Legislation and planning laws and the extent of their impact on the urban identity

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Research Summary

Preserving the urban identity in Egyptian cities is a cultural necessity, and looking at contemporary Egyptian cities, we find that they have lost their urban and architectural identity and their connection to the original historical architecture. Building laws and legislation affect the urban product of the city greatly, but it can be said that one of the most important factors shaping the built urban environment is building laws and regulations - along with the schematic style.

If these laws and legislations are not compatible with the surrounding environment of their comprehensive concept, including developmental factors, influences, and determinants, whether urban or hereditary, then the intended consensus cannot be achieved by creating an urban environment with a distinct character linked to its historical roots and suited to the needs of contemporary societies.

One of the most important factors shaping the built environment is the building laws and legislation. If these laws and legislations do not conform to the surrounding environment for their comprehensive concept, including factors, influences and developmental determinants, whether urban or hereditary, then the intended consensus cannot be achieved by creating an urban environment with a distinct character linked to its historical roots and appropriate to the needs of the contemporary society.

So it was necessary to do this study, in order to search for reasons that led to the absence of the urban identity in light of the laws and planning legislation, as well as the reasons for the gap between the citizen and his implementation of the provisions of laws and planning legislation, which have become clear in the current period as proven by the research study, and then conclude a mechanism to strengthen the urban identity in the Egyptian cities, as well as enhancing the feeling of participation and belonging among the Egyptian citizens and raising the awareness to preserve the urban identity in the city that they deal with and coexist with, and to realize the importance of preserving the urban identity and urban heritage.

Research problem:

The inability of the current strategic plans to find a comprehensive vision and effective applied solutions to urban problems, which led to their exacerbation and an increase in the gap between the citizens' needs on the one hand and the laws and legislation regulating urbanization and lack of commitment to them on the other hand, and consequently the absence of the urban identity of the Egyptian city.

Research objective:

The main objective:

Exploring and studying possible means and frameworks to activate the role of planning laws and legislations to root and strengthen the urban identity in Egyptian cities and strengthen it among the Egyptian citizen, especially in the city of Mansoura under study.

Sub-aims:

• Trying to find more effective frameworks and policies towards strengthening the role of popular participation in decision-making.

• Searching for a new formulation of the laws regulating urbanization in order to support belonging rather than to increase the gap between the citizen and his responsibilities towards activating his positive role and rooting the urban identity.

• Attempting to direct the mechanisms and objectives of the strategic plan for the city of Mansoura in 2027 to achieve the urban identity in the city.

• Highlighting the importance of comprehensive planning thinking.

Research importance:

The importance of the research is due to the absence of the urban identity in most of the Egyptian cities and the emergence of slums to a large extent and to seize any opportunity to violate the law and circumvent it to achieve personal interests regardless of the public interest, such as demolishing or burning heritage buildings and not understanding the extent of the need to preserve the urban identity of the city. Therefore, it was necessary to search for the reasons for the gap between planning laws and legislation on the one hand, and how to activate them in order to support and enhance the urban identity of the Egyptian citizen on the other hand, and then arrive at proposals and recommendations to solve this problem.

Research Methodology:

• Knowing the concept of law, its sources and divisions.

• Learn about urban laws and legislation and their relationship to the urban identity.

• Studying the urban identity by identifying its concept, levels and components, as well as the factors affecting it.

• Study the link between urban identity, culture and heritage.

• Study the importance of preserving the urban heritage, and mention the international conventions that confirm this.

• An analysis of the experiences of Arab and foreign cities that succeeded in preserving the urban identity, how to benefit from it and its applicability to Egyptian cities?

• Demonstrating the extent to which the current planning laws and legislations and the planning thought to achieve the needs of the Egyptian citizen and establish the urban identity.

Research assumptions:

The research is based on a set of pillars that formulate its general thought and assume the following:

• It is possible to search for a new formulation of the laws regulating urbanization to support and enhance the urban identity of the citizen.

• Strategic plans can be more expressive of the actual future needs of citizens by using more effective strategies to ensure real participation and expressing their needs in an honest and transparent manner.

• The concept of popular participation needs to be reformulated in order to become more influential in the formulation of strategic plans for urban development and a stronger expression of the future needs of citizens and thus meet the actual needs of cities.

Structure Search:

First: Urban laws and legislations, and this chapter aims to get acquainted with urban laws and legislations, where the chapter begins with a historical overview, then introduces the law and its sources, then sections of legislation and its levels, from which it is concluded, then what are urban laws and legislations concerned with? The study falls under the civil law, then the definition of the most important concepts mentioned in urban laws and legislation, with a presentation of the most important areas that urban laws and legislations have been exposed to in Egypt, with clarification of the purpose of each law and the issuances that were exposed to it, and at the end of the chapter the relationship between identity and urban laws and legislation is clarified.

 Second: the urban identity, which includes the concept of identity, its levels, its importance, the components of the identity and the factors affecting its formation, the value and its connection with the identity and the formation of the architectural form, the difference in the urban formation according to the different identity.

 Third: the link between the urban identity and culture and heritage, this chapter aims to identify the extent of the merging and interdependence of the relationship between identity, culture and heritage, by clarifying the concepts of each term separately and then explaining the relationship between them, urban heritage to enhance and rooting the urban identity.

Lessons learned from the selected experiences that can be used in developing Egyptian cities:

Establishing a comprehensive plan for the development of the Chester one City Plan while preserving the natural and heritage environment. Once approved, it becomes a legislative document that must be adhered to it.

- Establishing a special authority for the development of the city with the responsibility of implementing and supervising the development plan.

- Assigning a body responsible for presenting and coordinating public and private investment projects while setting priorities.

Establishing an association for public and private sector partnership to raise the level of the local economy.

Exploiting the unique and distinctive urban heritage of the city and investing it to achieve maximum benefit from it.

Encouraging environmental projects to make Chester a sustainable city.

The state's interest in providing all the needs of citizens as well as visitors.

Community participation in decision-making with the responsible authorities and all relevant local stakeholders.

Correcting the conditions of the responsible departments and bodies and reconfiguring their functional structure, to ensure the achievement of the development plan.

Holding conferences and meetings that are officially held during a specific period annually, with the participation of various segments of the relevant stakeholders to discuss and present ideas and then take decisions.

Up to the results and recommendations:

First: the results

1- Planning laws and legislations are related to the urban identity, so we find that they affect negatively or positively the citizen's identity.

2- The identity is formed and changed constantly, as it is always in a state of continuous movement that forms and interacts with its external environment.

3- The importance of the urban identity is divided into two parts, one of which is of moral importance, as it increases the spirit of belonging, self-esteem, a sense of security and privacy, and the loss of a sense of identity leads to the individual feeling of alienation, and the other functional importance as it produces a special urbanization that expresses the community and its local self.

4- The urban identity is made up of a set of factors and values, including immaterial factors such as (social - cultural - economic - political) and other material (natural - architectural).

5- The urban configuration differs in each city according to its urban identity.

6- Through the analytical study of city models, whether Arab or Western, it became clear that the success of the urban identity is due to the extent of the government's interest in the urban identity and its visibility and rooting among the citizens.

7- Social participation, as well as spreading awareness among citizens, is one of the most important reasons that led to the success of many urban experiences.

Second: Recommendations

1- Rooting the importance of the urban identity for all workers related to engineering, organizational and planning indications.

2- Adopting a plan to educate the community about defining identity and the importance of preserving it and motivating them to do so, whether by holding seminars, meetings, etc. ...

3- Media participation by spreading the importance of the urban identity and identifying it, whether through television programs or daily or weekly publications.

4- Finding new methods of dealing with buildings of value and integrating them into the daily activities of the individual that enhances his identity.

5- Exploiting technology and social networking sites by identifying the urban identity and the need to preserve it.

6- Providing educational programs in the field of urban identity at the level of higher education.

7- Teaching the urban identity as an independent subject in the Faculties of Engineering, Department of Architecture.

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