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Mahalle meets Stadtquartier

'Mahalle meets Stadtquartier' is an international exchange programme hosted by the Department of Architecture, Habitat Unit (Chair of International Urbanism and Design), TU Berlin, Germany, in cooperation with the Institute for Urban and Territorial Planning (INAU), Rabat; University of Tehran, Tehran; and Mimar Sinan University, Istanbul. Funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the aim of this three-year programme is to provide a platform for inter-cultural (Europe-MENA) dialogue and urban exchange on the potentiality and urgency of 'the local'.



The project proposes to initiate a scientific dialogue about similarities, differences and cultural specificities and traditions associated with "neighbourhood" as a situated and dynamic socio-spatial-cultural construct. What destructive and constructive collisions are currently occurring between the European / German and Islamic / Middle Eastern understanding of neighbourhood — between Stadtquartier and Mahalle? Why is there a resurgence of interest in neighbourhoods in the different cultural settings?

The hypothesis is that better mutual understanding will help to contribute to a more constructive dialogue between different cultures, produce a secure ground for increased engagement and open new opportunities for establishing a common understanding.

Doctoral students currently pursuing a PhD thesis in themes related to the programme will be involved in a series of PhD colloquia held in the partner cities and institutions (Istanbul 2014, Rabat 2015 and Tehran 2016). The participating students from all the cooperation partner institutes will become familiar with the history, evolution and current position of 'the local' (spelled out in different terminologies in different contexts), learn about the current national or city programmes that enrich 'the local', investigate which urban unit can serve as the optimal scale for enriching 'the local' and discover what roles the proposed unit can play to address facing problems regarding social cohesion and governance.

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