

Appropriating the New Urbanism Principles to the Egyptian Context

Thesis Submitted For the Partial Fulfillment of the
Master of Science Degree in Urban Planning

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Cairo 2008

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Introduction

New Urbanism is an urban design movement that became very popular in the late 1980's and early 1990's, that promotes the creation and restoration of diverse, walkable, compact, energetic, mixed-use communities composed of the same components as conventional development. Furthermore, New Urbanism is assembled in a more integrated fashion, in the form of complete communities, which contain houses, work spaces, shops, entertainment, schools parks, and civic facilities essential to the daily needs of the residents, and all within easy walking distance of each other. It also promotes the increased use of public transportation and light rail, instead of more highways and roads. The size of parking lots is reduced using on-street parking, as well as, enhancing other modes of transportation.

From the international experiences, New Urbanism Principles is about raising quality of life and enhancing standard of living by creating better places to live in. However, different cultural, ecological, and economic circumstances require New Urbanism Principles to be adapted according to every context, as Douglas Kelbaug argued:

“New, Post and other urbanisms, they do represent different values and sensibilities. They need to be situated in time and space, contextualized in different cultures and geographies”

(Kelbaug, in Fisherman, 2005)

and as Rahul Mehrotra argued:

“What makes sense in the developing world is very different of what makes sense in North America or Europe. It’s unlikely there will be one urbanism for all people, not even for all North Americans, there is not even one new urbanism”
(Mehrotra, R. in Fisherman, R., 2005)

Thus, the purpose of this research is to develop appropriate design criteria for Egyptian new cities, which takes in consideration the cultural and ecological distinctive characteristics of the Egyptian environment.

Problem Definition

Out of 60 planned new communities, 19 new communities were built in Egypt during the past 30 years; those cities were not planned according to predefined guidelines or regulation, instead they were planned according mental and previous individual experiences of the urban designer and planner. Unfortunately, the rational plans of new cities could not create livable communities which meet the human needs and demands. As a result, out of the 19 built communities, not even one community could achieve the target number of population, and some cities (such as 10th of Ramadan city) are suffering from decreasing number of population.

Research Objective

The research aims to appropriate New Urbanism principles to the Egyptian social and physical context, in order to avoid any misapplication of those principles, and also to gain as much benefit as possible from New Urbanism principles when they are applied on Egyptian new cities.

Hypothesis

Although Kelbaug claimed that New Urbanism principles need to be adapted to fit in different cultures and geographies, some principles are universal and should be applied (with no required adaptations) on cities regardless its location, size, or environment.

Methodology

Part 1: Theoretical Review

A descriptive, explanatory and thematic methodology will be conducted to introduce and explain the basic principles of New Urbanism, in addition to the analysis of different International examples of new communities planned and designed based on the principles of New Urbanism. This will assist in obtaining certain criteria which will facilitate the analysis of local Examples in further phases of the research.

Part 2: Appropriating New Urbanism

An analytical study, a classification of new communities in Egypt can be induced in order to select a number of case studies. New Urbanism principles will be tested on this sample, in addition to a field survey (questionnaire) that aims to: First, trace the satisfactory degree of new cities' inhabitants with their built environment. Second, inhabitants' expected correspondences toward applying each principle of New Urbanism on their community.

The research will finally examine the applicability of each principle on the Egyptian environment, and recommend the required adaptation for New Urbanism principles to fit into the Egyptian culture and local urban conditions.

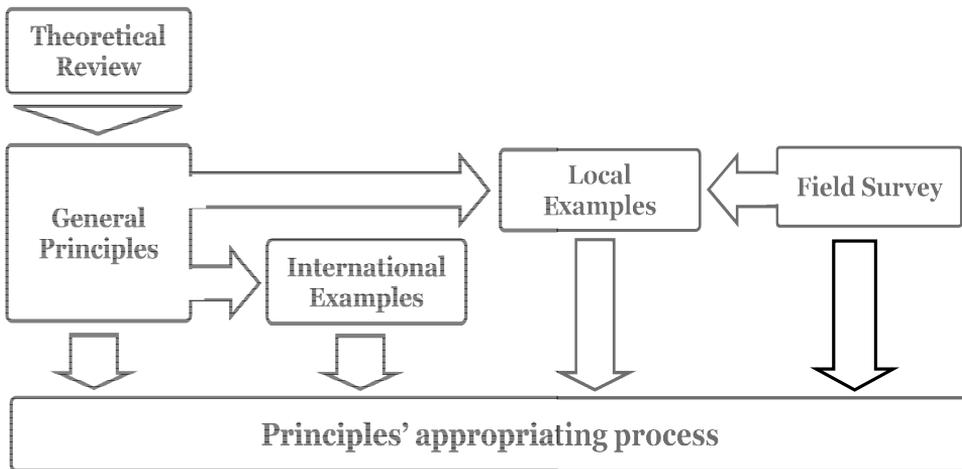


Fig Intro-1: Schematic Methodology
Source: Researcher

Research Structure

Introduction

Part 1: Theoretical Review

Chapter 1: Definitions, History and Motivations.

Chapter 2: Principles of New Urbanism Movement.

Chapter 3: Analysis of International New Communities.

Part 2: Appropriating New Urbanism Principles

Chapter 4: Testing NU principles on Egyptian New Cities.

Chapter 5: NU principles' Appropriating Process.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations.

Part 3: Appendices

Appendix 1: Charter of New Urbanism.

Appendix 2: Classification of Egyptian New Communities.

Appendix 3: Field Survey Study - Statistical Procedures.