

REGENERATION OF HISTORICAL HOUSING CONTEXTS AND PRIVATIZATION OF URBAN SPACES

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Abstract *privatization of urban spaces is a challenging phenomenon that is recently taking over in many historical city centres. Transforming traditional spaces like sidewalks, streets and squares into commercial standard spaces controlled by private investors aiming profit generating activities, attracts high and middle income groups causing though possible gentrification of existing traditional contexts. This concept is economically sustainable and may help regeneration processes by transforming city centres into vibrant spaces. However it may have major impact on context's character, image and diversity, since it changes traditional uses, types of users in contexts, and city blocks ownership patterns.*

The current paper examines the effect of privatization of urban spaces on: social equity in publicly accessible spaces, character of historical housing contexts, traditional uses and local communities.

The first part of the paper discusses public spaces and character of built environment, the concept of privatization of urban spaces, commercial activities and gentrification of public spaces, traditional uses and character maintenance. The second part reviews two case studies of spaces regeneration in city centres of Amsterdam, Netherlands and Cairo, Egypt, assessing the impact of regenerated spaces on contexts' character. It concludes with a framework that evaluates spaces regeneration initiatives in the Egyptian context.