Non Physical Research Methods and Design Proposals, in Redevelopment Projects.

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Abstract

Old historical contexts in mega cities are very challenging to designers and planners in trying to understand the complexity of change through time and its effect on physical and non physical aspects of the setting. These contexts are characterized by high level of mixed uses, and residential use is the highest, therefore the cooperation and agreement of local community seems to be essential in each case, in order to understand local communities' culture and needs. Methods and techniques of data collection and analysis should also evolve from basic analytic representation to incorporating time layers, cultural aspects and contextual frame work in order to help in understanding the complexities of change in urban settings.

Design and research became two interconnected fields; together they allow better problem identification and site observation. The paper focuses on the concept of redesign and upgrading of open spaces (streets and nodes) in existing historical settings, the research tools required for this kind of design, and how these research tools can be effective in including local communities' views in urban design decisions.

The paper reviews two projects that were implemented in the old city of Cairo, each with different views and goals and both include many disciplines: renovation, conservation, reuse of old and new buildings and infill design, open spaces and collective facades design. One project is under the supervision of Aga khan and UNESCO and the other is under the supervision of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Culture. Each project depended on a different approach to data collection and analysis that affected and is reflected in the final resulting urban setting.