

FROM INFORMAL TO FORMAL CITY :

DEGRADATION PROCESSES AND INTEGRATION MECHANISMS: CONSTANTINE FACES THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND URBAN RESILIENCE.

1- INTRODUCTION

The city of Constantine, like many urban areas, grapples with issues of poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, and inadequate access to basic services. However, it also demonstrates resilience and innovation in addressing these challenges.

The aim of this study is to put into perspective the conditions that led to the emergence of informal housing in the city of Constantine and the deterioration of its built environment, as well as to highlight the policies implemented to integrate these precarious margins into the legal city, while ensuring a better living environment for their inhabitants.

2- CASE STUDY

Our starting point was the general observation that the **city of Constantine**, as the capital of the East and a regional metropolis, suffers from several urban problems that alter its image.

The city's built environment has always been marked by the prevalence of precarious constructions,

In addition to the deterioration of its housing stock, which has had repercussions for the environment, the city's image and the quality of life of its inhabitants.

Urban renewal is a form of urban evolution that involves the action of **reconstructing the city** upon itself and recycling its built resources.

Its primary aim is to address **social, economic, urban planning, architectural**, and other issues in certain older and/or deteriorated neighborhoods. It also aims to stimulate new dynamics of economic development and foster solidarity on the scale of the metropolitan area, including better distribution of vulnerable populations through social housing initiatives. **Urban renewal is a favored tool in combating impoverishment, inadequate housing, slumlords, and social and spatial segregation within urban areas.**

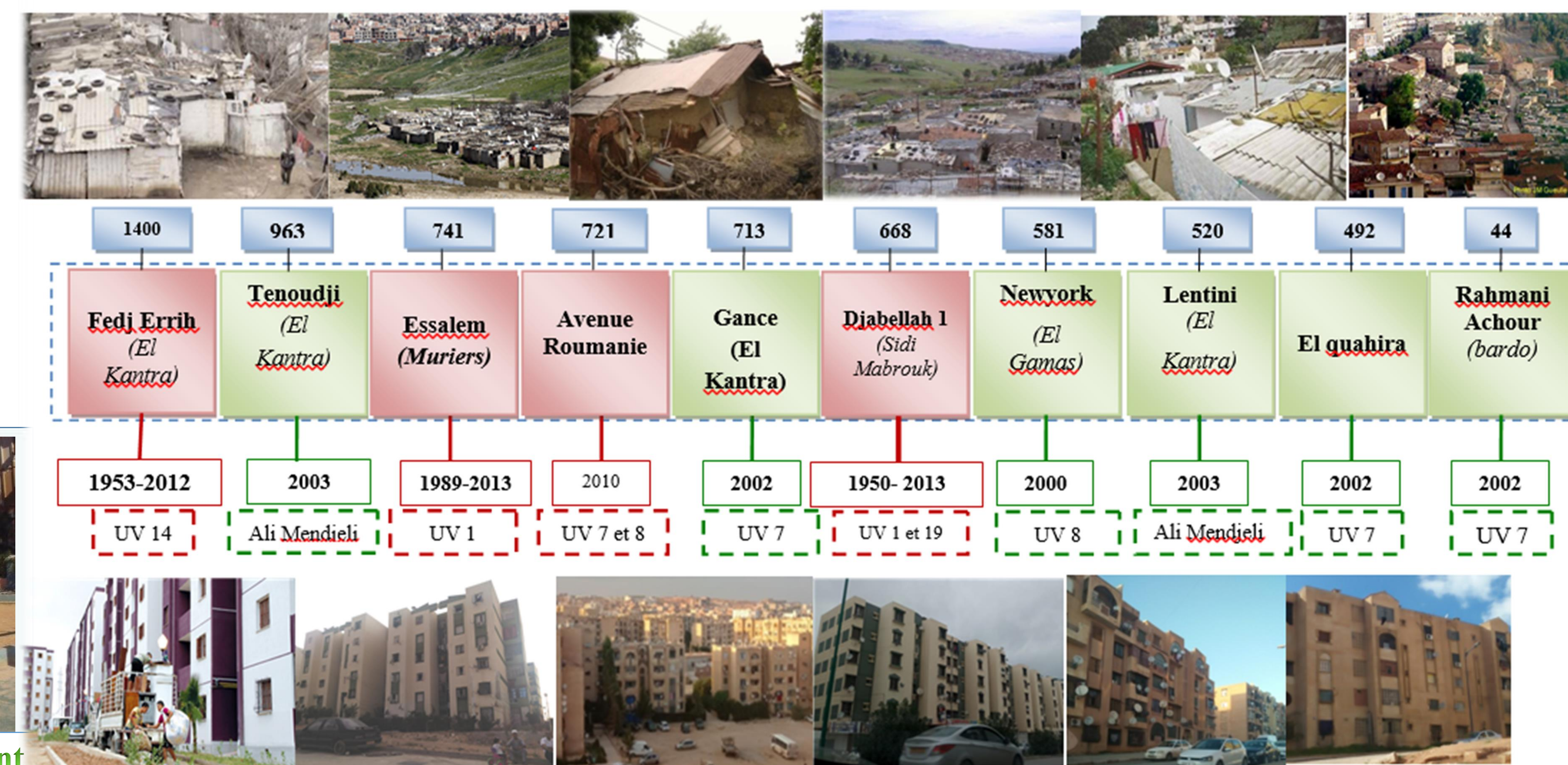
4- RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We have observed in terms of urban actions that the various interventions undertaken have impacted both **formal and informal neighborhoods**.

Starting from operations such as **the rehabilitation of the medina** and colonial real estate park, **urban requalification and improvement of social housing neighborhoods (ZHUN)** aim to achieve the **eradication of slums and restructuring of informal settlements**. The common denominator among **these various urban operations is rehousing**.

- Urban integration:** Restructuring and improvement of informal settlements, including the refurbishment of infrastructure such as drinking water, electricity, sanitation, and drainage. Installation of necessary equipment to support these improvements.
- Spatial integration:** Demolition and relocation of slum dwellers to peripheral areas of the city or neighboring municipalities.
- Land integration:** Regularization of land tenure in informal settlements to ensure security and legal stability for residents.
- Social integration:** Objective to combat poverty and improve living conditions by promoting social and economic integration of residents into urban life

In addition, among **the actions** undertaken to combat **exclusion is the policy of reducing precarious housing**, the aim of which was not only to rid **the city of shanty towns and all forms of precarious housing**, but also to improve the **city's image through the rational and correct reuse of this land**.



ERADICATION OF THE LARGEST SLUMS IN CONSTANTINE (SOURCE: AUTHOR 2018)

Fig.5 Chronology of the eradication of the largest slums in Constantine with their rehousing sites

5- CONCLUSION

As a result, we have been able to see that in terms of action on the city, the various operations undertaken, affecting both formal and informal neighbourhoods, **belong to urban renewal and meet its definition as a means of intervention on the city**.

However, it seems prudent to emphasize that **sustainable development and urban renewal are two intimately linked concepts aimed at creating more balanced, resilient, and environmentally respectful urban environments**. Nevertheless, it appears judicious to **resort to strategic urban planning and collaboration among the various actors, as well as active citizen participation**.

The aging and deterioration of the old city



Fig.1. Advanced deterioration of buildings on the Souika in the old town of Constantine (Source: Author, 2018)

The proliferation of slums



Fig.2. Overview of Essalem (Bessif) Slum, the third largest slum in Constantine eradicated in 2013.

The landslide

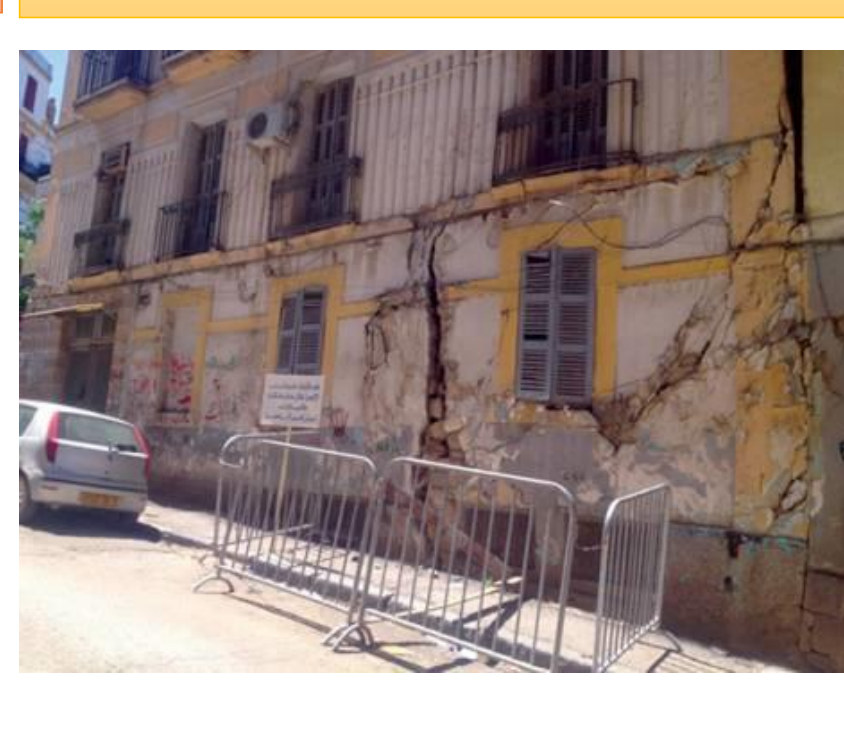
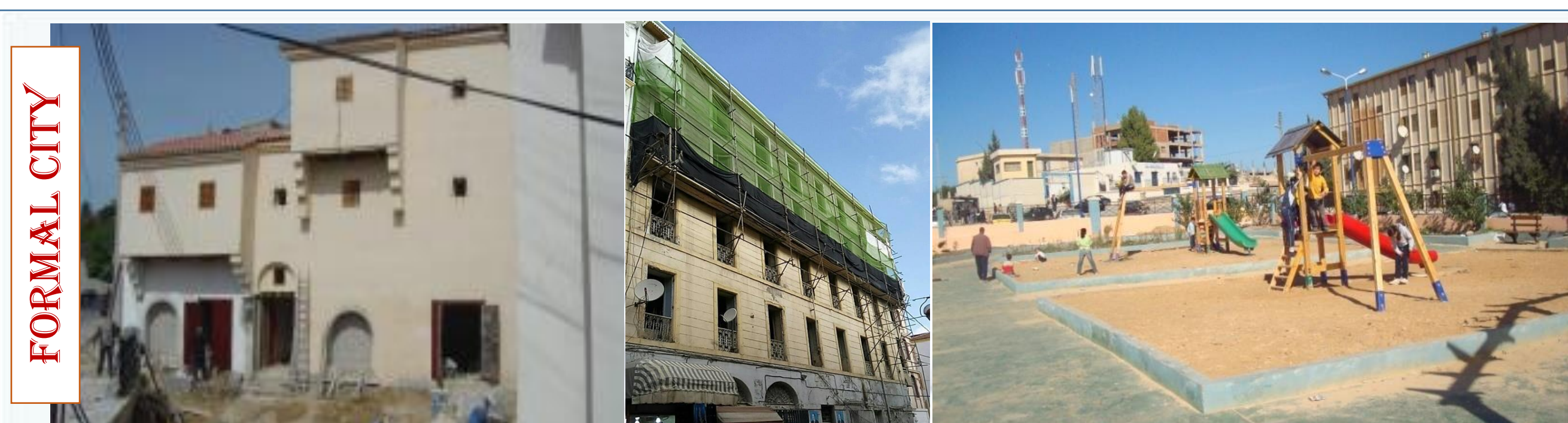


Fig.3 Building in danger of collapse in downtown Constantine



Rehabilitation and Renovation

Urban requalification and improvement of neighborhoods



Eradication of precarious housing



Rehousing

The common denominator among various urban operations is rehousing.

Fig.4a, 4b,4c,4d: Different urban renewal operations in Constantine

The chronological presentation of Constantine's experience in the fight against precariousness and marginality led us to note that the methods of intervention in troubled neighbourhoods can be summed up as integration actions: **urban, spatial, land and social**.

3- METHODOLOGY

Our approach is based **on direct observation** of the various actions affecting formal and informal neighbourhoods that have been undertaken to remedy the problems facing the city of Constantine.

