Spatial Articulations of Collective Identities in the Context of Middle Eastern Cities

Cambridge-Middle East Symposium
September 23rd 2016 | 9:00-18:00
Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge
This event is generously funded by the School of Arts and Humanities, the Department of Architecture and Churchill College at the University of Cambridge.

Special Thanks to:
Prof. Wendy Pullan
Neil Mayo
Pilar Alonso
Sue Luxon
Hanna Baumann
Jessie Fyfe
Chris Friel

Cambridge Middle East Symposium Committee:
Ahmad Al Hussieny
Anwar Jaber
M Wesam Al Asali

www.cambridgemiddleeast.wordpress.com, #cambridgeME
Cover Image: Chris Friel | Damascus 1950
Programme

Friday, 23rd September 2016
Lecture Room 1
Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge

9:00 - 9:30  Registration
9:30 - 9:45  Welcome from Professor Wendy Pullan, Head of the Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge

10:00-11:30  Panel 1: Between Loss and Presence
Chair: Hanna Baumann
- Dr. Dorota Woroniecka-Krzyzanowka: Identity Politics and Spatial Practices of Exceptionality in a West Bank Refugee Camp
- Mohamad Al Taha: Cultural Heritage and Collective Identity in Baghdad Historic City
- Alex Mahoudeau: Urban Problems as Collective Engagement: Framing the Political through the Local in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Beirut
- Yara Hawari: Collective Remembering in Palestine’s Destroyed Villages

11:30-12:00  Coffee Break

12:00-13:15  Panel 2: Tensions and Duality
Chair: M Wesam Al Asali
- Anwar Jaber: Spatial Manifestations of Loss and Changing Memory: the Muakata of Ramallah
13:15 - 14:45 Lunch Break

14:45 - 16:15 **Panel 3: Urban Interventions and Articulations**

**Chairs:** Ahmad Al Hussieny and Anwar Jaber

- **Anna Rowell:** Openness: A Productive or Reductive Spatial Construct in Cairo?
- **Noura Wahby:** Understanding Collective and Individual Identities in Cairene Informality
- **Arwa Ibrahim:** State Power and the Modes of Everyday Resistance: A Comparative Study of Urban Renewal in Historic Marketplaces in Istanbul and Cairo
- **Ula A. Khalel Merie:** The University and the City / The Urban Structure of Baghdad after and before 2003

16:30 - 17:30 Closing Remarks + Exhibition Launch (M Wesam Al Asali)
Panel 1: Between Loss and Presence  
Chair: Hanna Baumann

With the increasing conflict, war, dislocation, and fragmentation in the Middle East, the concept of identity raises questions concerned with the transition from the relatively static condition of the nation state to the dynamism of the current situation. The arguments that this panel raises range between loss accompanied by destruction and devastation, and presence within the very acts of resistance, rebuilding, and even nostalgia. It also touches on the more indirect contentions of how development discourses and practices consolidate or evade the question of identity and struggle.

Identity Politics and Spatial Practices of Exceptionality in a West Bank Refugee Camp

Dr. Dorota Woroniecka-Krzyżanowska  
Department of Middle East and North Africa, University of Lodz

Refugee camps are generally believed to be transitory places filled with provisional arrangements to be dismantled soon after their residents are permitted to return home. The question remains, however, what happens when conditions for return fail to materialize and the camps turn into places of long-term urban residency. Following the prominent work of Giorgio Agamben, refugee camps have often been conceptualized as spaces of exception - spatial tools of biopolitical control placed outside the normal judicial order and exempted from the social life of host populations. Such model is challenged by the reality of protracted camps, where new forms of social and urban order emerge and various networks develop between refugees and the neighboring communities. Here, as Diana Martin has argued, the exception is rather an entry point than a predetermined outcome. Based on eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Al-Am’ari, a Palestinian refugee camp established in 1949
in the West Bank, this paper explores the complex set of actors, regulations and practices that have constituted camp’s exceptionality over the years. Unlike the majority of research that treats camp’s exceptional status solely as an imposed and coercive condition, this study approaches it as a multifaceted construct that is produced, contested and negotiated by various actors pursuing various identity projects and/or political agendas. Such perspective allows to trace the different – and at times conflicting – politics in and around camp space that may otherwise be shadowed by the grand narratives of the right of return and struggle for national liberation. The paper focuses on how Al-Am'ari residents and organizations have carefully developed and pursued the spatial politics of exceptionality to foster a strong local community, negotiate its position in both local and national space and develop a particular form of urban organization that reflects and nurtures their collective identity as camp refugees.

Cultural Heritage and Collective Identity in Baghdad Historic City

Mohamad Al Taha, School of Architecture, University of Sheffield

Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, Iraq has entered a vicious circle of conflict and instability. This has consequences on re-forming Iraqi national and local identities. It is generally accepted that forming human and place identity is based on the process of exchange between humans and their surroundings, and since collective identity is manifested in cultural heritage tangibly, through architecture, and intangibly, through memories, customs and practices; any changes in cultural heritage mirrors changes in collective identity and vice versa.

This paper focuses on Baghdadi cultural heritage in Rusafa historic core, explores tangible and intangible changes after successive periods of wars and waves of terrorism, and critically discusses their impacts on collective identity. Tangible heritage is approached by re-surveying the citywide architectural heritage survey of 1977, the only comprehensive survey conducted prior to the instability, while intangible heritage is discussed through the case study of Al
Mutannabi Street, which was subject to a terrorist attack in 2007 when a car bomb exploded killing thirty people and devastating a large part of its buildings and shops.

This paper argues that in spite of the wholesale destructions of tangible heritage amidst the drama of conflict and its negative impact on the place identity, surviving intangible heritage in and around the devastated heritage places has reinforced local collective identity in Baghdad historic centre.

Urban problems as Collective Engagement: Framing the Political through the Local in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Beirut

Alex Mahoudeau
Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, King’s College London

The Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon represent one of the most protracted refugee situations in the contemporary world, having existed since the period of the Nakba in the late 1940s. Throughout the years, the camps have constituted a focus of interest for various research topics, ranging from daily resistance to collective identities and struggles. After the withdrawal of the PLO from the country in 1982, the subsequent urban destruction of the camps in the 1980s, and the signing of the Oslo Agreements, the camps of Lebanon have known considerable transformations in terms of overall situation and of the system of power governing them as urban areas. The relative decline of the Palestinian political organisations has led to an increase in importance of other actors, notably non-governmental organisations (NGOs), grassroots organisations, and activist networks, which have put forward their own agendas and framings.

One of the main topics of focus for these organisations have been the range of local and urban problems touching the camps, presented as “problems of the camps,” in opposition with the “classical” political problems of return or national struggle. These “problems of the camps” include issues linked to collective consumption, garbage
pollution, and spatial suffering of various sorts (among others, densification of the built environment, degradation of the urban, or dangers linked to the networks of water and electricity). This presentation will focus on the activism of these organisations on these topics in the Beirut area. Taking a step back from a “depoliticisation” framework, it will highlight the processes of investigation of space through the lens of the sociology of public problems, question the social resources and actions employed in these organisations, and attempt to discuss how this activism relies on the affirmation of a struggle on the sense of space and place in these locales.

Collective Remembering in Palestine’s Destroyed Villages

Yara Hawari, University of Exeter

This paper will examine collective remembering amongst the Palestinian citizens of Israel at destroyed and depopulated villages.

There are over 400 destroyed Palestinian villages in historic Palestine (Israel proper), depopulated and de-Palestinianised in the 1948 Nakba. As a community, the Palestinian citizens of Israel, face various challenges and limitations wrought by the very citizenship that allows them to stay on the land. Along with the institutional discrimination they also face the systematic shrinking of Palestinian space inside Israel. Identified by some scholars as spaciocide, this is a deliberate effort to sever Palestinians from the land and by extension from their historical narrative. With the latter dubbed by Ilan Pappe as memoricide.

The commemorative practice of visiting depopulated and de-Palestinianised sites has been common in private family units since the Nakba in 1948. However the personal narratives and memories that accompanied these visits failed to infiltrate the narrative on a more national and collective level. In the 1990s as oral history started gaining traction as a political tool amongst indigenous communities world-wide, return visits and the sharing of memories in historic
into many commemorative activities. Indeed, in the last two decades, the largest political rally amongst the Palestinian citizens of Israel has been the ‘March of Return’, which sees thousands of participants marching to a destroyed village every year and listening to memories and narratives. At these destroyed villages, private memories are now being reproduced and intertwined to form a collective narrative of displacement and survival. This collective narrative in turn is being used to counter the violent spaciocide and memoricide imposed by Israel on the Palestinian community within the 1948 borders.
Panel 2: Tensions and Duality  
Chair: M Wesam Al Asali

To reflect the sense of confusion and uncertainty that accompanies the Middle Eastern status quo, the notion of identity itself had to build up an altered connotation; a connotation that involves duality and tension rather than singularity and rigidness. The rising situations involving relocation of communities, fading of edges and borders while others are redefined, and infiltration of foreign interventions and developments has led to the overlapping, fusion, and intertwining of identities. With the change occurring to those identities, is the Middle East itself coming to be redefined? The following papers will highlight those characteristics in the second panel of this symposium.

Spatial Manifestations of Loss and Changing Memory: the Muakata of Ramallah

Anwar Jaber, Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge

Historical structures are remnants of a certain cultural period that reveal aspects of life during that period. The city of Ramallah in Palestine was affected by, and adapted differently to, several political events in the region; starting with the British Mandate operating in Palestine in 1920 and ending with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that followed. Such political incidents re-structured the social, economic, cultural and political strata in the city and as a result, several architectural artifacts emerged and others disappeared. This paper aims at investigating such forgotten architecture in Ramallah that once constituted a substantial colonial embodiment and currently became forgotten, almost non-existent in the colonial historical narrative of Ramallah. The paper will investigate the current Headquarters of the Palestinian
Government in Ramallah, called the Mukata’a complex, which was built by the British Mandatory Government in early 1930s as an administrative center and prison. Designed by Sir Charles Tegart, this complex was one of many such complexes built all over the country for the same purpose. The paper will shed light on the Mukata’a complex and the architectural transformations it went through to highlight its role both as a colonial tool and as a national/political symbol; where its colonial history almost disappeared to affirm the symbolic political face of the unborn State of Palestine.

Spatial Practices of Retreat Among Egyptian Christians: Isolating or Empowering?

Dr. Elizabeth Monier
Department of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge

Spatial practices play a role in the socialisation of Coptic Christians in Egypt and in formations of collective identity. Since the 1950s, and particularly after Pope Shenouda III became the Patriarch in 1971 the church has increased its creation and command of Coptic spaces. This came parallel to the rise in Islamic social service provision, for example by the Muslim brotherhood, in line with a trend that saw religion increase its influence on forums of expressions of collective identity as political spaces were restricted by authoritarianism and insecurity. One significant site is the monastery. The monastery is a symbolic and physical refuge. It is a repository of Christian cultural and spiritual life that also plays a social role while acting as a site of pilgrimage and gathering for Christians. Newer developments include the use of electronic media and the ‘Bayt’ (meaning home). The latter is the practice of churches purchasing hostels to which church members can go on holiday, take part in youth groups and often meet Christians from other nearby ‘Bayts’ that together constitute a kind of a resort. In all these examples, Christians reinforce horizontal ties with other Christians and vertical ties with Church authorities. However, this does not represent a withdrawal from national life or rejection of Egyptian spaces. In fact, Christian cultural and spatial practices
emphasise the rootedness of Egypt’s Christians in the land and history of Egypt and their integral status in the nation’s fabric. Retreats could then contribute to strengthening the expression of Coptic collective identity as a foundational strand of Egyptian identity and empower Copts to remain in Egypt despite sectarian attacks on Copts and Coptic spaces, rather than seeking the complete withdrawal represented by emigration.

The Demise of the Architect, the Rise of the Contractor and Cairo’s Cultural Landscape: An Investigation into the Reinvention of Roles and Communication in the Egyptian Construction Industry

Ahmad Al Hussieny, Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge

What is referred to as urban informality is becoming a prominent phenomenon marking an apparent and fundamental change in the built environments of the majority of developing countries. This phenomenon is often defined and understood through the lens of “divide”, “difference”, socio-economic and socio-political tension.

Although there are quantifiable appearances that validate the distinction between “formal” and “informal”, the conclusive coining of the term informality has led to a confusion, mostly caused by the complexities of the production of space and, in many cases, the intertwining of the formal and informal in terms of characteristics and processes.

This paper attempts to introduce an approach that rather understands the contemporary built environment through the dynamics of “similarities” and common practices. From observations of the Egyptian context, I expand on two critical dynamics: the reinvention of roles in the construction industry, and the development of code and modes of communication between different parties involved in the industry. The former is marked by the rise of the contractor as a
central figure in building processes, while the latter by the reduction of the complexity of code and communication. It is argued that those two key differences taking place in both the “formal” and “informal” domains of Cairo are more telling and more indicative of the change in the Egyptian built environment than the simple divide of formal and ‘Ashwa’i. Through the initial observation of those two differences, signs of the exploitive nature of society begin to appear, describing what Annette Fahmy describes as the “poverty of culture”; a quality of society deeply linked with the questions of its identity.

As the new approach of investigating this domain of similarities is presented, a core question is posed: what are the conditions of possibility that lead to the reinvention of the building process and eventually the contemporary situation of urbanism?
Architecture has always been examined as a means of engagement and change. The more progressive question that can be raised when looking at the Middle East is how intervention affects the situation and whether its role is significant given the number and complexity of critical factors and variables. By looking at the different urban endeavors that are taking place in different parts of the Middle East, the idea of intervention and identity is investigated to identify what appears to be a reinforcement of identity, what acts as a provocation, and what simply represents the extensions of an oppressive or colonial practice.

Openness: A Productive or Reductive Spatial Construct in Cairo?

Anna Rowell, Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge

Cairo is a city that exists on its streets. In their uniquely post-Arab Spring, Middle Eastern context, these realms offer a means to critique the extent to which the city’s spatial parameters and physical barriers enable certain productive dynamics and expressions of collective identity to flourish.

Egypt’s governing systems have, for many years, neglected to tackle urban inequality, particularly since the political turmoil of the January 2011 revolution. Against such a tumultuous backdrop, this paper seeks to understand ‘openness’ and its implications for the peripheral informal neighborhoods on Western Cairo’s former agricultural belt. As the street is not just the sum of its physical dimensions, neither is ‘openness’ merely the degree to which publicness is enhanced or restricted by urban edge conditions and public mobilities.
It is argued here that elements of closure mask a highly urbanized and ‘open’ social infrastructure, a spatial reservoir of possibilities, capable of facilitating the intersection of relations so that expanded spaces of economic and cultural operation are accessible to residents of limited means. In other words, fragmented physicalities may in fact engender more appropriate, connected, lived practices. For example, Asef Bayat notes the large segments of Cairo’s populace are in constant negotiation between autonomy and integration, carving out self-governance wherever possible, but reliant on the state for security and service provisioning. AbdouMaliq Simone poses that these junctions, where complex combination of objects, spaces, persons and practices assemble, are in themselves a radically open infrastructure. Fragmented spaces are instead opened up to new reciprocal exchanges: connected through an invisible infrastructure of networks.

Understanding Collective and Individual Identities in Informality-The Case of Self-Help Water Systems in Cairo

Noura Wahby, Centre for Development Studies, University of Cambridge

Currently, Cairo boasts of a population counted in 2012 at 18 million and state-society interactions have led to two competing axes of urban growth- informal settlements and desert satellite cities, with their respective manifest identities. The state has also long differentiated in providing infrastructure for different types of communities based on their geographical build-up; and manifestations of the discrepancies between provision of services can be seen vividly across the city. Based on PhD fieldwork in Egypt, this paper will look at how communities in informal areas in Cairo come together to fill the absence of state infrastructure, looking specifically at water. It is important to realise that in urban Egypt, water accessibility remains a core survival dilemma for marginalized areas. It is estimated that 11 million Cairo citizens live in some type of informal settlement (Sims, 2012); numbering 1105 in 2011 (Cities Alliance, 2008). Both national
and local governments have struggled to provide public services for all, wavering between laissez-faire attitudes and direct interventions; ultimately failing to provide full accessibility. Many areas have thus been forced to provide their own infrastructure, in many cases without input from the state.

This paper will thus analyse how these self-help initiatives have brought together communities to create a collective identity when dealing with the state, while also weighing personal interests. In the battle to secure water piping, communities alternate between collective and individual identities to navigate the grey area of citizenship claims in these areas. The denomination of different ‘informality’ by the state will also be looked at to understand how residents in these settlements see themselves under different nomenclatures- unsafe areas, informal areas, dilapidated areas, etc. As citizens question- “What are we?”, this paper discusses how scarcity of resources highlights the dual play of the collective versus the individual in these areas.

State Power and the Modes of Everyday Resistance: A Comparative Study of Urban Renewal in Historic Marketplaces in Istanbul and Cairo

Arwa Ibrahim, Political Sociology, University of Cambridge

The formation of collective identities and repertoires has been seen as an essential part of the emergence and development of collective action and social movements. Taking this assumption forward, I analyse the development of local resistance to two comparable urban renewal projects in historic marketplaces in Istanbul and Cairo during the 2000s. In an attempt to understand the relationship between state power and collective action, I compare two distinct political structures and the emergence of local resistance in Istanbul’s Grand Bazaar and Cairo’s al-Mu’izz Street. Both cases represent historic marketplaces that have undergone significant transformations due to state-led renewal projects that aimed to conserve the heritage sites and attract tourism. But with different state power structures in each case, the
development of collective identities and modes of resistance has varied. In Istanbul’s Grand Bazaar, collective identities and actions developed in order to resist the state-led plans, while in Cairo’s al-Mu’izz Street, the local community used individual and hidden strategies to subvert the state. These differences can be linked to the democratic and inclusive local governance structure in Turkey, compared to the closed and autocratic environment in Egypt that acts to limit opportunities for collective action. Despite the risks in Egypt, I argue that the local community in Cairo’s al-Mu’izz Street manages to impose its will and re-appropriate its immediate environment in ways that are not visible in the case of Istanbul’s Grand Bazaar.

The University and The City: Creating an Integrated Urban Structure In Baghdad

Ula A. Khalel Merie, School of Architecture, University of Sheffield

The university campus represents a unique urban form that is characterised as a small city which goes beyond its educational mission. Its institutional principles and structural values are used to create a special community within its urban context. Thus, the relation between the university design as a unit and the urban environment of the city can establish a wide range of opportunities for their community, in terms of promoting a better engagement relation in the social involvement, the economic investment, the political strategies or the urban integration quality. However, in the last three decades, the environment of higher education, particularly in Iraq, has witnessed a series of complicated situations, whether they were caused by war, sanction or terrorism. These situations have seriously affected the urban environment of the universities and the urban context that surrounding them. Accordingly, this study attempts to explore the potential role of the urban design of university with the urban context in which it is based, practically in the context of Iraq. In order to understand how the university design can promote the quality of the urban integration without ignoring the urban identity and the cultural values for the city in which it is based. To address this, the study will analyse the relation between Baghdad, the capital city of Iraq, and its
oldest university, the University of Baghdad which was established in 1958. This university has three main campuses which are situated in different urban locations within Baghdad urban context. These campuses provide different opportunities to explore the urban design of the university in terms of its relation to the surrounding urban context.

In order to verify the integration quality for urban campus with its surrounding urban context, this study adopts fundamentally the integral urbanism theory by Nan Ellin to evaluate this relation. This process is based on expanding the application of the theory according to urban context and the urban design of the university. This adaptation helps to evaluate the integration quality between the urban design of the university and the urban context in which it is based.

The outcome of this study will provide a comprehensive structural guideline that will reflect the unique urban values and its identify as well as enhance the potential roles of the place between the urban design of the university and its surrounding urban context. This vision will claim how to promote the urban context that hosted the university campus as much as possible, in order to create an integrated urban structure that addresses its own needs, expresses its identity and the future vision of its urban development, without ignoring the environment circumstances and the cultural values of its urban context.
## Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mohamad Al Taha</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mimaltaha1@sheffield.ac.uk">mimaltaha1@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yara Hawari</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yara.c.hawari@gmail.com">yara.c.hawari@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad Hussieny</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aameh2@cam.ac.uk">aameh2@cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arwa Ibrahim</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ai203@cam.ac.uk">ai203@cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anwar Jaber</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aj437@cam.ac.uk">aj437@cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ula A. Khalel Merie</td>
<td><a href="mailto:uakmerie1@sheffield.ac.uk">uakmerie1@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Mahoudeau</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mahoudeau.alex@gmail.com">mahoudeau.alex@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Elizabeth Monier</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ei211@cam.ac.uk">ei211@cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Rowell</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alr49@cam.ac.uk">alr49@cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salim Salamah</td>
<td><a href="mailto:salim.salamah@gmail.com">salim.salamah@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noura Wahby</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nw352@cam.ac.uk">nw352@cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Dorota Woroniecka-Krzyzanowska</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dorota.woroniecka@uni.lodz.pl">dorota.woroniecka@uni.lodz.pl</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Wesam Al Asali</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mwa24@cam.ac.uk">mwa24@cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna Baumann</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hb400@cam.ac.uk">hb400@cam.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As cities retreat during war, many of its spaces manifest a phase of a severe change and destruction. While conflicts might be seen as an accelerated course of actions, one close insight might shed light on a consistent, abandoned, and marginal status of vacuum. Retreat is also a phase of reordering when there is nothing else to do but to wait.

IN RETRAET is an exhibition that attempts to expose the variable and reciprocal relationships with a city that is going through a multi-layered and forced change. It will investigate the dynamics through which the identity of the city manifests a contrasted image of congestion and emptiness, movement and stillness, crisis and deliverance. From Damascus and the diaspora, a group of students of architecture illustrate this contrast visually and narrate their retreat from their own spaces.

Launching event: 23rd September at 17:30

Curator: M Wesam Al Asali*
Urbegony – Architects without Borders Syria Group: Ammar Al-Hetteh, Hazem Raad, Mary Shoufan, Masa Malas, Osama Abo-Samra, Rami Bakhos, Saeed Kendakji, Victoria Amoghalian, Samy Zarka, Shaden Sharaf Eddin, Yara Al Heswani

www.cambridgemiddleeast.wordpress.com

EXHIBITION
IN RETRAET: War Images through the Lens of Syrian Students of Architecture

September 23rd - October 14th, 2016 I Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge
*The Exhibition includes a contribution by Iyas Shahin’s “City | Incarnation” exhibition that will be held simultaneously in Damascus.
The Centre for Urban Conflicts Research (UCR) is an interdisciplinary centre based in the Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge. Cities are, arguably, our most complex creations, and urban density is rapidly increasing. With the majority of today's conflicts now taking place in cities, the problem has been recognised as one that requires more research and better understanding in both matters of policy and practice. UCR is dedicated to investigating cities that experience extreme or particular conflicts, including those caused by ethnicity, nationalism, religion, class or race. Deriving from an architectural and spatial approach to the city, the Centre has expertise in understanding the relationship between policy and planning issues and everyday life. It is particularly concerned with the possibilities for resilience and long term urban transformations.

UCR's activities focus on four main areas: research, consultation, communication and education. It includes ongoing research projects of various size and scope; these are based at the University of Cambridge and done in partnership with other institutions. UCR endeavours to make its research relevant and accessible to individuals and groups beyond academia, and is available in a consultation and advisory capacity. Communication takes a variety of forms, including: conferences and seminars, policy briefing papers, visual research, as well as the Centre's own website. Individuals and groups who wish to become involved with the Centre's work can apply to become associate members. Graduate students working on urban conflict at Cambridge may be invited to be members of the Centre. They take part in its activities and benefit from its research.
The Centre for Urban Conflicts Research builds upon ten years of research in projects supported by the Economic and Social Research Council of the UK, including ‘Conflict in Cities and the Contested State’ (www.conflictincities.org). It enjoys an international network of collaborating scholars and practitioners. UCR is part of the Cambridge Department of Architecture’s research wing, the Martin Centre.