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Applying the Cultural District Concept as an Approach for Boosting Future Development of Cairo City

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Abstract

The notion of ‘cultural district’ or ‘cultural quarter’ is not new. Cities have always had spaces for entertainment, arts, and cultural consumption, whether as scattered venues across the city or in clusters of entrepreneurial activity. Cultural districts are geographical areas which contain the highest concentration of cultural and entertainment facilities in a city or town. Cultural districts have a role to play if it is well defined inside the cities. It could be a catalyst for development as well as enhancing the image of the city. Thus, corresponding policies towards the recognition of these places and consequently adopting suitable plans for its development will result in economic benefits to the city. Although the fact that ‘cultural districts’ have been well identified in many international practices as well as in the literature, the concept is still vague in the developing countries. Cairo is possessing several places where culture is the main focus involving important intellectual and creative components. The city centre, Old Cairo, Khan El Khalili, Coptic Cairo are all districts with high potential of cultural and creative activities. They are a sound strategic investment for boosting the economic fortunes of the city. Thus, a dedicated plan should be tailored considering its capacity for local development and the recognition that culture could be facilitated for more benefits.

This paper aims to address the notion and characteristics of ‘cultural districts’ and apply this concept to re-frame some specific areas inside Cairo and to explain how culture and creativity can act as a driver for identifying solutions to the main development challenges they face. The viability of cultural districts is discussed regarding the designation of potential territories, required and supporting legal frameworks, contributing stakeholders, ending by adopting a management plan that could lead to territorial competence and efficiency within the city. The research targets the area of Al Fustat specifically as a potential territory for applying the discussed notion. The paper is organized in two main parts to achieve its objectives: The first part is the theoretical part which discusses the definitions of cultural districts and its associated characteristics. The paper demonstrates the classification of cultural areas within the city and focuses on policies and approaches that govern them. The second part analyses some international experiences of cultural areas to conclude the “cultural districts model”. And consequently apply them to the Egyptian context, for future consideration of the culture and its role in development plans.

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Keywords

Cultural districts; Cairo; Creative Cities; Cultural Development

1. Introduction

The utilization of cultural activities, goods, and services to a city's image gain enhancement, tourism attraction, and promote economic development has become a prevailing trend not only in the renowned traditional cultural capitals of the world but also in places not famous for their past cultural backgrounds, such as Bilbao, Spain. Many cities have initiated the building of museums, cultural destinations, arts centers, galleries, and cultural districts, as part of their urban development and conservation policies. The coexistence of cultural activities with many urban development schemes makes it important for planners and policymakers to think how they add to the success of the local economic development.

On the other hand, the declining quality of the Egyptian cities is now a matter of extensive public and academic concern and is part of a wider fear that we can no longer manage the well-being of our cities. It is becoming inevitable for city planners and decision makers to adopt tools and mechanisms emerging from the realization of local context and existing potentialities to employ in formulating the development plans and strategies of our cities. Culture is one of these tools, which is offered greatly within Cairo as the capital city of Egypt. The significance of culture as an incentive for urban development can be determined by considering its role in our cities' revitalization and development.

This paper is intended to clarify policy discussions about how to enable Egyptian cities, particularly Cairo, to utilize their cultural potentialities and gain the benefits for all citizens. The discussion is organized into three parts. The paper starts with an overview of elaborating the close link between culture and the development of the city districts. The contemporary concept of cultural districts and the growing prevalence of market-provided forms of culture and leisure in the urban context is discussed. It questions whether local authorities can develop a policy relying on the cultural and creative potentialities of the place in order to reach a new quality of urban life. Second, the paper highlights different attempts from different cities of the world presently informing new visions and initiatives that involve culture in their development plans to assess the returns of cultural investments in selected cities. The third part of the paper tests the possibility of adopting and implementing the cultural district approach in one of the prominent districts of Cairo. Finally, the paper notes an absence of local initiatives dedicated to developing urban areas by looking at the cultural dimension of the place and utilizing it to gain more developmental opportunities. One of the key conclusions arising from the study is that a better relationship between creativity and city urban areas could play an inevitable role in developing these areas.

2. Culture as a catalyst for city development

Cultural-led development and revitalization policies have attained importance in the economic development plans of many cities around the world, yet the notion was not applied in the cities of developing countries which are possessing considerable cultural backgrounds and could be invested and employed. Cultural activities are considered as a significant catalyst for city development due to many reasons as it plays a role in urban tourist and visitor draws, and a significant factor in how individuals prefer where to live or work. Many researchers have focused on the success of specific cultural projects in urban regeneration. The current literature lacks, however, a discussion of how local governments in Egypt could utilize and associate culture in their proposed urban development schemes. Although many agree that culture is important, but how cultural activities become a catalyst for economic development? What are cultural activities can governments support? What are the expected benefits of these activities? How do cities designate places to pursue cultural policies?

To answer the previous questions, we first discuss briefly the evolution of cultural development notion as addressed in the urban development literature. Cultural strategies models are outlined to describe the characteristics and objectives of distinct approaches to cultural development. Then, a presentation of some case studies is discussed to determine the extent to which local governments can consider cultural activities as vital catalysts for economic development and helps to obtain a clear understanding how strategies are applied on the ground.

3. Why culture?

Many reasons have recently justified the need for the local development initiatives to consider culture as a promising mechanism for economic development. Reasons include:

1. The competition between cities due to large global forces that have radically transformed the economic base of many cities. Despite its various global expressions, culture is a feature of distinction for cities, and this marks it a key component of contemporary urbanization. Each city is offering a unique culture, reflecting its associations with the heritage of a community, and its expression into the world (Van Der Borg and Russo, 2005).
2. Innovations in communication, transportation, production, and management have materialized the deindustrialization of many cities and encouraged the growth of an economy marked by an increase in service industries. Wealth creation is now motivated less by the exploitation of ordinary resources of the land or the manufacturing processes but more from the utilization of our creativity, innovation and intellectual potentialities and cultural associations (AuthentiCity, 2008).
3. The increasing levels of education, and people interested in urban lifestyles with significant expenditure on leisure and cultural activities, and the growth of consumption behavior as a means to express one's social status and identity. Van Der Borg and Russo (2005) argue that the growing changes in the lifestyle have encouraged the demand for cultural services and the proportion of that income going to culture, leisure, and entertainment.

As these considerable changes have occurred to societies, governments have become more interested in initiatives that will stimulate economic growth within their cities. A clear reaction by municipal governments in this regard is to plan cultural development policies that take advantage of on these changes. The growing need of municipal governments to invest in cultural and entertainment facilities has become a prevailing response (Eisinger, 2000). In many different cities, the creation of cultural facilities has encouraged a rapid pace in the development process.

4. What culture can do?

The goal of involving cultural amenities in the development process is multifold. It has a tangible economic effect on attracting tourists and visitors. It has the potential to improve a city's image. It also provides employment in the cultural sector, especially among the creative class and offers educational programs for a wider public. It is clear that culture has the potential to support the physical, economic and social revitalization in urban areas in many ways. Thus, city governments pursued to adopt different principles as techniques of cultural revitalization. When applied in combination, the following principles help to clarify how culture is realized as an important mechanism for effective revitalization:

4.1. Cultural facilities act as a catalyst for investment and activities

Cultural facilities (such as, festivals, art venues and historic destinations, etc.) have a ripple effect in the economic sense, implying that it can help generate other economic non-cultural activities by attracting visitors, people, and tourist who spend in restaurants, hotels and public transport, etc. In this way, cultural destinations act as a catalyst for investment and activity. Cultural districts cannot perform without cultural and other non-cultural supporting activities. This mixed-use economy should be diverse, preferably at the small and medium scale where the target is to boost the economics of the area and helps create self-sustaining growth. This notion can also facilitate a public-private partnership so at the same time the public sector provides cultural services; private sector contributes with other private galleries and supporting services.

4.2. Cultural activities as the basis for a night-time economy

Cultural activities have the capacity to create a night-time economy and bring the revitalized areas to life. This is noticeable in many areas that were obsolete and by the injection of such activities; they could return to its active role. It is advisable for city planners and governments to promote and manage the night-time economy as part of their approach to supporting the economic contribution of cultural activities. This entails paying attention to managing security, accessibility, and transportation.

4.3. Creating a range of activities and mix of uses

It is apparent from the previous discussion that culture can help to provide the critical mass in amount and time-scale of the activity, which facilitates the social and economic performance of an area. This can be achieved by encouraging a range of activities and mix of uses in an area, which reinforces each other and help to increase confidence in an area through a purposeful utilization of properties for cultural uses. Consequently, cultural quarters are created.

4.4. Culture has the potential to form a sense of identity and meaning of a place

Culture also has a significant role in providing the content for activity to create lively urban areas (Montgomery, 2003). Events in public spaces, parks, and squares help bring meaning and, therefore, improve the competitiveness of those spaces. In this way, culture in association with the built-up environment helps to create a sense of meaning and identity of the place.

4.5. Culture could inform the process of urban design

It is critical that the urban public realm has a local identity that creates its distinctiveness and remarkable character of its spaces, squares, and streets. If rooted in the cultural backgrounds of the area, architecture and urban design can develop special human experience, vigorous economies and more sensitive integration with communities. Urban design needs to have a cultural conscience to succeed. This intertwining of culture and urban public realm will result in positive articulation of the city through new developments, revitalization schemes, and public art.

4.6. Branding the place and its products

Cultural activities, if exist, have the potential to transform the place from a mere location to a destination where people want to visit, live, and work. It is worth mentioning that successful branded cities were able to market their history, culture, quality of place, diversity, lifestyle, etc. Cultural venues can radically affect the city brand as in the example of Guggenheim in Bilbao - Spain has largely affected the image and the economics of the City.

5. Cultural development strategies

Cultural development strategies are not a simple task that engages only policymakers to formulate these strategies, but they require collaborative efforts among different governmental and private bodies to bring them on the ground. But it is important to identify the approach in which these strategies have to be formulated according to the variables offered by the place. Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris (2007) have grouped cultural strategies into three models: Entrepreneurial Strategies, Creative Class Strategies, and Progressive Strategies. Each type varies based on a set of factors that include strategy objectives, the cultural activities, proposed venues, geographic scale, and target users. Entrepreneurial strategies follow a practical, market-driven approach directed by merely economic goals; Creative Class Strategies pursue economic development by providing quality of life and recreational facilities; and

Progressive strategies follow a neighborhood-based approach to cultural policies that correspond to the desires and needs of its local communities and existing cultural organizations.

5.1. Entrepreneurial Strategies

Entrepreneurial Strategies favors enhancing the economic growth rather than social goals. In this process, city governments try to adapt their built environments and economies to compete for the emergent industries of the “new economy” such as cultural tourism, performing arts, and information technologies. The process was adopted earlier to revitalize the abundant parts of the cities that have been ignored for a long time due to the de-industrialization process. The strategy was seeking to inject new investments by creating retail and mixed-use spaces in historically themed environments, the construction of flagship cultural complexes competing for attention. This approach has its roots in the in economic agglomeration theory which can be described as a geographical concentration of firms within an industrial sector. Firms locating within a cluster benefit from shared infrastructure, resources, and networks, as well as a shared image for branding and other general economies of scale.

The goal was to bring a new enhanced image to attract new capital, visitors, and tourists. Due to their apparent economic success and marketing competencies, a wide range of cultural activities has become a key factor of many urban redevelopment and revitalization projects. Critics argue that entrepreneurial initiatives favoring the private sector over the public sector are better as they concentrate more on building the city for visitors and affluent residents rather than the whole population (Eisinger 2000; Zukin 1995). However, a balanced relationship between the public and a private will certainly lead to more comprehensive consequences.

5.2. Creative Class Strategies

Creative class strategies focus on the quality of life and lifestyle facilities that attract the “creative class” – a wide-ranging group of people who are highly educated workers and “knowledge-based professionals” including such diverse of professionals as software designers, writers, artists, architects. Florida’s “creative capital theory” argues “creative people power regional economic growth and these people prefer places that are innovative, diverse, and tolerant” (Florida, 2008). He, further, explains that a specific type of human capital, the ‘creatives’, are important ingredients for the economic growth. For him, creativity or ideas are key economic goods (Florida, 2002). Other keywords behind the Creative City concept, besides the mainly economic outline which creativity and culture are seen in, is the promotion of growth - understood as a growth of the Creative Class and with it, economic growth - and the competition among cities.

Landry (2008) suggests that the concept of the creative class and creativity affects the urban realm and have become its dominant paradigm. For Florida “place is the key economic and social organizing unit of our time, making the quality of a place essential” (Florida, 2002). Establishing a creative environment is becoming a key factor for the economic success of cities. Citizens become more demanding for quality of life facilities in their cities. Cultural and entertainment consumption and urban amenities are increasingly important for enhancing locations turning the city into a vibrant destination (Clark, 2004).

5.3. Progressive Strategies

Progressive strategies concentrate on providing a wide spreading of benefits among people. Success here is not measured regarding economic returns, but rather its impact regarding its social benefits such as reducing the economic and social differences and increase the overall standards of living and the encouragement of citizens’ participation. Progressive strategies seek to extract public benefits from the private sector. Progressive cultural strategies seek to broaden access to and participation in the arts, support local cultural production and utilize the arts to strengthen community identity and to revitalize disadvantaged neighborhoods. City governments have established initiatives to fund arts and culture education, turn obsolete properties into community cultural centers, and encour-

age attention to local heritage and culture (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007)

6. Cultural districts

The notion of “cultural district” or “cultural quarter” is not new. Many cities have always utilized spaces for cultural consumption, arts, and entertainment, whether in dispersed locations across the city or grouped in clusters of entrepreneurial activity. Wynne (1992) defines a cultural district as “that geographical area which contains the highest concentration of cultural and entertainment facilities in a city or town”. Cultural districts for Brooks and Kushner (2001) are mixed-use zones anchored by cultural facilities. They have a distinctive sense of place influenced by well-designed architecture and an attractive public realm. A lively day and night economy typified by markets, festivals, and public art programs. Culture is crucial to the idea of a cultural district as a place where people can live, work and play.

A cultural quarter can be defined as a geographical area of a city characterized by agglomeration of cultural activities. They are typically mixed-use, comprising cultural and heritage organizations, business, retail, and residential uses, as well as being centers for night-life and tourism. An economic agglomeration is one feature of the cultural quarters that can be described as a geographical concentration of firms within an industrial sector. Firms locating within a cluster benefit from shared infrastructure, resources, and networks, as well as a shared image for branding and other general economies of scale.

6.1. The urban setting

The cultural district may gain attraction through its unique urban and architectural configuration, which plays a considerable role in accommodating a diversity of cultural and creative activities. Historic urban settings, for instance, with significant forms of symbolic meaning, are a potential territory for encompassing cultural and creative activities. The articulation between individuals and the physical setting of the place contribute to facilitating the transfer of different forms of cultural production and consumption.

The physical component of cultural districts such as buildings, places, spaces, streets . . . etc., appear to be essential. It provides the local milieu with physical venues capable of circulating and transmitting cultural activities. They provide suitable opportunities for the people to exchange ideas, knowledge, and creativity.

Montgomery (2003) argues that a place which has good cultural activity but lacks a good urban design and form will not count as a cultural quarter in the sense of being a destination which attracts everyday users and visitors, but rather a place (most likely) of only cultural production detached from the arena of consumption. This means that cultural quarters, and indeed the wider notion of city creative economies, cannot be considered in segregation from the geographical setting and the characteristics of its urban qualities.

6.2. The cultural component

The competition between places entails the creation of meaning behind the mere existence of its physical fabric. Incorporating both tangible and intangible elements, and profoundly affecting the social image, reputation, and representation, culture becomes the main interest of this time. Fanzini & Rotaru (2012) argue that cultural heritage is no longer considered as a consumer good, but rather a capital resource and asset that can be utilized in the process of producing goods and services and consequently contribute to the local development. Hence, it is not surprising that places within the city are becoming more appealing by involving important intellectual components to their physical context.

6.3. Events

If the physical settings appear as formal meeting points, events offer a key platform for culture producers to offer their work and interact with the community members. Events can bring a wider recognition on both the local and global scene. The scale and scope of a specific event may increase and lead the community to plan further specific events such as public festivals, fairs, competitions that may reach a wide spectrum of audience and individuals. These events are vital to revitalizing the creative process by allowing cultural districts to new exposures. In turn, these events stimulate a process of facilitating the interaction between potential producers or consumers (Cohende et al., 2011).

6.4. The economic dynamism of the cultural sector

Cultural districts have a role to play as incubators for creativity, innovation, and quality, which can lead to bringing economic benefits. They also succeed in attracting tourists, visitors, new business opportunities and mixed-use economic activities. Thus, they are a sound strategic investment for boosting the economic fortunes of the city, throughout the recognition that culture could be facilitated commercially. Understanding how cities can offer a desirable milieu for its individuals and firms to pursue their creative and intellectual activities has become a key issue in today's economies. Cohende et al. (2011) argue that Cities can play a remarkable role in defining the road map for creativity both locally and globally. However, many questions remain as to how cities can effectively utilize human creativity and benefit from their cultural potential.

6.5. The institutional arrangements

The existence of mutually shared objectives between stakeholders is one of the most important factors that support the cultural district development process. There should be a local administrative arrangement committed to facilitate the integration between cultural activities, urban settings, and target audience. The local authorities have to provide incentives, community support, and regulations to facilitate the implementation of the cultural district and to ensure its continued success.

7. International practices

Cultural districts designation has major influences on the cities which followed a cultural policy in urban regeneration schemes. It has, in many cases, transformed the city spaces and the peoples' everyday life in different manners. Investments in the cultural facilities, enhancements of the public spaces and buildings in the city, and conducting various cultural projects, which reflect the recent tendencies in cultural policy and urban regeneration have together reformed the cities' image with a modern look and up-to-date atmosphere.

The concept of promoting and introducing cultural facilities to revitalize abandoned urban areas is expanding within many cities across the world. Over the past few years in the United States, Australia and UK and elsewhere, 'cultural planning' has started to enter the debate between designers and urban planners, local government officers, community arts workers, and organizations with special interest in the arts and cultural production. This is a good sign in so far as it implies that cultural resources, broadly defined, are now being taken seriously in planning strategies. The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), for example, considers cultural planning along with environmental, economic, social, and infrastructural planning among its requirements for local developments in Australia.

7.1. The United States practices

United States' cultural districts are distinct areas, selected or certified by state governments that employ different cultural resources to stimulate economic development and promote interactions between culture, arts and other businesses (NASAA, 2012). State cultural districts have developed into pivotal areas that are characterized by many types of businesses, yield a high quality of life for its residents, attract visitors and provoke civic pride. Cultural district programs are, currently, established in fourteen different states and more states are expected to consider the implementation of similar policies. There are more than 200 state-designated cultural districts, and more new districts are evolving every year (Stubbs R., 2014). Cultural districts are among strategies states have implemented to foster their economies while achieving many other social benefits. The anticipated results of cultural districts spread beyond the arts and cultural sector to benefit all members of the community. Those goals may include:

1. Attracting the creative class and cultural endeavors to a local community, and encouraging business and job development.
2. Addressing the community's unique conditions, assets, needs, and opportunities.
3. Encouraging tourism.
4. Restoring and rehabilitating historic buildings.
5. Improving the property value of the area.
6. Promoting cultural development.
7. Cultivating creative places.
8. Designating districts through qualifying assessment criteria and developing an application process, allowing not only governmental bodies but also communities to apply for designation and inscription.
9. Articulating standards, and adopt guidelines to both rural and urban needs.
10. Providing technical and planning assistance.
11. Ensuring wide and fair benefits.
12. Provide financial support.
13. Offering incentives to encourage business development such as tax exemptions for the creative class and businesses within a district.
14. Pass enabling legislation.
15. Improving the visibility of cultural districts through marketing strategies and promotional endeavors that can attract visitors and tourists to designated districts.
16. Integrate existing districts into a statewide program.

For the sake of a successful outcome, many state agencies have been participating in collaboration in state cultural district programs such as historic preservation, department of economic development, division of cultural affairs, department of tourism, state Main Street office (may be government or nonprofit), and small business administration.

7.2. Cultural districts in the UK and Ireland

The concept of cultural quarters was established in the UK during the mid-1980s. These were perceived as creative milieus that are as focal places in cities – quarters or industrial districts – where economic development of the creative industries, the arts, and other cultural economy of cities are focused to achieve trading exchange, agglomeration economies, and city diversity. Recently, urban cultural quarters are considered as mechanisms for urban revitalization. This was, intensively, discussed in the urban literature, especially on theories of city growth, urban design and economic development. Cultural quarters are usually perceived as part of a broader strategy interlinking cultural and economic development. This is usually interlinked to the development or revitalization of a selected urban area, in which mixed-use urban development is to be encouraged, and in response, the public urban realm is to be rearranged and enhanced to adopt with changes. In other words, cultural quarters opt to combine strategies for consumption of culture and arts with urban place-making.

John Montgomery, with Urban Cultures Limited, devised their first cultural quarter plan 1991. At that time, the Irish government appointed him to advise on the establishment of a suggested cultural quarter in the Temple Bar area of Dublin. This remarkable initiative is now viewed in the literature as a pioneering modern urban planning initiative. This work has been followed by other similar projects in many cities, including Glasgow's Merchant City, Manchester's Northern Quarter, Grainger Town in Newcastle, Belfast North side and East Gateshead, the Sheffield Cultural Industries Quarter, and Dundee's emerging cultural quarter.

The case of Temple Bar is perhaps the most prominent as it dates back more than 25 years ago when the area witnessed neglect and decline in its property values which resulted in an imperative process of revitalization. By 1990, Temple Bar had many neglected buildings, vacant sites, problems of poor, remains of business activity and many buildings which were declining. Businesses, culture and arts organizations the area organized themselves to establish the Temple Bar Development Council as early as 1989, and started to raise the issue of the need to revitalize the area as a cultural quarter. The strategy, which was adopted to accomplish this, was a combination of cultural led urban revitalization, physical renewal, and local economic development, particularly in connection with the cultural activities. An early strategic development framework for the area was prepared by Urban Cultures Limited in 1990/91 (Montgomery, 2004). This recommended the following key interventions:

1. Adopting managerial arrangements to facilitate land acquisition and to bring back the physical constancy of the urban area;
2. Adopting cultural projects and activities to act as urban focal points and to provoke interest in the area, these included different cultural venues.
3. Providing grants and loans to help small enterprises to start up their business, and to promote the existing ones.
4. Proposing training for people who are involved in business and the offered cultural industries.
5. Promoting activities contribute to the night economy.
6. Proposing initiative to improve vehicular access and pedestrian walkways through the area, involving the design of new public spaces, squares, gardens that consequently affect the experimental qualities of the public realm.
7. Suggesting a major intervention of public art and cultural animation, designed to retrieve and provide meanings and distinctiveness to the area's public domain;
8. Property management and rehabilitation based on balancing the current needs to enhance the area's image with the needs to retain specific existing activities;
9. The introduction of incentives to encourage the process through grants and tax exemptions;

10. The insertion of newly designed buildings for newly proposed activities.
11. Branding the area through marketing campaigns, and information provision using good attractive design.

Cultural writers acknowledge the importance of Temple Bar as a notable example of using culture and design to re-establish an area's economy and place-making. They referred to Temple Bar as a strategy of utilizing cultural assets to attract people and stimulate economic benefits.

8. The case study of Al-Fustat as a potential cultural district in Cairo:

Cairo is the capital of Egypt and, it has a total population of 16 million people, and is considered as one of the largest cities in the Middle East. It is one of the 19th largest cities in the world. Cairo offers a considerable destination for a variety of visitors, tourists and people who are even seeking a place to work. Cairo possesses many old districts that date back centuries ago. Many of its districts are having cultural references and backgrounds that add to their identity and meaning and its citizens' everyday life in various ways. The research, through its previous discussion, has concluded that over the past few years, one of the essential developments in the local governance of urban spaces is the general recognition of the notion that provision of access to and consumption of, "cultural" resources is a vital concept in successful urban development strategies. However, this has not yet considered in the local context, which is providing a variety of places with considerable potential for such application of this concept.

Downtown Cairo, for example, has been the urban center of Cairo since the late 19th century. After many years of being a place for Cairo's creative intellectual class, downtown started its deterioration in the mid-20th century; its prosperous population began to move to new suburban areas. This resulted in a notable transformation of the city center. Buildings started deterioration due to disrepair caused by the freezing rents by rent laws. Street names also changed from its original. Later, and as more residents moved from the area and Cairo became more crowded, building facades deteriorated, infrastructure overloaded, street vendors occupied the area, and garbage spread all over. Part of this deterioration was caused by the change from an prestigious residential area into a business and shopping destination for lower social classes; and as Cairo continued to develop, traffic crowd became a prevailing feature of the downtown, making it difficult to access.

Recently, the government has initiated a restoration project of downtown bringing its former glory back, the project included painting and restoring buildings' facades, providing parking-free lots to main streets, regulating signage, planting trees, and paving pedestrian sidewalks. Another important initiative was providing transportation stops, which helped to mitigate the flow of traffic. The plan also proposed the replacement of street vendors and the removal of unlicensed coffee shops from the district's main streets. The initiated plan with its interventions provided solutions for the physical urban elements of the districts and could capture the extraordinary potential of its cultural dimension to support its future continuous and sustainable development.

8.1. The district of Al Fustat-old Cairo

Another district in Cairo, which offers a good cultural potentiality, is the pottery district of Al-Fustat in Misr al-Qadima area which represents an example of a cultural production district in Cairo, among many others, as an industrial, cultural district using low technologies. Al-Fustat has been renowned for its pottery making, the distinct of its traditional design and the creativeness of its artisans. Pottery production has marked the cultural spirit of this district.

In response to its air pollution caused by the use of primitive methods, the Egyptian government decided to close the district's pottery kilns in 2003. This resulted in threatening the potters who trace their origins to the establishment of al-Fustat in AD 641. In response to this, an arts and crafts center project was initiated to include modern kilns and commercial spaces as part of a new potters' village. Another project was also designed for the study of the

traditional crafts of pottery and ceramics. The building consists of lecture areas, workshops, , exhibition galleries, offices, a multi-purpose hall, and rooms for artists. The center has become a catalyst for the revitalization of Al Fustat and an important training destination. (Nassar, H. & Hewitt, R., 2012)

The district is located near the Coptic Museum and historic churches in Old Cairo; The location is featured by its old churches and other heritage buildings. Buildings such as The Hanging Church, Abu Sarga, the Church of Saint Barbara the Martyr, the Church of the Virgin Mary, The Greek Orthodox Church Mar Girgis, The Church of the Monk Mar Girgis, the Fortress of Babylon, the Coptic Museum and the Ben Ezra Synagogue are all considered among the super touristic destinations of Cairo.

The NMEC is the first museum of civilization in Egypt is also located in the district, overlooking the Ain El-Seera Lake. The NMEC is planned to display the Egyptian civilization through different eras from prehistoric times to the present day and highlight the country's tangible and intangible heritage.



Figure 1. The National Museum of Egyptian Civilization NMEC Source: (<http://caiobserver.com>)

The realization of the cultural significance of this area of the City has attracted the attention of the non-governmental bodies to contribute to providing another venue to the area. Darb 1718 is a non-governmental organization founded in 2008. It provides different types of spaces for a variety of cultural and artistic events. Darb 1718 has one theater, two exhibition halls, stages, open-air cinema, outdoor spaces in addition to the residential part to offer accommodation facility for guest and artists coming from abroad. The center offers different artistic workshops, cultural events, and training programs for young artists and provides them with spaces to display their work together with professional artists. It involves the Egyptian creative class with the local and international art and culture field. Darb 1718 is the gathering point and a platform for displaying Cairo's Contemporary Art.



Figure 2. Fustat Traditional Crafts Center, Source:<https://archnet.org/sites/5065>



Figure 3. Darb 1718 a cultural venue, Source: <http://www.darb1718.com/darb1718/>

Al Fustat- old Cairo is showing another opportunity to invest in culture for the sake of developing the whole district. The case here is providing many cultural venues but needs more physical interventions to positively change and align the public realm with the cultural offerings of the place.

8.2. The effects of cultural district designation

The key consequences of the designation of districts as a cultural district can contribute to the change and the overall enhancement of the physical content, activities and the image of the place. It will also yield an opportunity for an active partnership between the local community organizations, and governmental bodies. This can offer effective governance of the area and engagement in the regenerating activities of the place.

Major cultural activities at Al-Fustat are mixed between selling goods with traditional and artistic cultural contents, besides the touristic and cultural services offered by both the Coptic churches and museum with the recent existence of The National Museum of Egyptian Civilization. The future of Al-Fustat depends on both the private sector activities and the public involvement in determining the framework of private sector activities through ordinances, building regulations, infrastructure provision and urban public realm enhancements such as open spaces, squares, pedestrians, and street installments.

Goals of thinking to involve such initiatives of cultural districts include: revitalizing these designated areas of the city, offering evening activities with extended hours during which the area is used, providing facilities for cultural activities and organization, enhancing employment, and connecting culture more intimately with community development.

8.3. Proposed cultural district strategy for Al Fustat

Combining both cultural and urban planning is a key element in this strategy. Streets, parks and open spaces, for example, could be perceived as tracts of the built environment. However, those same urban elements might become the venue of film making, a site of musical performance, or for displaying visual or performing arts and so on. The annual Citadel Music Festival of Cairo is a good example of celebrating art and culture within an environment, which offers historic associations of Saladin Citadel. The proposed strategy is suggested to include the following stages:

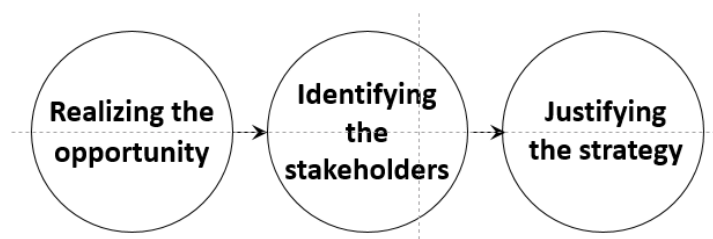


Figure 4. Proposed strategy elements (The researcher)

Realizing the opportunity: which consider in broad terms the full range of the cultural resources as well as its interrelation with the physical environment as a milieu. In this phase, all conditions, issues, and needs should be identified in the local area concerned. Cultural mapping is the prime identification of the cultural features in the designated area. Mapping is a tool for pinpointing creative and cultural assets. The focus of mapping is to compile information of cultural resources that support decision-making and planning in cultural development or revitalization.



Figure 5. Al Fustat area cultural mapping (The researcher)

Identifying the stakeholders: the coordination between concerned agencies, organizations, and departments of government to affirm that relevant programs, public expenditures and regulatory process are effectively connected, and focused on culture as the key component. The previous literature review shows that building governance capacity requires institutions of collaboration.

Justifying the strategy: this considers taking into account the economic and social impact of the cultural planning. The identification of all the consequences such as the provision of Job opportunities, the creation of more attractive places based on the cultural dimension and the attraction of visitors and tourists. According to (Montgomery, 2003) changes brought by the cultural district designation should be analyzed and assessed in terms of the district image, cultural and other related activities and meaning.

8.4. Objectives of cultural based development of Al Fustat:

The key objectives of the cultural district of Al Fustat are to:

1. Enhance the physical image and reputation of the area.
2. Reinforce relationships between target groups and the site including cultural producers, residents, landowners, community representatives, non-governmental organizations, and visitors.
3. Encourage and enhance cultural activities, events, and festivals. This could be promoted by NMEC.
4. Raise heritage awareness and involve professionals in the revitalization of Al Fustat.
5. Encourage cultural tourism and improve mobility and access to the different cultural and heritage destinations.

6. Guide investors towards sustainable interventions to benefit the whole site.

8.5. Target groups:

8.5.1. Community

Community members have to be involved in the safeguarding and enhancement of their cultural production. Community members include: business sectors (ceramics and pottery craftsmen, services, local businesses) and residents of Al Fustat

8.5.2. Stakeholders

The involvement of governmental authorities, such as Supreme Council of Antiquities SCA, Ministry of Antiquities MoA, Ministry of Culture MoC, Ministry of Housing MoH, Ministry of Tourism MoT, and National Organization for Urban Harmony NOUH is crucial both to raise awareness and protect the Heritage property of Al Fustat. Local and international institutions, development programs and non-governmental organizations that provide services on the site should also be addressed.

8.5.3. The tourist industry

The cultural tourism sector is considered as an economic resource not only for the country but also for the local people; however, it needs to be structured, managed, and enhanced on the area to maximize its expected benefits.

8.5.4. Media

The partnership between the creative class and the media in Egypt needs to be strengthened to raise awareness of the area. Good media channels to reach the public include for example newspapers, magazines, and the internet.

8.5.5. Students and education professionals

The cultural district targets secondary educational entities, such as cultural centers and museums, which can contribute to awareness-raising and the safeguarding of cultural heritage, introducing cultural events, promoting the existing cultural production of ceramics and pottery through selected programs and events.

8.5.6. Professionals

The contribution of cultural professionals, artists and experts is vital to establish technical groups who can support the revitalization of Al Fustat area through events, workshops and public lectures. They include cultural and technical experts (urban planners, engineers, architects, historians, writers, artists, etc.), socioeconomic experts, Legal experts and investors willing to support sustainable interventions in the site.

8.6. Tools to be applied

The cultural district designation and implementation strategy involve a variety of tools – both essential and complementary – to fulfill its goals and objectives. These are described below.

8.6.1. Offering incentives to encourage business development

Governments use a variety of tax incentives and eligibility for special loan funds to encourage business development within local cultural districts. Exemptions and loans for artisans and cultural business within a district foster activity and contribute to local people's welfare and well being.

8.6.2. Improving the physical component of cultural districts

Physical components such as buildings, places, spaces, streets ... etc. have to be improved to achieve good accessibility to the district and providing a suitable milieu for the existing cultural activities. It should reveal a unique identity, and authentic image marks the district's distinctiveness regarding its heritage buildings, cultural places, museums... etc.

8.6.3. Public relations/multi-media

The effect of the media is crucial to help promote the concept of cultural district and the benefits of the site to a wider audience. Media coverage and events may incorporate the following: press releases, Newspapers and magazines, dedicated website, Twitter account and Facebook profile that responds to public queries and includes cultural and events information, documentaries, short movies, and other visual art projects related to Al Fustat, smartphone applications, including tours guided by GPS. The application could be connected to a website for the creation of itineraries. Itineraries have to include cultural attraction points within the site such as The National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, Fostat Traditional Crafts Center, Darb 1718 cultural venue and the Coptic Museum and historic churches of Old Cairo.

8.6.4. Branding

Making the site's image more recognizable by branding tools will help users, and visitors pinpoint site attractions, new initiatives, and proposed interventions in the site, thus supporting the promotion of Al Fustat. A general logo may be designed as a vehicle for a soft branding of the site. A strong, identifiable brand is critical for the success of any cultural districts. Many of the districts have used considerable resources to create websites that provide information about the district and its events; some have ensured that the district is well branded with signage defining its entrance and boundaries; while still others have installed an information center where visitors are greeted and welcomed during events. Enhancing the visibility of cultural districts, through marketing and promotional efforts more attraction of traffic and tourism to local districts may be achieved.

8.6.5. Interactive events

Interactive events that involve different groups of people can raise awareness about Al Fustat, benefit the local community in learning about the potentials of the site and involve stakeholders in the promotion of the area. They include workshops, lectures, forums, and information days that target relevant authorities, institutions and the community. Community events is another tool that raises public awareness and creates social, economic and cultural benefits for the community. Festivals, exhibitions, and performances may be arranged in strategic existing venues. Activity workshops and competitions for children, young people, and inhabitants including painting, poetry, Ceramics may also take place.

9. Conclusion

Several key notions of the cultural district's concept were discussed to understand the framework in which cities are investing in their possessed cultural aspects. Although the concept has been applied by many cities around the world, it was not perceived in the local context. Cairo, as the capital city of Egypt, is possessing many districts with cultural references and could build upon the concept to facilitate the development of these districts. It is worth mentioning that to achieve this, a local plan formulated by the authorities and city officials should be developed to designate the cultural districts of Cairo and indicates its role as a focus for cultural and other related activities. In terms of implementation mechanisms, an umbrella organization, coordinating all key stakeholders should control of the cultural district's promotion and the implementation of all the required actions and initiatives to achieve a vibrant cultural quarter, including financial incentives, encouragement of mixed uses, promotion of high-quality urban design, and direct development projects.

Yet whether in Al Fustat, or elsewhere, any successful cultural district must be firstly planned in a matter that fits the unique characteristics of its given characteristics, and secondly, be built with the broad support it needs to meet its goals. By doing so, cultural districts can improve their access to benefits from cultural economic development, thus bringing economic, recreational, and educational benefits to all residents of a city.

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