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Spontaneous urban renewal of the former Eurasian settlements in the event of the sustainable development: case of Dechra Beida, Arris (Algeria)

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Abstract

This paper is a study focuses on two concepts often used in political and scientific debates, namely urban renewal and sustainable development.

The objectives of this study are, on the one hand, the analysis of the process of spontaneous urban renewal in the former Eurasian settlements and the search for a link between this process and the requirements of sustainable development, on the other hand. To do this, we chose the Dechra Beida, one of the oldest and most important human settlements of both the Aures and the agglomeration of Arris. Our approach consists of a comparative analysis of the urban fabric of the Dechra Beida on three different dates (1962, 2010 and 2016) and the data processing was carried out using the software QGIS (2.18.2) and Fractalyse (2.4.1).

The results show that spontaneous urban renewal is a process that underpins the development of ancient human settlements and thus fits well with the objectives of sustainability. This is clearly highlighted by the rational use of natural resources as well as the recycling and reconstruction of the urban fabric, which limit the sprawl and waste of peripheral areas.

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1. Introduction

Spontaneous urban renewal is a phenomenon which always existed and continued being. Just like our bodies renew regularly their cells to continue to live; cities also renew their contents since their creation, to follow one another to themselves while modifying their general aspect and their extensions. Every city is so touched by the phenomenon of the urban renewal, even if this process knew time-varying intensities and according to the local or contemporary contexts which favored it or on the contrary controlled it [1]. It has for main stakes the urban and social reorganization through the densification and the re-use of existing urban fabric and as well as the limitation of the urban sprawl and the reduction of its fatal consequences which are a challenge for the sustainable development of cities.

2. Problematic

In Aures and during the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, we attended the decline of the old human settlements among which some collapsed, and others following the example of those of the urban area of Arris seem less affected. The disappearance of certain activities, consequences of important rural exodus aggravated by the decay of the built frame; explaining the complexity of a situation which affects appreciably the old Eurasian urban agglomerations. But from the years eighty and thanks to the special programs, of which the region of Aures benefited, the inverse phenomenon occurred and this engendered an urban renewal in a good number of urban areas. The former constructions were gradually demolished and reconstructed and the streets redrawn and/or widened. The recycling of the urban fabric was spontaneous because the men were forced to rebuild on the inherited and already occupied plots of land.

Through the study of Dechra Beida, one of the old cores of the built-up area of Arris, we tried to explain this shape of implicit regeneration which developed spontaneously. We also tried to include the reasons which chaired it, the urban morphology which it generated and the way whose urban renewal insures the sustainability of old human establishments. This led us to raise the following questions:

What are the factors which favored the urban renewal? How it takes place? How does it contribute to the sustainable development of the old Eurasian settlements?

Two hypotheses can be applied:

- Several elements are at the origin of the urban renewal, going of the socioeconomic changes up to the intervention policies which aimed at the stabilization of the population in the urban Eurasian areas.
- The urban renewal intervenes directly on the morphology of this urban fabric and it allows to ally the past (it reuses an urban fabric inherited from the previous times), the present (it transforms it to answer a current need) and the future (it slows down the growth and protects grounds). This temporality which the urban renewal respects is the major principle of the sustainable development.

3. Methodology of approach:

Basing on the analysis of the urban renewal process of one of the most important old cores of Arris (Dechra Beida) and its urban shape, the article looks for the link between the regeneration of the old Eurasian establishments on themselves in front of the sustainable development requirements. To arrive there, we opted for a comparative analysis of the urban tissue of Dechra Beida in three different dates. The work knew two phases which are:

- Data collection which was the fruit of a thorough bibliographical search, a survey on ground and of conversations with the persons in charge of the technical service of town planning of the MPA (Minucipality Popular Assembly).
- The analysis of the data whose objective was to determine the characteristics which continued in time and which have a link with the foundations of the sustainable development. It was necessary thus to redraw the history of the urban renewal of Dechra Beida and to determine the factors which favored it as well as to study the urban morphology of this establishment in various dates (on 1962, 2010 and 2016).

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