

Transformation of the Relationship Between Neighborhood & Sociality

Space and Land Use in Tripoli Lebanon

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Abstract

Prior to the technological breakthroughs of the past two decades, the relationship between neighborhood and sociality had long remained relatively stable. However, Social media and technological innovations have occasioned changes in both lifestyles and urban forms. This research takes a social perspective to analyze the urban space of the city of Tripoli across three main stages. Tripoli has been chosen because the city includes a variety of urban structures and a variety of lifestyles. This study investigates how space affects culture and culture affects spaces in urban design. First, I present three parts of Tripoli's urban fabric, then provide an overview of residents' daily lives. I focus on the problems that these residents face because of the urban design of indoor and outdoor spaces as well as the relationship between neighborhood and social activities. I advance a new orientation for evaluating urban design based on social life, assisting urban designers and those responsible for improving residents' social lives.

Keywords: *Urban fabric, Culture, Space, Social Life, Land Use, Tripoli, Lebanon*

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Introduction

Tripoli is the second largest city in Lebanon, situated 85 kilometers (53 miles) north of the capital Beirut, its habitation goes back to at least the 14th century B.C. and many civilizations resided there, starting with the Phoenicians who established a small trading station there. Later, under the Persians, Tripoli was home to a confederation of the Phoenician city states of Sidon, Tyre and Arados Island. Under the successors of Alexander, the Great during the Hellenistic period, Tripoli was used as a naval shipyard. There is also evidence that it enjoyed a period of autonomy at the end of Seleucid era. After that, under Roman rule, starting with the takeover of the area by Pompey in 64-63 B.C., the Romans built several monuments here. The Byzantine city of Tripoli, which by then extended to the south, was destroyed, along with other Mediterranean coastal cities, by an earthquake and tidal wave in 551. After 635, Tripoli became a commercial and shipbuilding center under the Omayyad. It achieved semi-independence under the Fatimid Dynasty when it developed into a center of learning. At the beginning of the 12th century the Crusaders laid siege to the city, finally entering it in 1109. The conquest caused extensive destruction, including the burning of Tripoli's famous library, the Dar il-ilm, with its thousands of volumes. During the Crusaders' 180-year rule the city was the capital of the "County of Tripoli." But Crusader Tripoli fell in 1289 to the victorious Mameluke Sultan Qalaoun who ordered the old port city (today Al-Mina) destroyed and a new built inland near the old castle. It was at this time that numerous religious and secular buildings were erected, many of which still survive today. During the long Turkish Ottoman rule (1516-1918) Tripoli retained its prosperity and commercial importance and, in these years, more buildings were added to the city's architectural wealth. Later, with the French occupation, a lot of buildings were raised following the architecture European style. But after independence, new architectural style appeared in the city and was basically influenced by the Bauhaus school and respecting the new law of construction to present a new era of Tripoli city.

That is why a lot of politicians and historical researchers have praised the city and spoken about its value:

“Tripoli is a city with a rich history dating back to the days of the seafaring Phoenicians. It is at the same time a modern city with tremendous political, economic and cultural potential, a well-preserved historic center and a coastline that highlights the historic orientation of the city and its citizens toward the Mediterranean” (Christian Clages Ambassador Federal Republic of Germany, Special issue, March 2015).

The result of this history can be seen nowadays as mixture of three urban forms different in architectural appearance and social life style, which leads here to discuss if the urban design when transformed under certain policy, was based on the social needs of the Tripoli residents, or the new urban design leads to a transformation in the cultural social life of Tripoli citizens.

This paper discusses the effect of culture on urban design and the influence of the urban spaces on the resident's culture and social life. Indoor and outdoor social places are the elements to be analyzed to evaluate this cause and effect relationship.

According to Gibson and Stevenson the variety of programs, policies and strategies underscores the importance of the interaction between cultural programming and urban planning in developing "creative cities," "creative industries," "cultural regeneration" or attracting the "creative class." As this issue makes clear, the complexities of the cultural, economic, social and political implications of such programs are multiple as is their applications. It is clearly not simply a matter of "add culture and stir." (Gibson & Stevenson, 2004:4).

Looking inside the daily habits of Tripoli citizens, some values and rituals remain alive from its past; such as deep family relationships and mutual respect. The sanctity of ones relationship with neighbors and hospitality along with tolerance in coexistence. While in Tripoli, sociality rituals are clear in ones daily interactions and manner of communicating with people. There are morning and night meetings, preserving the common prayers and practicing traditional handicrafts. Hence the questions this research might ask are:

- Are all those "values" in Tripoli city still the same or changed?
- Are social spaces in the new urban design related to the "Tripoli culture" or trying to diverge far away with new style of life?
- Are the different urban fabrics of city affecting the "culture"?
- There is any way to preserve the "culture" of the city?

Theoretical Framework

Tripoli is classified as Lebanon's second capital. The two oldest parts of Tripoli are El Mina, which is located on the coast, and the Mameluke core, built surrounding the Abo Ali River. Figure 1 shows the holistic zoning of El Mina and Mameluke old Tripoli (Gulick, 1963). The two old districts were connected directly by three spine roads across an agricultural area. The new districts that were allocated later to fill the distance between the two historical parts of Tripoli have become urban zones nowadays. Figure 1 shows also the growth of Tripoli in modern times.

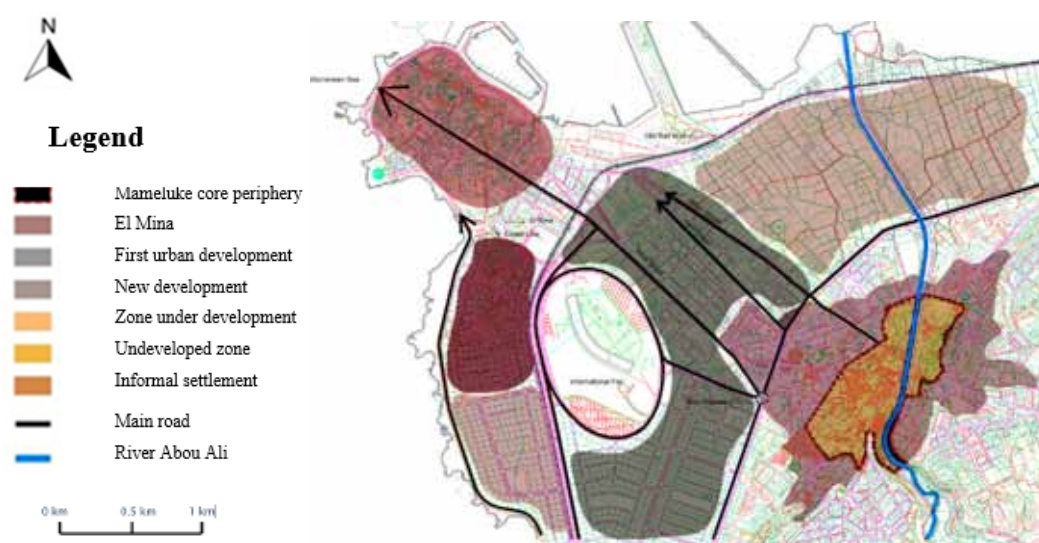


Figure 1. The zoning of Tripoli urban zones in modern times (based on Ginzarly & Teller, 2016, updated by the author 2020).

I will analyze the three urban fabrics in Tripoli in terms of historical, political and technological phases from which they have emerged. My analysis will focus on indoor and outdoor spaces where people gather.

Research Methodology

The following results and analysis, products of a 15-month study, were presented at the Culture in Urban Design Conference in Macau in April, 2019. It is based, first, on a documentation of the history of the city, then I held meetings with the researchers working on the same topic; not only researchers but also residents, politicians and responsible parties. I also included data from my fieldtrip to Tripoli and the surveys I did in all areas of the research. Outcomes of this research suggests a framework to analyze the transformation of the relationship between neighborhood and sociality in Tripoli, Lebanon. It also analyses the transformation of the nature of public space and discuss the effect of public spaces in urban design on the social activities and how much culture and space influences each other. By surveying the citizens and visiting the public and private places to explore the reasons behind any cultural transformation in the city related to the places, a clear vision about the culture and various recommendation will be elaborated at the end of the research.

The suggested framework consists of four sequential phases: documenting the public spaces for different fabrics of the city; analyzing users and neighborhood satisfaction; critiquing the effectiveness of public spaces regarding good social activities and proposing solutions for culture preservation of the city.

First, the public spaces for three forms of the city will be documented by observing and documenting the social spaces indoor and outdoor in each fabric and the appropriate regulation of buildings and land use at the same time. Second, the users and the neighbors' satisfaction of the same fabric will be analyzed by meeting them and asking about problems faced and facilities satisfaction with testing at the same time, some differences in interests and traditions. Third, effectiveness of public spaces will be critiqued by measuring the flow of people using these spaces and meeting persons in charge of activating and managing the places. Lastly, this research will provide solutions based on similar or inspirational experiences. Finally results from data collected and residents' points of view are reviewed to delineate the problems and potential solutions.

Domain of Study

The study covered the center of Tripoli starting from the surroundings of the grand mosque of the historical city; fabric 1, with no priority of one neighborhood over another, but what is important is the similarity in urban design form of the plot itself. The other zone is the expanded zone from the center of the city; fabric 2, represented as period of transition between the historical site and the modern one. The third area of the study is the new extension – the expanded zone with new regulations for buildings and urban land use; Fabric 3. As shown in figure 2, fabrics 1, 2 and 3 have remarkable distinguishing characteristics in its urban plan layout and will be analyzed in the following section of the research.

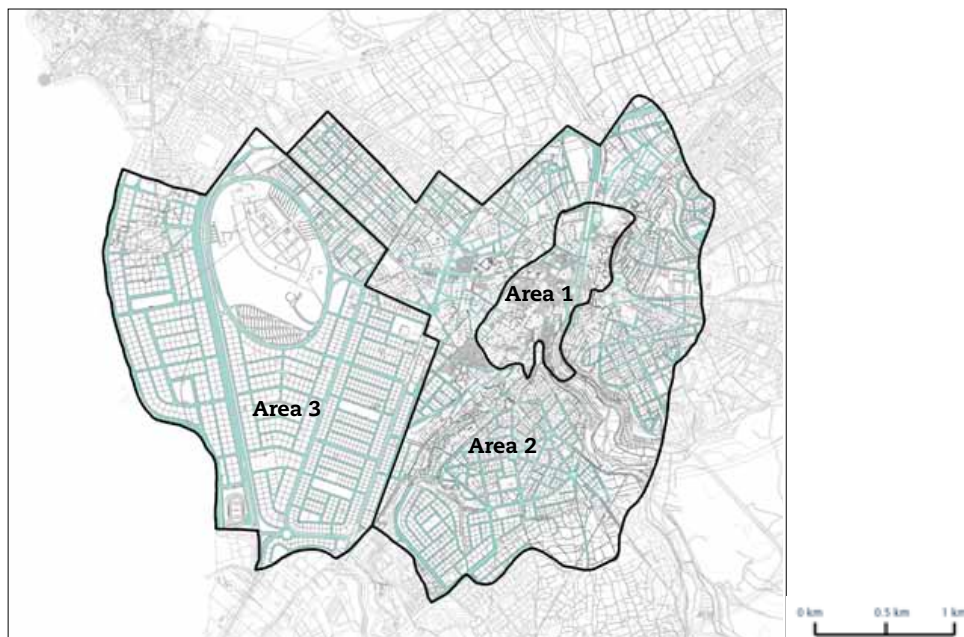


Figure 2. The selected areas of study with different urban fabric (Author).

Documenting the Different Types of Urban Fabrics

Area 1: Historical City Fabric (Mameluke stage)

The historical city of Tripoli in Lebanon is among the most important Arab cities, with distinctive urban planning and it has not changed since the Mameluke period. The urban fabric of the old city is typical Arabic historical design with radial streets distributed out from the center hosting the grand mosque of the city. Then it is further dispersed with very small streets for only pedestrian use as vehicles are not able to enter inside this zone except along the periphery as one-way car lanes. The commercial needs of the city are found at the ground floor in form of markets organized referring to the product type. In the upper levels, residential apartments are found. These markets (Souq) are the most crowded part of the city, in spite of low-quality buildings, poor infrastructure and lack of maintenance by the state.

Main defining characteristics of the urban design are:

- Typical Islamic Radial fabric (The Grand mosque is located in the center of the city and streets are emerging from this center in a radial form)
- Overlapping residential buildings
- Trading activities in the ground floors
- Indoor common places inside some houses
- Some houses are on the ground floor, others are on the first and second
- Narrow alleys to reach both commercial and residential buildings
- Mosques are numerous and opened for prayers (5 times a day) and for social ceremonies and easier to reach by foot
- Large number of outdoor common spaces are for public and residents
- Large number of historical buildings, as Khan (old hotels), Hammam (Public Sauna and Bath rooms), Takiya (Meditation place, Madrasa (schools), Tombs, ...
- Buildings are two or three stories high

Area 2: Intermediate Tripoli City Fabric (Ottoman and French occupation)

The new settlement that later arose was built a few miles inland and was connected by broad avenues to the port district. Long disputed by rival Syrian princes, it was occupied by the Egyptians under Ibrahim Pasha in the 1830s and was taken by the British in World War I. It was incorporated into the State of Greater Lebanon (Grand Liban) in 1920. During World War II, the city was occupied by the British and Free French and in 1946 it became part of the independent Republic of Lebanon. This area, as shown in the figure 2 and 3 is a transitional fabric, attached to the historical one while having some elements similar to the third.

Main characteristics of the fabric are:

- Part of the urban zone has Radial streets distribution
- Part of the urban zone has grid streets distribution
- Streets' width: differ between 4, 6 and 8m
- Attached buildings
- No outdoor spaces between the buildings
- Mostly with no elevators with 5 to 6 floors as the maximum height allowed.
- The commercial and even industrial uses are allowed and no car parking in the area except at the borders of the streets
- Mosques are less numerous, opened for the 5 daily prayers but easier to reach by car
- Some trees are on the sidewalks

Area 3: Modern Tripoli city Fabric (from 1985 - current)

After a painful stage in Lebanon due to the political troubles the country suffered, the republic started in the last decade of the century with an overall development plan taking shape. This development included new construction regulations, taking in consideration the growth in population, new materials and construction-technology and the importance of green and social places inside the city.

Therefore we can define the Main characteristics of this urban fabric as follows:

- Linear urban design and building distribution.
- Main open space is the International Fair of Tripoli designed by Oscar Niemeyer and hosts the big events of the city. (supports the social cultural, educational and industrial exhibitions)
- On the left of the main spine of the district there are three different streets sizes with three different land use regulation: 8m street width when no commercial buildings are allowed just residential, 24 m width where only services facilities are allowed with residential, and 32 m width with commercial and no industrial services are allowed with residential
- Regulation set back mandatory between buildings and 60% of the land is useful for buildings. 9 floors are maximum height allowed
- On the other side of the spine no more than 5 floors are allowed and no commercial use is permitted, social and educational centers are found
- Mosques are less numerous and opened for 5 daily prayers and hard to reach by foot
- Two main public parks in the area and some green paths in the middle of main streets.

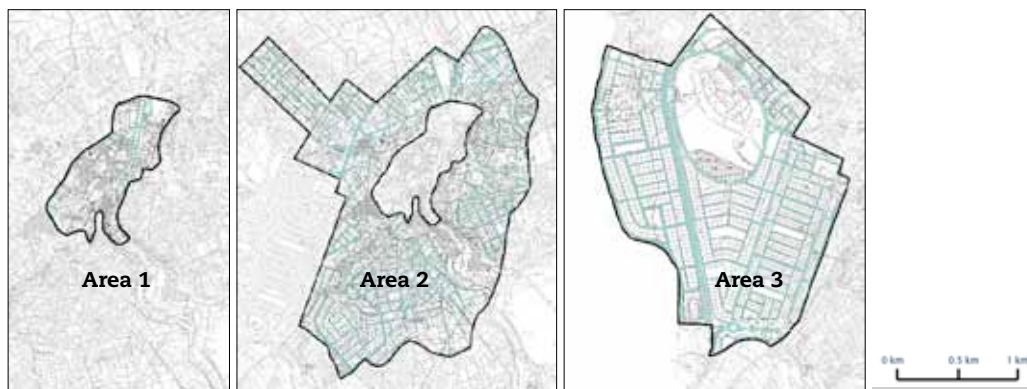


Figure 3. From left to right: Area,1, 2, and 3 consecutive different urban design features. (Author).

Documenting the Public Spaces

Walking in the city of Tripoli you can't count the number of public spaces or the gathering points which are dominant in the city but you can observe a city full of life and activities, people are walking around to achieve their needs on foot or by taking public transportation located everywhere in the heart of the city or along the peripheries.

Some public spaces are common for both Area 1 and 2 users as the park of Tripoli (El Menshie) or (Mussa coffee) that exists in the second area of the study but serves both urban fabrics.

For Area 3 almost all the social places are in the form of restaurants and coffee shops and the users are not necessarily the residents of the urban fabric. The types of social spaces are totally different in each area. While we find the narrow walkable alleys that encourage communication among the residents in fabric 1, there are only a small elevators sized for one family or 4 people maximum in Area 3 while the stairways in Area 2 provides opportunities for neighbor's interaction.

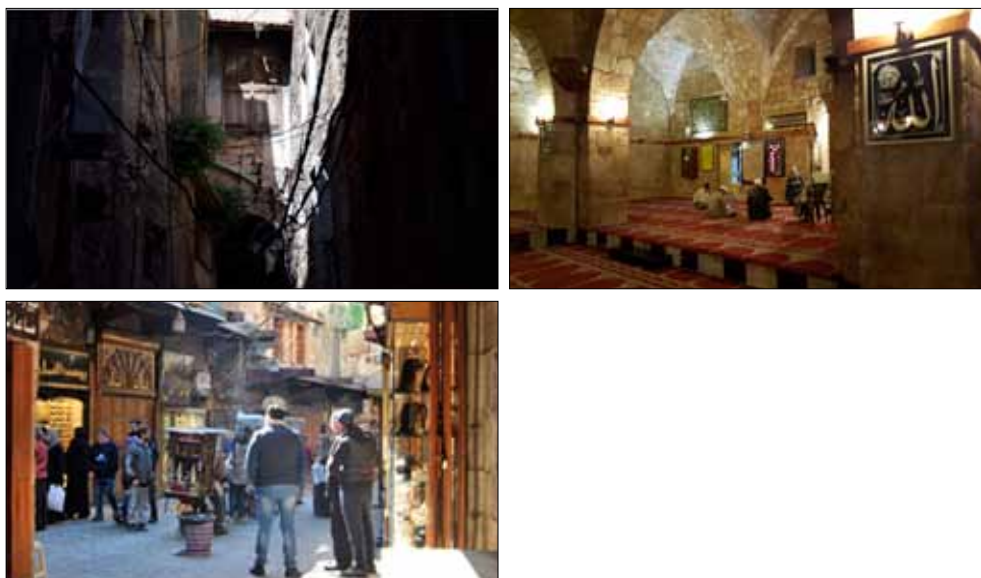


Figure 4. From left to right shows urban fabric 1 social spaces, Indicative narrow alley with vaulted connection on the upper level, Interior of Jami Taynal, Indoor market (Attareen market alley, Grand mosque, Jewelry market).



Figure 5. From left to right shows Area 1 social spaces, Left, Inside the vaulted courtyard of Souq Al Haraj (also known as “auction souq”) with the granite columns in the foreground. The doors of the shops on the ground floor and the windows of the private rooms on the first level are also visible. Middle, Another vaulted alley of Tripoli. Right, Fahim Coffee.

Regarding mosques: They are close and walkable in Area 1 became far and best reachable by car, in areas 2 and 3. Thus this minimize prayer attendance in those districts permanently. In the figures below, the significance of these social spaces and their differences are mentioned.



Figure 6. From left to right shows Area 2 social places: parks, outdoor shops (Bab AlRamel park, Azmi street) (the author, 2019).



Figure 7. From left to right shows Area 3 social places: Hassan park, outdoor restaurants and coffee shops, and along the route towards the International Fair of Tripoli) .

Surveying the Residents and Neighborhood's Satisfaction Levels

To check how much is noticed regarding the transformation of the culture and the traditions in Tripoli, and if this transformation is referred to the urban fabric design or not, it is important to have a look at the story of this transformation over the centuries. The famous Lebanese writer Vivian Mehanna says in her book *Lebanon & on* that Tripoli residents are still known for their youth and liveliness. They are brave, respectful, welcoming of guests and have agreeable temperments. They serve their culture, social traditions and family ties. Rarely in the world exists a city having an impressive sense of hospitality as Tripoli. This is not a way of living; it is a vocation and its slogan. In direct opposition to the artificial merits of countries which are stressed upon in international guides. Tripoli remains always as it

has been as natural as could be, the second home for all its visitors. It is also mentioned that 50 percent of the old traditions have changed or disappeared, except in some rural places and this is because of mechanization and tool improvements.

To explore if Tripoli citizens still respect their culture, a survey was distributed equally between the residents of the three fabric areas resulting in an arbitrary sample of about 300 persons. Results After surveying people of the city and asking about relationships and neighborhood life, most of their answers came to prove an awareness about these thoughts and socio-religious traditions. Statistics present a high percentage about 80% from all the fabrics believe in the importance of social relationships.

Inquiries about family relationships show they are still existing and practiced. all fabrics' residents are in the same range of respecting this part of culture and spend the most time with their families. But on the other hand, testing how much the urban fabric influences these interests, we found that people in Area 1 are the most respectful to their close relationship with neighbors; they are daily meeting each other and they share their stories aiming to be helpful, while this less in Area 2, there is a further decrease to level about half in Area 3.

The Social Spaces and the Neighbor's Satisfaction

Based on deep cultural roots the urban space should be evaluated as the best response to the cultural and social needs of the residents, so that after surveying the residents in these three fabrics of the city some indices started to appear. They indicate that the historical city of Tripoli has no longer been useful for the new generation, who desires more open spaces and more privacy as well. There is also a transformation in interests and hobbies from traditional games to video games which are not available there. After increases in government support of education there is a score of the highest percentage interest in reading in Area 1 as it is shown in figure 8's table and the conveyable chart in figure 9.

Residents of Area 3 are the most satisfied with the shelter they chose as they have more privacy and more open spaces to use. The luxury life - style, good facilities, and the high quality of neighbors are main characteristics in this area.

What residents of Area 2 likes the most in their districts are the social spaces, but at the same time they are the most unsatisfied with the location due to poor buildings quality and the absence of open spaces for gathering. They prefer to practice the popular sports and most do not have enough space for it.

All residents of Area 1, 2 and 3 are spending their free time with family and have formal relationships with the neighbors. But at the same time all of them believe in the importance of having deep relationship with the neighbors. It is an enduring value.

Based on the questionnaire and response percentages presented in the table 1, it is clear that Area 1's residents are the most satisfied with their social life, but in

Areas 2 and 3 are the least. This is due to differences in the social spaces in the area. All are aware about social culture, and all believe in it, but it seems that the design of urban space played a negative role in cultural preservation.

| Urban Fabric space design and social life efficiency | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | Area 1 | Area 2 | Area 3 |
| Are you satisfied with your social environment in your district | 60% yes | 36% yes | 52% yes |
| What are the problems you face there (in your district) | 44 % no green space | 33% No green space | 43 % No green space |
| | 40 % quality of residents | 23% quality of residents | 34 % quality of people |
| | (because they are not the original residents of the district) | (because they are not the original residents of the district) | (because they are coming from all around the city to the new fabric) |
| What do you like the most in your district | 45.2 % privacy | 50.9% privacy | 65.9 % privacy |
| | 24.2 % quality of residents | 16.4% common space | 4 % common spaces |
| Do the Tripoli citizens still have deep family relationship? | 69.1 % family | 62.9 % family | 70.3 % family |
| How do you prefer to spend your free time sharing with | 29.1 % friends | 22.6 % friends | 18.2 % friends |
| | 0% alone | 12.9 % alone | 9.1 % alone |
| Do the Tripoli citizens still have deep neighborhood relationship? what kind of relationship you built with your neighborhood | 72.7 % formal | 64.5 % formal | 72.7 % formal |
| | 21.8 % closed | 21 % closed | 11.4 % closed |
| | 5 % no relationship | 14.5 % no relationship | 16 % no relationship |
| Do you believe that still people need to communicate and to have a deep relationship | 76.4 % yes | 80.6 % yes | 88.6 % yes |
| | 23.6 % no | 19.4 % no | 11.4 % no |
| | Because some neighbors are not sharing the same culture | Because some neighbors are not sharing the same culture | |

Figure 8. Table of the survey summary results showing the social life place satisfaction and culture preservation interest.

The question now is how much the public space in each fabric area is still utilized by the residents, how much is a lack of use is limiting the prosperity of that fabric and what are the obstacles to an increased utilization? The answers to these questions suggest changes that will move the fabric in a better direction.

By surveying transformation in the flow of people in the most popular and famous public city spaces for the different fabrics and meeting the visitors and managers of the private and public sectors, we found the following obstacles:

Area 1

- A retardation in number of visitors but still noticed by the residents
- Hard accessibility for foreign visitors
- Customers are mostly elderly (not many youngsters attend (old style with no TV or Internet)
- No actions taken from the ministry of Tourism to rehabilitate the archaeological buildings instead the small garden was replaced by a modern square.

Area 2

- Almost all public spaces are outside the fabric's residential area
- Most public spaces are for the public and not visited by residents of the neighborhood
- Major retardation for 4 years, mainly due to politics; the area is politically split supporting different parties. Bad reputation advertisement for the area such as awareness from fights
- The hard landscape existing in the park needs maintenance and the addition of new game//play areas could help

Area 3

- Most public spaces visitors are from around the city and quite a number are local residents
- Retardation in the number of Lebanese attendees, mostly due to facility conditions (cleanliness of bathrooms, broken fountains used as swimming/wading pool, closed cafeteria, and the banning of food and beverages in the parks)
- Remarkable retardation this year – likely due to recent poor economic and political conditions. It Prefers the current street plans.

The survey and meetings ended with the resident's dreams and suggestions for improving the social life and cultural preservation of the city. Residents are looking for a safe city, empty of trucks, renovated, including entertainment and cultural facilities while asking for neighborhood committees, more green spaces and playgrounds and more places for both teenagers and adults. Figure 9 summarizes the responses from all fabric areas and presents for this research a couple of recommendation to be submitted to the government and local municipalities as well.

| Citizens Dreams and Suggestions to Improve the Social life in Their Districts | | |
|---|---|---|
| Area 1 | Area 2 | Area 3 |
| Provide social clubs | Provide social clubs | Provide social clubs |
| Social communication places | Social communication places for all ages and interests | Social communication places for all ages and specially for elderly people |
| Maintenance | Maintenance | Playgrounds for kids |
| Playgrounds for kids | Playgrounds for kids | Provide playgrounds |
| Charity activities | Provide playgrounds with movements activities to minimize the overuse of electronics games | Provide green spaces |
| Preserve streets only for people | Preserve streets only for people | Found a neighborhood committee |
| Provide green spaces | Provide green spaces | Provide library |
| Found a neighborhood committee to look for problems | Found a neighborhood committee to look for problems | Entertainment places |
| Provide library | Provide library, theatre | Neighbors meeting weekly plan |
| Entertainment places | Entertainment places | |
| Prevent trucks to pass through the neighborhood | Prevent trucks to pass through the neighborhood | |
| renovation | Big renovation | |
| | Big improvement in the city and not only in the neighborhood | |
| | Lovely social live | |
| | Provide places for social meeting very near to the houses | |
| | Provide parking | |
| | Teach people about responsibilities and duties and train people to maintain their houses and neighborhood | |
| | Build a mosque | |

Figure 9. Survey summary of results showing the citizens suggestions to improve the social life.

“Culture” of the City – Preservation and Solutions Approach

As mentioned previously we can summarize the main features of Tripoli City “culture” as the neighbor’s relationship where people of the same district interact and meet each other and communicate.

To preserve this quality of social life, some successful local and international examples could be applied to each of Tripoli’s fabrics depending on its urban site and situation. Consequently, from Area 1 to Area 3 some inspirational solutions cases are presented as follows:

a. International Project: Rehabilitation of the Fez Medina (Area 1)

Fabric “1” is the most complicated and difficult area to be solved, because of the heritage aspect of the site and due its high population density, lower residential income, lack of government interest, overlapping buildings, narrow alleys, mixed used functions housed in single buildings and many other constraints. But at the same time the conservation of heritage sites are a trend nowadays and both public and private organizations are working on this. What is key is cultural conservation is not far from the heritage conservation and once interested parties submit solutions to sustain the heritage site as it was built it can support traditional norms leading to cultural conservation.

These historic commercial spaces will once again be turned over to commerce, mostly as workshops and sales outlets for traditional urban crafts projected to create more jobs opportunities and rehabilitate these residential areas.

b. Local Project: “El Hay” Integrated Multi-scale Intervention for the Vulnerable Population of Tripoli, Lebanon (in Area 2)

This project was in collaboration between Solidarities International, UN Habitat project and the municipality of Tripoli. It’s a supportive neighborhood approach from emergency to development including primarily the following sectors: Shelter, Wash, Energy and Social Cohesion. Within 13 months the project was completed in the neighborhood of Qobbe, Tripoli, Lebanon – In particular, the areas of Shaa-rani, Rahbet and Old Qobbe. These areas are located in Area 2 and after checking the place it was clear there were good effects on cultural preservation. The project could improve the social spaces by furnishing the spaces between buildings and creating seats everywhere and added to the playgrounds wherever open spaces were found. Hence the project encouraged resident’s utilization and interaction. This project are a very good example to be repeated in each district of Area 2.

c. Local Case: Small Mosque of Bride of Maarad (Area 3)

One individual idea from the resident “Abu Riyadh” in the AlMaarad district of fabric 3 was to create very small mosque in the ground floor of a tower building where all neighbors meet, pray and communicate. This small mosque as I examined by myself is a vital place where the residents and even passerbys off the streets meet and discuss the social, political and their daily life concerns.

What if we repeat this on the ground floor of each area 2 or 3 multi story building? Or what if we create multiple prayer areas in the case of very tall high rise building! A positive impact on the social life will surely be the result.

d. Rooftop Social Place

With the increase in population worldwide and the decrease of plots areas, Designers around the world are beginning to create new social places everywhere. For example on building's rooftops social spaces such as playgrounds, swimming pools, restaurants, coffee shops etc. provide additional opportunities for cultural, recreational and social activities - increasing interaction. A place where people can gather, meet and interact assists in achieving the main goal of cultural continuity and preservation.

What if we create social place at the top of each multi-story building? Or in the middle for the case of a medium height building or incorporating social terraces every 10 floors in case of tower building?

e. "Must Have" Common and Social Spaces

Studying the daily life habits and common time of departure (work/school) and returning home along with the common free time during the day and the weekends, we can create common spaces between the buildings or in their entryways.

They can take form as a narrow green alley or in form of terraces extended at the mezzanine levels of the stairs, or just an elevator stop to a "social floor" having a playroom area, coffee corner, or T.V. screen and sitting zones. Providing a place for the neighbor's committee meetings could be a "must have room" in new buildings.

Conclusion

Tripoli, Lebanon is a city that conserves its culture and features of this conservation are most evident in the resident's familial relationships and respectful neighborhood interactions and religious rituals as congregational prayers, fasting, Ramadan and celebrating the Eids with family and friends.

Although Tripoli is still conserving its culture and defending its traditions and ethics, it is at the same time beginning to look to the extra needs and life style with high quality urban buildings and facilities.

Understanding the city's urban design, current regulations and how and why it has changed over history paired with the analysis of its urban social spaces from the perspective of its occupants and their social activities will lead to a more accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of the design of urban transformation and its influence on social interaction and cultural preservation.

Furthermore, the urban fabric is a very important factor affecting resident's social activities. And in the case of Tripoli, the disappearance of common spaces in the new urban fabrics negatively impacts the cultural practices of its residents.

Tripoli today is defined by these 3 urban fabrics: A – The Mameluke typical Arabic city with lots of common spaces. B – The extension of the city with a high density population and low floor level and less common spaces. C – The new high density as and higher floor levels with the existence of public spaces only.

As seen in the research, the existence of some public areas even if commercial increases the resident's interaction, but when they become over-crowded it undermines occupants levels of privacy and tranquility.

The citizens in the Old city of Tripoli are the most satisfied with their human relationships because of narrow alleys and common entrances through the neighborhood. But at the same time this design creates a real problem of reduced privacy. In addition, the mixing the commercial areas with the residential plots prevents occupants from a level privacy that most view as required.

The new city of Tripoli with its high density and no common spaces design negatively impacts cultural preservation, but provide a comfortable and acceptable level of privacy for its residents.

Finally, it is recommended to think about new strategy in the old city regarding the residents' needs and problems facing them there. In regard to the public spaces it is important to improve them by adding new technological facilities and updating its social activities and events. It is recommended also to rehabilitate the old city and keep it sustainable by preserving the residential apartments with extension of these areas when needed.

Looking at fabric 2 recommendations, a strategic architectural maintenance program is needed by surveying the quality of buildings to then define which plots could be potentially removed with the goal of increasing the number of open area public use spaces.

In the fabric 3 area it could be recommended to provide some social clubs and the existing public spaces should to be more available and attractive by hosting some social and community service events. This new fabric of the city could be improved by developing roof tops and the ground floor areas of the buildings as social places described earlier.

To end with, it is important for new city designers to take in consideration the established culture and history of the city and to try hard to create indoor and outdoor "must have" social places encouraging more interactions away from the pressure of modern life. However, I wouldn't limit it to just new cities, but to the continual expansion and rebuilding of older cities, such as Tripoli

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