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THE RESTORATION AND THE REHABILITATION OF MOSQUES AND ZAWIYAS IN THE ANCIENT CITY OF CONSTANTINE, ALGERIA: A POST-2015 ANALYSIS

Dr. Bouguebs Nadira¹, Dr. Khenchoul Toufik²

Abstract:

Constantine's ancient mosques and zawiyas are emblematic of the city's rich Islamic heritage, serving as both spiritual and architectural landmarks. These structures are integral to Constantine's identity, reflecting its historical and cultural depth. Despite their undeniable significance, these architectural gems have suffered from neglect, with the 2015 "Constantine, Capital of Arab Culture" initiative falling short in their restoration. To revitalize these sacred spaces, a comprehensive preservation and revitalization plan is essential. This study aims to develop a strategic approach that balances the preservation of historical authenticity with the integration of these sites into contemporary urban life. By conducting in-depth field research, we seek to understand the current state of these mosques and zawiyas, identifying challenges and opportunities for their restoration and adaptive reuse. Ultimately, this research seeks to position these architectural treasures as key components of Constantine's cultural tourism strategy, contributing to the city's economic and social development...

Keywords: Ancient mosques and Zawiyas; religious historical monuments; Restoration; The ancient city of Constantine.

1. Introduction

The ancient city of Constantine, a treasure trove of diverse urban heritage, is home to a wealth of historical and cultural significance. Mosques and zawiyas, in particular, stand as invaluable testaments to the city's rich past, embodying the unique fusion of cultural, social, economic, and urban civilizations. As noted by Bousmaha (2024), "the construction of mosques became a continuous process, leaving a profound imprint on the city's architectural landscape" (p. 152). Despite their historical and cultural importance, these architectural gems have faced numerous challenges, including natural hazards and intentional and unintentional human violations, leading to their deterioration and, in some cases, loss.

The urgent need to preserve and protect the invaluable architectural heritage of Constantine, Algeria, has garnered significant international attention. This was notably highlighted by the Arab Organization for Education, Culture, and Science (ALESCO), which designated Constantine as the Capital of Arab Culture in 2012. This recognition underscores the city's rich cultural landscape and historical significance, particularly in relation to its mosques and zawiyas, which are essential components of its architectural identity. These structures not only represent the artistic and architectural achievements of past civilizations but also serve as vital social hubs, bridging the city's historical legacy with its modern community (Redjem, 2023).

Despite the commitment to preserving urban heritage, including these historical landmarks, the practical realities of preservation efforts in Algeria—especially in Constantine—reveal a troubling narrative. The city has experienced neglect and marginalisation, which have adversely

¹Ecole Normale Supérieure, Constantine (Algeria). E-mail: bouguebs.nadira@ensc.dz

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-7841-864X>

²- Oum El Bouaghi University, (Algeria). E-mail: toufikhenchoul@yahoo.fr

affected its mosques and zawiyas. These sites, once vibrant centers of community life and religious practice, now face deterioration due to insufficient maintenance and a lack of effective preservation strategies (Lifa, 2024).

The focus of this investigation highlights the status of restoration and rehabilitation efforts for mosques and zawiyas in the ancient city of Constantine, particularly in the context of Constantine as the Capital of Arab Culture after 2015. By examining the effectiveness of restoration and rehabilitation efforts, this study aims to create strategies for preserving and reintegrating these cultural landmarks into the city's fabric. The goal is to harness their potential as tourist destinations, and attractions, to drive economic growth.

This research adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, drawing on previous studies and fieldwork investigation to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and potential solutions for preserving and promoting the historical and cultural value of mosques and zawiyas in the ancient city of Constantine.

2. The Theoretical Frame

The examination of mosques and zawiyas stands as a pivotal aspect within the realm of urban heritage preservation. These sites represent ancient historical landmarks that significantly contribute to the cultural fabric of a region. To conduct a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of these sites, it is imperative to delve deeply into the existing literature that sheds light on their significance and preservation challenges. By exploring the scholarly discourse surrounding mosques and zawiyas, a more nuanced understanding of their historical, cultural, and architectural importance can be attained, facilitating a more informed and comprehensive assessment of their role in urban heritage conservation.

2.1. Understanding Historical Monuments

Historical monuments, a cornerstone of urban heritage, encompass structures of profound historical, artistic, scientific, and societal significance, ranging from architectural marvels to intricate decor and furnishings (Arab Organization for Education and Culture, 2017, p. 04). Designated under Algerian legislation "Law 98-04" for the safeguarding of urban heritage, these monuments are classified as cultural assets, each serving as a testament to a distinct civilization, pivotal historical epoch, or significant modern development. They span a spectrum of architectural feats, encompassing renowned landmarks, intricate artwork, and exquisite Arabic calligraphy, as well as grand religious, military, civil, agricultural, and industrial complexes. This classification extends to prehistoric sites, funerary memorials, caves adorned with ancient paintings, and structures commemorating pivotal moments in national history (Official Journal of the Algerian Republic, 1998, p. 6).

2.2. Mosques and Zawiyas in Algeria

Mosques and Zawiyas in Algeria represent significant cultural and architectural elements that reflect the country's rich Islamic heritage. Rooted in their respective cities, they boast authentic artistic architectural designs that have left a lasting impact on society. These structures played a pivotal role in fostering unity and cohesion among community members during their time of emergence. Furthermore, they served as hubs for the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and religious teachings, while also addressing various societal issues. Today, mosques and zawiyas stand as cherished legacies, contributing to the rich urban heritage of Algerian cities.

2.2.1. Mosques Roles

The mosque is identified as the building in which Muslims worship God. In the very literal sense, ‘masjid’ means a place of prostration, a place of submission, and humiliation to God (Saki, 2018, p. 42).

According to the Algerian legislation, a mosque is a holy place where Muslims come together to pray, recite the Holy Quran, and seek knowledge that enriches their spiritual and everyday lives. It is a religious social institution that performs a public service aimed at promoting the values of the Islamic religion” (The Official Journal of the Algerian Republic, 2013, p. 5). The role of mosques extends to ritual practices, such as ablution, which is integral to Islamic worship (Kouider et al., 2024). Because of their essential and effective role in various aspects including the society's spiritual, educational, and cultural life, the Algerian legislative system defines the main functions of the mosque through Executive Decree No. 13-377 of November 9, 2013. The latter specifies and describes the basic functions of the mosque as follows:

- A devotional spiritual function such as praying, reciting the Holy Quran, praying to God, and maximizing his rituals.
- An educational function involves teaching Islamic sciences, memorizing the Qur'an, teaching its recitation and interpretation, literacy classes, and lessons on Islamic morals, religion, and civic values.
- Cultural functions include hosting lectures and gatherings to promote Islamic culture, organizing exhibitions featuring Islamic literature and arts, and celebrating religious holidays and events.
- A guiding function such as protecting society from extremist ideologies and fostering values of tolerance and unity within the community.

2.2.2. Zawiyas Roles

The Zawiya is a Maghrebi term that refers to an Islamic religious school. It is a place where people isolate themselves in a corner to worship God. It has been identified as an institution of communication between individuals and groups that represents the cultural, security, and religious outlet for individuals and groups (Ben Labad Al-Ghali, 2008, P. 29). The zawiya was also known as

A corner of the mosque that was used for worship, and then the Zawiya later evolved into small buildings where Muslims hold prayers and hold seminars in religious sciences and in which the elders of “Sufi” perform activities such as a dhikr. They are as well as known as religious schools, and guest houses for pilgrims”.(Al-Amari, 2014, p. 128)

In Algeria, the zawiya performed various functions in the reform of the Algerian society ideology has been the major one. Its main roles can be summarized as follows:

- The religious function of the zawiya is limited to the workshops held under the supervision of its sheikh, which focuses on treating matters related to the Islamic Sharia (Amari, 2014, p. 130).
- The zawiya has been universally recognized as a cornerstone of Islamic education, contributing significantly to the dissemination of Islamic knowledge.

2.3.The Deterioration of Mosques and Zawiyas in Constantine: A Multifaceted Challenge

The preservation of ancient mosques and zawiyas in Constantine is critical for maintaining the societal, historical, cultural, and religious identity of the old city. Yet, several factors threaten the security and integrity of these heritage sites, leading to their deterioration.

Natural factors such as climatic elements (rain, wind, and temperature extremes) represent the primary contributors to the deterioration. They compromise the structural integrity of these ancient buildings. The cumulative impact of these forces can lead to significant physical damage over time, necessitating urgent intervention to prevent further decay.

Human actions have also contributed to the decline of these architectural treasures. Historically, efforts to erase the architectural features characteristic of Islamic design have led to alterations that disregard the original aesthetics and structural integrity. Such modifications often stem from a lack of awareness or appreciation for the cultural significance of these sites. Additionally, inadequate management practices and lax enforcement of preservation laws have exacerbated the situation, allowing for continued neglect and alteration without proper oversight.

Economic challenges associated with upgrading ancient mosques and zawiyas are substantial as well. Effective preservation requires clear policies and scientifically informed technical mechanisms. Allocating significant financial resources is essential for investing in the valuation and rehabilitation of these heritage sites. However, limited funding often hampers restoration efforts, leaving many mosques and zawiyas in a state of neglect.

2.4.Origins and Urban Characteristics of The Ancient City

Constantine has been a capital city for more than 2,000 years, a long-standing city throughout many civilizations. That is why its regional presence in the eastern Algerian region makes it one of Algeria's important economic regions.

Historically speaking, considerable controversy among historians and researchers about the history of Constantine arose. Some believe that the city's history remains shrouded in much mystery like other city histories. (Ben Ali Shagheib, 1980, p. 7). Since its inception, the city of Constantine has known the succession of many civilizations making it the scenery of many changes related to the requirements of the historical periods it has witnessed. The city was characterized during its expansion by architectural features that directly contributed to the formation of its historical features, which are rich today.

The ancient city of Constantine initially grew up on a triangular rock in the north and its head in the south, precisely on both sides of the El-Rhimel Valley and Boumerzoug surrounded by obstacles and steep slopes that increased the importance of its position (Benidir, 2007, p. 45). The city flourished and developed significantly in many fields, economic, cultural, and architectural because of its important geographical location across the eastern region. This location makes the city of Constantine a vast area of exchanges between the hill and the desert. As for culture, interest was given to the construction of mosques and zawiyas which were considered places of worship, memorization and reciting of the Qur'an, and the study of various sciences. As for urbanization, where the city expanded within its walls and reached an area of 30 hectares, and had four doors: Bab el-Wad, Bab el-Quantra, Bab el-Jabiya, and Bab el-Jadid.

The architecture of the city was derived from Arab-Islamic architecture that was characterized by a unified, compact style consisting of dwellings, mostly three floors and with

fourteen dwellings, characterized by narrow streets and a lack of green spaces (Sadiq Mazhoud, 1995, p. 26).

The ancient city of Constantine, an example of authentic Arab-Islamic, is an urban heritage that has been captured over time. This fact has reinforced the value of the city's ancient historical monuments.

The rock-based city represented the entire city's boundaries until it fell under the French occupation on October 13, 1837. Like all Algerian cities at the time, the city of Constantine did not have a reconstruction guideline. Hence, it was gradually reconstructed according to the citizens' needs. This was achieved by interfering with the fabric of the mother city by removing a large part of its dwellings that were divided into two parts up and down separated by a newly constructed road in the center (Al Arabi Ben Mehidi Street) and aimed at connecting the Bridge of el-Quantra near the train station to "La brèche square" on which European-style collective buildings were built.

In 1840, the French colonizer began to build a military quarter labeled as el-Kasbah on a surface estimated to be 5 hectares. The French supported their civilian presence by building administrative buildings at the expense of the ancient area of the city, such as the State House which was established in 1849, and the Municipal Palace in 1845, to give the city a purely French character. (Mazhoud, 1995, p. 26).

The several civilizations that the city of Constantine witnessed have made it a fortified war base and the cradle of intellectual and civilizational radiation, especially in the Islamic era.

2.5.Ancient Constantine's Mosques and Zawiyas

The ancient city of Constantine is full of various historical monuments due to the many civilizations that have tracked it over different periods. The most important of these landmarks that currently exist in the city and have preserved its authenticity by confronting the various factors contributing to its natural or human change, the zawiyas and ancient mosques that were interested in the construction of the Ottoman period, which will be identified by reviewing some models of them as follows:

2.5.1. Constantine's Ancient Mosques

The prioritization of mosque construction within cities during the Ottoman rule stems from its pivotal role in urban and architectural planning. These mosques held paramount significance in terms of social, religious, educational, and cultural functions, serving as places of worship, repositories for the Qur'an, and hubs for the dissemination of various sciences. This concerted effort not only facilitated the flourishing of Islamic science and culture among the city's inhabitants but also left an indelible mark on Constantine. The city thrived culturally during this period, and its legacy endures through approximately 12 mosques recognized as historical monuments of the Islamic urban heritage. This study focuses on four of the largest mosques (see Figure 1), exemplifying their enduring influence and architectural grandeur that bear witness to Islamic authenticity up until 2023.

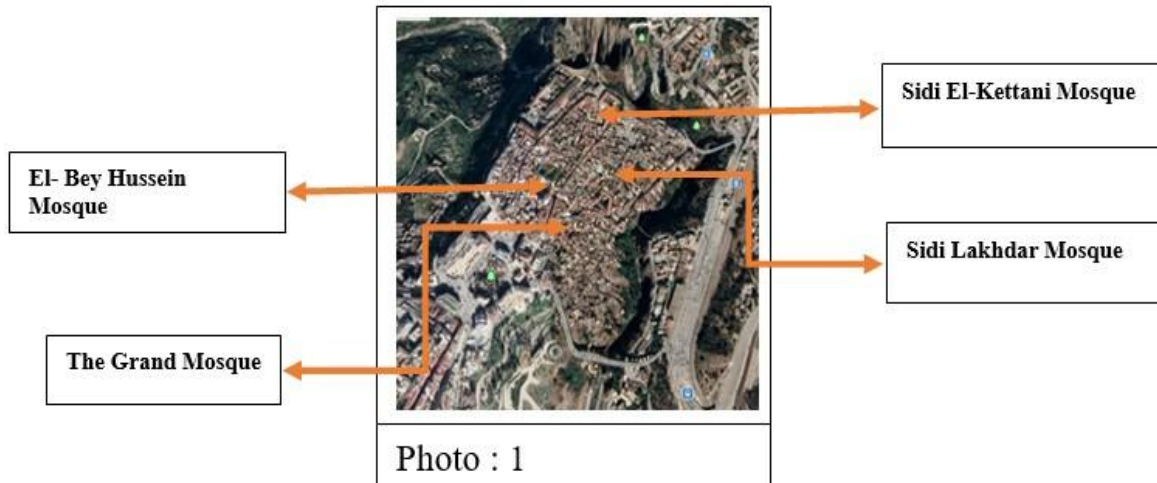


Figure 1: Geographical location of the four Mosques in Constantine (<https://earth.google.com/>)

1.5.1.1 The Grand Mosque

This historic mosque stands as one of the oldest mosques in Constantine, erected upon the "remains of the Roman Temple" (Redjem, 2020, p. 1-9). Constructed between 1136 and 1137 AD during the Hammadid dynasty's reign, it served as the central Friday Mosque, accommodating a significant portion of the city's population. The Grand Mosque is the most prominent historical monument in the Ancient City of Constantine (see Figure 2, Photo 2). During the modernisation of Arabi Ben M'hidi's roads, a portion of the mosque was demolished. Subsequently, the main facade facing the thoroughfare was redesigned while preserving some of its original architectural elements" (Bouchareb, 2006, pp. 139-140)(see Figure 2).



Figure 2: The Grand Mosque Mosques (Author's exploration 2023)

1.5.1.2 Sidi Lakhdar Mosque

Situated on the eastern side of the Old City within the Al-Jazzarin neighbourhood, the Sidi Lakhdar Mosque, erected in 1743 by Bey Hussein bin Hussein, also known as Bouhanak, holds historical significance. Bey Hussein found his final resting place within the mosque premises (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidi_Lakhdar_Mosque). Distinguished by its gracefully curved marble columns and intricately sculpted capitals, the Sidi Lakhdar Mosque stands as a testament to architectural finesse.

This mosque gained additional importance when Cheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis selected it as the venue for the Muslim Scholars Association, where he imparted lessons on the interpretation of the Quran and the Hadith (Centre National des Recherches en Archéologie, 2017). Beyond its architectural allure, the Sidi Lakhdar Mosque has become a religious landmark, boasting both historical and cultural value. It stands as an asset enriching the urban heritage of the ancient city of Constantine (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Sidi Lakhdar Mosque (Author’s exploration 2023)

1.5.1.3 El- Bey Hussein Mosque

El-Bey Hussein Mosque, situated in the Ancient City adjacent to the Ahmed Bey Palace and the Square of Si al-Hawass, holds a rich historical background. Before French colonization, it bore the name “Souk al-Ghazal” Mosque, signifying its proximity to a market where wool was traded and prepared for weaving. Its nomenclature was derived from the adjacent wool market, known as Souk al-Ghazal.

Constructed around the year 1720 during the reign of Bey Hussein, the mosque was identified as the Hassan Bey Mosque in more recent times (Field Investigation of the Researcher, 2023). An architectural marvel, it stands as a testament to Islamic authenticity, showcasing intricate decorations, finely carved domes, stained-glass windows, and an array of tiles and multicoloured ceramics (Centre National de Recherche en Archéologie, 2017) (see Figure 3).



Figure 4: El-Bey Hussein Mosque (Author's exploration 2023)

1.5.1.4 Sidi El-Kettani Mosque

Constructed in 1776 under the rule of Ottoman leader Saleh Bey bin Mustafa, who governed Constantine from 1771 to 1792 (Field Investigation by the Researcher, 2023), the Sidi Kettani Mosque occupies a notable place in the city's history. Located within the weekly market recognized in Constantine as Souk Al-Asir (Al Asir Market), the mosque is more than a religious edifice; it is an architectural masterpiece. Reflecting the authenticity of Islamic architecture, the mosque's marble foundations and key construction materials were sourced from Italy during its construction period, adding a distinctive touch to its structure and design.



Figure 5: Sidi El-Kettani Mosque (Author's exploration 2023)

2.5.2. Constantine's Ancient Zawiyas

During the Ottoman era, in the ancient city of Constantine, the zawiyas played a central role in religious, cultural, intellectual, educational, and political life. Its profound impact on the dissemination of sciences, particularly religious knowledge, and its role in fostering intellectual reform among the city's inhabitants are widely acknowledged. This underscores the significance behind the construction of these zawiyas and the artistry embedded in their architectural planning (Dahdouh, 2017, p. 1171).

Constantine boasted a total of sixteen (16) zawiyas, among them those affiliated with renowned families such as the zawiya of Ouled Fgoun, zawiya Benaamoun, and Zawiya Bendjaloul (Merikhi, 2017, p. 237). Over time, certain zawiyas have stood resilient, maintaining their authenticity amidst various challenges. The most notable zawiyas that have withstood the test of time in the city include:

1.5.2.1 Zawiya Ben Naamoun

The zaouia is situated in the Ancient City of "the Shatt," precisely on Perigo Avenue No. 76. Named after Ben Naamoun, it houses graves belonging to the Ben Naamoun family, associated with the Bayat of Constantine. Referred to as "The Tijaniya", this zawiya continues to serve as a space for the five daily prayers and Quranic teachings see Figure 4.



Figure 6. Zawiya Ben Naamoun (Author's photos 2023)

1.5.2.2 Zawiya Bash Tarzi

This zawiya is situated in the Ancient City of Constantine, named Bash Tarzias after the graves of the Bash Tarzi family it houses. Also referred to as the Rahmaniya zawiya, it was founded by Abderrahmane ben Ahmed ben Hamouda ben Mamesh, commonly known as Bash Tarzi. The zawiya remains a venue for the five daily prayers, coupled with Quranic teachings (see Figure 5).



Figure 7. Zawiya Bash Tarzi (Author's photos 2023)

2.6. Constantine's Mosques & Zawiya: Recognition and Neglect

Despite its rich cultural-historical heritage, Constantine has endured years of marginalization, particularly concerning its historical monuments, mosques, and ancient zawiya. The neglect over time has resulted in the deterioration of this cultural legacy, influenced by a myriad of factors, including natural, economic, and social aspects, as well as inadequate management until December 30, 2012. On this significant date, the Arab Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALESCO) made a pivotal decision, acknowledging Constantine as the capital of Arab culture for 2015, recognizing the city's profound history and cultural significance (Baziz, 2018, p. 39).

As part of this initiative, the ancient city of Constantine witnessed the implementation of various projects aimed at the restoration and valorisation of numerous mosques and ancient zawiya. In 2013, the National Office for the Management and Exploitation of Cultural Property undertook the rehabilitation of 19 mosques and old zawiya (Massai, 2021, p. 16).

Many of these restoration projects have evolved into ongoing initiatives, such as the Sidi El-Kettani Mosque, which continues to serve as an active cultural center as of 2022. However, some mosques, due to closure, have experienced accelerated deterioration. The Sidi Lakhdar Mosque, for example, remains closed, leading to further neglect and decay.

2.7. Assessing Zawiya Restoration in the Old City of Constantine (2023)

In 2013, as part of Constantine's designation as Arab Cultural Capital, twelve ancient mosques were scheduled for restoration and rehabilitation. These projects were completed with an investment of approximately 1.34 billion Algerian Dinars.

As of 2023, four mosques in Constantine have been restored and reopened for worshippers: Bay Hussein, the Grand Mosque, Bastarzi, and Sidi Lakhdar. The Rabia Sharif Mosque has been fully restored and is awaiting its opening.

Five mosques remain under construction: Sidi Maghraf, Sidi Abdelmoumen, Sidi Jleiss, Rural, and Sidi Maimoun (Abdulghani Massai et al., 2021, p. 16). Meanwhile, the construction freeze has been lifted from Sidi Afa and Al-Qatania mosques. Their restoration plans have been approved, including timelines and budget allocations, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Status of Mosques with the Freeze Lifted in the Ancient City of Constantine, Year 2023

Mosque Name	Current Status	Progress Percentage
Bey Hussein	Completed restoration and final handover, open for worshippers	- 100%
Grand Mosque	Completed restoration and final handover, open for worshippers	- 100%
Abderrahman Bastarzi Mosque	- Completed restoration and final handover, open for worshippers	- 100%
Sidi Lakhdar Mosque and its Annexes	- Completed restoration and final handover, open for worshippers	- 100%
Rabia Sharif Mosque	Temporary handover completed	- 100%

Source : Directorate of Culture 2023 + Field Investigation 2023 + Massai, 2021, pp. 17-18.

2.8. Assessing Zawiya Restoration in the the Old City of Constantine (2023)

The restoration and rehabilitation efforts have been allocated to seven (7) Sufi lodges (Zawiyas) in the ancient city of Constantine as part of the events of the "Constantine, Capital of Arab Culture" for the year 2015. The total cost for these operations amounted to 264,380,000.00 Algerian Dinars, intending to enhance the spiritual heritage of the city and transform it into a preferred destination for visitors (Massai, 2021, p. 16).

Table 2 . Status of the ancient Zawiyas in the ancient city of Constantine

Zawiya Name	Current Status	Progress Percentage
Bou Abdallah El-Sharrif Zawiya	Urgent work has been completed - Work has not started due to the financial monitor's refusal to divide shares. A new specifications book is being prepared, including the study and monitoring of the remaining four zawiyas.	0%
El-Issawiya Zawiya	-	-
El-Tayibiya Zawiya	-	-
Bashtarzi Zawiya	-	-
Sayyida Hafsa Zawiya	Study completed, the specifications book for the work is in the preparation stage.	95%
Upper Taygania Zawiya	Study completed; restoration work will resume on 03/09/2023.	50%
Lower Taygania Zawiya	Study in the fourth mission is currently underway, the study office is addressing recorded reservations in the restoration project.	0%

Source : Directorate of Culture 2023 + Field Investigation 2023 + Massai, 2021, p. 19-25.

From Table 2, we notice that out of the seven Zawiyas scheduled for rehabilitation as part of the Constantine, Capital of Arab Culture event in 2015, urgent work has been completed in six of them. However, work is currently halted in four of these zawiyas due to the financial monitor's refusal to divide shares. A new specifications book is being prepared for the study

and monitoring of the remaining zawiyas, namely Zawiya Bouabdallah, Aissawiya, Tayibiya, and Bashtarzi.

The Lower Taygania Zawiya is currently addressing recorded reservations in the restoration project. The Upper Taygania Zawiya has achieved a 50% progress rate, having completed the study, and restoration work will resume on September 3, 2023. Notably, the highest progress percentage, reaching 95%, is observed in the restoration work for Sayyida Hafsa Zawiya.

Despite substantial human and financial efforts by the state to restore and revalue mosques and ancient zawiyas in the context of Constantine, the Capital of Arab Culture in 2015, the goals have not been fully achieved as of 2023, with several unclear reasons, especially concerning the zawiyas. This highlights the urgent need for in-depth and comprehensive studies by experts to understand the reasons behind this partial failure. These studies should serve as a basis for analyzing the technical, administrative, and financial aspects of each project. Furthermore, serious follow-up by decision-makers is required to implement the recommendations resulting from these studies and ensure improvement in future restoration processes.

2.9. Safeguarding and Restoring Mosques and Zawiyas in Old Constantine: A Multifaceted Approach to Preservation

The ancient city of Constantine has long been a privileged place in the Eastern Algerian region as being considered an urban heritage over time. The Ottoman reign represented the period of the authentic Arab-Islamic city which reinforced the value of ancient historical monuments, especially the mosques and antique Zawiyas that the city currently possesses. The safeguarding and restoration of this cultural heritage require a multifaceted approach that integrates historical preservation with modern techniques to guarantee and preserve the value of this heritage in the future. To restore these cultural treasures, a comprehensive strategy is required. This strategy should:

- Integrate historical preservation with modern techniques to maintain the architectural integrity of the structures while enhancing their cultural significance and economic potential.
- Utilize advanced technologies like photogrammetry allows for accurate restoration while preserving aesthetic and historical authenticity (Simou et al., 2023). Furthermore, merging traditional techniques with modern practices ensures that the structures retain their original character during restoration (Jadhav & Kurnthekar, 2022).
- Establish a specialized oversight body supervised by researchers and archaeologists to facilitate the restoration process based on traditional and contemporary techniques. This body would be responsible for ensuring the restoration efforts are conducted for the historical context and the structural integrity of the buildings.
- Restoring these structures can yield significant social and economic benefits for Constantine. By creating attractive spaces for residents and tourists, revitalization efforts can boost the local economy. Moreover, repurposing these sites as vibrant hubs for both locals and visitors can elevate the social and economic standing of the city's inhabitants (Khalfallah & Derbal, 2023).
- Sustainable management of these heritage sites necessitates several key components. First, new legislation should define clear preservation strategies and ensure compliance through specialist oversight, encouraging investment in these sites (Khalfallah & Derbal, 2023).
- Additionally, fostering community awareness through associations that educate residents about the cultural significance of mosques and zawiyas will promote

greater involvement in preservation efforts. Educating local populations on how these structures contribute to national identity can encourage active participation in their upkeep.

- Expediting the completion of restoration projects programmed as part of the 2015 Demonstration of Constantine as the Capital of Arab Culture is also crucial. Providing financial resources to authorities responsible for preserving historical monuments will facilitate necessary restoration and rehabilitation efforts.

In brief, safeguarding and restoring mosques and zawiyas in Old city of Constantine requires a coordinated effort that combines innovative technologies, legal frameworks, community engagement, and economic investment. By addressing these aspects comprehensively, stakeholders can work towards preserving the rich cultural heritage represented by these structures for future generations.

Conclusion

The ancient city of Constantine has long been a privileged place in the Eastern Algerian region as considered an urban heritage over time. The Ottoman reign represented the period of the authentic Arab-Islamic city which reinforced the value of ancient historical monuments, especially the mosques and antique Zawiyas that the city currently possesses.

Despite the attempts and goodwill displayed by the responsible authorities in rehabilitating and valuing mosques and Zawiyas in the ancient city of Constantine as part of the demonstration of Constantine, the capital of Arab culture in 2015, it failed mostly for many vague and unclear reasons. As such, more studies and investigations in this field need to seriously uncover and provide a thorough explanation for what remains unanswered.

It is, therefore, necessary to seek clear mechanisms and policies to preserve the mosques and Zawiyas of the ancient city of Constantine and raise their value. This could be achieved by proposing several processes that require the concerted efforts of all members of the community including researchers and specialists as well as the population and seeking to reintegrate them into the components of the urban fabric of the Ancient City. This would serve the needs of the inhabitants of the city via exploiting this cultural heritage in Economic development processes, especially tourist attractions without compromising the historical value of mosques and zawiyas.

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