

The Impact of Digital Technologies on Urban Life Quality and Social Dynamics in Bismayah



Rafah Zuhair Alshaikh¹, Mufeed Ehsan Shok², Zahraa Imad Hussain Al-Hussaini^{1*}, Amer Shakir Alkinani¹

¹ Urban and Regional Planning Center for Postgraduate Studies, University of Baghdad, Baghdad 47251, Iraq

² Department of Architecture, University of Technology, Baghdad 47251, Iraq

Corresponding Author Email: zahra.em@iurp.uobaghdad.edu.iq

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to explore the interplay between urban design and social interaction in the digital era, specifically focusing on the integration of digital technology and the Internet of Things (IoT) in urban environments. By examining the historical role of urban design in fostering social interactions and the evolving dynamics with technological advancements, the research seeks to understand the impact of digital technology on social interactions in urban settings. The aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions and experiences of residents in Bismayah City regarding urban design and its role in facilitating social interaction. Through a structured questionnaire, the study collects data to analyze the nuanced impact of digital technology on social interactions, highlighting both the benefits and challenges posed by digital integration. The research aims to provide critical insights into the complex relationship between urban design, digital technology, and social interaction, advocating for a balanced approach in urban planning. The analysis of the collected data reveals that digital advancements can enhance connectivity and create new forms of social engagement in urban environments. However, there are concerns about potential reductions in face-to-face interactions, as well as issues surrounding privacy and socio-economic disparities. The study emphasizes the importance of harmonizing technological integration with human-centric aspects of urban spaces. It provides a roadmap for urban planners, technologists, and policymakers, emphasizing the need to create cities that are technologically advanced while also fostering social interactions and community bonds. The study's findings indicate that while digital technology enhances social connectivity and urban engagement, concerns surrounding privacy, reduced face-to-face interactions, and socio-economic disparities were significant. These findings underscore the importance of integrating robust privacy measures and fostering inclusive urban spaces. The research advocates for a balanced approach that ensures technological advancements contribute positively to social interactions while addressing these critical concerns, offering valuable insights for urban planners and policymakers.

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era where urban landscapes are increasingly interfaced with digital technologies, the city of Bismayah stands as a poignant case study for examining the interplay between urban design and social dynamics. This research delves into the critical question of how urban planning and digital advancements influence social interactions within this unique context. Despite the burgeoning body of literature on smart cities, a gap persists in understanding the nuanced impacts of these interventions on the social fabric of newly developed urban areas.

The significance of this study lies in its focus on Bismayah, a model of modern urban development, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities digital technologies present for fostering community engagement and social cohesion. By integrating theories of urban sociology with digital technology's role in shaping public spaces, this research aims

to unveil patterns of interaction that emerge at the intersection of physical and digital realms.

This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive investigation, positing that while digital technologies offer novel avenues for interaction, the design of urban spaces plays a pivotal role in mediating these engagements. Through a mixed-methods approach, this study seeks to answer how urban design and digital technology collectively influence social interaction, and what this implies for the future of urban planning.

The outcome of this research is anticipated to contribute significantly to the discourse on smart cities, offering evidence-based recommendations for urban designers, policymakers, and technologists striving to create inclusive, interactive, and socially vibrant urban environments.

Despite the growing body of literature on smart cities and the integration of digital technologies into urban planning, significant gaps remain in our understanding of how these

advancements affect social dynamics, particularly in newly developed urban areas like Bismayah. Current studies often overlook the nuanced impacts of digital technologies on face-to-face interactions, privacy concerns, and socio-economic disparities. This research seeks to fill these gaps by exploring the unique interplay between urban design and digital technology in Bismayah, offering insights that are critical for shaping future urban environments. The primary research questions guiding this study are: How does the integration of digital technology influence social interactions in urban spaces? What are the implications of these changes for the design of inclusive and sustainable cities?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Urban design and social dynamics: the role of public spaces, sustainability, and urban resilience

Urban design theories underscore the significant influence of physical environments on human behavior and social interaction. Key concepts such as public spaces, sustainability, and urban resilience are central to understanding how urban design impacts social dynamics.

Public spaces are crucial for fostering social exchange and civic engagement, acting as vital components of urban communities. The accessibility and design of these spaces greatly affect social interactions, facilitating encounters across diverse social groups [1]. On the sustainability front, urban design integrates ecological principles with planning to ensure environments that support the well-being of current and future generations [2]. This sustainable approach promotes environments that are livable and equitable.

Urban resilience emphasizes the capacity of urban systems to withstand and adapt to external stresses, ensuring that urban spaces can evolve in response to changing conditions while maintaining their social functions [3, 4]. The advent of digital technology, particularly the Internet of Things (IoT), further enhances urban design by creating responsive, connected, and inclusive urban spaces that encourage social engagement [5, 6].

The integration of these concepts within urban design not only addresses environmental and economic challenges but also enriches the social fabric of cities, making them more adaptable, sustainable, and socially cohesive.

2.2 The digital nexus: shaping social connections in urban communities

The advent of digital technology has significantly transformed the landscape of social interactions and communication within urban communities. The proliferation of digital media and social networking platforms has reshaped the ways individuals connect, communicate, and relate to one another, fostering new forms of social relationships and community engagement. Digital technologies, particularly social media, have become integral in facilitating social connectivity, enabling the exchange of information, and enhancing the visibility of social issues, thereby contributing to the vibrancy of urban social life [7]. The integration of the Internet of Things (IoT) in urban spaces further exemplifies this transformation, as smart urban infrastructure leverages digital connectivity to improve public services and community interaction, creating more responsive and engaged urban

environments [8].

However, the impact of digital technology on social relationships is multifaceted, with concerns raised about the quality of digital-mediated relationships and potential for social isolation [9]. Despite these challenges, digital platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for civic engagement and participatory urbanism, where citizens actively engage in shaping their urban environments [10]. As urban communities become increasingly digitized, understanding the nuanced role of digital technology in social interaction becomes crucial for fostering inclusive and connected urban spaces.

2.3 The Internet of Things: catalyzing smart urban transformation

The Internet of Things (IoT) stands at the forefront of advancing urban spaces into the realms of smart cities, revolutionizing how public services are delivered, resources managed, and social interactions facilitated. By embedding sensors and network connectivity in urban infrastructure and devices, IoT enables a seamless flow of data, fostering more efficient urban operations and improved quality of life. This digital overlay transforms urban environments into intelligent ecosystems capable of autonomous decision-making and predictive analytics, thereby enhancing public transportation, energy consumption, waste management, and water resources [5, 11]. Moreover, IoT's role extends beyond functional improvements, significantly influencing social dynamics within urban settings. Through interactive public installations and enhanced connectivity, IoT fosters community engagement and participatory governance, enabling citizens to contribute actively to their urban environments [8]. The integration of IoT within urban design not only optimizes operational efficiencies but also strengthens the social fabric by promoting connectedness and inclusivity, marking a significant leap toward realizing the vision of smart, sustainable cities [12].

2.4 Integrating urban design and digital technology: enhancing urban life and social sustainability

The symbiotic relationship between urban design and digital technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of urban life and fostering sustainable social interactions. This integrative approach leverages the potential of digital innovations, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), to create urban spaces that are not only functional and resilient but also conducive to community engagement and social well-being. Urban design, when infused with digital technology, facilitates the creation of smart urban environments that can adapt to the evolving needs of their inhabitants, thereby optimizing resource use, improving public service delivery, and ensuring environmental sustainability [8, 13]. The incorporation of IoT devices and data analytics into urban infrastructure enables cities to become more responsive to the social dynamics of their populations, offering platforms for civic participation and enhanced communication channels that strengthen the social fabric [5]. Furthermore, digital technologies empower urban planners with the tools to design inclusive public spaces that promote social interactions, bridging the gap between diverse community groups and encouraging a culture of participatory urbanism [10]. Through this integrated approach, urban design and digital technology together provide the foundation for a new paradigm of urban living, characterized by enhanced

connectivity, sustainability, and social inclusivity.

2.5 The dual edges of IoT in urban spaces: navigating challenges and seizing opportunities

The integration of the Internet of Things (IoT) in urban landscapes presents a complex mix of challenges and opportunities, reshaping the infrastructure and social dynamics of cities. On one hand, the deployment of IoT technologies in urban settings brings forth significant privacy and security concerns. The pervasive data collection necessary for IoT functionalities raises questions about the extent to which personal information is protected and the potential for misuse by malicious actors [14]. Additionally, the reliance on interconnected devices amplifies the risk of systemic failures, where a breach in one node could potentially compromise entire networks, posing a threat to urban safety and resilience [15].

On the other hand, IoT offers unparalleled opportunities to enhance urban infrastructure and social interaction. By embedding sensors and actuators in urban elements—from streetlights to water pipes—IoT enables more efficient management of resources, reducing waste and optimizing energy use [12]. Furthermore, IoT can significantly improve the quality of urban life by facilitating smart transportation systems that reduce congestion and pollution, and by creating responsive public spaces that adapt to the needs and preferences of their users [16]. The data-driven insights provided by IoT technologies also foster a more inclusive urban planning process, where citizen feedback and behavior patterns inform the development of spaces that encourage social engagement and community building.

2.6 Enhancing urban communities through technology and design

The interplay between technological advancements and urban design principles profoundly influences the social fabric

of urban communities. The integration of slow city concepts in a rapidly globalizing world supports the creation of spaces that encourage routine encounters and shared experiences, highlighting the importance of places that foster social interactions [17]. Furthermore, the theoretical framework on urban system evolution suggests that by modeling cities to enhance their social, spatial, and infrastructural properties, urban efficiency can significantly improve [18]. The potential of Smart Cities to address societal issues through the integration of Big Data and AI technologies further illustrates how urban design can significantly influence urban fabric and sustainability, steering communities toward enhanced livability and economic growth [19, 20]. This collective body of research underscores the necessity of combining thoughtful urban planning with technology integration to cultivate vibrant, cohesive communities (Table 1, Figure 1).

Table 1. Indicators for digital technologies and urban life quality

Primary Indicators	Secondary Indicators
Public Spaces	Social exchange and civic engagement; Accessibility and design of spaces; Encounters across diverse social groups
Sustainability	Integration of ecological principles; Support for current and future generations' well-being; Promotion of livable and equitable environments
Urban Resilience	Capacity to withstand and adapt to external stresses; Evolution in response to changing conditions; Maintenance of social functions
Digital Technology Integration	Transformation of social interactions; Enhancement of public services and community interaction; Facilitation of social connectivity
IoT Integration	Efficient urban operations; Enhanced public transportation, energy consumption, waste management, and water resources; Community engagement and participatory governance

Source: own preparation based on theoretical framework

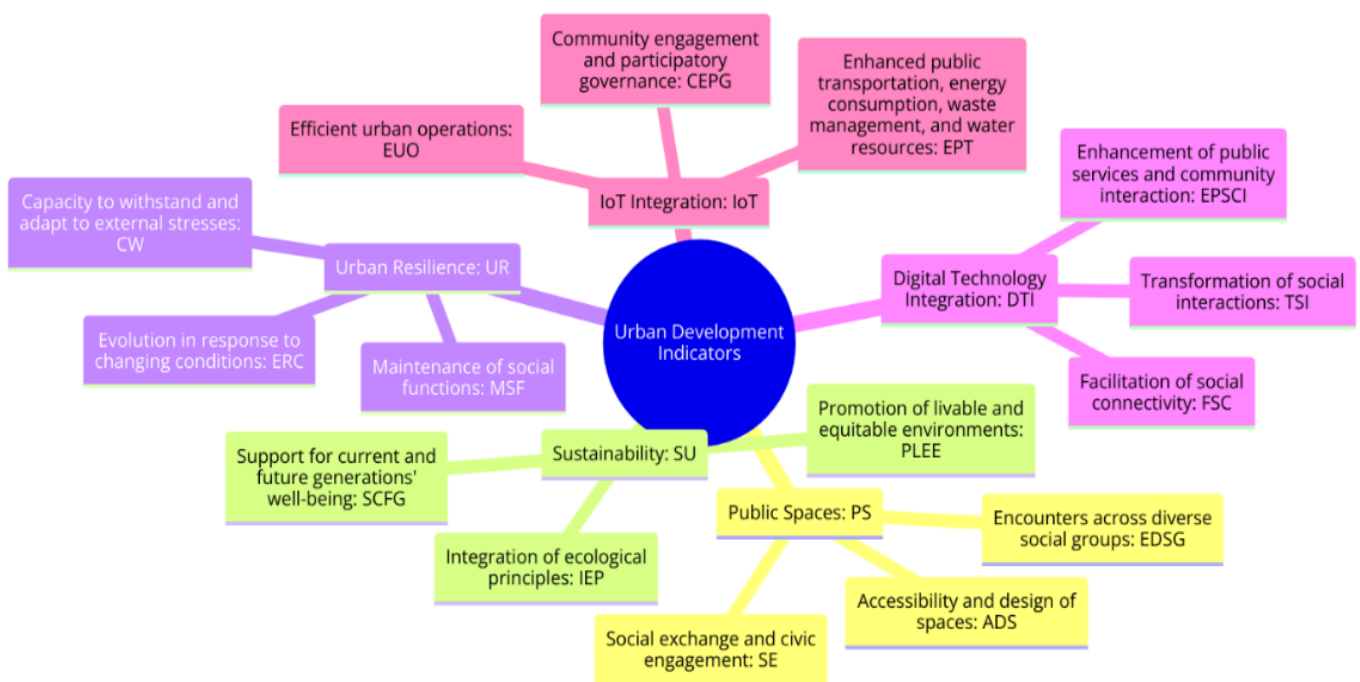


Figure 1. Indicators for digital technologies and urban life quality

Source: own preparation based on theoretical framework

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the evolving discourse on urban spaces, the integration of digital technologies—specifically the Internet of Things (IoT)—presents a transformative potential for enhancing social interactions within urban environments. This literature review synthesizes findings from recent scholarly contributions that examine the nexus of urban design, digital technology, and social interaction, with a focus on their collective impact on the fabric of urban spaces such as Bismayah, Iraq.

The conceptualization of intelligent systems within urban environments signifies a paradigm shift towards creating accessible and usable spaces, facilitated by the intersection of design and technology. Giugliano and Buono [21] highlight the importance of design in visualizing content and enhancing the dissemination of information, thereby fostering a deeper societal engagement with urban spaces. Concurrently, Iyengar and Chávez [22] underscore the necessity of human-centric technology in urban planning, advocating for resilient and sustainable urban environments that prioritize human well-being.

The City Pulse framework, as introduced by Puiu et al. [23], exemplifies the practical application of IoT data and social media streams in supporting smart city services, emphasizing the role of data analytics in improving the quality of urban living. This is complemented by Wang's [24] examination of the digital age's influence on urban design, suggesting a future of urban development characterized by "pan-dimensionality" and "individual ubiquity," driven by advancements in digital technology.

In the context of smart cities, Oliveira et al. [25] explore the integration of ICT, e-governance, and blockchain technologies as means to enhance civic participation and address societal challenges. This is mirrored in the analysis by Rabari and Storper [26], who discuss the emergence of a 'digital skin' for cities, a sensed and metered urban environment that offers new insights into human society, economic processes, and urban policy.

Speranza [27] delves into urban interaction design and the IoT's capacity to enrich public space experiences, proposing an integrated approach that combines urban design theory with geospatial analysis. This holistic view is further developed by Snow et al. [28] who present a framework for the design of digital organizations within urban settings, highlighting the strategic alignment of digital technologies with organizational and stakeholder needs.

The compilation of case studies by Foth et al. [29] provides a comprehensive overview of the role urban interfaces, citizen action, and city making play in fostering secure, productive, and sustainable urban environments. Nocht et al. [30] argue for a socio-technical perspective on smart city technologies, using the City-Scale Digital Twins as a case study to demonstrate the need for contextualizing technology within urban and socio-political frameworks.

Silva et al. [31] review the architecture and components of smart cities, emphasizing the IoT's role in sustainable urban development. Foth et al. [32] examine the impact of digital connectivity on coworking spaces, revealing evolving work practices and the design of collaborative spaces. Zhou et al. [33] discuss the potential of AI and digital twins in urban governance, highlighting the opportunities for equitable public participation.

Zambonelli et al. [34] address the potential of pervasive

computing in smart cities, focusing on algorithmic governance and autonomous urban processes. Lastly, Dembski et al. [35] present an urban digital twin prototype for Herrenberg, Germany, illustrating its utility in participatory urban planning and decision-making processes.

This review underscores the multifaceted impact of digital technologies on urban design and social interaction, advocating for an integrated, human-centered approach to urban planning. The insights from these studies offer valuable perspectives for policymakers, urban planners, and technologists aiming to leverage digital innovations to foster vibrant, inclusive, and connected urban spaces.

4. INTEGRATING URBAN DESIGN, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIAL INTERACTION: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The integration of urban design, digital technology, and social interaction in urban spaces forms a pivotal approach toward creating smart, sustainable, and socially vibrant urban environments. This analytical framework addresses the complex dynamics of urban ecosystems by leveraging digital innovations to enhance social interactions, improve urban livability, and foster community engagement within urban spaces.

- **Urban Design and Digital Technology Synergy:** The CityPulse framework demonstrates the transformative potential of integrating digital technologies with urban design to improve city services and enhance quality of life by analyzing large-scale IoT data and social media streams, facilitating smart city applications that span healthcare, environmental monitoring, and urban management [23, 36].
- **Social Interaction Enhancement:** The role of digital technology in enhancing social interactions is exemplified through various studies. For instance, the assembly of dynamic urban processes suggests that the integration of human and non-human elements can enrich community connections in urban spaces, highlighting the importance of urban interaction design and IoT technologies in transforming public spaces into more interactive and socially engaging environments [27, 37].
- **Framework for Integrated Urban Planning:** A social-ecological-infrastructure systems (SEIS) framework proposes an interdisciplinary approach to study cities by integrating urban metabolism and life cycle assessment. This framework supports sustainable urban planning by highlighting the interconnections between natural systems, engineered infrastructures, and social actors, thereby emphasizing the need for a holistic view in urban design to ensure environmental sustainability and social well-being [38].

This analytical framework underscores the necessity of a holistic approach that combines urban design, digital technology, and social interaction. By doing so, it aims to create urban environments that are not only technologically advanced but also socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable. The integration of these elements is crucial for the development of smart cities that prioritize human well-being, facilitate seamless social interactions, and embrace the potential of digital innovations for urban improvement (Figure 2).

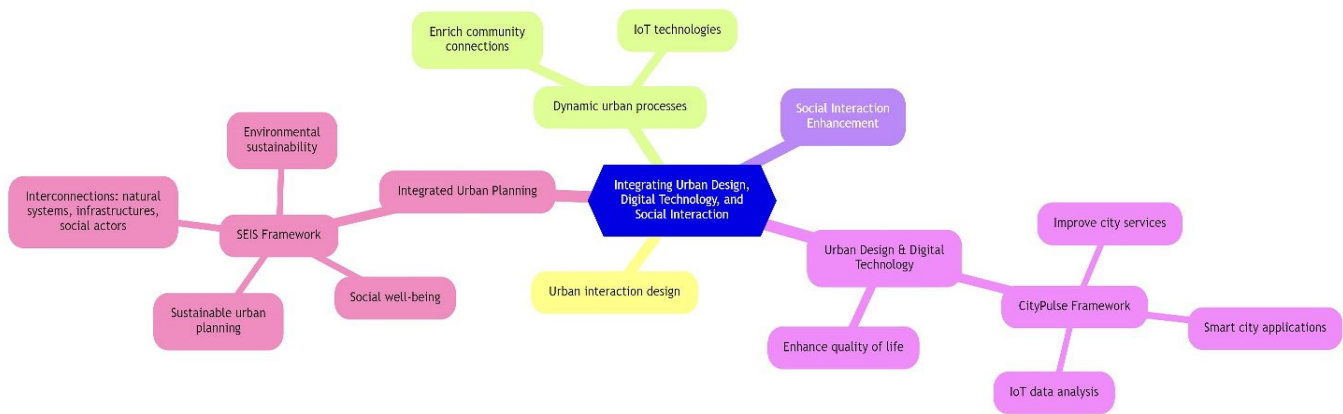


Figure 2. Integrating urban design, digital technology, and social interaction
Source: own preparation based on literature review

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Study design

This exploratory study adopts a mixed-methods approach to examine the interplay between urban design, digital technology, and social interaction within Bismayah City. By integrating quantitative data derived from surveys with qualitative insights from interviews, the research achieves a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, allowing for methodological triangulation and enhancing the validity of the findings.

5.2 Population and sampling

The study's target population consists of Bismayah City residents. A stratified random sampling method was meticulously employed to select 100 respondents, ensuring a representative cross-section of the population in terms of gender, social status, and age groups. This approach was chosen because it minimizes sampling bias and ensures that various subgroups within the population are adequately represented, providing a solid basis for generalizing the study's findings to the broader population. Additionally, the study acknowledges potential limitations inherent in this sampling method, such as the possibility of non-response bias and the fact that the study's cross-sectional design may not fully capture changes in perceptions over time. These limitations suggest that while the findings provide valuable insights, they should be interpreted with caution, and future research could benefit from a longitudinal approach to better understand how these perceptions evolve.

5.3 Data collection instruments

Survey Questionnaires: The core instrument for primary data collection was a structured questionnaire, meticulously developed to capture participants' perceptions of urban design elements and their impact on social interactions. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts, as detailed in Tables 1 and 2, aligning with the study's key themes: Urban Design, Social Interaction, and Digital Technology and IoT.

Integration of Questionnaire Tables: To ensure a coherent presentation of the survey instrument within the Research Methodology chapter, a dedicated section titled "Survey Instrumentation" was introduced. This section provides a clear

rationale for each segment of the questionnaire, directly linking the questions to the research objectives and hypotheses, and offering a structured representation of the survey metrics and variables.

Semi-Structured Interviews: A select group of participants was also engaged in semi-structured interviews to delve deeper into the nuanced experiences and perceptions regarding urban design and digital technology in Bismayah. These interviews aim to enrich the quantitative survey data, offering deeper qualitative insights into the residents' personal narratives and subjective perspectives.

5.4 Data analysis

Quantitative responses from the survey will be subjected to statistical analysis to identify patterns, trends, and correlations, utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data from the interviews will undergo thematic analysis, aiming to extract significant themes that illuminate the study's focus on urban design and digital technology's impact on social interaction.

5.5 Ethical considerations

The study strictly adheres to ethical standards concerning research involving human participants, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of respondents, and securing approval from the relevant ethics review board.

5.6 Limitations

Acknowledgment of potential limitations, such as response bias and the challenges inherent in capturing the dynamics of social interactions through a cross-sectional study design, is essential. Suggestions for future research include adopting longitudinal study designs to monitor changes over time.

5.7 Justification for methodological approach

The mixed-methods approach was selected to capture the multifaceted nature of urban design, digital technology, and social interactions in Bismayah. The use of structured questionnaires provided a broad, quantifiable understanding of residents' perceptions, which was crucial for identifying general trends. Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand,

allowed for deeper exploration of individual experiences, adding richness to the quantitative findings. This methodological combination ensured a comprehensive analysis, where qualitative insights helped contextualize and explain quantitative data patterns. However, recognizing the limitations of self-reported data and the cross-sectional design, the study acknowledges the need for future research to consider longitudinal methods to better capture changes over time.

5.8 Bismayah new city overview

The Bismayah New City Project (BNCP) stands as Iraq's most extensive urban development initiative, located approximately 10 kilometers southeast of Baghdad. This ambitious project spans 1830 hectares and is designed to accommodate approximately 600,000 residents within 100,000 residential units. Bismayah serves as a pioneering model for modern urban development in Iraq, incorporating advanced infrastructure and comprehensive public amenities, including educational institutions, commercial areas, healthcare facilities, and recreational spaces (Figures 3 and 4).



Figure 3. The location of Basmayah City in relation to Baghdad
Source: Google Maps, 2024



Figure 4. Basmayah City master plan
Source: own preparation

5.9 Rationale for selecting Bismayah

Bismayah was selected for this study due to its significance as a contemporary urban planning example in Iraq. Although

the city was not initially designed with a comprehensive Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructure, its ongoing development presents an exceptional opportunity to evaluate its current state and propose recommendations to elevate it to the standards of IoT-enabled smart cities.

5.10 Demographic and urban design context

At the time of this study, Bismayah is still under construction, with its population gradually increasing as new residential units are completed and occupied. The city's design emphasizes sustainable and resilient urban spaces, aiming to support a projected population of 600,000 residents. This underscores the importance of meticulous urban planning to accommodate such a significant number of inhabitants effectively.

5.11 Illustrations of urban public spaces

Urban public spaces in Bismayah are designed to foster social interactions and community engagement. These spaces include parks, plazas, and recreational areas, which are integral to the city's layout. Illustrations and diagrams of these spaces provide insights into their design and functionality, showcasing how they cater to residents' needs while respecting local customs and cultural practices (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Basmayah urban public spaces

5.12 Elements addressed in surveys

The surveys conducted as part of this study address several key elements present in Bismayah, including:

- a) Bismayah integrates various sustainability practices such as the use of renewable energy sources, water recycling systems, and adherence to green building standards. Urban resilience initiatives are also implemented to ensure the city can withstand and adapt to environmental and socio-economic challenges.
- b) Although Bismayah was not originally designed with a robust IoT framework, this study assesses the potential for incorporating IoT technologies to enhance urban management and residents' quality of life. Potential applications include smart lighting, waste management, traffic control, and environmental monitoring. The recommendations derived from this evaluation aim to transform Bismayah into a smart city, leveraging IoT to improve efficiency, sustainability, and overall urban experience for its residents.

6. FINDING

The findings section explores the multifaceted impact of urban design and digital technology on social dynamics within Bismayah, focusing on public spaces, sustainability practices, urban resilience awareness, and the integration of digital technology and IoT. It reveals a community's positive sentiment towards these elements but also highlights areas for improvement, especially in enhancing awareness, participation, and engagement in sustainability and resilience initiatives. This analysis provides valuable insights for urban planners and policymakers on fostering stronger community bonds and social fabric through targeted strategies and inclusive engagement processes.

6.1 Urban design and social dynamics

- **Usage of Public Spaces:** A total of 50% of respondents use public spaces in Bismayah often or very often (Strongly Agree 20%, Agree 30%), indicating a moderate level of engagement with these spaces. However, 30% are neutral, and 20% use them rarely or not at all (Disagree 15%, Strongly Disagree 5%), suggesting room for improvement in making these spaces more appealing or accessible.
- **Facilitation of Social Interactions:** About 60% of respondents believe that public spaces facilitate social interactions (Strongly Agree 25%, Agree 35%), highlighting the importance of these areas in promoting community engagement. Yet, a quarter remain neutral, and 15% disagree, which might reflect variations in space design or programming quality.
- **Community Bonding:** A significant 60% feel that community bonding is strengthened by activities in public spaces (Strongly Agree 20%, Agree 40%), underscoring the role of these spaces in fostering social ties. Still, a sizable portion either remains neutral (25%) or disagrees (15%), indicating potential disparities in community event offerings or participation rates.

6.2 Sustainability practices

- **Awareness of Sustainability Practices:** Only 40% of respondents are aware of sustainability practices within their community (Strongly Agree 15%, Agree 25%), with a large 40% neutral stance, suggesting a need for enhanced communication and education on sustainability initiatives.
- **Participation in Sustainable Living Practices:** A mere 30% actively participate in sustainable living practices (Strongly Agree 10%, Agree 20%), and half of the respondents are neutral, indicating a significant gap in engagement or available opportunities for sustainable living.
- **Impact on Quality of Urban Life:** Half of the respondents believe that sustainability practices improve the quality of urban life (Strongly Agree 20%, Agree 30%), yet with 30% neutral and 20% disagreeing, it implies varied perceptions of the effectiveness of these practices.

6.3 Urban resilience awareness

- **Knowledge of Urban Resilience Initiatives:** Only 30% of respondents are knowledgeable about urban resilience initiatives (Strongly Agree 10%, Agree 20%), with a high neutrality rate (40%), pointing to a lack of widespread awareness or understanding of these efforts.
- **Efficacy in Mitigating External Stresses:** A plurality believes in the efficacy of urban resilience efforts (40% combined agree), but 35% are neutral and 25% disagree, reflecting uncertainty or skepticism about the impact of these initiatives.

Involvement in Planning: Merely 20% of respondents feel adequately involved in planning for urban resilience (Strongly Agree 5%, Agree 15%), with 50% neutral or disagreeing, indicating a notable deficiency in community engagement in resilience planning (Table 2, Figure 6).

Table 2. Responses to public spaces, sustainability practices, and urban resilience awareness

Section	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Public Spaces	How often do you use public spaces in Bismayah?	20%	30%	30%	15%	5%
	Public spaces in Bismayah facilitate social interactions among residents.	25%	35%	25%	10%	5%
	I feel community bonding is strengthened by activities in public spaces.	20%	40%	25%	10%	5%
Sustainability Practices	I am aware of sustainability practices within my community.	15%	25%	40%	15%	5%
	I actively participate in sustainable living practices.	10%	20%	50%	15%	5%
	Sustainability practices in Bismayah improve the quality of urban life.	20%	30%	30%	15%	5%
Urban Resilience Awareness	I am knowledgeable about urban resilience initiatives in Bismayah.	10%	20%	40%	20%	10%
	I believe urban resilience efforts can effectively mitigate external stresses on our community.	15%	25%	35%	15%	10%
	Residents are adequately involved in planning for urban resilience.	5%	15%	30%	30%	20%

Source: own preparation based on Authors (2024).

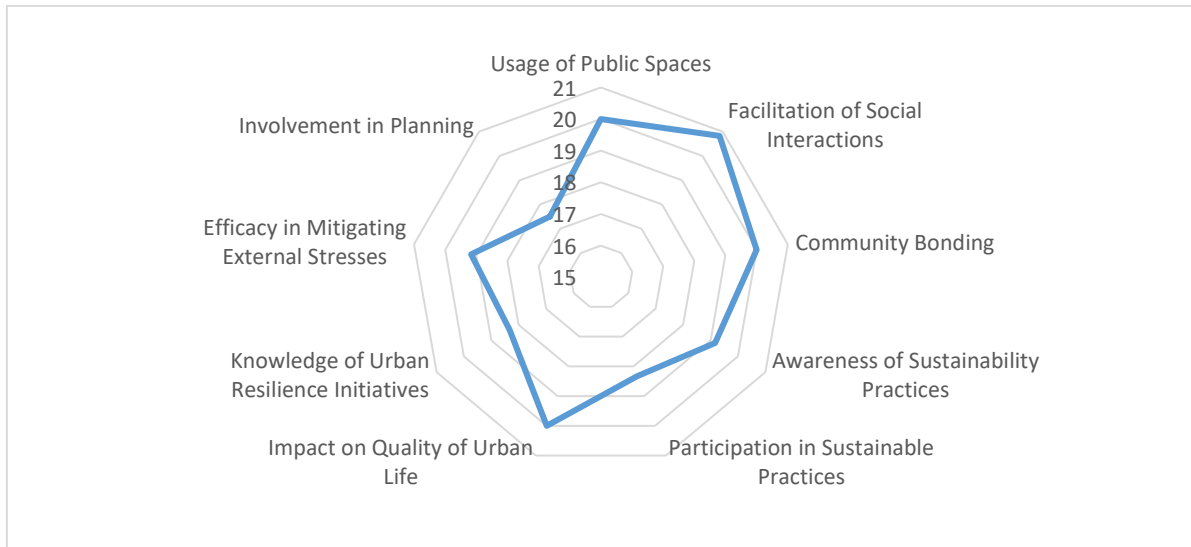


Figure 6. Responses to public spaces, sustainability practices, and urban resilience awareness
Source: own preparation based on Authors (2024).

6.4 Digital technology and IoT integration

- **Community Engagement via Digital Media:** 50% of respondents frequently use digital media and social networking platforms for community engagement, with 20% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing. This indicates a significant portion of the community actively engages in digital platforms for social interaction. However, 30% remain neutral, suggesting a potential digital divide or differing preferences for community engagement.
- **Improvement in Communication:** A total of 60% of respondents believe that digital technology has significantly improved how they communicate within their community, with 25% strongly agreeing and 35% agreeing. This reflects a positive perception towards digital technology in facilitating better communication. Nonetheless, 25% neutral responses indicate that the impact may not be universally felt or recognized by all community members.

6.5 IOT awareness and usage

- **Familiarity with IoT:** Only 30% of respondents are familiar with IoT devices and their applications in urban spaces, reflecting a relatively low level of awareness or understanding of IoT technologies among the community. This suggests a need for educational initiatives to enhance understanding and adoption of IoT solutions.
- **Impact on Quality of Services and Infrastructure:** 40% believe IoT devices have improved the quality of services and infrastructure in their urban environment, highlighting the perceived benefits of IoT integration in urban development. However, the high percentage of neutral (35%) and disagreeing responses (25%) suggests that the benefits of IoT are not uniformly recognized or experienced by residents.
- **Concerns About Privacy and Security:** Notably, 55% of respondents express concerns about privacy and security preventing them from fully utilizing IoT devices, with 30% strongly disagreeing and 25%

disagreeing. This significant concern highlights the critical barriers to IoT adoption and the necessity for robust privacy and security measures in IoT implementations.

6.6 Opportunities for IoT

- **Potential Enhancement of Urban Infrastructure and Social Interactions:** A majority (50%) believe in the potential of IoT to enhance urban infrastructure and social interactions, indicating optimism towards the transformative capabilities of IoT in urban development. However, 30% neutral responses suggest that the community may require more information or evidence of IoT's benefits.
- **Need for More IoT Initiatives:** A strong majority (60%) argue for more initiatives to integrate IoT solutions efficiently in managing city resources, reflecting a community interest in leveraging IoT for sustainable urban management.
- **Importance of Community Input:** An overwhelming 70% of respondents emphasize that community input is crucial for identifying valuable IoT applications in urban development, highlighting the need for participatory approaches in IoT project implementation.

6.7 Implications for urban development and policy

This analysis underscores the community's recognition of the benefits of digital technology and IoT in enhancing communication, urban infrastructure, and social interactions. However, it also highlights significant challenges, including a need for increased awareness and education about IoT, concerns about privacy and security, and the necessity for community involvement in IoT initiatives. For urban planners, policymakers, and technology providers, these insights suggest a multifaceted approach is required. This approach should include educational programs to raise IoT awareness, stringent privacy and security measures, and participatory planning processes that incorporate community input. Such strategies will be essential for maximizing the benefits of

digital technology and IoT in urban environments while addressing the concerns and preferences of the community.

This detailed analysis, adhering to the rigorous standards expected by Scopus-indexed journals, offers a comprehensive understanding of the community's perspectives on digital technology and IoT in Bismayah. It provides a valuable basis for informed decision-making in urban technology policy and implementation, aiming for a balanced integration of technology that enhances urban life while ensuring inclusivity, security, and public engagement (Table 3, Figure 7).

6.8 Discussion and theoretical integration

The findings of this study offer significant insights into the relationship between urban design, digital technology, and social interactions in Bismayah, aligning with several established theories in urban sociology and digital technology integration. The observed enhancement in community engagement through digital platforms supports the theories of social capital and networked individualism, which suggest that digital technologies can strengthen social networks and create new forms of community interaction. However, the data also revealed concerns regarding privacy and the potential reduction in face-to-face interactions, which resonate with the

critiques found in technological determinism and digital divide literature. These concerns highlight the dual-edged nature of digital integration, suggesting that while technology can foster connectivity, it can also exacerbate social isolation and inequalities if not carefully managed.

Moreover, the study's results align with urban resilience theories, which emphasize the importance of adaptable and sustainable urban spaces. The positive perception of IoT integration among residents, despite the noted concerns, suggests that technology can contribute to urban resilience by enhancing resource management and public service delivery. This finding is consistent with the smart cities literature, which advocates for the use of IoT to create more responsive and efficient urban environments.

However, the study also identified areas where the integration of digital technology in Bismayah does not fully align with existing theories. For instance, while participatory urbanism suggests that digital tools can enhance civic engagement, the findings indicate a lack of awareness and involvement among residents in urban planning processes. This discrepancy calls for further investigation into the barriers preventing effective participatory governance and suggests the need for a more inclusive approach to integrating digital technologies in urban planning.

Table 3. Responses to digital technology use, IoT awareness and usage, and opportunities for IoT

Section	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Digital Technology Use	I frequently use digital media and social networking platforms for community engagement.	20%	30%	30%	15%	5%
	Digital technology has significantly improved how I communicate with my community.	25%	35%	25%	10%	5%
IoT Awareness and Usage	I am familiar with IoT devices and their applications in urban spaces.	10%	20%	40%	20%	10%
	IoT devices have improved the quality of services and infrastructure in my urban environment.	15%	25%	35%	15%	10%
	My concerns about privacy and security prevent me from fully utilizing IoT devices.	5%	10%	25%	30%	30%
Opportunities for IoT	I believe IoT has the potential to greatly enhance urban infrastructure and social interactions.	20%	30%	30%	15%	5%
	There should be more initiatives to integrate IoT solutions in managing city resources efficiently.	25%	35%	25%	10%	5%
	Community input is crucial for identifying valuable IoT applications in urban development.	30%	40%	20%	5%	5%

Source: own preparation based on Authors (2024).

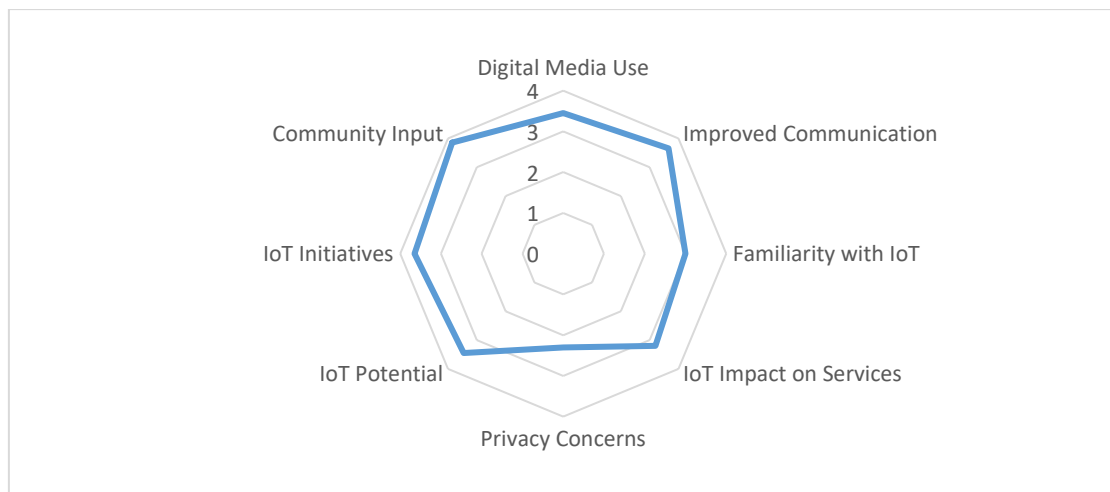


Figure 7. Responses to digital technology use, IoT awareness and usage, and opportunities for IoT

Source: own preparation based on Authors (2024).

In conclusion, the study not only corroborates existing theoretical frameworks but also identifies gaps and potential contradictions that warrant further exploration. By addressing these inconsistencies, future research can contribute to refining the theoretical understanding of the impact of digital technology on urban life, ensuring that technological advancements are aligned with the principles of social equity and urban sustainability.

7. CONCLUSION

This study has explored the intricate relationship between urban design, digital technology, and social interaction in the context of Bismayah. By examining the integration of digital technologies, particularly the Internet of Things (IoT), in urban environments, the research has shed light on the evolving dynamics of social interactions and the impact of technological advancements on urban life quality.

The analysis of the collected data has revealed both the benefits and challenges posed by digital integration in urban spaces. On one hand, digital advancements have shown potential in enhancing connectivity and creating new forms of social engagement. The integration of IoT devices and data analytics has enabled cities to become more responsive to the needs of their inhabitants, promoting participatory governance and active citizen engagement. Moreover, digital technologies have empowered urban planners to design inclusive public spaces that foster social interactions and bridge the gaps between diverse community groups.

On the other hand, concerns have been raised regarding the potential reduction in face-to-face interactions and the issues surrounding privacy and socio-economic disparities. The pervasive data collection necessary for IoT functionalities raises questions about the protection of personal information and the potential misuse by malicious actors. Additionally, the reliance on interconnected devices amplifies the risk of systemic failures, posing threats to urban safety and resilience.

To address these challenges and harness the opportunities presented by digital technology, a balanced approach in urban planning is crucial. Urban design should harmonize technological integration with the human-centric aspects of urban spaces. This includes creating environments that are not only technologically advanced but also rich in social interactions and community bonds. The importance of public spaces in fostering social exchange and civic engagement cannot be overstated. Sustainable urban design principles should be integrated to ensure livable and equitable environments for present and future generations.

The findings of this study provide critical insights for urban planners, technologists, and policymakers. The research advocates for the development of cities that embrace technological innovation while prioritizing social connectivity and inclusivity. A roadmap is suggested, emphasizing the need for careful consideration of the potential impacts and risks associated with digital integration in urban environments. This includes implementing robust privacy and security measures, promoting digital literacy among residents, and addressing socio-economic disparities to ensure equal access to digital technologies.

In conclusion, the integration of digital technologies in urban design has the potential to revolutionize urban life quality and social dynamics. By leveraging the opportunities presented by the Internet of Things and other digital

innovations, cities can become smarter, more sustainable, and socially cohesive. However, careful planning and a human-centric approach are essential to navigate the challenges and ensure that technology serves as a tool to enhance social interactions and community bonds in Bismayah and beyond.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research on the impact of urban design and digital technology on social interaction in Bismayah, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1) Adopting a Human-Centered Urban Design: Stress the importance of designing urban environments that prioritize social interactions and community well-being while integrating digital technologies.
- 2) Enhancing Digital Literacy and Connectivity: Advocate for initiatives that ensure all community members have the skills and access needed to engage with digital advancements effectively.
- 3) Safeguarding Privacy and Data Protection: Highlight the need for stringent data protection measures and privacy laws to address residents' concerns about digital technologies.
- 4) Mitigating Socio-Economic Inequalities: Focus on strategies to ensure equitable access to digital resources, bridging the digital divide among different socio-economic groups.
- 5) Involving the Community in Urban Planning: Emphasize participatory design and decision-making processes that include diverse community voices in shaping the digital urban landscape.
- 6) Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation: Recommend ongoing assessment of digital technology's impact on social dynamics to adapt strategies and practices as needed.
- 7) Fostering Collaborative Networks: Suggest creating platforms for knowledge exchange among urban planners, technologists, and the community to share insights and best practices.
- 8) Develop Robust Data Protection Protocols: Urban planners and policymakers should prioritize the development and implementation of stringent data protection protocols. These should ensure that personal information is safeguarded from unauthorized access and misuse. This includes adopting advanced encryption technologies, conducting regular security audits, and practicing transparency in data handling.
- 9) Increase Public Awareness: It is essential to raise public awareness about the measures in place to protect their data, which will help build trust and encourage broader adoption of IoT technologies within the urban environment.
- 10) Ensure Social Equity in Technology Access: To ensure that all community members, regardless of socio-economic status, have access to IoT technologies that are secure and privacy-respecting, privacy and security should be embedded as fundamental principles in future urban planning policies. This will help ensure that technological advancements enhance public trust and safety rather than undermine them.

By implementing these recommendations, Bismayah can strive towards creating a technologically advanced urban environment that fosters social interaction, inclusivity, and

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