Constructing an Urban Future: The sustainability and resilience of cities – infrastructures, communities, buildings and housing.

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Tracking Future Development: The spatiality of Everyday Commuting Behavior in the UAE

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• Author(s) Name:
Dr. Sahera Bleibleh
Eng. Nasma Hannawi

• University or Company Affiliation:
United Arab Emirates University “UAEU”

• Abstract (300 words):
Cities are engines of development and change. As such, it’s timely essential to consider impacts of growth on built environment and well-being. In so doing, historical commuting patterns provide a lens to examine spatial trends in an attempt to project future development models. This paper studies historical patterns of spatial development in the UAE through collecting everyday activity-based trips. Analyzing commuting behavior in the region for the last 50 years reflects a pattern that shows how the activity-based trips of the residents in the past relates to current development. The relation between the development and commuting behavior of the residence in the studied area helps in understanding the past, present urban form and anticipates the future of the area.
The case of Abu Dhabi the capital of the United Arab Emirates. It is the largest and most populated of the seven emirates. Using a mixed methodology approach, tracking historical residents' activity-based sheds light on the city evolved to embrace sprawl. Based on structured survey the research design is segmented to covers the spatial and temporal duration between 1950-2017. The survey includes demographic data of the participants, commuting details over the years as the origin-destination and activity-based everyday trips, commuting time, frequency of the trips and mode of transport.

Findings of the conducted pilot study confirms the interrelationship between the travel behaviors and the distribution of activities and spatial development in Dubai in the last 50 years. This pilot study has been refined and replicated in Abu Dhabi. The study main objective is to provide a conceptual framework to operationalize historical data to anticipate future patterns of development. Interestingly, not only this research contributes to the larger research on urbanization and urban development, but also it expands to connect with emerging research consequences on displacement, sense of place and cultural identity.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Sahera Bleibleh, PhD, is currently an Assistant Professor at the United Arab Emirates University in architecture, urban design and planning. Prior to joining the UAEU, Dr. Bleibleh was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Washington, Seattle, where she received her PhD in Urban Design and Planning. Her research is focused on informal urbanism, everyday life and environment-behavior. Sahera’s broader research includes sociopolitical production of space, identity and culture issues, anthropology of place, everyday urbanism and resilience of people living in areas of conflict. Through her research, Dr. Bleibleh expands the concept of Everyday Urbanism to associate specific activities of the daily life with potential patterns of development.