

Call for applications: Research stay in Egypt in March 2024

# UNDERSTANDING URBAN MARKETS

PHYSICAL AND NON-PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF URBAN FORMS



Commercial streets, commercial urban areas and commercial infrastructures play a crucial role in the morphology of historic districts in major cities across the globe. At the same time, they represent an important pillar for the economy of local communities and a fine representation of their socio-cultural backgrounds. This puts commercial streets, commercial urban areas and commercial infrastructures at the forefronts of areas that could also play a significant role in downtowns revitalization. A thing that also calls for integrated interventions and approaches to preserve their heritage value and urban character for future generations and at the same time provide effective and responsive intervention for changing socio-cultural and economic needs. In historic cores of major German cities, commercial streets, commercial urban areas and commercial infrastructures have been witnessing numerous approaches for revitalization. In many cases commercial streets and urban areas turned into pedestrian areas, some commercial infrastructures including department stores were conserved and rehabilitated, several infill projects were included for the revitalization of historic commercial urban areas. In parallel, even though most historic centers in Egyptian cities still provide vibrant commercial venues; commercial streets, urban areas and infrastructures in historic districts in Egyptian cities still need several interventions in order to protect and highlight the

architectural and urban heritage values of such contexts and at the same time maximize the economic and social benefits that can be generated from their urban revitalization

This research project aims at exploring the relationship between the physical and nonphysical aspects of urban forms focusing mainly on commercial urban areas in historic districts. Towards this aim, the present research project proposes an inter-cities analysis between urban forms of commercial areas in Egyptian and German historic centres. The research highlights patterns of similarities and differences in the contexts under investigation and draws lessons that could be learned and others to be avoided in urban interventions, urban regeneration and revitalization attempts of commercial urban areas and commercial infrastructure in historic districts.

### **Research Objectives:**

The main aim of this research project is to elaborate a framework for the exploration of patterns of relationship between the physical and non-physical aspects of urban forms in commercial urban areas in historic districts in major Egyptian and German cities. Towards this aim a network of German-Egyptian actors is created and therefore, the objectives of the research project are divided into three sets of objectives: the first set is directly related to the proposed academic topic, the second is linked with the revitalization of commercial urban areas in German and Egyptian historic districts, and the third set is linked with the German-Egyptian partnership in the short and intermediate term.

I. Objectives related with the academic topic: Analyzing patterns of interrelationship between physical and non-physical aspects in historic commercial urban areas in selected major Egyptian cities  
Analyzing patterns of interrelationship between physical and non-physical aspects in historic commercial urban areas in selected major German cities:  
Analyzing inter-city patterns of interrelationship between the physical and the nonphysical aspects of urban form in commercial historic urban districts.

II. Objectives related with interventions and revitalization attempts of commercial urban areas in historic city districts - Reaching a set of recommendations to inform urban interventions, regeneration and revitalization of commercial urban areas in historic districts in Egypt: Reaching a set of recommendations to inform urban interventions, regeneration and revitalization of commercial urban areas in historic districts in Germany.

### **Methodology:**

The stream of knowledge of Urban morphology includes different approaches based on different schools of thoughts. Each of the followed approach aims at understanding urban form from a specific perspective. The present study adopts the following three approaches for the investigation of the inter-city analysis of the Egyptian and German cities under investigation:

***The historico-geographical approach:*** This approach was based on the foundational work of the German-British scholar MRG Conzen. In this approach geographical structures are analysed based on the analysis of their constituent elements and the transformation of these elements through time. Within this approach urban areas can be subdivided into three main form complexes: streets systems; plot patterns and building patterns. The topographical

character of an urban area is the outcome of the various combinations of these three complexes. Urban transformation can be traced through detection of change of these form complexes through time.

***The Configurational Approach (Space Syntax):*** Mainly developed by Hillier and Hanson, this approach includes a set of methods and techniques that analyses urban spatial configurations and their impacts with humanistic affairs. It is a science-based human-focused approach that interrelates spatial layouts with social, economic and environmental phenomena.

***The Spatial Analytical Approach:*** this approach is evident in the work of Michael Batty (UCL), an approach that uses GIS and other models to understand the spatial structure and dynamics of cities. Through this study a number of commercial urban areas in historic cities in both Germany and Egypt are selected and investigated using the above-mentioned urban morphology approaches. The results are then used to extrapolate patterns of similarities and differences, and lessons to be learned and others to be avoided through development control regulations in the path of urban transformation.

### **Expected results:**

The expected results of this research project can be outlined as follows:

- A study on patterns of interrelationship between the physical and the nonphysical aspects of urban form in commercial historic urban districts in major German and Egyptian cities.
- Recommendations to inform urban intervention, urban regeneration and urban revitalization of commercial urban areas in historic districts for both Egypt and Germany.
- The creation of an effective network of Egyptian and German actors, that can extend its work beyond the limited duration of the fund, in order to disseminate awareness of the importance and potentials of historic commercial areas for their local urban contexts.
- An exhibition of panels including presentation of the analyses of the selected urban contexts is to be organized in both institutions.
- Lectures presentations to present the investigations and outcomes of the research project is to be organized by both partners. This will help disseminate the research outcomes and encourage young researchers to present their work.
- At least one international publication in peer-reviewed (Scopus indexed) international journal to document the research outcomes and disseminate the research framework. This will also encourage the participating young researchers in academic publishing.

### **Requirements for the application**

The workshop calls for applications by master or PhD students from different disciplines at the Bauhaus University Weimar.

Travel and accommodation costs will be covered by the DAAD for the accepted applicants. The mobility will be supported by 850 Euro and the stay with 2086 Euro for a one month stay. Shorter stays are potentially possible, longer stays are allowed but not further supported. The research will be out in a team of four students (master) and guided by Prof. Eckardt.

For the application, a letter of motivation and a CV are required. Furthermore, a scan of your passport needs to be sent. Please send these required documents until 01.11.2023 to [Frank.Eckardt@uni-weimar.de](mailto:Frank.Eckardt@uni-weimar.de)