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The deterioration of residential neighborhoods and the challenges of developing them in Algerian cities. A case study of a neighborhood of 600 dwellings in the city of M'sila

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Abstract. Urban planning demands that the needs and problems resulting from the dynamics of society and its development should be taken into account, relying on the studies that consider the reality of the city and the factors influencing its daily life, so it can perform its function under favorable circumstances for a better future within the context of durable development. It should be remembered that the first imbalances of the urban space are those that followed the industrial revolution and the doctrines and intellectual trends. However, the modern trend in architecture and urbanization in terms of urban space is the most influential. Urban space becomes a scene of symbolic confrontations between the designer (imposed plans) and the users of space. This situation appears clearly in the deterioration of the urban space giving a significant transfer of a denial, because of its incompatibility with the needs of the population. The Algerian city has experienced, particularly after the independence, the same situation despite the diversity of cultural and cultural heritage because of several factors, including rapid urban growth. These factors marked the course of the reconstruction and thus the urban structure of the Algerian cities, which urged the search for solutions, hastily put in place, to this evolution which led to changes in the society, testifying a blatant failure to reach the ambitions of users when they were excluded during all stages of the urban project. This is why urban space is considered as consumer goods within the user's reach, although it should be considered as a process rather than a product. Our research work is axed on the inadequacy of the productive environment (living environment or urban space) in the city of M'sila and on the way of life of the population that uses this space for its needs and aspirations, which are expressed through unjustified user interventions in the perspective of adapting space to their way of life. The point is to focus on the user and his participation in the creation of a durable and suitable urban environment.

Keywords. urban planning, urban area, Algerian city, user, participation

Introduction

The city is a preserved record of the history of its inhabitants and a mirror that reflects their image through their characteristics, activities, culture, heritage and civilization. It is a distinct geographical, social, economic and demographic structure.

After the industrial revolution and the resulting technological progress and urban activity in various fields, the city became a point of attraction for different groups of residents, from different sides and sides, which led to complex problems that had a clear impact on the urban field. Especially in developing countries, including Algeria.

What is noticeable about the Algerian city is that there are many historical, political, developmental, demographic, social and cultural factors that were behind the production of the urban field with its contradictions and problems, which led to the apparent inability to fully absorb its residents. and integrated into its new urban system.

The colonial period in Algeria left clear imprints on the urban field of the city, by adopting inherited Western models in the urbanization and housing sector, which led to the creation of differentiation in the morphology of residential structures. And deterioration in urban areas that have been emptied of their social and cultural value, and are now taking varying dimensions of deterioration and decline, due to the transformations that society has known and is still going through. From this proposition, we can ask the following:

What are the manifestations of this multifaceted crisis? What is the position of the various actors regarding this overlap in use?

In this research, we seek to monitor the most important transformations and changes that the residential environment is exposed to in the Algerian city, and to enhance the role of urban interveners in organizing the city and upgrading its urban field. The field study through which the reality of the urban environment is presented and analyzed through the M'sila city model.




Stages of formation and development of the urban areas of the Algerian city

The urban area of the Algerian city was not spared from the various political, economic and social fluctuations for a long time, as the Algerian city did not know a continuous urban history, due to the nature of the external presence and its regulations, as the urban area was subject to demolition and construction by everyone who stepped on it sabotaging and erasing what its predecessor had accomplished and consecrating its existence. And there are only rare fingerprints left since the existence of man on the land of Algeria, which we will review as follows: (El Dib , 2001)

The development of the urban areas of the Algerian city before 1830

The history of reconstruction in Algeria cannot be separated in any way from the history of the civilization of the Mediterranean, just as it cannot be separated from the history of the Great Arab Maghreb. Frequent interruptions in this pace due to the succession of the occupiers and the invaders, each of whom had his own style, so as soon as an occupier was victorious, he erased the traces of his predecessors in order for him to extend his influence and hegemony over the urban field in all its forms. This reflects a historical fact that complete control over the territory of Morocco the Arab world, and especially Algeria, was not absolute and infinite, but changed from one occupier to another. (Toumi, 2006)

As most references agree that the history of reconstruction and urbanization in Algeria before 1830 passed through three stages during which the important and influential periods in this regard were formed: (Mohamed, 2005)

-  The Roman-Byzantine period.
-  The barbaric Arab stage.
-  The Ottoman (Turkish) stage.

Reconstruction during the colonial phase (French occupation)

Despite what Algeria knew of a long history of cities and urban life that would establish an urban culture with its dimensions of life and knowledge, perhaps the long period of French occupation was sufficient for that despite the introduction of modern technologies in urbanization and urban life in general. (Sultania, 2006)

It is noteworthy that the current urban network in Algeria is, in fact, the basic base that was established since the entry of this colonization in the year 1830 AD to independence, just as this network is a long historical stage that extended from the “Enfantin” plan in the year 1843 AD, to the Constantine plan in the year 1958 AD, it is clear that the French colonial influence has left its mark largely structurally and spatially.

Post-Independence Era

After independence, Algeria did not possess any clear-cut policy for the preparation of the region. The urban planning was a voluntary work of certain individuals or groups, and the most important characteristic of this stage was the application of the self-management method and the application of the agricultural revolution. After 1962, he introduced a new concept in urban policy, which is the preliminary urbanization plan (PUP).

With the beginning of the seventies, urban preoccupations began to appear clearly in the preamble to the first quadruple plan (1970-1973), whereby the public authorities committed themselves to issuing new texts to suit the changes taking place to replace the old ones. Major agglomerations and all cities with a population exceeding 10,000 residents, followed by urban modernization plans - PMU - for major cities.

And the interest of the public authorities in the field of construction increased, so that a policy of establishing urban housing areas - ZHUN - in addition to industrial zones - ZI - was announced after one year and with the launch of the second quadruple plan (1974-1977).

Urban planning in the first two decades of independence was characterized by investment-oriented efforts and its sectoral approach, but its short scope was among the main reasons for its failure, as it became invalid with the rapid developments that Algeria knew in all fields, which directed attention and efforts towards adopting new means to control the field. In the year 1980 AD, the Ministry of Planning was established, as well as the establishment of the National Agency for Territory Planning to carry out studies, in addition to the planning directorates in each state.

In the year 1986 A.D., the National Plan for Territory Development “SNAT” was established at the national level, and at the regional level, the “SRAT” Regional Plan for Territory Development.

As for each state separately, it created what is known as the state planning plan “PAW” in addition to the municipal development plan or the municipal development plan “PAC”. However, this was not sufficient to develop and modernize the planning and reconstruction sector with all its projects, which prompted the Algerian state to Creation of two new plans: the planning and development master plan (PDAU) and the land occupancy plan (POS).

Our study of the historical stages of the urban development of the Algerian city is motivated by the search for the nature of urbanization in the region, what is the specificity of this development over time, and how the succession of different civilizations affected the formation of its urban field and the knowledge of the various factors of its expansion, whether in the past or the present.

The Algerian urban policy has always been subject to a situation of endless crisis by giving priority to quantity at the expense of the qualitative and aesthetic character, which produced very negative results and led to the emergence of multidimensional crises. (Cherif)

Urban problems and the accumulation of previous experiences in the production of urban areas in the Algerian city

Field experience has proven the limitations of the approaches applied in the field of reconstruction, in controlling spatial growth and responding to the social and economic transformations of society. The urban areas in particular and the Algerian city in general suffer from this deterioration.

Perhaps the most important problems that hinder the production and planning of these urban areas are those related to how, methods and techniques of production and the extent to which the user deals with them. The issue of planning these areas is one of the problems that has become increasingly preoccupying from day to day. And the field in which he lives, translated into this rebellion that he is witnessing, especially in terms of form and content on the part of the user, who is looking through his social logic for a level of coexistence with this field, which was produced through approaches in which it was excluded on the one hand, as well as the absence of an actual study of the culture of society in the stages of urban development on the other hand. (Preparation, reformatting, renewal, restructuring...), without an in-depth study.

Rather, it can be said that most of the studies are superficial and hasty studies aimed at bridging the deficit at that stage, without thinking about the upcoming consequences that will result from this unstudied intervention in a sound scientific way, which reveals to the observer later what the field of urban planning suffers from defects and deterioration in many ways. levels.

The aim of this level of understanding and analysis is to emphasize the inevitability of what can be considered a new method in the production of these urban areas, which seeks to make the production of these urban areas not an imposed production, but rather a consensual and participatory production with the concerned community, and based on true understanding. The nature and culture of the user and the inhabitant.

Manifestations of deterioration in the Algerian city

Since independence, Algeria has worked to create a comprehensive development, with what has been achieved as a building for living and housing, health and services.

This is what has been achieved over decades of great transformations in the economic, political and social life that had a clear impact on the social structure and the transformation of Algerian society, and one of the effects of this policy was that the phenomenon of urbanization increased at record levels, but it is noticeable that most cities in recent times are witnessing the spread and exacerbation Many urban, social and ecological problems, which have become disturbing and worrying various researchers and politicians alike.

From here, the crisis of the Algerian city is considered a multi-faceted and multi-level crisis, perhaps because we did not understand well its specificity, and therefore our approach to the city was not sufficiently understanding and analytical.

Algeria worked to import the manifestations of modern urbanism as a solution or as a means to solve its urban and architectural problems that became exhausting, so these solutions came in the A form of projects that crystallized in foreign circles and environments without taking into account the urban, architectural and climatic standards appropriate to the urban and

spatial planning of each region, nor the cultural characteristics and social values of the concerned community.

This urban orientation has made the urban areas of the Algerian city degraded and emptied of their social, cultural and urban value, and made them live with problems that have taken different dimensions of deterioration and deterioration, as well as losing the damage factor. Sustainability, due to the transformations that both society and the Algerian city know, which makes it possible to control, direct and keep pace with its movement. It is difficult, despite the attempts made by officials, including planners and specialists, to work on developing a clear strategy and policy with a forward-looking vision based on well-thought-out projects and plans, to work to limit this deterioration that it is suffering from. The metropolitan area of the Algerian city.

Faced with this situation, the new law of the city came to draw and define measures and procedures for the development and promotion of the city according to harmonious, integrated and sustainable conditions.

We must know that the law is not a program of action, but rather defines the main features of the policies and objectives of any development of the city and the principles that derive from them and the actors and tools that lead to the embodiment of these goals., and the law relating to the city is based on a threefold basis

(The state - local groups - the citizen), and the citizen must regain his effective role in any work for the advancement of cities. (Benammar , 2001)

The reality of the urban environment in the city of M'sila (through a neighborhood model of 600 dwellings)

Study Area

The city of M'sila is one of the most prominent inland cities in the high hills' region of Algeria. It is located within the following geographical coordinates: Between two widths: Circles: 35.48°, '35.67° north of the equator. Between the two longitudes: 4.57°, 4.48° east of Greenwich, which is the line that **connects north and** south. Since the city is located in the middle of the Tell Atlas and the Saharan Atlas, it is also distinguished by its natural and economic diversity. The area of the municipality is estimated at (232.03 km²), inhabited by 214,661 people, and the population density is estimated at: 925 people, according to the Department of Municipal Statistics 2014. The study area, which is the urban center of the city, is estimated at: (50.01 km²) See: Figure 1).

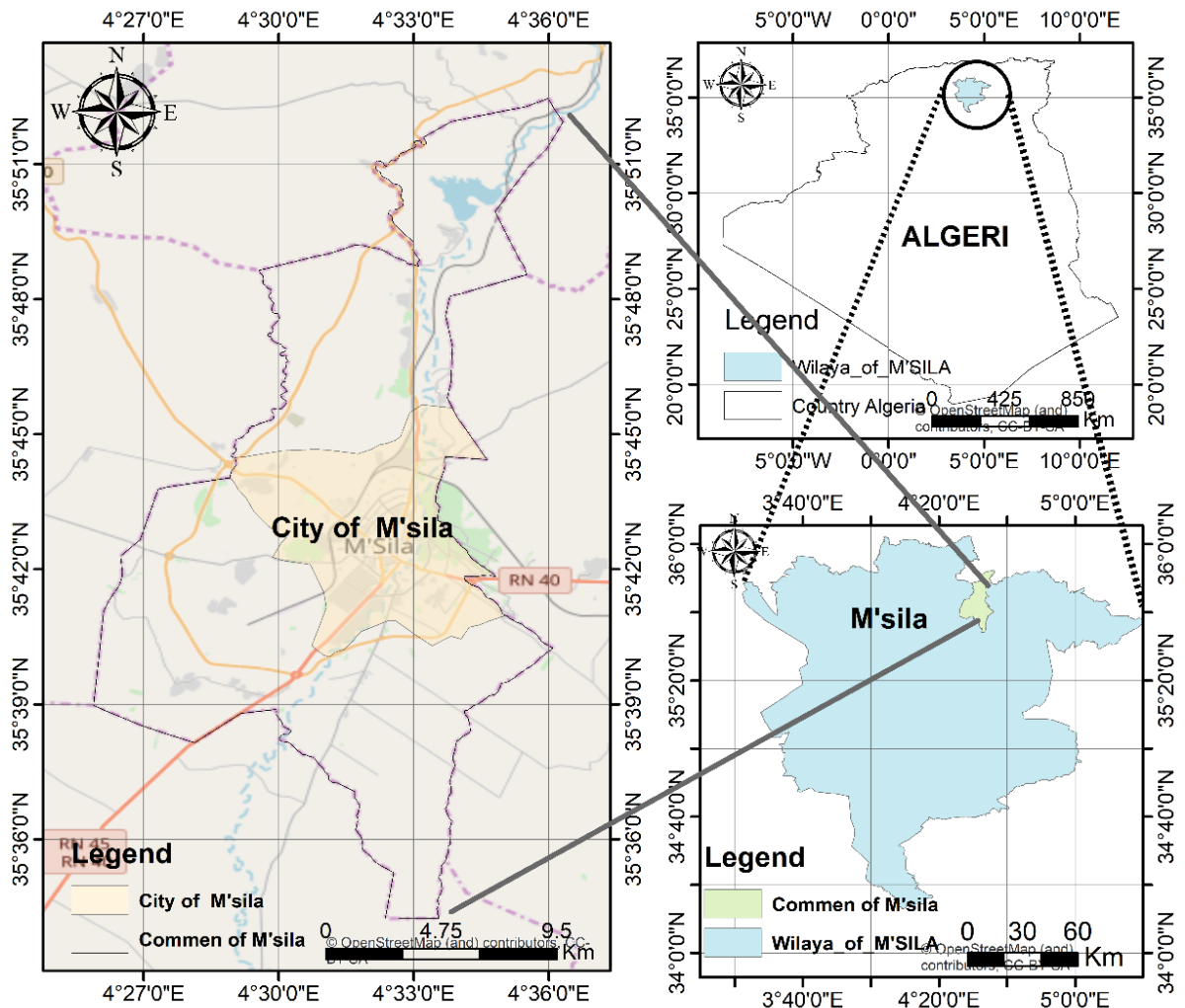


Fig 1:- Location of the Study Area City of M'sila.

(Source: (DEHIMI & HADJAB, 2019))

Characteristics of the urban area of the city of M'sila:

The city of M'sila includes a group of urban units that were formed through different historical stages, where the first urban nucleus was formed in the "Karaghla neighborhood", which dates back to the era of the Ottoman Mandate for Algeria. It bears the name (Al-Kadiyah), and during the colonial period the city witnessed two types of urban patterns, a pattern characterized by the character of Arab and Islamic cities, for example in (Al-Arqoub neighborhood, Jinan Al-Kabeer neighborhood, Al-Kush neighborhood, Al-Hamas (currently the administrative district) Falaj Al-Nilo, and the retail is currently 817 dwellings.

These neighborhoods are inhabited by Algerian citizens, or what is known at that time as the people (Lizandéjan), and they are characterized by narrow streets, and the material used in their construction is mud and wood. Cement and rock bricks are used in its construction. These neighborhoods are Al Dhahra and Foresti.

It was also the first building block of the collective housing style of architecture (HLM). The city of M'sila, during the era of independence, witnessed the emergence of

residential neighborhoods after the earthquake of 1965, the most important of which is the Al-Zaher neighborhood with 300 dwellings (Al-Mankoubin Al-Tahta), Badr neighborhood with 500 dwellings (Al-Mankoubin Al-Lafqa) and Al-Shawaf neighborhood. Where these neighborhoods were a mixture between the colonial character and the Arab-Islamic character in terms of the quality of the streets as well as the architectural structure of the building. In the seventies, neighborhoods appeared next to National Road No. (45), what is known as the Burj Road neighborhood and Janan Budiyyah. Likewise, the Wa'a al-Madani neighborhood, and at the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, the city of M'sila witnessed a wide spatial leap towards the northwest side, where several residential neighborhoods arose in the form of residential fragmentation with individual buildings as well as collective buildings.

There is no doubt that the "University of M'sila site" gave the western side of the city a special vitality and dynamism and contributed significantly to the creation of a new urban spatial complex that matches or competes with the old city center (Martyrs Square + Wa'a al-Madani neighborhood) and this situation gave a new breath to the city, to better expand towards the western side. It is the railway line, which cuts through the urban fabric of the city.

Introducing the neighborhood of 600 dwellings

The neighborhood is considered one of the projects established by the state in the 1980s to eliminate the housing crisis (which was widespread at the time), within the framework of the policy of establishing new urban residential areas, and it is one of the collective neighborhoods affiliated with it. To the real estate promotion and management office. Real estate research and studies, Messila Branch (BERM), the neighborhood is divided into two parts : area (01) on the northern side, and area (02) located on the southern side. To whom the name of the neighborhood is illegally attributed, and which the residents only refer to among themselves.

The location of the neighborhood and its borders

The "600 dwelling" neighborhood is located in the first part of (Land Occupation Plan No. 03), which is located on the western side according to the directive plan for the development and development of the PDUA of the city of M'sila. It sits on a real estate area estimated at 21.56 hectares, as it is located along the national road No. The city center and the Ishbilia neighborhood." It is bordered on the north side by the "1000 residences" neighborhood, and on the south side "the National Gendarmerie Group and 100 residences," and on the eastern side "the maternity hospital (Suleiman Amirat), an elementary school, 100 residences, a nursery, and the neighborhood of 55 Tarqawi residences (Hajj Issa)." And from the western side, the "University Residence Nuiwat Musa Al-Ahmadi and the Jaber Ibn Hayyan High School." See Plan No. (02).

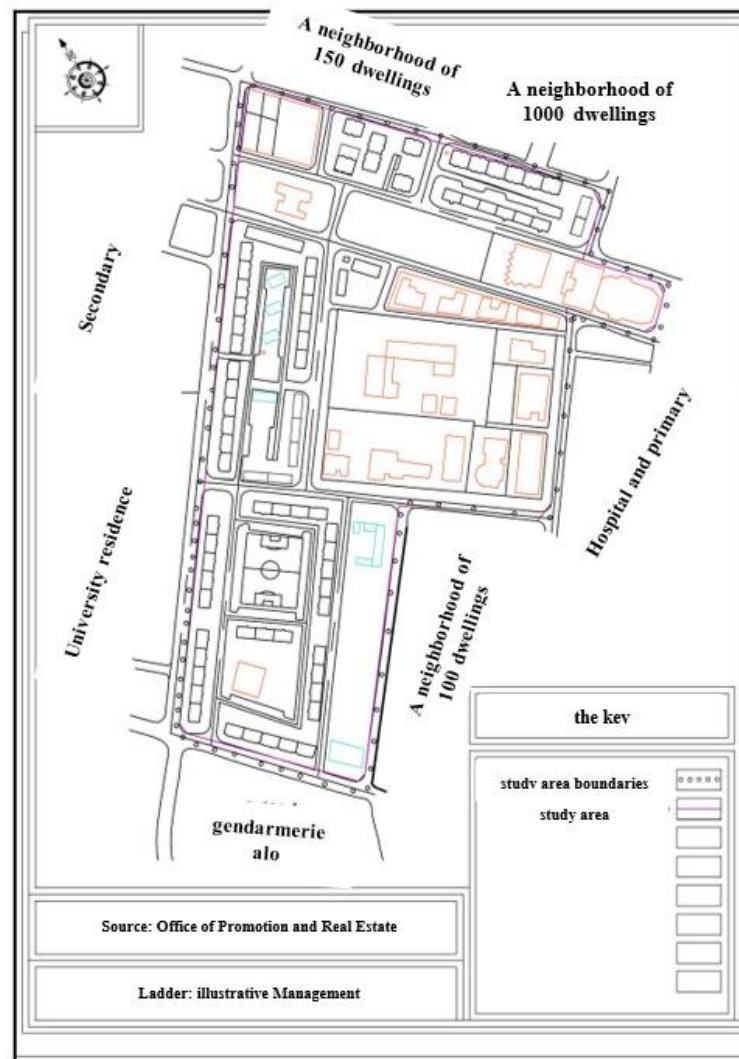


Fig 2: - Study neighborhood site.

Manifestations of the deterioration of the urban environment in the neighborhood of 600 dwellings

In order to determine the manifestations of deterioration and their size in the urban environment of the neighborhood of 600 dwellings, and the reasons that contributed to their existence, the field study was adopted with all its elements, and we had the following reading:

Manifestations of deterioration at the level of the built framework

A- Appearances at the dwelling level

Based on the field observation, the building frame of the neighborhood of 600 dwellings witnessed and is constantly witnessing internal and external changes, especially at the level of transforming the function and the facades. (Photo 03), and 58.23% of the residents of the neighborhood admitted that the space is not sufficient for the family, and the result is that they do not spend their time inside the house and do not feel the comfort that they are looking for, and because their income is weak according to the field survey, this is reflected in the way they exploit the built and unbuilt spaces that make up the neighborhood And the study showed that

87.25% of them installed protective windows and doors, in which tastes differed in terms of type of material and method of installation, for security reasons. Picture (01,02).



Photo No. (01): It shows the exploitation of the field in a job other than the one for which it was planned



Photo No. (01): It shows the exploitation of the field in a job other than the one for which it was planned



Photo No. (04): It shows the deterioration of the façade through transformations to widen the inner space



Photo No. (03): The reflection of this transformation on the facade and the exterior appearance of the building.

We notice in Picture No. (03) how the balcony was closed for the sake of the expansion process, as well as the thing that draws attention to the different use of building materials, as well as the use of windows for protection and from a security aspect, according to the field survey that I did. We notice in photo No. (04) that how the dryer was converted into a room without knowing its importance, for the purpose of expansion according to the field survey, and what is noticeable in this photo is the dependence of most of the residents on artificial treatment (conditioners), which increases energy consumption and this is contrary to the principles of sustainability.

B- At the level of the unbuilt frame

To study the unstructured framework, we must take into account several levels, as follows:

- **At the level of roads and car parks:**

Roads are considered the first structural element of the neighborhood, as they are:

It determines the general organization and division of the neighborhood, and it also plays an important role in linking the various parts of the neighborhood on the one hand, and the outskirts of the city on the other hand, as a significant area has been allocated for them estimated at: (12.34%) of the area of the neighborhood), so it covers all parts of the neighborhood and is

distributed regularly On the residential units, where the preparation depends on connecting the triple roads to all buildings.

However, it is noticeable that the number of parking spaces is clearly lacking compared to the number of residents compared to the national average (at the rate of one parking lot for every 02 dwellings). This led to the exploitation of sidewalks and various vacant parking spaces. As illustrated by Photo No. (05,06).

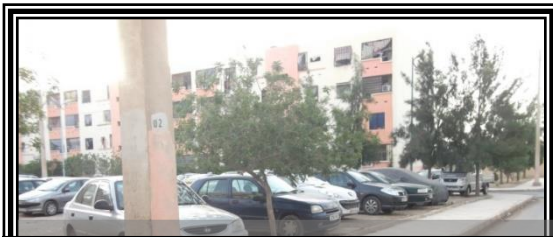
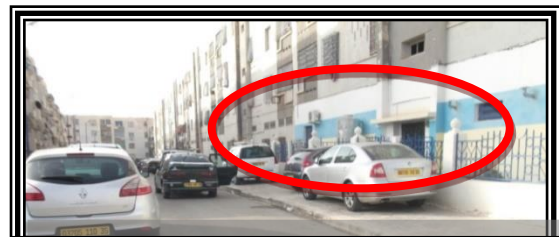


Photo No. (06): The lack of parking spaces shows what resulted in the use of sidewalks to park cars in places designated for green spaces



Picture No. (05): The lack of parking spaces shows what resulted in the use of sidewalks for parking cars

- **At the level of sidewalks and squares**

The main role of sidewalks and walkways is to facilitate pedestrian movement and link between buildings, as a large area has been allocated for them. It is completely paved with non-slip tiles, but the movement of many of these sidewalks and paths is poor, and after a field inspection we found that they were deteriorating in some places due to lack of maintenance. See photo No. (07), as its width ranges from (1.5 to 3)m, and its area is estimated at: 3.16 hectares, or (26.97%)of the total unbuilt area. For squares:

In this section, we record the presence of a single yard (the first of November yard) with an area estimated at: 1.25 hectares, i.e., (10.64%) of the total unbuilt area, and it affects the adjacent surroundings, but it serves a small part of the neighborhood as it has been reconfigured.



Photo No. (07): shows the deterioration of the sidewalks and the lack of maintenance.

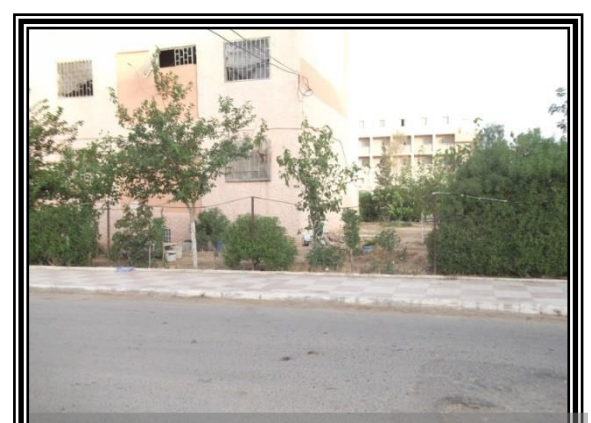


Photo No. (08): Some modest attempts by residents to take care of green spaces.

- **At the level of green spaces**

Green spaces are a vital element within the residential complexes, as they directly affect the psychological aspect of the residents in addition to the aesthetic and vital role they play. Some decent attempts by the residents in front of the buildings. See photo No. (08).

Although it is included in the plans for the neighborhood, its area is 1002 square meters, i.e., (0.60%) of the total unbuilt area, which is very small compared to national standards (10 squares meters per inhabitant).

The most important reasons for the deterioration of the urban area of the neighborhood of 600 dwellings

According to this field study, we have explored through it a set of reasons behind this deterioration in the urban environment in particular and the urban field in general, and it goes back to reasons that were divided into several aspects and came as follows:

 **Administrative side**

- The absence of civilized coordination between all the agencies responsible for the implementation and follow-up of this process and its tight connection with the established plans, objectives and controls that are required to deal with it and with it, which results in the deterioration of the urban field we are witnessing today.

- The weakness of the urban legislation related to the urban systems that achieve a balance between architecture and climate, as the recent urban Al Dhafra produced urban and architectural patterns that are inconsistent with the climate of the region in general, and there are shortcomings in the legislative texts that enable the planning and building control agencies to control this matter.

- The intransigence shown by the vast majority of engineers and decision-makers ignores the reality of the existence of the population as a real partner, so they forget them sometimes and forget them often, so the residents remedy the situation by including their views on their urban field in a way that suits their conditions.

 **Technical side**

- Lack of beauty and consistency in the urban environment due to the absence of control over the patterns of architectural structures in terms of building heights and their relationship to streets, the harmony of facades, and the provision of squares with their symbolic and aesthetic elements, public parks, and arenas for sports, recreational and cultural activities.

- Urban transformation resulted in the presence of certain backgrounds (absence of planning and management and neglect of urban plans with rapid urban change). To the population's occupation of the field in a chaotic manner, and according to their simple perceptions, which resulted in a backward and spontaneous urbanization, lacking the minimum appropriate and decent living conditions.

- The use of architectural treatments that ensure the achievement of privacy and the appropriateness of the surrounding natural factors and the provision of an internal climate for human comfort in order to achieve the greatest degree of functional efficiency and environmental integration.

 **Social side**

- The social factor is no less important than the planning factor, as it represents one of the most important variables that must be taken into account in the study and planning of cities, which was neglected during a period of growth in Algerian cities, which led to the emergence of several negative repercussions on the general appearance of Algerian cities. On the other hand, the city's residents affect the general framework of the urban environment of the city, and

this is through individual and irresponsible actions and lack of environmental awareness. These are some of the reasons, including :

- The absence of an urban culture among the population and their lack of awareness of the need to preserve the surroundings and improve the framework of life, which makes it difficult for the actors in the city to work appropriately and correctly.
- Lack of awareness initiatives of the importance of the urban environment and its preservation.
- The inability of users to adapt to the new field and the inability of this field to achieve maximum interaction with them in the urban life of the various users.

The financial side

▪ The value of the rental price is very far from the economic price that can fill the financial deficit of the institution, which affects the full sponsorship of these residences in the intervention operations in terms of the building and in terms of the accompanying external areas. We have noticed that :

The ongoing economic transformations have focused attention on housing, and the remaining built framework has been neglected due to the lack of sufficient financial support for such operations.

▪ However, the phenomenon of urban degradation lies in two parts, one group considers the problem revolving around the social factor and another group considers that the main factor of the phenomenon is explained by the management and oversight factor, and all these factors are intertwined with each other, resulting in a real crisis that the inhabitant suffers from, despite the efforts it makes The state is in this field, but the crisis remains, so we must review comprehensively and accurately through what has been achieved, by including the term participation, which is one of the pillars of sustainable development in all policies related to construction and housing.

It can be said that ensuring the conduct of urbanization is a difficult task that presupposes a clear political vision, a civil consensus and a cultural and intellectual awakening, all of which are formulated within a comprehensive strategy with clear features within the framework of an urban project with strict control over the application of laws without leniency or tolerance, and strengthening the role of the judiciary for a better vision for the future of urbanization. In our country, because it is a barometer that measures the civilization of every society, according to the words of the scholar Ibn Khaldun: "Whenever urbanization is more, civilization is more complete."

This system must be applied to the city as a whole, because such a system cannot succeed in the study area alone, for example, and in isolation from the rest of the city. This system eventually becomes an integrated whole, a system, and a way of life. It is also necessary to recall the importance of placing restrictions on both design and materials. used, heights, quality of development and sophistication so that all of them serve the planning policies established and agreed upon.

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