UN Habitat's participatory initiative to public space design involving residents, refugees and local authorities: the case of Nabaa', Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon

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Abstract: This paper explores the process of engaging participants in designing a public space in a neighbourhood with socially deprived people from different backgrounds. The space was designed by locals and refugees, with the support of the local authorities. The paper investigates the extents to which placemaking, initiated by a third party could generate a civic space that combines people through everyday needs stemming from the context, and being addressed over time, rather than in a fixed design outcome. It examines the intervention initiated by UN Habitat Lebanon in Bourj Hammoud municipality at the eastern boundaries of administrative Beirut, and specifically within it, the area of Naba'a. Studying this public space initiative within Naba'a addresses marginal neighbourhoods that are in need of ameliorating the living conditions, and improving the quality of life for the population. UN Habitat's intervention comprised mediation between municipality and residents, and collaboration with the local residents and refugees within one neighbourhood in Naba'a, and framing their needs for an open public space. UN Habitat engaged the municipality in supporting the locals in executing this public space. The presentation argues that this process enabled place attachment for people with no official claim to an urban area.

Keywords: public space; social cohesion; place attachment; Bourj Hammoud

Introduction

Currently many urban contexts witness conflicts, displacement and the influx of refugees with limited access to services and job opportunities. These people often reside in marginal neighbourhoods, which are not visited by outsiders, reducing the opportunity for encounter (Netto *et al*., 2018) and 'unplanned interaction' between disparate bodies and things (Amin, 2012: 71, Watson, 2006). This paper focuses on the process of public space provision and design in marginalised neighbourhoods that goes beyond securing a physical location (Tornaghi and Knierbein, 2015), and takes the challenge of activating and maintaining the space. In this approach, through a third party's initiative, local authorities, local residents and refugees are engaged in the decision-making process for designing a public space. The paper frames this approach through a relational perspective (Lehtovuori, 2010, Tornaghi and Knierbein, 2015), which allows for the understanding of the space contextually as a process intertwined with the local daily social practices (Knierbein, 2015). This understanding

considers the meanings, qualities and values attached to spaces (Healey, 2006), while enabling diverse people to jointly build space attachment.

The selected case study is one neighbourhood in Nabaa', Bourj Hammoud municipality, to the east of the capital city Beirut, Lebanon that has witnessed since World War I perpetual population flows and shifts causing instability and poor living conditions.

The following section examines marginal neighbourhoods and implications for their users and public spaces. The framework of a relational perspective on public space is then presented with the aim of understanding which processes could mitigate issues arising in public space design within marginal neighbourhoods. The next section focuses on UN-Habitat's participatory approach within a 'counter flow' relation and its application within a deprived neighbourhood.

Marginal Neighbourhoods and Public Spaces

The provision of public spaces is highly associated with their success in promoting or regenerating cities. Central public spaces reflect 'the legitimacy of the local administration' and are often considered 'nodes for social cohesion' (Madanipour, 2004: 269). Yet public spaces in marginalised neighbourhoods are usually neglected by local authorities and investors due to various reasons (Madanipour, 2004) ranging from the absence of commitment if residents are not voters, to the lack of interest in investing in a neighbourhood with poor environmental quality of urban space and residents with low purchasing power. The spaces are then either closed, inaccessible or highly securitised and controlled. Alternatively, self-regulatory mechanisms emerge for coping with the lack or the poor state of public spaces such as avoidance of the space by the residents (Barolsky, 2016) leading to the lack of encounter opportunities (Kwan, 2009) and often segregation. This segregation is reflected spatially but also in their social, economic and everyday life activities (Healey, 2006, Selim, 2015). Residents are disadvantaged and do not have equal access to job opportunities, facilities and amenities (Netto *et al*., 2016, 2018). Yet they seek refuge within such neighbourhoods not by choice but rather by the lack of it. The population in such neighbourhoods is socially fragmented, forming 'a mosaic of difference trapped within a limited space … and with limited capacity to connect to the outside world' (Madanipour, 2004: 271).

In the particular case of Nabaa' this neighbourhood is populated with disadvantaged residents consisting of locals or refugees who face social exclusion. On the one hand, refugees are often perceived as a security threat and a competitive workforce (Madanipour, 2004, Healey, 2006). On the other hand, the local residents can equally experience social exclusion due to different forms of vulnerability, for example age, disability, employment, ethnicity or other (Madanipour, 2004: 270, Selim, 2015). The vulnerability and poor living conditions that residents share lead to avoidance or lack of interaction, especially if 'most are preoccupied with sorting out some of the basic problems of life, their capacity to deal with others becomes more limited' (Madanipour, 2004: 271). Different forms of expression and the difficulty of communicating among residents cause tensions, and in some instances generalisations and prejudices about people that are perceived as different (Madanipour, 2004).

Tensions and schisms are visible in such a marginal neighbourhood's public spaces, especially if dominated by one group, sometimes requiring the intervention of security forces (Barolsky, 2016).

The decline of public spaces and lack of encounter among residents leads to their detachment from the place (Dines *et al*., 2006, Lehtovuori, 2010). Some residents withdraw from the neighbourhood's urban spaces when feeling unsafe, intimidated or discriminated. Yet there is evidence that these perceptions can be reversed by increased everyday contact and interaction (Selim, 2015). This requires residents' mobilisation and collective engagement in the process of providing public spaces that meet shared interests and needs (Madanipour 2004, Lehtovuori, 2010). Through collective action, residents are enabled to 'de-alienate' public spaces (Knierbein, 2015: 54) and establish communication channels among themselves. Through the exchange of 'local knowledge' (Healey, 2006: 111), communication facilitates understanding, learning and acknowledging different ways of using, organising and valuing space (Healey, 2006: 112), which affect spatial practices and expressions. Discussing 'the management of co-existence' in shared space requires communication (Healey, 2006: 111) that is transformed into action. Over time, this may enable forging social links in public spaces beyond kinship or one's community (Healey, 2006), which is essential in a fragmented society. This is achieved through their shared engagement in shaping that space within their neighbourhood (Madanipour, 2004: 282) and establishing place attachment over time (Dines *et al*., 2006, Lehtovuori, 2010). This attachment is dynamic and can switch from negative to positive depending on social relations and experiences as well as the presence of support available in the neighbourhood in the form of social networks, local facilities and reference points (Dines *et al*., 2006).

Public Space Design and the Relational Perspective

This paper uses a relational perspective to explore public space as a process within a context with socially constructed meanings and practices, rather than as a product, a physical stage or a container of activities (Lehtovuori, 2010). This approach enables the analysis of material and immaterial aspects of public space by critically examining the relation of the social, political, historical and cultural context and its impact on people's lived practices within the public space process (Tornaghi and Knierbein, 2015). Within this perspective, individuals are given voice and are recognised as 'communities whose emotional and lived involvement in place making is not an option, but a fact' (Tornaghi, 2015: 35). These actors adopt 'a radical proactive attitude in the reconfiguration of institution-citizen relations in light of environmental and social justice' (Tornaghi, 2015: 35). This approach fosters 'links to be created between the dynamics of civil society (including conflicts between individuals, groups and different social spheres), political decision-making, and planning and design practice' (Tornaghi and Knierbein, 2015: 2).

UN-Habitat's role goes beyond giving voice to people (Miessen, 2010: 14); it rather works to ameliorate a crisis situation in a marginalised neighbourhood, and forge a lasting collaboration. UN-Habitat is keen to raise awareness on public space not only at the level of communities but also at the level of local authorities, highlighting the significance of learning from local knowledge and collaborating (see UN-Habitat, 2017b). 'Public space has surfaced as a top priority and a dire need, it is not only about asphalting a space and fencing it with walls, it is about a social need' (social development coordinator, UN-Habitat, personal communication, 25 January 2018). There is a sense of 'responsibility' from the part of UN-Habitat and the local authority to improve the citizen–institution relation. UN-Habitat has an 'interest' in giving voice to vulnerable people and learning from insiders (Till, 2011). Their approach could be considered as 'entering participation from the side' (Miessen,

2010: 16), and engaging various stakeholders in decision-making. This is achieved through the neighbourhood profiling process and learning about the intricacies of the political, economic and social characteristics of the context under study (Miessen, 2010). In turn this insiders' knowledge guides the public space process, which combines people's needs with the municipality's vision. The next section examines UN-Habitat's public space design in a neighbourhood in Nabaa', Bourj Hammoud. But what was specific in the choice of Nabaa'?

Introducing Nabaa' in Bourj Hammoud

Bourj Hammoud is the eastern suburb of the capital city Beirut, which until the eighteenth century was agricultural and marshland. This terrain hosted Armenian refugees towards the end of the First World War, following Ottoman persecution, within shelters in a grid iron layout with narrow streets (Harmandayan, 2012).

A second wave of refugees included Lebanese, mainly from the south and east of the country during the civil war period 1975–1989. Similarly, Lebanese-Armenians also fled into Bourj Hammoud seeking refuge, and investing in commercial activities. This transformed the area into a commercial hub but also caused the out-migration of those economically better off (Harmandayan, 2009). The area's proximity to employment sources, and the affordability of housing caused the influx of economically and socially disadvantaged people of various backgrounds including Lebanese and foreign transient workers (Harmandayan, 2009). Historically and spatially, this population diversity and turnover resulted in social fragmentation.

In addition to population dynamics, planning decisions capitalised on the road network (Salam, 1998), leading to the division of Bourj Hammoud into a northern industrial waterfront area and a predominantly residential southern area, characterised by deteriorated housing stock with commercial streets dissecting the urban blocks (Harmandayan, 2012). In particular, the south-western part called Nabaa' is characterised by high population density, poor services, the lack of public spaces and a degraded urban environment (Harmandayan, 2012).

Within such a context Nabaa' still witnesses episodes of population influx, and is considered a hub for the disadvantaged. The most recent dynamic is the influx of Syrian refugees. Since 2015, about 61 per cent of the population are Syrian refugees, about 34 per cent are Lebanese and Armenian, and the rest are foreign workers. Irrespective of their background, the population is characterised by low income, and renters suffering from rising rent prices due to the housing market monopolised by few real estate dealers (social development coordinator, UN-Habitat, personal communication, 25 January 2018).

The neighbourhood under investigation in Nabaa' (Figure 1) is located at the crossing of three main roads and next to a school and mosque (UN-Habitat, 2015: 9). It comprises three blocks with 48 buildings and an estimated 2,044 residents in 2015 (UN-Habitat, 2015: 9). The sidewalks are in poor condition, with only commercial activities, and little greenery. The intersection of the three main roads is considered as a square, and the internal roads as the neighbourhood's public spaces (UN-Habitat, 2015: 9).

Figure 1: Location of Bourj Hammoud east of Beirut

To investigate the current public space provision in this neighbourhood, I conducted interviews between January and November 2018 with the social development coordinator at UN-Habitat who was in charge of this process, and reviewed available reports by UN-Habitat (UN-Habitat, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b).

Intervening in Nabaa's

After conducting a rapid assessment in 2015 in Nabaa' followed by detailed neighbourhood profiling of Bourj Hammoud in 2016, UN-Habitat determined the imminent need to initiate a public space process and ameliorate living conditions in a highly congested area hosting refugees. This decision, which was supported by a successful public space programme application (UN-Habitat, 2017a), equally stemmed from the need to decrease tension among residents; this tension was manifested both verbally and physically. The local Lebanese residents claimed that safety and security deteriorated with the arrival of the refugees, and so did services including electricity and solid waste management. The municipality indicated that refugees had an economic impact by opening shops and competing with the locals. The school principal indicated that arguments among Lebanese and Syrian parents were recurring. The Syrians complained of prejudgement by the Lebanese, harassment of some females and money theft in some cases. So what was this public space process?

The Committee

In March 2016 a local committee of 11 members was formed with the help of a local female activist and under the guidance of UN-Habitat who requested that the members represent the neighbourhood with its social tissue including gender, age, role in this neighbourhood and nationality. The committee held regular meetings, and represented Lebanese and Syrians and included a municipal council

member, persons affiliated with the various political parties existing in the area, (for more information on various struggles in Lebanon refer to El-Khazen, 2000, Hanf, 1993, and Khalaf, 2002,). Particularly for contestations in public space refer to Mady, 2012, Fawaz *et al*., 2009, Bou Akar, 2012, Bollens, 2012, and Deeb and Harb, 2013) two principals of local schools, a mukhtar or head of the locality (a mukhtar is a representative of the local government in charge of administrative tasks) and two activists from the area. In the local committee meetings, the significance of a public space process was highlighted, and residents were made aware that the municipality is a partner along with them in the process. As the majority of residents in Nabaa' are not from Bourj Hammoud, they have no voting rights within this municipality according to the Lebanese electoral law. This has led some residents to believe that their needs are neglected because they are non-voters.

The Intervention Site

One of the committee's first tasks was to aid UN-Habitat in identifying possible intervention sites. Several vacant lots were found at the south-western periphery of Nabaa', yet they were privately owned. Searching within the blocks, the committee identified a lot which was municipally owned though small in surface area, 200 square metres. UN-Habitat then got permission from the municipality to proceed with the implementation of the public space project on it. There was an obstacle, however, the domination of the lot by a drug dealer who defined his territory with a tent, a small van, tables and chairs where men often gathered. The dealer was a foreign worker whose sons were imprisoned, yet was under the protection of local influential persons. The local committee and the municipality worked for almost a year to relocate him away from the neighbourhood. In February 2017 and following the mayor's last warning for evacuation, the public space implementation began. Note that this could not have been achieved without the consent of the local political party representatives, after identifying this lot as municipal and seeing the benefit in offering it to the residents as a public space (social development coordinator, UN-Habitat, personal communication, 23 March 2018).

Minecraft as a Participatory Tool

Once the intervention site for the public space implementation was determined, UN-Habitat was ready to start the process of public space design by mobilising and engaging the community (UN-Habitat, 2016). Within the presented case study, UN-Habitat opted to use Minecraft as a participatory platform (UN-Habitat, 2016), which since 2013 has been implemented in other contexts, yet not in Lebanon.

Minecraft is a computer game that uses building blocks to visualise design ideas. UN-Habitat used it as an engagement tool following seven steps, first by building the model of the location using Google Earth and available maps. The second is to offer training to a group of participants from a UN-Habitat expert. The third is to hold workshops with community participants to give instructions on Minecraft and establish dialogue regarding the purpose of this process and the significance of public space. The fourth is forming groups of 2–4 participants each sitting at a computer, where ideas were collected and discussed, missing amenities were identified, similarities and differences in approaches were later compared. The fifth is constructing the actual Minecraft model generated by the participant groups within the 2–4-day workshops. The sixth is sharing the models with stakeholders, discussing, prioritising and ranking the proposals; this is further explained for Nabaa's case. The seventh is

converting the final Minecraft model into architectural work, estimating the cost and preparing for bidding then implementation (UN-Habitat, 2016). Minecraft was seen as a useful tool for building cohesion since it enabled residents to share their everyday knowledge of the neighbourhood including their experiences, their values and cultures, and use this knowledge as ingredients in a joint public space design process. This established a socio-spatial and contextual link that was useful in forging an understanding of what constitutes a public space for different users.

The public space process in Nabaa' is a pilot project, introducing a participatory approach that is not common in Lebanon, let alone involving Lebanese and refugees. Some adjustments in the seven steps of Minecraft approach were necessary to fit within Nabaa's context. These related to modelling, language, information dissemination and workshop duration. To produce the site model, Minecraft programmers were sent surveyed maps and photographs of the location. UN-Habitat game facilitators did not speak Arabic, except one urban designer who worked in UN-Habitat in Sweden and was trained on Minecraft facilitation. The engagement process took approximately four months, including networking with the community and disseminating the information provided during the workshop. While the Minecraft training sessions usually take four days, the facilitator was alerted that in the Lebanese context and culture, participants would not dedicate that much time. Therefore, information usually shared in the first Minecraft session was instead disseminated in the focus group, allowing for shorter workshop duration. These groups also served to reveal the needs and opinions of residents.

The focus groups took the form of a one-day discussion organized in the neighbourhood school. The groups were formed with the help of the local committee, in particular the female activist, and according to the selection criteria given by UN-Habitat to represent the neighbourhood residents. This was possible as this activist has lived in the neighbourhood for 18 years and gained the trust of residents. She was the gatekeeper whom all authorities and NGOs contacted for support. The groups had five themes: children, adolescents, youth, men and women, and each group was then asked to nominate members for the Minecraft workshop. The five focus groups comprised 120 participants who roughly represented 120 households within a catchment area of five minutes' walking distance from the location. Roughly an equal number of males and females participated and the groups comprised Lebanese and Syrian from different social backgrounds (ranging from homeless to employed).

Tensions between both nationalities surfaced during the focus group discussions, in some cases shifting to problems they were facing and projecting them on the public space discussion. The main issues of contestation were the drop in commerce for the Lebanese as Syrian shops selling cheaper products were frequented by the Syrian refugees; housing rent skyrocketed after the arrival of the refugees with an increase in demand and a limited supply, the willingness of Syrians to share apartments and split rent; issues of insecurity with the arrival of refugees and women feeling unsafe to go out; incidents with Lebanese and Syrians leading to prejudices and generalisations. After continuous discussions, these issues were resolved by UN-Habitat as follows: empowering the Syrians and allowing them to explain their case in front of the Lebanese; reminding the Lebanese of their own war struggles, and that refugees are obliged to flee and hence require support rather than adversity; using as examples public spaces in other refugee-receiving countries such as Germany, in which public spaces are equally accessible by Germans, Syrians and Lebanese without discrimination (social development coordinator, UN-Habitat, personal communication, 15 January and 23 March 2018). The latter was in response to a request to either provide separate public spaces, or temporally segregate the

space's use by nationality, knowing that the space is too small to hold many users. UN-Habitat responded by explaining that the management of the space will assure an equal opportunity and access to all residents to use it (social development coordinator, UN-Habitat, personal communication, 15 January and 23 March 2018).

In July 2016 the Minecraft training started and included 24 participants representing the five focus groups. Around ten groups with six to seven members participated (social development coordinator, UN-Habitat, personal communication, 25 February 2018). The training took place at the UN-Habitat HQ in west Beirut during two consecutive days. Participants were roughly equally divided in terms of gender, but predominantly Lebanese. Syrians, especially females, had some cultural constraints, such as women requiring the permission or accompaniment of the husband, and children not being allowed to go without a parent. About 30 per cent were Syrian and 70 per cent Lebanese in a neighbourhood where 61 per cent were Syrian. However, this did not prevent collaboration within the groups. A 50-year-old woman who could not use the computer was supported by younger group members. One homeless young man was very creative in the ideas he proposed, as was another drug addict. The Syrian children were often more active and creative in their proposals than Lebanese ones. The participants worked in groups of three, and some were allowed to work individually when they did not integrate well in the group. Many different proposals emerged: a Syrian child proposed building his house; some proposed building on two stories a garden and library.

It took the participants one-and-a-half days to complete their designs. Facilitators of each group then summarized the components of each proposal. It is worth noting that participants worked together in mixed groups, not minding their differences and focusing on their design proposals. On the second day, the work of the groups was presented to the local committee. Each group had one participant who presented the group's ideas and the discussion was with the local committee, while the facilitator, an architect, registered all ideas and counted frequencies (turned to scores). Participants felt proud that their work was taken seriously by the local committee including the municipality. The site planning was the combination of ideas with high scores from all groups, which became the basis for the Minecraft model. Participants were made aware that individual designs could not be executed so as not to favour one group over another. This was to ensure equal opportunities for the shared ideas to be implemented. They were also informed by the local committee regarding the feasibility of their ideas (trees, green surfaces, toilet, two storeys and so on), and provided with explanations about the rejected ideas. For example, the proposal to have a two-storey project including a small library was dismissed after explaining why it cannot fit within this tiny lot. The local committee validated the model with UN-Habitat to arrive at a final design, which took a week after the workshop. Some changes were made, for instance bollards proposed to mark the space's edge were replaced by a fence upon the request of the committee, although against UN-Habitat's intentions to keep the space open. The UN-Habitat facilitator then converted the key proposals into a Minecraft model, which the UN-Habitat architect later visualized through perspectives and drawings representing the design components. These included land levelling, flooring, landscaping, fixing sidewalks, furniture, trees and vegetation. The components corresponded to walkways, a resting area, a play area, trees and greenery, screening the adjacent building, lighting and toilets. During the discussion, residents decided not to have the toilets, as the space is very small, and embedded in their neighbourhood, which meant they could use utilities within their houses instead.

The discussion ended around August 2016 when the design and execution drawings with the corresponding bid documents were prepared by UN-Habitat and handed over to the municipality. One condition was to involve workers from Nabaa' to ensure the engagement of the neighbourhood residents during the implementation process. Between August 2016 and March 2017 the municipality started the procurement process. The selected bid included only local workers, such as the contractor, the builder and others. Meanwhile, UN-Habitat kept visiting the area to reassure people that the implementation was ongoing and that it was adopted by the municipality. The local committee continued its involvement in the process; one female activist had an active role in resolving problems arising during implementation. For instance, she was able to detect people who falsely claimed they worked in implementing the public space and asked for payment.

In August 2017 and under the auspices of the municipality, 'Nabaa's Garden – Bourj Hammoud' was inaugurated. Local catering was provided (ice cream vendor) and a show for children was organised (Figure 2). The lively event attracted many people from outside the neighbourhood.

Figure 2: Location of the neighbourhood in Nabaa'

Post-Implementation

The inauguration had an impact beyond the neighbourhood itself with positive and negative effects. On the positive side, some NGOs working within Bourj Hammoud and Nabaa' are using the space for meetings after gaining permission from the municipality (YMCA, Kafa and Himaya). The space is now well-known and popular, and is mostly active when open. On the negative side, some children started fighting over the monkey bar and the municipality did not abide by the space management agreement, and the grass and trees withered. To resolve these issues, the bar was removed and opening hours reduced (Figure 3). To some extent, the belief that the municipality neglected the neighbourhood due to residents' inability to vote seemed to hold true. UN-Habitat's response to this was to rethink the space with the residents' help. This reflects the principle of counter flows, where input from different scales is continuously sought and used to manage the public space.

Figure 3: Location of the lot before and after the public space implementaiton

The agreement was to have two municipal wardens in two shifts, morning and afternoon. In reality, there was only one, a policeman. Yet after the opening, the space was closed for some days, after which one of the local committee members negotiated with the municipality to open the space from 8am to 2pm. These opening hours were not suitable for the Lebanese children who finished school around 2pm. Only Syrian children had an afternoon school shift and could benefit from the space in the morning. Instructions on how to use the space were posted at the entrance and included the exclusion of food, ball games and access to youth as decided by the local committee. The space was dedicated for resting and for children to play safely away from cars.

To date and after implementation, UN-Habitat has been engaged in further learning from residents about their needs from this space and establishing a sense of ownership. This includes considering: the opening hours, the warden, maintenance of the provided amenities, greenery and safety. Based on residents' feedback, the space was upgraded in spring 2018, and some design elements were changed. The concrete benches, which are less likely to be vandalized or damaged than plastic or wooden ones, were relocated as they are set too close to each other. The grass, which dried out, was replaced with rubber tiles that are safe for children. The concrete benches and walls were painted with graffiti. (social development coordinator, UN-Habitat, personal communication, 23 March 2018). The trees that dried out were replaced with trees in pots, which give shade and do not require much irrigation. The tree pots and sand pits for children will be reused old rubber wheels collected from the area. In terms of safety and visibility, two water tankers used to park just next to this space blocking the view. In their place the tree pots were placed to maintain visibility. Solar lighting fixtures are installed and the whole neighbourhood is benefitting from them. Light wire fences were installed rather than walls. The space's flooring was expanded towards the road, that is, out of its limits, thus extending it into the neighbourhood.

Meanwhile, negotiations with the municipality continue regarding the opening hours and management of the space – either provide a municipally assigned warden for the afternoon session, or assign a local who would be paid by the municipality or funded by UN-Habitat.

Conclusion

The bleak image of a degraded and socially fragmented neighbourhood was transformed. This was possible due to the relational approach, which enabled an ongoing process of communication and collaboration among the municipality, residents and refugees. Within this context, 'the core feature of a relational public space is change' (Tornaghi and Knierbein 2015: 15), which is manifested through the initial engagement of various actors in the space's implementation, the use of the space for social practices beyond the confines of the neighbourhood, and the upgrading that followed. It is an attempt to counter stagnation and residents' perceived neglect of their neighbourhood by the municipality, and equally mix residents rather than suffice to live parallel lives leading to prejudices. This dynamic engagement of individuals has both benefits and shortcomings. It is an interweaving process that starts with reading the spatial and social fabric of the neighbourhood, identifying individuals, establishing social networks, and involving them in placemaking, empowering them to gain a sense of ownership and place attachment, nurturing over time and space a process of social cohesion.

The recently designed space became one component of the nearby facilities that form a fabric weaving across the neighbourhood. This new place established a station in people's everyday practices, providing immaterial benefit through gathering and contributing to wellbeing, specifically for housewives. Also, the space was recognised at a wider urban scale by engaging residents but also outsiders, and accordingly pinning the neighbourhood on the city map.

The relational approach together built a process rather than a product. There is no expectation that the design will solve all the neighbourhood's problems. Yet using the design as a shared basis for the residents is seen to enable encounters, everyday practices, and possibly have the potential to gradually dissolve prejudgements and establish affinity and coherence among disparate residents. This

marginalised neighbourhood with its palimpsest social and spatial urban context provides the ground for reflections on similar contexts in globally.

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