

## **Bridges in Historic Areas: Juxtaposition of Value and Incongruity**

**Hisham S. Gabr, Professor, Department of Architecture, Cairo University, Egypt**  
**Aliaa ALSadaty, Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, Cairo University, Egypt**

### **Abstract**

Bridges, as physical structures, provide often needed connectedness and linkages, however, they can cause physical division and separation within the urban fabric. This paper focuses on bridges that pass through historic districts in Cairo, Egypt. It investigates the impacts caused by the physical structures of the bridges on the urban and social fabric they are imposed onto. Two bridges that cut through two historic districts in Cairo are selected. The two historic districts are namely Zamalek and AlAzhar, and the two bridges that are passing through are, 15<sup>th</sup> of May bridge and AlAzhar bridge, respectively. Towards this investigation the paper is organized into four parts: the first briefly reviews the literature concerning pathways in historic districts; the second part illustrates the case of Zamalek district, focusing on the impacts of the construction of 15<sup>th</sup> of May bridge on the existing fabric; the third illustrates the case of AlAzhar bridge and its influences on the below setting; finally the fourth part provides a reading of urban connectedness and separation caused by the two bridges in the two districts. The paper establishes that the upstairs-downstairs relationship between the bridge and the heritage context below reflect a juxtaposition of value and intrigue, an intrigue due to arising aesthetic and social challenges. The apparent physical connection hides more interesting influences and meaningful dynamics in the urban context that challenges users of space.

**Keywords:** Zamalek; 15<sup>th</sup> of May bridge; AlAzhar Bridge; Urban Connectedness; Separation; incongruity.