The aestheticization of the urban landscape of Constantine’s safeguarded sector: actors, forms and appropriation

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Keywords: aestheticization; historic urban landscape; public space; appropriation of spaces; the safeguarded sector; Constantine.

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to analyze the multiple forms of the aestheticization of the historic urban landscape, as well as the impact of these practices on the quality, image and identity of heritage spaces, and their appropriation by users and residents. The safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine has undergone a profound aestheticization operation of its built heritage and public space. However, some operations were deficient and they have damaged the historic urban landscape. This raises questions about the reason of this situation, especially, the threat to the image and the identity of the heritage areas. Several hypotheses can be envisaged, including the lack of heritage culture among public stakeholders, ignorance of the status of the safeguarded sector and some management aspects. To confirm this, we adopt a qualitative approach based on the use of several data collection instruments concerning several intervention operations undertaken during the last decade. This research shows that the process of the aestheticization has had several qualities and shortcomings in terms of the requirements of respecting the historical character, the quality of public spaces, and the response to the expectations of users. Understanding the gap could lead to a renewal of the interventions’ modalities in order to preserve and modernize correctly the heritage areas.

1. Introduction

In its broadest sense, the notion of aestheticization is part of a vast field that includes all areas subject to the imperative of beauty and aesthetics. It is for many researchers, the reference to formal qualities related to the injection of aesthetics (Brady, 2007) and symbolic values (Margier, 2016), thus contributing to the revalorization of the attention paid to the appearance (Gravari-Barbas, 2000; Levitte, 2010; Nouvel, 1994), character of urban and suburban communities (Duncan, 2004), politics (Acquarelli, 2019), cultures (Carre and Oeyen, 2011), objects and artworks (Guinard, 2010), behavior (Margier, 2014).

The aestheticization of heritage components gaining strength in recent urban requalification policies, and it has become a subject of collective hysteria (Puech, 2014, p.85). In this sense, preserving and modernizing the "Historic centers [...] which illustrate, perhaps more than other urban spaces, the components of the aestheticization of the city" (Gravari-Barbas, 1998, p.175), pass as an example of good "sustainable development" practices (Garat et al., 2019).

From what aestheticization can cover, there are various similar processes, particularly embellishment, transfiguration, artification, and artialisation (Bouchier, 2013). All these elements express a kind of staging of the urban area by actions and aesthetic treatment (Dessouroux et al., 2009, p.174), such as design (Paetzold and...
Rollet, 2011), public art and advertising (ARMAND, 2018; Chaudoir, 2008; Margier, 2016), building relooking through modernizing the external appearance, landscaping (Beaudet, 2013, p.155; Romeyer, 2018) based on predominantly vegetal practices, and rethinking the city as an ecosystem.

These practices aim to create desirable atmospheres for users, through "ambient aestheticization" (Mons, 2013), and to ensure that the environment matches the current aesthetic tastes and lifestyles of these users (Launay and Nez, 2014). They could allow requalifying the spaces from an economic and tourist point stand (Gravari-Barbas and Jacquot, 2018), socially related to the improvement of the quality of life (Sokoloff, 1999) and ecological (Thibaud, 2018). In this sense, they are often considered "an opportunity to give a second breath to the old centers" (Simard et al., 2009), particularly its public space (Lolive, 2006, p.164).

A number of researchers have focused on the impact assessment of aestheticization approach, which despite being a means of embellishment and urban valorization, it can lead to unexpected and undesirable effects.

Aestheticization has been studied in relation to its social impact, it can affect the social composition of neighborhoods with as a corollary the emergence of a gentrification phenomenon (Minassian, 2010), and also it leads to a general renewal of social relations by promoting the reappropriation of public spaces and cohabitation (Margier, 2014). Other authors stress the inverse effect when gentrification could be a generator of an aestheticization process (Launay and Nez, 2014).

The desire to make a heritage beautiful for tourism-oriented purposes could be a cause of museumization and folklorization (Drouin, 2010). M. Gravari-Barbas (2000) has highlighted "symptoms" of the cities' aestheticization, which correspond to a privatization of public spaces by actors, through the marking and qualification of territory.

The aestheticization policies are gaining a special place in territorial marketing and the competitive market (Sylvie and Vles, 2010). This makes several European cities, such as Lyon and Barcelona, an exemplary urban model in this instrumentalization of heritage, to "make it a kind of scenographic decor for the pleasure of visitors" (Drouin, 2010).

Through the intermediary of landscape, aestheticization can play a significant role in establishing new frameworks of sensibility, influencing the aesthetic gaze of the observer on his living environment. The landscape is therefore seen as "a key player in the aestheticization of territories and the city" (RAMOS, 2017), and it is an opportunity to question a better urban living environment.

Accompanying what dominates the international scene, and particularly national: Algiers (capital of the Arab culture 2007) and Tlemcen (capital of Islamic culture 2011), through which cities compete in terms of the beauty of the heritage elements. Constantine was no exception. This trend of updating the heritage of the safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine has led to the reshaping of its urban landscape, by an aesthetic treatment of its built and non-built components, with a particular place for formal quality and landscaping. However, these projects have never lacked criticism from users and residents, regarding the alteration of the heritage's identity, the trivialization of the landscape result, and other "symptoms" that we will address in our article.

A number of academic researchers have studied the intervention operations on the architectural and urban heritage of the safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine during the last decade, some of them have focused on the issue of management of heritage conservation operations, which using the diagnostic tools, they were able to identify the reasons for success and failure of the projects undertaken (Fantazi et al., 2019; Fantazi, 2021). Other has chosen the evaluation of the consequences of the cultural event 2015 on the city as a whole, before, during and after its implementation, as well as highlighting the place given to heritage for its reuse for cultural purposes (Messali, 2016). However, the question of the impact of these interventions on the quality of the urban landscape, and the appropriation of these aestheticized spaces by
users and residents remains a field poorly explored by our local researchers, which seems to be an opportune subject to make our contribution.

The paper aims to study the multiple forms of the aestheticization operations and their impact on the quality, image and identity of urban landscape of the safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine. All the intervention operations that have affected either the built environment or public space undertaken during the last decade were selected for evaluation. To achieve the objective, various documentary resources were analysed, data were collected through interviews with public stakeholders, designers and users, and in situ observations were carried out.

2. Materials and Methods

Firstly, we reviewed previous research related to our subject, with the aim of grasping the central role played by aestheticization in the valorization and devalorization of heritage spaces at different scales. Then, we were interested in revealing the various forms of the aestheticization of the safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine, based on fieldwork (collection of data and information related to the multiple projects) supported by interviews with some Public stakeholder involved in these projects; this step was preceded by in situ observations to establish a summary table including only the completed projects. Finally, we studied the impact of these practices in terms of enhancement or devaluation of the urban landscape of the safeguarded sector of Constantine, both in its symbolic, aesthetic, and functional dimensions, through a qualitative survey carried out with the users and residents, supported by an overlay of photographic clichés displaying the image of the heritage places "before and after".

Twenty-four (24) people have participated in the interviews. They were local public stakeholders involved in the different operations, residents and traders who visit the site frequently, and some users present on the site who were randomly selected during the preliminary observations as regulars of the site. The group is composed of twelve women and twelve men, of all ages and different socio-professional categories.

3. Results

3.1 Contextualization of the aestheticization approach of the urban landscape of the safeguarded sector of Constantine

The safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine is marked by a double image linked to two distinct but inseparable parts: the lower part in ruins and of a bad reputation, and the upper part in good condition but congested (Modernization plan for the metropolis of Constantine, 2011).

The last decade has been marked by several heritage enhancement programs, which have revealed a particular interest in aesthetic actions, and the majority of which are registered in the event Constantine Capital of Arab Culture 2015. The latter has given great importance to the heritage component on the perimeter of the protected area, with seventy-three (73) projects, including rehabilitation, restoration, development, reconstruction and restitution, etc.

This program is very ambitious for the residents of Constantine, especially by being "one of the major operations initiated in Algeria after independence on the built heritage" according to the director of the national Office for the management and exploitation of Cultural Property. It articulates a cultural policy, city policy, and aestheticization of the historic urban landscape. Indeed, it was a promising project that aims to "enhance the great cultural and historical wealth of the city" (Minister of Culture, 2013).

This event has generated a strong and unprecedented commitment from public authorities. The state has mobilized the necessary human and financial resources, with a very intense holding of meetings between the actors and officials of the city.
Several organizations from different sectors were invited to share their experience, according to their areas of expertise: Nine (09) project owners collaborate with twenty-one (21) preselected design offices, in order to succeed in this challenge.

The main actors of the local scene are obviously the various directorates and offices of the project owner. At the head of these organizations, the Directorate of Culture is the owner, and "the wali" is the first responsible and holder of power throughout the city. On a larger scale, the Ministry of Culture is the first responsible for the country (table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National scale</th>
<th>Local scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Culture of Algeria</td>
<td>The Wali of the City of Constantine</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Directorate of Culture the various directorates (Nine (09) project owners)</td>
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3.2 The aestheticization forms of the urban landscape of the safeguarded sector of Constantine

Several devices have been put in place to aestheticize the urban landscape of the safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine: rehabilitation of public facilities, pedestrianization of streets, greening project, lighting plan, installation of a contemporary artwork, renewed urban furniture, and relooking of the urban facades in the respect of the old image; for each operation corresponds a specialized project owner (see table 2). Therefore, many parts of the safeguarded sector have been staged by aesthetics; thus, the image of some places has been completely changed.

Today, these parts, as meeting and exchange spaces between the users and the residents, exert a significant attractiveness by the opportunities they offer in terms of event or permanent animation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural infrastructures</th>
<th>Development and rehabilitation of public facilities:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Rehabilitation of the former residence of the wilaya and its reconversion into a center of Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reconversion of the House of Culture EL Khalifa into a Palace of Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Rehabilitation of the Medersa and its reconversion into a museum of the great historical figures of Constantine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reconversion of the EX-MONOPRIX building into a museum of modern and contemporary art</td>
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<tr>
<td>** Project owner: Department of Public Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Rehabilitation and equipment of the Regional Theater</td>
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<td>** Project owner: National office for the management and exploitation of protected cultural property</td>
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<th>Transport infrastructure</th>
<th>- Lighting/ Enhancement of bridges ** Project owner: Directorate for the urban planning and construction</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Rehabilitation of the Sidi Rached bridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Independence bridge/ TransRhumel</td>
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<td>** Project owner: Directorate of Public Works</td>
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</table>
Frequent field trips have allowed us to establish a map including only completed projects (see Figure 1). It reveals that all projects are concentrated on the upper part of the The safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine.

**Development Accompanying program**
- Development of the Bardo site
  ** Project owner: Directorate for the urban planning and construction
- Landscaping: realization of an urban park at the Bardo site
  ** Project owner: Environment Directorate
- Restoration of cultural heritage: squares, Zaouias, mosques, alleys
  ** Project owner: National office for the management and exploitation of protected cultural property

**Tourist infrastructures Reception**
- Redevelopment of the Cirta hotel
  ** Project owner: Eastern Society of Tourism Management
- Realization of a Museum of the handicrafts
- Realization of a House of the handicrafts
  ** Project owner: Department of tourism and handicrafts

**Other structures and equipment**
- Rehabilitation of urban real estate heritage
- Eradication of satellite dishes
  ** Project owner: Directorate of Housing
- Renovation of the old post office
  ** Project owner: Directorate of the Post, Information and Communication Technology

**Figure 1. Projects and interventions of Aestheticization**
3.2.1. Aesthetic valorization of the built heritage

The real estate heritage occupies an important place in the landscape of the safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine. It includes housing, shops, cultural, administrative, and religious facilities. It contributes, as Lynch (1964) emphasized, to the atmosphere of public spaces, through the way in which the façades of buildings are architected and organized.

It represents exceptional testimonies of the different civilizations that have marked the history of the city, particularly the last three (Arab-Muslim, Ottoman, and French). The indelible imprints have not left indifferent the country's officials, who have placed it among the priorities for several years. This operation of building’s aestheticization is considered the biggest operation of the post-independence period. It was launched as part of the preparations for the event: Constantine Capital of Arab Culture 2015. The safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine has benefited from a rehabilitation program of several monuments (Figure 2) and various buildings along the main streets: Street "19 Juin", Street "Didouche Mourad", boulevard "Zighoud-youcef", Street "Laarbi Ben M'hidi", Street "Tatache Belkacem", a total number of 156 buildings (Report from the directorate of housing of Constantine, 2014).

The initial objective was to undertake heavy rehabilitation works, which were subsequently limited to relooking interventions, due to the pressure of the very short time reserved for the realization of the projects (April 2015), so the works included the revamping of the facades and applying a finish coat of paint.

These light operations of rehabilitation have certainly favored a staging of the typological diversity of the historic built framework, improving the urban landscape of the rehabilitated streets, which is made aesthetically beautiful, clean, and more coherent.

3.2.2. Aestheticization of public space: towards a new image of heritage spaces

a) The recovery of the street "DIDOUCHE Mourad" for the benefit of users

A pedestrian-friendly policy has been carried out during these latest interventions in public spaces. In order to offer users places entirely dedicated to walking and shopping in complete safety.

The street "DIDOUCHE Mourad" (ex-street of France) is one of the structuring streets of the safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine; a commercial street that counts of more than 190 formal stores, and a hundred of street vendors.

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1 The ancient fabric of the city of Constantine has undergone major transformations carried out by the colonial urban policy during the years 1854-1903. This operation involved the decomposition-recomposition of the colonized city (Belabed-Sahraoui, 2004), which completely changed and remodeled the urban landscape of the historic city.
Due to the street configuration and particularly its size, that one does not lend itself well to large mixed flows of vehicular, pedestrians, street vendors, and stores. This made it constantly congested.

During its recent redevelopment, the designers complied with the directives of the safeguarding and enhancement plan of Constantine’s safeguarded sector (it was established in 2011), which gave major importance to pedestrian movements and the reduction of the use of cars within the safeguarded sector.

The street become pedestrian, and it lost the asphalt of the roadway and the small sidewalks covered with heterogeneous materials, in favor of new paving in artificial and anti-slip stone. This operation was also accompanied by the rehabilitation of all the facades of the buildings, and the resolution of problems related to sanitation (Figure 3).

All along the Street, the public square "TREVENUE AUGUST", which was invaded for longtime by the automobile as a parking space (for residents and traders) has benefited from rehabilitation that has impacted its connection function. This intervention has contributed to palliating the inherent inhospitable character of the old layout and also has improved the image and the landscape of the street. The installation of a few benches, chosen for better integration into the urban landscape and to preserve the identity of the place, has encouraged visitors to stop and meet, "It becomes a breathing space for me, I rest here regularly ... I settle down to wait for a friend, consult my phone or make a phone call .... In the rare cases, I amuse myself by looking at the rehabilitated facades and the wrought iron of the balconies" (Woman, 34 years old) (Figure 4).
b) The Breach: from a place of passage to an ideal place of attraction

The place called "the Breach" is particularly privileged in recent development work. It represents the main entrance to the safeguarded sector and the articulation node that links two zones with particular historical importance: the medina or old city, with the Coudiat, which constitutes the extension of the colonial city.

During the French colonial period, this place was built in three different spaces and an underground space underneath. Then, it has undergone some transformations, particularly the appearance of new installations and new buildings, with the progressive decrease of the vegetation in favor of the mineral.

The recent redevelopment of this entrance will be divided into several projects according to the different forms:

- A first part of this entrance, called Martyrs' Square (ex-Lamoriciere Square), in reference to the army General Louis Juchault de Lamoricière, one of the outstanding figures of the Algeria's conquest. In this square, the city council decided to raise a statue to the glory of him after his death. After the independence of Algeria, the French army’s engineers transferred the statue to France.

- This place has been staged by the installation of contemporary artwork, displaying an image defended as symbolically strong, and reconciling residents of the city with their history and their memory. The chief of the city (the Wali) considered it as the most convincing from among seven (07) proposals (Figure 5).

![Figure 5. The entrance of the safeguarded sector arranged and staged](image)

The artwork is composed of four elements displaying a book and a pen (representing science and knowledge), a sun (conveying the idea that science is light), and a spiral path connecting the base with the top, on which are hung pigeons symbolizing peace.

The artwork rests on a stone base in the form of steps referring to the topographic specificity of the site, on which the historical city was built.

The designer justified his choices in relation to three points:

- The inscription of the artwork in the history of the city, by referring to the nickname of the city "city of knowledge and scholars", which was the cradle of a privileged elite: writers, poets and scholars; like "Abdelhamid Ibn Badis", who was an icon of the Muslim reformist movement in Algeria, which strongly claimed for independence of Algeria against french colonization.

- The nature of the event, which was a cultural event, so the actors have been looking for a model that represents culture and knowledge.

- The symbolism of the place, by highlighting the idea of a strong link between knowledge, the struggle against the colonizer, and life in peace as the result of a long path full of sacrifices.

However, the design was criticized by some interviewed, who qualified it as "standard and lack of creativity, because of the simple components always used to symbolize the day of knowledge" (Man, 31 years old).

For the second part of the entrance, on either side of "Ben Boulaid" Avenue, bordered by pedestrian walkways, there has the redevelopment of a square dating from the
colonial era, commonly called "Dounia Taraïf " before becoming now "Ahmed Bey" Square (Figure 6). The work carried out concerns the coating of the floors and the installation of urban furniture, with a respect for a certain unity and continuity of pedestrian surfaces.

According to the former head of the architecture Department at the Directorate for urban planning and construction, the installation of new benches in artificial stone and the nature of the floors’ coating were chosen in respect of the identity of the city, where the natural stone is a local material the most used in the construction of traditional houses within the safeguarded sector.

Figure 6. The Ahmed bey square

On the other hand, the treatment of the pedestrian circulation space on both sides of the avenue has accentuated the autonomy of the walk, of discovery and meeting in a protected space. The presence of trees on the edge of the alleys marks a boundary with car traffic and offers pedestrians a sort of protective screen and a delimitation of the space that is devoted to them.

This idea of separation is reinforced by the installation of railings between the street and the sidewalk. The flower boxes and the greenery integrated into the repaved pedestrian walkways bring a few touches of nature that embellish them.

The pedestrian has become a spectator during his journey, enriched by an opening on the environment he is walking through, particularly after the removal of inappropriate visual obstacles (lampposts, fence walls of the two squares, etc.) (Figure 7).

Figure 7. The Breach, Opening on the environment
c) The light plan, a determining element in the aesthetics of the night landscape of the safeguarded sector of Constantine

Today, the illumination of heritage is one of the essential tools of urban aesthetics, to which public actors have resorted in several historic cities, particularly French cities (Mons, 2000). In the safeguarded sector of Constantine, several spaces-witnesses, cultural and administrative (bridges, buildings, and trees, etc.) were primarily illuminated at night, displaying a modern look, combining the red, green, and white, the three colors of the national emblem of Algeria. Because of its great capacity to modify the visual perception of the night landscape and even develop a sensitive look of the citizen on the architectural memory of the city (Mallet, 2010). The lighting plan of the safeguarded sector has also allowed highlighting of the heritage spaces and architectural wealth of the city.

This operation is part of an overall project of illumination of the bridges of the old rock, which was subsequently expanded to include several other monuments inside and outside of the perimeter of the safeguarded sector, such as the war memorial, the tunnels, and cliffs of the cornice of the city, etc.

The choice is therefore made for the most visible monuments, the most present in the urban landscape, and particularly the most symbolic in the city's identity (Figure 8). The impact of this project on the image of the old rock is significant, it offers aesthetically pleasing nighttime arrangements. Thus, these spaces are transformed into an outdoor museum in which the main objects exhibited have been highlighted.

![Figure 8. Artistic illumination of bridges and artwork. Source: LAFIT, 2016](image)

### 3.3. Aesthetization Effects and Appropriation of Spaces:

Beyond this diversity of aestheticization modes for different parts of the safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine, it is essentially in the image's promotion and in the public space's appropriation that the impact of aestheticization will be the most visible.

That appropriation could be measured according to Simard., et al (2009) through three dimensions: material, symbolic and political. Therefore, it seems interesting to us to grasp the way users qualify the choices made by public stakeholders in terms of the formal aesthetics for these aestheticized spaces, as well as to identify the positive and the deficiencies effects of this policy in relation to the use and the identity of the places.

#### 3.3.1 New installation as a source of tension

The pedestrianization of the street "Didouche Mourad" was accompanied by installing fixed bollards at the entrance and all along the street. The aim was to prevent cars from accessing it or parking there; and thus, put an end to the problems of saturation and traffic jams on the street, which have suffocated it for a very long time.

The decision made was without concertation or coordination with residents who were used to parking cars near their homes, nor with the traders who have to load and unload their goods every day, choice becomes a source of tension, even conflict. Both residents and traders have described this act as an abuse on the part of the public authorities, which led them to aggressive and oppositional action, even to insurrection (Lolive, 2006,
p12). When they proceed to remove several bollards, which cost a huge budget "it is not fair from them... I waited until nightfall and I removed two fixed bollards in front of my house, I have to park my car there" (Man, 37 years old) (Figure 9).

This behavior judged uncivil has caused a gradual return of the car to the street, on which have appeared signs of advanced degradation, just after a few months of its inauguration.

Figure 9. The emplacement of bollards was removed

3.3.2. New social composition

For "Ahmed Bey" Square, the new layout has totally changed the social structure of this space where informal commercial activities were developing spontaneously without any planning. The removal of the fence has erased the border between the interior and the exterior, which has encouraged passers-by to enter, thus promoting social interaction, "Before, I never dared to go in there, for me it was dirty and a home for delinquents. Now it's completely different, it's clean and friendly, especially when organizing events there. The removal of the fence has made it visible and remarked, which invites us to visit it"(woman, 45 years old). Today, it has become a mixed and intergenerational space shared by different categories of people, belonging to different age groups (Figure 10).

Figure 10. The "Ahmed bey" square before and after rehabilitation

On the other hand, the redevelopment has induced new forms of unpredictable appropriation due essentially to the imbalance between the urban furniture installed (the benches) and the number of visitors, who use the borders at the foot of the trees and the steps connecting the two parts of the square as seats.
During the summer, and especially during the very hot days, this space is very exposed to the sun, and without shelters and without shade of the trees, become completely deserted.

3.3.3. New visual identity

The embellishment of the central public space, which is part of the entrance of the safeguarded sector, has helped to provide a new visual identity, particularly through the installation of contemporary artwork and several kiosks at the public square "Ahmed Bey". The design of these components is reflected in a way to be closer to the architectural and historical context of the place. They seem to be inspired by the rich and varied history of the city, as they will be part of the history of these heritage spaces for future generations. According to the former head of the architectural department at the Directorate for urban planning and construction, "the company Euro-Japan [...] produced this type of prefabricated kiosk, spread throughout the country, kiosks in kit form, easy to assemble and disassemble, flexible [...] it was much more a question of saving time and adaptability, with of course a little touch of local decorative design, ornaments, cornices".

3.3.4. Alteration of the places' identity

Some rehabilitated projects within the safeguarded sector do not cease to feed discussions, particularly in relation to the colossal sums of money spent, without bringing an added aesthetic value, but rather, participating in an alteration of the historical character of the place and a devaluation of the urban landscape.

The new streetlighting model introduced in several parts of the city, especially in the suspended bridges and the "Breach" is becoming a subject of tension and conflict (Figure 11). Many interviewees do not like it and prefer the old model, which they consider classic and much better adapted to the historical features of the places, without forgetting to mention the oversized height that displays a significant visual imbalance.

Impressions are increasingly clear against this model, "which distorts, destroys and degrades the landscape and tends to trivialize the historic site classified as a safeguarded sector" (Woman, 41 years old), especially by finding this new model everywhere in the city of Constantine.

![Figure 11. The new street lighting model in the safeguarded sector](image)

In terms of the building, the rehabilitation-reconversion of the cultural center "Mohammed Laïd Al khalifa" ex Citroen Garage (dated from the French colonial period 1929-1935) was violently criticized.

The strategic place in a crossroads avenue, its monumentality and architecture offer this monument a singular visibility, both for pedestrians and for motorists, as well as they make it a landmark and a striking element of the urban landscape. All the values (historical, architectural, cultural, symbolic, and artistic) obtained during several years
require to intervene with prudence and full respect of the existing. Its second reconversion in this last decade (January, 2014 - July, 2014) was marked by a major transformation of its external envelope, when a big part of its facades has been redone (Figure 12).

According to project owner the added elements were chosen in reference to the architectures of previous civilizations, which have marked the history of this city: a cladding with an arabesque pattern for almost the entire exterior of the building referring to the Arab-Muslim art, an imposing tetrastyle pronaos with monumental columns and a pediment inspired by the Greco-Roman civilization.

Faced with this form of intervention justified in relation to the history of the city, the result was traumatic, and it constituted "an erasure of memory and alteration to all values accumulated during about a century of time, particularly, being a category of industrial building in a particular period of world history (mechanical industrialization)" (Man, 54 years old).

4. Discussion

The analysis of the data collected and their transpositions in the field show a great gap between what was planned and what was actually executed of the program. Although, it was well distinguished from the previous operations as for the extent of the assumption of responsibility of the heritage components in the safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine, but it must be recognized that it has not succeeded in its entirety.

In the light of the crossing of theoretical data dealing with project success and failure factors (Slevin, Pinto. 1986), the results of our field survey (interviews and impact analysis) showed that the complexity of the projects and the tight deadlines envisaged to implement the program have led to the precipitation, by the adoption of exceptional procedures for the award of projects.

In order to simplify the action, the local officials turned to the "mutual agreement" as a solution to save time in relation to the long administrative procedures. In the absence of any competition and of the competency requirements, this way of acting had repercussions on the cost and the quality of interventions, as it gave the chance to the actors (company and engineering office) not having the necessary experience, and which lacks qualification and intellectual resources as regards conservation and intervention on the heritage.

This may explain some practices of irremediable disfigurement of the image of historical monuments without a particular concern for its multiple values, as indicated in the reply of an architect concerning the intervention of relooking of the city hall of Constantine, "Do they have any more details on this project of the city hall? Has it been followed by a qualified architect? I don't recognize the original colors of the facade anymore" (Man, 37 years old), someone else added "I didn't like the new paint. There is
no uniformity in the colors. It has become similar to the buildings in the New City" (Man, 40 ans).

On the other hand, in terms of management, some choices and proposals are marked by the hegemony of the "All Wall" (Messali, 2016), expressing the dominance and sacralization of the political opinion lacking the skills and qualification on the expert opinion (qualified architect or others). Also, with each change of the authority (succession of three ministers) a new vision was established, a lot of ideas and approaches that come into be archived, in favour of other new approaches which were put in place.

The involved public stakeholders confirm the difficulty of implementing some operations for several reasons, notably the conflicts with the residents and users following the different decisions taken: the new organization of the streets (especially the street "Didouche Mourad"), intervention on occupied buildings (rehabilitation of facades), the long duration of some facade rehabilitation witch were started but never finished, where the scaffolding is still in place since 2013, and it has become a facade element that affects the quality landscape of these places.

A last important point, around which the opinions of the interviewees were unanimous, it was the failure to take care of the built heritage of the lower part very damaged, despite its value of antiquity and its figuration in the initial program as "requiring urgent safeguarding", the image of this part is degrading more and more having consequences on the physical, functional and especially visual integrity of the historic urban landscape.

5. Conclusions

During the last decade, the safeguarded sector of the city of Constantine has benefited from several significant projects, which have clearly contributed to the embellishment and reshaping of its urban landscape, as well as valorization and staging of some heritage spaces by the aesthetic.

The data collected from the actors and the field visits allowed us to identify the multiple forms of aestheticization on the built environment and public space.

Our survey results join those of similar research related to the double impact (positive and negative) of aesthetization operations on the built environment and public space. According to some users' responses, the superposition of the photographic clichés "before and after" have shown that these interventions have brought to the spaces a surplus of beauty and an aesthetic added value, it has made them more attractive and less aggressive to the look. They have also favored their material and symbolic appropriation by the users particularly for the case of the public places. These several interventions operations seem to be inspired by the history of the city of Constantine; also, they carry symbolic connotations of independence, freedom and sovereign.

In such particular context, as the intervention on a safeguarded sector, the absence of a heritage culture among actors (qualification and intellectual resources regarding the intervention on a classified heritage) would have a negative impact, when it reached the image and the identity of the heritage places. The latter see their local particularities diminished and their identity values threatened. This poor result is also attributable to the insensitivity of public stakeholders, due to the ignorance of the status of the safeguarded sector, because they didn't do anything to correct the situation.

Undertaking a requalification action on an occupied site requires a consultation with users (residents and traders), as well as an awareness of the common interest of the interventions, in order to avoid any tension and conflicts between the actors. In these situation, the users demonstrate various reactions; either through resistance to contested projects, in different ways (Berry-Chikhaoui and Deboulet, 2002), or aggressive and oppositional actions, even to insurrection (Lolive, 2006).

References


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