

# Placemaking

exploration, research and reflection on cities , public space, urban design , urban planning and landscape design

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Thursday, January 20, 2011

## So What is Accessibility for Public Spaces?

Public space should be **accessible** to and used by all. (Arendt ,1958) It is particularly important, as Fraser (1990) and Hartley (1992) argue, that by claiming that public space as an embodiment of the public realm, it should include and foster interactions between different groups of the society. It should also offer **excluded groups an opportunity to claim their rights of representation within the general community**.



**Demographic accessibility** refers to the link between the production activities of the space and the output generated to the entity operating it whether it's a public or private agency. **The production activities, such as retail, can be analyzed through the formal and informal programs that the implemented design generates as well as the one designed for [N1] [N2]**. The inclusivity of the public space is established collectively through the diverse groups that uses is to engage in dialogue, debate and oppositional struggles. Key aspects of inclusive public space are its suitability for gatherings and encounters and its accessibility as an arena through which privacy is contested (Mitchell 1995)>Inclusive public space also encompasses the range of wage groups it serves and being served to. Demographic accessibility is important since it allows for various perceptions of the space to surface. In fact, (Ramon, 2004) advocates that variables such as age, sex, social class and ethnic identity affect the way urban life is **perceived**[N3] .



**Physical accessibility** is defined by the nature of the network that links the urban space to its surrounding urban fabric. **The nature of these networks , highway or a pedestrian street, can change their role from linkages to obstructions facilitating or preventing exchange processes and therefore the inclusivity as a quality of Publicness**. "Environments, individuals and/or groups perceived either as threatening, comforting or inviting may affect entry into a public space" (Tiesdell and Oc, 1998: 648).



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active/passive engagement. The nature and the scope of activities incorporated in the public spaces can either allow or prevent the emergence of spaces of representation. **The impact of the spaces of representation vary depending on the flexibility of such a representation.** If it is narrow, it would only allow for representations of selected groups, if it is wide, it would allow for overlapping representations and increase its circle of influence beyond the development to the city scale.

This could even extend to **national scale especially in extraordinary events** such as the place de martyrs in Beirut in becoming an arena for multiple representations for Lebanon over the past two years. By outlasting mortal lives, it memorializes and thereby conveys a sense of history and society (Arendt 1958). Public spaces are defined in terms of the social encounter and exchange "where groups' interest converge "( Borja and Muxi ,2001;Glazer and Lilla 1987;Vernez Moodar 1992;Sorkin 1992;Tibbalds 1992;Worpole 1992). It reinforces the collective identity of the community (Valle Del,1997; Franck and Paxson,1989;Gehl,1987;Lynch 960;Whyte,1980;Kensler 1993;Ruddock 1996).



**Reinforcing residents' feelings of belonging to the city is attributed to the actions that can be carried out in public space which reflects an opportunity to urban justice (Borja, 2000).**

Posted by [nadine bitar chahine](#) at 12:17 PM

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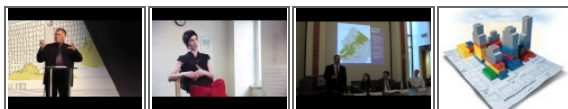
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