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INFORMAL URBANISM AND REFUGEES SETTLEMENT

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VIRTUAL INVESTIGATION: PLACE IDENTITY AND PERCEPTIONS OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENTS CITY UTICA, NY

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In this paper, I examined relationships between the theory of place and refugee integration with a set of tweet data of a US refugee-receiving site Utica, New York obtained between March 2006 to March 2020. This study intended to determine a correlation between social media and literature to understand a representation of virtual space, physical spaces, and their meanings. Specifically, I asked how social media becomes a virtual space for disadvantaged communities that reflects everyday experiences of refugees after their resettlement. The paper begins with topical information of a refugee resettlement site. It continues with a review of the two strands of literature and Twitter data. The findings suggest that with specific keywords the aggregated tweets help pinpoint spatial participation of refugees due to day-to-day nature of twitter use. Hoverer, the collected tweets data insufficiently convey psychological meaning of place and integration. The paper concludes with a discussion on limitations and applications of tweets as a representation of actual activities in a physical setting.

1. INTRODUCTION

Immigrant and refugee studies have many challenges, such as stigmatization of the topic, illegitimate legal status of the subject, mobility of the subject, and language barriers. With the potential and applicability of the social media, this study attempts to connect a gap between theories and real-life situation. My hypotheses are: refugee populations utilize virtual space and social media to actively engage with their ethnic groups while physical spaces enable them to bridge their connections to local host community; refugee groups may use digital space to replace the absences of their actual political spaces; yet, the virtual space still represent spatial relationship between digital and physical world. My research questions are: what is a correlation between literature on place identity and integration and the use of digital space; and how representative the virtual space is to the physical space?

This study used Utica, NY as a case study because of its rich in ethnic diversit of immigrants and continuous inflow of refugee resettlement. Since the 1970s, Utica has continued to resettle over 16,000 refugees. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recognizes Utica as 'the town that loves refugees.' As of 2019, one-sixth of Utica's population are refugees.

Due to the out migration, the town had many abandoned houses, shops, and civic buildings. When refugees arrived Utica, they have rejuvenated Utica's cultural and financial conditions. While the repurposing of these existing infrastructure is advantageous; these refugees have small chance to physically express their cultural identity form of their traditional settlement and architectural features in the new host community. They would rather renovate, adapt, or adjust abandoned buildings. This strategy allows refugees to spatially integrated with locals. However, it does not celebrate uniqueness and the distinct characters of each culture. This raises a

question of how refugees utilize their space when there is no cost or character limitations. Thus, it leads to the examination of social media. Using twitter data help provides large number of data points that altogether can illustrate trends and patterns of uses. They are especially helpful for an initial stage of a research prior to a fieldwork and mitigate communication barriers for research in diversity.

To answer these questions, I conducted a literature reviews on place identity and refugee resettlement. The literature then comparatively analyzed with tweet data to see how the tweet content have align with theoretical assumption of place and spatial integration of refugee a receiving city.

2. DATA AND METHODS

Research Design

This is a pilot study that attempts to uncover if theories and actual response from social media are parallel or not. Twitter is one of the world's largest social media platform that is quickly becoming a powerful resource for data mining. People use twitter not only to express their thoughts and daily life experiences, but also their political affiliations and opinion of subject matters. Researchers can collect data dated back to 2006 when the platform was established. To date, many scholars use twitter data to explore migration patterns[1], political landscape[2], border security.[3] With many challenges that immigration and refugee studies face, twitter data demonstrate abilities to democratically represent geographical landscape along with political atmosphere of a specific time and subject. This capability makes it is feasible to test and approve the application of theories.

For this comparative study, I have identified two sets of data sources. First set of data is two strands of literature on place identity specifically refugee resettlement site and spatial integration theory. The second set of data is tweet data between March 21, 2006 – March 4, 2020. The period was not determined but dated back to the first available tweet with two keywords to the recent tweets from Twitter website on March 4, 2020. Keywords use for extraction are "refugee" and "Utica". In all, 1,167 tweets were extracted using /R/ package.

Data Analysis

In the literature review, I assessed literature on the theory place identity in conjunction with refugee studies. At the same time, I reviewed studies on refugees' resettlement experience, specifically in the global north countries. Base on the literature and previous studies, I analyzed them on chronological order using attribute coding and evaluation coding. Then I identified chains of meaning of place and reception experience in the integration process.

For tweet data, I employed two methods: frequency of terms and co-occurrences of terms. Zhao performed these techniques and illustrate trends and patterns of tweets in his study of social network analysis.[4] The frequency of term is used to plot word cloud. I focused on how tweets illustrate similar or different concerns regarding refugee issue in Utica especially in terms of means and markers. Co-occurrences in tweets then used to build a network of terms. The tweet data can be tracked to events and uses of public space to celebrate diversity, voice political opinions, and illustrate cultural identities of refugee in Utica. These two sets of data are then compared to correlate social media space and theory of 'place' for refugees.

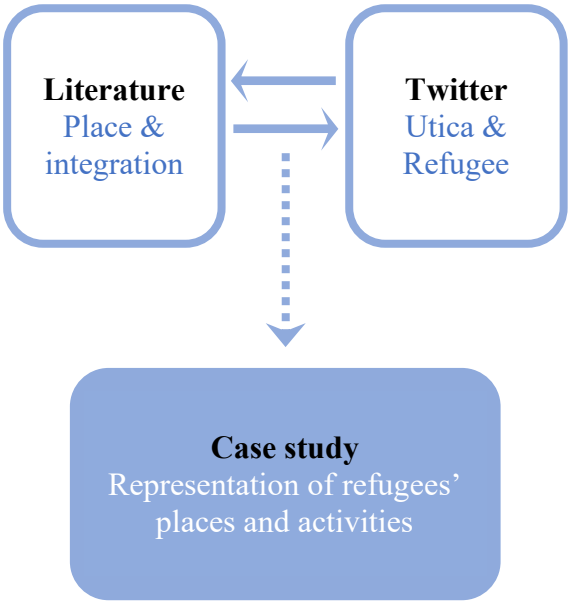

Fig. 1: Research design *(author, 2020)*

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study reviews two strains of literature: place-identity and refugee integration. It aims to: first understand how integration process impacts 'place' for refugees after resettlement; then arrives a meaning of 'place' after a resettlement especially 'home' and 'belongingness'. These two strands of literature are supplementing one another in order to arrive a meaning of place and integration in refugee-receiving site. In the latter phase, I compared the review with twitter data to examine a correlation.

Integration and Spatial Dimension

Integration is a multi-level two-way process involving various stakeholders from individuals, local agencies, a state and national have a role. With the variance definition of integration, Ager & Strange develop refugee integration framework for UK Home Office. The framework provides ten domains of refugee integration categorized into four levels (see Figure. 1).[5] Various stakeholders from multi-level adopt this grounded

framework providing a cohesive evaluation of integration and create a common ground for further study. They construct the framework based on UK pluralistic policy.

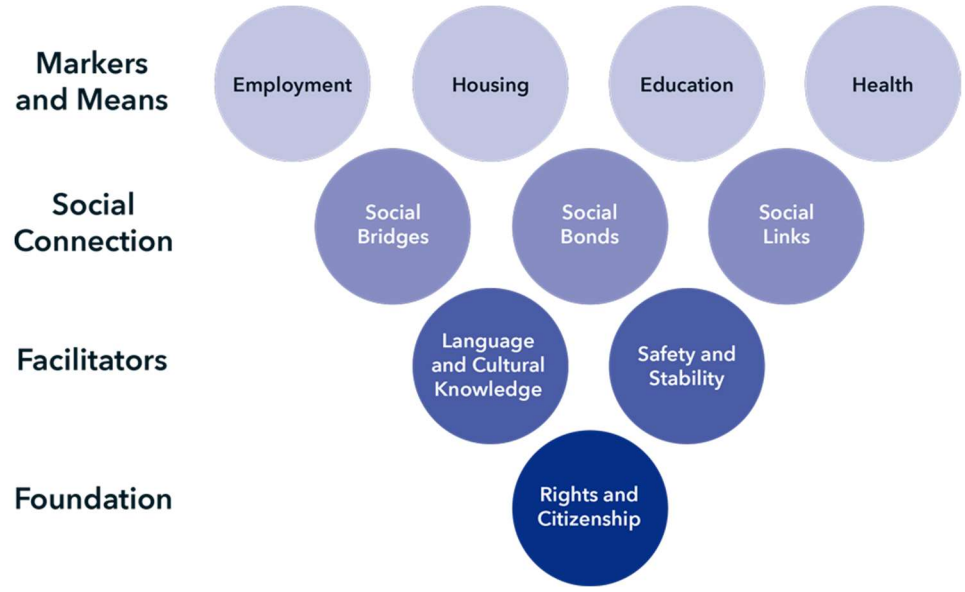

Fig. 2: The Indicators of Integration Framework (Ager & Strang, 2008)

Many studies examine the integration process by putting more emphasis on quantifiable aspects such as level of income, education attainment, language proficiency etc. In a cross-sectional study of refugees in Birmingham by Phillimore & Goodson, they point out that housing has the highest priority for integration followed by employment and other social indicators.[6] Established on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, they argue that housing symbolically marks the end of their fleeing journey. Secured housing enables refugees to take parts in education, employment, and connect to host society.[7] Their analysis further identifies four components of appropriate housing: location, stability, quality, and affordability. Therefore, spatial integration both reflects and reinforces socioeconomic mobility among America's new immigrant and refugee populations. Alba et al., stress the positive correlation of family income and a neighborhood quality that also gives empirical credence to this spatial assimilation.[8]

This cultural pluralistic approach is similar to US integration model, which promotes multi-cultural societies. Alexander proposes policy typologies for different migrants' domains. He categorizes the spatial dimension of integration into three areas of focus: housing, relation to ethnic enclave, and symbolic uses of space. For pluralistic policy, which is the same approach as the US, Alexander provides examples; anti-racial discrimination housing policy; promoting ethnic enclaves' potential of resident-based renewal; and supporting

manifestation of otherness. He further discusses cultural and religious dimension which highlight the supports of minority religious institutions and promote public awareness of diversity as agent of integration.[9]

> *By placing issue areas such as housing, urban development and its relation to ethnic enclaves, the location of symbolic functions such as mosques, and so on in a separate domain, we can better follow the spatial manifestations of local authority attitudes and policy responses to migrant settlement. This dimension would be lost were these policies dispersed across the other domains.*[10]

Ruiz-Tagle explores socio-spatial integration of immigrants/refugees in US society. The idea of integration is in fact a desegregation approach. In his integration policy analysis, he concludes that proximity has no casual effects on social integration outcome.[11] Although, proximity works in some cases to achieve upward mobility, location alone is insufficient to promote integration. Regardless of direct causation between proximity and integration, Ruiz-Tagle recognizes the opportunity of social contact proximity offers. That is "physical integration will be transformed into social integration."[12] Socio-spatial distance; therefore, influences the construction of social identity e.g. class, race, ethnicity. At the same time, the physical distant can mitigate social distant by shaping social relation. The author offers 'contact-hypothesis' where positive attitudes among different groups increase when contact increased. While this hypothesis is arguable due to tension and conflict that occur when counterpart interact, Ethinton affirms that a restriction of space can worsen social distant between ethnic group. The promulgation of Jim Crow laws exacerbates the geometric distance base on race especially in public space in American South.[13]

To understand physical distance and disadvantages refugees encounter Pablo Bose investigated mobility and acculturation of refugees in Vermont. Because the majority of recently resettled refugees cannot afford a car, the author stresses the importance of public transportation for refugees as a mitigation of social distance and spatial mismatch. The problems go beyond interconnectedness of residential patterns and transportation network. It includes the schedule arrangement in which many activities, especially ESL classes, are offered after bus operation hours making these population rely on self-carpooling. Beside promoting self-autonomy, the problem of public transportation becomes barriers of accessing education, health, job or language training, and establish social life in a new community.[14]

Host community's perspectives is another critical dimension when investigating integration. In 'Sharing America's Neighborhoods', Ingrid G. Ellen identifies five factors that have supported stable racial integration of Blacks and White Americans: the neighborhood's history of stability, distance from main minority concentrations, percentage of rental housing, secure set of amenities, and the presence of African-American population in the metropolitan area as a whole.[15] To maintain the racial composition, she points out the key

roles of White population in deciding to stay or opt out a neighborhood because White households have more residential choices and more likely to detest integrated areas. Many neighborhoods experience structural declines that lead to racial segregation. Ellen explains.

> *…the collective consequences of individual residential choices may result in fewer integrated neighborhoods than is optimal. The key point, as emphasized throughout this book, is that many white and black households might in fact prefer to live in racially mixed environment, but because of a widespread lack of faith in the harmony and stability of these areas, these environments are more rare (despite real progress) than they should be.*[16]

Since the late 1960s, the US applies many residential integration policies. Goetz classifies housing dispersal program into two generations. The first generation is 'open housing movement', which promotes racial integration through scattered-site program. Although the program was promising, land price, property cost, and community opposition limit the application of this strategy nationwide. In addition, fair-share housing programs, voucher, and regional housing production programs are all intended to promote racially mixing and mitigate poverty problems. The second-generation dispersal program, which promotes mobility and revitalization of distressed areas, started in the 1990s. The Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program and HOPE VI program aim to redefine public and assisted housing with redevelopment of low-density, mixed-use, mix-income projects.[17]

Talen emphasizes similar issues of economic segregation as the problem of 21st century segregation. The income-based segregation receives more attention because the increasing trends of the problem. Although, she does not explicitly state that the problem of racial segregation has disappeared but rather is better than what were in 1910s.[18] The rapid growth of US diversity contributes to the formation of "global neighborhoods" which consist of at least four racial groups. Both Ruiz-Tagle and Telen argue that proximity alone is inadequate for meaningful integration. *Community interaction via community gathering space is a vital component in creating more dynamic of multicultural, multi-income, multigeneration neighborhood.*

> *The diversity object of the everyday neighborhood requires a constant search for balance, a middle ground between a neighborhood of stranger and a neighborhood of friends. Physical definition is essential to finding this balance… If the balance is found by having homogenous groupings at the subneighborhood level – small clusters of homogeneity set within a lager, heterogeneous neighborhood – that is one approach* [19]

This line of literature indicates that the perception of place, especially housing, is a mean of establishing roots in a new community. They address the problem of segregation. With a low residential mobility, refugee may face challenges of negative reception experiences, discrimination, spatial mismatch. These in turn negatively affect their integration process as they discourage sense of belonging and acculturation to a new host society.

Besides proximity, scholars advocate for participation in public spaces that promote mutual understandings and desegregate refugees from locals. This will expand their spatial network beyond an ethnic boundary thus promoting integration.

Fig. 3: Common words from the literature (author, 2020)

Identity, Place, and People

Understanding migrants' perception of place in a resettlement site is crucial for urban regenerative because it enhances a sense of belonging and connection society. Many scholars have examined place identity in a western host society with regards to ethnic population in a new host society. In "Remaking Home: Reconstructing Life, Place and Identity in Rome and Amsterdam", Maja Korac discusses transnationalism and life reconstruction of Balkan immigrants in the Netherlands and Italy. She employed ethnography research to explore 'emplacement' by refugee and immigrants. The author highlights the meaning of 'home' as a place that one can regain a control of life through economic, social, and cultural realm. These domains signify both physical and political facilitators in a host society.[20] In line with Korac, Gina Netto examines meaning of home in her study, "Identity Negotiation, Pathways to Housing and "Place": The Experience of Refugees in Glasgow."[21] Using a housing pathway framework, she explains regaining stable housing signify self-autonomy. The author further discusses the importance of place that affects safety and security allowing refugees to reconstruct social ties to local community, state, and country beyond the meaning of place of country of origin. To understand a relationship between migrants' memory and place attachment, Rishbeth &

Powell initiated a self-directed audio recording project with immigrants in Sheffield, UK. The researchers identify two means of place: recollection and normality; and embodied experience and social connections. Rather than finding visually identical 'home', immigrants construct their attachment by resonating emotional connection of home and host country using architypes. These archetypal patterns are social, historic, cultural, or emotional.[22]

On a larger scale of neighborhood and district, Feldman conducted an extensive analysis of psychological bonds with settlements and coined the term 'settlement identity.' His investigation in Denver's metropolitan area signifies that compromising psychological bond to settlement types resulted in failure to maintain a long-term residence in a constant location.[23] The author identifies several indicators representing the psychological bonds and tangible surroundings: *"a unity of identity of person and home place, constancy of residence in one place, a belief in the distinctiveness of home place, and positive affective responses toward this place."*[24] The study underlies the importance of how one perceives his/her roles in a settlement site which directly related to scale and size of a settlement. He roughly laid out settlements only in forms of city vs suburban. However, to apply the dimension of settlement identity to this study, it is critical to examine the psychological bond of refugees' connections to previous settlement either their homeland or a camp town. However, the manifestation of different cultures cannot be detected easily. Furthermore, refugees and immigrants may take a different stance in maintaining their cultural heritage and acculturation due to their dissimilarities in push and pull factors of migration.

Arijit Sen, in his analysis of immigrant visual culture, argues that visual differentiations may negatively discourage a construction of new identity in a new host society. His conclusion on Indian immigrants and their mobility is as follows.

> *Formation of peoplehood in diaspora was Junas-faced – a discourse that was simultaneously direct towards other expatriates and to non-Indians. Such a discourse allowed immigrants to negotiate a political position of in-betweenness and to engage different audiences. …But unlike their European counterparts, rarely did the Indian immigrants physically transform the new landscape with buildings and familiar architecture styles (Upton 1987; Peterson 2008; Gjerde 1997). They [do not] transform the entire town or region by their architecture or construction technique. Theories of cultural diffusion [did not] apply to their situation because the immigrants from India used more ephemeral tactics to reproduce their home in new locations*[25]

On a domestic scale, Lynne Dearborn have examined Hmong habitats in Milwaukee to understand socio-spatial patterns of refugee acculturation. Rather than replication of physical architectural features found in

their settlement in Laos, Hmong have reinterpreted their culture when moving to a new context. Hmong have managed to adjust their residential environments to maintain their kinship dynamic and social hierarchy of an extended family.[26] This is supplemented to "bodily practices of a culturally specific kind, entail a combination of *cognitive* and *habit-memory*" where she performed a case study using four-generation families residing in a duplex flat originally built for German immigrants.[27] The reinterpretation of a nuclear family household influences how Hmong expand their housing unit to a building or a land plot next to each other to accommodate a large family. Other crucial elements are those reflected religious and beliefs of Hmong. Comparing ritual space of a Hmong's house in a refugee camp in Thailand and Milwaukee, Hmong's house accommodates the shaman's altar, the medicinal altar, the ancestor's altar. The arrangements of altars are appropriated for spirits' movement around a house. Furthermore, Dearborn highlights the importance of owning a home for Hmong. As an ethnic minority in their southeast Asia, a permanent home in the US means ability to maintain their cultural heritage that is not possible in their homeland.

In line with many studies on ethnic enclaves, in "Ethnic Place Identity Within a Parisian Neighborhood" by David Kaplan & Charlotte Recoquillon assess local place identity in Goutte d'Or, Paris. This neighborhood demonstrates how architecture expresses social and economic meanings of coexisting ethnic groups, European French and immigrants. Residents have established religious centers, modified landscape and altered social milieu to intensify social activities that differs from other part of Paris but meaningful to locals. French residents, however, extend their network of place beyond Goutte d'Or yet benefit from low rents of the neighborhood. The concept of augmented network of community is not only limited to host residents.[28] Gillem & Pruitt explored three immigrant communities in the US in "Security, surveillance, and new landscapes". They argue that immigrants gradually assimilate into economic class and disperse beyond their ethnic enclave to larger metropolitan area. However, markers of identity, such as ethnic markets or mosques remain culturally and symbolically important even for new generations that are not attached to their heritage country.[29]

In terms of reception experience, other lines of research suggest the influence of history and social identity on refugee reception. Driel and Verkuyten, in "Local identity and the reception of refugees: the example of Riace," investigated local social identity of emigrated town in southern Italy and refugee reception. The authors suggest positive outcomes when locals foster their hospitality identity and initiate restoration projects to welcome and host refugees. They show public message with refugee welcome signages, murals, and many cultural events. However; the authors also address challenges of maintaining this hospitality identity due to financial resource and competitive employment market.[30]

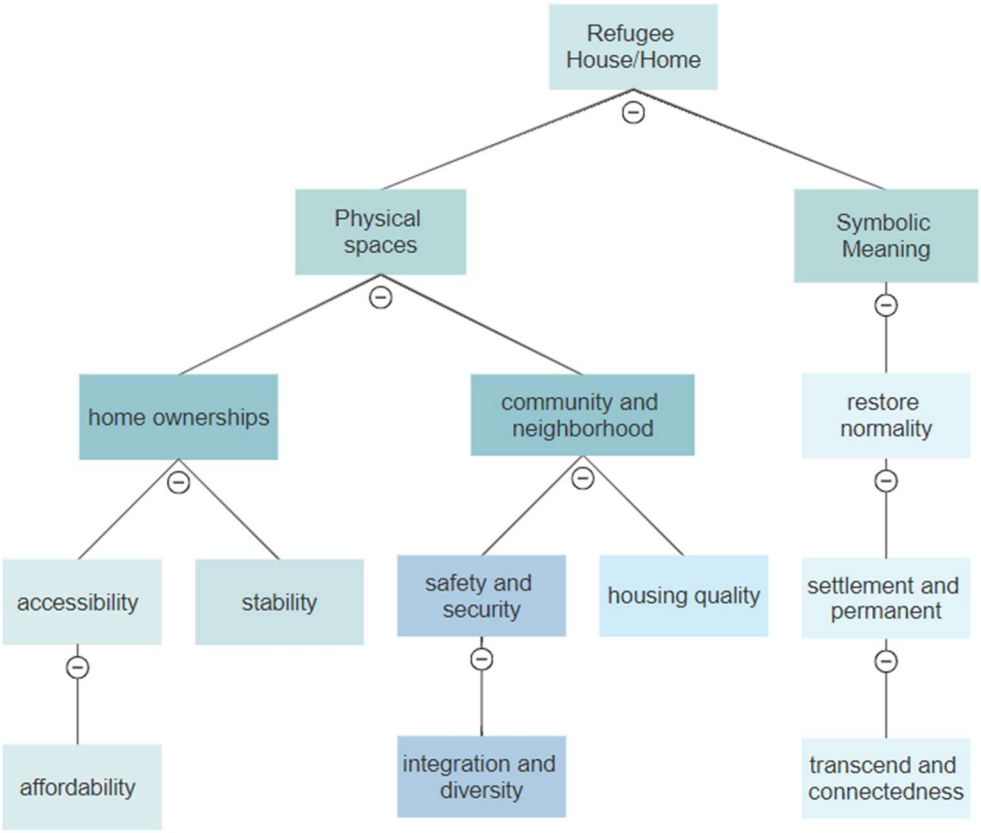

Fig.4: Meanings of 'home' from literature (author, 2020)

A house offers basic human needs while home has a symbolic meaning of rebuilding their life and maintain their culture. Perception of neighborhood, district, and city is vital because it contribute to how ones establish their roots and belonging to a place.

In all, these studies the influence of history, cultural and local identity to the reception experience and place making of immigrants and refugees. They illustrate the interlacing networks of host community and immigrant's community. The spatial dimension of refugee resettlement deals with both place identity and integration theories. The loci of ethnic identity contain richer ethnic markers and means, however, the network itself extended throughout a city which I speculate the alteration of place identity making a city becomes the aggregation of cultural diversity. However, physical manifestation of cultural identities may not be obvious especially in a public realm as they deter integration and differentiate refugees from host society. In contrast, these features are more visible in private domain, such as the case of Hmong.

4. CASE STUDY: UTICA, NEW YORK

Utica is one of many rust belt towns in upstate New York historically received many immigrants (Germans, Italians, Poles, and Arabs). The declining industry drove more than half of Utica's population to find jobs elsewhere. The refugee resettlements help stabilize Utica's population at approximately 60,000. One-sixth of population are refugees from Vietnam, Soviet Union, Bosnian refugees, Ukraine, Somalia, Bhutan, Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Kraly and VanValkenburg (2010) and Scott Smith (2008) highlight the unique history and strengths of Utica's resettlement program that not only reinvigorate the economy but also prevent a further population loss of the city.[31] Utica enables refugees to construct their place attachment attracting secondary migration of refugees from other US cities even though the town does not match images refugees had prior to their arrival, not to mention the harsh weather conditions.[32] Kraly reports their success in building diverse workforces and promoting cross cultural understandings among distinct groups. They also organize events for refugees using public spaces like "International Mile", a 15k race; "World Refugee Day"; and "Passport to the World." The absence of a formal ethno-space and an ethnic enclave in Utica presents a unique spatial pattern of a multicultural city. These qualities make Utica appealing to an examination of shifting place identity and connecting spatial-social networks in a well-established refugee receiving city.[33]

Tweets about Refugees in Utica

This study used two keywords to filter tweets: "refugee" and "Utica" to conduct text mining. At the time of study, 1,167 tweets between March 21, 2006 to March 4, 2020 were extracted. Any retweet posts were omitted from these counts. Derived from Silge and Robinson's "Text Mining with R," two methods were employed to analyze the tweets: word frequencies and word co-occurrences and correlation. With the limited time frame, the process of data cleaning; to remove punctuation, number, hyperlink, or stop words, was not completed.[34]

Word Frequencies

The tweets data were aggregated and processed to identify word frequency. The frequency generally used to quantify what data implies.[35] The terms were plotted as a word cloud shown in Figure 5 using /R/. When

omit the keywords and general common terms from the rank (refugee, Utica, ny, city, population), the most frequent terms related to people and place are:

families (250+)
community (200+)
school (150+)
center (150+)
businesses (120+)
sanctuary (120+)
worldnetdaily (120+)
homeowners (120+)
familiesbelongtogether (120+).

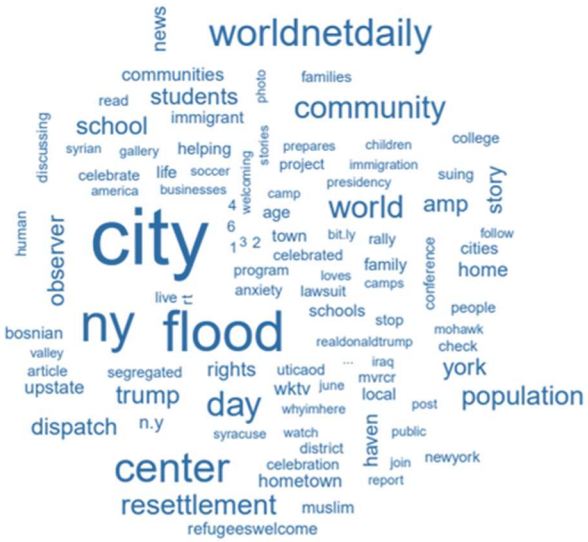

Fig. 5: Word cloud from tweets (authors, 2020)

Some of these terms directly refer to a place or social activities in Utica such as students, school, college, celebration, soccer, and gallery. However, some terms need further clarification and context to specify meanings as following:

'center' refers to Mohawk Valley Recourse Center for Refugees

'worldnetdaily' is a news and opinion website

'familiesbelongtogether' is a series of protests Trump's family separation policy

'flood' refers to the influx refugee population

Of these words, there are mixed positive and negative messages. Especially, many of these are news which should have a neutral tone but may contain positive/negative story. To understand this pattern, it requires further analysis to identify the patterns.

Word Co-occurrences

In addition to frequency of terms, this study analyzed co-occurrences of words. This is a process that determines a pair of words that occurs together in tweets.[36] First, the co-occurrences were plotted as a term network in Figure 6. In this figure, the keywords, Utica and refugee, are included.

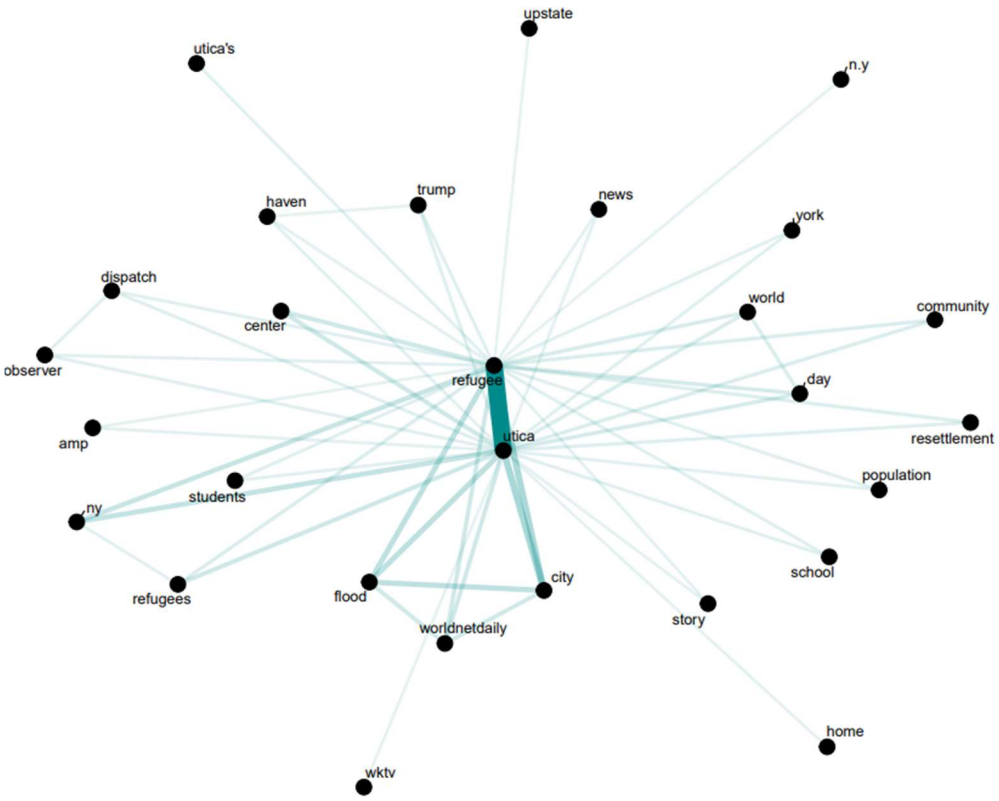

Fig. 6: Network of terms (authors, 2020)

As shown in figure 6, the connections of terms are strongly related to the keywords without illustrating a cluster of connection or clear themes. Therefore, omitting keywords breakdown the network into subgroups as shown in Figure 7. The findings discuss how networks of terms visually presents thematic topic of tweets and how have they aligned with the literature review.

5. FINDINGS

By comparing two word-clouds from literature and tweets (figure 3 and figure 5), they illustrate that literature largely discuss policies while tweets illustrate more relatable subjects. However, when comparing word frequency to specific pieces of literature, 'school', 'homeownership', and 'businesses' are closely related to employment, housing, and education domains in 'means and markers' from Ager and Strang.[37]

Interestingly, 'homeownership' rises as a topic of concern from tweets. This aligns with the study of Phillimore & Goodson that address housing as the most important key for integration. The ownership issue also directly relates to refugees' feeling of safety and security, the accessibility of home, a symbolic meaning of permanent settlement as discussed in the second part of literature review (see figure 4).[38]

When closely observed ethnicities, there are several countries that had been mentioned in the tweets. However, only one ethnic marker of Bosnian is observed from the tweets. Bosnian refugees have converted an abandoned church to their mosque making it one of the most important landmarks of cultural diversity and refugee resettlement. The absence of ethnic enclave in Utica, highly diverse refugees background, or low residential capita may explain the reasons behind this absence.

Following the explanation of word co-occurrence in 4.2.2, figure 7 illustrates clusters of words and network of terms. Several clusters demonstrate practices and participation of refugees related activities and places. Facilitator like Mohawk Valley Recourse Center for Refugees has important roles in publicizing information thus has high frequency and occurrences. Moreover, the center bridges policies and implications. Additionally, the medias also actively engage in this virtual space.

When compare the date, literature draws a big picture of policies and theories while tweets present a case specific activities and atmosphere. Rather than using virtual space to actively engage within ethnic groups as hypothesized, tweets of "Utica" and "refugees" present the expression of political opinions and public participations, additional dimension of physical spaces and its virtual engagement However, it is insufficient to conclude if refugees use social media to replace any absence of place.

6. LIMITATIONS

Utica is a small town and has a limited number of social media activities. As a pilot study, a limited number of tweets at make it possible for manual coding if a software coding phase fails to provide comprehensive analysis. However, this research encounters many research biases. **First,** Utica is a small suburban town that has no evidence of excess uses of social media. The represent of twitter data to general refugee resettlement is dubious. **Second,** the tweet data is collected and aggregated to generalize a picture of refugee resettlement site. There is a limitation of identifying ethnic or cultural background of tweet's owner making it impossible to specify dynamics from either host society or refugee. This limitation in turn minimizes the capability to understand pressure and preference from both local and newcomers' perspectives.

7. DISCUSSION

This chapter scrutinizes benefits of using social media data, its application and potentials. Then, it discusses limitations and duplicability. The article concludes with suggestion for future studies.

The distinct nature of these two sets of data reversely transmit information as literature and its case studies generalize and theorize information while tweets present case specific and topical information. Even though

the current set of tweets from Utica cannot present day-to-day experience, it has started to present thematic patterns that line up with area of works on refugee integration. Using social media data demonstrates its advantage on providing a big picture and pinpointing active actors and important events from aggregated information of a case study. Observing social media also provides a connection between policies and implications that allow researchers to observe public responses. It helps identify problems for further investigation. For example, schools in Utica is facing discrimination and segregation problem as illustrate in figure 7, or health domain is completely missing in this set of data but why.

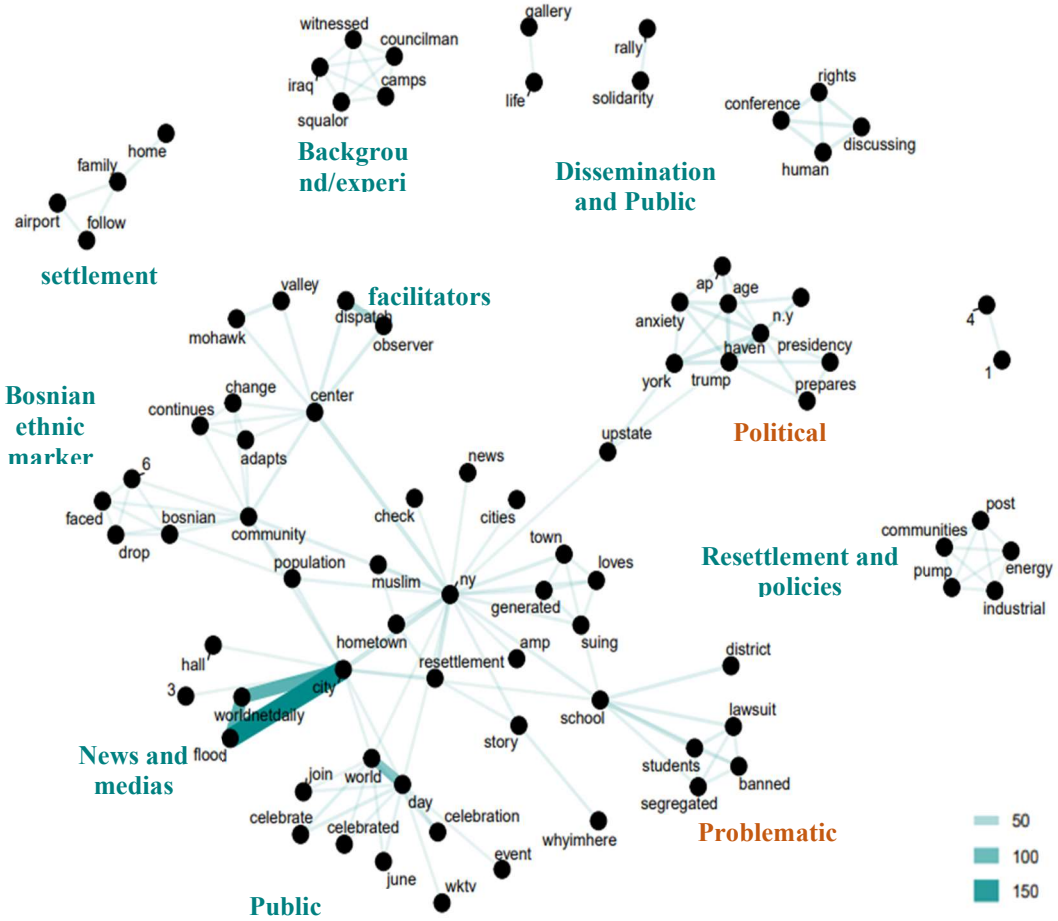

Fig. 7: Word networks in "Utica" and "refugee" tweets (authors, 2020)

Beyond this study, further analysis can be employed to identify positive and negative responses to a specific circumstance. A researcher may choose to focus on social media as place for public opinion, political expressions, or a reflection of an event such as a diversity celebration day or welcoming experiences. These can be analyzed in conjunction with political atmosphere, and chorological analysis.

This tweet data set covers a period of 14 years but only has over a thousand entry. To expand the metadata, a researcher must consider adding more keywords due to negative connotation of the word 'refugee.' Countries of origin or ethnic groups (i.e. Bhutan, Myanmar, Bosnian, Ukraine, Iraq, Vietnam, and Somali) can be used to augmented or specifically examined an ethnic group.

The duplicability of this method relies on availability of data and social media uses. A researcher must consider other social media platforms that widely used in a specific location. Demographic profile such as age, gender, and income are important factors to put into consideration. The representation of tweets and Utica's population in this study is questionable because large number of tweets are from organizations and medias. Additionally, different culture and profiles has different approaches to social media.

Regardless of these limitations, twitter denotes high potential for data and text mining especially for a bigger city and metropolis area. The higher level of digital activities will provide more data points suitable for detail analysis. Using social media data also demonstrates another potential line of research in spatial analysis when geolocations are largely available, and a study is conducted in a regional scale. In this study, however, only a hundred geolocation, or about 10 percent of tweets data, are available. Social media demonstrate many benefits and potential resources for refugee studies. Besides contents that represent public response, twitter data provides time for chronological analysis, geolocation for spatial analysis, as well as numbers of retweets and followers for impact analysis. To date, many researchers uses geolocation from twitter to perform migration analysis and identify communication pathways. Additionally, it makes cross sectional analysis for multiple case studies possible.

In conclusion, literature and social media data in refugee study both correlatedly inform aligning themes and patterns. However, their application and implications are different in levels of reflections and expression. Social media data is unpredictable making it difficult to plan an analysis phase. However, it provides large opportunities for data future studies. Its open nature of the data offers wide range of applications in diverse place and social research.

8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

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Traditional Dwellings and Settlements

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URBAN VILLAGES AS INVISIBLE BEACONS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUCCESS: THE ROLE OF MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN SHENZHEN, CHINA

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URBAN VILLAGES AS INVISIBLE BEACONS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUCCESS: THE ROLE OF MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN SHENZHEN, CHINA

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This paper will critically examine how Shenzhen's urban villages, as working-class communities, have survived and evolved under the pressure of globalization, rising land values, gentrification, and redevelopment pressure. The important role of the local government and its policies and strategies in relation to these unique and important communities will also be evaluated in the context of an era driven by the market economy and rising of neoliberalism. The paper will conclude by articulating the importance of the migrant working-class communities of Shenzhen's urban villages against the context of the limitation of existing urban policies.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A BRIEF BACKGROUND ON SHENZHEN: REFORM AND OPENING-UP POLICY IN SHENZHEN

The Uniqueness of Shenzhen

> *In Shenzhen, the party-state has arguably achieved an economic liberalization far beyond what Western-led, neoliberal global institutions have managed in the post-socialist cities of Eastern Europe*
>
> Mary Ann O'donnell, Winnie Wong, and Jonathan Bach[1].

Shenzhen was a series of small villages, on China's border with Hong Kong, totaling around thirty thousand people before China's 'reform and opening-up' policy was introduced in 1979[2]. At this time, there were no skyscrapers and built-up areas were surrounded by paddy field. Today, Shenzhen has become a megacity with a population of more than twenty million (13 million permanent registered and 8.5 million permanent non-registered residents)[3].

Whilst cities in neighboring countries boomed as a result of economic development as a result of capitalist initiatives, China sought its own unique economic path. Due to lack of experience and social institutional barriers, it was difficult for China to replicate the successes of the 'Asian Tigers' (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea) or the way of western modernization[4]. China had been isolated from the outside world for a very long time after World War II and its own Civil War between 1927 and 1949[5]. The subsequent Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976 exacerbated the challenges to economic growth[6]. In 1979, the Communist Party's central committee and state leaders headed by Deng Xiaoping began to seek new ways to reconnect mainland China to the outside world and the idea of a 'special district' was first introduced in March 1979 [5].

Deng Xiaoping's concept was for the establishment of special district that would not only attract foreign capital but also create an area for new socialist reform. Unlike those in Taiwan or South Korea, the aim of the special district was not to become a capitalist enclave but to "develop productive forces under socialism" [7, 8]. In April 1979, the Guangdong Provincial Party Committee put forward a proposal to the central government to establish export-processing zones in Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Shantou due to their close proximity to Hong Kong and Macao with their international connections. This idea was strongly supported by the then Communist Party Chairman Deng Xiaoping. Subsequently, Shenzhen become a first-tier city from an unknown series of small villages in just 40 years. Its GDP(2.422198 trillion yuan)[9] even surpassed Hong Kong (2.845317 trillion Hong Kong dollar or 2.4 trillion yuan (the average exchange rate in 2018 of RMB to HK $1.1855)[10] in 2018 and now ranks 3rd in China. As the Brookings Institute put it in 2013, "Shenzhen's economic model has to some extent become synonymous with China as a whole" [1].

Shenzhen's Geographic Characteristics

Shenzhen is located between the major international cities of Guangzhou and Hong Kong giving it huge advantages in terms of economic and trade exchange. Because the concept of special economic zones was too radical for many 'conservative' socialists, there was a risk that its creation might cause serious damage to the social situation in China which had yet to fully stabilise after the Cultural Revolution [1]. Obviously, it was a very bold idea and it was difficult to find a comparable precedent to justify its creation. It was impossible to build such a special zone in a mature city, like Beijing, Nanjing, or Chongqing, as China was still in the process of consolidating power after its Civil War [1]. Therefore, due to their strategic locations, the first Economic Special Districts were designated in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen. Shenzhen being close to Hong Kong, Zhuhai close to Macao, and Xiamen across the sea from Taiwan, whilst Shantou was home to one of the largest concentrations of overseas Chinese people in China
The subsequent successes of Shenzhen are inseparable from its excellent geographical advantages.

Guangzhou has been the economic centre of Guangdong province, and even the whole south of China, since ancient times. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, it was the only major port for foreign trade in China and is the only major port in the world that has lasted for more than 2,000 years. Whilst Hong Kong was a British colony before 1997, it was a tax-free port with significant importance in the world economy and trade. Shenzhen has a key location being the only place that physically connects mainland China and Hong Kong, and it is also mid-way between Hong Kong and Guangzhou. The contrasting political systems, cultural differences and the trade gaps between the mainland and Hong Kong made Shenzhen the perfect choice for the implementing the 'reform and opening-up' policy.

Before 1980, Shenzhen was basically a loose amalgamation of small fishing and agricultural settlements, but this provided abundant farmland for urban construction, therefore making it relatively easy to implement any political experiment. At that time, the income of Hong Kong residents was approximately 100 times that of residents living in the Shenzhen area, moreover, the city infrastructure of Hong Kong was incomparable to that of Shenzhen. At that time, more than a million southern Chinese people would risk their lives to illegally enter Hong Kong to enjoy the benefits of the prosperous colony [11, 12]. Interestingly, today some villages have same name in both Hong Kong and Shenzhen, due to their establishment by villagers who fled to Hong Kong at that time. The huge economic gap between Hong Kong and Shenzhen in the early 1980s became the economic driving force behind Shenzhen's future successes.

As a pragmatic leader, Deng Xiaoping believed that it was futile to rely on border patrols and military measures to solve the problem of economic refugees fleeing from Bao'an County (Shenzhen) to Hong Kong. He concluded that the problem of economic refugees was a result of poor policies and he also realized that the economic gap between China and the developed world had created a situation of increasing political risk [1]. One of the first measures introduced was the elevation of Bao'an County to the status of Shenzhen Municipality in 1979. With the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy in Shenzhen, this started to bring in capital, technology, and management know-how from Hong Kong (or more importantly from developed countries via Hong Kong). Subsequently, Shenzhen has become the pilot site for transforming the planned economy elsewhere in China.

In 1980, an 84.5-kilometre administrative boundary, known as the Second Line (二线 erxian), was created in Shenzhen, which divided the municipality into the Shenzhen Economic Zone (SEZ), which occupied 327.5 km^2 of the municipality and the 'rest'. The China Merchants Shekou Industrial Park was first area to be created in the SEZ. The border of the SEZ was opened up gradually and as the city matured the border was fully erased in 2018. This meant that the Shenzhen model had matured and could be promoted to the whole country without any reservations. It also demonstrated that the central government had achieved their desired results from this innovative experiment.

1.2 A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE URBAN VILLAGE: THE DEFINITION OF THE CHINESE URBAN VILLAGE

An 'urban village' in the Chinese context refers to those traditional villages which have lost their farmland (usually purchased compulsorily by the government), in a geographic location that has gradually been surrounded by urban development. The subsequent dichotomy, of rural and urban, creating two opposing statuses of space and inhabitation. The economy of rural areas relies on its production of land, which mainly

refers to agriculture and animal husbandry, however, secondary and tertiary industries are the main financial support of urban areas. Due to the high cost of compensation and fees for relocating the farmers, they have often been left 'enclosed' by urbanisation as an autonomous zone within an expanding city and outside the control of local government. Because of the high autonomy of the villager and the high value of land in modern city, the villagers have often tried to build apartment buildings as high as possible on their own land for the rental income, since they no longer have land for farming. The high density of building in urban villages can create abundant income for the villagers but also cause a series problem, such as poor living environments, poor levels of hygiene, poor construction quality, and potential safety hazard from fire and criminals[13]. However, beyond these obvious factors, social conflict and the obstacle that urban villages cause to a city's further urban development are serious problems facing many cities.

1.3 A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE URBAN VILLAGE: THE FORMATION OF THE URBAN VILLAGES IN SHENZHEN

There are various reasons for the emergence of urban villages in Shenzhen. The main drivers were the existence of urban-rural dual system and the popularity of neoliberalism are the main drivers, which brought about an impact on the strict planned economy. The urban villages in Shenzhen can be regarded as the typical product of this period and their creation is explained in the subsequent section.

Influx of Migrant Workers

China has a long history of rural-urban segregation. As such, after the found of the People's Republic of China in 1949, under the policy of urban-rural dualism, cities became responsible for industry and management, while rural areas were mainly responsible for agriculture. Before 1980, Shenzhen was like most other poor Chinese areas and had a very low rate of urbanization. Because of controls on where people could own homes under the regulation of the 'Hukou' system, the migration from rural to urban areas was strictly controlled and had to be approved by the authorities [14, 15, 16, 17] (for details on the Hukou system see: [18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 14]. After the implementation of the open market policy, the control of 'Hukou' system was relaxed, and in 1985, for the first time, rural migrants were allowed to register as temporary residents in urban areas[24]. These 'temporary' migrant workers from rural areas have since become an important driver of urbanization in China [25, 26, 27, 28, 13].

According to statistical data from the Shenzhen Municipal Government Housing System Reform Office, the average monthly income among migrants in Shenzhen was 1,149 RMB in 2004, which was relatively high compared to other cities. It was, however, much lower than the income among official residents (2,195 RMB per month)[9]. Nevertheless, it was still largely beyond the average income of people in rural areas and many

other cities in 2004, which was typically around 3000 RMB per year [29]. The huge income gap between rural and urban areas resulted in more and more migrants moving into developed cities like Shenzhen. The permanent non-registered population (767,800) exceeded the permanent registered population (648,200) for the first time in 1989. Subsequently, the non-registered population kept growing year-by-year and reached 8,181,100 in 2017, which was as twice the number of the permanent registered population (4,347,200) [3]. Moreover, these figures did not include the large 'floating population' that is not registered at all. Significantly, this 'floating population' tended to find it impossible to afford the extremely high house prices in Shenzhen and therefore the relatively low-rent homes in the urban villages often provide their only solution.

Significantly, China's increasing neo-liberalism and central fiscal decentralisation led to large amounts of land being sold by local governments to raise revenue. As a result, most of the former agricultural land that belonged to the urban villages was expropriated, resulting in two major consequences. First, the villages lost their agriculture land on which they relied for income leading to them illegally expanding the scale of construction on their 'homes' to obtain profits from renting out rooms. Secondly, the large amounts of previously rural farmland were sold to property developers enabling significant profits for both the developers and the local government. The subsequent rising land prices drove-up house prices [3] in the city and subsequently the poorer quality housing in the urban villages became affordable housing for the immigrant labour force (market economy and neoliberalism). Thus, the strategy of land acquisition did not purify or upgrade the urban village, on the contrary, it created low-rent housing in urban villages that became indispensable in Shenzhen.

The Issues Facing the Urban Villages

Due to the absence of governmental control and high-level autonomy of village affairs, the 'illegal' construction in the urban villages lacked the basic principles of urban planning alongside other building regulations. Thus, the profit driven construction process caused a spectrum of problems in relation to the physical environment of the urban villages. The original homes were typically traditional Chinese houses of no more than 3 storeys, however, in Shenzhen's urban villages most buildings are now at least 7 storeys tall with some exceeding 20 storeys. The original plot size and layout remains and therefore many of these 'tall' buildings are only a few metres apart leading to little natural light, and security issues. In addition, car parking is often completely lacking leading to further congestion and a lack of open space for residents [30, 31].

Besides the terrible physical conditions, there are significant environmental health issues with pollution, waste discharge, and garbage disposal creating problems for residents [32]. Indeed, essential infrastructure such as rainwater and sewage pipes could not easily be integrated into the dense urban villages. High crime rates in

the urban villages is also often a problem with data suggesting that more than 90% of criminal behavior is caused by migrants in Shenzhen [33, 34, 35]. Moreover, the large number of small unregulated stores, such as hair salons, food outlets, etc., who often avoid paying taxes can easily lead to a culture of crime. The lack of control of these illegal businesses also exacerbates hygiene and fire hazard issues [32].

Behind the scenes of Shenzhen's rapid rise to become an international city, and 'under the radar' of the local government, the urban villages continued to evolve. The potential impact of these villages and their locations upon the strategic layout and aspirations of Shenzhen has, however, increasingly created obstacles for the city government. The urban villages have therefore now become obstacles to the future urban development of Shenzhen and the local government is increasingly trying find appropriate ways to intervene in these unique places.

2. URBAN VILLAGE, THE BEACON OF SHENZHEN

2.1 HOW SHENZHEN'S URBAN VILLAGES SURVIVED AND EVOLVED

The different phenomena of the evolution of the urban villages closely reflects the pace of economic and social development in the city. Indeed, the urban villages have evolved under the pressure of globalisation, rising land values, gentrification, and redevelopment pressures. This evolutionary process can be explained through the following five stages, from their birth to the new retrofit strategies. The discussion about these 5 stages will be expanded based on,5 factors: time; macro policy in Shenzhen; the situation of the Shenzhen's urban villages; policies for the urban villages; and the economic and social development of Shenzhen (see table 1). The macro policy in Shenzhen gives a general view on the current focus of Shenzhen's municipal government and then the situation of the Shenzhen's urban villages shows the status of it during that period. After that the policies related to the urban villages demonstrates the local government's attitude and this will also be emphasized in section 4. Lastly the interaction between the urban villages and the economic and social development of Shenzhen will be discussed at the end of each stage. Because of the uniqueness of stage 5, it will be treated in more detail in section 3.3.

STAGE	TIME	MACRO POLICY IN SHENZHEN	THE SITUATION OF THE SHENZHEN'S URBAN VILLAGE	POLICY ON THE URBAN VILLAGE	ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SHENZHEN
0	1949-1979	Urban and rural areas are divided and isolated	No urban villages have yet emerged	No urban villages have yet emerged	Have no different with other poor cities in China

1	1980-1985	Reform and opining-up	Urban villages began to appear	Government issued regulation to limit the size of building in urban village	The main industry change from agriculture to industry, and Shenzhen's administrative level has been upgraded
2	1985-1990		The number of illegal buildings in urban villages began to increase		High incomes in Shenzhen attracts a large number of migrant workers to work and live in Shenzhen
3	1990-2000	City environmental beautification	Illegal construction began to get out of control	The government has been forced to gradually relax restrictions due to inadequate regulatory powers	
	2001-2004			The government issued regulation to turn the illegal construction become legally by paying penalty	The urban villages have been demolished to develop new real estate projects, resulting in the rapid increase of housing prices and the increase of price and labour. Meanwhile, the urban environment has been improved.
4	2004-2017	Rural elimination	Because of the high density and poor physical environment in urban village, a serious of hygiene and health problems emerged	The government put forward policy to promote and standardize retrofit activities	
5	2018-	Innovative and sustainable cities	Demolition and rebuild' are bogged down by high compensation costs and a lack of affordable housing	The government launched a new renovation policy of 'comprehensive improvement' to increase the inventory of affordable housing	The focus of development has gradually shifted from industry to high-tech industry, no longer blindly pursuing GDP, and more attention has been paid to innovative cultural industry

Table 1: five stages of the urban villages

Stage 1

Since 1980, Shenzhen started to attract an external labor force in order to accelerate its industrial development at the same time as it was beginning to formulate the preliminary plan to lay the foundation and pattern of Shenzhen. According to the 'Master plan of construction of Shenzhen city 1980' (深圳城市建设总体规划 1980), the development goal of Shenzhen was to focus on industry, while developing trade,

agriculture, and tourism. In 1982, the government issued the document 'Outline of social and economic development plan of Shenzhen Special Economic Zone' (深圳社会经济发展规划大纲) which stated that Shenzhen planned to focus on the electronic industry as its main industry (electronics industry is a labor-intensive industry, detail see 'three-plus-one' mode [36, 37, 38]), and to focus on products mainly for the international market.

During the period from 1980 to 1990, the urban villages in Shenzhen emerged and illegal construction spread rapidly. At the beginning of the implementation of reform and opening-up policy, the government's focus was on the development of new areas, the acquisition of agricultural land, etc. with the development of new land creating large amounts of fiscal revenue for the local government. With more and more farmland being requisitioned for construction, the unique phenomenon of the 'urban village' started to appear. The emergence of urban village not only showed that the city was developing rapidly, but also that the way of production of the urban village had changed from agriculture to industry or real estate. The change of meaning and value of land in Shenzhen demonstrated that the positioning and function of Shenzhen had changed significantly.

Stage 2

In 1985, for the first time, rural migrants were allowed to register as temporary residents in urban areas [24]. The migrant workers from rural areas have since become an important driver of urbanization in China [25-28]. Shenzhen, as a pioneer city of China's reform and opening-up, began to expand rapidly because of a combination of factors including its unique geographical location.

Because of the increasing status of industry in Shenzhen, its population grew rapidly due to labor-intensive industry being the focus of activity in the city. The influx of migrant workers dramatically stimulated the rental market in the urban villages, which can be observed from those illegal construction in urban village. The registered residents in Shenzhen increased from less than half a million to about 2.12 million from 1985 to 2007, meanwhile, the number of temporary residents increased to 6.5 million in 2007, three quarters of the residents in Shenzhen were migrants from other places [13, 39]. Based on this situation, several characteristics of Shenzhen's economic and social development can be observed: 1. industry was the main body of Shenzhen development; 2. the spread of neo-liberalism shows its influence on the rental market; 3. the 'three-plus-one' trading-mix (custom manufacturing with materials, designs or samples supplied and compensation trade) shows its success in Shenzhen the attraction of high incomes caused a large number of migrant works to move into Shenzhen. All the factors above prove that Shenzhen was developing rapidly.

Stage 3

In the 1990s, the upgrading of its urban positioning and beautification of the urban environment become the priority tasks in Shenzhen. The 'Urban development strategy of Shenzhen' claimed that becoming an international metropolis was the direction of Shenzhen. It not only reclaimed the main position of industry in Shenzhen, but also mentioned the importance of tertiary industry with hi-tech industry being mentioned in Shenzhen's future development for the first time. The central government set an ambition that make Shenzhen a multifunctional international city, and to be socialist window for economic prosperity and all-round social progress.

During this period, the situation in the urban villages did not develop methodically as the authority expected. On the contrary, the illegal construction in urban villages gradually became out of control with the number of stories in urban villages increasing significantly. Indeed, the villagers continued to build illegal construction in the urban villages because of the high compensation for demolition. In 1992, the municipal government decided to 'urbanize' rural areas and villages inside the SEZ by issuing the 'Interim provisions on rural urbanization in Shenzhen SEZ（关于深圳经济特区农村城市化的暂行规定）'. Village committees (rural local organizations) were abolished and replaced with neighborhood committees (the equivalent urban local organizations); local farmers' hukou status was changed from agricultural to non-agricultural; production teams (the rural economic bodies) were reformed into shareholding companies and village residents became shareholders. These compulsory changes gave local villagers some financial benefits and the right to access urban social and economic services, however, in return, the government brought all land within the SEZ under its control. It also acquired the right to develop any remaining agricultural land and the right of planning control over village residential land [40] . Also, Illegal building codes were modelled [32] to ensure suitable space between buildings and to limit the volume of buildings. The idea was to slow the pace of housing construction in the urban villages and to increase the government's control. Nevertheless, the illegal construction continued especially when in 2001, the villagers were allowed to turn their illegal buildings into legitimate construction by paying a fine. Ironically, the fine was much lower than the market house price, therefore, increasing the popularity of illegal construction in the urban villages.

During the 1990s, the changes to the urban villages showed that there was a big gap between Shenzhen's ambition and the true facts of the urban villages. The methods that local government used to deal with the urban village issues were not binding on illegal construction, on the contrary, they worsened the situation. Also, with the improvement of Shenzhen positioning, land price and house prices were soaring, which also aggravated the phenomenon of illegal construction. This did not mean that Shenzhen's urbanization process had failed, however, it did indicate the prosperity of rental market and the huge attraction of the job market.

Just like other international developed cities such as London, New York, and Tokyo, because of their huge urban advantages, many immigrants including foreigners were attracted as the city was booming and attractive.

Stage 4

2004 was the turning point of the evolvement of urban villages in Shenzhen. The city became the first 'rural-free' city in China and was named one of the top ten civilized cities [35], but due to the bottleneck of urban development, it began to systematically transform the old villages. Because of the lack of land for construction, in early 2005, Li Hongzhong, the then secretary of the Shenzhen municipal committee of the communist party of China (CPC), put forward the "four unsustainable" challenges when analysing the difficulties faced by Shenzhen's development. These were that the: (i) land was limited and could not be sustained; (ii) resources were in short supply and could not be sustained; (iii) overburdened and unsustainable population; and (iv) environmental carrying capacity was seriously overdrawn and could not be sustained. Due to the shortage of land in Shenzhen, urban development had reached a 'bottle neck' position. In addition, the quality of the buildings constructed in the 1980s was generally poor with many of them having serious safety risks. The situation of those self-built houses in the urban villages were even worse due to the absence of supervision from a relevant department. However, the dilemma was changed when illegal buildings were turned into legal property by paying a fine, with the plan to 'demolish and rebuild' being introduced. Indeed, in 2004, the government began to issue a series of policies to support the promotion of urban village reconstruction projects. The Shenzhen municipal government issued the 'interim provisions on the reconstruction of urban villages (old villages) in Shenzhen,' which clarified the conditions, plans, objectives, implementation steps, standards of demolition compensation for the reconstruction of urban villages. For the first time, this systematically resolved the reconstruction process and norms of urban villages, which laid down the early basic framework of the reconstruction policy for the urban villages. Later, in 2012, the government issued its 'Detailed rules for the implementation of the urban renewal measures of Shenzhen' as a supporting implementation document of the renewal measures. In addition to detailing the relevant provisions in relevant regulations, it focused on strengthening the supervision and management of urban renewal projects and standardizing them.

In summary, the government promoted the renewal project not only because of the high speed of the city's economic development, but also to generate more fiscal revenue. The urban villages were even defined as 'the urban tumour' of the city [41]. The relative policies were carried out rapidly, with more and more urban villages and old industry zones being reformed into to high-end residential areas, commercial, or office buildings.

Because of the number of urban villages that were demolished and rebuilt during this period, the construction land in Shenzhen was supplemented and the economy continued to develop rapidly. Real estate, as the main pillar of Shenzhen's economy, drove other industries to maintain a good growth rate and the government was proud of many successful examples of urban village renewal such as the Caiwuwei north village project in 2006 which is now the upmarket KK Mall [42].

2.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE URBAN VILLAGE AND MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

The area and scale of buildings in the urban villages has increased year by year, due to two fundamental reasons: firstly, the rental income has enabled construction costs to be covered in 3 to 5 years; and secondly, the lack of affordable alternatives and central locations have led to the urban villages being the obvious residential choice for the immigrant migrant workers [32]. Since 2003, the Shenzhen government has had a series of policies and regulations to grant all local rural residents' urban status, which meant the end of urban and rural division in the city, with all traditional villages becoming urban villages. In 2003, Shenzhen therefore became the first city in China to have 100% urbanisation with no rural region at all. This in turn led to increasing numbers of migrants coming to the city and seeking the low-cost housing provided by the urban villages. As a result, most buildings in the urban villages changed from owner-occupied to rental properties as building owners exploited the significant financial opportunity.

According to an Urban Planning & Design Institute of Shenzhen (UPDIS) report in 2004, urban villages take up total area of used land of 93.49 km^2 with total floor area of 105,620,000 m^2 [32]. In 2005, there were around 300 urban villages in Shenzhen with 91 of them located inside the SEZ [43]. These villages within the SEZ accounted for a total of over 1000 hectares of land and including villages in the following three major city districts: Luohu (162.4 hectares); Futian (428.92 hectares); and Nanshan (412.0341 hectares) [32]. This included a population of around 7 million living in more than 300,000 private houses and a further 2 million rental homes within Shenzhen's urban villages. Also, illegal construction accounted for over 150 million square meters of development within the villages [44, 32].

It is hard to measure the accurate number of how many people live in the urban villages today, however, the increasing population of migrants can easily be observed from the increasing construction activity. According to UPDIS[32], the land area of Shenzhen's urban villages increased by 28.8% after 1999 and the building floor area increased by 200% (51,920,000 m^2) [35]. Homes in the urban villages are rarely sold as they provide valuable income sources for owners as demand to rent there is high. Indeed, more and more migrants are living in urban villages when they move to Shenzhen. The relatively low price of the rent in comparison to other redeveloped areas, more than 50% of homes in urban villages cost less than 2000 yuan per month to

rent, is also attracting college graduates whose income is typically around 4000 yuan per month. The urban villages have therefore become the only choice for migrants and other low-income earners moving into the city.

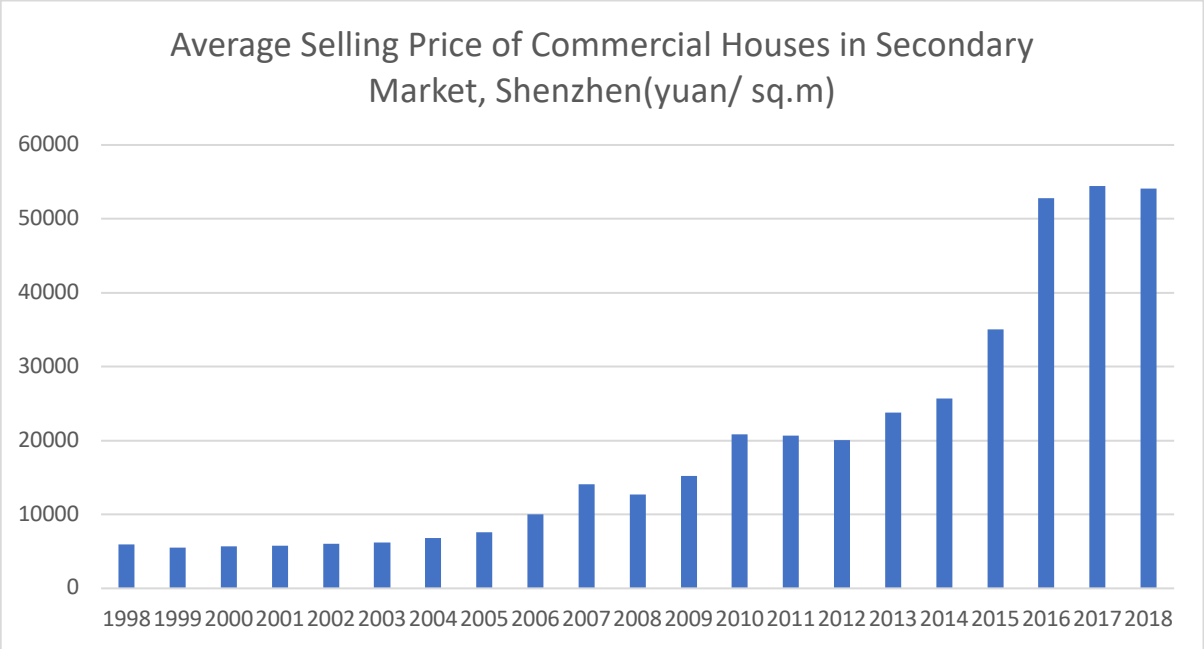

Table 2: Average Selling Price of Commercial Houses in Secondary Market, Shenzhen

In a city focused on the tertiary sector, where rapid urbanisation has led to rapid property price inflation (see table 2), living costs are beyond those providing essential services and fulfilling lower paid jobs. Importantly, the urban villages have therefore become essential 'providers' of affordable residential accommodation for lower paid and lesser skilled workers that have been essential in the process of the city's development. However, with the increasing pressures for the renewal of the urban villages, the future of these unique urban quarters is under threat. The gentrification already experienced in some of the villages has already begun to limit living choices for the lower paid in the city and the rate of immigration has slowed down since 2003 [9].

2.3 OVERVIEW ON COMPREHENSIVE IMPROVEMENT

As China's economic development preliminarily enriched capital accumulation via the extensive economic growth mode, the central government advocated high speed economic development and both 'natural environment' and 'human environment' as the next stage of China's major contradictions. Shenzhen as the 'Window of Socialism' has the responsibility to take the lead to the call of the central government.

In January 2018, the state council approved the abolition of the Shenzhen SEZ management line, [45]which means the area outside the old SEZ would gradually be supervised under the same principle as the SEZ

including the urban renewal strategy. In the same year, the state council agreed that Shenzhen should build an innovation demonstration zone for the national sustainable development agenda with the theme of innovation leading the sustainable development of super large cities[46]. Due to the requirements of sustainable development, industry also need to be transformed. In February 2019, the party central committee and the State Council issued 'Outline of development plan for the Guangdong – Hongkong – Macao greater bay area' which required Shenzhen to play its leading role as a SEZ, a national economic centre and a national innovative city, strive to become an innovative and creative city with global influence, not just an ordinary industrial city in the early stage of reform and open.

Meanwhile, the urban village evolved to fit in society at large environment of sustainable development. With further increase of Shenzhen housing prices, which are similar to international cities like New York or London, although the method of 'demolish rebuild' could increase government revenue, but at the same time the high cost of demolition and difficult negotiations also created many dilemmas for the city's government. Moreover, the shortage of social housing and low-rent homes has left Shenzhen's government with no choice but keep the scale of urban village in order to maintain the advantage of low costs for Shenzhen's manufacturing industry. The dwindling number of urban villages has led to a reduction in housing for the City's migrant workers, thus the previous pattern of demolition and construction has needed to cease. One of the biggest renewal project 'Baishizhou' village is likely to be the last large-scale 'demolish rebuild' urban village renewal project in Shenzhen before 2025 because of the implementation of the new 'comprehensive improvement' approach. The new policy focuses on improving the infrastructure of urban villages, aiming to eliminate safety risks such as fire and poor sanitation. It will also gradually standardize the rental market and reinforce the management of property in urban village [47].

The new urban village strategy illustrates its importance in the provision of alternative low-rent houses in the City. The reduction of demolition and construction can be seen as intentional control from the government, but more importantly, that the status of the village in the city makes its preservation more valuable than its demolition: (1) the low-rent house provided by urban villages could alleviate the rising cost of services, stabilizing the market price and housing price; (2) demolishing urban villages requires huge financial subsidies, which is not conducive to the sustainability of municipal funds; (3) the loss of the population of cheap labour is detrimental to the rapid and sustainable development of Shenzhen.

3. THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

After the Hukou system in Shenzhen was relaxed in 1985, the city witnessed a sharp increase in the number of migrants. Therefore, as autonomous villages without farmland, the building owners in the urban villages

began to spontaneously seek a new income source – house rental. As highlighted in the previous sections, because the urban villages provide important homes for the city's poorer paid workers, they have become very complex and sensitive issues to deal with. As a major player in the property market, the municipal government has regularly changed its attitude and strategies towards dealing with the changing problems of the urban villages,

3.1 PROPHASE (1980-2004): THE LACK OF CONTROL OF ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION

The phenomenon of illegal construction in the urban villages as a result of rising land values raised concern amongst the local government. As a result, the Shenzhen government introduced the 'Provisional regulations of Shenzhen municipality on the construction and use of land for rural residents' (深圳经济特区农村社员建房用地的暂行规定) [48]in 1982. This first regulation allowed each household to have a courtyard covering 150 square meters of land, of which 80 square meters could be used for housing construction. In 1986, a new regulation stated that the height of private houses should not be over three storeys and that the average construction floor space should be less than 40 square meters per person [49]. In 1993, the government changed the regulation of construction limitation and the standard size of a new yard was reduced from 150 to 100 square meters per household and the permitted housing construction floor space was also capped. Each household was therefore allowed to build up to 480 square meters of construction floor space (irrespective of the size of the household) [50].

When government realized that illegal construction in the urban village was out of control, they tried to increase housing construction control through regulations that enabled villagers to declare the details of their houses and to pay a corresponding fee to turn their illegal construction into a legally registered building. After paying the penalty, the building owners could then register their houses with the government and obtain legal property certificate. Villagers had to pay 20-100 yuan per square meter depending on how much they had built illegally above the 480 square meter limits. However, this penalty that the villagers needed to pay was too low compared to the much higher housing prices in Shenzhen (typically 6300 RMB per square meter in 2001) [35]. These regulations were intended to ensure acceptable space between buildings and to limit the volume of building by slowing the pace of housing construction and increasing the government's control in the urban villages. However, villagers saw this as their last chance to seize land and build larger houses, and as a result, illegal construction in the urban villages went out of control [30].

In the period from the end of 1980s to early 1990s, most of the self-established buildings in the urban villages were less than 5 storeys. Since the mid-1990s, 80% of them were 6-9 floors, more than 5% were higher than 10 floors, and some of them even reached 20 floors in height [51]. Despite the regulations of the early 1990s,

the phenomenon of illegal construction progressed at an unprecedented scale with almost every building in the villages breaking the limitations of the building code. As a result, a new policy (Overall Planning for Comprehensive Improvement of Urban Villages (old villages) in Shenzhen 2019-2025)[47] was discussed and approved in October 2001, however, it wasn't officially implemented until March 2002, and this again provided villagers with another time gap for illegal construction. The volume of illegal construction in the urban villages had become beyond the supervision power of Shenzhen's government.

3.2 METAPHASE (2004-2017): STIGMATIZATION OF THE URBAN VILLAGE

The position of the urban villages can be observed from the government's working notes and reports. In 2004, the focus of the government was dealing with the problem of illegal construction and how to 'remodel' them with the aim of forming an 'international image city' regularly appearing in reports. Indeed, Li Hongzhong (2004), the then mayor of Shenzhen, said in a meeting in 2004: "the illegal construction appeared continuously, it has seriously damaged the prestige and reputation of the party and the government and trampled on the dignity of the law. The number of people who own illegal buildings is expanding, which has seriously eroded the social fabric and structure. The problem of urban villages has become a serious obstacle to the construction of an international city and a harmonious society" [52].

In 2007, Mayor Xu Zongheng approved the '2007 Shenzhen Urban Village Annual Reconstruction Plan' at the 5th meeting of the Shenzhen Leading Group on Investigation and Punishment of Illegal Construction and Reconstruction of Urban Villages. In this Plan, 117 renovation projects (including old factory and urban villages…) were listed, of which 46 needed to be reconstructed completely, and 71 needed to be improved in terms of their physical condition. The meeting also claimed that the Plan aimed to raise the international profile of Shenzhen ahead of its hosting of the 2011 Universiade in Shenzhen. In accordance with the relevant laws and regulations of urban village reconstruction, the meeting also approved the demolition of real estate and the rebuilding of urban villages. The new residential area would be consist of commercial houses and small part of low-income houses [53]. The meeting notes clearly demonstrated that the government considered that the urban villages were hindering Shenzhen's aspirations to become a modern international city. This plan would cause displacement of migrant workers, moreover, it stimulated the villager's enthusiasm for building more illegal construction. The high price of the houses and rents directly caused a lack of low-cost housing and displacement of migrant workers.

Although the Shenzhen government previously had ambitions to demolish all of the urban villages, this attitude has changed more recently. One significant reason for this is that the cost of compensation payments is now too high for the government to afford. In addition, the government has finally realized that the

demolition of the villages will exacerbate the housing problems for essential migrant workers, and that their displacement could result in a chronic shortage of people to work in services, infrastructure, and other industries.

This change in official government attitude began with the recent ministry document 'Overall Planning for Comprehensive Improvement of Urban Villages (old villages) in Shenzhen 2019-2025 (深圳市城中村（旧村）综合整治总体规划 （2019-2025）' [47]. This can be seen as a milestone in terms of the issues and future of the urban villages. In the context, background, and aim of this document, it emphasized the importance of the history and context of the city and the indispensability of low-cost space. It also emphasises the importance of human rights above the profit, in order to build a sustainable city. However, it states that this does not mean that the urban villages should remain as they are, and it points to '综合整治 (comprehensive improvement) as a priority strategy to be applied in the urban villages. In this process, 55km² (56% of the total land area) of 'comprehensive improvement 'will be finished before 2025. In the SEZ, 75% of all urban villages have to apply the comprehensive improvement strategy, which involves improving public facilities and non-civil works, instead of demolition and reconstruction. The aim is to reduce fire hazards, to improve living conditions and to introduce basic municipal facilities. The policy also states that priority shall be given to the rental demands of the original tenants, so as to effectively guarantee the supply of low-cost living space in the urban villages. Obviously, this policy impact upon the interests of both developers and villagers significantly, however, it avoids the loss of essential workers' housing and protects the rights of low-income people in the city.

3.3 NEW ERA (2018-NOW): THE IMPROVEMENT UNDER SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The changing attitude of the government alongside the evolution of the urban villages profile the importance of these villages to Shenzhen. Because the urban villages have evolved spontaneously in terms of form and scale, they reflect the demands and challenges of a city undergoing unprecedented economic and physical growth. Indeed, the urban villages and their evolution have been inextricably linked and sensitive to the social and economic changes in the city as a whole.

4. CONCLUSION

_ENREF_30There has been considerable literature emphasizing the importance of urban villages and in particular their function of accommodating low-income people and migrant workers, due to the positive influence on urbanization. Others have also highlighted the negative approach of the previous 'demolish-

rebuild' strategy for urban villages proposed within Shenzhen [30]. This paper emphasizes the changes to urban villages in the city as they have become the physical home of the immigrant community and therefore become invisible beacons of Shenzhen's economic and social development. As the influx of migrant workers continued to increase after the relaxation of the city's Hukou system, the number of self-build houses and extensions in the urban villages significantly increased. This demonstrated an awkward situation during the period of comprehensive urbanization of Shenzhen, especially regarding the policies and attitudes of the local government. Finally, the city began to realize the irreplaceable role of the urban villages in the sustainable development of Shenzhen and began exploring a new strategy to achieve urban renewal. Significantly, every change to the urban villages and every change to the government's policies demonstrate the embodiment of the importance of the phenomenon of the urban village in the social and economic development of city.

In terms of the experience of development in the urban villages, there were several limitations and shortages in the city's previous strategies for its urban villages. Firstly, the underestimation of the difficulty of urban village management caused the failure on the control of illegal construction in urban villages. Secondly, the misunderstanding of the social situation meant that the local government did not fully consider the problem of how to accommodate its large 'floating' population. Last but not least, the ill-considered urban village renewal projects resulted in the large scale 'demolish-rebuild' approach being both exorbitant in terms of compensation and unsustainable as a development mode. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of sustainable development has gradually replaced the previous concept of development that blindly pursued GDP in China.

In relation to the urban villages, the announcement in 2004, that the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics defined 'cultural industries' as activities which provide products and serves of cultural entertainment to general public and other related activities was significant (NBSC, 2004). Also, the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015) set the aim of promoting cultural industry as a pillar industry. According to the plan, "by 2020, the cultural industry will become the pillar industry of the national economy. In terms of the development of cultural industrial in Shenzhen, the local municipal government introduce the slogan '文化立市' (build city on culture) in 2003 to respond the summons positively. Seizing this opportunity, due to their unique physical, cultural, social and economic qualities, Shenzhen began to identify some of its urban villages as areas for the promotion of cultural industries. One of the urban villages,'Dafen village' was officially endorsed to be one of the 'statistic projects' of Cultural Industrial Basis by Shenzhen Municipal Government. As such, a series of new measures were introduced in order to accelerate the development of a new mode of economy (Li, 2006; Wen, 2006).

The role of urban villages in social and economic development cannot be underestimated in Shenzhen. Their transformation since Shenzhen's 'birth' as a city in 1979 has created unique urban situations that are both unique and critical to the subsequent successes of the city. Nevertheless, they have remained controversial and continue to draw contrasting and often contradictory negative and positive publicity. As a city, Shenzhen and even the whole China continues to seek the next direction of urban development, and how to deal with the complex issues of the urban villages, is still challenging local governments throughout the country. Whatever, their approach, local government's need to carefully observe the role and influence of urban villages upon the city and to carefully formulate relevant policies to ensure the sustainable and people-oriented development of the city. In successfully achieved, urban villages can flourish in their roles as invisible beacons of economic and social success for many years to come.

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Traditional Dwellings and Settlements

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BETWEEN INTEGRATION AND SEGREGATION OF NEW TRADITIONS: THE CASE OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEES' SETTLEMENTS IN EGYPT

Iman Hegazy and Maye Yehia

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BETWEEN INTEGRATION AND SEGREGATION OF NEW TRADITIONS: THE CASE OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEES' SETTLEMENTS IN EGYPT

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Since the start of the civil war in 2011, millions of Syrians have been experiencing either forced displacement or migration. In Egypt, there are no refugee camps. The Egyptian urban fabric is an open "Urban Refuge": a diversified built environment that embraces Egyptians and migrants. This research investigates how Syrian traditions have emerged in different neighborhoods and how spaces are negotiated. The analysis will focus on the Sixth of October Town in the outskirts of Cairo. Based on the understanding of these results, a set of recommendations will be developed to improve the integration of the Syrian community within the local context.

1. INTRODUCTION: ON IDENTITY, ROOTEDNESS AND TERRITORIALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION

"To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul. It is one of the hardest to define. A human being has roots by virtue of his real, active and natural participation in the life of a community which preserves in living shape certain particular treasures of the past and certain particular expectations for the future'.[1]

- *S. Weil.*

Weil used the metaphor of 'roots' to explain the natural tie between people, identities and places. In this conception, from the scale of the homeland to the scale of home, identity is stable and has an unchanging character. 'Uprootedness' is defined as a near universal condition resulting from the destruction of ties with the past and where people lack deep and living connections with their environment. Similarly, the British geographer Doreen Massey sees 'Home as place where identities are grounded'.[2] And thus, here displacement is seen as a loss of identity.

However, Massey also investigates how people re-invent place in a globalizing world. [3] This concept is in line with Cresswell understanding of space which, for him, is "in a constant state of becoming". [4] Other researchers have debated the implications of the time-space compression that results from mobility and globalization. David Harvey follows the widely recognized philosopher Henri Lefebvre [5] in examining how capitalism influenced space, from the construction of buildings to the distribution of investments and to the worldwide division of labor. Harvey argues that capitalist urbanization has caused 'displacement and dispossession' in a sense that poorer and less powerful populations are losing their place and space in the city, despite the fact that they produce city-life. He emphasizes people's attempts to re-invent a sense of place to resist the forces of global capitalism and migration, showing how dominant groups in gated communities exclude 'others'.[6]

This is not a recent phenomenon only linked to globalization, but it was experienced repeatedly throughout human history. Hannah Arendt, the humanist thinker, have suggested that in the context of 'infinite expansion of profit and power', people have been marginalized and live as "isolated individuals in an atomized society" where anyone can be considered 'disposable or superfluous'.[7] Consistent with these theories, Nezar AlSayyad observes: "Today's urbanism has been often diagnosed as a moment of sharpened exclusion and inclusion, mapped through patterns of segregation and dramatically represented in the icon of the wall or gate".[8]

In times of massive displacements of people around the world, and the resulting complexity of relations between the host communities and migrants, this concept is somewhat more obvious than ever. For who for a variety of reasons have had to continue their lives elsewhere, identities have been recreated in different forms. Actually, Weil argued that "a given environment should not receive an outside influence as something additional to itself, but as a stimulant intensifying its own particular way of life. It should draw nourishment from outside contributions only after having digested them, and the human beings who compose it should receive such contributions only from its hands".[9] Similarly, Madanipour [10] understands space as inherently caught up in social relations, where physical spaces and the social life of citizens are shaped together. Thus integration is achieved at the physical, spatial, social, and symbolic dimensions.

Sustained control over certain aspects of the physical space by an individual or a group leads to the creation of a territory. Altman [11] sees territoriality as a mechanism to regulate social interaction, whereby people can increase the range of choices open to them and have control over options of level of interaction with their environment. According to him, a territory depends on 4 factors: the period of residence in a place, a perceived influence on the residents and others in creating a sense of ownership, level and value of a place personalization, and defensibility rate at the time of an invasion to a territory[12]. Altman perceives privacy as a crucial regulatory or boundary-control process through which access to a person or group is determined. The private realm can be understood as a system of layers around individuals to ensure self-protection, but the social realm that create these layers can change over time.[13] A sense of territoriality originates a sense of belonging and intimacy with a place. Territory strengthens the sense of distinction, privacy, and personal identity.[14] Thus, within this territory, people feel secured.

The notion of spaces of representation and re-appropriation of spaces has been by developed by Henri Lefebvre who thinks about the production of the urban environment as the manifestation of abstract economic processes as well as the location of social and cultural activities. Henri Lefebvre has explained that 'We are confronted not by one social space but by many – indeed, by an unlimited multiplicity or uncountable

set of social spaces'[15]. In informal and popular areas, where spaces are appropriated by people by virtue of networks and pathways in everyday life, the notions of Lefebvre relating to social spaces are articulated and can be understood. Especially urban spaces as spaces 'that emerge in all their diversity and interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another'.[16] For its importance, Lefebvre had proposed to establish everyday life as a scientific topic for investigation, as it is a carrier of values and meanings that help understand the society and social space. Also related to informal urban spaces and the confrontation of with 'the other', where meanings of space can be open to contestation and conflict, Massey characterized space as a process. Here space involves multiple and diverse identities and are defined by interactions with the outside. And thus, spaces are not settled, but continuously demand negotiation, and this is what gives space its creative character and place identity.[17]

Hence, philosophers, geographers and thinkers on place and space and its modes of production agree that place and identity are closely intertwined, in a process of co-production and negotiation, as argued by Cresswell: 'Place is the raw material for the creative production of identity rather than an a priori label of identity'.[18]

In this research, the aim is to open up key insights from the literature and survey analysis of a particular neighborhood to understand how displaced and migrant Syrian communities recreate their identity and express their traditions in host cities. To examine this topic, it is crucial to understand the factors that shaped urban refuges and to compare their forms of livelihoods and coping strategies in central areas/ versus peripheral ones. The major overarching themes include change and transformation of spaces in the context of the resettlement of migrant communities.

The existing body of research that investigates the Syrian refugees' conditions in Egypt mostly analyses and documents the circumstances as well as the needs of this target group. [19] However, there is a shortage in research examining the spatial and socio-cultural impact of the Syrian refugees on the Egyptian urban landscape and the extent of the Syrian refugees' tradition manifestations in the Egyptian context. There are only two notable and in-depth works related to this question: the first is a Master thesis untitled '*Refugee Setting and Urban Form and Governance, The Predicament of Syrian Refugees in Navigating Cairo's Urban Spaces and the Complexities of Governance in Turbulent Times*' by Rasha Arous, achieved in 2013.[20] And the second is the more recent Master thesis of Samir Shalabi (2017); untitled "*City Margins and Exclusionary Space in Contemporary Egypt, An Urban Ethnography of a Syrian Refugee Community in a Remote Low-Income Cairo Neighborhood*".[21]

The methodology of the present research employs the neighborhood as the main spatial scale of analysis and focuses on a particular area to facilitate the study of the everyday experience of Syrian residents within the local specificities of the urban space. The wider context is also investigated to emphasize its linkages with wider spatialities of the city, focusing on Sixth of October satellite city. The research relies on the interviews of the Syrian refugees themselves and experts in services providers such as UNHCR, CARE Egypt, Caritas, or other international and local NGOs. The research also presents the results of focused open-ended interviews and group interviews; including Egyptian citizens and Syrian refugees. Data have been also gathered from site visits and TV documentaries. At the street level, a pedestrian shopping street in a core district with high concentration of Syrian amenities is mapped and analyzed. At the neighborhood level, two social housing projects are examined to understand how the Syrians newcomers navigate the new challenges in their everyday activities and negotiate their location on the periphery of the Sixth of October City.

2. EGYPT AS AN URBAN REFUGE FOR SYRIANS: RESIDENCY PROCEDURES AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

According to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), the definition of refugee is: "any person who owing to a well-founded fear of being for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself".[22] Currently, 130,045 Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers are registered with UNHCR Egypt.[23] But the Egyptian government estimates the number to be closer to 300,000 to 500,000.[24] According to the statistics published by the UNHCR reports, the vast majority of those refugees reside in the Great Cairo Region (GCR) and in Alexandria.[25]

Officially, the Egyptian Government has legal obligations towards refugees, as Egypt has signed the 1951 convention, in addition to its 1967 protocol in 1981. However, the applied measures are disintegrative rather than integrative; which is the main reason behind the UNHCR Regional-Representative-Egypt, taking over all responsibilities in accordance with the 1954 memorandum of understanding (MOU).[26] The UNHCR takes the refugees' responsibilities: registering in the UNHCR is a crucial step for any refugee entering Egypt, because by registering the refugee is granted protection and becomes eligible for assistance. However, many of them, whose statuses do not fit the requirements, see their request for the residency permit rejected. The file is then considered a 'closed file' by UNHCR. In practice, "Closed files" illegally extend their stay in Egypt and would have extremely high vulnerability to both exploitation and abuse. [27]

By the end of 2011, the first wave of Syrian asylum seekers arrived in Egypt. They were mostly political activists and well-off groups. [28] Later many poorer groups emerged, such as helpless families and injured

people.[29] The geopolitics and long Egyptian-Syrian bond have encouraged a mass number of the Syrians to move to Egypt. Thanks of being previously one country, in the Nasser era, both social groups enjoyed free access to both countries without requirements for visas or residency permits. [30]

But since July 2013, the Syrian refugees' condition in Egypt has changed; Syrians became obligated to acquire entry visas, as well as permits and security clearness as the Egyptian borders have been closed. These harsh regulations have been established, as many Syrian refugees took part in protests and performed violent actions against the current government. [31] Several Syrian refugees argued this assumption during the author's personal interviews conducted in 2017 and 2018. This was confirmed during a personal interview with a Syrian female refugee, she explained: "*The asylum procedures are getting more and more complex. Having an entry visa or residency permit is extremely hard. Only touristic or student visas are affordable to obtain, and "Not" for all refugees*".[32] As described by Arous, the vulnerabilities of Syrians were overburdened, at the time, by hate speech, intimidation by the Egyptian public media and the cut-down of many support channels, and most importantly, by the newly-emerged need of legal protection through the restrictions on residency and entry visas. [33]

Before July 2013, many Syrians stated that they were welcomed when they arrived to Egypt.[34] In an interview held by a governmental newspaper [35], the interviewed Syrian refugee clarifies: *"We felt as if we were in our own country […] we are so close in everything, including language, culture and religion. That offered us real solace, as we wanted our children to be brought up in more or less the same culture as we were raised in*."

After 2013, the new restrictions on entry visas have separated families, as family reunions became almost impossible to arrange. Even the slightest actions such as opening new bank accounts for Syrians and registering their businesses got hindered, despite the fact that this should go under the umbrella of an Egyptian entrepreneur.[36] A sudden change in the process declared that work permits are issued exclusively for people who have residential permits, which explains why many refugees feel trapped. In this scenario, accepting jobs in the "black market" such as: cleaning, street vending and construction work, seemed like their only option. [37] In 2016, because of the floatation of the Egyptian currency: the value of the Egyptian Pound reduced its value by almost 50% against the dollar; the economic situation became even harsher for all.

Choosing Egypt which doesn't share borders with Syria, as a destination for Syrians refugees and migrants might be astonishing, considering all the above-mentioned difficulties in Egypt which current population exceeds 102 million people[38] and with the resulting scarcity of job opportunities within the current harsh economic conditions on the national scale. Many interviewees explain that they chose Egypt as a destination

because it was relatively affordable in comparison with other surrounding countries, that the language and culture are close, that it is safe and that they knew relatives or friends who could facilitate their settlement and work.[39]

So, despite the Egyptian political changes towards the refugees, Egypt is still considered as an attractive urban refuge for many Syrians, due to the assumption that the living conditions in Egypt, especially on the social and economic levels are better than other hosting countries and camps. This was confirmed during the researcher's personal communications and mentioned in research explaining that the Syrian refugees decide to come to Egypt because of the lower cost of living and a favorable protection environment.[40] That is in addition to settling in areas, which have more or less the same urban environment where they used to live in back in Syria, in addition to the background familiarity and connections in specific urban refuge.[41]

The UNHCR provides various forms of assistance to recognized refugees. These forms of assistance include educational scholarships for children; job placement support, vocational trainings, and medical care services, food vouchers and monthly cash assistance.[42] The UNHCR's provides payments on monthly payment between the value of 400 LE to 1,200 LE through its cash assistance program, this value is calculated based on the size of the family.[43]

Many Egyptians engaged in supporting and welcoming the Syrian refugees; through actions such as providing food, clothes and some even provided furniture. This was also observed by the researcher's site visits to the UNHCR and CARE [44] international organization, as well as other local NGOs. Other Egyptians showed their support via helping in paying rent or buying household equipment. Some helped refugees establish contacts to get the needed psychological treatment. These charitable aids were provided directly or sometimes indirectly through local organizations along with mosques and churches; they have encouraged many Syrian refugees to extend their stay in Egypt.[45]

3. THE 6TH OF OCTOBER SATELLITE CITY: A CASE STUDY OF SOCIO-SPATIAL POLARIZATION OF THE URBAN SPACE

3.1 LOCATION, POPULATION, AND SOCIAL LIFE

The Government has built more than 29 new cities since 1974 to decongest overpopulated Egyptian cities and to absorb population growth.[46] Eight of them are part of Greater Cairo. But many critical issues arise from the current desert conquest in Egypt: segregation of functions, gated communities, lack of public transport, uncontrolled and unsustainable sprawl, waste of resources, fragmentation and alienation. David

Sims[47] argues that indications that things were going seriously wrong have been around for decades. He observes that the results, in spite of colossal expenditures, have been derisory and that today Egypt's desert is scattered with abandoned projects, uninhabited towns and lost dreams.

Neo-liberal economic policies and real estate capitalism of the Mubarak regime have led to the proliferation of gated communities that were constructed away from the city's hustle. For the elite, Cairo has been and still is identified with pollution, congestion, poverty, criminality and violent protests against the regime. When they can afford it, the wealthy few escapes to protect themselves inside the walls of secured enclaves. In parallel, the majority of people, living in the neighborhoods of the inner city and in informal areas, struggle on a daily basis in a way that is close to post-industrial dystopias of the nineteenth century. Hence, Cairo and its Greater Region constitute a divided megacity where socio-spatial inequalities are stark, between inner-city overpopulated districts, gated communities for the elites, informal neighborhoods, and low-density satellite cities of the surrounding desert. At the same time, these diverse spaces have created different opportunities of urban refuge.

The satellite city of Sixth of October is located about thirty-five kilometers west of central Cairo and is the settlement that accommodates the highest concentration of Syrian refugees in Egypt.[48] The name of the city commemorates the start of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, its area spans 470 square kilometers after its extension, and its original concept consists of an industrial zone with residential areas for factory workers.[49] Administratively, It is a suburb of El Giza governorate and it offers reasonable accommodation compared to the cost of housing in other downtown areas of Cairo (FIG.1).

In 2006, the population rate at the satellite city was an average of 154,093 inhabitants.[50] According to the most recent report of 2019, the total population number has increased to reach 360,549 citizens.[51] In 2011, upon the arrival of the Syrian refugees and their increasing demand of accommodation, the city urban setting has been extended to include more dwellers, between public, private, and gated housing settlements. In May 2012, an estimation of more than 30,000 Syrians have been settling in the 6th of October. That is in addition to the nearby city of El-Sheikh Zayed. The Syrian refugees were almost formulating 15% of the total population density of both areas. [52] So the city of Sixth of October is significantly less densely populated than other districts of Cairo or Alexandria, which is convenient for Syrians, as it will be explain latter in the research. Another reason behind the Syrian attraction to the area is its similarity to the urban environment that the refugees used to live in, back in Syria, as it was mentioned in several interviews. Most importantly, as an urban refuge, the City is considered relatively cheap compared to other new towns, in terms of real estate prices.[53]

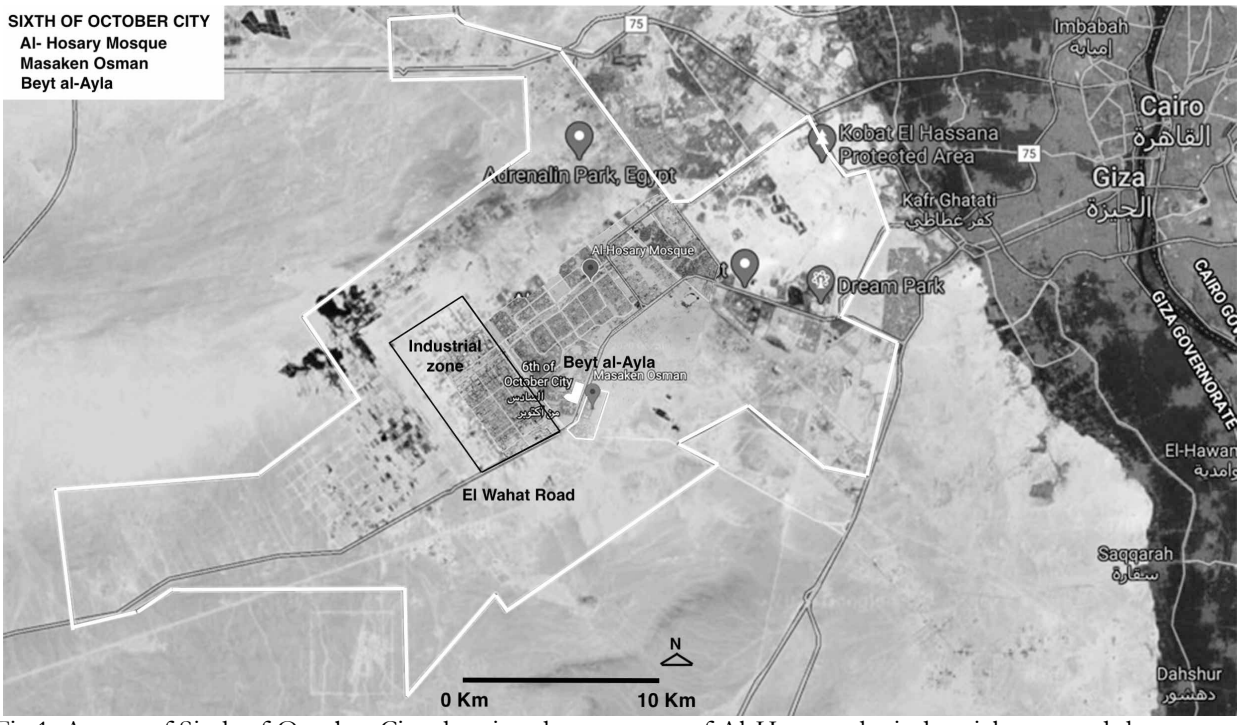

Fig.1: A map of Sixth of October City showing the core area of Al-Hosary, the industrial zone and the two remote social housing neighborhoods cited in the research: Beyt al Ayla and Masaken Osman (Source: Google Earth with author edits).

The city's planning is based on a modernist approach of wide spines, gridiron patterns and large blocks. Like other new desert cities, the Sixth of October City has failed to reach its population targets, and this contributed to the settlement of refugees that found affordable accommodation there. Today, besides its large industrial zone and its twelve residential districts, the city's services include: several hospitals, medical clinics, a number of schools, State and private universities, several shopping malls, clubs, recreational parks, a large bus station, several hotels, a library, a Media Production City, several mosques, clusters of services and facilities mostly located in the first and second central districts. Shalabi describes the spatial aspect of capitalist development that is clearly present when comparing 'core' regions of the City with low-income communities on the margins, as the city's central districts are inhabited by people with stronger purchasing power.[54] Actually, the site survey visits have help grasping the clear differences between the central districts of Sixth of October city and the areas lying on the city's outskirts, in terms of accessibility to services and amenities, cleanliness of the streets and public spaces and maintenance of façades.

3.2 THE CLUSTERING PROCESS ADOPTED BY THE SYRIAN COMMUNITY AROUND AL-HOSARY MOSQUE AREA

The newcomers in the Sixth of October city are distributed in different districts based on their economic profile, class, city of origin, background, and political engagement. The majority is following family networks, since they came in family and extended family groups from the same origin. Most of the refugees depend on each other, on the UNCR support and other community-based associations, but also the generosity and solidarity of the Egyptian society.

Longing for territoriality suggested by Altman[55] is represented in the clustering process adopted by the Syrians refugees as a process to ensure self-protection. Based on the "density" factor, many Syrians have achieved formulating a material expression of owning the space. As per Honneth's theory[56], self-esteem grows when one differentiates oneself from others grounded on having valuable competencies. Judging by this, individuals get the opportunity to stand out and develop themselves through their individuality, which results in higher self-esteem.[57]

The city of the Sixth of October reflects class divisions in its spatial configuration, and also demonstrates how the Syrian community has developed these 'protection spaces' in several neighborhoods of the satellite city. The present research gives the description of a particular area in the central area of the 2nd district of Sixth of October, named 'Little Syria' and sometimes 'Little Damascus'[58] to explain how new traditions have been introduced in the urban space after the settlement of the Syrian refugees (FIG. 2).

Fig. 2: Al-Hosary Mosque area showing the commercial pedestrian street between the two blocks occupied by the Syrian community and named 'Little Syria' (Source: Google Earth with Author edits).

Within Al-Hosary mosque's area, new economic and commercial activities have been developed along with charitable and support agencies that have set up offices there. The mosque and its related traditional practices and services provided to the Syrian community have played an important role, triggering a significant coping mechanism and helping refugee clustering. The development of these refugee spaces has contributed to raising the diversity and vitality of the urban space where they have been able to express their collective identity. Now the area has been also developing schooling facilities for Syrian children and hosting many

Syrian-specific services. Many Syrian students are living in the area and study in State and private universities located there and a busy informal transportation hub has emerged next to Al-Hosary mosque.

Many journalists have been reporting on the many success stories of the Syrian community praising their resilience and combativity against the everyday hardships, economic deprivation and precarious social and legal situations.[59] The documentaries describe how they left Syria and how they built new lives in Egypt. In the words of one of the Syrian refugees: "*We left everything behind, our memories, our families, our money, our personal belongings, everything and we came here*". Another person relates; "*We borrowed the money to buy the flying tickets*". A manager of one of the factories in Sixth of October city adds: "*We change the course of our lives like millions of others*".[60]

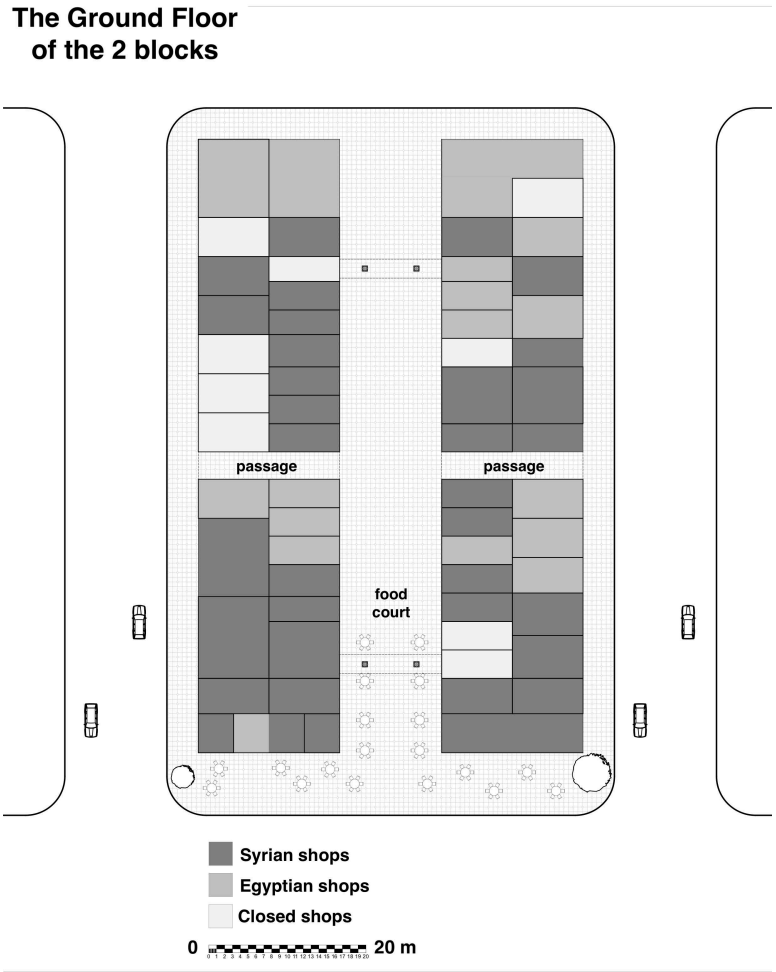

Fig. 3: The schematic plan of the ground floor of two buildings in Al-Hosary Mosque area, showing the dominance of the Syrian shops and their concentration (Source: Author).

The area in question has been developing into a socio-economic, cultural and political hub by/for Syrians that has become busy with various Syrian activities and that can even be considered a Syrian landmark and 'territory', named 'Little Syria' (FIG. 3).

The following is an analysis of the ground floor of the two blocks that triggered the name of 'Little Syria' for the whole area:

- The two blocks of buildings include a total of 52 opened commercial shops on the ground floor.
- The number of Syrian shops is 35 shops, so the percentage of the Syrian shops represents 63.7% of the total area of opened shops (35/52).
- The number of restaurants and cafés is 12 representing 34.3% of the Syrian shops (12/35).
- The number of food related shops is 14 representing 40% of the Syrian shops (14/35).
- The number of other shops is 9 (Mobile phones, electronics, supermarkets, perfume shops, and hairdressers), representing 25.7% of the Syrian shops (9/35).

From the above analysis, it is clear that Syrian restaurants, cafés and food related shops selling Syrian pastries and specialties, which are particularly appreciated by all, created a special sense of place in the food court created between the two buildings. The two buildings are connected by two bridges above the first floor to link the shops of the upper level (FIG. 4).

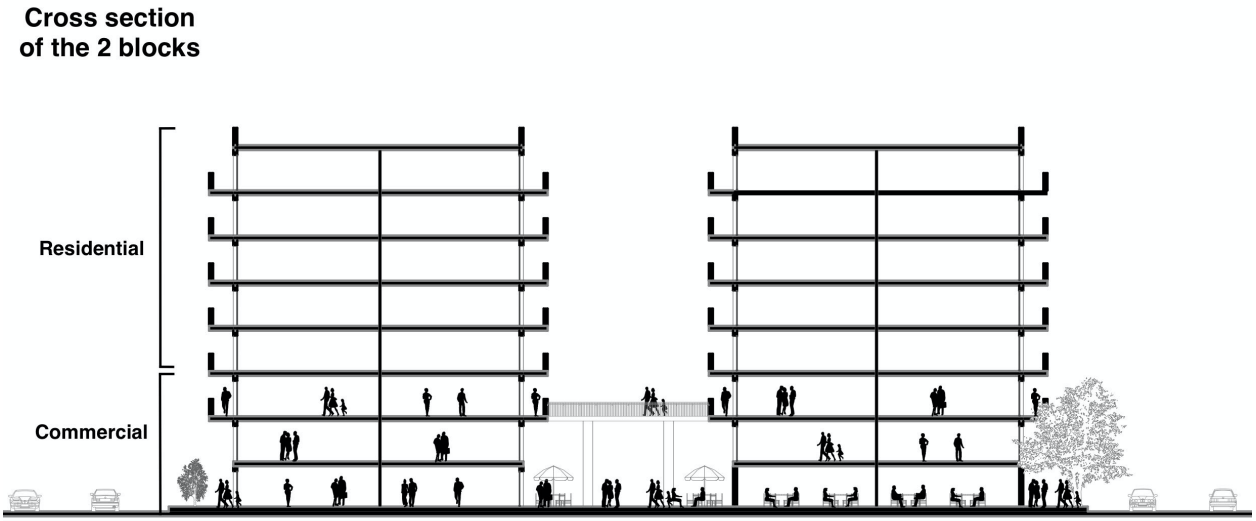

Fig. 4: The schematic cross section representing the two buildings: each of them is an eight-story walk-up block, the ground floor and the two following floors are for commercial purpose, and the five upper floors are residential (Source: Author).

The shop owners used Syrian names to assert their identity, and the quality of Syrian food and pastries such as: 'Negm El-Sham' (star of the Levant), 'Ward El-Sham' (rose of the Levant), 'Khayrat Demashk' (bounties of Damascus), 'Barakat al-Halabi' (Barakat from Aleppo), Al- Sendian (the name of a tree that grows in the Levant region), 'Al Negma Al-Naboulsia', (the star form Nabuls), 'Spices of Al-Ghouta', and so on. Even if the shop is not food related and is a hairdresser, or specialized in Mobile phones and electronics, or perfumes, the names of the shops are displaying a Syrian origin such as 'Sehr El-Sham' meaning magic of the Levant, or 'Syria phones' or 'Salon Al-Malek Al- Souri' (the Syrian king), etc. [61]

Advertising these names, is a way of attracting more market activities and mark 'the territory' with a Syrian character. Thus, not only the Syrians are benefiting of these 'Syrian pockets' that have scattered in the city of Sixth of October but the Egyptians as well. The sense of place in the area reflects a "virtual Syria" experience, as Arous has mentioned,[62] the Syrian refugees have been translating, reflecting and transferring their traditions, and even merging these socio-cultural expressions and practices to fit the local context. In terms of culinary traditions, for example, many interviewees have explained that they modified their recipes for Egyptians.[63] (FIG. 5).

Fig. 5: The Syrians are proud to display their origin and identity as shown in the shop façades of the studied area (Source: Author).

It is worth mentioning that, in that pedestrian street (FIG. 2, 3 & 5), due to the aforementioned Egyptian-Syrian relationship and the welcoming atmosphere, the Syrians groups have hanged a large billboard that reads in Arabic: *"Thank you Egypt, On behalf of the Syrian community in the Arab Republic of Egypt, we extend our thanks to Egypt, the 'mother of the world', land, citizens and government for their good welcome, treatment and hospitality. We hope that Allah will maintain security, peace, and prosperity and that the bonds of love between the two brotherly people will last".*[64]

In fact, through the survey of the area, diverse informal vending activities and informal modes of transportation (tuk-tuks and minibuses) were observed especially surrounding the Hosary Mosque and 'Little Syria".

4. INFORMALITY AS A COPING MECHANISM IN REMOTE SOCIAL HOUSING NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE SIXTH OF OCTOBER CITY

Rents at the Sixth of October city have been increasing since the settlement of Syrian relatively well-off groups and therefore the renting chances for the poorer refugees were decreasing with tightening options. Of course, the poorer groups are more exposed to struggles, challenges and experimental journeys, especially facing their settlement in remote social housing neighborhoods. These areas are characterized by lack of services and the daily transportation costs are a heavy burden on the poorer groups, which is a problem pertaining to most government-subsidized housing projects in Egypt. In addition to that, the economic weight of Syrian newcomers on these areas leads locals to have negative attitude towards them and undeniably increases the tension between refugees and locals. Actually, this is the case anywhere in the world, since there is an ongoing competition between the two groups over job opportunities. [65] But there are also other conflicts based around struggles for power; AlSayyad explains that "in contemporary informal settlements, there is a fierce competition between different territorialized forms of association and patronage—be they the state, religious organizations, NGOs, or international development institutions".[66] This was confirmed in literature review and during several interviews.[67]

In addition to that, the systems of marginalizing refugees, which are "embedded in exclusionary policies"[68] of the Government, have aggravated the precarious social and legal situations of the Syrian refugees. Due to the national policy constraints regarding the formal working permits, they are mostly seeking black market, accepting informal and low-skill jobs—especially the poorer groups.

Depending on their previous social connections in different areas and with the support of local organizations, Syrian migrants found their urban refuge in social housing neighborhoods such as Masaken Osman and Beyt

al-Ayla. During the course of this research, the two social housing neighborhoods were visited; they are situated opposite each other on both sides of the Wahat road, on the Sixth of October city's south-western periphery (FIG.1). Within their interaction with the local context, the Syrian migrants have been testing their survival strategies.

The fist 360 Syrian families were moved to Beyt al-Ayla from Masaken Osman with the help of local UNHCR organization. Then, later on, hundreds of families settled there. In Beyt al-Ayla, Samir Shalabi[69] identified six types of informal practices: small shops on residential ground-floor balconies, a bread oven outside a building, vegetable gardens, chicken breeding cages on pavement plots, hairdressing within apartments, and a daycare facility that occupied a private flat but was extended to the street pavement through a steel cage. These are informal practices that emerged due to the lack of services in the neighborhood (FIG. 6).

Fig. 6: Informal practices in Beyt al-Ayla: converting the residential balcony of the ground floor unit for commercial purpose (Source: Author).

In Beyt al-Ayla, fences and gates surrounding its territory, apparently simulate a sense of security in the area and materialize the exclusionary urban space. Moreover, these fences hinder the development of diverse land uses.

Fig. 7: The entrance gate and fence surrounding the Beyt al-Ayla social housing neighborhood. (Source: Author).

Fig. 8: Masaken Osman neighborhood: children playing in the street despite an inhospitable and unsafe environment (Source: Author).

Concerning Masaken Osman, the settlement is a much larger estate, and this urban refuge for the Syrian newcomers was facilitated by a faith-based organization that has established its charitable works and set up an

office inside a local mosque in Sixth of October city. The organization has its own criteria for accepting Syrians into the areas it controls. Arous calls it a "Patronage Type of protection".[70] The urban environment in Masaken Osman is much more deteriorated than in Beyt al-Ayla, the area is more populated and dense, and people tend to be more aggressive and suspicious.[71] Moreover, interviewees have pointed out the problems of insecurity that impede free mobility, especially women, that are often harassed by thugs.[72] Along the unclean streets, informal kiosks for basic grocery are randomly scattered but any other amenities are lacking (FIG. 8).

In both neighborhoods, Beyt al-Ayla and Masaken Osman, the Syrian community is excluded from fair employment and from accessing socially valued resources such as services. Thus, the informal solutions have emerged as a result of the unavailability of amenities and as an economic strategy for survival.

Hence, refugees wanted to be integrated and merged with others in some urban areas, such as in the case of Al-Hosary Mosque area. While in social housing estates, they kept a low profile, preferred anonymity and even searched to be hidden. This was noticed during casual conversations and interviews, some respondents were open and at ease, while many others have refused even talking to the researchers, adopting a certain apprehension attitude and mistrust. This is certainly due to the dire and fearful experiences they had to endure after they were forced to flee their homeland during the war and the persecution they faced by the local authorities and some Egyptians.

As such, the more Syrian refugees are socially and economically vulnerable, the more they feel insecure and alienated. In search of social recognition, they have negotiated their ways through new traditions, new mechanism of coping and new spatial practices to feel more securely rooted in society. Searching for stability and continuity, recovering their repressed histories and identities, their places of congregation and gatherings provided them with a sense of familiarity they may be unable to attain in public space, especially in economically depressed neighborhoods. Practices, such as cooking traditional food and listening to Syrian music made them recover a sense of belonging to the social communities they left in their homeland. Reviving their 'roots' but also expressing the changes they experienced through their displacement and resettlement. In 'Little Syria', for example, Syrian newcomers have a sense of self-confidence provided by a welcoming and fulfilling environment from a strong Egyptian-Syrian bond.

As a socio-tolerant urban environment, due to its location, being far away from the capital and the political conflicts in the inner city, the Sixth of October city has accepted all immigration groups, such as Sudanese, Somalis, Iraqis, and others and since 2011 Syrians. However, also thanks of being detached from the capital, many of Syrians refugees are living there illegally "in shadow". In fact, the power that those social groups are

obtaining from the surrounding community made them less keen to be legally recognized. Others cannot afford to have official documents, or do not want to for security reasons.

Before the Syrians' arrival, many scholars have pointed out that the financial feasibility of the 6th of October city was not stable.[73] The city's urban sphere was failing to attract residents because of the lack of public amenities.[74] Yet, after the Syrian refugees' choosing the Sixth of October city as an urban refuge, the city's socio-economic and urban setting have been developing. [75] Syrians were able to gain a recognized position in the Egyptian economy because of their reputation as skilled businesspersons and employees, especially in the food industry. The well-to-do among them were able to start their own businesses and provide opportunities to Syrians and Egyptians alike. Among them, many investors decided to move all their resources in terms of capital and economic activities and open factories in the Sixth of October city, consequently, the investments have increased in the area in general. The Syrian community's concentration, clustering and its commercial activities and cultural expressions can be considered a catalyst for the under-developed city of Sixth of October. Thanks to strong networks between the Syrians and with Egyptians, within these islands of freedom, a spatial appropriation took place in the urban space where a collective identity is clearly expressed.

Nevertheless, with a community of Syrian refugees that has begun to settle in Egypt since nearly nine years (2011-2020) at the time of writing, a long way is still ahead for them to be fully accepted and recognized especially in low-income groups environments. However, they proved in many ways that they are active agents of the society and not passive victims whose needs should be considered more effectively.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

For the Egyptian government, Syrian refugees are considered a security threat, a community that has to be contained and subjected to strict control and surveillance. Therefore, the Syrian refugees in Egypt cannot overcome the self-perception of being "victims". In government-subsidized social housing neighborhoods, they have been suffering from marginalization and exclusion and the class-based polarization of the Great Cairo region has aggravated their livelihoods on a daily basis. There, the Syrians live in shadow and created their own controlled communities.

The Egyptian government should reconsider its restrictive measures in term of visa regime and access to residency for Syrian refugees, and all immigrants as a matter of fact. In accordance with Egypt's legal obligations towards refugees, and signed conventions and protocols, the local authorities should ensure their protection from abuse and exploitation and should support their legal recognition to help their equitable inclusion into the workforce and labor market. Empowering provinces and cities in managing migration

could address the notable mismatch between an evolving labor market and the location of the labor force. In fact, housing affordability in provinces, away of main urban centers such as the Great Cairo Region and Alexandria can be a driver for starting new urban nodes of development including new factories and enterprises, and new employment opportunity for Egyptians and the displaced communities.

Humanitarian agencies and NGOs supporting refugees need to develop their system by introducing planners and experts that could work in synergy with local authorities and municipalities to help developing urban strategies for newcomers. These International agencies, such as the UNHCR, and local associations should also create networks with real-estate offices and work with them to develop their structures in order to provide suitable housing options for the refugees. The role of these humanitarian agencies should also provide legal assistance to poorer residents to protect them from the threat of eviction.

Although the Government of Egypt continues to allow Syrian children equal access to public primary and secondary education as Egyptians, challenges remain. [76] Initiatives that have been taken from the Syrian community to integrate Syrian children in the national school system by establishing different educational facilities for them should be supported by the Government, the different associations and the local community. Education is vital and has a great role to enable Syrian children and youth to feel connected to their roots, their origins, to the past and its resources, as "the sense of continuity in time we derive from history is an essential nutrient for the soul". [77]

The Media should have a role to help raising public awareness about the importance of supporting and integrating migrant communities socially, economically and psychologically; journalists and writers should promote the acceptance of 'the other'. Besides, they can put pressure on the Government towards revising its restrictive measures in terms of visa regime and access to residency for migrants and asylum seekers. For these refugees who have endured human atrocity and terrible hardships, the "right" of everybody to "have rights" [78] must be recognized in host cities.

The spatial polarization of society between rich and poor and the phenomena of uneven development and division of labor, as observed by theorists on urban space and human geography cannot be clearer than in the Great Region of Cairo. The Megapolis has showed its capacity to house different displaced communities that could resettle by establishing networks and relationships to seek livelihood opportunities, this is truly a lifeline for them. Nevertheless, no one can say how the situation in Syria will evolve, or if Syrians will ever be able to return back home and how many refugees will continue to choose Egypt as a haven. In the 21st century, this is a situation facing many cities of the Global South, especially in the Middle East region. This entails a

rethinking of the challenges and the potentials, and of the way researchers understand space. Putting in mind that space is not something static and neutral but it is something intertwined with time, to respond to the fundamental and rapid changes that lie ahead in terms of population, urban dynamics, migration, technological and cultural change in cities.

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Traditional Dwellings and Settlements

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FESTIVALS AS CATALYSTS FOR SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION

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This study goes beyond the descriptive analysis of festival rituals to explore how rites can represent traditions within a certain community and how the effect of these rituals on the hosting environment extends to both physical and non-physical scales. The study is based in al-Khalifa district, a neighborhood with rich heritage, located in the heart of Egypt's Historic Cairo, a registered UNESCO World Heritage Site. The study focuses on a single case study of the Mawlid of al-Sayyida Sukayna (a female Muslim saint's day celebration) and explores the interrelationships of influence between festival and space. It highlights the physical and non-physical elements of this festival and presents the efforts of a local NGO to revive a cancelled ritual of al-Zaffa (procession), using the virtual technology of augmented reality.

1. INTRODUCTION

As an architect working in al-Khalifa for almost eight years, I have the opportunity to take a closer look on this heritage-rich neighborhood, observe the dynamics of activities that reshape its physical setting on a daily basis, and witness its spectacular transformation as it accommodates local festivals.

Al-Khalifa area is located in the heart of Historic Cairo, a registered UNESCO World Heritage Site based on its nomination on April 10, 1979. Its main spine, after which al-Khalifa is named, is the southern extension of al-Mu'izz li-din Illah al-Fatimi Street, and it leads to the Southern *Qarafa* (cemetery). Al-Khalifa Street area contains a large number of vision shrines and mausoleums of the descendants of the prophet Muhammad and other mausoleums dedicated to members of Egypt's ruling dynasties across history. A vision shrine is a domed building within which no one is buried yet is spiritually linked to a religious figure as it represents the place which witnessed one of his/her *karamas* (a miraculous deed or epiphany) for example. Al-Khalifa Street was historically named al-Mashahid Street after these shrines (*Mashhad pl. mashahid*)[1].

The study area stretches from al-Saliba Street in the north to al-Sayyida Nafisa Square in the south. At its widest (in the north) it stretches between Ahmad ibn Tulun Mosque and al-Qal'a Square (Figure 1)[2].

This neighborhood, like other neighborhoods and districts of Historic Cairo, has a thumbprint of almost every ruling family of Egypt since its establishment within the borders of the second Islamic capital, al-'Askar, in the 'Abbasid period (750-969 CE, 133-358 AH). Its many listed monuments, and buildings of value, attract local and international visitors for cultural, historical and religious tourism. This, without a doubt, adds a distinctiveness to the neighborhood, in addition to constraints on how to use and shape its urban fabric, especially when it comes to listed heritage buildings and their buffer zones. Add to this its urban morphology, which is characterized by narrow streets, the lack of open spaces and public squares, in addition to the lack of basic services such as resting places, shaded areas, public toilets and so forth.

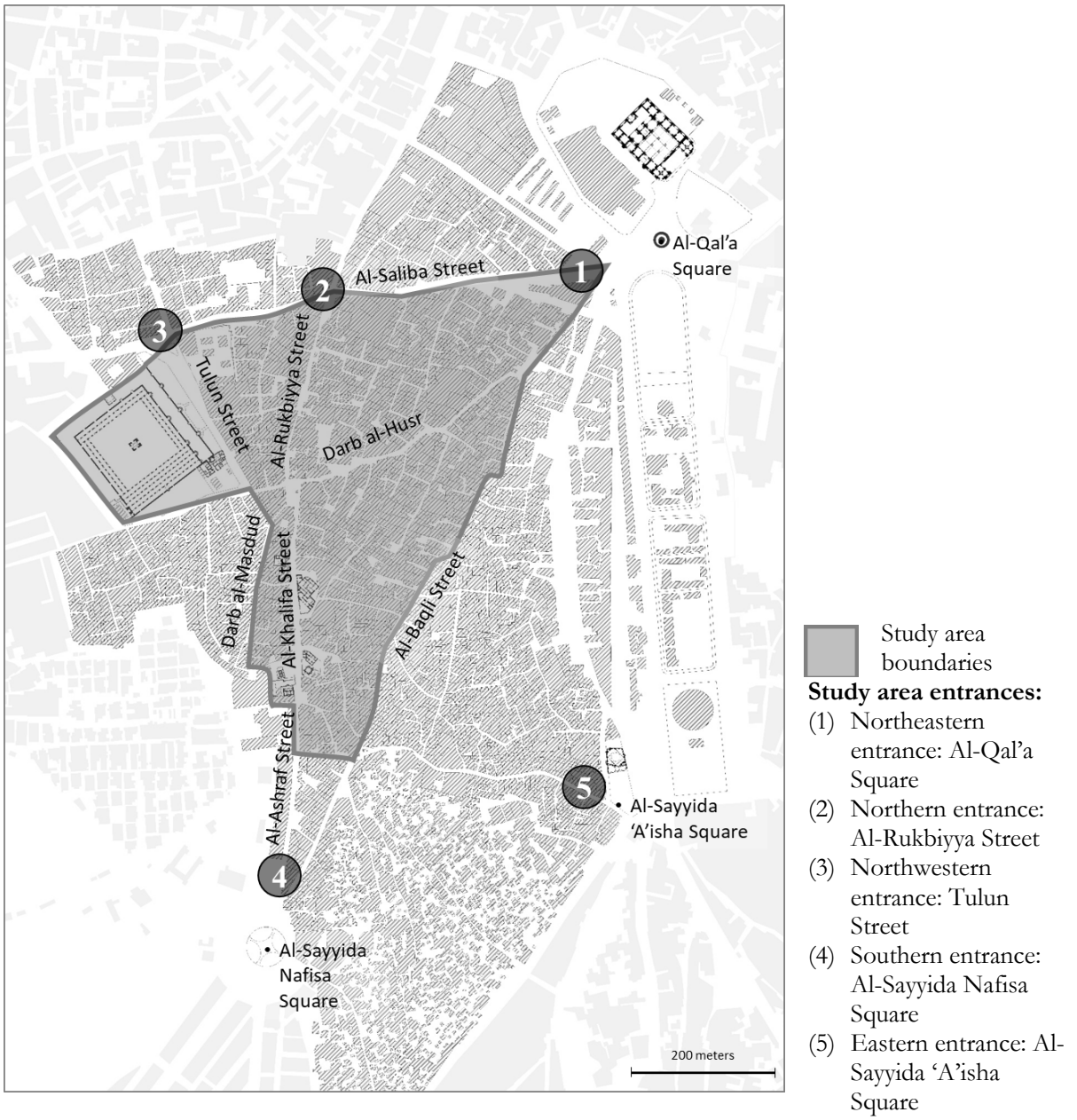

FIG. 1: Study area boundaries. Source: Author (2021).

These spatial restrictions did not prevent the development of *mawlid* (saint's day) festivities that occupy streets, open spaces and narrow passageways, transforming them temporarily and changing patterns of flow within them, in a phenomenon of interplay between temporal activities and their host setting that is worthy of study.

This study documents and analyses transformations in the physical setting (buildings, spaces and paths) as they accommodate temporal festive activities that celebrate their iconic religious markers. It studies al-Khalifa as place that is communally "produced" rather than space that is individually "designed", based on the premise

that physical elements do not make places on their own. This is in line with theoretical approaches to placemaking that focus on the role of people's perceptions, feelings, interactions with each other in a space, and with the built environment and its physical elements. This spots a light on the "user" as the differential factor between producing places and designing spaces. In doing so, they advocate for the necessity of taking users' needs, activities and cultural, social and economic interactions into account and ensuring that they are involves in the design and implementation process[3].

It also aligns with the work of theorists and practitioners such as Yi-Fu Tuan, who argues through his theory of Humanistic Geography that transformation from space to place is the product of adding meaning or values to this space, where the place is defined as an embodiment of values in a tangible form in which users can stay and live [4].

This too, is in keeping with the work of Athar Lina Initiative (www.athrlina.com), whose activities in this neighborhood since 2012, have followed a mandate of transforming heritage into a driver for development. This mandate has necessitated the study of relationship between the community of al-Khalifa and its heritage in order to optimize modalities of benefit to incentivize them to take an active role in heritage preservation. In my capacity as a member of Athar Lina, since 2013, I have had the opportunity to observe the interplay between the community and its heritage, both tangible and intangible. This study presents the some of the findings of my master's dissertation comparing the placemaking effect of *mawlid* celebrations to that of public events organized by Athar Lina. It also reports on an activity with local teenagers designed and implemented by me in 2021 to reflect on al-Khalifa's lost *mawlid* activities and present this reflection through augmented reality.

2. RITUALS SAFEGUARDING LOCAL TRADITIONS

Festivals are communal events that celebrate shared values in certain communities[5]. They have their unique spatial, temporal, behavioral and symbolic characteristics that define the festival and its rituals[6]. These characteristics are the morphological translation of peoples' activities during festivals. In other words, a ritual is the act or behavior that users perform in a way that carries a bold symbolic message framed within a defined spatial and temporal setting[7].

The historical heritage of mankind is brought to us through the generations by their continuous efforts to pass down knowledge and traditions. People have always innovated in the ways they transform information. The traditional songs, proverbs, stories and myths form the simplest and most powerful mediums for telling stories. By extension, these communities have developed the concept of festivals that are a significant vehicle for these mediums.

Anthropologists have worked hard to understand and define rituals, according to Alessandro Falassi, "(t)hese units, building blocks of festivals, can all be considered ritual acts, "rites," since they happen within an exceptional frame of time and space, and their meaning is considered to go beyond their literal and explicit aspects"[8]. He claims that a festival consists of these rituals, and these rites do not only describe human acts and interactions and their symbolism (which is non-physical), they are concerned with the spatial physical frame in which these rites happen as well.

He classifies rituals into rite of valorization, with which a festival starts; rites of purification and passage, which are mostly related to religious festivals; rites of reversal, conspicuous display and conspicuous consumption, which formulate the appearance of festivals; Rites of drama, exchange and competition, which constitute the acts of users and their activities and finally, rite of devalorization; with which the festival is closed.

In this study I deal with festivals as a medium developed by local communities, formed of specially designed rituals that represent the local culture and traditions, and kept alive by passing them down generations. According to Falassi, the process of passing traditions is a knowledge exchange rite which makes it an essential part of festival's morphology.

3. THE FESTIVALS OF AL-KHALIFA

Al-Khalifa district accommodates a large number of festivals that relate to religious, cultural, social, and heritage traditions (Figure 2). The study uses photo, audio, and video documentation; site observation; behavioral mapping; interviews; and desktop research as research tools to observe and document al-Khalifa festivals [9].

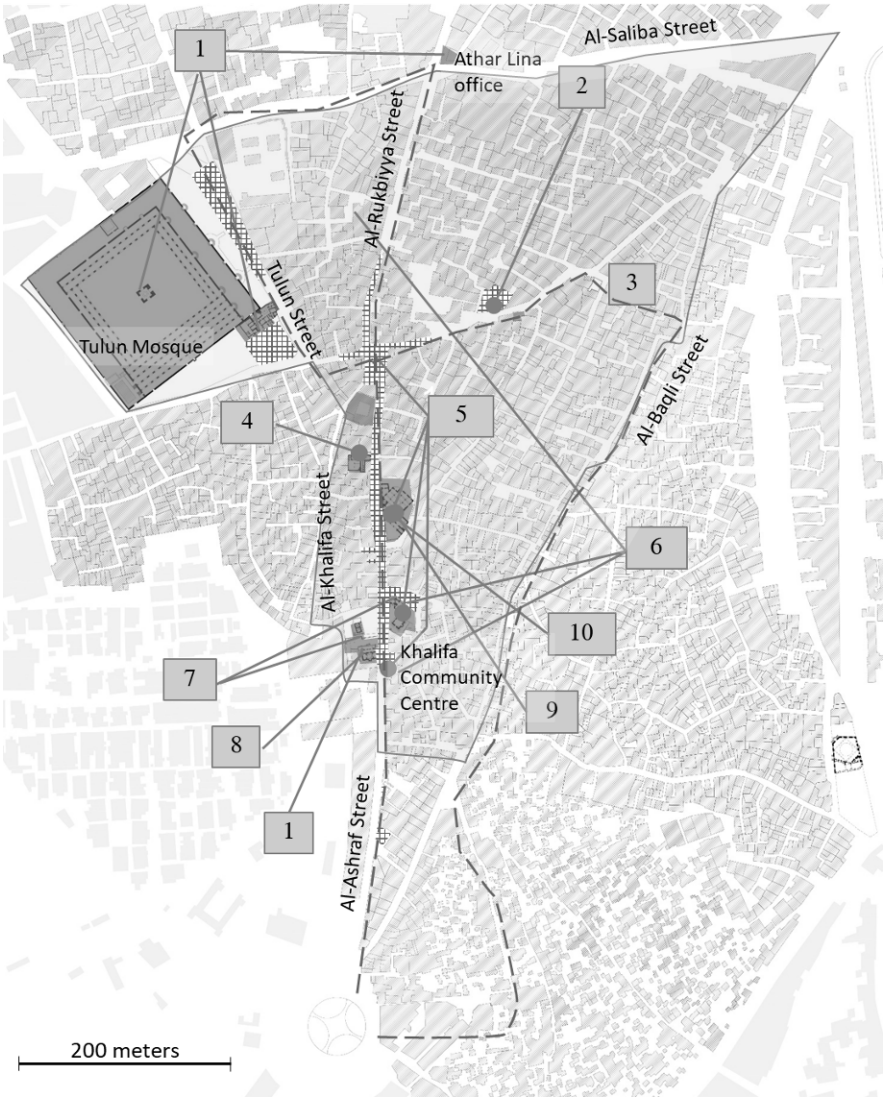

FIG. 2: Festivals of al-Khalifa and their effect on physical settings. Source: Author (2017)

By analyzing the spatial transformations caused by the festivals of al-Khalifa, we can easily read its patterns. Festivals often accommodate a limited number of public and/or service buildings in the neighborhood, such as mosques, community centers, public markets, and so forth. They could also seep into the narrow streets and paths and cause partial or complete obstruction of vehicle flow in these streets. Surprisingly, this tends to happen with community sanction and acceptance. The conflicts caused by festivals of al-Khalifa are present, but very limited, and mostly are about security and safeguarding of the listed monuments by authorities[10].

From this wide range of festivals, the study focuses on a religious festival celebrating the Mawlid of al-Sayyida Sukayna. It is a traditional event that, like other Cairene *mawldis,* has both religious and secular aspects, and has been implemented over centuries, surviving myriad spatial, security and political transformations within al-Khalifa. This festival has the largest spatial range of effect, with the largest number of affected buildings, spaces and paths, the longest duration of continuous active rituals that usually last for two consecutive weeks. It is a god representative manifestation of the social cohesiveness of al-Khalifa community. Roles are assigned collaboratively, Community members contribute time, money and effort to ensure the continued implementation of this festival annually.

All festivals rites described by Falassi are represented in this festival. Most of them appear in the festival's focal point inside and in the surrounding area of the mosque of al-Sayyida Sukayna (Figure 3).

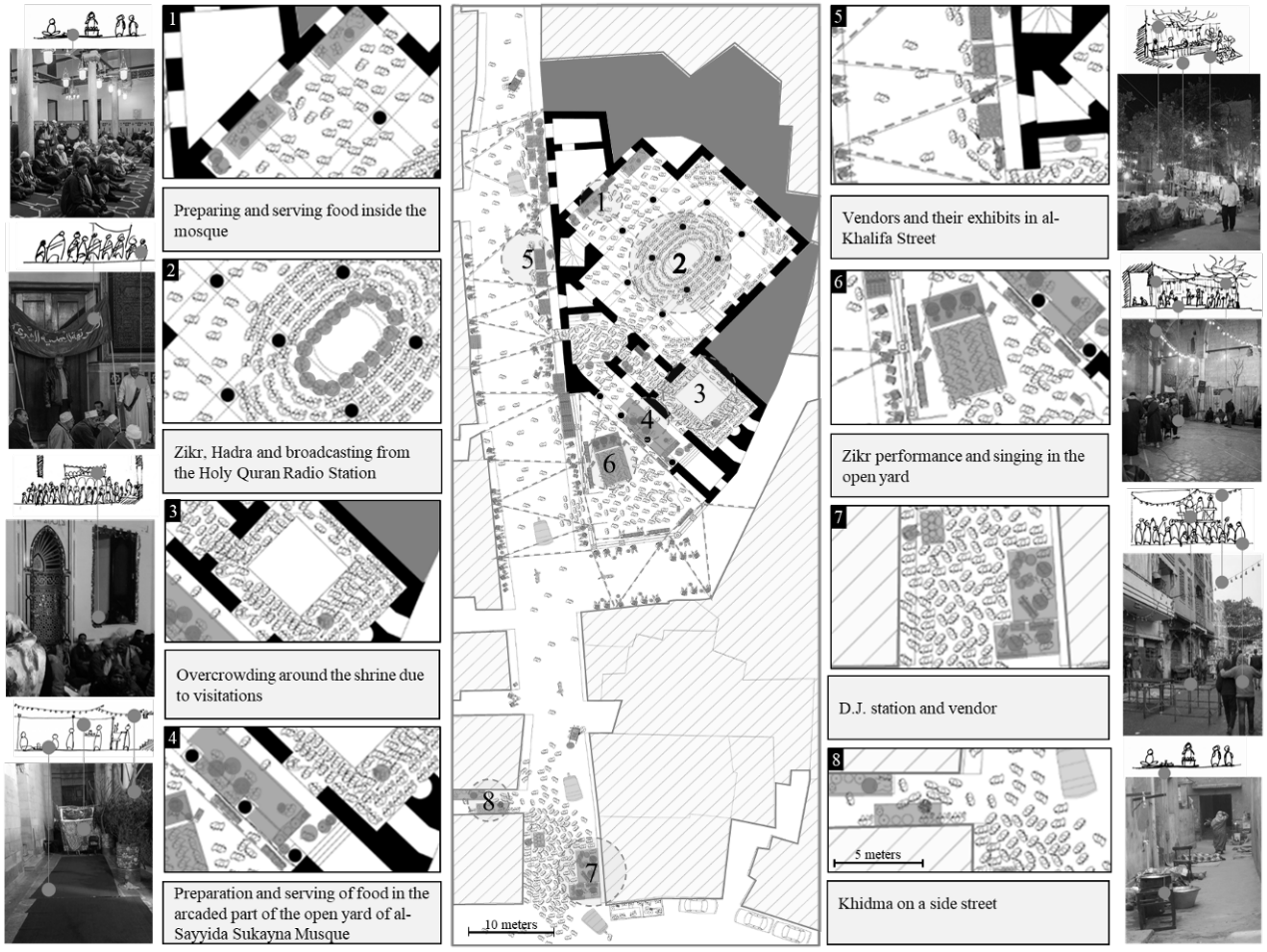

FIG. 3: Al-Sayyida Sukayna Mosque and its surrounding area during the peak of *mawlid* celebration. Source: Author (2017)[11]

Rituals have non-festive components, many of which are performed all the yearlong, and continue to be implemented during the festival of *mawlid*. They include: (1) visitation; in which visitors head to the mosque and shrine for praying and charity. (2) *Dhikr* (mentioning or remembering), which includes individual or group reading of verses from Holy Qur'an, prayers and praising and thanking God. *Dhikr* is also held weekly within a gathering called the *hadra*[12]. (3) Praying; in which Muslims perform five prayers a day all the year. All these rituals represent rites of purification.

The festive rituals that are directly linked to the festival and do not appear in the street unless the *mawlid* starts are hospitality services (known in Arabic as *khidma* or service), in which the local community organizers guarantee any visitor who comes to attend the *mawlid* a freshly cooked meal, hot and cold drinks and a place to rest or/and sleep (FIG. 4). This communal effort represents purification and conspicuous consumption and gives an excellent example of how people could resolve the lack of basic services in this neighborhood, implementing a tactical placemaking intervention spontaneously. Tactical placemaking[13], as defined by Eric Reynolds, uses the available resources to immediately implement "the lighter, quicker and cheaper transformation of the public space"[14].

FIG. 4: An example of a light structure *khidma* in the *mawlid* of al-Sayyida Sukayna. Source: Author (2017)

This is in addition to a group of secular activities that represent conspicuous display, exchange and competition rituals which are commercial activities and street vendors spread through almost the entire spatial range of effect, and the unique traditional street games.

The devalorization rituals of this festival are all performed on the last night of festival, called the big night (*al-layla al-kabira*) or the closing night (*al-layla al-khitamiyya*); including *dhikr* performances, broadcasting the Holy Qur'an Radio Station from inside the mosque, and the morning celebratory rite (al-*sabahiyya*) in which someone holds a large amount of henna; placed in a round big tray and decorated with candles and colorful ribbons. Everyone is singing, clapping and whistling and make sure to take a bit of henna back home as a blessing from the saint.

4. THE CANCELLED FESTIVALS OF AL-KHALIFA

Although Historic Cairo in general, and al-Khalifa neighborhood in particular, have hosted *mawlid* celebrations for hundreds of years, a number of transformations on both the physical and non-physical scales, have resulted in the cancellation of some rituals or a whole celebration in some cases[15]. Small *mawlid* celebrations were cancelled, other decreased in size, scale and number of performed rituals. The size of a *mawlid*, or any other festival, is determined by its physical occupation of the built environment, the number of attendees, number and diversity of rituals and duration[16].

In an interview-based study, a range of interviewed residents of al-Khalifa interpreted the reason of downsizing the activities of one *mawlid* or canceling it to the organizers. Most of these *mawlids* are funded, organized and attended by local community members. A *mawlid* disappears once an organizer passed away or moved from al-Khalifa with no one to substitute his/her role[17]. People in this case are not simply occupiers of space within the physical setting of *mawlid* festival, though non-physical, they are an active actor in the physical existence of the entire festival.

The *mawlids* of al-Khalifa missed a special and spectacular ritual in the past 15 to 20 years, which is the procession, or *zaffa*. The *zaffa* is a celebratory procession which usually starts from a nearby significant shrine or mausoleum and ends at the shrine of the saint being celebrated[18]. Al-Khalifa's zaffas were cancelled for security reasons by the authorities.

After the global situation of COVID-19, the Egyptian Authorities implemented precautionary measures to limit gatherings by canceling a number of activities, including *mawlids*. For two consiquitive years, al-Khalifa did not witness the festivals of al-Khalifa. No one can predict how long the cancelling of *mawlids* will last, and if they

will return. And if they return, it is unclear if they will have the same appearance, spatial effect and rituals or whether they will change or be downsized.

At this point, two main thoughts come to mind. The first, is the value of the research work done by auther to document and analyse the *mawlid* of al-Sayyida Sukayna, which will be a useful record for researchers to build on, and use as a baseline reference to compare between "pre-Covid" and "post-Covid" *mawlids*.

The other thought is that people could be encouraged to play the role that *mawlids* stopped playing for the past couple of years, which is the preservation of traditions through knowledge exchange rituals. *Mawlids* welcome all kind of celebratory acts, with both positive and negative side effects; people no longer feel it is safe to send their wifes, sisters and children to attend this festival. Frequent attendees of *mawlids* tend to include strong believers, people who seek entertainment, general visitors and local and international tourists. This has resulted in a bew generation that is detached from *mawlid* festivals and does not know much about them.

This triggered a personal interest to dig in the memories of a generation who used to wait for the *mawlid* every year, dress in new clothes, put on make-up and jewellery and attend at least the closing night and witness its activities. I wanted to work with a group of younger residents to get them fascinated and interested to learn more about *mawlids* in general and the cancelled *zaffa* spectacle in particular. As a final result, I wanted them, the younger group of residents, to participate in spreading the word about the *zaffa* using a virtual reality technology that was recently introduced to al-Khalifa.

5. BRINGING THE ZAFFA BACK TO LIFE

As a part of the work Athar Lina Initiative does in al-Khalifa, a heritage education component was developed in the form of a free-of-charge summer camp since 2014, targeting 7–13-year-old children to link them to their heritage through a variety of modules and teaching curricula. By the time, children graduate from the summer camp, they find themselves in need of a summer job to help support their families, save money for their private lessons during the academic year or for pocket money[19].

This was one of the reasons why we decided to launch the Athar Lina Heritage Design Thinking School Project (ALHDTS)[20]. This project introduced participants from the age group of 14 to 18 years old to heritage as a vocation. It opened their eyes to heritage industries, encouraging them to explore the hidden heritage gems they live with and reflect on how to safeguard them and benefit from them at the same time. Participant teenagers were also given a participation stipend in lieu of working on ideas for real income-generating, heritage-based products and activities. This was my target group.

In a class room with 15 youth participants aged between 14 and 18 years old, all residents of al-Khalifa, we asked a simple question about the *mawlid zaffa,* and no one knew what it was. None of the participants had witnessed a *zaffa* as the last recorded neighbourhood *zaffa* had been in 2005 when they were not yet born or were two years old at maximum. However, their parents and neighbors did. The fact that these teenagers had not heard about the *zaffa*, puts into question the mechanism of passing down traditions through this community. In this case, the absence of the physical implementation of *zaffa*, was not enough to motivate the "non-physical elements", mainly the users and stakeholders, to compensate for the absence of the physical elements, even by narration, despite the fact that when triggered by Athar Lina, the parents encouraged their children to conduct their research and provided them with all the required information. They were even proud of their children's eagerness to learn about the heritage of their neighborhood[21].

In this classroom, entitled "Listen to the procession – *Isma' al-Zaffa*", participants were introduced to oral history definitions, roles and techniques[22]. They were given simple, yet specialized readings to learn about the *zaffa* and to stimulate their interest in certain topics and have their own smaller oral history projects done. We used design thinking methodologies to develop their ideas about how will they use the knowledge gained to keep that tradition alive.

This teaching module used a non-physical asset, narration, to rebuild the ritual of the *zaffa* and revive this tradition using virtual technology. This was implemented through educating these students and raising their awareness about the importance of the word-of-mouth to keep history alive, and how a successful oral history project can make a real change in people's quality of life. We also discussed what they miss when they do not listen to the voices of past, how they could have fun while learning about their history and presenting it to others in an innovative way.

In two weeks, they were able to recognize the *zaffa* and differentiate it from other *mawlid* activities, determine and categorize elements of the *zaffa*, conduct an oral history interview and transcribe it, use the six thinking hats[23] smoothly to rethink and criticize their ideas and work in groups on characters and physical elements design and illustration, movement, sound tracks, bridging and stenciling drawings to prepare for graffiti, and design the main scenes they wanted to include in their very first augmented reality project (Figures 5 & 6).

FIG. 5: A tour through the neighborhood to introduce participants to the augmented reality technology. Source: Athar Lina (2021)

FIG. 6: A participant illustrating al-Sayyida Sukayna Mosque. Source: Athar Lina (2021)

This effort resulted in a wall mural linked to a video that appears once you scan it with an augmented reality application[24]. This technology was first introduced to al-Khalifa during the tourism promotion event *Spend the Day in al-Khalifa 8,* when Athar Lina collaborated with artist Agnes Michalczyk to produce five augmented reality murals depicting daily life in al-Khalifa. This professional workshop led by the same artist as an activity of ALHDTS, in which she taught this technique to a total of 10 participants. Two designers from this were followed by a workshop joined Isma' al-Zaffa to mentor the youth, develop their illustrations to formulate and implement the final product of the module (Figure 7).

FIG. 7: A snapshot from the animated video linked to the mural using augmented reality technology (Actual video is colored). Source: Author (2021)

6. CONCLUSION

The study presents a successful example in which a local NGO was able to trigger a link activity to keep the flow of passing traditions through generations. The case of cancelled *zaffa* shows that a tradition will

disappear when everyone stops narrating its story, as even specialized books do not draw a complete picture of what really happens within each distinctive local community during *mawlids*.

The study proved that oral history projects and virtual technologies such as augmented reality could partially substitute the physical absence of a physical activity and open a community conversation about a past ritual that until the near past was an integral component of the culture of this community. This augmented reality mural catalyzes people to reimagine and rebuild a richer place that they remember from the past.

In this study, the researcher seized an available opportunity to fully document and analysis the *mawlid* of al-Sayyida Sukayna before being terminated due to COVID-19, which highlights the importance of documentation research work on its own, and the role it plays in different disciplines in the fast-changing world we live in.

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The augmented reality module is a work designed, instructed and implemented by the Author, Athar Lina team, and two designers, Heba Hatem and Rawan Hamdy, as a hybrid module between two programs of different age groups within the second season of Athar Lina Heritage Design Thinking School (ALHDTS) project (2018-2021). For this module, I would like to thank Lamma Attia, ALHDTS project manager for encouraging me and supporting the module with all available means, and for her guidance in writing this paper.

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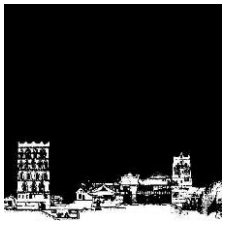

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