Vernacular architecture & spatial typology: their share in urban health

Akuto Akpedze Konou
Vitor Pessoa Colombo
Jérôme Chenal

Communauté d’Études pour l’Aménagement du Territoire (CEAT - EPFL)

Aim & methods

“Vernacular architecture can be defined as a type of local or regional construction, using traditional materials and resources from the area where the building is located. (Camilla Ghisleni, Archdaily 2020).

The aim of this study is to reveal that over modernization of architecture and spatial planning techniques could be a threat to urban health in Global South, and that resort to vernacular methods could be a solution. It is an empirical study resulting from a combination of personal, quasi-ethnographic experiences, 10 years of professional practice, observation, scientific reading and discussion, and experimentation.

Aim & methods

- Scientific research
- Education
- Professional and institutional training
- Promotion for more independent, resilient & HEALTHY CITIES.

Findings

With the advent of colonization in Africa at the beginning of the century, the importation of modern construction materials and methods gradually changed the architectural and urban landscapes. Earth, wood and stone gave way to concrete, glass and metal. Moreover, the spatial organization in community has given way to more and more individualism and the urban sprawl has made the land scarce, which forced to a contiguous and under-equipped development. The old habit of the proximity of the fields as an integral part of the living place is also more and more fought for reasons of modernism. All these practices lead to discomforts such as excessive heat in the habitat.

Recommendations

- Regulations for implementation & maintenance, adapted tests on specificities & complexity
- Evaluation of properties & durability
- Improvement of vernacular techniques

Conclusion

In addition to discomfort, there is scientific evidence that exposure to high indoor temperatures can affect the immune and cardiovascular systems, and even lead to serious illness and death" (https://hal.ehesp.fr/hal-02190365/document, page 44).

Individualism also leads to psychological access, and the uneducated population, without access to urban agriculture, lives in precarious and undernourished conditions.

Conclusion

- Scientific research
- Education
- Professional and institutional training
- Promotion
- For more independent, resilient & HEALTHY CITIES.