Abstract

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Farewell al-'Anbariyin

Would the disappearance of one's building influence his own daydreams, experience, and sense of belonging? Would this person remember it? Would these memories preserve the demolished building? This paper explores people's memories and perceptions upon the demolition of a historical building, and their effect on the produced space and sense of belonging. It documents people's narratives as a way of conserving the building through their memories. The paper focuses on Wik?li? ?l - 'Anbariyin, a market that dates to the Fatimid period and represents a significant Mamluk architectural style. Its location is at ?l-Mu'iz Street, near ?l-?zhar Street, ?l-jmm?liyha district, Cairo. However, nowadays, it is just a ruin with a fence and street vendors next to it, after its demolition in February 2019. The study utilizes qualitative methodology through site visits, observations, and random semi-structured interviews with people in ?l-Mu'iz Street. The collected data is thematically analyzed. The results reveal the diversity of memories and their dependence upon the level of interaction with Wik?li? ?l - 'Anbariyin . The ability of people's memories to conserve, not only the tangible heritage, building's architectural design and materials, but also the spatial experience, events, and social activities. Furthermore, memories show people's sense of belonging and place attachment, especially to those who used to work there, even after the building's demolition. During site visits, it is remarkable to observe the ability of previous shop owners and workers to conserve their memories about Wik?li? ?l - 'Anbariyin by using simple elements. Finally, the paper shows the importance of using memories as a way to conserve Wik?li? ?l - 'Anbariyin even after its demolition.