

Social Development Through Cultural Properties - Reading Hassan Fathy's
Experience.

التنمية الاجتماعية من خلال الممتلكات الثقافية - قراءة في تجربة حسن فتحي.

Dr. Benzeghadi Mohammed¹¹

¹ University of Abu Bakr Belkaid, Tlemcen, mohamed.benzeghadi@univ-tlemcen.

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Abstract:

With the increasing social complexity and the dominance of materialism, as a result of the endless human aspiration to live the best life, a set of problems have emerged, perhaps the most important of which is the housing problem. The population growth accompanying the tremendous development in all fields is the most important reason for its occurrence in third world countries, specifically in Egypt. This problem has emerged, which prompted those in charge of the government there to find a solution to it, in light of the scarcity of resources and capabilities. At that time, the brilliant engineer Hassan Fathy announced an initiative entitled "Look at the mud under your feet and build", inspired by the heritage buildings found in Upper Egypt. This project had a great impact in highlighting the role of heritage in driving the wheel of social development.

Keywords: Cultural property; Social development; Hassan Fathy; Housing problem; Clay.

¹Author Corresponding

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural properties, including historical landmarks (civil, religious, civil), ruins of sites, and archaeological finds, irrespective of their perceived value, serve as a conduit between the nation's past and its present. They offer a perspective on the prevailing trends and developments of the past. This is due to the values and meanings they embody, reflecting the ingenuity of our ancestors in utilising natural resources to establish a civilised framework that ensures survival and meets their aspirations for a decent standard of living.

2.The concept of cultural property

2.1Linguistic concept:

-Possessions: The linguistic derivation of the word "possessions" comes from the verb "malak" (to possess), meaning to possess something, take control of it, and make it one's own. There is also "malakut", which means glory and power, and "mulkah" (the kingdom) is the glory and power of the king. (Majd al-Din Muhammad bin Yaqub al-Fayruzabadi 2008, p1554)

-Cultural: The word 'cultural' is derived from the verb 'thaqafa', which means to become clever, agile, and intelligent. (Majd al-Din Muhammad bin Yaqub al-Fayruzabadi 2008, p218)

2.2 The technical concept

According to Law 98/04, the latter is defined as all the remains left by ancestors, whether they are tangible and fixed in place, such as buildings of different nature, or movable, such as artifacts that can be carried by hand and moved from one place to another, or intangible, represented by social interactions and the creativity of individuals and groups throughout the ages, which continues to express itself from ancient times to the present day. (The Official Gazette 1998, p04)

The measures to be taken to prohibit the trade in cultural property, as presented in the UNESCO Convention held on 14 November 1970 in Paris, may be relevant here. The convention confirmed that the state is responsible for the removal and classification of cultural property for scientific and archaeological importance. The following is a representation of this:

- Rare collections and specimens from the animal and plant kingdoms, minerals and pieces that are important for their connection with paleontology.

- Also got properties related to history, including the history of science and technology, military and social history, the lives of leaders, thinkers, scientists, artists and important events that the country has experienced.

- the results of the archaeological excavations (both the legal and illegal ones) and archaeological discoveries.

- Pieces that were part of artistic or historical artefacts that had been amputated, or from archaeological sites.

- Antiquities discovered over a century ago, including inscriptions, coins and engraved seals.

- Objects of ethnological significance.

- Artworks of notable importance, including:

- a-Hand-crafted paintings, drawings and sketches.

- b-Authentic statues and sculptures, irrespective of the materials used in their manufacture.

- Manuscripts, postage stamps, antique furniture and historic musical instruments.

(Al-Hadithi 1999, pp19-20)

It is important to note that the UNESCO Convention, in addition to encompassing the material and immaterial effects that have been accomplished in the past, also comprises a number of topics related to various contemporary aspects. The stipulations within the

Convention emphasise the requirement for distinction and a unique fingerprint, a outlined This has led to a contradiction with the content of Law 98/04, as stipulated by the Algerian legislator, which states that it pertains to all remains left by man, whether material or immaterial, dating back to ancient periods, which are believed to be over one hundred years old.

3. The first beginning of using the term cultural property

As will be discussed in subsequent lectures, the values contained in archaeological remains have been re-evaluated, and it is now considered that they should be regarded as cultural property, the care of which is the responsibility of the relevant countries. In light of this re-evaluation, conferences have been held to enact legislation that prevents the formulation and loss of such remains.

The first documented use of the term 'cultural property' is believed to be in 1863 (Bouzar Habiba 2008, pp4-5), in the Lieber Law, which declared the heritage of the entire human race to be a cultural property that must be protected. This concept was subsequently disseminated through the contributions of experts during conferences focused on heritage, such as the Brussels Convention, which is widely regarded as the first of its kind in establishing international legal principles for the protection of heritage. Subsequent conventions, including the Hague Convention of 1899 and 1907, further defined the rights and obligations related to the preservation of cultural property in countries experiencing political instability and conflict. Subsequent international agreements further solidified the term in academic discourse and legal materials, underscoring the establishment of legislation aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage from the devastation of war. (Bouzar Habiba 2008, p04)

In Algeria, the initial focus was on the establishment of a new state within a legal and institutional framework to organise public life, moving away from the system in place during the French colonial occupation. However, the importance of heritage was recognised

through the enactment of Law 62/157 on December 31, 1962, which merely extended French legislation, including the protection of historical monuments. Subsequent to 1967, the state promulgated a series of legislative texts, notably Order No. 67/281 dated December 20, 1967, which pertained to excavations and the protection of historical and natural sites and monuments. This was followed in 1969 by Executive Decree No. 69/82 concerning the confiscation of objects of artistic, historical and archaeological significance. In 1979, a joint ministerial decision was issued, which included the establishment of a joint ministerial committee with the purpose of purchasing artistic artefacts. This was followed in 1980 by the announcement of a decision regarding the license to search for buried antiquities. The powers of the municipality and the state in the cultural sector, including monuments and archaeological sites, were determined in Decree 81/382. This legislative development signified Algeria's alignment with global trends in heritage legislation, aimed at safeguarding over 400 classified monuments and sites. (Bouzar Habiba 2008, p05)

Notably, several of these sites were designated as World Heritage Sites, including the Tassili Park, the city of Cherchell in Tipaza, the site of Djemila, Timgad, the Beni Hammad Fort, the M'zab Valley, and the Kasbah in Algiers.

4. Distinctive values of cultural properties:

As cultural properties represent a form of creative human endeavour, they embody a set of values that have been defined by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in the Bora Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Value as follows: (Jawad Salam 2011, p150)

- Aesthetic value: This is defined as the harmony and beauty resulting from the architectural elements of exquisite craftsmanship.

- Spiritual value: This is understood to mean understanding and enlightenment.

- Historical value: This is defined as the ability to communicate with the past as the material heritage is a visual document that faithfully conveys what was real in various fields.

- Symbolic value: This is because cultural properties contain shapes and decorations that reflect a certain subject.

- Authenticity value: This is uniqueness and its lack of any similarity to what is currently being accomplished in similar architectural works, and even if implemented, it will be the first origin of that.

5.The concept of sustainable social development

The notion of social development is not a recent one, yet the term 'sustainable' has recently assumed a central role in this discourse. Other scholars define sustainable development as the organised efforts to enhance living conditions in society by encouraging and urging its residents to cooperate with each other through caring for their religious and cultural origins. Community development is a direct entry point to comprehensive cultural change; therefore, it is important to pay attention to the ideas that govern people's minds so that the social development that was started by the ancestors under the guidance of the true religion's teachings remains sustainable in subsequent generations. (Saeed Fakroun 2005, p54)

Social development is defined as the relationship between humanity and the natural environment, and the advancement of human well-being. It encompasses the improvement of access to fundamental health and education services, the establishment of minimum security standards, and the promotion of human rights. Additionally, it involves the development of diverse cultures, diversity, pluralism, and the effective participation of citizens in decision-making processes. In this regard, development should prioritise the distribution of returns from economic growth, as well as the manner in which these returns are allocated, with the ultimate goal of enhancing citizens' living conditions.

6.Indicators of sustainable social development

Social development is defined as a continuous and escalating process which occurs in response to the renewal of societal needs. It is not a state or phenomenon which occurs suddenly, and must be understood as a societal process in which all categories, sectors and groups must contribute. It is important to note that social development must not be relied upon by a small group or a single resource.

It is a deliberate process, characterised by specific goals, a long-term strategy, phased objectives, plans and programmes, Social development is a process directed by a developmental will that is aware of societal goals and committed to achieving them. It is also able to achieve the efficient use of societal resources, production and distribution.

It is a comprehensive, holistic process that engenders structural transformations, a feature that distinguishes it from other processes, The existence of social responsibility for members of society is defined as the individual's inclination to interact and participate positively in the circumstances, events and changes taking place in his environment or society, with spontaneity and initiative that guarantees him the feeling of achieving This concept encompasses the notion of individuals contributing to the progress of society through their active engagement in positive activities, guided by their personal principles and convictions. The pursuit of this engagement is characterised by spontaneity and initiative, fostering a sense of fulfilment and contribution. (Joan Ismail Bakr Abdul Hamid Ali Saeed Al-Barzanji 2020, p136)

7.The role of heritage in promoting sustainable social development

The primary and ultimate objective of development in all its forms is to modernise society. It is imperative to recognise that society requires growth and creativity, rather than mere imitation and replication. From this perspective, the beneficial role of heritage in social

development becomes evident. The greater the emphasis placed on heritage, the more our historical identity evolves in harmony with contemporary developments.

A plethora of studies have demonstrated that the efficacy of developmental programmes within societies is profoundly influenced by the nature of heritage, the customs and beliefs of the populace, and the absence of consideration for such factors in the development plan invariably results in the project reaching an impasse, or at best, yielding outcomes that fall significantly short of the objectives initially set forth. Irrespective of prevailing economic factors and the political framework, it is imperative to achieve a proper integration and balance between the interests in heritage and the drive for progress. In order to ensure the regularity of the cultural and economic development process, it is vital to acknowledge the significance of the social development process, which is contingent on a number of key elements, all of which are facilitated by heritage in its two forms. At the forefront of this is identity, which means distinction from others and conformity to oneself, i.e. the privacy of the self, which is what monuments and archaeological sites provide, as they embody an objective visual record of the cultural origin of a nation, of its religion and its imprint in human civilisation as a whole.

8. Reading in Hassan Fathy's experience, architecture for the poor

The innate and essential human need to seek refuge from the transient nature of time is a phenomenon that has been widely documented. This pursuit of shelter can be likened to the fundamental human drive to secure sustenance. The term "shelter" shares a linguistic connection with the verb "to dwell" (sakana), and the term "sakun" is associated with the concepts of reassurance and security. This notion is further reinforced by the divine decree: "And God has made for you, from your houses, a place of rest." (The Holy Quran, Surat An-Nahl, Verse 80). It means what you resort to and what you trust, And from it is the dwelling and the dwelling is the people of the house.

8.1 The concept of architecture

The definition of architecture as a spatial formation that responds to the requirements of utility, durability, beauty and economy is a commonly accepted one. Through this definition, the architect's ingenuity is manifested in achieving a kind of harmony and balance between these four elements. Utility is a requirement limited to the role of shelter, residence and work, while durability means endurance against natural factors, and beauty is a requirement as old as humankind, as it has always sought to achieve the greatest amount of it, starting from the first caves he inhabited. As for the economic aspect, it is represented in gaining the greatest amount of sunlight and natural ventilation. The synthesis of these elements is exemplified in Islamic architecture, a genre that has made a profound impact on the field of construction, giving rise to fortified cities extending from India in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west, characterised by a diverse array of architectural styles encompassing the Umayyad, Abbasid, Egyptian-Syrian, Moroccan-Andalusian, Indian and Iranian styles. (Hussein Mounes 1981, p182), It differs from other buildings in several ways. The dwelling has been the fundamental architectural element of the residential neighbourhood since ancient time, Its external appearance was consistent across socio-economic groups, reflecting the principle of egalitarianism that underpinned its formation as a social entity before its architectural expression was defined, There are rare exceptions to this rule, and these are due to geographical factors and the type of building materials used. With regard to the manifestation of agreement in the interior design of the houses, it is evident that they contain an open courtyard, with the rooms surrounding it, the residence reflected the cultural appearance and general civilised aspect of the Muslim family (Abdullah Kamel Musa 2003, p207), as it is the basic nucleus that forms the city and the axis of its prosperity and organisation. (Abdul Qader Al-Rihawi 2000, p609)

8.2 Housing problem

Since ancient times, man has always been searching for a living framework that would ensure his survival. He relied on the materials he found in nature to achieve this, and despite

their simplicity, they achieved what he was looking for. The matter remained in this manner from the prehistoric period to the ancient period, then the intermediate period, passing through the modern period, But, The law of change that has affected many areas has had a significant impact on development, leading to various challenges, most notably the housing problem due to demographic growth and the lack of response from the real estate sector, particularly given the use of imported building materials, which has further complicated the situation.

The housing problem is defined as the severe shortage of housing for members of society. It is regarded as one of the problems resulting from poor economic conditions and social complexity in a country. Due to its importance, it is among the problems that attract the attention of all governments.

8.3 Hassan Fathy's experience through heritage architecture

Historical monuments are not buildings devoid of any culture or any reference, Conversely, It is one of the important channels that enable us to understand what is going on around us and what we have been through, Therefore, it can be said that the destruction and collapse of a historical landmark, or the vandalism of an archaeological site, represents a loss of our identity and a threat to our cultural heritage. In the interest of maintaining a connection between the past and the present, it is essential to preserve the authentic style. We believe that the construction of buildings with an Islamic design, taking into account the prevalent styles of the past, is a key step in achieving this objective. The notion of architecture for the poor was pioneered by the architect Hassan Fathy, who derived this concept from the idea of "Look at the dirt beneath your feet, then build." The duration of the project was from 1945 to 1953, spanning a period of eight years, The project has attracted significant interest from a number of countries, with numerous analogous initiatives currently underway in the US and Iraq. (Muhammad Majid Khalousi Fathi 1987, pp. 15-19) , It is also worthy of note that he has been the recipient of numerous awards, the most notable

of which was in 1980. Where he received the Iga Khan Award and the Alternative Nobel Prize. It is more appropriate for us to follow in the footsteps of this architect whose architectural thought extended to local building materials such as soil, lime, sand and stone. And a time to a period of time far from us, (Mustafa Ibrahim Fahmy 1989, p02).

9.CONCLUSION

We wanted to emphasize through this research paper that the concept of cultural property has changed its meaning or concept. It is no longer just a window through which we can look at what was prevalent in societies that are thousands, and sometimes even millions of years away from us. Rather, it has become part of our lived reality, from which we draw inspiration from the genius of our ancestors and their experience in various fields. For example, we talked about architecture and the housing problem that was solved in Egypt through the idea advocated by architect Hassan Fathy, where simple building materials were used, mainly clay and straw, and mixed together, in addition to unpolished stone. Thus, it was possible to build residential complexes for a number of members of society, so that they could find a refuge for themselves and their children through those dwellings, in the manner that was prevalent in the past. This architectural idea was adopted by a number of advanced countries, so to speak, such as the United States of America, Canada and Germany, the latter of which built an entire village from the same materials that were used to build cultural properties in Egypt, but why, I wonder? Is it because the housing problem in these countries has worsened, or because they cannot accommodate demographic growth? Of course, the answer is no, but because they discovered a deeper secret in the buildings made from the aforementioned simple materials, which is that they are environmentally friendly, and are known as green architecture, and some have called it smart architecture, yes, because it has the property of reflecting the climate, so in the winter the weather is cold, and it reflects it to a hot atmosphere inside, and the same thing in the summer, it softens the atmosphere in the rooms, and prevents the high temperature from leaking inside, without air conditioners that harm human health. This is the discovery that the scholars of cultural properties in Upper Egypt have reached, indeed the ancestors left experiences that contribute to advancing the wheel of social development.

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