

The architectural image of the neighborhoods of the old city of Tlemcen - a descriptive and analytical study.

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Abstract:

Descriptive and analytical studies are among the most important scientific research methods, if not the backbone of any research field. There is no doubt that talking about the material heritage of both types, this study is considered the ideal tool to reach the truth that is thousands of years away from us, and sometimes millions of years, so that we can get to know the architectural image that the old neighborhoods of the city of Tlemcen live in. We conducted a field investigation, and described its condition, presenting at the same time an analysis that reveals the underlying reasons behind the result it reached. It seems that its artistic and historical value is deteriorating, after we compared what we found on it currently, and the field inspection carried out by the National Agency for Regional Planning in 1998.

Keywords: Antique quarters; architectural image; City of Tlemcen; Artistic And Historical Value.

Introduction:

Ancient cities act as a conduit between the past and present of nations, akin to an open-air museum. These cities possess a unique character, much like museums that include exhibition halls and facades filled with artefacts. The buildings, each imbued with its own distinct character, stand as timeless imprints that offer an objective perspective on the prevailing cultural and architectural trends of a time period hundreds, if not thousands, of years away from us. These edifices constitute a monolithic urban fabric that is vibrant in a manner comprehensible only to those who have traversed its thoroughfares. The genius of geometric thought, exemplified in the designs of Muslim architects, is manifest in the labyrinthine pathways, sheds and blind walls, which resemble a unique vernacular within the historical lexicon. These architectural features, with their sinuous pathways, sheds, and blind walls, can be regarded as a unique form of expression, diverging from the prevailing linguistic norms of the

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era. It is noteworthy that certain voices have been raised in various conferences held in Western countries, such as France, seeking to disparage the achievements of Islamic civilisation in the domains of architecture and urban planning, characterising them as haphazard endeavours. In response, it can be contended that architecture is inextricably linked to its environment and precedes its religious affiliation.

Ancient cities comprise a variety of edifices, including religious, civil and military structures, which represent the areas that all nations throughout history are keen to embody on the ground. The ancient city of Tlemcen is one of the cities that the sultans in the past were interested in building to a high degree of perfection to put it among the ranks of capitals that competed with it politically. Economically and even architecturally, and perhaps, from our perspective, reached its zenith in the field of construction during the era of the fifth Sultan of the Zayyanid state, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Tashfin. Known as the 'Sultan of Architecture', Abd al-Rahman ibn Tashfin is particularly renowned for the completion of the Tashfinian School, a notable edifice that left the French colonial engineers, led by the renowned engineer Doutoit, at a loss. The engineers, under the leadership of DOUTOIT, were initially unable to proceed with the demolition of the structure due to its advanced architectural design, which was comparable to that of palace buildings. Consequently, they only initiated the process in 1873, after transferring some of its components to the Cluny Museum in Paris.

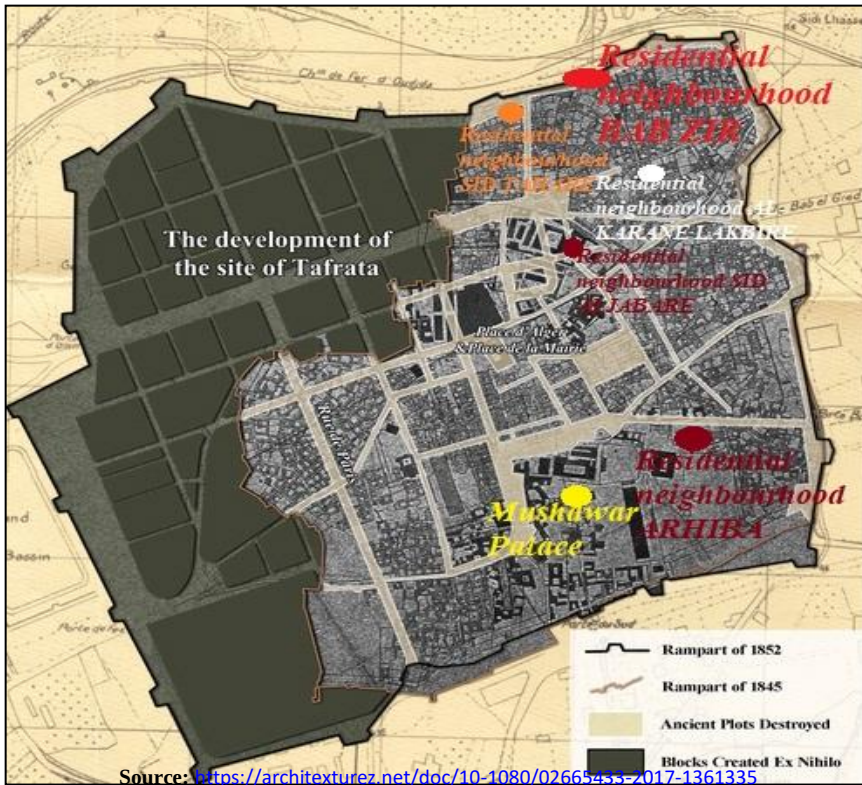
The preceding discussion prompts the following questions: what is the current state of the architectural structures that have survived in the urban fabric of the old city of Tlemcen? Do these structures continue to emit the olfactory traces of history, or are they succumbing to the effects of time, including demolition and neglect?

In order to ascertain the current situation, it was decided that these research papers should be presented, with the analytical method being relied upon. The field was examined in order to determine what could be examined, and the urban image of the old city neighbourhoods in Tlemcen was conveyed.

2. Analytical descriptive reading of the boundaries of the scope of the study:

The living framework of the historical fabric in the old city of Tlemcen is made up of three main categories. The subject of this paper is the following neighbourhoods: Rahiba, Bab Zir, Sidi al-Jabbar, Massoufa,

Darb Sidi Hamed, and Al-Quran al-Kabir, which line the eastern side of the city, as well as the buildings opposite the Mashour Palace, located on the western side of the old city. (Abdelkader Tahar, 2015, p. 216) ,The designated area for these three categories has been designated a 51-hectare protected area by Executive Decree 09/403. (Gazette, 2009, pp. p6-7)
Figure 1: The location of the study sample neighbourhoods in the old city of Tlemcen.



These cases are distributed across all the residential neighbourhoods that make up the urban design of the Old City of Tlemcen, and we will talk about each neighbourhood separately:

1.2 Al Rhiba neighbourhood:

The neighbourhood under consideration is located on the southern-eastern side of the old city, and its estimated area is 3.66 hectares. (The National Spatial Planning Agency, 1998, p. 15)• The neighbourhood is exclusively residential in nature, serving the function of housing without the ancillary function of commerce. It is distinguished by the homogeneity of

the general appearance of its dwellings, as evidenced by the field investigation that revealed significant discrepancies in their condition. Moreover, there has been a notable diminution of the artistic and historical value, attributable to the general equipment that has been provided in the context of achieving contemporary requirements. In addition to the increase in the number of dwellings completed during the period, there has been a concomitant loss of artistic and historical value, largely due to the general equipment that the neighbourhood received in the context of achieving the requirements of the times. Furthermore, the dwellings built in the colonial period have accelerated this loss of historical value. The neighbourhood is bordered to the north by a series of European-style dwellings along 01 November Street, which was known as Sidi Bel Abbes Street during the French colonial era. These dwellings exhibit a vertical configuration, comprising a single storey, with balconies and expansive windows. A similar architectural character is observed along the northeastern side of the neighbourhood, which is also bordered by a number of dwellings completed by the colonialists.

The architectural composition of the neighbourhood has undergone significant changes since its establishment, including alterations and modifications that have occurred since the field investigation conducted by the National Agency for Territorial Planning.

It is evident that the state of the housing stock has undergone significant alterations since the 1998 field investigation. It is noteworthy that the destroyed buildings referenced in the 1998 investigation were those that were completely removed during the colonial period and replaced by buildings exhibiting a purely Western style. Our findings revealed that some of the dwellings that were in danger of collapse have completely collapsed, while others remain in the same condition. Furthermore, it was observed that the dwellings threatened with collapse have indeed collapsed, while others remain intact. In addition, it was noted that some of the collapsed dwellings had been occupied by workers engaged in construction work, having removed the rubble.

Two observations merit attention: firstly, the administrative dimension, which highlights the discrepancy between the past and present of this neighbourhood, evidenced by the absence of any building permit substantiating the proprietor's entitlement to construct the building in question; secondly, the cultural dimension, exemplified by the utilisation of contemporary construction materials that diverge from the traditional

materials employed in the remainder of the old houses, complemented by modern engineering design. Upon inquiry into the rationale behind the survival of the collapsed structures, it was ascertained that their proprietors had passed away, resulting in a dispute among their heirs that precipitated their deterioration and eventual collapse.

It is interesting to note that this residential neighbourhood has undergone a type of intervention that has not been observed in other residential neighbourhoods. This intervention involves reinforcing the walls of the houses to prevent them from falling, thus avoiding a collapse of the house as a whole. This phenomenon was observed in the Bab Al Jiad Avenue, situated at the southern border of the neighbourhood, and in the Sidi Al Wazzan Avenue, located at the northern border of the neighbourhood. In both cases, wooden boards were utilised, interlocked to ensure maximum durability.

2.2 Darb Masoufa and Sidi Hamed neighbourhoods:

The neighbourhood under discussion is located on the northern side of the Ruheiba neighbourhood, separated from it by November Street. Its estimated area is 4.86 hectares. The buildings in the area are characterised by an incompatibility and harmony of external condition. Such cases are common, but the area under discussion differs from Ruheiba in that it combines the two main functions of housing and trade. In this case, the two functions are combined in one building. The owner of the building had dedicated part of the ground floor of the residence as a shop. This led to the erasure of its historical and artistic value as a result of such modifications.

In addition to the aforementioned transgressions, the neighbourhood is in a state of chaos in terms of its organisation and the condition of its buildings. This is due to the changes that have been made to the original state of the buildings, whether in the distant past, at the time of their formation, or more recently in the previous years during the French occupation. The construction of houses and streets during the French occupation led to a new image being added to the neighbourhood. Examples of this include the street of the Ben Chakra brothers, which was known as Lamorisière Street, Sidi Hamed Street, which was referred to as Masara Street, and which was initially one of the paths of the old city and then expanded by the colonialists, and Aissat Idir Street, which was known as Mansour Street during the colonial period.

In relation to the condition of the dwellings in this neighbourhood, the investigation revealed that they ranged from those that were completely

deleted and replaced by dwellings from the colonial period or later, to those that were removed in the Rahiba neighbourhood and replaced by Western-style buildings, a phenomenon that was observed in this neighbourhood and previously documented in the ANRTA investigation as being in good condition. However, from our perspective, As previously mentioned, the demolition of these buildings reflected the absence of visual harmony that characterised the ancient city as an architectural unit subject to the principles of the true religion. These principles determined the urban rules that obliged architects to ensure the principle of equality in construction and not to exaggerate in decoration. Consequently, the dwellings were functional structures serving humanitarian purposes according to a social and economic basis and a religious rule, nothing more and nothing less. (Marouf, 2007, p. 15)

This phenomenon is still evident in the historical fabric of the old city of Tlemcen, as evidenced by numerous cases of owners demolishing dwellings and constructing new buildings in their place, employing a modern vertical architectural style and modern building materials. The collapsed dwellings have remained in a state of disrepair since the last field investigation conducted in 1998 by the National Agency for Territorial Planning. The collapse of the dwellings has been noted since the 1998 investigation, with the exception of two dwellings in Darb al-Qadi. The first of these has been rebuilt and now features windows in its walls, while the second, located near Aissat Edir Street, has been completely rebuilt and is currently used as a shop.

It is also worthy of note that there are some houses in this neighbourhood that are threatened with collapse because they have been abandoned by their owners for more than thirty years. This information was provided to us by the residents of the neighbourhood, and we also observed the beginning of construction work on a house that was threatened with collapse at the level of Aissat Edir Street. The owner of this house has a licence to build a commercial shop on the site of the works with decision No. 731 dated 21/04/2016.

It is evident that the dwellings at risk of collapse are undergoing a renovation process, primarily due to the constant commercial activity in this neighbourhood. This has prompted the owners of the dwellings to refurbish them for commercial use, as the reconstructed dwellings are located in key commercial areas.

In relation to the dwellings that are in average condition, these are most prevalent in this residential and commercial neighbourhood. This is due to an influx of residents who have chosen to reside there, which has contributed to the preservation of some of the morphology of the dwelling. The field investigation revealed that the majority of these dwellings are situated within the residential neighbourhood, a distance from significant commercial areas or heavily trafficked streets.

It is noteworthy that the number of dwellings in good condition in this neighbourhood remains relatively low in comparison to other dwellings after the period of their construction. This is due to exposure to a number of human and natural influences, which have resulted in the loss of a significant portion of their originality and subsequent alterations in design and construction materials. However, a notable number of dwellings were observed in the outer perimeter of the neighbourhood on the eastern side, presumably due to their owners' continued residence, which facilitates convenient access without traversing winding paths and enables ease of daily needs, in addition to proximity to essential facilities.

It is noteworthy that such dwellings in this area of the old city are renowned for their high prices. For instance, a dwelling in good condition was observed to be for sale, and upon inquiring with its owner, it was revealed that he had been offered 13,000,000.00 DA (one billion and three hundred centimes), which is a notable figure given that the area of the dwelling is estimated at 235 m². This equates to a price per square metre of 55319.00 djd, reflecting the importance, location and condition of these dwellings, which are conducive to habitation and residence.

3.2 Bab Zir and Al Qaran Al Kabir neighbourhoods:

The four neighbourhoods under consideration are located in the north-eastern part of the old city, with a total area of approximately 5.30 hectares. They are characterised by their compact and cohesive architectural composition and narrow, winding streets. However, they are also crossed by straight and wide streets created by the colonialists during their occupation of Algeria. As previously mentioned, the neighbourhoods are limited to two main streets: Benou Ziane Street, which was called Tannerie Street, and Ben Khaldoun Street, which is still called as such.

It is important to note that the number of dwellings in these neighbourhoods is comparatively low when viewed in contrast to other residential neighbourhoods located in the central and southern regions of the city. This may be attributed to the colonialists' limited interest in the area,

possibly due to its distance from the administrative and military headquarters. It is noteworthy that the number of dwellings demolished by the French colonialists is comparatively low in this area when compared to other residential neighbourhoods in the centre and south of the city. This may be explained by the colonialists' lack of interest in the area, possibly due to its distance from the administrative and military headquarters of the city.

In the context of the collapsed buildings that have become ruins, there are several cases in these neighbourhoods, most notably in the north-eastern corner of the Bab Zir neighbourhood. This area was subjected to a terrorist attack in 1996 that resulted in the destruction of numerous residential structures. Presently, the site comprises a 2,326-square-metre square that functions as a car park, a condition that has persisted since the previous investigation conducted in 1998 by the National Agency for Territorial Planning (ANAT), with the exception of the southern portion, where a two-storey concrete structure has been erected to serve as a youth hostel.

This phenomenon was not an isolated incident within the architectural landscape of these neighbourhoods, as there were multiple instances of total or partial collapse of residential structures. During the course of our field inspection, we encountered numerous analogous cases, some of which involved two or three dwellings. We also observed three dwellings in the nearby neighbourhood of El Koran El Kabir from the colonial period that had fallen into ruins, and another in front of Martyrs Square that was at risk of collapse, as only the walls and balconies remained, having been abandoned. It appeared to have reached this state in recent years, as the investigation conducted by the National Agency for the Preparation of the Territory indicated that it was in an intermediate state. A number of other dwellings were found to be in a dilapidated state, including those in the Bab Zir neighbourhood and those in the Koran El Kabir and Sidi El Jabbar neighbourhoods. The Bab Zir neighbourhood was found to have a higher number of dilapidated dwellings in the part that does not have one of the necessities of life, which is natural gas, perhaps due to the lack of this necessary facility. It is plausible that the owners' failure to repair and maintain these dwellings is attributable to the absence of essential amenities, such as natural gas. The residence and mosque of Lalla El Ghariba, located in the Quran El Kabir neighbourhood, represent a notable exception. It was reported that the mosque underwent renovation as part of the Tlemcen

Capital of Islamic Culture event in 2011, while the residence was rehabilitated prior to that.

With regard to the dwellings that were threatened with collapse, it was found that some were still intact, whilst others had been demolished and thus fell into the category of completely collapsed buildings. This was due to the same reason that was previously discussed, i.e. the inheritance factor, which was also identified as being behind the collapse and survival of dwellings in both the Rahiba neighbourhood and Darb Masoufa. Three dwellings that were threatened with collapse and subsequently became collapsed were recorded: one located at the level of the Bab Ali neighbourhood and two other dwellings located at the level of the Sidi El Jabbar neighbourhood. Conversely, a structure was identified in the northeastern quadrant of the Bab Zir district, situated on the periphery of Qawar Hussein Street. The proprietor of this property, who was present on the premises, disclosed that he had undertaken renovations following the structure's imminent collapse. The property has now been converted into a two-storey hotel.

Mediocre dwellings remain scattered throughout the residential neighbourhoods of Bab Zir, Bab Ali, Sidi Jabbar and El Koran El Kabir. These dwellings are characterised by a degree of durability and the survival of their original building materials despite the modifications made to them as a result of the attempt to revive the requirements of urban development, such as laying water and gas pipes. The installation of meters within the walls and the attachment of telephone and electricity lines are further evidence of this. A substantial concentration of these dwellings has been observed in the Al-Quran Al-Kabir neighbourhood, a phenomenon that may be attributed to its status as a prominent attraction for the local population. Homeowners appear reluctant to vacate their dwellings, while tenants of residences and commercial establishments express a preference for the neighbourhood due to its proximity to Darb Masoufa and Sidi Hamed, which are characterised by a high degree of commercial activity.

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In relation to dwellings that are in good condition, it appears that there is a limited number of such dwellings in comparison to the number of cases mentioned above in these four neighbourhoods. Inspection of the field revealed that the majority of these dwellings were constructed by the French colonialists, with the majority located at the periphery of the neighbourhoods rather than in the central areas. A small number of dwellings, classified as completely collapsed, threatened or moderate, were observed within the neighbourhoods. In addition to some interventions made by their owners to strengthen the load-bearing elements, primarily the walls, we observed dwellings in fairly good condition whose external walls had been strengthened with a layer of cement estimated to be about 10 cm thick. This layer covered the walls from bottom to top to prevent them from falling, cracking or rippling. This intervention is considered a primary cause of the visual pollution that has affected the city. The artistic and historical value of the buildings is derived from the original materials used in their construction. Any alteration to these materials is considered a violation of

the buildings' original integrity, which is the essence of their design. This method of strengthening the buildings reflects the influence of urban development on the city of Tlemcen, which introduced a new construction method (vertical construction) first employed by the French colonialists. The Algerian state pursued a consistent approach to construction and reconstruction, thereby disseminating the geometric concept to the populace, as evidenced by the alterations implemented by the inhabitants of the historical city of Tlemcen and its environs. Numerous illustrations of this phenomenon exist, demonstrating a discernible divergence in the cultural milieu of the city and its historical fabric. (Rahoui Houcine, 2001, p. 210)

4.2 Al Mashour neighbourhood, Bab al-Hadid and Flaoussen Street:

The three neighbourhoods under consideration are located in the southwestern part of the old city of Tlemcen. These three neighbourhoods represent the spatial space occupied by the Karagalla in the city at the time of the entry of the Turks following the political turmoil that affected the Zayyanid state. This period marked the end of the time period during which a sprawling state with its own political, social and economic entity in the Islamic Maghreb culminated in Tlemcen.

The total area of these neighbourhoods is estimated to be approximately 06 hectares, and their architectural structure is comparable to that of Ruhaiba, Bab Zir and Bab Ali. The dwellings in these neighbourhoods are compact and close to each other, separated by winding and narrow paths that are no more than 2 m wide at the maximum. There are four small mosques to perform the five daily prayers, namely the Sidi El Gharib Mosque located along Dr Damerji Street (Paris Street in the colonial era), The Sidi Zayed Mosque is situated within the architectural fabric on the northern side, in close proximity to Major Djebbar Street (Ogan Etienne Street in the colonial era). Another mosque, the name of which could not be ascertained, is located along Dr Damerji Street on the left side, in contrast to the Sidi Zayed Mosque on the opposite side. The fourth mosque, Sidi Zekri Mosque, is located on the southern side of the Machour neighbourhood, in close proximity to Bab al-Hadid. All of these mosques have undergone restoration processes that have impacted their external structures and interiors. However, according to the testimony of some local residents, the first three mosques no longer fulfil their function.

In consideration of the prevailing characteristics of these neighbourhoods, it was determined that they inhabit a state of contradiction and disparity in their urban composition, exhibiting a combination of two distinct urban images in terms of architectural units, streets and building materials utilised. This phenomenon can be attributed to the transformations that occurred during the colonial period and the subsequent era of independence. In the initial phase, numerous traditional dwellings were substituted with edifices embodying a Western style, a phenomenon that persists to the present day. In the first period, several old dwellings were replaced with others with a western style that is oriented towards the outside, and they still exist to this day, while in the second period, the latter were replaced after their walls cracked, their roofs fell off, and they were no longer fit for habitation with new dwellings with modern architectural features, which is in fact a new architectural style with a western cultural background that began with the entry of the French coloniser and his completion of a number of development projects.

It is noteworthy that the southern part of this residential complex, comprising three neighbourhoods, is unique in that it retains numerous historic dwellings that remained untouched by the colonialists. In contrast, many of these dwellings were removed and destroyed along Paris Street, Flausen and Major Djebar, as well as within the architectural fabric. This resulted in a blend of narrow, twisted paths of Islamic origin with Western influences. A similar phenomenon occurred with the new buildings, leading to the remaining architecture exhibiting the characteristic of twisted paths and mosques distributed within the neighbourhoods.

This radical change is attributable to the topographical characteristics of the neighbourhoods, which are free of inclines. In contrast to other neighbourhoods, these areas benefit from proximity to the city centre. During the colonial period, they functioned as the nucleus, a role that persists in the contemporary context as the city centre has expanded and the area has increased. This development has directly contributed to the availability of these neighbourhoods, which exhibit the most significant manifestations of urbanisation. In addition to their proximity to the city centre during the colonial period, The topography of the neighbourhoods has been identified as a key factor in the observed urban development, with the absence of slopes in comparison to other areas leading to the development of these neighbourhoods. The proximity to the city centre during the colonial period has also been highlighted as a significant factor,

with the expansion of the city and the increase in area directly impacting the availability of these neighbourhoods. The availability of these neighbourhoods has been attributed to the presence of notable manifestations of urbanisation, including well-built structures and the addition of essential urban infrastructure such as electrical and telephone lines, gas and drinking water pipes, wall meters, and lighting poles.

During the course of the inspection, it became evident that the dwellings which comprise the fabric of this neighbourhood exhibit an artistic distortion, a consequence of their lack of harmony and compatibility with each other. This phenomenon can be attributed to the alterations in their external morphology, as evidenced by the presence of structures dating back to the colonial period juxtaposed with more contemporary edifices. Furthermore, there are a number of buildings whose structures are at risk of collapse, or have already collapsed, as is the case with the dwellings in the residential neighbourhoods in the north, northeast, and southeast of the old city. However, observations were recorded in the Meshwar neighbourhood, Bab El Hadid, and Flaussen Street, which highlighted the absence of waste and garbage within these areas. The narrow, winding pathways that characterise these areas were found to be entirely devoid of any such waste, suggesting a strong commitment on the part of the local residents to maintaining a clean and orderly environment. This phenomenon appears to be a consequence of the neighbourhoods' strategic location and their dual functionality as residential and commercial areas. The latter has increased the appeal of residing in these neighbourhoods for Tlemcen citizens. Commercial activities in the area include, for instance, establishments specialising in cosmetics and food. Additionally, there are snack bars and similar establishments.

The section near Bab El Hadid has undergone restoration work to a certain degree, thereby reinstating the authenticity of the dwellings that had previously been lost. Nevertheless, the extant structures have undergone significant alterations. The dwellings that have completely collapsed are distributed across three neighbourhoods, some of which have remained untouched by any restoration process. The majority of these dwellings are believed to date back to the colonial period, as evidenced by the presence of foundations and architectural elements such as iron bars and polished stones, among others. However, some have been replaced by modern, vertical buildings comprising one or two floors, as evidenced in the Al-Mashwar neighbourhood, which was constructed on the site of a dwelling,

including a blood analysis laboratory. A similar process has occurred in the two other dwellings, which have now become mere ruins, located near the Ouled Sidi Imam path. In their stead, two new dwellings have been erected, embodying a contemporary architectural style, albeit with the addition of a protective gate cover.

The second category of housing is that which is at risk of imminent collapse. It is noteworthy that no such instances have been documented. However, the investigation conducted in 1998 by the National Agency for Territorial Planning revealed that the residents had undertaken the restoration of the structure with a novel architectural design predicated on the principle of outward orientation and a vertical form comprising two storeys. This intervention resulted in a new architectural image that contradicts in form and content the nature of the neighborhoods characterised by their narrow alleys. This phenomenon can be attributed to the inherent nature of architecture as a direct manifestation of human thought, subject to constant evolution in response to external influences. The outcome of this process is often characterised by a decline in architectural unity, leading to a discordance between traditional values and modernity. This discordance manifests as a conflict between authenticity and modernity. It is possible that, during the period when it was at risk of collapse, the building represented, at least to a minor extent, authentic architectural thought, due to the survival of a number of architectural elements within it, thereby achieving a certain degree of cohesion with the general character of the neighbourhood.

In terms of the average-quality housing, which continues to reflect Islamic architectural style, there is a paucity of such properties in these three neighbourhoods. Indeed, the majority of such housing is to be found within the confines of the neighbourhoods themselves, rather than in the outskirts, where complete renovations have taken place. This observation suggests that the initiative taken by the French colonisers was subsequently adopted by the residents of these neighbourhoods. The most notable examples of this phenomenon can be found in the vicinity of Derb Ouled Sidi El Imam. In the same neighbourhoods, there is a scarcity of good-quality housing that has not been renovated and retains its original architectural features. It is noteworthy that these latter properties are particularly vulnerable to the forces of architectural modernisation. During the field investigation, it was found that there are a large number of houses with a new architectural style that relies on modern building materials such as cement, bricks measuring

30 cm in length and 20 cm in width, and iron. It was observed that one of the houses located along Dr. Damirji Street had been completely destroyed, despite not being in a state of severe disrepair, as indicated by the owners of the adjacent shops. The motivation behind this demolition was to align the structure with the prevailing architectural trends in the city, a pursuit that has become increasingly challenging in the wake of an urban development process. This development process is regarded as a significant conduit for progress across diverse domains. This situation is indicative of the population's desire to reside in this area of the city, a phenomenon that has had a detrimental effect not only on the design of the neighbourhoods, but also on the sewage channels that were constructed earlier to accommodate a certain number of residents. Our research revealed that a section of the infrastructure had been compromised at the vicinity of the Sidi Abi Abdullah Al-Sharif Al-Tilimsani School Lane.

Conclusion:

The historical fabric of the old city of Tlemcen, which has been declared a protected sector and which was selected for study, is a landscape characterised by architectural disorder. The fabric is characterised by various states of disrepair, with some structures on the verge of collapse, and others that have been completely obliterated. This phenomenon, we posit, is not a recent development, but rather a rather ancient one, dating back to the colonial period. France's actions during this period were not solely driven by the desire for plunder; they also involved the deliberate imposition of their architectural culture, seemingly with the objective of eradicating authenticity and identity, thereby ensuring the success of the settlement project. This has resulted in a number of consequences, including the adherence of a significant proportion of residents to the techniques, methods and building materials employed by the colonisers. These techniques and materials are, in fact, alien to the environment left behind by their ancestors. The destruction of ancient dwellings and the construction of one- and two-story Portland cement dwellings has been well-documented. Others have been neglected and abandoned, resulting in a gradual loss of their artistic and historical value. It became evident that the fundamental issue in the aforementioned neighbourhoods pertains to a dichotomy between authenticity and modernity, between the demands of the present age and the necessity to maintain pace with contemporary developments in order to actualise human aspirations, and between the cultural identity that

fosters a sense of belonging to a shared past. This situation was identified as a key incentive to address the issue, with the aim of uncovering the loss of a link in the chain of civilizational communication and arousing the interest of readers and specialists in the consequences of their past and history.

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