The Impact of Building Technologies on Local Identity of Urban Settlements

Authors : Eman Nagi Gowid Selim

Abstract : Nowadays, the relevance of places to people has been questioned from different perspectives. This is attributed to the fact that many international concrete blocks were used to create multi-use public spaces in neighborhoods based on the techniques of mass-productions concepts that became one of the most effective ways in building construction, replacing the local and traditional built environment. During the last decades, the world has become increasingly globalized and citizen more mobilized, and thus, ignoring the social and environmental dimensions of the local identity. The main enquiries of the research are "How did building technologies affect urban settlement's identity?" and "What are the impacts of technologies and globalization on local identities in urban spaces? "From this perspective, the research presents firstly, a historical review that shows how old civilizations enhance their local identities using the newly discovered building materials in each era in different urban settlement and fabrics without losing the identity. The second part of the research highlights the different approaches of building technologies and urban design to present a clear understanding of ways of applying and merging between different methodologies to achieve the most efficient urban space design. The third part aims at analyzing some international and national case studies where the form and structure of particular spaces are vital to identifying the morphological elements of urban settlements and the links existing between them. In addition, it determines how the building materials are used to enrich the vocabulary of the local identity. This part ends with the deduction of the guidelines for the integration of the environmental and social dimensions within the building technologies` approaches to enhance the sustainability of local identities and thus, ending up with redefining "Urban Identity" to guide future research in such cultural areas. Finally, the research uses the comparative methodology for applying the deduced guidelines on a national case study namely "Othman`s Towers" in corniche El Maadi, and then ends up by some results in the form of strategies for future researcher, that identifies how to ensure local identity in urban settlements using new building materials and technologies to achieve social and environmental comfort within the cultural areas.

Keywords : building technologies, cultural context, environmental approach, participatory design, social dimension, urban spaces

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