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Saharan Urban Identity in Algeria: A Lever for Attractiveness and Territorial Marketing

Abstract

This document discusses the creation and preservation of urban identity in Saharan cities, focusing on balancing modernization with the preservation of socio-cultural, architectural, and urban heritage to create an authentic image for these cities. It emphasizes the importance of adapting to the harsh desert climate and incorporating local customs into urban planning. The study uses Kevin Lynch's method of urban analysis to assess the urban spaces in the Ziban region of Algeria, identifying issues such as inaccessibility, lack of safety, absence of mixed-use development, illegibility, and a lack of distinct character. The document argues for the need to integrate elements of Saharan identity into urban design and territorial marketing to create unique and sustainable urban environments.

Keyword: *Urban Identity, Saharan Cities, Heritage Preservation, Sustainable Urban Planning, Cultural Integration*

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Əlcəzairdə Sahara şəhər kimliyi: cəlbədicilik üçün bir qol və ərazi marketinqi

Xülasə

Bu sənəd Sahara şəhərlərində şəhər şəxsiyyətinin yaradılması və qorunub saxlanmasıdan bəhs edir, bu şəhərlər üçün orijinal imic yaratmaq üçün müasirləşmənin sosial-mədəni, memarlıq və şəhər irsinin qorunması ilə balanslaşdırılmasına diqqət yetirir. Sərt səhra iqliminə uyğunlaşmağın və yerli adətlərin şəhərsalma prosesinə daxil edilməsinin vacibliyini vurğulayır. Tədqiqat Əlcəzairin Ziban bölgəsindəki şəhər məkanlarını qiymətləndirmək üçün Kevin Lynch-in şəhər təhlili

metodundan istifadə edərək, əlçatmazlıq, təhlükəsizliyin olmaması, qarışıq istifadə inkişafının olmaması, oxunmazlıq və fərqli xarakterin olmaması kimi problemləri müəyyən edir. Sənəd unikal və dayanıqlı şəhər mühitləri yaratmaq üçün Sahara şəxsiyyətinin elementlərinin şəhər dizaynına və ərazi marketinqinə inteqrasiyasının zəruriliyini müdafiə edir.

Açar sözlər: *Şəhər Kimliyi, Sahara Şəhərləri, İrsin Qorunması, Davamlı Şəhər Planlaşdırması, Mədəni İnteqrasiya*

Introduction

The creation of urban identity occurs through stable conditions such as cultural heritage (traditions), societal needs, and geographical, climatic, and topographical conditions. This urban identity must be highlighted through the combination of insightful urban design and the ability to adapt to changing conditions (Sağlık & Kelkît, 2017).

From antiquity to the present day, cities have acquired a specific personality shaped over time by historical factors, including physical, cultural, socio-economic, and urban planning aspects, with their unique qualities evolving and transforming (Gates, 2011; Leontidou, 1990)

This is particularly true for Saharan cities, which represent a rich heritage, especially in Saharan urban planning. Preserving this heritage requires an in-depth understanding of the image of ancient Saharan cities through local customs and adaptation to the harsh arid climate. This can shape the brand of a Saharan city, reinforced by efficient territorial marketing that addresses the challenges posed by accelerated urbanization and globalization. These factors subject Saharan cities to adaptation challenges, particularly in terms of urban planning, infrastructure, housing, and essential services.

Research

In the context of the rapid urbanization of Saharan cities, a key issue arises: how can infrastructure modernization and evolving lifestyles be reconciled with the preservation of the cultural and architectural identity specific to these regions? Given this reality, the objective of this study is to identify a tool for preserving Saharan socio-cultural, architectural, and urban heritage by balancing modernity with the preservation of Saharan identity. The aim is to create a perceptive and authentic image for Saharan cities, leading to a modern territorial marketing strategy marked by the distinctive Saharan identity.

Literature Review

The Saharan urban identity has developed over centuries under the influence of the desert climate, cultural exchanges, and the region's economic dynamics. Traditional architecture and urban planning, adapted to extreme climatic conditions, play a crucial role in defining this identity (Freund, 2007). For example, the compact earthen dwellings and narrow alleys of Ghardaïa help maintain cool temperatures in summer while providing protection against sandstorms. This architectural adaptation illustrates the close relationship between the natural environment and Saharan urban design. This environmental anSaharan cities are distinguished by their rich cultural and social fabric, shaped by the coexistence of different ethnic communities. This diverse social structure is expressed through traditions, rituals, and local crafts. In Marrakech, the traditional souk and Jemaa el-Fna square serve as spaces for social interaction and cultural transmission (Akhchine, 2024) . Similarly, Ouarzazate, with its kasbahs and film studios, highlights the fusion of local heritage and the creative industry, contributing to the region's cultural influence. This cultural context enriches economic activities, which, in turn, reinforce urban identity.

Economic activities, particularly trade and tourism, play a crucial role in maintaining this identity. The trade of handcrafted products such as carpets, pottery, and jewelry provides a source of income for many local families. In Ghardaïa, the traditional market remains a pillar of the local economy while preserving ancestral craftsmanship (Bouguedoura et al., 2015). Moreover, the development of tourism in cities like Marrakech and Ouarzazate contributes to the promotion of architectural and cultural heritage, enhancing their international attractiveness. However, economic growth also brings urban challenges, particularly in terms of spatial management and the preservation of local identity.

In this context, an analysis of Biskra's urban space using Kevin Lynch's method highlights several challenges related to contemporary urban planning. According to Lynch (1960), the quality

of urban space relies on five key elements: accessibility, safety, diversity, legibility, and distinctiveness. In Biskra, poor accessibility is reflected in inadequate transportation infrastructure, limiting mobility within the city. The safety of public spaces, especially at night, remains a concern for residents. Additionally, the lack of mixed-use development and architectural monotony reduce the appeal and vitality of residential neighborhoods (Kherrou, 2022). Finally, the legibility of the urban fabric is compromised by inadequate signage and an incoherent spatial organization. These findings highlight the need for an urban approach more in tune with local specificities.

In response to these challenges, integrating Saharan urban values into future development projects is essential. The use of local materials, the design of public spaces that encourage social interactions, and the promotion of architectural heritage can help strengthen urban identity while meeting contemporary needs. For example, the rehabilitation project of Ghardaïa's historic center illustrates how modernity and respect for local traditions can be reconciled (Bendjelid, 1998). Such an approach would allow for the creation of urban environments that are both sustainable and deeply rooted in their cultural context.

Saharan cities, located in desert regions, are heavily influenced by climatic and geographical conditions, which shape both lifestyle choices and urban planning. This vast territory, spanning several North African countries—including Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Mali, and Niger—features urban forms adapted to these extreme environments. Among them, the Mozabite urbanism of Ghardaïa (Algeria) serves as a remarkable example. Its architectural and cultural layout, perfectly adapted to climatic constraints and respectful of local customs, reflects an ancestral expertise that harmonizes functionality with territorial identity (Figure 01).

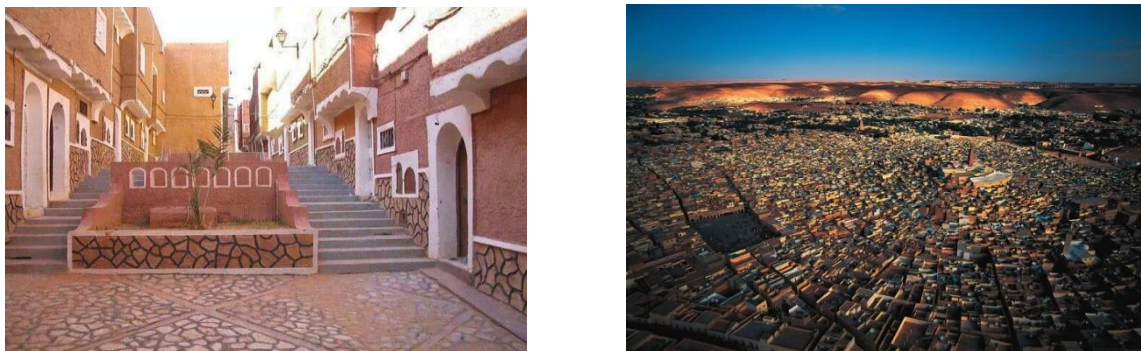


Figure 1. Authentic Mozabite Urbanism Adapted to the Harsh Arid Climate in Ghardaïa (Algeria)

The beautiful cities of Marrakech and Ouarzazate in Morocco represent a typical model of Saharan territorial marketing thanks to the image and Saharan identity adapted into the external urban design (Figure 02)

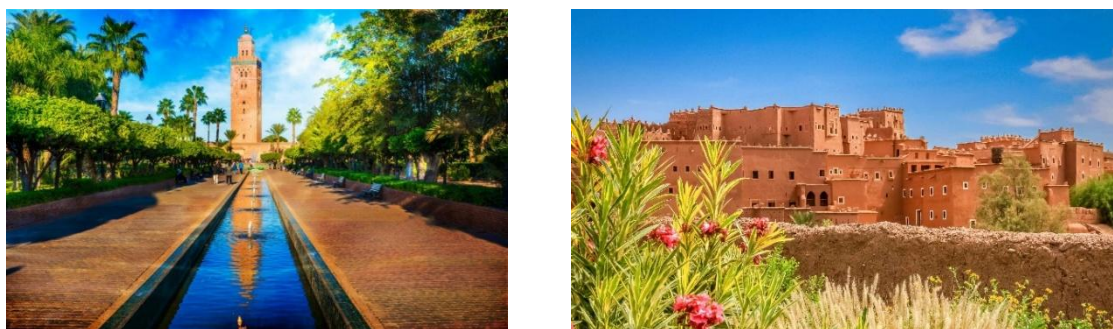


Figure 2. Identité urbaine à Marrakech et Ouarzazate (Maroc)

Traditional Saharan architecture is distinguished by the use of local materials such as stone, clay, and sand. These materials enable the construction of buildings adapted to extreme climatic

conditions. Thick walls provide thermal insulation, while flat roofs capture the coolness of the night. Additionally, the narrow alleys of Saharan cities create shaded areas, reducing daytime heat.

The compact urban planning of historic cities like Ghardaïa, Tamanrasset, and Ouarzazate helps preserve cool temperatures and promotes natural air circulation. The close proximity of neighborhoods and homes also supports a communal way of life while limiting exposure to the arid climate.

Cultural diversity is a key characteristic of Saharan cities, which host Berber, Arab, Tuareg, and other ethnic communities. This diversity is reflected in the languages spoken, local customs, and social practices, creating a rich and varied cultural fabric (Gearon, 2011).

Saharan traditions and customs, inherited from Berber and Arab cultures, are expressed through cultural festivals, traditional music (such as that of the Tuareg group "Taghawit"), and folk dances. These artistic expressions play a crucial role in preserving local identity.

Local craftsmanship is a pillar of Saharan urban identity. The production of carpets, pottery, and jewelry reflects skills passed down through generations. These handmade crafts symbolize the deep attachment of the inhabitants to their traditions.

The economy of Saharan cities has historically relied on a combination of subsistence and trade. In the past, these cities served as transit points for caravans connecting sub-Saharan Africa to the Mediterranean world. Today, although this commercial role has evolved, modern trade and mining operations play an increasing role in regional economic development.

Tourism represents a major economic driver, attracting visitors from around the world to explore desert landscapes, oases, and historical sites. However, this growth presents challenges in preserving urban identity and protecting the natural environment, requiring sustainable strategies to balance economic expansion with respect for local heritage.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Urban Analysis Method

This study is based on Kevin Lynch's urban analysis method, developed in his book *The Image of the City* (1960). This approach aims to understand how residents perceive and organize their urban environment. Lynch identifies five fundamental elements that contribute to creating a clear and coherent mental image of a city: **paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks**.

This method stands out for its ability to enhance the **legibility and accessibility** of urban spaces, facilitating orientation and social interactions. Its application helps propose urban improvements that strengthen both urban identity and residents' well-being.

As part of this research, the analysis focused on:

- Mapping the key elements of the urban landscape.
- Evaluating the **legibility and spatial organization** of the city.
- Observing **social interactions** within public spaces.
- Proposing **urban developments** to optimize connectivity and neighborhood identity.

2.2 Description of the Study Area

The study area is located in the **Northeast of the Algerian Sahara**, specifically in the **Ziban region**, at the southern foothills of the Aurès Mountains (Berghout & Dridi, 2022). This transitional territory, situated between the folded Atlas Mountains in the north and the desert plains of the Sahara in the south, covers an area of **151,687.51 hectares**.

Geographically, the region is bounded by:

- **North:** The wilayas of Batna and M'sila.
- **East:** The wilaya of Khenchela.
- **West:** The wilaya of Djelfa.
- **South:** The wilayas of Ouargla and El-Oued.

The study area includes **five municipalities**:

- **Biskra**, the capital of the Zibans and the administrative center of the wilaya.
- **Sidi Okba**, the district capital of Sidi Okba, located in **Zab Chergui**.
- **Chetma**, geographically part of **Zab Chergui**.
- **El-Hadjeb and Oumache**, located in **Zab Gherbi**.

This **geographical and urban configuration** provides a suitable framework for applying Lynch's method, enabling an assessment of how **natural and historical characteristics** influence **spatial organization** and the **perception of the urban environment** (Figure 3).

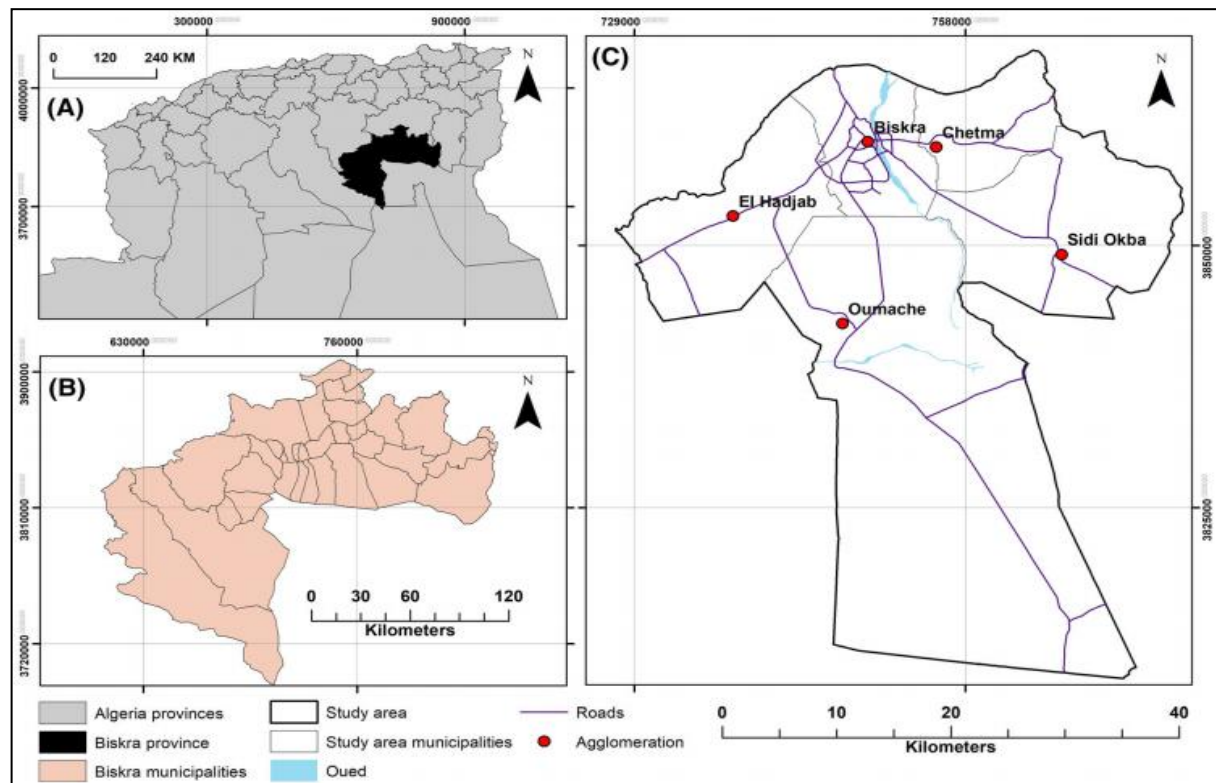


Figure 3. Presentation of the Study Area

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Analysis of Certain Elements of the Urban Space

This section examines several factors influencing the **quality of the urban space** in the study area, highlighting their impact on the **perception and use of public spaces**.

3.1.1 Illegible Urban Spaces (Legibility)

Legibility refers to the clear **readability of the urban structure**, allowing individuals to easily form a **mental image** of a city or place and to identify **well-defined landmarks**.

In the study area, most public spaces appear **difficult to interpret** for users and are **rarely frequented**. **Figure 4** illustrates the lack of legibility in the **public spaces of the northwest extension of Biskra**, emphasizing the **absence** of the five key elements used to read an urban structure, as defined by **Kevin Lynch (1960): paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks** (Lynch, 1995, 2020).



Figure 4. Lack of Legibility in the Public Spaces of the Northwest Extension of Biskra Municipality

From this observation, it can be deduced that the **urban space is not comprehensible as a whole**. For example, the **relationship between the width of the streets and the height of the surrounding buildings** is not comfortable, as the streets are **very wide** and lack compensatory elements such as **rows of trees**. As a result, the **framing of the space is considered uncomfortable** in its own right.

3.1.2 Absence of a Mental Image that Distinguishes a Space (Visibility)

There is a **complete absence** of the key elements that contribute to the **imageability** of an urban space, preventing it from being **characterized** or **distinguished** by **unique features**, including:

- **Pathways without Accompaniment:** These serve as movement corridors but lack defining **boundaries** created by enclosures. There is **no street furniture, playgrounds, or other urban elements** to enhance the experience.

- **Undefined Horizontal Space:** Pedestrian and vehicular boundaries are poorly defined, and the **ground-level experience is disorienting** due to the total absence of **shops**, making navigation confusing.

- **Lack of Defined Edges:** There are **no clear urban limits or structured enclosures**, resulting in **poor spatial organization** and a **lack of orientation**. This leads to an **absence of well-defined districts or neighborhoods** within the city.

- **Blurry Sectorization of Districts and Neighborhoods:** There is no **coherent thematic continuity** in terms of **texture, color, materials, forms, symbols, functions, or activities**, leading to a fragmented urban identity (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. The Absence of Key Elements of Urban Structure (Paths, Edges, Districts, Nodes, and Landmarks)

Absence of Landmarks and Nodes: These elements help with orientation through distinctive features. Figure 6 illustrates the lack of **visibility elements** and **urban space structuring**, as well as the **total absence of urban furniture** (ecological, landscaping, etc.).



Figure 6. Absence of Visibility Elements and Urban Space Structuring

3.1.3 Lack of Urban Character (Identity)

Character is the defining element that distinguishes one space from another, making an urban environment unique and distinctive through an identity that creates a specific and authentic

character. This identity can be socio-cultural, inspired by local history, or architectural, drawing from nature or the climatic specificity of a region, among other factors.

Character can be understood as an ambiance or atmosphere and is rarely considered solely in tangible or intangible terms; both categories are often intertwined. The tangible aspects of character include unity and diversity, roof design, prominent architectural elements, regional or territorial identity, and locally distinctive urban furniture.

An analysis of unity and diversity within the newly urbanized areas of the studied municipalities reveals that the element of character is not realized in either the urban growth planning or the implementation of urban projects. There is a complete absence of any imprint of Saharan urban architecture adapted to harsh climatic conditions or of cultural elements that define the local way of life and spatial utilization.



Figure 7. Absence of Saharan-Character Urbanization Imprints

Figure 7 shows the absence of all components that could give character to the urban space, namely: Despite the presence of a single prototype implemented in northern Algeria, which is not adapted to the climatic conditions of the South, there is a lack of diversity in the architectural styles of urban building facades.



Figure 8. Absence of urban furniture distinctive to the identity of the Zibans

The absence of locally distinctive urban furniture representing the identity of the Zibans, which is not found anywhere.

The lack of urban and architectural designs adapted to the specificities of arid regions, such as roofs designed to diffuse temperature.



Figure 9. Absence of a vernacular architectural style with Saharan character

Figure 9 clearly illustrates the absence of any regional identity (physical, climatic, local construction models, local materials, or a vernacular style). While it is not necessary to have all these elements combined, the presence of some of them could create a distinctive Saharan character and style unique to the Zibans.



Figure 10. Total absence of the socio-cultural identity of the Zibans

Character is both easy and difficult to define because it requires starting from an observation and working on the subtleties of distinctive elements to create a truly specific and authentic identity.

3.1.4 Inaccessibility and Low Permeability (Walkability)

The permeability of the urban fabric promotes and encourages movement and freedom of choice for pedestrians, commonly referred to as "walkability" in English. It is defined by the ability of a space to encourage people to walk without feeling bored throughout their journey, without perceiving the routes as endless, and by offering engaging, functional, and symbolic activities along the way.

To better illustrate this essential element, we analyzed examples of new urban developments within the study area's agglomerations, which appear to have low permeability.





Figure 11. Example of new urban growth in the agglomerations of the study area

3.1.5 Lack of Mixed-Use Development (Vitality and Security)

Mixed-use urban planning integrates various functions such as residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, and recreational spaces within a single area. This approach enhances social interaction, increases urban vitality, and improves the perceived safety of residents.

Unfortunately, this element is absent in most urban extensions, where lifeless facades make walking uninviting and create a sense of insecurity. Figure 12 clearly illustrates the lack of public space vitality in the communes of Oumache and El-Hadjeb.



Figure 12. Lack of Public Space Vitality in the Communes of Oumache and El-Hadjeb

3.1.6 Lack of Enclosure (Security)

Enclosure, alongside openness, is often seen as a paradox. Enclosure prioritizes security at the expense of openness, promoting stability over freedom, whereas openness encourages intellectual and cultural development, allowing for better visibility and fostering a broader perspective.

In an agricultural context, enclosure proves to be both effective and efficient.



Figure 13. Urban spaces lacking elements of public space framing in the Biskra agglomeration

A lack of vertical elements framing the space in most areas undergoing urbanization has created a sense of insecurity among public space users. For example, people experience assaults and undesirable behaviors with their children in the North-West extension, known as the "new city" or "new hub," of the Biskra agglomeration.

3.1.7 Use of Space (Public Presence)

The presence of the public is an undeniable indicator of the success or failure of an open urban space. Moreover, the presence of people in an urban space, along with its spatial configuration, attracts others to frequent the area.

Beyond considerations of age and gender, this practice is divided into two categories:

- **Dynamic activities**, which are more associated with streets, boulevards, and avenues.
- **Static activities**, which are more related to squares, plazas, and public gathering spaces.

3.2 Environmental Quality and Green Spaces

A public urban space that possesses all the necessary attributes cannot be considered successful if the public avoids it, as the absence of people is a sign of failure. Even if an urban space meets a set of specifications that include all the entities and attributes analyzed and discussed in this section, its success ultimately depends on public engagement.

The use of space is a key element in city-making and the design of public spaces.

3.2.1 Environmental Quality in Neighborhoods

Approximately 35% of the surveyed residents live in unsanitary neighborhoods. This significant percentage reflects, in one way or another, the state of waste management and the level of citizen awareness. Residents are expected to participate in waste management efforts and in preserving and protecting the environment.

Meanwhile, 55% of respondents consider their neighborhood's environment to be acceptable.

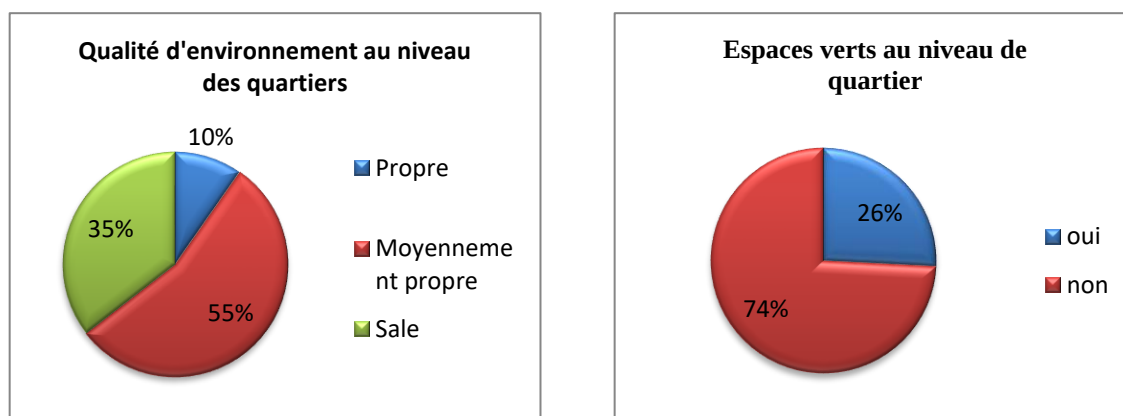


Figure 14. Environmental Quality in Neighborhoods

Only 10% consider their neighborhoods to be sanitary. This highlights the poor management and neglect affecting the immediate environmental quality of neighborhoods, which could potentially lead to epidemics and other diseases.

3.2.2 Green Spaces

Green spaces and gardens play a crucial role in improving microclimates within urban fabrics on one hand, and serve as places for relaxation and connection with nature on the other, thanks to the benefits of vegetation on both mental and physical human health.

Vegetation also contributes to spatial reinforcement and configuration by enhancing the intelligibility of spaces. Consequently, it helps address environmental challenges in urban areas by creating ecological links at the heart of cities and providing recreational spaces.

The newly developed urban areas within our study region lack any form of vegetation, gardens, or green spaces, despite the arid nature and hot climate of the region. This urgent need requires integrating green spaces as a top priority in planning and programming, particularly for arid regions, within urban development and planning tools to prevent ecological disasters.

This form of urbanization, considered anarchic by ecologists due to the absence of green spaces, remains a pressing issue for improving living conditions and avoiding various nuisances or potential health risks.

The green space survey graph (Figure 75, Green Space Graph) shows that:

- A very high percentage (74%) of respondents do not have access to green spaces, gardens, or vegetation in their neighborhoods.
- Only 26% answered positively, which is an alarmingly low percentage.

This lack of vegetation and green spaces significantly impacts air quality and the health of urban residents. Green spaces are essential for both physical and mental well-being.

The urban extensions, known as "new poles" or "new cities" in an ecologically sensitive and fragile arid region like the Zibans, warn of an impending ecological crisis in arid ecosystems in the coming years. This urgent situation calls for immediate action and the declaration of an ecological emergency in both urban growth areas and the Ziban agro-system, which is suffering from excessive agricultural land consumption and overexploitation of groundwater resources.

4. Impact of Urban Dynamics on the Arid Ecosystem and Oasis Agro-System

The rapid growth of urbanization has significant environmental consequences, particularly affecting the delicate balance of arid ecosystems and oasis agro-systems. This section examines these impacts, highlighting major threats such as land artificialization and excessive consumption of natural resources.

4.1 Toward an Authentic Saharan Territorial Identity

Urban expansion at the expense of palm groves has led to catastrophic consequences for the oasis ecosystem of the Zibans and, more broadly, for arid regions. This phenomenon contributes to the worsening process of desertification and sand encroachment in the study area. The initial signs of ecological degradation indicate a situation that will be extremely difficult to control and nearly impossible to reverse unless urgent, strategic measures are taken as soon as possible.

It is crucial to implement proactive policies to safeguard the remaining natural resources—fertile soil, date palm wealth, and biomass—which form the foundation of the Ziban heritage. Preserving these resources is essential not only for environmental sustainability but also for maintaining the cultural identity of the Saharan populations in the Zibans.



A. Urbanization at the expense of the palm grove in the municipality of El Hadjeb



B. The old core and oasis of the municipality of Chetma must be conserved and preserved.



C. Agricultural lands and oases deteriorating due to urbanization in El Hadjeb.

In sensitive regions, it is essential to have a territorial project and to manage multi-scale initiatives involving a diverse range of actors within vulnerable ecosystems. This approach enables these areas to become more attractive, dynamic, and innovative. The need to break down barriers between different sectors and professions facilitates the discovery of new skills and ideas, helping to assess various resources—natural, human, social, and economic. For this reason, we have analyzed the state of public spaces within the study area through the characteristics of their urban identity to enhance this sensitive region through insightful marketing.

Through this approach, the territory can attract investors and tourists while also engaging other stakeholders through various events, including education and training, sports, culture, and health. Two key phenomena shape attractiveness both tangibly and intangibly: tangible mastery and intangible unpredictability.

Building a territorial identity involves linking historical heritage with authentic roots, understanding who we are to better define and fully embrace our ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic identity. This process helps structure the urban morphology, establish a clear identity, and potentially create a brand—though branding is not always necessary. However, it can serve as a unifying factor, bringing together local actors around a specific project.

Authenticity is rooted in differentiation, which is the cornerstone of competitiveness for our territories and cities. The major challenge is attracting entrepreneurs, new talent, tourists, and events while revitalizing traditional trades. To achieve this, it is essential to reflect on our identity and capabilities to conduct a thorough and effective diagnosis.

Territorial identity is not limited to nature, landscapes, or the sea; it is also defined by the people who inhabit the region. Often, we overlook that identity primarily stems from the individuals within the territory. By leveraging these human strengths, we can shape an image that resonates with both internal and external audiences.

The ultimate goal is to gain a deep understanding of real issues on the ground at the study area level, uncover aspirations and expectations, and analyze public perceptions. For these reasons, field

surveys and open, constructive debates are essential to highlight the challenges and future prospects for all stakeholders in our territories and cities.

4.2 Recommendations for an Optimal Urban and Territorial Identity in Saharan Cities

Based on the presented findings, it is essential to formulate recommendations aimed at strengthening the urban identity of Saharan cities by reconciling cultural heritage with sustainable development.

The urban identity of Saharan cities should consider several interconnected elements:

- **The Influence of History and Geography:** Saharan cities have a rich and complex history shaped by extreme climatic conditions, human migrations, and commercial exchanges. These factors contribute to the formation of a unique urban culture and identity, balancing modernity with tradition.

- **Resilience and Adaptability:** The urban identity of Saharan cities is also characterized by a strong capacity for resilience in the face of geographical, climatic, and economic challenges. The inhabitants have successfully adapted to the constraints of the desert environment and continue to thrive despite difficult conditions.

- **Contemporary Challenges:** Globalization and rapid urbanization bring both opportunities and challenges to Saharan cities. Modernization must be accompanied by careful consideration of cultural and natural heritage preservation to maintain a balance between development and respect for traditions.

Lynch Method for Urban Space Improvement

Lynch's approach is valuable for urban planners and architects as it helps them design more coherent and comprehensible urban spaces. The key idea is to enhance the **legibility** of the city—making it easier for residents to navigate and identify its various components. This improves the sense of security, facilitates movement, and strengthens the connectivity between different neighborhoods.

The analysis of a city using Lynch's method follows several steps:

- **Mapping Key Elements:** Identifying paths (streets and main axes), edges (natural or artificial boundaries), districts (distinct zones), landmarks (prominent visual elements), and nodes (points of convergence and gathering).

- **Assessing Urban Legibility:** Evaluating how easily these elements can be identified and how they interconnect. A city where residents can orient themselves easily and where transitions between neighborhoods are seamless provides a more pleasant and secure experience.

- **Observing Social Interactions:** Studying how the configuration of these elements influences residents' movement and interactions. Nodes often serve as meeting places, while landmarks contribute to a sense of belonging.

- **Optimizing Urban Spaces:** Based on this analysis, proposing improvements such as creating new landmarks, optimizing circulation routes, or restructuring neighborhoods to strengthen urban identity and cohesion.

Conclusion

The urban identity of Saharan cities is the result of a complex interaction between geographical, cultural, social, and economic elements. It reflects a deep historical heritage and a remarkable ability to adapt to the challenges of the desert. In the modern context, the primary challenge is to preserve this identity while addressing issues related to rapid urbanization, climate change, and globalization.

Thus, Saharan cities must seek creative solutions to integrate modern urban development with environmental sustainability and the preservation of their rich cultural heritage. Originality and authenticity are key local assets that can contribute to tangible and sustainable development, aligning with each territory's cultural and natural potential.

A thoughtful approach to such an initiative would highlight local expertise, foster wealth creation and decent employment, promote local brands, strengthen urban identity and heritage, and

revive local historiography through an inclusive and solidarity-driven dynamic. By embracing diversity and enhancing territorial competitiveness at the municipal level, these efforts can ultimately lead to the creation of sustainable cities.

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