Liveability Case Study
Public Realm: Markets and Bazaars and their effect on Liveability within Tunisia and Bahrain
What is a Public Realm in Islamic Cities?

Introduction of bazaars and markets in Tunisia and Bahrain, and their importance on liveability.

- They are the outdoor open spaces that bridge the gap between private interior and hustle city life.
- These spaces are usually adopted by small craft businesses, local coffee shops, gathering spaces and a dimension where people interact, meet, make acquaintance and friendships with each other.
- One of the mandatory Islamic values is to know, visit, and care for your neighbours.
- It is self-evident for the dwellers to be responsible for the unified design of the public realm.
- It is everyones responsibility as a community to support and care for the space.
Affecting the communities life.

Influence of the public realm on liveability through several factors:

1) Bringing the collective of neighbourhoods together - part of the whole.

2) Create income and business for families.

3) Everyday items sold. Necessary for all households, motive for constant use.

4) Multi-use throughout the year on a daily basis within one specific space.

5) Create a vibrant and pedestrian-only friendly traffic.

6) Seasonal change of items according to the time of year.

7) Human interaction and connection.

8) Cultural showcasing - stages for folklore and music.

9) Cultivates a space that attracts travellers.

10) Human trust and personal bonds.
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AL-Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
Tight organic urban corridors built up over time.

Mixed-use condition of permanent shops, temporal bazaars, apartments on top of shops, and single family houses surrounding.

Arrangement on a basis of first comes, but traditionally no two or more of the similar goods shop can be close to each other.

Traditional restaurants and coffee shops utilizing urban space.

Religious events take place in these premise throughout the year.

A place that brings people together on a daily basis at any time of the day, people still go these urban spaces because it’s a part of tradition and culture which will never change.
The evolution of public realms in Manama, Bahrain
Selling goods from the region as a flourishing market around living premise.
Gradually, spaces started to change to gear towards expatriates and locals, especially that a lot of the affordable housing for expatriate workers were located in those premises. Locals still constantly visit the old souq for items such as herbs, condiments, gold and fabric.
Social events and gatherings.
Modern take on the old Souq and Bazaars
Bahrain’s social life has changed recently in aesthetics but still staying true to their beliefs of showcasing local talent, work and businesses.

The older souq has become more of an attraction for expatriates and the older generation. The younger generation gradually diverted and created their own new “Public markets and Bazaars” where it encompasses elements that interests them such as hip culture, pop art, ready food and a social place where people get to sit around and meet up.

In addition, it is seen as a “must-go-to” aspect because its temporal and changeable. Every bazaar has a new set of artists, designers, chefs and stores. So it’s seen as a once in a while experience.

These modern souqs and public spaces are valued more because the youth are the ones that build them, we know what we want, so we build it for us.
It isn’t just a market or souq anymore, but it started becoming a trendy scene and an art form. It influenced the modern liveability in terms of economics & social interactions.

Creates connection not just with the local people, but also regional ones such as visitors and artists from Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Lebanon and other countries.
Over view of urban public realms in Sfax

- Generally it links the main gates of the Medina.
- There is a relationship of streets to the land-use pattern and related street coverage.
- Location of urban elements/building types to the street system.
- Major Suq around the Grand Mosque: generally soft, noble, quiet market: gold, silk.
- Suq adjacent to Bab or Medina gates: generally loud, rough market: blacksmith, vegetables, carpentry.
The evolution of public realms in Sfax, Tunisia
What came first? the function or the architecture?

After the independance, two bigger gates had been opened on each side of the original gate.

The consequence: introduction of cars into the entrance of the mainly pedestrian city.
What create the space/ vibes/ ambience: the space or the products?
What we ended up having today

A mall sample that you can find anywhere not particularly in Tunisia
Internal conflict
Arabisance: architectural style appeared in North Africa during the French colony.

Same building: the facade and the interior do not spread the same word.

Decoration on the wall

Inside: classical courtyard for service

The Arabic Islamic Mediterranean architecture is more than some random rooms and streets
The city with its historic components are well linked
But the problem dwells in the space appropriation

Difference of the pedestrian experience/walk from the old the city to the new one: more stressful, more chaotic.
Design Principles.

- History and identity
- Non-fear of new technologies

- Potential place to gather people
- Meet other people
- Proximity
- Daily needs

- Human scale
- Food, clothes, water, fresh

- Use a place that has already a significant memory related to the function/use
  (not spreading, barren land)

- Let it define itself, not force it.
Conclusion Take Away.

- Public spaces and life style came hand in hand and built liveability.

- Has many links in regards to economics, food, culture and heritage.

- The assumed similarities between Islamic cities, when in details, it's a different structure.

- Evolution of public realm over time to accommodate current situations.

- The influence of other cultures on the halt of public realms.

Thank You.