



# Sustainable Tourism Development a basic factor for preserving urban heritage in Algeria: An Applied study on the Casbah of Algiers

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## Abstract

Algeria is one of the many countries that are gifted with an abundantly rich and diversified urban heritage, which stems from the multiplicity of successive human civilizations and its natural environment that is rich in all forms of heritage. These can be invested from a tourism perspective for sustainable development in accordance with a myriad of global challenges that exist in the tourism space. The most important heritage areas in Algeria include, among others, Casbah of Algiers, on which this article sheds light in this research. The Casbah (meaning citadel (fortress)) refers unambiguously to the citadel of Algiers in Algeria and the traditional quarter gathered around it. In 1992, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared Casbah to be a World Cultural Heritage site. This article seeks to highlight the remarkable urban and cultural potential of the Casbah obtained throughout its ancient history and refers to the monumental buildings inter alia Ketchaoua Mosque, Al Safir Mosque, Grand Mosque, Palais des Rais, Palace of the Dey, Dar Hassan Pasha, and its cultural diversity such as traditional handicrafts jewellery, dress, furnish etc. By taking advantage of the heritage pillars for the sake of heritage tourism development and tourism promotion in a way that achieves the sustainability of this unique urban heritage area, great progress can be made. UNESCO support is in addition to the local government bodies that enacted a series of laws that regulate rules and offer direction to preserve this valuable heritage at the local and also on the global level.

**Keywords:** Preservation, urban heritage, tourism development, sustainability, Casbah, Algiers.

## Introduction

Urban heritage is witnessing increased interest from countries, governments and international organizations to preserve it, because of its importance to the historical, civilization, cultural and memorable heritage of peoples. Many heritage areas in various countries have been affected by social, cultural and political changes (Muhammad & Myung Kim, 2018), which is evident by the emergence of many intellectual currents that call for the need to preserve and develop it as a fertile area for tourism investment, especially within the new global orientation, which adopts it as an urban sustainability imperative. With the advent of the idea of cultural tourism that depends on the potential of heritage and its ability to revitalize the tourism movement, heritage tourism, as part of a broader category of cultural tourism, has become a major pillar of tourism strategy in many countries (Mohamed Rani, Othman & Najiah Ahmad, 2014). It is important in enhancing and diversifying the economic base of many developing countries because of their strong association with many industries (Mazimhaka, 2007). Their direct and indirect social and economic effects are reflected in the way heritage tourism contributes to the development of the country's economic wealth; it must therefore be a planned, integrated and properly managed activity (Ioan-Franc & Iştoc, 2007).

It is worth mentioning that urban heritage has been affected by the emerging conditions witnessed in most cities, which have resulted in encroachment upon this sensitive part of the urban fabric in part or in total, which requires the existence of urban policies aimed at maintaining and requalification of the sites, by putting various mechanisms and powers to achieve its objectives between different actors in this field. This is especially critical when it comes to its tourism development by creating an integrated relationship between preservation



policies and tourism development, "while tourism depends on visiting that heritage by tourists in addition to protecting it to ensure its sustainability (Brcar & Colarič-Jakše, 2017).

In this context, Algeria has a diverse urban heritage reflecting the multiplicity of successive human civilizations and rich natural environment in all heritage forms (Helly, 2014). In recent years it has been moving towards adopting a national strategy for sustainable tourism development in order to preserve its urban heritage by investing in it from a sustainability perspective. Algerian authorities consider age, neglect and overpopulation as the primary contributors to the degeneration of Casbah. The overpopulation also makes it problematic to solve building decay issues because of the exertion it would take to relocate the residents to other accommodation. There are between 40,000 to 70,000 people living as squatters in vacant buildings (Algeria Channel, 2010). Another reason that the government wants to improve the condition of the Casbah is that it is undoubtedly a possible sanctuary for criminals and terrorists alike. In the late 1950s and throughout the civil insurgency and struggle against French colonial rule it was a hideout for the National Liberation Army.

Algiers Casbah, fabled bastion of Barbary pirates who plied the Mediterranean for centuries in defiance of European power. But the deadliest of the many blows suffered by Algiers's disintegrating old quarter may actually be contemporary—neglect by successive governments of modern Algeria. The few outsiders who visit tend to wonder why this United Nations world heritage site with an epic past woven deeply into Mediterranean history should be at risk of collapse—and in a North African state earning \$1-billion a week from oil and gas. The answer is a lack of political will, Algerians say. Oil wealth has meant tourism has been a low priority, despite the powerful attraction this haunting Ottoman settlement could exert on Western tourists in search of the exotic and educational. The result is that the labyrinth of alleys, palaces and fountains clinging to a steep hill above Algiers port is now a fissure-ridden slum of mostly greying, rotting buildings. Many of the population of more than 30 000 live in squalor. "This is our culture and our soul and we should protect it," says construction official Fatah Abdelaoui, his voice echoing in the cool interior of Hassan Pasha palace, an elegant structure of marble and mosaics currently under renovation... "The Casbah is in danger, and we must save it before it is too late," historian Belkacem Babaci says, reflecting a pride found everywhere among the tottering huddle of walled houses. "If we restore the Casbah, it would become our number-one touristic product," he says, adding that of the roughly 1 200 houses in the 36ha site, 136 were in good condition but 600 needed urgent work (Maclean, 2008).

## Research Problem

The city of "Casbah", which dates back to the Ottoman period, is the first nucleus of the capital building of the capital city of Algiers. It is central to its urban fabric and is an important historical and heritage landmark. However, it has not been employed as well as it could be as a tourist site. This urban heritage has been severely degraded by indiscriminate and often randomized interventions and the migration of indigenous populations, in addition to modern attacks that are inappropriate with its urban and architectural specificity. The city of "Casbah" has the potential of heritage and cultural tourism that allows rapid tourism development if it is rationally planned to ensure its sustainability according to the challenges that have been faced by many bodies and organizations to preserve the urban heritage. The problem of research is how to establish a mechanism to employ the city of "Casbah" for its development and tourism development in a way that achieves the sustainability of its amazing and unique urban heritage. The tripartite sustainable development and tourism requirements can be combined and preserved, and the role of civil society in preservation policies from the perspective of sustainability is needed to avoid the negative repercussions and effects on this sensitive part of the key city of Algeria.



## Research Objectives

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Introducing the urban potential and cultural heritage of the city of "Casbah".
- How to employ various potential strategies for the tourism development of the city of "Casbah".
- Identifying practices and policies that contribute to the preservation of the city of "Casbah" from a sustainability perspective.
- Clarifying the relationship between preservation of urban heritage and tourism development and sustainability.

The importance of this research stems from the following:

- The importance of preserving urban heritage as one of the determinants of sustainable development.
- "Casbah" was a national landmark in 1991, followed by a world cultural heritage in 1992 by UNESCO.
- The mechanism of combining the preservation of urban heritage and its employment within tourism within the logic of sustainability.
- The highlight the role of the local community as a key player in the various policies of preservation of urban heritage.
- The status of the city "Casbah" as a distinct tourist destination requires the need to preservation and maintaining.

## Methodology

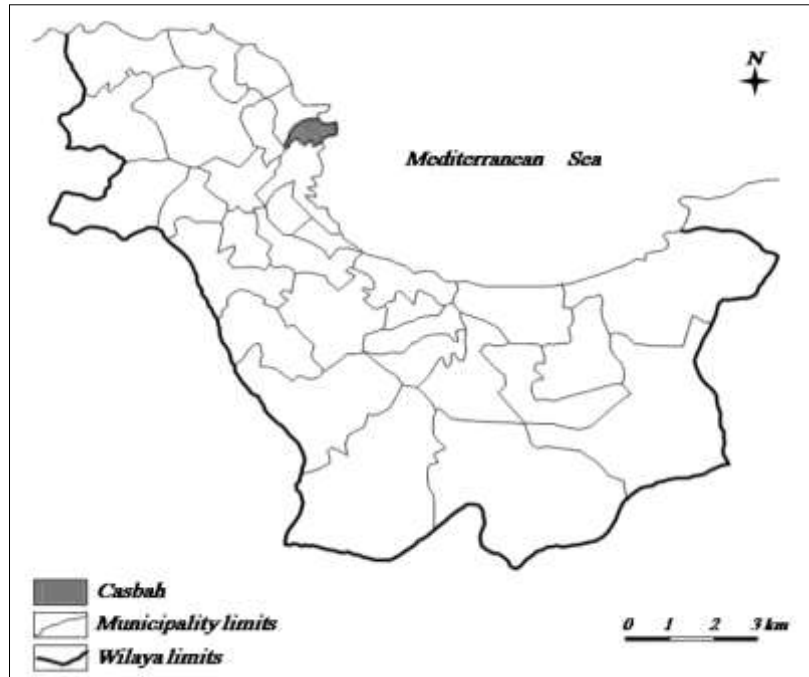
This research is based on an analytical descriptive approach in shedding light on the various urban and heritage potentials acquired by the city of Casbah, and how to take advantage of them for tourism purposes from the perspective of sustainability. This is in addition to the analytical quantitative approach which is interested in processing various data to highlight the status of "Casbah" as a tourist destination that is worthy of interest by both local and foreign tourists.

This research was based on a collection of theoretical references from books, magazines, articles and documents that allowed giving a comprehensive view of the importance of preserving the urban heritage and the necessity of its tourism development, in addition to field work that contributed to the local and international status of "Casbah" and the necessity to protect it after it became a preferred tourist destination.

### **CASBAH is an urban heritage that is centrally situated**

Casbah is the original and historical nucleus of the capital city Algiers, so it occupies a central position with the city. It is located on one of the heads of the Gulf of Algeria, which is more suitable for the establishment of a seaport. This has helped the city to emerge in this position and its growth in a crescent gradient towards the sea within this Gulf is almost natural (Ravereau, 1989).

The city of Casbah is the seventh municipality of the Wilaya of Algiers, bordered to the north by the municipalities of "Beb El Oued" and "Oued Kouraish", and in the south-west by the municipality of "El Abyer", while in the south we find the central municipality of Algiers and the Mediterranean from the east (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Administrative localisation of the Casbah Source: ONS, 1992, p. 88

The area of "Casbah" is 46 hectares in the form of a triangle whose dimensions are positioned to the specificity of the slope (Photo 1), from the citadel to the sea (Raymond, 1985), which was added to form a sea front for the old city of Algiers (Loeckx, 1997).



**Photo 1.** Site of the "Casbah" within the hills of Bouzaria Source: Faidi, 2015, p.9

### **CASBAH is deeply rooted in history**

The history of the city of "Casbah" dates back to the era of the Phoenicians who initiated the establishment of a city called the "El Nawras Island" due to the existence of a number of islands corresponding to it. This choice is due to the specificity of the location suitable for the establishment of a seaport so as to allow commercial exchanges. During the Phoenician era, the city was characterized by its heavy commercial activity with its extensive trading activity, especially in the field of Marine exchanges. It enjoyed autonomy under the "Juba II" rule of the Kingdom of Mauritania.

After the Romans entered the city in 40 CE, the name of the city was changed to Icosium and it became subject to Roman law. It is worth mentioning that there are not many traces of this era except for monuments such as the "Marmari" monument that still exists on one of the walls of the Bab Azoun. Axiom a Roman area, occupied a triangle-shaped area, bounded between two axes are: Le Cardo (south axis - north) and Decumanus Le (west axis - east). The city was



surrounded by walls, in addition to the characteristic sandographic layout of the Roman cities (Peck, 2013).

After the end of the Roman rule, the city was subjected to the Vandalian invasion like other Mediterranean cities. By adopting the faith of Islam, the city was known as the "Algeria of Beni Mazgneh". It was known for the development of agriculture and the flourishing of its Marine trade. In 340 AH (952 CE) the city was fortified under the rule of Polygene Ibn Ziri Al - Manad who called it "Algeria" as a proportion of the four islands corresponding to its coast, and then until the fifteenth century the Zairians, Hammadis, Almoravid, Almohads and Hafsids tried to extend their authority over it and the center of Morocco. It should be noted that during the period of the reign of Abu Zaid Abdul Rahman bin Makhlof Thaalabi he made great achievements for the benefit of the population of the city, and people still visit his gravesite in the mosque "Sidi Abder Rahman El Thaelebi" as does the mayor of the city.

The 'Algeria' of Beni Mazgneh developed on the site of Icosium and within its urban heritage, and was followed by many dynasties since the advent of the Muslims in the 7th century CE until the Ottoman rule in the fifteenth century CE; the city was fortified in the eighth century CE in response to the military and demographic requirements of that era. The city expanded and spread, towards the hills, and resulted in the expansion of two paths or two directions located on the top of the hill or above the axis of the buttock (Djar, 2009).

Commercial activity focused on the center of the city and along the most important axes (north-south), in addition to the existence of a Grand Mosque built in 1097 CE by the Almoravids. In the tenth century CE, the features of the city appeared clearly and were surrounded by walls containing many of the necessary housing, equipment and facilities. In 1365 CE, the city was struck by an earthquake, which was followed by deep changes in layout.

During the sixteenth century CE, the city witnessed important historical events, perhaps the most important of which was the city's rise to become the capital of the state, in which the shape of the final city was determined and ultimately assumed the form of a triangle with an area of 45 hectares, occupying the hill overlooking the Gulf of Algiers (Cresti, 1986).

This administrative ranking of the city grew and it gained many new business enterprises and included many political, economic, social, cultural and other bodies. The city preserved its previous urban features and components. The city's borders were further enhanced by its walls, fortifications, trenches and castle. Historical sources indicate that the city wall was 2500m long and its height was 11 to 13 m, and included five (05) city gates (Bab El Djedid, Bab Azoun, Bab El Bahr, Bab El Djazira and Bab El Oued) (Figure 2) and the seat of an ancient government called "El Geneina" (Piaton & Lochard, 2017) and another called the "Castle" at the bottom of the city was structured within two axes namely:

- The axis: Bab Azoun Street - Bab El Oued Street.
- The axis: Marine Street - Khairuddin Harbor and Marine Port.

The point of intersection of these two axes centered on commercial activities in the form of markets, in addition to the existence of many official structures such as barracks, prisons, various administrative buildings, and some of the housing and high-rise places such as Dar Aziza, Dar Hassan Pasha, and Dar Mustafa Pasha. This area was the vital center of the city because of the spread of cultural and religious movements within it, such that the corners that surrounded the establishment of the ancient dynasties is known as "El Geneina" without forgetting the city's main Mosques (Missoum, 2003).



**Figure 2.** Doors of the city of "Casbah" during the Ottoman period Source: Boudaqqa, 2015, p. 44

Within the spread of the residential areas of the city some special equipment that embraces some of the activities of crafts and services such as furnaces, mills, baths and mosques is evident. In 1716 CE the city was subjected to an earthquake that destroyed many buildings, some of which were restored and some of them were later rebuilt before they were ultimately occupied by the French colonial forces. The French colonization expanded, when it occupied the city on 05 July 1830, and this led to significant changes in the level of its urban fabric. It first initiated the formation of modern Algeria in a European style in response to the colonial needs and the accommodation of French expatriates, which led to the removal of the bottom of the "Casbah" and these changes also included the completion of expansion in the streets named Bab El Oued, Bab Azoun and "La marine" street

The construction of European buildings outside "Casbah" wall also went beyond the slopes of "Lounes Arzaki" and "Arabji Abdel Rahman", which facilitated communication between the castle and the port (Deluz, 1988).

It is noted that the first decolonization was characterized by the reuse of the areas of the old city "Casbah", and then divided into three spatial scopes, namely:

- The first band: a "Marine district" that offered the greatest amount of morphological changes and functional transformations.
- The second band: the Upper "Casbah" where the lowest level of French intervention was recorded, because of the difficulty of its topography on the top of the hill, which made it easier for the indigenous people to take shelter.
- The third band: the commercial area, which represents the central area of "Casbah", which was able to preserve its planning and the most important structures despite the expansions that have been developed, so it is an urban fabric combining two types of buildings resulting from the construction of colonial buildings over other structures of a traditional nature.

Starting from 1840 CE, the features of "French Algeria" began to appear clearly after the establishment of the European Center, which had attracted the most important urban functions transferred from "Casbah". The European population left "Casbah" to settle in modern European neighborhoods that were deemed to be more suitable for their lifestyle (Picard, 1994), and here they began unloading "Casbah" from its original functions and stripped it of its importance and status as an urban center, where it seemed to be only marginal in the city of Algiers (Missoum, 2003). This led to the first signs of deterioration in the level of the urban fabric of "Casbah", which was caused by several factors:



- Excessive exploitation of traditional housing.
- Recent transformation by rural expatriates in the use of a different methods of construction in "Casbah".
- The loss of vital city functions, except for the waterfront that was destroyed between 1926 CE and 1930 CE.

The aim of all these changes brought about by the French colonization of large buildings was to hide and isolate the city of "Casbah" visually. For this purpose, the waterfront of French Algeria was created in 1938 CE. As a result of these changes, the city of "Casbah" continued to be destroyed and isolated, and to be replaced by a European urban field that turned its back on "Casbah" and marginalized it at all levels including the economic, political and social.

With the independence of Algeria on July 5, 1962, "Casbah" intensified its growth after the influx of rural populations and the occupancy of houses left by Europeans. This situation resulted in a very heavy frame of life, exploited to the maximum extent; the poor management of new houses was exacerbated, which accelerated the process of deterioration of the urban fabric.

It is worth mentioning, that during this period; "Casbah" has witnessed no importance projects other than the establishment of parking lots, institutes, schools and a health center, in addition to a number of renovation and repair projects, which affected a number of buildings (Deluz, 1980).

Today, "Casbah" is suffering from the deterioration of its urban structure and urban heritage due to the rapid growth of the population and the strong intensification of its urban fabric, along with the lack of facilities and infrastructure. The development of informal and irregular activities has contributed to the emergence of many problems, all of which have become apparent in the phenomenon of marginalization.

It is worth noting that during this period, "Casbah" underwent profound transformations. After the departure of the original families, houses were replaced with new houses while some rushed to the houses that were left, and lived under very difficult living circumstances, which further deteriorated the structure of buildings and the decline of urban and aesthetic values of buildings. This was due to the absence of maintenance and indiscriminate and chaotic interventions that were not subject to any follow-up or monitoring (Osmani, 1988). Among these interventions is the process of increasing the floors above the original buildings, in addition to the excessive exploitation of these structures without taking into account the technical specifications.

The most important changes of the buildings of "Casbah" are the modernization of traditional houses, which were carried out mainly in the post-independence period, through the expansion of the openings to take the forms of windows of considerable dimensions, because the traditional facades of the houses were large, and the entrances of the dwellings constituted almost the entire aperture. In addition to some tiny openings that would allow light and air to pass through the stairs and some spaces, the rest of the rooms would receive light through the inner openings entering the building.

The phenomenon of degradation has also included the non-compensation or replacement of the destroyed buildings with the same style and characteristics on the same floor. The street becomes uninterrupted, the buildings lose the fabric of the arrangement their openings, their distinctive urban elements, flat facades, continuity and gradual alignment to the sea under. It is subjected to internal division with an opening to the street and closure of the neighboring houses. The lower part of "Casbah" suffers from many problems, especially with regard to the the movement of the many pedestrians and cars, which further exacerbates the marginalization and isolation that "Casbah" is experiencing today. Faced with these problems, "Casbah" is still able to preserve a positive image in the mind and continuity of its identity, which is still recognized today (Boussaa, 2012). In spite of the transformations and changes that took place in "Casbah", the three poles: the citadel, the Marine headquarters and the



facade overlooking the sea still exist, in addition to some original equipment and services such as baths, furnaces, mosques and a number of traditional houses that have unimaginable heritage and offer good urban value for their price. All of this makes the city a national and international heritage site and UNESCO's interest in it as a world heritage was noticed in 1992 (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/565>), in addition to the interest of local government authorities, which issued a number of regulations and laws concerning the adjusting of rules and new directives for preservation of the heritage at the local and international levels (Safar-Zitoun, 1996).

### **CASBAH is a national heritage requiring preservation**

As a result of the deterioration of the city of "Casbah", the local authorities have to push as a necessity of interest the preservation of this urban heritage. In this context, the "Casbah Workshop" was established in 1968 to prepare the necessary studies that were included in the general masterplan (POG) for the year 1975 which relates to the urban design of the city of Algiers as a whole (Lesbet, 1985).

During the eighties the use of Italian experts in the field of maintenance and restoration was called for, and they cared for the preservation of the urban heritage until 1993 when their work was stopped because of the social, economic and security situations that prevailed during that period. Since 1995, the city of "Casbah" has received increasing interest in its preservation through the creating of a reconstruction master plan (POG) that covers the urban city of Algiers (Lesbet, 1992).

These efforts were supported by an important legal framework. The first law issued in Algeria regarding on the preservation of heritage was Law No. 62/157 dated of 31 December 1962, which was an extension of the French laws in force prior to independence. The decree issued of September 14, 1925, is related to historical monuments in Algeria and has been amended twice, and was first amended by the Decree of 03 March 1938 and the decree was further amended in 14 June 1947 and the Law was dated to 21 November 1954 (Zadem, 2002). In addition to the Law issued on 02 May 1930, it is related to natural monuments and places of historical, cultural and artistic nature, and the decree issued on 09 February 1942 explained the vague law Issued on September 27, 1941. This was approved by a decree issued on 18 September 1945 relating to excavations of historical interest, in addition to order No. 67/281 of 1967, of French origin (Doulcier, Pawlowski, Sato, 1973). Thus some attempts at repeated restoration of the Casbah are evident until the issuance of Law No. 98/04 dated of 15 June 1998 which relates of the protection of cultural heritage.

According to the view of some archaeologists, this law is somewhat late and insufficient, but it is an introduction to strategies, programs and projects for the preservation of urban heritage in the Algerian city.

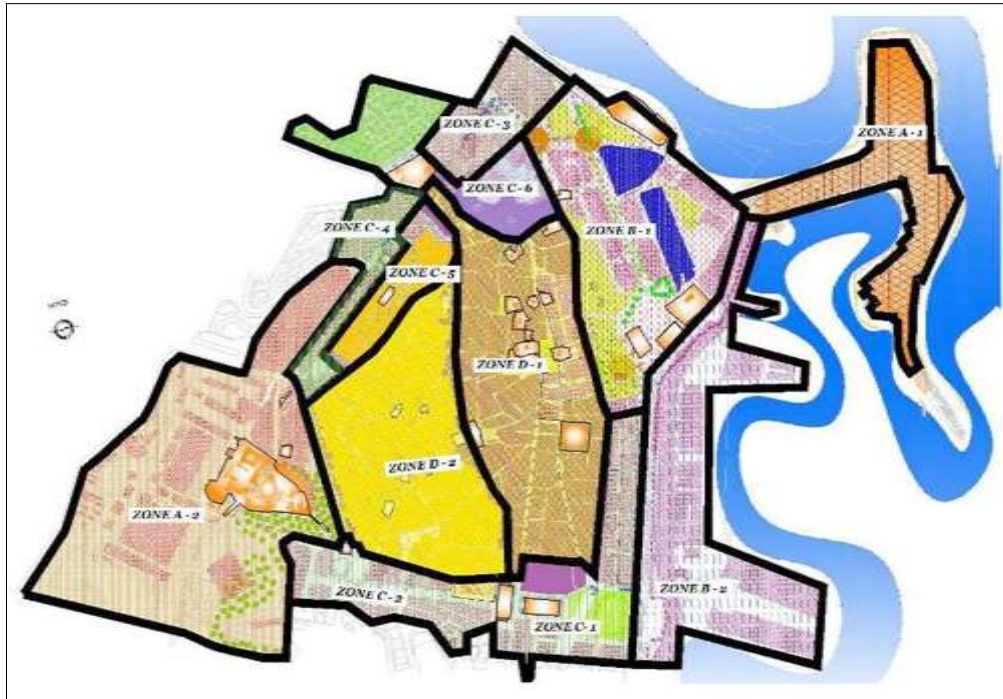
In order to stop the deterioration of the city of "Casbah", many measures were implemented by the local authorities (Figure 3), which are as follows:

- Strengthening buildings from both the inside and outside.
- Protection of monuments, and interfaces.
- Repairing of potable water channels, drainage channels and purification of local wells that collect rainwater.
- Rubble and refuse disposal.
- Household waste removal.
- Removal of electricity network hazards.

The plan for the preparation of the city of "Casbah" prepared by the National Center for Studies and Urban Research in cooperation with (UNESCO) a group of processes, aimed at the following:



- Working to reduce the population by half, (and was able to do so in the early nineties).
- Configuring and repairing of infrastructure such as roads, ditches, drainage systems etc.
- Restoration of houses, buildings, monuments and historical monuments.
- Restoration of traditional crafts with a view to their integration into the activities of the city as a whole.
- The creation of abandoned buildings and the creation of cultural and tourist spaces (Ministère de la Culture, 2008).



**Figure 3.** Permanent plan for the safeguarding and enhancement of the "Casbah"  
Source: Ministère de la culture, 2008, p. 99.

### **CASBAH and its tourist potential**

The city of "Casbah" abounds with many important tourist potentials that reflect the various civilizations that inhabited it. It is an urban cultural and urban heritage that has many ancient mosques (Chergui, 2007) and palaces that have been looted and destroyed under the various circumstances of each period. This potential of these is as follows:

#### **Mosques**

The number of mosques in the city of "Casbah" is huge because of the multiplicity of rulers and rich buildings (Chergui, 2011), and these carry great tourism potential and the most important of these mosques are:

- The "Great" Mosque: one of the oldest and largest mosques in "Casbah". The date of its construction dates back to the period of the Almoravid during the reign of "Yusuf ibn Tashifin" in 1097 CE. It was classified in the historical heritage dated to 30 March 1887.
- "Ketchaoua" Mosque: One of the most famous historical mosques in Algeria, was built in the Ottoman era in 1612 CE, and was built by Hassan Pasha in 1794 CE. It was classified as a legacy of history dated on 26 March 1908, before it regained its status as a mosque after independence.
- "Safir" Mosque: Located in the upper stile, the mosque was a unique urban masterpiece, in the past a small prayer space, and on the arrival of "Dey Hassan Pasha" in 1798, he worked



to expand it to become a big mosque, and it has been classified as an inherited historical site dated to 30 May 1905.

- "Ali Bitchin" Mosque: The Ali Bitchin Mosque is located in the Lower "Casbah". Its main facade includes a magnificent Ain known as "Ain Al-Shara" and was classified as a historic heritage site on April 29, 1949. This mosque was closed for several years to undergo restoration work; so far, it is open to prayer since 2010.

- Djamaa el Djedid, "LaBishri": This mosque was established in 1660 CE by the Turkish sailors and thus called the "Mosque of the fishing shop" at the site of the corner of "Sidi Bouanan", and was classified within the historical heritage sites dating to 30 March 1887.

- "El Barani" Mosque: The mosque is located on the second side of the street where the main entrance to "Dar Al Sultan" is located, it is a street called "Talib Mohammed". It was built in 1818 by the "Dai Hussein" on the ruins of the Roman city of "Iquosium" as indicated by research and studies, noting that this mosque has been listed as a historical legacy as was its predecessor on 30 March 1887.

- Djamaa "Sidi Ramdane": Its construction dates back to the 11th century CE and it is located on the upper side of the city of "Casbah" near the city wall, which included a door known as Bab Sidi Ramdane. This mosque was classified as a historical legacy on 26 February 1994 (Photo 2).

- "Sidi Mohamed Sharif" mosque: This mosque is located in the upper part of the city of "Al Casbah", specifically in the corner between the streets of "Clipper" and "Al Nakhla", not far from the Safir Mosque, where its constructor "Sidi Mohamed Sharif" was buried in 1541 CE, This coincides with the historical campaign of the Spanish Emperor "Charlocan" on the city of Algeria, and this mosque was classified within the historical heritage preserved on 13 May 1905.

- Sidi AbdAllah Mosque: It was established as a small mosque in 1716 by "Sidi AbdAllah" and was named after his name. It was as a Koranic school, surrounded by a large number of shops within the street known as "ZnikaAl lahamen" (Oulebsir, 2004).

All such buildings are potentially great tourist sites, especially for those in the Islamic faith.



**Photo 2.** Some mosques in the "Casbah"

Source: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/yves\\_jalabert/sets/72157624984505081/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/yves_jalabert/sets/72157624984505081/)

Many palaces have huge potential for heritage and cultural tourism.

### Palaces

The building include the palaces of Al-Beys, Al-Deys and Al-Riyas earlier (Blas de Roblès & Sintes, 2003), and are now in a period of renovation including the directorates and schools, these palaces can be summarized as follows:

- "Aziza" palace: It is also called Dar Aziza, which was the palace of the last Ottoman sultans in Algeria. Dar Aziza was the last witness to the El Geneina palace, which was given by Dey Hussein to his daughter Aziza on the occasion of her marriage to Bey Constantine, It was taken as a residence for foreign guests to improve their relations with Algeria, This house



originally consisted of a courtyard surrounded by several rooms and a bathroom, but the features of this palace changed a lot after the earthquake in 1616, and it has been converted into the guards barracks of the supreme commander of the army during the French colonial phase. Due its proximity to the palace, "Hassan Pasha", and after independence it was inhabited by the clan of Hamdan Khoja who lived there for a year and then wrote a book about the Algerian princesses there. It was later transformed into the headquarters of the first Algerian magazine called "Culture", which was published in Arabic for tourism purposes. In 1992 this palace was included in the World Heritage Register.

- The castle: also called the Dar Al Sultan, dates back to 1551 CE. It was originally an army barracks built by the Spaniards, The Barbaros brothers chose it as a defensive center when the Sultan of Algeria, Selim III, appealed to them in 1516 CE to defend the city from marauding Barbary pirates. The castle is considered as a prime model of the architecture of the Algerian palaces during the Ottoman era, but it was subjected to deep distortions by the French occupation, and this was in addition to the changes made by the people after independence, which increased its deterioration. Furthermore, the work of the Offices of the Studies of Restoration, did not take into account the specifics of its architectural style.

- "Palais des Rais": This palace is also called "Fort 23", and is one of the most important historical landmarks of the city of "Casbah" and the city of Algiers as a whole. It represents evidence of the past embodied in the extensions of the city of "Casbah" towards the sea during the Ottoman period which extended from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century CE. The palace was designed to reinforce the city's low defenses by Ramdan Pacha in 1576 CE, and it was referred to as Palace 18. After the occupation of the city by French colonialists, this palace became the residence of the Commander of Civil Engineering Corps. Then it was turned into a boarding school for girls and later a municipal library. In 1980, The Ministry of Culture began to take care of different stages of restoration of this historical landmark, which deteriorated due to the use of the population and its proximity to the sea. The first works were the relocation of its residents to houses. Later there was restoration of the part that would become the center of arts and culture at the Palais des Rais (Fort 23), and restoration works continued from 1987 to 1993 and the palace opened to the public in 1994. The Palais des Raishas included several exhibitions and cultural activities throughout the year, and these were in addition to the revival of concerts on the occasion of religious holidays. Forty assistants are ready and on standby for the maintenance of the palace, including 6 supervisors, architects and security officers.

- The Palace of "Lala Khadawej Al Amiaa" is also known as "Dar Al Bakry" and it is located in the Lower Casbah. It was built during the Ottoman period. Some references indicate that the palace was one of the properties of "Hassan Khaznaji" one of the members of the council with Dey "Mohammed bin Othman", which dates back to 1792 CE. Some novels also indicate that Hassan Khaznaji bought several buildings next to the palace and attached them to it to enrich, conserve and decorate it so he could give it to his youngest daughter Khadawej. The palace was subjected to many transformations, the first of which was its conversion to the technical body of traditional Algerian craftsmanship in 1947. Later it became the Museum of Popular Arts since the independence of Algeria until 1987. Later, the Lala Khadawej Palace became a national museum of folk arts and traditions, including thousands of traditional artifacts such as jewelry, copper, textiles, clothing, socks, baskets, furniture and all that relates to Algerian cultural heritage.

- Palace of the Dey: This palace is the residence of the last Algerian Deys, the most important residential building inside the Casbah, which also includes two mosques and a another palace and a store for salt. It is located in the north-eastern corner of the city of "Casbah". It was known for several transformations. After its construction during the second half of the sixteenth century, and especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it retained a military function. It was also the headquarters of the Diwan Council, which was guarded by a garrison of the Janissaries army, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Dey "Ali Khoja" built a palace to protect himself from a popular revolution.

- "Dar Hassan Pacha": this palace was established by the Dey "Hassan Pacha" son of Khairuddin Barbaros in 1791 next to the Ketchaoua Mosque and opposite Dar Aziza, and the palace is located at the bottom of the Casbah. It is also considered the main center of the city because it contained the official state authorities during the French occupation, and then became the seat of the governor general of Algeria. He made changes to its original structure except the salons that bear the spirit of the Ottomans. After independence, it was occupied by some of the state's authorities, then the Directorate of Religious Affairs, and then it became the headquarters of the Supreme Islamic Council, and is currently undergoing restoration and reform.

- "Dar Mustapha Pasha": this palace was established by the Dey Mustapha Pasha in the period 1798 - 1805 after receiving land from his uncle (Photo 3), Hassan Pasha invested in it with construction, agriculture and irrigation projects which covered all the southern regions of the capital, some of which still bear his name. Dar Mustapha Pasha was the residence of the French consul "Duval" before the occupation of Algeria, passing by successive French leaders and personalities after the occupation of Algeria, and in 1848 it was turned into an orphanage sponsored by nuns. In 2007, Dar Al-Sultan took advantage of restoration after neglecting it for years, and later proposed it to be a national museum of miniatures (Golvin, 2003).



**Photo 3.** Some palaces in the "Casbah"  
Source: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/yves\\_jalabert/sets/72157661266930844](https://www.flickr.com/photos/yves_jalabert/sets/72157661266930844)

### **CASBAH in need of tourism development**

The urban heritage of the city of Casbah is a fertile area for the development of cultural tourism since it has a cultural heritage of urban architecture and constitutes an important tourist offering which is attractive to local tourists and also foreigners (Fadli & Sibley, 2014). What is needed is a study of incoming tourists to realize the importance of tourism development related to the challenges of sustainability. The city of Casbah is an open museum for various visitors to discover its varied and rich urban heritage with its various social and urban dimensions.

The report of the Directorate of Tourism of the State of Algeria indicates that the city of Casbah received between 300 - 500 tourists a day during the eighties, but tourists were prohibited to visit it in the nineties because of the political and security problems that prevailed. In more recent years, the city of Casbah has received between 200-400 tourists a day, and it is expected to rise dramatically to reach 1 million tourists per year (Direction de Tourisme et d'artisanat, 2015). Most of the tourists coming to Casbah are French industrialists and businessmen, who make up a large proportion of the total number of tourists who are interested in discovering this urban heritage area in the capital of Algeria.

The increase in the influx of tourists to the city of Casbah is due to the contribution of civil society, which represents the resident families who host and welcome the tourists into their houses so as to introduce the authentic customs and traditions of the Casbah community (Dris, 2005). Males account for the largest numbers of the incoming tourists compared to females, which is attributable to men's greater interest in urban heritage when this is compared to women.



The abundant number of retail shops and popular markets in the city of Casbah has increased the number of tourists coming from different destinations, especially the states close to the state of Algiers, the capital, such as Boumerdès, Tizi Ouzou, Tipaza, Blida, etc., and a significant proportion of tourists come in from the eastern, western and even southern states, and most of them are aged between 23-40 years of age. Many are construction and architectural students and researchers and some are hotel, tourism, archeology and sociology specialists, as well as the foreign tourists who are mostly aged 40-65 years of age. The latter want to identify urban heritage, which is commensurate with their income and ages because most of them are retired, and this is not forgetting the delegations and scientific missions of various disciplines coming from all parts of the globe.

From a time perspective, there are seasonal local tourists arriving during the period from November to June in absolute terms, while foreign tourists, according to the data of the Tourism Directorate of the State of Algiers, come mainly from May to August when the climate is moderate and costs are relatively low, especially when it comes to overnight stays. Local tourists during this period are interested mainly in the practice of beach tourism. The presence of specialized shops in traditional crafts such as pottery, industry of copper, footwear, traditional clothes such as silk embroidery, stitching of "Burnous" and "Djellabiya" reflect the city's customs and traditions and these increase the influx of tourists.

### **CASBAH challenges impeding tourism development**

The most important problems faced which are impediments for the most part include:

- The fact that there are many studies which serve to address the conservation of the urban heritage of "Casbah", but they do not fit in with its privacy; this has led to improper methods being adopted and have exacerbated the deterioration of structures.
- Lack of local community participation in the projects of restoration and rehabilitation of the city's heritage buildings, resulting in a slow implementation of the plans.
- The absence of serious interventions by the local authorities to preserve the urban heritage of the city of Casbah.
- The limited role of UNESCO on conservation and restoration through only granting funds.
- That the State intervenes to restore heritage buildings such as known mosques and palaces but not the rest of the residential heritage.
- The complex nature of property ownership is a stumbling block, which has further deteriorated the residential buildings owned mostly by individuals.
- The lack of an organizational plan for the traffic movement in Casbah is problematic as there is an overlap between the movement of cars and that of men, especially in both the trade streets of Bab El Oued and Bab Azoun, as well as a significant deterioration of roads and key routes.
- That buildings that have collapsed have turned into urban waste of different types (household and commercial).
- The spread of chaotic trade has been an obstacle to the development of traditional crafts and the sales thereof.
- The lack of service facilities, green spaces, public squares and meeting places, resulting in further deterioration of already poorly maintained buildings.
- The lack of maintenance of the various networks (drinking water, sewage, electricity, etc.) has led to threats to the health of the population and the degradation of the natural environment.



- Maclean (2008) asserts that “Some people deliberately damaged their homes in the mistaken hope of resettlement in state housing elsewhere—a consequence of a now-abandoned bid to rehouse the population and allow a mass renovation unimpeded by residents. Also, an expectation persists that the state will pay for all repairs, residents say. Most Casbah homes are owned privately, many of them by absentee landlords.”

In light of these problems, it is difficult to develop the urban heritage tourism in Casbah, so it is necessary for some recommendations to be provided; this is an international challenge that various cities of the world aspire to achieve.

### **CASBAH preservation from a sustainability perspective**

In order to preserve and develop the Casbah urban heritage ensuring sustainability as an international challenge, it is necessary to combine and balance the triad of sustainable development with the requirements of tourism and the preservation of Casbah urban heritage, which can be achieved through the following recommendations within two major focal points:

#### **Preservation of urban Heritage**

- The need for involving the local civil society with all its stakeholders in all programs of restoration and maintenance of Casbah buildings from the study stage up to implementation as key actors who know and live in "Casbah" is critically important.
- Stimulate support from associations concerned with the protection of heritage (Casbah Buildings Landlords Association, Sidi Abdel Rahman Thaalabi Foundation, Society of Let's Save Casbah and the Civil Society) and encouraged them all to face up to the deterioration of most of Casbah buildings and to thus play an active role in maintaining them.
- Ensure the issuance of urban plans on urban heritage and its spatial framework with various interventions, and determine the role of various institutions and bodies in the restoration, maintenance and preservation in an integrated and coordinated framework.
- The need for laws to prevent the occupation of the residential buildings threatened by collapsing, and place pressure on their owners or local groups, if so agreed by the owners, for an urgent intervention in order to maintain and preserve these buildings.
- Ensure the expropriation related to some of the deteriorated residential buildings in the favor of the Ministry of Tourism to so they can exploit them as cultural or touristic places of value.
- The necessity of preparing a permanent urban plan to protect Casbah urban heritage, in which all the new laws and concepts of how to protect the various heritage items are identified, especially in the historical cities inhabited by the population.
- Encourage original and genuine owners to renovate their homes by establishing a national heritage fund whose mission it is to raise funds to preserve and restore degraded buildings, as well as obtain financial assistance provided by the State.

#### **Sustainable Tourism Development of urban Heritage**

- Determine the roles and responsibilities of both the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tourism on developing the necessary measures to implement the conservation and restoration plans for Casbah urban heritage development and its sustainability for future generations.
- Construct modern four- and five-star hotels to ensure high-quality tourist services for foreign tourists so as to diversify accommodation facilities, as well as restaurants of traditional cuisine which are listed in heritage buildings – after they have being restored and maintained.
- Implement a tourist plan that takes into account the interests of the local population on the one hand, and achieves effective modern and integrated tourist facilities.
- Investment in touristic historic and archaeological buildings to equip them to provide a distinctive touristic presentation of Casbah, such as (museums, palaces, mosques, castles, etc.) and illuminate them for night viewing. Also recruit tour trained guides to introduce them



as this encourages the expansion of these tourism investments on most of the buildings concerned.

- Encourage handicrafts and traditional industries to be offered to tourists in order to achieve social and economic benefit through exhibitions, festivals and markets, and to activate the tourism movement on the one hand and to introduce handicrafts and highlight the importance of traditional industries in attracting tourists to the Casbah.
- Conduct awareness campaigns to identify the value of urban heritage and the nature of tourism and the relationship between them, and encourage young people to maintain all that they inherit by providing ongoing regular heritage lessons and lectures by specialists in the field.
- Develop an efficient and effective traffic plan for Casbah, which takes into account the allocation of corridors and roads for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Develop a radical solution to the chaotic trade and legalize it to allow traditional crafts and industries in "Casbah" to be developed.
- Restore and rehabilitate the waterfront district to be a touristic destination on the national, Maghreb and Mediterranean levels and tailor make it to the specificities of its location on the Gulf of Algiers and the port's presence beside it; this will make it a unique and important touristic destination in the future.

## Conclusion

Today, Casbah city faces many challenges. After undergoing many changes since its inception up to the present time within the various local urban policies, the international attention has created greater drives toward sustained World Heritage status. However, the numerous urban interventions in Casbah have caused many problems which have exacerbated the rapid deterioration of its heritage and historical buildings, and of course also affected the social and economic life of the city. This unique and distinctive urban heritage needs to be preserved and maintained in scientific and rational ways. The roles and responsibilities need to be determined within an urban plan for Casbah which also takes into account its spatial relationship according to legal texts issued which support such types of intervention.

In accordance with the global challenges, the tourism dimension must be one of the priorities of the intervention policy because such world heritage sites represent an important tourist attraction in Casbah, which is highlighted by its multi-important tourism potential if it is rationally planned. This importance of tourism increases with the participation of the local community in all urban interventions supporting the development of traditional crafts and industries for which "Casbah" is known since its inception. It is preferred by domestic and foreign tourists because they reflect the and a lifestyle, customs and traditions, etc, and so as to avoid the negative repercussions and effects on this sensitive part of Algeria, we aspire to achieve the its needed sustainability.

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