UNIVERSITY OF THE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Neighbourhood Workshops - Learning from each other

HafenCity Universität Hamburg: Lehr- und Forschungsprogramm Urban Design Cairo University: Center for civilization studies and dialogue of cultures



It is people who make a city tick. It is people who appropriate the city how they want it to be, and it's people who define the future of the city. At least this is how we would like to think. For that to happen, a certain measure of non- conformity would be necessary so that people had a chance to appropriate the city they inhabit according to their needs and desires. In how far is restriction necessary? How would this affect the social and built-up structures? What form of governance would take place? Would there be total chaos and fear? And is there a space between appropriation and regulation? - Initiators

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UNIVERSITY OF THE NEIGHBOURHOODS 1
Preface 5
This book 5
The Documentation 5
The Master Program Urban Design at HCU Hamburg 5
The UD approach 6
Motif 6
Context 7
Al Darb Al Ahmad 7
Intro: A Discussion Between the Initiators 8
Neighbourhood. A Notion in Transition 13
Part I Veddel Hamburg 19
Universität der Nachbarschaften (UdN) 20
UdN - Live-Work Space 20
Schumacher´s Veddel 23
Where is Veddel? 23
Veddel and its built environment 24
Who then lives on the Veddel? 24
Approaching the Field: Dérive 26
Dérive 26
Finding a Common Language 31
Observation 33
Meeting Neighbourhood-Insiders 35
Mental Mapping 36
Mapping 40
Interview 41
Working on the Wall 42
Intervention 44
Open Dialogue 47
Learning from Each Other & Sharing Knowledge 48
Themes & Working Groups I: Threshold 50
Themes & Working Groups I: Traffic & Trade 54
An island as transitional space 54
Themes & Working Groups I: Collective Spaces 60
Themes & Working Groups I: Barriers 63
Bakery Shop - barrier as identification 63
Sportsclub Wall - barrier as guide 65
Sallys Imbiss - barrier as separator 67
Perspective 70
Part II Al Darb Al Ahmar 72
Approaching Al Darb Al Ahmar 73
Exchange of Impressions and Mapping 77
Themes & Working Groups II: In Between Spaces 80
El Zeriba (the barn) 83

Madkor House 85
El Sheikh Salah School 87
Themes & Working Groups II: Mobility 90
I Junction 95
II Street Market 97
III Prison at Darb Saeeda 98
Themes & Working Groups II: Adapting History 104
Muaayid Sheikh (Hospital) 105
Sultan Al-Muayyad Hospital 106
Questions 108
Future Scenarios 108
Conclusion 111
Themes & Working Groups II: Place Making 113
Mapping of activity setting 113
Catalogue of activity setting 115
Notes from Al Batneyya Square 122
A gate made of Coca Cola cases 123
Al Batneyya Square – two main actors 124
Portrait El Hag Ahmed Zuhdy 125
Portrait Sahar Om Ibrahim 128
Conclusion – Place Making 129
Conclusion Part I & II 132
Cairo University 135
Work Live Learn 138
Urban Studies Challenges the School of Political Science at Cairo University ... 141
Mahalle Adaptions 143
What is it like to be “informal”? 147
One Application – Three Workshops 151
Reflection of the Process 152
‘Learning from each other’ was a guiding principle 152
Two workshops in two places 153
Fieldwork sites 153
The organisation 153
The hospitality concept in Hamburg 153
From today’s perspective 154
People 155
Participants 155
Lecturer 158
Hamburg 158
Cairo 160
Team 162
Professors 164
References 165

Preface

Bernd Kniess, Anna Richter

> »The city is where difference lives and where the struggle with one another over the shape of the city, the terms of access to the public realm and even the rights of citizenship constantly have to be renegotiated. Out of this struggle emerge new modes of living, and new modes of in- and co-habitation are produced.« (Henri Lefebvre).

This book

The present publication documents the workshop series organised by Urban Design students from HafenCity University Hamburg and political science students from Cairo University. It addresses students of various disciplines (architects, urban designers, urban planners, political science, sociology, ethnography, etc.). Both, the organisation and the actual content of the workshops in Hamburg and Cairo were planned and managed by students for students. While this presented a valuable practice and learning experience, it was only possible with support and advice from professors and staff from both institutions involved.

The Documentation

The workshops documented here present a snapshot of urban design research and practice – as developed, practiced and taught at HCU. It is the documentation of a process – not a methodology handbook or teaching tool. It contains case studies, rather than comprehensive research projects. It is a compilation of work resulting from two workshops. Instead of presenting results of two case studies, the documentation gives insights into working and thinking practices.

The Master Program Urban Design at HCU Hamburg

The Master of Science degree programme Urban Design at HCU is based on a broad conception of contemporary urban structures, networks and processes. In the light of the challenges posed by a dynamically changing built and social environment, new kinds of solutions must be developed that create solid grounds for sustainable and open-ended urban planning processes. The master degree programme teaches the methods and tools for substantiated research and design practices that emphasize conceptual working processes, in-depth analyses, experimental intervention formats and process-oriented planning strategies.

The UD approach

Following an interdisciplinary approach, the Urban Design programme provides a setting in which the different departments and areas of research at HCU can interact: Architecture, Urban and Landscape Planning, History of Architecture, Urban Theory, Urban Sociology and Project Management. The educational programme thus combines the design skills needed for an architecturally oriented urban design practice with technical, social-scientific and communicative competencies required by an urban planning practice characterized by task management. The master programme Urban Design concentrates on strengthening this cross-over of disciplines in order to access new areas of research and practice in the built environment.

Rather than finding solutions to problems and implementing these, UD is concerned with opening up and unlocking alternative ways of approaching and setting into perspective the urban. Taking into account practices, processes and their materialisations, this UD approach departs from and cultivates a relational understanding of urban and non-urban space as always co- and re-produced. Urban Design as practiced and taught at HCU is concerned with understanding the urban in its multiplicity before any specific questions are asked or directions followed. Specifically, the HCU approach to Urban Design seeks to translate rather than offer solutions simply to be implemented; it aims to provide an understanding of possibilities rather than prescribe what is to be done. Centrally, it works interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary, drawing from architecture, urban studies, sociology, geography, design, planning, engineering, but also from the arts, literature and music. It is concerned with intercultural perspectives, intervening – through research, practice and performance – into debates and discourses. Following Mark Terkessidis (2010), the notion of interculture, rather than integration, enables us to capture ongoing processes of mobilities and migration in the ‘parapolis’, a coexistence of different cultures and multitudes none of which can be considered hegemonic anymore. Urban Design is reflective and reflexive in that it continuously questions traditional approaches and perspectives and proceeds in iterative steps reflecting on questions asked, material collected, methods used and assumptions made.

> ‘What we believe is necessary is a strategy for dealing with complexity and, related to this, insecurity. We are searching for tools and methods that can help us use complexity and insecurity productively.’ (Kniess 2011, 130)

Motif

Departing from the notion that cities are always in flux, more process than product, we are concerned with those who live in cities and contribute to this process through their everyday practices and daily routines as much as with abrupt changes and longer term developments. In order to understand how cities function, how they tick, we therefore need to engage with those who live in cities and who co-produce cities as socially produced and materialised spaces. Such a

relational approach following Lefebvre consciously departs from dividing the urban into different disciplinary perspectives, according to which planners know how cities are planned and built, architects are experts of construction and design, sociologists are concerned with populations and milieus and political scientists analyse governance structures. Bringing these disciplines together in an effort to learn from one another is not only motivated by an increasing need to bring into conversation the professional silos, it also entails an engagement with the emerging interstices between the disciplines, the gaps in between and overlapping areas of specific perspectives, approaches, didactic and theoretical concepts. Learning from each other invites to question one's own disciplinary taken-for-granted truths as much as listening to another's seemingly basic – but importantly: curious – questions. In the context of the Hamburg-Cairo Workshops, 'learning from one another' was both the envisioned aim and the methodological basis.

The perhaps at first impression rather 'thin' results or findings need to be seen in the context of intensive (but largely undocumented) discussions. Different disciplinary backgrounds and directions have made it paramount to find a common language. This, in fact, was more important than presenting results in the form of finished solutions – just as it corresponds with UD's priorisation of process over product.

Context

While the workshop and visit to Cairo took place just after the 'Arab Spring' movement, the focus here is on the everyday life of dwelling and living-as-practice. The 'Arab Spring' movement is undoubtedly an urban phenomenon: its materialisation and culmination on Tahrir Square is only one example of a new vitality and renewed meaning of public spaces – despite the frustration with relatively meagre results of the actual 'revolution' (cf. Lopes de Souza & Lipietz 2011: 620-621).

Al Darb Al Ahmad

Al Darb Al Ahmad presents an urban context within which two extreme urban development processes can be observed: while the neighbourhood is one of the poorest in Cairo and simultaneously features one of the richest concentrations of Islamic architecture, characterised by informal developments, building activities and exchanges, it is equally subject to interests pursued by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), an organization that focuses on the physical, social, cultural and economic revitalisation of communities in the Muslim world, thus representing the more formal interests [1]

1. https://www.akdn.org/egypt_social.asp%20darb_alahmar

Intro: A Discussion Between the Initiators

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Aya Nassar, Nihal Ragab, Mathias Schnell, Philipp Wetzel

Urban matters
Rapid and far-reaching urban transformations characterise the present. For us, students of the Urban Design Master Programme at HafenCity University in Hamburg, such changes and developments are central to our approach to and understanding of cities and urban processes. Yet although a lot of the work and projects we undertake remains within the university, even within the faculty, it nevertheless addresses issues of importance and relevance to people beyond our own discipline, beyond the university and beyond Hamburg. The two workshops and their documentation therefore present an attempt to share our approach and work with a wider audience.

Interdisciplinary practice
A workshop that addresses urban transformations necessitates interdisciplinary thinking, both of theory and of practice. When we began to organise the workshop, we felt a particular need to work across the disciplines, bridging multiple voices and perspectives. As students of Urban Design, we shared an enthusiasm for cross-disciplinary research and issues around urban form(ation)s as well as perspectives beyond technical questions and wanted to create an opportunity to discuss the spatial politics of (studying) cities. When we developed the idea to bring two geographically, culturally and educationally diverse groups of student researchers together, the aim to contribute to mutual learning was simultaneously a central objective and condition for the workshop to work. We therefore attempted to project our understanding of the urban co-production onto an understanding of urban research and exchange: in order to understand urban processes in two very distinct and different places – Hamburg Wilhelmsburg and Cairo Al Darb Al Ahmar – we needed to understand each other and engage with the ways the participants perceived, saw, heard, represented and understood urbanity and urban production.

Cooperation
In our interest to enable cooperation we conceptualised the two workshops together with our partners in Cairo. If we were to avoid putting on simply another research activity organized in Germany to be applied in Egypt, we had to bypass generic forms of development policy and practice. The DAAD's funding programme for short-term support of exchange activities between German and Egyptian universities provided the necessary means to pursue our intentions. We developed the idea, framed the theme and our focus and involved members of staff. Both the Faculty of Political Sciences of Helman University in Cairo and the Urban Design Programme of HafenCity University in Hamburg supported our project and in January 2012, the organizing team in Hamburg was able to submit

a successful application. By the time we started receiving responses to our call for papers, the two student-led organising teams were practically working as one. For many of us, this was a first experience in an organizational role – especially of such an intense activity. We hence organized the workshop on the basis of our understanding that organizers and participants should learn from each other and from the experiences and spaces we shared while we created them.

The dynamics of the teamwork

The dynamic of the teamwork was influenced by and dependent on the different professional backgrounds and interests of the participants. While this was valuable for the discussion in the initial stages and helped develop research questions, these differences also meant it was sometimes difficult to communicate within the group and to arrive at decisions shared by all. For the actual research and data collection, we split into smaller groups that addressed the research questions from different angles. In hindsight, we could possibly have yielded better results had we worked in one group with more direct exchange between the participants. Meeting in the larger group to discuss the findings meant that we had to explain how we approached the questions from the various different angles. Small groups are more mobile and flexible, especially with tight time schedules. Smaller groups developed the necessary dynamics that enabled professional backgrounds to retreat while discussions helped develop a common language among the groups.

Of course, organisational issues add another dimension to the dynamics of any projects. It was important to get to know the people involved as well as setting out their individual responsibilities so that the right contacts could be reached at the right time. While a schedule provided an overall structure, it had to be simultaneously flexible so as to enable adding to or dropping items from the agenda. While an ideal strategy for organising a workshop may not exist, working as a core group of organisers as well as having existing and making new contacts was key to the successful management of the planning and delivery of the workshop.

The workshop in the making

The idea for the workshops emerged in December 2011. We were interested in conducting two interdisciplinary intercultural workshops in two different cities: Hamburg, Germany and Cairo, Egypt. We therefore wanted to motivate students of the social sciences and urban planning disciplines to work together on two very different case studies chosen for several reasons: Veddel and Al-Darb Al-Ahmmar. The aim and subject of the workshops was to study ‘neighbourhood’, as a concept, a set of practices and specific places. This involved engaging with different ways students of the social sciences and urban planning study the city, let alone neighbourhoods. If we were to aim for an holistic grasp of the two neighbourhoods, it was important to identify and discuss these various concepts and definitions of ‘neighbourhood’.

Rather than producing a finite definition of ‘neighbourhood’ or even specific solutions to various problems in the two neighbourhoods, the workshops’ purpose was primarily the exchange itself: pedagogical exchange through presenting and discussing different methods and strategies for research, intercultural exchange through working with students from both countries and different backgrounds, and interdisciplinary exchange through an appreciation of various disciplinary

perspectives.

Finding the theme

Our interest to study neighbourhoods was a suitable theme to bring together, over a relatively short time, a very mixed group of young researchers. The subject triggered similar ideas as to how the two fieldwork sites could be approached; research interests emerged; and sessions were organized accordingly. We also found that although neighbourhoods differ decisively between locales and cultures, there is ultimately a shared notion of the neighbourhood – at least we thought so. We wanted to find a topic participants could relate relatively quickly to, so that exchange in a common language was made possible. This was particularly important during the first workshop in Hamburg as we tested and practiced research methods that were new to many in an environment that was equally new to many. Moreover, we worked with and on methods that we would take to Cairo to test and practice them there under reverse circumstances.

Partly inspired and fully hosted by the UdN (University of the Neighbourhoods), an Urban Design project in Hamburg, the workshop participants studied the neighbourhood from within the neighbourhood.

Of course, 'neighbourhood' is a very open topic. Various disciplines and discourses refer to the neighbourhood, if in different and sometimes conflicting ways. In order to be able to create a common language we had to find a common ground to meet and discuss. The theme "neighbourhood" provided such ground while at the same time allowing for a reinterpretation and a re-working of the term. This was particularly intriguing because a literal translation of the word 'neighbourhood' into Arabic doesn't exist. Yet when the small groups were negotiating the term, we discovered a number of shared meanings: relationships, structures and processes within the fabric of urban living arrangements.

Such challenges made us reflect on the methodological transfer that we tried to achieve – after all, we had assumed that 'neighbourhood' exists in every language. Now, we were possibly superimposing a specific neighbourhood in our initial conception of the term: an existing community formation that bears a different meaning for its residents as compared to outsiders. So is it neighbourhoods that create communities? Or do communities create neighbourhoods? Or is it layers of negotiations and practices alongside solidarity that create community and commonality? Had we 'again' managed to project our subjective understanding of the city onto a particular urban space? We therefore allowed for enough room to re-visit it from the residents' perspectives.

Research Interest

The Urban Design programme's particular interest in neighbourhood research, everyday live of communities, everyday practices and the production of everyday spaces emerged and ripened in the context of a five-year research project in Hamburg Wilhelmsburg, the University of the Neighbourhoods (UdN), an old and unused building in one of the most diverse and socially disadvantaged areas currently under regeneration during the International Building Exhibition (IBA). The building and newly founded 'institution' UdN gave us an opportunity to engage as neighbours with neighbours, to situate ourselves as students within the very context that we studied and to programme the building architecturally and socially (see Chapter 4). It housed seminars, workshops, conferences, research

projects, communal practices such as cooking and eating together and inter-cultural projects such as tree house workshops for children from the neighbourhood and thus offered the opportunity to host the first of the two workshops for 20 students from Egypt and Germany. The rationale for using the UdN as home base for the first of the two workshops was threefold: it offered a place to live, work and discuss; it made it possible to study the surrounding neighbourhood both from within and without at any time, from insider and outsider perspectives; and it presented – as a building, a project and a programme – a succinct and direct introduction to the Urban Design approach developed and practiced in Hamburg (see Chapter 3).

Funding

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) gave us an opportunity to exchange knowledge and ideas as much as to gain research practice in very different settings under very different conditions. This matched our interest in informal urban processes and developments, and studying these in different institutional, geographical, political and social settings promised to generate valuable and meaningful debates in respect to the DAAD's principles and those of our Urban Design programme.

The DAAD's funding was available to German/Egyptian projects in the context of – but not restricted to engaging with ongoing developments in Egypt and the Arab countries, most prominently the protests known and widely discussed as 'Arab Spring' (Abourahme & Jayyusi 2011; Lopes de Souza & Lipietz 2011; Kanna 2012; Taher 2012; Abaza 2014). The programme supports measures that encourage and practice knowledge transfer, intercultural learning and academic exchanges between Germany and Egypt in an interest to foster a democratic culture in societies in transition, enable partnerships to emerge and allow (academic) research strategies and methods to be exchanged. The Urban Design programme's interest in uncovering potentials rather than prescribing solutions resulted in the proposal to organise and deliver two related workshops expecting to foster academic exchange, interdisciplinary teaching and learning practice, knowledge transfer and in-situ intercultural experiences for students from both countries.

Unsurprisingly, the workshop realities turned out to be messy and very much a work in progress. Rather than pushing through a set programme, the actual exchanges and experiences of working in mixed groups, questioning processes and disciplinary perspectives and the inevitable production of chaos enabled the participants to develop ways of dealing with these issues. From the Urban Design perspective followed at HCU, the ability to deal with one another across disciplines, across cultures, from different backgrounds is central to developing a common understanding of matters at stake.

The workshops were thus an opportunity to practice knowledge production and its communication, always attempting to maintain a balance between imparting knowledge and eyelevel discussions. Organised by students for students, the workshops enabled students to practice research, to exchange methods and theoretical approaches 'in the field'.

Inspiring theories and reference points

The workshop was first envisioned as a broad idea of interdisciplinary and intercul-

tural research. Since our main interest was to study neighbourhoods in Hamburg and Cairo, the theoretical approaches evolved out of relevant issues and urban questions facing urban spaces in transition. Our theoretical lenses were initially quite broad, as we were concerned with methodological questions regarding tools and perspectives that would help us to understand both the neighbourhoods and how they are studied. Influenced by Lefebvre and the Situationists and with backgrounds in Sociology and Cultural Studies, we invited the smaller groups of participants onto Dérives through a neighbourhood in Hamburg Wilhelmsburg and consequently in Cairo Al-Darb Al-Ahhmmar. We approached a social worker, Dr. Francine Lammar, in advance, who was able to suggest potential interview contacts to the groups and figured as a gatekeeper and door opener.

Finding a 'common language'
Perspectives on the urban fabric and its interpretations varied according to the different professional backgrounds of the participants, but also depending on each participant's individual experiences with urbanity and its various appearances. This made working in interdisciplinary and intercultural teams challenging and at the same time helped create a controversial yet simultaneously inspiring atmosphere to work. In this process communication was a key factor, which resulted in the desire and need to find a 'common language'. This was not only important within the working groups but also in terms of communicating the groups' findings to an external audience. The term 'common language' can be seen as a metaphor for the process of interdisciplinary teamwork in which making use of the various competencies of the participants helped channelling them into joint research strategies. During the two workshops we repeatedly discussed the use of different research methods, the analytical foci and the various ways of presenting our material in writing and visualisations. This already indicates the constant exchanges between "different languages", as exemplified by the following examples:

An architect would learn how to use social scientific methods of quantitative data analysis, while a social scientist would use pencil and sketch-book to map the neighbourhood.
A political scientist participates in an urban intervention in a public space initiated by a street artist. The scholarly outcome of the project can be better defined in terms of process than in terms of actual scientific facts. We were able to involve researchers from very different backgrounds and with at times conflicting notions of how to work, share knowledge, create research methods and live together. Rather than producing outcomes, the workshops intended to bridge the various gaps between the disciplines that (still) more often than not work in disciplinary silos – even when they pursue similar matters and interests. This is where we see the workshop's main social and academic achievement: we have learned how to bridge disciplinary borders and learned that this is not only possible but also creates valuable outputs.

Neighbourhood. A Notion in Transition

Christopher Dell

The notion of neighbourhood is extraordinarily intricate, and, due to this difficult if not impossible to generalize. We can think of particular sites, the neighbourhood in our house, in our street, a neighbourhood in a Paris residential quarter, a Frankfurt Bank District or a neighbourhood next to a Detroit industrial site or in a small village in Brandenburg and so on. All these sites are extremely different: in size, structure, form, function and scale. These examples indicate that we cannot longer even agree on what counts as a neighbourhood.

Yet I argue that the notion itself, just because of such intricacy, is nonetheless evermore valid for urban design discourse. Let us look at the basics: neighbourhood is a relational notion. The condition of neighbouring is based on the fact that there are always two entities: a person and a person next to the person or a thing and a thing next to it – neighbouring cannot take place individually, a neighbourhood cannot exist on its own. That holds equally true for the topological dimension of the notion. Concerning the second dimension – the social – things turn out in even more complex ways. While the first dimension of neighbourhood concerns geographical place (physical space, built environment), the second aspect refers to social practice. The definition of the second aspect is problematic in that in itself it is grounded in certain qualities of the topological – the 'social' – that inevitably are a matter of social debate themselves.
Social geography speaks of the neighbourhood as a place based on the connectivity of territories (Nystuen 1970). Sociology defines the neighbourhood as 'a social group that interacts on the basis of physical proximity' (Hamm 1973) . This definition is based on the assumption that 'a social group is defined by the interactions between its members' (Homans 1968). But not only is social action, i.e. changes in definition according to historical changes of knowledge, hard to define. It also lends itself to an overestimation of a quality of place, to an overestimation of a social nativity or the immediacy of a social place called neighbourhood. Mumford, for example, refers to the neighbourhood as a connectivity of place that he understands as the most original form of social relations (Mumford 1967: 115).

The nativity postulate concerning the notion leads us to see that 'neighbourhood' enters the urban discourse with an anti-urban impetus. Used first by the likes of Wilhelm Riehl and Ferdinand Tönnies to play out the rural qualities of a village discursively located the neighbourhood in opposition to urban anonymity, the notion assumed pro-urban fame through Robert Ezra Park's interpretation and the work of the Chicago School. Park had studied with Georg Simmel in Berlin, adopted several concepts of the German sociologist and introduced them to the American context from the 1920s onwards. At that period, more people lived in cities than in rural areas in the United States for the first time. That led Park and

his colleagues to discover the city as a new continent on which to undertake ethnographic research: 'The world had been discovered. ... what next? There are other worlds to be discovered: even more interesting. The world of great cities. The immigration colonies. The Ghettos and the Chinatowns' (Park 1990: 98). Whereas Simmel regards form as determining interaction, Park sees interaction itself as the factor producing form. For Park, social interaction in proximity constitutes the basic feature of society as a process. Where Simmel focused on the dissociation of forms that resulted in individualization processes, most vividly in his Metropolis and Mental Life (1903), Park studied the heterogeneity of structures, emancipation and possibility. The neighbour in Simmel's concept stands for proximity, whereas Park sees the function of the neighbour (proximity) itself as a driver for urban interaction.

In drawing links between interaction and space, Parks brings about the very social-cultural definition of neighbourhood for which the Chicago School has become famous. This definition resembles a naturalization of the notion itself: the research field 'local community' is defined as a 'natural area' that is developed as a result of competing interests (e.g. industry needs land, population groups need affordable housing). In this context 'neighbourhood' constitutes a subsection of a larger community—a collection of both people and institutions occupying a spatially defined area influenced by ecological, cultural, and sometimes political forces (Park 1916: 577-612). The Chicago School's research attempted to take a direct empirical glance at urban territories. The social mosaic of the city became the place for the ethnographies of neighbourhoods and social types. The material they researched and collected resulted in patterns of place and land uses. Seen this way, neighbourhood connotes a shared residential area whereas community implies its social function. Parks' colleague Louis Wirth interpreted the totality of the city as a 'substitution of secondary for primary contacts, the weakening of bonds of kinship, the declining social significance of the family, the disappearance of neighbourhood and the undermining of traditional basis of social solidarity' (Wirth 1938: 1-24). The neighbourhood stands for the basic unit of the city, the base of social control and organization (Park 1967: 7). This interpretation is based on an organic view of the city, in which neighbourhood change evolves as a process of invasion and succession. The most famous example is the Chicago School's use of the biologist notion of segregation: in the context of the city segregation denotes the mechanisms of aggregation and disaggregation of communities. Under these homologous premises a well functioning neighbourhood consists of homogenous communities in which the individuals are able to adapt. The population is distributed like biological species in city zones. The Chicago School defines the city as a quasi-natural cultural topography of site-specific norms, rules, behaviour: 'each separate part of the city is inevitably stained with the peculiar sentiments of its population. The effect of this is to convert what was at first a mere geographical expression into a neighbourhood, that is to say, a locality with sentiments, traditions and a history of its own' (Park 1915: 579). Social disorganization occurs due to the 'inability of a neighbourhood to solve its problems together' (Thomas; Znaniecki 1918: 32).In that manner the city is analytically divided into two levels: the social processes (= society) in which cultural communication, interaction and moral order take place are located on the upper level. The second level consists of elementary (natural, biotic) processes (=

the city) and refers to the human behaviour in the urban environment, with the dimensions of inter-stimulation and natural order. Form these premises follows the hypothesis that the spatial structure of the city is the effect of competition that can and often does lead to conflicts about material and spatial resources. These effects form what the Chicago School calls the 'mosaic of cultures'. This theory of the city is based on a dualism: on the one hand there's the city structure, the form of built environment and the physical organization and on the other, there's social behaviour, patterns of interaction and social organization.

As social conflict in the cities became increasingly prominent in the 1960s, urban ethnography revisits the neighbourhood model but criticises i.e. redefines it by means of new research results and perspectives. The homological view is transformed into an interpretation of neighbourhood as a place of heterogeneity. Gerald Suttles, for example, proposes that neighbourhoods represent socio-cultural models of the city, ordered by segmentation. Different urban segments represent ethnic groups who, while living in the same neighbourhood, experience the place in different ways (Suttles: 1968). Later Suttles refines his point as he recognized that local communities do not form their identities solely as a result of free-market competition. In fact, outsiders can impose identities and boundaries onto communities. Suttles also argues that the local community is best thought of not in terms of a single entity, but rather as a hierarchy of progressively more inclusive residential groupings. In this sense, we can think of neighbourhoods as ecological units nested within successively larger communities (Suttles 1972). On this backdrop, Gans studies how population heterogeneity affects communities' social relationships. Gans interprets neighbourhood conflict among different social groups as less reflecting a contest over spatial supremacy than a struggle over enduring intra-ethnic values: 'If neighbours are too diverse, differences of behaviour or attitude may develop which can lead to coolness or even conflict. For example, when children who are being reared by different methods come into conflict, disciplinary measures by their parents will reveal differences in ways of rewarding and punishing' (Gans 1968: 155) In this respect neighbourhood homogeneity cannot be determined by social policy. On the contrary, the postulate of homogeneity leads to unacceptably high levels of conflict between neighbourhoods of different ethnicities, classes and religions. Our perspective on neighbourhood changes as heterogeneity is regarded in more positive terms and a basis for interpersonal relationships. This perspective is supported by the 'contact hypothesis' developed by Hogg. The hypothesis mirrors a prevalent belief that close and pleasant interpersonal contact between people from different groups is probably the best way to achieve social harmony (Hogg 2003). Such thinking resonates in Jane Jacobs' widely received work The Death and Life of Great American Cities. Here we also read of the positive implications of neighbourhood heterogeneity. Jacobs cites New York's Greenwich Village as a vivid but over-idealized example of diversity: contact and activities between diverse people help enhancing new ideas and ways of thinking, a co-operative neighbourhood life in which heterogeneity stimulates interaction and activities among diverse individuals who need to negotiate openly with each other in order to maintain stable relationships. Jacobs argues for the benefits of heterogeneous land uses such as mixing employment activity within residential neighbourhoods. To her, the cross--links that 'enable a district to function as a thing are neither vague nor myste-

rious. They consist of working relationships among specific people, many of them without much else in common than that they share a fragment of geography' (Jacobs 1961: 133). These arguments echo in later literature, for instance in Sennett's The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life (Sennett 1970), Charles' The dynamics of racial residential segregation (Charles 2003) and Massey and Denton's American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass (Massey; Denton 1993).
The socio-cultural perspective on neighbourhood is challenged in the 1970s by a specific branch of urban geography that puts the focus on identifying the links between place and economics. In Government Policies, Financial Institutions and Neighbourhood Change in US Cities (Harvey 1979), for example, David Harvey reflects on the influence capital has on neighbourhood constellations. Neighbourhood change, he argues, depends less on the preferences and demands of consumers than on how industrial, financial and property capitalists decide to move their holdings. Whereas the classical Chicago School premised that gradual disinvestment within inner cities relates to a wide number of individual decisions by residents and businesses, Harvey sees disinvestment as caused by the actions of a few large institutions, including banks, insurance companies and real estate developers. The classical perspective interprets the economic struggle as a natural cycle all neighbourhoods are destined to undergo, whereas urban geographers see neighbourhood change as occurring in an uneven way to reflect strategies adopted by institutions seeking to maximize their returns. Two capitalist neighbourhood strategies can be identified: the first strategy prefers investment into new construction over investment into existing development. Because capital invested in urban infrastructure (the built environment) becomes devalued over time, investors constantly seek new, more profitable sites while withdrawing from older sites. This results in the decline of existing neighbourhoods. The second strategy implies the withholding of investment. For both strategies, the circulation of capital is a key driver for neighbourhood change.

The 1990s see the concept of 'neighbourhood' being questioned in general. New interactionist theories focus on processual effects rather than topological or geographical boundaries (Sampson; Morenoff; Gannon Rowley 2002). Sampson et al. for example argue, that in practice, most social scientists and virtually all neighbourhoods studies assess and rely on geographic boundaries defined by the Census Bureau or other administrative agencies (e.g. school districts, police districts). Yet although administratively defined units such as census tracts and block groups work reasonably consistently with the notion of overlapping and nested ecological structures, they offer, according to the authors, imperfect operational definitions of neighbourhoods for research and policy. This is an important reason why researchers become increasingly interested in the strategies employed to define neighbourhoods more in respect to the logic of street patterns and the social networks of neighbourly interactions (Grannis 1998).
The latest debate on neighbourhood assembles around the dichotomy of locality vs. globality and local neighbourhood vs. cosmopolis. Richard Sennett insists on the quality of place and local interaction as transmitter of knowledge. He criticises that if colleagues or neighbours are no longer able to meet in the workplace or the neighbourhood, because they move elsewhere, locals lose their knowledge of acquaintance. Sennett suggests that, in the global era, the cosmopolitan

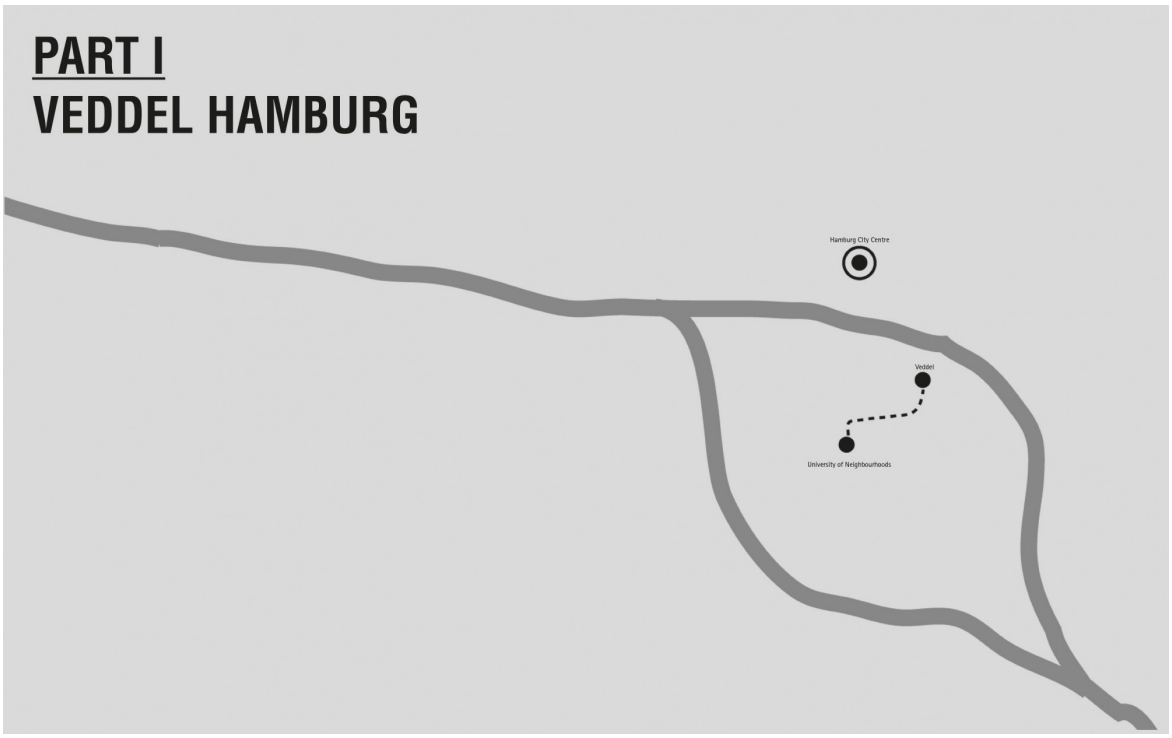
citizen controls the locals' knowledge of acquaintance, a neighbourhood, however, cannot survive without its basic ingredients: neighbours (Sennett 1998). Contrary to this position, the late Jacques Derrida introduces the notion of cosmopolis into the neighbourhood debate. For Derrida, the cosmopolis constitutes a safe haven for strangers that is grounded itself in the neighbourhood role. Thus the cosmopolis receives strangers as neighbours in extending local and national resources to them. Derrida locates the quality of cosmopolis in the fact that it is able to include strangers through its performance of hospitality. But Derrida also indicates that the influx of refugees and immigrants as such does not yet constitute the cosmopolis: the cosmopolis needs the performative identification with the stranger, organizing local life around the theme or motive of the stranger (Derrida 1997). The arguments brought forward by geographer Ash Amin head in the same direction. Amin suggests that the borderless inclusion of strangers indicates the ongoing interaction between locals and strangers. For Amin, the cosmopolis becomes rooted in the locals' self-understanding, when they are able to transgress all group boundaries, in order to be continuously on the path with strangers, as dislocated nomads and strangers to themselves, of always becoming new persons (Amin 2004). In this perspective neighbourhood can be interpreted as a topological site in which the performative transformation of urban life forms as new forms of citizenship is tested (Nussbaum 2002).
To sum up, let us go back to the definition of space that Kant once formulated. For him, space is the conception of the pure possibility of being together with others (Kant 1838). Any conception of neighbourhood then implies a sort of pre--structuring of the possibility of being-together. This leads to my final argument. Neighbourhood is not a social structure within a given ('natural') space, as 'natural', neutral physical space always constitutes an idealization of the perceived. Thus the social and the spatial converge in social space. Social space, interpreted from this perspective, is not an object but a performatively produced process. Neighbourhood is not an object but an urban situation as collective of agents and actants (= acting things, cf. Bruno Latour). An urban situation can then be defined as a holistic spatial and temporal totality on a certain scale. Holistic in this context is to say that a) the properties of the situation cannot be reduced to the properties of its elements, b) the form of the situation cannot be identified as compositional entity or as a synthesis of form (Christopher Alexander), c) the functions of the situation cannot be reduced to the functions of its elements and d) the structure of the situation is not concrete (concrete structures can only be experienced as the concrete structural relation of its elements) but abstract (as experience of subjects that are practically engaged in or open for the situation).

From this argument four premises follow: a) that the structural properties of an urban situation depend on our description and conceptualization, b) that structural properties of an urban situation are relational, i.e. neither subjective nor objective (physical), c) that the structural properties of an urban situation can only be experienced through the agentic engagement of subjects in any material--social situation and d) that this engagement is not based on preconceived knowledge but on capacity.

These premises bring up to the following questions, which conclude and open up my text: if the structural properties of the situation as a totality can only be experi-

enced through the agentic engagement of a subject within a situation and thus depend on description and conceptualization, how then can relational experience be mediated? And which interrogations on the descriptions and descriptiveness of an experience of an urban situation, such as a neighbourhood – as constellation or collective of actants, actors and uncertain modes of action (Latour 2005) – have to be made? This is exactly the point where the work of UD begins.

Part I Veddel Hamburg



Universität der Nachbarschaften (UdN)

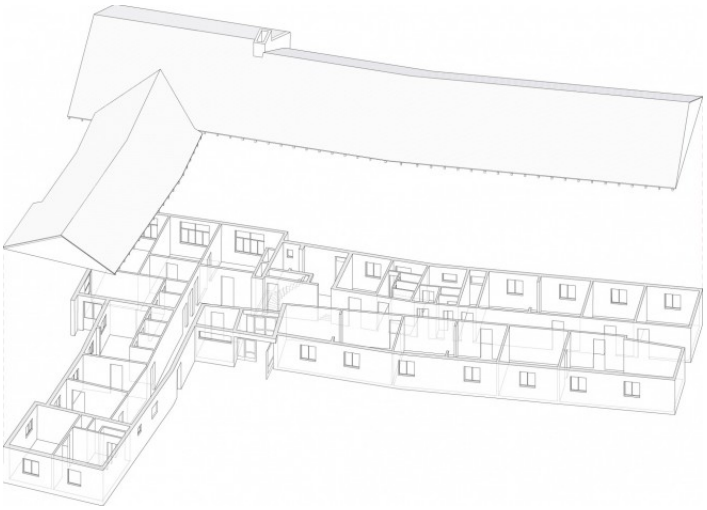
Lukas Grellmann



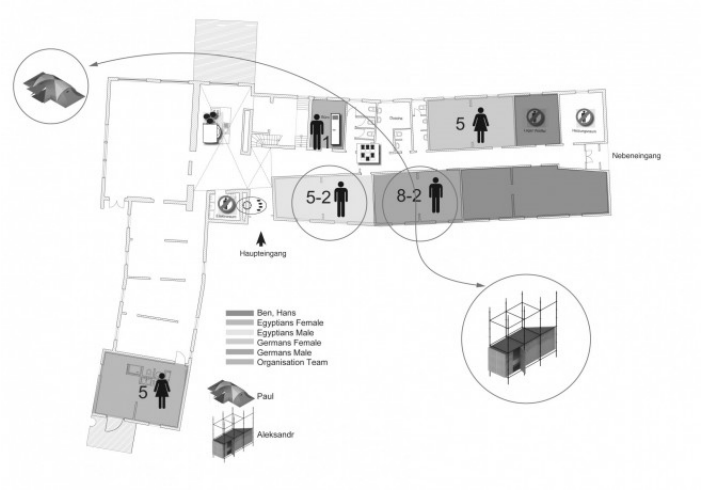
UdN - Live-Work Space

During the workshop in Hamburg, participants were confronted with their different perspectives and views on neighbourhood and with differing approaches and analytical tools, many of them for the first time, but they were also facing another challenge: They shared a house, they lived and worked under one roof. This situation included the need for arrangements of all sorts: sharing the room with four to seven other participants, organising shower schedules in the morning and arranging tables and chairs in the park for dinner in the evening, not to mention sharing the walls for presentations and the spaces of leisure. Yet, living together and sharing the facilities with all the responsibilities this entailed didn't simply equal limited privacy and more housekeeping duties than expected, the UdN also offered a space that was not only allowing appropriation through its inhabitants, but was really asking for it.
Participants were in a position to negotiate their work, live and leisure spaces in the UdN; they could occupy areas for work, use them as galleries for their work, divide work and leisure spaces or combine them. Part of the experiment was to

ask whether this building, besides the responsibilities and low standards, could offer as much freedom for appropriation and inspiration that it would play its own role in the research process by influencing the group work in a positive and constructive way.
By creating and reproducing everyday situations, the UdN made room for discussions in and on the neighbourhood. The 1:1 teaching, learning and practicing laboratory and model served to test 'dwelling-as-practice' as well as neighbourhood practices. Particularly important were thus common and routine activities such as cooking and dining together. Not only is the kitchen the very centrality that brings together people, food, recipes, energies and a complex set of cultural rules, information and knowledge, it is also the place where various forms of capital (in Bourdieu's sense) can be accumulated, exchanged, shared and translated. Throughout the UdN project, cooking and eating activities and practices led to understanding the kitchen as a method, a means of literally putting everything on the table, preparing a coherent meal based on a conversation about what the participants like and consuming it together in an atmosphere of productive reflection.
The UdN did not only function as a hospitable and inviting place, it was also transformed into a vital urban laboratory where apart from the research into neighbourhoods, exchanges and discussions on more than urban issues were taking place. The UdN therefore became part of the methodological framework by bringing researchers and neighbours together and providing a fruitful environment for the collective development of research questions and interdisciplinary strategies for neighbourhood research in Hamburg. Apart from figuring as research station and temporary home for the workshop participants, the UdN also served to develop, tailor and pre-test the methods, research strategies and working routines for further research, not least the second leg of the workshop in Cairo. This research and development phase in Hamburg was very important in order to prepare especially the German working groups for research in a mega city like Cairo with its even more diverse and complex neighbourhoods and – in comparison to Hamburg – extremely challenging working conditions regarding heat, traffic and language. Conversely, such meta dimensions of cultural exchange of research practices and theoretical approaches alongside the integrated understanding of research and accommodation in the UdN was equally important to the Egyptian working groups.



UdN - isometric drawing of the UdN by Benjamin Becker



UdN - room occupation during the workshop

»The working, living and learning situation in Hamburg was quite different to the one in Cairo. For example, in Cairo only the participants and organisers from Germany lived together. In Hamburg, it was more like a residential community; one could observe the subject ‘neighbourhood’ almost two weeks for oneself while living it.« Prof. Bernd Kniess



UdN - Live/ Work Space



UdN - Live/ Work Space

Schumacher´s Veddel

Sarah Asseel



ground plan Veddel

The beginning of the 20th century marked a time at which large residential blocks were built for the workers who lived and worked on the Elbe island. A lot has since changed over the years, but the red brick residential structure covering several blocks designed by Schumacher has remained and is still an essential characteristic of the area. The following is an attempt to introduce the social fabric and urban structure of the Veddel in order to understand the context to which the workshop participants were exposed and that they conversely researched into during their time in Hamburg.

Where is Veddel?

‘Wir sind die Insel... in Hamburg... Wenn wir die Brücken weg denken, dann haben wir unser... unser Land!’ (‘We are the island… in Hamburg. If we ignore the bridges, we have our… own land!’, A Veddel resident, 2008) The Veddel lies in the northern part of the Elbe Island. The area is often and plausibly characterized as an island. Although it isn’t surrounded from all sides by water, it is nevertheless

fully enclosed by highways and railways apart from water.

Veddel and its built environment

Before Schumacher started to build his housing development for workers, Veddel was already inhabited by workers who lived with their families in garden houses (in German known as Garten-Siedlungen). Later Schumacher also designed houses for workers alone (not including their families). Hence, these apartments were small and most of the time bathrooms were shared between apartments (Uetzman 2009).
In the 1990s the SAGA (the Siedlungs Aktiengesellschaft Hamburg, or Housing company Ltd Hamburg) who had acquired most of the buildings on the Veddel island over the years invested into the structure of the apartments, transforming them into more suitable sizes for small German families. Already back then, the Veddel was populated by a significant number of migrant families (Statistikamt Nord 2012).

Who then lives on the Veddel?

The Veddel is very diverse, given that people from 158 countries live there. At 70 % Veddel has the highest concentration of foreign inhabitants and immigrants in Hamburg (Statistikamt Nord 2012). The island therefore is home to many different languages and cultures. A closer look at the demographic structure of Veddel shows that in comparison to Hamburg, the concentration of children under 18 years of age is the highest on the Veddel (Statistikamt Nord 2012). The community fabric of the Veddel is notorious for poverty and diversity due to immigration. While this partly results in very strong bonds and connections between inhabitants and their island, this also reflects in missing weak ties that are sometimes important to build those bridging elements for individuals' social capital.
Various pressures have resulted in the creation of ethnic enclaves and niches on the Veddel. It is an extremely diverse, heterogeneous, yet partly segregated and divided place.

Despite all its potential, the Veddel has been regarded to be on the verge of creating a 'parallel "fundamentalist" society' since 2003 (Uetzmann 2009). Such a belief has driven out a lot of residents who could afford to do so, resulting in a depreciation of the rents, conversely making them affordable for newly arriving migrants and poorer Hamburgers.
This status quo confronted us with such questions as, for instance, what kind of boundaries have been created between the Veddel and Hamburg, but also within the Veddel and what methods of adaptation have been used for building such barriers? How do the imperatives set by institutions affect the neighbourhood? And how can the potentials of the island be uncovered? Where are formal and informal neighbourly activities to be found? And most importantly: what can we learn from these?



Approaching the Field: Dérive

Lukas Grellmann

> »On the Veddel, during our first dérive, the first thing we noticed was that people from different cultures don't sit together, even in public and open spaces they don't connect, there is no link between them.« Hebatullah Hendawy

How can researchers explore urban space without merely following pre-defined problem-definitions and avoiding stereotypes and clichés to affect their research? This theoretical question and its implications for practice led to the methodological question of how researchers can explore urban space and develop research interests relying on personal analyses and experiences within and of the area rather than following prevalent problem-definitions right from the beginning. Can researchers identify potentials but also challenges of urban neighbourhoods that add to commonly accepted knowledge? Can they do so by looking at the area with little prior knowledge and an interdisciplinary approach?

Dérive

To find answers for these questions, the dérive was used as an experimental method to explore the neighbourhood and accordingly develop research questions for projects concerned with the neighbourhood. Taking the dérive-concept of 'drifting' literally – 'a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances' (Debord, 1958) – participants were not provided with any input about the areas we were going to study, and explicitly left to explore the area unprepared. The groups were only asked to collect any kind of information they found worthwhile. These impressions were discussed within the working groups and later presented to the whole group. All this information gave an overview on the area's urban context and triggered research questions that guided the groups' further neighbourhood research.
Using the dérive as a method meant that the working groups only received instructions about where and how to enter the research area, how to get to the starting point and where to arrive. How to find their way to the destination, what to look for and how to orient themselves was left to the working group members. The only given task was to precisely document any detail that appeared to be important or distinctive for the research area and to bring photos and videos or any physical object to illustrate their dérive experiences. While working group members got to know each other they were equally confronted with new and different perspectives on urban space, depending on the respective interdisciplinary and intercultural formation of the each group.
Each group used information from their dérives and plenary sessions to generate a common research topic. Further research focused on these emerging, more specific topics. The participants were asked to bring into a dialogue their various professional skills in order to conduct a neighbourhood analysis from an interdisci-

plinary perspective by using different methods according to the different backgrounds and tools available in each working group. As a means of generating a common research topic within the working groups, the dérives served as “idea--generators” as the groups collected information without any pre-set restrictions or problem-definitions or even predefined research questions. To the contrary: to develop the research questions was precisely the aim of the dérives.
The workshop began with a derive, starting at the Landungsbrücken through the Old Elb Tunnel (the old tunnel under the River Elbe) and the harbour area. The participants were expected to arrive one way or another at the University of the Neighbourhoods (UdN), located in the Reiherstiegquartier on the Veddel. This walk was characterised by three main phases. The Old Elb Tunnel with its long, straight and narrow tube generated a dramaturgy towards the Island of Wilhelmsburg (on which the Veddel is situated) and created a certain curiosity about what will be reached on the other side. Coming out of the tunnel, reality retrieved us. Not really pedestrian-friendly, an industrial area with restricted access for the public forms a long corridor, leaving hardly any possibility to walk but straight ahead. We walked between warehouses, cranes and trucks, the walls and fences on both sides. The third important situation arose just after leaving behind the forbidding harbour area with its restricted access. Attracted by the first building, a single remaining house of an art nouveau block structure, we started a conversation with an old lady who had been living there all her life, for almost 70 years. As she knew a lot about the place, its people and the waves of changes and transformations, she became a kind of ‘gatekeeper’ for us and introduced us to the island of Wilhelmsburg.



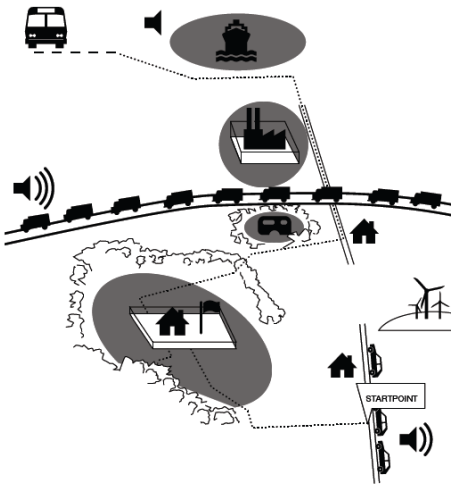




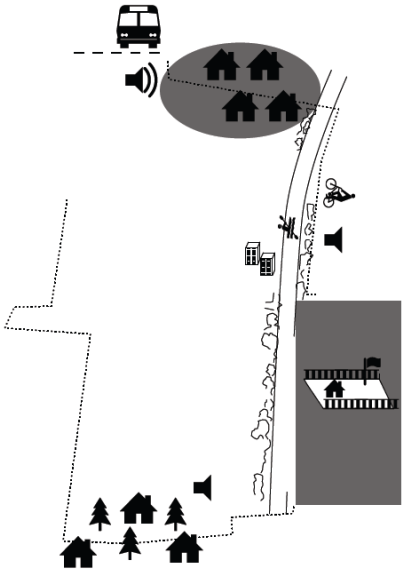


The methods we used for this workshop reflected the dynamics of the process. Our work took many turns, shifted, experienced turbulences and blurred the lines until we reached something more concrete that we were able to work with. This situation emerged due to a lack of information, wrong and greater expectations, the short time available and different and conflicting points of view. The journey from the vague beginnings to a more focused perspective required a constant reflection and adaptation of the methods we used in order to address the respective aspects we were interested in and came across. A wide range of methods and approaches was deployed to serve the advancement of work. Since we were perfect strangers to the area we had to familiarise ourselves with the island. We chose an experiential approach following the Situationists' dérive, the randonnée and rambling-moving-walking-seeing-feeling-hearing-experiencing. Experiential approaches such as these characterised the first few days. We had to search for a research interest and develop guiding questions, which was not an easy task given the different perspectives and backgrounds as well as due to the fact that we only knew little about the neighbourhood. We continued with another dérive on the Veddel in order to get a first hand experience of the research area.





The dérive started at 2.26 p.m. with a cab ride to the end of Haulander Weg. From there we walked to the south, passed an apple orchard adjacent to the highway and took a coffee break at Wilhelmsburger Hof. We met the owner of the place who collects bottle-openers. His collection counts 11.000 bottle-openers. After this impressive meeting we walked through an industrial area dominated by a large number of parked trucks and lorries until we saw people walking on the streets. We followed them and reached an intersection with apartment buildings in the west. From there we walked through the neighbourhood until we heard the sound of children playing. We stepped into the backyard and watched them playing football between the buildings. Continuing through the neighbourhood, we finally arrived at the bunker next to UdN at 6.25 p.m. [Collective Spaces]



Our study started with a dérive in Willhemsburg that led us through some allotment gardens where we noticed the mix of symbolism, personal identification, and territorial arrangements and their role in identifying the community's social organization. These issues were highlighted once more as we took our second dérive, this time in the isolated neighbourhood of the Veddel. We noted several attempts of territorialising and controlling the neighbourhood based on behavioural patterns or nationality, as well as symbols of personal or national identification. [Barrier]



Finding a Common Language

Lukas Grellmann

Methods in a way are scientific tools and instruments employed to acquire and analyse data so as to build knowledge on a certain issue. Usually, this is something taken for granted and not questioned or challenged. For the context of our workshop, we included aspects normally not considered 'methods' or 'techniques' into our 'tool box', such as the situation of our work space (UdN) with its spatial qualities and social potential, the intentional mixing of different disciplines (inter- and transdisciplinary working groups) or the refusal to pre-define research questions but rather leave this to the participants (who would develop their research questions during their dérives).
Following the workshop's objective to facilitate an international and interdisciplinary workshop on neighbourhoods, our main interest was to bring an intercultural group of researchers together and develop a common language in order to communicate. The set of methods used was supposed to help participants to jointly formulate research questions and develop appropriate research strategies according to their questions and motifs. During the workshops, methods were regarded as tools with which the research participants developed and built a deeper understanding of the composition and complexity of the urban. As neighbourhoods can be understood as small nuclei within the complex system of the urban, 'zooming in' to a neighbourhood can help researchers to learn on an eye--level perspective and make use of this knowledge by transferring it into the design process. Being concerned with a neighbourhood is not meant to reduce the complexity, but still provides a means to focus on a slice of the complex urban. As the participants came from a number of disciplines and professions, an important first step was to find ways of overcoming language barriers. Language here refers to more than spoken and written language as it includes the different professional languages 'spoken' in different disciplines and contexts.
Similarly, the participants also faced the challenge to adapt to two different research areas in a short period of time in such different urban environments in Hamburg and Cairo. The first workshop in Hamburg strongly focused on the practicing of methods and interdisciplinary group work – yet rather than discussing methods solely in theory, they were tested and tried in the 'field' of Veddel. The second workshop in Cairo followed up on the experiences made in Hamburg and asked the working groups to proceed with the methods they had already tested and used; they were then asked to develop them further or amend them to suit the new urban environment and its different research conditions. Therefore, methods used during the workshop have been chosen carefully in order to promote a process-oriented and interest-based research approach. Various methods were introduced and presented to the participants by experts invited; but the participants themselves also brought in methods and methodological strategies. This led to an exchange of different professional backgrounds and their respective approaches as much to a process of negotiating where which methods could come in, which methods could be combined, amended, expanded etc.

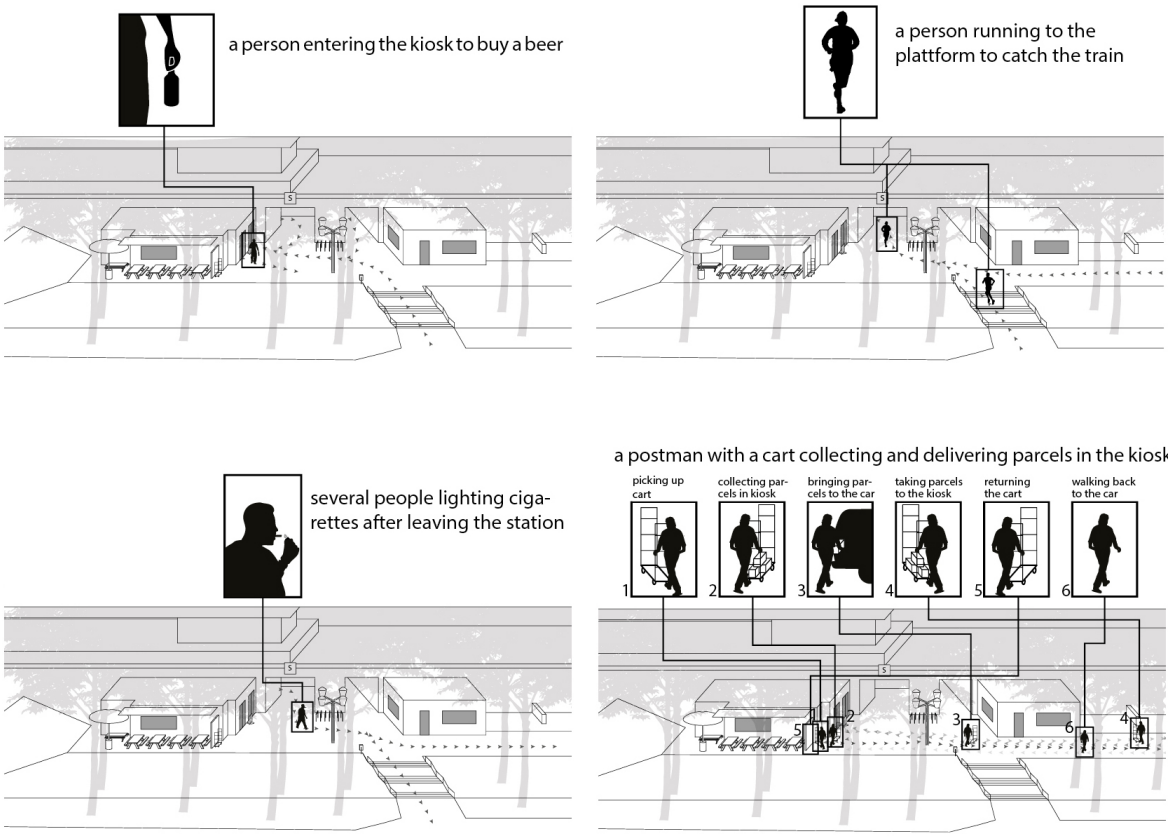
The following pages introduce and give snapshots of approaches taken during the workshop in Hamburg. In presenting them, we focus on methods and their application and demonstrate specific features that were meaningful to the workshop participants while working with these particular methods. The set of methods is neither complete nor introduced in their complexity – rather they are part of a dynamic tool box that can be adapted for particular topics, contexts and the research groups' specific requirements and capacities. Thus, methods include ways of working together as well as communicating work in progress, such as the wall presentations, discussions over dinner and table top rounds. The common language we sought to develop turned out to reach far beyond the actual academic and scientific methods and included developing an intercultural and transdisciplinary awareness.



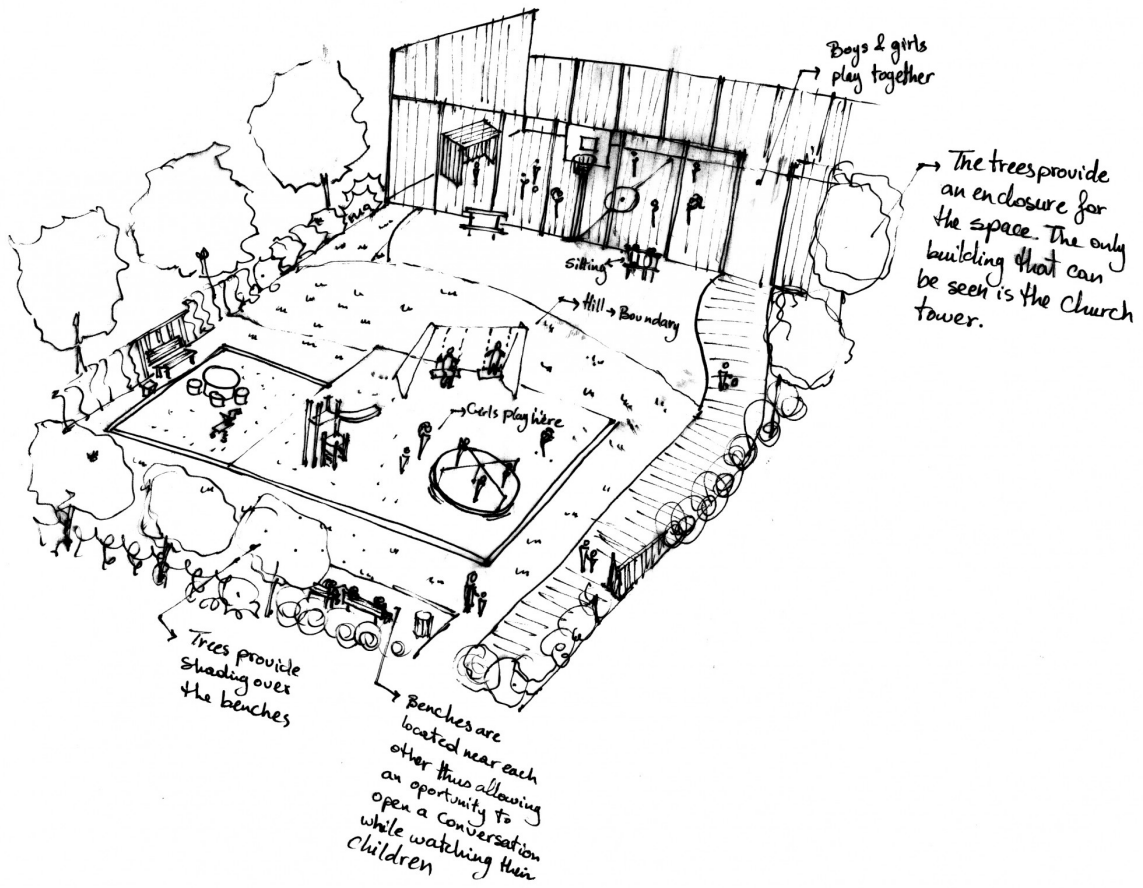
»Every five minutes you have another topic to talk about. They appear in an intuitive way or through a keyword or an inspiration that somebody's given us; even through critique or in the street or anywhere. Everybody has different ideas on how to progress in this workshop or in this project. Since we are different, we have to reach a common ground. And that's the melting pot. How can we satisfy everybody, how can we come up with an idea that satisfies all people in the group? So this is how it's built up. We come from different backgrounds, professions and cultures so each of us tackle what they see differently with unique eyes. We see things in a different way and this is how hard it is to progress and sometimes how useful it is. So it is a hard thing and a good thing at the same time. And this was the biggest challenge in this project: how can we work together to reach a single understanding of the neighbourhood? To advance in this project we come up with all kinds of creative ideas.«
Mohamad Abotera

Observation

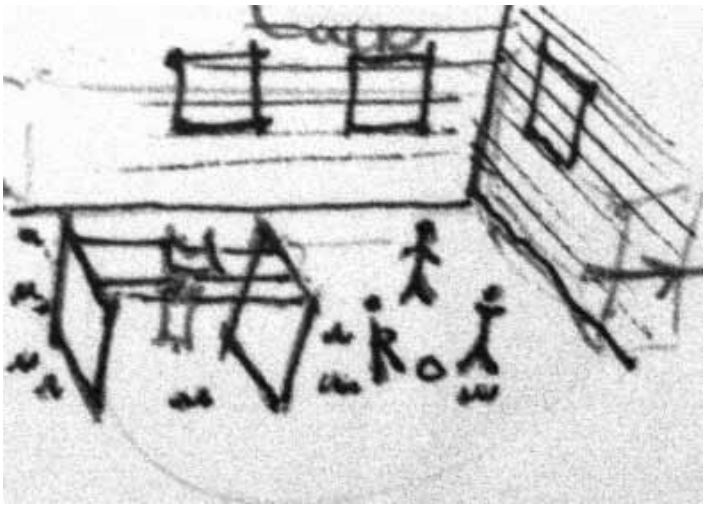
Observation helps to get a sense of a place, an initial feeling for its quality, but also serves to complement data generated through other methods, such as interviewing or mental maps. What and how we observe can either be predefined or be decided upon while observing an area. While prepared questions can help generate a sense of the area, it is equally possible to start an observation from scratch and to follow one's interest. Observations and the subsequent thick description of what has been observed are borrowed as a method from ethnography and anthropology (e.g. Spradley 1980).



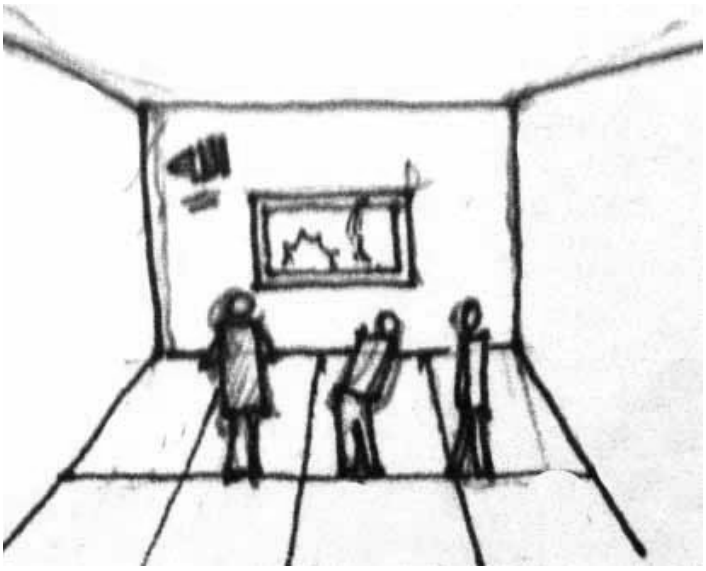
During our research we spent quite a bit of time in the neighbourhood. While observing, we focused on casual activities like drinking coffee or running to the train to understand the everyday life of the people on the Veddel. [Threshold]



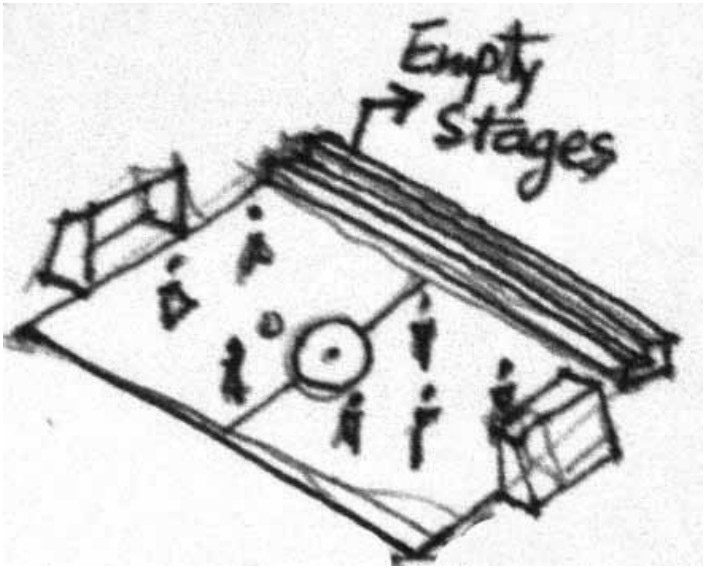
Local Playground
At the local playground children are gathering and playing together. This practice produces stories that are shared: The local playground figures as a place that allows people from different age groups and nationalities to gather. [Collective Spaces]



Backyard Playground While walking, the sound of children led us into the backyard playgrounds between the building blocks where we perceived this place as a gathering place for the children of the same apartment building or same block to play together. [Collective Spaces]



Praying Area / Mosque At the mosque we got to know another side of the Veddel community and perceived the mosque ‘acting’ as a gathering place for the Muslim community who share the same belief. It was founded by community participation. [Collective Spaces]

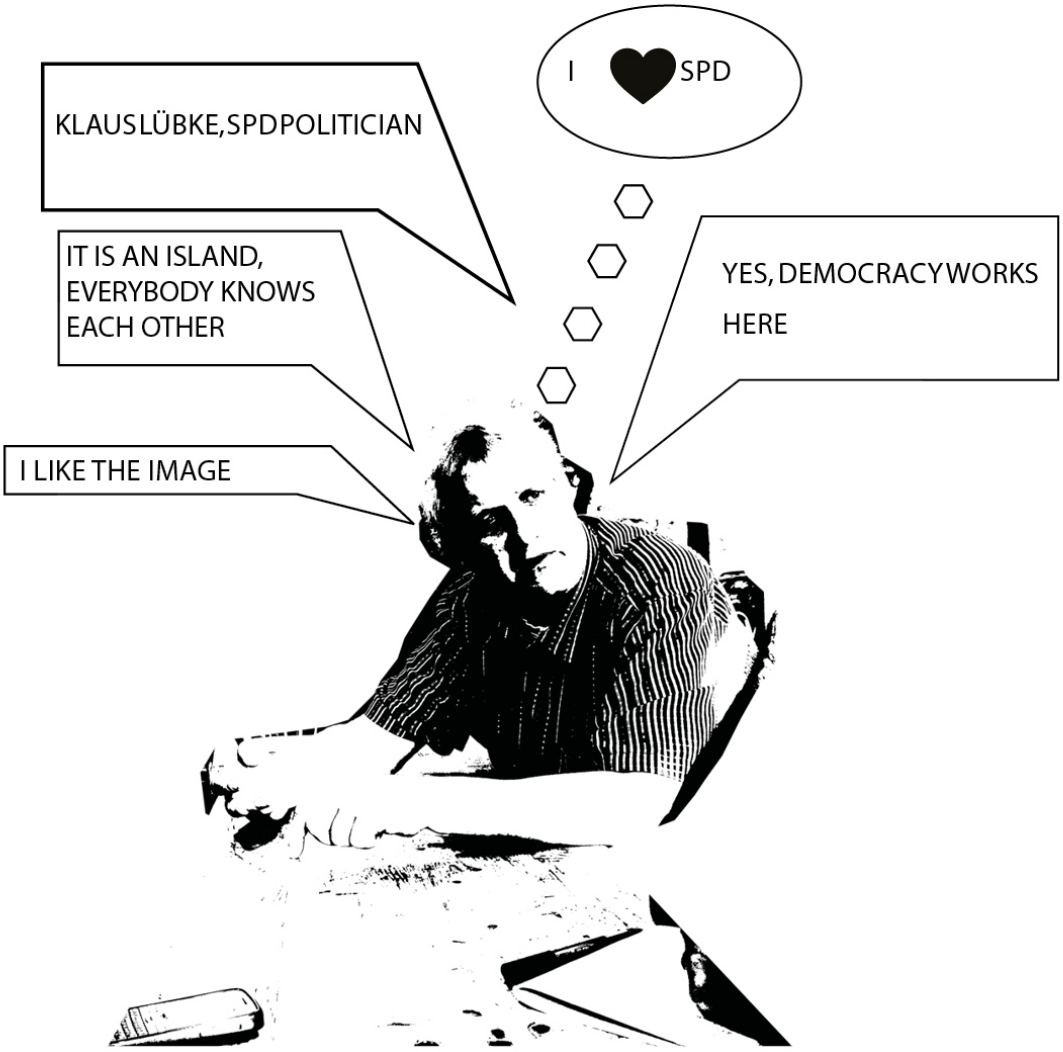


Football Club At the football pitch we interviewed local expert Olaf Block who is the founder of FC Dynamo and we learned that football as an event brings together children from different nationalities, age groups and genders. [Collective Spaces]

Meeting Neighbourhood-Insiders

Who can we ask in order to learn more about neighbourhoods and their inhabitants; and how can we analyse and understand the neighbourhood’s constitution and composition within the context of the entire city? Often, scientific reports focus on neighbourhoods’ social and cultural compositions and their economic potentials or challenges and make these data available, but the ‘neighbourhood voices’ and their local expertise remain marginalised and do not find their way into these reports. This is especially problematic as it excludes local knowledge and close insights of both resident-experts and professionals or activists of local NGOs or political parties who live in the area that would be of potential use to

those studying and understanding the area. When studying neighbourhoods, neighbours are our experts.



[Collective Spaces]

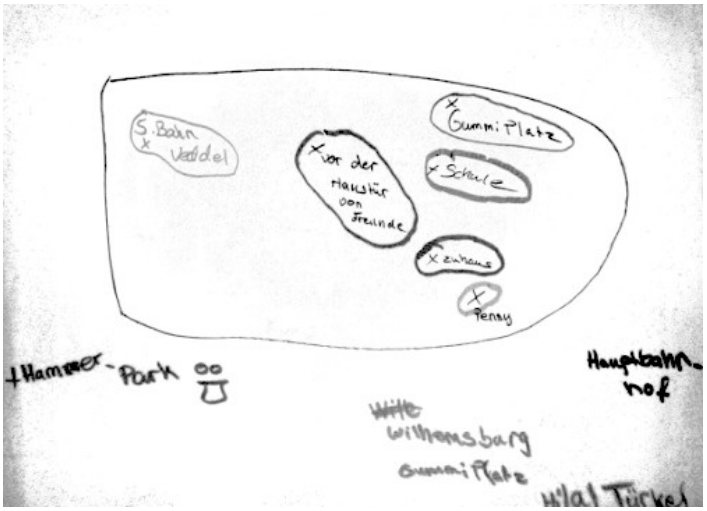
Mental Mapping



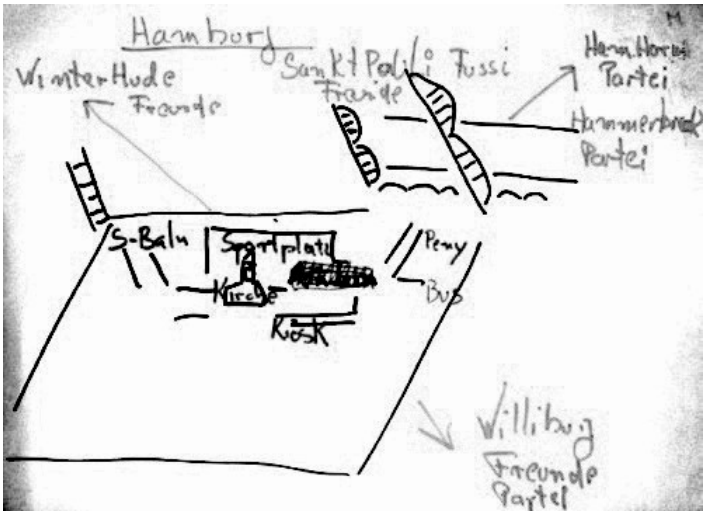
Mental maps are a method to record people's individual and personal perception of spaces and places. They serve to document only those aspects that are important to individuals as opposed to representative maps, for instance. A series of mental maps created in one area can thus result in very different maps of one and the same place, while they simultaneously show popular landmarks and facilities used by nearly everyone (e.g. the train station).



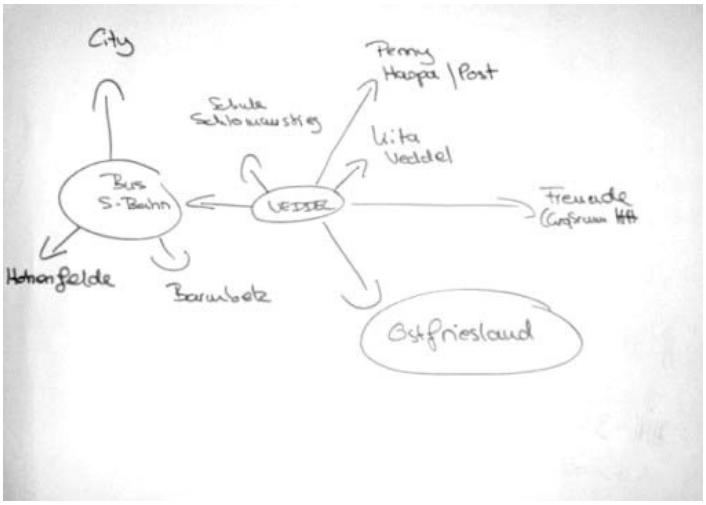
During the annual local street festival we prepared a table, paper and pencils to give children the opportunity to be included in our research. We asked them to draw their favourite places where they meet their friends on Veddel. While they were drawing we talked to them and asked them why these are their favourite places. Most children told us that they like the places because they can meet their friends there and play together. Most of the children drew specific places such as a swing or even a football field. All the drawings of their favourite places provided good accessibility during the day. Following this this we asked elderly residents to draw their gathering places on Veddel by compiling mental maps. These so-called 'People's Places' were added to the already mapped institutions. After we collected this data we visited those places that were mentioned and analysed them according to their architectural, historical and social structures. [Collective Spaces]



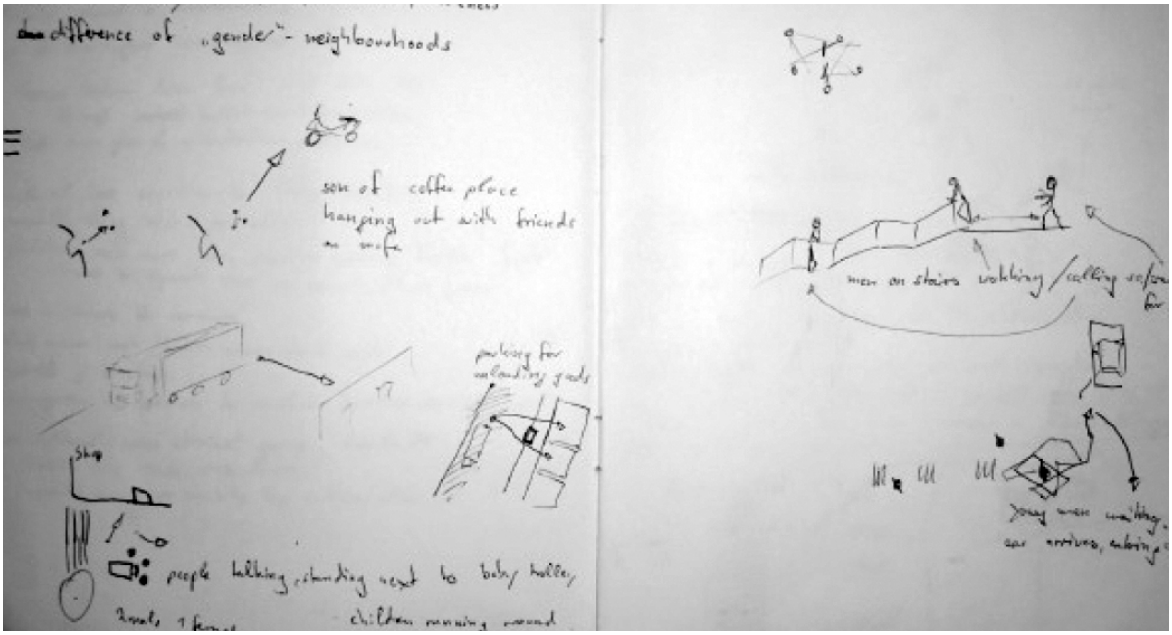
We decided to use mental maps as a research tool to gain a first impression and to help us focus on the issue of 'perceived space' (Lefebvre). For this purpose, we asked people to draw a subjective map of their neighbourhood and the places they regularly visit in their everyday lives. We tried to give people as little direction as possible in order to maximize the potential of this research tool and allow for people's own interpretation of what we were after. We had the chance to put our idea into practice at a local festival that took place during the fifth day of our research.



Though avoiding standardization proved to be a good idea, since it increased the heuristic potential of the maps, it also showed to be a hindrance in terms of their epistemological readability and their comparability. Another issue we had to deal with some people's reluctance to draw such a free map on a blank page. While this was partly due to the fact that these people were attending the local festival in order to enjoy rather than to help a group of students with their research, this is also a well known constraint of mental maps. Our questions and the open task to draw a mental map could also have been perceived as a form of intrusion into their privacy.



Another important step in our research was to look into the historical development of the area, so we used the archive of the local association 'Veddel Aktiv e.V.', which proved a rich source and produced a lot of useful information. With a view to investigate the relationship between the local commercial infrastructure and mobility patterns, we also decided to create a catalogue of the commercial activities on the island using questionnaires to map them. Open interviews with local residents and participant observation rounded up our methodological toolkit. [Traffic & Trade]



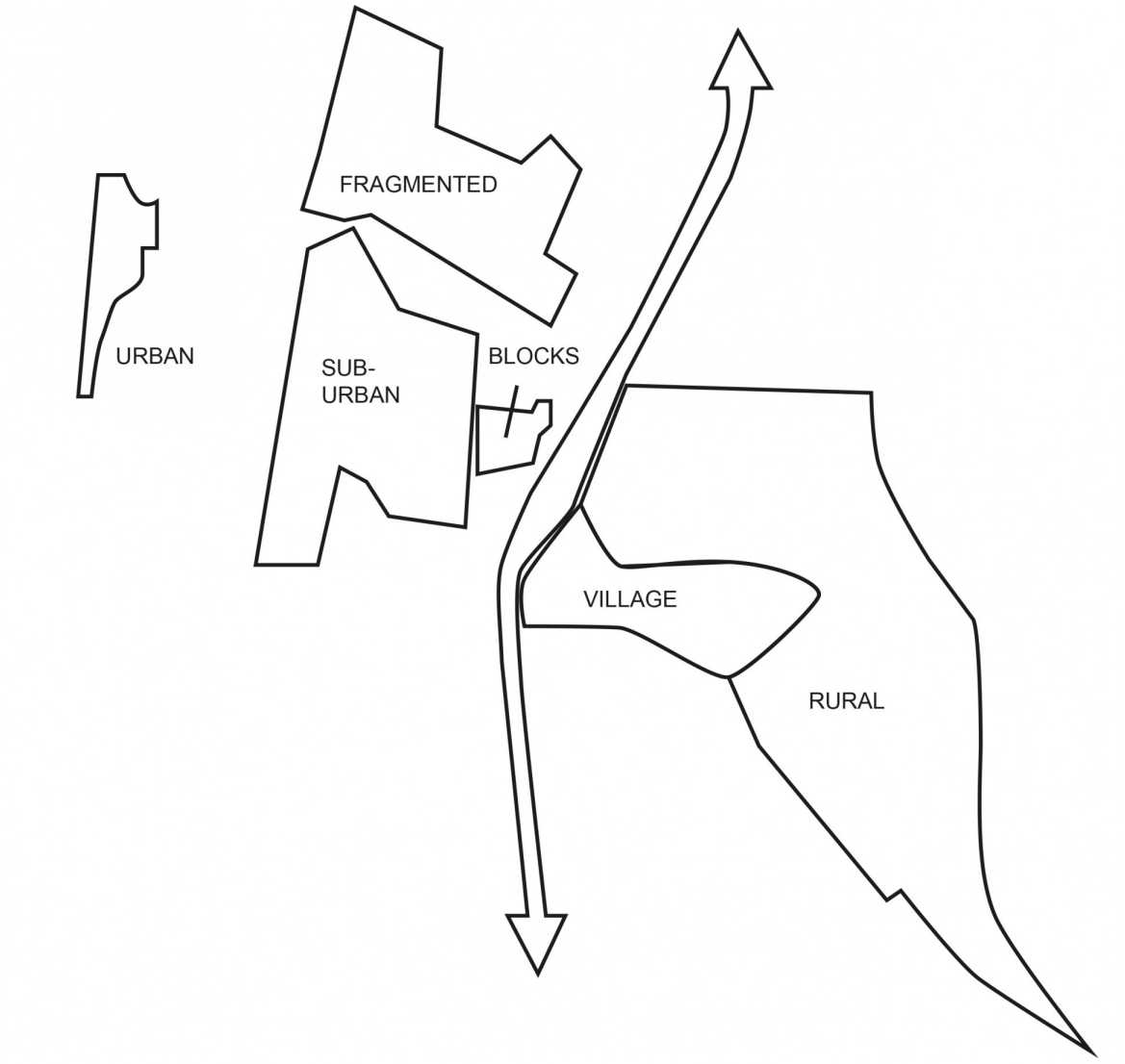
We also used two types of maps to study two types of findings. A ground figure plan showed built structures and undeveloped land, which we used to insert the various types of activities and services such as traffic, shops, schools, workshops, cafes, the mosque etc. The second type of map was a behavioural map that we drew to feature the activities taking place in specific spots, such as around the station.
For purposes of documentation we also took photographs and annotated the maps, linking the photos to the map by indicating where photos were taken and what they showed. In the research process, we integrated these maps and layered them so as to produce a dense collection of mapped data. Analysing these maps helped us to weave the various aspects we had studied together. Our final presentation demonstrated how we layered and dissected these maps by using text, graphics, sketches, photos and perceptions. [Threshold]

»We are an island - in Hamburg. You have to imagine that. If we get rid of the bridges, we'd have our own land here. We could totally take it over. There are only two entrances, over the bridges. It's like a fortress.« Veddel resident

Mapping



We also mapped all the collective spaces
and places for gatherings in a catalogue
that distinguished between ‘institutions’ as collective places, such as the church and the mosque, and ‘People‘s Places’ which were named during the local street festival. This catalogue provided us with information about the places’ qualities, accessibility and target groups and, combined with the residents‘ choice, a focus on one place that we decided to focus on in our working group. [Collective Spaces]



Mapping Veddel/ Wilhelmsburg
Islands within the island. Different parts of the Wilhelmsburg river island and transport infrastructure as a central barrier. [Traffic & Trade]

»Veddelers are aware that outsiders refer to the Veddel as a ghetto. Some groups, especially young men, playfully integrate this label into their identity. The cultural borders are mostly crossed by children while the German community feels frustrated as a minority, treating migrants as invaders and some non-German Veddelers feel that these are Germans who do not want to integrate into today's Veddel. Graffiti appears as 'communication' facade in certain assigned places.« Yiannis Pappas

Interview

Interviews presented another method we used. They were employed for two different purposes and in different stages of the research. The first purpose the interviews served was to get access to key people (gatekeepers) and topics concer-

ning the neighbourhood. We interviewed Dr. Francine Lammar, a social worker who runs the 'Veddel Aktiv' organisation. In this interview, we asked open questions and invited the interviewee to present their own perspective – as opposed to asking specific questions in order to gather data on specific aspects. We therefore considered this type of interview as another type of experiential activity. The information we gathered from this interview contributed to shaping our ideas and helped us formulate our research interest more specifically. We then wanted to validate and complement this initial information, which is why we also used a different interviewing technique. With this second type of interviews we were able to focus more on specific questions and topics such as habits, rituals and ethnic relations. While interviews are useful, they are not sufficient and need to be complemented with other methods of data collection and research practice. Interviews have a caveat in that they present narratives and issues that are of interest to the interviewees and do not necessarily cover the researchers' interest. Interviewees can also withhold information, both purposefully and unintended. Semi-structured interviews also follow a set of questions that may be useful to gain some aspects while missing out on other pieces of information that could have been useful. [Threshold]

Our interlocutor was Mr Özden Kaya, a longtime resident of the Veddel of Turkish origin. Besides giving us a lot of useful information about the neighbourhood, Mr Kaya helped us to define our research interest insofar as some of his expressions appeared to be in stark contrast to what another Veddel 'insider' and local activist, Dr. Francine Lammar, had told us earlier concerning the mobility patterns of Veddel residents. Such contrasting views illuminated how different people have different perspectives and make different experiences – even when concerned with the same topic. [Traffic & Trade]

As we continued our observations and gained a deeper understanding from the Veddel interviews, we realised the considerable social and cultural divide within the neighbourhood as well as its effects. This was quite apparent in the public domain as countless barriers and fences dissected public spaces. [Barrier]

> »Veddel used to be a dirty and dangerous place because of the drugs but this has changed (…). Even if our neighbourhood is an island it doesn't represent itself in terms of an isolated space and that's mostly because of the good transportation by S-Bahn and buses. I have a car and I can easily commute everywhere. But I believe that mostly for children and for young people Veddel is a socially restricted place. I have four kids, they are able to speak German, Greek, Turkish and English. But they believe that the Turkish language is the most useful of them all because it is by far the most common language spoken here. There are classes in kindergarten and in schools where there isn't a single German child.« Worker/ Veddel resident

Working on the Wall

'Make use of the wall; pin your work to the wall and present it!' This has been a

repeated slogan throughout both workshops. Participants collected various material, large amounts of information and drafts while observing, interviewing, mapping, drawing and reviewing the literature. One important question was therefore how to organise and communicate to others such multifaceted information without describing it piece by piece. How can such data generated in the research process, furthermore, be organised yet so that it remains flexible and adaptable to future findings and discussions? The groups therefore aimed to maintain a constant flow of generating, organising and discussing their data, allowing multiple interpretations and, importantly, re-interpretations. Participants were asked to pin their data to the walls in the UdN. Notes, drawings, photos, sketches, maps, found objects and the like covered the UdN walls. This meant that a hanging order as well as a narrative and a description had to be discussed among the groups, stimulating discussion and negotiation processes. By pinning collected information to the wall, their variety, dimensions and different focal points became visible to the other groups and teaching staff, resulting in productive discussions between groups as well as within groups. Following an open source principle, this method also allowed the working groups to use information among them, sharing data so as to use it in different projects and analyse it from different perspectives. Working on the wall by clustering information, identifying linkages and networks or demonstrating developments over time contributed to a common analysis of the neighbourhood and led to a deeper understanding of the specific research conditions and approaches. Later on, using the wall also helped to present research findings to a wider audience and opening the different perspectives onto the material, which allowed for discussions with external guests and neighbourhood residents.



Wall Situations

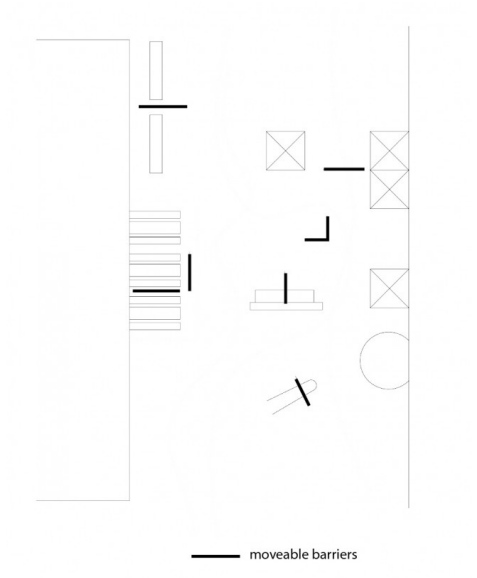


Wall Situations

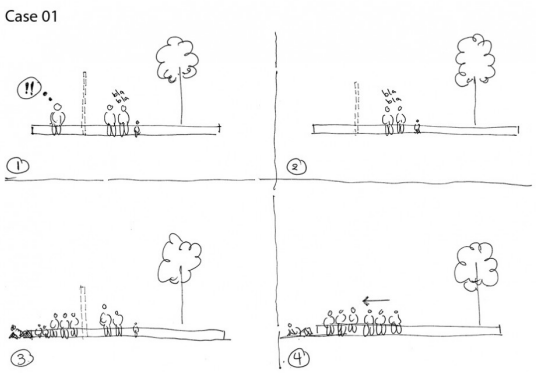
Intervention

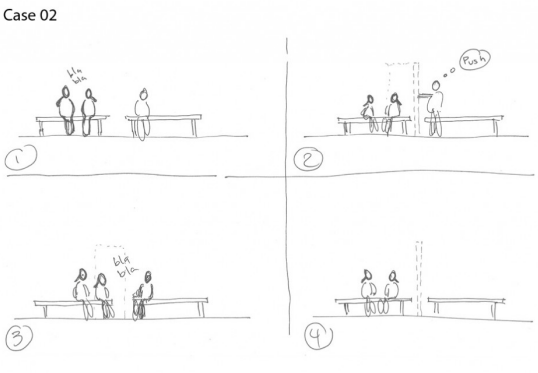


The Urban Design course at HCU is partly based on an understanding of research as intervention. In this view, the researcher is never outside of the processes they study, their very presence and interest already an intervention into the situation. This puts an emphasis on the ways in which a researcher performs their research (cf. Denzin 2008). The concept further allows researchers to directly change the area of interest so as to generate reactions, questions, debate.



During the Veddel Fest (the local festival already mentioned), we decided to experiment with barriers and study the ways barriers work. This focus was intended to help us understand the extent and forms of neighbourhood divides. We built a movable partition and used it both as an element for defining or enclosing a particular space and as a physical separator between seating areas. We then observed people's responses and realised that we provoked a whole range of reactions to the partitions: some physically moved the partition and showed their disapproval, others accepted the partition as part of the Fest arrangement, and yet others seemed to actually enjoy the new enclosures and the privacy created through the partitions. As the group continued their research into these specific contexts and situations of socio-cultural conflict, several different cases in Veddel were collected and catalogued. These included public spaces as well as semi-public spaces that were divided based on social group, nationality, gender and ownership. Barriers were seen as symbols of status, as marketing, as marking territory, as materialisation of privatisation or as elements of control. This catalogue served as an initial categorisation of the group's observations and increased our further interest in two specific cases. [Barrier]









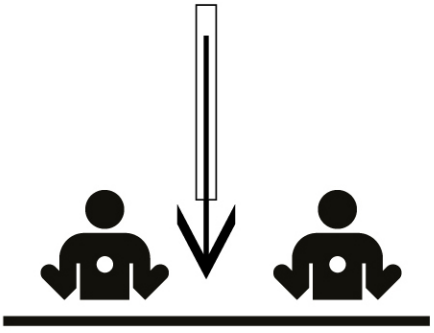






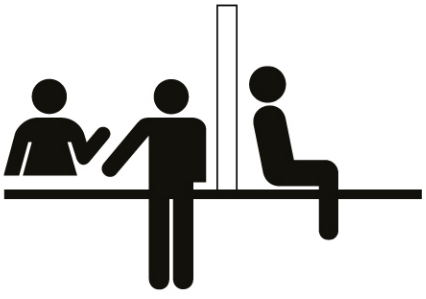
Conclusion

At the moment of building the barrier



- it is unexpected and provokes questions about socially constructed spaces;
- people cannot understand it;
- they have to deal with the new situation: staying, leaving, moving the barrier;
- most of the people don't like what we're doing but don't react.

Once the barrier is already built



- people accept the barrier as part of the spatial arrangement;
- they are not interested in the new condition;
- some are enjoying the privacy and enclosure;
- and even try to protect the barrier.

Open Dialogue

The workshops were based on an understanding of research as permanent dialogue between researchers, research area and its inhabitants, as well as among the researchers themselves. This perspective underlines the role of communication and brings into focus the various communication strategies used between researchers and inhabitants as well as among researchers themselves. Communication became especially important in such an intercultural and interdisciplinary setting. Participants faced different communicative situations, such as debating and agreeing on methods and approaches with their fellow group members across various disciplines and backgrounds, talking to people in the neighbourhood in order to gain information, sharing information and findings with other groups and teaching staff, and not least reflecting on information they had gathered. In short, they had to work out a common language to work as a group, to process information they had gathered and to jointly develop a research question for further neighbourhood research.
Understanding research as a permanent dialogue between researchers, the area or subject and its inhabitants, but also between the researchers themselves meant that communication strategies were significantly important for the research process during the workshop. Researchers were put into different situations in which they had to communicate with each other or with others in order to gain information, share information or reflect what they had discovered. The had to communicate within their working groups and match different analytical tools and theoretical approaches according to their different disciplines. They had, in short, to find a common language to work with their material, to work with one another and to make themselves understood. This also required that they jointly developed an overarching research question for further neighbourhood research.

> »Working in interdisciplinary teams has both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that you get to know how people from other fields think and that there is a big difference between how you perceive the situation and how the person next to you perceives it. And the problem is that sometimes there were these clashes: we as architects and urban planners, we want everything to be visualised in form of graphs, maps, drawings, but on the other side people from political science, sociology and philosophy are focussing more on the textual material.« Hebatullah Hendawy



Discussing and working in intercultural and -disciplinary teams



Discussing work in progress in the UdN

Learning from Each Other & Sharing Knowledge

According to the open source principle, working groups have been asked to share their findings with other working groups, thus promoting the ideas of learning from each other and sharing the pool of bits of information that could be used to lead to refined questions, new interests and relate to other groups. Both data and findings were open to all groups. Where possible, findings were also discussed with external experts, stakeholders and residents from the neighbourhood so as to gain feedback and discuss quality and relevance of findings and interpretations. The approach was characterised by an iterative, circular process of data collection, discussion, analysis and interpretation. Sharing information according to the open source principle included developing the ability to communicate information and to enable sharing of a collective stock of information that could be read and

used from various perspectives and angles. Following what symbolic interactionists such as Denzin proposed, research in its own right only made sense if it was communicated to others and, most importantly, to those it actually pertained to. Findings were therefore discussed with external experts and neighbours who were invited to comment on the work. The teams actively intended to produce work that was relevant to the neighbours themselves, whilst equally producing perspectives that opened up new possibilities.



Wall Presentation

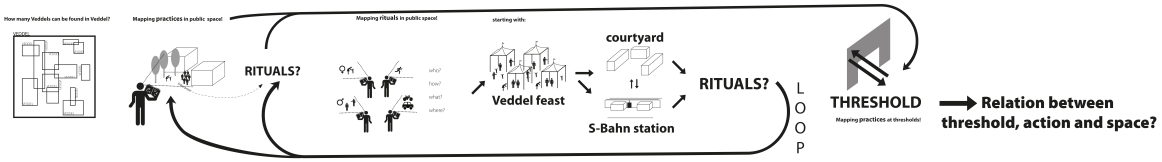


Table session

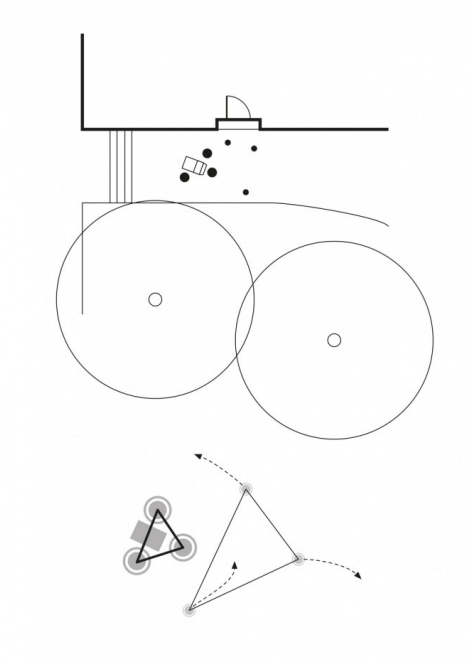
Themes & Working Groups I: Threshold

Mohammed Abotera, Sally Ahour, Katalin Gennsburg, Adrian Judt

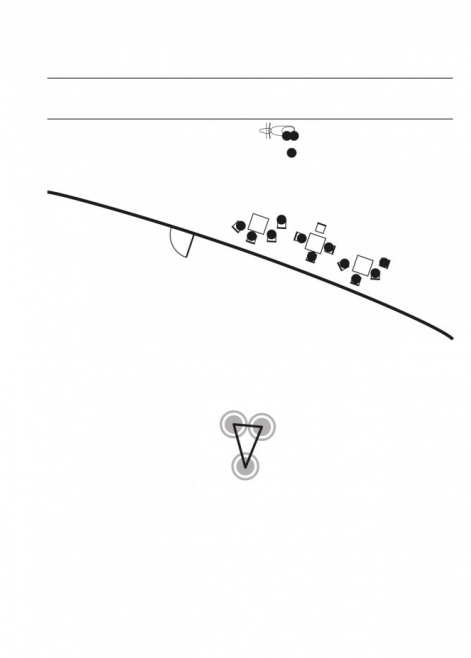
We began our research into the different neighbourhoods on the Veddel with an open interview with Dr. Francine Lammar. Dr Llamar has been a social worker on the island for more than a decade and provided us with a great deal of general information as well as a number of issues that people are facing in the neighbourhood. She shared her perspective regarding the situation of migrant women, their children and of teenagers and their (often meagre) job perspectives. She also mentioned various informal practices that are taking place on the Veddel. According to her, the municipality only has little influence on the island – not least because of its isolated location. To her, there is no simple image of the Veddel but a kaleidoscope which is changing depending on one's perspective. We gathered that there are different Veddels on the Veddel.
Given this plethora of information, it was difficult to focus on one specific issue. From what we had heard about the Veddel so far, it was impossible to see the Veddel as a whole at first glance. Our first impression of what we actually saw was therefore quite sobering: it seemed more like a quiet housing area that could be found in any other western city. This contrast led to our first framing of the topic: what is it that makes the Veddel so 'veddelish'? Are there specific practices that are typical for the Veddel? We decided to drift once more through the streets of the Veddel the next day to look specifically for activities in public spaces that could impart some of the characteristics of the Veddel.
During our second drift on Friday, we still had the feeling of 'not seeing anything', although a variety of different practices were noticeable. Yet somehow it seemed as if all this activity was more or less everyday activity that would take place in any other quarter. In the afternoon we heard about the Friday prayer that would take place in the local mosque nearby. When we arrived there, we didn't see anything before or during the prayer, but as it finished, the men poured out of the mosque and filled the street. Both very young and very old men as well as all ages in between left the mosque, laced up their shoes on a small wall or stood together, chatting in groups. Simultaneously, some women arrived on the street. They had either left their houses or were waiting in cars. Young girls were also passing by. Suddenly, a certain liveliness became palpable and visible, turning the street into a dense happening. To us, it seemed a bit like a wave that caught the people in its dynamic and transformed the main street.
At this point, we developed a first idea of what we would like to look at and how we could train our view to look for performative activity in public, open space. We decided to firstly concentrate on visible rituals on the Veddel. This decision was partly based on the fact that a local borough festival was going to happen in the area the next day, the Stadtteilfest. Having surrounded the festival for a good part of the day while thinking about the Veddel's history and its implications for the present, we finally entered the courtyard through the different entries.



While some of us sketched impressions of the festival, its dynamics and the location of the stands, as a group we wondered about the relations between people, the emerging networks and what we discovered were important actors. Yet although the festival presents a major annual ritual for the whole Veddel community, we were not able to observe any similar practices of greetings and commotion at the festival that we had found after the Friday prayer. We reflected again on the Friday prayer and came to the impression that its impact on public space was not only generated by the practice of praying itself, but also by the contrast of the spatially closed mosque within the building and the open space outside of it. Thus, the gateway between these two opposite spaces came into focus. Realising this issue shifted out topic once more: How are entrances related to activity and behaviour in public space? Our observation focused on the first visible entrance of the courtyard where the festival took place. This entrance consisted of a gate between two separate buildings and the impression of a border. Every time we had been there it was open. But there was a chain to lock it. And indeed the entrance had an impact on the behaviour of the people passing through it: men straightened their trousers, women rearranged their handbags, people checked their keys and everybody was looking around the square in front of the gate. Another observation showed that next to the gate, a couple of male youth sat down on a brick bench and took on the demeanour of gatekeepers. After we had observed this scene, we looked at another entrance to compare them. The second one featured a bar instead of the gate to prevent cars from passing through. “Veddel” was written in large letters on the bar on which three female teenagers sat.
We noted that different groups of teenagers occupied different spaces, the different entrances to the courtyard and festival. We also observed that people act differently in different settings. We decided to concentrate on two case studies, focusing on researching into this and develop categories to compare groups and behaviours as well as spaces in which these occurred.



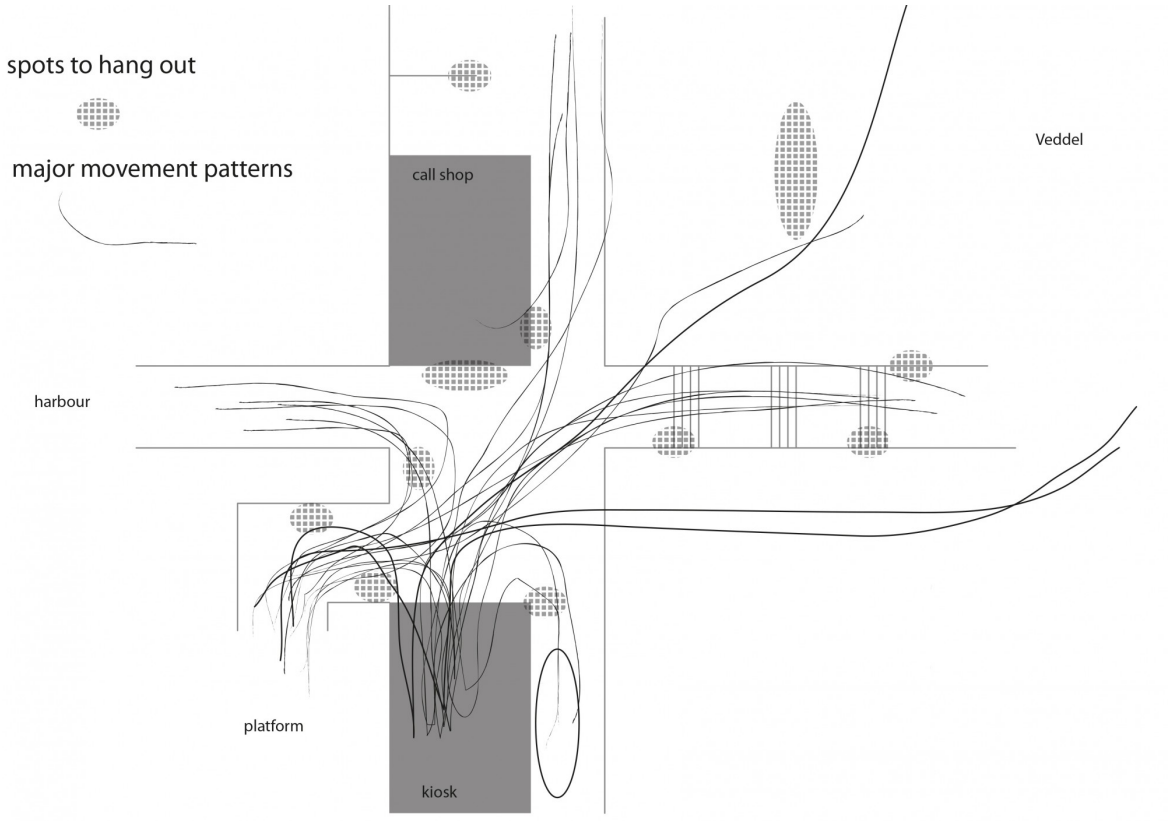
Major movement patterns at S-Bahn station Veddel
around 6 o'clock in the evening



Major movement patterns at S-Bahn station Veddel
around 6 o'clock in the evening

The courtyard became our first case study as we had already collected a lot of information and material the day before. For the second case study we chose the S-Bahn station Veddel, the primary traffic hub for entering and leaving the Veddel. Because it is highly frequented, it is also a social meeting point and combines different functions for the whole quarter. What we gathered was that researching into rituals was very complex and a sensitive topic that required detailed information about the personal contexts and individual stories. We therefore reconsidered once more whether rituals were really possible to deeply engage with in relatively little time. Moving away from the social category of rituals, we reframed our interest and decided to focus on the thresholds that our case studies presented. Our

topic was therefore constantly evolving, never fully set until the last days of the workshop. We had started with looking at the different ‘Veddels’ within the Veddel, focusing on any kind of activity that would give us an insight into the uses of public spaces.
The most interesting event we observed was the end of the Friday prayer that had an quite an effect on the open space surrounding the mosque. It directed our interest to focus on activities that we defined as „rituals“, more in terms of people’s everyday life than in terms of religion. We picked the courtyard hosting the festival and the S-Bahn station as case studies so as to make our observations comparable. Due to the short period of time available, we weren’t able to develop the necessary depth for any meaningful findings. As we realised this, we decided to re-iterate our process so far in a second take by reconfiguring our material. Restructuring our research data, we engaged with the themes and topics that had emerged throughout the workshop week.
The question around thresholds emerged as an important aspect of everyday life on the Veddel – not only in terms of its geographical location, but also with regards to the habitus in and of the spaces as represented by the social groups using them. By the end of the workshop week we arrived at more general questions about the relation between thresholds, practices and public spaces.



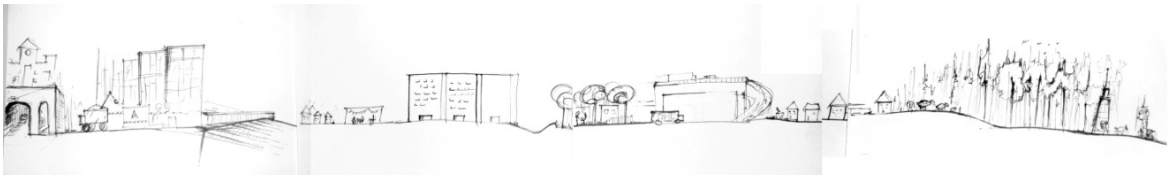
Everyday life situations & relations between actors

Themes & Working Groups I: Traffic & Trade

Felix Blass, Noel David Nicolaus, Salma Sherif

An island as transitional space

Research on the Veddel produced two topics within one day that proved rich in terms of their accessibility, their daily presence in both obvious and hidden ways as well as their meaning to residents in the neighbourhood. We realised that they are part of what makes the Veddel a unique place within the city of Hamburg. The first topic was observed during the dérive that served as a first approach to the field of research in a larger context and returned again and again in many ways: Wilhelmsburg as the biggest river island in Europe, fragmented again into smaller parts with their own character. The Veddel is an island that belongs to Wilhelmsburg but separated from the city through water, transport infrastructures and socioeconomic peculiarities. The second topic we came across on the first day was the logical counterpart to isolation that is usually associated with an island: connections. We observed these in terms of transport infrastructures connecting the island by car, train and bicycle routes, as reappearing signs and symbols in the public realm or, in much more abstract ways, as the cultural diversity that makes the Veddel and Wilhelmsburg a special place within Hamburg with connections to places far away.
In urbanist contexts, an island is often described in negative ways referring to missing social integration, low mobility and little access to a city's common resources. One exception is the concept of the city of short distances that emerged in the 1960s out of the discussion around urban density fuelled by publications such as Jane Jacobs' The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961). The concept of the city of short distances implied high density of usages within the urban fabric, providing an alternative to the functional segregation propagated by modernist prophets for decades at the time, and whose negative consequences became apparent in the shape of urban sprawl, increasing traffic and the resulting wasteful use of natural resources. It was the attempt to re-interpret as a strength the diversity and constriction of historical cities that had been rightfully criticized for their lack of health and sanitation and to rediscover an idea of urbanity that had been declared out of date and inefficient. Returning to the Veddel, two contradicting quotes from our initial conversations with experts and residents developed into our main focus: "Some people never get out of the Veddel." (Dr. Francine Lammar, Veddel Aktiv e.V.); "Everyone here has a car. Mobility is not an issue." (Özden Kaya, resident)



The contradictory nature of these affirmations caught our attention, leading us to focus on mobility as our main interest. Still, ‘mobility’ proved to be a very broad topic given the short amount of time available to conduct our research. In our group sessions, while brainstorming over our data, we found that the topic of insularity as well as the question whether ‘daily needs’ could be met on the island proved highly relevant for us. We also wanted to find a way to investigate how the perception of spaces in the neighbourhood changed depending on the social actors we would observe. We thus thought that it would be interesting to turn ‘insularity’ and the related assumptions about the closed spatial and social nature of the Veddel upside down, questioning the negative stigma attached to it and instead suggesting insularity as a positive quality, both in terms of sustainability and social cohesion. In other words, we wanted to conceptualise the Veddel as a small piece of the ‘city of short distances, a notion now popular among those planners and social actors advocating urban density as a means of dealing with sustainability issues.



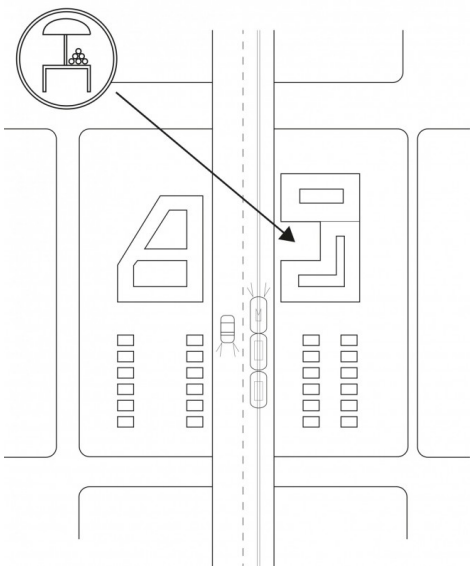
Impressions from the weekly market at Wilhelmsburg‘s Stübenplatz



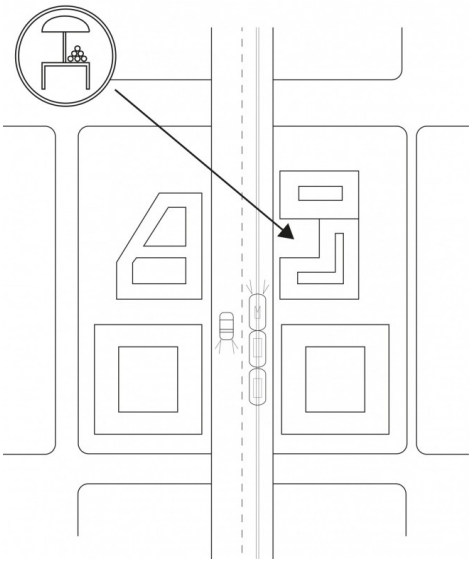
Impressions from the weekly market at Wilhelmsburg‘s Stübenplatz

As a result of our efforts, we realized that mobility was indeed a major issue in the neighbourhood, if in a different way than we expected: local residents complained a lot that commercial infrastructure on the Veddel was weak, if not close to non-existent; therefore they would have to leave on a daily basis to get many of the

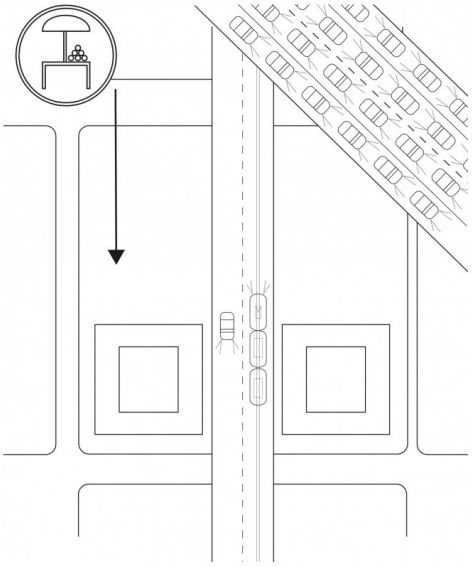
things they needed. This contrasted with the historical situation we could find based on interviews and research into archive material, which portrayed a strong local commercial infrastructure as well as a lively farmers' market in the 1960s and 1970s. Looking for an illustrative case study to represent our interests and findings so far, we decided to focus in more depth on the local farmers' market. For the last days, we concentrated on researching further into the historical development of the market and the reasons for its disappearance. Equally focusing on the connection between the Veddel and a market located outside the neighbourhood (more precisely the weekly farmers' market taking place at Stübenplatz, in the neighbourhood called Reiherstiegviertel), findings from the mental maps and various conversations indicated that some kind of functional replacement between the old market located on the Veddel and this other, already existing external market had occurred. A diachronic perspective on the Veddel's development clearly showed that the neighbourhood which was constructed as a residential area for workers from the adjoining industrial compounds (mainly located on the Peute island) had lost its original functions as an 'integrated neighbourhood', as it had originally been intended by the influential turn-of-the-century Hamburg architect and city planner Fritz Schumacher. Still, historical documentation retrieved from the 'Veddel Aktiv e.V.' suggests that until the big flood of 1962 a strong local commercial infrastructure existed on the island. In the aftermath of the flood and during the subsequent exchange in local population structures, which saw a strong inflow of Turkish immigrants replacing the aging German population over the course of a decade, many shops changed ownership and started to cater for the needs of the Turkish population, mainly 'ethnic' grocery stores. Today, just one such store remains, and the vacancy rate of retail space, though not as high as a decade ago, is still considerable. Our question was thus: What had happened in the meantime that had weakened the local retail infrastructure so much?



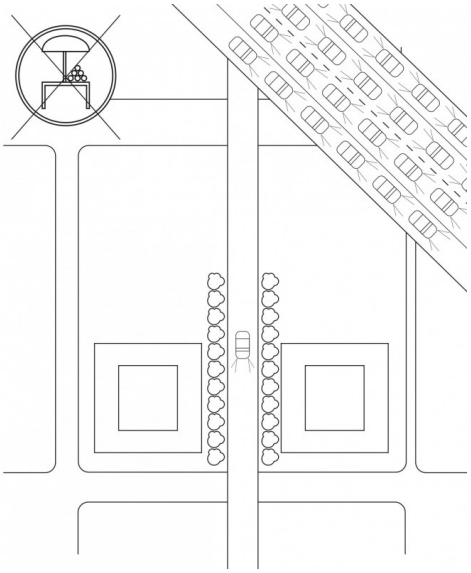
Farmer s market on the Veddel Phase 1: Wilheminian Style + Terrace Houses



Phase 2: Wilheminian Style + Modernism

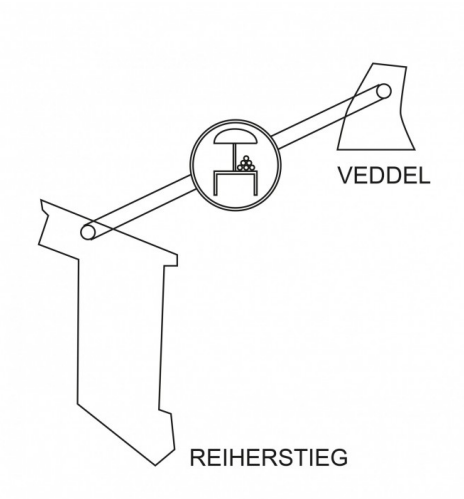


Phase 3: New Mobility, Infrastructure + Modernism

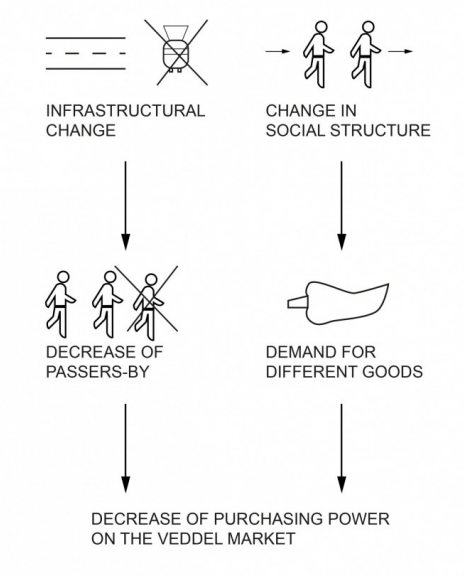


Phase 4: Traffic Calming + Modernism

Although due to time constraints we couldn't focus on the influx of more complex factors, such as the general change in consumption patterns in urban areas during the past decades or the specific role of a decrease in local purchasing power due to population exchange, the weak retail infrastructure appeared to be related to the development of the local mobility infrastructure. This became visible while concentrating on the local market place. Focusing on the local farmers' market, we found a strongly symbolic space not only epitomising the development of the neighbourhood as a whole but equally functioning as an indicator for the changing fortunes of the local commercial infrastructure. Founded shortly after the beginning of the island's urbanisation in the wake of the Harbour's industrialization, the market was located in a square (actually called 'market square') characterized by typical Wilhelminian housing blocks. While the square and the surrounding buildings had been obliterated during the Second World War air raids, the Schumacher housing blocks were mostly spared or reconstructed after the war and until today characterise the island's appearance. As a typical example of post-war urban development, the historic square was replaced by a highway interchange. Still, the market continued to take place and was moved to the nearby Slomanstraße. Here, it continued to function and serve the neighbourhood until its demise during the first decade of the 2000s. From that point on, residents of the Veddel had to use other farmers' markets on the island of Wilhelmsburg. To understand the relationship between mobility and commercial infrastructure, one should keep in mind the fact that the Veddel can be considered the 'entrance' to the city of Hamburg when coming from the southern shore of the harbour. It is, and was, an important transit point. But while historically the roads to the proper city core had always crossed the neighbourhood, cutting through the urban fabric, the main flows of traffic were restructured during the past decades so that they now bypass the neighbourhood. The last development in this sense was the pedestrianisation of the main street of the Veddel, the Brückenstrasse, which followed the removal of the tramline and the construction of the highway. In other words, the heavy traffic flows entering Hamburg now bypass the residential area at high speed, without entering the actual neighbourhood. This development, together with the strong decrease in overall population numbers (which are now halved compared to their peak: from 10,000 to less then 5,000 inhabitants) and the reduction in purchasing power following the influx of immigrant populations, are reasonable elements to suppose that the overall purchase power of the island decreased to such an extent that it could no longer sustain a large commercial infrastructure nor a weekly market.



Stübenplatz as a functional part of the Veddel neighborhood



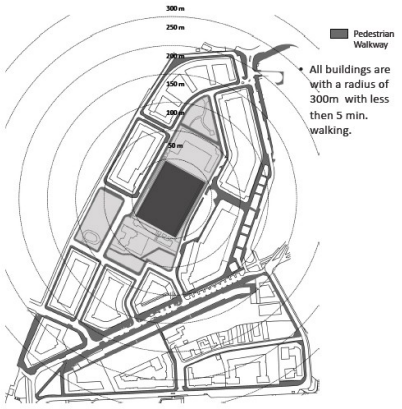
Conclusion

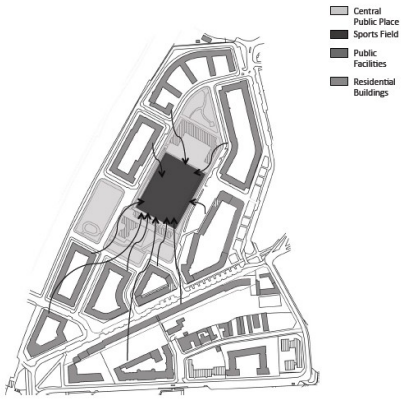
Themes & Working Groups I: Collective Spaces

Thomas Kohlwein, Maja Mijatovic, Mohammed El - Azzazy, Mariam Waheed

During our dérive, we stopped at the local football club and met local expert and founder of the football club FC Dynamo Olaf Block.
The club was founded in 2009 after parents had repeatedly suggested and asked for an opportunity for their children to play and practice regularly. Until then the club only had a men‘s team. Olaf Block, resident on the Veddel for 11 years now and a pensioner, was able to spare his time and established the football club for children. He works as a volunteer – the passion for the game and the children keep him going until today. Three years later, the club has 136 members from 13 different nationalities who play two times per week for almost three hours together. Due to the high demand for membership and multiple requests of parents and children, the already existing football club Vatan Gücü established another team for older children. Approximately 60 children are playing for this club. The team coaches and parents see football as a way to get their children off the streets. Both football clubs report they have no problem with racism within the teams; children respect each other and also spend their leisure time together. Because some parents cannot afford the monthly fee and their children are still allowed to play, the lack of money available to the club is palpable. Playing equipment and jerseys cannot be afforded. ‘What else should they do? Here on the Veddel there is no other possibility for young people.’ (Sedat, Coach at Vatan Gücü).
Olaf calls this football club an inherent part of the island, especially because this sport is so important for the children. Even though everybody knows about the importance of this club for the children, the motivation and commitment to support the club among the parents is rather low. Olaf is well known and respected on the island; the children invite often him for their birthdays, but apart from that, participation on the part of the parents is rare. He is aware of this and knows that the club is bound to perish if he stopped engaging for it.
By definition, football is a collective activity. Football is a universal sport connecting people who may be different in terms of language and colour and nationality. Players interact with one another, literally, for a common goal. Football also implies to act in specific ways; the rules are set. The children meet at the pitch; football brings them together. So the question arising for us was whether the Veddel football pitch was different. In how far does the football club and the actual field on the Veddel influence the children’s characters and the extent to which they accept each others’ differences? In approaching the football club, we discovered quite a few things that caught our attention. The impression we got on the Veddel was that children from different nationalities were interacting in a way that reminded us of a melting pot. We realised the pitch functioned as a typical neighbourhood spot and a collective space. It reminded us of Randolph Hester’s definition of the neighbourhood space that is public (and ill-defined private outdoor space) close to home that residents consider their own because

of collective responsibility, familiar association and frequent shared use. While most neighbourhood spaces emerge seemingly naturally, they require an individual's or group's initiative who live in the neighbourhood. Michel de Certeau's notion and linkages between space and place also came to mind as we analysed the football pitch as it presented a place not many people used before it was opened and defined as a football pitch. After the coaches Olaf Block (FC Dynamo) and Sedat (Vatan Gücü) founded the clubs, the spot became a place and children went there frequently. We concluded that through practice, the space turned into a place.





> »Space is practiced place. Thus, the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalise it and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities.« (Michel de Certeau).

The football field is also a typical public space in that it is open to the public and without entry fee. The children do not have enough money to pay the coaches or their membership fees, but the coaches don't insist on the money. Rather than managing professional football clubs, the aim of their offer is to get the children off the streets and enable them to experience and learn team spirit. They seek to

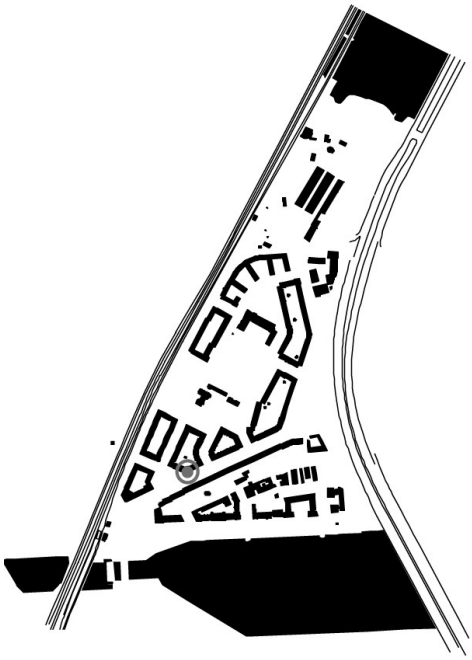
engage with their community. Sedat told us: ‘Some of the parents cannot afford the fees but I cannot kick the children out of the team.’
The two coaches know and help each other. Both of them train children from different ages so they can complement their work. The coaches play very important roles. They know the team and strengthen the individuals’ abilities to work as a team and support each other. Coaches understand their players’ weaknesses and potentials, their dreams and their fears. As such, they play an important role in the neighbourhood where their team live. The coaches believe that neighbourhood means that people help each other and develop reciprocal relationships.
Our case study shows that public space as practiced space, such as the football pitch, enhances urban life. People find a place to meet and interact as well as strengthen their relationship within the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood is defined as people’s interaction without seeking material benefit.
People are able to create their own spaces by organising themselves independently and helping one another. In order to be successful, such interaction and participation based on little to no funds requires the motivation and will of the people.

Themes & Working Groups I: Barriers

Mazin Abdulkarim, Max Mütsch, Jean Paul Olivier, Abeer Younes

‘Reading Barriers‘ is a brief research note about the culture of separation and isolation in the socio-culturally divided neighbourhood of the Veddel.
The dérive and an interview drew our attention to physical items creating and separating space(s): fences. We found and saw them everywhere. They obviously had had a strong impact on the neighbourhood. At this point we read them as negative measures of separation. It appeared as if they were installed to disable public space for private reasons. They functioned as barriers to separate the different communities of the Veddel. Through our focus on this phenomenon we became the ‘Barrier-Group‘. Focusing more on the people installing and profiting from them helped us understand a lot about the Veddel, its inhabitants and the people passing through the borough. We also realised the positive aspects of separation. The ‘Scotland-Jards‘-bakery for example used a wind screen as a visual separation so as to enable the simultaneous operation of two businesses with very different and potentially conflicting user groups: Muslim women were enabled to enter and leave the bakery without being stared at by the eastern European men who frequented the ice cream café.

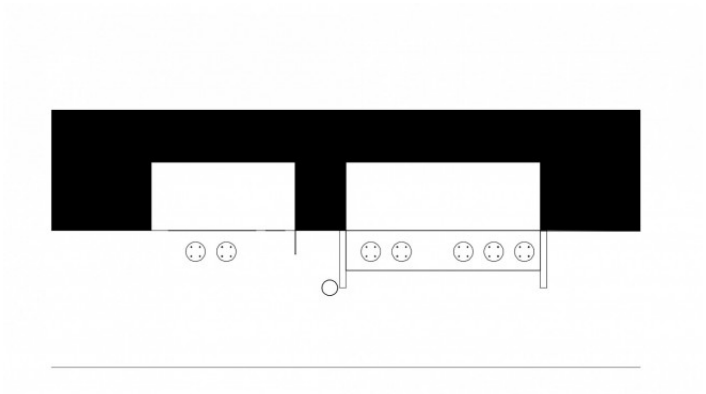
Bakery Shop - barrier as identification



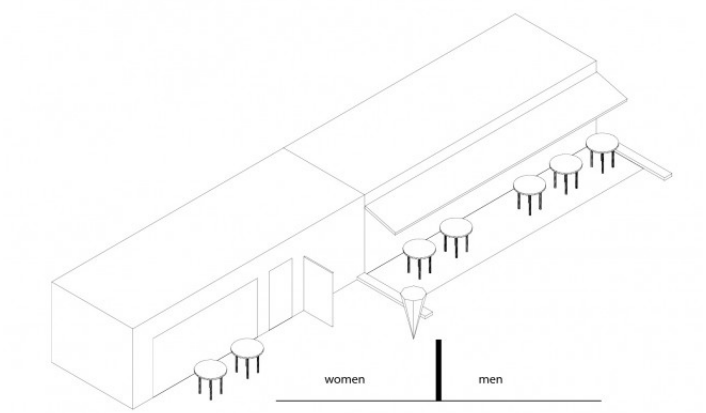
Ground figure plan; location: Veddeler Brückenstraße



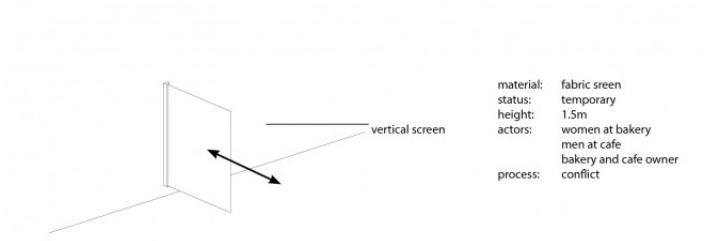
Entrance situation of the Bakery Scotland Jards (white door next to the red fence)



Detailed plan



Perspective view



Elements

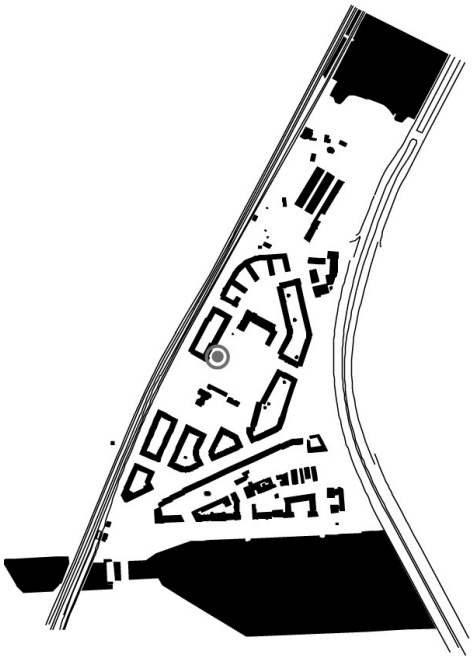
The temporary screen located between the bakery shop and ice cream café is a significant representation of the cultural and social division between the two user groups of the two shops. The bakery shop is mostly frequented by Muslim Turkish women in the early morning hours, while the ice cream café is dominated by young eastern European men. The potential conflict between these two user groups was recognised by the bakery shop owner and resolved by using the screen to create a visual separation. As the potential conflict and tension consisted mostly of gazes that the Muslim women found irritating, the visual barrier was a sufficient means to resolve the problem.

> »We arranged a curtain outside to make a more intimate space for women. They felt uncomfortable with men staring at them. You know, there is a look and a look. The other day, this old German woman comes. Since years she buys here two rolls every day. I thought I really knew her. But she tells me we should take the curtain off and that Turkish women in Germany should adjust to German standards. I was shocked. I am a migrant, too! A bit of tolerance is necessary! We have Turkish, Russian, Albanian women sitting here together and there was never a problem.« - Bakery Owner

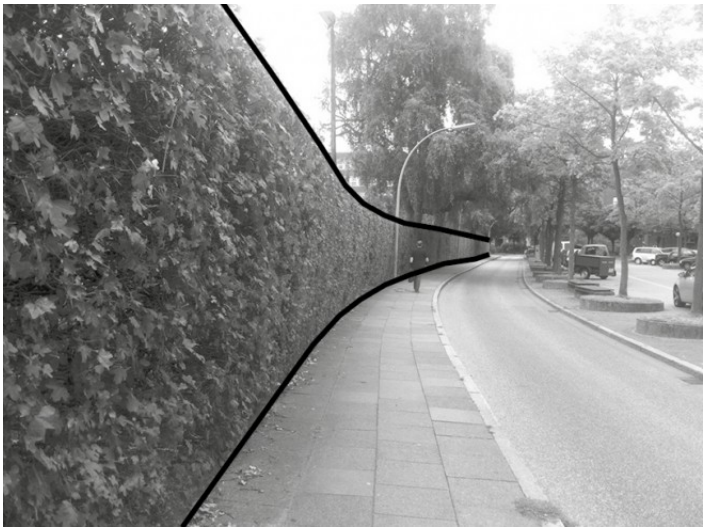
On the one hand these separators or markers were about place making and physically defining spaces, but on the other they also represented an embedded cultural and social divide, and sometimes conflict, between different groups, enforcing their sense of personal identification with the space. The idea of reading these barriers as manifestations of socio-cultural conflict, as well as understanding the processes of negotiation that occur to materialise these conditions became the focus of our interest.

Within this initial interest we asked ourselves:
What kind of barrier are we dealing with?
What is behind the physical border? How does it function? What kind of symbol does it present?
What does it communicate?
Who is concerned and how are they dealing with it?
Is the barrier just a physical space maker or does it create more than two separated spaces?

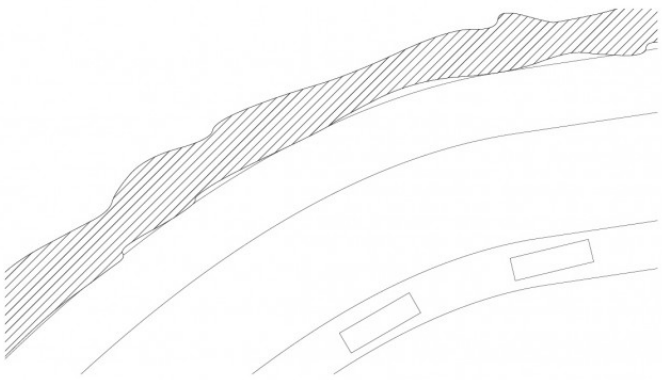
Sportsclub Wall - barrier as guide



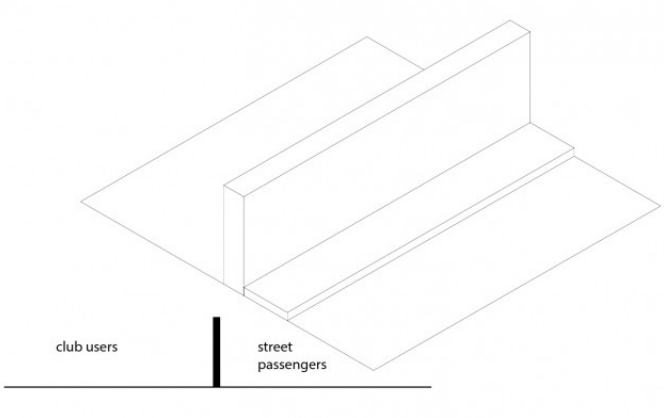
Ground figure plan; location: Wilhelmsburger Straße



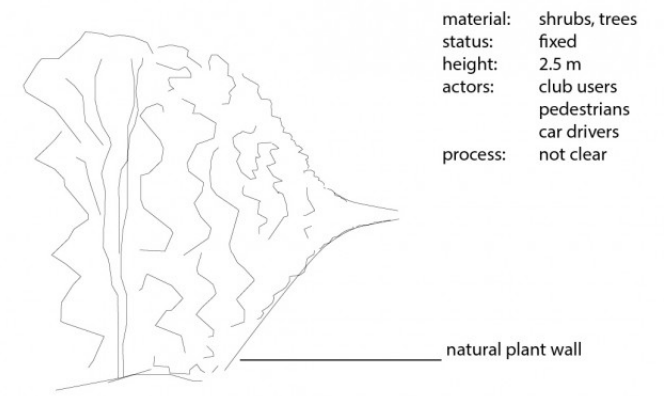
Wall dividing street and sports club



Detailed plan



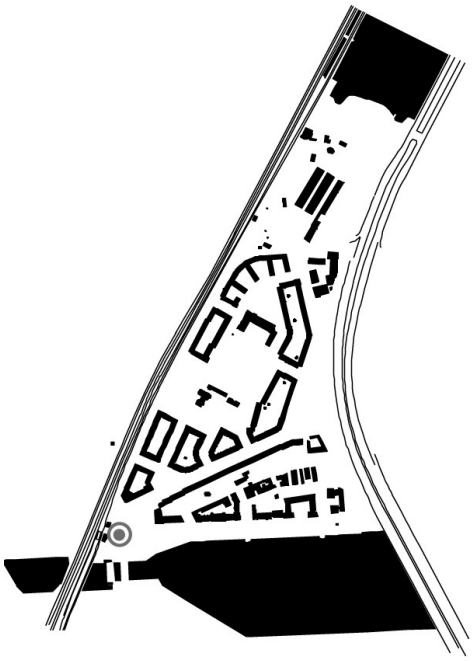
Perspective plan



Elements

Sallys Imbiss - barrier as separator

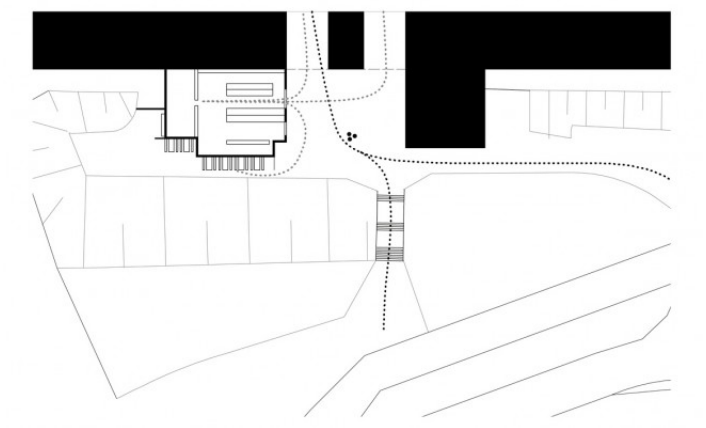
The barrier at the diner (Imbiss) located directly at the entrance/exit of the train station acted not only as a separator between two groups of users (harbour workers and train passengers) but also as an appropriation of space to portray workers' identity. Understanding the case reveals a domination of male workers in a specific time of the day where the barrier signifies an enclosed area for relaxing, drinking, and chatting.



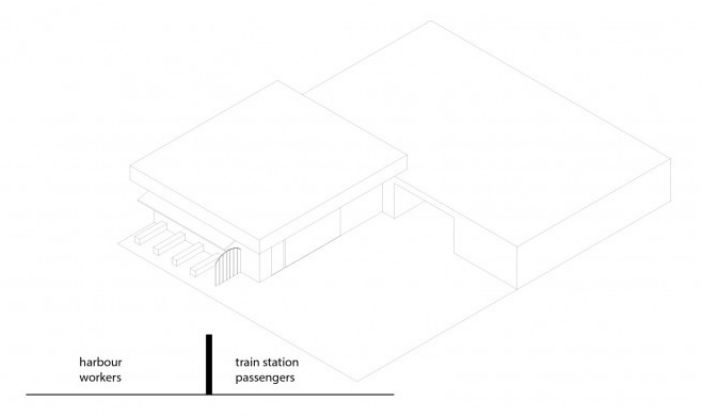
Ground figure plan; location: S-Bahn Station Veddel



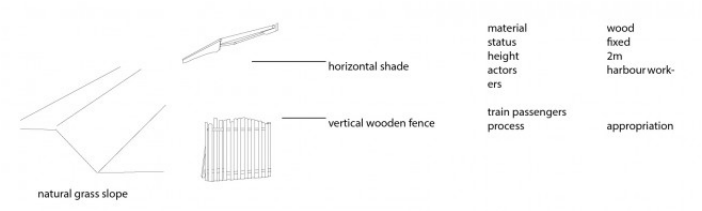
Veddel Station



Detailed view



Perspective view



Elements

Perspective

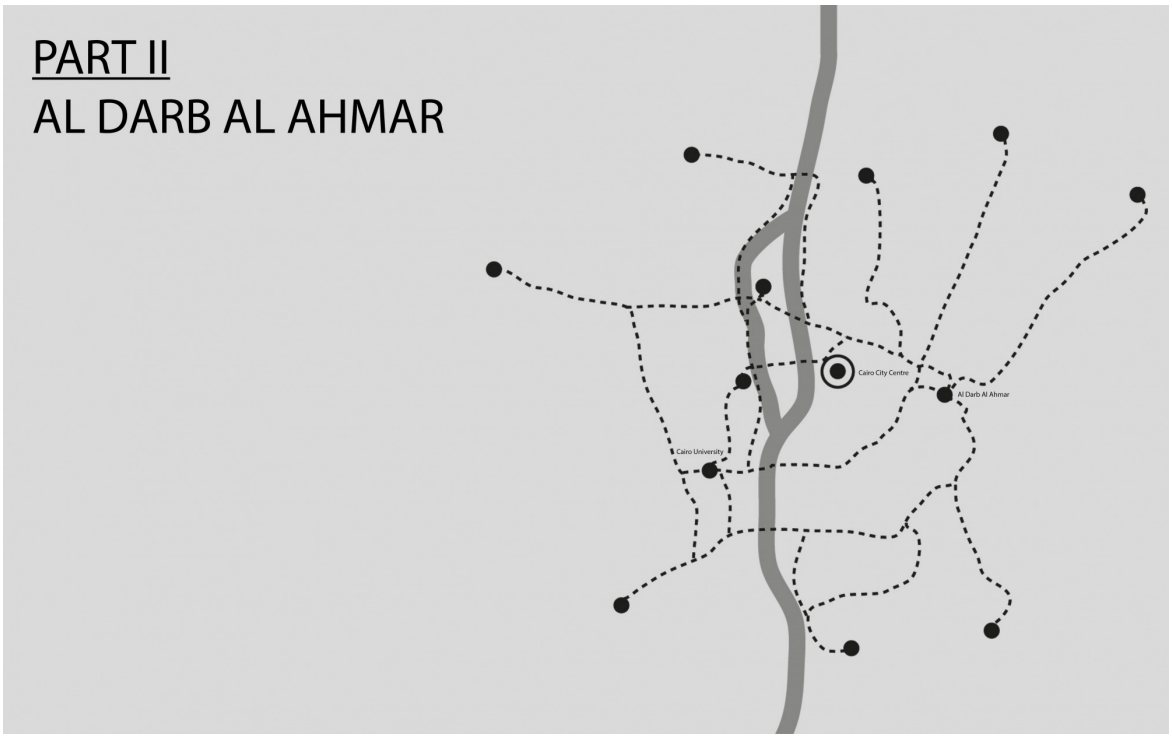
The groups left the Veddel with more questions than answers and moved to Cairo in the hope to be able to reflect upon these questions from another perspective.
What do collective spaces mean for different people?
What kind of social impact do collective spaces create for people?
How do people organise themselves in order to create and use collective spaces?
What does a residents‘ collective space mean for the neighbourhood in the future?

In our analysis we discovered that countless activities and practices take place in public (and collective) spaces. Even where public and collective spaces seem to be designed for one particular practice (such as a playground or a market place), they are not exclusively used as such and bear various other meanings and possibilities. While these may not be visible at first glance, they are central to a place’s atmosphere, connotation and actual usage.
Thresholds and barriers can turn into places to stay where people hang out; contrary to the general assumption that thresholds and barriers divide places, they can turn into places of encounter and exchange. It is for us to take a closer look and explore how barriers develop within neighbourhoods, how they come to represent processes of conflict that may not be visible anymore, but remain inscribed into the physically and culturally produced places. We need to excavate the negotiations and multi-layered processes that created such barriers and thresholds as much as collective spaces and places of traffic and trade. What kinds of individual and collective identities are expressed through and in these places and symbols?
The task, it seems, is to find a way of dealing with the often chaotic layers that characterise urban spaces and places. This chaos, while actively produced by planners, politics, people and periods, can and should be equally seen as productive: if we are to re-think neighbourhoods and think beyond the mere physical or mere social dimensions of particular spaces, we need to make the chaos we find productive.
Using another example from one of the groups, traffic calming measures may very well increase the livability of a particular neighbourhood from the perspective of direct residents in terms of air quality and noise reduction, but they can equally decrease this neighbourhood’s commercial infrastructure and livelihood. Whatever answers and new questions we developed, it’s always a matter of perspective.

We developed and practiced a common language. Now the challenge is to test it in a completely different setting and context. Off to Cairo!



Part II Al Darb Al Ahmar



Approaching Al Darb Al Ahmar

In Cairo, we were concerned with the neighbourhood and area Al Darb Al Ahmar, located in the midst of historic Cairo. The district is well known for its medieval Islamic monuments and mosques; its urban fabric a pattern of crooked narrow streets and alleys aligned with the stone-built houses of classic Islamic architecture. Al Darb Al Ahmar is surrounded by the Ayyubid Wall to the east, borders with the Salah-Al-Din Citadel to the South (part of the World Monuments Fund) and the famous Al-Azhar Park to the west. Its distinctiveness originates historically from being near to the Citadel, the political, economic and cultural centre of power at the time of the Ayyubids around 1860 when the first large expansions of the city were undertaken (Sims 2003).

In contrast to this rich Islamic heritage, the present urban condition is considered critical due to a number of problems ranging from high levels of poverty, poor infrastructure, deteriorating housing conditions and social inequality. By some seen as an informal area, it has been included in the category of the deteriorating historic cores (Sims 2003: 6). Having attracted a number of strategies and community development and NGO programmes over the past few years, the district's present state is quite different in comparison to its past. One of the most notable interventions was led by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) in partnership with the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities and the World Monument Fund. AKTC restored the monumental structures in the area, in particular the Um al-Sultan Shaaban Mosque and the Khayrbek Complex, but its most significant undertaking was the Al-Azhar Park, for which a 500 year old landfill site was transformed into a recreational space and a 'green lung' for Cairo.

The original aim of the AKTC developmental programme as stated in 1984 was to provide Cairo's residents with green public space, while restoring monuments and revitalising cultural heritage. The trust subscribes to a participative strategy and thus included the restoration of selected housing estates and socio-economic programmes. The intervention was targeted at the community, rather than the park or monuments alone and accompanied by a host of health, cultural and educational activities. The outcomes of the AKTC programmes, however, weren't only satisfying. Although the AKTC succeeded in restoring several monuments and regenerating a number of historic houses, the community didn't appreciate that revalorisation was given priority. The overall management was seen as top down, thus countering the participative approach. It was questioned, for instance, how effective the social development programme was in the light of the mainly superficial reconstruction of the historic fabric.

Especially after the Arab Spring of 2011, a new understanding of participation and the reclamation of rights characterises the population of Cairo and beyond. This impacts on how people in Al Darb Al Ahmar perceive their abilities to determine future developments of an area considered informal and historically significant at the same time, an area in transition and a neighbourhood of ambivalences and contradictions.



Map of Al Darb Al Ahmar

»At first incomprehensible to someone from a European background with its strict regulations on public space, traffic and commerce, the physical shape a well as the usage of street spaces is subject to constant change and negotiation in Cairo’s historical quarter Al Darb Al Ahmar.« Felix Blass





»Just like a large house with different floors and public areas in between, we entered Al Darb Al Ahmar through its short cuts, passages and small streets where kids were playing, a funeral ceremony took place and workers such as carpenters and others were working. It seemed that nearly everything takes place on the street.« Adrian Judt





»Streets are not just streets. They are used for storage, manufacturing, cooking, eating, playing and for chatting. These daily practices make the district look like a mosaic with thousands of tiny different patterns and details, but simultaneously one larger image.« Katalin Gennburg





»Cars, bicycles, trucks and mule carts carrying people and goods, tea glasses and meals being delivered from one shop to the other, the occasional news wandering from door to door with an incense bearer – the streets of Al Darb Al Ahmar are its veins.« Mohamad Abotera

Exchange of Impressions and Mapping

Upon arriving in Cairo, we approached Al Darb Al Ahmar through a dérive, just like we had approached the Veddel in Hamburg. Drifting through the district, we probed into the method as well as the neighbourhood, getting in touch with a completely different context. In an evening roundtable discussion, we exchanged our impressions and presented the mental maps, thereby sharpening our perspectives by sharing our experiences and associations.



Presentations on the wall: mental maps and first impressions of the research area Al Darb Al Ahmar



Presentations on the wall: mental maps and first impressions of the research area Al Darb Al Ahmar



Presentations on the wall: mental maps and first impressions of the research area Al Darb Al Ahmar



Presentations on the wall: mental maps and first impressions of the research area Al Darb Al Ahmar



Presentations on the wall: mental maps and first impressions of the research area Al Darb Al Ahmar



Presentations on the wall: mental maps and first impressions of the research area Al Darb Al Ahmar

»Like in Hamburg, we approached ADAA through a dérive, probing into the method as well as the neighbourhood in a completely different context. These impressions were then exchanged by presenting the mental maps at an evening roundtable discussion, thereby sharpening our perspectives and sharing knowledge.« Lukas Grellmann



working space in Al Darb Al Ahmar

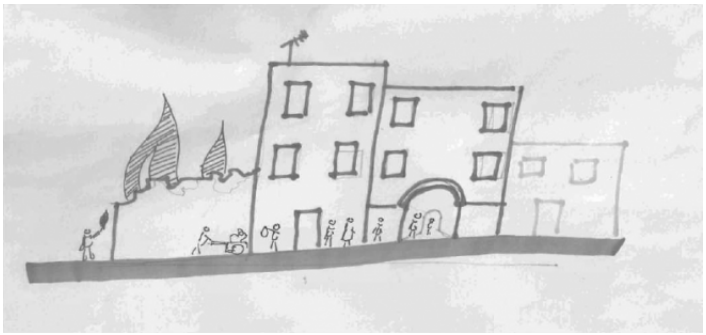
Themes & Working Groups II: In Between Spaces

Mohamad Abotera, Sally Ashour, Katalin Gennburg, Ebraheem Imam, Adrian Judt

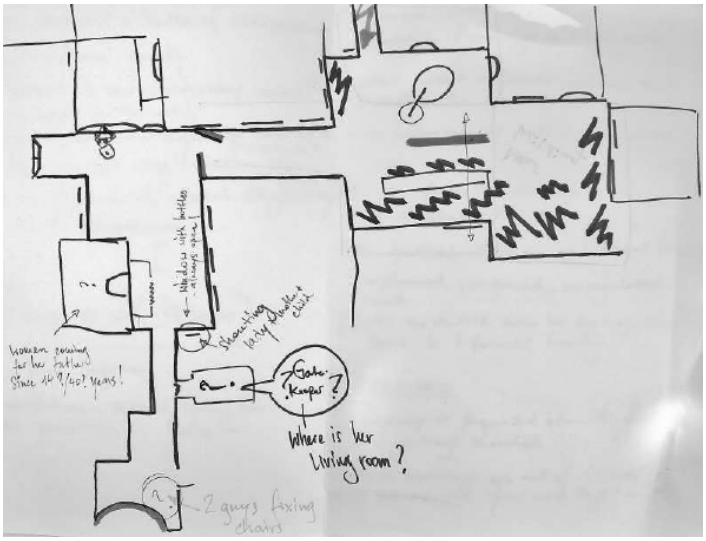
How do people discover places? How do they create privacy when living in such a densely populated area?
When we entered backyards – or in-between situations as we would come to call them – we talked to the people who lived there. They were concerned about losing their housing. We were informed that owners of houses in Al Darb Al Ahmar burned down their properties in order to build new buildings with higher rents on the same plot, regardless about the future of former, i.e. current inhabitants. We were confronted with this fear nearly everywhere; people were afraid to become homeless and losing their places of work at the same time. This information changed our perception of Al Darb Al Ahmar and similarly made us realise that the neighbourhood is changing quite dramatically. People in Al Darb Al Ahmar told us that they would not know where to go if they were losing their homes. We decided to make this dilemma our case study: people having to leave their place and appropriating another one, with the carpenter we met at the schoolyard being one of them. Our research interest became more focused on the question about how people appropriate space, how they negotiate public space and how they move around in relation to these understandings. We were curious what kind of places we would find behind walls and facades that seemed to be private properties. Similar to the situation in the first backyard, we discovered overlapping usages in nearly all of them: so called in-between spaces are sometimes used just like public squares, serving as crossings and pathways or meeting spaces, but they are also private areas at the same time. Building on to this recognition, we tried to find out how people discover such routes and places and for whom they are accessible and when.



Impressions from the case study sites.



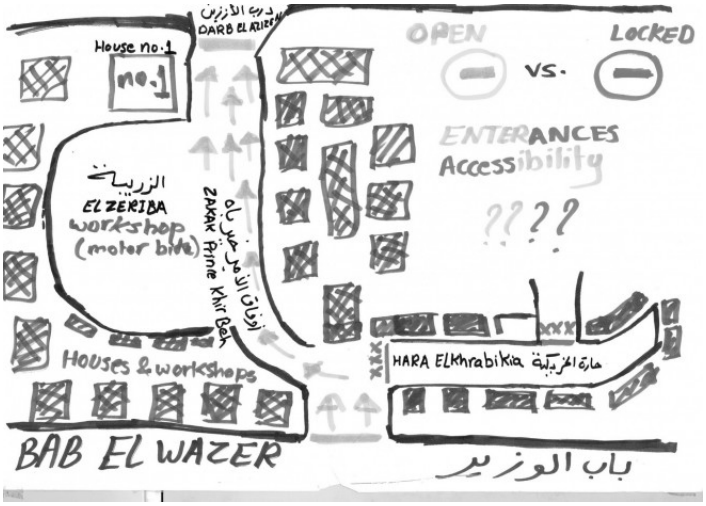
Impressions from the case study sites.



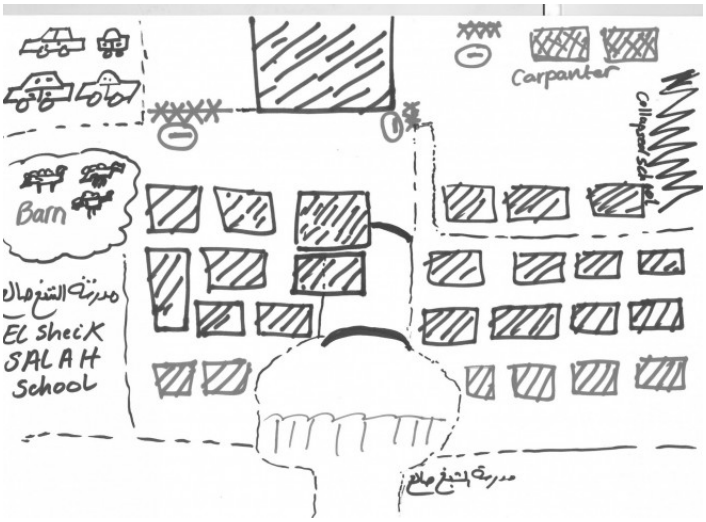
Impressions from the case study sites.

Our questions addressed these concerns: Who owns the place or to whom does it belong? What is accessible to whom and by whom? Does the community negotiate public and private areas? How does this negotiation of space take place? These questions are of course crucial in Lefebvre's 'The Production of Space' (1992), where he argues that it is people who produce the space they live in and that no space is simply given, like a container in which we then live. The idea of relational space (Lefebvre; Bourdieu; Löw) as opposed to the idea of container space also includes raising the question of who plans the city? We observed in Al Darb Al Ahmar and in Wilhelmsburg alike that people are involved in 'planning' through using the spaces they have access to or are able to use. Recognising the intricate working of individual appropriations and negotiations helped us understand what we had known before from reading theory (Lefebvre, Bourdieu, Massey etc.) in a much more direct sense.
In the course of our research we found ourselves again simply walking, waiting and observing, looking for instances we identified as performative action – where actors and actants (non-human actors) were transforming, using, signifying, etc. urban spaces, always framing and de-framing what we saw in relation to Latour's Actor-Network Theory.
Methodologically, we observed places, people and situations of manufacturing or living first and then spoke to the people about our observations. Our interviews were all about the history of the places we had observed, the relations between the places and their relation to the outside, for example the family networks or distribution networks around the corner. We mapped places and people, sket-

ched situations and objects and took photos along while walking around.
A main finding was that objects were used to create privacy. Where space is limited and different demands over the same space overlap, certain behaviours are brought forward and stimulated that again are articulated through employing objects and creating specific interior designs. Our observation showed that curtains or other material (carpets, blankets on clothing lines, old reused banners) were used to block views from certain directions and undesired glances. We equally found ‘actants’ in the service of privacy, such as dogs or shouting people who made us feel unwelcome or even chased us away.
By drifting through Al Darb Al Ahmar we identified three different in-between spaces with the overall attribute that they were all spaces between buildings. Following the general question of different typologies of such ‘inter-building spaces’ we concentrated our fieldwork on three specific case studies. The analysis of each ‘place’ consists of three different layers: the physical structure defined by the buildings, the history of the relation between surrounding buildings and their (former) inhabitants and the daily practices of the appropriation of the spaces. Due to the short research phase of four days, most of the collected data are qualitative and served to understand the people we interviewed. Our own subjective perspectives and interests are of course equally part of the case studies as we drew on our own mental mapping and observations.



El Zeriba



El Sheikh Salah School

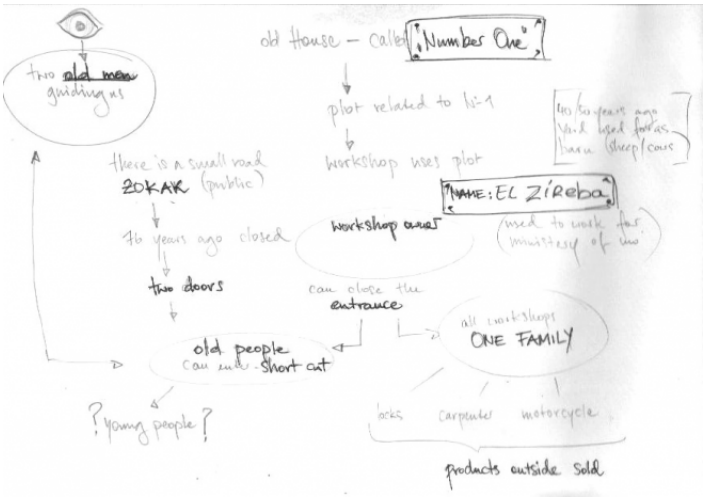


Madkor House

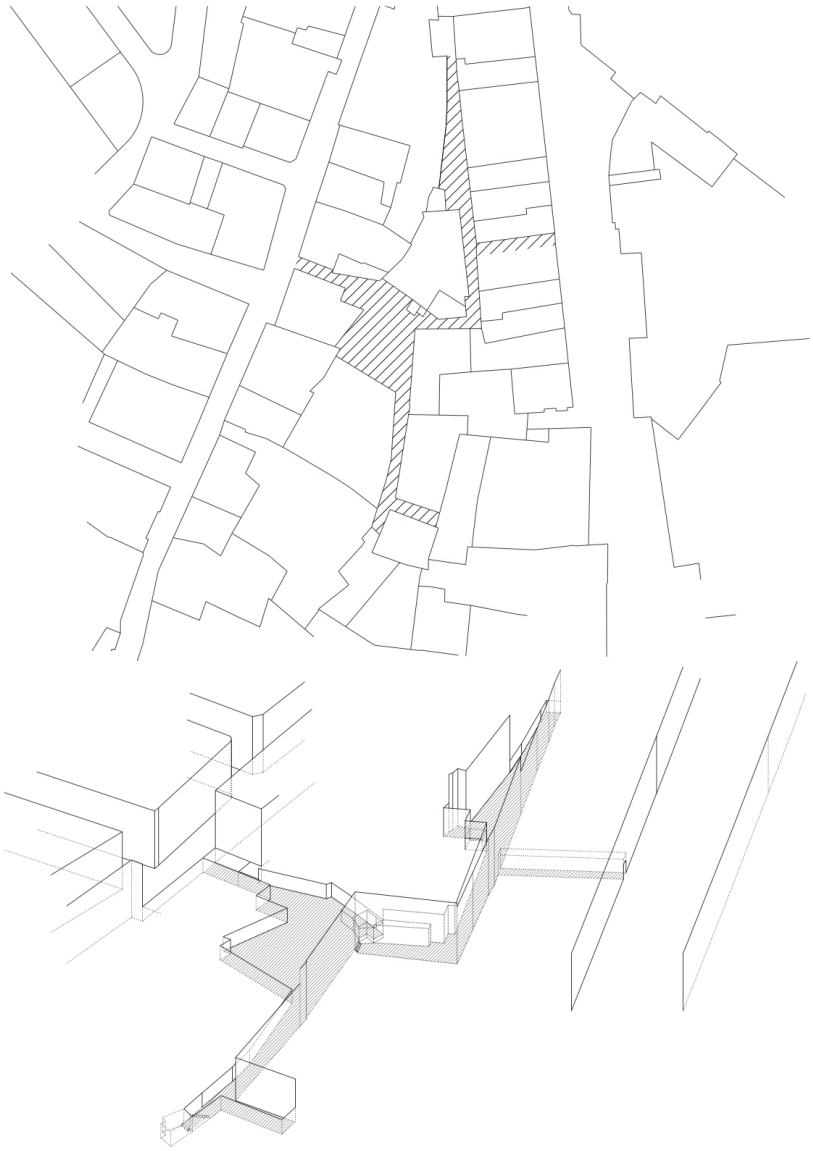
El Zeriba (the barn)

We discovered this place accidentally when walking through Darb el Azazeen. We walked down a street when an old man tried to get our attention. He told us that we would find something really interesting if we would walk through some kind of entrance he pointed at on the other side of the road. We decided to follow his advice and walked through an entrance that seemed to be the remnant of a former building. Passing through it we found ourselves in a backyard mainly used as a motorbike workshop. We crossed the yard and took the only possible path (the only other one was a dead end), which led us around several corners into a narrow corridor ending on the Bab el Wazir street. We thus found out that many locals use this connection as a shortcut. On our second research day we returned to this backyard and tried to find more information about this space and its entrances. One of the men from the motorbike workshop told us that a small courtyard had already been here for more than a hundred years until one of the houses, No. 1, collapsed and made it possible to extend the yard. The building's façade remained until this day and in fact formed the pathway through which we

had first entered the backyard. The two entrances used to have wooden doors about 70 years ago, which were opened during the day and closed over night for security reasons. Furthermore, the worker told us that the buildings around this yard house workshops on the ground level and flats in the upper stories. The pathway's official name is 'Zokak El Amir Omar Khir Beh'. 'Zokak' indicates it is a public way, which is confirmed by looking at the touristic maps for Al Darb Al Ahmar. The yard, in contrast, is called 'El Zeriba', denoting 'barn' and referring to the former usage of this place as a barn for cows by its former inhabitants. Because the neighbours living off the path and yard all know each other and/or are even related, they claim this space as their own. They 'allow' everybody to walk through the passage (especially old people), but they are able to close the two entrances with metal fences within two hours.





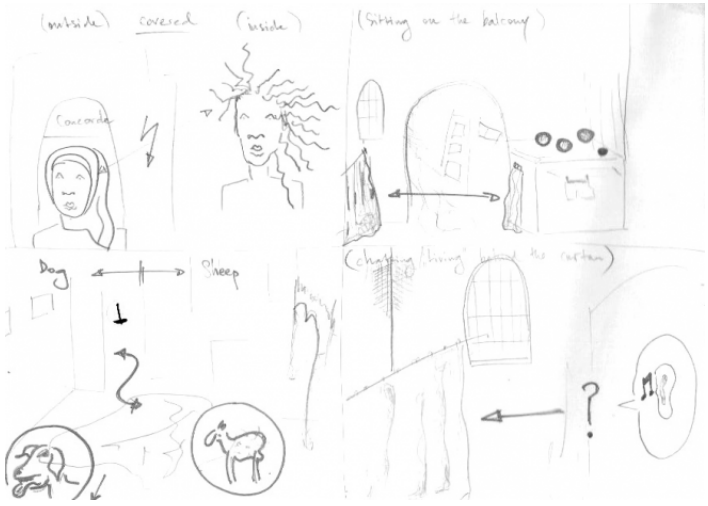


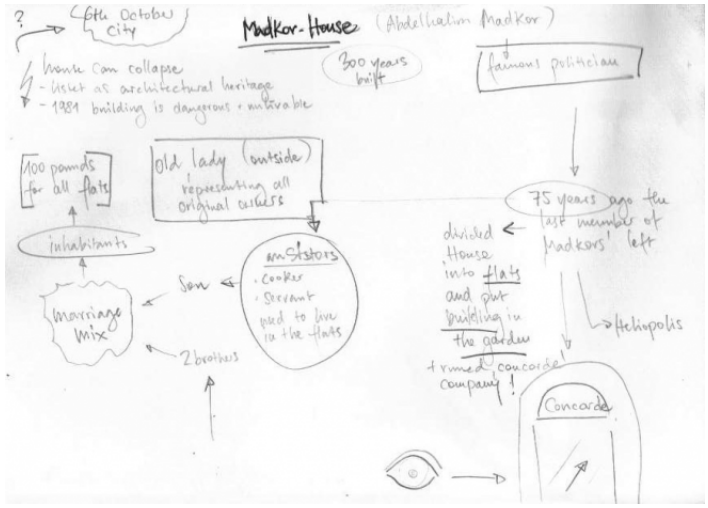
The El Zeriba courtyard. Plan and perspective drawing with its physical borders.

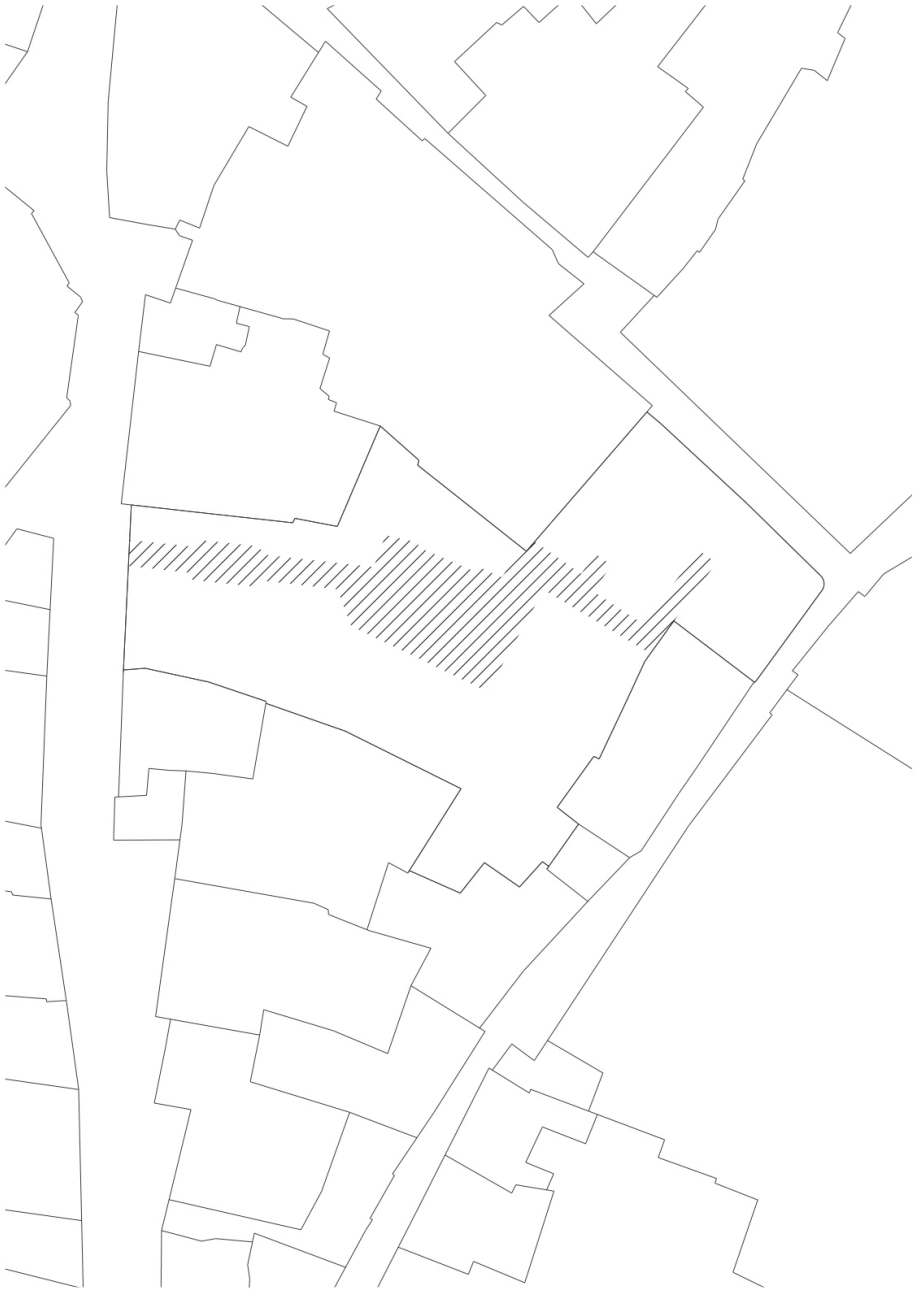
Madkor House

"CONCORD for construction and decoration" is a company’s title featured on an arch above an entrance in the middle of the remaining ruins of a building. We got interested in exploring the contrast between our own interpretations of representation and the sign’s factual location on a run down building, as ‘Concord’ could equally refer to the five star hotel chain. We decided to enter the accompanying courtyard. Having crossed the threshold we realised the building is reduced to ruins with the roof lacking. The back part of the entrance way at least had a roof and walls with a small window where a dog was barking. The courtyard is surrounded by a building looking like an old villa and several smaller bungalows. Each of these buildings had at least one door facing the courtyards, now covered by curtains. Between the old building and the newer houses we discover a small path that gives way to a very run down staircase. The carpenter in his fifties whom we interviewed in the courtyard explains that the old building is a more

than 300 years old villa owned by a family called Madkor.
The owner's father used to be a famous politician who lived in this building. Some fifty or so years ago, however, the owner and his family decided to move into a better off area and subsequently divided the house into flats and built the bungalows in the formerly large garden. The family rented out these flats to the people who used to work in the house (the cook, driver, servants) and other people. Apart from the new buildings, the new tenants also transformed some of the ground floor spaces into workshops where shoes, tents, chairs and the like are manufactured, as well as storage units. The building was seen as an example of unique architectural heritage and put under protection by the preservation order. Yet in 1982, the responsible authorities decided that the building was in danger of collapsing and presented great danger to its inhabitants. The house was set for demolition and the inhabitants to move to 6th October City, where they had been offered new flats. One of the families who live there seemed to be quite happy with the prospect to live in a modern house, while the neighbouring family didn't want to leave the area due to the imminent loss of the nearby workplace as well as family and friends nearby.





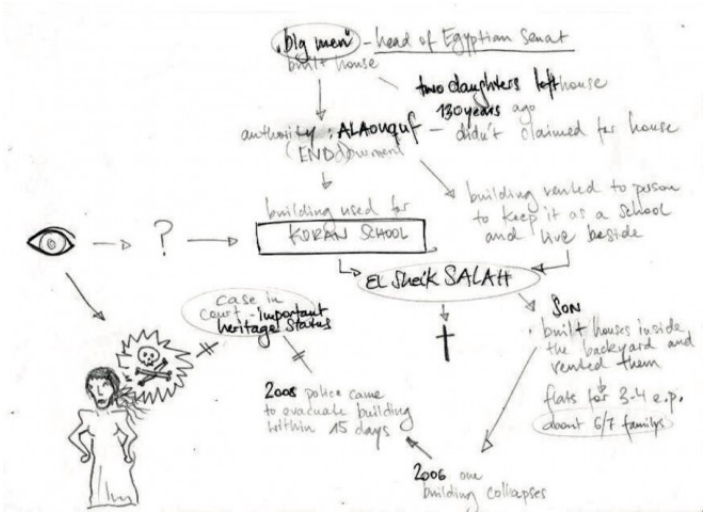


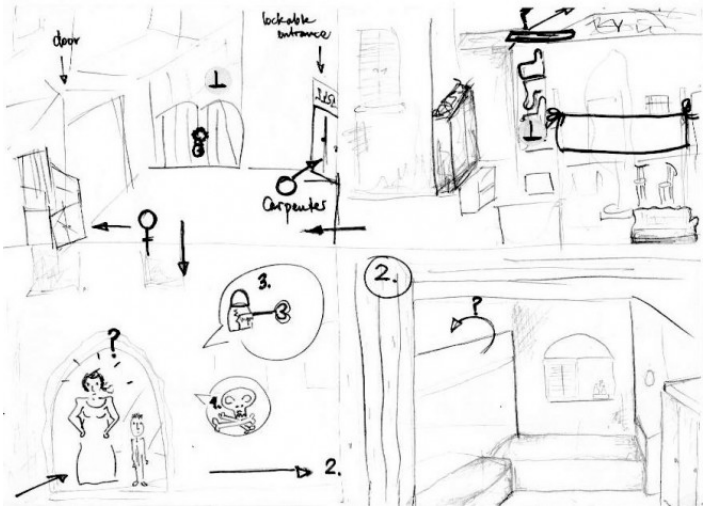
The courtyard of the “Madkor House”

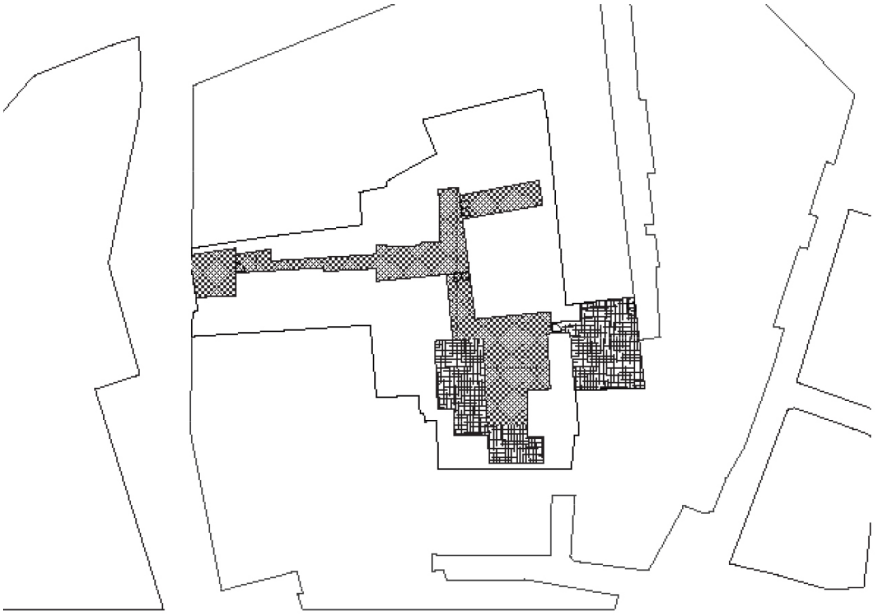
El Sheikh Salah School

Over the entrance of another building, hidden by a curtain, we read ‘El Sheikh Salah School’. Inside and behind the curtain, however, two men work in a small workshop, making wooden chairs. Opposite the curtained entrance, there is another door that gives way to a small courtyard from where a narrow corridor leads to a second courtyard surrounded by old but well-preserved buildings. From this second courtyard another, more open courtyard branches off to the right, a dead end path to the left. It is mainly characterised by collapsed buildings around it. Only one single storey bungalow is still inhabitable and inhabited by a carpenter whose workshop uses most of the courtyard. On our last research day

the lady who seemed to be in charge of the whole building ensemble explained the long story of this sequence of courtyards. The old house is about 130 years old and used to be owned by the head of the Egyptian Senate. He had two daughters who married and left with their husbands to live elsewhere, thus abandoning the house. The property was passed on to an endowment trust and used as a school teaching children the Quran. Later on, Sheikh Salah rented the house for his family and built a primary school in the adjacent yard.
As Sheikh Salah died, his son took over the house and built several new flats in the other yard that consequently turned into a dead end. At some point in the past the school was closed and the building started to deteriorate and later to collapse. After its closure, the building was occupied or rented out to other people who converted it into flats and workshops. In 2001, one of the buildings in the yard was set on fire and collapsed. The inhabitants think that the landlord was in charge of the fire as he planned to worsen the building's condition in order to get permission for demolition. At that point in time, the local authorities still saw the other buildings suitable for inhabiting them. Yet by the 28th January 2008, the inhabitants received an order from the police to evacuate the house due to safety issues. The inhabitants went to court to stop the owner from taking the buildings down and managed to produce a document that declaring the house unique architectural heritage. Having handed over this document to the court on 20th September 2012, they are waiting for a decision to be made on 7th March 2013.



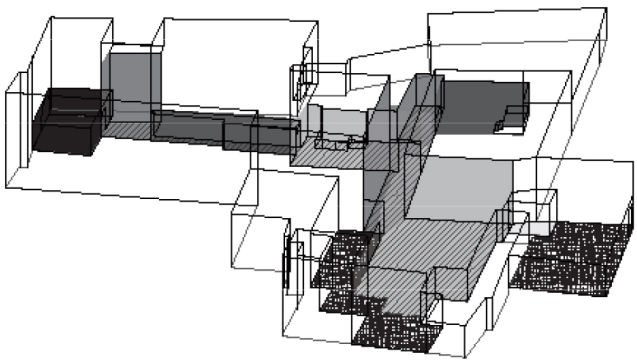




Grade of Privacy to Public:

low

high

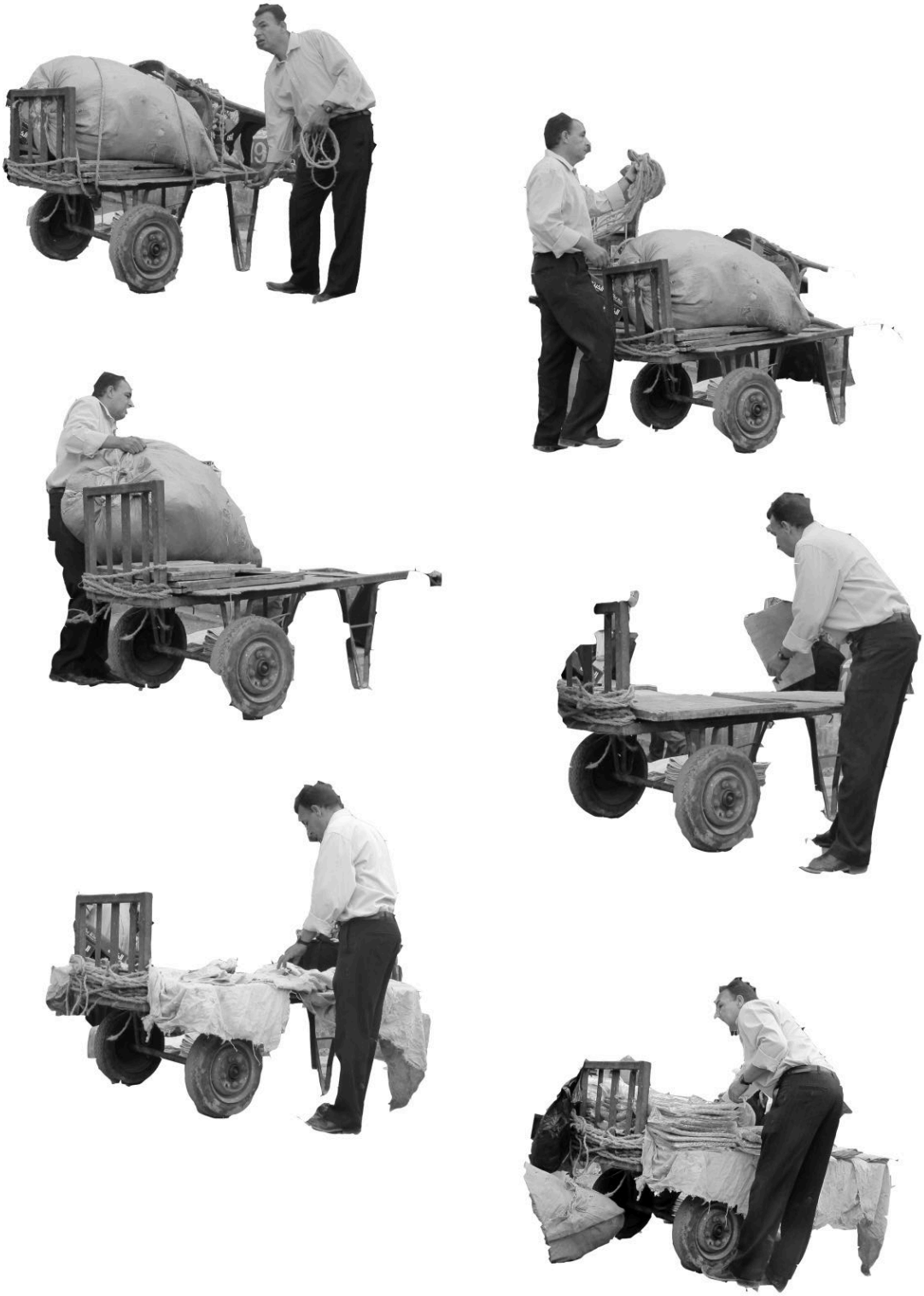


The courtyard of the “El Sheikh Salah School” is charactarised by two collapsed building units.
The perspective drawing shows the spatial borders and the hierachy of privacy.

Themes & Working Groups II: Mobility

Felix Blaß, Philipp Wetzel, Noel David Nicolaus, Yiannis Pappas, Salma Sherif, Ahmed Borham

The focus of our emerging work in Cairo surprisingly overlapped with the issues we were concerned with at the end of the first workshop in Hamburg, albeit under completely different conditions. An article published just after the workshop in Cairo on a blog entitled ‘Cairo from below’ highlights an everyday fact that surprised German participants: ‘Commerce is a legitimate and vital use of the street, as is transport.’ At first incomprehensible to someone from a European country with their strict regulations of public spaces, traffic and commerce, the physical shape as well as the usage of street spaces is subject to constant change and negotiation in Cairo’s historical quarter Al Darb Al Ahmar. In order to get a better understanding of these everyday practices and relations, the group engaged in some intense and enduring observations, interviewed a number of people and undertook a small experiment. The first observations produced a number of topics, which made it necessary to focus on a more specific research question and to change the scale. We had to get as close as possible to the everyday practices and practically explore the issue at hand, so we defined the problem to be explored by the different participants of the group: How do negotiation and appropriation take place on the street?



Setting up a stall



Situation at a street corner

Observations and a small experiment shed light on the practices shaping the street spaces in question. In contrast to European cities, authorities or communities do not physically divide the space between two houses. Rather, the entire space is available for traffic and claimed by passers-by and trespassers by adopting a set of practices. These include sounds such as the horn of a car or scooter or simple shouting, visual signals such as waving one's hands or staring at people to move out of one's path or just claiming space by driving a vehicle at high speed or standing in a spot as a pedestrian without giving attention to the highly mobile surroundings. To illustrate the latter, we conducted an experiment by moving step for step into the street, thereby creating a 'safe' space behind us, which was quickly used by other pedestrians. This worked up to a distance of about two metres from the side of the road, but from then on other traffic participants started to contest our pedestrian usage of the street (see figure 1). In order to create such safe spaces of a more permanent nature, rocks, goods and furniture are used by the residents to block certain parts of the street (see figure 2). Favourable locations for these practices are the blind spots behind bends and turns in the street or gaps in the walls lining the street (see figure 3).

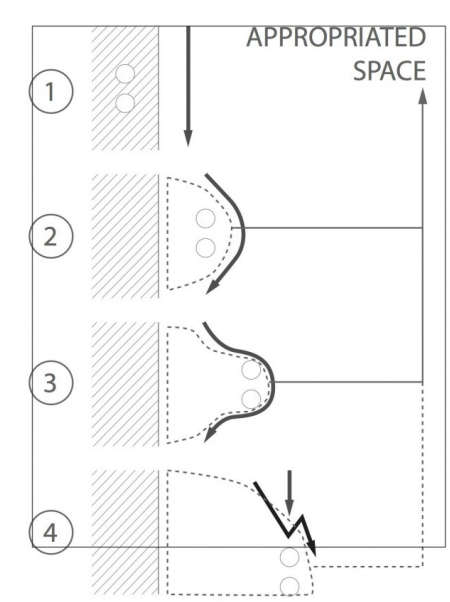


figure 1 Example of appropriation: experiment of disturbing traffic

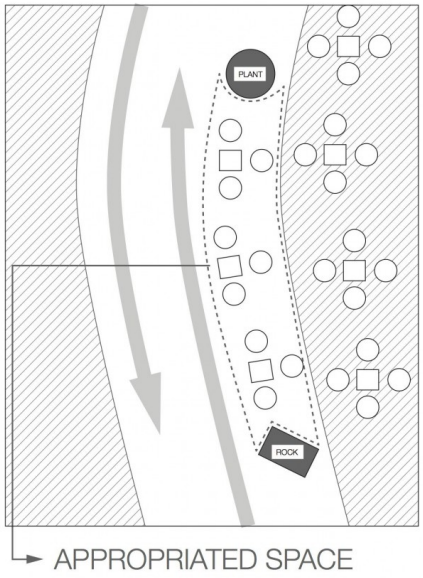


figure 2 Example of appropriation: blocking traffic to create safe spots

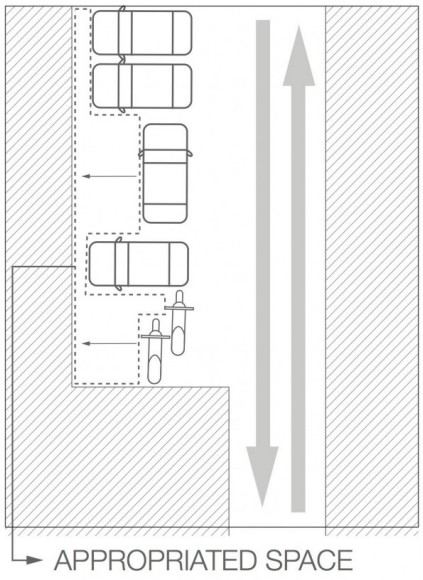
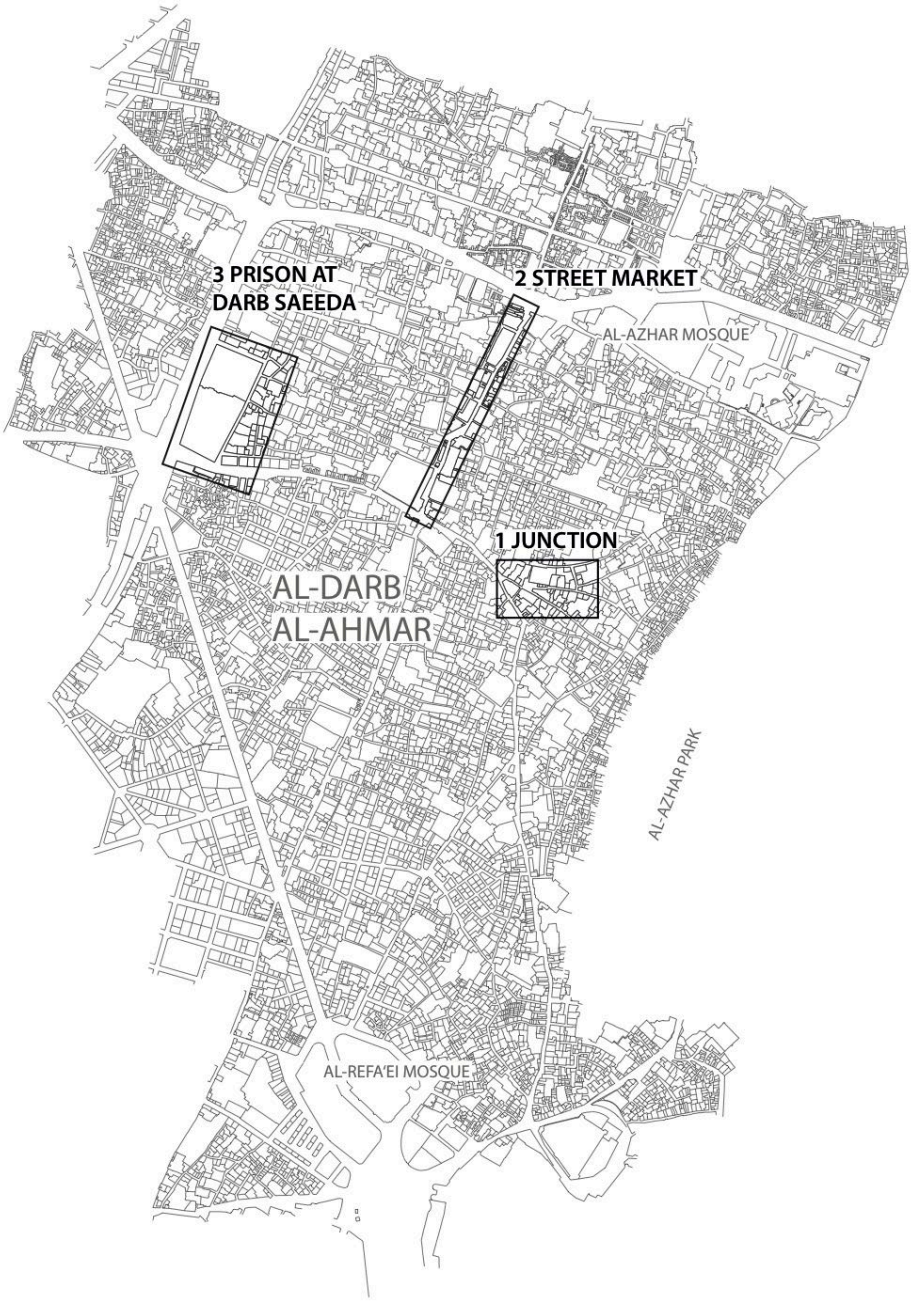


figure 3 Example of appropriation: priorisation

Larger obstacles like parked cars can create larger safe spots. We observed that the apparently random car parking is strictly regulated and employed as a means of creating and protecting pedestrian or sitting spaces. Interviews revealed a concept of the Arabic law which allows the owner of a property the usage of the courtyard and the space immediately adjacent to the outside of a property wall. This concept is believed by some to have shaped form and usage of streets in the Islamic City for centuries (although the notion of the existence of a ‘uniform’ Islamic City is contested among scholars).



Overview

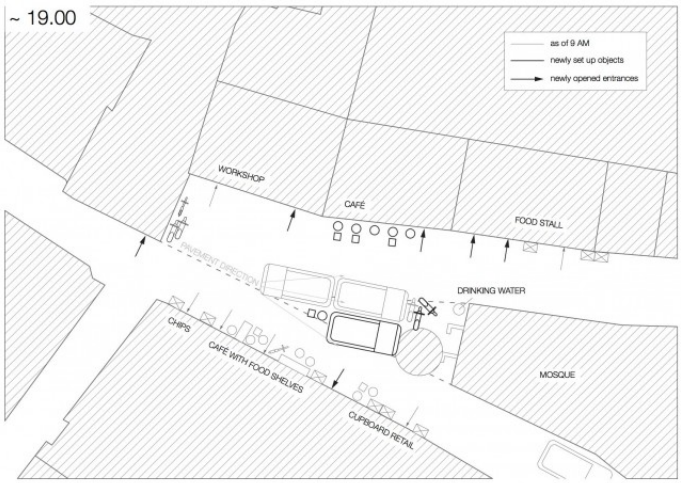
I Junction

Between Saad Allah and Abou Harbaya
Coming from the main road of Al Darb Al Ahmar, I pass under an ancient archway

in search of an island of peace where I can find some rest. I seemingly find it immediately afterwards, when I reach a fork in the road that somehow reminds me of a small square. I stop at a shop on the right hand side to buy some crisps and something to drink, probably unconsciously attracted by the stacked boxes of salty fried potatoes that greet me as I enter this cosy corner of the neighbourhood. While the street life of this little world I just discovered unfolds all around me, I feel like the lucky spectator of a show put in place in my honour: a basket is dropped from a window in front of me, a shop owner readily awaiting it to fill it with goods; schoolgirls with their books and women with their shopping bags strolling through the streets, eagerly chatting; a shopkeeper watering the space in front of his business with a hose to get some relief from the omnipresent dust and, as if to emulate him, another shopkeeper hastily sweeping a small heap of rubbish into the street, just before a wave of traffic erupts from all directions filling the space with motorbikes, minivans, vespas and carriages of all kinds, crowding it to the point of almost bringing it to a halt. Soon the whole neighbourhood is volunteering to unravel the gargantuan chaos of voice and horns ensuing. Right at the tip of the fork, above the pavement, a jovial man is chatting with the driver of a small pickup parked in front of him. The man is sitting on a chair and seemingly enjoying his position like a rough captain on the bow of a ship in stormy waters. Their voices are soon dominated by the pious chants of the muezzin, calling people to pray in the small, modern mosque located right between the fork of the road. Quite a few people follow his invitation, causing a thin, slow but steady flow from the surrounding homes and shops to the small one-storey building. While I slowly leave this little corner of the huge megalopolis that is Cairo, I stop by a blue plastic water bucket to get rid of the salty aftertaste of the crisps, and I can't help but smile when the lights turn on one after the other, colourful garlands adorning the street and spreading a festive air.



Elements set out to appropriate street space in the morning



Elements set out to appropriate street space in the evening

II Street Market

Between Kobri Al-Azhar (Bridge) & Bab Zuweila (Historical gate)
Coming from the main road of Al Darb Al Ahmar and heading north, I pass the gate of Bab Zuweila, with its two towering minarets, just to be immediately absorbed by the busy activity of the bazar. Not much has changed since my last visit 2 years ago, at least concerning the street: it is still in a condition of disrepair, with sewage pipes running all along it, but the vendors have apparently adapted themselves well with the situation, with small wooden steps constructed across the pipes to the entrances to their shops. I like this time of the day, just around sunset, when many of the shopkeepers start to move their goods inside, leaving more space for pedestrians like me and for the many girls and women walking around on the streets at this time. The reddish light penetrates between the sunshades, illuminating the clothes on display throughout the bazar in warm, soft colours. I soon reach the large Al Azhar Road, marking the northern border of Al Darb Al Ahmar, and I stop a while to take a look at the frantic activities going on around me. Improvised vendors of all kinds usually guard this area as their territory, and today is no exception: many different goods, more or less useful and tasteful, are offered here, mostly clothing and cheap plastic gadgets of all shapes and colours. My attention is grasped by a man whose formal appearance and tired looks make me think of an office worker who just finished his shift, an impression reinforced by the pronounced uncertainty and inexperience he shows while taking down his stall. He somehow manages to finish his job.
I wouldn't mind now walking towards the Khan El Kalili, but since the pedestrian bridge burned down a few months ago, the massive flow of vehicles on Al Azhar Road has become an insurmountable barrier even for Cairo's standards, and I don't feel like walking all the way up to the passage further north. So I decide to head left, towards the textile wholesale market and it unbelievably narrow alleys. Here I will get a chance to get lost along mountains of fabric of all varieties, packed one upon the other so tightly that only small hand carriages can find their way through them, cushioning the deep soundscape created by Cairo's incessant flow of traffic: the endless metabolism of this restless metropolis.

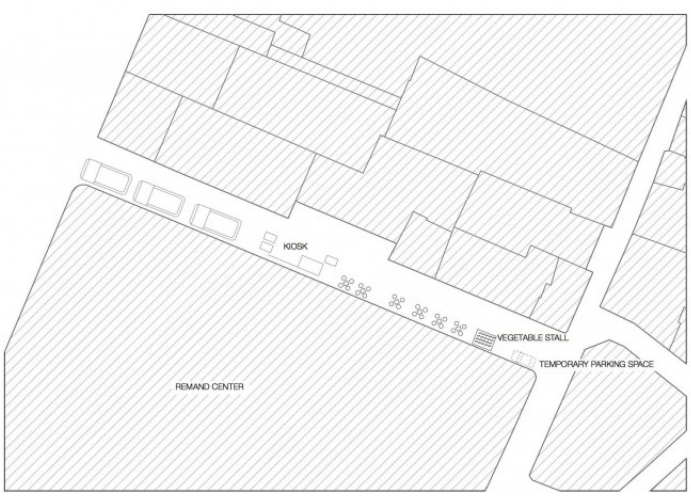
III Prison at Darb Saeeda

At the intersection between Ahmed Maher and Port Said
My mouth feels dry and slurred while I dive through the intense, restless flow of traffic running along Port Said Road, shouting, waving and running to fight my way through the river of steel, animals and humans. The fading heat of the day is still reflected by the reddish clouds of dusk and smog hovering over the large building marking the entrance to my destination, Al Darb Al Ahmar. In front of me is the prison, clearly recognisable by its windowless walls topped by barbed wire and watchtowers, whose shabby appearance shouldn't deceive. As always, some big, bulky police trucks are parked in front of the entrance reclaiming a whole lane of the road for their vehicles and the state authority they represent. Not that the state would be content with that: both sides of the street are lined with carcasses of cars seized by the police for who knows what reasons, left there to rot under the sun. I prefer to choose the sidewalk on the right side of Ahmed Maher Road, not just because it's opposite of the prison, but also because it's lined with cafes, shops and stores where I know I'll be able to find some food. I rapidly find what I'm looking for: the owner of a bakery has put up his stall on the boardwalk, under a large, white tent spanning from the front of his shop to a couple of poles he has arranged on the road. I thankfully stop in the shade to buy some bread, starting to eat it right away while I find a comfortable seat on a concrete block right next to the stall. Just now I realise that while all along the street the car carcasses are parked perpendicularly to the road, here the cars have been arranged parallel to it, creating an island of calm amongst the chaotic street life, whose invisible borders are marked by three concrete blocks, one of which I'm sitting on. Curious and fascinated, I ask the baker if he has anything to do with this interesting arrangement and he enthusiastically confirms my presumption, telling me about how he negotiated with the police so as to be able to move the cars in a way that wouldn't disturb his stall and business. While I reflect upon this little anecdote, my attention is drawn to the increasing noise across the street. I cross the heavy but almost still-standing traffic, composed of mostly cars, vespas and minivans, dodging some bikes, the heads of their riders crowned by huge pyramids of freshly baked bread, to read the opposite sidewalk, just next to the entrance of the prison. A large group of people, mostly women dressed in black Galabeyas, are trembling with anticipation, expecting the delivery of a prisoner. Some of them are holding packets of cigarettes, which they will try to hand over to him while he is transferred from the police truck to the prison. In a climax of shouting voices, ringing horns and confused bodies, I witness in disbelief how the seemingly impossible happens: in the distance between the prison and the truck, the prisoner is swallowed by the mass of people and pushed towards freedom: when the police officers start chasing him, he has already disappeared in Darb Saeeda, the 'road to happiness', where day after day other, less lucky women shout their words of despair over the blind walls to their imprisoned relatives, while around them the many carpenters of Al Darb Al Ahmar are incessantly absorbed by their work.

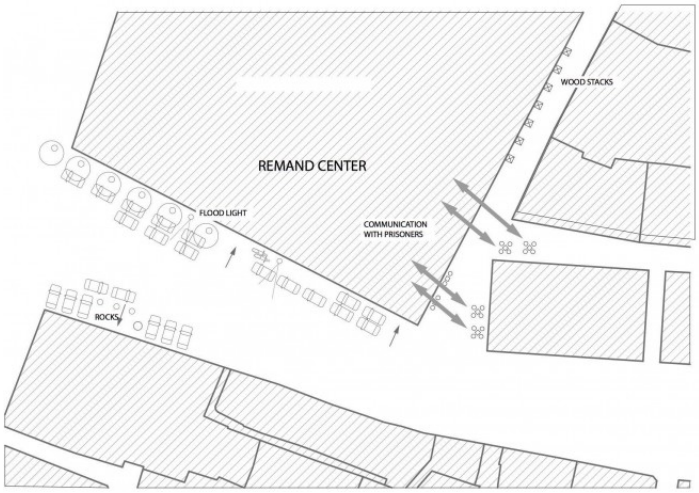


Field notes: streets and spaces around the prison area
During daytime rush hour (12pm-3pm) the two streets that follow the prison from Boursaid Street into the neighbourhood of Al Darb Al Ahmar seem to be in use as follows:
Ahmed Maher Street functions as an exit for the vehicles and the carriages and Al Estenal Street as an entrance into the neighbourhood. In the afternoon (3pm-7pm) both ways are in use for both directions – to get into and to leave the neighbourhood. After seven o' clock it seems that people mostly use Ahmed Maher Street.
Along the prison's wall on Ahmed Maher Street (about 68m) there are six palm trees, 5 metres apart from one another up to the main entrance of the Department of Investigation. There is an array of ruined cars collected by the police in front of the palm trees. The whole pathway on this side is completely appropriated by the authority as a storage area for confiscated cars, reducing the 10 metres width of this street to six metres.
Opposite the prison on Share'a Ahmed Maher Pacha Street, space is also appropriated by the authority for the same purpose in front of the twenty-three entrances to shops and buildings occupying about four metres of the street. Thus the publicly free space of the street remaining is just about four metres wide. After a while all the ruined cars are used as garbage dumps. In the in-between spaces of these cars, people negotiate their everyday practices: parking their own vehicles, offering or storing their goods around them, but people also sit on them while they are waiting and waiters use the cars as surfaces to temporarily hold the plateswhile they are serving customers.
Two big trash bins are placed in a distance of four metres by the wall beneath the main entrance of the Department of Investigation, which always remains free of

parking cars, and between the small entrances of the prison. They demarcate the border of the rubbish dump by the ruined cars up to the entrance/exit for prisoners.
Three big trucks delivering goods for mini markets and kiosks around the neighbourhood usually park opposite the five shops on Al Estenal Street. A small kiosk has extended its stall with product stands and a polycarbonate sheet as an awning protecting its two copy machines, the fridges and food from the sun. Two rows of coffee shop tables and chairs line the street up to where a permanent shop run by a vegetable seller without built structures offers goods from cartons, baskets and colourful textiles.
In the evenings, this place is transformed into a parking space. On El Saada Street or the ‘happiness road’, there is a special way of negotiation with high volume private conversations between the prisoners and their families taking place every evening. The wall with its watchtowers and numerous guards tolerate this communication as a ‘minimum of freedom’ for the prisoners.
Two coffee shops are constantly busy serving relatives of the prisoners. The relatives sit around movable tables that are located across the sidewalk into a small street and between the parked cars. There’s also the more or less ironic image of high ladders on daily display in front of the prison’s wall: these products are presented by the carpenters who take up most of the length of the wall on both sides of the street.



Appropriation of space on Ahmed Maher Street – south of the remand center (prison).



Appropriation of space on Al Estenal Street – north of the remand center (prison).

A few findings

Concluding remarks and open questions after two international and interdisciplinary workshops

'With the right strategy, transport and commerce can co-exist in the streets of Cairo. Both are essential to a thriving economy and a vigorous urban environment, which benefits all Cairenes. Care must be taken not to undermine one success in the pursuit of another' (Cairo from below 05/10/2012).

This conclusion of the blog article sums up the findings from Cairo and sheds light on the failed strategies of banning street vendors in some parts of Cairo as well as creating purely pedestrian zones and thereby severely damaging retail structures in European cities.

Interestingly, the close connection of retail success and passing traffic had already been identified as a core issue emerging during the ten days of research on the Veddel. The findings from both workshops hint at the importance of mobility at different scales and speeds and its impact on local economic structures which in turn reflect a neighbourhood's capability to provide different functions for its residents.

The adaptability and resilience of the built environment as well as social structures can be improved by changing patterns of responsibility. According to Akbar (Akbar 1988), patterns of responsibility are the main difference between the structure of the traditional and contemporary built environments. The traditional built environment shows a higher percentage of property ownership than in contemporary centralised cities where large parts of the population neither own nor control property.

The loss of control – Lefebvre refers to this as the shift of responsibility impact – goes beyond the immediate residential scale to affect neighbourhood and city in their structures and shapes. As a consequence of the extension of residents' responsibility for their outdoor spaces, most urban spaces were marked by signs that denoted a sense of territoriality for individuals as well as groups. This ensured protection from outsiders and increased social interaction among residents. The strong social networks resulting from the continuous process of interaction and negotiation among stakeholders ideally increased the agents' autonomy and freedom of action. It was also seen to have helped establish stronger social networks among agents, resulting in more resilient communities.

Jane Jacobs (1961) argued that we should trust the self-organising vitality of cities rather than traditional ideas as to how they should look like. Beyond this short set of conclusions, there are many more questions and unresolved issues that emerged throughout the two workshops and could not be fully be explored in depth, although they certainly contributed to the working group's thinking processes.

Reflection
Space is the physical support of the way people live in time. Real world time, the space-and-time to which people are accustomed, is the 'space of places', which is unlike the 'space of flows' because it lacks the three elements of
(i) the proper flow medium
(ii) the proper items composing the flow traversing through it
(iii) the organisational nodes through which these flows circulate.

The concept of the 'space of flows' comprehends human action and interaction occurring dynamically and at a distance – effected via telecommunications technology containing continuous flows of time-sensitive communications and the nodes of global computer systems. These information flows connect people to a continuous, real-time cybernetic community that differs from the 'global village' because the group's position in time becomes more important than their place (Stalder 2003).
Lefebvre's claim for a 'Right to the City' involves two main aspects: participation and appropriation. Participation is the right of the citizens to play a central role in the decision making process that contributes to the production of urban space. Appropriation describes the inhabitants' activities to fully use and even occupy the urban space, but it is also the right to reproduce urban space so that it meets the inhabitants' needs (Purcell 2002).
There are four major elements creating the characteristic texture of cities in the traditional Muslim built environment: finaa', dead-end streets, and public spaces such as streets and squares. Finaa' is defined as the space on the street abutting a property, used exclusively by the residents inhabiting that property. The claims enjoyed by the parties of the finaa' differ according to its location – whether it is located on a wide, a narrow or a dead end street – and whether or not it is demarcated by the owners (Akbar 1988).

Urban Scenes
We used narration as a means for the empirical description of complex urban environments. Due to the highly complex and heterogeneous nature of the Cairene urban environment as well as the tight time constraints we worked under, we encountered a certain difficulty in presenting our findings in an organic and clear way. We decided to bypass these problems by adopting narration as a device for representing the manifold impressions we collected during our field observations. As a result, we sketched the following three urban scenes, recreating the subjective experience of an urban drift through the streets of Al Darb Al Ahmar.

Emerging new questions

How can flows be organised in such a way that they do not compromise but support the liveability of a neighbourhood and its capability to enrich everyday activities through the density of street life?
Can ‘soft’ interventions be designed to reduce motorised traffic without completely stopping transit traffic and thus damaging retail structures?
Can retail centres be sustained by pedestrian customers alone?
How can the appropriation of street spaces be facilitated by urban design?
Can residents be given equal instruments in the negotiation of public space?
Is a return to more decentralised retail structure on the neighbourhood level possible for European cities (too)?
Can public transport stimulate retail structures in similar ways as motorised traffic?

Themes & Working Groups II: Adapting History

Hebatuallah Zein Hendawy, Maja Mijatovic, Mariam Waheed, Mohamed El Azzazy, Pia Lorenz, Thomas Kohlwein



After we had been concerned with collective spaces and the question how people from different backgrounds and nationalities interact in collective public spaces in Hamburg, we were now asking one main question in Cairo: ‘What memories and stories do they share about this certain place?’
We originally wanted to pursue a similar idea in Cairo, although it is a completely different place. We thought of choosing a single place – “The Bimaristan Muaayid Sheikh” – and trying to account for the different memories people share about this place across different eras that form the overall collective memory about it. So we had two concepts in mind with our two projects ‘Collective Spaces’ and ‘Collective Memory’. It was all about collectivities and shared perceptions that take place across time and space.



Muaayid Sheikh (Hospital)

The Bimaristan was built by Sultan Muaayid Sheikh between 1418 and 1420; it was the second public hospital built in Cairo after that of Qualawun (1248). It is noted for its monumental scale, unprecedented in a civic building, which is clearly inspired by the nearby free-standing grandiose Madrasa (School) of Sultan Hassan and also for its portal, which is set in a pishtaq, a feature which give the façade a Persian character.
After Muaayid's death, the Bimaristan was neglected and abandoned on the pretext that there was no provision for its maintenance from the endowment trust. The patients had to leave as the property turned into a house for the ambassadors from the eastern kings. Later it became a brothel and yet later a garbage place. In the year 1894, the Arab monuments preservation committee visited the place and prepared a report stating its monument status that deserved care. While the front of the building was restored, the property itself remained neglected.
Ali Pasha Mubarak mentions the Bimaristan in his encyclopedia (El Khetat), which contradicts the previously related claims that the Bimaristan was ignored and bereft of its function. It appears that the reason for this lie is to be found in people's hatred of El Muaayid who poisoned his son (El Saremy Ibrahim) because he didn't want him to inherit the throne after his death, but then regretted it so much that he himself died of sadness for his son.
Muaayid Sheikh El Mahmoudy came to Egypt when he was 12 years old. He was offered for money to the princess who however didn't buy him because the merchant wanted a high price. As he had beautiful features and was calm in

nature, he was bought by Khawaja Mahmoud Shah El Bazdary, the merchant of the Mamluks, and because it was a deal between merchants, the price El Khawaja paid wasn't very high, so that El Khawaja gave him as a gift to prince Barquo q before he became a sultan. His name El Mahmoudy remained as Mamluks were named according to their masters.

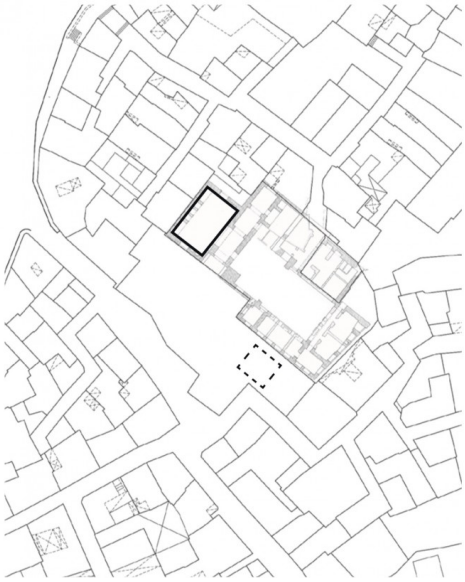


The figure-ground plan shows the high density of buildings around the Bimaristan. The area offers a great potential for public use for the neighbourhood, partly due to its high density

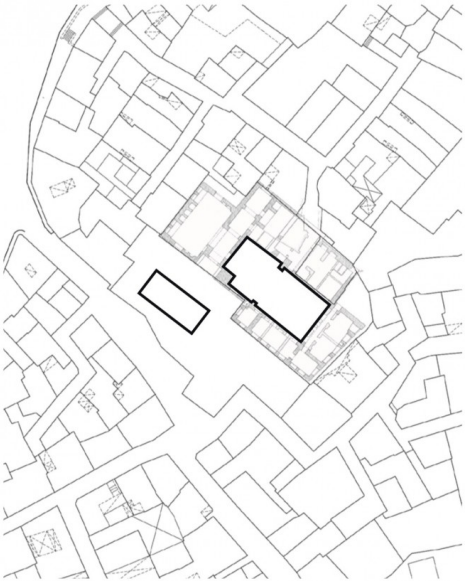
Sultan Al-Muayyad Hospital

Commissioned by the Mamluk Sultan Al Muayyad Sheikh Al Mahmoudi (1412-21), the Bimaristan, or Sultan al Muayyad Hospital, was founded in 1418 as Cairo's main infirmary. Al Muayyad was a usurper of the Mamluk Sultan Faraj (1399-1412) who while imprisoned by his predecessor, had vowed to replace what had been a gruesome prison by a place for Islamic prayer, study and charitable work. The Bimaristan Complex included a mosque, three minarets, two mausoleums and a madrasa (Islamic college). Sultan al Muayyad was extravagant to the point of expropriating elements of earlier Islamic charitable foundations when lavish materials were not available otherwise. Among his 'borrowings' were large marble plaques from old houses in Alexandria and towers from Bab Zuvayle, which were used as minaret bases. The two-story structure was divided into male and female sectors with a timber-roofed middle hall and four iwans (vaulted open chambers)

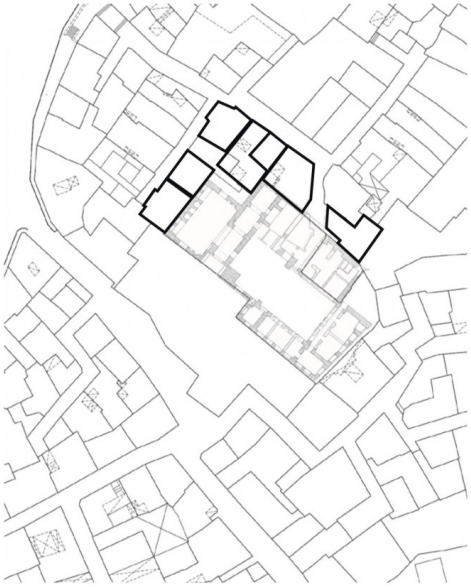
with pointed arches. A scripture describes it as comprising 25 chambers and four secluded rooms for special patients, a pharmacy, library and small mosque. Near the entrance was a sabil (drinking fountain), a school for orphans and a third smaller mosque. The hospital fell into disuse after the Sultan's death.
Today, the hospital's upper floor is missing, a result of neglect, but the main façade stands as a ruined monument to the wonderful proportions and ornamentation of the Mamluk period. Structural stabilisation, documentation and stone conservation are needed to preserve the building.



The Bimaristan was used for praying. There were two places where people prayed: a bigger spot within the building and a smaller one next to the historical structure



Before the Bimaristan was restored and still enabled people to enter it, it was used by children as a football ground. There were two place where children played: a larger one located inside the built structure, and a smaller one in front of the building with easier access to it. This is where now the construction site's entrance is located.



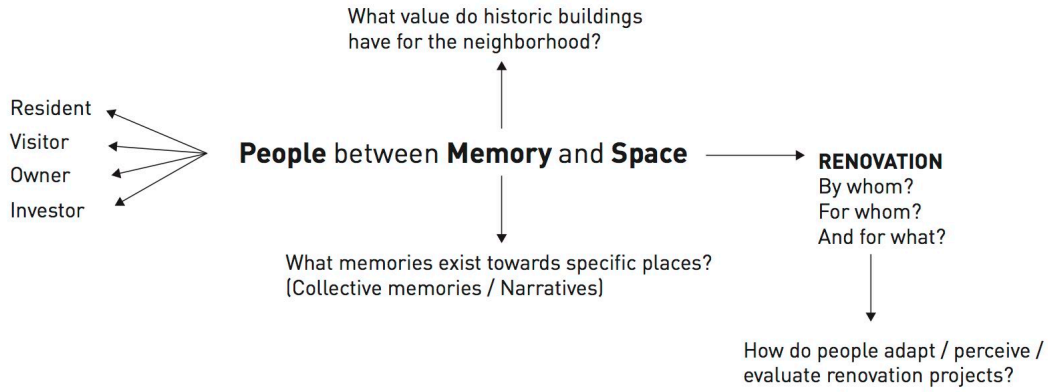
Currently, some people live on top of the northern part of the monument. In the past years, people have moved to the ruin and started to build on top of the historical structure. Although they have lived there for generations and identify strongly with the area, they will have to leave due to restoration work.

Questions

Is the history of the building and its value the most important aspect or is the history of the people living in and around the building more important?
What value does heritage have for the direct neighbours of the Bimaristan?
How strongly – if at all – are the neighbours involved in the process of restoration – in terms of transparent information, the future use(s) of the building and the handling of problematic issues?

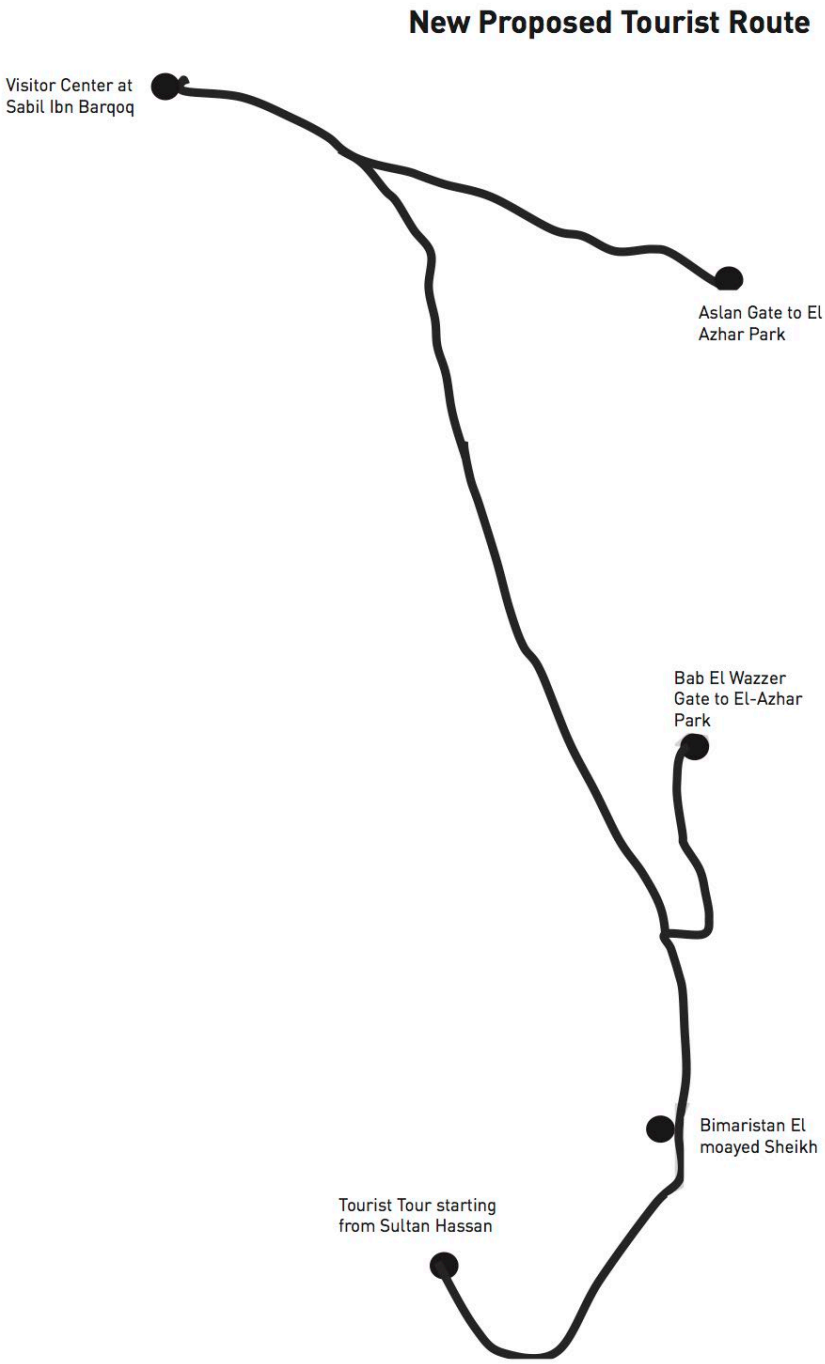
Future Scenarios

In order to get a better idea of the future use(s) of the monument and to show potential consequences for the neighbourhood, we created two scenarios on the basis of different approaches. The scenarios were thought out to illustrate two possible, if radical ways of dealing with current heritage issues.
The first scenario shows the current dealing with heritage as increasingly institutionalised respectively addressing tourists more than neighbours and locals. The second scenario turns around this perspective and assumes the residents' own perspective. This latter intervention is not as stark, but may have a strong impact. It all depends on the respective actors.



Scenario #1 Touristic Conservation Approach

The Ministry of Antiquities currently plans to create a touristic route through the historic neighbourhood of Al Darb Al Ahmar. This will involve the restoration of the local monument as well as regeneration of the streets. The residents are initially convinced that restoration of the heritage site and building includes the upgrading of their residential buildings along the streets. Yet there is no information on official plans that confirm this.
There are already two suggestions as to how the Bimaristan could be reused. One suggests that the Bimaristan could be transformed into an event hall for cultural events for tourists. Many residents could not afford the entry fees should this option get the go ahead, and the Bimaristan would become an exclusive place for tourists and well-off Cairenes. The other suggestion is to maintain the heritage site and add a platform for panoramic views of the Citadel and El Sultan Hassan And El Refaie Mosque. This would involve the demolition of existing residential buildings within the neighbourhood and subsequent displacement of the residents who currently live there.
This scenario and its possible developments raises several questions: what will happen to the local economies? Will the area transform into one that only caters to tourists? What happens to people who may not be welcome in the area anymore? What will happen to the residents who are displaced?



Scenario #2 Telling the history of the Bimaristan

Another approach would start by informing the local residents about the building's history. Most of them may not know much about it and thus not value the building or its heritage. This approach would include, for instance, a cooperation with local artists and the participation of as many local residents as possible. They could draw the history as it is told (most residents are illiterate). The drawings,

possibly a comic, could be put on the walls next to the Bimaristan, so that people would get a chance to learn about its role in the past. There would also be blank wallpaper onto which people could draw or write their ideas and suggestions for potential uses of the heritage building and site. A next step is to analyse the gathered information: what kinds of ideas have the residents voiced and expressed? What can be done on the basis of their ideas? This approach must accept an open end in order to enable ideas to emerge and develop.



Conclusion

The exposure of the historical and current situations as well as urban transformations are important aspects of a city's development discourse. Especially in cities in which history is ubiquitously present, as in Cairo, however, residents' needs and activities within their neighbourhoods need to be equally taken into account. What we recognised through our case study is that almost no attention is given to current dynamics between and among residents and their practices and activities beyond the built environment. While there is the will to include and involve residents, processes of transformation and (re)development are often undertaken without real knowledge of what is important at a particular moment in a particular area. People try, for example, to inform others about their current projects by offering workshops or support, but information is communicated in complicated ways. Due to the fact that most of the inhabitants of Al Darb Al Ahmar are illiterate, written information is not likely to inform them. Another difficulty are the costs that participatory and inclusive events incur – costs that the people from the neighbourhood cannot afford. As a consequence, the inclusive and participatory events are successful and attended – but by people who visit the neighbourhood rather than by those who live there.
We have also found that the institutional side involved in the transformation processes doesn't care whether they are destroying family and neighbourhood structures that have existed for decades by displacing them. The families,

however, don’t seem to protest against their treatment – they simply deal with it. Planners’ priority clearly lies with the expected outcomes of providing heritage on a tourist market. This results in a view over the city being regarded as more important than the preservation of dwelling space in a dense area.
While a simple comic would be a small intervention, it could still create a new awareness of and among the people in the neighbourhood. If shown at eye-level literally written on the wall, this approach of communicating problems, desires and needs takes local people serious without necessarily leading to a solution.
Our biggest concern is what will happen with those residents who have been living on the monument for decades. At the time of our research the engineers told us that they will have to remove the buildings so as to set the heritage monument free for renovation. What will happen to this small neighbourhood on top of the monument? At least ten households live there. The official procedure is to inform the respective residents that their buildings are going to be demolished. Yet contrary to this praxis, their dwelling space could be included in the restoration process. This would upgrade their living situation in the neighbourhood and still allow for the heritage’s potential to come to the fore: as a living structure.
At this point we agree that a closer examination of the local situation and its inhabitants is necessary in order to make a more precise suggestion. In any case, eye--level communication with the local residents will open up opportunities of transforming the neighbourhood without radical destruction of existing structures.

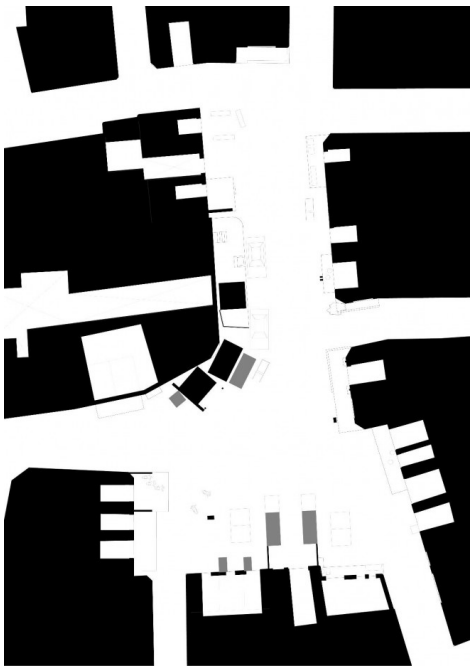
Themes & Working Groups II: Place Making

Max Mütsch, Jean-Paul Olivier, Mazin Karim, Abeer Youness, Joanna Kusiak

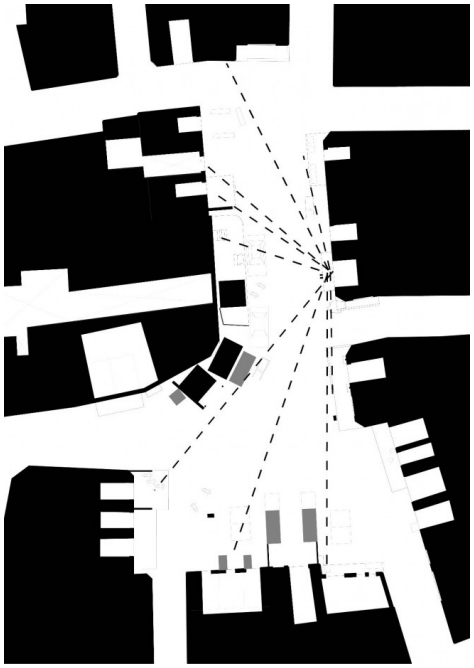
The second leg of the workshop brought the ‘Barrier Group’ to Cairo. Upon arrival, we faced old and new issues. We struggled most with creating a group identity and finding a research topic to study place making and how it worked in the borough of Al Darb Al Ahmar. Finally, we found ourselves on Midan al Batneyya Square and decided to look into the question how the existing physical space influences the behaviour of its users.

Mapping of activity setting

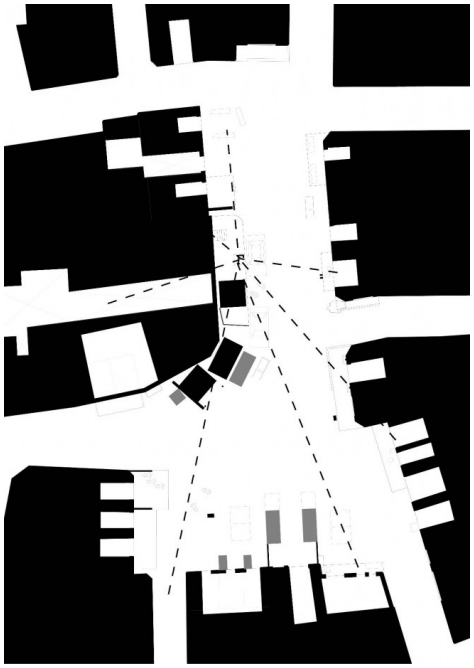
Different networks on Al Badneyya Square



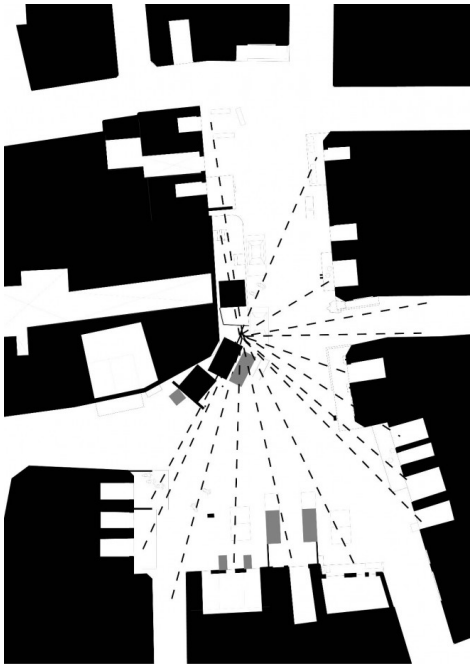
1 Moveable objects (bottle cases, cars)



2 Tea network (the tea house is located where the lines meet, the lines represent the footsteps of neighbours when they go to get tea)



3 Water network (the public well is located where the lines meet, the lines represent the neighbours' paths when getting water)



4 Trash network (the trash collection point is located where the lines meet, the lines representing the paths neighbours take when taking their trash outside)

Catalogue of activity setting

Bread sales

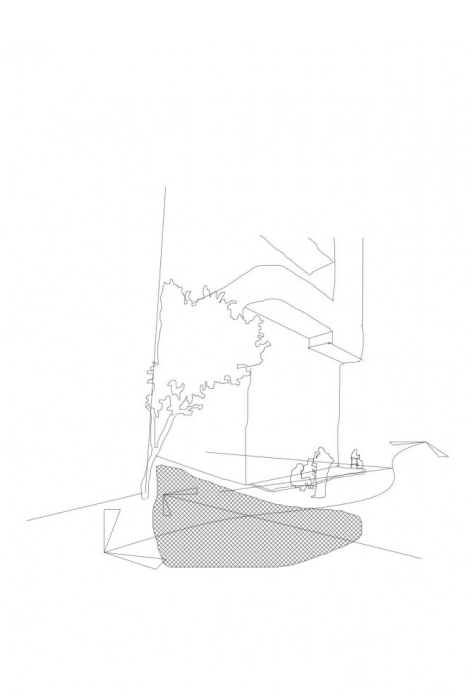
The bread line is not blocking traffic and allows for social activity and mingling to occur.



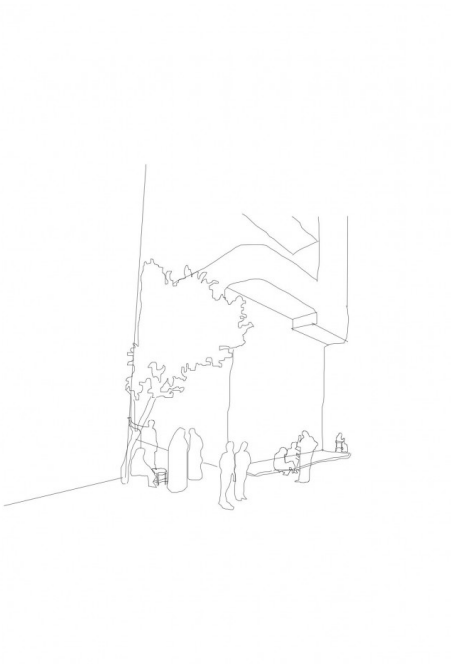
Place



Action

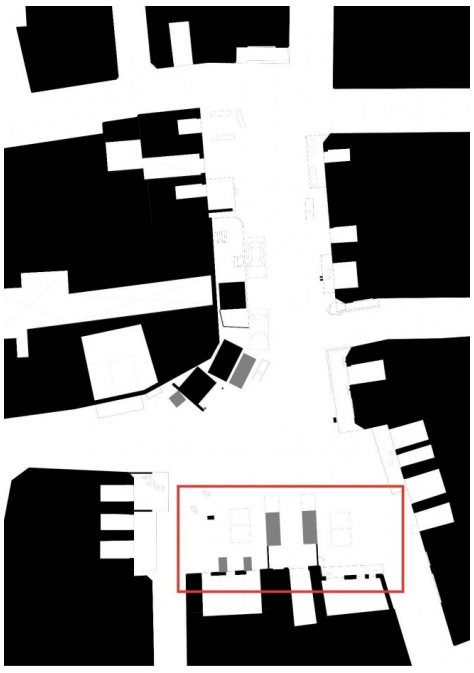


Situation



Appropriation

Box storing
Creating spatial opportunities on both sides and disturbing the flow of traffic.



Place



Action



Situation



Appropriation

Trash collection point

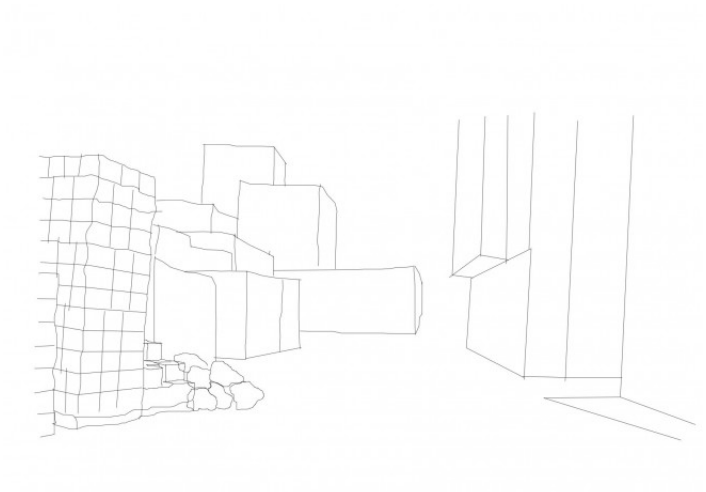
Bread kiosk moves to another location. Cats and dogs occupy the garbage collection point. The enclosure is not suitable for children or recreational activity. Economic opportunities emerge for independent garbage collectors.



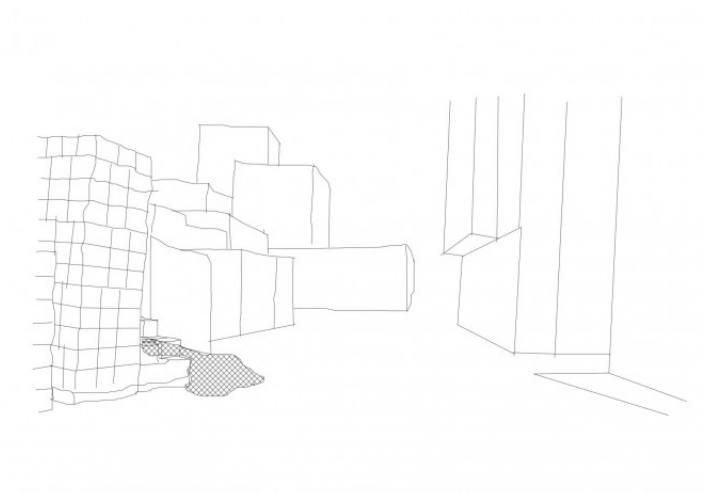
Place



Action

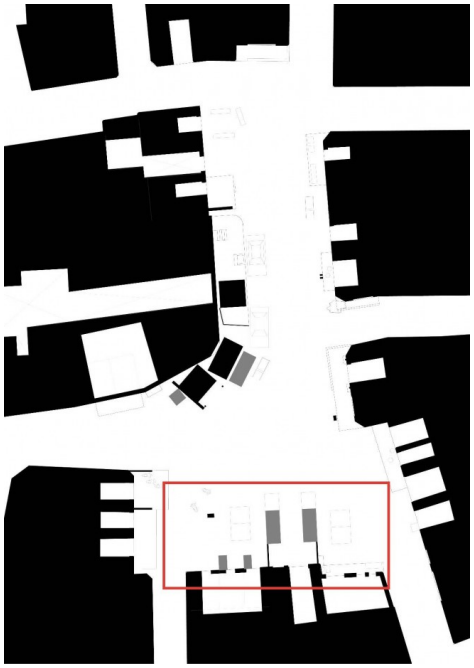


Situation



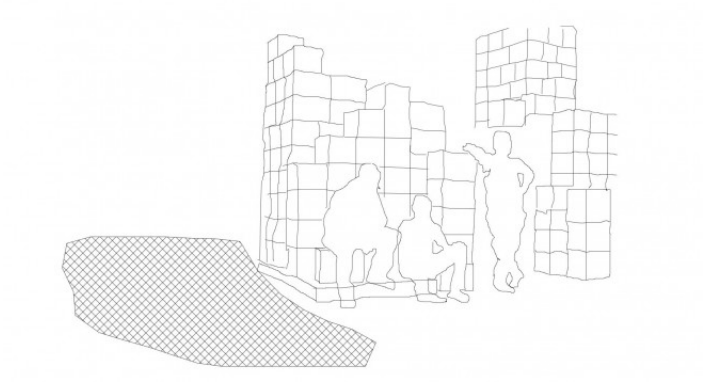
Appropriation

Recreational activity
Space is occupied by playing children. More women appear.

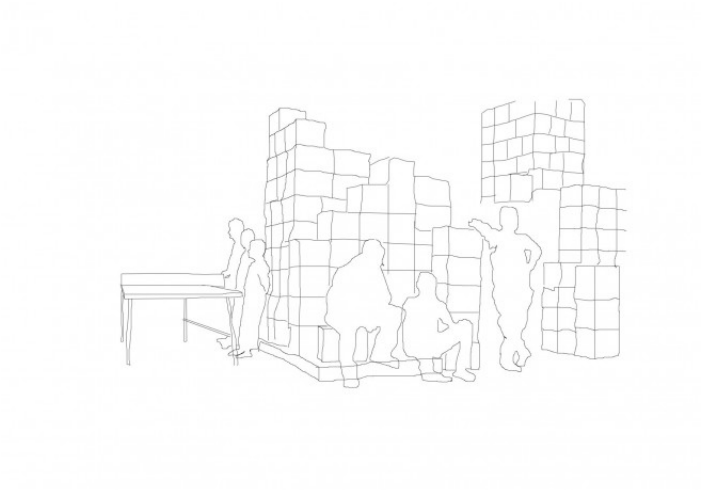


Place





Situation



Appropriation

Notes from Al Batneyya Square

On Thursday at around 12:17, a local robabikya enters Al Batneyya Square from the left side carrying a tin bathtub on his cart as well as a white toilet bowl evenly covered with dust. We note this as meticulously as we note possibly everything that goes on on Al Batneyya Square. Robabikya is the name for a person collecting scrap metal, old clothes, slightly broken pieces of furniture and anything that can possibly be sold again. In terms of sustainable urbanism, robabikyas have always been on the forefront of the recycling movement, long before it became a middle class idea. A quick google search tell us that the word robabikya comes from roba vecchia, meaning ‘old clothes’ in Italian. On the big bazar under the highway bridge, we could probably buy the bathtub off this robabikya for 50 piastas. But more about this later. On Thursday at around 12:18, the robabikya looked at us when he passed us. Our eyes met for a moment and we knew that this was a moment of recognition.

Everyone on Al Batneyya Square knows our names already. They are not completely sure, however, about what we are actually doing. Sometimes we are sitting in one spot for hours barely without moving except for the odd waving the flies away. Only the robabikya knows that we are in fact (re)searching. What we call ethnographic research is not so far from his job. Like him, we go to the places that are thick of people’s daily lives and try to pick whatever is left on the street from their daily hustle and bustle, from their family affairs and business struggles. We collect whatever oddments we can find of the lives lived in Al Darb Al Ahmar, hoping to resell them later in the form of hypotheses or findings, relating to theoretical considerations. Our standstill is in fact a sign of our hunt, sitting still we are in fact trying to follow where these three boxes come from and why someone has put them close to the empty kiosk. Before she disappears inside the house entrance, our gazes follow a young mother with shopping bags. Seemingly bored, we are in fact agog to see the outcome of a minor street fight.

And when there is nothing more to pick up from the surface of urban life, we approach residents, similar to the robabikya who’s shouting underneath people’s windows, convincing them that we are happy with anything they can give us, even if they think it is a ridiculous piece of scrap. Whatever spare time they can

find between work, we gladly accept it to ask our questions. And we take in more than just their words. We collect the smile and the crowfeet on the face of a tea woman and secretly steal the reflection of her golden earrings that are telling us more about her status than she herself would like to admit. Our memories, super-charged like a wooden cart, try to take and keep as much as possible: an old wooden electricity box, now used as a barrier between the trash pile and a kiosk; iron scissors hanging on the wall of a kiosk and the way the seller uses them; a daily calculation of a bread seller. And oh, how happy we are when among the pile of stuff we find we discover something that may be of value for our research. Being a researcher really is about selling the findings to the reader. It is about making the reader pay attention to what we have discovered and are offering now.
So welcome, welcome to Egypt! Please stop and take a look at what we have to offer! There are some beautiful findings. You should buy the story, we can see that it suits you well. We give you a good price. A really good price, just because you came today with an Egyptian. But don't haggle too much. Our stories are all handmade and it took us twelve days to weave them together. It's a really good price, my friend. Today, especially for you, we have a story on offer about a very special urban gate we found on Al Batneyya.

A gate made of Coca Cola cases

If you ever wondered how global capitalism entered Al Batneyya Square, it was through this giant gate, assembled from colourful Coca Cola cases as if from Lego blocks. The truck delivering cokes arrives every day and rebuilds the gate anew. Empty cases are being replaced by full ones and the gate changes colours from red (Coca Cola) to blue (Pepsi), with some individual yellow cases with local lemonade, but these are nothing more than dots across the solid monochromatic construction. The shape may differ slightly every day, but the owner – let's call him Mohammad – always makes sure that the construction remains within the wooden panels.
Mohammad is the main supplier of soda beverages to the whole of Al Darb Al Ahmar. He is clearly the most powerful person on the square. By looking at the way he maintains the gate made of boxes, you can gauge his relation to the residents. He appoints himself as a kind of manager, not only of the beverage business, but of the whole social space that Al Batneyya Square provides. He is the first one to greet and to check up on the strangers. He is open and hospitable to us, playing a role both before us and the people on the square: he makes sure that we know how important he is, while he equally ensures that others see he has international guests. He likes to show off a bit, showing us a glittery violet wallpaper, which he saw in the hotels in Saudi Arabia, sweet as the candy his wife offers us. We buy cans of Coca Cola and take pictures of ourselves holding them. Mohammad has another picture of people holding Coca Cola cans. This photo is obviously of great value to him and there is a touch of proud confidentiality in his voice when he shows it around. On the dusty Square Al Batneyya, some high Coca Cola officials from Turkey and Canada are holding cans in front of the colourful gate. The sparkling smiles on the picture make Mohammad smile. Even a bread seller woman remembers well the day they came, which turned into a big

celebration. A banner of Coca Cola was solemnly hung across Al Batneyya Square.
Standing underneath this banner, Mohammad feels in charge. He makes sure that the traffic runs smoothly (for instance he told us to move from a stone we were sitting on when a car came, and he moved similarly when a boy on a motorbike approached), yet he also willingly tells us about his family and his trip to Saudi Arabia. He has spent a couple of years working as a driver for the Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia, a job that he got through family connections and that allowed him to accumulate enough money to develop his business afterwards. Mohammad is well settled and well off and it is clear to us that he will not approve easily of any changes that might threaten his life as it is. Like the recent revolution. After the revolution, he says, everything got a bit out of control. There were some shortages of gasoline, which disabled the daily truck deliveries. And people do not comply with former regulations anymore. For example, they now build higher than the four stories that used to be the maximum height hitherto. We follow his pointing hand gesture and have to acknowledge that indeed, there are a lot of high-rise construction sites around. You might notice that his building is higher too, but then of course, he is a well-networked person who even had assistance from the municipality to renovate and expand his buildings.
Whenever trouble arises, Mohammad feels he is in charge to take initiative. He know all the shopkeepers around and in order to keep his business going well, he maintains connections with officials. When Al Azhar Park was transformed from a dump into a fancy urban park and it turned out that there was not enough water for the neighbourhood, he proposed that the neighbours use empty Coca Cola bottles as Molotov cocktails and destroy the park. The municipality, formerly unwilling to talk, then decided to build a second pump as an alternative water source. That's at least how Mohammad sells the story to us, and while he is telling us the story, he observes his helpers out of the corner of his eyes, making sure that the gate is being rebuilt the right way.
If you buy our gate made of Coca cola cases, you may want to dig into the following research questions:
How are capitalism and economic power relations translated into the daily life of this neighbourhood?
How do the informal structures of leadership and local power emerge?
How does the fact that the main Coca Cola distributor is located at Al Batneyya Square influence the dynamics of the whole neighbourhood?
How are the flows of capital and goods organised?

Al Batneyya Square – two main actors

After a short field observation and some interviews, we focused our research on two people who play important roles in the daily life of the public square. Through them, we were able to probe deeper into the complex network which covered the area in question. One was a woman who sells bread, the other a soft drink distributor. Both had different influences on the square. Both were influenced in their activities in different ways by the physical characteristics of the place.
The bread seller for instance left her official trading place: a metal box she rented from the municipality. The box turned out to be too hot in the summer and too

close to a public trash collection point – a local hatchery for insects. She thus decided on her own account to move across the street into a shadowy corner with less flies. Through details such as this we uncovered links and hierarchies between the different groups, institutions and actants organising and contributing to the daily life on the square.

Portrait El Hag Ahmed Zuhdy



El Hag Ahmed Zuhdy and his wife on top of their house

Becoming a Coca Cola & Pepsi Distributor
Ahmed Zuhdy was born in Al Darb Al Ahmar in 1958. As a four-year old boy he started working in his father's shop (probably a grocery store). At the age of 30, he left Egypt to work in Saudi Arabia. His father's death forced Ahmed to return to Al Darb Al Ahmar where he took over the family business. We don't know when he became a Coca Cola & Pepsi Distributor, but that he upgraded his father's business into a major soft-drink selling point.

Family Situation
Together with his wife, Ahmed Zuhdy had three daughters and two sons. The daughters don't live with their parents and thus seem to be married. The sons work as drink distributors in Zuhdy's business. Ahmed Zuhdy is further related to Sahar Om Ibrahim at 2nd or 3rd degree.

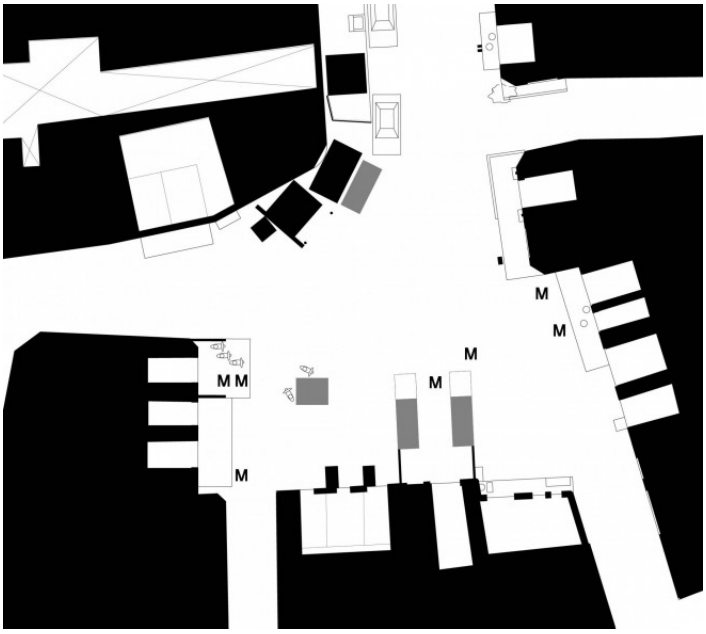
Job Situation

Ahmed Zuhdy is proud to be a salesman within a global network and to be one of the largest drink distributor in Al Darb Al Ahmar. He sells his drinks to 120 local stores – in the summer about 500 cases a day, in the winter about half as many. He is well connected on a local – neighbourhood – as well as global – international corporation – level, as he demonstrates by showing us photos of other salesmen and special events organised by Coca Cola Egypt. When he buys a case of soft drinks, he gets two bottles for free. This deal gives him an advantage over other distributors and may be one reason why his warehouse is (probably) the biggest in the area. The drinks are delivered from a factory in Nasr City, 20 kilometres away from Al Darb Al Ahmar.

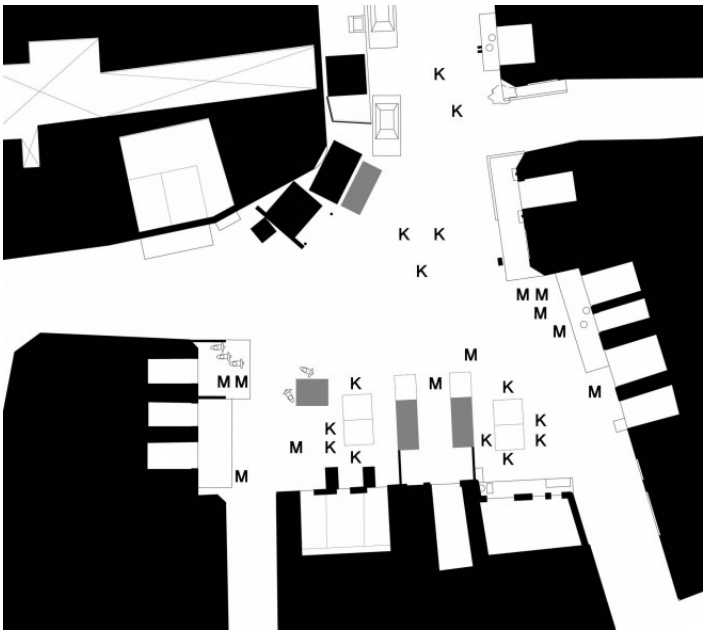
Zuhdy's influence on Al Badneyya Square
It is said that Mr Zuhdy owns one of the biggest warehouses in the neighbourhood. Yet the logistics of his soft drinks business is spread across Al Badneyya Square. He says: 'There are no rules for taking up space – as long as one doesn't disturb the traffic.' Contrary to his perspective, another neighbour on the square reported that Mr Zuhdy is stockpiling the cases for other reasons: The Coca Cola gate blocks other shop owners, which has led to some of them having to close down their businesses on the square. The empty shops have then been taken over by Mr Zuhdy on cheap leases.

Housing situation
Mr Zuhdy owns a two-storey house with a basement. He and his wife live in one apartment, the other is rented to foreign students (for which he receives a monthly rent of 1000 Egyptian Pounds). The house was in need of repair following the earthquake of 1992, an endeavour for which Mr Zuhdy received financial support from the Aga Khan Foundation. He renovated the house and built and extra storey on top of the house.
Clearly, Mr Zuhdy demonstrates business skills. Some neighbours, however, see in him a gangster on the housing market. His practices are described as follows: He searches for houses in poor condition, seeks out their owners and offers them other flats in better condition far outside of Cairo City. If they agree and he can buy the shabby houses, he refurbishes them quickly, while the former tenants or owners leave the neighbourhood and their networks. Since the revolution, the housing market is seen to be out of control by many. There is no housing regulation. Those with money determine where houses and flats are built – a profitable business in the face of the housing shortage. In the light of his own success and the many displacements, hardships and inequalities taking place around him, it seems cynical that Mr Zuhdy himself misses the 'good times' under Mubarrak. 'Since the revolution everything got worse.'

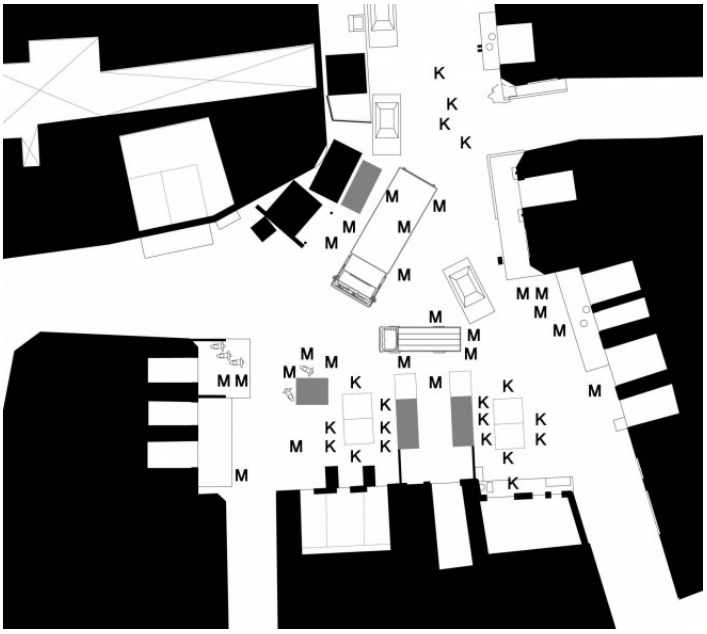
Al Badneyya Square and its different users at different times:



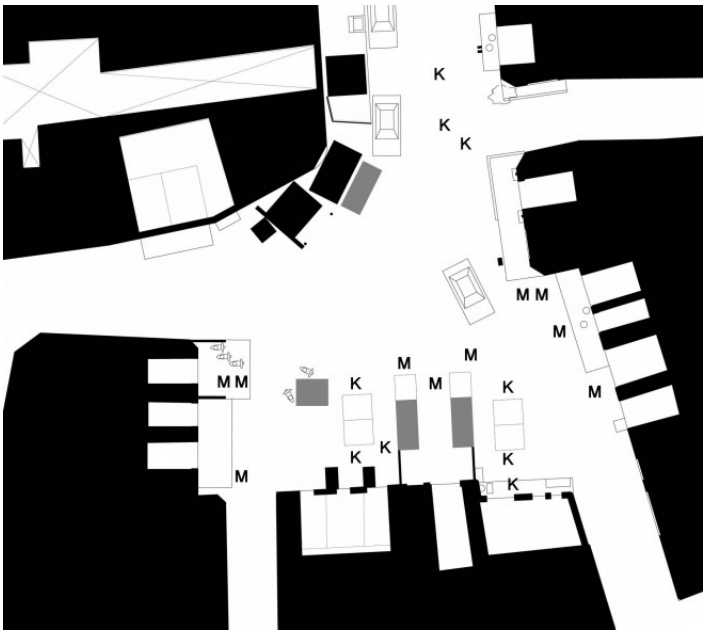
12:00 PM M = male, F = female, K = kids. The grey boxes are Mr. Zuhdy's soft drink cases. His shop are the two rectangular parallel boxes.



2:00 PM M = male, F = female, K = kids. The grey boxes are Mr. Zuhdy's soft drink cases. His shop are the two rectangular parallel boxes.



4:00 PM M = male, F = female, K = kids. The grey boxes are Mr. Zuhdy's soft drink cases. His shop are the two rectangular parallel boxes.



6:00 PM M = male, F = female, K = kids. The grey boxes are Mr. Zuhdy's soft drink cases. His shop are the two rectangular parallel boxes.

Portrait Sahar Om Ibrahim

Mrs Sahar Om Ibrahim was born in the late 1940s in Al Darb Al Ahmar. She received her high school degree at the school of tourism. Her dream was to become a stewardess, but this dream was buried when she got married. Ironically, Mrs Ibrahim never travelled. She has had several jobs and since four years works as a bread seller, a job paid by the municipality.

Family situation
Mrs Ibrahim's husband works in the security business. He has spent three years

working in Libya. Together they have four children for whom they want to provide good education opportunities. Mrs Ibrahim and her children live in her mother's house in Al Darb Al Ahmar. On weekends, she meets her husband outside the neighbourhood in their own flat and returns to Al Darb Al Ahmar during the week to work.

Job situation
Mrs Ibrahim is a breadseller on Al Bedneyya Square from Saturday to Thursday. Her work starts at 7am and ends at 3:30pm. She earns 200 to 400 Egyptian Pounds a month. She doesn't only sell bread however, but plays an important role in the struggle against subsidised flour corruption. This system consists of different levels. On a local level, Mrs Ibrahim is the municipality's representative. She receives ten special tickets, which allow her to buy bread from a bakery that uses subsidised flour for their bread. The bread is cheaper than bread made of regular flour. For each of the ten tickets she can buy 50 loafs of bread.
The municipality prescribes certain rules for Mrs Ibrahim: 1) no one is allowed to buy more than 5 loafs of bread on any one day (one loaf costs 0,2 Egyptian Pound). 2) She has to sell her bread out of a certain shop (a metal box which she has to buy from the municipality for 10,000 Egyptian Pounds) in a specific area (Al Badneyya Square).
Another level of the anti corruption system is the relation between Mrs Ibrahim , the delivery man and the bakery. Mrs Ibrahim gives one ticket to the delivery man. He passes it on to the bakery in exchange for 50 loafs of bread. He returns to Mrs Ibrahim who sells the bread. This supply chain is repeated at least every 15 minutes. When Mrs Ibrahim runs out of tickets, she gives him 100 Egyptian Pounds in return for the 10 tickets.
The municipality only pays Mrs Ibrahim. She receives no benefits from the sales of bread. And yet, she breaks the rules sometimes: a) sometimes all the 50 loafs of bread are sold at one time (for example at lunch time when construction workers send someone for their food, which means that other customers have to wait), b) some people are allowed to buy bread for about 1,5 Egyptian Pounds per head (very poor people as she says), c) she doesn't sell from the metal box. This latter point is due to the fact that it gets too hot from the direct sun all day and that it is located right next to a trash collection point and contaminated with flies. She argues that she doesn't want to sell unhealthy bread.

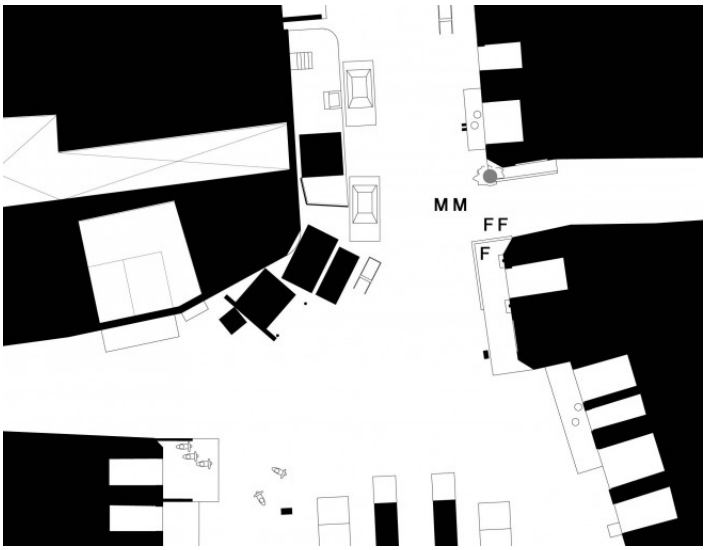
Mrs Ibrahim's influence on Al Badneyya Square
Mrs Ibrahim is an important presence on the square. Even people from outside of Al Darb Al Ahmar come to visit her shop on the square to buy bread from her because she sells it at a cheap price. Sometimes, these customers then re-sell the bread a few corners down for a higher price. Where she sits – across from her metal box – under a tree in a street corner, she occupies a relevant spot where men and women are allowed to meet publicly.

Conclusion – Place Making

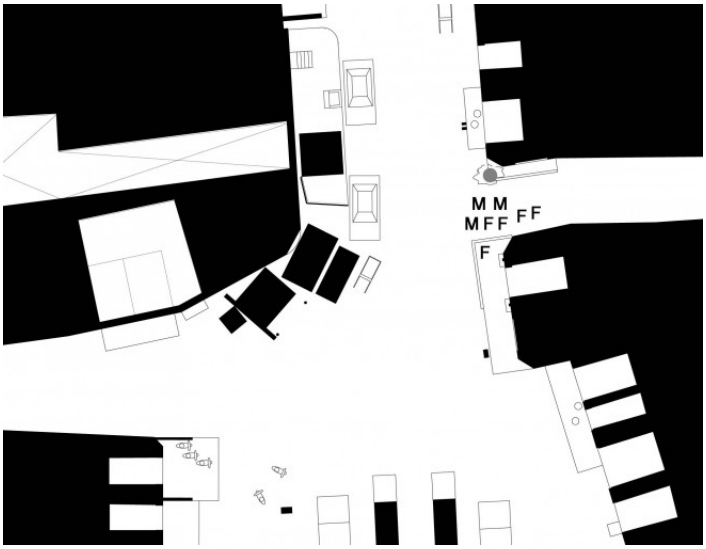
We started with material items that are used in the process of place making. These items – Coca Cola cans and bread – can be found everywhere, not least on

the Veddel and in Al Darb Al Ahmar. And of course these products are not only used to create neighbourhoods. We understood them as an entry point to probe deeper into the complex networks that make the everyday function in neighbourhoods.

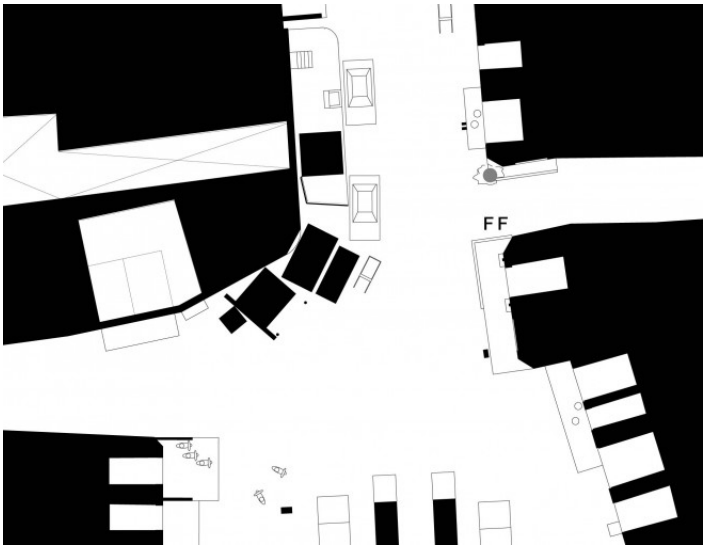
Al Badneyya Square and its different users at different times, here in relation to the spot where Mrs Ibrahim sells bread:



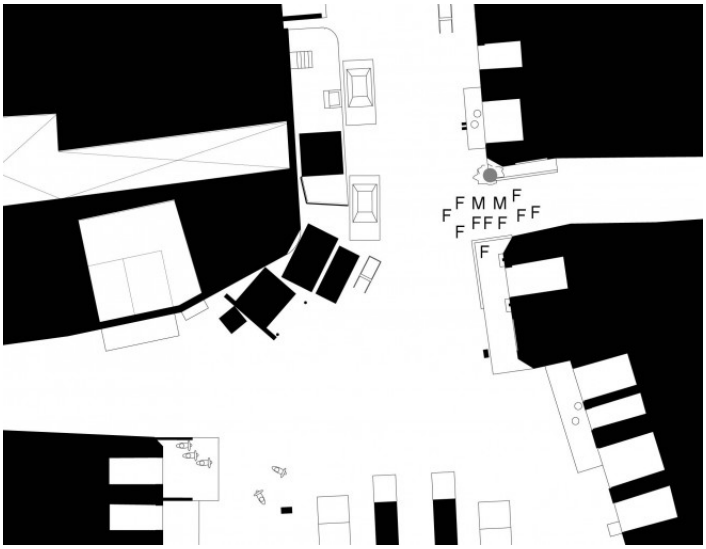
8:30 AM M = male, F = female, K = kids. The grey boxes are Mr. Zuhdy's soft drink cases. His shop are the two rectangular parallel boxes.



9:00 AM M = male, F = female, K = kids. The grey boxes are Mr. Zuhdy's soft drink cases. His shop are the two rectangular parallel boxes.



11:00 AM M = male, F = female, K = kids. The grey boxes are Mr. Zuhdy's soft drink cases. His shop are the two rectangular parallel boxes.



1:00 AM M = male, F = female, K = kids. The grey boxes are Mr. Zuhdy's soft drink cases. His shop are the two rectangular parallel boxes.

Conclusion Part I & II

Initiators

> »As a first step, it was important to develop a common language to communicate with one another and to prepare an approach for working together. The second step was then to actually test the methods that were introduced in the first step. Another step would be to go deeper and ask: What else can this interdisciplinarity do in planning processes than the planning discipline alone?« – Bernd Kniess

To summarise and conclude the two parts of the workshop on 'urban transformation' in Hamburg and Cairo can hardly be accomplished by a simple list of practical outcomes. As we concentrated more on the process than on results, there is a need to take into account a wider perspective rather than reflecting on and listing the topics, findings, methods and themes discussed. In the attempt to provide a meta perspective on the process and the questions that were raised, we can summarise that the schedule was full of events, that the interdisciplinary project was ambitious and that surprisingly the cultural and bi-lingual framework was less complicated as we had imagined. It was a courageous experiment – and it worked.

When we started in Hamburg, we initially had no idea what to do and how to busy ourselves in an environment where not much else could be done than research the area. In hindsight, this was the best start into the workshop we could have hoped for. Christopher Dell put in a nutshell why this approach was so important: 'you got lost, you got bored and you stuck in it.' We all had to realise and experience that the feeling of getting completely lost and immersed in an area was part of the process and an important aim of the workshop. Having made this experience as a first step during the first workshop in Hamburg, we developed a clearer idea as to how we should have conceived the workshop and what it should have been about. Our first impression of urban transformation in action was the Friday prayer at the mosque on the Veddel. We observed how the life on the street changed when the prayer ended. It was the first time that something 'interesting' happened on the main street on the Veddel and we were surprised how the street suddenly teemed with men leaving the mosque and women appearing to pick up their husbands, young girls passing by to check out the young men leaving the mosque. With this impression we knew that we had found a starting point but didn't know what else to look for. Changing our perspective slightly, we realised that we had to work on our own perception and discovered the important skill of seeing things happen, everyday practice taking place. So we practiced proper observation skills and techniques: sitting still, looking out and waiting for things to happen. How we developed our research interest in Hamburg was very different from how we moved on in Cairo. In Hamburg, we struggled to identify what we were really interested in and to determine our research interest. Every presentation on the wall gave us new ideas and almost made it necessary to start afresh. The discussions with the other participants were

helpful as well as confusing.

Our experience in Cairo was different. Immediately we had the feeling of where and how to look, what to ask and how to wait for things to happen or show up. Following our first derive we directly revived our group dynamic from the time in Hamburg. We remembered how to communicate the topics, how to deal with each other and we felt familiar with each group member's way of thinking and personal style.

Our group's final outcome could be described as a development from rituals – to entrances – over thresholds – via accessibility – into in-between spaces. These were the aspects we discovered and found reflected in artefacts in order to get a closer look into how people live and produce their space; how the production of space takes place if we understand ordinary people as 'urban designers'.

Snippets from our sketchbooks as presented throughout this publication tell us a lot about how we actually went about. Our attempts to find a topic and focus on theoretical approaches mirrors what Bruno Latour discusses in his Actor-Network Theory under the processes known as framing and de-framing. When we interviewed Francine Lammar in Hamburg, a social worker familiar with the field for more than a decade, we framed an image of the Veddel that we weren't able to discard – yet didn't reflect this fact enough for a long time. It took a lot from us not to think about the Veddel in terms of the stereotypical poorest neighbourhood of Hamburg, its history and statistics characterised by unemployment, migration and crime. Observing without being led by our implicit and underlying ideas and trying to see things happening without directly judging them in both Hamburg and Cairo was harder than we were initially able to admit. We thus learned by doing, mapping situations, observing performative action and everyday life as it happened in the streets of the Veddel and backyards of Al Darb Al Ahmar. And yet, at the end the question remains how all the details we collected, mapped, drew, questioned and listened to relate to each other on a higher level, in the larger picture? What is the relation between finding out that curtains in Al Darb Al Ahmar's backyards help to create privacy and the political situation in so-called 'post-revolutionary Cairo'? How can we map actants and objects of Urban Design without taking note of the political situation so as to preserve the relevant findings from turning into platitudes? One answer is surely that nothing we found can be explained solely in respect to the term 'cultural identities'. What we started to research in Al Darb Al Ahmar as one of the oldest districts of historic Cairo also has to be understood as resulting from actual processes of up-grading an area in the middle of modern Cairo. When we realised that a majority of people we spoke to are afraid of losing their homes and some people have already been displaced – some even because the owners of the houses set fire to their property in order to build new houses – we were not just mapping curtains. We were observing people in situations of high uncertainty with little money and frightened to lose their homes. Because it was impossible for us to discuss the complex political situation in Cairo and Egypt in detail during the short workshop in Cairo – and indeed because we aimed to look at the everyday life without focusing on the Arab Spring – we didn't engage in proper political analysis, while nevertheless acknowledging its importance. In conclusion, what we feel we have

accomplished is to produce a number of snapshots into everyday life practices in Hamburg and Cairo that are informed both by the specific and local contexts as well as the more general processes and global developments.

»… the investigation of the Place Making group and its case studies on the actors ‘Coca Cola’ and ‘Bread Selling’, for example. If this is properly finalised and worked through, I can imagine that it attracts the interest of many actors in this place. This is how people gain an insight into the local social and economic linkages. This is how returns are made. From this piece of work, a political force can develop. The research is still in its infancy of course, but it is well placed. The group has found two important and significant actors in this place and because of their strong relational proportion – the actors and the spatial setting – they disclosed a huge amount of information.« – Bernd Kniess

Cairo University

Aya Nassar



Cairo University was founded in 1908 and is regarded as the first modern university in Egypt. It is the second oldest after Al Azhar University. The faculty of Economics and Political Science was founded in the early 1960s. Cairo University was first called The Egyptian University and then King Fuad I University, until it was renamed again into Cairo University following the abolishment of the monarchy.

The university's main campus lies in the heart of Giza and is the centre of a vibrant transportation network. In its founding days, it was considered outside the city centre; the campus was built on rural land and still is close to the zoological garden and Al-Orman botanical garden. Both the zoological and botanical gardens are perfect examples of modern western-style nineteenth century green spaces in Cairo that were modelled and landscaped by European planners. The campus itself was designed by European architects and still exhibits the formal grandeur and impression (Reid 2002).

The university's iconic dome presides over the administrative building; the clock dominates the skyline upon crossing the River Nile. Some faculties and other University buildings have been erected later outside the main campus. The guesthouse and the faculty of Economics and Political Science are located on the main campus.

The workshop started with the academic year, so the participants rubbed shoulders with thousands of students flocking the campus for their first weeks of classes. Being accommodated on campus meant that the participants had to adapt to the rules and regulations that all students have to abide by on campus.



Rem Saad gave a lecture on ethnographic methods and shared ideas and tricks as to how to get in contact with people in the research field Al Darb Al Ahmar. She spoke about ethnography as a product and process of description, arguing that a researcher needs time in the field, so that people can get used to him/her. For the researcher him/herself, it is equally important to take their time during field work so that different stories and perspectives can be collected. “Sometimes,” she said, “you are more observed than you observe.” And she added: “Don’t throw away any information you get.”



Diane Singerman in her talk described a phenomenon one can come across in Cairo, known as ‘waithood’. The term is closely associated with the five sectors of education, employment, housing, credit and marriage. Parents save money as soon as they have a son, so that he can once buy or build a home and thus make a marriage possible. “Cairo is full of empty apartments because people buy them for their children to pass on to them when they get married.” She relates this example to the United States where parents save for their children’s education and to send them to college. The term ‘waithood’ obviously refers to the fact that the apartments are mostly empty until the children grow up and get married, which is why a high percentage of houses are vacant in Cairo. The cost for weddings is estimated to amount to 3.87 trillion Dollars per year.

»People are very thirsty to be proud in those areas. We are not giving enough respect to the handicrafts and this is one reason why they are leaving the crafts. […] They become security guards or work in dish-fix-up-shops and they are skilled craftsmen who should be paid ten times more, so that we don’t lose

our crafts. But they are not respected in society, they are not recognised as watchmakers in Switzerland, for example. You have industries, traditional crafts that are respected and even if they don't make that much money, at least they live a decent life, they have a status in society, respect.« – Dina Shehayeb



Dina Shehayeb during her lecture

Work Live Learn

Lukas Grellmann

Unlike as in Hamburg, the workshop participants didn't live and work in one building, let alone in a building like the University of the Neighbourhoods. German participants and organisers resided in the Cairo University guesthouse. It is located directly adjacent to the faculty of economics and political science, to which the CCSDC, the partner research centre, belongs and where some of the input sessions and the final exhibitions were held. Egyptian participants and organisers commuted from their homes and places of residence in Cairo. While this may have affected the overall coherence of the group, it equally represented the realities of most Cairenes who often have to deal with long commutes for assemblies and get togethers. And while this took a toll on the social time participants were able to spend in the neighbourhood together, it was the fastest and most efficient way to tap into the spatial-temporal rhythms of living and working in Cairo. Most urban practitioners usually don't live in the neighbourhoods they work in.

The commute from Cairo University to Al Darb Al Ahmar for the German participants was essential to give them a feel for the position and location of the neighbourhood in the broader context of Cairo. Unlike the Veddel, Al Darb Al Ahmar is not an island and its identity as a distinct neighbourhood relates very much to its surrounding and history. The participants walked through Cairo University campus, Al Darb Al Ahmar Community Development Company, a restored school that functioned as working space in the neighbourhood during the workshop, and Al Darb Al Ahmar neighbourhood itself.



Welcome Dinner at the Guest House of Cairo University





Campus Cairo University

»During the entire time in Cairo, we repeatedly met certain limits. Some of these were visible, some only noticeable. For example, the university's guesthouse was a place surrounded by these boundaries. The first for me was to leave the house alone and step over the campus boundaries where I was absolutely struck by its appearance. Everything asked for a degree of attention that I was not used to in my daily life. Another visible boundary was the fence that surrounded the large campus. Along this fence, there were several entrances through which one could enter or leave the university. Once outside the campus, there was a third boundary: traffic. Roads with 5 to 8 lanes without a crossing light. The trick, as we were told by people, was to establish eye contact with the oncoming motorists and hurry to cross the street.« – Lene Benz



»We had the sociologists doing a map while the architects describe. This was one exercise how it would be because we see it in different ways. If I as an architect do it, I do a map. I would do it with proportions in scale because this is how I work. The sociologist would see something else. So what we did is that I described the space and the sociologist mapped it. The outcome is that we both try to see with someone else's eyes.« – Mohamad Abotera

»We need to have a different understanding of politics, a different definition of politics. What is politics on the local level, on the micro level? What is politics in the informal aspects of our lives? And you see that those informal areas compose 65% of Cairo. The majority of our lives is taking place in the informal zone, so you need to understand politics as it takes place – and here is the importance of this project.« – Mohamad Soffar

»The surprising thing for me was that all those pieces of work focused on the overlapping of different meanings of space – planning and setting the patterns for action meant that it's not really about transformation. We called the workshop Cairo Urban Transformation. But really what has struck me and as I think back to what Christopher Dell stressed, it is more Improvisation Cairo. This is pure improvisation and indeed in its purest form...« – Bernd Kniess

Urban Studies Challenges the School of Political Science at Cairo University

Abeer Youness

The structure of the Cairo Urban Transformation workshop has challenged what I have been studying in the school of political science in terms of content and methodology. Regarding content, urban studies is usually part of the school of engineering or the field of public administration in terms of decentralisation, whereas the school of political science at Cairo University emphasises theory and approaches tackling the relation between the state and society. The effectiveness of the state has therefore been the core question of work produced and studied in the school of political science and it might well be a legacy of colonisation and the subsequent independence process that has led to this orientation. The point of departure in the workshop, on the contrary, is society and the question how interactions among individuals could combat or reformulate the role of the state according to societal needs and interests. The content of the workshop accordingly renovates the essential role of society in forming the state and in defining its regulations.



Campus Cairo University

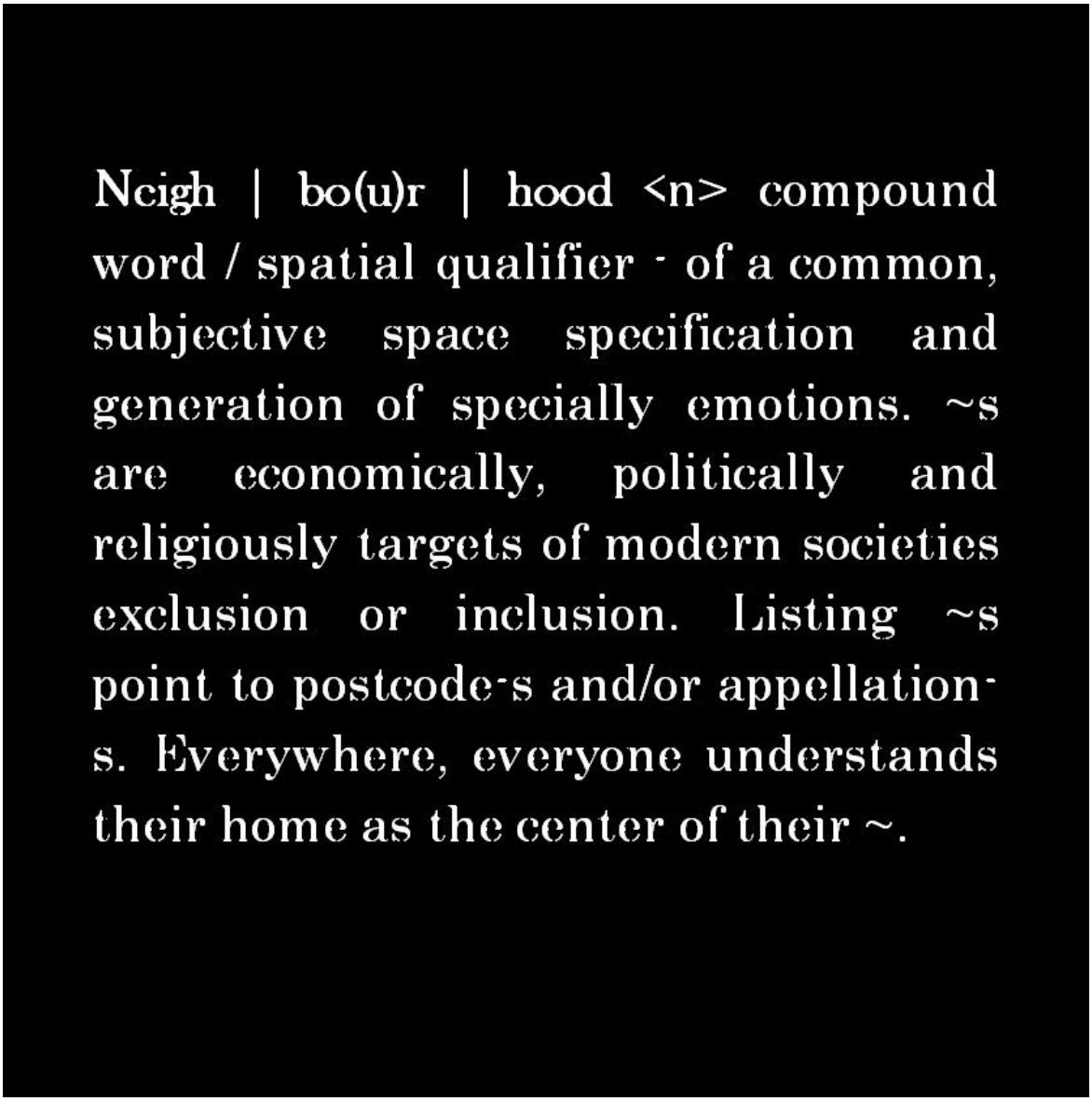
On a methodological level, the school's focus on the role of the state leads to qualitative and quantitative methods as the main tools to investigate society's

reaction toward national policies. Yet, various difficulties have challenged the quality of these methods due to the modest rate of human development in Egypt. Traditionally, scientific research starts with a theory or concept; the researcher is trying to test or apply these theories and indicators to their respective case study. In contrast, the workshop's methodology is based on a 'dérive' that aims to explore the research problem and to define the possible aspects of the case study; the methodological techniques are considered only then and present the necessary means to arrive at answers and to refine the outcomes of the research. Applying the method of the 'dérive' in political sciences enables to better understand actual societal interactions and the effectiveness of national policies from the standpoint of those who experience them. After the revolution, it became necessary to change the orientation of the school of political science.

Ignoring and misunderstanding the real societal dynamics among individuals and between individuals and the state partly explain why the school failed to predict the eruption of the revolution and to provide tangible alternatives to manage the transitional period.

Mahalle Adaptions

Yiannis Pappas



The question begins with what ‘urban transformation’ means. Throughout the workshop ‘Cairo Urban Transformation’ we had the opportunity to research two different urban areas in two very different urban cultures on two different continents.

The first part of the workshop took place in Hamburg where I tried to approach the mentality of the Wilhelmsburg neighbourhood on the Veddel. The limited time available for research was spent interviewing and observing in an effort to try to understand the relationships between and everyday practices of the different cultures, as ‘islands on an island’. The Veddel is an island and used to be a place for ‘Gastarbeiter’ after the Second World War. As such it was popular with foreign workers and their families who made up 70% of the island’s population. For ‘outsiders’, this number could be sufficient to characterise the island as a

‘ghetto’, but this classification is definitely not accepted by any of the ‘island migrants’. The survey of social groups whom we investigated included teenagers, working men, mothers, shopkeepers, retired elder inhabitants and unemployed people. Generally, Veddelers are aware that outsiders refer to the Veddel as a ghetto. Some groups, especially young men, playfully integrate this label into their identity. The high number of Muslims makes the neighbourhood resemble a Middle Eastern country where public space is clearly appropriated by the masculine gender. The cultural borders are crossed, however, and mostly so by children, whereas some of the German community feel frustrated as a minority and treat immigrants as invaders. Some non-German Veddelers, on the other hand, feel that there are Germans who do not want to integrate into today’s Veddel. Nowadays, finding a house on the Veddel as a migrant is almost impossible, as rents are rising and students have started to move to the Veddel in larger numbers. A main inner dispute within the neighbourhood is about jingoism. Although we didn’t interview nationalist groups, graffiti pieces by Veddelers present obviously jingoist statements, slogans and outrage.

The second part of the workshop took place in Cairo. On the basis of the derive and the observations we have undertaken in Al Darb Al Ahmar as well as some short interviews, I realised that a common topic between the two different neighbourhoods in Germany and in Egypt could be characterised by the term ‘neighbourhood pressure’ (mahalle baskisi). The term was used by Professor Serif Mardin, sociologist and political scientist. He claims that neighbourhood pressure is a mechanism that society uses to ‘create’ its members. Through neighbourhood pressure, society constructs norms. Some claim that neighbourhood pressure includes both the secular segments and religious segments of society. Neighbourhood pressure or societal pressure according to Mardin literally means a ‘skeptical eye towards individualism or differentiation’.

Mahalle (ma allä) is an Arabic word, adopted into Turkish and variously translated as district, quarter, ward or neighbourhood. The mahalle is generally considered to play an important role in identity formation in many Middle Eastern countries with local mosques and local coffee houses as the main social institutions. Mahalle lies at the intersection between private family life and the public sphere. Important community-level management functions are performed through mahalle solidarity, such as religious ceremonies, life-cycle rituals, resource management, conflict resolution, etc. Al Darb Al Ahmar used to have a bad reputation because of the high rates of crimes and drug-dealing, hence from a western perception easily read as an ‘oriental ghetto’.



Nowadays, Al Darb Al Ahmar is attracting attention by urban planners, and so does the Veddel island. The Al-Azhar Park (an ex dump and main drug-dealing space) brought the neighbourhood behind the freshly conserved ancient wall closer to certain strategies for urban transformation. Authorities are in the process of persuading the locals to exchange or sell their properties in order to displace them from this fast developing area so that they can exploit the public space and turn it into a tourist attraction. New high-rises stand next to low, old and small houses around the Islamic monuments, reflecting a new outfit of Al Darb Al Ahmar ‘mahalle’: here the neighbourhood dispute is clearly about class.

Consequently, what follows the terms ‘mahalle / neighbourhood’ and ‘ghetto’ are questions: how do people and society perceive them and treat them? What are the strategies of the continuously newly emerging capitalist priorities of initiatives and community-driven transformations of urban space employed by investors and the burgeoning tourist industry and how are they understood by those targeted by ‘urban transformation’?

Al Darb Al Ahmar’s anarchist, self-made neighbourhood construction seems to an interesting subject and topic of urban transformation, given the subventions spent on heritage reconstruction. Veddel’s already well planned infrastructure – part of it from the fifties – also suggests that the island could be prone to exploitation due to its geographical position so close to the centre of Hamburg.
The term ‘neighbourhood pressure’ in both cases and in the two areas studied during the workshop le me to a wider understanding of the external pressures applied to these neighbourhoods in the form of ‘today-makeshift’ practices in the name of twenty first century urban development.

> »I wanted to attend a workshop that actually included fieldwork in certain areas, especially in Cairo and in Germany, so that it’s not like we (architects) work without having direct contact with the neighbourhood. For me it is very new to work with ethnographic methods. We as architects don’t go to study the neighbourhood as much as we did in this workshop. Here, I learned more from a completely new perspec- tive. « – Hebatullah Hendawy

What is it like to be “informal”?

Katalin Gennburg

In 1974, the philosopher Thomas Nagel wrote an essay ‘What is it like to be a bat?’ The essay discusses the basic questions posed by cognitive philosophy. Nagel wanted to point out that even if we are able to explain scientifically how the mind works, we are not able to explain scientifically the feeling of being someone or something. His arguments started off a debate that began by referring to the second Kantian question: ‘What am I able to know?’ This was the definite moment of the birth of cognitive philosophy.

The crux of Nagel’s question, for me, is that he makes the point that if we speak about someone or something, we have to be aware that we cannot look through the eyes of the scientific object. By asking the Nagel-question, I’m trying to figure out the question of WHO speaks about WHAT. The time in Cairo gave me an entirely new perspective of how to catch phenomena that are scientifically interesting. The ethnographic methods we used (mapping, drawing, interviews) gave us the opportunity to explore people’s habits and practices in Cairo. By expecting innumerable differences between what people do in Cairo and Hamburg, I was surprised to find them but equally see them in relation – to what people do everywhere in the world. As we know from Henri Lefebvre, space is not something given from above, i.e. people produce space. What we discovered in Cairo and in Hamburg was as simple as that. It’s the people who produce space and make the city tick.

From this point of view, there is a big gap between what science tells us about practice and what people actually do. Here we are faced with a similar question and scientific problem that cognitive philosophy tries to formulate by asking ‘What is it like to be a bat?’

During our stay in Cairo, Professor Hans Harms, architect and city-planner, gave a lecture on ‘informal housing’. For me, this lecture reminded me of the question this essay poses. The title of his lecture raised my expectation to hear a clear definition of ‘informality’, including crucially the critical questions of ‘WHO invented the term?’ and ‘WHO uses the term and what for?’ Calling to mind the tradition of critical theory and the call for discourse analysis that, amongst others, Michel Foucault posed, these questions seemed important enough to be answered. This is my attempt to formulate my initial thoughts about the term ‘informality’, a term obviously used in scientific explanations and descriptions of phenomena that can be observed in ‘countries of the global south’. I’m grateful for the opportunity to reflect on this topic as a result of the great workshop I was so lucky to attend.

First of all, it is important to not ignore that fact that more than one third of the world’s population live under inhuman conditions without access to even the minimum standard of living as defined by the United Nations. This essay thus

deals with an epistemological question, i.e. the question of where the term 'informality' comes from in general and where it leads us towards in discourses about 'informal housing' in particular and about mega cities in general.

The 'stability pact for south-eastern Europe' was made after around eight years of debate between countries like Macedonia and Serbia and their partners, i.e. the European Union and the World Bank. Regarding the question of WHO uses the term and for what, it is important to bear in mind that both actors, the EU and the World Bank, are powerful players with strong political interests generally not considered to be interests of social balance but of holding power. Terms from a specific political background cannot be used without knowing and acknowledging their particular background. In this sense, we are engaged with politics when using political terms. The idea to connect the language we are speaking to the thoughts we are thinking goes back to Friedrich Schiller. This interrelation had a massive impact on Victor Klemperer and his book 'Lingua Tercii Imperii' about the language used by fascists in the Third Reich. Klemperer tells us that, for instance, 'fanaticism' was used in different ways by fascists than it was used and understood before – so that nowadays we need to question in what way people use and understand the word. It is easy enough to see this interrelation and when trying to describe phenomena in scientific terms we definitely need to question what we are speaking about and where the description, the adverbs, the terminology originates. As we know from Theodor W. Adorno and the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, it isn't theory that reflects reality. It is reality that builds theory and therefore social scientists and people in general have to understand theory and reality in a dialectical manner, as dialectically interrelated and constitutive of one another.

Regarding the term 'informal housing', we don't just have a term describing objectively what we see and what 'reality' (as far as it exists in that singular sense) looks like. My argument is that we are dealing with a term that presents something like the needle's eye into the entire topic of the 'world economy and its actors'. Postcolonial theory thus might provide a bundle of extra arguments concerning the question of WHO speaks about WHOM and WHAT in western European social science.

Gayatri Spivak wrote about the term 'the subaltern' referring to those people who still live in a present day post-colonial world. The subaltern are not heard because they are seen to not be able to take part in hegemonic discourse. The ways of knowing, understanding and reasoning must be subordinated to the knowledge, understanding and rational reasoning that the western world dictates. If the 'western world' speaks about sweat shops and industrialisation in the countries of the 'global south', the subaltern would possibly not reflect their situation of poverty and exploitation themselves, but rather reflect their situation through the eyes of those western people who legitimate their world because of its rational necessity in a capitalist system. Isn't even the idea of determining the situation of subjects somehow different from the societal location of those who determine the problem? What functions do such identifications have?

I argue that the 'informality discourse' refers to modernist western ideals of city

planning in general that are supported by ideals of social order and regulation policy. These ideals have a long tradition particularly in Germany, but can be observed in every European city and country in the practices of urban policy and their norms of housing policies. This tradition includes different periods of shaping and re-shaping cities, which points to certain contradictions. Aesthetic ideals in western European urban planning, I argue, are the voice of normative standards. There is nothing 'natural' in those standards and their long history. What Georg Simmel called the 'objective culture' and what was defined as the 'ornament of the masses' by Siegfried Kracauer in the early 20th century can be understood as metaphors for hegemonic ideals that have a long history and are fundamental for our general understanding. For example, what we know as one urban phenomenon – the battle of (high) culture and counter culture including the regeneration of inner city districts, graffiti and street art, represents the battle about what society calls 'culture' and what is therefore seen as hegemonic or dominant cultural paradigms.
In addition, Henri Lefebvre coined the term 'harmonic beauty'. For him, 'harmonic beauty' works as a 'common language' that can be understood as a 'code' or 'coded language' and builds the aesthetic of the modernist city in Western Europe. Lefebvre argues that this 'coded language' provides a 'holistic space' comprised of an ensemble of the fine arts. Cities like Basel or Heidelberg are regenerating their historical inner cities so as to imagine the old European city based on an understanding that these are objectively cultural (Simmel) or harmonically beautiful (Lefebvre). The 'ornament of the masses' (Kracauer) still works today and continues to inform urban planning's ideological background. There is no space to go into this normative aesthetics' history here, but a significant aspect can be traced back to the idea of the public good in Germany that was based on the idea of social order and justice ('gute Policey'). This understanding of social order is to this day a matter of class and served elites to secure their property.

When I arrived in Hamburg to attend the first part of the workshop in Wilhelmsburg, I crossed the main station's court. Hamburg is known all over Germany for playing classical music played around the station in order to avert the unwanted. It is one voice of this idea of social order. I argue: classical music against homeless people and against social disorder is an heir of 'harmonic beauty' and 'objective culture'.



Following this somewhat rambling journey to the classics of urban sociology and philosophy, I argue that the term ‘informal’ is an expression of the Western European ideal of social order policy and discipline, and of the German ‘gute Policey’ in particular, that directly leads to the era of urban planning which is known today as the era of great plans. Both Haussmann’s re-shaping of Paris and Hobrecht’s new order of Berlin are prominent examples of this tradition. Both were stepping up to create a city of social order and regulation and to structure and control the uncontrolled bodies of the modern metropolis. Urban studies today are still clad in those very same clothes, working according to the very same tradition, using the very same vocabulary. My background is in philosophy of science and I am concerned with phenomena by asking the questions of an urban historian. My point is to argue for an acknowledgement of continuities and a worldview that considers scientifically determined phenomena as always already related to one another. I therefore call for urban studies from the so-called ‘Western world’ to look at the so-called ‘countries of the global south’ with the eyes of the people who were first geographically and then economically colonised and are still colonised today. How would the ‘subaltern’ (Spivak) conceptualise ‘informal housing’ and how do they need to speak about ‘informal housing’? What is it like to be ‘informal’?

One Application – Three Workshops

Sally Ashour

‘One application – two workshops!’ These words caught my attention as I read them on a poster in my faculty. I read the call for proposals, liked the idea of working together in interdisciplinary teams, made the decision to participate, submitted the required documents, waited for an answer and attended the two workshops. Afterwards, I reflected what I had experienced over the course of the two workshops and realised that they were quite different than any other workshop I had attended. Holding two parts of a workshop in two different places, countries, environments, cultures was a very challenging idea.

The first part of the workshop in Hamburg started unofficially late a night when I found myself in front of an unexpected university building that, to me, looked more like a home. When I stepped inside, I found myself in front of a huge table in the middle of what one would think to be the main hall, which turned out to be the kitchen. There were various large spaces, a small library, a number of chairs and small tables arranged for us to have dinner. The dining room later turned out to also function as work space where we would have lectures, workshops, group work and discussions. This was the UdN, a place that made me feel I was in a house and at home; and in spite of the fact that we only just introduced ourselves to the other workshop participants, the UdN and the way it was arranged managed to break the ice in less than a day, which again impacted positively on our work.

The second workshop in Cairo continued what had been started in Hamburg; and although we didn’t live and work in the same space in Al Darb Al Ahmar, the organisers managed to overcome the congested traffic problems and expected unpunctuality.

Personally, there was a third workshop that ran parallel to the Hamburg and Cairo workshops for me. As I read the call for proposals, I stumbled across the sentence: ‘The workshops are rather seen as a process than a final product, with participants working together in interdisciplinary teams and developing their approach.’ I had doubted this was practically possible, but discovered at the end of the two workshops discovered that following the methodology offered in lectures, our working groups (comprised of different disciplines) found the freedom to choose our own research question and effectively worked in a way that resolved all my initial doubts. And although the workshop was designed as work in progress and in fact made it possible to concentrate on the process rather than a final product, the final result appeared to be so much more presentable, efficient and useful, both for academic research and authorities concerned with ‘urban transformation’. Such workshops, I think, should be conducted before setting any National Research Agenda, and when recommendations are prepared for politicians to advise them on actions to be taken.

My experience can thus be summarised as ‘one application – three workshops’.

Reflection of the Process

Initiators

‘Learning from each other’ was a guiding principle

A central idea and objective of the workshop was to work together when approaching the topic of ‘neighbourhood’ from different disciplines. While the first workshop in Hamburg served to create mutual understanding and learn a common language, the second workshop in Cairo provided the opportunity to test and apply the methodological approaches and practices. Upon reflection, this transfer of knowledge and the room for individual experiences was essential for the negotiation of cultural and disciplinary understandings and values. Both workshops were designed to provide for a holistic experience of learning from each other: not only were both workshops designed to include group work in interdisciplinary teams, especially the first part in Hamburg provided the means to settle together in the University of the Neighbourhoods (UdN) and explore ‘neighbourhood’ from the inside out, so to say. While thus at first an overall aim of the workshop series, ‘learning from each other’ quickly turned into one of our guiding principles, influencing not only the formulation of our aims, but also our approaches (dinner discussions, working on the wall, sharing information).
Throughout the first workshop on the Veddel, we presented to and discussed our work with experts from the university and the Wilhelmsburg District. As different stages of the presentations and ongoing research results from all groups remained on the wall, it became possible to trace and document the actual processes of knowledge production and mediation, even to outsiders and guests. This technique also allowed to show how perspectives, specific details and methods travelled between workshop members, alongside the more mundane and everyday, yet equally relevant and important experiences that were made as roommates and workshop colleagues sharing one place to live and work. Some participants remarked that the intense sharing experience was particularly worthwhile and effective: the groups were excited to see each other present their observations and hear what kind of situations they had discovered, explored and witnessed. ‘Learning from each other’ also meant to learn from each others’ perception and perspectives, to see how others had approached a specific situation, to hear someone’s or a group’s explanation and viewpoints. This exchange resulted in a broadening of individual research perspectives and sharpened the participants’ methodological knowledge. Because the group as a whole lived and worked in the same area, participants were enabled to relate to and comprehend specific perspectives not only methodologically but also thematically and in relation to the field.

Two workshops in two places

The two legs of the workshop enabled organisers and participants alike to get to know each other, develop a common language and exchange methodological approaches in Hamburg and prove deeper into the interdisciplinary exchange over research interests and fields in Cairo. If the first workshop was more of a warming up exercise in terms of the depth of the actual projects, it was essential in terms of team building and exchanging of understandings. The Hamburg convention was also the first personal meeting between the organisers from Hamburg and Cairo. As the theme for our workshops – neighbourhoods – demanded the presence of different disciplines, it was vital to introduce and get to know each other so as to provide opportunities for discussions and exchanges on both organisational and methodological levels. Coming from two different institutions and different cultural backgrounds meant that organising the workshops became an intercultural and interdisciplinary exercise which had to be communicated among the organising group and between us and the participants.

Fieldwork sites

Although as organisers, we determined the place where the participants would work and stay, we didn't chose the exact research fields. The themes and places of interest were chosen by the individual working groups during or following their dérives on the Veddel. The four groups and their foci developed through continuous rounds of presentations on the wall and discussions, both formal table sessions and informal evening conversations over dinner. The research interests from Hamburg were then transferred to Cairo and further developed. As organisers, we simply facilitated the working process. The participants developed their topics and interests on their own with guidance from experts and supportive university staff who provided feedback throughout the process.

The organisation

The organisation of the two workshops rested primarily in the hands of students. Each organising group was responsible to prepare the local workshop with regular mutual updates, so that the two workshops would work as a whole. Each organising team split up into subgroups responsible, for instance, for accommodation, the programme and finances, so that coordinating the teams and weaving the different strands together remained as crucial as updating Prof. Bernd Kniess, the financial department of HafenCity University in Hamburg and the DAAD in Germany and Cairo. Keeping the various communication loops alive and coordinated turned out to be an important intercultural experience in its own right.

The hospitality concept in Hamburg

The workshop in Hamburg took place in and around the University of the Neigh-

bourhoods (UdN). The participants and some of the organisers lived and worked there, using the building to its full extent. The UdN's infrastructure invited participants to get to know each other not only professionally through group work, but also personally as bedrooms were shared and meals prepared and eaten together. The open and flexible architecture allowed for the lecture hall to transform into the dinner hall and to host a concert after dinner, only to be transformed again into a room for table top sessions with experts and university staff supporting and discussing with the individual working groups on the next day. While prepared by the hospitality team, the common cooking sessions in the open plan kitchen in the evening enabled chance encounters, exchanges of kitchen tricks and collaboration and team work of a different kind than during the day, yet equally important and inspiring for the actual research projects. Hosting and accommodating 20 participants was a challenge that also had reverberations for the further development of the UdN itself as it turned into a temporary hotel, a method later to be explored further and resulting in winning a prize awarded by Deutsche Bank. The setting's unfinished and improvised character and the intentional avoidance of a definition of the building's function for the sake of being open to various functions enabled the participants to spontaneously adapt the space as necessary. Collaboration and team work functioned beyond the workshop groups, even cooking and cleaning duties were shared, resulting in not merely studying 'neighbourhood' but living 'neighbourhood'.

From today's perspective

The two-part workshop can roughly be divided into six phases – organisation, workshop, reflection in Hamburg, organisation, workshop and reflection in Cairo. Organising in hindsight was the trickiest and most time consuming effort, while carrying out the actual workshops was all about improvisation. No matter how well planned and organised everything had been, the dynamics evolved with the participants and depended to a good extent on their inputs, interests and demands. In Hamburg, the UdN enabled such unplanned interventions and schedule adaptations depending on the situation, whereas in Cairo, accommodation and work spaces were quite far apart.
Initially designed as work in progress, the emerging routine, flow and work ethic suited both participants and organisers. Retrospectively, the UdN experience was significant in setting a scene, bringing the participants together and developing a common language. Each stage of the workshops could then build on one another with participants shaping the topics and themes. The resulting 'neighbourhood of researchers' was strong enough to remain stable throughout the workshop in Cairo where working and staying were spatially divided. Building on the Hamburg experience, interaction in Cairo didn't have to be established in the first place, so that the groups were able to directly delve into their projects. If grounds for comparison are always contestable and contested, the two workshops offered to question the notion and explore the meaning of 'neighbourhood' from two greatly different perspectives and in very distinct contexts.

People

Participants

Abeer Rabei Younes Abazeed
*1985 in Kuwait, lives in Cairo
University: Cairo University
Last Degree: BA Political Science
Degree Programme: MA Political Science
References: Research focus on the transformation of different neighbourhoods of Cairo by the increasing migration into Egypt.

Mazin Abdulkarim
*1983 in Manama (Bahrain), lives in Cairo
University: Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport, Faculty of Urban Design & Town Planning, Cairo.
Last Degree: MA Architecture
Currently: Teaching Assistent
Refernces: Authored numerous scientific papers that deal with the juxtaposition and contradictions of everyday life in cities.

Mohamed Abotera
*1980 in Giza, lives in Cairo
University: American University and Arab Academy for Science and Technology, Cairo
Last Degree: MA Cultural Identity and Globalization
Currently: Teaching Assistent
References: Interventionprojects and theoretical confrontation with space production in focus of the occupation of the public space during the revolution.

Sally Ashour
*1985 in Giza, lives in Giza
University: Cairo University
Last Degree: MA Political Sciences
Degree Programme: PhD Political Sciences
References: Right of Housing; focused on exploring the using of new districts in Cairo, the differences between the aims and objectives of the national plans and strategies, and the actual use of the dwelling.

Ahmad Borham
*1980 in Saudi Arabia, lives in Cairo
University: Ain Shams University, Cairo
Last degree: BA Architecture

Degree Programme: MA Architectural Design

Felix Blass
*1987 in Saulgau, lives in Hamburg
University: HafenCity University Hamburg
Last Degree: BA Urban Planing
Degree Programme: MA Urban Planing
References: Dynamics of of the urbanization in Africa

Mohamed El-Azzazy
*1985 in Giza, lives in Cairo
University: Arab Academy for Science and Technology, Architectural Engineering & Environmental Design, Cairo
Last Degree: MA Cultural Identity and Globalization
Currently: Teaching Assistant
References: Specialization in cumulative heritage of the historic urban landscape of Cairo (including El-Zamalek)

Katalin Gennburg
*1984 in Weißenfels, lives in Berlin
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Last Degree: BA Philosophy
Degree Programme: MA Metropolitan Studies/Historical Urbanism
References: worked for the German and European Parliament, numerous publications about city and society

Hebatuallah Hendawy
*1990 in Cairo, lives in Cairo
University: Helwan University, Cairo
Degree Programme: BA Architecture
Refernces: Active in dealing with the socio-economics and exploring new realms of possibility of the communities in informal settlements in Cairo

Ebraheem Imam
*1989 in Bilqas (Egypt), lives in Cairo
University: Mansoura University, Cairo
Last Degree: BA Architecture
Degree Programme: MA Architectural Engineering
Refernces: Focused on the traction which urban space can have in socio-political transformations.

Adrian Judt
*1986 in Bünde, lives in Hamburg
University: HafenCity University Hamburg
Last degree: BA Urban Planning
Degree Programme: MA Urban Design
References: Interdisciplinary team work; participation on numerous Workshops

Thomas Kohlwein

*1988, lives in Berlin
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Last Degree: B.A. Urban Studies, Vienna University of Technology
Degree Programme: MA Historical Urban Studies
References: Research focused on relation and influence between architecture and literature in the international context.

Joanna Kusiak
*1985 in Poland, lives in Berlin
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Degree Programme: PhD Urban Studies
Last Degree: MA Sociology
References: Researchfocus on transformation processes in cities using the example of Warschau.

Maja Mijatovic
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University: HafenCity University Hamburg
Last Degree: BA Architecture
Degree Programme: MA Urban Design
References: Research on informal settelments in Belgrad

Max Mütsch
*1987 in Heilbronn-Neckargartach, lives in Istanbul
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Last Degree: Undergraduate Diploma Architecture
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References: Social communities and architecture and its relation concerning the daily use

Noel David Nicolaus
*1980 in Preetz, lives in Berlin
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References: Political activist relating to problems and possibilities of contemporary city.

Jean-Paul Olivier
*1982 in Berlin, lives in Berlin
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Last Degree: BA Cultural Studies
Degree Programme: MA Space Strategies
References: performative research under the topic of public sapce and its production

Yiannis Pappas
*1978 in Patmos (Greece), lives in Berlin
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Last Degree: BA Fine Arts, Athens (Greece)
Degree Programme: MA Space Strategies
References: several videoprojects and transdisciplinary Interventions, which dealed with public spaces

Salma Sherif
*1988 in Cairo, lives in Cairo
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Last Degree: BA Architecture
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References: Research interests about production of playgrounds and the associated potential spaces for neighbourhoods

Mariam Waheed
*1988 in Giza, lives in Giza
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Last Degree : BA Political Sciences
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References: research focus is “body and public spaces” during the occupation of the tahrir square during the revolution in 2011.

Lecturer

Hamburg

Ingrid Breckner
Ingrid Breckner, Dr. rer. soc, is a sociologist and university professor; born 1954 in Medias / Romania.
Study of education and sociology at the University of Munich. Re- search on media education and urban development in Munich. Doctorate in sociology at the University of Bielefeld. Teaching in Weihenstephan, Munich and Bochum. Project development and scientific support EU pilot project Wohnforum Munich gGmbH. 1994/95 visiting professor at the University of Kassel. Since 1995 professor for urban sociology and regional planning at the Technical University Hamburg-Harburg,since 2006 HafenCity University Hamburg. Recent research has focused on the issues of urban sprawl, social city, uncertainty in european cities, mobility and integrated urban development strategies.
More detailed information on Prof. Ingrid Breckner’ s research and teaching-activities can be found on www.hcu-hamburg.de.

Zegeye Cherenet
Zegeye Cherent is an architect and urbanist from Addis Ababa / Ethiopia. He earned his B.Sc. in Architecture and Urban Planning from Addis Ababa University 1994 and received his Master in Architecture (with Honor) from Indian Institute of

Technology (IIT, Roorkee) in 1998. He has been teaching design at the department of architecture at Addis Ababa University (AAU) since 2000 and served as guest lecturer in various colleges and universities in Ethiopia and abroad on theories in contemporary and vernacular architecture in Ethiopia and trends of urbanization in North-East Africa. He was academic guest (August 2006 – August 2007) of the department of architecture in ETH Zurich, teaching design and construction at the department of Professor Marc Angelil and Professor Andrea Deplaz. He served as a chairman of the department curriculum committee for Architecture at AAU since 2005 and also as general secretary of the Association of Ethiopian Architects (AEA, 2004-2008). In addition to teaching architectural design, Zegeye Cherent runs his own studio with his partners in Addis Ababa (OADUS architecture and engineering-office for architecture, design and urban studies). He has designed and built many private and public buildings in various places in Ethiopia. He is currently serving as a deputy director of EiABC (Ethiopian institute of Architecture, Building construction and City development at AAU) and isalso a chair holder of architecture and design in the institute (October 2009-February 2011).

Christopher Dell
Christopher Dell is a jazz-musician, composer and architectural theorist, born 1965 in Darmstadt / Germany. He works as a theorist, curator and percussionist at the interface between architecture and arts. His research focuses on applied theory, improvisation as technology, performance and space. He is director of ifit - institute for improvisation technology, based in Berlin. From 2008 to 2010 he was visiting professor at the urban design chair at HafenCity University (HCU) Hamburg.

Jesko Fezer
Jesko Fezer is professor of experimental design at Hochschule für Bildende Künste (HfbK) in Hamburg since 2011. Fezer works as an architect, author, designer, artist and as curator. In collaboration with »ifau« (»institut für angewandte urbanistik« / »institute for applied urbanism«), he has created architectural projects in Munich, Graz, Utrecht, Stuttgart, Berlin, New York and London. After jointly running the »Pro qm« specialist book store – specialising in urban subjects, politics, pop, economic criticism, architecture, design, art and theory – he became co-editor of the political architecture magazine »An Architektur. Produktion und Gebrauch gebauter Umwelt« and co-founder of the »Kooperative für Darstellungspolitik« research and exhibition design studio. In 2009 and 2010, lectureships at numerous institutes for arts and architecture and a visiting professorship in architectural theory and urban research at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Nuremberg were followed by a post as director of the research project »Civic City. Design for the Post-Neoliberal City« at the Institut für Designforschung at Züricher Hochschule der Künste (ZHdK). Jesko Fezer researches and publishes about architecture and design history in the post-war era, on design methods, participation and on the politics of design. He is a member of the board of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Designtheorie und -Forschung (DGTF) since 2011 and is also a member of the Hamburger Kunstkommission.

Marjetica Potrc
Marjetica Potrc is a Ljubljana-based artist and architect. Her work has been exhi-

bited extensively throughout Europe and the Americas, including such major exhibitions as the Venice Biennial (1993, 2003 and 2009), the São Paulo Biennial (1996 and 2006), Projekte in Muenster (1997), and others. She has taught at a number of important institutes in Europe and North America, including the IUAV Faculty of Arts and Design in Venice (2008 and 2010); the Advanced Course in Visual Arts at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti in Como, Italy (2006); the Städelschule Art Academy in Frankfurt am Main (2006); and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2005). She was also an associate professor at the design department at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana from 1993 to 2004. In addition, she was a lecturer for the Architectural League (New York), Goldsmiths College (London), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the National College of Art and Design (Dublin), The New School University (New York) and many others. Marjetica Potrc has been the recipient of numerous awards, including grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (in 1993 and 1999); the Hugo Boss Prize 2000, administered by the Guggenheim Museum; a Caracas Case Project Fellowship from the Federal Cultural Foundation in Germany, the Caracas Urban Think Tank, Venezuela (2002); and the Vera List Center for Arts and Politics Fellowship at The New School in New York (2007).

Cairo

Paul Amar
Paul Amar is an associate professor in the global & international studies program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, specializing in international security studies, political sociology, global ethnography, and gender/race/postcolonial theory. He holds affiliate appointments in Feminist Studies, Sociology, Middle East Studies and Latin American & Iberian Studies. His research traces the origins and intersections of new patterns of police militarization, security governance, humanitarian intervention and state restructuring in the megacities of the global south.

Nabeel Elhady
Nabeel Elhady is a professor and architect born in 1964. He holds a Bachelor of Architecture with honors from Cairo University where he was also awarded the Masters of Architecture and then the Doctorate of Architecture in 1997. He used to be a fellow of the Architectural Association in London 1992/93. He was also a Visiting scholar at the University of California at Berkeley during 1994-95. Currently he teaches Architectural design, History of urban form, Aestetics and Architectural criticism in Cairo University.In addition, He intiated and organized (through the architectural dept. at cairo university) the annual architectural students' competiton. He also organizes the public lectures by the international members of the jury. Besides the academic responsibilities he is a practicing architect in his private practice named "noon" since 1998. Through the projects undertaken by the office, continuous attempts are made to blend theories with realities in order to bring about architecture that respects humanity and nature.

Hans Harms
Hans Harms teaches at the Technical University in Hamburg-Harburg and part

time at the Development Planning Unit, University College London. He has worked for many years on housing and urban renewal in Latin America and has published widely on housing and self-help strategies in Germany as well as in the South.

Reem Saad
An associate research professor at the social research center Reem Saad, received her Dr. Phil. in social anthropology from the University of Oxford in 1994. Her thesis title was “Peasants’ perception of recent Egyptian history”. Her research interests include rural Egypt, historical anthropology, issues of public culture and ethnographic film. She was Ioma Evans- Pritchard Junior Research Fellow at St. Anne’s College in Oxford between 1993-95. At SRC she is an associate research professor. She is the author of a monograph and numerous articles on villages and peasants in contemporary Egypt. She has participated as an anthropologist in the BBC documentary “Marriage Egyptian Style”, 1992, and was assistant director of the documentary “Four Women of Egypt”, produced by the Canadian National Film Board, 1997.

Dina Shehayeb
Dina K. Shehayeb, is a professor in the institute of architecture and housing, at the Housing and Building National Research Center (HBRC) in Cairo, Egypt, as well as the principle of her private consultancy firm Shehayeb CONSULT. Graduated as an architect in 1984, she earned her Ph.D. Degree in architecture and environment-behavior studies from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee in 1995, focusing on human aspects in design and planning. Specialized in transdisciplinary research, she works on bridging the gap between the physical built environment and its socio- psychological and cultural dimensions. She applies this knowledge through research and practice on affordable/appropriate housing, community-based neighbourhood planning, historic area conservation and design guideline on a national and international scale. She worked with the Aga Khan Cultural Services- Egypt, German Technical Cooperation - GTZ, Egypt, the Institut de Recherche et Development _ IRD, France, the UN-Habitat Gender Unit, Nairobi, Oikodrom, Vienna and UCLA on commissioned research projects and research based interventions in upgrading- and rehabilitation projects. She serves in several committees such as code development committees in Egypt and advisory boards for UN-HABITAT and other international organizations.

Diane Singerman
Dr. Singerman is an associate professor at American University in Cairo and a comparativist, whose research interests focus on political change from below, particularly in the Middle East, and more specifically Egypt. Her work examines the formal and informal side of politics, gender, social movements, globalization, public space, protest, and urban politics. Her most recent edited books are Cairo Contested: Governance, Urban Space, and Global Modernity, and „Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East.

Omar Nagati
Omar Nagati is a Ph.D candidate and a practicing architect/urban planner who currently lives in Cairo. A graduate of Cairo University, he studied and taught at

University of British Columbia and University of California Berkeley, with a specific focus on informal urbanism. Nagati adopts an interdisciplinary approach to questions of urban history and design, and engages in a comparative analysis of urbanization processes in developing countries. He teaches Urban Design Studio at the Modern Sciences and Arts University in Giza and has recently cofounded CLUSTER, a new platform for urban research and design initiatives downtown Cairo.
Nagati has widely presented his research on Cairo in several cities and institutions in Europe and North America, including Bari (2003), Vancouver (2004), Venice (2006), Vienna (2007), Copenhagen (2007), Cairo (2009), Berlin (2010), Harvard (2010), Zagreb (2010) and Leeds (2012).

Team

Sarah Asseel
*1982 in Giza, lives in Hamburg
University: HafenCity University Hamburg
Last Degree: BA Architecture
Degree Programme: MA Urban Design
Research interests: Research and methodology, architecture, housing and adaptation. As a student assistant she has planned several events and workshops. Besides doing her own research in Cairo, Sarah has been working as a junior consultant in the GIZ for the past 5 months.

Salma Belal
*1990 in Cairo, lives in Cairo
University: Arab Academy for Science and Technology, Cairo
Last Degree: BA Architecture
Currently: working as an architect for ‚TAKWEEN for integrated community development' in Cairo

Lene Benz
*1985 in Tübingen, lives in Hamburg
University: HafenCity University Hamburg
Last Degree: BA Sociology and Political Science
Degree Programme: MA Urban Design
References: Research interests expand to social theory, urban studies and planning, housing concepts and ethnology. As a student assistant she planned cultural and academic events as well as conferences and workshops.

Katharina Böttger
*1986 in Frankfurt am Main, lives in Hamburg
University: HafenCity University Hamburg
Last Degree: BA Geography, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main

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References: Research interest in humangeografischen, sociological and ethnographic issues in the urban context. She was a student assistant in the Office of Urban Development and the time tutor in Project Management in the Department of Culture of the metropolis.

Salma Dahab
*1992 in Giza, lives in Giza
University: Cairo University
Degree Programme: BA Political Science
References: Interseted in Political Theory, Political Sociology, Urban Theory and Cultrual analysis. Attending seminars, conferences and events concering these disciplines.

Lukas Grellmann
*1982 in Stade, lives in Hamburg
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Last Degree: BA Social Science
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References: He is interested in planning strategies that provide alternatives to investment driven urban development in rapidly growing cities in the global south. His current work is addressing public parks and their role in the development of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Aya Nassar
*1984 in England, lives in Cairo
University: Cairo University
Last Degree: MA Economics and Political Science
Degree Programme: PhD Political Theory
References: She has written on Cyberspace

Nihal Ragab
*1987 in Cairo, lives in Lund (Sweden)
University: Cairo University
Last Degree: M.A. Economics and Political Science
Degree Programme: MA Applied Cultural Analysis (MACA)
References: She is generally interested in sustainability in terms of community--based sustainability, and not just individual-based sustainability that targets building individual careers disconnected from their communities. Moreover she is studying marginalized communities.

Mathias Schnell
*1985 in Dornbirn (Austria), lives in Hamburg
University: HafenCity University Hamburg
Last Degree: BA Space & Design Strategies
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References: Besides studying, Mathias is project assistant at GKT Hamburg, where he gained experience in planning workshops with international architects

Philipp Wetzel
*1985 in Leipzig, lives in Hamburg
University: HafenCity University Hamburg
Last Degree: BA Urban Planning
Degree Programme: MA Urban Planning
References: Research interests in effects of transport and common spaces in developing countries. Concerning to that he is looking for new planning procedures.

Professors

Prof. Bernd Kniess
Bernd Kniess is a Professor for Urban Planning/Urban Design at HCU Hamburg and since 2008 dean of the master program Urban Design at HCU. Together with Michael Koch and Christopher Dell, he initiated the teaching and research project „University of the neighbourhoods“ (UdN). He studied Architecture and Urban Design in Darmstadt and Berlin, since 1995 he works as an independent architect, also teaching among others at RWTH Aachen and the University of Wuppertal. Since 2009 Bernd Kniess is member of the North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Prof Dr. Mohammed Soffar
Dr. Soffar is the current director of the center for civilizational studies and dialogue at Cairo University, he is also assistant professor for political theory at the department for political science at Cairo University. Dr. Soffar received his PhD in Political Theory on the topic: “The political theory of Sayyid Qutb: a genealogy of discourse from Freie Universität Berlin in 2004.

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