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Phd (c) Zaara KHAZENE 1
Dr.Djameleddine BENSLIMAN 2

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**The Role of Heritage in Emphasizing the Features of Cultural Identity:
“the Water Springs in the Kasbah of Algiers as a Case Study.”**

PhD (c)Zaara KHAZENE ¹, Dr.Djameleddine BENSLIMAN ²

¹ University of Mohamed Khider, Biskra, Social Change and Public Relations Laboratory in Algeria. University of Mohamed Khider, Biskra, zaara.khazene@univ-biskra.dz

² University of Mohamed Khider, Biskra, Algeria, djameleddine.bensliman@univ-biskra.dz

Abstract:

This article seeks to examine the role of heritage in illuminating the characteristics of Algerian cultural identity, using “the Kasbah Springs” as a case study. The focus is on the tangible heritage concerning the water springs, which were integral to daily life in the Kasbah, and how these springs embody the inhabitants’ relationship to their environment and heritage over time. Through an anthropological analysis, the paper reviews the significance of the Kasbah Springs not merely as water sources, but as cultural elements that boosts local identity and narrate historical accounts of crafts, customs, and traditions. The research further explores how the preservation of this heritage contributes to the strengthening of national identity and stands against the challenges posed by globalization and urban deterioration. The paper concludes that the water heritage of the Kasbah, epitomized by its springs, serves as a crucial foundation for comprehending Algeria’s cultural identity and fosters intergenerational connections to cultural heritage.

Keywords: Heritage; Kasbah of Algiers; Water Springs; Cultural Identity.

1. Introduction:

The cultural heritage serves as a fundamental pillar of individual and collective identity. It transcends mere material legacies found in historic buildings or artistic masterpieces, representing instead a complex mosaic of values and denotations that evolve over time, forming an essential component of society's collective memory. This heritage acts as a bridge linking contemporary generations to their historical ancestry, serving as a living testament to the experiences, achievements, and aspirations of their forebears. Through the lens of heritage, individuals and communities can rediscover their identity, strengthen their cultural and civilizational ties, and draw inspiration from the past to forge a robust future grounded in those enduring values.

In this context, tangible and intangible heritage emerge as fundamental pillars that enhance the sense of belonging. Tangible heritage is represented by archaeological sites, architectural landmarks, and ancient structures that narrate the stories of the past and provide living evidences of societal development. Intangible heritage encompasses traditions, customs, oral arts, and social rituals that are transmitted across generations, expressing a profound and diverse cultural identity. Cooperatively, these two forms of heritage create a vibrant

manifestation that reflects the richness and cultural diversity of societies, while underscoring the continuous interaction between the past and the present.

One of the most significant examples of tangible heritage that personifies Algerian cultural identity is the “Kasbah Water Springs.” These fountains are not merely ancient natural water sources; they embody a profound historical and social legacy that illustrates their importance in the lives of the Kasbah's residents throughout history. Serving as the lifeblood of the city, these springs provided essential water for agriculture and domestic use, while also acting as a social gathering point that fostered strong interpersonal relationships among the local population. Beyond their practical function, the Kasbah Springs have emerged as a symbol of cultural heritage, reflecting the urban identity of Algerian society and signifying the connection of Algerians to their natural environment and their ongoing interaction with water resources.

The influence of the Kasbah springs permeates various facets of daily life, having borne witness to the social and political transformations experienced by the Kasbah throughout history. In periods of quietude and peace, the springs served as the nucleus of daily life and social engagement, where individuals congregated to converse and exchange ideas. During times of crisis, these springs continued to attract attention, both for their strategic significance and their integral position within the historical fabric of the city. Amidst the modern developments and societal changes in Algeria, the springs of the Kasbah retain profound symbolic significance, connecting contemporary generations to their cultural heritage and reminding them of the identity that is shaped over centuries. Consequently, the “Springs of the Kasbah ” exemplify the importance of preserving tangible heritage, not merely as historical monuments but as vital components of cultural identity that bolster national belonging. They constitute an essential aspect of Algeria's cultural and urban history, having been instrumental in supplying water to the urban populace and fostering the social interactions that emerged around them. Despite contemporary urban advancements, these springs remain a vibrant symbol of heritage that symbolizes the identity of the Kasbah as one of Algeria's oldest heritage sites. Nevertheless, this heritage confronts numerous challenges stemming from neglect and socio-economic changes that jeopardize its existence and contribute to its potential erasure.

In light of the profound transformations experienced by the modern world, cultural and social changes are occurring at an unprecedented pace, presenting complex challenges to the cultural identity of numerous communities. Globalization, rapid urbanization, and the proliferation of modern technology all influence local cultures and exert pressure on societies to safeguard their traditional legacies amid this global momentum. Within this framework, the significance of cultural heritage, particularly tangible heritage, becomes essential in preserving the cultural identity of communities, as it serves as a bridge linking contemporary generations to their historical roots and fostering the sense of belonging.

However, despite its significant importance, this heritage is subject to various pressures, including neglect, disinterest, and socioeconomic transformations that diminish the role of heritage in the daily lives of communities. This raises the question of the extent to which this heritage can continue to serve as a source of cultural identity, particularly in the face of contemporary challenges. In this context, the research focuses on the tangible heritage in Algeria, specifically the “Kasbah Springs,” which exemplifies the heritage that embodies a portion of the cultural and urban identity of Algerians. The Kasbah city, with its ancient alleys, historical landmarks, and renowned “springs,” stands as a vital symbol of the urban heritage of Algiers, reflecting the daily life across various periods in the city's history. These springs, once the primary water source for the residents of the Kasbah, encompass not only a functional aspect but also a profound historical and social legacy.

Accordingly, the research problem is articulated as follows: What is the role of heritage in the preservation of Algerian cultural identity? Additionally, how do the Kasbah of Algiers water springs contribute to this role?

- **Sub-questions**

- In what ways does the tangible heritage of “Water springs of El Kasbah” foster the Algerian cultural identity?
- What role do the springs of the Kasbah play in revitalizing the collective memory of its inhabitants and reinforcing their connection to the cultural past?

- **Research Objectives**

This study seeks to:

- Examining the significance of the "Kasbah Water Springs" within the realm of tangible heritage in accentuating the characteristics of Algerian cultural identity.
- Emphasizing the historical and cultural significance of these springs in influencing the social and economic fabric of the Kasbah city.
- Examine current challenges associated with the preservation of this heritage and offer recommendations for addressing these challenges to safeguard cultural identity.

- **Research methodology**

The research employs an ethnographic approach, aiming to describe the tangible heritage represented by "Kasbah Water Springs" and to analyze its role in emphasizing cultural identity. It seeks to examine the historical and architectural sources linked to these sites and will also draw upon anthropological studies that explore the relationship between heritage and cultural identity to comprehend the social and cultural dimensions of these water springs.

2. Heritage and Cultural Identity: Concepts and Intersections

a. The notion of heritage:

Heritage encompasses "all that the predecessors bequeathed in terms of scientific, artistic, and literary contributions, whether tangible, such as ancient structures, artifacts, and manuscripts, or intangible, such as customs, traditions, and values." (The Universal Arab Encyclopedia, 1999, p. 197).

2.2 Definition of Tangible and Intangible Heritage

- **Tangible Heritage:** As defined by UNESCO, tangible heritage encompasses 'monuments: architectural works, monumental sculptures and paintings, elements or formations of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings, and combinations of features that possess outstanding universal value from the perspectives of history, art, or science' (UNESCO, 1972).
- **Intangible Cultural Heritage:**

According to UNESCO, intangible cultural heritage is characterized as "the practices, conceptualizations, expressions, knowledge, skills – along with the instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated with them – that communities, groups, and, in certain instances, individuals acknowledge as integral to their cultural heritage" (UNESCO, 2003, p. 2).

3.2 Definition of Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is the collection of traits and characteristics that differentiate one society from others, encompassing language, religion, customs, traditions, values, beliefs, arts, behavioral patterns, and other elements that form the unique culture of that society" (الجابري, 2009, p. 25).

3. Monograph of the Kasbah

The Casbah is among the oldest and most significant historical cities in Algiers, with origins tracing back to the Middle Ages. It is regarded as a prominent heritage and cultural landmark that encapsulates the history and culture of Algeria. This ancient district exemplifies a distinctive model of traditional urban organization, where narrow alleys and densely clustered buildings intertwine to narrate the stories of the region's rich past.

The Kasbah is not merely a residential area; it embodies a living memory that represents the social, economic, and political traditions that have shaped various epochs of Algeria's history. Furthermore, it stands as a symbol of resistance and resilience, particularly during the era of French occupation, which was marked by numerous significant events that played a crucial role in the history of national liberation.

2.3 The historical origins and evolution of the Kasbah of Algiers:

The Kasbah stands as one of the most significant historical and cultural landmarks in Algiers, serving as a testament to the city's evolution through the centuries. Originating in the early Islamic period, the Kasbah has experienced substantial architectural and social changes over time. Throughout history, it has functioned as a vital urban center, maintaining its symbolic and cultural importance for the people of Algeria.

1. Origins and Beginnings

Dating back to antiquity, it was initially a Phoenician, subsequently a Berber, and finally a Roman port. The Kasbah represents a distinctive type of Islamic city. Situated in one of the most picturesque coastal locations along the Mediterranean, it overlooks the islands where a Carthaginian trading post was established in the 4th century BC. The site features remnants of a citadel, ancient mosques, and Ottoman-style palaces, alongside traces of a traditional urban structure that reflects a profound sense of community. The Kasbah of Algiers serves as an exemplary model of a historic Maghrebi city that significantly influenced urban planning in the western Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, the Kasbah is positioned on the Mediterranean coast and has been inhabited since at least the 6th century BC, when a Phoenician trading post was founded there. The term Kasbah, which originally denoted the highest point of the city during the Zirid period, is now used to refer to the old town complex of Algiers, enclosed by ramparts constructed at the end of the 16th century, dating back to the Ottoman era (UNESCO, Convention World Heritage).

A historic city that embodies a confluence of cultures and traditions, the Kasbah of Algiers has served as a home to numerous civilizations since its establishment as a Phoenician trading post in the 6th century BC. This rich history has led to a significant influx of immigrants, each community contributing its own architectural style through the construction of distinct buildings. Over time, these diverse influences have culminated in a unique urban center along the Mediterranean coast, beginning with the arrival of the Phoenicians and later the Romans 500 years thereafter. In the early 860s, a Berber chieftain named Bologhine Ben Ziri initiated the first formation of the Kasbah on the site of the former Roman city of Icosium, naming the new settlement Algiers. Following the arrival of the Ottomans, the city underwent reconstruction in the 16th century after a devastating earthquake in 1365. The Maghrebi city ultimately achieved its final configuration by integrating wooden beam techniques that rendered the Kasbah's structures earthquake-resistant. Beyond its stunning architecture, the Kasbah significantly influenced various cities with its distinctive architectural design, shaping lifestyles in North Africa, Andalusia, and sub-Saharan Africa during the 16th and 17th centuries. In the mid-20th century, following French colonization in 1830, the French army demolished the lower Kasbah to facilitate troop access, replacing it with new French constructions. Consequently, in this area, it became increasingly marginalized as power shifted to the new city. The Kasbah also played a pivotal role during the Algerian revolution, serving as a stronghold for the National Liberation Front. However, after gaining independence in 1962, it failed to reclaim its former prominence and once again became a marginalized region (Bettayeb, 2019).

The Kasbah, influenced by successive civilizations including the Punic, Phoenician, Carthaginian, Berber, Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, and Arab cultures, as well as the Ottoman and French empires, also served as a refuge for numerous refugees expelled from Andalusia during the Spanish Reconquista. The inhabitants of the Kasbah, along with the broader Algerian populace, embody a confluence of these diverse ethnic groups, each contributing their customs, traditions, attire, cuisine, arts, and architecture. Consequently, the Kasbah stands as a significant example of a traditional human settlement that encapsulates a synthesis of various traditions within the Mediterranean basin (Bettayeb, 2019).

1. The Kasbah during the Ottoman Era: Prosperity and Urban Development

During the Ottoman era, commencing in the 16th century, the Kasbah experienced significant architectural and cultural transformations. Algiers fell under Ottoman control in 1516, which enhanced the Kasbah's political and economic significance. This period saw considerable development, marked by the construction of numerous public buildings, splendid mosques, and palatial structures. The Kasbah experienced a phase of urban prosperity, during which the Ottoman rulers constructed their palaces and administrative centers in the city's core. These changes influenced the architectural identity of the Kasbah, as the local Islamic style merged with the Ottoman style, resulting in a distinctive character that integrated diverse architectural arts (الإذاعة الوطنية, 2016).

Additionally, the Kasbah was regarded as a vibrant urban center, characterized by bustling markets, artisanal crafts, and traditional industries, which rendered it appealing to both residents and merchants. The Ottoman city is also home to numerous mosques, including the “Kabir,” “Jadid,” and “Ketchaoua” (currently undergoing restoration by the Turkish Development and Cooperation Agency “TIKA”), as well as the “Ali Betchine,” “Al-Safir,” “Al-Sultan,” and “Sidi Ramadan” mosques (عبد الرزاق بن عبد الله, 2016).

2. The Kasbah during the French Colonial Era: Resistance and Defiance

With the onset of French colonization in Algeria in 1830, the Kasbah faced a new array of challenges. The French efforts aimed to change the architectural and cultural identity of the city; however, the Kasbah preserved its significance as a symbol of resistance and resilience. The narrow alleys of the Kasbah served as a refuge for Algerian resistance fighters opposing the French imperialism, transforming the area into a focal point for numerous events associated with the Algerian national movement.

Despite the French occupation's efforts to change the city in accordance with European standards, the Kasbah retained its traditional character, with its castles and walls serving as enduring symbols of the Algerian people's resilience against attempts by the occupier to obliterate their cultural identity. During this era, numerous historical structures were destroyed, and sections of the Kasbah were converted into slums due to intentional neglect; however, the spirit of resistance persisted within its alleys.

3. The Kasbah Post-Independence: Preservation and Rehabilitation

With Algeria's independence, the Kasbah underwent a significant exodus, characterized by families relocating from this neighborhood to urban or municipal areas. In this context, the European apartments of Bab El Oued and El Biar became attractive alternatives. The Kasbah transformed into a site of speculation, with residents renting out their properties. Older inhabitants were supplanted by rural newcomers eager to vacate the area swiftly, with some even opting to demolish their homes to take advantage of the new social housing opportunities.

Restoration efforts were thwarted by insufficient political will. Consequently, the Kasbah rapidly transformed into a congested and endangered area, losing its pivotal significance within the city of Algiers. Nevertheless, it continues to serve as a symbol of resistance against injustice and a repository of collective memory for the Algerian people. In 1992, UNESCO designated the Kasbah as a World Heritage Site and has since engaged in its preservation. Local organizations and residents actively participate in the restoration of the area and the revitalization of social life. The citadel that overlooks the site is presently undergoing extensive restoration.

Despite ongoing efforts to safeguard it, the Kasbah confronts significant challenges stemming from urban decay and neglect. Numerous restoration initiatives have been launched to conserve historical monuments, including mosques and ancient palaces. This restoration seeks to rejuvenate the cultural and social fabric of the Kasbah while maintaining its traditional character, which embodies Algeria's rich history across the ages.

Since its inception in the early Islamic era, through the Ottoman period and the French colonial era, and continuing into independence, the Kasbah has been a vital component of Algeria's history and cultural identity. Over the centuries, it has served as a symbol of traditional Islamic architecture and a hub of social and economic activity. Despite the challenges it has encountered, the Kasbah today endures as a custodian of the Algerian nation's memory, a testament to its history and rich cultural heritage.

1.3 A historical perspective on the Kasbah Water Springs:

Water is an indispensable resource for any civilization, playing a pivotal role in the emergence and development of cities and societies. Throughout history, civilizations have depended on various water sources to fulfill their daily requirements, with natural springs emerging as one of the most significant, as they provided water in a natural and continuous manner without the necessity for advanced technology. Water springs significantly influenced the social and economic structures of cities and were integral to the lives of their inhabitants. The "Springs of the Kasbah" are also a crucial component of the cultural and historical embroidery of Algiers. These springs, or public fountains, boast a rich history that dates back to the Ottoman era, serving as a primary water source for the residents of the Kasbah.

During the Ottoman era, the springs of the Kasbah were established as strategic hubs for the distribution of water among residential neighborhoods and public facilities, including baths and mosques. These springs were integrated into a network of canals that facilitated the efficient allocation of water to the populace. Notable springs such as Ain Sidi Ramadan, Ain Mazouqa, and Ain Bir Shabana remain prominent in the city today. (جريدة الشعب, 2021)

Historical studies, including those by Algerian historian Nacereddine Saidouni in his work **Algeria in History: The Ottoman Era** (1984), suggest that these springs served not only as water sources but also as significant social hubs. Women would congregate to import water and engage in conversation, while men would assemble to perform ablutions prior to prayer (سعيدوني, 1984).

Architecturally, the boulevards of the Kasbah are characterized by their distinctive Islamic decorations. Algerian researcher Farida Ben Youssef, in her article "Architecture in the Kasbah" (2015), asserts that these decorations embody a blend of Andalusian, Ottoman, and local influences, serving as a testament to Algeria's rich cultural diversity throughout history (بن يوسف, 2015).

In terms of cultural significance, Algerian anthropologist Mohamed Bouzian highlights in his study "Water and Society in Ancient Algeria" (2010) that the springs of the Kasbah were linked to numerous popular rituals and traditions. For instance, there existed widespread beliefs regarding the healing properties of the waters from certain springs (بوزيان, 2010).

In the modern context, the springs of the Kasbah represent a significant aspect of Algerian cultural heritage. The Algerian Ministry of Culture's report "Protection of Cultural Heritage in Algeria" (2018) emphasizes that the preservation and restoration of these springs are vital to maintaining Algerian cultural identity amid the challenges posed by globalization and rapid urbanization.

1. Water Springs in Urban History

Throughout history, water springs have played a vital role in the prosperity of human societies, as they were strategically located in cities and villages to fulfill the drinking water and agricultural needs of local residents. Springs established a direct connection between societies and nature, showcasing humanity's capacity to adapt to its environment. Furthermore, the presence of springs fortified the population centers surrounding them, facilitating the growth and expansion of cities.

1. Water Springs in Islamic Heritage

In Islamic heritage, springs held significant importance. They served not only as sources of water but also possessed religious and spiritual dimensions, being integral to daily practices of Muslims, such as ablution and bathing. Furthermore, springs were regarded as blessings granted by Allah to the earth, which rendered them particularly revered by the local populace. In traditional Islamic cities, springs were essential to daily life, supplying water for mosques, public baths, and residences.

4.3. Water Springs in the Kasbah

In Algiers, the Kasbah springs served as a vital water source for the residents of the old quarter. The geographical location and elevated terrain of the Kasbah made these springs a significant factor in the establishment of the population in this historic area.

The springs were strategically located throughout the Kasbah, providing water to residences, baths, and mosques. Beyond their practical function, the springs played a significant role in the social life of the Kasbah's residents, serving as gathering places for social interaction and the exchange of news. The most renowned of these springs are the "Bir Jbah" spring and the "Sidi Ramadan" spring, which have served as the primary sources of clean water in the Kasbah for centuries. (بوزيان, 2010)

5.3. The significance of water springs in the daily life of the Kasbah inhabitants

The springs of the Kasbah served not only as vital sources of water but also as integral components of the social and cultural fabric of the community. These springs functioned as gathering places where men and women convened to collect water or launder their clothes, thereby fostering social interaction among community members. Additionally, the springs significantly contributed to the economic life of the population, as the water

was utilized in various commercial and industrial activities, including fabric dyeing and leather production. (بن يوسف, 2015).

Additionally, the springs were regarded as symbolic locations, imbued with profound religious and spiritual significance. Certain springs were linked to righteous men, and the local populace believed in the healing properties of their waters, rendering them highly valued by the community. These springs played a crucial role in shaping the cultural and religious identity of the Kasbah and its residents.

The significance of the Kasbah springs in accentuating the elements of cultural identity:

1.4 Heritage and Cultural Identity:

In the field of anthropological studies, heritage stands as a crucial concept for comprehending the cultural dynamics of human societies. It is characterized as the aggregate of practices, traditions, customs, knowledge, and skills transmitted across generations, thereby constituting the collective memory of a society. This cultural reservoir encompasses not only tangible aspects but also intangible elements such as language, values, and beliefs, rendering it an essential foundation for the construction of cultural identity. (حجازي, 2013, p. 78)

The significance of heritage in shaping the cultural identity of societies resides in its role as a mirror that reflects the collective experiences and interactions with the environment throughout history. It serves as a bridge connecting past to present, offering individuals a framework for understanding themselves and their relationships with others. Anthropologically, it is a mechanism for the formation and reformation of cultural identity, through which symbols and meanings that differentiate society and define its uniqueness are conveyed.

Amidst rapid global transformations and the expanding of globalization, heritage is becoming increasingly significant as a bastion for safeguarding cultural privacy. Globalization, characterized by the exchange of information, ideas, and practices across borders, presents a challenge to local identities. In this context, the role of heritage emerges as a cultural defense mechanism that fosters a sense of belonging and fortifies social connections within society.

The role of heritage in preserving cultural identity is apparent on multiple levels. At the individual level, heritage offers individuals a source of pride and appreciation for their origins, thereby bolstering their self-confidence amidst prevailing cultural trends. At the collective level, heritage serves as a unifying element, fostering solidarity among members of society through shared values and experiences, which fortifies their cohesion in the face of external challenges.

The interplay between heritage and globalization can be perceived anthropologically as a dynamic process of interaction and adaptation. Instead of considering heritage as a static construct that obstructs change, it can be recognized as a flexible mechanism enabling societies to engage with global influences while preserving their core identity. This creative interaction between the local and the global results in what some anthropologists refer to as “cultural hybridity,” wherein societies successfully integrate new elements into their cultural framework while retaining the essence of their identity (فوج, 2023, p. 82).

In this context, heritage serves as a vital instrument for sustainable development and social cohesion. By safeguarding heritage and reinterpreting it to meet contemporary needs, societies can maintain their distinct identity while participating in global discourse. This nuanced equilibrium between originality and modernity defines societies that successfully endure and flourish in the era of globalization. Furthermore, the examination of heritage underscores its essential function as a means of cultural resistance and adaptation simultaneously. In confronting the challenges posed by globalization, heritage emerges as a platform for cultural negotiation, enabling societies to redefine and assert their identity amidst global cultural currents.

This process can be understood through the concept of “cultural selectivity,” in which societies identify and prioritize elements of their heritage that they consider most significant and suitable for preservation and promotion. This selection is not arbitrary; it arises from intricate dynamics involving power relations within society, the surrounding economic and political contexts, and interactions with other cultures. In this framework, Eric Hobsbawm's notion of the “invention of tradition” is particularly noteworthy, as it describes the process by which new cultural practices are reformulated or even created and presented as integral to the original heritage. This phenomenon is not necessarily a distortion of history; rather, it represents a creative response to

contemporary challenges, aimed at enhancing collective identity and reinforcing social bonds. (أوزكيريملی, A., 2013, p. 36)

Conversely, heritage plays a crucial role in what is referred to as “identity politics.” By emphasizing specific elements of heritage, communities or sub-groups within them strive to assert their existence and legitimacy. This political aspect of heritage is particularly pronounced in post-colonial contexts, where the revival and reinterpretation of heritage become integral to the processes of nation-state building and the consolidation of national identity. Simultaneously, heritage confronts significant challenges in the contemporary era. Rapid urbanization, migration, and swift economic and social transformations all pose threats to the continuity of certain heritage practices. This underscores the significance of “cultural heritage management,” a collection of practices and policies designed to safeguard heritage and ensure its continuity while preserving its vitality and adaptability.

The relationship between heritage and cultural identity in the context of globalization is both dynamic and intricate. While heritage serves as a cornerstone of cultural identity, it is also subject to ongoing processes of reinterpretation and adaptation. This dynamic process allows societies to preserve their cultural distinctiveness while remaining receptive to change and evolution. Therefore, from an anthropological perspective, heritage is not merely a remnant of the past; it is a vital and influential component in shaping the present and future. It equips societies with the means to comprehend themselves and establish their place in an ever-evolving world, all while safeguarding the essence of their identity and cultural uniqueness. In this regard, heritage acts as a bridge between originality and modernity, enabling societies to engage in global discourse without sacrificing their distinctive voice.

2.4 Algerian Heritage and National Identity:

Algerian heritage, categorized by its unique cultural fabric, embodies a profound history of successive civilizational and cultural interactions on Algerian territory. This diverse heritage, encompassing both tangible and intangible elements, serves as the foundation for the contemporary Algerian national identity and reflects the depth of the historical experience of the Algerian people. The components of Algerian heritage range from traditional architecture, exemplified by kasbahs and desert palaces, to visual arts such as rock carvings in TassiliN'Ajjer, alongside handicrafts like pottery and traditional weaving. This tangible heritage is further enriched by intangible aspects, which include a variety of languages and dialects, traditional music and dance, as well as a rich oral literature filled with proverbs and folk tales.

This diversity in Algerian heritage illustrates the succession of civilizations and cultures that have traversed the country. The influence of the Phoenicians and Romans is evident in archaeological sites such as Timgad and Djemila, while the Muslims introduced a new dimension reflected in Islamic architecture, calligraphic arts, and Andalusian music. The Ottoman era further enriched the Algerian cultural mosaic, particularly in architecture, traditional cuisine, and attire.

The cultural influence was not confined to these historical periods; it also encompassed interactions with sub-Saharan African cultures, which enriched the music, dance, and folk arts of southern Algeria. Even the French colonial period, despite its oppressive nature, left an indelible mark on the language, education, and architecture of the major cities, contributing an additional layer to the complexity of Algerian culture.

This cultural and civilizational amalgamation has resulted in the emergence of a multifaceted Algerian national identity, characterized by both authenticity and diversity. In this regard, Algerian heritage transcends a mere collection of historical elements; it is the outcome of an ongoing process of cultural interaction and synthesis throughout history. This diversity serves as a wellspring of strength and cultural richness, enabling Algerian society to navigate contemporary challenges while safeguarding its distinctive identity. From an anthropological perspective, Algerian heritage can be regarded as a vital mechanism for constructing and reinforcing national identity. It offers individuals and society a framework for self-understanding and their relationships with others, establishing a connection that links the past to the present and paves the way for the future. This varied legacy empowers Algeria to engage in contemporary global discourse while maintaining its cultural specificity and unique identity. Algerian heritage, with its myriad components and diverse origins, constitutes a robust foundation for cultivating a national identity capable of confronting the challenges of the modern era. It

exemplifies the capacity of Algerian society to assimilate various cultural influences and integrate them into a cohesive whole, thereby forging a rich and revitalized cultural identity that preserves its authenticity while simultaneously embracing the world.

3.4 The Kasbah of Algiers as an exemplar of architectural heritage:

The Kasbah of Algiers represents a distinctive example of Algerian architectural heritage, encapsulating within its urban layout and architectural nuances a cohesive civilizational narrative that spans centuries. This historical site, perched on a hill with a view of the Mediterranean Sea, serves as a testament to the strategic and cultural significance of Algiers throughout history. The Kasbah's historical relevance is underscored by its role as a center of governance and administration since its inception in the tenth century AD. Its walls and narrow passageways have borne witness to critical historical events, from thwarting European invasions to serving as a hub of resistance against French colonial rule. This historical context has rendered the Kasbah a symbol of Algerian national identity and a wellspring of inspiration for successive generations in their quest for freedom and independence.

Culturally, the Kasbah serves as a mirror reflecting the diversity and cultural richness of Algeria. It encompasses a distinctive blend of ancient mosques, historic palaces, and traditional houses that articulate the social and economic lifestyle of the population throughout various eras. This architectural and cultural diversity has earned the Kasbah a place on the UNESCO World Heritage List, affirming its universal significance as a shared human heritage. (وكالة الأنباء الجزائرية, 2022)

The Kasbah of Algiers vividly exemplifies the confluence of the diverse civilizations that have successively inhabited Algeria. Its architectural style showcases a multitude of influences, beginning with the North African principles of urban planning and their adaptation to the site's topography. Subsequently, the Islamic influence imparted a distinctive character to the architecture, evident in the mosques featuring the Maghrebi style, the inner courtyards of residences, and the intricate Islamic decorations embellishing the facades and doors. The Ottoman era left a significant imprint, particularly in the palaces and administrative structures that merge styles. This amalgamation is apparent in architectural features such as pointed arches, domes, and marble columns, alongside ceramic decorations that reflect a variety of artistic influences from across the Islamic world. Even the French colonial period exerted an influence on the urban landscape of the Kasbah, particularly in its immediate vicinity, where neighborhoods with a European character emerged, intertwining with the traditional fabric of the old city. This intersection produced an architectural and cultural dichotomy that illustrates the tension and interaction between local and foreign cultures.

4.4 The Kasbah of Algiers Water Springs as a distinct heritage element:

In discussing the Kasbah of Algiers, one cannot overlook the significance of its water springs. In the heart of its ancient version, a silent aquatic life pulses through a complex network of springs and wells, the urban arteries that have satisfied the city's thirst for centuries. These wells, distinguished by their unique characteristics and rich history, represent a significant element of heritage that transcends their fundamental role as a water source, serving instead as a reflection of the depth and complexity of Algerian cultural identity.

The fountains of the Kasbah of Algiers are notable for their distinctive architectural design, which harmoniously blends functionality with aesthetics. They serve not merely as water distribution points but as artistic masterpieces intricately carved into the rocks of the Kasbah, adorned with delicate Islamic inscriptions and Arabic writings that embody wisdom and supplications. This fusion of the practical and the aesthetic demonstrating a profound life philosophy that asserts beauty should be an essential component of daily existence, even in its most fundamental forms.

These springs are strategically positioned throughout the narrow alleys of the Kasbah, creating an integrated water network that serves mosques, public baths, and houses. This thoughtful distribution exhibits remarkable engineering ingenuity in water resource management, with origins tracing back to ancient historical periods, blending local techniques with imported knowledge from successive civilizations in the city.

Throughout the city, the water supply expands a tree-like system, featuring water channels that traverse main streets and branch into secondary and tertiary pipes, ultimately delivering water to around 150 public fountains, including ablution fountains in mosques, barracks, and palaces (Kameche, 2020).

Hydraulically, the Ain Zeboudja aqueduct provided water to the Kasbah, with a tower situated one hundred meters from the city featuring a suction system designed to create the Kasbah waterfalls. According to Kameche (2020), this hydraulic system was entirely unfamiliar to researchers studying the urban history of Algiers. Interestingly, the iconography illustrating the aqueduct bridges in both the city and its surrounding countryside is notably rich, as these structures are regarded as highly picturesque. The kiosk fountain and its reservoir are initially required to be supplied with water. The option of a forced water pipe is necessitated by the lack of a water bridge at the point where the pipe must ascend a hill. Subsequently, water is distributed by gravity flow throughout the entire defensive complex, a multi-layered ensemble that encompasses the Dey's palace, the Dey's mosque, the Bey's palace, the Janissary quarter, the Janissary Mosque, several defensive batteries, the Summer garden, the Ostrich Garden, and various baths, including the Agha's bath. The water continues its journey through the upper districts of the city, supplying the numerous public fountains along Sidi Driss Hamidouche Street (formerly Kasbah Street) (Kameche, 2020).

Anthropologically, these springs serve as miniature social centers that are integral to the daily lives of the Kasbah's inhabitants. Women gather around to foster connections and exchange local news, men assemble to perform ablutions prior to prayer, and children engage in play during the sweltering summer days. By which Algerian cultural identity is shaped in multifaceted and intricate manners. Primarily, they represent the Islamic values embedded in Algerian society, where water signifies purity and life. The inscriptions and writings embroidering the fountains convey this spiritual essence, serving as a reminder to passersby of the significance of water and the necessity of expressing gratitude for this blessing.

These springs also convey the intricate layers of Algerian identity. Their design epitomizes the influence of foundational Phoenician Algerian art, interwoven with Roman, Islamic, Ottoman, and, in certain instances, Andalusian elements. This amalgamation illustrates the capacity of Algerian culture to assimilate diverse influences and blend them into a singular entity, resulting in a distinctive, multi-faceted identity.

The fascination with the beauty of the Kasbah springs and their ongoing care through generations underscores a profound value in Algerian culture: a respect for heritage and a commitment to its preservation. Despite the significant social and economic changes that Algeria has experienced, these outflows have maintained their significance, safeguarding their authenticity, which attests to the deep connection between the past and the present within the Algerian collective consciousness. The springs of the Kasbah of Algiers serve as a testament to the ingenuity of the Algerian people in adapting to their environment and utilizing it to meet their needs, all while preserving their aesthetic and spiritual values.

5.4 The Water Springs of the Kasbah: “Presence and Extinction”

The Kasbah, the historic district at the center of the Algerian capital, has been enriched by a network of water springs integral to the daily life of its inhabitants since the sixteenth century. These springs symbolize life and continuity in a district that has undergone numerous transformations throughout the ages.

Although the number of springs in the Kasbah is estimated to be 200, only a select few have withstood the test of time, with merely six springs currently supplying the population with water. Among these enduring springs are Ain Sidi Ramadan, Ain Mazouqa, Ain Bir Jbah, Ain Sidi Mohamed Cherif, Ain Sidi Benali, and Ain Bir Shabana. These six springs serve as a testament to a rich history, continuing to flow with pristine water that the community relies upon, even amidst modern water distribution networks.

These springs served not only as water features but also as exemplars of architectural aesthetics, showcasing engravings and decorations on ceramics and marble columns. While some have succumbed to the ravages of time, these small historical landmarks continue to impart a sense of charm to the old neighborhood, despite the incongruous modern modifications, such as contemporary taps that detract from their original character.

However, the preservation and maintenance of these springs continue to pose a significant challenge. Numerous springs have vanished over time or are in a state of decline due to excessive use by the current population, as

noted by several elderly residents of the Kasbah. Historian Abdel Rahman Khalifa emphasizes that the Kasbah once boasted an advanced irrigation system comprising 175 springs, suggesting that the revival of some of these springs could be achieved with minimal effort. (جريدة سياح, 2018)

1.5.4. Water Springs Extinction

With the onset of the French occupation, there arose an urgent necessity to rehabilitate the city's water supply network, which had been extensively damaged by French troops to the extent that the Ain Zeboudja aqueduct ceased to provide water to the city. This period was characterized by frequent demolitions, which significantly impacted the integrity of the pipes. Louis-André Pichon, State Councilor and Civil Steward of Algiers, attests to these deteriorations in the following: "Our cantonments elsewhere are the main cause of destruction. The ducts are from terracotta; a post will not go a quarter of a league to fetch a fountain, when with a pickaxe in the ducts, he can make one" (Kameche, 2020).

Water pipes were frequently damaged by carts, resulting in recurrent flooding of the streets. The water level in the city diminished. The stringent penalties enacted did not contribute to its preservation, as the conservative entity, the former fountain company, had been disbanded. A commission established by King Louis Philippe in 1833 dedicated three months to addressing the city's issues. Its report lamentably indicated that 80 public fountains had ceased providing water to the city since the occupation (Kameche, 2020).

Between 1825 and 1850, the municipality planned to establish an additional water conduit leading into the Kasbah. Engineer Piarron de Montdésir proposed a reconfiguration of the water distribution system. Previously, the entire water supply was directed to the Kasbah barracks, complicating management and maintenance. To address this issue, the allocation of water between the city and the Kasbah was relocated to the summit of the first souterazi. Consequently, a pottery pipe with a diameter of 0.20 cm was constructed from this initial tower, extending directly to the end of Kasbah Street, which serves as the starting point for water distribution in the upper city, considering the perforation of Mohammed Taleb Street in the old wall. Between November 1911 and 1926, the water from the Ain Zboudja springs was deemed unfit for consumption. Nevertheless, this water found alternative applications. Since the establishment of the park of the Museum of Antiquities, it has been utilized for irrigating farms and creating streams, waterfalls, and a large fountain. This garden also features several fountains from the old city, including the Cale aux Vins fountain, which was classified as a historical monument in 1905, along with various other fountains distinguished by their ceramic decorations. This expansive garden remains one of the most exquisite in Algiers today, characterized by its unique stone retaining walls and buttresses. The utilization of this water thus offers the dual benefit of supplying public drinking water while sustaining the garden and irrigating portions of Michelet Street (now Didouche Mourad Street) (Kameche, 2020).

In general, the urban development experienced by Algiers, particularly during the French colonial period and following independence, has led to a gradual decline in the significance of the water springs of the Kasbah. The introduction of modern water networks to accommodate the city's increasing demands diminished reliance on traditional springs. Furthermore, numerous springs have been neglected as a result of urban expansion and a lack of attention to their restoration and maintenance. Today, only a few of the springs that once sustained the inhabitants of the Kasbah remain. While some springs still exist, they are often overlooked, and many have entirely vanished due to the urban and economic transformations the city has undergone. Nevertheless, the springs of the Kasbah continue to hold symbolic importance in the collective memory of the neighborhood's residents and are regarded as an essential component of the city's historical heritage.

5. Initiatives to restore water springs

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the significance of preserving the Kasbah's water heritage, particularly through modest initiatives aimed at restoring some of the remaining water springs. These endeavors strive to revitalize a segment of the Kasbah's cultural heritage, not only by repurposing the springs as a water source but also by safeguarding their symbolic and cultural significance. The preservation of the water springs forms part of a larger effort to protect the Kasbah's heritage in its entirety and to ensure the longevity of this historical landmark for future generations (جريدة الشعب, 2021). While many have vanished, the surviving

springs embody a rich history of the interrelationship between humanity and water, serving as a reminder of the necessity to safeguard this tangible and symbolic heritage amid contemporary challenges.

6. Challenges in Preserving the Kasbah water springs

One of the most significant challenges confronting the preservation of the springs of the Kasbah is the physical deterioration caused by time and neglect. The aging infrastructure of the water networks supplying these springs is plagued by corrosion and leaks, threatening the viability of some springs and contaminating others. This decline is further intensified by the mounting population pressure on the Kasbah, resulting in the excessive and unregulated exploitation of these invaluable water resources. Additionally, the rapid urbanization and haphazard modernization pose a threat to the original characteristics of the Kasbah, including its historical springs. While urban development projects are essential, they may compromise the preservation of the authentic essence of these heritage sites if the cultural and historical aspects are not adequately considered.

The economic challenge presents an additional obstacle to spring conservation efforts, as restoration and maintenance activities necessitate substantial financial resources that may not consistently be accessible given the various development priorities confronting the country. This situation underscores the need for innovative financing methods that integrate government initiatives, community efforts, and international collaborations.

On a societal level, the challenge of altering lifestyles and the diminishing awareness of the significance of heritage among younger generations is underscored. As modern water networks proliferate and social customs evolve, springs have started to forfeit their traditional function as hubs of gathering and social interaction, thereby putting at risk the vital aspect of the collective memory and cultural identity linked to them.

One effective approach to utilizing the springs for the promotion of cultural identity is to incorporate them into educational and awareness programs. Cultural and touristic routes can be established that connect the various springs, supplemented by historical and cultural narratives that underscore their significance in shaping Algerian identity. This initiative would foster awareness among younger generations regarding the value of their heritage and the necessity of its preservation. The social function of the springs can also be revitalized by organizing cultural and artistic events in their vicinity, such as exhibitions, poetry readings, and musical evenings. This innovative application serves to create a link between the past and the present, redefining them as vibrant spaces for cultural and social engagement.

In the economic context, sustainable cultural tourism models could be developed that emphasize the Kasbah's springs as a primary attraction. If executed with cultural sensitivity, this approach could generate resources for the conservation of the springs and create employment opportunities for local habitants, thereby reinforcing their connection to their heritage.

On both artistic and architectural fronts, traditional springs designs may draw inspiration from contemporary architecture, establishing a visual and cultural continuum between the past and the present. This amalgamation of heritage and modernity plays a pivotal role in shaping a contemporary Algerian architectural identity that is deeply anchored in its historical context. Furthermore, modern technology can be utilized to document and reveal the history of the springs and its cultural importance. For instance, augmented reality applications can provide visitors with an immersive interactive experience that links the physical environment to the historical and cultural narratives.

The springs of Kasbah of Algiers embody both a challenge and an opportunity. The obstacles to their preservation are significant and multifaceted; however, they simultaneously pave the way for the rediscovery and redefinition of Algerian cultural identity within a contemporary framework. Effectively balancing the preservation of the authenticity of this heritage element with its innovative application in the present is crucial for ensuring the continuity of its influence in shaping and fortifying Algerian cultural identity for future generations.

● Conclusion:

The "Kasbah Springs" serve as a significant model demonstrating how tangible heritage can reflect cultural identity, intertwining historical, social, and spiritual values that represent the essence of Algerian society. These

springs were not merely sources of water; they embodied social and cultural hubs integral to the daily life of the Kasbah's inhabitants, contributing to the development of a cohesive civilizational tissue.

Although many springs have vanished due to urban development and the advent of modern water technologies, their symbolic and historical significance endures in the collective memory. Preserving this water heritage requires considerable efforts to enliven it, not only by restoring the remaining springs but also by promoting awareness of the importance of this cultural legacy in safeguarding Algerian identity.

In light of this study, we conclude that the heritage of "Springs of El Kasbah" represents an essential component of the landmarks of Algerian cultural identity. By undertaking efforts to revive and preserve this heritage, we can guarantee its continuity as a facet of national identity, allowing it to serve as a testament to the history and civilization of Algeria across the ages.

- The most significant outcomes achieved:
 - The significance of tangible heritage in cultural identity: The findings affirm that "Springs of El Kasbah" plays a crucial role in safeguarding Algerian cultural identity by linking contemporary generations to their historical roots.
 - Pressures and challenges: Springs confront significant obstacles stemming from neglect and environmental degradation, endangering its status as a symbol of heritage.
 - The significance of preservation and restoration: Safeguarding the "Springs of El Kasbah" necessitates coordinated efforts that encompass both restoration and preservation, along with inspiring awareness of the importance of this heritage within society.
- Recommendations pertaining to the research subject
- Develop conservation and restoration strategies: Effective strategies for the conservation of the "Springs of El Kasbah" must be formulated, encompassing an assessment of their condition and the creation of comprehensive restoration plans.
- Raising community awareness: It is essential to promote awareness of the significance of cultural heritage through campaigns and workshops that foster understanding and interest in this vital aspect of our identity.
- Encouraging community engagement: The local community should actively participate in heritage conservation efforts by endorsing voluntary initiatives and enhancing the role of civil society.
- Integrating heritage into sustainable development: The conservation of heritage must be incorporated into sustainable development strategies to guarantee that it aligns with urban and economic advancement.

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