



Urban Minorities final conference

13th and 14th november 2014
programme

Thursday 13.11.2014

10.00h

Urban Minorities and Urban Planning, [Frank Eckardt](#)

Sons of the Land of Gol Nubians as urban minorities in Alexandria, [Hebatalla Abouelfadl](#)

„Leaving the backyards behind“: modern European mosque architecture between urban participation, delimitation and exclusion, [Julia Maxelon](#)

12.30h Lunch break

14.00h

Diversity and Inclusion: National and Mobile Stakeholders in Jordan, [Yasser Rajjal](#)

Graffiti in Devon: acquired minority culture by choice and osmosis, [Adam Evans](#)

15.30h Coffee break

16.00h

Space and Urban Minorities: A Cultural History of Armenians of Julfa of Isfahan [Nasser Fakouhi](#)

Vast Regions and Confined Spaces, [Nele Brönnner](#) and [Willy Sengewald](#)

Friday 14.11.2014

10.00h

Housing the Unwelcome: Exclusion, Control and Heteronomy of Asylum Seekers in the European Fortress City, [René Kreichauf](#)

Asylalltage. Everyday-life strategies of asylum seekers in Leipzig, [Philipp Schäfer](#)

Echoes from Cosmopolitan Alexandria: „Ethnic Minorities and Multiculturalism fostering Alexandria urbanism“, [Ebtissam Mohamed Farid](#)

12.30h Lunch break

14.00h

Gendered public space in urban transformation: Tophane example, [Özge Altın](#)

„Save Alex ... Retaining momentum?“, [Ahmed Hassan Moustafa](#)

15.30h Coffee break

16.00h

„Because they threaten the public security and order.“ Questioning the legitimacy basis of practices against homeless people on public spaces in Germany, [Sandra Schindlauer](#)

Planning In Jordan: Insights into planning cooperation in the Middle East, [Maram Tawil](#)

10.00h Urban Minorities and Urban Planning

In contemporary cities, the subject of „minorities“ seems to be most present but hard to describe. In the analysis of the modern city, two contradictory observations are seemingly apparent. Firstly, modern cities cannot be imagined to be built up without the influx and contribution of migrants who are in a „minor position“ to those who are „already there“. Secondly, modernization goes together with the emergence of mass society and institutions of representation. While the relationship between majority and minority is the core of the political constitution of the modern city, the question arises how the city can be planned within the context of a postmodern fragmented metropolis based on a carpet of changeable minorities. In this introduction, the question of the planner as mediator in search for „overlapping consensus“ (Harper and Stein) will be presented and discussed against the background of the furthering social polarization in European cities and with an outlook to its transferability to cities of conflict.

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10.45h Sons of the Land of Gold - Nubians as urban minorities in Alexandria

Around 5,000 years ago, a rich and powerful nation called the kingdom of Kush (also referred to as ancient Nubia) was a center of culture and military might in Africa. Ancient Nubia had a wealth of natural resources such as gold, ivory and ebony. The Nubians are believed to be the first human race on earth, and most of their customs and traditions were adopted by the ancient Egyptians. With history and traditions which can be traced to the dawn of civilization, the Nubians first settled along the banks of the Nile in Aswan. With the building of the High Dam in 1964 under late President Gamal Abdel Nasser era, approximately 50,000 Nubians were forced to move to villages around Kawm Umbu, about fifty kilometers north of the city of Aswan. In 1990 there were around 160,000 Nubians most of them lived in cities, especially Cairo, Alexandria, and along the Suez Canal. Although considered Egyptians, Nubians have their own languages and they carry distinctive features. In the city of Alexandria, family houses from the same village cluster in one or two districts. Did the urban life of the city affect those Nubians, their language, traditions and ties...this was a question that was explored.

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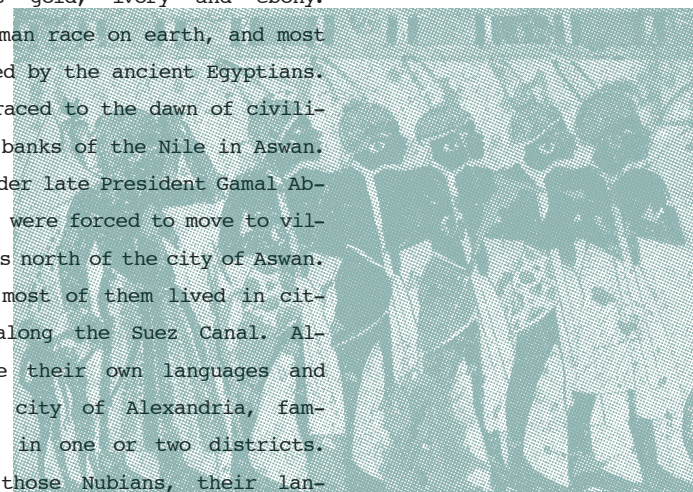
11.30h „Leaving the backyards behind“: modern European mosque architecture between urban participation, delimitation and exclusion

The construction of mosques has been gaining significance in Europe since the 1950s. They appear in a variety of forms and types, and at the same time are torn between urban participation, delimitation and exclusion. Besides legal restrictions, where and how mosques are built across Europe is heavily dependent on populist debate and processes of interpretation and power. For this reason, urban minorities such as mosque communities need to fight not only for social acceptance, but also for „urban acceptance“. By being architecturally visible, they are blending in with the surrounding social structures. This battle has a clear impact on their architecture. In Europe, mosques are often situated on the outskirts of cities. The religious communities need to compromise on the sites, designs and dimensions. They are constantly engaged in resolving disputes and anticipating possible sources of conflict. Nonetheless, there have also been construction projects that passed without any resistance. By looking at examples of both kinds of development (e.g., London, Glasgow, Aachen, Cologne), it can be shown how mosques have established themselves as a new building type in Europe and how they relate to other building types and architectural concepts.

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PhD-Thesis (in progress): „Paradigmen der Moderne im europäischen Moscheebau“
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14.00h Diversity and Inclusion: National and Mobile Stakeholders in Jordan

Diversity refers to human qualities that are different from one group to another living within the same geopolitical boundaries. Aspects of diversity include religious beliefs, ethnicity and race, social status, gender, age, physical abilities, sexual orientation, educational background, job classification and other dimensions. Jordan, in the past two decades, has received a substantial number of refugees from the neighboring countries, specifically, Syria and Iraq, seeking a more safe environment, and resulting in the abnormal growth in population. Refugees have been considered, by both the government and public, as a socio-economical and security burden causing the increase of demand on the economy and infrastructural networks. They have been also considered as a source of cheap and illegal labor adding to the existing unemployment problem, as well as consumers of subsidized services and utilities, such as school education, transportation, oil, electricity and water. This paper suggests accepting the reality of the „Refugees“ and manag-



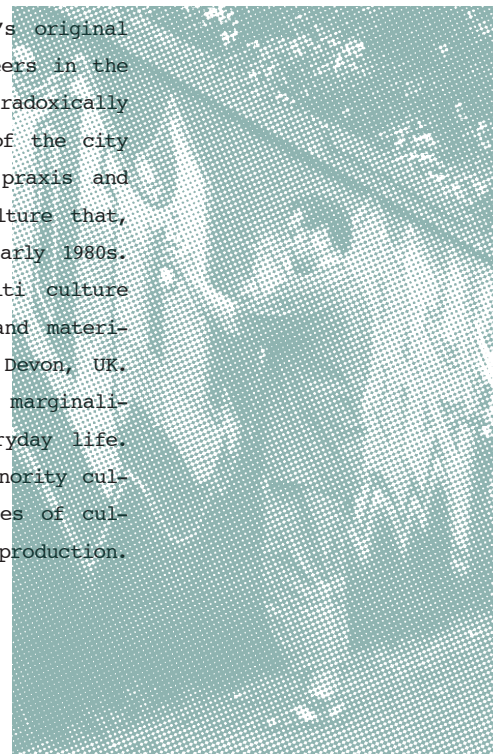
ing their diversity by introducing them as "Mobile Stakeholders" with high potentials for inclusion with the "National Stakeholders" living in Jordan. The aim is to develop human and physical environments by valuing the differences and maximizing the potentials. This involves an intentional and active commitment to embrace difference and create a sense of belonging for the purpose of achieving a commitment to equity and justice, cross-cultural understanding, and the creation of respectful, open communities, where everyone has an opportunity to fully participate in creating success and where each is valued for his/her distinctive skills, experiences and perspectives. These require more than tolerance, acknowledgement of differences, or awareness of others, they require intentional dispositions and practices.

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14.45h *Graffiti in Devon: acquired minority culture by choice and osmosis*

During the early 1970s, the visual language of New York's original subway graffiti writers brought them fame amongst their peers in the ghettos, liminal spaces and margins of the city, whilst paradoxically and ironically being labelled as vandals and destroyers of the city by authorities. The graffiti phenomenon, through intense praxis and production, quickly established itself as a robust subculture that, largely through the media, translated to the UK in the early 1980s. This work explores the acquisition and praxis of graffiti culture by certain youths and interrogates their socio-spatial and material counter-positions within the context of Exeter City, Devon, UK. The work also interrogates the concurrent tensions and marginalisation they experienced within family structure and everyday life. The work focuses on the formative years as this hybrid minority culture evolved, and is underpinned by Homi Bhabha's theories of cultural production and Henri Lefebvre's theories of spatial production.

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16.00h *Space and Urban Minorities: A Cultural History of Armenians of Julfa of Isfahan*

In this article we aim to describe and analyze the situation of an urban religious minority in an Iranian metropolis. How this minority has been created and survived since centuries and how its identity has coined the image and the identity of the neighborhood? The point on which we want to insist is the relationships that existed and still exist in part, between this community and its own identity on the one hand and the tangible urban constructions and non-tangible representations, on the other. The minority we studied is the one of Armenians in the Julfa district of Isfahan. Some 3000 Armenians today live in this district of about 30,000 population, and in this city with nearly 1 million inhabitants. The total number of Armenians in Iran is about 150,000 out of a total population of 78 million. Yet it is the most numerous religious minority concentrated today in Tehran. By stressing on the Armenian urban cultural history, we will discuss of its urban strategies and consider the question of survival through the collective memory and material urban constructions in the city of Isfahan and more generally in Iran as an Islamic and multiethnic country. Finally we try to take a lesson from this history for potential revitalization of those rich religious minorities' cultures through urban planning strategies and modern architecture in Iran today.

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16.45h *Vast Regions and Confined Spaces*

The design of a building is also the design of its ruin. The draft is the blueprint for its use, its modification and its exploitation. In our talk, we will engage with two development projects, that seem very far apart at first glance, but have a lot in common, when looking closely. In a simultaneous seminar at the University of the Arts Bremen and German University New Cairo City, we will intervene into the adamant schemes of planners and investors. Through means of design, depiction and intervention, alternative endings to the tale of construction will be created.



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10.00h Housing the Unwelcome:

Exclusion, Control and Heteronomy of Asylum Seekers in the European Fortress City

Migrants, which flee to the EU to seek for protection, are predominantly housed in asylum centres during the often long-standing asylum procedure. In regards to EU, national and local asylum and housing policies as well as the living conditions of asylum seekers, this contribution illustrates the characteristics of asylum centres, causes for the implementation of this form of housing, their socio-political functions and effects on the socio-spatial exclusion of this group in (Greater) Copenhagen, Berlin, and Madrid. This article argues that the asylum centre may take several different forms of exclusion in the investigated cities in respect to national and local policies. However, it states that the centre is the dominant and politically pushed form of housing in the case studies implemented to systematically control, displace and disfranchise asylum seekers. The centre serves as an exclusionary institution aiming to systematically isolate and deprive asylum seekers in benefitting from characteristics of the European City.

René Kreichauf

Bachelor thesis: (2012): Zuwanderung und Kleinstadt. Zur Theorie und Empirie ethnischer Segregation in kleinen Städten.
Master thesis: The Fortress European City - The socio-spatial Exclusion of Asylum Seekers in Copenhagen, Berlin and Madrid
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10.45h Asylalltage. Everyday-life strategies of asylum seekers in Leipzig

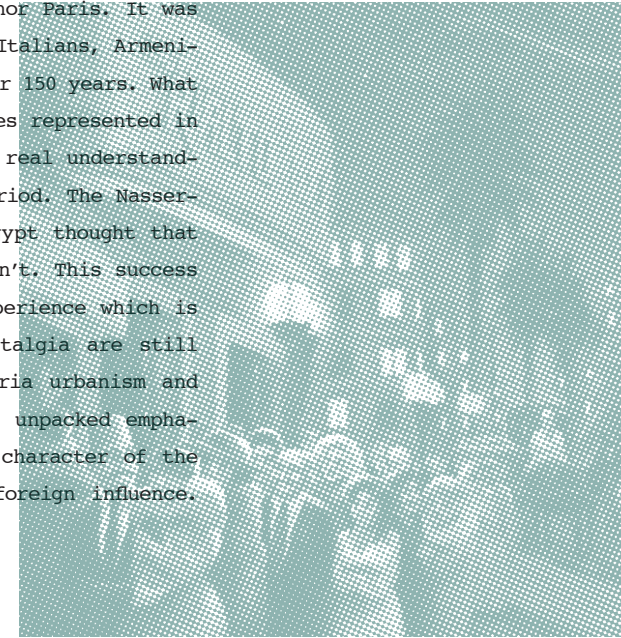
My contribution deals with asylum seekers and their everyday-life strategies in the urban area of Leipzig. Both of the big local residential homes give shelter to more than 450 persons, altogether. The sites are located at Leipzig's periphery – hardly noticeable in the urban area, although they are fully occupied. Through ethnographic participatory observation I did research on the living conditions of the persons being housed there. My research was led by the following questions: How do asylum seekers position themselves, using what resources, in a space how to be characterized? Life in the accommodation centre and in the new urban society constitutes itself as an experience of difference – not only as far as resources are concerned, but also by diverging values and positions. How do the persons in these centers succeed in doing a day's work, while their lives are a priori dominated by unemployment and structured by long hours of dealing with the various authorities and offices? And: What is the center's and the urban society's role in their efforts?

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11.30h Echoes from Cosmopolitan Alexandria “Ethnic Minorities and Multiculturalism fostering Alexandria urbanism”

In the mid-20th century, the foreign-minority communities had played a significant role in developing the character of modern Alexandria, shaping its culture, civic life and the built environment of the city. Alexandria; the City of Memory was neither New York nor Paris. It was rather a successful multi-ethnic city where British, Italians, Armenians, Greeks, Jewish and Egyptians living in harmony for 150 years. What was important was not the multiplicity of nationalities represented in the town but rather the interaction between having a real understanding of the economic truth and productivity of the period. The Nasserite regime that compelled the foreigners to leave Egypt thought that it wiped out 100 years of history but actually it didn't. This success should be analyzed; highlighting the cosmopolitan experience which is already a thing of the past. Hence, memory and nostalgia are still an integral part of the narrative fostering Alexandria urbanism and the fabric of the town. An attempt that needs to be unpacked emphasizing on role of foreign minorities in shaping the character of the city which was intentionally ignored or derided as foreign influence.

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14.00h Gendered public space in urban transformation: Tophane example



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14.45h "Save Alex ... Retaining momentum?"

"Save Alex" is a new initiative, founded after the 2011 Egyptian uprising in the city of Alexandria, committed to protecting the built heritage of the city, and enhancing its built environment through raising awareness and public debates of what is left of the rich built heritage of the city and the challenges facing it. The presentation provides an overview of the case of built heritage of Alexandria; the crisis of heritage conservation and built environment in the city; and the role of "Save Alex", as a grassroots movement, played/plays in the face of such drastic and accelerated patterns of heritage assault and urban decay. It shed some light on the main reasons that led to the current situation, the dynamics of what was happening in the last 3 years, and how to sustain an effective grassroots actions within a new situation with a very little, and contentiously shrinking, space of maneuvering for civil act.

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PhD thesis under the title: "The conservation of historic urban landscapes in context: A critical inquiry into the adaptation of HUL concept and value-based heritage management processes to the local context of Alexandria"
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16.00h "Because they threaten the public security and order." Questioning the legitimacy basis of practices against homeless people on public spaces in Germany

Due to a combination of precarious conditions on the labor and housing market and severe deficits within the national social security system and the municipal support system, German cities are currently facing an increasing number of homeless persons on public spaces. While many citizens perceive homeless people as a part of the cityscape, their presence conflicts with the efforts of the cities to create an appealing image for investors and visitors. Whenever this image is at stake, decision makers try to exclude the homeless by referring to the protection of the "public security and order" on the one hand and the "subjectively felt insecurity" of the "normal" citizens on the other hand. This paper argues that (municipal) decision makers misuse the ambiguity and diffusivity of these terms not only to legitimize measures against homeless persons on public spaces but also to make them appear necessary to protect the public security and order. Following Zygmunt Bauman's differentiation between security, safety and certainty, the author wants to show how homeless persons serve as a personification of these threats as they menace safety in more than one manner.

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PhD-Thesis: The Shelter System for Roofless People in San Francisco. A Comparison of Perspectives.
Current work: Homeless in the City of Leipzig. Between Historical Heritage, Centralized Support System and a Tightening Housing Market.
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16.45h Planning In Jordan: Insights into planning cooperation in the Middle East

Democratic, interdisciplinary integrated sustainable development are important ingredients in the development of cities in the Middle East. This presentation showcases an example of previous cooperation projects that was funded by the DAAD for spatial planning through intercultural dialogue. It displays a planning approach of integrated disciplines as well as introducing the students from different cultures to common modern approaches in city planning including ideas and specific knowledge of different actors following a qualitative participatory approach. Such an approach had an added value on both levels; on the cooperation level and networking between the universities as well as on the research level of "Sustainable, Integrated Urban Regeneration and Revitalization of Historic Town Centers". Outcomes of such cooperation are seen to include extensive research on multidisciplinary, integrated and community driven bottom up planning, teaching methods through Intercultural dialogue: impact on learning outcomes and social, cultural, economic and environmental outcome of the joint universities project.

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The transnational project

The project Urban Minorities is laid out for a duration of three years (2012–14). The 2014 program comprises a workshop for students in Madaba/Jordan, a workshop for the promotion of young scientists in Istanbul and a concluding conference in autumn. A publication of the results of the project as well as of the conference is scheduled for 2015. Universities involved are the University of Alexandria, American University Madaba, the German Jordanian University Amman, the University of Tehran and the Istanbul Sehir University.

The project is conducted within the programme “Academic Dialogue with the Islamic World” (Hochschuldialog mit der islamischen Welt) by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and funded by the Foreign Office (AA).

