



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

SENSE OF URBAN PUBLIC PLACE SAFETY IN WAR-TORN BAB AL-SHARQI IN BAGHDAD CITY

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SENSE OF URBAN PUBLIC PLACE SAFETY IN WAR-TORN BAB AL-SHARQI IN BAGHDAD CITY

By

HAJIYAT SHAHAD RAAD MAYOOF

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

June 2020

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أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

"وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ"

يوسف (٧٦)

DEDICATIONS

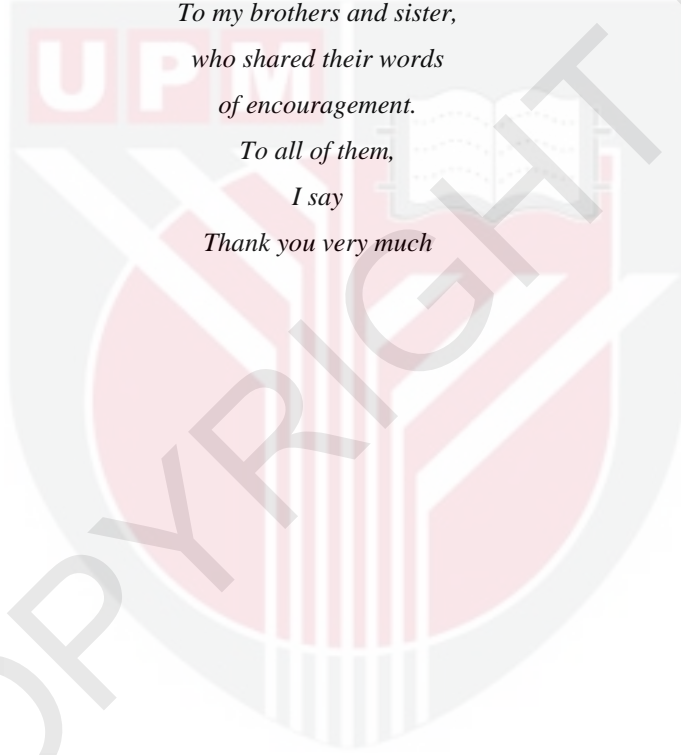
*This work is faithfully dedicated to
my beloved parent, for their love,
care and continually support.*

*To my brothers and sister,
who shared their words
of encouragement.*

To all of them,

I say

Thank you very much



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

SENSE OF URBAN PUBLIC PLACE SAFETY IN WAR-TORN BAB AL-SHARQI IN BAGHDAD CITY

By

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June 2020

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The physical remains of warfare in Iraqi cities can be clearly seen in the damages to its urban environment. There are many fallouts of this destruction, but safety is a major concern especially in Urban Public Spaces (UPS). Users of UPS perceived them to be unsafe and thus, the goal of this study is to investigate perceived safety of UPS in a war-torn Iraqi city. This study is carried out in Bab Al-Sharqi a neighbourhood in the centre of Baghdad. A mixed-method approach was applied using a questionnaire survey, in-situ observation, archival analysis and artefact analysis as data gathering instruments. The collected data was then subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The results show that the sense of safety in UPS of war-torn Iraqi city is significantly related to boring, visually dull, and physical incompatible places. Furthermore, many UPS are perceived more unsafe for women than men. These findings may contribute to the formulation of a set of strategies to mitigate the impact of the post-war period on the urban environment in Iraq.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia Sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**RASA KESELAMATAN DI TEMPAT AWAM DI BAB AL-SHARQI YANG
DILANDA PERANG DI BANDAR RAYA BAGHDAD**

Oleh

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Kesan tinggalan akibat peperangan boleh dilihat dengan jelas pada kerosakan fizikal persekitaran bandar di Iraq. Terdapat banyak kesan akibat peperangan, namun begitu keselamatan ialah aspek utama yang perlu diberi perhatian di Ruang Awam Bandar (UPS). Pengguna UPS merasakan UPS bukan lagi tempat yang selamat, justeru matlamat utama penyelidikan ini ialah untuk menyiasat tahap keselamatan yang dirasakan oleh pengguna di ruang awam bandar Iraq yang dilanda perang. Penyelidikan ini dijalankan di Bab Al-Sharqi iaitu berdekatan kawasan kejiranan di pusat bandar Baghdad. Pendekatan kaedah campuran dilakukan dengan tinjauan menggunakan soal selidik, pemerhatian, analisis arkib dan analisis artifak sebagai alat pengumpulan data. Data yang dikumpulkan kemudian dianalisis secara analisis statistik inferensi dan deskriptif. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa rasa selamat di ruang awam bandar yang dilanda perang berkait rapat dengan keadaan tempat yang membosankan, kelihatan tidak menarik dan tidak serasi secara fizikal. Selain itu, UPS dirasakan lebih tidak selamat bagi perempuan berbanding dengan lelaki. Hasil penemuan kajian ini boleh menyumbang kepada penggubalan strategi untuk mengurangkan kesan tinggalan peperangan pada persekitaran bandar di Iraq.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

2D	Two Dimensions
3D	Three Dimensions
ATD	Anti-Terrorism Design
CC	Creative Cloud
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTS	Not To Scale
POS	Public Open Space
PPS	Project for Public Spaces
RQ	Research Question
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UOGS	Urban Open and Green Spaces
UOPS	Urban Open Public Spaces
UPS	Urban Public Spaces
URBACT	Urban Action Europe
WWII	Second World War

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

War has devastating consequences in not only the loss of human lives but also the destruction of the physical environment especially in affected cities. In many major conflicts, the destruction of the urban environment became a winning strategy as it inflicts maximum physical damages on the enemy properties and infrastructures. This has led to countless loss of lives and properties never before seen since World War II (WWII). New inventions in weapon technologies can cause massive damage to urban areas especially in urban areas associated with urban densification (Kozlowski, 2018). And architecture is the target of destruction in most conflicts as it is the foundation of urban growth from physical environment to the community's culture, values, and economy. The use of modern weapons on cities brought almost instant destruction to the urban environment and its community. And wherever public perception of the war still remains, it affects the use of urban public spaces (UPS) in the affected cities. Indeed, UPS has become the target of such mass attacks. Targeting the UPS that are public or business places in the city centre, or UPS that are open spaces with crowd or have a main social gathering, or events. Therefore, this research investigates the use of UPS in Bab Al-Sharqi of the post war city of Baghdad, Iraq.

Urban public spaces such as parks, plazas, squares, etc. are places where people gather and interact. In urban design, public spaces are open and accessible to all people and are vital for a city to function well. However, the quality of public place can vary according to the intention of design space by urban planners and designers. People perceptions of public places determine the use of public places, for instance, being cautious. Thus, a sense of safety is one of the significant factors that affect public behaviour.

Today, due to the recent conflict in Iraq, public open spaces in Baghdad are unsafe for people. The quality and the value of these public places had diminished due to the long-term conflicts. Nevertheless, Baghdad city had grown from an ancient city that has a long history in the land of Mesopotamia (Kleiner, 2020, Ch. 3, p. 32). The nation had witnessed the rise and fall of many civilisations since its founding back to 7000 B.C. Among these include the Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, the Islamic dynasties and to the most recent rulers. All have their influences on the people, culture, architecture, and the urban environment of Iraq today. However, the conflicts in Iraq brought about many afflictions on the city such as critical safety issue, road obstacles, restricted movement, etc. All these causing negative perceptions of the UPS in Bab Al-Sharqi Baghdad. The study area of Bab Al-Sharqi has three squares: Tahrir square, Alumma park and Tayeran square. The site is strategically located as a buffer between the traditional, organic urban fabric and its modern planned urban fabric of Baghdad city. The former consists of Bab Al-Sharqi were the commercial site of the city. The safety in UPS of Bab Al-Sharqi is issue that This study aimed at investigating the impact of conflicts on the physical

environment and the community related to UPS. Knowledge derived from the research may help restore these places, reinstate the social interactions, and raise awareness regarding public perceived safety in these places.

1.2 Problem Statement

Urban public space (UPS) is a central theme in urban studies in many global cities of the 21st Century. A large part of the debate on public spaces in the urban environment revolves around the analysis of crisis factors affecting the use of UPS including the sense of safety, especially in cities facing the trauma of war. The remains of conflicts, in the destructed urban environment, have not only left permanent scars on the physical UPS environment, but also, triggered animosity and fear among the community. Thus, the perceived safety is an issue caused by the scar of such conflicts left, in the urban physical environment of many cities. This research is considering studying the sense of safety in the UPS environment and its related community in a war-torn city. The previous studies on sense of safety of urban public places have concentrated on the relations between public places' physical design, perceived safety and improvement concerns. To the researcher's knowledge, no study till date has explored the perceived safety in UPS of war-torn city and defined the means of user's perceived safety in UPS, particularly in Bab Al-Sharqi, Baghdad city.

1.3 Research Aim and Questions

The aim of this research is to undertake analysis of perceived safety of existing urban public places in a war-torn Iraqi city by identifying the impacts of war on urban public space physical environment and users' perception.

The main research question (RQ) is as follow:

What is the impact of war on the sense of safety in urban public spaces (UPS) and their related community?

The sub-research questions are as follow:

1. What are the indicators of sense of safety in UPS of a war-torn city?
2. How UPS physical environment affects the sense of safety in a war-torn city?
3. What is the people perception of UPS safety in a war-torn city?

1.4 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the indicators of the sense of safety in UPS of a war-torn city.
2. To analyse the sense of safety in the physical environment of UPS and people's perception in a war-torn city.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The study hypotheses and developed for the research questionnaire survey in relation and answering the research questions. This study posited three hypotheses as follows:

1. Urban public places incorporating permeability, legibility, and activity are indicators of UPS sense of safety.
The first variable is permeability which deals with accessibility within the place such as the time of use, mobility etc. the second variable is legibility, which is the visual, physical settings. This includes the safety features, place maintenance, landscapes, visibility, etc. and the third variable is the public activities which include the numbers of users visiting the UPS, frequency of visitations, etc.
2. Sense of safety of post war UPS is negatively correlated to the concept of visual-spatial properties.
This second hypothesis shows the influence of UPS physical environment on the sense of user safety in post war city.
3. A low level visual environmental setting is publicly perceived as unsafe, especially for female users.
This third hypothesis attempt to prove the notion that women perceive the safety of UPS through many site features more than men.

1.6 Significance of the Research

This research is unique in the field of urban planning and design, in that it attempts to investigate the sense of safety between the community and UPS safety in a city that suffered considerable damages due to war activities. The study focuses on the physical environment and social perception of a disrupted part of the city of Baghdad in Iraq that has undergone significant damages due to war. This part of central Baghdad has a rich history and unique urban evolution. In addition, this study will also highlight gender differences in their perception of safety in the UPS. The findings of this study will hopefully benefit urban planners, designers, architects, social physiologists, and researchers, especially those involved in planning and redeveloping cities damaged by war. The research contributes to the importance of the safety of UPS and its role in the war-torn city as a potential catalyst in restoring urban life. It addresses three UPS in Bab

Al-Sharqi in Baghdad. All three spaces are different in terms of design, functionality, and physical conditions. It also contributes to the set of strategies for UPS and mitigating the impact of the conflict on the urban environment.

1.7 Research Methodology

This research is primarily qualitative approach. The nature of this study requires a mixed-method strategy. This research gathered relevant documents and analysed the qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources. For the knowledge and filling this study gap, this research will include mainly qualitative data and supporting of quantitative data. The study requires utilising mixed methods such as observation of the case study, conducting a survey, etc. The major techniques will include the literature review, field survey and in-situ observations. Mixed-method, is indeed necessary, that excludes as much of bias in the data and overcoming research limitation by strengthen the evidence of the work. Mixed- method includes and offers both a better understanding of observing UPS environment and contribute to questioning the users' perceived safety of UPS at Bab Al-Sharqi in Baghdad, Iraq. It is more needed when it comes to study two different variables in a phenomenological study (Moustakas, 2011; Flynn and Korcuska, 2018). Where the mix method, inquire of such case, could led to a comprehensive conclusion, and eventually overcome or limited the study biases. That involve qualitative describing of individual behavior in a certain environment. The use of a mixed method is highly recommended and used by many urban study researchers (Carmona and Wunderlich, 2013; Wang and Groat, 2013). John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell explained the use of mixed method in such studies with qualitative approach, stating that "A mixed methods study can employ either the qualitative or the quantitative approach (or some combination) to writing an introduction. ... the emphasis might tip in the direction of either quantitative or qualitative research, and the introduction will mirror that emphasis ... A mixed methods problem may also be that the existing research is primarily quantitative or qualitative in methodology, and a need exists to expand the approach to be more inclusive of diverse methodologies." (W.Creswell and David Creswell, 2018, Ch. 5).

1.8 Scope of the Research

This study focuses on social perception of safety concerning the physical environment of UPS in Baghdad, Iraq. In other developed countries, the context of public spaces is socially vital and peaceful. However, this study is investigating public perception of safety in post-war UPS as the war had impacted its physical environment and its community. The concept of public space can be interpreted in many ways. However, a public space is defined in this study as an open and publicly accessible space. Meanwhile the 'sense of safety' derived from the review of relevant literature and developed into a conceptual model and theoretical framework. This study also requires a qualitative approach due to the nature of perceived safety of the physical characteristics of UPS as experienced by its users. It investigates the relationships of study's variables based on UPS environment and users as further elaborated in research framework.

1.9 Research Framework

Perception can be defined as a conscious act of responding to place setting. An individual can observe and react to an environment for many reasons. (Lynch, 1960,p. 7) mentioned that “Environmental images are the result of a two-way process between the observer and his environment” With reference to UPS, the visibility of the space design has an impact on the users’ perceptions of safety and their reactions on whether to use the place or not. This mechanism is referred to as the ‘sense of safety’, which involves physical and use, activity, and attitudes. However, sense of safety concept is not limited to only positive reactions. It can develop an adverse or negative reaction depending on individual’s perceptual classifications. This relates to self-safety concerns derives from the observed environment settings. Therefore, this study examined the impact of conflict which has visually immediate impacts on the urban physical environment, notably the urban public spaces. The study conceptual framework is shown in figure 1.1.

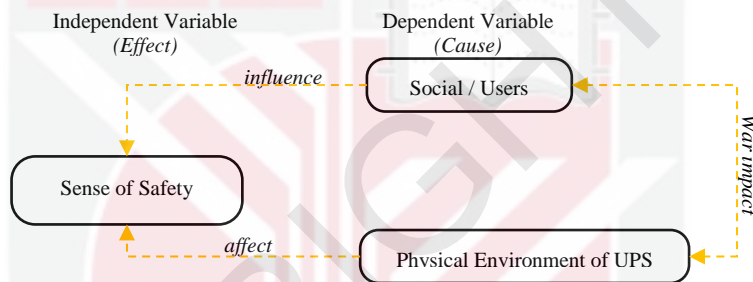


Figure 1.1 : Initial Conceptual Framework of the Study Variables.
(Source: Author, 2019)

1.10 Research Limitation

This study has several limitations. First, most available information on urban planning and design in Iraqi cities focus on residential areas such as housing, urban growth and heritage places with very little on urban public space. The second, the questionnaire survey was done through online survey tools such as Google form. Using online data collection will limit samples only to those with internet connections and they may not be the majority of the UPS users. Nevertheless, this approach had to be done due to safety concerns on the investigator if it was to be carried out on site. Third, while all efforts had been done to avoid respondent biases, there still a risk of responses influenced by culture, rational thoughts or any other type of biases from the respondents. Finally, the design of the questionnaire is to capture user social attitudes towards public spaces safety in the study area. However, there is a risk that the responses may not be accurate to respondents’ actual behaviour. This research is limited due to the difficulties of obtaining the data on the field of study also due to the specific situation (peculiarities) in Iraq. A more confirmatory approach, such as a longitudinal study, may be needed to confirm the responses.

1.11 Structure of the Research

This thesis is organised into seven chapters:

Chapter 1: It presents the outline of the research including an introduction to the research background and gives an overview of the nature of the research area. There is also a discussion on the development of the framework based on a theoretical proposition and knowledge from previously reviewed work. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the research aim, questions, objectives, study issue and structure.

Chapter 2: The chapter deals with the literature review and includes the study of documents, records, and related theoretical frameworks. It also contains definitions of the study terminologies and explains the research strategy for secondary data. It introduces the thoughts of scholars concerning the research topic in general and relating it to the research problem. It highlights the knowledge gap for this research area.

Chapter 3: This chapter discusses the study research methodology. The chapter covers a description of the research design, verifications, and justifications of the implemented methods and strategies for obtaining data. Study sampling and observation with other aspects of the study and discussions of moral considerations are also included in this chapter.

Chapter 4: It defines the study area and its physical environment. It describes the three UPS and relates them to issues on site. This includes the visual analysis of the sense of safety through in situ observations of in UPS of Bab Al-Sharqi. It also contains a summary of the primary data obtained from questionnaires. The online survey includes data to be undertaken and analysed with the related study variables and framework of urban public spaces in Baghdad, Iraq.

Chapter 5: This chapter summarizes the research and the fulfilment of this study's aim and objectives. Findings of the study literature, data analysis of the case study are highlighted with primary data conclusions and discussions of each research proposition. The chapter also lists recommendation for improving UPS in war-torn cities, as well as, suggestions for future work within the research area.

Outlining the expansion of the research in study structure in figure 1.2, study flowchart in figure 1.3. It is recommended to further illustrate the research sequences, in the progress structure diagram, figure 1.2



Figure 1.2: Research Study Structure that Introduces the Contents of the Main Phase of the Study.

(Source: Author, 2019)

1.12 Summary

This chapter establishes briefly the background of research, the scope of the research, study issue, aim, objectives, questions, hypothesis, significance, materials, framework, limitation, and the structure of chapters. This research approach is primarily qualitative. But, it implements the use of a mixed-method (qualitative and quantitative methods) in this phenomenological study which emphasizes the safety issue in the UPS physical environment that faced war trauma. This study considered the investigation of the conflicts impact on the UPS, physical environment and user' perception in Bab Al-Sharqi of Baghdad city as the study area. By defining the outline of the research, the boundaries of the study are clarified leading to further investigation and development of the study.



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