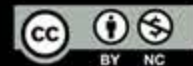


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The Journal of Public Space welcomes full papers for 2018 issues, to be published in April, August and December.

Deadline for April issue: January 10, 2018

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Deadline for December issue: September 10, 2018

Submissions will be ongoing throughout the year.

Submission can be made:

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Cover image: Gantry Section D, RMIT Swanston St, Melbourne 2016-2017. Artwork: Grace Leone.
Photo Credit: Nura Sheidaee.

EDITORIAL

The implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Our ongoing efforts after almost two years from the Habitat III conference

Luisa Bravo

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When City Space Architecture was selected to be part of Habitat III, the United Nations conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, held in Quito in 2016,¹ I realized that our efforts to promote public space culture and to give a contribution on the ongoing global discourse around public space were clearly visible and well understood. At the same time it was clear to me that being part of the Habitat III conference was our once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to start an ambitious and difficult path that could potentially have led to remarkable achievements.

City Space Architecture is a non-profit cultural association based in Bologna, Italy. Its strength is based on the ideals that are the pillars of its foundation: trust, solidarity and cooperation. All our affiliated members are volunteering their time because they are willing to give and I myself, as Founder and current President-elect, too. Our members come from academia, industry, governmental institutions and NGOs but we also engage students since our mission is mostly focused on quality education related to public space culture of young generations of future leaders. We always engage students in our projects, events and activities since we know they will carry the burden to build a more sustainable urban future for all, they will serve communities and will be asked to work as decision makers and influential advisors. We want them to be proud, committed and responsible ambassadors of public space culture, we want them to be servants of the public good.

Nowadays we are facing an unprecedented situation: the 'urban' is complex, like never before, and a great suffer comes from the humanity as a whole. The rise of poverty has generated conflicts and political instability in many countries. Equity, social justice and democracy are challenged by private interests and public space is seriously at risk. The New Urban Agenda adopted at the Habitat III conference and the related Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, with particular reference to SDG 11.7², recognize that public space is a key element for sustainable urban development. I strongly and passionately believe that

¹ At the Habitat III conference City Space Architecture organized and I coordinated the networking event 'Stand up for Public Space!' and a talk at the Urban Library for the launch of the first issue of The Journal of Public Space. Both events were very well attended. A report of both events is published on the issue Vol. 2, n. 1 (2017) of the journal. More on Habitat III here: <http://habitat3.org/>.

² According to the global indicator framework, the target related to SDG 11.7 is: 'By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities' - <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11>

public space is a fundamental human right, it is so precious but also so fragile that needs to be protected and preserved, if we really want to build cities for all, leaving no one behind. In 2017 I was engaged in two major UN events: I was nominated to attend the 26th UN-Habitat Governing Council in Nairobi and then granted an ad hoc-accreditation by Member States with a letter of invitation signed by the former UN-Habitat Executive Director Dr. Joan Clos; I was then selected by a Committee appointed by UN NGLS Non-Governmental Liaison Services to attend the High Level Meeting on the New Urban Agenda in New York. In 2018 City Space Architecture was selected to organize a networking event, that I coordinated, at the 9th World Urban Forum (WUF9)³ in Kuala Lumpur and was also selected as exhibitor (the only Italian exhibitor) together with 200 exhibitors from 50 countries. WUF9 was the first session to focus on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda adopted in Habitat III, under the theme 'Cities 2030: Cities for All' and attracted more than 22,000 participants from 165 countries. At the close of the meeting, WUF9 launched the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Cities 2030, which calls for accelerating NUA implementation and maintaining UN-Habitat as the UN focal point for follow-up and review of the NUA. Since the Habitat III conference in Quito, and afterwards in Nairobi, New York and Kuala Lumpur, I had the chance to meet and share knowledge with global stakeholders, to establish connections with many institutions that are promoting projects and programmes addressing global challenges, to be observer and speaker in relevant roundtable discussions, and I learned more about public space, how it is improved, appropriated and lived but also undermined, neglected and abused. More than ever, we need to be committed and continue our work on promoting public space culture and spread awareness on the importance of public space in cities.

This issue (Vol. 3, n.1, 2018) of *The Journal of Public Space* includes a section with reports from WUF9 from major stakeholders addressing challenges related to public space, that City Space Architecture supported as partners during meetings and events at WUF9: KTH Royal Institute of Technology and Ax:son Johnson Foundation (Sweden), the University of Auckland (New Zealand), UN General Assembly of Partners Older Persons (USA), IHC Global (USA) and Urban Synergies Group (Australia).

City Space Architecture is currently organizing a symposium which will take place at the Venice Architecture Biennale on September 22, in the framework of the educational programme 'Biennale Session'. In Venice several institutions will convene and continue the discussion on public space, such as: KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden), TU Vienna (Austria), Stanford Human Cities Initiative (USA), Keio University (Japan), Lodz University of Technology (Poland), The Graudate Center of the City University of New York (USA) and others are currently confirming their attendance. Some representatives from the UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme will also attend.

It's time to take action and we need to work all together.

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³ More on WUF9 here: <http://wuf9.org/> and on events on public space at WUF9 here: <http://wuf9.org/programme/thematic-itineraries/public-space/>

Skypeography. Investigating and mapping the public mind space of urbaness

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Abstract

'Skypeography: investigating and mapping the public mind space of urbaness' is an overview of the public space of Skype. This article discusses how mediation by screens is creating new urban concepts across an emerging new spatial geography and its new sociologies and cartographies. It begins by tracing an overview from perceptions of 'city' to experiences of 'urbaness' and explores the role of screens in creating a mobile state of being and a conceptualization of urban public space as transient and paradoxical mind space. The paper argues that an appropriate urban lexicon or cartographic recording is yet to be developed in relation to the public space of screens. In an increasingly visualized world, art practice has a significant role to play in exploring and mapping urban transience, movement, rhythm and paradox that forms a state of 'urbaness'. This article explores the concept of 'Skypeography' through the methods and aesthetics of artistic screen research practice undertaken in the fluid space of the SkypeLab research project. Key to the research is the project to identify 100 Questions emerging out of the practice of SkypeLab. Through its experimental approach in digital space, SkypeLab poses and exposes questions arising out of the practice, about urban space itself. Through both answers and questions, SkypeLab and its 'Skypeography' method contribute valuable knowledge towards an understanding of new conceptual territory within a profoundly changing urbanscape.

Keywords: urban consciousness, digital screen mediation, Skype space, urban lexicon, spatial urban mapping, urban public space, Skypeography.

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Introduction

This article provides an overview of the public space of Skype. It discusses how mediation by screens is creating new urban concepts across an emerging new spatial geography and its emerging sociologies and cartographies. It begins by tracing an overview from perceptions of 'city' to experiences of 'urbaness' and explores the role of screens in creating a mobile state of being and a conceptualization of urban public space as transient and paradoxical mind space. The article argues that an appropriate urban lexicon or cartographic recording is yet to be developed in relation to the public space of screens. In an increasingly visualized world, art practice has a significant role to play in exploring and mapping urban transience, movement, rhythm and paradox which form a state of 'urbaness'. This article explores the concept of 'Skypeography' through the methods and aesthetics of artistic screen research practice undertaken in the fluid space of the SkypeLab research project. Key to the research is the project to identify 100 Questions emerging out of the practice of SkypeLab. Refer to the Appendix for a summary of the SkypeLab research.

From City to Urbaness

Concepts of the 'city' are central to contemporary understanding of urban public space. 'What is a City?' This often-quoted question posed by Lewis Mumford in the 1930s (LeGates, Stout 2011) is today a far more complex question in the context of a fluid urbanized and digitalized world. Mumford was an American historian and sociologist, particularly known for his study of cities. While his view of the city as a theatre of social action recognized it as more than a constructed, physical space, he could not have envisioned the complex action and interaction of urban and digital networks that are experienced by today's societies. Mumford's thinking was framed at a time when the idea of the modern city was emerging and changing. Other urban concepts were yet to come. Among these was the idea of the 'Megalopolis' or urban cluster or corridor, posed in the 1960s by urban geographer Jean Gottmann (1961) that linked regionally connected cities such as BosWash (Boston and Washington), recognising the natural connections between existing cities. Later, this concept was extended to connect rapidly developing urban spaces within the economic zone of the Pearl River Delta in China, reflecting in part a changing emphasis in urban research from connecting cities of Europe and the USA to the expanding city space of Asia. This in itself reflects the rapid growth in urbanization across the planet and the speed of growth within the Asian region in particular. Sociologist Saskia Sassen (1991) coined the term 'Global City' in the early 1990s recognizing the interconnection between the three mega cities of New York, London and Tokyo. She observed that the flight between New York and London is one of the world's most heavily used connection routes, so it is not surprising to find that New York and London might have more in common with each other, than with other cities in the United States or the United Kingdom. For some, such journeys between physical cities are as much the city, as the two cities themselves. Gottmann's concept of BosWash (Boston/Washington) can now be extended to the NyLon (New York/London) concept. Going one step further in the conceptualization of the 'city' as a network of connections, the AMO Atlas published in Content (2004), aims to snap shot the world in transition. Devised by architect and urban thinker Rem Koolhaas with others from OMA Office of Metropolitan Architecture, it does this through visualizing data to record

physical and non-physical, interconnected, global information and trends that link cities across the world. From McDonald outlets to Chinatowns, the AMO Atlas records diverse urban connections, from commercial expansion to cultural dispersions. What this does, is create different ways of looking at spatially networked geographies and draws attention to new urban sociologies and cartographies.

The AMO Atlas exemplifies the text 'World = City' that appears on the back cover of another of Koolhaas's publications, on the project, *Mutations: Harvard project on the city* (2001). This project explored understanding the city well beyond its concrete manifestations in relation to 'what used to be the city' (2001: 19). Here definitions of the 'city' can be seen as shaped by the contemporaneity of the conditions shaped by rapid urbanization and digitalization. Koolhaas refers to this as a 'City of Exacerbated Difference (COED)', a copyrighted term he devised through the Harvard Project. While he was specifically referring to the Pearl River Delta, the concept also applies more broadly. The idea of 'exacerbated difference' finds its roots in such thinking as urban philosopher Henri Lefebvre's 'arrythmia' or colliding rhythms in his theory of *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) first published in French in 1992. While digitalization as we know it was a long way off, Lefebvre was in a sense observing through a screen of sorts as he used his Paris window to record and analyse the patterns of everyday life. The connection of urban rhythms was considered in earlier versions of this thinking in *The Rhythmanalytical Project and Attempt at the Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities*, co-written with urban philosopher Catherine Régulier (1986). These concepts laid the groundwork for deciphering the new urban situation where physical cities are created through rapid movement from place to place, and urban mind space is created through the digital movement in the space between those places. By its very nature this creates a connected territory of new urban rhythms or 'arrythms' constructed around difference. While difference is central to a great deal of thinking today in deciphering the lives we live and the spaces we inhabit, so too is transience or movement, often expressed as the 'mobilities paradigm' (Elliott, Urry 2010: 15). The term 'mobilities' emerged in the Social Sciences primarily in the work of John Urry (2000). Urry argues that for contemporary sociology to be relevant it needs to address a borderless world. While much of his research focuses on the impact of 'mobile lives' (Elliott, Urry 2010), on how people's lives are being reorganised, these studies also address the role the ubiquitous presence of networked screens play in shaping lives. Earlier sociologist Manuel Castells (1996) amongst others, outlined a networked society that changed concepts of the space of places - one could insert separate city spaces here - to a spatial concept of flows. Movement shapes experience. Digital movement shapes urban experience as observed by philosopher Marshall McLuhan. While it would be another thirty years before the World Wide Web became a reality, McLuhan had already begun to observe the urban/digital collision in the 1960s, predicting a shrinking world emerging out of what he described as pervasive electronic media. He coined the term 'Global Village' to describe what was happening. The two words do not belong together. To 'lose sight of the strangeness of these terms, speaks to an acclimatization' (Wark 2012: 27) to new thinking about the world we live in. Within these changing understandings of the space that is the 'city', the contemporary urban condition resides in a state of mobility and a space of transience and paradox that is best expressed as 'urbaness' (McCormick 2009).

Urban Lexicons

Tracing from concepts of the individual 'city' to the networked urban condition of 'urbaness' leads us to new questions about urban public space. If we ask Mumford's question again - 'What is a city?' - the answer may now be in another question - 'What is 'urbaness'? The term 'urbaness' refers to a specific state of urban consciousness, shaped by transience between, and compression of, space, time and difference, where collision is perceived as the norm. Forms of urban consciousness are as old as cities themselves, with concepts of transience and compression, embedded in the trains, cars and planes, that have increasingly diminished the distance and time between and within cities and people. The difference now, is not only the speed at which this takes place, but also an understanding of 'increased mind mobility' (McCormick 2013:117) and the concept that one is 'born urban, born transient' (McCormick 2009: 17) in both body and mind, as a contemporary life experience. Instantaneous satellite connection means we can simultaneously be in many places and time zones. Urban experience is both seen and unseen, within a cacophony of layered, fragmented, transient alignments, shaped by multiple screens. Our current urban vocabulary is closely linked to concepts of belonging to, and identifying with, individual city spaces. These terms include 'cosmopolitanism', 'urbanity' and even Saskia Sassen's more recent term 'cityness' (2005). While grounded in ideas of connectivity, the latter too is embedded in primarily global economic circuits. The term 'urbophilia' (Radovic, Dukanoic 2007) comes closer to capturing the essence of the times and the love of the urban. While architect, academic and urban thinker Darko Radovic may be right when he suggests the urban phenomenon by its very nature 'escapes complete understanding or any attempt at definite definition' (2007: 151) a new urban lexicon is emerging.

What additional language have we developed to express and record urban experience mediated by digital screens? In the 1990s, architect and urban designer William J Mitchell described the digital city using familiar city terms like 'digital highway' (1995). While such language helped us to begin to understand this space, new terms have now entered our vocabulary to explain the urban phenomenon more fully. In a digitally connected urban world, we now understand space through urban perception and experience within the framework of such concepts as sociologists Manuel Castells 'space of flows' (1996) and Zygmunt Bauman's 'liquid times' (2000). Media theorist McKenzie Wark describes the condition as 'telesthesia', where information and ideas move faster than people or things between spaces, 'to bring what is distant near, and make what is distant a site of action' (2012). It is argued here that the term 'urbaness' (McCormick 2009) comes closest to expressing the consciousness of networked urban space. To decipher 'urbaness' as a spatial experience of transience and paradox, there is a need to expand our urban lexicon beyond words and towards the visual. Significant advances have been made in the development of urban visual design lexicons in such fields as Space Syntax and Urban Informatics in relation to spatial analysis, but neither focus on the extended language needed to express the impact of mediation by the screen itself on urban perception and experience. Rather, both employ visualized digital language of embedded mathematical algorithms and geospatial computer technology to decipher urban spatial behaviour. These visual translations of complex data conveyed through digital screens, similar to the example used earlier of the AMO Atlas, have opened up different ways of conceptualising space as well as new areas of thinking and collaborative design in relation to the

effectiveness of social and built public space. In these fields of urban study through digital methods urban place and space are central rather than the collective idea of being urban and its associated mind space. Bill Hillier, Professor of Architectural and Urban Morphology (Bartlett School of Architecture, University of London) is credited as the originator of the conceptual framework of Space Syntax through the Space Syntax Laboratory, UCL. While he has written about the human mind in this equation (2012) his focus is on understanding cities through a geometric mathematical prism. A gap has still been left in the urban lexicon and the potential for analysis of the public space of collective urban mind space through the specific expressive language of art. This move to visualization sits well within our everyday experience of the visual language we are increasingly relying on in our everyday digital communication such as Selfies, Emojis and the endless Facebook photos we send, as well as evident in our contracted 140 characters Tweets social platform. Information is conveyed to us through mobile phone, iPad, and computer screens. Amongst the screen mediators is Skype. Created by Scandinavians Niklas Zennström and Janus Friis in 2003, it today has multiple versions to choose from, such as Zoom and WhatsApp, but it is 'Skype' and 'Skyping' that have entered the urban lexicon as verbs. By now (2018) over 560 million people have used Skype at one time or another. Experience of such dense, transient, and at times fragmented and frustrating space plays a pivotal role in the formation of knowledge. In contrast to Facebook, Instagram, or Email, Skype communication is directly through seeing each other's face. We are actively engaged. Skype continues to be one of the screens that we 'see' the new everyday conceptual transient 'city' of paradox through, by seeing the other, the self, space and time concurrently.

Skypeography and SkypeLab

As we have seen, like the subject itself, a study of the public space of 'urbaness' requires a cacophony of interconnected disciplines. Amongst the mix is art practice which is often overlooked in the wider fields of urban studies. In this article, the focus is on the particular practice of 'Skypeography' through the methods and aesthetics of artistic screen research practice undertaken in the SkypeLab project. The term 'Skypeography' like the term 'urbaness' has been purposefully created in an effort to expand the lexicon to better express the experience of our times. 'Skypeography' plays with the idea of Skype as public urban space, as a new geography with a new cartography. Embedded in its processes is a networking of understandings drawn across urban studies, including geography, sociology, cartography and art. Carto-City for example is the title of cartographer Denis Cosgrove's chapter in *Else/Where: Mapping New Cartographies of Networks and Territories* (Abrams and Hall 2006). Cosgrove concludes with the statement 'Urban space and cartographic space remain inseparable; as each is transformed, their relationship alters' (2006). In our contemporary situation, Cosgrove's conclusion reminds us of the continuously changing understanding of both city and cartography, and how each is intertwined. Being urban is embedded in paradox and mediated through screens, while cartography itself is dominated by screens. GIS (geographic information systems) are designed to capture, analyse and present all manner of spatial or geographic data, resulting in Google Maps and GPS global positioning systems, offering real time navigation. While this technology gives unprecedented access to information and to spatial engagement, it rarely addresses the implications. On the

other hand, transience and paradox are the territory of contemporary art practice and its specific mode of research and mapping.

Contemporary artistic modes of practice reflect a shift from individual to what is often termed relational or socially engaged, mirroring the digital network where each collision creates a new direction. In this era is not new for the arts to engage with the digital sphere in a multiplicity of ways. Of its time, SkypeLab 2014-2018, grew out of its predecessor Skypetra 2012-2013. Both explore the cartography of 'urbaness' through the interconnection between art practice, public space and digital technology. The SkypeLab concept grew out of a Skype conversation between Henning Eichinger, Professor at Reutlingen University in Germany and me, in 2012 about our observations of the increasing use of screens by our respective art in public space and design students. Unlike much of the engagement between art and technology, the SkypeLab interest is not in digital art as such. Rather, questions arose about the impact of 'seeing' and 'knowing' through screens: Questions about the impact of the everyday experience of connecting across contiguous urban digital public space on urban perception. Questions about how art and design practice might interpret and map this space. Questions about what role the hand, and the body still played in an urbanized and digitalized world. What answers, but more importantly, what questions might arise from this approach? While all research is by nature investigating the unknown, SkypeLab allows the unknown state to remain a core part of its philosophy reflecting the nature of art practice that begins with an idea and comes to the question through the practice itself. Integral to its processes, SkypeLab is compiling the 100 Questions project over 2018/2019. The questions arise out of the experience of the participants of both the state of 'urbaness' and the practice of 'Skypeography' through the filter of screens. To enquire into the questions, SkypeLab is being undertaken as a series of research laboratories across increasingly expanding networks, across urban public space as well as disciplines and mediums. Labs to date have created a networked 'city' or urban space between universities in Reutlingen, Melbourne, Shanghai, Rio De Janeiro, Barranquilla, Hobart and Barcelona. Within long timeframes and geographical distances, SkypeLab purposefully brings together differing and colliding urban time zones, seasons and cultures, mediated through digital screens where all are collapsed into a common urban space – a common 'city', if you like.

SkypeLab is witness to Castell's urban 'space of flows', Bauman's 'liquid times' and Wark's 'telesnesia', first hand. In this context, the research curatorial practice 'Skypeography' was designed by Henning Eichinger and me and employs a methodology shaped by ephemeral and transient urban experience, mediated by digital screens. In the process, contributions are made to an urban lexicon that expands our capacity to express our experience of this new conceptual cityscape. The interest in how difference plays out in this space as well the interest in the role of the hand in a digital space, led us to invite German, Australian, Chinese and South American artists, who had not met previously, to work in pairs or opposites. They undertook Blind Contour Drawing sessions via Skype over periods of several months. The technique is intimate as it involves looking at your partner intensively on the screen, and drawing with one continuous line, reminiscent of cartographic contour lines. A stranger crosses this public space to enter the private space of your bedroom or living room, while you traverse in the opposite direction. The meeting place is somewhere else. While Blind Contour Drawing was originally conceived as an innovative drawing teaching technique in the 1940s (Nicolaïdes 1941) and was later

adapted by art educator Betty Edwards in her book *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (1979), here in SkypeLab it is transformed into a research tool - a tool for investigating urban ephemera mediated by digital screens while concurrently exploring the role of the hand in our digital world. The methodology, as employed by the artists, favours the juxtaposition of difference (including culture and language), long time frames, and geographical distance. While, in more traditional cartography, contour lines indicate the shape of the earth's surface, here contour lines record the connection between complete strangers. They look directly at each other through the screen, at much closer distances than the usual physical encounter, and yet separated by distance, time, culture and often language. Here perception is transformed, as it responds to paradox, through frozen moments and fluidity, distance and nearness, connection and disconnection, hand and brain, light and dark, clarity and loss of detail, confidence and awkwardness, limitation and possibility, amidst a myriad of other apparent contradictions. Paradoxical fragments become everyday framing of how knowledge is formed and how perceptions are created, and experiences recorded. 'Drawing via the Skype screen interface reinforces the idea, that when we draw we mirror ourselves, as much as the other, and in the process, we redefine ourselves' (McCormick 2013) as mapmaker and the map itself - 'I have got you at the end of my pen' (Eichinger, McCormick 2013: 76).

In recording 'Skypeography' practice, artists talk of the physical contradiction of 'Drawing faster/moving slower to capture a moment' (Eichinger, McCormick 2013: 75), and the ambiguity of the screen itself, where 'Textures of the city swallow her face' (Eichinger, McCormick 2013: 74) as one sees the other, the self, their space, your space and layered reflections on glasses and mirrors. Some project participants gave all their attention to the space around the person, the partially visible space that opens up the imagination, some tracked the virtual space between the two screens, some recorded those somewhat undefinable noises that can be heard on line, some recorded soundscapes while walking and Skyping in physical public spaces and in the process erasing the distance. For others erasure itself was the focus referring to 'the ephemeral nature of online encounters and the idea of 'trace' as a memory in connection to temporality' with the intention 'to follow the drawn line back to its origin to map its journey' (Eichinger, McCormick 2016: 41). While the hand was engaged in the preliminary drawing process, the hand and the body reappeared in the artistic interpretations of the Skype encounter in the form of multiple mediums employing photography, projection, painting, printing, installation, video, fashion design, montage and performance. These do not illustrate the Skype experience but rather map this through the impact on each artists' practice. Through the interconnection between art and design practice, public space, and digital technology, this practice-led research develops new insights and new ways of building on contemporary knowledge of urban space. It compliments and enhances other forms of urban study leading to a fuller understanding of our urbanized and digitalized world. This is best expressed by social geographer and researcher for the Joint Research Centre, Stephane Chaudron, co-author with Henning Eichinger of the most recent publication associated with SkypeLab. In the report on Identities in the Digital World for the European Commission she says 'I could not but be intrigued by the similarities between the SkypeLab project research questions and mine while having different approaches, reasoning and process' (2017: 5).

Conclusion

This article has explored the impact of mediation through digital screens on the meaning of the contemporary 'city', and how experience of urban public space is being redefined. Rather than viewing cities as separate spaces, the concept of 'urbaness' poses the idea of 'being urban' within perceptions of the contemporary 'city' as a state of urban consciousness. The need for an expanded urban lexicon and new ways of mapping the contemporary 'city' have been discussed through the method of 'Skypeography' and the research project SkypeLab. Through its non-traditional and experimental approach within public digital space, SkypeLab poses and exposes questions arising out of the practice about the impact of the digital screen itself. In so doing it contributes to broader fields of urban inquiry. As we look into this new mind space of 'urbaness', SkypeLab asks: How do the layers, reflections and fragmentations of 'seeing' and encountering each other via digital screen space shape our urban experience and inform our urban perceptions? What role does artistic practice play in the language and cartography of contemporary urban public space? Through both answers and questions, SkypeLab contributes valuable knowledge to an understanding of new conceptual territory within a profoundly changing urbanscape.

Appendix

SkypeLab is undertaken in collaboration with the Goethe Institutes in Australia and China and funded through the Baden-Württemberg Foundation, Germany. Its predecessor Skypetrair received a research and teaching award in 2013 in Germany. Over 2012 to 2018, the mapmaking evolving out of this research process has taken multiple forms. These include street projections, street performance, public space interventions, exhibitions, publications and online presence at ARTE Creative TV France/Germany and the SkypeLab web site, and associated Blogs and Facebook. The concept was initiated by Maggie McCormick, RMIT University, Australia and Henning Eichinger, Reutlingen University, Germany in 2012 as Skypetrair. This Australian/German project which began with a focus on the face and the nature of portraiture in the digital screen age, soon expanded to consider the public space of the screen itself. As SkypeLab 2014-2016, the network expanded to include East China Normal University, Shanghai, China. In 2017 The Federal University, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil and the University of Atlantico, Barranquilla, Colombia were added to this network. In 2018 an archive 2012-2018 under the title of Skypescape was shown at the Salamanca Art Centre, Hobart in association with the University of Tasmania. Later in 2018, 22@ Barcelona SkypeLab will take place at RMIT Europe in Barcelona. This forthcoming dialogue will take the 100 Questions and SkypeLab publications as its starting point and will take the form of a symposium and mapping laboratory leading to a SkypeLab event in Berlin, Germany in 2019.

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Dialogue, ambivalence, public space

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Abstract

Public space is neither a fixed thing, nor a stable concept. This paper applies the term ‘dialogue’ as a conceptual basis for the idea of public space as something that changes according to multiscalar and overlapping contexts, with use and discourse. The concept of dialogue is developed from the dialogism of Mikhail Bakhtin whose related notions of ambivalence, polyphony, heteroglossia, carnival and chronotope are used to support a dialogical understanding of public space. The paper develops this understanding by creating a parallel between Bakhtin’s dialogism and the Barking Town Square by muf architecture/art (2004-2010). Through this parallel reading, the paper suggests that design proposals for the public realm are valued propositions that suggest a particular transformation of aesthetic, ethical, social and political relations through the ordering and transformation of spatial relations. No design, no conception, and therefore no dialogue creating public space can be neutral—but inevitably takes place within a fraught dialogical context inseparable from individual positioning and responsibility. The question of boundary maintenance thus arises inevitably, and the paper examines a range of such problematic demarcations, including between public and private, typologies and flexible criteria, immediate and social contexts, and ideals and reality. Given dialogue’s condition of ambivalence and incompleteness, the paper argues that the inherent contradictions to the concept of ‘public space’ are its very conditions for existence.

Keywords: dialogue, ambivalence, incompleteness, public space

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Introduction

The 2008 European Prize for Urban Public Space was attributed to the Barking Town Square, a project by *muf architecture/art* in the East London borough of Barking and Dagenham. In the reports following the announcement of the winner, the jury's chair, architect Manuel de Sola-Morales, is quoted saying that the jury wanted to *valorise 'not a design, but a process, a methodology that seeks to combine the old with the new, the private and the public and the citizen's relation with architecture'*¹ Explicitly distancing itself from public space as a physical thing, the jury encouraged the notion of public space as a boundless territory which responds to and creates new typologies, as action, as well as a discursive field whose polyphony is orchestrated by a design project. This paper will periodically come back to Barking Town Square - the subject of a fieldwork-based case study by the author between 2009 and 2012² -, but for now the Square serves as a case for Sola-Morales' argument that *'all urban space is more or less public'* (Angles, 2010: 25). The Square is a space-time marker for the 2008 European Prize discourse that saw the concept of 'public space' becoming diffuse and begging the question of its definition. This discourse highlighted the fluidity of the concept of public space and its multiple ambiguities: those between material and social, public and private, and the design object and its production. Public space as a design preoccupation has always been fascinating because of the overlap between a discursive public realm (communication, politics) and a physical public realm (material configurations). Furthermore, the idea of public space is continuously marked by the blurring of public and private boundaries, strict theoretical denominations that tend to dissolve with actual use and reveal internal contradictions buried within the concept.

To start any discussion, the word 'public' has to be situated in a particular context to acquire any precision. Considering the 'public realm', an extensive field that blurs discourse with spatial organisation, social and political theorist Jeff Weintraub points to the impossibility of formulating a *'grand dichotomy'* with public/private. Weintraub highlights four conflicting and overlapping paradigms for the dichotomy, and states that the distinction is nevertheless useful if only because its terms of reference, 'public' and 'private', inevitably imply meaning and our society is structured along the ambiguity of these terms (Weintraub, 1997: 37). Defining public space raises similar issues where the reliance on a precise division between public and private can only be contextual and partially accurate. As Weintraub notes, the concept of 'public space' is further problematised given the fact that the city is both the object of study and the metaphorical source of many of the key concepts of Western social thought and political theory (Weintraub, 1997: 26).

Calling Barking Town Square a *'freely accessible and pedestrianised public forum'* (Fraser, 2012: 20) signals a particular conception of public space that ties the project with an archetype of Western urban and political form rather than its immediate context. The

¹ Sola-Morales is quoted in Serra, C. (2008, April 30). 'Espacio público sin maquillar', *El País*, p. 48. The original Spanish reads: *'Hemos querido valorar en este premio no un diseño, sino un proceso, una manera de hacer en la que lo que se busca es combinar lo viejo y lo nuevo, lo privado y lo público y la relación del ciudadano con la arquitectura.'*

² The study involved 60 interviews with designers, developers, politicians, council officials and local residents, workshops with residents, multiple visits to Barking including week-long stays in one of the new residential buildings framing the site, and participation in a range of public activities in Barking Town Centre. For a discussion of research methods and dialogism, including those used in the case study, see Kenniff, 2011.

public character of such a Square depends on a range of factors, including time of day, opening hours, weather, bylaws, civic order, commercial activities, inter-subjective relationships, etc. Elsewhere, I have previously described how the identity of Barking Town Square emerges from a series of relationships as space-time figures, or chronotopes: those of London and Essex, Barking and Dagenham, Old and New Barking, Town Centre and Town Square, as well as chronotopes within the Town Square, in which distinct parts contribute to the assemblage of the whole (Kenniff, 2013). In this sense, the 'public space' of Barking Town Square relates to what political scientist Margaret Kohn describes as a '*cluster concept*' whose definition is multiple and sometimes contradictory and captures the public-private hybridity of social space in both its relational multiscalarity and its public character (Kohn, 2004: 11). Here, I propose that it is these ambiguities that define public space as a design problem.³

The paper builds on the contradictions of public space before developing a conceptual framework based on the concept of 'dialogue' that responds to and makes sense of these contradictions. This framework is constructed through the work and the legacy of linguist, literary critic and thinker Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). Bakhtin's work, spanning diverse areas of the humanities and arts and synthesised as dialogism (See Todorov, 1984; and Holquist, 1990), is particularly relevant to the study of public space, especially when considering the ambiguities described above. Bakhtinian dialogism frames immediacy, presence, corporeality, indeterminacy and incompleteness, as well as establishing conceptual links between language, speech, space and time. The dialogic, in this sense, is both an ontological and an aesthetic principle that, in contrast to the dialectic, offers no synthesis. In this paper, some of dialogism's principal concepts (dialogue, ambivalence, carnival, chronotope and heteroglossia) serve as foundation for our conception of 'dialogical public space'.⁴

³ For a specific description of muf architecture/art's project for Barking Town Square and their design process in relation to dialogism, see Kenniff, 2016.

⁴ Brief descriptions of Bakhtinian concepts used in this paper (in alphabetical order):

ambivalence = The result of the conjunction of opposites in *dialogue*, and whose encounter points in two directions simultaneously (*both/and* rather than *one/or*). Ambivalence is a crucial notion because it underpins the whole of *dialogism*: the *ambivalence* between self and Other, utterance and language, monologue and dialogue, fear and laughter, sacred and profane, etc. For a discussion of '*dialogic ambivalence*', see Zima, 1981.

carnival / carnivalesque / carnivalise = A temporary public situation predicated on laughter and *ambivalence* brought forth by the conjunction of opposites. Carnival laughter aims at the temporary overturning of ideals, fears, the sacred, and structures and figures of authority. From the point of view of *carnival*, strict oppositions (dichotomies) lose meaning. See Bakhtin, 1984b; LaCapra, 2003; Lachmann, Eshelman & Davis, 1988; and Zima, 1981.

chronotope = A spacetime unit of analysis that '*makes narrative events concrete*' by '*materialising time in space*' (Bakhtin, 1981: 250). *Chronotopes* can be symbolic (the square), historical (a particular period), or refer to, in our case, the process of writing or of design (the author's own timespace markers, or the project's place in time).

dialogism = The system of thought based on *dialogue* that, in its Bakhtinian version (as opposed to the dialogism of Martin Buber or Emmanuel Levinas) and for the scope of this paper, encompasses *ambivalence*, *carnival*, *chronotope*, *heteroglossia* and *polyphony*.

dialogue = A mode of relation and encounter between entities that supports that the encounter between them cannot be superseded or transcended synthetically. According to Tzvetan Todorov, the dialogic principle is that '*it is impossible to conceive of any being outside of the relations that link it to the other*' (Todorov, 1984: 94).

From symbolic types to fields of interactions

Because of blurred boundaries and ambiguous meanings attributed to the terms 'public' and 'private', public space eludes, perhaps like no other design problem, strict classification and typology. Attempts at classifying public spaces according to types usually produce longer lists fated to be edited in the future, expanded and adjusted to the 'evolution of public life' (see for example Carr, Francis, Rivlin, & Stone, 1992: xi). The problem with classification and typology, however, is that they eventually fail to grasp the full complexity of public space and, as architect and planner Matthew Carmona (2010) writes, the approach tends to produce an infinite complexity of types. As a possible solution, Carmona emphasises the tendency to move away from rigid classification toward more flexible evaluation criteria. He applies four: three are from Margaret Kohn, ownership, accessibility and intersubjectivity, with the fourth being management. Although Carmona's classification of urban spaces follows the idea of social space oscillating between the truly public and the truly private, it also begs the question of whether categorisation is ultimately inevitable even when dealing with flexible criteria, since we might keep fixing variables to understand a place according to a particular social concept, time, or value while continually relying on the polarity between uncertain and problematic notions of 'public' and 'private'.

Attributing a specific type to a place is trying to fix something that cannot be fixed. This attribution fixes meaning, but the meaning will change with the use of the place, its management, the connections it fosters, its perception in the local community, and with time. The typological expression 'town square', for example, attributed early on to the project for a public space in front of Barking Town Hall, has invited a constant debate between the projection of civic ideals and the reality of social life within Barking Town Centre. The debate can be heard in every attempt by local authorities to give a clear civic identity to the project and the place *vis-a-vis* the noise of local residents and users performing and producing spatial configurations or loose identities for it that are patently equivocal to the official discourse. A flexible (rather than a typological) model, however, recognises that 'public space' may have more to do with experience and use than regular forms or physical/spatial archetypes like squares and streets. Flexible criteria have their own problems but do seem like the most promising approach to the problem of defining public space as a socio-material construct while engaging the full complexity of spatial production.

In the case of Barking Town Square, conversations with local residents, politicians and designers reveal the social and material ambiguities of public space. While most public reactions imply a physical public realm as a particular location (partly owing to the formulation of the question), they also imply cross-overs between physical and social aspects of the public realm: public life, meeting strangers, crowds, speech, etc. In workshops and interviews, the expression 'public realm' (routinely used in the UK to identify a project of public space) rarely referred to an abstract public sphere of political and social interactions isolated from the physical world, and rarely implied 'public space' existing beyond and apart from public and social life. In some instances, the expression

heteroglossia = Linguistic stratification and diversification. Every speech act works toward *heteroglossia* and against the homogenising tendency of a 'unitary language' (Bakhtin, 1981: 272) by inflecting language with tone, genre, position and affectation.

polyphony = A plurality of equal and unmerged voices within the same subject, object or event. *Polyphony* points to an ambivalent relation between a unified whole and individual parts. See Bakhtin's work on Dostoevsky's *polyphonic* novel (Bakhtin, 1984a).

was used multiple times by the same person to describe different concepts, or objects.⁵ This type of ambiguity, implying both physical and social elements, expresses the idea that working on public space projects implies making propositions about the organisation of society.

The relationship between physical, spatial and social aspects of public space must be framed appropriately. Criteria beyond the physical properties of place are relevant to how we conceive public space. It is no longer appropriate to understand public space as a purely physical aspect of cities, a given stage for the enactment of human interaction (Crang & Thrift, 2000: 3);⁶ nor is it appropriate to extend a set of typological locations and settings to support new aspects of social life (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001: 16).⁷ Rather, 'public space' can be understood through Henri Lefebvre's work as both physical and social, a production of human society, where morphological elements express specific social production processes, and a reciprocal production of social behaviours through space (Lefebvre, 1991; see also Paquot, 2009). And nor can public space be conceived without addressing theoretical models for which human and non-human aspects have reciprocity and share agency; the city as an enactment of socio-material and socio-technical assemblages of *'heterogeneous actors, material and social aspects'* (Fariás, 2009: 14). Geographer Ash Amin argues the same about public space saying that the concept should include the total dynamics, human and non-human, of a public setting (Amin, 2008). From these positions, which derive in part from assemblage theory and actor-network theory, we can take the necessity of treating human actors and human constructs (language, culture, norms, structures, design, technology, etc.) reciprocally with actors exterior to (or not immediately tied to) human beings or culture (ecosystems, 'nature', weather, other living beings, substances and materials, etc.), as well as material/immaterial relationships, new technologies, digital and virtual spaces. 'Public space', then, moves irrevocably from the physical thing to the thing in becoming, from the type to the field: Seeing public space in this way, as an enactment or a performance, suggests that *'there is no archetypal public space, only variegated space-times of aggregation'* (Amin 2008: 9). The scope, here, is enormous, but the above lines of thought bring up the necessity to develop models that address the complexity of public space or, put differently, that address the fields of interactions from which public space emerges.

Voice and dialogic ambivalence

As will be developed below, Bakhtinian dialogism offers a promising way of dealing, in part, with this complexity by focusing on human actors (their actions and behaviour)

⁵ An architect who worked on Barking Central, the mixed-use regeneration project that includes Town Square, referred to the public realm as: the freely accessible built environment (*'...The more you put on the site, the more you could pay for the public realm...'*), the realm of information accessible to any UK citizen (*'...Every planning application has to be put into the public realm...'*), and the space of social interaction (*'...The principles of the public realm are...routes here, big space here, big space there, something tall there, library and police station here, and allowing things to knit through.'*).

⁶ Crang and Thrift propose that space has to be understood as process rather than a given abstract category.

⁷ Hajer and Reijndorp write that thinking about public space at the turn of the millennium is determined by the intuitive notion that public space must be specifically located: a square, a café, a park. For them, the pervasiveness of this notion means that new and different manifestations of the public sphere are at best overlooked and at worst ruled out of being public at all—a position echoed by Manuel de Sola-Morales in the attribution of the 2008 European Prize.

while opening the possibility to read discourse and intention in the organisation and ordering of various spatial contexts. What ties human actions and spatial contexts together in 'dialogue' is 'voice' and ambivalence. Not solely the voice of the person, but the communicative capacity of any entity⁸ and the way this 'act' actualises both a specific local context and a generic social context. In the case of Barking Town Square, the paper looks at how speech acts and discourses parallel the material (physical, spatial) project for public space as sets of 'voices' that come into interaction, agreement and (or) conflict.⁹ A public space like Barking Town Square should be understood as a product specific to its particular local context, culture, and political organization. It is a particular enactment or assemblage in space and time, a produced space, or process, rather than an architectural 'thing'. The meaning we attribute to the Town Square, or to any other place, is then accredited to its production, resulting from a dialectical relationship between objects and social practices. This is an important step in developing the background for a dialogical theory of public space, because it sets up a question about the relationship between space and dialogue and the accounting for myriad contributing actors. It would be impossible, for example, to dissociate Barking Town Square from the official views of the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation and its development production processes and biases from the clearly conflicting public use of the Square as a rallying point by rioters and looters during the 2011 London riots.¹⁰ But the scale and content of these views conflict only if we see public space as a given fixed entity.

The kind of telescopic reach described above between the scales of territorial agency and strategy and immediate local action enfolded in the production of public space illustrates, once more, the complexity of any attempt at classifying public spaces. Categorisation at any time leads to a fragmentary understanding of public space. It should always be possible to understand public space as a momentary production whose design, social, political, cultural, and (or) financial aspects overlap definitive boundaries. Ideal projections of and aspirations for public space are thus constantly challenged or affirmed by use and experience. Drawing an analogy with geographer and urban theorist Edward Soja's description of the socio-spatial dialectic (Soja, 1980), it is possible to say that ideal public space and real (lived) public space involve, underpin and pre-suppose each other; they reciprocally, continuously express and affect each other. The meaning of any public space, then, is worked at in the problematic—and non-synthesisable—relationship between authority and experience, and between ideals and their real counterparts. The fact that this relationship cannot be synthesised is one of the fundamental principles of the dialogic: 'dialogue' means an ambivalent relation between entities that are neither subsumed into nor transcended by the encounter. Public space, in other words, acquires form and meaning dialogically. The next sections of this paper address this proposition.

⁸ Bakhtin criticises the tendency of logically (structurally) defining all relations between entities and the necessary 'depersonalization' of the process. He, instead, hears 'voices in everything and dialogic relations among them' (Bakhtin, 1986: 169).

⁹ The particularities of Bakhtinian dialogism and Barking Town Square are two markers, therefore, for the scope of this paper, its potential and limitations in addressing the full complexity of public space. The aim, here, is an initial exploration into what 'dialogical public space' could mean so that it may eventually complement and lead to further productive encounters with other models for public space.

¹⁰ The London Thames Gateway Development Corporation was set up by the UK government between 2004-2013 to oversee the urban development of a portion of the Thames Gateway area (including Barking Town Centre and the Lower Lea Valley, the 2012 Olympics' site). Its CEO, Peter Andrews, in a personal interview recorded in 2010 a year before the London riots, claims that an 'ideal public space' has to be 'well-funded, orderly, economically viable and convivial'.

Dialogic public space

In 2009–2012, a period of consultative fieldwork in Barking revealed confusion amongst participants about the notions of ‘public space’ and ‘public realm’—blurred boundaries and reciprocity between social and physical aspects appeared in the use of the expressions generally (for different purposes and with different meanings) rather than in their specific use. There was rarely confusion as to the intended meaning of each expression when used: my interlocutors knew what they meant when using one expression over another. Speakers moved between physical, social and political elements depending on the dynamics of each conversation. This does not mark confusion as to the actual meaning of the expression but rather exemplifies the broadness of the concept itself whose signification changes according to its use, in the context of the exchange. The use of concepts must be placed in the context of dialogue whether it is the conversation between persons, or the conceptual ‘dialogue’ between things. This paper develops a response to the problem described above by examining it through Bakhtinian dialogism. This theoretical development takes a path through (i) the relationship between ‘dialogue’ and the notion of a discursive public realm, (ii) the spatial dimension of Bakhtinian concepts and, finally, through (iii) a proposed model for an aesthetics of public space in which dialogue and space mutually produce each other.

A grotesque public realm

Bakhtin’s dialogism, as an aesthetic and ethical principle, stresses the significance of voice, presence and corporeality while acknowledging the contingent and relative nature of being and cognition. From earlier work on art and aesthetics (Bakhtin, 1990; 1993), through exploration of the novel (Bakhtin, 1981; 1984a; 1984b), and to later work on language and the humanities (Bakhtin, 1986), the acting and speaking subject is presented from a dialogic, ambivalent position: sacred and profane, full of faults and potential, in constant relation to an ‘other’, begging for an answer back, incomplete. These general lines of Bakhtin’s dialogism make his thinking relevant to the modern model of a discursive public realm. This model, given form by philosopher Jürgen Habermas in the early 1960s, supports the idea that public space is generated by dialogue—diverse discourses, languages, linguistic spaces, meanings—rather than being a given setting for dialogue (Habermas, 1962). Bakhtin scholar Ken Hirschkop suggests that the immediate relevance of a Bakhtinian critique of the public realm lies in this very shift from conceiving public space as ‘*a space in which a certain kind of communication could take place*’ to a ‘*space generated by a certain kind of communication*’ (Hirschkop, 2004: 51). More precisely the Bakhtinian critique of the discursive model of the public realm builds on the work of, for example, critical theorists Nancy Fraser (1992) and Joan Alway (2000) who test the model for its handling of difference, projected ideals and evacuation of real ‘bodies’. Using Bakhtin, critics have sought to test and expand the Habermasian model on ethics and rhetoric, difference, grotesque corporeality and the intricacies of speech acts (see Nielsen, 1995; Garvey, 2000; Gardiner, 2004; Hirschkop, 2004; Roberts, 2004; 2008).¹¹ Habermas’ own response to his critics makes a brief mention of Bakhtin in recognising the political importance of ‘*plebeian culture*’ in shaping the public realm (Habermas, 1996: 427). The Bakhtinian public realm is one where dialogue takes place asymmetrically between subjects who are imperfect, whose speech confounds high and low culture, and

¹¹ The Bakhtinian critique of the discursive model of the public realm follows similar lines as the critique, during the 1980s, of ethnographic authority in anthropology (see Weiss, 1990).

whose actions are inseparable from their earthly, physical bodies: a ‘*politics of impurity*’ (Thornton, 1994: 92, quoted in Gardiner, 2004: 40).

Spatial dialogics

What we may infer from the above is an understanding of public space based on the idea that the relationship between dialogue and space is equivalent to the relationship between social practices and space. In this case, dialogue has to be developed as a concept that describes social, cultural and political relationships located in and producing space. Two seminal papers mark the development of a dialogical (Bakhtinian) conception of space. The first, by geographer Mireya Folch-Serra, explores ‘landscape’ as something constituted of multiple ‘voices’ with ideological character (Folch-Serra, 1990). The second, by Julian Holloway and James Kneale, also geographers, describes the spatial qualities of all Bakhtinian concepts, from self/other relations to the chronotope (Holloway & Kneale, 2000).

My suggestion here is to use these two papers as a basis to develop the concept of dialogical public space. At the onset, this notion means that (i) any conception of public space is a non-neutral and ideological conception marked by *polyphony*, and that (ii) the spatiality of the concept encompasses the myriad scales at which public space is produced, enacted or performed.

For Bakhtin, the relationship between dialogue and public space is one of ambivalence between fear and laughter and between authority and its challenge. Publicly enacted in space, this ambivalence takes the form of carnival (Lachmann, Eshelman, & Davis, 1988). It was the grotesque human body of the middle-ages (that Bakhtin read in the pages of François Rabelais’ novels) that embodied this ambivalence as opposed to the mathematical and ideal body one of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. As Holloway and Kneale note, this conception of the body was closer to ‘the body of the people’ for Bakhtin than any other, and in more than one sense. The general reality of bodies—gross, deformed, smelly, loud and subjectively incomplete—was metaphorically represented in ‘carnival’ as the other side of official culture (Holloway & Kneale, 2000: 80). That is, social relations and their subversion(s) were acted out in the space of carnival.

The relevance of Bakhtin’s concepts is less in their overt connections to public space through the medieval public square of Rabelais and the carnival, and more in their inherent spatiality. This observation is the crux of Folch-Serra’s and Holloway and Kneale’s conceptions of dialogical space. For Holloway and Kneale, this spatiality is characterised by two differing conceptions of context: one material and phenomenological-and the other one social. Because dialogue is such a diffuse concept that touches on space at multiple scales, what follows below traces a path through the singular and the collective, close and far, and touches on various fields including psychology, philosophy and geography.

The relationship between ‘self’ and ‘other’ constitutes the basis of Bakhtin’s thought on subjectivity and identity, a relationship that is always spatial because it is predicated on the non-repeatability of being as an event and the uniqueness of each person’s location in space and time. What Bakhtin emphasises is the importance of the particular place from which observations are made (Folch-Serra, 1990: 266). Hence, the positional relationship between the one and the other is what determines the meaning of an observation. The same applies to utterances or deeds which are situated and shaped by relationships to others. ‘*The work of signification or meaning*’, Holloway and Kneale report, ‘*always occurs as part of a dialogue between (at least) two utterances*’ (Holloway & Kneale, 2000: 76). Meaning

is worked at rather than given. The important point is that *'space matters because the outcome of a dialogue depends on where it is stated'* (Folch-Serra, 1990: 266). The meaning of a particular utterance depends on the position of the person standing in front of me, sitting behind a desk, upon a stage—always outside myself—and its relation to other utterances in the dialogue, and their respective position(s). This first, immediate, material and phenomenological spatial context is contrasted by a second, social conception of context. For Folch-Serra, the utterance, apart from being constitutive of immediate dialogue, communicates social dialects and contextual positions: class, gender, family, region, etc. (Folch-Serra, 1990: 260). Holloway and Kneale similarly suggest that any utterance given by a speaker expresses a particular world-view, social interest or positionality through its particular speech genre. Their diversity, in competition or in conflict, is called *heteroglossia*. Hence speech genres come to define 'position' as *'the placing of the speaker in an ideological terrain'* (Holloway & Kneale, 2000: 77). So the meaning of the utterance also depends on its position with respect to a wider social context given by particular speech genres. Each speech genre, in turn, presupposes, or predicates, and produces a particular space. A politician's speech on the stage of Barking Town Square during its inauguration ceremony (Fig. 1) and conversations on Main Street punctuated by slang (Fig. 2) are characteristic situations in which speech genres and space mutually affect each other in defining social context.

Holloway and Kneale suggest that the gap between the material/phenomenological and social conceptions of context is resolved by understanding social context as the third element between 'self' and 'other' a dialogic double-movement where each context affects and is affected by the other; a simultaneous pushing and pulling that happens in a given situation between the subjective and the social. This pushing and pulling is theorised by Bakhtin as a set of centripetal and centrifugal forces moving between homogeneity and heterogeneity. *'Dialogue takes places between the centrifugal forces of subjectivity, which are chaotic and particular, and the centripetal forces of system, which are rule-driven and abstract'* (Folch-Serra, 1990: 261). The ambivalence of dialogue between centripetal and centrifugal forces is what bridges the gap between the social and the phenomenological contexts. Hence, Holloway and Kneale can argue that heteroglossia is spatial because it acts on the (spatial) relationship between concrete (physical) speakers. They conclude that *'the social terrain of heteroglossia can be argued to be a socio-spatial landscape... If speech genres carve up the social then they can also be seen to carve up space'* (Holloway & Kneale, 2000: 79). Dialogue, then, produces space, and, applied as a concept it can reciprocally uncover the particular production process of this space. The boundary between understanding space and understanding dialogue about space starts to dissolve when we understand that each presupposes and underpins the other. This is what Folch-Serra implies when she describes landscape as a *'repository of heteroglossia'* both *'graphically visible'* in space but also *'narratively visible'* in time (Folch-Serra, 1990: 258). The analytical tool that supports this statement is the chronotope whose spatial implication is perhaps the clearest of all Bakhtinian concepts. The chronotope is based on the relationship between space and time as defined in Bakhtin's relativist view of space (in which 'difference' originates in the simultaneity of various points of view). What the chronotope allows is to momentarily fix the dialogical landscape so that it may be understood as a series of (consecutive) space-time situations on which stabilising and destabilising forces are acting. The chronotope, therefore, is a notion that supports the concept of 'dialogue' by specifying particular moments and tendencies of the latter's spatiotemporal structure. In Bakhtin's thought, the chronotope is introduced as a key to uncovering the spatiotemporal structure of

texts, from immediate to historical markers, literal to symbolic (Bakhtin, 1981). Chronotopes are characteristic of particular speech genres whose relationships to space and time are intertwined with their own ideological positions. So the wider social context, the production, of a particular space is inscribed in its chronotopes (Bakhtin, 1981: 250). For Folch-Serra, this means that to investigate dialogical landscapes through chronotopes always leads to the human voice. Reading time into space, either the space of self/other relations, the space of social relations, or the socio-spatial landscape of heteroglossia, thus uncovers the particular positions of a dialogue that is 'never a neutral exchange' (Folch-Serra, 1990: 258).



Fig. 1. Barking Town Square phase II opening ceremony, September 2009.



Fig. 2. Blake's Corner, Barking's main commercial intersection, 2010.

Public space production is marked by ambivalence, oscillating between stabilising and destabilising forces. The space of Barking Town Square is multiple, and points to people sitting on benches, walking its lines or to organised events. It points to boardroom budget decisions, political projects or to a set of plans approved by a planning authority. This ambivalence and multiplicity, as we will see next, is also at the root of a dialogical conception of public space.

Public square aesthetics

The above spatial dialogics, constructed from Bakhtin's writings, can be specified further with regards to public space in their intricate ties to the figure of the medieval public square and to medieval carnival. As previously mentioned, it is through these that the ambivalence and complexity of space acquire public, and eventually political, meaning. Literary critic and feminist scholar Pam Morris writes that Bakhtin draws from the medieval carnival '*the inversion of power structures, the parodic debunking of all that a particular society takes seriously (including and in particular all that which it fears)*' (Bakhtin, Voloshinov, & Medvedev, 1994: 250). Carnival laughter and folk humour then become paramount in de-stabilising the 'seriousness' of power structures (Kujundzic, 2002). Laughter, parody, the inversion and subversion of official culture introduce an ambivalence of boundaries and categories. In a more general definition, Michael Gardiner notes that the carnivalesque draws our attention to the underlying sociocultural forces that continually subvert our received commonsensical notions and habitualised viewpoints, and to encourage a renewed awareness of the hidden and all-too-often suppressed potentialities that lie within '*the dregs of an everyday gross reality*' (Gardiner, 2004: 42)¹² Historian Dominick LaCapra emphasises that it is on the public square that Bakhtin observes this drama taking place—this is where carnival is enacted, where bodies encounter each other in their gross reality, and where languages (tones and speech genres) come together dialogically (LaCapra, 2003: 41). The public square, rather than a mere container, becomes synonymous with and the principal spatial figure of heteroglossia. It is in the square that we recognise the potential for every utterance and every speech genre to 'carnivalise' official language, that is, to destabilise official culture. Thus, every speech genre is reconceived as a spatial performance of social relations which takes place in a particular place¹³ and whose practice stirs the emergence of a polyphonic space where performance and space/place mutually produce and announce each other. Following this idea, Holloway and Kneale suggest that, if we draw on Bakhtin, it is a mistake to focus on the temporary inversion of spatial, social or linguistic hierarchies, but we should instead be looking at the '*ways that Carnival constantly attempts to undermine these monologues in all spaces*' (Holloway & Kneale, 2000: 81). Carnival is the 'other' of everyday life, but not its antithesis. Each is steeped into the other and the two cannot be dissociated from each other (Gardiner, 2000: 65). That is, the same ideological undertones and power struggles that the carnival makes apparent in the balance between homogeneity and heterogeneity are similarly present in everyday life. So while the carnival appears inappropriate in certain cases where sociopolitical authority is not reversed or openly parodied, we can nevertheless look at these cases through the lens of everyday life and arrive at similar conclusions: Every utterance, every action performed in the everyday implies a potential and relative 'carnivalisation' of official culture that is located in and productive of a particular space.

¹² As a warning, however, cultural studies professor Lutz Koepnick notes that while Bakhtin's carnival has been accepted by scholars as a liberating and counteracting force other negative modes of carnival are possible. He notes that Walter Benjamin observed that in fascism, carnivalesque practices are co-opted as a '*tool of pseudo-emancipation*' to stabilise authoritarian rule. The fascist spectacle '*utilizes the subversive moment of the popular dimension; it transposes carnival's power of transitory displacement, reversal, and cathartic outlet into a project of synchronization and national renewal*' (Koepnick, 1999: 70).

¹³ Bakhtin identifies this spatialising of speech genres through 'billingsgate', a speech genre he associates with the market square, in which commercial and popular languages mix (See Bakhtin, 1984b).



Fig. 3. Bench at Town Square, 2012. During design development and according to Liza Fior (muf architecture/art), the local council was allegedly nervous about the addition of benches as they might encourage loitering.



Fig. 4. Town Square, 2010. The balustrade designed by muf architecture/art around the planted areas is meant to signal 'do not pass' to adults while letting children through. The designers were concerned, however, that garbage was often found among the gardens requiring dedicated care.

The word 'potential' is crucial here because we run into the issue, raised by Ken Hirschkop, that we cannot grant that every speech genre, or every action has ideological content, consciously or not, in relation to public space (Hirschkop, 2002: 176).¹⁴ Bakhtin's view of the public square is an idealised version of heteroglossia where individuals come together to speak and act as such without being abstracted into citizens or publics or

¹⁴ The same is supported by Amin (2008) who argues that action in public space is pre-cognitive and therefore relatively free of a wider social context.

having to shed all *'differentiating identity'* (Hirschkop, 2002: 179). What we may grant is that the relationship between ideal public space, heteroglossia and individual actions is one that is characterised by varying social and individual contexts. Emphasis has to be put on the act and how it is positioned (and understood to be) between the centripetal and centrifugal forces that shape the space. Once we conceive of public space, we are indeed giving value to these relationships, to these particular actions, and to this particular space, which is an ideological terrain. This is why dialogue and heteroglossia, with respect to space, have to be conceived first and foremost as part of a framework for understanding rather than representing public space. Otherwise, they are reified into ideals and the potential for dialogical public space is lost.

Anything but a neutral field

We are now in a position to bring together the characteristics of a dialogical conception of public space. Space, imagined dialogically, is the continuous interaction of a multiplicity of voices. It is never given but, rather, produced through this interaction. It is changing and uncertain. Qualifying something as 'public' participates in this production while, in parallel, fixing the complex process taking place. Any spatial production to which we would give the label 'public' is therefore difficult to categorise, for it eludes strict definitions and (or) classifications, as discussed earlier in this paper in the context of the ideological background to any conception of public space. Public space is anything but a neutral field. It harbours contradictions and is constantly contested, pushed and pulled between stabilising and de-stabilising forces that act on projected ideals and enacted counter-ideals. In this sense, any design project located in the public realm is charged with meaning, acting both on the physical properties of places and the social organisation of publics. Typologies and categories, words like 'public' and 'private' become utterances the meanings of which are contextually developed in both immediate and social dialogue within/between the multiplicity of 'voices' found in speeches, bodies, objects, actions, spatial practices and relationships. These dialogues acquire colour by particular genres that imply and produce their own space. Their collection, in the 'public square', we may give the name 'spatial heteroglossia'.

It is somewhat problematic to write about a dialogical definition of public space when this paper suggests the very impossibility of correctly defining the concept of 'public space' at all. Like any flexible definition, 'publicness' has to be identified as an oscillation, a variable. Here the movement between 'social' and 'public' is important, as the latter should stake a claim toward the political that the former lacks. If social space is the space between 'self' and 'other' (as per Holloway and Kneale, 2000), it can be said to acquire public, and thus political, qualities when its polyphonic production shows a tendency toward heteroglossia. The voices that make social space public are destabilising, 'other', unpredictable, even though they, or the speakers, may be publicly known. They are the voices that, through instability, contest, negotiate, push and force readjustments toward a potential (but never given) stability.¹⁵ It is this condition of an oscillation (variable double movement) between

¹⁵ Political thinkers Chantal Mouffe, Cesare Casarino and Antonio Negri have warned against the political ideals of 'dialogue'. Mouffe argues that the concept of dialogue, because of its ideals of openness and incompleteness *'is unable to come to terms with "the political" in its antagonistic dimension'* and to the sometimes undemocratic end of its own process (Mouffe, 2000: 129-130). Casarino and Negri suggest that dialogue is too tied up in *'liberal hegemonic discourse... as a means of negotiating and reconciling differences among various and sundry identities'* (Casarino & Negri, 2008: 2). These critiques are why heteroglossia

the stabilising and destabilising opposite forces on the spatial field, which defines the public qualities of dialogical space. The double movement is the mechanism of the carnivalesque as both the process of and the potential for subversion of any spatial production and is present in both the extraordinary and the everyday. The mechanism concedes that all production of space is fraught, caught between competing monological and dialogical forces. The relationship between authority and everyday life is fully acknowledged and both are allowed to co-exist and compete: The one, the 'other', and the dialogical relationship between them all matter, so that it may always be possible to read power and authority, and their challenge in space.

A crucial aspect of this reading of public space is the inescapable non-neutrality of taking part in dialogue. For Bakhtin, the subject acts from a place in spacetime that is unique to themselves and cannot be negated, or what he calls our '*non-alibi in Being*' (Bakhtin, 1993: 40). If we understand the public realm as something constructed and produced over time by polyphony, then the positioning of actors in spacetime through chronotopes can similarly be understood as an affirmation of undeniable ethical positions. '*The answerable act is, after all, the actualization of a decision—inescapably, irremediably, and irrevocably*' (Bakhtin, 1993: 28). We may not always find structural meaning behind every actor's deed, but we may understand each relation between actors as set by respective answerable positions in the process of public space production.

The conception of public space presented above cannot be developed, therefore, without locating dialogue in space and time. Every expression of public space points to chronotopes further stabilised or destabilised according to the dialogues that constitute them relative to historical time as well as everyday experience. The expression 'town square' has generic historical connotations as does its use in the contemporary city. Similarly, no conception of 'public space' can operate without acknowledging temporal aspects (e.g. access restrictions, seasonal uses). The issue of scale also becomes important here to ensure correct location of each expression of public space. While over a period of ten years we can claim that Barking Town Square is a public space with respect to the evolving practices that ultimately take place there, are allowed and curtailed, we can also claim that temporary use of the Square for a protest always generates a public space which, at the scale of that particular event, is distinct from the previous.

Conceiving public space dialogically does not rid us of any problematic conceptions based on strict boundaries, typologies, or ideals discussed earlier in this paper, but it does ensure that the continued use of any such in dialogue (and design) can be properly contextualised and given due agency. It also means that a dialogical model can co-exist with and complement other models that take the socio-material as their foundation by acknowledging and tempering dialogism's anthropocentric foundation, while simultaneously ensuring the human voice is included in the equation with all its faults, affects and ambivalence.

cannot be a reified ideal but a tool to understand difference in space. Similarly, while heteroglossia goes a long way to make social space public, it cannot be said to be political in its own right: the subversive process of carnival is necessary so that we are faced with a destabilising tendency that requires the confrontation and renegotiation of established ideals. In this sense, we can read the appearance of dialogical public space in a similar way to geographer Doreen Massey's conception of an emerging public space: Of spaces that are not rhetorically defined as public but are contested as such, Massey writes: '*The very fact that they are necessarily negotiated, sometimes riven with antagonism, always contoured through the playing out of unequal social relations, is what renders them genuinely public*' (Massey, 2005: 53).



Fig. 5. Public speaking at Blake's Corner, 2010.



Fig. 6. 'Read-aloud' activity by Central Library staff at Blake's Corner, 2010. Although the Central Library is situated at Town Square, the event's organisers chose Blake's Corner for their outreach activity.

Conclusion

Every conception of public space involves a dialogue between design and use and therefore requires a certain policing of boundaries—between the official branding of a town square and its unofficial occupation, between ways to behave and not behave in public, between the care for planting beds and their use as trash receptacles, or in the very concept developed by the designers of Barking Town Square between the 'civic' and the 'feral' analogically juxtaposed as square and forest (Fig. 3 & 4). Generally, we might suggest that a principal boundary exists between a conception of 'public space' that is

civic, clean, safe, open, representative, convivial, and a conception that, without being the opposite, involves the negotiation of these terms. More specifically, thinking of public space dialogically suggests that any (and all) boundaries are rather fluid and porous, that public space is continuously produced by the interaction of a multitude of different voices, intentions and (or) actions. Boundary maintenance does exist, but 'public space' has to be understood as the result of an interaction that stabilises and (or) destabilises boundaries, distinctions and limitations.

Design proposals (as all conceptions) for the public realm are valued propositions that suggest a particular transformation of aesthetic, ethical, social and political relations through the ordering and transformation of spatial relations. No design, no conception, and therefore no dialogue creating public space can be neutral. The question of maintaining boundaries between 'self' and 'other', immediate and social contexts, the social and the political, authority and its undermining, and ideals and counter-ideals, arises inevitably since these, now by definition non-neutral, dialogues that 'make' the public realm and public space are the projections of something that, in effect, never fully corresponds to reality.

In the case of Barking Town Square, I agree with most local residents saying that if someone is looking to reach others, then nearby Blake's Corner (Fig. 5 & 6), not Town Square, is the logical place to be. In this sense, the idea of designating a Square for this purpose is part wishful thinking because the assumptions and values that support it are not necessarily reconcilable with concrete reality or this time in history.¹⁶ As a wish-image in the eyes of its designers and political and financial backers, it has to be maintained and manufactured against socio-spatial production that might devalue it. But it is also as a wish-image that Barking Town Square should stand apart and be recognised since its being raises questions of purpose, function and meaning more acutely than similar projects by attempting to be a model town square.¹⁷ By extension, this manifest condition—the relationship between the ideals projected by the chronotopes of the Square at all levels and the realities of the Square's use and maintenance—is exactly what defines public space as an ambivalent dialogue.

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¹⁶ As one informant from the Greater London Authority comments, the location of the Town Square feels 'slightly manufactured' because it runs up against the natural morphology of the town. It also runs up, we might add, to the actions of individuals and publics. The public actions I witnessed in the Town Centre were for the great majority located around Blake's Corner, the main commercial intersection of the town, 100 meters away from the Town Square: political candidates handing out leaflets, religious groups speaking out (Fig. 5), library outreach activities (Fig. 6), a clash between supporters of the far-right British National Party and young black men chanting 'no hate in Barking' during the lead-up to the 2010 elections, or British National Party candidate and elected official (at the time) Richard Barnbrook riding a horse on St George's day of the same year.

¹⁷ 'A Model Town Square' was the title of the 2007 exhibition celebrating the opening of phase I of the Barking Town Square. The exhibition was curated by architectural critic Kieran Long with muf architecture/art.

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Greening and opening the public space of the Nile banks. A demonstration case study in Maadi, Cairo

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Abstract

The Nile, in general, and particularly in Cairo, is an ecological, cultural and social corridor that is not yet fully utilized. The 2011 Cairo workshop “Connecting Cairo to the Nile” identified the potential to increase accessibility to the river, suggested longitude trail system, proposed connecting the waterfront with adjacent neighborhoods and proposed expanding the ferry system. I studied a 2-km reach of the east bank in Maadi, a wealthy suburb about 10 km upstream of the city center, with relatively greener banks, availability of resources at the district level, higher awareness of local residents, physical setting allow for banks re-use, existence of community organizations (i.e. Tree Lovers and Midan). Findings of fieldwork and interviews show that: (i) species of native vegetation found are Phoenix Dactylifera, Jacaranda, Cortedarea and Papyrus alba; these are concentrated along 115 meter in southern part of the study area. (ii) Public access was categorized into: public space (accessible), private or semi-public space (accessible with conditions), and prohibited (inaccessible). Along this representative stretch of the Nile, the public access was limited to 16%, the private or semi-public makes 29% and the prohibited zones are 55%. (iii) Boating operations found to be in three categories, floating hotels (Nile cruises), motor boats (including ferries) and sailing boats, all are scattered along the banks without an overall plan or organization, which affects water flow and block public access to the banks. To better develop the banks, I recommend (i) maintaining existing riparian vegetation and expand it to other areas with healthy banks or planted nurseries, (ii) connecting open public spaces to create a pleasant walking trail along the banks in addition to improving public access by relocating government buildings (such as the police or military facilities) and facilitate access to the river for general public, (iii) reducing the anchoring points to two locations and redistribute boating operations to group all motor boats to use the ferry anchoring points and all the sailing boats to use Al-Yacht club marina.

Keywords: public space, landscape, Nile accessibility, Cairo, Egypt

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Introduction

Cairo suffers from massive urbanization, blocked traffic, informal housing, inefficient public transportation, highly congested movement corridors, insufficient public space, and almost no green cover. (AlSayyad, 2011; El Araby, 2002; G. M. Kondolf, Mozingo, Gohar, & Marzion, 2011; Sabry, 2010; Sims, 2012). Urban projects along the Nile in Cairo have always focused on the beautification of the banks to provide an enhanced view for city users, and some of these projects include public landscape architecture elements. Very little attention has been given to the river ecosystem and the public's access as main users of the city (Gabr, 2004; M. Kondolf, Gohar, Mozingo, Marzion, & Balakrishnan, 2013). The Nile corridor is an opportunity that is not fully realized to improve the quality of life for the city, if looked at beyond being a scenic view but rather an environmental stream with multiple urban, ecological, and social opportunities.

The aim of this research is to illustrate a sustainable long-term pilot project for a segment of the Nile in Cairo, which can inform future development along the Nile.

The "Connecting Cairo to the Nile" workshop report and paper have been presented in several conferences such as: ASLA Phoenix 2012, Cairo SB13 2013, and Cairo CCN 2017 are shown in figure 1.

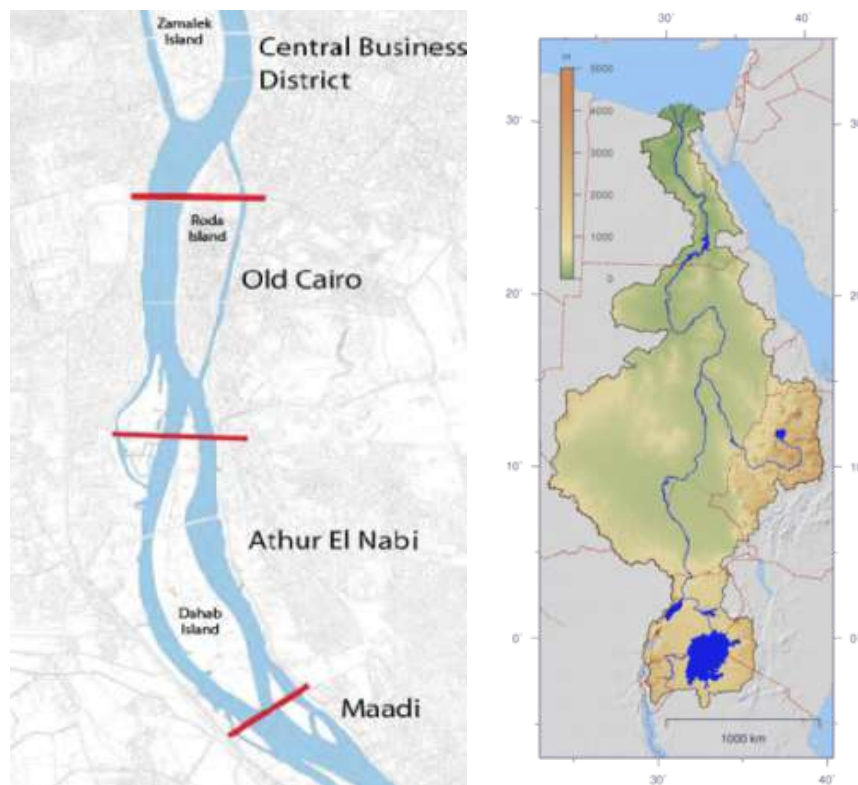


Fig. 1. The four study zones in Cairo workshop 2011 (source workshop report).

Fig. 2. The Nile from Victoria Lake to the Mediterranean.

The workshop/report addressed: developing a continuous path along the river bank; accessibility to the river; reconnecting adjacent neighborhood to the water front; greening” of the banks; and expanding the ferry system. However, the 2011 report did

not fully address: riparian vegetation; detailed assessment for the selected site in Maadi; boating operations and possibilities to improve it; and potential noise reduction across Maadi stretch.

Maadi, the last segment south was selected as case study site for the workshop, because it is considered a wealthy suburb about 10-km upstream of the city center, with relatively greener banks, availability of resources at the district level, higher awareness of local residents, and its physical setting allowing for banks' re-use, and existence of community organizations (i.e. Tree Lovers and Midan).

1.1. Nile Basin Background

The Nile is the longest river in the world (6,695 km), the total length of the river and its tributaries equals 37,205 km. The Nile's catchment's area: 2.9 million km² shared among eleven countries: (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda). The total population of these countries is about 280 million (El Araby, 2002; Kassas, 1971). Figure (2) shows the Nile from its Victoria lake to the Mediterranean with the magnitude of its watershed.



Fig. 3. Current plan views for the Aswan High Dam and the Northern part of Lake Nasser (Source, Google).

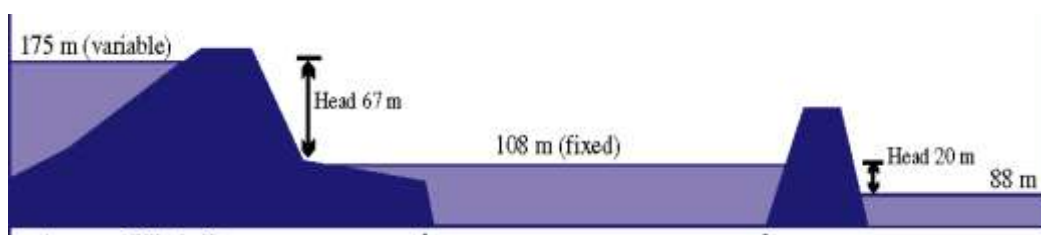


Fig. 4. Cross section showing the two Aswan Dams (Source Sayed El Sayed, Texas A& M University).

The most significant intervention on the Nile in Egypt is the High Aswan dam. While the dam was put in place to promote/enhance year-round agriculture production, retention of sediment has dramatically reduced nutrient value in floodplain. It was viewed by some scholars as a symbol of progress, others see it as a major drawback in terms of the river's

ecological integrity (El-Shibini & Rydzewski, 1977). AbuZeid and El-Shibini (1997) argues that the High Aswan Dam is the main source for sustainable irrigation, hydropower and navigation improvement. They also confirm that the dam has saved Egypt twice: (a) from a dangerous flood series, which occurred in the late 1970s, and (b) from severe droughts in the mid-1980s. Other scholars see the Aswan high dam as an obstacle to ecological process. Rosenberg (2017) confirms that before the building of a dam at Aswan, Egypt experienced annual floods from the Nile River that deposited four million tons of nutrient-rich sediment, which enabled agricultural production.

This process commenced millions of years before Egyptian civilization began in the Nile valley, and continued until the first dam at Aswan was built in 1889. This dam was insufficient to hold back the water of the Nile and was subsequently raised in 1912 and 1933. In 1946, the true danger was revealed when the water in the reservoir peaked near the top of the dam. Figure 3 shows a current plan view for the Aswan High Dam, and figure 4 shows its relation with the initial small dam that is further north.

The level of water in the Nile at the high damn has an average of 147m (Ministry of Water Sep.2013). The High Damn Authority confirms that the water behind the damn is 120 million m³ and the water in Lake Nasser is also calculated to be 120m³.

1.2. The Study Area, Cairo & The Nile

Very little attention has been paid to the river ecological dynamics or the banks, especially that the ecological restoration projects might be visually less appealing, according to a study by Gabr (2004). Tackling the banks' design and people's reaction to water front development, shows that the general public are concerned by losing the visual contact with the river as well as the degradation of the banks aesthetics. The river is running across the city as shown in figure 5 and it is the most significant corridor in the city.



Fig. 5. Cairo and the Nile.

Maadi is an affluent suburb in the south of Cairo, Egypt. The town is home to the Supreme Constitutional Court of Egypt, Lycée Français du Caire (LFC), Cairo American College (CAC), Maadi British International School (MBIS), the Cairo Rugby Club, and the

national Egyptian Geological Museum. Maadi is also home to the Maadi Sporting Club, founded in 1920 by the British Expats who were mainly working at the Delta Real Estate Company. The selected study area is located in Maadi which is also known for some remaining ecological integrity. This is evident in higher concentration of trees relative to the rest of the city.

The 2km study area extends from the military hospital north to Al-Adra historic Church south. Figure 6 (top) shows the location of the selected stretch of the Nile (Maadi) within Cairo, (bottom) shows the project extent.



Fig. 6 (top) Image showing the location of the study area within Cairo context; (bottom) the study area extent.

2. Research problem

2.1. Research Question

Within the current business-as-usual, urban development will continue taking place in an ecologically harmful manner resulting in loss of riparian vegetation, stress on the banks, loss of public access to the river and encroachments on water front (G. M. Kondolf et al., 2011; M. Kondolf et al., 2013). Booth (2005) and Bernhardt (2007) assert that it is important to realize that the restoration of dense urban rivers to its very original condition is almost impossible. The Nile in Cairo is no different, especially with the current dense urban development and the existence of the high dam. However, the goal of this pilot study is: to explore and examine different possibilities to improve the bank

condition, achieve public access to the river, and enhance the boating operations along the stretch.

While very little has been written on the quality of public space in conjunction with ecological status on the Nile, the literature identifies numerous factors that are used to measure the social and environmental quality of public space. Malone (2002), Zhang (2016) and Mehta (2014) confirm that the quality of the public space is determined socially by its accessibility, democratic use and quality of design. They equally assert that environmental qualities such as maintaining ecological integrity, protection of resources and reduction of solid improves the quality of the built environment for users.

In Cairo, and specifically in this study area, the applicable factors that are found to improve the quality of the public space and intersect with the environmental quality and waterfront improvements are riparian vegetation, boat operation, accessibility to the river and the use of the banks (El Araby, 2002; Gabr, 2004; Gohar, 2016; G. M. Kondolf et al., 2011; M. Kondolf et al., 2013)

2.2. Research Limitations

Ideally, any suggested water-front recommendations or restoration-based actions on the Nile would be part of a larger framework addressing the entire river. However, such research is the mandate of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), which is the organization responsible for coordinating all Nile related activities between the 10 member countries. It suffers lack of resources and un-coordinated management by representative countries. The dense urban fabric around the river limits ecological restoration of the river banks. There might be some challenges by government agencies that have planned for Cairo (i.e. Cairo 2050 plan) which have very little consideration to the river as ecological stream.

3. Methods (field work)

A combination of field observation and boat operators interviews was adopted to provide a measure for the extent of each factor and its impacts of the urban quality of public space. The survey of the bank shows that they are occupied by several uses; the most significant ones are listed below from South to North:

- 1- Al-Adra Church
- 2- Water company extension
- 3- MAADI Yacht Club
- 4- Private Restaurants: Fridays/Fish Market/Grand Café
- 5- Sailing Boats Jetty (Felouka)
- 6- Sailing Boats Jetty (Felouka)
- 7- Nile Cruise Station
- 8- Ferry building
- 9- Nile Police Service
- 10 - Government Building

The map in figure 7 shows the main activities on the bank in the study area, with the permanent concrete structures in red and the light structures in yellow. The remaining are nurseries, open spaces or abandoned lands that are mostly inaccessible by public.



Fig. 7. Activities with fixed structures the banks.

3.1. Vegetation

Most of the noticed vegetation on the river is introduced as part of the streetscape or by owners/users of the bank, such as the *Ficus Nitida* trees and some palm trees. However, the most common native plants found in the study areas are in the table below.

Vegetation Shape	Species
1. Palms trees	Phoenix Dactylifera
2. Trees Jacaranda	Jacaranda
3. Pampas Grass	Cortedarea
4. Papyrus Grass	Papyrus alba

Table 1. Riparian vegetation types in the Maadi area.

The map in figure 8 shows the vegetated zones in the study area (top), a close-up on riparian vegetation (middle) and picture of types of vegetation (bottom).

In absence of proper sedimentation in the river because of the High Aswan Dam that is explained earlier, banks remain vulnerable to erosion. Although this stretch has no concrete edges, the riparian vegetation seems to be very effective in maintaining the banks along this stretch.

3.2. Boat Operations

Boating can be classified into three main types according to the size of the boat:

- (a) The mega Nile cruise or the floating hotels that hypothetically takes tourists from Cairo south to Luxor and Aswan, while they are standing still as floating places for leisure (i.e. restaurants and cafes). In this stretch of the Nile seven cruises are parking and with no anticipated plans to park elsewhere as in figure 9. This phenomena impacts the water flow near the banks, are visually unpleasant and limit the use of the river to certain business groups.

Greening and opening the public space of the Nile banks



Fig. 8. Location of vegetation to the top, picture of vegetation to the bottom.



Fig. 9. Nile Cruises.

(b) Smaller than the above type yet still motor boats are the police marina and ferries that takes residents to the other side of the bank, with a cost of 50 piasters for the individual. These motorboats, shown in figure 10 are scattered along the river

without a comprehensive plan and locations can be better aligned or grouped to reduce air pollution, water pollution and noise.



Fig. 10. Motor Operating boats (i.e. medium size tourist, police boats, ferry).

- (c) The sailing boats, which are used for casual daily tours within Cairo, are rented by the hour for leisure. Figure 11 shows few boats anchoring to each other. This category includes private sailing/sports boats used by private owners (mainly located in el-Yacht Club). The map in figure 12 shows the location and the distribution of the above three types of boat operations in this representative stretch.



Fig. 11. Sailing boats for short tours.

In addition to field survey, it was essential to have a sense of the recent boating operation patterns, which cannot be captured in one visit. The interviewed boat operators (Mr. Ahmed & Mr Farag) had almost the same views about the current situation. They confirmed no operations for the Nile cruises in general and especially due to the recent political change in Cairo. The sailing boats (the Folouka) are mainly operated by people who are hired and not necessarily on monthly salary, but rather making a small percentage of the daily income from the tours (which are limited) and also tips from the customers. The interview revealed that the ferry is not inviting to majority of Egyptians due to its low quality and disconnect with other public transport system, which is also confirmed by a research on public transport by Mahdy (2012) who asserted that the ferry users are not more than 0.57% as in the diagram in figure 13.

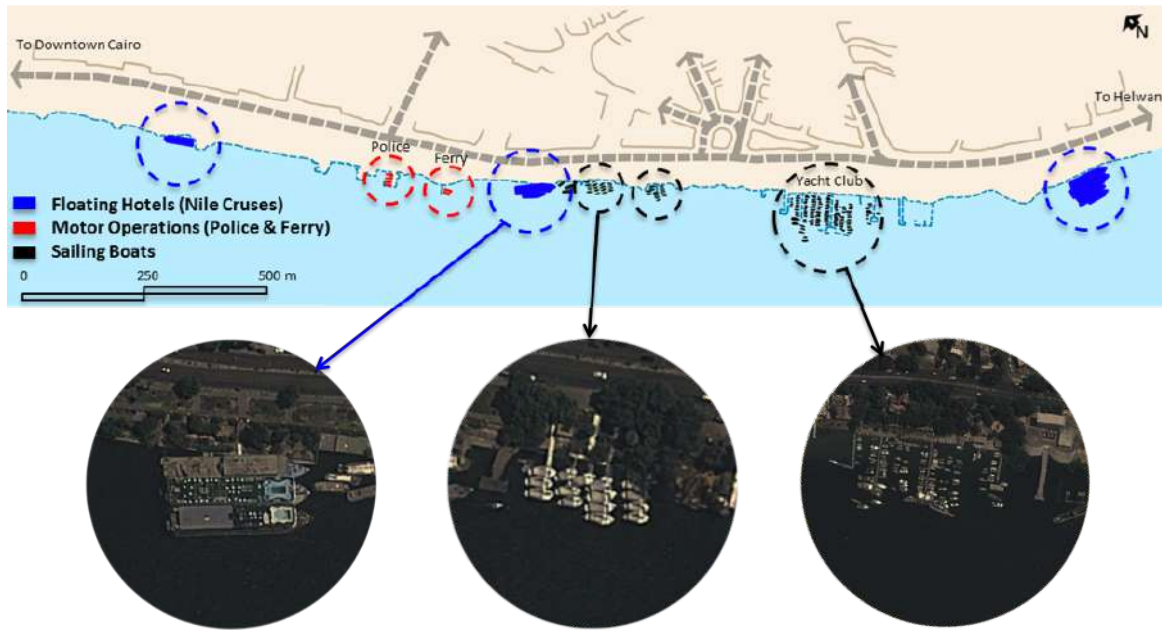


Fig. 12. The distribution of different types of boat operations in this stretch of the Nile.

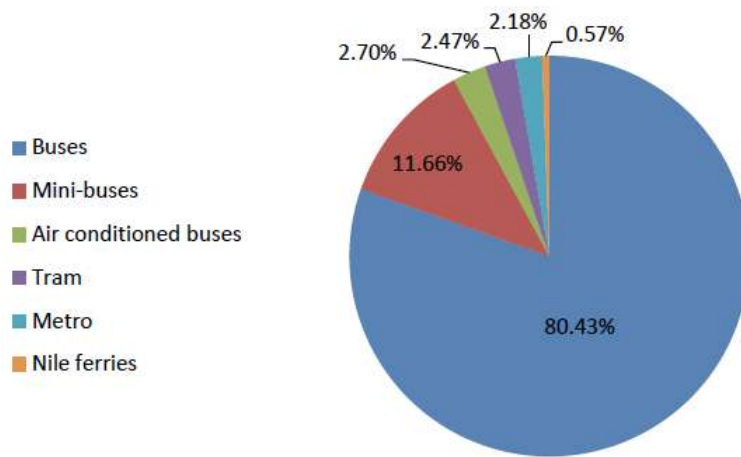


Fig. 13. percentages of uses for different transportations in Cairo.

3.3. Accessibility

Ethnographic research for old pictures of Maadi along the corniche is used to identify how the banks were utilized in the past. The images found shows that there has been more direct access to the Nile as a public domain. Figure 14-A shows (Al-Adra Church) looking north and how the road was not separated from the Nile while its current picture shows fence, parking area and some street trees blocking the access to the river. Figure 14-B shows a picture from the edge of the river (the sidewalk) looking southward. Figure 14-C is a picture from Misr-Helwan road, and although it doesn't show the water directly, it shows that the road visual connection to the riverside without the current dense urban

development. The location of the archival images is anticipated to be as shown in figure 15.



Fig. 14. Different images comparing the change of public access from past and today.



Fig. 15. Images showing the location where the images above were taken.

The study area is (2 km) in length and it is not all accessible to the public for different reasons. The entire banks were surveyed and classified into three categories:

- a) Public Space (Accessible): these are the zones that do not prevent any individual of the public to access the Nile. Such as areas with no uses between the main street and the river.
- b) Private or Semi Public space (Accessible with conditions): these are the zones of the Nile where there is development occupying land between the main street and the water, and it is semi-public because it is accessible to the public with conditions, such as restaurants that apply a high minimum charge that prevent some socioeconomic classes from reaching to the Nile. Another example is the yacht club, which requires a

specific membership that most of Maadi residents have, but other Cairo residents do not necessarily enjoy.

- c) Prohibited Space (Inaccessible): These are the areas that are not accessible at all and prevent the people from reaching to the Nile. These are either private lands such as planting nurseries or military services. Figure 16 shows these three categories along the study segment. Along this representative stretch of the Nile, the public access was found to be limited to 16%, the private or semi-public makes 29% and the prohibited zones are 55% as shown in figure 17.



Fig. 16. Accessibility into three categories: (i) accessible, (ii) conditionally accessible, (iii) inaccessible.



Fig. 17. Percentage of accessibility to the water in a linear stretch.

The set of images in figure 18 shows different examples of physical barriers that are installed to prevent the general public from accessing the river.



Fig. 18. Examples of physical barriers that prevent public access to the river

3.4. Other Cross Cutting Findings

3.4.1. Informal Occupation

Informal encroachment in Cairo is not limited to the urban encroachment on agriculture land, but extend to floating boats occupation of the sides of the river. The image in figure 19 shows an example of two families living permanently in these two boats and using the Nile as a permanent base to pursue all daily activities as well as overnight sleep.



Fig. 19. Family living permanently on the Nile

3.4.2. Noise

In a congested traffic and crowded city such as Cairo, and especially on such a main spine of movement parallel to the Nile, noise becomes an important factor to inform landscape designers on where to locate services, trails, activities and landscape features. In this stretch of the Nile, 15 different cross sections along the study area were identified based on the horizontal changes that occur in the morphology of the river and the main street. Three different measures were taken for each cross section, one on the street, one on the bank edge and one along the water. The street measures¹ varied from 86 to 92 decibels, the banks vary from 70 to 79 decibels and the measures at the water varied from 60 to 72 decibels. Figure 20 shows the map identifying the location in which the measures were taken, and the diagram shows the changes along the different sections for the three different zones².

¹ Measures were taken in at 3pm for three hours on two days; another check was done at early morning on few points. The noise was less but the variation was almost constant.

² The readings taken did not include night measures, which is a limitation that needs further exploration in the upcoming site visit.



Fig. 20. The three curves represent the change in noise, surveyed along the study area.

3.4.3. Under-utilized parts of the banks

Under-utilized lands are stretches of the banks that are used as dumping sites or informal storage/collection for unused boats. These are, according to the interview with Mr Farag, are owned by speculators who have several businesses and just maintaining those stretches as real estate to re-activate them when the economy improves as shown in figure 21.



Fig. 21. Image showing an underutilized land and now used as dump site for useless boats parts

3.4.4. Concrete Banks

The field survey showed that urbanization is invading the river on two scales: (i) the mega urban development (i.e. towers) prevents the possibility to any provision to support river meandering naturally even slightly and limit its original interaction with the land; and (ii)

the concretization of the river edges kills the river's ability to restore its natural process of the banks including restoring riparian vegetation, sedimentation or erosion process. Figure 22 shows the edges of Al-Yacht Club and Al-Adra church both being built to the water by concrete.



Fig. 22. Example of river edge with highly urbanized concrete banks (to the left al-Yacht club looking north and to the right al-Adra church looking south).

4. Results and discussions

When overlaying the entire layers of survey, as in figure 23, the following were the main findings:

- Native vegetation will likely grow if given the opportunity to be restored. Since existing bank with riparian vegetation zone is not eroded, encouraging the vegetation restoration will help stabilize the banks in the case of removing the concrete platforms. In addition, the floating Nile cruises are problematic to the remaining ecological process (sedimentation and erosion) and it is likely that the banks will gain more breadth and interaction with the water if the cruises are removed or reduced. The restoration of the native plants will act as a natural protection in the areas of high rate of erosion.
- Public access is found to be a concern as it is limited in relation to the opportunity provided. If, for example, we consider individuals wanting to pursue fishing as a hobby that require direct contact with the river, the calculation of the fieldwork showed that more than half of the stretch (55%) is not accessible for public. It is either blocked by military establishment, government facilities or private business.
- The Nile is underutilized as transportation corridor since it is a long river flowing through the city, it has the potential to be one of its main sources of longitudinal and lateral transportation corridors, and this will certainly reduce the pressure on the metro and the car traffic on the asphalt road parallel to the river.
- The banks have some (unused lands) that have potential for natural restoration and growing natural vegetation. The example represented in this segment, according to the interview with Mr. Farag, a boat operator who has been on the banks for 22 years, is that the owner had gone bankrupt and with no restrictions from the government to obtain the land back, it remained and transformed to a dump site for old boats or useless broken parts.

- Observations show that few families living on the Nile in floating boats (fishing), which constitute a source of pollution. Currently not extremely significant in the study area, the phenomenon is known to be common near the island and in other stretches of the Nile, but fieldwork shows that it started to appear in Maadi. It is part of an economic degradation in the city and need to be addressed in conjunction with informal settling in Cairo.

5. Conclusion and recommendation

Although the river cannot be restored to its full ecological integrity as explained earlier, the potential to achieve better ecological conditions for the river, the banks and its surrounding communities is doable. This can be achieved through the following recommendations in the plan in figure (24).

- group the marine operations into two jetties (i) the one the ferry is currently using to be the selected one for the motor boating, and (ii) the yacht club marina to be the one that hosts the sailing boats (not noisy and not polluting). This shall allow healthy restoration, even partially, of the riverbanks;
- connect public spaces together in a form of trail that can support pedestrian movement along the Nile;
- removing the concrete edges and stabilizes the banks by restoring native vegetation. Provide guidelines for bank users to gradually replace other trees with the identified Nile species;
- propose concentration of native vegetation between the sitting areas near the water and the main street to provide shade, improving micro-climate and enhance aesthetic quality. The integration between the river plans and the inland landscape increases the ecological improvements;

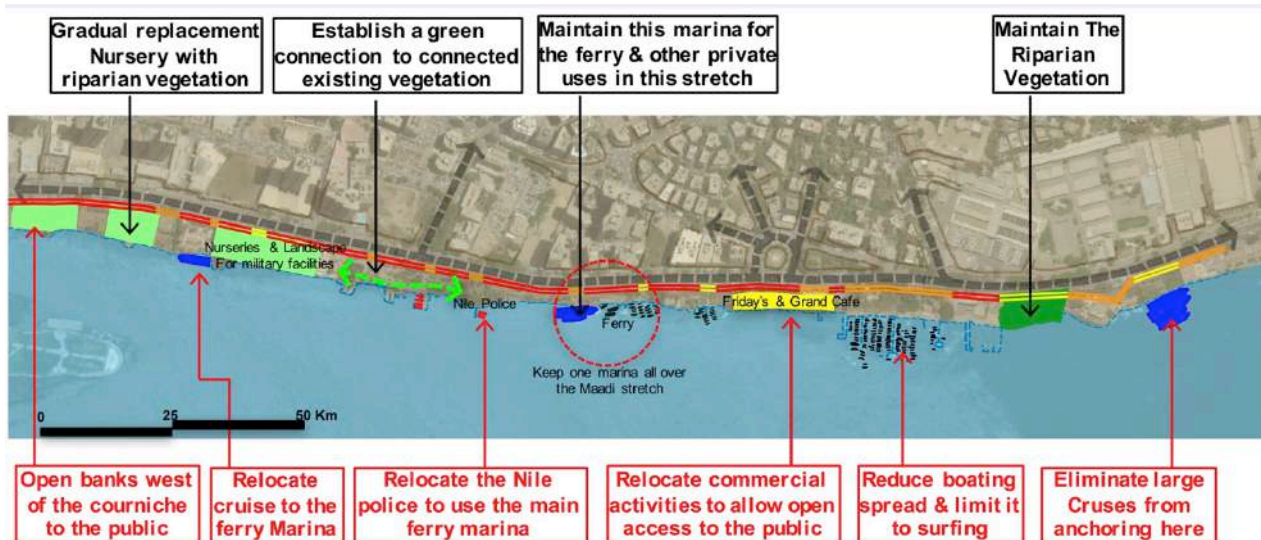


Fig. 23. Overlaid analysis - the black shows aspects to be maintained and supported, and the red shows the aspects that needs to change.

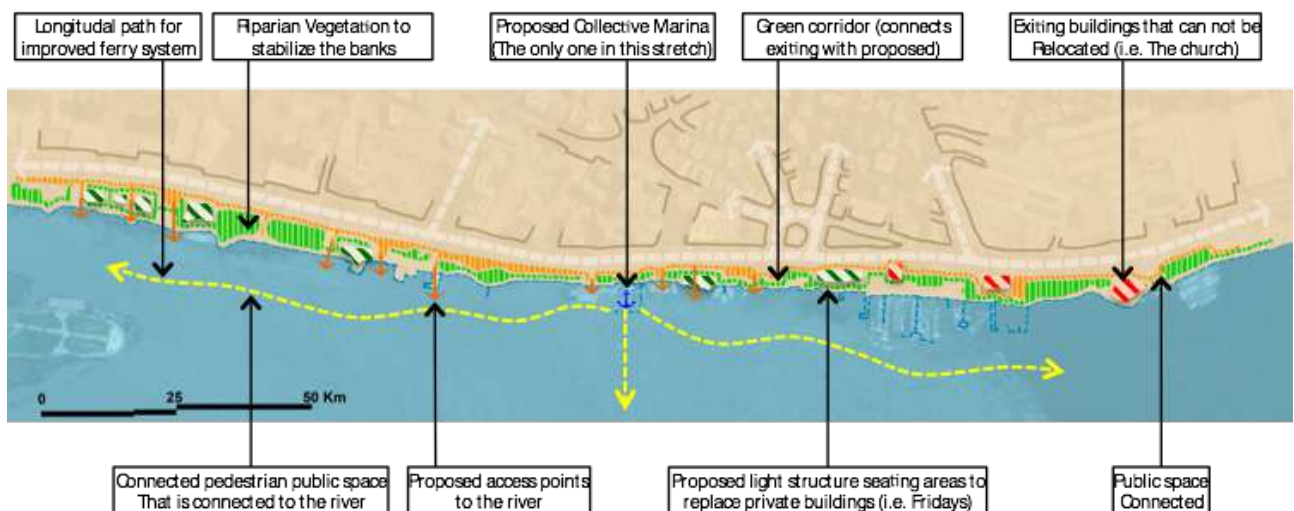


Fig. 24. Proposed schemes for the study area with the set of recommendations

- e) reuse the under-utilized properties along the banks, not by opening it for other (private) business, but by making use of its potential to be an accessible public space;
- g) as much as possible, allow access to the river by linking the main proposed path along the banks with the river to allow access. These access points shall be through: (i) the under-utilized lots that will be open for public, or (ii) the relocation of some government establishment such as military facilities, and (iii) modify regulations of private uses such as restaurants to allow better public interaction with the river. This shall upgrade the semi public to public increasing the length of the public access stretches from 16% to 45% of this total representative stretch as phase one of the gradual modifications;
- h) maximize the utilization of the river as a water corridor by developing a business model for the ferries, improve its conditions, integrate it with other modes of transportation and advertise for its use along wide range of Egyptians.

Figure 25 shows the proposed alignment for the pedestrian path, which is proposed in suitable areas that are sometimes on the street pavement and other times right by the water. The same illustration shows the potential area for vegetated zones as green network that include the existing riparian vegetation and other potential for green open spaces.

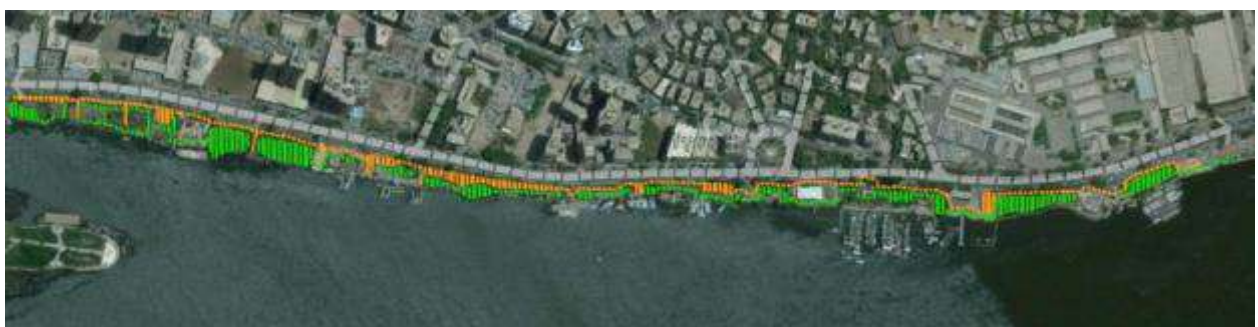


Fig. 25. Potential connection for pedestrian path and green vegetation corridor.

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What the mapping of Byron Bay Shire's informal settlement teaches us about having a home without having a house

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Abstract

This paper aims to add to the research investigating how home is created from the perspective of those who live outside the norms of a conventional house. This research focuses on those members of the community who live in public spaces in self-built camps in the nearby bush lands surrounding Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads (Australia). This study identified what methods people use to control space and create their own space by cross-analysing the patterns that emerged from a questionnaire and mapping data. The research also used ground-up inquiry to validate the statement that every human experience needs to be understood, with the view that we cannot improve one's housing conditions without understanding the people who live in those conditions and their values. The study identified some of the challenges and opportunities that face these communities which will need to be addressed in order to respond in a meaningful way in the future.

Keywords: home, informal settlement, Byron Bay, mapping

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Introduction

When a group of children in London were asked to draw a 'house', many drew a pitched roof, free standing house, despite all growing up in multistorey apartments (Rapoport, 1969). For many, the idea of house is tied with a world view of four walls and a pitched roof serving as a 'symbol of security' (Rapoport, 1969). If we move away from associating 'home' with 'house' in this typical sense, and focus instead on human vernacular, we can learn about how home is achieved through instinct. Instead of asking 'where is home?' maybe we should be asking 'what is home?'

When one member of Byron Shire's houseless community was asked 'where is home?' the answer was, "Home is in your heart, you can be anywhere." This answer alludes to the philosophical notion of home, a place that surpasses the physical structures of having a roof over one's head. It refers to a metaphysical place of belonging and thus questions: how do you have a home without having a house? In order to understand this question, we must first understand what constitutes the meaning of 'home'. This question suggests the idea of an ontological meaning encompassed in a multidisciplinary conversation between sociology, psychology, human geography, history, architecture and philosophy (Mallett, 2004). There has been an abundance of literature adding to this conversation, with recurring ideas about the nature of home and its link to identity and belonging (Zuffery & Chung, 2015). Yet less has been written regarding 'home' in some specific context, such as bush settlements.

This paper will use the Byron Shire bush lands' informal settlements to examine the physical and metaphysical notion of 'home' and discuss how we belong. This paper aims to add to the limited research investigating how home is created and perceived from the perspective of those who live outside the norms of a conventional house. Further, this research investigates the invisible people of Byron Shire and the environment they constitute as 'home'. This paper focuses on those members of the community who live in self-organised, self-built camps in the nearby bush lands surrounding Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads, New South Wales, Australia. Some of these informal settlements have been inhabited for over four years and house a large portion of Byron Shire's informal community (Kinninment, 2005).

The term 'homeless' is questioned as this paper doesn't discriminate between community members who are homeless by circumstance or alternately community members who are homeless by choice. Byron Shire is a unique area in that both these types of 'houselessness' occur concurrently.

This paper is organised in three sections. The first section concerns the literature review posing the debate in its wider context. The second section encompasses the method in which the study will be conducted. The third section is organised as a case study discussing the strategies and human interventions evident in the mapping of Byron Shire's informal settlements. These findings will be analysed against a psychoanalytical framework that expose the relationship between spatial vernacular and belonging.

1. Literature Review

In recent years, Mallett has contributed largely to the conversation about home in her exploration of whether 'home is (a) place(s), space(s), feeling(s), practice(s) or state of being in the world' (Shelley, 2004). Some literature has linked home to a physical structure or dwelling, such as a house, flat, institution or caravan (Bowlby, Gregory &

Mckie, 1997; Giddens, 1984; Mallett, 2004). This physical concept of home compliments the research on the more obvious idea that the distinction between the inside and outside world is concerned with private space and public space (Wardaugh, 1999; Altman, Werner & Oxley, 1985; Mallett, 2004). Others investigated phenomenological aspects of being in a home, placing importance on routine and celebration as pivotal notions of belonging (Saile, 1985). Rapoport (1969) furthered this aspect of home as he investigated the building vernacular as an embodiment of human culture and desire that isn't necessarily a response to the needs for human shelter.

When discussing the phenomenological aspect of home, we are invariably also speaking to the significance of place, with its understanding rooted in notoriously conflicting ontological assumptions (Casken & Bernado, 2012). Despite its complexities, the interconnectedness between people and their environment has been established by many scholars (Casken & Bernado, 2012; Seamon, 1979; Malpas, 1999). Echoed by Casey (1997) that there is "no place without self and no self without place", Seamon (2015) reiterates this connection in his statement that bodily routines that are rooted in a particular environment impact on the significance of place in meaning and attachment. The conflated relationship between self and place encourages the idea that the physical environment can be an embodiment of human desires, thus spatially exposing what it is that makes us belong.

As these 'significant places' in question often situate themselves in public space, it is important to get a broader understanding into the research concerning the perception of public space. Amster (2004) investigated the socio-cultural aspect on the perception of 'space'. Although having an "open and egalitarian quality" (Amster, 2004), Amster draws from Mitchell (1995) that "[Public space] has long been a place of exclusion, no matter how democratic ideology would like to argue otherwise" (Amster, 2004; Mitchell, 1995). Further to this, there has been research that explains the long history of people's perception of their safety in the presence of homeless people (Baillergeau, 2014; Chambliss, 1964; Foucault, 1975). Zanotto (2012), interested in neoliberal urbanism, concluded that in the making of "private desirable streetscapes, we alienate those who use public space to meet basic needs". This raises the question, for whom is this public space?

There have been numerous examples of international literature that endorse the importance of mapping informal settlements (Hasan, 2006; Karanja, 2010; Brillembourg & Navarro-Sertich, 2011). Less is known about contemporary informal settlements in Australia. This is partly due to the fact that there are fewer of these types of settlements, and they are often located in less visible areas. In common with many other informal settlements the conversation between these residents and the broader community is often fragmented and contentious (James, 2016; Turnbull, 2016; Broome, 2016). It is through the research that we understand the impact that in depth consultation with community engagement has on meaningful places (Memmott, 2008; Brillembourg & Navarro-Sertich, 2011). Through the mapping of these informal settlements, this paper aims to open up a dialog with members of these marginalised communities in order to respond in a more meaningful way in the future.

Furthermore, there has been less written on the concept of 'home' from the point of view of the residents of these informal settlements. However much can be learned about how people make homes in unexpected places and which aspects contribute to their significance. The research of Dovey (2013) aims to distinguish between "A slum [which] is

a symptom of poverty; [whereas] informality is a transgressive practice through which residents manage the conditions of poverty.” Baan (2013) contributes to this topic through his photography that celebrates such opportunities. From a more historically perception, Rapoport (1969) contributed to this limited socio-environmental research as he highlighted the significance of place and identified the driving forces that contribute to its significance. It is through these that he revealed underlying human desires, that at times prioritise the symbolic nature of arts over the utilitarian functions of space (Rapoport, 1969). Human behaviour is unpredictable as the works of Baan (2013) demonstrate. This research demonstrated that many people use space differently to the architect's intentions. Despite this finding, there are still emerging patterns in human behaviour, such as the need to create spaces that we can control (Rapoport, 1969; Dovey, 2013). This study will aim to identify the methods people use to control space by analysing the patterns that emerge from the mapping data.

In conclusion, there has been very little research that investigates the perception of 'home' from the point of view of houseless community in Byron Shire. There has been many newspaper articles referencing these communities with their loaded opinions and social commentary (James, 2016; Turnbull, 2016; Broome, 2016), some linking this type of living as more closely aligned with primitive and original peoples of the land (James, 2016). From this perspective, the work of Timothy O'Rourke (2015) is significant, adding to the limited historiographies of indigenous townships. Some writings, however, contributed to the fragmented research of pre-colonial societies in Byron Shire (Cook, 2017; Kerkhove, 2013) and others noted the connection between ecology and resilient living of the original peoples in the area (Gardiner, 2016). While these works provide a broader understanding to the opportunities of pre-colonial living as depicted through the original Australians in Byron Shire, we still know very little about our contemporary bush tent communities. Very little research has been conducted into the construction, mapping and spatial qualities that these communities create. Further to this, there has been no research on how these features affect the notion of 'home'. Mapping these settlements might provide a greater architectural and spatial perspective on the understanding of how these self-organised spaces encourage the term 'houseless' not 'homeless'.

2. Methodology

By understanding decisions and investigating the spatial language that inhabitants create in their self-organised settlements, we can learn about local cultural values that underpin people and their behaviour. Architectural atmospheres aim at speaking back to the inhabitant, revealing purpose in their actions (Perez-Gomez, 2015). In this sense, this research symbiotically investigates *how do you make architecture without architects*. It raises awareness into the ingenuity and adaptable nature of the human condition. It is the hope that this research will help to uncover the primitive conditions and socio-environmental forces that contribute to the design of these camps. The mapping will illustrate the place-making techniques and strategies that contribute to making a home. These human interventions will be discussed within the concept of home, making clear human values in the attempt to belong. In investigating these perceptions of home, this research will use a grounded theory method that allows a conceptual framework to emerge from the data (Glaser, 1998). Through participant surveys, this paper will uncover the meaningful attributes that people experience in their home. This data was cross-examined against the

mapping of Byron Shire's informal settlements to understand belonging from a socio-spatial perspective.

2.1 Data collection

Using a mixed method approach, this research has used mapping and surveys to collect data. The mapping relies on the hypothesis that town centres act as great resources for those who depend on public space to survive. This study surveyed the nearby bush lands of the two largest coastal towns in the shire, Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads.

Carried out over a two-month period within a 1000m radius from the CBD of Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads, the mapping focused on the main areas of dense vegetation that are close to the CBD and are inhabited by many of Byron Shire's 'houseless' community. Two different types of maps were produced;

1. Organisational Mapping (1:100 scale): floor plans were drawn of existing settlements in the area. For settlements that are within a 20-meter radius of one another, access and the interconnections between camps were also mapped for analysis
2. Location Mapping (1:5000 scale): drawing of settlements and their relation to the CBD and other resources.

One important aspect of this research was the involvement of the people who live in these areas. Participants gave responses through a questionnaire. This aimed to gather data from people who live in a conventional house and also those who live outside of this norm. The main concept was that surveying these different demographics would give a broader perspective of what constitutes a home. The questionnaire was designed to gather data on the participants' perceptions of home and to gather data on how people use their created spaces. Questions 1 and 2 aim to give insight into participant perception of home. From these answers, an analytical framework was developed that synthesizes the perception of home and gives a list of parameters from which we can analyse space. For the people who live in a conventional house, this is the only part of the survey they answered. Question 3-7 targeted those currently living in an informal settlement. This section gave insight into how basic needs are met as well as the socio-environmental behaviours that are experienced in the camp. This complemented the mapping of the settlements and gave a better understanding into how people use the space.

The questionnaire was comprised of seven questions;

1. *Where is home?*
2. *What does home mean to you?*
3. *How long have you been here?*
4. *Where else have you lived and can you draw it?*
5. *Who else lives here?*
6. *Where/how do you sleep? eat/drink? socialise?*
7. *Are there any rules?*

2.2 Data analysis and limitations

The data analysis was conducted on several levels. From the mapping, spatial analysis was performed, highlighting the relationships of settlement/town/natural environment. The spatial analysis contributed to categorise people's experiences and uses of space into several categories. An analytical table was then produced to capture the emerging

categories and allows for the comparison of the data. The comparison between the spatial analysis and the answers to the questionnaire helped to triangulate the findings. The main limitations concern the participation of respondents. From the 15 camps, all residents were asked to participate to the questionnaire. The full sample size was 39 persons. However, a limitation of this study concerns the fact that not all residents were willing to participate. Some feared for their safety or anonymity, others were not interested in participating. Only 14 responded to the questionnaire. Another limitation of the study is that not all respondents answered all of the questions. Again, some questions were considered too private or dangerous to answer. It is believed that a longer acquaintance with the residents might have resulted in a higher participation rate.

3. Results

3.1 Mapping

Fifteen sites were visited. Initially, the location maps gave indications of the main patterns of settlement by showing the location of the settlements, their distribution and their relationship to the town centre (Figure 1 & 2). A primary finding shows the dependence of these settlements on the town centre. The access to resources, such as shower, toilets, has been prioritized where possible. This has been confirmed by assessing the longevity of these settlements: camps that are located closer to resources such as the community centre and water sources are the longer standing camps in the study.



Fig. 1. Byron Bay Informal Settlement Map

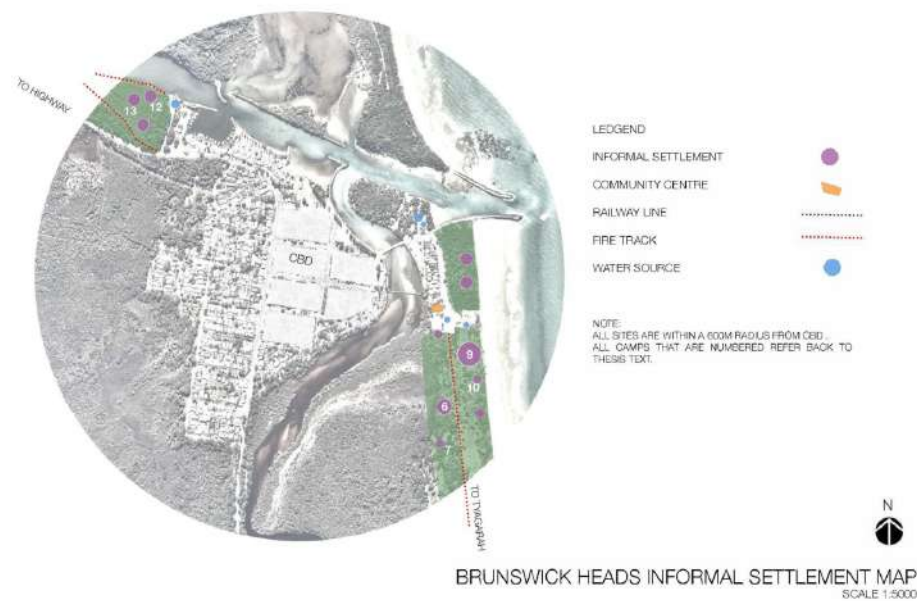


Fig. 2. Brunswick Heads Informal Settlement Map

Another interesting finding concerns the settlement population, which also seems to be related to longevity of the camp. In broad terms, camps that have a shorter life expectancy are those that are located further away from resources and have fewer occupants. Examples of these are camps 4 and 5 (Figure 1), with life durations of only a few months; while the longer standing camps (2 years old for camp 1; 6 years old for camps 6 and 9) have three or more occupants, and are closer to key resources. The maps demonstrate the clear correlation between nature reserves and the location and distribution of informal settlements in Byron Shire. These nature reserves act as invisibility cloaks in which members can remain mildly anonymous whilst still maintaining access to town resources. Another finding concerns the use of the fire trails in both Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads. These tracks act as key access routes for inhabitants who use these areas of dense vegetation to live. This aspect will be developed further later, showing their significant role in connecting these members with the broader community.

There were some clear organisational features that emerged during the micro-mapping (Figure 3-5). For example, in almost every camp it was possible to identify boundaries, whether natural or made by the residents. Several layers of internal boundaries were also displayed, thus evidencing social strategies to deal with otherness and own security. Entrances and exits were also clearly delimited for almost every camp. Other identified commonalities are the use of the circular form within the camp, as well as the use of decorative or non-decorative elements to organise and embellish the camps. Overall, space has been used, appropriated and adapted to the specific needs of the inhabitants, despite the lack of a formal housing type. These maps also revealed the construction of social-spatial strategies that contributes to the individual well-being (building up a sense of home and a feeling of security for instance), as well as to the

individual social position within the group (e.g. creation of hierarchy). This results have been synthesised into several emerging topics (Territory, Security, Hierarchy, Privacy, Comfort, Symbolism and Connection, Table 1), which interestingly were triangulated with the questionnaire.

Table 1: Spatial strategies against emerging concepts

CAMP	PEOPLE	Territory	Security		Hierarchy	Privacy		Comfort				Connection		Symbolism	
		Edge	Physical	Psychological	Circle	Monitored	Searched	Formal Entry	Veneer	Shelter (sleep)	Shelter other)	<3 tier	>3 tier	Art	Fire
1	6	x		x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x
2	1	x	x		x		x			x		x			x
3	3	x	x				x			x	x		x		x
4	1	x				x				x		x			x
5	4	x				x				x		x			x
6	3	x				x		x		x	x		x	x	x
7	2	x			x	x			x		x	x			x
8	2			x		x				x	x	x		x	
9	7	x		x	x	x			x	x		x			x
10	1	x	x		x		x			x		x			x
11	2	x		x	x	x		x		x			x		x
12	1	x		x	x	x			x	x		x			x
13	1	x			x	x				x	x	x			x
14	4	x		x		x		x		x		x			x
15	1	x	x		x		x			x			x		x
	39	14	4	6	9	11	4	4	3	14	6	11	4	2	14

3.2 Questionnaire

Twenty questionnaires were answered, fourteen by campers and six by those living in a formal house (blue colour, Appendix 1). From the campers, there were 8 male participants and 6 female participants, while there were 4 females and 2 males in the non-campers participants. Unfortunately, not all the questions were answered. This is a limitation in the research but it also reflects the sensitive aspect of the investigation, as well as the primary trust that needs to be present for some topics. Some participants were insecure about talking about their camp, not really being sure that the displayed information will remain anonymous (despite the ethics clearance).

To question 1 (where is home?), irrespective of where they live, most participants answered a location: 'here', 'the bush', 'Byron', 'Melbourne', 'Australia' (Appendix 1). Yet three had a more esoteric type of answer: "A place that is my own", "Home is in your heart, you can be anywhere" and "Where my husband and happiness is". For question 2 (What does home mean to you?), there is some discrepancy between those living in camps and those not living in camp (Appendix 1). For the first type of residents, 'independence' and 'family' are the main words that were returned the most often, followed by adventure, bush, security and comfort. Whereas for the residents of a formal house, 'family' and words around 'own space' were privileged. For example, "it's my place of sanctuary; my cave where I belong" or "it's a feeling of a place familiarity and comfort". Overall answers were connected to the seven topics which emerged during the mapping (Table 1).

Question 3-7 were intended for campers only. Not all questions were answered by all the participants as some again felt threatened, preferred their camp location to remain anonymous, or did not want to display information about other residents (Appendix 2).

These limitations also reflect the security, privacy, and territory topics.

Question 3 (How long have you been here?) addresses the longevity of stays in the camp, which usually ranks from a couple of weeks to long-life situation (Table 3). This latter is an exception as most of the respondents were equally spread over the different periods (two weeks, one month, one year). For question 4 (Where else have you lived?), there was a high level of non-answer (almost 50%) and those who answered displayed a lack of specificity: "all over", "Sydney" "been mostly on the move, all I have is on my back". The question 5 (Who else lives here?) reveals solitary habits with the answer "I live alone" at the same level as group habits ("friends and family"). For question 6 (Where/how do you sleep, eat, drink, socialise?), the answers to the sleeping place were not very detailed, with only one respondent giving a precise location ("behind the pine tree"). One common element emerged: the fire as a place to socialise ("... we eat and socialise around the fire"). For question 7 (Are there any rules?), the answers are equally split between "no rules!" and some kind of rules ("protocols - anyone new must meet Lois first").

In summary, all the given answers to these questions also related to some extent to the topics identified during the mapping survey (Table 2) yet the process chosen clearly showed some limits. For example, several authors have already discussed how personal contact tends to increase response rate when administering the questionnaire (Edwards et al., 2002) but other works show that trust and the establishment of a long-term relationship might be needed to obtain such results (Charmaz, 2000). Another limitation concerns the difficulty to avoid interviewer bias (Hodgson, 2000, Clifford and Marcus, 1986). In the context of the grounded theory for which Glaser (1998) argues that 'all is data', the questionnaire was designed as an objective mean to obtain the most relevant information and an opportunity to include other various observations (site observation, participant observation, group observation, etc). However, in reality it sometimes proved difficult to ask one question after the other. As Ravenhill pointed out in her doctoral thesis (2014), 'ethnographic researchers inevitably become attached to some of the people they research'.

What the mapping of Byron Bay Shire's informal settlement teaches us

Table 2: Quantitative categorization of answers to question 2 against emerging topics (female participants in red, conventional home residents in blue).

	What does 'home' mean to you?	Territory	Privacy	Security	Comfort	Hierarchy	Symbolism	Connection
						Equal/Not Equal	Ritual/Ceremony	Country/People
1	Byron Bay has been my home for over 22 years.							x
2	I was brought up next to the ocean. I'm not homeless I choose a life of adventure. I have a different perspective.							x
3	The Bush							x
4	Independence.	x						
5	Home is family, a place of safety and love.			x	x			x
6	Safety, family and friends, to feel like you belong by contributing equally. Having a connection to those you live with.			x	x	x		x
7	Security, comfort, somewhere I can relax. This land called me in.			x	x			x
8	It's my place of sanctuary. My cave, where I belong.	x		x				
9	It's a feeling of a place familiarity and comfort.				x			
10	Family and Security knowing its always there, Familiarity is important.			x				x
11	Sense of connection with place or/and people. Recipe. A place I can be totally at peace.							x
12	The view of my backyard.	x						
13	Somewhere its private and my own space.	x	x					
14	Somewhere I can be myself.				x		x	
15	Home is more a state of mind, it's a comfortable state of mind.				x			

16	A place where we gather around a fire.						x	
17	Family.							x
18	Familiarity.				x			
19	Childhood roots where you come from. The family house.							x
20	A place I feel loved.							x

4. Discussion

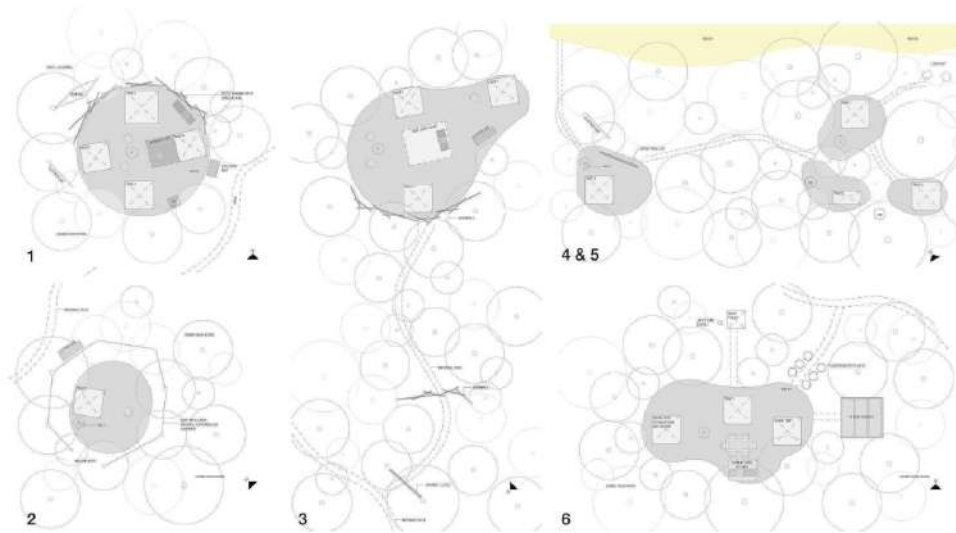
4.1 Territory

To understand territory as a production of space, it has to be emphatically considered against the relationship between person and programme. As literature has explained, art or practice (performing programme) that is linked to a specific space encourages a sense of ownership (Brighenti, 2010; Blomley, 2015). Thus the subcategory of territory was derived from answers that infer a sense of ownership of space. For example, when asked the question ‘*what does home mean to you?*’ one respondent answered ‘*A place that is my own.*’ This respondent did not own the land she lived on, yet she considered it as hers. Thus it triggered the following question: *How do you feel ownership without owning land?* Interestingly, the Oxford Dictionary (2017) defines territory without the notion of ownership but rather as “an area in which one has certain rights or for which one has responsibility with regard to a particular type of activity.” This definition underlies the relationship that is being established between people and programme in connection to a defined area.

A key component of territory is to define the land which person and programme sit within. The idea of constructing/identifying an ‘edge’ and a ‘clear space’ is a common strategy in achieving this land definition and sense of ownership. This strategy is demonstrated in all bush camps in this study (Figure 3-5). Therefore the bush and shrub clearing that is evident in all plans acts as a consistent determinant for territorialisation. This behaviour creates an edge but also a cleared space: an inside and an outside world. Once a space is defined, it is clear that occupants take pride and ownership in these spaces. Camp 6 is an example of residents who regularly raked the floor to achieve this edge and clear space with one resident explained “we liked to keep the place tidy, you know, looking good.” Another resident in Camp 5 similarly regularly rakes twigs, leaves and shrubs to create an edge and clear space, which has the additional effect of removing any rubbish. Notably he only removed the rubbish that was inside this defined area. The clearing of bush and the defining of usable clear space have a direct link to how they belong, because it defines an area in which they have more control. All camps that have used this strategy in the territorialisation of space present some functions that are inward facing from this edge, with important functions sitting within the edge and less important functions sitting outside of this edge. This is exemplified in Camp 2 with the location of the clothes line and Camp 1 with the location of the sunbed. In other instances there are programmes that sit outside the defined edge that require a completely different environment. For example Camp 6 locates the toilet outside of this edge, not because it is less important but rather because it requires a different condition to be comfortable. The

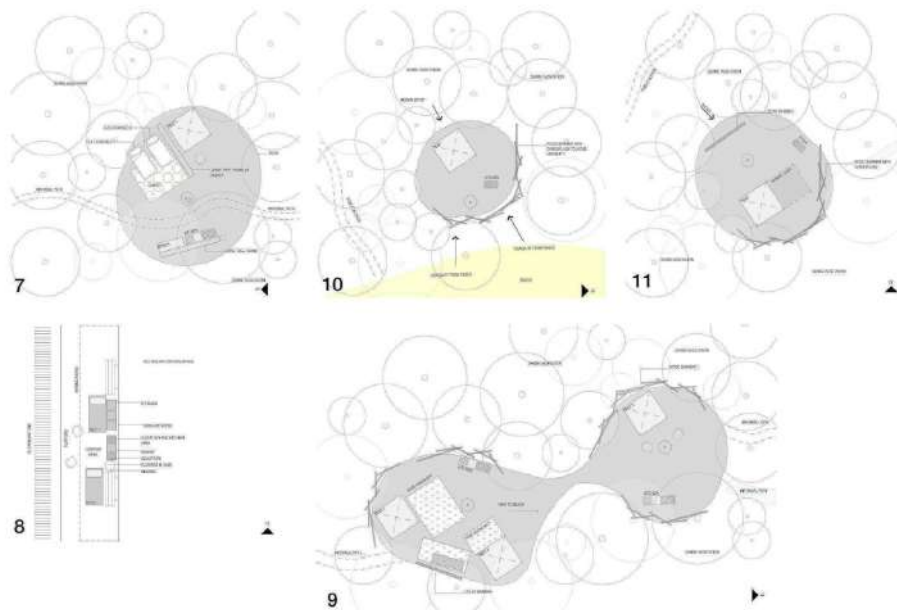
What the mapping of Byron Bay Shire's informal settlement teaches us

edges act as parameters in which we can achieve a certain condition, a condition that is usually better than outside this edge.



FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1:100

Fig. 3. Camp 1-6



FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1:100

Fig. 4. Camps 7-11

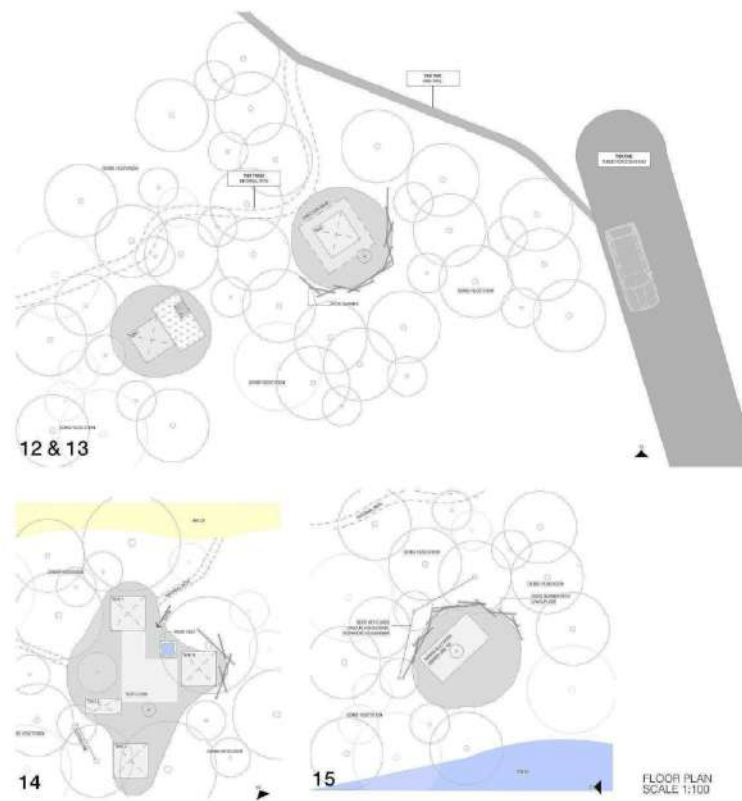


Fig. 5. Camps 12-15

Despite the few instances where programmes sit outside of the edge, it is clear that programmes usually sit inward facing from this edge, ensuring a border between functions and the outside world. There is one instance where this border is penetrated by the outside world as demonstrated in Camp 7 (Figure 4). The occupant has made clear space with an edge, defining territory in a typical sense as previously discussed, however has also allowed a public path to penetrate this territory. The public path divides the kitchen and sleeping zones. Camp 9 shows this relationship to the path as well, rather than sitting to the side, the path penetrates the territory. In this sense, it has a more open conversation with the broader community, with a more outward facing programme. It is perhaps an example of people who feel they do belong, not fazed by the passive surveillance of the broader community.

Even with these outliers in the data, there is an overwhelming evidence of bush and shrub clearing in defining territory. The answer “*the view of my backyard*” given by a conventional home resident, helps understand the results as typically a defined edge to our land contributes to our sense of territory. For this participant, large trees line the backyard defining his territory, ensuring all of the programme is inward facing from this edge.

4.2 Security

It is important to distinguish between those who design for security and those who design for a sense of security. “Walls protect people not from barbarians, but from anxieties and fears, which can often be more terrible than the worst vandals.” (Bradatan, 2011). This

section discusses how barriers contribute to physical security in deterring people but also in contributing to the psychological feeling of sanctuary embedded in the symbolic nature of a wall. Physical and nonphysical aspects have been specifically examined.

The strategy of using man made barriers is a common determinant in achieving security demonstrated in Camps 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15 (Figures 3- 5). Investigation reveals that these barriers help distinguish between those who value *being* secure and those who value *feeling* secure (Schneier, 2008). Camps 3, 10 and 15 demonstrate the physical determinant of *being* secure. For instance, Camp 3 utilises barriers in an anti-arrival strategy (Figure 3). There is a true defence mechanism at work here that not only aims to exclude authorities but also deter the general public. Human-made interventions, such as barriers made up of fallen timber and logs, are strategically placed in the path attempting to deter people from finding the camp. This illustrates three levels of defence to achieve security. Each stage is getting more robust with more engineering integrity. Unsurprisingly people who live in this camp were not interested in interviews.

Camp 15 also demonstrates the anti-arrival sequence, with no clear access route leading to the camp and multiple layers of defence. Another example of this physical deterrence is evident in Camp 10 (Figure 4), where the barrier precludes views from the public beach. Additionally, the camper uses the strategy of deflating his tent during the day to avoid people finding his location.

Paths and access routes play a large role into the security of a camp as many of these are illegal and depend on people not finding them. Lefebvre (1972) in his analysis of the production of space and its link to state explains that “the state uses space in such a way that it is in control of places.” Lefebvre alludes to the prohibited nature of place-making in state owned land. This is one of the largest social forces that impact on the security risk for these camps. Authorities retain the right to remove many of these camps and the inhabitants stand a chance of getting a fine, therefore anonymity is crucial. This strategy attempts to combat the physical security needs of anti-human interaction. Perhaps this is evidence of people who feel they don't belong? These barriers attempt to satisfy a material need for being safe, but what of feeling safe?

Schneier (2008) explains that the reality of security and the feeling of security, although being related, are certainly not the same. Previously this paper has discussed how people attempt to physically deter danger. Schneier (2008) suggests that this may contribute to the feeling of security but not absolutely. How one achieves a sense of security rather than physically being secure is demonstrated in the barriers of Camps 1, 9, 11, 13 and 14 (Figure 3- 5). Camp 1 for instance is one of the most obvious camps, making little attempt to conceal its entry. If its residents were to follow Camp 3's strategies then they would put barriers up towards the path to avoid people entering but that is not the purpose. The barrier curves overhead creating an enclosed feeling defining the back of the camp compared to the openness of the front; it is here that one can sit with their back to a wall and focus attention toward the entry. This psychological feeling of security can be attributed to the theory of prospect and refuge. This theory describes “why certain environments feel secure and thereby meet basic human psychological needs” as these environments allow people to “observe (prospect) without being seen (refuge)” (Dosen & Ostwald, 2013). The curved barrier focuses attention toward the only entry and exit providing more control over who enters and exits.

To put it simply, people like to have their backs to a wall. To do this, a front and a back need to be defined. The effect this 'wall' has on the feeling of security can be

demonstrated in the placing of vulnerable functions against these barriers. This is evident in Camps 1, 9, 11, 13 and 14, where sleeping areas are located adjacent to walls with less emphasis on the protection of the entry. The only time this psychological determinant isn't used is when the physical need for security trumps the psychological need for sanctuary. As this method is more common, it can be learnt from this behaviour that *usually* people place importance on the psychological feeling of security rather than the physical need of deterring danger.

4.3 Hierarchy

There is an interesting relationship between spatial reality and authority. How architecture can be read to interpret social behaviour has been noted by Rapoport (1969) in his reference to hierarchy and the furniture arrangement of a courtroom: a room can be read from the position of the defendant to the power of the prosecutor (Rapoport, 1969). As such, spatial arrangements such as floor plans are useful to understand the hierarchy being implemented. The hierarchy criterion was investigated through the analysis of floor plans, using the organisational mapping.

One of Byron Shire's Indigenous houseless community members yelled to one visitor "What have I told you, about crossing the middle of the circle. Go around the circle boy." In indigenous culture the yarning circle is a space of equal rights among members, a place people can listen and be heard equally (Roth, 1897; Memmott, 1979; Long, 2005). To ensure no dialogues are broken, one must go around the circle, not through it. One of the most common floor plans evident in the bush tent communities is the circle-shape plan, and the centralised plan with ceremony in the middle. Camps 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 all demonstrate these features with the circular 'edge' and programme within. Camp 1 is an example of private zones radiating off a central ceremonial zone. Even camps that don't adopt the circular 'edge', still use this radial shape in the organisation of programme as demonstrated in Camps 3, 6 and 14 (Figure 3 & 5). As with many cultures, including the Indigenous culture, the circle in social setting provides equal hierarchy to its members. It contributes to the idea of belonging as it encourages equal rights for all. There are also examples of decentralised plans in Camps 4 and 5 (Figure 3). It was found that they conveyed other meanings influencing the feelings of belonging. Primarily, hierarchy can only exist if people are from the same group. In order to be ranked within an organisation, one must be part of it. The members in Camps 4 and 5 are individuals, thus not fitting within the previous model. Yet, without taking on the circle plan, these members still achieve a sense of equality as they distinguish themselves from each other ensuring hierarchy cannot occur. This dissociation undermines any attempt at authority. It was also observed that the role of guests within the social structure of a space can be read from the plan. In the case of Camp 8, there are always seats available for guests, exclusively intended for the visitor and never for the host. By simply observing how chairs are laid out, a clear sense of hierarchy can be divined. Rapoport (1969) made this evident in his example of the position and style of two chairs in a psychiatric room. It is clear from this who is the patient and who is the therapist. If we can read what role we play from simply looking at two chairs, what does this mean for Camp 8? It was observed during social intercourse, that the two men sit on their mattress which is considerably lower and doubles as a seat that faces the common area. The two chairs that are offered to the visitors sit considerably higher and help define the common area in the middle.

One could suggest that this setting reflects on the humbleness of the hosts, showing the importance one has in socialization over personal comfort.

4.4 Privacy

Privacy can be understood through two lenses as described by Lessig (1998). Firstly, through the parts of anyone's life that are *monitored*, secondly through parts that can be *searched* (Lessig, 1998). To be *monitored* is simply to be seen walking down the street, passive surveillance of person and programme in the public realm, while to be *searched* involves the surveillance of programme in the private realm. As these communities attempt to create private space in the public realm, this section will discuss how private spaces are *monitored* and how private spaces are *searched*.

The two lenses that describe space's relationship to privacy can be understood as camps that are *monitored* to breach privacy and camps that would need to be *searched* to breach privacy. There is a clear correlation between the physical determinant for security and the *searched* component of privacy, as demonstrated in Camps 3, 10 and 15. It can be understood that strategies that are designed to deter public vicariously address the issue of public surveillance and create private spaces that would need to be *searched* to be breached. This encourages the more obvious thought that the more secure the space, the more private it is. Similarly, it can be noted that those who design spaces using the psychological determinant for security have more public campsites, less concerned with the passive surveillance from others as demonstrated in Camps 1, 9, 11 and 13. These camps are examples of life being *monitored*.

Monitoring usually infers a transient passage where a person performing a certain function can be seen and then shortly forgotten (Lessig, 1998). For those camps adjacent to paths, more frequent opportunities of short lived monitoring of life are enabled. This is evident in 11 out of 15 camps. However, there are outliers in this data. For example, despite Camp 2 being located along an informal path, there is a clear strategy being implemented to avoid monitoring and it would need to be *searched* in order to breach privacy. Colourful sheets are used to create a barrier between the inside and the outside world, conversely their colourfulness does little to hide the fact there is a camp, in fact they are the main identifiers for the camp's existence. The use of these large spanning sheets results in little visibility into the programme from an outsider's perspective. These sheets successfully create a visually private space in the public realm. It must be noted that this camp also shows a cleared space with an edge, which the sheets sit outside of this defined territory, thus emphasising their purpose of creating privacy. With the proximity to the path, it can be hypothesized that the camper is primarily concerned with visual protection. Recent literature, however, also suggests that "dense wooded areas, may not be restorative, "as they can evoke a sense of fear of getting lost, or being attacked and they may require concentration to find one way around" (Gatersleben & Andrews, 2013). It is, therefore, also possible that the visual barrier might be for the occupant's sense of psychological well-being, rather than symbolising a restriction for others. Regardless, this is a humble camp with evidence of minimal programming, yet great emphasis has been put into creating a sense of privacy. It is clear that visual privacy is a contributing concept into how people create home without having walls.

4.5 Comfort

Baan's photographs provide great insight into the architectural choices that contribute to human comfort. In one example, he depicts a family who has self-built their dwelling using masonry as their construction material for walls, to which they apply a pattern of masonry wallpaper (Baan, 2013). Many of these informal settlements show great effort being put into the condition of the homes, creating surfaces that are clean and consistent. This is particularly evident in Camp 9 and 12. Like many others mentioned before, these camps' residents have raked a clear space and created an edge, ensuring the removal of all dune grasses and unwanted vegetation. After this, Astro turf (a kind of fake plastic grass) has been laid. The removal of grass, then its replacement with 'fake grass' or by the application of 'fake bricks' on a brick wall, shows the importance that these veneers have on human comfort. Not only they are more manageable as a material but they also act as layers in which people can achieve a condition that is closer to perfect with a smaller amount of effort.

Another aspect within the comfort category concerns the method of access and exit from one's place. As previously discussed, the idea of prospect and refuge can lead to one way entry and exit into camps which in turn helps define and front and a back but also gives occupants more control over people who might visit. Entrances and exits also act as symbolic thresholds between two worlds. The arrival sequence and how one can feel welcomed by a home contributes to that relief of arriving home. Camps 1, 6, 11 and 14 demonstrate a formalised entry. In Camp 6 there are pots of flowers aligned in a row, marking the entrance into the camp. Camp 1 shows a similar strategy with a welcome mat to mark the entrance. For Camp 11, there is a log to distinguish this threshold: to step over the log would be to enter into *their* space. Entrances historically hold significant meaning in defining a passageway from one place to another. Defining the entry encourages the thought that one is traveling from a space into a *place*. Not only does it define the space, but it shows how it has been appropriated.

Resilience and ingenuity have been observed to improve comfort. For example, the two residents of Camp 6 are striving for self-reliance to minimise dependence on town resources with a composting toilet and productive veggie garden. One camper explained: "It took two years to get this camp like this, we don't get much so when we had a little [money] we would invest it back into the camp, slowly, slowly we could buy a tent then another and so on." These gentlemen lived here for over five years. The investment back into the living condition instils a sense of permanency, and it contributes to a self-sustaining environment. It also contributes to the sense of comfort as it makes services such as toilets and food resources more readily available. On a less obvious note, the investment into sanitation and food supplies add to the legitimacy of the camp, thus increasing the feeling of comfort.

This research has previously mentioned comfort from a design perspective and how it helps achieve psychological wellbeing. We have learnt of the physical interventions that contribute to these feelings of comfort but have yet to mention shelter, despite this being a fundamental element of habitation. All settlements have used shelter in some form or another within their camps. It is one of the most identifiable aspects of creating place as it helps meet basic needs for survival. There is a clear relationship between vulnerability and shelter, exemplified in any natural disaster where the erection of emergency shelter is a priority for civilians. Despite this not one person from the houseless community mentioned anything about the physical necessity for shelter and its impact on the essence

of home, despite us knowing the critical relationship shelter has with habitable space. This echoes the ABS (2017) definition of homelessness as one can have a roof over one's head and still be homeless, further questioning shelter's role in the concept of home.

This study has demonstrated that the most common use for shelter is for the sleeping zones with 14 out of 15 camps showing the clear relationship between sleep and shelter. If using shelter is separated as a determinant for sleep, it can be more easily understood which other aspects of the programme make people feel most vulnerable. When one camper was asked *Why don't you sleep in the tent?* he explained "how else do you see the stars?" Camp 7 uses shelter to protect dry goods and food rather than sleep. This demonstrates that for this particular resident, food is valued as a more vulnerable aspect of his programme compared to the act of sleeping. Similarly, in camp 15, the occupant has used shelter to cover the fire. The idea of using shelter to protect parts of the programme that are vulnerable provide great comfort since it satisfies the inherent attitude to protect aspects that are weaker or more important.

4.6 Symbolism

Regarding the question, *what does home mean to you?* some answers are harder to categorise in an architectural sense because they refer to ontological meanings of home and feeling such as freedom or happiness. How then to analyse spatial organisation and evaluate whether this space achieves freedom or happiness for instance? Previously these notions have been discussed through the key physical interventions, such as defining edges, maintaining clear space, construction of barriers and how they give control to the user. These feelings have been discussed as a by-product of controlling the environment. Yet there is also a contributing factor that sits outside the realm of environmental control. Literature has demonstrated when primitive man built, it wasn't necessarily the climate, technology or materials that governed its form (Rapoport, 1969). Mumford suggested this idea as he explained that humans made symbols before making tools (Rapoport, 1969). In 1772, when a castaway Eskimo was found,

"she had produced art objects, decorated her clothing and so on while the Eskimo has had to reduce life to the bare essentials, art and poetry are still an essential part of that life."
(Kepes, 1966; Rapoport, 1969)

True memorable space is one that holds significant symbolism, and reflects part of who we are. This is not necessarily derived from basic needs for shelter or privacy for instance. This section will look closer into the residents' behaviours to identify how symbolism plays a role in place-making and how this can be read from the architecture of the camps.

Camp 8 exemplifies the significance of symbolism on place-making. This camp is located in the most public location, yet there has been no attempt at defining space, creating barriers or privatizing. One section of the old existing building is covered in hung art works. Below is a large pot with incense burning with flowers in a vase, sculptures and more art. The plan area of the camp is far less developed than what has been discussed in the bush tent communities. However it is in its furnishing that the idea is encouraged that symbolism through art is essential, even with the bare minimum, as this camp demonstrates.

A large part about being home is associated with being in a space that is designed primarily around your habits. Habits and routine make up part of the behavioural component that contributes to the idea of 'being home'. In Camp 8, there is evidence of this routine with the lighting of incense upon the arrival of guests. Camp 15 demonstrates the significance of ritual in the arrival sequence in the camp. The entry is marked with a sunken pit lined with a plastic tarp that is filled with water. As members of this camp enter, they wash their feet to avoid bringing in any sand. This is the equivalent of taking your shoes off in a conventional house. Other rituals can be noted in plans such as Camp 5 attention to vegetable garden and Camp 4 ability to check the surf from the look out. Habits and rituals are verbs. It's the person regularly *performing* programme that gives place significance and contributes to the familiarity and comfort of home.

The fire is a sacred element in Australian Indigenous culture. It is a symbol of togetherness, acting as key focal point around which people gather and share knowledge (Roth, 1897; Memmott, 1979; Long, 2005). Both non-Indigenous and Indigenous members in this study gave great emphasis on the fire beyond its utilitarian purpose. All bush camps in this study use fire as a determinant for place-making. While some camps demonstrate its utilitarian use for cooking as illustrated in Camps 2 and 4, all others use fire for its symbolic nature in social gatherings. The separation of cooking space and fire space emphasis this difference in programme as demonstrated in Camps 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11. While kitchen areas often get placed around the edge of camps, fire is often located in the centre, the heart of the circle. Although the kitchen and fire are technically very similar, the symbolic significance of the fire can be read in the planning of these informal settlements. The circular clear space surrounding the fire can allude to the type of behaviour that is expected, people gathering.

4.7 Connection

This study has focused on a group of people who live outside the norm of a conventional house. In many ways, these people are seen as marginalised community members who upon first glance appear to seek isolation. Mapping these communities demonstrated, however, that a clear pattern emerges in the location of these camps that defies this preconceived idea of disconnection. For example, in Camp 12 and 13, like many other camps, it is evident that there are three tiers of access that govern the placements of camps. First tier is via any public road with full access and high amounts of foot traffic. The second tier diverts off this main road and consists usually of a track or informal path that sees a small amount of foot traffic. This second tier usually has a limited purpose such as fire trails with less people using the space. The third tier is an informal track, usually made by occupant or by others before. This track sees very little foot traffic with no reason for people to use it other than the occupant getting to their camp. It is in this tier that people often place their camps. Out of 15 camps reviewed 10 showed to be in this threshold. Whilst still maintaining a reasonable distance to town, these camps could bury themselves deeper in the bush and avoid all connection, another 4 or 5 tracks deep perhaps. Out of 15 reviewed only 4 were located in this deeper threshold. Therefore, most camps locate themselves *just* out of sight, whilst still maintain a connection to town. This threshold of course demonstrates the dependence on town for resources but less obviously teaches us about human beings inherent need for social connection, even at the risk of being found. This demonstrates that people value connection to community more than they value the security and anonymity of their camp.

5. Conclusion

In North Africa, at some point in history the French piped water to a series of villages. This caused dissatisfaction among the Muslim women as their only chance to socialise had been taken away. They were kept inside mostly and the daily trip to the village well was their only chance to see others and socialise. The Muslim women valued their social connection over the advances in technology (Rapoport, 1969). Similarly, this research has revealed that we cannot assume that human values are the same and that research acts as a contributor to unveil the less obvious nature of the human condition. Home remains a structured place consisting of habits and physical features, even when the approach is least conventional.

For instance, by analysing where campers put barriers, it was discovered that people more often value feeling safe over actually being safe. By analysing access routes, the research showed that these people value connection to community, despite running the risk of being discovered. This was also evident in the defining of entries and how formalising these thresholds contribute symbolically to the sense of home. This research also showed that usually people value social connection over personal comfort as read through the hierarchy of chairs in camps sheets hanging. Perhaps an even less obvious value was noted in the camps that contained the bare minimum but endeavoured to decorate space with art despite the lack of utilitarian purpose in doing this for survival. This research also revealed some obvious traits of the human condition. For example bush clearing and edge defining stand as a consistent determinant for the spatial territorialising. This edge and clear space are usually in the form of a circle with radial planning and ceremony in the middle. This suggests an egalitarian use of space between members. Knowing this definition of an 'inside' and 'outside' world, it clarified how people attempt to achieve a condition that is closer to perfect with smaller amounts of effort and means. This is demonstrated in the application of veneers and how settlers condition space.

Although the vulnerability of programme is varied, the use of shelter for protection is consistent. This is demonstrated in the correlation between shelter and sleep. There is also a clear correlation between privacy and security, with those who use the physical determinant for security having more private spaces and those who used the psychological determinant for security have less private spaces. The patterns of the bush techniques provide a language that helps us understand what people value and what it is to belong.

This ground up research aims to validate every human experience. Maybe the final finding from this research is that we cannot improve these conditions without recognising the people who live in them and understanding their values. By understanding human values, we give designers and architects more of an opportunity to design in a meaningful way in the future. In tackling the homelessness crises in Australia today, many efforts are focused on providing the physical need for shelter. Whilst this is an admirable and important challenge to address, we must also consider belonging from a more holistic view. This research has revealed human values that often surpass the physical need for shelter, therefore as architects we need to reevaluate our concept of home, one that can sit outside of four walls and a pitched roof. The most important lesson from this study is the need for in depth consultation with members of the communities as to not assume these values. It has become clear that belonging more often sits outside the realms of physical shelter and the challenge for architects is to address home from the perspective

of those who use public space to survive. It is disrespectful to assume we know how people should live and this could inhibit efforts made to improve the lives of these people. In conclusion, this research highlighted the integrated relationship that the community members who were included in the study have with public space, and the importance of town centres to provide sustainability to these community members. The claim by community members for freedom or adventure is easily denounced by our wider society, so further investigation needs to be conducted to determine to what extent one can be nomadic and accepted as such, among other questions.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Table of the answers to question 1 and 2
(female participants in red; conventional home residents in blue).

Questions/ respondents	Q1- Where is home?	Q2- What does home mean to you?
R1	<i>Byron bay has been my home for over 22 years</i>	<i>Repeated above</i>
R2	-	<i>"I was brought up next to the ocean. I'm not homeless I choose a life of adventure. I have a different perspective.</i>
R3	<i>The Bush</i>	<i>The Bush</i>
R4	<i>Been in Byron 13 years</i>	<i>Independence</i>
R5		
R6	<i>Australia</i>	<i>Home is family, a place of safety and love</i>
R7	<i>Home is in your heart, you can be anywhere</i>	<i>Safety, family and friends, to feel like you belong by contributing equally. Having a connection to those you live with</i>
R8	<i>Here</i>	<i>Security, comfort, somewhere I can relax. This land called me in</i>
R9	-	<i>Home is more of a state of mind, it's a comfortable state of mind</i>
R10	-	<i>A Place we gather around the fire</i>
R11	-	<i>Family</i>
R12	-	<i>Childhood roots, where you come from. The family house</i>
R13		<i>A place I feel loved.</i>
R14	<i>A place that is my own</i>	<i>Somewhere I can be myself</i>
R15	<i>Where I am at the moment</i>	<i>It's my place of sanctuary. My cave, where I belong.</i>
R16	<i>Melbourne</i>	<i>It's a feeling of a place familiarity and comfort</i>
R17	<i>Melbourne, where my family is</i>	<i>For me it such a significant home because I grew up there, that's where my address is, Family and security knowing its always there, Familiarity is important. My memories are there. Before it was renovated, you could recall more memories." It's still home but that's not where the memories were made.</i>
R18	<i>Where my husband and happiness is</i>	<i>Sense of connection with place or/and people. It's a Recipe. A place I can be totally at peace.</i>
R19	<i>Australia</i>	<i>The view of my backyard</i>
R20	<i>Byron and England I suppose</i>	<i>Somewhere its private and my own space</i>

APPENDIX 2: Table of the answers to questions 3 to 7 (female participants in red).

	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
R1	<i>In this camp, only a month or so. I have lived in other camps for over 5 years. Had the whole set up behind the youth centre</i>	<i>Behind the youth centre.</i>	<i>Sam* Been living together for years, Lived together in the camp behind the youth centre as well</i>	<i>Sleep here hang out here mostly. Buy food from town and cook it on our stove. We get water from taps around town but many have had their tops taken off. Wash at the laundry matt, I know the guy, lets us do our cutlery as well. Monday at the Community Centre we can have proper showers.</i>	<i>When we lived in the camp behind the Youth centre, we had a gust tent, for back packers and so on, if I invited someone and Sam* didn't like his vibe then the person would have to leave. Both of us had to be okay with the new member of the group.” “We kept the place clean as well, raked up leaves always had fresh flowers on the table, We want to place looking nice you know?”</i>
R2	<i>Whole of my adult life, I have been moving around heaps within the area.</i>	<i>No been mostly on the move, all I have is on my back</i>	<i>I live alone</i>	<i>I have a little set up in the bush at the moment, I have a little gas cooker I can cook and boil water. I come into town to see people or go to the beach to wash.</i>	<i>No rules, that's why I live how I live.</i>
R3	<i>I live behind the youth centre, been there for a year or so</i>	<i>Yeah Sydney.</i>	<i>Live alone, sometimes with others.</i>	<i>Sleep wherever, Get water from taps that haven't had the tops taken off. See people in town, Live in the bush</i>	-
R4	<i>Two weeks in this spot</i>	-	<i>Live alone, but I got mates who live in these bushes close by, I can't tell you where though</i>	<i>Mostly people come to my car here and we have parties. Then they go back to their tent, I need to get a new battery because everyone comes here to use my power.</i>	<i>No, that's why I am here!</i>
R5					

What the mapping of Byron Bay Shire's informal settlement teaches us

R6	One month	All over	-	My tent is behind the pine tree, we eat and socialise around the fire	Protocols- anyone new must meet Louis first.
R7	Don't live here, but I used to	-	Louis Cook and those who have followed her	I had a little tent, we eat and drink and socialise around the fire. We get water from town. Get groceries that are either donated or bought from town	The fire is sacred in indigenous culture
R8	One year	-	Friends and Family	Currently my Hob house is getting built so I will have a permanent place I can settle into	The fire is sacred in indigenous culture.

Dangerous Safety or Safely Dangerous. Perception of safety and self-awareness in public space

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Abstract

Exposure to perceived danger awakens our environmental awareness and sense of individual responsibility. In our rapidly evolving contemporary urban environments, the design of public space is often constrained and focussed on risk mitigation. Designers often rely on the inclusion of mechanisms to control behaviours (eg walls and fences) or rely on displays of authoritarian surveillance (eg CCTV and extensive warning signage). Measures also known as target-hardening (Saraiva & Pinho, 2011). This can create a reliance on the authoritarian control of urban space, which could result in the disuse of self-regulating mechanisms such as individual responsibility and environmental awareness.

This study investigates perception of danger in public space through a scenario-based investigation focussed on Brisbane, Australia. This study enquires how we sense danger, what provokes our sense of danger and how this affects our environmental awareness. Current exemplary design responses that aim to improve safety in public space are also discussed. The study highlights a need for further research about how authoritatively secured space affects city users, sense of place and community.

Keywords: urban environment, placemaking, risk mitigation, urban design

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Introduction

Feeling exposed, and therefore vulnerable, provokes our sense of danger, awakening environmental awareness and individual responsibility for our own safety (Barnard-Wills, Moore, & McKim, 2012). This physiological and psychological response to feelings of vulnerability is generally considered a negative state of being, despite the potential heightened self-reliance and protection. However, consideration is warranted for the gentle provocation of such awareness, for long-term solutions of designing safer urban environments (Beck, 1999; Saraiva & Pinho, 2011).

In today's rapidly evolving urban environments, designers of public spaces are concerned with public liability and focus their design on risk mitigation; this often results in the perceived need of separating competing activities with physical barriers, such as fencing or walls, or excluding undesired uses with inhibitors, like skate deterrents or slats on benches. Displays of authoritarian surveillance, such as CCTV and warning signage is another mechanic used to externalise control in a space and deter undesired activities (Despard, 2012). In some cases, everyday activities are strictly regulated imposing direct control on how a public space is used and perceived (Cox & Guaralda, 2016). Minimising clash-risk, through isolation and segregation of urban experiences, promote greater reliance by the user of public space on mitigating elements and strategies put in place by the designers, ultimately rendering individual responsibility and environmental awareness redundant (Chitrakar, Baker, & Guaralda, 2017; Dangschat, 2009).

These physically movement restrictive, but technologically enhanced public spaces enables our fast paced contemporary lives (Foth, 2011). How often do we neglect to look as we cross the road, instead trusting the signal of the light apparatus?. How often do we find ourselves lost without our GPS telling us where to turn? Combinations of line markings, curbs, street lights, signage, fenced pedestrian crossings, and median strips keep us at a safe distance from oncoming traffic. Effectively, reliance on mitigating elements creates environments more dangerous than the original threat as nobody is paying attention (Saraiva & Pinho, 2011). For how do we best keep ourselves out of harm's way as contemporary trends of safekeeping in the urban environment limit our experience of engaging with danger?

This paper reports an empirical study that investigates the relationship between perceptions of public spaces and safety within them, with a particular focus on the effect of imposed safety measures on individual responsibility and environmental awareness. It speculates on how an increased sense of danger can improve safety by prompting the individual's self-awareness. It does so by examining what our reaction is to cues of danger in the environment.

Literature review

Relationships between human-made urban environment and crime have been recognised for over 100 years. Pioneering the concept of Social Criminology Ferri (1896) makes the connection between the criminal and the environment in which the criminal exists. Burgess (1916) and Shaw & McKay (1942) both connect the development of criminal and delinquent habits and place of residence, describing how age, race, and sex although significant factors contributing to the occurrence of juvenile delinquency, the residential ward had a more significant impact. Jeffery (1971) originated the idea of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, considering particular environmental aspects affecting the environmental opportunity. (Burgess, 1916; Ferri, 1896; Jeffery, 1971; Shaw & McKay,

1942) One theoretical breakthrough was Jacobs's (1961) criticism of segregatory design policies destroying both established community fabrics and built-in safety structures later referred to as natural surveillability (Wood, Citizens Housing, & Planning Council, 1961; Wood & United Nations. Dept. of Economic Social Affairs, 1967).

Jacobs's and Woods's critiques were later translated into a rational framework by Jeffery's Crime Preventions Through Environmental Design (CPTED) (1971).

Subsequently, Newman (1972) popularised the concept. While Newman simplified Jeffery's notion concerning duality of physical and psychological reality of offenders, he importantly noted deterioration of safety when residents experienced lack of control over their environment and a resultant diminishing personal responsibility for it. This led Newman to develop *Defensible Space Theory*, which bases on residents claiming their territory, isolating and 'evicting' criminals from it. Two fundamental notions were pivotal for Newman's version; the defending party must be vigilant and visibly present, and also willing to intervene.

Environmental Criminology was developed mainly by Paul and Patricia Brantingham (1981) exploring relationships between physical and psychological fear environments. *Broken Window Theory* developed by Wilson and Kelling (1982) established four elements essential to crime: law, offender, target and place. Environmental Criminology concerns itself with place. Evidence of the fear versus crime relationship emerged in mid-90's via correlation of data from large multi-purpose municipal databases and police information systems (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). Studies of crime versus fear of crime reveal variations relative to eg. gender (Schafer, Huebner, & Bynum, 2006) and age groups (Fattah, 1991).

Isolated dark or unlit places, with presence of litter or graffiti, exemplify our perception of danger (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995), however are not necessarily matched to actual crime levels. Conditions where both fear of crime and actual crime are frequent were recorded in 'edge-locations'; between districts, halfway from major transit locations, border-zones between distinctly differentiating character and social status, along major pathways and at major nodes, where large numbers of movement paths intersect (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1975, 1981, 1993, 1995; Brantingham, Brantingham, & Molumby, 1977). Significantly, the research established the fear-crime relationship as variable by feelings of vulnerability (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995; Fisher & Nasar, 1992, 1993). Consequently, managing feelings of vulnerability would appear as significant when managing fear, as would the managing of actual crime.

Jeffery (1990) found that environments do not influence behaviour directly, but rather via human perception. Hence, to attempt creation of safer environments, the internal environment of human users is pivotal (Robinson, 1996). Greater understanding of these relationships emerged through research by Fisher and Nasar (1992, 1993), and Herzog and Chernick (2000) who establish that certain cues in the environment infer dangerous situations. This resulted in detail specific knowledge translatable into physical forms of urban environments. Environmental and spatial cognition and psychological theories, identify environmental cues that provoke fear of crime and describe how these cues generate fear of crime and constrain behaviour (Kitchin, 1994; Pain, 1997). The nature of these cues is both tangible and intangible, varying from specific physical features of built environment to presence of others (Cordner, 1986; Fisher & Nasar, 1992, 1993; Herzog & Chernick, 2000; Herzog & Miller, 1998; Loewen, Steel, & Suedfeld, 1993; Warr, 1990; Winkel, 1986). Research suggests provoking features constitute an assemblage, rather

than isolated cues, and include physical and psychological environment in combination. By the end of the century, a body of evidence drawn from several academic disciplines supported association between features of the physical environment and fear due to perceived sense of danger (Brownlow, 2005; Fisher & Nasar, 1992, 1993; Herzog & Chernick, 2000; Herzog & Miller, 1998; Merry, 1981; Warr, 1990). Assemblage theory developed from Guattari and Deleuze's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), later furthered by De Landa (2016), and theorises about the significance of the relationships between elements and features in creating compositions of elements which creates a whole.

Providing a design approach, Crowe et al. (1991) developed CPTED strategies suggesting three basic classifications; Mechanical, Organisational, and Natural (Sorensen, Hayes, & Atlas, 2013). These categories relate three reoccurring cues: lighting, greenery, and human presence. Lighting (ability to see and/or be seen) is objective, and hence this cue is often contradicted and contested. Research found street lighting had little effect on crime levels (Atkins, 1991; Ramsay & Newton, 1991) while Kirk (1988) shows poor lighting in combination with availability of hiding places are perceived as 'bad' places. By mid-2000s, it was concluded that lower lighting levels heighten fear (Stamps, 2005). Claims that increased lighting levels decrease crime levels, however, were contested (Marchant, 2004). Greenery too, has been questioned with arguments around foliage being an element, which counteracts lighting, blocks visual freedom and provides hiding spots for offenders (Fisher & Nasar, 1992, 1993; Herzog & Chernick, 2000; Loewen et al., 1993). Kuo, Bacaicoa, and Sullivan (1998), show tree density and grass maintenance strongly affect our sense of safety. Finally human presence has an intriguing dual nature.

Congregating crowds induces fear while place activation improves safety. (Skogan, 1990; Warr, 1990). Police visibility similarly yields contradictory reactions. Research shows significance in relative positioning of the police eg. on foot or in a vehicle. Not only were there differences in levels of fear but a positive influence could be turned negative as result of perceived power imbalance between police and citizens (Salmi, Gronroos, & Keskinen, 2004).

Moreover, strong gender specific influence returned to the topic during early 2000's. Gender based studies led the topic under scrutiny by sociologists, victimologists, psychologists, planners, and geographers establishing gender based differences in fear levels (Day, 1994; Fisher & Nasar, 1993; Fisher & Sloan, 2003; Klodawsky & Lundy, 1994; Lane & Meeker, 2003; May, 2001; May & Dunaway, 2000; May, Vartanian, & Viro, 2002; Reid & Konrad, 2004; Schafer et al., 2006; Smith & Torstensson, 1997; Wallace & May, 2005). Male specific considerations were explored to understand men's experiences such as fear of the unknown, fear of confrontation, and safety in numbers (Fisher & May, 2009). The gender studies coincided with renewed attention to CPTED strategies (R. Atlas, I.; & Saville, 2013) suggesting various prescriptive measures had forgotten Jacobs (1961) and Wood's (1961) originating concepts, also coloured by gender considerations. Reactions to the prescriptive approach of first generation CPTED mounted elevating the importance of community. At the essence of this is the idea of inclusion and belonging, opposing earlier prescriptive strategies (R. Atlas, I.; & Saville, 2013). Community also includes the 'offender', and belonging denotes deep rooting in place, making any approach necessarily place specific rather than a customisable template. This inclusive and thereby safe community approach base on people caring about their environment and the people within it. Examples include *Barrier Free Space* designs of *Wohnstrasse*, *encounter zones*, and *Pedestrian Priority Zones* (PPZ) which eliminates physical safety structures such as street

curbs and fencing in order to re-awaken the user's survival instinct. Early findings from research on such alternate designs confirm they improve safety (Schweizer & Fasciati, 2008).

Second generation CPTED acknowledges human cognitive mapping which individuals use for managing spatial and temporal information about the physical and social nature of their environment. Such maps guide behavioural decisions and give individuals "*a selective advantage in a difficult and dangerous world that is necessary for survival*" (Kitchin, 1994, p. 2). Understanding these maps and the sequence of cues which forms them, show far greater potential in providing understanding of the fear-crime relationship than simply measuring levels of fear (Merry, 1981): Merry also note the reoccurrence of interaction as significant. Interacting, even simply venturing into a place immediately heed "*criminalizability*" of space (Van der Wurff, van Staaldunin, & Stringer, 1989, p. 145). Inhabitation of space is hence perceived to decriminalise it. The action of inhabiting relates to our individual need to recreate and express our identity, plotting out of space our corner of the world (Bachelard, 1964, 1969; Cooper-Marcus, 1995). Danger is perceived when venturing outside this mapped sphere, the territory of our identity, acutely awakening our mapping ability as the accuracy of our cognitive map becomes pivotal to our safety in unfamiliar environments (O'Brien & Wilson, 2011).

The essence of feeling safe lies in control over territory. Within 'our territory' the cues are familiar and rules clear. It is, in accordance with the statistics of crime versus perceived dangerous areas, along the edges – within the uncontrolled – that crime is most prevalent (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). Yet, our societal trends are increasingly nomadic with strong drives to explore new and unknown places. This need is noted by Cooper-Marcus (1995) as a necessary act of defiance in a child's development of her/his identity. Bestrom (2009, p. 199) describes travel as "*a unique opportunity for self-exploration*" which by removal from our familiar surroundings provides the opportunity to "*new philosophical ideas and develop new ways of seeing the world.*" Such increasingly nomadic patterns further changes known dynamics as our identity is a result of our context more so than our context is a representation of our identity (Pallasmaa, 1994). As we up-root from traditionally inhabited place, we lose the foothold of our identity. However, after the 9/11 tragedy and subsequent national security threats around the world, significant changes have occurred. Most noticeably, the omnipresent surveillance and increased displays of authority, particularly at high-risk entry and exit nodes (R. I. Atlas, 2013). This has notably affected the sense of freedom of travel. The threat to our 'home' on an international scale clearly provokes the feelings of exposure and danger with which this research is concerned. It would appear from the literature examined that threat to our home and identity, our very being in this world, is essential for awakening our environmental awareness and sense of individual responsibility for our own and our community's safety.

Whilst literature on the topic is extensive, there is little consideration given to safety inherent in uncontrolled but inclusive communities, communities which include both 'victim' and 'offender'. Inclusive communities empower individuals, provoke them to safeguard themselves, and allow them to inhabit the environment. An exclusive community weakens both included and excluded creating instead a need for authoritarian guardianship. Whilst both are viable solutions, the exclusive community inevitably leave residual space outside its border. Its exclusivity becomes the generator of the 'edge-condition' favourable of crime. Including our fears into our everyday lives, allows us to

inhabit the same space as our perceived 'offender'. Not only lessening fear itself but providing opportunity to understand the offenders internal environment, just as Jeffery (1971) initially called for.

Methodology

The purpose of this research is to examine how public spaces can evoke a sense of danger through provision of simple features. As the study inquires the phenomenon of danger, the theoretical structure of "*knowledge of essences*" (Husserl, 2012, p. 3) was a logical selection. Phenomenology aims for understanding the un-biased nature of being, with additional input as variables of the experiential whole. Hence phenomenology asks for a wide-gazing and abductive methodological approach. Phenomenology is suited to exploring the sensation created by being in danger as it identifies the essential sensation and by doing so also identify elements affecting the resultant experience. Using a phenomenological framework to uncover data will not only identify particularities in the environment affecting the essence of danger sensing, but also suggest categories of particularities grouped together indicative of trends imposed on the subjects by the urban environment.

Research method

Research was conducted in six stages as illustrated in figure 1. The process was separated into two phases, one aimed at understanding the danger phenomenon, the other at exploring human reasoning and reaction to the phenomenon. Phase one included reviewing existing knowledge, and two pilot studies. Phase two contained a survey, analysis of survey responses and finally resulting in theory development.

Main data were collected via an online survey comparing responses to questions related to three urban environments, pictured as exemplary of three types of urban scenarios which can be found in most cities today. The three sceneries are 1) Sanitized 2) Surveillanced and 3) Uninhibited environments.

Participation was voluntary. All participants were over 18 years of age.

Participation involved completing the 30 item anonymous survey with closed and open as well as likert scale answers taking approximately 10 – 15 minutes of participant's time.

Questions included; *How connected do you feel to others in this situation? Do you feel exposed or sheltered in this environment?* and *Do you think people care about this place?*

Pilot study 1 was an experiment in using Pinterest as a tool for interdisciplinary unstructured research into the general topic of safety after dark. The research team created a Pinterest board that was used for collecting virtual images related to the topic of safety after dark, through a search of related keywords. The collected images on the board were then thematically analysed by grouping into emerging themes. Resulting in a number of thematic concepts related to safety after dark.

Pilot study 2 implemented the knowledge gained in previous steps, applying it to testing during a public event in Brisbane, Australia (URBNE festival – 28/30 March 2014). The image content used the experimental technology of 'Local Commons', a smart phone application allowing public interaction with image content. The aim of the pilot was to gauge the public reaction to the "*Safety After Dark*" topic. A finding of the pilot was related to familiarity of place as mitigating of level of danger experienced.

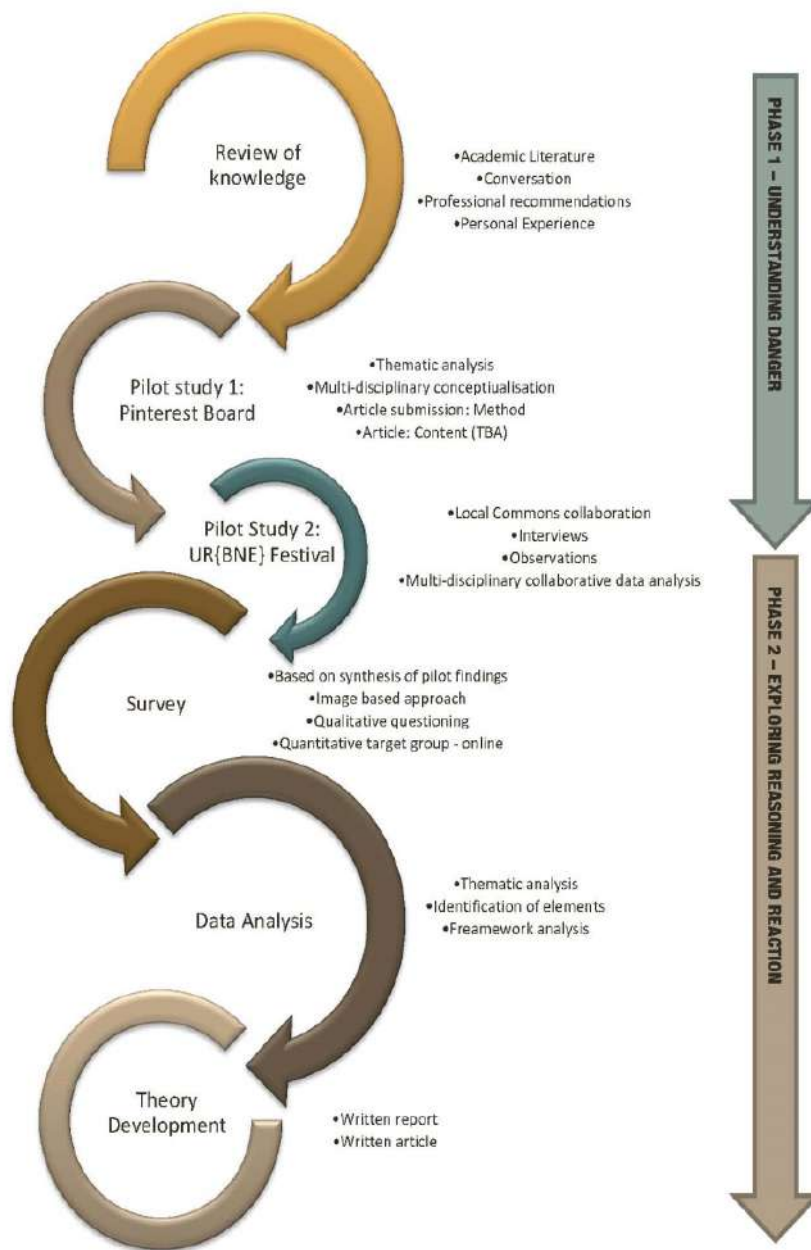


Fig. 1. Research Structure.

The pilots assist the development of a framework to guides the manipulation of images fundamental to the survey. Using images within the survey allows rapid-response questioning techniques aim at drawing on the subjects subconscious rather than rational responses, whilst in the form of a quantitative collection technique.

The final three steps aim to explore the reasoning and reaction to danger sensing. The survey contained images of the urban landscape, staging scenarios of varied nature. Three image-scenes where manipulated: 'Authoritarian' (figure 2), 'Sterilized' (figure 3), and

'Uncontrolled' (figure 4) and a set of ten questions were asked for each image. Authoritarian scenery was neat, clean, and displayed powerful signage and remotely controlled security devices. Sterilized settings lack distinctive identity but have good visibility, and vertically framing elements. Uncontrolled settings were unlawfully decorated, lacking vertically framing elements, with lowered level of artificial lighting.



Fig. 2. Scenario A "Authoritarian".

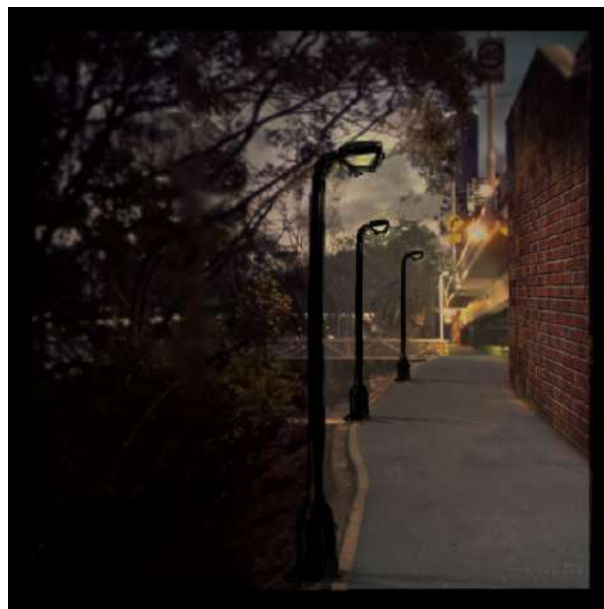


Fig. 3. Scenario B "Sterilised".

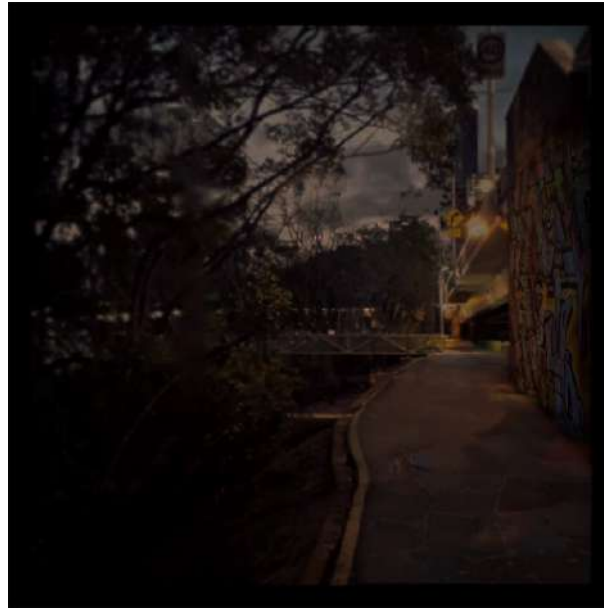


Fig. 4. Scenario C “Uncontrolled”.

A set of ten questions followed each image. Eight of the questions provided tick-a-box response options, two required open-ended answers. Questions were as follows:

1. Is this a safe or an unsafe place?
 2. How connected do you feel to other people in this situation?
 3. Do you feel exposed or sheltered in this situation?
 4. Do you think people care about this place?
 5. Is this a familiar environment to you?
 6. If you were threatened when in this environment, what would you do to protect or defend yourself?
 7. If you were planning to go to this place, would you bring anything in particular as a safety measure?
 8. If you were planning to go to this place, would you take any precautions before you left?
- What do you think this place is used for?
 - What is this place? If you were to give it a name, what would it be?

The survey was distributed over the social media platform of Facebook and via direct email.

Analysis of survey data expected to strengthen or weaken themes of the analytical framework, or generate additional themes. Details recorded as significant by participants of the survey was coded and added into the framework under the existing themes.

Limitations

Data collection was local to Brisbane, Australia, although the survey was distributed online with potential global reach of self-selecting participants. Survey images, however, were created from local photos, and their cultural and contextual nature limit responses.

Survey distribution online limited respondents to those with computer access as well as present on social media. As the study does not attempt to investigate the nature of danger relative to age, study was limited by the exclusion of anyone below 18 years.

Findings

Survey generated 44 completed submissions over a three-week-period in May 2014. The two open-ended questions contained in the survey are not shown in graph format and not included in the overall response diagram.

Scenario A: "Authoritarian"

Scenario A exemplifies a high level of remotely controlled safety measures such as surveillance cameras, graphical warnings and ominous lighting fixtures. Significantly, across all questions, many respondents felt "exposed" (Q3a), and their choice of safety measure was the mobile phone.

Most felt the scenario pictured in Scenario A was unsafe with a combined 49% answering either of the "unsafe" options as opposed to 37% answering one of the two "safe" options.

In relation to connectivity and sense of presence, 44% felt others presence out of sight, making them nervous, and 7% replied that the sense of presence they cannot see did not concern them.

Significantly, responses to which scenario made respondents feel exposed or sheltered saw 78% responding that scenario A made them feel exposed. While 44% replied they believe somebody cares about this place, this caring is only of the space being functional. The majority of respondents (41% +2%) knew the place pictured, but rarely or never used it. Only 9% knew of and frequently used the place.

Most respondents would attempt to run away if they encountered a dangerous situation while within this space. No respondents (0%) would attempt to hide.

When asked what conscious precautions would be taken when planning to travel through the space 34% replied "nothing in particular" with an even distribution between the other three suggestions. The most popular precautionary object to bring was the mobile phone with a response rate of 61%.

Scenario B: Sterilised

Scenario B exemplifies neat and clean, a "sterilised" place with traditional street lighting. As with Scenario A, Scenario B is perceived a situation of exposure with (50%) assessing the situation as unsafe to varying degree. Regarding presence and connectedness within the space, most respondents (32% + 20%) felt a lack of presence, and 44% responded that they sensed "somebody is nearby".

The majority (78%) felt exposed by the situation. In relation to perceptions of care of place, 70% responded affirmatively, while 39% thought care for the place was purely functional. The majority of respondents (44%) did not know this place; few (7%) recognised and rarely use it. Only 5% knew of and frequently used the place.

As in Scenario A, respondents again showed strong preference for running away from a perceived threat and no respondents saw the scene favourable for hiding.

When asked what precautions would be taken before going to this place, respondents showed no strong preference for either option provided and 30% replied they would do

“Nothing in particular”. Mobile phone was reported as the most favourable object to ensure one’s own safety.

Scenario C

Scenario C exemplifies a distinctively un-controlled setting displaying graffiti, low lighting levels and lacking fencing of the path. A main finding was a distinct sense of exposure. Increase was noted in respondents deeming the setting unsafe (55%) and no respondents found the setting to be safe. “Nobody is here! I feel lost and scared” combined with the option suggesting abandonment of activity comprise 63% of the responses. Respondents (80%) recorded feeling exposed in this scenario. A combined 55% felt nobody cared about the space. Respondents who knew the place and those who did not were balanced. Respondents majorly chose the “Run away” option as self-defence, but in this scenario hiding also emerges as being an option.

While the mobile phone is still the most preferred object of defence, this scenario significantly recorded respondents choosing the ‘weapon’ option, lesser rate on the “Nothing in particular” option is also noticed.

Discussion

Following sections analyse and discuss findings provided by the survey data, highlighting key findings and emphasising important aspects of the study. It further seeks to explore possible explanations for the findings comparing and contrasting them to results of other relevant studies in order to contextualise the results. Finally, implications of findings for future research are discussed.

Safe or unsafe?

It was clear that Scenario C was perceived as considerably unsafe, whereas Scenarios A and B were more moderately or even judged as somewhat safe. This confirms the findings of earlier research (Atkins, 1991), suggesting that there is a correlation between provision of lighting and perceived safety albeit not necessarily indicative of actual safety (Kirk, 1988; Stamps, 2005).

Scenario A was convincing of a presence, this evokes feelings of discomfort. In contrast the ungoverned scene in Scenario C signal to respondents the space being abandoned, making them feel lost and scared.

Evenly distributed between the three Scenarios a majority felt exposed in all three situations. Interestingly, this indicates that features such as lighting levels, physical obstructions and/or potential hiding spaces do not significantly affect the sense of exposure experienced.

Do people care about this place?

Significant differences were noticed between Scenario A and B as compared to Scenario C in terms of the perceived care given to the space. Responses indicates poor or lacking lighting, as previously suggested (Kirk, 1988; Stamps, 2005) heightening fear despite generally having low crime levels (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). No significant difference in response rates between the two scenes with differing types of lighting was recorded, supporting the claims of Marchant (2004) that increases in lighting does not increase safety.

Finding indicates that graffiti affects our perception of place. Whilst being characteristic indicators of territoriality (Ley & Cybriwsky, 1974; Skogan, 1988) it is perceived as someone caring for place. A clear distinction in perception of graffiti and authoritarian signage was also noted.

What is this place is used for?

When asked about the use, the first two scenarios again proved similar, with Scenario C distinguishing itself, examples of answers to this question are found in table 3. However, a slight variation is noted in responses to the first two images. In Scenario A, there was little doubt the space was for transitioning through, this is not a space for meandering. Similarly most responses observe a space for movement in Scenario B, although it seems the pace has slowed down and words like “wander” are used and respondents begin considering uses of the space other than the passing through.

A slowing pace and increased sensory awareness of place becomes obvious in Scenario C where respondents even imagine the history, difference in day and night usage, human presence, and generally begin to give detailed and more imaginative responses to what this place may ‘be’. It would seem as though lesser lighting levels, and removal of security signage and surveillance awaken our imagination and in several respondents a interest of place which was not present in the previous two scenarios. Nevertheless the uses imagined remain less accepted forms of community life.

Is this a familiar environment to you?

Familiarity of place decreased significantly in Scenario C as did frequency of use. With primary alterations to this option being lighting level, graffiti, and enclosing man-made structures, it is noted that the combination of cues has significant effect on familiarity. Possible explanations for this may be disorientation experienced with diminished eyesight, and reliance on sight-sense in way-finding. Other explanations are also possible in terms of sense of security gained from directional and enclosing features of the built environment and the sense of authoritarian governing of space. This finding would benefit from further exploration to investigate the causes and relationships beyond the scope of this study.

What would you do to protect or defend yourself?

Reactions to potential threat were similar in all three scenarios, the majority choosing to “run away” from the situation. This indicates flight instinct being a common response to exposure, and correlation of these two components a purposeful further investigation. The second preference was to pick up a weapon, i.e. fighting instinct, with respondents more prone to ‘fight’ in Scenario C. Despite respondents perceiving human presence in Scenario A, this did not show as an increased tendency to call out for help. This finding suggests directional understanding of the environment being of higher importance than alerts and warning of where to be wary of danger, as the former would allow mental mapping of potential flight routes.

Would you bring anything in particular as a safety measure?

The mobile phone was noted as a personal safety measure by most respondents. In two of the three scenarios, a mobile phone was a preferred safety device to a weapon. This not only indicates that carrying a weapon does not need to heighten ones sense of

security, but also that carrying a mobile phone, although having little physical ability to protect a person, can alter perception safety. Further investigation about attributes of mobile phones that promotes this sense of security would be valuable.

Would you take any precautions before you left?

A distinct unwillingness among participants to take conscious precautions before venturing out into a potentially dangerous place was noted. However, a distinct increase in consideration of not going alone into Scenario C is consistent with the previous finding of this scene being more unsafe than the previous two. This shows that the cues contained within Scenario C are conducive to heightening environmental awareness and a need to ensure one's own safety.

If you were to give this place a name?

When asked to name the place, Scenario A provoked names containing words such as Caution, Isolation, River, Warning, and Ugly.

Scenario B has a calmer impression, with respondents using words such as Serenity, Romantic, and Quiet. While responses make clear that it is a scary and dangerous place, names such as Quiet city walk and Evening Grove have a significantly more poetic tone to them than eg. 'Urban Shortcut'

Scenario C is consistently named relating to the place's abandonment/desertedness. The graffiti is mentioned as Art by one respondent. Interestingly one respondent manages to make a very clear comment relating to the interest of this study saying "Looks like an abandoned alley, Walk at Your Own Risk". This acknowledges abandonment, or the sense of lacking authoritarian governance here, as alerting individuals to enter this space in an attentive state of mind. Moreover, Scenario C is the only image to exhibit a response which contains the word 'love'. While this response is noting a lack of love, it is yet significant that the word is at all connected with the context. Findings for this question are summarised in table 2.

How does the responses compare?

Combining responses to the three scenarios, it is evident that Scenario C has the greatest differentiation from the previous two. Scenario C is deemed 1) significantly less safe 2) increasingly exposing 3) significantly less familiar and 4) significantly more likely to heighten conscious self-protective preventative actions.

The main difference between Scenarios A and B, and Scenario C is the governance factor; who is governing the space, and what level of self-governance is expected by a person entering the space. Scenarios A and B are clearly open public spaces, governed by an authority (council or similar). In these spaces the users are expected to follow commonly understood rules which apply to everyone and the governing power would likely be some form of security e.g. police. However, in Scenario C it is not obvious if the space is public, who is governing it, or what rules are expected to be followed or how or if these rules would be maintained. This finding confirms the success of the 'Encounter Zones' tested in Europe, suggesting it would be useful knowledge to understand more about what environmental cues relate, and how, to governance which in turn either promote or demote individuals' sense of urgency to ensure their own safety.

Conclusions

This study explored the relationship between perception of public space and safety within them, particularly focusing on the relationship between imposed safety measures and its effect individual responsibility and environmental awareness. It did so by examining what our reaction is to cues of danger in the environment. A significant finding of this exploratory study is that the exact same public space, with the actual same environment in terms of safety, is perceived in different ways when different control measures are present. A well-lit highly visible and camera surveyed public space is perceived as much safer than one where there is no clear presence of authoritarian control. Users feels equally exposed in lit as in unlit spaces, as do they in a highly surveyed or in an 'abandoned' space. While surveillance and lighting seemed to create a perception that there were others nearby, calling out for help if experiencing a danger situation was rarely suggested as an option. Familiarity is significantly affected by lighting levels, graffiti, and enclosing structures in combination. Enclosing structure, such as rows of street lamps and/or solid walls, had positive impact on how familiar a place was whereas graffiti and lack of lighting saw familiarity and recognition diminish and more likely to promote conscious self-protective preventative actions among respondents. The analysis suggests that the perceived presence of governing forces in the space impacts on behaviour and confirms the notion of the order of chaos on which design concepts such as 'Encounter Zones' build.

Understanding danger and how this condition human behaviour can be a useful tool to designers dealing with public space. The extreme mitigation of risk has so far resulted in highly designed and regulated spaces, but an alternative approach to safety and risk mitigation has already been explored in the so called 'naked streetscape' (Moylean, 2005). The removal of barriers and deterrents has increased the sense of vulnerability in users, mainly divers, within major European public spaces, for example Kensington High Street. The feeling of uneasiness and perceived risk has resulted in drivers self-regulating their behaviours producing a much safer environment for pedestrians.

Findings from this pilot suggest that the inclusion or not of specific features in our public spaces can affect our self-awareness and our behaviours. How to bring this preliminary finding into the actual design of a public space needs further research and more exploration, but it is suggested as a possible strategy to manage the growing complexity of our cities. With globalisation posing new opportunities and threats alike, urban environments are fast evolving into something new and unknown, as exciting as it may seem dangerous. Learning from the thrill-seeking adventurer's ability to stay safe, and by understanding the workings of the sought after thrill, will allow creation of much safer, but also much more stimulating urban environments. While an extensive body of knowledge already exists on topics of safety and perceived safety in urban environments, this explorative study has focused on unravelling questions awoken by evermore present authoritarian presences in public spaces. The study has highlighted the need of additional research on the power relationship created by safety conscious augmentation of urban environments with the complex nature of today's user base. It is clear that more knowledge of this relationship could improve safety conscious design measures as well as benefit the collective body of knowledge.

Table 1: Selection of Responses to question related to the suggested use of place for Scenario A-C.

SCENARIO A	SCENARIO B	SCENARIO C
Transportation; it is not a social space.	Transport something, alleyway. not somewhere to stay	It's the same place as before but is even scarier without proper lighting and signs.
Moving through - no one stays there	To get from one side of the road to the other	Drug deals are the first thing that springs to mind. Graffiti, also, so m maybe it's a gang hangout.
Thoroughfare	A walkway to get from a to b	it is a walkway but the darkness and graffiti indicate that its used by people as something other than that.
Access and thoroughfare	Looks safer though, since there seem to be less distractions and the light looks more familiar. The brick wall also adds some charm.	Graffiti probably was a nice place once
Path for Joggers and bicycles	Smell like a toilet, and play host to some 5-minute stands.	Clearly somebody hangs around here.

Table 2: Selection of Responses to question related to the name of place for Scenario A-C.

SCENARIO A	SCENARIO B	SCENARIO C
Cautious park	Serenity way	Bumpy
Isolation	Evening Walk	Art park
Spooky Lane	Back alley	It's an unloved not used much, it wouldn't have a name
Ugly Walk	Afterthought	Waiting for imminent death lane
Rivers edge	Quiet city walk	The gutter
Ambush Alley	A pathway. Romantic path	Forgotten
Lonely lane	Lonesome Alley	No-man's land
Cavern of fear	Dead end	Lost lights
Urban trails	Lamp post horror	The Forgotten Pathway
Urban Shortcut	This actually looks like a quite romantic setting	Rape alley
Underpass Alley	Council Corridor	Graffiti city

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Exploring Environmental Colour Design in Urban Contexts

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Abstract

The increasing complexity of urban colour and growing recognition of its psychological effects prompts rethinking of the current conceptual and methodological approaches to environmental colour design. Contemporary designers are challenged to understand how evolving colour knowledge can be integrated with the fundamentals of colour design. This paper aims to elaborate on the concept of environmental colour composition (ECC) and outlines an alternative approach to colour design in urban environments. A better understanding of the dynamic relationships between the tangible and perceptual elements of an ECC can bring new meaning to the consideration of colour as an integral component of city design. The proposed concepts of environmental colour events and scenarios provide a foundation for both further theoretical inquiry and practical application of synthesised colour knowledge in the design of urban environments.

Keywords: environmental colour composition, environmental colour design, colour event, colour scenario

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‘What is the colour of your favourite public place?’ Surprisingly, this simple question often causes confusion among many interviewees. Indeed, the complexity and ambiguity of visual information presented to viewers in a contemporary urban space make it difficult to determine what the prevailing spatial colour is. However, designers should not overlook the significant role of colour combinations in visual imagery and perceptual experiences in urban environments.

The perceptual aspects of colour were first theoretically explored by Goethe. In a treatise published in 1810, Goethe reflected on the interaction of various colours placed in proximity and suggested that ‘if in this intermixture the ingredients are perfectly balanced that neither is to be distinctly recognised, the union again acquires a specific character, it appears as a quality by itself in which we no longer think of combination’ (Goethe, 1810: 277). The value of colour totality or wholeness can be expressed in terms of harmony. Harmonious and pleasant colour compositions might elicit feelings of joy and appreciation of visual experiences. In reality, when people walk along the shopping malls and streets or rest in city squares, they may not consciously notice specific artefact colours, but rather feel an emotional response to the overall atmosphere. From our observations, the expressions ‘this place makes me feel good’ or ‘it is quite a disturbing surrounding’ often substitute as assessments of the colour combinations displayed. Goethe’s colour theory has long been considered an intuitive, mostly poetic account. However, the relevance of his hypothesis to contemporary findings in the field of environmental colour psychology is undeniable. As Itten (1970: 21) states, ‘expressive colour effects – what Goethe called the ethic-aesthetic values of colour – likewise fall within the psychologist’s province’. Numerous studies conducted over the last three decades have specifically extended our understanding of the effects of colour on the psychological stances of the urban dweller. For instance, Mahnke (1998) suggests that patterns and combinations of colours in the urban environment trigger emotional responses on both conscious and unconscious levels. Obscure visual patterns and disharmonious colour schemes can cause visual disturbances, disorientation, stress or low mood. In contrast, harmonious and contextually tailored colour areas stimulate positive emotions, eliminate visual disorder and enhance social interaction (Mahnke, 1998; Porter & Mikellides, 2009). Given that colour is a sensory stimulus, it may also contribute to psychological under- or overstimulation of some individuals. Whereas overstimulating environment features exposed saturated colours, strong contrasts and flickering illumination. An understimulating setting is usually monochromatic and lacks contrast and visual accents. While sensory overstimulation may increase anxiety and depression, understimulation causes deprivation or excessive emotional responses (Franz, 2006; Mahnke, 2004). According to Day (2004), the relationships between urban forms, spaces and colour can be life sapping or life-filling.

Over the last two decades, the use of innovative building materials and advanced lighting technologies has altered the complexity of colour patterns and visual experiences available to city dwellers. Porter and Mikellides (2009: 1) suggest that ‘facades can now change colour depending upon the perceptual point of view, they can thermochromatically colour-react to daytime and seasonal temperature shift, be chromatically animated by sensors, by light-projection systems or by plasma screens’. Lenclos (2009: 86) also states ‘architectural colour, now expressed in materials and illumination rather than paint, is creating a new chromatic dialectic between form, space, structure and light’.

The increasing complexity of urban colour and the recognition of its psychological effects has prompted rethinking of the conceptual and methodological approaches to environmental colour design. The challenge for contemporary designers is understanding how evolving colour knowledge can be integrated with the fundamentals of colour design and how colour can be used to balance sensory stimulation and create desirable polychromatic experiences in urban contexts.

Research in environmental colour psychology provides valuable information that can potentially guide design rationales but is not directly applicable to design methods (Anter & Billger, 2008). Sharpe (1981) stated that the extensive data on colour psychology must be organised and explained before a useful design methodology can be formulated. However, few scholars pursue systematic studies in this field from a designer's perspective.

Some leading architects search for their own methods to approach polychromatic environmental design in a holistic way. For example, McLachlan (2014) provided an insightful account of the eight architectural practices known for their distinguished use of colour. Among others, she endorsed Sauerbruch and Hutton for their phenomenological approach to architectural colour and design of dynamic colour experiences. Similarly, Steven Hall received praise for his experimentation with the transformative nature of colour and light. Mark Major (2009: 151–158) reviewed work that inspired expression of colour through light, as exemplified in the Zollverein Kokerei industrial complex in Gelsenkirghen, Germany and the Burj Al Arab tower in Dubai. He claims that 'the seemingly infinite flexibility provided by the new generation of tools ... allow[s] lighting designers, architects and artists to approach the use of colour in architecture in a progressive manner' (Major, 2009: 154). Prominent lighting artist Yann Kersale (2009) describes his experimental installations on landmark buildings (designed by Jean Nouvel, Helmut Jahn and Patric Bochain) as articulating his vision of a 'luminous, nocturnal architecture of colour and light' (Porter & Mikellides, 2009). Despite individual contributions, a comprehensive colour design framework that can be utilised by mainstream architecture and urban design remains undeveloped.

The methods for documenting and presenting colour design projects also require designers' attention. Conventional architectural palettes and city colour plans are generally created under controlled lighting conditions and documented in the form of two-dimensional swatches that represent materials or pigments. In real settings, the harmonious colour combinations selected by a designer can be affected by the interplay between the visual elements presented and intervention by large-scale digital advertising. Neither architectural palettes nor city colour plans can adequately reflect dynamic changes in environmental conditions or describe the likely psychological experiences in actual urban spaces.

These concerns have evolved into the concept of environmental colour composition (ECC), a holistic representation of an urban colour scheme. An ECC was initially defined by Ronchi (2002) as a synthesis of the colour of all visual elements within an urban setting, including natural elements, colours of built forms and urban elements as well as spatial and human activity patterns. This perspective aims to broaden the boundaries of an architectural palette and expand the traditional dimensions of colour in city design. However, its conceptual framework requires further clarification (specifically of the components of a contextual ECC) to provide the foundation for a shift in the colour design paradigm.

In line with this need, we argue that a thorough interpretation the ECC phenomenon is a first step in developing a holistic approach to environmental colour design (ECD). A better understanding of the dynamic relationships between the tangible and perceptual elements of an ECC can bring additional meaning to the consideration of colour as an integral component of city design. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is (1) to elaborate on the conceptual definition of the ECC in the context of public urban areas and (2) to outline an alternative approach to ECD that is underpinned by the synthesis of traditional colour design methods and psychological perspectives.

Environmental Colour Composition in Contemporary Urban Contexts

In urban contexts, the concept of colour has traditionally been considered in terms of architectural colour palettes and city colour plans. The selection of colour in architecture is essentially concerned with the aesthetic quality of a building. Practically, an architectural palette may be used to highlight or camouflage an entire built form, to enhance tectonic facades or details and to express the personal style of a designer or brand. Instead, city colour plans have usually considered the role of an individual building within a public area and have pursued visual compatibility of architectural colours within that urban area. Several widely promoted approaches to polychromic urban architecture advocate the use of colour with reference to both location and historical and cultural traditions. For example, Giovanni Brino (2009) developed methods of colour restoration in historical city centres that were adopted by 50 Italian cities. The colour plan of Turin in Italy aimed to restore the colour of facades on a citywide scale with reference to a historical prototype that originated in the Baroque period and was recovered at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Significant aspects of the colour plan developed by the Conseil des Ediles were manifested in the uniformity of architectural colour according to a coordinated system.

The focal point of Lenclos's *Geography of Colour* was the use of colour palettes associated with a local identity and sense of place. In a detailed account of colour meanings in urban environments, Lenclos (2009: 84–87) argued that colour is not an additional decoration, but rather a constituent of light that is influenced by climatic conditions, latitude, seasonal cycles and surface textures. His earlier work (1989) is associated with critical regionalism, but he has since built upon the transformative nature of contemporary colour that is sensitive to cultural, social, political and technological effects. From this new perspective, he stated: 'I am convinced that we are now experiencing a very important period in which architectural colour, now expressed in materials and illumination rather than paint is creating a new chromatic dialectic between form, space, structure and light' (2009: 86). Spillmann's original palette for Kirchsteigfeld in Potsdam was inspired by the concept of 'unity in diversity' and aimed to consolidate urban relationships while providing 'a colour-intense discrimination between public, semi-private and private spaces' (Spillmann, 2009: 36). The novelty of Spillmann's methodology has been underpinned by the integration of functional, environmental and social aspects of colour design in the contemporary built environment. He argued that 'the most harmonious colour combination will lose its harmony if it does not correspond with specific human needs and activities, if it does not fit with the given surroundings, or if it does not sensibly interpret the building structure' (cited in Schindler, 2004: 64).

The conceptual frameworks developed by Bruno, Lenclos and Spillmann provided foundations for further exploration of colour phenomena in contemporary cities. For

instance, Ronchi (2002) introduced another view of ECC that reflected the complexity and dynamics of colour images in urban settings. According to Ronchi (2002), an ECC includes the colours of natural elements, built forms and urban elements. Perception of ECC is influenced by pattern of spatial arrangements and human activities. A literature review revealed fragmented theoretical considerations that can be combined to enhance Ronchi's (2002) definitions. Recently, Zennaro (2017) defined the factors that influence perception of environmental colour as the size and functional use of buildings and the dimensions of, and relationships between, urban elements such as streets and public squares. Further, he emphasised the importance of geographical location, history and cultural traditions. Based on this combined knowledge, the main elements of any ECC can be classified as shown in Figure 1.

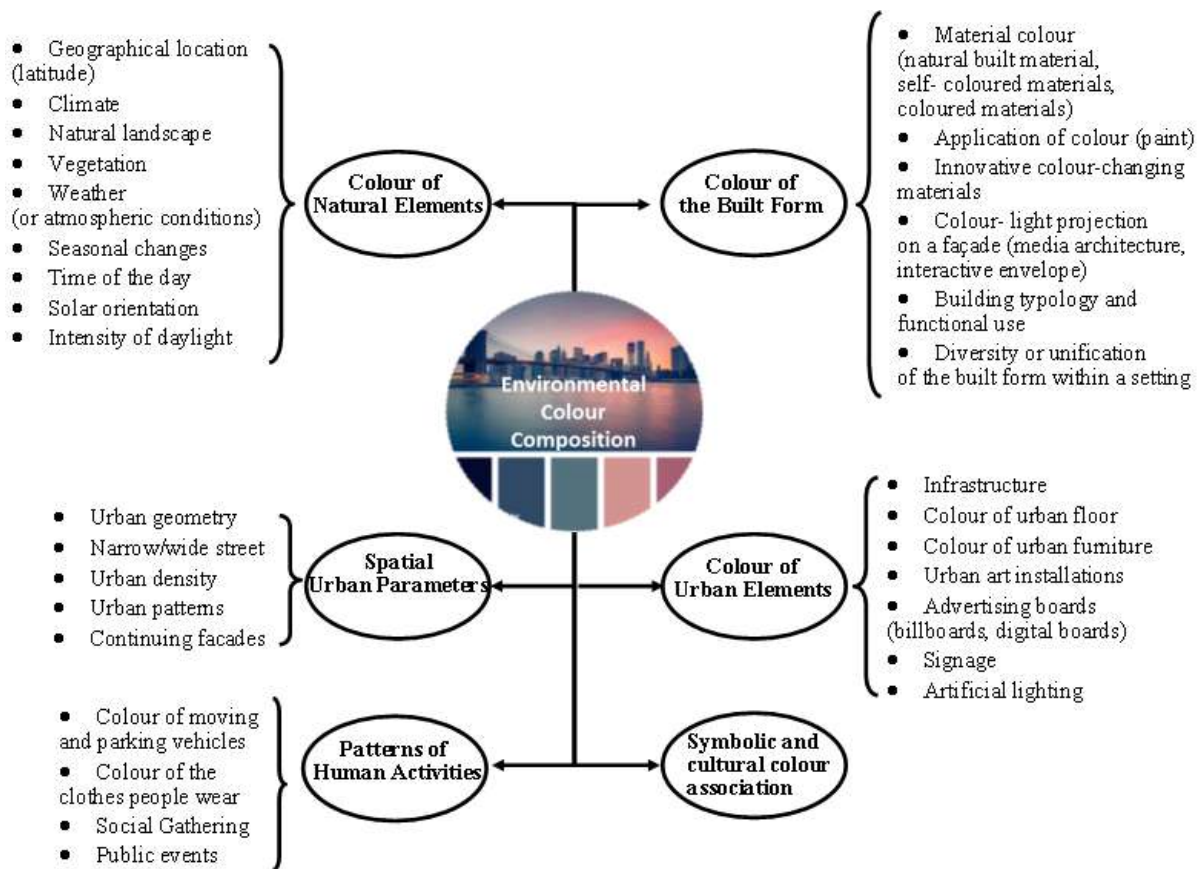


Fig. 1. Core Elements of Environmental Colour.

The complexities and combinations of core ECC elements differ substantially between urban settings and depend on multiple factors. For example, certain colours presented in urban environments can be understood as measurable physical properties. Others correlate with visual experiences and are defined through the viewer's perception. Thus, ECC has both tangible and intangible properties.

In a practical sense, the classification described here can be used to assess the visual elements of an ECC within diverse historical and cultural conditions. Indeed, the original ECCs of Turin, Italy in the nineteenth century would be more unified in terms of colour

compared to those in the city of Brisbane, Australia. The rapidly increasing complexity of ECCs in contemporary cities could be mainly attributed to changes in the density and volume of built forms; intervention of large-scale digital billboards and urban art installations; use of innovative colour-changing and highly reflective materials; development of new lighting technologies and the introduction of media facades. In the Brisbane context, the media facades and laser light projections on buildings remain limited and circumstantial. In contrast, giant advertising boards frequently appear on the ground, midsections of high-rise buildings and even on the rooves of heritage buildings. In some cases, the dimensions of such boards are almost equal to or bigger than the host building itself (see Figure 2). The saturated and flickering images of a digital billboard may overpower architectural colour, create colour dissonance and affect the visual experiences of both pedestrians and vehicle commuters. When installed on historical buildings, these boards may compromise the historical and cultural value of the public space or produce undesirable symbolic associations.



Fig. 2. Large digital board installations in Brisbane. These are found (a) on the roof of a historical building and (b) ground-standing digital board attached to a building used as a background. Photographs are the authors' own.

Another notable tendency in the use of colour is the expression of branding colour on facades. This means that entire commercial buildings have been painted in a brand-related colour without consideration of the potential effects of this approach on the perceived colour schemes (and thus, the appearance and aesthetics) of the surrounding area. A better understanding of the interrelated layers of colour in contemporary urban contexts may assist architects, urban designers and planners with surveying and analysing existing ECCs. This would allow development of a rationale for colour palette selection for singular infills or urban renewal proposals and for the approval of installations on existing buildings. Additionally, this knowledge may inform an alternative approach to ECD and suggest a more effective way of presenting the ECD product to clients, stakeholders and communities.



Fig. 3. Expression of brand-related colours on buildings in Brisbane. Photographs are the authors' own.

Conceptualisation of Environmental Colour Events and Scenarios

The environmental colour event (ECE) hypothesis originated from Ronchi's conception of ECC, but it celebrates the dynamic nature of colour in urban environments. This way of thinking was initially inspired by Cruz-Deiz's (2009: 11) philosophical discourse, which claims that:

Colour reveals itself as a powerful means to stimulate the perception of reality. Our conception of reality today is not that of 12th century man for whom life was a step towards eternity. On contrary, we believe in the ephemeral, with no past and no future, and where everything changes and is transformed in an instant. The perception of colour reveals such notions. It highlights space ambiguousness and ephemeral and unstable conditions, whilst underpinning myths and affections.

Later in this discourse, Cruz-Deiz (2009: 56) interprets colour as an ephemeral event that takes place in space and time. This concept is based on his personal reflections and intuitive exploration. Cruz-Deiz does not elaborate on the essential properties of a colour event; however, the universality of his philosophical assumption provides a foundation for inferring environmental colour as a dynamic and spatiotemporal event. Building upon the Ronchi's (2002) and Cruz-Deiz's (2009) concepts, the ECE can be related to the ECC of an urban space within a variable timeframe. Therefore, an ECE is characterised by both static and dynamic properties. The static properties are representative of the inherent colours of the built forms and urban elements. They are associated with the functional use, aesthetic value or symbolic meaning of colour. The dynamic properties reflect changing conditions influenced by natural and coloured artificial light, running images of digital billboards, interactive art installations and human activity.

Light and colour are inseparable factors in the process of environmental perception (Anter, 2000). During the day, the angle of natural light changes, which affects the appearance of perceived colours. Further, Tosca (2002) argues that contemporary cityscapes are significantly influenced by both natural light and artificial illumination, the latter of which makes it possible to visually modify the appearance of objects and space independent of viewing angles, distance and movement. Thus, Tosca (2002: 442) defines

two distinct images: 'the cityscape of daylight and that of the artificial light'. For examples of this in Brisbane, see Figure 4.

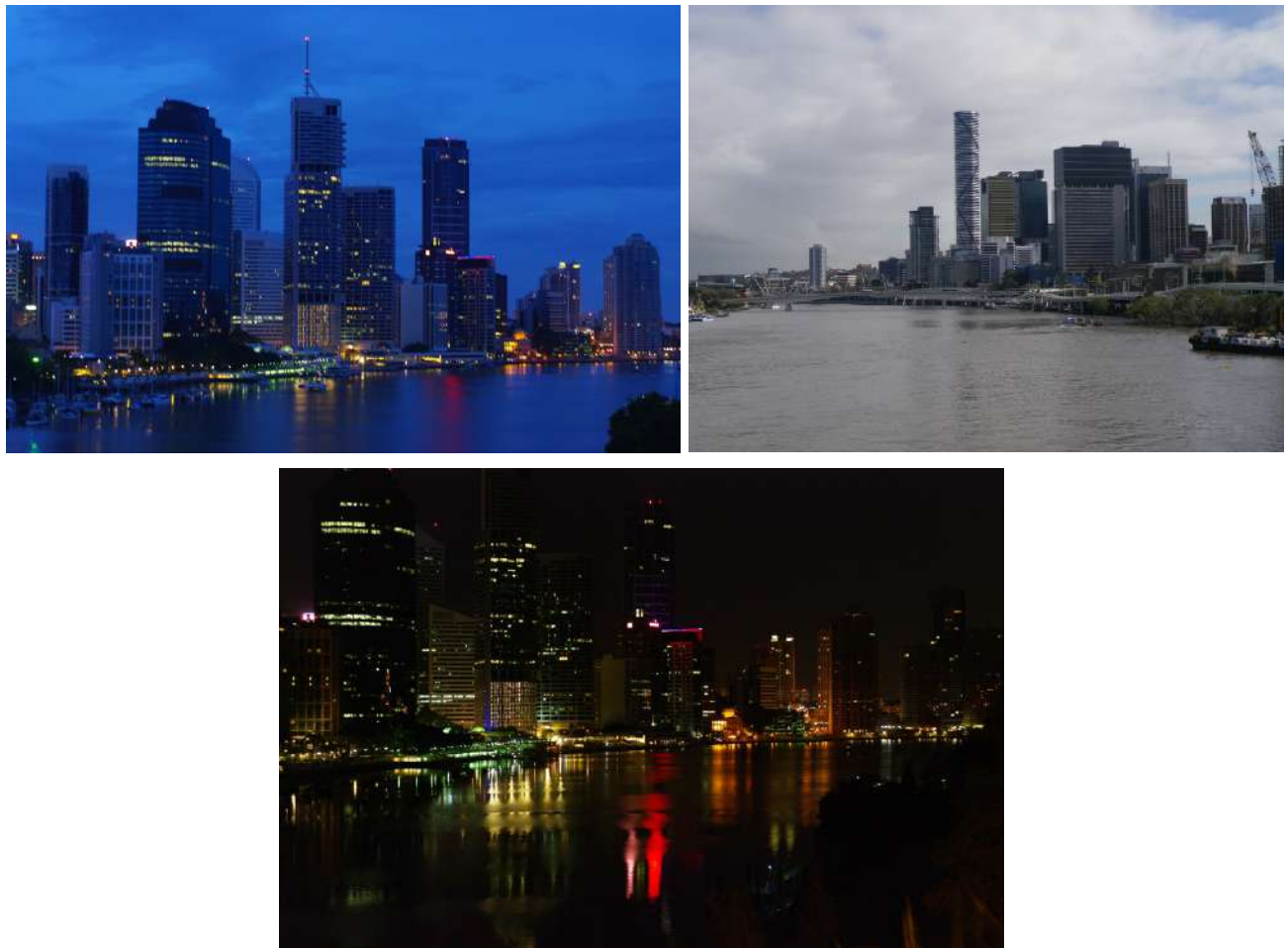


Figure 4. Brisbane city: morning and night. Photographs are the authors'.

Lenclos (2009: 86) draws a parallel with Tosca (2002) and suggests that:

Yet another phenomenon is commonly seen in today's cities across the world where buildings are no longer designed to function as an architectural event to be expressed during the light of day. Using a programmed choreography of coloured light, they can transform into a dynamic after-dark spectacle which can either complement or contrast with their daytime appearance. Well-known examples of this dual existence are found in Jean Nouvel's Agbar Tower in Barcelona which, after nightfall, assumes a new and vibrant persona.

Presumably, illumination as a design element of ECE allows linkage of day and night-time visual experiences. Dynamic lighting setups can be created to smooth the transition between sunlight and nocturnal ambience by balancing visual stimulation within changing conditions. Purpose-selected coloured lighting may emphasise the symbolic meaning of local colour and enhance the cultural identity of an urban area.

The idea of continuity in visual experiences relates to our original interpretation of environmental colour scenarios. Following the definition of ECE, an environmental colour

scenario (ECS) is a coordinated set of recurring ECEs linked by a thread of identifiable colour leitmotifs. Hypothetically, a designed colour scenario contributes to harmonious and balanced relationships between the static and dynamic colours of an urban setting. Additionally, the variations of ECEs within a designed scenario enrich visual experiences. Inference of ECS as a holistic design approach is ontologically rooted in the 'primary design' theory invented by Castelli. The theory shifts focus in colour design towards the non-material—or so-called 'soft'—aspects, which generally remain secondary in design rationales and are often underestimated by architects (Thackara, 1985: 28). These soft aspects include colour, light, microclimate, decoration and even odour and background sound. Castelli (cited in Mitchell, 1993) claims that his design approach intentionally eliminates forms and considers colour, light, texture and sound as means of design. He also emphasised the limitations of the traditional two-dimensional presentation of architectural designs. According to Castelli (cited in Mitchell, 1993: 88), two-dimensional architectural drawings 'tend to stress the objective properties of a product and neglect the subjective aspects, including sensual qualities'.

Mitchell (1993) positioned 'primary design' within the contextual design trend that is considered a catalyst for the user's perceived aesthetic experience. In keeping with contextual design traditions, an ECS is primarily concerned with experiences of colour and light in urban environments. This design approach aims to create a context in which an ECE will be perceived. However, a question that arises is whether the proposed concepts of ECS may inform applicable design methods.

The description of an ECD methodology is outside the scope of this paper. Rather, we hope to initiate debate on this important topic. Ronchi (2002) defines ECD as 'a holistic approach to the design of environmental colour composition on different spatial scales, which involves a parallel analysis of architectural, semiotic, illumination-related data as well as human-environment interaction'. This definition underlines the fundamental procedural differences between ECD and the more traditional application of colour in form design.

From our perspective, as a tangible element of an ECE, an environmental colour palette can be created using the fundamental principles of colour harmonies and contrasts. Environmental colour and material palettes can be documented and matched to the NCS colour order system in a conventional way. The initial environmental colour palette can be merged with a lighting design to create desirable visual experiences bounded by an ECS. ECEs can only be understood through perception and emotions. Psychological responses to environmental colour are subjective and difficult to assess. However, an augmented reality simulation may allow prospective users to virtually experience a singular ECE or a whole ECS and then describe their emotions using appropriate psychometric charts. To achieve a realistic presentation, the augmented simulation should integrate measurable parameters and perceived characteristics of an ECS. To make this process more user-centred, the initial design objectives can be modified based on the users' responses. While the process described may sound complicated, it could be simplified by a thorough design application program. We believe that many practicing architects and urban designers would agree that there is a need for an application to merge theoretical and multidisciplinary colour knowledge in a meaningful way.

In conclusion, a better understanding of the complexity and psychological effects of ECCs in contemporary urban settings can guide a more informed and user-responsive approach to ECD. The proposed concepts of ECE and ECS provide a foundation for further theoretical inquiry and the development of an applicable design methodology that could

be used by practicing architects, urban designers and planners. The exploration of ECS in urban contexts reveals opportunities for a holistic approach to ECD based on an appreciation of both colour theories and designs for positive visual experiences.

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VIEWPOINT

Application to Occupy

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'A city finds itself 'Under Construction'...a permanent state of affairs.'
(Koolhaas & Foster 2013: 48)



Fig. 1. Gantry Section D, RMIT Swanston St, Melbourne 2016-2017. Artwork: Grace Leone.
Photo Credit: Nura Sheidaee

Urban Animators: Living Laboratory (UA:LL) was a public art research project that actively engaged with the RMIT University New Academic Street capital works project, undertaken at the Melbourne city campus from 2015-2017. The construction site and the

surrounding campus were envisaged as a living laboratory encouraging research that engaged with the internal infrastructure, process and community of RMIT University. As curator of the UA:LL public art program I created a framework that encouraged collaboration, provocation, solidarity and exchange amongst RMIT University students, staff and alumni. This was achieved through the process of open expression of interests, learning and teaching, invited artists and industry research partnerships all resulting in public artworks embedded in the construction zone. The artistic installations included public artworks on construction hoardings and projections within the construction zone that positively activated the site condition and helped mitigate the disruption occurring on the campus.

As a curator, artist and designer I proposed a spatial curatorial proposition to the city via a public art installation titled 'Gantry Section D' as part of the UA:LL program. 'Gantry Section D' was the result of an intensive period of practice based investigation into the condition created when a city is undergoing transformation. During the process of construction, property developers gain permission to occupy the public space of footpaths and roads to accommodate processes and equipment directly related to building construction. This council permission is provided through a formal permit application and payment of associated costs. The calculation of the permit is typically calculated by multiplying the number of weeks of occupation, by the total area occupied, by the weekly occupancy rate. Essentially the public footpaths and roads become available for rent during construction processes resulting in a particular spatial condition littered with the construction hoarding and gantries.

My fieldwork investigated and documented this spatial condition using photography and performance within cities and suburbs in Melbourne and Shanghai taking note of the materials, colours, textures, layers, pedestrian activity and compositions. The presentation of the photographic documentation Photographic Matrix (Figure 1) is an extension of the fieldwork as the intentional gridded matrix of the images is an attempt to highlight the imposed perception of order versus the chaos in the experienced space. My production of a public performance piece, 'Shanghai Scaffolding' (Shanghai China, 2015) investigated the construction scaffolding occupation of the footpath, the pedestrian and the hazard tape. The performance and the physical composition of the elements highlighted the tension between the pedestrian and the public space occupied by construction gantries.

The fieldwork (Figure 2-5) informed the creation of 'Gantry Section D' a public art installation named after the notation used on architectural drawings that communicated the hoarding layout to builders. At the site of this installation the construction hoarding was the first piece of temporary architecture that was erected; delineating the construction zone from the public space. The construction gantry was then erected creating a space which corralled the public along the street. The steel columns and beams of the gantry supported an overhead platform which created a zone cantilevering over the footpath for builders to occupy with construction equipment. The footpath became formally occupied by the architecture of the gantry.

'Gantry Section D' expressed the architecture of the temporary hoarding and gantry occupying the public space by employing the iconography of the yellow and black hazard strip. The intention was to transform the occupied public space and create a spatial environment that visually privileged the pedestrian. The use of yellow and black stripes referenced the Australian Standards AS1318 which states 'yellow shall be the basic or

background colour, used alone or in conjunction with black for marking the following places where caution should be exercised and where cautionary notices of a general nature should be displayed.’



Fig. 2. Photographic Matrix. Artwork: Grace Leone. Photo Credit: Grace Leone.



From top, clockwise. Fig. 3. Construction Gantry, Melbourne, 2015. Artwork: Grace Leone. Photo Credit: Grace Leone.

Fig. 4. Construction Gantry, Shanghai, 2015. Artwork: Grace Leone. Photo Credit: Grace Leone.

Fig. 5. Shanghai Scaffolding Intervention 1, Shanghai, China, 2015. Artwork: Grace Leone. Photo Credit: Grace Leone. Performer: C. McCracken.

Fig. 6. Shanghai Scaffolding Intervention 2, Shanghai, China, 2015. Artwork: Grace Leone. Photo Credit: Grace Leone. Performer: C. McCracken

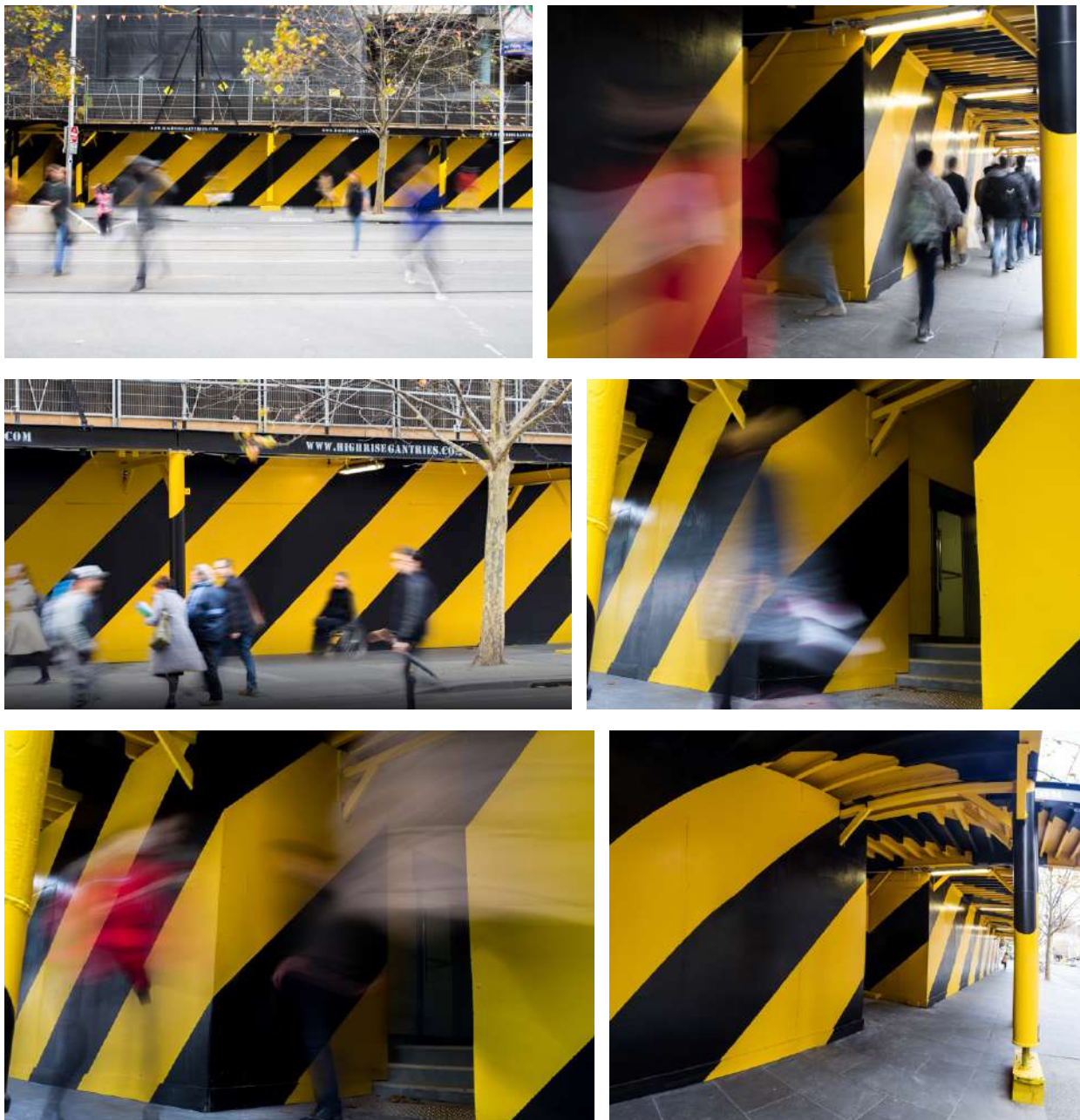


Fig. 6-11. Gantry Section D, RMIT Swanston St, Melbourne 2016-2017. Artwork: Grace Leone.
Photo Credit: Nura Sheidaee.

The iconography of the yellow and black stripe was intentionally scaled to human proportions creating a backdrop to the activities of the pedestrians and bringing to the forefront the effects of the gantry structure occupation on public space. The painted application of the yellow and black stripe extended over the wall of the hoarding and up to the underside of the platform overhead. The columns supporting the platform also received an application of the stripe, the composition ensuring that if viewed from across the road the stripes aligned with the stripes on the hoarding wall. The intention was to also acknowledge the architecture of the bluestone pavement as part of the spatial

condition with an application of painted yellow and black stripes. However council permits did not look favourably on the application of a painted graphic onto permanent structures in public space.

'Gantry Section D' became a stage for the everyday activities of pedestrians in public space occupied by construction hoarding and gantries. The application of the yellow and black hazard stripe on the spatial condition returned the focus back onto the pedestrian by placing them centre stage. 'Gantry Section D' questioned the public environment created when property developers are granted the permission to occupy public space during a city under construction.

'The stripe is not disorder; it is sign of disorder and a means of restoring order. The stripe is not exclusion; it is a mark of exclusion and an attempt at re integration.'
(Pastoureau, 2003: 90).

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VIEWPOINT

Postcards from the edge (of the Arabian Sea). Tales from the ballPark: this liminal life

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so binDi set off to India and attempted to peel back the veils. But India was not always kind to her, the photo shoot beauty a mere layer. She was older now, a young mind trapped in the body of a 60 year old. It was difficult. She visited forts and palaces, and wished they were not all built on the top of hills. She experienced the stillness of a lake at sunset, quickly marred by the din of traffic. She wasn't looking for God, and never found her....But she found her voice again in Kerala where her heart sang. Her smile returned. Her laughter was heard.

Artists statement from
(binDi Ball is deeply superficial: 2012)
Re-Picturing the Feminine: New Hybrid Realities in the Artworld
A Survey of Indian and Australian Contemporary Female Artists

Art brought me to this place, but art and so much more sees my returning and living here 6 months of every year. For 6 years. This PLACE is Fort Cochin in the state of Kerala in South India. The Art that brought me here was my participation in an exhibition entitled *Re-Picturing the Feminine: New Hybrid Realities in the Artworld – A Survey of Indian and Australian Contemporary Female Artists* at OED Gallery Fort Cochin, running concurrently with the first contemporary art Biennale in India: the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2012. I had decided to spend 6 weeks in Fort Cochin in order to make new work informed by the place, but I had never been to India so I went on a tour in North India beforehand. I spent 23 days travelling from Mumbai to New Delhi via Mt Abu, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Agra, Orchha and Varanasi and arrived in the south exhausted and not a fan. I can't eat spicy food, I don't like crowds, and the rubbish everywhere was horrible. I may have exclaimed; "I am such a Paris girl!!". Yet here I am, 6 years later, living a liminal life; on the edge of the Arabian Sea, between East and West, between 2 cultures, navigating my way.

Fort Cochin is essentially a village within a larger metropolis called Ernakulam. It sits at the mouth of the Periyar River overlooking a major shipping channel which sees container ships, naval vessels, gargantuan cruise ships, and fishing boats both big and small ply the waters. (Best seen from a table at Seagulls with a cold Kingfisher beer in hand.) Kerala's motto is God's Own Country and Fort Cochin and its adjacent town of Mattancherry are home to 13 different cultures/ religions. It is also famous for spices and India's first contemporary art Biennale.



Chinese fishing nets, Fort Cochin.

The first Biennale was called the Kochi-Muziris Biennale because it wished to reintroduce the name of Muziris.

The Kochi Muziris Biennale seeks to create a new language of cosmopolitanism and modernity that is rooted in the lived and living experience of this old trading port, which for more than six centuries, has been a crucible of numerous communal identities. (...) These (...) pre-date the post-enlightenment ideas of cultural pluralism, globalization and multiculturalism. They can be traced to Muziris, the ancient city that was buried under layers of mud and mythology after a massive flood in the 14th century.¹

The story of Muziris starts from early 3000 BC when Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians and later Arabs and Phoenicians came to the Malabar Coast in search of spices; Muziris in Kodungallur entered into the cartography of World trade map.

Tamil Sangam literature (300BC to 300AD) describes Roman ships coming to Muziris laden with gold to be exchanged for pepper, turning Muziris into the hub of a major spice trade. Evidence from a papyrus in the Vienna museum speaks of trade agreement between Muziris and Alexandria indicating that a substantial amount of trade flourished between India and the Greco Roman world that passed through Muziris.

With its streets, its houses, its covered fishing boats, where they sell fish, where they pile up rice-with the shifting and mingling crowd of a boisterous river-bank were the sacks of pepper are heaped up-with its gold deliveries, carried by the ocean-going ships and brought to the river bank by local boats, the city of the gold-collared Kuttuvan (Chera chief), the city that bestows wealth to its visitors indiscriminately, and the merchants of the mountains, and the merchants of the sea, the city where liquor abounds, yes, this Muciri, were the rumbling ocean roars, is given to me like a marvel, a treasure².

¹ *Against All Odds* (2012), DCBooks, p. 20.

² The *Purananuru* is a Tamil poetic work in the *Eṭṭuthokai*, one of the eighteen *melkanakku noolgal*. It is a treatise on kingship: what a king should be, how he should act, how he should treat his subjects and how he should show his generosity. The *Purananuru* is one of the eight books in the secular anthology of Sangam literature and is entirely unique in Indian literature, which are nearly all religious texts during this era. The *Purananuru* is a source of information on the political and social history of prehistoric Tamil Nadu.

Pliny the Elder gives a description of voyages to India in the 1st century AD. He refers to many Indian ports in his *The Natural History* (which became a model for later encyclopedias and scholarly works).



The Table Peutingeriana is one of the oldest maps of the world depicting ancient towns, seas, rivers, forests, mountain ranges and Roman Roads. It dates to the 12th century AD but is a copy of a 4th century Roman map. Comprising 11 sheets of parchment it measures 6800 mm long and is 330mm wide making it a compressed rendering of the real landscape. Muziris is in the bottom left of this copy in the Muziris Museum in Pattanam.

To those who are bound for India, Ocelis in the Red Sea is the best place for embarkation. If the wind, called Hippalus (south-west Monsoon), happens to be blowing it is possible to arrive in forty days at the nearest market in India, Muziris by name. This, however, is not a very desirable place for disembarkation, on account of the pirates which frequent its vicinity, where they occupy a place called Nitrias; nor, in fact, is it very rich in articles of merchandise. Besides, the roadstead for shipping is a considerable distance from the shore, and the cargoes have to be conveyed in boats, either for loading or discharging. At the moment that I am writing these pages, the name of the King of this place is Celebothras.

The current port of Kochi was first formed in 1341 AD when there was a tsunami –like disaster following which the river Periyar flooded its banks altering the geography and burying the ancient port of Muziris. And so, on the 12/12/2012, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale opened to great success in the area known as Fort Cochin/Mattancherry in the larger area of Kochi. Bose Krishnamachari, the biennale’s cofounder, attributes this (success) to the city’s history and cultural profile.



Muziris Children's Museum, Pattanam, Kerala
Kerala Council for Historical Research

Kochi and Muziris represent a long tradition of open interaction with the rest of the world, a vibrant exchange of ideas with the Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch, French and English traders. This has left an indelible mark on the city's culture, cuisine and architecture, offering perspectives from all corners of the globe and different time periods.³

The book serving as a record of this first Biennale is titled *Against All Odds*. It charts the stormy waters leading up to the opening day, providing an insight into the vision, the politics, the negative campaigns, but ultimately, its' great success. There was nothing to start with – no infrastructure, only a town with some disused colonial warehouses and bungalows. And a vision. A vision to create India's first Art Biennale to transform contemporary art in the country. This vision was a result of an idea by Kerala born artists Bose Krishnamachari and Riyas Komu who had left to further their artistic careers but had always hoped to return. In the Preface to the book, Bose describes those times:

"(...) We had no idea that (the Biennale) would sweep over us like an avalanche. Indeed it has hurt and caused more damage than an avalanche could. (...) It was easier dreamt and discussed than done, It had virtually thrown us into a cauldron. It was a journey not to be forgotten: painful testing, and above all, memorable. The path was strewn with hurdles and troubles but never did we think of calling it quits."⁴

And it was a great success.

Curated by Bose and Riyas, featuring 94 artists from 23 countries across 14 venues, the multicoloured flag rose up the pole in the historic compound of Aspinwall House on 12/12/2012.⁵

³ https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/magazines/travel/rediscovering-the-ancient-port-city-of-muziris/articleshow/57226035.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

⁴ *Against All Odds* (2012), DCBooks, p. 10.

⁵ Aspinwall House is a large sea-facing heritage property in Fort Kochi on the way to Mattancherry. The property was originally the business premises of Aspinwall & Company Ltd. established in 1867 by English trader John H Aspinwall. Under the guidance of Aspinwall the Company traded in coconut oil, pepper, timber, lemon grass oil, ginger, turmeric, spices, hides and later in coir, coffee, tea and rubber.



Aspinwall House.

It became the world's first biennale to be archived and digitized by Google Art Project. The Google Art Project has archived the entire Biennale and is open to anyone with an internet connection⁶.



Nalini Malani and Fiona Hall, artists extraordinaire.

It presented 'Site Imaginaries', a two-day symposium co-organised by Marieke Van Hal (Biennial Foundation) and advised by Gayatri Sinha and Paul Domela (Liverpool Biennial)⁷.

The Biennale actively engages the rich domain of cosmopolitanism and modernity that is rooted in the lived and living experience of this old trading port, which, for more than six centuries, has been a crucible of numerous communal identities.

It is necessary to explore and retrieve memories in the current global context to posit alternatives to political and cultural discourses, and build a platform for dialogue for a new aesthetics and politics rooted in the Indian experience.

⁶ <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/kochi-biennale>

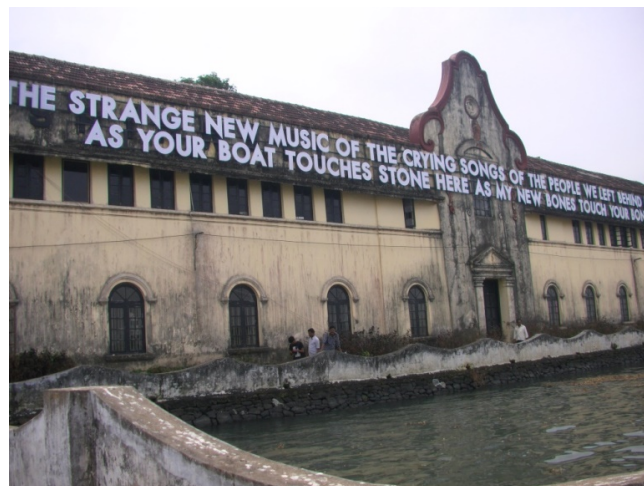
⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/KochiMuzirisBiennale/posts/534220259935158>

From a global perspective we also need to examine the artist as manifest in expanding geographies, and a redefinition of the regions of art. The two-day international symposium to coincide with the first Kochi-Muziris Biennale will discuss these issues pertinent to the biennale⁸.



Santiago Sierra (2012) *Destroyed Word* (installation view of video)

It presented “Let’s Talk”; a series of lectures. It revitalized Durbar Hall⁹. Its’ educational outreach programmes gave 50 students from I I colleges a chance to be a part of India’s first Biennale and interact with some of the best contemporary artists from across the globe. It revived traditional art forms.



On the left. Robert Montgomery (2012) *Fado Music in Reverse*.

And in doing so it changed Fort Cochin/Mattancherry. Locals referred to it as OUR Biennale; indeed the very word Biennale inserted itself into the lexicon. There were

⁸ <http://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennials/kochi-muziris-biennale-india/>

⁹ Durbar Hall was a heritage structure in Ernakulam City which was transformed into a world class exhibition space by the Kochi Biennale Foundation as one of their first projects. The work was carefully completed without affecting the heritage status of the building.

300,000 visitors in that first year and this grew to 500,000 in 2014 and even more in 2016. Biennales have proliferated globally often as a means to “use” culture as an economic driver resulting in a global mobility of artists, curators, gallerists, critics, collectors and visitors on an international level that brings with it the potential for urban regeneration and economic dispersion. In Fort Cochin/Mattancherry this benefit was obvious to homestay owners, restaurants, tea shops, postcard sellers, rickshaw drivers . Local people stepped up, on an individual level, realising what the biennale was doing for them, socio-economically and culturally, and in terms of putting Kochi on the international culture map. The Biennale venues were opened up to the public using public spaces, or allowing access to venues from which the public is usually excluded, and in so doing created a sense of the use of space “out of the ordinary”.



Robert E. D'Souza , Reader in Critical and Cultural Theory Within Winchester School of Art, writes of the Biennale:

The construction, let alone the launching, of exhibitions across citywide sites, was visibly challenging. The effect of this was not wholly detrimental to the event, lending a grassroots feel in the communal problem solving, which I could see still being played out well after the launch. It seemed apt in this deeply socialist state to see the visibility of the labor needed in the “production” of art, which, in other circumstances, might have been a less effective avant-garde gesture or performance but here seemed both honest and a welcome antidote to the self-conscious performance of reality.

While it was clear that some international visitors were perturbed by the unfinished nature of the biennale spaces and the lack of censure, it was also clear that this situation radically located this particular biennale as being uniquely Indian while acting as an antithetical gesture to the homogeneity and the clinical choreography of similar Western art events I have visited. What was also refreshingly apparent was the diversity of the audience: not just the usual suspects and VIPs of the international pack of art tourists, critics, curators, artists, and media that would normally be present, but a very democratic and largely local contingent that comprised local workers, schoolchildren, and a very general public. The influx of the art jet set is a manifestation of the politics of globalization, and when seen in Kerala brings to mind that “in The Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels argue that the bourgeoisie has created a new internationalism via the world market” (Harvey 1990: 99). Fortunately the lack of physical barriers or entry fee made for a more accessible event, while the reappointing of redundant

historical spaces with many works responsive to the locality made visiting the biennale both an inclusive and a democratic proposition.¹⁰

This engagement with local politics and people flourished in ensuing Biennales. KMB2014 curated by Jitish Kallat and entitled “Whorled Explorations ” included History Now (a series of talks and seminars), an Artists’s Cinema, Student’s Biennale, Children’s Biennale and a Program of events focusing on traditional art forms. The First Urban Space Dialogue in Kerala was organised by the Centre for Public Policy Research Centre for Urban Studies in partnership with Kochi Biennale Foundation where artists, architects and policy makers converged at Aspinwall. The Dialogue brainstormed ideas on Urban Spaces and the necessity of it in the state of Kerala. The panelists shared their experiences and vision of creating the right urban spaces to “ enlighten the curiousness of the citizenry”.¹¹

KMB2016 curated by Sudarshan Shetty was titled “Forming in the pupil of an eye” It repeated its’ extensive programming such as Student’s Biennale, Cinema and Seminars, and extended the reach physically by installing at Kottapuram Fort, some 25 kms from Fort Cochin and built by the Portuguese in 1523 and referred to popularly as Cranganore Fort.



Our identities are shaped by the stories we hear and tell about ourselves over time. While certain aspects of identity are fixed and unchangeable , our social identity is formed in relationship to others. They are produced in our encounters with other people and can be understood as forms of “everyday performances” or “masks” that we wear differently depending on who we are with and what we want to present about ourselves. *Spirit of Place (Genius Loci)* refers to a unique, distinctive and cherished aspect of a place as much in the invisible weave of culture as it is in the tangible physical aspects of place: a new layer of ley lines, feng shui, leftover spaces¹². This spirit reflects how a city functions in real time as people move through time and space. And so here I am, living, loving my liminal life. I work with/inhabit various personae which act as filters for my past. They set up the instruments for my exploration and interrogation of identity. I weave notions of

¹⁰ <https://read.dukeupress.edu/cultural-politics/article/9/3/296/25931>

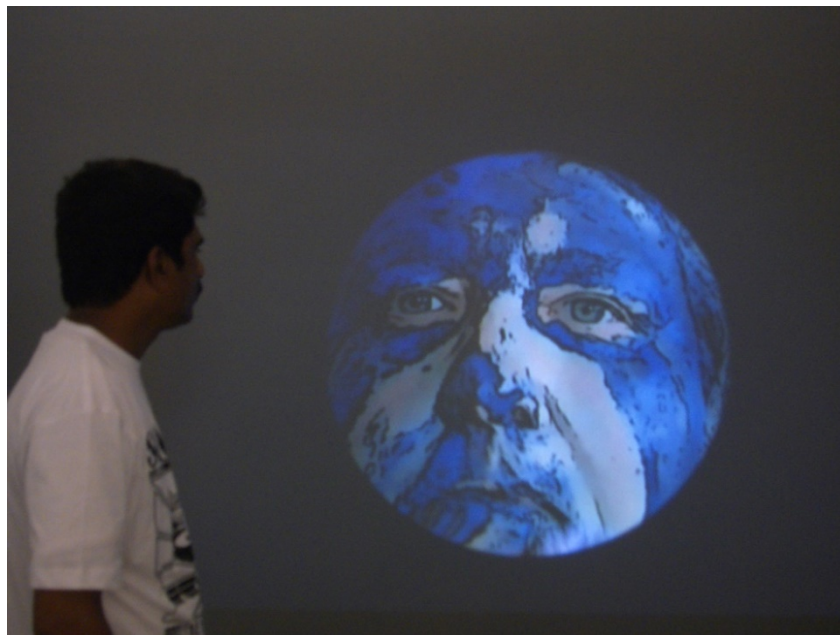
¹¹ <http://www.cppr.in/article/urban-space-dialogue-a-fusion-of-creativity-and-reality/>

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirit_of_place

Place and Identity into a series of insertions both performative and the residue of performance, and seek to engage with the local and in contrast with the “outsider”.



That outsider is ME. Di Ball. A large, old, Australian woman searching for her identity in this land.



Di Ball (2012), *binDi Ball is deeply superficial*, installation view of video

I look at myself
And find no trace of identity
In this some supersensory radiance
What is that unknown around which this unknown (self) rotates in perpetual motion?
It's as if the expanse of memory and forgetting, down the ages and far away
Make up its atmosphere
And get accumulated in different forms of history.
The "I" takes shape in its midst in the course of countless years.
Joy and Sorrow, good and ill, anger and envy, devotion friendship love -
with these are constituted its material body.
These are the ingredients - they are rotated, collected, danced.
The truth of their being
I myself haven't understood.

Rabindranath Tagore (1938) Prashna (Question) Visra-Bharati Vol XII, p. 135



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PORTFOLIO

Lebanon Cities' Public Spaces

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Public spaces, particularly in disadvantaged communities, bring people together to transform those spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, encourage renewal and serve common needs. Further, public spaces constitute a fundamental element in contemporary urban regeneration strategies entailing the creation of a public culture that shape public space for social interaction and constructing a visual representation of the city. A public space is a place publicly owned or of public use, which is accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive. There are different types of public spaces:

- 1) multi-use public spaces such as avenues, streets, squares, sidewalks;
- 2) public open spaces such as parks, gardens, public beaches and beaches;
- 3) public urban facilities including for example libraries, markets and sport facilities.

In city planning, public spaces are designed to improve the overall visual character of the city, as well as invigorating economic activities and enhancing the functionality of the city. Furthermore, public spaces promote social connectivity and diversity, thus making neighborhoods more cohesive, lively, and ultimately more attractive to residents and investors alike.

In Lebanon, the social connections are undeniable and crucial. However, meeting places remain private such as houses, restaurants, malls, and beach resorts. This is mainly due to the shortage of public spaces in Lebanon resulting from lack of planning, regulations and awareness around the right to the city and the importance of public spaces. In main cities where land prices are so expensive, common practice has prioritized the use of land in real estate development, thus trumping other uses such as public and communal spaces.

In the late 1990s, Lebanon saw the emergence of malls, which have arguably acted as alternatives to public spaces. Malls, with their wealth of food courts, restaurants, cinemas, and play areas, have become the new downtown for a portion of the Lebanese population. They are also considered safe, which is another important factor.

In 2015, the percentage of green spaces in Lebanon has decreased to less than 13%. While the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a minimum of 9m² of green space per capita (UN-HABITAT, 2016), Beirut has only 0.8m².

A Brief History of Public Spaces in Beirut

Most public spaces in Lebanon are a product of various political eras such as the Ottoman, Roman and French Eras. Public spaces dating to the Ottoman period include the Sanayeh Garden, the Serail and its gardens, Sahat Al Sur (Riadh Solh Square) and the Corniche. These spaces were developed as tools to modernize the city as per the Istanbul example and as a statement of the Empire's control. The Corniche remains until today one of the most functioning and dynamic public spaces in the city which welcomes people from all walks of life. Sanayeh Garden was also recently renovated by a private company, Azadea, revitalizing the space and making it attractive for the public, whether Lebanese communities or refugees.

The French Mandate brought changes to the city which reflects the French lifestyle with its cafés, cinemas and promenades, in addition to setting the stepping stone towards establishing an independent Lebanese state. Public spaces introduced by the French Mandate include Sahat Al Hamidiyah (Martyrs Square), Place de l'Etoile, the Pine Forest, and the Corniche, planned in Ottoman times.



Fig. 1. Martyr's Square, Beirut (image via Solidere).

The French Mandate influenced planning in Lebanon in terms of policies, regulations and plans which mark the city until today. Developed plans emphasized public spaces and focused on the transportation network and the urban expansion related to population growth. For example the currently adapted 1954 Ecohard plan focuses on the importance of public space. However, in terms of implementation streets were mostly implemented with little emphasis on open spaces.

In terms of plans and implementation, public spaces were losing importance especially in the face of the prevalence of private development and the prominence of the real estate market in Lebanon. This contributed to the loss of breathing spaces within very dense urban areas marked by a growing population. During the 1975 civil war period, Beirut's perpetual turbulences reduced its historical public spaces to scattered traces, thus annihilating them. The war divided the capital between east and west contributing to social segregation and resulting in reduced use of public spaces.



Fig. 2. Martyr's Square, Beirut (image via BlogBaladi).



Fig. 3. Place de l'Etoile, Beirut (image via word press).

“This eradication caused a distortion in the sociocultural Beirut framework and a huge gap in people’s everyday public lives. The post-war efforts to rejoin the divided city and reinstate its public spaces were limited to unrealized intentions. Beirut’s few public spaces struggled to regenerate or else changed their publicness according to their disposition in the city” (Madi, 2014).

The communities responded to the lack of public spaces by creating temporary spaces in the city to answer their needs to an open space. “This includes the minutia of plants on a porch to the use of a vacant lot for sports. These grass roots initiatives throughout the city are evidence of a response to urgent needs” (Madi, 2014).

Beirut: Public Spaces and Contested Spaces

Nowadays, very few spaces in the capital Beirut are designated as public. In addition to being scarce, they are often inaccessible or privatized. They consist of 49 public gardens and squares, as well as a fragmented waterfront appropriated by private interests. The Municipality of Beirut has not focused enough on providing the city with its much-needed public space. Thus the emergence of many activists who are fighting for the people's right to public spaces and the city. As such, many groups of people came together to raise awareness about the issue and create a dialogue with key stakeholders and the community. The activism includes individual and group initiatives involving university professors, environmentalists, and community organizations. Through engaging in initiatives revolving about public spaces, these activists have certainly been involved in shaping the future of these threatened commons, as well as raising awareness about them. Such public space activism initiatives in Beirut have relied on a range of community organization mechanisms, including discussion panels, public debates, artistic displays, petitions, campaigns, protests, strategic litigation, and lobbying.

Today, Beirut offers a limited number of public spaces, many of which are considered as dynamic gathering points in the city, and which carry significant meanings of integration. However, the city has also faced a challenge with many historic public spaces being replaced by private developments. Moreover, the heart of the city, Down Town, has been reconstructed and remains contested and debated whether or not it offers a public space. Here we explore some of these public spaces and the challenges around others.

Corniche El Manara

The vibrant public space of Corniche by the coast hosts around 30,000 users weekly from different age groups and social and educational backgrounds, performing a range of different social and sports activities. Most users commute by car to reach the Corniche and on average spend 1.65 hours there.

The space is used mostly for “informal” sports activities and leisure in the city. The majority use the space for jogging, walking, and hanging out, while the rest engage in swimming, fishing, and other sports activities such as biking and rollerblading. Some gather to play badminton in groups, some stop by the edge to stretch, children wander aimlessly followed by their parents and old men set up their checkerboards concentrating on winning the game amidst all the verve. Vendors also make their way to sell food especially fresh corn. The space's energy is heightened by social practices, many put out their plastic chairs, narguiles, and coffee from the nearby cafes to sit and chat. Young men also park their cars keeping the loud music on to enjoy the scenery and space with traditional songs in the background. Young girls and guys also wander on the Corniche while dressed up to gaze, be seen, or just use the space for a 'kazdoura'. Fishermen always line up on the edge of the Corniche looking outwards to the sea competing to catch their share of fish for the day. This vibrant public space is adjacent to AUB's raised wall that states that the institution is a separate entity from the Corniche (Chaaban 2008, Boustani 2012).

The Corniche remains today one of the most successful public spaces in the city.

Down Town Beirut: A Public Space?

Down Town Beirut was reconstructed by the private real estate company Solidere. The space mainly offers commercial shops, restaurants, private apartments and offices. Solidere urban planners were keen to offer public spaces in the design of the space. However there is a huge debate on whether these spaces are in fact public, private or even “privatized public spaces”. Those in favor of the space being public consider that it is open to being used by everyone, while those who argue against the space being public, explain that the presence of Solidere security guards at the entrances render it a private space. Moreover, many argue that the space was accessible to lower income populations by offering street markets and public spaces prior to being reconstructed. However, nowadays commercial activities are only affordable to higher income groups. “The orchestrators of the project have not indicated how the center would connect to the rest of the city and its population” (Madi, 2014).

The case of Horsh Beirut, namely the access to public parks

Horsh Beirut, also known as Horsh el Sanwbar or Pine Forest, is the biggest public green space in Beirut, covering an area of 400,000m². The history of development of the city of Beirut has always left traces and marks on this park, and the area has been continuously shrinking since the 20th century.

For more than 20 years, this urban park has been closed to the public. Prior to June 2016, only foreigners could access the park. The municipality of Beirut, argued that the closure of the park was due to security concerns and to prevent any sectarian or political conflict taking place in the park. Other concerns included prevention of abusive behavior and protection of the park from deterioration. These reasons seemed to contradict the meaning of public space, and this was the main argument used by civil society who worked together to reclaim the park and open it to the public.

A coalition of 20 NGOs worked for more than two years through street campaigning, awareness raising and liaising with government officials to gain the approval of the municipality and the governor of Beirut to open the park.

The park finally became accessible to the public in August 2016 and managed by the municipality.

The case of Dalieh & Ramlet el Baida

Waterfront property is contested in many cities, yet more so in Lebanon which has witnessed various private developments along its 135-mile coastline. Even though Lebanese Law states that all sandy beaches are public and inalienable (Fawaz, 2016), Lebanon’s coastline is increasingly being privatized with the Law being undermined.

This happened because: (1) of contradictions and lack of transparency in public records; (2) many modifications encouraged privatization to take place, in the form of “legal texts and decrees, ratified plans, formal decisions, and/or informal arrangements”; and (3) laws are issued by the same people governing and investing, so they manipulate it to serve their interests (Fawaz, 2016).

In particular, in Beirut, two remaining pieces of the coast that are publicly used, were threatened by illegal private development plans: the Dalieh of Raouche landmark and Ramlet el Baida, Beirut’s popular sandy beach. Both sites have been highly used and

accessible to lower income groups who otherwise cannot afford entry to Beirut's privatized beaches.

Dalieh of Raouche provided sustainable livelihood for many low-income city-dwellers and hosted many cultural activities (World Monument Fund, 2016). *Dalieh of Raouche* was threatened with plans to turn the public space into a private luxurious touristic resort. As soon as privatization plans were revealed, The Civil Campaign to Protect The *Dalieh of Raouche*¹ was formed by a group of concerned activists. They have succeeded to place *Dalieh* on the 2016 World Monuments Fund² Watch List. Today, although fenced, it is still accessible for people, who are afraid of future projects that might take place in the future.



Fig. 4 and 5. *Dalieh de Raouche*, Beirut (top image via Flickr, bottom image via ejatlas).

¹ <https://dalieh.org/>

² <https://www.wmf.org/project/dalieh-raouche>

Ramlet el Baida is a sandy beach located about a kilometer from Dalieh of Raouche. The space, which was accessible to the public for swimming and tanning, was threatened when the land was privatized. After fencing off the beach from the public, cranes started working on the construction of a luxurious resort in November 2016. Due to civil society pressure, the Lebanese State Council issued a suspension of the construction permit³ for the project in March 2017. However, construction was later continued with the project implemented.

Tripoli: a city losing its spaces

Tripoli's situation is different yet similar to that of Beirut. From an overview, the ratio of public space in the city is considerable, but that only tells half of the story. When looked upon more closely, it shows that, similar to the capital, the highest percentage of public spaces is concentrated in two bodies, the waterfront and the Rashid Karami International Fair (a one million square meter fair designed by the world-renowned Oscar Niemeyer). These two spaces can be compared to Beirut's "corniche" or waterfront and its biggest park "Horsh Beirut", which, like the fair, is not fully public due to several restrictions and concerns. In contrast to Beirut's streets and roads, Tripoli's streets allow more breathing space with wider sidewalks, more greenery and continuous uninterrupted spaces for pedestrians. The rest of the public spaces are small municipal lots, urban pockets and publicly used private lots.

Corniche El Mina

The waterfront contours the municipality of Mina and attracts the most users of any public space in the city, especially on weekends and public holidays. The users come from all sections of society and all parts of the city. It is a space used for sports, leisure and fishing. The waterfront is not equipped with proper facilities by the municipality or the government but individual efforts, characterized by kiosks, concession stands and boat rides, make up for this.



Fig. 6. Corniche el Mina (image via Mina Municipality).

³ In Arabic: <http://legal-agenda.com/article.php?id=3522>



Fig. 7. Corniche el Mina (image via Mina Municipality).

In a similar manner to “Corniche el Manara”, the waterfront of Tripoli remains the most successful public space of the city. On weekdays it is full of fishermen, joggers and cyclists while on weekends the Corniche is flooded by families, with their children, coming from as far as Akkar and Minnieh-Donnieh (one hour away from Tripoli). This space is also connected to Mina’s old core, a maritime town, and to the islands dispersed in front of its coast; hence fishing, diving and swimming remain vibrant activities practiced along the corniche.

Rashid Karami International Fair

The second largest “public” or semi-public space, Oscar Niemeyer’s Rashid Karami international fair has everything a modern public space needs in terms of equipment, facilities and open space. This space is fenced, gated and all entrances to it are controlled. Not everyone is allowed inside, it is mostly reserved for the middle and high classes. Nowadays it is mostly used for walking and running outside of the times when it is reserved for exhibitions and fairs. The municipality and the private sectors activate the fair scarcely for the yearly Tripoli International Festivals, the book fair and other exhibitions and forums (i.e. food, weddings etc).

The lost spaces

Scattered through the city are small municipal lots dedicated specifically to public gardens. The old city lacks a lot in that regard as very few lots are owned by the municipality, and those that are have proved to being under-maintained or under-equipped. Only very few municipal lots in the old city can be considered as proper public spaces and that is usually due to international organizations rehabilitating them. The most used spaces in a public manner in the old city are the “souks” or old markets. These markets, which were constructed at the era of the Ottomans and Mamelukes, are filled everyday with shoppers and people looking to spend some free time from dusk till dawn.



Fig. 8 and 9. Tripoli International Fair (top image via Tripolientrepreneurs, bottom image by lebanoninapicture).

At night both the souks and the public gardens are rarely used as they are perceived as unsafe spaces; the lack of lighting in them and to them is one of the main causes of that perception.

Outside the old city, these municipal lots fall into three categories:

- Poorly maintained public gardens
- Privatized lots
- Undeveloped lots

Few properly maintained public gardens exist in the city and this is due to expenses of maintenance and security. In order to avoid these fees, the municipality is signing Building Operate Transfer (BOT) contracts with the private sector to develop and operate these lots before returning their ownership back to the municipality after a certain number of years. These privately developed spaces become private properties that only seek financial gains, hence the city becomes more depleted of public spaces.

The lack of public amenities and properties is leading a large number of inhabitants into using private or semi-private properties in a public manner. Privately owned olive fields at

the boundaries of the city act as picnic spots on the weekends, while building canopies offering shade on the sidewalk make good hanging out spots for the inhabitants of the neighborhood.

The current situation of public spaces in Tripoli can be summarized as: the privatization of public spaces, the lack of spaces dedicated for public benefit, the plurality of actors and policies, the lack of maintenance and the lack of awareness when it comes to the rights and obligations of citizens.

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REGIONAL PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMME FOR ARAB STATES CASE STUDY TEMPLATE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Haddadine Public Space

Location, City, Country: *Al Aswak Sahat al Daftar, Haddadine, Tripoli, Lebanon*

Year: 2017

Main entity involved: (NGO or otherwise): Municipality of Tripoli, *Azm & Saade* (NGO), and Haddadine local committee

Partners and funding entities: *Azm & Saade*, the Embassy of Switzerland and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The neighbourhood of *Al Aswak Sahat Al Daftar* falls within the Tripoli municipality. It covers an area of 0.05 Km² within the community-defined boundary of Haddadine (approximate but not identical to the official Haddadine cadastre).

The old city where *Al Aswak Sahat Al Daftar* is situated is renowned for its historical character. Nearly 40 buildings are classified as heritage sites as they date back to the 14th century Mamluk period. The old city is also characterized by its historic mosques and Hammam, its operating old Souks as well as its traditional craftsmanship. The neighbourhood's population is estimated at 3,767 residents with 9% being Syrians and 1% Palestinians.

UN-Habitat Lebanon conducted a neighbourhood profiling identifying the main problems faced in the area. The findings show that there is weak collaboration between the municipality and the residents, which in its turn leads to reliance on NGOs for assistance. Women and youth groups feel unwelcome in the neighbourhood's public spaces. The former group reports a feeling of unsafety due to frequent harassment and lack of well-lit and accessible spaces. The latter group, which usually gathers in neighbourhood pockets, believes that they are regarded as terrorists in the eyes of the army as they cite frequent arrests.



Fig. 10. Haddadine Public Space: before



Fig. 11. Haddadine Public Space: after.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Several vacant spaces were identified through the process of neighbourhood profiling: a playground for children in Al Najah School, a few private yards that can be turned into common spaces, a vacant pool, and the garden of Al Mansouri Mosque. The pool and the public space around it were selected for this particular project.

Located at a Western edge of the neighbourhood outside the old town, the vacant pool occupied the Azm Mosque roundabout. During the late 1990s, the municipality of Tripoli decided to create fountains at several roundabouts throughout the city. By implementing large fountains the size of a small swimming pool, the municipality inadvertently invited people who otherwise do not have access to swimming facilities to plunge into the water. The municipality eventually emptied them to prevent drowning and other swimming-related accidents. Before the design intervention, children were playing Football in the empty fountain and injuring themselves with the broken tiles. Moreover, the on-site presence of an EDL (Electricité de Liban) transformer with exposed cables posed an electric hazard to the children using the space. The pool and the area around it, altogether a total of 400 sqm, were cloistered with a high steel fence. The children would climb on an adjacent electric column to go over the fence and access the space (Figure 3).



Fig. 12. Child climbing over the fence to reach the fountain space

The project of redesigning the Haddadine fountain space was aimed at turning it into a safe area that is accessible for the residents of the neighbourhood. This is especially true for the women in Haddadine who did not have any place to gather in the neighbourhood and socialize, as well as young children who were risking their lives to play in the fountain. In order to come up with an end product that can serve as a multipurpose common space, several key points had to be taken into consideration. Firstly, the idea of using local materials and local labour practices had social, economic and environmental dimensions. For it increases the ownership of local residents of the design, provides unemployed youth with a work opportunity, and saves cost and carbon emission from transporting new material from elsewhere. Secondly, the engagement of the direct users of the space also took shape through listening to their visions and implementing their ideas. The project was realized in partnership with the municipality and with Azm & Saade NGO. In addition, the users were assigned for the cleaning and maintenance of the space. Challenges were met during the implementation of works as the contractor had to collaborate with the local committee and employ unskilled labour from the neighbourhood. However, as the area is controlled by informal leaders, the gangs of these leaders pressured the contractor to hire them. As a result, the residents of the area rejected the project at first but the problem was eventually resolved.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The residents wanted to keep the space fenced for safety reasons. On the other hand, it was crucial to make the fence more visually appealing. The harsh orange and yellow steel vertical bars with spikes were therefore changed and the fence became galvanized steel with horizontal bars on which drawings of children and young individuals can be displayed (Figure 4). It was proposed that buckets for planting could be installed on the fence with the names of the women who would use them. The sidewalks were made more accessible for pedestrians as they were widened leaving lesser room for cars to park. A ramp for individuals with physical disabilities was installed at the entrance of the space. The transformer was additionally enclosed with a lock so that it would cease to pose any threat for young users especially.



Fig. 13. A more visually appealing and accessible fence was installed

Storm water management was another matter that had to be dealt with. The space was paved with porous material in order to allow for rainwater to infiltrate. An underground reservoir was installed to collect the water for irrigation and to fill the newly designed fountain. For solid waste disposal, trash bins were set inside the space as well as big dumpsters on the outside.

The space was divided into two parts with one being allocated for seating and the other as a playground for children. In the seating area, a water element remained the heart of the space yet was designed in a safer manner and with more adequate dimensions: a circular fountain of a 2.5 m diameter was constructed in the centre using materials from the walls of the old fountain (Figure 5). Surrounded with red and grey paved surfaces, the fountain became a pleasing focal element that can be filled with water without the previous risks. Two wooden pergolas, made by local workshops, were installed with wooden tables underneath and wooden benches on both sides of the pergolas.



Fig. 14. The new fountain was constructed out of recycled materials from the walls of the old fountain

Covered in artificial grass, the other section of the space was designed as a play area for kids. Durable and cost efficient steel playground equipment were chosen: three seesaws, a swing set consisting of three swings with wooden seats, and a jungle gym (Figure 6). Existing Ficus trees were kept around both the playground and the seating area and additional vegetation was added. Three types of evergreen trees were planted: Kurrajong (scientific name: *Brachychiton populneus*), Umbrella Pine (scientific name: *Pinus pinea*) and the Queen Palm (scientific name: *Cocos plumosa*) as well as one deciduous tree being the Cotton Tree (scientific name: *Bombax ceiba*). The space was also equipped with solar light poles. In order to maintain the security and cleanliness of the space, the municipality hired two guards for day shifts and night shifts respectively.



Fig. 15. Divided into two sections, the space now comprises a seating area and a play area

OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT/ RESULTS

On the 23rd of May 2017, UN-Habitat Lebanon organized in collaboration with the local committee, the municipality of Tripoli, and Azm&Saade an inauguration ceremony of the Haddadine public space. The event comprised short speeches by the stakeholders, ribbon cutting as well as animated activities for children.

In addition to the conflict that, as mentioned in the previous section took place due to the monopoly of informal leaders from the area, the maintenance of the space poses a big challenge.

Several design compromises had to be made with the municipality. Initially, transforming the whole 400 sqm to a Football area for children was proposed in the design. The municipality however insisted on dividing the space into two sections with one being for children and the other acting as an adult seating area. On the one hand, the outcome was positive as groups to whom the space was not previously accessible are now using it: Young boys and girls aged between 4 and 12 can now play safely; and women gather to watch their children play as they mingle in the seating area. On the other hand, there is now no room for teenagers to play since the equipment is only suitable for young children. Moreover, it was suggested in the main proposal that the wooden benches would be designed and constructed by local carpenters.

The kids used to say in the beginning that this space is for the municipality: now they accepted it as their own especially after several awareness campaigns were organized with the RTO (Regional Technical Office) and NGOs such as UTOPIA and Azm & Saadeh. The municipality of Tripoli is taking charge of the management and maintenance of the public space, also encouraging all active NGOs to use it for any event to keep the space active and accessible for all.

LESSONS LEARNED

As described in the previous section, the implemented design was met with mixed consequences. While the introduced playground attracted young children, the equipment was subjected to vandalism. It was concluded from this experience that using the most

durable material possible is a must. In addition to that, dealing with fencing proves to be a complicated matter in contexts with socio-economic and political tensions. Enclosing a public space with a barrier is typically not encouraged as it is supposed to be both visually and physically accessible to everyone. Yet in this case both the municipality and the local committee urged the architects to keep the fence. Design conciliation was then to maintain the boundary yet to replace the existing one with a more user-friendly form. Another valuable lesson is the importance of collaboration with various stakeholders. Coordinating with the municipality was crucial for the implementation. Nevertheless, without the involvement of the local committee as well as the NGOs working in the area, a sense of ownership of the space on part of the Haddadine residents would not have been sustained. For example as stated earlier the children attained an acceptance of the public space with the help of the campaigns organised by the RTO and the NGOs. Furthermore, the challenge lies in collaborating with the people who wanted to hijack the project, such as the informal leaders. It is important to keep in mind as well that compromises on the proposed design have to be often made in accordance with the various stakeholders and targeted groups.

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REGIONAL PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMME FOR ARAB STATES CASE STUDY TEMPLATE

GENERAL INFORMATION

Project: Implementation of a safe, inclusive, and accessible public space in Naba'a

Location ,City, Country: Naba'a, Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon

Year: 2016

Main entity involved: Municipality of Bourj Hammoud and Nabaa local committee

Partners and funding entities: UN-Habitat Public Spaces Programme

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Naba'a neighborhood is located within the municipal district of Bourj Hammoud, one of the eastern dense suburbs of Beirut. It is a low-income neighborhood spreading over 0.5 km², and has been accommodating a large number of Syrian refugees since the start of the Syrian crisis. The number of neighborhood inhabitants has increased from 22,000 inhabitants in 2012 to around 26,000 in 2014. Consequently, the municipality of Bourj Hammoud is overloaded with service and maintenance demands in shelter and infrastructure due to the increasing number of inhabitants in Naba'a and without having enough financial and human resources to respond to the magnitude of needed services.

UN-Habitat Lebanon implemented in October 2015 a rapid profiling; the findings showed that 60% of inhabitants are Syrian refugees. The study also showed that barely any public spaces exist within the neighborhood, leading children to use streets and sidewalks as a play zone. Furthermore, due to the absence of adequate public spaces, 57% of interviewed women prefer to stay home to avoid street harassment. According to this assessment, a high rate of tensions from Lebanese residents towards Syrians has been detected since the former consider that Syrian refugees have contributed to a denser and more deteriorating neighborhood.



Fig. 16. Naba'a, Bourj Hammoud: before.



Fig. 17. Naba'a, Bourj Hammoud: after.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A quick field assessment was conducted in coordination with Bourj Hammoud municipality and key stakeholders in Naba'a to identify a potential space to implement the project. Many

vacant areas were identified but most of them were private. The only available vacant space owned by the municipality is located within a residential area in the heart of Naba'a and for with an area of 200 sqm. A formal approval was granted by Bourj Hammoud municipality in order to implement a public space design on this property. This space however was being used as a coffee shop known to be a hub for drug users. Therefore the first intervention in coordination with the municipality as well as the local committee was to remove the coffee shop from the site. The following steps were carried out as pre-preparation for the intervention:

- 1) Creation of a local committee: As the UN-Habitat aims to engage the community in all phases of the project; a local committee was established in Naba'a (14 Persons) including key stakeholders and community leaders, i.e. Mokhtars, school directors, civil activists, representatives of active political parties as well as a representative from Bourj Hammoud municipality. The main objective behind the creation of this committee was to ensure that the main needs of the community are assessed and met in the design of the project as well as to ensure project's ownership and sustainability.
- 2) Development of a Minecraft Model: The participatory design of the Naba'a public space was developed with the help of Minecraft Model, an innovative tool previously used by UN-Habitat in several countries but for the first time in Lebanon. A technical study was prepared by the responsible engineer from UN-Habitat, in order to collect all needed information about the site. A set of materials was collected including photographs, Google maps and images, and GIS maps. The materials were then shared with the Minecraft modelers in order to start creation of the model which took around four weeks before the final validation.
- 3) Conducting orientation sessions: Prior to the Minecraft workshop, multiple orientation sessions were conducted with the community. The targeted groups were as follows: Group one involving children from 5 to 12 years of age, group two being adolescents from 12 to 18 years old, group three including youth from 18 to 25 years old group four for women over 25 years of age and a group of men over 25 years old (Figures 3 and 4). The selection of participants took into consideration gender aspects, the presence of Syrian refugees and the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The orientation sessions aimed to introduce the project, provide basic awareness on public spaces (what is public space, typologies of public spaces, why public spaces are important, the benefits of public spaces etc.), define the main problems of the space, and select the participants for the Minecraft Workshop. The main highlighted problems of the space were related to safety and security, the presence of drug users, the small size of the space, and the space users (is it only for children, for youth or for the whole family, is it for Lebanese or Syrians?). Around 120 persons from all age groups living within the geographical spectrum of the space participated in these orientation sessions.



Fig.18. Adolescents focus group.



Fig.19. Youth focus group.

- 4) **Minecraft Training:** 24 members from the community participated in a two-day Minecraft training workshop. The age of the participants ranged between 7 to 50, and included Lebanese and Syrians from different social backgrounds with fair gender distribution. The workshop facilitator started by welcoming the participants, explaining the objectives of the workshop and recapitulating the main findings from orientation sessions conducted previously (Figure 5). Afterwards, the participants were divided into 8 small teams of 3 persons each with relatively equal representation based on gender, age, nationalities and technical competence. Once the groups were formed, the facilitator explained to the participants how to build on Minecraft and explained the basic functions and how the software works. After a period of trial and error the

participants were ready to start building and designing the Naba'a Minecraft model (Figure 6).



Fig. 20. Workshop facilitator introducing Minecraft to the participants.



Fig. 21. Participants of all ages building and designing with the Minecraft model.

It took around half a day for the participants to translate their ideas into the Minecraft models. During the second part of the day, the teams tried to consolidate their designs to present them in front of the local committee. At the end, a priority list of interventions was set and agreed upon by the local committee and the participants. The list included: green areas, shaded areas, plantations, benches, fences, toilets, food kiosks, a pedestrian sidewalk and a waiting area. Following the workshop, the Minecraft facilitator used the notes taken during the previous steps and worked with UN-Habitat architect on consolidating a final design based on the participants' models (Figures 7 and 8).

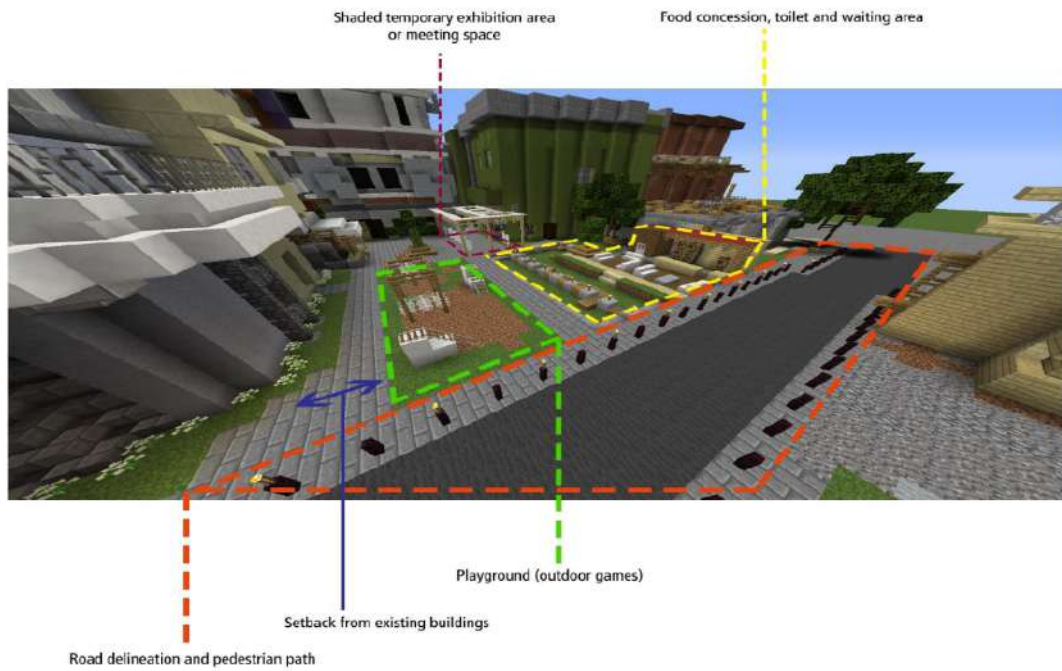


Fig. 22. The participants translated their ideas into a Minecraft model



Fig. 23. Architectural drawings based on the Minecraft model

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Civil works began in March 2017 involving local workers who were hired by the contractor. The 200 sqm area was covered with three distinct types of surfaces: The

entrance and the surrounding sidewalk of the site were repaired using interlock tiles with no mortar so that the water infiltrates and seeps into the green grass area (storm water reuse). Additionally, the sidewalk became more user-friendly as it is now accessible for individuals with physical disabilities (Figure 9).



Fig. 24. Preparation of the pavement. March 2017

The site itself was divided into three sides with a play-friendly soft surface: In the middle lies a green lawn with grey rubber surfaces on each side. Two steel tents were installed above parts of each of the rubber sections to provide shade and shelter from the rain and a resting area for parents escorting their kids to the space (Figure 10). Under the larger steel tent, concrete benches and picnic tables were arranged. In addition, a water tank was installed on the roof of the tent to irrigate the vegetation on site using the neighboring building's water overflow. A gutter that collects rain water and discharges it under the grass was also added.



Fig. 25. Dividing the space, April 2017

Different types of trees were planted in the lawn area. Ficus trees (scientific name: *Ficus nitida*) and Jacaranda trees (scientific name: *Jacaranda mimosifolia*) were placed along one of the fences of the site. Ficus trees are water efficient as they do not require much maintenance and irrigation. Jacaranda makes excellent shade trees. In late spring, Jacaranda blooms with a beautiful and fragrant purple foliage. Planted in the middle of the space Albizia trees were planted (scientific name: *Albizia julibrissin*) (Figure 11). Albizia, also known as Persian silk tree, is a fast growing tree with ferny leaves and fluffy pink flowers that resemble feathers. Apart from its attractive flowers, it is characterized by a fragrant smell and by that it attracts butterflies. Henna plants were also added.



Fig. 26: Albizia trees as a focal element of the space, June 2017.

Planters were installed by the sidewalk to prevent cars from parking and blocking the entrance. An arched monkey bar for children was added. Solar lights were installed on all six corners of the site. As the participants favored fencing the site for safety reasons, it was enclosed with a light wire fence that allows for visual access to the space even when it is closed. The site has one access point being a gate from the street side that will be kept open from 10 am to 8 pm daily and the municipality will be in charge of closing it during night. Surveillance of the site will be ensured by a municipal guard, and the lights will serve as night surveillance to expose any possible attempts at selling drugs in this spot during the night. The municipality will in addition take care of the maintenance of the site.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT/ RESULTS

On the 3rd of August 2017, UN-Habitat Lebanon organized in collaboration with the local committee and the municipality of Bourj Hammoud an inauguration ceremony of the Naba'a public space. The event was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Cooperation, and comprised short speeches by the stakeholders, ribbon cutting as well as animated activities for children. Shortly before 6 pm, the starting time of the ceremony, the streets were packed with individuals of all ages; Lebanese, Syrian, and other nationalities, women, men and children. The street was closed to cars during the afternoon and local vendors installed temporary kiosks selling food and beverages. Entertainment for the children was provided by mime artists and clowns from the neighborhood (Figure 12).



Fig. 27: Local Mime artist entertaining the children, August 2017.

A boy scout marching band played at the beginning of the ceremony, followed by the speeches and the official opening of the space. As soon as the ribbon was cut and the gate was opened by the municipal police, the children flocked after the clown into the green field, running, playing and waiting in line to climb atop the monkey bar (Figure 13).



Fig. 28: Children queuing for their turn to climb the arched monkey bar, August 2017.

The children now finally have a green space to play in. Women from the neighborhood have also started to bring their own food and gather at the picnic tables. The space will be used for future events organized by NGOs: Soon a roundtable is to be arranged by UN-Habitat Lebanon in coordination with the municipality to promote the use of the space by all local NGOs.

Nevertheless, several problems came across during and following the inauguration ceremony. Despite kids' enthusiasm, the arched monkey bar had to be eventually removed as it became the source of several injuries and fights among the children. Moreover, the municipality decided to prohibit young men exclusively from entering the space. While this

last decision defies the purpose of keeping the space accessible for everyone, the municipality felt obliged to undertake this step in order to keep the space from becoming again a hub for drug abuse.

LESSONS LEARNED

Security concerns can be a delicate matter in vulnerable neighborhoods with high rates of tension and drug abuse. While UN-Habitat team disagreed to fencing the space, both the local committee and the municipality insisted that a fence is crucial for averting previously existing troubles in the space. Moreover, the municipal guards were not able to fully control the situation and so it was finally decided that young men are restricted from entering the space. The design and use of any public space, including the Naba'a space, is therefore a work in progress shaped by the shifting social conditions within which it is entrenched.

It is obvious that local participation should be reinforced even after the design is implemented. This will aim toward an increased ownership of the space. It is proposed that in the near future someone from the residents will be employed for supervising the space instead of the municipal police. The space will also be upgraded with the help of the locals: the benches and the walls will be painted with graffiti, and the small plants currently occupying the planters on the sidewalk will be replaced with more visually enhanced trees. As mentioned in the previous section, the space will be constantly animated by events organized by local NGOs in the area. It is also important to note that this project would not have been possible without maintaining a strong collaboration between UN-Habitat Lebanon, the municipality as well as the local community.

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- UN-Habitat (2016) Using Minecraft for Community Participation. [online] Available from: <http://unhabitat.org/> [Accessed 20 July 2017].

ABI SAMRA PUBLIC SPACE COMPETITION

UN-HABITAT in partnership with the Order of Engineers and Architects in Tripoli recently organized a competition between universities for the design of a public space in Tripoli. The purpose of the competition was to support the municipality of Tripoli in obtaining a good design for one of its few remaining public spaces in Abi Samra, located within the City municipal boundaries. The design was developed through a structured process, whereby, students in Architecture faculties of 7 universities competed to offer the municipality with an appropriate and relevant design. The design was requested to be sustainable and conform to a budget falling between 1,300,000 and 1,600,000 USD. The choice of land did not come at random. The municipal plot is located in the South-West of Abi Samra, within a newly developed sub-neighborhood located across El Manar University. It is easily accessible to the inhabitants of Abi Samra and to people coming from nearby neighborhoods such as Mouharam and Haddaddine. Abi Samra was well known for its olive fields as it is called "Tripoli's East lung", however, over time, and with urban expansion, these fields have become threatened with extinction.

One of the objectives of the competition was to find design solutions that preserve the efficiency of the remaining green areas in parallel with the improvement of the human environment, with a clear and precise vision of the relation between the open green spaces, their proportions and their area, compared to the global planning and design standards.

A series of focus group discussions were conducted with local residents from Abi Samra, with a fair representation of gender/age groups (Children, adolescents, youth and adults) to pinpoint the needs of the community. During these discussions, participants complained about the scarcity of accessible and affordable public spaces in Abi Samra, and requested to have a multipurpose public space that can be used by all residents of the city.

The competition targeted students of Architecture faculties, 4th year level, and took place during the fall-semester of 2017-2018. Students worked in groups of 3 to 6 persons, and the universities were in charge of selecting two projects internally that were submitted to represent the faculty.

The final Jury presentation were held in the Order of Engineers and Architects in Tripoli on the 9th of December, 2017 where 9 teams presented their projects in front of the jury and one winning team was selected at the end. The jury members consisted of 5 academics and professionals coming from the American University of Beirut, the Lebanese American University and Tripoli Municipality, while there were lectures on different issues in Public Space design given by 3 different public space experts.

A team from the Lebanese University (Tripoli Branch), composed of 6 students, Ahmad Minaoui, Rouba Rima, Julia Katrib, Chaza Ghamraoui, Rachelle Shehayta and Sana Abdallah won first place.



Fig. 29: ABI SAMRA PUBLIC SPACE COMPETITION: the winning project



Fig. 30: ABI SAMRA PUBLIC SPACE COMPETITION: the winning project, night view

I. Prerequisites

- 2 A1 layouts (841 × 594mm), horizontal or vertical layout, which should include:
 - a) A general master plan on 1:200 scale;
 - b) A design concept/conceptual idea;
 - c) A graphic framework aimed to illustrate the project (i.e. plans, facades, cross-sections, diagrams) – choosing what to display and the relative scale is up to competitor's choice;
 - d) 3d views - i.e. renderings, pictures, hand sketches;
 - e) at least two significant cross-section on 1:200 scale;
- 1 Model: 1:200 scale;
- Bill of Quantities (Budget between 1,300,000 and 1,600,000 USD)
- Brief list of Specifications
- A power point presentation including a short 3D animation
- 1 Report of 400 words, explaining your design intentions, targeted audiences, planned activities and approach. It should be a relevant text explaining the project in a simple manner. The text shall include synthesis and written in English or Arabic.

II. Calendar/Key Milestones

- Official Launching of the competition: September 22nd, 2017
- Official Submission and Pin-up of Projects (2 projects per university): December 8th, 2017
- Final Jury Presentations and Selection of Winners: December 9th, 2017

III. Jury

- Bernard Mallat, Architecture and Design Department, AUB
- Carla Aramouny, Architecture and Design Department, AUB
- Dr. Yaser Abunnasr, Landscape and Ecomanagement Department, AUB
- Hala Younes, Architecture and Design Department, LAU
- Azza Fatfat, Head of the Engineering Department, Tripoli Municipality

The winning proposal

1. Site Analysis

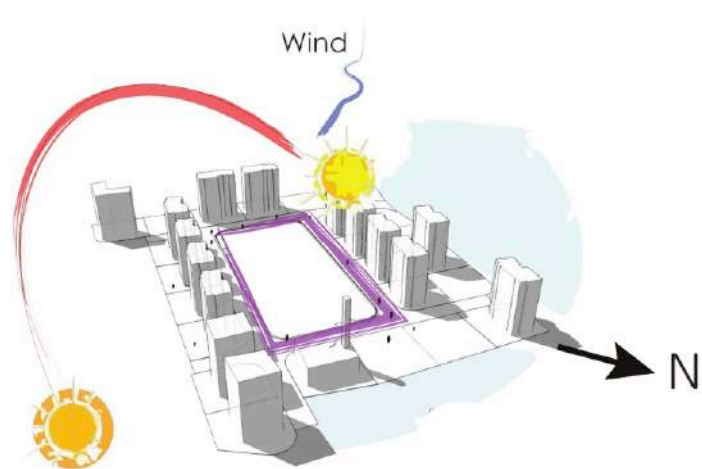


Fig. 31: ABI SAMRA PUBLIC SPACE COMPETITION: the winning project, site analysis.

The site's surroundings, like many other neighborhoods in Tripoli and Lebanon, was planned by the local authorities and developed by private developers. Architects and engineers are designing from above, prioritizing financial gain rather than the inhabitants' well-being. It is a global problem that most of our modern cities are facing.

Our case in Abi Samra is very special, as the link with the old neighborhood is still clear and dominant, not only physically, but also in the mentality of the inhabitants.

2. Problematic

What defines a public space in Abi Samra? How to address the Syrian Refugees? Are public spaces and gardens in Abi Samra a good example? How to deal with the privatization of public spaces in Abi Samra? How can the inhabitants contribute in the making of their neighborhood? How to create a social hub that can hold multiple activities? How to deal with public spaces in new urban fabrics?

3. The project: Ô-live, the community hub

DESIGN PROCESS

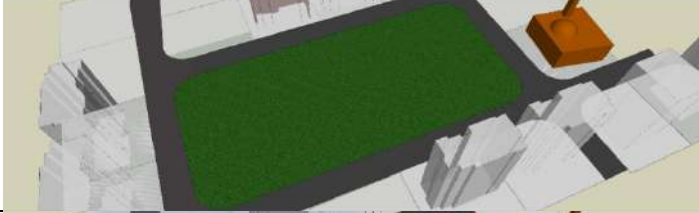
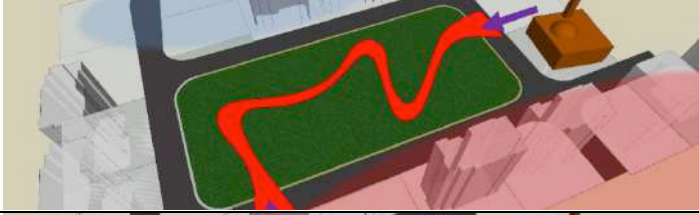
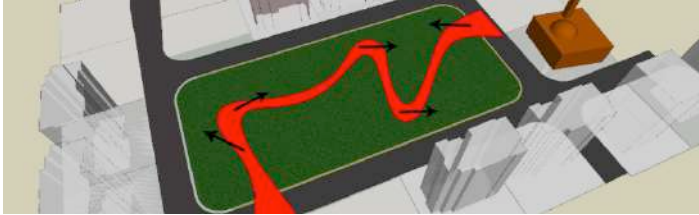
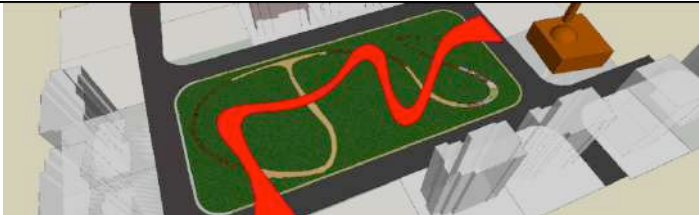
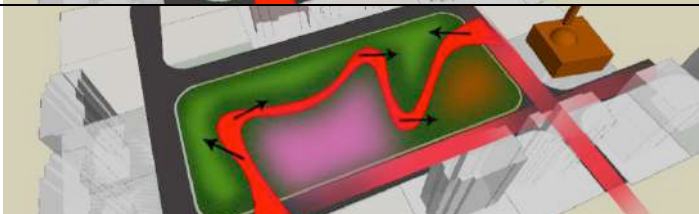
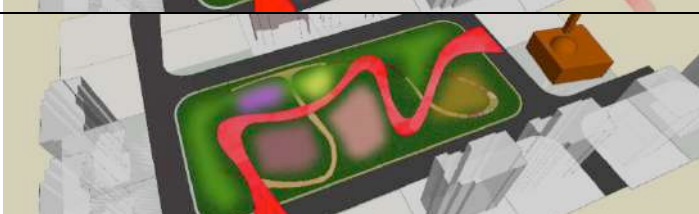

	Preserving the collective memory of Abi Samra
	Creating a social alley
	Curvy path: -Suspense -Different perspectives -Public space in constant innovation
	Creating a community sharing zone: -Facing the pedestrian flow -Generating curiosity
	A second path allowing a longer walk
	A network of dynamic paths encouraging relatedness
	Every node is a perspective changing point

Fig. 32: ABI SAMRA PUBLIC SPACE COMPETITION: the winning project, design process

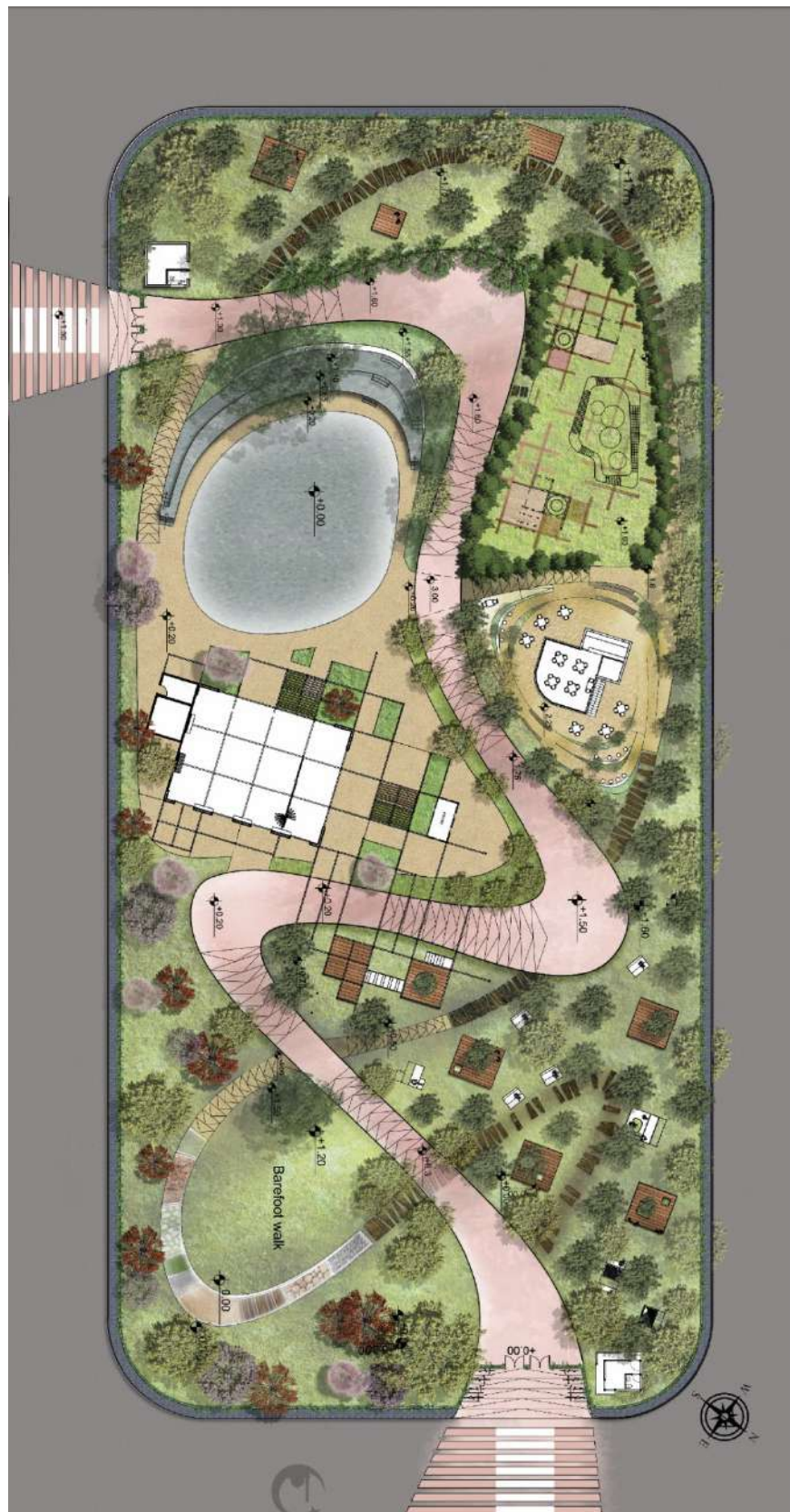


Fig. 33: ABI SAMRA PUBLIC SPACE COMPETITION: the winning project, urban design proposal

The main aim was to preserve the collective memory of this area as “Zaytoon” (Arabic for olives) surviving in the face of the urban expansion. A social alley was introduced into the project to create a bond between the users themselves and the olive trees and add the elements of suspense, innovation and playfulness. A second longer pass was added to generate perspective changing nodes allowing for the establishment of several community engagement zones.

The community was engaged in both the assessment phase and the design process; inhabitants of the direct neighborhood, inhabitants of the surrounding area and students of surrounding universities and schools were interviewed. The interviewees, out of which 60% were females, were asked about the frequency of using public spaces, modes of transportation, their practiced activities and security issues related to the public spaces. They were also asked to propose activities, designs and facilities for the proposed space. Rather than revolution, the project focuses on evolution.

Project’s Ambition

- Improve the social interaction in the neighborhood and create a social hub that can help in building communities.
- Make the people involved in designing a new extension of Abi Samra.
- Create a physical expression of the collective memory of old Abi Samra.

Design Strategy:

- Offering opportunities for impact.
- Considering ourselves as: - Expert citizens - Story tellers - Translators - Not to impose architecture.
- Considering Architecture as an emotional relationship and a piece of crafted art.
- Creating a place for buildings local communities and sharing. The main purpose is to allow people to communicate & relax wherever they see fit, as well as to ideate, collaborate, work, produce, restore.

Design elaboration

Considering that the plot is one of the last remaining municipal lots in old Tripoli, the aim was to preserve its identity, and create a social alley that links two main entrances. These entrances were located based on the surrounding built density: a light zone and a dense zone. This social alley is a curvy, fluid and dynamic path which allows different points of view and perspectives and gives up a richness of perspectives, as well as stimulating suspense.

This main path determined the main functions:

- A community sharing zone where the flow of pedestrians is the most important.
- A spiritual space situated in front of the mosque.
- A calm area also called “the olive trees promenade” embodying the collective memory we previously mentioned.

Every design element along this path is a sort of “folly”, where the path acts as the main link between these structures.

A secondary path creates a network, determines the sub-functions, and descends below the main path at some key intersections.

Zoning and Vegetation

The vegetation used in each zone depends on its function:

- For the communion space, where people interact, get to know each other, and gather, fruitful and aromatic vegetation were used.
- For the piazza, the oak tree is there to evoke the Lebanese tradition of gathering under its shadow.
- In front of the mosque, where the spiritual zone is, a barefoot walk was designed. It is a sequence of organic pavement cells (like wood, gravels, mud and others...) based on the Chinese treatment called reflexology.
This walk represents the social act of taking of the shoes before entering a mosque; it embraces a green lawn opened to sky as a negative space for the people to enjoy the sun heat. It can also hold religious events during “Ramadan” and Eid for example.
- The olive promenade includes wooden furniture, having different aspects: low wooden decks under the olive trees and benches with photovoltaic panels. In addition to olive trees, eucalyptus trees are also there to give shade and protection from the south-western wind.
- The kids zone was named the jungle fever; it includes two follies or structures as a stylization of playing in the jungle. Children can create their own game on the same structure.

Architectural follies

As previously stated, the main path links “follies” or structures located in different parts of the project. The follies are multifunctional structures and each one of them evokes a different mood. The multipurpose room is the main architectural structure. It can be modified using sliding panels transforming it to a multipurpose room, in a minimal and in a simple way, assuring its openness to the piazza.

To further emphasize on the multi-functionality, movable acoustic partitions would be installed, giving more layouts. 4×4 grids in the interior space, the same spacing that is the norm spacing between olive trees, is used. This gives many possibilities to use the space according to the needs.

As for materials, the façade panels were made of translucent polycarbonate panels allowing good lighting on the inside. This structure will be as well, a place for vine to grow, giving shaded areas. In addition to that, and under these structures, “corners” are integrated: a sort of shelving system that the community can use to donate their clothes and belongings to the less fortunate. This idea is in fact already in use in Tripoli; a cafeteria in Abi Samra uses the same system, and along with the act of good will this operation insures an interaction between different tranches of society.

The Atop folly is located at the end of the communion zone overlooking the olive trees promenade, while the cafeteria is located at the highest point of the project overlooking all the zones and spaces.

The Multipurpose structures

The main problem facing existing public spaces in Tripoli is the monotony and the lack of innovative approaches, hence the addition of the multipurpose structures to the project.

People usually tend to search for what is new and different to explore it. This allowed the design of a livable, changeable and dynamic space to kill this routine.

To emphasize the concept of the participatory approach, the idea was to put permanent multifunctional structures that can accommodate people's interventions. Pre-made and hanged samples will help in making this new idea more familiar to the public guiding people to imitate them, unleashing their creativity.

Here are several proposals of what these samples can be:

- Exhibition space.
- Suspended garden, where plastic bottles and other recyclable objects are used. Here the previously mentioned schools are welcomed to have educational trips for their students to practice the concept of reusing, reducing and recycling.
- Artists are equally involved to frequently display their art. Surrounding architecture, arts faculties and schools will have an important role in including their students in the design process of these installations.

Furniture and Fence

All furniture is sustainable and movable in the entire project. It is made out of recyclable materials, thus encouraging waste sorting.

Competitions can also be held in order to create the best designs.

Fencing the project was an obligation imposed by the municipality due to security constraints. Thus, two main types of interventions were applied:

- Near the Community Sharing Zone, the aim was to assure the most possible transparency with the outer road, where the flow of people is very high, in order to attract users to enter the park.
- Near the Olive Trees Promenade where calmness is needed, the fence used is semi-transparent.

In fact, to integrate the fence with the context of the park, botanic architecture is used to allow tree branches to become strong structures. To do so, steel columns are used to mold the growth of the climbing vegetation, years after, when the branches will take the desired shape, the guiding steel columns will be removed keeping a totally natural fence.

Sustainability

The used vegetation in the garden is wild, native and local, which helps, besides conserving the collective memory, in reducing the needed maintenance and in saving water.

Roofs are covered with PV panels in order to generate power for the project.

A rain water collection system is used to feed the irrigation system.

Maintenance and administration

- The municipality organizes the renting process.
- NGOs and beneficiaries organize the events' schedule.
- Solid waste is collected by the LVAJET, the same company that operates for the municipality. In addition there should be a collaboration between the municipality, LVAJET and recycling factories to profit from recyclable materials.

Olive's financial resources

- The rent of the cafeteria.
- NGOs renting the multipurpose room.
- Workshops.
- Food villages and daily or weekly markets.

The winning project 'Ô-live, the community hub' was presented at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur - <http://wuf9.org/programme/urban-library/o-live-community-hub/>



Fig. 34. The winning team of the ABI SAMRA PUBLIC SPACE COMPETITION, the O-live, the Community Hub, at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018).

Top: group picture with the six students of the Lebanese University (Tripoli Branch) Ahmad Minaoui, Rouba Rima, Julia Katrib, Chaza Ghamraoui, Rachele Shehayta and Sana Abdallah and with Samer Chinder (UN-Habitat Lebanon), Gaby Khoriaty (BANAKO Architects Lebanon), Luisa Bravo (City Space Architecture / The Journal of Public Space) and Jarunee Pimonsathean (Thammasat University, Thailand).

In attachment to this portfolio it is possible to download the pdf presentation of the 'Ô-live, the Community Hub' winning project.

REPORT FROM 9th WORLD URBAN FORUM

We the people, We the public space. An interactive exhibition at the 9th World Urban Forum

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At the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum, convened by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, held on 7-13 February 2018 in Kuala Lumpur, City Space Architecture was selected to be part of the event as an exhibitor: it was included in the exhibition area, held at the main venue of the Forum, the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, besides the Petronas Towers, as the only Italian exhibitor, together with 200 selected exhibitors from 50 countries.

City Space Architecture's exhibition space was curated by Luisa Bravo (Founding Member and President of City Space Architecture) in collaboration with Mirko Guaralda (Queensland University of Technology, Australia), Hendrik Tieben (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) and Manfredo Manfredini (University of Auckland, New Zealand), and with Winyu Ardruga and Jarunee Pimonsathean (UDDI Thammasat University, Thailand). The organizational manager of the exhibition space was Valerio Francia (Founding Member and Treasurer of City Space Architecture). City Space Architecture's exhibition space was intended to showcase City Space Architecture's international projects on public space for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and to spread information about networking activities and ongoing campaign and events promoted by City Space Architecture, such as the global campaign "Stand up for Public Space!" (Bravo et al., 2017), launched at the Habitat III conference in Quito during a networking event.

The exhibition space hosted the exhibition 'We the people, We the public space': recalling the well-known United Nations' campaign 'We the people' for the Global Goals¹ launched in 2015, the exhibition was intended to stress the concept that people and public space, intended as the space for democracy, social justice and equity, are strongly intertwined, so that talking about people is the same thing as talking about public space. The UN commitment 'Leaving no one behind'² (United Nations, 2016 and 2017) for inclusive development is strictly related to people and therefore to public space: it is a demand for country leaders to prioritise the needs of those most marginalised and disadvantaged, facing poverty and discrimination, so that the goals for sustainable development are delivered by 2030³.

¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/09/we-the-people-for-the-global-goals/>

² <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/leaving-no-one-behind>

³ <https://action4sd.org/leavenoonebehind/>

City Space Architecture is fully committed in promoting public space culture: since its foundation in 2013 the main objective of our organization was to inform, educate and spread awareness on the importance of public space in cities. Through high level academic events, art projects, workshops and internship programmes for high school, undergraduate, master and PhD students, online campaigns and community-based projects, engaging researchers, scholars, professionals, policy makers, artists, activists, NGOs and Universities, in less than five years, with a tireless, motivated and persistent attitude, we brought the message on public space at the highest levels and today we are proud partners of the UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme.

But what does it mean to promote public space culture? It means to include public space in the contemporary culture of cities and in the urban vision leading to sustainable and inclusive development. It means that public space is crucial if we really want to leave no one behind. So City Space Architecture's main commitment is aimed at putting public space at the centre of the current discourse on the future of cities and the future of humanity. But we need people to understand its value so that they can reclaim it as a fundamental human right for civil coexistence. And this is what we did at the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum, we showed the value of public space.

We divided the exhibition space in three sections. The first section was dedicated to 'We the people': we asked to our members, friends and supporters affiliated to our global network, to become our testimonials and be part of our exhibition by giving us a picture of their face (headshot), their first name and a very short statement on the importance of public space, from their perspective. The statement was intended to be linked to City Space Architecture's global campaign 'Stand up for Public Space!'⁴ which asks people to take a photo of their favourite public space and share it through their Twitter or Instagram personal profile, by using the hashtag #standupforpublicspace and/or #myfavouritepublicspace. So we also asked to our members, friends and supporters to share with us a picture of their favourite public space, to be included in the second section of the exhibition 'We the public space'.



Fig. 1. Face and statement by Luisa Bravo for City Space Architecture's exhibition 'We the people, We the public space' at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018).

Statement: I'm a passionate believer of the importance of public space for sustainable urban development. I promote the idea that public space is a fundamental human right for everybody. I am the Founder and President of City Space Architecture, a non-profit organization based in Bologna, Italy.

⁴ <http://www.standupforpublicspace.org/>



Fig. 2. Face and statement by Valerio Francia for City Space Architecture's exhibition 'We the people, We the public space' at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018).

Statement: I'm a strong supporter of public space as the key opportunity to foster social inclusion and enhance human well-being. I truly believe that public space is not just a piece of land, but is the bearing witness to human interaction within our cities. I am the Co-Founder of City Space Architecture, a non-profit organization based in Bologna, Italy.



Fig. 3. City Space Architecture's exhibition 'We the people, We the public space' at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018). A portion of the wall hosting the first two sections of the exhibition.

We put the first and second section of the exhibition in the same wall (Fig. 3), so that the visitors could clearly understand our message: public space is made by the people, with the people, for the people.

We the people, We the public space

In the third section of the exhibition, on the opposite wall, we put the five covers of the first five published issues of “The Journal of Public Space” together with a selection of papers (only the first page) from those issues. This section was intended to highlight the contribution of “The Journal of Public Space” in fostering the global discussion by providing public knowledge, with free contents for readers and without fees for authors to publish (the fee is known as ‘article processing charge’). The model that we use for the journal is the same functioning model of a real public space which is open and freely accessible to everyone.



Fig. 4. Luisa Bravo, Founder and President of City Space Architecture, was the curator of the City Space Architecture’s exhibition ‘We the people, We the public space’ at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018).

In the exhibition space we also hosted a small library, to show City Space Architecture’s four publications (a preview will be available on our ISSU channel in July 2018⁵). We also had a TV screen to show videos and power point presentations of our projects and of our partners’ projects.

The exhibition was intended not just to show our work but mainly to engage people and to invite them to join the exhibition. We were looking for stories, perspectives, and reflections from everyone, of every age, race, ethnicity and gender, from any field and

⁵ The four publications are: 1) *Pop-up City. Searching for instant urbanity*, 2) *MaPS. Mastering public space. A collaborative research network on cities and urbanity*, 3) *Past Present and Future of Public Space, Vol. 1 (Bologna)* and 4) *Past Present and Future of Public Space, vol. 2 (Venice)*.

background. Every time a visitor expressed the interest to join and interact with the exhibition, he/she was asked to do two simple things:

- allowing us to take a Polaroid picture of their face, that could be added to the faces of the testimonials on the wall, together with their first name:
- completing the sentence “My favourite public space is...” by filling out a postcard.



Fig. 5. Visitors interacting with the City Space Architecture's exhibition 'We the people, We the public space' at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018).

While the picture was easy and fun to get, we realized that the sentence on the postcard was not an easy task for the visitors: many spent several minutes thinking about it and asked questions in order to properly understand what to write.

We then asked the visitor to pin both the postcard and the picture wherever he/she wanted on the wall. Quite easy steps, capable to create a strong connection between the

We the people, We the public space

visitor and the exhibition, so strong that many times the visitors wanted to freeze that moment through a picture, so that they could remember that experience and share it with family and friends⁶.

Also, the exhibition space became a real public space where visitors could freely come, sit and enjoy the atmosphere, reading *The Journal of Public Space* or our publications; it became also a meeting space for professional gatherings and social activities.

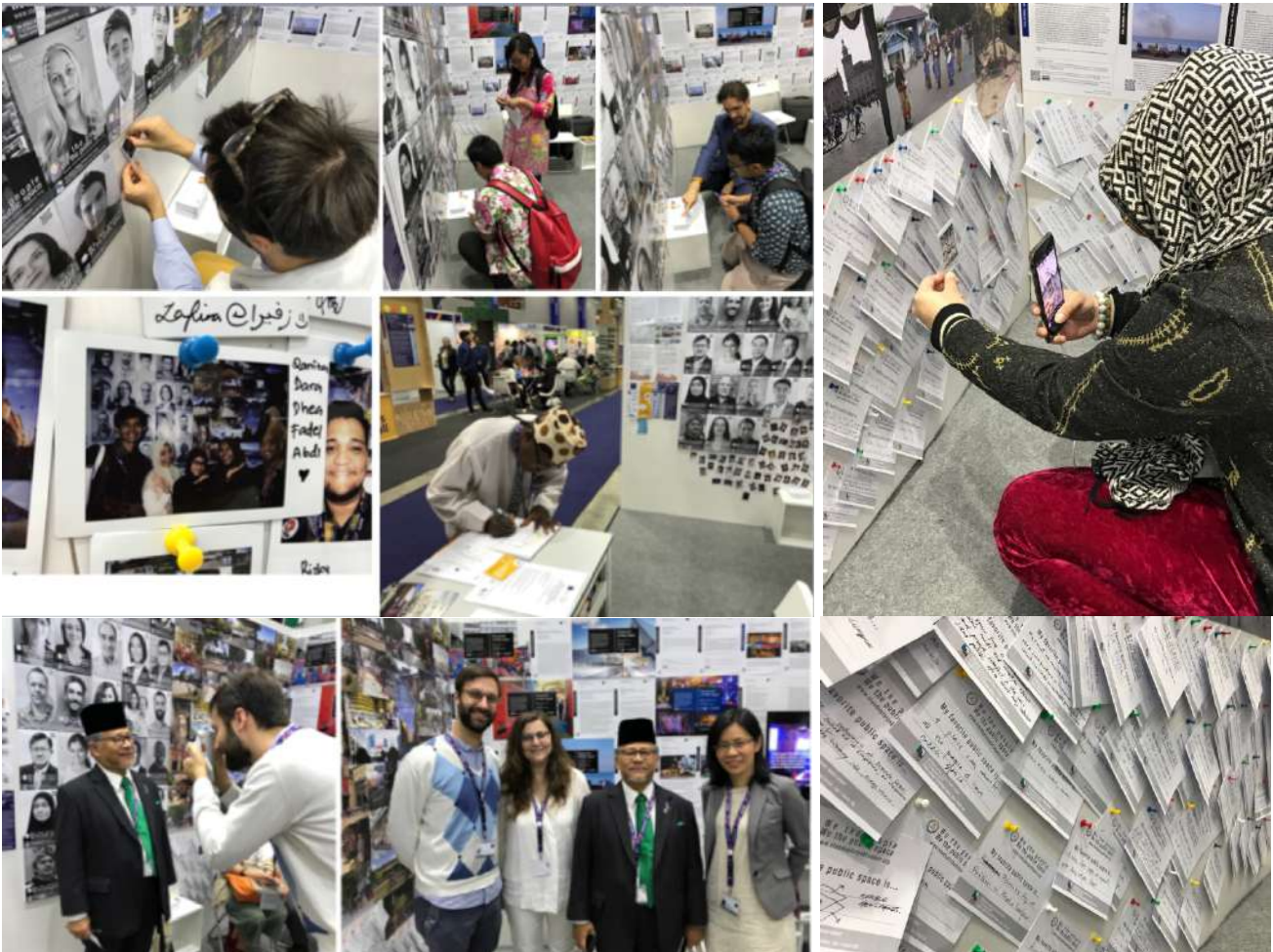


Fig. 6. Visitors interacting with the City Space Architecture's exhibition 'We the people, We the public space' at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018).

Having so many visitors started to attract more visitors: people were curious to know about City Space Architecture, about the exhibition and about *The Journal of Public Space*. Since the space was really welcoming, as a very successful public space, some visitors stopped by to talk with us and share their vision and experience during the Ninth World Urban Forum, and their point of view on public space. Some other visitors brought joyfulness and playfulness, and some even danced with us!

⁶ All the pictures of City Space Architecture's exhibition 'We the people, We the public space' at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur will be available on the City Space Architecture's Flickr account in July 2018.



Fig. 7. Visitors interacting with the City Space Architecture's exhibition 'We the people, We the public space' at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018).

We collected 168 postcards and 85 Polaroid pictures (most of them are individual pictures but some are group pictures or family pictures). We received mainly three kinds of answer:

- 1) some visitors decided to finish the statement by writing their favourite public space as squares, parks, streets, bus stops. All those places have a specific emotional value for them. So they finished the sentence "My favourite public space is..." with:

"... a bus stop. I've written lots of songs there" – Cornelia

"... in front of my house. Playground :) I love to see kids, young & adults together in one place" – Mohammad

"...Time Square in NY, USA | There is everything and nothing it is non place | you can be and feel lost | you can meet everybody there." - Mizia

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- 2) some visitors decided to state a generic place as their favourite public space. It took several minutes to them to decide what to write, since they wanted to write down a concept easily comprehensible and shareable.

“... a full of green areas, without traffic jam anymore” – Khalid

“...under bridges and highways” – Ahmad

“...a road without cars but full of people instead. A narrow road surrounded by coloured and iconic buildings representing the culture and history of the place” – Lorenzo

- 3) some visitors decided to describe their ideal favourite public space: they wrote what a public space should look like, referring to meaning and purposes. Some thoughts are addressing social justice and personal desires towards a more open and inclusive community.

“...promoting city with local wisdom – the space that allows one to express myself, be myself & connect with people, culture & value “without border” – Nor

“... a place that has trees, with pop-up places of activities, where people can interact in the environment without rules and restrictions. A place where everything is possible” – Daniella

“... all girls and women and youth can assess not matter social norm, religious or regulars migrants or poor” – Mrs. Pham



Fig. 8. Polaroid pictures and postcards from the visitors of the City Space Architecture’s exhibition ‘We the people, We the public space’ at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018).

Every answer is unique and it is related to a personal story, it is the result of a culture and it broadcasts a specific wish on how public space should be and should work. This is the reason why the concept of public space itself should be never taken for granted, especially if we say that we want to design and build cities for all.

“...the place that holds all the qualities of the true social inclusion, liveliness and joy. Togetherness in the world” – Anna

“...my school because when I see my students, I see bright future” – Amirah

“...a place where people can freely express their activism towards community engagement! – Shariman

“...a park, where I can connect with my childhood experiences.” - Zailin

In addition, the curator Luisa Bravo invited and interviewed in our exhibition space major stakeholders attending the 9th World Urban Forum, such as academic scholars, professionals from the public and private sectors, representatives from NGOs, Governmental Authorities and UN-Habitat. We recorded 29 short interviews, introduced by the curator Luisa Bravo, which will be available on City Space Architecture’s YouTube channel⁷ in July 2018⁸.



Fig. 8. Our curator Luisa Bravo interviewing major stakeholders at the City Space Architecture’s exhibition ‘We the people, We the public space’ at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018).

At the end of seven fully busy and exciting days at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, the response we received from all visitors who visited our exhibition space was overwhelming. Not just for the unexpected number of visitors that wanted to interact with our exhibition, mostly young people (students), every day throughout the day, but also for the gentle attitude towards us and the willingness to give their contribution and participate in the ongoing global discussion around public space. This was the most rewarding result that we achieved at the 9th World Urban Forum: we understood once again that our future

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/user/CitySpaceArchiTube>

⁸ Our curator Luisa Bravo interviewed: Anna Erlandson (artist, Sweden), Circe Gama Monteiro (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brazil), Costanza Pera (Ministry of Infrastructure and Mobility, Italy), David Sagita (United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific, Indonesia), Ethan Kent (Project for Public Spaces, USA), Francesco Rossini (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong), Gini Lee (University of Melbourne, Australia), Greg Budworth (Compass Housing, Australia), Gregor Mews (Urban Synergies Group, Australia), Hendrik Tieben (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong), Jarunee Pimonsathean (Thammasat University, Thailand), Judith Hermanson (IHC Global, USA), Katherine Kline (General Assembly of Partners of the United Nations, USA), Kevin Hsu (Stanford University, USA), Lance Brown (Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization, USA), Laura Petrella (UN-Habitat, Kenya), Lorenzo Petrillo (LOPELAB, Singapore), Margorzata Hanzl (Lodz University of Technology, Poland), Margarita Greene (Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile, Chile), Michael Mehaffy (KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden), Nor Hayati (University of Malaya, Malaysia), Pietro Garau (Institute of Urban Planners, Italy), Robert Wong (architect, Hong Kong), Setha Low (The Graduate Center City University of New York, USA), Simone D’Antonio (ANCI – Association of Cities and Municipalities, Italy), Tarun Sharma (Nagriika, India), Teresa Boccia (University of Naples Federico II, Italy), Thozamile Botha (Housing Development Agency, South Africa), Vincent Kitio (UN-Habitat, Kenya).

We the people, We the public space

is about people, that our future is about public space. And this is a strong encouragement to continue our mission at the global level.



Fig. 9. Special guests at the City Space Architecture's exhibition 'We the people, We the public space' at the 9th World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur (February 2018). From left to right: Valerio Francia (City Space Architecture, Italy), Jarunee Pimonsathean (Thammasat University, Thailand), Laura Petrella (UN-Habitat, Kenya), Luisa Bravo (City Space Architecture, Italy), Costanza Pera (Ministry of Infrastructure and Mobility, Italy), Mirko Guaralda (Queensland University of Technology, Australia).

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REPORT FROM 9th WORLD URBAN FORUM

We the public space. Strategies to deal with inequalities in order to achieve inclusive and sustainable urban environments

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At the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum, convened by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, held on 7-13 February 2018 in Kuala Lumpur, City Space Architecture was selected to promote a networking event, which took place on Sunday February 11 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

As coordinator of the networking event, I invited as speakers Mirko Guaralda (Queensland University of Technology, Australia), Hendrik Tieben (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong), Manfredo Manfredini (University of Auckland, New Zealand), Gregor Mews (Urban Synergies Group, Australia), Winyu Ardruga (Thammasat University, Thailand), Abner Manlapaz (Life Haven Independent Living, Philippines), Robert Wong (Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council, Hong Kong), Katherine Kline (General Assembly of Partners - Older persons), Jarunee Pimonsathean (Thammasat University, Thailand) and Jackie Mostny (Kompas Strategy, USA).

The networking event was intended to be an effective contribution to the discussion related to improvement of human health and well-being, overcoming discrimination and inequalities, thus giving rights to vulnerable community-groups. Those references are relevant both for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Human health and well-being are strongly related to public space and the way it is designed and managed. Nowadays we often record the increasingly privatisation of the public domain in direct and indirect ways; also, the lack of facilities to access, live and enjoy the public space often isolate communities, limiting their freedom to engage into the public sphere. We mainly refer to public space's cultural richness, identity and diversity, but in our contemporary times public space is dealing more and more with inequalities, poverty and conflicts. Public spaces are meant to be open, inclusive and democratic, but today we see physical, social and economic barriers that challenge the true nature of public space: economic issues, social and cultural segregation, huge real estate investments, privatization trends and gentrification processes are dominating aspirations of local communities and different social groups. We also experience theoretical barriers to an open discussion on public space: the discourse is often limited to specific national or linguistic areas and the dominance of exempla from the so-called global West or global North are limiting our knowledge about public space, often imposing an oversimplified view of public space design, management and use. Those

barriers, physical and theoretical, are a threat to our communities in terms of access to basic needs; they are also an obstacle for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and its principles.

The networking event briefly presented several researches and case studies intended to highlight strategies to deal with inequalities: 1) accessibility and inclusiveness for people with physical or mental disabilities; 2) inclusiveness for children; 3) accessibility for older persons; 4) segregation of social groups, economic inequalities due to privatization and gentrification trends; 5) accessibility through adequate mobility; 6) intergenerational city. After that, all attendees, about 40 in total, were divided in several groups, in order to properly discuss the six topics. The discussion was extremely fruitful and was an opportunity to critically pinpoint issues that are usually taken for granted.

All groups were asked to share outcomes of their discussion, to identify strategies that can meet the needs of different social clusters or strategies that can address multiple instances of inequalities at once. In the end we took a group picture!



Fig. 1. Group picture (top) at the end of the event and table discussions during the event.

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REPORT FROM 9th WORLD URBAN FORUM

Public Space in the New Urban Agenda. The Challenge of Implementation

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The New Urban Agenda – the landmark 2016 agreement for sustainable urban development that has now been adopted by consensus by 193 nations – contains no fewer than nine paragraphs extensively discussing the importance of public space. Among other things, the document describes public spaces as “drivers of social and economic development,” “enhancing safety and security, favoring social and inter-generational interaction and the appreciation of diversity” and “promoting walkability and cycling towards improving health and well-being.” There is also language on the role of public space in enhancing ecological sustainability and resilience, on equity and opportunity, on connectivity and social inclusion, on cultural expression and dialogue, and on broader human development (United Nations, 2017).

More fundamentally, the document recognizes that public spaces are the essential framework for sustainable urbanization – a point also made by the Secretary-General of Habitat III, Dr. Joan Clos:

“The principal question... is the relationship in a city between public space and buildable space. This is the art and science of building cities – and until we recover this basic knowledge, we will continue to make huge mistakes.”
(Clos, 2016)

Clos’ reference to “huge mistakes” echoes an alarming trend in urbanization: research is showing clearly that, even as urbanization rates are reaching historic high levels, public space is declining rapidly, in both quantity and quality. This is happening with so-called “market rate” development – which is increasingly auto-dominated, privatized, gated, and otherwise inward-turning – and also with informal settlements, where as many as one-quarter of all urban residents live (UN-Habitat, 2018). In both cases, we are losing this essential “relationship between public space and buildable space.”

The question is, then, how can we recover this “basic knowledge”? How can we proceed to implement the goals of the New Urban Agenda, and the related Sustainable Development Goals and their targets -- notably SDG 11.7, which calls for adequate public space per person? How can we develop the tools and strategies necessary to overcome barriers and improve the quantity, quality, connectivity, and equitable distribution, of public space? This is an enormous remaining challenge ahead – and one that increasingly appears essential to the goals of sustainable urban development.

The authors’ involvement in this work dates from 2013, when we convened the first Future of Places conference in Stockholm, Sweden, as a partnership of Ax:son Johnson Foundation, Project for Public Spaces, and UN-Habitat. The four-year forum brought together over 1,500 researchers, practitioners, officials and activists, representing more than 700 organizations, 275 cities and 100 countries from all around the world. Our goal from the outset was to explore the importance of public space as a major pillar of the then-developing New Urban Agenda, and to provide some insight on the pathways to implementation. The series (and related collaborative documents, meetings and consultations) produced a set of “key messages” that contributed to the language of the New Urban Agenda (UN-Habitat, 2015).

Now that the agenda has been agreed, we have moved into the challenge of implementation -- particularly the need to assemble systems for knowledge-sharing and action in specific (often quite varied) localities, under very different legal, economic and cultural circumstances. To do that, we’ve inaugurated a new research center based at KTH University, and drawing on a much wider network of researchers, policy experts, officials, practitioners and activists, to address the challenge. We, together with other “federated” networks of collaborators, will need to work closely together to move forward. We will need to self-organize within our own communities, and at the same time, coordinate carefully with one another at the more global levels.

That task was very much the focus of the Ninth World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur in early February of 2018 – the first forum since the adoption of the NUA, and the first to examine the specific issues of implementation. For one week in early February 2018, over 25,000 participants from all 193 countries gathered in Kuala Lumpur to take up the challenges, forging partnerships and developing pilot projects.

We all recognized that “business as usual” poses an overwhelming barrier. Current economic incentives and disincentives reward efforts to minimize public space, while penalizing – at least in the short term – efforts to create larger and more robust public spaces and public-space networks, including walkable streets. Regulatory tools to address the issue are often after-the-fact, clumsy, and inefficient. We need better tools and approaches. We need to reform the old defective models that are profitable in the short term, but dysfunctional or even catastrophic in the long term. This work is especially urgent in a time of unprecedented urban growth.

At the current rapid rates of urbanization – on track to build more urban fabric in the next 50 years than has been created in all of humanity up to now – the implications are simply unacceptable, and reform is urgent. This is true for all of urbanism and its quality, but it is particularly true for the framework of public space. It is public space that has a necessary relation to walkability, to livable compactness, to opportunities for improved health, to expanded economic opportunity, to reduced use of automobiles and other ecological impacts, and in turn to the crucial efforts to mitigate the grim prospects of resource depletion, pollution and climate change.

In all these issues, fragmented, resource-intensive, ecologically destructive urbanization – in a word, sprawl – plays a fundamental role. By contrast, walkable, mixed urbanism, organized around well-connected public space systems, also plays a fundamental role in mitigating those same trends (Mehaffy, 2015).

While we have good reason to be alarmed about the trends of sprawling urbanization, we must also recognize that there are many positive effects of urbanization – greatly improved health and sanitation, opportunities to escape crushing poverty and its ills, more opportunities for women, better opportunities for human development in general. But these benefits are in scarce supply in those cities that are urbanizing without good-quality public space – and as our research and others' has shown, this is not a coincidence.

The result is that much of the urbanization that is happening today does not afford to many of its new residents the benefits that good-quality urbanism actually offers for human development. Instead, we are too often getting “urbanization without urbanism”: gated enclaves, automobiles and inward-turning malls for middle- and upper-income groups, and slum-like conditions of deprivation and limited access for others. This is certainly not consistent with the goal of “cities for all” in the New Urban Agenda.

As it turns out, this state of affairs is not even good for the middle class and wealthy, at least in the long run. As much of the new research in economic networks is demonstrating, urban economies, like other networks, get their power from the number of nodes that are plugged in to the network. As our Colleague Luis Bettencourt has observed, to the extent that some parts of the network are cut off and unable to participate, that puts a drag on the performance of the network as a whole. We see this most obviously in the increased cost of healthcare, policing, prisons and the like. Less visible is the economic contribution that could have been made by huge numbers of people who are cut off, their participation diminished (Bettencourt, 2013).

There is also a strong corollary in Jane Jacobs' emphasis on diversity, not only as a matter of social justice, but no less so, one of economic vitality. Cities that fail to maintain diversity (like Detroit in the era of the automotive “company town”) set themselves up for stagnation and decline. The approach is unsustainable in a fundamental economic sense – and in social and environmental ones too.

Why is public space so important to other economic and social processes? At the World Urban Forum, we asked that question to Luis Bettencourt, who replied:

“Public space is central. In many ways, you can think of cities ultimately as really a bunch of strangers coming together to do difficult things – things that are very contested, and require continuous interaction, and a set of rules and spaces that allow that to happen. Public spaces are a very visible and very important part of where those encounters and those negotiations occur, and both serendipities and then also organizations come to be. I think that in the work that you're doing, but also increasingly as new ways of thinking about cities, we think about public spaces for what they do, not just as places that we build in certain specific ways... but in terms of their quality, how they bring people together, how people feel in them, and how open to different kinds of people and different kinds of interaction they are.”

(Bettencourt, 2018)

Our picture of cities is changing, says Bettencourt, from a simplistic notion that “that’s where the jobs are” to an understanding of why the jobs are there – cities are “social reactors” that offer the ability to form contacts and exchanges, and to develop within the

essential framework of public space, along with the many private spaces that are connected to it.

Of course we can replace public space with a privatized series of capsules – the capsule of the house, connected by the capsule of the car, to the capsule of the workplace, and so on. Instead of public spaces, one would only have workplace meeting spaces, conferences, the Internet and so on. In essence, that is the system we have adopted since the mid-Twentieth Century up to today, and it has been phenomenally powerful in its own way. We can certainly understand why some people find it attractive.

But this system is fatally flawed. It requires massive injections of resources to sustain it, and we are rapidly depleting those resources. Moreover, it incurs other kinds of costs too, “externality costs” that don’t manifest until later in the cycle, like pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, declines in health, increasing burdens on the elderly, the young and the infirm, and many other related problems.

Then too there are the heavy (if often hidden) costs of exclusion. Not everyone has a car and can participate in that kind of urban economy, or has access to work, or the means to generate new work. Large numbers of people are left behind in this kind of city, and, again, aside from social justice, there is a heavy cost to all the members of society, not only in lost opportunities, but in direct impacts as we discussed before (like healthcare costs, crime, etc).

For these and other converging reasons, then, it increasingly appears that the “public space agenda” lies at the core of a hopeful kind of “sustainable pathway” to human development, and that is why it needs to be at the center of our efforts.

But how can we take up the challenge? In Kuala Lumpur we conducted a session to help answer that question, titled “Public Space in the New Urban Agenda: Research Into Implementation.” The panelists included Laura Petrella (Leader of the City Planning, Extension and Design Unit, UN-Habitat), Kyle Farrell (Visiting Faculty, Harvard University, USA), Setha Low (Professor of Anthropology and Environmental Psychology, Public Space Research Group, City University of New York), Hai Dinh Dang (Senior Project Officer, Livable Cities Project, HealthBridge Vietnam), Ibrahim Maiga (Coordinator, Peaceful Roads, Niger), and Michael Mehaffy, moderator (project leader, Centre for the Future of Places at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm SE). Also participating as front-row participants were Ethan Kent (Vice-President, Project for Public Spaces, USA), Luisa Bravo (Co-Editor of *The Journal of Public Space*, City Space Architecture, Italy), Mirko Guaralda (Co-Editor of *The Journal of Public Space*, Queensland University of Technology, Australia), and Ben Bolgar (Senior Director, The Prince's Foundation for Building Community, UK)

In the session we discussed an evolving model of small, feasible public space pilot projects, working with key partners in strategic locations. These projects can be scaled up as they become successful, demonstrating the value of public space for the residents, and for local governments, businesses and other partners. From these pilot projects, larger masterplanning frameworks could be developed, leading ultimately to new national policies on the development of more and better public spaces.

In this model, our role at the Centre for the Future of Places would be primarily to offer a local “research arm” to the implementation partners – providing research on best practices, and also conducting (in partnership with local universities and others) field research to uncover strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in each locale. Coming out of each project, we would share the findings with other locales, who could then adapt them to their own specific conditions and limitations.



Fig. 1. Michael Mehaffy at the 9th World Urban Forum, during the session 'Public Space in the New Urban Agenda: Research Into Implementation'.

One of our proposed pilot projects is in Da Nang, Vietnam, where our partner, HealthBridge, is proposing to develop new public spaces in partnership with the City and others. This follows successful work they have already done in Hanoi and Hoi An, Vietnam. The City in turn is eager to see the benefits of this work scale up, perhaps into a city-wide masterplan. The national government has also expressed a strong interest, and asked us to provide commentary in their new national urbanization policy document. Of course, each locality has its own mix of opportunities and constraints, and in each case, all of the potential barriers and incentives need to be considered. In each case, revisions or alternatives may need to be found. This is the hard work of reform of the many barriers and constraints, like obsolete zoning codes, traffic engineering standards, bank lending rules, and myriad other elements of the “operating system for growth.” Some of these barriers and constraints are universal (like the dynamics of global real estate investment) and some are locally unique (like local ordinances and customs). Often, however, these elements have enough in common that sharing of tools and strategies can be enormously helpful. That is one of our goals.

Another goal is to build a knowledge base of research findings about public space, and the benefits on offer for those who improve their quantity and quality, as well as the issues that must be managed and accommodated in public space projects. To that end, we have begun to develop a “public space research database” with key research literature from a number of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, environmental psychology, economics, ecology, urban design, and other fields. This resource can be of value in providing the initial consultation for those seeking to develop a pilot project. In turn, the various pilot projects might themselves offer useful field research to add to the literature, and to the database specifically. Such a “virtuous circle” approach, connecting research to practice and back to research, should be helpful for both the state of practice, and for the research literature as well.

The research emphasizes one finding that should be encouraging to us all. We do know how to make public spaces – and cities – that are thriving, successful, equitable, and sustainable (because they have sustained). We have done it innumerable times

throughout human experience. Perhaps our biggest obstacle, then, is in our own attitudes from the recent past – mired in a now-obsolete way of seeing the world. As Dr. Clos says, the essential problem before us is simply this: to recover this lost art and science of building cities.

This is not simply a matter of reverting to older top-down models of design. Rather, as we discussed in the session, it is a matter of building the capacity of people to act as co-producers within their own public spaces, which in turn means the public spaces must be truly open, and truly public. The very good news, however, is that research does show (as we recently wrote for another research publication) that public spaces offer the capacity to support a complex agenda of livability and sociability, economic prosperity, community cohesion, social justice, and overall sustainability for cities.

The New Urban Agenda is undoubtedly a historic achievement, if only a first step down a very long road of implementation. It does express the proposition, supported by considerable evidence, that the cities that will do best in the long run will be those that best support an open, equitable public realm, and leverage its benefits for all those who utilize those places.

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REPORT FROM 9th WORLD URBAN FORUM

Give Us Space! **Augmented public space geographies in the changing public/private relationships**

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The inception of meta-public space

The aim of this article is to reflect on and share the findings of the Networking Event ‘Give us Space: Augmented public space geographies in the changing public/private relationships.’ The Event addressed emerging spatial issues in the production of the public realm of contemporary cities. This topic has been at the centre of the discourse on urbanism in both humanities and social sciences for decades, reflecting the increasing interest in spatial problems that have contributed to the crisis of public life in the socioeconomic, cultural and political spheres. The recent pervasion of spatial privatisation and public sphere mediatisation processes require a refoundation of this discourse. The discussions addressed some of the key areas of concern raised by the New Urban Agenda (NUA) related to open space, focusing on socio-spatial problems in the pervading production of semi-public spaces in contexts of rapid urbanization. Using a comparative urbanism perspective that highlighted the expanding role of digital geography, it elaborated upon specific Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These are the goals concerned with good health and well-being (3), reduced inequalities (10), sustainable cities and communities (11), and partnerships for the goals (17).

The event created a platform for knowledge exchange and networking amongst stakeholders. This aimed to 1) build capacity in both research and practice; 2) identify problems, limitations, and opportunities with respect to the various actors and stakeholders of urban public space; 3) highlight issues concerning less advantaged groups in society: children, youth and elderly, ‘differently-able,’ indigenous people, marginalized genders, migrants and socioeconomically deprived people.

Primary consideration was given to NUA-related research advocating the ‘right to the city’ in the transformation of urban public space. Reference to issues of disappearance of the commons (Harvey, 2012: 67-87), renouncement to the ‘open city vision’ (Sennett,

2018), and colonisation of the digital infosphere' (Fuchs, 2014), framed the critique of spatial control and over-determination exercised by hegemonic powers in the production of public space. This particularly concerned progressive processes of civil exclusion, dispossession, segregation, and abstraction that adopt displacement and spectacle to sedate mounting fear of the 'stranger' and disguise the perception of severe inequality. Design disciplines such as architecture, urbanism and planning, have increasingly struggled in engaging with these profound on-going transformations. Their difficulties are exacerbated by the deep changes in the space caused by the rapidly expanding role of the digital public sphere. The city and its core spatialities of relational life can no longer be addressed without redefining the approach to the new digitally augmented public realm. Understanding the emerging conceived, perceived and lived conditions of publicness is crucial to support the social, cultural, and psychophysical well-being of the inhabitants of cities of the digital age. Urbanists, designers, and place-makers need to rethink the theoretical framework as well as the conventional processes, methods and practices for analysis, project, and delivery of visions, strategies, and tactics.

The 'Give us Space' event was designed to propose a refoundational discourse of public spaces that, instead of tending to erase the legal, cultural, and performative tensions that exist between public and private domains in public space, comes to terms with the ambivalent and conflictual nature of contemporary publicness. This approach acknowledges the impossibility of considering the institutive historical metaconceptual spatial framework of the public/private dualism, but recognises the inescapable and impermanent ambiguity of the exclusive separation between collective and personal realms. The analysis of factual ambivalences found in the key public spaces of our cities complements the investigation of the widely studied phenomenon of public sphere pervasion in the private realm (Mitchell, 2003: 28-29). It shows the ambivalence of incessantly appearing private instances in public or parochial realms through more-than-virtual embodiments of the digital infosphere: the formation of a new kind of space, the 'meta-public space.' The epitome of this new spatiality is found in semi-public places at the core of consumption places, as evolution of pseudo-public spaces of hedonic consumption. This space includes the realms of spectacular deception of civiness with territorial stability, such as 'malled' urban centres and privately owned public spaces. The comparative urbanism method adopted at the Event enabled to systematically study similarities and differences among urban processes regarding the meta-public space. The session was started with a critical introduction of key characteristics of the new space as found in urban centres of rapidly developing cities in Asia and Australasia, highlighting the disjointed and introverted, yet hyper-connected and digitally augmented, spatialities (Manfredini, Jenner & Xin, 2017). The elaboration revolved around two key phenomena: 1) enhanced prosumption as collaborative and participatory consumption, and 2) augmented transduction as coded de-territorialising and re-territorialising spectacle (Manfredini, 2017). These phenomena are empowered by the pervasion of virtual, augmented, and mixed-reality applications that have scaled-up the spatial complexity and differential process, prompting a strong recombination of the rules of engagement of people with their own civic realm. This radical transformation of the relational practices can, if not subsumed by sectarian polarizations, pave the way to a repoliticisation of semi-public spaces.

Central places, like the more-than-consumerist megamalls, conceived and produced by hegemonic powers according to the civic-adverse, formal and quantitative imperatives of globalisation need to be remapped in order to counter the process of minimising

distinction and repressing relationality that, as Henri Lefebvre posited, by “falling prey of abstraction” alienates the civic (1991: 49). Advocating for an effective and efficacious implementation of the NUA in the meta-consumerist age, therefore includes urging eminent place-makers, such as designers and urban planners, to acknowledge their new role and take full responsibility in the development of augmented prosumerist-transductive spatialities towards a more pluralistic, participative and democratic city. This tenet was elaborated in the working groups of the Event as reported in the following paragraphs.

Public spaces for social integration and inclusion

Social and economic exclusion and spatial segregation are often an irrefutable reality in cities: public spaces clearly demonstrate how people can be socially excluded or discriminated in cities, whether they are children, elderly, women, differently-abled, or from a foreign country. The NUA has a vision of ‘cities for all,’ where cities are for equal use and enjoyment, promoting inclusive, safe, healthy, and affordable cities for all inhabitants without any kind of discrimination (NUA, 2016: 11). It promotes civic engagement from all inhabitants, engendering a sense of belonging and ownership, prioritizing “safe, inclusive, accessible, green and quality public spaces that are friendly for families, enhance social and intergenerational interactions, cultural expressions and political participation.” (13b)

Children and youth semi-public space issues: The NUA promotes access to quality basic services and public spaces for all, to enhance safe, diverse, and social intergenerational interaction. It takes into consideration children and youth in the promotion of “safe, healthy, inclusive and secure environment in cities and human settlements enabling all to live, work and participate in urban life without fear of violence and intimidation” (NUA, 2016: 39). Studies about growing up in cities, particularly in Australia, described children growing up in rapidly urbanized centres living in overcrowded, unsafe, and polluted environments, with little opportunity for recreation and play (Malone, 2001: 6). The discussions in the networking session, concluded that spaces should have plenty of leisure and natural green spaces to facilitate child health and well-being in urban environments (NUA, 2016: 14c). Facilities should be provided which encourage and allow children to identify and connect with their physical, social, and natural environment (Malone, 1999: 21). One particular case study which arose from the discussion was from Jakarta, Indonesia. In 2015, the Jakarta Capital City Government established a policy to revitalize a number of parks into interactive community parks called RPTRA (Child Friendly Integrated Public Space). These revitalized parks (funded by a private company through a government and private sector partnership), are multi-purpose child-friendly community spaces, and typically consist of a playground, a field, hall, a library with WIFI, and a garden for fruit and vegetables.

Migrants and grassroots semi-public space issues: The NUA recognizes and respects the full human rights of refugees and migrants, regardless of migration status, and promotes inclusive prosperity supporting both formal and informal economies. Though the movement of large populations into cities poses various challenges, the NUA acknowledges that migrants (as well as the working poor in the informal economy, particularly women, including unpaid and domestic workers) can also bring about significant social, economic and cultural contributions to the urban environment and life

(NUA, 2016: 28 and 59). The discussions highlighted that migrants-local people can constitute forms of socio-spatial networks with very complex patterns of territorializations that show unique examples of inclusionary agonistic and more-than-relational urban public space, where all have unrestricted right to participate in the production of the city. However, migrants and local people often must improvise in their use of public spaces and engage in critical non-compliant informal activities. Security in public spaces is an issue, and one case study was provided regarding the unique sidewalk encroachment in the Ancient Quarter of Hanoi, Vietnam (Manfredini & Ta, 2017). Here, the intertwining and dynamics of formal and informal territorialisation of public spaces strongly contributes to the creation of successful streets that support the social, cultural and economic well-being of citizens.

Acknowledging the NUA, an important point made in the forum was the celebration of differences and what these migrants can bring in terms of socially and culturally diverse contributions to urban life. However, although migrants and grassroots could bring new life into urban areas, their presence in public space and the areas they congregate could be contested (Manfredini & Ta, 2016). To illustrate this, Filipina migrants' appropriation of public spaces in Hong Kong clearly demonstrates how public spaces are not only a platform for diversity within the city, but also a platform where various interested actors or parties can engage or even contest in its use with social, cultural, economic, or even political agendas (Low, 2002).

Gender, 'differently-able,' and indigenous semi-public space issues: The NUA recognizes that various forms of marginalization and discrimination need to be addressed, particularly in relation to women and girls, children and youth, elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as refugees and migrants (NUA, 2016: 20). Paragraph 13c of the NUA raises the issue of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by ensuring their effective participation and equal rights, whilst preventing and eliminating discrimination and violence in private and public spaces (NUA, 2016: 13c). Recent literature on this topic describes an apparent lack of recognition and attention to the needs of women within the right to the city, grounded in their everyday experiences, whether they are workers, carers, or simply enjoying leisure activities (Reeves, Parfitt & Archer, 2012; Reeves & Zombori, 2016). Women face immense challenges as their rights become restricted in their search for place and feelings of belonging in today's cities. This is particularly evident in feminist geographical studies of London and Jerusalem discussed by Yasminah Beebeejaun (2017). Here, she states a case for women challenging the norms of public space through street protests. However this is just a temporary means of asserting women's right to be in public spaces and their need for more permanent recognition. By reengaging within the multiple uses of urban spaces, developing frameworks which draw more upon women's everyday experiences and spatial uses, which are attentive to their differences, can provide a more fine-grained understanding of the issues and the potential to support a fuller sense of gendered rights to everyday life in urban environments (Beebeejaun, 2017: 331). Space is not just a physical container of life, but it is socially produced, dynamic, ambiguous, and contested (Rob Kitchin, 1998, 343-45). In today's urban environments, people recognized as differently-abled are still marginalized and excluded as a result of a disabling environment. Spaces have become socially produced to exclude differently-abled or disabled people and have been organized to keep these people "in their place" as well as textualised to convey to such people that they are "out of place" (Steinfeld, Maisel & Levine, 2012). A number of

concerns, raised in the thematic session at the Event, revolved around the duty of care to provide public spaces for people previously made invisible through insensitive urban planning and design.

In the context of current urban planning practices and in existing public spaces, disabled people are 'locked out,' separated, and marginalized to the peripheries. Policies prioritize the perception and values of 'able-bodied' persons, and thus aim to normalize disabled people, rather than accommodating disabled people for who they are (Steinfeld, Maisel & Levine, 2012: 347). Rather than denying differently-abled or disabled people access to important decision-making within today's cities, all people should have the right to participate in the making of the city. Indigenous peoples have sovereign authority over their land which needs to be recognised through participatory processes and partnership models for indigenous governance. There needs to be regard for indigenous values and knowledge, sites of significance, traditional names, and regeneration of natural resources and systems, as well as work with indigenous artists and designers through the spatial design process for distinct outcomes (Auckland Council, 2017).

Age-friendly semi-public space issues: The NUA seeks to address the social, economic, and spatial implications of ageing populations as well as promote age- and gender-responsive planning (NUA, 2016: 13f and 62). In the discussions at the Event an 'age friendly city' was discussed in the context of 'a city for all ages.' We can lose key elements of our identity when we age and may potentially lose particular social and cultural connections. This has been noted as one of the least spatially regarded aspect in studies on marginalisation within urban environments (Buffel & Phillipson, 2016: 95). Buffel and Phillipson describes the challenge to create urban environments which support the equal rights of older people with others to a 'share' of urban space which is both safe and inclusive (Buffel & Phillipson, 2016: 97-98). Lefebvre's concept of 'the right to the city' and Harvey's 'right to make our cities and ourselves' need to be linked to the debate about developing age-friendly cities, such that people of all ages can enjoy full 'urban citizenship' and make full use of urban public spaces. This right simultaneously means guaranteeing older people a voice, ability to appropriate and associate urban space, participate in processes decision-making processes regarding the production of such spaces (Buffel, Phillipson & Scharf, 2012: 607-609). We should guarantee access to everyone to live and participate in the production of the city, instead of providing solutions for predetermined categories of users with generic sets of disabilities. To implement the NUA's vision of cities for all, there is a general goal to involve and engage everyone: it is a civic responsibility to establish efficacious, design-led participative decision-making and planning processes.

Public spaces for cultural consumption, tourism, and spectacle: The NUA acknowledges the importance of culture and diversity as sources of enrichment for people and the sustainable development of cities, and recognizes that culture needs to be considered in the promotion and implementation of new sustainable consumption and production patterns in cities (NUA, 2016: 10). Regarding public spaces of consumption, of particular interest today is how public spaces are reinstated into pluralistic forms of socio-spatial relationality that transforms the collective realm from semi-public or public into a 'meta-public' state in place-based augmentation of the culture of consumption emerging in public spaces with enhanced atmospheres of either produced or induced authenticity (Manfredini & Jenner, 2015).

Paragraph 19 of the NUA acknowledges the issues facing the least developed countries, particularly those which can be affected by natural disasters, like Nepal, stating that attention should be given to address their unique urban development challenges. The

Give Us Space!

Kathmandu Valley is a major tourist destination and consists of seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and a particular set of urban public spaces rich in historic traditions, such as the squares of markets and royal palaces. In the commodification of public space and culture for tourists, culture is staged and authenticity is challenged, as local people engage with cultural consumption and translocality of space to support the growing tourism industry (Morimoto, 2015). In the main touristic centres of the capital city, Kathmandu (Basantapur), Patan and Bhaktapur, foreign tourists come to consume ‘Nepalness,’ whereas locals come to consume global cultures. Urban spaces are transformed, decontextualised and distorted into venues for exotic spectacles. As Robert Shepherd claims, “what was once pure and authentic has become spoiled and commodified” (2002: 183). However, what makes some aspects of the Kathmandu model relevant to the ‘urban development challenge’ is the socialisation form that this resilient community has developed since the major natural disasters (2015 Nepal earthquake). Here, the disruptive effects of tourism on sustainable development have been mitigated by a distinctive phenomenon of local community empowerment that has improved livelihood and expanded participation in the exercise of citizenship.

Give us Space! at the 9th World Urban Forum

The “Give Us Space!” networking session at the WUF9 was held and organized by the University of Auckland in relationship with other partner universities and organizations. This Event fostered a discussion on public space as a common good, by means of sharing and critically evaluating emerging problems in the public realm in different geographical contexts with regards to spatial conception, representation, and everyday life experiences. Focusing on socio-spatial relationality it rethought and raised awareness of its importance to contribute to a successful implementation of the New Urban Agenda, promoting well-being in cities and creating safe, inclusive, accessible, public spaces for all. Specifically, it addressed a crucial kind of public realm: the semi-private space. This space, which often presents the highest levels of relational urban life, is characterized by complex mechanisms of production and control that, while strongly enhancing safety and comfort, pose severe limits to the exercise of the ‘right to the city.’



Fig. 1 Give us Space! session at the 9th World Urban Forum.



Fig. 2 and 3. Give us Space! session at the 9th World Urban Forum.

The audience was asked to contribute to the issue of privatisation of public space by providing insights and reflections in small groups. A collective question was posited: what is the most relevant emerging critical problem in private use of public space and what are the ways of addressing these issues? Each group had to summarize relevant outcomes from their discussions which were then shared at the end of the session.

Conclusion

In the wake of the increasing blur of public and private realms in today's cities, brought about by technological advancements and the inherent contradictions of hyper-consumerism, augmented spatialities mediated through communication-based digital spheres provide the main access to the public sphere in public spaces, constituting a form of re-politicisation and empowerment of the individual in the open, permeable, and recombinant 'meta-public space'. The various socio-spatial problems in the production of these semi-public spaces were critically addressed in productive sessions that found a common need for further research. Recommendations were made to pay particular attention to the opportunities and limitations of the global spread of the new complex blurred spatiality whilst simultaneously recognizing the differences of the diverse locale and range of actors and their issues in urban public spaces. This can guarantee the exercise of the right to the city and citizenship in a democratic, participative, and pluralist production of the urban space.

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REPORT FROM 9th WORLD URBAN FORUM

Smart City, Just City. An IHC Global Initiative in Support of the New Urban Agenda

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Abstract

This article describes IHC Global's "Smart City. Just City" initiative which it launched at a panel at the ninth World Urban Forum (WUF 9) held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018. The initiative is a key component of IHC Global's commitment to the New Urban Agenda and to achieving the aims of Global Goal 11. By seeking to align two different approaches to urban development – the technology driven "smart city" approach and the "social justice" informed "just city" approach – its goal is to fill a policy and practice gap with a policy framework and supporting indicators which will enable cities to intentionally use technology to achieve greater inclusiveness and equity and so to create places and spaces which are both "smart" and "just."

Too often "smart cities" focus on technology almost exclusively and when other benefits are seen as "by-products" of the technology. On the other hand, the human-centered focus of "just cities" too often fails to think sufficiently progressively or to use available technologies to advance its goals. "Smart City. Just City" aims to bring these two approaches together, to show that "technology" and "human centeredness" are not mutually exclusive terms and that the often private-sector driven use of technology can in fact serve "public good" purposes when these purposes are intentionally pursued. IHC Global's premise is that when a city uses smart technology with the purpose to achieve greater inclusiveness and justice, divisions will be lessened; economic opportunities will be more plentiful and widely available; a large number of people will be more robustly prepared to cope with natural and other "shocks"; and the city, as a whole, will prosper.

Keywords: smart city, just city, New Urban Agenda, WUF9

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The city of the future uses technology and data to advance inclusive and equitable urban development.

IHC Global launched its “Smart City, Just City Initiative” at the ninth World Urban Forum (WUF 9) in Kuala Lumpur, bringing together voices from city government, urban planning, public space, journalism and urban policy. The standing-room-only event was held on the World Stage of Next City. This initiative is a key component of IHC Global’s commitment to the New Urban Agenda and to achieving the aims of Global Goal 11.1 It fills a gap by seeking to align two different approaches to urban development – the technology driven “smart city” approach and the “social justice” informed “just city” approach – with the goal of developing a policy framework and accompanying indicators that cities can use to guide their efforts to create a city that is both “smart” and “just.”

IHC Global’s premise is that when a city uses smart technology with the purpose to achieve greater inclusiveness and justice, divisions will be lessened; economic opportunities will be more plentiful and widely available; a large number of people will be more robustly prepared to cope with natural and other “shocks”; and the city, as a whole, will prosper. Too often “smart cities” focus on technology almost exclusively and other benefits are seen as “by-products” of the technology. On the other hand, the human-centered focus of “just cities” too often fails to think sufficiently progressively or to use available technologies to advance its goals. “Smart City, Just City” aims to bring these two approaches together, to show that “technology” and “human centeredness” are not mutually exclusive terms and that the often private-sector driven use of technology can in fact serve “public good” purposes when these purposes are intentionally pursued.

The launch: building momentum at WUF 9

The focus of WUF 9 was “Cities 2030, Cities for All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda,” so it was a fitting venue to launch the Smart City, Just City initiative there as one way to advance the ambitious and inclusive intentions of the New Urban Agenda and meet the goals of Global Goal 11. The first phase of this two-phase initiative aims to heighten awareness and bring diverse voices and perspectives to the global urban development discussion while developing tools to enable the “smart” and “just” alignment. The objective is to change the nature of global discourse so that cities focus intentionally on achieving greater inclusiveness and fairness as they also achieve greater efficiency.

At the launch event, the initiative resonated with the audience in what was a highly interactive session. The differing but mutually reinforcing perspectives of the

¹ Global Goal 11 is one of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, sometimes referred to as SDG’s, that together comprise Agenda 2030, a global compact signed at the United Nations in September 2015 with the aim of eradicating poverty. Goal 11 calls for cities to become inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

presenters² proved a compelling way to underscore urban intersections and variety of ways that “smartness” and “justice” could come together. At the “Smart City. Just City” launch event, speakers from the World Bank, City Space Architecture, Next City, IHC Global together with the Mayor of Baltimore spoke about the importance of cities being both “smart” and “just.”



Fig. 1. IHC Global's 'Smart City, Just City' event at the 9th World Urban Forum, hosted at the Next City World Stage. From left to right: Luisa Bravo, City Space Architecture / The Journal of Public Space; Ahmed Eiweida, World Bank; Tom Dallessio, Next City; Judith Hermanson, IHC Global.



Fig. 2-3. IHC Global's 'Smart City, Just City' event at the 9th World Urban Forum, hosted at the Next City World Stage. On the left: introduction by Judith Hermanson. On the right: presentation by the Mayor of Baltimore Catherine Pugh (via video message).

² Presenters were Ahmed A. R. Eiweida, World Bank; Luisa Bravo, City Space Architecture / The Journal of Public Space; Thomas Dallessio, Next City; Honorable Catherine Pugh, Mayor of the City of Baltimore, MD; and Judith Hermanson, IHC Global.



Fig. 4-5. IHC Global's 'Smart City, Just City' event at the 9th World Urban Forum, hosted at the Next City World Stage.

This launch event was intended to be the first in a series of strategic efforts, planned for the coming year, designed to bring together the two separate narratives common within the discourse on urban development. The “Smart City” movement focuses on harnessing data and technological advances to make cities function in a more efficient, integrated, and sustainable manner. The ‘Just City’, in this case, refers to various discourses, which include “the right to the city” and which focus on cities that are inclusive and equitable, in which everyone is able to participate and to shape the urban experience, and in which services and infrastructure investments are designed to foster greater opportunity for all, including the most vulnerable. This new initiative will seek to show that the smart city can be the just city, and the just city can be the smart city, and will specifically highlight ways in which the two concepts can be symbiotic.

Main Objective

The objective of the Smart City, Just City initiative is to develop and advance a policy framework that uses smart city techniques to attain a ‘just city’ vision of an equitable, inclusive, and participatory urban reality. Its outcome will be two-fold: (1) To provide a draft policy framework, together with draft indicators that aid in the intentional use of an equity lens when using data and technology driven solutions and (2) to test the framework and indicators in selected cities through pilot projects at the municipal level.

Narrative framing

The main characteristics of the ‘Smart City’ and ‘Just City’ concepts are outlined in the boxes below. Smart City techniques are tools that can be used to drive decisions, often based on large quantities of data, the ultimate goal of a “Smart City” being an efficient and integrated city.

A ‘Just City’ begins with a commitment to justice, and focuses on ensuring that all residents are able to benefit from and participate in urban processes, the ultimate goal of a “Just City” being an inclusive and equitable city.

In reality, a city needs to pursue both Smart City and Just City visions in order to bring about the goals of both. This initiative will promote a framework that sees the Just City

as the normative basis for a successful Smart City strategy and sees the Smart City as a necessary conduit for pursuing Just City goals.

Smart City	Just City
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Involves the collection, processing and use of large quantities of current information on all aspects of the modern city; 2. Builds on the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) and Internet of Things (IoT) facilitated by inexpensive sensors on everything, widely distributed collectors and users of data, and much cheaper computing and data storage (cloud); 3. Covers all local public functions such as schools, libraries, transportation systems, hospitals, power, water waste management, law enforcement and other community services; 4. Requires a governance framework and institutional incentives to make smart decisions; and 5. Leads to more efficient, better managed and quicker decisions to address city problems. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Starts with a vision and commitment to justice - more equitable approaches; 2. Focused on better access to services and infrastructure for all; 3. Requires opportunity for good jobs for everyone; 4. Includes affordable housing, adequate investment in public services and fair taxes and charges; 5. Unifies the city through broad understanding and ownership of strategies.

Process

The *Smart City. Just City* initiative was conceptualized by IHC Global through its research and analysis of barriers to equitable urban development. It underwent vetting and review of IHC Global’s Senior Technical Advisors³ and will have two phases. In the first phase, five main activities will be undertaken over the course of twelve months, with the goal of engaging a wide audience of local governments, civil society groups, and private sector representatives. The findings of the five components will provide input to a report that lays out a ‘*Smart City, Just City*’ policy framework for how cities can utilize smart city techniques to attain a ‘just city’ vision. This framework report will be presented and debated at a multi-stakeholder convening that will bring together local government representatives, funding organizations, and civil society groups to connect, review and respond to the policy framework and its supporting indicators, prior to next steps which will include pilot testing in selected cities.

³ IHC Global’s Senior Technical Advisors are Laurence Hannah, former Lead Urban Economist, World Bank; Blair Ruble, Distinguished Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars; and Eduardo Rojas, University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture and Design. The later Thomas Kingsley also contributed to the concept, together with IHC Global Board Member Steven Feldstein, Associate Professor and holder of the Frank and Bethine Church Chair of Public Affairs at Boise State University and nonresident fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Context

There are many examples of citizen-led movements and projects that do use data and technology to advance more equitable urban outcomes for citizens. For instance, Slum Dwellers International, among other NGOs, has a history of undertaking community mapping and citizen-led enumerations to fill in information gaps that exist in informal settlements, and using this data to negotiate with city governments for better service connections in slums.

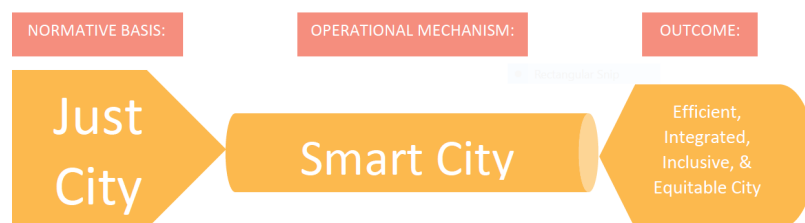
Another recent example of an effort utilizing smart city techniques to create a more equitable city is the Digital Matatus project in Nairobi, a collaborative effort between Kenyan and American universities that utilized cellphone technology to collect transit data and develop a mobile routing application to map the city's informal transit system routes⁴. With 3.5 million people in Nairobi reliant on informal public transport, increased information on how these systems are utilized can help the city plan more equitable transportation investments in the future.

As these examples show, Smart City techniques can be used to much more quickly and precisely identify inequitable conditions and to consult all citizens. This makes the Just City vision more practical and ultimately attainable. In reverse, the use of Just City goals as a lens through which to identify and prioritize Smart City solutions will lead to a more efficient and effective city which is attractive economically and socially to all stakeholders including private sector investors.

To date there have not been comprehensive efforts for how to prioritize smart *and* just efforts holistically within city-wide policy. Some cities have developed detailed 'smart city' plans that do include human-centered goals, such as livability, as important outcomes. For instance,

Copenhagen's smart city strategy, called 'Copenhagen Connecting', seeks to harness big data to reduce traffic congestion, make the city carbon neutral by 2025, and improve the quality of life for all cities. This strategy won the World Smart Cities Award in 2014 and has been lauded for utilizing smart-city techniques as instruments to attain specific goals⁵. However, a policy framework that can both be applied broadly and adapted to local contexts is needed to ground smart city techniques to specific just city goals. With this initiative, IHC Global will be reaching out to partners and participants over the coming year to help raise awareness and provide input a draft policy framework and indicators to gauge progress. These tools will in turn be vetted and tested in a second phase working with selected pilot cities across the globe.

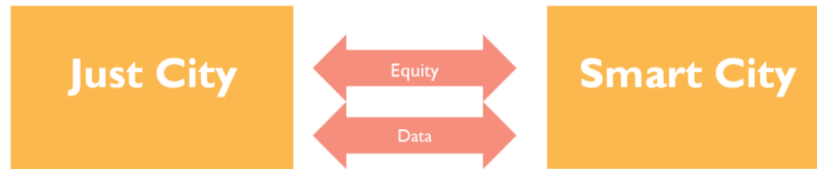
Smart City and Just City pursued together:



⁴ <http://www.digitalmatatus.com/about.html>

⁵ <http://www.copcap.com/newslist/2014/copenhagen-is-the-worlds-smartest-city>

This initiative will focus on two main ‘connectors’, data and equity (with special attention to data equity), that can help bridge the gap between these two narratives. While there are many potential focal areas that are relevant to both “smart” and “just” narratives, IHC Global chose these two connecting topics because they are cross-cutting in nature and have broad-reaching implications.



Phase I of *Smart City. Just City* is composed of five components:



In addition to the Launch Event, the other four are Public awareness and Advocacy, Data, Gender perspectives and Policy Research and Resource Hub. Each of these has several streams of work and each of the planned activities will include complementary awareness raising, consultation, and outreach components, each one designed to reinforce the others. For example, a blog series will bring the woman’s perspective to safety and ‘liveability’ of cities and a design effort will focus on inclusive approaches to

data gathering. Another example is an already realized product, a paper released also at the Kuala Lumpur Launch Event, “*Harnessing the Data Revolution to Support Housing and Urban Development*,” which analyzes and recommends practical ways that a city can begin the process of using data to support justice.

The outcomes of each of these components will be distilled and provide input into the Policy Framework with indicators, drafts of which will be presented, debated and refined at an Expert convening to be hosted by IHC Global.

Phase 2 will focus on testing, refining and validating the policy framework and accompanying indicators in a ‘real world’ context with selected cities.

In both phases of the project, IHC Global is seeking partnerships to reach widely and to develop pilot projects at the municipal level that are grounded in the *Smart City Just City* policy framework.

REPORT FROM 9th WORLD URBAN FORUM

Contribution of older urban residents

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UN-Habitat's biennial World Urban Forum (WUF9) took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia this year from 7-13 February. Following 18 months after Habitat III, its theme appropriately focused on "Cities 2030, Cities for All".

I participated as the co-chair of the General Assembly of Partners (GAP) official civil society group for older persons. Given very limited resources, we organized several panels with others: an official 2 hour Older Persons Roundtable; one with GAP Persons with Disabilities on accessibility and universal design; another representing older women as part of the Women's Assembly; a fourth contributing the civil society perspective to one by Business & Industry; and a fifth organized by City Space Architecture focusing on the importance of safe and accessible public spaces which can reduce isolation faced by many older urban residents.

Urbanisation and population ageing are century defining demographic trends. Over 500 million urban residents are older people. Yet cities everywhere are failing to address the changes brought about by global population ageing with increasing inequality and insecurity. Physical, social and economic barriers prevent older people in particular from fully enjoying their rights and living in dignity and safety in cities.

By 2030, older persons are expected to account for over 25 percent of the population in Europe and northern America, 17 percent in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and six percent in Africa. Over half the ageing population, 289 million, currently lives in low- and middle-income countries, and is increasingly concentrated in urban areas. Older persons are the fastest growing population group globally, expected to reach 22% by 2050 (UNDESA 2017). In 2015, 58% of the world's people aged 60 and over resided in urban areas, up from 50% in 2000.

At WUF 9, we sought to not only highlight key concerns of older urban residents but also to showcase examples of how some communities are involving their older residents in a substantial way to improve their conditions and to benefit from their knowledge, resources and activism. Using the 2007 World Health Organization's Age-friendly Cities Initiative, Sustainable Goal #11 "Building Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable Cities" and UN-Habitat III's *New Urban Agenda*, all of which call for age, gender and disability-sensitive urban strategies, significant improvements can be made.

With no UN funding, we (Sion Jones of HelpAge International and me representing SERR as GAP Older Persons co-chairs) were able include key global activists striving to improve the lives of older urban residents in more than 7 events: Robert Wong, a Hong Kong architect offered the example of how working closely and effectively with older urban residents in the renovation of a park they came up with innovations that others would

not have considered; Dr. Luisa Bravo, an Italian urban designer, president of City Space Architecture and a world renowned expert on public space, Dr. Tengku Aizan Hamid a female Malaysian gerontologist and Director of the Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing described new work in two Malaysian cities which sought to become more age friendly and Emily Tjale, an older South African activist with the Huairou Commission, described local efforts to protect older residents from those who sought to take advantage of them. We had tremendous support and assistance from the GAP Persons with Disability group who were both well organized and well - resourced and from the Huairou Commission, a network of women's global grassroots organizations. The World Urban Forum 9 offered an incredible opportunity to meet professionals and activists with an interest in urban issues, to share ideas, and most importantly, to focus attention on the growing intersection of global ageing and global urbanization.

PANEL: Inclusion, Innovation and Partnerships

Promoted by GAP Older Persons Co-chairs Katherine Kline & Sion Jones



Fig. 1. From left to right: Robert Wong, Hong Kong architect; Emily Tjale, LAMOSA South Africa; Kathy Kline, General Assembly of Partners Older Persons Partner Constituent Group; Tengku Aizan Hamid, Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing; Sion Jones, HelpAge International.

Robert Wong, Hong Kong architect, spoke about “Implementing universal accessibility at the local level – showcasing practical actions for realizing an inclusive new urban agenda” using the example of his work with senior residents who he involved in the redesign of a nearby playground. The result introduced elements that he, a younger architect, did not consider – such as a small nearby playground for their grandchildren; hooks on the back of benches for bags and for hanging canes and curved benches, some with backs and some without that encouraged conversations as well as comfortable spaces to sit. In “Towards the Development of Age-friendly Cities and Communities in Malaysia”, Dr. Tengku Aizan Tengku Abdul Hamid, Malaysian gerontologist and Director of the Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing, Universiti Putra Malaysia described how two Malaysian cities, Taiping and Kuching North, were dealing with challenges and

opportunities to improve their urban older residents' lives. Among their conclusions were: 1) acknowledging the diversity of cities and the implications for the 'age-friendly approach; 2) developing new forms of 'urban citizenship which recognize and support changing needs across the life course; 3) creating opportunities to involve ageing populations more effectively in the planning and regeneration of neighbourhoods.



*Fig. 2. Top: Canteen in Hong Kong, before.
Fig. 3 and 4. Bottom: Canteen in Hong Kong: after. Booth seating in different layouts to suit the uses.
A design project by Robert Wong.*

Emily Tjale, community activist with the Huairou Commission, caregiver, farmer, grandmother and leading member of the Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA) spoke about working to organize and advocate on behalf of older persons' need for safety, protection and better health and most important, the need to be included in policy and decision-making processes. Tjale recounted the story of older women in her community who were being swindled by two teenaged schoolgirls who would approach them, offering to help them when they were drawing out their pensions and other social benefit money. Community activists identified the girls responsible and enlisted the help of the police to introduce better safety measures to protect the older people. They introduced 24/7 neighbourhood patrols and the authorities changed the system for

obtaining payments so that people who were unable to write no longer just had to sign with a cross, but had to make a finger or thumb mark. Older people have wisdom, knowledge, skill, and life experience, and should not be marginalised, Tjale says. I spoke at numerous sessions about the role and situation of older people. “Ageing,” I told participants, “is a positive, not a negative word. Older women should be seen as “active contributors to society, not necessarily as charity beneficiaries”. They are donating hundreds of hours of unpaid caregiving work, and contribute via the “silver economy”.

“Too many of them [older women] live isolated in their own homes and don’t have a safe, secure, and reliable space near where they live to go out and intermingle with the rest of the world and therefore they’re sequestered and they get depressed and it’s not healthy.”
(Kline, 2018)

Older persons need to be included in discussions, planning, and decision-making processes, “in coming up with constructing safety and security for the older people and also protecting them from violence, protecting them from other people who may abuse them economically, socially, politically, and otherwise”.

PANEL: Universal Design Principles & Applications to Urban Development Promoted by GAP Persons with Disabilities



*Fig. 5. Park renovation in Hong Kong.
A design project by Robert Wong.*

We recommended that the concept of “universal design” be applied to all urban design, and not seen just as a tool to remove physical barriers for those with disabilities. One example is the development of what is now a large home product company named OXO. It began in 1990 when Sam Farber noticed that his wife Betsey had trouble holding a peeler due to arthritis in her wrist. He created a simple, attractive substitute which is now one of more than 1,000 home products that the US based company produces and

sells not in a specialty part of a store but in the household section as they are seen by all as attractive, easy-to-use products.

Another design issue – that of accessibility - is typically associated with ensuring removal of physical barriers in order to provide “access” to persons with disabilities. But researcher Carly Dickson asks what about social and experiential access? What about the human need for engagement, for having fun, for making connections, for building relations? Robert Wong, Hong Kong architect, has helped create several environments that prove that making spaces accessible enhances social engagement, looks good and makes people feel better in their environments. He works directly with older home residents to find out exactly what they want and then works with them, to create pleasing solutions.



Fig. 6-8. Workshop ‘Be a park designer’ with older residents in Hong Kong, by Robert Wong.

PANEL: How the New Urban Agenda, SDG #11 and age friendly cities can improve the lives of urban older residents

Promoted by GAP Older Persons Co-chairs Katherine Kline & Sion Jones

Hosted by Next City World Stage

The *NUA* and SDG 11 call for inclusive urbanisation that enables older persons to participate in planning and decision making, have access to safe and affordable public transportation and enjoy safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces. Together, these global frameworks provide opportunities for governments and other stakeholders at national, regional and city levels, to make clear and firm commitments to create inclusive cities for residents of all ages. However, there are also gaps in these international frameworks which must be addressed to ensure cities are fit for purpose for ageing urban populations. Change must go further, including well-designed public spaces,

reducing air pollution, increasing investment in public transport, and ensuring older urban residents enjoy their full rights to humanitarian assistance.



Fig. 9. From left to right: Luisa Bravo, City Space Architecture / *The Journal of Public Space*; Tengku Aizan Hamid, Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing; Emily Tjale, LAMOSA South Africa; Sion Jones, HelpAge International.

Exploring and identifying links among these three agendas can energize activities that advance all three. Expert panelists outlined what advocates were able to get included in the SDG #11 on cities and in the *New Urban Agenda* which reflect lessons learned from the implementation of the Age-Friendly Cities Initiative. Others offered local, practical examples of planning and implementation of initiatives that cross artificial boundaries and had a positive impact on the shared environment, and on older persons' quality of life. The World Urban Forum 9 offered an incredible opportunity to meet professionals and activists who have an interest in urban issues, to share ideas, and most importantly, to focus attention on the growing intersection of global ageing and global urbanization and what that means for our future.

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REPORT FROM 9th WORLD URBAN FORUM

Time for action. Implementing the New Urban Agenda in public spaces for health and wellbeing

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Urban Agendas are important guiding tools that frame thinking and point to major directions and changes needed. The dominant planning and city development practices in the 20th century resulted in the proliferation of modern cities that brought numerous problems that urban planners and designers are still dealing with. Do we have the capacity and appropriate tools to change the cities of tomorrow to make them more liveable places?

The challenges may seem overwhelming. However, there are advantages in strategies that combine acting locally and synergising with other places. Using insights from the Urban Synergies Group this paper represents a summary of initial pathways that may effectively implement the NUA (New Urban Agenda) – a collective vision for sustainable and healthy cities. To address the main issues of the NUA we discuss five key themes. First, we consider the level of commitment to achieve healthier cities for all during the 9th World Urban Forum (WUF 9). Second, we narrow our focus to examine child health and wellbeing. Third, we introduce an exemplary collaboration that harnesses collective wisdom through empowerment of participants. Fourth, we provide the rationale for the focus on public space. Within the fifth point we summarise tangible actions within the nexus of child health and public space that help to implement the NUA on the ground.

Keywords: public space, play, health and wellbeing, children, New Urban Agenda

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The United Nations predicts that the world population will nearly double by 2050 (United Nations, 2017). People move to cities, not only locally within the national borders, but also globally, in hopes for a better quality of life for themselves and for the next generation. Mass migrations from rural to urban areas have created challenges for cities, which town planners and urban designers alone seem unable to resolve comprehensively in order to enable sustainable, economically well-balanced and healthy living environments for all. While many nations have experienced mass migrations, the resulting challenges are diverse and require revisiting current urban planning and design practice.

The international community came together at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlement (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016 to readdress the way we plan, design, develop, manage and govern urban systems. The outcome was the New Urban Agenda (NUA): a document that sets out nonbinding commitments and the collective vision for an integrated sustainable urban development that will be achieved by the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2017). During the 9th World Urban Forum (WUF 9) 22,000 interdisciplinary stakeholders from 164 different countries came together showcasing their commitment to help implementing the NUA (UN-Habitat, 2018). This included the Urban Synergies Group (Mews, 2018). In this paper we reflect on the proactive involvement of this group during the event and discuss the nexus between health and wellbeing of future generations and the implications for public space.

The NUA has health as a key focus and WUF 9 should have been the opportunity to demonstrate this achievement. If citizens today seek to enable a healthy future for the next generation, new partnerships are required. Public spaces are the domain where necessity meets possibility, while the quality and appropriation become the measure of success. Genuine collaboration can enable tangible actions for and with children.

World Urban Forum and healthy cities

Concerted advocacy efforts of key stakeholders during Habitat III and the commitment by the World Health Organisation (WHO) led to the identification of health as the “pulse” of the NUA. Further the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) illustrate the potential for strong synergies between SDG 3 - *Good health and wellbeing*, SDG 10 - *Reduced Inequalities*, SDG 11 - *Sustainable Cities and Communities* as well as SDG 17 - *Partnerships for the goals towards tangible actions on a local level*. With this in mind the WUF 9 could have been the ideal opportunity to demonstrate a snapshot of the “pulse” of health across cities on planetary level.

Unfortunately, this “pulse” was beating at a low rate and remained hidden from most participants. Detailed actions and learnings from cities where positive examples of the “pulse” are evident in tangible evidence-based action in relation to public health and urban design remain fragmented. Overall, this “pulse” needs to beat at a satisfactory rate if we want to enable the much-needed seismic shift that is required to implement the collective vision set out in the NUA in a meaningful way.

Problems of urban health are evident in low levels of physical activity (and associated high levels of overweight, obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease), and high ecological footprints that are increasing at the same time as quality of life measures are decreasing. These trends support the recognition of the need to question the effectiveness of following current trends toward economic growth evident in high income countries. In

the absence of leadership on national scale, context specific actions are required to address the needs of people in cities and towns on bioregional and local scales. A healthy city is one that continually creates and improves physical and social environments, while it expands those community resources that enable people to mutually support each other when it comes to performing all functions relating to life and development to their full potential (World Health Organisation, 1998). These arguments can be seen clearly when focussing on child health and wellbeing.

Child health and wellbeing

Children are the natural experts of the local environment in which they grow up in and should be treated as such (Mews, 2018). Children are a kind of “indicator species for cities” (Gill, 2017). The British writer and children’s researcher Tim Gill explains that when children of all ages are visibly present in neighbourhoods, this is a sign of a healthy human habitat, in much the same way that salmon indicate the health of rivers. Children have also been described as being like canaries in the mines (Gleeson & Sipe, 2006): they are the group who are most likely to disappear from the streets as societies change and are perceived as more dangerous.

If we are collectively committed to creating a healthier and sustainable urban future, cities should enable spaces where children can develop to their full potential. However, evidence suggests that the way we currently operate urban systems is far from providing environments that enable healthy childhood development. One of the main issues in modern western societies is that children’s wellbeing is considered to be the individual responsibility of parents and families. For example, when traffic danger is seen as an issue, parents respond as individuals to keep their children safe by driving them to school and to other locations. The collective impact of this is to make cities more dangerous for all citizens. What is needed is a collective response that makes the whole environment, particularly public spaces, safer and more attractive for children (and adults).

The total mortality rate of children due to a road traffic collision is estimated to 10.7 per 100,000 population and 90 percent of those accidents occur in middle and low-income countries (World Health Organisation, 2008). In contrast growing up in a risk-averse high income society can equally result in damaging effects on children (Gill, 2007; Renz-Polster & Hüther, 2013). Serious cardio-metabolic disorders and mental health issues such as depression have been on the rise in adolescence and in early adulthood (Herrington & Brussoni, 2015; Sallis, Prochaska, & Taylor, 2000; Salmon, Owen, Crawford, Bauman, & Sallis, 2003; Tremblay et al., 2015). The level of physical inactivity is so high that children rarely achieve the global recommendation of 60 minutes of moderate to rigorous physical activity every day (World Health Organisation, 2010), which is associated with overweight and obesity. For example in Canberra, Australia, around quarter of children are now classified over a healthy weight (ACT Government, 2014) and sport alone does not deliver the desired public health outcomes for the next generations on large scale. Incidental physical activity as part of people’s everyday life routine such as walking, cycling as well as the opportunity to play independently become increasingly important. Malone described the current state of cities as “overcrowded, unsafe and polluted environments which provide little room for learning, play and recreation” (Malone, 2001, p. 9). Traffic congestion is estimated to get worse (World Health Organisation, 2008), public spaces are increasingly contested (Bravo, Carmagnini, & Matityhou, 2013; Iveson,

Time for action

1998; Manfredini, Gharaghooshi, & Leardini, 2017; Mierzejewska, 2011; Tieben, 2016), and perceived shifts in safety prevent children from exploring the city on their terms (Tranter, 2006; 2014; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997; Wyver et al., 2010).

A case study for collaboration: a side network event on “Shaping healthy cities for and with children”

During WUF 9, together with our partners City Space Architecture, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, University of Auckland, International Play Association, World Urban Campaign, University of Melbourne and the University of Canberra Health Research Institute, the Urban Synergies Group hosted a side network event that aimed to create synergies between children rights, health and wellbeing and public space. 60 people from nations around the world took part in this collaborative event entitled “Shaping healthy cities for and with children”.



Fig. 1-6. Networking event at 9th World urban Forum. Images by Urban Synergies Group.

The objective was to bring together an interdisciplinary group of thought leaders and key advocates to drive positive change for child health and wellbeing in cities. This included a panel of leading thinkers on public space and distinguished advocates for children’s rights. The evidence presented on international case studies and the lived experience of all participants enabled us to create an environment for knowledge exchange and a spirit of

genuine collaboration. A strong emphasis was placed on the harnessing of the collective wisdom in the room through workshop group discussions and short feedback presentations by the participants. This led to the identification of tangible actions such as safe independent childhood mobility (walking and cycling), encounter with nature in public space, and design for connected play spaces for all. All of these can be instrumental in driving change, empowerment of children and adolescents while fostering new partnerships.



Fig. 7-9. Networking event at 9th World urban Forum. Images by Urban Synergies Group.

Public space

The focus of this side network event was public space. The straightforward way to take action and start addressing the issues discussed here is in public domain. In order to engender support for change, urban governments need to start from what is a generally desirable goal. To implement the NUA we need to make space for the public and we also need to provide high quality public spaces so that all the actors can take conscious action in that space. With increasing proliferation of semi-public spaces and neoliberal “spectacle-isation” of the city the privately owned shopping mall and gated communities becomes the ultimate consumption mechanism of public space (Debord, 1994; Knapp, 2006). We recognise that we need to rediscover the traditional plaza. In addition, we need to go beyond consumerism and spectacle in making public spaces meaningful places for people. The new public experience needs to be immersive, experiential and sensual. As Harvey (2008) suggest “...it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city” and not mere existence and accessibility of public spaces.

In a liveable, vibrant and sustainable city, public spaces need to inspire people for healthy living; they need to provide identity, which will merge together the identity of the place collectively with people’s identities. The public space should evoke positive emotions towards the city. This new public space provides a setting for activities, imagination, creativity and ultimately play. The extent to which these are evident in public space will be the measure of the success of a new vision for the city.

WUF 9 - Findings from “Shaping healthy cities for and with children”

In relation to intervention in public spaces, participants in the networking event co-created and brainstormed a series actions that can lead to effective outcomes on the ground. The following five tangible actions were the most frequently mentioned during the workshop and strongly echo the collective wisdom of all participants and thought

leaders (Mews, Cochrane, Davey, 2017). The first action relates to the awareness of the importance of Children's Right to Play with Article 12 & 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) acknowledging the need to empower children and to co-create with them (Hart, 2013; Shier, 2001). The second action focuses on the reduction of motorised traffic speeds and the amount of traffic on local neighbourhood streets, and the protection and enhancement of public open spaces through co-designed place-making interventions with and for children in cities. The loss of independent mobility during childhood, and the lack of safe access to attractive outdoor spaces for free play, highlight the need for context and culturally appropriate place-making initiatives.



Fig. 10-11. Workshop with children at 9th World urban Forum. Images by Urban Synergies Group.

Evidence suggests that effective place-making can enable better health outcomes and increase the level of social inclusion and exchange (Ng, 2016; O'Brien, Jones, & Rustin, 2000; Veitch, Bagley, Ball, & Salmon, 2006). Successful policy responses include the creation of low speed or even vehicle-free spaces for safe play and independent active travel (Page, Cooper, Griew, & Jago, 2010; Tranter, 2014; Vallée, Cadot, Roustit, Parizot, & Chauvin, 2011). Alternatively, the emphasis on natural play spaces with loose elements can foster developmental opportunities for creativity and imagination in children (Bundy et al., 2011; Spencer & Wright, 2014). By reducing the number of artificial surfaces and plastic components in play spaces, heat islands and exposure to potentially hazardous fumes can be reduced (Lopes, Blick, & Pfausch, 2018). Natural spaces for free outdoor play are essential for healthy childhood development, in addition to the benefits of physical activity (Fjørtoft, 2001; Herrington & Brussoni, 2015; Seeland, Dübendorfer, & Hansmann, 2009; Spencer & Wright, 2014). Furthermore, the air quality indoors is often worse than outdoors, and thus the increasing number of indoor play spaces is of concern (Jones, 1999; Tham, 2016).

The third action refers to urban tree planting initiatives (green oases for healthy child play) to counteract heat islands, to enhance air quality and micro climate as well as providing additional play opportunities for children (Mews, 2018). The fourth action relates to the rediscovery of design for feeling, life and provision of safe infrastructure. Spaces that have a sense of place are a perceived playground for rich stimulation and social exchange and even tensions, where feelings can be expressed reflecting all facets of

life. If we seek successful public spaces for all we need to better understand the complexity of how a place is experienced. Muminovic (2016) suggests that understanding “place identity” (the complex relationships between all the elements of the place) can promote a better understanding of public spaces and how the character of these places changes over time.

The fifth action highlights an emerging issue in relation to the impact of modern technologies (e.g. smart phones devices, tablets, WIFI use) that overwrite the physicality of public spaces. The potential impacts of these technologies and their long-term implications for social dynamics and health and wellbeing are not well understood. The thought leaders in the room stressed that this urgently requires attention, so that policy makers can make better informed decisions and ensure public spaces provide health and wellbeing benefits not just for children but for all generations (Mews, 2018).

Conclusion

The arguments in this paper indicate that the challenges we face collectively as a species require an evolutionary shift in thinking and new approaches to the way we co-create and design cities. The NUA is an agreed document that formally acknowledges the shared vision of how the international community shall design the city we all need until 2030. Since we are now in the implementation phase of the NUA, the 9th World Urban Forum provided a platform for knowledge exchange, while being conceived as the ideal opportunity to form novel partnerships for action. The Urban Synergies Group has been given the opportunity to be a proactive player, is committed to implementing the NUA with the spirit of genuine partnership in relation to health and wellbeing and public space. Our findings demonstrate international stakeholders and passionate individuals are not short of innovative and evidence-based ideas about tangible actions that can lead to better outcomes for children’s health and wellbeing in cities. However, our reflections on WUF 9 highlight that to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes in cities the collective efforts need to be strengthened. It is hoped that WUF 10 will have a stronger more articulate “pulse” on health, where novel synergies will emerge with constituency groups, including visionary philanthropist, funding agencies and media partners which have been largely missing until now. Evidence suggests that concrete commitments can be implemented in an environment where innovative leadership empowers grassroots communities, and academic rigour informs better decision-making processes. Public spaces are and need to be the realm for social encounter. A realm where love, play, compassion, creativity, and fulfilling experiences can take place and enable space identities that meet the needs and desires of children as the indicator species for healthy urban spaces. In those spaces rules can and should be able to be contested, while we seek pathways for a collective realisation that health and wellbeing is a continuous process that starts with the rediscovery of the beauty of everyday life experiences in public spaces. Genuine partnership with stakeholders can drive change leading to actions that address spatial and non-spatial attributes, which can help create public spaces that promote wellbeing. The time for action is now.

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Thank you for reading!

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