

The Study of History and The Issue of Cultural Development in Algeria After Independence

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Abstract:

This study tackles the problem of the relationship between history science and cultural development in independent Algeria through highlighting the role of history science in establishing and developing cultural development projects in post-independent Algeria. This is due to the fact that history is an essential scientific subject, an important educational instrument and an effective development tool to promote the cultural climate and activate development and construction projects in this field. It is no secret that the fulfilment of history has remained the true starting point for cultural development in independent Algeria, often making historical culture a necessary background (cultural development).

Key Words: history science, cultural development, historical culture, Algeria.

Introduction:

History holds a fundamental position among the various fields of human knowledge, closely tied to the reality of cultural development in contemporary times. Historical awareness contributes significantly to strengthening the sense of belonging among younger generations, enabling them to engage with current social, economic, and political issues in a conscious and constructive manner, paving the way for positive prospects in the development and cultural advancement of societies.

In this context, our study, titled "The Study of History and the Issue of Cultural Development in Algeria After Independence," aims to shed light on the significance and role of history and historical culture in fostering cultural development in post-

independence Algeria. It also explores the prospects for cultural development in light of the current state of historical culture in the country.

Given that history is a fundamental scientific discipline, an essential educational tool, and an effective developmental instrument for enhancing the cultural environment and activating cultural development projects in independent Algeria, historical culture often serves as a necessary foundation for cultural development. Accordingly, we pose the following research question: To what extent does the study of history and historical knowledge contribute to cultural development in Algeria after independence?

1. Defining the Key Concepts of the Study:

This study encompasses a set of essential concepts that play a significant role in shaping the core of the research problem and its analysis. Defining these concepts accurately facilitates the research process and ensures the findings are effectively communicated to the audience. Among the most important of these concepts are:

1.1. The Study of History:

The concept of history has long been the focus of interest for historians, writers, and philosophers, both in the past and present. Opinions and discussions on the matter have diversified, resulting in a vast body of work addressing history as a term, an idea, an art, a subject, and a domain within the fields of human knowledge.

The term "history" has often been subject to widespread misunderstanding, partly due to the multiple meanings and various connotations attached to it. People have come to use the term in reference to an array of phenomena and subjects, such as the history of the universe, world history, general history, the history of humanity, natural history, the history of mankind, the history of science, the history of civilization, the history of culture, the history of philosophy, historicism, and numerous other topics associated with the term "history." (Al-Obeidi & Boujemaa, 2018, p. 12)

In the context of our exploration of the concept of the study of history in academic and scientific studies, it is often defined as the discipline concerned with examining the chronological record of events that have influenced a given nation. This study relies on the critical examination of various sources of information and provides explanations for the causes of these events. It collects data related to historical topics from various texts encompassing the history and culture of peoples and states, while also obtaining historical information on military, economic, legal, and other fields (Bin Salman, 2000, p. 32).

History can also be defined as the science dedicated to studying

the human past through written documents and other material evidence left by humans. In this sense, history serves as a foundational framework for historians and archaeologists to examine the political and social changes that have shaped human existence, including the rise and fall of nations and civilizations³ (Durant, 1993, p. 64).

Ibn Khaldun defined history as: "The science concerned with narrating human society, which represents the development of the world, and the conditions arising from this development, such as primitiveness, civilization, group loyalties, and the various forms of dominance humans exert over each other. It also examines the kingdoms and states that emerge from these dynamics, their stages, and what humans acquire through their actions and efforts, including wealth, livelihood, knowledge, crafts, and all phenomena naturally occurring in this society"⁴ (Ibn Khaldun, 1981, p. 98).

This definition implies that the study of history is not confined to wars or past events involving governments, rulers, and states. Rather, it investigates all aspects of past life, whether political, social, economic, intellectual, artistic, or religious (Ibn Khaldun, 1981, p. 109).

1.2. Cultural Development:

Cultural development is an innovative concept in the realm of social work, encompassing a comprehensive approach to various aspects of human life. Its emergence is closely linked to the modern intellectual awakening and became more clearly defined as the global community's vision of culture's role in society evolved. This concept has become a cornerstone of progress for nations and a fundamental principle of cultural and social policies, positioning development as a primary national goal (Al-Tuwaijri, 1996, p. 11).

In its general sense, cultural development refers to progressive changes that enhance culture both quantitatively and qualitatively, expanding its horizons and dimensions (Asir, 1995, p. 62). It involves processes through which the combined efforts of citizens and governments aim to improve cultural, social, and subsequently economic conditions, thereby fostering active participation in national progress (Abdelkader, 2003, p. 12).

From a functional perspective, cultural development can be defined as the efforts of specific institutions to implement cultural programs designed to advance the cultural landscape specifically, as well as the social and economic conditions of society as a whole (Zemouri, 2014, p. 149).

This is what leads us to emphasize that cultural development is the objective counterpart to the cultural development of society. Culture becomes an effective element in the growth mechanisms, strengthening efforts dedicated to improving

living standards, advancing humanity, enhancing capabilities, improving conditions, and activating contributions to the progress of society (Al-Tuwaijri, 1996, p. 12).

1.3. Historical Culture:

In its general sense, historical culture refers to the possession of sufficient historical knowledge by individuals in terms of facts, information, and concepts (Mohamed, 2021). It is considered the cognitive dimension of historical culture. Some define it as a certain level of knowledge, information, values, and historical orientations that an individual possesses, enabling them to engage with social, economic, and political issues (Razek, 2001, p. 14).

Historical culture, in these terms, represents the vessel of civilizational action and the field for applying values to reality. It serves as the nation's memory, embodying its experiences and lessons. It is a rich repository passed down from parents to children and grandchildren, a flowing river that originates from the past, passes through the present, and flows into the future (Mohamed, 2021).

2. The Status and Importance of the Historical Dimension in Cultural Development in Post-Independence Algeria:

An examination of the reality and trajectory of cultural development in Algeria following independence reveals that the efforts made in this field have positioned the study of history and historical knowledge as a fundamental starting point. As is well known, culture began to be viewed in the second half of the 20th century as a crucial element of sustainable development (Al-Mansif, n.d, p. 76). Since culture is a key factor in the process of civilizational construction and the foundation upon which civilization stands, the comprehensiveness, accuracy, balance, and stability of this foundation serve as the standard for the permanence and consolidation of any society's civilization (Tchicalov & Vladimir , 2014, p. 8).

In this context, historical culture represents one of the most important components of culture in general, as it plays a significant role in shaping the essential elements of Algerian national identity. It also contributes to the formation of various orientations, whether political, social, or economic (Abdel Samie, 2001, p. 6). In addition, historical culture has an impact on the moral dimension, including values, trends, and inclinations, as it enables historically informed individuals to translate historical concepts into practical applications in everyday life. This ensures their ability to plan, condense knowledge, and strengthens their participation in cultural development (Al-Jamal, 2005, p. 26).

The importance of historical culture in the realm of cultural

development in the Arab world, and specifically in Algeria, is further emphasized by the fact that we are currently living in a society that has undergone significant social, economic, and technological changes. These transformations have brought various intellectual and cultural currents, leading to dangerous social and cultural fractures. This makes it crucial to have a historical culture that contributes to deepening belonging and reinforcing identity within contemporary society (Rakash & Qasayisiyah, 2015, p. 123).

In pursuit of these goals, Algeria's efforts immediately following independence focused on increasing the role of history in shaping strategies and programs for cultural development. Despite the challenges and difficulties that Algeria faced within this framework, particularly considering that the independence period began under the duality of Algerian-French relations as stipulated in the Evian Accords (Al-Mansif, n.d, p. 89), there were still genuine attempts to integrate history into the cultural development process. This included introducing Algeria's authentic historical dimension into primary and legal education curricula as an initial step to raise awareness of and develop local cultural values (Telli, 2021, p. 315).

In this context, there was a gradual shift away from the French educational system in the teaching of history, starting with the Arabization of history to free it from cultural and linguistic dependence on France. This strategy was pivotal in eradicating the remnants of the colonial past on one hand, and on the other, in affirming change by teaching history in the language of the Algerians, thus helping to inspire the noble national principles, values, and goals of the liberation revolution (Derar, 1972, p. 158). All of this was aimed at building an authentic, progressive Algerian school system, aligned with the requirements of cultural development in Algeria. As expressed by the late President Houari Boumediene, "... Arabization must dominate everything that emphasizes our true Arab-Islamic identity..." (Boualak, 2005, p. 69)

Additionally, the importance of history as part of cultural development in independent Algeria was underscored by Ordinance No. 76-35, dated April 16, 1976, which outlined the organization of education and training in Algeria. This ordinance paved the way for the establishment of the basic school system, which primarily aimed to foster in students a love for their homeland, defend the achievements of the liberation revolution, and maintain constant mobilization for national reconstruction, in line with broader developmental goals in the cultural, economic, and political domains (Al-Mansif, n.d, p. 119).

Since independence, Algeria has also focused on instilling a sense of national and Islamic identity in the younger generations, through educating them about the historical depth

of Algerian society and prioritizing its inclusion as a key subject in educational curricula. This was done in recognition of the importance and status of historical knowledge in the cultural development process. Through this knowledge, original values are reinforced in society, making it indispensable for everyone working in the fields of education, culture, media, and reform, for the future of knowledge (Al-Wanas, 2001, p. 127).

In addition to the efforts mentioned, Algeria has sought to exploit its historical and archaeological landmarks for cultural development. Algeria is rich in historical and cultural heritage, with roots extending deep into history. The country boasts about 456 classified and protected archaeological sites as of 2010, according to the Algerian Ministry of Culture, along with 7 UNESCO World Heritage sites (Darbouch, 2020, p. 203), all of which could serve as attractions for millions of tourists, thereby contributing to the cultural development process. However, this interest remains modest, and some might argue, almost nonexistent, leading to a missed opportunity for Algeria to capitalize on this valuable resource in both the cultural and economic spheres (The Popular Cultural Diversity in Algeria... A Vast Revolution Threatened by Loss, 2020, p. 14). This is why we describe Algeria's exploitation of its historical heritage in the context of cultural development as a limited attempt.

Moreover, it is not an exaggeration to say that the focus on history and historical knowledge within Algeria's cultural development trajectory has remained limited. This can be attributed to the lack of a clear long-term strategy for integrating historical data into cultural development, as well as a comprehensive vision (Al-Mansif, n.d, p. 171). Additionally, the role of history in Algeria's cultural development efforts and national building projects post-independence has been shaped by political realities, social conditions, and the ideological trends prevailing at the time. As a result, the engagement with Algeria's historical data, as expressed through historical materials, has taken different directions in terms of conception and varied goals, reflecting the diverse convictions and viewpoints of those involved (Saïdouni, 2007, p. 100).

3- The Horizons of Cultural Development in Light of Historical Knowledge and Culture in Algeria:

Discussing the prospects of cultural development in light of historical knowledge in Algeria leads us first to examine the current cultural scene. This scene does not rely clearly on a strong strategic plan to integrate history and historical knowledge into the framework of cultural development within an institutional setting, with the exception of some temporary efforts with limited impact on revitalizing and advancing cultural development. It is evident that the contemporary cultural scene in Algeria reflects, to a limited extent, the depth of the Algerian society's historical identity and culture (Khatala,

2021).

This is why we emphasize the necessity of incorporating history and historical knowledge into the design of cultural development projects and national building processes in general. Today, Algerian society urgently needs to devise a meticulous plan to work in the realm of cultural development, which requires the integration of various knowledge and educational frameworks. At the forefront of these frameworks should be historical culture, which reinforces both national identity and belonging. This is especially crucial as we live in a society that has undergone significant social, economic, and technological transformations (The Popular Cultural Diversity in Algeria... A Vast Revolution Threatened by Loss, 2020, p. 14).

Undoubtedly, this strategy requires the historian to define his position regarding the vision of society's project and its place in national development projects in all their aspects and various objectives. This is essential in order to go beyond the traditional role assigned to historians in research and educational tasks, and to actively participate in economic development and social construction. This, however, demands that the Algerian historian, first and foremost, change their perspective on the role of institutions related to heritage or interested in historical culture. The historian should approach this with concrete examples and specific models that allow them to assert their role and fulfill their mission, rather than from an ideological commitment or abstract concepts (Saïdouni, 2007, p. 101).

The initial steps required in this approach involve the belief that history is the foundation and starting point of general culture, and that historical knowledge is the necessary background upon which development projects are built. History is a lived experience with repercussions on reality and impacts on the future, whether concerning cultural, economic, or social plans, among others. This is based on the fact that the experiences of advanced nations and developed societies have demonstrated that the historical dimension is essential for the success of any feasible plan, whether in cultural development or other areas of economic growth and human activity (Saïdouni, 2007, p. 102).

This approach also necessitates the teaching of history within the Algerian educational system using advanced methods to achieve the desired goals of studying it in our contemporary era. Teaching history is not merely reading; reading is just an overview of historical events that any person can do without analyzing them. In contrast, teaching history aims for much broader goals, striving for the acquisition of convictions, intellectual skills, and scientific learning, along with the ability to utilize these gains in professional life and future cultural development projects (Telli, 2021, p. 317).

In this context, attention must also be given to archaeological sites and historical spaces that are protected and have deep historical roots. These sites form an important asset that needs to be valued and transformed into areas of attraction, generating wealth and contributing to the construction of an alternative economy, which is an essential goal for cultural development based on these historical and archaeological landmarks. Additionally, introducing activities directly related to the nature of these historical sites and their civilizational dimensions would contribute to revitalizing them and transforming them into hubs for various service-related activities (Al-Mansif, n.d, p. 22).

With such perspectives on the role of history and thanks to these proposed views on the place of historical knowledge in shaping the Algerian mindset, it becomes clear that we cannot undertake the battle of construction or engage in the process of building and development in today's Algeria, regardless of the type or scope of the projects, or their specificities, without considering the historical experience. Life's principles have made it impossible for individuals and communities to live in the present without thinking about a future, the dimensions of which are shaped by its historical background (Saïdouni, 2007, p. 103).

Conclusion:

In conclusion of this study, we can say that the data of Algerian history, with its positive and negative aspects, reflects both the response and aspirations of the Algerian people. It also shows the researcher that the effectiveness of cultural development programs and projects is closely tied to our vision of the past and how well we understand and benefit from its experiences. Algerian history, as a cumulative civilization that expresses the genius of the people, has always been and will continue to be the factor that stores experiences and serves as a link between generations. It originates from every future vision and is realized through the execution of constructive works in the cultural field and other vital areas.

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