

Elements of Successful Commercial Streets: A Socio-Spatial Analysis of Commercial Streets in Cairo

Authors : Toka Aly

Abstract : Historically, marketplaces were the most important nodes and focal points of cities, where different activities took place. Commercial streets offer more than just spaces for shopping; they also offer choices for social activities and cultural exchange. They are considered the backbone of the city's vibrancy and vitality. Despite that, the public life in Cairo's commercial streets has deteriorated, where the shopping activities became reliant mainly on 'planned formal places', mainly in privatized or indoor spaces like shopping malls. The main aim of this paper is to explore the key elements and tools of assessing the successfulness of commercial streets in Cairo. The methodology followed in this paper is based on a case study methodology (multiple cases) that is based on assessing and analyzing the physical and social elements in historical and contemporary commercial streets in El Muiz Street and Baghdad Street in Cairo. The data collection is based on personal observations, photographs, maps and street sections. Findings indicate that the key factors of analyzing commercial streets are factors affecting the sensory experience, factors affecting the social behavior, and general aspects that attract people. Findings also indicate that urban features have clear influence on shopping pedestrian activities in both streets. Moreover, in order for a commercial street to be successful, shopping patterns must provide people with a quality public space that can provide easy navigation and accessibility, good visual continuity, and well-designed urban features and social gathering. Outcomes of this study will be a significant endeavor in providing a good background for urban designers on analyzing and assessing successfulness of commercial streets. The study will also help in understanding the different physical and social pattern of vending activities taking place in Cairo.

Keywords : activities, commercial street, marketplace, successful, vending

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