



Towards A Post-Traumatic Urban Design That Heals Cities’ Inhabitants Suffering From PTSD

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ABSTRACT

Cities are generally in a state of constant modification. Some experience this modification at a more rapid pace due to the technology available in the city; others experience this modification due to the city’s time of life, which requires many civilizations to imprint their architectural style and project their social image and identity. In certain cases, these modifications are due to natural disasters, such as earthquakes or tsunamis, or man-made wars, or even both. The study revealed that the relationship found between the ability of “Beirutis” (how Beirut’s original inhabitants call themselves) to perceive their identity through the built environment and PTSD, will help urban planners and architects find the procedures based on observation and scientific facts to build with the opportunity to heal disaster-torn cities’ inhabitants from PTSD.

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1. Introduction

“With a better understanding of the contributing factors to posttraumatic stress, we can increase our capacity to design in a way that is both sympathetic to this altered state and conducive to healing” (Finn, 2013).

Humans have always tried to imprint their interventions through the visible structure in an attempt to defy natural and man-made disasters. To “control” hurricanes, earthquakes, or floods, people have *built* the solution. People have even *rebuilt* their controlling solutions after being defeated or having defeated and occupied others’ lands or countries, reflecting through it the state’s power and identity by means of a city

(Shaw, 2008). Therefore, throughout the centuries, people have found themselves spending their lives inside the man-made environment and even surrounded by it (Kopec, 2012).

In attempts to correct the natural or man-made urban problems, the growing built environment shaped the adapting inhabitants’ interaction in the urban milieu, through the creation of visible (architectural) and invisible (social and psychological) bulwarks (Kopec, 2012).

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