

OBSERVING THE CITY'S USERS BEHAVIOURS: PRODUCTION OF A SOCIAL CYCLE LEADING TO A SPACE OF COMMUNICATION; CASE OF SIDI-BOUSAID

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_ Ons Ben Dhaou

Department of Architectural Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, University of Pécs, Boszokány u. 2, H-7624 Pécs, Hungary, onsbendhaou@gmail.com

_ Norbert Vasváry-Nádor

Department of Architectural Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, University of Pécs, Boszokány u. 2, H-7624 Pécs, Hungary, vasvary.norbert@mik.pte.hu

ABSTRACT

The functional use of a space is never a mere material use, but a situation that creates an imaginary relationship with that space and gives it meaning. In fact, when people talk about space, they talk about themselves, they translate their experiences in space and then engage in a process of meaning. It is assumed in this article that the forms and components of Sidi Bou-Said can give meaning to space and otherwise influence its practices. Presented under this image of a public space, social practices fit into it. Sidi Bou-Said is therefore "the immaterial and media space" the space of communication understood as "public sphere". A place where one seeks to communicate, to identify with a community. The combination of the observed spatio-temporal elements consists in talking about the user/space relationship with all that it entails of otherness, temporality, spatial devices and culture.

KEYWORDS *_ public space, spatio-temporality, spatiality, temporality, observation, social behaviours*

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 20th century, Sidi Bou-Said became the favorite place of artists and men of culture who were seduced by the village and its atmosphere. Artists and intellectuals, then, writers, architects, plastic artists, filmmakers etc. choose it as their home. An eminent personality was strongly linked to the destiny of the village. This is Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger, a British banker of German origin. This music lover, full of good taste and painter, came for the first time to the village at the beginning of the century. Seized by the beauty of the site, he resolved to take up residence there. And it was then that he built his palace which he named "NejmaEzzahra" of an essentially orientalist architecture. As a leading musicologist, he is the author of a treatise on Arabic music. It was at the origin of the beylical decree of August 6, 1915 safeguarding the village and it was he who pushed to introduce the white and blue of Sidi Bou-Said.

It is at Sidi-Bousaid that we meet the traditional model. The secondary residences are very close to each other and form a dense solid fabric reminiscent of the medina. The spatial hierarchy of the medina makes the central location the mosque. Thus, the centrality of the city is religious: everything is ordered around the religious landmark which is the Zaouia of the saint. (Santelli 1956). In this ground, we shall take into account a communication between different elements which confront:

Architectural style, Light, View and position effect with narrow streets to produce actions, reactions and interactions between these elements in a precise social and spatial code. This communication bases itself on the various memberships and the identity that it is religious, cultural, historic and artistic. It turns out, moreover, that during this research, we shall be interested to study the influence of the arrangement of this narrow streets in a direct or indirect way on the psychology and the behaviour of the users.

To illustrate the purpose of this research, the work has been divided to two correlative parts. The first is theoretical, which offers an overlooking about the history of the city to understand and discover the relation between the elements presented in the site; As follow the second part is practical with the aim of presenting the influence of the arrangement of narrow streets and its architectural details; a work on a case study was conducted; an observation of the city's users behaviours. The main interest is to set the light on the communication created between the city and its users in order to create a process of meaning during the previous years.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first phase of this research study exhibits the characteristics of both exploratory and descriptive research. Include in this phase, an initial review of existing literature was undertaken to develop an understanding of how the issues has been explored and adapted in these environment. The observation technique will be use in order to gain the information and data about this research. Towards the end, this study will capture key of well designed street furniture in narrow streets in Tunisia.

PROFILE OF THE SITE

Sidi-Bousaid in its global morphology presents itself as an open-air pedestrian space with a total area of 217 hectares. Facing east, it welcomes the first light of day. It is wide open to the urban landscape on one side and a natural landscape on the other. Sidi-Bousaid is a famous tourist attraction in Tunisia. Its positioning next to the Mediterranean Sea gives the city a cool atmosphere. The walls and staircases of the age-old buildings are of marble white, while the doors, window frames, shutters, and moucharabieh are of blue color. Baron, Rodolphe d'Erlanger, who was a French painter and a musicologist, introduced the blue and white theme. We chose, besides to study this outside living space which are frequented by infinity of users which include a social, cultural, commercial, artistic diversity. It is a small city with a population of around 6,000. Sidi-Bousaid is an important touristic pole, it is one of the sites the most visited of the Mediterranean sea and welcomes up to 100 000 visitors during the weekends of the summer months.

It seems that the architectural style, the colours, the opening or closing, the lighting, the surface, the geometric shape, the spatial arrangement of the components of a space, the activities that animate it, the routes and the mode of accessibility, promote the birth of social practices. The spatial arrangement of the components: The terraces of the cafes, a little behind the main axis, are reminiscent of the second balconies or bathtubs in a performance room. They offer a complete view of the scene.

The Café des Nattes, one of the emblematic places of Sidi-Bousaid, located on the first floor in the entrance, with its balcony, intimate and comfortable, a strategic position, right in the center of the village.

The Café des Délices is located at the top of the village and offers a view of the Gulf of Tunis. Its blue umbrellas are the same blue color used throughout the village.

The palace of the Baron d'Erlanger, which houses the headquarters of the Arab and Mediterranean music center on the top of the hill, offers a surprising view of the Mediterranean Sea.

The public lighting devices also accentuate, by their artisanal shapes and their soft orange light the scenic appearance of the space. In addition, the spatial organization and the various human activi-

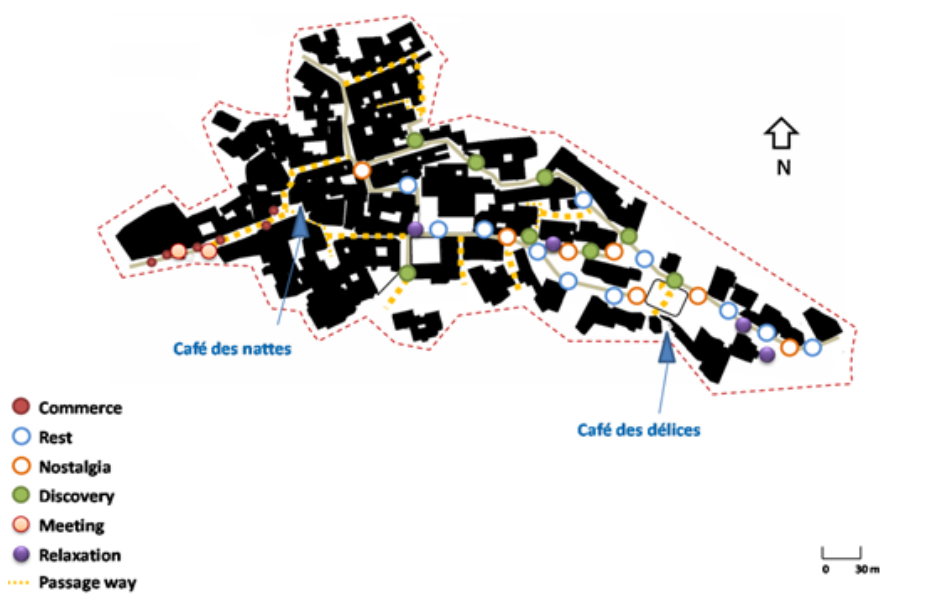
ties taking place in the square contribute to its dramatization.

The perception of the urban landscape depends largely on the observer's position and viewing angle. The zoning performed during the content analysis identified perceptive fragmentation of SBS. Users create imaginary holes and angles from their positions and their discourses seem to reflect these invented limits.

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE SURVEY CORPUS

The purpose of the observation is the direct collection of spatial behaviors at the time they occur. Moreover, the dramatization of space would not be rhetoric. Users by their attitudes and behaviors contribute to the staging of space. We also approach an audience that is not only a spectator «it is also capable of judgment; and it participates in the plot of the actions and characters that appear on the stage.

The following map represents the practices recorded in Sidi Bou-Said, during our investigation, by entering the site, the first activity that we can face are the commercial activities including social meetings and gathering.



_ Figure 1: Practices recorded in Sidi Bou-Said during a day (Author)

Going further inside the city, we notice the distribution of various activities, such as the discovery of place, the resting, the relaxation and nostalgic behaviors by using different sorts of street furniture such as the benches, the sitting walls all along the site.

Spatial elements of a daily observation

The following table summarizes the spatial behaviors recorded in Sidi Bou-Said through the observation in ordinary days. It illustrates:

_ Table 1: Social practices observed in Sidi Bou-Said: Mode and images

Practice	Mode	Emplacement	Image
Commerce	Individual and collective	The entrance to the city	Exhibition

Rest	Individual	The wall	Lounge
Meeting	Collective	The entrance to the city	Crossroad
Relaxation	Individual	The bench, the wall	Public park
Nostalgia	Individual	The wall	Parental house
Discovery	Collective	The surroundings of the city	Museum
Passage way	Individual	All the city	Passage

From these results, we notice the existence of several functions that take place throughout the day, from sunrise to sunset. These practices are carried out by different modes of use, in a collective or individual way in order to extract different images from a single space or furniture. Based on the practices observed on Sidi Bou-Said, we notice that these practices are mostly carried out in the individual mode. We can say that each space is transformed into a place by integrating a function according to the needs of the users.

Temporal elements of a daily observation

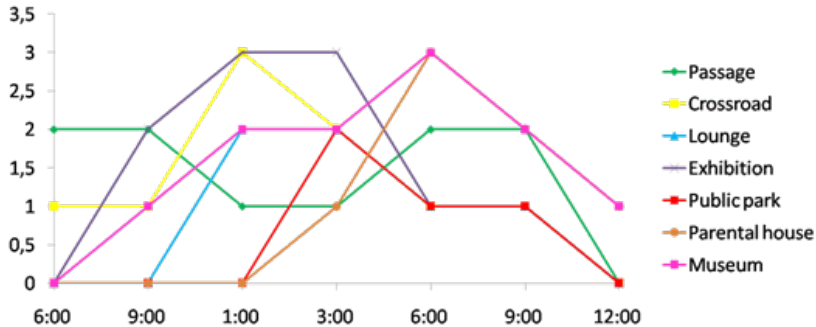
The following table summarizes the dynamics of space use during the day from 6am to midnight. We note that most of the practices take place between 9am and 12pm, they start with a long rhythm until they reach a maximum intensity

_ Table 2: Daily dynamics of practices on Sidi-Bou Said

Hours	Type of practices	Intensity
6am - 9am	Passage way	Weak
9am - 1pm	Commerce	Average
	Rest	
	Meeting	
	Relaxation	
	Nostalgia	
	Discovery	
1pm - 3pm	Passage way	Strong
	Commerce	
	Rest	
	Meeting	
	Relaxation	
	Nostalgia	
3pm - 6pm	Discovery	Strong
	Passage way	
	Commerce	
	Rest	
	Meeting	
	Relaxation	
6pm - 9pm	Nostalgia	Very strong
	Discovery	
	Passage way	
	Commerce	
	Rest	
	Meeting	
9pm - 12 pm	Relaxation	Strong
	Meeting	
	Rest	
	Commerce	

This suggests that most practices occur between 6:00 am and 12:00 pm. They begin with a weak

rhythm, intensifying as the day progresses to reach its maximum in the middle of the day and decreasing towards the end of the day to extinguish itself to the rhythm of sunlight. The combination of the temporal spatial elements recorded in Sidi Bou Said, during ordinary days, produces curves highlighting the temporality of the images released by the typologies of use of space.

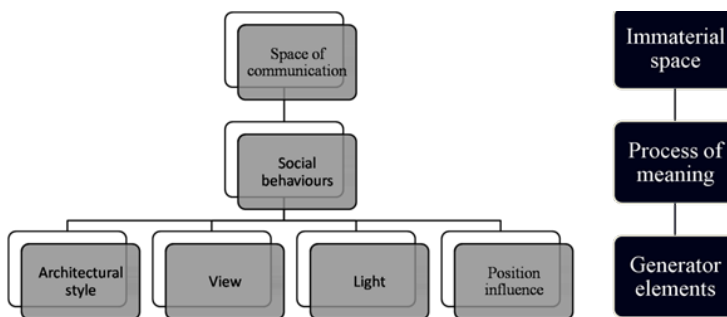


_ Figure 2: Curves of temporal evolution of the images released on Sidi Bou-Said (Author)

Indeed, this space experiences a spectacular dynamic analogous to the movement of living beings. In fact, the dynamics observed in this space make us think of vegetal tropism; the latter being a biological phenomenon by which living matter is oriented [1], it depends entirely on the external factor called stimulus. By following the progress of Sidi Bou-Said, we can see a dependence on light. Peaceful in its night sleep space recognizes its first users. And as the sun rises and the day progresses, the movement intensifies. and the movement is reversible when the sun tends at sunset, the movement weakens and the place deserts little by little and prepares for another quiet night. This phototropism is in reality only an imprint of social time. The urban time of space is strongly marked by social time. In fact, the identity of a group is expressed through its rhythm, its temporal and spatial organization the identity comes from culture rather than from the strict physical location [2]. The practices of space are conditioned by a contextual character, they are carried out in time and space.

CONCLUSIONS

It was presented, in this phase of research, the importance of the generator elements that allows the users of this space to act in a way that creates a process of meaning helping the transmission of Sidi-Bousaid city from a spatial to mental image then a space of communication.



_ Figure 3: The production cycle of a space of communication

Sidi-Bousaid as an object of study, is a space presenting the result of a development project. And there, in this space, social practices begin to appear and take place. This is where according to Marc AUGÉ announces that everyone has his own history with and in the city, it is the support of an infinity of memories, lives, expressions, feelings. The city becomes a place of life, passage, experience, consumption and work. This study will contribute in developing awareness for providing street furniture by considering the several criteria. The understanding of street furniture design including economic, environmental, and the social benefits are also considered to be in this study. The next step for this study is to provide a recommendation in creating suitable design for street furniture which results in widespread application by designers in producing the new design street furniture in narrow streets. Moreover, the findings of this study will contribute to experimental aesthetics in street furniture design from academic perspectives. The study also will contribute possible sustainable design criteria for street furniture values.

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