

# ADDRESSING INFORMAL PROCESSES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE CITY CENTRE

## Case of Saddar Bazaar, Karachi

*Asiya Sadiq – Polack*  
*Assistant Professor, NED University,*  
*Karachi, Pakistan*

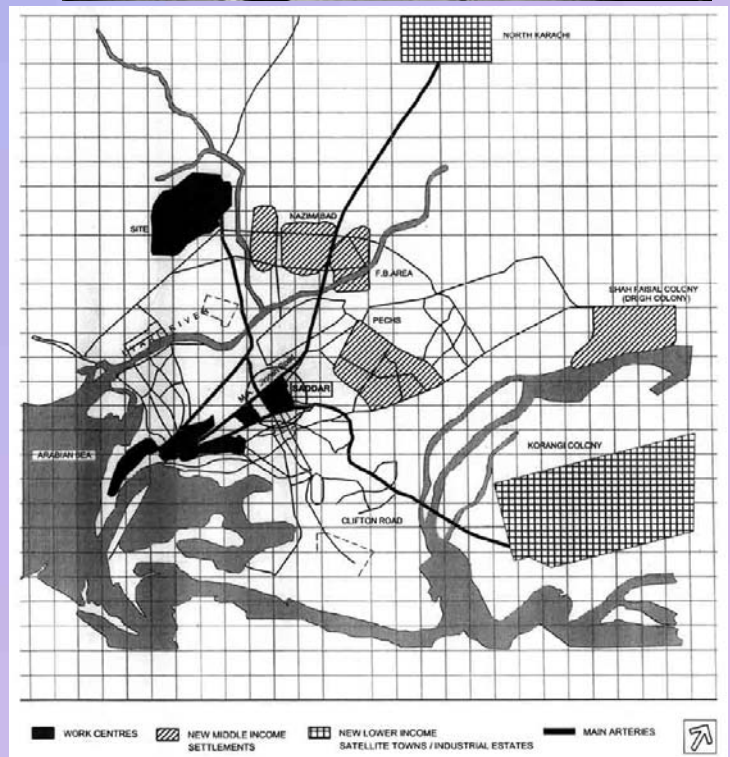
### ABSTRACT

Karachi's townscape has evolved through a process of responses to the changing needs and priorities of a population influx of the past 300 years. Over centuries, its port's trading and defence potential has attracted merchants, colonials, feudal lords, intellectuals and political and economic migrants. These migrant groups in turn, have contributed towards the development and degradation of the city and its centre, 'Saddar Bazaar'.

In the past 50 years, due to an immense increase in the size of the population of Karachi and the expansion of its geographical boundaries, several centres have developed, serving their locale. However, the importance of 'Saddar' as a cultural and economic centre still remains, as none of the other have been able to develop the required commerce or culture related facilities which could serve the whole city.

Saddar lies in the economic hub of the city and serves thousands of vehicles and transit commuters who pass through it. This has led to the degradation of its facilities and fast disappearance of its cultural spaces. The absence of these in turn, is resulting in alienation amongst communities, ghettoisation of rich and poor areas and a cultural division of the city.

This paper attempts to analyse the process of Saddar's transformation, identifying the inherent processes and agents of change, and gives some suggestions for its future rehabilitation.



### EXCERPT FROM THE TEXT

As the newly created state of Pakistan was unable to cater to the refugee influx, people belonging to destitute backgrounds squatted on all available open spaces, grounds and parks in and around the old town and some areas of Saddar. This resulted in the degradation of the infrastructure and emergence of inner city slums.

Upper class areas around Saddar were mostly occupied by civil servants, intellectuals and businessmen who added to its cultural and social life and Karachi's political and economic power. New schools, colleges, a university, many religious and cultural institutions sprung up to cater to this new multi cultural rich and middle class migrants.

By 1952, the city centre had expanded to its limits and new suburbs developed to the north of it. A Swedish planning company MRV was commissioned to design the first Master Plan for Karachi<sup>8</sup> to determine the growth patterns and future developments of the city.