



TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS AND SETTLEMENTS REVIEW

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENTS



**KARIM, FATHY, AND DOXIADIS
IN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY**
Nezar AlSayyad

THE CASE OF LIFTA
*Mark Jarzombek, Eliyahu Keller,
and Eytan Mann*

**TRAGEDY OF THE URBAN COMMONS
IN ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT**
Ahmed el-Kholei and Ghada Yassein

**WITHERING PUBLIC SPACE
IN CHANDIGARH**
Manu P. Sobti

**TRANSFORMATION OF
AHMEDABAD FORT WALL, INDIA**
Sweta Kandari

BOOK REVIEWS

Daniel A. Barber

Robert Adam

*Ehsan Abushadi and
Conchita Añorve-Tschirgi*

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TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS AND SETTLEMENTS REVIEW

Journal of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments

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ISSN # 1050 - 2092

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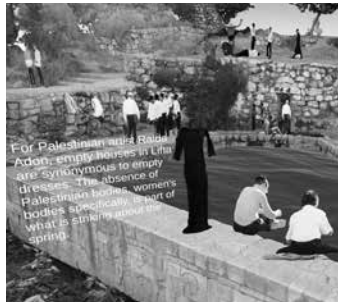
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Contents



6 EDITOR'S NOTE

FEATURE ARTICLES

- 7 Encounters of Modernity and Tradition in Nasser's Egypt: Architecture and Planning Discourses of Karim, Fathy and Doxiadis in the Mid-Twentieth Century
Nezar AlSayyad
- 21 Site, Archive, Medium and the Case of Lifta
Mark Jarzombek, Eliyahu Keller, and Eytan Mann
- 35 When Public Spaces Speak: Investigating the Tragedy of the Urban Commons in Alexandria, Egypt
Ahmed el-Kholei and Ghada Yassein
- 47 Withering Public Space in Chandigarh: Transforming Retail and Social Choreographies in the Neoliberal Indian Mall
Manu P. Sobti

FIELD REPORT

- 59 Continuity, Change and Adaptation: Understanding the Transformations of Ahmedabad Fort Wall, India
Sweta Kandari

77 BOOK REVIEWS

Modern Architecture and Climate: Design before Air Conditioning, by Daniel A. Barber

REVIEWED BY DANIEL J. RYAN

Time for Architecture, by Robert Adam

REVIEWED BY LAURENCE KEITH LOFTIN

The Architecture of Ramses Wissa Wassef,
by Ehsan Abushadi and Conchita Añorve-Tschirgi

REVIEWED BY DINA TAHA

Working Cities: Architecture, Place and Production, by Howard Davis

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Lahore: A Framework for Urban Conservation, edited by Philip Jodidio

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Heritage Conservation in Postcolonial India: Approaches and Challenges,
edited by Manish Chalana and Ashima Krishna

REVIEWED BY SAUMYA SHARMA

Resistant City: Histories, Maps, and the Architecture of Development, by Eunice Seng

REVIEWED BY NIHAL PERERA

The Porch: Meditations on the Edge of Nature, by Charlie Hailey

REVIEWED BY BOB MUGERAUER

87 IAESTE 2022 CONFERENCE, DECEMBER 14–17, SINGAPORE

90 GUIDE FOR PREPARATION OF MANUSCRIPTS

COVER ILLUSTRATION: FATHY'S NEW GOURNA VILLAGE. SEE ARTICLE P.II.

Editor's Note

I write this editorial introduction as plans progress for the IASTE 2022 conference to hopefully be held in person in December in Singapore, hosted by the National University of Singapore. I have been informed that IASTE has received more than two hundred abstracts and that the blind peer-review process has begun. By the time of this conference, if all goes according to plan, it will have been four years since we last gathered in person as the guests of the University of Coimbra in that most enjoyable Portuguese city.

As is typical for *TDSR*, this issue contains five articles and a number of book reviews, but this time we have given it a specific focus on India and the Middle East. As editor in chief, I last published in the journal was 1994. However, since the first four papers accepted this time dealt with these two countries, I decided to include a keynote address I had given elsewhere to further develop the theme. I am grateful to Prof. Hasan Khan and another anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments, which enriched my contribution, “Encounters of Modernity and Tradition in Nasser’s Egypt: Architecture and Planning Discourses of Karim, Fathy and Doxiadis in the Mid-Twentieth Century.” Constantinos Doxiadis, Hassan Fathy, and Sayed Karim were important figures in architecture and planning theory and practice in the Middle East and beyond in the 1960s. The article analyzes the indirect relationships between them and suggests that the discourses they engaged in and the theories they developed reveal much about how modern architecture and planning practice was viewed on the periphery of larger discourses on the topic, in the global South, particularly in Nasser’s Egypt.

Our second article, “Site, Archive, Medium and the Case of Lifta,” by Mark Jarzombek, Eliyahu Keller, and Eytan Mann, presents a summary of work by an experimental design-research workshop conducted by the MIT School of Architecture and Planning in Lifta, an evacuated Palestinian village on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The effort sought to challenge the traditional narration and production of history on both epistemological and experiential grounds. It also raised issues related to the impact of immersive digital forms of representation for the pedagogy of architectural history. Next, in “When Public Spaces Speak: Investigating the Tragedy of the Urban Commons in Alexandria, Egypt,” Ahmed el-Kholei and Ghada Yassein use the example of an important public garden in this ancient seaport to emphasize how changes in the built environment may result from transformations in prevailing institutional frameworks. Employing the method of Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD), they also interrogate what this particular public space has to say about shifting societal attitudes in Egypt. Our last feature article, by

Manu Sobti, “Withering Public Space in Chandigarh: Transforming Retail and Social Choreographies in the Neoliberal Indian Mall,” then takes us on a visit to Sector 17, the main public space of Le Corbusier’s Chandigarh. Sobti argues that in Indian cities, where the role of traditional *bazaars* and *maidans* (or modern attempts to re-create them, such as in Sector 17) is fast diminishing, the rise of private malls, as “consumptive paradises” masquerading as urban public space, heralds the “fall of public man.”

Finally, in our Field Report section, we offer a revised version of the presentation by Sweta Kandari that received the Eleni Bastea Prize for “best conference paper addressing an urban issue in a traditional setting” at the last IASTE conference, held virtually from Nottingham in the U.K. Titled “Continuity, Change and Adaptation: Understanding the Transformations of Ahmedabad Fort Wall, India,” it narrates the transformation of remaining pieces of this urban artifact as a contest between top-down and bottom-up approaches toward heritage. And, as an echo of an earlier appraisal of the wall by Patrick Geddes in 1915, it advocates for the essential role that residents may play in preserving such heritage as part of self-organizing systems of negotiation between the past and the present.

In synch with changing socio-cultural and economic conditions, the traditions we study in this field have manifestations that shape the processes used to produce, transform and preserve built environments. And over the past 34 years, IASTE has helped shape the discourse around the political, cultural, economic and legal frameworks used to evaluate these processes. It is in this vein that we chose the notion of “rupture” to frame the IASTE 2022 conference. To describe a rupture is to describe an event that makes the difference between a before and an after. A rupture is a crack, a fissure, a chasm, or a wrinkle in time. Whether understood in a temporal, physical or topographic sense, ruptures have played an important part in the making of buildings and cultural landscapes. The COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly created such a moment, and it provides an opportunity to reflect on the ways in which rupture, more generally, shapes traditional environments. An examination of rupture in its multifarious forms thus offers an opportunity to rethink the very notion of what tradition is — as something passed on, a linear narrative or a deliberate authoritative project, one that incorporates change rather than stagnation, and that often becomes the means to redefine the past in service of the political present. We hope you will all join us in Singapore.

Nezar AlSayyad

Feature Articles

Encounters of Modernity and Tradition in Nasser's Egypt: Architecture and Planning Discourses of Karim, Fathy and Doxiadis in the Mid-Twentieth Century

NEZAR ALSAYYAD

Constantinos Doxiadis, Hassan Fathy, and Sayed Karim were important figures in architecture and planning theory and practice in the Middle East and beyond in the 1960s. This article is a triangulation that attempts to analyze the relationship between these three individuals in a particular region of the world where they had direct and indirect connection with each other. The article suggests that the discourses they engaged in and the theories they developed reveal much about how modern architecture and planning practice was viewed on the periphery of larger global discourses on the topic taking place in Europe and the United States. Regrettably, these discourses had little impact on the production of the built environment in socialist Egypt during Nasser's time. Instead, the ideas of architects who operated largely without ideology but who were loyal to particular aesthetic forms had greater impact on the country at that time.

Egypt in the 1950s . . . thirty years after becoming an independent kingdom, a military coup toppled the British-supported regime of King Farouk on July 23, 1952. Led by a charismatic and articulate army officer, Gamal Abdel Nasser, this bloodless operation was hailed as the long-awaited revolution that would finally liberate the Egyptian people and bring equality and social justice. And within less than a decade, the officers under Nasser had established a new socialist republic with a pan-Arab nationalist orientation.

Nasser's meteoric rise to political fame was paralleled by the global changes of the early 1950s, which had already set the tone for the Cold War era and prepared the battleground

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for the ensuing struggle between the world's two superpowers. Attempting to create a middle ground, Nasser, along with Nehru of India and Tito of Yugoslavia, met at a conference hosted by Sukarno in Bandung, Indonesia, to launch the Non-Aligned Movement. It was in fact their search for a "third way" that resulted in the coining of the term "Third World." However, it quickly became obvious to these leaders that employing this rhetoric meant balancing their own relationship with the two emerging global superpowers — a compromised position that proved difficult to maintain.¹

Postwar development in Egypt, as in the rest of the newly declared Third World, took on the rhetoric of modernity and social equality through grand, state-led schemes that sought to demonstrate technological prowess and self-reliance. In Egypt, for instance, the Nile, which had through time been subject to periodic and massive flooding, became the target of new development projects. Indeed, the construction of a big dam to control the floods had been the dream of many rulers of modern Egypt. It was thus not surprising that Nasser announced in late 1955 that Egypt would build the High Dam at Aswan with the help of the West. But when Egypt approached the World Bank to obtain the loans needed for the project, the request was denied because of Egypt's socialist policies. It was then that the idea of raising the necessary funds to build the dam from another source within Egypt itself started to gain ground. The Suez Canal, which had been built in 1867 on Egyptian soil, was at the time still operating as an international company, owned primarily by British and French interests. And a few years before the company's 100-year concession was to expire, Nasser, as president of the Republic of Egypt, delivered a fiery speech in Alexandria condemning the imperialism of the West and announcing his intent to nationalize it.

The action took both Britain and France by surprise. It also prompted an immediate war, by which they were able to reclaim control of the canal in a matter of months with the help of Israeli forces. Yet, while Egypt suffered a military defeat, the country managed to garner the support of the world, including that of the United States and the Soviet Union, which joined in a United Nations ultimatum demanding the withdrawal of all foreign forces. This was a critical moment in world history, as it signified the demise of the British and French Empires and their replacement by the global power of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Nasser even gave a speech in which he taunted then U.K. Prime Minister Anthony Eden, calling him "the last Prime Minister of Great Britain, because from now on it is only Britain."² The nationalization of the canal was likewise hailed as a masterstroke by Nasser, who came to be seen as the unrivalled champion of Arab nationalism and a Third World leader who had single-handedly brought down two major imperial governments. And after arranging a short-lived political union with Syria from 1958 to 1961 (which led him to change his country's name to the United Arab Republic), Nasser went on to consolidate his relationship

with the Russians and succeeded in completing the Aswan High Dam with their assistance in 1970.

In 1962 Nasser also announced a new national charter that proclaimed Egypt to be a "socialist state." The first reforms implemented under the charter involved a reorganization of Egypt's workers and peasants and the nationalization and redistribution of agricultural land. But it was the dire condition of the traditional Egyptian village that was seen as the nation's most pressing problem at the time, and its reformation quickly became a pet project for the Nasser regime as well as for prominent Egyptian architects.

During this period, the Egyptian architects Hassan Fathy and Sayed Karim stood out as central figures in the nation's project to redefine itself — albeit in very different ways. Each had a special approach to the relationship between national identity and architectural modernism. Their ideas had thus originated in the context of planning philosophies partially defined by the international discourses of the Bauhaus and CIAM from the 1930s, 40s and 50s — and more specifically by figures such as Constantinos Doxiadis, the Greek planner of many megaprojects in the Third World in the 1950s, 60s and early 70s. But before delving further into the Egyptian architectural scene in the mid-twentieth century, it is first necessary to introduce these three important figures.

Sayed Karim (1911–2005) was a very successful architect at a time when many Arab nations were starting to gain independence (FIG. 1). Like Doxiadis, Karim also engaged in drawing up urban plans for cities, including Baghdad (in 1946), Jeddah (in 1949), Riyadh (in 1950), Mecca (in 1952), and Amman (in 1954).³ And he was a pioneer not only as an architect but as a publisher, having started the magazine *al-Amara* in 1939 after traveling through Europe and the Soviet Union. The magazine offered coverage of projects from all over the world, and its writers represented a new generation, mainly of Egyptians, who were not only modern but were also specialists in Islamic art and architecture.⁴



FIGURE 1. Sayed Karim.

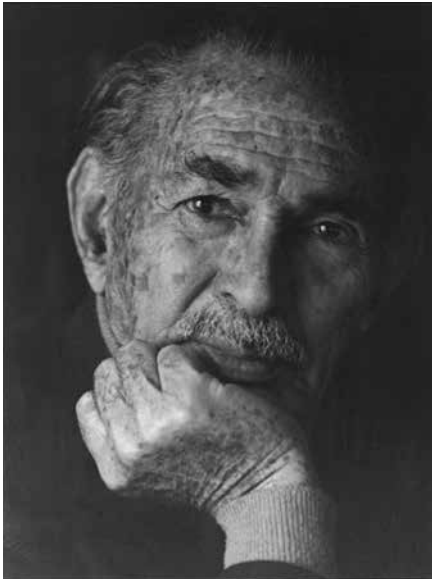


FIGURE 2. Hassan Fathy.

Hassan Fathy (1900–1989) was a French-educated Egyptian architect who advocated what he considered to be indigenous construction technology as a way of building for the poor (FIG. 2). He became extremely well known in the Western world toward the end of his career for his writings as an architectural theorist, which culminated in his being awarded the distinguished Aga Khan Chairman's Award for Architecture in 1981. Eventually, his work was also accepted in Egypt and the Arab World, and his disciples succeeded in continuing his work and creating a style of architecture they saw as a representative of Egyptian national identity.⁵

Constantinos Doxiadis (1913–1975) was a Greek architect and planner and a significant figure in modern planning in the mid-twentieth century (FIG. 3). He was also the founder of ekistics, a comprehensive approach to the built environment that he described as “the science of human settlements,” and which guided his theory, practice and writings and resulted in a journal of the same name. From the mid-1950s on, Doxiadis was the main planner for many rapidly expanding cities in the developing world, from Baghdad to Riyadh to Islamabad. In the 1960s and 1970s he also authored books, studies and reports, including some on American cities, and he addressed the U.S. Congress on the future of American cities.⁶

This essay attempts to discuss the practices of these three important figures and the interaction between them (if any). Karim emerged as a principal designer for the new Egyptian state at a time when Fathy's early projects there were being dismissed as total failures. Yet, even as he was well-known during his lifetime in Egypt and the Arab world, Karim had little international recognition or presence. By contrast, Fathy and Doxiadis, also influential figures in their respective



FIGURE 3. Constantinos Doxiadis.

countries, largely achieved their fame (for different reasons) in the context of the larger developing world, and later globally. Thus, in the 1950s and 1960s Doxiadis built a highly successful professional planning practice from Athens. And Fathy, whose career had stalled in Nasser's Egypt, went to live in Greece, where he worked for Doxiadis between 1957 and 1962. During these years great changes were taking place in the built environments of the Middle Eastern countries that neighbored Greece to the south and east. And the Middle East had always figured prominently in Doxiadis's sphere of operations, particularly between 1955 and 1965. A look at his journal *Ekistics* confirms this orientation, as more than ten percent of the articles it featured at this time were about the region or its specific countries. Among the topics these articles discussed were rural housing, urbanization, and the architecture of its newly independent nation-states, and Egypt was the focus of about a fifth of them (24 out of 135).⁷

KARIM AND THE EMBRACE OF A MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE IN SOCIALIST EGYPT

In the 1960s Nasser's United Arab Republic was busy with modernist construction in its capital, Cairo, and Syed Karim was the most active architect working for the state. Unlike Fathy, Karim's inspiration was doggedly modern and somewhat revolutionary, drawing noticeably on the precedent of Russian Constructivism.

In private interviews conducted in the 1990s, Karim described his early admiration for the work of the Constructivists — which he must have been exposed during a trip to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Indeed, one of his first commis-



FIGURE 4. *The Arab Socialist Union Building, designed by Karim.*

sions under the new Egyptian Republic (before the adoption of socialism and the establishment of the U.A.R.), a design for the headquarters of the Cairo Chamber of Commerce, closely resembled Ivan Fomin's Party District Headquarters in Leningrad. And the form of another of his projects, the Naval Transit Station in Alexandria, commissioned by the new Ministry of Transportation in 1959, seemed to draw on an unbuilt 1933 design by Fomin for the Tursk Railroad Station in Moscow.

In the early 1960s relations between Egypt and Russia had warmed considerably, and Nasser made several visits to the Soviet Union. Following these meetings Nasser advocated the establishment of a new Egyptian political order akin to the Soviet model. As part of this reorganization, the "Arab Socialist Union" (as it was then called) became Egypt's only recognized political party for the remainder of Nasser's rule. And as the party went about planning Egypt's new socialist image, architecture inadvertently became one of its tools.

In 1962 Karim contributed to this effort by designing a new headquarters building for the Arab Socialist Union. A largely uneventful modern five-story concrete structure with a straightforward plan, the building was detailed with angled windows, *brise-soleils*, and some minor exterior articulations. Its only distinctive feature perhaps was the unconventional placement of the hall of deputies atop its entrance, which resulted in a cantilevered white mass with a clear geometry and very small slot windows (FIG. 4). Once again, however, this was a form that had been used by the Constructivists — for example, in Melnikov's Moscow Tram Workers Club. Unfortunately for Karim, the building became totally obsolete six months after it was finished, when the size of the Arab Socialist Union mushroomed and it became necessary for the party headquarters to contain a far larger bureaucracy. As there was no time to build another building, the national government simply expropriated a newly finished and much larger structure built for the municipality of Cairo.

The trajectory of architectural modernism in Egypt was not immune from larger vectors of economic, political and social change in the immediate postwar era and the Cold War

period that followed. In the mid-1950s the Egyptian government had decided to impose a rent freeze on all residential property, thus stifling the private housing sector. And although the housing stock, unlike agricultural land, was well distributed, the socialist government chose to deal with landlords as capitalists who exploited the working class. But if the private sector, which had provided decent housing in the past, was not to build new housing, who would? The Egyptian National Charter of 1962 outlined the principal role of the state in the provision of education, employment, health care, and social security for all. And while it did not specifically mention housing, the Ministry of Public Works was nevertheless renamed the Ministry of Housing and Public Utilities in 1963. Having gone about dismantling the private market, the state thus signaled its eagerness to assist in the provision of housing.

In the years that followed, public housing, mimicking the forms that had emerged in postwar Europe in the 1940s, started to appear in Egypt. And, importantly, this brought a distinction between housing for villagers and housing for urbanites and experts.⁸ In fact, the first of mass housing schemes had started to appear in the 1950s, when nationalized companies and industries had begun the practice of providing housing units for their workers and employees. One example was the worker housing provided by the Mehala Textile Industry in 1954. But similar kinds of structures now began to appear in many small and medium-sized Egyptian towns, where they became associated in the minds of most people with the state role in both industry and housing.

Two additional factors, however, contributed to a deepening of the government's role in housing. The first was slum clearance. When Nasser's minister of planning and local government embarked on a major program to pull down all slum-like housing in Cairo the effort created a population in dire need of being rehoused. The second factor was the introduction of prefabrication. At a time when Egyptian cotton and textile exports were almost entirely mortgaged to the Soviet Union in return for help building the Aswan High dam, Egypt also bought several Russian and East European factories that produced prefab panels for use in public housing construction. And while that particular experiment was short lived, it shaped the construction industry in Egypt for many years to follow.

Meanwhile, Egyptian architects found an opportunity to participate in this building effort with the launch of a massive state project called Nasr City — or the City of Victory (a variation of Nasser's name) — to accommodate new government ministries. At the time tremendous population pressure on central Cairo had created the need for this massive suburb, premised on the notion, advanced by Karim, of "socializing the neighborhoods unit."⁹ And the building of new governmental institutions and functions in this suburb required the creation of new housing for the emerging middle class. Thus, even as Egypt was dragged foot and heel into the socialist realm, a similarity appeared between iconic Egyptian

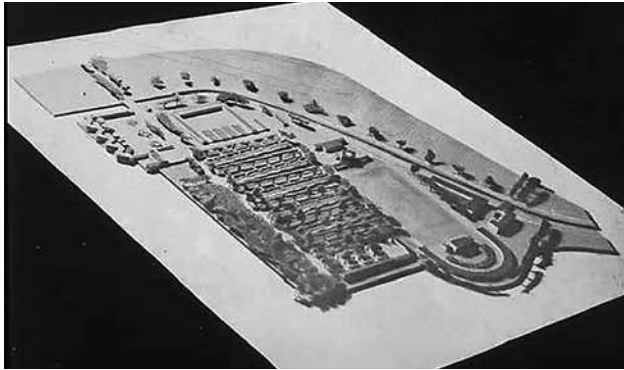


FIGURE 5. *Karim's model for the transitional village, 1949. Source: UC Berkeley Architecture Visual Resources Library.*

buildings of the 1950s and 1960s and the aesthetic of Russian Constructivism. The similarity begs a fascinating question: To what extent was the Republican architecture of socialist revolutionary Egypt influenced by the ideas of the Constructivist architects active in the early days of the Soviet Union?

In the mid-1950s, Sayed Karim also introduced the first ideas under the new government for upgrading the Egyptian village. One of these was to reorganize the workings of a typical village by dividing its functions between a “clean road” and a “dirty road.” The “clean road” would provide a location for its mosque, school, nursery, and village square; the “dirty road” would be the location for its market, cattle, animals, and grain storage. Village houses would similarly be divided to separate residential/sleeping quarters from animal quarters, with the courtyard in between.

Karim's prototypical village was, however, only one of many schemes advanced by Egyptian architects to redefine and standardize rural housing. For example, in the late 1950s, another architect, Ali Nasaar, proposed what he called “The Model Socialist Village” to accommodate 500 people.

The idea was to provide a residential form that would be directly connected to the fields and would make a minimal impact on the landscape. Again, the plan was very simple: one street for cows, a public square, a small open green with a school, a clinic, and a mosque (FIG. 5).

The standardization of village prototypes was ultimately a product of the establishment of the Ministry of Agricultural Reform and Desert Reclamation. It was hoped that the process of involving agricultural engineers in their development would also help bring educated, lower-middle-class Egyptians back to the village, thus serving the grander goals of the revolution.

FATHY AND THE INVENTION OF TRADITION

In the decade preceding Nasser's rise in Egypt, Hassan Fathy had already begun to advocate ideas for a new architecture for Egyptian villages. And in his New Gournia village, built in the early 1950s, he designed elaborate mud-brick structures based on what he imagined to be the indigenous traditions of the local population. Funded and started when Egypt was still a monarchy, New Gournia was to be an ideal village into which the residents of the nearby old village of Gournia, then located on higher ground near the ancient Egyptian necropolis, would be resettled. Although never proven, it was suspected these residents had been trading in stolen antiquities from the tombs.

Initially, the new community was supposed to be a collaboration between the architect, local craftsmen, and the residents. Fathy thus also saw it as a chance to revive local traditions of building as an alternative to the mass-produced concrete-block housing projects he detested. As an alternative, Fathy envisioned a vernacular village of handmade, sun-dried mud-brick houses that, as a prototype, might be used to sustain local village life and culture across the entire country (FIG. 6). The project, however, was interrupted in 1948 be-



FIGURE 6. *Fathy's New Gournia Village.*

fore completion, and for many years the Gournis refused to move into their new homes and abandon their existing houses built of stone or carved into the hillside above the new site.

Fathy's attempt to actualize his romanticized image of this new community failed for a variety of reasons that are well known and have been analyzed by many. Among these were the inappropriate use of a construction material for the new houses that required tremendous maintenance by poor occupants; architectural forms that were not acceptable to the inhabitants because of their association with tombs; and an elitist attitude toward Egyptian peasants hidden behind a rhetoric of modesty. Fathy would later explain that he had taught the villagers, themselves, how to build their own houses. But in reality he had designed every single house and supervised their construction by skilled craftsman from whom he had learned the technique of mud-brick construction, and whom he then trained to execute his particular designs.

Despite the failure of New Gourna in the 1950s, however, Fathy would repeat the experiment a decade later in Baris, another model village project in the Kharga oasis in the Western Desert, hundreds of miles from Gourna. This 18-acre project would again be composed of mud-brick houses; it would fail for similar reasons; and in a few years it, too, would be abandoned (FIG. 7).

I have argued elsewhere that some of the reasons for which Fathy's New Gourna project was commended by foreign architects and planners have in fact been the very same ones cited for its failure. For example, Fathy's use of vaults and domes was celebrated as a great attempt to reintroduce indigenous forms into modern design. However, the community for which the village was designed traditionally associated such formal elements with tombs found in the area, and they felt uneasy with the idea of settling in them as domestic spaces. On my visit to Gourna in the late 1970s, more than two decades after the village was supposedly inhabited, the remaining residents had thus destroyed, covered up, or replaced many of the domes and vaults with flat roofs.¹⁰

In 1972 Fathy attracted international attention when his book *Architecture for the Poor: An Experiment in Rural Egypt* was published in the United States. The book had initially appeared in 1969 in French, and then in English, under the title *Gourna: A Tale of Two Villages*. In it, almost three decades after the project's construction and two decades after acceptance of its failure, he largely blamed its demise on uncomprehending inhabitants and the Egyptian bureaucracy. He never recognized the paternalism of his claim to restore aesthetic qualities to locals who were incapable of appreciating his work or the hubris of his assumption that local villagers would willingly relinquish their own homes for his designs.¹¹ Fathy also failed to recognize his own homogenizing view of Egyptian building traditions, which had allowed him to borrow extensively from the Mamluk architecture of Cairo to build a village for the poor of Upper Egypt. Ultimately, his insistence on using the Cairene courtyard house as a form of spatial organization for the rural population of Gourna was also a serious error.¹²

It is also difficult to know if Fathy's reference to "tradition" as a valuable historic resource was meant as a direct challenge to the derogatory manner by which the concept was used by modernization theorists. At the time, modernization theory was the driving force in much of the postcolonial Third World, and was based on a constructed opposition between "modern" and "traditional" societies — with the former assumed to be progressive while the latter was assumed to be backward.¹³

Interestingly, Fathy's own position as a member of the Egyptian gentry was then also being threatened by the reforms unfolding in Egypt. So, in 1956, at the outset of Nasser's socialist era, disappointed in the country's new political orientation, he left Cairo to look for work elsewhere. And, in a twist of irony, it was to Doxiadis Associates in Athens that this advocate of the Egyptian village went at a time when his career had stalled in Egypt.



FIGURE 7. Fathy's Baris Village.

Interestingly, Greece did not lie at the center of European Modernism at the time, but rather at its periphery. In fact, in the 1950s Greece itself had been subject to forms of European Orientalist imagery, particularly under the view of modernist architects like Le Corbusier, who saw it as a Mediterranean extension of his North African travels.¹⁴ Yet, despite its marginal position in relation to the center of European architectural modernism, Athens still represented the core in relation to even more distant peripheries such as the Middle East and South Asia.

DOXIADIS'S SCIENTIFIC RATIONALITY VS. FATHY'S TRADITIONALISM

By the early 1960s Constantinos A. Doxiadis had become a major figure in modern architecture and planning. But when Fathy joined his firm, Doxiadis Associates, it was only just arriving as a major international consulting firm on urban development. A pressing need for reconstruction and rehabilitation in postwar Greece had given the firm its beginnings. But within its first five years as an independent practice, it had opened branches in Addis Ababa, Baghdad, Beirut, and Washington, D.C.

Doxiadis's practice was premised on "ekistics," a term he coined from the Greek word *oikos*, meaning "home." As "the science of human settlements," Doxiadis had begun to formulate his ideas on the topic as a government minister in charge of the postwar rebuilding of Greece under the U.S. Marshall Plan. And he doggedly promoted ekistics throughout his career as a comprehensive solution to the problems of housing and social development globally. Doxiadis's theory rejected artistic self-expression and reconceptualized architecture as an efficient container of human needs. Emphasizing the importance of human behavior as it was coming to be studied through the social sciences, ekistics thus sought to encompass economic, social, physiological and psychological considerations in design as a way to guard against the homogenizing effect of Western modernism.¹⁵

Based on his reputation, Fathy was welcomed into the firm by Doxiadis. But he may have also felt an affinity with Doxiadis, who had also turned to international clients after he saw his reconstruction efforts at home rejected by an uncomprehending society.¹⁶

Fathy's first assignment under Doxiadis was to work on the design of a rural farming village as part of the Regional Plan for the Development of Greater Mussayib in Iraq. James Steele has pointed out that Fathy's plans for the village in Mussayib, and later for the Iraq Housing Project, were uncharacteristic of his usual vernacular approach — and tended toward an international Corbusian aesthetic. Even the details of drawings Fathy produced at that time reflected such an influence, as can be seen in the Corbusian-style figures that appear in the sleeping areas of the Iraq Housing Project

(FIGS. 8, 9). However, Steele also suggested that the final plan for these two projects might in fact have been a major revision of an earlier scheme, in which Fathy stressed the individual quality of housing units, as he had in New Gourna. This earlier scheme also seemed to have been organized using somewhat organic forms, as typical of Fathy's earlier projects.

The question then remains: What prompted Fathy to deviate from the aesthetic he had championed in New Gourna and a design ideology he clearly held close to his heart? The answer might be found in a memo dated June 21, 1958, in which Doxiadis appears to politely instruct Fathy to change course:

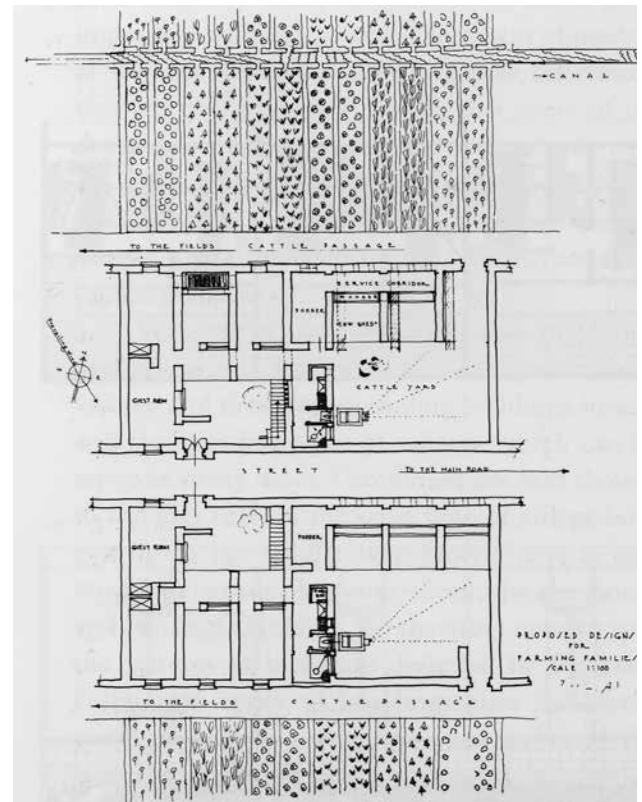


FIGURE 8. Fathy's plan for the Iraq Housing Project. Source: James Steele, *An Architecture for People: The Complete Works of Hassan Fathy* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1997), p.115.

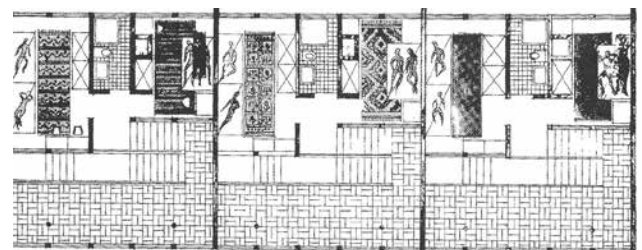


FIGURE 9. Detail of the Iraq Housing Project plan showing Corbusian-style figures. Source: James Steele, *An Architecture for People: The Complete Works of Hassan Fathy* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1997), p.115.

*. . . only [working] from the details up leads to the danger of not having the possibility of seeing solutions implemented at a scale which is the goal we all share . . . there is an imperative necessity to keep the system of module as we have worked it out up to now. . . . I beg Professor Fathy to look into the work for standardization of buildings which we have been doing lately. . . . From now on we will proceed in a way to implement these ideas, and give an assistant to Professor Fathy to help him, . . . in order to reach solutions. . . .*¹⁷

Clearly, Doxiadis respected Fathy, as evidenced by his manner of address. But following this critique by Doxiadis, Fathy's designs (such as that for a highrise housing block in Iraq) began to adhere to the boxy, concrete, modular aesthetic adopted by Doxiadis Associates — a style quite out of character for Fathy, an architect who was otherwise consumed with organic forms. In Steele's words, "Such an aberration in the career of the same architect who was able to conceptualize and partially realize the village of New Gourná against all odds only ten years earlier is startling, to say the least."¹⁸

It is clear from these correspondences that Fathy's conceptualization of architecture and planning at the level of the model village was more than a little contrary to the theory of ekistics advanced by Doxiadis. Moreover, one might argue that the issue was one of scale. Typically, Doxiadis shied away from using the term "village" altogether, preferring "city," and less often "settlement." Indeed, the very conceptualization of ekistics was premised on a larger, more abstract scale. At one point, Doxiadis wrote that,

*. . . city and villages are elements of wider systems . . . regional planning [has] come to embrace areas well outside immediate metropolitan influence, and, in many cases, regional planning has grown to become national planning. This may grow further but for most purposes, the nation is the biggest unit for which physical plans are being made.*¹⁹

Doxiadis, and by extension the framework of ekistics, thus largely operated from the top down, favoring the scale of the nation and economic geography as the basic progenitor of planning. In other words, ekistics was a heuristic device that worked toward the development of a prototype — one that certainly had relevance to place and community, but only in so far as these could be universally reproduced and extrapolated on an urban or regional scale.²⁰

Panayiota Pyla has brilliantly captured the complexity of Fathy's relationship with Doxiadis and his struggles to maintain his own image in this new landscape of international practice in the early 1960s:

Fathy's references to tradition actually reframed its knowledge systems as compatible with Ekistics' aspirations to rationalize the design process while embracing non functionalist and extra-technological concerns. His concern with Doxiadis' scientific rationality was not genuine, as his fascination with building with mud anywhere and everywhere overwhelmed him.

From here Pyla went on to discuss how Fathy was selective and discriminating in his research on building materials everywhere he went. And she cited the example of his visit to Iraq, where he immediately focused on mud-brick construction methods in the regions of Hilla, Kerbala and Najaf, while ignoring all other methods of vernacular construction elsewhere in the country.²¹

But one other factor might also have set Doxiadis's and Fathy's approaches to design and planning against each other: their attitudes toward antiquity and tradition. Scholars who have studied Fathy have pointed to how he was enamored by traditional forms and historic architectural details. They have also pointed to how he justified their use (for example, the domes in the houses of New Gourná or particular window details) on an abstract, emotional level, rather than as a matter of geographic relevance or the preservation of longstanding traditions. The past, for Fathy (and many others of his time), was perceived as providing a palette of architectural forms, materials and details that could be dipped into when needed to temper the brutal anonymity of modernism. Fathy's vision of the past and of tradition thus seems oddly romantic when juxtaposed with Doxiadis's approach to the same subject. In this regard, Alexandros Kyrtis has suggested that while Doxiadis recognized the utility of history and tradition, "he was no sterile admirer of the past." In fact, "he was conscious of the limits set by obvious differences between the ancient and the modern world."²²

The views of both men in terms of scale, as well as in their reverence or irreverence for tradition, thus may be seen to characterize the fundamentally different ways they addressed the village. For instance, in 1957, in a strongly worded statement, Doxiadis said:

*Though city people long for green parks and open spaces, we have found it quite otherwise in the countryside. The urban dweller thinks that the peasant farmer loves the country, that he finds it romantic and wants to have it incorporated in his village. The truth is just the opposite. The peasant farmer hates the countryside and nature, because it is there that he has to labor for days and days and years and years, only in the end to see beautiful nature destroying his whole crop. Whenever we worked with country people we found they wanted to isolate themselves from nature. It is for this reason that we grouped the dwellings around central squares; trying to give the country people a life protected from the elements of nature.*²³



FIGURE 10. Wissa Wassef Center.

Doxiadis's solution to the dilemma of how to produce a modern-day village was thus to make it into an urban typology. At the very least, he wanted to build into the structure of the village basic urban functions that would allow it to function within an overall pattern of urbanization extending all the way up to the metropolitan level.

Fathy, on the other hand, would have none of that — as can be seen in his extension of an existing village of weavers in Haraniya on the outskirts of Cairo originally designed in mud bricks by the Egyptian architect Wissa Wassif in 1941 (FIG. 10). For this project, Fathy utilized and refined concepts he had developed in New Gurna for the design of new houses with double frontages. One facade faced a central pedestrian street, which served as a major artery within the village; the other fronted fields, which could be used to graze livestock as well as grow subsistence crops and plants from which the natural dyes used by the weavers were made.²⁴

In sharp contrast to Doxiadis, and when working independently of his office, Fathy's schemes thus continued to favor the rural setting of the village. Moreover, they treated the village as a self-sustaining unit that was separate from, and in fact incompatible with, the city. Indeed, setting architectural form aside, one might point out how Fathy's plan for the weaver's village bears greater similarity to Sayed Karim's modernist scheme for the model village (with its separation of "clean road" and "dirty road") than it does to the principles of ekistics (FIG. 11).

In addition to his work in Iraq, in 1959 Doxiadis sent Fathy on a trip to Syria to oversee a presentation to the Egyptian head of Syria's planning department. At the time Syria was still a part of Nasser's greater United Arab Republic, and Fathy was reported to have acted irascibly, perhaps as a result of his displeasure at being sent back to work with the very regime he had meant to escape by coming to Athens three years earlier.²⁵

The counter-productive nature of his presence on this occasion raises an important question: Was Fathy comfortable during his time with Doxiadis, or was he only biding his time in exile, seeking to make a living? This is a difficult question to answer because Fathy, who was prolific in his writings and

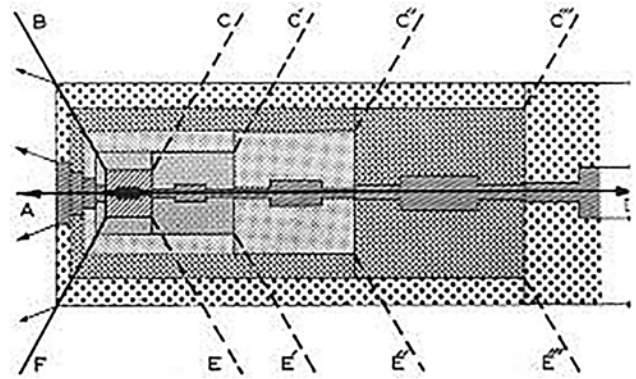


FIGURE 11. Doxiadis Associate's schematic diagram for the City of the Future.

interviews, never highlighted his time in Athens. However, it is also true that Doxiadis Associates cultivated an apolitical position in global practice because it had to deal with many newly independent governments. The firm thus favored a more cultured conception of the human subject, a position that must have been palatable to Fathy's way of thinking.

Yet at the firm Fathy was often criticized for overemphasizing the details of individual units when such an approach did not fit the firm's vision of creating more neutral design prototypes. Indeed, Doxiadis often scribbled notes in the margins of Fathy's reports indicating his anxiety with Fathy's efforts to translate his prototype designs into individual house designs. Thus, in one internal memo, Doxiadis begged Fathy, whom he recognized as a master designer, to "take into account that [the Doxiadis Associates team was] designing not one but many villages and types of villages and buildings 'which can be repeated many times.'"²⁶

In the end, Fathy's own attempts to reconcile his engagement with what he perceived as vernacular systems and the scientific rationality of ekistics was perhaps most evident in his engagement with Doxiadis's City of the Future project.²⁷ Beginning in the summer of 1960, work on this effort was Fathy's final assignment with Doxiadis Associates (FIG. 12, 13). Doxiadis described the mandate for the project as being:

*... to study the phenomena of growth in cities, with reference to changes in population, society, work, topography, relationship to region, etc., and to suggest principles for the planned control of city development to allow for future demographic and social changes.*²⁸

As a researcher for this project, Fathy was dispatched to various cities across the continent of Africa, including Cairo, Khartoum, Tripoli, Mogadishu, Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, Abidjan and Lagos. The parameters for choosing to study particular cities and not others remains unclear — except in flashes such as when Fathy was instructed to go to Mogadishu because it was the "worst slum town and Africa," but to ignore Nairobi, "a completely westernized place."²⁹ However,



FIGURE 12. Fathy (seated left) and Doxiadis (seated far right) at a meeting of the City of the Future project team. Source: James Steele, *An Architecture for People: The Complete Works of Hassan Fathy* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1997), p.110.

Fathy's adventures in relation to the project seem to have been marked more by bureaucratic troubles traveling between African countries and repeated bouts of illness than the bounty of his research findings.³⁰

His ambivalence towards the City of the Future project was also less than veiled at times. For example, his comments from Lagos to John Papaioannou, the project's deputy director, included the following assessment of the town of Cotonou:

*A 20th century brise-soleil style quarter, . . . corrugated iron-sheet and thatch native quarters, left to a population who is chased from the village to fetch work (money-paying jobs) so as to pay the taxes on their land at home. Could the City of the Future give something better for these people?*³¹

Indeed, as Steele observed, by this time Fathy had stopped being bashful about his preference for the value of tradition over modernism — a view that was not always shared by the other noted planners involved in the City of the Future project, possibly including Doxiadis himself.³²

In December of 1960 Fathy presented a paper in an important seminar held in Cairo on Arab urbanization hosted by the government of the U.A.R. The seminar was organized around the theme of "The New Metropolis in the Arab World." Fathy's paper was titled "Planning and Building in the Arab Tradition: The Village Experiment at Gourná," and it conveyed his belief that Doxiadis's principles of ekistics, when combined with a recognition of local architectural history and engagement with the client in the building process, might result in "a truly great Arab Metropolis in the future."³³

Based on this presentation, Steele arrived at the conclusion that the time Fathy spent in Athens did indeed affect his thinking. Thus, "Fathy did not view his association with Doxiadis as simply a collaboration of convenience, but was anxious to promote the basic tenets of ekistics to an audience who knew him well, tempering it with an appeal for a return



FIGURE 13. Fathy (seated right) with his team in the Doxiadis Office (Courtesy of Doxiadis Foundation).

to traditional values."³⁴ Yet, while this may be true in part, Steele also overlooked the fact that the relationship was not one of equals, and that, as an employee of Doxiadis Associates, Fathy was required to promote the ekistics paradigm. Eventually this obligation must have also proved untenable for Fathy. Thus, after his return from Africa, he returned permanently to Cairo, where he fell into relative obscurity for the remainder of the 1960s. Moreover, it is apparent from a string of correspondences in the late 1960s that while Fathy kept up minimal contact with Doxiadis and his associates, this may have been motivated more by a desire to maintain his relationship to those he viewed as his European contemporaries than any sense of loyalty to Doxiadis's ideological frameworks.³⁵

But Fathy's conference speech is also noteworthy for another reason, which has gone largely unnoticed by scholars. Prior to 1960s Fathy never mentioned or wrote about the courtyard house as Arab or Islamic; for him it was Egyptian. At least in his early years, and especially during the Gourná project, Fathy's interest was defined and publicized using the very specific rhetoric of Egyptian architecture, which he claimed carried historical vestiges of Pharaonic and Islamic aesthetic culture but was a uniquely syncretic mix of both. But in the 1960s, as Nasser's pan-Arabism emerged as a powerful ideology in Egypt and elsewhere, Fathy began to situate New Gourná within an "Arab" tradition of building — a move that can be seen as a direct, if pragmatic, response to the sentiments of the conference organizers. Indeed, it may not be a stretch to suggest that while Fathy's unit of analysis and scale of concern (i.e., the courtyard house) had remained largely the same, upon his return from Doxiadis's office he had simply learned to package his ideas in a less provincial way — as more global, pan-Arab, or pan-Islamic than Egyptian.

In the 1960s, Fathy also attended other conferences and was introduced to many academics from the West. And these colleagues helped him publish his first book about New Gourná in English, establishing him as an important architect and theorist among his First World contemporaries.

THE DISCOURSE ON MODERNIST PLANNING
BETWEEN DOXIADIS, FATHY AND KARIM

This article has attempted to triangulate the relationship between three important figures in architecture and planning practice in a particular region of the world who had both direct and indirect connections with each other. From this point of view, the important discourse involving scientific modernism versus cultural traditionalism exemplified by the relationship of Fathy and Doxiadis seems regrettably to have had no impact on Egypt whatsoever. Likewise, there is no evidence to suggest there was a direct connection between Russian Constructivist experiments in the early Soviet Union and Egyptian architectural forms under socialism in the 1950s and 60s. Nevertheless, it is apparent that some projects built in Egypt during that period bear similarities to this earlier period of modernism in terms of composition, style and material. At some level, the similarity may simply be explained by the tendency of socialist regimes to stifle individual initiative in all its variety to produce a standard physical environment representing the state. Of course, it is also possible that the Egyptian case involved simple mimicry of what the architects admired about the Soviet built environment. However, I believe that this vector of appropriation still matters in attempts to understand this time period.

In 1970, after eighteen years of ruling Egypt, Nasser died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 52. During the last ten years of his life he had eliminated or abandoned most of his revolutionary colleagues. Despite his attempt to deal with the massive defeat in the war with Israel in 1967, he also did not leave Egypt in a good state. In fact, Egypt's grand scheme of twentieth-century modernization had been partially aborted, and as a result its architectural and planning legacy cannot today be described as an "alternative" or "peripheral" modernism. Rather, it remained a derivative and incidental one that never took firm root in the country. Perhaps the best indicator of this condition was that Karim, who was a principal agent of this effort, fell into total obscurity in the 1970s, and is seldom, if at all, remembered in Egyptian architectural debates today.

However, in an attempt to bring these threads together, I would like first to discuss Doxiadis and Fathy and their possible influence on each other. I would then like to compare their concerns to another alternative evident in the work of Karim.

While Doxiadis was indeed influential in the Middle East, his influence on Egypt was actually quite limited. The kinds of debates that germinated in Egypt in the 1950s and 60s were apparently unaffected by Doxiadis's theories and practices elsewhere in the region. There is also no evidence that Fathy had any significant influence on Doxiadis and his ideas. And no scholar has so far been able to argue persuasively that Fathy's work was significantly influenced by his exposure to Doxiadis.³⁶

While Fathy may have been influenced in certain marginal ways by his years at Doxiadis Associates, I maintain that what Fathy gained most from his stint in Athens was a capacity to better package his own theories about architecture and planning, particularly to a European audience attuned to the larger ideas Doxiadis was advocating at the time.³⁷ Fathy's concerted efforts to publish his work and disseminate it to a broad audience (both Egyptian and foreign) after his years in Athens may be the best evidence for this position. Thus, what may in all probability have only been pragmatic strategies on the part of Fathy have likely often been misread as a sincere allegiance to Doxiadis's framework of ekistics.

Perhaps, without the exposure to Doxiadis and his theories, Fathy would have remained focused on diatribes against the Egyptian government, without attempting to propagate his own theories internationally. And this might have meant he would have been less successful in finally pressuring the Egyptian government to accept them. But it is also possible that there was another change in Fathy's work following his return from Athens in 1962 — one that led to his advocacy of an overly nationalistic architecture. Thus, Steele has suggested that "in compensation for his allegiance to international concepts, expressed in ekistics, [Fathy] felt compelled to align himself more closely with those willing to finance projects that would educate the public about Egyptian history."³⁸ Alternatively, while he may have paid superficial homage to the framework of ekistics while in Athens, it is also possible that afterwards Fathy simply returned to ideas that "related to his more humanistic, and less strictly rational worldview."³⁹ Both interpretations are reasonable and are not mutually exclusive.

In 1981 Fathy won the newly established but distinguished Aga Khan Award for Architecture, initiated by the leader of the Ismaili community, His Royal Highness the Aga Khan, to recognize the work of architects in the Islamic world. It is important to note that unlike other architects who received the award, Fathy was the first recipient of the so-called Chairman's Award in recognition of his lifelong theoretical and professional contribution to contemporary debates about architecture and planning in the Arab and Muslim worlds. But this may have also been facilitated by his exposure to larger debates about modern architecture and planning during his Athens period.

In fact, the very timing of the award points to the rising disillusionment with the austere anonymity of modernist architecture and a renewed, if misguided, search for "local" architectural practices and traditions around the world, as championed by theorists like Bernard Rudofsky in his 1964 book *Architecture without Architects*. Rejected by the locals, Fathy's Gournia project was given new life when his 1972 book appealed to an international audience as offering an alternative to modernism and its emphasis on universalizing assumptions. Architecture critics began to open up to fresh ideas from the global South, and New Gournia, despite its practical failure, was now lauded for its supposed use of old, traditional wisdom.

Fathy was never a pragmatist or a compromiser as an architect. But his pragmatism as a theorist and a public figure was evident in the fact that he wrote and published his book in French in 1969 and in English in 1972 under the now famous title *Architecture for the Poor*. It is also revealing that the book was not translated into Arabic until the 1990s, a whole decade after he won the award in 1981. It seems that he had decided his real audience was not his Egyptian compatriots, nor his Arab colleagues, but rather those in Europe and America who respected his work. Furthermore, while Fathy himself never subscribed fully to the modernist ethos, he did recognize the utility of engaging with those architects and planners looking eastward for a means to temper the austerity of the modernist aesthetic.

In this regard, the relationship between Fathy and Doxiadis is perhaps best summarized by James Steele, who has suggested that

... where Doxiadis saw the overwhelming need for unity in his vision of ekistics ... Fathy saw diversity, and the importance in encouraging local differences, to prevent cultural identity from being eradicated. Doxiadis spoke of [the planning process as] "integration," but Fathy characterized the process as one of "entropy," so that as each city grew, it would retain its own special character, rather than being an unrecognizable global urban zone.⁴⁰

There is not a lot more to add to this description of the interaction between these two giants of the mid-twentieth century. Regrettably, it appears that the little interaction between them discussed here did not produce a legacy in either architecture or planning discourse in the countries of the Middle East or the larger Mediterranean region.

Pyla has argued that the four-year period between 1957 and 1961 during which Fathy was employed by Doxiadis Associates represented a very influential time in the shaping of his ideas.⁴¹ But Fathy quickly abandoned the conceptual framework of ekistics when he returned to Egypt. To fit into Nasser's regime, with its revolutionary rhetoric and pan-Arab ideology, Fathy had to adopt a new strategy. He also continued to experiment with new forms and proportions for the courtyard house, using a variety of different building materials. But the most significant change in his approach, one that allowed his practice to thrive again, involved acquiring new, wealthier clients from the Egyptian and Arab elite.⁴² And because of the nation's pan-Arab orientation, manifest in the addition of the word "Arab" to its name, Fathy started to abandon the invocation of architectural space as "Egyptian" or "Muslim." Instead, he started to write about it as "Arab."

At the same time that Fathy and Doxiadis were engaged in serious discourse about the need to develop an overall vision for the region, however, Karim simply continued his project of building and planning for a socialist Egypt. And

ignoring much of the debate about the future of Egypt, the region, and modern architecture theory, he drew mainly on his own experience, his travels, and Egypt's ongoing association with the U.S.S.R. and the socialist states of Eastern Europe.

It is important to end with a reflection on the attitudes of Karim, Fathy and Doxiadis towards nature, as well as their views on the dichotomy between tradition and modernity as this was understood in the 1960s. Fathy was very clear in his attitude toward nature. He saw it as having a double function, providing both comfort and belonging. Thus he sought to employ vernacular strategies both to control the microclimate in his dwellings and establish an appropriate form for village life. By contrast, Doxiadis saw nature as a resource to be harnessed in the provision of economical, thermally comfortable shelter. It also had some psychological value. Karim was perhaps even more pragmatic than Doxiadis. He wrote little about nature, but his position was evident in his designs, in which climatic control was a matter of calculating temperatures and sun angles and designing modern architecture elements to deal with them.

It is difficult to find evidence of what Fathy may have learned from his time with Doxiadis regarding the emergence of an important new modern form of architectural and planning practice. He certainly never adopted the view that replicability and the design of prototypes should dominate the production of the built environment. Yet Karim's views were similarly complex. And, unlike Fathy, he did not believe that architectural styles were simply constituted of domes and vaults and proportions. Instead, he insisted that legibility of composition, forms of construction, and appropriate use of materials should give form to a building. He argued that architectural style had changed over time to represent the demands of new generations. Thus one need not ignore history in the design and production of new urban and architectural forms, but neither should one be determined by it. Karim and his generation also witnessed the emergence of a modern architecture in Egypt that differed from earlier nineteenth-century Egyptian architecture, with its Ottoman and European-inspired styles. He advocated modern, open-standard windows, with louvers of similar sizes — but ones that might also accommodate the proportions and forms of earlier heritage structures.

In this sense it is possible to say that Karim rejected the duality of modernity and tradition. And his magazine, *al-Amara*, attempted to reflect this position over the course of its two decades of publication. One can see such a position, for example, in articles in it dealing with the renewal of the Egyptian village. Karim thus did not reject the mud-brick architecture of the Egyptian village because it was considered traditional. Rather, he observed how such an architecture created maintenance and health problems that would not allow for an improvement in the quality of village life.⁴³

Hassan Fathy and his disciples, on the other hand, built much of their rhetoric on a false duality between modernity

and tradition. It was precisely this duality that helped legitimize his project of reviving tradition and borrowing from history — even if this did constitute an invented tradition and a history that never was. By comparison, Karim and his generation did not receive the same level of coverage or attention despite the success of many of their projects. In the end it was Fathy's failed projects and his attempt to create a national style from a local architecture that received much acclaim because it was published in English and French. This unequal treatment was a product of a particular culture that saw Third World modernity as inferior to its First World counterpart. Celebrating Fathy's traditionalism thus helped Western

modernity prevail and become the dominant discourse in the 1950s and 60s, in the process relegating all alternative forms of modernity to the position of secondary discourse.

There are those who have exalted Fathy as a guru of Third World architecture and the most accomplished Egyptian architect of his generation. But it may be argued that the Fathy phenomenon is something of a Western invention.⁴⁴ Indeed, for Egypt of the 1960s, it was not Fathy and his pseudo-vernacular theories, nor the scientific rationality of Doxiadis's plans for cities elsewhere in the region, that had the greatest impact. Instead, it was Karim's dogged practice that planned and built Nasser's Egypt.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. For example, as a new state, Egypt was caught in a dilemma when it came to buying arms to establish an army. When its former colonizer, Great Britain, and the Americans refused to sell them, there was no alternative but to turn to the Soviet Union. The Russians, wanting to establish themselves in the Middle East, were eager to help, and within a year a first deal was sealed, according to which Soviet tanks and fighter planes would be paid for by Egyptian cotton and textiles. Thus began a long relationship between the two countries and their leaders, Nasser and Khrushchev, to the displeasure of many in the West.
2. Gamal Abdel Nasser in conversation with his biographer, M.H. Haikal, published in *Azmat al-Su'ais* (Cairo: al-Ahram, 1989).
3. M. Elshahed, *Al-Hadatha al-Thauriya: al-Imara wa Siasat al-Taghier fi Misr 1936–1967, al-Qahira, al-Markaz al-Qaumi lil-Targama*, 2020, p.152, (originally a Ph.D. diss. in English under the title "Revolutionary Modernism: Architecture and the Politics of Transition in Egypt 1936–67").
4. *Ibid.*, p.122.
5. N. AlSayyad, "From Vernacularism to Globalism: The Temporal Reality of Traditional Settlements," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, Vol.7 No.1 (Fall 1995), p.95.
6. P. Pyla, "Hassan Fathy Revisited: Postwar Discourses on Science, Development, and Vernacular Architecture," *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol.60 No.3 (2007), p.29.
7. For examples of important articles published in *Ekistics* on the Middle East and Egypt, see M. Awad, "Settlement of Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes in the Middle East," Vol.7 No.42 (April 1959); H. Fathy, "Aided Self-Help or Cooperation?" Vol.9 No.55 (May 1960); and J. Abu-Lughod, "Migrant Adjustment to City Life: The Egyptian Villager in Cairo," Vol.12 No.71 (September 1961).
8. For a more thorough explanation of this phenomenon in Egypt, see T. Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
9. Private interview conducted by the author with Syed Karim, December 1995.
10. AlSayyad, "From Vernacularism to Globalism."
11. Pyla, "Hassan Fathy Revisited," p.30.
12. For more on Fathy's adoption of Cairene (specifically Mamluk and Ottoman) forms, see N. Rabbat, "Hassan Fathy and the Identity Debate," in G. Tawadros and S. Campbell, eds., *Fault Lines: Contemporary African Art and Shifting Landscapes* (London: Institute of International Visual Art, 2003), pp.196–203.
13. Pyla, "Hassan Fathy Revisited," p.28.
14. See Z. Celik, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers under French Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
15. Pyla, "Hassan Fathy Revisited," p.32, based on C. Doxiadis, *Architecture in Transition* (New York: Hutchinson of London, 1963); and C. Doxiadis, "Ekistics, The Key to Housing in Developing Areas," in *Report to the International Council for Building Research Studies and Documentation* (Rotterdam: The Council, 1959).
16. Pyla, "Hassan Fathy Revisited," p.30.
17. J. Steele, *An Architecture for People: The Complete Works of Hassan Fathy* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1997), p.114.
18. *Ibid.*, p.116.
19. C.A. Doxiadis, "Architecture, Planning and Ekistics," *Ekistics*, Vol.8 No.45 (July 1959), p.5 (abstract from a lecture series given at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring, 1957).
20. For more information on Doxiadis's penchant for the larger scale, see "Ekistics Scale" and "Alternative Views," in A.-A. Kyrtis, *Constantinos A. Doxiadis: Texts, Drawings, Settlements* (Athens: Ikaros, 2006), pp.21–22.
21. Pyla, "Hassan Fathy Revisited," p.31.
22. Kyrtis, *Constantinos A. Doxiadis*, p.29.
23. Abstract from a lecture series given at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring, 1957. Original text reproduced in *Ekistics*, Vol.8, No.45 (July 1959), p.7.
24. Steele, *An Architecture for People*, p.113.
25. *Ibid.*, p.117.
26. Pyla, "Hassan Fathy Revisited," pp.30–31; C. Doxiadis, *Raumordnung im Griechischen Stadtebau* (Heidelberg: Kurt Vowinkel, 1937); Doxiadis, "The Ancient Greek City and the City of the Present," *Architektoniki*, Vol.108 (July–August 1964), p.32; and Doxiadis, "Plans for Village in Mussayib by Professor Fathy," Internal Doxiadis Associates Memo, July 21, 1958, pp.1–2.
27. Pyla, "Hassan Fathy Revisited," p.36.
28. General letter from Doxiadis to urban authorities explaining the City of the Future Project, dated December 6, 1960, Doxiadis Foundation Archive, Athens.
29. The reference to Mogadishu is in a letter to Fathy from John Papaioannou, deputy director of the project, dated January 31, 1961; the reference to Nairobi is in a letter from Papaioannou to Fathy dated February 18, 1961. Both letters may be found in the Doxiadis Foundation Archive, Athens.
30. For example, on one occasion he was denied entry into the region of the former kingdom of Dahomey in present-day Benin because of his Egyptian passport. See a letter written by Fathy to Papaioannou, dated February 21, 1961, in the Doxiadis Foundation Archive, Athens.
31. See a letter written by Hassan Fathy to John Papaioannou, dated February 21, 1961, in the Doxiadis Foundation Archive, Athens. Fathy was later able to travel to Cotonou (the economic capital of the former kingdom of Dahomey and an important port city in West Africa) after meeting with powerful African representatives and diplomats who arranged a visa for him.

32. Steele describes a discussion between members of the City of the Future project during a dinner party hosted by Fathy in the courtyard of his house. The discussion was started by Iannis Christo (a musical composer), who argued that tradition trumped modernity in society. Fathy agreed with Christo, but their views were opposed by the Mexican professor Gomez Mayorga. See Steele, *An Architecture for People*, p.119.

33. *Ibid.*, p.120, quoting Fathy.

34. *Ibid.*, p.121.

35. Most correspondence between Fathy and the office of Doxiadis Associates during this time was administrative in nature and directed towards Papaioanno, a close associate of Doxiadis, then serving as deputy director of the City of the Future project. For example, see letters written by Fathy to Papaioanno dated November 27, 1961, and July 28, 1962; and letters from Papaioanno to Fathy dated August 7, 1962, and April 16, 1964 (in which the former advises Fathy on his designs for the residence of Marion Carr on the outskirts of Athens). All correspondence referred to is located in the Doxiadis Foundation Archive, Athens.

36. This position, although not new, was emphasized by Pyla in "Hassan Fathy Revisited," p.29.

37. This view has recently been counter-argued by Pyla. See "Hassan Fathy Revisited."

38. Steele, *An Architecture for People*, p.122.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Ibid.*

41. Pyla, "Hassan Fathy Revisited," p.29.

42. *Ibid.*, p.38.

43. Elshahed, *Al-Hadatha al-Thaurya*, p.81.

44. I have provided a more complete discussion of this viewpoint elsewhere. See AlSayyad, "From Vernacularism to Globalism." It has also been corroborated and elaborated on by Timothy Mitchell. See T. Mitchell, "Making the Nation: The Politics of Heritage in Egypt," in N. AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Heritage Manufacturing Tradition: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism* (London: Routledge, 2001).

Site, Archive, Medium and the Case of Lifta

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This article presents work conducted during an experimental design research workshop within the MIT School of Architecture and Planning, taking place at Lifta, an evacuated Palestinian village located outside of Jerusalem. Taking Lifta's historical and archaeological complexity as its archive, students developed and designed thematic virtual experiences of the village, its multiple histories and narratives. The efforts provide epistemological and experiential cross-sections and aim to challenge the traditional narration and production of history in favor of a critical historiography of Lifta. After describing these efforts, the article discusses critical questions that arose from the work. Can historical evidence be spatialized within the detailed context of the materiality of the site? What does an immersive form of representation entail for the pedagogy of architectural history? And what possibility does this framework for conveying the complexity of the site of Lifta offer for other, similarly complex sites?

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Over the past few decades there have been several expansions of the field of urban and architectural history away from a formerly standard building-based model. One of these has been in the direction that is generally called cultural history. Here, Carl Schorske's 1978 book *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* was particularly relevant to an earlier generation of emerging scholars.¹ Since then, of course, the desire to situate buildings or sites in the complex conditions of their making or reception has become commonplace. Indeed, recent decades have seen a growing interest both in geographies and histories left outside the Western canon.² In such efforts, however, the position of the architectural historian as a producer of knowledge is often left unchanged: research on the one side, learning on the other.

Books require seminars, not to mention teachers who can contextualize and position them. As a result, knowledge about how history is produced has become ever more remote from the productive spaces of creativity. Students thus typically expect history to be delivered to them rather than conceiving of themselves as active participants in its creation. The Lifta Workshop reported on here was aimed at counteracting this tendency, embracing the opportunity that sensory technologies such as real-time computer graphics and virtual reality (VR) provide in helping students come to grips with complicated contextual problems. Instead of just reading about sites and their associated histories in books, VR allows students not only to immerse themselves in a site, but to move from one “site” to another in the form of imaginary leaps. Such a capability may be particularly useful when it comes to helping students and advanced researchers come to terms with the different temporal and historical valences at play in the writing of history.

APPROACHING THE SITE

Lifta is an evacuated Palestinian village at the southwest entrance to modern-day Jerusalem. Through the research described here we sought to use the capabilities of VR not so much to discover if we could “re-create” it as to explore new ways to address the layers of traumas associated with it. For a long time such sites have been seen as relatively peripheral to architectural history. But given the increasing instrumentalization of violence across the globe (or at least the increased recognition of its presence), such sites are no longer just examples of some outlying problematic. In other words, whereas in earlier times a place like Lifta would have been positioned in the context of political history and not architectural history, we would like to put these disciplines on more equal footing. Is Lifta perhaps not an excellent way to teach architecture as a starting point?

In pursuit of this goal, we saw the fact that the students in the workshop knew little if anything about the site not as a problem but as an opportunity. Their lack of prior exposure would allow them to observe their own learning process and map out a strategy that would help shape a pedagogical “track” through the site that others might follow. The theoretical basis for how the students would work was, therefore, complex. The current tendency to call all multiperson work a “collaboration” belies situations like this. What collaboration usually implies is a group of experts working together, where the ignorance of one is covered by the knowledge of the others. Collaboration, so defined, however, almost always fails to acknowledge ignorance itself. By contrast, we wanted the students to accept the fact that they came to the site not knowing very much about it. In that way they could see themselves operating toward a pedagogically useful product while simultaneously experimenting with the epistemological/ontologi-

cal space of their own learning. We were asking them not to become experts, but to find “a voice.”

The results were tactical in the sense that we — the teachers of the workshop — did not propose a linear “beginning” to the history of the site. Nor did we propose a final position that needed to be taken. Instead, we wanted the students to see their design as a compass through the site(s) that could be passed on to the next person. Our intent was thus also to preclude the problem of a student wanting to make an “artistic statement” that referenced only his or her subject position, and which could not be handed down as a research platform for other people in a similar position. Though Lifta brings one front and center into the political vortex, the pedagogical orientation of the workshop and its results-as-pedagogy was designed to give students the time and “space” to come to terms with the site’s multiple layers of meaning and history.

The goal of the workshop was, moreover, to emphasize the *cumulative* efforts of the students, not their individual work, seeing the results as an anticipatory sketch of something even more layered and complex. As our hope was that this type of proceduralism would highlight a “political” all unto its own, for it was meant not just to challenge students eager to learn more about the world, but also to challenge our way of writing and researching architectural history. The texts of architectural history, much like any other discourse, “are not a sure thing.” As Louis Howe has noted, they “can be recycled, reoccupied, even taken over.”³ According to this view, we aimed to capitalize on the potential for incommensurability between intention and utterance and action. Relatedly, the technological approaches that we used were not seen as tools for some precise documentation and recording of the site’s reality. Rather, we embraced the limitations of what can be understood as real within the designed VR space, and we sought to exploit the capacity of VR to create jumps and links to other spaces, times and objects as part of its foundational capacity. We saw VR as a medium that would allow us to work between various epistemological registers to create something that would be just as much a part of architecture as of the ways architecture can be taught and conveyed.

By importing archival materials as well 3D-scanned segments of the site, we specifically wanted to build a bridge to developments in the art world, where artists have used historical research to become, in fact, ever more like historians.⁴ The well-known African-American artist Renée Green, for example, has explained that in her work, she

... wanted to begin by examining an artifact, a text, a painting or a group of paintings, a decorative object, an image, a novel, a poem, a garden, a palace, a house. By beginning with these objects or places, and the contexts in which they appeared, it was possible to detect the intricate working of certain ideologies which were being put forth . . . and to attempt to decipher the contradictory pleasure which might accompany them.⁵

Similarly, the choreographer Netta Yerushalmy and the historian Julia Foulkes developed a hybrid-event project called *Paramodernities*: part performance, part academic conference, and part town-hall gathering.

One of our guiding concepts was “critical historiography,” a space of working with history that operates between the pulls of objectivity and subjectivity. Though this approach accepts the importance of the subject position of the researcher, it warns that reducing everything to subject position is to remove oneself from the realities of difference and otherness.⁶ The same applies to the ideologies that govern “objectivity.” Developing a critical historiography that moves between the potential and limits of both subjectivity and objectivity is especially relevant in situations such as Lifta, where it can open up a unique space for both theoretical and pedagogical investigations.⁷

By placing artistic and historical interpretation in dialogue — and tension — with one another it is also possible to establish new ways of thinking about the past and its representation in the present. Take, for instance, *Mitologies*, a VR piece created by the Lebanese filmmaker Hisham Bizri in 1997. Bizri has described how “the work is loosely based on the Cretan myth of the Minotaur, the Revelation of St. John, Dante’s *Inferno*, and Dürer’s woodcuts of the Apocalypse. Music from Richard Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* serves as a structural motif for the unfolding narrative.” This amalgam of texts, images, objects and sounds is then brought together in an architectural model which

... fuses the exterior of a 3D church modelled after a Leonardo da Vinci sketch of a church that was never built with the interior of the Great Mosque of Cordoba. Beneath the church is a maze built as a “rhizome”: every path is connected to every other one, with no centre and no periphery. As viewers proceed through the maze, they find themselves on paths that lead to medieval curiosity rooms, to rooms populated by statues of Donatello, the iconography of Cesare Ripa, and so forth.⁸

Here, the historian-as-artist and the artist-as-historian are concerned with particular historical subjects as much as with the mediums and forms through which these histories are represented and conveyed. Rather than separating fiction from documentary modes of representation, works of fiction can be considered as historical documents in their own right — ones that are as potentially valid as a starting point for reflecting on present conditions as are documentary evidence, archival materials, and other more “conventional” historical records.⁹ The point is not to do a better history but to unpack history in contexts that defy linear reasoning and in ways that allow for interpretation and discussion. We thus purposefully picked a particularly complicated site, Lifta, a Palestinian village located on the slopes of the western entrance to Jerusalem, evacuated and depopulated by Israeli forces in 1948.

LIFTA AND BEYOND

The work presented here is the result of a collaboration between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Department of Architecture and the Department of Bible Archaeology and Ancient Near East Studies at Ben-Gurion University (BGU). Students from MIT in collaboration with archaeologists from Ben-Gurion participated in the study of the evacuated village and investigated through various methods the archaeological and architectural remains, as well as various archives, narratives, and stories told about the site. Following a series of preparatory lectures ranging across the topics of history, methodology and technique, we embarked on a two-week-long visit to Lifta and Jerusalem. At the site, we used advanced simulation techniques, 3D scanning, and real-time rendering, as well as an array of archival, historical and scholarly resources.

Though our approach could be deployed at any site, it became even more meaningful at a historically contested one, where it allowed us to pursue what Howe has referred to as “an ethics of perplexities rather than principles.” Thus, unlike other projects that have utilized digital technologies, representation and mapping in a quest to establish legal or “truth” claims, our intervention sought to establish a continuous and processual position of “ethical becoming rather than being ethical.”¹⁰ In that sense, we were not looking to recover a single truth or knowledge about Lifta.¹¹ Nor were we asking to discard or invalidate other histories and stories told within and about the site. Rather, we sought to explore, create and construct a space in which political, national, religious and mythical heritage and traditions would not subsume one another in a battle of discourses and documents, but rather cross-pollinate each other in the ongoing production of architectural histories in tension.

In adopting such an approach we were in general alignment with the work of the artist Cliff McLucas and his notion of “deep maps.” From McLucas’s point of view, deep maps need to be “sumptuous,” and embrace “a range of different media or registers in a sophisticated and multilayered orchestration.” Such representational documents “bring together the amateur and the professional, the artist and the scientist, the official and the unofficial, the national and the local.” This layering of narratives refuses the quest for “the authority and objectivity of conventional cartography.”¹²

As noble as this idea may be, the problem is that making such a map can be a tall order. One cannot achieve the results McLucas wants without extensive and continuous discussions; without reading, learning and writing; and without inputs and critiques. One also needs time — time to digest material, to travel, to discuss, think and create. The quality of the results also depends on the competencies of the educators and students, on the material that can be placed at their disposal, and even on the funding that is available. These things are rarely folded into the theoretical discussion or treated as background to the final project.¹³

The expectation horizons envisioned by McLucas are so intimidating that none but the most hearty will be in a position to fulfill them. Once again, this only emphasizes the need for the broad situationalizing space of pedagogy as opposed to the space of abstract, art-world theorizing. Instead of focusing on the end goal, we thus concentrated on process, conceiving of the workshop as an exercise in design research.¹⁴ And we sought to engage with pedagogical methods that students were familiar with from design studios and seminars. These included daily reviews of the work and progress both during the visit to Lifta and in the workshop's final week, as well as public reviews with guests and critics from the collaborating institutions and beyond. The workshop, supported by special funding from MIT for student research and travel, also featured a cross-disciplinary range of invited speakers.

Within this framework, while staff from MIT served both as instructors and (to a degree) as curators of the work, the role of BGU staff was to introduce the MIT students to archaeological methodologies, including site analysis, survey and approach. The BGU staff sought to convey these skills through on-site lectures. The students, who came from a variety of geographic and disciplinary backgrounds, were also asked to form small groups, have conversations among themselves, and develop themes and topics they wished to explore. With one exception, none of the students had visited Israel or Palestine prior to this workshop. They were thus able to approach the set of issues at hand from a relatively uninitiated position. The final two weeks of the project period were then spent back at MIT, where the students developed their projects for submission. There was a final presentation with a public review at the Keller Gallery in the MIT Department of Architecture. After experiencing the VR installations, a discussion about what was experienced took place, moving the pedagogical track out of the virtual space of the screen and back into the classroom.

What we achieved might seem to be just part and parcel of education. But for us, the work was also designed to gravitate around the dialectic of incompleteness: the necessary incompleteness of the project's ambition and the structured incompleteness of our expectation horizon. We embraced the foggy, ontological nature of making a narrative so as to go against the tendency to assume that the maker of the narrative map is a type of scientist or perhaps amateur scientist. The narratives the students developed were all made within the framework of a range of gives-and-takes with their own situational realities — most of which can themselves be only vaguely mapped. However, we made it clear that the final project was not just a narrative that mapped only backward onto their personal interests and experience, but had the potential to serve as a pedagogical tool for others. We hoped that the projects would reflect not how to learn, but how they learned. In that sense, pedagogy was not some backdrop to the final project, but a palpable force that circulated through these projects.

LIFTA

Lifta is one of only several remaining Palestinian villages that was neither completely demolished nor resettled by a Jewish-Israeli population following the Israel-Arab war of 1948.¹⁵ Nestled between the highways and cliffs leading to modern-day Jerusalem from the west, Lifta is a wounded landscape, where the marks left by soldiers and state violence, as well as the wear of time, the force of nature, and the stains of neglect are all visible. The village has also been surveyed and excavated repeatedly, from the beginnings of the archaeological study of Palestine and the Land of Israel at the end of the nineteenth century up to the most recent survey conducted by the Israeli Antiquities Authority in 2017.¹⁶ Its material remains, its history under different governments and empires, its present place within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as its uncertain future, all demonstrate the multiplicities of history's writing and construction. Indeed, Lifta is a unique and paradigmatic locus of conflicted histories, archaeology and landscape; of traumatic memories, contested presents, and potential futures.

Within the dominant Israeli and Jewish narrative, the village's biblical history points to the roots of Jewish habitation of the Land of Israel, marking the border between the lands of Judea and Benjamin as described in the Book of Joshua, and confirmed, supposedly, by various ancient maps — a vernacular fiction that has been used and abused by statesmen in the creation of national claims.¹⁷ In Palestinian history, Lifta was one of the largest and most flourishing towns within British Mandatory Palestine. Today, it is a ruin, waiting for the return of its original occupants, and a battleground for activists from both sides of the political and national map. In between and beyond these narratives, the history of the village dates back to the thirteenth century BCE, and is speckled with unique stories, spaces and events.¹⁸ Presently, the village is the only remnant to survive in such a remarkable condition in Israel and in neighboring countries. It remains as a living testimony to the landscape that has been common in the land of Israel and Palestine for thousands of years of history.

Taken all together, the site is defined by temporal scales of deep time, modern history, and urban processes, as well as by the borders of the map. As the investigation began, students were, therefore, faced with multiple decisions in demarcating and limiting their site of inquiry and, relatedly, by the scale and reach of the archive at hand. A study of any architectural site requires such limits to be set. Is the study limited to a particular period? Are only built spaces to be included, or is the landscape, whether cultivated or not, within those limits? What of the roads leading elsewhere? What are the trade routes, the streams, the terraces which condition the site's economy and activity? Or perhaps the limits should be set in accordance with municipal and legal definitions, themselves malleable and changing through history — their traces

found in maps, construction documents, property bills, and plans? And, lastly, what are the disciplinary boundaries when dealing with the history of destruction and state violence such as appears at Lifta? Can architectural history offer new perspectives on Lifta's destruction?¹⁹

In the process of designing a possible platform and interface for Lifta, the projects — as test cases — also aimed to further the potential of immersive technologies as a pedagogical tool, and to open the critical questions that arose from the research and the work. Can historical evidence be spatialized within the detailed context of the materiality of site? What does an immersive form of representation entail for the pedagogy of architectural history? And what possibility does this framework offer for conveying the complexity of Lifta in relation to other, similarly complex sites?

MEDIATION

The workshop included experimentation with 3D environmental scanning using photogrammetry and laser-scanning. To deploy photogrammetry to capture the present condition of the site, the students organized themselves into teams, each covering a different area in Lifta, as well as selected houses, at varying scales. To produce a photogrammetric model of the whole site, we used a high-altitude drone (DJI Inspire series). This allowed us to record the condition of the entire site, which we then used as a foundational model for the introductory VR scenes providing a view of the general spatial context. Smaller drones (DJI Mavic series) were also used to capture more focused areas at higher resolution, including houses that were partly covered by vegetation — which required precise flights above them and in between trees. High-resolution photogrammetry models of interiors were then created by teams of two to three students, who gathered information about selected houses using DSLR cameras with fish-eye lenses. The collected data was then initially processed in low-resolution to make sure that we had gathered sufficient information, and to allow faults or inadequacies in the model to be repaired with additional photography if needed.

The full resolution models were processed several weeks later at MIT using open-source photogrammetry software (AliceVision). The various scale models were then aligned and patched together to allow continuous movement between the large-scale model of the whole valley and the interior of the houses. LIDAR laser-scanning (Faro Focus) was also used to capture selected areas within the site that were especially difficult to capture using photogrammetry. These models were subsequently used as materials for the development of interactive and immersive environments using the Unity game engine.²⁰ The photogrammetry models were optimized for real-time rendering using third-party applications (such as Autodesk 3DMax and ReCap). The dense point clouds were rendered in real time using an open-source Unity

plug-in that allowed the visualization of points. Inside Unity, students used an interaction system that allows users to interact with the virtual environment by gazing at specific objects, thus activating them either as portals to other spaces or as sources for information.

We used these techniques to express multiple appearances of the site and to amplify onto-epistemological gaps inherent within these appearances. Topography, stones, maps, documents and photographs are all utterances of Lifta. In this regard, Howe's notion of discourse as occupiable suggests that a "potential for incommensurability between intention and utterance, utterance and action, or between intention and action," always exists.²¹ Language, speech and action are all ontological insistences that must be attended to. Moreover, they offer a creative opportunity to reframe the relations between them. Using a set of techniques and technologies we thus attempted to move beyond utterance and language to include action. In the process we thought to advocate a movement between historiography and a form of "historio-acting." On the one hand, this attempt involved highlighting the potential of purposefully emphasizing the incommensurable gap between historical documents and the material appearance of the site. On the other, it sought to reconcile the very same gap by "smoothing" it.

In hindsight, our strategies were particularly revealing when it came to documenting Lifta's irrigation system. This ancient infrastructure is today completely covered with thick vegetation. However, the dense LIDAR allowed us to capture a point cloud of the system and the vegetation, and thus document what had once served as a critical social center in the life of Lifta.

VR presents opportunities that both stretch the boundaries of such inquiries and expose them. In this regard, the complexity of Lifta's recent and more distant histories, as well as its present material and political condition, presented an excellent opportunity for experimentation and exposure. Rather than adhering to VR's hyped ability to transport one into realistic environments to create a sense of "being there," we considered VR as a challenge to the very notion of the real. With a VR headset, one rather steps in these projects into an assembled landscape to interact with objects there that hopefully create new potentials for agency.

As a first step to providing such an experience, we produced a digital model of the entire site, using a drone (as described previously) to document it photographically from above (FIG. 1).²² The large and comprehensive site model of the valley in which Lifta is located is thus presented to VR visitors at a scale that offers the kind of bird's-eye view typically associated with a distant and supposed objectivity. Yet at the same time visitors may move around in it and approach various structures and landscape features.²³

This first experience is enhanced when a visitor enters, so to speak, one of the several main sites in the model (FIG. 2). Visitors make the transition using the VR set to

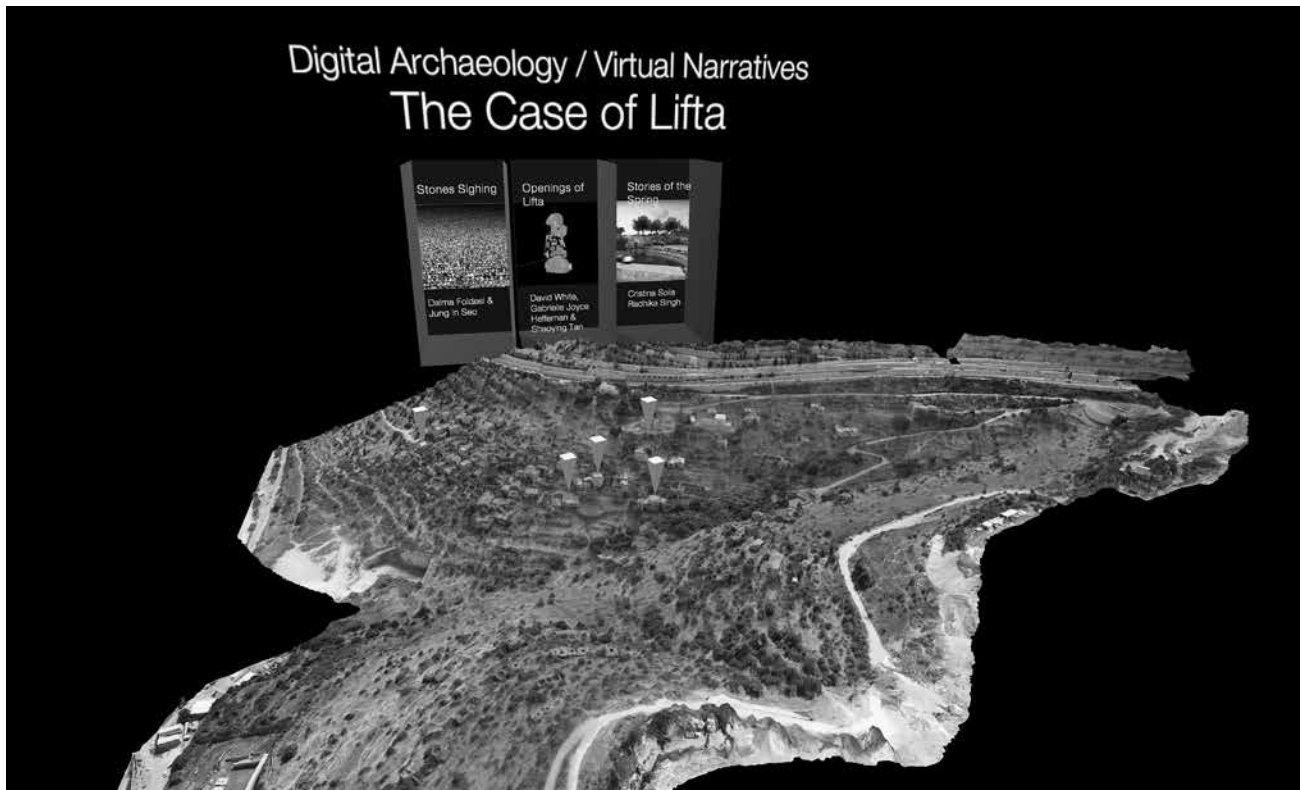


FIGURE 1. View of the entire Lifta site model, along with the entry portals to the student projects. Here the visitor can walk around the site as it is presented at a large scale and examine it in its entirety.

“focus” on one or another of three-dimensional cones located there. In those more detailed spaces, shell-like exteriors are represented in a grayscale palette, while interiors are injected with the colors recorded from the digital scans. Meanwhile, in the background, visitors are exposed to the “official” narratives of Lifta — texts borrowed from the Israeli Antiquities Authority 2017 survey — that are both projected on the black background and narrated as they walk around the site.

Finally, by focusing on yet other cones, visitors may project themselves into one-to-one scans of selected interior spaces where the derelict and neglected reality of Lifta’s present is exposed (FIG. 3). In the background, as they roam around these spaces, a more personal and less official tale is narrated. For instance, in Mukhtar’s House, located in the center of the village, visitors are accompanied by the voice of Ya’akub Uda, a Palestinian refugee and former resident of Lifta, who shares both the history of the house and his own experiences of it as a child.

This model, however, did not only serve as a visually stable recording of Lifta for visitors to explore and walk through. More importantly, it provided a “site” for the projects created by the student teams and a portal for their interpretations. In each of these three projects, the site, its various interlocutors, and its archival resources were composed in the service of narratives constructed by the students that allow Lifta’s complex histories to be seen anew.

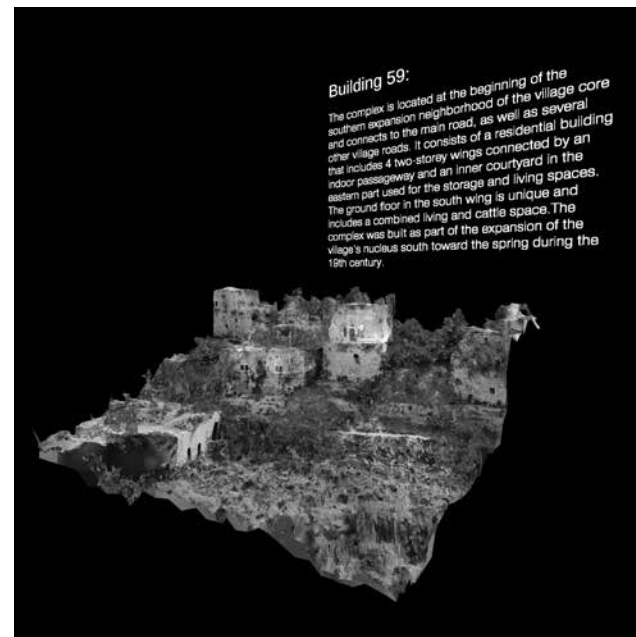


FIGURE 2. View of Building 59, on the northern slope of Lifta. The designation of the building and the accompanying text were provided by the Israeli Antiquities Authority as part of its survey of Lifta in 2017. The visitor can explore the house as if it were a kind of “doll house,” peer through its walls, and examine its interior spaces.



FIGURE 3. Screenshot of the interior in one of the houses located on Lifta's main pathway, as seen through the VR headset in one-to-one scale.

To create the material for these narrative projects, all the digital models collected on-site were imported into a game-design software to facilitate the design and curation of the installation. Here, a certain gaze is injected into the space through the apparatus of the virtual. The result is to allow each visitor to engage in a creative process as they compose a world out of the fragments offered and authored by the designers of each narrative.

THE "SITE"-ARCHIVE

To create their narratives, we asked the students to treat the VR experience as a tool to move about the archive we created for the workshop. This "archive," serving as an open-ended backstory of the site, consisted of documents, representations, surveys, testimonies and stories that were collected to bring out the tension between narrative, representation, evidence and myth. These included a history of habitation and occupation and of ownership, planning, design and surveying. It included photos, drawings and works of art. It included a history of materials and waste, their decomposition, their layering, accumulation and continuous effects on the reality of the site. And it included a history of narration, activism and resistance by organizations such as the Save Lifta Coalition — and our main guide throughout the fieldwork, the Palestinian refugee and former resident of Lifta Ya'akub Uda.

Some elements of the archive, obviously, already existed and could be mined. Others existed only abstractly, like newspaper articles or sets of postcards, and still needed to be curated to tell a story. Still other elements had not yet been created, but could be both created and curated as part of the same activity — such as interviews or on-site documentation. Finally, some elements of the archive were works of art or fiction that could move between disciplinary realms.

The student teams developed three themes to explore this archive: Water, Stone and Openings. In Lifta, the history

of water runs deeper than just a story about the local spring; it is a deeply metaphysical proposition. Similarly, stones in the walls of the buildings are imprinted, both literally and figuratively, with centuries of rituals and violence. Finally, the various openings in the buildings have multiple stories to tell. Some, like windows, were designed for purposes related to habitation. But others, like those in the ceilings, were created by the Israeli state as part of its de-habitation campaign. The openings thus testify both to specific traditions of architecture and craftsmanship, and to state violence and neglect.

Students used the archive in different ways. Some used it for the photographs, both old and recent; others for the sound recordings; and yet others for its documents and newspaper articles. In each case, students sewed and stitched the elements together as one would a fabric. The resultant epistemological message at the core of each of the three projects was curated using software which facilitated the presentation of visual material so that it might be manipulated and interacted with in real time by future viewers.²⁴ To accomplish this, the scanned models of the site were imported into VR, where they could be experienced in a room-scale scenario through a head-mounted display. This in turn allows viewers to inhabit the site in changing scales, to encounter a textual document, to move through a drawing, or to hear sounds emerging from a particular location designated in space.

WATER

One of the projects developed by the students focused on the history of public rituals and present conflicts around Lifta's spring. Titled "Stories of the Spring," it begins inside a depopulated ruin of a house overlooking the village's water source. From here, the spectator is able to roam around its evacuated interior in its current dilapidated state. On the crumbling floor of the Palestinian home, the students placed old family photographs of Palestinian refugees found in online archives — as if they had been left behind there by former occupants in a rush to depart. Gazing on the photographs, the VR spectator triggers a text which elaborates on the history of Palestinian displacement (FIG. 4). Simultaneously, a voice narrates the space, providing the testimony of the Palestinian refugee and native of Lifta recorded by the students while at the site, who shares the story of the family who owned the house. As the visitor approaches the house's window, a view of the spring itself is exposed, assuming the point of view of the house's original inhabitants.

The project goes further to present not only the spring's presence in history and in past conflicts, but its contested present as well. The visitor will thus next find herself standing by the spring's waters, witnessing the accumulation of refuse next to the fresh water (FIG. 5). Within the scene, the visitor encounters a *tallit* — a piece of garment traditionally used by religious Jewish men, which, when focused on, acti-



FIGURE 4. Screenshot depicting the view of the house overlooking the spring from Lifta's southern slope. On the floor, a visitor can activate a photo depicting the forced evacuation of Palestinians in 1948. Project by Radihka Singh and Cristina Solis.



FIGURE 5. Screenshot depicting the main pool of the Lifta spring along with cut-out images of religious Jewish men who use it as a mikveh (water source for religious purification). Alongside these, the visitor can also see a cut-out from the work of Palestinian artist Raida Adon, which evokes the absent bodies of Palestinian women and echoes present conflicts around gender and the use of the spring. Project by Radihka Singh and Cristina Solis.

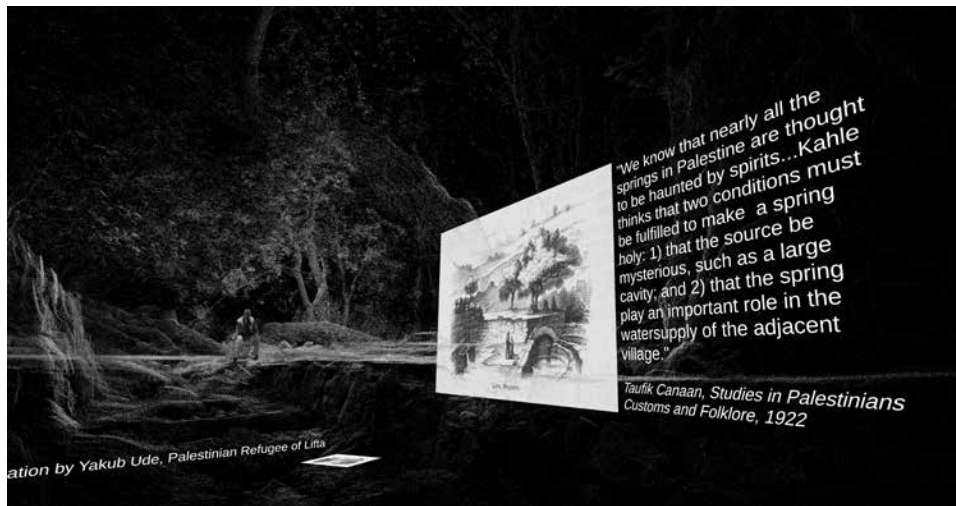


FIGURE 6. Screenshot depicting the area adjacent to the pool, referred to by Palestinian residents as “paradise.” The space is imbued with references to the various historical depictions of the spring as well as the narration of Ya’akub Uda, whose image appears in the faraway background. Project by Radihka Singh and Cristina Solis.

vates the archive of which the scene is composed. Using cut-out figures from journalistic photographs, an array of news items, and sounds of children playing in the water recorded during our fieldwork, the VR allows the visitor to experience a daily conflict occurring in Lifta. This takes place between religious Jewish men, who claim the space around the spring and use it as a purifying *mikveh*, and women, of any ethnicity or religion, whom they prevent, at times aggressively, from accessing the site.²⁵ To this the students added yet another artistic and archival reference: an visual excerpt from the work of Palestinian artist Raida Adon, who had placed empty dresses around the spring, representing Lifta’s houses, now emptied of the bodies that used to inhabit them and which have been violently removed.²⁶

The narrative ends with the visitor being transported into a point-cloud representation of a location adjacent to the spring’s source, where thick vegetation creates a sort hidden oasis, tucked in between the houses, paths and slopes (FIG. 6). Here visitors once again hear the voice of Ya’akub Uda, who shares his memories from this site. His image, implanted into the scenery is, however, juxtaposed to two other narratives concerned with the spring and the meaning of water in this geography. One is a drawing of the very same location made by a nineteenth-century pilgrim. The other is an early-twentieth-century text, written by the Palestinian physician, ethnographer and nationalist Tawfiq Canaan, exploring the meaning of springs in Palestinian rituals and folklore.²⁷

STONES

The intermingling of site and archive is also evident in the project “Stones Sighing,” whose narrative focuses on the main building material, “Jerusalem” limestone, from which the village was constructed. Giving voice, presence and representation to the history of the limestone, this project pulls from various sources to create a new space and expose the

composition and decomposition of the site. Multiple archives and histories are brought into this space: a detailed scanning of various domestic spaces within Lifta from early caves to dwellings almost completely collapsed under the weight of time; an archive of drawings and diagrams depicting the traditional construction methods of Palestinian masons and their appropriation by Israeli architects; historical texts, both primary and secondary, discussing the role, meaning and history of stone masonry; and an autobiographic poem, “Standing before the Ruins of El-Birwha,” written by the Palestinian national poet Mahmoud Darwish, which is used to structure the entire experience.²⁸

Using these materials, the work weaves three narratives. The first is carried by the poem, inflecting the scene with the voice of Palestinian memory and the story of the forced evacuation of 1948. The second focuses on the stones themselves. Here, every scene takes place in a space that represents a different moment in the life cycle of Lifta’s stones, thus animating the supposedly silent material through its historical procession. This begins with an excavated cave (FIG. 7). But it continues to one of Lifta’s older houses, moves on to a late-Ottoman-era residence, and visits a renovated house occupied by an Israeli, before ending in a collapsed and punctured ruin.

The third narrative revolves around the daily ideological and symbolic role of stone. Focusing on the tradition of Palestinian masonry, it exposes the manner in which traditional Palestinian methods and labor have become an instrument in the service of Israeli ideology and architectural design (FIG. 8). Adopting the local vernacular traditions associated with masonry, modern Israeli architects have thus often employed the very stones of Lifta (and of other villages) in the cultivation of a biblical imaginary for the design of contemporary, quasi-vernacular architectural works.²⁹ To emphasize this, the narrative begins and ends in a space that is several kilometers removed from Lifta: the Mamilla shopping center by the old city of Jerusalem, a contemporary architectural project inspired by the traditions embedded in Lifta’s stones (FIG. 9).

FIGURE 7. Screenshot of the second space of the installation “Stones Sighing,” where visitors can explore one of Lifta’s earliest residences, a cave dating to the first millennium. In the cave, visitors can activate visual documents from the Israeli Antiquities Authority as well as from various Palestinian sources. Project by Dalma Foldesi and Jung In Seo.

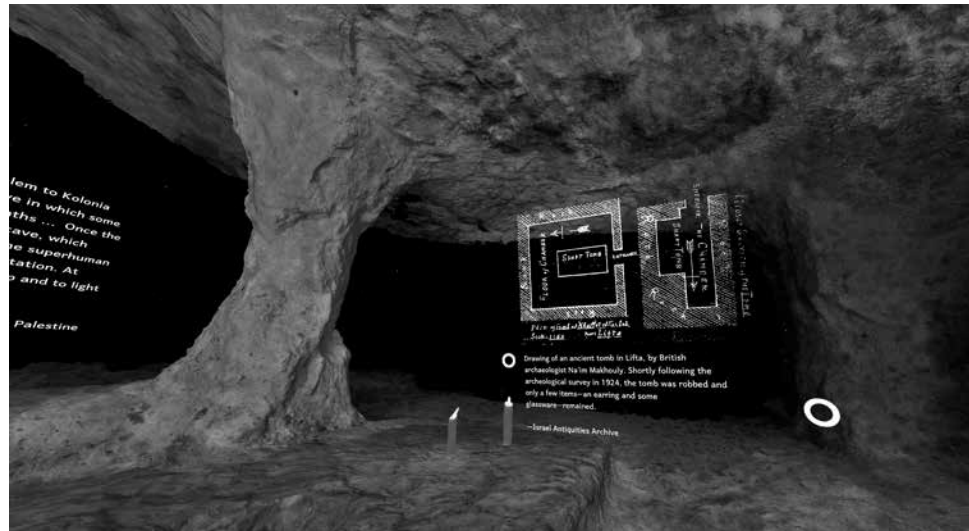


FIGURE 8. Screenshot of a vaulted residence in Lifta. Visitors can witness the development of local Palestinian construction methods as well as activate documents that demonstrate how these techniques have been appropriated by Israeli architects and scholars. Project by Dalma Foldesi and Jung In Seo.



FIGURE 9. View of the Mamilla Mall in the center of Jerusalem where the installation “Stones Sighing” begins and ends. This space, renovated by the renowned architect Moshe Safdie in the early 2000s, is presented along with recent work by the Israeli architectural historian Alona Nitzan-Shifman describing how local stone masonry has been decontextualized by Israeli architects in various projects. Project by Dalma Foldesi and Jung In Seo.



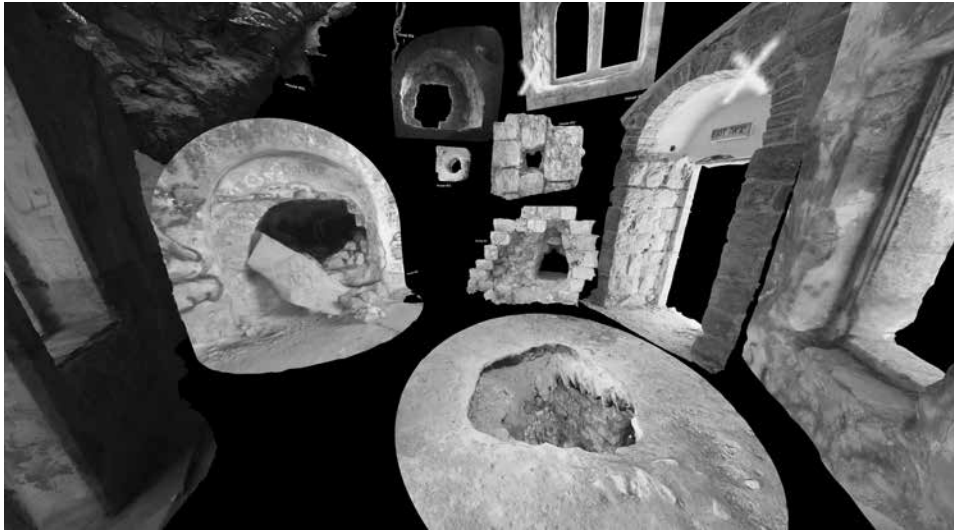


FIGURE 10. View of the collection of apertures in the student project titled “Openings.” The various apertures have been scanned from different locations in Lifta and organized as a kind of “cabinet of curiosities.” By focusing on different objects, visitors can explore both the history of Lifta and other contested sites worldwide as well as historical texts and images related to the practice of vision. Project by Gabrielle Heffernan, Shaoying Tan, and David White.

OPENINGS

The third project, “Openings,” examines Lifta’s history through the wide array of apertures on the site, some of which are natural, some designed, and some created by violence and war. The VR experience here begins with a somewhat abstracted space, employing the notion of a cabinet of curiosities, an instrument featuring objects that “appear . . . to transgress the boundaries between nature and artifice” (FIG. 10).³⁰

Here the project offers a kind of aperture museum in which various scanned openings are arranged. While some

apertures lead to archival texts and images related both to Lifta and to notions of photography and vision, others project the visitor into the specific location from which the aperture was extracted, removing it from its museal representation and presenting it within its current context (FIG. 11).

Still others connect beyond the limits of Lifta allowing visitors to look through them to the surrounding landscape, as well as to related geographic locations such as other Palestinian villages and cities or sites of conflict and ruination throughout the world.³¹

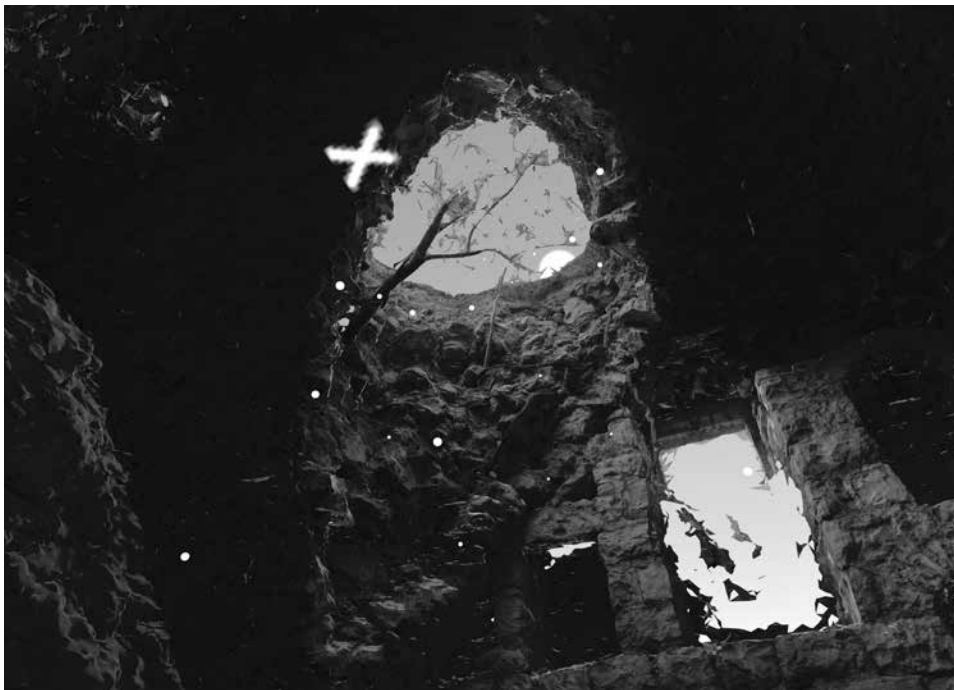


FIGURE 11. Screenshot of the view through one of the apertures in the “Openings” project. This particular aperture is located in one of Lifta’s most devastated structures, as evidenced by the tree growing through the dilapidated roof. Many of the openings in the roofs of houses in Lifta were created by Israeli military forces to prevent residents from returning to their homes. Project by Gabrielle Heffernan, Shaoying Tan, and David White.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR HISTORY

Moving between the real, the imagined, and the constructed, the three student projects deliberately eschew any attempt to discover some essential aspect of the site. Neither are they trying to articulate some individual artistic or poetic vision of it. Rather, they are intended to facilitate the discovery of multiple visions and voices.

To do this required shifting from an epistemological to an ontological and operational perspective on the issue of the reciprocity of site and archive, objects and their narration. Visitors to each project are thus expected to accept the doubling of history as both past events and present narratives, and to avoid getting caught up in dichotomous patterns of thought (for example, past as real versus past as constructed).³² The immersive quality of the projects thus facilitates a reciprocity between the site as it is recorded, represented and narrated. Likewise, it facilitates the simultaneous presence of numerous existing and constructed archives and various testimonies about the site. As these intermingle with one another through the work and the investigation, the site itself becomes yet another archive, while the archive is transformed into — or better yet, is exposed as — what it has always been: a site of intervention and design.

Such archival interventions require an engagement both with the archive and its absence. In a recent article, Anne Gilliland and Michelle Caswell coined the concept of an “impossible archival imaginary” as a way to undertake the messy business of contesting, renegotiating and redefining collective memory of the past “to take absences — and their attending affects — into account, and in situations where our ethics and humanity demand it, striving to turn impossible archival imaginaries into possibilities.” This means, they argue, that historians should complicate “the link between record and event in order to accommodate records collectively conjured by affect rather than created by event.”³³

We would agree with this assessment. And our work in *Lifta* aimed to take a step further: to link absent records, events, and the site itself in the collective project of making an archive possible, while acknowledging that ontological absence.

Together, the three student projects also demonstrate some of the capabilities that VR holds as a technological platform for critical historiography and critical thinking. Wearing the VR head-mounted display and moving around

a gallery space, the viewer is required to take action: to move within representations, images, texts and sounds as part of an unfolding event taking place in accordance with one’s actions and the feedback offered by the machine. Participants must thus move beyond being passive observers of the archive; rather, they become archive makers, collecting and connecting materials from various sources. This invites a sort of the-attrality in which the observer becomes an actor of sorts. In this sense their experience is not unlike that of the archaeologist who must re-create a story from found materials.

The archaeologist’s imagination, not unlike that of the designer of the VR experience in this particular scenario, constitutes a kind of dramaturgy. Indeed, it resembles that of a writer, a choreographer, or a director who organizes the motives, behaviors and actions of anonymous, fictional individuals within bounded analytic spaces in meaningful ways.³⁴ As soon as archaeologists begin to replicate, reconstruct, represent and restage the past, they invariably employ the scenographic devices and dramatic techniques of theatrical practice. VR, with its immersive and interactive qualities, brings the choreography of archaeology to the formerly far-away, dislocated experience of the observer. It does this by literalizing their subject position and asking that they lend their voice to the narration of history and take responsibility for that utterance. These technological affordances enable the generation of multiple, forking site-archives, in which the viewer becomes the narrator of the history constructed — another voice to be accounted for — as she generates narratives in real time in a sort of performative unfolding of archives, images and historical materials in space.³⁵

What becomes clear through the intimate bond between an archiving gesture and a transformative gesture is that design research is not only fundamental to historical research, and vice versa — but that they are mutually constitutive. Work, whether historical or projective, can only be experimental by both actively positioning itself relative to existing archives and through new archiving moves. *Lifta*, a unique, particular and significant case, is also representative of numerous other places, histories, archives and narrations that demand a contemporary and complex manner of engagement and pedagogy. Through the creation of spaces that have the capacity to sustain the perpetual tension already existing between multiple narrations, history itself can be told, created, learned and experienced in new, critical ways.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. C.E. Schorske, *Fin-De-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1980).

2. One example is the work carried out by the Global Architecture History Teaching Collaborative, whose mission originated

in the desire to “offer a framework for instructors in breaking free of the Eurocentric canonical categories that structure the current historiographical narrative” (see gahtc.org). Another recent example is the “Theory’s Curriculum”

project carried out by the online publishing platform e-flux architecture, which sought to challenge traditional history and theory curricula by offering a collection of alternative, non-Western and noncanonical syllabi (see e-flux.com/architecture/curriculum/).

3. L.E. Howe, "Ontology and Refusal in Subaltern Ethics," *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, Vol.25 No.2 (May 1, 2003), p.281.
4. The work of Mark Godfrey provides a good example of a trend among an increasing number of artists whose practice either starts with research in archives or who deploy what has been termed an archival form of research (where one object of inquiry leads to another). These varied processes lead to works that invite viewers to think about the past; to make connections between events, characters and objects; to join together in memory; and/or to reconsider the ways in which the past is represented in the wider culture. These tendencies are equally prevalent in object-based work such as that of Carol Bove, Tom Burr, Mark Dion, Sam Durant, Renée Green, Thomas Hirschhorn, Ian Kiaer, Simon Starling, and Fred Wilson. M. Godfrey, "The Artist as Historian," *October*, Vol.120 (Spring 2007), pp.140-72.
5. R. Green, "Introduction: Negotiations in the Contact Zone Symposium," in R. Green, ed., *Negotiations in the Contact Zone* (Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2003).
6. Dominick LaCapra has suggested that the term "Secondary Witnessing" be used to shed light on the intrinsic problem of the historian's positionality when witnessing destruction and violence. As he wrote, "Experience involves affect both in the observed and in the observer." Thus, for the observer, "the problem of experience should lead to the question of the role of empathy in historical understanding." Empathy, LaCapra argued, becomes a kind of surrogate or virtual experience, centered not on identifying with or substituting for the experiences of others but rather on attending carefully to "the possibly split-off, affective dimension" of those experiences. D. LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p.41.
7. M. Jarzombek, "A Prolegomena to Critical Historiography," *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol.52 No.4 (May 1999), pp.197-206.
8. H. Bizri, "Story Telling in Virtual Reality," *Leonardo*, Vol.33 No.1 (February 2000), pp.17-19.
9. It is worth noting, however, that any documentary "evidence" entails an aspect of fiction or narrative. As Bill Nichols noted in his discussion of documentary cinema, while all documentaries aim to tell a "true" story or depict a certain truth, they are still subjective artifacts, retelling history from a specific point of view. Though assuming an objective position, they are still personal perspectives. While "fiction may be content to suspend disbelief (to accept the world as plausible) . . . non-fiction often wants to install belief (to accept the world as actual)." B. Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), p.2.
10. Howe, "Ontology," p.294.
11. A prime example of this approach is the work of Eyal Weizman's Forensic Architecture, a research agency which develops and employs "new techniques for evidence gathering and presentation in the service of human rights and environmental investigations and in support of communities exposed to state violence and persecution." See <https://forensic-architecture.org/>.
12. C. McLucas, quoted in T. Harris, "Deep Geography — Deep Mapping," in D.J. Bodenhamer, J. Corrigan, and T. Harris, eds., *Deep Maps and Spatial Narratives* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2015), p.39.
13. For example, David J. Bodenhamer has argued: "How we construct these narratives will depend, in part, on the richness of our evidence and the tools at our command, but deep mapping can be an ideal storyboard for humanists. It goes beyond traditional uses of GIS and seeks to capture the essence of place and a humanistic sense of distance, direction, and identity." Be that as it may be, we would argue that narratives are only valuable if they expose the multiple potential "essences" of a place, and do not thus try to foreclose either the past or the future. See D.J. Bodenhamer, "Narrating Space and Place," in Bodenhamer, Corrigan, and Harris, eds., *Deep Maps and Spatial Narratives*, p.23. We would also generally agree with the following sentiment by Trevor Harris: "A deep map then is more than a topographical product in that it interweaves physical geography and scientific analysis with biography, folklore, narrative, text, memories, emotions, stories, oral histories, and so much more to contribute to a richer, deeper mapping of space and place" ("Deep Geography — Deep Mapping," in Bodenhamer, Corrigan, and Harris, eds., *Deep Maps and Spatial Narratives*, p.39. However, we would argue that there can only be "deep maps" (i.e., in the plural). Secondly, we would argue that "deep" can never be ascertained as a place to which one can arrive through any type of general prescription, even in the case of "deep maps." The quality of "deepness," therefore, should never promise an objectivity it cannot prove. After all, who is the judge of "deep"? The three narrative maps the students made are only the fragmented beginnings of a "deep" that can never be achieved in this traumatized landscape. And yet there can be no doubt that the whole experience was "deep" for the students.
14. The workshop took place during the 2019 summer and fall terms. It was funded by the MIT International Science & Technology Initiative (MISTI), which fosters collaboration between international institutions and MIT. Specifically, this was the first collaboration of its kind between the Architecture Department and the Department of Bible Archaeology and Ancient Near East Studies, and was supported through a fund designated for collaboration between BGU and MIT. At the end of a selection process, eight graduate students from the MIT School of Architecture and Planning were chosen (five from the Master of Architecture program, one from Design Computation, one from Art, Culture and Technology, and one from City Planning). The MIT students were joined in Israel by faculty and students from BGU led by faculty members Yuval Yekutieli and Eli Cohen. As a whole the workshop was conceived as an intensive four-week program, which included a week of preparatory lectures, drone training, and software tutorials (Metashape, Unity, Reality Capture) prior to the visit to Lifta; a two-week-long visit to Jerusalem, which included tours and lectures from BGU associates and others, daily fieldwork, and design reviews, including a public mid-review of the materials collected and project concepts; and a week-long intensive development of the projects themselves, which took place at MIT in the VirtualXDesign Lab. Future collaborations between the departments and institutions are currently being considered, employing similar methodologies at other sites in Israel as well as in the United States.
15. For a comprehensive study of the evacuation of Palestinian villages in 1948 and after, see W. Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2006).
16. Israeli Antiquities Authority, Conservation Administration, *Lifta Survey (2014-2017)*, available at http://www.iaa-conservation.org.il/Projects_Item_heb.asp?site_id=3&subject_id=6&id=180.
17. In a recent study, the architectural historian Alona Nitzan-Shifan noted the use of Palestinian masonry motifs, methods and styles by Israeli architects and planners in post-1967 Jerusalem. According to her, the annexation and unification of the city after the Six-Day War was followed by a shift in the practice of architecture and planning. This was meant both to evoke an image of a biblical and vernacular — rather than modern — image of Jerusalem and to lend historical, ideological and even religious legitimacy to the existence of the state. See A. Nitzan-Shifan, *Seizing Jerusalem: The Architecture of Unilateral Unification* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2017).

18. Though not accepted by all archaeologists, a prevalent assumption is that the name “Mei Nephthah” was derived from the name of the thirteenth-century Pharaoh Merneptah. As the argument goes, “the ‘Wells of Merneptah which are in the hills’ is the group of springs at Lifta, near Jerusalem, and were so named by Merneptah after his victory over the Israelites, whom he compelled to evacuate Jerusalem itself.” F.J. Yurco, “Merneptah’s Canaanite Campaign,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, Vol.23 (1986), p.213.

19. We, of course, believe that under certain terms it can. In recent years, architectural historians have pointed to the disciplinary issues that such engagement entails. For instance, Andrew Herscher has foregrounded the representational problem of architectural history when dealing with destruction. “When architecture is destroyed, however, it is typically regarded as just such a product, effect, expression, or mediation. Destruction usually displaces architecture from architectural discourse, if not the domain of ‘culture’ more generally, and positions it in the domain of ‘violence,’ and so, in typical formulations, in radically different disciplinary sites and epistemological frameworks.” A. Herscher, *Violence Taking Place: The Architecture of the Kosovo Conflict* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), p.4.

20. For environmental scanning we used photogrammetry combined with LIDAR scanning and audio recordings. The software used for composing VR installation was mainly Unity3D.

21. Here Howe specifically leans on Judith Butler’s *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. See Howe, “Ontology,” p.281.

22. As drones have become more affordable in recent years the practice of deploying them for the purposes of cultural heritage and archaeological surveying has become more prevalent. See D. Meyer, E. Fraijo, E. Lo, D. Rissolo, and F. Kuester, “Optimizing UAV Systems for Rapid Survey and Reconstruction of Large-Scale Cultural Heritage Sites,” in 2015 *Digital Heritage 1* (IEEE, 2015), pp.151–54. In the field of digital heritage, discussion on the use of drones has remained fairly technical, focusing on efficiency and urgency of use in surveying, modeling and managing heritage sites for preservation purposes. It has thus largely avoided taking a critical stance regarding their use as instruments of state power. Such a stance has, however, been expressed by Lisa Parks and Caren Kaplan, whose work has traced the inherent militaristic instrumentality of drones. According to Caplan and Parks, disregarding the power inherent to the drone perspective might implicate one in continuing a colonizing gaze, especially

in conflict zones such as Lifta. L. Parks and C. Kaplan, *Life in the Age of Drone Warfare* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017). The work in Lifta, however, used drones with the purpose of allowing self-generated 3D models, instead of using available city and state-made maps. This selected strategy aimed at repurposing drone imagery as part of critical design projects.

23. See, for instance, D. Cosgrove, *Apollo’s Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

24. The software development environment was done using tools for game design and development, mainly the game engine Unity. The video game industry has pushed forward a new medium for real-time, interactive representation, which can be imported to architecture, history and pedagogy.

25. For instance, N. Hasson, “Men and Women, Religious or Not, Battle for Rights at Israeli Springs,” *Haaretz*, June 29, 2018, available at <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-men-and-women-religious-or-not-battle-for-rights-at-israeli-springs-1.6221515>.

26. L. Van Lij, *Interview with Raida Adon*, <https://www.zochrot.org/en/testimony/54927>, 2013.

27. Various writings by Tawfiq Canaan were used in the context of the work, including those on the tradition of Palestinian masonry and the history of mythical beliefs in relation to water sources and springs in Palestine. See T. Canaan, *The Palestinian Arab House: Its Architecture and Folklore* (Jerusalem: Syrian Orphanage Press, 1933); and *Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Palestine Oriental Society, 1922).

28. The English translation used by the students is by Senan Anton and appears in the posthumous collection his poems. See M. Darwish, *I Don’t Want This Poem to End: Early and Late Poems* (Northampton, MA: Interlink Publishing Group, 2017).

29. Nitzan-Shifan, *Seizing Jerusalem*.

30. S. Bowry, “Before Museums: The Curiosity Cabinet as Metamorphe,” *Museological Review*, Vol.18 (2014), pp.30–42.

31. Although somewhat problematic, one of the recurrent references when speaking to activists who are involved with Lifta is Machu Picchu. For instance, the architect Gadi Iron, who is part of the Save Lifta Coalition, states that “We want to make a kind of Machu Picchu out of the village. Lifta is just as important.” “Interview with Gadi Iron, Architect,” accessed January 24, 2020, at <https://www.zochrot.org/en/testimony/54959>. We have also encountered this reference in conversation with architects involved in the Save Lifta Coalition during our fieldwork.

32. G. Lucas, *Understanding the Archaeological Record* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

33. It is worth noting that neither Gilliland nor Caswell are historians. Gilliland is a scholar in the field of information studies, and Caswell has worked in archival studies. Thus, the perspective offered in their work is a disciplinary one — not that of the archival tourist, be it a historian, artist or designer. It rather presents a view somewhat akin to that of an archival curator, or even a gatekeeper, so to speak. A.J. Gilliland and M. Caswell, “Records and Their Imaginaries: Imagining the Impossible, Making Possible the Imagined,” *Archival Science*, Vol.16 (March 2016), p.75.

34. M. Pearson and M. Shanks, *Theatre/ Archaeology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

35. A theory most frequently associated with the work of Judith Butler considers performative behavior as that which enacts something to which it refers. In such anti-essentialism, gender, for example, can be described as performance — as both something one is doing and a thing done. J. Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” *Theatre Journal*, Vol.40 No.4 (December 1988), pp.519–31. In the case of a site’s historical examination and the VR experience described here, one could argue that the archiving gesture operates similarly. Thus, the archive is acted upon while it is being enacted — that is, it is created anew by each user. One example of a historical performance art piece where the act and the matter of examination are superimposed is the “The Battle of Orgreave,” by British artist Jeremy Deller, who restaged a 1984 clash between police and striking miners. In 2001, in this work, Deller was able to resurrect the repressed memory of a troubled period of recent British history. By involving protagonists from the clash, he also triggered personal confrontations with that past. In addition, it was crucial that in this effort Deller used a battle-reenactment society, which are more frequently involved with English Civil War re-creations. Their participation pointed to how English history tends to be addressed only when it is romanticized and thus no longer deemed to have present political impact.

All images were created by the authors, with student participation noted with regard to specific projects.

When Public Spaces Speak: Investigating the Tragedy of the Urban Commons in Alexandria, Egypt

AHMED EL-KHOLEI AND GHADA YASSEIN

Public spaces are physical indicators of the institutional frameworks that govern urban development. Considering this relationship, this article, by examining the case of al Khalideen Garden in Alexandria, Egypt, emphasizes how changes in the built environment may result from transformations in the institutional framework. Specifically, the article analyzes how the tension between market and use value may provide a challenge to planners in capitalist societies, particularly those with weak institutional frameworks. Spaces are not mute. With this in mind, the article uses the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework to interrogate what this particular public space has to say about society, and thereby make recommendations for policy reform. The analysis reaffirms the importance of citizen participation in the design of public space and the importance of social media in reflecting people's opinions about it.

Cities are the cradle of innovation, they are responsible for production and consumption, they are frequently sites of conflict, and they are the origin of many environmental problems. Cities also symbolize the relationship between culture and the built environment, as they provide an archive of the past, thus transmitting culture and interpreting history.

Spaces such as parks, plazas and streets constitute a vital element of every city because they provide open areas that are publicly owned and managed. Public space is also a social construct because it is where social relations achieve spatial expression, contributing to the reality of a city as lived space.¹ As cultural products that reflect social change, public spaces further highlight the role of space in establishing power relations and constructing a sense of place as part of a meaningful cultural system. However, in urban societies where the authorities may deny residents the right to participate in decision-making, public spaces may embody an ongoing struggle for identity as a result of the relatively limited influence residents have on their functioning and design.

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The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a highly urbanized region containing some of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities. In Egypt these include Alexandria, which was founded in 331 BCE, and Memphis, which is part of modern Cairo but was founded in 300 BCE.² Other old cities in the region include Damascus, Jerusalem and Baghdad.

In the development of the region, tribal governance and social systems combined with the availability of building materials and construction techniques to shape traditional settlements. However, governing elites have long had an important impact on the development of the region's cities, a trend that continued under Arab rulers. For example, in each period of Cairo's history, rulers were associated with the construction of different buildings and urban spaces.³ And recently, using the cities of Doha and Dubai as case studies, Ashraf Salama has argued that regional urban traditions, originally shaped by ordinary people, have shifted to reflect the increasingly prominent role played by the powerful.⁴

THE TRAGEDY OF THE URBAN COMMONS

The local institutional framework — comprising a set of formal organizational structures, rules, and informal norms — affects the structure and functioning of public space in every society.⁵ Indeed, this framework provides a crucial nexus connecting public space to the operation of the larger public sphere of social relations. Nezar AlSayyad and Kate Bristol compared the nature of this relationship in three distinct cultures (the Christian West, the Middle East, and the traditional Orient) between the seventh and fifteenth centuries.⁶ They found a close link between a society's institutional structure and the shape and functioning of its urban open spaces. The extent of this relationship, however, varied from one society to another. In general, however, the character of open space in a community reflects the structure of its urban institutions. For example, forms of open space matching the hierarchy of power relations appear to have emerged in societies with visible, recognizable institutional bodies. Meanwhile, societies that lack distinct, visible institutions appear to produce less transparent open space forms, ones whose structure may not reveal the substance of their institutional order.

Public spaces in the cities of the MENA region often provide a location for markets [*suqs*], cafes and bazaars. Usually situated in front of a main mosque or church, these provide important places for people to gather and interact. An outstanding example of such a permanent public space is the Sāḥat Jāmi' al-Fanā, the main square and market of Marrakesh, which UNESCO proclaimed as essential to the preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2001. Alternatively, seasonal social activities may reaffirm collective urban identities and solidarities through the temporary resignification and reordering of space. Anna Madoeuf thus described the significance for Sufis of the *mulid* [festival] of Hussein

to a particular neighborhood of Cairo. As she observed, “A *mulid* emerges and evolves in dialog with the overall spatial, cultural, and contested character of its quarter.”⁷

In MENA cities, however, many activities related to public life did not occur in public spaces. In the early 1900s, for example, it was far more likely that public debate operated through media that literate citizens created and exchanged among themselves. However, at this time many educated citizens also began to spend increasing amounts of time in semi-public locations with easy access to the public realm. Reading rooms, theaters, libraries and cafes were among these locations. A longstanding feature of Middle Eastern cities, cafes, in particular, grew more popular in the early twentieth century with the expansion of magazines, newspapers, and radio broadcasting. Thus, in 1911, a British traveler observed that Cairo had the most lively cafes of any city. Wearing fez hats [*tarbush*], many cafe patrons could be seen reading newspapers and discussing politics, while others played dice or dominoes. Ideally, the operation of the public sphere should include everyone, but at this time it was still fairly exclusive in practice. For starters, many people were unable to read or write. As a result, public discourse might reflect the beliefs and viewpoints of individual *effendis* on topics such as egalitarianism or their admiration of education and achievement.⁸

Following the fall of the Ottoman Empire, many Middle Eastern nations emerged with newly defined national boundaries and public organizations. At this time the operation of the public sphere moved from semi-public venues such as cafes to more exclusively private ones, such as the Yacht Club in Alexandria. Other more formal forums, such as parliaments and senates, were also established as exclusive locations for the consideration of matters of public interest. Several planning scholars have since observed how the establishment of the public interest as an abstract criterion for decision-making resulted from a diminishment in the authority of older forms of interaction within the public sphere.

Toward the end of the twentieth century however, the spread of information and communication technologies (ICT) established a new venue for the functioning of the public sphere. The creation of cyberspace also had an impact on the use of physical public space. Thus, following the uprisings of 2011 in the MENA region, Nezar AlSayyad and Muna Guvenc examined the spatial and temporal dimensions of new forms of urban protest. Specifically, they pointed to a reciprocal interplay between social media, urban space, and traditional media that reproduced and incrementally changed interactions between important actors in these events.⁹

Accordingly, public spaces have risen to new prominence as locations to distinguish the often contradictory positions of a nominally representative state on the one hand, and civil society, the market, and the household as a privatized domain of social reproduction on the other. Public spaces thus express civil society, but they may not be entirely configured

by it; instead, they develop at the intersection of civil society and the state.¹⁰ Examining institutional frameworks thus provides an excellent way to interrogate linkages between the operation of the public sphere and the structuring and control of public spaces.

With their associated buildings, public spaces such as parks, plazas and streets are not just visual phenomenon suited to other modes of social analysis and evaluation. Public spaces can also speak about important matters — in ways that people can understand. Public spaces and buildings may thus express views on democracy or aristocracy, openness or arrogance, welcoming or threat, hope for the future or longing for the past. Moreover, researchers may document these qualities by examining how they carry out their physical functions. It is vital, therefore, for scholarship to examine how public spaces reveal and demonstrate the most pressing issues affecting society.¹¹

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In January 2011 masses of ordinary Egyptians gathered in Tahrir Square, Cairo, to demand a change in their ruling regime. Their chants included calls for improved livelihoods, liberty, and social justice. Repeating the same slogans, protestors soon poured into the central public squares of other Egyptian cities. This historic moment was about dignity, and besides expressing an overwhelming desire for justice, it demonstrated the power of mass solidarity.¹² Between 2011–2014 the use of barricades by the state to physically close off streets in downtown Cairo (particularly in locations such as Mohammad Mahmoud and the Cabinet of the Ministers that saw bloody street battles) further demonstrated the power of urban space as an arena for the establishment of a genuine public sphere.¹³ Graffiti that appeared across the city also suggested that the daring blossoming of youth subcultures and the explosion of artistic expression that emerged with the protests in Tahrir Square represented a moment of visible cultural transformation.¹⁴

As a result of this period of unrest, Egypt's 2014 constitution (amended in 2019) includes a special section on local administration. Specifically, its Article 176 assures a decentralization of power, requiring that the central government delegate certain duties to local authorities. However, the Egyptian Parliament has yet to pass measures outlining how this article is to be carried out, and there is no indication such measures will be passed any time soon.¹⁵ Likewise, there has been no effort to establish local popular councils to approve land-use plans.

In addition, the constitution does not explicitly acknowledge the right to public space. Several parts of the constitution do protect related rights. These include Article 65, which assures freedom of thought and opinion; Article 73, which stipulates that citizens may organize public meetings,

marches, demonstrations, and other kinds of peaceful protest; and Article 81, which protects the right to peaceful, private meetings without prior notice. Yet while these articles offer guarantees that might apply to the use of public space, they do not ensure the right of access to it. Indeed, this is expressly limited by a new law that requires prior consent from the authorities for any public assembly to be considered legal. Neither does the constitution address the privatization of public space or recognize the necessity of public space in promoting a culturally diverse society.¹⁶

Since 2014 the Egyptian government has embarked on number of initiatives aimed at improving the quality of settlements across the country. Among these have been the development of new cities, the clearing of slums, and the provision of alternative housing for those living in disaster-prone areas.¹⁷ In general these efforts have been planned and developed by the Armed Forces Corps of Engineers (AFCE) on behalf of municipalities and other governmental agencies. As stipulated by Law 119/2008, however, neither the General Organization for Physical Planning (GOPP) nor the National Organization for Urban Harmony (NOUH) seems to have been involved in these projects.¹⁸ As a result, they have been designed and built without citizen participation or the approval of elected local councils.

Among urban projects constructed since 2014 some new flyovers and roads have eased traffic congestion. However, these projects have often come at the expense of historical areas, such as Cairo's necropolis, or they have resulted in the paving over of precious green areas. For example, with a view to creating additional space for cars, new road projects have eliminated 90 acres of green space that once improved the quality of streets in Heliopolis, according to the Heliopolis Heritage Foundation. The result has often been to transform the character of places and what they once meant to residents.¹⁹ Cognitive, emotional and evaluative qualities combine to generate urban identity, which social representations of the city and socio-demographics also influence. Thus it has been shown that the sense of place among citizens affects their support for local initiatives.²⁰

The city of Alexandria provides an excellent example of the effects of this new institutional frame, which is based on denying citizens the right of access to public space. In Alexandria the governorate has in recent years leased public beaches to hotels, cafes and restaurants as a way to generate revenue and maintain their quality as urban spaces. But the effect has been to make them accessible only to those who can pay to use them. The city is also not an isolated case of such practices; rather, it is representative of a phenomenon that has spread to other coastal cities in Egypt. The development of a group of cafes, restaurants, and seaside gated resorts may generate a few jobs, but it may also deny people the access they need to the sea to sustain other livelihoods or simply enjoy local nature.

Alexandrians have had a mix of responses to these new privatization policies. Some have praised them as a way to clean up public areas, improve security, and offer decent facilities, such as WCs. But many others have been critical of the governorate's actions, and they have shared photos, posts and comments on the topic on their Facebook pages. In general two types of Facebook groups have taken up this issue: one consists of Alexandrians seeking to defend the public qualities of the city they once knew; the other represents the views of design professionals, such as the *Diwān āl Mi'māryn* [Architects' Council]. Together, the posts and comments from these two groups raise two central questions. Whose space is this? And what role should citizens have in making decisions with regard to it?

In the remainder of this article we will attempt to address these questions using the government's recent transformation of al Khalideen Garden as a case study. Specifically, we will investigate linkages between this project and the institutional framework according to which officials have justified alterations to public space that have diminished its operation as part of the public sphere. Our inquiry is thus concerned both with actions and meanings.

The section that follows will first outline the history and evolution of Alexandria as the context for the investigated space, al Khalideen Garden. The next sections will then present our sources of data and research design. This will be followed by results and discussion, and finally our conclusions.

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION

In 1805 CE, in an attempt to modernize Egypt, Muhammad 'Ali Pasha started a series of mega-development projects in and around Alexandria. Chief among these was the digging of the Mahmoudiyah Canal, which was intended to improve irrigation and facilitate navigation between Alexandria and Cairo. But Muhammad 'Ali also refurbished the city's forts and walls, rehabilitated its harbor, and established a telegraph line between Cairo and Alexandria.²¹ Even more importantly, in 1821 he introduced the cultivation of cotton, which soon became Egypt's leading export. As a result of these advancements Minett āl Bassal, at the end of the Mahmoudiyah Canal near the port in West Alexandria, became the location of a stock market. Along the canal, factories also developed, producing various products such as paper, and a freight rail line was constructed to deliver imported European machines to the factories and carry cotton and other agricultural products and manufactured items to the Port of Alexandria for export.

During these years Alexandria prospered as a significant outlet for exports, attracting many European traders. In 1798, at the time of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, the population of Alexandria had stood at around four thousand persons. Five decades later, however, the population had grown to 143,000, which included many Europeans, such as Greeks and Ital-

ians, who set up business associations within the city. And by 1872 Alexandria's population had reached 212,000.²² According to one source, "France, Italy, Greece, Switzerland, Austria, and others were represented by councils within Alexandria."²³

By the end of the century a new Egyptian aristocracy had also ascended to power in the city, reflecting the rise of cotton as a critical source of income. And in 1890 Alexandria became the first city in Egypt to create its own municipal council, which collected levies and provided various urban services. Michael J. Reimer, in his account of the origins and development of this council, the *Conseil de l'Ornato*, claimed it was the first modern local council in the Middle East.²⁴

After the ouster of King Farouk in 1952, however, Alexandria's institutional framework, local economy, and social structure were completely transformed. Egypt's new socialist government under Gamal Abdel Nasser began by nationalizing the assets of the foreign communities, forcing them to leave the country. Then, in preparation for the launch of Egypt's first five-year plan (1960–65), starting the mid-1950s he placed the properties of many wealthy Egyptians under state control. Many wealthy members of Egyptian minority groups, notably Jews and Copts, fled to Europe and North America at this time. And these members of the business community were replaced as leaders of Alexandrian society by bureaucrats in charge of government agencies and army and police officers. With these changes, the Egyptian state also gained complete control over the allocation of investments in and the shape of the city's built environment.

In 1970, however, the local institutional structure changed again when Anwar Sadat replaced Nasser as president. Within the course of his first year in office he replaced many former Nasser loyalists and freed the leaders of Muslim Brotherhood (which Nasser had suppressed) from prison. In 1974, Sadat also moved away from the tenets of a planned socialist economy, declaring a new policy of Openness [*Infitah*], which he hoped would liberate the Egyptian economy and raise standards of living nationally.

Under Sadat, businesspeople could once again take part in decision-making. But in Alexandria the Sadat years also saw the rise of the fundamentalist Salafist movement, and the Muslim Brotherhood increasingly came to control trade, manufacturing, construction and politics in the city. The rise of Islamic political factions, coupled with an influx of rural migrants, eventually also led to the emergence of a new elite in the city. This group had very different cultural values than its predecessors, and its power was increasingly associated with the spread of informal settlements on the city's outskirts. With the decline in cotton exports in the late 1990s, the city also lost much of its old image and vitality. The rise of new seaside resorts along Egypt's north coast, which attracted many Egyptians who had formerly traveled to Alexandria to spend their summer vacations, provided a further blow to the local economy.

AL KHALIDEEN GARDEN

Al Khalideen Garden [Ḥadiyqa' al Khāldyn] — i.e., “the Garden of Immortals” — is located in the Raml Station area of downtown Alexandria (FIG. 1). One of the city's oldest gardens, dating back decades, it is also now the site of a two-story underground garage that can accommodate 300 vehicles. Situated at a juncture of tram lines and public bus routes, the garden is separated from the Mediterranean by a broad boulevard, or corniche, officially known as July 26 *al Ġayšh* [the Army] Road. The southern edge of the park is dominated by the Army Officers' club and hotel. The headquarters building for the National Women's Council (WNC) occupies its eastern boundary (FIG. 2). And to the west, the garden is bordered by an apartment building whose flats are now mostly occupied by businesses such as dentists and trading companies (FIG. 3).

The park was constructed before the ouster of King Farouk in 1952, and it was originally named Princess Ferial's Park, probably in honor of Farouk's grandmother. In the early 1980s, however, the governorate constructed a garage under the park to serve downtown Alexandria. At the time the principal above-ground elements of the park were palm trees, wooden benches, and walking paths. But the governorate also decided to rename it al Khalideen to commemorate four historic Alexandrian figures: Alexander the Great, Hassan Pasha *al Askandrani*, Muhammad Korayem, and Sayed

Darwish.²⁵ And it placed prominent stone busts of each of these historic figures on dark red granite pedestals in the park, complemented by white marble panels describing their contributions to the city.

Nearby the park is the *al Qā'ed Ābrāḥim* [Ibrahim the Commander] mosque, one of the most famous mosques in Raml Station.²⁶ It was designed by the Italian architect Mario Rossi and constructed in 1948 to celebrate the centenary of the death of Ibrahim Pasha.²⁷ The mosque is famous for its tall minaret, distinctive design, and the Taraweeh prayers offered there in the month of Ramadan.

However, the mosque is not only famous for its architectural style but for its association with Sheikh Ahmad *al-Mahallawi*, an imam who led prayers there in the 1970s and 1980s and whose speeches often criticized government policies. *Al-Mahallawi's* Friday sermons attracted many Alexandrians and other Egyptians who traveled to Alexandria to listen to him. And, in 1972, with his support, a group of Islamic fundamentalists established a movement known as the Salafist Call in Alexandria [*Āld'wī al Salfya' bi al Askndrya'*]. Its members controlled wholesale and retail, construction, and agricultural businesses in the city and were active at the campus of Alexandria University near the mosque. At times, Sheikh *al-Mahallawi*, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Salafists have also used the mosque to attack non-Islamic political movements, including liberals and leftists. This has sometimes resulted in violent clashes between factions in the city.²⁸

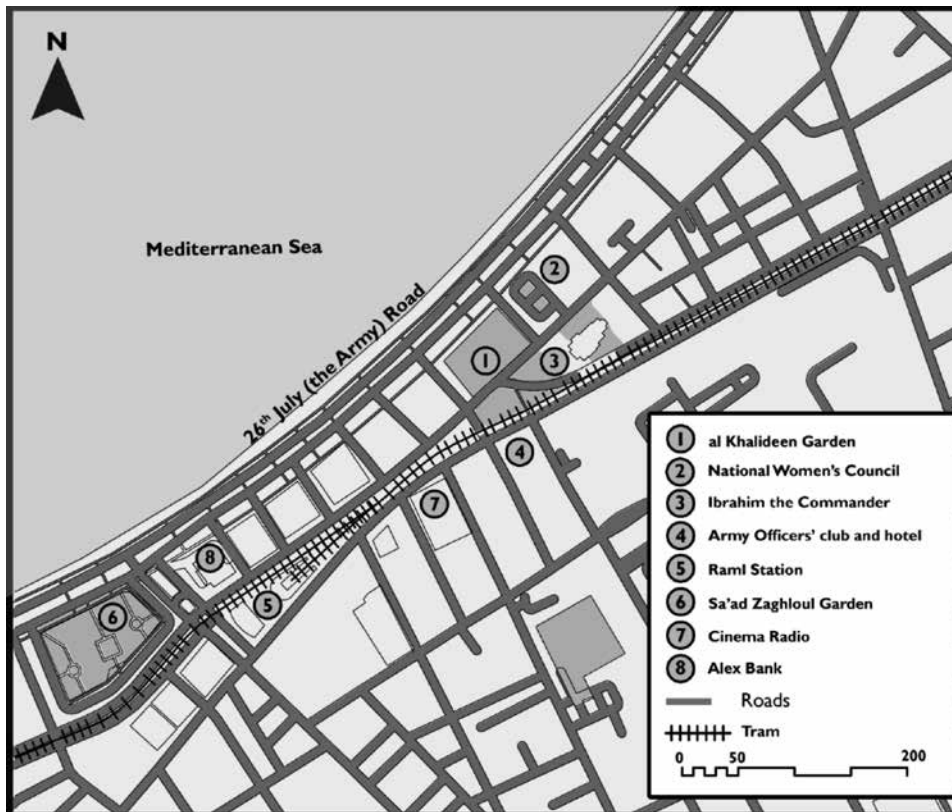


FIGURE 1. The location of al Khalideen Garden and its surroundings in Raml Station.



FIGURE 2. *Al Khalideen in the 1950s, showing the WNC headquarters building. Source: H.M. Kamel, “Alexandria, 1950s, al Khalideen Garden, Raml Station [al Āskandryāfī fī Kḥamsiynāt al Qarn al-Šhryñ Ḥadiyyaqāf al Khāldyn bi Maḥaif al Raml],” available at <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/380554237262028856/>.*

With the encouragement of Sheikh āl-Mahallawi, al Khalideen Garden and the plaza of the mosque were also significant venues of protest in January 2011 (at the time of the Tahrir Square demonstrations) and June 2013 (at the time of the demonstrations against the government of Mohamed Morsi). But thereafter the garden deteriorated as a result of the thousands of people who continued to flock to it. Although the Alexandria governorate had contracted with private companies to manage the collection of solid waste in the city, garbage could often be found piled high in the garden. The governorate also had not been able to maintain the garage underneath it for decades, so that it required structural repair. Eventually, citing a lack of security, the governorate decided to close the garage after drug addicts began to occupy it late at night.

The condition of the complex changed abruptly, however, in May 2017 when residents of the city woke up to find the Armed Forces Corps of Engineers (AFCE) engaged in a project to wipe away the former design of the park and restore the garage. And, after this work was complete, private companies appeared on site to set up restaurants and cafes in place of the public green area that had once been there.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Investigating actions and meanings with regard to public spaces requires the use of qualitative research tools. For this work, we chose to employ the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework developed by the institutional economist Elinor Ostrom. IAD is intended to divide the analysis of complex instances of collective action into discrete arenas, allowing a better understanding of eventual outcomes.²⁹ As a methodology it was originally applied in stud-



FIGURE 3. *A view of the square before its redevelopment. Source: N. Abu Shal, “Alexandria: Commander Ibrahim turned into a Garage [al Āskandryāfī: al Qā’yd Ābrāhiym Taḥawal ila Ġaraġ],” al Masry al Youm, Cairo, January 24, 2016.*

ies of people’s ability to organize themselves to manage shared physical resources without formal government regulation. But it has since been applied to the informal development of open-source knowledge systems.

Key to the framework is the analysis of action situations in which “actors in position” make choices within existing rule structures. These choices then create the basis for new action situations, the ongoing resolution of which leads in an iterative way to the development of commonly accepted social structures. In making their choices, actors in position are thought to respond to three main areas of concern: the physical environment, socioeconomic conditions, and evolving institutional arrangements. With regard to the use of public space, Margaret Polski and Ostrom, for example, examined how the IAD framework can help understand the emergence of policies of traffic regulation at two urban intersections (in Minneapolis and Boston) characterized by very different contextual factors and rules-in-use.³⁰

To embark on the analysis, we followed recommended steps for extracting and analyzing data from Facebook.³¹ Our data sources were the comments of Facebook users and group members regarding al Khalideen Garden, plus newspaper reports and YouTube video clips describing the transformation of the garden and Alexandria at large. We used NCapture, a free online browser extension, to collect Web content and then import it into NVivo, a qualitative data-analysis software.

As an example of qualitative data analysis (QDA), our research employed the metaphor of a symphony, which includes “Noticing, Collecting, and Thinking about Things” (NCT).³² According to this process, we read and coded posts and comments to develop replicable and accurate judgments using NVivo. In sum, our strategy allowed us to observe information trends on Facebook and the interactions between users

in existing Facebook groups to investigate public attitudes and opinions regarding development projects in Alexandria.

The Facebook groups from which we collected data were diverse. Among them was *Diwān al Mi‘māryn*, a group dedicated to general architectural discussions. But we also analyzed the content of groups dedicated explicitly to Alexandria, such as *Alexandria 1900*, *Alex Now*, and *Alexandria Ḥabybaty [My Love]*. And to enrich the analysis we used a data set collected through informal interviews and discussions from previous research. The posts and comments about al Khalideen Garden covered a period from 2020–21.

Our first step was to explore the data by applying cluster analysis.³³ We then searched for the one thousand words with significant frequency. Next, we determined the themes and codes under each one. Our third step was to determine relationships and associations between the codes as these addressed the action arena. This allowed us to identify the most important aspects of the physical world, the rules-in-use, and the community — the crux of the IAD framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reports from newspapers. On February 16, 2018, the Cairo newspaper *al Youm al Sab’a* reported that the governor of Alexandria had confirmed that the AFCE had completed the repair of the al Khalideen garage. He told the reporter, J. Munir, that the project was aimed at restoring the historical identity of al Khalideen Garden. He then added that the governorate and the AFCE were investigating various options to use the garden above the garage for cultural activities.³⁴

Two months later, the *Masrawy* news portal reported public displeasure at the rough handling of the busts of the four historical figures that occupied the site. The report, by M. Amer, affirmed Facebook posts that the local authorities had used a garbage truck, a loader, and a wheelbarrow to transport and relocate the statues. Amer also interviewed the chairperson of Alexandria’s Central District, who denied these allegations.³⁵ However, in the weekly newspaper *al Dos-tour*, S.‘Abd al Ḥamyid affirmed the allegations and provided pictures to prove them (FIG. 4).³⁶

On December 12, 2020, A. Elmessiri reported in the newspaper *Masr al Arabia* that Alexandrians were expressing their resentment toward the redesign of the garden on social media.³⁷ According to Mohamed al-Dassouki: “Unfortunately, the most important thing about the project is the revenue, regardless of the aesthetic and historical value of the garden to be an eyesore.” In particular, he added, “I was very sorry to see the liver sandwiches and Kushari [Kowšhāry] shops beside the traffic congestion.”³⁸ According to Ali Osman, “Businesspersons are responsible for commercial activities. . . It is unforgivable that the local administration seeks profit and distorts the divine beauty replacing the garden with restaurants to get an unjustified income.”



FIGURE 4. S.‘Abd al Ḥamyid documented how the local authorities mishandled the busts of historic figures that had once been prominently displayed on the site. Source: <https://www.dostor.org/2134203>.

In 2021 reporters from the news and media site *Veto* then visited al Khalideen and Sidi Gabr squares in Alexandria (which had both been venues for demonstrations in 2011 and 2013). In al Khalideen, they reported that the situation had changed entirely. The garden — where many revolutionaries had lived and where the statues of important Alexandrian figures had once been prominently displayed — had been entirely commercialized and converted for use by private restaurants. Indeed, the authorities had obliterated the former design, and the statues had been relocated so that they effectively disappeared (FIG. 5).³⁹

Responses from Facebook users. Our collection of Facebook posts revealed many of the same sentiments. For example, on July 2, 2021, the Egyptian poet and columnist Farouk Gouida wrote, “Trees are beautiful and fun, and logging has tarnished the streets and deprived our children of the pleasures of imagination and beauty. It is wrong for some to think that trees aren’t necessary because they add noth-



FIGURE 5. Stills from a Veto report on the conditions of al Khalideen before the development (left) and after its transformation into a food court (right).

ing to man, but the truth is they're part of beauty. Moreover, nothing without beauty is valuable.⁴⁰

Most design professionals who belong to specialized Facebook groups also sounded bitter notes. On September 1, 2021, the administrator of the Facebook group *Diwān āl Mi'māryn* recounted the phases by which the garden had been transformed into a food court. And the freelance multimedia journalist Laila Said commented, "In the future, it will be a model of how public spaces can be distorted and eliminated." Another group member wrote, "The same business-oriented mind that ruined Heliopolis, Cairo. An abnormal hostility to the greenery."

According to Mostafa 'Abdel 'Aal: "When we were young, we went with our father or brothers to al Khalideen Garden. We were in the presence of those magnificent historical figures and their beautiful statues, and we felt respect and admiration. Unfortunately, this summer I was on vacation and visited the place to be stunned by the hustle of crowds and the smells of food and the uncivilized scene."

The posts of other individual Facebook users were similar. According to one: "I was surprised that al Khalideen Garden, which was beautiful, turned into a liver and Mumbār shop.⁴¹ I was stunned with a large banner announcing *āl Fālāh* liver shops, replacing the statues of Muhammad Korayem and Sayed Darwish that were simply thrown into the trash."⁴²

Ibrahim Rashad commented, "I saw this ugly scene two weeks ago, coincidentally, and I was very saddened to see the statue of Muhammad Korayem become in the middle as a sad tombstone, God damn it."

According to Ahmed Yousri, "AFCE prepared the upper level of al Khalideen Garden with the flags and statues of the heroes of Alexandria around the Egyptian flag. It was a good optimism that the arena was supposed to be for theatrical and musical performances. Before the inauguration, *āl Fālāh*'s forces and followers intervened and turned the place into a visual blight. It seems that Alexandria's rulers don't care. While the President is appealing to the peasants to preserve the farmsteads, 182 acres nearby Green Plaza, Alexandria,

transformed into residential compounds and gated communities for the elite besides those developed at *āl Nouzha* airport. I hope God protects *āl Nouzha* and Antoniadis.⁴³ They hate Alexandria."

Outcome of the institutional analysis. Results of the cluster analysis suggested six themes to which the codes and coded quotations belonged (FIG. 6). First is context, which includes social change, events and politics. Identity, space and transformations constitute the second theme — conversion. Actions and meanings are at the crux of the third theme, decision-making. Class struggle is the fourth theme,

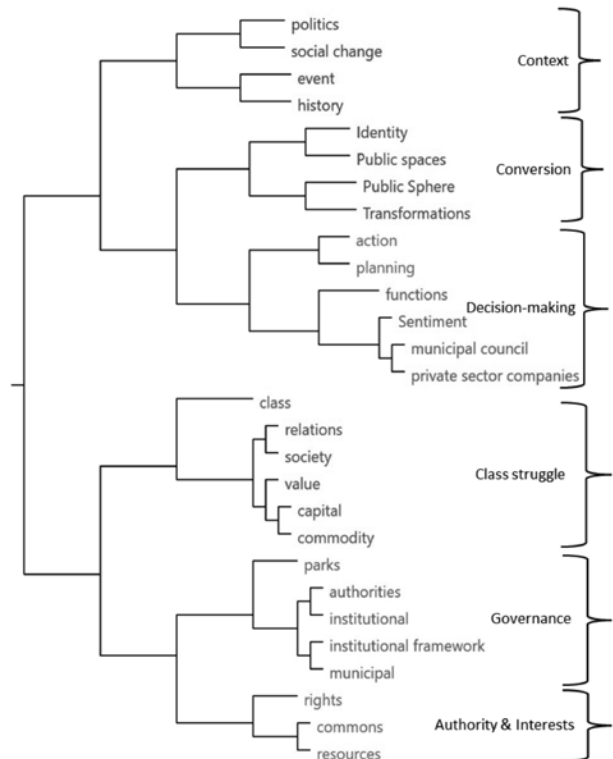


FIGURE 6. Words clustered by coding similarity.

	High excludability	Low excludability
High subtractability	Private	Common Pool
Low subtractability	Toll	Public

FIGURE 7. *Determining the nature of a good or service.* Source: M.M. Polski and E. Ostrom, "An Institutional Analysis and Policy Design," in D.H. Cole and M.D. McGinnis, eds., *A Framework for Policy Analysis* (London: Lexington Books, 2017).

which reflects competing interests and affirms the contradiction related to property inherent in the capitalist city. The last two themes — governance, and authority and interests — are inseparable and closely associated with the fourth theme.

The first step in conducting the IAD analysis then involved interrogating the decision-making context, which consists of three elements: the physical world, the community, and the rules-in-use. To determine whether a good or service is public, it must be low in terms of subtractability (the extent to which one person's use of a resource depletes the possibility of its being used by others) and excludability, as the accompanying figure shows (FIG. 7). Providing public goods and services is one of the reasons for planning. According to these criteria, the garden is a public good. However, once the governorate transformed it into a food court, it lost its identity as such.

The physical world. Developable land is a precious asset in Alexandria, as the city is squeezed between the Mediterranean and Lake Maryut. For that reason, many informal developments occupy former agricultural areas to the east and desert lands to the west. Parcels of land near the Mediterranean are the most valuable to acquire, which has the effect of pushing areas for the poor to the outskirts of the city.

Community. Alexandrians are diverse. Most of them are rural migrants or the children of those who migrated to the city at an earlier time. Since the mid-1800s, the city has attracted migrants from Egypt and abroad. Alexandrians are also proud of their city. However, in many instances, patterns of conduct reflect individualistic interests attributed to societal transformations and population diversity.

Rules-in-use. Rules-in-use are numerous, and the governorate does not seem to follow them all. As mentioned, the 2014 Egyptian constitution does not recognize the right of citizens to public space. Neither has the Egyptian Parliament passed legislation establishing the duties of local administrations. As a result, local authorities appear to have disregarded Law 119/2008. In particular, the GOPP and the NOUH do not seem to have been involved in any of the projects carried out in Alexandria in recent years, including the redevelopment of al Khalideen Garden. Instead, the AFCE has planned and developed projects on behalf of local authorities and other governmental bodies without involving citizens. In the absence of oversight by elected local authorities the actions of the AFCE also appear to be in violation of Law 119/2008.

		Influence	
		High	Low
Interest	High	Capitalists, such as restaurant owners	The locals who are not engaged in decision-making
	Low	Governor, local authorities, central authorities	City visitors, tourists

FIGURE 8. *Stakeholder analysis.*

Action arena. To examine the action arena, we conducted a stakeholder analysis (FIG. 8). We stratified stakeholders according to their power and influence in addition to their interests and concerns.

The first group was composed of capitalists, such as developers and restaurant owners. In general they are most concerned with the market value of the garden. Considering its location, they believe its redevelopment will boost their businesses and raise their profits. Because they have political power, most leaders of the business community associate with officials at the upper echelon of governmental institutions.

The second group was composed of local residents. They view the garden primarily for its use value as a needed environmental amenity. They thus prioritize it for the potential positive impacts it may provide for their health and well-being.

The third group is composed of local officials including the governor. They are influential, and their concerns primarily relate to the additional revenues the local administration may reap from the transformation of the garden into a food court. They defend their actions through state media, such as the reports in *al Youm al Sab'a* by Munir. These, for example, mention how the garden was neglected and not maintained, but they ignore the fact that one of the principal mandates of local authorities is to maintain the city's social and physical infrastructure.

The fourth group was composed of visitors to the city and tourists who knew the garden in its former state and who hold it in their memories as a significant destination in the city. Generally, this group feels sorry about the situation today. But both locals and visitors can only express their views on social media, because the authorities have denied them the ability to participate in decision-making.

Patterns of Interaction. Structures of political participation, information flows, and markets have defined patterns of interaction related to the redesign of the garden. Important conditions here include the absence of elected local councils to discuss and approve projects; the denial of the right of citizens to participate in decision-making; a lack of transparency and accountability; and the power currently wielded by a local oligopoly composed of a handful of real estate developers and restaurant owners. These conditions explain how previously public spaces are now being transformed into privately managed public spaces whose use is restricted to those who can afford to pay to enter them.

Evaluation criteria. Positive qualities of public spaces include accessibility and safety and the ability to encourage social interaction, contribute to the local economy, protect the environment, and embody respect for cultural values. Urban open spaces that satisfy these criteria contribute to the quality of life in a city and the well-being of residents. On June 18, 2021, after visiting an open space in Washington, D.C., Ali Alraouf wrote on his Facebook page:

The true meaning of quality of life is that this public space, with its social, gardening, and recreational dimensions, is available to the district's inhabitants and free. Egyptians do not have the same quality of life as our cities lack this type of space. Never say we care about the quality of life after visiting El Gouna or return from visiting a friend who lives in a gated community.⁴⁴ Urban justice is the solution, and the community's entitlement to public garden spaces is a right.⁴⁵

Outcome. As shown in the accompanying figure summarizing the IAD analysis, the outcome in this case was that the AFCE repaired the garage at al Khalideen Garden, but it also removed the trees, lawns and benches that had made the garden an important environmental amenity and a place for people to relax and observe each other and the city around them (FIG.9). In their place the governorate installed a private food court, amidst which the statues of the immortal Alexandrians, for whom the garden was named, have largely disappeared, obscured by crowds, noise and smoke. Many Alexandrians, as well as other Egyptians with memories of the city, feel dissatisfied and alienated.

The analysis indicates that public spaces are signs of the institutional framework, affirming the linkages between the public sphere and public space. It likewise affirms the existence of both property and capitalist-democracy contradictions that challenge planners in capitalist societies.⁴⁶ Planning in the face of power thus seems impossible when the institutional framework does not adopt principles of good urban governance and does not seek urban justice.

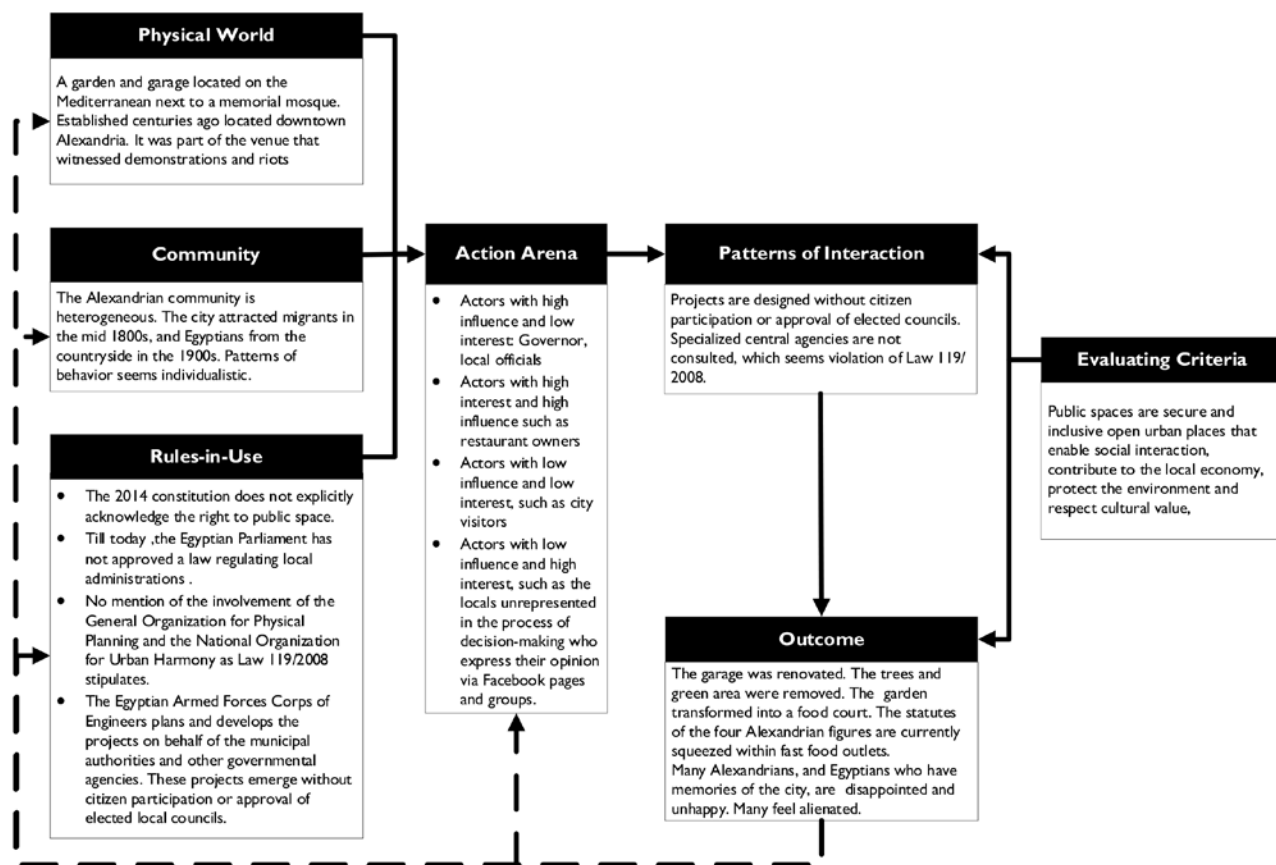


FIGURE 9. Results of the IAD analysis. Based on Polski and Ostrom, "An Institutional Analysis and Policy Design."

A CHANGED URBAN CONDITION

Public spaces are physical indicators of a vigorous public sphere and a robust institutional framework able to control urban development. Seen through the IAD framework, when rules-in-use seek to achieve social justice and assure good urban governance, and when actors in place respect these rules, public spaces prosper and are a source of people's enjoyment.

The tension between market value and use value, however, is a challenge to planners in capitalist societies. This may be particularly true in societies with weak institutional frameworks where laws are not respected, and where local people are rendered speechless. By contrast, citizen participation supports planners' quest to create public goods, such as gardens, to achieve social justice and mitigate the harmful external outcomes of economic activities, such as pollution and visual blight. In sum, public participation safeguards the right to the city and its open spaces.

The case of al Khalideen Garden, and Alexandria in general, support the above argument. Muhammad 'Ali's plans to modernize Egypt transformed the city from a neglected fishermen's village into a prosperous metropolis on the Mediterranean. In the 1950s and 1960s, however, the policies and actions of the Egyptian government under Nasser caused many Europeans and Egyptian businesspersons to leave the city.

When new policies were instituted in the Sadat era, the loss of Alexandria's former cosmopolitanism allowed a new ruling elite, with a different agenda, culture and values, to rise in the city. This was facilitated by the rise of Islamic political groups, who gained control of businesses — encouraging a further exodus of minorities from the city.

Today the transformation of the institutional framework of the city has led to many urban ills. Among these are the privatization of public spaces, the expansion of informal settlements, and the dumping of garbage on vacant lands.

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26. Ibrahim Pasha (1789–1848) was the eldest son of Muhammad 'Ali, the ruler of Egypt and Sudan. He was a commander in his father's Egyptian army.
27. Rossi lived in Egypt at the time, where he was serving as chief engineer in the Egyptian Ministry of Endowments.
28. For example, on December 15, 2012, Sheikh al-Mahallawi described those who followed leftist and secular parties as being outside the religion, and said they needed to repent for their positions. Some of the worshippers then attacked al-Mahallawi and injured him, forcing security forces to intervene. The following Friday al-Mahallawi's supporters from Alexandria and other areas in Egypt gathered at the mosque, setting up barricades, establishing security committees to verify the identity of worshippers, and searching everyone before they could enter the mosque. The result was a bloody clash that extend to nearby areas such as the campus of Alexandria University and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. See R. Muhharam, "The Incident of Sheikh Ahmed al-Mahallawi and al-Hazem in Alexandria," *Civilized Dialogue* [al Hwwar al Mutamadin], Sept. 23, 2020, available at <https://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=692933> (accessed September 16, 2021).
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43. Āl Nouzġaġ is Egypt's second largest zoo. The Gardens and Palace of Antoniadis date back to the Herculean period in Egypt and are among the oldest gardens in Alexandria.
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Withering Public Space in Chandigarh: Transforming Retail and Social Choreographies in the Neoliberal Indian Mall

MANU P. SOBTI

Within Le Corbusier's vision for the city of Chandigarh in the mid-1960s was his determination that its Central Market, in Sector 17, would serve as its main public space. But in today's epoch of Facebook, online shopping, and, most recently, the paralyzing Coronavirus, Sector 17 bespeaks monotony for a substantial percentage of the city's residents. Thus, while civic pride may allow them to grudgingly accept the modernist regularity of Chandigarh's urban plan, they often remain at odds with the architectural starkness at its heart. In examining Chandigarh's Sector 17 within the framework of transforming Indian urbanities, however, this article also seeks to reposition political discourse at the forefront of architectural making and unmaking, and interrogate the role of neoliberal policies in the subversion of meanings ascribed to space, place and ownership. Toward this end, it asks a number of questions: What spaces are losing out as a result of these processes? How is this happening? And what new, enticing temples of consumption are emerging, forging new elites via their cornucopia of goods? At the micro level, both within Chandigarh and beyond, it appears that the traditional Indian *bazaar* — serpentine, labyrinthine and lattice-like — has conspicuously withered and fallen apart. So have the originally indigenous carnival ground and the urban *maidan*, which served for millennia as a space of social mixing through both native and colonial regimes. In the neoliberal climate of consumptive appro-

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priation that characterizes India today, these spatial typologies may still exist, but they appear to no longer sufficiently titillate the desires of the newly emerging elite. Should the new shopping malls proliferating on the edges of Chandigarh then be construed as privatized realms masquerading as urban public space? And, if so, can these far-removed consumptive paradises not also be considered economic alterities that illustrate how the fall of public man is already woefully complete?

In Delhi's new Master Plan, effectuated in 2007, the poor are meant to be cleared away or incorporated into the rationalized city.

Ajay Gandhi¹

What really *makes* a city? Is it instrumentalized through paradigms of size, density, and numbers of people commuting along its busy thoroughfares? Or are the attributes of *city-ness* grounded in more general impressions of a thickly built-up landscape?² Does the visceral sense of the urban emerge from insalubrious smells emanating from the excreta in city's underground bowels? Is it evinced by a gargantuan trundling of human traffic? Or is it bound to the pleasures of serendipitous meetings among strangers in urban rooms on shared common ground?

Considering the kaleidoscopic array of experiences that constitute urban life, many scholars agree that a city's identity involves more than the sum of its spaces and temporalities.³ A city's physical attributes must therefore be seen as enmeshed with the dynamism and instability of its countless inhabitants. However, for cities that do not play by the rules and where legislation operates at best as a superficial overlayer, the concept of *city-ness* remains pointedly opaque. On this front, the urban landscapes of the global South, with their multitudes of inhabitants, stand as exemplars of "broken" rules (or no rules at all), where the future is inherently unpredictable. As existing palimpsests are either continually erased or where they provide layers of a concomitant past, what real and imaginary worlds are these mega-urbanities moving toward? Will these worlds ever stop growing or experience a self-conscious hiatus?

Given the struggle within urban scholarship to position normative (and largely Eurocentric) models of analysis alongside indigenous (and local) ones, this article aims to avoid value judgements about the multifarious processes that comprise city making and unmaking across Asia.⁴ Instead, it seeks to explore the tantalizing vignette of an unfolding phenomena that is complex in its causative conditions and perplexing in its gamut of repercussions. This is the process of typological change wherein the building blocks of urban morphology are being replaced not via considered architect-

tural intervention but through speculative actions largely outside the bounds of formal design.

To understand this process, this commentary emphasizes the need to reposition political discourse at the forefront of artifactual processes at work in the city — an approach often ignored in urban analysis. Specifically, it seeks to interrogate the negative agency of neoliberal policies — including privatization, financialization, and wealth polarization — in the subversion of meanings ascribed to space, place and ownership. And it seeks to uncover which spaces are losing out as a result of these complex processes, how this is happening, and what new, enticing temples of consumption are emerging, forging new urban elites via their cornucopia of goods.

LONG LIVE THE CITY!

The formal and spatial changes emerging in cities and settlements across greater Asia are the primary interest of this examination. As a land of burgeoning populations, squandered resources, and contrived experiments with "new cities," India offers many telling cases.⁵ Since independence in 1947, India's efforts at city-making have, at best, straddled Western-centered models and self-identified (though often simplistic) notions of "smartness." At worst, they have been guided by lax legislation that has fertilized the growth of cities and settlements in ways that have unashamedly disregarded history, memory, and the qualities of human life.⁶

According to a scenario of cheap production and capital flows unfettered by "conservative" nationalistic controls, the so-called "decisive" decades in India since the early 1990s have been marked by the transformative effect of neoliberal ideas of marketization and economic "deregulation."⁷ Some economists and social thinkers have, however, preferred to see this process as a notorious re-regulation in the interest of capital. The original idea was that populations were expected to attain unrivalled prosperity and social justice as a result of the catalytic impact of ambitious new economic policies. Instead, inequality has increased sharply in the last three decades, with far-reaching socioeconomic ramifications. Such a result has also called into question neoliberal promises of increased well-being as a result of the transformation of urban life, especially for the Indian poor.⁸

Within this cycle of urban change, the traditional Indian marketplace (the *bazaar*) and weekly market (the *haat*) — structurally quasi-informal and organizationally serpentine, labyrinthine and lattice-like — have withered and fallen apart. So have indigenous and colonial spaces of "social mixing," extant for millennia within the city and along its fringes, such as the carnival ground, the open *maidan*, and the *chowk*. Once typical of most cities and settlements, these spaces traditionally served as "permanences" within the urban fabric: where the *bazaar* and *haat* were sites of economic, commercial and religious exchange, the carnival ground and

maidan were containers for public spectacle and social performance.⁹ Interestingly, however, the decline of these spatial typologies has not primarily been a question of their continued relevance. Rather, in a climate of reckless appropriation and voracious consumption, it has had more to do with their failure to sufficiently titillate the desires of newly emerging elites, endowed with incomes on a par with those of residents of the developed world. As a result, these native urban socio-commercial spaces — manifestations of cultural *mentalités* in Braudelian terms — have been slowly but systematically replaced by the generic shopping mall and its trappings. At the same time, the rich choreographies of social and commercial exchange they enabled — demonstrative, argumentative and participatory — have given way to a new world of mundane and sanitized transactions (FIGS. 1–3).

Beyond replacing the *bazaar*, *haat* and *maidan*, the mall and its manifestations have also exacerbated the slow demise of exteriorized commercial space. Located in the liminal zone connecting shop frontages to busy sidewalks, these spaces traditionally played an important role in the anthropometrics of the Indian street. Seen in cross section, they allowed an overlapping of social domains that separated yet



FIGURE 1. TOP (1A): Kinari Bazaar street in Old Delhi/Shahjahanabad. BOTTOM (1B): Manek Chowk Market area of Ahmedabad.



FIGURE 2. TOP LEFT AND RIGHT (2A AND 2B): Laad Bazaar/Choodi Bazaar area around Charminar in Hyderabad. BOTTOM (2C): Sadar Market at Jodhpur.



FIGURE 3. TOP LEFT (3A): Bazaar at Bhadra in Ahmedabad. **TOP RIGHT (3B):** Nagaur Cattle Mela (fair) at Nagaur (between Bikaner and Jodhpur). **BOTTOM (3C):** Pushkar Mela (fair) at Pushkar (rural Maharashtra, around 270 km. from Mumbai).

connected the public street to private commercial areas and thus defined a continuity of urban experience. This “spillover” spatial realm also compensated for otherwise tight shop interiors that extended to the property line and in which it was difficult to provide interior atriums. Many of these sliver-thin exterior commercial spaces also culminated in squares or *chowks* — release points within the dense urban fabric.

But in Indian cities today, shopping malls have effectively inverted this urban condition. Their “bigness” has thus encouraged their perception as objects in the round, while their pseudo-modern design has left them semantically disconnected from their urban surroundings.

In the global North, malls may be constructed according to a variety of typologies, including the single enclosed building, the semi-open gallery-street, the theme park, and the assembly of interconnected pavilion-kiosks. Additionally, malls may appear either as isolated “island objects” on large properties surrounded by parking spaces or as interventions within existing city fabric.¹⁰ Within the Indian scenario, by contrast, malls appear to exhibit a nearly exclusive bias toward the “island object” typology. Planned and managed as a single property (in contrast to the individualized pattern of shop ownership characteristic of a *bazaar* street), these newly emergent complexes typically also occupy substantial tracts of land obtained either through the demolition of existing buildings or through their inclusion within the purview of greenfield developments. In most cases, however, only the mall interiors and immediate exteriors attract developer investment. The residual land around them is thus relegated to disorganized parking, left to serve as a spatial buffer between them and the busy streets that provide regional access to them. The mall, therefore, has almost no formal relationship to the city around it, a condition that discourages attendant incremental growth and that contributes little to the traditional sense of urban public space defined by building front-ages. The spatially malleable yet functionally specific *bazaar*, in contrast, encouraged a melding of individual enterprise and collective interest in the structuring of the city. Silently, therefore, the mall, in its various typologies, has inflicted irreversible damage on the accretive fabric of many Indian cities, first occupying real estate at the urban edge but now spreading to the urban core.

Once sporadic but now ubiquitous in the Indian context, shopping malls therefore can no longer be regarded merely as far-removed consumptive paradises. Instead, they can be seen as economic alterities where the fall of public man is woefully complete. Yet, despite this condition, few attempts have been made to critique the rise of the Indian mall for its contextual dissonance, or to comprehend it as a socio-spatial construct resulting from deeper forces of urban change. Neither have scholarly studies received much traction when they have sought to document how poorly designed malls are willy-nilly changing the urban fabric in the service of a new, consumerist Indian middle class. These are the difficult questions to address: on one hand they imply a critique of the shopping mall as a social construct; on the other they point to the challenges and failures of existing structures of urban retail that rely on public space (FIGS. 4, 5).

There is no doubt, however, that the demise of urban public space within the Indian context remains intertwined with the rising popularity of the private shopping mall. And,



FIGURE 4. TOP AND BOTTOM (4A AND 4B): *Two among New Delhi's modern shopping malls set on previously agrarian land outside the city proper.*



FIGURE 5. TOP AND BOTTOM (5A AND 5B): *Among the many Delhi malls, perhaps The Grand Venice built in 2017, in Noida, is the most bizarre in its emulation of the Grand Canal at Venice.*

to its dubious distinction, the mall has even now appeared in several of the subcontinent's "made-from-scratch" and "smart" cities, where it masquerades as a catalyst for sustainable growth. To begin to unpack this relationship, this article will thus initiate a discussion of how Corbusier's design for Chandigarh established an exemplar for an alternative modern approach to retail space, well before the arrival of the shopping mall typology. It thus reveals how the architecture and spatial character of Sector 17's Central Market may be seen to occupy a place parallel to New Delhi's Nehru Place — one of the Delhi Development Authority's earliest "designed" commercial centers from the 1970s.

Predictably, in the years since their respective construction, Corbusier's Sector 17 has, however, been maligned as part of the Brutalist monumentality of Chandigarh. But recently, so too have the successful plaza spaces and public buildings of Nehru Place been increasingly disparaged. Thus, in relation to a discussion of changing cultural attitudes, the article will conclude with an aspirational discussion of recent controversy surrounding the much-belabored redesign of New Delhi's Central Vista. The ongoing (though tragically far too late) rethink of the reconstruction of this symbolic open area at the heart of the national capital could truly provoke a substantive and timely discussion of urban public space in India.

THE MALL AS SOCIAL INCUBATOR

To understand the impact of the shopping mall on Indian cities, I will start by interrogating how neoliberalization is transforming the fabric of Indian urbanity. The contemporary Indian city is a consumerist paradise, a place where global brands vie for the attention of substantial chunks of the country's 1.4 billion inhabitants — specifically those with incomes beyond the minimum expendable GDP of US\$2,010.¹¹ Accordingly, the commercial function of many of India's fastest-growing megalopolises — including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad — has come to be dominated by a collation of new mall-laden shopping districts.

As a typology, the mall itself is not to blame for the relentless quality of this new landscape. In their earliest known incarnation, during India's immediate post-independence era, modest atrium-malls were considered desirable embellishments to busy shopping streets. New and unique, their architecture broke the monotony of the street facade. Indeed, the covered atriums of some and the air-conditioned enclosures and "step-down" sections of others made them especially memorable within the varied choreographies of the city. However, in recent decades privately owned mini- and mega-malls have displaced friendly, specialty-product shopping enclaves and gentrified the shopping streets that once characterized urban neighborhoods. One plot at a time, large-footprint commercial developments have also exploited

loopholes within planning legislation to systematically consume the leafy residential areas that once abounded both within and outside city centers.

In real estate terms, dedicated residential districts are only sustainable as long as urban land-use guidelines prevent their rampant conversion to retail and commercial functions. And in many of India's bustling cities (and even in less-important *mufassil* towns), residents of aging housing cooperatives and the owners of vanity bungalows have been no match for hawkish developers eager to strike a deal. Older shopping streets within busy urban centers have also now been identified as contested terrain, targets to be refashioned according to what is distastefully purported to be the new aesthetic of the "world-class" city.¹² In this ongoing privatization of central-city public space, there is also disturbing evidence of the state's unapologetic ties to a new middle-class constituency, leaving the poor and homeless to be forced ever-outward to a receding urban fringe.

For its plethora of local and national politicians, India's consumerist "prosperity" nevertheless shines through everywhere — each shop an exclusive domain and each shopping mall an exclave of privatized property. In this new urban realm, street or public frontage is perhaps the single most critical factor that determines the worth of an establishment. Indeed, mall architects may be commissioned (or fired) based on the extent of such precious frontage their projects potentially provide. However, such calculations also glaringly reveal a marked absence of concern for urban public space, both within and outside the typical development project. Thus, over the last few decades, the Indian brand of neoliberalization has discouraged nearly every investment in this direction.

Urban public spaces in their best possible forms are freely accessible, encouraging public assembly and fomenting debate and discussion. These spaces also instill a sense of common ownership, creating a broad spectrum of social claims while undercutting absolutist (or private) controls. Such spaces have long existed in India, typically intertwined with the narratives of festivities, ritual and spectacle. However, modern-day India has become noticeably miserly with regard to both the grandeur and inclusivity of its urban public spaces. And this is so much the case that many of these spaces (if their vestiges exist at all between new developments) are now subject to private control by individuals or corporations. This is certainly the case within a majority of India's larger cities. Furthermore, mass public assemblies in these spaces remain strongly discouraged, if not entirely forbidden, courtesy of the opportunistic resurrection of the very colonial-era civic laws that were mandated after the revolt of 1857, which Gandhi fought against as part of India's independence movement.¹³

So precious is urban space within the transforming Indian city that Walter Benjamin's quintessential *flâneur* would have a hard time finding an audience in the phantasmagoria of degraded public environments that characterize contemporary Delhi or Mumbai. The disemboweled *bazaar* can like-

wise provide little reprieve.¹⁴ Indeed, *flânerie* — as an activity providing a therapeutic pause in the hedonistic rush of city life — is now largely impossible along India's unwalkable sidewalks and in its much-encroached-upon squares (also almost entirely useless as venues for public debate and demonstration). In India today, Benjamin's "crowd" (a veil through which the familiar city is transformed for the *flâneur*¹⁵) can likely only be found in the relative safety of the claustrophobic and predictable indoor mall. Yet, where these formulaic and unmemorable spaces may seek to artfully mimic and provide a surrogate for the pulsating and unpredictable *bazaar*, they have also denuded the choreographies of real public space, replacing it with what might best be described as the modalities of Augéan "non-space."¹⁶

Meanwhile, beyond the visual cosmetics of the shopping mall, neoliberal forces also orchestrate how India's citizens behave in these "removed" urban public spaces. Most vulnerable in this regard is the Indian middle class — an economic and social categorization that emerged in the nineteenth century to denote the privileged residents of urban centers founded by their colonial masters.¹⁷ Following India's independence, and fast-forwarding to the decisive epoch of the 1990s, this often-maligned class has leveraged a major urban shift, riding economic reforms that incentivized private capital and encouraged foreign investment. It is this upwardly mobile 20 percent of India's population that today contributes as much as 66 percent of all retail revenues in the non-space of the mall.

The lowest echelons of this emerging class are composed of the hordes of rural migrants who have recently arrived in India's cities and have set out to join urban social and economic networks. For them especially, mall environments are constructs of divisive class distinctions writ large in building space. In this sense, Lucie Bernroider has suggested that such environments propagate relationships between the identity constructions of young urbanites, their middle-class practices and imaginaries, and the socio-spatial changes erupting within the city's multilayered and increasingly gentrifying spaces. In effect, alongside the familiar images of Indian middle-class urbanity, cosmopolitan inner-city life highlights the hierarchies emerging between the young urban middle and upper-middle classes.

Within India's exploding metropolises, urban migrant villages have also emerged as sites of tension, in which the drastic changes following economic liberalization are starkly visible.¹⁸ For the migrant and mobile middle class, symbolic claims to urban space are therefore expressed in the cosmopolitan urbanity of the mall, a claim that has otherwise been difficult to make given the development of Indian cities into "zones of comparative privilege versus disadvantage." Furthermore, now that its shock value as the new obese kid on the block has been normalized, the mall has actually taken on the guise of a new (and therefore acceptable) mode of public life. Beyond the role of the typical mall complex as a

functional and civic necessity (i.e., in the marked absence of small-time, street-corner retail stores from India's contemporary urban-scape), the sital constraints, formal limits, and extents of these outlandish creations have transformed them into undeniably value-driven sites.

This pervasive influence of malls within the space of the contemporary city may in fact be compared to Arjun Appadurai's characterization of the soapy theatrics of Indian cinema, and in particular popular Bollywood films. These productions have typically been viewed as a debased imitation of Hollywood's offerings, and perhaps as an apolitical vehicle of mass entertainment. Yet Appadurai has reasoned that, via its intended and unintended trappings, this make-believe world may also be seen as an emancipatory (and by extension a truly Indian) aesthetic form. Emerging in the post-independence era, Bollywood cinema might thus be reevaluated as one of the main sources of imagery for an independent, modern Indian. According to this view, within the parameters of a mercurial nation-state, the propagation of ideas of family, city and nation have been far more strongly influenced by the idiosyncratic mannerisms of Bollywood than by the futile overtures of avant-garde art, literature or politics.¹⁹

Similarly, it might be observed that the Indian mall has insidiously evolved as a backdrop for a new and disturbing social choreography of mass acceptance — even though this spatial practice remains inherently artificial and anti-urban. It is in precisely this sense that Meredith McGuire, who documents the “aspirational” capacities of architecture in contemporary Indian urban space, has observed how “new” public spaces such as the mall now embody the “acceptable” practices of a new middle-classness.²⁰ They thus translate into formal design language the aspirations of the throngs who visit them, riding on neoliberal economic trends.

Yet, even within the formal diktats of place, the Indian mall is not so much a unique place as it is a generic type, each bearing substantial resemblance to every other across the country. Nevertheless, for the economically mobile social class emerging from smaller towns and villages, the public acceptance and self-conscious promenading enabled by the mall is a self-claimed rite of passage to the better things in life. And in this sense the mall's decadent and sterile non-spaces become more real than the traditional and sweaty *bazaar* street or *maidan*, where social identities continue to be brutally measured by skin color, gender, accent, gait and demeanor. The mall environment, by contrast, superficially “masks” who you really are and what you can afford — as long as you look and behave your part, and even though this contrived “social relief” may last only a few hours.

LE CORBUSIER'S INTENTIONS AND THE THEATRICS OF THE MALL

The design for Chandigarh, the new capital of the north Indian states of Punjab and Haryana by the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier foreshadowed many of the present trials and tribulations related to the changing place of retail in Indian cities. Developed between 1951 and 1966, and responding to the Nehruvian ideals of a “historically unfettered future,” Chandigarh has remained one of the most controversial of India's “new cities.” As a culmination of the ideals of the International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAM) and the City Beautiful Movement, it likewise allows urban scholars to simultaneously look back and think forward.²¹ Chandigarh's Brutalist monumentality and its “unresolved” connections to its setting in the foothills of the Himalayas remain among its most well-known qualities.²² Yet, its self-conscious branding of an “Indic-modern” urbanity and its rapidly changing cityscape have also forced a reconsideration of what cities should (and could) do.

Beyond its monumentality, however, what also made Chandigarh a critical exemplar was Le Corbusier's willful institutionalization of retail space as a primary element within it. Clearly, his search for the city's *raison d'être* was reflected in his determination that the Central Market in its sprawling Sector 17 would serve as its main urban public space. Devoted solely to institutional buildings, which formed its periphery, and public retail, which comprised its core, Sector 17 was strategically located with regard both to the city's grand Capitol Complex and its other sectors. It was also positioned close to the Leisure Valley — an interconnected “river” of green landscape stretching northeast to southwest through the entire urban fabric (FIG. 6). Yet, as the city's cultural heart, Sector 17's Central Market, set within an otherwise gridded urban plan, also took the form of a typological hybrid that incorporated the spirit and spatialities of both the lattice-*bazaar* and the settlement *maidan*. In emulation of the accretive grammar of Indian urbanity, it was thus intended to incrementally occupy its site just as a dynamic *haat* might have.

While the built profile of the present-day Central Market is relatively horizontal, Le Corbusier also originally intended that Sector 17 exhibit a modest level of urban theatrics. Thus, in addition to design controls over building facades and layout that established its somewhat stark architectural character, the original scheme sought to punctuate the northeastern corner (quadrant) of the Central Market *chowk* [piazza] with an impressive eleven-story commercial tower.²³ This *pilotis*-supported, stand-alone structure, with a “T-shaped” floor plan, would have provided a vertical highlight within the sector's otherwise horizontal field of relatively understated slab buildings. And in its attenuated verticality, this “marker tower” (conceived of as the PTT or Post and Telegraph Building) would have nostalgically communicated with the mountains nearby — and the lands beyond them, including Punjab's “lost” cultural capital of Lahore, just across the India-Pakistan border.

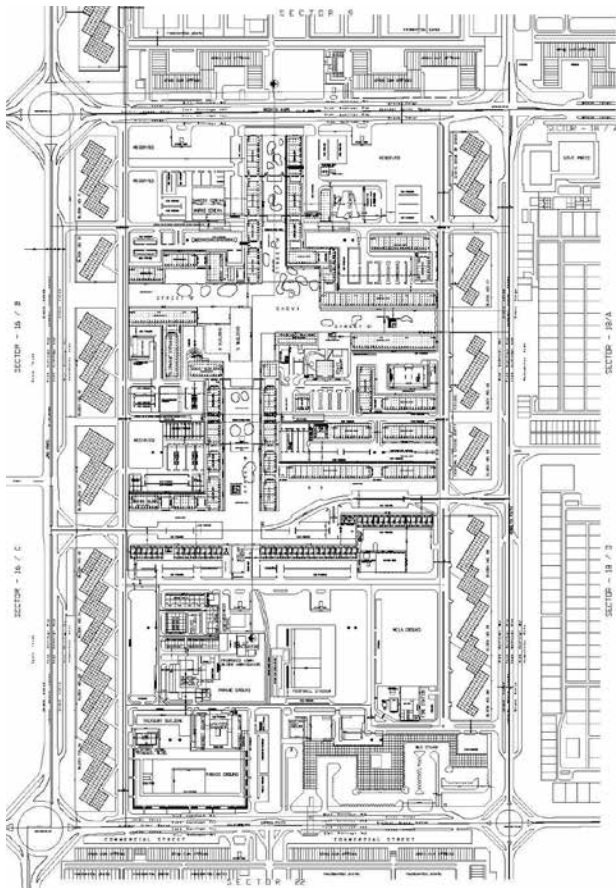
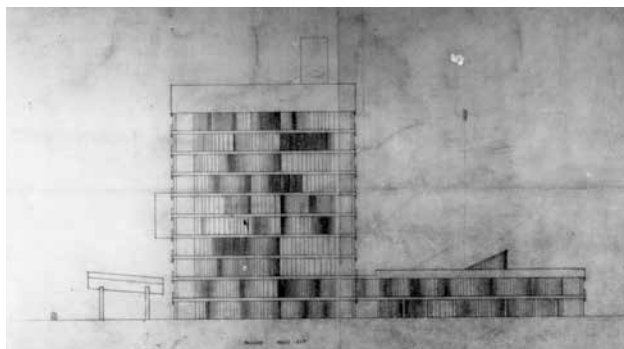
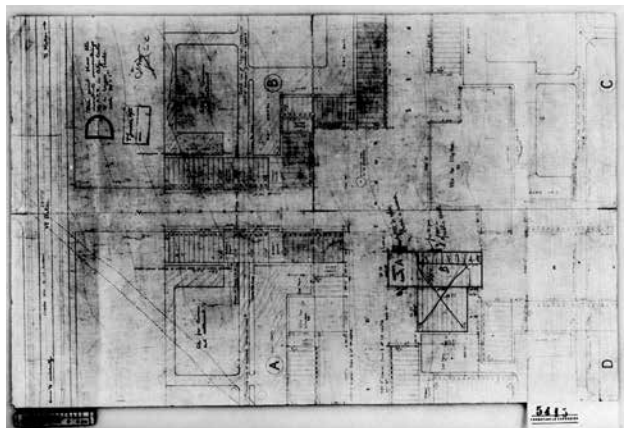


FIGURE 6. COUNTER-CLOCKWISE TOP-LEFT TO TOP-RIGHT (6A TO 6E): Chandigarh's Sector 17 City Center showing its plan, drawings of Corbusier's unbuilt PTT Building, and fountains. Photos by author; drawings courtesy of the Department of Urban Planning-Chandigarh Administration.



If completed, the PTT's directional axis would also have been modulated by the “compass-needle” of the Secretariat Building, set at the western edge of the Capitol Complex. The PTT Tower would also have conversed with proposed designs for a geometrically precise “Tower of Shadows” and a “Governor’s Palace” (both yet unrealized but part of Le Corbusier’s grand vision for the Capitol Complex). In combination, therefore, if all their elements had been built, the Capitol Complex and Sector 17 would have leveraged a more complete understanding of site and location — the former orienting the urban plan to establish hierarchy like a gnomon would, the latter driving an “archaeological stake” to fathom the remains of the Indus valley civilization that still lie concealed below the city substrate.²⁴

The PTT Tower, while substantially documented in Corbusier’s sketchbooks, remains unbuilt today as a consequence of political indecision, idiosyncratic choices, and budgetary constraints. Yet, even in its incompleteness, it offers some sense of Le Corbusier’s intent for the functioning of Sector 17. Besides sharing the semantics and scale of surrounding works by Le Corbusier, Drew, Fry and Jeanneret, it would have strengthened the notions of urban public space — both emerging and contested within the new plan of Chandigarh. In conceptualizing Sector 17, it is possible to imagine how Le Corbusier’s intent was to assemble a culturally connected

retail space like no other. It was to be a space defined by the subtly shifting facades of multiple retail buildings, interspersed with the variable spaces “discovered” through the overlapping of pedestrian movements. As an urban space, its edges were thus deliberately kept fuzzy, much as in the traditional *bazaar* and *maidan*. And, unlike the formal European-inspired piazza, its order (and chaos) would have been defined by a micro-organization too complex to quantify, as in a *haat*.

Most importantly, given his penchant for brutal monumentality, so evident in the design of other parts of Chandigarh, Sector 17 offered Le Corbusier the opportunity to create thin slivers of built mass that would minimally define “retail insides” to create an “urban outside.” In its architecture, formal qualities, and “exteriority,” Sector 17 thus today remains functionally different in every way from the spatial experience of the new malls proliferating at the edges and cores of Indian cities, including Chandigarh. While Le Corbusier’s Sector 17 sought to stabilize the navel of Chandigarh, these new malls and retail interventions undeniably destabilize the urban quality of their respective cities. And they do this not merely by serving as magnets insidiously pulling the public away from the streets where they belong, but also by substantially weakening the attributes of public space itself.

Positioned along four pedestrian promenades intersecting at a nodal point, the main *chowk* of the Sector 17 Market, however, today remains empty and unembellished. As clusters of pedestrians move with the shifting shadows cast by peripheral buildings, it thus appears to fatefully await the arrival of the PTT Tower at some distant, imagined time. Around the *chowk* are positioned the city’s most important civic and commercial institutions, including its Town Hall, Central Library, cinemas, banks, and shopping stores. And three elaborately designed water fountains offer dramatic respite in this present untidy landscape of broken paving, construction waste, and a few sporadic trees set on circular plinths.

Of course, the Sector 17 Market’s role as the City Center also remains problematic because Chandigarh itself has grown substantially since it was built, with additional sectors emerging to its south and southeast and satellite cities being established beyond them. More importantly, a number of no-longer-outlying malls have aggressively challenged the importance of Sector 17, threatening to sound its imminent death knell. Thus, while crowds still occasionally throng along the *chowk* edges and around its fountains, a new gentrified clientele resists removal from the luxuries of nearby malls. One might even wonder if Corbusier’s intent in creating Sector 17 was not to preempt this imminent demise of the city and its public spaces. Were his “figurative” *bazaar* spaces, set between carefully articulated retail buildings, deliberately meant to make permanent certain modes of the civic that he saw as being imperiled in the India of the future? Along these lines, as Corbusier’s visions have been progressively undermined, is it not appropriate to ask how “public” the informal containment of urban public space in Sector 17

will remain? There is doubt that the informal containment of urban public space it represents stands in clear opposition to the privatization of public space, and the erosion of the public sphere, brought to Indian life by the shopping mall.

Despite its formal contradictions, Chandigarh’s Sector 17 Central Market has so far proven surprisingly resilient. Indeed, it has lived on to become part of the lore of Chandigarh. Even in the era of Facebook and online shopping, while the surrounding buildings now largely bespeak monotony for city residents, the City Center’s vibrancy remains infectious, perhaps unlike anything attempted elsewhere in modern India. Nevertheless, in the decades since Chandigarh’s inception, India itself has moved on, as if the lessons of Chandigarh barely matter. Today Corbusier’s city serves neither as exemplar nor provocation; instead, the country’s callous indulgence in neoliberal economics has radically redefined the very meaning of the urban from a pattern of public to private ownership. It has likewise subverted the social choreographies that once genuinely constituted the public (or what was construed as such in the Indian context).

Chandigarh’s Sector 17 has seldom been included within studies of the public realm, but it appears to have been important to Corbusier’s understated views on the subject. It thus stands as a rejoinder to the so-called “monumental” vision ensconced in the sculptural artifacts of the nearby Capitol Complex. In this regard, the City Center’s otherwise ordinary and repetitive buildings were arranged to define something extraordinary — a space of social choreography that public participation might create and invigorate as India transformed within and alongside the genesis of Chandigarh. This same approach to figurative informality also may have factored into the exuberant layout of Sukhna Lake — another successful “social space” positioned within the fabric of Chandigarh. Indeed, the similarity makes one wonder if these two spaces — the former commercial and nested via its architecture, the latter cultural and defined by its quasi-natural setting — were intended by Le Corbusier as countermeasures to what he already perceived to be the slow erosion of urban public space in India. This degradation had begun following the Indian Revolt of 1857 with the crafting of colonial bylaws preventing public assembly, and it had continued in the plan for New Delhi, which created an enclave for the few socially distanced from the perceived miasma of the traditional city.

With his penchant for being seen flatteringly in the public eye as a master architect, even Le Corbusier would also have appreciated the willful agency of Nehru’s choice to employ him in the project to irreversibly change the primordial landscape of Chandigarh. In effect, while Chandigarh was meant to serve as a well-organized administrative machine, it may also be seen as Le Corbusier’s valiant attempt to reestablish the ownership and sociological practice of the street, alongside the cultural vestige of the *maidan* and square and other trappings of a forgotten primordial landscape.

THE UTOPIA OF DISCIPLINED URBAN SPACE

Beginning in the 1990s, across Asia, the valorization of the Anglo-American development experience resulted in a belief in neoliberalism as the remedy for all national ills. And as picture-perfect images of developed world cities were consumed uncritically by local and national governments, these ideals were imported under the guise of economic development as replacements for local urban practices. A similar dynamic has now even come to pervade the relatively recent (and equally contentious) smart-city movement.

Within this project, as streets and sidewalks have morphed into privatized domains, the shopping mall has perhaps become neoliberalism's most easily identified urban artifact. Yet it is certainly not the only one. In fact, as long as neoliberal urbanism is measured only by means of its most visible effect as a mode of consumption and accumulation, it is hardly possible to comprehend its full impact on cities and urban life. It is within this framework that the choreographies of the increasingly empty *bazaar* and the explosively popular mall must be seen as merely one phase of an ongoing, deeply disruptive process of change. The declining fortunes of the redundant *bazaar* have, for example, driven other alternative patterns of investment in finance and real estate. Thus, besides the proliferation of malls, India's cities have gained a host of residential suburban districts which now serve as sites of residence for the voracious consumers who patronize these commercial extravaganzas.²⁵

As projects of substantial magnitude, malls have leveraged change to urban public space in two significant yet little comprehended ways. Through its visible omission from the syntax of the city, the first involves the devaluation of public space as a fecund container for urban experience. In the decades since India's independence, save for Chandigarh's Sector 17, the popular Sukhna Lake promenade adjoining its Capitol, and a handful of "designed" spaces within other exemplary developments, the inclusion of public space has been glaringly missing in the design of new building complexes. Instead, the nation's efforts to create new urban public spaces have been limited to the introduction of contrived "green landscapes" — often oversized, ill-maintained, and difficult to access. Even the popular Delhi *haat* — a shopper's paradise for Indian handicrafts and souvenirs, inaugurated in 1994 — is essentially a gated complex with ticketed entry, a charade of what a genuine public space would be.²⁶

The second way shopping malls have changed the standing of public space in Indian cities involves the inherent limitations on access and activity that come with the insidious reversal of urban ownership patterns from public to private. Where the *bazaar* street and the *maidan* were once accessible to a full cross-section of the population, equivalent urban spaces in private malls today may deny access to those their owners deem unsuitable. Likewise, malls typically prohibit the full range of activities once welcomed in older public set-

tings, contributing to an erosion of the public sphere as the setting for a full range of public activities.

In his aspirations for Chandigarh's Sector 17 it may be noted that Le Corbusier was perhaps not alone in recognizing the danger of this condition. Lesser, now somewhat forgotten Indian architects also appear to have attempted similar experiments. Notable among these was New Delhi's Nehru Place Market — one of the city's earliest post-independence "designed" urban space. Located on 96 acres of prime real estate per the 1961 Delhi Master Plan, it was to be the first of the capital city's many proposed new district centers. Designed in a utilitarian modern style by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), it consisted of an ensemble of 1970s-era commercial buildings and urban spaces; yet even so, the DDA architects visualized it as an extension of Delhi's vibrant streets, which buzzed with activity close by.

In hindsight, Nehru Place may today be seen to have aspired to a condition of altered-reality akin to Richard Sennett's "porous city." Its intent was thus to negate the socio-cultural alienation of the large metropolis by mixing people together in their everyday activities through the filter of buildings.²⁷ In Sennett's words ". . . a 'porous' urban spot [is] accessible to people of all castes, classes, races and religions, while combining office, entertainment and institutional spaces. . . . [It is] every urbanist's dream: intense, mixed, complex. . . the sort of place we want to make, it's not the sort of space most cities are building." Today, although predictably degraded and much belabored, Nehru Place remains a social mixer of sorts. However, in the public (and administrative) eye, it can hardly provide a match to the luxury and variety of Delhi's 42-odd malls, whatever its collateral social benefits may be.

What has undeniably been lost within the fabric of Indian cities — and what Corbusier, the bureaucratic DDA, and a few others bravely attempted to re-create — may still be resurrected, however, if a vigorous new debate is encouraged on the generative qualities of urban public space. In this regard, the ongoing and necessarily controversial redesign of the Central Vista in New Delhi could provide an exemplary starting point. Positioned amidst the Lutyens and Baker plan from the 1920s, this Neo-Baroque public open space was the armature of the Foucauldian "grand perspective" of colonial control.²⁸ Originally, the Central Vista was envisaged as an exclusionary space, exuding the powerful aura of state control over the unruly Indian landscape and its deviant citizenry. However, the decades following independence witnessed its somewhat ironic transformation into a people's mall — a colorful public space associated with celebratory displays of self-identity, statehood, and nationalistic narratives. Its proposed redesign in association with the positioning of a new Parliament building and government offices, however, now seeks to largely eliminate such spontaneous popular uses within a "heritage-protected" zone.

Urban advocates have castigated these proposed changes as a form of "government sprawl" — one that would un-

ashamedly disregard the socio-cultural and ecological consequences of such a change.²⁹ The gargantuan project would thus appropriate urban space used by the public for recreational purposes to promote its exclusive use by the national government. And, of course, the pastiche of its architecture would remain even more contentious. Such a wanton manipulation of the city's palimpsest, or "urbicide," seems uncannily similar to British actions following the siege of Delhi and the popular Indian uprisings of 1857.³⁰ At that time British forces brazenly cleared large swathes of old Shahjahanabad closest to the citadel, effectively seeking to emasculate and future civic uprising. In a similar way, the project to redesign the Central Vista arrogates another important public space in a legally untenable manner, reaffirming the extreme vulnerability of these spaces within the contemporary Indian city.

Beyond the malevolent transformation of public space, it should also be noted how these vulnerabilities instrumentalize the caste-class disparities and social *mentalités* of Indian society. India has historically fostered an elite class: first the grand kings of antiquity, thereafter the colonial-era clerical indigenous elites, and most recently the rising middle and not-so-middle classes. Prior to the arrival of neoliberalism, however, fracturing along class-caste affiliations — and the absence of a "shared social imaginary" with its spaces of interaction — inhibited the holistic articulation of a coherent form of elite power. But over the last few transformative decades the middle-upward Indian elite have started to share a common media space, forging a sense of class cohesion connected to a neoliberal utopia. This imagined "unity" is also being reflected in the city's making and unmaking, leading to the creative destruction of the cityscape and former social relations of production.

The use of the term "utopia" here is deliberately sarcastic, a directed critique of Thomas Moore's seminal notion. Indeed, the new Indian utopia is seen today as an exclusionary space befitting the elite (or those who seek to pass themselves off as such) and other privileged social actors. In this scenario, only those considered to be ideal residents or citizens who behave appropriately may make a legitimate claim to the benefits of this space. And, by default, nonconformists are summarily excluded. This is the new pattern being materialized in the neoliberal planning of India's urban centers — wherein the mall is the utopia, and the old-fashioned *bazaar* street is a heterotopia left over from some distant time (FIG. 7).

In summary, the shopping mall represents a violent instrument of neoliberal change within the contemporary Indian city. In David Harvey's words, it signifies "a tidal wave of institutional reform and discursive transformation, entailing destruction of past institutional frameworks and powers, divisions of labor, social relations, welfare provisions, technological mixes, ways of life, attachment to land, and ways of thought."³¹ Among the manifestations of this transformation has been new divisions and demarcations space, including the creation of slums and shanty townships. And it has ex-



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FIGURE 7. TOP (7A): A migrant family, distinguished by their dress code, enjoying ice cream at the mall. **BOTTOM (7B):** Online Advertising for contractual Mall Security Services. "We will stop you at the entrance to the mall!"

erbed the "othering" of populations who are unable to appear or dress acceptably to enter the environments of the multiple, high-profile mall environments that surround them.

This militarization of urban space is further manifest in the overtly hostile reaction to how the poor use public space in contrast to the rich, almost as if an "appropriate" choreography mattered.³² Within the activity of governance, however, city planners continue to position slums more as a management problem than as the product of unequal development accentuated by neoliberal policies that are fundamentally antithetical to a unified city fabric. Thus via the mechanism of New Delhi's current master plan, urban authorities have sought to prohibit the intrusion of rural migrants at the city's exploding perimeter, even when this perimeter is categorically porous. And as justification for this position, it offers the simplistic rationale that unruly swarms of migrants will ruin the quality of urban life because of the problems it will create in terms of the need to provide new housing and services.

Within such a scenario lies a particular vision of the mall — an unreal space of make-believe choreography much like Bollywood — a social kindergarten for the multitudes born on the street, a place where they will learn proper behavior by being punished when they cross the lines.

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Field Report

Continuity, Change and Adaptation: Understanding the Transformations of Ahmedabad Fort Wall, India

SWETA KANDARI

By narrating the negotiations surrounding the transformation of the Ahmedabad fort wall, this article investigates the contest between top-down and bottom-up approaches towards heritage. Through a study of archival data and a survey of existing conditions, it describes the changing values and functions of the wall, its gates and bastions, and their surroundings. It then discusses Patrick Geddes's "Notes on Ahmedabad," a report submitted in 1915 to the British colonial Bombay Presidency advocating against removal of the wall. Unheeded and ignored at the time, Geddes's suggestions and methods for understanding the evolution of the city and for involving local communities in tackling issues related to the wall remain significant today. As demonstrated by ongoing adaptations of elements of the wall, the article ends with a discussion of how the status of heritage elements in cities may be driven by actions of their residents. These actions involve self-organizing, flexible systems that constantly evolve and embody a negotiation between the past and the present.

"Heritage" is traditionally defined as encompassing objects, places and practices that must be preserved and passed on to the next generation. Usually, the passed-on heritage is in the form of aesthetically pleasing buildings, towns, objects or landscapes that are formally protected by charters and laws. Most of this heritage is identified and promoted by select individuals or a group who are deemed to be experts. Such authorities interpret and generate the meaning of the past, which usually excludes contemporary cultural-social narratives and their role in the process of value creation.¹

Laurajane Smith has described three problematic issues with this approach toward heritage, which stresses the "top-down" generation of official "material" heritage frozen in

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time, with a fixed value — and which she termed Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD).² First, this approach excludes, ignores and dismisses narratives that do not fit within approved discourses of national identity. Second, it obscures the process of cultural production used to generate the values, memories and meanings of particular places. Last, this method of recognizing heritage privileges vested political and economic interests over those of local communities and their negotiations between history and culture. Criticizing the European-Western approach towards heritage, Smith has emphasized that “all heritage is intangible.” Accordingly, “there is always a ‘bottom-up’ approach between people, objects, places and memories which are unofficial forms of heritage.”³

The historian and geographer David Lowenthal has further argued that even when places are not recognized as official heritage, the way they are interpreted and physically integrated into their surroundings reflects the presence of individual and collective memory.⁴ Heritage thus encompasses a broad range of social-cultural activities based on action or experience, in which people actively, self-consciously and critically generate experiences, memories and identities. Such a process involves more than just categorization of structures based on procedures and legalities.⁵ David Harvey has reiterated this sentiment, and encouraged the consideration of heritage as a verb rather than a noun.⁶ And, in 2005, UNESCO’s convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) acknowledged the broader approach towards heritage and community, emphasizing that “community is integral to the entire process of heritage identification and nomination.” Yet, despite various attempts to make heritage inclusive, across the globe the approach to heritage is mostly driven by AHD in the service of established economic and political interests.

In an attempt to illustrate these discourses, this article narrates the historical and contemporary transformation of the fort wall that once encapsulating the city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat, India. In 2017 UNESCO declared the area within Ahmedabad’s 600-year-old walls, including the former Bhadra citadel in its west, to be India’s first Heritage City. An integral part of this heritage area, the walls co-evolved with it, and this article examines its transformation through the contrasting lenses of “top-down” and “bottom-up” approaches. In the case of Ahmedabad, this involves understanding how its present status reflects the outcome of a decades-long contest between the British colonial government and local elite leaders in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

I will begin by providing a brief history of the fort wall through periods of Sultanate, Mughal, Maratha and British rule. Through a primary survey and analysis of relevant historic accounts, the article will show how socioeconomic and political shifts influenced and reshaped the physical condition of the fort wall and its surroundings. In particular, it will stress how this reflected changing attitudes toward the complex of elements that constituted the wall and negotiations between city residents and local governing bodies over the ad-

aptation of various elements of it. The article will then turn to an analysis of Patrick Geddes’s “Notes on Ahmedabad,” a detailed report about the condition of the fort wall written in 1915. In it, Geddes described how people were actively using features of the wall in their daily lives, and he rejected suggestions that the British colonial government demolish it.

Turning to current proposals to demolish remaining sections of the fort wall and structures related to it, the article concludes by arguing that the “diagnostic” approach and “conservative surgery” proposed by Geddes continues to be relevant today. Echoing Smith’s criticism of AHD, the article asserts that Geddes’s philosophy of involving local people in change still offers a valuable approach to the changing values and functions of Ahmedabad’s historic city wall. I thus hope to demonstrate how everyday experience and engagement by citizens allows them to transform heritage spaces in ways that are useful to them and that allow them to reinvent themselves. And I hope to show how a bottom-up approach to heritage has many advantages over a culturally isolated, linear, top-down approach.

THE FORT WALL OF AHMEDABAD: BEFORE THE COLONIAL RULE

The evolution of the city of Ahmedabad can be briefly divided into the periods of Sultanate rule (1411–1572), Mughal rule (1572–1753), Maratha rule (1753–1817), and British rule (until 1947). Until the early twentieth century, the fortification of Ahmedabad included ten kilometers of walls that incorporated twelve gates and 189 bastions (FIGS. 1, 2).⁷

Sultanate rule (1411–1572). In 1411, some six hundred years ago, Sultan Ahmed Shah established the city of Ahmedabad (named after him) to the east of the Sabarmati River. The city limits were subsequently defined during his rule and that of his grandson, Mahmud Shah I (or Mahmud Begada).⁸

The exact year in which the city’s wall was completed remains a mystery. The works of Persian historians contain different theories about the period of its construction. The *Mirat-I-Ahmadi* describes the fortifications as being completed in 1413, whereas the *Mirat-I-Sikandari* mentions that this did not occur until 1417.⁹ Both, however, suggest that the walls were built by the first ruler of the city, Ahmed Shah. By contrast, Mahomed Kasim Ferishta’s *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India* — which focuses more on the actions of Sultan Mahmud Begada — credits him with completion of the city’s fortifications in 1487.¹⁰ This account further describes how this event was commemorated by the inscription of the sentence “Whosoever is within is safe” on the face of the fortification.¹¹ Additional accounts of the fort wall may be found in the travel writings of the Portuguese military officer Duarte Barbosa (1514) and the Arabian historian Udabir (1555), both of whom visited the city during the period of Sultanate rule.¹²

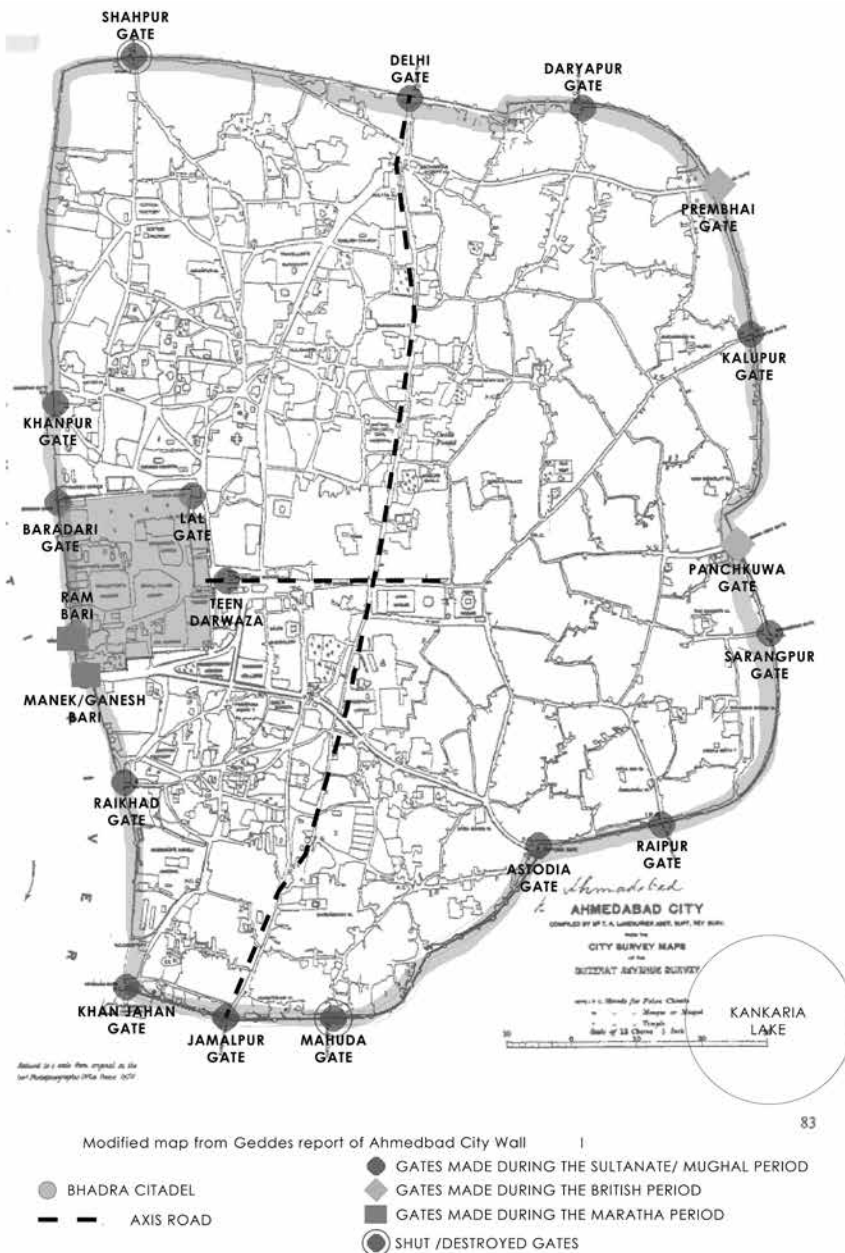


FIGURE 1. The fort wall of Ahmedabad and its gates as these related to the city's internal street system in the nineteenth century. Adapted from Theodore C. Hope's 1866 map "The City of Ahmedabad with Its Environs," in T.C. Hope, J. Fergusson, and T. Biggs, *Architecture at Ahmedabad, the Capital of Goozerat* (London: John Murray, 1866); R.E. Ethoven's 1879 "Map of Ahmedabad City," as shown in J.M. Campbell, *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. IV, Ahmedabad* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1879); Karl Baedeker's "Map of Ahmedabad 1914," in *Indien: Handbuch Für Reisende* (Leipzig: Verlag von Karl Baedeker, 1914); and G. Michell, "Ahmedabad Detailed Map in 1988," in S. Shah, ed., *Ahmedabad* (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2003).

Mughal rule (1572–1737). During the subsequent period of Mughal rule the territory of Gujarat was administered by governors and viceroys from the court of Delhi. This period can be divided in two parts. The first, from 1573 to 1700, is recorded as a time of good governance, when the city flourished and hosted a number of important visitors. The second phase, post-1700, however, is seen as a time of disorder characterized by a rapid turnover of rulers.

During this time descriptions of Ahmedabad's fortifications may be found in the reports of international diplomats, travelers and merchants. These include accounts by the English merchants Ralph Fitch (1611) and Nicholas Whittington (1614), the English traveler and ambassador Edward Terry (1617), the German traveler Johan Albrecht de Man-

delslo (1638), the French merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1664), and the French naturalist Jean de Thévenot (1666).¹³ All briefly mention the fort wall and its vastness. However, Mendelslo's writings also provide a first description of the moat around it. After describing the wall in much detail, he thus mentions how, "After inspection of the castle, they proceeded outside the city walls which had twelve gates and were surrounded by a ditch sixteen fathoms broad. This was, however, in ruins in many places and without water."¹⁴

Mughal-Maratha rule (1737–1755). In the first half of the eighteenth century the Maratha Peshwas established themselves in the city, entering from the south through Astodia Darwaza and Mahuda Darwaza. And in 1720 Momin Khan and the Marathas declared war against Anoop Singh Bhan-

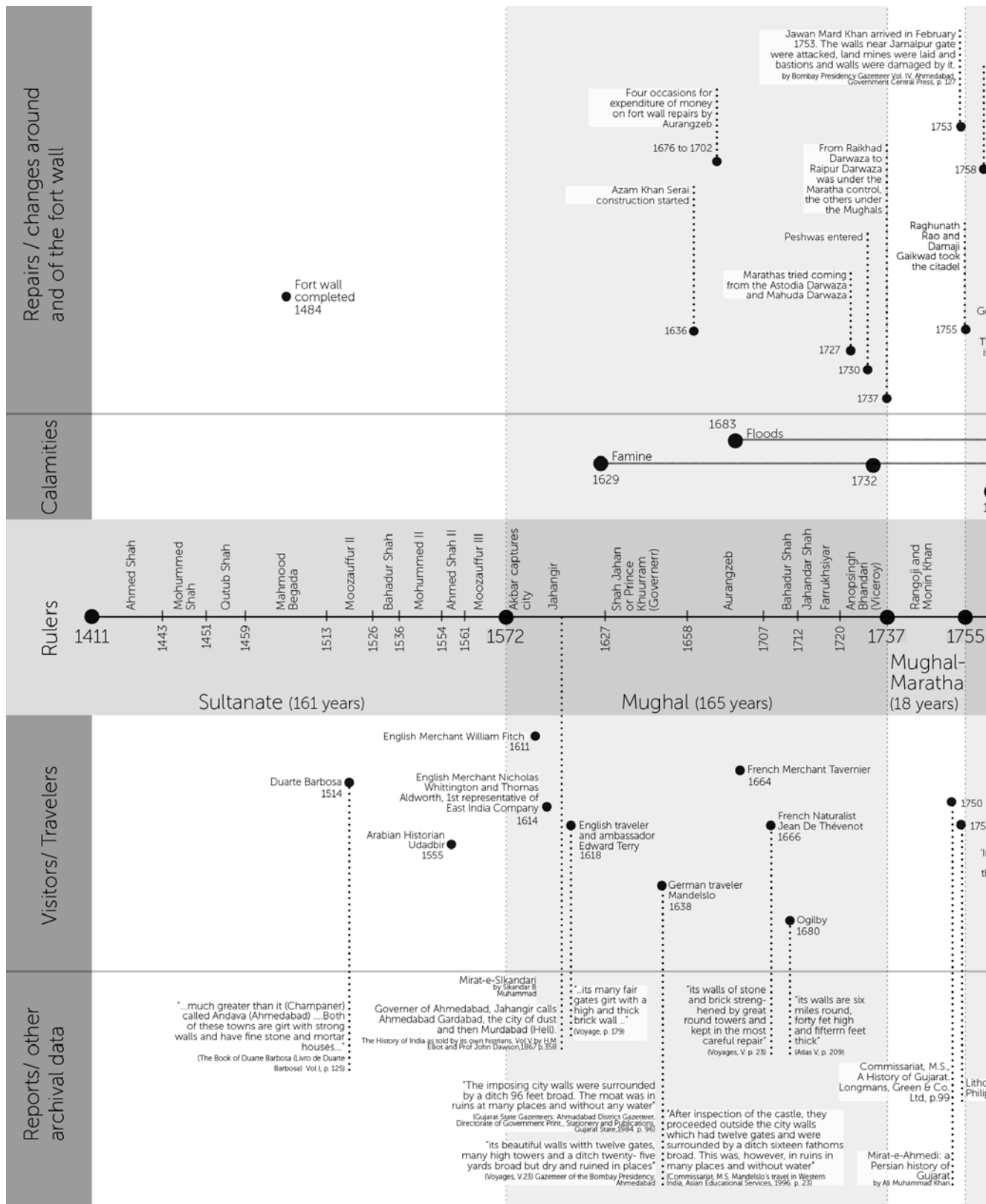
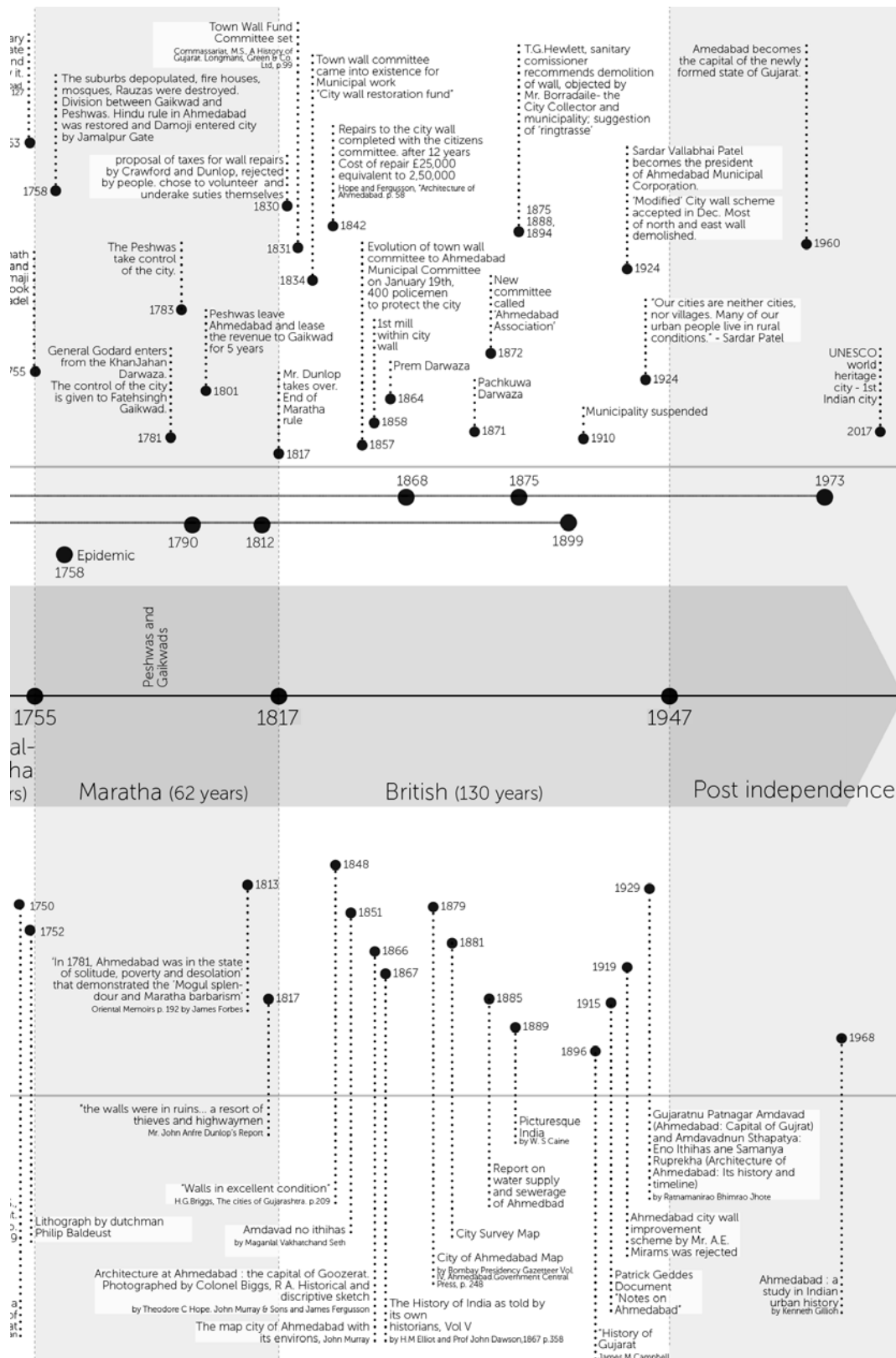


FIGURE 2. Timeline of important historic events and descriptions of changes related to the fort wall of Ahmedabad.



dari, the Rajput administrator of Ahmedabad, and occupied the city by force. Between 1737 and 1753 Ahmedabad remained under joint Mughal-Maratha rule, with the six gates in the south, from Raikhad to Raipur Darwaza, under the control of the Marathas.¹⁵

The construction of temples inside and outside the fort wall in this part of the city probably began at this time. Some of these have been maintained, while others are in a ruined state. For example, a cluster of temples dedicated to Lord Shiva exists today in dilapidated condition just outside Khan Jahan Darwaza, the part of the city that was once located closest to the Sabarmati River (FIGS. 3, 4).¹⁶

In February 1753 Jawan Mard Khan arrived near Jamalpur Darwaza and attacked the wall with cannons. Mines caused further damage to the walls and bastions at this time.

Maratha rule (1755–1817). In 1755 the combined Maratha armies of Raghunath Rao and Damoji Gaekwad captured Bhadra citadel, thus ending Mughal rule in Ahmedabad.¹⁷ Thereafter, the Marathas ruled the city for about sixty years, during which time its condition went from bad to worse. Its ongoing degradation derived mainly from constant power struggles between the Peshwas and Gaekwads but also from their retrograde and oppressive policies.¹⁸ Several archival texts mention that during this time houses outside the Jamal-

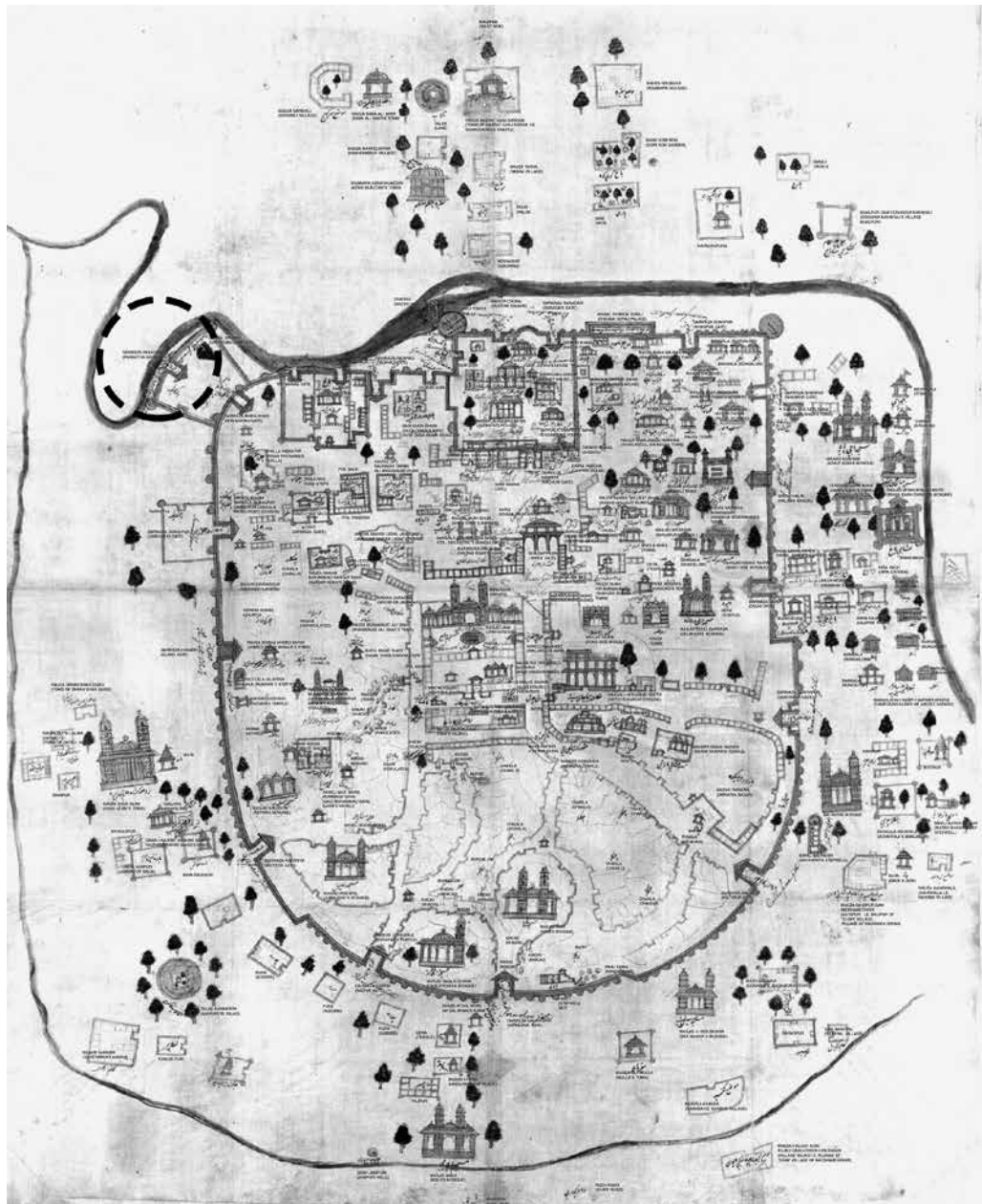


FIGURE 3. Seventeenth-century Pichwai painting of Ahmedabad showing the Sabarmati River running along the west side of the fort wall immediately adjacent to Parkot Darwaza (encircled). Source: India Office Library, London.



FIGURE 4. Area near the cluster of temples at Somnath Buddha ka Aara, near Parkot Darwaza.

pur Darwaza were destroyed and the moat was filled in. Fine houses, mosques and *rauza*s were plundered, destroyed, and left in ruins. To stop robberies inside the city walls, watchmen were also appointed to ring bells as a warning sign.¹⁹ And by 1758 the city's once populous suburbs had been largely depopulated and deserted.²⁰

Several texts have described the change in the city at this time from “one of the finest cities in the world” to one “divested of its riches and splendour” due to the “raids of the Marathas, the vandalism which accompanied those excursions, and their greed when they came to the possession of the district.”²¹ On several occasions the people of Ahmedabad asked the Maratha rulers to repair the wall, but their entreaties were in vain.²² Local Gujarati texts such as the *Gujarat Deshno Itihas* and the *Amdavaddno Itihas* have also described the tyranny, injustice and exploitation during Maratha rule and their lack of interest in reforming the city.²³

On February 10, 1780, the British general Thomas Wyndham Godard forcefully breached the wall and took the city by an assault through the Khan Jahan Darwaza. The mark of a cannonball fired during the attack can still be seen on the back wall of the Khan Jahan mosque (FIG. 5).²⁴ In his book *Oriental Memoirs*, James Forbes described the ruined state of the city at this time in extreme detail. Ahmedabad, in 1781, he wrote, was in a state of “solitude, poverty and desolation” that demonstrated “Mogul splendour and Maratha barbarism.” As he further observed,

*... the most splendid palaces at Ahmedabad were too ruinous a state during my visit to furnish a sufficient description. . . . Long wars, unstable and oppressive governments and the fluctuation of human establishments have brought it to a state of decay from which it seems doomed never to recover. . . . I shall not attempt in detail of the cruel oppressions and mean advantages of the Maratha Pundits and governors, now dispersed throughout Gujarat, and occupying these magnificent remains of Mogul splendour.*²⁵

Following several changes of administration between the Peshwas and the Gaekwads over the next few years, Maratha rule ended in 1817. This was followed by 130 years of colonial rule until the establishment of the modern nation of India in 1947.



FIGURE 5. Cannonball mark on the Khan Jahan mosque made during the British invasion by General Godard in 1780.

TRANSFORMATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS: THE COLONIAL AND NATIONALIST POLITICS

Unlike many other cities where foreign agents played the dominant role, the transformation of Ahmedabad during the colonial era was characterized by an ongoing contest for hegemony between local leaders and the colonial authorities. By the first half of the twentieth century, under the Bombay Presidency, Ahmedabad had become one of the largest industrial cities in India, known as the “Manchester of the East.” Yet the indigenous financial and mercantile elites, who continued to provide local political leadership, also played a major role in its spatial restructuring.²⁶ Indeed, Kenneth L. Gillion, in *Ahmedabad: A Study in Indian Urban History*, emphasized how “modern Ahmedabad was the creation of Ahmedabadis, not of outsiders.”²⁷

By 1817, according to a report of the city’s first collector, John Andrew Dunlop, Ahmedabad’s walls were in ruins, and within their enclosure several areas were covered with fallen houses, mosques and tombs, which acted as a resort of thieves and highwaymen.²⁸ At the time, the British colonial administration generated revenues through taxes imposed on land, salt, and the import and export of goods, among other sources.²⁹ And Dunlop suggested utilizing additional city revenues to repair and restore the wall.

In 1830 a new city collector, A. Crawford (along with Dunlop who was then serving as revenue commissioner), formally proposed imposing a new house tax to cover the cost of repairing the damaged walls. The intent was to collect these new funds from different caste groups in the city.³⁰ However, Ahmedabad’s leading citizens (merchants, financiers and traders) opposed the idea, and instead agreed to voluntarily commit to paying for and organizing the needed work. Since they felt the British government engineers were too expensive, they also suggested that contracts for the work be given to local people through a local committee that would include the city collector and a judge.

In 1831 the British government in Bombay accepted this proposal and constituted a Town Wall Committee (the predecessor to the Ahmedabad Municipal Commission), whose purpose was to administer repairs to the fort wall. The committee included the acting collectors of Gujarat, a judge, the *nagarseth*, the *kazi*, and selected other Native members.³¹ Following its establishment, merchants and traders in the city voluntarily raised funds for the repairs.³² With the committee in charge of an account known as the City Wall Restoration Fund, the work was carried on for twelve years, until its completion in 1842.³³ The total cost of the restoration was said to have been £25,000, or two-and-a-half lacs of rupees.³⁴ According to a report by H.G. Briggs in 1848, the result was that the “fort wall was in excellent condition,” having been consistently repaired, maintained and preserved.

The work of the Town Wall Committee, comprised of local citizens, then continued after the repair of the fort wall. Between 1842 and 1857, before it was finally dissolved, its du-

ties were enhanced to include responsibility for improving conditions in the city more broadly. This involved managing public works such as the city’s water supply, ensuring that garbage was collected and deposited outside the gates, watering the roads, lighting the streets, filling potholes, etc. However, over time the British colonial government began to feel threatened by such a self-financing local agency, and insisted on implementing a formal system of taxes to pay for improvements to the town. In addition, it decreed that an official committee, legally accountable for all money spent, was needed to ensure the further improvement of the city.³⁵ Based on these views, by official act in 1857, it formed a commission comprising fourteen colonial officials and sixteen nonofficial members that included leading Hindu, Jain, Muslim and Parsi citizens. The commission would meet quarterly, and all decisions related to changes in the city would require approval from both its official and nonofficial members. In return, the colonial government would not interfere in the details of local municipal administration, and would depend entirely on the city collector to monitor municipal matters.

During the second half of the nineteenth century great changes came to the city. In particular, it experienced a tremendous surge in the number of textile mills in and around it, which soon gave rise to a new elite class. Comprised of modern, Western-educated Ahmedabadis, this class was more politically conscious than the old elite.³⁶ And after the dissolution of the Town Wall Committee, in 1872, these local leaders formed another committee called the Ahmedabad Association, to put forth “the wants of the people.” The printing press played an essential role in bringing these issues forward. The new association drafted petitions of complaint against the city commission, criticizing it for overtaxation and the imposition of unnecessarily hefty fines. And with the support of local citizens who professed they had been happier under the administration of the earlier Town Wall Committee, it also began asking for a share in the government.

Thus began a contest for hegemony over municipal affairs in Ahmedabad between the British government and the old and new classes of local elites. In particular, the new middle-class elite, under the leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel, represented public opposition to the colonial government. This group would eventually play a dominant role in the restructuring of the city and the fort wall.

The first textile mill had begun operation within the city walls in 1858. But others soon began to operate just outside the gates or further to the east, and between 1891 and 1920 the number of mills increased drastically, from nine to 51 (FIG. 6). Already by 1872, Gillion wrote, “the number of persons per square mile within the Ahmedabad city wall was 53,435, greater than in Bombay and double that in London.”³⁷ But migration related to the rapid development of the textile industry brought a further huge increase in the city’s population. Industrialization also led to increased air, soil and water pollution as a consequence of dyeing, tanning, pottery and

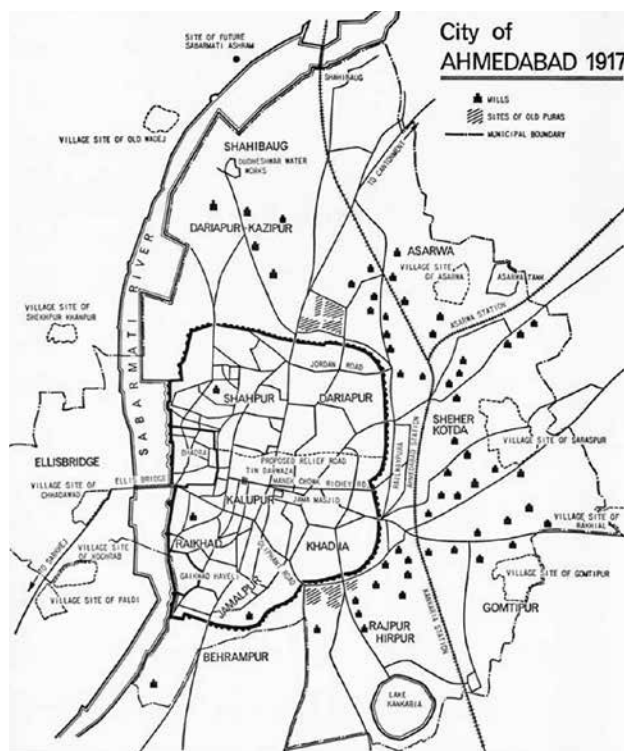


FIGURE 6. The location of mills inside the city and to the east of the wall. Source: City map of Ahmedabad, 1917, as reproduced in K.L. Gillion, *Ahmedabad: A Study in Indian Urban History* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1969).

tile-making. And eventually, congested and unhygienic living conditions gave rise to diseases like fever, plague, respiratory ailments, dysentery and diarrhea, leading to an alarming number of deaths.³⁸ Relieving congestion and improving sanitary conditions became the primary concern of the government.

To relieve congestion and facilitate movement, the British government added two new gates in the eastern section of the city wall. Called Prem Darwaza and the Pachkuwa Darwaza, these were constructed in 1864 and 1871, respectively, and were also used to access a new railway station (REFER TO FIG.1). In response to pressing issues of sanitation and hygiene, various suggestions to pull down the fort wall also began to surface. And, in 1875, T.G. Hewlett, the sanitary commissioner and health officer of the Bombay Presidency, formally recommended the demolition of the wall as a measure to improve air flow in the city. However, H. Borradaile, the city collector at the time, objected to this suggestion, asserting that the wall provided a useful barrier and safeguard against floods. He further emphasized that local people would oppose the demolition of the wall because of local practices and associations with it.

In 1888 and 1894 the collector and sanitary officer again urged that the colonial government proceed with a demolition

proposal. But these appeals, too, were rejected — as was the idea to convert the fort wall into a police line to improve security. Nevertheless, colonial officials continued to emphasize that removing the walls would improve light and ventilation in the city. And another suggestion surfaced to create a “Ring-strasse” around the city to improve accessibility to its suburbs.

Proposals to demolish Ahmedabad’s wall took a further turn at the beginning of the twentieth century. Inspired by the British Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909, the new effort was initiated by the Bombay government’s implementation of the Town Planning Act in 1915. Their objective was to prepare comprehensive schemes for the betterment and development of all cities and towns then facing issues of congestion and sanitation. A.E. Mirams, the consulting surveyor to the government of Bombay, was put in charge of preparing a scheme for the city of Ahmedabad, and his plan proposed the demolition of the historic fort wall and the construction of ring road in its place. To achieve this, he also proposed displacing a substantial number of people from the area. Ahmedabad’s residents and elite leaders initially rejected this “City Wall Scheme” in 1920, objecting to it on economic grounds and because it was incompatible with social realities in the city.³⁹ The proposal also led to vigorous public protests and political unrest.⁴⁰

The opinions of local political leaders changed after 1924, however, when they gained control of the municipality, and Vallabhbai Patel became its first president. Like the colonial government, one of the major challenges that confronted the new municipality was how to relieve congestion in the urban core. And one of its first initiatives was to begin reorganizing areas outside the fort wall, bringing the “open” agricultural lands near Astodia and Jamalpur Gates within the municipal limits.⁴¹ Unlike the British government, which had taxed the city’s residents to create a fund for improvements, the new elite managed to acquire grants for this purpose, meaning that no new taxes were needed to pay for it.⁴² But the new municipal leaders also realized they could not relieve congestion in the city without demolishing the walls. They thus turned to the implementation of a new city wall scheme, which they deemed vital to other planning measures they were trying to implement. Aware that this had been opposed by the public, however, they strategically “modified” the earlier City Wall Scheme, “so that it could blend in well with the social and economic realities.”⁴³

Mirams, the colonial consulting engineer, was subsequently employed to draft a second scheme, similar to the earlier one, for the construction of a ring road around the city. This time, however, a careful attempt was made to avoid the earlier plan’s most controversial aspects. For example, the revised plan proposed fewer acquisitions of private properties. The new plan also did not require that most citizens in affected areas be forced to relocate themselves. In addition, a proposed betterment tax was kept lower than in the earlier scheme. With these modifications, the proposal of the Town

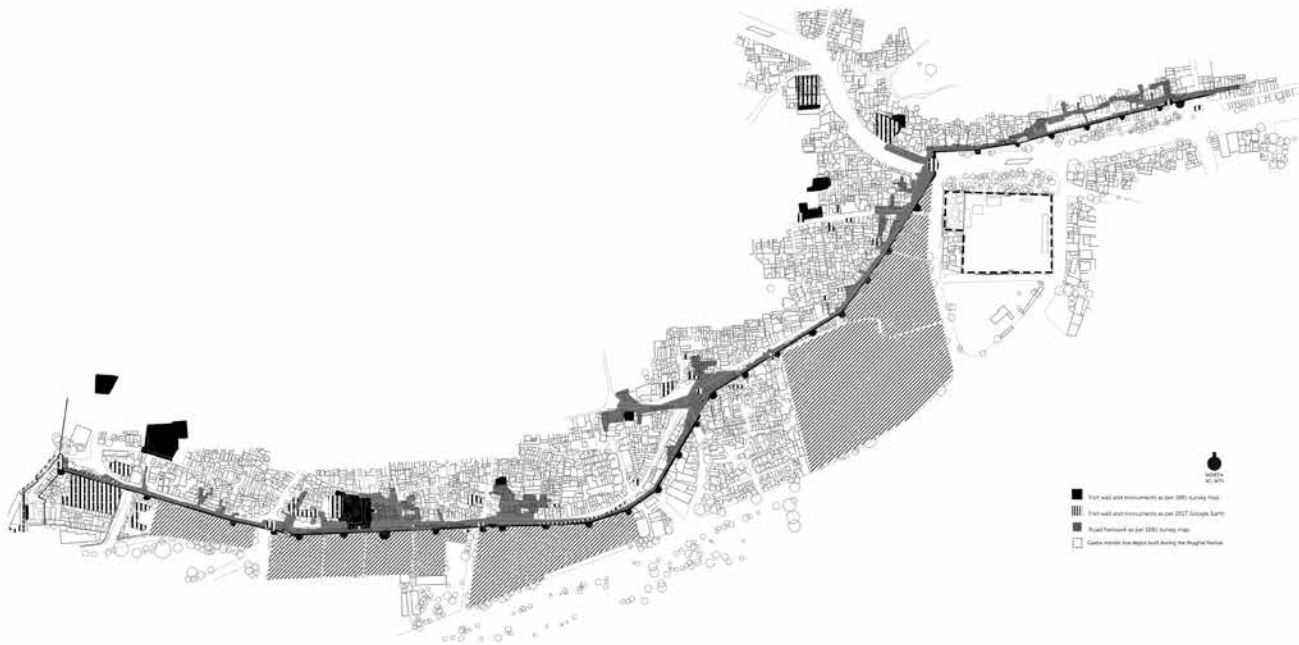


FIGURE 7. Present-day remains of the fort wall, its gates, and bastions along its southern and southeastern extents.

Planning Committee received the approval of people and the General Board of Municipality in December 1924.⁴⁴

Following the “modified” City Wall Scheme, most of the northern and eastern sections of the historic wall were demolished to allow expansion of the city, the construction of the ring road, and the “improving” of other urban conditions. The result is that all that remains of the wall in these areas today are its former gates, which are currently managed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The western side of the wall and its bastions (mostly intact and unbroken) has since been restored by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC). Meanwhile, to the south and southeast, some remaining dilapidated fragments of the wall and its bastions have been appropriated by residents of the area and adapted as a part of their daily lives (FIG. 7).

PATRICK GEDDES: “NOTES ON AHMEDABAD”

It was Lord Pentland, the governor of Madras, who invited the noted town planner Patrick Geddes to India to teach, deliver lectures, and impart his knowledge about town planning. Pentland believed that Geddes could educate locals and guide the British government in its implementation of the Town Planning Act in India. Geddes, with his diverse disciplinary knowledge of biology, sociology and planning, arrived in 1915, and during his stay in India he not only taught sociology and civics at Bombay University but was appointed by the British government and several princely states to make detailed reports on about fifty cities and towns across the country.

Among these commissions was his appointment by the Bombay Presidency to present his views on the demolition of the fort wall of Ahmedabad. In his report, made after a three-day visit to the city from April 4 to 6, Geddes described the fort wall extensively and dismissed the concerns of government officials related to ventilation and light. Taking into consideration tradition, history and local customs, he then suggested only minor improvements and the opening of the wall in a few areas, resulting in a minimum of demolition. In his report Geddes also expressed his firm opposition to the removal of the fort wall. Instead, he suggested that his philosophy and approach of “diagnosis” and “conservative surgery” would be adequate to improve the condition of the city.

Geddes’s philosophy promoted multidisciplinary integration of environmental, economic and cultural-social contexts, which he saw as essential to understanding the relationship of systems in a city. As he wrote, it was important to understand the “environment, function, and organism . . . as the elements of a single (evolutionary) process.” In general, Geddes also believed that citizen-led evolutionary processes needed to be continuous and open-ended, allowing each city to choose a different path and destination. He thus advocated engaging citizens in an inclusive and interactive process to tackle local issues. However, in Ahmedabad, he noted that the citizens were “half-blind” to the city and its history. He thus suggested two strategies for engaging locals and enhancing their knowledge: the establishment of a civic museum and the conduct of a civic survey. He argued these strategies would prompt an “arousal of civic feeling, and the corresponding awakening of more enlightened and more generous citizenship.”⁴⁶

Such a civic consciousness had clearly existed in Ahmedabad in the past. In the nineteenth century local merchants and traders had volunteered their services to raise funds for the maintenance of the fort wall. And when the original City Wall Scheme had proposed demolishing the walls, it had been met by massive opposition from residents.

However, people's association with the wall had become less intense as the local political scenario changed and living conditions in the city deteriorated. As the historian Nandini Gooptu has observed, this change of view also had much to do with the political ambitions of the newly elected middle-class leaders. They had been placed under great pressure to demonstrate their ability to deal with issues of congestion and sanitation. Thus, she wrote:

The Indian middle classes, with their nationalist and reformist orientation, would in theory go along with Geddes' ideas, but in practice they were more keen to see the towns modernized and expanded into clean new zones for their own use, the squalor-ridden slums eradicated, and the poor kept at bay and under control. . . . Ultimately, the grand conception of urban transformation was whittled down and domesticated to meet the immediate interests of the propertied classes.⁴⁷

To avoid further dissociation of the people with their cultural heritage, Geddes had placed great emphasis on observation and documentation. Thus, in the first half of his report he emphasized the importance of graphical representation of the city, in which "heritage of the past may be respected, the best activities of the present be maintained and increased, yet the expansion and activity of enlarging future found fuller."⁴⁸

Furthermore, he had insisted on converting the city survey into an exhibition called "Ahmedabad Past, Present and Possible," which could be used to educate both visitors and

citizens. Out of the three panels he proposed for the exhibition, he had dedicated one entire panel to the city walls. As a mark of their significance, he reiterated how essential it was to document them if they were to be removed. In some areas, as near Astodia Darwaza, he also observed that demolition would be an act of vandalism.

Yet, despite these efforts, his proposals were ignored, and most of the wall was demolished in 1924.

EXISTING CONDITION OF THE FORT WALL

Today the condition of Ahmedabad's walls varies considerably. Throughout history, the west section has never been threatened with demolition because it provided a defense against the river and acted as an urban retaining wall. This section thus remains mostly intact, and its ongoing restoration is being supervised by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC). In his report, Geddes described how small openings connected the people within the city walls here to the temples and river on its other side. He described this as a "direct common-sense way to adapt the wall to the purpose of life and use which enhances the variety and beauty." The river, whose course once adjoined the western section of the fort wall, is now located about 150–200 meters distant from it, and the newly constructed Sabarmati riverfront development occupies the land in between, running parallel to the wall and acting as a buffer between it and the river (FIG. 8).

Moving to the south and southeast, the remains of the wall reveal acts of continuity, change and adaptation, as residents have adapted pieces of it to their needs and available resources. Geddes described the area near Khan Jahan Darwaza, in particular, as having "great beauty and interest . . . a range of informal and varied landscape, of ghats, tombs and temples — natural riverfront . . . the most striking excursion



FIGURE 8. The Sabarmati riverfront promenade between the fort wall and the river.



FIGURE 9. Tombs between the houses of Khan Jahan ki Chali have become a part of daily lives of the people.

from the city.⁴⁹ These qualities remain today even though the river no longer runs adjacent to it.

The walled area that extended beyond the Khan Jahan Darwaza was called Khan Jahan ki Chali [the settlement of Khan Jahan]. Today the historic fort wall here has been adapted as a structural element of many houses, with people cutting openings into it for doors and windows according to their needs. A few tombs also exist randomly among the houses and are worshipped by the people as part of their daily activities (FIG. 9).

The gate that once connected this area to the river immediately adjacent to it was called the Parkot Darwaza (meaning “Across the Fort Wall”). Today the numerous architectural additions to this structure provide a sense of historic layering (FIG. 10).⁵⁰ Immediately inside this gate lies the historic Khan Jahan mosque. The Archaeological Survey of India once managed the old mosque, but it is currently managed by the Muslim organizations of the city. Recently, a new structure housing a *madrassa* (school) and a hostel for underprivileged boys was built less than a meter away from it. The

mosque, the Peer Naseerullah Dargah [Muslim shrine], and the unnamed tombs in the area are all maintained by the local community.

Just outside the Parkot Darwaza and the city wall boundary lies a cluster of temples in ruins, an unused well, and a settlement dominated by Hindus. A temple here called Somnath Buddha ka Aara (with a well in its precinct) was recognized as a Grade IIA building by the 2016 *Gujarat Gazetteer*, but it is currently in a largely ruined condition (FIG. 11). The longest stretch of the remaining south wall may also be found in this area, encompassing the “varied landscape” described in Geddes’s notes. However, it remains broken, disjointed and unattended, and it is abruptly discontinuous in places. In some stretches this urban edge also acts as a place to dump garbage or defecate.

Extending east from here to Jamalpur Darwaza, the wall itself does not exist, but people have adapted its former bastions for a variety of purposes. A primary survey recorded six bastions that have been adapted and modified in this area. One of these has been transformed to serve as a residence for two families. Its occupants have made a variety of necessary changes like plastering, painting, and adding a window for ventilation, a door for privacy, and a parapet wall to create a semi-private roof terrace. They also added a toilet and bathing space (FIG. 12).

Farther along, an addition has been made atop another bastion to a height of about four meters above the street to create the Hazrat Shahid Siddhi Baba ki Dargah (FIG. 13). Overlapping and comparing this location with an 1881 city map leads to the conclusion that this was once a bastion flanking the Mahuda Darwaza. This gateway, probably built during the Mughal period, was declared ill-omened after its construction, however, and was closed and never used. It was subsequently spoken of as the *bandh* [shut] gate, and is also probably the Dhedriah Gate mentioned in the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*.⁵¹

FIGURE 10. Parkot Darwaza and the rear of the Khan Jahan mosque (to its right). The Britishers entered the city through this gate. Different layers of history can be seen in the form of repairs and architectural additions including a dome.

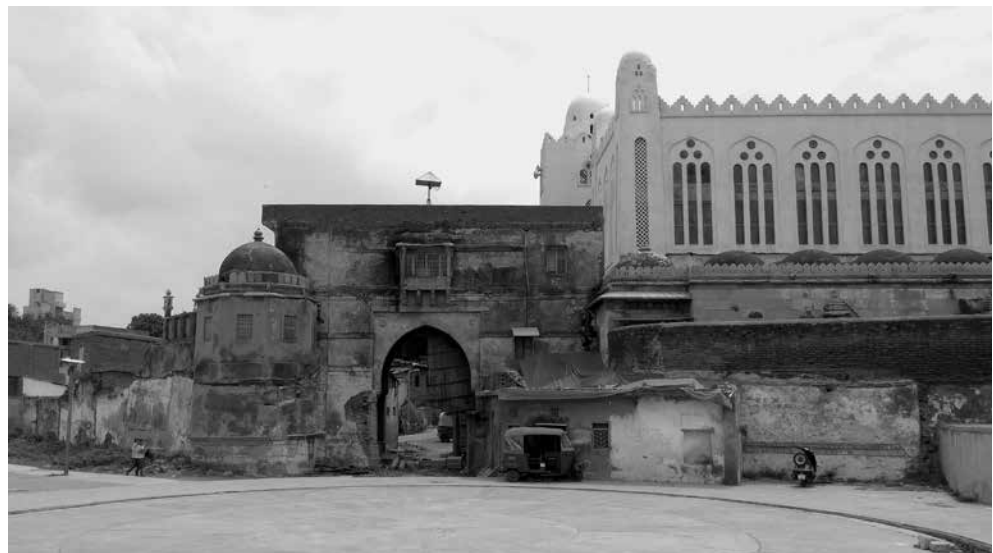




FIGURE 11A, B. These two images show the present dilapidated condition of the Somnath Buddha ka Aara, a Grade IIA building.

The other bastion flanking this gate has been modified into a residence. When questioned, its occupants seemed unaware of the existence of the former Mahuda Gate. But the key point to take away from the situation is that both of its former flanking bastions have been adapted to new uses — one as a public and the other as a private space.

In another case of conversion nearby, the interior of another bastion has been converted for storage, while a portion of its exterior has been converted for totally unrelated use as a site of religious worship called the Siddhi Sayed Chilla. In this case, the dilapidated structure of the former bastion lies completely hidden, while its facade facing the road has been well maintained (FIG. 14).

Moving towards Astodia Darwaza, small stretches of the fort wall can be found inside areas of settlement. A ruined cluster of temples here is used for storage, with the open area around it used for parking and social gathering (FIG. 15). After the height of the wall was reduced by demolition squatters, who were once forbidden from sheltering within the city, have now built semi-pukka houses on either side of it. Remains of the fort wall can still be found inside some of these semi-pukka houses. And, according to requirements, feasibility and convenience, residents have created openings for doors in it inside their houses.

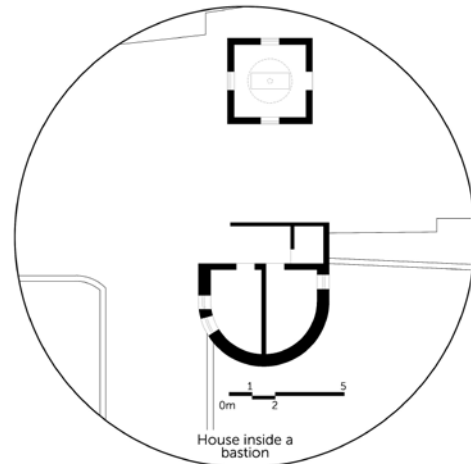


FIGURE 12A, B, C, D. The bastion modified into a residence.

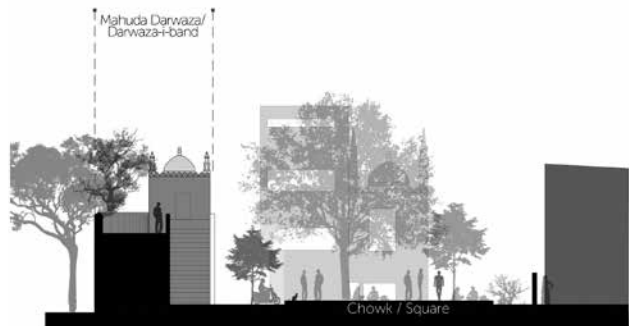
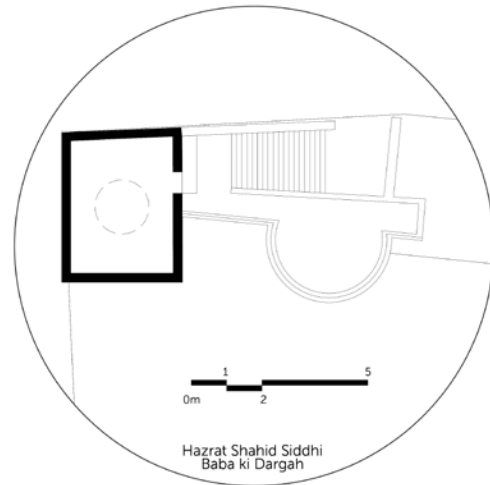


FIGURE 13A, B, C, D. The Hazrat Shahid Siddhi Baba ki Dargah is today located about four meters above street level on top of a bastion that once flanked the Mahuda Darwaza.

Issues of sanitation and congestion still exist in this area. The demolition of the wall did not resolve them. However, in his notes, Geddes emphasized how

... the south of the city is discredited and depreciated; in fact, unduly exaggerating the traditional inauspiciousness of his quarter it has undergone sanitary havoc. But with better planning, all due needs of sani-

tation can be met, and more economically. The interest and beauty of this in suburban region may be more than renewed, towards the river . . . all to the advantage of the city.

Written more than a century ago, these observations remain germane, and his suggestions still need to be revisited.



FIGURE 14A, B. A dilapidated and largely abandoned bastion is hidden behind the facade of Hazrat Shahid Siddhi Baba.



FIGURE 15A, B. The open space near a cluster of temples is used for parking and social gathering.

DEMOLITION NEAR ASTODIA DARWAZA

Within 100 meters of the Astodia Darwaza, there is a dilapidated enclosure whose walls have been vandalized by human and animal defecation. This enclosure, with its low walls (compared to the principal fort wall), was used as a leper asylum during colonial rule, although its origins are much older. Today the wall adjoining the Astodia Darwaza and this enclosure stand as islands.

In 1915 Geddes wrote that this area has “the finest of all the entrances and exits of the city.” And he noted that it provided

... [the] finest opportunities of city improvement along the whole-wall circle. The effect of the gate and wall is here enhanced by the wall of the spacious old Guard-House or Barrack, which is now used as a Leper Asylum. This military wall with its battlement like that of the city wall harmonizes with it and gives it an its bastions a fuller dignity and scale.

Geddes went on to comment that “demolition in this area would be vandalism and a waste of beauty brought about by extravagant labour and expense, and practically to no purpose within the wall any more than without.”⁵²

Despite this condition, in 2019, two years after Ahmedabad received its status as India’s first World Heritage City, a part of this enclosure was demolished by the state transport authority to allow construction of an extension to the Geeta Mandir bus station (FIG. 16). Final permission to complete the work, however, was revoked after a knowledgeable citizen brought the demolition to the attention of the cultural minister.⁵³

Despite the fact that the historic enclosure clearly lies within the buffer zone of the UNESCO Heritage City, argu-



FIGURE 16A, B. The enclosure near Astodia Darwaza built during Mughal rule that was used as a leper asylum during colonial rule. Part of the enclosure was demolished recently in preparation for the expansion of the Geeta Mandir bus depot.

ments related to the completion of the bus station project (and justifying the partial demolition of the walls) today revolve around the enclosure's "official" status. Though literature studies have clearly established that it was built during the Mughal period, these have focused on its ambiguous status as either on the "graded heritage list," the "tentative heritage list," or no list at all. Such a top-down approach to identification and listing (the AHD approach) raises questions of ownership, decision-making capacity, and responsibility for shared heritage. How can the old and new coexist and contribute additional value to historicity? Yet again, Geddesian philosophy about the importance of citizens who are aware and take pride in their heritage stands true (FIG. 17).

This area of the city near the southern stretches of its former wall embodies many evolving narratives and meanings for citizens of Ahmedabad. And a walk through it reveals various religious and social-cultural influences related to the city's timeline under different rulers. In comparison to other areas of the city where practices of "museumification and mummification" have been overseen by the ASI and AMC, it also offers the sense of raw, unfiltered, diverse layers of history. The reason is that the built environment here has been modified by people themselves without external direction. As a result, fragments of the wall here continue to have local value because they have been appropriated by residents and associated with activities of daily life.

Conditions in this area also highlight a correlated condition. This is that when historic elements are disconnected from daily life and left unattended, they may become places for defecation, dumping, and illegal activities. This in turn creates a pretext for them to be razed by the authorities for "development."

THE POWER OF SELF-ORGANIZING SYSTEMS

This study has sought to provide an example of how the philosophy and theories of Patrick Geddes may be related to Laurajane Smith's criticism of the concept of Authorized Heritage Discourse. In their respective eras, both these figures emphasized a people-centric approach based on the view, described by Smith, that "there is always a 'bottom-up' approach between people, objects, places and memories which are unofficial forms of heritage."

The recent partial demolition of the enclosure adjacent to Astodia Darwaza may thus be seen to beg several questions: Who decides what is important to preserve? And who is responsible — the people, the experts, the governing body? In this case the impending demolition of a historic structure was only brought to the attention of heritage authorities by a concerned citizen. This condition would seem to reiterate the importance of Geddes's suggestion from the early twentieth century that the establishment of a "civic museum" and the conduct of a "city survey" would be the best way to protect the



FIGURE 17. Interior view of the gate of the former leper asylum proposed as the site of an expanded present-day Geeta Mandir bus depot.

city's historic resources, because these initiatives would make the residents of the city more aware of them.

Citizens play a vital role in the continuity of heritage and its changing meanings. Once heritage sites become disassociated from the lives of people, they may be abandoned, leaving them to serve as locations in which to dump garbage or defecate. Though there are limitations to a bottom-up approach in terms of the time and resources needed to organize a community, it may ensure the maintenance and meaning of a place, as demonstrated by the integration of heritage resources into the lives of residents in the Khan Jahan ki Chali area.

Examples such as that of a family converting a bastion on Ahmedabad's historic fort wall into a house or a group of citizens constructing a *dargah* on top of another demonstrate how traditional practices can accommodate heritage into daily life. The reuse of remaining features of the southern stretch of the fort wall and the areas around it thus demonstrate the capacity of citizens to identify opportunities and organize their own responses to heritage value. Their actions in this instance also reiterate how it is people themselves who constitute a city — and how the physical quality of the urban future is always uncertain, constantly merging and evolving with people's needs. However, a lack of awareness of history and

historic structures may bring up other questions. Who is responsible for its maintenance? And to whom does it belong?

A core element of Geddesian philosophy is that cities are a discourse of self-organizing systems. As he observed, this makes it essential to observe and understand the processes and cycles involved in their systemic evolution. Such a view continues to offer a way forward when it comes to tackling contemporary issues in the World Heritage City of Ahmedabad. More than one hundred years ago Geddes highlighted how community participation and social equity were essential to this project. And today it remains crucial to recognize people and acknowledge their attachments within a place in order to best connect the past to the present.

In another work, Geddes highlighted the essential need to transform the prevailing definition of progress “from an individual Race for Wealth into a Social Crusade of Culture.”⁵⁴ The case of Ahmedabad demonstrates how citizens are able to maintain self-organizing flexible systems that are capable of evolving and continually negotiating between the heritage of the past and the needs of the present. To enable sustainable and inclusive change, new interventions and current practices should be undertaken in harmony with the present, rather than in contradiction to it.

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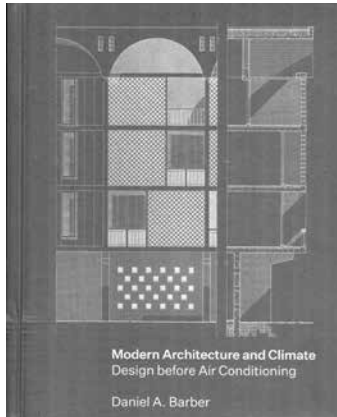
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29. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol.IV, 1909, pp.172–75.
30. Commissioner's Circuit Report, Revenue Department, 12/293/1830.
31. The *nagarseth* and *kazi* were the official agents of communication from the city's Hindu and the Muslim communities to the municipality and the colonial government. Both were recognized within the city as "respectable and learned."
32. This is probably the earliest effort of organized municipal self-government in the Western Presidencies and is described in W.M. Ducat, *Water Supply and Sewerage of Ahmedabad* (1881), p.14.
33. B.K. Boman Behram, "The Centenary of Ahmedabad Municipality," *Times of India*, April 2, 1935.
34. T.C. Hope, J. Fergusson, and T. Biggs, *Architecture at Ahmedabad, the Capital of Goozerat* (London: Murray, 1866).
35. Gillion, *Ahmedabad*.
36. Indian Famine Commission, 1901; Census Reports, Vol.IX (1901) and Vol.VII pt.I (1911); A.M. Shah, "Political System in Eighteenth Century Gujarat," *Enquiry*, Vol.I No.1 (1964); and D. Pocock, "The Movement of Castes," *Man*, Vol.55, pp.71–72.
37. Gillion, *Ahmedabad*, p.144.
38. Between 1898 and 1902 the mean death rate in Ahmedabad was 81.52 per mille (1,000) of population. The death rate of infants under one year of age per 1,000 births was 552.32 in 1904; 802.99 in 1905; 725.79 in 1907; and 976.69 in 1908. Government of Bombay, *Annual Report of the Sanitary Commissioner for the Government of Bombay*.
39. *The Praja Bandhu*, Feb.18, 1923, p.14.
40. Raychaudhuri, "Colonialism, Indigenous Elites, and the Transformation of Cities in the Non-Western World."
41. Government of Bombay, General Department ("General" Series).
42. Ahmedabad Municipal Record No.128, 2nd quarter, 1917–18, pp.41–44; and Ahmedabad Municipal Record No.134, 4th quarter, 1918–19, pp.140–44 and 157–83.
43. Raychaudhuri, "Colonialism, Indigenous Elites and the Transformation of Cities in the Non-Western World."
44. *The Praja Bandhu*, Nov.23, 1924, pp.1–2
45. P. Geddes, *Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and to the Study of Civics*, 3rd ed. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1968 [1915]), p.198.
46. *Ibid.*
47. N. Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
48. P. Geddes, "Notes on Ahmedabad by Professor Patrick Geddes" (1915).
49. *Ibid.*
50. Unpublished work by the author.
51. The gates were usually flanked by bastions on either side, and in no other stretch were bastions placed so close to each other.
52. Geddes, "Notes."
53. See <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/gsrct-sends-notice-to-firm-that-razed-old-gate/articleshow/72498219.cms>
54. P. Geddes, "On the Conditions of Progress of the Capitalist and the Labourer," in *Claims of Labour* (pamphlet) (Edinburgh: Co-operative Printing Co., 1886).

All photos and illustrations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

Book Reviews



Modern Architecture and Climate: Design before Air Conditioning. By Daniel A. Barber. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020. 336 pp., 76 color + 196 b/w illus. ISBN 9780691170039.

Until recently few architectural histories of modernism had much to say about climate. Even as the architectural profession grappled with sustainability in the early 2000s it was left to technologists such as Colin Porteous and Dean Hawkes to argue for modern architecture's environmental tradition. And while both sought to show some level of environmental intelligence (and some folly) in many of the key buildings, it was done with a view to developing models for future practice. The effort was never intended to unpack the history of architecture in terms of the changing way people have shaped, interacted with, and given meaning to the world through buildings. It is welcome, therefore, that in the past decade architectural history has taken an environmental turn, giving new emphasis to the changing meanings of climate and the role that architects and their buildings have played in conditioning it. This trend has largely been explored through tropical architecture and told through the lens of empire, decolonization, race, and Cold War politics. Notable works so far have included Jiat-Hwee Chang's 2016 book *A Genealogy of Tropical Architecture*, Iain Jackson's 2017 article for *The Journal of Architecture* "Tropical Architecture and the West Indies: From Military Advances and Tropical Medicine, to Robert Gardner-Medwin and the Networks of Tropical Modernism," and Ayala Levin's 2015 Columbia dissertation "Exporting Zionism: Architectural Modernism in Israeli-African Technical Cooperation, 1958–73."

Daniel Barber's *Modern Architecture and Climate: Design before Air Conditioning* builds on this engagement with the way climate became an architectural concern, and in turn changed and challenged the meaning of climate beyond the profession. The book does so by engaging specifically with the variety of innovative ways media were used within modern architecture to express environmental concerns. Rather than seeing climatic architecture as largely a question of technique, Barber shows how the cultural production of a whole range of diagrams and the translation of numerical data into graphic form enabled architects to perceive climate's relevance to their practice. In particular, he looks at the facade as a medium that allowed for the study of cultural norms and social practices about climate (p.13). Barber thus explains how architects gained an understanding of climate not through experiencing their buildings, but through drawing them and being able to tell stories about climate through their facades. By looking at a thirty-year moment in architecture from the late 1920s to the late 1950s, when modernism was ascendant but air-conditioning was not, Barber also hopes to open up a range of future possibilities for practice.

The book is structured in two parts. The first retells the story of how the protagonists of the International Style extended the reach of their models by thinking through climate, in the process bringing the environmental concerns of the periphery to the center. Chapter 1 reviews the interwar work of Le Corbusier and the role of the Mediterranean as a climatic testing ground for the adaptability of spatial and cultural models to the rest of the world. While models such as the Domino house are frequently considered in terms of spatial liberation, in Barber's hands, they are presented alongside the *brise soleil* as evidence of an attempt to universalize a particular kind of thermal space — one that was

amenable to European and North American norms, which Barber terms the “thermal interior” (p.37). Barber argues that Le Corbusier’s models sought to proliferate new lifestyles attuned to some industrial near future, and that this was only made possible through experiments with regional adaptations to climate such as the *brise soleil*. And yet, he notes, this was not always a smooth process, as initial attempts at spatial liberation, through all-glass facades, required extensive retrofits. Modernism’s adaptability was hard-won.

Moving from the Mediterranean to Brazil, Chapter 2 looks at how modern architecture facilitated industrialization by examining the institutional buildings that made rapid economic development possible. Placing insurance buildings, airports, and government offices for child welfare in the same frame, Barber argues that it was in Brazil that governmental and environmental strategies found a new convergence. Specifically, the adoption and refinement of particular shading strategies was an attempt by Brazilian architects and institutions to both partake in global modernity and reject some of the racialized assumptions about nontemperate conditions being inimical to economic development (p.77).

The third chapter looks at the geopolitics of American postwar reconstruction overseas and the role it played in acclimatizing and selling American ideals of democracy abroad — a battle for hearts and minds during the Cold War. The chapter thus positions public-works projects by Richard Neutra in Puerto Rico and U.S. embassies by everyone from Louis Kahn to Skidmore Owings and Merrill as an intermediate stage between the early internationalism of modern architecture, as in Brazil, and the full globalization of form that followed the widespread adoption of air conditioning. Barber terms this intermediate stage “the planetary” — a term he uses to account for the dynamics of both world capital and geophysical systems alongside its enactment at the local level (p.127). It’s a somewhat nebulous term, one that implies a certain environmental benevolence and opportunity for our own contemporary condition. And while Barber suggests that it accounts for local interpretations and influence playing a much greater role, the examples given, seem more concerned with projecting American power than encouraging local agency. Better buildings were thus seen as a way to mollify local populations rather than liberate them.

The second part of the book concentrates on the role that American research institutions and media played in instrumentalizing climatic architecture after World War II. If the first part of *Modern Architecture and Climate* is about the travels and trials of the *brise soleil*, the second part is about how technical images came into being and enabled architects to integrate climate into the design process (p.162). Building on Barber’s earlier research on solar housing and the 1950s diagrams of the Olgay brothers (for example, his 2017 article for *Public Culture* “The Nature of the Image: Olgay and Olgay’s Architectural-Climatic Diagrams in the 1950s” and his 2016 book *A House in the Sun: Modern Architecture and*

Solar Energy in the Cold War), the section is a tour-de-force in unpacking the way that environmental design was as much a project about communication as technique. Often overlooked today in discussions about environmental design, Barber shows how women’s magazines and professional journals popularized the consumption of climatically attuned lifestyles. He suggests that this project was about educating both clients and architects to adopt climatic design methods and features, making climatic design accessible and desirable for a conservative clientele, even when it revealed some of the tensions at the heart of American modernism (p.183).

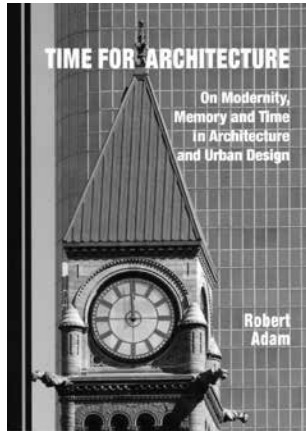
The later chapters of the book on “Calculation” and “Conditioning” point to how, before the advent of computers, architects and building scientists translated climatic data into increasingly codified methods to regulate internal thermal conditions. Barber argues that it is vital for today’s architects to understand how “they offered a counterproposal to how these conditions could be achieved through architecture, rather than air-conditioning” (p.201). Barber still sees potential in the methods, but he notes that, like the climate-control project before it, in the hands of the Olgays, the object was to maintain social stability rather than change.

Here the book folds back on its earlier studies of Brazilian modernism, noting how the Olgays developed new analytical techniques both to understand climate in their own projects and to communicate the validity of their approach to the architectural profession more broadly (p.205). In many ways the Olgays were the translators *par excellence* of technical images and diagrams from physical geography and mechanical engineering into architecture. Taking the example of Victor Olgay’s bioclimatic chart, Barber shows how it sought to resist the move to air-conditioned, sealed buildings by making the technique relevant to the design of more climatically attuned facades. It was not a complete success, as Barber notes in the penultimate chapter. Thus shading design came to be increasingly used simply to reduce air-conditioning loads, as expectations about the thermal interiors of buildings became unified as the 1950s drew to a close (p.251).

Overall, *Modern Architecture and Climate* is theoretically and visually rich, with many wonderful full-page illustrations that allow the reader to pick apart the layouts and diagrams of many mid-century publications and buildings. It is also an optimistic book, one that shows that the homogenous air-conditioned interior wasn’t an inevitability, and still need not be. If anything, given the emphasis on communication today, the book shows how modern architecture, particularly in the United States, placed great emphasis on making environmental ideas seem accessible, adaptable, and easy to enact in form.

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Time for Architecture. By Robert Adam. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020. 365 pp., 109 b&w illus. ISBN 9781527545977.



In a recent architecture jury the comments of one juror stood out. He sat rather pompously back in his chair and told the student that his project was not “timeless” enough. Moments later he told the same student that his project needed to be “of its time.” These two contradictory comments were puzzling.

Had that particular critic read Robert Adam’s remarkable book *Time for Architecture*, he would have been able to make much more intelligent and intelligible comments regarding the student’s work and its relation to time. “Timeless” and “of its time” have been critical tropes in many juries, usually referred to with a wave of the hand as if the landscape of ideas so represented were understood by all. Yet most of us, when pressed, would find these ideas difficult to explain with any real clarity.

Robert Adam is the perfect guide to this treacherous intellectual territory. He has apparently read everything: he quotes anthropologists, archeologists, architectural critics, economics experts, historians, paleontologists, philosophers, politicians, social scientists and physical scientists. His reading is vast and encyclopedic, as is his ability to locate just the right quote from just the right expert. And in this book he pursues the issues in terms of written arguments rather than the analysis of designed buildings. Buildings are, of course, referenced, and a number of black-and-white photographs punctuate the arguments, but this is primarily a rigorously textual undertaking.

The book is divided into five large essays, and the brief summaries to follow absurdly simplify their complexity. Chapter I, “Timeless,” discusses the claims of Classical architecture, geometry, and science. Chapter II, “Recognizing Time,” explores scientific and perceptual means of understanding time. Chapter III, “How Things Change,” takes up the topics of variable rates of change, innovation, and stylistic progression curves, as well as the notion of sustainability and considerations of building lifespan. Chapter IV, “Modernity,” moves on to the various ideas of the modern, modernism, modernist and modernity. Chapter V, “Memory,” examines forgetting and remembering, heritage and memory, and memory and history, before ending with a discussion custom and tradition. The essays are intended be read in sequence, but they can equally be read as stand-alone investigations.

Each is also followed by its own notes, allowing the reader to identify sources quite easily.

Given the vast range of territory covered and the even-handed way in which this highly charged material is approached, this book could be useful to nearly everybody. Adam has written a remarkable book aimed at a wide audience — and yet one that can also be successfully used by the specialist.

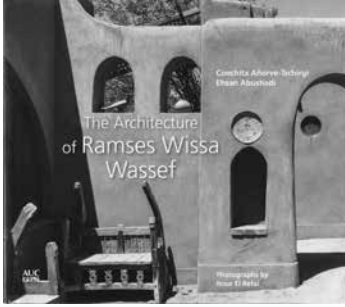
One of the pleasures of reading it is also the clarity and directness of its language. Even difficult ideas are explained in a simple, readable way, rather than by means of the turgid incomprehensibilities of most academic writing about architecture. The consistent approach to complex subjects and controversial issues leans toward a certain passionless objectivity. Yet this objectivity gradually lends the book the character of a dictionary — laying out with great clarity the various positions and ideas, but taking no eager position.

The final essay, “Memory,” generates a little heat, becoming a subtle apology for the use of “tradition” as an idea and a strategy in life and in architecture. Yet I suspect this condition may derive from the fact the word “tradition” is generally charged with negative connotations for the modern architect. The distinctions between custom and tradition likewise provide for an elaborate and complex argument. But much of the complexity here could perhaps be simplified by seeing tradition as a kind of “conversation” carried out among architects through their built work. As in any conversation, the “discussion” does not necessarily go in a straight line, but veers and shifts with changing conditions and requirements over time. Had Adam written a history of built projects this would have been an entirely different book. Indeed, a focus on built compositions and their changes over time might provide a useful companion volume to this one.

After perusing this book, the reader will leave with an introduction to the topic of time not only in architecture and urban planning, but how time applies to our very way of life, and fundamentally to the way we think about, well . . . *everything*.

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The Architecture of Ramses Wissa Wassef. By Ehsan Abushadi and Conchita Añorve-Tschirgi. Cairo: AUC Press, 2021. Vii + 259 pp., 350+ color and b&w photographs, plans and sketches. ISBN 9789774169243.



The Architecture of Ramses Wissa Wassef presents the first comprehensive survey of the work of the Egyptian architect and professor of art and architecture Ramses Wassef (1911–1974). Covering Wissa Wassef’s four-decade-long

career, the book presents both built and unbuilt works, showcasing the breadth of his practice, which included churches, schools, museums, private villas and rural houses, and public buildings. Categorized by type, descriptions of some seventy projects are supported by hundreds of archival drawings, sketches and photographs — the majority of which have never been published previously — and by recent photographs by architectural photographer Nour el Refai.

The book begins with an introduction detailing the architect’s personal life. From a young age, Wissa Wassef’s family cultivated in him both an interest in the arts — particularly sculpture — and a deep sense of pride in his country and culture. In his later work that respect translated into a lifelong search for an “authentic Egyptian architecture” that might respond directly to local, social and economic needs, and it also led to his experimentation with local materials and craft techniques (p.3). Wissa Wassef’s love for sculpture equally informed his design process. Thus, an ability to hone innate forms of knowledge and creativity came to inflect his architectural work as well as his artistic collaborations and pedagogical methodologies. While teaching at the Coptic Studies Institute in 1945, Wissa Wassef met the artist and pedagogue Habib Georgi, who would become a close collaborator and later his father-in-law. The pair shared the same principles surrounding what they saw as children’s innate creative abilities, and they worked to nurture that capacity through sculpture and weaving.

Wissa Wassef’s personal relationships and experiments with weaving and sculpture serve as a point of departure for the rest of the book which presents a survey of his professional work. The first section here begins with his most notable project, the Ramses Wissa Wassef Art Center (RW-WAC), created in conjunction with his wife, Sophie Habib Georgi. Starting in 1952, this project grew incrementally over the next two decades, providing the genesis for a number of Wissa Wassef’s ideas surrounding locally responsive architecture and demonstrating his experiments with traditional construction methods, particularly mud brick. The RW-WAC’s

program also provided a venue for Wissa Wassef’s pedagogical models — implemented through the weaving of tapestries (which the center is most recognized for) — and identified him as a protector of the arts in Egypt (p.102). This role was manifest in myriad ways throughout his projects, particularly his designs for some of the country’s most formidable artists. These included the Mahmoud Mokhtar Museum (1960) dedicated to the renowned sculptor and pioneer of modern Egyptian art, a residence commissioned by the sculptor Adam Heinein in 1968, and the residence and studio of ceramics artist Mohie al-Din Hussein in Harraniya that same year.

Wissa Wassef’s contributions were likewise palpable in the design and preservation of contemporary churches in Egypt. For example, he was responsible for the design of the St. George and St. Abram Church in Heliopolis and the Church of the Virgin Mary in Zamalek (1957), an icon of contemporary sacred space in Egypt. He also authored a proposal to the General Congregation Council to establish guidelines for contemporary Coptic church design. Yet despite his desire to establish a committee to promote general design principles, he also valued the ability of design to respond directly to context. This was most evident in his use of recycled material for the stained-glass windows of the Church in Zamalek at a time, under President Gamal Abd el Nasser, when imports were limited.

Although the authors are clear that they are not providing an in-depth description of the broader socio-cultural and historical context which informed these projects, the information they do provide offers the critical depth needed to understand Wissa Wassef’s work in relation to rapid developments in Egypt’s architecture and policies. The book thus discusses an important commission he received for the interior design and design of colored glass panels of the Grand Reception Hall at the Cairo Governorate Headquarters (1961) in collaboration with Shafiq Ahmed Hosni, Kamal al-Kafrawi, and Ahmed Bishindi, members of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo. The building itself, a landmark in Cairo’s historical and physical landscape, was designed by the Egyptian modernist architect Mahmoud Riad and built between 1958 and 1959. Other projects described include his design for the pierced stucco-and-glass shallow-domed lounge ceiling at the Palestine Hotel (1964) in Alexandria, built to host the attendees of the Arab Summit that year. Such commissions dismantle the notion that Wissa Wassef’s work stood in contrast to the modern architecture of his contemporaries and highlight his contributions within a broader socio-political context.

This comprehensive survey of Ramses Wissa Wassef’s projects also showcases his extensive contributions not only to architecture but also to art and pedagogy — disciplines whose boundaries were diluted and interchanged through his personal and professional collaborations. And it serves as a broader call to document and preserve the work of architects, artists and scholars from Egypt who have long been excluded from contemporary discourse. Such exclusions

have certainly played a role when it comes to the preservation of architectural work — perhaps the clearest indicator being that more than half of Wissa Wassef’s projects no longer exist. Over the past few years, however, formidable initiatives have emerged to document and preserve the work of important Egyptian architects. This may be seen most recently with publications like James Steele’s *Abdelhalim Ibrahim Abdelhalim: An Architecture of Collective Memory* (AUC Press, 2019), the first comprehensive study of the work and career of the late architect; and Mohamed Elshahed’s *Cairo since 1900: An Architectural Guide* (AUC Press, 2020), a survey of modern architecture in Cairo over the past century. *The Architecture of Ramses Wissa Wassef* will follow within this body of work and provide a foundational text both for general readers and students, architects and scholars within the extended and intersecting fields of art and architecture.

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Working Cities: Architecture, Place and Production. By Howard Davis. London and New York: Routledge, 2020. 280 pp., 139 color and 44 b&w illus. ISBN 9781138328662.



The nineteenth-century industrial revolution brought radical changes to both space and production. Cities were made and remade in sweeping ways, as mechanized industries, their associated activities, and the new mass of employees conglomerated in urban space. Former villages and cities were wholly transformed through the new scales, configurations,

and architectural typologies of factories, workshops, and worker housing.

However, since the middle of the twentieth century, cities have been increasingly hollowed out as sites of industrial production. Factory production has shifted geographically to become increasingly consolidated in Mexican *maquiladoras*, Chinese factory towns, and massive garment production networks in Bangladesh. Meanwhile, the financial sector has come to dominate economic activity in cities, particularly across the United States, Western Europe, and East Asia. Richard Florida succeeded (perhaps more than he expected or desired) in convincing U.S. cities to embrace this loss of industry and turn to the “creative class,” whose presence has now gentrified former industrial sites and worker neighborhoods. All this has led to cities in the twenty-first century that are diminished spaces of production. As the union boss Frank Sobotka laments in season two of the acclaimed HBO drama *The Wire*, “We used to make shit in this country, build shit.”

Howard Davis takes on exactly this loss of production — the “making of things” as a primary activity that spatially and socially structures cities — in his latest book *Working Cities: Architecture, Place and Production*. *Working Cities* is a spatial, historical analysis of urban industrial production and a rallying cry for the return of production to cities. And while the loss of industrial production in cities is not a new topic for scholars in the social sciences, Davis’s book offers a novel perspective by examining the topic through the analytical lens of the built environment.

Working Cities focuses on three topics: the historic built form that industries took in cities; the spatial needs of contemporary iterations of industrial production; and the importance of centralizing production in cities and in relation to domestic life. The book’s structure shifts between historical analysis and proposing how urban policies and design can encourage the return of production to cities. Davis examines historic production spaces such as workshops and industrial

zones in cities such as London and New York. He interviews contemporary makers and entrepreneurs, to better understand their spatial needs. And he conducts spatial analysis that ranges in scale from buildings to neighborhoods to understand the built forms that enable and encourage production, as well as the urban features that inhibit efficient production. By means of these investigations the book develops an unashamed call for production to return to cities, culminating in guidelines for city governments to facilitate the transformation. Davis's method is to illustrate what production in cities "looks like," and to speculate about how space at the scale of the building, the block and the neighborhood could be reshaped so production could once again thrive.

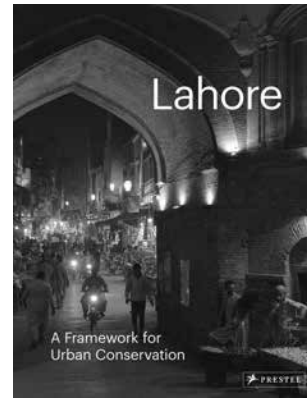
Working Cities is grounded in evidence from a small collection of cities, predominantly in the United States and England, though it aspires to speak to a wider array of cities. Some readers might find Davis's generalist approach to the political economy of production frustrating, particularly when he fails to critically identify how many contemporary "makers" are producing luxury commodity goods that are marketed to the very urban elite who often participate in the knowledge economy that is replacing production. However, that potential shortcoming is balanced by his careful — and novel — attention to the spatial and architectural aspects of production. *Working Cities* successfully straddles the spatial and social, illustrating the role that the design of the built environment plays in the viability of production in cities. And the book is generously illustrated, with a large body of photographs, analytical drawings, and design propositions. The latter, in particular, reflect Davis's experience as a professor of architecture who predominantly teaches design courses, and does so from the perspective of architecture's connections to social processes.

Working Cities, moreover, sits alongside contemporary scholarship on the urban housing crisis. Davis calls for urban designs that locate work and housing within walking or bicycling proximity, or that is distributed across the city in patterns that can be connected via efficient public transport. And the book draws attention to the need to include work by people with a broad set of skills and income levels in cities. Doing so for Davis, however, does not simply imply a nostalgic return to cities of earlier centuries and finer-grain scales. Centering work in urban design and policy is rather a question of equity, and of the spatial and social quality of cities.

Reading *Working Cities* a year and a half into the COVID pandemic feels prescient. Since early 2020 society has become focused on how to balance work and personal life, organize the space of each, and value the work each member of society performs. *Working Cities* points out that these questions are not merely personal; they are at the heart of the making of cities.

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Lahore: A Framework for Urban Conservation. Edited by Philip Jodidio. Munich: Prestel and the Aga Khan Historic Cities Program, 2019. 400 pp., 614 color illus. ISBN 9783791358567.



When I started my Ph.D. research on historic Cairo in the late 1980s, European cities were being showcased, studied and analyzed by urban conservation professionals as textbook examples of different philosophies and as case studies for best international practices. Postwar reconstructions in Europe had produced various exemplary approaches, which

were manifest in different attitudes in such cities as Leuven, Bruges, Rotterdam and Warsaw. As I began my work, I was aware of, and frustrated by, the many essential and obvious big issues in Cairo and other Muslim-majority historic cities, such as underdevelopment, uncontrolled population growth, mass poverty, the colonial legacy, and the Islamic worldview and value system. But these — as well as technical problems caused by aridity, heat, and other Southern Hemisphere phenomena — were hardly relevant in Europe. How could conservation strategies in Cairo or Lahore relate to those being developed in Paris, Vienna or other European cities? It was like comparing apples to oranges.

At the time no good examples for urban conservation in historic cities of the global South were known. Since then, however, the World Bank has acknowledged cultural heritage and included its conservation and revitalization in development projects it has financed in cities like Fez and Lahore. But it was the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) that changed the international landscape by pioneering projects in Zanzibar, Cairo, Aleppo, Lahore, Delhi and other historic cities in the global South. These projects paid attention to the diverse development needs and cultural specificities of non-Western cities while addressing international best practices in matters of technical conservation and philosophy. *Lahore: A Framework for Urban Conservation* is the fifth volume published since 2011 in an ongoing series that seeks to disseminate the achievements by projects of AKTC and its Historic Cities Program.

Lahore is an elegant hardback volume, generously illustrated with stunning colored photos, maps and architectural drawings. The built heritage of Lahore is contextualized both geographically and historically, and the reader will enjoy the wealth of information about Lahore's historic walled city, mausolea, fort, Badshahi mosque, and gardens (including the famous Shalamar Bagh). A feast for the eyes, it also provides

a great narrative of Lahore, “the City of Gardens,” and its Mughal urban, architectural and artistic heritage. But make no mistake, this is not a coffee-table book. It records and celebrates the urban conservation work that AKTC has planned, implemented, and is implementing in partnership with the World Bank, the government of Punjab, the Walled City of Lahore Authority, and other partners, including public-private partnership agreements over many years.

Edited by Philip Jodidio, the book includes contributions from nineteen authorities on art history, architecture, heritage, conservation, planning and development. Besides its introduction and a conclusion titled “The Way Forward,” it is divided into four parts: “Greater Lahore and the Walled City,” “The AKTC Initiative in Lahore (2007–12),” “Integrated Planning and Monument Conservation (2013–17),” and “The Master Plan for Lahore Fort (2017–Present).” According to this structure, the book paints a big picture of the rich urban landscape of the historic walled city as it sits amidst the greater contemporary city. It gets into the technicalities of the urban conservation of the walled city. And it addresses the complexity of a thriving city — including urban planning, infrastructure development, socioeconomic initiatives, conservation initiatives, economic regeneration, tourism development, municipal services capacity-building, conservation services capacity-building, and environmental improvement. The book also explains the philosophy behind conservation and development decisions and the approaches to techniques of conservation implemented at the Shahi Hammam, the Wazir Khan Mosque and Chowk, and other buildings. Furthermore, the text, drawings and photos describe and illustrate many fine restoration, consolidation and reconstruction efforts targeting delicate historic elements, such as the picture wall of the western facade of Lahore Fort, the *kashikari* (glazed-tile work) on the north facade of Wazir Khan Mosque, and the *naqqashi* (wall painting on lime plaster) in the Shahi Hammam.

As described, the master plan prepared for Lahore Fort and its buffer zone

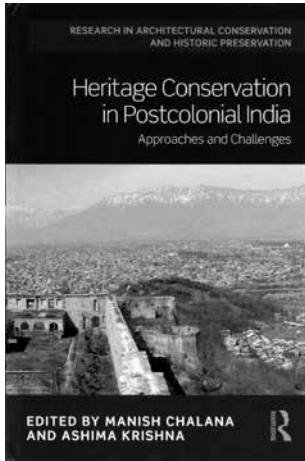
... presents a new vision for the conservation and rehabilitation of the Lahore Fort World Heritage Site in the context of the significant financial investments to be made over the next several years. It anticipates a new institutional setting for Lahore Fort World Heritage Site. This is in view of the proposed expansion of the World Heritage Site to include Badshahi Masjid, the Hazuri Bagh and the Sikh funerary complex north of Roshnai Gate, and of the addition of a “buffer zone” around the site — as per the current requirements of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (p.235).

Lahore documents and discusses AKTC’s endeavors to address the huge challenges of both conservation and development in the city from 2007 to the present, with sustainability as the main preoccupation. This is a pioneering work and a best-practice example of conservation and development in a non-Western context. The book is an important reference for both conservation architects and urban planners who work in historic cities.

Hossam Mahdy

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Heritage Conservation in Postcolonial India: Approaches and Challenges. Edited by Manish Chalana and Ashima Krishna. London and New York: Routledge, 2021. 328 pp., 71 b&w Illus. ISBN 9780367619947.



A collection of essays, this book, intends to bring to the fore a nuanced understanding of the complexities faced while approaching conservation of cultural heritage in postcolonial India. The editors have created four “thematic sections” to highlight the challenges associated with the field of heritage conservation at various scales of intervention, through a continuous process of evolution and located in highly diverse cultural milieus. The essays in

each section focus on different aspects of a theme and are written based either on specific field studies by research scholars or on experiences gained by conservation professionals during the course of one or more of their significant projects.

The first section — “Developments in Heritage Conservation: Institutions and Programs” — begins with insights by Saptarshi Sanyal regarding the evolution of the Archaeological Survey of India (the central government agency responsible for the protection and maintenance of more than 3,500 sites across the country). While acknowledging this agency’s shortfalls, Sanyal focuses on case examples that reveal the potential for the organization to evolve, and she highlights the importance of having such a government body as the principal custodian of the nation’s cultural heritage. The second chapter, by Divay Gupta, then provides a much needed account of the establishment, role and activities since 1984 of India’s most important nongovernmental agency, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and its Architectural Heritage Division. In the third chapter, Shikha Jain draws on her experience creating development and heritage-management plans with various competent authorities for the cities of Jaipur and Ajmer in the state of Rajasthan. As she contemplates the role of various legislative measures, she emphasizes the importance of anchoring conservation projects to a city’s vision plan while keeping an “inclusive participatory approach.” Despite the importance of legislation, the next chapter, by Ashima Krishna, examines instances from Lucknow that illustrate the role of advocacy as an important tool in case there is a lapse in governance. The last chapter of the section, by Michael A. Tomlan, then breaks slightly away from these large-scale institutional concerns to call for the inclusion of cultural heritage and conservation in elementary-school education as a way to sensitize communities in India to its importance.

The second section turns to the topic of “Critical Challenges in Heritage Conservation.” The chapter by Gurmeet S. Rai and Churnjeet Mahn first offers insight into their collaborative effort in Amritsar to develop an inclusive heritage practice by observing the present-day aspirations of resident communities along with contested historic narratives. Next, Swapna Kothari focuses on the loss of cultural artifacts by elaborating on the issue of trafficking in antiquities from India. Priya Jain then contributes a chapter on the necessity to recognize modern heritage as an important resource to “enable a deeper understanding of our place in the present and future.” An essay by Manish Chalana and Sakriti Vishwakarma concludes this section by elaborating on the importance of understanding vernacular building traditions as tools for disaster mitigation, using Chamba town as a case study.

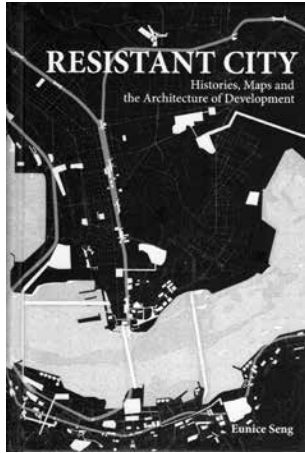
The third section, “Emerging Trends in Heritage Conservation,” begins with an experience-based discussion by Aishwarya Tipnis on the use of digital platforms to encourage participatory strategies of heritage conservation. Kamalika Bose then shares her experience of working in Kolkata’s Chinatown as a way to stress the importance of conserving minority neighborhoods. Continuing in the same spirit, Patricia Tusa Fels uses the example of Malabar mosques to emphasize the need for conservation programs that “honor the ingenuity of vernacular buildings and landscape.” And the section concludes with a discussion of intangible heritage, as Yaaminey Mubayi investigates the impact of inscribing the manufacture of brass and copper utensils by the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru Punjab on the UNESCO list.

The final section, on “Sustainable Approaches to Heritage Conservation,” is composed of essays that consider cultural heritage sites as complex ecosystems. A chapter by Amita Sinha first proposes design strategies to conserve the cultural heritage of the ghats on the river Ganga in Varanasi. Focusing on water-conserving design, James L. Wescoat, Jr., then takes the fort of Nagaur as the main case study in an analysis of the Indo-Islamic water experience in India. The last two chapters focus on the human dimension: Priyaleen Singh first discusses the necessity of acknowledging the innate “bond” of humans with nature through conservation of historic gardens; and Ananya Bhattacharya then writes on enabling tourism industry to become a sustainable social resource through community led initiatives.

The book, quite clearly, touches upon an appreciable range of concerns and complexities and no doubt is an important addition to the currently negligible amount of research available in the public domain on conservation practices in India. Nevertheless, considering India’s cultural diversity, it is important to note that because all the essays are very site or case specific, there is scope to include many more deliberations to this format. One may hope, therefore, that this book will be the first of, or the precursor to, a series dedicated to documenting all the many other varied aspects of “Heritage Conservation in Postcolonial India.”

Saumya Sharma
Chandigarh College of Architecture, India

Resistant City: Histories, Maps and the Architecture of Development. By Eunice Seng. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2020. 364 pp, b&w illus. ISBN 9789811204616.



Resistant City was my favorite read of 2021. Based on historical and field research it provides a well-studied, grounded and diachronic view of the intense (re)making of Hong Kong. Employing the work of well-acclaimed European critical theorists such as Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, and David Harvey, and paying special attention to leading scholars of Hong Kong such as Ackbar Abbas and Alan Smart and filmmakers

like Wong Kar Wai, Eunice Seng thus adds the case of Hong Kong to the growing number of studies of postcolonial urbanism. In this way, *Resistant City* not only acknowledges local perceptions and highlights the contestation of space provided for and/or imposed on them, but it also validates the production of knowledge of Asian cities from Asian cities, employing (hybrid) Asian perspectives.

In a way, the book is a modernist monograph, questioning Western (architectural) modernism while it traverses the path mapped by it. Seng simultaneously escapes the paradigm to critically look back at and question modernism, both focusing on and locating herself within its margins. By margins I refer here to the cracks, enclaves and fissures of mainstream Hong Kong, especially the “islands of resistance” through which Seng views it. In addition to mainstream actors, she brings out the agency, energy and tenacity of ordinary people who transform the city through their daily life, and through special activities such as “occupying.”

Seng’s Hong Kong is (re)produced by powerful property developers, supported by a system of financial incentives, in a society increasingly controlled by strong disciplinary mechanisms. But it is also negotiated by resistances, counter-spaces, and the everyday life of ordinary people-groups.

Sandwiched between a prologue and an epilogue (with a short addendum cataloging 85 public toilets in the Fragrant Harbor), the book’s six main chapters examine the resulting architectural typologies, such as tall towers and composite, hybrid structures. *Resistant City* thus highlights the universal optimism generated by tall buildings and the “modernization” of the city. But it also looks carefully at ways to create and transform spaces and places.

Seng not only maps out spaces usually addressed by social scientists, but she builds out a sense of their physicality using a trained architectural eye. She critically employs this capability to dig deep, taking the reader into unseen areas of small spaces created by “less-powerful” actors, and making visible the culture of resistance involved in the production of these spaces and structures. Going beyond resistance, she also makes visible a whole range of spaces and approaches that fall outside mainstream studies. Delving into the complex experience of Chungking and Kiu Kwan Mansions, she highlights their hybrid role as embodying both the cornucopia of Rem Koolhaas’s “Downtown Athletic Club” and a center for ordinary insurgents.

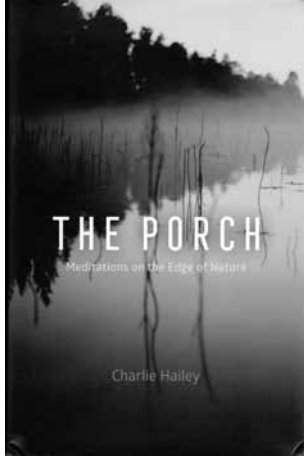
Although the work is academic, the eclectic framework, approach, and writing style (especially moving between academic and narrative registers) provide greater room for the (re)reading of local (marginal) spaces. The chapters are represented through a rich set of texts, photos, drawings, diagrams, and manga-style pen-and-ink drawings. They thus combine various techniques of representation used by geographers and architects to shed light on activities and spaces viewed as marginal to the mainstream. In so doing, the author invokes the spaces of everyday survival and resistance, (re)discovering “other” spaces and stories. The book employs these descriptions, representations and techniques to make a thorough analysis.

Drawing on de Certeau’s *The Practice of the Everyday*, Seng maps what occurs on the ground (or in the practice of space) and takes the reader on a “walk” through the buildings, towers, public spaces, alleys, and tent cities of Hong Kong, questioning the dichotomy between maps and itineraries. In so doing, she transforms documentation into analysis. As she guides the reader through maps representing sixteen episodes of history, Seng highlights various perceptions and negotiations of space that have caused the continual remaking of heterotopia.

Despite its many positive qualities I would be remiss if I did not mention several of this book’s shortcomings. Among these is a missing link to postcolonial urbanism. Some of the notes also appear misnumbered. And although this is a well-written book in which the language produces depth and critical insight, it could have been better if it had been more carefully copy-edited. However, none of these minor shortcomings come anywhere close to diminishing the great value of the book.

Nihal Perera
Ball State University, Indiana

The Porch: Meditations on the Edge of Nature. By Charlie Hailey. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021. 224 pp., 12 b&w illus. ISBN 9780226769950.



Charlie Hailey has generated a book in which he does what his subject matter calls for. He holds that the porch is not merely a room outside an entrance, but one that “also opens deeper meanings and paradoxes, just as porch’s common definition raises as many questions as it answers.” Hence the meditative, rather than propositional style of the work. What does this amount to? In a nutshell, our author tells us that

Porches offer lessons in paradox and contradictions. They celebrate the in between, as they teach us the value of thresholds. In and out, private and public, arrival and departure, social and natural, here and there, near and far, sight and sound, introversion and extroversion, stable and precarious. On a porch, we live paradox, working between opposite, thinking about what we see, trying to measure what we sense, and as Dewey says, “penetrating the true nature of experience.” Tuning in. Acclimating.

Here we are on notice that we have to assume an appropriate mood when reading. An openness to the logic of serious reflection, as of poetry, is required lest the reader be disappointed in the expectation of a discursive presentation of linear relationships. *The Porch* is not that kind of book.

This review does not intend to provide a “chapter by chapter” description of the book’s contents; in any case, that would be impossible given the reflective flow across heterogeneous subject matter. Rather, my goal is to convey the character of the work, that readers may approach it with the appropriate attitude.

Many readers who know Hailey’s smooth and inviting writing from earlier works such as *Spoil Island: Reading the Makeshift Archipelago* will expect, besides his sensitive response to both the natural and built environments, a strong evocation of a specific sense of place. In this regard, the reader can see what is in store early on. However, to say that the book is meditative in mode does not mean that it is centripetal, closed in on the author’s musings. To the contrary, the reflection is engagingly connected to the features of the place, to the body of thought in our heritage that he joins in conversation. The thinking and writing emanate from his

very particular porch on Florida’s Homosassa River (which empties into the Gulf of Mexico), where both the porch and the lagoon by which it stands are recognized as carefully planned, thoughtfully placed.

Hailey is not bashful about acknowledging a mythic dimension, especially that of the ancient Greeks (p.11). He considers details of construction, as befits an architect, describing the framing, with its motley assortment of lumber, and limestone foundation, with its varying degrees of solidity. This seamlessly leads him to consider the echo of Theseus’s ship, then onward to Claude Monet’s pool of lilies and its bridge. The work is populated not only by cedars, oaks, marsh grass, osprey and mangrove snappers. A surprising number of persons pass through, all in some way familiar with the place and with the phenomena of porches: Winslow Homer vacationing in Homosassa in the early years of the twentieth century, then the especially fruitful work of John Dewey on his porch in Miami Beach. All this in Chapter One!

To say that Hailey is a keen observer doesn’t apply only to what he sees (though he self-reflectively discusses the way he sketches). He is a fine listener to a wide range of “what it is that is said” — in Heidegger’s terms, what is laid out for us to take to heart.

As I hope to have made clear, the book is a site of emergence and flow, enriched by proceeding with concrete particularities as well as more general observations. Eschewing a strict logical, categorical matrix as the book’s principle of organization, the structure unfolds from the author’s contention that there are four core elements to thinking about a porch, each carrying the porch’s essence and paradox: tilt, air, screen and blue. Striking qualitative features, all. Plus acclimation, which “is how porches delicately tune person and place.” In the course of laying thought-worthy material before us, the mediations range across the nonlevel floorboards, driftwood, the story of robin’s-egg blue, a variety of seashells, geckos, pelicans, crabbers, shrimp boats, and the insect wire screening bureau. We find conversations taking up James Agee and Walker Evans, multiple U.S. presidents, numerous ancient Greeks and their architecture, Flannery O’Connor, Louis Kahn, Sinclair Lewis, more Greeks, Sigurd Lewerentz, John Ruskin, photographers Paul Strand and Al Clayton, the Gerber baby, Harper Lee, and St. Gregory.

Lest I leave the wrong impression, those wanting the “scholarship behind the thinking,” as provided by supporting footnotes, will not be disappointed. It is provided, but it recedes to a lower register. It can be found by moving to the 239 endnotes, though flipping back and forth disrupts the flow in which the reader can participate.

Bob Mugerauer
University of Washington, Seattle

RUPTURE AND TRADITION

DISRUPTION, CONTINUITY, REPERCUSSIONS



DECEMBER 14–17, 2022 | NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

CONFERENCE THEME

Tradition has multiple forms, manifestations, and influences that shape the processes used to produce, transform, preserve, and consume built environments in synch with socio-cultural and economic change. Over the past thirty years, IASTE has helped shape the discourse around the political, cultural, economic, and legal frameworks of tradition. The notion of rupture will be used to frame this ongoing discussion at the IASTE 2022 conference, to be hosted by the National University of Singapore. To describe a rupture is to describe an event that makes the difference between a before and an after. A rupture is a crack, a fissure, an impassable chasm, or a wrinkle in time. Whether understood in a temporal, physical, or topographic sense, ruptures have played an important part in the making of buildings and cultural landscapes. The pandemic year 2020 certainly provided such a moment, which may be used to reflect on the ways that “rupture,” in its multifarious forms, has shaped traditional environments. But its examination also offers an opportunity to rethink the very notion of what tradition is — as something passed on, a linear narrative, one that incorporates change rather than stagnation.

The way the “rupture” of the ongoing pandemic is restructuring how traditions are understood will certainly be at the core of IASTE 2022. Yet, instead of simply considering direct responses to this global moment, Rupture and Tradition is also interested in the slower, more long-term processes by which traditions consolidate history-altering events. Indeed, it is often through repercussions felt elsewhere, rather than the event itself, that rupture produces change, altering traditions and their forms of continuation. For example, the eruption of Tambora in the Dutch East Indies in 1815 was a cataclysmic local event, but it also had repercussions felt around the world, lowering global temperatures in subsequent years and triggering crop failures. In a similar sense, transformational events may be incorporated into traditional environments through the stories they instigate, conditions of political and economic status quo they disrupt, and popular understandings of shelter, safety, and supportive habitat they suddenly call into question.

The organizers of IASTE 2022 invite participants to submit papers that consider the numerous ways in which rupture and tradition are intertwined. Papers are not restricted to temporal or geographic frames. Papers that exhibit or explore new methodologies in the humanities are most welcome. The temporal and spatial anomalies that ruptures prompt may even prompt researchers to experiment with alternative narrative modes to present ongoing research, or they may motivate scholars to revisit existing material in a new light in terms of rupture.

We look forward to receiving papers from scholars, professionals, and practitioners in architecture, architectural history, urban design, art history, anthropology, archaeology, folklore, geography, history, planning, sociology, political science, urban studies, conservation, design, digital technologies, and related disciplines. Papers may address one of the following tracks.

continued

TRACK I: DISRUPTION

How does disruption reconfigure how traditions migrate, reshape, or translate under duress? Papers in this track may ask how disruption has played an integral role in shaping traditional environments and their contemporary interpretations. Similarly, disruptions of the contemporary moment may create challenging circumstances for the traditional in myriad ways. Thus, economic migration, pilgrimage, and family separation may all disrupt the continuation of traditions, yet eventually be integrated into them, shifting them in new directions. Disruptions in the historical sense can extend from the micro to the macro, both in terms of the repercussions of an event and the temporal frameworks of an event itself.

Papers in this track might address questions about architecture’s capacity to incorporate disruption as part of its decorative or structural properties. For example, South American earthquakes revealed the poor artisanship of ecclesial architecture built for settler-colonial societies under the *encomienda* system of indentured servitude, whereas the Incan ashlar structures that predated them survived. Disruption, in this sense, revealed differences in workmanship related to the wider socio-political conditions of that historical moment. Two approaches to disruption — retrospective and contemporary — might thus inform how papers ask questions about disruption, ruptures, and tradition.

TRACK II: CONTINUITY

What forms of continuity allow tradition to persist despite rupture? In contrast to disruption, asking questions around continuity allows for a different framework of tradition to emerge. In what ways have ruptures and disruptions been incorporated into traditional environments, their narratives, architectures, and positionalities? The idea of continuity might introduce ways of retelling through story, memory, and narrative that allow the emergence of different meanings of the built environment. How do dwellings, buildings, structures, and sites tell stories about continuity or its lack? This track is interested in exploring how the built environment and

the variety of ways of interpreting it can provide a measure for continuity.

Additionally, new methods in environmental humanities, architectural history, and urban studies may illustrate alternative ways to interpret continuity. For example, as a tool for considering historical maps and contemporary data as a cohesive composition, thick mapping might provide a methodology for evaluating the continuity of tradition. Questions of resistance, resilience, ingenuity, and existence are thus of interest to this track.

TRACK III: REPERCUSSIONS

In what ways are societal changes incorporated into tradition and its narratives? How have modern conditions, concerns for environmental sustainability, and calls for adaptive reuse posed new challenges and opportunities for tradition? Moreover, how do these contemporary concerns reframe the study of tradition? In what ways does the traditional reemerge under new circumstances? These questions of consequence and reverberation frame the third track, which is interested in methodological reflections on the study of tradition.

ethno-nationalism in many societies globally, Indigeneity itself has taken on new meaning since it brings forth notions of rootedness, diversity, and historical migrations that structure worldviews outside of the purview of the nation-state. Architects have thus recently turned to the study of Indigenous building methods both in search of respite from techno-scientific and unsustainable modes of construction and in order to exploit the conceptual implications that Indigenous uses of materiality bring forth. Papers in this track might consider these as repercussions of tradition — traditional forms in new frameworks under new interpretations — that call into question the static attributes of tradition and provide a means for understanding what James Clifford has called “becoming Indigenous in the twenty-first century.”

One important concern here is how tradition may become contemporary under new societal frameworks. For example, Indigenous building traditions may find new meaning through contemporary reinterpretation and reuse. Recently, with the rise of

SPECIAL SESSIONS/PANELS

Over the past few years, IASTE conferences have included special sessions and panels related to conference themes, collectively organized or sponsored by specific groups or institutions. Such proposals are welcome again in 2022 as a way to facilitate outreach to researchers from disciplines not normally engaged with IASTE or to introduce new topics or debates. We include here a call for such special sessions/panels.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- March 21, 2022** Deadline for abstract submission
- May 15, 2022** Acceptance letter for abstracts/conference poster
- September 1, 2022** Deadline for registration
- November 1, 2022** Deadline for paper submission to the IASTE Working Paper Series
- December 14–17, 2022** Conference
- December 18, 2022** Postconference Tour

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please refer to our website (iaste.org) for detailed instructions on abstract submissions. A one-page abstract of 500 words and a one-page CV are required. For further inquiries, please email IASTE at coordinator@iaste.org. Proposals for complete panels of four to five papers are also welcome. Please indicate the track in which the panel fits. Panel submissions must include an overall abstract in addition to abstracts and CVs from all proposed speakers. IASTE may accept the panel as a whole or only accept individual abstracts and place them in appropriate tracks. All papers must be written and presented in English. Following a blind peer-review process, papers may be accepted for presentation at the conference and/or publication in the IASTE Working Paper Series.

Contributors whose abstracts are accepted must preregister for the conference, pay the registration fee of \$450 (which includes IASTE membership for 2022–2023), and prepare a full-length paper of 20–25 double-spaced pages. Registered students and spouses may qualify for a reduced registration fee of \$250 (which also includes IASTE membership for 2022–2023). All participants must be

IASTE members. Please note that expenses associated with hotel accommodations, travel, and additional excursions are not covered by the registration fee and must be paid directly to the hotel or designated travel agent. The registration fee covers the conference program, conference abstracts, and access to all conference activities, theme sessions, keynote plenary talks, receptions, conference receptions, and a walking/bus tour of the city.

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National University of Singapore

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IASTE BEST PAPER AWARDS

Three awards will be given for papers presented to the conference: the Jeffrey Cook Award for the best paper by a scholar dealing with traditional dwellings; the Eleni Bastea Award for the best paper on an urban Issue; and the Ray Lifchez Berkeley Prize for the best paper by a student or junior scholar. The winners will receive a monetary award, and after appropriate review and revision their papers will be published in the IASTE journal *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*. Eligible papers should be concerned with the subject of traditional dwellings and settlements in a manner that challenges traditional scholarship on the subject and that engages spatial analysis from an interdisciplinary perspective.

POSTCONFERENCE TOURS

Tour 1: Diversity-Sustainability in Singapore

This tour will provide a brief experiential introduction to Singapore for symposium participants by means of specially planned routes, sites, and projects. The tour will showcase the development of Singapore from a cosmopolitan colonial town to a global city, including various typologies of public housing forms, conservation areas, rapidly developed business districts, and iconic new buildings. The trip combines a coach ride across urban areas and a walk through nature, culminating at the Marina Barrage to showcase Singapore's journey and struggle toward becoming a sustainable city while maintaining its cultural and morphological diversity.

Tour 2: Singapore Cosmopolitan Modernity

This time-travel tour will start from the old harbor and fish market at the Boat Quay and end at one of the masterpieces of modern architecture of Singapore in the 1970s, the People's Park Complex. The first part involves a walk along the former coastline of the water-bay (Telok Ayer), where early immigrants (especially the Teochew, Hakka, Hokkien, and Tamil) and international traders landed in Singapore. The second part involves a walk through Niu Che Shui's pleasure district, a watering hole for Chinese high-society during the colonial era and a prostitution district from the 1930s until the 1960s. The tour will end at the People's Park Complex. The tour allows observation of a mix of hybrid Modernist, Brutalist, and Metabolist architectural concepts. The area to be visited is one of the most important sites of Asian modern heritage, and one which is under tremendous pressure of redevelopment.

MAILING ADDRESS AND INQUIRIES:

IASTE 2022

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Guide for Preparation of Manuscripts

1. GENERAL

The editors invite readers to submit manuscripts on a rolling basis. Please send all initial submissions through the Oxford Abstracts system (<https://app.oxfordabstracts.com/stages/157/submission>). Please follow the instructions there carefully and remove the author(s)'s name from the manuscript. Submissions are circulated for review without identifying the author. Manuscripts are evaluated by a double-blind peer-review process.

2. LENGTH AND FORMAT

Manuscripts should not exceed 7,500 words and 20 images.

3. APPROACH TO READER

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the journal, papers should be written for an academic audience that may have either a general or a specific interest in your topic. Papers should present a clear narrative structure. They should not be compendiums of field notes. Please define specialized or technical terminology where appropriate.

4. ABSTRACT AND INTRODUCTION

Provide a one-paragraph abstract of no more than 100 words. This abstract should explain the content and structure of the paper and summarize its major findings. The abstract should be followed by a short introduction. The introduction will appear without a subheading at the beginning of the paper.

5. SUBHEADINGS

Please divide the main body of the paper with a single progression of subheadings. There need be no more than four or five of these, but they should describe the paper's main sections and reinforce the reader's sense of progress through the text.

Sample Progression: The Role of the Longhouse in Iban Culture. The Longhouse as a Building Form. Transformation of the Longhouse at the New Year. The Impact of Modern Technology. Conclusion: Endangered Form or Form in Transition?

Do not use any numbering system in subheadings. Use secondary subheadings only when absolutely essential for format or clarity.

6. REFERENCES

Do not use a general bibliography format. Use a system of numbered reference notes, located at the end of sentences, as indicated below.

A condensed section of text might read as follows:

In his study of vernacular dwellings in Egypt, Edgar Regis asserted that climate was a major factor in the shaping of roof forms. Henri Lacompte, on the other hand, has argued that in the case of Upper Egypt this deterministic view is irrelevant.¹ An eminent architectural historian once wrote, "The roof form in general is the most indicative feature of the housing styles of North Africa."² Clearly, however, the matter of how these forms have evolved is a complex subject. A thorough analysis is beyond the scope of this paper.³ In my research I discovered that local people have differing notions about the origins of the roof forms on the dwellings they inhabit.⁴

The reference notes, collected at the end of the text (not at the bottom of each page), would read as follows:

1. E. Regis, *Egyptian Dwellings* (Cairo: University Press, 1979), p.179; and H. Lacompte, "New Study Stirs Old Debate," *Smithsonian*, Vol.11 No.2 (December 1983), pp.24–34.
2. B. Smithson, "Characteristic Roof Forms," in H. Jones, ed., *Architecture of North Africa* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), p.123.
3. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see J. Idris, *Roofs and Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984).
4. In my interviews I found that the local people understood the full meaning of my question only when I used a more formal Egyptian word for "roof" than that in common usage.

7. DIAGRAMS, DRAWINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Illustrations will be essential for most articles accepted for publication in the journal, however, each article can only be accompanied by a maximum of 20 illustrations.

Since *TDSR* is printed in black and white, grayscale images are preferred but color is acceptable. Digitized artwork should be in one of the following file formats.

Rasterized artwork (photos): TIFF or JPEG files, 300 dpi, source file size should be between 4 and 6 inches wide (let the length fall), or 1200 x 1800 pixels. Source size is the file size when the image was taken. Images that are enlarged to a specific size will lose resolution in the enlargement process and may reproduce poorly.

Line art, including charts and graphs: 1) TIFF or JPEG files, 1200 dpi; or 2) vector EPS or AI (Adobe Illustrator) AI file with fonts outlined. If submitting EPS or AI files, please remember to convert any fonts to outlines.

8. ELECTRONIC IMAGE RESOLUTION AND FILE TYPE

All images accepted for publication should be submitted as separate grayscale TIFF or JPEG files of at least 300 dpi at the actual size they will appear on the printed page. Images taken directly from the Web are unacceptable unless they have been sourced at 300 dpi.

9. CAPTIONS AND FIGURE CALLOUTS

Please include all graphic material on separate pages at the end of the text. Caption text and credits should not exceed 50 words per image. Use identical numbering for images and captions. The first time a point is made in the main body of text that directly relates to a piece of graphic material, please indicate so at the end of the appropriate sentence with a simple callout in the form of “(FIG. 1).” Use the designation “(FIG.)” and a single numeric progression for all graphic material. Clearly indicate the appropriate FIG number on each illustration page.

10. SOURCES OF GRAPHIC MATERIAL

Most authors use their own graphic material, but if you have taken your material from another source, please secure the necessary permission to reuse it. Note the source of the material at the end of the caption.

Sample attribution: If the caption reads, “The layout of a traditional Islamic settlement,” add a recognition similar to: “Source: E. Hassan, *Islamic Architecture* (London: Penguin, 1982). Reprinted by permission.” Or if you have altered the original version, add: “Based on: E. Hassan, *Islamic Architecture* (London: Penguin, 1982).”

11. OTHER ISSUES OF STYLE

In special circumstances, or in circumstances not described above, follow conventions outlined in *A Manual for Writers* by Kate Turabian. In particular, note conventions for complex or unusual reference notes. For spelling, refer to *Webster's Dictionary*.

12. WORKS FOR HIRE

If you have done your work as the result of direct employment or as the result of a grant, it is essential that you acknowledge this support at the end of your paper.

Sample acknowledgement: The initial research for this paper was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts [NEA]. The author acknowledges NEA support and the support of the sabbatical research program of the University of Waterloo.

13. SIMULTANEOUS SUBMISSION AND PREVIOUS PUBLICATION

Submission of a manuscript implies a commitment to publish in this journal. Simultaneous submission to other journals is unacceptable. Previously published work, or work which is substantially similar to previously published work, is ordinarily not acceptable. If in doubt about these requirements, contact the editors.

14. ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

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16. CORRESPONDENCE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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