

Chapter 11

Towards Creative Mixed-Use Axes in the Upper Middle Class Residential Zones in Cairo Metropolitan Context

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ABSTRACT

Mixed-use development is one of the applications for achieving sustainability goals and quality of life in cities, and one of the creative city tangible characteristics indicators as well. Mixed-use approach was adopted in development strategies for two global examples in this chapter. This study sheds light on the unplanned generated mixed-use axes in upper middle class residential zones in Cairo, the paradigm in which they have been formed and the factors leading to the current mixed-use axes, and their effects on the quality of life for the same urban contexts, how might the stakeholders' needs be achieved without urban deterioration, how these axes could be creative places, and the importance of community involvement in urban development and management processes. A field survey of three local case studies will answer these inquiries in this chapter. Expected results will set guidelines for mixed-use axes in upper middle class residential zones to enhance the quality of life. These guidelines could be applied to transform/design the existing/new cities to be creative cities.

INTRODUCTION

By observing the main streets of residential neighborhoods of the upper middle class residential zones in Cairo, a transformation of the main streets in the major residential neighborhoods into central commercial streets for major stores is highly observed in the form of overlapping incompatible activities. Sometimes these stores attract consumers from both inside and outside the area in which they are located, which attracts other major stores to the same area, thus increasing land value in those areas by subjecting them to the high demand for residential units to be transformed to commercial units. This

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also causes changes in land usage without being subjected to any of the determinants, urban and planning studies, but based solely on the supply and demand of the Market. This causes many problems in the urban context, thus creating a negative impact on quality of life. The objective of this study is to investigate the reasons behind the generation of unplanned mixed-use axes in upper middle class residential zones' main streets and to set design guidelines for urban designers. Furthermore, to develop an urban management framework for the authorities to use, where applicable in the case study zones, and during the planning of similar neighborhoods to develop neighborhoods' main streets or spines where the mix between the residential and commercial usage occurs with: no built-environment deterioration, safe pedestrian network, social interaction spaces, environmentally-friendly aspects, live-work places, community involvement in decision making and urban management and high quality of life. The author defined these factors as creative mixed-use axes in upper middle class residential zones to achieve good quality of life in the same urban context.

BACKGROUND

Before the World Wars, urban settlements were based on walkability and mixed-use streets as live-work neighborhoods. Local residents' businesses were on the ground floors, or even in the basements of residential buildings which enabled residents to satisfy all their daily needs within walking distance. (Cities institute London Metropolitan University).

After the Second World War, mixed-use streets in residential areas suffered from neglect and transformed to slum zones due to (Jones et al., 2007):

- The directions of the post-war urban planning policy, with a clear separation of uses at the city and neighborhood levels.
- Neglecting planning policies for the mixed-use pattern of the main streets of the residential neighborhood.
- Establishing assembled commercial centers outside the city, which requires long distance travel and heavy reliance on the use of private cars.
- The overlap of the urban management responsibilities of the old cities between different governmental authorities and the lack of coordination between them.

While proceeding for decades in development policies with establishing new commercial centers outside existing cities, in the late 1980s and early 1990s a trend emerged from academics, urban planners, architects and groups of residents of ancient cities to stop the deterioration of the existing urban environment and to improve the quality of public spaces by reviving the main city streets in residential areas ("CNU", n.d.).

In 1993 the New Urbanism Movement was established to reinvest in new, and existing cities. The movement congress believed that well-designed cities create good communities and good places for all, and the integration between physical elements of the city, urban management authorities, community, economic and social activities all create creative urban environment. The movement's core values were based on diversity in population and uses in the neighborhood, pedestrian and transit oriented communities, that public spaces should be accessible and well defined by well-designed architectural and landscape features conforming local history, ecology, climate and buildings functions. Those principles

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