The Dimensions of Urban Design

1-The Social Dimension.

2- The Morphological Dimension.

3- The Perceptual Dimension.

4- The Visual Dimension.

5- The Functional Dimension.

6- Time Dimension.

Urban Design Staff

*WHAT IS SOCIAL DIMENSION OF URBAN DESIGN

Urban Design's Social Dimension can be defined as **the relationship between space and society**. Social dimension of urban design can be discussed by four key points:

1- The relationship between people and space.

2- The concept of the public realm.

3- Safety and Security.

4- The control of public space.

PEOPLE AND SPACE

The relationship between people and their environment starts with **Architectural or Environmental determinism**, where the physical environment has determining the influence on human behaviour.
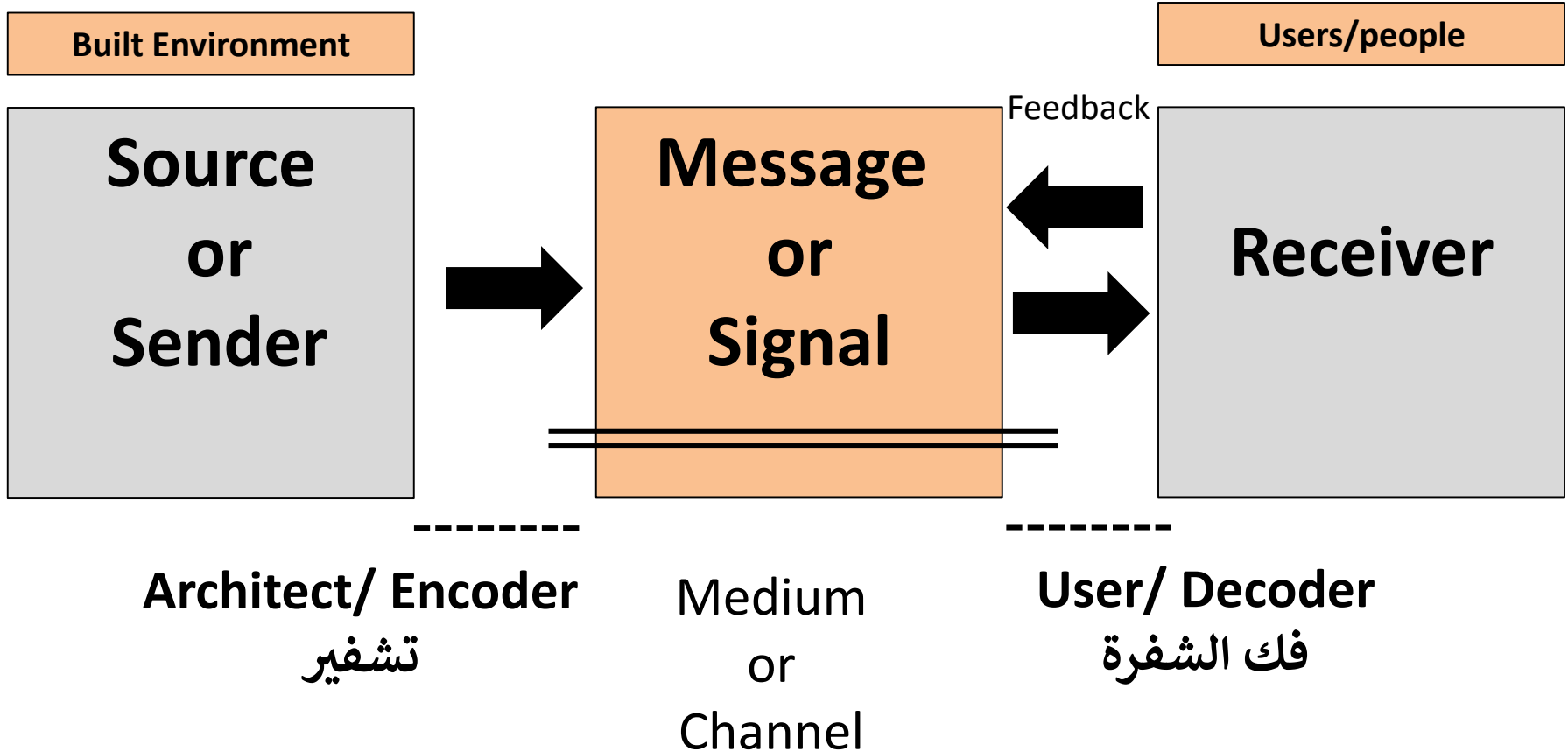

Not interesting

interesting

Communication Model

Built Environment

Users/people

Source or Sender

Feedback

Message or Signal

Receiver

Architect/ Encoder
تشفير

Medium or Channel

User/ Decoder
فك الشفرة

Amos Rapoport 1977 refers to the built environment as a form of nonverbal communication. The designer is the "encoderأداة تشفير" of meanings, and the user is the "decoder-فك الشفرة".

People & Space
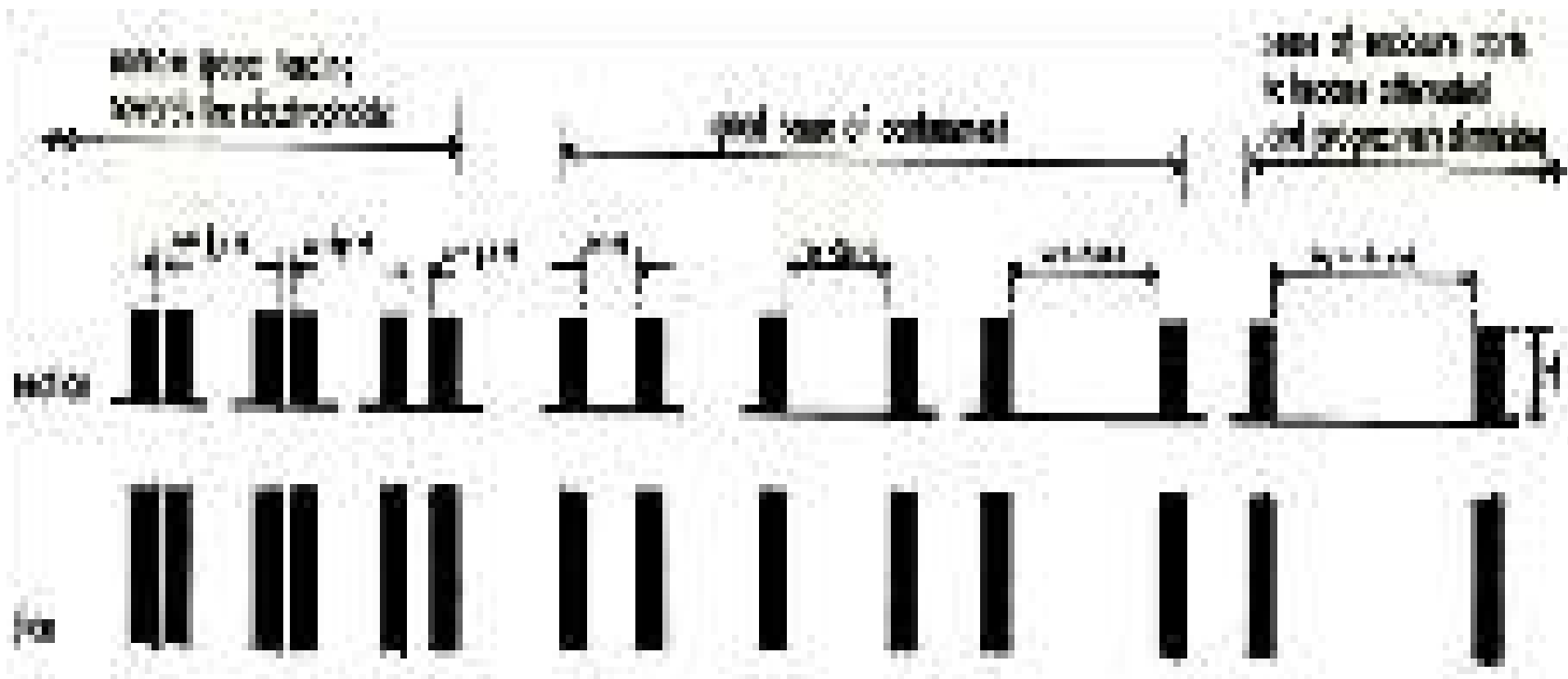
* What is the relationship between people and urban space?

Space and society are clearly related: it is difficult to conceive of '**space**' without **social content** and, equally, to conceive of **society** without a **spatial component.** The relationship is best conceived as a continuous **two-way process** in which people (and societies) create and modify spaces while at the same time being influenced by them in various ways. So, shaping the built environment, urban designers influence patterns of human activity and social life.

The first idea to be considered here is that of **architectural or environmental determinism (The environment imposes certain determinants)**, where the claim is that the physical environment has a determining influence on human behaviour. By negating the role of human agency, it assumes that environment-people interaction is a one-way process. People are not passive, however; they influence and change the environment, as it influences and changes them. It is, therefore, a two-way process.

Urban Form & Society

The urban form is a reflection of the social structure . The compact and harmonious form refers to the cohesion of the society.

Castle Zone/ Erbil 1936

Compact form = Coherent community, simplicity, privacy, equity,

* How urban space influences behaviour?

A Theory of Human Motivation

Human behaviour, and social interactions in public spaces are believed to be the result of the processes of the mind that are influenced by the different features of these spaces. These features may be physical, social, cultural or sensory but what they share in common is the power to affect people's behaviour in, and experience of the public realm.

Abraham Maslow (1943) in his study ''A Theory of Human Motivation'' identified a number of factors that are essential in motivating people and steering people to behave in certain ways in urban space. The theory which came to be known as **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs** suggests that the essential factors in motivating behaviour are:

1-Physiological & biological needs, الحاجات الفسيولوجية والبايولوجية

2- the need for safety,الحاجة للامان

3- the need for love and belonging,الحاجة للحب والانتماء

4- Self-esteem, احترام الذات

5- the need for self-actualization. تحقيق الذات

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

1- Physiological needs; Built environment should meet physiological side of human such as comfort, provides pleasing sensory experience, and positive symbolic association for its users.

2- Safety needs; Maslow classified safety needs as second. It is necessary that the human feels safe in the built environment.

3- Belonging needs; A sense of belonging to the social life in the urban space depends on many factors. The ability to meet people face-to-face in public space is one of the important factors.

4- Esteem; the social life of people in urban space could generate or motivate acceptance and feel respecting by other people if good communication has been achieved.

5- Self-actualization; Maslow describes *'the good life'* is one that leads to self-actualization, in his book *'Motivation and Personality 1954'*.
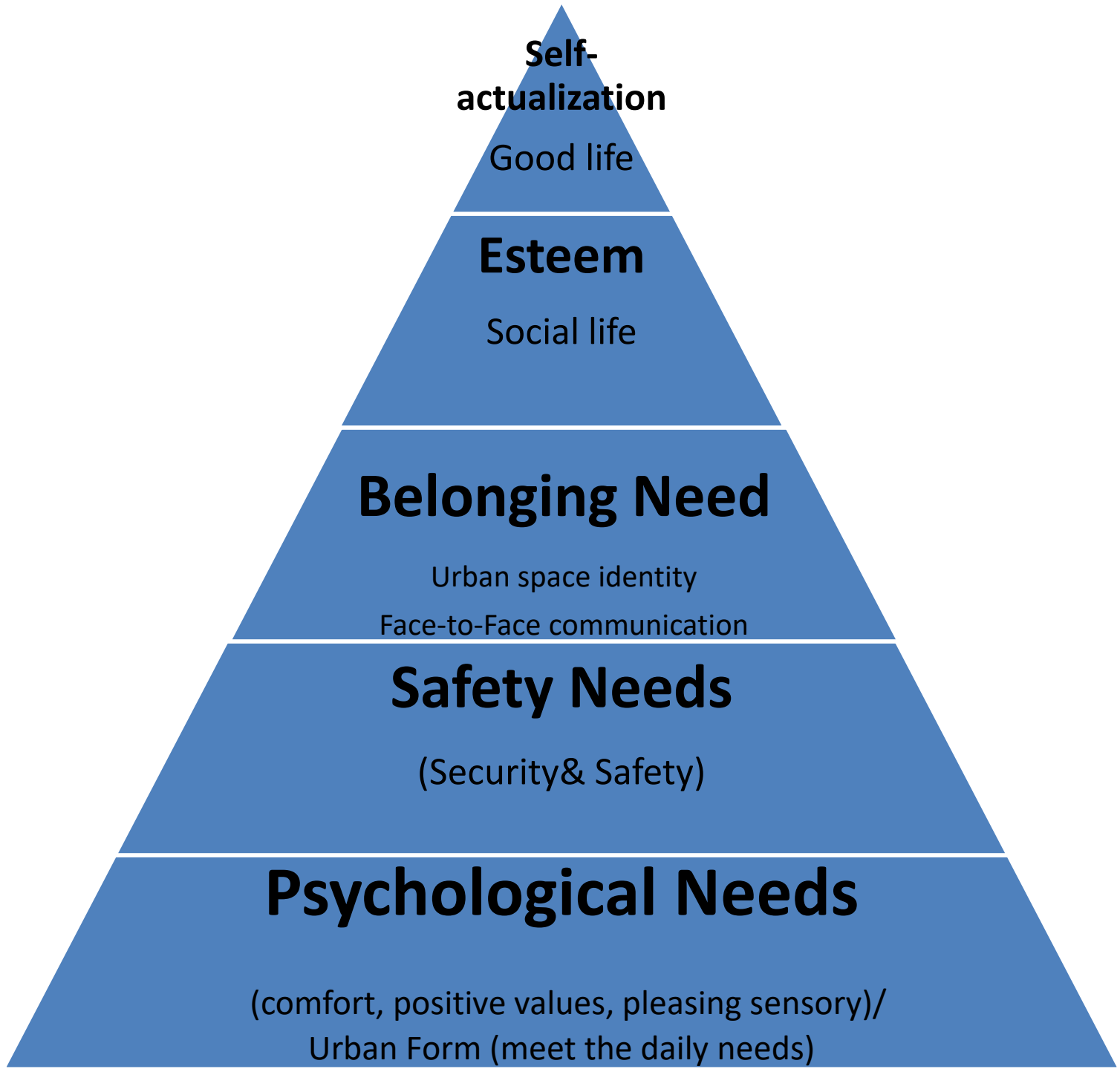
BELONGING

Qaysariya/Erbil

Meir street/ Antwerpen

Application in Urban Design

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Self-actualization

Good life

Esteem

Social life

Belonging Need

Urban space identity

Face-to-Face communication

Safety Needs

(Security& Safety)

Psychological Needs

(comfort, positive values, pleasing sensory)/
Urban Form (meet the daily needs)

*How urban design influences behaviour?

Jan Gehl **(1996)** adopts a probabilistic approach to understanding **how urban design influences behaviour?** He argues that through design, and within certain limits – regional, climatic, societal – it is possible to influence ***how many** people use public spaces, ***how long** individual activities continue, and ***which activity** types can develop. 'Greatly simplified' outdoor activities in public spaces can be divided into three categories:

- **Necessary activities** are more or less compulsory (e.g. **going to school or work**, **shopping, waiting for a bus**). As participants have no choice, the incidence is only slightly influenced by the physical setting.

- **Optional activities** are undertaken voluntarily, if time and place allow, and weather and setting invite them (e.g. **taking a walk to get a breath of fresh air, stopping for a coffee in a street cafe, people-watching, etc.**).

- **Social activities** depend on the presence of others in public space (e.g. **greetings and conversations, communal activities, passive contacts such as simply seeing and hearing other people**). They occur spontaneously as a direct consequence of people moving about and being in the same spaces at the same time. This implies that such activities are supported whenever necessary and optional activities are given better environmental conditions.

* What is the relationship between the quality of outdoor spaces and the rate of occurrence of outdoor activities (social behaviour).

The study of relationship between social behavior and physical elements in the built environment represent the foundation of planning and design process. Planners try to reach the optimal relation between human behavior and physical& spatial setting of the environment; the positive relation between physical - spatial setting and human behavior setting will reflect directly on the quality of life and meet the needs of residents in the city. Social aspects are vital to regular users of neighborhood streets.

The crux of Gehl's argument is that in poor quality public spaces, only strictly necessary activities occur. In higher quality public spaces, necessary activities take place with approximately the same frequency – although people choose to spend longer doing them – but, more importantly, a wide range of optional (social) activities also tend to occur.

The relationship between the quality of outdoor spaces and the rate of occurrence of outdoor activities. An increase in outdoor quality gives a boost to optional activities in particular. The increase in activity level then invites a substantial increase in social activities".
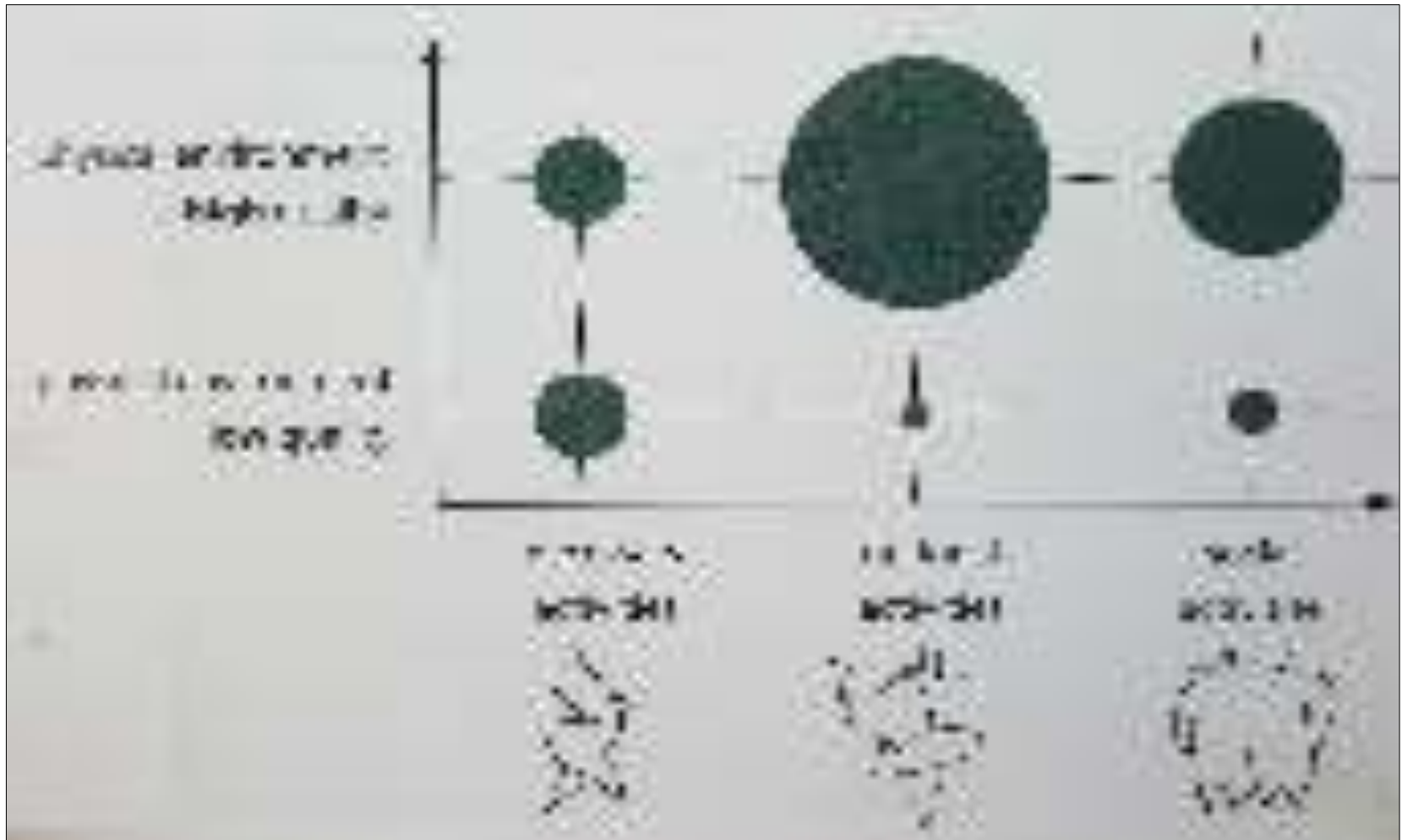
The importance of urban activities

Urban activities are vital elements in the urban life and their integration with other physical characteristics will become a sociable and lively places for meetings in the neighborhood, these activities are often small independent owned businesses. The most important benefits from these small activities are that besides selling goods and services; **they give the identity of the place and create a sense of place that remain in the mental image of a resident.**

Social Life in Den Haag Center/ Holland

The Relationship Between Built Environment and Society

The main role of urban designer is to organize and arrange physical space in such a way as to facilitate certain forms of behavior and to allow for the satisfaction of human needs. **The built environment can be thought of as relating to people in each of four ways :**

1- Physical: The end product of design is the arrangement and building of actual *physical structures*: *houses, apartment buildings, public transportation system, shopping centers, and so on.* These structures encompass and compartmentalize space- and therefore people as well.

2- Functional: The reason for designing and building a structure is to help accomplish some purpose. Each structure within a city can be judged by the extent to which it has the necessary components and the appropriate arrangement of them for task facilitation. This may range anywhere from proper lighting in an office building to an adequate number of toll booths on a bridge to keep traffic flowing properly.

3- Cognitive: The city as a whole and each of its component parts from large to small " speak to" people. **They provide cues to behavior** (i.e., what is appropriate, how best to accomplish one's goals), and these are the intended meanings of design. Furthermore, each environment provides a set of symbolic meanings. It says something about status, values, and lifestyle.

Amos Rapoport 1977 refers to the built environment as a form of nonverbal communication. The designer is the "encoder‏أداة تشفير" of meanings, and the user is the "decoder-‏فك الشفرة". If people do not share a common language, or if the intended meanings are not recognized, serious problems can result.

4- Social: This element deals not so much with the accomplishment of specific tasks in the environment as with the adequacy of the environment to meet the individual and interpersonal needs of the users. Here we ask such questions as: **Does the setting allow people to interact and meet others? Are people afforded enough privacy to feel comfortable? Do they have enough personal space, or do they feel crowded by others?**

The Social Production of Space
Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991)

Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991)
(The Social Production of Space)

Henri Lefebvre was a French sociologist and urban planner, he focused in his researches on the importance of **Time & Place**. He recognized the importance of space in the city, **Lefebvre believed that time and space are the most valuable or precious things of man.** Space is everything, it determines who we are as humans.

The Lefebvre's idea of production of space is based on the social production mode which, runs his **trait** to product of space. **Space, as a production of society, is changed when the society changes. In other words, the changing of society is prior to the changing of space.**

THE PUBLIC REALM in cities

Public Realm is defined as <mark>the space around, between and within buildings that are publicly accessible</mark>, including streets, squares, parks and open spaces. **These areas and settings support or** <mark>facilitate public life and social interaction.</mark>

Publicness is:

The quality or state of being public or being owned by the public. The relative publicness of space can be considered in terms of three qualities:

1- Ownership- whether the spaces is publicly or privately owned.

2- Access- whether the public has access to the place.

3- Use – whether the space is actively used and shared by different individuals and groups.

The Benefits & Values of Public Realm

Antwerpen /Belgium
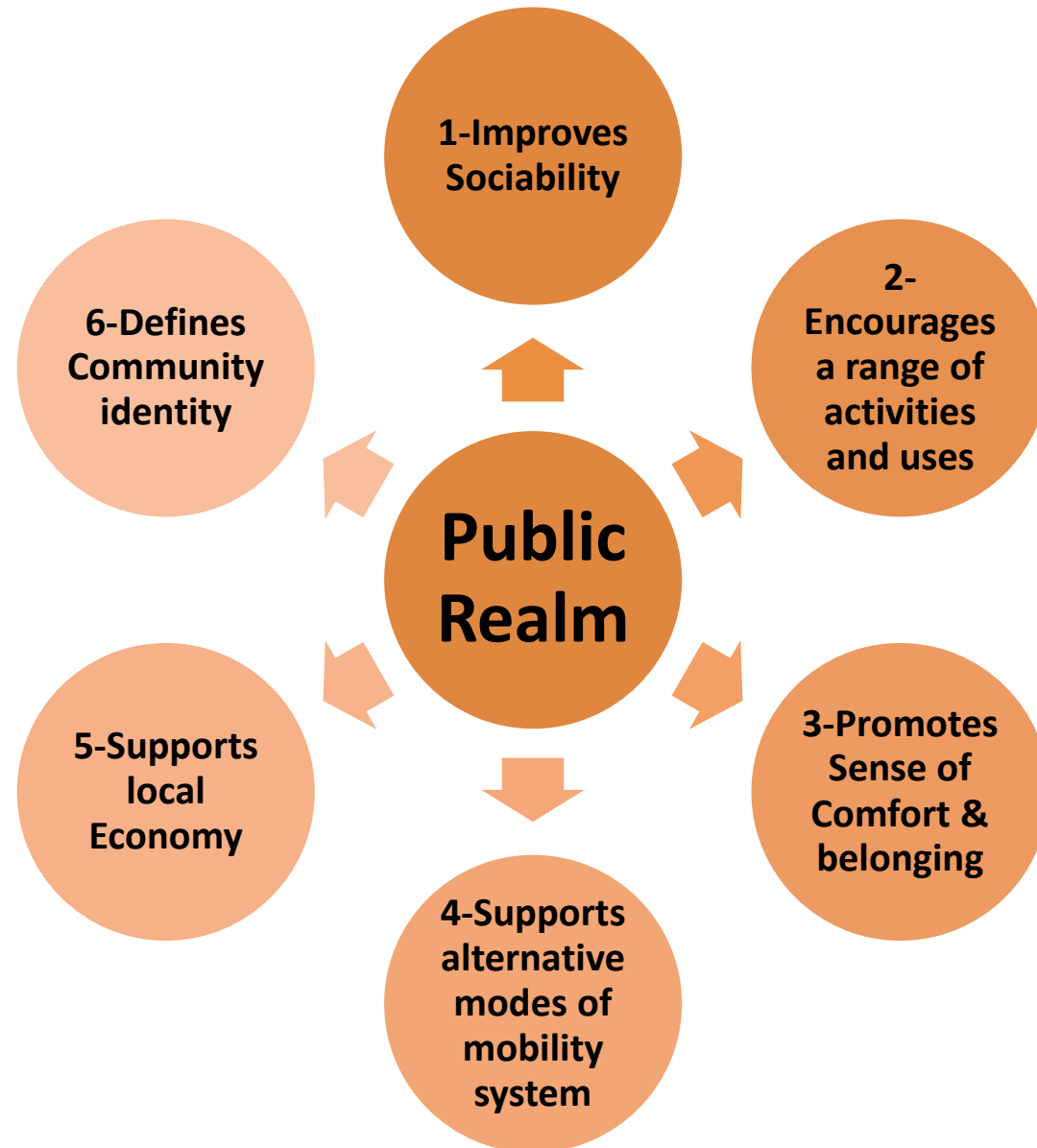
Amsterdam Center
Netherland

Amsterdam Center
Netherland

SAFETY* AND SECURITY**

People face a variety of threats in the urban environment – **crime**, '**street barbarism**'; **acts of terrorism**; **fast-moving vehicles**; **natural disaster/phenomena; and unseen problems such as air pollution and water contamination.**

Creating a sense of security and safety is an essential prerequisite of successful urban design.

Many people are fearful of certain parts of urban areas, such as pedestrian subways, dark alleys and areas that are crowded with the "wrong kind of people"_ (suspicious spaces)

*The condition of being protected from danger or risk.
** The state of being free from threat or potential harm caused by others.

Approaches to Crime Prevention

'**Dispositional**' and '**Situational**' represent two main approaches to crime prevention.

The dispositional approach involves removing or lessening an individual's motivation to commit acts, through **Education and Moral Guidance (EMG)_ Raising Awareness**

The main thrust of the situational approach is that once an offender has made the initial decision to offend (i.e. has become motivated then the techniques make the commission of that crime in that particular place more difficult **(Reduce the chances of committing crime through design)**.

Opportunity Reduction Methods

Opportunity reduction methods have been developed within the mainstream urban design literature with key themes of activity, surveillance, territorial definition and control. **Jan Jacobs argued that, rather than by police, the 'public peace' was kept by an intricate network of voluntary controls and standards and that sidewalk, adjacent uses and their users were 'active participants' in the 'drama of civilisation versus barbarism'.**

CONTROLLING SPACE: ACCESS AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION-

The control of urban space can be achieved by some regulations and techniques that support specific purpose on the space. Generally, there are two techniques of controlling:

1- Excluding behaviour:

Managing public space can be discussed in terms of preventing or excluding certain undesirable social behaviors. '**Exclusion Zones**'- zones designed to be free of some undesirable social characteristics, for example, **smoke-free zones**, **campaign and politics-free zones**, **car-free zones**, **skateboard-free zones**, **mobile/cellphone-free zones, alcohol-free zones etc**.

2- Exclusion through design: Includes **physical exclusion** being the inability to access or use the environment, regardless of whether or not it can be seen into. **Economic access**, a form of direct exclusion can be practised by charging an entry fee. Exclusion through design is typically a passive means of exclusion.

Physical Exclusion

3- Excluding people: **These kind of exclusions are more active and prevent the entry of certain individuals or social groups.** They include exclusion on the grounds of conduct (behaviour over which people have a choice) as well as on the grounds of **status** (factors over which people have no choice- skin colour, gender, age, etc.)