



FACING POST-SOCIALIST URBAN HERITAGE

PROCEEDINGS

DOCONF2023 / conference

5-6-7th October 2023, Budapest, Hungary

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DOCONF/2023

FACING POST/SOCIALIST

URBAN HERITAGE

date /

5 opening & 6-7 October 2023, Budapest, Hungary

venue /

Oct 5 & 6 / BME, 1111 Budapest, Műegyetem rkp. 3. / 2nd. floor room 10

Oct 7 / KÉK, 1111 Budapest, Bartók Béla út 10-12.

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38 lectures presented in consecutive thematic sessions about /

mass housing neighbourhoods, leiscapes, productive urban fabric, and re-use of urban public space

sessions are moderated in person by Melinda BENKŐ habil. PhD (BME), Prof. Aleksandra DJUKIĆ PhD (TU Belgrade), Willeminj Wilms FLOET PhD (TU Delft), Prof. Miles GLENDINNING (UEdinburg and Docomomo), Bálint KÁDÁR PhD (BME), Daniel KISS PhD (ETH Zürich), Prof. Richard KLEIN PhD, HDR (ENSAP de Lille), Prof. Angelica STAN PhD (UAUIM Bucharest), Árpád SZABÓ DLA (BME), David TICHÝ habil. PhD (TU Prague), Prof. Endre VÁNYOLOS DLA (HUT Cluj-Napoca), Federica VISCONTI PhD (UNINA Naples), Prof. Lúbia VITKOVA PhD (TU Bratislava), Domonkos WETTSTEIN PhD (BME), Veneta ZLATINOVA-PAVLOVA PhD (UACEG Sofia)

38 lectures presented by /

doctoral students, candidates, or post-doctoral researchers who are architects, landscape architects, planners, etc., arriving from different doctoral schools of 13 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Ukraine)

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FOREWORD

The bi-annual DOCONF series provides a comparative overview of current doctoral research in architecture, urban design, urban planning, and landscape architecture focusing on the urban challenges related to the inherited environment of post-socialist cities in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and post-Soviet Asia.

DOCONF2023 proposed five thematic sessions: leiscapes, industrial sites, mass housing neighbourhoods, public spaces, and heritage. Each session was prepared, proofread, and moderated by members of the scientific board, who are university teachers, and in most cases also doctoral supervisors either at the BME Department of Urban Planning and Design, Budapest, at a university in another post-socialist city (Belgrade, Bratislava, Bucharest, Cluj, Prague, Sofia) or in a Western country (France, Germany, Italy, Netherland, Scotland, Switzerland).

The organizers, the BME Department of Urban Planning and Design and the Foundation for Urban Design wish to promote international cooperation facilitating academic network building for scholars active in these specific fields of research through meeting in person to teach and learn from each other. Nevertheless, DOCONF2023 featured successive sessions consisting of presentations and discussions among scholars. This year the selected 36 speakers - doctoral students, candidates, and post-doctoral researchers (holding a doctorate degree for less than 5 years at the time of the conference) - study at various doctoral schools of thirteen European countries and make their research on post-socialist urban issues. We believe that the DOCONF conference series is an important step towards learning about each other's research fields, comparing research methods, giving presentations, and writing academic papers published in this open access, double proofread e-Proceedings.

As DOCONF's Founder and Chair, I would like to thank you all for being active in this shared experience, working on (preparing or proofreading) papers, and presenting and participating in the discussions in Budapest on October 5th, 6th and 7th, 2023. In addition, I would like to say a big thanks to my colleagues, especially Anikó BOSÁNSZKI, Dr Bálint KÁDÁR PhD, Dr Árpád SZABÓ DLA, Dr Domonkos WETTSTEIN PhD, and students at the BME Department of Urban Planning and Design for their contribution to the success of the 5th DOCONF.

I hope that we continue the DOCONF series in Budapest, this exceptional international doctoral meeting, and we contribute to the learning and teaching activity of the future generation scholars focusing on the challenges of the post-socialist urban heritage.

<http://doconf.architect.bme.hu/>
See you in 2025!

Budapest, 07th October 2023

Dr. Melinda BENKŐ habil. Ph.D.
Founder and Chair of DOCONF series



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PROGRAMME & CONTENTS

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18:00pm – 21.00pm OPENING

Prof. János LEVENDOVSKY DSc / Vice-Rector for Science and Innovation,
Budapest University of Technology and Economics, BME

Dr. Bálint KÁDÁR PhD / Vice-Dean for Science, Faculty of Architecture & Associate
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series, Associate Professor at the Department of Urban Planning and Design, BME &
Head of Standing Committee on Urban Planning and Design, Hungarian Academy of
Sciences

6th OCT 2023 / FRIDAYvenue: BME, 1111 Budapest, Műegyetem rkp. 3. / 2nd. floor room 10

9:00am – 11:00am LEISURESCAPES

Chairs:

Dr. Domonkos WETTSTEIN PhD / BME, Budapest, Hu

Dr. Dániel KISS PhD / Zürich, Ch

Dr. Federica VISCONTI PhD / Naples, I

Ágnes BERTYÁK / BME, Budapest, Hu p090
co-author: Dr. Kornélia KISSFAZEKAS PhD / Hu-BME
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Elena ANDONOVA / Madrid E p030
co-author: Prof. María Cristina GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ PhD
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Chairs:

Dr. Árpád SZABÓ DLA / BME, Budapest, Hu

Dr. Willemijn Wilms FLOET PhD / Delft, NI

Prof. Angelica STAN PhD / Bucharest, Ro

Dóra SZUSZIK / BME, Budapest, Hu p376
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Dr. Melinda BENKŐ habil. PhD / BME, Budapest, Hu

Prof. Miles GLENDINNING PhD / Edinburg, Sco

Dr. David TICHY habil PhD / Prague, Cz

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Chairs:

Prof. Endre VÁNYOLÓS DLA / Cluj, Ro
 Dr. Melinda BENKŐ habil PhD / BME, Budapest, Hu
 Prof. Aleksandra DJUKIĆ PhD / Belgrade, Srb

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Mega - Block 70, New Belgrade

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co-author: Dr. Shaha Mazen MATEIH PhD / Pécs, Hu
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Dr. Bálint KÁDÁR PhD / BME, Budapest, Hu

Prof. Richard KLEIN PhD HDR / Lille, F

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FULL PAPERS

The Impact of Mixed Culture on Open Public Spaces in urban areas: A Case Study of Mega - Block 70, New Belgrade

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ABSTRACT

Public spaces are important in the cultural landscape of a city, as they provide opportunities for social interaction, recreation, and civic engagement. The way these spaces are designed and managed has a significant impact on their use and meaning. This paper explores the influence of mixed culture on open public places, focusing on housing mega-blocks – the „Block 70“ in New Belgrade as a case study. Block 70 is a mixed-use development that includes residential, commercial, and cultural facilities. It is located in one of the most prominent areas of New Belgrade, which has undergone significant transformation in recent years. The study uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the cultural influences on the use and perception of open public spaces in Block 70. The paper begins by providing an overview of the theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between culture and open public spaces. It highlights the key concepts of cultural identity, social practices, and the role of the cultural impact seen from the aspects of urban design that is shaped and redefined by different cultural trends. The study then presents the results of a survey conducted among the residents of Block 70, first shown in non published paper which examines their perceptions of the cultural influences on urban design in open public spaces. The survey results indicate that the cultural diversity of the residents is reflected in the use and perception of open public spaces in Block 70. The study identifies several cultural factors that influence the use of these spaces, including social norms, gender roles, and cultural traditions. For example, women tend to use the public spaces in Block 70 less frequently than men, due to cultural norms that dictate their roles in open public spaces. The paper also examines the architectural features of Block 70 and their impact on the use and perception of public spaces. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of creating inclusive and accessible open public spaces that reflect the cultural diversity of the community. The findings of this study have implications for urban planners, designers, and policymakers, as they seek to create public spaces that promote social interaction, civic engagement, and cultural exchange.

KEYWORDS

open public spaces, culture, transformation, mega block 70-New Belgrade



Figure 1. An axonometric drawing attempts to map informal changes in today's Block 70.
(Source: author)

1. Introduction

1.2. Plan for the new city

New Belgrade began as a city of great ideas that produced significant architectural and urban initiatives while it was being built, but in the end, public and social housing with undeveloped open space became its primary use. Between 1960 and 1980, this new city was rapidly constructed in order to address Belgrade's ongoing shortfall of 50,000 housing units. The Athens Charter and microrayon system, which organized residential complexes around compact neighborhood hubs with stores, services, and centers for primary education and health, served as its urbanistic foundation. In the context of the former Yugoslavia, the municipality of the planned modern expansion of the capital, New Belgrade, was exposed to intensive urban development (Jovanović and Stupar, 2021).

From the very beginning, this new “city within a city” was planned with the dominant function of state administration, however, over time it gave priority to much needed housing (figure 2). The basic idea of the development was the construction of blocks with large residential buildings, the articulation of basic geometric shapes, an orthogonal matrix with a series of services and large areas of open public green areas, which represented the essence of modern urbanism (Blagojević 2007).

The paper focuses on Block 70, due to the fact that this superblock underwent a large transformation in spatial and functional way, and regarding the fact that because of the functional services in this area it is rather inhibited with different cultures, mostly Serbian and Chinese. The surface area of Block 70 is approx. 137 ha, with the built area of approx. 8,000 apartments for 15,700 inhabitants. The superblock is bounded by a huge green buffer zone next to the main road (Jurija Gagarin Boulevard) on the north, and a green promenade next to the Sava River in the south.



Figure 2. Masterplan of New Belgrade, 1950. (Source: Archives of the Urban Planning Institute of the City of Belgrade)

In 1962, the municipality of Novi Beograd adopted a regulatory plan. It was planned that a settlement with about 60,000 inhabitants will be built on the green area of the village of Bežanija and along the Sava River. On the basis of this plan, the urban design of a typical block was developed. The two similar superblocks, 45 and 70, represent the largest housing unit in New Belgrade, with surface of approx. 800 x 800 meters. In 1965, on the Yugoslav competition for urban planning concepts the first-prized design was done by Ivan Tepeš and Velimir Gredelj, and Milutin Glavički and Jovan Mišković made a detailed urban plan according to the initial design (figure 3).

The original urban plan for New Belgrade from 1948 defined a special urban fabric composed of superblocks. New Belgrade was developed as a symbol of the modern socialist country in the political and cultural way. The organization of the state was presented through this new development and huge construction, primarily developed as the antithesis of capitalism, which fundamentally determined the concept and strategy of its development. However, today it represents an illustrative example of how the market law can define the spatial organization of the capital (Djukić 2015).

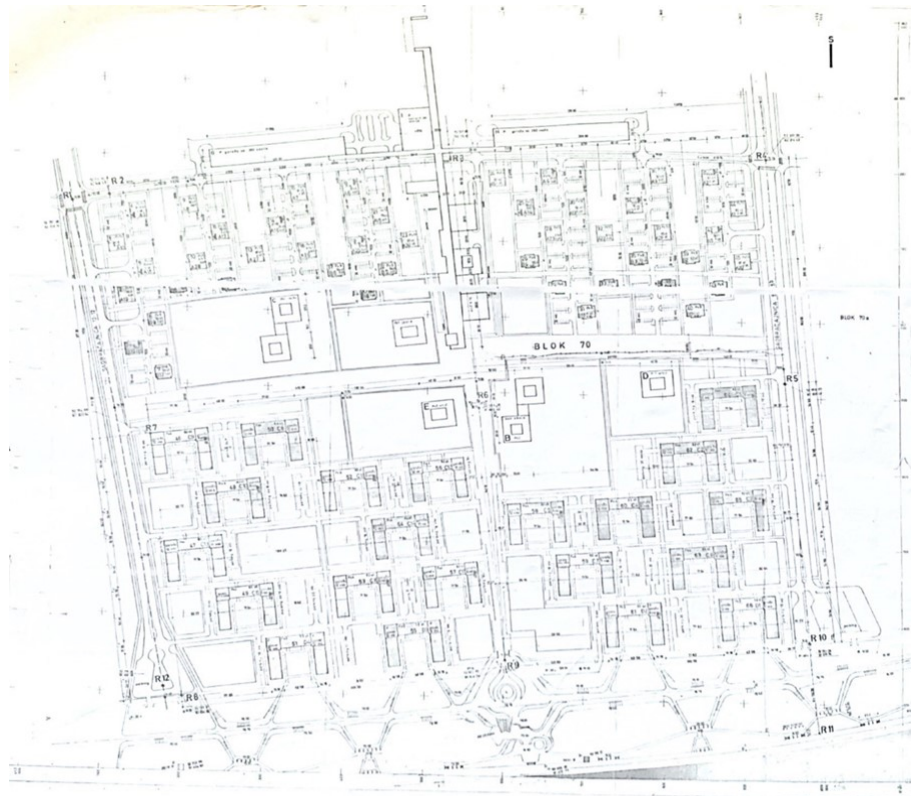


Figure 3. Masterplan of blk 70 in New Belgrade, 1965. (Source: Historic archive of Belgrade)

A qualitative research design was employed through expert observation techniques such as field study with cognitive mapping, while quantitative research utilized online surveys conducted among local citizens residing around Mega Block-70 New Belgrade. The data collected provided insight into how different cultural backgrounds impacted open public space usage patterns. Qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews with more than 10 participants were used in the combination with aforementioned methodology. Consequently, qualitative methods are used to observe the behaviour of local communities and identify community issues and needs from the aspect of open public space usage. Qualitative methods are advantageous for this type of research as they provide a basis for planning community efforts that lead to long-term change. However, qualitative methods do not always yield results that can be reduced to numbers. Therefore, it is important to use a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of overall space characteristics and usage.

2. Impact of Urban Redevelopment on New Belgrade Block 70 Usage

The urban redevelopment of New Belgrade Block 70 has changed the cityscape of the area and the overall morphology of New Belgrade. City authorities initially argued for the sale of land in the area to justify the intensive construction and promote it in the area. This has led to under-utilization of open spaces and problems with maintaining them, as well as poor maintenance of communications between homes and buildings, which has appeared to have a negative effect on the public image of New Belgrade. Physical deterioration of housing and semi-public open spaces in Block 70 is also evident. New Belgrade follows the principles of scientific urbanism, emphasizing light, air, and green space, and in the 1970s there was a socialist construction boom, while

in the 2000s new construction aimed to densify the urban fabric. The predominant prefabricated structural system in New Belgrade was developed at the Institute of Materials of Serbia and widely used in residential construction in Yugoslavia and exported to non-aligned countries.

Traditional theories of ethnicity rely on a straightforward relationship between identity and place, even when used to depict cultural distinctions in contexts where people from different regions cohabit. Social-scientific representations of space provide images of fracture, rupture, and disjunction a lot of attention. The cornerstone for the distinctiveness of civilizations, nations, and cultures is the occupation of "naturally" discontinuous territories, which appears to be an unproblematic partition of space. The concept of discontinuity serves as the foundation for theories that explain how cultures and societies interact, clash, and contradict one another (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997).

"Experience is a single whole, within which modifications may be distinguished, but which admits of no final or absolute division; and that experience is everywhere, not merely inseparable from thought, but is itself a form of thought." (Oakeshott 2015).

The unique sense of physical identity that a place can communicate is one of the generalizations with which most authors relevant to the research topic agree. It is recognizable in certain ways. It can be a physical unity that is represented by topographical details, such as being bounded by hills or mountains or partially or completely surrounded by water. Unlike a border, a central landmark, such as a harbor, a mountain, or a historically significant structure such as a church, temple, or mosque, can provide identity. Identity of Block 70 is defined by existing Chinese shopping market, but also by the Riverfront that is most frequently used by citizens for socialization and recreational activities, alongside with the river boat restaurants and clubs called "splavovi" that represent a perfect example of people tradition and identity in Belgrade. To borrow a definition from phenomenology, people are rooted in their environment, or, in other words, in their lifeworld. The interaction between an organism and its environment is ongoing, and because the two are closely related, our conceptual distinctions are often misleading and useful only as heuristics. For example, we often refer to the interaction between a person and an object or a person and a location. In contrast, there is a merging of concepts that are usually considered distinct entities, such as body and consciousness, culture and organism, inner thought and outer world, in the most basic sense of existence. Public spaces play a significant role in improving the quality of life for those living in urban areas. They provide an opportunity for social interaction, physical activity, and mental relaxation. However, cultural differences can influence how public spaces are perceived, used, and shaped by the community members. This essay explores the impact of mixed culture on open public spaces using Mega-Block 70 as a case study in New Belgrade.

Public spaces are crucial because they foster social cohesion and encourage community development (Mostafa, 2021). The design and maintenance of public spaces can have various effects on human behavior and well-being (Li et al., 2022). Cultural diversity is an essential aspect that adds to the richness of urban public space experience (Bulatović, 2022). Mixed cultures refer to various ethnicities or racial groups living together within a particular locality. Cultural influences are a major determinant of the use of public spaces and can even determine how they are shaped. Research indicates that age, gender, marital status, and area of residence are key influencers in the utilization of public spaces. Studies have also indicated that public spaces are

essential for the enjoyment and exercise of human rights, particularly cultural rights [6]. Furthermore, research has highlighted the importance of interactions between behavior and the built environment in public spaces. Indeed, it is important for planners and others to consider normative principles when designing and regulating public spaces in order to ensure that cultural influences are taken into account. Cultural influences have further impacted urban development across the world by influencing the design of open public spaces, which provide the means of connecting culture, nature and people. Consequently, it is clear that cultural influences must be taken into account when planning public spaces in Block 70 to ensure that they meet the needs of different cultural groups. While there is little acknowledgement that civilizations have irrevocably lost their way, "multiculturalism" is an attempt to integrate this multiplicity of cultures into the framework of national identity. Similar to this, the concept of "subcultures" upholds the notion of various "cultures" while acknowledging the relationship between many cultures and the dominant culture within the same geographic and territorial realm. Even when employed to explain cultural variations in circumstances where people from different areas coexist, traditional theories of ethnicity rely on an unproblematic connection between identity and place (Barross, 1990; Dovall, 1991).

Having a culturally diverse public space in Block 70 is incredibly beneficial. For example, regarding the connection between culture and public spaces, investing in these areas increases access to markets, jobs, and education. It is also important to recognize why different people of different cultural backgrounds use public spaces, whether it is because of the opportunities or exchange of ideas and experiences, or simply to enjoy the natural characteristics of open public space. Studies have also shown that urban green spaces influence lower levels of stress thus improving overall physical and mental health. Public spaces also bring many different people together, creating a positive framework for shaping public space. Moreover, with fresh development decisions, urban spaces can change spatially, increasing prosperity and extending expectations of modernization.



Figure 4. Photo of usage of green spaces in block 45 and 70 in 1970. (Source: Exhibition in gallery Neon, 2019)


It is evident that spending time in open public space can have a rather beneficial impact on the community, but how is this mixed community using these spaces. One of the most important benefits of having a culturally diverse public space in Block 70 is the ability to create cultural sensitivity, insight, and local knowledge, which can lead to higher quality. Therefore, having spaces. Diverse public space in Block 70 is essential for creating a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.

3. Analysis of Cultural Influences on the Usage of Open Public Spaces in Block 70

The utilization of open public spaces in Block 70, New Belgrade is affected by both cultural and political factors. The super-blocks in New Belgrade were built as part of a modernist urbanism plan, as a statement about the establishment of a modern socialist state. This plan resulted in the division of the super-blocks into smaller pieces and a current threat of privatization (Jovanović, Vuković / Mitrović 2019), which has a direct impact on the utilization of these spaces. These open public spaces are also an integral part of the super-blocks and form one of the most interesting aspects of these spaces. The super-blocks also became independent local communities to a certain extent, and formed an integral part of the everyday lives of the people living in the blocks. Therefore, the cultural factors surrounding the use of these public spaces should be taken into account before any decisions about them can be made.

Block 70 in New Belgrade, Serbia, is a unique urban area shaped by environmental, social, cultural, and spatial factors (Rakonjac, et al. 2022). The open public spaces in the New Belgrade waterfront area, in particular, reflect the influence of several of New Belgrade's characteristic super-blocks (70a, 70, 44, 45). Researchers have studied the structure of settlements and public spaces of the open block in an effort to understand the initial planning of sports and cultural areas (Milojević, Maruna / Djordjević 2019). This had an important theoretical impact on subsequent planning (Prokopljević 2015). Block 70 in New Belgrade is a modernist mass housing area that comprises several super blocks (45, 44, 70) (Zivkovic, i drugi 2019). This has a major impact on the context of the entire housing "Block 70," and by bringing new values to urban areas, public spaces can also be expanded to the other blocks of New Belgrade (Carlos A. Moreno-Camacho 2019). These factors have significant implications for the city structure and network them to have a broad impact in terms of functional and cultural aspects of open public places (Đukić / AntoniĆ 2019). For example, Block 45 in New Belgrade was designed in accordance with the principles of Green Infrastructure (Simić I 2017). In addition, there are urban gardens in New Belgrade's Block 23, estimated to affect approximately 70 households (Djokić, i drugi 2018). Moreover, spatial comfort within open public spaces and comfort with the city of Belgrade is widely due to its long cultural-historical impact (Vukovic, i drugi 2021). Thus, open public spaces provide terms of sustainability and a new method of cultural sustainability.

Open public spaces have the potential to bring a range of benefits. In Serbia, the community has implemented various initiatives to bring greening efforts to the area, such as urban gardening workshops, pocket park implementations, and the transformation of abandoned places in to places of culture. For instance, Vienna has an established system of community gardening that involves local initiatives in formal action plans, while Budapest engages a well-organized civil sector to find optimal models of cooperation (Simić I 2017). Vienna also provides financial support for



community gardens, while KÉK acts as a mediator between local initiatives and the local government (Simić I 2017). Block 70 is planned with more than 50% of occupied ground as greenery and spaces for leisure and recreation. Through survey and interviews conducted in 2022 and 2023 with residents, denizens and workers insight in to how open public spaces is perceived is broadened. Residents had answers that differentiate based on their gender. For women perception of security is influenced with neglect of space

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Mega-Block 70 exhibits diverse cultural influences due to its proximity to residential complexes where people from different cultures reside (Bulatović ,2022). These include food markets selling different delicacies from diverse cultures which provide residents with choices beyond their traditional cuisines hence leading towards acceptance and mutual respect between each other's cultures. This creates a unique sense of place with more opportunities for people to interact with each other thus breaking down barriers that may exist amongst them.

Individuals of many social classes, racial and religious backgrounds frequent liminal zones, which are heavily and simultaneously used by a large number of individuals. Although overuse fosters tension, it also presents opportunities for meetings and conversation, which are crucial components of integration. Between the socialist mass housing estates and Gagarin Boulevard, the setting of the Chinese shopping market could be seen as a kind of transitional area. Interviews as a methodology has given insights in to how users perceive shared spaces. Questions for the interview are based on the answers of the questionnaire that was previously conducted, making the order reverse in search of better research topic understanding. Interviews have been conducted in 2023 and do not represent full picture but merely a snippet of users and inhabitants' realities. Fragments of interviews shown in this paper will strive to articulate and examine theoretical framework. Interview conducted was with inhabitants who live in block 70, examinees have given insight in to personal relation with space and expressed need for better maintenance of greenery and surroundings of Chinese market place. Same interview questions were presented to the workers in Chinese market place. Examinees who work in market place have concerns with space deficiency for their needs. Lack of maintenance of greenery and public spaces presented one of the key concerns. As number of them stated, they do not use different open public spaces except for commute. Reasons varied from feeling of not belonging to a lack of interest.

Results indicated that shared values were more important than similarities in language or ethnicity for creating a sense of community among the residents. The study also showed that cultural differences play an influential role in shaping public space usage patterns.

The interpretation of findings suggests that urban design practices should reflect and embrace cultural diversity to encourage inclusivity and promote social interactions (Li et al., 2022). It is critical to have sensitivity concerning cultural values, traditions, and customs when designing public spaces to ensure they cater to all cultures present within the locality(Bulatović ,2022).

In conclusion, Mega-Block 70 serves as a perfect example of how mixed culture can positively influence open public spaces by fostering social interaction and breaking down barriers between different ethnicities or cultures. Urban design needs to be

sensitive to these differences so that they reflect and embrace the cultural diversity present within localities.

This research was limited by time constraints hence limiting further methods like focus group discussions which would provide much deeper insight into how diverse cultures were blending together around Mega Block70. Furthermore, the data collected are only from one specific area hence not generalizable across other areas with similar demographics.

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