

## **Re-thinking spaces as places: Anew vision of social housing in Egypt**

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### **Abstract**

People are linked to places they relate to through their memories, responsive places represent a sequel to human life outside buildings, and are considered a key focus to urban development. Social housing patterns are a translation of the interaction of people and their preferable places. Egypt has recently been trying to implement a sustainable development strategy in Egypt's Vision 2030; However, regarding the social housing pillar the gap continues to widen between the interpretation yet integration of the social character within the urban patterns of social housing projects in Egypt.

Therefore, this research seeks to reform the concept of social housing in Egypt based on the diversity in the application of practical practices of placemaking in a way that meets people's needs; through discussing both quantitative and qualitative methods in defining social housing in the Egyptian context, analysing global models of housing based on social housing factors, in order to integrate all life leading factors of urbanism in the future definition and application of social housing projects to form a comprehensive vision of social housing in Egypt.

Based on this, the research concludes that there is a deficiency in both definition and application of the practice of sustainable social housing that responses to the needs, requirements and aspirations of the population; despite being a vital and critical component that acts as a sequence and thus completes urbanism in the city; which indeed acts as a social interaction bond to the people towards their streets and places and makes them realize the difference between the space and the place.

So, Social Housing as both a definition and an application should be more comprehensive in order to include the different sequenced layers of both the buildings and the open spaces; and to deal with both layers based on the human needs and the relation between people and places to produce a liveable yet enjoyable and healthy communities.

In order to adjust the relation between people and places in social housing places in Egypt according to sustainable standards; all social, economic, environmental, cultural and functional

factors should be reconsidered, and a human-based criteria of 3 levels includes 1) Basic dimensions, 2) Secondary requirements, and 3) Standard indicators should be activated.

### KEYWORDS:

Responsive Urbanism, Placemaking, Great livable places, Social interaction, Sustainable social housing.

### الملخص:

يرتبط الناس بالأماكن التي يترددون عليها من خلال ذكرياتهم، وتمثل الأماكن المستجيبة تنمى للحياة البشرية خارج المباني، كما تعتبر محورا ركيزا للتنمية الحضرية في المدينة. تعتبر أنماط الإسكان الإجتماعي ترجمة لتفاعل الناس مع أماكنهم المفضلة. تحاول مصر مؤخرا تنفيذ استراتيجية التنمية المستدامة في رؤية مصر ٢٠٣٠؛ ومه ذلك، فيما يتعلق بركيزة الإسكان الإجتماعي، فإن الفجوة لا تزال تتسع بين تمثيل الطابع الإجتماعي مع دمجها في الأنماط الحضرية لمشروعات الإسكان الإجتماعي في مصر .

لذا يسعى البحث إلى إصلاح مفهوم الإسكان الإجتماعي في مصر على أساس التنوع في تطبيق الممارسات العملية لصناعة المكان بشكل يلبي احتياجات السكان؛ من خلال مناقشة كل من الأساليب الكمية والنوعية في تعريف الإسكان الإجتماعي في السياق المصري، وتحليل أمثلة من نماذج عالمية للإسكان الحضري القائم على عوامل الإسكان الإجتماعي، وذلك لدمج جميع عوامل العمران في التعريف والتطبيق المستقبلي لمشروعات الإسكان الإجتماعي والوصول لرؤية شاملة لاستدامة الإسكان الإجتماعي في مصر. وبناء على ذلك، خلص البحث إلى وجود نقص في كل من تعريف وتطبيق ممارسات الإسكان الإجتماعي المستدام الذي يستجيب لاحتياجات ومتطلبات وتطلعات السكان، على الرغم من كونه مكونا حيويا وحاسما يعمل على تسلسل العمران في المدينة، والذي يقوم بدوره كرابط للتفاعل الإجتماعي للسكان تجاه شوارعهم وأماكنهم ويجعلهم يدركون الفرق بين الموضع والمكان .

لذا، يجب أن يكون الإسكان الاجتماعي كتعريف وتطبيق أكثر شمولاً من أجل تضمين الطبقات المتسلسلة المختلفة لكل من المباني والأماكن المفتوحة؛ والتعامل مع كلا الطبقتين على أساس الاحتياجات البشرية والعلاقة بين الناس والأماكن لإنتاج مجتمعات صالحة للعيش وممتعة وصحية. من أجل إعادة تقويم العلاقة بين الأشخاص والأماكن في أماكن الإسكان الاجتماعي في مصر وفق معايير مستدامة. يجب إعادة النظر في جميع العوامل الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والبيئية والثقافية والوظيفية، وتشمل المعايير القائمة على الإنسان من ٣ مستويات (١) الأبعاد الأساسية، (٢) المتطلبات الثانوية و (٣) يجب تفعيل المؤشرات القياسية.

### الكلمات المفتاحية؛

العمران المستجيب، صناعة المكان، أماكن جيدة للعيش، التفاعل الإجتماعي، الإسكان الإجتماعي المستدام

### INTRODUCTION

CITIES represent the most precious asset in people`s life; as it is considered the place where they live, work, meet friends, shop, raise a family and practice daily life needs.

People are connected to their cities through the idea of “Home”; which relates to the memorable places in these cities, affiliation is the key component which bonds people to places.

A certain place differs from an ordinary space due to the interaction of people through practicing various activities; which creates and promotes the sense of place in people`s minds, this process is called place making.

Therefore, achieving quality of life includes ensuring the quality of place; so creating great livable places for people is the key stone to guarantee having healthy and balanced communities.

Also, the good design of these places helps to fulfill and satisfy people`s needs; which is necessary to make the ultimate benefit as well as maximizing their potentials in order to accomplish the fusion between both social and urban sides in sustainable urban development.

The process of transforming a space into a place requires careful consideration to highlight the human interactions and experiences in the place (Actions for streets as places: How community makes it happen, 2016); where it is expected that the relation between people and places is mutual as Fred Kent the president of Project for Public Spaces(PPS)is used to say: “ It takes a place to create a community, and a community to create a place”.

So, it is not too late to re-list human needs as one of the main components at the heart of the process of thinking, planning and designing our places; as a step on the right direction to reshape the future of our cities towards the sustainability of both people and places, (Caprotti, 2018).

Based on a review of the theories of human needs starting from the following: 1) Maslow`s hierarchy of human needs (1943) which categorizes them into 5 classifications, that include physical and psychological needs. 2) The three needs theory (1960s) by David McClelland that stated that our needs are determined according to our behaviors, and our achievement, affiliation and power; which included individuals and groups. 3) The ERG theory (1969) by Clayton P. Alderfer that suggested to rethink Maslow`s pyramid according to 3 categories as in existence, relatedness and growth, showing levels of needs as in basic needs and complementary requirements, (Jouneja, 2015).

4) The theory of basic human needs(1979) by John W. Burton which is based on the human needs, values and interests; recognized by Burton as non-negotiable needs beginning with physical, biological and ending with identity and recognition; which shows both categories of physical, mental and Individual, collective, (Azam, 2018).

5) The Max Neef model of human-scale development (1980s) that is based on a classification of needs and satisfiers which interact in one system, classified to fundamental needs defined by the being (Qualities), the having (Things), the doing (Actions) and the interacting (Settings), (Manfred. A., 1991).

Then we get to 6) The theory of universal human needs (2005) by Simon Hertnon who classified human needs to survival and betterment which he illustrated in a nautilus diagram that consists of 9 needs divided into 4 categories that represent intended goals (Hertnon, 2005), as in fig.(1); showing a comprehensive model of levels of needs (Basic, Complementary), Types of needs (Physical, Mental), Target groups (individuals, Species).

Thus, this research will focus on Simon Hertnon`s theory for correlating human needs in urban practices, as in fig. (2).

From the analysis of Simon Hertnon`s theory we can derive that it is focused on social, environmental, economic, functional needs of both groups and individuals in the society.

From this standpoint, the strong correlation between human being and urban practices is clear and can be expressed in social housing patterns; as a mechanism to achieve quality of urban

life, maximizing the people`s role to shape the places they relate to and to guarantee the balance in sustainable urban development process in the city.

Hence housing issues are one of the important and imperative challenges that influence the quality of people`s life, as well as being one of the most critical and crucial challenges that face the Egyptian urbanism; taking into account that social housing patterns occupies the highest demand in Egypt as one of the polices to accommodate and keep pace with Egypt`s high population rates along with the relative low income levels, (Abd El Hameed, 2017) .

	Survival needs	Betterment needs
Individual goals	EXISTENCE	HAPPINESS (to feel good about being alive)
Individual needs	1. Physical well-being 2. Mental well-being	5. More respect from others 6. More self-esteem
Species goals	SURVIVAL of the species	CONTENTMENT (and ongoing survival of the species)
Species needs	3. A safe and healthy environment 4. Reproduction or limiting reproduction	7. Appreciation of 'life' and all that you have 8. Doing good deeds (helping others to satisfy their unmet needs)

Fig. 1. Simon Hertnon`s classification of why we do the things we do. (source: Hertnon, 2005)

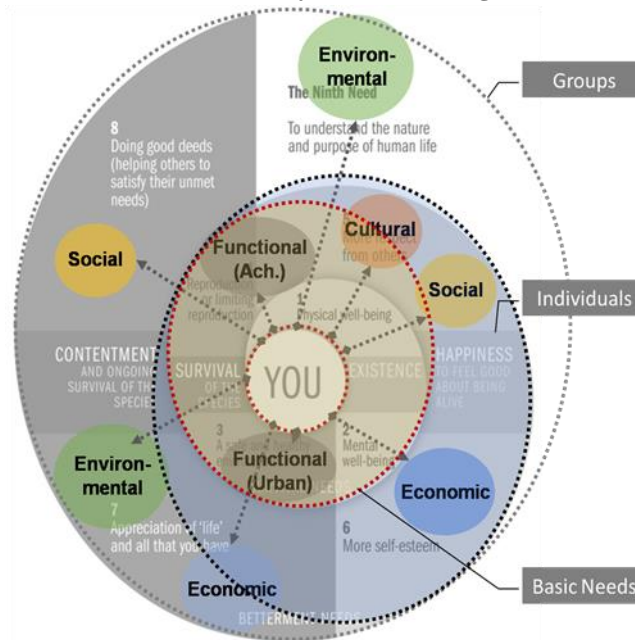


Fig. 2. Simon Hertnon`s Nautilus diagram of human needs. (source: Hertnon, 2005)

## The right of housing in Egypt

The right of an adequate, affordable, clean and secure housing is a basic and necessary need to establish a decent human life in any society; as housing is deeply associated with providing both physical and psychological basic human needs of the society members.

The permanent constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt for the year 2014, which was amended in 2019 states in Articles (8), (9), (41) and (78) the following:-

(Art.8): “The society is based on social solidarity, and the state is committed to achieving social justice and providing means of social solidarity, in a way that guarantees a decent life for all citizens, as organized by the law”.

(Art.9): “The state is committed to achieving equal opportunities for all citizens, without discrimination”.

(Art.41): “The state commits to implement a population program aimed at achieving balance between population growth rates and available resources; maximizing investment in human energy and improving its characteristics in context of achieving sustainable development”.

(Art.78): “The state guarantees citizens the right to adequate, safe and healthy housing, in a manner that preserves human dignity and achieves social justice.

The state is committed to developing a national housing plan that takes into account environmental specifications, and ensures the contribution of self and cooperative initiatives in its implementation, and regulating the use of state land and its provision of fundamental facilities within a comprehensive urban planning framework for cities and villages, and a strategy for population distribution; in order to achieve the public good and preserve the rights of future generations, (Egypt Constitution document, 2014).

These particular 4 constitutional articles are based on the slogans that the demonstrators launched as a general popular demand in Jan. 25th, 2011 revolution in Egypt.

These slogans were represented in 3 words: Livelihood ( which means in Arabic both food and shelter), freedom and social justice, was a head start for establishing the initiative “ Right to housing” by means of the initiative for personal rights” as an attempt to face the issues and challenges of urban development in Egypt, (Shawkat, 2013).

### **Housing provision and affordability in Egypt**

Considering the rapid urban expansion of the Egyptian cities accompanied with the high increase of population growth rates; housing provision and affordability has become a very difficult task for many Egyptians, especially the middle class and low income people (Sims, [Egypt housing strategy, 2020](#)), as in fig.(3).

This table shows inequality ratios between individuals` annual income compared to housing unit prices, where the affordability of housing can be measured as a price-to-income ratio means the number of years required for a household to pay for a housing unit price.

According to the Egyptian housing profile,2016; in Egypt the ratio between 5:7 is considered affordable for the median annual income level households, while in the developed countries the ratio varies between 10:20 for median households (Sims, [Egypt housing profile, 2016](#)).

Therefore, this leads to a huge gap in the housing affordability in Egypt and also means that the more convenient you want a house, the less affordable it will be, and reviewing and studying the policies that the government pursues to confront this issue, in particular the government social housing policy that suit the low-income category in Egypt to correct them, and adding the required criteria to their success and continuity.

All Egypt Household Income Position	All Egypt Annual Household Income	Type of Housing Unit	Unit Cost or Sales Price	Price-to-Income Ratio
Median Quintile 1 EGP 14,352		Type 1 Simple informal apartment of 40 m <sup>2</sup>	55,000	3.8
		Type 2 Informal apartment of 80m <sup>2</sup> in tower	110,000	7.7
		Type 3 SHP core program apartment of 75m <sup>2</sup>	135,000	9.4
		Type 4 Low-end private developer apartment of 110 m <sup>2</sup>	370,000	25.8
		Type 5 Private Developer apartment of 130m <sup>2</sup> in compound in new towns	600,000	41.8
Median Quintile 2 EGP 21,276		Type 1 Simple informal apartment of 40 m <sup>2</sup>	55,000	2.6
		Type 2 Informal apartment of 80m <sup>2</sup> in tower	110,000	5.2
		Type 3 SHP core program apartment of 75m <sup>2</sup>	135,000	6.3
		Type 4 Low-end private developer apartment of 110 m <sup>2</sup>	370,000	17.3
		Type 5 Private Developer apartment of 130m <sup>2</sup> in compound in new towns	600,000	28.2
Median Quintile 3 (also median of all households) EGP 27,144		Type 1 Simple informal apartment of 40 m <sup>2</sup>	55,000	2.0
		Type 2 Informal apartment of 80m <sup>2</sup> in tower	110,000	4.1
		Type 3 SHP core program apartment of 75m <sup>2</sup>	135,000	5.0
		Type 4 Low-end private developer apartment of 110 m <sup>2</sup>	370,000	13.6
		Type 5 Private Developer apartment of 130m <sup>2</sup> in compound in new towns	600,000	22.1

Fig. 3. Affordability rates and to price to-income in Egypt.

Source: (Sims, Egypt housing profile, 2016)

## OBJECTIVES

As an urgent need to fill the gap in our cities; reshaping the relationship between man, environment and urbanism in the Egyptian city and to reach how to create places that respond to the requirements of the population in their cities.

Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to reform the concept of social housing in Egypt based on the diversity in the application of practical practices of placemaking in a way that meets the needs of the population and is well received.

Also, aiming to integrate all life leading factors of urbanism in the future definition and application of social housing projects to form a comprehensive vision of social housing in Egypt.

This paper comes as a completion to the curious thinking of the researchers about the future scenarios of public spaces and the people's role in shaping their places; regarding the social housing role in binding and bonding all life leading activities besides maximizing the social cohesion between all layers of society on the basis of equity and social justice and rooting the sense of place in people's minds.

## METHODOLOGY

This research will discuss both quantitative and qualitative methods to reach to the answers of the questions:

1. What is social housing? And Who are the parties involved in?
2. Why is social housing imperative to the city?
3. What are the sustainability considerations acquired to achieve sustainable social housing in Egypt? And How can it be employed?



**First**, by following the theoretical approach and gathering data about the definitions and history of social housing focusing on the Egyptian context. **Second**, by applying the analytical approach through the study and classification of social housing objectives, strategies and challenges.

**Inferring to** the case study of Aranya low cost housing, Indore, India that combined the good application of the practical practices of placemaking based on achieving the different needs of the population. **Then** comes the analysis of the social housing model in Egypt (Msaken El Magzar in Mansoura city) as an example of social housing projects from the 1960s till now; to examine the possibility of applying these practices in the Egyptian context

to reach to a housing model that is responsive to the people`s needs. The research will use maps from Dakahlia Governorate, West neighbourhood official centre and Google Earth Pro for data analysis on maps of Msaken El Magzar district.

**Finally**, re-righting the definition and application of social housing in Egypt based on the different dimensions including placemaking practices that meets the people`s needs.

## WHAT IS SOCIAL HOUSING

Many studies have reviewed the term social housing in the context of housing sector including current housing issues and housing market; which differs from each country to another.

However, social housing concept in Egypt differs than any other country because it has included several dimensions associated with both the government, private sector and the people along its history. Therefore, the study will review social housing as both a theory and practice from the Egyptian context, as in Table (1).

**TABLE 1 LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL HOUSING**

Reference	Description	Issues	Addressed
(Fathy, 1996)	Type of housing provided by the government and assigned to architects and designers without any intervention from the population	- Costs and returns of housing. -Livelihood standards. -Relation between people and places	The poor and low-income
(Ettouney, 1984)	A governmental policy that proposes a housing plan that provides affordable units.	Closing the gap between supply and demand	Low-income households- families-
(Abd El Kader, 1987)	Low income housing that comes in two types:1) Governmental mass housing (centralized process) 2) Informal housing (decentralized process)	- Descriptions of the buildings. - Urban and architectural design. - Social housing patterns.	Low-income households

(source: The researchers)

It is one of the government policies to confront the huge population growth by providing low-cost affordable housing units (Abd El Ghany, 1989). As the government pursued this policy to provide adequate housing for those who need it through public housing projects, but with the

failure to find adequate support for these projects; the role of real needed housing that addresses the basic human needs necessary to establish a decent life was overlooked (Shabka, 1984).

Therefore, social housing is presented in the context of formal and typical residential complexes with high building density and high population rates.

As for the users social housing can be identified as a type of housing within the reach of the user, its main purpose is to provide affordable accommodation for those with low incomes. So, the rent percentage is determined according to laws that guarantee the tenants' rights. And it is allocated according to their needs; unlike private housing where the relationship between the owner and tenant is optional. Rather, it is specialized according to the necessity of who is entitled to receive urgent housing (Nasr, 2017).

Social housing is related to the concept of affordable housing as it is seen as a people centered pattern of housing; where according to (Abd El Hameed, 2017) affordable housing in Egypt relates to two cases, first: whether it is for people unable to afford the housing market costs such as workers and low income residents, second: is a low cost intermediate housing that provides more housing opportunities for families that earn incomes below average; which represents a big share of the Egyptian population.

### Social housing history in Egypt

In the following, the study presents an overview to the history of social housing in Egypt to identify the programs followed by the government over the time periods from the 60s until 2020, as in Table (2).

TABLE 2 SOCIAL HOUSING HISTORY IN EGYPT FROM 1960S TO 2021

Period	Reason for SH	Government actions	Social reaction	Problem
1960s (Gamal Abd El Nasser)	Rural to urban migration	- <u>Socialist approach.</u> - Setting up public housing programs. -Rent control laws (Abdelrahman, 2020)	Severely neglected and deserted after 1967	Informal housing areas
1970s (Mohamed Anwar El Sadat period)	Imbalance between supply and demand	- <u>Economic approach.</u> -Neglecting SH policies to build new cities.	Informal housing jumped to the peak.	Inhabiting the city of the dead ,housing unaffordability
1980s -2010 (Mohamed Hosni Mubarak)	Providing affordable housing	- <u>Political approach</u> -Mubarak youth housing project 1996,70,000 affordable units (didn't fulfill growing demand) Future housing 1998, National H 2005 didn't keep up with demand (Naans, December, 2016).	Reserving residential units at great rates	Insufficiency to meet the housing needs of the population



<p><b>2011 -2021</b> <b>(Abd El Fattah El Sisi)</b></p>	<p><b>Responding to the social needs</b> <b>(The right of housing in the Egyptian Constitution 2014)</b></p>	<p><b>- Socio-economic \ Political approach</b> - Social housing revival by the Social housing project” Million Units” launched in 2014 until now</p>	<p>Great interet on the part of low and middle income households</p>	<p>- High housing affordability burdens. - Delay in delivery. - Mismatch between built, delivered.</p>
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(source: The researchers)

The table shows the successive stages that formed social housing policies in Egypt through which it illustrates the ups and downs of each stage followed by its problems and endless social visions and demands, as in fig. (4).

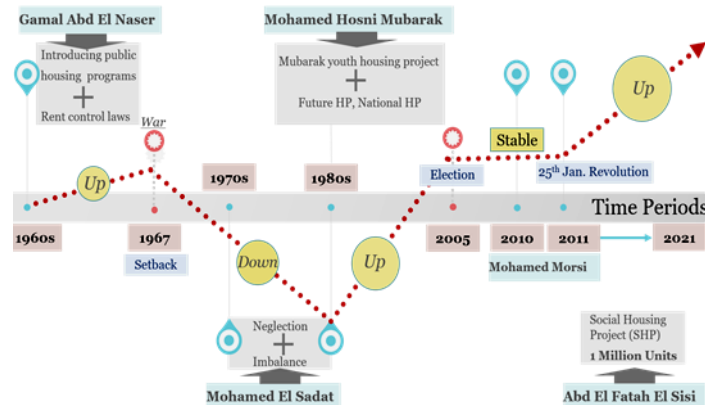


Fig. 4. Social housing timeline. (source: The researchers)

However, this analysis expresses social housing as a policy and program, but not as projects that have been implemented on the ground.

**WHY SOCIAL HOUSING**

Social housing seeks to reform the housing sector; where it is possible to provide the right to housing for all, and give equal opportunities to all groups of society to achieve integration and to live a decent life based on fair distribution and access to a good share of services while reducing the financial burden as much as possible, as in fig. (5).

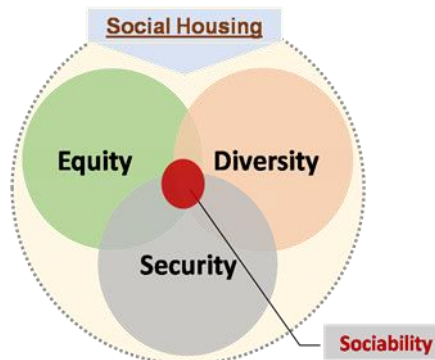


Fig. 5. Social housing fundamentals. (source: The researchers)

### Social housing aims to achieve the following: -

- 1- Establish and root the principles of sociability and connectivity among various community groups to promote and foster sharing values, as in fig. (6).
- 2- Giving all segments of society equal opportunities of sustainable accessible housing for the future.
- 3- Ensure services feasibility for all users to fulfill a broad view for housing needs and opportunities ([Affordable housing goals, objectives and policies report, 2016](#)).
- 4- Providing safe and affordable housing policy that meets the future needs of residents.
- 5- Preserving moderate housing market rates that assemble the quality of private housing.
- 6- Encouraging and promoting the follow up of laws and regulations of housing for the population.

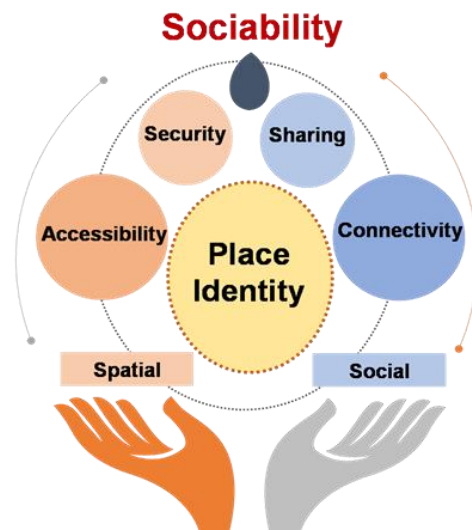


Fig.6. Sociability Values. (source: The researchers)

### Social housing objectives

The Egyptian government following the United Nations Human Settlements Program executed a housing strategy report issued by the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities in 2020 that included the objectives and strategies of government social housing as follows: -

- 1- Providing long term plans for the eligible groups of the population to face the housing challenges in Egypt.
- 2- Establishing and achieving the principles of equality and social justice among community members.
- 3- Raising the level of public awareness among different groups of the population to protect the public right to community assets.
- 4- Achieving sustainability through raising the economic efficiency and performance by controlling and monitoring the housing costs ([Sims, Egypt housing strategy, 2020](#)).

### Social housing strategies

The government stated in the housing strategy report in 2020, in the third dimension of the housing policies that address low-income groups that aim mainly to support low-income and eligible citizens and groups and provide affordable and clean housing for marginalized and eligible citizens and groups.

Social housing strategies are stated as follows: 1) providing state land for housing. 2) Providing private land for housing. 3) Subsidized rent. 3)

( Subsidizing the citizen, not the housing unit or the land. 4) Eased standards for affordable housing. 5) Financing affordable housing. 6) Increase the supply of private sector affordable housing.

## WHO IS CONCERNED WITH SOCIAL HOUSING

Social housing cannot be confined to a certain organization nor a certain category or a certain environment according to what is mentioned before, but the scope of those involved can be narrowed to whether providers or stakeholders, as in fig.(7); whereas providers represent governmental or non-governmental housing suppliers, while the stakeholders represent the beneficiaries from the households, investors, workers, employees, etc. (Ropke, March, 2018)



Fig.7. Social housing sector addresses. (source: The researchers)

## Social housing Providers

According to the Egyptian housing strategy 2020 social housing providers and suppliers are divided into 4 parties as follows: -

1- Governorate housing: - is supported by the local government, represents 44% of units' production in (1982-2005) and yet declined steadily until (2002-2005) to reach only 12000 units per year.

2- Housing co-operatives: - is the second largest type, represents 22% of units' production in (1982-2005) and yet declined until (2002-2005) to reach only 3000 units per year.

New Urban Communities Authority: - is located in new towns, represents 20% of units' production in (1982-2005) and had a significant share in the period (1997-2002) to reach 45% and yet declined heavily in (2002-2005) to only 9.4% with less than 2000 units per year.

3- Diverse Sources:- included other government agencies, housing funds and the Housing and development bank and Taamir agencies, which represented 14% of the total units (Sims, Egypt housing profile, 2016).

## SOCIAL HOUSING EVALUATION AND CHALLENGES

Being a pattern of housing that attributes to provide a solution for housing problems; social housing fulfills the demand of a big share of the population.

So, no doubt that this requires setting the right policy through implementing housing programs that addresses these continuous demands.

Therefore, the ministry of housing established some evaluation criteria to the government social housing programs starting from the 60s to the late Social Housing Project (SHP) known as “One million Units” and its predecessor the National Housing Project (NHP), these criteria is composed of 11 points that can be classified as follows in Table (3).

Based on the above, there are a few challenges that face social housing programs; which can differ from one country to another according to the difference of housing policies as well as the implemented plans.

Thus, this study suggests classifying social housing challenges into 3 categories as in fig. (8).

**TABLE 3 THE EVALUATION CRITERIA OF SOCIAL HOUSING PROGRAMS IN EGYPT**

Classification	Description
<b>Administrative</b>	- Delays in implementation
	- The targeting process and beneficiaries selection
	- Post-delivery issues and the Monitoring and evaluation
<b>Financial</b>	- Multiplicity of providers
	- Private sector inclusion
	- Construction costs and inflation
	- Direct subsidy elements
	- Indirect and hidden subsidy elements
	- Affordability of housing units
<b>Urban</b>	- Land availability and location
<b>Architectural</b>	- Infrastructure provision and costs
	- Housing models, designs and Layouts

(source: The researchers)

**Fig. 8. Social housing challenges. (source: The researchers)**

This chart shows that social housing challenges are: -

1- Institutional: is related to the barriers facing the public policy of social housing development that supports both the supply and demand for social housing projects.

2- Operational: is related to the factors that affect the design and management of social housing, and are divided into financial, environmental and cultural challenges.

3- Functional: is related to the ability to deliver sustainable social housing for users and help them to relate, belong and contribute to their communities, and is divided into architectural and urban challenges.

These challenges represent barriers that can be overcome to achieve sustainable social housing through integrating economy, identity and maintenance.



This shows that the challenges of social housing are multi-dimensional and can affect the vital factors in any urban environment, thus social housing programs shall consider these challenges to achieve a much better understanding and assessment of social housing projects.

Based on this, social housing should not be confined to the idea of providing adequate housing for people only. Where social housing can be seen as a means of achieving social cohesion and applying the required harmony

between individuals and groups to ensure the integration of all environmental, social, economic and cultural factors to achieve the quality of urban life of the population in their communities. So, studying the practical practices of placemaking at the residential level provides a better understanding and deeper knowledge of the integration of economic, social and cultural aspects of the people; to guarantee the diversity and ability to build unique identity of the community, as well as to create a positive, productive and welcoming community to live in.

Therefore, it is possible to take advantage of the solution of international case studies that have succeeded to adapt the concept of placemaking and employing it to achieve a social housing model that is compatible with the needs of the population and based on the exploitation of the potentials available in the place.



## Reintegration Of Placemaking Practices In The Residential Level

The researchers selected 2 different case studies in order to explain, analyze and conclude a comprehensive formulation of the concept and application of social housing practices based on the integration of all the applied dimensions of social housing as well as meeting the needs of the population and maximizing the possibilities of the place to create a sense of place as follows:

### The Aranya low-cost housing model in Indore, India

The project of Aranya housing is located 6 kms from the center of Indore, with a total built area of 100,000 m<sup>2</sup>, awarded the Aga Khan award for architecture in 1996 (Chilnis, 2014).

### Reasons of analyzing the Aranya housing model:

The Aranya housing project is considered a model of innovative social planning that indicates a framework based on the people by building their settlement themselves; which exemplifies their needs, and the understanding of the importance of participating to their community. as in fig. (9).

### Analyzing the Aranya housing model:

The main concept of the master plan was to create a main commercial spine in the center to connect the six housing districts together with green infrastructure supported by open spaces, courtyards and housing services, as in fig. (10).





Fig. (9) The Aranya housing model master plan (Source: Google earth Pro)

Fig. (10) The land use distribution in Aranya (Source: [Place matters handbook. 2019](#)).

The existence of amenities is installed according to the even distribution resulted from comparing between the 3 proposed alternatives as in fig. (11); to ensure the organization of green spaces, connecting places to the center and good accessibility to pedestrian activities within (10:15 minutes), as in fig. (12).

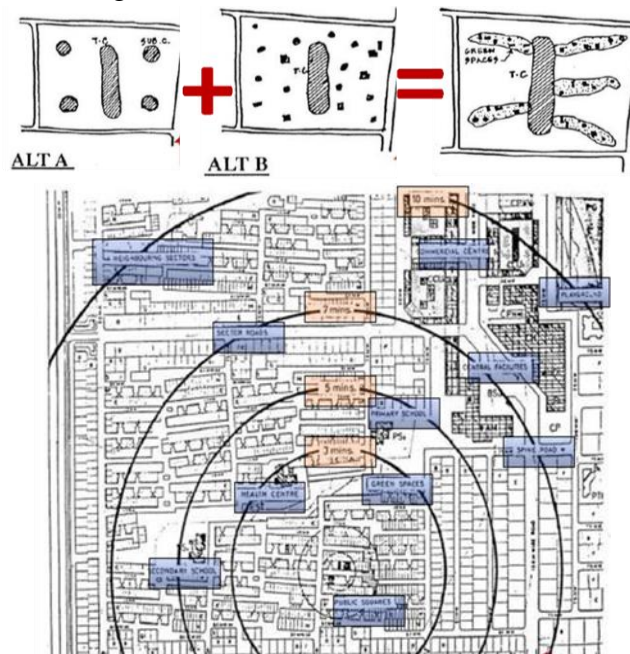


Fig. (11) The distribution of amenities in Aranya (Source: (Chilnis, 2014).

Fig. (12) The hierarchy of spaces and access in minutes in Aranya project (Source: [Chilnis, Anushree, et al.2014](#)).



### **The Aranya housing model strategy:**

The Aranya project plan is based on showing the potentials of innovative technological approach through the effectiveness of infrastructure design, creative construction techniques and efficient land use and site management.

Therefore, the strategy adopted the following themes: -

1. The spatial hierarchy of traditional Indian context to focus on issues related to densification, narrow streets, courtyards and hot dry climate.
2. Making basic service cores for housing especially markets.
3. Creating connections between road network and residential open spaces.
4. Good utilization of land to support nonresidential uses.
5. Prioritizing economic finance according to infrastructure components first; particularly roads, water and sanitation (Chilnis, 2014).

### **The Barcelona superblock model (Mini Neighborhoods)**

The concept of superblock is not recent; however in 2016 its application first in Poblenou superblock is considered a new and good achievement to create a model of productive neighborhoods that are flexible, stable, human centered, supported by good share of green infrastructure and good management of car use, as in fig. (13).

Fig. (13) The urban context of Poblenou superblock, Barcelona (Source: (Roberts, 2019).

### **Reasons of analyzing Barcelona superblock model:**

The experience of placemaking in Barcelona represents a model that serves compact communities and their management, the superblock concept came out first from the initiative “let’s fill streets with life”; which is based on the challenge of improving the quality of life and reducing the impact human activities on the environment (Place matter: Handbook of global best practices on placemaking for children, 2019). as in fig.(14).



Fig. (14) The Poblenou superblock master plan (Source: (Wang, 2017) .

### **Analyzing the Barcelona superblock model:**

Reducing the overrated range of cars and adding more pedestrian and bike paths in addition to public amenities, along with playing areas and shades introduced and merged a new level of social interventions between residents and visitors of the block; which in turn refreshed and enriched the social and urban potentials of the place. (Critton, 2019).

The process of re-shaping the residential block is considered a small-democratic placemaking experience coming out from the heart of human needs in their places; to increase the share of pedestrians, as in fig. (15) and reform the existence of cars and make a proper context made out of fast and cheap interventions to create public spaces for citizen use, as in fig.(16).

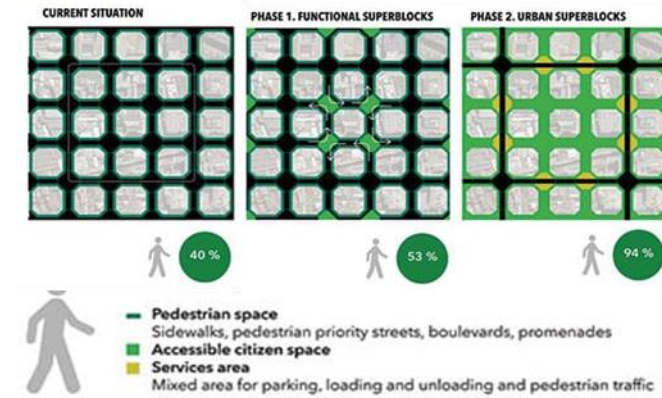


Fig. (15) Superblock model hierarchy

(Source: (Brass, 2017).



Fig. (16) Superblock model hierarchy

(Source: (Roberts, 2019).

### The Barcelona superblock model strategy:

- 1- The High density of open spaces and connectivity between them.
- 2- Mixture of land uses that favors social cohesion.
- 3- Attracting real estate developers, and efficiency of infrastructure & sustainability.
- 4- Combining tradition with innovation.
- 5- Innovative urban environment, creating productive neighborhoods.
- 6- Better exploitation of urban areas.
- 7- Green buildings, creating green areas, amenities & subsidized housing.

By analysing the previous study cases, the findings can be interpreted in a comparative form that combines the success factors of social housing and the applied practices of placemaking in each of them as in table (4); in order to reach a systematic formulation of the social housing model that is productive yet responsive to both the needs of the population and the components of the place, as in fig. (17).

TABLE 4 ANALYZING THE APPLICABILITY OF SOCIAL HOUSING DIMENSIONS IN ARANYA AND BARCELONA

SOCIAL HOUSING DIMENSIONS	PLACEMAKING CONCEPTS / PRACTICES	
	Aranya low-cost housing model	Barcelona superblock model
SOCIAL	Habilitate people according to their needs, and developing housing programs to adopt the sense of belonging and identity within affordability.	Giving an integrated rational comprehensive plan that combines real needs and requirements of the population based on sustainable criteria represented in four main structuring lines: compactness, complexity, efficiency and stability (Palenzuela, 2007)
FUNCTIONAL	Representing a hierarchy of elements gathered all together in a human scale/centered urban design demonstrated in public spaces, streets, parks, markets and buildings (Place matters: Handbook of global best practices on placemaking for children, 2019).	Focusing of Barcelona mini neighborhoods is to repurpose all neighborhood components to be centered around citizens by integrity of mobility, streets, spaces and buildings to serve human activities.
CULTURAL	Building a community character in Aranya by integrating population in the built environment (Chilnis, 2014).	Exemplifying good employment of renewing urban fabric, reestablishing sense of place and local identity and restructuring spatial quality between community members (Brand, 2013)
ECONOMIC	Providing diverse amenities based on reducing the expenses on transportation and less use of cars to encourage pedestrian usage.	Freeing up to 60% of the car used streets to turn them into active citizen spaces.
ENVIRONMENTAL	Depending on local resources and materials besides creating green arteries within the neighborhood.	Utilizing green corridors as an infrastructure level of services in the super block application.
LEARNED LESSONS	The utilization of placemaking practices on different scales along with interpreting the factors and dimensions of social housing as explained in land uses, amenities as well as green infrastructure networks.	The representation of social, economic, environmental, cultural and functional dimensions could be interpreted in so many different ways, but it definitely acquires both unity and variety to be applicable.

(source: The researchers)

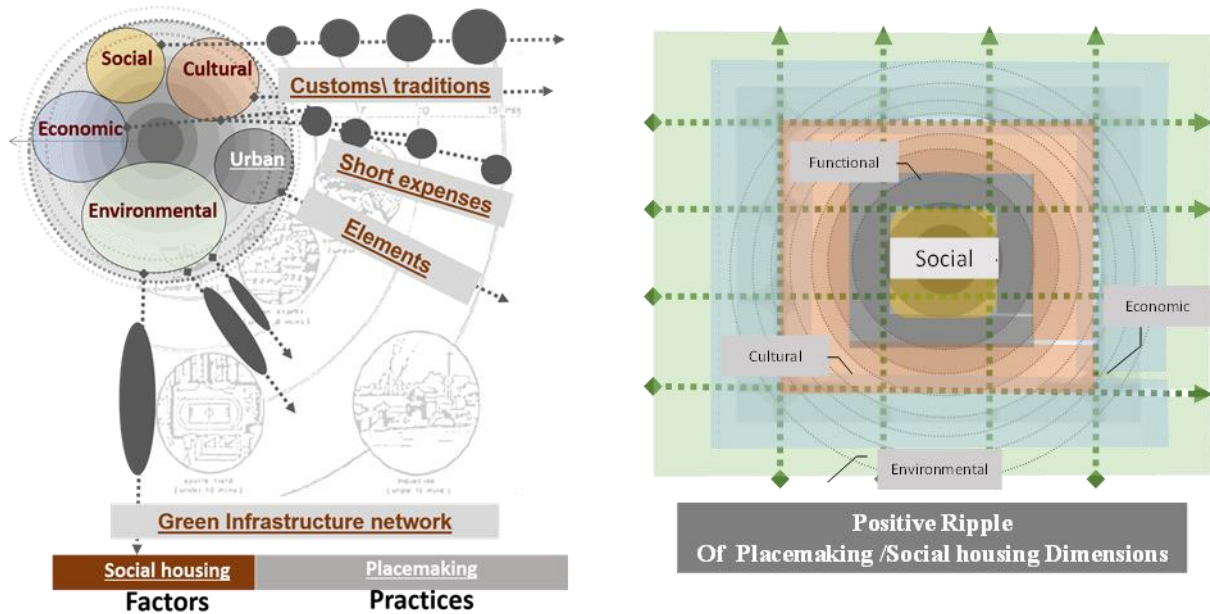


Fig. (17) Interpreting placemaking in the Aranya housing model on the left and Barcelona superblock model on the right (Source: The Researchers).

### HOW CAN SOCIAL HOUSING EMPLOY NON SPACES AS GREAT PLACES?

Unutilized spaces can be considered as existing misused resources that could make a different image in any residential community, if well managed; In order to accomplish a successful public open space, it takes concerns about the type of activity and also studying the resident’s behaviors to have vibrant community spaces.

These hidden potentials that those places have need to be investigated and examined according to the following:

- Conducting a SOWT analysis to get to a better understanding about the importance and value of these places, as in table (5).
- To extract a set of levels to measure the applicability of each social, economic, environmental, cultural and functional criteria to reform the definition yet application of ground related.

TABLE 5  
SOWT ANALYSIS OF UNUTILIZED SOCIAL HOUSING PLACES

Strength	Weakness
Connectivity and circulation Mixed use and different options. Available Traditional elements High public Demand Gathering places	Small scale and difficult to handle Does not invite recreation High walls, Dead zones and bad exposure to sun Lack of maintenance Lack of clear visual image Over used by cars Lack of awareness
Opportunities	Threats
Sponsorships by governmental or private organizations. Interest from local authorities to investments	Natural hazards and earthquakes Revolutions and lack of security Insecurity and robbery

### DISCUSSION

Now, it is clear that there is an unbreakable relation between people and their places; where Social interaction between community members themselves as well as achieving harmony



between them and their favorable places requires a framework that highlights the importance of the social role in upgrading the urban environment.

This gives a head start for engaging modern approaches that works as a creative intervention in the production of a strong bond between social, cultural, economic and urban forms of the city; such as placemaking practices to promote and integrate people into their community places.

Also, this all proves that Sustainable social housing is the suitable tool to fulfill the needs of the population in their communities with the guarantee of achieving social justice and equity as well as providing suitable and affordable housing within the environmental considerations.

Therefore, Social housing projects need to focus on the social interaction between residents themselves as well as integrating into the place.

Thus, this indicates the need to expand the scope in the social housing system as a theory and application to accommodate the changes and requirements of both the building and the urban environment and to integrate practical practices to include the needs, requirements and aspirations of people in the environment in which they want to live.

### CONCLUSION

By reviewing the definitions and analyzing the case studies of Aranya low cost housing model and the Barcelona superblock model social housing models we can deduct the following points:

- Social housing is considered a concept more than a definition, where its definition may differ according to each society, institution or even different groups of people.

The term social housing revolves around the essence of a concept that combines the population's need for suitable housing in spite of their inability to keep pace with real estate and land market, due to their inability to practice some steps in the process, whether from providing financial or construction resources or even the familiarity with following the required procedures.

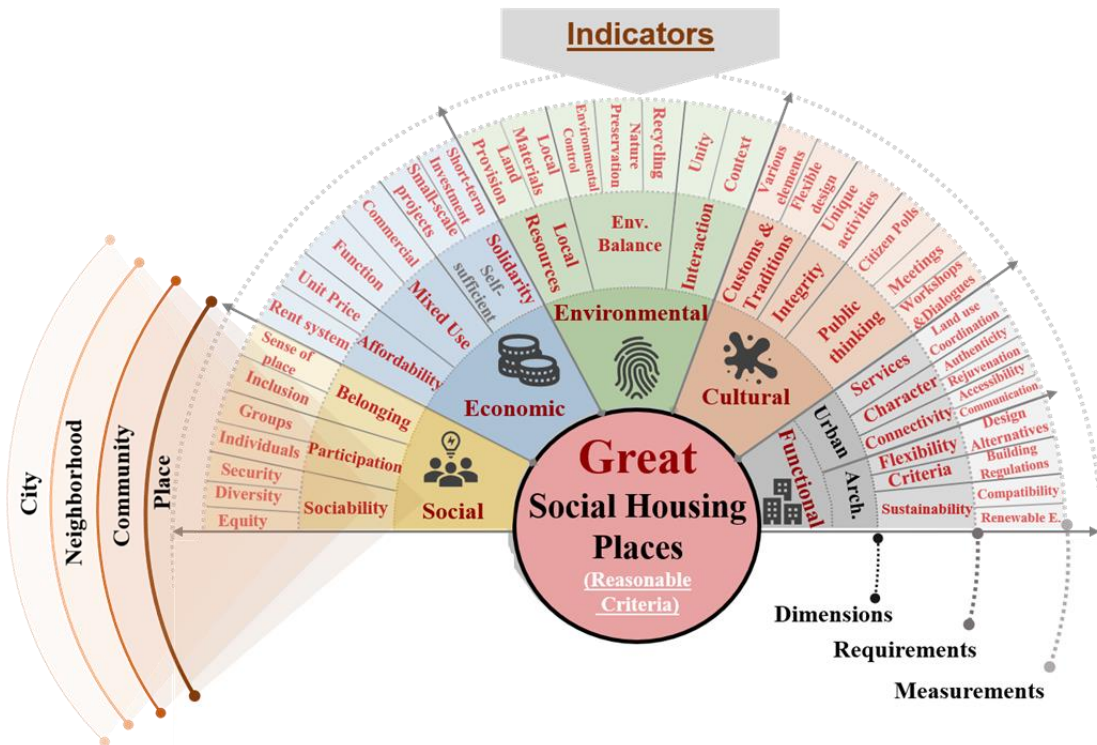


Fig. (18). Indicators of Sustainable social housing places (source: The researchers)

- It also comes to meet the needs of a large proportion of the population for housing in the event of high prices of housing units and the instability of prices for building materials and land, in addition to the lack of available spaces and suitable lands for construction.

Therefore, social housing can be considered as an attempt to find a solution to the housing problems in general and an attempt to meet the population`s need for shelter in particular.

Not to mention the urgent need to link people to places; through studying, analyzing and promoting the importance of the social aspect in shaping the urban context to create great livable and human responsive places, instead of ending up with reductive and non-responsive.

So, the study suggests and deals with the concept of social housing based on the interpretation of human needs along with its rooted social, economic, environmental, cultural and functional dimensions, as in fig. (19) and as follows:

**One of the components of the city that works to integrate the different groups of population to participate in their society; based on the ability to afford, invest and practice different roles for everybody, with maximizing the available potentials and without compromising the natural environment; aiming at creating a distinct character and connect different cultures through the flexible yet standard form of both closed and open spaces.**

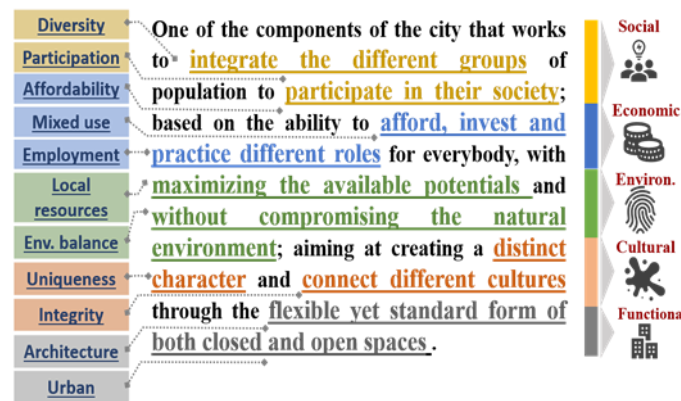


Fig. (19). The analysis of the re-coded social housing definition (source: The researchers)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Social housing patterns should be seen as an important component of the city, very much known to the public realm, being a common factor between theory and practice and revolves around the genesis of an integration between the built environment and open spaces.
- Urban planners, designers and local governments should all aim for the communication among all categories in the society, to create an urban environment on the basis of a socio-economic intervention that seeks to preserve the environment; in an attempt to achieve the equation of sustainability especially social sustainability since the human factor is the leading party in the process.
- Local Governments and planning authorities should work to derive a mechanism that combines human needs with creative ideas and long term investments to achieve quality of urban life through a community-led action plan in order to stimulate the relationship between man and urbanism in the form of social housing gathering/ activities places.



- Social Housing as both a definition and an application should be more comprehensive in order to include the different sequenced layers of both the buildings and the open spaces; and to deal with both layers based on the human needs and the relation between people and places to produce a livable yet enjoyable and healthy communities.
- In order to re-right the relation between people and places in social housing places in Egypt according to sustainable standards; all social, economic, environmental, cultural and functional factors should be reconsidered, and human-based criteria of 3 levels includes 1) Basic dimensions, 2) Secondary requirements, and 3) Standard indicators should be activated.

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