

Housing Problems in Bou-saada/Algeria Study of 270 Residences Quarter

Nouibat Brahim

Cité 19 Juin, Bt M2, Appt N°5, Bou-Saada, 28200, M'sila, Algérie

Abstract: In this study, we try to analyse the housing problems in Bou-saada. The types of houses in this town know the absence of the cultural, social, economic and climatic characteristics. These problems lead to the incompleteness and the repulsion between the original urban texture and the diversified one of the new quarters resulting from the social residences that have been achieved in Bou-saada. This study tries to analyse the social residences programme and its effects inside the urban environment through the analysis of 270 social residences quarter.

Key words: Housing problems, social residences programme, residential policy, collective social quarter, urban analysis, social and economic questioning, Bou-saada

INTRODUCTION

Algeria, including Bou-saada, knows a growth demand crisis in houses. In 1999, Algeria was in need of 1.2 million residential unities, the yearly demand is nearly 300.000 unities. The average of each unity in accommodating is 6 or 7 persons (Saoudi and Boudrâa, 2002). To minimize the sharpness of this growing crisis, year after year, the Algerian state adopted several experiences through programming different types of residences.

In the 1990's, Algeria witnessed acceleration in political and economic sides and many successive governments. For the type's industry generalization in all the country's districts levels, without taking in consideration the cultural, social, economic and climatic characteristics special for the desert areas will lead to incomplete and repulsion between the original urban texture (Ksar, in the Oasis of Bou-saada) and the branching urban texture, resulting the planning of buildings due to varied programmes: Evolutionary, Contributory, Social and Hire-Purchase residences (Nacib, 1986; Nouibat and Sahli, 1993; Poux *et al.*, 1982).

For the social residences programme, which has witnessed popularity in desert regions, in villages, in the countryside and even in the north regions with its two kinds: social individual and social half collective stopped in 1998. After that, social residences have been expanded in an alone kind called the collective social residences, which do not fit with traditions, especially with natural environment of the desert (Nouibat, 1997).

Bou-saada is suffering now from a great rural emigration, the number of inhabitants is rising continuously; in 1987, there were 69000 inhabitants,

10 years later they became 100.000, but in 2005 the number ascended to 125000. This led to deficiency between supply and demand in residential field. To cover the inability (13000 demands of houses) and (6000 demands-plots of land).

In the year 2005, the authorities in Bou-saada tried two types of residences in the expansion of the new zone (URBA BATNA, 2005; Attig and Nouibat, 2004).

The problem: The collective-social residences programme, generally isn't appropriate with the local habits and traditions, especially those of the dry nature of the desert cities. The given results due to these programmes are the following problems:

- Planning and designing of quarters, which will be exposed to deformity just after obtaining.
- The achieved residential quarters-according to the previous programmes-have not been promoted to be urban projects; shortage in equipments, in essential amenities and total absence of the exterior readying.

The actual study aims to analyse the social residences programme adopted by the Algerian state, to present the precized recommendations in order to prevent unfavorable results.

THE RESIDENTIAL POLICY IN ALGERIA FOR THE SOCIAL RESIDENCES

Our study treats the social residences programme (MHU, 2000, 2001, 2004) taking Bou-saada's city case as an example to study and to evaluate the programme.

A kind of residences financed by the Algerian state intended for the middle stratum and jobless citizens in all urban districts. It is under the total responsibility of the O.P.G.I (Promotional and Management of Real estate Office), it is intended also for renting, limited in the surface and limited in the monetary value. The social residence program knew different changes on the plan of financing and of the management.

The financing plan: The three fold plan (1967-1969) determined the social residence financing tasks, charging the state's fund (treasury) with a yearly profits of 1% for a duration of 40 years. In 1970, the C.N.E.P (Saving and Precautional National Fund) shared the state treasury the financing operation (50% for each):

- C. N. E. P → duration: 20 years/4.75% yearly profits.
- STATE's FUND → duration: 30 years/4.75% yearly profits.

But in 1979, the Algerian state's fund began financing the social residences bargains in full percentage (100%) till the end of 1990 when the CNEP decided to finance the residences sharing the task with the C.N.L (the National Flat Fund).

The management plan: In 1976, a decree was issued on 23rd of October contained the foundation of 32 offices (OPGI) to manage and achieve social residences according to a ministerial circular N°93/76, dated on October 23rd 1976 to clarify the tasks and duties of these offices as the following (MHU, 1976): renting residences, trading buildings gathering incomes, Counting and controlling.

Another decree N°502/82 was issued on the 25th of December 1982 modifying the former circular charging the 32 offices (on the national level) to do the following:

- Developing the residential programmes (offices must be the alone owners of the projects and owners of the rights to have urban lands intended to residential projects).
- The administrative management task: concluding contracts and bargains to achieve projects.

In 1991, the 32 offices (48 now) knew transformations; they became public establishments owners of industrial and commercial character and thus, they have become obliged to pay the real estate sums.

THE IN AN OPEN FIELD AND ANALYTIC STUDY THE COLLECTIVE SOCIAL QUARTER (270 RESIDENCES)

We have chosen the 270 social residences quarter as a sample for studying in Bou-saada. This town is situated in the South east of Algiers, the capital of Algeria, it is 248 km far from the capital. Bou-saada is *daira* (a sub prefecture) related to the *wilaya* (prefecture) of M'sila (65 km away). Bou-saada has a strategic site, it links between the East and the West and links the South to the North. It is situated in an arid region surrounded by natural obstacles(mountains).

Bou-saada is supporting a high tension of rural exodus caused by the great discrepancy in the developing projects distribution.

More than 54% from its urban texture isn't planned (Nouibat, 2007), in addition to that texture, we can touch the spreading of the other residential programmes, which make all together an opposition in the urban shapes. We remark the extension of the pit between the old and the new quarters: no urban estitic measures, neither sanitary nor environmental and functional conditions.

The study relies on the analytic method to analyse the concerned residential programme, then to be certain from the problem through an economic and social questioning to extract the advantages and disadvantages to know the real causes and the main obstacles, trying to treat them through some orientations and other some recommendations.

The urban analysis: This quarter is situated next to the National road N°8 (Bou-saada-Algiers) in the future expansion zone with a surface of 2.8 ha (nearly 5 acres).

The built surface represents 20%, the rest is an open air. The adjacent area to the quarter is personal houses from the North and the West (evolutionary quarters: 90 and 70 residences), AL-Rasfa quarter and buildings of 4 floors (terrestrial floor +4). This situation mentions the non respect of the height graduation rule. In addition, this adjacent circle is in need to minimal amenities, public equipments suffers from incompleted exterior readying.

The 270 quarter residences quarter is composed from 31 buildings in different height and different architectural elements in the frontage (façade). All buildings are consecrated to be residential, the density is 97 houses ha⁻¹ (Fig. 1).

After our analytic study, we could conclude the following:

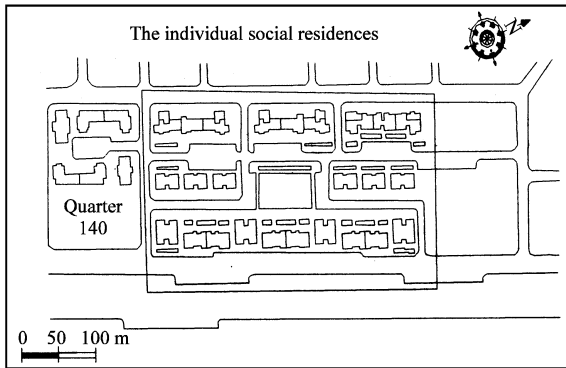


Fig. 1: The 270 social residence quarter. Source: the local agency for real estate Bou-saada

- The residences are achieved and habitable except the existence of (F1) with 30 M² and (F2) with 40 M², which don't fit neither for the dwellers needs nor for their cultural backgrounds, nor for the climatic and economic sides.
- For the (F3), which has 65 M², fits in general the dwellers needs but doesn't fit the climatic conditions of the zone (hot and dry) cause of the intense use of the reinforced concrete (cement), absence of covered paths, shortage in water points and greenness.
- The frontages are oriented towards the exterior through windows and balconies, that's why residents interfere to close or minimize them for the interior expansion cause of tightly rooms and severe traditions (Fig. 2).
- Lack of amenities and equipments: the choice of sites happens in the absence of plans, lack of coordination between the concerned directions such as: OPGI, DUC, DLEP, DTP and DH.
- The urban quarter canalization is achieved and ready:
 - The surface of roads and parkings represent 32% from the whole real estate project, its percentage of readying is 93%.
 - The quarter is linked to the different canalizations: water, electricity and drainpipe except gas.
 - The green surface represents 9%, playing surface 4%. Their percentage of readying is 50%.
 - The paved surface is 36% from the quarter total surface, then it isn't harmonious with the built surface, which represents 20% only. Paved surfaces consume a lot of money, it is preferable to consecrate these sums for green and playing areas.

These shortages don't refer to the state policy in this domain but to the charged offices: lack of management domination, lack of coordination and other causes.

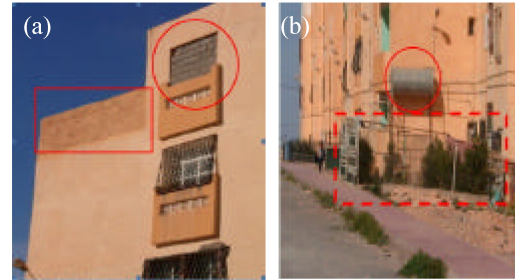


Fig. 2: The frontages are oriented towards the exterior through windows and balconies, that's why residents interfere to close or minimize them for the interior expansion cause of tightly rooms and severe traditions. Source: researchers achievement

Social and economic questioning: We have taken a sample of 54 houses, which represent 20% from the total quarter, the results were as the following:

- The kinds of residences (the social ones) is generally unsuitable with the cultural, social and economic factors of the desert towns. Those factors are the main cause in deforming the quarter 's urbanism and architecture. We notice also lack of equipments, lack of amenities and a great shortage in exterior readying, etc.
- Forty percent from residents are clercks, their salary alternates between 10.000 and 30.000 AD, for the 20%, are commerçants, daily labourers, jobless, etc. The rest (40%) are unable to pay their leasing.
- Thirty six percent are real beneficiaries only, for the rest have sold or hired their residences although, the law forbids them to do so. Those who have sold, moved to individual houses because they don't support living in flats or because their suffering from farness (down town is 4 kms away).
- The residence isn't appropriate for 45%, for 55% from residents showed their satisfaction about their situation; few family members, flats can accommodate them easily. They expressed their happiness about flats cause of their inability to have their proper flats or houses either in building or purchasing.
- Twenty four percent have modified the interior such as dividing the living-room, closing balconies to create new domains.
- Sixty percent confirm the inexistence of amenities, equipments, green areas and playing grounds. They confirmed also a shortage in street lighting, total absence in gas pipe. For the drainpipe is in everyday extension.
- All the residents suffer from the daily going to

down town for shopping or for necessary needs, 76% claim from transportation (wasting of time in waiting) and daily paying (sometimes they use foot).

CONCLUSION

Housing problem in Algeria is playing a great role in determining the town's shape cause of the diversity of the residential programmes and the prompt desire of the Algerian state to put an end to the crisis.

All these factors have lead to negative effects on the urban side and the built frames. The relation between the users of residences and their deformed environment had been lost.

The generalization of the same types (styles) in the whole country without taking in consideration the own characteristics of the desert dwellers had lead a random exploitation of the urban real estate, wherever, Bou-saada wasn't being saved from a mixture of its urban texture, which had sprung from the Ksar texture to the colonial and the actual random ones, which are illegal too.

On the light of this study, we present some recommendations, which should be taken in consideration:

- Determining of beneficiaries lists before the achievement residential.
- Establishing residential associations to follow and control the projects and protect them from deformities and modifications.
- The distribution rules should make differences between types of houses and categories of beneficiaries
- Beneficiaries must respect the legal limits and must be punished if they neglect the technical guiding.
- The residential programs achievement should go in parallel with equipments and public amenities.
- Giving importance to the exterior preparation (readying): canalizations, playing grounds, green places, roads paths water points, etc and must be finished before the distribution operation.
- The concerned associations should sensibilize residents about cleaning and protecting their living circle.
- Houses and flats should be achieved completely to avoid façades deformity.
- Maintaining the natural and climatic difficult conditions (heat, wind-storms, etc.).
- Expanding the surface of the (F2) modal and

minimizing its quantity: actually the number of F2 modal is the same as the F3 residences i.e., 50% for each or eliminate it totally.

- Changing the social renting residences by social personal or half collective ones. In arid areas, height should be (a terrestrial floor + 2 floors) only instead of (T.F + 4 or 5) relying also on local materials.
- Avoiding the generalization of the unique modal in all Algeria. Modals (types) should express the originality (authenticity) of each region.
- Town-halls and banks(long term credit with 0% profits (should participate in these programs.
- The sums of the purchased plots of land should be oriented to the exterior works: streets, playing grounds.

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