

IMPACT OF CULTURAL BASE IN THE THOUGHT OF DEVELOPMENT: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN CHINA-CAMEROON

IMPACT DE LA BASE CULTURELLE DANS LA PENSÉE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT : ANALYSE COMPARATIVE ENTRE CHINE-CAMEROUN

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Abstract : Culture has been and remains a pillar of development in all countries of the world. For each country to develop, it must be able to maximize its method of architecture so that it develops itself. This article aims to study the development methods of Shikumen (China) through its architecture. The Shikumen building has a facade and a backyard both protected by a high wall. Shikumen or the Shi-ku-men roughly translates to stone, gate, gate which describes the stone portals in the masonry walls that separate the courtyard of the houses from the adjacent lane. The various doors of these portals were usually made of heavy wood, painted black and fitted with iron hardware. The imitation of the Shikumen method will allow Bafoussam to encourage the citizens of Bafoussam (Cameroon) to promote their traditional architecture in order to resist suitable development before the horizon of 2035 to become an emerging city. Just like the case of Shikumen, which took advantage of its architecture to create a suitable layout, it is possible to do the same. Based on extensive fieldwork, this article is therefore mainly based on some empirical analyzes on documents, and the experience of Shikumen that have emerged based on their architecture around the world. The hypothesis of this article is that of a weak formulation of the architectural policy of Bafoussam towards a development or better still towards an adapted development. Hence the need to rethink the relationship between architecture and development by placing the local population at the center of strategic actions.

Keyword: Architecture, Culture, Emergence, strategies Suitable development.

Résumé : La culture a été et reste un pilier du développement de tous les pays du monde. Pour que chaque pays se développe, il faut qu'il puisse maximiser sa méthode d'architecture afin qu'elle se développe elle-même. Cet article vise à étudier les méthodes de développement de Shikumen (Chine) à travers son architecture. Le bâtiment Shikumen a une façade et une cour arrière toutes deux protégées par un haut mur. Shikumen ou le Shi-ku-men se traduit approximativement par une pierre, une porte, une porte qui décrit les portails de pierre dans les murs de maçonnerie qui séparent la cour des maisons de la ruelle adjacente. Les différentes portes de ces portails étaient généralement en bois lourd, peintes en noir et équipées de quincaillerie en fer. L'imitation de la méthode Shikumen permettra à Bafoussam d'inciter les citoyens de Bafoussam (Cameroun) à promouvoir leur architecture traditionnelle afin de résister à un développement convenable avant l'horizon 2035 pour devenir une ville émergente. Tout comme le cas de Shikumen qui a profité de son architecture pour réaliser un aménagement adapté, il est possible d'en faire autant. Basé sur un travail de terrain approfondi, cet article s'appuie donc principalement sur quelques analyses empiriques sur des documents, et l'expérience de Shikumen qui ont émergé en s'appuyant sur leur architecture à

travers le monde. L'hypothèse de cet article est celle d'une formulation faible de la politique architecturale de Bafoussam vers un développement ou mieux encore vers un développement adapté. D'où la nécessité de repenser la relation entre architecture et aménagement en plaçant la population locale au centre des actions stratégiques.

Mots Clés : Architecture, Culture, Emergence, Stratégies Aménagement adapté.

Introduction

In this last XXI century, there has been the custom of talking and hearing more about architecture and development which has pivoted so many discussions in the society following its motives for poverty eradication in emerging nations. Just as cited by Léopold Sédar Senghor on culture and development that, « *j'ai toujours pensé que l'homme, c'est-à-dire la culture, était au commencement et à la fin du développement* », ¹ The aspect of this culture that we are talking about here is architecture which is classified as the immobile cultural heritage. Hence, architecture places an important or primordial function in the dynamic of the economic development of a country.

Hence, with the fantastic development of the China (Shikumen), "Stone warehouse", the construction of this architecture seen is done with materials such as stones and woods for the structure, terracotta and ceramics for decoration, the height development was initially two or three floors. (Lucrezia, date, p. 10) ² This method of construction faced various crisis in which they passed through as an emergent country making China to be a significant icon in the international economy and politics, with active participation in international institutions, yet difficult for the third world countries to cross these crisis. The Architectural methods of these two towns (Shikumen and Bafoussam) are similar in the method of construction whereby, both architectural constructions are done with bricks and wood and at the level of building; it has a front and backyard both have stones in the foundation. The doors in the portals of these towns are made with heavy wood. Hence observing the similarity of the architecture of these towns in the way of construction, what then is the impact of Shikumen and Bafoussam architectural methods for economic development? This is the question that this article ambitions to briefly address. This question relates both to China's and Cameroon's economic development through architecture.

To be sure, China's used method for their economic development through architecture and not Cameroon. Nonetheless, my hypothesis is that the architecture of China led to a suitable development because of the conservation of their culture. At the same time, architecture has really contributed to increasing China's GDP and as well had an influence in the Global South in spite of several cases of pushback which the West has managed to capitalize upon. Meanwhile the Cameroon architecture method has been influence by modernization.

¹ M. Raymond Weber., 2009, « Culture et Développement : Vers un nouveau paradigme ? », Maputo, p.2.

² Triolo Lucrezia, Shikumen: an interior design proposal for limited space in traditional dwellings of Shanghai", politecnico Milano, p.10.

Not many articles have been published on this issue. This article is to put into aspect the architecture of the African continent and for Cameroon in particular, in the optic to boost the development of the continent. This paper aims at exploring: How to identify the major problem confronting the boosting of Bafoussam architecture and how to protect and promote the architecture of Cameroon for economic development.

This analysis will be based on primary sources from monographic materials compiled from field surveys and secondary data consisting primarily of documentary research. Based on the above, recommendations of the development and evolution will be analyzed and evaluated in the next sections below.

1. Presenting the Corpus: Shikumen and Bafoussam

After observing the introduction above, here we are going to present the two towns of our case study which are Shikumen and Bafoussam. In the first place we are going present the Shikumen town and later equally lay emphasis on the geographical presentation of Bafoussam.

1.1. Presentation of Shikumen

Shikumen³ is a town located in Shanghai and represents about 60% of the total lodging in the city of Shanghai and housed 80% of its population but her concessions were never just exclusive enclaves for privileged transient of foreigners.⁴ Shikumen has a lane of about 200,000 such as building covering about 20million square meters in the 1950s.⁵

Shikumen's architectural style is completely unique to Shanghai which is the combining of the traditional courtyard home (China) and the European townhouse such as France and British. This concession took place during the XVII and XIX century.⁶ Shikumen's architecture has taken the place of being a special and lasting identity that distinguishes Shanghai's architectural history and social fabric. The connection between existing architecture and urban history points to the significance of China's heritage preservation.⁷ Shikumen in other words known as "stone gate" refers to "black-colored heavy gateways" which is strength to houses, which abuts one another and are arranged in straight alleys called Linongs (Li refers to row or block of houses, while Nong means a lane providing access) this is because of the stone wall and gates that have really become notable features of the various residences that bordered these lanes.⁸

³ Shikumen or the *shi- ku-men* translates roughly as a stone, gate, door which describing the portals of stone in masonry walls that separate the courtyard of the houses from the adjacent lane. The various doors in these portals were typically of heavy wood, painted black, and fitted with iron hardware.

⁴ <http://www.topchinatravel.com>, 09/05/2022.

⁵ Ryan Kilpatrick., 2014, "30% of shanghai's iconic Shikumen homes have been destroyed, only 100 remain",

⁶ Plácido Gonizález Martinez, 2019, "Intervening in the historic residential tissue of Shanghai's Shikumen: Xintiandi as a paradigm", LOGGIA, n° 32, p.24.

⁷ Xiaohua Zhong and Xiangming Chen, 2017, "Demolition, rehabilitation, and conservation: heritage in Shanghai's urban regeneration, 1990–2015", in Journal of Architecture and Urbanism, p.85. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3846/20297955.2017.1294120>

⁸ Kori Rutcosky, 2007, "Adaptive reuse as sustainable architecture in contemporary Shanghai", Lund niversity, p. 18.

Picture 1: The Shikumen town



Source: Narine Exelby, 2018, "The Shikumen of Shanghai", p.7.
<http://www.journey.ritzcariton.com/destination-guides/Shikumen-of-Shanghai>
consulted on 3, May 2022

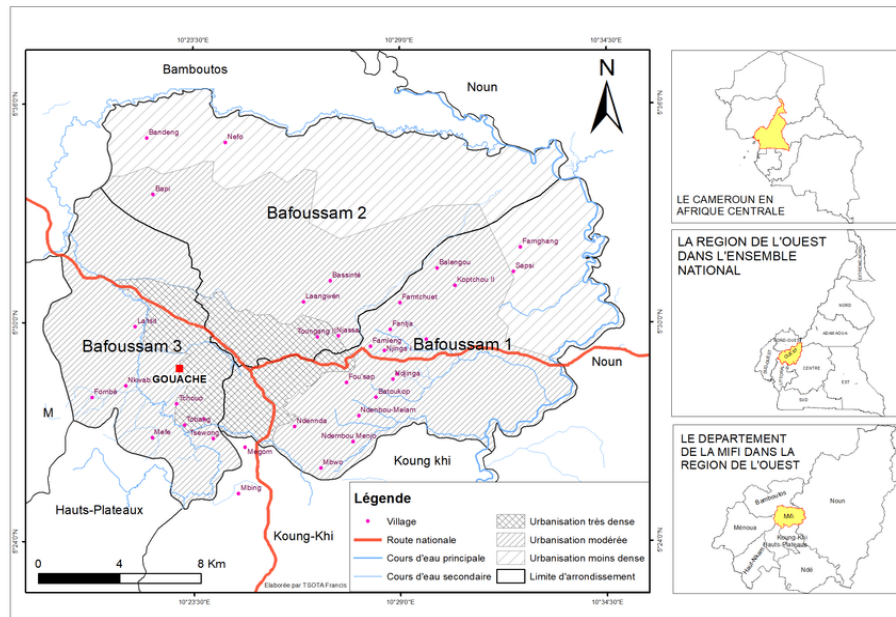
The picture above shows the town of Shikumen with his architectural method of construction.

1.2. Presentation of Bafoussam

Bafoussam is a town found in the West Region of Cameroon and is the Capital of the Mifi division. Bafoussam is located between latitudes 5°26' and 5°30' North and longitudes 10°20' and 10°30' East. Hence, this territory is bounded from the Northwest by the Bamboutous and Menoua divisions, to the south west by the Menoua, high Plateau and Koung-khi divisions, the north east by the Bamboutous and Noun divisions, to the south east by the Koung-khi and Noun divisions. Bafoussam is divided into three part Bafoussam I (Bafoussam), Bafoussam II (Baleng) and Bafoussam III (Bamougoum) municipalities.⁹

⁹ Renz Tichafogwe Tende and Kengmoe Tchouongsi Emmanuel (2020), "Urban overspill and its upshot to the Bafoussam Emergent Metropolis in Cameroon", University of Yaounde I, n Social Sciences Research Journal – Vol.7, No.4, p.138.

Map 1: Location of the Bafoussam town in the Mifi division of the West region



Source: <https://www.Bafoussam-Mifi-Ouest-Cameroun-decoupage-des-zones-map.com/cnt/local/bafoussam-presentation-sommaire-7095-a.html>, 04/5/2022.

Bafoussam surface area is about 91Km² that is 18Km² made up of the urban zone and the rural zone which constitutes 73Km² and counts about 98339 according to the general population census published by BUCREP.¹⁰

Picture 2: A house made of mud in Bafoussam



Source: Picture taken by Mvoulou Ngoudzo Emmanuel stephane

¹⁰ <https://www.bafoussamonline.com/cnt/local/bafoussam-presentation-sommaire-7095-a.html>, 04/5/2022.

From the above picture, the method used in the construction of this architecture undergo transformation from the traditional square- plan hut with mud- bricks locally known as (*poto-poto*) and a thatched roof to the rectangular hut with a sun-dried mud-brick walls and a roof made of corrugated sheet metal.¹¹

2. Factors of the Architectural Demolition in Shikumen and Bafoussam

In this part (II) we are going to analyze below the various reasons that have influence the town of Shikumen and Bafoussam not to exploit the potentiality of their method of architecture. Whereby, in the first place we will first analyze the degradation of the Shikumen traditional architecture and in the order side we are to look the factors that hinder the Bafoussam traditional architecture.

2.1. Reason for the Degradation of the Traditional Architecture of Shikumen

The traditional architectural style of Shikumen had been influenced by so many factors among which are the presences of the European such as Britain and France in China since 1840 when China entered into contact with the western culture and thought.¹² Due to their presence, there was a new style in construction by the various means of assimilation and acculturation of the national achievement. This change was due to a very long result of the culture and technological exchange which created an impact in the development of the architecture and culture of Shikumen.¹³ Hence this new styles that originated as a result of the presence of the Europeans partially assimilated China in general and Shikumen in particular traditional architecture technics and principles and their replacement by the European. Due to this impact of the Western architecture, the traditional architecture based on Hutong and Siheyuan has transformed because of the reduction of the area of the Shikumen.¹⁴ Thus, the decoration was the main method of imitation of a Chinese construction in this period.

Another factor that influences the traditional architectural style of Shikumen was the various political reforms that occurred in China. After the creation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) of 1949, the state took control of the Shikumen houses and they sub-divided it into small units that were rented out at very low rates. As a result of this shortage in housing, the original single-family Shikumen houses with only one entrance were shared by households in a small area of 3m² per capita. This high density created overloading and the lack of maintenance accelerated the aging and deterioration of the architectures which were also vulnerable to safety risks such as potential fire and collapse.¹⁵ Added to this, we can observe the reform carried out by Mao Zedong throughout his Cultural Revolution reform that held from 1966-

¹¹ Ellong Epée and Cheheb Diana, 2019, *The Africa dwelling: From traditional to western style homes*, Mc ferland, France, p.84

¹² Mao Zhiyuan "The value of Shikumen buildings as origin of the commercial residential buildings in China: A case study of Meihetang Shikumeng buildings in Hangzhou", Research Institute of Architectural Design, Zhejiang University, p. 2.

¹³ Kim, A. A., & Luchkova, V. I. (2016). "Sino-Western style of architecture" *Vestnik SGASU. Town Planning and Architecture, Russia* p.72–79.

¹⁴ Arkaraprasertkul, N. 2009, "Towards modern urban housing: redefining Shanghai's Lilong", *Journal of Urbanism*, pp. 11-29.

¹⁵ Xiaohua Zhong and Xiangming Chen, 2017, "Demolition, rehabilitation, and conservation: heritage in Shanghai's urban regeneration, 1990–2015", *in Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*, pp.84-85.

1976. This reform hindered the architecture of Shikumen because many families left their lane homes which were then subdivided and filled to the brim.¹⁶ Thus, making the heritage preservation of this town disappear from the administration framework, meaning that from 1980 onward Shikumen was managed by the different districts that made up the municipality of Shanghai and their entrepreneurial for the government.¹⁷ During the period of Deng Xiaoping's governance, there was the destruction of the old style Shikumen housing which led to about 30% of the traditional Shikumen architecture disappearing, and also leads to the loss of urban cultural baggage associations with them.¹⁸

2.2. Problem that hinder the Traditional Architecture of Bafoussam

So many reasons are influencing the degradation of the traditional architecture of Bafoussam. Among such reasons include the following. The European presence in Cameroon and most especially in the west region (Bafoussam) greatly influenced their architecture in that, after their arrival in Bafoussam, the Europeans such as France who assimilated the citizens and came on with their own style of construction. These styles greatly destroyed the traditional style of the architecture of Bafoussam.¹⁹

Added to this, there is the coming of globalization; many tribes and immigrants moved to Bafoussam and most of them found it difficult to cope with the Bafoussam (grassfield area) traditional style of architectural construction. To this regard, they prefer to construct with building materials from other countries of Africa, Europe and Asia.²⁰ Some even decide to deal with the European materials method of construction because of its cost. The cost of constructing a standard house using cement, iron and other materials are less costly than those that want to build a standard house using the local traditional materials since they are expensive. And in the case where the traditional materials are used for the construction of the architecture, it will eventually collapse.²¹

Another factor leading to the fall of the traditional method of construction on architecture in the Bafoussam area is the lack of road infrastructures. The region (West region) lacks road infrastructure and there is a great distance from the Portland cement production plants and the absence of forest combines to make the cost of basic construction materials prohibitive. Even the river gravel and sand, their geological inexistence makes the citizens to mine granite quarries which require extensive investment. The difficulties related to the supply of materials and building techniques

¹⁶ Narine Exelby, 2018, "The Shikumen of Shanghai", p.7. <http://www.journey.ritzcariton.com/destination-guides/Shikumen-of-Shanghai>.

¹⁷ Plácido Gonizález Martinez, 2019, "Intervening in the historic residential tissue of Shanghai's Shikumen: Xintiandi as a paradigm", LOGGIA, n° 32, p.27.

¹⁸ Triolo Lucrezia, "Shikumen: an interior design proposal for limited space in traditional dwellings of Shanghai", politecnico Milano, p.41.

¹⁹ Interview hold with Dongfack Nzeko Alain, 39years, Ingenieur at Bafoussam, 10 August 2021, Bafoussam- Center

²⁰ Interview hold with Fo Sokoudjou Jean-Rameauon, 85years, Chief of Bamendjou Chiefdom, Bamendjou, 14 August 2021, 13:32.

²¹ An Interview carried with Fotué Jean-Pierre, 64 years old, notable at Bamougoum chiefdom, Bafoussam, on the 13/08/2021 at 12pm.

doubtlessly impelled Bafoussam to become a systematic simplification of the traditional architectural symbolic representation of power.²²

After looking at the various problems of Shikumen and Bafoussam, we are to observe below how Shikumen traditional architecture was restored from her various difficulties and how Bafoussam can benefit from this method.

3. Shikumen Restorment on Architecture: a model to Bafoussam Architecture

In this part of the work there will be the need to outline how Shikumen despite its various problems on the preservation of her architecture, finally restored her traditional architectures and how can the Bafoussam town gain from this.

3.1. The Restoration of the Shikumen Traditional Architecture

In order to stop the demolition and the deterioration of the Shikumen traditional architectures, Pei²³ looked for a means to join the Western advanced technology with Chinese vernacular architecture without degenerating into problem. In regard to this, Pei said in 1981 that:

“We Chinese should create a new kind of building which expresses our history, life and culture...My design is not only a hotel, but an experiment aimed at finding a method that can also be used in high-rise buildings”²⁴

Indeed, as a result, the Deng government came out with the preservation of the urban heritage in China which started with a system put in place by “The national Famous Historical and Cultural Cities” in 1982.²⁵ And in the year 1986, the whole of Shanghai was listed as a “National Historical Cultural City”.²⁶

In order to solve the problem of state ownership, the administration organization favored public-private partnership for urban regeneration projects, which took the question of heritage into considerations. In the mid-1990s, the Chinese authorities came out with a resolution known as the “365 Plan”. This plan foresaw the demolition of about 365 hectares of Shikumen and relocates about 1.2 million of their residents to the new development plan in the outskirts of Shanghai. As a result, the government and the developers (Citizens and entrepreneurs) created a Shikumen identity, using their architecture and heritage as an important tool in the official urban beautification policy. In the year 2004 under the leadership of Jiang Zemin there were two ordinances that were carried out. These ordinances defined the notion of urban preservation through the creation of “heritage areas” where the indiscriminate practice of demolitions was restricted and innovations were introduced while conservation of the old feature’s materials or the environmental specific characteristic of Shikumen (Martinez, 2019, p.27).²⁷

²² Ellong Epée and Cheheb Diana, 2019, *The Africa dwelling: From traditional to western style homes*, Mc ferland, France, p.86.

²³ Ieoh Ming Pei was a Chinese- American architect.

²⁴ Lixue Q. Charlie, 2010, « world architecture in China » H.K CO p.52.

²⁵ This was first lauched in 1956 in order to renovate vast areas of dilapidated Shikumen houses but the project was stopped due to the Cultural Revolution.

²⁶ Xiaohua Zhong and Xiangming Chen, 2017, “Demolition, rehabilitation, and conservation: heritage in Shanghai’s urban regeneration, 1990–2015”, *in Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*, p.86.

²⁷ Plácido Gonizález Martinez, 2019, “Intervring in the historic residential tissue of Shanghai’s Shikumen: Xintiandi as a paradigm”, *LOGGIA*, n° 32, pp.27-29.

Looking on the various methods used in order to solve the problem of the Shikumen architectural style above, we are going to examine below how this method can be adopted in the Bafoussam.

3.2. Shikumen: A model for the Bafoussam preservation on her tradition Architecture

Due to the problem faced and still faced by the architecture of Bafoussam I, some methods will be copied from Shikumen in order to protect and promote the architecture of Bafoussam I. These methods will be examined below.

Ngouache Patrice²⁸ said, "Our architecture determine our origin and constructing our typical type of architecture makes our ancestors to be closer to us". This shows how architecture is important for a country or region. Hence, in regard to the method of the Shikumen style on her architecture, the Cameroon government most lay emphasis on architecture as an important tool in the beautification policy by preservation and creation of "heritage areas" in which it will not enhance the indiscriminate demolitions but introduce innovation while conserving the old Bafoussam materials of construction.

Picture 3: The Zingana architectural Hotel outside (left) and inside (right) in Bafoussam.



Source: <http://Zingana-hotel.com>.

The picture above, of the Zingana architecture is done in the African way in general and that of the grassfield (Bafoussam) in particular. In the picture at the left (outer part) it is muds that have carried a long process so as to withstand many obstacles like rainfall, dry season and so on. In the right picture which is the inner side of the hotel, we can see that most of it is done through the Zingana wood from South

²⁸ An interview with Ngouache Patrice, 55years, *mbe*, notable/ notable *Nddzinde Mafae*, 15 August 2021, Bafoussam- Kamkop

Africa. Hence if the government and the developers of Cameroon will do like the Shikumen authority did, it will really be of benefit for the Bafoussam zone.

Conclusion

This paper puts in evidence the importance of developing our country through our own architectural material methods. Through this, we took case studies to know Shikumen and Bafoussam architectures. Both countries faced serious problems facing their architectural styles such as the presence of European powers through assimilation and so many other factors. Hence, while Shikumen decided to overcome their problem by innovating their architectural style, Bafoussam still remains behind. So, in order for Bafoussam to withstand their various difficulties so as to be in the race of the emergent region in the architectural domain, we went to choose Shikumen as a suitable model for Bafoussam. Analyzing the architectural policy for development: comparative analysis of Shikumen and Bafoussam, we can say that adopting the Shikumen method used by the government and the public enterprises in order to promote their architectural will be of a great help and really beneficial if the government, the business men and the citizens adopt the Shikumen strategy in order to develop their own method of architecture in Bafoussam. In regard to this research, the measure taking by the government to preserve the traditional architecture of Bafoussam can be a go ahead for the development of Bafoussam ?

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