

The role of streets within placemaking in cross-cultural contexts: Case studies from Adelaide, Australia and Georgetown, Malaysia

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Abstract: Streets have multiple functions, ranging from being routes allowing movement of people and goods, and being spaces for gathering and conducting other public activities. Historically, streets have played a very important role for a variety of reasons, such as providing an environment to meet friends and neighbours, being a platform for political protests, and a location for markets and fairs, even being play areas for children in the residential setting. The aim of this paper is to identify the different roles of streets in place making, in varied cultural contexts, through case studies analysis. The importance of socially activating city streets is considered vital not only for people who use the streets but it is also important for the health and sustainability of the city. However, many streets in urban areas still struggle to induce public life or create socially active streets. Two cities from different cultural contexts namely, Adelaide in Australia and Georgetown in Malaysia have been selected for this study. Data was collected through a mixed-method strategy involving structured and unstructured observational surveys. The purpose of this research is to create a greater understanding of the public's experience and behavioural patterns in creating socially active streets.

Key words: Street, culture, placemaking

Introduction

Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull.

Jane Jacobs

Streets are an integral part of cities and must satisfy a multitude of functions. "The one public service we all use everyday are the streets where we live" (Government South Australia, 2012, p.4). Streets can be viewed as corridors of movement for public and goods, or, alternatively the street can be viewed as a public space where people can work, rest and socialise. The importance of a street as a public open space is one of the most critical characteristic within the public realm in cities (Gehl, 1987). Streets in which people can socialise are increasingly becoming more important to our cities and greater emphasis has been placed upon these social environments. It is increasingly recognised that effective urban public spaces are crucial to health, happiness, democracy and even the urban economy (Shaftoe, 2008). This underpins the direct value of what a successful street can provide in an urban environment.

The street's roles and functions could primarily support two alternative functions; a movement corridor, and a public space to improve the social capital of a community. The balance between its roles as a movement corridor or a place to improve social capital largely depends upon the primary objective placed upon that street. Indeed, streets are public spaces that account for the maximum percentage of overall public space. Lively and people friendly streets have become a point of discussion in the public sector and research arena. For example, Government of South Australia states that "there are numerous health, environmental and financial benefits of making our streets more cycling and walking friendly" (2012 p. 4). This leads to the question, "how can we improve streets and make them more walking and cycling friendly?".

The aim of this paper is to identify the role of streets in a cross-cultural context through an investigation of public behaviour, to understand the principles (form, activities and image) that could create more people friendly streets. This paper is more concerned with the sociological and

psychological aspects of human behaviour and behavioural pattern in the contemporary urban environment. Comparative urbanism is used as a theoretical framework to analyse the roles and challenges of streets in various cultural contexts. The first section of the paper presents the theoretical background, followed by a research approach. Results and findings are presented in sections three, and finally the last section discusses and concludes the roles of streets in placemaking in various cultural contexts.

Theoretical background

Along with other public realms such as squares, plazas, parks and other public spaces, streets play a significant role in many cities to facilitate and promote public life (Mehta, 2007; Bhowmik, 2005; Jacobs, 1961; Appleyard, 1981; Moudon, 1987; Jacobs, 1993; Carmona et al., 2003; Southworth & Ben-Joseph, 1996; Lofland, 1998; Hass-Klau et al., 1999; Fyfe, 1998; Owen, 1987, Dumbaugh & Rac, 2009). Eventually the street serves three main purposes, their primary function is to act as travel corridor: a mode for the movement for individuals and goods from one destination to another. The second purpose of the street is to serve as a location for goods and services, and the third purpose as public open space – a means of human interaction and socialisation (San Francisco Planning Department, 2010). Beyond acting as thoroughfares for motor vehicles, urban streets often double as public space, based upon the cultural perspective of a particular place. In some cultural contexts, urban streets are active public spaces and provide an arena for variety of social, cultural, and political activities that create vibrant urban spaces and add to the experience of public life (Cutts et al 2009; Fernando, 2007; Dovey & Polakit, 2007). The role of streets in place making is incredibly complex and always evolving. The street is no longer just perceived as a tool which facilitates transportation between buildings and networks (Gehl 1987). Mehta (2009) argues that no longer is the street a tool that can only facilitate transportation between buildings, but it provides links to adjoining networks. The street is now seen as an environment. As such the street and, inherently, the role it plays has in turn evolved into a habitat in which one can constitute the street as part of a public open space. The quality of habitat in turn underpins the quality and quantity in which people will use that particular street. The streets that are vibrant, lively and exciting promote social interaction and prolonged engagement. Gehl acknowledged in his book *Life Between Buildings* that streets are physically dominating feature within any city.

The main understanding of the modernist point of view irrespective of place, is based around 'efficiency...and the...connection of networks' (Moughtin, 1992 p.130). Most of the streets today are designed based around this objective. Le Corbusier's work is one of the best examples of this objective (Moughtin, 1992). Neglecting the street as a public place has in turn affected our community. It is argued that our streets have become car dominated, and as a result, the aesthetic value of our streets have declined. Sennett claims that modernism is a fault for the creation of the 'dead public space, (Carmona et al p38) which are 'isolated and isolating' (Carmona et al p38). Sennett pushed the notion that the current modern public space is nothing more than a space to move through; which it was designed for rather than a place to be in (Sennett 1977). Jacobs (1961) argued that streets must create a strong connection with the public in order to adequately handle strangers. There is an increasing pressure expressed within the literature, which challenges the modernist point of the view; often related to modernist design objectives. There has been a strong notion within literature that the success of the streets can be measured by the strong connection it has created with the public. Literature also illustrates that it is the experiences one has within the street that creates this strong connection rather than the aesthetic value of the street itself.

In the modern era, a street's ability to support social capital has been limited and somewhat diminished, in some circumstances because of modernist principles. However, the modernist concept of street and land use plans, with segregated land uses was challenged in the 1960s and 70s by promoters of public space such as Jane Jacobs, Gehl etc. Jane Jacobs (1961) in her book 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' has recognised these biases, and the shift towards the emergence of the vehicle dominance, and pushed for a transition away from a modernist path, which was heavily influenced by economic ideals and efficiency (Woehle, 2012). Current literature reveals that it is incredibly difficult to isolate the physical features of social and economic activities that bring value to our experience upon that street (Jacobs, 1993).

A well-known supporter of public places, Gehl (1987) and Mehta (2009) supports the mixed use concept stating "by mixing various land uses, we can achieve a more vital, vibrant, safe, viable and sustainable pattern of urban lifestyle" (Mehta 2009; p168). To create people oriented development rather than traffic, many planning paradigms have emerged such as 'New urbanism, Smart growth, Transit Oriented Development etc. In these paradigms, the street is considered one of the important elements for place making. Indeed the urban environment is predominately made up by streets, and

can be seen as the core of all the cities (Mehta, 2009). The streets provide some, "of the few remaining loci a chance where we can encounter difference and learn to understand and tolerate other people" (cited Worpole and Greenhalgh 1996; p. 12). In some cultural contexts, streets improve the social capital by facilitating other activities such as informal shopping, providing a place to socialise, etc. rather than being only transport channel for public and goods.

Social activities in urban open spaces are increasingly been used as a measurement of the towns' vitality and overall liveliness. As such these attributes can also be seen as a "direct indicator of the satisfaction of the people within their physical surroundings" (Mehta 2007; p. 167). Streets account for about 60% of public spaces and they account for a greater amount of developed urban land directly controlled by the public and communities (Jacobs 2010, Karuppannan and Sivam 2011). It must be acknowledged that in the last 10 years there have been some improvements in urban development guidelines. However it is still evident that many streets, despite providing fundamental necessities such as footpaths and bike lanes, lack the qualities that can promote any form of social development in many cities across the world.

Research approach

In this paper, cross-cultural studies are not conducted to demonstrate the similarities and difference but is to understand how street is playing a role in place making in different cultural contexts. Comparative urbanism is used as a theoretical framework to analyse the roles and challenges of streets in two cultural contexts. The strength of comparative urbanism is that it goes beyond identification of similarities and dissimilarities, but to learn from various contexts to improve context based issues. A mixed method strategy of inquiry was used to conduct this study. With this, a comparative analysis was conducted of the streets of the selected case studies in order to understand access and mobility, culture, and the sociology of the street space. The case study approach was used in order to answer questions such as 'how' and 'why', as suggested by Yin (1994). This method has the benefit of providing extensive information, a more detailed analysis, and a clear perspective of the subject of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 1998). The study also employed a triangulation-survey strategy involving a variety of techniques to collect data.

Two case studies were selected for detailed analysis: Firstly, Georgetown, in Penang, Malaysia and secondly, Adelaide in South Australia. As the aim of this paper is to study the role of street in place making in cross-cultural context, it was important to select case studies from various cultural contexts to make comparison meaningful and therefore one case study was selected from the Asian culture and another from the Australian culture. The justifications for selecting these two cities were because of familiarity and easy access to information and location (are from Asian or Australian culture). The study employed a mixed-method survey strategy involving a variety of techniques to collect data relating to the behaviour of people and use of the street. A sample of two streets from each city was selected: a commercial and a mixed-use street dominated by residential development. The authors completed site visits and structured visual observation of these sites. All four streets were personally observed and studied over a period of one week in order to evaluate and map user behaviour. These observations were supplemented by field notes and photographs. Data was collected at the street level from each case study. The authors conducted several walk-bys at each of the selected case studies and identified individual segments of the street for further in-depth analysis. The distances of the identified segments were approximately one kilometre in length, and were selected based upon land use, street amenities and activities.

Walk-by observational surveys were conducted to in order to understand the use of street, as well as individual's engagement with the street in different cultures, and in different land use areas, such as residential and commercial zones. The specific aim of these observation surveys was to understand these particular streets' physical attributes; social and economic aspects; environmental aspects; ease of access and mobility patterns. These walk-by observations were conducted at every hour, between 6.00 am to 10.00 pm, on both weekdays and weekends, on each street. Thus, there were a total of sixteen walk-by observations for both weekend and weekdays conducted for each street.

The case studies are: Adelaide's Rundle Street, a commercial street and Halifax Street as a predominantly residential street (refer figure 1). In Georgetown, Campbell Street was selected as a commercial street, and Love Lane as the mixed-use street (refer figure 2).

Georgetown is a multicultural society dominated by people of Malay, Chinese and Indian descent. Its streets and thoroughfares are named after people from various cultures. Campbell Street along with King Street, which is part of Little India, was selected as Commercial Street from the core of the city. In the mid-20th century, Campbell Street had become the most important shopping street for the locals. The business began to decline by the mid 70's. Today, most of the retail outlets have been

taken over by wholesalers. The Love Lane was selected as example of mixed use street within the inner city of George Town (refer Figure 2). It forms the boundary between the core and buffer zones of George Town UNESCO World Heritage sites.



Figure 1: Case study streets in Adelaide. Rundle Street (top panel) and Halifax Street (bottom panel)



Figure 2: Case study streets in Georgetown, Malaysia.

The observation survey was organised under six main headings: physical attributes; social activities; economic activities; environmental aspects; and the role of side-walk and transportation activities (access and mobility). A Likert scale was used to record the observation surveys. Likert scales require a minimum of two categories for classification, such as 'agree' and 'disagree' (Neuman, 1997, p. 159). As Neuman (1997) noted, using two categories is a 'crude measure', and forces distinctions into only two divisions. Accordingly, in this research, observation surveys were recorded as ranging from 'very bad' (rating of 1) to 'excellent' (rating of 5). The findings from these case studies were then compared in order to identify the role and challenges that streets face within different cultures.

Comparative analysis

For the purpose of this study, comparative urbanism is used as the theoretical framework to compare two case studies from two different cultures to understand the role and challenge of street. Comparison is the most common and most rewarding research strategy for controlling contextual variables and for uncovering casual patterns for explanation (McFarlane 2010, Robinson 2006, Pierre 2005, Pickvance 1986, Ward 2008). This technique is extensively used by urban planners and urban designers. The comparative urbanism approach not only allows an understanding between the similarities and differences within the case areas, but also aims at developing knowledge, understanding and generalisation at a level between what is true of all cities and what is true at one

city at a given point in time' (Nijman 2007, p.1). Comparisons in this particular study were used as a means to understand the reason for differences in role and challenges of street in different culture.

Comparative analysis of the streets from two different cultures is presented in this section. This will include physical attributes, social attributes, economic activities, environmental aspects, access and mobility and the role of the side-walk.

Physical attributes

With the help of a literature review, the characteristics for the physical attributes of the streets were identified from the observational survey. The characteristics considered in this study included the quality, design and maintenance of street, which provides roles in achieving a lively and successful environment.

Based on the above characteristics, an observational survey was conducted for the quality of the street, such as areas for relaxation, the quantity of rubbish bins (Cooper, 1975; Gehl, 1987; Mehta, 2007; Joarden & Neill, 1978), street plantations (1978; Sullivan et al., 2004; Joarden & Neill, 1978) and land use patterns, such as single use and mixed use (Jacobs 1961, Alexander et al., 1977; Montgomery, 1998). Street cross sections (including carriage width, sidewalk, pedestrian crossing and parking facilities) were observed in order to understand the compatibility of the design for the local culture. The quality and maintenance of sidewalks, the street and street furniture was observed to grade the level of maintenance. Observation of these attributes was graded on the Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

Observation surveys revealed that even though the designs of the streets for the different case studies have extremely similar standards; the other components comprising physical attributes vary markedly (refer Figure 3a). The physical quality and maintenance of Adelaide's commercial and residential streets had a higher ranking (4.0, compared to an average of 2.0 on the Likert scale for Georgetown). It is assumed that this may be because of the differences in Adelaide and Georgetown's socio-economic character and social values. Georgetown's commercial streets are dominated by the shop-house and mixed land use, in terms of informal shopping. Georgetown also accommodates residential areas on the upper storeys of buildings on commercial streets. In contrast, Adelaide's commercial streets have a mix of uses, such as ground level for retailing with other floors used for offices, but not often residential use. Residential streets in Georgetown are predominantly surrounded by residential zoning, with some corner shops and informal shopping along street, whereas in Adelaide these streets are predominantly residential.

Social attributes

The behavioural environment, such as use of streets, activities, operations and management, were examined in order to understand the social attributes of the various streets. The Adelaide streets were rarely used for public social activities; whereas in Georgetown the streets are used intensively for many activities (see Figure 3b). Both commercial and residential streets in Georgetown are used for social activities, such as social interaction, play areas for children and religious activities. Commercial streets are also used for informal shopping and other activities such as socialisation, religious procession and political meetings. This finding is supported by those of other researchers on Asian cities, such as Shamsuddin & Ujang (2008), Mateo-Babiano & Ieda (2005) and Edensor (1998), Dovey & Polakit (2007).

In Adelaide, the streets are mainly used for access and movement, whereas in Georgetown, streets are used for various social activities. These social activities make streets lively and safe until late hours. In Georgetown, both commercial and residential streets are used for religious events, socialising, exchanges of ideas, public shows, and play areas for children, meeting places for adults, and shelter for homeless people. The results indicate cultural differences, varying socio-economic conditions and how these places are governed and maintained. Therefore, overall social activities and social interaction for Georgetown rank 4.0, whereas in Adelaide, social activities on streets generally do not exist. Thus, the streets in Georgetown not only provide access and mobility, but also provide a public realm for various public and community activities.

Economic activities

The relationship between economic activities and streets in Adelaide is weak. Streets provide access to retail and commercial activities, and there is a clear demarcation between streets and economic activities. Commercial and residential streets in Adelaide clearly show that a street is used only for access and mobility (see Figure 3c). In Georgetown, however, the commercial streets not only provide

access to retail and commercial activities, but also allow informal economic activities to occur. The results reflect that commercial streets in Georgetown provide access to formal shopping experiences and facilitate informal shopping; there are kiosks, movable shops and vendors. The mixture of formal and informal shopping attracts people from various income groups and ensures shopping for the general populace, as well as making the place lively. The informal functions of the street, which promote economic activities, are ranked low (1.0) for Adelaide, but high for Georgetown (3.0-4.0).

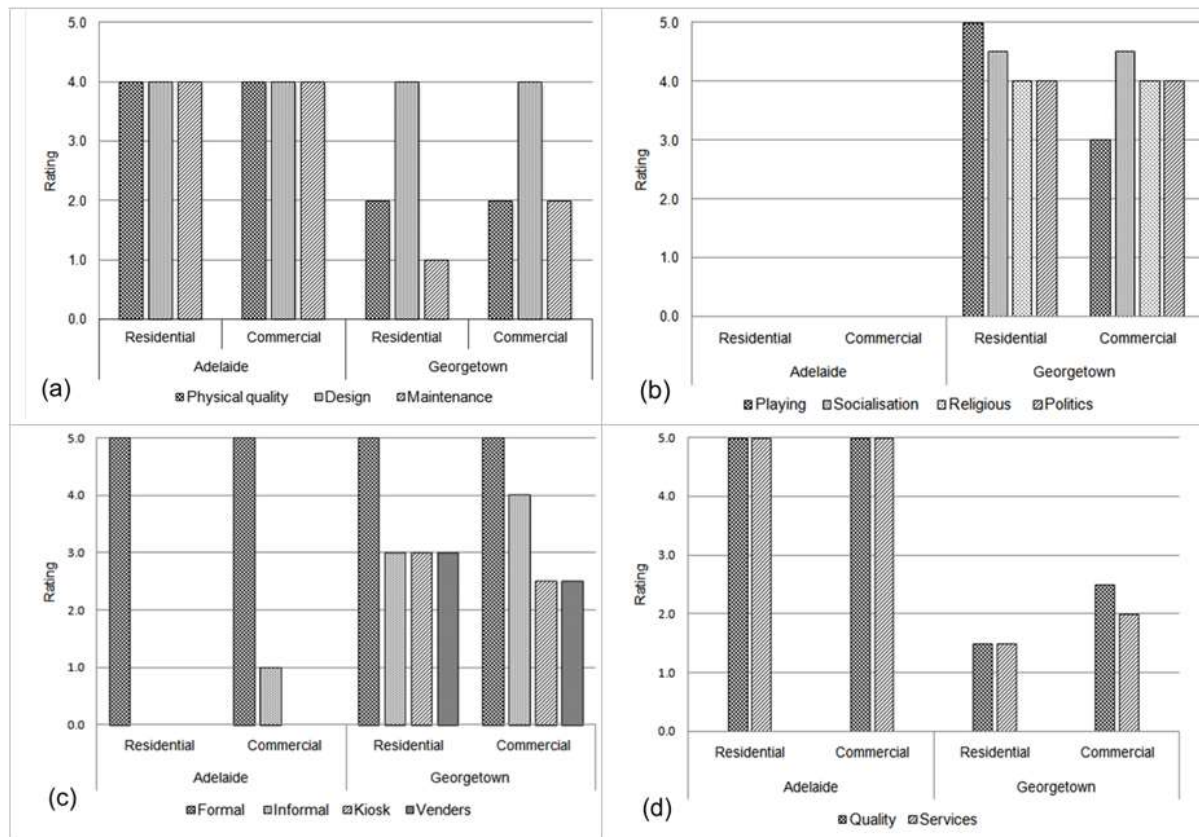


Figure 3. Quality of streets and activities in Adelaide and Georgetown. (a) Physical quality, design and maintenance. (b) Activities on streets. (c) Shopping on streets. (d) Quality of services.

Environmental aspects

The street environment in Adelaide is of a high quality because people generally follow civic rules and laws, with the selling of livestock, such as poultry, generally prohibited within residential and commercial zones. However, in Asian cities such as Georgetown, the environment is often poorer, because there are encroachments on public places by retail shops, parking spaces, kiosks and movable shops. They are also comparatively crowded, with sanitation systems often lagging behind Australian standards. Streets in Adelaide demonstrate a very good example of access and mobility, without any conflict between vehicular and pedestrian movement (see Figure 3d). In Georgetown, there is not only a conflict between vehicular and pedestrian traffic, but also with parking. Environmental aspects of Adelaide streets are ranked 5.0, whereas Georgetown's streets are very low (1.5 for residential and 2.5 for commercial).

Access and mobility

The quality of transportation aspects - such as vehicular movement, pedestrian movement, pedestrian crossings, formal parking, transportation management and transportation regulation - are very good for Adelaide (scoring a 4.5 on the Likert scale) whereas for Georgetown, a ranking of 1.0 was achieved (refer Figure 4a). This reflects the attitude of the government and the people. In both cases the attitude of the people reflect what is deemed culturally normal and accepted.

The role of the side-walk

A cross-section for both case studies' commercial streets demonstrates that the use of space is different between each example. In Adelaide, footpaths are used only by pedestrians, whereas in Georgetown, footpaths are used by pedestrians, motorcyclists and for parking motorcycles, as well as

establishing informal markets (refer Figure 4b). The case studies demonstrate that even though their design is essentially identical, these areas are utilised varies differently from culture to culture.

Table 1(below) demonstrates that there are many similarities and differences because of cultural and socio-economic contexts in Adelaide and Georgetown. In the context of residential areas, the cross-section reveals several differences.

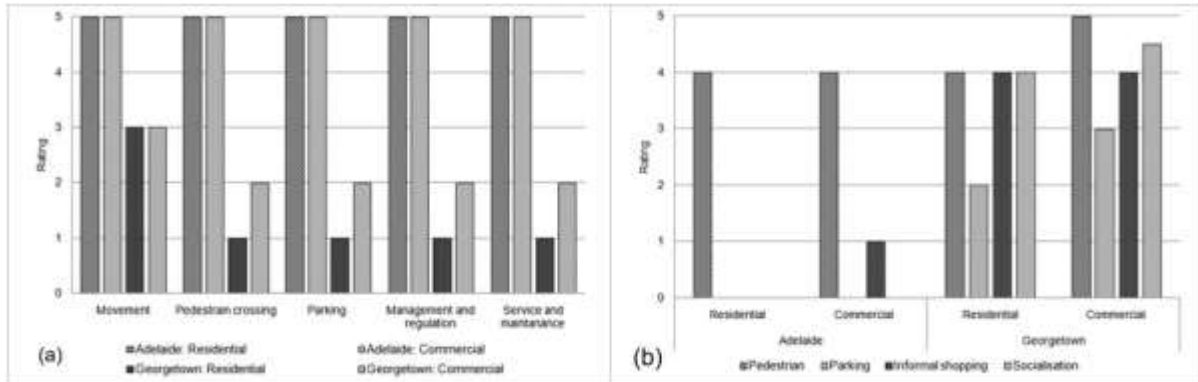


Figure 4. Quality of access and mobility of streets in Adelaide and Georgetown.

Table 1. Similarities and dissimilarities of commercial and residential streets in Adelaide and Georgetown.

Factors	Commercial streets		Residential streets	
	Similarities	Dis-similarities	Similarities	Dis-similarities
<i>Physical attributes</i>				
Quality of street		√		√
Street elements		√		√
Maintenance		√		√
<i>Social activities</i>				
Street as playground		√		√
Meeting place		√		√
Stage for religious activities		√		√
Market place		√		√
<i>Environmental aspects</i>				
Encroachment on street		√		√
Sanitation		√		√
Cleanness		√		√
<i>Economic activities</i>				
Informal Shopping		√		
Access to properties	√		√	
<i>Transportation</i>				
Mobility	√		√	
Conflict between vehicular and pedestrian		√		√
Parking		√		√
Road section	√		√	
Vehicular movement	√		√	
Pedestrian movement		√		√

In Adelaide, roads have a median verge, which is fairly common. Both Adelaide and Georgetown reveal that design does not change the use of street and in fact it encourages a street to be livelier. However, it is people's attitudes, cultural context, and social values that will ensure a thoroughfare is either deemed lively or dull.

The results of this study indicate that there are very little similarities in Adelaide and Georgetown regarding traffic movement and access to properties and activities performed on street. This is generally due to differing cultural contexts, socio-economic conditions and how these places are socially valued.

Discussion and conclusions

The analysis has demonstrated that even though a street is a standard design feature in every city globally, roles and challenges vary according to cultural context. Adelaide's streets serve mainly one primary purpose - that of access and mobility (refer Figures 4a), whereas in Georgetown, the streets offer more than simply being a pathway; they create a series of connected activities and spaces. This finding is also supported by other studies (see Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008; Ge & Hokao, 2005; Mateo-Babiano & Ieda, 2005; Edensor, 1989; Davey & Polakit, 2007; Fernando, 2007) by demonstrating that streets in many Asian cities function as places for social interaction for the community, play areas for children, shelter for homeless people and places of economic exchange. Moughtin (1992) argued that traditionally, the purpose of the street was to circulate and exchange goods, and to be avenues of social exchange. Over time, the role of streets has certainly changed, but Moughtin's argument, as well as the postmodernist argument that a street is much more than the physical connection from place to place and place to people, is still valid in relation to Asian cities.

Both commercial and residential streets in Adelaide function primarily for the reason of access and mobility. In Georgetown, streets are active places, providing a stage for the variety of social, commercial and cultural activities aiding in enhancing public life. Indeed, in Georgetown, streets are people oriented, rather than focused on the needs of the automobile. This appears a contrast to the monoculture of many of Adelaide's streets. Georgetown streets are quite flexible and adaptable to various activities, without any change in the physical attributes of the street. In commercial streets, many shopkeepers use the side-walk as an extension of their formal shopping. Street vendors in Georgetown use various 'semi-fixed' elements (Fernando, 2007) to setup their informal shops to sell their products. Georgetown streets are adaptable for a range of spatial functions and expression, which depict the socio-cultural identity of the many local communities (such as Indian, Malay and Chinese). Sidewalk activities changes over the course of the day. For example, in the morning, fruit and vegetable vendors, and people sitting and reading newspapers, is a common sight, whereas in the evening and night, the sidewalks are occupied by fast food vendors. Change of activities enhances utilisation and vitality of spaces.

Design elements such as side-walks and verandas play a very important role in social interaction, whereby people use the streets for social and economic activities. This design element is very common in most of the colonial cities and this has historically encouraged the expansion of shops outside formal boundaries. This statement is also supported by other researchers who have analysed or compared streets in Asian and Western cities (e.g. Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008; Ge & Hokao, 2005; Mateo-Babiano & Ieda, 2005; Edensor, 1989; Davey & Polakit 2007; Fernando 2007; Shuhana & Bashri, 2002). This study demonstrated that in place-making street activities are equally important as design. Therefore street design needs to consider both form (design) and activities.

In Adelaide and in other similar Western cities, there is a clear demarcation between commercial and residential functions, where streets are concerned. People generally do not use sidewalks, other than as pedestrian pathways. This strongly reflects the culture of the place and image of the street. Many researchers (e.g. Shuhana & Bashri 2002; Jacobs 1993; Bentley et al., 1992) argue that design plays an important role in the function of streets. However, this study reflected that the cultural context and activities of the place plays important role in the function and utilisation of the street rather than alone design. For example, even though in Georgetown informal shopping, extension of shopping is illegal, these activities are taking place. These activities are making streets lively by attracting people from all socio-economic groups by providing shopping facilities for all groups. Therefore, to make streets functional and lively there is a need to incorporate a local cultural context in design and space that will bring life to street and ultimately to the area.

Economic exchanges on streets at various levels from small transactions to large transactions, is very common in Georgetown, whereas in Adelaide, it is only for formal shopping. Both informal and formal shopping allows a greater flow of people because they provide opportunities to choose from a range of activities. Indeed this helps in place making.

Because of the high mix of activities on Georgetown's streets, the city is lively and safe well into the night. In comparison, the streets in Adelaide become deserted after the formal closing of shops at, or near, 5.00 pm. Furthermore, in Adelaide the pedestrian culture is missing not only from the shopping centres but generally overall. Streets appear to be livelier in Georgetown, despite the conflict between traffic, pedestrians and parking. This study highlighted that even though there are some problems associated with design, environment, access and mobility; Georgetown's streets were active, safe and lively. In Georgetown, people seem to prefer crowded streets rather than quiet streets, whereas in Adelaide, it appears people prefer orderly streets, which is again because of cultural context and social values.

The final issue to emerge from this investigation was that the streets in Georgetown bring life not just to their immediate vicinity, but to the wider community as well. Its streets are safe for all age groups, because of constant activity. In Adelaide, the streets are much less lively at night. Ultimately, the findings also suggest that to ensure streets are functional, the public authorities irrespective of place needs to consider their own local context and social values, rather than adopting a street design and provision of activities from a different culture. In Asian cities, street design or improvements need to consider environmental improvements, the reinforcement of community identity; the creation of space for various activities, such as socialisation and informal shopping, otherwise restrictive street design may lead to empty public spaces. Whereas in Adelaide street need mix of activities. Both Asian and Australian planners can ultimately learn from the other's cultural norms, to continually ensure that they are providing the best urban environment available for their citizens.

This study can be used both individually and collectively to illustrate how streets are sites and signs of discipline and disorder, as well as symptoms and symbols of modern and postmodern urbanism. Furthermore, these case studies demonstrate how streets can be viewed as both 'representations of space', the discursively constructed spaces of planners and architects, and 'spaces of representation' the spaces of everyday life of 'inhabitants' and 'users' (Lefebvre 1905). As public spaces, streets are universally accessible to the civic public, and provide evidence of how streets can be an active medium through which social identities are created and contested (Ruddick, 1996).

The empirical evidence from the comparative study of streets in the contrasting cultural contexts suggests that the role and challenge of street in place making varies from culture to culture. Adaptability plays a more significant role in Asian cities. Therefore, the street must be designed not only as a physical means of connecting various uses and people, but also, in how these features can be important in the evolution of sense of place for individuals and communities.

In summary the street should be designed within the context it is located. Understanding the demographics and location, social and cultural values of the place will provide the ability to design the street accordingly. There is need to develop a context oriented design language for the street in order to create a physical identity, this may encourage place making. To improve the role of street in place making we need to design to can encourage social contact in streets and for social activity to be performed comfortably. Finally street design needs to consider function rather than just visual appearance.

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