

# **The Impact of community awareness on the sustainability of the architectural and urban heritage in Al Quds**

**Dr. Amira Mersal**

**Architecture Department, faculty of fine arts Mansoura university, Egypt**

**[am.mersal@hotmail.com](mailto:am.mersal@hotmail.com)**

## **Summary**

The Arab region is rich in history, where many civilizations have experienced, so the current architectural heritage crisis in the Middle East is a complex and deep-rooted phenomenon, that requires progress towards understanding it with the contribution of heritage scholars and architecture, etc. in order to preserve the sustainability of architectural and urban heritage in the areas of conflict, especially Al Quds, where the occupation relied on the change of historical memory and identities through material and non-material heritage.

Architecture is the main influence, where the physical record of peoples and civilizations. This research comes to propose tools and ways to raise the awareness and knowledge of the community and preserve the identity of the place in Al Quds, as it is the main step to preserve such heritage.

Al Quds has many neglected architectural heritage monuments as well as a disregard for sustainable heritage development for poor resources and wars. But there is no strategic plan between the official institutions and the rest of society, which leads to a big gap, and the failure to solve the problems of society with regard to the preservation of the Old City. Therefore, a large part of the responsibility for this failure rests with the official institutions that are supposed to be the initiators, and now lead the work in the field of urban conservation, this study examines the role of community awareness and participation in maintaining the sustainability of the architectural heritage of Al Quds, in order to evaluate and propose some perceptions to increase their effectiveness as a factor of success.

The study reached a number of results, the most important of which is that there is a significant lack of community participation in maintaining the architectural identity of heritage, which indicates a lack of awareness of the importance of architectural heritage, in addition to the lack of a strategic plan with the official institutions concerned to activate it and benefit from it. The study recommended the importance of community awareness of the importance of heritage, and the need to apply the principles of sustainability of urban heritage through the development of a unified strategy to activate the role of community participation.

The research problem is how to achieve sustainability of the architectural heritage in Al Quds under occupation through community awareness and motivating members of the community to participate in the society to preserve the identity of the architectural heritage in Al Quds, because sustainability of the architectural heritage cannot be achieved without awareness and community participation, where community awareness is considered one of the most important pillars of the sustainability of the urban heritage in Al Quds.

Hence the importance and role of community awareness in the sustainability of architectural heritage, especially in Al Quds, and increasing the awareness of the community and their knowledge of the importance of urban heritage as a first step to its sustainability and increasing their participation in conservation processes, since no matter how much the architectural

heritage is restored unconsciously and community participation will be eliminated because the true value is the awareness of society because they are the true keepers of heritage.

### **Challenges to the Sacred Heritage: -**

Attempts of occupation for obliterating and changing the Arab architectural identity of the architectural heritage of Al Quds.

- The economic reality in Al Quds needs significant material support;

Lack of non-governmental entities and institutions specializing in architectural heritage;

- Failure to activate laws relating to the sustainability of architectural heritage, failure to take into account the cultural dimension in other laws, and weak legislation on the protection of the architectural identity of Al Quds;

Lack of support and interest in awareness and educational projects on the importance of architectural heritage.

- The disappearance of some traditional crafts and industries, in addition to the spread of cultures and misinformation among the community about the history of some buildings and historical streets.

### **• poor community participation in the architectural part;**

Poor coordination between institutions concerned with architectural heritage, but the biggest challenge that negatively affects the architectural heritage of Al Quds is the occupation and the change of the demographic and geographical reality and all that relates to the memory of the place in Al Quds, which is of course to obliterate the monuments of Al Quds and destroy the architectural heritage of memory and change the names of streets and buildings, but extended to society by erasing its personality and obliterating all the Arab architectural heritage in Al Quds from the lives of future generations, with all its components to change history, land and identity where it aims to empty history of its architectural and heritage stock, **and to Judaize all that is Arab :**

- Changing the names of streets, villages and houses in Al Quds to Jewish names, and registering them on the World Heritage List as non-Arab.
- The occupation forged and changed inscriptions and coins in archaeological places, to establish a historical right for them in heritage of Al Quds; and to steal Arab stones.
- The occupation buys the stones of the old houses of "contracts" after demolishing them in villages and towns or stealing stones from falling contracts, and building houses where the occupier lives to appear as old houses for hundreds of years.
- Work to change the Arab heritage of Al Quds, where many archaeological sites are destroyed, neglected and excavations are in various places.
- The construction of colonies on historical Al Quds, ancient archaeological hills and the separation wall, which in turn constitute an obstacle to the protection of architectural heritage, and the isolation of the city of Al Quds from its natural surroundings, and therefore their inability to protect their cultural heritage.
- The occupation included heritage material for compulsory teaching in its schools, to change the historical and cultural face of the city.

The social dimension directly affects the sustainability of the architectural heritage in general and Al Quds in particular because most historical places enjoy a vibrant life and society is the main driver of its sustainability of architectural heritage.

By discussing the role of conservation in achieving sustainability, it is noted that the process of preserving historic buildings is sustainable in itself and can be made more sustainable as a historic building during the process of preserving Noah for integrated development with the ocean aimed at upgrading and developing the community and the surrounding environment, producing a sustainable heritage urban environment.

It is ideal for the participation of the institutions of the local community to restore the old town in Kafr Aqal, which was implemented by the center of the popular architecture "Gallery" as part of a project entitled "Lifeline" and includes the restoration of a number of old Palestinian towns surrounding Al Quds in an attempt to protect the dismemberment of Al Quds from its natural surroundings.

Restoration of the Old City of Kafr Aqab, which contained beautiful stone houses, neighborhoods and additives, a building, a water eye, an old church and a mosaic, all dating back to the Ottoman period and about 2,000 years later. The restoration lasted for two years, the center "Gallery" restored half of the buildings of the Old City, the idea of the center "Gallery" not only to preserve the identity and architectural, cultural and cultural heritage, but also to restore life to these towns and turn them into a magnet for housing and work by encouraging individuals and institutions specifically working in the field of social, environmental and cultural, which do not have large budgets.

The Gallery center is not the only one with this vision, there are other institutions working in the same field that have succeeded in renovating hundreds of Palestinian homes in Al Quds.

There is a strong relationship between community institutions that aim to increase community awareness and the sustainability of architectural heritage as it is an interactive partnership relationship, and logistical technical cooperation, which is a mechanism for cooperation in the implementation of regulations and laws.

Community institutions seek to enhance knowledge and increase community awareness of architectural heritage as it has a role in preserving the Arab architectural identity of the city. Especially young people, so that in the future a conscious and educated generation will be created to serve their society.

As for the cooperation between the official institutions and members of the community with the aim of sustaining the architectural heritage to preserve the identity of the city under occupation, it is weak and even almost nonexistent.

Although there are a lot of individual initiatives. There is no strategic plan to activate community participation in conservation processes and to benefit from the energies and efforts of community institutions.

This means that there is a defect among the institutions in encouraging awareness and community participation and benefiting from it in the integration of efforts to preserve the Old City of Al Quds. Therefore, the importance and necessity of community awareness comes because the restoration and maintenance without awareness and community participation does not help to sustain the architectural and urban heritage in the old town of Al Quds.

### **The strategy of awareness of my community and its importance in maintaining the sustainability of the architectural heritage**

Members of the community can be encouraged to participate in the construction of architectural heritage by:

Raising the social level of the population of historical areas through conservation projects;

- Taking care of the technical staff specialized in preservation - forming a local technical team and training them from the same historical areas, especially in Al Quds.

Supporting community projects to build outstanding architectural heritage through media support and regular exhibitions.

- Support the owners of heritage buildings through some privileges and let it be a grant or a soft loan to help them in the preservation processes, as well as exemption from real estate taxes on the building.

- Increasing the community belonging to the architectural heritage and its historical surroundings through the various stages of education and the media, which helps to share the community and make it aware of the plans and projects of preservation.

- Interest in community projects interested in heritage to systematically introduce and preserve architectural heritage.

- Focusing attention mainly on the inhabitants of the old city of Al Quds and their participation to educate and train them and to consolidate the concept of sustainable preservation.

Preserving the historical cultural character of the inhabitants of the old town, which is one of the most important principles of sustainability, as the projects are derived from the population residing in the historical area through the community participation of the population and its role in the sustainability of heritage.

Community participation in awareness programs and sustainable protection of architectural heritage, maintenance and rehabilitation, within the framework of a strategy to sustain al Quds's urban heritage.

Community projects depend on the cooperation of the community to protect the architectural and urban heritage in coordination with local institutions specialized in heritage maintenance, through committees formed by local bodies such as committees (neighborhoods, cultural centers, management of archaeological sites) as the community is considered to have a role in the sustainability of architectural heritage.

Community awareness is the main pillar for preserving Al Quds's Old City by integrating the efforts of different institutions of society. Activating the role of society in conservation processes to become part of the decision-making circle. It also aims to develop some solutions to the problems of preservation in Al Quds, which are: lack of funding, lack of awareness of the importance of architectural and urban heritage among some groups of society, as well as the availability of technical cadres specialized in conservation work. The Committee also contributes to the development of a strategic plan to preserve the Old City of Al Quds and stop the encroachments it is subjected to, to set priorities for work and to ensure that the possibilities are utilized and with the participation of civil society institutions.

The preservation of the architectural identity of the ancient town of Al Quds is sustainable as the majority of society considered historic buildings as important symbols in the region and help them to link their roots to the past and provide them with a link between them and past communities and events.

Community awareness achieves sustainability at the level of participation in activities related to historic buildings.

Educational programs, workshops and programs for the development of restoration skills and activities related to historic buildings need further support and development.

There must be an integrated framework for the sustainability of architectural heritage through community awareness to ensure the maximum sustainability of the architectural heritage at its environmental, social and economic levels, and consider it one of the tributaries of economic and social development that reaps from the giving of society in a renewed way.

Al Quds is rich in material and moral heritage, as it is the cradle of civilizations. Community awareness has a major role to play in the sustainability of the architectural heritage of the old town of Al Quds and a means to preserve the history and identity of the city in the face of the dangers it is exposed to. Community participation is an important factor in the success of the sustainability of architectural heritage with its investment in the efforts and energies of society as a part of its members and institutions, reducing costs and increasing the sustainability and suitability of conservation projects to the needs of the population.

But there is a weakness in the community awareness of Al Quds and therefore the negative impact on the sustainability of the architectural heritage due to the conditions of the city in the preservation of the Old City and the following are the most important results:

- There is no plan to activate community participation due to occupation, lack of financial resources available. This reduces the sustainability of architectural heritage.

- Weak relations of communication and cooperation between official and community bodies.

- Protection, community participation and urban compatibility are among the most important mechanisms for implementing sustainable development.

- Weak budgets allocated to the awareness sector and heritage knowledge, so awareness activities are not continuous throughout the year.

- Poor interest in the educational curriculum in the subject of heritage and its introduction and dissemination of heritage concepts among groups of society, based on all of the above, the study recommends:

- Develop a strategic plan with the official authorities (for culture, education, tourism and antiquities) to involve the local community in decisions concerning the historical areas of Al Quds and to strengthen cooperation between community institutions to serve the architectural heritage.

- Attention to developing community awareness and spreading awareness of the importance of preserving the urban heritage in the Old City of Al Quds through community participation where society plays a major role in the sustainability of heritage.

- Attention to the comprehensive urban environment of historical buildings.

- Supporting volunteerism in introducing heritage, especially young people and children.

- Consider awareness as an ongoing approach at all levels and in all events, in order to preserve the architectural heritage of Al Quds from change, especially with the rapid social and cultural changes, as well as to face the occupation.

- Increased interest in heritage activities and events, especially awareness-raising for the community.

- Work to participate in these events by increasing material and moral support for the private sector.

To encourage writing and blogging in the field of heritage, especially documenting the heritage and architectural history of the old town of Al Quds.

-The need to promote security and political risks is one of the most important dimensions affecting sustainable development, especially in the unstable regions.

Heritage should be regarded as a tool for development and the adoption of the principles of sustainable preservation as a solution to the problems of historic buildings and centers and to ensure the rights of current generations.

The need to design a tool to assess the social impact of conservation on the social level:

- Adopt non-traditional creative educational and training methods based on partnering with students to raise awareness among students and the community of al Quds's architectural heritage.

-Encouraging community projects to preserve architectural heritage.

- Use social media to communicate heritage information, with a specialized team to follow up on these means and provide them continuously with information, data, photos and documents.

- Allocation of channels for heritage awareness, so that they are educational, bring awareness and as a media at the same time.

## References:

-Apo al-ghazlane haitham.2014. al-tarath al-fulstini pen mokhater diaaeh walmhafza alihei, majla al-wahdah al-islamiyeh el-add 491.

<http://www.Wahdaislamyia.org/issues/149/mhgazlan.htm>.

- Almaharies, Salman. 2018. wasael al-touasil alajtamaai wallouey al-trathie motamar al-athar waltrath al-hadharili ,Amane, al-ardan.

-Al –Abedeh, ghada. 2013.estratijiat eada al-tahil walttoir al-hadhri lamrakez almadan al-tarikhia hala de rasiya: al-murkiz al-tarikhi – lamdina ghaza (al-balda al-qudaima) ‘rassala magestere al-jamaa al-islamiyeh ,ghaza, falestine.

-Dunya Nasir Tarques wa shatha falih hassin . 2017. alastathmar al-mastadam fe mbani al-tarath al-amrani (derassa tahlilia lonmadje arbaya). al-araq : majla al-handasa jamaa uruke el-add al-thani.

-Seide ,S alah zaki .1999. al-tajdid walihiaa bamsharka al-ahali al-motamer altasea lamamariin al-masrin "al-tarath mamari waltenemia al-amraniyeh" ‘al-qahrah maser.

- Saade, Ayman Azmi. 2009.aliat tefail al-masharka al-shaabia fe masharia al-hafaz mamari walamrani (hala durrasia al-dafa gharbia) ‘atrouha lenel darja almagester fe al-handasa mamaria, jamaa najah al-watnya,Naples

-Nairate, Hassen.2017. ather mamarsat alahatlal fe tehoud al-tarath ola al-hawia outaniya al-fulastinia faaliat yom althagafa outaniya wa zarra althagafa al-fulastinia.

-Mehisne, Ahmad.2009.wagha al-bayut al-athria fe madina ghaza wesbel al-hafaz alihal ,majla al-jamaa al-islamiya lelhendsa waloum al-tabiaia majalad 17 ‘ el-add 1

-Mehseneb ,Salh. maanaah al-quds walmakdsat taht alahatlal al-israili markaz zeitoune laled rasat walascharat ,perot,2011

-Malouka, Brorah ,wa Amir bahri. 2015.tanmiya al-mastadama fe manateq al-tarath al-amrani (arad tujerba tunes warsad al-waqi fe al-gazair)al-gazair: majla al-aloum al-insaniyya walligtmaia aded khash balmeltaqa al-douli thoulat al-madina - sahraouia tekata makarbat hawl al-tahol alajtamaai walmarsat al-hadria.

- Buykli, M. Maksakovsky, N. Matyl, T. Stashkevich, A. Titova, O. 2015. Integrated approach to the management of the world heritage properties in the CIS countries, outcome paper of the seminar. Fund 'cultural heritage and modernity UNESCO. P0-36.
- Earl, John. 2003. Building Conservation Philosophy, 3rd edition, Donhead Publishing Ltd, Dorset, UK.
- Lourenço, Paulo B. & Branco, Jorge M. & Coelho, Ana. 2015. Sustainability and cultural heritage buildings. ISEI, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Minho, Guimarães, Portugal.
- United Nations. 1981. Popular participation as a strategy for promoting community – level action and national development, report for the meeting held at United Nations Headquarters 22-26 May 1978, New York.
- Muhaisen, Ahmed. 2014. Restoration Works to Preserve the Historic Houses in the Old City of Gaza. The 1st Conference on the Palestinian Heritage. Ecole normale supérieure (France). 15-16 March (2012), ISBN: 978-2-36013-177-8 .
- Francois LeBlanc. 11/7/2007. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, CA 90049. Available at: <http://www.getty.edu/conservation>.