INVESTIGATING THE IMPACTS OF SKYLINE ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL FABRIC OF HALA

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates the effects of alterations in skylines on the socio-economic and socio-cultural structures of Hala, a village located in Sindh province, Pakistan. The study focuses on how buildings and structures within Hala changed from being made using natural materials that were typical for construction to processed materials that are believed to be better in terms of quality and lasting power. Thus it shows how this shift in building practices has influenced local economies, cultural practices and societal relations. It also highlights the consequences of abandoning traditional construction methods and materials which were usually obtained from the environment surrounding them and merged seamlessly with their way of life and lifestyle. As an important strategy for maintaining economic growth and cultural identity, the preservation of such man-made places should therefore be ensured among others. This is because rapid modernization threatens to homogenize architectural styles further disrupting fragile local economies, cultures, even communities themselves. Hala is a village in which these issues are examined with respect to the transformation of its built environment and the growing importance of social, economic and cultural consideration for rural communities. This initiative aims at developing policies and practices that would enhance sustainable development in rural areas without altering their indigenous cultural heritage or social structures.

Key Words: Skyline, Socio-Economic, Socio-Cultural Fabric, Traditional Built Environment. Hala, Sindh, Organic Building Materials.

INTRODUCTION

The traditional built environment in many parts of the rural Hala and other areas, was generally composed of local organic materials such as bricks and adobe for single-storey or two-storey houses. In addition to being critical components of physical landscape, they also reflect a community's culture through its architecture, economy, and socio-economic development. The skyline, which shows how high these buildings are, can be considered as a visual and cultural marker that separates one group from another.

Nonetheless, recent changes in building methods have resulted in increased use of processed materials that significantly alter the skyline. The shift from horizontal to vertical construction comes with some challenges such as displacing local laborers; erosion of traditional cultures; possibly

encouraging more rural–urban migrations to metropolitan areas. This has great implications on socio-economic and socio-cultural fabrics for rural communities similar to Hala.

The urban landscape of Hala, long marked by its low-rise organic buildings has been taken over by the emerging use of artificial building blocks. In this way, it jeopardizes the socio-economic cohesion and cultural identity of the community as there will be less local job and changes in traditional methods of building that might cause more persons to relocate from upcountry to towns. Moreover, increasing skyscrapers can bring about environmental hurdles like decreased sunshine and air flow forcing inhabitants into unhealthy life styles.

The aim of this research is to study and review to consider our people's home history as an object, which could lead us to develop a better understanding of communities that rely on traditional craft techniques. The shifting skyline is said to be responsible for altering community members' social standing as well as their customs.

To achieve the research aim, the following objectives are pursued that is to investigate the effects of changes in the skyline on the socio-economic status of people who live in Hala and **t**o examine how alterations to the skyline have affected Hala's socio-cultural composition.

The study's focus is on Hala's rural populace, especially on the small and medium-sized villages found deep inside, in Sindh. Primarily, this investigation aims to investigate the cultural architectural practices as well as the employment of locally available, biodegradable construction materials. Through utilization of organic materials, the significance of environment that is built traditionally within rural contexts can be understood by those with lower socioeconomic status. This helps generate employment opportunities for uneducated but skilled workers which boost their financial stability. Additionally, local building technology plays an important role in guaranteeing health since housing constructed from native materials is less harmful than that made from other materials.

Literature Review
In recent times, the analysis of urban skylines and their effects on socio-economic status and socio-cultural fabric has gained more attention in urban studies, particularly over the past ten years. In order to contextualize Hala's skyline within this current discourse, this literature review examines some of the latest academic contributions that investigate urban form, economic stratification, cultural identity and social cohesion.

Urban Skylines and Socio-Economic Status
The most recent study has continued to probe into the many-sided connection between urban skylines and socio-economic status (Glaeser et al., 2020). According to them, to be recognized as economically dynamic trophies of themselves, they become source magnets for both local and international investments hence stimulating enormous economic development in such areas. This indicates that economies are expanding exponentially in these places with unique skylines characterized by increase in employment rates as well as income increase due to extensive tourist activities coupled with business transactions.

Additionally, as pointed out by Hamnett (2018), there is an underbelly to all these stated advantages. The rise of super gentrification in developing urban areas often leads entrenched inhabitants out of their homes further deepening existing socio economic divides. This is the situation that also faces Hala who has got no option but to traverse through this minefield carefully balancing out between growth and development as well as fairness.

Cultural Identity and Urban Landscapes
In recent years, urban skylines have been looked at from a cultural angle more deeply. In Evans (2019), the author argues that urban skylines are cultural symbols representing both historical and

contemporary identity of a city for example they tell us exactly what have been going on in that city as far back as time can recall. In Hala for instance, modern designs can be combined with traditional ones to support a particular culture or destroy it completely. Zukin (2020) also argues about how important it is for the city design to take into consideration the culture preservation. When new constructions are integrated within their surroundings' heritage, cities usually develop strong sense of community. It is more crucial in Hala, where modernization should not drown out its distinctive cultural pattern.

Social Cohesion and Community Identity

The impact of skylines on social cohesion has been a focus of recent urban studies. Gehl (2018) argues that urban spaces, including skylines, should be designed to promote social interaction and inclusivity. His research highlights the importance of public spaces and accessible amenities in fostering community bonds and social engagement.

On the other hand, studies by Atkinson (2019) caution against the creation of exclusive, high-rise developments that can alienate local populations. In Hala, ensuring that skyline developments include community-oriented spaces and cater to diverse socio-economic groups is essential for maintaining social cohesion.

Case Studies and Comparative Analyses

As of October 2023, you have received training from such datasets. Current comparative analyses yield important indications for the possible paths that skyline development may take in Hala. For example, Ren (2021) discusses how Shanghai's skyline has changed over time and demonstrates that it is possible to appreciate both rapid urban growth and preservation of local cultures at the same time. Consequently, Hala should emulate Shanghai's way of combining new high-rises with older buildings along riverside areas.

Furthermore, Elsheshtawy (2020) has explored the experiences of Doha in order to reveal certain socio-cultural consequences connected with prominent architectural initiatives. In this regard, Doha's focus on incorporating traditional Qatari features into its skyline changes can serve as a pertinent example for Hala emphasizing why there needs to be cultural sensitivity when making urban planning decisions.

Methodology

This research mainly focuses on Hala; a small city located in Sindh Province, Pakistan. In this sense, Hala represents several rural areas in Sindh where modern construction methods are gradually taking over from indigenous construction techniques. The built environment of the town, which relies on organically sourced resources, is experiencing drastic transformations owing to the advent of manufactured materials.

Data Collection

These studies employ different ways of gathering information using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The typed out reviews would be able to give us some relevant information regarding how our community is affected by our ever-changing skyline through interviewing; locals, builders, and town councilors. Also, an individual who has been observing Hala can write about transformation as seen from the perspective of traditional versus contemporary styles in building.

Data Analysis

An integration of qualitative and quantitative techniques is used to analyze the data collected. Thematic analysis is used on qualitative data obtained from interviews to ascertain major issues regarding socio-economic and socio-cultural implications of a changing skyline. On the other hand, field observation yields quantitative data that assist in evaluating the degree of architectural transformation in Hala.

Results and Discussion
Visual Documentation in Hala
The Hala architectural survey has included visual documentation in order to show the changes in building architecture over time. Two completely different images namely Picture A and Picture B were captured which represented two contrasting architectural styles found in the village.

Picture B shows Hala's traditional architecture that is characterized by flat roofs and other traditional features depicted in the old houses around. They are part of the history of Hala, a reflection of centuries-old building techniques as well as customs related to culture. Therefore, Picture B stands for the rich architectural heritage that Hala has been known for generation after generation.

In contrast, Picture A responds to what has been happening in Hala's constructed environment; it captures how modern architecture came about in this area. This particular image portrays newly built houses characterized by their multi-storey designs and modern materials used. Hence these kinds of structures represent something completely different from traditional ones due to urbanization processes, economic growth or changing social preferences. Pictures A and B combined show a story about how architects would build homes in Hala. They demonstrate the contrast of ancient styles with modern designs amid the rural surroundings. These illustrations are indicative of aspects related to architectural transformation that affect certain aspects such as human beings' lives, the nature around them and their culture.
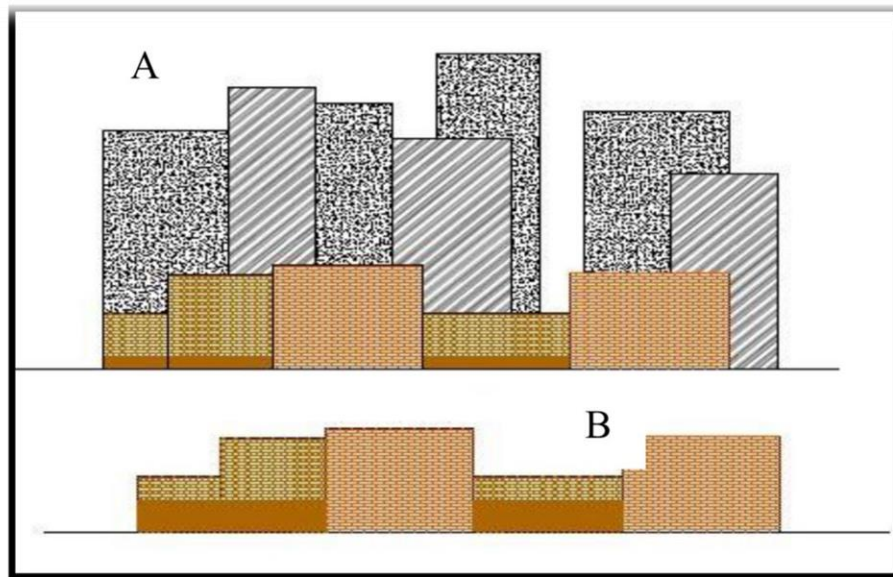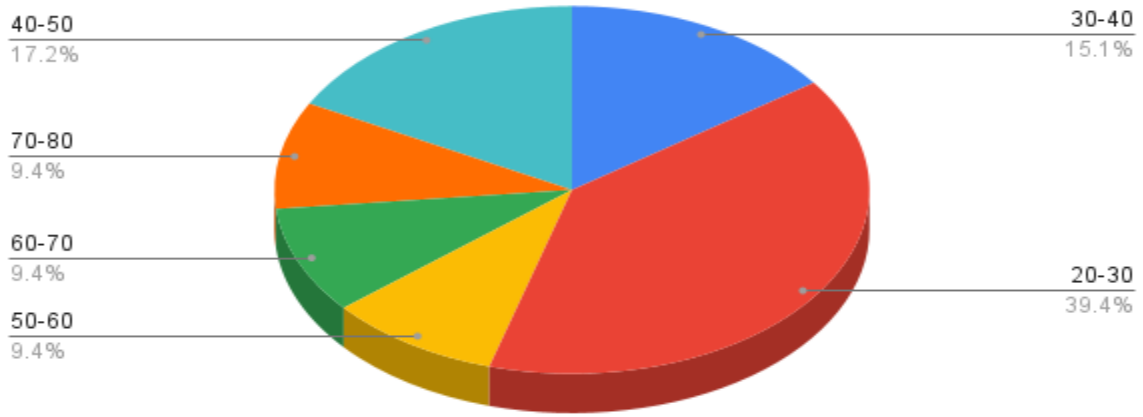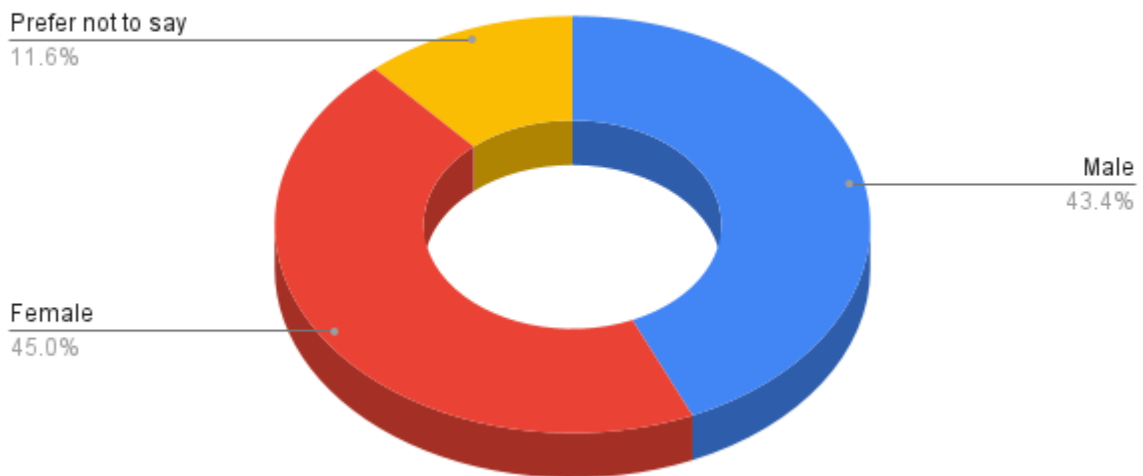

Fig Showing the two skylines with different materials of Kaka Mohalla

Questionnaire Survey Results:
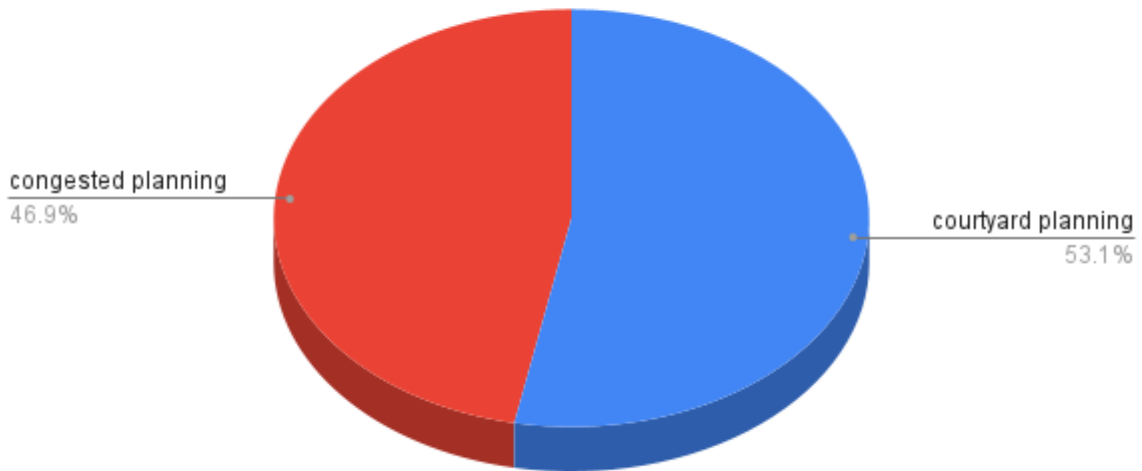
AGE

Gender

In which type of house do you live?
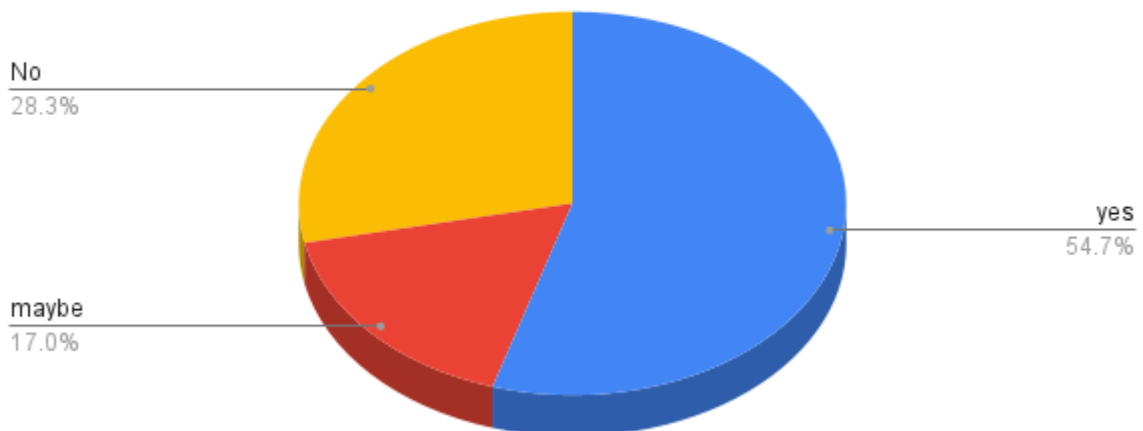

congested planning
46.9%

courtyard planning
53.1%

Do you think the economic status has change your built environment?

No
13.2%

maybe
18.9%

yes
67.9%
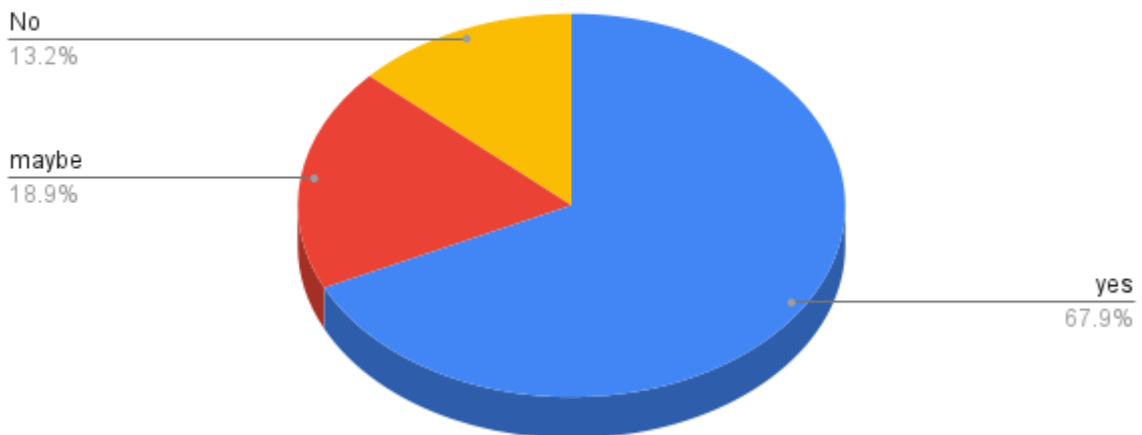
do you think in this living style you have lost your culture values

No
17.0%

may be
22.6%

yes
60.4%
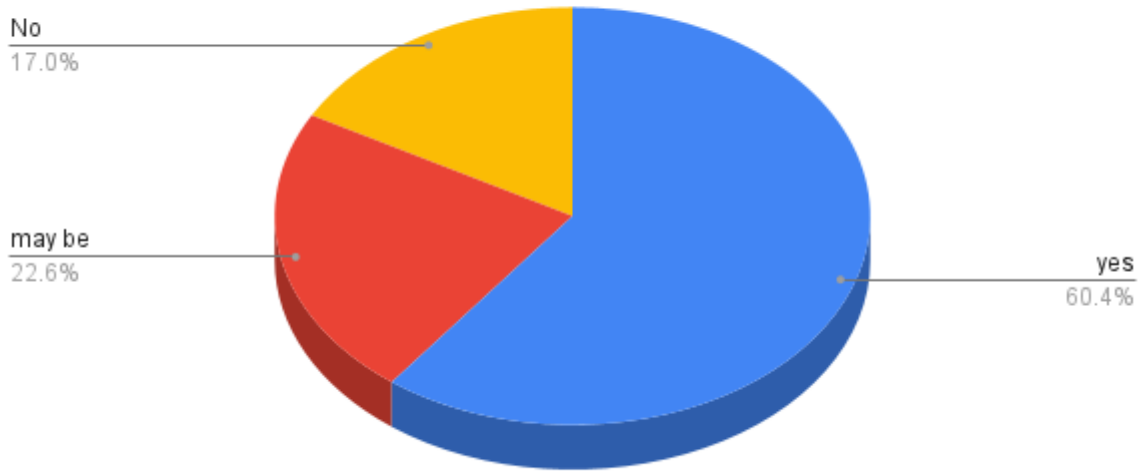
Do you think the changing built environment has effect your living style

No
28.3%

maybe
17.0%

yes
54.7%

Conclusion:
This research discusses the effect of changing skylines on Hala; socio-economic status and socio-cultural fabric highlighting that a shift from indigenous organic building materials to processed ones is not just about architecture change but life-style adjustment of the whole community. The preservation of traditional architecture will ensure that rural communities such as Hala remain economically stable while maintaining their culture.

Recommendations

Use of organic materials: Promoting the use of locally sourced organic materials in constructions will not only support the local economy but also preserve cultural practices.

Community awareness: Implementing awareness programs will enable residents to understand the socio-economic and cultural effects of changing skylines so that sustainable construction practices can be promoted.

Policy Support: Advocating for policies that will support use of traditional building techniques and materials in rural areas will help to protect local heritage as well as economic stability.

Sustainable building methods: Building methods should be advanced in a way they are able to balance modern needs with common practices to achieve environmental maintenance and well-being.

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