



**THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND**  
AUSTRALIA

**A Living Room in the City: The Place of Public Space in the Everyday Lives  
of Middle Eastern Women in Greater Brisbane**

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# Abstract

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With the first step people take out of their homes, they enter public territory. One of the significant visions for urban planners producing spaces for public life is creating a feeling of comfort for each urban dweller in this wide territory of many. Successful public spaces can only be produced through informed planning and understanding the needs of all urban dwellers. In an attempt to understand the needs of one group of urban dwellers, Middle Eastern women in Greater Brisbane, this study investigates their everyday experiences of public spaces in Greater Brisbane and explores the suitability of available public spaces for this group.

The aim of this study is to answer questions about the roles that urban spaces play in the daily lives of migrant women to find ways of making better connections between their everyday experience as migrants and public spaces as a constituent element of social life. To introduce a platform in which the voice of this minority group could be heard this study is an attempt to explore and understand the role and structure of urban spaces from three different angles: the meaning of public and private space, and relationships between the two spaces; diversity and migration and the impact of these on the everyday life of migrant people (especially on their use of public space); and women and their needs and expectations for urban spaces. These three different themes, in addition to the characteristics of Australian society and cities, could describe the main question of this research: how can the experiences of Middle Eastern migrant women using public spaces inform the planning and design of such spaces?

Phenomenology is the research approach adopted in this study. A Phenomenological approach is appropriate when the research question requires an intimate awareness and deep understanding of how humans experience a situation. Based on data collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with twenty Middle Eastern women, and with the assist of NVivo software and Phenomenological approach (Moustakas' modification of the Van Kaam model), twelve themes were identified that address the way this group of urban dwellers experience the built and natural environment.

Aside from an in-depth understanding of the urban experience for Middle Eastern women, the findings from this study recognises and understands how minority groups/migrants experience urban settings presenting possible ways planning disciplines could better respond to the needs and expectations of these urban dwellers. The research findings presented in this study contribute to planning involving Middle Eastern populations in multicultural settings and show how gender, social construct, ethnic composition, religious beliefs, and lifestyle define and change the ways in

which urban spaces are experienced and used by these urban dwellers. Subsequently these findings emphasize the role of urban specialists, particularly urban planners, in design and production of inclusive urban spaces that are suitable for use by multicultural groups and provide the possibility of intercultural dialogue. For example, inclusive spatial production of urban spaces considers Muslim women and their cultural-religious beliefs in the production of more woman-friendly spaces. This study suggests that the more people encounter and are exposed to other cultures and ethnicities, the more the democratic aspect of 'public' is demonstrated.

The findings in this study also suggest that by recognising the needs of ethnic groups/minorities in the social construct of multicultural cities, public spaces could have more harmony and features that help promote Brisbane and the Greater Brisbane region as world-class. These features include neighbourhoods with mixed-use design, neighbourhoods as arenas of social life, women-only public services and facilities, planning with the aid of cultural maps, and advocating night-life activities and cultural/ethnic/religious festivals. Planning for such spaces on a neighbourhood and city scale produces places that help women create meaning out of their everyday urban lives and helps them adapt to their new cultural and social setting in Australian cities.

Shopping centres, local and regional parks, and well-maintained sidewalks are some examples of these meaningful places. Diverse night-life, well-lit routes, local public recreational facilities, and walkable shopping streets are some examples of cultural and environmental requisites that help Middle Eastern women enjoy a lifestyle better suited to their expectations and understanding of public spaces. These well-planned public spaces could help women to leave the safe haven of their homes and other private spaces in order to blend in or connect with the new society of their host country. This process of assimilation can gradually change their 'host country' into their new 'home country' by making memories, history, and attachment associated with everyday places of their life. Spatial production of inclusive urban spaces could be the key factor in providing all groups of urban dwellers with different ethnicities, backgrounds, values and beliefs, with equal opportunity to assert their right to the city.

## **Declaration by author**

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

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**Contributions by others to the thesis**

No contributions by others.

**Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree**

None.

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Being aware of the role that the urban planning and design practice plays in shaping the future, I also dedicate this work to children, the clients of planning...



## **Keywords**

Social sciences, Public spaces, Urban design and planning, Phenomenology, Production of space, Middle East, Migrant women, Nightlife, Cultural diversity, Multicultural cities

## **Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)**

ANZSCR code: 870105 Urban Planning 50%

ANZSCR code: 160403 Social and Cultural Geography 30%

ANZSCR code: 200205 Culture, Gender, Sexuality 20%

## **Fields of Research (FoR) Classification**

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## Glossary

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List of Arabic terms used in this study:

*Burka/Burqa*: a type of veil which completely covers the face and has a lace part in front of the eyes.

*Dishdasha*: a long robe with long sleeves (some Middle Eastern men wear Dishdasha as traditional clothing in everyday life).

*Eid al-Fitr*: feast of breaking of the fast celebrated by Muslims worldwide that marks the end of Ramadan.

*Fatwa*: a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority.

*Halal*: refers to what is permissible or lawful in traditional Islamic law. It is frequently applied to permissible food and drinks.

*Haram*: Religiously forbidden.

*Hijab*: a veil worn by Muslim women in the presence of non-Mahram. The term can refer to any head, face, or body covering worn by Muslim women that conforms to a certain standard of modesty.

*Jihad*: a struggle or fight against the enemies of Islam.

*Mahram*: husband, father, father-in-law, brother, and uncle (Any man other than a woman's father, brother, husband, uncle and father-in-law is a non-*Mahram* man).

*Mohajjabat*: Women wearing the hijab (headscarves or veil).

*Ramadan*: the Islamic holy month of fasting.





## Preface

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The Webster dictionary believes “migration” means “to move from one country, place, or locality to another” and Oxford dictionary defines it as “movement of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions.” These definitions were also in my lexicon before I immigrated to Australia. Do these definitions change after the biggest event of your life? To this question I say “yes,” for I had been using a word that I knew so well through its meaning on paper, but I hadn’t experienced it in real life. I had a good life in my country of birth; a loving family, a secure job, a lovely home and a city that I had lived in for nearly 30 years. As an immigrant I had an urge to experience Australia as it captured my attention and love convincing me to live a new life of new culture, a new environment and new people.

After immigrating to Australia I transformed my home to a sanctuary, a warm welcoming Iranian environment, in order to create a safe haven to cling to. But it was not enough; I realized that I needed to find my place outside of this sanctuary. I had to adapt to this new environment and I needed to be adopted by my host country. There were moments when I realized that I was desperately looking for familiar elements in public spaces in order to attach my existence to this new world of differences; something that could remind me of my birth city Tehran, or any other cities where I had experienced a sense of belonging in any period of my life. I was not being nostalgic, but I was trying to connect my physical and emotional experiences that had shaped my concept of space.

Searching gave me the chance to explore many public spaces either as a visitor, as a professional or as a city dweller who uses place in everyday life. Every time I had a different reaction to a public space I examined it. My feelings and understanding of a place changed when I tried to find familiar elements, familiar feelings and familiar experiences. I have enjoyed such bright moments when walking in some parts of inner Brisbane and on blossomed sidewalks of the suburbs. But sometimes “the acquaintance” was missing. I could not find the bonds I was looking for. The public was there, civil life went on, and the place had enough liveability, but something was missing.

I began to ask some questions that led me to the topic of the present research. At first I wanted to know what an ideal public space is. In other words, what is it about some places/spaces that make me feel good? Then, there was a question about the role of public/private spaces in the everyday life of a migrant woman. Is there any way to accelerate the process of adopting a new

society, particularly in terms of the use of public space? Could public spaces have any possible role in the process of adaptation to a new society despite considerable differences that arise from culture, beliefs and lifestyle? Could a specific public space be convivial enough to consider it as the heart of public life of a neighbourhood? Could I find a living room for everyday social life within this new home of Australian cities? To address these questions I conducted research to investigate the place of public spaces in everyday life of Middle Eastern women.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

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Celebrating the role of different people as citizens, by including the needs of all urban dwellers when planning the use of urban spaces, is a political gesture to be honoured. The participation of all people in planning is of utmost importance and demonstration of democracy and freedom, for urban spaces are meant to be used by all different groups who live in a city (Lefebvre 1991). Different cultures mean different perspectives when observing and experiencing everyday life, especially for women where the quality of local public spaces may encourage or prevent the use of these spaces in everyday life. Because of these reasons, there are powerful planning and design implications regarding the production, use, and perception of public spaces for different cultural groups, especially for women from these groups.

The author argues that Middle Eastern women migrants in Western countries may experience exclusion from urban spaces, however this issue has not been studied in detail. The way Middle Eastern women define public and private space, and how they use urban spaces requires investigation. Considering the rise of international migration and the level of prejudice surrounding Middle Eastern people (particularly Muslims), migrant women from the Middle East have their own stories to tell.

The aims of this research are to observe, examine, analyse, interpret and present the “life of urban spaces” through the lives of Middle Eastern migrant women in public spaces of Greater Brisbane. By attempting to understand how these women view the quality and suitability of urban public spaces, this research will address questions about the roles urban spaces play in the daily life of migrants and help to find ways of making better connections between their everyday experiences as migrants in public spaces as a constituent element of social life. Case studies involving Middle Eastern migrant women, who have been living in Greater Brisbane for more than 4 years, will be used to investigate and evaluate the quality of existing public spaces and identify factors that support or hinder the use of public spaces by Middle Eastern women in an attempt to better understand the use of public spaces by this cultural group and provide recommendations to urban planners and designers.

Consequently, this study is an attempt to explore and understand the role and structure of urban spaces from three different perspectives:

- 1) The definition of public and private space, and linkages between the two

- 2) Cultural diversity and migration and the impact of such on everyday life of migrant women, especially in the context of how public space is used
- 3) Women, their needs and expectations of urban spaces.

Overall, the main question of this research is how can being both a woman and a Middle Eastern migrant shape the understanding and use of urban spaces?

The role of planners producing a convivial space for urban dwellers is obvious and the main responsibility of urban practice professionals. However, are planners aware of, and bring to practice the social and physical factors that contribute to enhancing the experience of Middle Eastern women in the built environment? The author believes there is a need for a dynamic connection to be made between those who design and create urban spaces, and those who use these spaces. The dynamic concept of this connection is fulfilled by defining links between these two for the purpose of removing, or at least decreasing, the possible barriers to information flow. As a result, this connection could create a reliable framework for policy-makers to consider and plan for optimum developments. The primary concern of this research is to address the apparent lack of knowledge regarding a subcultural group within a society for which planners must consider. Therefore one of the roles of urban researchers is to connect planning theories to other theories such as marginality, identity, difference, and social justice in the city and build a bridge between practice of urban planning and the urban dwellers, in this case, Middle Eastern women migrants as a minority group (Sandercock 1998, Sandercock and Kliger 1998, Vertovec 2010).

## **1.1 Background of the study**

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data shows that the number of Australian residents who identify their country of birth as a Middle Eastern country has modestly increased by 109500 persons over the decade between 2006 and 2016. Although these overall figures are not large compared to net migration to Australia (nearly 5%), there is a sufficient number of Middle Eastern migrants in Australia to qualify this type of study as an important field of research. Furthermore, statistics show an increasing trend in migration to Australia from 2006 to 2016 both in overall arrivals, and in Middle Eastern arrivals. These are people from extremely different cultural backgrounds compared to most Australians, yet in a few years they may become an integral part of Australian society as citizens.

Middle Eastern women are the target population in this study due to their different experiences acquired from living in a conflicted region of Middle East for a period of their life (Aitken 1998, Ahmed 2007, Afshar 2008, Crocco, Pervez et al. 2009, Schroeder 2009, Cotterman

2013, Krämer 2013, Publishing, Oecd et al. 2014, Sawalha 2014). The differences come from either living in a patriarchal society or from being restricted by the strict rules of religions, particularly Islam that forbids women from exploring many forms of public life: in Iran riding a bicycle is illegal for women; in Saudi Arabia women are not allowed to drive a car; and in public spaces of some Middle Eastern countries women are obligated to wear a Hijab. Therefore, there could be considerable differences in the perception of how public and private spaces are used by a Middle Eastern woman who immigrates from a suppressing environment to a secular one of the Western world (Sirageldin 1983-2012, Grillo 2008, Yılmaz 2015). In many Middle Eastern countries there are contrasting ways of how Islam is practised that shapes or dictates religious and public identities for Middle Eastern people, especially women, potentially affecting people who are living in the multicultural, secular environment in Australia where religious freedom is legislated.

This research also stems from a concern that Middle Eastern migrants face increasing prejudice and exclusion in Western cities. Poynting and Mason (2007) argue that anti-Muslim attitudes existed in Australia long before 9/11 (2001) and the ‘war on terror’ that followed. In different incidents of social unease (e.g. Gulf War, Sydney Siege) the “boundaries between the categories of Middle Eastern/Arab/Muslim/terrorist are conflated and accordingly racially based attacks on residents of ‘Middle Eastern appearance’, of ‘Islamic faith’ and who are ‘Third-World looking’ have increased dramatically” (Poynting and Mason 2007). On the basis of their origin and because they wear a Hijab, women from Middle Eastern countries and Muslim women in general, and even women from South East Asia who are not of ‘Middle Eastern appearance,’ are the focus of racial attacks and are abused and assaulted in public spaces of Australian cities (Atfield 2014, News 2016, Rachel 2017).

It is important to note that although Islam is the prevalent religion in most of the Middle East, there are a substantial number of followers of other religions. For instance, the population of Lebanon is 57.5% Muslim and 41.5% Christian, whilst in Israel the population is 75.4% Jewish, 16.9% Muslim and 7.7% practise a different religion (CIA 2017). It must also be noted that the official statistics regarding the number of Muslim people in some countries like Iran is debateable. When completing Census forms, many people who do not believe in Islam (or any other religion) declare themselves as Muslims to avoid serious consequences. Islam is the official religion of Iran and it is almost impossible to declare otherwise in Census forms because conversion from Islam to any other religion is against the Sharia law and could be punished by death. Considering the diverse range of religions in the Middle East, the author argues that labelling Middle Eastern people as Muslims must be approached with caution and discretion (Rehab 2015, Rahmath, Chambers et al.

2016). The same goes for the overreaching concept of ‘Middle Eastern as Arabs’ when nearly 41.62% of the population are non-Arab and instead are Iranian, Turkish or Israeli citizens.

There are several religious and medical studies that have focused on Middle Eastern populations or groups in Australia (Syed and Pio 2010, Aminisani, Armstrong et al. 2012, Francis, Wood et al. 2012, Hebbani and Wills 2012, Yasmeen 2013, Badland, Whitzman et al. 2014, Davey, Heard et al. 2015, Villanueva, Badland et al. 2015, Akbarzadeh 2016, Itaoui 2016, Pham-Smith 2016, Logan, Rouen et al. 2017). One study by Stirling (2013) looked at how the identities of Iranian and Turkish women living in Australia are affected by their religious, ethnic and cultural heritages (Stirling 2013). Other studies have focused on how migrants adapt to urban living in the Western world, particularly in the United States (Raffaetà and Duff 2013, Benson and Osbaldiston 2014, Cottrell and Cottrell 2015). Surprisingly, there are a limited number of studies exploring the impact of religion, in particular Islam or Judaism, on the use of public space. In one such study, Kwan (2002) used qualitative methods to show how 9/11 affected everyday life of Muslim women and how they used public space in Columbus, Ohio. The focus of Kwan (2002) was on women who wear a Hijab as they could be easily distinguished from other people. In a similar study, Johnson (2014) conducted research on the experience of Arab Muslim women in urban public spaces in the multicultural American context of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Johnson (2014) used the qualitative method of phenomenology to obtain an in-depth understanding of how Muslim women experience public spaces.

The experience of Middle Eastern migrants in urban spaces in Australia remains limited and needs more research. Despite the multicultural context of Australian cities, there appears to be a gap in research literature concerning public spaces and to what extent these places could fulfil the needs of migrant people and be more useful and convivial for migrants in their everyday life. Even with the increasing number of migrants moving from the Middle East to Australia, there have been few studies targeted to understanding how and to what extent the lifestyle, cultural and moral backgrounds of Middle Eastern migrants, which are inseparable aspects of their everyday life, may affect their Australian lifestyle.

With reference to the reasons discussed above, conducting research focused more on “being Middle Eastern” rather than “being Muslim” or “having Arab ancestors,” when talking about and exploring the everyday life of Middle Eastern women, could help cover some gaps in the literature of urban planning. For the purpose of the research presented here, it is necessary to understand the experience of Middle Eastern women from their perspective promoting clear and direct communication of their experience for the purpose of shaping and reshaping research questions and outcomes (Vlahov, Boufford et al. 2000, Rishbeth 2001, Selod 2011, Tissot 2011). Therefore, the

focus of this research is Middle Eastern women and their understanding and use of urban space, as well as the suitability of current urban/public spaces.

The research presented here attempts to fill a gap in the current literature and contribute findings to the planning discipline involving Middle Eastern populations in multicultural settings. Outcomes from this research could also be used to improve the lifestyle of a group of people whose needs and desires are not well known. On a micro level the experience of Middle Eastern women is unique considering the patriarchal and religious nature of these societies. On a macro level however, they are not different to other migrants when considering that all migrants seek to create a secure base in a strange, and in some cases, an unwelcoming environment. The aim of this research is to document the voices of Middle Eastern women and try to create a forum where they will have a chance to be heard and considered as one group apart from the many different ethnic and religious groups living their everyday life in a representative region of Greater Brisbane. Ultimately, the aim of this research is to enhance the currently limited knowledge about the public experiences of Middle Eastern women and Middle Eastern migrants.

## **1.2 Research questions**

This thesis investigation will focus on one overarching research question: How can the experience of Middle Eastern migrant women using public spaces inform the planning and design of such spaces?

To answer this overarching question, four sub-questions will be addressed. These secondary research questions were constructed to provide support for the primary research question:

1. How do Middle Eastern women in Greater Brisbane understand and use public space?
2. What is the relationship between public and private space for Middle Eastern women in Greater Brisbane?
3. What are the barriers to preventing the use of public spaces by Middle Eastern women and how can they be overcome when planning and designing public spaces in Greater Brisbane? And consequently, what are the factors contributing to the use of public spaces by Middle Eastern women and how can they be incorporated into the planning and design of public space in Greater Brisbane?
4. What is needed for public space planning and design in Greater Brisbane to better accommodate the needs of Middle Eastern women?

### 1.3 Significance of the research

Overall, this research will provide greater understanding about individual experiences of Middle Eastern women in the use of urban spaces, a topic that has not been the focus of research in urban studies. The results from this research will contribute important findings to urban studies literature and address current scholarly concerns regarding urban management issues for the increasing population of migrants in Australia. Moreover this study will increase the understanding of the potential role of urban spaces and will provide knowledge about the linkages between urban policies, urban planners/designers and decision-making processes, especially when catering for the needs and culture of minority groups.

This research is significant in three different but overlapping ways (Figure 1):

- **Sense of place:** An ideal public space is a place for use by “the Public” and this public consist of many members. Sense of place has been lost due to the modernist movement in urban design and Western cities are still to recover from this loss. In the case of Middle Eastern women, this loss may be felt more because it accentuates the loss of their homeland and community and their sense of belonging and familiarity that is established through everyday use of their homeland urban spaces.
- **Migration and Multiculturalism:** Australian multiculturalism and consequently social diversity are two significant aspects of planning. The way ethnic groups understand and use public and private space needs greater research, especially those with vastly different background like migrants from the Middle East, and in particular, Middle Eastern women. Urban public spaces can be complex environments when the variety of urban spaces users is considered. The individuals who use these spaces in their everyday life differ in gender, race, social class, religion, and age, contributing to the complexity of public spaces. Among all these different categories of individuals, this research attempts to understand the experience of Middle Eastern migrant women in Australia;

The number of Middle Eastern migrants in Australia increased by 12% in last decade (ABS Census data 2011) making it more likely that their lifestyle and cultural and moral backgrounds, which are inseparable aspects of their everyday life, may affect the Australian population in many ways. The cultural differences between Middle Eastern and Australian people, along with the elements of continuity, alteration, and transformation in Australian racism (Hage 2014), there may be a



significant impact on Australian society. Therefore, this is an issue that needs investigation prior to it potentially triggering serious urban problems

- **Gendered space:** The issues of white middle-class women have been the basis of many debates in planning and design literature and practice. Based on a strong body of knowledge, there is an understanding that all women, not just Middle Eastern, use and perceive the city differently to men. However, the voices of Middle Eastern women need to be heard and how this group perceive the city and its urban spaces needs to be examined more.

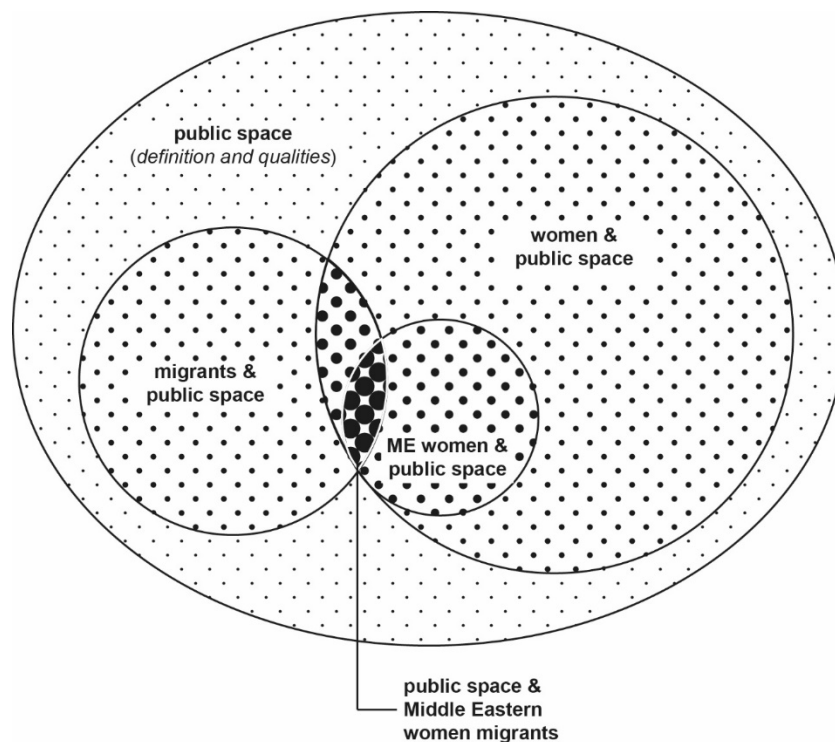


Figure 1: Significance of the research

## 1.4 Research scope and bounds

In this research, careful attention is given to Middle Eastern women and their activities in the urban context. The aim of this research is not to compare the experience of Middle Eastern women with the experience of Middle Eastern men or with non-Middle Eastern people (men and women) in public spaces. Instead, this research attempts to contribute to the authenticity of the experience of Middle Eastern women and illustrate this understanding in practical words that may be useful for decision-makers. To obtain such understanding the voices of these women should be listened to, whether or not this voice is consistent with that of men or non- Middle Eastern women.

The findings from this research will help find ways that might ease the experience of migration, not only for Middle Eastern women, but for all migrants who are looking for a new lifestyle in Western countries, in particular in Australia.

## 1.5 Dissertation structure

This study is organized into six chapters.

**Chapter 2:** This chapter is comprised of a literature review placed at the intersection of urban studies, Middle Eastern cultural studies, gender studies, and migration studies: an exploration in some aspects of public space, private space, and migrant Middle Eastern women in the context of modern cities and Australian/Middle Eastern communities. In this chapter different aspects of the related body of literature on the use of public spaces by Middle Eastern women is reviewed and the theoretical perspective of this research discussed.

**Chapter 3:** The third chapter delineates the analytical methods used to address the main and sub-questions and clarifies the methodological approaches used to collect and analyse related data. Phenomenology, research strategy (case study design and selection criteria), data collection methods (data needs and sampling design), and different steps of phenomenological analysis are detailed in this chapter.

**Chapter 4:** This chapter reports the results of this research. Twelve themes are identified, discussed in detail and are representative of the experiences of Middle Eastern women in urban spaces of Greater Brisbane. These themes are disseminated through interviews and related literature.

**Chapter 5:** The fifth chapter summarizes the research findings and provides comparisons to existing literature. Secondary research questions are answered based on related themes of composite textural-structural description and common themes driven from data are analysed in relation to relevant bodies of knowledge.

**Chapter 6:** In this chapter characteristics of suitable public spaces for Middle Eastern women that were derived from the findings of the research are summarised and analysed in relation to topical literature. The ways in which these findings advance research in this field are also identified. The final chapter concludes with the implications of this study for planning practice. Also, directions for future research are discussed in this chapter.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

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The primary focus of this chapter is to review literature that explores public space, private space, and migrant Middle Eastern women in the context of modern cities and Australian/Middle Eastern communities. These three different themes, in addition to the characteristics of Australian society and cities, could shape a pyramid in which each surface has its elements and roots in qualitative and/or quantitative methods of investigating and measuring, and together could describe the main question of this research: how can the experiences of Middle Eastern migrant women using public spaces inform the planning and design of such spaces? (Figure 2)

The following literature review examines the current body of knowledge with a focus on:

- The perception of space from the viewpoint of philosophers and theorists such as Lefebvre (1991) Merleau-Ponty (1995), Foucault (1995), Grosz (1995), and Soja (1996).
- The production of a plural and democratic public space from the viewpoint of Habermas (1974, 1989), Arendt (1998), Aristotle (1984), and Madanipour (2003, 2010).
- Gendered urban studies and the concept of women's everyday use of urban spaces.
- Women in Middle Eastern countries and their relationship with the public sphere.
- Impacts of migration on the use of public spaces.

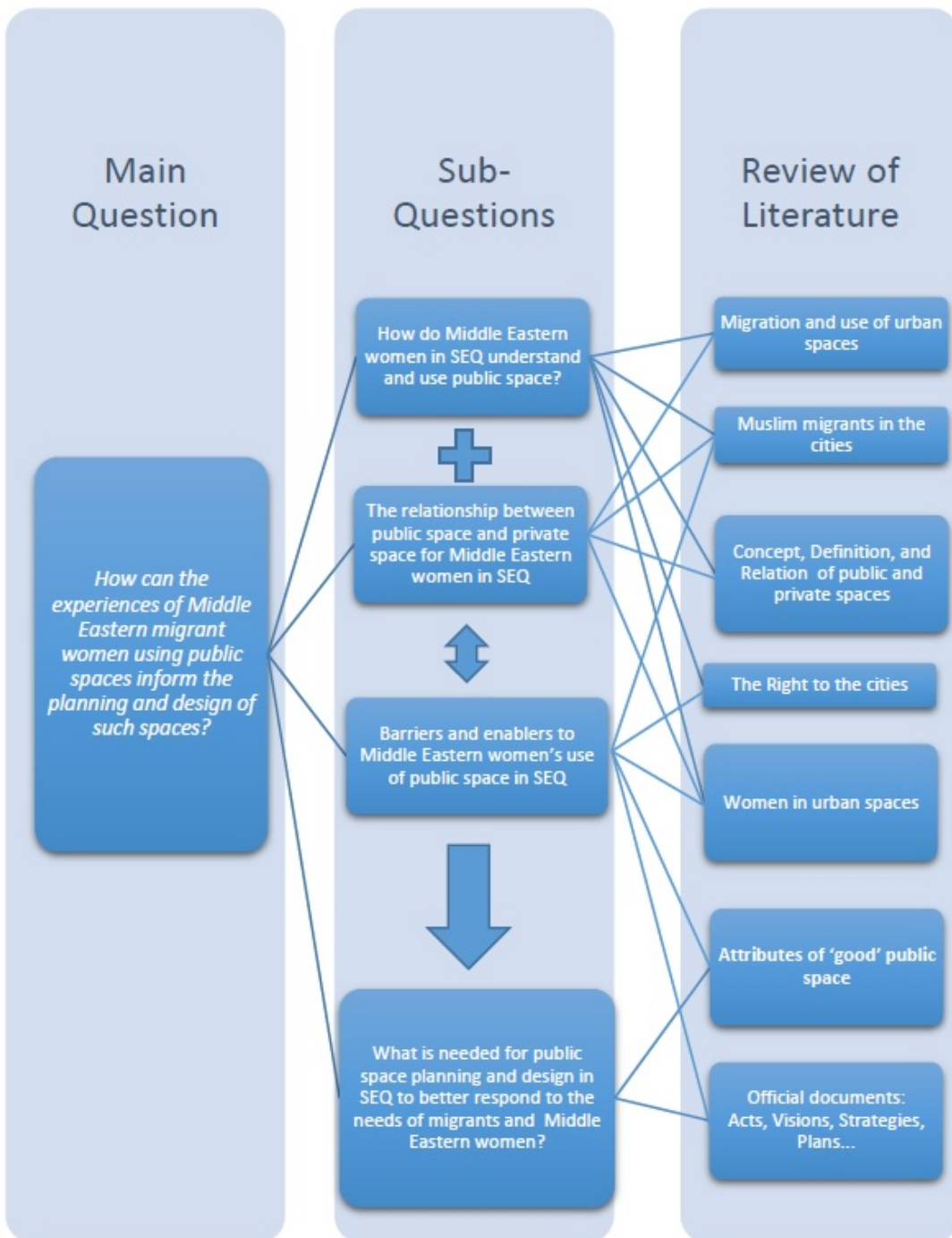


Figure 2: The relationship between different aspects of literature and how it can be used to address primary and secondary questions

## **2.1 Understanding of Public/Private Space**

Public space has been the subject of many different research studies and is investigated through varying disciplinary perspectives that largely focus on the theoretical aspects of public space including how to produce public space, who has the right to use it, and for what purposes is it used (Lapintie 2007, Mohammad Javad 2011, Bernd 2012). One way to understand the concept of public space is to investigate and understand its components: public and space. This section will discuss the following topics: the concept of space from a philosophical point of view that could reveal the importance of public space in everyday life of individuals; the necessity of public space as medium of democracy and well-being; and what is a well-designed and well-managed public space. Following the description of urban spaces, two important components of this study, women and migration, will be examined through literature in both global and Middle Eastern contexts as these could differ due to social differences or have similarities in many ways as they are based on human behaviour. Finally, place attachment and belonging, and their possible roles in the process of adaptation of migrants in a new home country, will be discussed with the aid of existing bodies of knowledge.

### **Philosophical Understanding of (Madden, Schwartz et al.) Space**

According to many philosophers like Merleau-Ponty, space cannot be reduced to a setting where things are arranged or where all things float, additionally it should not be abstractly conceived as a characteristic that things have in common. To Merleau-Ponty (1962) space is the “universal power enabling things to be connected” (p.243) and is “a means whereby the positing of things becomes possible,” (p.280) and finally, there would be no such thing as space if a person does not have a body, inferring the body is not merely a fragment of space. Merleau-Ponty (2002) believes that to understand spatiality better, there is a need to disclose the fundamental relationships between the body and space, and to achieve this disclosure the analysis of bodily movements is essential: “if bodily space and external space form a practical system,” (p.117) the former is considered as the background against which the object can stand out or be the void in front of “which the object can appear as the goal of our action” (p.105). Consequently the spatiality of the body is brought about only if it is investigated in action, that is by considering the body in motion the relationship between the body and space/time can be seen more clearly as movement actively assumes space and time and cannot be explained with passive understanding of space and time. This means, a person is not in space and time, nor does s/he think space and time but rather, s/he is space and time. Subsequently the body fits itself into, embraces and inhabits space and time.

Foucault also rejects the idea of space being defined as a void inside which things and people are placed and believes in space as “a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another” (Foucault 1986). For Foucault, space is not a vessel for positioning things but rather an unavoidable relationship of things or a phenomenon that does not refer to one’s physical location but to position in an imaginary system. This idea of space by Foucault connects things and individuals that are shaped through the very connections and interactions that occur between things and individuals.

According to Elizabeth Grosz the most important factors of space are the position of the subject within space and the importance of this position in a human’s perception of space. In other words, the perception changes due the possible changes in position of either the subject or an object. In this definition the subject could be a human body while the object is formed by the subject as a perceiver. The importance of Grosz’s work is the articulation of the human body as the important reference point for space making the identity of space as a description of the one who occupies it. How this occupant uses a space can be defined as the function of space that is a representative for both the occupant and the function (Grosz 1995). Therefore, the connections or relationships of “things” in one space are demonstrated by the function of that space. Work space, public space, private space, sacred or holy space, prayer space, and parking space are some examples of the function of a space. To shape a space, scientists, planners, and urbanists determine the function of a space in terms of what should be put where. In many ways defining the function of a space by scientists, planners, and urbanists is similar to what Lefebvre referred to as conceived space: the representations of space or the professional image of space (Lefebvre 1991).

All the philosophers discussed above defined and improved different aspects of space. Regarding public space, most of this research focuses on the concept of “Right to the City” which is expressed by Lefebvre (1991, 1996) in his two books: “Writings on Cities” and “The Production of Space.” In “Writing on Cities” Lefebvre introduced the concept of “Right to the City” which is the demand of individuals for a “transformed and renewed access to urban life.” Lefebvre believes that changes to cities and the reshaping processes of urbanization can only happen if every single urban dweller takes part in exercising a collective power of change. Therefore, this right is a common right to change the cities and to be changed under the influence of all urban dwellers. He argues, “the freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.”

In “The Production of Space,” Lefebvre’s aim is not to “produce a (Hage, Couch et al.) discourse on space, but rather to expose the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory” (p.16). Adopting

Hegel's dialectical understanding as a triadic approach (thesis-antithesis-synthesis), Lefebvre generates a theory linking the fields of physical space, mental space and social space both practically and discursively. In his theory, Lefebvre proposes an understanding of a unitary theory of urbanism that avoids reductionism at the same time. Additionally, to shape and complete the process of spatial production, Lefebvre introduces a spatial triad, the perceived, the conceived, and the experienced space, that should interact rather than being in conflict with each other.

Perceived space is the spatial praxis or the spatial non-verbal practice of a society and enables individuals to participate in a spatial event (Watkins 2005). Conceived space is the conceptual dimensions of space that is the space of scientists who plan what should be put where to produce a space. In urban planning the view of a land-use map, where sharp lines indicate variations in the functions of space, is the most familiar view to consider a conceived space. The experienced space or lived space is the representational spaces, or the symbolic dimensions of space. Lived space is directly lived through images and symbols and is not only the space of users and inhabitants, but also the space of those who describe it as such like artists, philosophers, and writers.

Lefebvre believes that the spatial triad contributes in different ways to the production of space according to attributes and qualities of each perceived, conceived, and experienced space, and according to the society or mode of production that is under investigation as well as the historical period in which the investigation is conducted. He emphasises that it is not a simple or stable relationship between the three moments of perceived space, the conceived space and the lived space. Additionally this relation is not either positive or negative when negative is defined as the unsaid, the indecipherable, or the unconscious (idem, p.46). According to Lefebvre the "spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space" and "it is revealed through the deciphering of space," it "propounds and presupposes" space in a society in a dialectical interaction and it produces space slowly and surely as spatial practice of a society masters and appropriates the space in a society (idem, p.38). Therefore, the first component of the triad contains the reproduction of social relations that is highly significant in the production of public space.

Lefebvre's spatial triad is updated by Soja's (1996) concept of spatial trialectics. To Soja, perceived space is ideal, utopian and very subjective calling it Secondspace. In Soja's perception, firstspace is the physical built-environment that he defines as an objective space (Soja 1996). Firstspace is similar to Lefebvre's conceived space. Foucault labels this space as "Codified space" where "the rule of functional sites would code a space that architecture generally left at the disposal of several different users" (Foucault 1995, p.143). And finally, Soja introduced Thirdspace that is



both subjective and objective, real and imagined and can exist in with possible blurred borders between them.

Hannah Arendt is another philosopher whose thoughts on public/private spaces should be considered carefully. Arendt defines the public sphere as a “sphere of appearance where citizens interact through the medium of speech and persuasion, disclose their unique identities, and decide through collective deliberation about matters of common concern” (d'Entrèves 2000, p.146). In her concept public space is identified this way because it can be distinguished from private spaces. Therefore, the spatial aspect of public space and the non-natural essence of it are the main concerns (Benhabib 1996, d'Entrèves 2000).

Overall the understanding of space that is used in this research is based on the concepts argued by all the philosophers discussed above. That is, space is a set of relationships that delineate sites that are irreducible to one another and in this space, the human body is the reference point where an analysis of bodily movements would help to understand spatiality. The identity of space is further defined by the one who occupies it making the lived experience of space the main concept through which space itself can be understood. Additionally, Lefebvre's spatial triad, Soja's Thirdspace and Arendt's non-natural understanding of public spaces are main ideas that shape the framework in which a public space could be defined and perceived.

### **Definition of Public Space and Private Space**

Reengineering the production of urban spaces is a way to understand the modality of using public spaces and determine the boundaries between public and private spaces that result from everyday activities, moral beliefs and other social and behavioural components of an individual's life. The result could be what links the fields of physical space, mental space and social space (Lefebvre 1991) leading to a comprehensive understanding of the production of public/private spaces by defining its concept, principals, factors, variables and causes. This provides a pathway to determining the possible barriers and enablers that could face an urban dweller when experiencing the public realm. The other result of this stage could be the distinction between public and private and how these two concepts evolve and change during the time.

The use of public space is part of everyday life for urban dwellers. Generally, urban space consists of places that people experience during a day and involves private and public spaces. With the first step people take out of their homes, they enter into public territory. Streets, sidewalks, parks, squares, piazzas, plazas, pocket parks, river banks, forests, shopping streets, shopping centres, libraries, community centres and other public or privately owned public spaces are elements every citizen occupies going about their daily life when they spend their time out of their

home. Public space could be described as a space that is for the use of every single person, it could be owned publicly or privately, it may be allocated by government, or it could become public due to some commercial benefits for the private sector. The most important part of this description is the people who use this space, because without them the term 'public' would not be appropriate. The experiences and feelings people have in a private place differ from those they have in a public one so their use of these two kinds of space differs and influences the demand for public spaces (Umemoto 2001, Wu and Plantinga 2003).

Better understanding of how public and private spaces fulfil the needs of everyday life requires a comprehensive definition of the words public and private. The etymological origin of the word public goes to late Middle English and the word is derived "from Old French, from Latin *publicus*, blend of *poplicus* 'of the people' (from *populus* 'people') and *pubes* 'adult'" (Oxford Dictionary). "The root of public is shared by *publish* (Middle English) 'to make public' and *republic* (late 16th century) Latin *res public* 'the business of the people,'" and is related to people. The public refers to integrity, universality and completeness in association with people. The use of public as a noun refers to either a particular body of people or a group of people who are members of a nation/community. Using public as an adjective confers to a noun and includes any sort of relationship to the people, that is the noun could be pertaining or belonging to the people, it could be perceiving or affecting the people, it may act in providing services for the people, or it can define a phenomenon where people have certain rights over it. Everyday examples include public life, public space, public realm, public affairs and even public transportation.

The etymology of the word private highlights its origins from Latin *Privatus* 'withdrawn from public life.' Private is a late Middle English word and originally denoted a person not acting in an official capacity. *Privatus* is a use of the past participle of *Privare* 'bereave, deprive or release,' from *Privus* 'single, individual'. Basically, private describes a phenomenon that is unsuitable for public use or display and is restricted to the use of a particular person, group or class. It also refers to a setting that has no official or public role or position, or is provided or owned by an individual or an independent commercial company rather than the state (Oxford Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Understanding and defining the connotations of private is easier when it is defined in contrast to the word public.

The experiences and feelings people have in a private place differ from those they have in a public one because of their experience in everyday life and their expectations and use of these spaces. This will clearly influence the demand for and expectations of public spaces (Umemoto 2001, Wu and Plantinga 2003). There is a common trend to understand and clarify public space due to its contrast to private space. In the 21st century, and as previously, the distinction between

public and private space is blurred for each person who has a very different understanding of the environment that surrounds them (Lefebvre 1991, Apostol 2007, Mensch 2007, Németh 2009, Fuchs 2011). As Apostol (2007) suggested, the conceptual meaning of ‘*the public*’ and ‘*the private*’ is transformed over time, and consequently “together with the meaning, the physical expression of the relationship between ‘*the public*’ and ‘*the private*’ is also transformed” (p. 12). So how could a clear line be defined between these two when the boundary moves according to every person’s experience of space? This boundary could be physical, social or even symbolic and may provide information that will help design, build and present better places for the use of ‘*the public*’ (Low 2000, Madanipour 2010, Staeheli 2011).

Historically, there is a constant shift between the definition of public and private spaces. Society’s use of such spaces has evolved from private family circles of the Romans to the public realm of military necessities, ritual and public ceremonies and public duties, the rules of the *res publica*, and again to religious/spiritual need for intimacy in the private spaces of worship of Near Eastern sects, and then after the dominance of Christianity and until today, it became a new principle of public order (Sennett 1986). As an example of the ever-shifting concepts of public and private spaces, are the sidewalk cafés in modern European cities’ where both public access and private use is allowed. It is a compromise between ownership as an indicator of ‘*the private*’ and accessibility/use as a component of ‘*the public*.’ Another good example is shopping arcades that were the focus of middle working classes at the beginning of the twentieth century and considered as a symbol of a classless society (Buck-Morss 1991). Introducing these physical expressions by modern society elude to the indistinct boundaries between different forms of ownership and use/accessibility (defining ‘*the private*’ and ‘*the public*’).

The political aspect of public space is derived from the Hellenic era where city-state public and private life had a distinctive dichotomy in meaning and elements. That is, private spaces somehow carried the same characteristics and were the “realm of necessity and transitoriness” and were “home” whereas public spaces, the agora, were defined as “a realm of freedom and permanence” in contrast to the private (Habermas 1989, p. 4). The agora was a multipurpose public space that could be a marketplace and a gathering space for all citizens to be able to take part in the events that occurred in the public realm. Attending these events was a right of all citizens but not of foreigners, women or slaves (Sennett 1986). As the public life in this era consisted of two main elements of “action” and “speech,” the agora was a space dedicated to these two (Aristotle 1984).

This concept of the “public” changed during the nineteenth century when fast urbanism and industrial capitalism began and impacted public life and society values that created a shift in

public-private correlation. There were many other spaces in the city that were “public” and the main square, similar to an agora, was not the centre of public activities any more. There were train stations, streets and parks that were busy and populated during day and night. In this era “a profound change in the nature of theatricality of the public realm occurs: passing from belief to make-believe” (Hénaff and Strong 2001) and due to this change the balance between public and private life changed; public become whatever connected individuals to the state and private become all the other “things” that were excluded from the public realm (Habermas 1989).

The same pattern may be present in the Middle East where cities have also undergone change. The differences were distinct, however Middle Eastern cities did not experience the industrial revolution and modernity, rather the function of public spaces in the Middle East have experienced the same changes as Western cities (Erkip 2003, Arefi 2013, Ehsani 2014). Lefebvre (1991) criticises the distinction between public and private and proposes a triadic approach in which fields of social, mental, and physical space are practically linked. Also, public or private dichotomy is widely reviewed and defined by feminist scholars covering various aspects of the distinction. Despite changes in the use of public spaces, according to Western definitions (Public is Political and Private as Domestic) in the last decades, and especially after civic movements in Turkey, Iran and Arab spring, the distinction between public and private is to some extent applied in the everyday life of dwellers in the modern cities of the Middle East. The use of public space as a medium to demonstrate public power by demanding civic rights is an example of this claim.

### **Necessity of public space**

Public and private spaces that are seen as part of the built and natural environment are essential elements of all cities, therefore analysing, understanding, creating and improving public spaces are amongst the most important responsibilities of urban planners and designers. But “what is spatial practice under Neocapitalism?” According to Lefebvre (1991) daily reality and urban reality are embodied through spatial practices that occur within perceived space.

*It embodies a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, ‘private life’ and leisure). This association is a paradoxical one, because it includes the most extreme separation between the places it links together. The specific spatial competence and performance of every society member can only be evaluated empirically (idem, p.38).*

Social constructions of public spaces are one of the most important answers to a repeatedly asked question: why do we need public spaces? To answer this question Bunschoten points out in his book 'Public Spaces' that public space is the playground of society while public realm is the playground in which society reinvents itself (Bunschoten 2002). Lefebvre also examines social constructions of public spaces as a theoretical aspect of this phenomenon (Lefebvre 1991). Furthermore, the influence of urban spaces on the everyday practices of urban dwellers and the relationship between using public spaces and the health of citizens, dominate research in the fields of urban design, urban planning, transportation, and public health (Maier 2001, Barraclough 2007, Watson 2009, Clara 2011, Durand, Andalib et al. 2011, Yates 2011, Cooper 2012) .

The question "why do we need public spaces?" is answered in the realm of social policies. In a progressively more privatized world of free-market economies, it is a big concern that public spaces can attract a big question mark in decision-making policies due their cost of production and maintenance causing the 'commodification' and 'devaluation' of urban public spaces (Sack 1994, Arefi 1999). However, many commentators have argued that an evolving urban public space is the basis of civilized life and essential for advancement of democracy (Sennett 1986, Worpole 1992, Worpole, Knox et al. 2007). Therefore, the most important component of the idea of public space is in fact the urban dwellers who use this space because without them the term 'public' would not be appropriate. These public spaces could be as convenient as a home in the way they offer safety, shelter, privacy and life processing similar to what a real home offers (Tuan 1975), or they could be a space with no boundaries, meaning, and memories that does not lead to an acceptable sense of place (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Shamai and Ilatov 2005, Scannell and Gifford 2010).

One possible necessity for urban spaces is their function as a means of democracy. Habermas (1974) defines the public sphere as a "realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed...In a large public body this kind of communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it" (p.49). The basis of Habermas's definition of the public sphere is democracy and the freedom for people to express diverse opinions. His thinking of space could be defined as a post-modern space; it is a space for information and cannot be confused with the modern and rigid spaces bourgeois societies created in the late 19th century. Habermas believes that the political aspect of the public sphere allows individuals to make equal citizenship demands manifesting democracy.

There are some critiques about the Habermas definition of spaces such as Benhabib (1993) who argues that women were neglected in bourgeois private space due to the oppressive and discriminative nature of these kind of spaces. Habermas believes that in the production of "a domain of private autonomy" in a bourgeois society, privacy has a subjective role, whilst

Benhabib maintains that when a man, as a bourgeois citizen, was fighting for his rights, his position in his own house was not based on equal right assumptions but that justice was a concern only outside the private space (Calhoun 1992). It is suggested that in a Habermas public sphere, some issues that have a certain impact on society tend to be labelled. For example, domestic violence is labelled as “private” making it invisible or excluded from society transactions.

Another necessity of public spaces is their function in the social life of people. Public spaces as the heart of democratic living (Carr, Francis et al. 1993), are the vessels in which urban dwellers can encounter differences and learn to understand and tolerate other people. By definition, when public spaces host a diverse group of people, it gives urban dwellers the opportunity to experience different norms, behaviour and cultures that can improve their social skills. An ongoing debate regarding how to measure the success of a social policy is divided between wellbeing improvements and the happiness of citizens as opposed to economic gains (Layard 2005, Layard 2006). Some studies have also found that there is a strong link between life satisfaction and the condition of environmental and urban spaces (Brereton, Clinch et al. 2008).

There are a vast number of urban studies in the last few decades that regard the *narratives of loss* and express discontentment when urban public places fade. Discontentment could be due to a loss in the connection between places and the loss of the meaning of place (Cox 1968, Sennett 1986, Jacobs and Appleyard 1987, Berman 1988, Habermas 1989, Sorkin 1992, Kunstler 1993, Boyer 1994, Crawford 1995, Putnam 1996, Lofland 1998, Scott 1998, Arefi 1999, Low 2000, Low and Smith 2006). In line with the *narratives of loss*, the negative effects of modernity on civic life are the main concerns of scholars. In the provision of public life the quality of urban spaces has an immense importance, that is, the privatization of public life results in the loss of public space in Western cities and the narratives of loss that describe the problem and possible solutions. Expressing social independence is considered as the behavioural expression of modernity that can mainly be achieved thorough individual isolation. This is a reason why scholars argue the consequences of modernity as the clear decrease in social contact and civic life of urban dwellers within the physical environment of cities (Blakely and Snyder 1997, Barber 1998, Harvey 2000, Sennett 1996 and 2002).

The importance of public space could also be understood through its function as a space for health and wellbeing. Increasing levels of heart disease and obesity are the results of modern sedentary life. Arguably, the use of public open spaces for physical activity could reduce the rate of heart disease and obesity (Brownson, Boehmer et al. 2005, Thompson and Travlou 2007, Durand, Andalib et al. 2011, Wolch, Byrne et al. 2014, Villanueva, Badland et al. 2015) and also improve mental health. In addition, it is also argued that psychological balance is associated with social

contact and access to green open space (Wilson and Kellert 1993, 2013, Chu, Thorne et al. 2004, Guite, Clark et al. 2006, Francis, Wood et al. 2012).

In general, the Western concept of public as ‘political’ and private as ‘domestic’ is derived from historic practices that took place in urban spaces. Following the trends in publicly used privatized urban spaces and use of spaces of flows (social networks in the age of information), it is inevitable that the boundaries between public and private will again shift.

## **2.2 Attributes of ‘Good’ Public Spaces**

The factors that deem a public space to be suitable differs from place to place (Lefebvre 1971, Lofland 1973, Lefebvre 1991, Tissot 2011, Parkinson 2012) and brings to mind three questions:

1. Is there a standard for the ideal public space?
2. Are there regulations prescribing what constitutes a convivial public space?
3. If there are regulations for a convivial public space, could these regulations be effective by themselves or do they need to be empowered by design, layout, location and other factors?

Through some qualitative and quantitative requirements and considerations, Appleyard and Jacobs (Jacobs and Appleyard 1987) describe the most important characteristics of a good urban public space as being “livability; identity and control; access to opportunity, imagination, and joy; authenticity and meaning; open communities and public life; self-reliance; and justice” (p. 114). Additionally, they suggest “people should care for and feel ownership of their surroundings and being encouraged to express themselves in the environment; therefore, citizen participation should be promoted and environments should be accessible to all” (idem, pp. 115-116). In fact, establishing the principals of a successful public space is normative and influenced by the values of the person defining the principals. All physical personality and psychology factors of a public space may influence the rate of its success. Considering both the ‘Ten Commandments’ by Francis Tibbalds (1989 p467) for architecture and the built environment, and the ‘Goals for Urban Life’ by Jacobs and Appleyard (Jacobs and Appleyard 1987), the future of a good urban environment and a successful urban public space is an acceptable level of legibility, livability, identity, authenticity, and opportunity.

### **Legibility**

Kevin Lynch (1960) used the term 'legibility' for the first time as a visual quality for urban design purposes. Legibility or apparent clarity, is the ease by which parts of a cityscape can be recognized and organized into a coherent pattern (Lynch 1960, p. 2). In a legible city, every district, landmark, or pathway are easily identified and gathered under one over-all group. Thus in a legible urban space visual coherence ensures it is easy to know where you are and easy to get to where you want to go as there are no uncoordinated signs and furniture, no confusion, contradiction, misdirection or illegibility of signs, no duplication in space equipment, and no obstructions or interruptions due to equipment within the space (Shaftoe 2008). Legibility is an important factor for environmental psychologists as well as urban designers because a confusing environment can lead to mental fatigue (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989). Furthermore, the design of a city is dynamic and must evolve when designers and people become acquainted with the designed space. Delivering a successful urban space attuned to all dwellers needs is more likely through a dynamic design approach when financial resources are available for adjustment and modification, (Brand 1997). Also when designers consider the legibility of space, this dynamic approach is more successful.

### **Livability**

From her point of view as an urban dweller in New York city, Jane Jacobs (1961) introduced the concept of livability through her descriptions of lively cities. Jacob referred to livability as 'qualities of living' whilst Carr et al. (1993) called it 'human dimensions' or a set of spatial characteristics describing behavioural and psychological aspects of public spaces associated with the general quality of life including health, well-being, and social interaction. The role of qualities of living is to enhance and contribute to how satisfied urban dwellers are with their environment, however qualities of living are not often addressed in the development of public spaces (Carr, Francis et al. 1993).

The first empirical study involving livability of urban spaces was conducted by Whyte (1980) in Manhattan and focused on public plazas, playgrounds, and parks. Suitability of sitting spaces, availability of natural elements, and visual accessibility of public spaces were among the factors that were consistent with a successful public space. The next important study was conducted by Carr et al. (1993) where three critical dimensions emerged: needs, rights, and meaning. By considering the three dimensions (that were mostly neglected by placemaking practice), Carr et al (1993) argue that by offsetting physical qualities (that were the main focus of placemaking practice) it is possible to plan and design a successful public space that stimulates and supports a wider range of users' needs, expectations, and activities. Carr et al (1993) believe



that there are five reasons for people to use public spaces: to satisfy the need for comfort and have access to water, food, shelter etc; for relaxation to enjoy the scenery and escape from confusion and noise of cities; for active engagement with the environment and use public spaces as a gathering space to catch up with friends or family; for passive engagement with the environment and watch the ongoing life of the city with no interaction with other people; and discovery of places worth a stop or places that can be used for specific purposes in the future (Carr, Francis et al. 1993, p.91).

### **2.3 Place Attachment and Sense of Belonging**

The emotional attachment to place has been the subject of both classic and contemporary literature for a long time. In a comparison between past and present time Norberg-Schulz (1988) argues that in the past, in spite of injustice and hardships, mankind had a better sense of belonging to their place than they do now: “The world was experienced as a world of qualities and meanings” (p.11). Therefore, in the unity of nature, man, and life, human beings were a part of a whole and experienced life from within. Since the modern era, understanding of the world has been more from a scientific view rather than from the inner parts of our experience that would lead us to look at our surroundings as separate phenomenon from ourselves. The result of this is what Norberg-Schulz (2000) calls the fracture between thought and feelings and according to Norberg-Schulz (1988) “existence becomes devoid of meaning” (p.12), consequently human beings have become wordless since they live in meaningless urban environments. He names this wordlessness of the modern man, “the loss of place.” He notes the meaning of the phrase “take place” when something happens, as opposed to that it takes “place” which is how it is commonly said, relating that event, no matter what, to the environment.

According to Low and Altman, place attachment is a complex and multifaceted concept defined as a bond that connects people to places (Altman and Low 1992, Manzo 2003). Place attachment is an emotional bond between people and a particular place or environment, and to different people there are different reasons that make a place meaningful. Place attachment may be either “traditional” or “active:” traditional attachment has the element of continuity and solidarity; whereas active attachment is more ideological, possibly based upon a deliberate conscious choice of where to live that reflect lifestyle, identity, and social class (Savage, Bagnall et al. 2005, Lewicka 2011).

Place attachment could be defined as the link people establish with specific settings (such as places) where they feel comfortable and safe (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001). More specifically,

place attachment is the bond between individuals and their meaningful environments. This concept has attracted much research in the past 30 years (Altman and Wohlwill 1976, Low 2000, Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, Dahl and Sorenson 2010, Nielsen-Pincus, Hall et al. 2010). Due to globalization trends and as a result of environmental crises, there is a growing concern in societies regarding the fragile bonds between individuals and their surrounding environment and the places that are important for each person (Altman and Wohlwill 1976, Relph 1983, Sara, Stan et al. 2003, Barraclough 2007, Rollero and De Piccoli 2010).

Place attachment, related to many important processes in urban studies and humanities, could be an emotional bond for people who are forced to relocate and is the focus of some studies that explore the grief and pain these people endure during this change in their life (Meehan 1963, Simpson 2008). Place attachment is also applied to immigration issues (Ng 1998, Hernández, Carmen Hidalgo et al. 2007, Lewicka 2008, Dahl and Sorenson 2010). In the human experience, bonding is considered as an important aspect of being human and ways in which s/he defines, shapes, and reshapes meaningful connections with their surroundings. (Manzo and Devine-Wright 2014). Better public spaces could be planned to encourage use by both native and non-native urban dwellers by considering social aspects of everyday life like place meaning and place attachment (Moore and Graefe 1994, Kyle, Graefe et al. 2004, Kyle, Mowen et al. 2004, Knez, Institutionen för teknik och byggd et al. 2005). This could be a top-down process if the planner, designer or the architect, instil their perceived sense of attachment, or it could be an inclusive and bottom-up process by understanding the needs and expectations of the space users and design and plan for all urban dwellers (Altman and Low 1992, E. 2004, Toolis 2017).

A unidimensional study of place attachment where this concept cannot be understood due to the time people spend in a place, gives rise to different types of place attachment with different spectrums of reasons and attitudes. These reasons and attitudes could be a combination of various factors: socio-demographic differences, differences in economic situation, differences in mobility, educational and cultural resources, residence length, number of residential moves, and number of cities where people had lived. For instance, a more mobile person may find different reasons to perceive a place as meaningful or could develop different types of attachment in comparison with those who are less mobile and long-time residents (Gustafson 2001, Lewicka 2011).

The environment people live in affects relationships with and understanding of place. How human beings make an emotional connection with their surroundings and develop feelings within their local environment that result in the place attachment (Inalhan and Finch 2004), and the importance of these emotions to a sense of place, is important in this research and should be explained by a relevant body of literature. Relph (1976) believes that “sense of place is not just a

formal concept awaiting precise definition, and clarification cannot be achieved by imposing precise but arbitrary definitions” (p.4) and states that by investigating personal involvement, landscape, and location as possible properties of place, the degree to which these factors are affecting and influencing people’s ‘sense of place’ could be assessed. This idea is in contrast with the thoughts of Lewis (1980) who suggests that attempts to measure the ‘sense of place’ are useless. He also believes that ‘sense of place’ could only be investigated through human behaviour and could not be defined by exact words and precise terms. The next factor influencing the ‘sense of place’ was introduced by Peterson and Saarinen (1986) as is known as ‘local symbols.’. They argue that “local symbols reflect and enhance sense of place” (p. 164) and by developing inside knowledge of localities through careful observation of their environment, people (in this instance, students) could conceptualise the place they live in and thereby develop the “understanding necessary to maintain and enhance place identity” (p. 168). Finally, Datel and Dingemans (1984) proposed a definition for ‘sense of place’ as a sense which is formed through a ‘bundle of meanings, symbols and qualities that a person or a group associates (consciously or unconsciously) with a locality or region’ (p. 135). Overall ‘sense of place’ is a multifaceted phenomenon defined or affected by a wide range of factors: the natural and cultural environment; history and traditions; and family and social activities along with the rituals, myths, meanings, symbols and qualities that people are associated with through a long and deep experience of a particular locality or region and are important factors in the process of developing a ‘sense of place.’

Entrikin (1997) believes continually, blended spatial scales are caused by the language of collective narratives and public discourses which “move between relatively centred and relative decentred points of view” (p. 263). He argues that although place is an important part of discussions involving modern political theories, conception of place is the phenomenon that is connected and defined through particularity of traditional communities. Therefore, experience of a place could not be a neutral one and place itself could “become like personality, unique and particular” (p. 265).

There are many studies that focus on place attachment. In one study, Fuhrer and Kaiser (1992) investigated possible social and intercultural processes that form place attachment for urban dwellers by adapting The Zurich Model of Social Motivation. Fuhrer and Kaiser (1992) developed a model in which place is a facilitator of emotional needs for people where formation of attachment with the home place consists of three processes:

1. Security measured by four factors including familiarity of place, sense of community support, sense of belonging, and feeling of permanence.

2. Autonomy measured by four factors including sense of ownership, interaction regulations, sense of control and power, and change initiation.
3. Stimulation where a physiological activity is elicited or accelerated (cited in Inalhan and Finch (2004)).

Inalhan and Finch conclude “place attachment is an emotional bond with a specific place. It is the experience of feeling attached and belonging to a place that can be stated at a point in time.” The sense of belonging and place is explained further by (Miller 2003) who proposes that the cornerstones of belonging can be categorized into three aspects, history, people, and place, in which history does not merely belong to the past but it moves and lives through people and places by constantly reproducing through memories in the present time of people and in the presence of material object in the places.

In urban studies there are two assumptions regarding the sense of belonging (to community, place, country and so on) among migrants. In the first assumption, migrants have no sense of belonging to the host country as newcomers and over time this sense of belonging transfers from their country of origin/birth to the host country. In the second assumption, migrants are considered to develop a sense of belonging to both host and origin/birth country simultaneously (Castles and Miller 1998, Castles 2002). Traditionally, migration is assumed as one single move from a/n birth/origin country to a host country where immigrants are supposed to assimilate into their new society and try to ignore, or replace, their previous emotional bonds with new ones in their new homeland. However, recent studies show that migration is more of an ongoing process in which involves a new means of communication and the possibility of mobility between origin/birth and host countries.

In another study Gustafson (2009) analysed the relationship between mobility and belonging by including five independent variables to measure different forms of mobility: commuting time, domestic travel, international travel, residential mobility, and international migration. The results from this study show that on local and regional levels that an immigrant’s view of national belonging is negative. Also, the likelihood of expressing a sense of belonging is higher for both women and older persons. Furthermore, Gustafson states that migrants who are less likely to have strong sense of belonging (in local, regional, and national levels), who lived abroad for a period of their life and return to their origin/birth country, show no difference with those who lived all their lives in the country. By this comparison he argues that “migrants often maintain bonds (local, regional, and national) with their former home countries” and these bonds can be revived after returning to origin/birth country. However, the social and emotional integration of migrants into a host country has an interdependent relationship with the length of their stay.

One of the factors that could enhance sense of belonging for migrants is natural environment. There have been some studies analysing possible roles of natural environments in developing the sense of belonging by focusing on forests (Jay and Schraml 2009, Jay and Schraml 2014), urban nature (Leikkilä, Faehnle et al. 2013), and urban parks (Peters 2010, Peters, Elands et al. 2010). In a recent and comparative study by Peters et al. (2016) that investigates the role of natural environment in developing the sense of belonging for Latino, Chinese, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Moroccan, and Turkish immigrants in U.S.A., Poland, the Netherlands and Germany, the findings can be arranged by Miller's (2003) three cornerstones of belonging (history, people, and place). These studies suggest that there are three different patterns for migrants to establish a sense of attachment through natural environment:

1. Slow and gradual bonding that involved most of the Turkish and Moroccan migrants, along with the low income Ukrainian and Latino, who perceived green urban spaces as artificial and detached from their everyday life. This appeared to be due to limitations in language taking them more time to recreate their bond with natural environment
2. Immediate appreciation that included most of the Chinese and Vietnamese migrants, who were from large cities, where the bonding with urban green environment was immediate after arrival. They especially enjoyed factors of spaciousness, cleanliness, and orderliness of natural environment. However, they tend to restrict their use of these spaces due to safety issues
3. Ample use that was applicable to Ukrainian and Latino migrants who, prior to migration, had lived in urban areas where there was not much difference in the use of natural environment. They used these spaces for recreation purposes. The outstanding factor for these group was the sense of peace that natural environment offered in their daily life.

Place attachment, sense of belonging and in general sense of place, are considered strong motivators in the process of adaptation for migrant people. In the literature related to this concept special attention is given to length of stay, natural environment, and the conviviality of urban spaces.

## 2.4 Women and Public Space

Lefebvre (1996) argues that to assert their “right to the city,” all inhabitants of a city must struggle constantly. Therefore, true citizens of a place are those who use the urban space on a daily basis, or are those who use the space for particular purposes and more importantly, are those who shape and produce urban space. In other words, the struggle for “right to the city” is a means for producing urban spaces. Historically women spent most of their time in the private sphere of home for domestic chores and raising children and were not assumed to be equal members of their communities and had to struggle to assert their equal rights (Marshall and Bottomore 1992). After the significant challenges to the dominant image of women being passive elements in the public sphere with no real role in changing or possessing it, a considerable body of literature followed discussing linkages and relationships between women and urban spaces. The relationships could be formed by women who actively use public spaces despite their safety and dangers (Koskela 1997, Koskela 1999), or the relationships could be a result of an unpleasant situation where a minority group doubts their sense of belonging or become excluded from public space for their own safety (Tissot 2011).

Women are nearly half of the world’s population and it is essential to consider their needs and expectations in the planning and production of urban spaces. Nowadays, this statement is acceptable and logical but just three decades ago there were no such approaches in urban studies as evidenced by Gardner (1989) who argued that urban studies exclude many minority groups such as women. The way women move around the city and how they use public spaces brings new and important questions to mind, particularly to what extent the characteristics of a public space can address the needs of people who use this place, and in particular, what should be considered in gender-based planning (Samantha 2010, Ali 2012).

Gillian Rose approaches the experience of place from feminist view points and discusses the mechanism of universal masculine domination (Rose 1993, Sarre, Massey et al. 1999). She believes underlying structures of power promote a sense of belonging to a place that only includes people who conform to the expectations of the place’s conventions simultaneously ‘other’ people are excluded and are easily distinguished from those who are powerfully associated with and belong to a particular place. Rose believes that space is central to arguments about the ‘subject of feminism,’ that was introduced by Teresa de Lauretis (1987), and is a particular sense of identity based on social relations other than gender that tries to displace the patriarchal dualism of man and woman, and masculinism, by embracing the differences among and within women. According to de Lauretis, the subject of feminism is “a political-personal strategy of survival and resistance that is also, at the same time, a critical practice and a mode of knowledge” and languages and cultural

representations play a more significant role than sexual differences in its constitution (De Lauretis 1987 p. 9). Rose introduces the concept of Paradoxical (sense of) Space; a multidimensional, shifting, and contingent space that could simultaneously occupy the centre (of the 'same') and the margin (of the 'other') and/or the inside and outside and could challenge the exclusions of masculinist geography.

As a sociologist Gardner (1989) brings two important aspects of women's everyday lives to the forefront of urban research: how women feel in public spaces, and how women's experiences are degraded and depleted when they need to remain vigilant all the time in public spaces. In her first study she offered some facts about how women feel in public spaces, and in the second study she discusses how women's experiences and efficiency may be corrupted when they need to remain vigilant all the time in public spaces (Gardner 1989). Her work ended with Mozingo (1989) who explored how women use public spaces. Mozingo's findings shed light on how women navigate a public space by comparing two types of public spaces: a plaza and a park. Mozingo believes that women prefer to be in groups while in a public space rather than being alone, and if they are alone they try to find a place near another group of women. Mozingo also believes that women prefer a park to a plaza because it is less social, less urban, and safer. Subsequently, these are characteristics of an experience that show why women prefer to use certain public places. Mozingo also found that the reasons behind why each gender uses public spaces are completely different. For example, men use public spaces to observe other people while women use them for socialising (Mozingo 1989).

Ideas about public space can be positive or negative. The literature identifies concerns about safety, or even feelings of fear, as a common barrier to the use of public spaces by women (Elizabeth and Yvonne 2011, Hengehold 2011, Pablo Paramo and Andrea Milena Burbano 2011, Paul 2011, Yardená 2011, Sur 2012). The fear women experience could be due to concerns about sexual crimes or darkness and is a strong barrier for them spending time out of their homes. Some women may have a general dislike of public places according to their fear of crime but have many ways to overcome this fear (Hengehold 2011, Schmucki 2012); they choose specific clothing, try to develop relationships with people who may help them to reduce the chance of crime (which could be a neighbour or a friend or even by pretending to be accompanied by a man), or they simply choose to spend time in places that are perceived as safe. All these precautions are because they like to feel safe, to some extent, as they feel in their own homes. Understanding public space through this perspective could define it as a familiar place that still has the significant element of being public or in the community (Madanipour, 2010).

Several fundamental studies have dealt with women and their fear in the public realm. One of the seminal studies on women and how they adapt in public spaces is by Koskela (1997, 1999) who argues that despite general equality and independency of women in Scandinavian societies, they do not feel equal in public spaces. Day (1999) brings ethnicities into this research field through a similarly structured study based in America. The findings presented by Day (1999) resembled the outcomes by Koskela suggesting that women tend to avoid entering spaces in which they may experience a sense of fear. This fear could be of poorer people downtown, or it could be of new spaces other than their familiar neighbourhood. Day argues that this fear is arising from the postmodern trend of society members who miss the meaning of downtown in their real life.

In her first study Koskela (1997) demonstrates that women tend to produce their own space by adopting some mechanisms to use public spaces despite its perceived safety and dangers. That is, women are not just passive elements of the public sphere without a means to change and obtain space. Koskela also suggested that although the concept of fear is dominant in the use of public spaces by women, it is a common trend for women to be alone at night time in public spaces because of their courage and wit. They leave their private spaces and learn to rely on their own strengths and abilities to adopt a public space. According to Koskela, women use a mixed approach to adopt a public space that is underscored by four stages. In the first stage women try to convince themselves they are being bold by reasoning. In the next stage women use areas of cultures they know so they are familiar with the context of the space. In the third stage women try to use a specific space many times to gain a reliable knowledge about the space and in the last stage, women learn how to defend themselves gaining their confidence by using their skills in a time of danger (Koskela 1997). In this way women have a proactive role in producing public spaces, they realize their own needs and assert them as an equal citizen.

Mozingo argues that for most women being among other people and having interactions with individuals support their concept of “civility” in regard to public space. They use public spaces in everyday life for socialising (Mozingo 1989) where being in the same situation with other women who feel somewhat the same way as they do, makes a place special shaping collective memory, especially if the women are new to those practices and/or have different prior experiences of the space itself (Piper, Reyes et al. 2012). Understanding characteristics of public spaces through women’s perspectives, and producing urban spaces based on this knowledge, could help define and create familiar places with a sense of community and the significant elements of publicness. That is, a public space can be planned to seem like home by meeting women’s main expectations of a space such as safety, shelter, privacy and life processing (Spain 2016). Simultaneously these well planned public places could offer women a colourful range of



experiences and feelings by making them feel comfortable and happy enough to do the shopping, spend time with friends, feel safe walking, feel at home and enjoy the day with noisy (and happy) children. In the city, public spaces offer this multilayered experience (Bondi and Domosh 1998, Scraton and Watson 1998, Farmer-Smith 2011, Nor and Inayatillah 2011).

Urban studies indicate that women, particularly women with children, are normally the highest users of public spaces (Gardner 1989, Bondi and Domosh 2002, Paramo and Arroyo 2011). Women with children use public spaces for a daily walk, for the playgrounds, parks and green lands and to get some sunshine and fresh air that will help their children grow stronger while helping themselves (as mothers) to relax (Garcia-Ramon, Ortiz, & Prats, 2004). It is common for families to gather in a green open space and spend time during weekends to have fun, meet old friends and make new ones. Public space also shapes collective memory for women as well (Paramo and Arroyo 2011, Piper, Reyes et al. 2012).

## **2.5 Middle Eastern Women and Public Space**

According to many feminists such as Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, and Elizabeth Grosz, “sex” is a biological, pre-social and natural aspect and “gender” is a political, social and cultural one (Moi 1999). The way society approaches and attempts to address the needs of women is based on the extent to which the dominant perspective of the society is influenced by sex or gender. Longhurst (1995) states “bodies are sexed” and during life time, through social and cultural experiences, these sexed bodies become gendered through experiences. Religion is one of many factors controlling the sexed bodies. It disciplines sexed bodies to regulate social and cultural behaviours and thereby shifts the sexed bodies to gendered bodies (Longhurst 1995). Nowadays the topic of the Hijab is one of frequent debate in the sociography field. There is an obligation in Islam for women to cover their body (except hands, and feet) and hair (however there is no necessity in Sharia to cover the face) when there is a possibility of a visual contact with non-Mahram men (or any man other than a woman’s father, brother, husband, uncle and father-in-law). Accordingly, the meaning of public and private spaces for these women has a close interaction with their personal beliefs and specially their assumption of Hijab. Wearing a Hijab is how these women personalize themselves in their society, define their identity, and position themselves in Muslim or Western secular societies.

Women’s veils or Hijabs, as a religious phenomenon, is in vogue in feminist research as well as political and religious fields due to controversies that have occurred on local and international levels about the legal and religious enforcement of [un]veiling in public spaces of countries like

Iran, Turkey, and France (Read and Bartkowski 2000, Secor 2002, Bartkowski and Read 2003, Afshar 2008, Dwyer 2008, Moruzzi 2008, Benhabib 2010, Gokariksel and Secor 2010, Syed and Pio 2010, Ahmed 2011, Tissot 2011, Welborne 2011, Gökariksel 2012, Hamzeh and Oliver 2012, Hebbani and Wills 2012, Kloek, Peters et al. 2013, McGinty 2014, Litchmore and Safdar 2016, Strabac, Aalberg et al. 2016). Historically, a veil or Hijab is like a symbol for Middle Eastern women and is considered as an obstacle in the development of Muslim women. However women who choose to wear the Hijab and accept the code of modesty in their dressing have different views and believe this battle surrounding their bodies and choice of appearance is actually against their right to the city. The veil/Hijab has changed considerably since the Prophet Mohammad era when the veil/Hijab was introduced to Muslim women as a means of modesty. These changes have included a transformation in form and in meaning causing the concept of the veil/Hijab to change for both Muslims and non-Muslims. For Muslim women the veil/Hijab became and still is a symbol of resistance especially after enforced modernization during Ataturk's governing of Turkey and Reza Shah in Iran (Beck and Keddie 1978, El Guindi 1999).

Aside from matter of the veil/Hijab in Middle Eastern studies, there are some other aspects of everyday life that have attracted the attention of scholars in both social and geographical studies. The significance of lived experiences by Middle Eastern migrants is influenced by their birth country and complex cultures that have many facets like religion, customs, traditions and history. A Middle Eastern woman with a heavy load of 'should and shouldn't,' 'do and don't' arrives into an extremely different environment in their new home country like Australia. The way she builds a relationship between her world and the new society is heavily influenced by the spaces she experiences every day and the attitudes and behaviours that are associated with them. Every single experience could be a step forward to acceptance in the new world, or a step backwards to uncertainty and exclusion.

Women in these countries have a very special situation as they are either Muslim and face many limitations, like women in Iran, Iraq and Arab ethnic countries, or they are non-Muslim and their life is affected by religion in some way, like Iranian, Turkish and Lebanese women who do not practice Islam (according to the CIA's World Factbook (2017), nearly 46% of population in Lebanon and 17% of population in Turkey are not Muslim. For Iran and other Middle Eastern countries the proportion is less than 1% of population). This impact of religion is not always a negative aspect. Either way, life for these women is completely different to the life of a woman in developed countries where their experiences and understanding of both private and public spaces are different. Migration brings all of this background to a new environment that has new concerns and demands. Religion in the Middle East is the basis of society and the influence of religious

beliefs on any aspect of life from private to international policies, is a matter of concern in many countries of this region. Religion, and in this case Islam, shapes the framework of everyday life in the Middle East and dictates the way people should live and act. Women in these countries are one of the most vulnerable groups and are always under the shadow of the authoritarian rule, moral values of the religious society, and expectations of their own families. There is a considerable amount of debate around the matter of seclusion of Middle Eastern women from social and political aspects of life, and Chamberlin (2011) argues this derives from the seclusion of women in the private sphere of everyday life. Hence, as Abu-Lughod (2013) argues and Al-Mahadin (2015) echoes, poverty and authoritarianism are more likely to be blame for the current sufferings of Muslim women, rather than a misguided interpretation of Islam and that this unpleasant situation should be resolved from the within and by Muslim women by recognizing and removing the source of their oppression.

The possible effects of a well-designed public space on easing the process of settlement for migrants has been examined through many different filters (Raffaetà and Duff 2013). One significant aspect is the lived experience of migrants prior to immigration as migrants bring their culture, beliefs and habits to their new home country. There are many studies that attempt to investigate the public life of Muslim women in a Muslim society or in Western countries (Mazumdar 2001, Thompson 2003, Mills 2005, Haddad 2006, Afshar 2007, Aitchison, Hopkins et al. 2007, Freedman 2007, Dwyer 2008, Schielke 2008, Schroeder 2009, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2010, Shahram and Joshua 2011, Tissot 2011, Krämer 2013, Lagasi 2013, Mohammad 2013, Johnson and Miles 2014, Foroutan 2015, Gökarıksel and Secor 2015). These empirical studies provide new ways to understand Muslim societies and argue that this understanding of Muslim communities is achieved more easily when approached from the perspective of local people.

One of the first studies that focused on the public and private sphere describes public/private dichotomy within Middle Eastern communities. In this study Hegland (1991), who lived in Iran from June 1978 until December 1979, studied the understanding of the public and private sphere in the everyday lives of Iranian women. She categorizes the women of Aliabad's village into three categories: Sayyid women, trading womenfolk, and peasant women. She states that the public/private dichotomy could be considered as internalized directives for women. The highest adherence to public/private ideology was by Sayyid women followed by trading womenfolk with the lowest adherence by peasant women (as they "did not give much attention to regulations of covering and segregation"). She believes despite the high level of consciousness and attention that these women show to the public-private ideology, there is not a strict division between public and private in their everyday life and the dichotomy is not accurately depicted in reality or the political

system in Iran where these women's "domestic and personal lives were political and part of the public world."

Mazumdar (2001) studied the role of religion and culture in use of public spaces by Middle Eastern women (in this research, Iranian and Indian women). Mazumdar believe there is a gradation between private and public in Islamic housing: there is a living room in which families carry on everyday activities and no men are allowed except for *Mahram* men; there is a guest room to receive male guests where women of the family are not allowed unless they are wearing modest dressing; and there is a courtyard that connects these two spaces. In this setting the guest room could be considered a public space even though it is located inside the walls of the private space of a house.

Findings by Mazumdar (2001) aligned with the findings of Hehland (1991) when she emphasised the fluid concepts of public and private in contrast with the classic public/private dichotomy in the West. In both studies the public/private definition of the locus of an activity could be changed based on the user of that specific space. For instance, alleyways are categorized as public spaces in the city, however in Islamic/Middle Eastern context, alleyway are considered more private during the daytime when men are not in street and are at work, and women (of the neighbourhood preferably wearing the Hijab) can use these spaces for possible domestic activities and gatherings. This fluid concept of public/private in Middle Eastern cities is examined in Turkey by Amy Mills (2007) with the same understanding of public space observed in this study, that is the use of public spaces within the neighbourhood by women varies acting as social spaces for interaction with other women during the daytime but changing to public in night time when men come back from work.

In another study Johnson and Miles (2014) conducted research about the experience of Arab Muslim women in urban public spaces in a Multicultural American context. Johnson and Miles used the qualitative method of phenomenology to obtain an in-depth understanding of how Muslim women experience public spaces. Their research provided a glimpse into 9/11 as the source of many changes in the behavioural attitudes of American people toward Muslims. In this research there were nine participants who shared their experience of specific public space (Bay Ridge, Brooklyn) through in-depth interviews, maps and drawings from their memories forming a structure for a deeper understanding of Arab Muslim women approach public spaces. Johnson and Miles pointed out the importance of Mosques as the centre of Arab communities for Arab Muslim women who live or work in the area. This study also revealed what Arab Muslim women needed in a public space like services and facilities for women only, mixed land use design of neighbourhoods, and ethno-religious festivals.

To understand the possible motivations that influence the choice of Muslim women in the United States to wear headscarf, Westfall et al. (2016) examined religious, social, and political life of 1847 Muslim-American women using an online survey of women from 49 states. Their findings indicated that Muslim women in the United States are more likely to choose head-coverings due to their religious lifestyle (that includes daily religious practices like prayer and mosque attendance) that connect them to their circles of peers and social networks. Other factors like religious abstinence and Muslim socialization were also reasons why Muslim women choose to wear head-coverings, however these factors are not as strong as the lifestyle factor. Furthermore, Westfall et al. (2016) argue that although the religious and social behaviour of Muslim women is systematically different from their political one, their findings show that it is possible that wearing a headcovering is also politically motivated.

Overall, although the studies involving Middle Eastern women provide concise recent information on related subjects, most of these studies are focused on religious aspects of their lives that attach a hidden, but ever-present, political aspect to the body of this research. Understanding the way these minority group experience the world and Western cities requires more investigation and effort from urban practitioners and commentators.

## **2.6 Immigration and Production of Urban Spaces**

Migration is a significant change. The Webster dictionary believes “Migration” means “to move from one country, place, or locality to another” and the Oxford dictionary defines it as “Movement of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions.” Taken together these definitions imply that immigrants may change their geographic location, but the impact of their ethnic or cultural background remains as a touchstone that on one axis shows “what they are” and on the other axis defines how much their establishment is successful through time. Society is a diverse blend of groups and people who have their own and very different needs and expectations about the environment they live in.

Due to their geographical position in the world, importance in energy production and because of the critical role religion plays in every aspects of everyday life, Middle Eastern countries have become a hot zone for political conflicts. Many Middle Eastern countries are wealthy, however because of the non-democratic basis of government, wealth is not evenly distributed in society and the gap between different classes of the society is considerable. The presence of the middle-class, who are the origin of change in some countries, is one of the most significant struggles for intellectual members of these societies and could cause an increasing demand for better standards of

life both for skilled members of these societies and non-skilled members who seek for just a “better life” (Hammar 1997, Vlahov, Boufford et al. 2000, Ross-Sheriff 2011). These demands could encourage some people to migrate to developed countries that offer higher standards of life, jobs and protection with less threats and censorship (Dhar 2012).

Generally migrant people, and in particular migrant women, experience a different life in the host country from the ‘native’ population and from male migrants (Australia. Dept. of, Multicultural et al. 2003, Graeme 2011). A common challenge for migrant women is the availability, location and design of urban public spaces. The way these migrant women gain a ‘sense of place’ is different from citizens who have lived in that society/place for a lifetime (Barber 2011, Bonifacio 2012). A well-designed public space could act as a catalyst to create a ‘sense of belonging’ and a ‘sense of place’ no matter who is using it (Bartram 2011, Polgreen and Simpson 2011). Due to their symbolic and practical importance, many studies have focused on the influence of urban spaces on the everyday life of urban dwellers, therefore there is a good deal of information about the quality and quantity of these spaces. However, when multiculturalism and its impacts on a society is a matter of concern in urban studies, especially in countries like Australia where a significant percentage of the population are migrant people, (Australia. Dept. of, Multicultural et al. 2003, Sandercock 2003, Parker 2011, Bastian 2012), the suitability of public spaces for all needs to be examined from a variety of viewpoints so as to understand the fundamental elements of each aspect that could shape the whole picture of the structure and provision of urban spaces.

Cultural differences are one of the reasons for different experiences of migrants in an urban setting. Culture is a way in which people organize their everyday life and it is the private life of an individual that influence their external realm of culture. Searching for and making meaning, death, and personal relationships are among the issues in life viewed through the lens of culture. As Bronfenbrenner (2009) states in his ecological theory of human development, “individual development occurs within a sociocultural context.” Therefore, without considering the context of development or the impact of the interrelation of external systems on the individual, assessing human development is nearly impossible. Scholars have discussed the importance of culture and how it may define different values and beliefs for the users of urban space (Sandercock 1998, Reeves 2005, Amin 2008, Fincher and Iveson 2008).

Sandercock (1998) believes “the urban experiences of new migrants, their struggle to redefine the conditions of belonging to “their” new society are reshaping cities” providing a reason why the impact of multiculturalism on a society is often a matter of concern in urban studies, especially in countries like Australia where a significant percentage of population are migrant people (Sandercock and Kliger 1998, Australia. Dept. of, Multicultural et al. 2003, Sandercock

2003, Parker 2011, Bastian 2012). Migrants transform themselves and knead the social and spatial fabric of the new environment they are a part of through everyday transformation of urban spaces. Public spaces are one of the most important issues in urban studies, in particular what impacts migration has on both the host and migrant society as public spaces are linked with public rights and democracy (Amin 2008, Madanipour 2010, Parkinson 2012). Amin states that “simply throwing open public spaces to mixed-use and to all who wish to participate is to give sway to practices that may serve the interests of the powerful, the menacing and the intolerant” meaning that a vulnerable group of urban dwellers, like migrants, minorities, women, and children, could suffer a sense of exclusion from public spaces when using these urban spaces (Amin 2008). In another words these vulnerable groups, like other urban dwellers, could be seen as ‘whole people’ when a well-designed and well-managed public space is experienced in harmony. This new concept of ‘whole people’ when experienced at the same time by different people with different perspectives could create a ‘temporary bond’ and improve the disposition of people toward others (Carr, Francis et al. 1993). Sandercock (1998) states well-designed and well-managed public spaces occurs when planners define their role as a producer of spaces who needs to be aware of socio-cultural differences of an ethnic society. This could arise because of cultural differences between native planers from dominant cultures and immigrant/minority communities, who are more aware of different needs and expectations. Sandercock believes that there should be a way in which these differences are accommodated in cities and neighbourhoods by the influence of planners that is moulded by their understanding (idem).

Investigating, understanding, considering, and including the needs and expectations of migrants in municipal public policies is one the ways in which urban commentators and practitioners can provide well-designed and well-managed urban spaces for all members of a society. In some multicultural countries like Canada, these policies are investigated carefully to understand the extent to what multicultural policies are considered in the production of urban spaces (Fourot 2015). However, such investigations are rare in Australia or are more than 10 years old. For instance in one study by Upham & Martin (2004) for the Brisbane City Council, the aim was “to determine what progress had been made, and make recommendations for the future.” Although this study is a good reference for ongoing multicultural policies, its aim was not to determine the implication of these policies. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature of urban practitioner in relation to multicultural policies and the production of urban spaces. This knowledge gap is more considerable when Brisbane City is considered as “a thriving world-class city, building its reputation as Australia’s New World City” in official documents (Brisbane-City-Council 2013) especially in the shadow of ongoing projects of privatized urban spaces like “Queen's Wharf Casino.”

The debates around the privatization of urban spaces bring the political aspect of public spaces to the forefront and could be used to understand the evolution in function of city elements. As Toolis (2017) argues, the implications and problems associated with privatization of public spaces influences the everyday life of urban dwellers in three ways: by constraining access and participation; by constraining and confining the variety of voices; and by constraining possible interactions within a place. Toolis (2017) argues that these limitations result in exclusive, segregated, monologic, depoliticized, commodified, and passive urban spaces in which minorities like migrants, low-income people, and women are excluded and displaced.

Emphasis on 'public space' is often a basic demand of a democratic society as public spaces were places for public debate and decision-making in early democratic societies. In emphasising this role in democracy, the significance of cultural differences and the acceptance of cultural minority groups were the essence of many political theories of past decades (Parkinson 2012). Finding an acceptable place for minority cultural groups in the everyday life of citizens becomes an important aspect of democratic politics (Rishbeth 2001, Barraclough 2007). That's because urban spaces could offer a chance for political actions and at the same time they are sites for a political competition over access, control and representation. It means public space could be a platform of democracy (Selod 2011, Parkinson 2012).

## **2.7 Summary**

This study is an investigation of the everyday experiences of Middle Eastern women in public spaces of Greater Brisbane and an investigation into how these women view the quality and suitability of these public spaces. The aim is to answer questions about the roles that public spaces play in their daily lives and to find ways of making better connections between their everyday lives and public spaces. Therefore, the literature review is structured around three main topics: the definitions of and concepts about public and private space in urban settings; current understandings about the ways that women and especially Middle Eastern women understand and use public space; and the particular issues that migrant people face when using public space.

Firstly the concept of space from a philosophical point of view is discussed with the aim of revealing the fundamental concepts of public space in everyday life. Next, the necessity of public space as a medium of democracy and well-being, and the necessity for having a well-designed well-managed public space is discussed. Following the description of urban spaces, two important components of this study, women and migration, are examined through literature in both global and



Middle Eastern context, as these two could be very different due to social differences or could have similarities in many ways as they are based on human behavioural concepts.

And finally place attachment and belonging, and the possible role of these in the process of adaptation following migration is discussed with the aid of existing bodies of knowledge. Understanding the way in which Middle Eastern women understand and use urban spaces in the multicultural context of Australia could enlighten the urban practitioners' action in the spatial production of urban spaces and encourage planning for differences. Adopting different voices in the production of urban spaces inspires and stimulates social interaction and helps to achieve the ideal public life that is diverse, civil and convivial. Also, as a bond that connects people to places, "place attachment" could provide insight into why and to what extent the values of an individual align with a particular environmental setting (Altman and Low 1992, Kyle, Mowen et al. 2004). There is substantial knowledge about predictors of place attachment (e.g. residence duration, home ownership, family roots, and so on), although the process of forming emotional bonds with places requires further investigation.

# Chapter 3: Research Methodology

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In the following chapter the research methodologies used in this thesis are explained in detail. Based on the concept of a systematic flow of knowledge in social studies, the description of the research approach is divided into three different sections: methodological construction of the thesis; methods of collecting data; and methods of organizing and analysing data. Addressing the research question of how the experience of migrant women using public spaces can inform the planning and design of these spaces was imperative; therefore the phenomenological approach was selected. “Phenomenological studies focus on the shared lived experiences of several participants to better understand a concept or a phenomenon” (Creswell 2014). As recommended in the phenomenological literature, semi-structured in-depth interviews were the sources of data for this study (Moustakas 1994, Saldaña 2011, Babbie 2014) enriched by research observation. Participants were chosen according to Purposive sampling instructions and data was organised and analysed by the aid of NVivo software based on a “modification of the Van Kaam model” phenomenological approach (see Section 3.3 “Phenomenological Data Analysis”). Grounded theory, which is the basis and the concept behind the analysing procedures in NVivo, was also used in the organising and analysing process.

## 3.1 Research Methodological Construction

### Research Design

The aim of this study is to explore and understand the everyday experiences of Middle Eastern migrant women in public spaces in a multicultural environment. By understanding their experiences, the values and culture of this particular group are addressed and could provide invaluable information for planning better public spaces. Therefore, the central focus of this study is the experience of Middle Eastern women as individuals as opposed to non-Middle Eastern people or Middle Eastern men. This research is designed to understand the meaning and the place of a phenomenon (here public spaces) in everyday life of a group of urban dwellers who have experienced more than two cultures in their lifetime.

Generally the first stage in the design of research methodology is selecting the best methods, approaches and tools that will be used to answer the research questions. In this study the research methodology incorporates an extensive literature review, census data for preliminary investigation into the Middle Eastern population in and migration to Australia, an understanding of the case study

method, a study of alternative qualitative methods for investigation purposes, preliminary field observations, and the development of interview guidelines.

As directed by Moustakas (1994) four design steps were followed for this phenomenological study:

1. The preparation phase where primary data collection was completed by reviewing existing literature, defining comprehensive research question (both primary and secondary), understanding and providing definitions, developing reliable criteria for participant selection, developing an interview guide, and conducting pilot interviews.
2. The data collection phase where the interview method was developed and in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted. In this phase eliminating any possible assumptions made by the researcher concerning the phenomenon is of utmost important.
3. The analysis phase where the modified Van Kaam method was adapted for phenomenological research analysis.
4. The organisation phase that is conducted based on the secondary research questions and with the help of the modified Van Kaam method.

The main focal points of this study are summarised as questions (Figure 3):

- What is the definition of, and relationship between, public and private space from the viewpoint of Middle Eastern women regarding their experience of urban spaces?
- What is the balance and division between private and public space for Middle Eastern women?
- How do Middle Eastern women view the different concepts of ‘the public’ and ‘the private’ and how do they transition between these concepts?
- What are the possible relationships of Middle Eastern women with their built environment in everyday life and can meaningful patterns be identified from these relationships?
- What are the possible strategies and everyday practices that Middle Eastern women employ when they inhabit a new and unfamiliar space and make it “their own” space?
- What are the expectations of Middle Eastern women regarding public space and private space and how do the existing spaces meet their needs?
- What are the enablers and barriers that connect or disconnect Middle Eastern women to or from public space?

- How do Middle Eastern women interact with their culture and with other cultures when experiencing urban spaces?
- What are the South East Queensland (SEQ)/Greater Brisbane public space conceptualisation, planning and design standards for alignment with the expectations of Middle Eastern women (such as standards, location, design, types of spaces, infrastructure)?
- What are the possible characteristics of public spaces suitable for Middle Eastern women in Brisbane according to their cultural and environmental needs?

Addressing these questions culminates into an inclusive primary question (Figure 3): *‘How can the experiences of Middle Eastern migrant women using public spaces inform the planning and design of such spaces?’* This overreaching, primary question leads to the following secondary research questions:

1. How do Middle Eastern women in Greater Brisbane understand and use public space?
2. What is the relationship between public and private space for Middle Eastern women living in Greater Brisbane?
3. What are the barriers of and enablers to the use of public space by Middle Eastern migrant women and how can these be incorporated into the planning and design of public space in Greater Brisbane?
4. What is needed for public space planning and design in Greater Brisbane to better respond to the needs of Middle Eastern women?

To answer the primary and secondary questions of this study, a qualitative research methodology was followed. When the experience and comprehension of a person regarding their surrounding environment is directly examined, a qualitative approach is the best research methodology to use (May 2010, Creswell 2014).

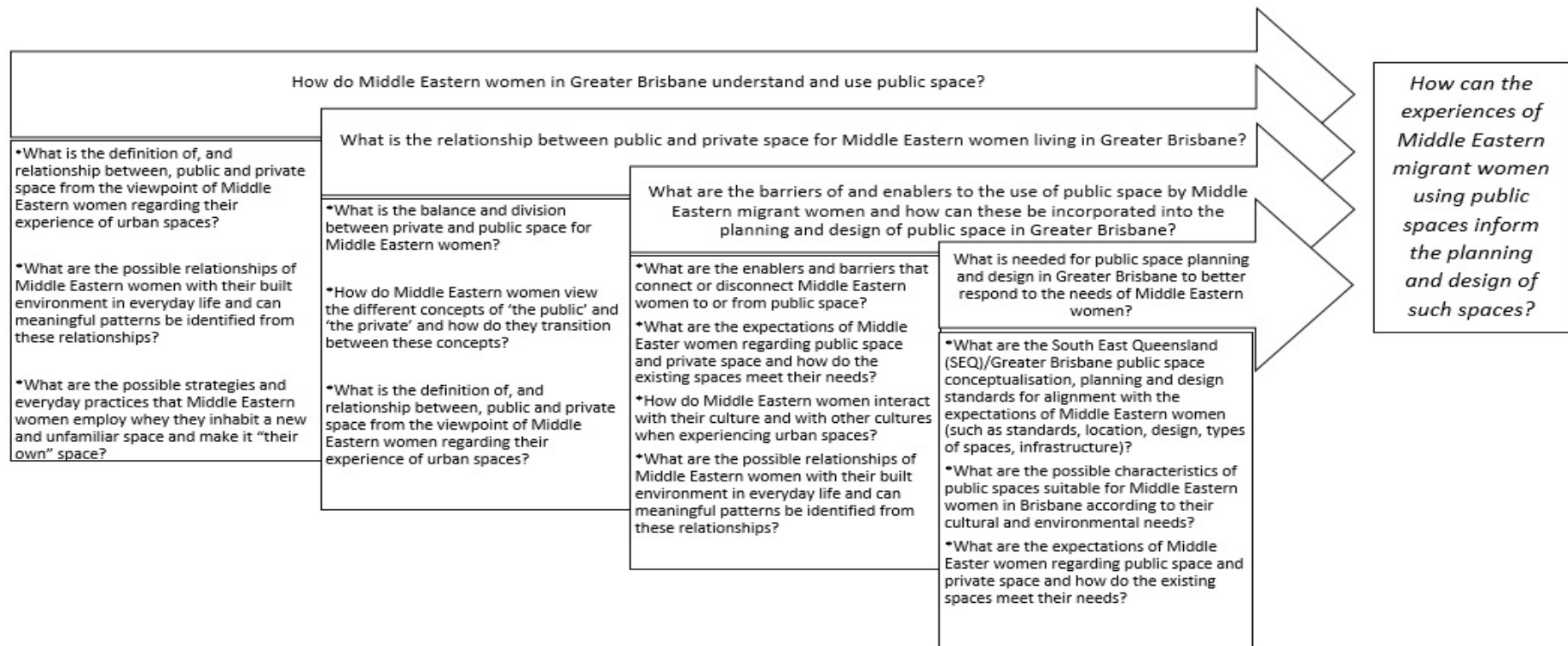


Figure 3: The focal points of this study

## **Phenomenology**

A phenomenological approach is the preferred research methodology when the research question requires an intimate awareness and deep understanding of the human experience of a situation (Smith, Larkin et al. 2009). Phenomenology is the study of the nature and meaning of a phenomenon (or thing) that can lead to a deep understanding of its fundamentals. Phenomenology focuses on concepts, events, or the human experience and can be as mundane as grocery shopping or as life changing as getting married. With a considerable historical and philosophical foundation, influenced by philosophers like Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre (Creswell 2003, Smith, Larkin et al. 2009, Creswell 2014, Lawlor 2014) and modified by Moustakas and van Manen (Moustakas 1994), phenomenology reveals some possible aspects of thoughts in the minds of participants and investigates possible feelings of the participants encountering the phenomenon (Creswell 2014, Lawlor 2014).

Phenomenology is the approach chosen in this research to investigate the phenomenon of public space in the everyday life of Middle Eastern women in an attempt to connect internalized feelings with the built environment. Applying this approach here makes it possible to elicit and study suitable themes to answer primary and secondary research questions. These themes can then be used in the professional assessment of how urban spaces are planned and produced in Australia (Greater Brisbane region).

## **Research Strategy**

To describe a complex phenomenon, such as urban spaces, and understand how urban dwellers interact with public and private spaces, the best choice of an investigative strategy is to use a “Case study” (Gomm 2000, Yin 2014). In this study case study is a research approach that includes phenomenology, grounded theory and content analysis. Case study units can be one person, one group, one event or one organization that may be chosen deliberately, strategically or conveniently due to its unique character, representing the most typical of its kind, or simply and purposively, for convenience to practice an in-depth examination (Marshall and Rossman 2006, Yin 2014). In this research the research design is a single case study with the unit of analysis an Australian city: Greater Brisbane region.

Research data collection and analysis should be accurate. The concept of accuracy embraces two components: reliability or the consistency of the observations; and validity, or connections between results and reality (Yin 2014). Reliability is a necessary condition for validity but does not guarantee it. When a case study is conducted for research purposes, the interactions among a

number of variables in a natural setting are examined, often without any preconceptions. The researcher plays a decisive role at every stage of the process: data collection, analysis and interpretation. Therefore, the actions and personal characteristics of researcher can have a significant and direct impact on the accuracy of the results.

It is important in case studies to minimise any personal influence by the researcher. The biggest potential problem with case studies is not unrepresentative data sets, because this is reduced by using specific data collection techniques and participants, but any emotional attachments a researcher might have with 'their' participants or 'their' community. In this study, there were four main situations that need to be dealt with in order to reduce human error and increase reliability of the research. Specific ways to overcome this bias, according to Yin (2014), were applied to each situation as follows (Yin 2014) :

1. A better understanding of the situation was attempted by giving plenty of time to each participant enabling them to think about each and every question. Participants were not coerced into expressing any statements based on the viewpoint by the researcher. This involved having a neutral face to eliminate self-censorship and was particularly important in case studies involving Middle Eastern communities that have self-censorship due to their social values (Najmabadi 2004, Babayan 2009).
2. Valid viewpoints can be overlooked by not choosing the participants in a systematic way. This was this least likely source of bias in this study because the researcher was completely new to the field of Australian urban studies and practice. Therefore, from the very first step it was necessary to determine who had valid viewpoint about each theme by being open to advice from each source of information regarding the next possible steps in data collection and analysis.

Routine events can be easily overlooked. This was avoided by the researcher taking part in as many events as possible in Middle Eastern communities in an attempt to improve the understanding of such communities, observe the characteristics of communities and look for possible participants who were interested in taking part in an in-depth interview or online questionnaire.

3. Interfacing and inferring not as a researcher, but a Middle Eastern woman, is one obvious sources of bias in this study and was possibly the hardest aspect to avoid during the many stages of this research from the literature review to data display. The more a researcher identifies themselves with participants, the greater the possibility of losing objectivity, judgement and insight and could possibly allow them to choose a side during each stage of the study. The only solution to counterbalance this tendency is by being aware of such bias

in each step the researcher takes and suspending their own opinions and resultant themes from influencing the literature review and by double checking interview contents to eliminate judgment interfering, triangulation and inclusion of a researcher's viewpoints in shaping the research framework.

Methodologically, if similar findings come from different sources, the findings have greater credibility. Triangulation, a particularly important component of the use of qualitative methods, comes from mapping where it refers to taking multiple bearings on a geographic feature to cross check a location. In research, triangulation is a process of using different techniques and multiple types of data to address one problem from different angles (Singleton and Straits 2010, Yin 2014). In this study triangulation was used is practiced by the use of five complementary interviews with Middle Eastern women that were analysed separately and use of official documents in which the issues of Multiculturalism and Women are addressed. Triangulation ensures the validity of the findings.

### **Overview of the Case study**

As mentioned in Brisbane Vision 2031, it is predicted that Brisbane will be the fastest growing economy of mature cities worldwide from 2012-2020, and is also building its reputation as Australia's New World City (Brisbane-City-Council 2013). To give more weight to Brisbane city as a thriving world-class city with the third highest city population in Australia and a typical example of Australian cities, the Greater Brisbane region as was chosen as an explanatory case study (Figure 4).

Brisbane is in the southeast corner of Queensland. The city is centred along the Brisbane River, and its eastern suburbs line the shores of Moreton Bay. The greater Brisbane region (Figure 4) is on the coastal plain east of the Great Dividing Range. Brisbane's metropolitan area sprawls along the Moreton Bay floodplain from Caboolture in the north to Beenleigh in the south, and across to Ipswich in the south west. Greater Brisbane had a density of 148 people per square kilometre in 2016. Like most Australian and North American cities, Brisbane has a sprawling metropolitan area which takes in excess of one hour to traverse either north to south or east to west by car without traffic. Unlike other Australian capital cities, a large portion of the greater metropolitan area or Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA) of Brisbane is controlled by a single local government area, the City of Brisbane. The remainder of the metropolitan area falls into the LGAs of Logan City to the south, Moreton Bay Region in the northern suburbs, the City of Ipswich to the south west, Redland City to the south east on the bayside, with a small strip to the far west in the Scenic Rim Region (Australian Bureau of Statistic).



## Greater Brisbane (GCCSA) (3GBRI)

Queensland

	Year	Greater Brisbane	Australia	
<b>Population &amp; People</b>	Persons (no.)	2015	2,308,720	23,777,777
	Median Age - Persons (years)	2015	35.2	37.4
<b>Economy &amp; Industry</b>	Total number of businesses (no.)	2015	185,932	2,121,235
	Main employing industry: Health care and social assistance (%)	2011	12.4	
<b>Income</b>	Median equivalised total household income (weekly) (\$)		No Data Available	
	Median total income (excl. Government pensions and allowance) (\$)	2013	46,790	44,940
<b>Education &amp; Employment</b>	Completed Year 12 or equivalent (%)		No Data Available	
	Unemployment rate (%)	2011	5.9	5.6
<b>Health &amp; Disability</b>	Persons who have need for assistance with core activities (%)		No Data Available	
<b>Family &amp; Community</b>	Average household size (no. of persons)	2011	2.7	2.6
	Average monthly household rental payment (\$)	2011	1,419	1,317
	Average monthly household mortgage payment (\$)	2011	2,074	1,994
<b>Land &amp; Environment</b>	Land area (ha)	2011	1,582,593.1	768,848,540.5
	Small-scale solar panel system installations 2001-2015 (no.)	2014	211,497	1,367,920

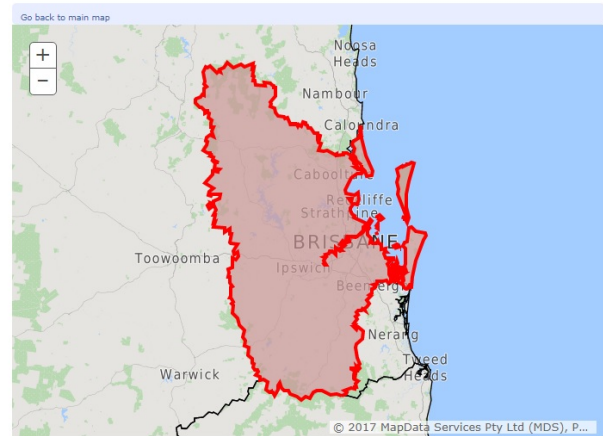


Figure 4: Greater Brisbane Region Summary- Australian Bureau of Statistic (ABS)

In the next two decades it is predicted that nearly 1 million people will immigrate (from other countries or regions within Australia) to the region of Greater Brisbane requiring research into its multicultural aspects. According to the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection, the eligibility for Australian citizenship requires being an Australian permanent resident for four years and living in Australia for at least another four years. Therefore, a minimum of four years residency was chosen as a criteria for selecting participants as time is an essential factor in post-migration adaptation (it should be consider that this criteria was based on the case at the time the research was being conducted but these policies are changing at the moment).

Statistics presented in Figure 5 show an increasing trend in migration from overseas to Australia during the last decade both in overall arrivals and migrants from the Middle East. This increased migration rate has contributed to the Middle Eastern born population being nearly 1.5% of total Australian population. According to ABS released data, Queensland (QLD) is the third most desirable state in Australia for migrant people preceded by New South Wales and Victoria (Table 1). The same trend in population growth is also seen with Queensland having a growth rate of 1.7 placing it third place amongst all states (Table 2). Between 2001 and 2011 the population growth in Greater Brisbane was approximately 25% and the second fastest growth rate amongst Australia's capital cities preceded by the Greater Perth region (26%). According to ABS census data, nearly 57% of this growth was attributed to migrant people who arrived in Brisbane during 2011. Although this trend may affect due to recent changes in immigration policies, it is possible

to overlook the effect on this research regarding to length of stay for candidates which is minimum of four years.

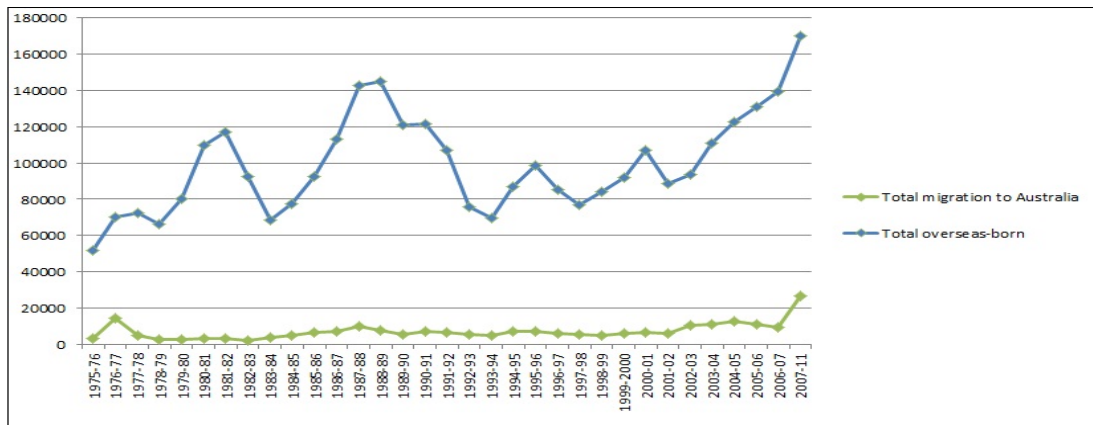


Figure 5: Migration trends to Australia from 1975 to 2011, Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data

Considering all these facts, Brisbane serves as an important destination for migrant people. This is reiterated in the SEQ regional planning document where “producing strong communities” is one of the “desired regional objectives.” To achieve such a strong community, there is a need to “understand the characteristics and demands of the members of this community, providing healthy, safe and inclusive places and spaces and ensuring that all members of the community have access and mobility” (SEQ Regional Plan 2009–2031). To achieve this, there is an urgent need to consider and plan for new members of society who come from different backgrounds and have different needs. Understanding the perspectives and experiences of urban phenomenon by new members of society could offer a vision to urban researchers and decision-makers to better plan and develop societies based on the actual needs of all community members. The rate of migration to QLD and its capital Brisbane reinforces the need to better understand new arrivals to ensure a more clear and predictable future for the city of Brisbane and Greater Brisbane.

State or territory	NOM		NOM ARRIVALS			NOM DEPARTURES		
	no.	%	Overseas arrivals no.	Median age years	Sex ratio(b) ratio	Overseas departures no.	Median age years	Sex ratio(b) ratio
NSW	50 186	29.5	141 161	27.4	99.4	90 975	28.7	103.5
Vic.	45 744	26.9	105 519	26.6	97.0	59 775	27.5	106.9
Qld	31 266	18.4	82 409	26.5	99.5	51 143	27.9	104.0
SA	8 667	5.1	19 658	26.1	97.8	10 991	27.4	106.1
WA	30 805	18.1	60 084	27.2	107.9	29 279	28.7	113.9
Tas.	995	0.6	3 396	27.5	101.5	2 401	28.7	103.8
NT	630	0.4	4 375	29.1	109.8	3 745	30.5	130.0
ACT	1 981	1.2	7 288	27.4	102.8	5 307	28.9	103.8
Australia(c)	170 279	100.0	423 897	27.0	100.1	253 618	28.2	106.0

Table 1: Net overseas migration and selected characteristics by state and territory in 2011. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data

PRELIMINARY DATA	Population at end Mar qtr 2012 '000	Change over previous year '000	Change over previous year %
New South Wales	7 272.8	73.5	1.0
Victoria	5 603.1	82.5	1.5
Queensland	4 537.7	76.4	1.7
South Australia	1 650.6	14.1	0.9
Western Australia	2 410.6	73.3	3.1
Tasmania	512.1	1.3	0.3
Northern Territory	233.3	3.0	1.3
Australian Capital Territory	373.1	7.0	1.9
Australia(a)	22 596.5	331.2	1.5

Table 2: Net Overseas Migration and selected characteristics by state and territory in 2012.  
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data

In order to configure a road map for the best possible outcomes, quantitative data was employed to determine the distribution of Middle Eastern women in Greater Brisbane. Two important elements in this stage were the rate of migration and population growth as well as spatial location. The outcome of this stage was an analysis of migration rates from the Middle East, the way this population has settled in Greater Brisbane and the ratio of this population compared to Australian residents. The data was from the ABS that is a reliable and accurate data source. There were some difficulties acquiring data for each Middle Eastern country as statistics for some countries were combined together, however this difficulty was overcome with some help from the experts in the ABS.

The Middle Eastern migrant population in Greater Brisbane is not evenly distributed and creates the need to concentrate on some regions with the highest number and density of Middle Eastern migrants. Figures 6 and 7 show the distribution of Middle Eastern migrants in SEQ and Greater Brisbane where most of this population have settled in Brisbane and south of the Brisbane River. Field observations during the preliminary investigation and during the data collecting stage (by participating in festivals, and ethnic and religious events) show that being near a Mosque and having access to *Halal* shops are the most important reasons dictating choice of suburb. In addition, being among pioneer groups that migrated from their country and housing affordability are other important reasons for choice of neighbourhood by both Muslims and non-Muslims.

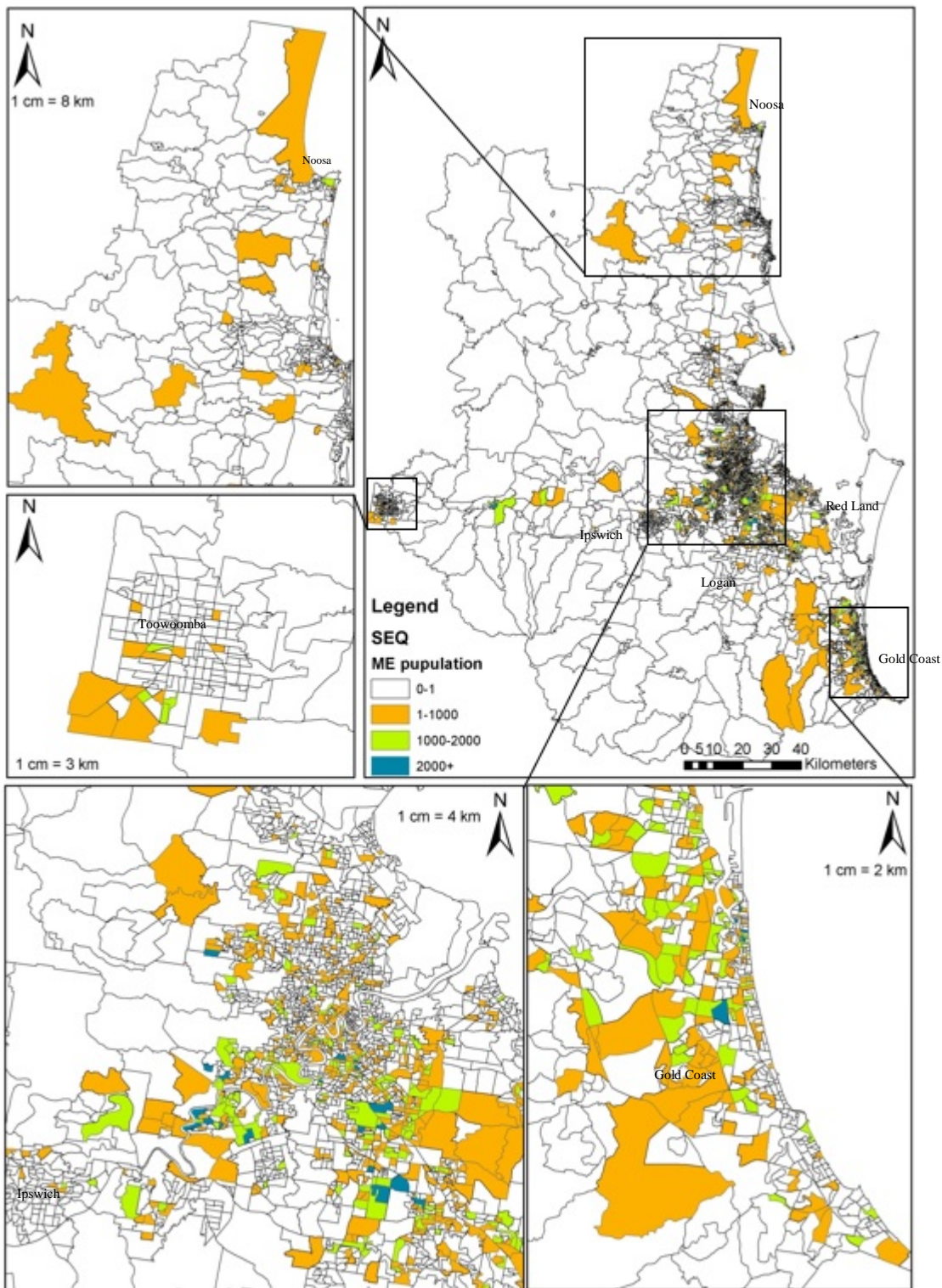


Figure 6: The distribution of Middle Eastern Migrant people in South East Queensland- Australian Bureau of Statistic (ABS) Census data



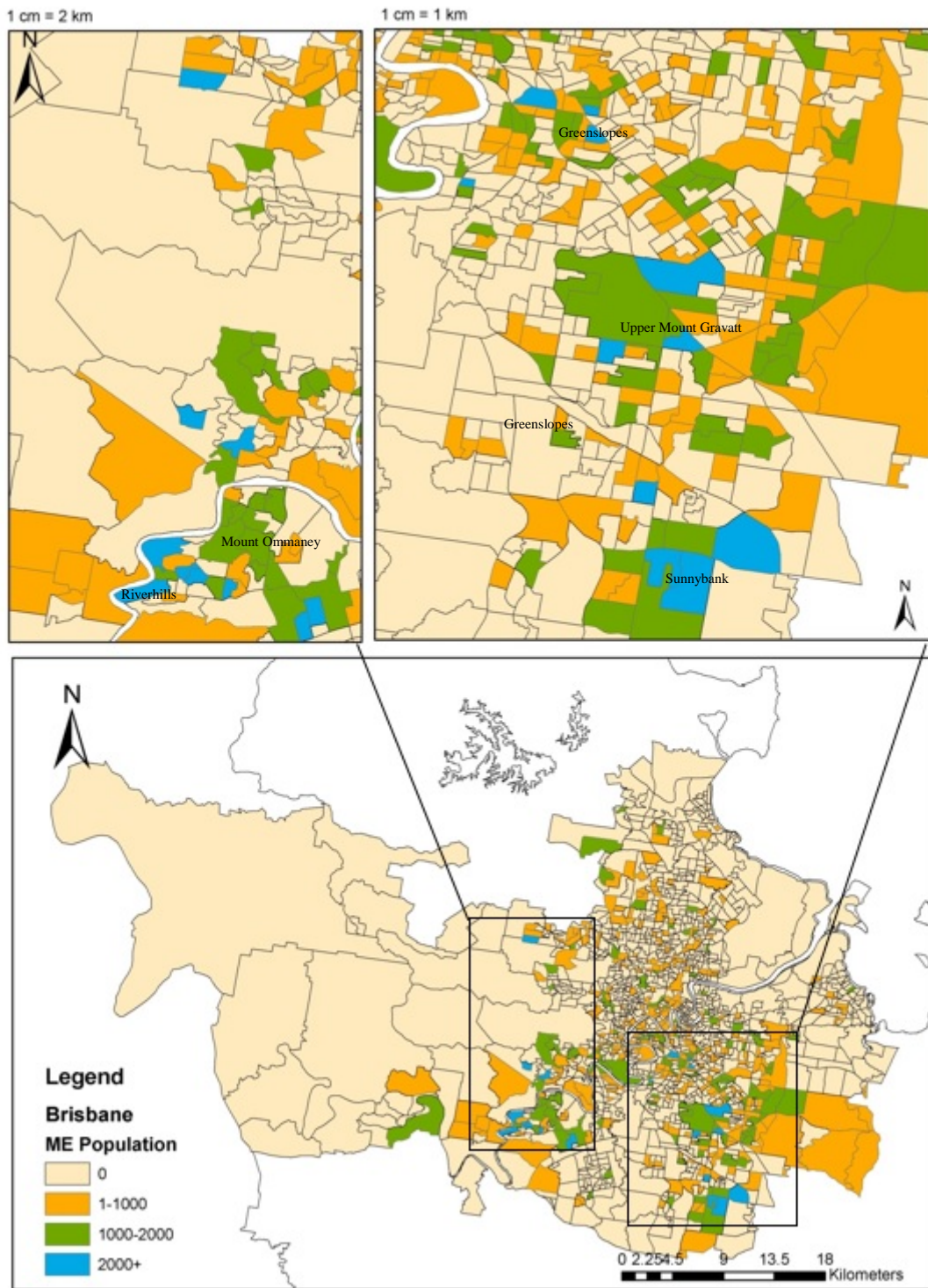


Figure 7: The distribution of Middle Eastern Migrant people in Greater Brisbane- Australian Bureau of Statistic (ABS) Census data

## 3.2 Methods of Collecting Data

### Data needs

In order to provide a reliable and comprehensive data set, suitable approaches for data collecting must be identified. This involved an extensive literature review, in-depth and semi-structured interviews using purposive sampling, field observations, use of secondary data from the ABS, and official documents. In this phase of the research methodology a combination of qualitative methods were used to produce data and information. Qualitative data was obtained from many different sources: interviews; a visual imagery activity that involved showing pictures from public spaces in Greater Brisbane, Middle Eastern countries, and European countries; and reviewing previous related research that contributed to observing and understanding everyday experiences of a selected group of Middle Eastern women.

Theme	Data collection techniques	Sources
Definition of public and private spaces	Available data	1. Literature review (books, research articles and thesis)
Women in urban spaces	Available data; Observation	1. Literature review (books, research articles and thesis) 2. Greater Brisbane ethnic communities
Migration to Australia (especially from the Middle East) and distribution of migrant population	Available data	1. Official reports and statistics (ABS), official archives for government annual reports and departmental gazettes 2. Literature review
Characteristics of Middle Eastern migrant communities	Available data; Observation	1. Literature review (books, research articles and thesis) 2. Greater Brisbane ethnic communities
Middle Eastern women understanding and use of urban spaces	Interviews; Observations	1. Face-to-face in-depth interview 2. Field observation

Table 3: Data techniques and possible sources of data according to literature review themes

Data needs along with the information from preliminary analysis of pilot interviews result in a set of questions within the interview guide to investigate the possibility of illustrating the ideal

public spaces for Middle Eastern women. This set of questions assist the author in conducting a comparison between two public spaces in Brisbane city, Queen Street (including Botanic Garden) and South Bank.

### **Sampling design**

People are not viewed as interchangeable in qualitative research methods, unlike other forms of research. Identifying the best possible candidates was one of the challenges in collecting data during this phase. To utilise the power and logic of this method and achieve the best possible result, purposive sampling was needed to select information-rich candidates for an in-depth study (Patton 2002). Using an in-depth semi-structured interview approach (please see the questionnaire in Appendix A) the participants could share their understanding and use of private and public urban spaces.

This qualitative study is based on twenty in-depth interviews with Middle Eastern women from different countries and backgrounds. The appropriate sampling strategy for choosing research participants was driven by answering two questions: (a) what is expected to be accomplished, and (b) what are the important points to know? (Hamel, Dufour et al. 1993). An answer to the first question could be achieved by asking what is the everyday experience of a Middle Eastern migrant woman in the urban spaces of the Greater Brisbane? An answer to the second question could be formulated by asking how do women with different backgrounds (country of birth, length of stay, and religion) and lifestyle (marriage status, number of children, employment status, driving habits etc) experience urban spaces in Greater Brisbane? Based on these approaches, the research participants were selected according to a “purposive sampling” technique. “Purposive sampling is a form of sampling in which the selection of the sample is based on the judgement of the researcher as to which subjects best fit the criteria of the study which seeks a representative group of participants” (Patton 2002, p 179). In this case, influential factors extracted from the literature that impact the use of public spaces were religion, cultural values, migration reasons, marital status, income, duration of stay, dependent children/adults, and employment status and type.

For purposive sampling, a matrix of main factors for selection of candidates was produced so every candidate had minimum requirements to provide the most comprehensive set of information when answering the research questions (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010). The matrix of factors for selection of candidates were as country of birth, age group, residency in Australia, marital status, number of children, number of elderly in the house, religion, level of education, job status, number of languages spoken, and suburb of residence. In purposive sampling it is important to reduce the number of factors involved in order to build a less complex matrix with a reasonable number of

dimensions that are both accurate and correct. As a result, and based on the literature review, country of birth, religion, number of children, and years of residency in Australia were the main factors. These factors were chosen based on the framework extracted from the literature review and according to core concerns of the main research question (Figure 8).

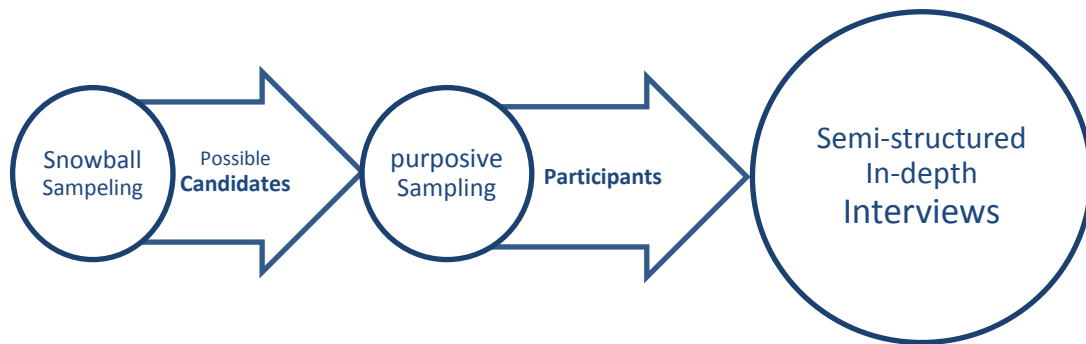


Figure 8: Flow diagram depicting the sampling design process

All candidates were Middle Eastern migrant woman who had lived in Greater Brisbane for a minimum of four years. This period of residency was chosen to ensure that each migrant had settled into their host country. These candidates were selected mostly through snowball sampling by approaching circles of friends and acquaintances, Australian ethnic and religious websites and organizations, religious centres, and ethnic shops. The next step was to produce the matrix of choices with the four main dimensions: country of birth, religion, number of children; and years of residency in Australia. The six subsidiary dimensions were also included: age group, marital status, number of elderly in the house, level of education, job status, and number of languages spoken. To simplify the matrix, the 3+6 dimensions were applied within each group of women with the same country of birth. For instance in *Table 4*, the main factors for candidate number 1 and 2 have some similarities, however the age of candidate number 2 places her in a different category to candidate 1 (other than 30-39), therefore this candidate was chosen as one of the final participants in the research.

At the next level of sample group selection, results achieved using this research strategy were compared with the ABS census data organised by suburb of residence for the Middle Eastern population. For this last stage of sample group selection, the intention of the researcher was to cover as many populated suburbs as possible in order to increase the coverage and reliability of the final data. For example in *Table 4*, candidates number 3 and 4 had similar descriptions, however candidate 4 was from a suburb where a higher number of Iranians resided and was possibly a better choice to contribute data that would result in a more comprehensive set of information applicable to



the research questions. Table 5 shows the distribution of participants in Greater Brisbane Suburbs, and Table 6 is a detailed description of participants at the time of interviews. Based on abovementioned process total number of 25 women out of 76 possible candidates was chosen as the final candidates for the interviews among which five interviews were chosen randomly and analysed separately for the purpose of data triangulation. As Creswell (2003, 2016) suggests the number of interview for phenomenological studies could vary from five interview to 25. For this research total number of 25 was chosen where five interviews were not used as the main source of data.

Participant	Country of Birth	Years of Residency in Australia	Number of Children	Religion	Age	Marital Status	Number of Elderlies	Level of Education	Job Status	Language Spoken	suburb
1	Iran	18	3	Baha'i	30-39	Married	1_3	Bachelor Degree Level	Employed part-time	Persian/English	Indooroopilly
2	Iran	23	3	Baha'i	40-59	Married	1_2	Year 12 or less (formal schooling)	Homemaker	Persian/English/Turkish	Manly
3	Iran	11	1	N/A	30-39	Married	1	Postgraduate Degree Level	Employed full-time	Persian/English	The Gap
4	Iran	10	2	N/A	30-39	Married	0-2	Postgraduate Degree Level	Employed full-time	Persian/English/French	Springfield

Table 4: Part of the matrix of choices for Iranian Candidates

## Interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews that rely on verbal accounts of social realities and allow in-depth examination of issues related to the primary and secondary research questions were performed in this study. An in-depth interview is more like a conversation between a researcher and an informant/participant, and is focused on the participant's perception of self, life and experience and is expressed in the participant's own words. An interview guide was developed around the issues central to the research question and was either a list of topics without fixed wording or ordering of questions, or a fixed set of questions that were asked according to answers and reactions given by the participant in response to questions that were asked without a fixed order (Oakley 1998, DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006, Rubin and Rubin 2011, Patton 2014, Seidman 2015). In this research all interviews were conducted face-to-face, in most of the cases, and to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences, probing techniques were used by the researcher. These probing techniques were mostly follow-up questions used to elicit more information after an initial question (e.g. hypothetical questions, posing ideas within the examples from other participants' interviews etc.). Prior to the performance of in-depth semi-structured interviews, guidelines were developed to conduct the interviews. After reviewing the existing literature, pilot interviews with three Middle Eastern women from the researcher's circle of friends were performed to seek information and advice from scholars who had studied, or were interested in this topic. Long meetings with supervisors were also used in the construction of interview guidelines.

All candidates were Middle Eastern migrant woman who had lived in Greater Brisbane for a minimum of four years. The definition of Middle East in this research included countries from Asia but not countries from Europe (like Cyprus) or Africa (like Egypt). To ensure anonymity and protect the confidentiality of the participants it is important to de-identify the data. In this study pseudonyms were used to identify each of the participants and protect their identity. In the first version of the sampling plan three participants were supposed to be chosen from Saudi Arabia due to its large population. However this plan changed because out of fifteen Saudi Arabian women were approached as potential candidates, five had lived in Brisbane less than four years (and were students or here with their partners who were students), and nine were not interested in participating in the research. Therefore, instead of three women from Saudi Arabia, one Saudi Arabian woman, one woman from UAE, and one Israeli woman were chosen to provide a better representation of the Middle Eastern population.

To share one's experiences, feelings, fears and what one likes about a phenomenon is always a complicated and challenging part of a qualitative research as it deals with individual personalities. These challenges are much more significant when Middle Eastern women are involved as they may face some difficulties in their personal life due to their participation in the research. The in-depth and semi-structured interviews conducted in this study required trust between the participants and researcher to ensure that the most accurate data was collected (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003, Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010). To gain the trust of participants and encourage them to continue despite minor difficulties, whilst aspiring to make the research seem as important to the participant as it is to the researcher, was a time consuming interaction that demanded perfect communication skills and effective interview design. This trust ensured that the data collected was more reliable enabling an accurate understanding of the participants' views of public and private spaces. To gain this trust, the number of participants was limited allowing all information to be observed carefully by researcher.

In order to investigate and understand the place of urban spaces in everyday life of Middle Eastern women 25 interview were conducted during a period of 15 months. For triangulation stage total five interviews were chosen randomly and were separately analysed and the other 20 interviews were the main source of data for analysis stage of the research. The total hour of interviews was 2260 minutes with the longest of 131 minutes and the shortest as 63 minutes. The average age of interviewees was 36.32 years, the oldest woman was 56 and the youngest was 21 years old. The average length of stay was 14.96 years with the longest of 36 years and the shortest of four years. The religion of women was one of the important factors in purposive sampling and the author tried to choose a wide range of religions for better understanding. The number of women

who practice each religion was chosen based of their availability in preliminary list and the number of followers based on ABS census data. It should be noted that six women preferred not to discuss their religion during the interview (mentioned as N/A in table 6).

### **Document review**

To obtain accurate and reliable data about factors urbanists may had applied to current policies involving Middle Eastern migrant women, there was a need for a thorough investigation into existing policies using content analysis methods. Urban policies in every region are defined by the needs and expectations of that region, however they are normally based on more general principles formulated from strong urban theories. Subsequently, an investigation into the body of knowledge that was related to the three main parts of the research question was required to shape a comprehensive understanding of the current status of policies, and the considerations given to minority groups when planning them. Secondary information was also collected from policy documents, government reports, development plans, journal articles, books, academic and consultant reports, and Australian ethnic and religious websites and organizations prior to and during the analysis phase. These documents were analysed based on twelve themes driven from semi-structured in-depth interviews (see Chapter 4) to investigate to what extend these themes are considered in official documents.

The main documents reviewed and analysed in this research are as following:

- Brisbane City plan 2014
- City Centre Master Plan 2014
- Brisbane Vision 2031
- Planning Act 2016
- SEQ Regional Plan 2009
- Youth Strategy 2014-2019
- Connecting SEQ 2031
- Brisbane Active Transport Strategy 2012-2026
- Living in Brisbane collection

GreaterBrisbane Statistical Areas (UR)	Iran		Saudi Arabia		Iraq		Lebanon		Turkey		United Arab Emirates		Israel		Kuwait		Syria		Jordan		Oman		Bahrain		Gaza Strip and West Bank		Qatar		Middle East, nfd		Yemen		Total			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Capalaba	18	18	3	0	0	0	5	17	26	22	3	8	6	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	3	5	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	70	77		
Cleveland - Stradbroke	10	13	3	3	3	3	14	5	6	8	5	10	5	4	5	0	0	4	0	3	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	58			
Wynnum - Manly	44	31	0	0	3	3	10	12	8	8	5	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	81	64			
Bald Hills - Everton Park	25	30	0	4	4	3	9	3	4	0	15	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	4	7	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	69	47			
Chermside	46	48	60	21	15	9	11	8	10	4	10	7	4	0	3	4	10	9	5	3	7	10	0	5	4	0	0	3	0	0	4	185	135			
Nundah	30	30	18	13	4	0	3	6	6	3	0	6	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	6	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	86	58			
Sandgate	23	17	15	9	13	9	11	11	17	10	9	8	0	5	0	9	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	91	78			
Carindale	50	53	8	5	19	15	21	28	9	4	9	8	6	11	3	3	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	132	133			
Holland Park - Yeronga	122	96	30	13	46	32	19	13	15	15	9	6	10	3	6	6	6	4	10	0	11	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	292	192			
Mt Gravatt	74	75	64	55	33	21	45	32	25	19	26	8	6	10	10	15	14	4	11	11	3	5	6	4	3	3	6	0	0	5	0	328	268			
Nathan	68	46	27	14	39	35	15	9	6	13	10	7	7	9	0	0	0	0	5	0	6	10	9	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	192	147			
Rocklea - Acacia Ridge	60	57	11	10	46	37	18	20	22	17	8	0	3	0	7	11	9	10	4	0	0	0	3	0	5	0	0	7	16	18	6	0	218	187		
Sunnybank	55	31	65	49	50	50	26	22	16	15	18	17	3	0	20	20	6	11	10	10	3	0	5	5	4	6	4	0	8	0	4	4	297	240		
Centenary	79	81	9	11	19	16	45	28	8	10	10	3	9	13	0	3	13	11	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	198	182		
Kenmore - Brookfield - Moggill	57	61	6	4	4	0	8	8	12	6	9	4	15	13	0	0	3	0	0	0	8	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	122	103		
Sherwood - Indooroopilly	110	106	95	83	43	34	5	6	12	6	10	15	11	10	11	3	5	0	0	3	15	11	8	3	0	0	6	0	3	0	0	334	280			
The Gap - Enoggera	35	19	5	0	21	28	3	6	10	3	6	6	8	5	0	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	92	75			
Brisbane Inner	126	80	137	62	20	17	30	14	55	27	25	22	13	12	19	6	8	6	15	11	7	13	11	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	466	276			
Brisbane Inner - East	23	27	0	0	5	5	4	0	24	12	5	0	3	13	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	76	61		
Brisbane Inner - North	95	75	170	124	10	7	12	11	12	5	25	15	16	4	11	9	0	0	4	3	11	4	5	4	0	0	0	6	0	0	4	0	375	267		
Brisbane Inner - West	53	49	33	25	7	9	7	5	8	5	17	8	12	5	6	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	151	111		
Forest Lake - Oxley	74	52	60	57	58	57	24	19	16	7	10	7	3	4	0	3	4	0	3	5	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	5	6	262	221			
Ipswich Hinterland	5	0	0	5	6	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	5			
Ipswich Inner	6	8	4	4	6	4	3	3	6	7	3	0	7	4	4	4	8	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	47	42		
Springfield - Redbank	42	29	4	4	6	0	8	0	3	10	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	77	58			
Beaudesert	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0			
Beenleigh	9	0	0	0	7	10	6	7	31	26	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	57	50			
Browns Plains	14	16	0	0	10	6	22	10	8	9	6	0	6	3	3	0	12	21	6	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	90	71			
Jimboomba	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	13				
Loganlea - Carbrook	6	7	0	3	8	10	28	19	8	11	5	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	70	56			
Springwood - Kingston	35	24	15	10	61	58	57	56	23	17	12	3	6	6	8	8	5	8	10	7	0	0	0	4	3	3	6	3	3	3	4	245	213			
Bribie - Beachmere	5	4	3	0	0	0	4	0	3	6	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	10			
Caboolture	12	9	0	0	11	10	7	4	4	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	29			
Caboolture Hinterland	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	3			
Narangba - Burpengary	6	4	0	0	5	0	4	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	8			
Redcliffe	9	10	4	0	4	0	8	10	6	5	3	0	6	3	5	3	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	35			
Hills District	14	9	3	4	10	10	6	7	3	4	3	5	10	7	0	0	6	3	4	0	0	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	69	53			
North Lakes	10	5	0	8	5	5	4	3	7	3	0	5	4	5	0	5	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	39			
Strathpine	6	3	4	0	5	4	4	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	13			
Total	1462	1223	864	600	606	507	513	412	439	321	281	191	213	161	136	117	129	115	104	75	100	67	75	63	39	36	27	31	30	21	37	18	5055	3958		
per ME women		30.90		15.16		12.81		10.41		8.11		4.83		4.07		2.96		2.91		1.89		1.69		1.59		0.91		0.78		0.53		0.45		100.00		
		6		1		4		4		3		1		1																				20		
		1								1						1		1		1		1			1										28	
		1																																		
Number of Interviewed Women Based on the Population Percentage		Number of Interviewed Women in Pilot Study						Number of Interviewed Women for Triangulation Analysis						Total Number of Interviewed Women				Analysed Interviews				Chosen Suburbs														

Table 5: Number of women interviewed based on population and suburb of residence at the time of interview



Participants	Participant Name	Country of Birth	Age Group	Years in Australia	Marital Status	Number of Children	Number of Elderlies	Religion	Level of Education	Job Status	Language Spoken	suburb of residence	
Interviewed Women for Main Data Analysis	1	Leila	Iran	30-39	15	Married	2	0-4	Islam	Bachelor Degree Level	Employed part-time	Persian/English	Indooroopilly
	2	Fareeda	Iran	40-59	23	Married	3	1_2	Baha'i	Year 12 or less (formal schooling)	Homemaker	Persian/English/Turkish	Manly
	3	Haleh	Iran	20-29	5	Never Married	0	0	Islam	Bachelor Degree Level	Employed part-time	Persian/English/French	Brisbane Inner
	4	Shirin	Iran	40-59	16	Married	1	1	N/A	Bachelor Degree Level	Employed part-time	Persian/English	Kenmore
	5	Maya	Iran	30-39	10	Married	2	0-2	N/A	Postgraduate Degree Level	Employed full-time	Persian/English	Springfield
	6	Sara	Iran	20-29	6	Divorced	1	0-1	N/A	Trade/apprenticeship	Employed full-time	Persian/English/Arabic	Centenary
	7	Nina	Iraq	30-39	4	Married	3	0-4	Islam	Postgraduate Degree Level	Homemaker	Arabic/English	Carindale
	8	Ayah	Iraq	30-39	14	Married	2	0-3	N/A	Bachelor Degree Level	Homemaker	Kurdish/Arabic/English	Yeronga
	9	Rouba	Iraq	20-29	11	Never Married	0	0	Islam	Year 12 or less (formal schooling)	Employed full-time	Arabic/English	Sunnybank
	10	Israa	Iraq	40-59	19	Married	3	0-1	Islam	Trade/apprenticeship	Self-Employed	Arabic/English	The Gap
	11	Samar	Lebanon	40-59	36	Widowed	5	0	Islam	Year 12 or less (formal schooling)	Homemaker	Arabic/English	Springwood
	12	Eva	Lebanon	40-59	27	Married	8	2	Christian	Trade/apprenticeship	Self-Employed	Arabic/Armenian/English	Chermside
	13	Diana	Lebanon	20-29	10	Never Married	0	0	Christian	Bachelor Degree Level	Employed part-time	French/English	North Lakes
	14	Safiya	Lebanon	30-39	7	Married	4	1	Islam	Bachelor Degree Level	Homemaker	Arabic/English	Mt Gravatt
	15	Aynoor	Turkey	30-39	7	Divorced	3	1	N/A	Postgraduate Degree Level	Homemaker	Turkish/English	Capalaba
	16	Melek	Turkey	40-59	31	Married	4	1_2	Christian	Year 12 or less (formal schooling)	Self-Employed	Kurdish/Turkish/English	Rocklea
	17	Elif	Turkey	20-29	4	Married	1	0	Islam	Trade/apprenticeship	Employed part-time	Turkish/English	Beenleigh
	18	Rana	Saudi Arabia	20-29	6	Married	2	0-2	Islam	Bachelor Degree Level	Homemaker	Arabic/English	Brisbane Inner
	19	Amira	UA Emirates	30-39	17	Married	5	0	Islam	Year 12 or less (formal schooling)	Homemaker	Arabic/English	Brisbane Inner - North
	20	Liraz	Israel	40-59	16	Married	2	0-2	Jewish	Bachelor Degree Level	Employed full-time	Hebrew/English	Brisbane Inner - East
Interviewed Women in Pilot Study	21	Iran	30-39	9	Married	2	0-4	N/A	Year 12 or less (formal schooling)	Employed part-time	Persian/English/Turkish	Oxley	
	22	Oman	20-29	5	Married	2	0	Islam	Postgraduate Degree Level	Full-time student	Arabic/English	Indooroopilly	
	23	Turkey	30-39	5	Never Married	0	0	N/A	Postgraduate Degree Level	Full-time student	Turkish/English	Brisbane Inner	
Interviewed Women for Triangulation Analysis	24	Palestine	20-29	24	Never Married	0	0-2	Christian	Bachelor Degree Level	Self-Employed	English	Cleveland	
	25	Iran	40-59	27	Married	8	2	Baha'i	Trade/apprenticeship	Employed part-time	Persian/English	Springwood	
	26	Jordan	30-39	21	Married	4	1	Islam	Year 12 or less (formal schooling)	Homemaker	Arabic(Jordanian)/English	Mt Gravatt	
	27	Kuwait	30-39	7	Married	3	0-3	Islam	Bachelor Degree Level	Homemaker	Arabic/English	Brisbane Inner - North	
	28	Syria	20-29	11	Never Married	0	0	N/A	Trade/apprenticeship	Employed full-time	Arabic/Kurdish/English	Rocklea	

Table 6: Description of the participants

Note: "Number of Elderly" shows the maximum number of participants' and/or participants' spouse's parents who live with them under the same roof for more than 1 month per year .

### 3.3 Methods of Organizing and Analysing Data

#### Data Analysis: coding and categorizing

Patton (2002) describes the analysis phase based on small data units which primarily but not exclusively are collected from interviews; the process is to compare these data constantly through a series of cumulative coding cycles. This methodology as a definition of the Grounded theory, is the basis of Nvivo analysis. NVivo sifts through the possible themes in the analysis phase of a study facilitating development of hypotheses and theories.

In one way, the grounded approach helps to test theories and research hypotheses extracted from literature reviews, and tries to make patterns from data analysis. That is, the grounded approach can produce results with less assumptions and biases by helping to keep the mind of a researcher open to new ideas that might be overlooked when a researcher is preoccupied by a favourite theory or hypothesis. In another way, the grounded approach attempts to understand existing theories that build on experiences of others in similar situations, and can help identify patterns that otherwise might not be obvious. There should be a balance when using the grounded theory in case studies that comes from reviewing appropriate literature to identify themes of interest simultaneously avoiding formal research hypotheses (Creswell 2003, Bogdan and Biklen 2007). For instance, after applying a primary analysis to the in-depth interviews, it became clear that there was a need for some information about participants' partners that could help to understand the participants' situation better. With this intent, some changes were applied to the interview guidelines to ascertain the influence of the participants' partner on the participant when they use public spaces. Fortunately, all participants agreed to have a conversation about their partners with the researcher.

In social research there are three phases for data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Babbie 2014). Preliminary data reduction in this research was a part of a literature review where boundaries needed to be defined for the study as it had a wide, multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary topic. After the data reduction phase was applied, the pilot data analysis was performed in order to select the best criteria to investigate and address all research questions. For data display and drawing conclusions, NVivo was chosen as a powerful and reliable tool accepted by many scholars for analysing qualitative research results (Bazeley and Jackson 2013).

NVivo 10 is software designed to assist in auto coding and categorizing qualitative raw data. Auto coding is a useful asset in qualitative research as a large number of different sources can be used as the data source. However, according to Lewins and Silver (2014), researchers should not be

compelled to find a use for auto coding the research just because this functions is available because auto coding can be unreliable and cause errors in data analysis. Therefore different methods, including Nvivo coding and phenomenological coding (a coding based on phenomenological understanding of the researcher from interviews), were used to ensure that the analysed data was reliable. Furthermore to remain focused the coding process contained repeated reminders to use the research questions, conceptual framework, and objectives of the study. Remaining focused on research goals helps to raise the possibility of revealing codes and concepts that are hidden in transcripts; these concepts could have one or more elements of being a) unexpected b) insightful and c) exciting (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003, Saldaña 2011). The result would produce possible answers to the research questions through analysis involving phenomenology, Nvivo, and ARC-GIS. The results from this study could be categorized into two different types; the understanding of how Middle Eastern migrant women in their everyday lives use and view urban public/private places; and the implications for urban planners and designers for optimum usage of public spaces.

The data analysis in this study was based on qualitative primary and secondary information. The source of primary information were in-depth interviews with Middle Eastern women that incorporated their reflections of a picture series from private and public spaces of Greater Brisbane, Australia, and Middle Eastern and European countries (Appendix D). These pictures were selected to illustrate the focal points of this study (please see Figure 3) as well as a variety of public spaces from all around the world. The main reason for using pictures was to investigate what the most important aspects, albeit environmental, cultural, ethnic, and/or social, were for participants' perceptions of urban spaces.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) and Saldana (2013) suggest coding, categorizing, and interpreting the data while the research is in progress is a reliable method of data collecting. Thus, after each interview all conversations were transcribed, coded, and organized. This preliminary data analysis helped to improve both the questionnaire and the way researcher approached the important parts of the research question during the interviews (Figure 9).

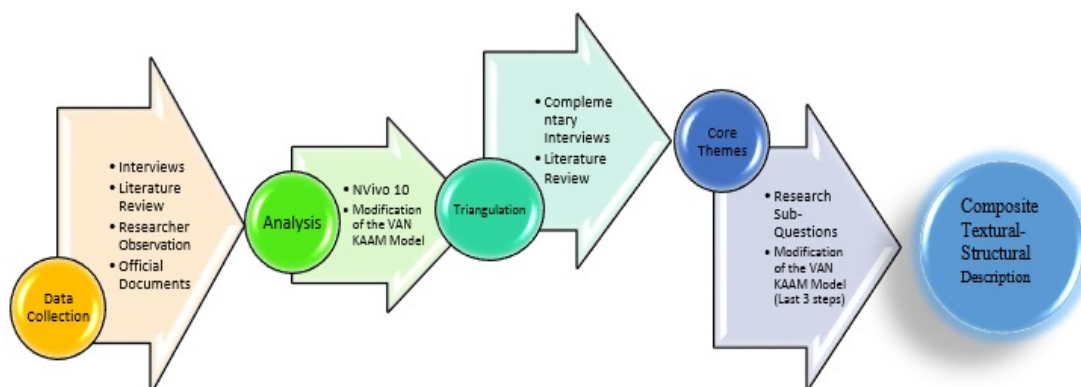


Figure 9: Data collection and analysis process

### **Phenomenological data analysis**

To understand the phenomena through the primary question and sub-questions of this study and to interpret the collected data, the qualitative phenomenological research method and design introduced and modified by Moustakas (1994) was used. The result of the first two phases of the Moustakas method was the transcribed interviews that were analysed through Moustakas' modification of the van Kaam method. In his book the "Phenomenological Research Methods," Moustakas identified two primary methods for analysing phenomenological data (Van Kaam method, and Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method) and introduced a modified version of these methods in order to better fulfil the needs of researchers in all fields of qualitative research.

The modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method highlights the role of the researcher by beginning with researcher's experiences of the phenomenon. In this study, the researcher is a migrant woman from the Middle East, however the need for separating personal understanding of the phenomenon from the academic understanding leads to eliminating this method of analysing phenomenological data. The modifications of the Van Kaam method by Moustakas, reduce the twelve steps (in four stages) to seven steps. Following the seven steps of Moustakas's modified Van Kaam method for each participant, in conjunction with using NVivo software for coding and organising the complete interview transcripts, resulted in an individual and textural-structural description for each participant. Each description was organised and analysed based on four secondary research questions using the last three steps of the Moustakas' modified Van Kaam method "to develop a composite textural-structural description of the lived experiences that embodies the group as a whole" (Moustakas 1994).

#### ***1. Horizontalization***

Horizontalization, the listing and grouping of transcribed data, is a part of phenomenological reduction and aims to capture all aspects or expressions provided in the responses of participants. According to Creswell (2014), the horizons are non-repetitive and non-overlapping units with equal worth. The best result derives from this step when every expression and quote that are relevant to the experiences of the participant are reviewed and listed (Moustakas 1994). With the aid of NVivo software a 'node' was allocated to each meaning units (key word, phrase, and significant statement). All transcripts were analysed separately using the software's nodes.



Some of the key words, phrases, and significant statements were as follows: safe, safety, light, nightlife, privacy, values, comfort, similarities, shopping centres, experience, community, belonging, Hijab, scarf, government, accessibility, transport, and home.

## ***2. Reduction and elimination***

In this phase non-relevant expressions that were overlapping, vague, irrelevant, or repetitive were eliminated. Also, expressions that could not be abstracted or labelled were eliminated. It's possible that eliminated expressions may have been essential to answering research questions, therefore the eliminated expressions were rephrased and presented in more exact descriptive terms that could be both abstracted and labelled. After the reduction and elimination phase, the remaining statements were regrouped into relevant expressions and headlined under new nodes as 'invariant constituents' of the experience.

QSR NVivo 10 software was the tool used in this research for the reduction and elimination process. This software provides a space to visualize defined nodes.

The new nodes that were labelled as invariant constituents were as follows: code of dressing, age differences, manner as relic, nightlife, life style, religion, language, sense of belonging, community bonds, public gym accessories, public transport, architecture, urban design, landscape, open space, children, elderly , fear, gender differences, Government, private space, and public space.

## ***3. Clustering and thematizing***

This step involves grouping the statements by meaning and organizing the horizons under particular clusters. Each pre-grouped statements are analysed closely to determine and label all the core themes of the phenomena. Organizing and achieving a better understanding of the horizons are the main purposes of clustering the invariant constituents. In other words, the final result of the third step is a number of clusters of meaning units that are used for all interviews, however the horizons within each cluster may or may not be different for each participant. After analysing the data from each participant, the data was collectively analysed by the research sub-questions to ensure full convergence and development of themes and concepts. Accordingly, the next sub-step in data analysis is to group the clusters into the overarching themes according to each research sub-question. For each research sub-question, a number of common themes emerged from the categorizing of similar clusters into sets with each of them identified by a general heading.

The clusters of meaning units in this study are as follows: appearance, nightlife, personal beliefs, social bonds, barriers of mixing, wellbeing, accessibility, built environment, open space, family members, fear, gender differences, trust, private space, and public space.

#### ***4. Checking and validating***

By checking themes and invariant constituents against both research questions and each transcript, explicitly and compatibility of core themes was guaranteed in this step. There was an elimination of invariant constituents and themes that were not relevant to the research questions. The following step was to enter each theme into the NVivo software program as a node. Participant's transcripts were reviewed comparatively based on these new nodes. The final result compiled by NVivo software is a coding summary for each research question. These coding summaries in combination with the results from the first three steps identified above are the source of information for the next two steps of data mining in "modification of the VAN KAAM model".

#### ***5. Textural description***

Moustakas (1994) explained that the challenge of the textural descriptions is to determine the textural components of each interview based on the answers to the question of "what" or "what is thought about" a particular experience described by the words of the participants. The textural descriptions refer to the "pre-reflective" stage of inquiry and are the analysis of each individual's experience through the lens of their own words. Each participant's textural descriptions, is supporting the themes that are derived from previous steps and shows their relationships with urban spaces. The textures include, but are not limited to, the emotional and physical descriptions they offer for each experience.

#### ***6. Structural descriptions***

Structural descriptions show the mental process used in thinking and perceiving the experience. It shows "how" the experience is experienced. According to Moustakas (1994) "the structural descriptions are the individual's voiced thoughts and feelings about the phenomenon" (in this study, public and private spaces) and "are concerned with self in relation to the world" (in this study, urban spaces, the migration and adaptation process, and gender differences). The structural descriptions tend to reveal the appearance of the experience and uncover the hidden parts of the experience. In other words, structural description is the interpretation of the descriptive textural data through researcher's lens to understand the possibilities of how an experience occurred. In this stage of data analysis the participants' explanations of the images and maps used during the interviews provide a better understanding and support the interpretation of textural descriptions.

#### ***7. Textural-structural description***

Combining results from the last two steps of the model is a detailed in a report that ultimately outlines the meanings and essences of experiences of urban spaces by each individual based on four secondary questions of the research. Integrating all individual textural-structural descriptions resulted in twelve themes illustrating in words Middle Eastern migrant women's experience of urban spaces of Greater Brisbane.

In the next sub-step, a composite textural-structural description for each secondary research question emerged from the twelve individual textural-structural descriptions of all of the participants. The aim of the composite textural-structural description was integrating all individual textural-structural descriptions into a universal description of their experience in urban spaces of the Greater Brisbane that could answer each secondary question and represent the group as a whole (Moustakas 1994).

### **3.4 Summary**

The main purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of Middle Eastern migrant women going about their everyday lives in public spaces of the Greater Brisbane region and how this understanding can influence urban planning procedures. To capture the essence of their experiences and recognise core themes, this topic is approached from a phenomenological perspective with all resultant interviews analysed through QSR NVivo 10 software. In the analysis phase "modification of the VAN KAAM model" is used to determine the themes from how Middle Eastern women experience urban spaces of the Greater Brisbane region.



# Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

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The analysis phase takes place with the focus of the research in mind (Figure 3). Each in-depth and semi-structured interview was transcribed and analysed using NVivo software according to Moustakas's modified Van Kaam method. The common themes that arose from interviews were re-analysed pursuant to four sub-questions of the research. After analysing and synthesizing the transcribed data, and considering the invariant constituents, twelve themes emerged that show how a migrant woman from the Middle East experiences urban spaces of Greater Brisbane in her daily life. The twelve themes are listed below:

1. Flexible understanding of public and private spaces
2. Personal appearance and religious apparel
3. Sense of belonging
4. Direct and inverse stereotyping
5. Sparse population
6. Retreat to the private sphere
7. Design, natural amenities, and services
8. Perceived and real safety issues
9. Trust and surveillance
10. Lack of nightlife
11. Public participation and the right to the "Western" city
12. Financial exclusion

Note: In the following sections italicised sentences or phrases and words contained within ' are used as descriptions of each theme and were extracted directly from interviews with minimum structural change.

## **Theme 1: Flexible Understanding of Public and Private Spaces**

Participants shared a very broad concept of public space when defined in contrast with private space. To Middle Eastern migrant women, a public space is a place that is not home, where different rules apply, or where there is a particular sense of freedom. According to Middle Eastern migrant women there is a 'private ground' and leaving this ground means entering the public realm. In the public realm 'the place is shared with other people' and 'people are allowed to be trafficking [moving about] at the same time and at the same level.' The right of the public to use a space is the

main characteristic that defines a space as public. This understanding of public space is an interpretation of Lefebvre's Right to the City that 'is a demand... for transformed and renewed access to urban life' (Lefebvre 1996: 158).

*Where I am allowed and everyone else is allowed too. [Shirin, 50s, married with one child, Iranian]*

*When you walk out of your home, when you open the door, step out of your place and close the door, you are not in your private ground. [Nina, 30s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

Although participants were aware that the rules that apply in public spaces are different to the rules that apply in their private domain, some participants defined a public space in relation to both informal and formal rules. This group of participants identified public places with a sense of freedom and defined these spaces as being a place where 'no one can kick you off', or 'where you can just be walking around if you want to.' In this way, these participants made a subtle distinction between truly public spaces and privatized public spaces, such as shopping malls or cafés. To other participants, adherence to their belief that rules of behaviour apply in both 'public' and 'privatized public' spaces (e.g., a civic plaza and a shopping mall) meant that these two types of spaces, regardless of ownership or expectation of consumption, were perceived the same way. For the latter group, a shopping centre is 'a place with many people' and an example of urban vitality or vibrancy where these participants create meaning out of their neighbourhood lives. For most of the participants, a shopping centre is a place to spend the free hours of an ordinary day, especially the warm days of summer.

Only two participants (Rana [20s, married with two children, Saudi Arabian] and Amira [30s, married with five children, UAE]) defined shopping centres as places for occasional gatherings and socialising with friends. These views are in agreement with the critics of literature that present the privatized essence of shopping malls as choreographing a customer's movements to prevent possible gatherings, socialising or lingering by youth and as a preferred single-destination for purchasing activities (Wood and Baker 2014, Tani 2015).

However, it is the private domain that is truly associated with freedom. For most of the participants home is the only place where they are truly comfortable and feel that they can be 'themselves' and express their identity. To most participants, private space differs from public space because it is a place where they can make and follow their own rules as opposed to public places where they need to follow the rules of others. For instance, a participant stated: 'in a restaurant you cannot eat the way you eat at home... you should behave'. There are some exceptions to this statement; for example Safiya [30s, married with four children, Lebanese] considers a

restaurant table she might be temporarily using as a 'private' space because her children should behave according to her rules. This concept is supported by Foddy and Finighan (1980) who refer to heterogeneous residential areas where it is possible for privacy to become less important when there is some familiarity and comfort in an individual's relationship with those in the area and/or when a similar set of standards are accepted and used by people. This distinction is reinforced by different perceptions of the homes of friends. For some, the fact that they have to follow the rules of others means that the home of a friend is a 'public' space. For others however, the level of comfort and closeness is important in perceiving a friend's home as a private space. There is a similar pattern when recognising urban spaces as public or private.

*Public would be anywhere that you think you can't do whatever you want to do. [Ayah, 30s, married with two children, Iraqi]*

*...sometimes it's all I'm talking about - don't do this, don't behave like this you are outside, you are not at home. [Eva, 40s, married with eight children, Lebanese]*

This concept of private space as being a haven of freedom may arise from the different ways Middle Eastern people experience public spaces in their homeland. Historically there isn't an equivalent for the Hellenic Agora or the Roman Forum, spaces associated with a sense of freedom and permanence, in Middle Eastern cities. Public spaces in the Middle East are mostly associated with religious or commercial activities (Mosques, bazaars) restricting a sense of freedom to the private sphere. The extent to which women from a different origin experience privacy in Australia is different from country to country and directly related to the concept of privacy they learned and experienced in their homeland. For some women, privacy is 'not being seen by others' and for others privacy is tangled with the power and the person/group who define the rules. In this respect, and according to two participants (Maya [30s, married with two children, Iranian] and Shirin [50s, married with one child, Iranian]), the differences between government-based rules and personal rules define a line between public and private. For these two women, experiencing different privacy achieving mechanisms is a powerful means for individual expression within the controlled and regulated public sphere (by government who are considered as 'others') which is a rebellious assertion of self against authority. This understanding of privacy could be explained by the effect of environmental condition on privacy achieving mechanism (Foddy and Finighan 1980).

*...in Iran we are banned from using alcohol, drinking alcohol or playing some music or dance or something together [in private spaces]. We all - me and with my friends, we all did this sort of thing which was against law in our private places, our home, our friend's home. So because it was private places and some rules that us, as a*

*specific group of people, applied that rule, I felt those places are also private places.*  
[Maya, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]

*My friend's home definitely is a private place. They have their own rules, yeah but still not the rules from outside, like from the government...* [Shirin, 50s, married with one child, Iranian]

Overall, for Middle Eastern migrant women a private space is where ‘you can have your own rules’ and nothing ‘has been dictated to you from outside.’ Furthermore, it is a place where ‘you feel safe and you feel comfortable’ and ‘just yourself to yourself’ (means “by yourself”). For Muslim women in the study, along with above-mentioned characteristics of private space, solitude (or being free from observation by others) (Westin and Solove 2015) is also an important factor that defines a private space because no one can see you, except your “Mahram” relatives, and you can ‘take off Hijab’ or ‘have a shower.’

*A private space for me is home, just home, nowhere else. I see everywhere as public. The private place is somewhere I'm feeling safe and feeling comfortable.* [Leila, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]

Middle Eastern women have different assumptions regarding privacy which shape their understanding of public and private spaces. For some, privacy is achieved when no one can see them whilst for others, the concept of privacy moves with them through the city. Therefore, for the first group even their own backyard and balcony are not deemed a private space, however for the second group, the inside of their car or the table they are dining at in a restaurant is a private space. Given the differences to what is considered private by different Middle Eastern migrant women, there is still a recognisable pattern in these views of privacy and the labelling of a place as ‘private.’

*...here the house is more for private use, the more bedrooms, more comfortable in your master bedroom, everything is there...but in my culture there's some place for having guests around, family around. Maybe I like a more open space, not outside, inside my house.* [Ayah, 30s, married with two children, Iraqi]

One component of this pattern is the remnant of manner for older generations of migrants, even though they had spent more time in Australia compared to younger generations, the sense of privacy and concept of what is public is more consistent with concepts from the Middle East (Thompson 2003, Krämer 2013). This brings to mind the interwoven concepts of privacy and identity presented by Stone (in: Rose 1998, Heinemann 2003) who states that when a person is situated in a society and has their participation or membership in social relations acknowledged,



they are cast in the social shape of that society. Therefore, their concept of privacy as a remnant of the past could be due to a strong bond with their original community, or to the mechanisms that defined their specific identity when interacting in social relations.

It should also be noted that for more traditional women like Aynour [30s, divorced with three children, Turkish], a young participant who described herself as ‘very classical,’ the concept of privacy and definition of private space was intertwined with the existence of physical mechanisms. For these women privacy can only be achieved if there are physical mechanisms like barriers, walls, and fences to ensure a sense of invisibility or being unidentifiable. This static concept of privacy (with regard to time) is not supported by Foddy and Finighan’s assertion (1980) who argue that “privacy is a dynamic matter that depends upon environmental conditions, opportunities and “intelligence or wit”, and that “as social structures change, the type of identities that individuals need to assume will also change.” But for these women, the change in immediate environment and new design of private spaces with no or a low height hedge is not satisfactory for their privacy achieving mechanism.

Another definition of privacy arose from the responses of two young single participants (Diana [20s, never married-no child, Lebanese] and Rouba [20s, never married-no child, Iraqi]) where the concept of privacy related to ownership and number of people who use the space. For example, Diana stated that if her car was not used by other people she would call it a private space ‘but now it is like a public one.’

The definition of privacy advanced throughout this study and implied that for religiously observant women (both Muslim and Christian), private space should present a level of privacy in which no one is allowed except for them. In this definition, conditions of privacy result in self-disclosure that can lead to personal growth where you ‘can be alone with your own soul’ and ‘be alone with your own self.’ For these women the very first example of private space that come to mind was where they practice their daily prayer. In this regard, for the three Muslim women in the study (Leila, Samar, and Rana [20s, married with two children, Saudi Arabian]), a Mosque is considered a private space.

*...so that place for me is only the Mosque my small prayer room in my home. That’s a private space for me. [Leila, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

*Really this privacy is a part of Islam. Sharing house is not in Islam, so no-one shared houses at that time. They had their tent, they built something, they have his wife in another place so sharing things, I hate it and my [late] husband hates it too. [Samar, 50s, widowed with five children, Lebanese]*

Following on from the definition of privacy, the concept of freedom was also, different for religious women compared to other Middle Eastern women of the study. Freedom is a restricted concept with clear boundaries that are determined by religious instructions. In public or private spaces, there is framework for freedom in everyday life. For religious Middle Eastern migrant women, the behaviour in and attitude toward social and personal aspects of life is specified clearly and cannot deviate at any cost.

*...when I say anything [means] anything that is based on our holy book the Quran...so of course I cannot do[anything I want]... [Rana, 20s, married with two children, Saudi Arabian]*

*...when I say I can do everything, it's wrong actually. I cannot say everything, [but,] everything that is based on my guidance which is the Quran. [Leila, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

Solitude, anonymity, invisibility or being unidentifiable, freedom from surveillance, and experiencing safety are the means by which Middle Eastern women describe their sense of privacy in everyday life. Fluctuations that may occur in the status of their privacy could result in changes to the physical expression of private spaces. In this regard, one place could have a different meaning in different social settings:

*...in Malaysia even the place you live in, it's not really private for you, because every time your agent can come in without letting you know... Then in Australia I feel like this place is private to me, and no-one can come in. [Elif, 20s, married with one child, Turkish]*

There is an exception to this common trend. One of the participants, Israa [40s, married with three children, Iraqi], connects private space to the notion of safety and defines a private space as where she feels safe, even if the space is as open and public as a park.

*In parks I don't feel any distract. Yeah I can say that if I'm going to do reading in a park, I don't feel like I have to have a look to my surrounding every 30 minutes - 30 seconds to feel like I'm safe. So it's private for me. [Israa, 40s, married with 3 children, Iraqi]*

Limited or protected communication was also mentioned by most of the participants when talking about the cultural differences between their homeland and the Greater Brisbane region. Specifically they referred to the non-judgmental or incurious Australian society, and for most participants this characteristic of the Australian society was the most significant change that occurred in their lives after immigrating. The non-judgemental or incurious nature of Australian

society enables migrants to perform productively in their new homeland through a variety of possibilities that most of these women were not exposed to in their Middle Eastern societies due to patriarchal power over their societies. In this new society, Middle Eastern migrant women are free to define interpersonal boundaries, that would have previously limited their communication, and share personal information with trusted others without feeling exposed.

*The good things is people don't too much make attention to each other. People feeling okay this is my business and not your business and that's your business not my business doesn't - you feel free sometimes of judgment of people. [Shirin, 50s, married with 1 child, Iranian]*

*...when I was like in public transport systems in Turkey, I felt like everybody is talking. They want to talk to you. They stare at you. They want to be involved with you at some point. But here you rarely find people who ask for something or who stare at you...It could be good and bad. I'm not saying that whatever that is in here is so good. It's definitely not. As people don't care about each other so much. But in respect of privacy it's good. [Melek, 40s, married with four children, Turkish]*

An example that illustrates the importance of solitude (Westin 1970) in the concept of privacy for Middle Eastern women is their attitude towards backyards, gardens and balconies. For most Australian citizens these spaces are private, especially in Queensland where a considerable part of an ordinary day is spent in these places. However, some participants in this study do not consider their backyards, gardens or balconies as a private space in the sense that 'people/others can watch them through fences.' For these Middle Eastern women 'if there is no solid wall which could cover [them] from outsiders then there is no privacy and it is not a private [space].' To these participants, their backyard, garden or balcony is not a public place, however the visibility of this semi-private spaces allows visual encounters leading some participants to feel that their backyard, garden or balcony is not as 'safe' as their home that has 'solid walls' and 'curtains to covering the windows if needed.'

*It's not private for me, because when I go to backyard I have to - it's - that's - it's my belonging, it's my property, but saying it's a private space for me? No could not be, I need the walls around my private space, walls. [Fareeda, 40s, married with 3 children, Iranian]*

*...backyard or balcony for example. I would say seventy per cent is mine, thirty percent is not. [Ayah, 30s, married with 2 children, Iraqi]*

In spite of the strong tendency to exclude backyards, gardens and balconies from the definition of private spaces, two participants refer to the balcony of their home as a private space. These

participants state that there was a shift in their concept of privacy after migrating to Australia due to the non-judgmental or incurious nature of the Australian society.

*For me a private one is when I can take off my Hijab and I can have a shower... here in Australia, even in my backyard I don't have to wear Hijab. It's a private. [Nina, 30s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

*The balcony of your apartment is meant to be your private place but you can't just go on your balcony and hang your laundry when you're in your shorts in Iran. Here in Australia, you can do that because it's your private place and nobody is meant to be watching you. [Sarah, 20s, divorced with one child, Iranian]*

One of the presuppositions of this study was the transformation of the conceptual meanings of public and the private over time and of the physical expression of these two concepts along with their relationship. Both public and private refer to a certain individual or a number of people. Hence, definition of these two concepts varies based on the definition of their boundaries that could be physical, social, or symbolic. It is of the utmost importance that the concept of public and private play complementary roles in urban studies and that the function of these two concepts be considered and dealt with in combination (Apostol 2007, Kern 2007). This premise is supported by the dynamic concepts of public and private space perceived by the participants in this study.

*I actually rather to go to a friend's place rather than go to a pub or something. [Haleh, 20s, never married-no child, Iranian]*

*When I got to library, where I'm sitting in library is pretty much private for me. [Diana, 20s, never married-no child, Lebanese]*

Some participants feel the dichotomy between 'alien' and 'comforting' space is more important than the dichotomy between 'public' and 'private' space that is emphasized by Western commentators. To them, true comfort and belonging can only be achieved in their home country albeit in private or public spaces. For example, Elif [20s, married with one child, Turkish] offers:

*...when I lived in Turkey I didn't really care which space was public and which one was private. Shopping centres weren't really public or private to me. I didn't mind this distinction ... I used to go working there and that made it 'my' space. ... Then, when I moved to Malaysia, everything changed, maybe because it wasn't my home country. It was someone else's country. So sometimes I didn't even feel home at home... It was like 'this is where you live, but still it's not your home.'*

## Theme 2: Personal Appearance and Religious Apparel

This theme is about the relationship participants have with their appearance and the way they present their cultural values through their appearance. Subsequently, this theme is mostly about the role personal beliefs play in everyday life of participants that could be the remnant of manner (as social convention, legal stricture, or phallic authority (authority dictated from male members of family e.g. father, brother, husband)) from their homeland or emanates from the cultural differences experienced their homeland and the Australian culture.

However it is important to note that this study is not focused on the religious apparel of women, but it is an important issue in the everyday lives of Middle Eastern women both from the viewpoint of those who have a dress code (e.g. modest dressing) and those who change their personal appearance after migration to Australia (e.g. Iranian women who remove their Hijab when they are out of Iranian borders). As discussed before, there is an obligation in Islam for women to cover their body and hair when there is a possibility of a visual contact with men who are not “*Mahram.*” Accordingly, the meaning of public and private spaces for these women has a close interaction with their personal beliefs and wearing the Hijab. Five of the 20 participants in this study wear a Hijab (and cover their hair and parts of their bodies in various styles according to professed Islamic codes of modest dress) in their everyday life:

- Leila, 30s, *married with two children, Iranian;*
- Nina, 30s, *married with three children, Iraqi;*
- Samar, 50s, *widowed with five children, Lebanese;*
- Rana, 20s, *married with two children, Saudi Arabian;*
- Amira, 30s, *married with five children, UAE;*

And one participant wears a Hijab occasionally (Elif, 20s, *married with 1 child, Turkish*). According to these women, the main reason for wearing a Hijab is due to religion as all of these women practise Islam and have strong personal beliefs regarding their religion. Other reasons for wearing a Hijab were for covering specific parts of the body as a matter of personal choice and to establish a strong and reliable bond with, and relate themselves to, their ethnic and/or religious communities. For the first group, wearing a Hijab illustrates their behaviour in different situations based on the impulses they perceive from the milieu. It means a Hijab is not just about wearing a scarf or burqa but something more comprehensive. Wearing a Hijab is how these women personalize themselves in society, define their identity, and position themselves in a Western secular society. Hijab is ‘the flag of Islam’ and is their ‘way of *Jihad* against those want to weaken Islam.’ Amira (*[30s, married with 5 children, UAE]*) also added another aspect to why some women wear a Hijab by indicating that she feels safe when she wears a Hijab according to code of modest dressing.

*I'm with the Hijab and long sleeves and long pants, I feel comfortable and very very safe, and people are very friendly.*

The reasons for wearing a Hijab offered by participants are aligned with the findings of Westfall et al. (2016) who argue that “multiple dimensions of religiosity simultaneously influence the choice to wear the headcovering” in which “religious lifestyle, religious abstinence, and Muslim socialization” respectively play the most significant role in a the choice of a Muslim woman to adhere to the Islamic code of dressing. In Amira’s case, her main reason for wearing a Hijab is a religious followed by a feeling of safety that is attributed by many scholars (Koskela 1999, Whitzman 2013, Listerborn 2016) as being one the most important factors influencing the use of public spaces by women.

Ali (2005) also states there is a tendency among research participants to “collectively define for themselves what it means to be a Muslim.” An example of this is the experience of Leila [30s, married with two children, Iranian] and Nina [30s, married with three children, Iraqi] who choose between being a Sunni or a Shia, despite the fact that in Middle Eastern societies it is common to inherit religion from parents and forbidden to change it (there may be a death penalty by stoning for those who change their religion from Islam to any other religions even those which are accepted in state law). This freedom to choose between different religions enables them to choose their code of dress and how they appear in public. In other words, they themselves define their identity as a Muslim and this behaviour is not a remnant of their homeland. In Australia they are comfortable and proud being a Muslim woman.

*I'm Sunni. I used to be Shia, but when I study, because I studied in university here about Islam and then I changed my, you know, path. [Leila, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

*When I was old enough my father told me to choose I want to be Shia or Sunni. You see? Because my mother is Shia and my father is Sunni. I have the choice. [Nina, 30s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

In this study it was also observed that the definition of being Muslim and commitment to wearing a Hijab is interchangeable. It is possible that when a Muslim woman feels safe and unharmed in an environment, and when there is not a possibility of being observed by others, she can change the ‘complete Hijab’ rules and wear something that she feels more comfortable in and free.

*No, look sometimes - when my husband is driving I feel I am totally relaxed. I don't have to think about anything so all the time I take off my Hijab in the car because it's our car and no-one could see me. [Nina, 30s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

The second point of view highlights the cultural aspects for wearing a Hijab. In this case a Hijab is more likely to be a cultural remnant rather than a personal choice or belief or habit. Some Middle Eastern migrant women wear a Hijab because the community or their family expect them to do so. It is not a matter of choice or belief but an obligation out of respect that arises from legal strictures (like in Iran and Saudi Arabia), social conventions (like some parts of Turkey), or from a phallic authority (found throughout all of the Middle East). Therefore, there could be a dual attitude for wearing a Hijab in both public and private places. That is, a Hijab is worn only when there is possibility of interaction with members of their family or community and if these interactions are unlikely, they choose not to wear a Hijab. This point of view aligns with Secor (2002) who discusses the dichotomy of wearing a Hijab in Turkey. According to Secor, a Hijab is either a personal affair that could be prescribed by the private sphere or is part of urbanization processes that are derived from opportunities for literacy and religious instruction. In other words, for the first group wearing a Hijab could be the result of cultural or social conventions and is not an accurate representation of 'true' Islam.

*People talk if you don't have Hijab. They say you are not a "good girl". I sometimes wear headscarf for the sake of Dad. But in public, no, not much. [Elif, 20s, married with one child, Turkish]*

*I have one of my colleagues - she's Muslim, but she doesn't wear Hijab at work, but she said she does when she goes to a friend's place or relatives. [Rouba, 20s, never married-no child, Iraqi]*

One of the Iranian participants (Fareeda) states that the reason she left Iran and chose to live in Australia was the obligation in Iran for women to wear Hijab and change their appearance.

*Actually I didn't like the situation of Iran, I hated to wear Hijab but they said that we have to wear Hijab. I said, as soon as I heard that, because I came back that time from England, and I said I have to get married to someone that take me away from this country. I don't like my country anymore, and I hated Hijab, because they forced the women to wear Hijab. I was lucky I had a man that could bring me out of Iran, we got married and we left the country. [Fareeda, 40s, married with three children, Iranian]*

Fareeda's story has another important aspect in that she chose marriage as a means to live 'abroad' in order to overcome the impossibility of living by herself in a country other than Iran or England (where she would be under the vigilance of her brother). This pattern is repeated by many Iranian women, even today, to escape a social convention with an unwavering phallic authority where a young or divorced woman cannot live alone and should be under the protection of a female, or preferably a male (brother, uncle, or husband), when she is not under the direct vigilance of her parents. Although this social tendency has diminished in the last decade, it is still a dominant perception among Iranian families and is promulgated by all means of official media. All participants in this study, except four (Haleh, Maya, Liraz, and Rouba), stated that it is 'safer,' 'much better,' 'more appropriate,' or 'right' for young girls to live under the care of their parents until they get married.

Based on observations made during interviews and in follow-up meetings, there was a distinctive obsession in the attitudes of these women regarding their Hijab. These women are extremely sensitive about how people act when they visit them for the first time when wearing the Hijab, and they tend to shape their relationships based on the impact they receive from 'non-believers' towards their Hijab. There could be two reasons for this behaviour. The first reason could be due to bombardment by media causing these women to recognise a new dimension for the concept of Hijab, apart from the religious and personal aspects, as a means of resistance against dominant propaganda opposing Islam and the headscarf. In this case wearing a Hijab is a political act by which they announce and demand the legitimacy of their personal beliefs making the Hijab a sign of, and confidence in, their Islamic or Muslim identities. Most of the *Mohajjabat* participants believe they 'feel no difference with other people when they first came to Australia,' however this secure feeling changes after a while when the impact of negative media and people is felt that associates them with a disliked stereotype. In response to this, these women often 'have the feeling that the first look would be at the piece of fabric on their head.'

*...but it's the normal look so if you have only this part of your covering or if you only have normal clothes you are not exposing yourself in this sexy way. [Nina, 30s, married with 3 children, Iraqi]*

*If I say that you wouldn't believe, since I've been wearing Hijab, 15 years ago it was yeah, I've never, ever had a bad experience. You wouldn't believe, I just say maybe, maybe because I'm wearing this, just for the sake of Allah, because this is the command of Allah. [Leila, 30s, married with 2 children, Iranian]*



The second reason is both psychological and cultural as there is tendency for the people of Asia, and accordingly Middle Eastern people, to seek the approval of the public in their everyday communications (Fiske 1998, Bushra, Khadivi et al. 2007). In Asian culture, and unlike Western culture where self-esteem is encouraged from the very first years of childhood, praising and complimenting are limited encouraging critical appraisal of self and self-discipline. As a consequence there is a tendency to acknowledge the judgments and approval of others in these cultures (Fiske 1998). So it is possible that these women despite their confidence in choosing and practicing the Hijab have an unconscious desire to receive the appreciation of their acquaintances.

### **Theme 3: Sense of Belonging**

The findings from this study highlight the role public places play in building a sense of belonging for Middle Eastern migrant women as a population that can contribute to the feeling of insecurity and not belonging in their country of residence. One of the objectives of this study was to identify and understand the possible practices and strategies participants employ in order to inhabit a new and unfamiliar space and make it “their own” space.

The places most commonly reported by participants as “their” spaces were public spaces within the neighbourhood, likes parks, shopping centers, and common areas, that they considered central to the maintenance of their social relationships. A sense of belonging enables urban dwellers to participate fully in the everyday life of the city and encourages them to speak up about their needs and make a medium for their voices to be heard. This occurs when urban spaces meet the everyday needs of all urban dwellers. The accessibility and availability of public spaces, as well as their natural beauty, contribute to the sense of belonging participants feel with public places. The accounts provided by participants do not differ from the ways public spaces are used and understood by Middle Eastern migrants and other residents of Greater Brisbane according to the vision and strategies in the SEQ Regional Plan 2009-2031 (2009), Brisbane Vision 2031 (2013), and Planning Act 2016 (2016) documents.

According to Miller (2003), the cornerstones of belonging could be categorized by three aspects: history, people, and place. History does not merely belong to the past but moves and lives through people and places by being constantly reproduced through the memories of people involving the material objects of places. This statement is supported by the experience of Middle Eastern women in this study who reported that their sense of belonging was achieved by finding familiar spaces in their new habitat. Furthermore, this reproduction of history contributing to a sense of belonging aligns with Bennett (2014) who argues that development of long-term

relationships with the places people inhabit results in an embodied understanding of their obligations to their past and future. As an example, this is the reason that Brisbane River is the source of comfort for those participants who have a similar or even vastly different river or creek in their hometown.

*Yeah I'm from a city that have a river. Sometimes it [Brisbane River] remind me from my city... [Israa, 40s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

As “an affective bond that connects people to places” (Lewicka 2013), *Place Attachment* could provide insight into “why and to what extent an individual identifies with and/or values a particular environmental setting” (Altman and Low 1992, Kyle, Mowen et al. 2004). There is substantial knowledge about the predictors of place attachment (e.g. residence duration, home ownership, family roots, and so on), although the process of forming emotional bonds with places requires further investigation. Lewicka (2014) states that declarative semantic memory (long-term factual stored information) could be an enabler in the process of an affective bond for a newcomer in a place. The interests in place history and in family roots are two measures used by Lewicka (2014) to investigate the possible role of memory in place attachment process.

For Middle Eastern women in this study, there was a similar pattern for developing an affective bond with their new environment after migration. All of the women in the study were more interested in their family roots (even if it has nothing to do with the history of their host country, but to them it was a way to belong and have some levels of personal integrity) after migration. They also try to transfer what they have inherited from their family to their children, or in some cases to their circle of Australian friends and acquaintances. This inheritance could include their native language, stories of the past (especially stories of the glorious era of their region) antiques from their region, and/or their cuisine. In this manner they reproduce history (as one of the three cornerstones of belonging) within the new setting they encounter.

*When we are in public places with other people who are not speaking Farsi, yes we do, but other than that, most of the time it's all Farsi... [Shirin, 50s, married with one child, Iranian]*

*I love to cook for my Australian colleagues. They like to know our foods and our way of living. [Eva, 40s, married with eight children, Lebanese]*

*It is important to know about the history of the suburb you want to buy house in it... You know people more in this way... [Fareeda, 40s, married with three children, Iranian]*

The notion of 'place-ballet,' (regularity of place founded in habit, routine, and supportive physical environment) which was introduced by David Seamon (1980), is evident in the everyday lives of three women in this study more than any others. For Samar [50s, widowed with 5 children, Lebanese] and Fareeda [40s, married with 3 children, Iranian] who have lived in Australia for more than 30 and 20 years respectively, and for one participant who categorized herself as a classic person Aynour [30s, divorced with three children, Turkish], building a relationship with urban settings has a meaningful connection with their ability to resume a daily routine. They tend to define automatic, ritual-like routines that are allocated and performed in specific places on a daily or weekly basis. This tendency was detected in almost all of the participants' daily routines representing a need for anchorage in a specific place. However, in the everyday life of these three women it plays a more vivid role. For the two older participants, the bond between them and their specific places is more unconscious and occurred over time. For Aynour, it is more a deliberate and conscious process as she has created a daily routine for herself to help her feel that she belongs and is attached to the neighbourhood.

Conversely for Elif [20s, married with one child, Turkish] and Haleh [20s, never married-no child, Iranian] who had two stages of migration (Elif, from Turkey to Malaysia and then to Australia; Haleh, from Iran to Kuwait then to Australia), attachment occurred more inside their residential place rather than in their neighbourhood or other urban places. They moved about Australia to seek better chances for life and were the only participants who prefer to live in cities other than Brisbane (preferably Melbourne) whenever they could find a good job there.

In between these two extremes is the third group of participants (with the majority number of fifteen) whose tendency to produce, reproduce and expand their sense of belonging is related to strong place attachment they developed after their migration. These women actively try to create history through living an everyday life in particular places. Of the preferred places of interest is 'Southbank'. Some of the women had to participate in English classes provided in Southbank making this area their first place of interaction with the society in their new homeland. Some other women had spent quality time in Southbank during River festivals, Christmas time, and fireworks. For all groups being in Southbank was 'full of good feelings' as they 'love Southbank' and during the interviews they happened to 'remember' many happy moments. In other words, Southbank represents a kind of history in their life and is closely associated with their sense of attachment, especially to places.

*My kids used the pool inside Southbank but I just put my feet in. We were sitting - on Christmas time, yeah I remember they have the screen - big screen and they have*

*some films. You can just sit on the sand and you just watch the film. it was amazing... [Nina, 30s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

This observed spectrum of attachment is to some extent aligned with Lewicka's typology in which traditional attachment (everyday rootedness/place inherited) and active attachment (ideological rootedness /place discovered) are examined with respect to procedural memory (long-term memory that is responsible for knowing how to do things) and declarative semantic memory (Manzo and Devine-Wright 2014). Nevertheless, there are inconsistencies between the findings from this study and Lewicka's study. Lewicka (2011) states that "The traditionally attached people were less educated and older, their social relations were mostly restricted to the closest social circles, they were generally less active and held more conservative values than did the actively attached participants" (p. 701). This is in contrast to the attributes of the young participant in this study who consciously chose a strict daily routine for herself. This participant is educated, young and relatively active, but she prefers her close circle of friends, has moderate social connections, and tends to hold conservative values. It could indicate that being more religious or conservative is a stronger predictor of traditional attachment than being older or less educated.

For the majority of participants establishing some kind of bond within their original ethnic communities and/or new communities, introduced to them through their interaction with professional and cultural groups, produces a strong sense of belonging. For these women doing volunteering jobs and engaging in religious social activities are a means to develop a stronger sense of belonging to society and urban places. As many of the women stated, the multicultural concept of Australian cities is one of the most important and notable aspects that can help them adapt to their new homeland.

*...I'm working with the diverse people with the different cultural communities because of my work...for example, just last month I was in 10 year anniversary for Eritrean women Mu'Ooz Restaurant. That was big ceremony. Different, with African, Eastern African women and men that was family. [Liraz, 40s, married with two children, Israeli]*

For most of the participants, having one or more reliable circles of friends who share similar language, beliefs and understanding is of utmost importance in the early stages of their migration. Therefore, they tend to explore more within their ethnic communities rather than Australian or other communities. This tendency changes after they find some roots in their new society and have established their group of peers. For most of the participants, the next stage is to engage more with

Australian communities and form new bonds with communities (other than their ethnic community) and they mostly achieve this by participating in voluntary activities.

In this phase they tend to distance themselves from their ethnic community (but not from their circle of friends) and create, find, or establish new sources of attachment to different communities. Some examples from the participants in this study were introducing or participating in film clubs and home movie nights, joining golf clubs or a local club such as Lions Clubs, and participating in or organising some events like barbeques for local community (especially by those who live in residential complexes). Most of the participants believe that despite the advantages of having a resourceful network within their ethnic community, it is essential to establish roots within Australian communities in order to achieve a sense of belonging. For these women, those moments of connection are important and in some cases a source of confidence.

*There was a time, few months after I arrived in Brisbane, I was a member of a choir and I - we used to rehearse every week and we used to have concerts in public. We rehearsed at the church in the city. It was a nice experience. Gave me confidence when I need it most. Now I'm a member of a professional choir, smaller but more professional. We will have a free concert next week in Indooroopilly shopping centre. [Aynour, 30s, divorced with three children, Turkish]*

The accounts provided by participants suggest that cultural festivals are among the activities that provide a strong bond with the multicultural aspects of their life and encourage their sense of belonging by creating a 'feeling of harmony.' Parties, dancing, music, and food sharing are important features of community life in the Middle East (El Hamamsy and Soliman 2013), and cultural festivals are the best way to find all of these features in one place. All of the participants had a special memory of participating in at least one cultural event and their experiences covered a considerable range of activities including the 'Ramadan Eid festival' and its 'colourful environment' and 'amazing food,' and the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) festivals in Brisbane and Sydney and how they 'feel alive and happy' by participating in these festivals. Also, as participants specified, the multicultural and cultural festivals are as educational as they are enjoyable. Multicultural festivals provide the opportunity to interact with other groups of the migrants and expand their social networks that they believe to be the main component of a successful society. All participants confirmed that cultural, and especially multicultural events, enabled them to establish a thriving sense of belonging both to urban places and the Australian society.

*I talked a lot with different people. It was interesting, always some interesting thing to hear and I learned different things from them, and they do different activities,*

*which is interesting. Lots of lots of food. Lots of colours. Lots of people. It was a colourful environment. I love it. [Eva, 40s, married with eight children, Lebanese]*

Some women associated their “memorable experience of a public space” with their experience of festivals and the possible multicultural dimensions these festivals offer. The opportunity to ‘experience other cultures’ and ‘learn something new,’ as well as ‘the vibe’ in these events, help the participants to feel at home. For the majority of participants being among people of other cultures was a way of establishing self-confidence and as a result, created more feelings of belonging. Experiencing different cultures and living in a multicultural country was mentioned by all participants as an incentive to augment their sense of belonging and help them feel more comfortable living among not just Australian, but people from all around the world. When comparing Melbourne and Sydney with Brisbane, eight women allocated more weight to those cities for the sole reason that these cities are ‘more multicultural’ and mentioned that they ‘feel more comfortable and belong’ when they are in those cities.

*I remember we were in Sydney and we went to Mardi Gras carnival and I loved it, it was so much fun. It's the gay and lesbian festival. We were on the streets till 3 or 4 in the morning, and people were dancing and having fun in the city. I felt alive and happy all the time. We were walking on the bottles of - beer bottles...It was so much fun. The policemen were everywhere though because of so many drunk people... [Maya, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

*Like I think two years ago I went to a multicultural festival and there was an African space and people that were teaching you how to make a basket. I sat with them and I started to make a basket, a little basket for myself. It was interesting. [Melek, 40s, married with four children, Turkish]*

For example, for some of the Iranian participants who engaged in the running of ethnic events (e.g. Nowruz and Mehregan festival) as volunteers, their involvement was even more vibrant and real than the event itself. This experience helped them to feel attached to their new society of people who ‘even don't really know when [Iranian] New Year festival is, but they participate and enjoy’ the vibrant social and cultural climate as much as Iranian people. The same experience was described by participants who were involved in other cultural festivals. The connection they had made as volunteers in an event enhanced their sense of belonging to the Australian community.

*I was involved in Nowruz, like the Persian New Year's party which was being held in Queen Street every year... we have very good experience doing it. We just love it... being in the environment, doing things, preparing things, getting involved with everything; with timing, expenses - everything - arranging things...*

*They [Australians] even don't really know when it is, but when they walk around and they see all this, they are like so surprised seeing all these happy people. They're dancing everywhere. They're singing. They're kind of drunk sometimes. I think they [Australians] like it, yeah. [Fareeda, 40s, married with three children, Iranian]*

#### **Theme 4: Direct and Inverse Stereotyping**

An analysis of the interviews reveals stereotypical views from the participants towards others (outgroups), and from other nationalities towards Middle Eastern women, when using public spaces. The stereotypes that frequently appear in the interviews are mostly about the appearance of women (especially when wearing the Hijab) or men, asylum seekers, African people, and being Middle Eastern. One of the barriers to using public spaces identified by some participants is due to stereotypes Australians have towards Middle Eastern people. Most of the participants had experienced judgmental attitudes based on their race or witnessed judgmental behaviour intended for ethnic minorities. In all interviews terms 'Australians/Aussie/native/local' were referred to those who were born and raised in Australia and terms 'migrants/other' were referred to those who had migrated to Australia (legally or illegally); the latter group could be granted the citizenship of Australia but as they are not born and raised in Australia they are not considered as Australians.

Stereotype can be defined as "a cognitive structure that contains a perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, and expectancies about a human group" (Macrae, Stangor et al. 1996). The stories from the women in this study about unpleasant behaviour towards women who wear the Hijab are countless with each woman telling stories about herself or a friend who was mistreated, especially during periods of terrorist attacks or other incidents in Australia or other countries. This concept is aligned with the attributes of the four quadrants cluster model presented by Fiske et al. (2007) that defines perception of these groups as competent and cold. In the USA these groups are known as the envied groups and include Asians, Jews, female professionals, minority professionals, and rich people. "Envied groups elicit envy and jealousy more than other groups" and as a result, behavioural consequences towards this clusters is passive association and active harm which means that during periods of societal breakdown (periods of 'moral panic'(Cohen 2002)), these people might experience attacks and looting from ingroups (here non-Middle Eastern, especially Australian people).

*...someone shouted against me, why are you wearing this, after the accident here in Sydney, and it's happened to me two times. [Nina, 30s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

Another example of stereotypical views is the notion that “all Middle Eastern are Arabs.” All Iranian participants mentioned the ironic notion of ‘are you speaking Arabic?’ when encountering Australian people. Ironic, as it is a common belief in Iran that ‘Iranians had a significant history prior to “invasion of Islam” and Islam, and more importantly Arabs, are the source and reason for all the problems that face Iran and Iranian people.’ This statement is an obvious example of a stereotype. Consequently, for all Iranian women in the study, the very first conversation with Australian people was an ‘unpleasant’ and ‘frustrating’ one. They were automatically categorized as Arabs and had to respond by defining their nationality and ethnic language to prove they are ‘not Arabs,’ ‘have no camels in streets,’ and they ‘cannot or do not speak Arabic.’ For these Iranian women, this stereotyped experience implanted a new stereotype in them when considering Australian people as ‘lacking the basic knowledge of the world.’

Other stereotypical views were also expressed by other women in the study when they compare Australian and European people and categorize Europeans as ‘aware’ and ‘eager to know,’ in contrast with Australians who ‘pay no attention what is happening all around the world,’ are ‘shallow,’ and have a ‘carefree lifestyle.’ This perception of Australian people is repeatedly mentioned by all participants during the interviews both in positive and negative ways. As advocates, some of the participants argue that it is an advantage to not being involved with news of the world every day and ‘it’s good to have a simple, carefree life full of green environment, camping and barbecues.’ According to these women this lifestyle is ‘because of the Australians’ tension-free life’ and a result of ‘not experiencing frightening disasters like war.’ This first group tend to experience and explore their new lifestyle more, and as a result this behaviour becomes a strong enabler for mixing with Australian communities and/or using open public spaces. On the contrary, some other participants refer to this assumed perception as the cause of their ‘considerable distance from the Australian society’ when it comes to deeper communication and exchange of knowledge. For the second group this assumption is considered the barrier to mixing with people in their new society.

*Sometimes I think I love to interact with people with a little bit deeper thinking about the things around them... Maybe it's about Australia, the whole Australian culture. Maybe because they don't have a big history or they are far from other countries. I think comparing to other countries maybe they are not - in some respects they are not as deep as other cultures. So sometimes I find it hard to talk about some things that are important for me, some issues that I have. [Aynour, 30s, divorced with three children, Turkish]*

*In general talks I have no problem talking about just everyday things that happen. I can talk with them. But when it comes to some specific area sometimes I find it hard to communicate. [Liraz, 40s, married with two children, Israeli]*



This propensity for judgmental thinking is not just directed at Australian people. Most of the women, including Nina and Leila who wear a Hijab, are non-supportive of women who wear a Burka. For example, Leila believes that ‘it is not what Islam ask women to practice’ and states that ‘its harm to Islam’ is immense and immutable.

*It is not good to see these people in street. Because you can't communicate well with those people. How can you communicate with someone not looking at their face, when they cover their eyes? [Nina, 30s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

The possibility of harm, initiated by an experience, media propoganda and/or the fear of others (Sandercock and Kliger 1998), is stated by Fiske and colleagues (2007) in their comprehensive model of social perception (known as the Stereotype Content Model or SCM), plays the main role in shaping this stereotype. The SCM is based on “warmth and competence as universal dimensions of social judgment across stimuli, cultures and time.” The consistency of warmth and competence are reflected by answering two basic survival questions: “first, and crucially, does the other person or group intend to harm or help me (or us)? Secondly, does the other have the ability to enact those intentions?” (Fiske, Cuddy et al. 2007 p. 82). In response, lay people “ask the same warmth and competence questions of societal ingroups and outgroup as they do of individuals, which create predictable stereotypes, emotional prejudices and discriminatory tendencies.” Analysing the interviews shows that answers to the first question are pre-determined through media and/or racist perceptions. The concern of these women is safety in two different aspects: their safety when there is a possibility of a terrorist attack (which is mostly the result of propoganda and the war of terror); and their physical safety in case that the person behind the veil could be a man and may harm them.

*...when someone like that is walking in the street with that sort of thing and she's telling me, I don't want to communicate with you. Don't be close to me. You're dangerous. You guys are dangerous. And to be honest it is scary for me too. Anyone could be under that cover. Even a guy. And imagine being with such a person in public toilets. This is real. It happened to one of my friends back home. [Samar, 50s, widowed with five children, Lebanese]*

The important issue in this propensity is its paradoxical context illustrated by women who are advocates of the freedom of the Hijab, but have immediate and in some cases extreme reactions, to wearing a Burka. For example, Maya [30s, married with two children, Iranian] states that she always call for her children when ‘this kind of women’ are around. This propensity for avoidance is explained by Fiske et al. (2007) as low warmth–low competence outgroups (e.g. homeless people) who receive both kind of harm, active attack and passive neglect, from ingroups.

*When I see some people that are more natural and normal, if they've covered their hair I feel okay. I feel respectful. I think, okay, that's their belief. It's not that bad, but covering whole of your body with Burka is not good. It is like they are a - don't know, like they are a piece of fabric. [Liraz, 40s, married with two children, Israeli]*

In addition, data analysis shows that this paradoxical approach can develop into self-censorship attitudes among some of the participants. For example, Haleh [20s, never married-no child, Iranian] states that she missed the feeling of 'wearing headscarf in a fashionable way' but she 'would never dare to try it here in Australia because it's not common' and has concerns about the reaction of other people to her Hijab. The fear of being different, both within her community and the Australian community, is evident in most of her responses. Unlike other Iranian women who insist on not wearing Hijab even in a fashionable way, Haleh has no problem with her own appearance (her Self) but is concerned about her position in society and the perception of others regarding her appearance (her Identity) (Rose 1998, Heinemann 2003). She did not want to expose herself to religious racism so she opted to avoid the Hijab altogether, even when she greatly missed it.

*But sometimes I miss it... because I think it's a fashion...But I don't like it in here [Australia] because I think here it's not common... [Haleh, 20s, never married-no child, Iranian]*

As mentioned before, the tendency among people of Asia to seek the approval of others has dual impact on women's views towards the Hijab. For women who wear a Hijab this tendency could personify as a sensitive reaction to other people's opinion regarding their Hijab, and for some other women like Haleh, could personify as a complete denial of religious bonds and not wearing a Hijab under any circumstance. For the latter group of participants who identify themselves as secular or are Muslim, but have chosen not to wear a Hijab or practice Islam, the 'natural' propensity is to act and dress like other members of the society. For these women, wearing a Hijab means being different and marginalised. This group of women may be predisposed to stereotyping (consciously or unconsciously) the non-Middle Eastern population of Australia. In their minds, wearing a Hijab means other members of the society would judge and label them as Muslim and consequently as a Terrorist and a possible threat.

*For example the office that I'm working in I have never seen ladies with Hijab, and I don't know, for example, if one day I wear a Hijab and go to the office what would-the reaction of everybody? it's a bit difficult to say. [Aynour, 30s, divorced with three children, Turkish]*

*I don't want to get isolated, because the way they look at you is so much different. [Elif, 20s, married with one child, Turkish]*

*I remember the day after this incident [Sydney siege], I went shopping and I could see the women who were wearing the scarves and I was thinking, poor things, are they going to be treated less nicely today? I was thinking about that on the same day, but I didn't notice anything myself, because I don't look like a Muslim. [Maya, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

The fear of being different could be behind the views of some non-Muslim women in the study about the compulsory concept of the Hijab in Islam. For example, Fareeda [40s, married with three children, Iranian] points out there should be freedom for women in all countries to decide for themselves and choose their life (it appears that she thinks Muslim women do not enjoy such freedom). Additionally, from a stereotypical viewpoint, the contrast created between the matter of choice by women who practice Hijab and the overall perception regarding the mandatory concept of Hijab, is a matter of importance.

*I do feel sympathy for women, and I don't mean only women from my own country. All the Muslim women who can't choose what to wear and how to cover themselves. That hasn't been changed. But I do hate people who try to persuade others to practice their religion, who are Muslim men. So yeah. I'm disgusted with them. [Fareeda, 40s, married with 3 children, Iranian]*

The Sydney hostage crisis was used as an example in the interviews to investigate and understand the experience of participants in situations where their birth region is the focus of everyday news. The incident was stressful for all participants and they claimed to 'follow the news minute by minute' during the incident and in the days that followed. Except for Leila who states that she felt safe and welcome in her neighbourhood while doing her daily exercise, and Elif who 'asked for three days off to avoid any possible danger,' four of the six women who practice Hijab had an unpleasant encounter more than once with 'Australian people' in the days that followed the incident. As Poynting and Mason (2008) explain, the degree of state control in the politics of multiculturalism has changed in Australia since its conception in the early 1970s with one of the significant changes being made regarding the cultural affairs of Middle Eastern countries. While the concept of Middle Eastern 'other' changed to Arab 'other' and then to Muslim 'other,' the discourse of 'othering' and 'otherness' remains immovable. Dissemination of these interchangeable concepts, especially by media, could be the reason for the misunderstanding that all Middle Eastern people are Arabs and Muslim creating periods of 'moral panic' (Cohen 2002) within the public discourse.

*In social media networking I have noticed some comments from people about that [Sydney hostage crisis]. I also heard from one of my friends who is a teenage girl and grow up here at school, and she expressed that feeling that after Sydney siege, lots of her friends were insulting Middle Eastern people and believed that the*

*government should send them all back home, that sort of racist thing. Horrible. [Liraz, 40s, married with two children, Israeli]*

Other participants (except for Nina, Samar, Rana, and Amira), despite being extremely sensitive and ‘ready to stand [their] ground as a Middle Eastern non-Muslim non-terrorist citizen of Australia,’ ‘didn’t notice anything’ or ‘didn’t get any bad feeling from colleagues’ because they ‘don’t look like a Muslim.’ Alternatively, the people they encountered were aware of the situation but ‘didn’t talk about it’ in their presence possibly to avoid discrimination within the workplace. According to some participants, the reason may also be the possible differences in the common perceptions of Australians regarding Middle Eastern women and men. Some participants think Australians believe it is easier for a woman to adapt in a new homeland as the perception of Middle Eastern men causes more hesitation and concern compared to women. This notion was confirmed by all women, except for Turkish and Israeli participants.

*...Even talking to one of my Australian friends he told me that, yes, you are right, we have that perception. Sometimes even when we are at train station or when we are with our family, when we see some Middle Eastern looking guy, subconsciously we feel in danger or we don't feel very safe. [Shirin, 50s, married with one child, Iranian]*

Repeating the same ironic paradox for women with a Burka, a number of participants have stereotypical views, similar to what some of them mentioned about Australians, towards some groups of male Muslims. The stereotyped groups of men have a distinctive appearance with a long beard or wear different apparel (e.g. a Dishdasha) when they are in public spaces. It is important to note that Turkish and Israeli participants have the same perception about this group of Muslim men (despite their denial of such stereotype existing for Middle Eastern men in Australia).

*To be honest, when I see some extreme Muslim looking people, specifically guys, I don't feel as safe. I know it's a stereotype, but yeah I can say I'm afraid - I feel that. Even if I try to say no, people are not different, when I see a guy with the large beard sitting beside me or something, I have that judgmental thing in my mind. [Liraz, 40s, married with two children, Israeli]*

*I don't like men with long traditional dress in street. It is not your country, you are like a guest here and you should respect their way of dressing. [Aynour, 30s, divorced with three children, Turkish]*

The same concept is apparent when talking about asylum seekers in interviews. Some of the participants, mostly Iranian, support the initiatives of the Australian Federal and state governments that prevent the entry of refugees and asylum seekers to Australia. Notwithstanding most

participants' utmost respect for the multicultural concept of Australian cities, Rouba and Sarah are not satisfied with this aspect of their new homeland (Sarah herself is an asylum seeker).

*I also prefer to live in Brisbane than Melbourne. Mainly the reason is that there were too many migrants there. I just prefer to live in a non-multicultural city. Yeah, that's racist I guess. I do feel more relaxed and more comforting because I don't face too many different cultures... [Sarah, 20s, divorced with one child, Iranian]*

This perception could be the result of the same fear dissemination by media and in this case, the role of social media is more noteworthy both in raising possibilities of harm coming from 'others' and in affirming the public opinion/disgust, or could be the natural reaction to an unpleasant experience in past.

*...like ABC News or that sort of thing, I sometimes read the comments from Australian people and some of them are not really fair, they are swearing [all Middle Eastern/Muslims]... [Maya, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

*Never from a local, no. Not from an Aussie person. But I got some bad looks from non-local people. I received some bad looks and some naughty language from migrants. Very few times. [Safiya, 30s, married with four children, Lebanese]*

An example of the latter reason is illustrated by Sarah [20s, divorced with one child, Iranian] who had a 'terrifying experience' once in a parking space when 'a big migrant man' attacked her with a knife and 'wanted her bag.' The situation was resolved when 'security guys, a native Aussie' approached them 'just in no time because of the CCTV.' During the interview this incident was mentioned just once, however the effects of it were apparent throughout the entire interview. In the analysis of her interview, any unsatisfying situation was related somehow to migrant people (who are not born in Australia) or to the multicultural policies of Australian states, however all fortunate and blessed circumstances were associated with 'native people' (who were born and raised in Australia) and the way they manage these types of situations.

*...The guy came to me - it was only like 10 metres away, and he wanted my bag...then they were coming - felt so much relief. It was like; you're the best thing happen to me. Can you believe I hugged them? [Sarah, 20s, divorced with one child, Iranian]*

To prevent these unpleasant experiences, some participants proposed that there should be more educational programs (especially in mass media) to help people understand different cultures in this multicultural setting. They believe it is necessary that the perception of both migrant and native people must change by means of non-fabricated information and they believe that media

constantly ‘miseducates developed countries’ by ‘fabricated,’ ‘wrong,’ and biased information about Middle Eastern people. In this regard ‘when people become educated of Middle Eastern real concepts of life and culture and beliefs’ and ‘if they (both migrants and natives) become educated of the other party’s behavioural norms’ it is possible to ‘live in harmony’ and with ‘more respect.’

*Sneezing. After that you should apologise, for example. It's not in my culture in. We feel that it's a very natural thing and we don't do anything for that... But if no one tells you about that, how would you know? You would do that action and some - you would get some judgemental thing from people around you at the street, train station that, oh this is Middle Eastern people, how rude they are. But they are not rude. They don't know what to do. [Maya, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

## **Theme 5: Sparse Population**

Arguably, high density inner/middle suburban areas are the key to sustainable cities that could provide urban dwellers with better locations close to urban amenities with higher quality and cutting-edge technology, walkable urban design (to reduce the fuel use per person and improve the health of dwellers), and “affordable housing as well as top end apartments, aged peoples’ housing with universal access features, and architectural diversity” (Newman 2014). Despite the increasing literature advocating high density urban areas, it is not executed widely in Australian cities due to political challenges (Newman 2014). Most of the big cities in the Middle East are high density cities and according to the most recent version of the Global Cities Database-1995, Tehran is placed 16th, and Brisbane is 82nd among the 84 most dense cities.

For most of the participants the vibe or atmosphere of the place encourages the use of a public place. Most participants believe a lack of liveliness is the result of the small population in the Greater Brisbane cities. Participants believe that in more populated areas there is a greater sense of place and belonging compared to silent suburban areas.

*I think because Brisbane is not a - the population in Brisbane is not that large, so social activities can't be as much as very populated places, for example, like Sydney.*

Most of the participants state that they favour the ‘Australian lifestyle’ and living in green suburban areas with medium density. However, it is also important for this group of participants that they choose a suburb close enough to a high density section to enjoy the benefits of better transport, shopping centres, schools, recreation facilities, childcare, and aged housing. Consequently, most participants lived in a suburb within 20 km of the Brisbane CBD and less than 5 km from the inner city in less populated cities of the Greater Brisbane region. For three participants who prefer to live

inside the city CBD, housing affordability is the biggest obstacle; therefore they ‘try to find an affordable home in next suburbs’ of the Brisbane inner area. These participants prefer to live in a high density area to increase the affordability of everyday journeys and the accessibility of amenities and facilities, as well as enjoying the vibe and liveability of inner suburbs. For instance Haleh [20s, never married-no child, Iranian], who does not drive (as she is scared of driving a car) and walks every day to her job, enjoys the ‘daily noises coming from street through her bedroom window is the meaning of life’ and urbanism. For Israa [40s, married with three children, Iraqi] who chose to live in a calm suburb ‘where a three bedroom house is possible to buy,’ being ‘in busy places same as city’ with ‘people moving around,’ make her ‘feel more alive.’ This feeling is because she has ‘not seen any unfriendly people,’ so it gives the feeling that she is surrounded by people and ‘is not living in desert.’

*They [Europeans] say Australia still have a good public life. But [to me] it seems a bit boring and it is because it's not a populated city. Not enough population, yes, that's why... [Rouba, 20s, never married-no child, Iraqi]*

*I like city in the CBD and also I like South Bank and why because I feel there is a city. I'm not a country girl. I'm a city girl and I like a busy environment of cities, people, all seeing people, they are alive, moving, everybody and busy. [Aynour, 30s, divorced with three children, Turkish]*

*In Germany the place we were living, it was just huge, very big houses and very different. There wasn't any fences, just green trees...Then we went to Sweden, it was just an apartment and not much space and when I came here, I prefer never live in apartment again. So I live in townhouses, because house was too big for me but I want to live the way I lived in my country. [Liraz, 40s, married with two children, Israeli]*

## **Theme 6: Retreat to the Private Sphere**

The process of adaptation in the new environment for some participants began from their private spaces. All the participants state that in the first months of migration it was ‘nearly impossible to feel home’ even when they were inside their homes. In order to change these feelings of detachment they try to improvise new ways to belong and in most cases this involves creating a welcoming, conventional, and stable space inside their home allocated to past memories. They tend to reproduce a comfortable space inside their home by the use of familiar home décor like photos, traditional art works of their region of birth, carpets, and sometimes the use of a more familiar interior design for those who built their own house or could make some changes to the design of an Australian house.

The sense of 'feeling at home' is found through familiarity when there is a physical departure from the ethnic homeland. By this strategy migrants try to bond with their new environment and for women in this study, this stage varies and could involve minor changes like hanging a photo on the kitchen refrigerator or major changes like devoting one room of the house to a similar purpose. The next step is to adopt their home (as a bigger area) and/or a special private place used publically (e.g. café, restaurants, bars...) as a place that can generate a sense of attachment. It is possible that they feel safer in these enclosed places rather than public spaces they use every day as it's less challenging to generate a routine using semi-private spaces to recreate a familiar territory through both locus and people who are associated with these spaces.

The final step is to move beyond the residential place and find attachment in the neighbourhood, or in other public spaces with the characteristics of a familiar space from their homeland. Nevertheless, for some participants the last stage just happens after long years of residency in Australia. This is especially true for those participants who are not that familiar with English language and/or for those who could not drive causing progression from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> stage to take between 8 to 12 years.

*That's pretty much like Turkey; to catch up with friends we just have to go to restaurants or coffee shops and I prefer my own or my friends' home. I never walk, for example on sidewalks or go to parks or do something like this. [Aynour, 30s, divorced with three children, Turkish]*

All through the journey of adaptation, migrants try to create new strings of attachment to their new environment and this strategy is successful unless there is an unhappy incident or they have to move to other parts of Australia during their stay. In the latter case it is more common to create memories through what is permanent. For example, Elif [20s, married with one child, Turkish] took photos of the Queen Victoria Market in her 'last visit of Melbourne and hangs them on refrigerator in memory of [her] hometown,' so every day she could 'feel she is home' when looking at these pictures. Therefore, that specific space inside the home, and in the next stage their entire home as a place, play a significant role as a vital thread in the everyday life of these women living away from what they could call 'familiar and secure.'

From another perspective, a new home can be a place of conflict as much as it one of comfort. A place of conflict arises when their homes become a space through which they engage in insecure, demanding, and unhealthy relationships with other members of the family. It is possible that in the shadow of political and economic processes, their position as a free woman becomes clouded by social and cultural categories of race, class, and especially gender (due to the traditional patriarchal context of Middle Eastern communities) forcing them to endure a lifestyle different from what is



common, or accepted as a norm, in Australia (Williams 2005, Nititham 2017). In some cases this conflict can lead to domestic violence or mental/physical abuse.

*My husband prefer me to see my friend at our home or their home... He says it is not safe and it is not good to go outside like shopping centres. [Sarah, 20s, divorced with one child, Iranian]*

## **Theme 7: Designed and Natural Amenities and Services**

Tranquillity is one of the most important factors when Middle Eastern women assess a public space. For most of the participants, public space is a place in which they ‘relax and feel comfortable’ or as an asylum from ‘stressful city life.’ It is also a space ‘to pass the time by watching people’ or ‘enjoy the scenery.’

*When I want to go and watch people I go to Queen Street Mall. It's my favourite place for that sort of thing. [Shirin, 50s, married with one child, Iranian]*

Responses indicated that the main factor affecting the way Middle Eastern women use public spaces is their lifestyle that is a remnant from their time in their homeland. And according to all participants this lifestyle could change after migration. For some participants this change happened immediately due changes in social climate and the freedom Australian cities and communities offer. For others life style changed after a while following changes in their immediate family such as marriage, having children or living with elderly. All participants indicated that using public spaces in their neighbourhood in daily or weekly basis for exercise is among the most significant changes in their lifestyle. These exercises could be ‘just walking’ or ‘walking and biking’ or using the provided ‘gym devices or facilities’ in public parks.

*Yeah I used to go to the gym, but I stopped a few months ago, I just go every day for a walk near the river. [Leila, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

Everyday use of shopping malls is one of the many ways in which Middle Eastern women enjoy their lives in Greater Brisbane. For instance, Safiya [30s, married with four children, Lebanese] believes her ‘boring days could change by a visit to shopping centre in the neighbourhood’ and spending time in this semi-public space ‘could change [her] mood for the rest of day.’ For Nina [30s, married with three children, Iraqi] a shopping centre in the neighbourhood means ‘spending a hot day of summer in a cool lively space with minimum expenses.’

For all participants the location of their homes was important in different ways and the notion of ‘location, location, location’ was a frequent phrase when responding to questions related to choice of suburb. Having acceptable access to public places such as parks and good state schools are among the most important factors for families when looking for a home to buy or rent. Some of the participants had to change their neighbourhood because of school catchment policies and they were not happy with this extra effort they had to give for higher standards of education in primary or high schools. Fareeda [40s, married with three children, Iranian] believes ‘there should be completely similar standards for all schools of Brisbane suburbs and if not, there should be no catchment policies.’ For families who have one or two elderly who live with them this is more complicated as there needs to be proper facilities for older people in the area as well as a good school and many other factors that affect housing affordability for families. For those participants who adopt a pet, especially a dog, ‘it is important to find a fenced area for dog to play’ and as they want to use the space on a daily basis, finding such a park within walking distance is considered ‘a struggle’.

While access to amenities is the main characteristic of a desirable suburb for families with children and elderly, the greenness of an area and the designed or natural beauty of the suburb is the determining factor for single participants or young couples. They believe the natural flair of this region is one of the reasons for a higher quality of life in SEQ, especially in Brisbane. Although most of the participants experienced nostalgia recalling characteristics of a climate with four distinct seasons, the colourful aspects, differences and similarities between the vegetation in SEQ/Greater Brisbane and their region in Middle East was one of the most frequently discussed subjects in the interviews. As Shirin explains, women’s eyes are ‘constantly seeking for familiar sceneries like warm colours of the tree leaves in autumn’ or ‘the fruits of the trees in summer.’ This was reiterated by many of the participants and they would like to see and enjoy more fruit trees in public spaces such as parks and street sidewalks.

*I think I like the western suburbs of Brisbane because it's more - it's greener...it's the only suburb in Brisbane which has so many trees and the eastern suburbs, you can't see much...but it is more forest-y kind of suburb. That's why I like it. It's greener and nicer. [Israa, 40s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

For all participants the greenness of Greater Brisbane is the iconic characteristic of the region, and along with the ‘beautiful weather,’ makes it different from their homeland and other places they have lived in Australia or other countries. The natural beauty of Greater Brisbane cities and landscapes play a significant role in the pursuit of satisfaction in the everyday life of Middle Eastern women. They also admire the nature-based design of the inner city and the presence of local parks

in suburbs. Some of the participants believe, even if they do not use these public places daily, that existence of such places changes the landscape in a way that they could recall each suburb or area based on the characteristics of its green space and urban design. For Ayah [30s, married with two children, Iraqi] using cafés and bars to catch up with friends is out of the question when she has ‘this beautiful area’ and can ‘have outside activity and enjoy the time outside’ there is no place for spending time ‘in an indoor boring place.’

*I sometimes think that Brisbane does not need public or socialising places very - like officially. Because people are already doing it by going out. [Sarah, 20s, divorced with one child, Iranian]*

For some participants the weather was the most positive point of the natural environment in Greater Brisbane. The stability of weather and the blue sky was repeatedly stated as a blessing of the region. As Nina [30s, married with 3 children, Iraqi] and Samar [50s, widowed with 5 children, Lebanese] state that if they had to choose between Melbourne and Brisbane, they would choose to live in Brisbane ‘especially because of the good and warm weather.’ Nina remembers her first days in Australia where she ‘had to open the hot water in the shower and just stand to be warm’ because she is ‘from a bit hot country’ and ‘Melbourne was too cold’ for her, so after six months she moved to Brisbane.

*Yeah the weather is crazy and in Melbourne every things are grey but in Brisbane everything's colourful. [Ayah, 30s, married with 2 children, Iraqi]*

*I think people in Brisbane enjoy their outside activities like this rather than for example the other cities like Tehran, like Sydney. It is a different lifestyle. [Fareeda, 40s, married with three children, Iranian]*

The Brisbane River, and in some cases creeks, are reported repeatedly in the interviews as attractive features of Brisbane city and its greater region. For some participants the river was a reminder of their hometown and they enjoy the sense of nostalgia and the scenery at the same time. But for most of the participants, the Brisbane River was a means to relax and enjoy personal hours as the scenery was new to them. River side places or beaches are not common sights in Middle Eastern cities and except for few cities, the biggest bodies of water are lakes behind the dams which are not usually open to the public.

*I love South Bank a lot. I feel more connected to that place [south bank] because of the river. Because it's not surrounded by big buildings and all that. So when I don't go for shopping, why would I [bother to] see all the tall buildings? I would prefer to enjoy myself sitting beside the river and enjoy the weather. [Amira, 30s, married with five children, UAE]*

For Safiya [30s, married with 4 children, Lebanese] the beauty of the nature in Brisbane was life changing and her ‘biggest reason to try harder to stay and not going back’ to her hometown. She was in the middle of a personal crisis when she moved to Australia and as she states, the greenness of the city was where she used to escape during her hard times. She chose to say no to divorce and going back to her country only because she believed the beautiful nature of Australia was worth giving it another try and change her life and situation to a better one. ‘The city I am from is a bit dry’ and though it has ‘got its own beautiful views and scenery, beautiful parks, beautiful designs,’ but because of the ‘tropical weather here’ the environment is more green compared to her homeland where ‘back there it is dry.’

*The beautiful nature around us and it has got both aspects, living in a city as well as living in a countryside area, beautiful. It's beautiful, it always helped me... It even helped me with my personal relationship. I was on the edge when I arrive here. I was going to be separate and go back home just because I was so lonely and detached. Then I began to walk sometimes for hours; just the walking in this beautiful environment help me to stay. And then I find a job and I started liking here and having friends and having my own activities here. [Safiya, 30s, married with four children, Lebanese]*

There is a wide range of ideas among participants about the design of Brisbane and its public spaces. Some prefer low-rise buildings whilst others enjoy the modern look of Brisbane City and the Gold Coast. Adequate and well-situated urban spaces such as public parks, trails and sporting and recreational facilities supports healthy behaviour among the members of the society by encouraging social activity and physical and psychological wellbeing. With respect to public spaces like parks, all the participants reiterate the importance of having a park in walking distance, although the majority of participants believe that parks should have more elements of design. Lack of sufficient neighbourhood playgrounds, landscape design, and trails, sporting and recreational facilities are stated as the drawbacks of Greater Brisbane’s public spaces. For some participants there were some negative points regarding the landscape design of CBD including the absence of planted flowers, imperfection of waterfronts, and positioning of benches. Besides these suggested refinements that could be considered in the planning and designing of urban spaces of Greater Brisbane, all women expressed their appreciation of significant characteristics of specific areas.

*I like walking in Queen Street and watching people on weekdays. The pavement is good; the trees are green and little gardens are always full of flowers. It seems people are much happier inside the city. Everything is within your reach; you should just ask for it. Water, shops, police, city lights, sitting benches, botanic garden, river*

*and many other significant elements I could name for inside the CBD; though suburbs' facilities are not as good as city CBD. [Liraz, 40s, married with two children, Israeli]*

A child friendly environment is the first and most important requirement for Middle Eastern women with kids. It is a fact that the experience of public spaces by women changes dramatically when they are a mother (Uteng 2012, Petesch and Demarchi 2015). It is the same for Middle Eastern women as children are the centre of every single one of their suggestions related to design, infrastructures and services of urban spaces. For instance Maya [30s, married with two children, Iranian] states that if she wants to add anything to the public spaces of Greater Brisbane it would be restaurants where the welfare of children and parents are considered at the same time.

*I love it [Queen Street Mall] because when the kids are with me I don't have to feel like something will hit them so it's a more relaxed time when I walk in these streets. Especially in Southbank they have it, there no cars can access these streets, I love it yeah. [Nina, 30s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

*...I would put people to look after the kids as well, at the centre, when they're having their meal. The parents really need it. [Maya, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

Both child friendly and disabled friendly environments are mentioned by participants as one of the significant differences between public spaces in Greater Brisbane and their hometowns. Most women experienced some kind of difficulties before their migration to Australia, or when they have a trip back to their countries, regarding the design and accessibility of public spaces for children, elderly, and disabled people.

*...it's a big problem in Turkey. In Turkey you can't go with the pram, you can't use it everywhere. But here you can use it easily...I go by his [her child] pram into a bus and everybody help me when I'm going in or coming out of the bus... [Aynour, 30s, divorced with three children, Turkish]*

Another difference between public spaces in Greater Brisbane and the Middle East is the cleanliness of the Australian cities, especially Brisbane, Noosa and the Gold Coast. For example, Maya, Aynour, and Liraz mention that in their opinions, these three cities are by far the cleanest among all Australian cities. Most of the participants believe that 'having a clean city is because of the efforts of people and city council' that have attitudes different to those in Middle Eastern cities where 'people do not care and leave their garbage in street and parks and everywhere' and city councils do not apply their 'best effort to clean the public spaces.' Melek [40s, married with four children,

*Turkish*] believes the responsibility of urban dwellers is more significant than ‘the council cleaning men could clean the streets but people make it unclean again in just one hour.’

*The cleanliness. It's a very, very tidy city. When I came here I was amazed how clean it was. I can't say it's the most beautiful city in the world, but it's really clean and I liked it. [Shirin, 50s, married with one child, Iranian]*

Lack of facilities in neighbourhoods is the most significant drawback that Middle Eastern women in this study identified about their experiences living in Australia, especially for those who had lived in big cities in Europe or America and experienced different lifestyles with varying standards prior to their migration to Australia. These women consider Greater Brisbane as their home and in order to create feelings of attachment to this new land, they need some basic requirements related, or not related, to their background. Despite the fact that they know they are migrants, this new urban settlement follows different standards compared to their home country or other countries where they have lived. One of these facilities is suburban street lighting that is not sufficient according to all participants (that is, they either live in a suburb without sufficient lighting or have a friend or family member who live in such suburbs). There is a notion in every interview that ‘streets are too dark at night’.

The other issue raised by participants is signage in roads and inner city streets that is insufficient or not suitable for participants to use. Participants believe ‘having no access to GPS, is a nightmare that could happen any time’ and would restrict their freedom of movement as they are not confident enough to explore the city by themselves. Although some participants experienced difficulties due to the quality and the quantity of road signage in Greater Brisbane, the majority of participants are satisfied by the signage. Here are two completely different experiences:

*Ah, don't talk about - signs are crazy bad in Brisbane. Driving signs, I'm not happy with them. When you want to find your direction without using a GPS it's crazy. It's not helpful at all. [Sarah, 20s, divorced with one child, Iranian]*

*Every month go to airport and come back because of my husband's job and when I use the navigator I'm lost. But when I use the traffic signs no it can help me. [Eva, 40s, married with eight children, Lebanese]*

The other concern is about cultural differences that cause some difficulties for minority groups and could be unisex toilets in some parts of the city or not including a proper prayer room in shopping streets or centres. There were some comments about lack of facilities for religious people

(by Muslim participants) who have to cover their body in public spaces like gyms or swimming pools. For participants who practice Islam, lack of facilities and services that they can use is a matter of importance.

*Just the only thing is just not for myself, but those young Muslim girls. To have gym only for the ladies, especially if there is any just for the Muslim it could be. You know that could be a social things for the Muslim as well, the ladies, the Muslim get together to see each other. Yeah and the swimming, swimming pool yeah. [Leila, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

For each woman the advantages and disadvantages of a public space were different based on her experience of living in a different neighbourhood. A perceived advantage by one woman could be a disadvantage for another. For instance, while Diana had a good experience using the sporting and recreational facilities in her neighbourhood, Sarah was upset about lack of these facilities in her area.

*I would love to go to these parks with all this equipment and walking pathways. There is one. Very close by, it's called Rocks Riverside Park in Jindalee. It has the pathway for walking or cycling and also it has gym devices or facilities for exercising. [Diana, 20s, never married-no child, Lebanese]*

*No, I never go to parks or sidewalks to walk or run or jog. Maybe because their equipment is not really good in the park. I mean, in Iran in the parks you get to see a lot of exercise equipment and it's everywhere in every park, but you don't really see a lot of it here in Brisbane...and all the equipment you see in the parks, they're very old and they're so dirty, and you don't want to touch it, and if you touch it you need to take a shower. [Sarah, 20s, divorced with one child, Iranian]*

Access to public transport, one of the important check points of choosing a home location (Newman, Matan et al. 2015), generated a lot of negative points and possible suggestions for refinement by participants. Inefficiency of public transport is the biggest barrier when using urban spaces for most participants, especially for those who could not drive. Most of the participants believe insufficient public transport restricts their freedom of movement and jeopardises their right to the city. This problem becomes worse when considering inadequate or expensive parking spaces in the inner city areas. It must be noted that three participants did not drive and had different reasons not to learn or practice it. For example Rana 'never liked to drive and never think about it [learning how to drive a car].' Sarah, who is from an overly crowded city of Tehran, was taking driving lessons but did not feel the necessity of having a driving licence back in her hometown as she 'hates the terrible traffic of Tehran streets' and stated that she could 'have access to every place by public transport' even if 'it was a slow and crowded version of public transport.' And Aynour

was 'afraid of big trucks here [in Australian roads]. They drive even inside the city' and despite having a driver's licence, she has never driven a car in Australia.

*I prefer to use my car rather than bus or train. Train station is too far from our house and we couldn't walk there; and when you start your car it is hard to park it somewhere and catch a train. [Samar, 50s, widowed with five children, Lebanese]*

*I think sometimes I spend too much time in bus stops. So it means that there are not sufficient buses and trains. I'm not sure really about trains, but buses. There could be more. [Amira, 30s, married with five children, UAE]*

Another drawback identified by most of the participants is the absence of shopping streets. Missing the feeling of 'walking around the streets and window shopping in the street' was mentioned by a number of the participants. For Shirin it is 'the only change' in her lifestyle that she cannot understand and get used to. A liveable street for Middle Eastern women in this study is a street with 'lots of shops on each side of the street' where people can walk for a while and 'enjoy the environment' or 'enjoy different kinds of cuisines and restaurants.' This suitable street is 'a place with more sign of nature in it' and is not 'too short for a walk and it's not too crowded.' Additionally, the fact that the functions and users of malls are tightly regulated by the mall owner (Staeheli and Mitchell 2006) is noted by participants when they feel a restriction in the use of shopping malls with respect to opening times and the people allowed in the place. Reichl (2016) argues that these privatised public realms are of limited value as democratic spaces and this statement is confirmed according to findings of this study. For some participants, privatized public spaces 'are not really public' when there are 'some restrictions on people's behaviour.'

*I loved that because if you're walking, shopping or window shopping and enjoying the environment. I love that. I love more open space coffees shops, open space street shops not shopping centre. [Melek, 40s, married with four children, Turkish]*

*It's good to extending the just-people pathway to other street and make it [Queen Street Mall] longer [for walking]... [Rana, 20s, married with two children, Saudi Arabian]*

*It's nice but not appealing... probably if they think about having an area around the Queen Street Mall with more different kinds of cuisines and restaurants, maybe the people would like it more. [Sarah, 20s, divorced with one child, Iranian]*



## **Theme 8: Perceived and Real Safety Issues**

Safety and freedom from violence are a commodity in the Western context when issues related to fear and safety are co-opted by many stakeholders, such as the authorities and property companies (Listerborn 2016). This is the reason why an increasing focus on control, surveillance and security dominates planning and urban policies. Women and their fear of sexual and non-sexual violence are among the important issues that should be addressed by urban planning and design professionals. There are some contradictions in the literature of urban studies when they try to highlight the vulnerable position of women with respect to safety and simultaneously avoid the enforcement of stereotypes as well as existing social and spatial power relations.

Some of the participants pointed out the sense of territoriality in some neighbourhoods or areas of the city is a barrier to the use of public spaces. The sense of belonging to a space is reduced by the feeling of ethnic dominance in these areas that create a sense of ‘fear of others/outgroups’ (Fiske, Cuddy et al. 2007). The fact that despite being on the receiving end of racism sometimes, Middle Eastern women might also display racist attitudes themselves as discussed in the Stereotype theme. The same feelings are mentioned by interviewees when discussing the use of public spaces during late nights in the CBD where they feel unsafe and/or uncomfortable facing drunken men or homeless people.

In the literature of urban studies the concept of safety with the concept of fear is a way of describing the characteristics of a safe environment (Whitzman, Andrew et al. 2014, Moser 2017). Different kinds of fear, either real or imagined, influence the everyday life of women by circumscribing and defining women’s access to public spaces. Fear of crime that could be a robbery, an assault, or any kind of abuse produces insecurity in an urban setting. Findings from this study indicate that for all participants a sense of safety is correlated with the concept of fear, and when there is enough facilities and services to prevent crime and diminish fear to a possible level, the area is assumed safe.

Some facilities and services mentioned by participants are pedestrian and street lighting, maintained sidewalks, cycling infrastructures, presence of people (especially police officers who were referred to in all interviews), absence of some specific groups like homeless people, and correctly sized spaces (wide spaces or enclosed spaces are assumed unsafe). For instance, Liraz believes that she feels safer when she drives ‘home late at night and there are open shops –like Dominos- in streets of suburbs.’ Israa indicates that although she ‘was stopped by a police car in entrance of [her] street [of residence] and they asked for driving licence and ask some questions and

there was an alcohol test' this experience makes her feel safer as she is now 'aware of constant presence of the police force.'

For Rouba and Nina who lived in Iraq during the US invasion in 2003 and the years after, the concept of safety is highly correlated with survival skills. They believe their concept of safety was different before the invasion and then inevitably it changed. Although, it is hard to redefine these feelings of safety and bring it back to the 'normal' status they had lived in until 2003, even after their migration to Australia. When Nina was asked about the most enjoyable feature of Australia life she stated one word: 'Safe.' She related afterwards this feeling to the freedom of movement and trust:

*Yeah safe. You can go by bus, by train whatever you want to the Gold Coast. Sometimes I go to the Gold Coast with my little ones. Yeah I drive the car there so it's safe and look, if you - sometimes if you want something you could ask anyone to help you. [Nina, 30s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

And when she was asked if there is anything that she doesn't like about living in Australia? She answered 'Not really; because this normal life just reminds me of when it was normal in my country.'

*But you know I was always scared to go alone in the street during night. If some voices coming I would go looking back what's that? But I know here is not that much [danger]. There is always problem and danger everywhere but not as much as back home. [Rouba, 20s, never married-no child, Iraqi]*

It is also notable that for some participants the concepts of comfort and safety are related but do not coincide. That is, lacking or delivering one could not lead to the absence or presence of the other one.

*They're drinking and they're shouting. They're making noise. I don't feel unsafe; I just feel annoyed. [Melek, 40s, married with four children, Turkish]*

*...sometimes I feel uncomfortable in the West End because of some people there, I think specifically some Aboriginals that are sometimes swearing and when I walk past there I feel uncomfortable. I have seen it several times there. I don't feel unsafe because I know that these sorts of things are in control. But what comes to my mind is, there is something here that the government see but intentionally don't do anything about it, because of the subject of acting with Aboriginal is very sensitive I think. They [government] don't do what they need to do to make it safe and good for people here. [Shirin, 50s, married with one child, Iranian]*

The perception of safety could be influenced by people's experiences and their cultural norms of behaviour. In this regard, and for a number of participants, safety has a strong connection with the level of privacy. Participants believe a higher level of privacy allows them to feel safe and be able to improve their sense of at-homeness (Koskela 1997) in both public and private spaces. Here, a higher level of privacy means 'not to be seen by so many people.' The tendency of being hidden from the eyes of other people has its roots in the cultural norms of women's behaviour and cultural preferences of their country of birth where strict divisions separate women's space from men's space both in public and in private spaces (Thompson 2003, Najmabadi 2005). Although, for some participants the feeling of being seen by 'others' may render a space less troublesome at night-time and make it easier to navigate through neighbourhood knowing that they are watched by anonymous but local eyes. This concept is close to the concept of "eyes on the street" which according to Jane Jacob is one of the main characteristics of a thriving urban space (Jacobs 1961). Jacob believes that "eyes on the street" provide informal surveillance of the urban environment and helps people to feel safe and secure in public spaces, despite being among complete strangers. As Rouba [20s, never married-no child, Iraqi] indicates, her 'annoying nosy neighbour is like a gem' when she arrives home late at nights and 'there isn't even birds in street.'

*... I love Southbank. I love the restaurant by the river. Just all those little seats, like behind the trees - to make it more private for people. It's just somewhere you want to go with your love - just sit in there and just have some private romance. I feel some kind of safe there because [although] it's really public but no-one can see you, but then you can see everyone- it's kind of private. [Elif, 20s, married with one child, Turkish]*

For Leila [30s, married with two children, Iranian] a change in her lifestyle altered her concept of safety. After she practiced Islam and become a religious person, she defines safety as not being seen by others and especially by those who are not Mahram. Prior to this change her concept of safety was related to the possibility of crime.

*Yes, and I can say at that time, because I wasn't practicing Islam, every place could be a private space for me. Even if the houses in each country that I lived, wouldn't have anything around to make it safe for me, it was still safe for me... I don't know, I don't know why. But now it's very important for me. [Leila, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

In most Western and Islamic societies, gendered spaces are encouraged by private-public division of space with the traditional view that associates women to private space and men to public space. Consequently, presence of women in masculine public spaces is considered unwelcome or inappropriate. In 1982 McDowell pointed out the negligence of the feminist urban studies in addressing the concept of gender divisions, which according to McDowell, "is an important

structuring element of urban space and urban processes.” It is of utmost importance to avoid the polarity between viewing urban space as either constraining or enabling for women. For Middle Eastern women in this study, the masculinity of an environment is an obstacle for using and claiming public spaces. Reproducing a space with “‘feminine’ characteristics of the city, its enclosing embrace, its indeterminacy and labyrinthine uncentredness” (Wilson 1992), creates strong cohesion for the sense of safety by these women. This could be the reason why the tendency of these women is to redefine a private sphere within a public space. The more ‘natural,’ ‘inside’ and ‘safe’ a place becomes, the more it is considered as private; the more ‘cultural,’ ‘outside’ and ‘dangerous’ it becomes, the more it is considered as public.

*Yeah, he [a stranger who happened to be a drunk man] cuddles me and my husband told him she's not your girlfriend but he said, no, she's my best friend [laughs] and because of that every Friday night when I go out I'm scared. Oh, no, yeah, I don't like to go out on Friday nights. It was really scary. [Elif, 20s, married with one child, Turkish]*

## **Theme 9: Trust and Surveillance**

There are nearly two million closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) that record everyday life throughout Australia due to concerns related to safety. Introducing CCTVs was a formula for more social and individual security. Nevertheless, there is a belief that presence of CCTVs could result in privatized spaces in cities. Koskela (2000) borrowed the concept of panopticons from Foucault (who describes cities as enormous panopticons). She believes the principle of video-surveillance and the principle of Bentham’s ‘ideal prison’ are the same and are ‘to be seen but never to know when or by whom.’ [Note: The Panopticon is a type of institutional building designed by the English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham in the late 18th century. The concept of the design is to allow all (pan-) inmates of an institution to be observed (-opticon) by a single watchman without the inmates being able to tell whether or not they are being watched. The same concept is described in Bentham’s ‘ideal prison’.]

In the same manner, and for most of the participants, the function of CCTVs coincided with the concept of safety and ensure citizen safety. However, for some participants the existence of CCTVs is a source of anxiety and insecurity based on their experiences in their birth country. For these participants surveillance cameras located in urban spaces could ‘take images of [their] everyday movements at any time of the day’ and these images could provide the opportunity for both Australian and their homeland government to spy on them. A previous and ‘unpleasant experience’ of being ‘monitored’ and ‘watched’ by surveillance cameras could be triggered by

noticing CCTVs in Australian public spaces. For these participants a ‘controlled space’ is not a ‘public space’ or ‘at least it is not fully public.’

Some participants mentioned the same concern when seeing police patrols, especially those women who had a bad experience with police back in their homeland. In countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia, police can interfere with even the private aspects of a woman’s life, like her appearance based on Sharia rules. Therefore, it is very common for women from these countries to experience violence through an encounter with the police. All Iranian participants talk about how hearing the police siren increases their heart rate and makes them anxious.

Despite three participants (Sarah, Israa, and Fareeda) mentioning the postulate of video-surveillance as a means of controlling, the majority of participants feel safer and more secure when they feel they are watched by ‘trusted’ people. In this sense of safety the element of trust has a significant role by government who are responsible for monitoring the CCTVs that provide them with this sense of safety. For most of these women the feeling of ‘being watched by others’ is not a pleasant experience, however they feel safe when they trust those who are watching them even when they do not know them at all. These findings are aligned with the findings of Johnson and Miles (2014) about Muslim women in the United States. For most of this group of women, the concept of control and the concept of safety, are complementary even if they do not coincide.

For those participants opposed to CCTVs it is mostly due to a lack of trust in the operators of video-surveillances. This lack of trust could be the effect of a bad experience from their ethnic homeland, or could simply be another outcome of the conspiracy theory that is very popular among lay people. Their perception of trust changes over time and they feel safer inside Australia, but the level of reliance is not high enough to make them trust those who ‘can see you but you can’t see them.’ These participants use ‘watching’ as a verb to describe the surveillance which shows their tendency to believe that video-surveillance is an on-going permanent routine and would endanger their personal space and their private life. The same concept is indicated by Foddy and Finighan (1980) when referring to the relationship between power and privacy where power is symbolically defined as the possible access to the devices and resources that facilitate the achievement of privacy (in this case, endanger privacy).

*You know? A place where someone watch you and control you all the time is not a public place. There are lots of cameras, policemen, security men and many many other people they like to control you. I know it is for my own safety but then why I don’t feel safe when I see them? Isn’t it funny? [Israa, 40s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

As an advocate of CCTV, Nina [30s, married with three children, Iraqi] states that video-surveillance inside specific private spaces like kindergarten ensures her family's safety. They choose to send their child to kindy due to her husband's insistence on not using family day-care, despite their low income.

*I just give you an example, when we were first here and we had two kids we wanted them in the kindy and the kindy was too expensive...so we decided to think about the family day care. My husband said no, no-one is watching them, I won't put my kids in this place when there is no-one watching them. Yes she may be nice but I don't trust her but I trust the centre where we can pay more but we will feel relieved because many people are watching. Nothing wrong will happen for sure. [30s, married with three children, Iraqi]*

And when asked about possible bad experiences in public spaces, Rana [20s, married with two children, Saudi Arabian] pointed out an incident where she become agitated when there were no CCTVs in the area. She believes she would 'feel safer if there was someone watching her back even by camera.'

*I think it was a year ago at the train station. I just thought that a man is following me. It happens only once or twice...I looked around but there was no camera. I was scared, very scared, but then, I was sure that he couldn't attack me, he couldn't harm me...because I believe that it's safe here. [20s, married with two children, Saudi Arabian]*

## **Theme 10: Lack of Nightlife**

Having the opportunity to enjoy the nightlife with the wide definition of enjoying urban life after the dark, is the most explicit and frequent requisite of the participants. Middle Eastern understanding of 'nightlife' is different from Australian understanding. When Middle Eastern people talk about nightlife they reference is to their ongoing life after the dark within both their neighbourhood and their city centres or in some cases they refer to their never sleeping cities. Enjoying pubs and clubs (as Australians understand the 'nightlife') could be one part this ongoing life after dark. In Middle Eastern countries the closing hour for most retail shops and department stores is between 8 and 10pm. Restaurants and supermarkets are open and fully operated until midnight. This lifestyle undergoes a significant change for most migrants in Australia. All participants state that it was the first and 'the most significant' shock which 'makes [them] to believe that their lifestyle has changed' and they 'should adjust and accept this new lifestyle.' For instance, Eva [40s, married with eight children, Lebanese] remembers that some days after their arrival in Brisbane they 'had all got dressed to go out but everything, all the shops, were closed and it was still daylight.'

The majority of participants believe that Greater Brisbane has a considerable capacity to inaugurate a thriving lifestyle that embraces nightlife as a possible component of everyday life and that this opportunity is ignored by ‘local people who are governing the state.’ Lack of nightlife in SEQ and especially in Greater Brisbane, seems to be an obstacle for a number of participants in the process of adapting to Australian society and initiating a sense of belonging. Nightlife and the liveability of the city after sunset are inseparable factors of their experience of public spaces back in their homeland. To reconstruct a sense of place and attachment they tend to reproduce those good memories, which is nearly impossible with the current regulations and limited nightlife in their private spaces. This retreating to private sphere could enhance the dichotomy of public/private and cause a feeling of exclusion for the Middle Eastern migrant population.

Introducing nightlife spaces into the neighbourhood could be a solution that generates a convivial atmosphere for social interactions among different users. This need for nightlife is aligned with the changes proposed by urban planners and economists that have happened in many cities (Grazian 2009, Roberts and Eldridge 2009, Hae 2011, Eder and Öz 2015, Yeo, Ho et al. 2016) during the past decades. The concept of these changes are not limited to urban vibrancy at night but also apply to youth and families based on their expectations and their lifestyle as they include nightclubs, bars, and music venues as well as a wider range of retail outlets like fashion stores, supermarkets, restaurants, and fast foods venues.

The limited opening hours for some public spaces, like botanical parks and the Queen Street shopping mall, also discourage a sense of belonging to their new environments and safety due to the feelings of being restrained or excluded from a place. Through the limited opening hours participants believe that governments have privatized these ostensibly public places.

*What I don't like about my neighbourhood? Not about my neighbourhood but whole city; I don't like that I couldn't spend time with my family and friends after 9pm, or even after 5pm. It isn't safe to go to for example Mount Coot-tha late at night. It is not safe. [Leila, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

*I just wish there were more exciting life - nightlife here, we had some more places to go at night time, like what you can see in Melbourne or Sydney. Sydney had an amazing nightlife, yes but not in here. It's getting better, I think, but it's still boring. The nightlife is very boring. [Elif, 20s, married with one child, Turkish]*

There were two opponents of nightlife among the participants. Rouba [20s, never married-no child, Iraqi] believes there is no need for nightlife in Brisbane as there are a sufficient number of events during a normal month. However, she specified that the quantity of convivial public spaces is not adequate

in Greater Brisbane and ‘there should be real reformation on the number of interesting public spaces in Brisbane.’ Samar [50s, widowed with five children, Lebanese] believes her lifestyle has changed during the long period of time she has lived in Greater Brisbane (35 years) and has no more desire for nightlife as she had in the first years after migration.

*I think we did have enough of nightlife in Brisbane. I think it's more than enough, but things to do daytime. We don't really have those too much. I mean, where can you go for your one day off – one-day holiday? [20s, never married-no child, Iraqi]*

*I get used to it. It is boring but I'm ok. We spend time with our family members instead. It is not too bad. Believe me! It is not bad. [50s, widowed with five children, Lebanese]*

### **Theme 11: Public Participation and the Right to the “Western” City**

Some participants brought up the importance of actively participating in the adaptation process after migrating to a new country and society. For these participants the right to the city as a citizen has an important correlation with the level of participation in mainstream cultural, environmental, and political aspects of urban life. For example, Eva [40s, married with eight children, Lebanese] recalls the importance of her experience when actively participating in the adaptation process by requesting maintenance of a local road surface that was answered by city council some months later. Haleh [20s, never married-no child, Iranian] had a similar experience when she ‘called the council and ask them to add one light to the street.’ Again this type of request received a positive outcome and was even ‘a source of confidence’ for Haleh because receiving such an acknowledgement of her role in the community is not as common in Middle Eastern cities. Feeling responsible for and concerned about the improvement of urban spaces came from a sense of belonging. Having an active role in the improvement of a neighbourhood is a significant achievement and these participants believe there should be a higher level of participation by migrants both in the everyday life of cities and in decision-making processes.

*Not to specifically Middle Eastern people, but I think people from different cultures, governments should think about them because they come here and will be part of this society. Their behaviours affect the society here. So as I said, providing enough information to those people that come here is necessary. Because you will improve your citizens' knowledge and it will improve your society. [Maya, 30s, married with two children, Iranian]*

A common theme among participants was to compare Brisbane with its counterparts in other Australian states like Melbourne and Sydney. Participants believe these pioneer cities offer more choices for different tastes.



*In Melbourne there are events, performances, museums, but in Brisbane no, not that much. [Shirin, 50s, married with one child, Iranian]*

In this respect, one of the participants believed that the absence of migrant women, especially Middle Eastern migrant women, in cultural urban settings (e.g. museums, performances, art festivals and so on) is noticeable. Lack of confidence could be a reason behind this invisibility and could be due to many factors like limited English skills, unpleasant experiences with Australian people like unsuccessful job hunting in an unfamiliar cultural environment, experiencing discrimination due to skin colour, income, status, or appearance, and not being recognised for their skills and abilities. There has been substantial research conducted by AMES Australia (Adult Multicultural Education Services) in 2015 that shows many migrants, regardless of the way they arrive in Australia, suffer from a lack of confidence due to limited skills in language, misunderstanding the culture, and experiencing exclusion due to limited social networks.

Current research reveals the same trends in Middle Eastern women and how they experience migration. English classes are expensive and unaffordable without Government support, and for some who have had these supported classes the number of classes is not adequate for learning English up to an acceptable level. Because they cannot fully understand the conversation or the atmosphere of events, most of the women in this study experienced lower levels of participation in cultural urban settings compared to their homeland, and compared to native Australians. For example, Safiyya [30s, married with four children, Lebanese] mentioned that she prefers ‘to watch new films at home, not because it is more comfortable, but because of the subtitles.’ For Maya [30s, married with two children, Iranian] missing ‘the joy of watching performances in big theatres’ was notable as she ‘could not completely understand the theatres [performance] in English.’ As a result, most of the participants look for any opportunity to enjoy cultural events in their native languages. Considering that the challenge of living in a new country with a new culture and language is not easy to overcome, participants believe this situation could be eased in two ways:

- Educating migrants in the English language, Australian culture, and other opportunities their new lifestyle could offer
- Providing more facilities and support for ethnic activities at local and national levels

*For example, maybe immigrant women, as much as I've seen [in] my studies and my working every day, there is not places (like museum, libraries) you can find them because they don't find themselves as a match to environment... [Liraz, 40s, married with two children, Israeli]*

## Theme 12: Financial Exclusion

For some participants, mostly those who have lived in Australia for less than 5 years with no financial support, the affordability of public and private spaces and services was the most significant barrier to participating and feeling a sense of belonging. They feel restrained or excluded when they cannot use the same services they used to enjoy in their ethnic homeland. For Ayah [30s, married with two children, Iraqi] it is a matter of concern because her two kid cannot enjoy the same level of extracurricular activities and comfort as a Middle-class Australian child. As an example she refers to swimming classes that ‘cost a fortune’ and ‘some people (both Australian and migrants) cannot afford it.’ The same applies to theme parks, cinemas, and other privately owned public spaces. This feeling of exclusion could be a reason that some women do not participate in other cultural and educational functions like museums and libraries, as discussed in the participation theme.

*It's a bit expensive. In my country it's just a few cents to enter the zoo, it's not that you pay \$150 just entering and then we need to have some lunch there, so at least \$15 for something. It's not quite - it's just one burger or Coke or something so these little things are expensive so at the end of the day you have to spend \$300 or something for one day. [Ayah, 30s, married with two children, Iraqi]*

For Sarah [20s, divorced with 1 child, Iranian] it brings to surface the issue of choice that is believed to be a significant component of ‘personal’ identity in the enculturation process (Fiske 1998).

*For example every house, every apartment are small living room and you can't have any choice. In Iran you can choose your private [space] but here no. Here you don't have any choice because you cannot afford... [20s, divorced with 1 child, Iranian]*

## Summary

In this chapter the twelve themes that emerged from the data analysis phase were discussed in detail as a composite, textural-structural description of the secondary research questions. These twelve themes are the result of analysing and synthesizing the transcribed data from interviews based on Moustakas’ modified Van Kaam method with a focus on the research objectives. In this study, the twelve themes revealed how a migrant woman from the Middle East experiences the urban spaces of Greater Brisbane in her daily life. The twelve themes can be summarised as follows:

### 1. Flexible Understanding of Public and Private Spaces

In this theme an explanation was given regarding the definitions and understanding of how participants experience public and private spaces in their everyday life, and what their concepts of privacy are and how they achieve it. Overall, public space is viewed as being free and open to everyone whilst private space has a self-defined set of rules in where solitude and privacy are of utmost importance. The concept of privacy is defined through two main factors: solitude and invisibility. The most frequently used privacy achieving mechanism applied by Middle Eastern women is the use of a physical barrier to achieve an acceptable level of invisibility that leads to the experience of solitude.

### 2. Personal Appearance and Religious Apparel

In this theme the experiences of Muslim Middle Eastern women who practice Hijab were discussed. For participants in this study the most important aspect of practicing Hijab is their freedom of choice. They emphasised that their Hijab is not a remnant of their homeland but the result of their own choice.

### 3. Sense of Belonging

This theme discussed the factors that motivate or discourage a woman's sense of belonging, sense of place, and place attachment. The role of place, people, and history, as well as the barriers to and enablers of place attachment were also discussed.

### 4. Direct and Inverse Stereotyping

This theme clarified stereotypes from two different viewpoints: the stereotypes experienced by participants during their social encounters with the Australian population; and the stereotypes that are employed by Middle Eastern women in everyday social encounters with non-Middle Eastern and Middle Eastern people.

### 5. Sparse Population

This theme pointed out that sufficient access to amenities and services is the main reason for Middle Eastern women to favour medium to high density suburbs for the choice of home.

### 6. Retreat to the Private Sphere

This theme discussed the tendency of Middle Eastern women to use private spaces as opposed to public spaces. A three-stage mechanism was introduced regarding the development of a sense of belonging and place attachment.

#### 7. Design, Natural Amenities, and Services

This theme mainly discussed the expectations of Middle Eastern women for public spaces as well as their current use of these spaces. Amenities were the main factor for choice of a home or suburb and the apparent lack of amenities was also discussed. Street lighting, shopping streets, and fountains, as well as recreational and sporting facilities were among the highlighted expectations of Middle Eastern women. The importance of natural environment in the everyday life of Middle Eastern women was also presented in detail.

#### 8. Perceived and Real Safety Issues

Different concepts of safety were discussed in this theme as well as the possible relationships between safety and privacy, safety and comfort, and safety and fear. The fluid concept of safety was highlighted along with the barriers to achieve a sense of safety. Privacy was defined as being hidden from the gaze of 'others,' and safety had a close relationship with enclosed spaces (preferably private spaces). Being uncomfortable did not necessarily lead to feeling unsafe when safety was the result of trust in law and its practitioners. Fear of crime was found to create the feeling of being unsafe and in this regard eliminating the causes of fear was the first response to the situation.

#### 9. Trust and Surveillance

In this theme the issue of trust were elucidated through the views of advocates for and opponents of CCTVs. Bad experiences from ethnic homelands, conspiracy theory, and the feeling of being controlled and observed by unknown eyes were the possible reasons given by those opposed to CCTVs.

#### 10. Lack of Nightlife

This theme discussed the most frequent requisite of Middle Eastern women - Nightlife. As a cornerstone of Middle Eastern culture, nightlife was discussed with respect to the possible benefits the vibrancy of nightlife can bring. Safer suburbs, vibrant communities and heightened senses of attachment and belonging were some of the possible outcomes for Middle Eastern wanting a better nightlife in Greater Brisbane.

## 11. Public Participation and the Right to the “Western” City

Participation, as one of the most important practices of citizenship, was elucidated in this theme. Limited knowledge of English language as a barrier to participation plays the main role the lack or shortage of confidence in Middle Eastern women and consequently their avoidance of participating in cultural and social activities.

## 12. Financial Exclusion

In this theme financial exclusion was discussed in relation to a sense of detachment and ignorance. This was experienced by participants who had lived less than six years in Greater Brisbane.

In the next chapter abovementioned themes are analysed and categorised according to four secondary questions of this research. Each secondary question is answered based on possible themes by which the question could be illustrate and understand from the view point of Middle Eastern women of this study.

# Chapter 5: Discussion

Twelve core themes emerged from the individual textural-structural descriptions of the sub-questions. The twelve themes, as a composite textural-structural description of research sub-questions, shape a comprehensive understanding of ‘what’ is the understanding of urban spaces of Greater Brisbane by Middle Eastern women and ‘how’ are these spaces experienced and used by this group of urban dwellers. In this chapter each secondary research questions is answered based on related themes of the composite textural-structural description.

Research Sub-question	Core Theme	Common Theme
How do ME women in Greater Brisbane understand and use urban spaces?	Perception of public space	Define in contrast with private spaces
		Define in contrast with freedom and rules
	Use of public space	Wellbeing
		Open space for family members
		Passing time
What is the relationship between public space and private space for ME women in Greater Brisbane?	Perception of private space	Level of Privacy
		Possible Differences
		Dilemma of Backyard/Balcony
		Home as the Anchor of Belonging
	Flexible Understanding of Public and Private Spaces	pliable understanding
What barriers and enablers to ME women’s use of public space in Greater Brisbane can be attributed to the planning and design of public space?	Socio-Cultural Barriers and Enablers	Appearance
		Sense of Belonging
		Gender Differences/space
	Environmental Barriers and Enablers	Natural Flair
		Design, Infrastructures & Services
	Psychological Barriers and Enablers	Perception of Safety
		Gender Differences
Trust/ The Question of Gaze		
What is needed for public space planning and design in Greater Brisbane to better respond to the needs of ME women?	Cultural Requisite	Nightlife
		Festivals
		Participation
	Environmental Requisite	Design
		Infrastructures & Services
		Accessibility

Table 7: Findings based on the secondary research questions

## Sub-question 1: Understanding and use public space

*How do Middle Eastern women in Greater Brisbane understand and use public space?*

The first of the secondary research question in this study is address through two core themes: Perception of public space, and use of public space. Each core theme is an integral part of several common themes that emerged from individual interviews.

### **Perception of public space**

Middle Eastern women illustrate the concept of public spaces in their everyday life through two different, but overlapping, definitions. Firstly, Middle Eastern women define public space in contrast to private space as a place that is not their home. In the second definition, that identifies how rules can place a line between public and private spaces, public space is recognized according to whether a sense of freedom can be experienced there. That is, public space is where people have to respect some external rules. The first definition emphasises the internalized understanding of private sphere where private is antecedent to the definition of the public. Through the first definition, some women have a solid understanding of the private that is based on, and enhance by, the public/private dichotomy where only one place is associated with the private sphere and it is 'home.'

In contrast, in the second definition, rules are the distinctive difference between private and public where personal rules define the private and external rules define the public. For women with this understanding the concept of private has fluidity and moves with them through urban spaces and settings where they apply personal rules that are normally part of the private sphere/territory (e.g. restaurant table, personal car, a bench in a public park).

### **Use of public space**

Aside from the everyday use of public spaces, such as driving, shopping, and walking, two common themes were highlighted by Middle Eastern women regarding the use of public spaces in daily life: public space as the locus of wellbeing, and family activities. Also, using public spaces as a contrivance to establishing and enhancing a sense of belonging and place attachment, along with utilizing public spaces in socio-political demonstrations, are other ways public spaces are used by this group of urban dwellers.

A women's lifestyle appears to define and shape their use of public spaces. After migration lifestyle undergoes tremendous changes that are more fundamental for Middle Eastern women compared to European and American people (who are among the highest number of migrants in Australia and are socially and culturally more similar to Australians prior to migration). Consequently the process of adaptation for this group of migrants is more complicated and multi-dimensional. Influenced by culture, family, social class, and reference groups, an individual's

lifestyle may or may not change after migration. Considering the differences between Middle Eastern and Australian lifestyle and applying these differences to lifestyle (i.e. change in lifestyle) are two subsequent phases of the adaptation process. Applying Australian or Western lifestyle features varies for each individual and family as a unit and is based on their experiences, cultural demands, and preferences. Also, for each nation and cultural cluster, different lifestyle changes may happen. For instance, using public spaces for exercising is completely new to Iranian women when they use a bicycle in their everyday life because cycling is not permitted in public spaces in their homeland due to religious fatwa. However, spending time in public spaces for recreational purposes or enjoying the tranquillity of national parks are activities that are traditionally experienced by many on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

Using public spaces to promote wellbeing through physical activity or other lifestyle behaviours like socializing is an example of a lifestyle change that is reported by all participants. For some, this was a significant change as they experience and include a new aspect of public spaces in their daily life (e.g. cycling and jogging by Iranian women). In this study, two types of public spaces are used by women for exercise: privatized public spaces like shopping malls (used by two women on a daily basis for walking); and public spaces like local parks and walking trails (used by other eighteen women on a daily or weekly basis for walking, jogging, and cycling).

For the latter group it is not common to exercise where there is no defined pathway or track for walking (which is a common design in many neighbourhood), that is why they choose to drive to the nearest open public space or riverside tracks for daily/weekly physical activities and is stated by participants as being time consuming and as a result, diminishes their adherence to this new lifestyle. Despite the vast use of open public spaces like national parks and walking tracks by women on a weekly and monthly basis (for group exercises like cycling and long distance walking), none of the participants experienced these spaces alone, or with a small group of female friends (less than three people), not even in high accessible public spaces like Mt Coot-tha that offers public transport. Although organising such activities takes time, the organiser faces other difficulties like the logistics of moving about in a group both in remote and close urban settings.

Public space as the locus of wellness-related interventions covers considerable aspects of the use of urban spaces by Middle Eastern women. Participants describe their use of public spaces for many reasons including weekly and monthly gatherings in picnic areas, daily use of riverside parks to experience a sense of peace, spending time in inner city public spaces to pass time, and enjoying public life.

Field observations show that being near a Mosque and having access to *Halal* shops are the most significant reasons explaining a Middle Eastern Muslim's choice of suburb. In addition, being among pioneer groups that previously migrated from their country and affordability of housing, are



the reasons for both Muslim's and non-Muslim's choice of neighbourhood. For non-Muslims and non-religious women, access to shopping centre and the best possible state schools, being as close as possible to the CBD, and affordability of the property were the most common reasons to choose a particular suburb. For some ethnic groups suburb prestige was important and for others not being among, or even close to, their ethnic community was important. Most of the women in this study choose to live in Brisbane or Greater Brisbane cities because of their partner's job status or relatives who also live in this region.

### **Sub-question 2: Public and private spaces of everyday life**

*What is the relationship between public space and private space for Middle Eastern women in Greater Brisbane?*

The understanding of public and private spaces by Middle Eastern women is influenced by three main cores: privacy, safety, and personal beliefs. For these women the characteristics of a private space are privacy, safety, comfort, and self-regulation. Possible alterations in these descriptions could result in changes to the physical expression of private spaces. In this regard, one place could be viewed differently in different social settings. Also, these four descriptions could define a private space in a parallel, coincide, or transverse combination.

In a parallel combination, private space could be a self-regulated safe haven in which privacy is an important issue and where uninvited people are not allowed and invited guests must follow some stipulations. This understanding of privacy is rare among the women in this study which aligns with findings of Quintero (2014) who states that only "for a few participants, privacy is connected to a feeling of safety." It should be note that it is a common theme to define safety according to level of privacy, however defining privacy as a direct result of safety was not common in participants' accounts.

In a coincide combination, private space could be a place with the highest level of privacy that is achievable only if self-regulation is present. In a transverse combination, comfort of the private space is more important than privacy. This concept is supported by Foddy and Finighan (1980), when referring to heterogeneous residential areas, who state that it is possible for privacy to become less important when there is a sense of ease in an individual's relationship and/or when a similar set of standards are accepted and used by people. Distinction between a coincide combination and a transverse combination is demonstrated by the different perceptions of the homes of friends. For participants who define private space in coincide combination, the fact that they have to follow the rules of others means that a friend's home is a 'public' space. For those who

define private space in transverse combination, the level of comfort and closeness is important so a friend's home is considered a private space. A similar pattern is detected in recognising urban spaces as public or private.

Another possible explanation for defining private space through the coincide combination of privacy and self-regulated characteristics, is the importance of differentiation between government-based rules and personal rules. This definition is used by two Iranian participants. Consuming alcohol is forbidden in Iran in public or private spaces and is a punishable offence (80 whips) according to religious fatwa. Therefore, people in these countries tend to disguise their personal activities (like their parties or gatherings) inside their private spaces by assigning a new semi-public use for their private space. This could be a reason that some Middle Eastern people only feel safe and find freedom within the private spaces of their homes.

For these two Iranian participants, experiencing different privacy achieving mechanisms is a powerful means to define an expression of individuality within the controlled and regulated public sphere (by government who are considered as 'others') and is a rebellious assertion of self against authority. Foddy and Finighan's (1980) underscore the temporal dynamics of privacy based on the theories of privacy by Altman (1981) and Westin (1970) where the environmental condition is the main component of privacy achieving mechanisms. In other words, when the government regulates both public and private sphere by means of law, new privacy achieving mechanisms are defined within both spheres in order to balance freedom and restriction and still attain privacy.

This concept of private spaces brings to the surface the different lifestyles of Middle Eastern people and concept of public spaces in this region. In the Western tradition, and as previously discussed in the literature review, public spaces like the Hellenic Agora were used to debate political ideas and are defined as "a realm of freedom and permanence" in contrast to the private spaces or the "realm of necessity and transitoriness" (Habermas 1989). Historically there hasn't been an equivalent for the Hellenic Agora or the Roman Forum in Middle Eastern tradition. Although Agora were introduced to pre-Islamic architecture of the cites in the Middle east, they never had the same function as the Hellenic Agora, except for commercial trades and were simply a space defined by the built structure that surrounded it (Brebba and Boquera 2016, Mehan 2016). In the Islamic era bazaars and the main (and local) Mosque were the centre for practicing official and cultural life. Squares remained as a space defined by other urban spaces such as bazaars, public baths, religious schools and great Mosques (e.g. Naghsh-e-Jahan square in Isfahan- Iran). Consequently, when public spaces have tended to equate to religious or commercial spaces (Mosques, bazaars), life retreated into the domestic sphere.

Even in the architectural design of Middle Eastern houses, internal private space is separated into three zones with different functions (Othman, Aird et al. 2015): one zone that is more private

and is used in everyday life activities (and is a space to welcome female guests); one zone that is close to the house entrance and designed for possible interactions with male guests who do not belong to immediate and extended family and are not “Mahram;” and one zone dedicated to services. The three zones are linked through a courtyard. Nowadays, this model of design is rarely followed in big cities of countries like Iran, Turkey and Lebanon as high-rise buildings are considered more convenient for urban life. However, this architectural design is widely followed in smaller cities and there are many historic houses in these countries, and many new houses in Arab countries, with the same design.

This distinction between public and private is to some extent the same in the modern cities of the Middle East and is the reason for Middle Eastern people to feel safe and find freedom within their private spaces of homes. Therefore, the way in which women with different origins experience privacy in Australia is related to the concept of privacy they learned and experienced back in their homeland. For some women, privacy is ‘not being seen by others’ and for the others it is interwoven with the power and the person/group who define the rules.

For some Muslim women in the study a Mosque is considered as a private space. There is paradoxical element in this definition, as a Mosque should serve as a place where Muslims can come together for prayer. This understanding of private spaces appears to be ingrained in the appeal for a sense of permanence. In Muslim culture a Mosque is a haven to harbour those in need and is therefore permanent, protective, safe and always welcoming. These characteristics align with the requirements some women have for the definition of private space. This concept is also consistent with Biondo’s (2006) claim that in the Western context, a local Mosque represents the centre of a community and is essential to the identity of Muslims.

Banerjee (2001) states there is a decline in traditional public space and realm in the Western context and that the boundary between public and private is blurring. It is of utmost importance that the concept of public and private play complementary roles in urban studies and that the function of these two concepts should be considered and dealt with in a combined manner (Apostol 2007, Kern 2007). In support of Apostol’s suggestions, it appears that for Middle Eastern women there is a distinctive transformation in the conceptual meanings of public and private over time. This study indicates that there is a transformation of the physical expression of these two concepts along with their relationship. This premise is supported by the flexible understanding of public and private spaces by the participants in this study.

As mentioned before, the majority of participants related the concept of private space to the level of privacy they experience in a space. Middle Eastern women have different assumptions regarding the sense of privacy that shape their understanding of public and private spaces. For one

group of participants, privacy is achieved when no one can see them and/or there are physical mechanisms like barriers, walls, and fences to ensure a feeling of invisibility or not being identifiable. The appeal of freedom from surveillance could be due to the need for solitude, anonymity, invisibility, unidentifiability, or a combination of these senses. For the other group, privacy achieving mechanisms are self-regulated processes that move with them through the city. There is a recognizable pattern in these women's assumption of privacy and their tendency to allocate 'private' to a place. Overall the members of the first group are more traditional/classic and members of the second group are more modern.

The author argues that the more a woman identifies herself as "modern," the more their understanding of privacy (and consequently their concept of private space) is aligned with Altman's (1977, 1981) definition of privacy, that is, "the selective control of access to the self." For these 'modern women' privacy is not restricted or dictated by social or religious norms, nor from 'outside' but is restricted by their own personal rules. They perceive themselves as an autonomous independent individual who can choose and control her social relationships according to her level of privacy. For a "modern" Middle Eastern woman who is engaged with advanced knowledge and modern science, and is simultaneously exposed to various sources of information describing the "American Dream," the characteristics of self in the European-American context is considered to be "natural, necessary, healthy, and good" and more appealing.

In the individualist cultural model that prevails in North America and most parts of Europe, the "person is believed to consist of a set of internal and personal attributes such as abilities, talents, personality traits, preferences, subjective feeling states, beliefs and attitudes" (Fiske 1998). Fiske also believes these attributes can enable a person to rise and flourish from within their self, and that these attributes are not subject to the situation or generated by or relative to the person's social context but developed by growing up and living in North America and European ideas, institutions, practices, and meanings. In this regard, the "modern" Middle Eastern migrant woman in Australia must create a new identity borrowing the attributes of a "Western" person or woman by defining and redefining their sense and level of privacy, and privacy achieving mechanisms, in order to fit into this new society. Therefore, the formulation of the concept of privacy for a "modern" Middle Eastern migrant woman owes much to media as a source of filtered information and/or to self-educating practices that are both crucial components of the process of adaptation in the new society.

The understanding of privacy by Middle Eastern women is aligned with Westin's (1970, 2015) theory of privacy. Among the four states of privacy defined by Westin, "Solitude, Intimacy, Anonymity, and Reserve," a Middle Eastern migrant woman's sense of privacy in urban spaces is elucidated best by solitude and reserve. Most of the participants in this study do not refer to a friend's home as a private space due to their hesitation with intimacy. Also, the concept of being a

migrant in a Western country offers them a unique opportunity to feel anonymous within the public realm and that this state of anonymity is not a matter of concern unless it takes place in their ethnic community. Most participants believe their understanding of privacy experienced no considerable change after migration. This finding does not support Westin's theory of privacy applicable to Western democracies. That is, Westin believes the consistency of his theory with the socio-political values of Western democracies results in the specification of states and functions of privacy to political systems. While Middle Eastern countries are not known for their democratic political system, the understanding of privacy by Middle Eastern women who have lived a considerable part of their lives in that region is aligned with Westin's theory of privacy.

With respect to the functions and purposes of privacy indicated by Westin (1970, 2015) that include personal autonomy, emotional release, self-evaluation, and limited/protected communication, most Middle Eastern women in this study referred to personal autonomy (when they avoid being exposed to others) and emotional release (when they have a "time out" from social demands and provide themselves with opportunities for emotional release) when defining privacy in urban spaces. Self-evaluation was also referred to Muslim women who choose to wear the Hijab in public spaces and integrate their experience of 'being different' into a meaningful acknowledgement of their religious contemplations.

### **Sub-question 3: Barriers to and enablers in use of public space**

*What are the barriers to and enablers of Middle Eastern migrant women's use of public space and how they can be attributed to the planning and design of public space in Greater Brisbane?*

To answer the third sub-question of this study it is essential to understand and address the barriers to and enablers of public space use by Middle Eastern women. These barriers and enablers, discussed in detail below, can be divided into three categories: socio-cultural barriers and enablers, designed and natural amenities and services, and perception of safety.

#### **Socio-Cultural Barriers and Enablers**

There are three core themes describing socio-cultural barriers and enablers that influence the spatiotemporal presence and use of public spaces by Middle Eastern women: personal appearance and religious apparel, sense of belonging, and sense of community.

The first theme is about the relationship of participants with their appearance and the way they present their cultural values through their appearance. This theme is mostly about the role of personal beliefs in the everyday lives of participants that could be a remnant of their homeland or

could emanate from cultural differences between the culture experienced in their homeland and the Australian culture. In each case, the Hijab is a means by which these women identify themselves and establish and/or enhance a sense of identity.

Stone (1962) believes there is a difference between self and identity by viewing self as an object and stating that attitude is established by appearance, “identity establishes what and where the person is in social terms” (p.93). Identity is stabilised when others define the person as a social object through acknowledgement of their participation or membership in social relations (by assigning the same words of identity that he appropriates for himself or announces) (idem p. 93). In other words, having identity means that the person is “situated’ and has a meaning of self by the coincidental placement and announcement of that identity. Therefore, appearance (the Hijab) for these women is the way they establish both their self and their identity. And when their identity as a Muslim woman is not acknowledged or appreciated by others they would feel they do not belong. That is why these Middle Eastern women emphasise the matter of choice in wearing the Hijab. That is, they choose to wear the Hijab and not because of their family values. For instance, the daughters of Nina’s oldest brother who live in Iraq, have never worn a headcovering in their whole life and this situation is completely acceptable for her family. Nina [30s, married with three children, Iraqi] even showed their photos to the researcher both to admire their beauty and as an evidence for her claim.

Despite the fact that wearing a headscarf in the public sphere is a symbol in which personal piety and public assertion of Islamic difference is conflated. This action also has a deep personal aspect by which these women define their relationships within their private sphere. In this manner ‘the point of the Hijab is not to expose yourself in a very sexy way for other men’ and ‘it is not about what women wear it's about how they feel, how they express their love to their husband.’ In this point of view, Hijab is not about wearing a veil to express Islamic piety, but about covering the body and hair to value the expectations of a Muslim woman. For instance, Nina [30s, married with three children, Iraqi] is comfortable with her appearance and she ‘usually wear colourful head scarves and never wear black’ in order to cheer up herself and her colleagues and at the same time she never ‘wear short sleeves shirts or tight jeans.’ This aspect of Hijab is described best by Ragland (2008) who talks about the veil preventing jouissance and calming the effects of such drives. Ragland suggests that covering up a women’s sexuality by traditional veil (covering her gaze, her lips, sometimes even her voice) would results in the jouissance of woman being proscribed. Therefore in a psychological or a sociological picture the purpose of veil/Hijab would be the obliteration of the woman’s sexuality and consequently defining her as the unique property of one man or one family (idem p. 9).

The appearance of Muslim women and men also comprises a considerable amount of stereotypes associated with the socio-cultural life of Middle Eastern women. A dichotomy of

'choice' and 'obligation' is evident in the understanding of covering by Middle Eastern women (both for men and women). When five women of the study who practice Hijab by their own choice consider it as freedom, the other fifteen women (including Elif [20s, married with one child, Turkish] who occasionally wears a Hijab) propound it as an obligation that originates from legal strictures (like Iran and Saudi Arabia), from social conventions (like some parts of Turkey), or from a phallic authority (the examples are all over Middle East). Also Burka and its modality is criticised and questioned by almost all participants (except for two, Rana [20s, married with two children, Saudi Arabian] and Samar [50s, widowed with five children, Lebanese]) illustrating an example of stereotypical attitudes initiated from the possibility of harm. As Fiske and colleagues (2007) state, experience and/or media propaganda along with the fear of the others (as cited in Sandercock 1998) play the main roles in shaping this stereotype. The same trend is seen towards Muslim men who wear traditional apparel or have a Muslim/Middle Eastern look.

The second theme is about a sense of belonging and how Middle Eastern women embody, perceive, shape and reshape their sense of belonging as a migrant in Australia. It also shows how this sense of belonging helps them with, or is affected by, their use of urban spaces. According to Young (1997) urban space in every country should be arranged in a way that "supports the bodily habits and routines of those who dwell there" and is where there are always shared sites in which familiar actions are performed (Edensor 2006). When these shared sites disappear, by war or natural disasters (like what happened in Iraq, Syria, and Bam in Iran) or by migration to new homeland, a sense of alienation or a loss of belonging is possible creating a need to restore familiar spaces, routines and timings by recreation of familiar time-space. Bennett (2014) argues that "place plays an integral role" in recreation of familiarity as it defines "who we are, and, consequently, how everyday life is lived." The author argues that developing a sense of belonging through familiar spaces within the city and private sphere, along with the possibility of participating in multicultural festivals to maintain and establish familiar rituals, are key to Middle Eastern women feel 'at home' in their new homeland.

These findings are consistent with O'Reilly's (2000) suggestions from her study of a British expatriate community in Spain. O'Reilly puts forward the importance of daily rituals for migrants to establish a shared identity of 'Britishness' within the unfamiliar context of urban life. This argument also aligns with Miller's (2003) idea of the three cornerstones of belonging, history, people, and place, when women reproduce history through stories from the past (especially stories of the glorious era of their region), using their native language, and sharing their cuisine with other people within specific places of their private sphere and/or through the daily use of public spaces. In this study, the idea of belonging is driven by the idea of 'elective belonging' and aligns with that

proposed by Savage et al. (2005) where belonging is defined by choice rather than historical attachment:

*Belonging is not to a fixed community, with the implication of closed boundaries, but is more fluid, seeing places as sites for performing identities. Individuals attach their own biography to their 'chosen' residential location, so that they tell stories that indicate how their arrival and subsequent settlement is appropriate to their sense of themselves. People who come to live in an area with no prior ties to it, but who can link their residence to their biographical life history, are able to see themselves as belonging to the area (P29).*

The bonding function of multicultural/ethnic festivals that emerged from this study is also reinforced by Massey's (1994, 1995) idea of a thriving place where space is the product of social relations and changes in social organisation of spaces disrupts the understanding of place. A remedy for this disruption is rethinking and reorganising the place as a locus of intersecting social relations and time-space activities. "Some of these relations will be contained within the place; others will stretch beyond it, tying any particular locality into wider relations and processes in which other places are implicated too" (p120). The author argues that ethnic festivals present a setting in which familiar prior-migration experiences can initiate a sense of belonging and attachment to familiar places through social relations.

The third and final theme is sense of community and the impact of social bonds on the everyday use of urban spaces by Middle Eastern women. The majority of participants experienced almost the same journey after migration establishing new bonds within their ethnic and Australian communities. For those who had relatives in Greater Brisbane, the journey was less challenging as they had the opportunity to be connected to reliable circle(s) of friends/relatives who share similar language, beliefs and understanding. For unaccompanied migrants the importance of ethnic gatherings and festivals is more evident as it is a promising way to explore within their ethnic communities to find a reliable circle(s) of friends.

After establishing roots in a new society, the focus of exploration moves to engagement with Australian communities and the formation of new bonds with communities other than their ethnic community. For most of the women in this study, this phase was experienced through voluntary activities and/or workplace relations to create, find, or establish new sources of attachment to different communities. In this phase there is a tendency to distance themselves from their ethnic community and minimise interactions with their close circle(s) of friends. The researcher argues that the interchangeable use of terms like Middle Eastern, Arab, Muslims, and sometimes Terrorists



by media, and consequently by Australians, is the main reason for Middle Eastern women to deny or diminish their bonds with their origin in some stage of adaptation.

The focus of all women on distinct aspects of their identity (national, religious, and international identity) and the distinction of their cultural experiences from their religious experiences (if applicable) is substantial evidence for this claim. Although for the majority of women the ‘distancing phase’ is temporary and sometimes the result of a societal breakdown that follows an unpleasant situation related to the region of Middle East or Islam in general, the effect of such self-denying experiences could cause some irreversible damages to their sense of self.

Moreover, the author suggests that language plays the most significant role in developing a sense of belonging for Middle Eastern women in two ways. Firstly, acquiring English knowledge is a tool for empowerment and for reproduction of history through people and places as well as accessibility to the mother tongue within the ethnic community. Secondly, language is a method of communication and more importantly, a mechanism of power as the language used by individuals defines his/her position within social and special contexts (Hanks 2005).

The importance of accessibility to mother tongue must be considered, even though all participants in this study were able to communicate in English, many referred to other migrants from their country of birth that could not speak in English yet and access to the mother tongue provides these migrants with a means to communicate and live, at least until a basic level of English knowledge is gained (which is crucial to develop a sense of belonging). Additionally, speaking the ethnic language provides participants with a sense of comfort and a safe zone within the space of otherness in order to consolidate a shared identity with other members of their ethnic community. This outcome is aligned with findings of Johnson and Miles (2014) in their study of Arab Muslim women in America where the “contribution of Arabic language to the lived experiences of both immigrant and non-immigrant Arab women.”

### **Environmental Barriers and Enablers**

There are a wide range of ideas from the Middle Eastern women of this study about the design of Brisbane and its public spaces. Some prefer low-rise buildings whilst some enjoy the modern look of Brisbane City and the Gold Coast. Adequate and well-situated urban spaces such as public parks, walking trails, and sporting and recreational facilities also support healthy behaviour by encouraging social activity and physical and psychological wellbeing. Regarding public spaces like parks, all the participants emphasise the importance of having a park within walking distance, even though the majority of participants believe parks in this region should have more elements of design. Lack of sufficient playgrounds in neighbourhoods, lack of landscape design, and lack of trails and sporting and recreational facilities are stated as the drawbacks of public spaces in Greater

Brisbane suburbs. For some participants there were some negative points regarding the landscape design of the CBD such as the absence of planted flowers, imperfection of waterfronts, and positioning of benches. Also, child friendly environment were the first and most important requisite of Middle Eastern women with kids.

All participants emphasised the importance of convenient access to public places such as parks and shopping areas. Being close enough to the CBD, being close to the neighbourhood centre, access to a shopping centre with every day facilities, a good childcare, and a reputable school were the points to be checked when looking for a home (for buying and renting). With respect to access to public transport, which is another one of the important check points of choosing home location, there were many negative points and possible suggestions for refinement. Inefficiency of public transport was the biggest barrier to using urban spaces for many of these women, especially for those who could not drive as this inefficiency restricts their freedom of movement and jeopardises their right to the city. This problem becomes more disturbing considering inadequate or expensive parking spaces in the inner city areas. Also, some participants mention quality and quantity of road signage in Greater Brisbane as a barrier to the routine use of urban spaces.

### **Psychological Barriers and Enablers**

Level of safety plays the main role in defining the place of public spaces in the everyday life of Middle Eastern women. Two different definitions elucidate the assumption of safety by Middle Eastern women: common perception of safety and cultural perception of safety. The first definition is similar to the general definition of safety and considers to what extent public spaces protect urban dwellers from crime and violence whereas the term ‘women’s safety’ generally refers to “prevention, positive and pro-active strategies and policies which work to create safer environments for women through direct partnerships between local organizations and municipal governments” (Shaw and Capobianco 2004). The second definition includes the tendency to be hidden from eyes of others who could be spies who work for the totalitarian regime of their country of birth, a curious neighbour, or any random person that lives in the city. This concept of safety is often associated with the private sphere. The equivalent concept defining safety in a public realm is closer to the state of anonymity in Westin’s (1970, 2015) theory of privacy where a person feels safe when they are among many and cannot be recognised or known by any.

The first definition of privacy forms the basis of the general response by all Middle Eastern women in the study when asked ‘what is safety?’ The second definition is used to complement the first definition and is mentioned by fifteen participants when responding to the question about which places they consider to be safe. The author argues that the definitions of safety and privacy

are interwoven into the concept of privacy for Middle Eastern women. In other words, a place that is deemed private is also considered safe even if this privacy is acquired through anonymity within the public realm. A possible explanation for this tendency is the flexible understanding of public and the private that was discussed previously. In this manner, privacy achieving mechanisms could be redefined and/or altered by safety achieving mechanisms making creating the possibility of exclusion from urban setting more likely.

The author understands that this tendency to be hidden from the eyes of others has its roots in the cultural norms of behavior for Middle Eastern women and cultural preferences in their country of birth considering the strict divisions of space for men and women in both public and private spaces (Thompson 2003, Najmabadi 2005). Although, for some participants the fear of ‘being seen by others’ may render spaces less troublesome at night-time and make it easier to navigate through a neighborhood knowing that they are being watched by anonymous but local eyes. This aspect of safety was raised by participants when talking about the importance of nightlife within a neighborhood.

Efficient access to affordable public transport is considered as a safety achieving mechanism for Middle Eastern women and was stated by eleven participants, three of who cannot drive. Public transport can offer mobility within, and beyond, the familiar territory leading to a sense of freedom that could increase women’s self-confidence and sense of self-worth. The author argues that this heightened self-confidence can result in an enhanced sense of safety. This argument is consistent with the changing concept of safety over past few years in which safety is viewed more than just in relation to violence and is included in new aspects of women’s lives like “enhancing sense of confidence, security, and social importance, financial security and autonomy, and having a sense of self-worth”(Lambrick and Travers 2008).

#### **Sub-question 4: What is needed?**

*What is needed for public space planning and design in Greater Brisbane to better respond to the needs of Middle Eastern women?*

Cultural and environmental requisite are the two main themes to elucidate and address the needs and expectations of Middle Eastern women concerning public spaces in Greater Brisbane. Cultural requisites emphasize cultural differences experienced by Middle Eastern women and focus on the needs and expectations that are related to women’s lifestyle: nightlife, festivals, and participation. Environmental requisites are mostly related to the ideas from Middle Eastern regarding a better urban place. These needs, although suggested by a small group of urban dwellers,

could represent the needs of any other resident of the Greater Brisbane region as they emerged from the experience of individuals in a specific time-space setting. This theme covers suggestions for design, infrastructures, and services provided by state and government.

### **Cultural Requisite**

The most explicit and frequent requisite of Middle Eastern women in this study is the availability of nightlife within different levels of urban settings. Having the opportunity to enjoy late-night shopping on the weekend and having access to a wider range of retail outlets alongside the chain supermarkets like Coles and Woolworth during the week is mentioned by all participants. In Middle Eastern countries the closing hours for most of retail outlets, shops, boutiques, malls and department stores is between 9 and 10 pm. For large malls in capital cities the closing times are usually after midnight. In Dubai malls are open until 3 am and there are some 24 hour malls in some cities of the Middle East like Baghdad, that ironically is not considered as safe as it was in the pre-invasion era.

For example, in Tehran, the policy of a uniform closing time at 12 am was introduced to retail owners not long ago in the first half of 2012 and encountered a considerable amount of debate, complaints, protests, and even civic resistance. It was simply not acceptable for both retail owners and consumers to face this restriction in public life and surrender to ‘unjustified legal demand’ for change in their lifestyle. The same story applies to most cities in the Middle East that has more than 31 metropolitan areas and a population of over 1.5 million. Moreover, along with the lively shopping spaces (streets, boulevards, malls etc.), the scenery of public spaces all through the cities contributes to a vivid vibrant life after sunset until midnight, especially during the spring and summer months. Urban forests, parks, green spaces, and sometimes even the green grass of city roundabouts are hosts of ordinary denizens who are enjoying a night out. More importantly, this lifestyle does not follow the alco-centric model which is familiar for urban practitioners who have studied and investigated Western culture for decades (for its everlasting negative aspects of exclusionary, homogenising and criminogenic) as in many Middle Eastern cities (e.g. Dubai, Riyadh, Tehran) consuming alcohol is forbidden and culture of bars and clubs is obscured or is practiced undergrounds.

Ideas for nightlife in the Greater Brisbane region is deferred from the nightlife experienced in the Far East within the laissez-faire hours of the night (however in most cities laissez-faire hours are not common or happen only occasionally). The Middle Eastern nightlife is an extension of daily life with more spirited offerings such as spending quality time with family members in a park and having a home-cooked dinner while enjoying breeze of a summer night, walking through shopping streets and boulevards and enjoying the social vibrancy of urban public settings, or spending time in

waterfront precincts being struck by the friendliness and tranquillity of the place. Undoubtedly this lifestyle endures a significant change after migration to Australia.

Night-time economy (NTE) and its modified version, evening and night-time economy (ENTE) has been at the crest of urban studies for more than two decades. Through first-wave and second-wave research and practice, a considerable body of knowledge (mostly in English and Australian context) supports the third-wave of NTE research that is “emphasising the exclusionary outcomes that can result from securitisation and gentrification of the NTE; processes that operate both top-down and at street level” (Hadfield 2014). The idea of nightlife proposed by Middle Eastern women in this study is mostly consistent with ideal nightlife that has emerged from third-wave studies and literature (idem). In the socio-spatial practices that occur during the nightlife in a shopping street, ordinary people such as pedestrians, consumers, shoppers, vendors, art performers, and security personnel carry out various “informal modes of appropriation, negotiation and democratisation” that define, shape, and furbish the experience of urban life and consequently improve and enhance social sustainability. The possibility of enjoying public life in public spaces of the city after day-light is a charming proposition that could create some new opportunities for the thriving cities of Greater Brisbane. Prosperous economy, economic viability, accessibility of urban spaces by a wider range of urban dwellers, higher level of safety, practice of the tolerance of plural norms, diversity of people, businesses and design aesthetics, higher level of life satisfaction, and participation by civil society are among the possible out-comes of this Middle Eastern requisite (Yeo and Heng 2013, Hadfield 2014, Eder and Öz 2015)

### *Multicultural Festivals*

For Middle Eastern women participating in this study, the multicultural, cultural, and ethnic festivals are as educational as they are enjoyable and participants believe that cultural events allow them to fulfil a thriving sense of belonging both to the society and to the place by creating a ‘feeling of harmony.’ While multi-cultural or cultural festivals provide the opportunity to interact with other ethnicities within the multicultural context of the society, they also help social networks expand which is believed to be one of the main components of a successful society. Ethnic festivals act as mediums by which participants experience a sense of belonging and at-homeness.

Dance, music, and food sharing are important features of community life in the Middle East (El Hamamsy and Soliman 2013) and ethnic festivals are the best medium by which all these features can be experienced in one place. Also, affiliating good experiences in multicultural/ethnic festivals with the use of public spaces is expressed by all participants. These memories cover a wide range of cultural events from religious festivals like *Eid al-Fitr* (end of Ramadan festival) to the

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras festival. According to Middle Eastern women, being among people from different cultures and having the opportunity to explore and observe interesting aspects of other cultures is the main reason for multicultural festival participation. For the majority of participants being among people of other cultures was a way of establishing self-confidence as a migrant, and as a result the feeling of belonging was enhanced. Experiencing different cultures and living in a multicultural country is mentioned by all participants as an incentive to augment the sense of belonging, as it helps them to feel more comfortable living among not just Australians, but people from all around the world. Although when comparing Melbourne and Sydney with Brisbane, eight women preferred these cities for the main reason that these cities are 'more multicultural' and have more multicultural/ethnic events. Also these participants stated that they 'feel more comfortable and belong' when they are in those cities based on their multicultural nature.

The concept of multicultural/ethnic festivals as the medium for developing a sense of belonging is aligned with the findings in a Canadian study by McClinchey (2014) who explored the "narratives of sense of place at a community multicultural festival." She argued that the place itself is not matter of debate in developing a sense of place as it varies for each individual, but the reasons behind the individuals' choices are important as they experience quite similar processes to find meaningful places in their life. This process is a combination of a 'sense of belonging, place attachment (as an identity enhancer), and the feeling of being comfortable, rooted, or connected to one's roots.'

As previously discussed, the author believes ethnic festivals present a setting in which places that were familiar prior to migration feature in the new homeland (host country) as meaningful places. That is, one function of ethnic festivals is to initiate a sense of belonging and attachment through familiar experiences and new social relations. This argument is consistent with the findings of McClinchey (2014) that refer to the role of festivals in connecting multi-ethnic festival exhibitors with their interpretations of place, and further suggest that this interpreted place could refer to a migrant's country of origin. McClinchey also indicates that 'these connections may be unique to multi-ethnic or ethnic events,' again this perspective is consistent with the understanding and experience of Middle Eastern women when they participate in managing ethnic events or are attending one.

Overall, ethnic and multi/cultural festivals could play a significant role in the use of urban public spaces by Middle Eastern women by enhancing their sense of belonging, developing attachment to place, and providing a setting in which they connect themselves to familiar/meaningful places from their country of origin. In this respect, ethnic festivals in particular, refine, modify, and promote different mechanisms that are used by Middle Eastern women to

actively connect to their experiences from their country of birth and new homeland. These connections assist in developing social relations in the process of place making by Middle Eastern migrant women. Mechanisms through these which active connections are produced and developed are as follows:

1. Possibility of speaking in their ethnic language, which as mentioned before, provides a comfort zone for exchanging, communicating, and maintaining culture
2. Possibility of developing social networks and exploring within or beyond their ethnic community in order to re-establish circle(s) of reliable, similar, and/or diverse friend/peers
3. Possibility of transferring ethnic social capital through ethnic food sharing, music, dance, and other cultural activities to second generation who have no or a limited sense of place toward their ethnic roots
4. Possibility of reproducing a sense of pride and at-homeness through rituals and sharing identity activities within a specific time-space setting
5. Possibility of heightening a sense of self and self-confidence by interacting with other members of Australian multicultural urban settings, including Australians and migrants, and improving sense of belonging, wither consciously or unconsciously, by experiencing a sense of self within the pervasive context of multiculturalism.

### *Participation*

Lefebvre argues that the city is an '*oeuvre*' or a work in which all its citizens participate (as cited in Mitchell 2012). This participation involves a constant struggle of creating, claiming, and appropriating urban public spaces. Mitchell (2012) argues that the struggle of citizens to assert their right to the city "is the only way that the right to public space can be maintained and the only way that social justice can be advanced." The right of Middle Eastern women to the city, as the author argues, is jeopardised by their inconspicuous presence in urban social settings of Greater Brisbane. There could be two reasons for this feeble presence; lack of confidence presents a barrier to mixing and participating, and the patriarchal authorities of household and community that define and restrain women's mobility and accessibility.

This lack of confidence could come from an inadequate knowledge of English as a second language that cause self-expression to be inarticulate leading to a sense of exclusion. This observation was made in an interview involving one participant in this study. According to the author, even though the patriarchal concept is undergoing change or decline, its

heavy sedimentation is the reason it appears in almost every aspect of Middle Eastern women's lives. The patriarchal concept has endured for decades and centuries within patriarchal cultures, as such the process of neutralization and obliteration requires patience and is a constant struggle.

In general, participation as civic right needs to be practiced more by Middle Eastern women and this cannot happen unless adequate knowledge and understanding is offered with an aspiration for change.

### **Environmental Requisite**

Planning, management and maintenance of cities' infrastructure, services and facilities are accepted to be critical components of urban settlements and the quality and quantity of these components could be an index for evaluating a neighbourhood. Amenities are the most important factor in estimation of land value and in most cities land values change based on the quality and quantity of access to good schools, health services, fast transport, recreation sites, and employment opportunities (Newman 2014). Analysing the data from interviews in this study shows to what extent infrastructure, services and facilities are meeting the current needs of Middle Eastern women as urban dwellers whilst revealing what these urban settlements offer and what they lack. Furthermore, the data analysis also outlined the importance of natural environment as an incentive for Middle Eastern women to understand and use urban spaces. Overall the advantages and disadvantages of a place were as follows:

- Inadequate or derelict landscapes
- Water fountains and waterfront precinct within the CBD or in neighbourhood centres
- Damaged and maintenance footpaths
- Insufficient or unintelligible urban signage
- Unisex toilets
- Lack of comfortable or well-placed benches in public spaces
- Insufficient walking and cycling trails
- Lack of sporting and recreational facilities in neighbourhoods and/or within walking distance
- Neighbourhood facilities within walking distance
- Lack of street lights in suburban areas
- Absence of prayer rooms in public spaces especially in shopping centres
- Public transportation facilities and services



For the participants in this study, the characteristics of a private space were sense of privacy, safety, comfort, and managing the place according to their personal regulation. For the majority of participants the architectural aspects of their homeland was more desirable. Although from a social point of view, they all prefer to live in an environment with less interruption to their privacy.

### **Summary**

In this chapter secondary research questions were answered based on related themes of composite textural-structural description and common themes driven from data analysed in relation to relevant bodies of knowledge.

The first sub-question of the research was answered through two core themes: perception of public space, and use of public space and was illustrated through use and understanding of public spaces in the everyday life of Middle Eastern migrant women. The second sub-question was addressed through the core themes of perception of private space, and flexible understanding of public and private spaces, and was mainly about understanding the concepts of “the public” and “the private” according to Middle Eastern women and possible transformations in this understanding during their time of residency in Australia. As for the third sub-question which examined the everyday experience of Middle Eastern women in public spaces, three core themes were derived from the analysis of data: cultural barriers and enablers, environmental barriers and enablers, and perception of safety. The last sub-question investigated the possible needs and expectations of Middle Eastern migrant women with findings from the study proposing two cultural and environmental requisites to address this question.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

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*A city is composed of different kinds of men; similar people cannot bring a city into existence (Aristotle, Politics)*

In this chapter the characteristics of suitable public spaces for Middle Eastern women that were derived from the findings of the research are summarised and analysed in relation to topical literature. The ways in which these findings advance research in this field are also identified and followed by the implications of these findings for helping researchers, practitioners, and community members plan and design public spaces.

One of the main focal points of this study was to present the possible characteristics of suitable public spaces for Middle Eastern women in Greater Brisbane by considering their cultural and environmental needs and expectations. To address this issue the author identifies Conviviality (Peattie 1998, Shaftoe 2008), Diversity (Sennett 1992), and Livability (Whyte 1980, Carr, Francis et al. 1993) as the main characteristics of an ideal public space in the production of democratic urban spaces. These three characteristics are based on the findings from this study and address the understanding and expectation of Middle Eastern migrant women in Australia. Additionally, in order to illustrate the ideal public spaces for Middle Eastern women, the author conducted a comparison, based on these three characteristics, between two public spaces in Brisbane city, Queen Street (including Botanic Garden) and South Bank. The three characteristics emerged from data analysis from in-depth interviews enriched by field observation.

Conviviality is the essence of urbanity and as Shaftoe (2008) states it presents the sociability and festivity of urban spaces. Every “open, public locations where citizens can gather, linger or wander through” (p. 4) is considered as a convivial public space which according to Carr, Francis et al. (1993) is the “heart of democratic living.” Within a civil society, conviviality of public spaces becomes more conceivable through the idea of democratic conviviality that is introduced by Peattie (1998) who defines it as “small-group rituals and social bonding in serious collective action, from barn raisings and neighbourhood clean-ups to civil disobedience that blocks the streets or invades the missile site” (1998, p.246 cited in Banerjee 2001, p.15). A demonstration of conviviality is the free Latin dancing at Reddacliff Place on a Friday night that was mentioned repeatedly by participants as one of their best memories of the Brisbane CBD (Image 1: This image is taken from

Night Noodle Markets 2017 and was not shown to participants of the research. This picture illustrate the vibrancy of nightlife when a diverse range of activities is offered to urban dwellers.



<https://www.goodfoodmonth.com/brisbane/noodles/>

*Image 1: The Night Noodle Markets, South Bank, Brisbane*

In this study conviviality refers to the democratic aspect of the production of urban spaces and represents the lived space of Lefebvre's triad (Lefebvre 1991). It also brings forth the dynamic concept of spatial production in which citizens are the main source of possible changes in their environment providing them the chance to influence the world they live in towards more personalized and adapted spaces. These possible changes allocate character and soul to urban spaces and increase their usability. In other words, the 'conceived spaces' of knowledge and action are improved by interactive citizens who incrementally transform, recreate, and reproduce 'lived spaces' by adapting their environment based on their needs in order to assert their 'right to the city' (Lefebvre 1991, Lefebvre 1996).

In addition, conviviality is pertinent to the desirability of public spaces. In this study desirability implies two different subjects: the social vibrancy of a space and the visual endearment of a space. Nightlife, as it is experienced in the Middle East and Far East, is the main concern of the social vibrancy whilst well-designed and well-managed planned landscapes are examples of the visual endearment of an urban space. In this regard, the author argues that a convivial public space is a human-scaled asymmetric space with plenty of ergonomic seats (preferably movable) and a variety of vegetation within an exciting landscape (planned or natural) with natural elements like

water and fire, and a combination of sheltered and open spaces to enjoy in all-weather as well as appreciate the beauty of the Australian sky.

Comparisons based on the conviviality of public spaces results in a higher ranking for South Bank compared to Queen Street. Although Queen Street is the heart of the Brisbane city with plenty of well-designed and well-maintained urban fixtures, South Bank was more desirable for almost all participants. The possibility of memory-making through events and festivals held in South Bank was higher with most women associating a large portion of their good memories of being in a public space with South Bank. For most women, Friday nights in Queen Street awaken mixed emotions of joy and fear (of attack), happiness and hesitation (of drunk men), trust (of the police) and suspicions (of *strangers* in the space e.g. aboriginals, homeless, transients and backpackers). South Bank on the other hand was associated with a sense of familiarity and belonging for some of the women (who had English classes in Southbank TAFE). The openness of the place and the possibility of enjoying the scenery at any hour of the day was emphasised and compared to the restricted hours of using Queen Street (after hours use of Queen Street was not mentioned by any of the women as they believe it becomes deserted after dark). Also Queen Street was described as being awry as it covers only a short distance and is a car-free walkable path without the glamorous features of a world-class leisure street.

The idea of diversity in the city is to some extent due to Aristotle (2015) when he addressed cities as an arena in which people with different backgrounds gather and experience everyday life emphasising the idea of diversity as the very reason for the existence of cities (Sennett 2012). Sennett (2003) also describes a city as an “instrument of impersonal life, the mould in which the diversity and complexity of persons, interests and tastes becomes available as social experience” (p. 339) and believes the medium through which urban dwellers practise this social experience of diversity and complexity is public space. Production of a diverse public space occurs only when the dominant tendency of interventions to “clean out the spaces of cohabitation” or engineering the contact (Amin 2012, p. 60) is questioned and improved by policies and participation-encouraging procedures in production of urban spaces.

Diverse public spaces, as the locus of social interactions and social experiences, are more likely to be considered as successful spaces when they offer the possibility of intercultural interaction along with the possibility of co-presence of users with different backgrounds (Wilson 2014). In this regard, the more functional a public space is the more urban dwellers are likely to experience social life by interacting through the medium of speech and persuasion (d'Entrèves 2000). In other words, and as Young (1990) indicates “the interfusion of groups in the city occurs partly because of the multiuse differentiation of social space. What makes urban spaces interesting, draws people out

in public to them, gives people pleasure and excitement, is the diversity of activities that they support” (p. 239).

The need for multifunctional public spaces is emphasised by Sennett (1992) who argues that by reducing and trivialising the city, and specifically urban spaces, to a limited set of functions could eliminate social contact and consequently prevent a balanced social life for individuals and in collective dimensions. In this study diversity as a characteristic of vibrant public spaces implies both multicultural and multifunctional aspects of an urban space. The author argues that diversity of use and diversity of users are the key factors in democratic spatial production. Therefore the author argues that publicity (Sennett 1992), civility (Barber 1998) and multi-functionality of public spaces are the main factors for producing and developing successful urban spaces.

According to Sennett (1992) ‘survival communities’ are the means by which the publicity of a public space can be fulfilled. Urban dwellers of survival communities tend to recognize conflicts but do “not to try to purify them away” and therefore they demand and try to apply two changes within the structure of urban life: the “change in the scope of bureaucratic power in the city,” and the “change in the concept of order in the planning of the city” (p.309). By recognition and application of these changes, the author argues that urban dwellers as “true citizens”(Lefebvre 2007), are able to recreate urban spaces that are more adapted to their everyday needs and lifestyle subsequently claiming and acclaiming their right to the city.

In this respect civility of a space plays conveys places that are not occupied by people engaged in political activities such as voting and jury services, or in commercial activities such as working, shopping, and consuming (Barber 1998). Instead, these places can be used for socializing, people watching, and/or leisure and relaxing in the manner illustrated by Soja’s (1996) ‘third place;’ they facilitate voluntary and contractual communications between individuals within urban settings and at the same time provide a zone for members of a community to interact and thrive through social bonding.

Civility of public spaces also brings to the conversation the concept of Baudelaire's *flâneur*; a wanderer within the urban context who became a symbol of modernity in the nineteenth century. In this study *flâneur* (is a wide concept that predicated both male and female) is an urban dweller who enjoys the social life of public spaces without being engaged in interactions between other people. *Flâneur* is an observer through the lens of a camera, windows of a shop, or his/her own eyes. In this regard a *flâneur* could be a woman who prefers to walk through a shopping street enjoying her presence within the lively, thriving, and ongoing dynamics of the street as well as window-shopping colourful shops, or a *flâneur* could be a woman who likes to sit on a bench in the CBD and take photos of the vibrant life of the city. Overall, public spaces that can fulfil both civility and livability characteristics of urban spaces have the capacity to be enjoyed by a *flâneur*,

provide users with a variety of choices to enjoying civil life (preferably with no or minimum charges), and can address both individual and communal aspects of human beings.

Multi-functionality of public spaces could be understood through the concept of a diverse experiential urban environment (Penn, Perdikogianni et al. 2009) in which the diversity of functions (mixed land use) and textures (in height, material, and design) in a space are important factors in the production of public spaces. In this regard land use and its effect on physical, spatial and material properties of the built environment is of utmost importance. Moreover, the effects of land use upon “human occupation densities, movement patterns and behaviours; the economic life of land parcels, and the relation of these to development density and human occupancy” are key factors in the experience of urban diversity by citizens (idem p. 220).

Both Queen Street and South Bank display a high level of diversity according to the experiences of Middle Eastern women in these places. The multi-functionality of both spaces are similar, however Queen Street has higher level of civility while South Bank shows a higher level of publicity. Both spaces provide a good mixture of functions and activities (bars and restaurants, seasonal festivals, cinema complexes, and tranquil spaces). Queen Street was mentioned repeatedly as the best spot to experience space as a *flâneur*. It provides women with the opportunity of being among other people, but as a *stranger*, enjoying the vibrancy of the CBD with no or minimal personal contact with people creating the feeling of power by watching and not being watched/noticed.

Based on field observations the author believes that South Bank could offer the same set of experiences but it seems Middle Eastern women in this study prefer to enjoy life as a *flâneur* in Queen Street rather than South Bank. In the author’s opinion, the variety of activities (business, leisure, shopping etc.) in Queen Street (especially during the working days) encourage a more diverse crowd in this space and is possibly the reason that participants in this study prefer to spend time as a *stranger* in Queen Street. South Bank provides a better opportunity for intercultural dialogue, mostly due to various festivals held in the space.

Most of the women recalled a good memory participating in an event in the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) that affected their understanding of the world. All participants mentioned free exhibitions at GOMA, although some of them did not attend any of the exhibitions, they still believe these events make them feel safe and part of the environment as they could enjoy a sophisticated aspect of life for free whenever they wanted to. Mixed feelings were expressed by the women with respect to the high level of surveillance on Queen Street, from both CCTVs and police patrols, Even though the women feel safe when they are watched and are aware of the existence of the CCTVs, they have a sense of freedom that is also attached to a feeling of being controlled and this is stronger for them in Queen Street compared to South Bank.

The third characteristic of a successful public space is its livability. Veenhoven (1996) defines livability as the degree to which provisions and requirements of a nation fit with the needs and capacities of its citizens. This understanding of livability could also be expanded to the livability of public spaces as these spaces are the means by which citizens enjoy the possibilities of a democratic society and are “fundamental to the furtherance of democracy and civilized life” (Shaftoe 2008). Consequently, the suitability of public spaces for a wider range of urban dwellers demonstrates the degree to which citizens are involved and participate in the production of democratic urban spaces. The understanding of livability used in this research is illustrated by Hortulanus (cited in van Kamp, Leidelmeijer et al. 2003) as “the degree to which the individual is capable of creating his or her daily living situation.”

In addition, livability refers to the concept of accessibility of public spaces, or to what extent a certain public space provides its users with easy to reach activities that are related to that space (Geurs, Krizek et al. 2012). In one of the first definitions of accessibility Hansen (1959) described it as the potential for interaction which in contrast with mobility (which is focused on transportation) accounts for land use patterns and the activities defined in relation to these patterns in a socio-spatial context. A livable public space addresses the equity of access to urban spaces and services for all members of the society, and in production of such spaces, planning, design, and management of public spaces are equally important issues.

As mentioned before Whyte (1988) believes that the visual and physical connections of a public space with its surrounding could be a reliable indicator of whether the accessibility of a public space is acceptable (Whyte 1988). This statement is confirmed by many quantitative (see Pasaogullari and Doratli 2004, Lotfi and Koohsari 2009, Bisht, Mishra et al. 2010, Páez, Scott et al. 2012, Albacete, Olaru et al. 2017) and qualitative studies (Rahder and McLean 2013, Johnson and Miles 2014, Wagner and Peters 2014, Currie 2017) and also by the findings of the present research suggest that for a public space to be fully functional and considered a successful urban space, necessities must be located in the centre of its constituency, in a walkable distance, and/or are visible. In this regard, it is easy to have access to, and through, a ‘good’ public space as it is visible both from a distance away and up close (Whyte 1988). Well-designed motorized routes (Shaftoe 2008), equitably dispersed locations (Talen 2000), public spaces with proximity to living areas (Pasaogullari and Doratli 2004), well-designed sidewalks that address the continuity and diversity of a human scaled space (Calthorpe 1993), well-managed sidewalks, and alternate routes for pedestrians (Talen 2000) are some examples of livable public spaces that fulfil the accessibility aspect of a successful urban space.

Based on the experiences of Middle Eastern women, both South Bank and Queen Street are deemed to be livable spaces. The high level of accessibility and the accepted level of visibility and tranquillity gives provides users with a range of activities and functions that make them memorable as the medium for a classless ludic society (Nieuwenhuys 1974)

From the view point of Middle Eastern women in this study, both South Bank and Queen Street would be good examples of a successful public space if they could provide more vibrant opportunities to enjoy everyday life. This includes the opportunity of enjoying Middle Eastern style nightlife that enhances engagement by offering more diverse activities and tolerance. Also, according to the Middle Eastern women in this study, South Bank and Queen Street could also be improved by paying more attention to the design and appearance of the public spaces by adding more tangible elements (like fruit trees, flowers, water or fire features) and designed urban furniture (like moveable seats and more comfortable chairs) as well as promoting more enjoyable experiences (like the opportunity to cool down on a hot summer day in a water fountain on Queens Street - which was repeatedly mentioned by many participants).

### **Implications for planning and design**

In this section a set of implications are proposed as an answer to the primary question of this study: *“How can the experiences of Middle Eastern migrant women using public spaces inform the planning and design of such spaces?”* These implications could help urban specialists to develop better plans for the multicultural society of Australia, and better serve its sub-cultural groups.

*Neighbourhoods with mixed-use design:* Based on the principals and ideas from last two decades in urban movements (e.g. Smart Growth or New Urbanism), it is suggested that neighbourhoods with walkable mixed-use design can offer more opportunities to their residents. Having access to places and services that are required for everyday life within a short walking distance, along with the well-established routes for motorised vehicles, allows residents to enjoy a more productive daily routine. Walking as an alternative mode of mobility supports those women whose mobility is affected (and in some cases restricted) by their cultural/religious values. It also provides peace of mind for those newcomers who have no or limited access to cars and are dependent upon male members of the family. If walkable access to public places required for everyday life by all residents of a neighbourhood cannot be provided, affordable public transportation systems (e.g. neighbourhood loop buses) must be offered as a just distribution of access and resources among all residents of a neighbourhood. The author suggests that mixed-use



planning is a reliable means to accelerate the adaptation process and enhance assimilation of Middle Eastern women who migrate to Australia.

*Neighbourhoods as arenas of social life:* The author suggests that by promoting the chance of intercultural encounters and dialogue within the neighbourhood, it is possible to have more tolerant communities. To achieve this goal, the author recommends design of more inclusive public spaces in between neighbourhoods to increase the chance of dialogue, not only with residents of one community, but with all surrounding neighbourhoods. This shared public space also delivers a variety of choices for residents as they could move between different spaces and personalize them through possible encounters with other *strangers* from adjacent neighbourhoods.

*Allotment of women-only public services and facilities:* Providing all urban dwellers with equal chance to enjoy public spaces and facilities is an important role of urban specialists. Therefore, it is fair to consider those citizens who have some obligations when using public facilities (e.g. the use of swimming pools or gyms by Muslim women). Middle Eastern migrant women pay taxes like any other citizen of Australia, and like other Australians their “right to the city” must be considered providing fair and equal access to public services and facilities that could make a considerable change to the quality of life for these women. At the moment, Muslim women of this study, due to their feeling of being marginalized, believe they are segregated from ‘the public’. Providing accessibility to services in a way that benefits all groups of women, especially minorities (e.g. allocating a special hour as women-only use or allocating some services as women-only with a 20 minute drive to neighbourhoods with large populations of Muslims) guarantees a more just society that acknowledge and address the differences among its citizens. This approach also could benefit groups of non-Muslim women (e.g. orthodox Jewish women, orthodox Christian women, and those women who have issues with male gender due to bad experiences etc.) who prefer to use women-only services. This women-friendly approach in planning for more inclusive cities could push the current standards of Brisbane one step closer to becoming a world-class city.

*Planning with the aid of cultural maps:* The author proposes the use of cultural maps that show the predominant cultures throughout different regions to provide a base for community planning. These maps could show the use of language, possible cultural services (e.g. mosques, worship places, ethnic shops etc.), and the distribution of population within an area to provide information to planners to better recognize and address the needs of each cultural minority. These maps could also assist with the analysis of population movements and possible changes within and between neighbourhoods. As an example, this type of map could help planners find the best

location for a women-only swimming pool within a large urban area that has a high Muslim population.

*Advocating nightlife diverse activities:* Nightlife economy is a popular subject in urban studies, however it is not considered widely in Greater Brisbane policies and visions. There are some admirable attempts to introduce this lifestyle to Australian culture (e.g. Night Noodle Markets in South Bank), but as mentioned before these attempts are insufficient or could not address the needs of diverse activities that could happen after dark. The Middle Eastern nightlife is not based on alcohol consumption or other adult-only activities and if included in public spaces could introduce a welcoming inclusive environment for all family members as well as vibrancy and joy for single urban dwellers who seek a different experience and like to enjoy city life after dark.

*Advocating cultural/ethnic/religious festivals:* Festivals are public activities that can provide a variety of experiences for urban dwellers: sense of place, sense of belonging, sense of inclusion, and the possibility of intercultural encounters. Festivals on different scales (e.g. neighbourhood scale, city scale, and regional scale) offer and increase the opportunity of dialogue between *strangers*. Along with promoting increased tolerance, they could also offer a higher level of vibrancy and joy on different scales and introduce new opportunities for learning from, and engaging with, other cultures. The author suggests that planning for such festivals, especially on a neighbourhood scale, could increase the sense of belonging and facilitate the process of assimilation for migrant members of Australian society.

### **Directions for Future Research**

This study contributes to the literature on public spaces with a phenomenological understanding of everyday life for a minority group of urban dwellers. Phenomenological methods are not widely used in urban planning studies and are not familiar methodologies in the planning field. Considering the importance of planning for inclusive cities based on everyday life, needs, and expectations of all citizens, it's becoming more and more necessary to use qualitative methods to understand the basis of and differences in the experiences of individuals within an urban setting.

This study was an attempt to understand the experiences and use of urban spaces by a specific group of urban dwellers and provide a bottom-up insight from an ethnic migrant group. Future studies could add a top-down insight complementing this study by investigating the experience and viewpoint of urban and regional planners and designers through qualitative research on their assumptions of and commitment to producing urban spaces for migrants. Also, quantitative research should be used to investigate the characteristics of the ideal urban space for Middle Eastern

migrant women and could overcome the limited number of participants in this qualitative study enabling research to be applied to more members of the community. Moreover, it is important to investigate and understand the possible impacts of the recent changes to immigration policies on ethnic migrant groups.

Additionally, research on the use and understanding of urban spaces by Middle Eastern women/people could be compared with other migrant women/people or Anglo-Australian women/people and offer a comprehensive understanding of possible similarities and differences that could affect the future of Australian cities. And finally, considering the thriving nightlife economy of many big cities, it is suggested that further studies investigate the possibility of introducing and developing nightlife in Australian cities (without compromising shop assistants' right to their family life and regulations for penalty payments). The question is how can balance be achieved between these two sets of needs to address the requirement for nightlife that is commonly associated with vibrant and thriving big cities.

### **Limitations of the study**

Insufficiency of data about Middle Eastern migration to Greater Brisbane:

Reports from Australian Bureau of Statistics census data show lack or insufficiency of data related to Middle Eastern countries. In some reports only major countries of Middle East are mentioned (especially census data 2011) and in some reports the region is not considered as a possible extensive body (mostly in census data before 2011).

Sourcing a committed and representative research participant pool:

In-depth interviews need enormous efforts from both participants and researcher. As there is no encouragement for participants in university researches it is always the possibility that they could not be able to keep up with the research timelines and cancel their participation. Also, there is need to nominate sufficient participants when purposive sampling is conducted in a research. Building such participant pool becomes an effortful task when dealing with a minority group with a high risk of vulnerability.

Build trusted relationships with the research participants:

To share one experience, feelings, and fears about a phenomenon is always a complicated part of a qualitative research as it deals with the personalities of each person. These cautions would be much more significant when talking about Middle Eastern women as they may face some difficulties in their personal life due to phallic authority. To gain participants' trust and in order to encourage

them to continue despite minor difficulties it is important to describe and illustrate the importance of the research for them. This task needs considerable degree of skills in communication and interview design.

Limited number of participants in this qualitative study:

In this research the number of participants was limited to 25. This allows the researcher to building trust and obtaining all possible information through observation and dynamic engaging in interviews. Despite the authenticity that qualitative research provides it should be noticed that the result from such research could not be applied to all members of a community or its subcultural groups.

### **Summary**

In this chapter an ideal public space for Middle Eastern women was illustrated through three characteristics: conviviality, diversity, and livability. The possible factors for achieving these characteristics in public spaces were also considered. In order to demonstrate a practical example, two public spaces in Brisbane city, Queen Street and South Bank, were compared based on data collected from interviews and from field observations. Overall South Bank was labelled as a more compatible public space with respect to the needs and expectations of Middle Eastern women in this study.

Summarizing the themes derived from the semi-structured in-depth interviews reveals three characteristics for an ideal public space according to Middle Eastern women: conviviality, diversity, and livability. The proposed ideal public space is followed by a set of recommendations for urban specialists to consider when planning for more diverse and inclusive cities. The proposed ideal public space was followed by a set of recommendations for urban specialists in the planning of more diverse and inclusive cities. These suggestions could be more specific and practical by providing guidelines for planning migrant communities if additional research was performed in related areas.

The major contributions from this work offer an understanding of the experience of urban spaces in a multicultural context, and as researchers in this field have advocated, this topic has not been addressed appropriately or comprehensively in urban studies or by urban specialists. The research findings presented in this study contribute to planning involving Middle Eastern populations in multicultural settings and show how gender, social construct, ethnic composition, religious beliefs, and lifestyle define and change the ways in which urban spaces are experienced and used by these urban dwellers. Subsequently these findings emphasize the role of urban specialists, particularly urban planners, in design and production of inclusive urban spaces that are

suitable for use by multicultural groups and provide the possibility of intercultural dialogue. For example, inclusive spatial production of urban spaces considers Muslim women and their cultural-religious beliefs in the production of more woman-friendly spaces. This study suggests that the more people encounter and are exposed to other cultures and ethnicities, the more the democratic aspect of 'public' is demonstrated.

The findings in this study also suggest that by recognising the needs of ethnic groups/minorities in the social construct of multicultural cities, public spaces could have more harmony and features that help promote Brisbane and the Greater Brisbane region as world-class. These features include neighbourhoods with mixed-use design, neighbourhoods as arenas of social life, women-only public services and facilities, planning with the aid of cultural maps, and advocating night-life activities and cultural/ethnic/religious festivals. Planning for such spaces on a neighbourhood and city scale produces places that help women create meaning out of their everyday urban lives and helps them adapt to their new cultural and social setting in Australian cities.

Shopping centres, local and regional parks, and well-maintained sidewalks are some examples of these meaningful places. Diverse night-life, well-lit routes, local public recreational facilities, and walkable shopping streets are some examples of cultural and environmental requisites that help Middle Eastern women enjoy a lifestyle better suited to their expectations and understanding of public spaces. These well-planned public spaces could help women to leave the safe haven of their homes and other private spaces in order to blend in or connect with the new society of their host country. This process of assimilation can gradually change their 'host country' into their new 'home country' by making memories, history, and attachment associated with everyday places of their life. Spatial production of inclusive urban spaces could be the key factor in providing all groups of urban dwellers with different ethnicities, backgrounds, values and beliefs, with equal opportunity to assert their right to the city.

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# Appendices

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## APPENDIX A: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

### INTERVIEW NUMBER:

#### 1. Can you please tell me more about your background?

- ❖ What is your nationality?
- ❖ Where were you born?
- ❖ The district you come from (back to your birth country) is a city or rural area?
- ❖ Did you leave your country as a migrant or refugee?
- ❖ Why did you immigrate?
- ❖ What countries have you lived in? How long?
- ❖ How long have you lived in Australia?
- ❖ Are you a permanent resident  an Australian citizen  on a temporary visa
  
- ❖ What is your religion (denomination)?
- ❖ What is your age  
0-19  20-29  30-49  40-59  over 60 years
  
- ❖ What is your marital status?  
Married (or De facto)  Separated or Divorced  Never Married  Widowed
  
- ❖ What is your level of education?  
No formal qualification  Year 12 or less (formal schooling)   
Technical Qualification  Trade/apprenticeship (e.g. hairdresser, chef)   
Bachelor Degree Level  Postgraduate Degree Level
  
- ❖ Is your qualification recognised in Australia?  
Yes  No  I don't know
  
- ❖ What is your current job status?  
Employed full-time  Employed part-time  Unemployed looking for work  home duties  fulltime student
  
- ❖ What country is your partner from?
  
- ❖ What is your partner level of education?  
No formal qualification  Year 12 or less (formal schooling)   
Technical Qualification  Trade/apprenticeship (e.g. hairdresser, chef)   
Bachelor Degree Level  Postgraduate Degree Level
  
- ❖ Does your partner qualification recognised in Australia?  
Yes  No  I don't know
  
- ❖ What is your partner current job status?

Employed full-time  student    Employed part-time     Unemployed looking for work  home duties    fulltime

❖ Do you have children?

No                       Yes

If YES, How many children live with you in Greater Brisbane? How old are they? (Circle one number on each line)

0-4 years	0	1	2	3	4 or more
5-14 years	0	1	2	3	4 or more
15-19 years	0	1	2	3	4 or more
20-24 years	0	1	2	3	4 or more
25+ years	0	1	2	3	4 or more

❖ Which languages do you speak?

❖ Which language do you prefer to speak?

❖ Which language is the main spoken language in your home?

❖ What language your children prefer to speak?

❖ Do you drive in Greater Brisbane? How often? (Do you have regular access to car?)

❖ Back to your country of birth, you identify yourself as a:

Working Class                       Middle Class                       Upper Class

❖ Have you ever lived in other parts of Australia?

❖ How long have you lived in Greater Brisbane?

❖ Why did you choose to live in Greater Brisbane?

❖ What things do you enjoy about living in Australia/Greater Brisbane?

❖ Is there anything you don't like about leaving in Australia/Greater Brisbane?

❖ Which Suburb you live at the moment?

❖ What do you like most about your neighbourhood?

❖ What do you dislike most about your neighbourhood?

❖ Where are your 2 (two) most favourite places in Greater Brisbane? Why?

❖ Are there 2 (two) places that you don't like in Greater Brisbane? Why?

**ROJA SAYS...** In urban planning literature, there is a general understanding about private spaces and public spaces. For example, private space is inside your home and garden, shopping centres and other spaces and public spaces are streets, sidewalks, shopping streets, public parks, schools, community centres and other spaces. These spaces could be like your home by offering some kind of safety, shelter, privacy and life processing or could be a space with no boundaries and meaning and memories which would not lead to an acceptable sense of place.

- Can you tell me the meaning of private space (from your point of view)? Please give examples of what you mean from both your country of birth and Australia, and
  - ❖ How you might use such private spaces?
- Can you tell me the meaning of public space (from your point of view)? Please give examples of what you mean from both your country of birth and Australia.
- Where do you usually go for social activities? Explain (what you do and how spend time) for example
- Meeting friends – Shopping - Exercise - Spend time with your children - Have fun - Volunteering - other social activities
- I'm going to name some public spaces in Greater Brisbane. Can you tell me how often you use these public spaces, what time of the day and with whom?

	Streets	Sidewalks	Shopping Streets	Public Parks	Schools	Community Centres	Other
Frequency of Use ( Daily - Weekly- Monthly)							
What Time Of The Day?							
With Who?							

- Do public spaces in Greater Brisbane have some similarities to public spaces in your hometown or other cities in your birth country?
  - ❖ And are there differences? What are these differences?
- Did you wear the Hijab in public places in your country? What about Greater Brisbane?
- Thinking about these public spaces in Greater Brisbane, do you believe they meet your current needs? When you use these public spaces, are you comfortable in these spaces? (Are there things you like about these spaces? Is there anything you do not like?)
- Do private spaces in Greater Brisbane have some similarities to private spaces in your hometown or other cities in your country?
  - ❖ And are there differences? What are these differences?

- Do you know any religious or cultural festival which is celebrated in public spaces in Greater Brisbane? Do you participate in them? Did you feel comfortable with everything in those ceremonies? In what ways (yes / no)?
- Can you remember good experiences associated with being in a public space? (Clarify when and where and how)
- Can you remember bad experiences associated with being in a public space? (Clarify when and where and how)
- Is there anything you want to change about the public spaces in Greater Brisbane to make them more comfortable for you to use?
- I'm going to show you pictures of some public spaces in Greater Brisbane, could you possibly recognise these public spaces?
- Imagine yourself in each of these public spaces (e.g. Queen Street, South Bank) do you believe they meet your current needs? When you use these public spaces, are you comfortable in these spaces? (Are there things you like about these spaces? Is there anything you do not like?)
- Is there anything you like to add and discuss as a member of Australian society to improve the quality of public and private spaces in Greater Brisbane?



## APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM



School of Geography,  
Planning and Environmental  
Management

CRICOS PROVIDER NUMBER 00025B

Title: *A Living Room in the City; the Place of Public Space in the Everyday Lives of Middle Eastern Women in Brisbane*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby agree to be involved in the above research project as a participant. I have read the Participant Information Sheet pertaining to this research project and understand the nature of the research and my role in it.

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved has been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.
3. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without prejudice, without affecting my relationship with the researcher (Roja Gholamhosseni) and University of Queensland now or in the future. If I withdraw the information I have provided up to that point will not be used.
4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.
5. I understand the researcher would like to audiotape the interview and that I will be provided with a copy of the draft transcript to check for accuracy.

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Date: .....

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## APPENDIX C: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW CHECKLIST



School of Geography,  
Planning and Environmental  
Management  
CRICOS PROVIDER NUMBER 00258

### In-Depth Interview Guide

Name/Number:

1. Can you please tell me more about your background?  
I need to know about your Nationality, religion (denomination), age, marital status, education, job status, children, when did you immigrate to Australia, how did you come to live in Greater Brisbane?
2. How long have you been in Greater Brisbane and how do you like it? Explain (I might ask her if she has lived elsewhere in Australia before).
3. Where are your most and least favourite places in Greater Brisbane and why?
4. What do you like most about Greater Brisbane? What do you like most about your neighbourhood?
5. What do you dislike most about Greater Brisbane? What do you dislike most about your neighbourhood?
6. Where do you usually go to have fun and social activities such as meeting friends? Explain (what you do and how spend time)
7. Can you tell me what a private space is for you? Please give examples of what you mean from both your country of birth and Australia, and how you might use such a private space.
8. Can you tell me what a public space is for you? Please give examples of what you mean from both your country of birth and Australia.
9. Do public spaces in Greater Brisbane have some similarities to public spaces in your hometown or other cities in your country? What about private spaces?
10. For what purposes do you usually use aforementioned public space? How many hours do you usually spend in these spaces per week?
11. Do you know any religious or cultural festival which is celebrated in public spaces in Greater Brisbane? Do you participate in them?
12. Can you remember good experiences associated with being in a public space? (Clarify when and where and how)
13. Can you remember bad experiences associated with being in a public space? (Clarify when and where and how)
14. What would you like to change about the public spaces in Greater Brisbane to make them more comfortable for you to use?

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## APPENDIX D: IMAGES USED IN THE INTERVIEWS

*Image 1: Mt Coot-Tha, Brisbane*



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mt\\_Coot-tha\\_night.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mt_Coot-tha_night.jpg)

‘The night view is amazing’ and ‘was very familiar’ for Middle Eastern women. All of the participants remember good memories watching this picture. For most of the participants this view was the very first image of the city they live in Australia.



*Image 2: The South Bank Parklands*



<https://blog.budget.com.au/2015/01/find-something-for-everyone-at-the-south-bank-brisbane/>

Diversity of activities that South Bank offer participants was important. Use of the swimming pool was mentioned by all mothers especially those who identified themselves as low/medium income class.

*Image 3: Bazaars in the Middle East (Grand Bazaar, Tehran)*



<http://www.megazip.org/bazaar-middle-east.html>

This image was a familiar scene for most of the women as they associated it with gendered spaces through the mechanism of gaze. However this trend has been changed in last decade, still women are not welcome in such places since the environment is defined as a masculine space.



Image 4: Queen Street at night



[http://www.visitbrisbane.com.au/the-city/news/comprehensive-guide-to-shopping-queen-street-mall?sc\\_lang=en-au](http://www.visitbrisbane.com.au/the-city/news/comprehensive-guide-to-shopping-queen-street-mall?sc_lang=en-au)

This scene was not a familiar image to the participants. Most of the women had no or little memory of being in Queen Street at night. In one case a bad memory associated with a group of drunk men was mentioned by a participant.

*Image 5: Hamra Street, Beirut, Lebanon*



<https://thisisbeirut.wordpress.com/2010/06/28/9-new-things-i-learned-this-weekend-in-photos/>

This was a familiar scene for all Middle Eastern women except for Iranian and Saudi Arabian women. Two of the Iranian women were surprised when they found this photo was taken in Beirut and not in a European city.



Image 6: Pitt Street Mall, Sydney



<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=1590061&page=4>

Image 7: South Bank Christmas Markets



<http://www.gourmandandgourmet.com.au/christmas-markets-brisbane-comes-south-bank-markets/>



*Image 8: Queen Street in Day-time*



<http://www.bridgewaterterraces.com.au/brisbane/the-best-of-brisbane-cbd-in-48hrs/>

Most of the participants were unhappy with the water fountains in picture 8 (some of them didn't even recall it). They believed Queen Street needs more natural elements to become a better space.

*Image 9: Queen Street in Day-time*





Image 10 & 11: Shopping Street in Istanbul, Turkey



<http://www.davestravelcorner.com/journals/destination-africa/istanbul-trapped-in-an-accessory-store/>

Both modern and traditional shopping streets were among most memorable aspects of public spaces' functions for Middle Eastern women. Also the diversity of functions and night-time life was mentioned by most of the participants.

*Image 12: Latin Friday nights Reddacliff Place, Brisbane*



<http://www.weekendnotes.com/latin-dancing-at-reddacliff-place/>

Friday nights' Salsa dancing was mentioned by some of the participants as one of their joyful memories in public spaces. As Leila [30s, married with two children, Iranian] stated 'the life of Friday nights is much better than other nights in CBD'.

