

TEMPORARY USES AND REGENERATION OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS THE CASE OF ATTABA MARKET, CAIRO

S. IMAM¹, D. ELKERDANY², N. HAMZA³, A. ALSADATY¹,
T. ELSERAFI⁴, AND M. ABDALLAH⁵

ABSTRACT

Recent redevelopment methods consider activities as the core of catalytic regeneration strategies in decaying settings with value. Urban catalysts approaches recently focus on temporary uses in pilot projects. This paper discusses temporary uses and cultural activities impact on urban regeneration strategies, turning old historic market buildings located in contexts of value into social and cultural catalysts to their surrounding contexts. The methodology includes three parts: the first part discusses temporary uses as catalysts in contexts of value, the strategies adopted to turn historic markets into social and cultural catalysts, and the role of different stakeholders in temporary uses strategies. The second part reviews an Egyptian 19th century market building "Attaba vegetable market" as a potential catalyst in Attaba historic district facing heavy urban growth threatening area character. The third part develops an approach to allow experimental and temporary activities to be active in testing residents' needs and turning an existing historic building through a temporary reuse program into an urban catalyst to its surroundings. The framework proposed consists of a comprehensive flexible program that sets regeneration objectives benefiting the catalytic effect of experimental and temporary activities in pioneer projects and proposes several ways to achieve regeneration goals for different stakeholders.

KEYWORDS: Temporary uses, Urban form, Incremental change, Regeneration policies, Historic markets, Attaba market.

1. INTRODUCTION

Regenerating decaying contexts in response to social needs and social changes is a challenging task that needs indicators to such needs and related changes. The concept of temporary uses allows such indicators to be identified through temporary

¹ Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, Giza, Egypt. saharimam@hotmail.com

² Professor, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, Giza, Egypt.

³ Senior Lecturer, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University, Newcastle, UK.

⁴ Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, Giza, Egypt.

⁵ Lecturer, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Mansoura University, Dakahlia, Egypt.

activities suggested in empty locations or as adaptive reuse of historical buildings supported by different stakeholders and local governments. These temporary activities may succeed and turn into a pilot catalyst project for surrounding contexts redevelopment programs or fail without serious risks and huge costs. Temporary activities usually succeed economically and socially when they are part of a comprehensive flexible redevelopment program.

The current paper examines how including temporary uses as adaptive reuse in empty locations within historical buildings may be an effective way to revitalize the historical building and the context surrounding it, as it attracts many types of users and encourages them to engage with context differently. Cultural uses specifically attract creative class that has power to attract mobile investors and turn the area into a magnet for investments [1]. The paper reviews and documents the Egyptian case of “Attaba vegetable market hall”, a 19th century historical building which is currently losing its architectural significance due to uncontrolled change and sprawl of activities different from its original use, covering the whole building and its surrounding threatening building’s aesthetics and area character. The current research discusses the possibility of saving the building and its surroundings through the adoption of cultural temporary uses within the market building as part of an adaptive reuse process, providing an infrastructure for cultural clustering [1] that has been already repeated in many other historical buildings in the surrounding contexts. The case explores the concepts of temporary uses in turning old market buildings into social and cultural catalysts to surrounding contexts, and turning the historical district into a cultural cluster attracting upper income groups and tourism, upgrading social and economic problems while saving area character and history [1].

The paper examines the potential of using cultural temporary uses policies as an instrument to address economic [2], social and physical decay of Cairo historic contexts. The first part discusses temporary uses as catalysts in contexts of value, the strategies adopted to turn historic markets into social and cultural catalysts, the role of different stakeholders in temporary uses strategies. The second part reviews the 19th century market building “Attaba vegetable market hall” as a potential catalyst in

Attaba historic district facing heavy urban growth threatening area character. The third part will develop an approach that allows experimental and temporary activities to test residents' needs and help turning an existing historic building into an urban catalyst to its surroundings.

2. TEMPORARY USES AS CATALYSTS IN EXISTING CONTEXTS OF VALUE

Temporary uses have existed in old industrial nations since 1970's and 80's when many large European cities adopted new strategies that created alternative lifestyles in protest to traditional planning tools [3].

During the past two decades, the concept of temporary uses and the use of cultural activities in urban renewal programs became a new trend. Many recent theories consider cultural activities as an effective tool that can contribute to development of urban fabric and spaces. Since art and cultural activities provide possibilities for self-expression, increase public life, contribute to community cohesion and provide a basis for creating the feeling of one urban identity [4].

Recently many redevelopment strategies cases succeeded in changing the image of decayed areas by introducing cultural temporary activity. When such an activity succeeds, it becomes a source of economic growth and an instrument for area marketing [5]. One of the successful cases for cultural activities is the renewal of Newcastle central business district (CBD) in Australia that was subject to a temporary program addressing vacant shops aiming to revive the CBD as shown in Fig. 1, enhance the life of communities and save it from continuous decay. The project succeeded in creating a microcosm of artisans and community groups promoting Newcastle to outsiders [6].

Temporary uses are experimental urban projects that have the power to change cities' economic base by attracting investments and visitors to a location and vitalize it. Therefore, many recent strategies depend on temporary experimental projects in economic motivation to attract investments, and in social development strategies in addressing local community needs and increasing citizen cohesion [4].



Fig. 1. Hunter street mall has the highest concentration of temporary projects to promote Newcastle to outsiders [6-7].

The inclusion of artistic activities in urban renewal is an influential tool in addressing social development, with the collaboration between authorities and artists. Artistic activity and intervention can become a powerful tool in addressing social objectives in urban renewal projects

3. THE ROLE OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS IN TEMPORARY USES CATALYTIC STRATEGIES.

The boom of temporary uses in Europe over the past two decades is due to the transition from industrial to knowledge based economies, and the development of a diversified knowledge environment [3]. Among the temporary use examples of pilot projects that affected surrounding area social and economic conditions is the arena area in Berlin, a former bus Hall Built in 1927 as shown in Fig. 2 - for Berlin's public transport system, in 1995 the actor Falk Walter founded (Art Combine) a nonprofit association with the goal to establish long term art activities. In the hall today, the arena is a commercial enterprise that helps shape the city's cultural landscape welcoming one million visitors a year. Many other activities appeared around the arena changing the image of the surrounding area affecting renting prices in the area and attracting different income groups [3].

Many stakeholders are usually involved in temporary uses strategies and debates; architects, planners, and urbanists consider it a new research field and new types of projects. Recently municipalities and urban investors in many countries consider the creative city concept as a tool for place marketing [10]. Users and residents of designated areas, who were usually not allowed to take any decisions, with

the aid of the temporary uses concept gave them a chance to be part of the urban development processes [3]. Therefore, temporary uses solve the stakeholders' dilemma since space is available at a reasonable charge. It represents a starting point for user based urbanism.



Fig. 2. Berlin's former bus Hall Built in 1927 [8]. The WAF festival taking place as temporary event in the arena of Berlin attracting many visitors [9].

Temporary uses do not exclude long term planning. Alongside classic planning tools temporary uses strategies are based on a public-private partnership and a clear supportive role of public authorities in providing information of vacant properties, keep rent low and guarantee accessibility to facilitate the culture clustering concept. When temporary uses are part of long-term visions for regeneration it is easier for authorities to adjust their plans and policies according to temporary projects' indication to contexts' needs [11]. Temporary uses are considered experimental urban projects that have the power to change cities' economic base by attracting investments and visitors to a certain location, therefore they have a major effect on urban transformations of existing contexts and can cause indirect economic effects generating additional income through short-term uses [12].

The governmental sector is usually responsible of the comprehensive urban vision of the area, assigning private projects as regeneration pivots according to vision. Users and residents of designated areas are part of the temporary use experiment assigned in the regeneration pivots. A third sector represented in committees and organizations interested in urban conservation and regeneration could facilitate

providing an assessment of surrounding community needs benefiting the temporary uses' experimental nature, this sector should work with local planning authorities and the active NGOs in the area.

4. HISTORIC MARKETS AS SOCIAL CATALYSTS

Temporary uses strategies are an effective tool to explore physical and social potentials of places since they create an arena for community involvement that can help understand needs that residents themselves have not been able to formulate in a bottom up effective process. Therefore, including temporary uses in urban renewal strategies may be a successful tool to measure community needs and include them in decision making to move along with the demand of society.

The inclusion of artistic activities in temporary uses practice is very influential when addressing social development. Recently, cities are considering social and physical aspects together to raise their international competitiveness and to deal with social diversity. Cultural activities are a good tool in place making creating attractive urban spaces.

Historic market halls, located in contexts of value, represent a potential ground for social and cultural fusion. They can tolerate the inclusion of cultural activities as temporary uses in urban development of contexts of value. The current paper considers temporary uses to be an effective tool to explore physical and social potentials of contexts, exploring turning market halls into catalysts to their surrounding through introducing cultural temporary uses in these halls and testing community reaction to it.

5. TEMPORARY USES AND 'CULTURE CLUSTERS' IN CAIRO HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

A temporary use as an indicator for existing community needs is a new field that depends on experimenting in the city through concrete temporary projects. The temporality idea encourages risks, as it does not have to be a long-term situation [6]. Cultural activities are the most common temporary use activities suggested in experimental urban projects. Temporary experimental urban projects can transform old buildings, factories, and market halls into cultural venues that provide events and offer

entertainment. Such strategy attracts creative class to city spaces, which in turn attracts investments and helps catalyzing districts' regeneration processes [11].

This is the case in downtown Khedival Cairo where adaptive reuses of existing 19th century buildings are adopting temporary cultural uses to create a catalytic pivot for regeneration of decaying context. Figure 3 shows the venues where such activities take place transforming the district into a culture cluster [13].

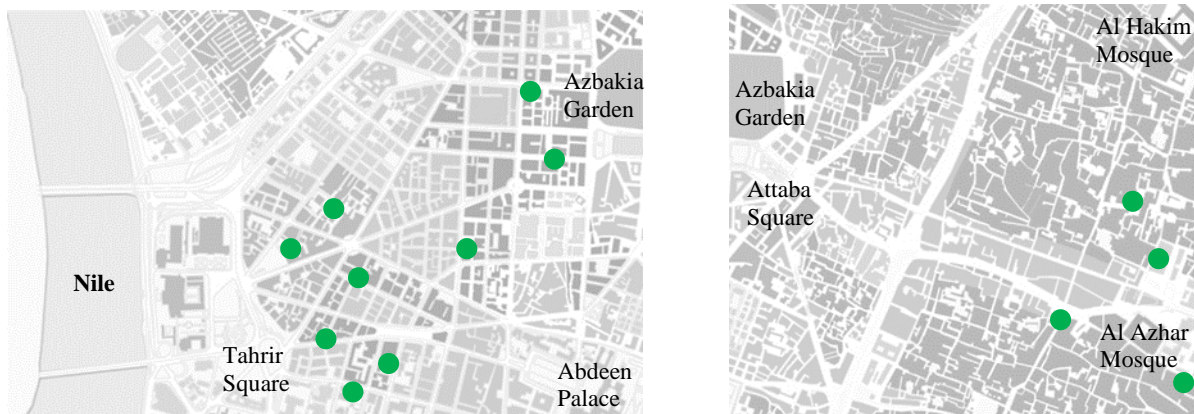


Fig. 3. Maps showing cultural performances locations in downtown Cairo and in medieval Cairo (based on the UNESCO Urban Regeneration Project for Historic Cairo (URHC) 2014)

Many successful trials include Studio Emad Eddin Foundation, 100 copies, and the Town House gallery that started in 1998 as a trial for an independent nonprofit art space expanding the knowledge and practice of contemporary arts in Egypt [14]. The Downtown Contemporary Art Festival (DCAF) is based on the idea of reviving existing contexts by creating art and culture in vacant locations and historical buildings aiming to attract entertainment business and residents to downtown and revive the area's old image [15]. One of the venues used by the DCAF festival is the Khazendar old department store, recently renovated through an international competition. After renovation the store was included in the 'Creative City' initiative where the DCAF artists were seeking a physical dialogue between art and trade. Other trials took place as well in the old medieval core experimenting the temporary uses concept and creating cultural venues in old historical buildings such as; Beit El kady and Wekalet El Ghoury. A network is formed from private independent initiatives supported by investors believing that art can be a tool to revive the city.

This network depends mainly on private initiatives encouraged by private investors such as the DCAF festival depicted in Fig. 4. The venues were rehabilitated by the private company, Al Ismailiya, aiming to regenerate the old image of historic downtown Cairo by buying old buildings and restoring them allowing creative uses to take place. Urban policies in Cairo are centralized with no flexible vision allowing the contribution of non-governmental bodies. Recently, however, Cairo Governorate together with the National Organization of Urban Harmony (NOUH) are supporting many of the initiatives in downtown Cairo offering a potential for social and economic development [16].



Fig. 4. The festival aims to bring different types of audiences and performers to nontraditional sites for performances [15].

The current paper suggests that Cairo old market halls can easily be part of such a network. Each market may represent a catalytic pivot in its location attracting new types of uses and changing the image of decaying contexts. The paper examines the vegetable market hall in Attaba, its unique place between the medieval core and the 19th century city core makes it a potential to be included in the network of temporary cultural uses that started in both historical cores.

6. ATTABA VEGTABLE MARKET PART OF THE ‘CULTURE CLUSTER’

Downtown Khedival Cairo at the end of the 19th century used to be the cultural and political heart of Cairo. According to Scharabi [17], Khedival Cairo’s urban structure is based on a European gridiron plan with oblique boulevards anchoring

squares [18]. The introduction of Western urban district that was socially and physically modern alongside the traditional city [19] was among the efforts of Ismail Pasha to modernize Egypt [20].

6.1 Area and Market History

Many new building types were introduced to modernize Egyptian contexts. Among them are the central market halls providing shelter from the weather and clean environment for wholesale shopping. The Attaba vegetable market was built during Khedive Tawfiq era, for healthier shopping, behind the parliament hotel buildings overlooking Attaba square. The market is in a permanent building equipped with facilities to maintain health standards. The market is surrounded by Alazhar Street from the Northern side connecting the market with older traditional markets in Muski, Gamaleya, and Hamzawi. From the Southern side, Mohamed Ali Street connects Attaba square to the Citadel [21]. It is an endowment building, which means the revenue from the shop rents should be spent on its maintenance and the rest would go to the beneficiaries. Currently, the Egyptian Endowment Authority is the owner of the market and is one of the major stakeholders that should be included in the regeneration policies. Attaba market was built in Neo Classic style around two covered alleys, bringing together four principal pavilions each of them having a specialty [22]. The market area is around 6260 m² surrounded by three streets and a pedestrian walkway. Its main halls are made of steel and are similar in construction details and in shape to many French and Italian markets.

The Market shown in Fig. 5 has several main and secondary entrances to facilitate accessibility in and out of the building. They are all direct entrances leading from the street to the inside of the building as shown in Fig. 6 -in contrast with bent entrances that were familiar in the Islamic city- surmounted with triangular pediment and ornaments resembling a fruit, such an ornament is a revival of classical and renaissance architecture [23].

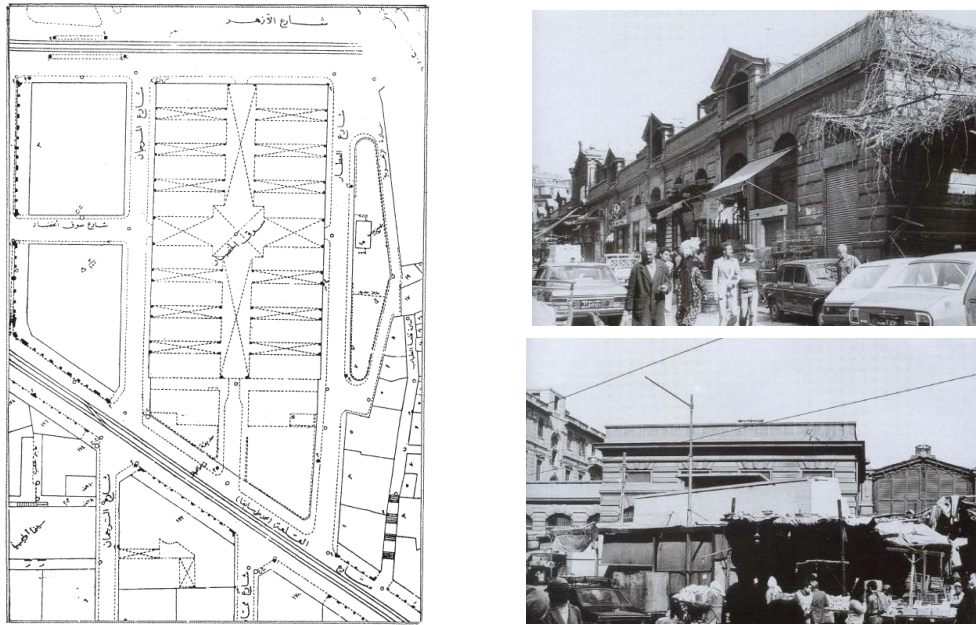


Fig. 5. Attaba market, map 225 (1/100), 1935, Egyptian Survey Authority and elevations of Attaba market in 1948, [17].

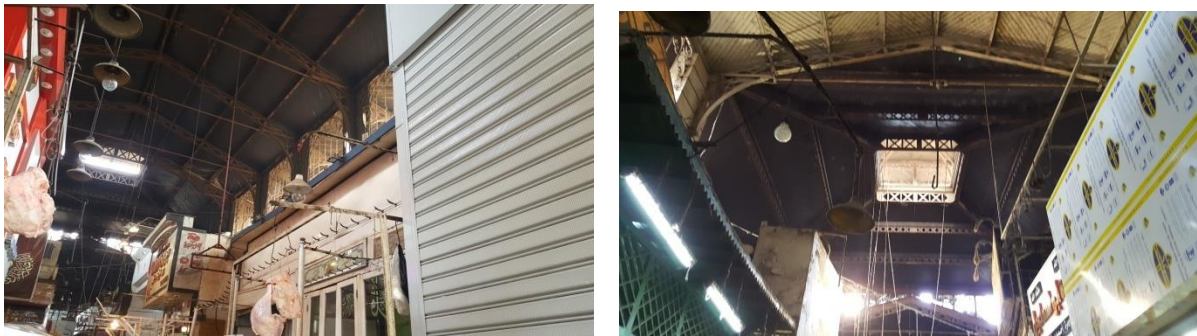


Fig. 6. Wide alleys covered with metal trusses; the space at the intersection of the two corridors is covered with the conical pyramid like trussed roof.

As shown in the maps of Fig. 7, done by the Sustainable Green Markets research team, the Attaba square represents the edge of the traditional city and the beginning of the 19th century city core. It was a perfect roundabout for carriages, trams, and automobiles bringing consumers from newer districts and from traditional ones as well. The market was accessible to families from different social classes. The square was divided by an old palace into two separate squares: Azbak and Attaba. The palace was reused as the mixed court building was demolished in 1936 turning the square into one big open space with many significant buildings along it. Two major

streets appeared by 1948 Al Azhar and Al Gaish changing the area urban morphology as shown in Fig. 7.

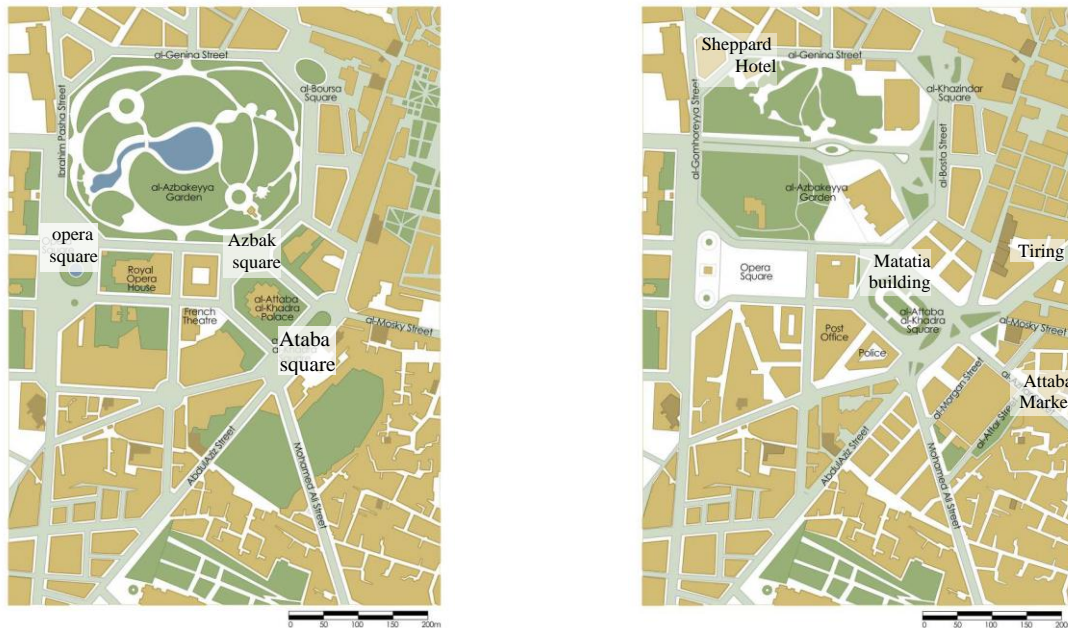


Fig. 7. Attaba Context, 1874, (based on Grand Bey, *Plan General de la Ville du Caire, 1874*), and 1980, (based on the *Cadastral map of Cairo, 1980*)

6.2 Area and Market Current Condition

The second half of the 19th century witnessed changes in the historical cores. The cores started to lose some of their fine urban qualities for many reasons: historic buildings were subject to rent freezes and fragmented ownerships, one apartment can be now owned by six or seven brothers and sisters. This led to rapid deterioration of several buildings due to lack of maintenance [24]. The increase of densities, demographic changes, the loss of iconic buildings around the square like the Opera house, Sheppard hotel, Matatia building as shown in Fig. 8 and the change of uses from residential to administrative uses caused many public buildings to fall into decay. The cultural heart of Cairo was transforming into a deteriorating area with heavy traffic.

In addition to the urban morphological changes documented previously, the market hall is recently suffering sprawl of electronic trade, creating a second skin covering its facades and the facades of the buildings surrounding it, threatening the architectural value of the building and the area character.



Fig. 8. Map showing Matatia and Tiring location In Attaba square, current Photo of Tiring old department store, and a Photo of Matatia building before destruction [25].

Change in uses was behind the need to increase the number of shop. Shop facades were redistributed to create a bigger number of smaller units. Many shops were divided into two or three shops and new shops were added even if they cover the entrances.

The open air space overlooking Mohamed Ali street disappeared, a mosque was built covering the market's facades, and the two buildings annexed to the market are almost completely covered with new additions as seen in Figs. 9 and 10.

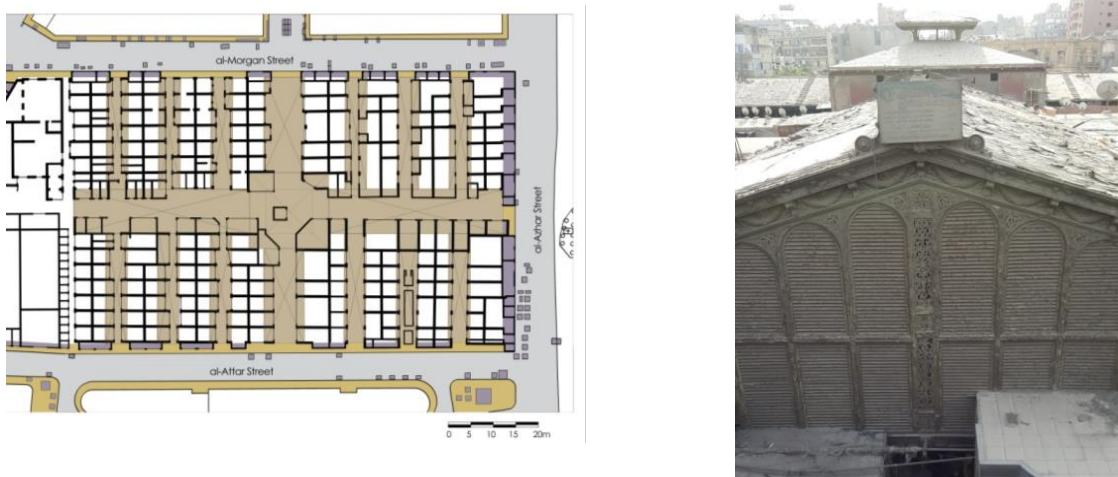


Fig. 9. Preliminary survey for Attaba Market plan, by the research team 2017 (based on Egyptian Survey Authority plan), additions to the Facade of the Attaba Market impeding the Main Entrance, 2017

This façade is centred with an entrance gate that is perfectly identical to the previous entrance gates. The area that was once accessible to families from different

social groups became inhabited by one socioeconomic group benefiting the activities covering the market facades, these activities are an extension to activities in major surrounding streets.



Fig. 10. Second skin of shops covering the market facades, a multi-story building covering the façade of Mohamed Ali street.

7. DISCUSSION

Recent temporary uses strategies consider art and culture as tools to revive existing contexts due to the temporality aspect of these activities that allow them to experiment community needs by creating an arena for community involvement. Therefore, including such activities in old historic buildings as an adaptive reuse policy, helps protecting and maintaining the historical building, and is an influential tool addressing social development strategies [1]. Temporary activities are also considered as experimental projects that can change areas economic conditions by attracting investments and visitors to the area.

7.1 Downtown as the Hub of Many Cultural Temporary Experiments

Downtown Cairo used to be the cultural and political heart of Cairo. Many theatres and shows were built, its cafes started revolutions all along Cairo history. As previously mentioned, the district lost part of its old cultural image, but it is still the hub of many art and cultural temporary experiments that took place in empty locations and were supported by private investors. These include Townhouse gallery and DCAF festival that used non-traditional sites for performances: historical buildings, store

fronts, alleyways, and rooftops aiming to bring audiences and performers to engage with the city thus transforming the district into a culture cluster. In both cases, artists and sponsors believe that art and culture can be tools to revive existing contexts.

Old Cairo markets can easily be part of these trials. Each building may represent a catalytic pivot in its location attracting new types of users and changing the image of decaying contexts of value.

Historic markets are potential social venues of interactions and mingling, the vegetable market in Attaba represents a potential ground for social and cultural fusion. It is a unique place, in the middle of two historic settings in Cairo, the medieval core and the 19th century city core. The market is unique, not only in terms of the historic and aesthetic values it carries, but also in terms of people interaction with it. Observing individuals and small groups' behaviors inside and around a historic building can be in several cases, a rich ground of research to show users and passers-by connections with the building and its meaning for them.

7.2 Flexible Programs and Regeneration Visions

Governments considering flexible programs and not fixed ones can absorb the non-stable nature of creative activities and benefit their abilities to change settings. Flexible programs can use temporary uses as tools to understand locations potentials, residents' needs and possibilities for economic transformation. To achieve such a goal while involving different stakeholders, a comprehensive plan coordinating and linking investors and artists' efforts designed by a committee formed of urban planners, artists and municipalities under the management of Cairo Governorate and the National Organization of Urban Harmony (NOUH) will help achieving such vision. This is depicted in Figs. 11 and 12.

This paper proposes the following framework for factors that allow experimental and temporary activities adopted in historical buildings to create a catalyst that regenerates a decaying context of value through the adaptive reuse of historical buildings. The framework consists of proposing a comprehensive flexible

plan for the designated historic context. The flexible plan is a regeneration program under the management of Cairo Governorate and NOUH based on studies of existing condition, goals and available funds that tests public reaction to chosen strategy through a designed participation plan [26].

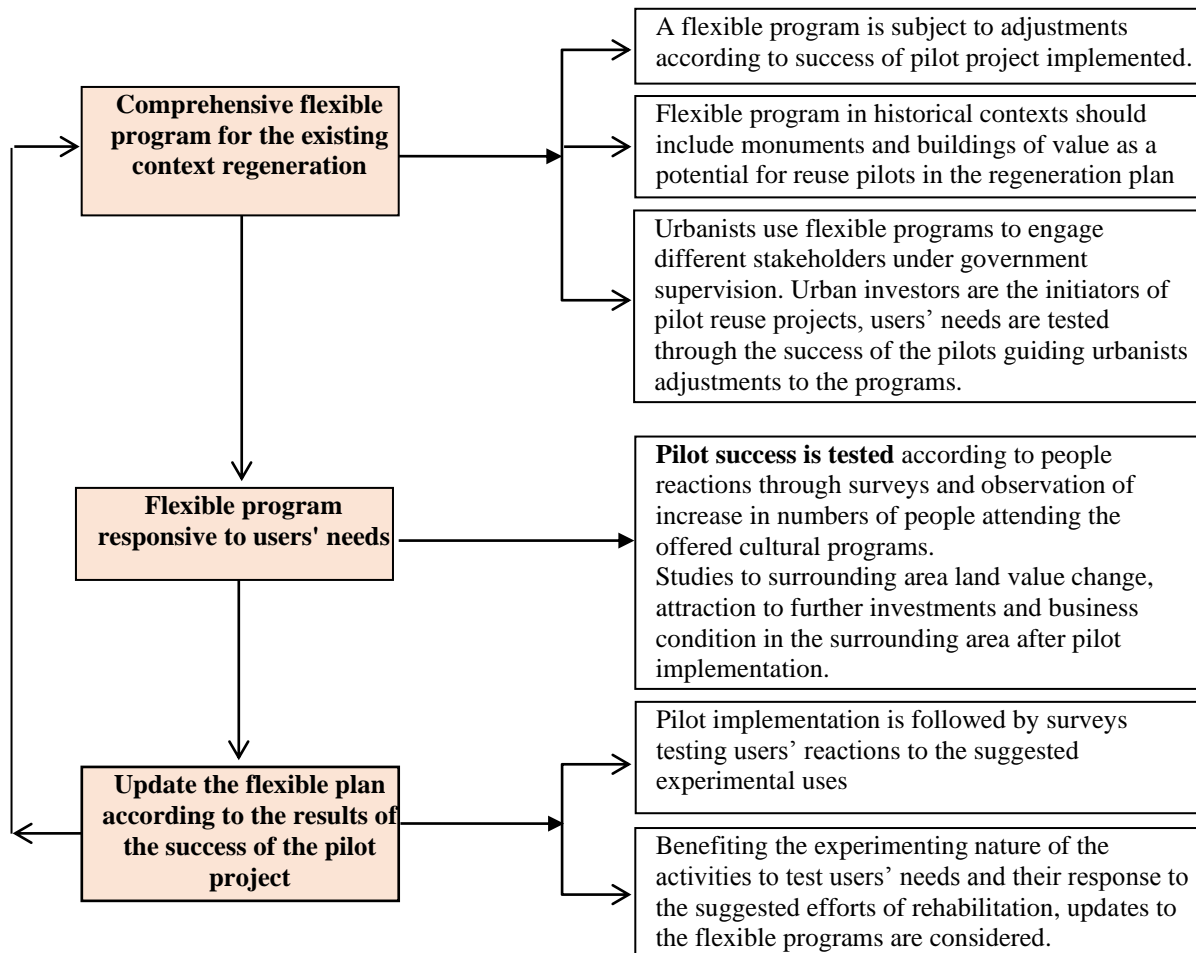


Fig.11. A proposed framework for the regeneration process using the catalytic effect of experimental and temporary activities in pioneer projects.

The flexible plan sets more general objectives and identifies several ways of achieving them based on circumstances and understanding of contexts' needs. It therefore controls development in a more responsive way. It includes different stakeholders such as private investors, Egyptian Authority of Endowment, artists, and performers to set pilot temporary trials.

Being flexible, the plan can be updated according to the results of the success of the pilot project, benefiting the experimenting nature of the proposed pilot activity and

its indications to market and community needs. The pilot project can be a temporary activity that can be created as a reuse within contexts' historical buildings or in vacant buildings exploring communities and market's needs. Culture led initiatives cannot be articulated into a wider policy agenda without a comprehensive framework adopting different initiatives under the management of Cairo Governorate and NOUH. Figure 12 outlines the framework that examines governmental and nongovernmental roles in culture-led urban regeneration initiatives.

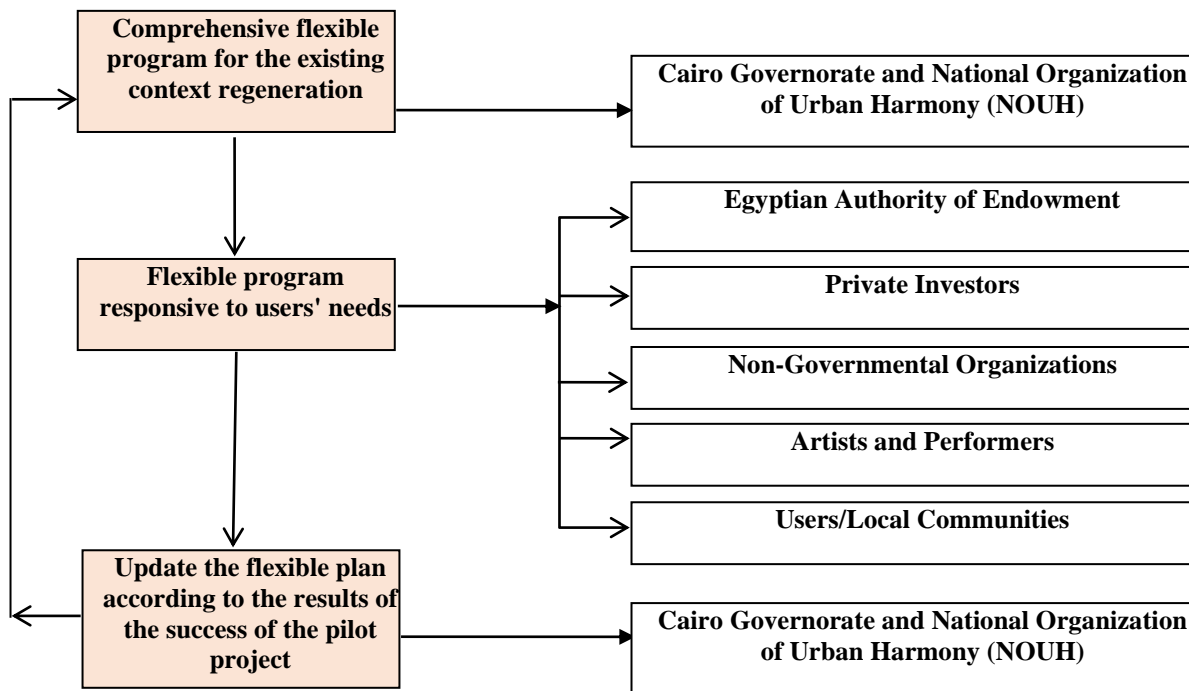


Fig. 12. A proposed framework for the governmental and nongovernmental roles in culture-led urban regeneration initiatives in Historical Cairo.

7.3 TEMPORARY USES AS AN EXPERIMENTAL REGENERATION TOOL

Temporary uses is a relatively new tool for dynamic urban design. It aims at taking decisions based on feedback from the existing community and market's needs in order to integrate market parties in a market oriented development and stimulate development projects. Community empowerment helps shape the decisions to the

benefit of local communities [27]. Temporary uses encourage the concept of small private sector led urban development projects. Such projects encourage local authorities to manage the redevelopment of urban areas based on public private role division.

When tested, this framework can be applied to other historic markets in Cairo, including Bab el Louq and Heliopolis historic market buildings. Temporary uses can exploit such buildings as pioneer projects to regenerate both market buildings as well as their surrounding contexts. The experiment can then be implemented in other historic markets in Egypt putting into consideration the cultural specificity of each context.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have declared no conflict of interests.

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الاستعمالات المؤقتة وإعادة تنمية المناطق التاريخية دراسة حالة لسوق الخضار بالعتبة، القاهرة

يناقش البحث الاستعمالات المؤقتة ودورها في إعادة تنمية نطاقات تاريخية قائمة من خلال إعادة استخدام مباني الاسواق التاريخية كمحفزات تنموية للعمارة المحيطة بها ويتكون من ثلاث اجزاء: الاول يناقش الاستخدامات المؤقتة في المشاريع النواة كمحفزات عمرانية، وتحويل الاسواق التاريخية كاتوية تنمية اجتماعية وثقافية، والجزء الثاني يعرض لاحد اقدم اسواق القرن التاسع عشر في القاهرة وهو سوق الخضار بالعتبة وهي منطقة تاريخية تواجه تدهور عمراني يهدد طابع وتاريخ المكان والجزء الثالث يبلور هيكل للتعامل مع المناطق التاريخية من خلال برامج وسياسات مرنة تستخدم الاستعمالات المؤقتة كأدوات تجريبية لفهم احتياجات المجتمعات القائمة وكنوايا تحفز التنمية العمرانية والاقتصادية في النطاقات ذات القيمة.