PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACES AND REGENERATION OF CONTEXTS OF VALUE

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ABSTRACT

Privately owned public spaces are a new model of spaces that is recently integrated in city centers and new developments. This new model is implemented through a public private partnership process that is recently adopted in regeneration strategies. The current research examines privatized open public spaces as a regeneration tool, since such spaces guarantee economic sustainability and catalyze regeneration of existing built environment surrounding them. The first part of the paper discusses open spaces as a major constituent of town character. It also examines the concept of privately owned public spaces that are different from traditional spaces owned and operated by governments. The second part of the paper explores the concept of privately owned public spaces and its applicability in urban renewal of existing decaying contexts through public private partnership, and whether it can catalyze regeneration in existing contexts, or it will change the social patterns and consequently the character of areas. Therefore it investigates case studies from developed and developing cities, to assess the applicability of the conception in the Egyptian contexts of value. It concludes with a brief framework for the evaluation of the public private partnership policies for open spaces regeneration initiatives in Egyptian context.

KEYWORDS: Privately owned public spaces, public private partnership, regeneration of contexts of value, public spaces character.

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of open public spaces is critical in understanding the city. Such debate has been examined by many researchers like Lefebvre who always argued that spaces are an entity actively produced by society [1]. These ideas were also examined by

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Lynch 1960, Jane Jacob 1961, Rapoport 1990 [2-4] arguing that urban environment is shaped and influenced by users' culture and behavior [5].

Open spaces shape the image and character of towns and cities. Activities in these spaces are based on concepts of equality and open access all through history; therefore they increase the senses of identity and belonging. A new model of open spaces different than traditional ones owned and operated by private sector started to appear in city centers and new developments. Such model is attracted by profit making and market needs, many of these privatized spaces succeeded in catalyzing investment in their surroundings though they may reduce diversity and control activities. The current research assesses three cases: one is part of major redevelopment project of Berlin city center, the second is a rehabilitation of a historic complex creating series of pocket parks as part of another regeneration project in Berlin, and the third is part of the development of a new suburb in Cairo, Egypt. These cases assess public private partnership success and the potential of applying it in settings of historical, aesthetical and cultural value.

The current paper's first part examines the rising phenomenon of privately owned public space and the standardization of urban architecture, changes of social aspects in open spaces through time, and open spaces as a major constituent of town character. It also examines the concept of privately owned public spaces and whether it can be a regeneration tool for decaying contexts of value. Privatized spaces introduced market needs into the realm of public culture, though it sometimes affects the variety and uniqueness of urban centers [6]. The second part of the paper explores the concept of privately owned public spaces in urban regeneration of existing decaying contexts such as corporate courtyards and pocket parks, and whether it can catalyze regeneration in existing contexts without changing the social patterns and consequently the character of areas. Therefore it investigates case studies from developed and developing cities: Sony center, Potsdamer platz, Berlin, The Hackesche Höfe complex, Berlin, The Arkan plaza, Zayed city, Egypt, in order to examine the appropriateness and applicability of the conception in the Egyptian contexts of value.

It concludes with a brief frame work for the evaluation of the public private partnership for open spaces regeneration initiatives in Egyptian context of value.

The paper is divided into three main parts: the first part examines the rising phenomenon of privately owned public space; the second part investigates case studies from developed and developing cities, the third part with a brief frame work for the evaluation of the public private partnership for open spaces regeneration initiatives in Egyptian context of value.

2.   PUBLIC SPACES AND SOCIAL PATTERNS IN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN SETTINGS

Open spaces, squares and streets according to Jacob make up the face of towns and cities [3], they are an arena for social interaction and social engagement, which increase the sense of identity and belonging to spaces. In traditional fabrics streets and squares are shaped according to users' activities, needs and behavior [4]. They were shaped according to users' cultures representing their shared values and religious beliefs. In new modern settings affected by industrial revolution, spaces changed their physical character from a compact structure with short walking distances to the development of new urban scale that eases mobility and transportation as a necessity for industrialization. But spaces continued to reflect changes in social patterns and communities' need they were places to meet, interact and express opinions.

In the past two decades a new morphology of spaces was created in city centers and new developments; privately owned public spaces that are controlled and operated by private sector responsible to attract investments and keep the space alive [7]. These spaces are different from traditional city streets, sidewalks or parks that are publicly owned, managed and accessible to public [8].

The new type of created spaces is very successful on the level of marketing spaces and guaranteeing economic sustainability, but may be affecting diversity and equality which affects respectively the sense of belonging and identity. Public spaces owned by developers reflect the identity of universal consumer culture, since controlled diversity is more profitable to developers than uncontrolled social

interaction. Many theorists consider that these spaces represent a break from the shared and accessible older historic spaces creating a new model of spaces with a contrived diversity instead of real social mix [6].

3. PUBLIC SPACES AND CHARACTER OF TOWNS.

Spaces are a major constituent of urban form that affects the character of towns and cities. Losing the sense of place is one of the characteristic features of losing area character. Streets and piazzas have been regarded as a lively public domain and the site for protest and struggle [9]. Equality and openness are important qualities of spaces, in public spaces no boundaries are found between different ethnic, ideological classes' backgrounds. Public spaces are usually linked with memories for a wide public which makes it one of the pivots that enrich collective memory [10].

Character maintenance is a very precious aim recently due to increasing globalization of culture, therefore preserving spaces and regenerating them while taking into consideration community needs, culture and preferences is essential to suggest policies sensitive to contexts' intangible value and to preserve space image and character. Since non-physical aspects of contexts are major constituent of image, identity and character of contexts [11]. To understand an existing context's character deep morphological studies are needed to understand how it evolved through history physically in terms of buildings and open spaces and non-physically in terms of activities and communities, since a space is considered as a process built through time to reach its image, character and identity [12].

4. PUBLIC SPACES AS REGENERATION TOOL IN CONTEXTS OF VALUE.

Public spaces witness daily life patterns and wide varieties of activities in different periods of time which reflect value and traditions of users. They provide a wide variety of social exchanges, a place to meet and interact with others, to express opinions, and to shop. Therefore they represent an important factor of people's place attachment, and are considered as means for integrating social diversity [13].

Open spaces therefore are a great potential for regeneration processes that are sensitive to character of places and to social patterns, they can catalyze economy in a decaying area while preserving its character, they can maintain attractions to towns and districts since they reflect character and images of these areas. Documenting physical and non-physical data of contexts is very important to save tangible and intangible aspects of character and guide decision making process to visions sensitive to context's history, cultural heritage and sense of place [11]. Otherwise these visions can affect diversity and equality and the sense of belonging in spaces.

Revitalization and regeneration of historic cores and areas of value provide source for residential identity and pride, they improve living conditions and add values to built environment which attracts business and investments turning decaying inner cities into vibrant residential and economic spaces. To reach such an effect, regeneration tools should be aware of contexts' character and identity, based on accurate documentation process linking chronological morphological studies to non-physical aspects of contexts. This leads to a regeneration process that is sensitive to its surroundings [11].

Privately owned public spaces are a new concept applied in many fields of regeneration and redevelopment of built environment [9]. Many new redevelopment projects around the world include in their plans public spaces that are owned by developers who initiated the redevelopment process or were part of it. A comprehensive regeneration vision that includes different stakeholders and is based on accurate studies of area history of change is essential to preserve diversity and accessibility of public spaces, and may turn privatized spaces into a tool that positively catalyze regeneration of existing contexts of value.

5.   THE CONCEPT OF PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACES.

During 1980's many American cities established a model of privatized public spaces aiming to create social coherence in public spaces shifting authority over space from government towards private sector [13]. Public spaces in new urban settlements are increasingly becoming under the control of private corporations and designed for

consumption rather than communication [9]. This new concept started also to be implemented in regeneration of existing contexts defined by Kohn as mauling of public spaces [14].

This new type of public spaces is spreading in new developments, designed to market universal consumer culture. Unlike public spaces managed by local governments privately owned spaces are controlled, ordered and designed reflecting marketing needs of users, turning according to Voyce places into spaces specifying citizens as clients. Privately owned public spaces such as corporate courtyards and pocket parks may be seen as sealed enclaves for restricted social classes and a recreational area insulated from the city public streets creating a certain expectation of behavior and consumption, the commercialization of urban amenities and the experience of space itself take place without obvious exclusion [9].

Suggested activities in these spaces go beyond shopping and retail to include entertainment and other lifestyle activities related to similar community classes. This concept on the other hand encourages public private partnership and is successful in turning a decaying space into a vibrant one attracting investments and different kind of users promising economic sustainability [6].

6. PRIVATE PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION PROCESSES.

Public private partnership is a process that brings together many partners to deliver a public service, partners usually are; public sector providing the asset and a regulatory framework, private sectors usually providing capital and technical expertise, and a third sector that will provide local knowledge and needs.

Concepts of public private partnership are applied in urban regeneration of decaying contexts in order to achieve economic sustainability and improve living conditions of residents. Public private partnership is not only a financial process it can provide opportunities to encourage community commitment and empowerment [15].

Traditionally the government sector was responsible of regenerating and upgrading public spaces and identity, defining public spaces in order to protect urban

heritage which represented an economic burden on governments. Many heritage agencies faced declining budgets, and the public sector had to find innovative ways to partner with other sectors to achieve urban regeneration goals. Collaboration between public agencies, private developers and community is currently growing in conservation and regeneration projects, the public sector turns to the other sectors to balance the funding problems [15]. Thus private spaces concept can turn to be a solution for regeneration funding problems.

The current research considers that successful public private partnership avoids privatization ensuring public sector to maintain responsibility for the proposed activities by forcing a regulatory framework that respects contexts history and heritage, like for example the framework applied In Catalonia Region, Spain 'District law' dealing with neighborhood management, it was adopted and designed to improve urban areas in decay through public spaces, the law reinforces social inclusion in spaces to control gentrification of these spaces [16].

The current study examines three cases: the first one in the heart of 'Berlin' Germany, the Potsdammer platz a widely regenerated area through public private partnership during design and implementation phases, the second is also in 'Berlin' Germany an old complex in a decaying context of value that was rehabilitated to include in its courtyards pocket parks turning the area into a vibrant trendy entrepreneurial spot in Berlin through public private partnership.

In the light of the German projects the paper examines the Egyptian case of privatized spaces in "Cairo" Egypt, 'Zayed' new development, examining through literature, direct observation and survey these new projects' pattern along the 26th of July corridor, showing their relation to surrounding areas residential projects.it also examines the public private partnership process in this example to assess whether it can be applied in Regeneration of existing contexts of value.

7. BERLIN 'POTSDAMER' AND A NEWLOGIC OF PUBLIC SPACES.

Potsdamer platz in center Berlin was extensively-redeveloped between '1994-1998', the redevelopment was one of the largest public-private construction projects in

Europe, planned by a team of international architects and urban planners, and it included recreational, administrational buildings and many public spaces. The project started by a competition that was held to propose a renewal plan for the area of Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, financed by major German investors such as; Benz, Sony and Brown. The competition was one of the tools suggested by the government that initiated the collaboration between public and private sectors through professional architects and urban designers, it helped in examining the context's previous character and image before introducing solutions that represents developers' aims. The regeneration concept was based on a mixed use development that brings back vitality to the area long divided by the wall as seen in Fig.1, among the newly introduced complexes is 'Sony center' designed by Helmut Jahn [17].

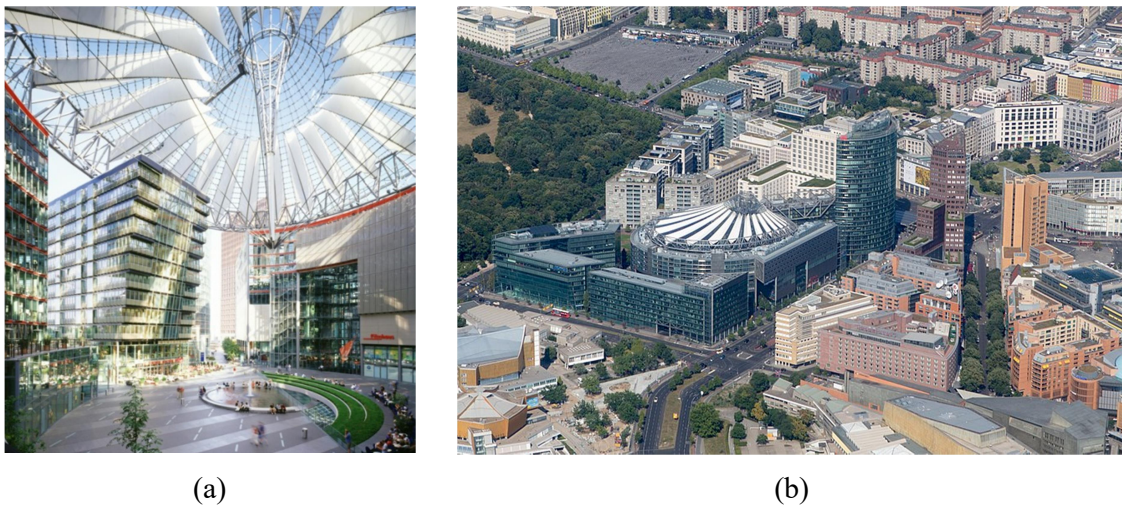(a)   (b)

Fig. 1. (a) The public space surrounded by Sony European head quarter, (b) the relation between the inner public space and surrounding city center fabrics [18].

'Sony' public space is a branded space that houses Sony's European head quarter, the buildings are set around an urban forum with bars, restaurants and cinemas framed by Sony's consumer offerings allowing cultural exchange and social interaction, surrounded by traditional urban streets and spaces [6].

This example of privatized public spaces at the heart of Berlin's redevelopment led to seductive designs attracting visitors to circulate and interact. The space itself has

no gates, accessible yet closed, inclusive yet controlled. It gives you the impression of openness and accessibility. It attracts different kind of users turning the space into a vibrant one as seen in Fig. 2.

The space activities were chosen according to planners winning the competition together with investors financing the project, both shared a common vision with the government of mixed development that brings vitality back to city center. The Sony space advertise Sony Company in addition to passive recreation, it succeeded in being a vibrant space that is economically sustainable.
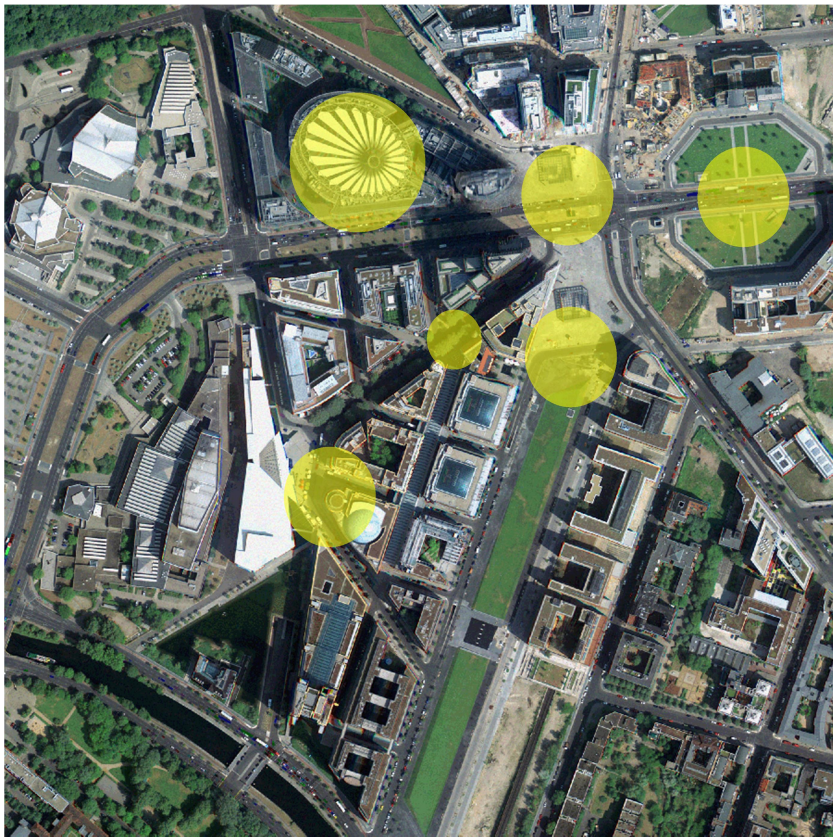

Fig. 2. Sony center one of many spaces proposed in the
Potsdamer regeneration project [18].

8.   HACKESCHE HOFE BERLIN

The courtyard complex opposite Hackescher Markt is an old complex designed in 1906 with an Art Nouveau facade by Endell. The buildings were only partially

damaged during the Second World War, but became increasingly dilapidated while Germany was partitioned [19].

The complex became communal resident in 1951 state-owned, 1961 facades were renovated till major restoration began after reunification in 1995 under a group including a residents' association, private investors, local authorities, and was carried out by Berlin architects Weiss and Partner. The original use of the buildings was included in the restoration concept and successfully implemented, creating one of Berlin's liveliest quarters since reunification.

The public private partnership is shown in the committee including members of residents, private developers and local authorities that carried out the renovation and pocket parks design with the professional guidance of German architects familiar with regulations and history of the contexts and its value.

Since the 1990s the area around Hackesche Höfe has been positively affected by the new uses introduced around the interconnected courtyards creating a series of pocket parks as seen in Fig. 3 reflecting a vibrant urban renewal to the whole surrounding area, combining a mix of business and offices, residential housing, entertainment venues, art galleries, boutiques, bars and restaurants as seen in Fig. 4. The Höfe is an example of the spirit of entrepreneurial spirit adopted in many spaces in New Berlin it is one of the trendiest spots in center Berlin creating a new image for the city [20].

Fig. 3. Hackesche Höfe complex the original use of the buildings was included in the restoration and regeneration plan [18].

Fig. 4. In Hackesche Höfe complex new uses introduced around the interconnected courtyards creating a series of pocket parks within the surrounding area [19].

9.   PRIVATIZED SPACES IN ZAYED CITY, CAIRO, EGYPT:

Private spaces became a new trend in Cairo's new developments, since open spaces are a burden on public sector to manage and maintain. Many private investors started to consider open spaces as profit generator; therefore they provided public spaces within their buildings complexes to attract different uses and more investments keeping the space vibrant and economically sustainable. There are variety of private spaces some owned by one developer that usually sets his headquarter and uses the public space for shops and restaurants owned by his companies or advertising his products similar to 'Sony center' case. Others are more dynamic as developer rents the office buildings to different companies and the activities around the space are also rented to different shops and restaurants answering a certain level of needs.

The current research examines the case of Zayed City, a new development next to October city, where development process started by low cost housing projects with internal flexibility of housing units, one of the governmental trials to solve the Egyptian housing problem in 1980's [21]. Although the housing vision in the area changed due to changes in land values to housing for medium – high income groups, these changes encouraged private sector to introduce private public spaces driven by profit and laying on the fact that vitality of spaces and economic sustainability rests upon rich social mix available due to new housing types.

As documented on map in Fig. 5 observation and survey of this new pattern of spaces showed that many of these private spaces appeared close to each other on plots at the edge of Zayed city overlooking the 26th of July highway, creating a pattern of spaces in the area attracting mostly high income groups of users to the spaces.
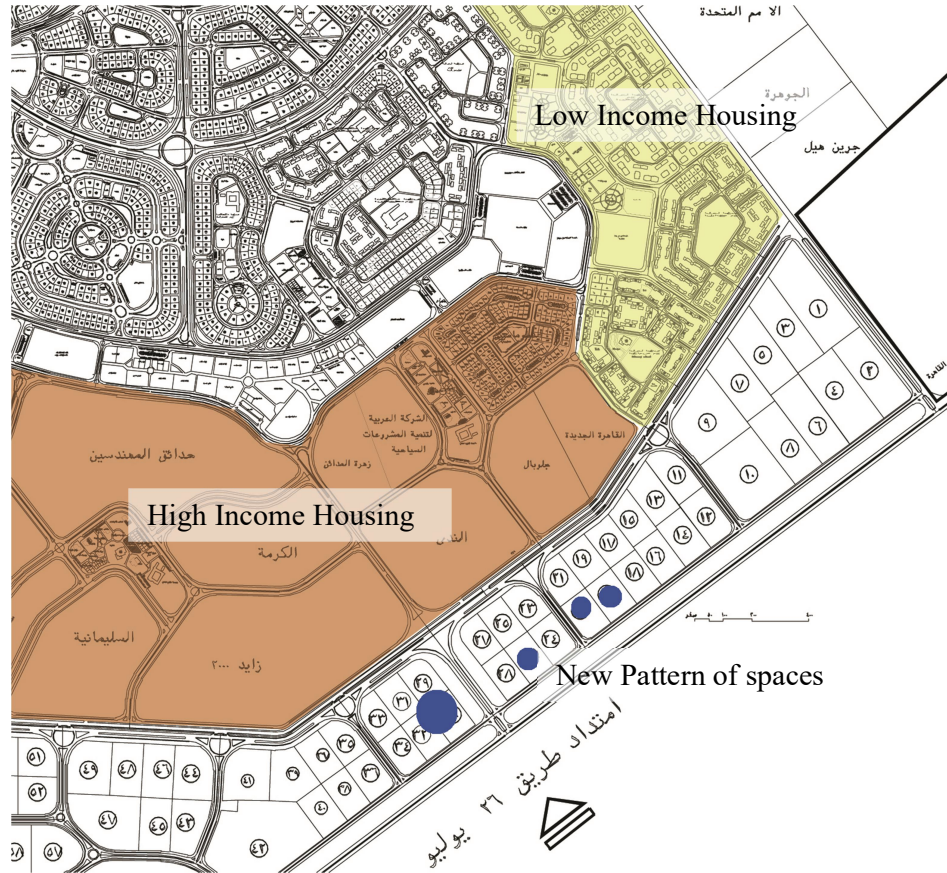

Fig. 5. Map of Zayed city with the old low income housing projects, the new high income ones, and the new privatized spaces inserted along the 26th of July highway.

As an example of these spaces 'Arkan' is one of these office buildings opened on 2012 Fig. 6, designed in a way to create a linear space between two office buildings directly related to the street in an open yet controlled manner. The space offers a multitude of retail and dining outlets along with banks and offices. Due to its success an expansion is in progress with more offices, retail and leisure facilities to high income groups.

In this case in spite of the great success of maintaining an economically sustainable space, public private partnership is applied only on the level of facilitating regulations for the developer to achieve his goals which led to success of spaces in achieving investors' goal of attracting high income groups and keeping the space vibrant, without having a comprehensive plan including local communities or allowing professionals in creating a vision to regenerate the whole area.

Fig. 6. "Arkan" a privately owned public space one of the
new spaces inserted in Zayed city fabric [22].

10. DISCUSSION.

The current research examines a new model of open spaces that started in American cities according to Zukin and now can be found in Europe and many countries around the world; private public spaces could be represented in corporate courtyards, pocket parks or market places [13].

It explored whether these spaces respect social diversity and accessibility which represent essential aspects of traditional spaces, and whether they can be a regeneration tool to existing decaying contexts if inserted in such contexts due to their economic sustainability. It is equally highlighting the importance of public spaces as an arena for social interaction and a reflection of city image discussing the possibility that privately owned public spaces can regenerate existing contexts and maintain their character and aesthetics.

Privately owned public spaces homogenize public spaces by reducing and controlling diversity, these new forms of urban spaces represent a new regulatory mechanism that may exclude people rather than engaging them [9].

Transformation of decaying contexts of value into vibrant public and economic places is a very difficult task that needs various stake holders to act. The role of government is of utmost importance. There should be a political will to revitalize the contexts of value converted into legislation and plans to realize [23].

The research examined two western cases to understand the management structure and types of studies adopted to suggest space activities. In both cases government input in creating a comprehensive vision for public spaces and activities distribution in a context is the beginning of the process, sharing such vision with different stakeholders (residents, private investors.) through local authorities and a third party that is usually a chosen urban planning firm selected via a competition. These spaces are integrated with surroundings achieving an economically sustainable vibrant space. The regeneration vision and activities distribution shared by all stakeholders leads to a public private partnership with positive results.

In the Egyptian case though the great success of spaces in achieving investors' goal of attracting high income groups and keeping the space vibrant, public private partnership is low. This is due to due to various reasons among which: owners' structure depends on a single developer who controls rent level affecting diversity of activities, spaces are not related to real public realm of difference and diversity, and government input in creating a comprehensive vision for space activity distribution is weak.

The need to create economically viable places in city centers and new developments is an important regeneration concept but the current followed approaches to create places seem to focus on the economic aspect missing out other aspects of the process that are essential to create successful places [24]. One of these factors is the need to preserve the inherent character of places, its cultural traditions, social patterns and diversity of its community. Turning places into consumer products tend to harm their character and places seem to become unreal [25].

In privatized spaces projects ownership structure changed to a single developer instead of a heterogeneous pattern of owners that ensured diversity [24]. The rent level is also having an impact on diversity of activities affecting community-led business, and when inserted in a city it may lead to gentrification possibilities. Creating a balance between new uses and local ones, strengthen place attachment to the area.

For such a model of space to be a tool for regeneration of existing contexts, these spaces should allow diversity in a real not illusionary way, spaces must be accessible, connected through a comprehensive plan to area surrounding activities, easy to maintain and related to local context. To achieve such a goal, a high public private partnership should be adopted like in the Hofe, involving all stakeholders in visions of activities, management of spaces. It would allow creating a public private partnership without letting private sector control activities in the public spaces and prevent diversity.

The following diagram in Fig. 7 represents a framework showing how a public private partnership can be a successful tool in regenerating existing contexts through privatized open spaces.

The diagram is a concept that can be used to generate tools for assessment of privatized spaces in contexts of value, it shows three involved sectors: public sector represented by government and local authorities, private sector represented by private investors and developers financing the project, and a third sector that can play a fundamental role through the public participation partnership. The third sector's aim is to protect context's heritage, and its action is not driven by profit unlike private investors who need to cover their costs. Third sector responsibility could facilitate providing an assessment of surrounding community needs and area local heritage in order to provide visions that are sensitive to context character and identity, work with local planning authorities and the active NGOs in the area. This sector can be represented in committees and organizations interested in urban conservation and regeneration in case the project is inserted in city old centers, where committees of urban designers and architects are familiar with the contexts where these projects take place.
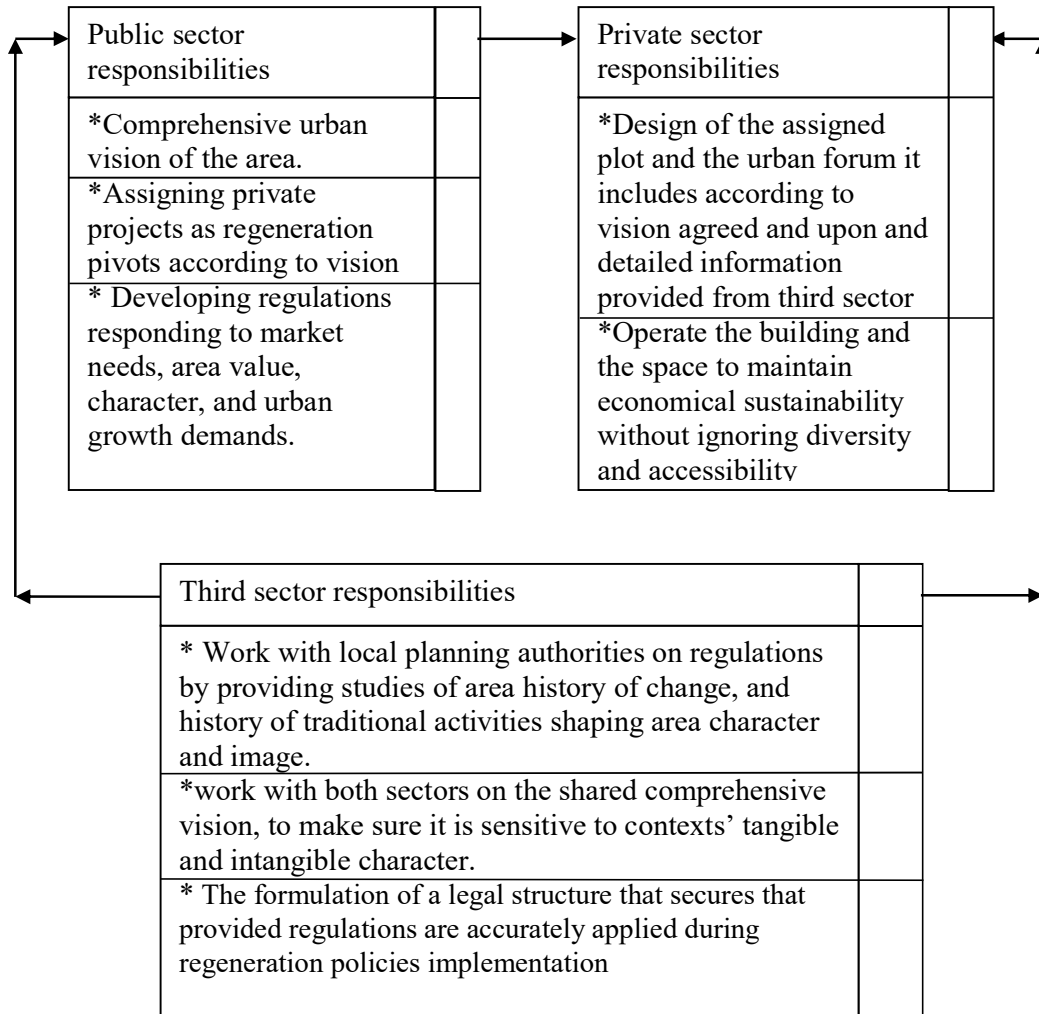
Public sector responsibilities	
*Comprehensive urban vision of the area.	
*Assigning private projects as regeneration pivots according to vision	
* Developing regulations responding to market needs, area value, character, and urban growth demands.	

Private sector responsibilities	
*Design of the assigned plot and the urban forum it includes according to vision agreed and upon and detailed information provided from third sector	
*Operate the building and the space to maintain economical sustainability without ignoring diversity and accessibility	

Third sector responsibilities	
* Work with local planning authorities on regulations by providing studies of area history of change, and history of traditional activities shaping area character and image.	
*work with both sectors on the shared comprehensive vision, to make sure it is sensitive to contexts' tangible and intangible character.	
* The formulation of a legal structure that secures that provided regulations are accurately applied during regeneration policies implementation	

Fig.7. Public private partnership as a successful tool in regenerating existing Contexts through privatized open spaces.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has declared no conflict of interests.

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الفراغات العمرانية العامة المملوكة للقطاع الخاص وتنمية النطاقات ذات القيمة

يتناول البحث نمط الفراغات العمرانية العامة المملوكة للقطاع الخاص كأداة لاعادة تنمية النطاقات القائمة ذات القيمة من خلال شراكة القطاعين العام والخاص لأنه يحقق استدامة اقتصادية ونقاط جاذبة لاكثر من فئة من المستخدمين، مما يسهل جعل الفراغ نواة تحفيز لتنمية النطاق المحيط به ويناقش الجزء الاول من البحث العلاقة بين الانشطة الاجتماعية وتشكيل الفراغات العمرانية عبر الزمن، موضحا تعبير الفراغات العمرانية عن المجتمعات القائمة فيها من حيث عاداتها وتقاليدها، والذى يعتبر مكون اساسى لطابع المكان والصورة الذهنية للمكان لدى هذه المجتمعات ويناقش الجزء الثانى النمط الجديد للفراغات العامة وتطبيقه في اعادة تنمية المناطق القائمة مستفيدا من شراكة القطاعين العام والخاص من خلال امثلة لفراغات ناجحة كان لها دور فى تنمية النطاقات المحيطة فى دول غربية، ومصر لتقييمها وامكانية الاستفادة منها كنواة فى اعادة تنمية نطاقات ذات قيمة فى المحتوى المصرى.