

**Global, Developed or Managed Cities:
Reflections on the Urban Theory with Implications for the Development
of Arab Human Settlements**

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Abstract

In the past, urban systems, hierarchy and rank size order were explained in terms of static geographic relations with little respect to time. Today, as result of accelerating rate of globalization, processes of capital accumulation shifted into new forms and modals were time is among the prime explanatory factors of urban transformations. This paper argues that lack of proper urban management and abandoning principles of good governance in Arab cities will complicate urban poverty and environmental degradation. It belongs to the intensive research type. It investigates substantial relations of connection using case study as a research strategy. The paper uses Dubai, UAE; Aden, Yemen; Port Said, Egypt; and Safi, Morocco; as case studies from the Arab region to test for the hypothesis. The analysis shows that lacking proper urban management and abandoning principles of good governance in Arab cities is among the reasons for the lagged development of many Arab cities manifested in the form of wide spread poverty and accelerated rates of environmental degradation.

The paper attempts to show that location and spatial dimensions, today, do not have the same impact on the development of a human settlement. Today, globalization and associated advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the world is currently unified into one space. These transformations have transformed the process of capital formulation, accumulation and circulation.

The contemporary dichotomous mode of thinking affects our perception of both time and space. As a result, measures of urban space evolved to assess the competition between settlements according to their “globalness,” “globality” or “centrality.” However, there is a positive diversity of spaces in the world that cannot be known in a singular manner. This diversity, pluralism and richness is the basis for proper urban management that assures the development of the city and its sustainability. And, positioning the city at the right time, within the process of capital circulation, is one of the key elements in its development. This suitable positioning cannot be attained without proper management and adopting principles of good governance.