Listening to Local Context: Extreme Examples

Dr. Emily Silverman
Hebrew University of Jerusalem
December 2018
4 Reflections on Placemaking Networks!

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Hebrew University of Jerusalem
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The Urban Clinic is an academic unit, with a people-centric theory of change

Empowering place makers, and influencing rule makers and project makers:
5 days, 5 cities, 5 place-based workshops and 5 public lectures, with final conference bringing all together.
地方 ומיכון - ירושלים

Place Making - Complex System - Jerusalem

Place Making through the lens of Cities as a Complex System Theory: a focus on Jerusalem

תאריך: 26 בספטמבר 2023

לפקטיים: 13.00 - 14.00, 15.00 - 16.00, 17.00 - 18.00

לפרטים: LCM.PLACEMAKING@GMAIL.COM

סרגון גורביץ אקדמאי

صحוות ומיכון - ירושלים

 LOGGER 2x82 to 944x585
Local communities
Ideas and initiatives

Mediators:
- Community Planner
- A Maker
- Eden Company

Institutions
Municipality
4 Reflections on Placemaking Networks

1. Learn by doing
2. Connect the dots
3. Stone Soup: trust the process
4. Make it inclusive, local and fun
1. Learn by Doing
2. Connect the Dots

FIG. 1 - Centralized, Decentralized and Distributed Networks
Placemaking as community building

**Project Name**

**Partners/ Stakeholders**
- partners and target group

**Project Goals**

**Public Involvement**
- Project budget
- Time frame
- Project scale

**Before**
- Description of the project site before the new intervention
- Main problems and challenges faced with the site, community challenges, design obstacles and others

**Current**
- Description of the project site after the implementation of the intervention
- Describe the impact and outcome of the project / add how did you overcome the previous challenges and obstacles

**What's Next?**

**What are your Insights and Recommendations?**
Placemaking in the Palestinian neighborhood of East Jerusalem

Background and Process

Education and attachment to culture played a major role in shaping the outcome of this placemaking project. In the first phase of the project while mapping potential sites for the new intervention, the search for a meaningful space started. We could not find a better place to change than a neglected dowtown spot right in front of the public library. Education and learning is highly respected in Arab culture and Palestinian traditions and the project put a spotlight on that. The project worked on transforming a neglected space which is next to the library into a more visible lively space. This brought more attention to the existing library. In addition, introduced a new feeling of the space, a new accessible entrance sign for it.

In a bigger context, there are very few public spaces for the Palestinians in east Jerusalem. Re-introducing a new notion of public space to the people was a quite a conflicting process. The Palestinians who live in east Jerusalem and suffer from very difficult obstacles that they experience in their everyday lives.

The concept of this project was inspired from the ideas of the local community. Their ideas were about their attachment to their Palestinian identity and their love to the Arabic calligraphy art. We have designed a ‘T’ marker which is inspired from traditional Palestinian clothing and added a meaningful Arabic quote about education. Further more adding benches and beautiful greenery all helped reviving the space and creating a small existing place for students and people to sit and read and enjoy the new space.

What are your insights and recommendations?

1. The right to have a safe inclusive public space for the Palestinians communities in east Jerusalem.
2. Community involvement in the primary stages of the project is very essential especially in cases of conflict. As a result, this will increase their attachment to the project and decrease the chance of vandalism.
3. Designing public spaces should be unique and site specific: the project should respect the local community identity traditions and culture.
3. ‘Stone Soup’ – trust the process

- Place making
  - Change management
  - Community building
  - Endless planning

- Rule making
  - Level playing field
  - Planning regime
  - Smart regulation

- Project making
  - Feasibility & approval
  - Implementation
  - Public/Private Partnership
4. Make it local, inclusive and fun
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People-centric theory of change for places: empowering place makers, and influencing rule makers and project makers. The placemakers are social entrepreneurs and interpreners who share the values of placemaking, and possess the drive for effecting change. The network seeks to transform people and support transformative people.
Closing image – all four on one page with description of each

• Research I want to do – on placemaking networks –
• Would like to hear from you
• And for the internationals – I have interns – if anyone wants!
4 Principles and Paradoxes for Placemaking Networks

• **Trust not Control:** Networks are built on long-term trust-based relationships. But a placemaking network makes decisions about allocating resources and visibility.

• **Humility not brand:** Network leaders are stewards who build capacity for others. But a new network also needs a visible international profile.

• **Nodes, not hubs:** An international placemaking network needs to connect across nodes, not act as hubs alone. But starting a strong placemaking network may need a centralized organization that recruits budgets and partners, evaluates and rewards.

• **Mission not organization:** The network needs to prioritize outcomes, not organizational standing. But a placemaking network may need to prioritize people, enabling leadership, over places.
People-centric theory of change for places: empowering place makers, and influencing rule makers and project makers. The placemakers are social entrepreneurs and interpreneurs who share the values of placemaking, and possess the drive for effecting change. The network seeks to transform people and support transformative people.
A City Is Not A Tree  

(Christopher Alexander, 1968)

The tree of my title is not a green tree with leaves. It is the name of an abstract structure. I shall contrast it with another, more complex abstract structure called a semilattice. In order to relate these abstract structures to the nature of the city, I must first make a simple distinctive
De-centralized Hub with Nodes

ADVANTAGES:

Clear structure, easy to join.

Centralized decision making is stream-lined.

Information is well organized.

DISADVANTAGES

Nodes don’t learn directly from each other.

The Network doesn’t benefit from each nodes’ relationships beyond the network.

Requires lots of long-term cultivation and maintenance.

Some nodes are antagonistic to each other, may oppose linkage.
Distributed Web with Channels

ADVANTAGES:

- Multiple entry points, easy to join.
- No competition for relative status.
- Branching and clusters allow for variation among types.
- Nodes bring in their own connections, and form connections with each other.
- With branching, nodes can keep each other at a distance if desired.

DISADVANTAGES

- Without a clear center— who sets priorities, makes decisions, raises and distributes funding?
- Role of network is purely supportive and enabling, not leadership.
Learn by Doing
City Markets

Parks and waterfront

Streets and transport

Civic Building

Housing types

Children, youth, Elderly

Gender/religion

Low income/disability
Networks: Grouping Similar for depth, different for breadth and impact

• About network by:
  • Country – and then region
  • Topic (streets, markets, historic preservation, parks,
  • User Population: age, gender, religion.
  • Sectors: Government, Private sector, Academia, Non-profits.

Unite around VALUES –list them. Still need to be countering the project –led approach... see the values.
Network across the topics (not separated like here), and sectors, and user populations...
Consider recast back to local context for Networks

1. Venn: in order to have place-making, must influence the rule-makers and the project-makers. THEY are the ones who will finance and pilot the great projects at scale.

2. But – they don’t come to our conferences UNTIL they share the values.

3. In order to get them on board – need the ‘placemakers’ – those who share the values and visions (show these).

4. Nurturing the placemakers requires Active translation into LOCAL CONTEXT. We tend to think that it’s enough to ‘train’ the placemakers by conferences – at fees, with scholarships for those from lower income countries. There, learn good practices, see great places, practice skills internationally, as requested) for the policy makers and the rule-makers who need to take the first step...
1. But for influencing the rule-makers and project makers – going to a conference isn’t enough for the placemakers. They will need to ‘translate’ the analysis and tools into local context. For example from my country:

1. UO – death threats in trying to paint with families, this courtyard – bk play isn’t supported, leisure is taking away frm study, is ‘toeva’ (translate), physical activity is immodest, and even the much loved benches are outlawed – boys ahd girls – so single benchers. Needed to learn how to cast in terms of children’s healthy development, to make this modest and acceptable.

2. EJLM – needed to develop a palatte, referencing calligraphy, Palestinian history, absolutely no municipal identifying symbols...
People centric placemaking network – to listen to local context.

Illustrate with KOLB, and show what each stage means for ‘translation’

• Experience (travel and see and smell)
• Describe: how is this similar to / different from ME?
• Analyse: WHY is it different? Politics, scale, history and culture; demography; economics, religion, climate – what else?
• Plan Change – what needs to be different when doing this in MY country?

Add an external – research and evaluate the differences, and what is working – collate the knowledge, teach other.
Redo to address students too?
People-centric theory of change for placemaking network

Empowering place makers, and influencing rule makers and project makers:
Hub and Spokes

Many Channels

Dense Cluster

Branching
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After dinner with the westerners

• See notes on previous slide and change.

• Focus more on equity. Explain that if we focus on places – and money for those places from revenue streams – we’ll be doing Amsterdam, and Vancouver, and Melbourne and Cape Town – the richer cities and probably the richer areas in them... Note the needs of people who are more crowded, more at home from illness or unemployment, or in really crappy informal places – have huge need for good public spaces.

• They’re missing the DNA change in the city – talk about the need to change the values – by empowering the leadership. The places are the expression of the values. The network embodies the values of inclusion and humility and trust and empowerment.

• Add back the Tree to the Network diagrams and note that a tree is NOT a network. Ask – what’s the shape – the 3D expression of a placemaking network that links health and historic streets and communities (not separate like here!).

• Talk with Hans – what is happening with the European PM network?
Ideas to add

• Network – use the Sister City networks – with local government and universities. I’m from Jerusalem – strong network – sister city with...

• Critique the passive learning approach – we gather, listen, and go home and do. We are missing the translation to local context piece. Give ‘extreme examples’.

• Discuss on-line video courses that provide the questions for translation to local context.