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University of Minia
School of Engineering And Technology
Architectural Department

**INTERACTION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND
OPEN SPACES**

A dissertation presented to the Architectural Department
to fulfill the doctoral degree in Urban and city planning

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PREFACE

This study discusses the use of spaces between the buildings in the Egyptian residential areas. These residential spaces provide the major part of public open spaces in the city. In fact, streets and residential spaces have always scenes of conflict. They are and have always been public property, but power over them is ambiguous. Although the street space is open to all, its detailed design can subtly favor one group over another. By changing the physical configuration, one obliges certain users at the expense of others. The actual situation of the Egyptian cities shows a difference in the urban tissue for different socio-economic classes. Consequently, their spaces afford some activities and block some others.

Several competing population groups vie with one another for control of the street space, each representing or claiming to be the public. The most powerful and well-established groups often win. The law could organize the use of urban open spaces, but actually does not. The social and psychological factors of the users are more powerful to establish a balanced interaction between users' behavior and physical settings.

The human behavior refers to thing people do, including thinking, feeling, and seeing, as well as talking with others and moving around. It is a complex process that results from many variables such as the cultural background, the social and psychological

environment. The dilemma of why and how people behave in reaction to public urban spaces drew me to achieve this study. I started my study influenced by the work of William Whyte who studied the behavior of ordinary people on city streets. The applicability of his work was to analyze spaces that work, do not work, and the reasons why. Whyte published his Street Life Project in his book *The social Life of Small Urban Spaces* and a 55-minute film with the same title and the same general structure. In this study, I wanted to add a deeper social and psychological analysis for *activities* rather than observing *acts*, trying to derive an interpretation of causes of behavior, employing several methods in parallel.

My topic, then is environment-behavior research (E-B) - planning it, doing it, and using its results. In an E-B research, the most important problem is to found it on reliable methods. The choice of methods depended on the specific problems and the research situation. I argue that applied E-B knowledge should participate in design decisions, taking the benefits of natural environmental laboratories. The intention of this study is to raise the consciousness of designers to the new insights on the nature of the built environment and the use of a variety of disciplines in the design process.

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