

The Mosque in the City: Synchronic and diachronic spatial analysis

Ziad Aazam

Welsh School of Architecture Cardiff University Cardiff, UK
aazamz@cardiff.ac.uk

Abstract

The mosque has been, for more than fourteen centuries, an object of continuity and transformation in its socio-spatial city context. This paper will explore the mosque in the city by focusing on the congregation mosques in selected cross-cultural pre-modern city-samples with an emphasis on Makkah and Madinah mosques as origins.

The study will project the cultural similarities and differences of the spatial organisation of the congregation mosque and its relative position in the city and to other spatial organisations (e.g., market, palace, school, etc.) The spatial analysis will take the following approaches: diachronic, to understand the congregation mosque socio-spatial organisation continuity or transformation in that particular city and synchronic, to capture a snapshot of the role of the congregation mosque socio-spatial organisation locally and globally in that city.

The research will question whether or not it is valid, or perhaps necessary, to carry a separate genotypical analysis on the object itself and axial analysis on its relative position in the context of the city, in order to have a full picture of the object's socio-spatial nature? And would it be feasible then to put the combined results through a comparative analysis of other similar cases?

The paper aims at understanding the nature of the relations between the mosque spatial organisation (object/context) and the social and cultural life in the pre-modern Muslim world.