Algiers from the Medina to the European City: Identity Loss

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- **Abstract**

After 1830, the French presence in Algiers brought significant changes to the architectural landscape of the city. The dominant feature of this transformation was the construction of European houses. The first models were constructed mainly within the Ottoman city, especially in its lower part. This paper attempts to explain certain aspects of this type of housing. To do so, it relies on three tools necessary to the study of minor architecture, namely the plot of land, the template, and the scheduling. And how the colonial cultural heritage shaped perceptions and references. This resulted in the dismantling of the original architectural model in city of Algiers represented by the "old" city el-Casbah with its time-established functional, artistic and social divisions and new political-social divisions that respond to the needs of the colonizer rather than the needs of the indigenous population, in addition to technical and value distortions in the general architectural fabric.

Keywords: Algiers, Geni military, Architecture heritage, memory, urban planning

- **Introduction**

One does not tire of describing the city of Algeria as pulsing with charm and beauty, with its picturesque bay (Baie d'Alger) and its location that flows gradually with its gorgeous view of the sea, which formed it and has a scene, perhaps the most beautiful among its counterparts from the Mediterranean cities, a unique urban scene with a central focus It wraps like a bracelet around the coastal strip, from the first nucleus el-Casbah passing through the growth outside its walls, where a new urban fabric is formed.

Algiers remained the capital of the Ottoman Ayala until the French occupation in 1830. The city underwent imposed transformations that were in response to an urban policy on the part of the occupation. In the beginning, it was dominated by military construction, and with the beginning of the twentieth century, eastern architecture appeared, and in the thirties, a Mediterranean architecture appeared that continued until independence. We will examine the various architectural styles, and expansions that the city has undergone since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

I-   Architectural styles of Algiers city before the colonial period (The Islamic architecture)

Many civilizations passed over the rule of the Algiers city, over more than two thousand years of its inception, as historians point out. It was originally a Phoenician commercial crossing, surrounded by Bouzareah and resting on it, as the port's natural protection factor. The city was built on a hill near the port, and the choice of location was considered a way to link the eastern coast of the Mediterranean and the northwest coast of Africa, and to link coastal cities with inland cities. The Phoenicians called it (Ikosim) and after it grew and expanded in the Roman and Byzantine eras, it became known as (Icosium), and then the city was re-modified in the period of Bologin Ibn Ziri in the tenth century, and it became a capital in the 16th century by the Dey Khair al-Din in the Ottoman era. After the arrival of the ottomans major projects are immediately underway to improve the defense against the Spanish and the security of the city, as well as the living

conditions of local communities and Andalusian refugees. During that period, the city experienced a boom in the fields of construction, trade and maritime navigation, especially after the development of the natural location of the marina to a port linked to the city via a pier thanks to Andalusian engineering. Like other cities in that era, the city of Algiers was surrounded by a wall of 3200 meters in length. Inside the wall, an integrated urban system was formed in the concept of that era. Governance palaces and administration buildings were erected in the city center, and around them castles and forts that protect the city were constructed parallel to the city's waterfront, followed by residential neighborhoods, places of worship and water fountains, then markets, trade activities and traditional crafts. The area of the city at that time was about 50 hectares, with five gates surmounted by fortified towers penetrated by the wall. These portals formed the outlets and means of communication with the outside world. Faced with the city's need for new urban expansions, the central buds (bourgeon de la centralité) extended through the entrance to Bab al-Oued towards the northwest, and through the entrance to Bab Azzun, southeast of the city, due to the difficulty of extending through other gates and due to the rugged nature of the site.[1]

Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1992, This ancient medina of the 10th century The Casbah of Algiers. Commonly called "Casbah" is the area comprising the Casbah proper (fortress) and all the old city of el-Djazaïr located between this fort and the seaside. Beyond its artistic wealth, the old town is a precious witness to the history of Algeria.

II- The colonial era and the beginning of the change of the architecture in Algiers city

1. architecture and military town planning (1830-1840)

After the French occupation in 1830, for the sake of accessibility, but also of domination, enlargement works were launched from the first days of the capture of the city. The face of the city began to see drastic changes, when demolition and preparation operations began for Bab El-Wad and Bab Azzoun. On the ruins of what was destroyed, a public square was built in the Lower Casbah, called the Royal Square, and wide roads were paved to secure the movement of military vehicles, and housing was built to house soldiers and their families. During the first decade of the occupation of the city, the early colonial architectural model began to appear, completely different from the original urban model and character of the city.

2. The colonial civil architecture (1840-1880)

The city of Algiers is gradually developing into two opposing unequal entities sharing the same site. while the lower casbah - the plain - will be redeveloped to accommodate the nucleus of the new colonial administration, businesses and the European population, the upper casbah, el- djebel, baptized in Medina, is experiencing a growing crowding of the Muslim population due to demolitions and topographic boundaries.

The reconstruction process that began was not according to a comprehensive and thoughtful preparation plan, but rather was distinguished by its ad hoc functional nature that meets the military and war needs of the occupation.

The transformation process of the city

for the French generals, Algiers is a labyrinth made to disorientate the foreigner (jordi Jean Jack, p30). It is therefore at a military request dating from 1836 that a (general alignment plan) is partially adopted on December 10, 1846 (Jordi J.J. 1998.31). that it was implemented in 1848. however, the philosophy of the straight line will condition all urban development since the early days of colonization. the lower casbah becomes an open-air laboratory for the alignment and widening of streets and will paradoxically serve as a practical test for Haussmannian theory.

The layout of the first extra-muros European city had planned a linear grid stretching along the seafront. Concern for sanitation, ventilation and safety largely dictates the way in which new urban areas are designed. Public gardens, slopes arranged in open spaces, esplanades and crossings dominate the new urban morphology

The demolition process continued, with the demolition of the markets bordering Bab Azzun, Bab Al-Wad and Al-Bahariya neighborhood, the wall and all the doors were demolished in 1846, the waterfront was built in 1860, the Algerian port was expanded and the wide roads continued between 1865-1890.[2] This prompted the encroachment of the axes of urban growth in the east of the old nucleus to build the Isly stress (La rue d'Isly) known today as el-Arbi Bin Mahidi street, and to the west of the city's nucleus by building the Bab al-Wad neighborhood. Here begins, in our view, the story of modern urbanization in the city of Algiers. a system of squares and boulvards alternating between them, ensures the articulation with the new segments and the continuity with the old nucleus of the colonial administration. this linear development was finally reinforced in 1880 by a tram which links the fragments of the new European city.

On the other hand, the old city began to gradually lose its functional role, and became a mere "Casbah" neighborhood. But when did the urban act and the process of large-scale reconstruction in the Algiers city start? In fact, half a century had to

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[1]Regional planning and development department of Algiers, Statistical yearbook of the Wilaya of Algiers, 1996, p. 03.
[2] Regional planning and development department of Algiers, Statistical yearbook of the Wilaya of Algiers, 1996, p. 04.

pass, and their shape became evident with the emergence of new neighborhoods in the upper parts of the city: Michelet Street, now Didouche Mourad Street, which is the main street in the city today, Télemly Street, (Karim Belkacem today) Mustafa Pasha quarter, and the first May Square. El-Hamma as an extension of the new city center, according to the European style of architecture.

the structuring of the European city and its identity were reinforced by the empress' boulvard. this project of the century gave a new facade to the city and masked the eastern or Arab city. with a total area of 48,000 m.²

the empress' boulvard ; then the republic boulvard

based on the Christian religion, colonial architecture has become a means of expression of domination through the implantation and scale of religious buildings. Notre Dame d'Afrique (1858-1872) provides a striking example of this instrumentation which marked the landscape of the bay of Algiers. with its impressive location on a plateau which culminates on the hill of Saint-Eujene, 124m above the sea. is chosen to be seen from all sides of the city.

3.   The colonial civil architecture (1880-1900)

Like other Algerian cities, Algiers was concerned through the cultural policy of the Governor General of Algeria, Charles Célestin Jonnart who marked the passage of the 19th century to the twentieth century by an architecture seeking to reconcile Arab-Islamic and French culture. This second colonial period is characterized by a collection of historical styles imported as: neo-Greek, neo-classical.

The neoclassical is grouped in a regular layout forming a homogeneous and compact entity in the urban landscape of the city of Algiers, the colonial city center is a beautiful glimpse on the neoclassical style. This style dresses the majority of official buildings of this period, as well as the buildings overlooking the public places which convey the symbols glorifying the power of the French authority.

4.   The colonial architecture in the beginning of the 20th century (1900-1930): the good times

Seen from the perspective of architectural styles and trends, Algiers architectural production between 1860 and 1930 was undoubtedly the richest of the entire colonial period

▪   **The Jonnart style:1900-1914**

Neoclassical was criticized from the beginning of the 20th century by orientalists, qualifying it as too Western, and which ignored and devalued the local culture[3]. To remedy this problem Jonnart announced in 1905 that: "neo-Moorish architecture of local inspiration would be the state style, it is supposed to reconcile the past and the present, the West and the East, and to combine tradition and modernity"[4]It is a style that seeks to integrate the elements of local architecture in the production by a fundamental principle, the dissociation between the function and the decorative element. It appears that this simulation has made its way in the absence of a clear vision of a comprehensive growth plan for the city as a whole

the city of Algiers experienced a shift of its city center to Agha. this shift will be materialized by two considerable monuments which will mark the urban landscape and the beginning of the century: The new prefecture (1908) and The Algiers central post (1907-1910) which is a significant example of the marriage of two different cultures. Realized in the Neo Moorish style with a particular façade.

▪   **Moorish architecture in individual housing**

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[3] Cohen JL., & Oulebsir N., &kanoun Y., 2003, Alger, paysage urbain et architecturales, 1800- 2000, Les éditions de l'imprimeur, Paris,400 p.
[4] Cohen JL., & Oulebsir N., &kanoun Y., 2003, Alger, paysage urbain et architecturales, 1800- 2000, Les éditions de l'imprimeur, Paris,59p.

the individual habitat in colonial times presents a sphere of liberty where the tastes of individuals outside the military egemony and official authorities were expressed. in the case of algiers, mustapha superior and later El-Bier, escaped in terms of grand manners, Haussmannian town planning and the logic of Cartesian geometry. Given the rugged topography, they became areas of land speculation, private subdivision and town planning of houses. a large number of villas and individual dwellings of the wealthy class were born there. a new British community is established in these places where we met annually each winter, hence the name winterers, to escape the cold of Europe. by synchronizing with the local culture which reminds them of the orient ", they adopted the neo-Moorish style for their dwellings, thus expressed their refined sense and at the same time gave a "lesson to the French" of what an elegant architecture is.

the English architect Benjamin Bucknall (1833-1895), pupil of Violet le Duc, who masters the Moorish architectural language, can be considered as a precursor example of this tendency. His mastery of this architecture is due to the restoration work of villas and surveys that he undertook.
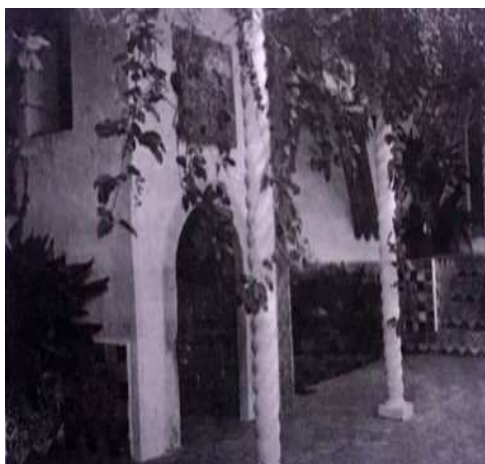
▪ **the theoretical foundations of the neo-Moorish style**

Algiers is gradually becoming a cosmopolitan city where artistic tastes intersect. for Europeans, especially Englishmen, who flee the cold climate in winter, it becomes a preferred destination for residence; hence the birth of seasonal tourism and orientalist taste.

while evoking the memories of the culture of the 'thousand and one nights', these well-off 'winterers' came to Algiers for health reasons, were known for their avid attraction to the picturesque exoticism, which the indigenous rural cultures presented. [5] according to them, the city of Algiers should not lose its identity and become another Paris, because that will not serve its tourist vocation. it is thus that the Moorish style is organically attached to the field of tourism and that the Moorish villas are born on the heights of Mustapha and El-biar between 1880 and 1890. From 1870, the hotels of Algiers, as well that those of Blida, Cherchell, Constantine, Oran and Hammam Righa live on English time.[6] the villa "Djnane El Mufti", owned by Mrs. Arthur, the queen of the British colony in Algiers, is an example of this community's commitment to this style.

The ville Djnane EL-Mufti.   Source: Frederick H. Evans.

over time the neo-Moorish style taken in its folklore sense is attached to the field of tourism. it does not take long to adapt to tourist complexes, casinos and hotels.

▪ **The Algerianist tendency:**

At the beginning of the twentieth century a line of Algerianists arose, which refers to all the architects, most of whom were born in Algeria, having expressed a certain sympathy for the Algerian heritage through their speeches or their architectural works. Guiauchain and Paul Guion, constituting the examples of this tendency. Algerianists are convinced that the local heritage is an inexhaustible source. they also believe that the local architecture better meets the requirements of the place in all its social, physical and cultural dimensions.

the presence of this new New Moorish style in modern emmeubles seems to be limited to the treatment of the outer walls, which is expressed in details of arches and arcades in the balconies, geometric motifs of the arabisance. this renewal is limited to the use of local forms and the resourcing of the material memory of the Casbah without attachment to the original

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[5] Piaton C & Chebani M .2016..p ;61
[6] Redouane Joelle.. 1984, 23

mode of spatial organization, and to the semantics of the elements. it reflects the signs of a new French tradition imbued with local forms.[7]

- **The Celebration of the centenary (1830-1930)**

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The celebration of the Centenary represents a great moment in the history of colonization. It was marked by a series of works and political, cultural and scientific events. This celebration of the triumph over "barbarism" and the end of the war in North Africa, includes a large number of events glorifying colonialism, and commemorating its works and great deeds. Architecture and town planning present the most obvious result. Despite the aspect of cultural tolerance towards the indigenous culture, the event of the two Centenary openly expresses the fundamental principles of the cultural colonial policy: the diversion of the history of the country by attaching it exclusively to the Greco-Roman precedents through the vestiges. and selective archeology, the concealment of all other belonging, and the legitimization of the colonizing action by staging its works and merits for the creation of a new Algeria in a century

Paradoxically with the aim of glorifying colonialism, the celebration of the Centenary represents a moment of reconsideration of indigenous architecture as a component of French imperial culture that allows the presence of colonial cultures.

- **The indigenous house of the centenary**

At the request of the colonial administration, and in the context of the celebration of the Centenary, a house was built in 1928 to serve as a cultural landmark for tourists and as a sample of what is the local architecture and the mode of native life. Its internal organization must allow to live the atmosphere of the different spaces constituting the house such as Sqifa, West-el-dar and Byoute, and its exterior reflect the typology and the decorative elements of the typical Arab house.

A technology based on the presence of reinforced concrete, was carried out by the Enterprise des Frères Perret reflecting in a way the transitory adaptation of the old style to the new construction technology.

The project which rises on the debris of a demolished house located in the Upper Casbah on the edge of the republic Boulevard, near Bâb-El-Djadîd and Palace of the Dey was entrusted to Léon Claro (1899-1991) on a commission from the Governor General. The spatial arrangement is made around a central courtyard, the patio. Its outer envelope is devoid of openings with the exception of small windows. It overflows its plan of the ground floor by encorbellements recalling the encorbellements, Janâh, which animate the streets of the Casbah without disturbing public traffic. Its construction was made with the remains of materials recovered from other demolished houses. As an urban project located in the Casbah, this house, while being isolated from its context, does not seem to be integrated into the urban fabric. The distance taken to expose it to the sights of tourists constitutes an obstacle to the principle of indigenous architecture which seeks to be unnoticed. In the same sense, the open space which surrounds it on all sides in the form of a garden, inspired by the philosophy of the villa, does not match the authentic language of the Casbah, whose compact fabric is the result of assembly, and joint ownership.

Finally, we must note that this typical house, built as a model of local architecture and inaugurated at a time when the Moorish style was in decline in the face of modernism, reflects the extension of the discourse of political appeasement followed by Jonnart with regard to the indigenous population. By limiting itself to the symbolic imprint and the one-way dialogue, the architecture of the house of centenary seems to be intended above all for the visual consumption of European tourists. In the context of the emerging preservation policy, the project reflects the folkloristic allure that characterizes the local heritage under colonial administration.

5. **Algiers, laboratory of modernity**

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[7] Oulebsir N.2005. P258-259

In the late colonial period, the Algerian city witnessed an urban and industrial revolution that introduced the world of modernity Urbanism with its positive aspects (modernization of the city and the relative improvement of living conditions) and negative aspects (functional and morphological fragmentation, the poverty of the architectural discourse, the fragility of the cultural spaces and urban spaces. This phenomenon was linked to a duality and historical duality system characterized by the disparity between the Algerians and the settlers, and this was neglected by the planners who adopted the easiest and most appropriate solutions to their bureaucratic and cultural patterns of modernization. So The city formed a four-dimensional image: a neglected, original Islamic city inhabited by Algerians, The European city of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, which remained the functional and symbolic center of the city, is dominated by Europeans and a minority of Algerians. The residential and industrial complexes of the retrofit project, which is the city of the new European community with its frameworks and users; "Slums" and resettlement neighborhoods. The most prominent characteristic of this image is the splitting and disconnection of its components, which confirmed the disconnect in the relationship of Algerians to modernization.

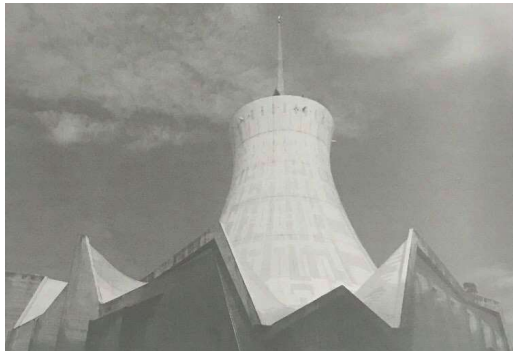## 6.   Beginnings of modern styles 1930-1945

From 1930 to the end of World War II, new development plans, PAEE and PAR(regional development project), followed one another to support the city's growth and face the challenges of significant demographic and economic growth. The town planning of this period increasingly integrated the parameters of social life. It is in particular periodically crossed by the question of habitat, a subject that has become a source of tension and social conflicts which will not be really taken care of until the end of the 1940s as part of a development program, says "Municipal action plan", which provides for the construction of low-rent housing and housing estates for the elimination of precarious housing as well, and on a larger scale, a construction program of several housing estates. dwellings for the Algiers conurbation.[8]

It was under the municipality Charles Brunel, mayor of Algiers from 1929, that the development, improvement and extension plan for the city of Algiers (PAEE) was approved. The Algiers municipal council examined it and gave its approval at the meeting of April 4, 1930.

▪   The Modern style 1945-1962

At the turn of the twentieth century, urban expansion by "successive extension plans" was no longer sufficient to control the development of a city which extended to the north, south and west of the old Kasbah and whose The center has already moved several times (from the square of government to Bugeaud square in the Isly street, then again to Laferrière boulevard around the central post building). The era of urban planning is imposing itself on a city now established as an economic capital of primary importance on the Mediterranean, especially as it had, until then, no normative framework to regulate its frenetic expansion.

The discovery of reinforced concrete and its use in architecture constitutes the flip side of modernity which characterizes this century, which swept away other styles, and which established a new architecture in the city By dictating new rules of design and construction, the new material has revolutionized the art of building and organization of urban space. Its use in Algiers is historically linked to a few pioneering French companies in the construction industry, of which the Frères-Perret, Hennebique and Vidal are the best known. By freeing design and construction from the constraints posed by old materials, and the aesthetics of classic decoration, concrete has revolutionized the art of building, the organization of internal space and art. The Sacré-Coeur, constitutes a major landmark in the urban landscape in Algiers, which reflects the impact of this material on architectural expression and its immense potential plasticity. However, its presence as a religious edifice during the heyday of modern philosophy provokes a deeper analysis of the place of French religion. in the colonial project even in its last moments of presence in Algeria.

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[8]Zohra Hakimi, *Alger*, 2011.

church of Sacré Coeur of Algiers, 1956. Source : GNU Free Documentation License.

Among the consequences of the Second World War in Algiers, we note the great delay experienced by the housing sector. The shutdown of the construction sector, the rural exodus and the demographic growth of both European and indigenous populations combined with the growing social demands of the local population. This state of crisis manifested itself through the emergence of slum pockets around the city.
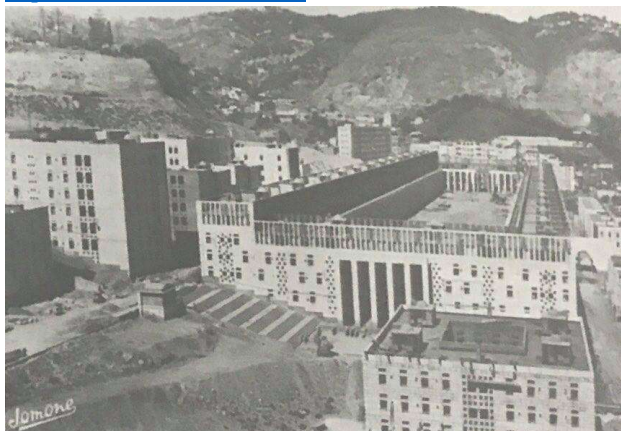
▪ **HLM (Habitation à Loyer Modéré) or low-income housing and the Corbusier model in Algiers**

In the late decade of the colonial era, a number of residential neighborhoods (HLM) were established within the framework of the policy of building large housing groups to accommodate low-income people. Some of them received residents of the Casbah whose homes had collapsed - such as the neighborhoods of Diyar al-Mahsoul, Diyar al-Saada, Climate France (now Oued Quraish), Diyar al-Kef, and the community's homes. With the establishment of these major housing groups, the neighboring urban communities were annexed to the new fabric, such as El-biar and Bologhen in the west, Hussein Day, Madania and Bir Mourad Rais to the east and south, to form this new fabric what was termed in 1959 "Greater Algiers."

Diar-el-Mahsoul, 1550 housine. Source: http://www.leclossalombier.fr

Climat de France: residential project of 200 housing. Source: Fondation Fernand Pouillon

After the approval of PAEEE 1931, Algiers was engaged in a construction boom [9]The area of the Navy in Bâb-El-sheltering the first European working classes, was designated as an unhealthy district. Being the first nucleus of the European city, at the beginning of colonization, the district became an insalubrious place, where the Spaniards, the Portuguese and the Jews were crowded[10]. A project developed by R. Danger and revised by H. Prost and M. Rovital which consisted of the construction of low-rent buildings[11].The resettlement of its population after demolition and regrouping, will be effective between 1932 and 1935 thanks to the realization of the group of social housing H.B.M of Malako,[12]. On the south side, Mustapha inferieur, a virgin land of 25 ha belonging to the military and better known under the name of the Champs-des-Maneuvers, received a first operation in 1928: It was not, however, until 1952 that A large bar building project encompassing 1,000 low-cost housing units, designed by architects Bernard Zehrfuss and Jean Sebag, was undertaken in this area which kept the same name (Mercier G. 1960).

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[9] Hakimi Z. 155
[10] Chabou H. 2016, 10-11
[11] Hakimi Z. 147.
[12] Mercier G. 1960

Towards Upper Mustapha, the boulevard Télémly, which had gradually lost its picturesque side in favor of new apartment buildings, provides an example of HLM housing. The enormous mass of the Aéro-Habitat built in the fifties, will dominate the city of Algiers by its parallelepipedic volume inspired by the Housing Unit and designed by the architects Miquel, Ennery and Bourlier, members of the "Corbusean" circle. " in Algiers.

H.L.M housing of the Champs-des-Maneuvers. Source : htpp://www.alger-roi.fr/collection B. Venis.

The recourse to the strategy of the H.L.M, appeared since 1930, the only most effective option to the elastic demand of the European working masses. However, it was excluded from any proposal to house the indigenous population. Being convinced that this model does not suit him, and that it fits exclusively with the European way of life, the French authorities launched a research track worthy of consideration which consists in seeking a habitat specific to the natives. In front of the scale of the crisis and the atmosphere of war which started in 1954, and in spite of the colossal effort of Chevallier in "his battle for housing", this research was abandoned in favor of the rapid solution of the HLM.

By relying more and more on the idea of standardization of construction elements, the standardization of human needs and assembly on site, modern architecture applied to housing approached the slogan of the century launched by Le Corbusier considering "The house as living machine "[13] The hygienist approach coupled with the utopia that Le Corbusier embodied in his project for a "radiant city" gradually modeled the outskirts of cities into a series of residential blocks and reduced urban life to the four functions that modernism assigned to it through the Charter of Athens; live, work, circulate and recreate.However, the geometric banality that characterized Le Corbusier's model appearing in the residential towers seduced the architects of the time and became the reference for any project that the colonies could serve field of experimentation [14]

Le Corbusier's plan, called Obus, which presented itself as an alternative to the master plan of Algiers and a celebration of the Centenary of colonization, received great media attention.

Although it has been the subject of several criticisms and was considered utopian and unrealistic, this plan seems to turn into a source of inspiration to the generation of modern architects in Algiers. By conveying the principles of modern architecture, it becomes a signal of the beginning of a stage which will constitute a major episode in the history of colonial architecture in Algeria.

III- Architecture after independence (1962-2000)

Urban planning continued after independence (1962) as desired by the colonial administration due to the cultural and technical dependency and the weight of the colonial legacy, so the state and its national bureaucratic agencies adopted the regulatory procedures that are not dominated by sovereignty (1962). The foreign and local study offices had a role in continuing to work with the same planning tools, and if the names changed, then the absence of the original city was confirmed, and the morphological transformations continued with the completion of housing complexes in the suburbs.

Attention was focused on constructing dwellings in a quantitative, programmatic way according to rapid, stereotypical, and social construction techniques, and the result was faded architectural forms, segmentation and design. Focusing on urban expansion and neglecting the historic city has deflected the balance of urban spheres, and the latest break between the new expansions and the old urban centers that were qualified to embrace urban life. This raises the central crisis that affects the city's performance of its functions and the fluidity of life in it. As the urban center inherited from the colonial period remained the same morphologically, while the administrative, economic, cultural, and service functions did not leave it, with a big difference in population, extension and scale.

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[13] Wusten HVD 2016
[14] Marchand B. 2016

The central crisis of urban problematic linked to the urban heritage, especially the Casbah city which has shrunk its buildings, which reward their owners Indigenous and Ohmloha, under the technical, administrative and legal obstacles facing rehabilitation projects, most notably the issue of ownership, despite some restoration or Aalchharah renewal isolated at a time when housing became in the old city and in the informal settlements strategically to obtain housing in new residential communities and represents the troubled relationship of the city and the existing urban heritage dimensions of a Alanfsamah situation.[15]

III-   The deterioration of heritage

During the long colonial period, the traditional towns, in addition to the double effect of nature and actions of voluntary destruction, experienced overpopulation which accelerated their degradation.

In addition to the actions suffered by the Algerian heritage during this period, there was a legal and administrative vacuum following the recent dissolution of traditional organizations such as the habous, the mahkama and the hisba. [16]Municipal services which functioned under the responsibility of the sheikh -al-balad were also abolished or reduced to a minimum.

 Due to the rural migration which deeply agitated the social structure of the Medinas[17], the status of properties has known a shift towards the rental status and a rotation of use to a chain of arrivals, this which had direct consequences on the maintenance and preservation of the built environment. Due to the low rents of the dwellings, the remaining houses made El-Casbah a place of resettlement and a simple springboard of transition to the city.

 If el-Casbah was considered, during the colonial period, as an indigenous town, and therefore a second-class agglomeration, it did not change its status either in the eyes of the authorities after independence. Progressive ideology and its image of underdevelopment have ensured that the Casbah and the urban heritage in general seen as signs are eradicated, or at least neglected. [18]

Despite its inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List in December 1992 and the multiple national and international preservation studies, as well as the creation of specialized institutions, the Casbah seems to have been delivered to its inevitable destiny of degradation. gradual. Only academic studies as well as selective and isolated projects keep the medina in the public arena.

  The intangible heritage, which discreetly attaches to the medinas and which consists of all the sociocultural norms and rules arising from Muslim law and collective participatory practices, seems to be little known in our times. and consequently out of use in preservation operations. [19]They become simple actions to safeguard the physical framework and buildings.

Conclusion

Town planning and architecture are characterized by their lasting effect on man. In the case of colonized countries, the inherited built environment continues to shape newly independent societies.

We can say that there is a very particular collection of inherited styles carrying important aesthetic values, which feature in a very daring way in the Algerian urban landscape, thus defying time, and testifying to ideology and culture. who have passed through the history of the city.

Today, the city of Algiers faces two main challenges: The first is the saturation of the city, its overpopulation and its diversification of employment in parallel with the suburban sprawl, especially the spread and dispersed urbanization.

The second challenge is the problem of the architectural identity of the city of Algiers.

One of the relevant questions that emerges in Algeria is that of cultural identity in the colonial context inherited Historically, the policy of uprooting Arab Muslims, and the origins of rooting in French culture, seems to be a key piece in the colonial project. A postcolonial consequence of this policy is the state of ambivalence between two cultures: local and western characterizes contemporary Algerian society which manifests itself in daily life through language, clothing, cuisine, lifestyle and of course the architecture.

After independence, the appropriation of the city by the Algerians seems to have as effect the amplification, or at least the persistence of this state of ambivalence. The city that was designed for the European population became a strange container for the new community that inhabits it. By appropriating this heritage and readapting it to the standards and daily needs, the Algerian family finds itself constrained to a mode of organization and use of an inherited space. During this time, the built environment is gradually being transformed from its original state to meet the new demands and needs of users, most

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[15] Fatiha Benidir (2007), p. 163.
[16]Ben-Hamouche M. 1994.
[17] Benatia F. 1979
[18] Ben-Hamouche M. 2013
[19] Besim H. 2007

of whom came from the countryside. Because of its permanence and its size, it continues to be the physical vehicle of this ambivalence. The continuous change of urban facades in the city of Algiers and the radical reorganization of the interiors of houses and apartments together constitute an inexhaustible source in architecture and urban sociology of post-colonialism. This adaptation process is a cultural and cognitive malaise that accompanies appropriation and is amply analyzed by Halbwashs (1950, 88) in his work on collective memory under the title of "Locations and displacements, adhesion of the group to its place". According to him, the inhabitant "tries to maintain himself or to reform in a district or in a street which are not any more made for him.[20]

At the individual level, the Algerian citizen seems to have lost, after 132 years of domination, a large part of his urban culture, his, citadinity and even the art of building. And it is then that the loss of typological reference becomes an explicit image of the identity crisis. Whether it is a client for the architect or the administrator who examines the building permit files, architectural culture is in a state of research. The citizen in building his house is often influenced and modeled by the media or by his own experience. As for the remaining local heritage, it becomes a simple witness to the past or, at most, a nostalgic and folkloric reference.

Faced with the cultural burden represented by the colonial heritage, the heterogeneity of the projects carried out and the degradation of the local heritage, the question of identity comes to the fore of the Algerian cultural scene, of which architecture constitutes the keystone. The renewal of Moorish architecture as a reflection of this identity does not meet this challenge because of its superficiality and mimicry. The teaching of architecture and the training of architects in Algeria, whose roots are steeped in the colonial period, requires reconsideration of contextual knowledge in theory and seems in practice.

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