

The Role of Urban Flux in Re-Shaping “the Private for the Public” Concept in Traditional Courtyards

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Abstract

This research examines the flow of people’s activities within the urban fabric, identified as an ‘urban flux’, and highlights its role in restructuring the traditional genre of open courtyards in heritage buildings from private to public spaces, especially in heritage areas with a compact urban fabric that lacks ample public spaces. The research examines two preserved/revitalised nineteenth-century Ottoman heritage buildings in Baghdad: the Qishla and the Public Courts. Both buildings housed different state bodies during their lifetime, and their ample geometrical courtyards were of restricted uses, deprived of public visits.

The research observes the recent emergent public flow and its movement towards engaging the courtyards of these buildings with cultural activities, thus forming a moving urban flux that attributed a new social meaning of free engagement to this heritage area. The purpose of the study is to demonstrate how the traditional typological basics are converted, by turning the private courtyard spaces into open public spaces, when they are connected to the urban fabric. Guided by an examination of the documents and field observations, the study investigates this conversion based on the basis of accessibility and ownership, along with spatial functionality and characteristics.

The research concludes that such a perspective holds the potential of being a strategy with which to reconsider the activation of the courtyard building type in cities of similar urban fabric, aiming at the revival and sustainable activation of such a built heritage.

Keywords: Baghdad, Compact heritage areas, Courtyard building, Public space, Qishla (Qushlah, Qishlah), Urban flux.

Introduction

By the end of the 20th century, international approaches to cultural and architectural heritage preservation developed assertions towards the importance of redefining heritage as a vital asset to cities and an active part of their urban life, instead of being a static material component that needs physical conservation. As could be observed in charters such as the Burra charter of 1999 (Australia ICOMOS, 2000), the charter of Krakow 2000 (Charter of Carcow 2000, 2000), and others, this view denotes a turn towards the intangible values of heritage, including social and cultural meanings. It also indicates that meanings attributed to heritage are subject to change and might be replaced by new emergent ones during the formation of the history of the place. People are recognized as vital agents of any change, being the generators as well as the receptors of such meanings. In this regard, the Faro Convention of 2005 identified “the need to put people and human values at the center of an enlarged and cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage; emphasizing the value and potential of cultural heritage wisely used as a resource for sustainable development and quality of life in a constantly evolving society” (Council of Europe Treaty Series - No. 199, 2005:1). It also declared that “every person has a right to engage with the cultural heritage of their choice while respecting the rights and freedoms of others” (Council of Europe Treaty Series - No. 199, 2005:1). Although built heritage has been recognized as a focal element in sustainable tourism (Al-Obaidi and Al-Tameemi, 2019), the main perspective here is concerned with local communities. Thus, people are invited to participate in generating new social meanings to heritage and sustaining it through this correlation.

In this study, two heritage buildings in the city of Baghdad are presented, namely the Qishla and the Public Courts (Fig.1), to reveal the role of people in activating heritage spaces that have been previously recognized as private and assigned to controlled uses, then turning them into public spaces with a new social meaning of free democratic traits.



Fig. 1: The Qishla and the Public Courts in recent times: (a) River Bank Elevation of The Qishla and The old Public Courts Buildings. Inactive. (b) The Qishla and The old Public Courts Buildings. Activated.

Source: (a) & (b) Authors

The research identifies this role as being a manifestation of an urban flux, represented in people's activity flow in the area and the buildings. The purpose is to draw attention to the potential of such spaces, to be part of an urban network of public spaces that could encompass the surrounding heritage urban fabric characterized by the courtyard building type in the old center of Baghdad, as well as in the cities with similar compact heritage fabrics. Such fabrics represent built heritage areas that currently face challenges in meeting contemporary needs in expanding and developing cities.

The research discusses people's movement and activities as an aspect of the urban flux concept, then addresses the concept of public and private spaces in heritage areas of cities. Afterwards, it examines a case study and relies on a revision of resources to gather historical records and field observations for collecting on-site information. The study presents a comparative analysis and discussion in examining the formation of people's flow in the area, and how they affect the two courtyards in terms of accessibility and use. It then explains their influence on the spatial characteristics and functionality. Finally, the paper demonstrates how the concept of private/public was reproduced in a different manner, along with a recommendation of its suggested view.

Literature Review

There are three concepts that need to be reviewed in the literature. The first is the concept of urban flux, and the second is private versus public spaces in urban contexts. The third is the concept of the public space in compact urban fabrics.

People as Urban Flux

The term urban flux has been widely used in the literature and is concerned with the urban climate. Such research discusses issues of urban warming, energy consumption, carbon dioxide fluxes, aerosol fluxes and other microclimatic factors that are described as the flux in cities.

From another perspective, research on urban design has also used the notion of urban flux. In his article titled "Urban Flux", Matthew Gandy (2009) observes the variables that affect the design and use of urban spaces at the scale of development projects. Drawing examples from London, Lagos, Mumbai, Dubai and other cities, he shows that the ebb and flow of capital investments in urban space as well as other variables, such as different geometries of power, belief and social stratification, are all approaching a property-led form of urban regeneration, thus intensifying global inequalities of wealth and poverty. Thus, for Gandy (2009), it seems that the urban flux is presented in all these changeable factors, which act upon the urban environment.

In few studies, "urban flux" is used to denote the changeable aspects of urban spaces that grant public spaces their vibrant scenes and pulsating urban life. They appeal for a shift from the classic interest of urban designers in the concrete physical qualities that form the urban space towards other, more animated qualities that affect the public space.

Amin describes this as:

"every public space has its own rhythms of use and regulation, frequently changing on a daily or seasonal basis: the square that is empty at night but full of people at lunch-time; the street that is largely confined to ambling and transit, but becomes the center of public protest; the public library of usually hushed sounds that rings with the noise of school visits; the bar that regularly changes from being a place for huddled conversation to one of deafening noise and crushed bodies. There is no archetypal public space, only variegated space-times of aggregation".

(Amin,2008:9)

Thus, the rhythm of change in public spaces varies on a mutual space-time basis. Consequently, a public space can hardly be described or valued with only one of them. While

the three dimensions of space are presented by its physical qualities, the fourth dimension of time is bound to the ever-changing urban flux.

In this regard, Inam (2013) demonstrates how different theorists, scholars, and practitioners have approached the city as a medium of constant change, through time, due to human action, and perceived it as a flux. He states that

“while the city may be designed, built and experienced as a three dimensional material object, the crucial fourth dimension of time requires that the city be more appropriately conceptualized as flux; that is, as constant change”

(Inam, 2013:60).

Hack (2011) presents flux as a force for civic improvement. He refers to material elements such as the maze of signs, canopies, street furnishings, sales racks, vending carts and other intermediaries between the pedestrians and merchants, as well as the temporary elements added to the environment as buildings are constructed, restored or renovated. He also focuses on the effect of new technologies in media and communications such as street screens and neon signs, and the animated effect they evoke in the urban scene. In addition, Hack (2011) does not ignore the effects of “sounds, smells and human contacts”, thus denoting people’s activities and their movement as part of the urban flux. Referring to streets of Asian cities such as Hong Kong, he observes that the above mentioned elements change the street’s character from hour to hour. Such additions to the environment, he states, “resonate directly with observers and have a temporal dimension that is difficult to achieve through architecture alone” (Hack, 2011:450).

The role of people as a generator of public spaces has also been pursued in other studies that do not use the term urban flux. According to Bravo:

“... accidents in the urban fabric are not open empty spaces that can more or less easily be converted into archetypical public spaces but alien bodies, troublesome presences that also offer the opportunity of being assimilated for civitas. In this case, we are confronted with volumes, which might be disconcerting when it comes to considering them as public space. Yet, when they are covered and have facades, they do not cease to be fully loaded with a sense of urbanity if it is understood that this sense is autonomous from the form”.

(Bravo, 2010:46)

Hence, “Whatever its name may seem to indicate, public space is not a geometric, Cartesian and objective framework, nor even a physical, material and tangible container”(Bravo, 2010:44).

Supporting a similar perspective, Gehl and Matan (2009:108) quote Shafto’s statement that “places where people can be ‘social and festive’ are the essence of urbanity. Without such convivial spaces, cities, towns and villages would be mere accretions of buildings with no deliberate opportunities for casual encounters and positive interactions between friends and strangers”(Shaftoe, 2008:5), while Roderiguez and Simon (2015) stressed that the denotation of conviviality should not only be bound to places; rather, it mostly can be an attribute of people using these spaces.

Based on these concepts, it is possible to approach the activity of the people, their movement, and their use of a space in the city, as a demonstration of a certain urban flux that occurs with a regular continuity in that space.

Public Space vs. Private Space in the Urban Domain

In her study of the characters of public spaces at different scales, Birch observed that

“The demarcation of public and private areas, although seemingly sharp is sometimes vague”, and despite the fact that the inhabitants of the earliest urban civilizations have incorporated public and semi-public space in their houses, neighborhoods, and cities, and used law, custom, and sometimes design to ensure the safety and security of these places, their use has changed over time

(Birch, 2008:118)

Observers of public space may include streets, squares, and parks in their definition of public space, labelling the totality as the “public realm” (Birch, 2008). They view public space

as arenas that reflect contemporary community values and attitudes and as places that contribute to urban social life (Birch, 2008). In her conclusion, Birch mentioned that a good public space is “malleable and allows its users to take or give it meaning and definition”, and that “positive public space trends strengthen their role in supporting community organizations, and citizen participation in planning and design” (Birch, 2008:126).

It is mostly agreed that the basic criteria for the distinction between these two space types are ownership and accessibility, or use according to Carmona et. al. (2010), Grobelšek (2015), and Moroni and Chiodelli (2014). Hence, a public space being external or internal could be owned by the state. When it is public ownership it is accessible to all public or if it is private property but open to public then they can use and access. In other words, a ‘true’ public space is recognized as being accessible to all groups, providing freedom of action, and allowing temporary claim and ownership (Francis et. al., 2012).

On the other hand, a private space could be publicly owned but restricted to private and determined uses; thus, its accessibility is also controlled, or it is private in terms of ownership and use as well. Examples of these categories expand along a list of types’ varieties (Carmona, 2015). Carmona (2015) suggested an elaborate variation of urban space types, explaining, as part of their distinguishing characteristics, the type of ownership that controls the accessibility, even including the semi-public type.

Though the study of Szołtysek was based on research dedicated to Polish cities, and his argument discussed the work of Polish writers to establish principles of fair access to city public space, it provided a comparative table between the characteristics of public and private spaces in cities (Szołtysek, 2017). He demonstrated that a non-public space is not freely accessible; its beneficiary and benefits are solely the owners and those who are permitted by the owners, and that the flexibility of the decision is rather high (Szołtysek, 2017). Furthermore, he mentioned that some places appear to be opened but have a “narrow slice of society than if it really were fully accessible”; others are controlled by “limited elites, property developers, investors, (and) business associations” (Szołtysek, 2017:23), and other parties of various harmful interests. In addition, there are places whose residents are cutting themselves off from city membership behind gates, walls, and razor-wire fences (Szołtysek, 2017).

The above argument brings attention to the interchangeable roles between the private and the public, where the functionality of space appears to be related to people’s activities while being restricted to specific factions. It also shows how spatial characteristics are influenced by the nature of people’s activities. Furthermore, space accessibility is not affected by ownership, but by the people’s choices of engagement in these spaces.

Public Spaces in Compact Heritage Urban Fabric

This study focuses on the integration between the external spaces that form a network of open nodes and pathways and the courtyards of the buildings, especially found in compact urban fabrics of old towns and cities around the world. These spaces traditionally establish a system of public/private relations that is bound to their social use. This relation was the focus of several studies that tried to evoke interest in the sustainable characteristics of these areas. In this sense, Ramezani and Hamidi (2010) examine the hierarchy of privacy in a traditional Iranian town, while Bekleyen and Dalkılıç (2011) have looked into courtyard houses in Turkey with regard to social privacy and climatic solutions.

Referenced by the former studies, Kiet (2011) shares with Ragette (2006) the identification of the main characteristics of the urban fabric in old Arabic cities that apply to the city of Baghdad. These characteristics include firstly the hierarchical order fully enforced on the urban form, and manifested in public, semi-public and private zones that introduce elaborate customs of social relationships. Accordingly, the public alleys/roads are longer in distance, wider, and straighter than the private (Kiet, 2011). Secondly, the courtyards in public or civil buildings (e.g., palaces (Qusour), schools (Medares), citadels (Qilaa’a), inn-caravansaries (Khanat), etc.), as they are found in houses. They serve as common circulation spaces and neutral meeting ground (Ragette, 2006); they are joined to the main entrances of the buildings, open to the sky, and surrounded by the building facilities, where windows and doors

are opened to them (Ghālib, 1988). Hence, such courtyards are private zones that serve as part of the building functionality, as they are restricted and bounded to it, while connected through the main gate to the outside network of public or semi-public alleys.

Furthermore, a distinctive spatial experience is generated through the hierarchy and the courtyard system along with other factors of visual impact, such as sizes and types of windows, and their ornaments (Al-Kaissi, 1983). The effect occurs due to the spatial nature of the courtyard compared to the leading spaces, from the surrounding alleys/roads of the fabric, to narrow and small indoor entrances before the open courtyard (Al-Kaissi, 1983; Kiet, 2011).

According to Karaçor (2016), visual perception and aroused sensations, in a public space within a historic context are related to the image and identity of the place. The identity of a place connects it to its users and to the city, and while this identity is related to the characteristics of the place itself, and described for being objective, the image of a place is a set of feelings and impressions of that place for people Karaçor (2016). Therefore, for a place that is occupied with people's activities, gathering, and communication, the identity is no longer the main attractor, nor the generator of the activity, but rather the image that is derived from the sensation of such an activity. Hence, it is the image of the place that connects the people to the place.

Research Methodology

The research is based on the case study method, carried out through two revitalized nineteenth-century Ottoman heritage buildings in Baghdad, namely: the Qishla and the Public Courts. They are part of a series of historical buildings, from different eras, located as a row on the bank of the river Tigris, each with a courtyard. The choice of the two buildings was for the uniqueness of their situation, which was developed overtime; therefore to present an understanding status of their current condition, which carry the potentials of being a strategy for other similar cases.

The study of this case is based on the collection of qualitative data, following two techniques: the first is a comparative investigation to examine the available documents, images, and maps which provide the historical information about the two buildings and their urban context. Further, it also examines the available inventory of city maps, old images, and architectural drawings, to acquire further details about the degree of privacy and the functions of the two courtyards.

The second technique is an obtrusive method that involved a live personal experience in the area (participant observation), in addition to direct visual observation of the behaviour of the people's flow around and inside the two buildings. Observations included the general actions and direction of the people's flow, the types of activities, and the types of gatherings. The method also surveyed the types of constructions and installations and their purposes along the Mutanabbi Street and inside the courtyards of the two buildings. These observations were chronicled by using basic photography, and direct participation in the activities. These aspects helped the description of the two factors: permitted accessibility with freedom of action, and the temporary claim of ownership in relation to spatial characteristics and functionality.

In the description of the findings, the study reported how the activities of people, and the flux of their movement affected the spatial degree of privacy. The discussion explained the impact of the people flow on the transformation of the courtyard and inner spaces of the buildings, comparing to their inherited nature.

The Case Study

The scope of work for this research includes three grounds for observations in the traditional urban context of Baghdad: two courtyards of two historic buildings: the Qishla, and the Public Courts, and AL-Mutanabbi Street along with its extension, a small narrow alley leading to the river and separating the two buildings. Since the year 2013, the two buildings have been subjected to a vast public activity centered into their outdoor spaces, as an extension to the major activity in the area, occurring every weekend, especially on Friday mornings until the afternoons and evenings. This phenomenon is the target of this study, aiming to demonstrate

the role of urban flux, identified in this paper as the people's activities and flow, in reshaping the traditional genre of open courtyards in heritage buildings from private to public spaces. The research has identified two main factors, namely accessibility and ownership, as the factors that catalyze the flowing flux; thus, they are the target of observations (Fig. 2).

Description of the Buildings and the Surrounding Area

Situated on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, the Qishla, the Public Courts are considered as monumental buildings in the Saray area. They are among the rare examples of the Ottoman public architecture that have survived many radical changes in the historic center of Baghdad (Fig. 2a). The Qishla is a large building with a front of about two hundred meters, and a side of about eighty meters. It has two floors and two gates, in an L shape, creating an ample courtyard parallel to the river and containing the clock tower. Its front façade faces other historical buildings on a small historical street called the AL-Saray Street (Fig. 2).

The Courts building is attached to the Al Saray souk—a covered traditional market for stationary goods—from its eastern side, and to Al-Wazir Mosque from its southern side; thus, it has two free elevations. The western elevation faces the Tigris River. It is separated from the river by an open area, while the northern elevation has the main gate at its center, from where the central courtyard can be accessed (Fig. 2). The two buildings are separated by a small alley. This alley connects the Al-Mutanabbi Street with the river (Fig. 2b).



Fig. 2: The main grounds of the case study area: (a) Al-Qishla, and Public Courts Buildings, separated by a small ally. (b) Top view of: Al-Qishla and Public Courts Buildings with Al-Mutanabbi Street and the small alley.

Source: (a) Authors, 2022; (b) Google Earth 7.3.4.8642 (64-bit). June, 21, 2021. Al- Saray area, Baghdad. Iraq. Map Image and Data: Image © 2022 Maxar Technologies, accessed July 13, 2022; graphics added by authors.

Case Study Background Investigation and examination

In order to build a comprehensive understanding of the happenings within the two buildings of the case study, it was necessary to trail the change within their life time.

The inquiry about the background of the two buildings and the area needed a comparative tracking between written texts, maps of the city, photographs, reports, and drawings (Table 1). The collected data have three distinguished periods before the year 2013: the first is the historical background, since the construction of the two buildings, till the radical restoration of 1987-1989 for the Qishla, and 1991-1993 for the Public Courts. The second is between these radical restorations, till the year 2003 and the third is between 2003 and 2013.

Both authors are citizens of the city of Baghdad, witnessed the 2003 war and invasion of the city, and watched the change of different life aspects in the city, including its urban transformations. Thus the descriptions of events and activities provided within the case study area, are the result of personal observations along this period of time.

Table 1. List of the examined documents.

Source: Authors.

Document name	Document type	Author/ Owner/ Source	Year	Data
Baghdad Al-Quadeemah (Old Baghdad- English)	Book – Arabic text-	Al-Allaf, A. K.	1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text about the history and the function of the Qishla and Public Courts history.
Al-Tatweer Al-Physia'i lil-Qishla we Saray Baghdad (The Physical Evolution of Al-Qishla and Saray of Baghdad – English)	M.Sc. Thesis – Arabic text-	Al-Hadithi, T.A.	1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text about the history and the function of the Qishla Photograph of the Qishla with its wooden tower Photograph with its clock tower during the forties. Photograph of king Faisal crowning. Photograph of the side part of the Qishla in its original form, before its collapse.
Hay Al-Seray Conversion Set of Drawings	Architectural Drawings	The Iraqi—Italian center for Restoration of Monuments / The State Board (Directorate) of Antiquities and Heritage	1978–1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functions of the two buildings at that year (status plan)
The Qishla Restoration Project Team materials	(text reports, photographs, site surveys, and architectural drawings)	The State Board (Directorate) of Antiquities and Heritage	1987–1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photograph of the Qishla with its wooden tower Photograph from the river toward the Public Courts showing the small alley opening to the river Photograph of the Qishla with its tower during the forties. Photographs of the Qishla with its clock tower: during and after rehabilitation Functions of the two buildings at that year (status plan) Functions of the two buildings (proposal)
City of Baghdad, in: Maps of Iraq with notes for visitors	Map	British Library, W 3994 (Maps 26.c.27)	1929	Showing the Qishla as (Government offices) and the Public Courts as (Law Courts)
Article: Midhat Pasha Wa Islahatuh fil Iraq (Midhat Pasha and his repairs in Iraq)	Photographs of the Courtyard - The Public Courts (formerly known as: Al-Madrassah Al-Rasheediah Al-Asskaria in Baghdad) (Arabic text)	https://nna.iq/2019/12/17/ Dr. Salah Abdul Razzak	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One photograph shows students of the military school while they were training in the courtyard. Another blurred photograph shows a habited courtyard of the same school with plants and figures in it.

Background of the Two Buildings and Their Functionality

The current Qishla with its courtyard and clock tower and the current Public Courts appeared for the first time in the map of Baghdad presented by Rasheed Al Khodjah in 1908, without any notification of their use (Fig. 3).

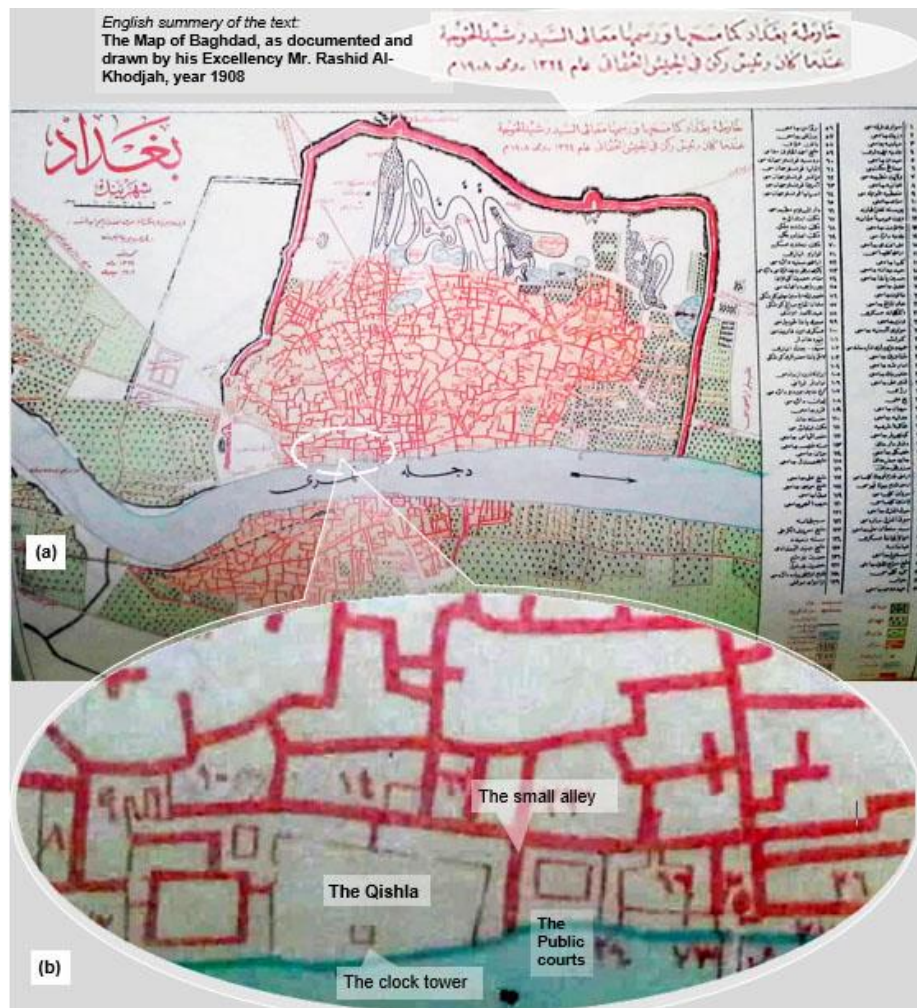


Fig. 3: Current Qishla and Public Courts Buildings: (a) Map of Rasheed Al-Khodjah, 1908. (b) Enlarged portion of the Qishla and the Public Courts buildings, showing the Qishla courtyard with its clock tower, separated by the small alley from the Public Courts.

Source: A. Sussa, M. Jawad. Atlass of Baghdad. The Iraqi Scientific Council, 1957; (b) Enlarged portion of the map, graphics and text added by Authors.

An aerial photograph of Baghdad from 1917 (Fig. 4), the same year as the British invasion of Baghdad reveals a clear wide area with tent-like shapes in the Qishla courtyard, and clusters of tree-like appearance in the courtyard of the Public Courts, proposing their functional purposes. The photo also illustrates the Mutanabbi Street as a road extended to the river by the small alley between the two buildings.

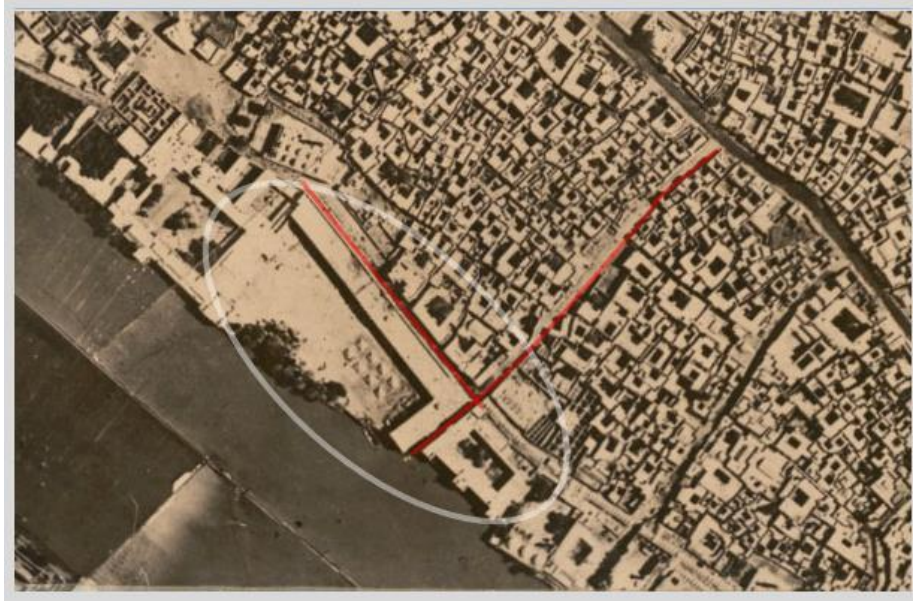


Fig. 4: The Qishla and the Public Courts in 1917: an Enlarged Portion of the (Mosaic aerial photo of Baghdad in 1917), showing the Qishla with its wide clear courtyard, with an organized cluster of tent-like shapes, and the Public Courts revealing with its limited courtyard area, revealing a cluster of tree-like appearance in the middle.

Source: Courtesy of National Archives UK, WO 302/550. Graphics added by authors.

According to Al-Allaf (1960) and Al-Hadithi (1978), these two buildings have never ceased to function throughout their history, and each of their courtyards have been part of the building function itself (Tables 2 and 3). By the seventies, the buildings were occupied by the authorities of the Ministries of Knowledge, Finance and Justice, and even though they were inhabited and used, they were neglected in terms of architecture conservation. They ended up being compacted and overloaded with a variety of harmful uses, which abused their courtyards, and eventually, they both lost their primary architectural features.

Table 2: History and functionality of The Qishla building and its courtyard.

Source: Authors. Based on: Al-Allaf, 1960; Al-Hadithi, 1978; Maps of Iraq with notes for visitors, City of Baghdad (Map) 1929 (British Library, W 3994 (Maps 26.c.27); The Iraqi—Italian center for Restoration of Monuments (Hay Al-Seray Conversion Set of Drawings), 1978–1979; The Qishla Restoration Project Team materials (text reports, photographs, survey and architectural drawings), 1987–1989.

Ownership of buildings	Year	Events related to the building	Function	Function of Courtyard
Ottoman Occupation The rule of Namiq Pasha's second period	1861 to 1868	Years of construction	military purposes Qushlat Al-Peidadah (The infantry barracks)	Military training clock tower to control time
Ottoman Occupation The rule of Midhat Pasha	1869 to 1872	Years of completion	military barracks + military prison	
British occupation	1916 to 1917	British Invasion of Baghdad: the British flag was raised on the top of the Qishlah's tower	Housing British officers' families	

Formation of the Iraqi Government – several parties	1921	Base for Government authorities + financial and legal institutions	Gov. authorities Administration and management	crowning of King Feisal courtyard land was used to add more buildings
Government bodies	1940	The change of the clock tower top from wood to brick.		Streets and car parking + building of the ministry of justice offices , shown in the survey maps of the courtyard
	1978 to 1979	Studies of the Iraqi – Italian center for Restoration of Monuments		
The State Board (Directorate) of Antiquities and Heritage	1987 to 1989	Major Rehabilitation of the building		
	1990 to 1993	1990 to 1991 Gulf war	Exhibitions Post- war reconstruction of damaged buildings	abandoned
	2004	Plundering events : Demolition of roofs	abandoned	
	2010	Rebuilding of demolished roofs and replacement of authentic details with new ones	abandoned	
Several parties in agreement with The State Board (Directorate) of Antiquities and Heritage	2013	Change of beneficiaries (Baghdad capital of Arabic Culture)	New Cultural activities in the large hall + Exhibitions and storage in other halls	New Cultural activities Re-activation of night activities
	2020	COVID 19 restriction of movement		
	2021	Return and reactivation of evening events		

Table 3: History and functionality of The Old Public Courts building and its courtyard.

Source: authors. Based on: Al-Allaf, 1960; Maps of Iraq with notes for visitors, City of Baghdad (Map) 1929 (British Library, W 3994 (Maps 26.c.27); Studies of the Iraqi–Italian center for Restoration of Monuments (Drawings), 1978–1979.

Ownership of buildings	Year	Events related to the building	Function	Function of Courtyard
Ottoman Occupation	1879	Year of construction	The Military High School (Al-I'adadyiah Al-Asskaryiah)	School courtyard
British occupation	1916 to 1917	British Invasion of Baghdad\		
Formation of the Iraqi Government	1921		Civil Courts	

Government bodies	1929	The Public Works department of Baghdad: Map of Baghdad	Law Courts	Building courtyard
	1978 to 1979	Studies of the Iraqi – Italian center for Restoration of Monuments	Rusafa Courts	
The State Board (Directorate) of Antiquities and Heritage	1991 to 1993	Years of Rehabilitation		
	2004	Plundering events : Demolition of roofs	abandoned	abandoned
	2010	Rebuilding of demolished roofs and replacement of authentic details with new ones	abandoned	abandoned
Several parties in agreement with The State Board (Directorate) of Antiquities and Heritage	2013	Change of beneficiaries (Baghdad capital of Arabic Culture)	New Cultural activities in the large hall + inactive Exhibitions and storage in other halls	New Cultural activities
	2020	COVID 19 restriction of movement		New Cultural activities
	2021	Return and reactivation of evening events		Re-activation of night activities

Description of the Recent Area Activity

After 2003, restrictions were applied on the automobile mobility in the city of Baghdad due to terrorist attacks, which became more severe by the years 2006 and 2007. They targeted public spaces, gatherings, and markets, leaving limited choices for safe public activities. Following the security management plan, cars were prevented from entering Al-Saray area, and checkpoints were introduced to control the access to Al-Mutanabbi Street, Souk Al-Saray, and the Al-Saray Street.

The Al-Mutanabbi street is known for being the center of printing and trading books and has historic Baghdadi coffee places and small local diners, where intellectuals and shop owners tend to gather and meet. During the nineties, the walk-ways of Al- Mutanabbi Street gradually transformed into ground stations for the trade of old and new books, but they were barely functioning due to automobile traffic. After 2003, restrictions on car mobility in the city of Baghdad were applied due to terrorist attacks, and this was also applied to Mutanabi, resulting in more free walkways and intensified activities along the street.

In March 2013, to celebrate Baghdad being named the Capital of Arabic Culture, the Qishla and the Public Courts buildings were opened to the public again after hasty maintenance and cleaning work, and from this year on, real change and activities have taken place in this area. In a short time, both buildings became extensions to the activity of the streets. Every Friday, hundreds of people take a walk from the new security gate at the entrance of Al-Mutanabbi Street and enjoy the book-stalls along the street, toward the riverside, reaching the courtyards of the two buildings to engage with the cultural activities (Fig. 5). Despite the mobility restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the area bounced back afterwards and is even more energetic with the renovation of the facades in the Mutanabbi Street in 2021 and with the initiation of nightlife activities.



Fig. 5: Before and after 2003, the Friday March: (a) Car and Pedestrian movement to gain access to the Qishla and Public Courts buildings and to Al-Mutanabbi Street before 2003, (b) Pedestrian movement flow through Al-Mutanabbi Street toward the Qishla and Public Courts buildings after 2003.

Source: Google Earth 7.3.4.8642 (64-bit), 21 June 2021. Al- Saray area, Baghdad. Iraq. Map Image and Data: Image © 2022 Maxar Technologies, accessed 13 July 2022; graphics added by authors.

Case-Study Observations

For the Qishla and the Courts buildings, before the year 2003, the transition between the public and the private space existed in the two buildings within the hierarchy system as part of the compact urban fabric of the city (Fig. 5). Moreover, restrictions to private governmental use imposed on the courtyards prevented any kind of public engagement with, or appreciation of, these spaces.

The development of accessibility after 2013, which is related to the Mutanabbi Street activity generated a new and different value for the courtyards, implied by people's behaviours and attitudes as a flux flowing around and inside the two buildings. This phenomenon that manifested in this area every weekend, on Friday and Saturday, was the target of the field observation conducted by the authors as follows: first: visits in the morning hours of 10:30 am to 12:30 pm over several weekends, during the years 2017–2021; and second: visits for evening activities were from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm in the spring of the year 2022.

Two aspects were monitored:

First Observation: General Behaviour and Tendency of the People Flow: Permitted Accessibility and Freedom of Action

The condition of the Qishla and the Public Courts buildings reveals a tendency, defined by the flow of the crowd that comes to a node, either from Al-Mutanabbi Street or the Souk Al-Saray, to choose a direction, either to continue through the small alley or to take the Al-Saray Street to enter the Qishla. The small alley area receives part of the crowd from this node and from the side gate of the Qishla exiting this building. The alley provides an entryway to the Courts building or a path to the riverbank, where a plaza was created behind the Courts buildings and the Mutanabbi ferryboat station (Fig. 5).

The spontaneous and consistent flow of people, and its density, neutralizes the hierarchy between the private and the public as the flow becomes one huge fluid mass of continuous instant movement change. The whole composition of streets and buildings functions as one spatial container rather than a complex of spaces. With such a constant stream, the crowd would be granted free access to both courtyards despite the checkpoints at the gated entrances of the buildings. People of all characteristics could be seen, from young to old, intellectuals, students, and artists, in addition to ordinary people. In addition, sellers of different goods and servers of small snacks and quick drinks can all be seen along Al-Mutanabbi Street, the small alley, and the adjacent part of Saray Street leading to the main gate of Al-Qishla (Fig. 6, and Fig. 7).

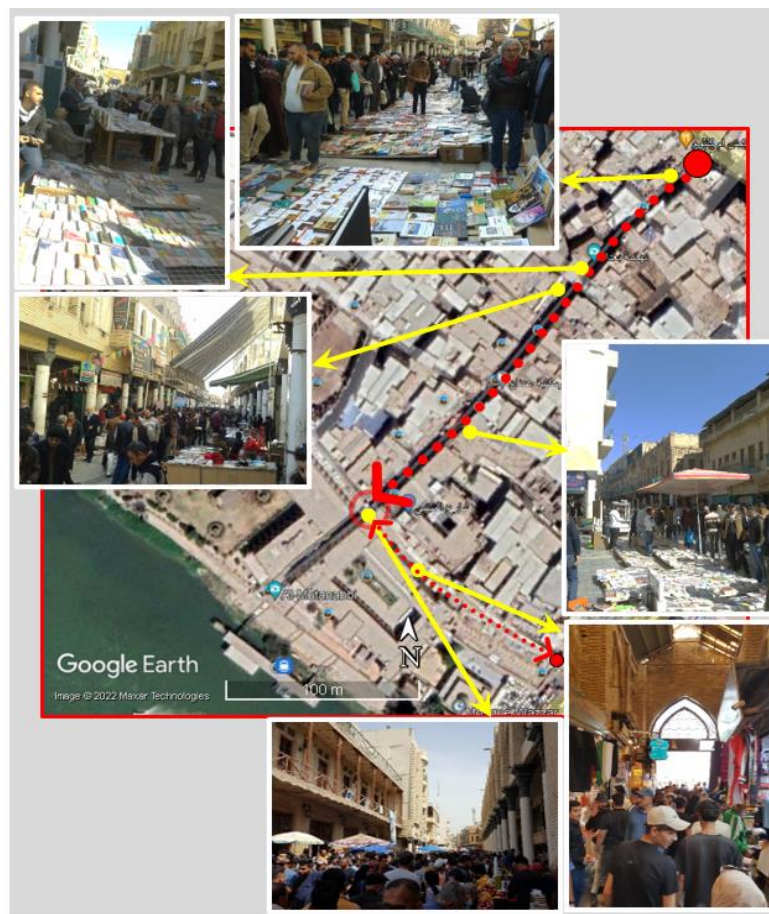


Fig. 6: The walk of Al-Mutanabbi Street and The Saray Souk.

Source: background map: Google Earth 7.3.4.8642 (64-bit), 21 June 2021. Al-Saray area, Baghdad. Iraq. Map Image and Data: Image © 2022 Maxar Technologies, accessed 13 July 2022; Graphics and Photographs: Authors.

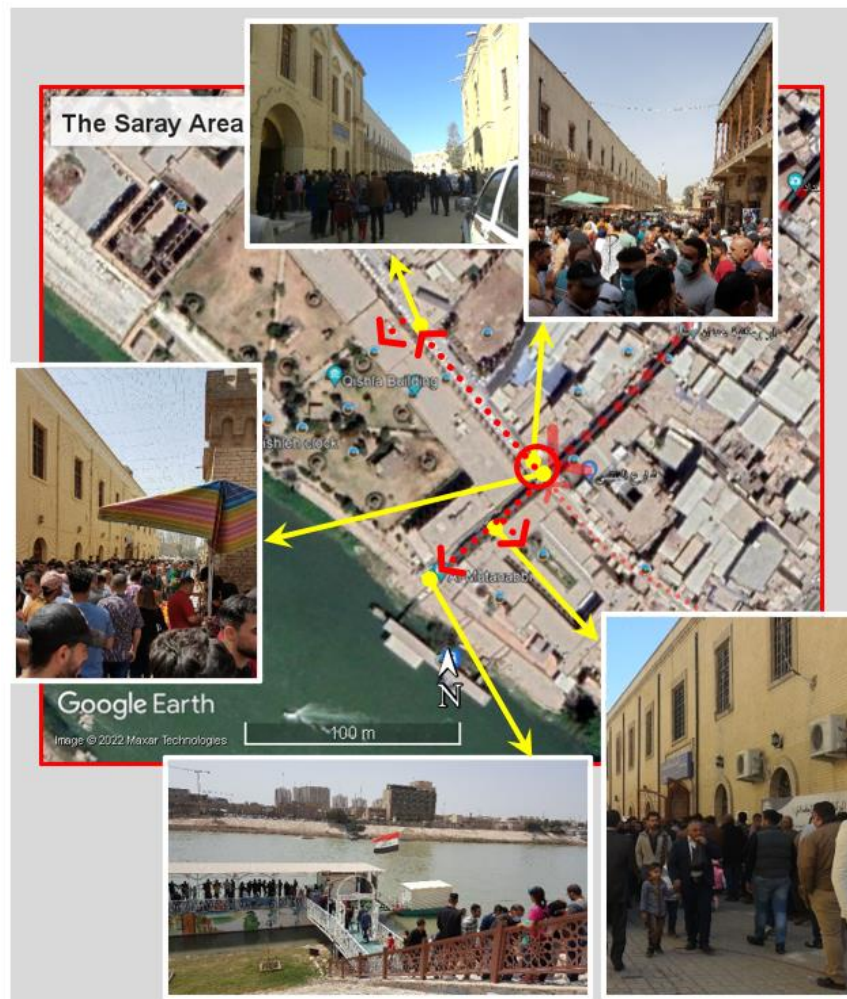


Fig.7: The destination of the people flow at the intersection of Al-Mutanabbi Street with Al-Saray Street, Al-Saray Souk.

Source: Background map: Google Earth 7.3.4.8642 (64-bit), 21 June 2021. Al-Saray area, Baghdad. Iraq. Map Image and Data: Image © 2022 Maxar Technologies, accessed 13 July 2022; Graphics and Photographs: Authors.

While visitors from the crowd create the flowing flux, sellers generate focal points where the crowds gather in a temporary stance before moving on their way toward their own aims. Once the flow of people arrives at the courtyards, the activities turn from trades to cultural and social gatherings.

In the courtyard of the Qishla, the behaviour of the flow changes into swarm-like groups in constant change and small gatherings within the courtyard. Minor stream formations appear along the walkways and the arcades of the building (Fig. 8). Due to such freedom of activities inside the courtyard, three out of four of the inner halls on the ground floor have started to receive people for activities similar to those of the courtyard (Fig. 9).

Entering the courtyard of the Public Courts is open to the people, but due to its limited and enclosed space, people in this courtyard behave as visitors rather than participants, as the courtyard's function is limited only to certain interests and purposes, such as a place for events, or a bazaar to sell souvenirs and goods of cultural value (Fig. 10).

The inner spaces function as lecture halls and permanent exhibits of historic cultural value that are related to the city, the area and both buildings (Fig. 10).



Fig. 8: Activities inside the courtyard of The Qishla Building and its arcades.

Source: Authors.



Fig.9: The extension of the activities of the courtyard to main hall in the ground floor. Showing part of the Large Hall on the ground floor, and one among many stations, to teach Calligraphy to people of different ages.

Source: Authors.



Fig. 10: The activities of the courtyard of The Public Courts, currently known as The Baghdadi Cultural Centre, showing the functionality of its courtyard and inner spaces.

Source: Authors.

Second Observation: Redefining spatial characteristics: Granted Temporary Claim of Ownership

The activities inside the courtyards of the Qishla and Courts buildings resulted from the free accessibility that counts as an extension to the activities of Al-Mutanabbi Street; they all carry the same aspect: temporality.

The standalone activities along the Mutanabbi Street are small, limited stations. The book traders claim the grounds of the walkway as their territory and established their exhibits on low installations made of crates, or small- and medium-sized tables (Fig. 5), while stacking their storage under the tables. They are temporary, yet they represent the catalyst that revived the activity of the area.

Moving at a slow pace between the stalls, the crowd is eventually led either to the two buildings and their courtyards, or to take the small alley to the river side, where they can enjoy a ferryboat tour in the Tigris (Fig. 6). In the small alley, gifts and goods sellers, freelancing artists, and musicians exhibit their work and offer art to the public at both sides of the area, with no installment but their wits to attract the crowd around them.


While the courtyard of the Public Courts building each week witnesses different activities that lay down a temporary installation for a few hours, which is then removed when the activity is over (Fig. 9), the crowd inside the courtyard of Al-Qishla follow another mode (Fig. 7). Inside this courtyard, the groups and gatherings are initiated as focal points by performers; these points act as points of attraction. At the beginning of the day, the performers take a stand or find a free spot to present their act, and people would gather around them. Some of these gatherings were housed in small circular seating areas, shaded by timber components. Some artists present their artwork, while others would teach children drawing and coloring. Calligraphers present their artworks and teach calligraphy to young teenagers (Fig. 9). All other activities occur freely within the installations of the landscape zones.





Due to the temporariness of such activities and their types, their installations stretched to the largest hall on the ground floor of the building. Tables and portable partitions defined the zones of the activities along the two longitudinal spaces of the hall, allowing the flow of the public to make their way around in a linear sequential manner (Fig. 8).

By such a creation (Table 3), for both buildings, the attention of the court visitors is directed towards the activities as well as the public spatial atmosphere of the courts. Therefore, the spatial characteristics have shifted from perceiving the architectural features toward these new settings. The traditional nature of the courtyards have shifted from being private spaces that belong to the buildings to public spaces that belong to the urban flux.

Table 3: Categorization of behaviour, types of activities and types of installations during Fridays inside the researched spaces.

Source: Authors, 2022.

Space	Behaviour and Tendency of the People Flow	Type of Activities, and Gatherings	Types of Constructs and Installation
The Mutanabbi street space	Fluid mass of the crowd along the street	Book trading, and book affairs	 <p>Ground installations and boxes. Tables. Umbrellas. Tent fabric installations.</p>

The Saray Street space	Fluid mass of the crowd heading toward the Qishla entrance	Takeaway drinks and sandwiches	 <p>Carts with shading installations for food and drinks sale, with varieties depending on the season.</p>
The small alley space	Fluid mass of the crowd heading to the Mautanabbi ferry station and/or The Public Court entrance	Artists exhibiting their art and engaging people on the walkways.	 <p>Portable installations for stationary items and Art exhibits or none.</p>
The Qishla courtyard space	Mass of people distributed into gatherings with focal generators inside the courtyard of the building	Initiation of centralized activities; most of them are of a participatory nature from the public side	 <p>Wooden installations, and tent fabric with metal structure, with no specific function; and portable installations.</p>
The Courts Building courtyard space	The crowd is limited to one public type of function in the courtyard	Either a gathering for an event or an exhibition of art or artisanal sales	 <p>A wooden podium for temporary events, and temporary installations for Art and Artisanal exhibitions and sales</p>

Findings and Discussion: the Re-assignment of Spatial Privacy

The findings from the above observations can be presented in terms of the people flux flowing in the area, as follows (Fig. 11).

Concerning the Al-Mutanabbi Street, it can be noticed that with the new activities, the standalone stalls of book traders function as a spatial container for the pedestrians' mobility. As a result, it is isolating the crowd from the space of the side arcades of the walkways, and consequently isolating the shops from the crowd and creating a filtering space. The penetration of this filter is limited to the few people who have certain interests in one of the street's shops themselves or the small alleys connected to the street. As for the small alley, it has become a link to the private backyard of the Public Courts at the riverbank, which has now developed into a cul-de-sac public plaza extending toward the river, causing the creation of a wide space where the crowd can gather to enjoy the river, take the ferry, or engage with different activities.

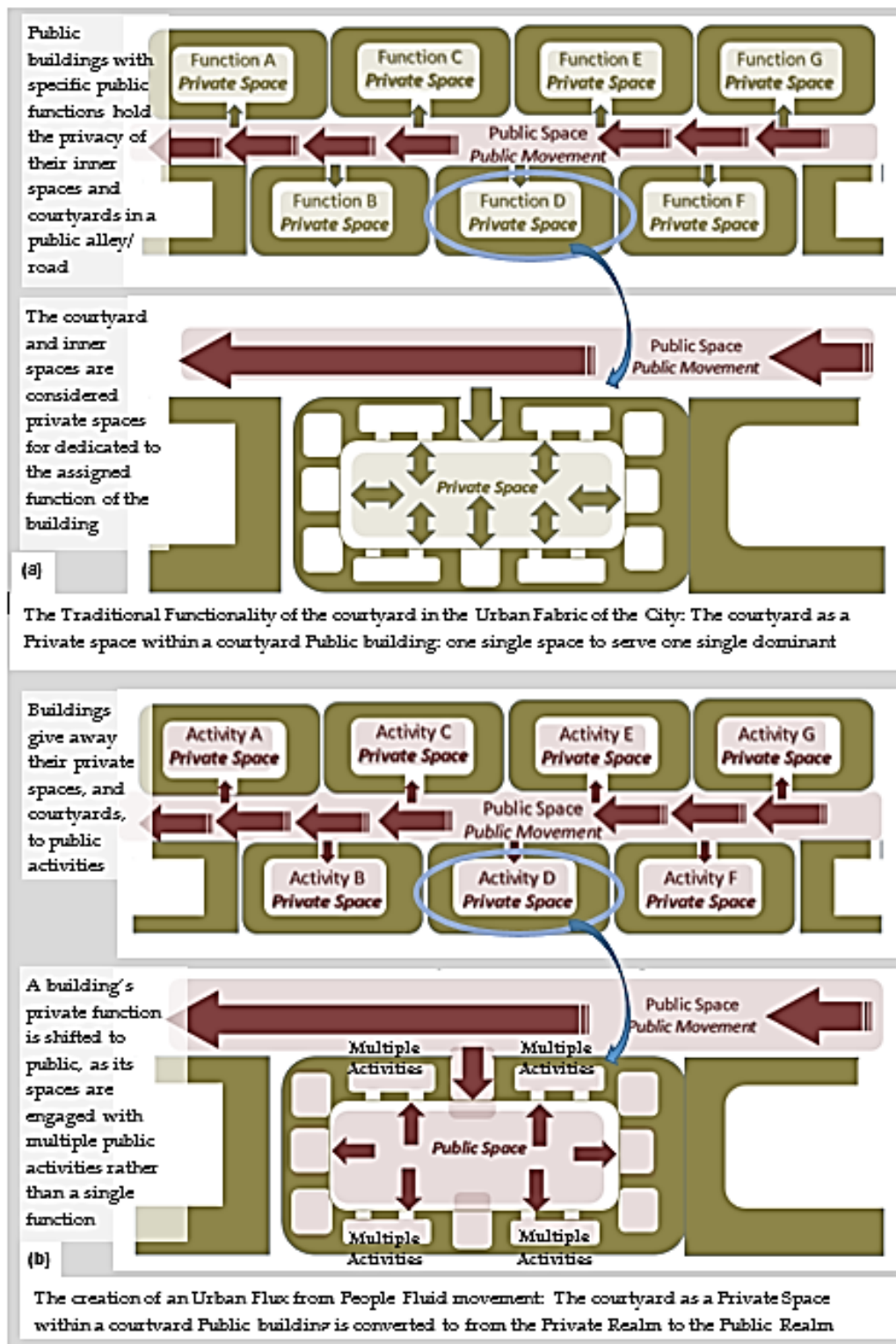


Fig. 11: The conversion concept from private to public with the effect of urban flux: (a) The Traditional Functionality of the courtyard in the Urban Fabric of the City. (b) The Case of the Qishla and the Public Courts prototype during Fridays with Al-Mutannabi Street Activity.

Source: Authors.

The design of the courtyard in the Qishla and the Public Courts are meant to serve the building as a unified private space within a public building (Fig. 11a). However, with the new

tendency, the courtyard has started to host its own activities, which can have multiple forms of gatherings. These gatherings have come into being due to the space being pliant and flexible for the hosted functions, rather than being a uniform transitional space that serves the building's function. Then again, being confined within the building, it is sometimes dedicated to a single function, that is public in nature, and opened to the receive the crowd from outside. Therefore, while the inner spaces host their own activities, this space is bearing the potential of being both private and public at the same time, and carrying multiple layers of functionality between this duality.

The walk from Mutanabi to the gate of Qishla is very active. The crowd of people passes by the stalls of food and drinks that took over the walkways and enjoy the buildings and other activities all the way to the Qishla gate. This has produced small spatial pockets, next to the stalls where people can pause, take a sandwich or a drink, and sometimes sit on a box or a portable chair to eat or drink. These small pockets represent a temporary local privacy within the public flow of the crowd.

Reaching the courtyard of the Qishla from the main gate within the crowd, the axis between the gate and the clock tower is barely visible. It is not only because of development of the landscape design of the courtyard in terms of the choices of trees, and scale of the landscape arcades, where even the visual axis to the tower is blocked, enhancing the feeling of temporary locality within the flow but also because of tendency of the flow inside the courtyard.

This courtyard receives the majority of the visitors. Once the flow of the crowd enters the space, it spreads and starts to gather like a swarm around certain activities, creating a fluid space. Indeed, it is subject to constant change due to the attitudes of people as they tend to act like a whirlpool around the activity initiator. The enhancement of these gatherings by the circular shaded seating areas have created a spatial paradox within the courtyard due to the variant locality of the gathering and the generality of the spatial organization of the courtyard, declaring the first to belong to the crowd, coming from the urban space, in comparison to the second, which belongs to the building, leaving the space in a blurry formation.

This type of formation extends to the major inner spaces of the ground floor of the building (Fig. 11b), which marks a difference from the other ground-floor spaces and the inner spaces of the Public Courts building. This particular space reveals itself to belong to the crowd, where the temporality creates local spaces for each station of activities within the general space of the hall, generating the same paradox as the courtyard.

This creation of multiple localities inside the courtyard, in the form of activity initiators, such as in the Qishla Building case or over-layered in unclear duality (juxtaposition method), such as the Public Courts Building case; would create competitive points of interest that could generate a flux through the Public Realm, by attracting the crowd. It would consequently take the courtyard from its Private Realm, as well as the inner spaces of the buildings, and engage all of them with the multiplicity of the crowd's activities.

The taking over of a place by people, such as the buyers and sellers of the Sunday markets, Friday markets, and weekend markets, are the most similar activities to this. However, the uniqueness of this comes from the unique activity of the crowd within the private spaces of the buildings, and the distinction of the two buildings with their private courtyards, setting a different example for active public spaces, and carrying the potentials of a new strategy to activate the traditional courtyard genre. It is empowered by the urban flux as demonstrated in this research. Moreover, such an engagement would transform the buildings from the limitation of being part from the city identity and history, to being part of the image of the city and its collective memory.

Conclusion

This study examined the case of two courtyards buildings, from the Ottoman nineteenth century rule in city of Baghdad, Iraq. The main objective was to demonstrate how these two buildings witnessed a change in their life activities due to the impact of people's flow and activities, recognized as being an urban flux, which eventually changed their hierarchy system

of privacy; and restructured the traditional genre of courtyard buildings from private to public spaces on the level of the building itself.

In the literature review, the study discussed two essential concepts, the first was the concept of (Urban Flux) and the second was the concept of (Private/Public), and the system of Hierarchy in compact urban fabric, to establish the basis of the discussion.

The research followed two methods to achieve its goal, the first is to investigate the historical background of the area, the two buildings, and the functionality of the courtyard during the life of the two buildings. The second is to adopt a field observation of the case. The findings were described and discussed, to demonstrate the change in the spatial functionality and characteristics due to the temporality of the flow of crowd and people's activities. The study concludes that the potentials of Urban Flux is a possible strategy as demonstrated in this case study, to develop public spaces.

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