

**Politecnico Di Milano**

Scuola di Architettura e Disegno Urbano

**ACCESS TO DIVERSE SACRED SPACES**

A Common Ground for the Three Monotheistic Religions in Milan

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A Common Ground for the Three Monotheistic  
Religions in Milan

Rana Mohamed

Department of Architecture and Urban Design  
Politecnico di Milano  
Master Thesis

2022/23



## ABSTRACT

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### Abstract

Religious diversity is becoming more predominant and visible in cities around the world. We're looking here at Europe, which is changing rapidly, and the need for Europe to come to a very sophisticated, mature, and cultural accommodation, as immigration, families, and conversion are all likely to continue. It is going to be a part of Europe's future. Drawing attention to the idea that the sense of the sacred is still an integral part of the lives of many people, and looking at the sacred spaces that facilitate based on the diverse urban population that occupies one city, brings up the idea of diversity in unity and designing a space as a representation of the inherent relationship between the One and the Many. Contributing to the academic research that focuses on the urban religious diversity in Europe, specifically the metropolitan city of Milan, analyzing the interaction with the new groups of non-Christian and Christian populations who live together in the city, affect, influence, and have their own needs and designing a sacred space, its mandate is to meet the needs of the non-Christian community in Milan and beyond by facilitating good practice in faith community development, social cohesion, interfaith dialogue and bringing together something very ancient and timeless with the latest technologies.

This is examined in a range of three ways, firstly by inspecting the contemporary city, its urban population, and its existing religious strategies, policies, and guidelines. Secondly, it is a deep literature review on sacred spaces and draws attention to the significance of sacredness in people's lives rather than ironizing it or regarding it skeptically. Thirdly and lastly is producing a project as a resulting design in the urban context of the city of Milan.

**"Say O People of the Scripture, come to terms common between us and you: that we worship none but Allah" Quran: 03**

**TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER, COMMON GROUND BETWEEN US**

## RIASSUNTO

---

### Riassunto

La diversità religiosa sta diventando sempre più predominante e visibile nelle città di tutto il mondo. Stiamo guardando qui all'Europa, che sta cambiando rapidamente, e alla necessità che l'Europa giunga a una sistemazione molto sofisticata, matura e culturale, poiché è probabile che l'immigrazione, le famiglie e la conversione continuino. Farà parte del futuro dell'Europa. Attirando l'attenzione sull'idea che il senso del sacro è ancora parte integrante della vita di molte persone, e guardando gli spazi sacri che facilitano in base alla diversa popolazione urbana che occupa una città, fa emergere l'idea della diversità nell'unità e progettare uno spazio come rappresentazione della relazione inerente tra l'Uno e i Molti. Contribuire alla ricerca accademica che si concentra sulla diversità religiosa urbana in Europa, in particolare nella città metropolitana di Milano, analizzando l'interazione con i nuovi gruppi di popolazioni non cristiane e cristiane che convivono nella città, influenzano, influenzano e hanno la loro propri bisogni e progettando uno spazio sacro, il suo mandato è quello di soddisfare i bisogni della comunità non cristiana a Milano e oltre, facilitando buone pratiche nello sviluppo della comunità di fede, coesione sociale, dialogo interreligioso e riunendo qualcosa di molto antico e senza tempo con l'ultimo tecnologie.

Questo viene esaminato in una serie di tre modi, in primo luogo ispezionando la città contemporanea, la sua popolazione urbana e le sue strategie, politiche e linee guida religiose esistenti. In secondo luogo, è un'approfondita revisione della letteratura sugli spazi sacri e richiama l'attenzione sul significato della sacralità nella vita delle persone piuttosto che ironizzarla o considerarla con scetticismo. Terzo ed ultimo è produrre un progetto come risultante progettuale nel contesto urbano della città di Milano.

**"Di, o Gente della Scrittura, venite a patti comuni tra noi e voi: che non adoriamo altro che Allah" Corano: 03**

**Per conoscerci, un terreno comune tra di noi**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

---

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First and foremost, all praises to God, the Almighty, for his blessings throughout my thesis work, and all the peace and blessings upon my mentor the prophet Mohamed, thank you for being the light in every darkness.

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My mum, dad, sisters and brother: Thank you for loving me and carrying me through life.

Finally, I devote this work to the force and strength of my family, my mother Sana.

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## THESIS OUTLINE

### Thesis Outline

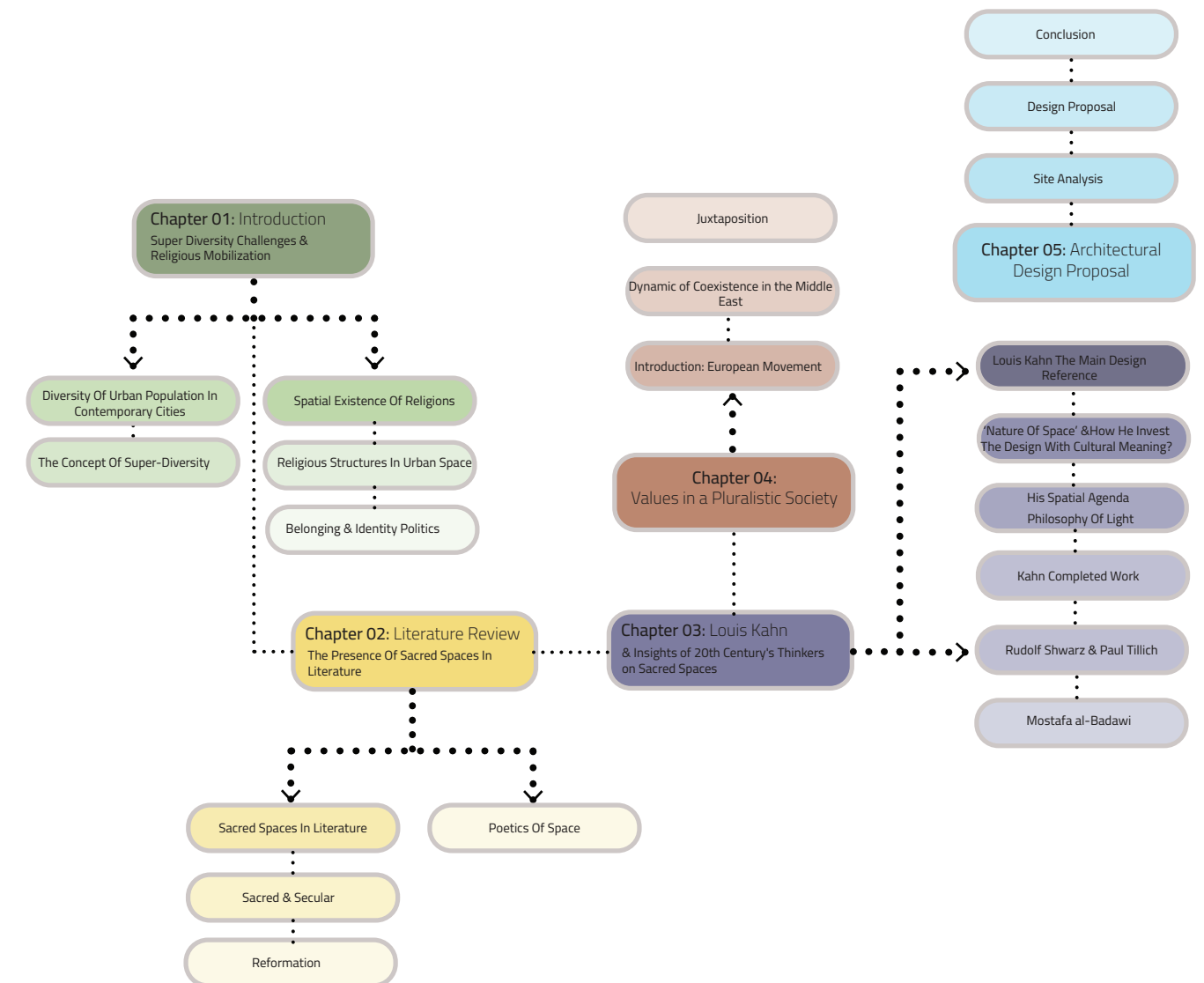


Figure 1: Thesis Outline. Source: Author.

## INTRODUCTION:

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### Introduction:

In recent years, different urban populations have inhabited large contemporary cities for many reasons; their inhabitation can be for long or short-term. They experience the city daily, consume, adapt and affect the cities' fabrics. The new communities that live in the contemporary cities shape the existing streets, neighbourhoods and buildings to accommodate their needs, feel recognition and reconstruct their identities. The generation of migrants added another layer to the cities they worked and lived in. One of the most essential needs the urban population barely finds in contemporary cities is places of worship. Places of worship are not just prayer rooms, but they resemble the community identity, culture and their own ideas of aesthetics as well as they are places for celebrations, gatherings and social events. As mentioned in **L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui** the French architectural magazine, "In France, our churches are public buildings. Yet many of them are often closed, especially in villages. By closing them, you limit their use to the practitioners who meet there when there is a mass. It is important for churches to stay open, to go back to being public spaces that represent the common space that has been built communally." Said Desjobert.

Milan is a global city; it is so cosmopolitan, with different ethnic groups and nationalities. The tragedy is that within all European megacities, Milan doesn't have a proper purpose-built mosque. I noticed last Eid (one of our big Islamic feasts) I was co-living in San Donato by this time, and we were too many people. Yet, we had to pray outside the mosque, and there wasn't any space for children to run around outside and meet their friends from different religions and backgrounds to play and share the feast happiness. Nevertheless, every Friday people need to find a venue to do namaz every Friday.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

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But do Milan need just a mosque? Are the diverse communities isolated from each other? What do people need?

### Problem Statement:

This thesis questions How the city fabric can host places of worship of different religions for religious tolerance?

Based on the sub-questions:

What are sacred spaces? How can religious identities be present in contemporary cities? How do we live together despite our diversity? What if sacred spaces become cultural spaces for everyone?

### Aims and Objectives:

Following the discussions mentioned above, the present study aims to explore and experiment with case studies to investigate the interaction of local authorities with the presence of new religious identities in contemporary cities. Moreover, create new sacred spaces in the city of Milan to fulfil the diverse population's needs for free religious expression. This exploration will help contribute to the following objective: the study of sacred spaces and their relation with urban policies, the study of the city of Milan to be successfully plural, inclusive and capital of religious harmony.



## RESEARCH LIMITATION:

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The aims of this thesis, as laid out in the scope, are to be achieved through a research methodology combining the following:

- a) Literature search
- b) Field inspections
- c) Case studies

## Research Limitation:

This study will take place inside the geographical confines of the Republic of Italy, with instances chosen for the diversity of urban population (Immigrants, International students, working people) impact on the urban fabric and urban form of Milan.

Milan is somewhat behind the big cities even as other places like Oxford and Cambridge that has purpose-built mosques and Eco- Mosque, and it is a little bit depressing that Milan is lagging behind them. There are about seven mosques already in Milan, but they are generally tiny houses and warehouses that have been converted, but the demography has been increasing. On an unfashionable side of San Donato with a railway underground, an empty garden where the municipality announced 'Places of worship and mosques, another step forward from the Municipality of Milan'. The Co Council unanimously approved the guidelines that will be the basis of the tender for the concession in surface right of the two buildings indicated in the Plan of religious facilities: we are talking about the building via Esterle 15/17 and the area of via Marignano to be used for the exercise of worship activities. Due to the increase in Muslim residents, mosques make up the majority of newly constructed places of worship, while churches make up the majority of those that are renovated. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam recognise that the purpose of freshly built places of worship extends beyond their usage as liturgical spaces to include social, cultural, and representa-

## RESEARCH LIMITATION:

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tive purposes. Moreover, the religious-political intention of newly built religious structures differs considerably between religious communities.

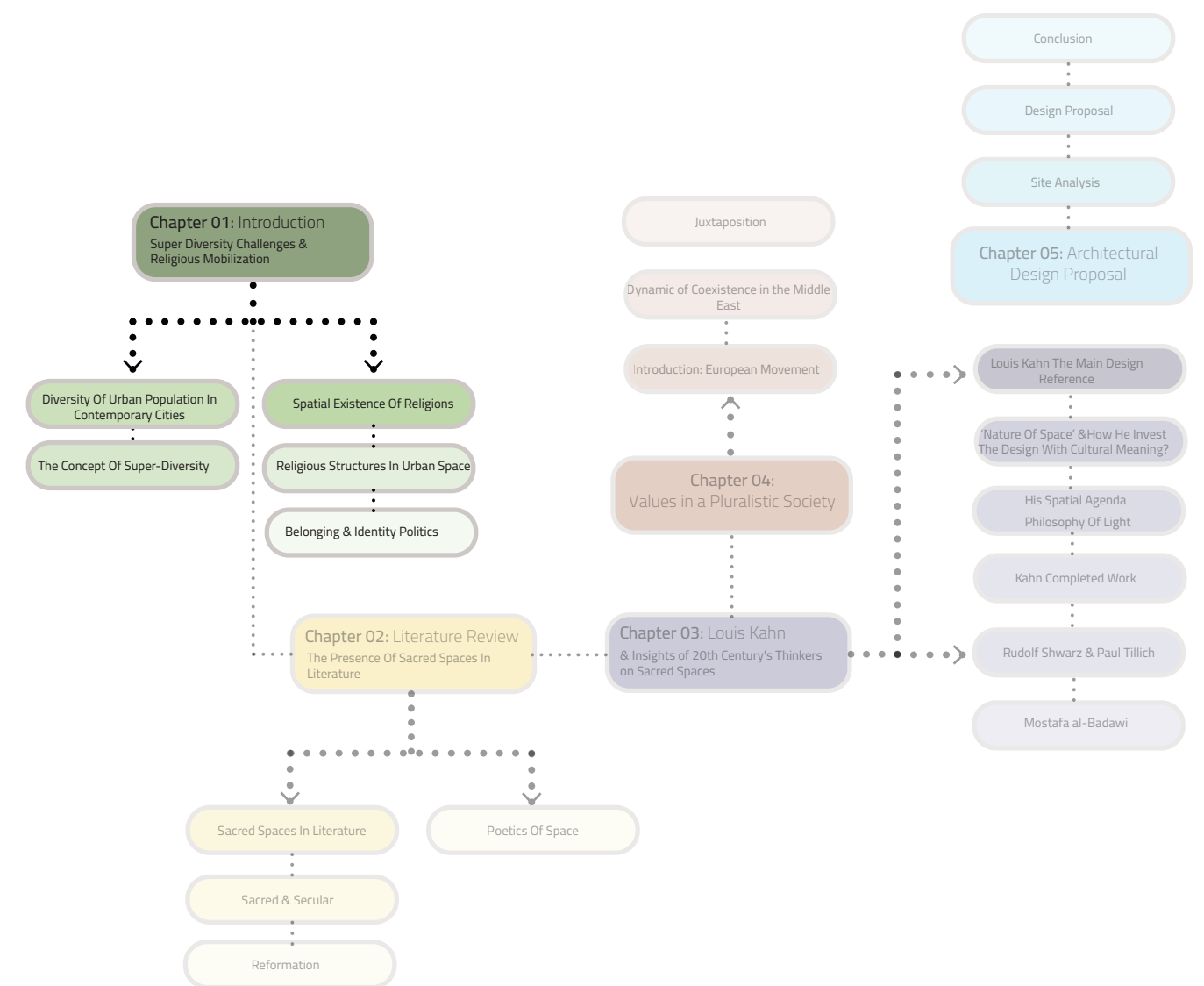
Having spent my postgraduate and early career between Milan and Copenhagen, two mega contemporary cities in Western and Northern Europe, I was surrounded by an intellectual environment with many different ideas and perspectives on migration and social diversity.



# Chapter 01

## Super Diversity Challenges & Religious Mobilization

Keywords: Urban population, Superdiversity, Spatial existence, Religious Mobilization, Religious Place-making, and Religious Place-Keeping, Urban Religion



## 1.1 DIVERSITY OF URBAN POPULATION IN CONTEMPORARY CITIES:

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### 1.1 Diversity of Urban Population in Contemporary Cities:

#### 1.1.1 Urban Population and religious pluralism and cultural diversity:

##### **What is the correlation between urban population, religion, and urban constraints?**

Super-diversity is usually understood to be a feature of large metropolitan hubs of global migration, such as London, Paris, Berlin, or Milan. In recent years, different urban populations have inhabited large contemporary cities for many reasons; their inhabitation can be extended or short-term. They experience the city every day, consume, adapt, and affect the city's fabrics. The new communities that live in the contemporary cities shape the existing streets, neighbourhoods, and buildings to accommodate their needs, feel recognition and reconstruct their identities. The generation of migrants added another layer to the cities they worked and lived in. The understanding of the urban population that I wish to articulate here is based on the observations of the Italian sociologist Guido Martinotti, but it differs from them concerning one fundamental feature. As we know, from the sociological point of view, Martinotti's contemporary city encompasses four types of populations that perform their activities (living, working, and consuming) in different areas in or outside the city (Martinotti 1993, 1999). Simplifying Martinotti's analysis to the extreme, we could say that Residents work and "consume" in the city and may or may not work there. Commuters live elsewhere but definitely work in the city and may also perform activities related to consumption there. City users come from outside and do not work in the city but perform activities related to consumption. Finally, businessmen work and consume in the city without living there. If the city of the residents and commuters is that of the first generation, consumption is of the second generation, and businessmen are of the third generation. The interaction between the four populations is then destined to shape the future of large metropolitan regions around the world, also through the generation of new conflicts and government challenges (Martinotti, 1992). The observations of the Italian sociologist can be

## 1.1 DIVERSITY OF URBAN POPULATION IN CONTEMPORARY CITIES:

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regarded as a solid starting point. They validate the premise that urban populations are among the most distinguishing elements of the changes taking place in the contemporary metropolis. Moreover, there is the coexistence of different and potentially conflictual practices related to uses between populations in both space and time (Pasqui, 2016). By narrowing the scope of the influence of urban population on contemporary cities to their cultural practices through the cities' urban spaces and changing the layers that shape the metropolis.

One of the most essential needs the urban population barely finds in contemporary cities is places of worship. Places of worship are not just prayer rooms, but they resemble the community identity, culture, and their ideas of aesthetics as well as they are places for celebrations, gatherings, and social events. As mentioned in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, the French architectural magazine, "In France, our churches are public buildings. Yet many of them are often closed, especially in villages. By closing them, you limit their use to the practitioners who meet there when there is a mass. It is important for churches to stay open, to go back to being public spaces that represent the common space that has been built communally." Said Desjobert. Nowadays, sacred spaces, the places of worship, in a city are shaped by many aspects the most important is the social construction of the society and the diversity of the urban population. Moreover, sacred spaces do not only function as places of worship but also work as public spaces and community hubs, so we cannot limit their use of them to spiritual practices only. Looking at the aspect of sacred space construction based on the different urban population that occupies one city leads us to the fabric of the city itself and how it can accommodate new types of sacred spaces. Based on demographic studies and in-depth observation of the city of Milan, its interaction with the new groups of non-Christian and Christian populations that live there affect, influence, and have their own needs.

1.1 DIVERSITY OF URBAN POPULATION IN CONTEMPORARY CITIES:

1.1 DIVERSITY OF URBAN POPULATION IN CONTEMPORARY CITIES:

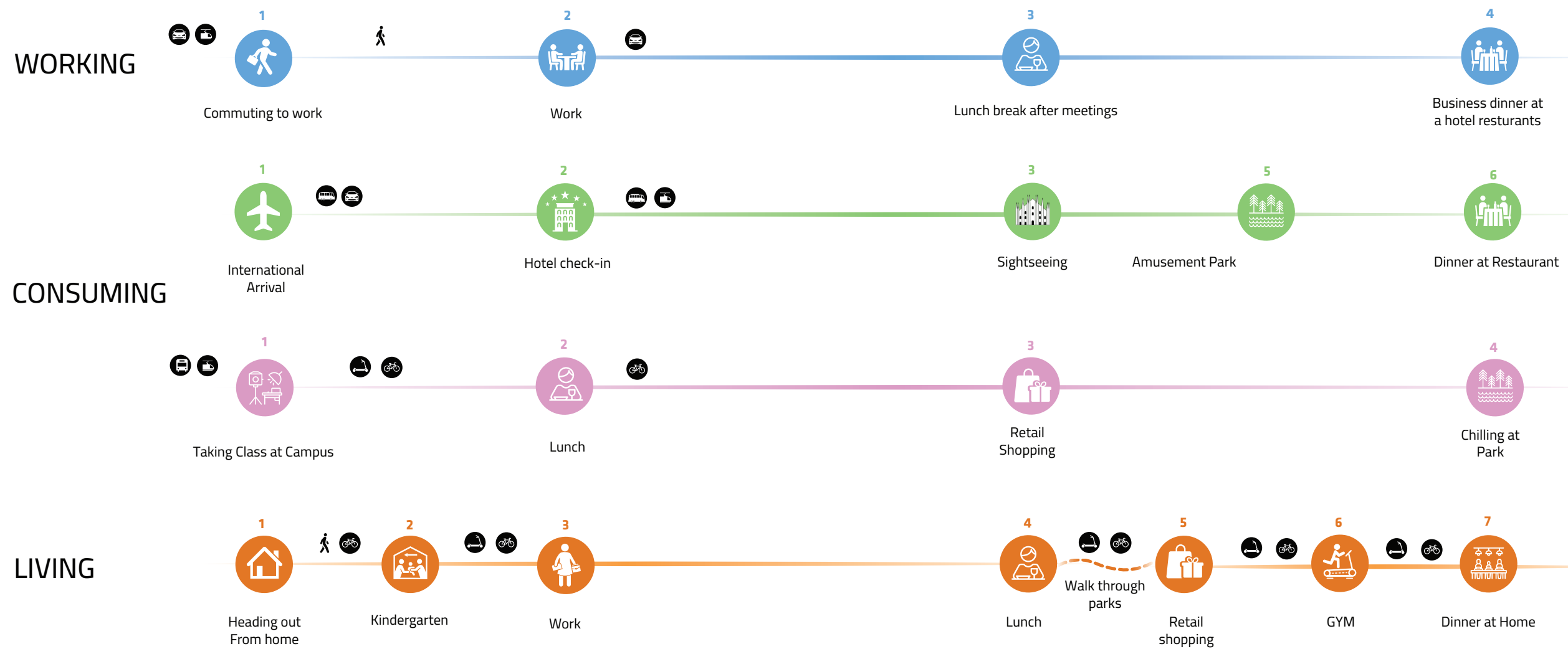


Figure 2: City Use Experience, Source: Author.

## 1.1 DIVERSITY OF URBAN POPULATION IN CONTEMPORARY CITIES:

**What is the relation between religion and urban space? Will the reconceptualisation of sacred space as sacred and public space simultaneously devalue the sacredness of the religious buildings? How can the city fabric host places of worship of different religions for religious tolerance?**

In the case of Italy, specifically in Milan, to better understand the pattern and dynamics of diversity in Italy, we should first define the immigrants' categories: workers, students, spouses, family members and refugees, and new citizens. As I experienced the city for two years of studying there, the inhabitants are familiar with diverse worshippers who offer many cultural activities in the area. A solid civic link exists in addition to diverse religious practices, as seen by active involvement in the activities of, for example, the Islamic Institution of Italy, which is housed in the mosque, such as educational services for children and youth and entertainment. The Institute also provides support and orientation services, literacy and integration programs for women (including visits, events and debates, and health awareness raising), Italian language classes, and seminars on housekeeping and childrearing methods. My study aims to discover the power of multi-religious existence in the super-diverse metropolises, which will lead to a reinterpretation of sacred spaces in contemporary cities through revisiting European identity regimes and discourses and opening them to non-Christians—addressing capabilities and issues around cultural integration and multi-religious coexistence.

## 1.2 THE CONCEPT OF SUPERDIVERSITY

### 1.2 The Concept of Superdiversity

#### 1.2.1 Religion in a super diverse Environment

Steven Vertovec (2007) first used the term "super-diversity" about ten years ago to describe a situation in which a rapidly increasing number of migrants continued to fall outside the social, economic, and cultural categories that are typically used to describe migration trends where the distinction between diversity and super-diversity is not one of quantity, but of the co-occurrence and mutual influence of several classifications. He also used the term to highlight the growing complexity of factors describing migrants' social status and day-to-day lives in Britain. Since then, the phrase has become widely accepted within the social sciences and is now more commonly used to describe societal dynamics/plurality/societal changes in nations with significant rates of immigration and population movement (Meissner and Vertovec 2015; Meissner 2015). Although religion was not previously an essential topic of discussion in discussions about migration-driven diversity, this has drastically changed in recent years (Becci, Burchardt, and Giorda 2016). Today, we need to understand **how religious diversity affords visibility, how it is spatially positioned and arranged, and how it helps people to visualise their social backgrounds understandably.**

In this research, we investigate the multiplicity and dynamics of religious differences, as well as the extent to which the concept of "religious super-diversity" suggests a fruitful avenue for guiding research and theory. "In the earlier debates on migration, religion did not play a major role. This situation has changed drastically, and social scientists now view religion as central to understanding immigrants' choices, migration trajectories and social integration (Levitt 2007, Kivisto 2015, Connor 2014, Banchoff 2007, Burchardt 2016) as well as religion was reduced to an aspect of ethnic culture and belonging. Subsequently, the paradigm of diversity and especially that of super-diversity, were meant to ameliorate the shortcomings of multi-culturalism in accounting for the internal differenti-

## 1.2 THE CONCEPT OF SUPERDIVERSITY

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ation of migrants' characteristics (Fanshawe and Sriskandarajah 2010; Cattle 2005, 2012). Importantly, these paradigms also seemed to open new conceptual spaces for considering the location of religion. First, many scholars pointed to the more central place of religion in debates over recognition. Grillo (2010) and Eade (2011) have observed how the object of recognition in Britain has shifted from "race to faith", while D'Amato (2015) has explored the political construction in Switzerland of a "homo Islamic" within a "total discourse" homogenising Muslim identity (Behloul 2009). That is precisely the point that I want to refer to; the concept of integrating into disintegrating society; in such a quite fragmented and broken western society where the loss of local community and social capital exists, the church has even song once a month, how to maintain the sense of community and the distance? By showing something better, providing service, and seeing the divine in everybody rather than just because the government believes in the society as a kind of blender/ homogenization in which migrant communities are thrown and blended up in a couple of generations, everybody is the same! This is not good for the country; diversity is good for us. (I got inspired by Dr Tim Winter's lecture in Cambridge Central Mosque) In my contribution to sacred spaces, I want to shed light on how religion is more a factor of solidarity, cooperativeness, and conviviality than a factor of conflict and how people craft cities according to their religious lives. Moreover, religious diversity shapes different social scales (neighbourhoods, cities, nations) by leaving permanent architectural imprints on them.

"In order to fully appreciate religion in the context of super-diversity, it is equally important to explore how religion may exaggerate, affirm, or unsettle established or dominant notions of social and cultural difference both in institutional contexts and everyday life. In many European countries, migrants' religious identity as Christians may help them to lower their profile in public debates on immigrant integration as a social problem or to foreground commonalities with host societies. If host

## 1.2 THE CONCEPT OF SUPERDIVERSITY

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societies are highly secularised, such as the Netherlands or Belgium, such commonalities may also easily fade or turn into cultural differences (Carol, Helbling, and Michalowski 20105)."

The research by Fabretti and Vieri in Rome, the capital of Italy, provides fascinating insights into the city as a distinctive spatial development of a particular religious super-diversity. Their research links this creation to political-institutional, cultural, and other factors that are involved. The writers argue that all types of diversity tend to be expressed through the register of religion because of the perception of Rome as the ideal "religious city." Although Italy's history of monolithic Catholicism would seem to suggest otherwise, the image of Rome as a holy city is rooted in national imaginaries, mirrored in urban aesthetics and materialities, and circulated through worldwide media networks. Fabretti and Vieri observe insightfully how this image has produced and enhanced religious diversity by encouraging various religious groups to create and mark their places in the urban space in monumental ways. They, like the other studies in this issue, emphasise that religious super-diversity develops at both the global and local levels. (Burchardt, 2016)

Liza Steele discusses how she discovered and attempted to make sense of multiple religious connections while researching people with multiple religious commitments. For example, how can one quantify Buddhist practice among Christians and Jews, regular church attendance among those who claim not to be religious, and the children of mixed-religious couples who may be raised with some level of identification with both parents' spiritual traditions?

She examines how to quantify such situations using data from the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life in the United States in 2009. Taken together, the contributions to this special issue demonstrate that religious diversity is not a given but is created by various patterns of human mobility across people's lives and across the globe, as well as changes in political orientation, class, and gender. These locally grounded and historically shaping layers of religious expression ar-

## 2.1 SPATIAL EXISTENCE OF RELIGIONS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES:

ticulate what we call religious super-diversity patterns. (Burchardt, 2016)

### 2.1 Spatial Existence of Religions in Western Countries:

#### 2.1.1 Religious Diversity and Spatial Strategies in European Cities:

##### **How the city's urban fabric and its political, cultural, and economic layers can host diverse places of worship?**

Nowadays, just over 3.000.000 people live in Milan, the design and business capital of the region of Lombardy and one of the most socially booming and economically prosperous cities in Northern Italy. The city experienced an increase in urban population to the rate of 15%. Although there has been a presence of Muslims, Jewish, and many others in Milan, no proper religious building was erected for them. Apart from practising the spiritual rituals of each religion, each community aims to manage its belonging to the locality by using the Italian language within the community and constantly being in touch with local authorities. Members of the community accompany Muslims/ Jews when they go to a hospital or government offices for administrative issues. They help to organise funerals in the local cemetery, weddings, and other communal activities. In terms of place-making strategies, revisiting regimes and discourses of European identities and opening them to non-Christians becomes more pressing as migrants, many of whom have lived in Europe their whole lives, demand equal citizenship and as states seek to secure the loyalty of their growing diverse urban populations.

Furthermore, the spatial strategies we observe are not representative of all European cities, nor are they confined to them. However, Christianity's historical domination over European urban areas enforced a cultural pattern known as the "parochial package" by Nelson and Gorski (2014). This concept depicts a particular method of grouping residential populations into religious membership units focused on spatial centres of institutional structures (churches, schools, hospitals). As well as

## 2.1 SPATIAL EXISTENCE OF RELIGIONS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES:

observing the spatial strategies for producing familiarity and belonging for the different urban populations in European cities.

For migrant minorities in super-diverse cities like Milan, religion plays a significant role in re-centring and re-inscribing space, linking the personal and local to the transnational and global. In particular, religion provides some critical idioms and practices through which to think and perform authenticity, purity, authority, moral legitimacy, and belonging at the local level, vis-à-vis the liberal state, and in imagined and absolute reference to the diaspora. (Knott, 2014)

#### 2.1.2 Religious 'place-keeping' strategy and 'place-making' strategy in Italian cities:

Thus, religious place-making addresses different urban perceptual registers as well as visibility within urban spaces. In many contemporary European cities, different historical memories, each storing a variety of collective religious and secular experiences, are layered upon one another: materially and symbolically in architecture, immaterially in urban religious imaginaries, and socially through the coexistence of multiple religious mobilisations.

Spatial strategies of religious communities have resulted in religious super-diversity in European cities. Most sociologists use the word religious diversity to indicate the presence of 'global religions' (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.) on various societal scales as a result of migration (neighbourhoods, cities, nations). This is significant because religious migrant groups may face urban constraints as places of worship. "For migrant communities, the 'making' of places of worship is linked to the embodied performance of urban presence, the spatial management of difference and belonging, and multiple embedding across networked spaces" (Knott and Vasquez, 2014).

Urban and religious changes can be addressed comprehensively if linked, more generally, to the social and political controversies about migration and religious diversity. We observe and



## 2.1 SPATIAL EXISTENCE OF RELIGIONS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES:

analyse, in an Italian city, how religions quickly diffuse in urban space, describing the way inherited religious institutions, i.e. mostly dominant Christian traditions, negotiate spatial regimes through 'place-keeping' strategies. Diaspora and migrant religions, by contrast, adopt different 'place-making' strategies.

Speaking of spatial existence for religions in Italy, Catholicism has had a profound spatial existence in Italian cities and towns; as a result, we are mentioning the place-keeping strategy to solve the dilemma of friendless churches, as well as to rescue and protect historic places of worship in Italy. Undoubtedly, it is a part of the general scheme of the 17th international Biennale Di Venezia "How we Live together" to sustain the original religion and create a space for other religions to exist. Since Catholicism in Italy has been dominant since the early middle ages, not only in Italy but in most European countries, its social power, material resources as well as architectural sophistication reflects the rich history of religious architecture in Italy. However, these congregations are currently concerned with methods to maintain their position. Traditional Christian churches face significant challenges, including declining membership, decreased participation in services and other religious activities, changing residential demographics, and an ageing population. Furthermore, their legal significance entails obligations to the public. Their religious sites hold special meaning in the collective memory of not only active attendees but also of entire neighbourhood populations who live in the region surrounding these churches.

## 2.1 SPATIAL EXISTENCE OF RELIGIONS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES:

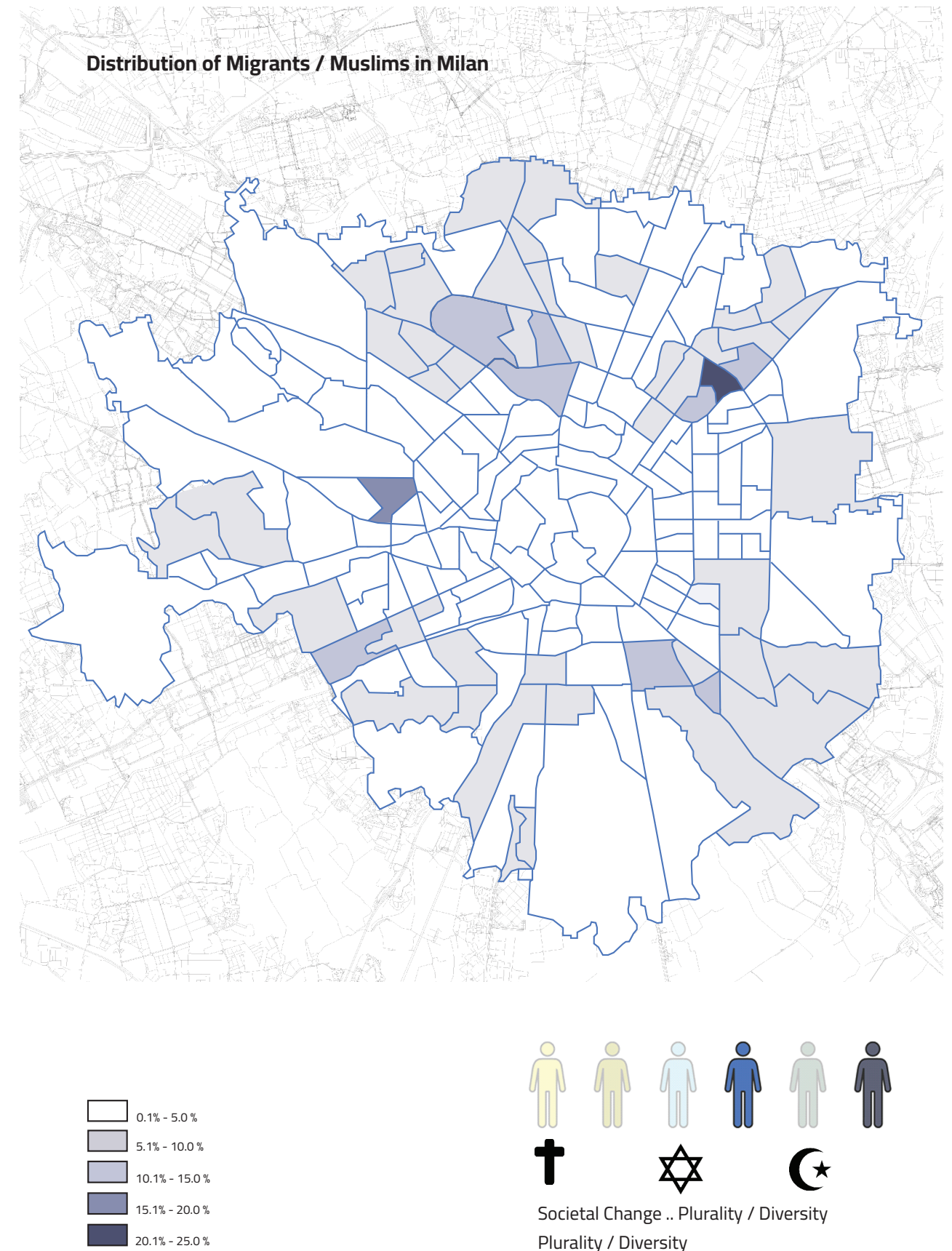


Figure 3: Map done by author, reference: Religion and the city: A review on Muslim spatiality in Italian cities

## 2.1 SPATIAL EXISTENCE OF RELIGIONS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES:

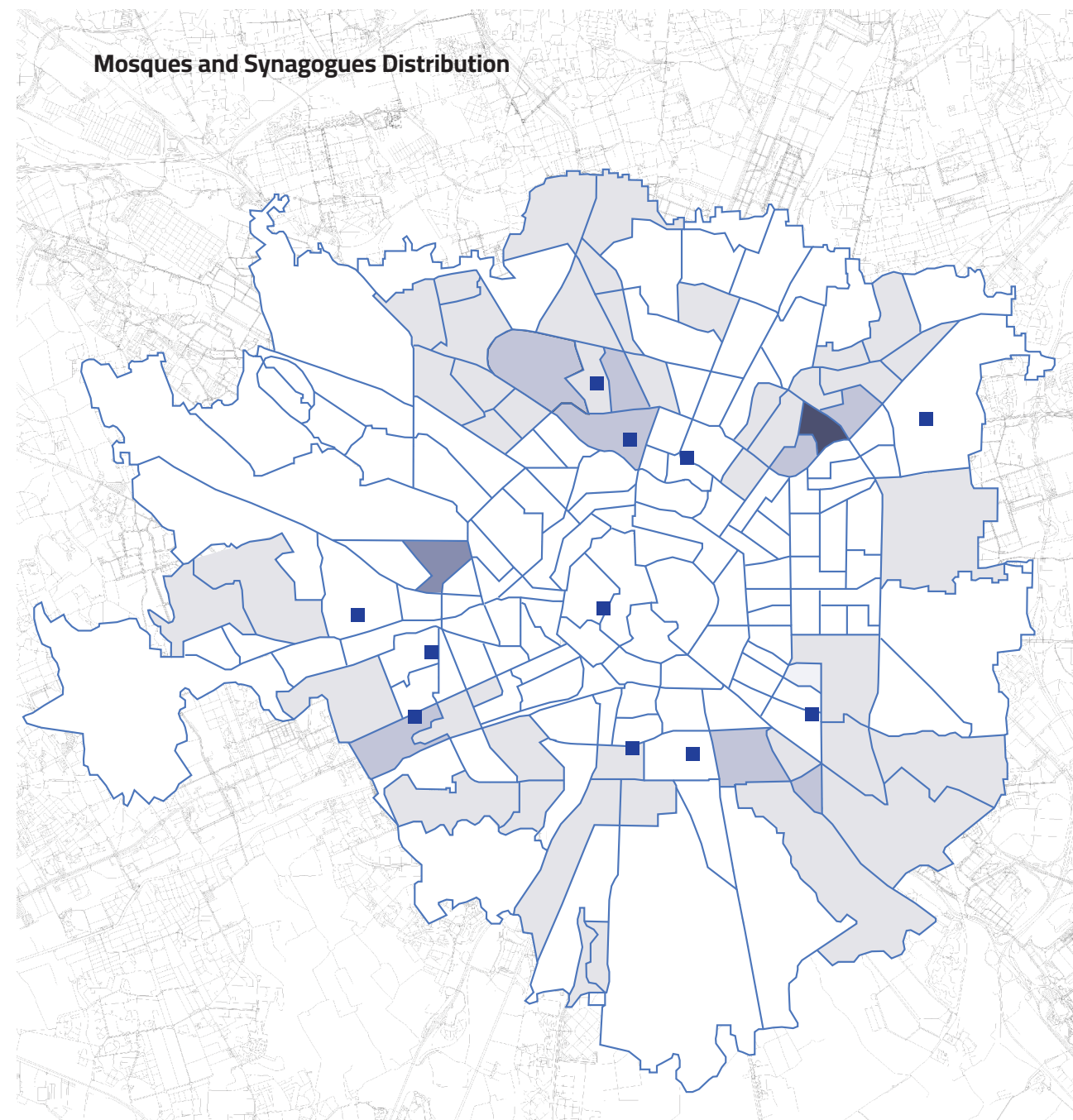


Figure 4: Map done by author, reference: Religion and the city: A review on Muslim spatiality in Italian cities

## 3.1 RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE IN URBAN SPACE:

### 3.1 Religious Architecture in Urban Space:

#### 3.1.1 Multi-Religious buildings and their relation to urban spaces

#### **How do religious buildings structure urban space? The consequences of religions on the morphology of the Italian cities**

Western Europe is relatively fresh to the experience of multi-religious and multi-cultural existence outside the imperial environment. The Middle East, on the other hand, would be impossible without the coexistence of synagogues, churches, and mosques, however controversial that coexistence may still be. As we will show, this distinction impacts the incorporation of alien architectural forms into indigenous contexts. According to sociologists, until recently, Muslims in Europe were viewed as transient immigrants, refugees, or insignificant ethnic minorities rather than as members of communities deserving of their places of worship or cultural organisations.

The importance of religion, particularly religions other than the dominant Catholic religion, for many migrants has a substantial impact on the morphology of Italian towns—the public presence of religious structures in cities, as well as multi-faith sacred spaces. Therefore, the monumental structures of multi-faith/multi-religious buildings offer insights into the connections between religious architecture and the diversity of religions in contemporary societies. Additionally, how societal changes impact the religious built environment and how those changes impact societal discourses. For the analysis of the impact of city planning on religious buildings, how synagogues, churches, and mosques are situated in urban space in the context of growing religious plurality, and how this develops meaningful discourse and serves as a platform for negotiating issues of belonging and identity through architectural forms. The increase in religious plurality in society becomes visible in the cityscape and architecture (Burchardt and Höhne 2015) and can function as a catalyst for societal conflict. Whereas churches and synagogues are usually found in city centres, mosques are predom-



### 3.1 RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE IN URBAN SPACE:

inantly positioned on the periphery of the cities (e.g., Kuppinger 2014, p. 801). This is because of the history of Islamic presence in Europe. The first generation of labour migrants did not build representative mosques. In this context, mosques were established in buildings such as residential houses, former shops, and so on, buildings that cannot directly be identified as mosques by their architectural form. According to Lorenz Korn, minarets are often interpreted as signs of Muslim presence in Europe or symbols of power.

“Religion enters this sensuous and spatial politics of recognition by materialising behaviours such as the construction of churches, mosques, and temples that make migrants and long-term residents visible to one another. Tweed (1997: 93) puts it well when he writes that Constructing a place religiously involves engaging in contests with others within the natural terrain and at social sites. With and against others in the community... religious men and women are continually in the process of mapping a symbolic landscape and constructing a symbolic dwelling in which they might have their own space and find their place.”

The Muslim presence in Italy has a marked impact on the urban space:

Not just race but also religion is a central pillar on which a considerable proportion of migrants from Muslim nations create their individual and social identities as migrants. “These pseudo-mosques became formal “precedents” for constructing modern mosques seeking roots in various Western locations where new Islamic populations formed beginning in the 1950s. Burdened by Eurocentric administrative constraints and ideological passions imposed for several causes, these communities sought conformity, historicity, and authenticity in the architectural vocabulary of their places of worship away from their Islamic home.” (Avcioglu, 2007)

### 3.1 RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE IN URBAN SPACE:

#### Muslim Spatiality in Italy:

Muslims in Italy come from a very diverse range of geographic origins, including the Middle East, Northern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, several Balkan nations (such as Albania), and South-Eastern Asia (Pakistan and Indonesia). According to the country of origin, there may be significant differences in language, customs, and religious practices.

- Sacred spaces

Mosques are the most illustrative symbol of the Muslim presence in Italy. A mosque is generally understood to be a place where Muslim worshipers frequently congregate to pray. The three types of Islamic places of worship in Italy (as well as other immigration nations), following Allievi (2010b), are musallayat, purpose-built mosques, and Islamic centres.

1. Musallayat: These are plain, frequently small, and temporary prayer spaces. They typically reside in previous residences, stores, or warehouses. They frequently lack outward indicators of their purpose, making it difficult for non-Muslims to recognise their presence. They serve as neighbourhood worship places.
2. Purpose-built mosques: These are typically distinguished by imagery in mosques, such as domes, minarets, and Arabic script or symbols. In certain instances, they are founded with the financial and political assistance of international organisations or Muslim nations (the mosque in Rome, Italy, is an example).
3. Islamic Centers: These are locations established for purposes other than prayer (cultural, recreational, and social functions, e.g. meetings, Koran courses, and Arabic language classes). Alongside these activities, prayer is practised.

The fact that musallayat constitutes nearly the entirety of Muslim places of worship in Italy attests to a qualitative problem. There are just a few purpose-built mosques in the country: the large

### 3.1 RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE IN URBAN SPACE:

mosques of Rome, the small mosque of Segrate (near Milan), and the modern mosques of Colle Val d'Elsa (between Siena and Florence), Ravenna, and Piacenza. Compare this to the presence of roughly 200 purpose-built mosques in France (over 2100 Muslim places of worship in total) and 100 (over 432) in the Netherlands (Allievi, 2010b). One of the main reasons for this shortage is the reluctance of local authorities and the community to construct purpose-built mosques - see, for example, Saint-Blancat and Schmidt di Friedberg (2005) on the situation of Lodi. Thus, Muslims in Italy frequently decide strategically to create a small musallah that is often invisible to the local community and institutions (thus avoiding disputes) to meet their needs for places of worship. This musallahayt meets the liturgical needs of Muslims daily. However, they do not meet the goals of public acknowledgement, visibility, and the dignity of Islam in the city, as would the construction of a severe and dignified place of worship in terms of architectural features and localisation.

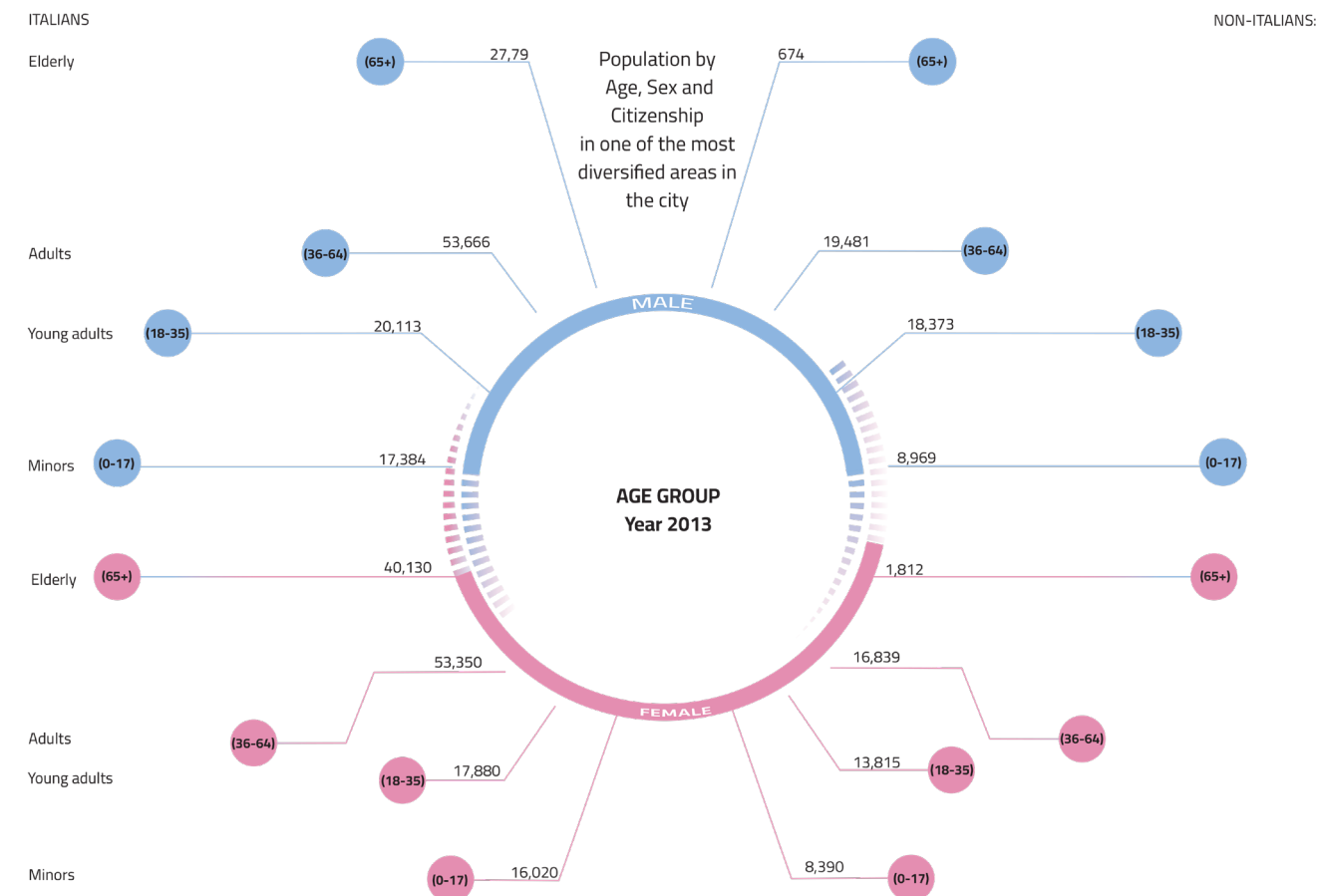


Figure 5: Population by age, gender and citizenship in one of milanese neighbourhood. Source: Author.

### 3.1 RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE IN URBAN SPACE:

#### 3.1.2 Religious Architecture in Turin

I observe and examine how religions intercalate in urban space in Italian cities, demonstrating how inherited religious institutions, mainly dominant Christian traditions, manage spatial regimes through "place-keeping" techniques. Contrarily, diaspora and migrant religions use various "place-making" techniques, but modern spirituality practitioners and new religious groups are "place-seekers," in keeping with their emphasis on flows and mobility.

Recently, Turin was one of Italy's most important industrial hubs and a focal point for national political struggles (Giorda, 2011). The Albertine Statute, passed in Turin in 1848, was Italy's first declaration of civil rights and religious freedom (for Jews and Waldensians). Waldensians and Jews lived in the city before the Statute, but they were denied urban visibility through designated buildings. The Jewish ghetto had a prayer hall, but most rituals took place in private homes. Following the granting of building permits to new congregations, the San Salvario neighbourhood was included in the capital enlargement plan as one of the city's growth regions, allowing non-Catholics to construct their places of worship. In the early years of the new millennium, like other Italian cities, a hugely diverse migrant population arrived. There are currently about 222,000 immigrants living there, meaning that virtually every fourth person living there is a recent immigrant. They come from Eastern Europe, South America, Africa, and the Philippines. Following earlier waves of internal migrants from southern Italy who came to northern Italy after World War II, their presence has significantly changed communities like San Salvario, one of Turin's fastest-gentrifying suburbs. The demographics of religion have altered significantly as a result of immigration as well as the emergence of new spiritualities. There are now 200 religious communities, up from 120 in the last few decades. These changes after centuries of Catholic dominance are also observed in urban media debate: "In Turin, you pray anywhere: churches, courtyards, garages, gyms; structured churches and temporary cen-

### 3.1 RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE IN URBAN SPACE:

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tres of aggregation are blended with life practices and well-being ideologies” (Tortello, 2013). Urban authorities have responded to these issues with laws and projects to address public acknowledgment, visibility, social integration, and religious citizenship. Religious super-diversity has thus led to new ways of situating religious practices in urban spaces.

### 4.1 BELONGING AND IDENTITY POLITICS

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#### 4.1 Belonging and identity politics

##### 4.1.1 Politics of Recognition

“Challenges to alterity, assimilation, or multiculturalism through the “uses” of culture and tradition are not only a symptom of latent Orientalism, but they have also become a general phenomenon of identity politics in the face of fragmentation and alienation nurturing varieties of religious and nationalist fundamentalism worldwide.”(Avcioglu, 2007)

Milan has been a city deeply marked by migration; the proposed project reflected more the economic and cultural changes taking place across Milan and provided the opportunity for a prestigious building by a religious minority. The centrality of religious structure in placemaking among migrant minorities is part of the politics of recognition. Scholars of multiculturalism have gradually moved away from viewing identity as a static, given category that people bring to encounters with others and toward viewing it as the result of a dialogic process with others who can confirm one’s identity claims. According to this viewpoint, recognition is the product of situated sociability, which revolves around legitimacy and competence, temporality and situatedness, and the conditions of involvement in a specific domain.

In general, we can see a tendency to cluster in some significant areas where the presence of Muslims is above 10.0%: the Via Padova-Loreto area in the north-eastern part of Milan with the highest presence of Muslims in Milan – 23.1%, 2,524 persons; the Farini-Bovisa-Dergano area to the north; the Scalo Romana-Piazzale Corvetto area to the south-east; the Giambellino area to the south-west; and the Piazzale Selinunte area to the west. The case of Piazzale Selinunte (18.6% and 19.5%, 1798 and 1580 persons, respectively) is rather distinctive: contrary to the previously mentioned case, Muslims in Piazzale Selinunte tend to concentrate in a small area surrounded by areas where the presence of Muslims is shallow. This fact is probably related to the area’s morphology:

## 4.1 BELONGING AND IDENTITY POLITICS

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Piazzale Selinunte is a deprived area characterised by a high concentration of degraded public housing, surrounded by a portion of the city (e.g. San Siro and Fiera areas) which are very heterogeneous in terms of inhabitants and functions.

### 4.1.2 Political Changes Towards Diverse Places Of Worship

Although the city's government changed in 2011 (from Letizia Moratti's right-wing administration to Giuliano Pisapia's left-wing administration), there are no evident differences in the rules regarding Muslim places of worship. However, there are differences in how the issue is portrayed in public: the right-wing administration repeatedly stated that it was vehemently opposed to the construction of new mosques in Milan, while the left-wing administration repeatedly stated that it intended to address the lack of minority places of worship (mosques included).

Giuliano Pisapia, the previous mayor of Milan, expressed his willingness to consider building a temporary, specifically designed mosque for the World Exhibition Milano 2015 (financed by Jordan and Morocco). Additionally, Pisapia stated that this mosque might remain in place after the Exhibition. However, during the time that Pisapia's government has been in power, the situation of places of worship for minorities has not improved. The city still lacks a sufficient number of neighbourhood-based mosques and a purpose-built mosques, particularly in some parts of the city.

The current musallayat in Milan only partially corresponds to the actual pattern of Muslim residential areas; they are present in some Muslim neighbourhoods (such as Padova, Loreto, Centrale, Dergano, Stadera, and Lodi-Corvetto) but not in others (e.g. Selinunte, Giambellino, Villapizzone). Muslims must therefore continue to pray in informal prayer rooms that cannot accommodate all of the true believers (and doing so may cause a great deal of commotion in the neighbourhood, as in the well-known instance of the musallah in Viale Jenner, where devotees must pray on the side-

## 4.1 BELONGING AND IDENTITY POLITICS

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walk), or in temporary places when permitted (e.g. the PalaSharp basketball arena and the Civic Arena during Ramadan. The attempt to impose religious control over social space can be seen at several scales, from the body to the state. It is negotiated in the context of internal religious debates about innovation and tradition, as well as external debates about the role of religion in public life in general. With a governmental contribution of the Municipality of Milan, today's resolution," says Anna Scavuzzo, deputy mayor in charge of relations with religious communities, "is one of the pieces of the path started by the Municipality of Milan for an open, plural, and inclusive city that ensures respect for the constitutional right to profess one's religious faith freely.

### **"Places of worship and mosques, another step forward from the Municipality of Milan"**



## CONCLUSION

### Conclusion

Diversity is shaping the metropolitan cities in many aspects and it is important to claim that and take a step forward towards how can these megacities benefit from this diversity and what people need to coexist and embrace diversity. It's also important to acknowledge and address that designing diverse and sacred spaces has the potential to create positive impacts not only for religious communities, but for the broader community as well. By promoting coexistence, respect, and understanding between different faith traditions, these spaces can help to build stronger, more inclusive, and more harmonious communities.

Additionally, reimagine the entire process of religious placemaking and placekeeping from end to end, maximize diversity, would help to create a system that could adapt to people needs and their different backgrounds in the landscape environments. Arguably, I can see this reimagination through creating the multi-religious existence to bring people together in a communal and social engagement.

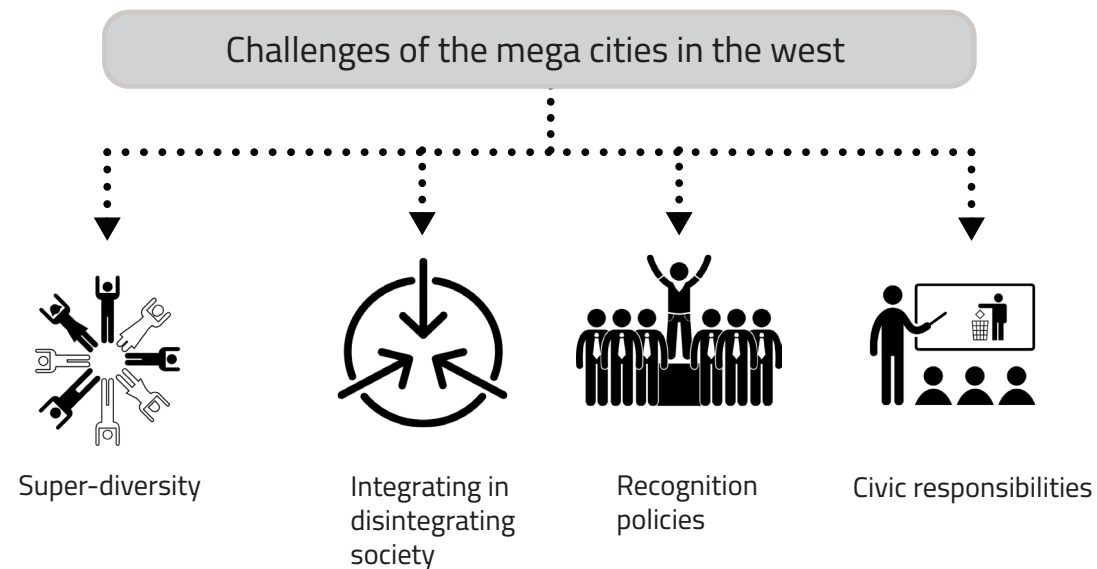


Figure 6: Diagram. Source: Author.

## CONCLUSION

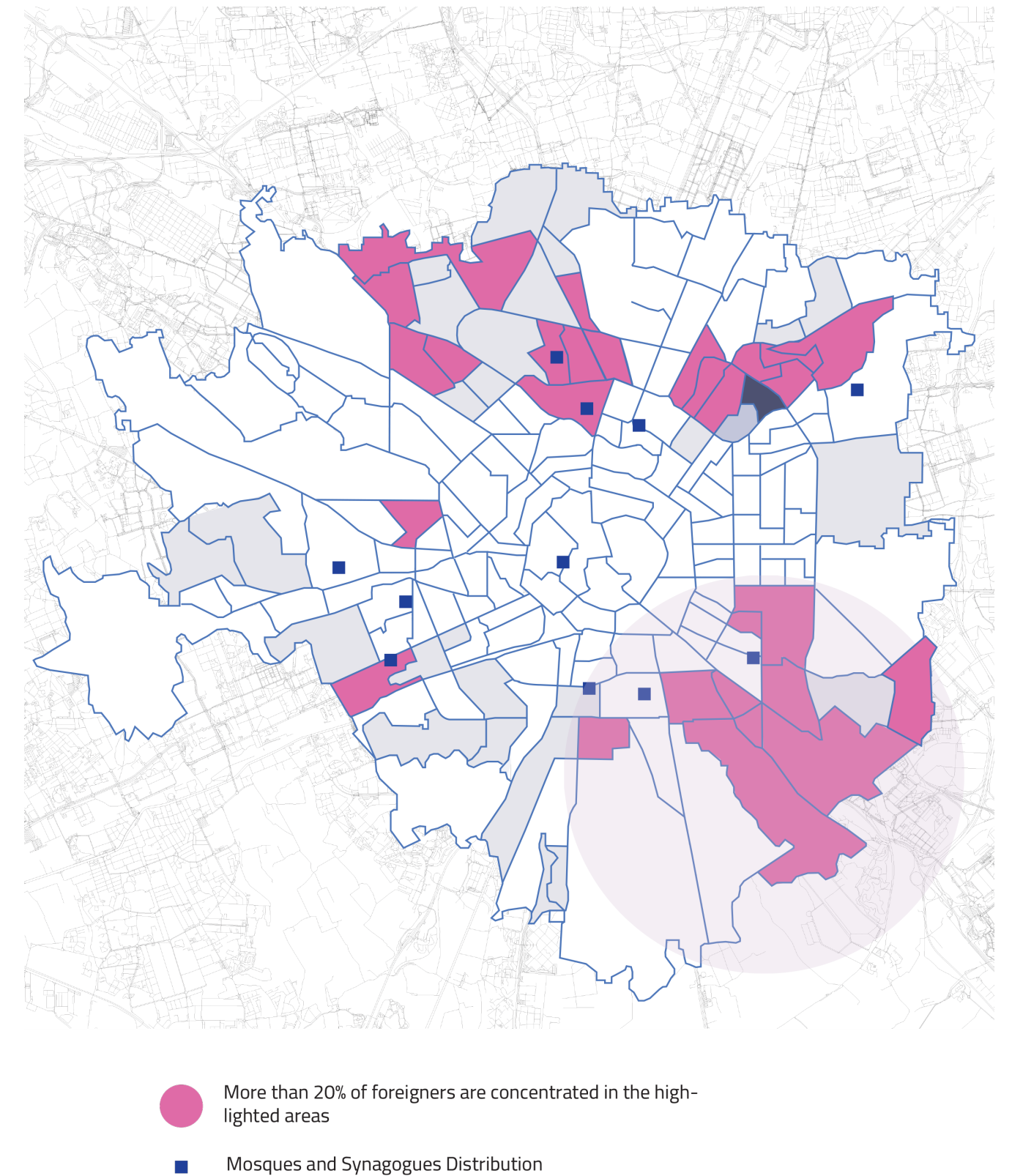
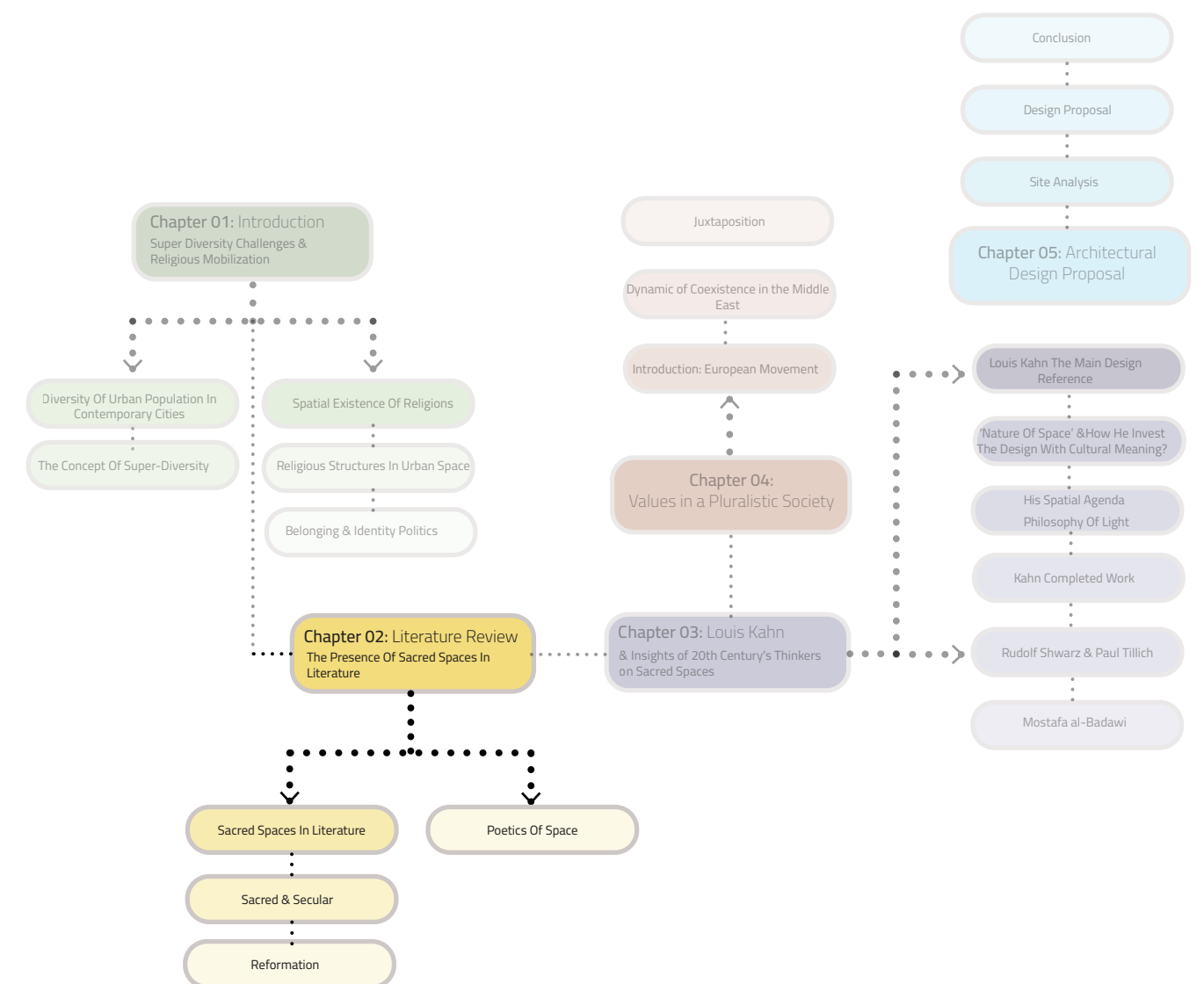


Figure 7: Map done by author, reference: Religion and the city: A review on Muslim spatiality in Italian cities

# Chapter 02

## Literature Review on Sacred Spaces

Keywords: Sacredness, Secularization, Reformation, Poetic of Space, .....



## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW:

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### 2.1 Literature Review:

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

Living in a meaningful world has little to do with the scientific idea of space as an infinite expanse with no centre. Humans have never lived in a space imagined by mathematicians to be isotropic, with the same qualities in all directions. Humans experience space in an orientated manner. For the spiritually conscious person, space is not homogeneous. Such a person experiences manifestations like Moses in Bible and Quraan, **“But when he approached it, he was called, “O Moses! It is true I am your Lord! So take off your sandals, for you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa.”**

Let the last word be with Eliot, the poet and churchwarden;

**The Church must be forever building, for it is forever decaying within and attacked from without; For this is the law of life, and you must remember that while there is the time of prosperity, the people will neglect the temple, and in time of adversity, they will decry it. I have loved the beauty of thy house, the peace of thy sanctuary, Where there is no temple there shall be no homes, Though you have shelters and institutions When the Stranger says: What is the meaning of this city? What will you answer?\***

#### 2.1.2 The Presence Of Sacred Spaces In Literature

The sacred should not be defined because definitions imply limits and are not all-inclusive (Meurant, 1989; Lawlor, 1994). Lawlor (1994) believes that a precise definition of the sacred is not possible simply because of the uniqueness of our backgrounds, while Robert Meurant (1989:1) states that “To confine the Godhead to our construction and image, is to attempt to name God. That is not our right.” Understanding the nature of the sacred as a transcendental, all-inclusive, and absolute reality, according to Eliade (1959), is difficult because such an endeavour necessitates critical,

## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW:

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unified thinking and experience. Because our entire education is built on contention, polarities, and the nature of categorisation, the concept of totality is challenging to grasp (Critchlow, 1980).

In the seventh century, theologian Maximos the Confessor, for example, compared the parts of the church to the components of the human body: “Its soul is the sanctuary; the sacred altar, the mind; and its body, the nave.” He associates the soul and mind with the church’s most sacred space, the realm of the clergy, reflecting his anthropocentric theology; the body, the province of the laity, is implicitly equated with the profane.

The desire to separate the sacred and profane the sacred and profane separate is so strong that screens can be found in nearly every setting where the divine manifests himself to man, from primitive shrines to highly organised religious centres. Psychologists, anthropologists, theologians, and historians of religion, architecture, art, and ritual have all addressed the primal urge to divide space. It is important to remember that all ancient Mediterranean religions shared the need to protect the sacred from pollution.

The bent-axis approach or mountaintop location of Mesopotamian cult centres, as well as the varying floor heights and progressively shrinking room sizes of Egyptian temples, created “screens that effectively shielded rituals and regulated access” through the manipulation of architectural forms. In the broadest sense, the screens range from the temenos, which literally “cut” an ancient sanctuary’s precinct from the surrounding landscape, to curtains or doors placed in front of a modern-day Torah shrine.

Moving to the Mosque in the Islamic Golden Age, “this is the Islamic building par excellence, and as such, the key to Islamic architecture,” said Robert Hillenbrand about the Mosque (Robert Hillenbrand, 1994). Furthermore, the medieval Muslim world, like medieval Europe, was a theoretic society, and the mosque was the natural expression of that society. The mosque as a place of wor-

## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW:

ship is a structure enclosing a space that believers regard as sacred and distinct from its secular surroundings and that, by virtue of its sanctified status, can enhance the meaning of the believer's words and actions while he is present there. If the traditional concept of the mosque and its sacred character is altered, the primary function of the building is distorted (M. Arkoun, 2002). As a result, the design, forms, and special features of the building, such as the dome, minaret, mihrab, and mimbar, are typically reproduced in accordance with the familiar architectural imagery that has been instilled in the minds of individuals as a result of constant repetition over the centuries.

### 2.1.3 Sacred and Secular

The notion of the sacred has been variously defined. Emile Durkheim, the prominent sociologist, and Mircea Eliade, the well-known historian of religion, consider the sacred as that which is distinct from the profane, common and ordinary. Eliade, in particular, believes that the divine presence erupts in the sacred thing, though he also maintains that anything can be set apart as disclosing the qualities of the sacred (Livingston 2005, p. 46). Durkheim, likewise, notes that sacredness is a value placed on objects communally agreed on by specific groups (Paden 2003, p.31). Rudolf Otto, the eminent theologian discussing the sacred in religions, observes that the sacred or the holy is the root of religious experience (Livingston 2005, p.42). Similarly, Durkheim considers sacredness a universal feature of all religious phenomena (Paden 2003, p.31). In the intersection between religion and space. Durkheim, at the turn of the twentieth century and Eliade, half a century later, approached the study of religion and the concept of the sacred in very different ways; both pursued a unifying theory of religious experience. Space was broadly divided into the dichotomy of sacred spaces that represented the known, valued, and honoured on the one hand, and profane spaces which were unknown, chaotic, and denigrated on the other. Such a definition of the sacred seems to follow the spatial defi-

## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW:

nition referring to what is inside the temple, traditionally the counterpart of the profane' designating what is 'outside'. We don't really have this idea of a secular space in Islam because, in our belief, the earth belongs to God, there is nowhere where his operations are not proceeding without any impediment, and every space is part of God's place of prostration for humans beings, and this is part of the meaning of the whole earth is a place of prostration for everything.. everything is submitted to the divine command (Tim Winter, 2021). As Helen Wilcox reminds us, another spiritual tradition has defined the sacred as the whole world 'and all that therein is' (Psalm 24:1, Book of Common Prayer). "The mosque is an unmistakable spatial symbol and abode, fully dedicated at all times to spiritual repose, sacredness and nothing but sacredness." (Arafa Hassan, 2015)

**"IN THE HOUSES [of worship] which God has allowed to be raised so that His name be remembered in them, there [are such as] extol His limitless glory at morn and evening".Quran:31**

### 2.1.4 Reformation and Secularization?

#### **Process of reformation and secularisation that occurred in England and Wales**

Visitors to St Teilo's Church in the National History Museum of Wales find themselves walking into a strangely complex space. A medieval church, its walls were cleansed of its religious paintings from the Romans' past during the Reformation. A new emphasis on the word read from the Bible and spoken from the pulpit had required a clean rendering in whitewash to erase the old words and colourful depictions of saints that had previously surrounded the congregation in the congregation in prayer. As the population shifted over the years, the church building became increasingly isolated in its original location. The words from the pulpit eventually fell silent, and the church fell into disrepair. The roof leaked, and as the rain trickled down the walls, it took the labours performed by those early reformers with it, bringing the medieval wall paintings once again into view. Today, through modern



## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW:

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labours of a different sort, the paintings have been preserved in a climate-controlled gallery of the museum.

The church itself has been painstakingly moved, stone by stone, to its new location within the grounds of the museum's reconstructed Welsh village. The walls are once again being painted with exact replicas of the original wall paintings as they would have looked in 1536. The wooden screen is being re-carved, and the space is open for people to enter and experience, at least in some sense, the holiness of the space as it once was. But now, the church has an additional emphasis, a secular concern, to represent a critical cultural moment. Curatorial objectives now mediate the sacred. It is a display offered for historical understanding and as part of a larger project to give the wider public an aesthetic and cultural appreciation of Welsh life at this time. (Sterret, Thomas 2011)

On the other hand, nowadays, we see many movements towards the revival of churches as dedicated houses of worship for the multi neighbourhood area. For example, as I live in Copenhagen, I notice many architectural firms are seeking proposals that reflect this; "It is time to go to the church". Nevertheless, Friends of friendless churches is a charity that rescues and protects historic places of worship in England and Wales.

## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW:

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### 2.1.5 The Poetics of Space, The Sacredness

Since the late 1980s, there has been a significant increase in interest in religion and urban space. Scholars from several disciplines, including Religious Studies, Social Sciences, and Geography, have embarked on a study of the role of space for religion as part of the so-called "spatial turn" (Kong, 1990). Such interest is frequently linked to concerns of migration, diversity, and recognition, and it has generated extensive ethnographic work on religious identities and their struggles to negotiate their presence in cities around the world (Becci et al., 2013; Gomez and van Herck, 2012; Knott 2008; Pinxton and Dikomitis, 2009). Lily Kong (2001) presents a practical difference to help traverse the developing field. On one side, she sees studies concerned with the poetics of space, which inscribe themselves in a study tradition dating back to Mircea Eliade (1973). Current approaches in this line, which frequently depend on phenomenology, argue that religious places feel a certain way and propose various ways to explore such feelings, such as through conceptions of practice or embodiment (Holloway, 2013; Mazumdar and Mazumdar, 2004; Olson et al., 2013).

**"Place is the most fundamental form of embodied experience—the site of a powerful fusion of self, space, and time" (Feld and Basso 1996b: 9; see also Casey 1997 and Csordas [1994] on the place of the body).**

Arguably a poetics of religion and space (Knott 2009b: 422), Tweed's theoretical project shows the rich possibilities of rethinking what religion is and does through spatial metaphors. Religions, according to Tweed, enable people to make homes (to dwell), whether they are migrants and outsiders or settled insiders; they also facilitate crossings as groups and individuals reposition themselves in physical, as well as corporeal and cosmic terms.

I want to investigate how space is zoned to correspond with boundaries of (im)purity in order to maintain the sacred symbolically and dig deeper into the construction of sacred space, taking into

## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW:

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account physical sensations because the body and its senses actively participate in perceiving space. I argue that "being in space" is both a mental and material configuration, which presupposes a constitutive relation between space and bodies toward the construction of the sacred.(Binte Abdullah Sani, 2015), where I can see the meaning behind the term 'Poetics of Spaces'.

Nevertheless, I have an experience in following a Sufi order, in which the dervishes do a meditative practice as they turn around in a type of dance movements as a devotional expression of Dhikr, remembrance and contemplation to God, and arguably the entranced spinning of the deliberately structured Sufi body (head, hands, arms, torso) can transform a secular/profane place into a space of mystical encounter with the Divine as the dervish whirls in continuous circles around the invisible axis that binds the Sufi to Allah. This experience claims that an indeterminate place can be transformed into a sanctified space. Moreover, religious and sacred spaces have poetic meanings that the body can perceive throughout its spatial experience inside the space. The body as a starting point to explore the poetics of sacred spaces, as Hanisah demonstrates in her work on 'Corporeal Poetics of Sacred Spaces', that the phenomenology of space in which depends on experiences and meanings. The experiences and meanings basically aim to the embodiment of space and the body as the main principle. "The body as the existential ground of culture perceives space and all its accoutrements within as a "world of objects," continuously engaged in a reflection and refraction process, thereby firmly embedding the phenomenological approach within a larger constitutive context".(Binte Abdullah Sani, 2015)

The application of this spatial methodology with its aspects of sense of place and experiences of place, as well as paying attention to the body, senses, and emotions of dwelling and landscape, has been beneficial in the case of diverse religions and secular beliefs in uncovering the different aspects and dynamics of sacred spaces in displaying this diversity where the body and its senses

## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW:

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have leading role in constructing such spaces. Macdonald stressed the ways in which religious people "work with concrete and imagined places in constructing worlds of meaning" and, through their religious work, "transform [space] into place" (2003b:17, 2, 17).

My interest has led me to review historical and contemporary perspectives on religion and space. More recently, I examined the contribution of Louis Kahn on his approach to making poetic spaces, moreover other different themes that help to explore the intersection between religion and spaces like diasporas and migration and religion in a secular context. As a result, the literature part will be dedicated to understanding and exploring the thoughtful making of spaces to move accordingly to the poetic nature of spaces and their sacredness. Nonetheless, those whose spatial concentration is experience, aesthetics, the senses, and the sacred have continued to be drawn to the poetics of space. As Kahn provided the foundation for designing spaces," Architecture deals with spaces, the thoughtful and meaningful making of spaces" (Kahn 1973). In an exploration of Kahn's deepening understanding of space through several of his significant works, providing new inroads to the architecture's rich spatial poetry. From the small scale of space to the organisation of spaces that makes architecture to the effect of this architectural typology in an urban fabric of a city, thinking about how diverse people experience, use, and represent the spaces they inhabit the religious spaces precisely. From this point to the application of multi-religious structure in the contemporary city fabric. Arguably, this reflects, from my point of view, the lateral meaning of the poetic of space. Moreover, the study of space, the poetics of place and the sacred, and politics and religion leads me to move to the placemaking of sacred spaces in the various western countries where new communities have grown in the last 50 years. In addition to the architectural vocabulary of their places of worship distant from their homes, these groups sought conformity, historicity, and authenticity.

## CONCLUSION

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### Conclusion

#### Meaning in Forms / Spiritual Meaning in Forms

Spiritual significance in something as utilitarian as a building. Finding spiritual meanings in God's creation has always been recognised not only as justifiable but as a highly desirable pursuit. Finding such meaning in man's artifacts comes under the same rule and should also be considered highly desirable. For instance, the qibla where you direct your face and heart towards Mecca, becomes stimulus for meditation, islamic architecture is designed primarily to remind of God and paradise. When you enter a sacred space, you leave the world behind you, you turn your back to the world and you enter in the presence of Allah.

The timeless element in sacred architecture is the timeless element of the spiritual significance. These elements we always see in the sacred utilitarian depends on each religion and its principles, like the Aisle, Baptistry, chapel, confession spaces in the church. Also the Mihrab, prayer rugs, Ablution Fountain, dome in the mosques, the ark and the Bimah in the synagogue.

These physical elements illustrate and simulate the timeless and spiritual significance that give the meaning to the users inside these sacred spaces. So there is a significance of a form that indicate points at one of the higher meanings in the Quraan, Bible and Torah, that indecates something about Allah. There are three dimensions, first is the utilitarian dimension which the building has to be designed to facilitate the purpose for which its built, the second is the easthetic dimension "Allah is beautiful, and he likes everthing to be beautiful". The third is the spiritual significance, for instance in the mosque you will find an illustrative image of paradise, another example of spiritual significance in the architecture of the mosque is the minaret, the minaret is somthing that shoots out from ground

## CONCLUSION

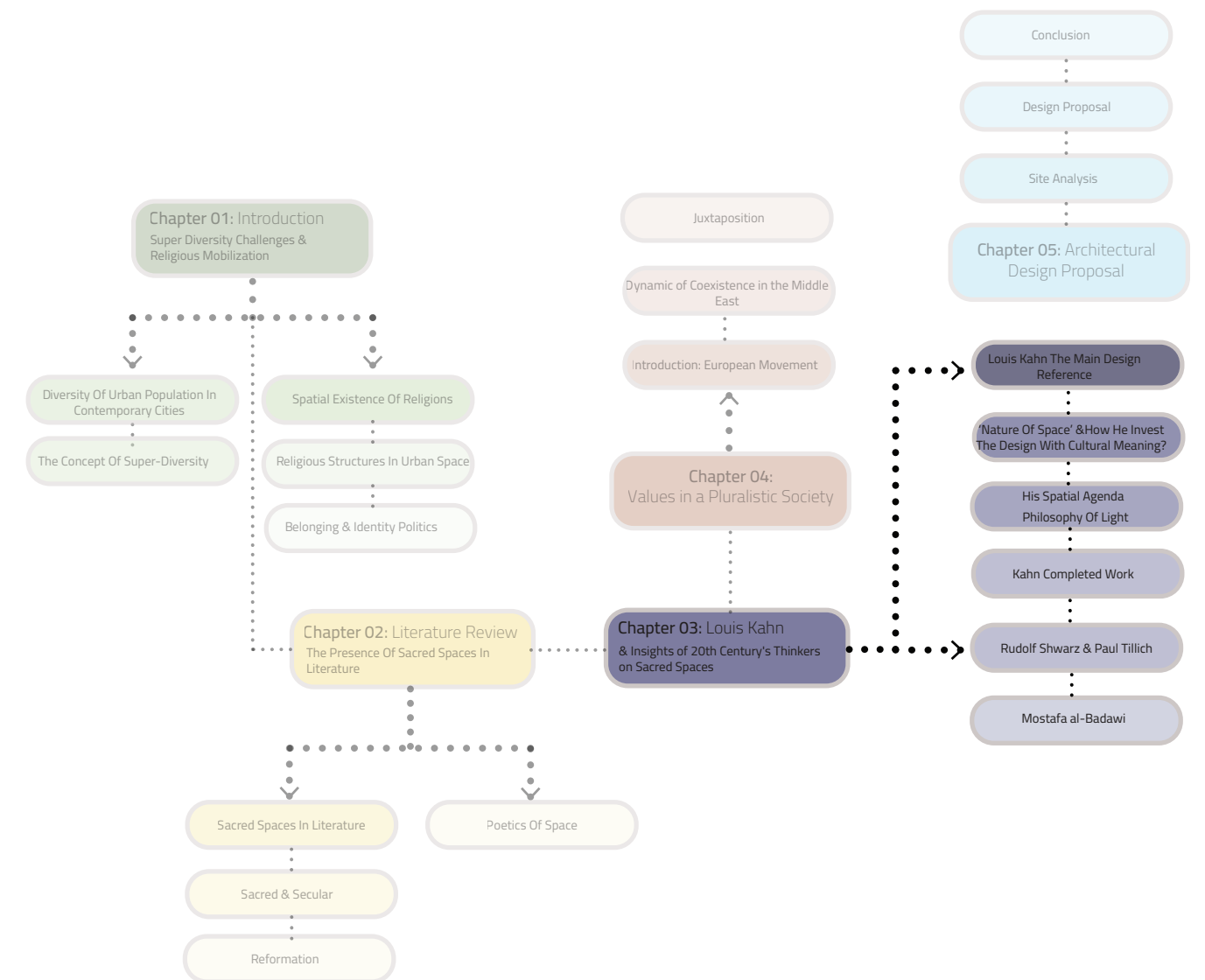
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level to the sky which means the asension of a human being from the physical level to the spiritual level.

# Chapter 03

## Louis Kahn & 'Insights of 20th Century's Thinkers' on Sacred Spaces

Keywords: Nature of Space, Louis Kahn, Monumentality, Philosophy Of Light, Rudolf Schwarz, Paul Tillich, Sacred Emptiness, Communitarian, spiritual significance, Mostafa al-Badawi



### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

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#### 3.1 The Existing Literature on Louis Kahn

##### 3.1.1 Louis Kahn as the main design reference

Kahn's ideas for sacred spaces of various religions blended the concept of assembly with a sense of transcendence. He evoked and investigated the origins of architecture itself through symbolic geometries. Louis Kahn saw monumentality and spirituality as vital traits to be transmitted by architecture after travelling through Rome, Greece, and Egypt. They realised modern buildings were failing to give them. Kahn, although Jewish, was not an unlikely candidate for the Dominicans (THE DOMINICAN MOTHERHOUSE), his freewheeling religiousness seemingly at home in all faiths and none: "I can't speak about religious sects. I just know about the Catholics, the Jews, and the Muslims-I have a vague idea of the various sects. But I don't have a vague idea about religion itself. I feel conversed with religion as a very sacred part of the intimate.

"The room is the beginning of architecture. It is the place of the mind. You are in the room with its dimensions, its structure, its light responds to its character, its spiritual aura, recognising that whatever the human proposes and makes becomes a life. " (Kahn, 1971)

A building is a world within a world. Louis Kahn, 'White Light, Black Shadow,'

Approaching Kahn's ideas and tracing the evolution of modern architecture's guiding spatial paradigm in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the risk of oversimplification, it must suffice to reiterate how much that "New Vision" of space (as propagated by Giedion, Moholy-Nagy, Gropius, and others) has been a manifestation of a paradigm informed by Newton, Descartes, and Plato's not-quite-new atomism: a notion of space as a neutral and absolute background for the objects that inhabit it. It was-among other things-this (mis)understanding of architectural space as neutral and highly delicate and light, rather than as charged, deep, clear and continuous with

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

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meaning, that began to draw heavy critique from all sides as modern architecture hit its Long step in the fifties, Although he was one of the most accomplished advocates of many of modernism's core beliefs/principles, it is no accident that Kahn's rising timed with modernism's great crisis, representing, as his work increasingly did, those qualities of space that mainstream modernism had so carefully purged from its program. Kahn, by no means ignoring true complexities designer, needed to verbally come to terms with the "what" of architecture before the "how" of his mature work was to unfold. After two decades as a journeyman modernist, he began in the fifties to formulate his first original statements on architecture: defining and refining, among other things, a "spatial agenda"; attempting to talk his way out of modernism's dead ends while steering clear of its expression used by its professions that other people won't understand. His texts (largely culled from lectures and interviews) are often the thinking aloud of a man searching: his expression, repetitive, self-invented language ranged from rather sensible short statements to extravagantly emotional drifts into the intended to be understood by a small group of people. Kahn's written or spoken language has long presented a problem for his interpreters. Though timely in its reintroduction of long-neglected themes and refreshingly welcome in its reopening of the gates of wonder to a no longer new profession on pragmatism and opportunism, Kahn's late-life tendency to drift into insensitive and self-indulgent abstract concepts can try even the most loyal of his followers.

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

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#### 3.1.2 Nature of Space, Form and Type

Meaning in Representation and Non-Representation Kahn's initial vocal installation of space at the centre of his agenda appears to have taken place in the early 1950s. Dissatisfied with the way his students jumped from a shallow analysis of the program (and possibly some mildly historical precedents) to the design phase, Kahn proposed a process of creation that began not with an analysis of "function," construction, or precedents, but with a reflection on what he provisionally called the "nature of space."

Examining the "nature of space" or "Form" of an institution. The search for something essential and irreducible is a germ or starting point powerful enough to drive the design and invest it with cultural meaning. Like Quatremère's type, an essential part of Kahn's quest for "Form" is the search for an iconic or "message" value as the basis for the design. In our case, it is A space/ place/ building that injects a new spiritual and inclusive life to the neighbourhood of the Milanese multi-neighbourhood of San Donato. In an environment that is changing rapidly in terms of urban population and diversity needs, the purpose is to make a schematisation which is socially, spiritually and communally available to everyone. In the creation of socio-spatial schemata, our sensations of location and relationship in, say, an urban area or a building is not dependent on any objective fact that can be measured; they are phenomenal.

While Kahn's early writings, such as "Monumentality" 1944, show a passion for the constructive/material basis of architecture, in the middle of the 1950s, his attempts to define "order" were primarily in terms of construction, geometry and spatial hierarchy, by the late 1950s, "space" in Kahn's texts—and more importantly, in his architecture—increased addressed phenomenal, social, emotional, or spiritual dimensions: "One quality of space is measured by its temperature by its light

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

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by its ring." "A room is a place. A small room is a place where, if you are with one other person, you can be generative. You can say what you have never said before. The walls seem to talk with you and give you a sense of what you want to say. The vectors of the two meet... The room is a marvelously sensitive thing."

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

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#### 3.1.3 Philosophy of light

Speaking of the light and the structure of the spaces, the first goal of this study has been to illuminate and shed the spot on the "sacred space creation" with the linkage to "a world within a world" as Kahn mentioned in his text. The recognition of a place where possibly diverse people would meet, everybody's space which the religious spaces should be. The spaces have been made out of feeling, a feeling of a world within a world—the world where man's mind becomes sharp and present.

"The senses really can be considered one thing, it all comes together" ... "I must see a plan as though it were a symphony, of the realm of spaces in the construction and light. I turn to light, the giver of all presences: by will, by law. You can say the light, the giver of all present, is the maker of material and the material was made to cast a shadow, and the shadow belongs to the light. Louis was continually referring to silence and light. As I contemplate and halt, frequently as Louis did, while observing nature, water features, the sky, changing moods of the sun, rain, and shadows, I understand what he meant. The pace and activity of people have frequently changed as they move through the various spaces of light and shadow. There is frequently a murmur, followed by quiet, a pause, and departure. Sacred spaces/ places of worship need to emit peace and tranquillity, considering the alterations in time, movement phase and activity kind. They are defined by a fundamental timelessness that anchors the past, present, and future together, like Noah's Ark.

The structure is the maker of the light from Kahn's point of view. The module of the structure is light-no light. "It's a sort of structure, a sense of the order of brick, sense of the order of structure, which made this possible. The design goes on and on, speculation of the ways you can do this thing in the most fantastic ways because you recognise that structure has an order; that material has an order; that the construction has an order; the space has an order in the way of the servant spaces

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

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and the spaces served; that the light has an order because it has an order in the sense that it is given by structure, and that the consciousness of the orders is felt".

Speaking about the various feelings that people may feel inside different types of buildings, especially the sacred spaces, I remind you of the story by Rumi, a very famous Persian poet who lived in twelve hundred or so who tells poet-writes of a poet; "There was a Priestess who was going through her garden in spring, and of course, it was a glorious day. As she went through her garden, observing everything, and came to the threshold of her house, she stopped in admiration--standing at the threshold, looking within. And her servant-in-waiting came over to her, saying Mistress, Mistress. Look without and see the wonders that God has created.? And the mistress said, yes, yes, but look within and see God!" In other words, what man has made is a manifestation of God.



### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

#### 3.1.4 Louis Kahn complete work

##### 3.1.4.1 Louis Kahn's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

In the history of contemporary architecture, Louis Kahn's Capitol Complex in Dhaka, Bangladesh, is monumental yet veiled in mystery. The political and national movement of the Bengalis is closely related to the significance of the Capitol Complex. The relationship between architectural form and norms. With the National Assembly Building's strong resonance in the area, Kahn revived the poetic of brick architecture. With its earth-hugging physiognomy, deep shadows, geometric form, and articulation of the arch with the concrete tie, Kahn's new order of brick architecture introduced a new vocabulary to the repertoire of modern regional architecture. They may have even given rise to what would later be called "critical regionalism."



Figure 8: Exterior of The National Assembly Building, Source: The Architectural Review

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

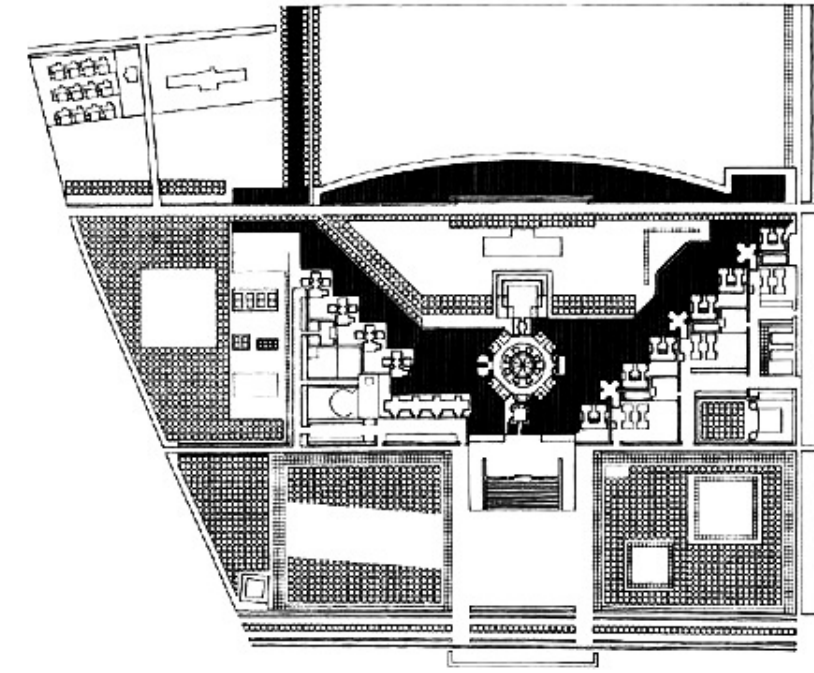


Figure 9: Sher-e-Bangla Nagar pplan. Source: The Architectural Review



Figure 10: Source: DAVID GREEDY / GETTY IMAGES - The jewel in the Capitol Complex crown is the fairfaced-concrete National Assembly Building.

Arial view from the northwest of the citadel of the assembly showing the north garden entrance plaza to the left centre. The assembly building without a roof in the middle, the south entrance plaza to the right, and the cylindrical structure. Other buildings related to the lake or in the contiguous ground will be of masonry construction.



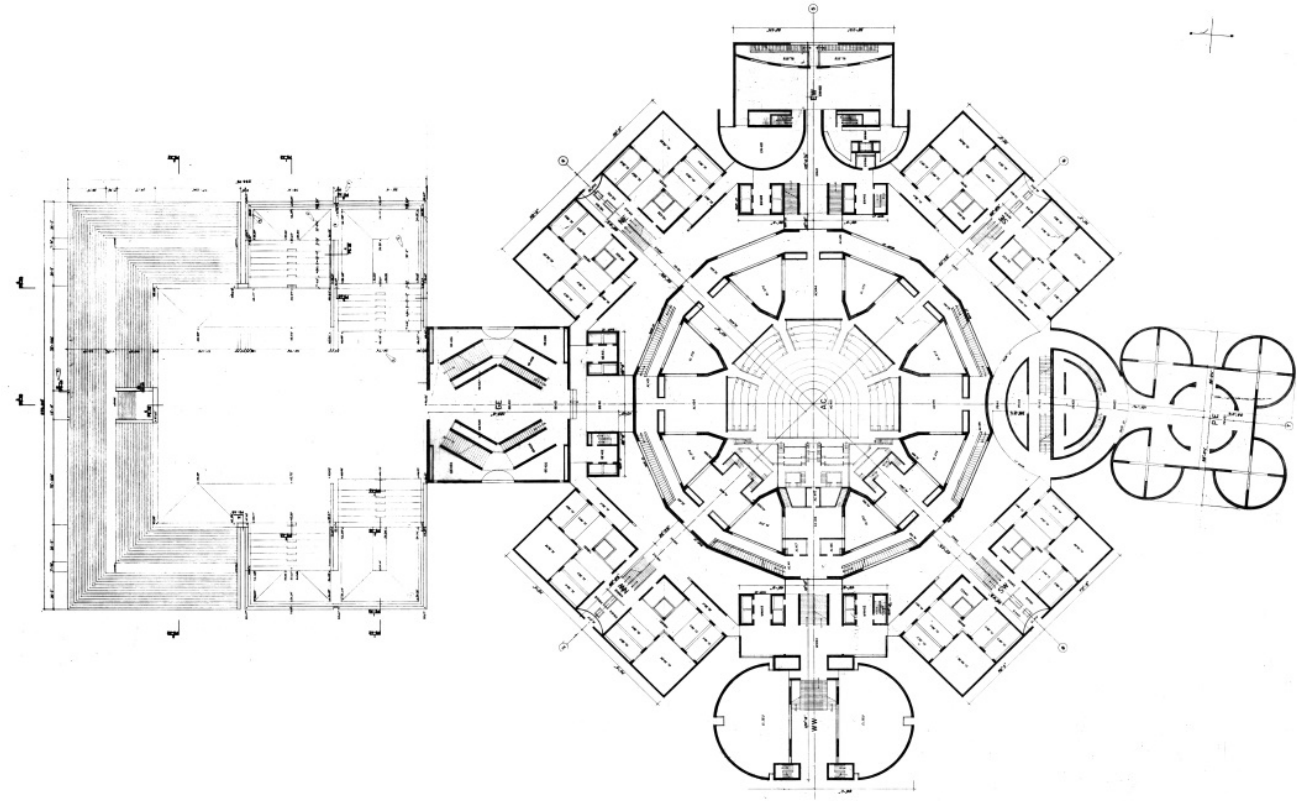


Figure 11: National Assembly Building Ground Floor Plan, Source: The Architectural Review

Plan showing the central zone and the peripheral zones, north entrance to the left, mosque and south entrance to the right. Hall of Assembly in the central zone showing eight light courts and galleries in between.

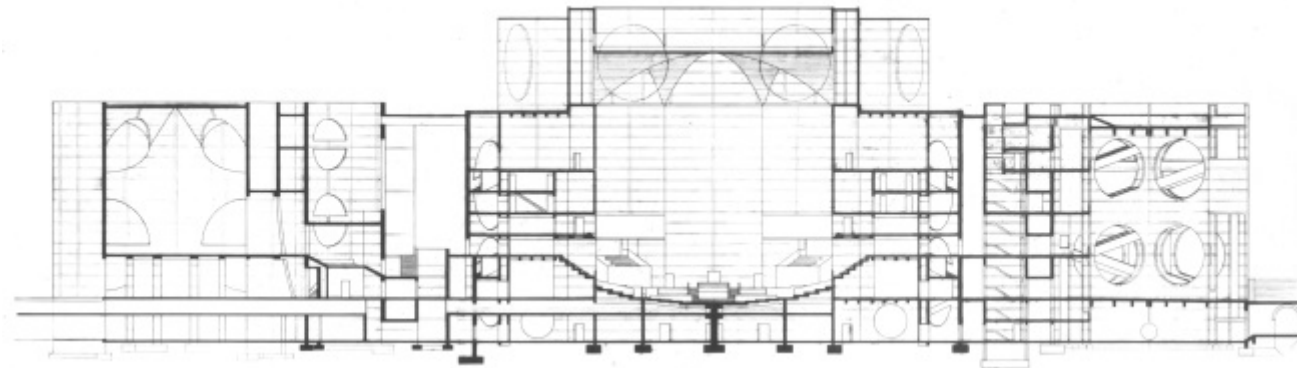


Figure 12: National Assembly Building Section, Source: The Architectural Review.

Longitudinal north-south section facing west, showing prayer hall to the left and garden entrance to the right, and speakers' dias in the centre.

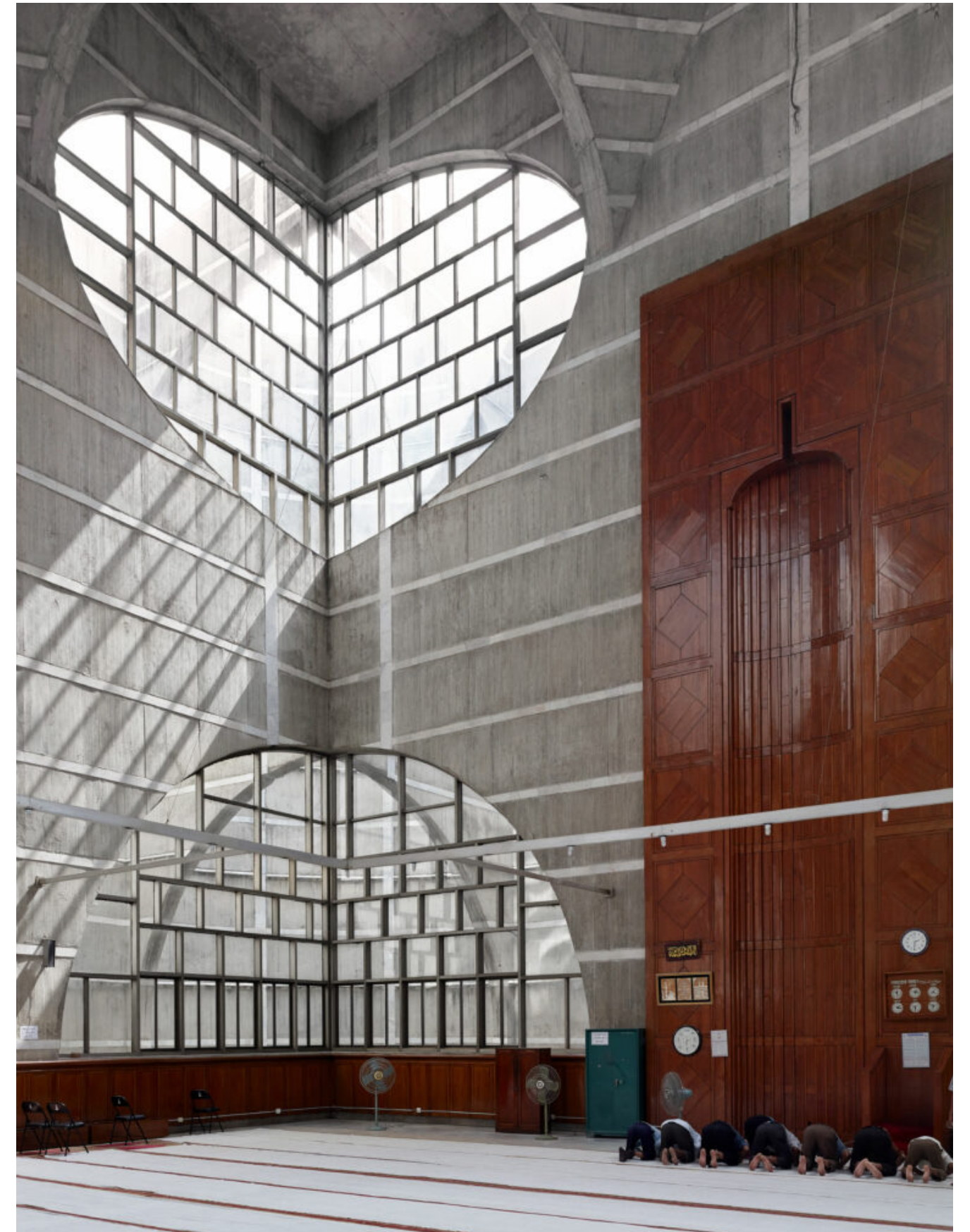


Figure 13: National Assembly Building - Mosque Interior Shot. Source: The Architectural Review



### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

#### Analysing and sketching the Dakka assembly building:

The architecture image of the assembly building gave a practical shape to the interior needs. For instance, the ablution space or fountain represents the requirement of ritualistic purity of the worshiper's body, garments, and any attachments. The interior of the assembly building divided into three zones; the central zone is the area of the assembly, the middle zone provide the interior circulation, and the outer zone is the area of the offices, garden entrance, and the mosque. The assembly building is composed of eight light-air courts to light all the interior spaces.

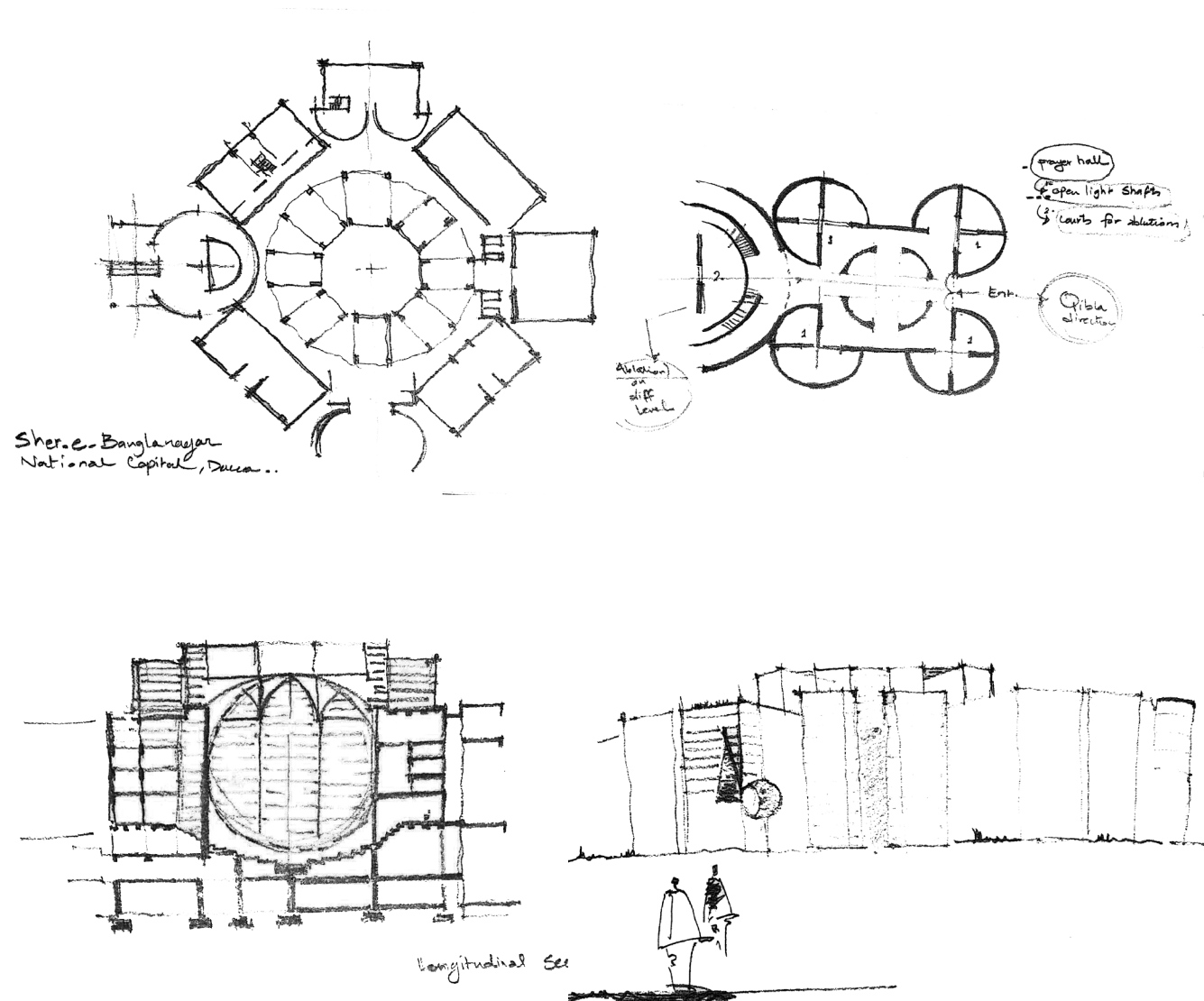


Figure 14: National Assembly Building, Interpretative Sketches, Source: Author

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

#### 3.1.4.2 First Unitarian Church/School of Rochester, NY

In 1958 the first unitarian church congregation commissioned Louis Kahn to design a new church and replace the existing building situated in the Midtown plaza in a large open land gently sloping west from its eastern entrance.

The sanctuary of the First Unitarian Church, which serves as the centre of the structure and promotes community, unites a contemporary design aesthetic with ancient unitarian values.



Figure 15: Exterior of Unitarian Church, Rochester. source: ArchDaily

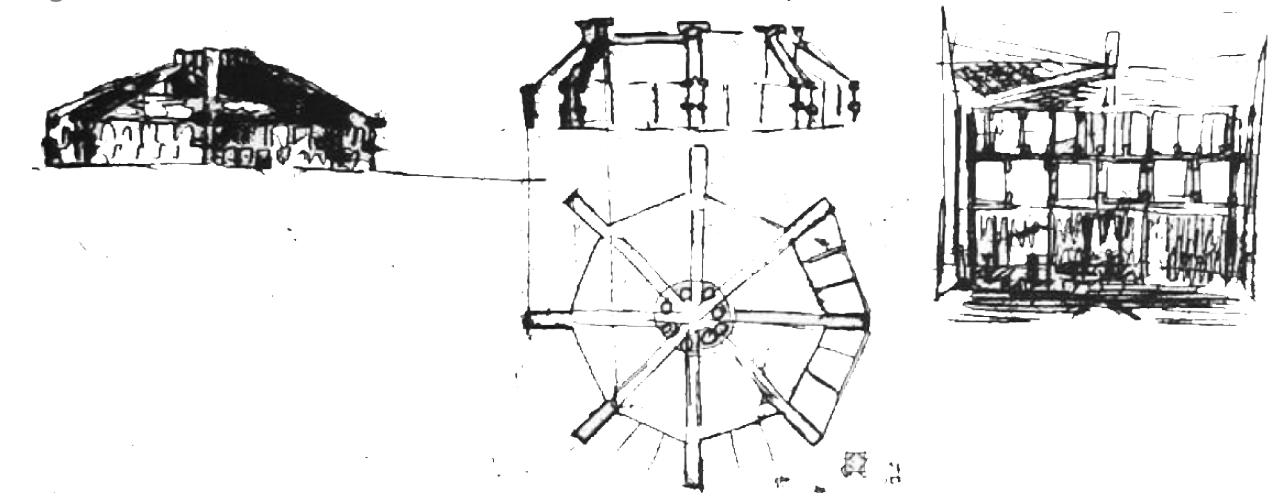


Figure 16: First Phase Sketches showing the inspired image of a building on a mound. Source: Louis I. Kahn Complete Work.

Perspective sketch view from the northeast, early version, showing the dream-inspired image of the building on a mound. At once, Louis had the umbrella scheme with the columns on the side, but then he changed it after a wide-span roof and skylight studies.

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

#### The evolution of the design through conceptual

#### sketches:

"I made a square centre where I placed a question mark.. meant it to be the sanctuary. An ambulatory encircled this for those who did not want to enter the sanctuary. Around the ambulatory, I drew a corridor that belonged to an outer circle enclosing a space, the school it was clear that the school which gives rise to the question becomes the wall that surrounds the question. This was the form expression of the church, not the design." Said Louis; having heard the minister give a sense of the Unitarian aspirations, it occurred to me that the sanctuary is merely the centre of questions, and the school was that which raises the question. I felt that that which raised the question, the spirit of the question, were inseparable.

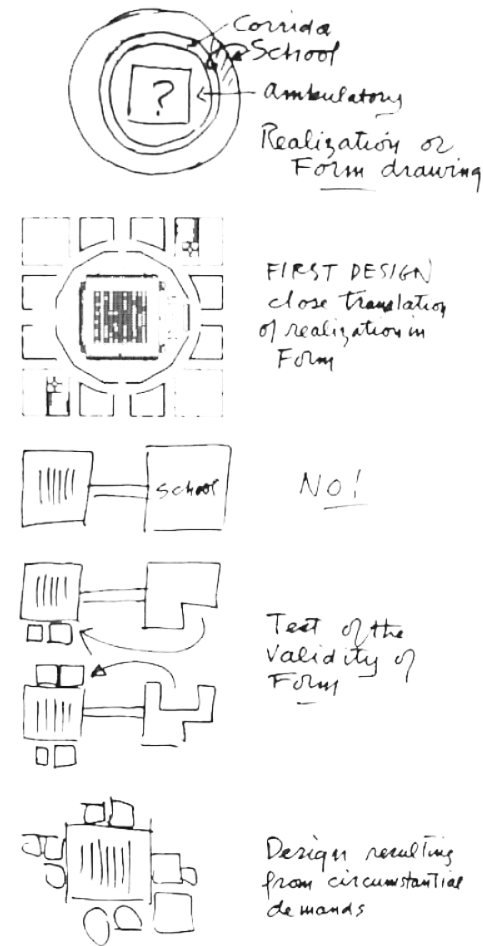


Figure 17: Evolution of The Unitarian Church in Conceptual sketches. Source: Louis I. Kahn Complete Work.

The plan of the first design and diagrams demonstrate the realisation of design from circumstantial demands. At one point, they insisted that the sanctuary must be separated from the school, which was a ferry ble blow to me Dividing might be just doing lip service to the many other activities of man. And so, at one point, I had to show the auditorium as a separate thing simply. but did this only in the diagram, not in the actual plan. I asked questions about the sanctuary: What do you do after services? They say they have a coffee hour: they discuss the things that were talked about in the auditorium.

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

They felt it would be terrific to have a kitchen close to the sanctuary. So I took a piece out of the school block and put it next to the sanctuary. And then they felt another room was necessary next to the kitchen to serve the kitchen So I placed that and took another piece off of the school, And pretty soon, they all began to realise that we were back where I had started. It had to be that way because of the very nature of the activities. and I sensed right from the beginning that these things had to be close. I realised they didn't know what a school really was: that a school was an adult room and a schoolroom for children. And so all plans that follow give in to the design demands of the various committees and, of course, the financing limit. which disallow extra rooms and prevented the development of a clear geometric form on the exterior of the building

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

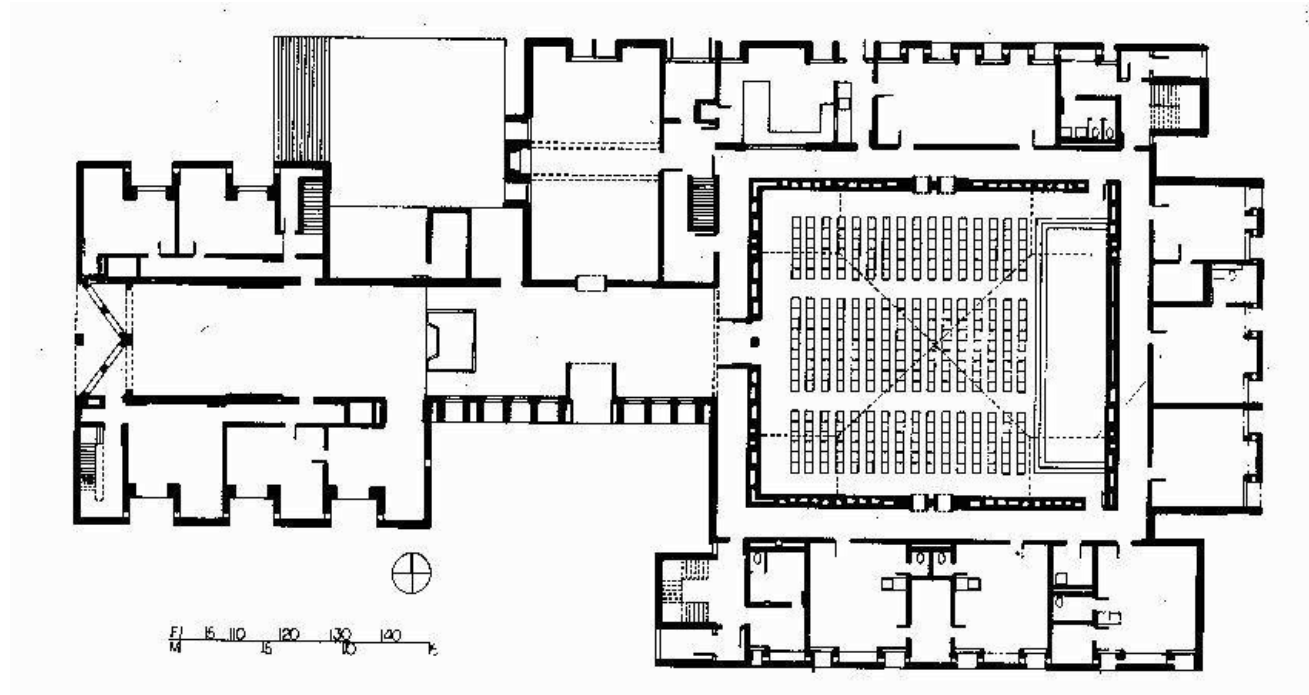


Figure 18: First Floor Plan of The Unitarian Church. Source: Louis I. Kahn Complete Work.

The First Floor plan shows a rectangular sanctuary and corridor surrounded by loosely as ranged square units accommodating the various requirements of the school and administration. The seating capacity of the sanctuary is increased from 282 to 468 seats.

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

Longitudinal section through the sanctuary and meeting room, looking towards the north. You get your light from the four corners, four columns and a concrete wall. And off this concrete wall is cantilevered the roof. And this wall also holds these slabs which intersect - the beams are out - I've taken the beams away, but you get the light. Now, interestingly enough, this acoustically is good. The turning of the slab upward these are good for reverberations that you would get in the music.

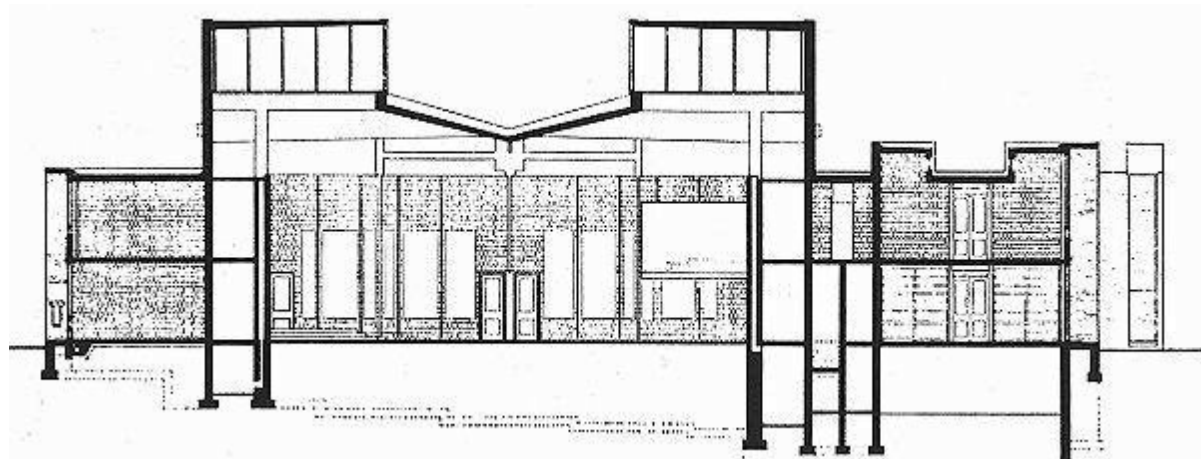


Figure 19: Longitudinal Section Through The Sanctuary and The Meeting Room Looking Towards North, Source: Louis I. Kahn Complete Work.



### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN



Figure 20: Interior Shot of the Sanctuary of the Unitarian Church. Source: ArchDaily.

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

#### Analysing and sketching the unitarian assembly building:

The first plan was almost a literal translation of the form drawing that presented parts of the unitarian building, before Kahn knows the specific requirements, but he started with a primitive statement. The exterior became a square, the interior corridor was a round and the sanctuary was still square, with four large corner rooms for various activities.

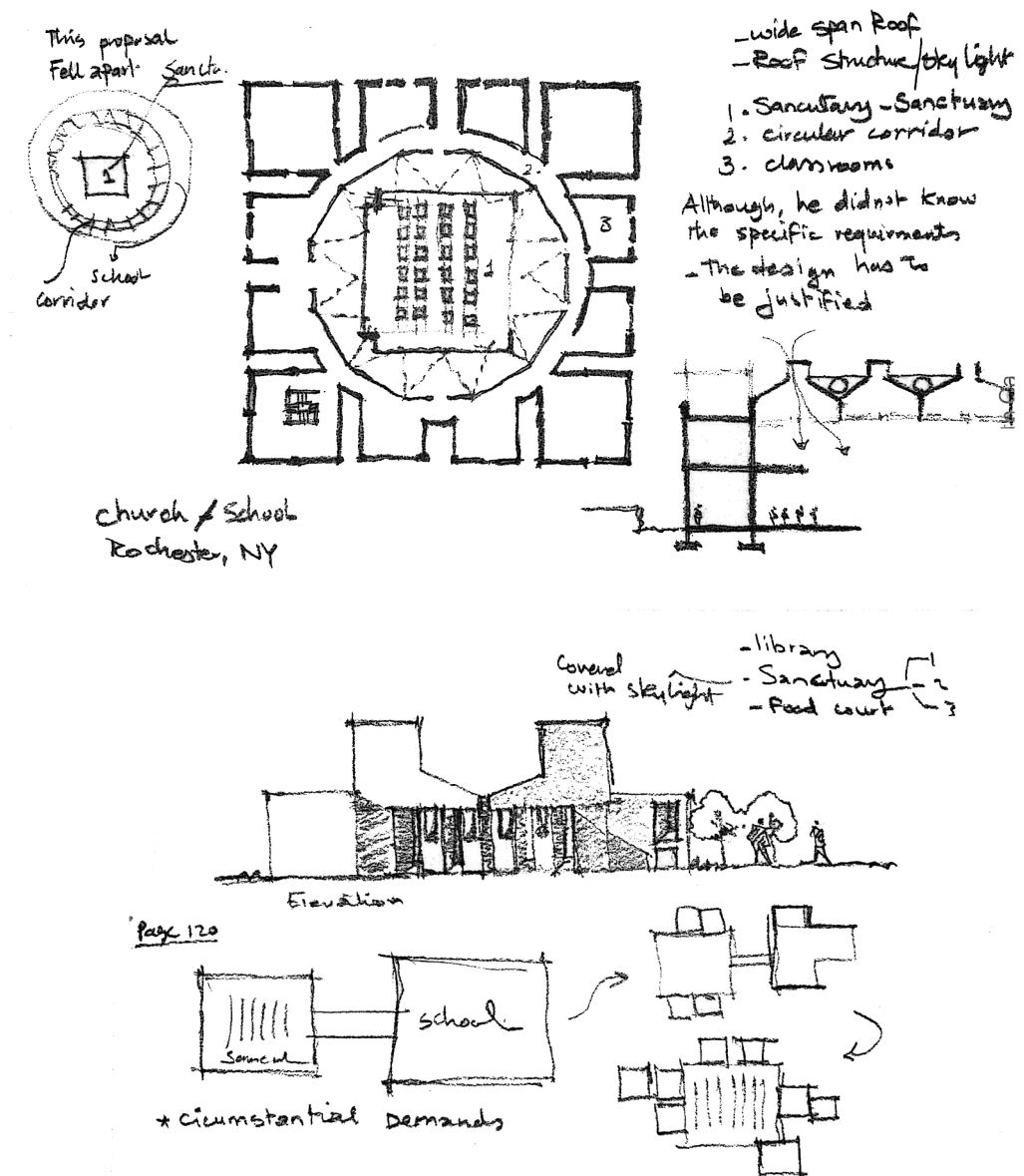


Figure 21: Interpretative Sketches of the Unitarian Church. Source: Author.



### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

#### 3.1.4.3 Aduth Jeshurun Synagogue Montgomery County, PA

Louis Kahn realised that monumentality and spirituality were vital traits to be expressed by architecture and that modern structures were failing to do so after travelling through Rome, Greece, and Egypt. Kahn got multiple commissions from Jewish institutional benefactors despite not being a practising Jew or predictably belonging to a synagogue for nearly any immigrant of his time.

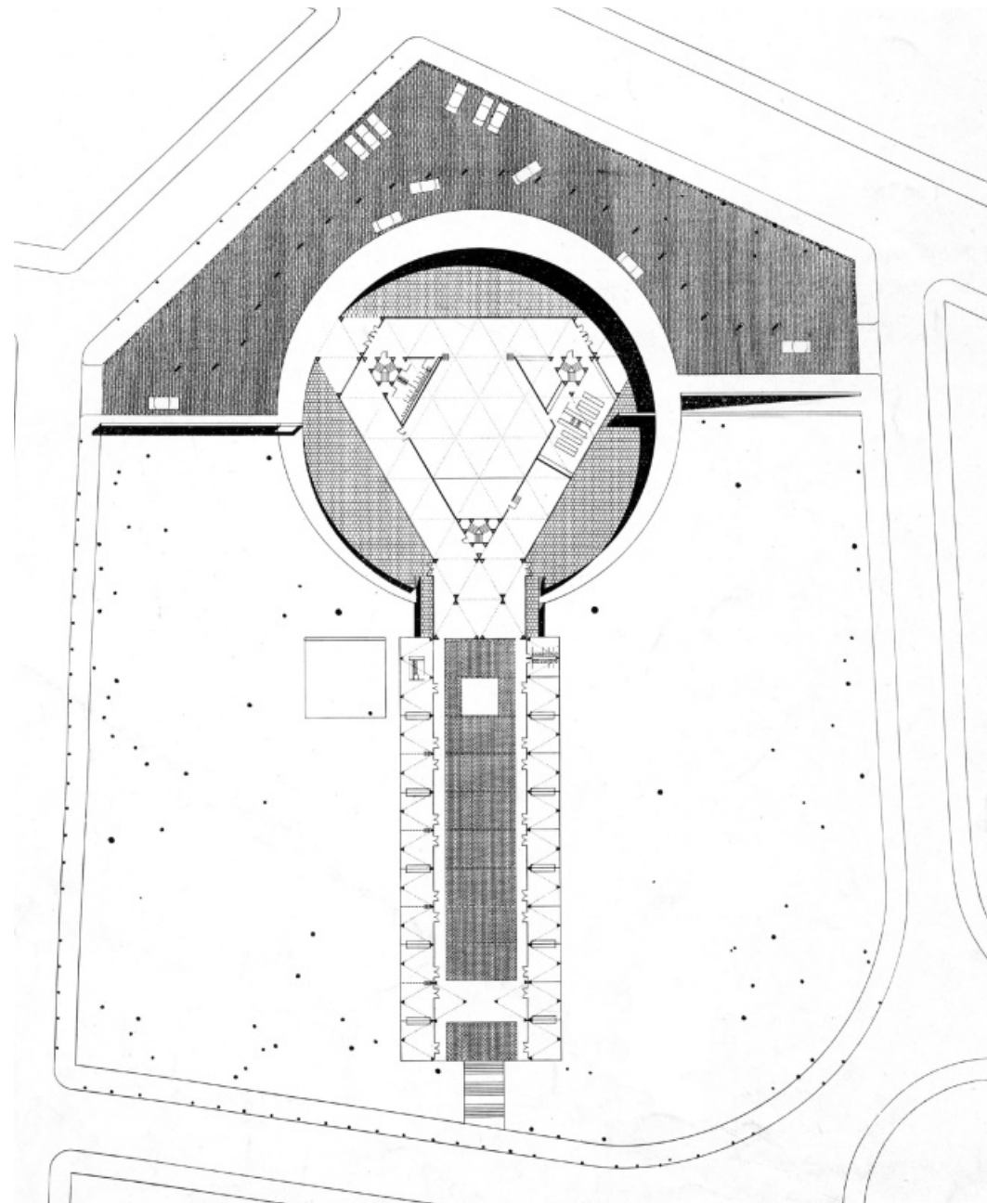


Figure 22: Master Plan of the Unbuilt Synagogue. Source: The Architectural Review.

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

The assembly building rests in a circular plaza cut into the slope of a 5-acre estate, the retaining wall following the rise in the land casts a half-moon shadow on the plaza. The car dock is inclined with the land and designed for slow movement. Parking is separated from movement by posts as tall as a man about 20' apart, which also serves to light the cobbled paving of the dock. The circular sidewalk follows the 6% slope of the dock at and above the plaza level and continues to dip below the plaza level for the circulation needs toward the east. The rest of the site will be developed as places for relaxation and the enjoyment of nature's design. For some time, Kahn considered using a tetrahedral structure.

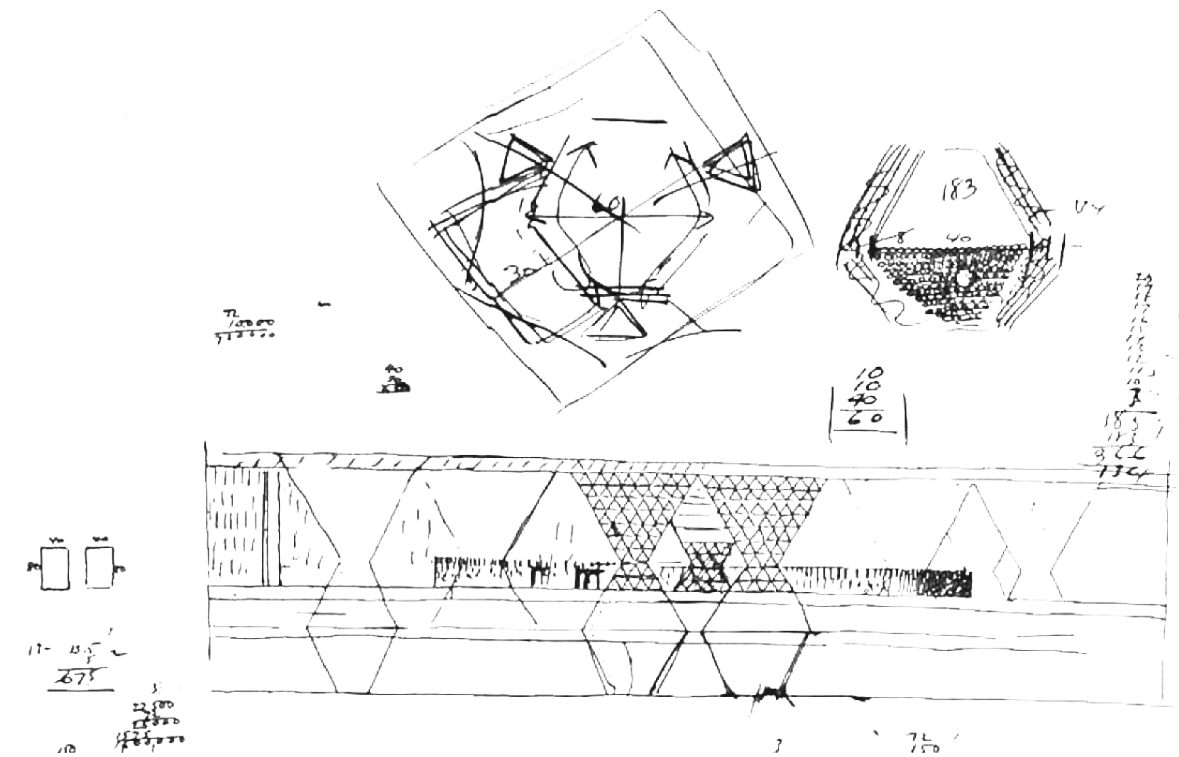


Figure 23: Sketches show the tetrahedral structure. Source: Louis I. Kahn Complete Work.

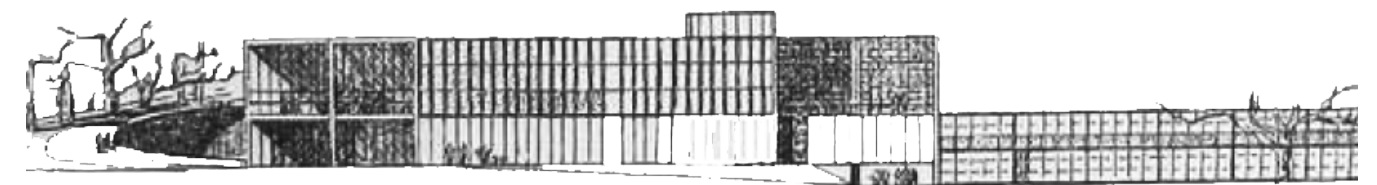


Figure 24: Elevation study. Source: Louis I. Kahn Complete Work.

### 3.1 THE EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOUIS KAHN

#### Analysing and sketching the Adath assembly building

A project for Adath Jeshurun community, where he design a plaza on a lower level for pedestrian circulation needs, also to create spaces for relaxation and enjoyment of nature. Moving on to the significant form in which, Kahn developed a structure arrangement to accommodate a simple function and quantitative consideration. The significance of form appears in the combination of triangle and circumscribing circle which was a motif and the structure arrangement.

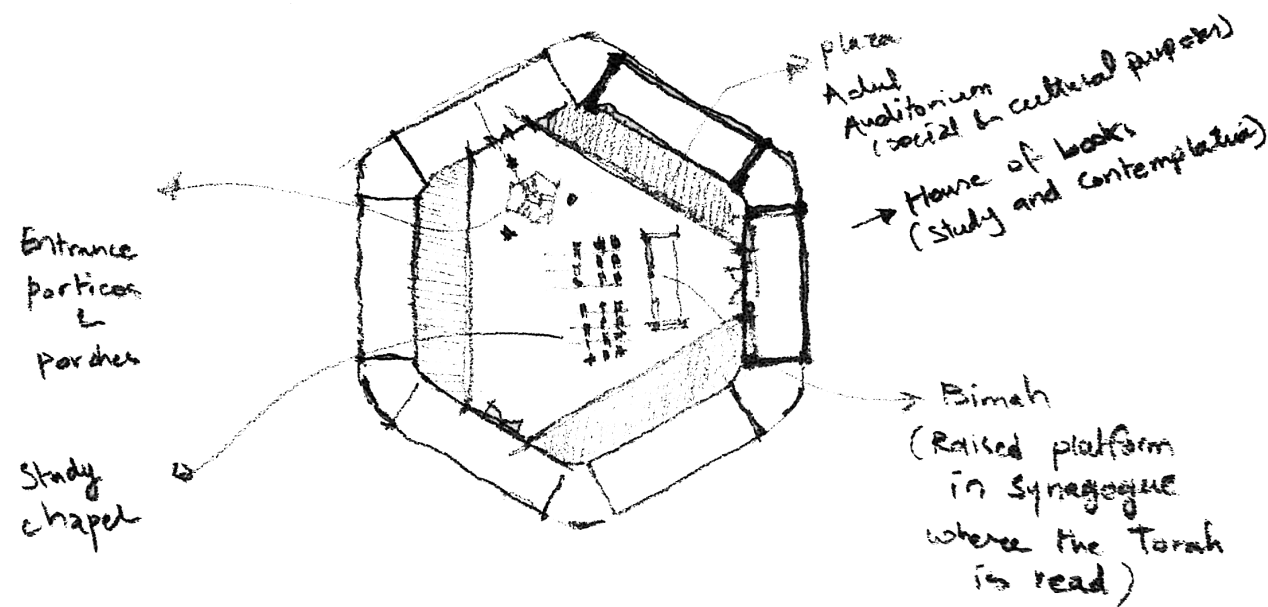


Figure 25: Interpretative Sketches of the Adath Synagogue. Source: Author.

### 3.2 'INSIGHTS OF 20TH CENTURY'S THINKERS' ON SACRED SPACES

#### 3.2 'Insights of 20th Century's Thinkers' on Sacred Spaces

##### 3.2.1 Rudolf Schwarz & Paul Tillich

It is important to make the case once more for sacred emptiness as a religious symbol in and of itself at a time when the minimalist emptiness of many modern church buildings is rightfully criticized for failing to evoke a sacred feeling. Before looking at the holy emptiness in contemporary church architecture, this essay recovers the ideas of two scholars from the 20th century who argued for it: the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich and the Roman Catholic architect Rudolf Schwarz.

When can it be said to be sacred and when is it not? This is an important question for anyone who considers the meaning of religion today, not just architects. The monotheistic dimension of religion, the importance of mystery, contemplation, and transcendence in contemporary life, and the capacity of emptiness to be a symbol of the divine are all addressed in this question. (Daelemans, 2022).

By uncovering the insights of the two thinkers of the 20th century and analyzing how did they tackled the argument of the sacred architecture, The first is the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich (1888–1965), The second is the Roman Catholic architect Rudolf Schwarz (1897–1961), close friend of Roman Catholic theologian Romano Guardini (1885–1968) and writer of a seminal book on church building.

The sacred emptiness was significant in the twentieth century, in an era of architectural modernism and minimalism, but it has recently become a question in and of itself: what was initially intended to be sacred appears to have lost its sacredness (van Rooyen 2018). Consider Schwarz's well-known Corpus Christi church in Aachen (1930). Schwarz's contemporaries were already having difficulty accepting the building's utter emptiness. Even Guardini had to defend its emptiness as

### 3.2 'INSIGHTS OF 20TH CENTURY'S THINKERS' ON SACRED SPACES

providing meaningful, contemplative, and sacred silence (Guardini 1931). Nonetheless, opposition to minimalist space appears to grow today (Barron 2001; Doorly 2007). Sacred emptiness has been diluted into mere emptiness over the years, perhaps not objectively, but something in the relationship between the space and its users has lost its appeal. Perhaps something has changed subjectively in the users' ability to experience the sacredness of emptiness as a divine symbol. So, can something be done objectively in the architecture to restore people's sense of the sacred? (Daelemans, 2022).

Tillich uses seven elements when discussing the bridge between art and religion. First, art and religion must be linked in some way. Second, Tillich is primarily concerned with expressiveness, Tillich is primarily concerned with expressiveness, Third, sacred emptiness appears to him to be a means of bridging art and religion. Fourth, sacred emptiness is the most expressive form for him. Fifth, for religious art and architecture, sacred emptiness may be the best solution. Sixth, he defines sacred emptiness in relation to religious symbols (objects such as icons, crosses, figurative art, and liturgical furniture). Seventh, honesty and humility appear to be at the heart of this definition, because we should abandon the pretense of possessing religious symbols that we do not have, because they have lost their power: many religious symbols are not understood. In 1962, Tillich came to the conclusion: "The sacred void can be a powerful symbol of the presence of the transcendent God. However, this effect is only possible if the architecture shapes the space so that the building's numinous character is visible. An empty room with only benches and a desk for the preacher is like a religious education classroom, far removed from the spiritual function that a church building must have" (Tillich, 1989). Again, he contrasts sacred and mere emptiness, which cannot express the "numinous," or divine presence. (Daelemans, 2022).

### 3.2 'INSIGHTS OF 20TH CENTURY'S THINKERS' ON SACRED SPACES

It is significant that, at least in the opinion of this theologian, modern Protestant architecture must incorporate the spiritual and numinous aspect, which could also be referred to as sacramental from a Roman Catholic perspective. He doesn't specifically explain how architecture may produce this impact, but, notably, he insists that it is the architecture itself that "shapes the space." In 1955, he described the specific architectural interaction of space and light as "a mysticism from below," which does not require aesthetic ornamentation or religious symbols to be "beautified" or "signified" because architectural emptiness is potent enough to serve as a religious symbol on its own (Tillich, 1989).

Let us now turn to Rudolf Schwarz; he presents his view of architecture as essentially dynamic, as the "combination of life, space, and time"; as he defines architecture in his first publication (Schwarz, 1924). Kieckhefer dedicated a whole chapter to this architect, his theory, and his practice, but, unlike my reading, he considers his buildings more of a "contemplative" than of a "kinetic" kind (Kieckhefer, 2004). Schwarz's thinking on church building starts with the body, the individual body and the collective body of a Eucharistic assembly called to become the Body of Christ (Schwarz, 1958; Daelemans, 2015).

The body needs space to dance. This dance is not in the first place to be taken literally but rather as a metaphor for the changing expression of the living body: the body adopts different postures over time. In a religious context, these postures express diverse attitudes towards the divine. Over time, architecture is as organic as a plant that grows out of the "space of a point" (Punktraum, the German word that Schwarz uses, expresses well that even the smallest dot is in itself primarily "space": (Schwarz, 1924). Architecture is space over time for a living body. Architecture is first and foremost a "living space" (Lebendiger Raum) that grows and develops, giving way to a variety of "fundamental manifestations" (Grundanschauungen). These are akin to hinges or "oscillatory sta-



### 3.2 'INSIGHTS OF 20TH CENTURY'S THINKERS' ON SACRED SPACES

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tions" (Schwingungsstände), each with a "definite direction" (bestimmte Richtung) towards a higher reality (Schwarz, 1924).

#### 3.2.2 Mostafa al-Badawi

Mostafa Al-Badawi, who has a significant contribution in writing about Islamic Architecture- which is among the most recognisable and most admired in the world. It's known for its beauty, sacredness and timelessness, but few understand the meanings and metaphors that underpin it. In his book, the Spiritual Significance in Islamic Architecture Dr Mostafa Badawi takes the reader on a journey to uncover long forgotten meanings related to sacredness and architecture.

He mentioned that there is correspondence between levels of existence, level of reality and that religions have to indicate something in your heart and vice versa, and that what we should see unrelated between religion and art which the same argument as Tillich and Schwarz mentioned as well that there had to be meaning in man-made things, and that what we should clearly see in architecture when we look at it from spiritual point of view as well as from the art historian point of view. (Al-Badawi, 2021). It is not about what the architect wanted to do when it comes to a sacred building but it is more about the lay user what he should perceive in such spaces. From manufacturing of geometry in terms of the engineering possibilities and the aesthetic and sense of transcendence in these juxtapositions of the patterns and colors and the affected state that generated by that kind of architectural conjuring that takes you to a certain exalted emotional and spiritual places. (Winter, 2021). In Architecture, you start with a form, the form triggers of thoughts, and these thoughts and concepts rise up to connect with a higher meaning and in sacred spaces the higher meaning is the attribute of divinity. And anything that succeed to triggers this in your heart and mind, then this is sacred art, and sacred architecture. There are things that people absorb from the surroundings in a

### 3.2 'INSIGHTS OF 20TH CENTURY'S THINKERS' ON SACRED SPACES

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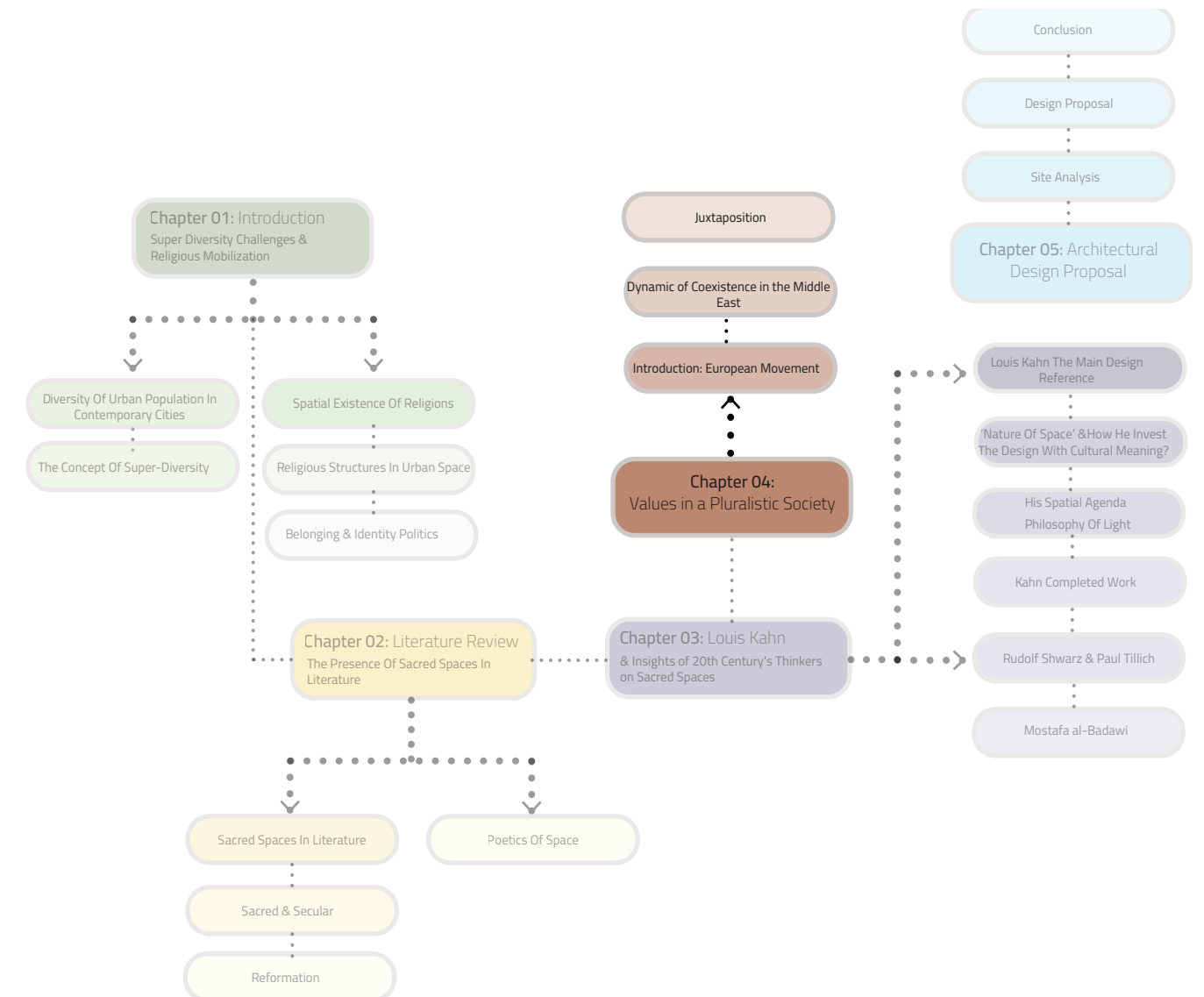
sacred space and from the meanings in the specifically designed elements around that are subliminal which they get the feeling without even explicitly think about it.

# Chapter 04

## Values in a Pluralistic Society

### Europe Movement Towards Coexistence & Middle East Experience with Coexistence

Keywords: European Council, Neutrality, Dialogue, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Inter-religious relations, Ottoman Empire, Coexistence, Tolerance, Plural Society



## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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### 4.1 Introduction

The coexistence of multiple religions in the Middle East is a notable feature, while most countries in Europe have a dominant religion. In the Middle East, religious diversity is reflected in the region's architecture, food, culture, and lifestyle. In contrast, European countries have historically been predominantly Christian, but religious diversity has increased due to immigration and other factors. The Arab world has a diverse population that includes various religions such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and others. Different religious groups have left their mark on the region, resulting in unique and diverse cultural expressions.

However, tensions and conflicts have arisen in both regions due to religious differences, and efforts to promote tolerance and understanding remain important. A comparison between the Middle East and Europe highlights unique differences in how multiple religions coexist.

### 4.2 Values in a Multicultural Society

In the context of pluralism and multicultural society, Böckenförde's famous remark that "the liberal, secularized state takes its life from preconditions it can-not itself guarantee" (Böckenförde 1976, p. 60) raises even more issues. The question of state neutrality arose even then in order to create a just society in which every person or group could find its place, despite the fact that at the time he coined the dictum, the (political) society was homogeneous from the perspective of the dominant culture and religion (Judeo-Christian). It is considerably more difficult to achieve that goal in a society when there is no longer any cultural or religious unity, and it may even seem impossible. Can a system of values that is accepted by all individuals and groups in a multicultural society be developed while maintaining a position of neutrality toward religious and nonreligious values? We must first understand what neutrality entails and whether it is even conceivable. After examining

## 4.2 VALUES IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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models and tactics for neutrality in the public discourse in liberal democracies, Strahovnik bases his argument that the way of dialogue is not neutral and encompasses moral attitudes on Berger's contention that secularization and pluralization are interchangeable: "Participants in dialogue must discuss and express what they really think or are truly convinced of. So, moral or evaluative dialogue is viewed in terms of its openness with the development of our own value standpoints and, by its very nature, excludes the precondition of the dialogue's (value) neutrality provided above (Strahovnik 2019, pp. 71–72). We may all agree that moral discourse requires more tolerance and time, but at least it is sincere, which is, in our opinion, what matters most in a debate. The unsolvable problem with the state's claimed neutrality and political correctness seems to be that it leads to a dilution of values, the loss of ethical grounds, and the obscuring of a clear framework for social activity. Core values must at least be at their bare minimum levels for society to be stable and have clarity for all of its members. Tradition and the values of the majority do not necessarily imply that the minority is in danger or that change is impossible if it would be good for the community. Politics continues to be a constant source of tension and conflict as a result of the abandoning of those values, which has led to the clash of many ideologies that extensively utilize democratic instruments and potential. When discussing values, we cannot neglect Hans Küng's attempt to see the postmodern paradigm as an ecumenical paradigm. In response to the four fundamental crises (economic, political, social, and environmental), Küng emphasized the demand for four cultures (nonviolence, solidarity, tolerance, and equal rights), concluding that a global society requires a common ethic and that the fundamental goal is to achieve peace between believers and nonbelievers, between members of different religions, and between man and nature, all through the mediation of a common ethos drawing on common human values. Küng thus rejects secular or autonomous secular ethics. The world ethos is held together by two underlying foundations that operate equally in all religions: the principle of

## 4.2 VALUES IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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humanity (common human nature, *humanum*)—every human being should be treated humanely—and the principle of reciprocity (the Golden Rule): Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you. These two foundations are strengthened further by four rules on which all religions agree in their own way: (1) not murder! (2) not steal! (the culture of nonviolence and respect for all living beings); (3) not bear false witness! (the culture of solidarity and just economic order); (the culture of tolerance and the pursuit of truth) (4) You are not to commit adultery! (Men and women's equality and partnership culture). Küng concludes with four key assertions: (1) that there can be no peace between nations without peace between religions; (2) that there can be no peace between religions without interreligious dialogue; (3) that such dialogue cannot exist without global ethical standards; and (4) that our planet cannot live in peace and justice without a new paradigm of international relations based on global ethical standards (Küng 1990). This proposal undoubtedly raises new concerns. Nonetheless, this is one of the worthwhile attempts to establish a common platform in accordance with the democratic order of society and the Convention on Human Rights, a step that may inspire others. What we value in discussions about interreligious and intercultural dialogue is the platform of humanity as the core foundation and starting point for building **coexistence**.

## 4.3 COUNCIL OF EUROPE GUIDELINES

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### 4.3 Council of Europe Guidelines

The Council of Europe's documents and recommendations on intercultural and interreligious dialogue begin with what all people have in common. Although it is known by various names, it is concerned with the same anthropological reality and the foundation of human life: experience, symbolization, and narration (Joas), experience of (particularity of) one's own world, profile of life (Hünemann), lifeworld (Habermas), ultimate concern, depth (Tillich), and *humanum* (Küng). Reflection and dialogue on humanity's fundamental experience are required for the realization of the "learning to be together" process, as described in the White Paper (Council of Europe 2008, p. 31), as well as the realization of "the four pillars of education," as outlined in the Delors Report: learning to understand, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to coexist (International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century 1996). Several important documents and recommendations on interculturality and religious education have been published in the last 20 years by the Council of Europe and various bodies and institutions of the European Union (Razum and Jurii 2020).

The Council of Europe recognizes interreligious dialogue as well. Ministers responsible for culture, education, youth, and sport from states parties to the European Cultural Convention met in Wrocław and adopted the Declaration, which stated that "intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, based on the primacy of common values, should be organized and systematically encouraged as a means of promoting awareness and understanding of each other, preventing conflicts, promoting reconciliation, and ensuring the coherence of the European Cultural Convention."

the dimensions of remembrance and common heritage, cultural action and participation in the community" ([Council of Europe 2004b, chp. 3](#)). Following this guideline, the importance of culture's openness to religious critique, as well as religion's openness to cultural critique, should be

#### 4.3 COUNCIL OF EUROPE GUIDELINES

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emphasized. In a multicultural society, we encounter a plurality of cultures and values that must be subjected to a debate in which everyone, without exception, participates in order to transform the space of dialogue into a space of encounter. The role of religious communities in the context of education is also highlighted at the level of intercultural education's religious dimension, which influences the adoption of attitudes characterized by respect and tolerance, as well as life in cultural and religious diversity. European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs pledged in the Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention to "consider the development of knowledge of history, cultures, arts, and religions from school age onwards to be of central importance," and to "encourage, through cooperation with ministerial authorities specifically responsible for education in the various states, the inclusion in school curricula of lessons illustrative of intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention." as well as cultural bridge, including appropriate collaboration with representatives of the various components of cultural diversity, including religious diversity" (Council of Europe 2004a, p. 8).

Religion is an important component of culture and aids in understanding other cultures. Intercultural dialogue, including interreligious dialogue, is required to achieve coexistence in a diverse Europe. Furthermore, in accordance with EU recommendations, interreligious dialogue plays an important role in "learning to live together," and this learning should be integrated into education, not only at the informational but also at the educational levels. Both religious and interreligious competencies are needed. The school can mediate religious diversity as a positive element that enriches the quality of life by broadening horizons for the other and the different and critically re-examining one's own assumptions from an early age. Given that genuine dialogue takes time, as we demonstrated with Hünemann, the years of primary and secondary education are particularly suited to such long-term practice. One of the primary goals of religious education is, without a doubt, educa-

#### 4.3 COUNCIL OF EUROPE GUIDELINES

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tion for dialogue (Razum 2017). Dialogue is an essential characteristic of humans; it should become a way of life in a multicultural and pluralistic society (Petkovek 2007).



#### 4.4 THE DYNAMIC OF LIVING TOGETHER IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

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##### 4.4 The dynamic of living together in the middle east:

###### 4.4.1 Historical overview

The beautiful symbol for the peaceful coexistence of religious communities in the Middle East, where they represent the official version of the coexistence of religious communities where you see spire and minaret sit peacefully next to each other, tolerating each other's call/tolling for prayer. In this chapter, I am shedding some light on the possible reasons behind the coexistence of diverging versions of social relations with a historical, political, and socio-cultural overview. The diverse meanings and local significances of sacred space and different religious communities all claim a historical and/or mythical connection to the territory. Nevertheless, the Christian, Jew, and Muslim ideas of the Sacred are not essentially different, and in many cities in the middle east, you can find other sacred sites marking the urban space and the landscape; in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Lebanon, and much more.

Where they live together and create shared civilisation, the concept of keeping your tradition and cultural heritage while simultaneously opening up to the world mainly makes civilisation and brings people together. This dynamic way of living collaborated for people to live with each other.

Understanding how inter-religious relations in the city is manifest shows how communities, daily, reconcile, accommodate, and emphasise differences while simultaneously sharing a sense of common belonging.

(Gara, 2017)The mosaic world of subjugated nations and self-governed religious communities (millets) that lived parallel and distinct lives gave way to the plural society of extensive inter-religious interaction at the individual or communal level in the last two decades of the twentieth century. At the same time, the emphasis shifted from the oppression of non-Muslims to tolerance. We are now in a new phase of revision that focuses on the forms, extent, and limits of toleration

#### 4.4 THE DYNAMIC OF LIVING TOGETHER IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

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and intercommunal interaction, as well as changes over time. The Ottoman Empire was a dynastic state in the Eastern Mediterranean, encompassing diverse populations and human ecologies. Since the fourteenth century, in the mixed Greco-Turkish and Islamo-Christian environment of north-western Anatolia, the Ottoman realm has provided religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity. It grew even more complex over time as Ottoman dominions expanded in Europe, Asia, and Africa due to migration, displacement, and conversion. The religion of the dynasty and the state was Islam, but it was not necessarily the religion of the majority of the population. Anatolia and the Near East were predominantly Muslim, while the European provinces and islands were predominantly Christian. The populace in almost all urban areas was religiously diverse. In addition to Ottoman subjects, Muslims, Jews, and Christians of various denominations, there were communities of resident foreign subjects in the imperial capital, the commercial cities, and the ports (usually Roman Catholics). (Gara, 2017)

Sharia classifies non-Muslim subjects of a Muslim ruler as *ahl al-dhimma* (hence the term *dhimmi-zimmi* in Ottoman parlance), i.e. people subject to a guarantee of protection in exchange for payment of a special poll tax and compliance with a set of discriminatory rules. In the ottoman, as in other Islamic empires, Christians and Jews had personal and religious freedom, the right to own property, to regulate family and inheritance matters, and to settle disputes with fellow believers following their canon laws. (Gara, 2017)

Toleration of the religious other alongside encouragement of conversion to Islam and legally enforceable Muslim supremacy; discriminatory practices and discourses but no policy of persecution; colonial regimes that ensured asymmetrical access to wealth, power, and prestige but also allowed non-Muslims a modicum of upward mobility these are all essential aspects of interreligious coexistence in the Ottoman Empire. However, they have been challenging to incorporate into the nation-centred or state-centred approaches that dominated the field until recently. Many saw the

## 4.5 JUXTAPOSITION OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD

early modern Ottoman Empire as a haven of plurality, a tolerant society in which various religious communities coexisted peacefully until they collapsed due to the alarms of nationalism.

### 4.5 Juxtaposition of different religions in the Arab world

#### 4.5.1 Cairo, Egypt:

However, in the middle east and after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Over thousands of years, the Middle East has been home to adherents of many religions, allowing religious communities to grow and thrive alongside one another. As a testament, for example, Egypt is one of these pluralistic societies, where interaction between religious communities for over 1,200 years. The sacred landscape changed after the Muslim conquest of Egypt in 639-642. The al-Attrin Mosque in Alexandria was constructed using hundreds of Roman columns, and Muslims incorporated Coptic arts into their own. That shows the tolerance and acceptance of all religions and their respect for each other. That appears in how we collaborated in art, architecture, jewellery, crafts, and music. Moreover, the daily lives of prosperous Jews in medieval Cairo and the lives of Christians and Muslims in medieval Mediterranean society

Known as the “city with a thousand minarets”, Cairo’s religious landscape is much more complex than meets the eye. A specialist in modernism in Egypt and the Arab world, architectural historian Mohamed Elshahed underlines how Cairo’s religious buildings reflect the countries’ cultural, political and economic layers.

## 4.5 JUXTAPOSITION OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD



Figure 26: Gabriel Loire - Egypte- Le Caire - Chapelle du collège des Frères de la salle, Daher



Figure 27: Basuna Mosque / Dar Arafat Architecture. Photo by: Essam Arafat



#### 4.5 JUXTAPOSITION OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD



Figure 28: St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral, Cairo, Egypt, Google Image



Figure 29: Ben Ezra Synagogue, Cairo, Google Image

#### 4.5 JUXTAPOSITION OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD

##### 4.5.2 Homs, Syria



Figure 31: Marwa Al Sabouni, a Syrian Architect, visualise the social coherence and juxtaposition of different religions in Homs, S

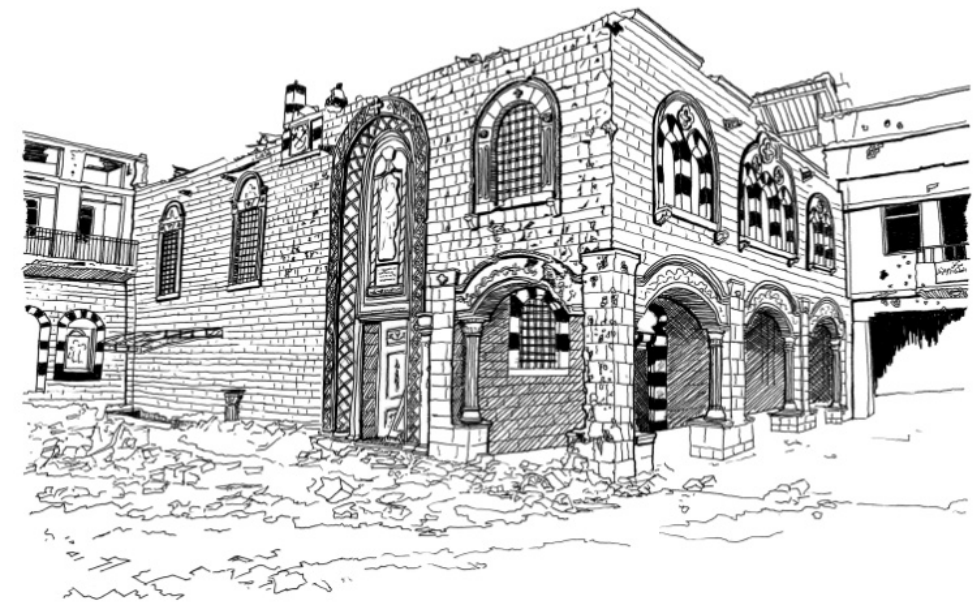


Figure 30: The Church of St Mary of the Holy Belt in Homs, illustrated by the Syrian Architect Marwa Al Sabouni, shows the architectural features commonly used in the architecture of the Mosque and Church.



## 4.5 JUXTAPOSITION OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD

### 4.5.3 Gaza, Palestine:

According to some Christians, the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Palestine differs from that in other Arab countries. According to Suhayl Saba, a member of the Council of Representatives for the Roman Orthodox Church in the Gaza Strip, "the Christians of the Gaza Strip are Christians by religion but Muslims by culture," which has contributed to the historical coexistence of the two, making it difficult to tell a Muslim from a Christian. They live freely and fearlessly and freely practice their religion. According to Father Emmanuel Msallam, the leader of the Latin Church in Gaza, Muslim-Christian relations are at their best.

Several historical factors have strengthened relations between Muslims and Christians in Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip. The most important of these is that after conquering Jerusalem in 638 CE, Caliph Umar Ibn al-Khattab promised Saint Sophronius that he would protect the rights of Christians and their places of worship. This was the most important agreement reached between Muslims and Christians in Palestine. Umar's covenant amounted to Muslims' recognition of Christian places of worship and other property and churches' independence in running their own affairs.

## 4.5 JUXTAPOSITION OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD



Figure 32: Saint Porphyrius Church with Orthodox Bishop Alexis in Gaza, Google Image



Figure 33: The Church of the Nativity (left) and the 19th-century mosque of Omar ibn al-Khattab looking over Manger Square in Bethlehem, Google Image.

#### 4.5 JUXTAPOSITION OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD

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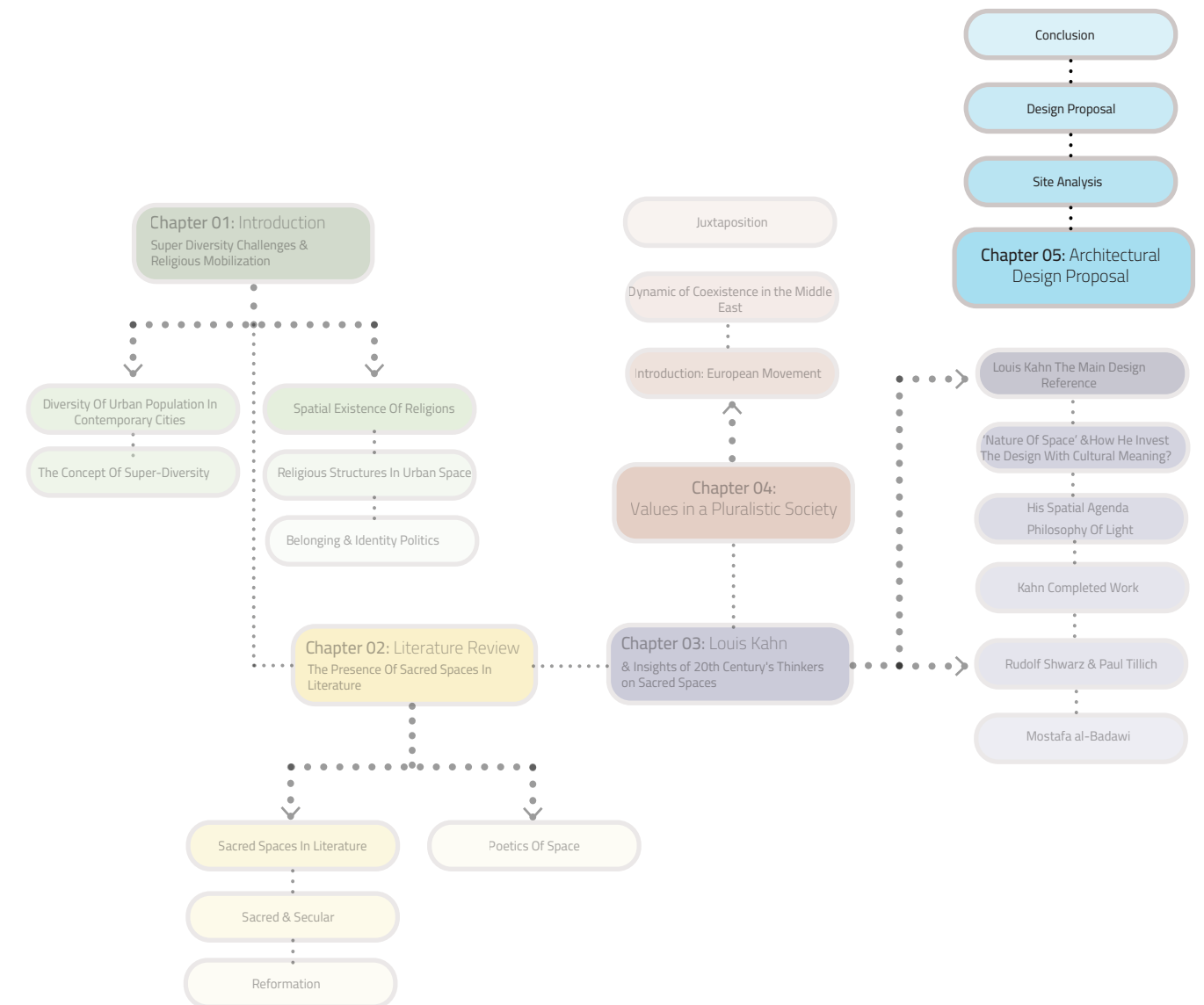
Factors of coexistence in the middle east: Sharing food, cultures, and language created a shared civilisation. All three monotheistic religions originated in the Middle East, and today, despite ongoing tensions, there would be no Middle East without synagogues, churches, and mosques. The experience of multi-religious and multi-cultural existence outside the imperial environment is relatively new to Western Europe. Contrarily, the existence of synagogues, churches, and mosques is essential to the Middle East, despite its ongoing controversy. We'll demonstrate how this differential affects foreign architectural forms incorporated into native environments. Sociologists claim that until recently, Muslims in Europe were not seen as members of communities deserving of their places of worship or cultural institutions but as temporary immigrants, refugees, or tiny ethnic minorities. (Avcioğlu, 2007).



# Chapter 05

## A Common Ground for the three Monotheistic Religions in Milan

Architectural Design Proposal



## 5.1 SITE ANALYSIS



### 5.1.1 Overview

Metanopoli was built in 1952 When Enrico Mattei (head of the nascent oil and petrol company ENI) commissioned architect and town planner Mario Bacciocchi to design a new garden city for ENI's white collar workers. The architect was tasked with integrating residential, social, and production functions in a neighborhood bounded by via Emilia in the municipality of San Donato Milanese. Bacciocchi's plan did not call for the conversion of rigid geometric grids into building lots, but rather for an open format that could be expanded in response to demographic and production changes. Metanopoli grew over time to include a variety of new architectural projects, making it an interesting example of Italian architectural and town planning history.

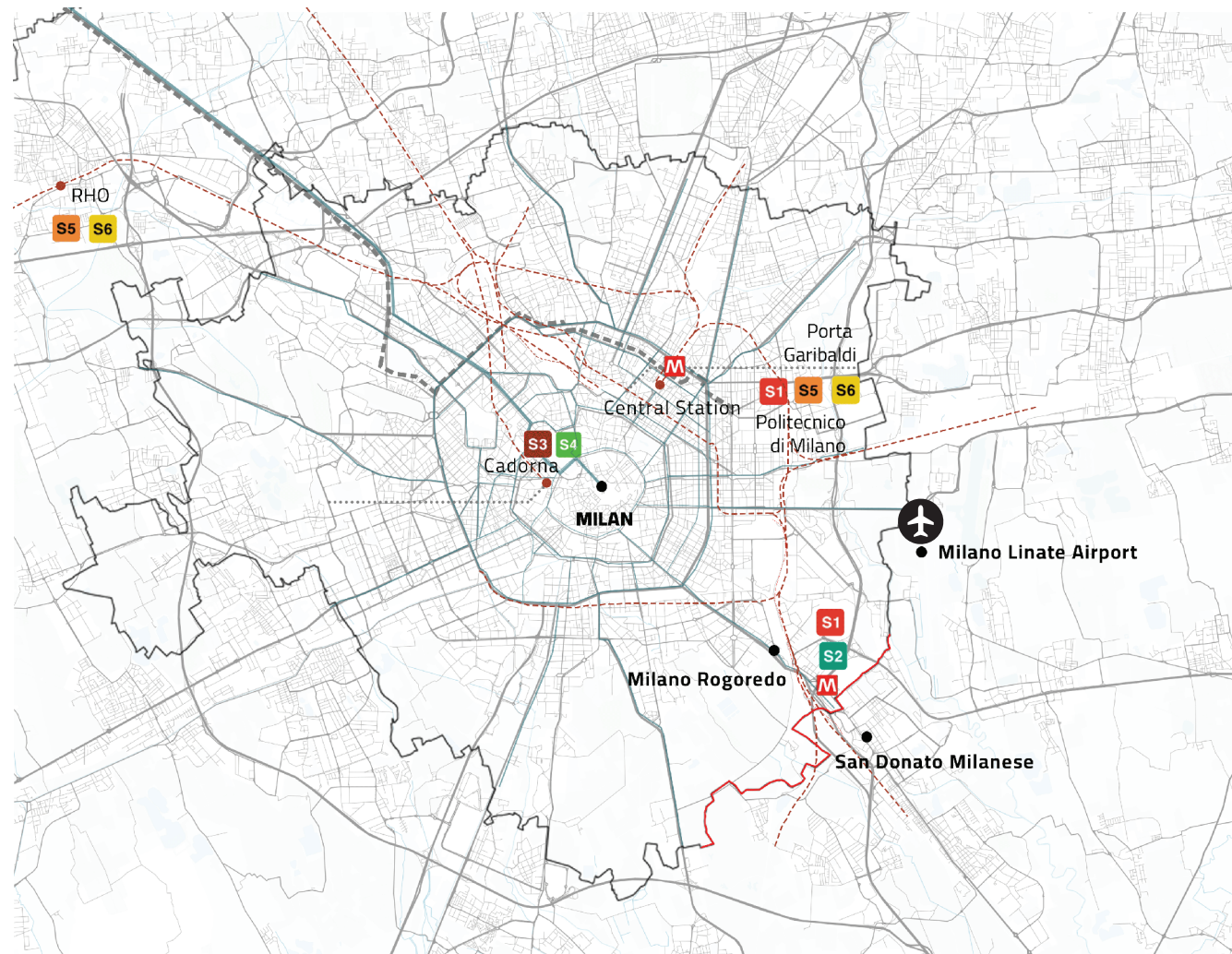


Figure 34: Location and Mobility Analysis of the area of via Marignano, Milan. Source: Author based on Mapbox.

## 5.1 SITE ANALYSIS



### 5.1.2 Landscape

- Pedestrian Roads
- Pedestrian Tunnels
- Water Ways
- Vegetation/Park
- Lake

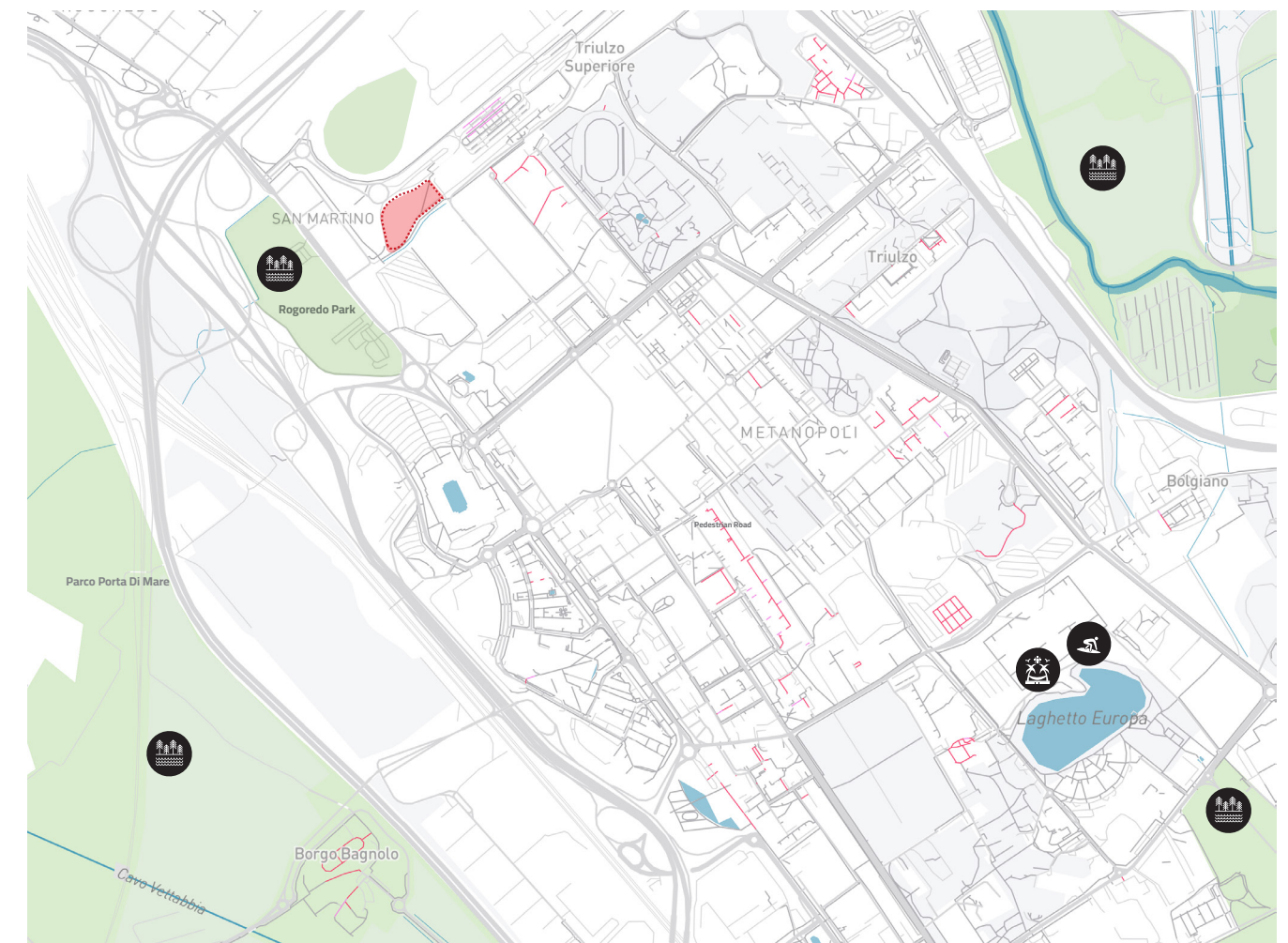


Figure 35: Landscape Analysis of the area of via Marignano & San Donato Milanese. Source: Author based on Mapbox.



## 5.1 SITE ANALYSIS



### 5.1.3 Vehicular Circulation

- Road Rail
- Bridges
- Main Road
- Secondary Road
- Road Paths
- Road Pedestrian

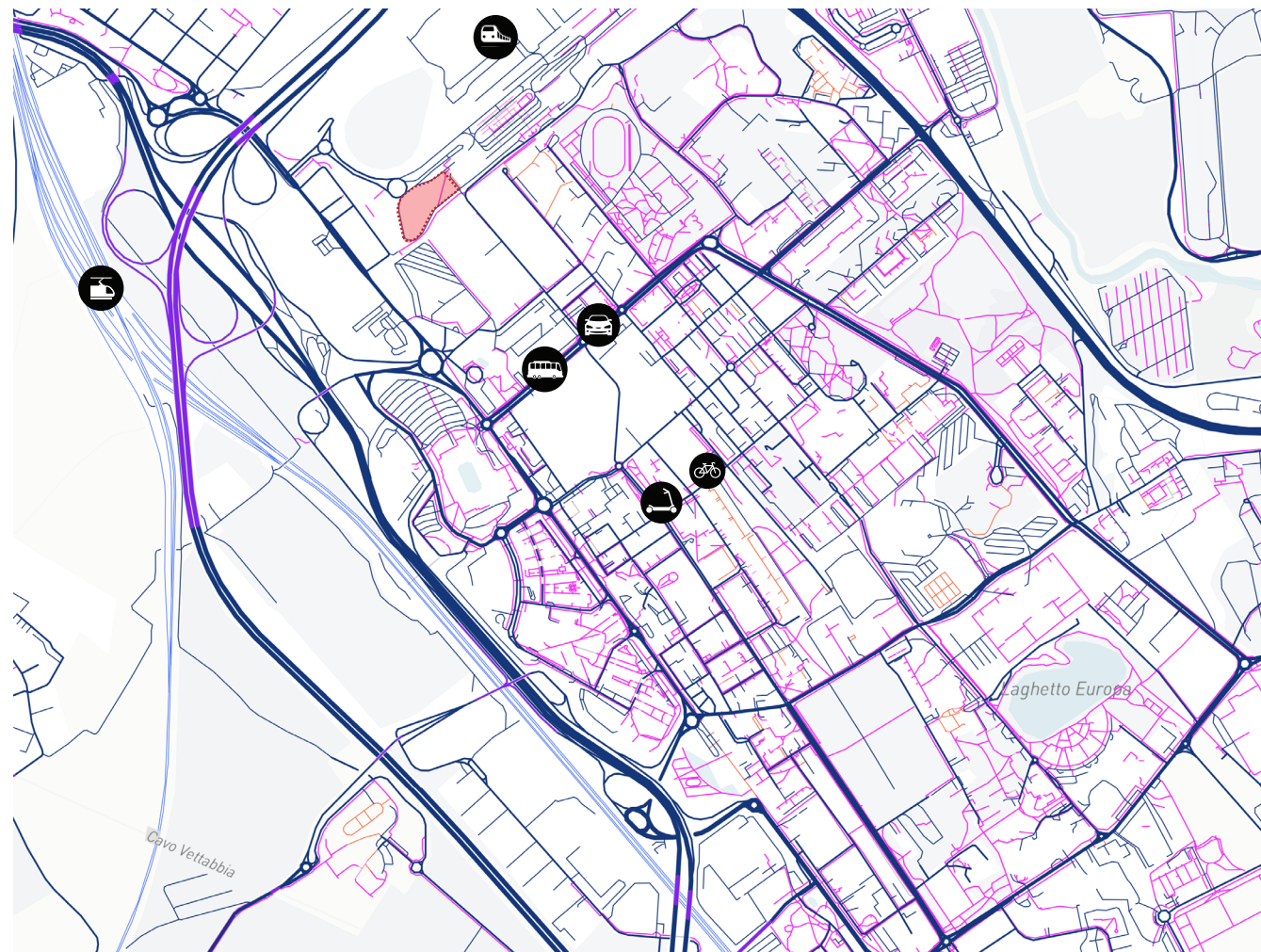


Figure 36: Vehicular Analysis of via Marignano, connecting the Municipality of Milan and Municipality of San Donato. Source: Author based on Mapbox.

## 5.1 SITE ANALYSIS



### 5.1.4 Project Site

**Location:** The Area of via Marignano - Milan - Italy

**Project Typology:**

Multi-Faith Complex / Places Of Worship

**Site Area:** 3400 sq m

**Project Year:** 2023

**Project Keywords:**

Juxtaposition, Common Ground, Sacred Spaces

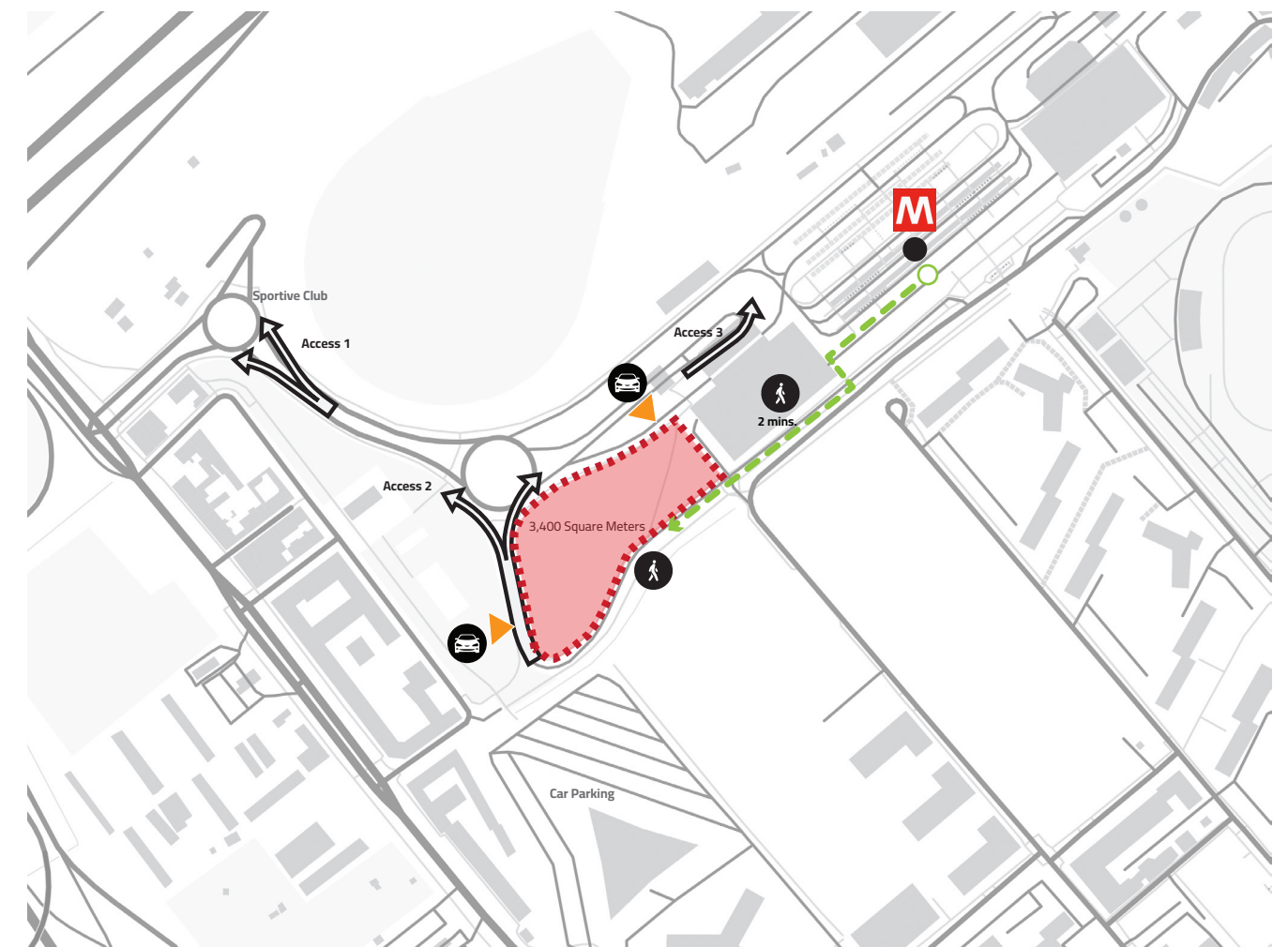


Figure 37: Project Site & Site Access. Source: Author based on Mapbox.

## 5.1 SITE ANALYSIS

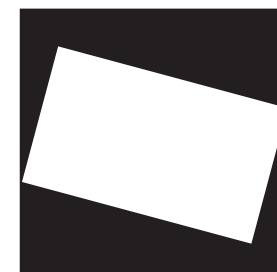


### 5.1.5 Design Vision

Situated within the territory of the Municipality of Milan and near to the diverse landscape of San Donato Milanese, Rogoredo and Corvetto.

The Three Monotheistic Places of Worship are envisioned to be harmonious with the context, communal for the diverse population, and standing as a physical embodiment of sacredness, spirituality, Monumentality, and community.

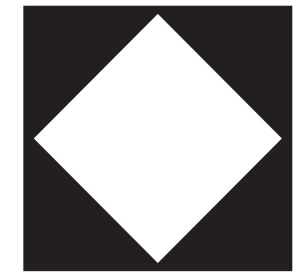
### 5.1.6 Design Approach



Qibla



Aisle



Ark Axis



Figure 38: Design Approach Sketch. Source: Author.





5.1.7 Form Arrangement

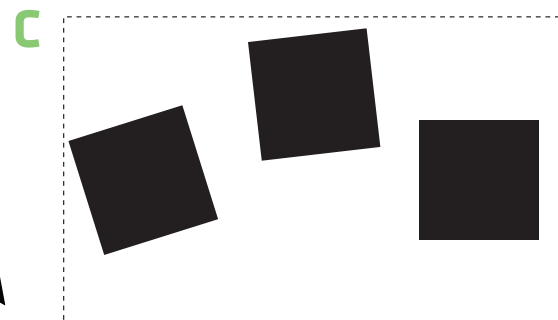
**Opt. A:**  
The common ground as a big plaza on the ground floor and the three sacred unitarians distributed inside the plaza and facing North



**Opt. B:**  
The common ground is placed on the South, on the same level of the three buildings but separated from them



**Opt. C:**  
Each building of the three is oriented to the ancient orientation and again distributed in the middle of the common ground



**Opt. D:**  
The common ground is on a lower level in the south, where the three buildings faced it from different directions and all connected with a bridge and vertical circulation along with the common ground

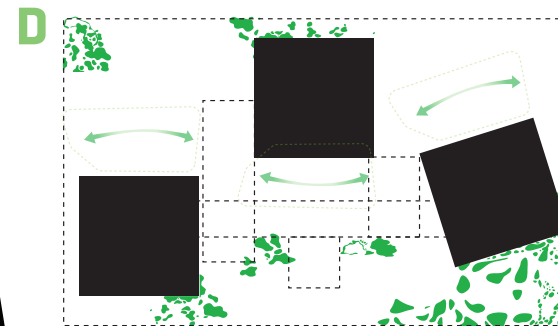


Figure 39: Design Alternatives Analysis. Source: Author.



5.1.8 Form Generation

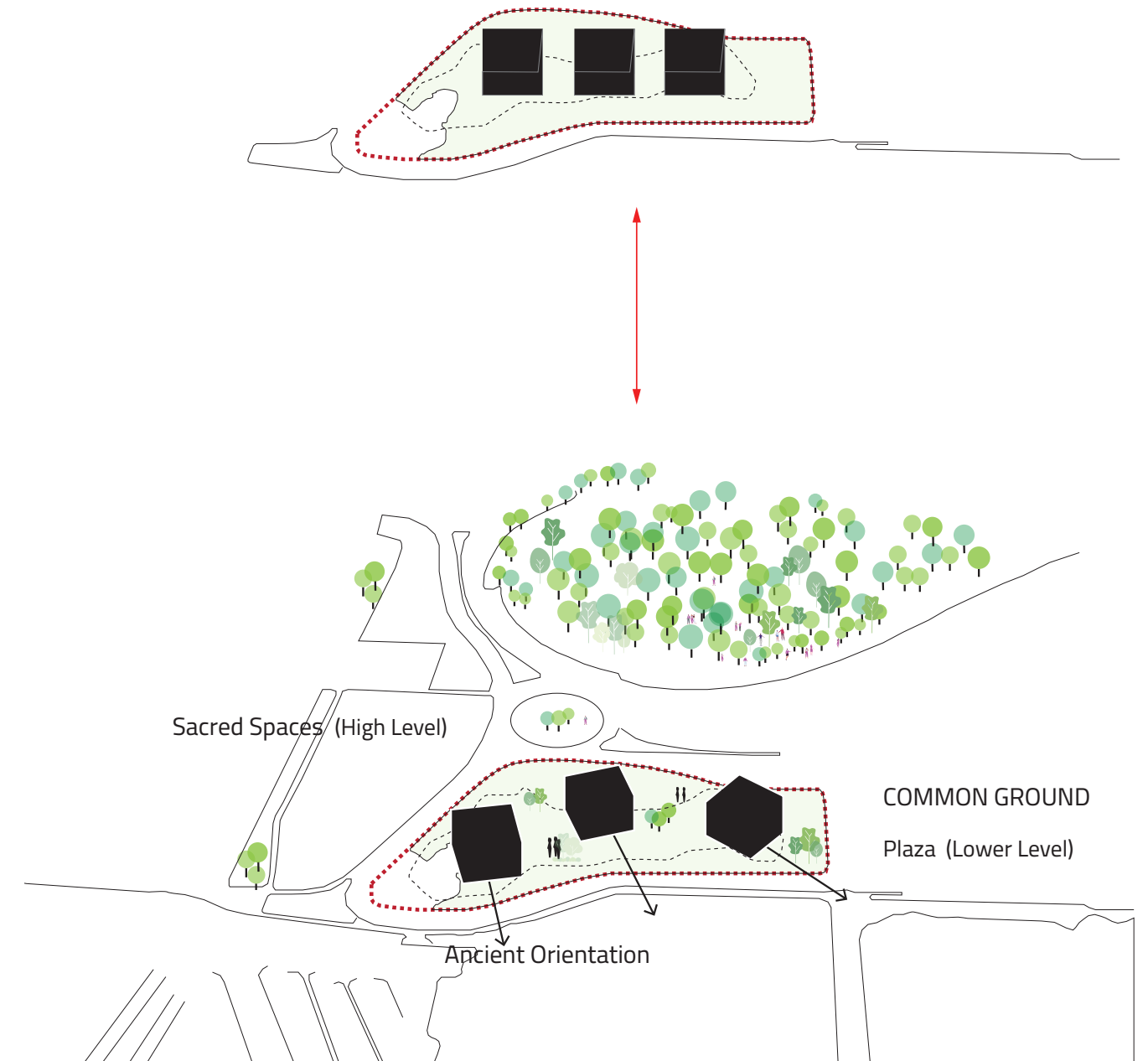


Figure 40: Form Generation Process. Source: Author.



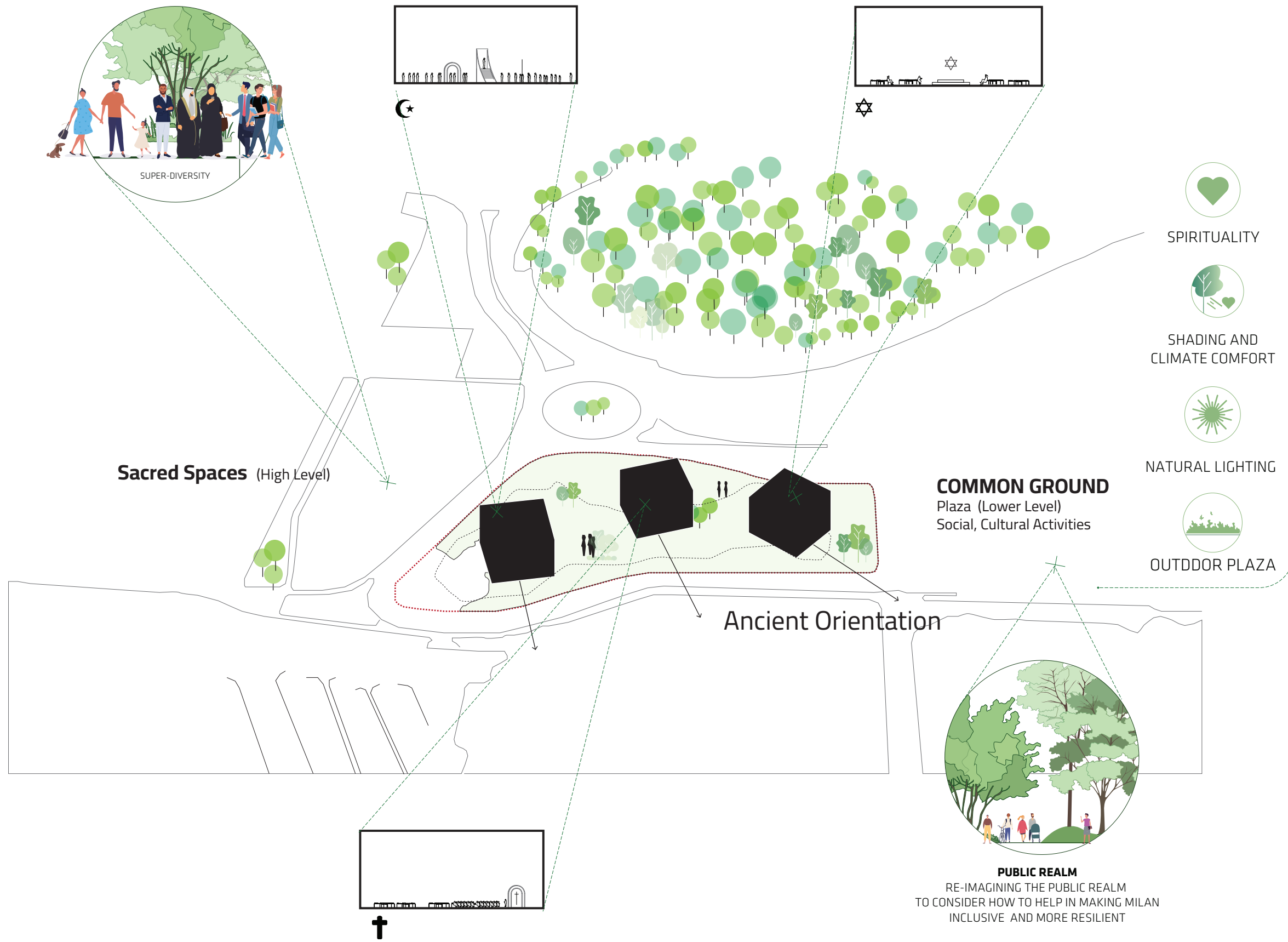


Figure 41: Illustrating the Project Vision. Source: Author



'Sacred Spaces' Program

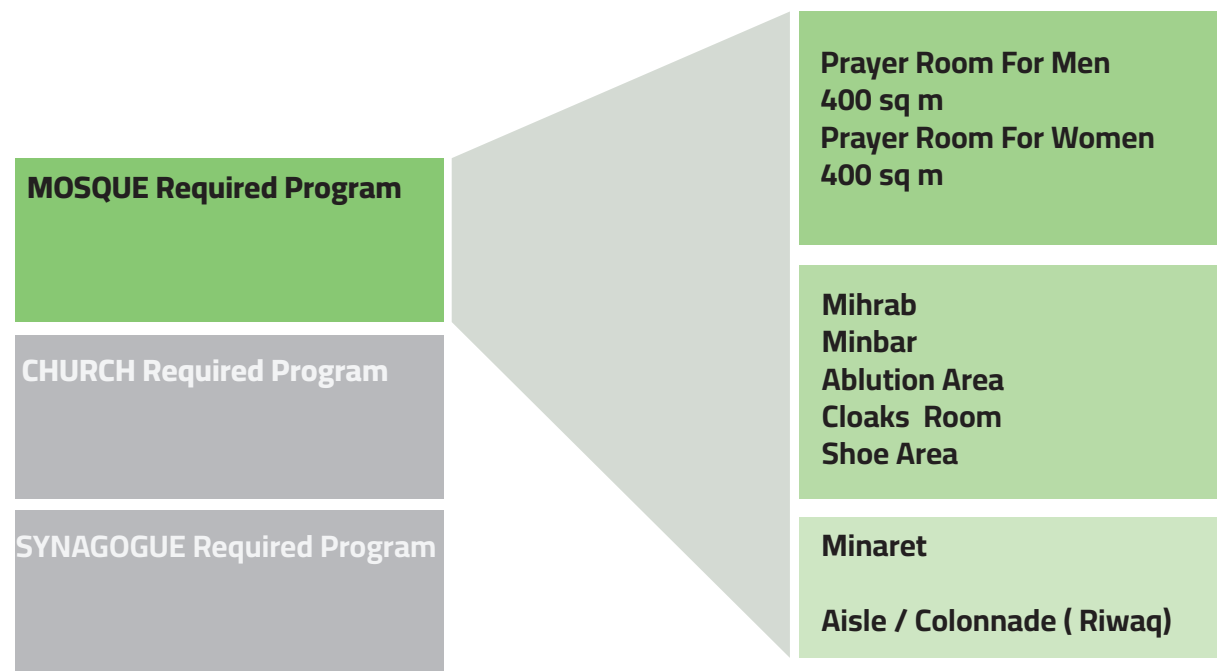


Figure 42: Mosque Program Analysis. Source: Author



'Sacred Spaces' Program

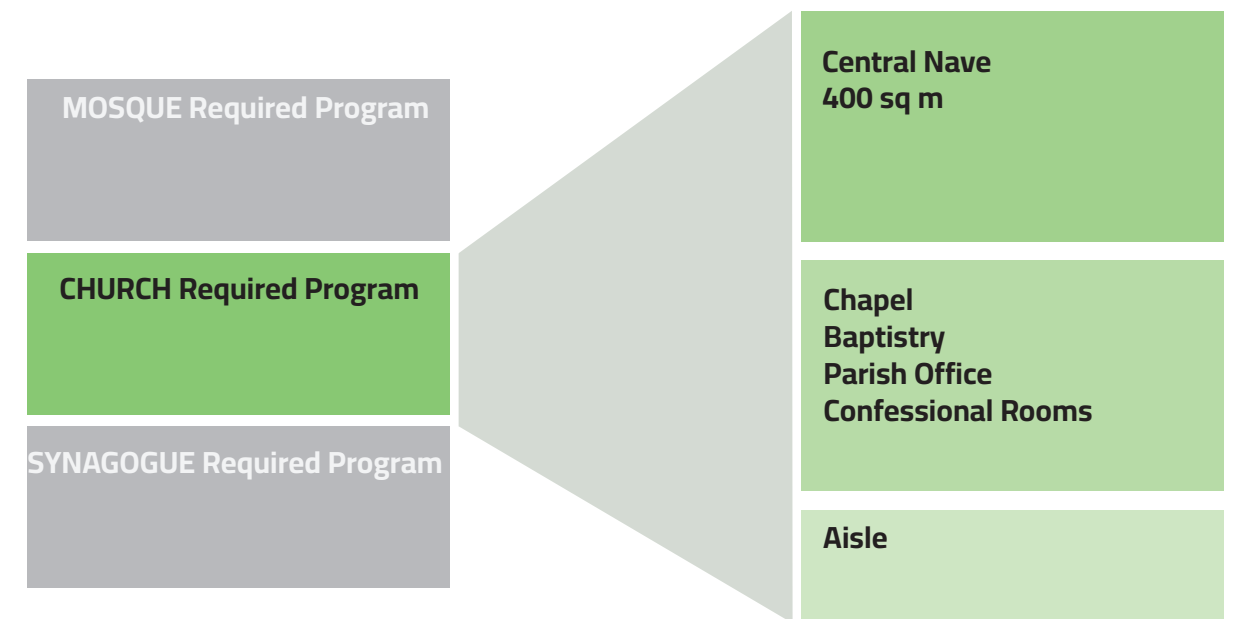


Figure 43: Church Program Analysis. Source: Author



'Sacred Spaces' Program

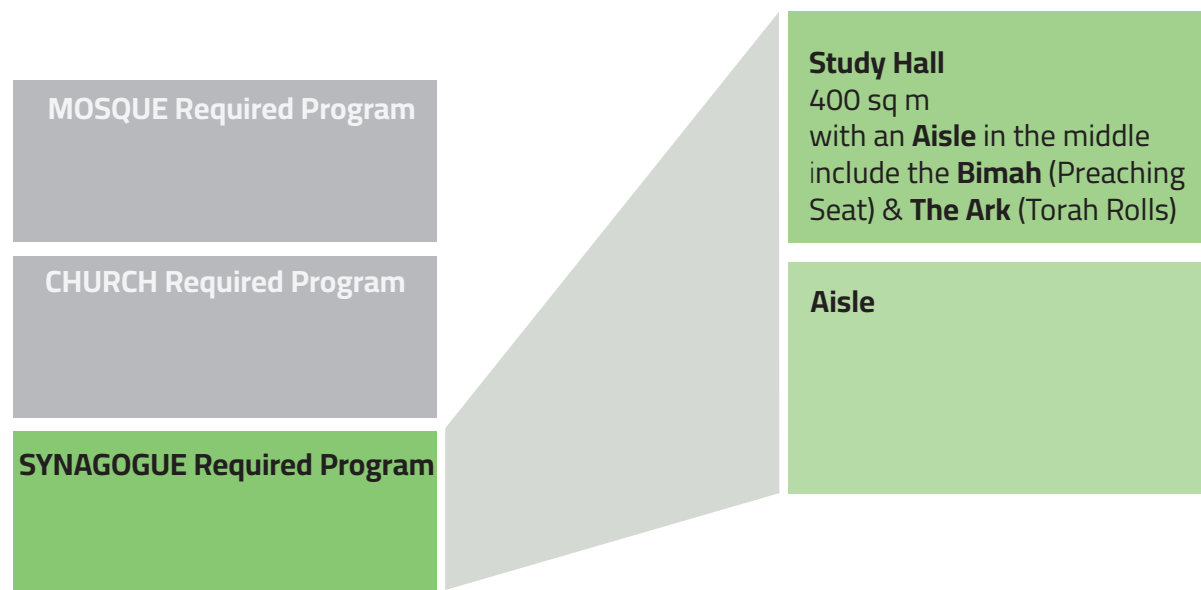


Figure 44: Synagogue Program Analysis. Source: Author



'Common Ground' Program

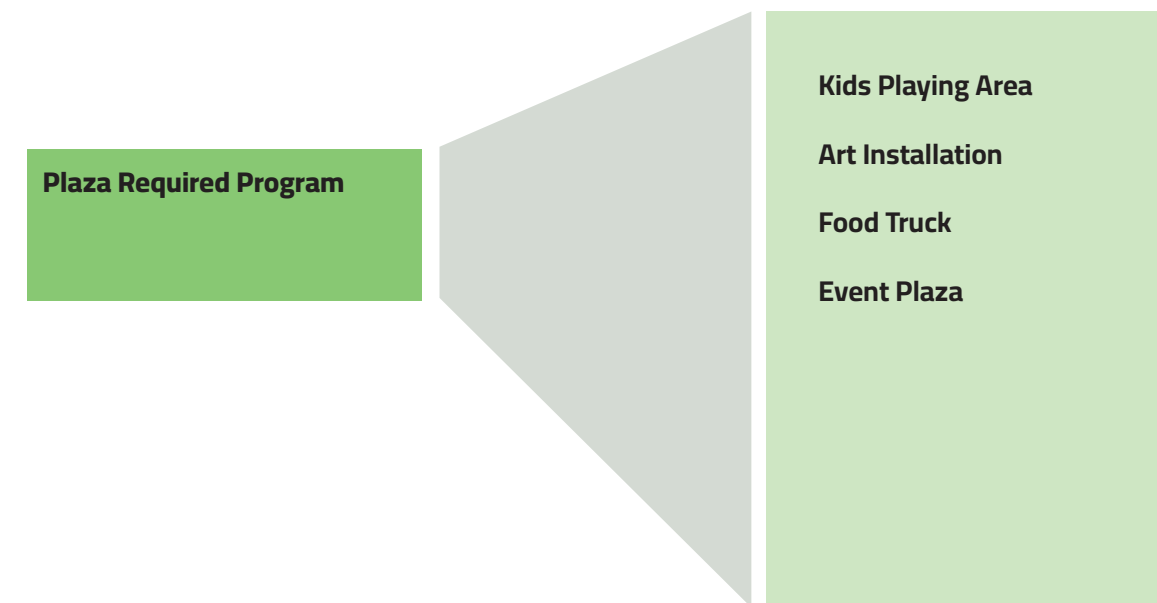


Figure 45: Common Ground Program Analysis. Source: Author

A SACRED SPACE

A PLACE OF WORSHIP

A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY & UNITY

A PLACE THAT EMBRACES DIVERSITY

A Common Ground for the Three  
Monotheistic Religions in Milan





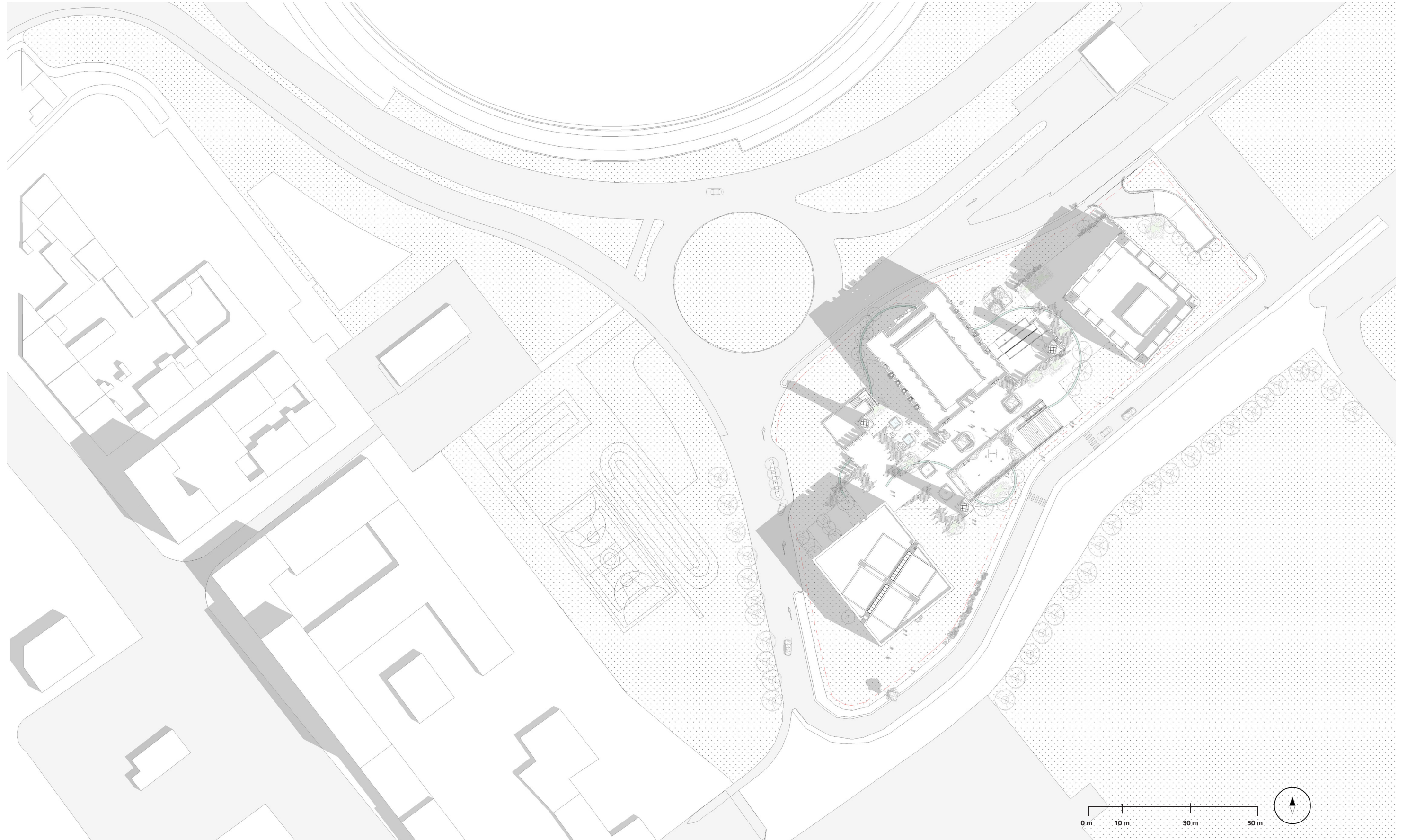


Figure 46: Site Plan . Source: Author







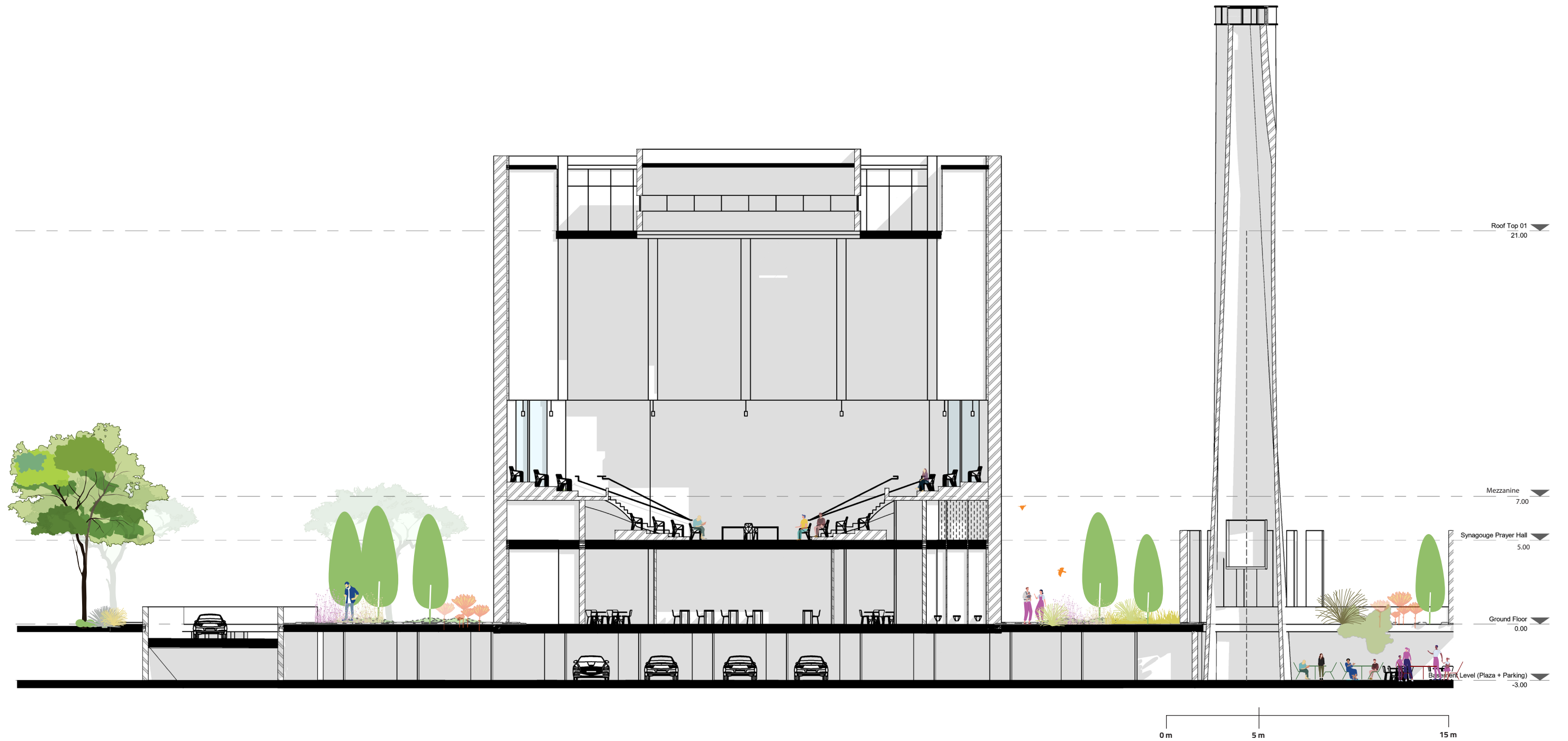


Figure 48: Section B-B in the synagogue. Source: Author

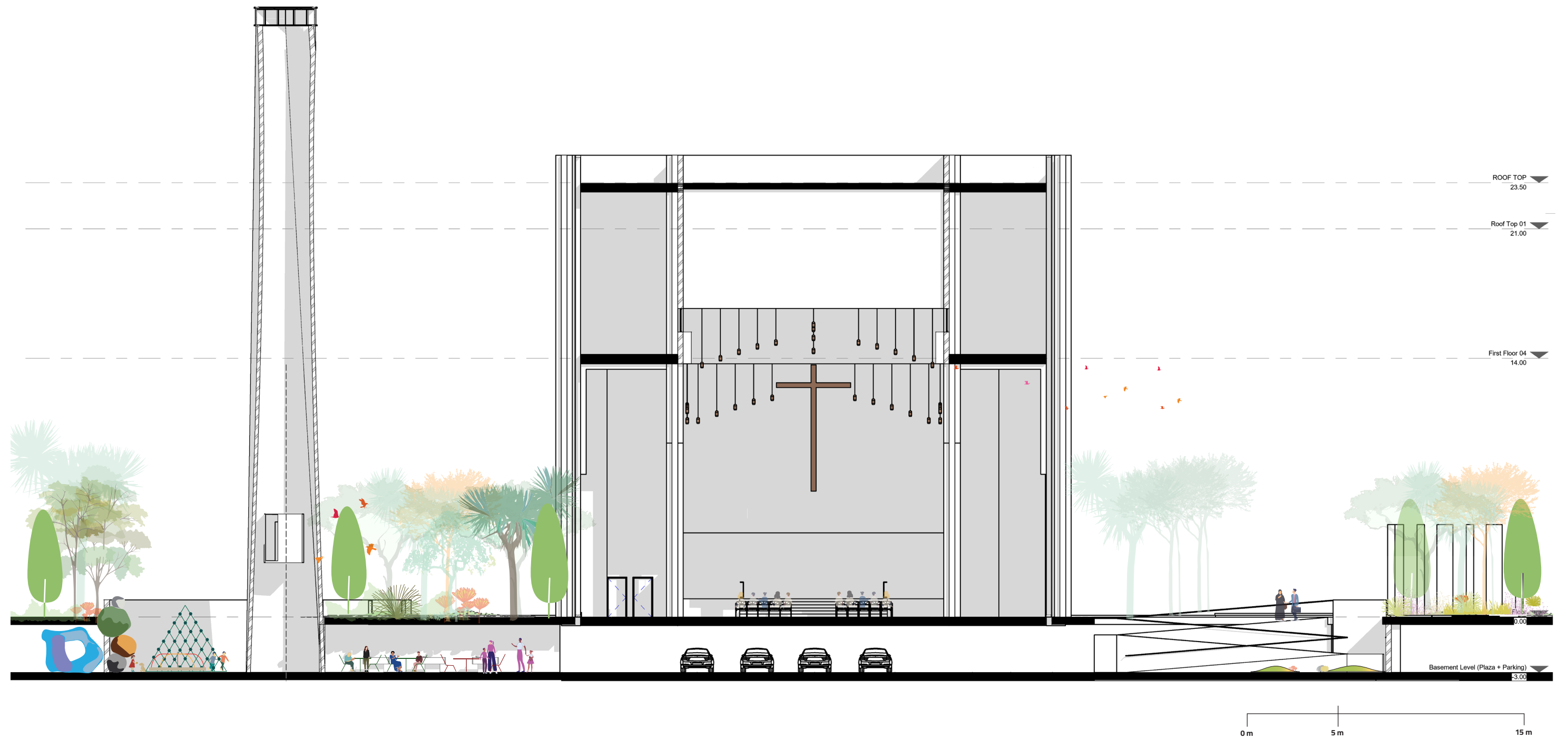


Figure 49: Section A-A in the church. Source: Author

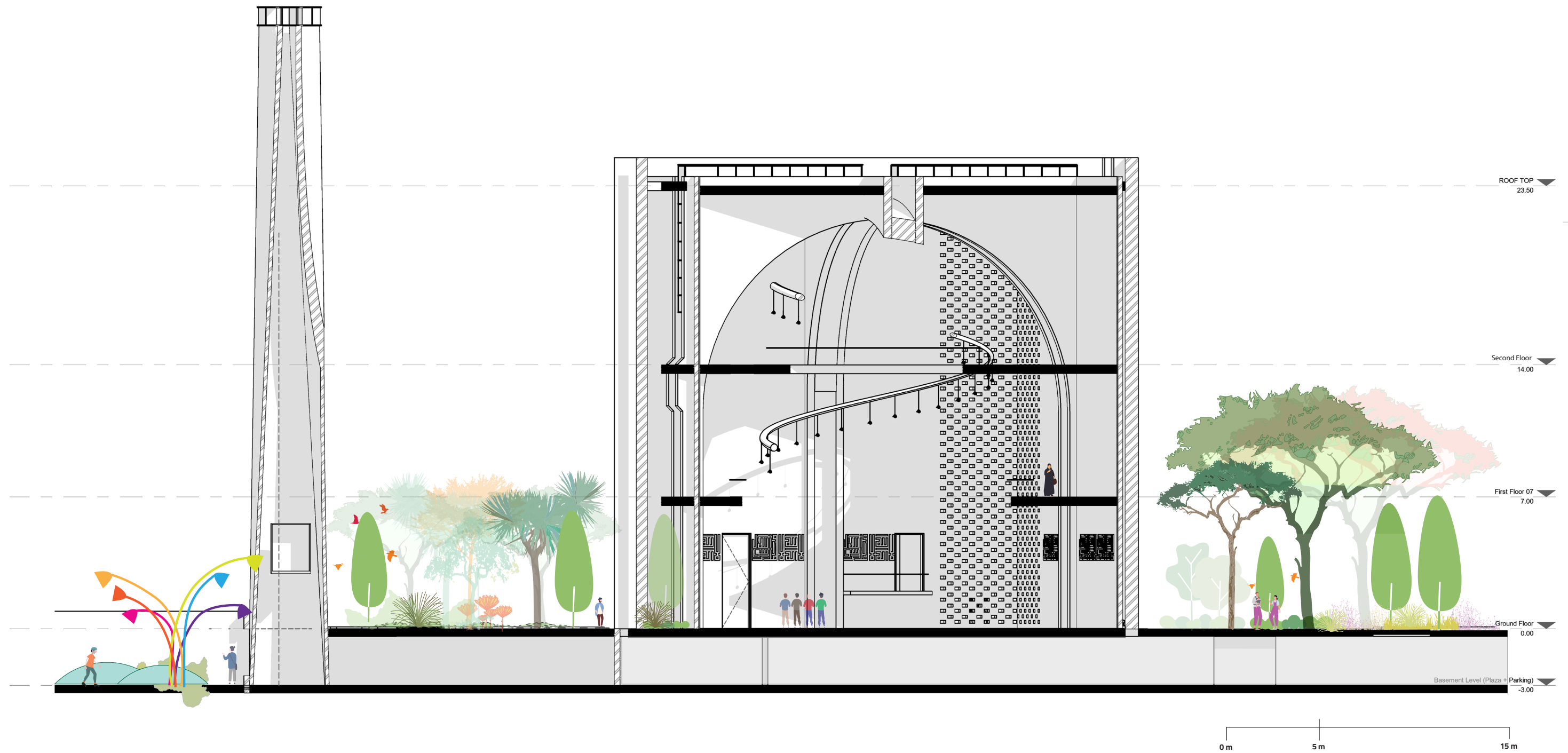


Figure 50: Section C-C in the mosque. Source: Author.





Figure 51: Visualized interior shot of the synagogue study chapel. Source: Author.





Figure 52: Visualized interior shot of the church central nave. Source: Author.





Figure 53: Visualized interior shot of the mosque prayer hall. Source: Author.



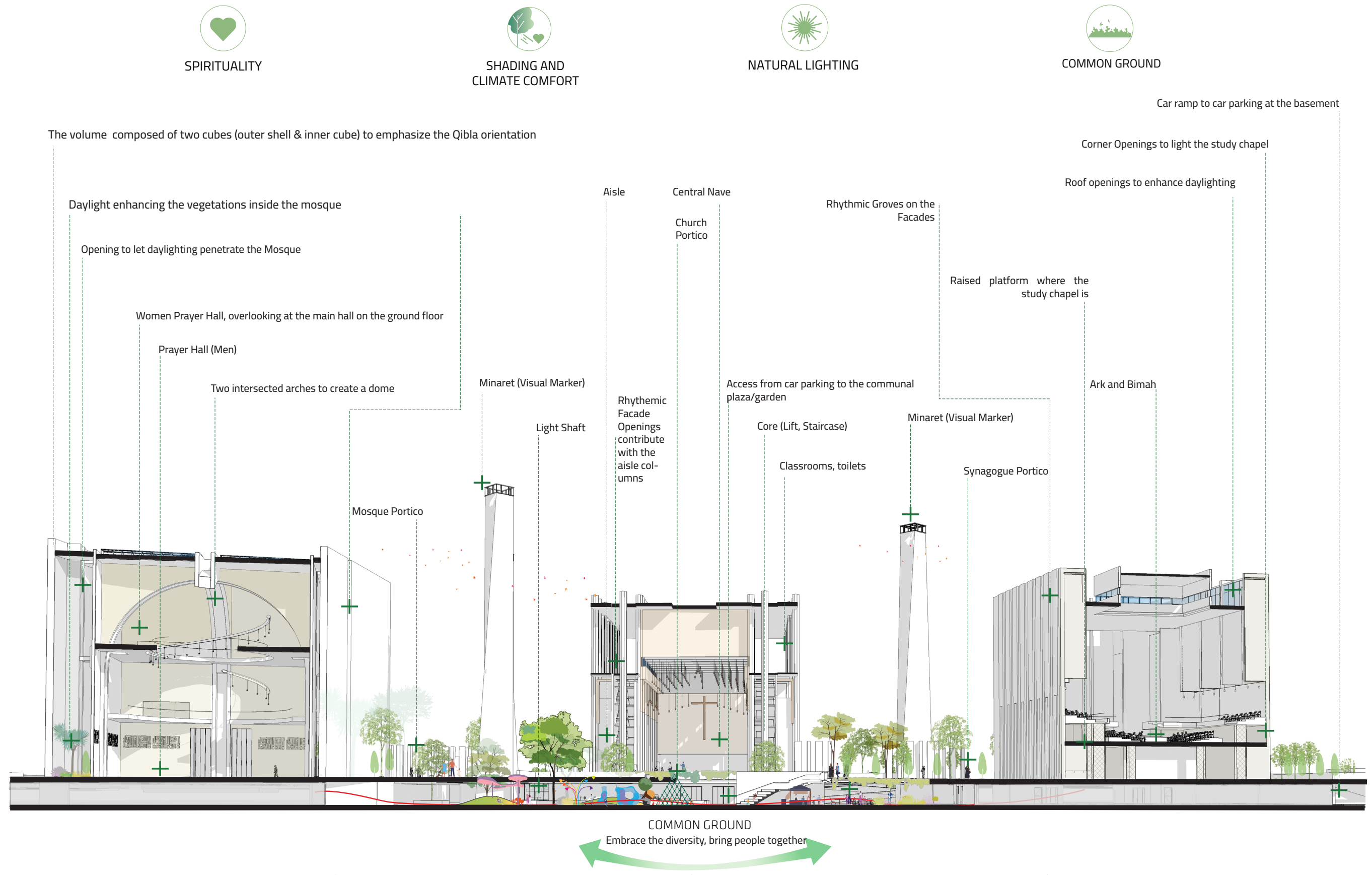


Figure 54: One point perspective section in the 3monotheistic buildings & the common Ground. Source: Author.

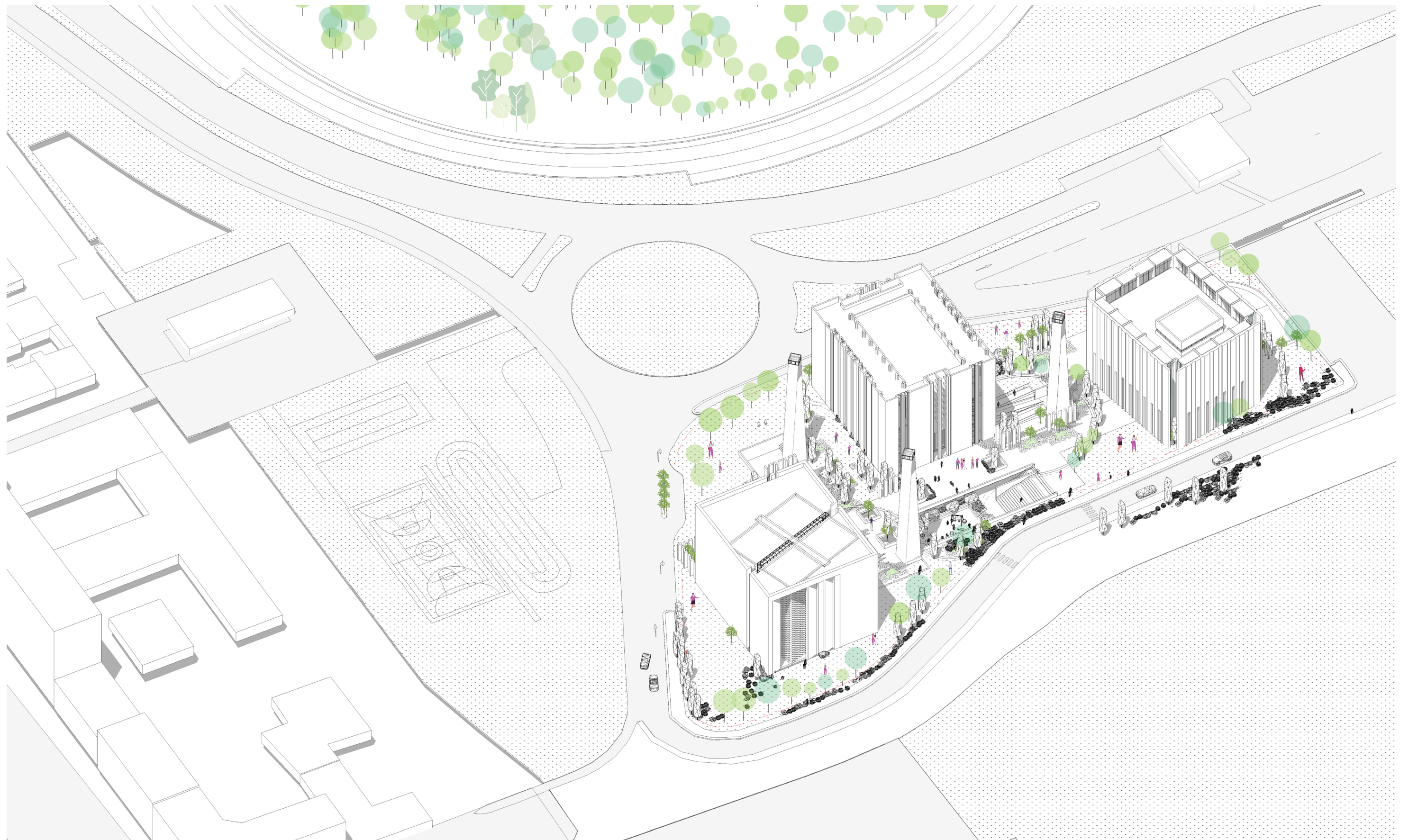


Figure 55: A full image of the project. Source: Author.





Figure 56: Exterior shot of the mosque main facade





Figure 57: Orthogonal shot of the main entrance. Source: Author.





Figure 58: Exterior shot of the synagogue. Source: Autho.





Figure 59: Orthogonal facade of the entire project and the main entrance. Source: Author.





Figure 60: A perspective shows the church and the synagogue and the plaza. Source: Author.





Figure 61: A perspective of the common ground plaza and the side facade of the mosque. Source: Author.



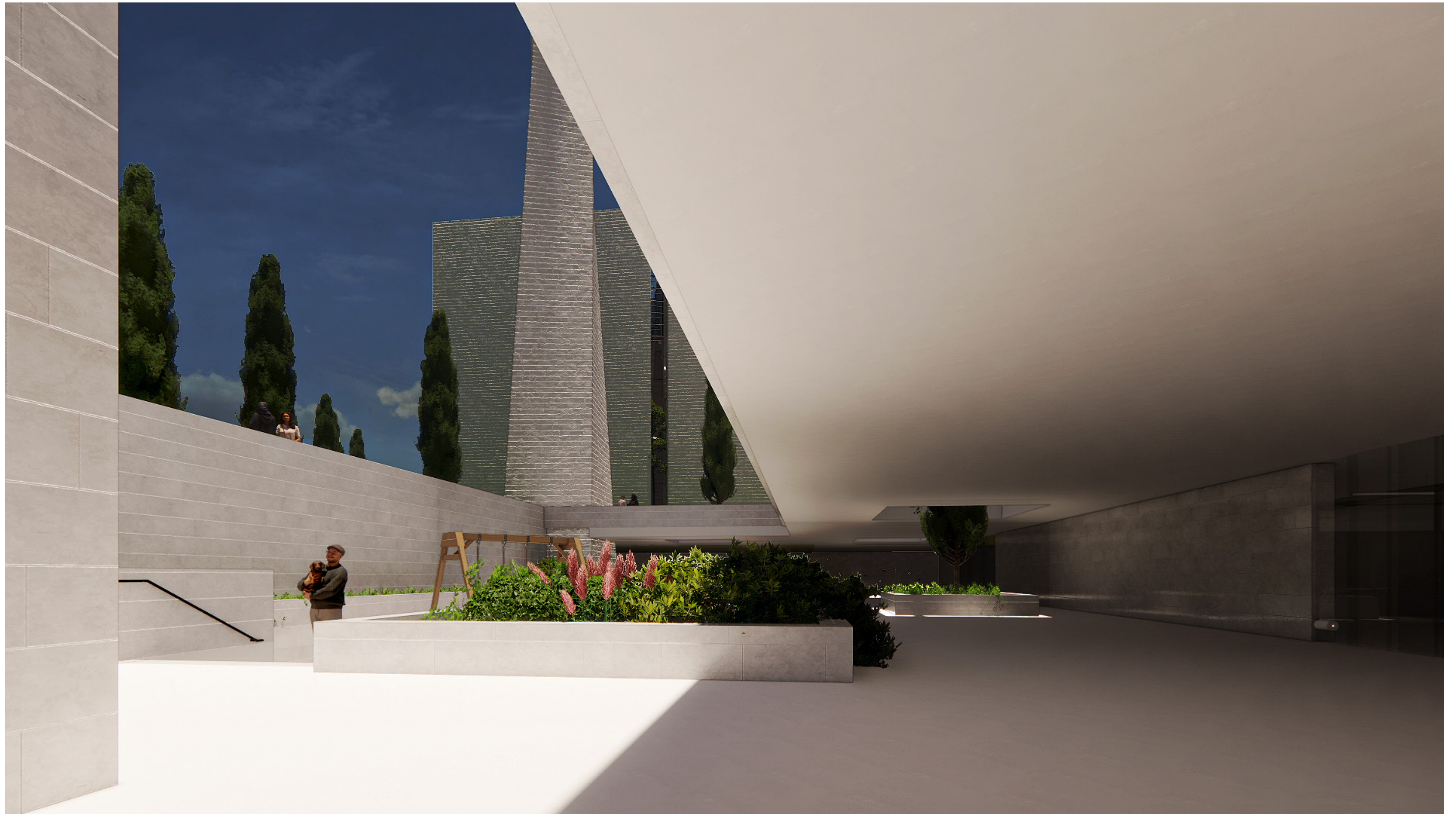


Figure 62: A perspective of the bridge that connects the common ground with the entire project. Source: Author.

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