

**The Role of Integrated and Diverse Retailing in the production of  
social vitality:  
Reshaping retailing in Kuwait City**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The main objective of this research is to examine the role of social vitality in successful retailing centres and develop a comprehensive view of their built environment characteristics. The research then compares these findings with the characteristics of the problematic retailing in Kuwait City which has been undergoing a process of fragmentation and decay caused by the establishment of large scale out-of-town retail developments, urban sprawl and the move toward a single-land-use and car dominated city.

The research has utilized various theoretical and empirical methodologies. The research has been informed by several theories and ideas drawn from different fields and disciplines such as urbanism, economics, planning and sociology. The empirical analysis draws on three case studies of successful city centres – Glasgow, York and Aleppo. It examines the role of retailing and the production of social vitality through the use of different methodologies such as space syntax analysis, stationary activity observation, active frontage analysis, visual environment evaluation and economic vitality analysis. It then relates this evidence to the failing centre of Kuwait City.

This research has shown that a dense urban grid as well as an integrated network encourages movement. An urban environment that is easily read and understandable promotes walking and being in public. The research demonstrates that urban policies can and do create integrated and diverse retailing that provide the necessary conditions for social vitality. Based on the findings of this research, the success of retailing requires a central location, proximity of population, a strong tourism market, a high-quality urban environment and the existence of diverse retailing types.

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother **Mrs. Huda Al-Mousheriji** and my father **Dr. Ebrahim M. Al-Shaheen**, without their continuous encouragement, love, prayers and support I could not have completed this research.

I would like also to dedicate this work to the people of Syria, the City of Aleppo, to their revolution and struggle for liberty that began on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2011. I wish for the best outcome for the beloved people of Syria and the lovely Aleppo City, which has been a crucial element of this research.

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# DECLARATION STATEMENT

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# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.0 Introduction**

The initial thoughts of this dissertation started when I was a planner at Kuwait Municipality between 2003 and 2007. During that period Kuwait went through a period of rapid development and expansion especially in the commercial sector, when many high rise buildings and shopping malls were constructed. However, the new developments did not contribute to the social vitality and urban integration. At that time I was stimulated by the concept of retailing and its role in the enhancement of vitality in city centres and reshaping contemporary cities.

This dissertation examines the role of integrated and diverse retailing in the production of social vitality in city centres, and it studies in particular Kuwait City. More specifically, this dissertation reviews literature that discusses a wide range of theories and issues such as consumption and retailing, urban theories, and manual and digital techniques applied to the analysis of cities and urban forms. These combined sources are studied and analysed in an attempt to improve our understanding of the relationship between urban integration, physical urban quality, diversity of retailing and use, and social vitality within city centres and retailing environments.

This chapter seeks to introduce the research project. It is divided into two parts. Part one deals with the structure of the research and sets out the research objectives, problems, significance and research questions. It also illustrates the research methodologies used to address and answer these questions. Section 1.6 provides an overview of the research structure and the content of this dissertation.

Part two of this chapter includes a section on the target case study context and historical background. It informs the reader about the historical development of Kuwait; its economy, demography, social development and the characteristics of its urban form. It describes the development of urban form in the light of economic changes and planning decisions. It illustrates the nature of commercial development and the latest trends with regard to out-of-town shopping centres.

## **1.1 Section One: Introducing the Dissertation**

The main objective of this research is to produce a deep understanding of the role of retailing in the production of social vitality. This understanding shall lead to a comprehensive view of the built environment where central and integrated retailing can act as a catalyst for social vitality. The analysis that developed out of this research can act as a guide to planners and designers, directing them to solutions to one of the main problems that face contemporary cities. The approach is conceptual, it does not attempt to provide detailed solutions, but rather it opens up new discourse and opportunities for others to do so. It is a valid debate for planners and researchers, which raises as many questions as it attempts to answer.

The aim of this research is to assess the condition of retailing in Kuwait City and its influence on urban and social vitality. The research stems from a belief in the ability of integrated and diverse retailing to produce vital city centres. It seeks to address the problematic urban condition of Kuwait City, which has been undergoing a process of fragmentation and decay caused by the establishment of large scale out-of-town retail developments, urban sprawl and the move toward a single-land-use and car dominated city. The author realizes the dynamic relationship between urban development, spaces of retailing and consumption. Retailing has been a major vehicle of urban change and can be utilized as an active tool for the construction of a vital urban environment.

The vitality of the urban environment is a social construct. It is not always just a set of physical conditions but depends largely on the perception of the observer. "It is not the mere satisfaction experienced by an individual but, rather, a dialectic between what is being observed and by two actors: one who observes the observations of the one who observes her/his experience." (Fadda, 1999: P. 44). It should be noted that the nature of knowledge about the vitality of the urban environment is interdisciplinary and holistic. This research is limited to the investigation of the urban environment and retailing specifically within city centres.

### **1.1.1 Research Objectives**

The aims and objectives of the study are:

- To develop a theoretical model of physical retailing that contributes to the vitality of the urban environment of Kuwait City.



- To highlight the role of planning policies in the promotion of integrated and diverse retailing.
- To emphasize the relationship between retailing physical structure and social diversity.
- To outline the physical and social factors that contribute to the creation of economically successful retailing.

### **1.1.2 Research Significance**

The State of Kuwait is relatively young. It is a developing state that is still undergoing a process of change. It enjoys a strong economy that is entirely dependent on the exportation of crude oil. The economic prosperity and small population encourage urban growth and a planning policy that seeks modernization, novelty and expansion. These practices do not always lead to successful products, especially in the built environment. Currently the urban environment of Kuwait is characterized by sprawl, fragmentation, zoning, and low-density developments. Due to the high employment rate and high disposable income enjoyed by the Kuwaiti population, most development has been directed towards commercial activities. Most of these development projects contribute to increased polarization and divisions among the population based on income level. On the other hand, the high level of car ownership, dependency on the private car and neglect of compactness and a pedestrian-friendly environment has led to the decline of public transport, extreme traffic congestion and lack of vitality. Uneven models of development lead to more congestion, urban decay and an excess supply of commercial land.

Recently the shopping mall and indoor retailing environment have spread and become the most attractive development model. Many researchers have proved that such forms are among the most harmful to the urban fabric. This research advocates the adoption of more intelligent methods and forms of retailing in order to have a positive impact on the built environment and to create social vitality. In addition, it calls for the adaptation of a sustainable urban development model that encourages wise growth strategies and smart utilization of resources.

### **1.1.3 Research Questions**

The research began with the following hypothesis: "*Better integrated and diverse retailing can produce urban and social vitality*", in which the author speculated about the outcome of the research thesis based on his personal knowledge, observation and theoretical stance. Certain physical and economic conditions, when met within urban retailing environments, can lead to social vitality. The hypothesis was framed at the inception of the research by a series of questions that became the basis of the deductive approach of this work. The research questions are as follows:

1. How can the physical organization and design of retailing contribute to the creation of vital urban environments?
2. How can planning policies promote integrated and diverse retailing within city centres?
3. Do diverse densities and physical structures produce social diversity?
4. What are the physical and social factors that contribute to the creation of successful retailing?

The research questions were developed to frame the phenomenon to be studied and help the researcher to focus his efforts to test the hypothesis. They helped to identify the body of literature, areas that needed further exploration, similarly constructed research, the relevance of the questions in the time period, and how the result would impact the field of the study and benefit the study area (Kuwait City).

### **1.1.4 Research Methodology**

#### **1.1.4.1 Part One: Theoretical Context**

The theoretical approach is a major part of this research. The author believes that the normative approach alone is not sufficient to form a comprehensive understanding of people's activities in cities. The aim behind the review of the theoretical background is to form an understanding of the literature in the field; also, to formulate a deeper understanding of the research problems that is evident in the target case study: Kuwait City. The theoretical review helped the researcher to explore new lines of inquiry. The review of the theoretical context was very fruitful in gaining several methodological insights and to highlight areas of necessary further research. This review has been crucial and gave the author support to build a grounded theory. (Randolph, 2009: P. 2)

The research was informed by several theories and ideas and drew from different fields and disciplines such as urbanism, economics, planning and sociology. As shall be seen in this dissertation, the behavioural approach has been central to the construction of its findings. The author sought to understand human experience in space. The author through this research attempted to provide deep description of the complex studied phenomenon. "Phenomenology is the interpretive study of human experience. The aim is to examine and clarify human situations, events, meanings, and experiences as they spontaneously occur in the course of daily life" (Seamon, 2000). In the context of the urban research David Seamon outlines three specific approaches to phenomenological inquiry.

- a. A first-person approach: in which "the researcher uses her own first-hand experience as a basis to examine its specific characteristics and qualities." (Seamon, 2000)
- b. A hermeneutical approach: this approach has to do with the investigation of the meaning of text, since the creator of the text is not available. The approach is widely used in environmental and urban research since it allows researchers to investigate abstract concepts such as landscape, shopping centres, suburbs, new towns and others. (Beidler, 2007: P. 24)
- c. An existential approach: this approach attempts to interpret the experience of other people. It seeks to understand a given phenomenon from a defined social and historical context. (ibid)

This approach is humanistic in nature and bases its investigation on the lived experience of people. A phenomenological approach is suited for small scale research like this one where the main resource is the author himself. (Denscombe, 2003: P. 105). Within the context of this research the author preferred the first-hand approach because it relies on the experience of the researcher and his understanding of the general meaning of the phenomenon.

The author was also influenced by the structuralism approach to urbanism that seeks to understand society by the study of the underlying factors that govern society's behaviour and through the construction of theories by processes of abstract reasoning. (Knox, 2006b: P. 2) The structuralism approach offers "theories of knowledge that emphasize the importance of underlying, unobserved rules and social relations that gives rise to the surface, observable phenomena." (Wyly, 2011: P: 6) Also, the post structuralism

approach provides a rich source for the study of cities. Unlike the structural approach it believes that there are various underlying factors that structure and explain the world beside conflicts and tensions. Post-structuralism thinkers "argue for the study of cities as sites of difference, identity, contingency, and process and they are deeply suspicious of attempts to generalize from one city to another... given the extraordinary complexity of individual standpoints, discourse, interpretations, and meaning." (Wyly, 2011: P.6) While the above mentioned approaches seem to be conflicting, together they contribute to ways in which one can study cities and formulate better understanding about these complex organisms.

Alongside these theoretical approaches, the author learned from the conceptual theories of the New Urbanism Movement, Jane Jacobs, Jan Gehl, Bill Hillier's Space Syntax analysis and others, who advocate the creation of vital urban public spaces through mixed-use development that balances housing with working opportunities, dense developments and the creation of pedestrian environments. These ideas illustrate that physical planning may have a deeper meaning and significance and can contribute to the social well-being of citizens. The writings of the above-mentioned group and others discuss several concepts such as the preservation of common good, the establishment of a sense of community and the assurance of social capital.

Most of the selected theories criticize modern planning principles and some urban renewal practices which encourage urban sprawl that destroys local communities and contributes to the creation of isolated and fragmented urban spaces. Also, they criticize the grand transportation systems and the extreme reliance on the car, which dominates other modes of transport like walking, bicycling and public transport. Knowledge about indigenous urbanism and historical modes of development is also strongly relevant to this research. The author believes that the historical urban forms that precede the car can be a valuable source for contemporary urban planning, and can contribute to mitigate today's urban problems. The researcher reviews regional city form, urbanism and social construct in order to distil lessons for the subject of this research.

#### **1.1.4.2 Part Two: Empirical Context**

At the early stages of this research, the author believed that the case study approach was a suitable research strategy. It was seen as a useful tool to obtain an in-depth understanding of the research topic. The definition of case study approach is wide and

carries different meanings. According to Gerring “(a) its method is qualitative, small; (b) that the research is endo-graphic, clinical, participant-observation, or otherwise “in the field”; (c) the research is characterized by process-tracing; (d) that the research investigates the properties of singular case; or (e) that the research investigates a single phenomenon, instance, or example.” (Gerring, 2004: P.342). A successful definition of ‘case study’ depends on the ability of the researcher to formulate well-structured research questions, and be well informed by the theoretical context of the research subject. The case study should have a well-defined boundary; a clear understanding of the boundary is crucial for the researcher to understand what is included and what is excluded from the investigation.

According to Denscombe, the case study approach has the following characteristics:

- Case studies will focus on one or a limited number of instances. They aim “to illuminate the general by focusing on the specific” (P. 30). In that sense, it is opposite to the mass survey and experimental approach.
- The case study approach allows the researcher to study things in more detail, since he/she is working with fewer examples and limited settings.
- The case study approach studies relationships and processes. “Case studies tend to be ‘holistic’ rather than deal with ‘isolated factors’ ” (P. 31). It offers an opportunity to explain ‘why’ certain outcomes happen rather than just explain them.
- The studied cases are ‘naturally occurring phenomena’. They are neither created artificially, nor controlled and must continue to occur after the conclusion of the research.
- One of the main strengths of the case study approach is that it allows the researcher to use multiple methods, a variety of sources and diverse data sources as part of the investigation. (Denscombe, 2003: P.31)

Case studies have been a crucial element of this research, since it sought to undertake a holistic and in-depth investigation of the role of integration and diversity of retailing in the vitality of city centres. The aim of the case studies was to collect data with which to develop grounded theory. By selecting several case studies, the author sought to describe, explain and evaluate the role of integrated and diverse retailing in the creation of urban and social vitality.

The strength of case studies as a research method lies in their ability to formulate a three-dimensional picture of the situation, illustrate relationships, incorporate socio-political issues and reflect patterns of influence within a particular context. “By means of the case study method it is possible to establish the number and variety of properties, qualities and habits combined in a particular instance. The depth of the inquiry possible through the case study method is greater than any other research method” (Lubbe, 2006:P. 13).

Case studies may be utilized to gather information from different sources. In this study the author relied on documentation, file data, Space Syntax analysis, site visits, direct observation, analysis of the physical context and analysis of economic vitality . Case studies allow the use of multiple research methods and in turn facilitate the validation of data through triangulation. “Triangulation involves locating a true position by referring to two or more other coordinates” (Denscombe and ebrary Inc., 2003: P. 133). The multi-method approach allows processes to be corroborated or questioned by comparing the data produced by different methods. By observing the phenomenon from different perspectives, findings may be corroborated and the validity of the data enhanced.

Comparisons of findings from several case studies are considered more compelling and add to the overall validity of the research. According to Cavaye, the logic underlying the use of multiple case studies is that each case must be selected so that it either (1) predicts similar results (a literal replication), or (2) produces contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication) (Cavaye, 1996: P.237). In this case the author aimed to distil some aspects from the case studies for a theoretical replication, where the analysis of the target case study may show contrasting results, and where areas of improvements can be outlined. While the author believes in the importance of case studies as sources of learning and better understanding, he is cautious about generalizing findings as each urban site is a complex organism that possesses various complex and unique conditions.

### **Case Study Selection**

When selecting the most suitable case studies, the researcher may be directed by various factors that are pragmatic and scientific. In some instances, these are selected because

they are representative of other cases; in others they are selected because of their uniqueness and relevance to the research subject. When choosing a typical case, the research is able to generalize the findings elsewhere. Sometimes, researchers study extreme cases that provide contrasting results from the norm, and allow the researcher to see more clearly the specific factors. In some research projects case studies are used for “theory testing” and “theory building”, where the research could predict certain outcomes based on the validity of the theory. Researchers could choose to study cases where theories are tested under least expected circumstances, and where theory holds true under least expected conditions, the theory is given more credibility. (Denscombe, 2003: P.33)

For this particular research, the case studies were selected specifically to distil and test the background theories of this research. These case studies will assist readers to appreciate the applicability of the research hypothesis. The author selected and studied three cases that illustrate the role of retailing and the behaviour of the public within the retailing context: the cities of Glasgow, York and Aleppo, in addition to the target case study - Kuwait City.

The city of Glasgow was selected as a pilot case because of its strong retailing sector especially in the city centre. Also, from a practical point of view, it was chosen because of its proximity to the author’s office (located in Edinburgh) which allowed the author to revisit the site repeatedly to verify data whenever needed. The city of York was selected as a second case study for several reasons. The researcher sought to select a city in England in order to widen his study as complementary to the first case study, the city of Glasgow. York was also chosen because of its strong, compact and dense central retailing; the area demonstrates rich diversity and clear social vitality. The city of Aleppo was selected as a third case study because of several motives. In contrast to the first and second cases, Aleppo is a Middle Eastern city that shares a lot of cultural and social similarities with the target case study, Kuwait City. It is a historical city where retailing forms a major sector and the historical markets of Aleppo are central, very well integrated and show signs of social vitality.

### **Analysis of the Case Studies and Case Study Report**

After collecting the data the author undertook data analysis in four elements. These were interpretation of the findings while in the field, coding and organizing the data into

themes and constructs, searching for disproving themes or evidence, and testing alternative interpretations of the data to see if the understanding of the information changed. In addition, personal contemplation, reflection, imagination and experience have been used. At the conclusion of each case study, the author prepared a separate report. The format of the case study reports includes the following: introduction, general data, historical background, Space Syntax analysis, observation, visual quality assessment, economic data, and conclusion. Part two of this dissertation, Empirical Context, includes four reports as follows: Chapter Five, Pilot Case Study: City of Glasgow; Chapter Six, Second Case Study: City of York; Chapter Seven, Third Case Study: Aleppo City and Chapter Eight, Target Case Study: Kuwait City.

#### **1.1.4.3 Observation**

As part of the qualitative and quantitative approach of this research, the author sought to gain an in-depth understanding of human behaviour in public spaces, in particular within the retailing environment. The purpose of observation was to allow the author to formulate his own version of what is occurring and to construct an alternative source of data for verifying the information obtained by other methods (Gall et al., 2007: P. 344). While the research questions determined what was to be observed, the researcher also utilized the situation and made sure that everything of potential interest was recorded. The researcher employed some of the methods used by Jan Gehl, whose approach is grounded in a desire to encourage life and activity in the urban environment. Gehl's approach to urban design begins by first researching public behaviour, then studying public spaces and the spaces between buildings, and finally, analysing the buildings themselves. Gehl uses a variety of techniques to measure the human dimensions of public space such as pedestrian counts, interviews, stationary types of activities and the age and gender of users. The physical dimensions of urban space studied include scale, façade character, building uses, climate, and building typologies (Sullivan, 2006).

### **Methodology**

“A large number of pedestrians walking in the city do not necessarily indicate a high level of quality. However, a high number of people choosing to spend time in the city indicate a lively city of strong urban quality” (Gehl, 2007).



Case study observations collected data using three main methods:

- Survey of stationary activities (behavioural mapping).
- Active Frontage Analysis.
- Visual environment evaluation.

The researcher used some of the methods developed and employed by Gehl Architects and used in previous studies in Perth, Melbourne, Adelaide, Wellington, London, Riga, Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, Rotterdam, Edinburgh and others.

- The researcher mapped stationary activities every second hour between 10am and 8pm.
- The survey took place twice in each case study, once on a summer day with fine, sunny weather and the other on a fine winter's day. In order to identify factors affecting the counts, the survey noted the prevailing weather conditions at each hour as well as any unusual events or circumstances that might affect pedestrian movements, such as road works, sporting events and public markets.
- The observations were made on weekdays (Tuesday/Wednesday) and Saturdays.

Stationary counts were conducted by walking through the selected sites and recording activities on a map of the area, using different symbols to plot what people were doing, where they were and how many there were. The survey mapped people standing, sitting, lying, playing and involved in cultural and/or commercial activities. Commercial activities are those where people are using public space to sell goods or services in order to make a living, such as vendors, outdoor cafés, and kiosks.

In addition, the researcher observed and evaluated the level of environmental quality and the quality of building frontage at eye level. The researcher assessed the level of attractiveness of street frontage based on the method used by Gehl Architects (Gehl, 2004). According to this, each street can be evaluated according to the number of doors per 100 metres, diversity of function, closed or passive units, interesting reliefs at facades, quality of materials and details. Gehl has developed a six-grade scale to indicate the level of attractiveness, ranging from A: attractive to F: mean. (see section 1.1.4.4).

In addition, the researcher evaluated the physical quality of the case study areas using the methods employed by official planning studies such as the Scottish government's Town Centres and Retailing Methodologies, which outlined the following criteria:

- “Physical layout of town centre and pedestrian routes, connectivity and retail circuits.
- Location of car parks and public transport facilities and pedestrian links between them.
- Quality of buildings and streetscape.
- Provision of public space and opportunities of events.
- Ease of access, including for the disabled” (Hargest, 2007).

### **Recording Observations**

The researcher observed and recorded on maps the movements, use and behaviour of people within urban spaces. The aim of this observation was to understand the effect of retailing and the built environment on activities and social behaviour. These observations were used to assist in the construction of a model of successful retailing and public space that enhances urban vitality. Systematic observations (behavioural mapping) through the use of various techniques like diagrams, maps, categorization, photographs and counting different activities have been used in combination with other methods (such as interviews and surveys) to answer research questions and check the validity of the hypotheses.

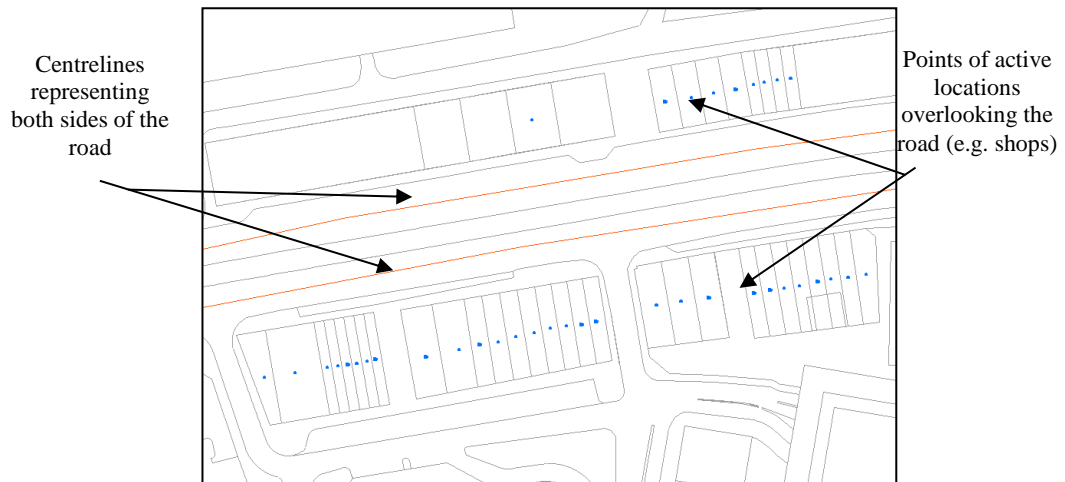
#### **1.1.4.4 Active Frontage Analysis Attraction Density Distribution**

In order to analyse and geographically illustrate the level of active frontage on the case study areas, the author has used the Geographic Information System and the Attraction Density Distribution. The objective of this analysis is to geographically plot the distribution of attraction locations across the road segments under investigation.

### **Methodology**

To identify the geographic distribution of the attraction locations overlooking road segments one must first model the attraction points.

1. To start the geographic modelling, valid attraction locations were first identified and plotted on the map (e.g. vector points were used to depict active shops and their entrances)
2. The road segments were plotted as two parallel lines representing two centre lines of road sides. Figure 1.1 illustrates how each line represents a street side and is plotted at the centre of the lane close to the side it represents.



**Figure 1.1 Geographically Plotting Active Locations and Roadside Centrelines. (Author)**

3. For analytical purposes, at each attraction locality the points were manually projected to the road side centrelines taking into account the location of the approximate entrance of the attraction facility. The resulting points are corresponding Attraction Points on the road segment. AutoCAD was used for the drafting of those first three steps. See Figure 1.2.



**Figure 1.2 Corresponding Attraction Points Projected to Road Centrelines (Author)**

4. The projected points were used as input for a "Kernel Density" analysis using GIS tools available from ArcGIS Spatial Analyst. Kernel Density basically calculates a magnitude per unit area from point features using kernel function to fit smoothly tapered surfaces to each point.

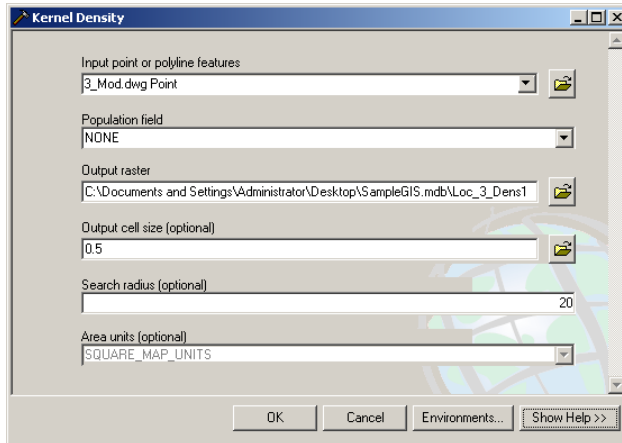


Figure 1.3 Parameters Used for the Kernel Density Analysis (Author)

5. Figure 1.3 shows the parameter settings used for the analysis including a search distance of 20m within which to calculate the density (walking distance discrimination from one attraction point to another), an output raster image spatial resolution of 0.5m output cell size to show fine image resolution, and an output image classification of 6 distinct classes (first class represents zones of no attractions). See Appendix-A for details of the Kernel Density Analysis.

6. The output of the analysis is a Raster layer with values of actual density of attraction localities. This raster dataset was clustered into 6 classes. Figure 1.4 .

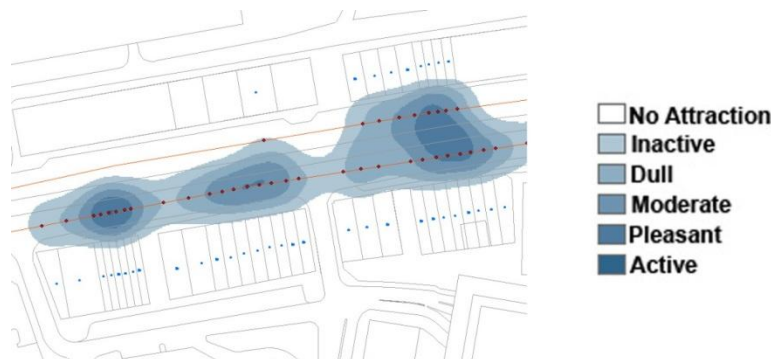


Figure 1.4 . Sample Density Distribution Along with Adopted Classes (Author)

#### **1.1.4.5 Space Syntax Analysis**

In addition to observational analysis and behavioural mapping the researcher employed Space Syntax analysis to evaluate and compare the results with findings from other methodologies. Space Syntax originated in the 1970s and 1980s through the work of a research team led by Bill Hillier at the University of London. The key sources are Hillier's *The Social Logic of Space* (co-authored with Julienne Hanson) and *Space is the Machine*, published in 1984 and 1996 (Cambridge University Press). "Space syntax is a set of computer techniques for modelling buildings and cities, in which spatial layout is first represented as systems of linked geometrical elements – lines when studying movement, convex elements when studying interaction, fields of view when examining more complex patterns of behaviour – and then analysed in terms of the relations between each spatial element and all the other spatial elements in the layout" (Hillier: P. 2).

Space Syntax focuses on space and how people move through it, and where social and economic activities are enacted. The logic behind Space Syntax can be illustrated by three different factors. First, configurational accessibility can be assessed by evaluating the non-metric and non-geometric configurational properties of space, the ease of physical movement through a district and the number of alternative routes running through it.

Second, within the urban structure, streets are considered as individual spaces and are identified by "axial lines". Space Syntax uses different variables such as relative integration, which measures how a street is configurationally accessible with respect to all other streets in the city. A high integration value means that a street is more accessible, more useful for through movement than other streets in the city.

Third, the term connectivity refers to the number of all axial lines that are directly connected to other lines, and control is the level of control that a line has on its neighbours. Space Syntax thereby provides a theoretical foundation for empirical analysis of the way urban space is used (Gabay, 2003: P. 2).

### Space Syntax: Basic Analytical Techniques

It has been the aim of Space Syntax theories to arrive at a representational methodology for the study and analysis of space. According to Space Syntax theory, space can be represented in the form of axial, convex and isovist shapes. The system then gets transcribed using a small circle to represent a space and a line joining two spaces to represent their relationship: “it was always a primary aim of Space Syntax to arrive at spatial descriptions of buildings and cities with the minimum intervention of linguistic concepts” (Hillier, 2009:P. 042:6). Space Syntax theories encourage the study of space from a functional point of view and analyse what people do in it. People move in lines, occupy convex spaces and see irregular shapes called isovists (Fanek, 1997: P. 33).

A **justified map** “is one in which some points, usually the carrier, are put at the base, and then all points of depth 1 from that point are aligned horizontally immediately above it, all points at depth 2 from that point above those at depth 1, and so on until all levels from that point are accounted for” (Hillier and Hanson, 1984:P. 106). Justified maps represent spaces as circles and the relationship between them as a line. Cells with one entrance are referred to as unipermeable points, while cells with more than one entrance can be conceptualised as multipermeable points. [Figure 1. 5]. From these elements a pattern can be constructed. [Figure 1. 6-A] illustrates *a* and *b* in a symmetric and distributed relation in respect to *c*. Figure 1. 6 B shows *a* and *b* in a symmetric and nondistributed relation with respect to *c*. Figure 1. 6 C shows *a* and *b* in a nondistributed and asymmetric relation with respect to *c*. Figure 1. 6 D shows a more complicated example where *a* and *b* are symmetric to each other with respect to *c*, but *d* is an asymmetric relation to both with respect to *c*.

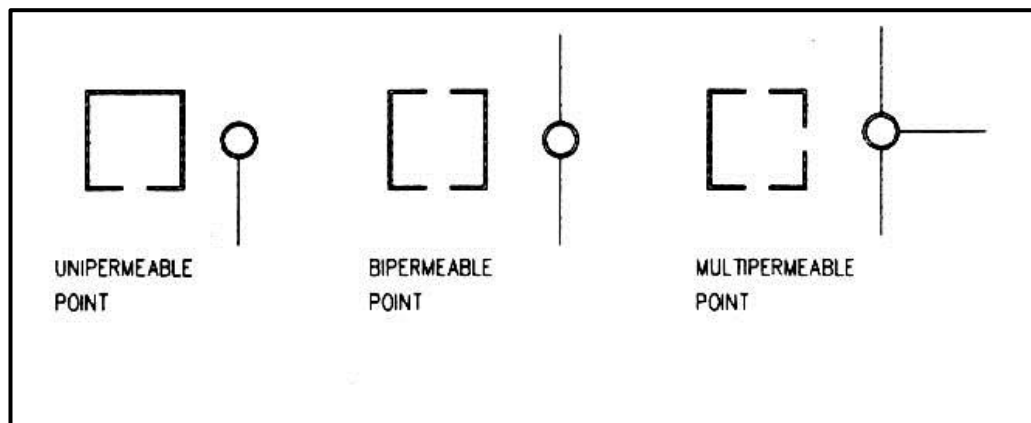


Figure 1. 5 Unipermeable, Bipermeable and Multipermeable point. (Unlu, 1999, P. 3).

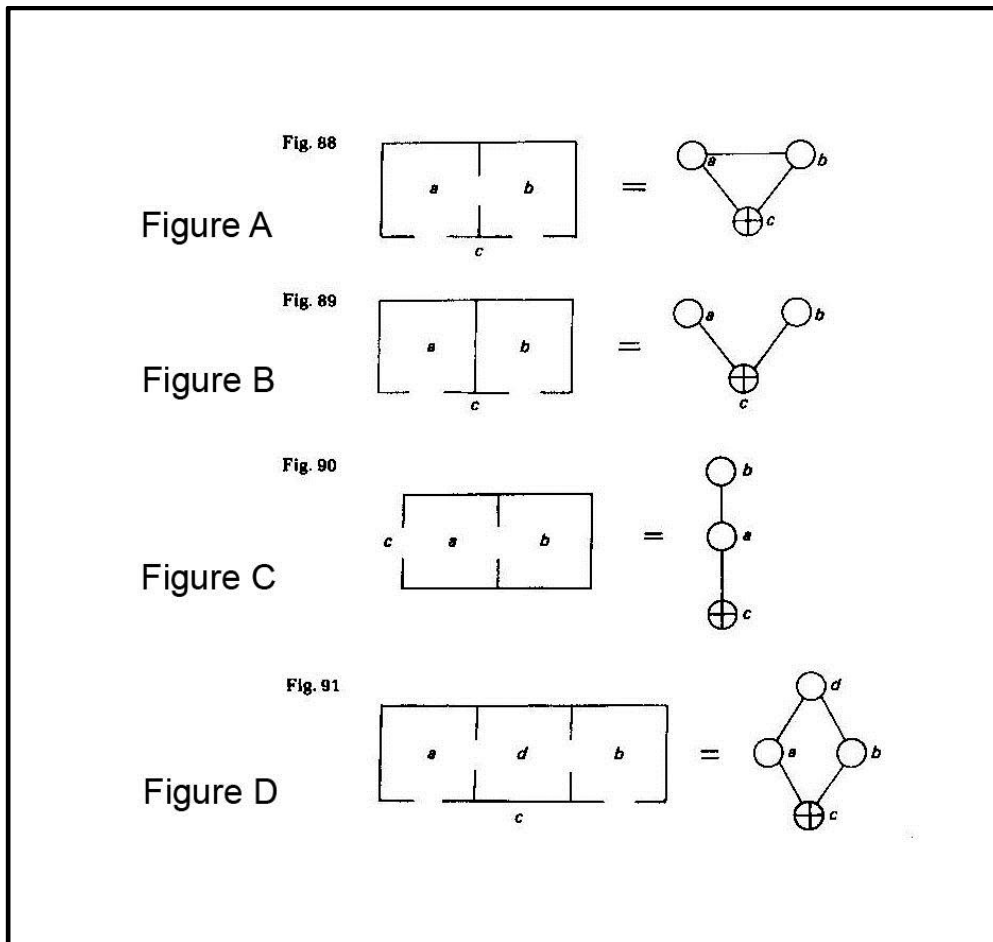


Figure 1. 6 Justified Graph Concept (Hillier and Hanson, 1984, P. 148)

A **convex map** “depicts the least number of convex spaces that fully cover a layout and the connections between them” (Klarqvist, 1993:P. 11) (see Figure 1. 7). The **axial map** is one of the main tools of spatial analysis in Space Syntax. It is defined as “the minimal set of axial lines such that the set taken together fully surveys the system, and that every axial line that may connect two otherwise unconnected lines is included” (Turner, 2005: P.428). It constitutes a web of axial lines that cover convex spaces in a certain area whether an urban space or a building. All axial lines have to cross at least one other line (see Figure 1. 8).

An **isovist map** “depicts the areas that are visible from convex spaces or axial lines” (Klarqvist, 1993: P.11).

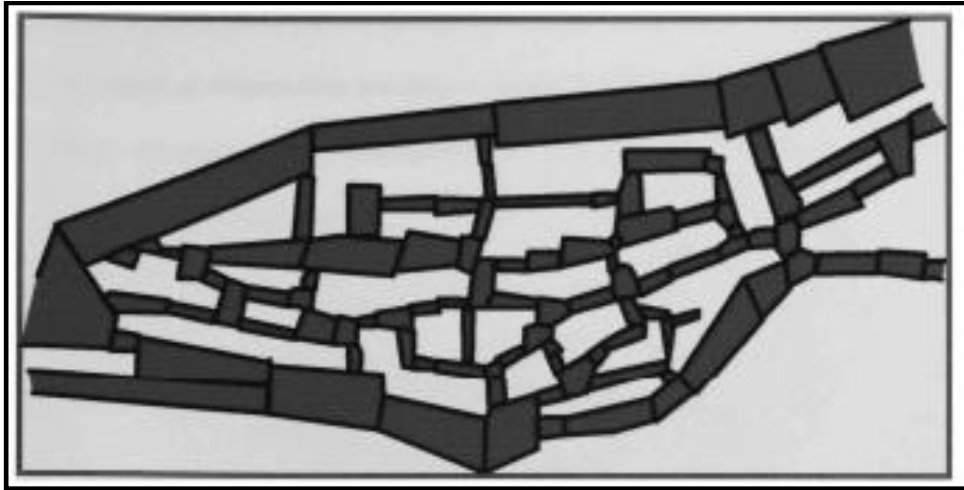


Figure 1. 7 A convex space map of Gassin, France (Fanek, 1997: P. 3).

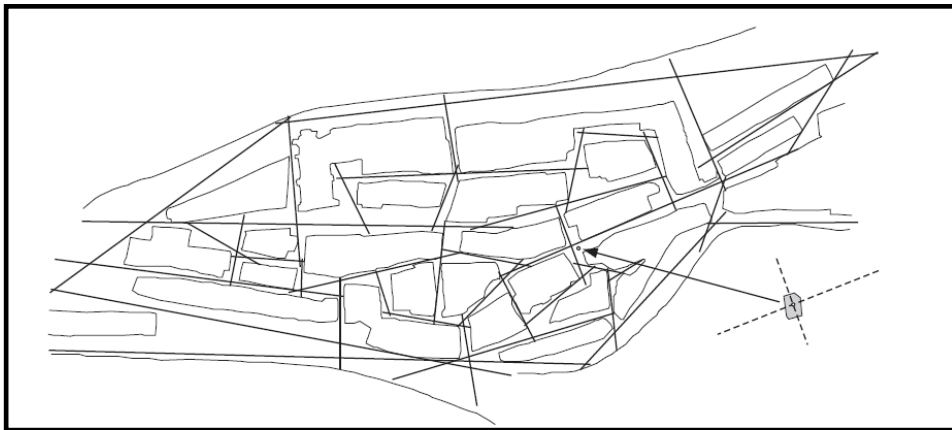


Figure 1. 8 The original hand-drawn axial map of Gassin, France, vectorised from figure 28 in Hillier and Hanson (1984: P. 91).

Space Syntax models measure the potential of movement at different scales, from local to global and accordingly can help researchers and designers to make assumptions about how people evaluate distances and select certain routes and destinations. Thus, Space Syntax tools give researchers and designers a matrix of network measures to explore the structure and functions of cities (Hillier, 2008: P. 13). A major principle of Space Syntax theory is that people move through their perception of the angular geometry of the network, rather than the actual metric distance from origin to destination.

Space Syntax uses four different syntactic measures:

1. **Connectivity**: “is the number of immediate neighbours that are directly connected to a space. This is a static local measure” (Klarqvist, 1993: P.11).
2. **Integration value**: “is a static global measure. It describes the average depth of a space to all other spaces in the system. The spaces of a system can be ranked from the most integrated to the most segregated” (Klarqvist, 1993: P.11). In



order to measure level of integration, we must understand depth, and how deep axial or convex segments are from buildings or carriers. Relative asymmetry “generalizes by comparing how deep the system is from a particular point with how deep or shallow it theoretically could be” (Hillier and Hanson, 1984: P. 108). The *global integration value* is a description of how accessible a line in the system is to all other lines. The term global refers to the analysis of all lines in relation to all others, regardless of how far they go, provided that they are connected and form the web of the axial map. Another valuable measure is the *local integration value* (R=3), which is mostly used to study pedestrian movement. The local integration value measures the relationship of every line in the system that is within three steps of the line being measured. Through the use of axial map analysis one can determine integration. When the number of steps it takes to get from one line to all others in the system is low, then the line is well integrated; highly integrated streets correspond with high levels of movement.

3. *Control value* “is a dynamic local measure. It measures the degree to which a space controls access to its immediate neighbours taking into account the number of alternative connections that each of these neighbours has” (Klarqvist, 1993: P.11).
4. *Global choice* “is a dynamic global measure of the ‘flow’ through a space. A space has a strong choice value when many of the shortest paths, connecting all spaces to all spaces of a system, passes through it” (Klarqvist, 1993: P.11).

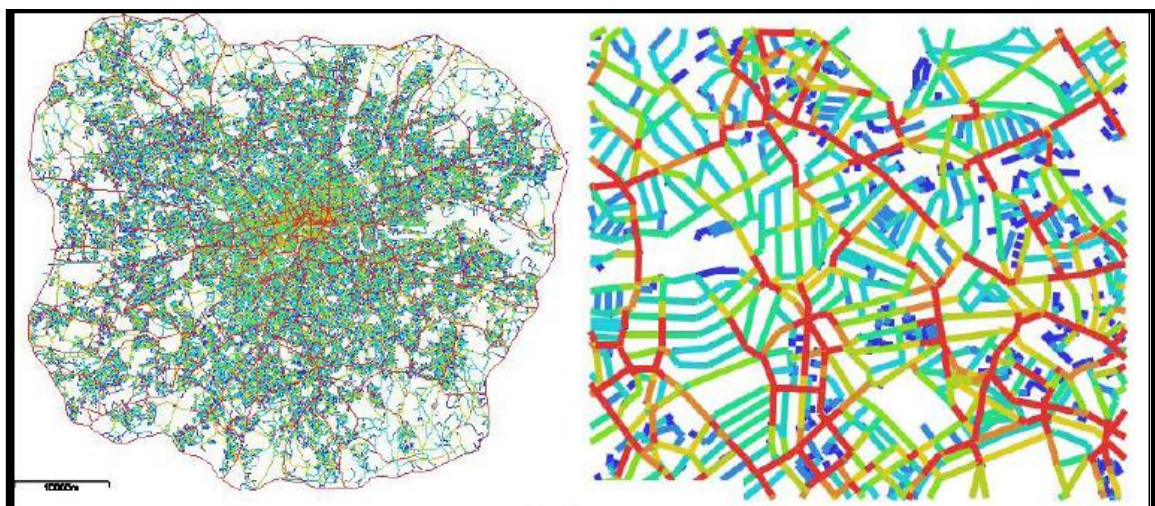


Figure 1. 9 Axial map of the City of London (left) and London's urban village (right) (Hillier, 2008).

The diagram on the left in Figure 1. 9 illustrates the axial map of the City of London within the M25, which has more than 285,000 segments, and which was intended to explore that large-scale movement. The result was successful in predicting the actual main movement arteries. The map on the right in [Figure 1. 9] shows the structure of local movement potential up to 750m for London's urban village and the links between them (Hillier, 2008). "A layout can thus be represented as a different kind of spatial system according to what aspects of function we are interested in" (Hillier, 1996: P.156). Hillier illustrates the plan of the city of Rome in three modes. The first (Figure 1. 10 a) shows the customary plan where plan buildings are drawn in black and space white. The second (Figure 1. 10 b) shows the axial map of Rome, showing the fewest and longest lines that cover the streets. Figure 1. 10 c illustrates all the convex elements (public space) together with their isovists.

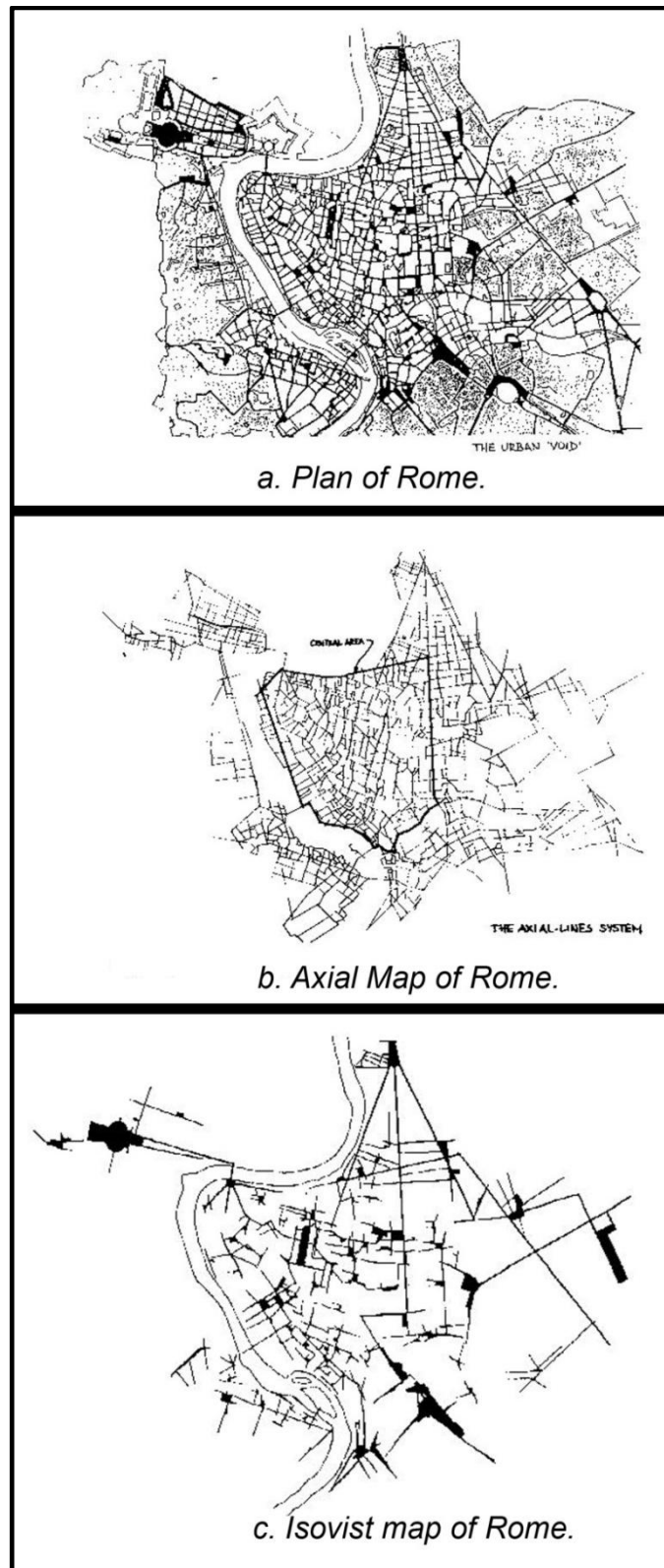


Figure 1. 10 Plan of Rome in three modes (Hillier, 1996: P. 155).

### DepthMap

Space Syntax computer techniques have been used to develop an understanding of existing cities, urban areas and buildings. Computer models can simulate the likely effect of new design proposals, and incorporate social and economic data that can be used for design proposals and planning processes. Depthmap is the main software that is

used to undertake the various Space Syntax technical analyses. The software performs various spatial analyses intended to understand social practices in the built environment. It works at different scales from buildings to urban spaces and entire cities or regions. The software aims to produce maps of open space elements, establish connections between them, and create graph analyses of the results. The goal is to produce a number of variables that could have practical significance to researchers and practitioners (Turner, 2007a:P. 49).

“Depthmap can be used to assess the visual accessibility ... It can produce point isovists, that is, polygons representing the visually accessible area from a location, along with measures of those polygons (such as perimeter, area and so on), or it can further join a dense grid of isovists into a visibility graph of indivisible points (with graphs of up to about 1,000,000 point locations). The visibility graph may then be analysed directly using graph measures, or be used as the core of an agent-based analysis” (Turner, 2007b). Depthmap software can derive axial maps of small to medium urban scale models. Once a map has been generated, researchers could analyse data through the use of graph measures, and compare data with other indicators such as social data or pedestrian counts. (Turner, 2007b). Depthmap can produce coloured maps, tables and scatter grams that compare measures against other measures or observed data, as well as a three-dimensional view of agents walking (Turner, 2007b). It can also carry out various analyses of the visual relationship of potential human-occupied locations within space (Turner, 2007a:P. 45).

The author prepared a Space Syntax model for each of the selected case studies. This, together with the findings from the rest of the research methodologies will present a strong empirical proof and assist in answering the research questions. The application of Space Syntax informs this research through the illustration of the strong relationship between successful retailing and vital urban centres. It has so far shown the relation between spatial structure and social relations, and illustrated the role of integration and centrality on the production of urban and social vitality and coherence. The use of Space Syntax analysis provides a method of modelling the potential socio-economic impacts of new urban retailing structures.

#### **1.1.4.6 Economic Vitality**

Economic analysis was one of the essential dimensions that informed this research and provided answers to the research questions. The author sought to identify the relationship between physical and social factors that contribute to the creation of successful retailing. In addition to the physical urban form and the social mapping of case studies, the researcher measured the vitality of retailing within the selected case studies and its relation to the physical and social findings. The author employed three key measures of town centre retailing vitality, attractiveness and viability:

1. Rental value
2. Occupancy rate
3. Diversity of retailing.

#### **Rental Value**

Rental values are considered to be one of the major indicators of the viability and vitality of commercial centres. Changes in rental value indicate the level of attractiveness/viability of retailing within a given centre, and it is postulated that there is a strong relationship between rents and localized accessibility. Therefore, the researcher attempted to identify rent gradients or surfaces within centres along the lines generated by the access-space model (Alonso, 1964: P.44). In the UK, rental value in town centres is defined by “Zone A” rents. Zone A rents "reflect the established approach to the valuation of shops, whereby the most valuable part of a shop is located at the front (generating greater sales), with the value declining moving towards the rear of the shop unit” (Hargest, 2007). In other countries there may be alternative measures, therefore the comparative analyses of case studies took this into account.

The researcher obtained information on rental values in each of the selected case studies from documents produced by agents, valuation offices and city councils, as well as personal discussions with local agents. The findings were then correlated with the results of the social activity surveys. Then, the author illustrated the level of attractiveness of the public and retailers to central, integrated locations that offer opportunities for social activities.

#### **Occupancy Rate**

Retail occupancy rates can be defined as either the number of occupied (active) units or amount floor space, expressed as a percentage of the total number of units or floor space

in a centre. (Hargest, 2007: P. 113). The objective of the occupancy survey is to record the uses of buildings at ground level to provide a record of the actual nature of occupancy on a schedule, map and pictorial representation. The survey was limited to the boundaries set by the selected case studies. The researcher carried out the process in two main steps: first, a walk-over survey recording occupiers and land use based on official ordnance survey and GOAD maps that were purchased. Second, desk-based work was conducted to collate the findings and clarify any areas of uncertainty.

The analysis described the physical characteristics of the retail industry within the studied area and described the typology of retailing (anchor stores, chain, independent, etc.) as well as the uses on the ground floor. A percentage breakdown of the type of occupancy was produced for instance shops, financial & professional, restaurant & café, drinking establishments, hot food takeaway, business, hotels, dwelling houses, non-residential institutions, community assembly & leisure, and other. When identifying vacancies the researcher considered the following factors, as identified by Hargest:

- The distribution of vacancies.
- Vacancies of non-retail/retail service uses.
- Vacancies in upper floors.
- Vacancies in spaces undergoing development.
- The causes of vacancies (Hargest, 2007: P.114).

### **Retail Diversity**

Retail diversity is defined in relation to “size of business, type of ownership, format, price, quality of service, range and type of goods and operator.” (Findlay, 2010). The author mapped the percentage of the different types of retailers in the following categories:

- National and regional multiples.
- Independent and specialist traders.
- Specific retailer categories such as charity, second-hand and discount shops.
- Anchor stores.
- General shopping facilities.
- Markets.

### **1.1.5 Research Structure**

#### **Overview of the thesis**

This research attempted to discuss the relationship between the built environment and economic activities in the form of retailing and social vitality. It focused on the ability of cities and urban centres to enhance the built environment through integration, centrality and diversity, and by doing so achieve stronger social and urban vitality.

Part one: Theoretical and Empirical Context, Chapter two, *Consumption Activities and Urban Environment*, discusses the relationship between consumption and urban change. It identifies the relationships between consumption and typical spaces, places, lifestyle and forms of social behaviour in the contemporary city. The chapter illustrates the relationship between consumption activities and urban vitality. It demonstrates that when retailing activities are utilised efficiently, they can contribute to urban integration and social vitality.

Chapter three, *Urban Theories and Retailing Environment*, reviews diverse urban theories and resources. The author realized that in order to reshape retailing in Kuwait City, he has to develop a deep understanding of urban theories and social and cultural values. Chapter three studies the characteristics of the Islamic urban form and its retailing environment typology. In addition, it looks at modern and contemporary urban thinkers such as Jane Jacobs, whose ideas illustrate that dense and compact communities and mixed-use urban areas are essential for creation of social vitality and economic prosperity. Chapter three also refers to the writings and projects of Jan Gehl, which contributed greatly to this research; his thinking seeks to enrich the life of people in cities through integrated streets and walkability. The research also distilled knowledge from the ideas of New Urbanism, which advocates mixed-use, high-density development and a return to traditional urban design and architectural language. Chapter three takes a glance at the field of urban economy in order to develop a better understanding of the effect of location on retailing in the contemporary city. The theories reviewed in chapter three confirm that better integrated and diverse retailing can produce urban and social vitality.

Part One: Section B: Empirical Context of this research includes chapter four, *Pilot Case Study: City of Glasgow*, chapter five, *Second Case Study: City of York* and chapter six, *Third Case Study: City of Aleppo*. Within those chapters the author

presents the case study reports. These chapters seek to demonstrate the holistic and deep investigation that describes, explains and evaluates the role of integrated retailing in the vitality of city centres. The chapters describe the studies carried out in three cities that collected diverse data from which a grounded theory was developed. The findings of the three case studies allowed the researcher to distil lessons that proved to be very valuable in the study of the target case study, Kuwait City.

The pilot case study of the city of Glasgow and its three central retailing streets (Buchanan Street, Sauchiehall Street and Argyll Street), and the study of the city of York and its three retailing streets (Parliament Street/Davygate, Stonegate and Coney Street) helped to distil information on the characteristics of vital retailing environments. Urban policies in both cities illustrate an understanding of the positive role of retailing in the city's economy. They aim to preserve centrality and focus development in the city centre rather than on the fringes. Urban policies clearly work to enhance the concentration of retailing activity and encourage mixed-use development in order to create a 24-hour city. Various development controls observe the enhancement of the visual quality of the built environment, both through grand schemes and through attention to small details.

The studied sites are hubs of retailing and different forms of formal economic activity. At the same time, they encourage the existence of several informal activities. The studied streets allow diverse social groups to enjoy the place regardless of age, race, economic and physical abilities. The streets are well defined and the buildings contribute to the rich visual environment, despite their variation.

Rental values, diversity of retailing and uses, and rate of occupancy provided indicators of retailing attractiveness and helped to test how the studied areas are measured economically. Through the overlapping of results from different indicators, one can find strong correlations between rental values and other indicators like integration value, stationary activities, visual quality assessment and others.

The city of Aleppo as a case study provided a different example and allowed the researcher to look at a historical city from within a similar regional and cultural setting to the target case. Aleppo encompasses several qualities which contribute to the creation of a strong retailing environment. The town has a strong centre and a well-defined urban



area. The streets are strongly integrated, especially at the local level, which makes the markets easily accessible. The streets are well defined through the maintenance of a continuous facade of buildings that address the street, in addition to the encouragement and preservation of small-scale activities which leads to a rich and large number of active frontages. The physical structure of the markets with their covered walkways presents a good example of architecture that responds to its environment. The on-site surveys and observations illustrate the presence of a good mix of activities, both cultural and economic. As well as mixed types of economic activity which add interest to the street, attract visitors and contribute to the creation of economic and social vitality, the public nature of the markets makes them places open to all, young and old, citizens and tourists, poor and rich workers and shoppers. Looking at the economic vitality, the researcher based the survey on the release value to assess the vitality of different parts of the market. It was clear that the markets had high diversity and occupancy rates, indicating that despite huge social challenges and competition from neighbouring commercial centres, the old markets of Aleppo stand as a vital economic and retailing hub.

In Part Two: Target Case Study, chapter seven, *Target Case Study: Kuwait City*, the author describes the characteristics of Kuwait City and reviews its urban policies. The author used the same methods of analysis as in the three previously discussed studies and chapter eight illustrates areas of weakness in the public space and retailing environment that contribute to the lack of urban and social vitality in Kuwait City.

Part Three: Findings and Recommendations, Chapter eight, *Conclusion*, provides an overview of the entire research. It lists the hypothesis of the research, the research problems and the research objectives. The chapter summarises the research problem as identified by the literature review and field work. This concluding chapter then outlines the research body and the structure of the dissertation, providing a synopsis of the content of the previous chapters and their contribution to the research. It then explains in extensive detail the emergent approach, findings and recommendations which aim to remodel retailing in Kuwait City and address the problems that are manifested by the lack of urban and social vitality in the city.

As part of the deductive approach of this research, in Appendix One, *Space Syntax Theories*, the author highlights the basics of Space Syntax theories. He traces the ideas

that led to the development of Space Syntax and highlights its relationship to other major urban themes like sustainability and urban form. Space Syntax offers valuable tools and insights for the development of successful retailing that is built on urban integration and social vitality and cohesion. First, it calls for a compact urban form that enhances centrality for the sake of ensuring efficient movement and lively urbanity. A high concentration of retailing is desirable for business and the social vitality of city centres. The theory emphasises the importance of integrated networks at the global and local levels, corresponding to the higher volume of movement that is necessary and desirable for retailing. The allocation of mixed residential, commercial and work areas in a highly integrated network produces higher movement, resulting in interaction (as the by-product) and leading to more social cohesion. Intelligibility and linearity are desired spatial characteristics for retailing that provide strong visibility and encourage shopping, but can also be used to create a sense of excitement to encourage buying. Shops that cater for the private vehicle need to be connected at the global level, but those that cater for pedestrians should be connected at the local level. The application of Space Syntax also helped the author to understand the social aspect of retailing which tends to promote segregation.

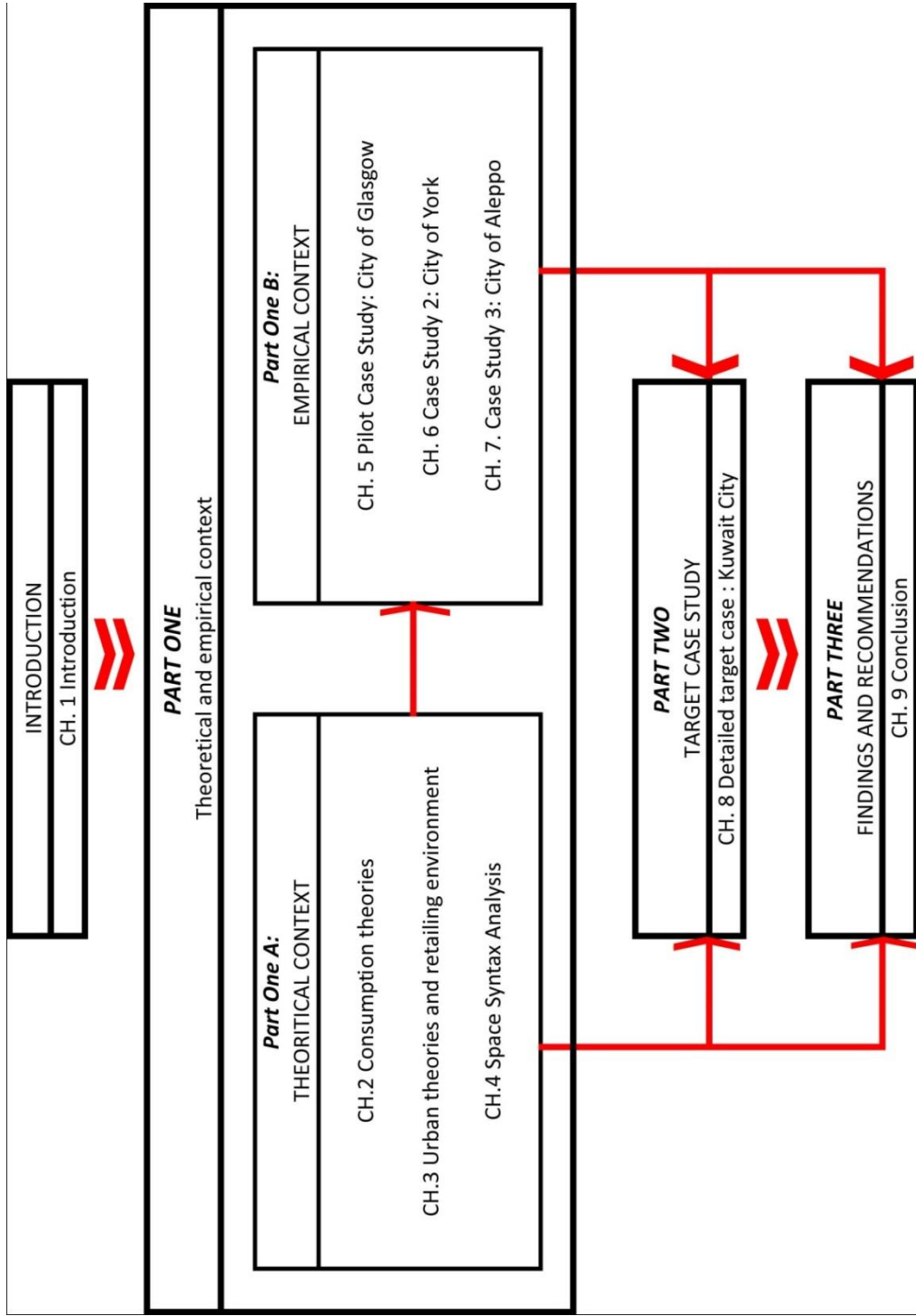


Figure 1. 11 Research Structure Diagram (Author)

## 1.2 Section Two: Background and Context

The State of Kuwait is positioned in a strategic location at the head of the Arabian Gulf between Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The total area of Kuwait is 17,870 sq. km. The developed land makes up only 8% of the total area of the country. Kuwait's climate is that of dry desert characterised by intensely hot summers and short, cool winters. Its terrain is generally flat to slightly undulating desert plains.



Figure 1. 12. Map of Kuwait (source: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

### 1.2.1 Historical Background

The origin of modern Kuwait can be traced back to the settlement of the area by Arabian clans who emigrated from the central Arabian Peninsula around the beginning of the nineteenth century due to harsh living conditions.

### 1.2.2 Economy

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Kuwait's economy was based on trade; it was known to be a harbour town located at the northern of the Arabian Gulf. Kuwait

and Basra formed a transit route of trade between India and different parts of the Middle East. By the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the economy relied primarily on pearl diving. The tradition of seafaring and trade gave Kuwait a thriving merchant class and an outward orientation that remains important to this day. In 1938, oil was discovered and since its export, which began after World War II, economic development has continued until now.



**Figure 1. 13. Kuwait Town and Harbour (Source: Ministry of Information, Kuwait)**

Kuwait's relatively open economy is mainly dependent on petroleum, with self-reported crude oil reserves of about 96 billion barrels – 10% of world reserves. Petroleum accounts for nearly half of GDP, 95% of export revenues, and 80% of government income. Kuwait's geographical location and its active business help strengthen the economy. The national unemployment rate is 2.2% (2004 est.), and wage levels are among the highest in the Middle East (CIA, 2007). The government has also engaged in initiatives to privatize many companies that were formerly owned by the state, in an attempt to free the market and instigate investments; ongoing efforts are underway for further privatization.

### **1.2.3 Modernization and Social Change**

The discovery and production of oil had a big impact on the social structure of Kuwait and its people. Before the production of oil, Kuwait was a limited market and its contact with external societies was minimal; the society was semi-Bedouin and shared similar customs and traditions. Kuwaitis began to engage in new forms of economic activity such as pearl diving and limited trade with Persia, India and the African coasts, which exposed them to diverse cultures and traditions and in turn began to enforce new social realities.

Pearl diving is a tough and difficult trade; even to this day people relate many stories about the horrors of that practice. It took many lives and left the majority of the population with a small income that barely allowed them to survive. It also established a set of social relations that lasted over decades. The nature of that economic activity led to the strengthening of the extended family model that was necessary to cope with the expanding business of ship owners and merchants. It also led to the hierarchal structure of societies in the Gulf in general, and Kuwait in particular, that put the merchants on the top and the pearl divers and slaves at the bottom.

Oil brought great income to Kuwait and allowed the government and people to increase their expenditure in various areas. As a result, common people experienced a new lifestyle characterized by consumption patterns and the purchase of luxury items. Also, as a result of this wealth, new industries were introduced in the country and these also played a role in the social change. For example, it was only in the 1940s that the first bank opened in Kuwait, and within 30 years, in 1974, Kuwait had more than 84 local and international bank branches. Commercial activities expanded as well, and national imports reached 14.35 billion with food, construction materials, vehicles and parts and clothing being the most imported goods (2006 est.) (CIA, 2007).

### **Population growth**

In the 1950s, the availability of public funds resulting from the oil revenues led to large urban expansion. Before then, building used to be limited to within the boundaries of the old town inside the Kuwait Wall. High revenues allowed the government's compulsory purchase of the majority of private properties within the boundaries of the old town, with amounts that equalled many times their market value. This was done in an attempt to achieve two major goals: first to distribute wealth among the general public, second, to re-plan the city on modern principles. (Amal Yousef Al-Athby AL-Sabah, 2004: P. 29).

The economic transformation encouraged foreign workers to migrate to Kuwait, which in turn had a major impact on the geographic distribution of the population as well as on social changes. By 1957, foreign residents made up about 44.9% of the total population of Kuwait. According to Al-Romaihy, "Oil did not only alter the form of labor force, but also introduced new classes that were not familiar to traditional Kuwaiti society,

that is labor in its wider sense, technicians, services workers, governmental, transportation, industry employees” (Al-Romaihy, 1995: P. 21).

### **Demography**

According to the latest census report published by the Public Authority of Civil Information, the total population of Kuwait is around 3,328,136 (2007), with 31% of the population being Kuwaiti.

#### **1.2.4 History of Urban Planning**

Along with economic prosperity and population rise, the government of Kuwait gave priority to housing welfare. The expansion in the establishment of housing projects led to evident urban sprawl. In April 1952, the State of Kuwait commissioned the first master plan for the country that could achieve the following goals: the provision of a road network, the allocation of zoning, the provision of housing and establishment of commercial development areas. The plan reflected these goals and covered Kuwait City and extended to cover the areas up to the third ring road. It included all the different land uses: residential, commercial, industrial, and government and public utilities. For the first time in Kuwait, the government began to implement international planning standards. The plan executed a ring-road structure and introduced the suburban system with its central services centre that achieved wide success.

In parallel with the economic boom, Kuwait continued to experience rapid growth in population resulting from both natural growth and migration. The population was 206,473 in 1957 and jumped to 467,339 in 1965. There was a vast growth in building and soon it covered the area planned in the first master plan of 1952. Therefore a need for further land emerged.

During that period, the Department of Planning (Kuwait Municipality) worked on several development studies and assisted in the provision of further land. After many studies, Kuwait Municipality began to seek advice from the United Nations. Later, in 1968, Kuwait Municipality appointed the British consultants Colin Buchanan and Partners Ltd to carry out the second master plan study. The study comprised the following components:

- 1- Long Term Study
- 2- National Plan

- 3- Metropolitan Area Short Term Plan
- 4- Kuwait City Master Short Term Plan.

The metropolitan area plan was set for the coming 15 years and covered the period until the population reached 1,258,000. It also designated the limits of the urban form. Regarding housing policy, it recommended the removal of primitive housing and the housing of the Bedouin population. In an attempt to create an even distribution of administrative and commercial services, the planning established five hierarchies of commercial centres:

First: Kuwait City; as a major centre and the capital of the country.

Second: A secondary centre in the West Fintas area to cover the areas south of the sixth ring road and serve about 500,000 people.

Third: Seven additional centres of smaller scale to serve 100,000 people each.

Fourth: Neighbourhood centres.

Fifth: Local retail shops.

As for Kuwait City, the plan recommended that Kuwait City preserve a population of no less than 80,000 people, a number that equalled the actual number of residents of Kuwait City at the time of the study. By that time the employment in the city was about 95,000. Realizing that the number of city dwellers was decreasing, the plan thus proposed to re-house 9,000 people to the city, decrease the number of non-Kuwaitis and decrease the collective labour housing to 8,000. In addition, it recommended housing 2,000 Kuwait University students in the city.

### **First Review of Second Master Plan of 1977**

Due to the unexpected increase in the population, the 1970 Master Plan underwent some changes; both the passage of time and alterations to the floor area ratio allowance necessitated a review. In 1977, Kuwait Municipality appointed the British consultant Shankland Cox Ltd to carry out the first review of the 1970 Master Plan.

The plan reviewed employment between the years 1975 and 2000, and took account of the increase in population and the overcrowding of residential areas. It also reassessed the capacity of the metropolitan area and recommended the provision of housing for



1,000,000 outside the metropolitan area. The study noted the increase in car ownership and encouraged the redistribution of commercial and administrative centres within the metropolitan area. It also proposed measures to increase the efficiency of public transportation. As for the commercial centre, the study noted the increase in income and spending patterns, reasserted the principles of the 1970 plan and greatly encouraged the speeding up of the implementation of the second district centre in the Fintas area.

The study pointed out that if all the allocated plans were implemented, Kuwait City would experience complex problems in terms of traffic and environment. Thus, the plan suggested a cap on the number of jobs within Kuwait City to 140,000 and controlled the development in the traditional market area as well as Fahad Al-Salem Street and the Sharq area.

As for housing, the plan recommended that the state take charge of the provision of low and middle-income housing, primarily to serve the non-Kuwaiti population within the city. The plan encouraged the preservation of the green belt and the development of other open areas and parks, as well as proposing the preservation of several historic sites and buildings within the city. It also reviewed the traffic conditions of the city and proposed the development of the first ring road as well as more parking and constraints on traffic within the city.

### **Second Review of the Second Master Plan of 1983**

This review recommended several alterations to the policies and recommendations of the previous study, based on demographic, economic and political developments. The second review estimated the overall capacity of the metropolitan area at about 2.085 million by the year 2005 and recommended an increased capacity for the proposed new towns to meet the rising population.

### **Third Review of Second Master Plan of 1990 and the Third Master Plan of 1997**

The third review study of the second master plan was commenced in January 1990. However, it came to a sudden termination due to the events of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. After the liberation of Kuwait and the process of reconstruction, there was a pressing need to implement a comprehensive review of the planning policies and to guide the development process with planning principles.

After liberation, Kuwait experienced major changes in demography as well economic conditions. Thus, Kuwait Municipality commenced the study for the Third Kuwait Master Plan in 1992. The plan began with an overall survey of population, employment, environment, natural resources, land use, housing, energy, capacity of metropolitan area, transportation and utilities. These studies have formed the basis for a detailed analysis of the nature of each sector and its major problems.

However, the study period was extended and failed to gain official approval as a result of the bureaucratic process. Yet, Kuwait Municipality planners continued to consult the plan to answer different emerging issues until the start of the 3KMPR.

### **First Review of the Third Master Plan 3KMPR**

Because five years had passed since the Master Plan of 1997, Kuwait Municipality saw the need to carry out a review of it. This was especially important because the latest plan had not been officially approved in the light of the latest political and economic changes. Thus, in 2003 Kuwait Municipality appointed a team of local and international consultants - the Kuwait Engineering Group and the British consultancy Colin Buchanan & Partners in order to review, update and develop all information in accordance with the latest plans and projects in all sectors. This involved carrying out a multi-faceted study projected to the year 2030, when future plans would be set for population and employment growth, including predicting the required roads and public utilities, assessing the direction of future urban expansion, establishing goals, strategies, and policies that would guide future urban growth and that might be a source for all local public authorities and decision makers. The 3KMPR study was carried out in three main steps - data collection and analysis, planning studies, and plan preparation on three levels as follows:

1. National Physical Plan
2. Metropolitan Area Structure Plan
3. Kuwait City Local Plan.

### **District Centres Policy**

The 1970 Master Plan was the first master plan to propose the development of the District Centres Policy. It constituted ordered levels of a hierarchy distributed across the metropolitan area, in order to provide different sorts of services and community

facilities in accordance with demand as required by population size in the catchment area. Kuwait Master Plan proposed a four-level order hierarchy as follows:

- The first order was set for Kuwait City as the state's capital. It was envisioned as being the major centre of retail activities, the concentration of financial activities like major companies, banks and the stock market, as well as being the centre of government and authority.
- The second order, titled Major Centres, was allocated to the Fintas area to provide services similar to those of Kuwait City but on a smaller scale. Later, during the Kuwait Master Plan Review of 1983, this Fintas centre was downgraded to the level of a District Centre, thus transforming the system to a four-tier hierarchy.
- The third order was called the Neighbourhood Centres, which were to be established around co-operatives in the suburban areas.
- The fourth order was the Local Centres, which were to be located within residential areas and provide everyday services and functions.

In fact, most of the recommended policies in regard to the establishment of district centres were not implemented. This in turn has directed development to existing centres, causing major pressure from owners to increase densities, encouraging illegal uses and increasing traffic congestion. (Kuwait Engineering Group and Colin Buchanan & Partners Ltd, 2004).

### **1.2.5 Notes on Planning Developments in the State of Kuwait**

It should be noted that the 1970 Master Plan set the framework from which all following master plans were prepared. During the 1980s, it was evident that the government had failed to implement many of its plans, including those stated in the master plans, such as the execution of satellite towns, the development of district centres and the maintenance of a considerable resident population within Kuwait City.

### **1.2.6 The Urban Form of Kuwait**

The development of the urban form took a radial pattern, following the coastline of Kuwait at the south of Kuwait's cove and governed by natural constraints such as the oil wells south of Kuwait City. Thus, the metropolitan area took an L-shape. (See Figure 1. . 15). The metropolitan area of Kuwait comprises governorates: Al-Kuwait (Capital),

Hawalli, Al Ahmadi, Al-Jahra, Al-Farwaniya and Mubarak Al-Kabeer. Each of these governorates is made up of several suburbs (see Figure 1.14).

Land use in Kuwait is divided into three main usage classifications: residential, commercial and industrial. The residential sector is divided into two main segments, private residential and high-density investment residential. Private housing is the most important market segment of the property industry; it is primarily based on the government’s resolution to provide a house for every citizen. However, it is mainly directed at Kuwaiti nationals. (See Figure 1.16 & Figure 1.16)

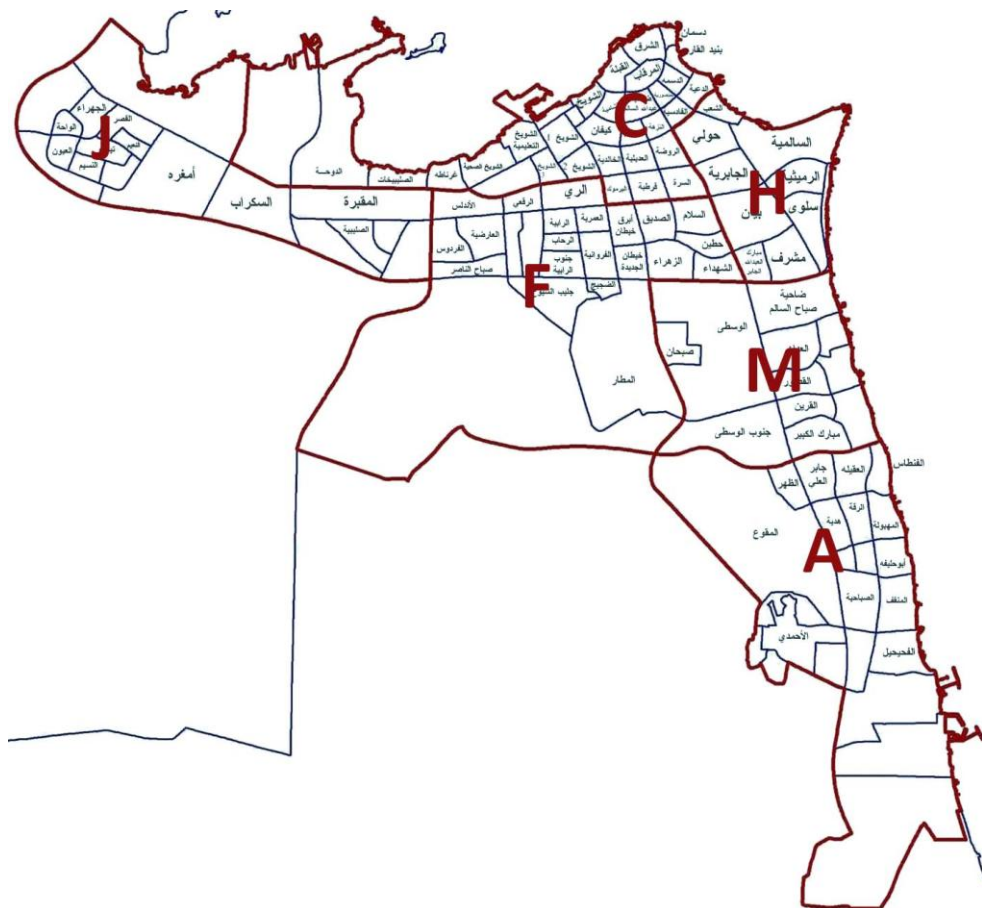


Figure 1.14. The six Kuwait Governorates (Source: <http://www.nonhores.com>, with amendments)

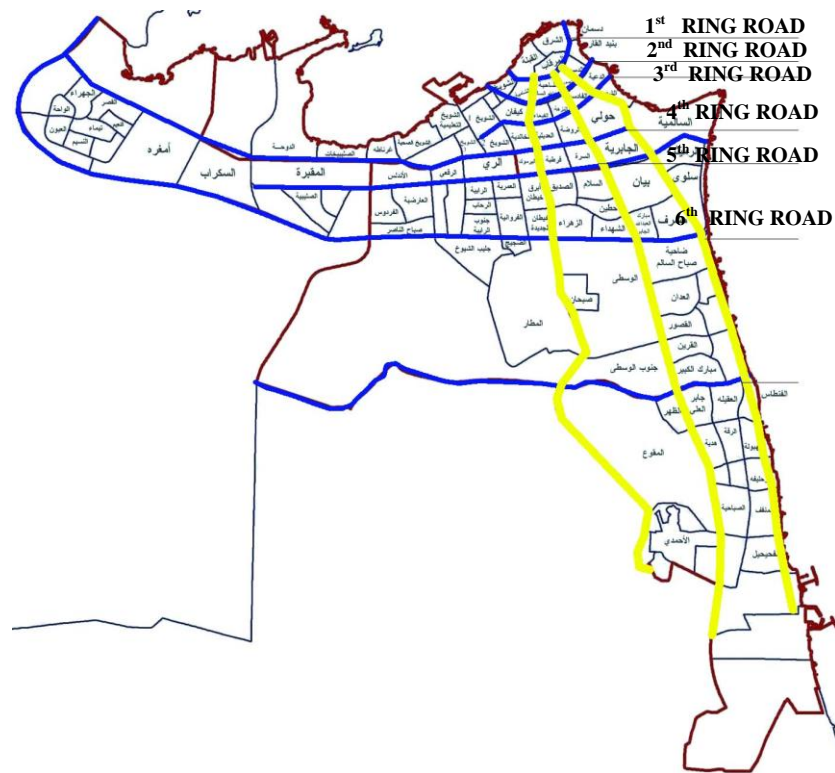


Figure 1.15 . Radial Expansion of the Metropolitan Area (source: www.kt.com.kw amended by the author)



Figure 1.16. Private House, Kuwait



Figure 1.17. Governmental Housing(Author)

### Investment (High-Density Residential)

High-density investment residential is divided into two segments, high-density residential and collective housing. It was estimated that in 2001 there were 110,491 high-density investment units. This type of housing mainly services non-Kuwaiti nationals who live in Kuwait as families or individuals. It is the second major form of housing that makes up the built environment in Kuwait. (See Figure 1.18)



Figure 1.18. High-density Residential Buildings in Salmiya, Kuwait ( Source: right: panoramio.com, Left: infotel.co.uk)

### Commercial

The commercial sector is intended for office and retail uses. It is characterized by a high cost due to the scarcity of land, which has limited the investment in this sector to large corporations and high net-worth individuals. The main commercial areas in Kuwait are Kuwait City, Farwaniya, Hawally and parts of Salmiya. While commercial space in Kuwait City consists largely of offices, Salmiya, Hawally and Farwaniya mostly have retail commercial space. (See Figure 1.19)



Figure 1.19. Al Hamra Tower and United Tower in Kuwait City ( Source: Right: www.urbike.com, Left: sshic.com)

### **Retailing in Kuwait**

Many international retail operators and brands have either already established themselves or are in the process of securing a presence in Kuwait. This trend is not limited to Kuwait but covers the overall region. “The turnover for the retail sector in the GCC exceeds \$100 billion each year. The real estate retail market is one of the fastest growing in the world. In the 1990s, shopping centres in the GCC offered around 1 million square metres of retail area, with only 20 international brands present. Since then, floor space has grown to over 5.3 million square metres and over 500 global brands. Furthermore, with the large population growth and the increasingly active tourism industry, the GCC retail area is expected to increase three-fold to over 16 million square metres by 2010 - an increase of over 565% since 2000” (Nash, 2007).

Over the last few years, Kuwait’s commercial landscape has changed dramatically. In order to cope with this influx of international retailers and to respond to their requirements, developers and property companies competed in building a series of shopping malls. Due to the scarcity of privately owned land of sufficient size, and in an effort to catch up with international and regional trends, Kuwait Municipality began a process of releasing valuable state land within the metropolitan area to create private developments, as part of a grand project to develop the seafront and encourage privatization. Also, the Municipality eased restrictions and increased the allowable built-up area in order to encourage further development of private land. Kuwait has added massive amounts of retail capacity especially between 2003 and 2007. As a result, it has experienced enormous growth in commercial development, which continues to have a great social, economic and urban impact. (See Figure 1.20)



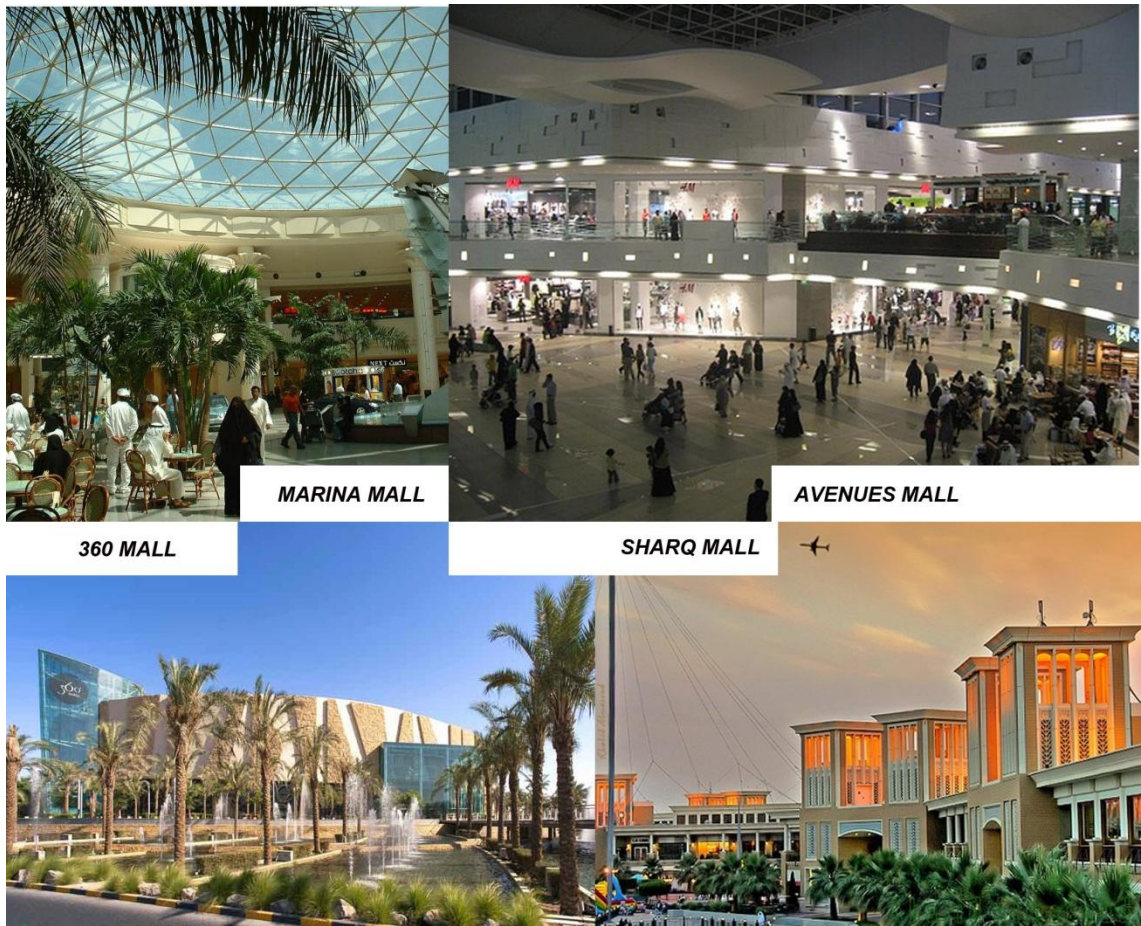


Figure 1.20. Examples of Shopping Malls in Kuwait (Sources: Thom Gordon, [www.4thringroad.com](http://www.4thringroad.com), [www.cityknown.com](http://www.cityknown.com) & [www.yadig.com](http://www.yadig.com))



## **PART ONE A: THEORETICAL CONTEXT**

### **CHAPTER TWO: CONSUMPTION THEORIES**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

As part of the theoretical context of this research, this chapter aims to form an understanding of the role of consumption as a social activity in the creation of sites of consumption and contemporary urban spaces. This chapter helps to create a better understanding of the research problems that are traced in the target case study: Kuwait City. It plays a role in the development of new inquiries and helps the author to build a grounded theory. This chapter discusses the relationship between consumption and urban change. It aims to discover the role of consumption activities in the creation of urban vitality. It seeks to highlight the role of sites of consumption in the creation of urban integration. The chapter starts with a discussion of the definition of consumption and shows that consumption is more than the purchasing of goods in urban context; consumption is influenced by broader social and cultural values. Consumption is an interactive term that has various meanings and implications.

Consumption is urban in nature and "The city continue to provide the prime context within which consumer experiences are both constructed and acted out" (Miles, 1998c:P. 815) It also illustrates the relationship between culture and consumption culture and how both are intertwined in the contemporary city. In order to create a better understanding of the term, the author gave a short historic background on the development of consumption traced through the rise of modern and postmodern periods. "Milling around the shops, ancient, modern and postmodern, you get to know a city, its history and the history it makes. In a city and a country formed by trading connections, shopping is the connective tissue, the life blood and essential ingredient that makes all apparent and comprehensible" (Sardar, 2000: 76). Consumption has a direct impact on urban spaces globally. Global sites of consumption have standardized consumption tastes, fashion, architecture, media and other forms of material cultures. The chapter

illustrates the main characteristics of major sites of consumption such as the arcade, the boulevards, the department store, the superstore and the shopping mall.

In the context of this research, this chapter seeks to highlight very important issues. Consumption is a social force that is impacting human behaviour and urban environment; it is recognized as a natural product of modernism and progression. Sites of consumption are the sites of contemporary urbanism; the culture of cities is seen today through commercial activities and within commercial streets. Contemporary economic activities seek to expand retailing sites to cope with continued demand and competition.

## **2.1 What is Consumption?**

The definition of consumption is not easy to grasp. Although there is a general agreement that the term may be defined as “the process in which goods and services are bought and used to satisfy people's needs” (Benson, 1996a: P.5), this definition remains ambiguous and requires further clarification. It needs further explanation of the types of goods one consumes and distinguishes between consumption and investment, as well as differentiating between necessary needs and luxury items. The twentieth century has seen an increased use of the term consumption due to the spread of mass consumption; the spread of mass consumption increases the importance of studying the concept of consumption. Many studies began to look closely at its origin, development, relationship with other aspects of postmodern life and its effect on the overall development and shape. Miles defines consumption at its most basic levels as the "the purchase and use of goods" (Miles, 1998c:P. 815) Campbell defines it as "The selection, purchase, use, maintenance, repair and disposal of any product or services" (ibid.) McCracken describes that in Western developed societies, where consumption has a different meaning and a very significant one. "Without consumer goods, certain acts of self- definition and collective definition in this culture would be impossible." (ibid.) The term is quite complex and its meaning extends beyond the traditional economic aspect.

A review of the term shows its contradictory nature. While some see it as a positive and necessary practice that generates economic expansion, reflects democratic values and fulfils personal needs, others look at it as a controlling measure to increase capital

accumulation, highlight social divisions and a means to eliminate unique identities. “Consumption is always destructive and creative; entropic and negentropic; a process of 'creative destruction' and 'destructive creation'. This duality is itself internalized within the modern system of consumption.” (Clarke, 2003: 24) Consumption is a force that is utilized to generate intense social interaction, competition and identification.

While consumption has become a global phenomenon, societies differ in their level of adaptation to it. Bauman (2007) has identified a few characteristics of the 'society of consumers'. "The 'society of consumers' ... stands for the kind of society that promotes, encourages, or enforces, the choice of a consumerist lifestyle and life strategy and dislikes all alternative cultural options" (Sills, 1968: P. 53) The society of consumers as opposed to the society of producers focuses on the retaining of the individual from early age on the shopping mall and the commercial street where goods are to be sought and obtained. (Sills, 1968: P. 54) To become a member of the 'society of consumers' requires continued effort to maintain that status which is fuelled by the fear of inadequacy. The consumer market capitalizes on that fear and assists their potential client to reach their ever ending goal. (Sills, 1968: P. 60). "The 'society of consumers' tends to break up groups, or make them eminently fragile and fissiparous, favouring instead the prompt and swift formation and scattering of swarms." (Sills, 1968:P. 77) The 'society of consumers' is a liquid society where, identities are not given at birth, but rather projects to be built continuously. (Sills, 1968: P. 110). Consumption activities help individuals and groups to construct distinct identities, mark unique places within society, spaces, and places. Regardless of the difficulties of arriving at a precise definition of consumption one can observe the changes that occurred since the last century in the whole world and how it shaped the economic and social atmosphere.

### **2.1.1 Sociological Analysis of Consumption**

A major body of work that discusses consumption from a sociological point of view stems from the ideas of Karl Marx, whose “critique of consumer culture revolves around a brutal paradox: a system that has the material power to liberate humans from want and provide the basis for human development instead subjugates them to the logic of exchange that produces alienation and unhappiness. Dissatisfaction arises from the conflict between complexity of needs and alienation” (Sanghera, 2008). Another major

contribution was that of Thorstein Veblen, a Norwegian-American sociologist and economist whose research on conspicuous consumption in the late nineteenth century has led the way for later work on consumption. His work *The Theory of the Leisure Class* traces the evolution of primitive society and the emergence of the so called leisure class that is made from the ruling class and/or rich who could afford not to work or carried minor and symbolic roles within the society. Veblen introduced the term "conspicuous consumption" to describe the waste of money and resources for the sake of displaying higher social status. The term explains the extravagance of the turn of the century rich, who used ornament and glitz to signal their class and wealth to others. "He explains how goods are used as symbolic makers of social status, and how consumption is for the purpose of impressing others with one's good taste and ability to pay for more than most can afford." (Mackay, 1997: 4)

It is evident that consumption became a culture and common practice that unites all contemporary men and women. It is crucial to achieve an understanding of the term "consumption culture" despite its problematic and dialectical nature. One is drawn to explore the term as two conflicting terms are brought together by modernity. (Slater, 1997: P. 9) According to Salter, that "Consumer culture... is a contradiction in terms for much of modern western thought. The phrase comes to us dripping with irony, for the very term 'culture' was designed to signify all that has been destroyed by the world which produced the consumer" (Slater, 1997:63). As we attempt to define consumption, it is essential to define culture and understand this composite term 'Consumption Culture'. One definition states that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society" (Sills, 1968: P. 527). Or in another attempt, "that level at which social groups develop distinctive patterns of life, and give expressive form to their social and material life-experience" (Hall and Jefferson, 1976: 10). From the above two definitions of the term culture, one can see that culture should manifest character, identity and uniqueness. But in this era of mass consumption, can there be consumption cultures or culture? And here is where one can grasp the problematic contradiction of the term.

The study of consumption culture revolves around a paradox; on one hand it is a system that has the material power to liberate humans and allows them to obtain their full desires and maximum potentials. It is a life that is about acquiring goods and the ability

to pursue and follow latest trends. At the same time it exposes them to the powers of capital and transforms them into mere figures, which produces unhappiness and alienation.

### **2.1.2 Why do consumers consume?**

Mass consumption developed gradually to become a global phenomenon. It went through several stages especially in the Western world to become one of the major defining forces that shapes the world today. It also became a common practice and one of the most important activities of everyday life. How did it reach this high status? And why are we attracted to consumption? According to Benson, historians have stated three main factors that contributed to British consumption, one is that consumption increased as a result of a common believe that was shared by consumers toward a higher standard of life, others believed that consumers consumed to emulate others and follow a social norm, and others who believed that consumers consumed because they were manipulated to do so through advanced techniques of advertising. (Benson, 1996a:3).

Consumers seem to be driven to consume by two major forces. One is the feel of fulfilling needs; the other is a continuous desire to obtain the latest available goods. "While consumption may appear to be rooted in the satisfaction of natural and actual needs, in a sense it has emerged historically as an increasingly 'unnatural' social force; ... it actively accentuates social divisions" (Miles, 1998a: 11). Parallel with the development of mass production and mass consumption industry, the advertising industry emerged as tool to facilitate the marketing of goods through the employment of the understanding of human psychology for the sake of increasing consumption. In addition, the design industry played a major role in assuring a continuous supply of new goods into the market. And while "...the consumer is constantly seeking novel rather than familiar products regardless of their use or value, there is indeed always a feeling on the part of the consumers that novel goods will provide them with satisfaction and happiness." (Zukin, 2005)

## **2.2Historic Development of Consumption**

### **2.2.1 Consumerism and Modernity**

In the following section, the author seeks to trace the development of consumption and its relationship to the overall changes that took place since the Industrial Revolution. It will be understood that consumption culture and modernity are interwoven. In the late eighteenth century and the nineteenth century the rise of the Industrial Revolution brought about tremendous changes, and wider belief in the ability of humans to transform the world and aid the spread of mass democracy. The Industrial Revolution most importantly led to the establishment of industrial production and market economy. Parallel to the overall transformations that occurred, the nature of consumption has changed as well; these changes in the concept of consumption in modern times were manifested in several dimensions.

Modernity presented an opportunity for social change and it has in many ways helped to dissolve traditional social divisions. For the first time in the history of mankind one was able to create a new identity through consumption. “Modern commerce, democracy and enlightenment dissolve the social bonds and values that previously held society together and gave the individual a place within it. “(Slater, 1997:64). “Modern identity is best understood through the image of consumption. We choose a self-identity from the shop window of the pluralized social world; actions, experiences and objects are all reflexively encountered as part of the need to construct and maintain self-identity” (Slater, 1997: 85). The spaces of consumption have been modified and gained a status higher than being merely spaces of economic exchange. Corresponding with political and social changes, modern societies needed a new public space that is able to fit with the latest requirements of the age. There became a need for spaces that allow the modern public wider participation in public life and permit them to take an active role in the civil societies of the time. As Slater has stated “It can also be argued that – places and shops serve a range of functions; not just the circulation of commodities, but being a focus of social gatherings and collective identities, where people meet and hang out, a focus for tourism, a place to steal or to sell, to busk or to beg, to make speeches or to hold marches, and so on. Markets, in this sense, are not purely economic but complex social events and institutions” (Slater, 1997: 54). Thus, as modernity gave deeper meaning to consumption, consumption has risen to become a culture.

In order to best grasp the developments that occurred in the practice of consumption, we will shed a light on several developments that took place in Britain between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries. McCracken's book gave an important insight into the understanding of the historic development of consumption, setting three significant periods in the history of consumption; sixteenth century, eighteenth century, and nineteenth century consumption in England. McCracken has shown that the last quarter of the sixteenth century witnessed a stunning consumer boom. The eruption of this consumption pattern was attributed to two main influences; first, Queen Elizabeth I's excessive spending the aim of which was "to communicate the monarch's legitimacy of rule, aspirations for the kingdom, qualities of power and majesty, and finally, godlike status as the individual is seen increasingly in mythical, religious, and literary terms" (McCracken, 1990: 11). The second factor of the consumption boom was the social competition among the Elizabethan noblemen. It had consumed the families of the noblemen in an exhausting rivalry to maintain their required social status, and it led to further development that took place in the culture of consumption.

During the eighteenth century, patterns of consumption had changed and it witnessed a rise in consumption practices. Markets had seen dramatic increases in the quantities, variety of goods available for purchase, the frequency of provision of novel goods and number of active consumers engaged in consumption. (McCracken, 1990: 16). We could say that the eighteenth century saw the "birth of the consumer society". (McKendrick et al., 1982:3). McCracken mentioned a variety of evidence from several scholars which illustrates that the main reason behind this consumption revolution was the competition for social status. (McCracken, 1990: 16). He lists several factors that contributed to this change such as the tremendous rise in participation in consumption activities, which is due to participation of subordinate classes and shopping for one's self instead of for the family. McKendrick's study of the eighteenth century gives ample evidence of the new use and sophistication of other marketing devices especially fashion magazines, fashion plates, and the English fashion doll. Considered alongside advertising columns in the press, the trade cards of retail merchants and the roving of Manchester men, Scottish drapers and Scottish hawkers who carried commercial goods into the provinces, it became clear that the eighteenth century consumer had access to a new volume of influence and information" (McCracken, 1990: 18). The connection between individualism and consumption was a product of the eighteenth century, but had roots

as shown above that date back to the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries... individuals were prepared to suppose that “the self is built through consumption [and that] consumption expresses the self”. (McCracken, 1990: 20).

In a book by John Benson, he traced the context of consumption between 1880 and 1980 and observed the changes in demand and supply that occurred during that period. (Benson, 1994). Changes in production systems meant changes in consumption patterns; more goods required more and bigger outlets. Thus, the department store emerged as a new form of retail outlet that provided the answer to the needs of the time and evolved into shopping malls and superstores. One of the most evident changes is the emergence of a culture of mass shopping. It is no longer limited to the wealthy public, but involves almost the whole of society. “The culture of shopping no longer depended on a leisure class of women shoppers who had the time and energy to spend in “civilized department stores”. Thorstein Veblen’s leisure class was now divided into wealthy “ladies who lunch” as well as shop, and working class women, rich and poor, who have to schedule grocery shopping, and gift shopping, often with kids, into an already over scheduled day” (Zukin, 2005: P. 142).

### **2.2.2 Postmodernism as a Consumption Culture**

Postmodernism is a term applied to a wide-ranging set of developments in critical theory, philosophy, architecture, art, literature, and culture, which are generally characterized as either emerging from, in reaction to, or superseding, modernism. There are several trends that characterize postmodern society. Many postmodernists stress the fact that there is no definite definition of reality; instead, there are fragmentations of language games, time, human objects and society as a whole. Reality and reproduction seem indistinguishable.

Changes to the concept of consumption took another form in the postmodern era. “Under Modernism, there was a relatively fixed relationship between class belonging and the consumer goods used to indicate this belonging. Under postmodernism, this fixity has become loosened, and indication of class has been replaced by a more individualistic indication of Lifestyle, or even by temporary grouping of people beyond



individualism” (Corrigan, 1997: 179) The postmodern period has seen immense surplus of goods and means typical of post-industrial economies. As a result, consumption became a central theme of society. Some objects have taken great significance beyond their original value. An individual finds comfort and establishes their identity through continuous consumption. Consumption activities are seen as essential to the well-being of the economy. Postmodern period brought about the co-modification of all things including art, culture and even spirituality. "Culture is a commodity and a public good, a base – though a troubling one – of economic growth, and a means of framing the city". (Zukin, 1995: P. 113) The challenge would be to extract the good out of this prevailing culture. We understand that postmodern cities are cities of consumption. "cities of the shopping mall rather than of the factory." (Glennie, 1998:P. 927) Thus, special attention should be given to the design of sites of consumption, as they are the sites of contemporary urbanism.

### **2.3 Consumption and the City**

Consumption and urbanism are interwoven. Consumption thrives in cities and at the same time it promotes urban growth. Many of the characteristics that construct the concept of consumption are urban in nature. Cities can be consumed visually by visitors and tourists. Also, places can be consumed literally through the construction of buildings and the obliteration of the natural environment. Along with economic growth, cities around the world seek to establish themselves as cultural centres. More and more, it has been very difficult to distinguish between cultural and commercial activities. According to Zukin the ability to transform urban spaces into culture spaces requires material capital in the form of affordable space, attractive buildings, art, labour force and investment in cultural activities; also, a symbolic vision that makes the city known to be artistic in nature. (Zukin, 1995: P. 150) The problem of maintaining this vision comes from two contradictory forces; democratization of urban development and aestheticization. On one hand, democratization means the decentralization, recognition and satisfaction of public wishes. On the other hand, artistic communities that are made of cultural institutions, volunteer groups, and professional organizations would not always support developments that are economically driven or democratically decided. (Zukin, 1995: P. 151)

Competition and the aspiration to create social status are aroused in urban centres. Within traditional societies and micro-social groups, individuals do not feel the urge to compete. On the other hand, in large industrial societies and at urban centres of high urban density there is a great pressure exerted upon individuals to differentiate and seek distinguished status. "When the whole social world becomes urbanized... 'needs' grow exponentially - not from the growth of appetite, but from competition." (Clarke, 2003: 69). Paris is always cited as an example of modern city especially in consumption literature. The plans of Baron Haussmann, who redesigned the city for higher aesthetical quality and to utilize greater control over its citizens, produced a new urban space. Places where there are great buildings and boulevards attract large numbers of people. The boulevards and the high degree of visibility they offered made walking an important social activity. (Benson, 1996b:P. 34)

Cities, through their public and commercial spaces, produce areas that could be both sites of social integration and conflict between various social groups. Zukin cites examples of shopping streets and their social structure in post-war New York City. She has shown how shopping streets have changed when post-war Jewish immigrants bought stores and were integrated with American Jewish customers. Zukin shows that African American vendors were only allowed to park their stalls in front of African American shops. Further, how these shopping streets had lower status because they sold low priced goods and were ethnically isolated because they tended to cater for a certain ethnic group. (Zukin, 1995: P. 196)

The postmodern city is open, diverse and it is tolerant to strangers. It brought about two novel personalities; the stranger and the flâneur. Different from traditional towns and villages, the city became more tolerant to unfamiliar faces and unknown wanderers. "The flâneur - who appears as a detached observer, a pleasure-seeking stroller on the streets of the nineteenth-century city as a loiterer, frittering away time - has emerged as a "key figure in the critical literature of modernity and urbanization"" (Wilson 1995, 61)... a figure embodying a disposition "ultimately more truthful than the zeal of the [urban] reformer" (ibid., 76). (Clarke, 2003: 83). The consumptive city is inviting and welcomes strangers especially as consumers.

The manifestation of the increased importance of consumption in cities is the increasing amount of space dedicated to shopping both at suburban shopping malls and inner city

centres. (Knox, 2006a:P. 56) Even architectural style is commercialized. First, architects like other professionals in the global economy find themselves working to meet the imperative of the urbanized economy. The evolution of architectural thought and work and its ability to create fashion and new trends serves to promote the circulation of capital. In addition, consumption is spatial by nature; space has been consumed just like products through the transformation of homes, neighbourhoods and city centres. Spatial consumption imposes symbols and meanings constructed by and dominated over less dominant groups. (Knox, 2006a: P. 202)

## **2.4 Spatial Dimension of Consumerism**

### **2.4.1 Promoter of Urban Sprawl**

Although consumption is urban, it encourages urban sprawls and it sees suburbs as a catalyst for further consumption. Urban sprawl presented a fundamental shift for the consumer society; the suburbs depleted resources from the city centre. Urban sprawl is made up of two main characteristics, mass consumption and family orientated lifestyle. The suburban life provided a calmer, safer and more prosperous life than that of inner cities. Suburban life was created for leisure time; the larger residential space allowed more activities to occur in the house where more time was available to be spent with family members. This led to further isolation and seclusion, and further dependency on the private car to attend social activities within clubs, venues and arenas. (Benson, 1996b:P. 52) According to Miles, the consumer culture transformed the suburbs into a place for the export and import of workers to and from the city centre who depended entirely on the car, which itself became a symbolic object. "Consumer culture has focused on the car as an icon of suburban consumer lifestyles and as a result cars and roads provide a framework within which contemporary lifestyles are enacted" (Miles, 1998a: 53).

### **2.4.2 Placelessness**

Many sites of consumption can be characterized as having no sense of place – they are “placeless”. They lack a relationship with their local environment, and they could be situated anywhere. Such sites as grand shopping malls, petrol stations, fast food branches, global department stores, super stores are elements of placeless milieus. Figure 2. 1 & Figure 2.2 illustrate two IKEA stores, one in Kuwait and the other in a

European city, and the two look almost identical. Other large scale examples are the new and fast growing towns and edge of city office buildings. “Consumption has become so fundamental to the character of our urban environments that cities could be constructed to be ‘unreal’ in the sense that they could be anywhere; they have in effect lost a sense of place” (Miles, 1998a: 68).

Placelessness reduces diversity, significance and sense of place for people. It is strongly related to the overall development that occurred in the post-industrial period. More and more different places are created in the same image and are being experienced similarly. On the other hand various political and economic forces are transforming significant local places to be experienced superficially and commercially. "The identities of our urban centres are being actively undermined by this process of standardization" (Miles, 1998b:P. 1004)



Figure 2. 1 IKEA Store in Europe



Figure 2.2 IKEA Store, Kuwait (Author)

### 2.4.3 Gentrification

Gentrification is “the process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying the influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces poorer residents” (“Gentrification”, 2008). It is a phenomenon that describes the development plans that are carried by local governments and/or private investors to transform the urban condition of certain areas that are undergoing physical deterioration for the sake of physical improvement and profit making. This process usually results in an increase of property value which generally displaces poorer businesses and residences. Many

cities are using gentrification and regeneration as a means to transform urban centres into consumption landscapes, such as the examples of Glasgow and Manchester.

Several cultural and economic factors contribute to gentrification. Many real estate firms engage in opportunist activities to purchase run down properties and/or areas and resell them to major developers who are looking for large plots for large scale development schemes. Others see it as a result of powerful market forces of supply and demand and as part of the overall neo-liberal reforms like deregulation and privatization. (Knox, 2006a:P. 144)

There are ongoing debates about the benefits and disadvantages of gentrification. Advocates of gentrification argue that it provides an ability to reinvest in deteriorating urban areas, as well as increasing property values and in effect improving lending capital for low-income mortgage seekers. Also, they cite the positive effect of gentrification on the reduction of crime rate. On the other hand, adversaries of gentrification see it as a measure that destroys local communities and drives out low income local residents or local shops because the rent is no longer affordable. With regard to crime rates, opponents of gentrification believe that it does not reduce rate, it only shifts it to other areas.

## **2.5 Sites of Consumption**

"Spaces of consumption have emerged and continue to develop in response to the ever-increasing power of consumerism" (Mullins, 1999: P. 47) The historical development of consumption and the previously discussed ideas can be manifested in certain sites within the modern and contemporary city. These spaces share similar characteristics and use similar techniques to attract users. In many cases they contribute to further sprawl, placelessness and gentrification. Accessibility to high quality sites of consumption is of prime importance, especially to middle and high income groups. They have become more than just places to acquire goods, but also places to fulfil higher values like self actualization. (Mullins, 1999: P. 49) These sites of consumption employ and arouse taste, sight, sound, touch, and smell - the full range of sensations. The smell of food preparation, the sound of music played in the background, theatrical performances performed, and various other forms and techniques are routinely enacted at consumption spaces (Mullins, 1999: P. 49). Contemporary sites of consumption follow similar

strategies that aim to attract shoppers. First, the huge size that conveys to shoppers the ability to find everything they need. It also conveys the power of the institutions and the corporations housed within them. Secondly, sites of consumption use similar strategies in presenting the goods, they employ various advertising methods and cleverly designed window displays. Also, most sites of consumption employ highly qualified and trained sales people who have been part of the seduction machine. They are disciplined, cultivated and pleasant. (Corrigan, 2006: P. 55) Lastly, sites of consumption attract crowds, and by doing so they attract more people. They convey the spirit of the public that gather mainly for consumption purposes. Cities are sites of consumption and as the size of the urban areas increases it would provide greater variety of goods and services. Individuals benefit socially from being among other consumers. (Borck, 2007: P. 2120) The following section will shed light on the similarities shared by some main sites of consumption; the arcade, the department store, the boulevard and the shopping mall.

### **2.5.1 The Arcade**

The development of shopping malls can be traced back to several sites of consumption such as the Agora, markets, Eastern markets, fairgrounds, and the arcades of the nineteenth century. Special attention has been given to arcades and their relation to today's shopping malls. First, "The arcade was the first European building planned primarily to accommodate a collection of shops" (Coleman, 2006: P.30). Arcades were high-profile urban places that appeared first in Paris and major cities around the world. The spread of arcades came as a response to the growth of the metropolitan areas of industrial cities and provided a place for the rising class of business men and women to obtain luxury goods, and the middle class to participate in the act of conspicuous consumption. The creation of arcades responded to socio-cultural and functional needs. Figure 2.3 & Figure 2. 4. The design of the arcades with their glassed roofs, cast iron ornamental structures and lit by gas lamps distinguished the arcade from the ordinary city streets and provide a safe and convent place for shopping. As major streets in large cities became busy, hostile, crowded and filthy, (Coleman, 2006: P.30)



Figure 2.3 Royal Opera Arcade, London & Burlington Arcade, London 1819 (peterdaletd.com)



Figure 2.4 Galleria Colbert, Paris. 1826 (source: lachansondelacigale.blogspot.com) & Galleria Umberto, Naples 1891. (source: Pantchoa)

### 2.5.2 Boulevards

Baron Haussmann's renovation plan of Paris which was commissioned by Napoleon III between 1852 and 1870 had a great influence on modern urban planning around the world. The project presented an overall scheme that introduced streets and boulevards, imposed regulations on the facades of buildings, public parks, sewer and water works, city facilities and public monuments. The plan was commissioned to facilitate more control over the urban realm of the city which had a history of street revolutions. It



proved to be successful in transforming Paris into one of the most beautiful cities. The plan had a profound effect on the everyday life of Parisians. Figure 2.5.

The city of Paris introduced the boulevard to facilitate easier circulation, shorter travel time and control. With this, the boulevard became a site of public gatherings and provided opportunity for public display. "They're theatrically fused with cafes, and other places of entertainment that sprang up along them to create spaces for the display of bourgeois affluence, conspicuous consumption, and feminine fashion. The boulevards, in short, became public spaces where the fetish of the commodity reigned supreme" (Harvey, 2003: 216). This transformed Paris and other major world cities from chaotic medieval cities with narrow streets into structured modern cities with wide boulevards, squares, monuments and landmarks. The wide streets allowed large numbers of people to circulate, be seen and be part of the city scene. Later with the introduction of public transport systems, more people were able to circulate between home, work and shopping areas with relative ease.



Figure 2.5 Boulevard Life in Paris. (Source: <http://klio.uoregon.edu/sci/UptoWW1.htm>).

### 2.5.3 Department Store



The increase in production (supply) and consumption (demand) required larger spaces and encouraged businessmen to create the concept of the department store as a new form of retail outlet. The department store is a retail establishment that sells a wide range of products such as apparel, furniture, appliances, electronics and others. Increased urbanization and density was another factor that contributed to the emergence of the department store. Increasing rent value in city centres led retailers to expand their exhibition space and react to the market force. (Corrigan, 1997: 53). Changes in transport eased access to department stores with the establishment of rail, and as it became more accessible to the general public, more people could go to city centres for shopping.

Department stores appealed to customers. The idea of finding everything under one roof, the huge size, free entry to all, shoppers able to see and touch was so attractive and unpredictable. As more people started to frequently visit department stores, store owners began to pay more attention to the presentation of goods to attract more customers. (Corrigan, 1997: 57) Even sales staff gradually became part of the marketing grand scheme. In order to fit the overall presentation of stores and goods, new style sales persons were needed. “They had to be disciplined, cultivated, and pleasant. In one word they had to be presentable” (Corrigan, 1997: 58).



Figure 2.6 Altman Department Store, NY. [www.scripophily.net/balcofanewyo.html](http://www.scripophily.net/balcofanewyo.html)



Figure 2.7 Altman Department Store, NY. [www.nyc-architecture.com/MID/MID161.htm](http://www.nyc-architecture.com/MID/MID161.htm)

‘Le Bon Marche’ of Paris is considered the first true department store. It was founded by Aristide Boucicaut. The store offered a wide variety of goods distributed among departments in one building. Since then department stores have spread all over the world, such as the Clery’s department store that stands today in London as Selfridges,

Bainbridges in Newcastle which was founded in 1883, Lewis's department store which started in Liverpool in 1856 then opened in Manchester in 1877 and Birmingham, Glasgow, and Liverpool. The same concept of department stores was also established in the United States; for example in New York, The Marble Palace was founded in 1846. In Chicago, Marshall Field's was one of the most talked about department stores and was considered to be the second largest department store in the world. Figure 2.8 & Figure 2.9.

By the end of the nineteenth century, department stores had established themselves as a main component of the retail industry and became a universal icon of modern city consumption. The development of the department store is responsible for high attention to design in retail. They employed modern materials that encouraged architectural innovations. They encouraged diversity. They introduced new services that were never used before such as restaurants, cafés, reading rooms, home delivery, gift wrapping services and were open for long hours.



**Figure 2.8 Marshall Field's 1907.**  
[dig.lib.niu.edu/.../marshallfield/index.html](http://dig.lib.niu.edu/.../marshallfield/index.html)



**Figure 2.9 Marshall Field's Interior.**  
[www.rachelleb.com/.../shopping-on-state-street/](http://www.rachelleb.com/.../shopping-on-state-street/)

#### **2.5.4 Superstore**

Superstores are those large stores that sell wide variety of goods and merchandise. Usually they are located in suburban or rural areas or in proximity to a highway junction and/or shopping malls. It is large freestanding structure usually a single floor and its area varies according to locality but in North America it can reach 18,000 sq m. It can either sell general goods like Wal-Mart or ASDA or can specialize in a specific range like Home Depot or Barnes & Nobel. See Figure 2. 10 & Figure 2. 11.



Figure 2. 10 Kiddicare Shop at Peterborough  
(Source: <http://www.mypushchair.co.uk>)



Figure 2. 11 Kiddicare Shop at Peterborough  
(Source: <http://www.mypushchair.co.uk>)

Although a superstore can offer consumers convenience and low cost goods, critics argue that they are visually overwhelming and cause harm to local small businesses. Zukin wrote about examples of locals opposing the opening of an IKEA store close or near a city centre. “The debate over superstores turns partly on aesthetics and a sense of place; these stores are ugly, they turn their back to the street, they buffer themselves with acres of asphalt parking lots, and they look the same no matter where they are. They attract too many shoppers, whose automobiles clog the streets and pollute the air. But the arguments against them also reflect economic interests” (Zukin, 2005: P. 67). She points at the lost sense of community and lack of social interaction that are caused by superstores. (Zukin, 2005: P. 264).

### 2.5.5 The Shopping Mall

Today shopping malls stand as the major sites of consumption. They remain the most economically viable solution to developers and retailers. At the same time they are the most preferred places of consumption to consumers who are looking for a convenient and safe place to shop. They appeared in the sixties, a period which saw the emergence of a new type of retail development in the United States as a direct response to the public need for conveniently located retail facilities. The model is one of a group of buildings located near a major intersection of highways, surrounded by a vast parking area that can be accessed from several points of entry. Within these centres, attention was given to details and the creation of high quality environments. The wide spread of car ownership, urban sprawl in the form of suburbs and the construction of highways to service them contributed greatly to the success of shopping malls. Developers of

shopping malls pay great attention to design and details, from the employment of traditional styles of architecture and placement of urban design features such as fountains, sculptures, benches etc. to symbolize civility, to the maze design that aims to confuse shoppers and draw them to spend more time at malls. Goldsteen brought the example of the 1952 Detroit's Northland mall that "prided itself on the series of courtyards between buildings. Services and deliveries were subterranean, and slightly more than 40% of the 165 acre site was used for automobile parking." (Goldsteen and Elliott, 1994: 116).

The main characteristic of shopping malls is that they create highly controlled environments. Developers take extreme measures to ensure the security of shoppers through the installation of high security techniques like personal monitoring, CCTV cameras and other means of control. As a person enters the shopping mall, he/she becomes part of a community of consumerism; that contrasts with the real life urban community.

More and more malls are aiming to become exclusive. They try to appeal to high end consumers and those who are willing to spend. Thus, malls employ different tactics to market a lifestyle rather than the goods they sell. "You do not go to the mall to pick up few necessities and leave; you visit the mall for a fully marketed lifestyle experience" (Sardar, 2000). Although shopping malls sought to create a balanced social mix that replicated the scene in city centre, in malls that mix was limited by the mixing of high-status and low status stores. Yet, in shopping malls social boundaries are maintained through the separation of stores' status across floors and or areas. (Zukin, 2005P. 23)

Although shopping malls seek to be unique and distinguishable, they are becoming identical, especially with their content. "Both inside and outside town centres British urban environments in particular appear to be increasingly characterized by uniformity as major companies seek to establish market dominance. The identities of retail outlets are therefore virtually identical from one shopping centre to the next, such familiarity being intended to garner customer loyalty. (Miles, 1998a: 63).

Bluewater Mall, which is considered to be one of the largest shopping malls in the United Kingdom and prides itself on being larger than the size of Kent, "... despite its police station, multiple cinema, and bus garage, is not a town. It is a controlled, private space. The lower-class Ds and Es – to use the marketing lingo – turn up if they like, but



with little cash in their pockets and few aspirations to upward mobility, they are not part of the plan, so they had better not step out of line. No drunks and crazy people here, no beggars, no street musicians. No gangs, no protesters. No disorderliness of any kind. No wonder we fall for Bluewater” (Saunders, 2005: 47).



Figure 2.12 Bluewater Shopping Centre (source: <http://www.heritage-explorer.co.uk>)

### **New Trends in Shopping Malls**

The development of shopping centres has undergone several stages and become a sophisticated and dynamic industry that provides solutions to different social, economic and urban situations. The evolution of the shopping centre which is basically a site of consumption and a leasing retail space led to the development of a wide range of different types; each caters to a specific urban setting and each is directed at a definite consumer group. When cities are paying more attention to inner city areas, out-of-town shopping centres are going through hard times. In order to respond to strong competition, mall owners began to develop new type of shopping centres in order to appeal to larger sectors of consumers such as the Festival Mall, lifestyle centre and the green design malls.

According to the International Council of Shopping Centres, Festival Centres employ a unifying theme in architectural design and to some extent in their range of sold goods.

At Festival Malls, entertainment is major component. These malls usually target tourists, but also local customers who look for a unique shopping experience. (ICSC, 2007). Lifestyle centres are another type of shopping mall that are defined as centres that are “most often located near affluent residential neighbourhoods, this centre type caters to the retail needs and “lifestyle” pursuits of consumers in its trading area. It has an open-air configuration and typically includes at least 50,000 square feet of retail space occupied by upscale national chain specialty stores” (ICSC, 2007: P. 5). Lifestyle centres or malls are made from the same elements found at a standard shopping mall. However, they employ high end design to create an attractive environment. They cater for high end customers, who would not normally prefer to go to malls for shopping. The design of Lifestyle malls ensures ease of access and proximity of car parking facilities. Different from shopping malls, they do not include anchor stores, they tend to house unique brands which appeal to customers who are looking for the great synergy created through the collective gathering. (Coleman, 2006: P. 104) According to an article by Ann Goedken she cites the words of Les Morris, Corporate Public Relations Manager at Simon Property Group Inc., the largest retail real estate company in North America who said that “We are not building new regional enclosed malls from the ground up now. Nobody is” (Goedken, 2006). Many large malls are suffering therefore, “In certain cases, mall facility ownership is taking drastic measures to resurrect struggling malls. ‘De-malling’ has varying definitions; most often, it is the practice of turning an enclosed mall inside out” (Goedken, 2006) The mall is reconfigured so that the majority of individual store entrances are on the exterior rather than the interior of the facility” such as the case of the Roswell Town centre which was built in 1974 and in 1994 underwent a drastic change to transform this two storey 400,000 square foot mall into a successful open air centre. (Goedken, 2006).



Figure 2.13 The Grove: Lifestyle Mall, Los Angles ([www.about.com](http://www.about.com))

Another major trend of shopping malls development is the employment of environmentally friendly measures in the creation of shopping centres. In an article by Katherine Field Lac Mirabel, a new mega mall, was planned in Canada (although it was never built, due to the economic crisis). It was designed to sprawl across 332 acres and have a 100 mile catchment area. The developers intended to create North America's first green mall; it was planned to have a windmill, solar panels and a thermal pull to provide power to the common areas. In addition the building's framework was designed to be constructed from native wood rather than steel (Field, 2006). This trend posed a huge contradiction with the fact that mega out-of-town centres are major source of environmental harm due to the vast area of rural land that they consume and the fact that they are major generators of private car traffic.

Although developers are responding to consumers' demand in the creation of such centres, one can see very clearly that these malls whether called 'lifestyle' or 'festival' are in fact responding to a natural human need for communal life and the desire of many people for a real urban experience.

### 2.5.6 Urban Consumption

Since the 1980s a new economic structuring has been evolving that has a strong impact on many cities around the world. Many world cities sought to redevelop their central areas with high profile schemes that are symbolic and would attract spectators,

businesses and consumers. Many of these development schemes consisted of high rise office buildings, waterfront sites, heritage sites and urban villages.

Richard J. Williams discussed urban development in the city of Manchester since 1997 and he has shown how at a certain point developers began to employ urbanism as a tool for further consumption. He has shown how several cities within the UK like Glasgow, Birmingham, Leeds and Liverpool are changing their development pattern toward urban regeneration, in contrast to the previous model that used to create excluded development with little attention to visual appearance and urban harmony. He states that “The city of consumption, by contrast, is urban. It reasserts the core over the periphery, and in doing so it seeks to make urban realm reassuringly legible” (Williams, 2004: 210). Birmingham started a big regeneration programme with the Bullring shopping centre, which was built through a public private partnership and cost more than £500 million. The generation project was centred on shopping.



**Figure 2.14 Manchester: City of Consumption (source: digitalspy.co.uk)**

Urban regeneration projects that guided the establishment of further commercial uses within city centres aimed to enhance the urban centre as well. Urban projects learned a lot from the theory of New Urbanism which itself borrowed from traditional urban design principles, like focus on the street and the square as sites of public gathering. The



establishment of a clear urban hierarchy strengthened the boundary between public and private, the use of landmarks and the encouragement of traditional design language for urban form. (Williams, 2004:P. 213) According to Williams "the revival of traditional urban forms such as the street and the square was a means of making consumption spectacular again" (Williams, 2004: P. 217)

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The previous chapter aimed to shed light on the concept of consumption and its role in the production of urban form. The chapter attempted to identify the relationships between consumption and typical spaces, places, lifestyle and forms of sociability in the contemporary city. It showed how cities and the urban environments are consumed and how various cultural and economic forces are contributing to the creation of certain urban forms. This chapter was crucial to the construction of a wider understanding of the research matter. It allowed the author to formulate a better comprehension of the research problems as seen in the target case study: Kuwait City. The following chapter outlines concepts from various thinkers and the author, who employed a structuralist approach to understand society by the study of the underlying factors that govern people's behaviour, and a post-structuralist approach that envisions cities as sites of difference, identity, contingency, and process. The concepts discussed in this chapter contributed to the production of the research findings and recommendations. It also assisted the researcher to discover areas of important further research.

In order to better understand sites of consumption, it is crucial to understand the consumer society. As discussed earlier, the consumer society promotes a consumerist lifestyle. The consumerist lifestyle tends to have various negative consequences; it tends to break up groups and subjugates the public to the logic of exchange that produces alienation and unhappiness. Consumer culture overwhelms character, identity and uniqueness. Nevertheless, consumption became a common practice and one of the most important activities of daily life. The areas of consumption became central to modern life and main sites for social gathering and collective identity.

This chapter attempted to trace the historic development of consumption activities in the city and its evolution until it became the most important urban element in contemporary

cities. The eighteenth century saw the birth of the consumer society and utilized consumption to pursue social status. The nineteenth century permitted the participation of wider sectors of society in consumption activities through the construction of boulevards and department stores. Later, with the emergence of post modernism, consumption grew and led to the commodification of all aspects of life including, art, culture and even religion. Thus, sites of consumption became sites of contemporary urbanism.

Through this chapter the author demonstrated that consumption can have both a positive and negative impact on cities, depending on the way it is utilized. Evidence throughout the world shows that consumption thrives in cities, and can be an agent of urban growth. Cities all over the world seek to establish themselves as cultural and tourist centres through the strengthening of commercial activities. Also, commercial spaces when planned carefully can be sites of social integration. It is illustrated clearly that large commercial centres exhibit more tolerance to strangers, diverse social groups and foreign practices. On the other hand, spatial consumption could impose social dominance of affluent groups over less fortunate ones. Also, sites of consumption could be places where diversity is not welcomed. Commercial activities that are led by economic forces contributed to sprawl and wider urban fragmentation. Larger commercial centres such as shopping malls and superstores lead to placelessness and lack of character. In other circumstances, commercial projects that seek gentrification and change may harm some social groups through replacements and displacement.

This chapter acknowledges the ability of cities to use consumption and its associate forces in the creation of urban and social vitality and coherence. In order to achieve these goals, it highlights the following recommendations:

- In order to battle the negative impact of placelessness and gentrification. Cities need to promote democratic processes in deciding issues that affect public space and commercialization, such as decentralization, recognition of community identities, and compliance to public wishes.
- Cities need to acknowledge the driving economic and social forces of mass communication and consumption. Nevertheless, they undertake different economic and political measurements to support and promote local businesses in order to

resist the subjection of local identity and small businesses, and weaken the negative impact of gentrification projects as local businesses are the backbone of local economy and are less vulnerable to global business pressure. Also, local businesses contribute to the enhancement of local identity through the creation of product variation and social diversity.

- Cities should promote local culture and support the preservation and enhancement of social and local context. Since global consumption forces tend to suppress unique identities, spatially and socially, cities must understand this fact in order to be able to resist it. Spaces with strong identity and unique local culture can generate economic growth to attract visitors and social vitality.
- There should be an engagement of cultural institutions, volunteering groups and professional organizations in the decision making processes regarding public space and spaces of consumption. Civil society institutions acknowledge issues of local importance and are able through their participation and independence from commercial forces, to encourage best practices to develop public spaces and create the most successful model of urban form.
- Cities and developers should acknowledge the natural human need for communal life and the desire of many people for a real urban experience. There is no alternative for true public spaces. It can be both socially and economically rewarding.
- Accessibility to retailing is of great benefit to the public. Cities should encourage retailing rather than limit it; it is a question of quality rather than quantity.
- The physical form of retailing sites must be diverse and should encourage centrality; located to face the street, connected with public spaces, and respecting local context.

## **CHAPTER THREE: URBAN THEORIES AND RETAILING ENVIRONMENT**

### **3.0 Introduction**

The aim of this research is to assess the condition of retailing in Kuwait City and its influence on urban and social vitality. The author appreciates the dynamic relationship between urban development, spaces of retailing and consumption. Retailing has been a major vehicle of urban change and can be utilized as an active tool for the construction of a vital urban environment. The research shows that better integrated and diverse retailing can produce urban and social vitality and coherence. This research takes a holistic approach that attempts to distil knowledge from diverse sources; this chapter forms an important part of the theoretical background review. It seeks to formulate a better understanding of related literature. Also, it attempts to assist the researcher to address the problems that have been observed in the target case study: Kuwait City. This chapter shall contribute to the investigation of new lines of inquiry, gain several methodological insights and highlight areas for further research. The material in this chapter has been useful in giving the author support to build a grounded theory. (Randolph, 2009: P. 2)

This chapter looks at the Islamic urban form, in order to understand the historic and cultural values that influence the development of Middle Eastern cities like Kuwait. It also reviews the work of Jane Jacobs, who is considered one of the major thinkers on urban issues and an important critic of the modern planning principles that have influenced the development of cities in the last century. It then reviews the ideas of the New Urbanism movement, a major contemporary urban planning and design movement that emerged as a response to suburbanization and the deteriorating urban conditions of major American cities, and which shares a lot of characteristics with many urban conditions in developing countries around the world, including Kuwait. Field survey and empirical work are major components of this research; thus, the researcher found in Jan Gehl's methodologies a valid and valuable source for the study of urban situations, especially public spaces and retailing. Also, in order to address the forces that shape the development of urban spaces and the retailing environment, the researcher believes that it is important to shed light on urban economics. The field of urban economy offers a wide range of theories and techniques that can assist researchers in building a broader

understanding of the development of cities. Urban economic theories provide a solid scientific base to comprehend the forces that shape urban areas.

### **3.1 Islamic Urban Form**

Since this research aims to study the relationship between urban form and retailing and seeks to arrive at a model of retailing for Kuwait City, the researcher thought it crucial to provide an overview of the Islamic urban form as an important source of inspiration. The urban fabric is more than mere buildings, structures and roads. Also, it is more than a society living in a specific geographic location. The city is an interaction between humans and place. This interaction does not occur only in space; rather it is governed by a set of ideological and technological frames that reflect the identity and essence of the people and place. The Islamic urban form draws inspiration from several conceptual and physical principles. Throughout the years these principles have created the base for a unified urban morphology in cities throughout the Islamic world, from India to Andalusia. Islamic urbanism “is that space which conforms to general intentions of the Islamic law and does not contradict with its specified regulations. The traditional Islamic city was nothing but specific images in space and time to the qualities of conforming to those principles; which qualifies it to a certain degree to become a model which can provide contemporary civil life solutions in the light of the Islamic Law” (Hamoush, 1999: P.19).

Islam is an urban religion. Although it was revealed in the Arabian Peninsula, which is a rural environment, it originated in Mecca city. After ten years of attempts to convince the people of Mecca to follow his message, the Prophet of Islam decided to look for another ground to call for his Islam. Therefore, he emigrated to Medina, another major settlement in the Arabian Peninsula, which later became the centre of Islam and the first capital of the Muslim caliphs. Muslim rulers looked at the practices of the Prophet in his city as a source of legislation and later used Medina as a model for their urban development throughout the world.

#### **3.1.1 The Conceptual Characteristics of Islamic Urban Form**

The conceptual characteristics that make up the Islamic built form are derived mainly from the teachings of the religion of Islam, which motivated early Arabs to spread the

message of Islam and create cities. Islamic cities, although diverse in location and origin, have evolved to form a unique typology that distinguishes them from other cities around the world. Certainly there are different functional and physical factors that contribute to the creation of Islamic cities, such as cumulative knowledge, availability of materials and functional solutions. Yet conceptual factors have also played a major role in their creation and evolution. The following section aims to shed light on the role of the encouragement of building in the Islamic religion, and introduces features of Islamic law that have both influenced the public behaviour of residents of Islamic cities and provided an urban legislation that governed their growth.

### **Encouragement of Building in the Islamic Tradition**

The first task undertaken by the Prophet of Islam after his arrival in Medina was the building of the mosque, an act that acknowledged the importance of building forms. The mosque became the nucleus of the newly established community and a central feature from which everything else grew. The Prophet stressed this centrality through the prohibition of the construction of another mosque during these early years. The Koran speaks about this incident in one of its verses (9: 107–109). Islam came with an active message that encouraged its followers to build and rehabilitate the earth. The Koran cites different verses that call upon its followers to build and develop the earth (11: 61). In another example of encouragement to settle and develop, it is narrated that the Prophet said “Whoever borders a land with a wall, it becomes his own”. These quotations attempt to provide an example of some of the principles that motivated Muslims to settle and build, as one should not underestimate the role of religion in the creation of early Muslim cities and the form they took.

### **The Role of Public Ethics in the Creation of the Built Environment of Early Muslim Cities**

Islamic teachings provide extensive guidelines that regulate and govern the lifestyle of Muslims. They deal with issues ranging from worship, marriage, sexuality, food, and hygiene to government and warfare. There are a number of rules that aim to regulate the public behaviour of Muslims, many of which have a direct relationship to the built environment, such as the right of roads which has to do with the removal of obstacles, abstaining from harming others and/or causing noise. Also, many commandments deal with the rights of neighbours. Among those rights is the protection of privacy, which

holds a major status under Islamic law and has direct implications for the built environment. Many studies have looked at the role of privacy in the creation of the specific built environment in Islamic cities; as Al-Hathloul wrote, “The concern for privacy was reflected in the physical form of the city in several ways. Among these are the limits on building heights throughout the city, avoidance (or architectural treatment) of windows on the street, and the placement of doors within the street” (Al-Hathloul, 1981: P.105). On the larger scale, the urban fabric reacted to such requirements by the creation of borders and highlighting the importance of entrances. As Serageldin states, “It reflects a sense of boundaries, physical and psychological. The architecture seeks to express the boundaries between the public and the private, and between the transition zones in the physical sense of space, just as the behaviour is articulated in that same gradation of demeanour. It is not surprising that the iconography of Muslim architecture has put a premium on the gateway and the transition, almost as much as on the enclosed space itself” (Serageldin, 1996: P. 23).

### **Islamic Building Legislation**

After the death of the Prophet of Islam, Muslim scholars began to establish a comprehensive Islamic law based on the Koran, and the sayings and practices of the Prophet. Religious interpretations answered issues that went beyond mere worshipping matters and developed to cover all aspects of life. Thus, these aspects are the building legislation. Generally, Islamic law stresses the protection of rights and the prevention of harm. The teachings of Islam have guided the behaviour of people within different types of space in ways that guarantee personal benefits and do not harm the communal good of society. While Islamic law used to govern the everyday life of Muslims and their cities, religious laws (Arabic: *Sharia*) provided many studies that concerned building and urbanism, such as the rights of streets, their hygiene, the distribution of markets, the provision of water, building heights and views and the encouragement of perfecting public buildings.

The sanctity of space in Islam is a responsibility outlined in the legislation system for the sake of both the public and personal good. The sanctity of space is the sanctity of its physical frame as well as the sanctity of the activities and functions that take place within it.

### **3.1.2 The Physical Characteristics of Islamic Urban Fabric**

After the review in the previous section of the conceptual aspects that governed the evolution of the Islamic city, this section seeks to cover its physical characteristics in an attempt to understand better the situation of the market within it. At first sight, Islamic cities look chaotic with their narrow, zigzag streets and inconsistent buildings. Yet this section aims to find within this chaos the underlying order of the Islamic city. “Paradoxically, it can be said that it was the highly formalized way of life which allowed for relatively informal urban layouts and a corresponding freedom of individual architectural expression in the Islamic city. The relaxed attitude (or even hesitant) with regard to formal modes of planning is based on the consciousness of well-defined individual and social duties, as fixed by religious conventions” (Bianca, 2000: P.29).

#### **Interiority vs. Exteriority of the Urban Fabric**

A visitor to any Islamic city would notice its emphasis on the creation of boundaries and the clear distinction it makes between public and private spheres. According to Bianca, “the residential districts are shielded off from the main streams of public life. The houses, often closely knit together, or built wall to wall in the case of courtyard structures, form inward-oriented autonomous units which are protected against visual intrusion from the street or from neighbouring buildings... the access from the public areas to residential quarters is usually tortuous and broken into successive hierarchal sections which herald increasing degrees of privacy” (Bianca, 2000: P. 38). Therefore a distinctive urban form has emerged in Islamic cities from Asia to the Atlantic, a unique space that grew in accordance with laws, customs and local climatic conditions. “The typical urban form of historic Arab cities grew as a compact aggregate of smaller and larger precincts, each one equipped with the appropriate cellular infill, as well as inbuilt open spaces, access systems and shared facilities allocated to the respective groups of collective and individual users” (Bianca, 2000: P. 156).



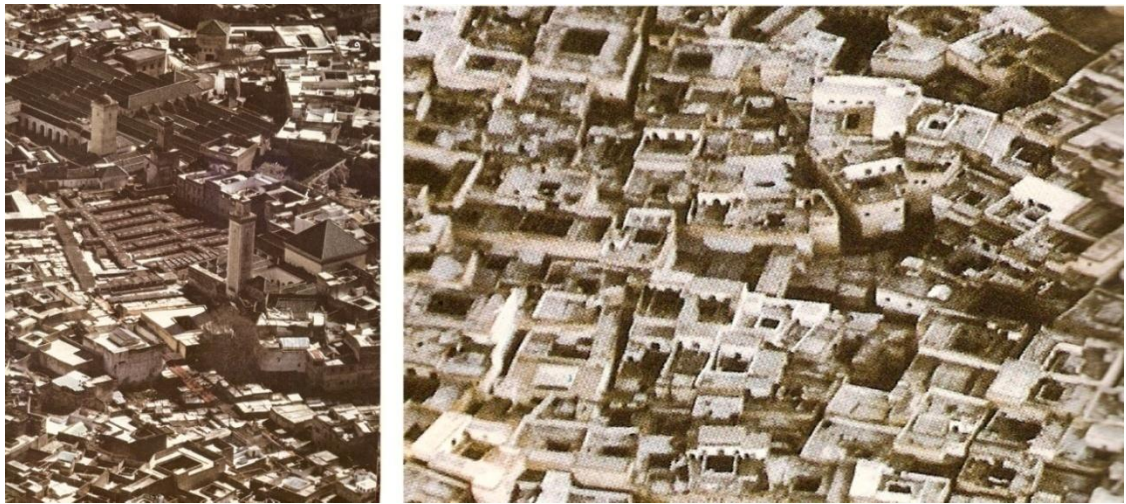


Figure 3.1 Urban Fabric of Fez (Source: Serageldin, 1981)

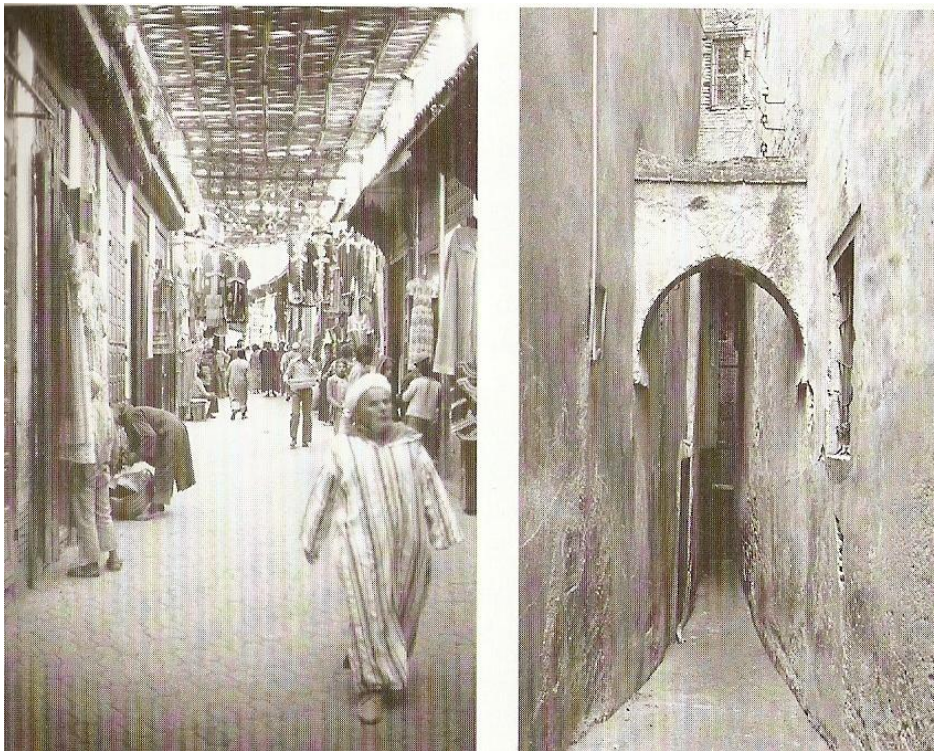


Figure 3.2 Contrast Between Central Market Spine and a Secluded Dead-end Access to a Residential Quarter in Fez (Source: Bianca, 2000)

### **Narrow Zigzag Streets**

Islamic cities are characterized as having narrow streets. These narrow and zigzag streets provide climatic protection as well as being a tool for further privacy and control. For example, it has been cited that medieval Cairo had streets so narrow that two camels could barely pass next to each other. In a study carried out by Al-Alfi it was found that the percentage of open space was about 11% in Islamic cities, while it was 27% in

Greek cities and 31% in Roman ones (Wazeri, 2004: P. 96). Street width seems to follow a hierarchy from wider major roads that lead from the gates of cities to the central mosque, to narrower streets that service residential quarters. Bianca presents a comparison between the central market spine in the city of Fez and a secluded dead-end access to a residential cluster (Bianca, 2000: P. 147) (see Figure 3.2).

### **Centrality and Hierarchy in Islamic Cities**

Since the establishment of early Islamic cities, a clear structure has been set which was based on a central nucleus from which the rest of the city grew outward. The central core contained three major structures: the mosque, the market and the government house. (Mustafa, 1997: P. 347). This centrality is evident in the planning of the first cities of Islam such as Madina, Al-Basra, Al-Kufa, Al-Fustat, Al-Qairawan, Baghdad and others (Mustafa, 1997). The three major elements of the central district of the Islamic city reacted to functional needs; while the mosque symbolized the unifying element of the early tribes of Arabian cities, the government house established law, order and protection, and the market came third as a natural requirement for daily life and an essential space for settlement and growth. “In the open space around the (mosque) there were markets which developed spontaneously around the most densely used public spaces. It can be assumed that they initially consisted of informal tent structures, probably comparable to the rural markets which have survived in many Arab countries up to the present day” (Bianca, 2000: P. 52).

In addition, early Islamic cities presented another type of hierarchy that was expressed in the location of residential quarters around the central core. Where early companions of the Prophet and leaders of the community lived closer to the centre, new followers of the faith lived further away, and so on in a manner that reflected the social status of the residents.



Figure 3.3 Umayyad Mosque, Aleppo (Source: author)

### **Density and Integration**

It is noted that the traditional Islamic city is compact in size, similar to most medieval cities all over the world. High density and compactness were preserved for the following reasons:

1. The harmony and strong ties among residents due to tribal and ethnic congregations.
2. The security measures necessitated by integration and proximity.
3. The importance of proximity to ease communication through walking.
4. The scarcity of water, which prevented the establishment of open parks and gardens (Hamandy, 1981: P. 33).

The dense formation of the Islamic city created a unique environment that strengthened ties among residents, functioned well and responded soundly to local climatic conditions.



### **3.1.3 Discussion**

The study of the Islamic urban form aims to observe the relationship between historic urban form and contemporary urban development. Urban planners seek to distil lessons from indigenous ideological and physical backgrounds in order to create vital cities. Religion remains a major force in the development of culture especially in the Middle East. Certain public ethics have a strong influence on the formation of the built environment; issues like privacy and segregation contribute to the creation of a unique urban form in Middle Eastern cities. Urban planners must utilize local urban patterns like major buildings, densities and typologies to develop a better understanding of space. Islamic cities encourage centrality, where the mosque and the market form the nucleus of an urban centre. The city is characterized by dense urban fabric, narrow streets and integrated neighbourhoods where everything is close by and can be reached by walking.

### **3.2 Jane Jacobs**

Jane Jacobs is an American-born Canadian writer and urban activist. She was born in 1916 in the coal mining town of Scranton, PA. She had no conventional training or formal qualifications in the field of urban planning, yet she “used her own observations about cities to formulate her philosophy about them” (Rawlins, 1996). During the Depression she moved to New York City where she held various writing positions, both as a full-time and as a freelance writer for different newspapers and magazines such as the *New York Herald Tribune* and *Vogue*. She authored several books that greatly influenced urban planning thinking in the twentieth century, such as *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, her first published work, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*, and *Systems of Survival* (Rawlins, 1996).

Although Jacobs had no official credentials in planning, her critique and method of investigation left a great impact on planning thinking throughout the whole world. Carmona describes Jacobs’ critiques by saying that “they are based on richly described real life situations, whose credible individuals and incidents form the basis of an evaluative aesthetic derived from experience in the world” (Carmona and Tiesdell, 2007: P. 28). She looked closely at the details of daily life in urban settings and saw the influence of planning policies on the lives of people, and she observed the dimensions that make a lively and successful urban environment. “The influence of this inevitably subjective and impressionistic approach to investigating urban design has nevertheless been profound, providing an early and devastating critique of Modernist urban space

design” (Carmona and Tiesdell, 2007: P. 141). Her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, published in 1961, is considered one of the most influential works in the history of urban planning. The book discusses with clear and simple arguments the weaknesses of the modern planning principles and major urban renewal projects that were changing the face of many cities worldwide. Jacobs advocated the protection of existing neighbourhoods, mixed land use, and urban vitality. She strongly criticized planning policies and practices that separate land uses and destroy communities. Like most planners, she believed that good urban places cannot be produced through private players alone, but require active public intervention, “she retains the ambivalent relationship to private markets; she recognizes that free real estate markets are essential for urban diversity, but sees that these markets operating on their own cannot effectively create the textural conditions on which vital places depend” (Carmona and Tiesdell, 2007: P. 38).

### **3.2.1 Cities as Sources of Economic Growth**

Jacobs argued that cities are the main generators of economic growth. “My purpose is to show that cities are also primary economic organs”. (Jacobs, 1969: P.6). She believed that only in a high-density setting where people interact and through their shared effort improve their daily lives can a strong economy exist and thrive. “Development is a process of continuously improving in a context that makes injecting improvisations... feasible. Cities... create that context. Nothing else does.” (Jacobs, 1984: P.155). Jacobs believed that cities are the wealth generators of nations, not the other way round. She advocates the creation of more independent cities and regions that encourage innovation, creativity and diversity. Jacobs argued that high-density centres are crucial hubs for job creation; mixed-use, mixed-age, three-to-six-storey-high urban forms facing an active corridor to create pedestrian streets, which are important for the creation of new employment opportunities (Hill, 1988: P. 302). Cities are the source of innovation, since they continuously attract creative and active individuals and firms. “Jacobs (1969, 1984) argues that cities are the essential medium by which ideas circulate and new ideas spring forth; interaction between people in cities promotes innovation, continually pushing up productivity” (Polese, 2005: P. 1434).

### 3.2.2 Mixed Use

After WWI, European planning was influenced by the Bauhaus design school and the International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAM), which called for the separation of work, residential and leisure spaces. “This principle of segregated functions was eventually to become a primary target of Jacobs’ attack on planning, as she advocated the importance of mixed uses for cities” (Klemek, 2007: P.51). Jacobs argued for the creation of mixed-use cities, which she saw to be very important in creating vital urban settings. She arrived at this idea from her observation of successful urban places and neighbourhoods such as the one she used to live in, Greenwich Village, New York (see Figure 3.4).



Figure 3.4 Greenwich Streets in the 1970s (Source: Photostream, 2010)

### 3.2.3 Organic Unplanned Cities

Jane Jacobs opposed the urban renewal and large regeneration projects that mainly changed the face of urban spaces. She believed that urban renewal produces vast urban public space and monuments with no activities in them. She paid little attention to urban design and architecture aesthetics and did not engage in the discussion of urban ornamental form, which to her was a secondary issue. “Jacobs was uninterested in the aesthetic debate. For her, attractiveness was defined functionally as the ability to attract lively use” (Klemek, 2007: P. 54). Jacobs never saw a city as a work of art, even when discussing urban form she looked at it from a different perspective than most urban designers. For her, cities are organic forms and “planning of any kind of order seems to be inconsistent with the organic development of cities which she sees as a direct

outcome of the activity of living” (Carmona and Tiesdell, 2007: P. 71). She was an opponent of the traditional planning institutes and was very sceptical of their intentions and methodologies. “Jane Jacobs (1962) argued that conventional planners studied cities from high pedestals, did not pay enough attention to the subject matter (city dwellers), they misinterpreted the chaos of cities and its relation to man and nature” (Sibley, 2001: P.241). Jacobs opposed the modernist vision for cities which sought order, single use, ease of traffic flow and a scientific solution to the problem of the modern city. “This is the kind of modernist vision which, Jacobs argued, was killing North American cities and, among urban critics of this period, she is probably the best known advocate of mixed uses as a means of revitalizing cities” (Sibley, 2001: P.241).

### **3.2.4 Diversity**

Diversity is regarded today as a major quality of the urban environment. It is defined by Telen as “the mixing of population in relatively close spatial proximity, as measured by variation in income, race/ethnicity, family type and age” (Telen, 2010: P. 488). Social and formal diversity is a sought-after theme throughout Jacobs’ writing. There are two positions regarding the production of diversity, one account related to physical form and the other to mixed land use. According to Telen, “Lewis Mumford (1968) believed that a healthy diversity required limits on size, density and area, while Jacobs (1961) stressed the importance of use. Offices, factories, dwellings and other types of primary use were essential for bringing people to a place and secondary uses were essential for serving the people that came” (Telen, 2010: P.490). Jacobs blamed national government for the destruction of city centre diversity through the execution of large-scale projects. She called for an end to public housing projects and supported subsidizing rent in existing housing in the city centre. Also, she opposed any construction projects larger than quarter of a block and argued against any building taller than its surrounding context and which may isolate existing buildings from the everyday street life (Hill, 1988: P.305).

She called for the preservation of a variety of building types and ages in the city centre. She believed that a mixture of building ages allows for the availability of various housing options that cater for different economic groups and so help to create diversity. “She argues that the social instability of the modern city comes about because the city is separated spatially into stagnant ethnic, class, status, and age sections. That separation

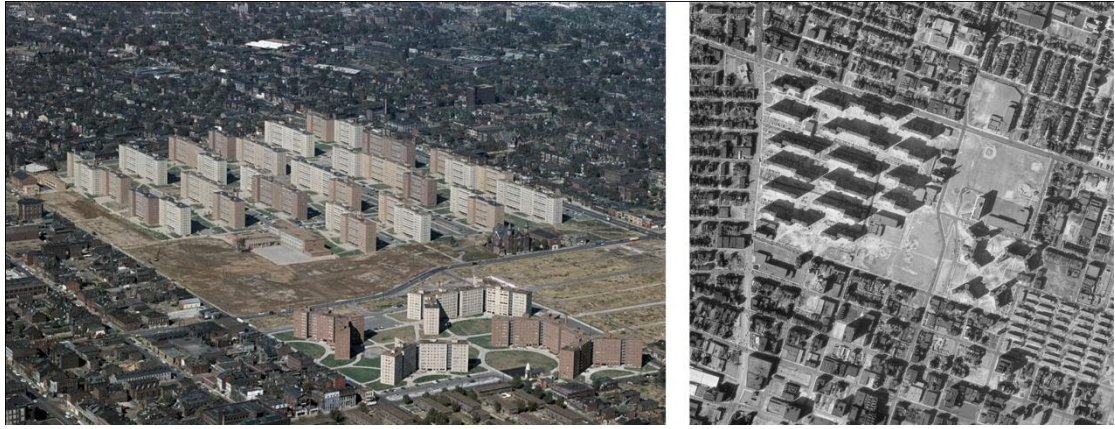
forces people to continually change their living and working places throughout their lives. If a person could be born, work, prosper, and age without having to leave the same diverse street and area, city social relations would become properly stable and enriched” (Hill, 1988: P. 306). Diversity can provide an opportunity for businesses of different size and financial ability to start and grow in cities. Jane Jacobs (1961) argued that old buildings in cities could provide affordable office space for new entrepreneurs who could not afford the high rent in new buildings. According to Storper, the 1990s saw her argument partially validated (Storper 2006: P.1259).

Jacobs also valued retail streets as a tool to increase street safety. First, shops encourage residents and visitors to use pavements. Second, they act as attractions that encourage walking along the pavements of streets without active frontages. Third, shopkeepers are natural defenders of public safety and order as well as strong supporters of maintaining the general surrounding area. Fourth, the presence of people, especially diners, attracts more people (Jacobs, 1961: P. 36). Jane Jacobs believed that a street should have three qualities in order to be vital and safe: first, a clear definition of the boundaries of public and private spaces, unlike the case in most suburban settings; second, eyes on the street, both through the presence of local residents and the orientation of buildings to the street; and third, a sufficient number of activities along pavements to attract people.

### **3.2.5 High Density**

Jane Jacobs called for the maintenance of high urban density, which she claimed is a major component of urban vitality. Nevertheless, she opposed the creation of large housing projects in inner cities in accordance with modern principles, which isolate communities and fragment the urban fabric. This is illustrated by Pruitt-Igoe, which was an award-winning public housing project completed in 1955 in the city of St. Louis in the state of Missouri. Its demolition in 1972 marked and symbolized the failure of modern planning principles. See Figure 3.5.





**Figure 3.5 The Pruitt-Igoe Public Housing Project Completed in 1955 in St. Louis, Missouri, USA**  
(Source: Wikipedia)

Jacobs believed that in order to create a vital street life one needs “a most intricate and close grained density of uses that give each other mutual support” (Jacobs, 1961: P.14). She was a strong supporter of the preservation of the three-storey, closely built buildings that have mixed use (living, work and retail). For Jacobs this urban form is able to generate the vitality necessary for city centres. “For her the hustle and bustle of crowded sidewalk life in the corridor streets generates the excitement, interaction, and beauty that form the essence of what makes central areas of great cities around the world so appealing” (Hill, 1988: P.304).

### **3.2.6 Critique of Jacobs' Ideas**

One cannot deny Jacobs’ contribution to thinking on contemporary planning. Yet there are many thinkers who have highlighted areas where she was lacking. Regarding her support for high-density and diverse communities, “She neglects such classic factors as middle class values and wealth, cheap gas, and white flight from racial and ethnic diversity” (Hill, 1988: P. 310). There remains a considerable majority who would always prefer the suburban options, which became and remain the normal setting for middle-class families. Regarding her position on urban centres and economic growth, she “ignores the fact that great cities have grown for reasons other than diversity – including such factors as access to natural resources, skilled labour, transport systems, venture capital, and quality living sites” (Hill, 1988: P. 310). Certainly, her analysis may be simplistic and attention must be given to other economic and political forces that guide the development of cities.

Another major critique of Jacobs' thinking is that it falls within the theoretical realm and neglects the reality of planning policy implementation and the complexity of planning procedure. As Hill states, "Planning is an action-oriented profession and strategic details add to the power of planning theory. While a powerful spirit drives for action in Jacobs' writings, she rarely follows through with detailed implementation strategies" (Hill, 1988: P. 312). For example, there are many powerful characters in cities who would not accept or approve of Jacobs' model. They would not see their needs fulfilled by the simplicity of her proposals. According to David Hill, the influential central business district owners would not support the diversity model proposed by Jacobs and would certainly use their power to protect their single-function office buildings in city centres (Hill, 1988: P. 312).

### **3.2.7 Discussion**

Jane Jacobs is considered one of the major thinkers on space and urban development. Her ideas serve students of urban theory and economics. She was a strong advocate of urban living and saw cities as a major source for economic development. She called for mixed-use development that allows people to live, work and socialize in close proximity. Jacobs believed that vitality can be achieved only through high-density urban environments that encourage integration and social interaction. She also called for cities that grow naturally rather than those that utilize scientific methods that ignore real-life situations and fail to sense the beat of the street.

## **3.3 New Urbanism**

New Urbanism is an urban movement that appeared as a response to the various planning trends that prevailed after WWII in the United States and the rest of the world. It is mainly concerned with the issue of sprawl, which expanded cities and resulted in the creation of suburbs, strip malls, motorways and car parks, and changed the nature of urban communities. Many traditional inner-city neighbourhoods have been destroyed and new large-scale housing projects have been constructed in their place.

### **3.3.1 Principles and Theories**

New Urbanism bases many of its ideas and theories on older theories and urban thinking. It borrows from examples of historic cities such as Venice, Athens and Rome.

More recently, others like the ideas of the Garden Cities, as presented by Howard, who proposed towns that are self-contained, surrounded by green belt, and contain carefully balanced areas of residences, industry and agriculture. The City Beautiful movement also clearly inspired the ideas of New Urbanism. Jane Jacobs' book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* provided a major source to the movement. It also draws on the work of Christopher Alexander, Kevin Lynch and Leon Krier; "Much of the theory behind the movement has its roots in Clarence Perry's concept of the neighbourhood unit and Leon Krier's concept of a mixed function urban quarter, a revival of the Classical and vernacular planning tradition as it existed before international-style Modernism perverted its methods and objectives" (Waugh, 2004:P. 13). The movement's critique emerged as a response to the failure of suburban living to deliver on its promise of a high-quality life and community living. According to Bressi, some of the hindrances of suburban living are as follows: first, the fact that more leisure time is spent in the car commuting; second, the devastating effect of suburban living on those groups who cannot drive, mainly children and the elderly; and third, the unhealthy polluted suburbs, particularly in suburb metropolises like Denver, Los Angeles and Houston (Katz, 1994: P. xxix).

The principles of New Urbanism are defined by a Charter that was developed between 1993 and 1996 by a broad range of architects, planners, interested citizens, scholars, elected officials and developers. It was ratified at the fourth annual congress, the annual meeting sponsored by the Charter for New Urbanism. The principles laid out in the Charter are divided into three major categories:

- The region - metropolis, city and town.
- The neighbourhood, the district and the corridor.
- The block, the street and the building.

For New Urbanists, the first category states that towns within regions should be diverse and provide opportunities for people of all income levels. The Charter also encourages towns to develop a unique sense of place. It recommends that cities and towns should develop clear boundaries that contribute to the creation of distinct character. Land between cities and wild land must be preserved as open green spaces and farmland. The Charter calls for the creation of a specific size and scale of various urban formations within a region such as town, city, and neighbourhood (Figure 3.6).

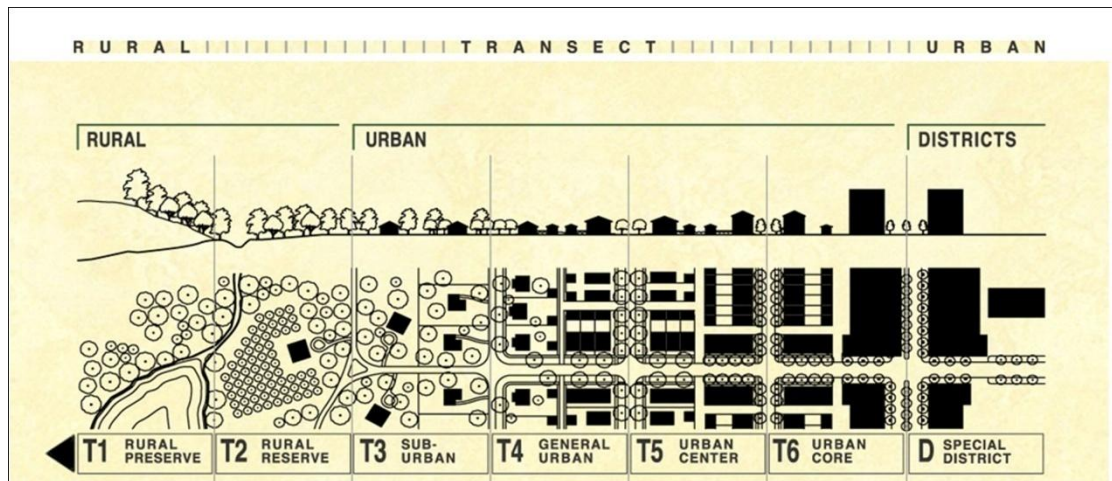


Figure 3.6 The Region Scale, Size and Land use.

The second level of the New Urbanism Charter is the neighbourhood. The main proposal is for neighbourhoods to be diverse and walkable. For New Urbanists, each neighbourhood must have an edge and a centre that constitutes a public space. They even propose that the size of the neighbourhood should not exceed a quarter of a mile from centre to edge, which allows a person to walk that distance in approximately five minutes. The aim is to encourage and make it easy for people to walk to various activities such as schools, shops and transportation hubs. “New Urbanism strives to establish a ‘sense of community’ that has been overlooked in conventional suburban development” (Waugh, 2004: P. 9).

The third level of the New Urbanism Charter is the block, street and building. They aim to create safe, comfortable, interesting places for people to walk and meet. As for buildings, they should face pavements, rather than car parks. New Urbanism uses buildings to define streets. It calls for prominent locations to be reserved for important buildings. Architecture design should always respect context and local character. Streets should be designed to accommodate the private vehicle, but also allow adequate space for pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities.

“New Urbanism offers a theory of integrated settlement, of ‘communities of real neighbourhoods’ in diverse districts in a coherent ‘metropolitan regions’” (Gibson, 1997: P. 119). New Urbanism seeks to establish higher densities, which contribute to the reduction of strain on overall land consumption and the ability to reduce

infrastructure costs. It also calls for mixed housing types in order to attract diverse economic and age groups and to ensure the availability of suitable housing types that fit people throughout their life cycle (Waugh, 2004: P. 8). In many ways it tries to work with the preferred housing option (suburb), but develop it in a sustainable manner. As Waugh outlines, “an important contribution of New Urbanism is the application of urban principles to the suburb while coping with the suburban economic and social imperatives” (Waugh, 2004: P. 8). The Charter provides a comprehensive review of the theories of New Urbanism, yet “as in any movement still taking shape, the theories of New Urbanism are multiple, fluid, partial, and sometimes even internally contradictory” (Grant, 2006: P.45).

### **3.3.2 Sample Projects**

According to Duany, the principal designer of Seaside Village, in his comment on the lexicon document “what we New Urbanists are against is a system that is extraordinarily efficient, even elegant. In order to replace conventional suburbia, the New Urbanist must develop a system that is equally simple, efficient and elegant” (Bressi, 2002P. 32). This section discusses two projects carried out by those who apply the principles of New Urbanism, Seaside Village and Main Street Kendall, Florida.

#### **Seaside Village**

One of the first examples of the thinking of New Urbanist planners is the town of Seaside Village in Florida. The town was designed by Andrés Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk with the aim of fostering a strong sense of community. This is achieved through “consciously asserting the primacy of public over private space” (Katz, 1994: P. 4). It is compact and designed on an eighty-acre site (324,000 m<sup>2</sup>) of Florida Panhandle coastline. Its form follows the principle of the “five minutes’ walk”. It was designed for a population of about 2,000, which makes it comparable to a typical 1920s and 1930s American small town or city neighbourhood. It consists of about 350 houses and 300 other types of dwelling unit. It includes various public facilities including a school, a town hall, an open air market, a tennis club, an amphitheatre a post office and a range of shops and offices. The designers developed a simple design code that outlines how buildings should look. This is simple to allow for design variations but also create a coherent context (Katz, 1994: P. 4) (see Figure 3. 7 & Figure 3.8).





Figure 3.7 Public Space at Seaside Village, Florida (Source: [http:// architectureandmorality.blogspot.com](http://architectureandmorality.blogspot.com))

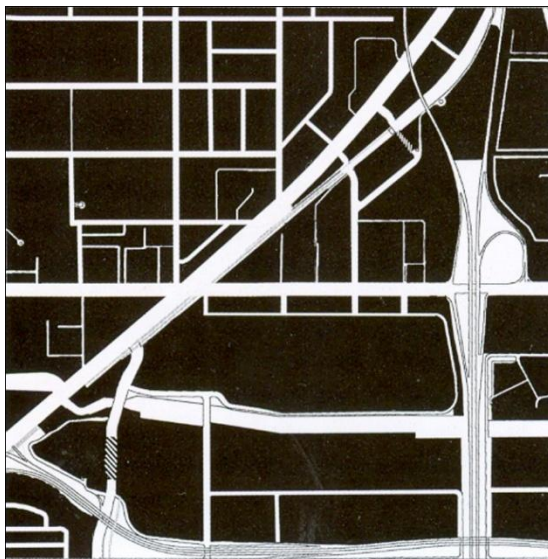


Figure 3.8 Aerial Photograph of Seaside Village, Florida (Source: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com))

### **The Revitalization of Main Street Kendall, Florida**

As a result of metropolitan growth the studied area sits in the middle of an extensive suburban area. It consisted of various buildings sitting in the middle of car parks (the Metrorail station, Kendall Drive Highway, Palmetto Expressway, Snapper Creek Canal, high-rise office buildings and Dadeland Mall). In an attempt to address the issue of uncontrolled westward growth, South Florida Metropolis called for the redevelopment of the area.

A master plan was prepared that aimed to create order, provide a pattern for sustainable development and preserve the identity of the area. The planners presented a land analysis of Kendall Square that showed how the area consisted of large empty blocks that lacked connectivity. They also used comparison studies to present the current and proposed solution drawings, showing how the rights of way could be used for more than just car movement, adding transit systems, off-street parking and landscaping (see Figure 3.9, Figure 3.10 and Figure 3.11).



**Figure 3.9 Kendall Square Land Analysis (Source: (Bressi, 2002))**



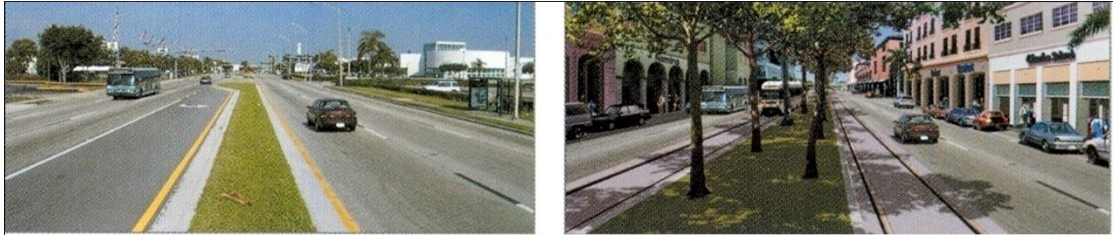


Figure 3.10 Before and After Illustrations of the Kendall area (Source: (Bressi, 2002))

The architect also proposed the creation of covered sidewalks, which are important in Florida’s climate. They also suggested bringing the buildings closer to the street and presented illustrations that showed interesting shop frontages aligned behind colonnades and shaded arcades. All in all, the planners used eight principles borrowed from the New Urbanist thinking:

- Give priority to pedestrians.
- Provide sufficient, but secondary attention to the private car.
- Improve the primary street.
- Introduce various types of public spaces.
- Extend transit systems.
- Improve the area visually.
- Propose land development regulations.
- Do the improvements in an organized manner (Bressi, 2002: 59).

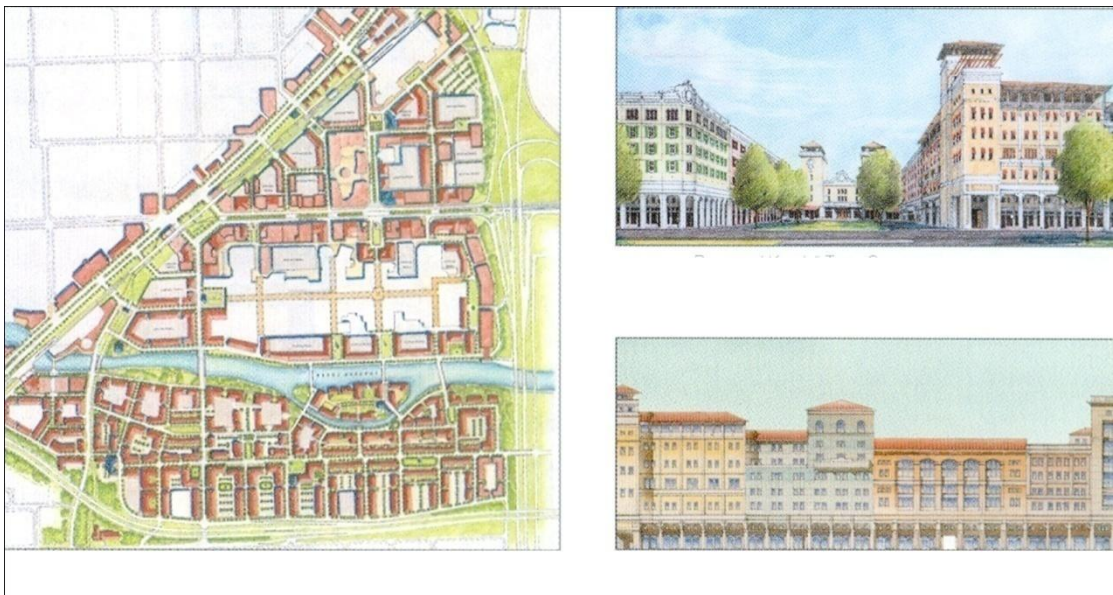


Figure 3.11 Kendall’s Master Plan and Illustrations (Source: (Bressi, 2002))



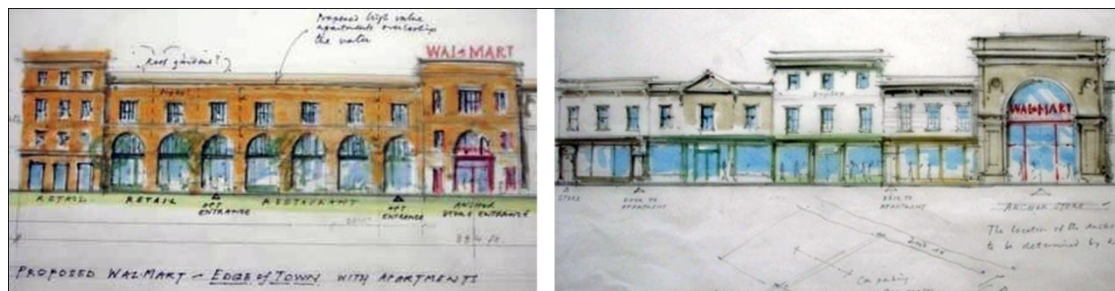
### **3.3.3 New Urbanism and Retailing**

New Urbanism calls for compact and high-density communities that encourage walking. “One key ingredient of a successful mixed use town is a close relationship between the local and the 'global' movement system” (Gibson, 1997: P.114). It encourages the strengthening of public transport systems that allow the public to move freely and efficiently through towns and cities and facilitate getting to public spaces and commercial centres. “The centre of local activities requires a public transportation system to pass through, in such a way that it does not disturb the urban integrity of the district” (Gibson, 1997: P.116). Through research and historical examples, New Urbanism advocated the implementation of the simple grid system that has proved to be easier for circulation and space legibility. The grid encourages street vitality, improves pedestrian safety and provides alternative routes that promote integration. On the other hand, cul-de-sacs are single use and low density, do not support walking and break integration with the global system (Gibson, 1997: P.117). The integration of the urban structure leads to safer streets that are lively and encourage commercial vitality (Gibson, 1997: P.118).

Peter Calthorpe, whose ideas have influenced New Urbanist thinking, proposed the TOD, “Transit Oriented Development”, which channels growth into discrete nodes along light rail and bus networks. The TOD would be dense and would include mixed-use activities such as housing units, retail, offices, health clubs, cultural facilities and public spaces, all of which are easily accessible to residents and do not require vehicle usage (Katz, 1994: P. xxxi).

An example of the New Urbanists’ urban and architectural approach to a retailing project is the redesign of the Wal-Mart store in Mississippi. Wal-Mart stores are signature stores that are known to have influenced the United States retailing sector and the urban environment. The store building is a big box, so is large and sits in the middle of a large car park usually only accessible by car, and has a harmful economic influence over downtown merchants who suffer in competition with a giant business in terms of accessibility, diversity of goods and prices. After Hurricane Katrina, planners from Mississippi invited the British architect Ben Pentreath to propose a new type of Wal-Mart in Pass Christian, Mississippi that was more responsive to its context in scale and

integration. The idea was to create two types of Wal-Mart; first the Wal-Mart Village consisting of apartments, condominiums and town houses that surround the giant store. Designed streets and sidewalks would allow easy access on foot. Parking would be hidden behind the building rather than forming a sea of concrete in front. The second was the Downtown Wal-Mart, where the store would have an urban street-front facade rather than a strip-mall front. It would anchor a downtown shopping district that would include smaller retailers (ElNasser, 2005) (see Figure 3.12).



**Figure 3.12 Proposal for Wal-Mart, Miss. by Arch. Ben Pentreath (Source: <http://www.mississippirenewal.com>)**

### 3.3.4 Critique of New Urbanism

Criticism of New Urbanism varies and covers a wide range of issues such as practicality, concern with image and social impact. Reading New Urbanism vision and principles, one can see that the proposed ideas do not fit with current planning and building regulations in the United States and/or the rest of the world. “That New Urbanism runs up against zoning laws (segregated uses) and street design regulations that maximize efficiency for automobiles. These laws typically make New Urban communities illegal to build” (Waugh, 2004: P. 11). This poses a challenge to developers who want to implement them. Also, the financial risk associated with developing New Urbanism schemes is high. “It can present a high risk to developers. Mixed-use developments can be complicated to implement; development costs can escalate; there is a difficulty in standardizing products; and it places high demands on management skills and design expertise” (Waugh, 2004: P. 11). Bressi warns that large-scale New Urbanist projects could be criticized as contributing to further sprawl, especially if they are not implemented on a regional scale. Furthermore, he clarifies that New Urbanism projects require community involvement on the longer term for them to be successful and this issue still needs years to be tested (Katz, 1994: P. xli). Several writers have highlighted that New Urbanism is overly concerned with design details

rather than major urban situations. Bressi acknowledges the limitations of New Urbanism thinking and warns of the traps that it might fall into, such as paying attention to the language of house design and architecture only (Katz, 1994: P. xli). Krieger states the wide difference between “the image of the community from the desire for a community” (Bressi, 2002:P. 52). Baum is concerned that New Urbanism “may try to project an imaginary past on the future through wishful thinking, rather than creating a workable future through action” (Baum, 1999P. 7). On the other hand, there are concerns about the specific design language, as it could be seen as an obstacle to creativity. While New Urbanists claim in the CNU that architectural language is not the issue, many NU projects provide extensive and detailed codes of building design that favour traditional style (Grant, 2006: p.72).



**Figure 3.13 Post Office Building at Seaside, Florida (Source: <http://mattnt.com>)**

Another major criticism is that it focuses on new development rather than addressing existing urban conditions that need attention. Krieger warns that the New Urbanist response to urban problems is no different from any previous one, that is, it abandons troubled urban areas and starts new ones. He claims that American urbanists do not need to come up with “a better way to subdivide land, but rather to rescue, reinvigorate, reform, resettle and learn to love the again the places that have already been made” (Bressi, 2002: P.52). Krieger claims that there is a significant cultural shift happening in the United States that is contributing to a return to urban living. This shift is geared by the following social, economic, cultural and political forces:

- Belief in the disadvantages of suburban living.

- Boredom with suburbia.
- Saturation of some suburban real-estate markets.
- Re-emergence of ethnic neighbourhoods in various cities.
- Shift in employment opportunities
- Changing political centre structure from nation to state to local
- A demographical change in the American household
- The rise of environmental awareness among middle-class families
- The search for a sense of community.

Krieger states that New Urbanists fail to see this cultural shift and remain preoccupied with large-scale new suburban solutions, which could negatively impact the urban environment (Bressi, 2002: P. 56).

One of the major criticisms of New Urbanism is that it tends to make several solid assumptions and believes that urban forms have direct impact on social practices, without providing proof. According to Grant, some of the assumptions are based on hope rather than evidence (the idea of a smaller house size subsidized by large public amenities or plans that encourage walking, for instance). The question remains whether a small saving “a year persuades people to give up the convenience of the car? Responsibility is a hard sell” (Grant, 2006: P.68). The same is true for the claim that mixed use would result in social diversity. “In the absence of empirical analysis that demonstrates that mixing can overcome societal differences and inequalities, we are expected to have faith that minor inconveniences are worth the trouble, or that they may prevent the incipient insurrections” (Grant, 2006:P. 70). Another view criticizes New Urbanism for social injustice in the way it is promoted to middle and high income groups, and “serves primarily as a way of marketing urban development to promote particular ideology” (Grant, 2006: P.76).

The movement remains relatively new and needs to stand the test of time in order to verify its claims of being environmentally and socially sound. According to Gibson, “the capital and commercial investment profile of our great urban centres is not a yield cycle of five, or ten, or twenty years. The social and economic returns are sustained through centuries. New Urbanism sits in a place round the debating table of Sustainable City” (Gibson, 1997: P. 119).

### **3.3.5 Discussion**

New Urbanism is an American urban movement that emerged as a response to the failure of the suburban living model that prevailed throughout the United States and failed to create the high-quality life it promised. It is a comprehensive urban theory that addresses the region, the neighbourhood, the street and the buildings. It learned from several previous urban ideas and theories and built upon the experiment of various cities around the world. New Urbanism calls for the creation of compact and walkable communities. It puts strong emphasis on the creation of communities and social interaction. It seeks to achieve its goals through the provision of urban solutions that address economic concerns and try to fit with local regulatory planning systems. It shows an understanding of the role of retailing and a central commercial area and serves in the creation of vital urban settings. New Urbanism is a theory that is still under development and is the subject of a lot of criticism, yet it remains a valid source for urban thinkers. The strength of New Urbanism lies in its practicality and pragmatism that addresses real-life situations. Thus the theory provides a valid source of inspiration for this research.

### **3.4 Jan Gehl**

Jan Gehl is an architect, city planner and academic, a consultant and the author of several influential books about urban design and city planning. He married a psychologist and between them they thought about the relationship between space and human psychology. His first book, *Life Between Buildings*, was published in 1971 in Danish. The first English translation received great attention when it appeared in 1987, and to this date it remains an important source for planners and critics. The book marked Gehl's move from architecture to urban space where he saw planning as a means to improve the lives of city residents. Gehl lectured at the Royal Danish Academy from the 1970s to the 1990s, during which time he continued to explore his ideas about public behaviour in public spaces. The academy opened the Centre for Public Space Research and appointed Gehl as its director. Gehl's research had a large influence on his home city Copenhagen, and throughout the 1990s the city underwent a process of gradual development that led to it to become a successful example and vital city. Gehl's book *Public Space Public Life*, published in 1996, illustrates the processes and achievements of the city where he claimed that the university provided the thinking, and the city the implementation. Later in 2001, Gehl and his colleagues established

Gehl Architects which allowed Gehl to test and implement his ideas. Since then, he has acted as a consultant to many world cities, as well as contributing to the production of various planning reports that illustrate his ideas and reaction to various urban situations.

### **3.4.1 Gehl's Theoretical Ideas**

Gehl is mainly interested in outdoor activities and the physical conditions that influence them. In his study he divides outdoor activities into three categories: necessary, optional and social (Gehl, 2006: P.9). This categorization allowed him to develop a deep understanding of public behaviour in urban space. He points out that being in public is an important activity. It provides an opportunity to maintain already established contacts and to contribute to the social environment; it is a source of inspiration and a stimulating experience (Gehl, 2008: P.19). The starting point for Gehl's thinking is that the "street is a social space, rather than just a channel for movement" (Mehta, 2007: P. 166). Gehl acknowledges the role of the economy and consumption culture that has led to the major transformation of urban space in the last century, including factors such as dependency on the car, large-scale development, out-of-town shopping malls, gentrification and segregation. However, he believes that cities could use the same economic forces that have been shaping cities for centuries, to reshape them again more humanly: "the same consumer culture, together with the need for active and passive engagement and interaction, relaxation, and leisure, also supports the concept of public life in coffee shops, bookstores, theatres, health clubs, and so on, on traditional public spaces such as streets" (Mehta, 2007: P. 166).

### **Critique of Planning**

Like many contemporary urban thinkers, Gehl strongly criticizes modern planning principles. He traced the development of urban form from medieval, Renaissance, functional and modern cities. He praises the medieval city as being designed for humans, where "the scale of these cities, dimensions of the streets, the distribution of uses along streets and squares, the scale and detail of buildings are in harmony with human senses and opportunities for movement" (Gehl, 2001: P. 14). While the medieval city evolved freely as a result of natural growth patterns, Renaissance cities were not a tool, but seen as work of art where attention was given to landmarks, building facades and perspectives. After 1930, Functionalism evolved as a result of advances in medical knowledge and was mainly concerned with healthy living standards that upgraded the

specification of dwellings. However, the physiological and social aspects of buildings and public spaces were neglected; instead cities were designed with roads, paths and wide grass lawns. The rationalization of urban planning resulted in vast marginalized spaces (ignored spaces between buildings) (Gehl, 2008: P.41). This led to the destruction of public life on the street level and made the automobile the predominant mode of transport. Thus, Gehl points out repeatedly in his writing and research that in order to re-create vital urban places the same attention given to the creation of roads must be given to the physical setting on a smaller scale. “Just as it has been noted that automobile traffic tends to develop concurrently with the building of new roads, all experience up to date with regard to human activities in cities and in proximity to residences seems to indicate that where a better physical framework is created, outdoor activities tend to grow in number, duration and scope” (Gehl, 2008: P. 37). Planners spend a lot of effort conducting traffic studies and counts, such as manual counts, automatic counts, journey-time surveys, parking supply and demand surveys, while little attention is given to the understanding of public behaviour in cities. Gehl asserts that “every city counts its traffic one or two times a year, but hardly any city knows about what people do in a city and how the city is being used” (Makovsky, 2002: P.12).

At another scale, many municipal authorities and city councils focus on the development of architectural standards and the promotion of high-quality architectural schemes, in an attempt to improve the built environment. Yet they fail to make a positive contribution to urban vitality. Gehl indicates that “it is of prime importance to recognize that it is not buildings, but people and events that need to be assembled” (Gehl, 2008: P. 81). Gehl believes that traditional urban planning techniques such as floor area ratio and setbacks fail to create the necessary conditions for a successful urban environment. Gehl also emphasizes that lively urban places require small-scale solutions rather than grand schemes.

### **Car-Free Cities**

Gehl is a strong promoter of pedestrianization. His proposal of closing off streets and converting those to walkable urban malls has been very successful in many cities, especially through his early experiments in Copenhagen. In order to create a vital urban environment one has to create conditions that allow and promote encounter and communication. Cities for pedestrians have different dimensions and scales from cities

for automobiles, and the latter makes human communication almost impossible. Gehl explains that although the highway and the pedestrian mall each have an 85-person-per-minute traffic rate, at any specific time twenty times as many people can be seen in the mall as on the motorway. In the mall, many people are sitting and standing and the speed of movement does not exceed 3 miles per hour, compared to the motorway, which has an average speed of 60 miles per hour (Gehl, 2008:P. 76). In order to create lively cities certain physical measures have to be taken to slow traffic, such as the widening of pavements and narrowing of roads, the use of special pavement materials and limited parking facilities; “slow traffic means lively cities” (Gehl, 2008:P. 77).

### **Better Conditions for Cycling**

According to Gehl, cycling is a faster form of foot traffic, yet it remains part of city life in terms of the sensory experience it provides. Although many cities are not suitable for cycling because of their harsh weather or terrain, many have been very successful in accommodating cyclists. In order to promote cycling, cities should provide comprehensive cycle paths and parking. In addition, cycling should be integrated into the overall transportation infrastructure of the city (like trains, subways and buses) and cycle paths should be kept clear of any obstacles such as snow. Recently many cities have introduced a variety of city cycling schemes, where bicycles are offered free to residents, examples being Copenhagen, which has 20,000 such bikes, Paris and more recently, London (Gehl, 2010: P.182).

### **Urban Design/Furniture**

Gehl stresses the importance of employing urban design techniques to enhance public space. He demonstrated various tools that help make public space more attractive and increase its usability. He remarks that many urban designers and architects tend not to think much about the type and location of urban furniture and as a result it either remains unused or harms public spaces. Urban furniture should be distributed carefully and evenly, and designers should avoid cluttering sidewalks as “cluttered sidewalks not only impede access but also negatively affect the visual environment” (Gehl, 2008:P. 23).

Gehl emphasizes the importance of seating in the urban environment in order to create successful vital urban places. He discusses in detail the specification of good seating in



the urban milieu and how it can best be utilized to serve and attract the public. Seating furniture is best located at the edges or boundaries of urban space: “a place that offers intimacy and security and, as a rule, a good microclimate” The best seats are those that provide the best views. One must also acknowledge that different social groups require different types of seats. According to Gehl, suitable seating should be provided at equal intervals every 100 metres.

High-quality architecture is desirable in the urban setting and can contribute to the overall enhancement of public spaces. A high degree of articulation on buildings, physical settings such as nooks, corners and small setbacks in adjacent walls, as well as landscape elements such as ledges and planters, all contribute to the creation of an interesting built environment. These increase aspects of sensory stimuli perceived from the environment, including other people and activities.

### **Active Frontages**

The idea of the street as a social space requires special attention to the number and type of activities that take place along it. The aim is to encourage walking and presence in public space through the placement of attractions. The issue of active frontage is central to this research and strongly emphasized in Gehl’s writings and analysis. He points out that the liveliness of streets is reduced by the placement of large units or activities such as petrol stations, car dealerships, car parks and offices and banks, if these are not treated carefully. Gehl mentions how some Danish cities have reacted to the problem of dead streets through urban policies that restrict the establishment of offices and banks at ground level. Others have allowed such activity to operate on ground level if their street facade does not exceed five metres (Gehl, 2008: P.95). While we can tackle the issue of active frontage on main streets, there may still be marginalized areas that cannot be filled with commercial activities. Urban design solutions could be implemented in those marginalized areas to increase their usability, especially for social activities (Garde, 1999:P. 209).

### **3.4.2 Methodology**

Gehl is best known for his working methodology and analysis of urban areas. He has employed his methods in various cities that differ in size, location and level of economic development such as Perth, Melbourne, Adelaide, Wellington, London, Riga,

Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, Rotterdam, Edinburgh and others (Gehl, 2010:P. 210). The aim of these surveys is to extract the “the potentials and challenges found in the public realm” (Gehl, 2008: P. 17).

### **Pedestrian and Stationary Activity Counts**

Pedestrian counts are counts of the “measure the volume and direction of pedestrian traffic in the CBD through time and by location” (Emmons, 1965: P. 2). According to Gehl, “a high number of pedestrians walking in a city does not necessarily indicate a high-quality walking experience. However, if a large number of people choose to engage in voluntary activities (having an outdoor lunch, playing, or sunbathing) then a city most likely has an excellent public realm” (Gehl, 2008:P. 16). Throughout the years Gehl has developed a systematic method of surveying moving pedestrians and people engaged in stationary activities. These surveys aim to collect quantitative and qualitative data on certain study areas. The procedures of the surveys have been clarified in the research methodology chapter of this thesis.

Gehl’s survey of stationary activity helps to draw a picture of the immobile individuals. Observation and survey of the conditions at bus stops is essential to understanding the effect of the location and distribution of bus stops on the attractiveness of public transport and how easy it is to use. Gehl stresses the importance of outdoor seating in cafés and restaurants; he sees it as a feature that benefits business owners as well as improving the public realm.

### **Active Frontage Evaluation**

Gehl Architects has developed a method of assessment for the level of attractiveness of street frontages (Gehl, 2004: P.35). According to this, each street can be evaluated according to the number of doors per 100 metres, diversity of function, number of closed or passive units, interesting reliefs at facades, quality of materials and details. Gehl has developed a six-grade scale to indicate the level of attractiveness ranging from A: attractive to F: mean.

## Assessment of the Quality of the Public Realm

Gehl pays a lot of attention to the relationship between buildings and public space. He values connecting indoor and outdoor spaces and warns of the negative effects that streets usually have in breaking such connections. Gehl highlights the effect of physical barriers and how several public spaces are surrounded by fences and trees, which isolate them from pedestrian traffic. As a result, these spaces lack visual connection, become unsafe at night and are usually closed after hours. Closed, dead facades and metal gates contribute to the lack of street vitality, especially at night. Figure 3.14 illustrates how Times Square has only 11% of its space allocated for people (Gehl, 2008: P. 32).

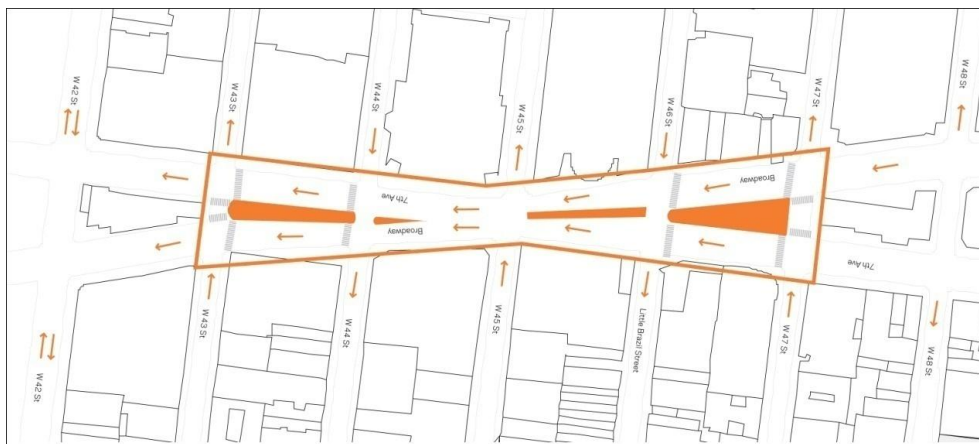


Figure 3.14 Space Allocated for Pedestrians in Times Square (Source: Gehl, 2007: P.32)

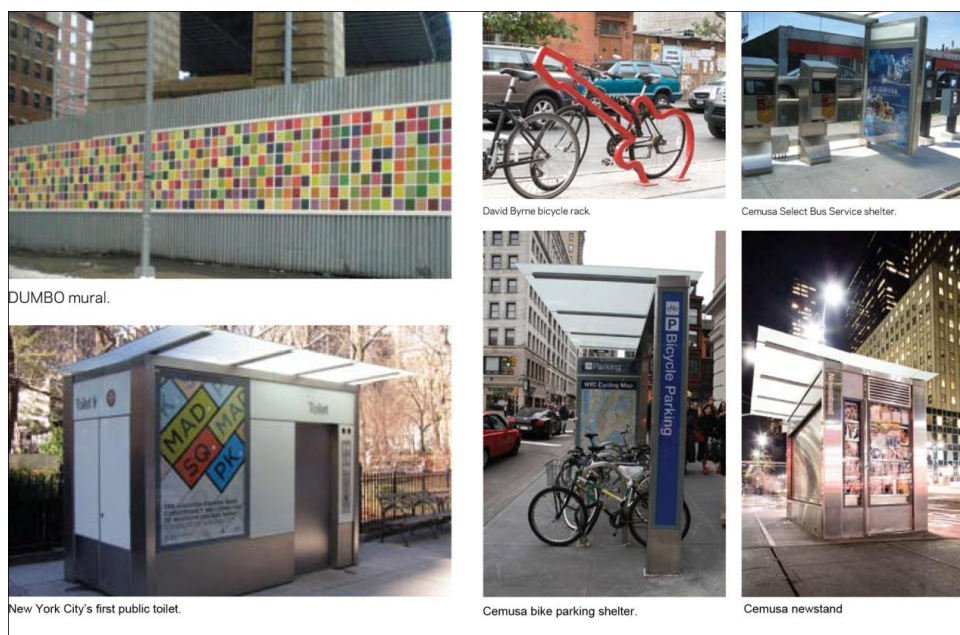


Figure 3.15 Various Implemented Urban Elements That Enhance Visual Appearance (Source: Gehl, 2007: P.47)

## **Population**

When conducting surveys Gehl Architects records the type of street users in order to produce a percentage that represents a certain age or racial group and compares it with the actual percentage of such groups among the population of the area, so that one can see whether the streets studied are welcoming or unfriendly.

### **3.4.3 Discussion**

The ideas of Jan Gehl are very valuable for this research. His interest in public space and public behaviour in space provides important insight for researchers. Like other influential thinkers, he criticizes modern planning principles that have led to the destruction of public space and turned the city into a car-dominated realm. He focuses on the urban conditions that encourage walking and cycling. He also shows a deep understanding of the role of street furniture in the creation of better settings that attract more use and occupation of public space. Regarding retailing, he encourages mixed-use development and small-scale commercial activities that face circulation corridors, and he emphasizes the link between interesting street fronts and a high number of pedestrians. In addition to his theoretical ideas, Gehl provides a well-structured study methodology. This is very valuable for urban planners and researchers and could contribute to the creation of a deeper understanding of the urban realm. Pedestrian and stationary activities, active frontage and physical environment assessment provide a useful tool to planners and researchers.

## **3.5 Urban Economics**

Urban economics is an important element of this research. It contributes to the creation of an understanding of the spatial structure of retailing within the urban area and its relation to microeconomics. This section looks at the location theories of von Thünen, Alonso, Christaller and Losch. It also reviews agglomeration economy and its role in creating the urban market and contribution to centrality. The section also examines the role of urban form and urban policies and their effect on the development of retailing. Finally, it looks at urban and rental value as an analytical tool for the understanding of urban form and retailing vitality. Since retailing is one of the major land uses in all cities, it has a strong relationship with the location of housing and commercial activities.

Today it is used by local governments worldwide as a tool to regenerate inner-city areas and create the desired vitality. This research examined patterns of land use and utilized the rental value to form a better understanding of retailing.

### **3.5.1 Central Place Theory**

Central Place Theory (CPT) was developed by the German geographer Walter Christaller and refined by Losch. Christaller believed that settlements simply function as “central places” that provide services to surrounding areas. “The theory illustrates that the location pattern of different industries are merged to form a regional system of cities. The theory answers two questions about cities:

1. How many cities will develop?
2. Why are some cities larger than others? (O’Sullivan, 2003:P. 103).

CPT predicts that in a region, cities will be hierarchical, with fewer large cities and more small cities. The amount of goods sold in smaller cities is a subset of the goods sold in large cities. “Firey argues that although accessibility and the capital value of sites diminish outward from the centre of the city, the rate of fall in site value is not the same for each use. Industries dependent on accessibility have a greater rate of decline than those, not all uses experience the rate of decline away from the centre” (Balchin et al., 2000: P.99). CPT has also been employed to explain the distribution of retailing in and within urban areas (Goodall, 1972: P. 134).

Retail location is affected by both centralization and decentralization forces. These two forces combine and determine the location of retail stores (Ling, 2009: P.6). Consumers behave differently when purchasing high and low-order goods. Convenience goods are purchased regularly at short intervals and represent a small fraction of a person’s income, therefore they do not require comparison and selection and are usually purchased locally, while consumers will travel further to obtain high-order goods and seek comparison and lower prices (Goodall, 1972: P. 136).

Although CPT continues to be very relevant to the study of urban economics, several empirical studies claim that consumers do not always go to the nearest business centre for shopping (Clark, 1968). Others criticize the claim that consumers carry out single-

purpose trips, pointing out that people may conduct multi-purpose shopping trips and buy different categories of goods (Buursink, 1981: P. 48).

### **3.5.2 Agglomeration Economies**

Stores are clustered in one location in order to benefit from the sales of other items. “Comparison shopping causes the clustering of firms selling imperfect substitutes. One-stop shopping causes the clustering of firms selling complementary goods” (O’Sullivan, 2003 P. 61). Clustering of shops selling homogeneous products is found in market centres. Shops agglomerate linearly and vertically, in the same building (Ling, 2009:P. 19). Stigler developed the concept of “search”, which highlights that sellers and buyers both benefit from clustering; while sellers need to ensure that their pricing is adequate, buyers need to gather information about products and prices. Also, the greater the price of a commodity the more time customers spend on the search. As the number of repeat buyers increases, the effective search is greater and as the geographical size of the market increases, the cost of the search is greater (Stiglers, 1961: P. 219). “Both Eaton and Lipsey (1979) and Wolinsky (1983) pointed out that firms clustering were capable of increasing sale volume. It is because more customers would come to the cluster for comparison shopping” (Ling, 2009: P.25). According to Konishi, shops cluster in order to capture the highest possible number of customers and to compete by cutting prices. Thus, customers learn that a cluster of shops minimizes not only searching cost but also product price (Konishi, 2005). Even smaller firms could benefit from the existence of larger ones. “The leader-follower behaviour typical of many industries will tend to encourage small firms to cluster together in space close to large firm” (McCann, 2001: P. 40).

### **3.5.3 Land and Rental Value**

“Urban rent is determined by the productivity (or profitability), which is highest at the place of maximum accessibility, that is, the central business district” (Balchin et al., 2000: P.81). Von Thünen is a nineteenth-century German economist (1783–1850). He established the theory of agricultural land, which was developed before industrialization. The model starts with the following simplifications:

- The city is at the centre in an “isolated state”.
- The “isolated state” is surrounded by wilderness.

- The land is completely flat without any topographic variation.
- Soil quality and climate is constant.
- There are no roads and farmers use ox carts for transportation to the city centre.
- Farmers behave rationally to maximize profit.

The model generates four concentric rings of agricultural activities. The first consists of dairy and intensive farming, since the produce needs to be transported to the city quickly. The second ring consists of timber and firewood. The third consists of crops that last longer and are lighter, so have lower transportation costs. The final ring consists of ranching since animals can be walked to the city. After that lies wilderness, which, according to the model, is too far out to utilize any kind of farming (Findlay, 2010).

Richardson devised a rent theory that states that the productivity of land determines its rent value; rent declines as distance from the optimum location increases. Neo-classical rent theory suggests that rent diminishes outward from the city centre to reflect lower revenue, and higher operating and transportation cost (Balchin et al., 2000: P. 192). In 1960 William Alonso extended von Thünen's model to cover land use. His model provides a solution to the property market by giving land use, rent, and intensity of land use, population and employment a function of distance from the central business district. Unlike in von Thünen's model, Alonso illustrates that there are factors other than transportation that contribute to rental value. Households may prefer locations further from the city centre for the sake of more space and open green land. The bid rent function does not have to be a straight line (Watkins, 2010).

Rental values are considered one of the major indicators of the viability and vitality of commercial centres. Changes in rental value indicate the level of attractiveness/ viability of retailing within a given centre and it is postulated that there is a strong relationship between rents and localized accessibility. Therefore the researcher will attempt to identify rent gradients or surfaces within centres along the lines generated by the access-space model (Alonso, 1964: P. 44). In the UK, rental value in town centres is defined by "Zone A" rents. "Rent paid by a tenant in the Zone A portion of its space. This is the first 20 feet of store depth from the entrance (i.e. the most valuable selling space)" (GSA, 2009: P.14). In other countries there may be alternative measures so the comparative analyses of case studies will have to take this into account.

### **3.5.4 Retail Structure**

The retail sector is one of the most dynamic economic sectors. In the last two decades it has undergone radical changes in terms of scale, organization and geographic representation. Until the 1950s, the retail sector in the entire world was dominated by small to medium-size store units that followed Christaller's type ranking. Changes in demographics, technology and lifestyle have contributed to the changes in the retail sector. Lately we have seen new types and formats of stores that have dominated the urban environment and led to the reduction of the importance of downtown retailing and the expansion of suburban and out-of-town malls. In addition, retailing has adopted a global strategy, where developed countries with saturated markets have begun to export their form of retailing to new markets especially in developing countries. This expansion has led to major economic and social transformation and had a drastic effect on local retailing that can be seen in the decline of small-scale and independent local retailing (Komoil, 2006:P.2).

However, there remains a personal factor that contributes to the protection of the variety of retailing types. Goodall confirms that "variation in consumer taste can create variation in retail structure" (Goodall, 1972:P. 137). Differences in income level and variation in residential location can provide consumers and urban areas with an interesting retail mix. Scale shift in retailing sectors occurs when real income increases and transportation improves, high order shops increase and often represent an increase in speciality shops and luxury stores such as florists, pet shops, photography services and others.

The construction of an adequate retailing structure is crucial to the development of a vital urban environment. Planners should seek to create a suitable retailing mix that addresses the creation of social vitality and coherence. Cities with active retailing sectors show greater ability in urban and economic development. According to O'Sullivan, evidence has shown that cities with the greatest variety of consumer goods have grown most rapidly. In the United States the most rapidly growing metropolitan areas were the ones with the highest number of restaurants and performance venues per capita. Also, in France, the most rapidly growing cities were the ones with a relatively high number of restaurants (O'Sullivan, 2003: P. 5).



### **3.5.5 Land Use and Urban Policies**

The monocentric, core-dominated city which consists of a central business district and surrounding residential regions has served as a model for many urban economic studies. The monocentric city model has become weaker over time as modern transportation modes contribute to the ability of people to live further from city centres. The aim of various urban models is to understand the decision mechanism for the location of firms and households and how such mechanisms contribute to the development of the urban form. Urban economists seek to analyse the distribution of activities in order to find out what determines the price of land and why it varies across areas. It seeks also to investigate the role of urban policies and legislations such as zoning and development controls on urban form and the general economy.

One of the major urban phenomena that have affected urbanism is sprawl. Urban sprawl is defined as “the spreading outwards of a city and its suburbs to its outskirts to low-density and auto-dependent development on rural land, high segregation of uses (e.g. stores and residential), and various design features that encourage car dependency” (2010). Sprawl is a term used loosely to include both haphazard developments on the fringes of urban areas and the construction of housing on plots of larger sizes (Thompson, 1968: P. 320). O’Sullivan explains that there are several factors that contribute to the suburbanization of the population, such as higher income, lower commuting costs, central city problems like crime and weak schools, and higher taxes (O’Sullivan, 2003:P. 208). The out-of-town mall has been one of the major artefacts of urban sprawl. “Enhanced purchasing power at the urban periphery, combined with the mobility and flexibility offered by the motor car makes the development of satellite regional shopping centre feasible” (Goodall, 1972:P. 141).

According to Thompson, the attack on sprawl is not an attack on the increased size of the urban area, but the lower densities produced by that growth. When the urban area grows larger with lower density, the cost of transportation, communication, utilities and public services becomes high and inefficient (Thompson, 1968: P.320). “Fringe developments often impose a fiscal burden on the city. The taxes from new development fall short of the cost of extending public services to urban fringe” (O’Sullivan, 2003: P. 249). Thompson states that with the majority of the population

owning and depending on the private vehicle, it becomes very difficult to support good public transport systems with few users. “Simultaneously, with the decline of the mass transit, manufacturing, retailing and other activities have been suburbanizing. With suburban densities far too low to support the extension of the lines of even a healthy mass transit system, the elderly, those financially unable to own a car, and others find that dependence on the central city mass transit system has narrowed their employment opportunity very appreciably” (Thompson, 1968:P. 375).

Therefore, there has been a strong call to resist suburbanization and focus development in the city centre to attract residents and users. Despite the historical data that shows persistent moves from centres to peripheries, the city will continue to be protected from stagnation. “The central city will continue to have an advantage in providing goods and services for which face-to-face contact is required” (O'Sullivan, 2003: P. 222).

### **Urban Policies**

Some cities use zoning to control population growth through various means, such as defining urban service boundaries, limiting development land and limiting the number of building permits. There are different types of zoning, each of which has a different purpose. Nuisance zoning seeks to separate incompatible uses. Fiscal zoning aims to exclude households that do not pay their share of the cost of local government. Design zoning is a sort of macro-architecture: planners arrange activities within the city to promote the efficient use of the city's infrastructure (O'Sullivan, 2003: P. 233). Critics of zoning see it as a violation of property rights. They claim that zoning hinders economic efficiency and works against the concept of the free economy. In many cases zoning laws prohibit the creative use of land such as the development of mixed-use schemes.

Similar to zoning, many local authorities resort to urban regeneration policies that aim to counter the migration from city centres to suburban areas. There are three main reasons behind this shift. First, developments in means of transportation and communication have reduced the importance of city centre locations. Second, the rise in household income has led many households to prefer larger space and better amenities. Third, limited land in the city centre prevents businesses from expanding their operations (McCann, 2001: P.249). This phenomenon leads to further problems

associated with the creation of urban wasteland, which in turn leads to further issues such as deprivation, poverty and crime. Regeneration schemes aim to alter the legal and institutional environment within which the local land market operates in favour of disadvantaged areas. It is hoped that after implementation of urban regeneration schemes the living conditions of people in city centres and the aesthetic aspects of inner-city areas would be improved. However, low income groups may suffer as a result of such policies. First, many are forced to migrate from city centres. Second, the low-income group within the city centre remains stable because of their inability to afford the higher costs associated with living far from centres of employment, so they end up paying higher rents. Third, with the increased rent in the city centre the low-income groups tend to live in higher dwelling densities (McCann, 2001:P. 251).

Many world cities have seen the emergence of a process called “gentrification”, in which high-income groups migrate to the city centre. Associated with the change in activities that occurs with such movement, new businesses move in and occupy the gentrified area, businesses that cater for high-income consumers and which appeal to wealthy migrants but are less accessible to the less wealthy. Some believe that the process of gentrification has a negative consequence only on low-income groups. Others see it as benefiting all in the long run via the provision of local employment opportunities and the development of the physical built environment (McCann, 2001: P. 254).

In addition, many authorities restrict the growth of urban areas through the establishment of a “green belt”. The logic behind the green belt is to limit the growth of the urban area and protect the wild rural land. However, from an economic point of view, such policies may have a welfare implication on the lower-income groups. Land closer to the green belt has a higher rental value and therefore becomes accessible only to higher-income groups, while city centre land becomes the affordable location for lower-income groups (McCann, 2001: P. 254).

### **3.5.6 Discussion**

The study of urban economics is central to this research. One cannot study retailing, which is a major economic real-estate sector, without looking at the economic forces that determine its location, form and development. The field of urban economics offers

a wide range of ideas and theory that addresses the issue of retailing in urban areas. Central Place Theory provides an insight into the location and size of commercial cores in the city and their place within an urban region. An understanding of agglomeration economy is essential to retailing and to research that calls for centrality and integration and seeks to develop an understanding of the relationship between urban integration and vitality. Understanding land and rental values allows researchers and urban planners to assess the attraction of certain locations. It has allowed this research to construct a correlation between areas of vitality and rental value. In addition, in order to evaluate urban systems, one needs to understand the nature of retail structure and the hierarchy that emerges as a result of historic centres, residential areas and movement corridors. The study of urban economy is interconnected with the regulatory system. Economic forces are some of the major factors that shape our cities and determine the location of various activities in the urban milieu. A clear understanding of this relation is crucial for the creation of a working model for a vital retailing environment.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This research aims to assess the condition of retailing in Kuwait City and its influence on urban and social vitality. It starts from the author's realization of the dynamic relationship between urban development, spaces of retailing and consumption, and acknowledges that retailing has been a major vehicle of urban change and can be utilized as an active tool for the construction of a vital urban environment. The theories reviewed in this chapter confirm that better integrated and diverse retailing can produce urban and social vitality and coherence. This chapter has drawn from diverse sources ideas that help to reshape retailing in Kuwait City. Retailing in Kuwait is intended to address various social, cultural, physical and economic issues that are important for the development of any urban system.

A review of the Islamic urban form is crucial to developing an understanding of the socio-cultural values that guide development in many Middle Eastern cities. The researcher confirms that many Arab cities, including Kuwait, have followed international urban planning principles and values. These planning principles have been implemented with little attention to the local social structures and cultural values. Thus, after years of development it is evident that Kuwait City and other Middle Eastern cities suffer from deteriorating physical conditions, they lack vitality and continue to drive out

residents. It is hoped that any model of urban development will be based on a deeper understanding of the social and cultural values that still run strongly in such communities and that must be reflected in any solution that aims to improve the urban situation.

The researcher saw in the ideas of Jane Jacobs a wealth of theories and a profound way of thinking about urbanism. Her bottom-up approach teaches planners to start from the street level and observe the everyday life of people before arriving at any major urban solutions. She was a strong critic of the modern planning principles that have affected many cities around the world. She showed that dense and compact communities and mixed-use urban areas are essential for creation of social vitality and economic prosperity.

New Urbanism, which appeared in the 1990s and continues to gain momentum, is another source of criticism of the modern planning principles that have led to the deteriorating condition of many developing cities around the world. As a movement it provides a comprehensive model of urban development that covers the whole spectrum from the region to the single building. It calls for mixed-use, high-density development and a return to traditional urban design and architectural language.

This chapter also discussed a number of urban economic theories that explain the economic forces that shape cities and determine the location of retailing within urban areas. This research has benefitted greatly from the review of the previously discussed ideas. This chapter contributed to the construction of the overall recommendations and findings, and put forward the following:

- Urban centrality is crucial for the creation of vital cities. The location of retailing activities in central areas contributes strongly to the enhancement of social and economic strength.
- The quality of built environment is another important element for the creation of vital cities and commercial centres. High quality urban spaces influence behaviour and areas with well-designed public spaces provide various amenities that benefit retailing in the area.

- It noted from various thinkers on urbanism that the quality of the urban fabric can lead to social and economic vitality. Retailing activities benefit greatly from high levels of urban integration and connectivity. It is crucial to understand the social role of the street and view it as a civic space rather than just circulation corridor.
- It will be noted that mixed-use developments are essential to successful retailing. Mixed areas ensure the presence of people throughout the day and night, encourage walking, attract more pedestrians and contribute to the creation of local sense of place. By doing so, such areas provide direct benefits to retailing.
- Higher social interaction can be stimulated through the employment of various urban tools, both political and physical. People come to cities to be in public, observe everyday life and socialize. Retailing will benefit greatly from socially vital areas and vice versa.
- Rental value indicates the level of attractiveness/viability of retailing within a given centre, and it is postulated that there is a strong relationship between rents and localized accessibility. The relationship between urban policies and economic drivers and how policies can be utilized to reshape the urban environment have also been explained.

## **PART ONE B: EMPIRICAL CONTEXT**

### **CHAPTER FOUR: PILOT CASE STUDY: CITY OF GLASGOW**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to undertake a holistic and in-depth investigation of the role of integration and diversity of retailing in the vitality of city centres. The aim of the case studies is to collect data with which to develop grounded theory. By selecting several case studies the author seeks to describe, explain and evaluate the role of integrated and diverse retailing in the creation of urban and social vitality and coherence.

This chapter includes the work carried out in the City of Glasgow, and will present the results based on five methods of analysis: first, a review of regional and local planning policy and its influence on retailing; second, Space Syntax analysis, which will highlight the role of the urban fabric and layout on the production of high volume of pedestrians and the presence of economic activities; third, a survey of stationary activities and observation of public behaviour within the selected locations, which will inform the research on the relationship between public behaviour in public spaces and economic activities; fourth, reflection on the role of urban setting and visual quality on the production of successful retailing centres; and fifth, an analysis of economic vitality measures such as rental values, occupancy rate and retail type surveys. The study is limited to the investigation of three main retailing streets: Buchanan Street, Sauchiehall Street and Argyle Street (Figure 4. 1). It is hoped that this chapter and the results and lessons learned from the selected three cases can help in achieving the research goals, answer its questions and assist in the development of a strategy of reshaping retailing in Kuwait City.

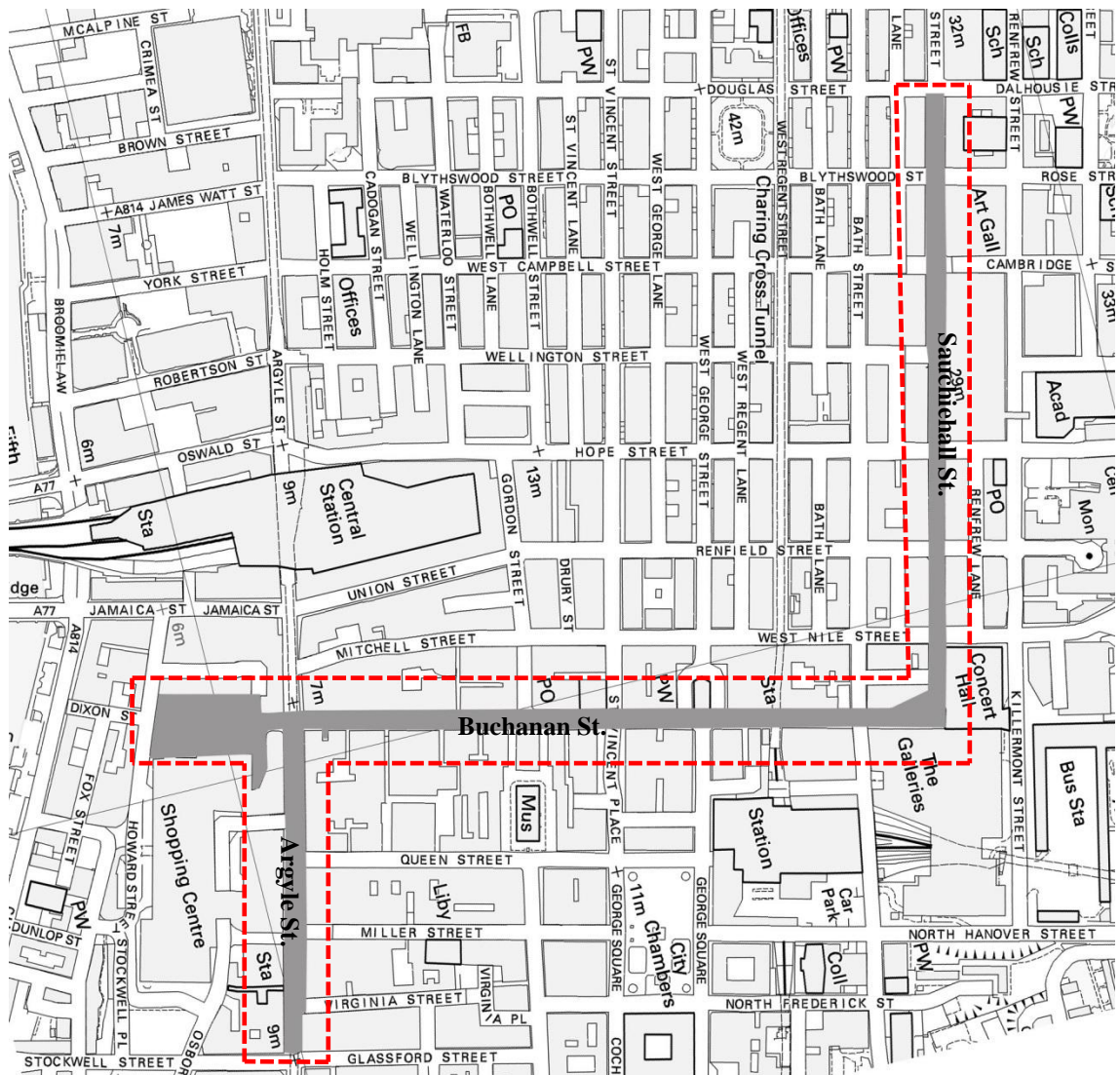


Figure 4. 1 Case Study Limit (Author)

## 4.1 General Information

### 4.1.1 Historical Background

Glasgow's history stretches back to early times. Archaeological evidence dating back to the Stone Age has been found on its site. It is also believed that the Romans established a trading post in Cathures, the earliest name for Glasgow. In ad 543 St Kentigern settled in the city, and established his church where Glasgow cathedral stands today. By the twelfth century it became a Royal Burgh and a site of major institutions such as the cathedral and the University of Glasgow. Glasgow's location, which provided access to Ireland and the Highlands, in addition to its supply of natural materials such as coal and fish, established the city as a major burgh. In the eighteenth century its location facing the Atlantic gave an additional advantage in establishing major trade with the New



World. By the nineteenth century Glasgow was at the centre of the industrial revolution with its new industries, such as soap making, distilling, glass-making, sugar and textiles, and later heavy industries such as shipbuilding, locomotives and engineering. All these achievements ranked Glasgow as one of the finest and richest cities in Europe. Yet, after the First World War the city saw great industrial decline and faced a major economic depression, which lasted until after the Second World War when competition from overseas harmed the industrial sector and pushed the city to a new field centred around the service industry.

In the aftermath of the Second World War Glasgow faced a major housing crisis. In an attempt to imitate the modern towers designed by French architect Le Corbusier, several high-rise flats were introduced to the city. However, it soon became apparent that such schemes have drastic effects on the population and that they bring with them huge problems such as social exclusion and occupant unhappiness.

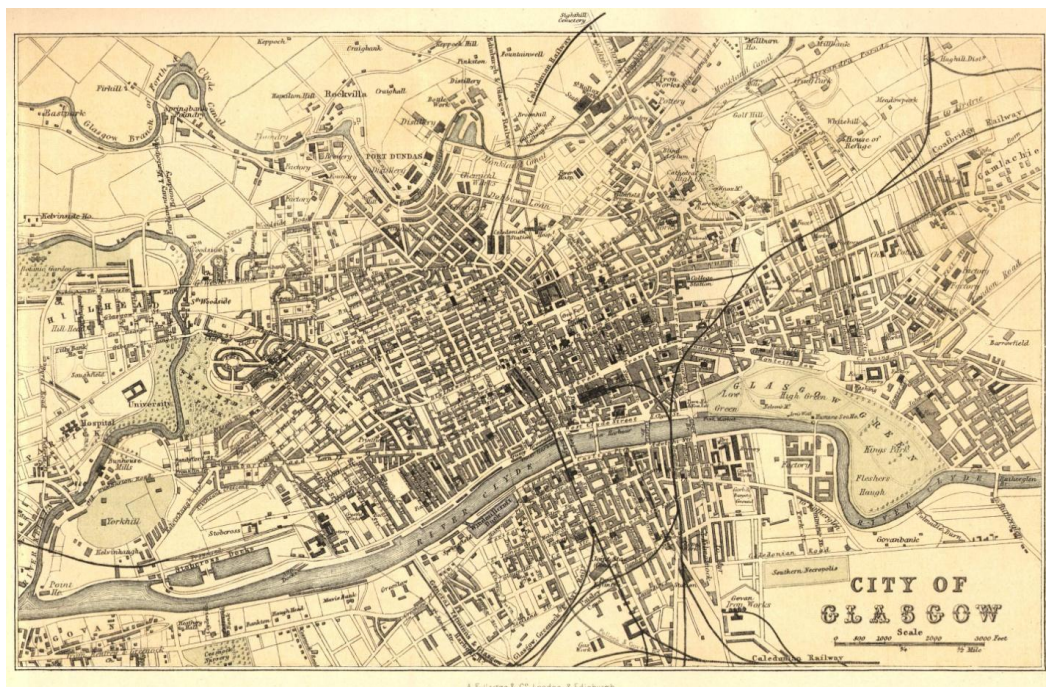


Figure 4. 2 Glasgow Map 1878 (source: <http://mapof.net>)

“Glasgow has no concentric structure with a clearly defined core and rings of development surrounding it. From its origin at the High Street and Trongate /Gallowgate the city grew on either side of the river Clyde roughly to the east and west” (Frey, 1999:P. 77). According to Frey, there are several urban characteristics shared by

many traditional European cities of the time, which gave Glasgow its urban form. These are as follows:

- A regular grid pattern
- A block development principle with almost continuous building masses
- The repetition of standard building types such as the terrace, the urban villa, the multi-storey warehouse and office building
- High-density development in the city centre with up to seven storeys
- Mixed-use development with adjacent shopping, living and industrial uses (Frey, 1999:P. 78)

The interwar period saw a shift in urban development strategy that took shape in the form of the garden suburbs, which introduced organic-shaped, low-density, detached houses and fragmented enclosure of streets. These newly introduced suburbs had a negative effect as they became isolated and added to the fragmented nature of the city. From a social point of view, these housing projects created social buckets that segregated the population along socio-economic lines. (Frey, 1999: P. 82).

The 1950s and 60s saw a new wave of changes to the city's urban structure that came in the form of Comprehensive Development Areas (CDA). Their aim was to react to the lack of housing with the provision of high-quality housing. Most of the designed CDAs were inspired by the modern movement, which rejected most traditional principles. Streets were neglected and open space was abandoned. (Frey, 1999:P. 87). In addition, new plans were arranged to prepare Glasgow for mass car ownership and dependency. The 1970s saw some development in the historical centre of the city with a focus on the rehabilitation of historic buildings and quarters that enrich the face of Glasgow as a unique Victorian city. The 1980s' political atmosphere, which encouraged development based on market forces, allowed for the development of several out-of-town shopping malls and as a result moved many retailers out of the city centre. In other cases it gave rise to the establishment of city centre malls such as the Buchanan Galleries and the St Enoch Mall.

#### **4.1.2 General Data**

Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland and the third most populated city in the United Kingdom. According to the latest census, the population of the city of Glasgow has reached 581,940 (GROS, 2009).

### **4.1.3 Planning Policy**

Glasgow's planning system in regard to the city centre follows the United Kingdom approach, influenced by the PPG6. Planning policy statements outline the United Kingdom's policies on different aspects of town planning. Glasgow City Council adopted The City Plan on 1 August 2003. The Plan is in two parts: Part 1 is the Development Strategy and sets out the council's broad vision for development and regeneration in the city for the next 20 years. Part 2 is the Development Policies and Design Guidance which supports the delivery of the development strategy (GCC, 2003). In section 8.5, the city plan recognises the availability of other national planning guidelines (NPPGs) that could provide policy guidance for development in the different activities within the city centre. (PAN 59).

In terms of retailing, it is evident that the city council acknowledges the importance of the city centre and its retailing industry. (GCC, 2003). The aims of the city centre development strategy are outlined as follows:

- “i) promoting the City Centre as a competitive international business and commercial location;
- ii) sustaining the City Centre as the strategic focus for Glasgow, the Clyde Valley and the West of Scotland; and
- iii) enhancing the rich architectural heritage and physical environment of the City Centre” (GCC, 2003).

The plans acknowledge the threat that sprawl can have on the city centre, especially in the decentralisation of office space. Therefore, it has allocated a desired area for future office businesses (see Figure 4. 3) (GCC, 2003).

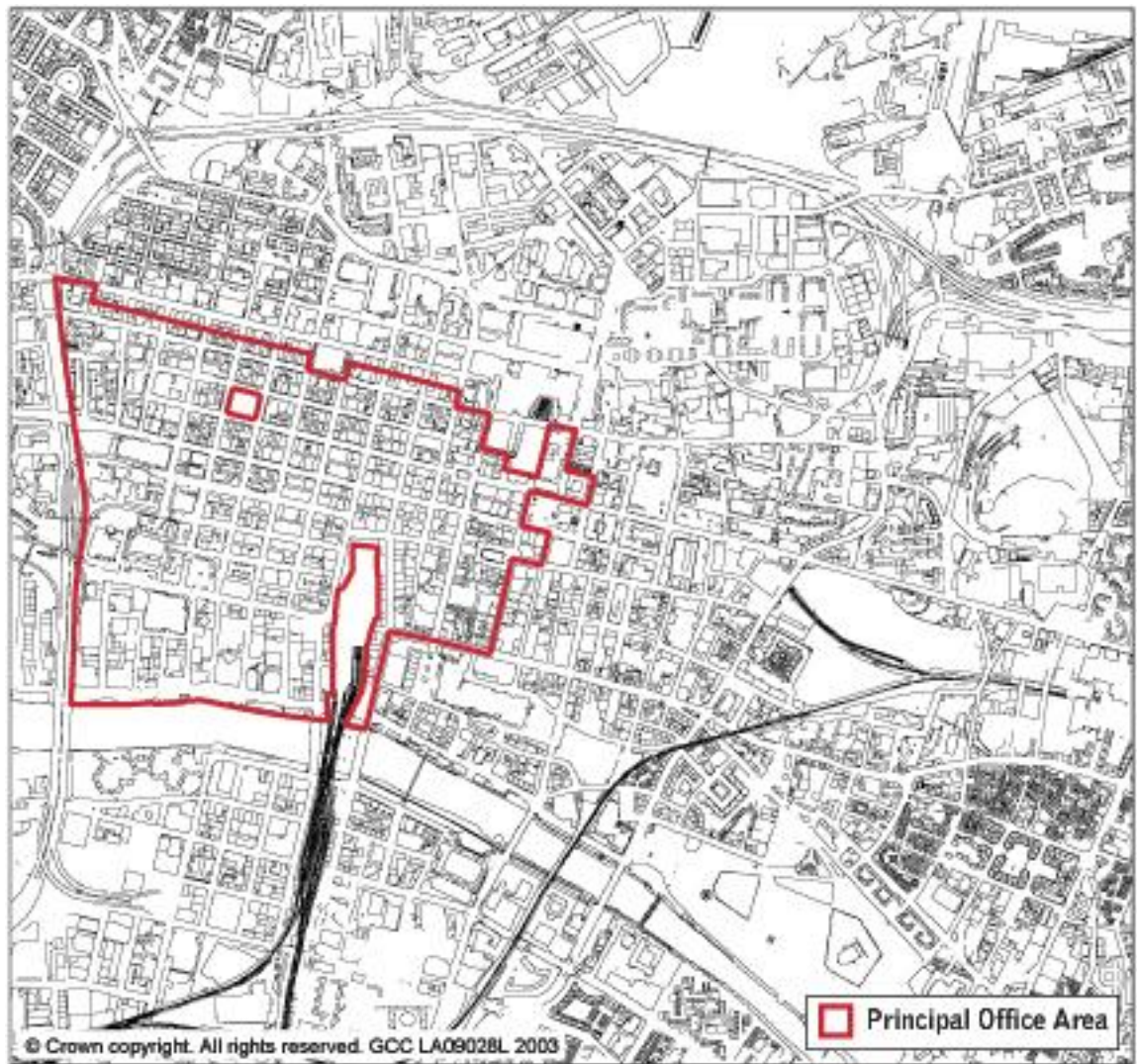


Figure 4. 3 Principal Office Area (GCC, 2003)

It is clear throughout the document that the plan recognises the importance of the retail industry on the vitality of the city centre area. It aims to build upon the success of the past and continue the growth in city centre retailing. (GCC, 2003). In addition, the plan defined a “Principal Retail Area, centered on Buchanan Street and extending from Sauchiehall Street to Argyle Street/St Enoch Square [Figure 4. 4]. Policy DEV 7: Principal Retail Area (City Centre) helps encourage and focus all major retail investment to the City Centre to ensure that the area remains attractive to shoppers, retailers and retail investors.”



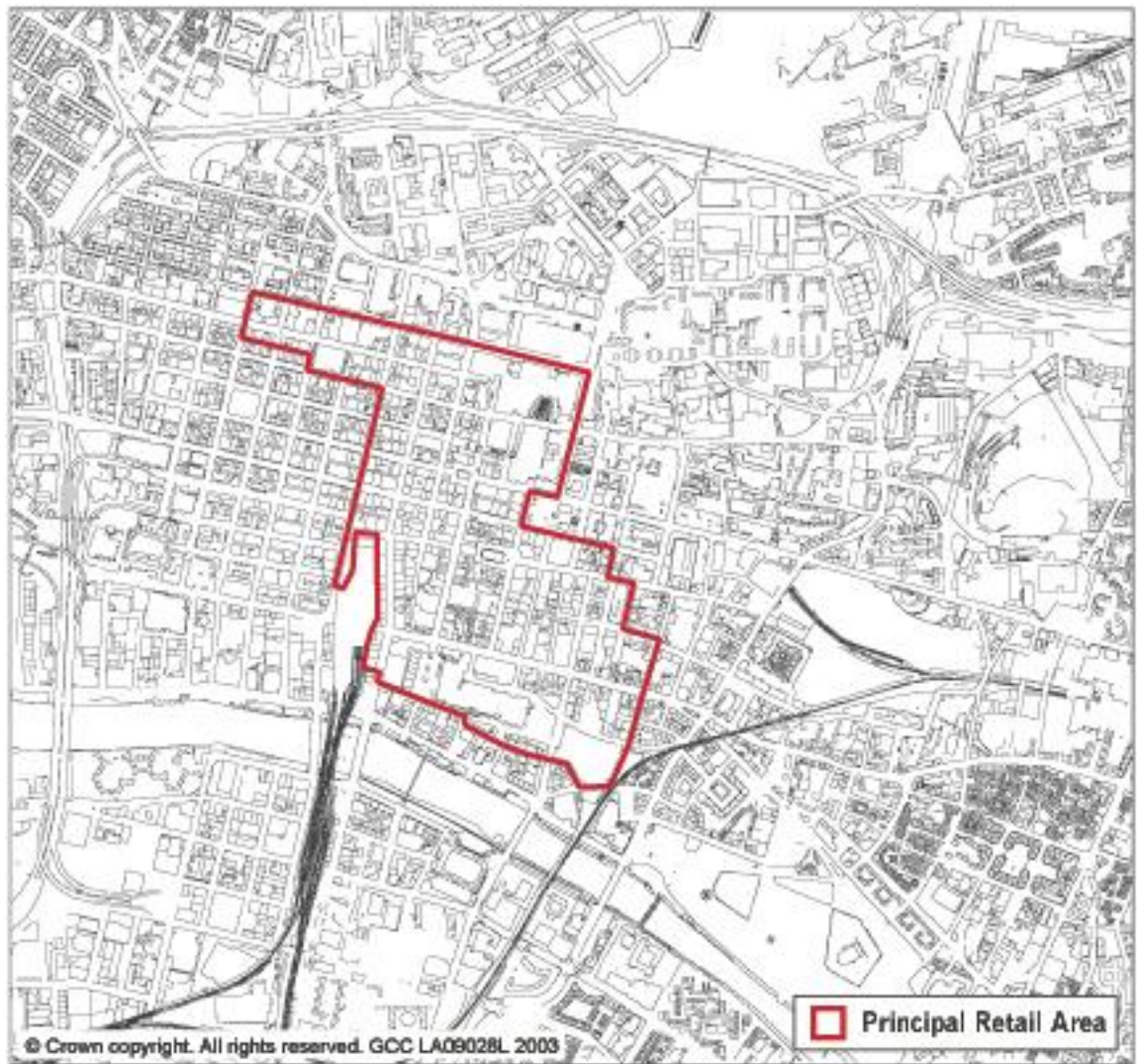


Figure 4. 4 Principal Retail Area (GCC, 2003)

In section 8.10 the plan emphasises that the council will continue to promote the principal area of retail and encourage further investment in retail within the city centre. In section 8.11 the plan asserts that the vitality of the city centre area is achieved through retaining centrality and concentration of retail services within an accessible range. Also, the council affirms that it will resist change within the primary retail area from class 1 retailing to other classes. One of the reasons for this is to defend Glasgow city's competitive edge from out-of-town retailers and other Scottish centres.

The plan has given special attention to the development of the architectural heritage and the physical environment. It has adopted the Glasgow City Centre Millennium Plan Public Realm Programme in association with its partners.

The council realises the importance of mixed-use areas and attracting more people to live in the city centre and supports the expansion of residential development in the city centre, including proposals that bring vacant upper floors back into residential use. By following such policies the city council aims to enrich the city centre by attracting residents who would contribute to the livelihood of the city even after business hours. The plan addresses the importance of cityscape and urban design, and seeks to improve the public realm by the promotion of public art and other forms of public space improvements. The city aims to enhance its public realm and encourage the public to occupy public space. Café culture and other long-hours operators help to promote a 24-hour city.

The plan outlines several policies that aim to improve the urban realm, such as the encouragement of mixed-use development, continuous frontage of retailing and restriction of high-rise buildings. Strong policies and design guidelines are set to control the quality of shops' signage, canopy and security measures. All in all, the plan put forward several positive motions that have contributed to the improvement of the city so far and will certainly help its development in the future.

## 4.2 Space Syntax Analysis

Space Syntax analysis has been employed to evaluate and compare the results with findings from other methodologies. The author has produced an axial map model that illustrates the global integration values of the city's streets on a map for the city of Glasgow which, coupled with the findings from the rest of the research methodologies, will present a strong empirical proof and assist in answering the research questions.

#	Street	Global Integration		Local Integration		Connectivity	
		Value	Order	Value	Order	Value	Order
60	Scott Street	1.39	33	2.95	3	20	1
61	Dalhousie Street	1.36	37	3.14	8	18	2
62	Rose Street	1.41	25	3.41	1	20	1
63	West Campbell Street	1.39	30	3.24	4	18	2
64	Wellington Street	1.39	32	3.17	6	17	3
65	Hope Street	1.49	17	2.66	10	15	5
67	Renfield Street	1.47	9	2.61	17	13	6
68	West Nile Street	1.47	10	2.74	21	11	8
<b>1</b>	<b>Buchanan Street</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

37	Queen Street	1.71	1	2.6	27	4	14
89	North Hanover Street	1.55	16	2.44	39	6	13
91	S Frederick Street	1.75	2	2.59	29	6	13
73	Buccleuch St	1.13	96	1.53	40	5	14
70	Hill Street	1.16	97	2.41	41	5	14
49	Renfrew Street	1.16	95	2.54	36	6	13
<b>48</b>	<b>Sauchiehall Street</b>	<b>1.37</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>
44	Bath Street	1.37	13	3.08	7	12	7
40	West Regent St	1.3	38	2.85	13	9	10
38	W George Street	1.31	35	3.03	9	12	10
10	St Vincent Street	1.65	5	3.37	2	16	4
8	Bothwell Street	1.26	62	2.62	19	8	11
7	Waterloo Street	1.26	60	2.53	15	9	10
<b>85</b>	<b>Argyle Street</b>	<b>1.68</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.83</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>
163	Howard Street	1.43	28	2.36	52	5	14

Table 4. 1 Axial Analysis Results Sample (Author)



Figure 4. 5 Global Integration of Glasgow (Author)

The global integration value based on the axial model of Glasgow is shown in Figure 4. 5. It is clear that the centre is highly integrated and the integration value decreases as we

move from the centre to the peripheries. The graph illustrates that the studied streets fall within the highest integrated area. Buchanan Street, as outlined in Table 4. 1, is the third most integrated street in the city out of 321 elements. Argyle Street has a high global integration value and is ranked seventh in the city. Sauchiehall Street has the least integrated value of the three chosen cases. Yet it is still well integrated and ranked twelfth out of the 321 elements in the city. All in all, it is clear that the primary retail area of the city of Glasgow is highly integrated, and due to this integration and other factors there is high movement and business demand.



Figure 4. 6 Local Integration (R3) of Glasgow (Author)

The above map [Figure 4. 6] is the same analysis but carried out with a restriction on the radius of the measure. It illustrates a much more localised picture of the movement structure within the area. The graph highlights both Buchanan Street and Sauchiehall Street as having high local integration values and as being strong movement corridors within their local setting. As shown in Table 6. 1, Sauchiehall Street has the highest local integration value (3.15) and is ranked fifth out of the 321 elements in the city.



Argyle Street has a local integration value of 2.83 and is ranked sixteenth. Buchanan Street has a 2.80 integration value and is ranked eighteenth.

The onnectivity value illustrates the number of lines that are directly connected to a specific line. In our case it gives an indication of how well a specific street is integrated within the urban fabric and as a result gives an indication of its ability to generate movement. As can be seen in Table 4. 1, our selected cases – Buchanan Street, Sauchiehall Street and Argyle Street – all have high connectivity values which, with other supporting factors, may explain their attractiveness as primary retailing sites.

## **4.3 Observation**

### **4.3.1 Survey of Stationary Activities (Behavioural Mapping)**

This survey was conducted to build upon the theoretical and empirical approaches of this research. It forms part of the behaviour approach that seeks to understand human experience in space as they spontaneously occur in everyday life. It is humanistic in nature and relies on the author's first-hand experience.

In order to evaluate the stationary activities, the researcher used methods developed and employed by Gehl Architects and used in previous studies in different cities. As clarified in the introduction of the case study, this survey is limited to the three main retailing streets in the city of Glasgow: Buchanan Street, Sauchiehall Street and Argyle Street. Stationary activity counts have been conducted four times, twice during the winter and twice during the summer. The winter stationary activity counts were conducted first on 4 March 2009 and second on Saturday (weekend) 7 March 2009. In both cases stationary activities were recorded every second hour between 10am and 8pm. The findings were recorded on maps of the area. Each type of activity (such as sitting, playing, socialising, etc.) has been given a specific sign and was recorded on the map to distinguish it from the others. The other stationary activity counts were conducted during the summer, the first on Thursday 17 June 2009 and the second on Saturday 20 June 2009. At the conclusion of the study the researcher accumulated the whole data into one map in order to highlight the findings [Figure 4. 7].

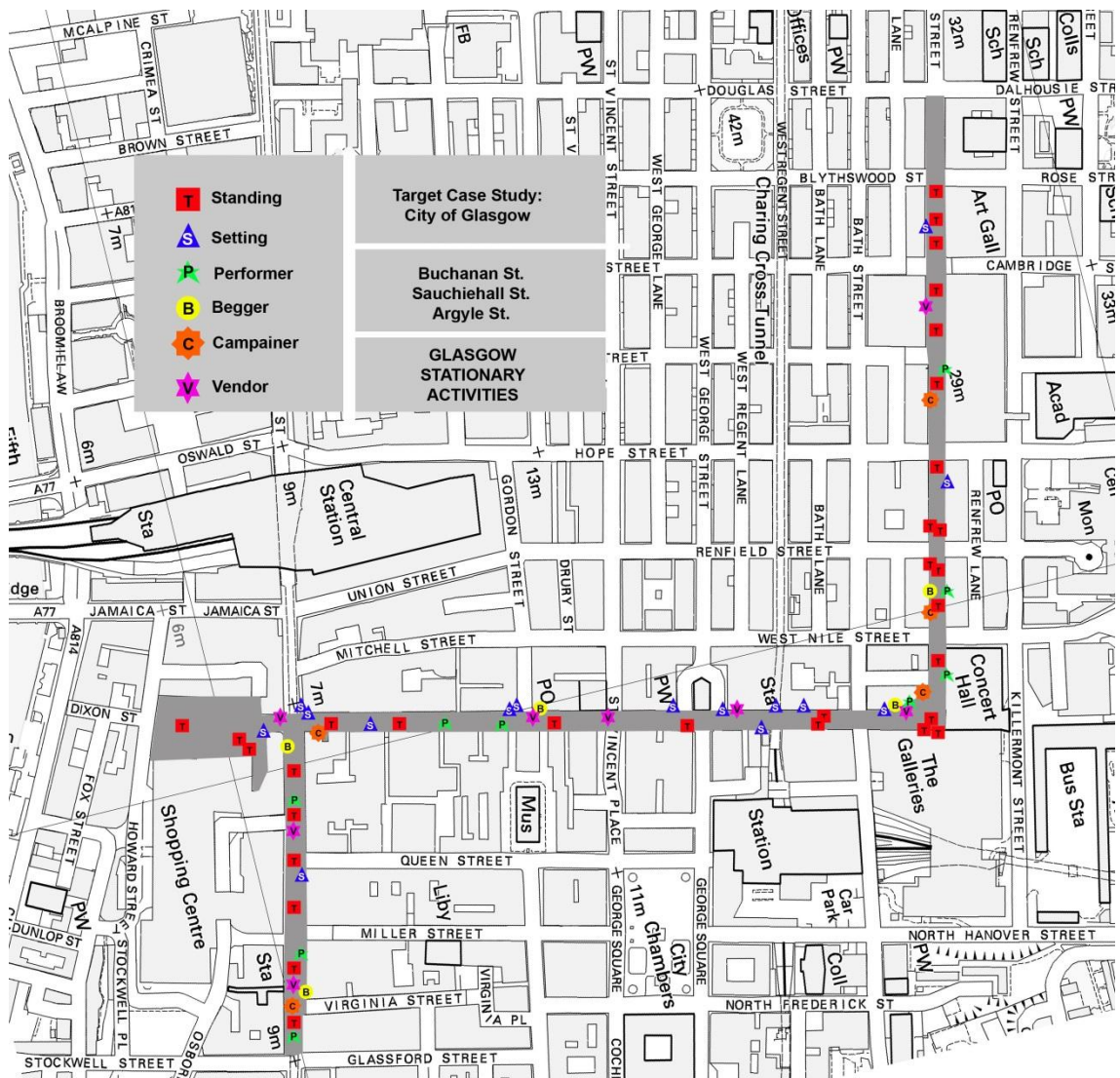


Figure 4. 7 Glasgow Stationary Activity (Author)

## Winter surveys

### Wednesday 4 March 2009

Weather – Temperature Max: 10°C. Low: 4°C. Rain: Yes.

Despite the cold temperature and the rainy weather, the streets were busy and had high pedestrian movement. Because of the rainy weather most people were moving and there were very few stationary activities. People rarely sat on benches as they were wet. Outdoor café seats were never used, but cafés and restaurants attracted many people.

Also, very few commercial and/or cultural activities were taking place, yet there were campaigners collecting signatures on Sauchiehall Street and vendors selling *The Big Issue* magazine on Sauchiehall Street. Several newspaper vendors were stationed along

Sauchiehall Street as well as taking shelter under cantilevers. In contrast, no such activity took place along Buchanan Street.

The cold and rainy weather seemed to attract people to shopping malls and arcades around sites such as the Buchanan Galleries, St Enoch Shopping Centre and Argyle Arcade on Buchanan Street and Sauchiehall Street.

### **Saturday 7 March 2009**

Weather – Temperature Max: 10°C. Low: 4°C. Rain: Yes.

During the weekend the site had a different atmosphere as pedestrian movement was significantly higher. Despite the cold and rainy weather, more stationary activity was present on the site. As is the case every Saturday, many vendors and campaigners set up booths along Buchanan Street between Gordon Street and West George Street. Booths attracted large crowds and contributed to the vitality of the area.

Several performers conducted their shows on the site as well, attracting a reasonable number of spectators despite the harsh weather. Performers, campaigners, the homeless and vendors seemed to select their location very well as they were always stationed in strategic locations where they could be in the way of a high number of passers-by [Figure 4. 8].



Figure 4. 8 Sauchiehall St. Active despite the rain (Author)

## **Summer surveys**

### **Thursday 18 June 2009**

Weather – Temperature Max: 14°C. Low: 9°C. Rain: A little.

During the summer the scene was drastically different. Although the sites attracted almost the same high volume of pedestrian movement as on the winter weekdays, the streets were bustling with activities.

Many people sat on the public benches on Buchanan, Sauchiehall and Argyle Streets. Cafés facing the streets had outdoor tables that were fully occupied. The streets had many vendors, campaigners and performers who contributed to the liveliness of the site.

### **Saturday 20 June 2009**

**Weather – Temperature Max: 10°C. Low: 4°C. Rain: No.**

The site was very vibrant during weekends. The streets were used to their full potential and reflected a highly successful public place. Several stationary activities took place within the sites.

Buchanan Street is the centre and, just like the rest of the year, attracted booths that promoted commercial, political and social service activities. The booths were generally situated between Gordon Street and West George Street. In addition, there were several performers who usually occupied the centre of the street and put on shows that attracted a fair number of viewers. The intersections with Argyle Street and Sauchiehall Street were chosen locations for several campaigners and vendors as they were busy with pedestrian movement.

Cafés and restaurants extended to the outdoors and provided additional seating, which was mostly full. Some cafés provided defined temporary spaces to attract further customers and by doing so enriched the street life. South of the street on St Enoch Square the ongoing construction work on St Enoch Shopping Centre seemed to



influence the space negatively. Yet, Café Nero also provided outdoor seating and attracted a fair number of customers (Figure 4.9. 4.10, 4.11 & 4.12).



Figure 4. 9 Buchanan Street Vendors (Author)



Figure 4. 10 Buchanan Street Campaigners (Author)



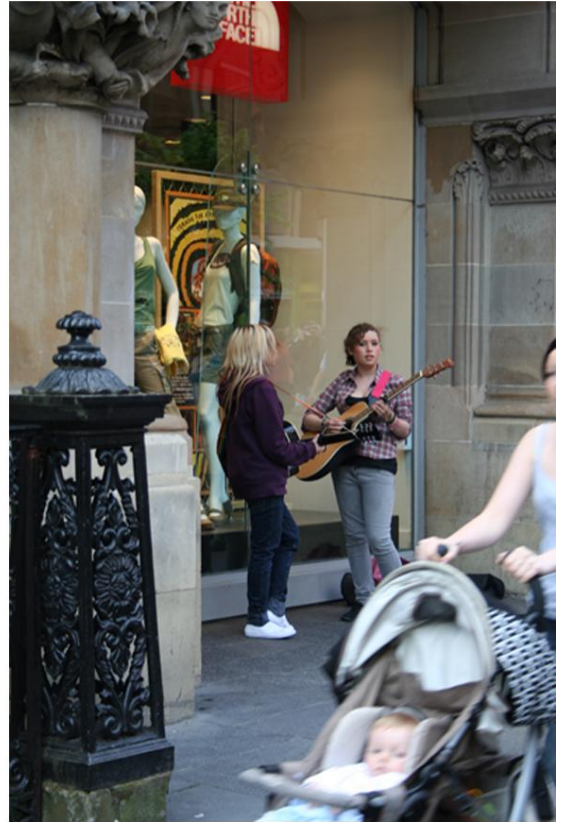


Figure 4. 11 Buchanan Street Performers (Author)



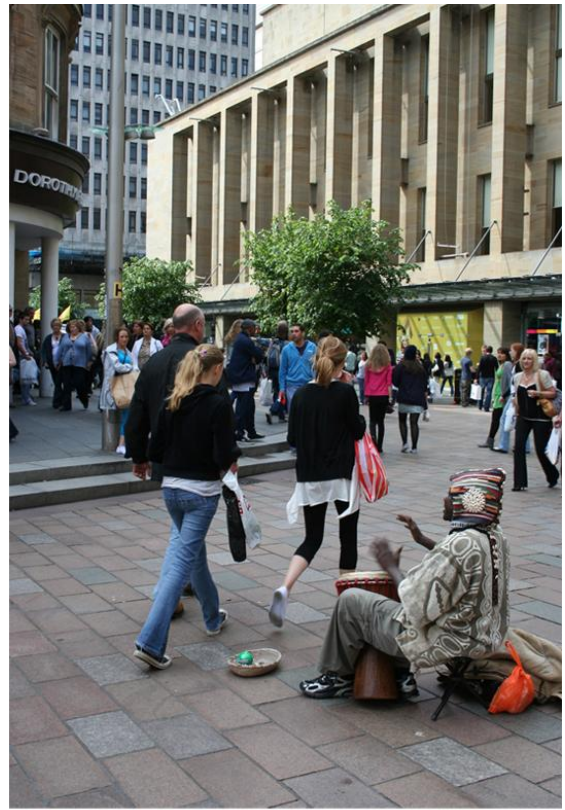


Figure 4. 12 Activities on Intersections – Buchanan St. (Author)

As for Sauchiehall Street, most performers, vendors and campaigners chose to locate near the intersection with Buchanan Street and the entrance to the Buchanan Galleries. Others used the public benches located in the middle of the street. Some vendors chose



to stand by the entrances to major department stores such as Marks & Spencer as major attractors of pedestrian movements. Several cafés which provided outdoor seating were very busy and attracted large numbers of customers (Figures 4.13 and 4.14)



Figure 4. 13 Sauchiehall Street Performers (Author)

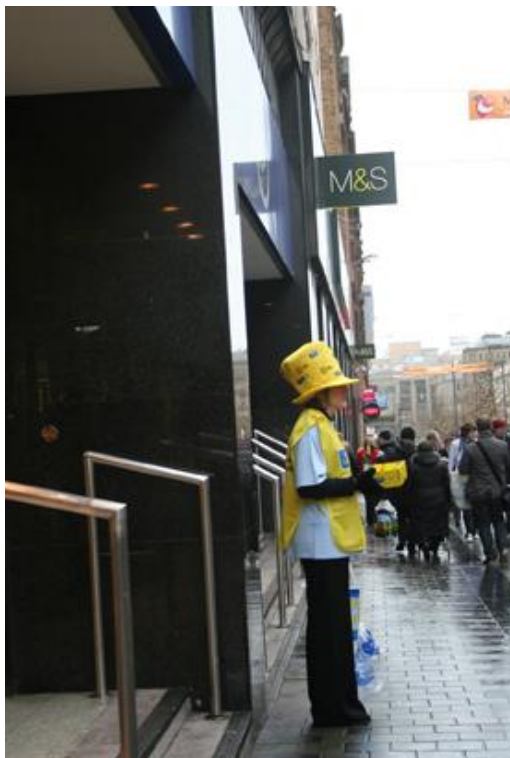


Figure 4. 14 NGOs on Sauchiehall St. (Author)



On Argyle Street most of the stationary activity took place within the pedestrian zone of the street, where the centre of the street provides a well-defined space to perform different activities. Also, the street is equipped with various types of street furniture that invited the public to sit and enjoy the scene Figure 4. 11] [Figure 4. 12].



Figure 4. 15 Argyle St. Performers (Author)



Figure 4. 16 Argyle St. NGOs and Vendors (Author)

As a result of the field visits and surveys, the researchers found the following:

- For the city of Glasgow and its people, the primary retail area of Buchanan Street is an iconic space. It offers an opportunity for a wide range of activities. During most parts of the day, the place is busy and the presence of people attracts more people.
- The pedestrianisation of the street encourages public use and engagement. The evident existence of elderly and children, families and singles is proof of the hospitable environment it offers. One encounters people who are shopping, walking, sitting, standing, playing and enjoying the presence of others throughout the day.

- As mentioned above, the space of Buchanan Street is consciously designed, and therefore provides several elements that encourage public use. The availability of benches, steps and café seats throughout the site encourages the active use of space. People sit alone, socialise and chat, watch the passers-by. Workers use them during breaks to have their lunch.
- The site is widely accessible, it encourages senior citizens, children, disabled and families to visit and enjoy the public amenities the places offer to the people of Glasgow (Figure 4. 17 and Figure 4. 18).



Figure 4. 17 The Site Accessibility (Author)



Figure 4. 18 Mixed-age use (Author)

- The visual richness that the buildings provide adds to the overall quality of the space and contributes to attracting users to the area. The street facades are covered with a wide range of materials. The buildings are designed in different styles and are different colours. In addition, along both sides of the street visitors enjoy an interesting variety of sizes of buildings. Many facades offer well-designed reliefs and setbacks which provide a place to lean on to stand and watch and/or chat with others. The projecting cantilever and shading devices that

many buildings have along the street provide a nice protected space during the rainy weather.

- As seen in Figure 4. 19, Buchanan Street provides various forms of seating, benches, chairs and other urban elements. In addition, the public uses different structural elements as additional seating [Figure 4. 20]. Steps within the site in addition to major public buildings provide an attractive seating area especially as they provide a unique viewing point towards the site and the passers-by [Figure 4. 21].Retailing itself within Buchanan Street is diverse; as one moves through the site from south to north then from east to west, one encounters a wide variety of retail activities. For example, the city centre shopping malls (Buchanan Galleries and St Enoch Mall) provide a nice contrast to the high street setting of the street and provide a useful alternative to shoppers especially during times of harsh weather.
- As shall be explained in more detail later in this report, the good mix of activities one finds on the street and the existence of changing arbitrary activities add to the attractiveness of the site. Along the pedestrian zone of Buchanan Street and Sauchiehall Street one can find rich and diverse activities. Although retailing is the major component, there is the Glasgow Royal Opera, a Museum café, and restaurants, offices and residential units. The site also benefits from the diverse nature of retailing, as well the presence of several informal independent activities from booths, vendors and performers.



Figure 4. 19 Benches and Seating (Author)





Figure 4. 20 Seating Within Buchanan Street (Author)



Figure 4. 21 Steps as Seating (Author)

The street is highly connected and very well integrated within the urban fabric. The site is easily accessible and served by several transportation hubs such as two rail stations, one underground station and a central bus station.

### 4.3.2 Active Frontage Analysis

The objective of this analysis is to plot geographically the distribution of attraction localities across the road segments under investigation. After identifying the attraction location by field survey and GOAD maps, the author has plotted active locations as vector points. Then, the road segments were drawn as two parallel lines representing the two centre lines of the road sides. The projected points were used as input for the “Kernel Density” analysis using the Geographical Information System available on ArcGIS software. Using the proposed active frontage hierarchy of Jan Gehl that range from Active to No Attraction, we were able to achieve a smooth tapered surface as can be illustrated in Figure 4. 22. Figure 4. 22 illustrates that the most active and pleasant segments are located in the centre of Buchanan Street, the intersection of Buchanan Street and Sauchiehall Street, and the centre of Sauchiehall Street.

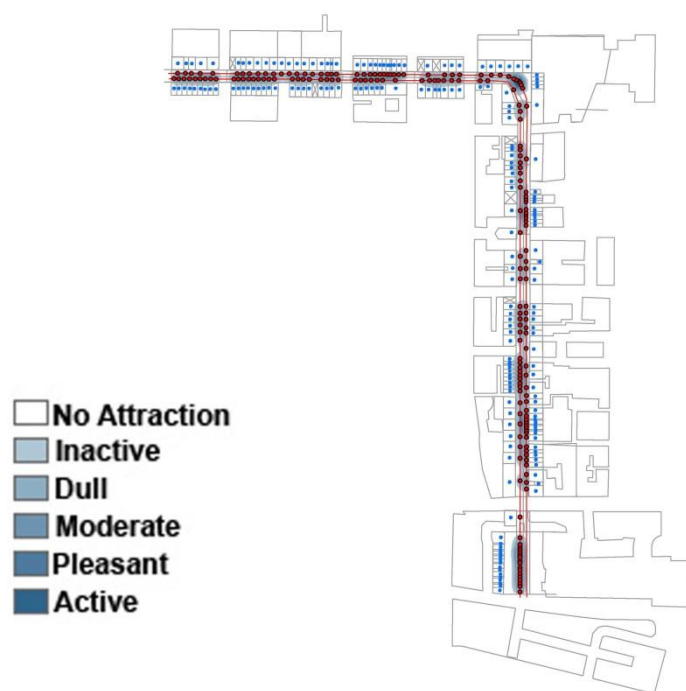


Figure 4. 22 Density Distribution of the Level of Active Frontage along Buchanan and Sauchiehall Street (Author)

### 4.3.3 Visual Environment Evaluation

The site of Buchanan Street is located at the heart of the commercial centre of the city of Glasgow. It is linked to a wide area and strongly connected to services and amenities. An observer can see clearly that the area is successful and attracts public from the city and abroad.

Buchanan Street is mainly a retail area. However, it includes other land uses such as offices and residential spaces. The site is surrounded by different uses such as the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, the Gallery of Modern Art and The Lighthouse building that houses the Centre for Architecture and Design. The availability of two interior shopping malls and several arcades enriches the shopping experience and provides an alternative shopping environment in case of unpleasant weather conditions. The pedestrian area of Buchanan Street and Sauchiehall Street is approximately 1km long. The physical characteristics range from rich to dull. There are numerous Victorian and Edwardian designed buildings that enrich both sides of the street. The area benefits from its historical development and importance as a major site of commerce and exchange. It also benefits from its cultural heritage and cultural status as a public space and site of public engagement and exchange.

The buildings surrounding the pedestrian area are of different styles, size and shapes. This mix enriches the visual quality of the area. One can see traditional Victorian, Queen Ann, Gothic and other architectural styled buildings as well as modern less attractive ones, in addition to contemporary projects. Most are relatively small in size, none is over dominant and all contribute to the overall image of the street.

Buchanan Street was first pedestrianised in 1978. However, the condition of the street today is a result of an international design competition held by Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Development Agency in 1997. The design presented a holistic design and established design guidelines for all street elements such as surfaces, street furniture, signage, soft landscaping, lighting, water and public art. A visitor to the site today can experience clear visual order aided by a range of street furniture, signage and public information. The street is well lit at night, although the lack of activities during the evening contributes to a decrease in traffic. The use of barriers and a variety of surface treatments help to add safety and order.

### **Buchanan Street Visual Quality**

Buchanan Street is defined by high-quality architecture. The street is well defined by buildings that range from three to six storeys high. Although the styles of the buildings may vary, the overall effect is quite homogeneous and well preserved (see Figure 4. 23 and Figure 4. 24). Most buildings face the street directly and open up toward the public

side. In some cases, the entrance to semi-private areas such as offices or residential properties is through a niche or a setback. Such solutions assist in the distinction between public and private functions and have limited effect on the integrity of the street.

Despite the overall high-quality architecture of Buchanan Street, it has a few distinctive buildings that stand out from the homogeneous style of the street. Such buildings, which may be distinctive in style, colour, size or height, may in some cases contribute negatively to the overall quality of the street. Some examples can be seen in Figure 4. 24 and in areas in the north of the street such as the Buchanan Gallery and the blocks that face it, and also in the buildings surrounding St Enoch Square and the new development of St Enoch Shopping Centre (Figure 4. 25).



Figure 4. 23 Buchanan Street Built Environment (Author)





Figure 4. 24 High-quality Victorian Architecture on Buchanan Street (Author)



Figure 4. 25 Sample of Distinctive Architecture Along Buchanan Street (Author)

### Sauchiehall Street Visual Quality

Similar to Buchanan Street, Sauchiehall Street’s urban form is strong. It is pedestrianised and has buildings that define the street on both sides. The buildings mostly range from four to five storeys high. In terms of architecture it is not as distinctive as Buchanan Street. Nevertheless, the street has some well-designed

buildings. The street is equipped with different street furniture such as benches, chairs, telephone booths, signage, flooring and vegetation.

Sauchiehall Street has several buildings that are dull and distinct from the overall character of the site. In some cases they vary by design and style and in other cases by size and height. All these variations have a negative impact on the overall quality of the street.



Figure 4. 26 Overall Character of Sauchiehall Street (Author)



Figure 4. 27 Examples of High-quality Architecture on Sauchiehall Street (Author)





Figure 4. 28 Distinctive Architecture on Sauchiehall Street (Author)

### Argyle Street Visual Quality

Argyle Street is in a good location and links various important elements in the city. Although it ranks as the third major retail street in the city, it is not as successful as Buchanan and Sauchiehall Streets. The fact that the pedestrian zone is short and the street is disconnected from Buchanan Street by vehicle traffic segments and is only pedestrianised in the blocks between Queen Street and Glassford Street, contributes to this impression.

Yet overall, the street is well defined by continuous facades on both sides. The pedestrian zone is very well designed and has good services. The space provides a range of street furniture such as benches, vegetation, flooring, barriers, signage and other urban elements (Figure 4. 29 and Figure 4. 30). The street has some high-quality architecture, both historical and modern. Yet at the same time, it has a few examples of dull and distinctive architecture that do not fit well with the overall character of the area (Figure 4. 31).



Figure 4. 29 Argyle Street Urban Character (Author)



Figure 4. 30 High-quality Architecture on Argyle Street (Author)





Figure 4. 31 Dull and Distinctive Architecture on Argyle Street (Author)

There are a few buildings that do not rise to the overall condition of the site, some of which can be found around St Enoch Street. There are also dull buildings along Sauchiehall Street which are designed in the modern style.

There are exceptions to this in areas such as the intersection of Buchanan and Sauchiehall Streets, where the grand steps of the Opera House create a large setback that suddenly feels empty in comparison to the rest of the street. Moreover, the area between Argyle Street and Howard Street with its enclosed form and the entrance to the St Enoch Shopping Mall creates another fragmented space that fails to blend with the rest of the site.

#### **4.4 Economic Vitality**

In trying to evaluate the economic vitality of the case study area, the research undertook three different measures. The first was zone A rental value at different parts of the study area. The information was obtained from CB Richards Ellis Limited. Second, occupancy rate was evaluated to assess the economic vitality of different parts of the study area. Third, an attempt was made to measure diversity of retailing in the study area.

##### **4.4.1 Rental value**

Glasgow's city centre is considered to be one of the UK's major retailing centres. It is ranked second after London's West End and before Manchester, Birmingham and Nottingham (Experian, 2009). Retailing is the second employment sector in Glasgow with 14.8% (Focusnet, 2009). January 2009 put the zone A retail prime rent at 250 psf with the rate in growth stable since 1987 (Figure 4. 32).

Glasgow is a strong retailing hub, where 85% of the top retailers are present in the town centre (Focusnet, 2009). The top three ranked streets are Buchanan Street, Sauchiehall Street and Argyle Street. The street ranking is defined as follows: "Street Rankings TM identifies multiples (stores with 5 or more locations) located on the main shopping streets of 760 major retail towns in Great Britain. Multiples are then allocated an attraction value based on sales density and average selling area. Using these attraction



values, Street Rankings TM ranks each street, within a town centre, by the combined attractiveness of its stores” (Focusnet, 2009).

From the collected data it appears that Zone A rental value varies across the study area. It appears to be highest at the centre of Buchanan Street; Sauchiehall Street comes second and Argyle Street third. On Buchanan Street the available data from 2007 and 2008 shows that the Zone A rental value ranges from £246/sq m to £268/ sq m. Over the same period on Sauchiehall Street Zone A rent ranges from £70/sq m to £163/sq m.

There are many factors that contribute to Buchanan Street having the highest Zone A rental value. First, is its central location between Sauchiehall Street and Argyle Street. Also, its location between two major rail stations (Glasgow Central and Queen Street Station) contributes to it being a major corridor. The existence of two indoor shopping centres to the north and south also plays a major role. The first of these is the Buchanan Galleries which was opened in 1999 and is 55,740 square metres. It includes a number of major anchor stores such as John Lewis, Next, Boots, H&M, Sainsbury’s and Jenkins & Marr. The St Enoch Centre was opened in 1989 and is 65,520 square metres. It has a number of major anchor stores such as Bhs, Boots, Burtons, Debenhams, Disney Store, Dorothy Perkins, Etam, Gap, HMV, TK Maxx, Top Shop, Virgin and others (Focusnet, 2009). Both centres act as major anchors and attractors and generators of major pedestrian movements along Buchanan Street.

The homogeneous pedestrian settings of Buchanan Street and Sauchiehall Street play a major role in attracting large crowds, as in addition to being a pleasant place to be, it forms a safe and comfortable location for families and people with disabilities. The typology of Argyle Street changes as half the street allows for vehicle movement, while the other half is entirely closed and is reserved for pedestrian movement. This change in nature contributes to the loss of character of the street.

Both the number of retailers and the active frontage along the three streets contribute to the level of attractiveness and the amount of movement each street generates. It is clear from the plan (Figure 4. 22) and Table 6. 4 Retailing Diversity (Classification) (Author) that Sauchiehall Street holds the highest number of retailers, followed by Buchanan Street then Argyle Street.

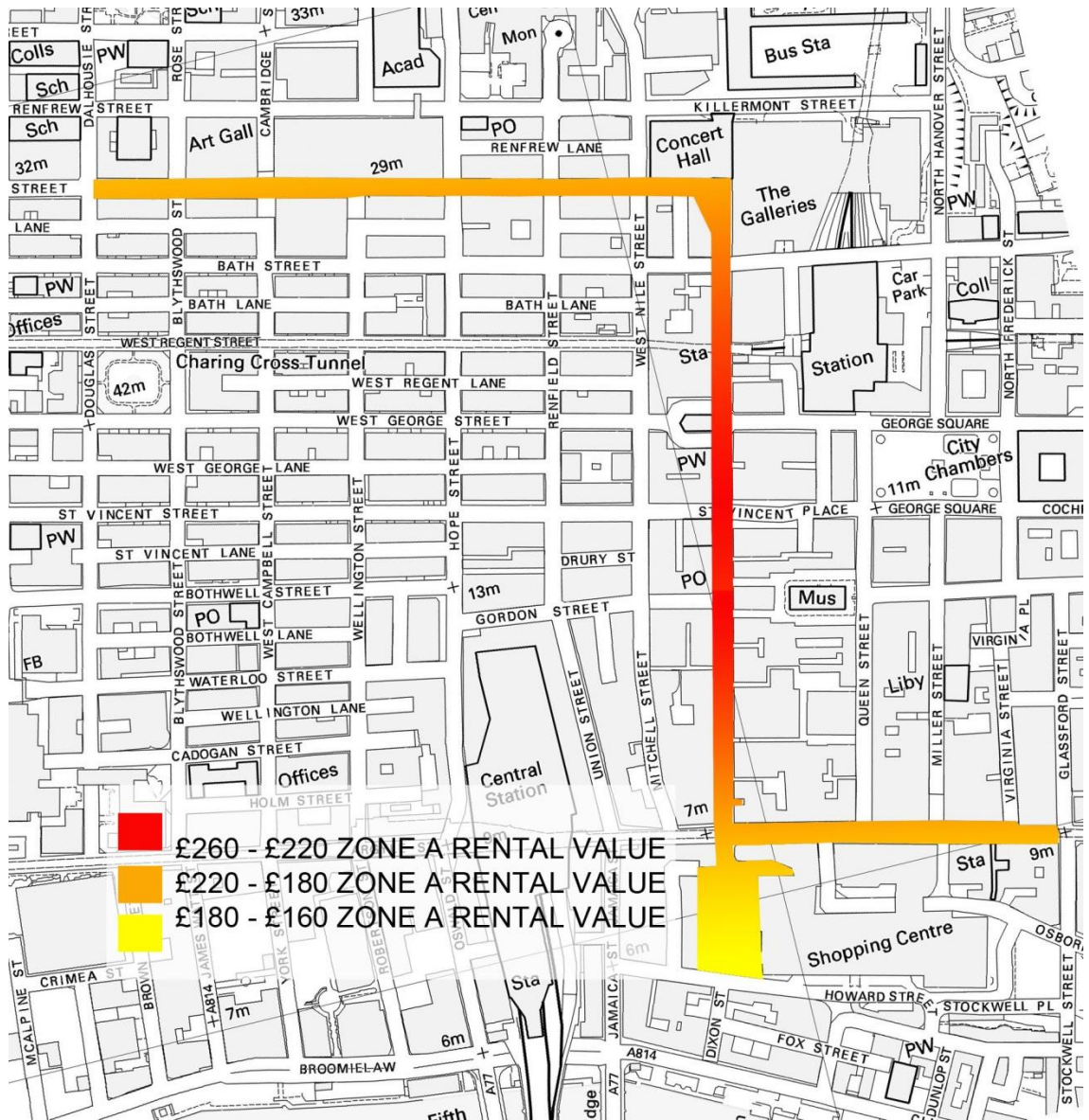


Figure 4. 32 Zone A Rent (Author)

#### 4.4.2 Occupancy Rate

There is concern for Glasgow's retail streets as more stores are boarded up as the credit crunch has hit Glasgow's most famous shopping streets. A new survey found 14% of the shops on upmarket Buchanan Street – 11 out of the 79 available – are lying empty. On Argyle Street the figures are even worse, 12 of the 67 stores are empty – a vacancy rate of 18%. Sauchiehall Street has 11 empty shops out of

101, which is 11%. Steve Inch, the city council’s executive director of development and regeneration, said: “Unfortunately, Sauchiehall Street has a number of high-profile vacancies, planned closures and relocations.” Among the city centre companies to shut are Woolworths, Au Naturale, the Early Learning Centre, Miss Sixty in Buchanan Galleries and Foot Locker. (Nicoll, 2009)

Buchanan Street			Sauchiehall Street			Argyle Street		
Total	Occupancy	%	Total	Occupancy	%	Total	Occupancy	%
60	55	91%	72	64	88%	38	36	95%

Table 4. 2 Occupancy Rate (Study Area Only) (Author)

Occupancy rate may give an indication of the level of vitality on certain streets. However, field survey results may not give an accurate measure of the level of occupancy as there are several stores that are let, but are temporarily closed and others may also be under construction and/or remodelling. The fact is that this principal retail area is very active and many stores do not remain vacant for long as new tenants/retailers tend to move in quickly.

#### 4.4.3 Diversity of Retailing

In trying to come up with a way of measuring retailing diversity, two methods were followed. First, retailers on Buchanan, Sauchiehall and Argyle Streets were classified to determine which street has the most diverse types of retailer. From the findings in Table 4. 3, one can see that Sauchiehall Street has the highest diversity as its retailers are more distributed among the retail classifications, while 50% of the retailers on both Buchanan Street and Argyle Street are clothing and footwear stores. Also, Sauchiehall Street has the highest percentage of cafés and restaurants among the three streets. On Buchanan Street and Argyle Street most of the cafés and restaurants are located within shopping malls and arcades.

	Buchanan St		Sauchiehall St		Argyle St	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Books, Stationery & Newspaper Stores	2	3.3	8	11.1	1	2.6
Clothing & Footwear Stores	32	53.3	22	30.6	19	50.0
Department Stores	1	1.7	3	4.2	1	2.6
DIY Stores	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Food Stores	4	6.67	4	5.6	0	0.0
Furniture Stores	2	3.3	0	0.0	1	2.6
Health & Beauty Stores	3	5.0	7	9.7	1	2.6
Music Stores	1	1.7	1	1.4	2	5.3
Cafés & Restaurants	4	6.7	8	11.1	0	0.0
Electronics & Phone Stores	7	11.7	9	12.5	8	21.1
Banks	2	3.3	3	4.2	1	2.6
Toys & Games	1	1.7	2	2.8	1	2.6
Pound Shop	0	0.0	3	4.2	1	2.6
Others	1	1.7	2	2.8	2	5.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4. 3 Retailing Diversity Classification (Author)

Another method of evaluating the level of retailing diversity in the study area is to compare the number of independent and locally owned retailers with multiple retailers (Table 4. 4 and Figure 4. 33 Multiples Vs. independent Retailing on Buchanan, Sauchiehall and Argyle Streets (Author)). The presence of independent retailers is an indicator of a strong local business environment and can offer a certain location a distinctive feature that differentiates it from competing centres.

	Buchanan Street		Sauchiehall Street		Argyle Street	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Multiple</b>	62	<b>73.8%</b>	64	<b>79%</b>	34	<b>85%</b>
<b>Independent</b>	22	<b>26.2%</b>	17	<b>21%</b>	6	<b>15%</b>

Table 4. 4 Multiple Vs. Independent Retailing (Author)

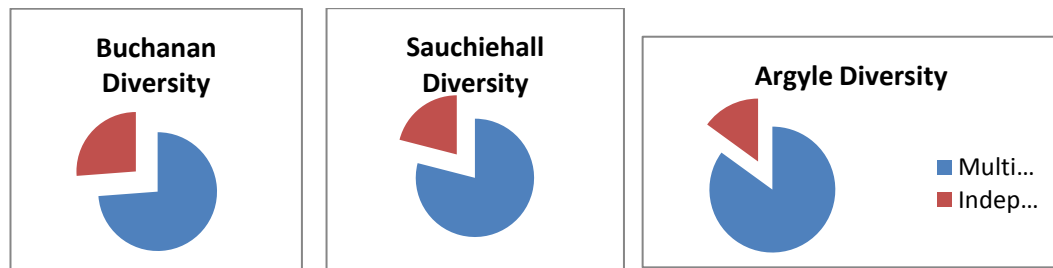


Figure 4.33 Multiples Vs. independent Retailing on Buchanan, Sauchiehall and Argyle Streets (Author)

## 4.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to conduct a holistic and in-depth investigation of the role of integration and diversity of retailing in the vitality of city centres. This pilot case was crucial in the testing of the theoretical concepts and the evaluation of the empirical methodologies that have been developed earlier by the researcher. The aim of this and the other case studies is to collect data with which to develop grounded theory. The author sought to describe, explain and evaluate the role of integrated and diverse retailing in the creation of urban and social vitality. It is anticipated that the emergent concepts of this case study will contribute to the overall research and help to distil information on the characteristics of vital retailing environments.

On reviewing the planning data for the city of Glasgow, it is clear that the city council is aware of the importance of the retailing industry in the city. Through years of development the city government came to understand the important role of preserving centrality and focusing development in the city centre rather than in the fringes. The plan clearly calls for more concentration of retailing activity and encourages mixed-use development in order to create a 24-hour city. Many policies and strong development controls observe the enhancement of the visual quality of the built environment both through grand schemes as well as through attention to small details.

From observation it was evident that the study area was lively and the public enjoyed being there, regardless of the weather conditions. The site is a hub of retailing and different forms of formal economic activity. At the same time, it encouraged the existence of several informal activities such as vendors, campaigners and street

performers. The design of the site encouraged different types of people to enjoy the place regardless of age, race, economic and/or physical abilities.

Within the study area, one can observe different levels of visual qualities. However, it seems that the city is constantly learning and the area is in continuous development. The site is very well designed and is rich with public amenities. The streets are well defined and the buildings contribute to the rich visual environment, despite their variation.

Space Syntax analysis also contributed to a better understanding of the overall quality of the city and the study area as it highlighted how integration in the physical environment has a big influence on how people use the place. It also showed how pedestrian movement and the presence of economic activities are strongly connected and have an interchanging relation.

Rental values, diversity of retailing and uses, and rate of occupancy provided indicators of retailing attractiveness and helped to test how the study area is measured economically. Through the overlapping of results from different indicators, one can find strong correlations between rental values and other indicators such as integration value, stationary activities, visual quality assessment and others.

It is hoped that the research will benefit from the results of this case study and the results to be obtained from other case studies, in order to assess the development of a healthy planning model that provides an economically vital retailing environment which contributes to the integration of the urban environment and encourages social diversity.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SECOND CASE STUDY: CITY OF YORK**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This section discusses the second case study that looks at the central area of the city of York. Following the pilot case study: City of Glasgow, the author has selected to investigate the city of York and its retailing environment. After a preliminary visit to the site and because of the grand scale of city-centre retailing, the researcher chose to focus the study on three main streets within the primary retail area of York: Parliament Street/Davygate, Stonegate and Coney Street. These were chosen because of their central location, level of integration within the urban fabric, the type of retailers operating in them and their initial level of vitality. The aim is to undertake a holistic in-depth investigation of the site and look at the role of integrated and diverse retailing in the vitality of city centres. The aim is to collect data, answer the research questions and build a grounded theory.

This chapter includes the work carried out in the city of York, and will present the results based on five methods of analysis: first, a review of regional and local planning policy and its influence on retailing; second, Space Syntax analysis, which will highlight the role of the urban fabric and layout on the production of high volume of pedestrians and the presence of economic activities; third, a survey of stationary activities and observation of public behaviour within the selected locations, which will inform the research on the relationship between public behaviour in public spaces and economic activities; fourth, reflection on the role of urban setting and visual quality on the production of successful retailing centres; and fifth, an analysis of economic vitality measures such as rental values, occupancy rate and retail type surveys. It is hoped that this chapter, and the results and lessons learned from the selected three cases, can help in achieving the research goals, answer its questions and assist in the development of a strategy of reshaping retailing in Kuwait City.



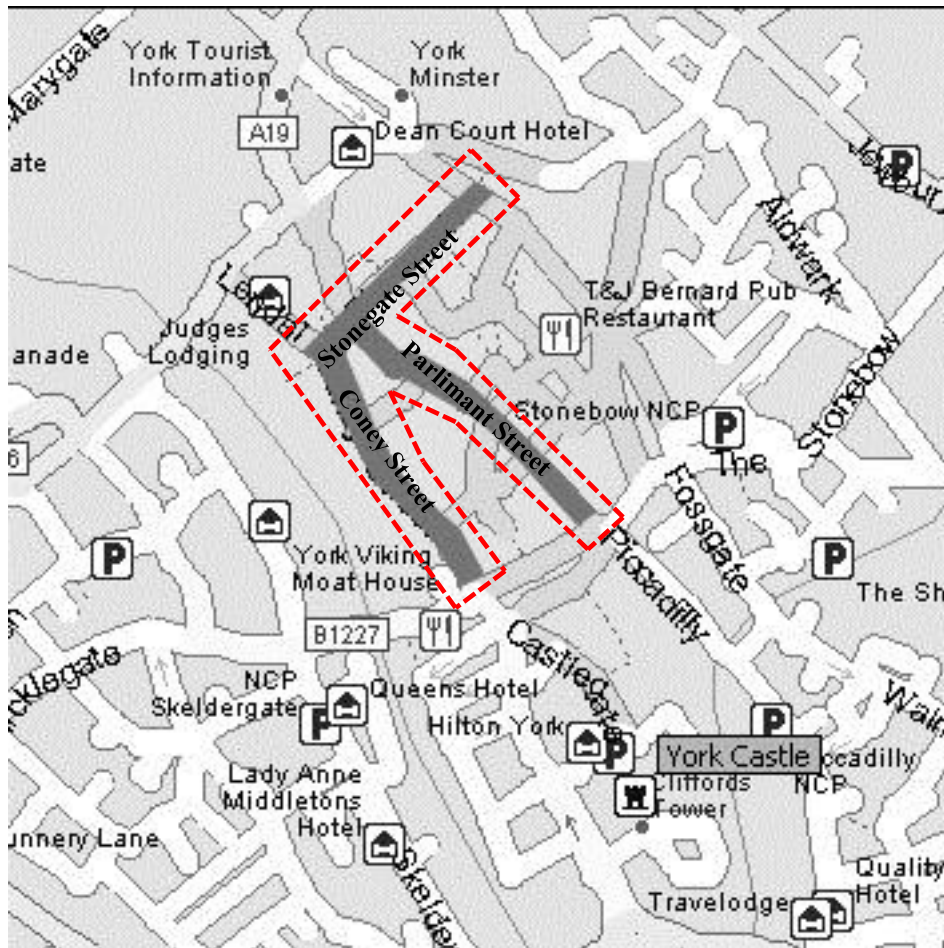


Figure 5. 1 Case Study Limit (©Microsoft Corporation, Author)

## 5.1 General Information

### 5.1.1 Historical Background

The immediate vicinity of the city of York has been a site of human habitation since prehistoric times. Much archaeological evidence points to the existence of settlements that date back to the Bronze Age and beyond. The Romans founded the city around AD 71 when a Roman legion set a camp and built a fortress where the rivers Ouse and Foss met. Even after the Roman Empire faded the city remained a centre of political and economic importance in the north of England. The Vikings invaded in the seventh century and the Kingdom of Jorvic lasted one hundred years. Many existing streets are based on the Viking's city plan (HYP, 2009). During the Middle Ages, York became a major centre of wool trading and a capital of northern England. York's location between London and Edinburgh contributed to it being a major transportation hub. Today the historic core of the city remains one of its most important assets and contributes to its successful tourism industry. Today the service industry accounts for the majority of York's economy.

### **5.1.2 General Data**

York is a historic cathedral city and is a principal commercial and retailing centre for north Yorkshire. The city is one of the principal tourist centres for the region attracting four million visitors annually. It also offers a frequent rail service to London.

According to the 2001 census York's population has reached 137,505 and its urban area houses 59,240 households. The following age pyramid shows that the majority of York's population falls within the youth and professional group, which contributes to the purchasing power of the area

### **5.1.3 Planning Policy**

#### **National and Regional Policies**

The City of York Council, through its city plan and 2008b retail study, affirms its commitment to national planning policies with regard to sustainable development and the protection of town centres. The current retail policies within the City of York are developed with consideration for the Regional Planning Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber to 2016. Among its guidelines it states that "existing centres shall continue to be the focus for shopping, social, cultural, leisure and business services. This is accordant with the principles of sustainable development, and the policies set out in PPS6" (Grimley, 2008: P.4).

The city of York houses several large out-of-town shopping centres and retail outlets such as Clifton Moor Shopping Centre, which houses more than 30 stores and restaurants. It is located just two miles from York's city centre and has more than 3,000 car parking spaces. In addition, Monk Cross Shopping Park is located just outside York's ring road, and has more than 30 department stores, shops and restaurants, and provides 1,000 free parking spaces. York Designer Outlets is a huge shopping centre with more than 120 stores and is only ten minutes' drive from York's city centre. Nevertheless, the plan affirms the necessity to control further out-of-town shopping centres: (Grimley, 2008: P.5).

#### **Local Policy: City of York Development Control Local Plan**

The success of York as a major retail centre and a tourist destination can be attributed to the clear and strong planning policy that understands the importance of city-centre

retailing and, in particular, retailing that contributes to the liveliness of the urban core.

These include the need:

- to maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and range of shopping provision in York city centre, district centres and neighbourhood shopping parades;
- to sustain York city centre's sub-regional shopping centre role;
- to maintain and enhance the range and diversity of retail products of the city centre and local and neighbourhood centres;
- to promote additional food retailing in the city centre and district centres; and
- to preserve small, independent shops within the city. (Local Plan)

It is noticeable that although it is a major retailing hub, the city lacks the presence of major retailers. The plan stresses their importance and calls for city officials to attract major department stores. (Grimley, 2008: P. 25). The split between independent and multiple retailers is an indicator of the retail condition of the city. An analysis of Goad plans shows that York has 51% independent retailers and 49% multiples.

More and more, the plan stresses the importance of focusing development in the city centre and resisting the pressures to establish new out-of-town shopping malls or enlarge the existing out-of-town centres (Grimley, 2008: P.103).

## **5.2 Space Syntax Analysis**

Space Syntax analysis has been employed to evaluate and compare the results with findings from other methodologies. The author has produced an axial map model that illustrates the global integration values of the city's streets on a map for the city of York which, coupled with the findings from the rest of the research methodologies, will present strong empirical proof and assist in answering the research questions.



Figure 5. 2 Axial Map of York: Global Integration (Author)

The global integration value based on the axial model of the central area of York is shown in Figure 5. 2. It is clear that the centre is highly integrated and the integration value decreases as we move from the centre to the peripheries. The graph illustrates that the studied streets fall within the highest integrated area. Parliament Street and Davygate are first and third in order of the most integrated streets in the city out of the 212 elements, as outlined in Table 5. 1 Coney Street has a high global integration value and is ranked eighth in the city. Stonegate has the least integrated value amongst the three chosen cases, yet it is still well integrated and ranked eleventh out of the 212 elements in the city. All in all, it is clear that the central area of the City of York is highly integrated, and because of this integration and other factors there is high movement and business demand.

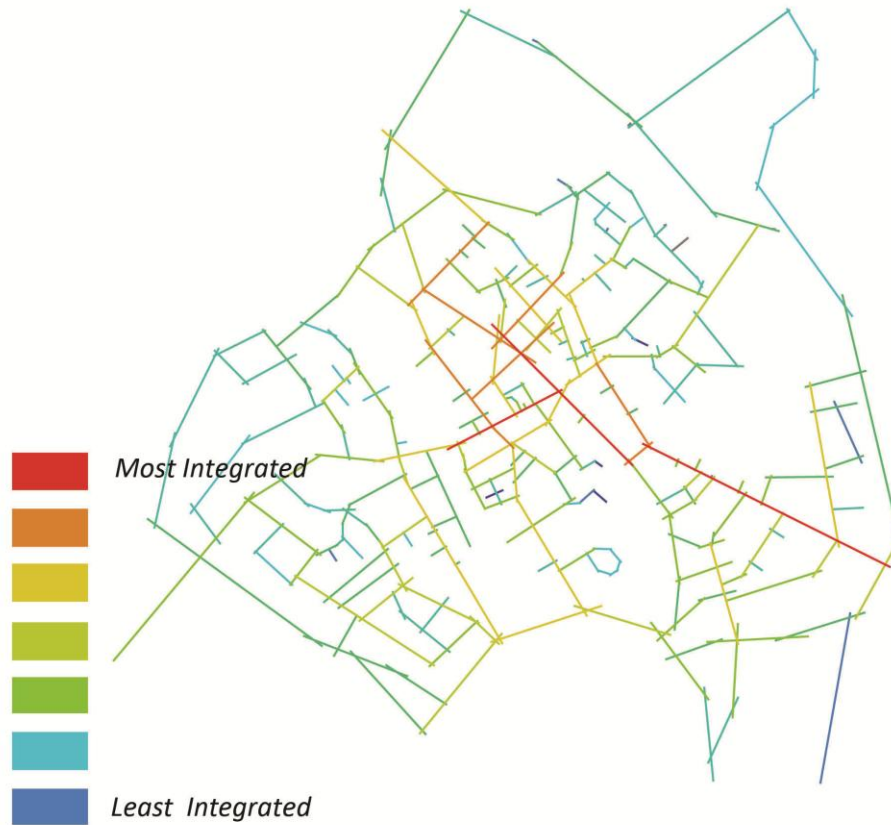


Figure 5. 3 Axial Map of York: Local Integration (R3) (Author)

The above graph (Figure 5. 1) is the same analysis but carried out with a restriction on the radius of the measure. It illustrates a much more localised picture of the movement structure within the area. The graph highlights Parliament/Davygate as having high local integration values and as being strong movement corridors within their local setting. As shown in Table 5. 1, Parliament Street has the second highest local integration value (2.0) and is ranked second out of the 212 elements in the city. Coney Street has a local integration value of 2.445 and is ranked sixth. Stonegate Street has a 2.527 integration value and is ranked fifth.

Connectivity illustrates the number of lines that are directly connected to a specific line. In our case it gives an indication of how well a specific street is integrated within the urban fabric and as a result gives an indication of its ability to generate movement. As can be seen in Table 5. 1, our selected cases Parliament/Davygate, Coney Street and Stonegate all have high connectivity values which, with other supporting factors, may explain their attractiveness as primary retailing sites.

#	Street	Global Integration		Local Integration		Connectivity	
		Value	Order	Value	Order	Value	Order
62	Goodramgate Street	1.125	14	1.413	17	3	7
83	Aldwalk Street	0.757		1.224	19	2	8
51	High Petergate Street	1.021	16	2.191	11	6	5
<b>46</b>	<b>Stonegate</b>	<b>1.196</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2.527</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
50	Duncombe Pl Street	1.020	17	1.836	15	5	4
45	Blake Street	1.146	13	2.063	14	3	7
<b>23</b>	<b>Davygate</b>	<b>1.366</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.553</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>
20	Lendale Street	1.090	15	1.895	12	3	7
<b>3</b>	<b>Coney Street</b>	<b>1.294</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2.445</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>
17	New Street	1.241	10	2.009	11	4	6
12	Market Street	1.337	5	2.571	3	9	2
0	High Ousegate Street	1.503	2	2.679	1	10	1
7	Coppergate Street	1.320	6	2.208	10	7	4
13	Piccadilly Street	1.559	1	2.631	2	9	2
9	Pavement	1.318	7	2.295	8	5	4
<b>13</b>	<b>Parliament Street</b>	<b>1.559</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.631</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>
291	Fossgate Street	1.293	9	2.397	7	6	5
284	North Street	1.152	12	0.861	22	4	6
1	Micklegate Street	1.342	4	2.249	9	6	5
253	George Hudson Street	0.963	20	1.323	18	2	8
223	Skeldergate Street	1.095	18	2.068	11	4	6
221	Buckingham Street	0.935	21	1.883	14	3	7
244	Cromwell Road	0.729	22	1.425	16	2	8
202	Bishopgate Street	1.005	19	2.018	13	5	4

Table 5. 1 Axial Analysis Results Sample (Author)

## 5.3 Observation

### 5.3.1 Survey of Stationary Activities (Behavioural Mapping)

This survey was conducted to build upon the theoretical and empirical approaches of this research. It forms part of the behaviour approach that seeks to understand human experience in space as they spontaneously occur in everyday life. It is humanistic in nature and relies in the author's first-hand experience.

In order to evaluate the stationary activities, the researcher used methods developed and employed by Gehl Architects and used in previous studies in different cities. As

clarified in the introduction of the case study, this survey is limited to the three main retailing streets in the city of York: Parliament/Davygate Street, Coney Street and Stonegate Street. Stationary activity counts have been conducted four times, twice during the summer and twice during the winter. The summer stationary activity counts were conducted first on Thursday 18 June 2009 and second on Saturday (weekend) 20 June 2009. The winter stationary activity counts were conducted first on Thursday 17 December 2009 and the second on Saturday (weekend) 19 December 2009. In both cases stationary activities were recorded every second hour between 10am and 8pm. The findings were recorded on maps of the area. Each type of activity (such as sitting, playing, socialising, etc.) has been given a specific sign and was recorded on the map to distinguish it from the others. At the conclusion of the study the researcher accumulated the whole data onto one map in order to highlight the findings.



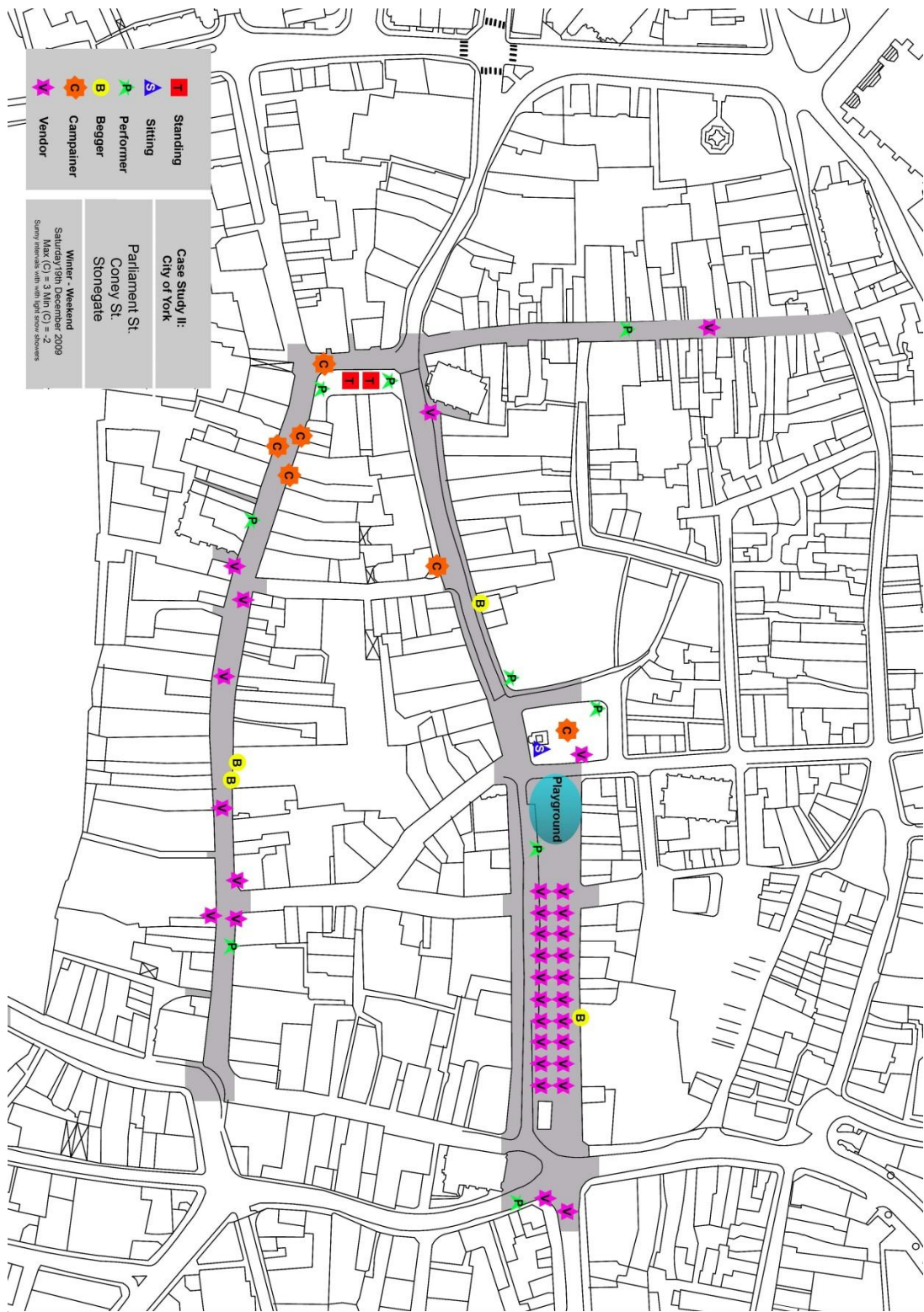


Figure 5. 4 Winter Stationary Activity Survey Map (Author)

From the survey it was evident that the place was very crowded. The area contained a wide diversity of uses. To an extent there was good mix of activities that created a 24-hour culture. The physical structure and managerial setting encouraged inclusiveness and the area invites different kinds of users, regardless of age, physical ability and social

background. The area was well maintained and had restricted vehicular traffic which encouraged more pedestrian movement.

### **Summer surveys**

#### **Thursday 18 June 2009**

Weather – Temperature Max: 14°C. Low: 9°C. Rain: A little.

As mentioned above, the central area of York attracts high volumes of pedestrian movement. The streets are full of different kinds of economic and social activities. Observing the selected three streets in detail and the overall central area one can notice the following. Starting from Parliament Street, which is considered the central street of York, one can see that its wide profile allows extended uses. Throughout the day it is being used as a performance stage, and several temporary markets are set up (see and (Error! Reference source not found.)). Also, the cafés along the street extend into the outdoors and provide additional seating, which is almost full all day. Parliament Street is rich with various urban elements and amenities. The benches along the street encourage visitors to hang around the site. People also use other urban elements to stand, lean and/or sit on to observe the scene. In addition, various campaigners and vendors use the area to attract visitors Figure 5. 5). As one moves further down, St Sampson's Square provides another interesting public space which attracts a high volume of visitors. The square provides an opportunity for additional tables for different cafés and restaurants. In addition, the square was used to accommodate a children's playground and various vendors and performers.

Davygate Street, which is an extension of Parliament Street, is another interesting street along the site. It includes strong retailers, though its narrow profile allows for limited additional activity. Nevertheless, the square/cemetery in the centre of the street provides a unique place where several visitors find a nice niche to relax and spend some time. St. Helen's Square is located in a central location that links five streets. Its interesting setting and intimate size and form attract various visitors and street performers. Also, it is well maintained with various urban elements and street furniture.

Stonegate is also one of the major streets of York. Its exceptionally high-quality physical characteristics and rich mix of retailing activities contribute to its being a major site of retailing in the city. Its relatively narrow width restricts the presence of informal activities, yet one can still find a few performers and beggars along Stonegate.

Stationary activities are no different on Coney Street. The street is rich with retailing activities and is well maintained physically. Its prime location as the closest to the river and the rest of the city contributes to the high volume of pedestrians it attracts. Throughout the day the street attracts various vendors and street performers. Most shops close at eight o'clock, yet the area remains relatively active as a result of the presence of various after-hours' activities such as restaurants, cafés and cultural institutions. However, of course the amount of pedestrian movement drops dramatically.

### **Saturday 20 June 2009**

Weather – Temperature Max: 10°C. Low: 4°C. Rain: No.

During the summer it is difficult to compare the different behaviour of visitors in York's central area and this is due mainly to the city being a major tourist destination. Nevertheless, the same activities were held during weekends although with higher intensity. On Parliament Street performances were better and carried out by better crews and the outdoor markets were more crowded.

### **Winter surveys**

#### **Thursday 17 December 2009**

Weather – Temperature Max: 2°C. Low: -3°C. Rain: No.

Despite the cold weather, the central area of York displayed a large number of activities and pedestrians. Various kinds of economic and social activities were observed within the three selected streets. Parliament Street was the site of a large number of vendors and shoppers. Toward St. Sampson's Square, seating was largely occupied and the playground was active with children and parents. However, Davygate Street, which is an extension of Parliament Street showed fewer activities throughout the day.

St. Helen's Square remained one of the most occupied areas in the central shopping vicinity. Its central location made it a preferred location for campaigners, performers and observers.

It was evident that Stonegate Street is less busy than usual. On the other hand, Coney Street was the busiest; it was full of pedestrians. Campaigners chose to locate on the western part close to St. Helen's Square. Beggars were seen sitting in the centre of the street while vendors seemed to favour intersections with New Street and Market Street.

## **Saturday 19 December 2009**

Weather – Temperature Max: 3°C. Low: -2°C. Rain: light snow showers.

The central area of York is vibrant during the weekend. It attracts large crowds and is vital with different kinds of economic and social activities. Parliament Street is the main site of gathering and it attracts large numbers of shoppers due to the presence of shops and the weekly market that is made up from a large number of vendors. It is a major site for shows that attract large spectators. The playground located on the western side adds to its uniqueness and attracts children and parents. St. Sampson's Square is a large open area that hosts various campaigners' booths, as well as a few vendors and performers.

Davygate Street attracts a large number of pedestrians during the weekends and becomes a main site for stationary activities. Along the street vendors, campaigners, beggars and performers have been observed. St. Helen's Square remains a main site of public gathering. It was observed that people set, stand and observe various activities that take place at the square such as performers and passers-by.

Stonegate Street has its share of the crowds during the weekend. In addition to the large number of shoppers, performers and vendors were observed there. Coney Street exhibited large number of shoppers. It also showed extensive stationary activities that seemed to follow similar patterns. Campaigners chose to locate on the western part close to St. Helen's Square. Beggars were seen sitting in the centre of the street while vendors seemed to favour intersections with New Street and Market Street.

As a result of the field visits and surveys, the researchers found the following:

- The central area of York is well preserved and it still conserves its historic urban environment; this, with the high concentration of mixed activities, makes it a successful and vital centre.
- The pedestrianisation of the street encourages public use and engagement. The evident existence of elderly and children, families and singles is proof of the hospitable environment it offers. One encounters people who are shopping, walking, sitting, standing, playing and enjoying the presence of others throughout the day.

- The central area of York is very rich and in addition to the organic street network and the high-quality architecture, the urban environment is consciously designed, and therefore provides several elements that encourage public use. The availability of benches, steps and café seats throughout the site encourages the active use of space. People sit alone, socialise and chat, and watch the passers-by.
- The area offers various forms of seating, benches, chairs and other urban elements. In addition, the public uses different structural elements as additional seating (Figure 5. 8).
- The site is widely accessible; it encourages senior citizens, children, disabled and families to visit and enjoy the public amenities the places offer to the people of York (Figure 5. 10).
- The visual richness that the buildings provide adds to the overall quality of the space and contributes to attracting users to the area. The street facades are covered with a wide range of materials. The buildings are designed in different styles and are different colours. In addition, along both sides of the street visitors enjoy an interesting variety of sizes. Many facades offer well-designed reliefs and setbacks which provide a place to lean on to stand and watch and/or chat with others. The projecting cantilever and shading devices that many buildings have along the street provide a nice protected space during the rainy weather. It is evident that the rich physical attributes of the city centre contribute to the sense of place and attracts visitors.
- Retailing itself within the central area of York is diverse; as one moves through the site, one encounters a wide variety of retail activities. For example, the large department stores present a pleasant contrast to the high street setting of the streets and provide a useful alternative to shoppers, especially during times of harsh weather.
- As will be explained in more detail later in this report, the good mix of activities one finds on the street and the existence of changing arbitrary activities add to the attractiveness of the site. Along the street one can find rich and diverse activities. Although retailing is the major component, there are the museum café, restaurants, offices and residential units. Also, the site benefits from the diverse



nature of retailing, as well as the presence of several informal independent activities from booths, vendors and performers.

- At times of high volume of crowds there is competition between formal and informal activities. For example, street shows attract high numbers of viewers, filling the street from side to side, and as a result some shop fronts become blocked, so performers frequently have to ask people to come closer and move away from shop fronts.
- The street is highly connected and very well integrated within the urban fabric. The site is strongly accessible and can be reached by buses and the private car.



Figure 5. 5 Performers on Parliament Street (Author)



Figure 5. 6 Temporary Market Stalls on Parliament Street (Author)





Figure 5. 7 Vendors on Parliament Street (Author)



Figure 5. 8 Benches on Parliament Street (Author)





Figure 5. 9 Informal Standing and Seating on Parliament Street (Author)



Figure 5. 10 Accessibility for Various Age Groups and Handicapped in York (Author)





Figure 5. 11 Vendors and Homeless on Stonegate Street (Author)



Figure 5. 12 Performers on Stonegate Street (Author)



Figure 5. 13 Accessibility of Stonegate Street (Author)







Figure 5. 14 Vendors, Campaigners and Homeless on Coney Street (Author)





Figure 5. 15 Vendors, Campaigners and Homeless on Coney Street (Author)



Figure 5. 16 Accessibility on Coney Street (Author)

### 5.3.2 Active Frontage Analysis

The objective of this analysis is to geographically plot the distribution of attraction localities across the road segments under investigation. After identifying the attraction location by field survey and GOAD maps, the author plotted locations of active frontages as vector points. Then, the road segments were drawn as two parallel lines representing the two centre lines of the road sides. The projected points were used as

input for the “Kernel Density” analysis using the Geographical Information System available on ArcGIS software. Using the proposed active frontage hierarchy of Jan Gehl that range from Active to No Attraction, the researcher was able to achieve a smooth tapered surface for the level of active frontage along the selected streets. The following graph (Figure 5. 17) illustrates the active frontage density analysis and shows that the area in general is pleasant and active. Nevertheless Stonegate Street and Coney Street are slightly more active due to the high number of shops that are located on them and the smaller shop fronts.

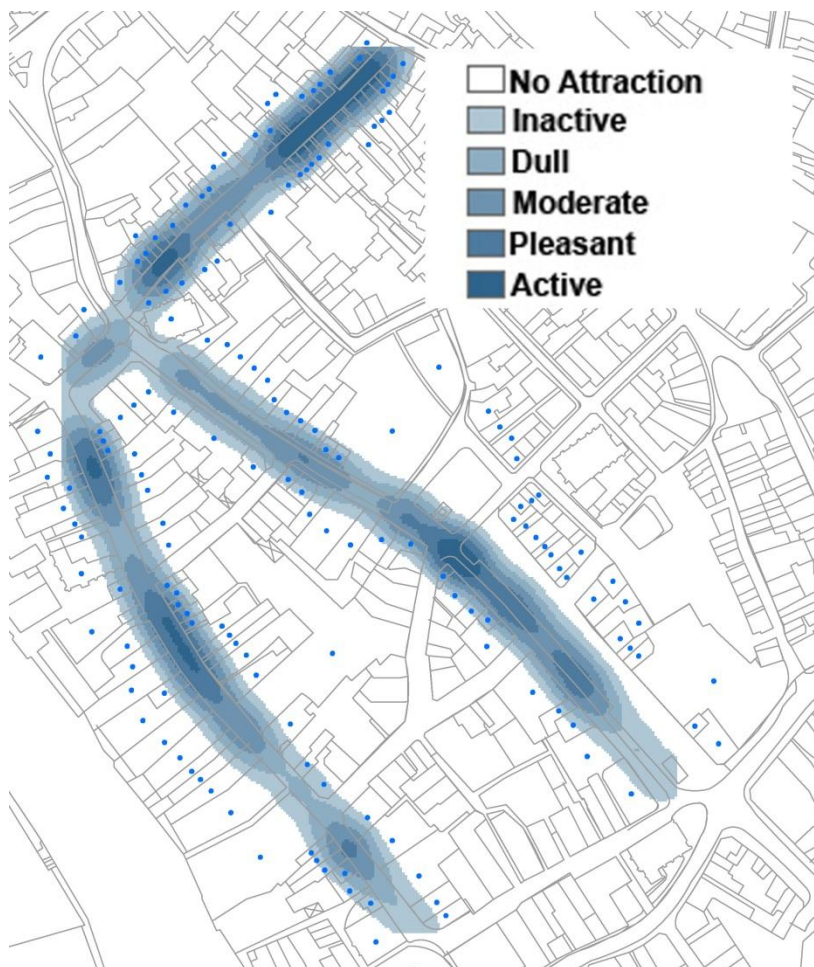


Figure 5. 17 Active Frontage Analysis (Author)

### 5.3.3 Visual Environment Evaluation

The author believes that the quality of the physical environment is crucial in creating a strong sense of place to the area, and it can contribute to attracting more visitors.

Like most medieval towns, York is located in close proximity to the river, enclosed by a wall and several gates that control access to the town. There are churches and squares with marketplaces. The city is unique and has a strong distinctive form. Its urban fabric and architecture complement each other in creating a high-quality visual environment.

### **Parliament Street and Davygate Visual Quality**

The site of Parliament Street is central to the overall centre of York. It is the widest street in the historic city centre and this width makes it the major site of public gathering and activities.

Most buildings face the street directly, and they range in height from two to three storeys. Unlike other streets in the area Parliament Street has several relatively modern buildings which negatively influence the visual quality of the street. While most buildings are small in width and have a uniform facade, these modern buildings have longer facades, disturbing the rhythm and architectural pattern (Figure 5. 17). York's historical architecture is rich with detail and facade treatment, but as well as their size, some modern buildings along the street have a dull character and lack colour and detailing. The streetscape of Parliament Street is well maintained. The place has a lot of street furniture. There is strong facade continuity, and the public open space is well enclosed and clearly defined.



**Figure 5. 18 Parliament Street Architecture (Author)**

The modern retail scheme developed on Davygate Street and designed by Panter Hudspith is a good example of how the planning commission in the City of York is meticulous with regard to the types of development that take place in the central retailing area (see Figure 5. 18). It also shows how good design can contribute to the overall quality of the site without compromising the historic architecture.



The architects used the same stone as that used in the neighbouring church, exposing the steel frame in order to echo the classic exposed timber-frame buildings. As a modern piece of architecture it was successful in respecting its context and producing a contemporary building suitable for retailing, in addition to providing a set of rules for all future occupants to control the design of every individual shop front.



Figure 5. 19 Davygate Retail Development (Author)

### **Stonegate Visual Quality**

Stonegate is one of the oldest streets in York, its name derived from the fact that it was a Roman street paved with stone. Stonegate is one of the most interesting streets in the central area of York. Its physical characteristics are unique and outstanding. Unlike most high streets that one experiences every day, it is very narrow, not exceeding approximately four metres in width, and it goes without saying that it is a pedestrian street. This unique width makes the experience of being there extraordinary (Figure 5. 21) and changes the way shoppers perceive the environment, observe shop fronts and interact with the crowds.

In addition, the street is rich with well-preserved historic buildings in excellent condition. The language and style of the architecture varies and adds interest (Figure 5. 19). Several buildings have unique ornaments and architectural elements that contribute to the overall quality of the street (Figure 5. 21).

Also, one can notice how the planning department is successful in maintaining a strong contextual image by implementing strict rules on all kinds of developments on the street. For example, it is evident that shop signage conforms to special standards in order not to harm the overall historical quality of the street (Figure 5. 22). The street is relatively long in comparison to other streets in the central area of York. As one moves through the street from St. Helen’s Square one sees changing views of York Minister, a Gothic cathedral, which is considered the second largest Gothic church in Europe and marked the development of Gothic architecture in England (Figure 5. 23).



Figure 5. 20 High-quality Historic Architecture on Stonegate (Author)



Figure 5. 21 High-quality Historic Architecture on Stonegate (Author)



Figure 5. 22 Interesting Architectural Elements on Stonegate (Author)





Figure 5. 23 Shop Signage Responsive to Context on Stonegate Street (Author)



Figure 5. 24 Toward York Minister from Stonegate Street (Author)

### **Coney Street Visual Quality**

Coney Street is one of the major retailing streets in York's main retail area. It houses many major retailers and several cultural institutions. The street is located in a primary

location and runs parallel to the river. It runs from High Ousegate Street to St. Helen's Square.

The street has limited vehicular access and during holidays and weekends it is limited to pedestrian access. The buildings on both sides of the street range from four to five storeys in height and define the street very well. In terms of the style and quality of architecture, the buildings along Coney Street vary in style, age and condition (Figure 5.24).

### **Notes on Visual Quality**

All in all, it is quite evident that the central area of York possesses a high-quality urban environment and distinctive historical character that distinguishes it from any other retailing area. As a result of the field survey the researcher found the following:

- The highly integrated layout and dense urban fabric plays a major role in the generation of higher pedestrian movement. The smaller block size invites pedestrians to experience the area and enter various streets and alleyways. The changing character of the streets in terms of width, layout and profile adds to the interest of the overall experience of the area and encourages visitors to spend more time within the town centre.
- The ratio of the height of the buildings to the width of the street is crucial in creating a comfortable and inviting environment for pedestrians. The enclosure ratio, which should range from 1:2 to 1:3, is important in order to create a strong spatial definition, especially in retailing areas where pedestrian movement is desired.
- Particularly within the retailing environment, facade continuity enhances the urban scene and intensifies the activities. Cities should encourage small shop frontage and aim to achieve higher variation, rather than long and dull ground-floor facades.
- Street furniture plays a major role in creating functional and appealing outdoor spaces for public use. Areas that provide well-designed and conveniently located street furniture can attract users and promote outdoor activity.

- Architectural quality can contribute to the creation of a vital urban milieu. Cities should seek to erect buildings with sufficient scale, maintain consistency of architectural character, yet encourage variety which could add interest. They should also focus on high-quality detailing of facades through the use of local materials and colours.



Figure 5. 25 Coney Street Buildings (Author)

## **5.4 Economic Vitality**

In an attempt to evaluate the economic vitality of the case study area, the researcher undertook three different measuring activities. The first was Zone A rental value at different parts of the study area. The information was obtained from various real estate agencies. Second, occupancy rate was evaluated to assess the economic vitality of different parts of the study area. Third, an attempt was made to measure diversity of retailing in the study area.

### **5.4.1 Rental Value**

York city centre is considered to be one of the UK's major retailing centres. It is ranked 27th April 2007 on the Experian Retailing Centre ranking. The Zone A retail prime rent is set around £180 psf (£16 psm) for the prime retailing city centre area around Coney Street and Spurriegate. The author chose to focus his study on the three major streets in York's city centre: Stonegate Street, Parliament Street/Davygate Street and Coney Street/Spurriegate. The author collected data regarding rental value from real estate agents, properties consultants and surveyors either through direct contact or published reports, such as CB Richard Ellis, Savills, Williams Gunter Hardwick Chartered Surveyors, BNP Paribas Real Estate, Fawley Watson Booth Retail and Commercial Property Consultants, Insight Foundation Property Trusts Limited, Churston Heard, and Harmer Ray Hoffbrand Commercial Property Surveyors.

From the collected data it appears that Zone A rental value varies across the study area. It appears to be highest at the centre of Davygate and Coney Street; the central segment of Stonegate and Parliament Street came second, and the remaining fringes came third. On Parliament Street/Davygate Street the available data from 2008 and 2009 shows that the Zone A rental value ranges from £18/sq m to £22/sq m. Over the same period on Coney Street/Spurriegate Street Zone A rent ranges from £18/sq m to £22/sq m.

There are many factors that contribute to Davygate Street and Coney Street having the highest Zone A rental value. First, they occupy the central location between Parliament Street and Spurriegate Street. Also, their location between St. Helen's Square, York Minster and Coopergate Shopping Centre contribute to the high pedestrian levels one finds there.



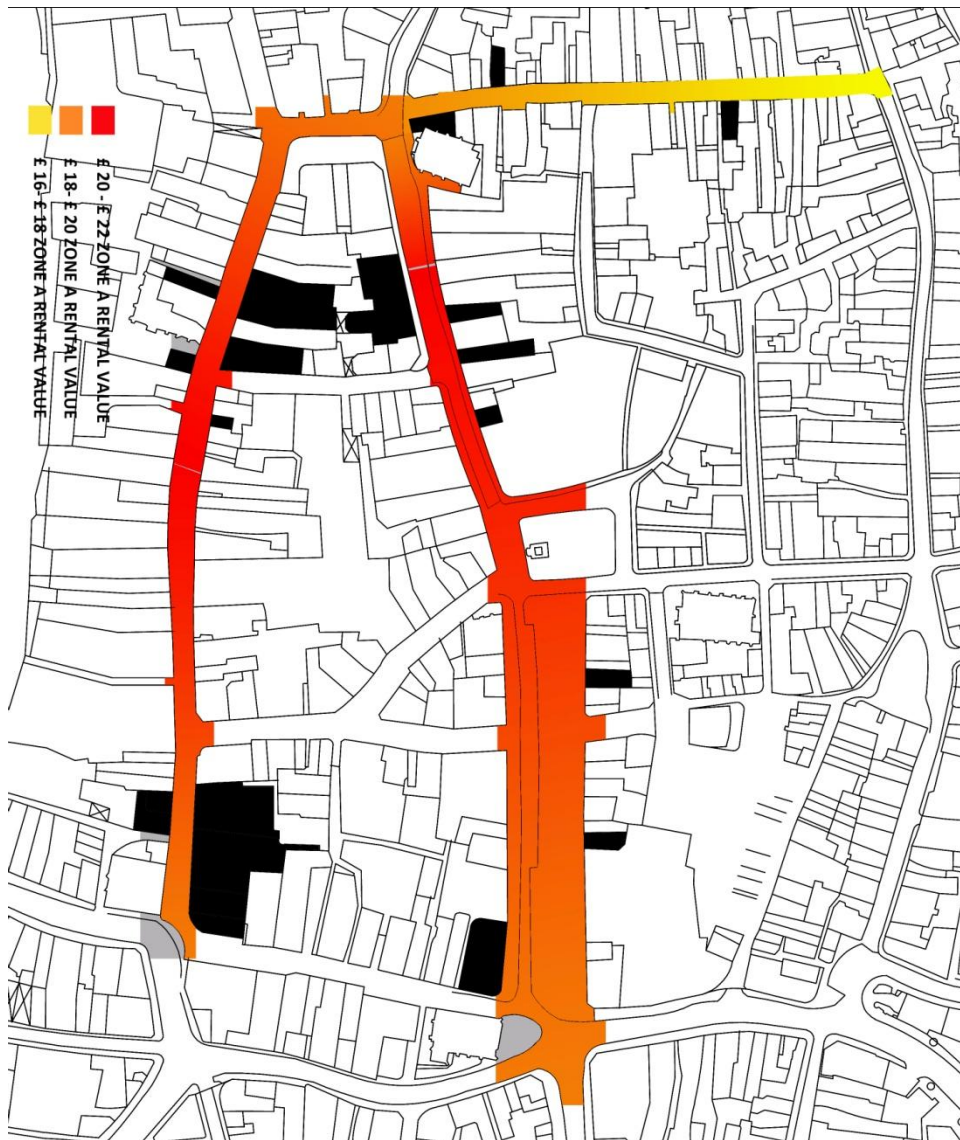


Figure 5. 26 Zone A Rental Value Gradient (Author)

The existence of major anchor stores such as Marks & Spencer, BHS, W.H. Smith and Browns Of York increases the value of certain locations, as they act as major attractors. Also, sites of public markets, vendors and performers attract large crowds and as a result increase store value. The homogeneous pedestrian settings of Parliament Street, Stonegate Street and Coney Street play a major role in attracting large crowds, as in addition to being a pleasant place to be, it forms a safe and comfortable location for families and people with disabilities. Both the number of retailers and the active frontage along the three streets contribute to the level of attractiveness and the amount of movement each street generates. It is clear from the Table 5. 2 that Coney Street/Spurriagate Street hold the highest number of retailers, followed by Parliament Street then Stonegate Street.

### 5.4.2 Occupancy Rate

From the conducted field survey, and the selected streets in particular, one can see that despite the economic crunch, the occupancy rate is quite high. Occupancy rate can give an indication of the level of vitality on certain streets. However, field survey results may not give an accurate measure of the level of occupancy as there are several stores that are let, but are temporarily closed and others may also be under construction and/or remodelling. The fact is that this principal retail area is very active and many stores do not remain vacant for long as new tenants/retailers tend to move in quickly.

Parliament/Davygate			Coney Street			Stonegate		
Total	Occupancy	%	Total	Occupancy	%	Total	Occupancy	%
60	55	91%	72	64	88%	38	36	95%

Table 5. 2 Occupancy Rate (Author)

As shown in Table 5. 2, the occupancy rate is high for the three studied streets. Stonegate has the highest with 95% occupancy rate, while Coney Street/Spurriegate Street have the lowest occupancy rate with 88%.

### 5.4.3 Diversity of Retailing

In trying to come up with a way of measuring retailing diversity, two methods were followed. First, retailers on Parliament/Davygate, Coney Street/Spurriegate Street and Stonegate Street were classified to determine which has the most diverse types of retailer. From the findings in Table 5. 3, one can see that Stonegate Street has the highest diversity as its retailers are more distributed among the retail classifications, while 35% of the retailers on both Parliament/Davygate and Coney Street/Spurriegate Street are clothing and footwear stores.

However, the three selected streets have a high percentage of cafés and restaurants, indicating the liveliness of the area. Parliament/Davygate has the highest percentage of cafés and restaurants among the three streets. This may be due to the fact that it is a main corridor and central street within the primary retail centre. But it might also be explained by the fact that it is a relatively wide street that can easily accommodate outdoor seating. In contrast, Stonegate has the smallest percentage of cafés and restaurants, perhaps because of the narrow profile of the street.



	Parliament St		Stonegate		Coney St	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Books, Stationery & Newspaper Stores	2	4			2	4
Clothing & Footwear Stores	16	34	9	22	18	35
Department Stores	3	6			1	2
DIY Stores						
Food Stores	1	2	6	15	1	2
Furniture Stores			4	10		
Health & Beauty Stores	2	4	4	10	5	10
Music Stores					3	6
Cafés & Restaurants	5	11	3	7	4	8
Electronics & Phone Stores	3	6			8	16
Banks	8	17			2	4
Toys & Games Stores	1	2	1	2	2	4
Pound Shop						
Others	6	13	14	34	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5. 3 Retailing Diversity (Classification) (Author)

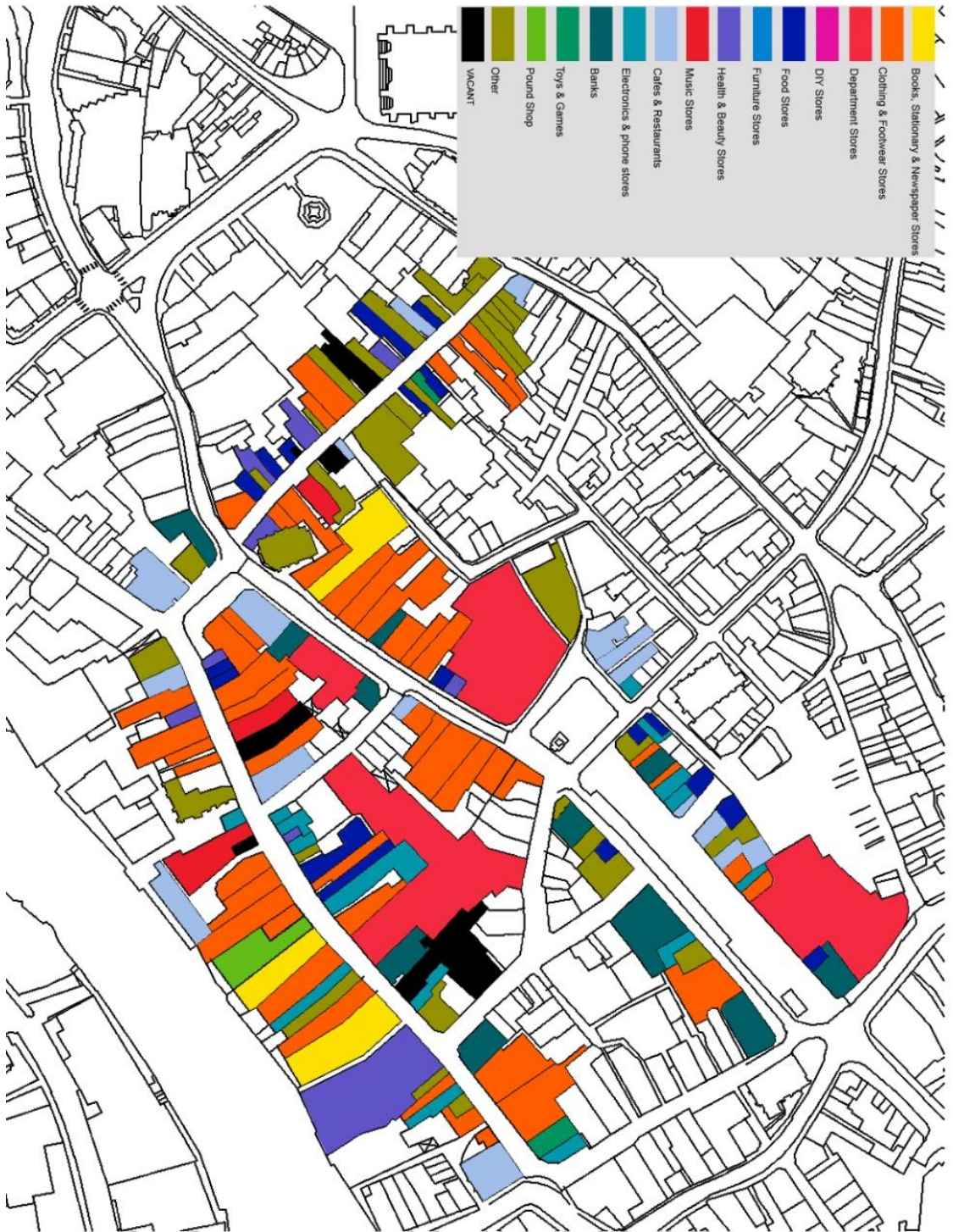


Figure 4. 34 Retailing Diversity (Author)

	Parliament Street		Stonegate		Coney Street	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Multiple</b>	36	76	6	15	40	78
<b>Independent</b>	11	24	35	85	11	22

Table 5. 4 Multiple vs. Independent Retailing (Author)

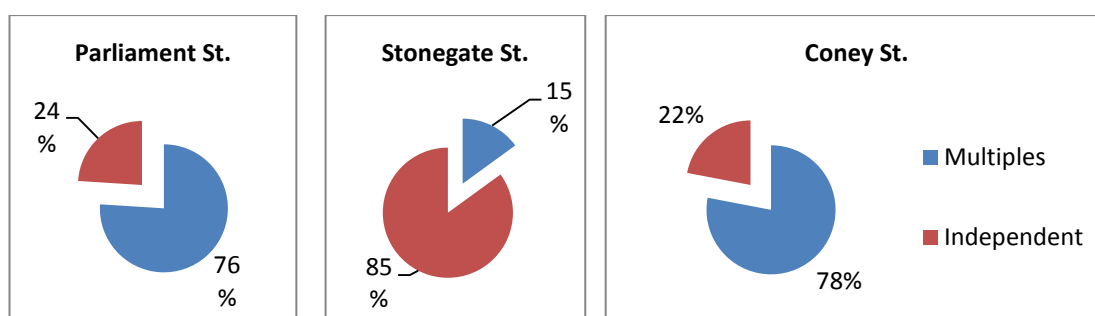


Figure 5. 27 Multiple vs. Independent Retailing (Author)

Another method for evaluating the level of retailing diversity in the study area is to compare the number of independent and locally owned retailers with the number of multiple retailers. The presence of independent retailers is an indicator of a strong local business environment and can offer a certain location a distinctive feature that differentiates it from competing centres.

It is evident from Table 5. 4 and Figure 5. 27 that Stonegate has by far the highest percentage of independent retailers while both Parliament/Davygate and Coney Streets have almost the same division of multiples and independent retailers.

## 5.5 Conclusion

It is hoped that the conclusion of this case study will contribute to the overall research and the development of findings that will help to distil information on the characteristics of vital retailing environments.

On reviewing the planning data for the City of York, it is clear that the city council is aware of the importance of the retailing industry in the city. Through years of development the city government has come to understand the important role of preserving centrality and focusing development in the city centre rather than in the

fringes. The plan clearly calls for more concentration of retailing activity and encourages mixed-use development in order to create a 24-hour city. Many policies and strong development controls serve to enhance the visual quality of the built environment, through both grand schemes as well as attention to small details. At the same time they resist further out-of-town developments that weaken activities within the city centre.

From observation it was evident that the study area is lively and the public enjoy being there, regardless of the weather conditions. The site is a hub of retailing and different forms of formal economic activity. At the same time, it encourages the existence of several informal activities such as vendors, campaigners and street performers. The design of the site invites different types of people to enjoy the place, regardless of age, race, and economic and or physical abilities. The behaviour of public in the study area contributes greatly to the development of a unique sense of place.

Throughout the study area one can observe that visual quality varies across the studied streets. It is noted that the city planners are constantly learning and the area is in continuous development. The site is very well designed and is rich with public amenities. The streets are well defined and the buildings contribute to the rich visual environment, despite their variation. The city officials are actively trying to steer future development so it can contribute to the overall character of the city. It is clear from surveys that there are strong development controls that limit the activity of retailers in order to preserve the historic quality of the streets. Although lacking major retailers, department stores, cafés and restaurants, Stonegate is still a major attractor because of its unique architectural quality. It is apparent that the high-quality physical environment contributes to the creation of sense of place and social vitality.

Space Syntax analysis also contributed to a better understanding of the overall quality of the city and the study area as it highlighted how integration in the physical environment has a large influence on how people use the place. It also showed how pedestrian movement and the presence of economic activities are strongly connected and interrelated. It was clear from the surveys and results of the analysis that the most successful streets are also highly integrated and connected to the urban fabric.

Rental values, diversity of retailing and uses, and rate of occupancy provided indicators of retailing attractiveness and helped to test how the study area is measured economically. Through the overlapping of results from different indicators, one can find strong correlations between rental values and other indicators such as integration value, stationary activities, visual quality assessment and others.

It is hoped that the research will benefit from the results of this case study and the results to be obtained from other case studies, in order to allow the development of a healthy planning model that will provide an economically vital retailing environment which contributes to the integration of the urban environment and encourages social diversity and coherence.

## **CHAPTER SIX: THIRD CASE STUDY: ALEPPO CITY**

### **6.0 Introduction**

This section discusses the case of the old market of the city of Aleppo. It forms part of the empirical approach of this research. The purpose of this study is to undertake a holistic and in-depth investigation of the role of integration and diversity of retailing in the vitality of city centres. The aim of the case studies is to collect data with which to develop grounded theory. It also echoes the theoretical context and addresses the issues raised in chapter three: Urban Theories and specifically the Islamic Urban Form. Aleppo has been chosen to complement the first two case studies: Glasgow and York. It offers a unique case since it is a Middle Eastern city that shares a lot of historical and cultural values with the target case study: Kuwait City. After a preliminary visit to the site and because of the grand scale of city-centre retailing the researcher chose to focus the study on two main intersecting streets within the old market. These were chosen because of their central location, level of integration within the urban fabric, the type of retailers operating in them and their initial observed level of vitality.

This section will discuss in detail the processes and findings of the case study and will present the results based on five methods of analysis: first, a review of the historical development and planning policy and its influence on retailing; second, Space Syntax analysis, which will highlight the role of the urban fabric and layout on the production of high volume of movement and the presence of economic activities and people; third, a survey of stationary activities and observation of public behaviour within the selected locations, which will inform the research on the relationship between behaviour in public spaces and economic activities; fourth, reflection on the role of urban setting and visual quality on the production of successful retailing centres; and fifth, an analysis of economic vitality measures such as rental values, occupancy rate and retail type surveys.

It is hoped that this chapter, the reported results and lessons learned from the case of Aleppo can help in achieving the research goals, answer its questions and assist in reshaping retailing in Kuwait City.



## **6.1 General Information**

### **6.1.1 Historical Background**

Aleppo is important as a town for several reasons: first, it is considered one of the oldest, if not literally the oldest, existing urban centres in the world. According to Dr. Heratani, the discovered archaeological evidence proves that the city dates back to the third millennium bc. (David, 2005: P. 93) In 333 bc Aleppo was conquered by Alexander the Great and kept under the Greek rule for about 300 years; during that time the city became an important trading city. Later in 64 bc Pompey brought Aleppo and most of Syria under the Roman domination, which remained part of the Byzantine Empire until 637 ad when the Arabs invaded it. In 944, it became an independent Emirate under the Hamdanid prince Sayf al-Daula, and enjoyed a period of great prosperity. During the Abbasid Dynasty, Aleppo underwent a period of great cultural, economic and urban development especially in the area of architecture and fabric production and trade. In 1516, Syria became part of the Ottoman Empire which lasted for four centuries. During that time Syria was neglected and underwent setbacks in economic, social and political areas. In 1916, the Arab nationalist took the opportunity of WWI and declared their revolution against the Ottoman rule with the assistance of the British troops. Despite partial attempts by the Ottomans to control the revolution, Arab and British troops entered Damascus to end 400 years of Ottoman rule. During the same year the Syrians declared their independence under the rule of King Faisal the first. After WWI the Ottoman Empire was dissolved and the League of Nations split the regions of former Syria into two parts; the United Kingdom controlled Jordan and Palestine, and France took control of modern-day Syria and Lebanon. (2009b: P. 955)

### **Aleppo During the French Mandate**

Continuing pressure from Syrian nationalist groups and the United Kingdom forced France to evacuate Syria in April 1946, leaving the country in the hands of a republican government that had been formed during the mandate. On 1 January 1944 Syria was recognised as an independent republic. A lot of changes occurred during the French Mandate to Syria. Khans and traditional markets lost their historic significance, yet maintained their role as major trading sites especially for wholesale and exports. In addition, many official headquarters were established in the modern city centre in addition to the construction of new roads, highways and railways. Car ownership also multiplied; up until 1920 there was not a single car in Aleppo but by 1937 there were more than 1,500 vehicles and trucks. All this contributed to the expansion of the new

suburbs in the west of the city and near the road to Damascus. Modern policies at the time created modern centres that posed strong competition to the traditional old town centre (David, 2005: P.42).

## **Independence**

After independence, Syria underwent a period of political chaos and instability. In 1948 Syria was involved in the Arab-Israeli war which the Arabs lost in 1948, 1967 and 1973. Yet they refused to recognise Israel and engage in any type of negotiations with it. In 1963 the Arab Communist Ba'ath Party led another coup and continued to lead the country until today. (2009b: P. 960)

### **6.1.2 General data**

Syria is located in the Middle East bordering the Mediterranean Sea, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq and Jordan. The total area of Syria is 185,180 sq km. Aleppo is located in northern Syria and Aleppo governorates cover about 16,000 sq km. It is considered the second largest city in Syria.

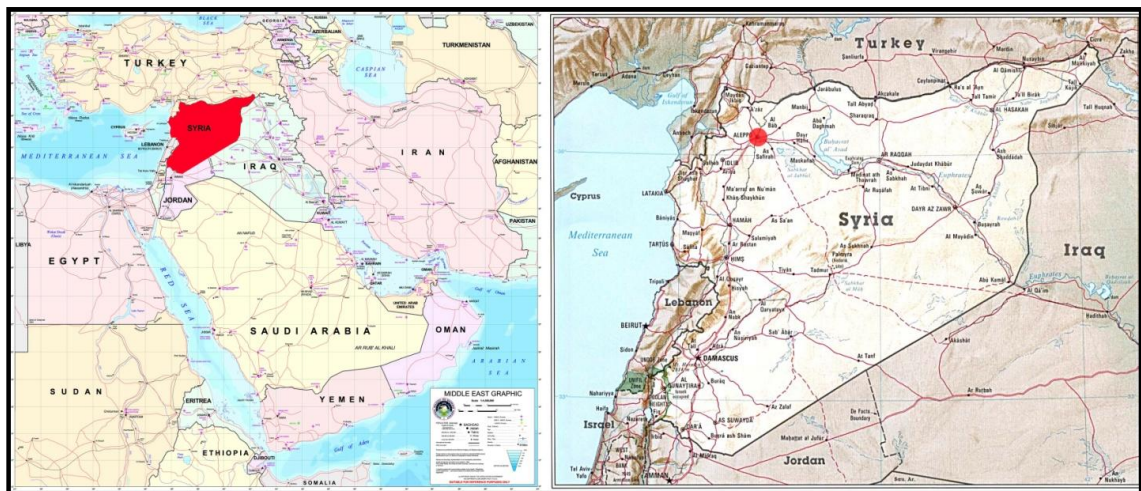


Figure 6. 1 Syria Location and Aleppo City Location (source: vidiani.com)

## **Population**

The total population of Syria is 20,178,485. The youth population between the ages of 0 and 34 makes up about 43% of the population.

### **Aleppo Demography**

The population of Aleppo reached 4,393,000 in 2002. Three-quarters of Aleppo inhabitants are Muslims. The racial background is diverse where Arabs, Kurds, Adyge, Albanian, Assyrians, Turkmens and others are present in Aleppo and have influential communities. In addition, Aleppo has the largest Christian community in the Middle East after Lebanon, as well as a large Jewish community which later migrated to the occupied Arab land. (2009a)

### **Syrian Economy**

Syria is considered a developing country with diversified economy based on agriculture, industry and energy. The current GDP per capita has reached \$4,600 in 2008. “During the 60s and based on its socialist ideology, the government nationalized most major enterprises and adopted economic policies designed to address regional and class disparities. This legacy of state intervention and price, trade, and foreign exchange controls still hampers economic growth, although the government has begun to revisit many of these policies, especially in the financial sector and the country’s trade regime.” (2009b). The strict governmental control of the economy is evident as the market is limited and very few international corporations practise in the country. The bad economic policies along with widespread corruption continue to halt development and lead to increased poverty. Despite slow development in the tourism sector, the location, climate and historical significant makes Syria in general, and Aleppo in particular, an attractive tourist destination especially in the region. Tourism is a major source for large foreign exchange and contributor to economic growth. (FRD, 2005: P.11)

### **Introduction to Aleppo’s Old Town**

Aleppo city has been a main trading centre for years. It is located on a crossroads of main trade routes; from India and the Euphrates region to Europe. The old city of Aleppo is a world heritage site of international renown. It has 355 hectares of traditional urban fabric, 110,000 inhabitants and is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities. The case study looks closely at the old markets of Aleppo (Figure 6. 2 and Figure 6. 3); and specifically at two intersecting streets, namely the main corridor which runs from the castle to Antioch gate and the other which runs north–south from Souq Algharabeen (Adlyia Street) to Souq Aslan Dada (Figure 6. 4).



Figure 6. 2 Map of the Old Town of Aleppo



Figure 6. 3 Aerial Photo of the Study Area (Old Markets of Aleppo) (Author)



Figure 6. 4 The Selected Studied Streets (Source: Google Earth with Author illustration)

### 6.1.3 Planning Policy

Similar to the case of many traditional town centres in the world, modern planning principles contributed to the destruction of the traditional urban fabric of the old city of Aleppo. Increased car ownership and the master plan of 1959 which gave priority for highways and established modern neighbourhoods, contributed to the decay of the old city as inhabitants gradually moved to the modern and more spacious suburbs.

European planning since the 16<sup>th</sup> century began to influence Aleppo. As “town planning was often identified with street planning. In the nineteenth century, the French boulevard concept continued to emphasize this trend and it became a major planning feature all over European and other cities. As a result, the growing vehicular traffic started conditioning all other aspects of urban life” (Bianca, 1980: P. 25). The same pattern continued to prevail after independence, as modern planning principles persisted, “the results of this approach were becoming apparent by the end of the sixties. Complete city centres were cleared for the sake of vehicular traffic; urban life based on dense human scale environment became virtually extinguished, and substantial parts of the architectural heritage accumulated over centuries were abolished within a few years.” (Bianca, 1980:P. 25)

Modern developments transformed the city drastically. The results were devastating, “By 1978, 20 percent of the historic city had been lost outright to the broad avenues and high-rise offices and residences mandated by the master plan.” (Graves, 1999) By the 1980s and while the population of Aleppo reached 1.5 million, the resident population dropped from 170,000 in 1940 to 130,000 (ibid). The devastating results on old city drove the Ministry of Culture to declare Aleppo as a national historic monument and appoint a conservation committee to develop planning guidelines for the old city. Since then, and despite limited resources, the city began to see signs of improvements and many significant historical buildings and urban quarters were re-inhabited or underwent the process of preservation. Several international organisations are contributing to the protection of Aleppo old city centre such as the German Governmental Fund (GDZ), Aga Kahn Foundation, UNDP, Arab Fund for Economic Development and others.

Despite the various negative impacts of modernity, Aleppo remains one of the few fascinating Arabian cities the retained a lot of its traditional character. “Today, Aleppo,



unlike many other Islamic cities, is still in a position to maintain the unity of its old urban fabric. The unique qualities of its historic environment are most valuable asset for future development, and its timeless values can inspire modern city planning.” (Bianca, 1980: P.26).

## **6.2Space Syntax Analysis**

Space Syntax analysis has been employed to evaluate and compare the results with findings from other methodologies. The author has produced an axial map model that illustrates the global integration values of the city’s streets on a map for the city of Aleppo which, coupled with the findings from the rest of the research methodologies, will present strong empirical proof and assist in answering the research questions.

The global integration value based on the axial model of the central area of Aleppo is shown in Figure 6. 5. It is clear from the map that the city centre is segregated. In conjunction with the design principles of Islamic urban form, streets are short and neighbourhoods are designed in closed clusters and lead to a cul-de-sac. The graph illustrates that the studied streets do not differ from the rest of the city in term of the level of integration. All in all, the studied streets have low global integration value. The urban fabric as a whole does not act as a catalyst for pedestrian movement, but the historic and economic importance of the traditional markets makes them a destination and a primary retailing hub.



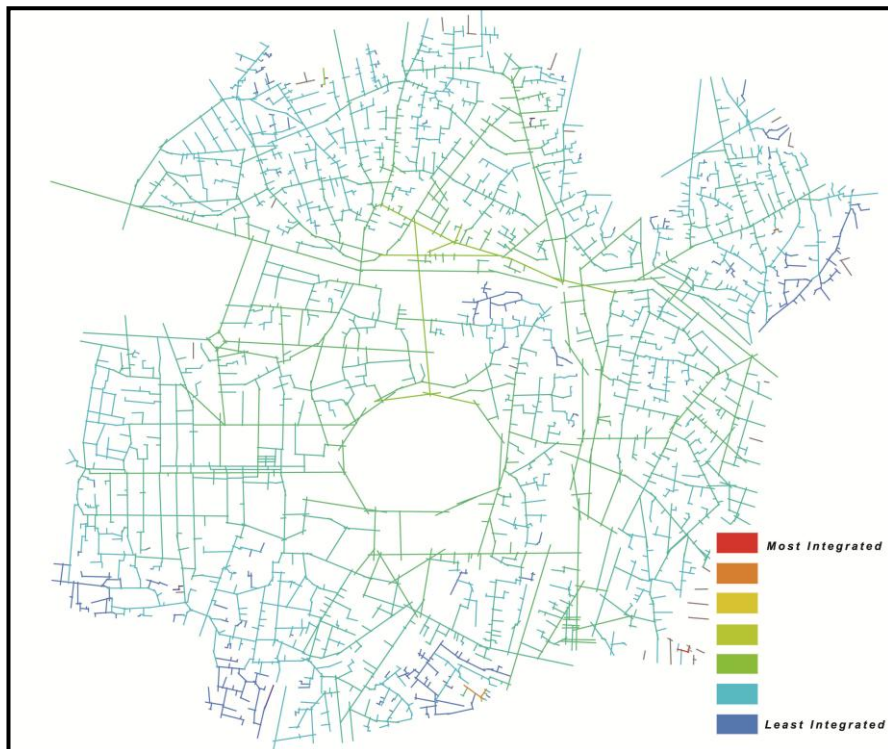


Figure 6. 5 Global Integration Axial Map of the City of Aleppo (Author)

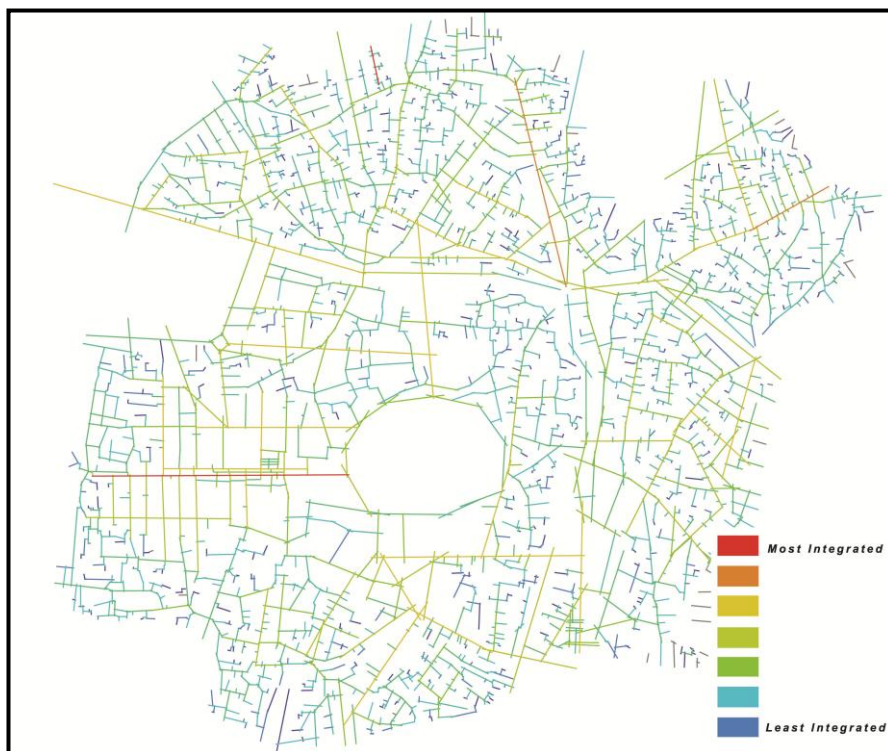


Figure 6. 6 Local Integration (R3) Axial Map of the Old City of Aleppo (Author)

The above graph (Figure 6. 6) is the same analysis but carried out with a restriction on the radius of the measure. It illustrates a much more localised picture of the movement structure within the area. In contrast to the global integration value map, the local integration analysis gives a clearer picture of the level of integration of the selected

cases and illustrates how the main corridor which runs east–west has a high local integration value and is a strong movement generator.

The connectivity value illustrates the number of lines that are directly connected to a specific line. In our case it gives an indication of how well a specific street is integrated within the urban fabric and as a result gives an indication of its ability to generate movement. As can be seen in Table 6. 1, our selected cases have high connectivity values which, with other supporting factors, may explain their attractiveness as primary retailing sites.

#	Street	Global Integration		Local Integration		Connectivity	
		Value	Order	Value	Order	Value	Order
2733	Dowar Al-Qal'a St.	0.898		2.532		4	
0	Ommayad Mosque St.	0.900		2.868		11	
41	Souq Kahn Al-Harir	0.763		2.390		5	
20	Ibn Kashab St.	0.825		2.365		3	
19	Souq Istanbul	0.879		2.954		10	
<b>8</b>	<b>Souq Al-Saboun</b>	<b>0.799</b>		<b>2.601</b>		<b>4</b>	
<b>32</b>	<b>Al-Adliyah St.</b>	<b>0.778</b>		<b>2.123</b>		<b>6</b>	
1158	Al-Kosrofiyah St.	0.716		2.332		2	
21	Adolf Pasha St.	0.800		2.856		10	
25	Souq Al-Yebraq	0.791		2.531		4	
42	Hammam Atab St.	0.767		2.633		6	
46	Al-Wali St.	0.797		2.575		4	
50	Al-Sudan St.	0.795		2.525		3	
52	Kawarezmi St.	0.791		2.525		5	
54	Al-khatib St.	0.791		2.594		5	
56	Bin Zayd St.	0.791		2.551		4	
3	Jallum St.	0.816		2.762		2	
17	Souq Al-Sarmatiyah	0.812		2.909		15	
<b>6</b>	<b>Main Corridor</b>	<b>0.867</b>		<b>3.590</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>
45	Souq Khan Al-Wazir	0.735		1.886		12	

Table 6. 1 Axial Analysis Result Sample (Author)

## 6.3 Observation

### 6.3.1 Survey of Stationary Activities (Behavioural Mapping)

In an attempt to understand the social life of the traditional markets of Aleppo, the researcher has conducted two site visits and carried four stationary activities surveys. This survey was conducted to build upon the theoretical and empirical approaches of this research. It forms part of the behaviour approach that seeks to understand human

experience in space as they spontaneously occur in everyday life. It is humanistic in nature and relies in the author's first-hand experience. Among the initial findings is that, despite the development that occurred in Aleppo and the existence of modern shopping streets and centres in close proximity to the old markets, traditional markets retained their importance and continue to attract visitors, businesses and tourists. In addition to the obvious scene of heavy pedestrian flow, the researcher observed several interesting features that are unique to the traditional markets of Aleppo and could contribute to a better understanding of successful retailing environments.

In order to evaluate the stationary activities, the researcher used methods developed and employed by Gehl Architects as used in previous studies in different cities. Stationary activity counts have been conducted four times, twice during the summer and twice during the winter. The summer stationary activity counts were conducted first on Thursday 13 August 2009 and second on Saturday (weekend) 15 August 2009. The winter stationary activity counts were conducted first on Thursday 11 February 2010 and second on Friday (weekend) the 12 February 2010. In both cases, stationary activities were recorded every second hour between 10am and 8pm. The findings were recorded on maps of the area. Each type of activity (such as sitting, playing, socialising, etc.) has been given a specific sign and was recorded on the map to distinguish it from the others. At the conclusion of the study the researcher accumulated the whole data onto one map in order to highlight the findings.

### **Summer Surveys**

#### **Thursday 13 August 2009**

Weather – Temperature Max: 36°C. Low: 19°C. Rain: No.

From early morning the streets of Aleppo markets are busy and had high pedestrian movements.

Despite the narrow streets and heavy crowds, independent vendors manage to find a place in Aleppo's traditional market. As can be seen in Figure 6. 7 some vendors use the opportunity of a closed shop to set up their goods and in some cases shop owners display their merchandise in front of their shops. Vendors occupy places in the area toward Antioch Gate and where shops are lighter and space is available.





Figure 6. 7 Vendors Along the Traditional Corridors (Author)

Social activities were very evident throughout the market. People seem to know each other as they greet one another and welcome passers-by. Also, many shops have chars or stools placed in front for costumers, visitors and invited guests (Figure 6. 8).





Figure 6. 8 Chairs Located in Front of Shops for Shopkeepers, Customers and Guests (Author)

The relationship between religious social activities and the market is a strong one due to the nature of Islamic practices where Muslims are obliged to perform five prayers during the day and night. It was necessary to provide several places in the market where merchants and visitors spend long hours performing the obligatory prayers. The relationship between the place of worship and businesses evolved and grew in conjunction. As the markets stand as the major place of public gathering, the wealthy and the powerful sought to express their status through the construction of mosques and other social buildings such as Kahns and schools for public good following the Waqf system within them.

The Waqf system is considered one of the unique achievements of Islamic civilisation. Throughout the ages the Waqf has established and maintained an integrated system that

serves several aspects of society – religious, educational, medical and social. Waqf has been defined in Islamic Law as the holding of trustee property and distributing to charities from its income. The Waqf is different from a simple act of charity in that “it is a constant charity that cannot be sold, or given, it can only use its rewards on the activities which have been specified by the original donor. While charity is mainly the act of giving of money of anything beneficiary for the sake of good” (KAF, 2008). Therefore, mosque builders began to purchase shops in the markets and use their rental revenue to upkeep the mosque – for example. It is currently estimated that 90% of the shops in the market are Waqf.

Despite the wide variation in the mosque placement in the market, whether having a major entrance, or small door, or narrow stairway that leads to a prayer hall on the first floor, it is evident that its existence is essential and serves an important social and cultural role (see Figure 6. 9).

A walker along the market streets of Aleppo can encounter several religious landmarks such as tombs, drinking water fountains and mosques. These places which stand next to and are mixed with business premises, provide a social and cultural function as well as acknowledging the importance of the shopping streets (see Figure 6. 9 and Figure 6. 9). In addition to the religious purpose of the mosque it can provide several other roles, for example it can provide a sanctuary and a quiet place for having a rest away from the noisy market (see Figure 6. 10).





Figure 6. 9 Mosques Along the Market Streets (Author)



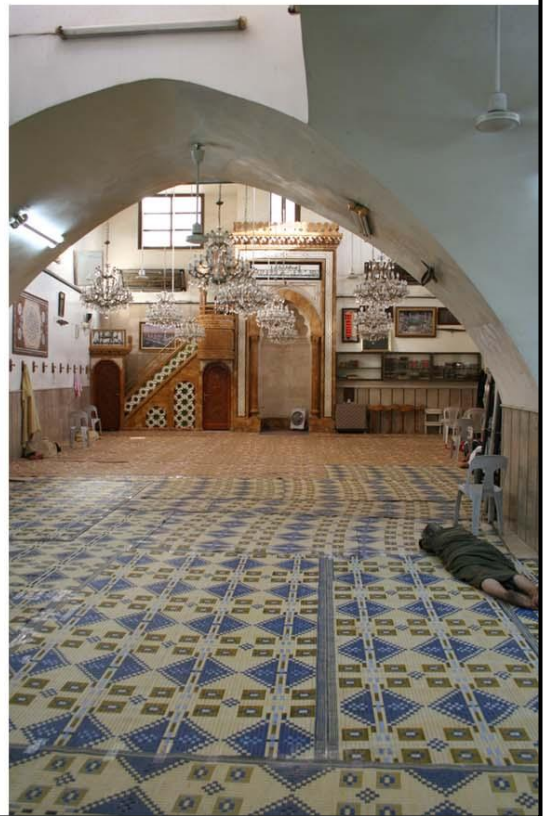


Figure 6. 10 Religious Activities Along the Market Streets (Author)

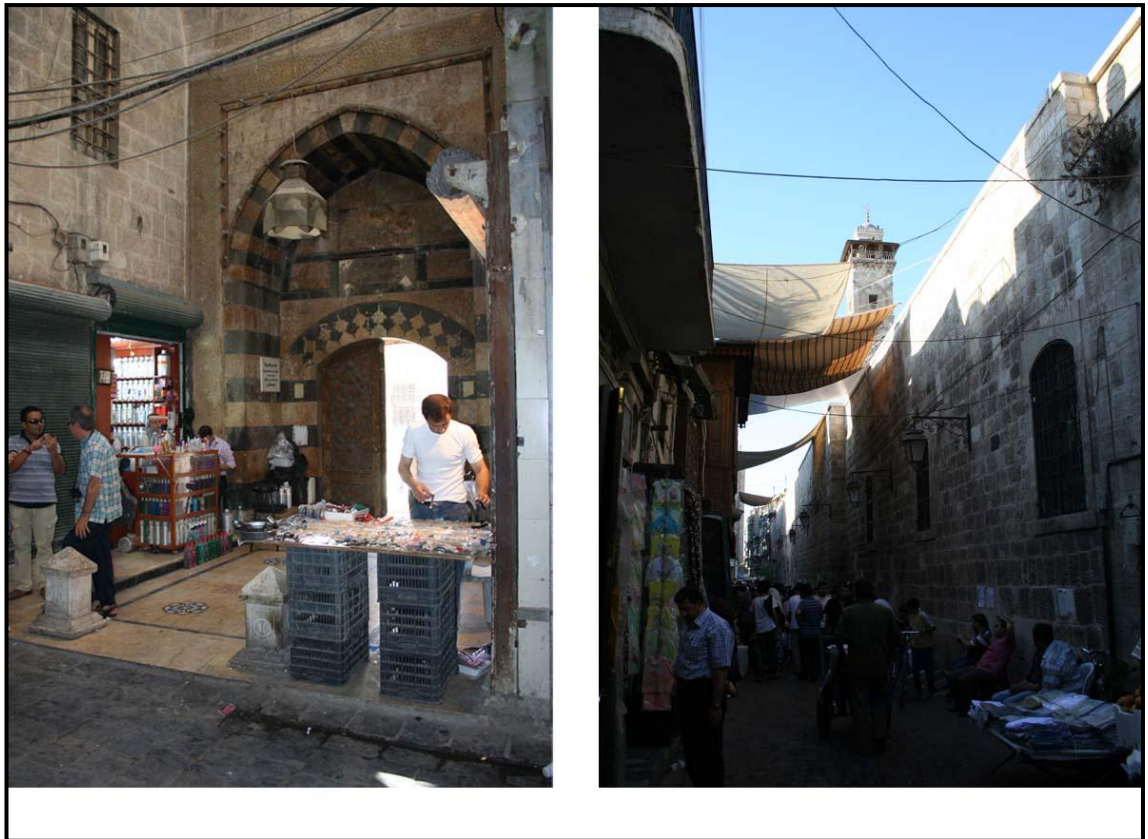


Figure 6. 11 Vendors and Mosques (Author)

The relationship between formal and informal business activity occurs in proximity to mosques. As mosques attract visitors throughout the day and night, they provide a semi-public space in front of them and vendors utilise this opportunity and occupy the niche and/or mosques walls (see Figure 6. 11).



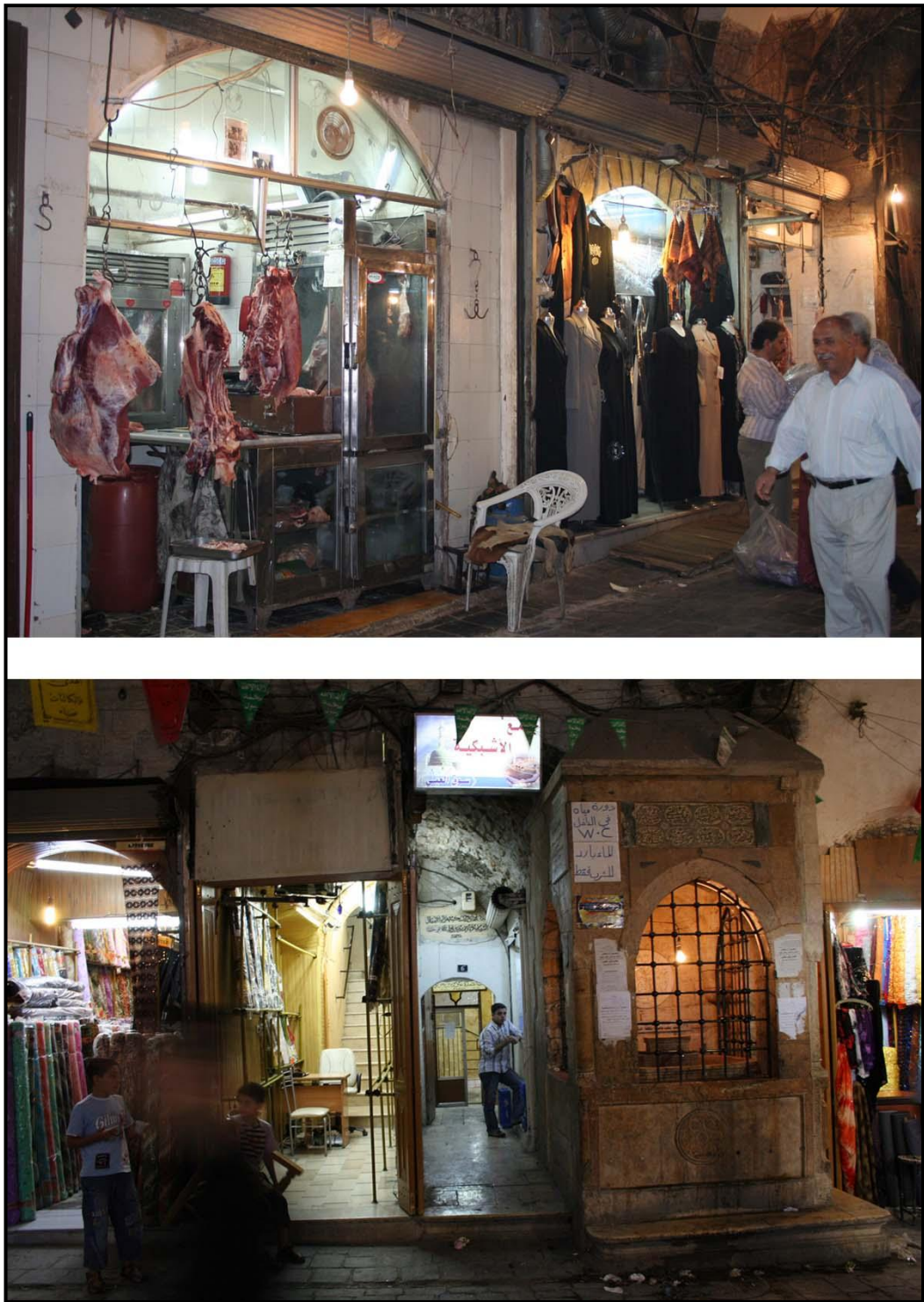


Figure 6. 12 Mixed Activities at Aleppo's Traditional Markets (Author)

One of the major observations of the traditional market is its ability to accept mixed activity in a way that is rarely found acceptable elsewhere. For example, as can be seen in Figure 6. 12, it is acceptable to find two or more contradictory activities or goods sold next to each other, as in the case of the above mentioned Figure 6. 12, where meat is sold next to a gowns shop, or the case where the shop is placed next to the sawing shop, the mosque and the drinking water fountain.



Figure 6. 13 Different Age Groups Working at the Markets (Author)

Walking along the market it was clear that workers and salesmen at the market belong to different age groups. One can see the elderly as well as the youth selling or working at various workshops. Also, the scene of father and sons or even a group from three generations is commonplace in the market (see Figure 6. 12).

### Saturday 15 August 2009

Weather – Temperature Max: 38°C. Low: 21°C. Rain: No.

During the weekend, the same phenomenon were observed. The markets continued to be busy and enjoyed high levels of crowds. However, it was also noticed that a larger



number of tourists visited the markets, especially local families who enjoy spending time in the open space between the market and the citadel.

### **Winter Surveys**

#### **Thursday 11 February 2010**

Weather – Temperature Max: 13°C. Low: 5°C. Rain: No.

The researcher recorded similar observations.

#### **Friday 12 February 2010**

Weather – Temperature Max: 15°C. Low: 6°C. Rain: No.

In this instance the researcher conducted a visit on a Friday, during which the markets are mainly closed for a break day (Figure 6. 14). The only area that had extensive crowding was the area surrounding the Ummayyad Mosque, due to the Friday prayers and the vendors who are active on that day.



**Figure 6. 14 Closed Shops and Markets on Friday (Author)**



As a result of the field visits and surveys, the researcher noted the following:

- The traditional markets of Aleppo are vital and still hold many of their original characteristics. They act as a centre to the entire city and a major commercial and services hub.
- The markets are well integrated within the fabric of the city. The location of the markets and its streets encouraged pedestrian movements and attracts a large number of visitors. However, access is mainly for pedestrians and restricts vehicle movement.
- It is evident that the markets attract a large number of visitors and diverse social groups such as locals, visitors, old, young, workers and shoppers.
- The area is architecturally rich and possesses unique physical characteristics which enhance the sense of place. Nevertheless, some parts are in a clear state of decay and require attention.

### **6.3.2 Active Frontage Analysis**

The objective of this analysis is to plot geographically the distribution of attraction localities across the road segments under investigation. After identifying the attraction location by field survey and GOAD maps, the author has plotted locations as vector points. Then the road segments were drawn as two parallel lines representing the two centre lines of the road sides. The projected points were used as input for the “Kernel Density” analysis using the Geographical Information System available on ArcGIS software. Using the proposed active frontage hierarchy of Jan Gehl that range from Active to No Attraction, we were able to achieve a smooth tapered surface for the level of active frontage along the selected streets. The following graph shows the two analysed streets (Figure 6.15). Due to the high density of the market and the small shop frontages that range from 2 to 4 metres wide, it can be seen that the streets are generally pleasant and active.

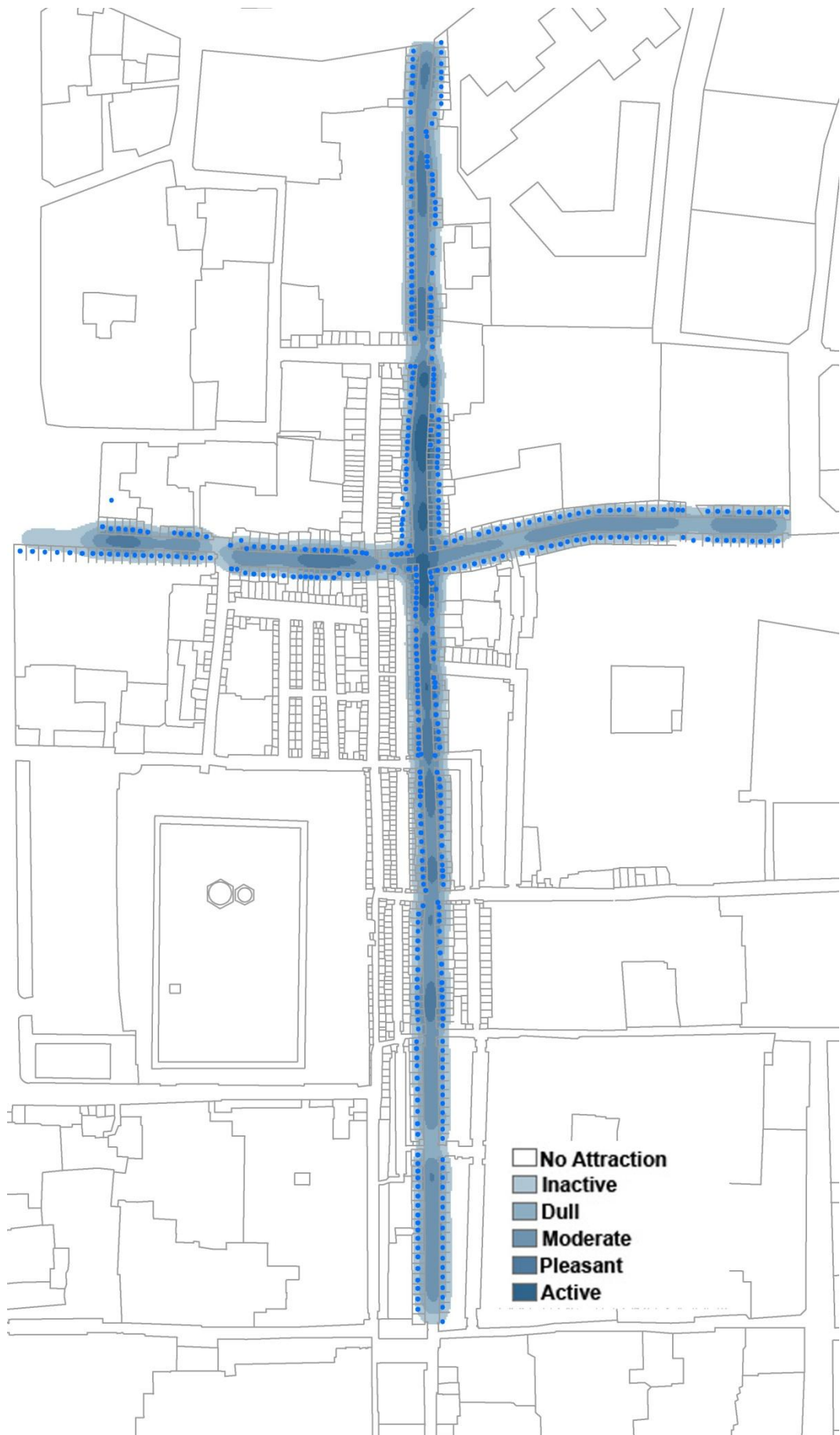


Figure 6. 15 GIS Output of Active Frontage Mapping of the Two Main Streets in Aleppo (Author)

### 6.3.3 Visual Environment Evaluation

#### Urban Structure

In an attempt to describe the visual form of the city of Aleppo, we shall look at its characteristics as a historic and Islamic city in particular. Despite variation in the circumstances that led to the development of different cities in the Muslim world, they share a unique urban. First, is the adaptation to natural laws, where cities tried to respond to weather conditions and topography which resulted in specific urban forms such as “courtyards, terraces, narrow covered streets and gardens” (Saoud, 2002: P. 4). “The courtyard plan, used widely in every kind of building throughout the Arab world, inevitably produced in urban conditions continuous walls and one building touching and merging with the next. This in turn, produces urban scale and character, as well as space between and within buildings – streets, alleyways, small squares and courtyards – which are readily appreciated as space” (Cantacuzino, 1984: P. 25). Second, confirmation of religious and cultural beliefs where issues such as the separation of public and private activities had a strong influence on the urban structure which took form in the creation of narrow streets and cul-de-sacs, and the separation of economic activities from residential quarters (ibid). Third, the influence of the Islamic law (sharia) which, due to its emphasis of protecting privacy, established certain building codes that controlled building heights and property rights (ibid). Fourth, social principles guided the development of the Islamic urban form and it took shape in the development of quarters that define a certain social group for the sake of meeting social needs such as “kinship solidarity, defence, social order, and religious practices” (ibid).

On the other hand, there is a debate as to whether there is such a thing as Islamic cities, or were they only a development of previous urban forms? Yet despite this disagreement there is a consensus that Islamic cities share several typical features. First, the main mosque which is usually situated at the heart of the city and where the main Friday prayer is held and Islamic knowledge is taught. One can see examples of this feature in many Islamic cities such as Aleppo, Damascus, Isfahan and Tunis. Second, the (souq) or the market, located near the main mosque and where major public activities take place such as social services, administration, art, public baths and hotels. “The souk traditionally embraces all these occupations; it houses the young and the old, the rich and the poor. It contains large and small houses, schools, mosques, hamams, shops, and industry...” (Cantacuzino, 1984:P. 26) Third, the citadel which represents the place of government; it is surrounded by a wall and in several cases is situated

within a district that is supported by several services such as the mosque, offices and residential quarters. Fourth, the residential quarters which are comprised of “clusters of households of a particular quality of life based on closeness which is manifested in personal ties, common interests and shared moral unity” (Saoud, 2002:P. 6). Fifth, the narrow and winding streets which connect the various quarters are a typical feature of many Islamic cities. Sixth, a well-defined wall. Seventh, several uses used to take place at the exterior of the Islamic cities such as cemeteries, weekly markets, gardens and fields (ibid). In addition, the mixed-use nature of traditional cities contributed to the creation of a unique urban form and interesting architectural language. “Traditionally uses have tended to overlap. Living accommodation is over shops; workrooms are over living accommodation; shops or small industry are inserted into ground floors of public building...” (Cantacuzino, 1984: P.26).

Thus, in accordance with previously established concepts that relate the number of entrances to the volume of movement; traditional cities with their fine urban grain produce a high number of activities and mixed uses which tend to enrich the public street livelihood. “Many small buildings or units means many entrances, and the more entrances there are, the more frequently they occur along the street, the more movement there will be” (Cantacuzino, 1984: P. 26).

### **The City of Aleppo**

The hill on which the citadel stands at the centre of Aleppo is one of the most fascinating features of the town. As mentioned earlier, it is believed that many human settlements have existed in Aleppo since early times. The city shows traces from the Hellenistic and Byzantine periods, such as the grid pattern of the streets which were gradually transformed into pedestrian alleys and pedestrian walkways during the Islamic times (Bianca, 1980: P. 11).

The nucleus of the old city (Arabic: Medina) consists of the large commercial centre established along the traditional east–west axis of the Hellenistic town; and the main mosque occupies the former space of the Agora. The total length of the old city is about 750 metres, stretching from Antioch Gate to the citadel. This area is considered the focal point of the city and centre of most public activities (Bianca, 1980: P. 12).

The old city reached an area of 16 hectares and entrances to the city are through several gates that lead to the Grand Mosque and the heart of the city. The main corridor of the market is called the Old Street which stretches from Antioch Gate to the citadel. Part of the street which stretches to the Buhrameia Mosque is not covered, but after that it branches into four parallel markets covered with stone arches. On the eastern part of the Grand Mosque, which is considered the oldest part of the city, there is a series of intertwined markets that house several services buildings (Heratani, 2006b: P. 23).

The expansion of the city around the citadel led to the need for building the city wall as the citadel was not enough to provide the necessary protection for the city. Along the city wall there are several gates, some of which still remain. “The thoroughfares leading from the gates to the Medina are the main streets of the old city. They are not only components of the traffic system, but also places of meeting, social activity and trade. Shade, absence of aggressive traffic and pleasant human scale provide the pedestrians with a physical comfort which is hard to find in modern developments.” (Bianca, 1980: P. 73).

### **Main corridor (from the citadel to Antioch Gate)**

There are several markets that exist along the main corridor, each has its own physical and functional characteristics. The Zerb Market located near the citadel. The market importance lies in being the entrance from the citadel side to the traditional markets of Aleppo. Recently it was restored by the old town authority and the GTZ. The work was carried on the main elevation, interior elevation, wood work, flooring and old steps, and electrical and drainage work. In addition to the clearance of activities that extended beyond the property lines and other building violations.

Zerb market specialises in selling heavy fabrics made from sheep and camel hair, and caters for nomad Bedouins. The market still exists, and it plays a role in exporting tents to other Arab states such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.





Figure 6. 16 Zerb Market (Image: Author – Drawing: GDZ project design drawing)

Then follows the cloak market which, in addition to selling cloaks and gowns, sells various fabrics. It is shorter than Zerb market and houses about 53 shops.

The traditional function at (Al-atareen) the perfumes market is selling spices and its derivatives. The fabrics merchant expanded westward and took several shops at (Al-atareen) the perfumes market yet it still preserves its original function as a spices and traditional scents market. Today it houses about 82 shops.

The Al-soqtia market extends toward the west of Al-Atareen the perfumes market and it specialises in selling traditional foodstuff and in particular ingredients for making traditional meals and sweets as well as fruit and vegetables. Today it houses about 86 shops.

The Al-buhrimia market is an extension of the Al-soqtia foodstuff market and it took its name from the Buhramia mosque which opens directly at the market. The market with its 52 shops specialises in selling foodstuff and nuts. This market is different from other traditional markets in that parts of it are not covered. The mosque was built in 1583 according to the Ottoman style. Several trusts were dedicated to the mosque, such as several shops in the market as well as other businesses in the city of Aleppo and other shops in Cairo, Egypt. (Heratani, 2006a: P. 23)

Antioch Gate market is located in the middle of the eastern side of the old city wall. The gate is one of the oldest entrances to the city markets. The market itself lacks any architectural identity; similar to other markets it comprises two rows of shops of different shapes and sizes facing each other. The street is not covered, but recently

attempts were made to cover part of it with modern corrugated metal sheets. Toward Antioch Gate the market is simple and without any unique architectural features. Along the road several shops face each other with different sizes and some are erected in a disorganised manner. It is noticeable that this portion of the market is not covered with any type of roof, although today the occupants attempt to cover it with some kinds of fabric and modern corrugated metal sheets.

Aleppo's city markets have unique quality and despite its long streets have uniform characteristics. The narrowness of Aleppo's market streets is one of its most striking features. The proportion of width to height is 1:1 or 1.5:1. This proportion makes the experience of shopping so unique as one can observe the shops on both sides of the streets, in addition to walking in close proximity to the crowds and the exhibited merchandise.

The number of activities that occurs in a given place is high. There are both mixed and a high quantity of activities in a given distance. The width of each shop does not exceed two metres in many cases, so whether one is walking or standing, the number of visually apparent activities is high.

The lighting quality in Aleppo's traditional markets is unique as well. The natural light streams through the openings in the roofs and the many domes along the shopping streets which shed rays of lights throughout the day. This is complemented by artificial lighting which is installed to compensate for the lack of lighting during dark times.

Along the market street one experiences different levels of architectural detailing and finished quality. There are areas with rich architectural ornamentation and unique materiality and finishes. Such conditions can be observed in some shops, but mostly on special buildings such as mosques, schools, public baths (hammam) and khans. There are also well preserved areas and recently restored as part of the efforts carried by the GTZ. On the other hand there are areas of low architectural quality and where streets and shop fronts are unattractive. Sometimes they stand next to one another, yet despite this condition, the chaos and lack of order contribute, especially in this case, to the uniqueness of the overall experience of being in a traditional market.

The quality of the roofs that cover the markets of Aleppo varies greatly. In some streets one can see some fine examples of stone or plastered arches. On the other hand there are areas with deteriorating roofs or some cheap modern roofs that use simple corrugated metal sheets which stand in contrast to the rest of the market.

## 6.4 Economic Vitality

### 6.4.1 Rental Value

The real estate market of Aleppo's traditional markets is unique due to the distinctive market structure and the nature of ownership. In order to draw an accurate picture of the value of a certain shop in Aleppo's market, one needs to look at three factors: selling price, rental value and release value.

The selling price of shops in the traditional Aleppo market is proportional to its size and location within the traditional market. When the salesman is not the owner of the shop, he or she usually pays a rental value that is set usually for a three-year period, and evaluated in accordance with the size and location of the shop and paid annually (Heratani, 2006b: P. 108). Table 6. 2 gives an example of the rental value of various shops throughout the traditional market. The low rental value is quite low and does not reflect the true value of the shops, which can be expressed more clearly in the release value.

#	Street	Rental Value	
		Sayrian Pound (SYP)	United Kingdom Pound (GBP)
	Dowar Al-Qal'a St.	80,000	1,088
	Souq Al-Zerb	120,000	1,630
	Souq Al-Atareen	150,000	2,040
	Souq Hatem	120,000	1,630
	Souq Istanbul	60,000	816
	Souq Al-Saboun	350,000	4,760
	Al-Adliyah St.	300,000	4,080
	Souq Al-Nahaseen	160,000	2,176
	Souq Al-Buhromiya	180,000	2,448

Table 6. 2 Rental Value (Author)

### **Release Value**

The release sales are recognised legally and are paid by the new tenants to the old one as long as the nature of business does not change. In the traditional markets, shop owners or tenants rarely change, since the shop is transferred from father to sons. Thus, the latest value is evaluated based on the most recent interaction carried out in a specific location, street and/or market. For example, in Al-Saboon market, there are two families who occupy the market for a long time and every change is carried out between relatives who are not obliged to pay a release value.

According to Dr. Heratani the release value is based on several factors such as:

1. Shop size.
2. Shop location, form and design.
3. The value of the goods sold.
4. The prosperity of the market (location).
5. The type of activity (retail or bulk).
6. Social (family) and practical relationships between traders in a certain market.
7. Location in relation to traditional pedestrian corridors.
8. Location in relation to automotive roads.
9. Location in relation to proximity to administrative and public services.

(Heratani, 2006b: P. 112)

Al-Sagha (goldsmith) market has the highest release value due to its high prosperity and the type of retail activity that takes place within it. Next are Al-Harag market and the Bazazeen market which are located in the cluster near the main entrance corridor to the traditional markets and the Grand Mosque. (see Figure 6. 17)

Next come Al-Nahaseen (coppersmiths) market which became a place to sell modern shoes and Al-hoor market where high-value minerals and art pieces are sold. According to the survey carried by the researcher and estimated values obtained through interviewing several traders within the traditional markets, the following gradient was established: (see Figure 6. 17)

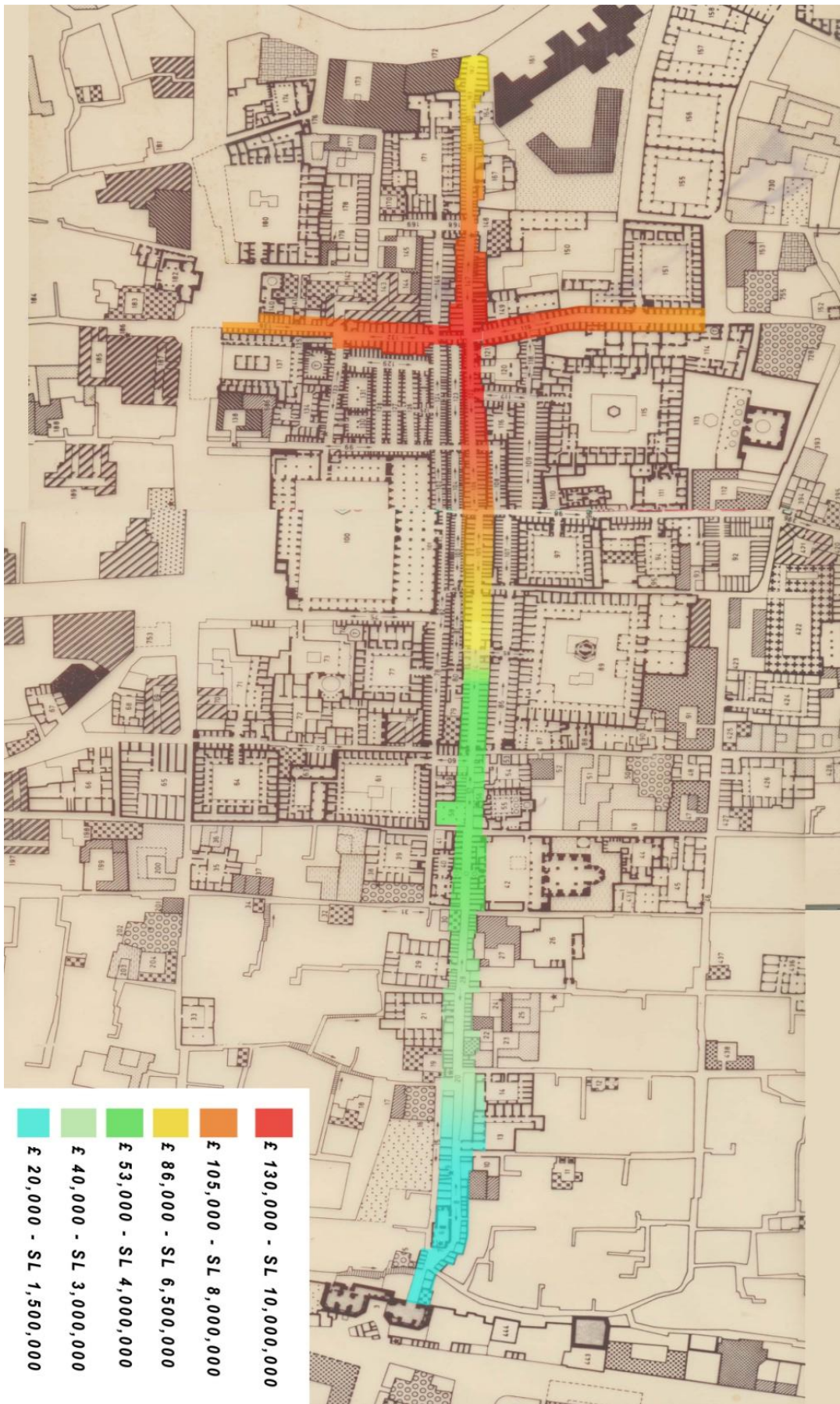


Figure 6. 17 Release Value Gradient (Author)



### 6.4.2 Occupancy Rate

From an actual survey of the site, and the selected streets in particular, one can see that the occupancy rate is quite high. Occupancy rate can give an indication of the level of vitality on certain streets. However, field survey results may not give an accurate measure of the level of occupancy as there are several stores that are let, but are temporarily closed and others may also be under construction and/or remodelling. The fact is that this principal retail area is very active and many stores do not remain vacant for long as new tenants/retailers tend to move in quickly.

Main Corridor			2		
Total	Occupancy	%	Total	Occupancy	%
<b>281</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>96%</b>

Table 6. 3 Occupancy Rate (Author)

As shown in Table 6. 3, the occupancy rate is high for the two studied streets – 91% and 96%.

### 6.4.3 Diversity of Retailing

In trying to come up with a way of measuring retailing diversity, two methods were followed. First, retailers on the two studied streets were classified to determine the level of diversity. From the findings in Table 6. 4 and Figure 6. 18, one can see that both streets have high level of diversity and incorporate a wide range of retail types and services.

	Main Corridor		2	
	Number	%	Number	%
Fabrics	35	12.46	29	20.86
Clothing & Footwear Stores	67	23.84	40	28.78
Perfumers /Spice dealers/Druggists	48	17.08	2	1.44
Sewing Materials	11	3.91	11	7.91
Offices	0	0.00	3	2.16
Workshops	0	0.00	0	0.00
Antiques /Jewellery /Gold	23	8.19	8	5.76
Food Stores	53	18.86	1	0.72
Cafés & Restaurants	8	2.85	0	0.00
Carpets	0	0.00	5	3.60
Bedding	0	0.00	12	8.63
Leather Shops	0	0.00	13	9.35
Religious/Services	2	0.71	2	1.44
Others	10	3.56	7	5.04
Vacant	24	8.54	6	4.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 6. 4 Retailing Diversity (Classification) (Author)



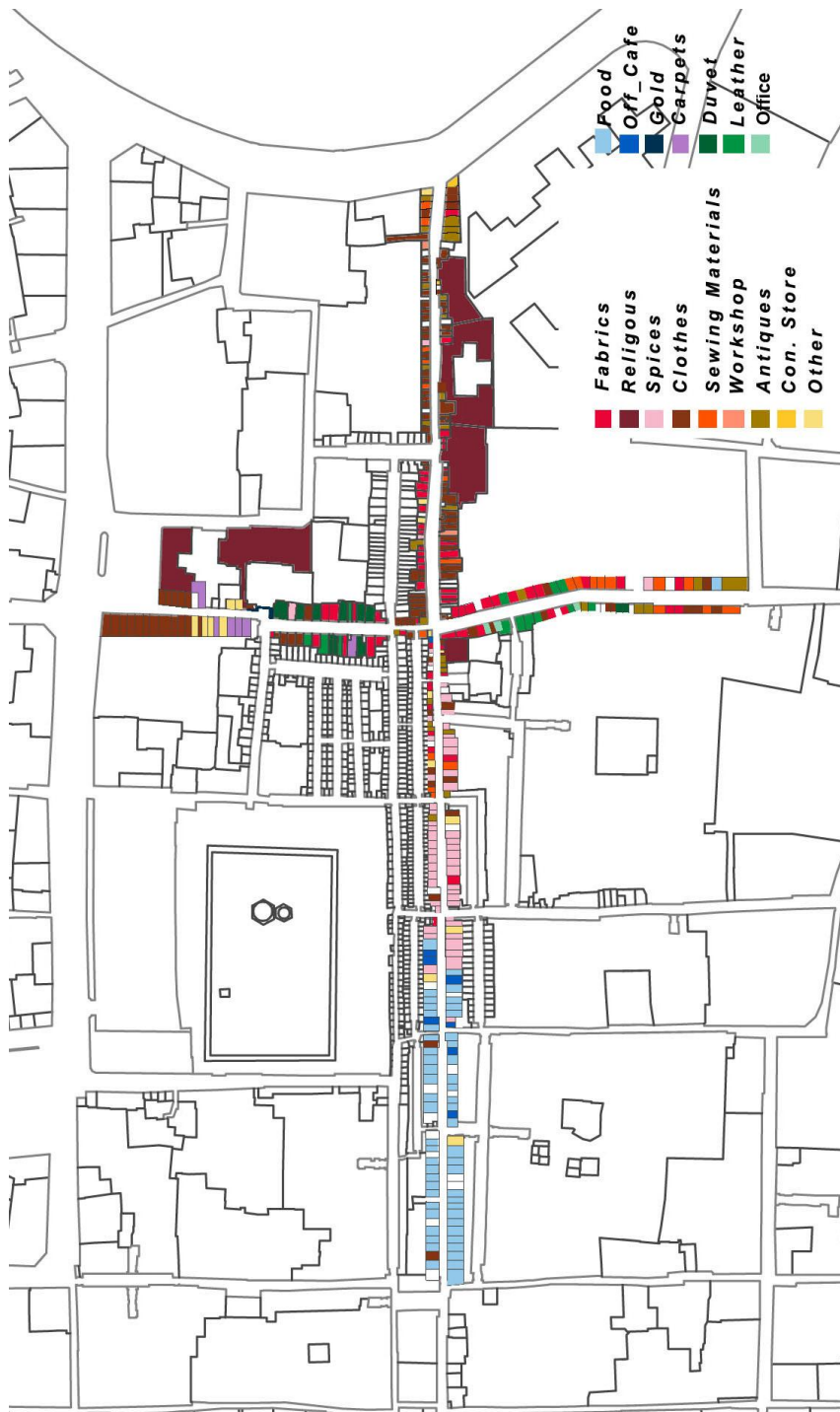


Figure 6. 18 Diversity of Retailing (Author)

## 6.5 Conclusion

The aim of the case study is to distil lessons that could be utilised to construct a better understanding for reshaping retailing in Kuwait City. The traditional markets of Aleppo

were analysed using four methods: background surveys, Space Syntax analysis, observation and visual environment appraisal, and economic vitality.

From an urban perspective, the old town of Aleppo, similar to many traditional towns in the world, encompasses several qualities which contribute to the creation of a strong retailing environment. The town has a strong centre and a well-defined urban area. The streets are closely integrated especially at the local level, which makes the markets easily accessible. The streets are well defined through the maintenance of continuous facades of buildings that address the street. In addition small-scale activities have been encouraged and preserved which leads to a rich and high level of active frontage. The physical structure of the markets with their covered walkways, presents a good example of architecture that responds to its environment. Despite setbacks that occurred in Aleppo in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and in the period after independence (1960s–1980s), which led to the implementation of modern planning principles that had a devastating effect on the urban fabric of Aleppo, the city still has a unique urban quality and can be seen as an example to be learned from.

The vibrant scene of the markets of Aleppo provided a valuable setting for the research. The on-site surveys and observation illustrate the presence of a good mix of activities, cultural and economic, as well as mixed types of economic activities which add interest to the street, attract visitors and contribute to the creation of economic and social vitality. The public nature of the markets makes them a place open to all, young and old, citizens and tourists, poor and rich, workers and shoppers. The family structure which is preserved and highly valued in the Syrian tradition is clearly reflected and continues to have its influence on the economic and social structure of the markets. The link between religious and economic activity is illustrated both socially and physically and provides a valuable factor that enriches the overall experience of the market.

Space Syntax analysis also contributed to a better understanding of the overall quality of the city and the study area as it highlighted how integration in the physical environment has a marked influence on how people use the place. It also showed how pedestrian movement and the presence of economic activities are strongly connected and interrelated. Despite contrasting results from the other case studies (Glasgow and York), Space Syntax analysis of the City of Aleppo reflects unique results due to the nature of its urban structure. While the global integration value of the studied streets are low,

local integration values give clearer pictures and illustrate that the main corridor that links the entire market have a high value. The local integration value and the high connectivity values, along with other supporting factors, explain their attractiveness as primary retailing and commercial centres.

The survival of the old markets of Aleppo throughout the years is an indicator of its success. The unique nature and structure of the markets made it difficult to rely on rental value alone to measure economic vitality. Thus, the researcher based the survey on the release value to assess the vitality of different parts of the market. It was clear that the markets had high diversity and occupancy rates, which indicates that despite huge social challenges and competition from neighbouring commercial centres, the old markets of Aleppo stand as a vital economic and retailing hub.

All in all, the relationship between urban, social and economic vitality is seen very clearly in the old markets of Aleppo. The centrality of the markets and their level of integration along with the public nature and the presence of different types of activities are strongly correlated with economic vitality findings. The old markets of Aleppo can provide valuable insights into the creation of a better understanding toward reshaping retailing in Kuwait built upon the development of urban, social and economic factors.

## **PART Two: Target Case Study**

### **CHAPTER SEVEN: TARGET CASE STUDY: KUWAIT CITY**

#### **7.0 Introduction**

As part of the research titled “The Role of Integrated and Diverse Retailing in the Production of Urban and Social Vitality: Reshaping Retailing For Kuwait City”, the researcher, after completing a series of case studies on Glasgow, York and Aleppo, has worked on the target case study of Kuwait City. The author aims to illustrate the problematic situation of the retailing environment in particular and public space in general within Kuwait City, and hopes to show the relationship between urban fragmentation, social segregation and lack of vitality.

After a series of visits to the site and based on a comparative evaluation, the researcher chose four case streets based on various factors such as historic significance, retailing concentration and prime position within the road network of the city in an attempt to draw a picture of the nature of existing retailing streets within the city.

This chapter discusses in detail the processes and findings of the case study streets and will present the results based on five methods of analysis: first, a review of regional and local planning policy and its influence on retailing; second, Space Syntax analysis, which highlights the role of the urban fabric and layout on the lack of integration, the location and nature of economic activities; third, an observation of activities and public behaviour within the selected locations, which will inform the research on the relationship between public behaviour in public spaces and economic activities; fourth, reflection on the relationship between urban setting and visual quality on the production of successful retailing centres; and fifth, an analysis of economic vitality measures such as rental values, occupancy rate and retail type surveys.

All in all, this chapter aims to illustrate areas of weakness in public space and retailing environments in Kuwait City that contribute to its lack of vitality and failure to compete with out-of-town shopping centres. It is hoped that this chapter, and fieldwork and the results, can help in achieving the research goals, answer its questions and assist in creating a better understanding of the desired retailing form for Kuwait City.

## 7.1 Study Area

This chapter focuses on Kuwait City. It has been one of the fastest growing cities in the Middle East. The city is located on the coast of the Arabian Gulf. Kuwait has experienced rapid urbanisation especially during the oil boom period between 1950 and the 1980s, and during the period between 2002 and 2007. Kuwait City is located at the centre of Kuwait bordering the Arabian Gulf, Kuwait's bay and the first ring road from the south. It is an oval-shaped city that covers about eight square kilometres. It has a long waterfront area that is well developed and open to the public with the exception of the segment occupied by the Seif Palace (government's headquarters). On the south the city is framed by the green belt and the first ring road. The green belt initially was supposed to provide a buffer zone that limits the growth of the city and creates a green space for the public. (Figure 7. 1). The city has four major land uses: residential, commercial, light industry and governmental.



Figure 7. 1 Kuwait City Buffer Zone (Google Earth & Author)

### **7.1.1 Residential Land Uses**

The residential uses are mostly concentrated in the Sharq area. Traditionally, similar to the rest of the city, it used to house several hundred Arabian houses (courtyard). However, as a result of pressure from owners, the municipal council permitted the change of land use to high-density residential, consisting of multi-storey residential high rises with FAR (Floor Area Ratio) equal to 240%. Again, this specific land use has been under pressure to be replaced by commercial during the last eight years. With the release of a municipal decree that allowed certain blocks to change their use from residential to commercial for office use only, provided that they maintain the same allowable Floor Area Ratio, residential use was eroded further. Moreover, the area is expected to experience a huge disturbance with the opening of the Al-Hamra Tower, which is the highest commercial tower in Kuwait, reaching a height of 320m and which has been built on a site that previously used to house two large cinema halls.

Another major change that occurred in regard to the residential land use within Kuwait City is the conversion of the land allocated for the Public Authority of Housing Care in the Mirqab area, to a site allocated for the Headquarters for the financial and commercial Centre in the city. This shift stressed the direction that the municipality is taking which sees Kuwait City as a single-use city dedicated to the provision of office space services of large financial and commercial institutions.

The largest residential land use area is located in Al Sawaber area (see Figure 7. 2), a project completed by the Public Authority of Housing Care and designed by the world-renowned Canadian architect Arthur Erickson in the 1980s. It consists of 33 buildings, housing a total of 524 apartments serviced by 66 elevators. It was initially envisioned as providing modern urban housing for Kuwaiti citizens and aimed at encouraging Kuwaiti families to reside in the capital's centre. After 30 years the project is in terrible shape as it has been poorly maintained, and suffers from vandalism, crime and overcrowding as a result of renting apartments to expatriates who, in some cases, had occupancy rates of 30 people in a single flat.





Figure 7. 2 Al Sawaber Residential Complex, Kuwait City  
(<http://img55.imageshack.us/img55/4506/untitledim4.jpg>)

Before 2002, residential space in many commercial buildings was rented out to low-income labour, mostly bachelors. The condition of these residential units is terrible and residents live in overcrowded conditions and with limited amenities. After 2002, many of the old buildings constructed in the 60s, 70s and 80s were torn down and newly constructed high rises were built to benefit from the increased allowable floor ratios and the economic prosperity which predicted high demand for office space. As a result tenants were evicted and had to look for accommodation outside the city. This process continues to lead to the increased single-use character of the city and the evident increase of traffic as a result of the higher volume of commuters to the city during rush hour.

All in all, the residential land use in Kuwait City is not pleasant and continues to fail to attract middle-income families. Residents of public housing projects failed to create a strong homeowners' association in order to take care of the maintenance of their estates and collectively represent their interests. The rapid increase of building densities within Kuwait City created a gap between the number of occupants and the provided amenities. Amenities such as open spaces, playgrounds, public parks and parking are very important in creating a pleasant residential environment. In addition, the availability of good schools and other social institutions are crucial in the decisions of families to occupy an area. The condition of residential land use is worsening and if it continues

along this trend it will add to the degraded situation of Kuwait City which is moving toward a single-use city dedicated to commercial office space without residents and the necessary mix to create a vibrant and live city.

### **7.1.2 Administrative and Governmental Land Uses**

The state is the largest owner of land within Kuwait City. It has many major administrative buildings occupying prominent land (see Figure 7. 3). However, they fall within two categories: buildings that are of high quality but set in isolation from the urban fabric and do not contribute to the creation of an integrated urban environment, and those which are in a deteriorating condition and contribute negatively to the quality of the built environment. It has to be understood that the government of Kuwait is the largest employer in the state and more than 84% of the population work in the public sector (Blair, 2009). Several major ministries and authorities are located in the city centre, and thus they contribute to the generation of high traffic volumes toward the city centre at the start of the working day (from 7:00am to 8:00am) and at the end of the working day (between 1:00pm and 3:00pm). Similar to many state buildings around the world, they are dedicated to a single administrative use, with restricted access and have few active entrances which generate relatively dull inactive frontages. Administrative governmental buildings are usually large, set back from the main roads and, similar to shopping malls, sit in the middle of a sea of parking lots. All in all, the situation of governmental buildings in city centres needs attention and should be designed with care so as to contribute positively to the overall urban fabric and the built environment.

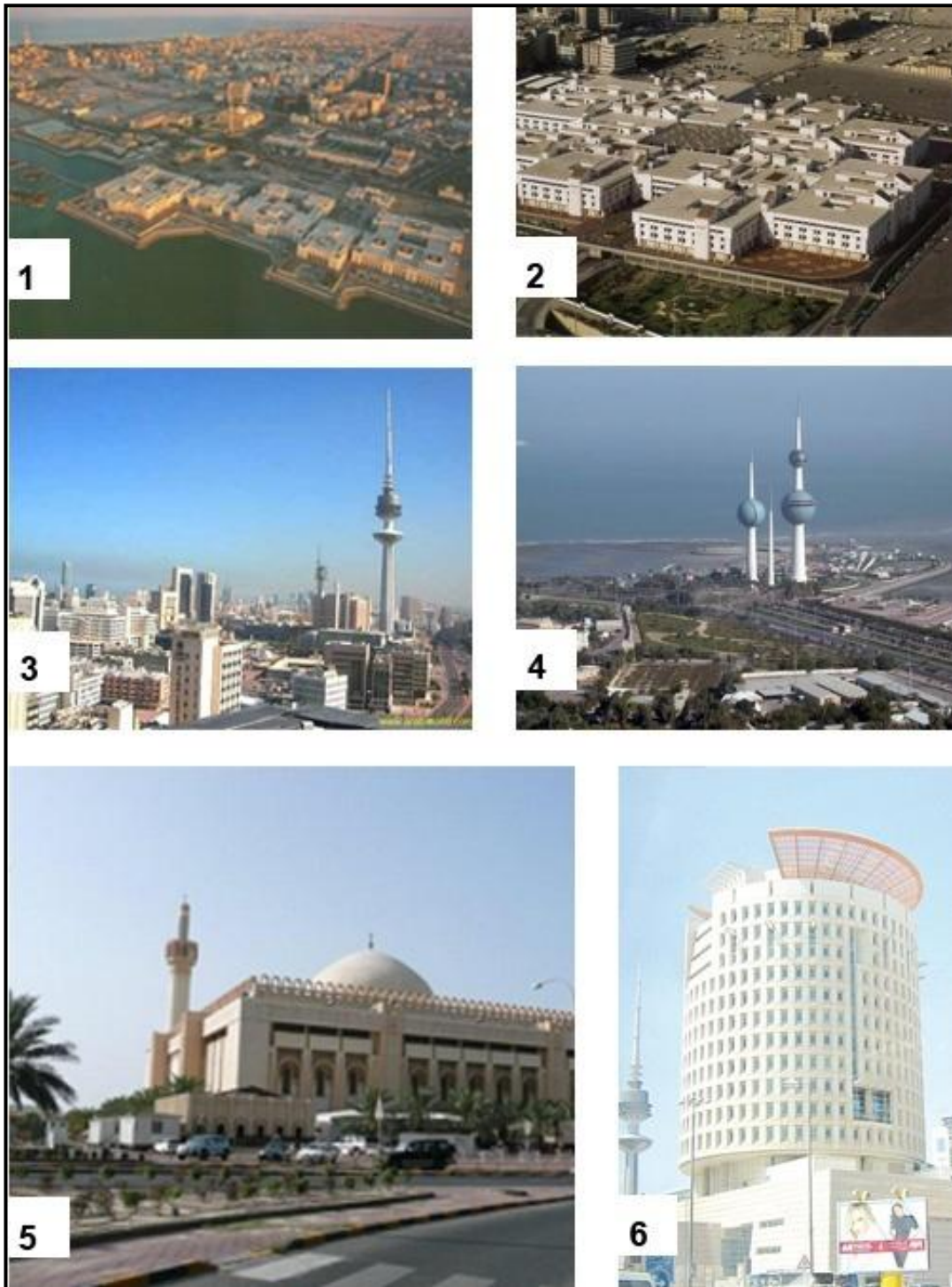


Figure 7.3 Administrative and Governmental Buildings within Kuwait City (1. Seif Palace 2. Ministries Complex 3. Liberation Tower 4. Kuwait Towers 5. Grand Mosque 6. Kuwait Chamber of Commerce)

### 7.1.3 Commercial Land Use within Kuwait City

Commercial land use is the largest and the most developed, and it is growing constantly with varying levels of quality. There is the office space sector which has seen rapid growth during the last 10 years and continues to expand as a result of increased FAR and permission to construct high rises that have reached 77 floors (Figure 7.4).





Figure 7. 4 Office Towers in Kuwait City. (Sources: [businessinsider.com](http://businessinsider.com), [panoramio.com](http://panoramio.com), [p0ech.com](http://p0ech.com), [fried-junk.com](http://fried-junk.com), [isul6ana.com](http://isul6ana.com) & [e-architect.co.uk](http://e-architect.co.uk))

#### 7.1.4 Population

Kuwait City is part of the Capital governorate of the State of Kuwait. It is the nucleus of the metropolitan area of the State of Kuwait. The urban form grew in radial form from Kuwait City. The economic growth and changes in lifestyle have been the drivers of population and urban expansion in Kuwait. Before the 1950s, urban growth was primarily concentrated in the city centre. This pattern has changed; immigration to Kuwait from Asia and the Middle East, and the process of nationalisation necessitated urban growth and led to the development of residential suburbs. Economic development and the welfare policies have increased dispensable income; the new economy produced new markets and created new forms of consumption spaces. Gradually, the city lost its residents, the suburban house became the preferred form of housing for the Kuwaiti population and the apartment became the dominant housing form for the non-Kuwaiti population.

According to the latest census, the total population of the Capital governorate is 421,673. Kuwaitis account for 197,933 and make up about 47%, and non-Kuwaitis account for 223,740 and make up about 53% of the population. As for Kuwait City, the current population is only 48,960 and the Kuwaiti population is only 2,870, making up only 6% of the total population of the city. This shows the failure of the city to attract middle-class residents and, in particular, state citizens. (SCO, 2007).

#### **7.1.5 Kuwait City in the Master Plan of the State of Kuwait**

The Master Plan of Kuwait has been the document that guides all aspects of urban development in the state of Kuwait including transportation, infrastructure, environment and land uses. “The term master plan is conveniently used to describe a sequence of plans at three principal levels, each covering a different area with different objectives. These include: A National Physical Planning Strategy, covering the state of Kuwait; A Metropolitan Area Structure Plan, covering the urban area between Jahra and Mina Abdulla; the Kuwait Town local plan covering the city centre within the First Ring Road.” (Al Jassim, 1996) An introduction to urban planning in the state of Kuwait has been laid out in the introductory chapter of this research. However, in order to shed light on the target case study, its commercial areas and, in particular, retailing in Kuwait City and its development, the researcher felt the need to distill from the master plan important sections that could illustrate the strategic principles that govern urban development in the country and influence retailing and public space.

#### **Master Plan Goals**

The author chose to focus his study on the latest approved plan that is the Third Master Plan Review, referred to here as 3KMPR. The plan is structured in the same way as all previously prepared master plans and consists of three major levels: the National Physical Strategy, the Metropolitan area and Kuwait City. From the Kuwait City Structure Plan completed in 2005, the author sought to extract the vision of Kuwait City as developed throughout the years and this particular approved study. The plan states very clearly early on the aim of the government of Kuwait to transform Kuwait City to a regional financial and commercial centre. “This is manifested in furthering the role of Kuwait City as a national/international financial/business and commercial center.” (Buchanan, 2005: P.1). It states that “the role of Kuwait City is, therefore, expected to be vigorously modified in order to perform the role of a vital centre of gravity, not only

for the State of Kuwait but also for the whole region, capitalizing on its strategic location, and revival of its economic base. Promoting its business and commercial base in the context of a top quality multifaceted urban structure, constitutes the principal objective of the future development of Kuwait City.” (Buchanan, 2005: P.4)

Yet on more than one occasion the plan repeats that it’s restrained by the intrinsic problem of the city which might be difficult to overcome. “...(the Plan) is considerably constrained by the inherent problems of the existing urban structure of the city.” (ibid) The plan summarises the problems of Kuwait City as they continue to exist today as “traffic congestion, inefficient public transport system, scarcity of state owned land, and a deserted city image through the night. The other major factor of negative influence is the absence of a clear image of the city urban features that can easily reflect the essence of the city role, whether it is a sovereign state seat capital, or a business/commercial one, or a multifaceted one.” (ibid: P. 7). Modern and contemporary urban planning has paid great attention to the formulation of strategies and techniques to develop residential areas within city centres. The latest Master Plan of Kuwait has given special attention to housing in the country, but neglected it within the city centre.

Lately the government of Kuwait has moved towards a post-modern economic model that seeks privatisation and calls for the involvement of the private sector in all areas of development, while earlier plans have drawn up areas of residential development within Kuwait City, which were mainly planned to be developed by the state through the Public Authority of Housing Care. This plan, coupled with general consensus, sought to engage the private sector in the development of residential projects within the city and in the country as a whole, while until today state-owned land remains undeveloped and the government failed to provide a clear strategy on the way forward for its development. The city remains in need of residents in order to have the necessary mix required to create a vibrant urban environment.

Although the 3KMPR asserts the need for further mixed-use development, it focuses on certain projects directed at a specific economic class, which is most attractive to private-sector developers and which generate the most feasible housing development projects. The Master Plan states that “...the initiation of a housing program that would serve the new trend prospects of city population of Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and executive business men who would reside in the city during working weekdays.” (Buchanan, 2005: P.20).



Nowhere in the plan is there a reference to the need for the creation and maintenance of a diverse population across the economic spectrum. While there is a clear need for the attraction of middle and high classes into the city, the city needs to provide space for people on low income and who make up a big proportion of the workforce within the city. Without a clear strategy to include a diverse population, the city will remain dull and fail to achieve its goal of being a regional financial and commercial centre.

#### **7.1.6 Description of the Problem**

Planning policies and patterns of urban developments in Kuwait City have had a serious impact on the quality and the understanding of urban life. Public spaces lost their significance and gradually lost their basic role as points of interaction between different classes, as each class develops its own homogeneous space. Kuwait City shows several signs of urban decay and deterioration, some of which can be described as follows:

- **Lack of Identity and Character**

Apparently the city lacks unique character and fails to preserve/create a distinctive character. The weakness of movement corridors within the city and their failure to attract users contributes negatively to the experience of the space. Recent developments vary in form and size, yet most are unsuccessful in relating to the local context and do not contribute to the creation of a unique local character.

- **Fragmentation**

Spaces and streets are isolated from the wider movement network. Thus, it is evident that the city lacks security, vitality and effective mixed uses. The urban form of the city with its large urban block adds to the fragmented nature of the city and prevented integration and connectivity. The city has potential areas and several major project and urban spaces that could attract users, but fails to utilise them to strengthen integration.

- **Urban Grain**

The urban grain of a given city has a significant role in its ability to attract users and encourage pedestrians. A well-designed urban layout should be

legible and allow pedestrians to navigate the city easily. The urban setting must utilise the building elements in order to create well-defined public spaces. Urban block must be aligned in order to establish a strong edge with active frontages that are well detailed and designed. Kuwait City's urban grid is illegible and difficult to conceive; the urban network and the built elements fail to integrate in a positive way. There is a clear lack of street definition and long façades of dead frontages (Figure 7. 5).



Figure 7. 5 Comparison Between Kuwait City and Several Cities' Urban Grain (Source: left: diibybrain.com, right: Author)

- **Toward a Single-use City**

The success of cities depends greatly on their ability to create mixed use, and to bring in diversity of people and activities. As mentioned earlier, Kuwait City is continuously losing residents; it is missing the core element of mixed use and the ability to create communities. Latest planning policies continue to enforce zoning and clear division of land use.

- **Unbalanced Density**

In general, high densities are desirable in cities as they achieve more efficient use of land and create the necessary volume for a vibrant urban milieu. Although Kuwait City took several measures to increase densities considerably in the last 10 years, it has failed to achieve the desirable effect. It has failed to relate to the context and in many cases high-rise buildings have been set next to lower buildings producing awkward effects by not

relating to the plot size and/or street width. In many cases also, high-density schemes harm the quality of the public realm by generating overcrowding and high volumes of vehicular traffic. In several instances, high-rise developments did not consider parking requirements and, as a result, produce high levels of needs that extended and dominated the external environment.

The following case study streets shall illustrate the previous problems that contribute to the decay of public spaces and the degradation of retailing streets.

## **7.2 Case Streets**

### **7.2.1 Criteria for Selecting Case Streets**

The researcher, in his attempt to study the retailing environments in Kuwait City, contemplated very carefully the way to analyse the condition of retailing, taking into consideration time and effort constraints. A systematic method of street selection was established that could give a realistic picture of the condition of retailing in Kuwait in general. The developed system looked at existing density of retailing, traditional sites of retailing within the city, proposed high-priority beautification schemes, and streets with proposed pedestrian priority.

- **Streets with High-density Retailing**

Looking at Kuwait City, one can see that commercial land use is dominant. Despite this definition, there is a lack of development at ground-floor level and little attention is paid to the development of successful retailing in the city. Many land owners prefer the development of high-rise offices, where ground-floor retailing contributes a small portion of the overall value of their developments. Land owners with large plots resort to shopping mall developments where retailing located on ground and mezzanine floors is inward looking and rarely opens to the street with little or no enforcement in place to create continuous and active retailing streets. More and more, the city lost a large portion of its traditional retailing. Thus, streets with existing high proportions of retailing are essential to give an indication of the current situation of retailing streets and public space in the city.

- **Streets with Traditionally Successful Retailing**

Kuwait City historically was the major commercial centre and occupies the highest level of commercial centres within the country. Gradually with growth, sprawl, lack of urban vision, weak code enforcement and the introduction of new forms of retailing, the city lost its position to other forms of retailing, especially out-of-town retailing. Nevertheless, the city has streets that used to have traditional retailing. Although, they have lost their historic significance, they preserved their historic value and in some cases transformed the nature of their retailing from high-end to less valued retailing. Selecting streets based on their historic value as sites of successful retailing is essential to this research.

- **Streets with Proposed High-priority Beautification Schemes (3KMPR)**

The Master Plan of Kuwait through its Kuwait City structure plan identified areas of priority beautification schemes. It has identified three grades of beautification schemes – 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The selection of sites of development schemes illustrates the importance of selected streets and their envisioned role in the development of the city. The author decided to look into this decision by the planners as a guide to the selection of streets for the study of Kuwait City (Figure 7. 6).

- **Streets with Proposed Pedestrian Priority (3KMPR)**

The Master Plan of Kuwait also identified streets that shall be given pedestrian priority. The relation between retailing and pedestrian environments is covariant. Thus, the author looked at the recommendations of Kuwait planners and used them as a basis for his selection of potential streets to be studied to measure the current condition of retailing in Kuwait City (Figure 7. 7).

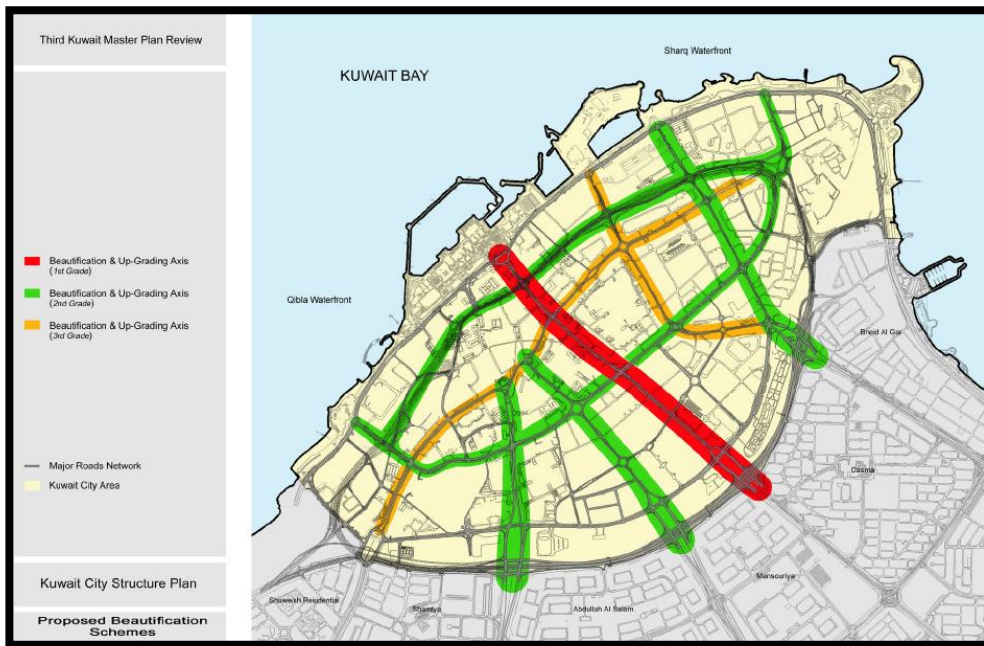


Figure 7. 6 3KMPR Proposed Beautification Schemes (3KMPR)

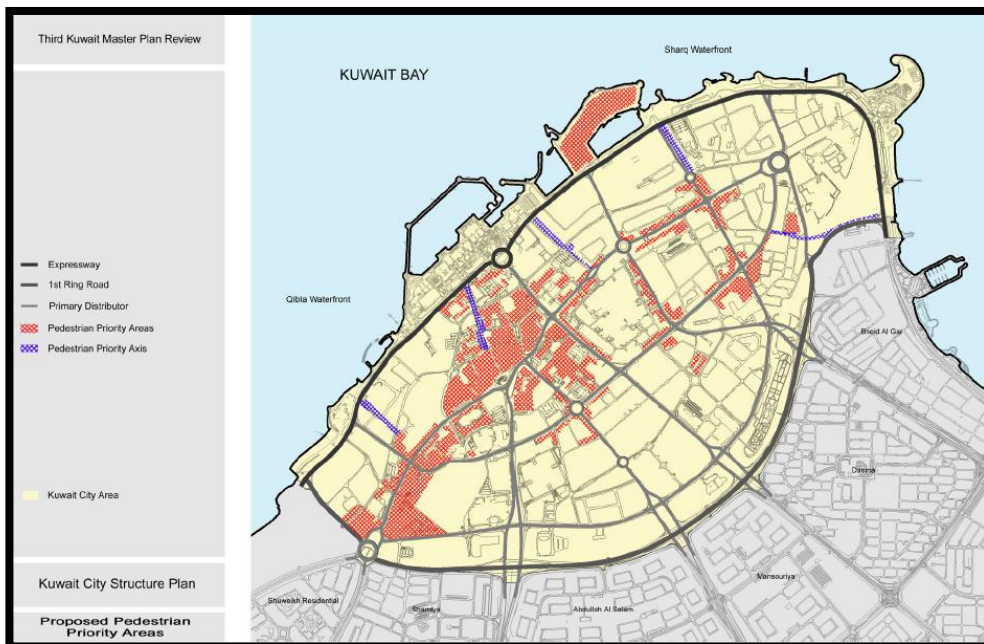


Figure 7. 7 3KMPR Proposed Pedestrian Priority Areas (3KMPR)

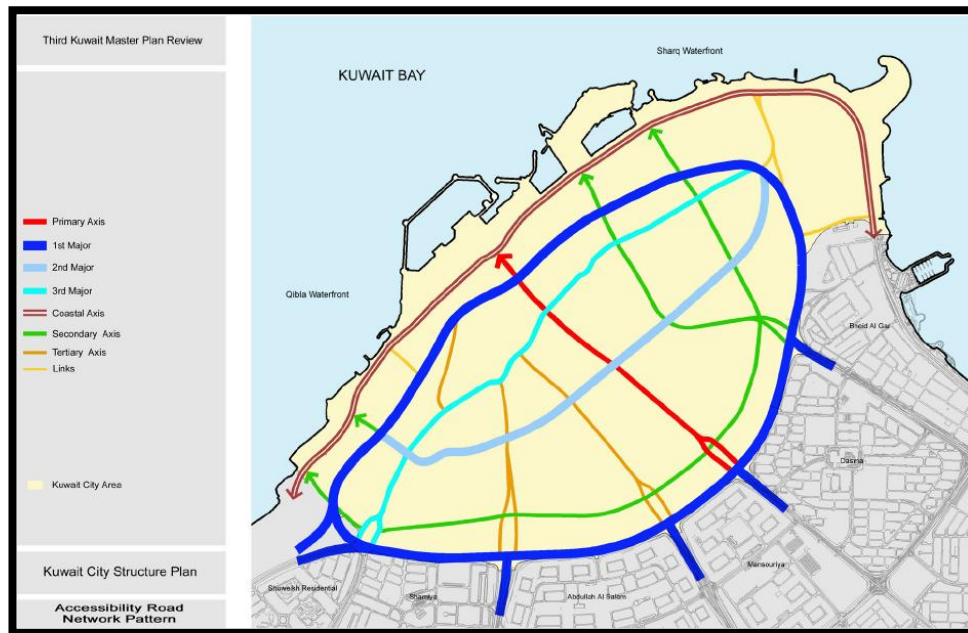


Figure 7. 8 3KMPR Accessibility Road Network Pattern (3KMPR)

- **Road Accessibility Hierarchy (3KMPR)**

The Master Plan of Kuwait also established a hierarchy of road accessibility. The relation between road hierarchy and pedestrian environments is quite complex. However, for the sake of simplification the author took the classification of Kuwait municipality planners and created a correlation between the level of given street, which could give an indication of the importance of the street (Figure 7. 8).

### **Evaluation Criteria and Scoring**

The author developed a table that lists Kuwait City streets and the five chosen selection criteria, then evaluated each street in order to select the preferred streets for further studies. Selected streets are those that ranked highest in terms of the summing up of the values assigned to the each criterion (Table 7. 1). As a result of the above mentioned methodology the author chose to study four streets that, when studied, could give a comprehensive image of street retailing in Kuwait City. These are: Fahad Al-Salem Street, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Street, Jaber Al-Mubarak Street and Palestine Street.



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Fahad Al-Salem	Al Shuhada Street	Abdul Allah Al-Mubarak St.	Mubarak Al-Kabir	Khaled Ben Al Waleed St.	Ahmad Al Jaber St.	Jaber Al Mubarak St.	Abdul Allah Al Ahmad St.	Al Soor St.	Waryah St.	Mohammad Thunayan St.	Abu Baker St.	Salhiya St	Palestine St.	Abdel Men'em Reyadh St.	Othman Ben Affan St.	Yousef Ar Rumi St.	Rashed Burusli St.	Jassem Budai St.
A	<i>High-density Retailing</i>	5	3	0	4	3	2	3	2	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
B	<i>Traditionally Successful Retailing</i>	5	3	0	4	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
C	<i>Proposed Beautification Schemes</i>	3	4	4	5	3	3	4	3	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
D	<i>Proposed Pedestrian Priority</i>	5	2	0	3	3	5	5	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
E	<i>Accessibility and Roads Hierarchy</i>	3	4	1	5	1	3	1	4	5	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Total		21	16	5	21	13	16	16	13	7	0	0	0	21	0	0	0	0	0

Table 7. 1 Street Selection Computation (Author)

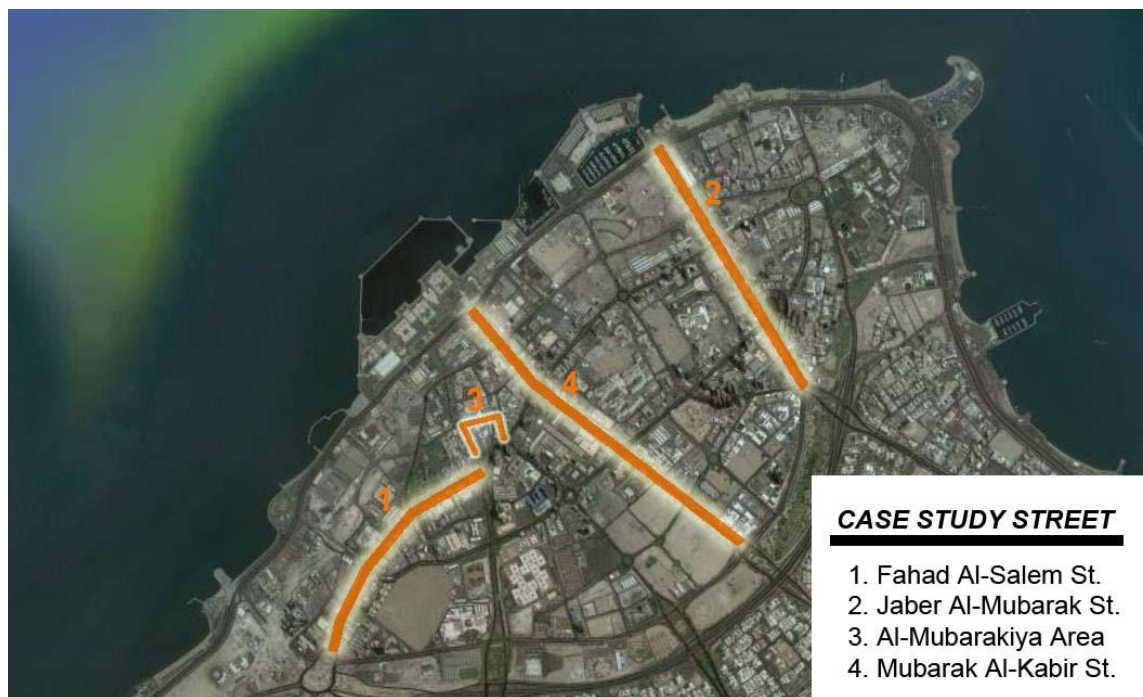


Figure 7. 9 Selected Streets in Kuwait City (Author)

### **7.2.2 First Case Study Street: Fahad Al-Salem**

Fahad Al-Salem Street is one of the main commercial streets in Kuwait and is considered one of the earliest developed modern streets in the city. It is located in Qibla Sector in the western area of Kuwait City. It takes a curvilinear shape and runs from Al-Jahra Gate (now called the Sheraton roundabout) to Safat Square. Its length is about 1,520 metres (Figure 7. 9).

#### ***Spatial Quality***

The street is very well defined in comparison to other commercial streets within the city; it has few empty or undeveloped plots. Due to originally enforced building regulations, a continuous façade with colonnades has been developed along both sides of the street. However, there remains little public-owned land left undeveloped and several buildings have been demolished and are under construction. In addition, both the public park on the eastern part of the street and the public square in the Salhiya area, create voids and contribute to the lack of proper enclosure that adds to the definition of the space.

The gaps between Fahad Al-Salem Street buildings vary from interesting to banal. Some are interesting and provide opportunities for glimpses to the rear streets and/or buildings, others provide spaces where quiet public space is created. In some cases the pedestrian alleys between buildings are spaces where smaller shops exist and serve the public (Figure 7. 10).

Looking at building plots in Fahad Al-Salem Street, one can see that plots vary in terms of width, and orientation, while in general most buildings – as in the case of the majority of commercial streets – fill the entire plot and contribute to the creation of a continuous street façade. However, the division of plots in some cases stands out and sits in isolation from the uniformity of the entire street, taking a unique orientation, occupying a single block and/or not occupying the whole plot. By doing so, they break the continuity of the street and create areas of inactive frontage.

Along the same lines, the street in general has uniform and defined edges. However, in some segments, it has wider areas where green spaces, public squares and/or parking plots are located. Such spaces could contribute to the creation of interesting urban spaces and can add to the character of the street. However, in the case of Fahad Al-

Salem Street there are odd areas, voids and undefined areas that give a sense of chaos to the street.

For some time streetscape has been ignored. Lately, the Kuwait municipality began a process of development that aims to upgrade the pavements of all sidewalks within Kuwait City. The proposed high-quality pavement material – 10cm X 10 cm granite blocks – is contributing to the improvement of the street. In general, Fahad Al-Salem Street lacks well-designed street furniture. Recent works have involved installing high-quality street lighting poles in addition to bollards which contribute to the overall quality of the street. However, a comprehensive solution is needed to enhance the quality of the street.

From a traffic viewpoint, Fahad Al-Salem is considered a third-grade axis according to the Kuwait municipality assessment. Nevertheless, heavy traffic throughout the day affects the ease of use and enjoyment of the street by pedestrians. As in Kuwait City in general, spaces allocated for car parking are not sufficient along Fahad Al-Salem Street and, as a result, cars tend to park in two rows and in many cases obstruct bus stops. The Ministry of Public Works decided to convert parallel parking into perpendicular, which encroached on space from sidewalks and made it worse for pedestrians and car traffic which had to deal with cars backing up to the road (Figure 7. 11)



Figure 7. 10 Gaps Between Buildings at Fahad Al-Salem Street (Author)

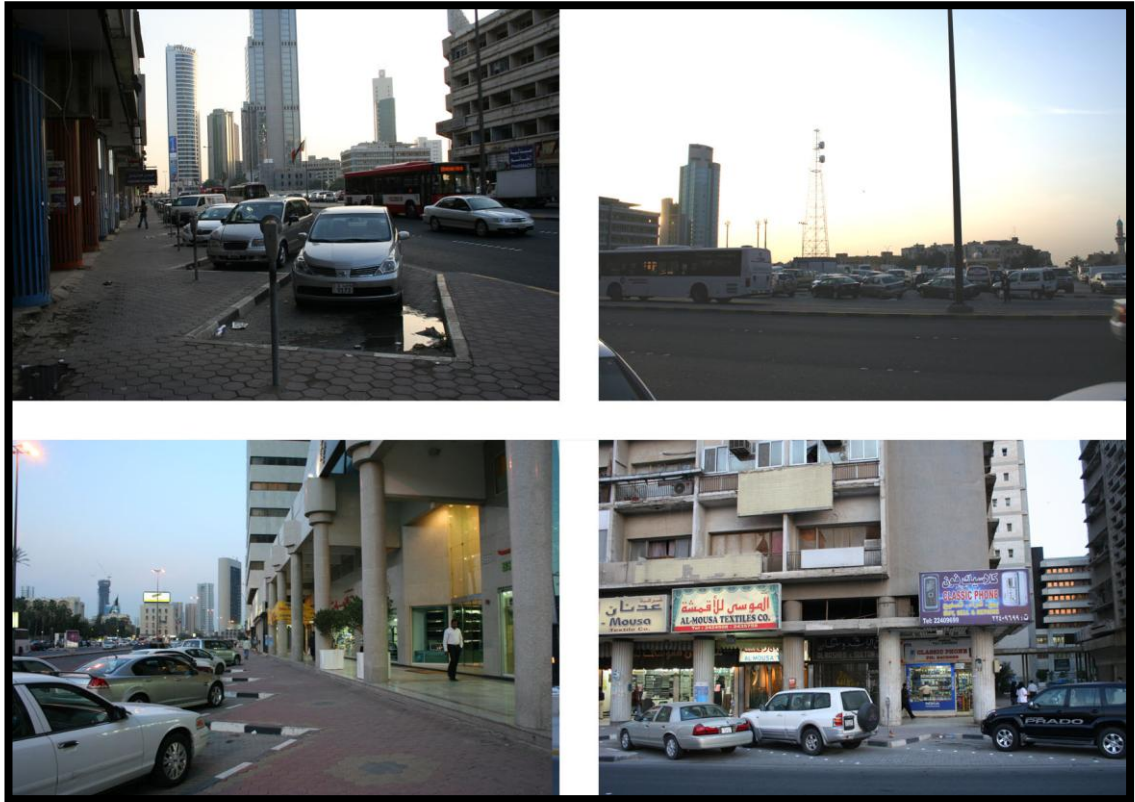


Figure 7. 11 Parking on Fahad Al-Salem Street (Author)

### Visual Quality of Buildings

Fahad Al-Salem buildings have undergone major development during the last eight years. As a result, the character of the space has changed completely. Relaxed building regulations that allowed for high-rise buildings encouraged owners to redevelop their properties to the maximum FAR. Floor allowable ratio does not control height and, as a result, today we see buildings with different heights existing along the street, which contribute negatively to the visual quality of the street.

Glass curtain walls are the dominant building material today. The use of glass curtain walls is extensive and is perceived as being trendy, despite its unsuitability in a country such as Kuwait with harsh and very hot weather. Buildings on the street fail to create a uniformity of building materials, nor do they achieve an interesting diversity.

In general, buildings on Fahad Al-Salem Street fall within two age categories: those which have been developed in the sixties and those developed during the economic boom period after 2002. Older buildings are not very well maintained and certainly have a very negative impact on the quality of the built environment.

In terms of use, buildings on Fahad Al-Salem have diverse uses. The majority of buildings have commercial office spaces on the higher floors and retail on the ground and mezzanine. Several older properties tend to have upper floors rented out as residential units, usually for tenants of low income. In addition, there are few administrative and religious buildings along the street.

### **7.2.3 Second Case Study Street: Jaber Al-Mubarak Street**

Jaber Al-Mubarak Street is one of the main commercial streets in Kuwait. It is located in Sharq Sector in the eastern area of Kuwait City. It runs straight from Al-Soor Street all the way to Arabian Gulf Street. Its length is about 1,960 metres.

#### **Spatial Quality**

In general the street fails to create a well-defined enclosure due to the lack of development of buildings on both sides. Plots along the street vary in terms of size and orientation, and so result in a wide range of building scales, size and heights. Most privately owned plots have constructions on them built in compliance with building regulations, while publicly owned buildings do not conform to standard building regulations and are not governed by financial constraints. They have large set-backs and occupy part of the allocated plots and in doing so contribute negatively to the definition of the street and the creation of a strong visual quality. The street suffers from wide areas of empty and/or undeveloped plots, partly due to the large proportion of publicly owned land or the continuous change of land use within the area which makes developers hesitant to develop and commit to a certain scheme. The latest economic depression led to the suspension of development on several major sites within the scheme and resulted in numerous fenced abandoned construction sites (Figure 7. 12).

Buildings on Jaber Al-Mubarak Street fall within two major categories: public and commercial buildings. On the northern part of the street Al-Amiri Hospital is located and in the centre there are two major public institutions: Gulf Investment Corporation and the Centre for Research and Studies on Kuwait. The rest is mainly commercial office high rises with retailing on the ground floor. From a design point of view, it is a low-quality street. Sidewalks are poorly maintained with low-quality pavements and no



consistent street furniture. Broken and obstructed sidewalks are uninviting to pedestrians and the overall setting results in a street that caters only for motorists.

The traffic volume is acceptable. The street is assigned a secondary axis grade according to the Kuwait municipality assessment yet it has various elements that negatively affect pedestrian movement. Parking, in particular, is one of the major problems throughout the city. On the street it was converted from parallel to perpendicular which took space from the sidewalks. Also, few allocated pedestrian crossing points contribute to the chaotic nature of the street.

### **Visual Quality of Buildings**

In general Jaber Al-Mubarak Street's buildings fail to contribute to the spatial quality of the street. Looking at individual buildings one can see that they were developed independently with little or no consideration for the context of the street and/or the area.

Buildings on Jaber Al-Mubarak Street vary greatly in terms of size and scale. On one hand, Al-Hamra Tower is the highest building in Kuwait rising to 77 floors; on the other hand there are several other buildings with very narrow widths and low height (Figure 7. 13).

Buildings also differ in terms of age from new to buildings of at least 40 years old. In addition, the use of cladding materials fails to create a coherent visual character and fails to respond positively to the local context.

The same applies to use and functions of buildings. In general the street is commercial and most of the plots and buildings are permitted to have retail use on ground floors and offices on the upper floors. However, there are a few major developments that stand out such as the Amiri Hospital on the northern part of the street which has a long, dull fence, and a few governmental administrative buildings in the central area in addition to a single storey restaurant that exists in contrast to the rest of the street.



Figure 7. 12 Halted Construction on Jaber Al-Mubarak Street (Author)



Figure 7. 13 Variation in Building Scale on Jaber Al-Mubarak Street (Source: Right: <http://upload.wikimedia.or>, Left: Author).

#### 7.2.4 Third Case Study Street: Al-Mubarakiya Area (Al-Gazali Street, Palestine Street and Abdullah Al-Salem Street)

The selected streets to be studied in this case are located in the Al-Mubarakiya area, which is the historic market area of Kuwait City. They are located in the Al-Qibla Sector of the city which is central to the city. To some extent the government tried to preserve the historic nature of the area through height control and land use regulation.

##### **Spatial Quality**

The spatial character of the Al-Mubarakiya area is strong and produces ordered uniform streets. The studied streets are well enclosed and clearly defined by the existence of the continuous buildings' façades. The uniqueness of the area is due to the small size of its plots; most plot sizes do not exceed 150 sq m. In general, most buildings fill the entire plot and strongly address the street. Plot width varies reasonably, thus creating diversity yet maintaining an acceptable level of order. Palestine Street, in particular, has a controlled vehicle access and is dedicated to pedestrians only. By this it has created an airy and open space that encourages the presence of people and adds to the enjoyment of the space. Overall the streets are narrow and enclosed by two- to three-storey-high buildings. Such proportions help to control the light entering the space and protect

pedestrians from the harsh sun. At the same time it makes it easier to cover the street with a shading element that serves the same purpose. The three studied streets run straight, creating clear views from one end to the other.

In general the area is commercial with small retail units making up the majority of activities within the area. In addition, there are several cafés and restaurants that serve the public and add to the liveliness of the area. Similar to traditional markets, retailing is specialised, where specific streets sell the same line of products. For example, Al-Garabali Street specialises in traditional carpets and money-exchange shops; Palestine Street has shops that sell traditional clothes, shoes and perfumes; and Abdullah Al-Salem Street houses an agglomeration of electronics shops.

Buildings have active frontage which contributes to the creation of a vibrant and lively street scene. Pavements' material and street furniture also vary throughout the area. Al-Garabali Street has a relatively well designed streetscape; it was developed through a BOT (Built – Operate – Transfer) scheme that transferred part of the market to a private developer who redeveloped the market and is contracted to maintain it and invest in it for 25 years. Property owners on Palestine Street are individuals; Kuwait municipality recently completed a maintenance project that upgraded the pavements, bollards, roofing and lighting. Abdullah Al-Salem Street streetscape remains not well maintained. The street has asphalt pavements and sidewalks are of various finishes. In addition, it changes level, has several obstructions and does not follow universal accessibility standards. It is still open for vehicular access and is heavily congested. Parking is scarce and poorly managed.

### **Visual Quality of Buildings**

The condition of buildings in the Al-Mubarakiya area varies so much. Some are in a very poor condition, their owners do not consider it feasible to maintain and/or rebuild them with the current restrictive building regulations that control height. Others are relatively new and very well preserved.

The eastern part of Al-Garabali Street consists of small three-storey buildings individually owned. The buildings are of mediocre condition built around 20 years ago. The western side is part of the BOT scheme that is managed now by a private investor.

It has a uniform design that tries to copy the traditional Kuwaiti architectural language. It is very well maintained and creates an interesting coherent character to the entire area (Figure 7. 14).



Figure 7. 14 Al-Gharabali Street Character (Author)

Palestine Street buildings are individually built and their condition varies considerably. Part of the street has several poorly maintained single-storey buildings that are leased for several retail units. Others are recently constructed buildings with modern materials, but have failed to respond sensibly to their context. A section of the street is part of the governmentally owned land, which is now managed by a private company (Figure 7. 15).



Figure 7. 15 Palestine Street (Author)

Abdullah Al-Salem Street within the Al-Mubarakiya area is one of the first modern streets in the city, although it is only 220m long. It is fully developed with three-storey-high buildings. Historically it became known for housing retail units that specialise in selling electronics and watches. The buildings are of several modern styles, yet maintain a continuous colonnade that provides a nice shaded walkway. The buildings are covered with shop signs in an overwhelming fashion that contribute negatively to the quality of



the street. It is noticeable that the street suffers from excessive traffic congestion and scarcity of parking spaces (Figure 7. 16).



Figure 7. 16 Abdullah Al-Salem Street (Author)

All in all, the buildings in the three studied streets have a uniform size and scale. The BOT project helped to establish a dominant building material and assert the traditional Kuwaiti architectural language. The uniform retail nature of the area supported by various cafés and restaurants contributes positively to the area.

#### 7.2.5 Fourth Case Study Street: Mubarak Al-Kabir Street

Mubarak Al-Kabir Street is one of the most important streets in the city. It literally divides the city into two halves. It runs from the first ring road all the way to the Seif Palace (Prince's office and the government's headquarters).

According to the Kuwait's master plan it was assigned a first-grade priority for beautification schemes. Also, its northern section is set as a pedestrian priority area. In terms of accessibility, it is considered a primary access. The street has a good presence of retailing on it, however, the nature and distribution do not contribute to the creation of a vibrant shopping location.

#### Spatial Quality

The character of the street differs greatly from north to south due to the existence of a large empty plot of land on the southern section and an area of light industry which is overlooking the street's southern segment. Thus, in terms of enclosure and street definition, one can say that on the southern segment the street is very poor. On the central and northern parts it gets better, where a commercial privately owned plot and



strong building regulations helped to create a continuous façade that clearly defines the street.

At the same time the central and northern segments of the street have several gaps in between buildings that helped to create some interesting glimpses, created a breathing space and provided access to rear spaces. The way buildings relate to the plots of land differs greatly along the street. While privately owned buildings in the majority of commercial streets fill the entire plot, state-owned buildings relate to the plots differently and in many cases contribute negatively to the character of the street.

The allocation of large parking lots along the street has a devastating effect. It just emphasises the priority given to vehicle movement rather than pedestrians. It also contributes negatively to the lack of definition in the street's closure (Figure 7. 17).



Figure 7. 17 Parking Lots in Front of Buildings on Mybarak Al-Kabir Street (Author)

It is also noticeable that the streetscape is neglected and the street suffers from lack of maintenance and upkeep. In some areas, the pavement is broken, bus stops are in a horrible condition, the street lacks landscaping elements and obstacles on the sidewalks hinder the movement of pedestrians let alone those with disabilities. The street lacks sufficient street furniture and fails to establish a unified visual character (Figure 7. 18).

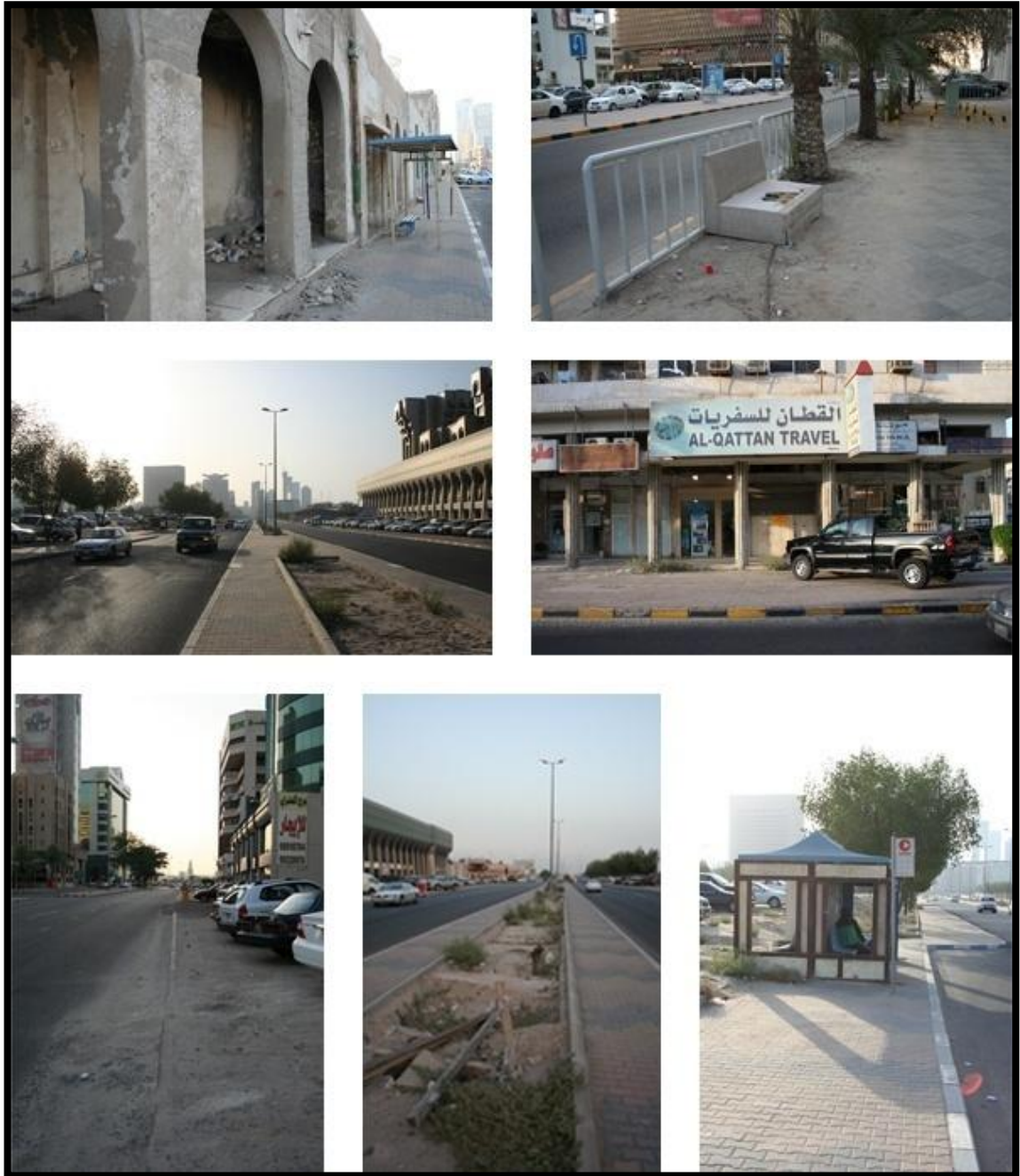


Figure 7. 18 Low-quality Sidewalks on Mubarak Al-Kabir Street (Author)

### Visual Quality Buildings

Although there are several high-quality and important buildings along Mubarak Al-Kabir Street, their presence rarely contributes to the overall quality of the street. There is an evident lack of uniformity of design and a failure to create a level of successful diversity. The historic Seif Palace with its distinctive tower and the Al-Sha'ab Gate were not utilised to create a significant urban place (Figure 7. 19).



Figure 7. 19 Seif Palace Clock Tower and Al Sha'ab Gate at Both Ends of Mubarak Al-Kabir Street (Author)

Buildings along the street vary in terms of size and scale which disturbs the quality of the street. Buildings on the street differ in age. They range from those completed in the sixties and seventies to those recently completed in the last eight years (Figure 7. 20). The same can be applied to their condition; there are some that are well maintained and others that are clearly old, neglected and contribute negatively to the street. The buildings fail to create a collective character to the street; some are built with modern glass curtain walls, others used metal, stone or stucco cladding.

In general, buildings on the street are occupied, but they differ in use. There are several high-end administrative buildings such as the Seif Palace, Kuwait Stock Exchange, Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Grand Mosque. The central segment is mainly made of commercial buildings with retail on the ground floor and offices on upper floors, while the southern part consists of several one-storey car workshops that form part of the light industrial area of Kuwait City.





Figure 7. 20 Building of Varying Scale and Size on Mubarak Al-Kabir Street (Author)

### 7.3 Space Syntax Analysis

Space Syntax Theory and Analysis has been employed in this research to evaluate the level of integration in the street networks of Kuwait City and create a fundamental understanding of its urban structure. A detailed reference to the theories and applications of Space Syntax is outlined in chapter four of this dissertation.

Kuwait City is a unique case of rapid urban development that sought to follow modern methods. Urban planning policies and decisions that guided the development of the urban form of Kuwait City in the last 60 years have led to the creation of a fairly fragmented urban system with many heterogeneous urban spaces. The division of land use which separated uses and led to the creation of isolated residential areas in the heart of the city centre and the gradual move toward a single-use city that is mainly commercial, contributed negatively to the overall fragmentation of the city. In addition, modern planning principles that give priority to vehicle movement continue to guide planning decisions and throughout the last 50 years aimed to create street hierarchies that act as barriers to pedestrian movement. When studying Kuwait City the researcher has aimed to trace pedestrian movement rather than mere spatial forms. According to Bill Hillier, “The fundamental correlate of the spatial configuration is movement” (Hillier, 1996: P.43). While modern planning principles rely on the block to assign and divide different land use in cities, lines (streets) as the natural corridor of movement flow must become the elements of uniform land use. “The fundamental land use element is not the zone or even the urban block but the line ... the pattern of alignment is the fundamental determinant of movement.” (Hillier, 1996: P. 53).

Space Syntax theories stress the ability of the geometric form of the urban grid to generate the desired movements. People would select certain routes based on different factors that are more complex than mere shortest distance from origin to destination. (Hillier, 2005: P. 554). (Hillier, 2005: P.562)

In Space Syntax methodology, the axial map is the basic tool of study. The first step was to create a global Space Syntax model that covers Kuwait City and highlight areas of fragmentation and potential vital retailing. Next these four streets were selected to evaluate the configuration and integration values. The spatial layout of Kuwait City was analysed using Space Syntax techniques by assigning syntactic values to every street segment in the system (City). The researcher used two syntax measures: global integration and local integration. The global and local integration based on the axial model of Kuwait City is shown in Figure 7. 21 and Figure 7. 24. Each line in the axial map shows the global integration value of the axial lines, where the colour red represents the highest integration and the colour green represents the lowest integration. The integration value of each line reflects its mean linear depth from other lines in the system (Hillier, 1996: P. 160). Local integration refers to the calculation of integration

only up to three lines away from each line in all directions. Global and local integration maps and values are a great tool to illustrate potential movement along a certain line (i.e. street). Yet, in specific cases results should be verified in specific locations to confirm findings.

### 7.3.1 Global Integration

An overview of the global integration axial map shows that, in general, axial lines have low values. From the map we can see that the most segregated areas are situated on the edges (Figure 7. 21). Although Space Syntax theory suggests that segregated areas correlate with low pedestrian and vehicular movement, observations have shown high vehicular traffic along Gulf Street and high pedestrian flow along developed sea-front areas.



Figure 7. 21 Kuwait City's Global Integration Axial Map (Author)

Kuwait City modern planning was actually built on the historic form of the city which consisted of thousands of courtyard houses, narrow walkways and cul-de-sacs. When the government sought to modernise the city and purchased most private properties within the city, it did not follow a comprehensive plan, but in many cases reacted to existing obstacles such as cemeteries, religious buildings and even sometimes private properties. The area of the old market was preserved and the royal family's property on



the eastern part of the city remained unaffected. Until now vast areas within the city centre remain undeveloped, as a result the city now consists of large urban blocks. All this led to the current fragmented condition of the city which consists of large blocks that are not pedestrian friendly, and streets with few connectivity values that are short, winding and prevent visual control. The government also filled the sea on the edge of the city to reclaim seafront land, which created an attractive public space, yet it failed to integrate it with the city centre fabric and is mainly accessible by private vehicles.

Looking at the four selected case streets/areas (Figure 7. 22), we can see that the first case study street (Fahad Al-Salem Street, which is located in the eastern part of the city and is considered the major retailing street of the city centre) has a low integration value equal to 0.8797. The second case study street (Jaber Al-Mubarak Street) has a global integration value equal to 1.2375. The third case study area (Al-Mubarakiya Streets) has a low integration value equal to 0.8378. The fourth case study street (Mubarak Al-Kabir) has an integration value equal to 1.223 in its southern section and 0.9596 in its northern section towards the seaside.

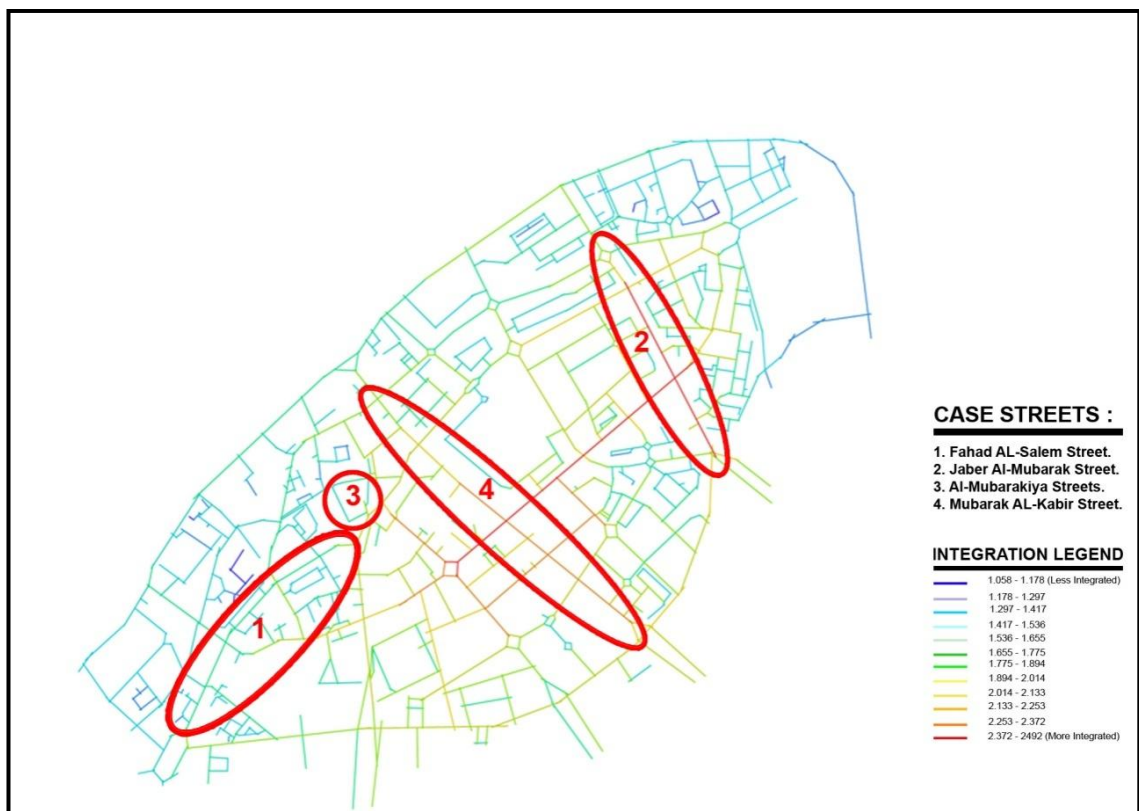


Figure 7. 22 Kuwait City Case Streets Global Integration Map (Author)

The low integration value of Fahad Al-Salem Street and Al-Mubarakiya area streets is due to the land use isolation which fails to create the necessary mixed uses that attract users, but also, and especially for Fahad Al-Salem Street, the large urban blocks and the large distance between junctions discourage pedestrian flow.

As for Jaber Al-Mubarak Street and Mubarak Al-Kabir Street, they have relatively high integration values that are due to their connectivity to a large number of elements in the system, in addition to their straight shape which enhances visual control and cognitive perception.

### 7.3.2 Local Integration

The local integration map ( $r=3$ ) (Figure 7. 23) shows a heterogeneous structure with a clear lack of centrality. The least integrated lines are located on the edge of the city, are short and serve mainly to connect few streets.



Figure 7. 23 Kuwait City's Local Integration Axial Map (Author)

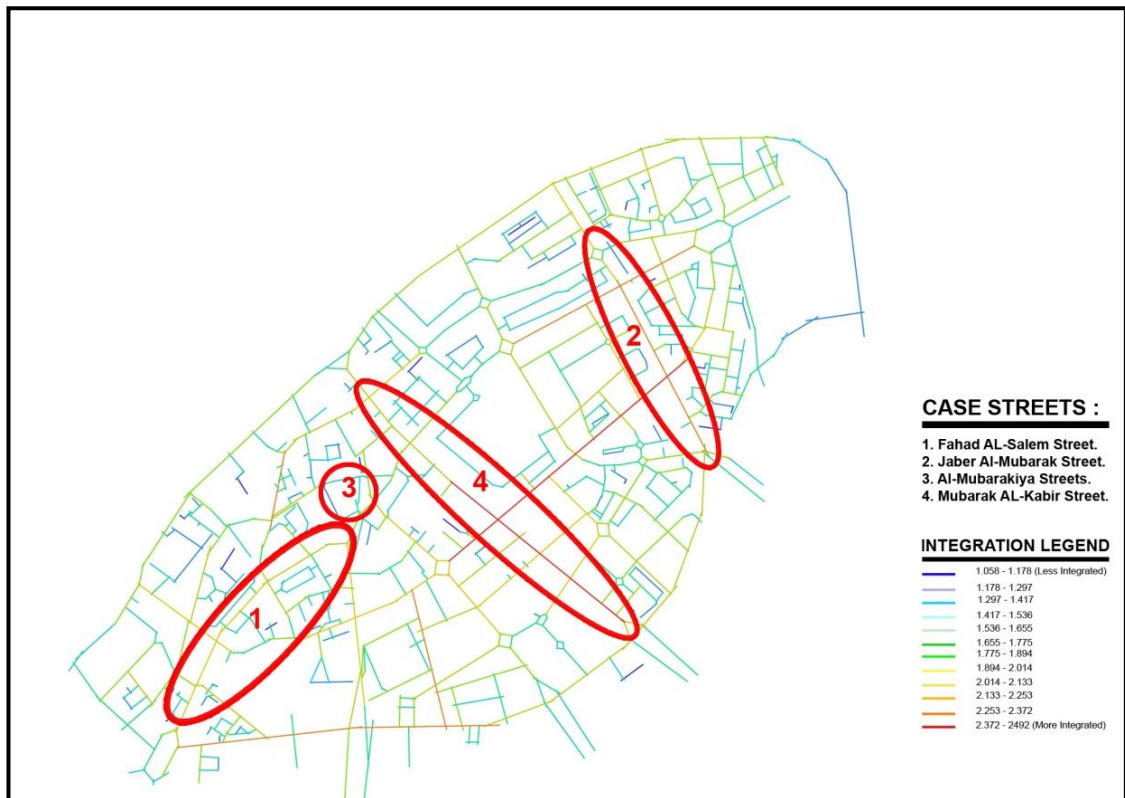


Figure 7. 24 Kuwait City Case Streets' Local Axial Map (Author)

Fahad Al-Salem Street has a low local integration value equal to 2.5440. The second case study street (Jaber Al-Mubarak Street) has a global integration value equal to 2.7872. The third case study area (Al-Mubarakiya Streets) has a low integration value equal to 1.2123. The fourth case study street (Mubarak Al-Kabir) has an integration value equal to 2.8638 in its southern section and 2.1758 in its northern section toward the seaside (Figure 7. 24).

The city in general is as fragmented in the global level as in the local level. It failed to create local centres that generate the necessary pedestrian flow. Again, the lack of an adequate mixed use contributed negatively to the lack of vitality.

### 7.3.3 Discussion

Looking at Space Syntax maps of Kuwait City, one can see that there is a strong correlation between the situation of the city and its representation in the axial maps. The situation in Kuwait City can be described as “Disurbanism”, which is defined as “...the breaking of the relation between buildings and public space; the breaking of the relation between scales of movement and the breaking of the interface between inhabitant and stranger.” (Hillier, 1996: P. 56).

The first problem is its lack of strong and clear centrality in the global and local levels, despite consistent local planning documents that call for the importance of holding Kuwait City at the highest level of commercial centres in the country (Buchanan, 2005). Throughout its development, Planners failed to create a high quality centre in Kuwait City; nor create distinguished local centres, which could have been developed in the historic quarters of the traditional city (Jibla, Sharq and Murqab).

The second major problem is fragmentation. Although the historic core of the city has a strong structure, planning policies have isolated it from the rest of the city. Both public and private developments have contributed to the fragmented nature of the city. The following list attempts to outline some of the factors contributing to the fragmentation of Kuwait City:

- Large public-owned land left undeveloped in the heart of the city.
- Several cemeteries in the heart of the city, acted as barriers to proper developments and added to the fragmentation of the urban fabric.
- Large isolated blocks of public housing and projects.
- Cutting through the city to create major streets to serve vehicular movements (such as the extension of the first ring road project).
- During periods of economic boom, chaotic developments took place such as rebuilding, increasing buildings' heights and changing land use which contributed to further fragmentation of the urban fabric.

It has to be recognised that current plans will worsen the structural problems of the city. The latest Master Plan ignores the issue of segregation and fails to address the issue that fragmentation and urban expansion are weakening centrality and affecting the city centre negatively.

## **7.4 Observation**

This research aimed to look at the problems of Kuwait City from a holistic and integrated viewpoint. Looking at issues such as social vitality is not a simple task and it cannot be studied in isolation from other factors such as the physical setting and the economic conditions. From observation one can see that Kuwait City suffers from lack of social vitality, which can be due to four main factors:

1. Lack of residents.
2. Unbalanced mix of activities and land use.
3. Fragmentation of the urban fabric and poor urban setting.
4. Harsh weather.

In the last 50 years Kuwait City has been transformed into a dull place that lacks the presence of people and the necessary conditions for social vitality. It has followed certain international planning principles that promote single use and utilise the urban environment to serve the circulation of the private vehicle.

#### **7.4.1 Discussion of Observation**

After observation of the current conditions of Kuwait City, one can see that the public realm is neglected and little effort is dedicated to the creation of inviting public spaces in between buildings. As a result, gradually city streets have been abandoned and only those with limited alternatives remain as users of public space within Kuwait City.

The first problem continues to be the failure of the city to maintain and attract middle-income residents. The presence of people during working hours only and within few quarters in the city is not enough to create a sense of community and belonging, and would not create the necessary liveliness needed to create a successful city centre and retailing environment.

Single-use planning contributed negatively to social segregation, as middle- and high-income residents left Kuwait City for newly constructed suburbs. The government continues to fail to create the proper alternatives that attract the necessary social mix for the creation of social vitality in the city centre. Walking in the city centre streets, one can see clearly the absence of certain social groups such as women, children and the elderly.

While planners in Kuwait City remain concerned with finding solutions for Kuwait City through traditional planning tools such as zoning, Floor Area Ratios, height restrictions and setback requirements, Gehl stresses the importance of thinking about the creation of spaces that attract people and create events since, in accordance with findings of this research, people want to be among others. Regardless of how nice the physical setting may look visually, it is not enough to make a successful urban place. (Gehl, 1987: P.

81) With the exception of few places within Kuwait City, more and more, people are finding it more exciting to go to out-of-town shopping malls with the amenities and the comfort that they provide. There is no public space and very little consideration is given to pedestrian movement, or to the design of places dedicated to public gathering.

Kuwait City has a collection of very well designed high-rise buildings which are designed by individual owners and/or public institutions. While they are contributing to the improvement of the city image a kilometre away, the situation at ground level has not improved – it may even have worsened. Gehl observed that while high-rise buildings look good on the skyline, they fail to humanise the street-level walkers. He noted the importance of view angles and the act of spectacle to the presence of people in certain areas. That's why he came to the conclusion that low buildings work better for the creation of warm physical environments in which people feel more comfortable sitting or walking next to. (Gehl, 1987: P. 99).

In contradiction of what's happening in Kuwait City, where authorities are constantly concerned about the development of the street networks for the sake of faster and easier car traffic, Gehl stresses from observation that where wider sidewalks and open public spaces exist, people would feel more comfortable to be and walk. (Gehl, 1987: P. 77).

Through observation the research sought to trace some positive signs of public space usage despite official resistance and scarce physical settings. Starting from May 2006 and the rise of political tension between the government and opposition, political parties sought to show public support and searched for an adequate public space to gather and debate public issues. Thus a group of active youths selected a planted lawn site located on the seafront area across the street from the Public Assembly building to call for public gatherings and demonstrations. Since then, the site has become known as the Well Square, and has been a site of continuous congregation to debate various issues of public interest (Figure 7. 25).





Figure 7. 25 The Well Square: a Site of Public Gathering in Kuwait City (Author)

Field observation of people's use of space at the Al-Mubarakiya area illustrates that, wherever people find adequate space, they tend to use it. Figure 7. 26 shows the outdoor seating area that extends in front of several dozens of cafés and restaurants, and how the area is utilised and customised with simple shading. It is quite successful and fairly busy especially during evenings and nights.



Figure 7. 26 Outdoor Café/Restaurants in Al-Mubarakiya (Author)

Another example from Kuwait City is seen at Safat Square, a historic square that is located at the heart of Kuwait City. The modern design that converted the square into a below-grade site, contributed negatively to its isolation from the urban fabric. Nevertheless, due to its development and provision of seating and design elements such as a water fountain, pavements, lighting, and so on, the square is relatively active and is able to attract crowds especially during the weekend (Figure 7. 27).



Figure 7. 27 The Safat Square in the Heart of Kuwait City (Author)

Another sign of people’s readiness to occupy and use an open public space in Kuwait City, is the presence of vendors at Safat Square (Figure 7. 28). Although they are illegal and liable to prosecution, one finds them in big numbers selling various goods especially during weekends.



Figure 7. 28 Vendors at Safat Square (Author)

Also, at Palestine Street in the Al-Mubarakiya area, one can see clearly that the street is dedicated to pedestrian movement only. There is a high volume of pedestrian movement and users, especially families, are attracted to the area as they feel secure, joyful and comfortable to be in a public space (Figure 7. 29).



Figure 7. 29 Pedestrianisation on Al-Mubarakiya (Author)





Figure 7. 30 Vendors on Abdullah Al-Salem Street (Al-Mubarakiya) (Author)

The presence of an informal public market at the open space towards the southern end of Abullah Al-Salem Street within the Mubarakiya area illustrates again public eagerness to occupy public space and engage in an unplanned manner with the public and public space. One finds dozens of vendors sitting on simple stools, presenting their goods on low tables and selling various goods such as watches, jewellery, toys, mobile phones and other items (Figure 7. 30).

It is evident from observation that Kuwait City lacks the provision of adequate public space for social interaction. Nevertheless, the researcher tried to illustrate different examples that show people's interest to be in the public realm among others whether for economic, entertainment or socio-political reasons.

All in all, Kuwait City failed to create suitable public spaces that are attractive to people. The physical setting of public spaces whether sidewalks and/or squares, in terms of size and shape and their relation to surrounding buildings, discourages pedestrianisation and are uninviting to people. From observation, one can see that there is a lack of sense of enclosure, long façades of inactive frontages and even the buildings and monuments are set in isolation and fail to relate well to the public space.

Buildings in Kuwait City in the most part are visually poor and do not pay enough attention to human scale. Latest development ignored common-sense issues that used to exist 50 years ago, such as accommodating local microclimate through the choice of materials and the provision of shaded areas and walkways. Also, very few areas provide adequate public seating in suitable areas that attract users and help to engineer and assemble events.

The city's lack of social vitality is due to various factors such as the lack of residence communities; that could act as 24-hour occupiers and users of space. Residents operate as natural surveillance and their presence in or around public spaces increases safety and security. Having a real residence community in the city centre could establish a sense of belonging to the city and a sense of ownership that may lead to the care and the development of public space.

#### **7.4.2 Active Frontage**

The researcher has completed several studies to assess the level of attractiveness of street frontage based on methods used by Gehl Architects (Gehl, 2004: P.34) where each street can be evaluated according to the number of doors per 100 metres, diversity of function, closed or passive units, interesting relief of façades, quality of materials and details. Gehl has developed a six-grade level to indicate the level of attractiveness ranging from A: attractive to F: mean.

Research has shown that there is a strong relationship between the level of active frontage and the presence of people and their desire to walk along a street. (ApS, 2007: P.33).

## **Methodology**

The objective of this analysis is to geographically plot the distribution of attraction localities across the road segments under investigation. To identify the geographic distribution of the attraction locations overlooking road segments one must first model the attraction spots (shop and building entrances). A detailed explanation on the methodology has been covered in Chapter One: Introduction. The aim was to convert the data collected from the field in regard to the number of active frontages into a geographical presentation that illustrates the various levels of activities from Active to Mean. The author has utilised ArcGIS software to generate maps.

### **Assessment of Kuwait City Retailing Active Frontage**

The researcher has undertaken active frontage analysis for the four selected case study streets and produced four illustrations that show the degree of active frontage along the street. In Fahad Al-Salem Street, which is considered the earliest and the high street of the capital, one can see clear inconsistency in the segments of active frontage. This is due to several reasons such as the presence of governmental buildings, a shopping mall, a large department store, empty lots, and the high-rise office developments that neglect the relation to the street (Figure 7. 31 A).

As for Jaber Al-Mubarak Street and Mubarak Al-Kabir Street, they are dull with no active frontage except in small segments at the centre of the street. For Jaber Al-Mubarak, it suffers from large empty land and the existence of major high-rise towers and Al-Amiri Hospital that fails to address the street and relate to the activities along the sidewalk (Figure 7. 31 B). Regarding Mubarak Al-Kabir Street, although it is a central street, it has few active segments. The street has several institutional buildings with long-dead façades. It also runs by large empty and undeveloped land and has large segments of large parking lots that face the street and contribute to the breaking up of the continuity of activities (Figure 7. 31 C).

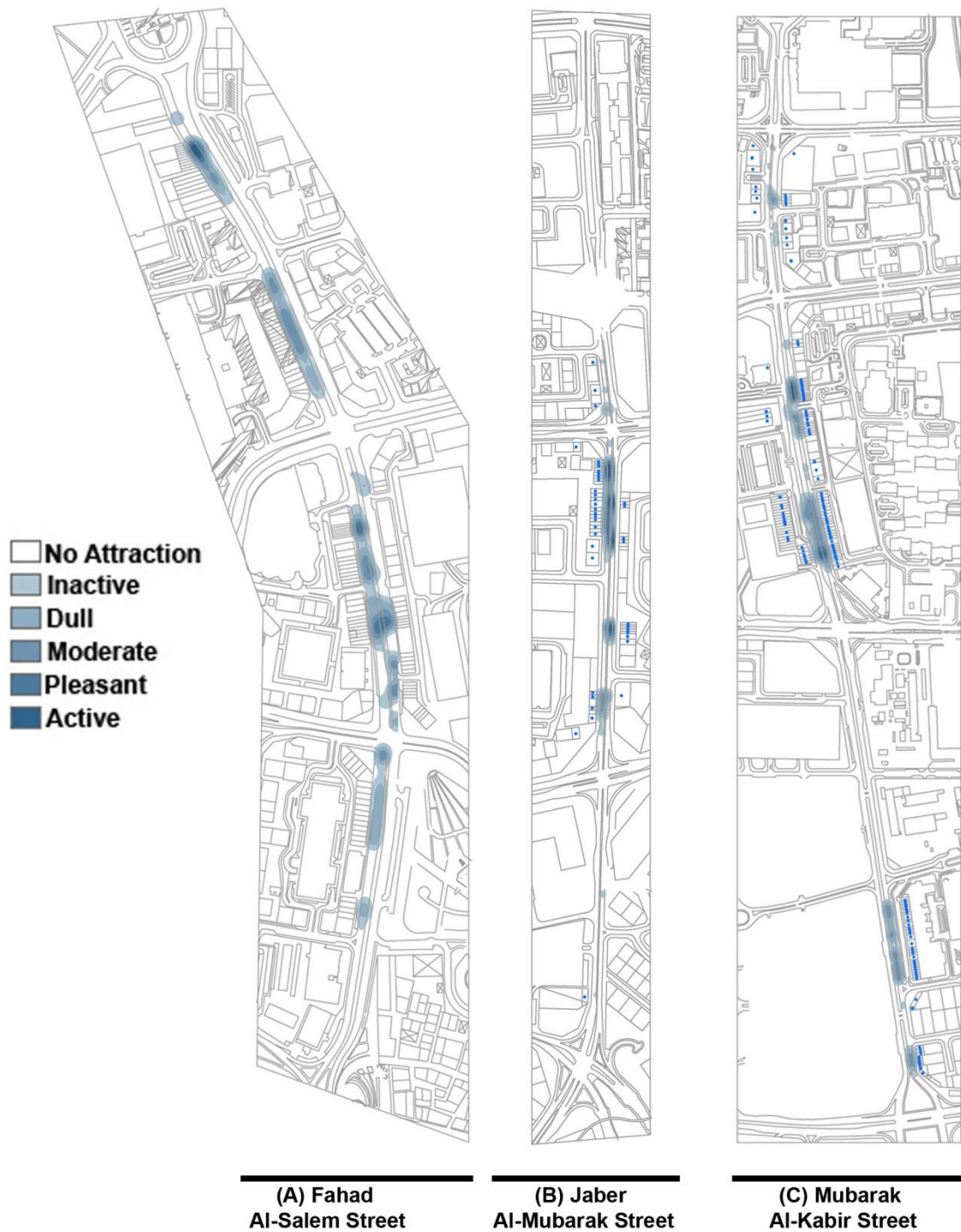


Figure 7. 31 GIS Output of Active Frontage Mapping of (A) Fahad Al-Salem Street, (B) Jaber Al-Mubarak Street and (C) MUBarak Al-Kabir Street (Author)

In the streets of the Mubarakiya area, one can find a concentration of active frontage. There is a strong coherence due to the continuity of small shops and the pedestrianisation of the streets, which in return creates pleasant and interesting streets (Figure 7. 32).



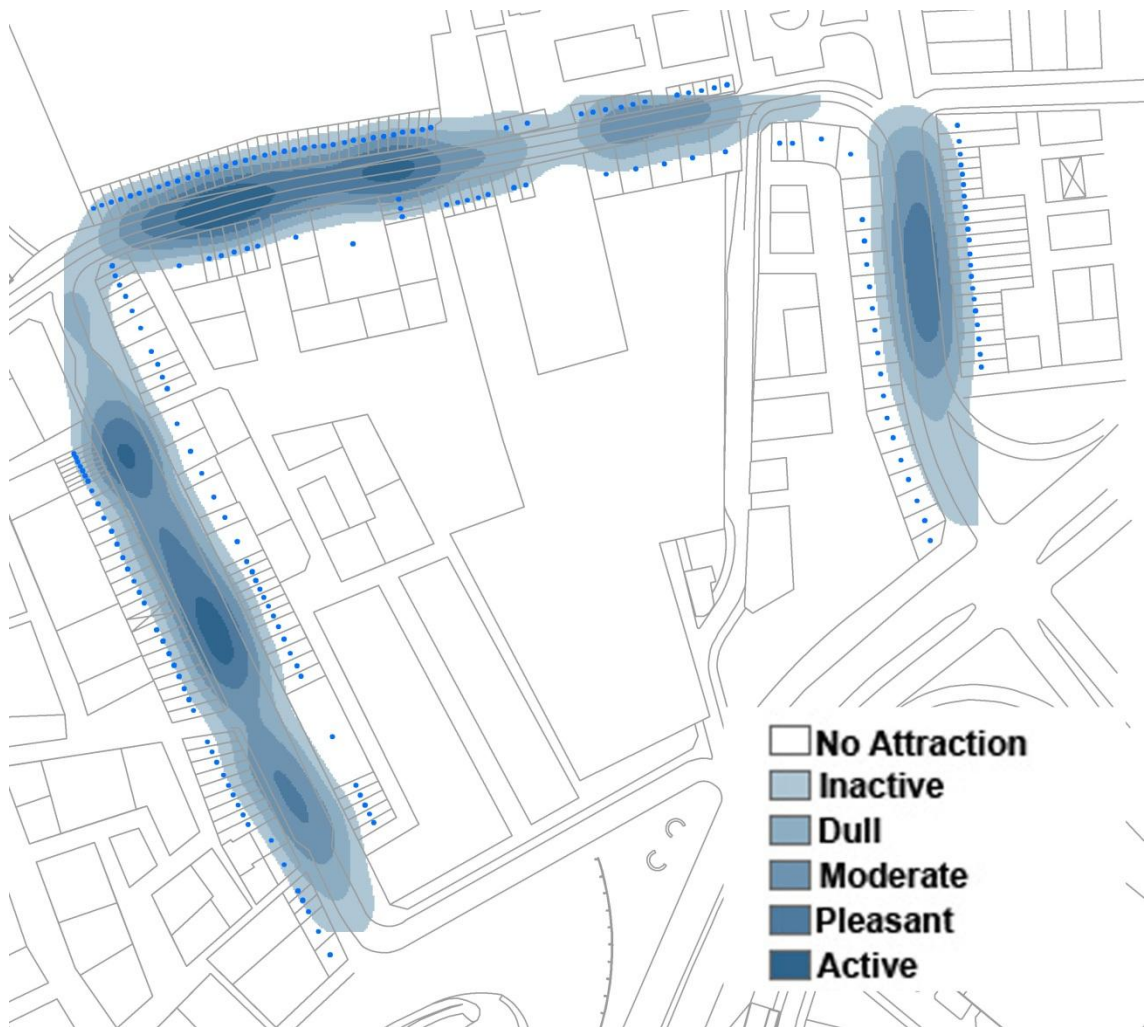


Figure 7.32 GIS Output of Active Frontage Mapping of Al-Mubarakiya Area Streets (Author)

## 7.5 Economic Vitality

In order to be able to draw a picture of the level of urban and social vitality of Kuwait City, the researcher sought to measure the level of retailing vitality and diversity as a means of measuring the economic vitality of certain streets or the lack thereof. In previous sections the author assessed the urban quality of the selected streets and it is hoped that this section shall illustrate the relationship that exists between urban integration, coherence and economic vitality.

The relationship between good design and economic return is not direct and may be difficult to prove. Nevertheless, there are several economic benefits that can be gained by the development of high-quality public space, some of which are:

- “Higher land value.
- Higher sale value.

- Higher rental return.
- Increased asset value.
- Reducing running cost.
- Maintenance of value/income.
- Easy maintenance of high quality materials.
- Reduce travel costs.” (Carmona, 2001: P. 26)

In an attempt to evaluate the economic vitality of the target case study area, the researcher undertook three different measuring activities. The first was rental value at different parts of the study area. The information was obtained from various real estate agencies and through personal contact with shop occupiers. Second, occupancy rate was evaluated to assess the economic vitality of different parts of the study area. Third, an attempt was made to measure diversity of retailing in the study area.

#### **7.5.1 Rental Value**

The retailing sector in Kuwait is strong and Kuwait City is among the top ranking cities in the world. It is ranked number 17 in presence of global retailers. (CBRE, 2010: P.6) “Kuwait retail sales are expected to rise from USD 42.64 bn in FY 2009 to USD 59.27 bn by the end of FY 2014. This positive forecast is mainly due to the favourable economic outlook, high disposable income and varied consumer base. Kuwait’s retail sector has expanded significantly given the development of shopping malls.” (CSR, 2010: P.2).

The researcher collected data on the rental value of four case study streets/areas within the city in order to draw a picture on the level of the economic vitality and try to establish links between urban integration and economic strength. The results have shown that the rental value ranges from KD6/£12 to KD100/£200 per square metre per month. During collecting data the researcher faced some challenges, where some retailers did not agree to disclose such information. Also, several retailers have unusually low monthly rental which does not follow the trend of the area, due to their old contracts. Also, some shops have additional spaces which are difficult to estimate such as attics and basements which affect the rental value.

Unsurprisingly, out of the four selected case study streets/areas Al-Mubarakiya streets have the highest rental values which reached up to KD100/£200 per square metre per month. With Palestine Street ranking top among the three selected streets; it is a pedestrian street with strong coherence and number of active retailers. It has maintained a strong position throughout the history of Kuwait City, it is strongly integrated within its locality and strongly specialised in unique niche selling traditional clothing and accessories, see Figure 7. 33.



Figure 7. 33 Al-Mubarakiya's Area Rental Value (Author)

Jaber Al-Mubarak Street had a high rental value in few shops at the central segment of the street. This is due to it being a strongly integrated street, globally and locally. Moreover, many retail units are placed in newly developed high rise towers which tend to attract high-end retailers such as cafés, restaurants and multiple retailers.

Fahad al-Salem Street has a rental value that ranges from KD7/£14 to KD22/£44 per square metre. The centre of the street has the highest rental value while both ends lose attractiveness due to the lack of integration and loose concentration of retailers (Figure 7. 34).

Jabe Al-Mubarak Street has a rental value that ranges from KD8/£16 to KD40/£80 per square metre. A short segment at the centre of the street has the highest rental value while the north and south segments have low rental values, due to the existence of empty and undeveloped land, lack of integration and of retailers (Figure 7. 34).

Mubarak Al-Kabir Street has a rental value that ranges from KD10/£20 to KD27/£54 per square metre. Similar to other case study streets, the central segment of the street has the highest rental value while both ends have relatively low rental values. The northern segment is less integrated and has various state buildings that lower the presence of retailers, while the southern segment has large state-owned and undeveloped land on one side and a light industry land use on the other, that fail to integrate the urban fabric and create a strong active frontage that attracts users (Figure 7. 34).



Figure 7. 34 Fahad Al-Salem St, Jaber Al-Mubarak St and Mubarak Al-Kabir St Rental Value (Author)

### 7.5.2 Retailing Diversity

In trying to come up with a way of measuring retailing diversity, two methods were followed. First, retailers on selected streets were classified to determine which has the most diverse spectrum of retailers. From the findings in Table 7. 2 to 8.5 and Figure 7. 35 to 8.39.; one can see that commercial streets in Kuwait City differ greatly in terms of the quality and quantity of retailing. While in general, retailers agglomerate according to the type of goods they sell, several retailing streets fail to realise their potential and tend



to house shops that cater for low-income customers or sell industrial goods and are not suitable for major city centre streets.

For instance, looking at Fahad Al-Salem Street's retailing conditions as illustrated in Table 7. 2, one can see that it has a strong retailing diversity. The street has been undergoing an active redevelopment process during the last eight years and thus there are few empty and/or undeveloped plots that are in the process of redevelopment. There is a high percentage of clothing and footwear stores, fabric stores and opticians, which indicates an ability to attract pedestrians and personal shoppers. Also, the street has a high presence of restaurants and cafés, which highlights its liveliness. On the other hand the street has a high number of banks, service shops, and electronics and mobile retailers, which are contributing negatively to the street and its ability to attract comparison goods shoppers.

Jaber Al-Mubarak Street's retailing survey shows a presence of a high number of cafés and restaurants. Lately the increased number of office towers and changing structure of the working day raised the need for various outlets to serve workers during lunch hour. The high percentage of cafés and restaurants is a healthy practice that contributes to the vitality of the street throughout the day and attracts customers in the evening times (Table 7. 3).

On the other hand, the street lacks the presence of comparison goods shops. It has a high number of service shops and administrative units. It also has a number of retailers that are out of place such as car workshops which contribute to the dullness of the street and its failure to attract pedestrians.

The selected streets within Mubarakiya area as shown in Table 7. 4 and Figure 7. 37 have a strong retailing environment and the diversity survey indicates retailing types that are directed for personal, pedestrian shoppers looking for comparison goods. The streets which are located within Mubarakiya area maintain their historic status and specialise in selling traditional clothes and foodstuff. They also maintain their central area and provide different services and goods for visitors to the city such as money exchange, gifts and antiques shops. The area in general has many cafés and restaurants usually allocated to secondary streets and overlooking open areas in order to utilise spaces for seating which tend to be very busy especially during evening times.

Mubarak Al-Kabir Street retailing differs as one moves from south to north. Table 7. 5 shows that the street has a high concentration of electronics shops which cater for labourers who live in the city and/or work in and carry out projects in the city centres. It is also noticed that there is a concentration of fabric stores and tailors, who service customers and agglomerate around commercial blocks located in the centre of the street. Mubarak Al-Kabir Street retailing mix does not fit with its central location and its importance as a major street that divides the city and runs from one of the major city gates to the Seif Palace (Prince's Office and Governmental Council).

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Clothing & Footwear	24	20.2
Goldsmiths/Watches	3	2.5
Fabrics	15	12.6
Pharmacies	5	4.2
Banks	5	4.2
Restaurants & Cafés	9	7.6
Services	11	9.2
Food Stores	7	5.9
Mobile	4	3.4
Optician	11	9.2
Electronics	13	10.9
Vacant Plots/Buildings	7	5.9
Others	5	4.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7. 2 Fahad Al-Salem Street's Retailing Diversity (Author)

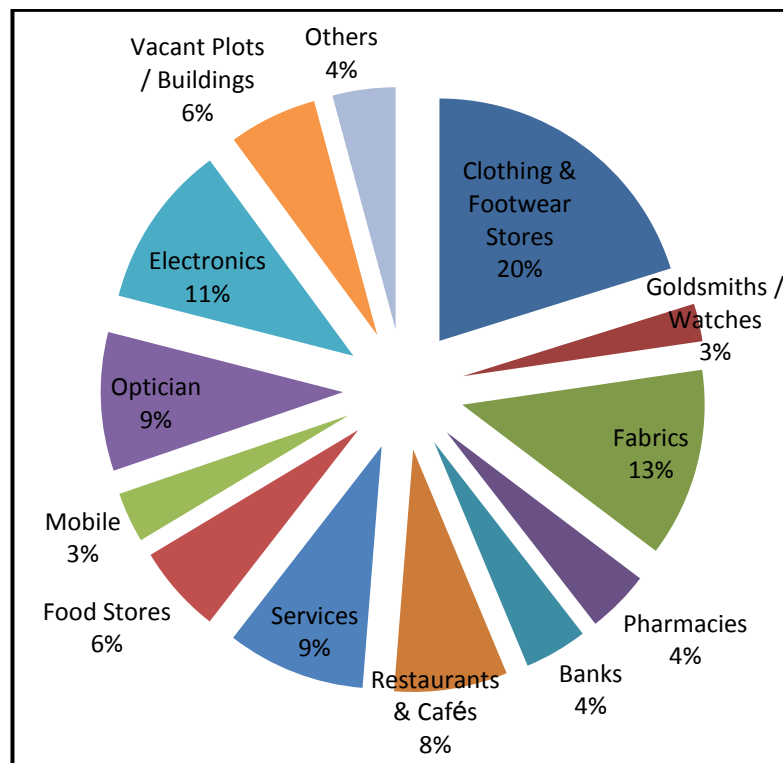


Figure 7. 35 Fahad Al-Salem St. Retailing Diversity Chart (Author)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Clothing & Footwear Stores	5	7.5
Car Workshops	6	9.0
Fabrics	4	6.0
Barbershop	2	3.0
Office/Administrative	7	10.4
Restaurants & Cafés	14	20.9
Services	7	10.4
Food Stores	2	3.0
Vacant Plots/Buildings	13	19.4
Others	7	10.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7. 3 Jaber Al-Mubarak Street's Retailing Diversity (Author)

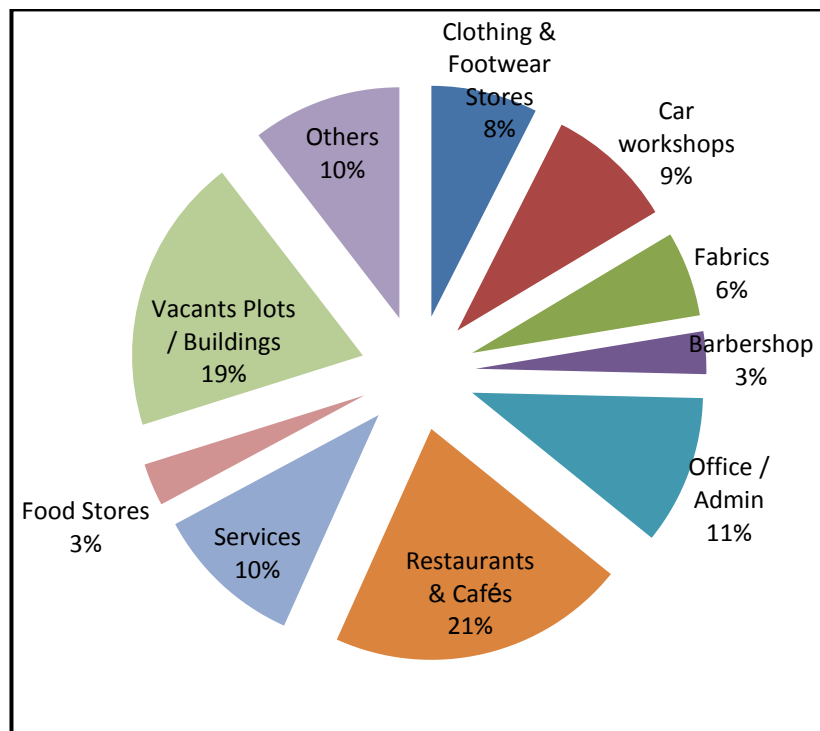


Figure 7. 36 Jaber Al-Mubarak Retailing Diversity Chart (Author)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Clothing & Footwear Stores	48	31.0
Bags	3	1.9
Electronics	22	14.2
Watches	25	16.1
Mobile	5	3.2
Perfumes	8	5.2
Cafés/Restaurants	5	3.2
Food	5	3.2
Gifts	8	5.2
Money Exchange	10	6.5
Rugs/Antiques	8	5.2
Vacant	3	1.9
Others	5	3.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>231.3</b>

Table 7. 4 Mubarakiya Area Streets' Retailing Diversity (Author)

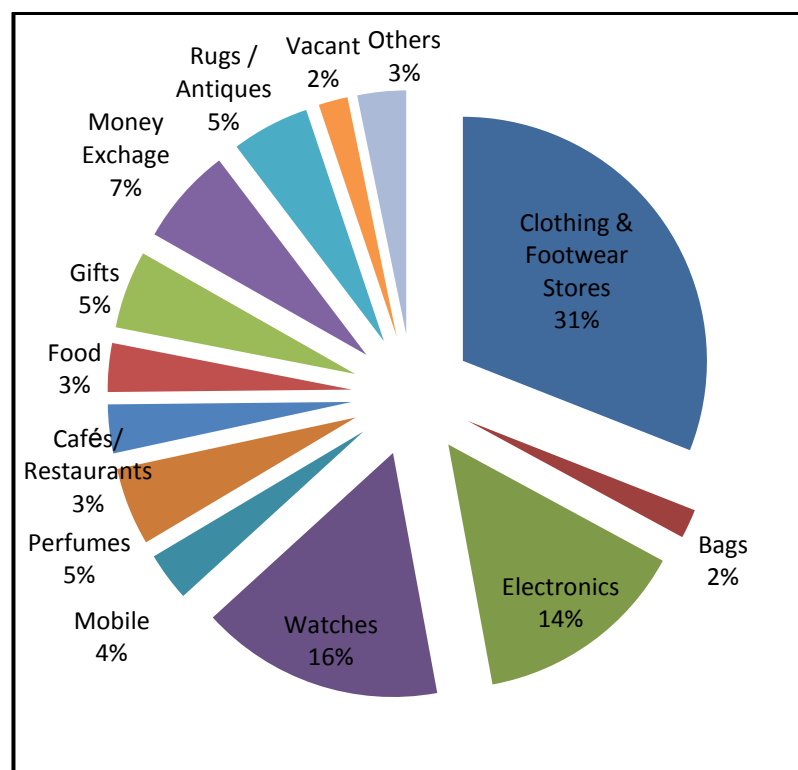


Figure 7. 37 Al-Mubarakiya Area Street Retailing Diversity Chart (Author)



<i>Category</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Electronics	38	30.4
Car Workshops	3	2.4
Fabrics	11	8.8
Press	6	4.8
Mobile	5	4.0
Restaurants & Cafés	7	5.6
Services	12	9.6
Food Stores	9	7.2
Clothes & Shoes	3	2.4
Tailors	10	8.0
Vacant	8	6.4
Other	13	10.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7. 5 Mubarak Al-Kabir’s Retailing Diversity (Author)

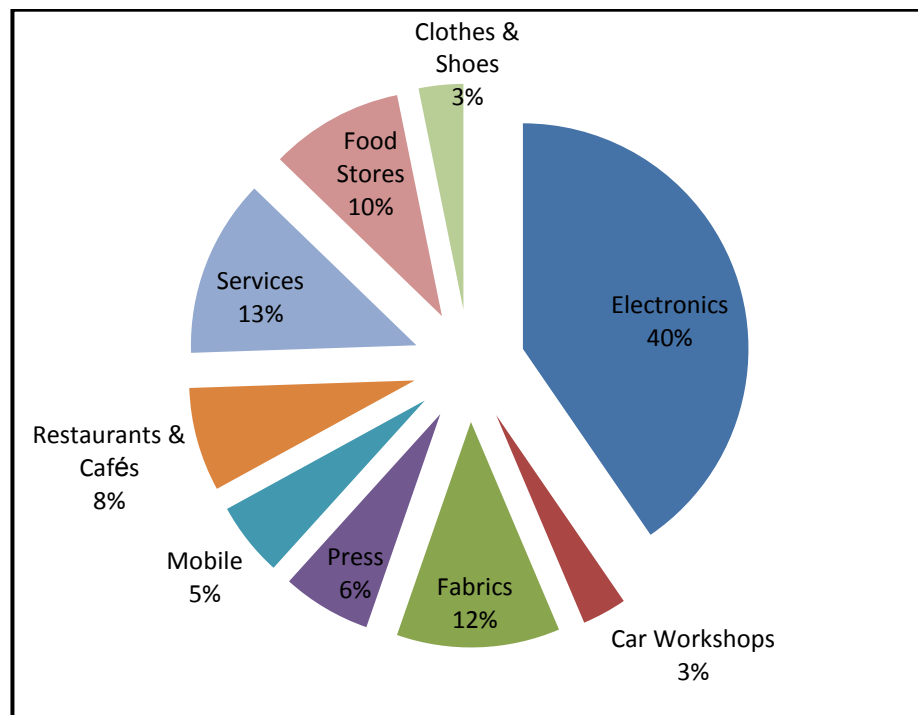


Figure 7. 38 Mubarak Al-Kabir Street’s Retailing Diversity Chart (Author)

### 7.5.3 Occupancy Rate

Occupancy rate may give an indication of the level of vitality on certain streets. However, field survey results may not give an accurate measure of the level of occupancy as there are several stores that are let, but are temporarily closed and others may also be under construction and/or remodelling. Nevertheless, occupancy rate,

coupled with other factors, could give an indicator of economic vitality. It could also be used to compare several areas or streets.

A field survey carried by the author found that in general the selected case streets within Kuwait City have a high occupancy rate, which shows that the retailing sector is in good shape from an economic viewpoint. Of the shops on Fahad Al-Salem Street 94.1% are occupied – 112 out of the 119 available. On Jaber Al-Mubarak Street the figures are lower, 63 of the 76 stores are let – an occupancy rate of 82.2% (Table 7. 6). Mubarakiya Street has only two empty shops out of 155, which gives an occupancy rate of 98.7% and Mubarak Al-Kabir Street has a 90.4% occupancy rate with 113 occupied units out of 125 (Table 7. 7).

<i>Fahad Al-Salem Street</i>			<i>Jaber Al-Mubarak Street</i>		
<i>Total</i>	<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>%</i>
119	112	94.1	76	63	82.2

Table 7. 6 Fahad Al-Salem Street and Jaber Al-Mubarak Street Occupancy Rate (Author)

<i>Mubarakiya Area Streets'</i>			<i>Mubarak Al-Kabir Street</i>		
<i>Total</i>	<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Occupancy</i>	<i>%</i>
155	153	98.7	125	113	90.4

Table 7. 7 Mubarakiya Area and Mubarak Al-Kabir Street Occupancy Rate (Author)

Results illustrate that in general the occupancy rate within selected streets in Kuwait City is high. It shows the potential of retailing streets in the city to be vital public spaces. On the other hand, in order to assess the level of success within certain streets, one needs to study other factors such as type of stores and comparisons to successful shopping streets or centres in the area.

## 7.6 Findings

In light of the literature review and previously completed case studies, the researcher has completed the study of the target case study: Kuwait City. The study comprised of studying various issues in relation to retailing in Kuwait City such as context and

planning policy, field survey and observation, Space Syntax Analysis, and economic vitality assessment.

This study has found that planning policy overlooked attention to public space and urban design. It has focused on strategic and global levels and neglected the street, which should be the planning unit. This survey shows that gradually the city is moving toward single land-use which is contributing to the lack of vitality. Planning policies in Kuwait are mostly concerned with the development of vehicular movement while it must aim to achieve the delicate balance between pedestrian and traffic circulation and promote alternative modes of public transportation. Planning policy should promote sustainable development that sustains and enhances the vitality of city centre streets. It shall focus retail development in the city centre in areas where it is accessible to businesses and the public. Moreover, it should maintain diversity of uses, retailing and services.

In terms of retailing, planners should support high street retailing as a major tool for urban integration and social vitality, as well as emphasising centrality and seeking to create various centres in Kuwait City at different levels. Review of current trends, the author found that officials prefer large scale development, yet an even model of development that promote small scale vs. large scale and maintains human scale rather than grand and high-rise development. On the street level, planning decisions must be based on an understanding of the importance of integrated streets as generators of movements and economic vitality. Kuwait City lacks public spaces at various locations and of various scales to accommodate and serve the public. More attention is needed to promote and maintain continues active frontages and correct existing cases of long, dull and dead facades that contribute to the fragmented nature of the city.

Kuwait City streets must be redesigned to enhance legibility, perception and create interesting views. Building regulations shall help to improve the overall quality of space through understanding issues such as scale, height/width ratios. This chapter has revealed the deteriorating condition of public space within Kuwait City. It has highlighted the failure of various governmental agencies to maintain and develop the quality of the public realm. More concern is needed for the upkeep of pavement, utilities and various urban elements in the city centre. The government needs to establish criteria of urban design that raises the quality of the built environment and high streets. Such

criteria shall aim to minimize clutter, calm traffic, and introduce various urban design tools like water features, lighting, art installation that create a distinctive local character. Through building regulation, the government shall maintain proper and uniform scale of building that fit with its context. Building regulation shall enforce continues facades that achieve strong street and public space definition. It shall encourage and enforce that building must follow sustainable standards that response to local climate and respect context. High design must be encourage and rewarded in order to create a strong local character and reflect an image of civil and progressive city.

This chapter has shown that there is a strong relationship between urban integration and coherence and economic vitality. While in the last ten years economic forces led the development agenda, which has created undesirable effects and led to various urban and social problems. A new model for development must lead the way for the future, where urban, social and economic factors must go hand in hand.

## **Part Three: Findings and Recommendations**

### **CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION**

#### **8.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the entire research. It starts by setting out the hypothesis of the research, the research problems and the research objectives. It gives a summary of the research problem as identified by the literature review and field work. The chapter then outlines the research body and the structure of the dissertation, providing a summary of the content of the previous chapters and their contribution to the research. Then, it explains in extensive detail the emergent approach which aims to remodel Kuwait City and addresses the problems that are manifested by the lack of urban and social vitality in the city.

The main part of this chapter is found in the findings and recommendations section. The research findings are broad concepts that illustrate the importance of this research and its relation to the field of urbanism. There are a number of findings that reinforce some known and strong notions in the field of urbanism and the author has illustrated their relevance to the case study: Kuwait City. The proposed model for Kuwait City is created through addressing various recommendations. Each of these recommendations is discussed to address the holistic nature of the problem and respond to the general research questions. Finally, the author acknowledges the limitations and challenges of this research and lists areas of important future research.

#### **8.1 Emergent Approach**

##### **8.1.1 The Thought Process of This Thesis**

The research began with the following hypothesis: *"Better integrated and diverse retailing can produce urban and social vitality"*, in which the author speculated about the outcome of the research thesis based on his personal knowledge, observation and theoretical stance. The hypothesis was framed at the inception of the research by a series of questions that became the basis of the deductive approach of this work. The research questions are as follows:

1. How can the physical organization and design of retailing contribute to the creation of vital urban environments?
2. How can planning policies promote integrated and diverse retailing within city centres?
3. Do diverse densities and physical structures produce social diversity?
4. What are the physical and social factors that contribute to the creation of successful retailing?

The research questions were developed to frame the phenomenon to be studied and help the researcher to focus his efforts to test the hypothesis. They helped to identify the body of literature, areas that needed further exploration, similarly constructed research, the relevance of the questions in the time period, and how the result would impact the field of the study and benefit the study area (Kuwait City). The aims and objectives of the study as listed earlier in the research are:

- To develop a theoretical model of physical retailing that contributes to the vitality of the urban environment of Kuwait City.
- To highlight the role of planning policies in the promotion of integrated and diverse retailing.
- To emphasize the relationship between retailing physical structure and social diversity.
- To outline the physical and social factors that contribute to the creation of economically successful retailing.

The research has used critical thinking through the application of observation and evidence findings, examination of context and review of various relevant criteria to arrive at judgments describing the uses of different applicable methodologies and techniques, and review of the various theoretical constructs to distil lessons and ideas. The author began his work by recognizing the existence of the problem and building a structure through which it could be addressed. The research attempted to place the problem within its context and to understand its order in the inherited structural problems of the city and the country. The research began by gathering a wide range of relevant data, started with a strong hypothesis and recognized untested assumptions and values. The author employed relevant methodologies and techniques suitable for interpreting the data and evaluating the arguments. Then, and throughout the research,



various conclusions and generalizations were drawn. Later, the emergent approach was developed on the basis of the findings and the wider body of knowledge.

The research has been informed by several theories and ideas and drew from different fields and disciplines such as urbanism, economics, planning and sociology. These ideas illustrate that physical planning may have a deeper meaning and significance and can contribute to the social well-being of citizens. The writings of the above-mentioned group and others discuss several concepts such as the preservation of common good, the establishment of a sense of community and the assurance of social equity.

The research highlights the relationship between consumption and urban change. It confirms that social conceptions of consumption are central to the urban environment and retailing sites. Thus, the research started with a comprehensive overview of the role of consumption activities in the creation of urban vitality, and highlighted the role of sites of consumption in the creation of urban integration. The research discussed the definition of consumption and illustrated that consumption is more than the purchasing of goods in an urban context; consumption is influenced by broader social and cultural values.

The author was aware that the nature of knowledge about the vitality of the urban environment is interdisciplinary and holistic, and he indicated early on that this research has been limited to the investigation of the urban environment and retailing specifically within city centres.

### **Research Methodology**

The research was informed by both its theoretical and empirical contexts. The combination of theoretical reviews and field surveys provided validity and value to the research. Since the beginning of the research, the author believed in the importance of relevant theories and the limitation of the normative approach alone to produce a comprehensive understanding of social vitality in cities. In order to understand social vitality in cities, the author followed a behavioural and humanistic approach that bases the investigation of the lived experience of people. The author sought to understand human experience in space and to provide a profound description to the complex studied phenomenon. From a philosophical point of view, the author referred to the structuralism approach to urbanism that seeks to understand the underlying factors that

govern society's behaviour. At the same time, the author attempted to understand the post structuralism points of view in the study of cities, which look at them as sites of differences, identities, contingencies, and processes. Post structuralism emphasizes uniqueness and opposes attempts to provide generalized and global solutions. The author has learned from conceptual theories, such as the New Urbanism Movement, Jane Jacob, Jan Gehl, Bill Hillier's Space Syntax Analysis and others, who advocate the creation of vital urban public spaces through mixed-use developments that balance housing with working opportunities, dense developments and the creation of pedestrian environments. In addition the author stressed the inherited value of historical urban forms and in an effort to respect context, the author tried to distil knowledge for contemporary cities.

This research was built upon the case study strategy, in order to obtain in-depth knowledge about the studied phenomenon. The research used case studies to collect data with which to develop grounded theory; by studying retailing environments in the cities of Glasgow, York, Aleppo and Kuwait City, the author sought to describe, explain and evaluate the role of integrated and diverse retailing in the creation of urban and social vitality and coherence. The use of a case-study method gave the research strong credibility in formulating a three-dimensional picture of the situation, illustrating relationships, incorporating socio-political issues and reflecting patterns of influence within the selected case studies.

Case studies have been utilized to gather information from different sources. In this study the author has relied on documentation, general data, Space Syntax Analysis, site visits, direct observation of stationary activities and visual qualities, active frontage analysis and analysis of the economic vitality of retailing in the studied areas. Case studies allowed the use of multiple research methods and in turn facilitated the validation of the data through triangulation. Observing the phenomenon from different perspectives allowed the author to corroborate findings and enhance the validity of the data.

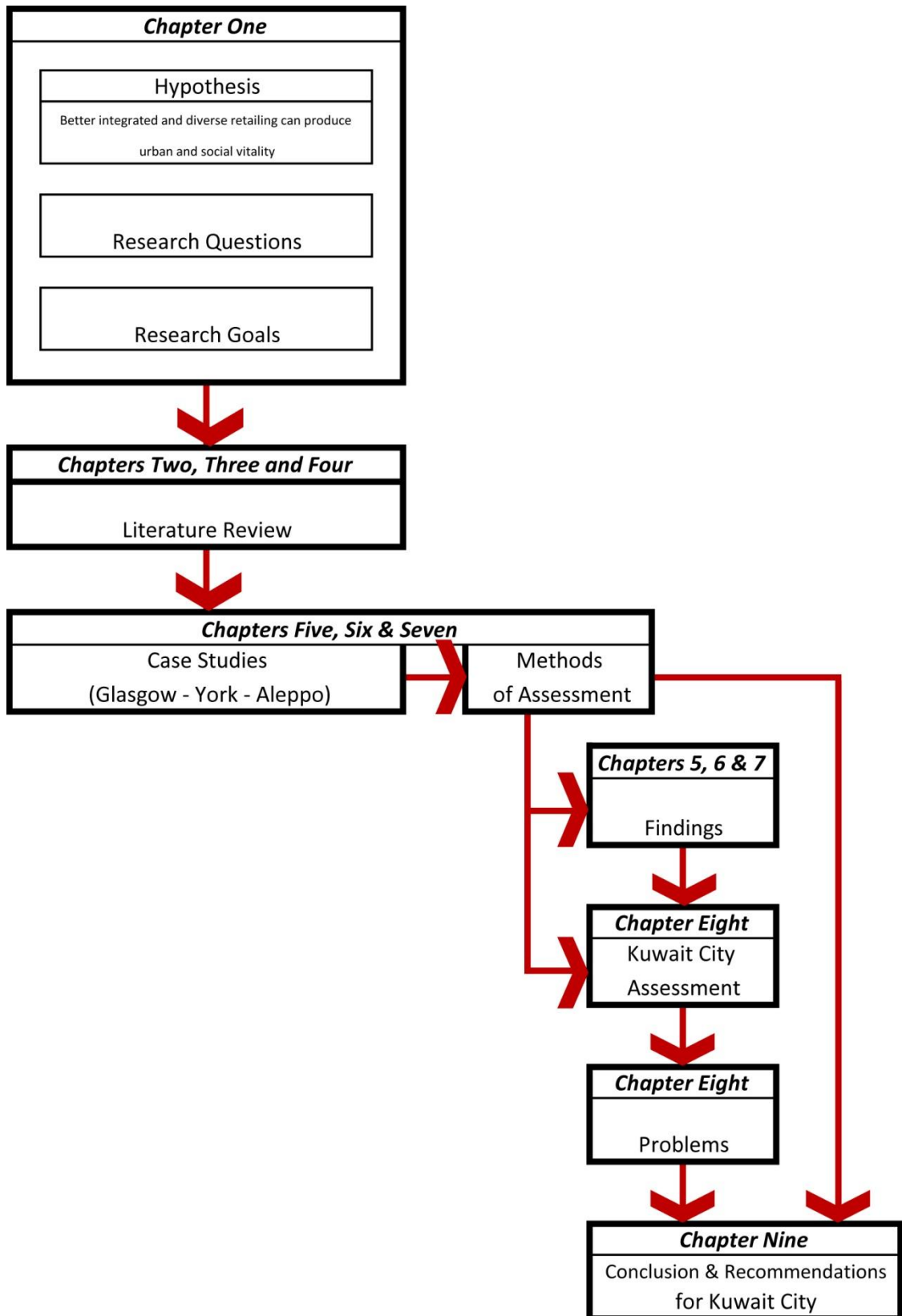


Figure 8. 1 Emergent Approach

### 8.1.2 Overview of the Thesis

This research attempted to discuss the relationship between the built environment and economic activities in the form of retailing and social vitality. It focused on the ability of cities and urban centres to enhance the built environment through integration, centrality and coherence and by doing so, achieve stronger social and urban vitality.

Chapter two, titled *Consumption Activities and Urban Environment*, discussed the relationship between consumption activities and urban vitality. It demonstrated that when retailing activities are utilized efficiently, they can contribute to urban integration and social vitality.

Chapter three, titled *Urban Theories and Retailing Environment*, reviewed diverse urban theories and resources. Chapter three studied the characteristics of the Islamic urban form and its retailing environment typology. It looked at modern and contemporary urban thinkers such as Jane Jacobs, whose ideas illustrate that dense and compact communities and mixed-use urban areas are essential for creation of social vitality and economic prosperity. It referred to the writings and projects of Jan Gehl, which contributed greatly to this research; his thinking seeks to enrich the life of people in cities through integrated streets and walkability. The research also distilled knowledge from the ideas of New Urbanism, which advocates mixed-use, high-density development and a return to traditional urban design and architectural language. It has visited the field of urban economy in order to develop a better understanding of the effect of location on retailing in the contemporary city. The theories reviewed in this chapter confirm that better integrated and diverse retailing can produce urban and social vitality.

In chapter four titled *Pilot Case Study: City of Glasgow*, chapter five titled *Second Case Study: City of York* and chapter six titled *Third Case Study: City of Aleppo* the author conducted a holistic and in-depth investigation that described, explained and evaluated the role of integrated retailing in the vitality of city centres. The three chapters describe the studies carried out in three diverse cities that collected data with which a grounded theory was developed. The findings of the three case studies allowed the

researcher to distil lessons that proved to be very valuable in the study of the target case study: Kuwait City.

In chapter seven titled *Target Case Study: Kuwait City*, the author described the characteristics of Kuwait City and reviewed its urban policies. The author used the same methods of analysis as in the three previously discussed studies. Chapter seven illustrates areas of weakness in the public space and retailing environment that contribute to the lack of urban and social vitality in Kuwait City. The following section, 9.1.3, illustrates the urban problems that arose from the target case study and the author's observations.

In Appendix A, titled *Space Syntax Theories and Methodology*, and as part of the deductive approach of this research, the author highlighted the basics of Space Syntax theories and techniques. It traced the ideas that led to the development of Space Syntax and highlighted its relationship to other major urban themes like sustainability and urban form. The application of Space Syntax also helped the author to understand the social aspect of retailing which tends to promote segregation.

### **8.1.3 The Problem**

One of the aims of this research is to assess the condition of retailing in Kuwait City and its influence on urban and social vitality. The research stems from a belief in the ability of integrated and diverse retailing to produce vital city centres. The research was able to address the problematic urban condition of Kuwait City, which has been undergoing a process of fragmentation and decay caused by the establishment of a rigid single-land-use policy, the urban sprawl, and transport policies that have created a car-dominated city. The author recognizes the dynamic relationship between urban development, spaces of retailing and consumption. Retailing has been a major vehicle of urban change and can be utilized as an active tool for the construction of a vital urban environment. The urban problems of Kuwait City can be illustrated as follows:

- The existing planning system focuses on strategic urban planning. It seeks to identify major infrastructure projects and changes to the built environment and coordinate efforts with various ministries and official authorities to implement projects. This planning process ignores urban design studies that develop the

urban environment on the human scale and neglects essential details that encourage usability and enhance appearance.

- The planning system, led by Kuwait Municipality, lacks enforcement tools to ensure adherence to the law and to assure the quality of the public realm. Although there are strict procedures for the issuance of a planning permit before the start of any construction works, when the buildings are complete there is evident weakness in the supervision and enforcement mechanism.
- All decisions are taken centrally with minor involvement from local residents. Some plans could have social and economic consequences on residents and local businesses, yet public participation in the development of land-use planning policies is not encouraged.
- The State of Kuwait fails to provide building codes and/or regulation that would control architecture design quality; as a result, the built environment has been degraded. Most developments in Kuwait are not environmentally sound and there is no code that enforces environmental considerations in new construction projects. There is an evident failure to address environmental problems such as air quality, solid and liquid waste, and energy consumption. In addition, building codes do not control the visual characteristics of buildings, thus many projects fail to respond to historical and contextual determinants.
- Since its establishment as a modern capital and commercial centre, Kuwait City has failed to attract residents. Housing policies and social standards do not encourage middle-income families to live in the city centre. There is a clear lack of social and community structures, and rapid increases in housing costs. Consequently, there is an ever decreasing number of Kuwaiti residents within the boundary of the city.
- The State of Kuwait is rapidly growing and its society is characterized by urban sprawl, which is encouraged by government urban policies and financial prosperity. The metropolitan area is spreading outward from the city centre, most developments are low density and the society is dependent on the automobile for most of their transportation. Urban policies promote segregation



of use and the creation of single-use areas. Middle-income families favour the detached single family house and the use of the private vehicle.

- Building densities are low in the metropolitan area and within housing areas in particular. This low density is generally unsustainable; it encourages car dependency and increases air pollution and energy consumption. And where higher densities are permitted they are in single-use plots that mainly take the form of a commercial office tower. Part of the problem is the government's reliance on only the building floor ratio to determine density, while there are other factors that should be looked at in parallel to this in order to understand the effect of density on the vitality of the urban environment.
- In general, public transportation in Kuwait is poorly managed and coordinated. Public transport systems are weak and unreliable. They are deteriorating both across the whole country and in Kuwait City centre. Buses, the only public transport option, are the least preferred mode of transportation and only serve as a last resort to users, who generally belong to low-income groups (3KMP. 2003). The weak public transport systems of Kuwait City encourage reliance on the private car, which increases congestion and air pollution and creates a social barrier to some destinations for certain groups.
- With the limited supply of land in Kuwait City, the price of land is high. Although the State is the largest owner of land in the city, most of its land is kept undeveloped. Since the market in Kuwait is artificial, prices are constantly rising with very little incentive for property owners to sell or develop. This condition is pushing small businesses and low-income residents out of the city.
- The city lacks social and cultural activities. There is no space for street theatre, vendors, performers, musicians and small-scale commercial activities. In addition, there are limited areas for democratic expression that are open to all.
- There is evidence of increased polarization in the use of public space. Lower-middle and low-income classes find it difficult to coexist in contemporary public sites of consumption.

- The city lacks diverse activities that would ensure 24-hour operation and vitality. Only a small number of activities operate during the day and night.
- Looking at the smaller scale, public space and retailing streets suffer from various problems, such as:
  - There is a low number of pedestrians as city centre streets and public spaces fail to attract people due to poor-quality infrastructure and harsh weather.
  - As a result of weak coordination among official authorities, public spaces and streets exhibit low-quality design and poor maintenance.
  - Sidewalk spaces are relatively small and continue to be ignored and invaded by other uses. As the number of pedestrians decreases and congestion increases, the city continues to convert pedestrian space to space allocated for the private vehicle.
  - Major streets have few existing or planned commercial street-front developments, which contributes to the lack of vitality. Due to worsening footpath conditions, most shops choose to face inward toward air-conditioned malls.
  - Activities and land use in the city centre are uniform and lack diversity in terms of size, economic level, formality, ownership and use.
  - There is a lack of adequate public places where people can meet, sit, stop and allow people to see and be seen.
  - There is a lack of balance between pedestrians and traffic circulation.
  - Public space and sidewalks fail to provide comfortable climatic conditions.
  - There is lack of regulation and enforcement for the creation of pleasant architectural facades. Most projects are commercially driven and seek low-cost development. In addition, there is clear lack of architectural awareness that address issues such as environmental design and contextual sensitivity.
  - There is no provision of facilities and conditions for people with disabilities. This is due to low awareness and lack of regulation that would require such facilities.

- The urban structure does not have clear pedestrian systems, which makes it difficult for pedestrians to find their way around. Sidewalks are not connected and the network has a lot of interceptions.

## **8.2 Research Findings and Recommendations**

### **8.2.1 Research Findings**

The relationship between socio-economic structures and the physical urban form has long been established; the shape of cities affects socio-economic activities. Various environmental factors contribute to the social vitality of public spaces. Retailing as a major attractor of people, and in particular pedestrians, can be a major driver of urban vitality. In order for retailing to be successful it requires a high volume of movement. Whatever the type of shops, the ability to attract a high volume of consumers is the key to successful retailing; various environmental and design strategies are utilized to ensure attraction and purchasing. Retailing is a major economic sector and its success is not just a sign of economic prosperity but it could contribute to greater economic vitality in various sectors.

The development of integrated and diverse retailing requires the intervention of the public and the private sector. Through clear strategies and objectives, various urban and functional qualities can be implemented that create integrated and diverse retailing. This research has found that the existence of this kind of retailing contributes to the creation of urban and social vitality.

- The *centrality* of retailing and commercial activities has proved to be a crucial element for the creation of a strong and successful retailing environment and socio-economic vitality. Centrality refers to the close location of activities, services and employment opportunities. The location of commercial activities in a central district has been an important part of the traditional approach to urban planning as reflected in urban structures and location theories, while classical theory defined centrality in terms of attractiveness (Alonso et al., 1964). The research has supported the argument that strong centrality influences attractiveness to businesses and pedestrians, yet centrality can be achieved both by the location of activities and by the configuration of the urban fabric. Urban structures and functions are mutually dependent. In addition, modern analysis of

economic activities in urban areas emphasizes the importance of agglomeration and its economic advantages to commerce and buyers.

In the urban planning field centrality refers to accessibility, transport costs or effort and areas of high accessibility lead to urban and social vitality. In order for city centre retailing to succeed it has to be located in proximity to a resident population and within mixed-use developments. The state should take an active role to control the size, location, distribution and type of retailing within urban areas, and should aim to encourage integrated retailing rather than large-scale isolated and fragmented forms of retailing.

Findings from the studies case studies support this assumption. The cities of Glasgow, York and Aleppo have strong urban centres where successful retailing exists and thrives. See findings from chapters four, section 4.1.3 and chapter five, section 5.1.3.

- *The quality of the urban fabric* and the characteristics of the urban network contribute greatly to the promotion of walkability and increase in movement. The street as a major element of urban form should be the focus of urban planners and policy makers. Healthy societies have vital streets and public spaces. The street is not just a tool for vehicular circulation; rather it is a social and civic place that has wider social, political and economic roles.

Vital retailing requires a high level of integration and connectivity. The different shape and scale of streets contribute to attracting shoppers of different characters and needs. For retailing to succeed it requires a high volume of pedestrians; pedestrians require a comprehensible urban environment that encourages walking from one attractor to another. This legibility is an important urban quality because humans would rather move and spend more time in an understandable urban environment. Urban planners could achieve higher levels of legibility through the layout of the street network, the establishment of landmarks, vistas and other identification methods. The type and location of retailing should depend on adjacency to global and local networks. While large shops that cater for the private vehicle should be located on the global network,

shops that require a high level of comparative shopping should be located on the local network.

Results from Space Syntax analysis support this notion as the author found strong correlation between vital streets and the level of local and global integration. See findings from chapter four, section 4.2, chapter five, section 5.2, chapter six, section 6.2 and appendix 1.

- Cities should *promote social interaction and activities*. While shopping is a major attractor, this research shows that people come to cities to enjoy being in public and benefit from the observation of others, experiencing events, seeing public performances and local characters. City centres, and retailing areas in particular, should provide opportunities to stimulate the spectacle and interaction. Within this vital environment, retailing will thrive and urban and social vitality increase.

Results from Glasgow, York and Aleppo indicate that people come to city centres and retailing streets not just for shopping; the vibrant social life that exists in city centres attracts diverse social groups. See chapter four, section 4.3.1, chapter five, section 5.3.1 and chapter six, section 6.3.1.

- Rental value is a measure of retail strength. This research confirms that rental value increases within vital areas and high-quality urban environments that attract high volumes of people.

Findings from Glasgow, York and Aleppo confirm that rental value increases within prime locations, integrated streets, and high quality urban realms. See chapter four, section 4.4.1, chapter five, section 5.4.1 and chapter six, section 6.4.1

## 8.2.2 Wider Conclusions

In order to distinguish between positive findings and general speculations; the author thought that it would be useful to outline a couple of wider conclusions that have been thought about during the journey of this research project. It is hoped that a clearly

identified and reasonably comprehended broader findings can add to the value of this research.

- *The quality of the built environment* is a major factor in the creation of successful retailing and urban vitality. Several thinkers believe in the ability of the physical urban environment to influence behaviour. Despite arguments about the validity of that point of view, one cannot disregard the role of the physical environment in having some influence on public behaviour and the creation of a sense of place. The quality and design of various urban elements such as spatial arrangements, building types, scale and design, natural features, and public space furniture and details, contribute to the enhancement of the built environment.

From observation it was noted that areas of vital retailing are rich with high quality urban settings. This has been seen clearly in Glasgow, York and Aleppo. High quality built environment might contribute to the creation of vital urban areas.

- *Mixed-use development* is an essential element of successful retailing. Retailing requires mixed social groups, mixed densities and continuous operation throughout day and night. At the global and local scale, the presence of people in close proximity to retailing streets is valuable.

Mixed-use developments have several benefits to the urban environment, such as the activation of urban areas throughout the day, reduction of car dependency by providing alternative travel options, and creation of a local sense of place (Miller, 2003: P. 11). Mixed-use developments could benefit retailing and possibly increase urban vitality.

### **8.2.3 Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of this research, the author sought to put forward a number of recommendations taking into consideration the geographic, political and cultural context of Kuwait City. The author lists the following recommendations based upon the results found in the research. The author wanted to propose realistic suggestions in the



light of knowledge of local conditions, implementation possibilities and research findings; the author also sought to provide alternative recommendations that are holistic and address the problems from different directions rather than one closed recommendation.

### **Promotion of Local Identity and Businesses**

Recognizing the historical and cultural identity is crucial and contributes to the enhancement of pride and sense of continuity in certain geographical areas. The creation of local identity and uniqueness can be achieved through physical structures as well as through social and economic measurements.

In chapter two of this research, the author has highlighted the contradictions between consumption culture and the establishment of unique identity. Chapter two emphasized the importance of protecting and maintaining any traces of uniqueness that exist in contemporary cities in order to battle the forces of globalization that is highly manifested in retail areas. These global forces work to gradually create an overall sameness in every city centre in the world. The author has been aware of the ability of the city to reflect a set of ideological and technological signs that reflect the identity and essence of people and place. Recognizing the context of the target case study, the author attempted in chapter three of this thesis to find some traces from the form of the Islamic City that could contribute to the creation of unique identity for Kuwait City. There are various characteristics that can be distilled from the Islamic City, some are urban in nature and others are aesthetic and reflected in the architectural language and facade treatments.

Work done on the three case studies of Glasgow, York and Aleppo confirmed that part of their success in attracting locals and visitors is due to their strong identity and ability to maintain a distinctive character through the protection of their historical monuments, buildings and architectural identity. The three case studies have a considerable share of local retailers and encourage the presence of informal activities such as weekly markets, vendors, performers, and others.

Field work attempted to measure retailing diversity to investigate and compare the number of independent and locally owned retailers with the number of multiple retailers. The presence of independent retailers is an indicator of a strong local business environment and can offer a certain location a distinctive feature that differentiates it from competing centres. Findings show that streets with a high number of independent retailers such as Buchanan Street in Glasgow and Stonegate Street in York are among the most vital.

The study of the target case study has found that more attention should be given to historic monuments in Kuwait City in order to strengthen and maintain a strong and unique national identity and achieve a level of diverse character within the city. Kuwait City should acknowledge the driving economic and social forces of mass communication and consumption. Nevertheless, it should undertake different economic and political measures to support and promote local businesses. Local businesses are the backbone of the local economy and are less susceptible to global business pressures and crises. Local businesses contribute to the enhancement of local identity through the creation of variation in goods, and social diversity. Planning policies should consider economic forces that drive profit motivated large-scale developments generated through multinational corporations, but at the same time they should seek to protect, support and encourage small-scale businesses which are an important asset to any vital city. Local authorities should impose fair restrictions and taxes that generate the necessary funds for the protection of the urban areas and natural environment, and provide a source of funding for small entrepreneurs and commercial development instead of large-scale developments. Policies should seek to support local and disadvantaged businesses in the city centre, taking into consideration that local businesses are one of the most important economic units and active creators of economic and social vitality. It should encourage new developments to allocate affordable commercial activities and retail space for local and disadvantaged businesses, and provide financial support to local and small retail start-up businesses. In addition, other forms of financial incentive directed at facade and spatial developments should be provided. It is essential to enhance accessibility in such a way that mixed types of shops (high and low end) are present and accessible to all.

### **MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT**

Chapter eight which investigated the target case study has illustrated that Kuwait is moving toward single land-use which is contributing to the lack of vitality. The city

centre should aim to achieve a balanced mix of activities that create a strong urban centre rich in both social and cultural activities. The city should encourage mixed-use development in order to create a 24-hour city, taking into consideration the relatively short working day and the readiness of people to utilize night time for shopping and entertainment.

Major thinkers on urban issues stress the importance of mixed-use and diversity in the creation of vital urban centres. (Jacobs, 1961) (CNU, 2001) (Gehl, 2006). This research has also found that a mixture of building types and ages allows for the availability of various housing options that cater for different economic groups and so help to enhance diversity. (Hill, 1988)

In addition, it was observed in Aleppo (chapter five) that the city is rich with diverse cultural, administrative and residential activities in close proximity to the traditional market, which contributes greatly to the vitality of retailing environment. The same has been observed in the cities of Glasgow and York, where the presence of various cultural, residential and types of commercial activities enhance the vitality of the retailing centre.

Kuwait City needs to strengthen links between cultural, religious and economic activity, both socially and physically to provide a valuable factor that enriches the overall experience of the city. Residential and commercial neighbourhoods need to be injected with recreational activities that have an ability to encourage vitality and 24-hour city life. Diverse communities should be created, where all age and social groups can participate, thrive and use the urban milieu, as this is crucial for the creation of social vitality.

### **The Creation of Active Public Spaces**

The creation of an active public space that is open to all is one of the major factors that lead to the enhancement of vitality and successful retailing. It noted from various cities around the world that public space is a powerful tool that transforms communities. The relationship between successful public spaces and economic prosperity, social vitality and strong identity is evident. Various ideas that are discussed in chapter three of this dissertation emphasize the importance of the creation of places of public assembly and the establishment of the necessary conditions that encourage gatherings in public spaces

(Jacob, 1968), (Gehl, 2008) (CNU, 2001). This research has shown that successful urban spaces resolve the conflict between vehicle and pedestrian traffic. For cities and retailing street to be vital, priority has to be given to pedestrian traffic and measures must be taken to slow and control vehicle traffic. (Gehl, 2008) In addition, planners must dedicate the global network for fast moving vehicle traffic and dedicate the local network where high-end multi-purpose shops are located for pedestrians. (Hillier, 1996) (Sharma, 2006). The ideas and studies of Jan Gehl stress the importance of creating spaces for public activities rather than dead unusable squares. (Gehl 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010)

The empirical work on the three case studies as outlined in chapter five have shown that vitality increases in commercial areas where there is high integration and accessibility yet limited vehicular circulation. Through the empirical work the author has found that wider streets as in the case of Parliament Street in York and squares connected to busy commercial streets as in the case of St. Sampson's Square in York attract people and become prominent sites of different types of activities.

It is recommended that Kuwait City should utilize existing major buildings and infrastructure to create vital areas of public assembly, gathering and vista points. Examples include the Grand Mosque area, Liberation Tower, the Parliament, the green belt, the seafront area and others. The city should prevent further upgrading and widening of highways within its boundaries. Streets should be designed to accommodate the private vehicle, but not at the expense of pedestrian movement. Sidewalk width should be increased to encourage pedestrian movement and they should be shaded to create a better environment for walking, especially during the day. The research found that streets should offer places for unplanned stationary activities that provide good views and controlled exposure.

### **Restrict the Establishment of Out of Town Shopping Malls**

Out of town shopping centres have several advantages that attract shoppers and generate high volumes of sales. Within areas of harsh weather, they present indoor environments that protect shoppers from a severe and changing climate. With the increase dependency on the private vehicle especially for wealthier shoppers, the high street cannot compete with the free standing shopping malls that provide vast areas of free parking. However, several urban and environmental activists oppose the creation of out of town shopping

centres because they encourage urban sprawl and generate more traffic. In addition, they compete with city centre business and usually have devastating economic effects on city centre retailers.

Planning policies in the UK and as seen through the study of the cities of Glasgow and York in chapter five illustrate that existing centres continue to be the focus for shopping, social, cultural, leisure and business services in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, and the policies set out in PPS6. It is noted that planning policies in the UK have not always been successful in controlling urban sprawl and out of town shopping centres as despite clear objections, many more centres have been created since the 1980s. Nevertheless, in comparison to policies in the State of Kuwait, there is a lot to be learned from the British model.

In line with the aims of this research which is to increase the vitality of Kuwait City centre, the author recommends preventing the construction of free standing shopping malls in Kuwait City and restricting the construction of out of town shopping centres that disturb the retailing centre hierarchy of the metropolitan area. Such developments generate high traffic, greater dependency of the private car and they harm retailing streets.

#### **Promotion of Active Frontages**

Retailing streets must be through routes that generate movement and have a good mix of activities. According to the dictionary of urbanism, active frontage is defined as “*A building or other feature whose use is directly accessible from the street which it faces. A blank wall creates the opposite effect*”. Active street frontage should be given more importance in to retail development and on high streets.

The theories and studies of Jan Gehl (Gehl 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010), that informed this research placed a lot of attention on active frontage as a promoter of vitality. New Urbanism theories emphasize that streets should have continuously active frontages. (Leccese et al., 2000)

Empirical work on Glasgow, York and Aleppo that attempted to correlate the number of active frontages with the presence of people and stationary activities, indicate that the

presence of people increases where there are high numbers of active frontages in the form of smaller shops, cafes and entrances that vary in form, type and character.

Kuwait City should promote and maintain continuous active frontages through building code revision, enforcement and various incentives to utilize movement and generate contact and interaction. Also, they should avoid the construction of multi-storey car parks and surface parking; the majority of parking structures should be below ground to free up space for open areas, green spaces and pedestrian walkways. The city should include active street frontage for a range of commercial activities along the street, which are accessible, usable and open during the day and preferably the night time.

### **Encouragement of informal activities**

People are attracted by the presence of other people. Good public spaces provide venues for organized and informal activities, and as the quality of public spaces increases more social activities occur in them. The ideas of Whyte and Jan Gehl have informed this research and placed importance on the role of informal activities in the vitality of public spaces and suggested ways to encourage them.

People tend to settle where seating is provided. (Whyte, 1980, p. 18). Performers and vendors would choose to locate in appropriate locations that are visible and provide an opportunity of attraction. Whyte highlights that seating should be designed to be comfortable and provide views, and public spaces should provide choices. (Whyte, 1980, p. 28) (Gehl, 1987 P. 99) For example, the selling and consumption of food attracts people and people attract more people. (Whyte, 1980, p. 50, 52).

From observation and field work, the studied streets are hubs of retailing and different forms of formal economic activity. At the same time, they encourage the existence of several informal activities such as seating, vendors, campaigners and street performers. It has been evident that studied areas were lively and the public enjoyed being there. Informal commercial activities are drawn to a strategic location that provides higher levels of visibility. The studied sites encouraged different types of people to benefit from the place regardless of age, race, economic and physical abilities.

Kuwait City should encourage the existence of several informal activities such as vendors, campaigners and street performers. Instead of resisting informal gathering and



informal commercial activities, it is recommended that the city encourages both mobile and static vendors as they serve different sectors and play different roles in increasing vitality in the city. A legal framework needs to be established to organize and manage street vendors. On the other hand, more locations should be allocated for political campaigners and public protest in an integrated setting that brings together both commercial and social life.

### **Compact Urban Form and Linear Streets**

Much urban planning literature discusses the impact of urban sprawl and highlights the benefits of a compact urban form. Compact cities are characterized by high density, mixed use and are serviced by an efficient public transport network, and encourage walking and cycling. (Burton, 2000: P. 1970) There are several environmental benefits that are gained from urban compactness, such as the reduction of private vehicles and the wasting of virgin land. Yet there are other social benefits such as vitality, equal access to amenities and services by larger sections of the society. (Williams, 1999:P. 168) Also, Space Syntax theories and analysis indicate that urban form must be compact with linear network to encourage visibility to increase efficiency of movement and encourage walking. (Hillier, 1996)

It has been extracted from the study's cases in the cities of Glasgow and York that compact cities encourage walkability and accessibility. Also, it has been observed in the studied cases that streets such as those in the traditional markets of Aleppo which are linear and straight, allow for greater permeability and visibility and thus encourage walkability.

Special attention needs to be given to the street as the major element of urban design. Planning decisions must be based on an understanding of the importance of integrated streets as generators of movement and economic vitality. Each street should be studied individually to establish a coherent identity and structure. Public space and the street should be perceived as places of shared use. The urban structure of Kuwait City has to be permeable; clear urban spaces mediate the co-existence of strangers and residents and encourage the presence of people. Retailing areas should be distinct from their context in location and form. City streets must be redesigned to enhance visibility and perception and create interesting views, promote straight streets, develop corner

properties and enhance vistas and landmarks. The location of monuments and landmarks at the end of axis streets creates and enhances their importance and may contribute to the creation of strong cultural identities in the city.

### **Promotion of Strong Centrality and Boundaries**

The concept of centrality has been fundamental to the development of cities and activities in urban environments. It has been stated in chapter three of this thesis that centrality is not just a formal structure, but also a product of accessibility. The research aimed to draw ideas from different fields and sources, and it was necessary to look for historical models and regional sources. The form of the Islamic city has a strong centre that is based on social meanings and significance. It has been noted from the review of the development of Islamic cities illustrated in chapter three, that they have a clear structure set which was based on a central nucleus from which the rest of the city grew outward. The aim is not to create a tradition by merely mimicking physical forms, but to learn how some traditional models contributed to the creation of unique social practices and increased vitality.

Several contemporary urban theories such as New Urbanism, as described in chapter three, promote strong centrality and the development of clear boundaries that contribute to the creation of defined and distinct character. (CNU, 2001). Chapter three also reviews agglomeration economy and its role in creating the urban market and its contribution to centrality. (von Thünen, Alonso, Christaller and Losch) This dissertation asserts that land and rental value confirms the attraction of central locations.

The three case studies (Glasgow, York and Aleppo) as shown in chapter five of this thesis demonstrate that vital cities have strong centres, which are protected and enhanced through policies, regulations and comprehensive physical planning techniques such as the establishment of clear boundaries, strong centres and strict control over out of town or fringe retail developments.

Thus, it is important to focus development on Kuwait City centre and other central districts of the State of Kuwait. The city should aim to have a strong centre and a well-defined urban area as dispersed development patterns only harm the role of the city. In addition, Kuwait City should create centres in areas that used to be defined historically, for example the traditional districts of Jebela, Sharq, Mirqab and Dasman. Other districts

can be established between main roads that create bold and natural divisions and seek to create a robust centre for each with a strong, unique identity. Where possible, these districts should be like a small town within the borders of the city.

### **Urban Scale and Spatial Definition**

Urban scale is one of the most important qualities of any city. The definition of a good urban scale is debatable, problematic and not yet fully developed, yet there are various techniques employed by architects and urban designers. These are driven from traditional designs and borrow from various mathematical ratios that are related to the human scale and specific context which have been proved to make the experience of being at specific place or street more enjoyable. Chapter three of this thesis has illustrated that many urban designers and planners encourage attending to the urban scale when designing cities and public spaces. The Charter of the New Urbanism calls for the creation of a specific size and scale of various urban formations within a region such as town, city, and neighbourhood. (Leccese et al., 2000) Gehl also stresses that the vitality of cities is due largely to the scale and dimensions of the streets and the distribution of activities along streets and squares, and the scale and detail of buildings that are designed in harmony with human senses. (Gehl, 2001: P. 14). Urban scale is particularly important within the retailing environments where it enhances the urban scene and intensifies activities.

Chapter five illustrates the empirical work conducted on Glasgow, York and Aleppo; it demonstrates the importance of street width and building height ratios and street definition by buildings. It was noted that the ratio of the height of the buildings to the width of the street is crucial in creating a comfortable and inviting environment for pedestrians. Buchanan Street in Glasgow is wide, but has a good scale that fits well with the size of the crowd and the height of surrounding buildings. On the other hand, Stonegate Street in York and the market streets of Aleppo are much narrower which intensifies human encounter and makes the experience of passing through retailing street more robust and lively.

The findings of this research recommend that building height should be controlled in Kuwait City. The allocation of high-rise buildings that exceed 20 floors should be permitted with the intent to create landmarks and highlight the importance and/or

character of a certain area. Building regulations should help to improve the overall quality of space through understanding issues such as scale and height/width ratios. It is important to highlight and allow minarets and domes to be visible throughout the city to preserve the cultural and architectural identity of the city.

### **Urban Design**

Urban design... “involves the design of buildings, spaces and landscape, and the establishment of frameworks and processes that facilitate successful development” (Cowan, 2005: P. 416) although Jane Jacobs was not interested in the aesthetic debate, and in her opinion the attractiveness of a public space is derived from the level of vitality. (Klemek, 2007: P. 54). Jan Gehl stressed the importance of urban design techniques such as tools to improve public spaces and promote being in public and using the public realm. Gehl and other urban thinkers believed that urban design solutions could be implemented in those marginalized areas to increase their usability, especially for social activities (Garde, 1999:P. 209). Chapter three also illustrates that New Urbanism calls for the return to traditional urban design and architectural language.

Field work on the cities of Glasgow and York found that urban design and urban elements can play a major role in creating functional and appealing outdoor spaces for public use. Areas that provide well-designed and conveniently located street furniture can attract users and promote outdoor activities. Architectural quality can contribute to the creation of a vital urban milieu.

Kuwait City planners should seek to erect buildings with sufficient scale, maintain consistency of street architectural character, yet encourage variety which could add interest. They should also focus on high-quality detailing of facades through the use of local materials and colours. Major commercial and retailing streets should be treated differently in terms of design and finishes; extra care has to go into flooring materials, street lights and street furniture. Urban design tools should encourage different types of people to enjoy the place, regardless of age, race, and economic or physical abilities.

#### 8.2.4 Further recommendations

While the author has focused on retailing streets and addressed issues such as urban form, centrality, integration and diversity, other issues have arisen out of necessity and a concern to provide a holistic solution to the problem at hand. The author wanted to shed light on other strategic issues that are crucial to improving the overall quality and enhance the public realm within the retailing environment of the target case study: Kuwait City.

- Planning policy in the State of Kuwait: The city should develop a democratic and transparent system of government that encourages public participation and responds effectively to social needs. Planning policies and decisions should seek to distribute national findings throughout the entire urban area. Public spaces and street improvements should receive an appropriate portion of public funding. Urban land-use policy has to be guided through clear economic studies and recommendations in order to prevent over-supply or scarcity of some uses.
- A clear hierarchy of urban centres should be achieved for the city to regain its importance and achieve vitality and coherence, a hierarchy where Kuwait City, being the capital of the State of Kuwait, should be reinstated at the highest level as a central commercial area.
- Housing policy in Kuwait should be re-evaluated and structured to provide a wider range of housing options that are mixed and distributed equally throughout the metropolitan area. Currently there are strong boundaries between various housing types that serve different social and income groups, this in turn influences neighbouring retailing and exacerbates the lack of vitality.
- This research has shown that various thinkers such as Gehl, Jacobs and New Urbanists place great importance on efficient public transport, other modes of transport and car-free cities and urban vitality. In addition, the author's work on the three case studies has found that successful retailing centres enjoy alternative modes of transport, and successful retailing streets are designated for pedestrian movement only. Kuwait City needs to enhance bus services and introduce new modes of public transport that connect Kuwait City with the rest of the State of Kuwait in order to decrease dependency on the private car and reduce traffic congestion. Buses have to be developed to attract middle and

high-income as well as low-income users. They should not be perceived as the transport option of last resort.

- More attention should be given to the creation of successful parks that attract the public. Such parks should include plantings, seating areas and playgrounds. These parks should be integrated and linked with commercial streets, public buildings and residential areas.

## **8.3 Limitations and Further Research**

### **8.3.1 Research Limitations**

Most research projects face some challenges and have several limitations, and this research is no exception as it encountered various theoretical challenges and lack of time and resources. The topic of vitality is wide and depends on various elements. It is crucial to state that this study was limited to the review of retailing environments within city centres, and studied only some of the social, physical and economic indicators to measure the level of vitality. The study of the selected cases was a central tool of this research. The evaluation and analysis of the case studies were limited to the outlined areas. The relationship between retailing environments and vitality can be expanded to cover many aspects, some of which have been mentioned in this research, while others were not conducted due to the limited time and availability of resources.

While the selection of the case studies was based on evident signs of vitality and practical circumstances, the author is aware that various observations and findings are difficult to generalize to the State of Kuwait and its population. The author acknowledges the wide socio-cultural gaps, as well as the different economic and political systems, that make the comparison of exemplars difficult. The author tried to avoid this limitation by the study of a regional city (Aleppo), yet that case also poses its own differences and uniqueness, both politically and economically. The author understands the lack of credibility and the difficulty of making generalizations from case studies and human behaviour research. It is also important to point out that the behavioural approach that has been followed to trace stationary activities is more descriptive than analytical and as such, and despite its value in explaining the phenomenon, it might lack credibility.



In terms of the network analysis, the study depended only on Space Syntax analysis. Space Syntax poses various limitations in the determination of the relationship between movement generation and social comprehension. It is noted that there are a number of factors other than mere grid structure that contribute to the generation of movement. The author is aware that Space Syntax methodology requires supportive methodologies from the social sciences in order to create a better understanding of social behaviour in urban milieus.

While the research has addressed the importance of the physical environment in the creation of sense of place, the attraction of larger crowds, and the encouragement of social activities the researcher believes that physical conditions cannot determine social practices alone. There are wider social influences that might determine better social practices in space.

Retailing is an economic activity and there are many different methodologies for evaluating retailing vitality, such as rental value, consumer spending, retail employment and wages, sales tax revenue, property site revenue, supply and demand of retail space, and others. The research could have undertaken more economic analysis in order to create a deeper understanding of the vitality of retailing. However, the current research was not specifically designed to examine economic factors, and therefore relied only on rental value "in terms of Zone A" to get a rough estimation of economic vitality and its relation to other factors.

### **8.3.2 Further Research**

Among the many issues tackled by this research, many questions need further investigation in the area of urban policies, physical design and social vitality and its effect on retailing. Further work needs to be done to assess the effectiveness of the planning system in the State of Kuwait in achieving planning policies and objectives. It would be valuable to assess the role of urban policy in Kuwait as a catalyst for urban renewal and community building. More research is required to assess the impact of urban policies on the distribution and form of retailing activities. Future research might explore the role of political influence on the real-estate market and the form of the commercial and retailing sector in Kuwait. More information is needed on ways to engage the private sector in the creation of vital urban centres.

Future studies that assess the value of an urban design code as a tool for development in Kuwait would be very helpful. A better understanding could be developed on the potential economic, social and environmental value that urban design can add to the city environment of Kuwait. Further research in the field is needed to explore the role of design codes in the creation of distinct local environments that are more able to attract private investment.

More work is needed to determine the relationship between urban form and consumption habits. Such work could ask questions such as the role of retailing types and car-dependent environments in the determination of specific kinds of use of public spaces. There is a need to build a deeper understanding of ways to enhance social diversity in transitional global cities such as Kuwait City, as well as to determine the factors that govern the development of public space as a point of interaction between different social groups in the Middle Eastern context.

#### **8.4 Final Word**

This research has demonstrated that the street is the major element of urban form and should be the focus of development for planners and policy makers. Vital streets and public spaces are signs of healthy societies. This study illustrated that integrated retailing can contribute to the development of urban and social diversity.

In the course of this research many questions have arisen, as have been outlined in section 8.3.2 Further Research, to highlight areas that require further investigation. Nevertheless, this research provided a coherent body of work that is based on extensive theoretical backing and fieldwork findings. At the conclusion, the research provided a comprehensive model that is holistic in nature that addressed the inherited problems of the urban condition of Kuwait City and its retailing areas in particular. It is believed that the main objectives of this research have been met. The findings presented in this chapter should be a sufficient starting point for the creation of a comprehensive framework that leads to the development of a vital social vitality through integrated retailing environments.

- 1. How can the physical organization and design of retailing contribute to the creation of vital urban environments?*

This research has shown that a dense urban grid as well as an integrated network encourages movement. An urban environment that is easily read and understandable promotes walking and being in public. A well-designed, furnished and maintained urban environment encourages the usability of public space for different purposes and by different types of people.

2. *How can planning policies promote integrated and diverse retailing within city centres?*

From the literature review and through the data gathered from the case studies, it has been shown that urban policies can and do create integrated and diverse retailing. Urban policies and guidelines can protect historic urban centres, enforce continuous active frontage, maintain the human scale and enforce high-quality urban design. Policies can also protect small and local businesses and demand, and enforce mixed-use development.

3. *Do diverse densities and physical structures produce social diversity?*

It remains difficult to establish a solid correlation between urban structures and social product. This is an area that has been debated extensively and requires further work. However, based on the findings of this research, diverse densities and diverse urban structures could encourage diverse functions; diverse functions could likely attract diverse population and create the necessary conditions for social vitality. From the literature review and the findings gathered from the three analysed case studies, it was evident that well designed urban centres that enjoy higher physical and social densities create the necessary conditions for urban vitality.

4. *What are the physical and social factors that contribute to the creation of successful retailing?*

Retailing is a major economic sector and its vitality indicates a healthy economy. However, it is a highly sensitive sector that is easily affected by the conditions of the local and international economy. The study of retailing in Kuwait City is further complicated by the fact that the State of Kuwait has what is characterized as an artificial economy. The national GDP is high and the general population has high expenditure ability. Yet, based on the findings of this research, the success of

retailing requires a central location, proximity of population, a strong tourism market, a high-quality urban environment and the existence of diverse retailing types.

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## **Appendix 1: SPACE SYNTAX THEORIES AND METHODOLOGIES**