

# Morphological Identification of Articulation Spaces in Dual Cities. *The Example of La Brèche in Constantine, the Urban Square, Signs without Place*

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## Abstract

The topic of this article is to attempt to reflect on the spaces of articulation within agglomerations. Through an analysis that will lead us from the medieval city, in general, to the Algerian city in particular, we propose to study the space of "La Brèche" of the city of Constantine.

Being the door of the medina originally, the space of La Brèche is today the center of downtown Constantine. It represents the natural relationship of the peninsula which is unique in the world, linked to nature by an isthmus.

In spite of two centuries of urban structuring and restructuring, this urban entity does not seem fixed in a stable image, contrary to the scheme of the colonial or even universal project. It remained an open site, witnessing several physical transformations through a spectacular urban dynamism becoming a stake of appropriation between greenery, bitumen and paving. Why has this space, that represents a model known in the history of architecture and the city, been subjected to these pressures?

Our search tool is the typo morphological method supported by a cartographic support and survey work by drawing. Through these successive urban forms, the memory of this project was exhumed by questioning its perceptible aspects and social visibilities.

Our objective is to account for the production of this space, to verify its evolution, to understand the process that transformed it from a space of articulation and continuity to a space of rupture and discomfort, which appears at the same time as a space with a strong centrality in the imagination of the population.

The results of the research show that the crisis of the space of La Brèche emerges from the choice of the permanence of the urban fact on the Rock, a garrison citadel to the extension and the absence of a project stopped and fixed in a stable image for its erection. The layout of the buildings in the space and their places in view combined with the writing of their architecture has divided the extent into sub-spaces poorly connected in the topography, the use and the perception of their forms.

**Key words:** Public space, Constantine, la Brèche, articulation, legibility of forms, conflict of appropriation, dual city.

## INTRODUCTION

Some urban space developments are not placed in the history of architecture and urbanization, nor are they placed in the history of theories that have contributed to the conception and realization of the built heritage. They are affirmed by the impact of operations whose architectural autonomy and internal organization reflect ruptures with the natural or built environment. However, harmony can only be achieved in a positive way by taking into account the data usually referred to by the "urban quality": the plastic organization and the legibility of spaces and buildings.

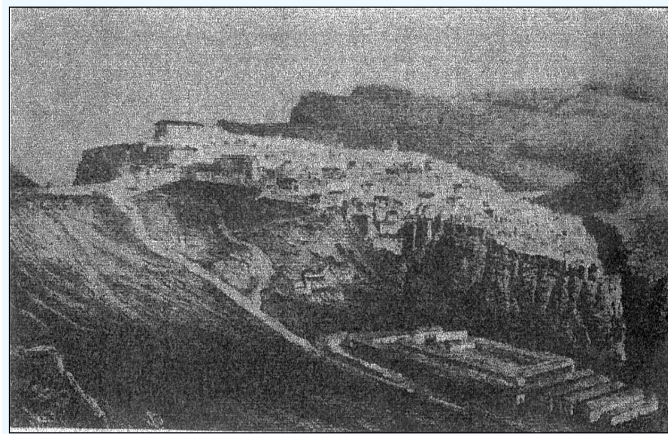
It was with this in mind that the French military engineers had tried to restructure the Algerian cities so that their plans could resemble those of the new French cities of the 19th century (MALVERTI, 1969). Some doors of the medinas have become spaces of articulation within the agglomerations. Through an analysis that will lead us from the medieval city, in general, to the Algerian city in particular, we propose to study the morphological identification of the space of *La Brèche* of the city of Constantine, situated in the east of Algeria.

The urban entity *La Brèche* is not a unique phenomenon in Algeria. From Tebessa to Annaba, from M'sila to Boussaâda, we find this phenomenon of spaces of exchange that were born and structured in contact with the old city and the European city to form a dual city. The place is too small or ambiguous to carry all the centrality, but in all the cases cited, it presents itself as a meeting place, a convivial space, one that has a very strong brand image in the imagination of the city dwellers.

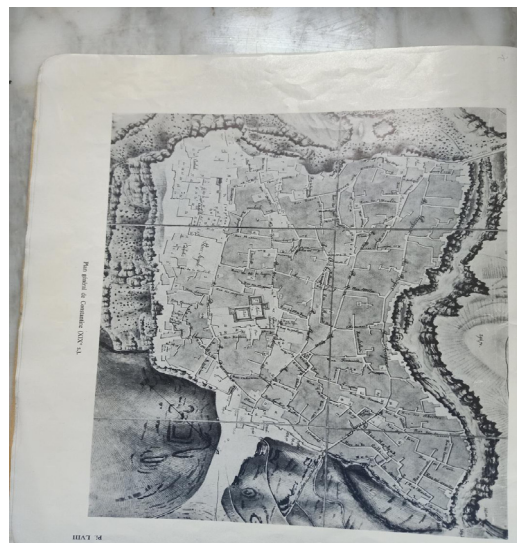
This phenomenon is however not specific to the cities of the Maghreb. The history of architecture and urbanization teaches us that it has been observed in the majority of medieval cities. It is the gate that has become a pole of growth or the boulevard that replaces the ramparts (Panerai, 1980).

As the public place in the tradition and history of cities that refers to the figure of openness to the world, to the gathering, to the various exchanges and exhibitions, it was chosen in its material form to concretize "Articulation space in the dual city."

According to a UNESCO study (1989), the Rock of Constantine is the only peninsula in the world linked to nature by an isthmus. The gorges are a natural boundary and the isthmus a door. The city has forbidden itself to overflow on the outer space until the moment when, a part of the ramparts removed; a new entity will be established at the location of the Bab-El-Oued gate. The barrier is then replaced by a suture, the space of *La Brèche*. Today it is presented as an infill space in the continuous city (MEGHNOUS, 2002) located between the two hills, the Rock and the Coudiat ATY, representing the main entrance to the Rock and its only natural connection. This space owes the essence of its existence to the permanence of the urban fact on the "Rock" on the one hand, and on the other hand, to the project of the upheaval of the promontory Coudiat-Aty. (Figure 1)



Source: DELAMARE, Scientific of Algeria, 1850



Source: NOWEIR Sawsan, 1988

**Figure 1.** The space of La Brèche represents the natural relationship of the peninsula, being unique in the world, linked to nature by an isthmus

Urban identification draws its tools from the *visual*, a privileged field of reflection on the urban by grasping the urban dimension of the discipline (CHELKOFF, 1992). The work of Kevin LYNCH (1965), Camilo SITTE (1981), Bruno ZEVI

(1976), Raymond UNWIN (1981) and Philippe PANERAI (1988) are just a few examples of that. The promotion of the concept of urban layout, with urban architecture, following the Italian theoretical work and the idea of a relative submission of architecture to the city, has given back importance to the exterior space of the building: the public space.

The space of *La Brèche* begins with the clearing of the isthmus and the *Place d'Armes*. Backfill, support and drainage techniques are used to flatten and widen the base to create a truly pristine plateau. By announcing the project of "extension" and "beautification" of the city, this plateau foreshadows the project of linking the Rock to the surrounding suburbs, ensuring urban continuity, by concentrating in a single place of power, equipment that serves to satisfy and accomplish the new centrality. From an isthmus 150 x 200 m wide, after the work of flattening it has become an area of 114,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

Subject of several dissertation investigations (LAZRI, 1991; MEGHNOUS, 2002), research and studies (EntrepriseMétro d'Algiers, 1989 & Ministère de l'habitat, 1984), the space of *La Brèche* is also the subject of several urban interventions and transformations in spite of two centuries of urban structuring and restructuring. It remained an open construction site, witness to the demolition of the Colosseum, a public building whose architectural value is inestimable, the disappearance of the Garden of the Republic, the place *Valée*, and finally the square Panis replaced by two urban hotels.

The question asked is why has this space, which represents a model known in the history of architecture and the city, been subjected to all these loads?

This work addresses the spaces of articulation in dual cities and admits the hypothesis of a trinitarian relationship: City/History/ Architectural object (project). In the case of *La Brèche*, it shows the divorce and the rupture of the project with the history of architecture and the city. This divorce is expressed on the theoretical level by the non-application of the know-how acquired at the time and on the practical level by the failure of urban policy, which accentuated this notion of rupture. It was designed in order to ensure urban continuity, it is lived and perceived as a space of *rupture*.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Our methodological position is inspired by the Italian school and is based on its experience in the analysis of cities: the typo-morphological approach. Born in post-war Italy, this approach has evolved considerably from Muratori and Caniggia, to Rossi and Aymonino, to Panerai and Castex, to Huet and Devillers to name but a few (Panerai, 1980).

Urban analysis or typo-morphology presents itself as an alternative whose concern is to control architectural production by paying close attention to the solutions applied in the past, considered to have met the needs and aesthetic ideologies of their time.

By being interested in the building on an architectural scale and the territory via the district and the city on an urban scale through complex problems associating a multitude of dimensions concerning both the data of the «locus» that space in its materiality, the typo-morphology couple allows a study of the city in a wide sense. More than a century old, it is probably not without consequences on the methods advocated. However, in this work, we are content with the method presented by PANERAI presented in the book *Elements of Urban Analysis*, a method that is actually based on a theoretical and empirical inheritance.

Methodologically, to grasp any urban entity, it must be approached to its zero degree, that of its most resistant repository. It must be described as a built object, as an architecture: to delimit this object, to decompose and to name its parts, to discern the order of its constituents. This object is a product: the projection on the ground of social, political, economic organizations. However, this projection is done through various systems of spatial symbolization and in a material that has its own consistency and resistance: the built space.

The space of *La Brèche* as an urban entity has been captured in all its complexity and analyzed through its architectural concretization, its lived experience, its perspective and perceptible aspects and its social visibilities. The period 1837-2022 is the time for the progressive establishment of the space of *La Brèche* that is the time for debates, reflections, proposals and achievements.

Our reflection cites examples of this urban phenomenon in the European world as a pole of growth materialized in public space, and in the Maghreb as a "space of articulation in dual cities," among others in cities of Algeria like Algiers

and Annaba. It particularly deals with the case of Constantine's large city from the interior of the country to the binding site marked by the persistence and permanence of the centrality on the Rock its original site.

It is a comparative method which is a necessary instrument for all disciplines. Only the comparative method can restore the identity of the object of study which distinguishes itself from other objects. The examination of a single object, building or space does not allow any general knowledge in itself, which cannot be considered as a conceptual instrument. Similarity and distinction ratios can only be signified through synchronic, diatopical and diachronic studies (Panerai, 1980 b).

To grasp the space of *La Brèche*, we propose a historical division of the phases of its growth. This study makes it possible to place the morphological analysis in a global vision of the agglomeration where time has its part.

Our approach was based on fieldwork conducted by means of architectural surveys, supported by documentary investigation based on a cartographic support that gives it the historical thickness and theorization of the subject essential to the understanding of this entity. The investigations led us to two types of documents: cadastral plans and notarial deeds. They are based on the analysis of written and graphic documents of the colonial city and draw its information from searches of archives, minutes and reports between the municipality of Constantine and the Government General of Algeria, and the texts of laws that were at the origin of this urban production, at the time when great decisions to make the city were being put in place.

To this end, the research technique adopted is carried out from several entries:

- Restitution of land transactions, based on notarial deeds
- Reading of the plan raised in 1867 from Place Nemours
- The reading of the 1872 plan of beautification of the city
- Plan of extensions outside the Rock in 1873
- *La Brèche* Plan after 1970

## RESULTS

### Spatial Delineation of the Space *La Brèche*

The space of *La Brèche* is the infill space in the continuous city located between the two hills, the Rock and the Coudiat ATY. At its level, the city continues to develop, the types realized are empowered through the exhibition of the European city. At the global level, the structuring elements of *La Brèche* space are the Avenue des Squares and the two places: Place du 1<sup>st</sup> November and Place des Martyrs (Figure 2).

The Place of 1<sup>st</sup> November 1954, framed by exclusively elaborate public buildings, offers itself to the gaze and perspective, only when reaching its level. The complexity of Avenue des Squares, which is sloping and diagonally traced, combined with the placement of the post office and the courthouse on a frontal plane robs the appearance of the square on the Rock.

Arriving at the central area, passing the square of 1<sup>st</sup> November, south side, the structure of the avenue is altered, thus opposing two spaces. The alleys take on the identity of urban pavement bordered by wide sidewalks. The relationship with the building changes, we move from continuous, aligned buildings to the space of the large properties where the buildings are no longer in alignment, but preceded by gates and broad steps delimiting the space of two public gardens on the north and south sides by their posterior facades.

Still moving south, the space of the Martyrs' Square is thought of as an articulation and treated as a roundabout: Crossroads of nine ways. Subdivided into three sub-spaces: the roundabout located in the centre, the East and West squares evolve on different floors integrated into the site and supported by long retaining walls.

At the edge of the hill of Coudiat-Aty, the avenue changes structure for a second time: the lanes, integrated in the site, are staggered in terraces embracing on both sides the slope of the ground.



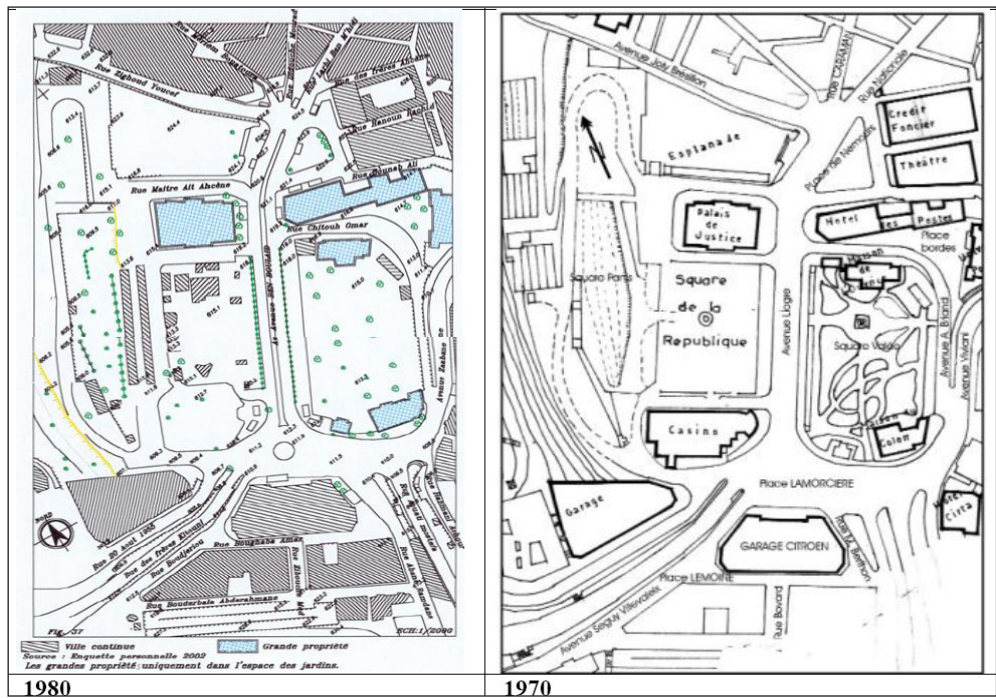


Figure 2. The Structural Elements of La Brèche Space. Source : Personal Survey 2002

Restitution of Land Transactions From Notarial Deeds

The restitution of land transactions from notarial deeds, allowed us to establish a set of operations summarized in the following tables:

Table 1. The training program of the place of 1<sup>st</sup>November

Place of 1st Novembre 1954 (place of Duc Nemours)			
Buildings and public spaces	Date of Achievement	The transformation	Date of Transformation
The BarleyStore	Around 1837	Place Valée	Around 1914
Theatre	1883		
The Market	Around 1880	Land credit	1908
The Main post office	1908	Expanded	1932
The town hall	1896		
The Laune Room	1906	The Courthouse	1918
Place Valée	1903	The Market on the Ground Floor and the Esplanade on the Terrace	1937
		The plan of the Restructured Esplanade	1950
The External Bank of Algeria	1926		
Place of Duc Nemours	1867	Restructured in Place of Weapon	1873
		Restructured into Pedestrian and mechanical space	1922
Joly Brésillon Boulevard	1903	Restructured by the Construction of a Projecting Bridge	1948

Source: Author, 2002

**Table 2.** The Martyrs' Square Training Program

<b>Martyrs Place</b>			
The Place	Date of Creation	The transformation	Date of transformation
The grain market	1863	The Citroën garage	1933
		Refurbished in the El Khalifa complex	1986
		A new restructuring and facade makeover	2015
CirtaHotel	1914	Enlarged by another building	
Nudez Casino	1921	The Coliseum	1934
		Garden	1976
		Public place	2011
The 2nd Grain Market	1921	The Vinson House	1926
		Redevelopment into an APC branch	
The house of agriculture	1930		

**Source:** Author, 2002.

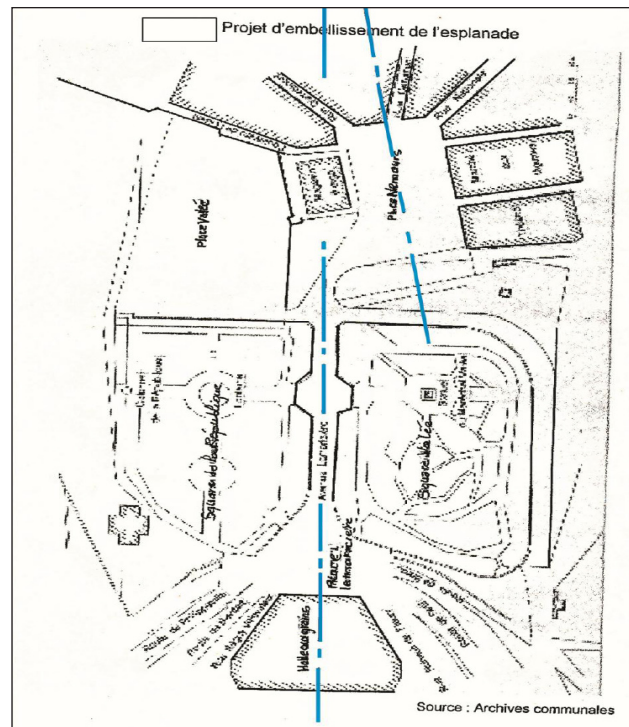
**Table 3.** The Garden Space Training Program

<b>The garden space realized around 1855</b>			
The place	Date of creation	The transformation	Date of transformation
Square Valée	1865		
Square Panis	1865	Novotel and IBIS hotels	2012
Square of the Republic	Around 1855	The intercity bus station	Around 1980
		Ahmed Bey Square	Around 1980
		Place Bey	2012
The Alley of the Squares	Around 1855	ValéeStreet	1887
		Lamoricière Avenue	1909
		Avenue Pierre LAGRE widened from 12 to 18 m	1936

**Source:** Author, 2002.

### Reading of the 1872 Town Improvement Plan

The reading of the plan of embellishment of the city of 1872 allowed us to decipher the logic of the geometric line of the space of the Breach. the vision of the plan is the privileged revealer of the architecture. Review of the plan is essential to understanding the spatial organization. The one that would appear only as a labyrinth incomprehensible to anyone - on the ground - while roaming spaces, can become – seen from the sky – suddenly intelligible (STIERLIN Henri, 1977). This aerial vision traditionally belonged to God, before the invention of the plane during 1890-1907. (Figure 3)



**Figure 3.** The 1872 Esplanade Beautification Plan. **Source:** Municipal Archives

#### The logic of the geometric layout of Place Nemours

Delimited by the public buildings of the city, the Theatre, the Land Credit, and the Postal Hall, they are articulated around a rectangular square that runs alongside the barley store and the Plaza d'Armes. The geometric outline of the rectangle is depicted on the beginnings of the three streets: Clemenceau Street, Caraman Street and Damrémont Street, on one side. The second side is the siting boundary of the two buildings, the Theatre and the Credit Land which form a return of square with the Main post office.

#### The logic of the geometric layout of the Place Lamoricière

In the extra-muros space, the isthmus is reappropriated by tree plantations according to an orthogonal grid following the axis of the alley of squares in the extension of that of the grain market. The latter is the first building built in outer space with the Rock as the head of the front (SAHRAOUI, 2004). The Palace of Justice and the Casino, are located according to this orthogonal framework whose generator is the building of the Grain Hall, a building governed by Military Engineering.

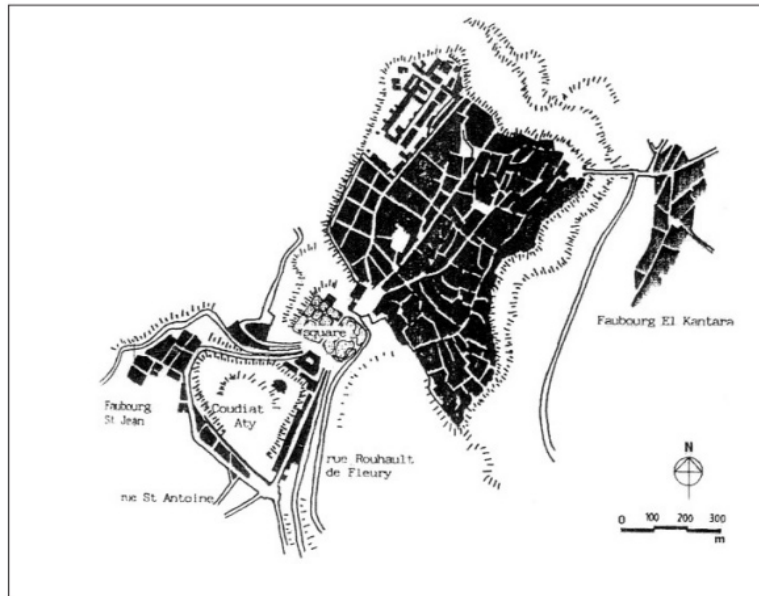
The reading of this plan has revealed to us that the regularity of the tracing of the two places adhered to physical references materialized by military buildings:

- The barley store is surrounded by the rebuilt ramparts. The layout of this property of the military engineer directed the route of the square of arms. The construction of the theatre, the first building to be built, had begun in 1877 and its establishment respected the barley store as a landmark.

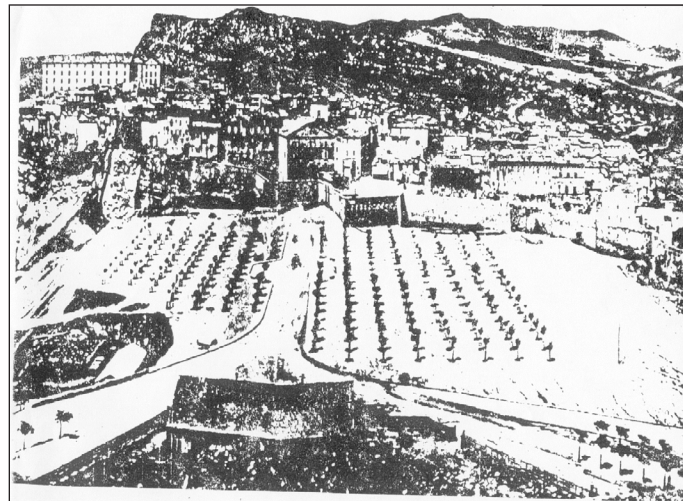
- The Grain Hall is the first extramural building.

#### The logic of the layout of the garden space

In order to aerate the too dense agglomeration and to give the inhabitants a possibility of escape, the government voted for the creation of the squares of the esplanade Valée and the planting of trees that it considered useful in a warm country and in a city with a special configuration characterized by the absence of place ((R 5, 01-05-1866, 33v) and (R 5, 02-05-1866, 80 v)). The isthmus is reappropriated by the tree plantations on the orthogonal grid along the axis of the alley squares perpendicular to the future location of the grain market. These plantations were sparsely planted in 1855 (Biesse 1985). (Figure 4)



Source : PAGAND B., 1988



Source : EICHELBRENNER Michèle Biesse, 1985

**Figure 4a.** Green Space Plantations in La BrècheArea

From an alley of squares, the path that divided the green space has become a symbolic axis sufficiently “strong” despite the “violence” of urban history, and remains an essential support of urbanization. It was marked with elements that serve as reference points to define a route for a person who did not know it. For this purpose, a monument dedicated to Lamoricière General of division and French politician was inaugurated in 1909. This famous personality has become focal in the division of the squares. It has become a place of great political and cultural events, enhanced over its length by the establishment of four kiosks of tobacco and newspapers preceded by wide sidewalks.

The lands of the space of *La Brèche* are only ceded by the various authorities for the construction of equipment likely to lead to an increase in income for the municipality. Strategic positions, given the narrowness of the base of *La Brèche*, are reserved for buildings that provide the most. This last orientation finds meaning in financial concerns, in search of a substantial land rent for the benefit of the city:

- The Grain Hall at first, and the Citroën garage at second
- The Theatre - The Market - The Casino - The Land Credit - The Main Post Office
- Hotels at the corner of each street in Nemours Square, in addition to the Cirta Hotel



- Cafes around the corner converted into clothing bazaars imported from Dubai, China...
- The House of Agriculture was built by an association of farmers in 1933. Its position at the head of the front compared to the street of Sétif (currently Aouati Mustapha), a dynamic axis, is explained by the arrival of the foodstuffs and their payment
- The substitution of Republic Square and Panis Square by two urban hotels

## DISCUSSION

Robert KRIER (1980) postulated that an urban space is such only if it possesses legible geometric and aesthetic characteristics without which any vacuum could not be considered an urban space. Two elements still emerging from these approaches: the street and the square. At the same time, the observations made in the texts of Camillo SITTE (1981) and Raymond UNWIN (1981) deal with the formal qualities of the public space: the place. The idea of joint closure and visual closure in their approach is an essential quality and criterion. It is necessary to meet some examples of architectural works meeting these criteria to realize that they are relevant and reasonable. The public space is solicited as a place of visibility and accessibility, it is also invested as an urban landscape. To the qualities of pleasure or convenience, socially normalized, is superimposed the aesthetic question, to which does not escape the production of the public space. Although, reduced to the visual register in architectural practice, aesthetic emotion appeals to all senses. Furthermore, the public space is a sensitive world by our use of it, because it is not only an aesthetic receptivity but also a sensitive practice. (CHELKOFF, 1992). However, this art of building public space in the urban entity of the Breach, as we have just presented, has undergone several mortifications.

### **The Tools of the Space of La Brèche Training Project in Relation to Those Used in Algiers and Annaba**

The result of the assembly of the debate on the plan of *La Brèche* according to their dates of edification is striking; it is a dispersion of figures, which appears as if the place of *La Brèche* was constantly remodelled where separate figures condense that leave between them unresolved intervals. The shape of the space of the Breach, its design, but also the rules of formation of its fabric are quite new. There is no more unitary set, materialized by a defined outline and thought in a simple geometric scheme which governs the relationship of the constituent elements, as in Algiers and Annaba.

The layout of the doors space in Algiers: three doors were selected in this research:

- The Gate of the Sea has been converted into a large arms square (Government Square, now Martyrs Square)
- The Bab El Oued area has been converted into a vast esplanade, a garden and the beginning of a winding street towards the Casbah.
- After the first suburb was built outside the ramparts, the location of the Bab Azzoun gate was converted into Place Bresson (now Mohamed Touri.)

Place Des Martyrs (Ex: Government Place)

It is a place of political, commercial and social exchange. This open space is of regular shape of an area of one hectare; it is limited in its three sides by public facilities- Jama'a El Kébir, the Ketchaoua mosque, the treasury, the post office and the chamber of commerce- and opened on its fourth side to a panoramic view: the seafront (Les cahiers de l'EPAU, N° 9/10 October 2001).

Square Port Said (Ex: Square Bresson, 1880)

It is positioned on the same linear structure as the Martyrs' Square. It measures 122 m X 140 m and is surrounded on three sides by commercial buildings and the fourth side is open to the sea. This public space was staged by the Frontality of the National Theatre, a former municipal opera house built in 1853 (MODOT, 1974).

The development of the Annaba City Revolution Course

The French were forced to establish their new city in the extension of the medina located on the eastern side of a hill overlooking the sea and enjoying the best climate of the region on the marshy grounds that formed its western end. They built a dike for the development of the port of the navy; and in its alignment, they traced a wide avenue, the Course of the Revolution, parallel to the alignment of the ramparts to the port. The plate of the Boulevard was built in continuity

with the construction of the dike. At the edge of the old town, after the street replaced by the ramparts, the Cours de la Révolution (formerly Cours Jérôme Bertagna) marks the north-south axis of the city. It is a pleasant walk, planted in its southern part with shady ficus, decorated in the northern part with squares and gardens and lined with arcades on which are established important public buildings whose architecture is richly elaborated. On the left, the municipal theatre, on the right, the town hall, and at the end of the courtyard, stood the cathedral which alone was razed for cultural political reasons. It has been replaced by a two-story space with a terrace in place of conviviality, linked to the central lane of the Cours de la Révolution by a staircase. In Barcelona are the Ramblas and in Tunis is the avenue Bourguiba to which the course of Annaba is a small replica!

This perception of these public spaces as a whole, as a form that corresponds to an urban interior, has given them the essential criterion for the visual aesthetics of a square.

### **The architecture of the buildings in *La Brèche* space**

Beyond the “design”, the appearance of the built forms and their style build an environment and it is from this angle that the built frame was analyzed. The language of the façades of *La Brèche* space is expressed in neo-classical architecture, Moorish architecture and Art Nouveau.

The writing of the facade of these architectural styles does not designate the premises or activities behind it. It is a controlled combination of conventional elements. The same building has two dissimilar facades: the front and the back. The front facade is orderly. It is the place of representation on the public space. It expresses collective convenience. It recognizes the conventions that can mean urban globality. Behind it, it is quite different; there is no need for this expressive register. Thus, the expressive language of the front of the buildings of *La Brèche* space, better still, the emphasis on public exposure, combined with the implantation of the buildings approximately perpendicular to the axis of composition: the avenue Ben Boulaïd has excluded much of the physical extent of *La Brèche*. We conclude that despite the work of flattening the urban entity, of a wide isthmus of 150 x 200 m becoming an area of 114,000 m<sup>2</sup>, the layout of the buildings obeying two systems of different coordinates, fragmented the space into a multitude of sub-poorly articulated spaces in their topography, use and perception.

### **Repetitive Plunder of the Green Space of *La Brèche***

From the beginning, this space was conceived as the lung of the city. The lands of the isthmus between the two hills declared of high public utility for the execution of the beautification works of the city, the public authorities opposed to their acquisition by the individuals even after their decommissioning. As the fortification limits of the city receded, the military gave the land to the city, and the state did the same by giving the state land to the commune.

- At the beginning of the 20th century, the production of the city, conceived as an economic project, changed the attitude of the authorities. The stakes were so high that the realization of this project was made at the expense of nature: the green space of the space of *La Brèche* experienced several disposals in order to build buildings whose land rent is substantial. The common owner of the land of the two squares has agreed to sell to private people plots for them to build the three buildings, the Casino, the House of Agriculture and the House of the worker.

-The apotheosis of mortifications against nature in the space of *La Brèche*, continued with the destruction of the Municipal Coliseum in 1976. Not only did this blow afflict public opinion, it also destroyed the square of the Republic. From a space appropriate by an architectural building and open to the general public, it was beheaded of its trees and its plate was arranged in a space of grouping materialized by barracks that fulfilled the function of “Moorish coffee”. As a result, the construction of an intercity bus station was done by dislocating a large part of the square Panis.

-The revival of investment and cultural tourism in Constantine has given birth to the project to build the two hotels: the Ibis hotel and the Novotel hotel. The opaque construction of both the hotels structured in continuous “bar”, blocked the visual relationship that the citizen had with the natural space that emerged through the visual escapes, from which the gaze could embrace a magnificent perspective that was limited to Philippeville, only by the distant mountains of El-Kantour. This unbridled urbanization with the advance of concrete has “eaten away” the green space of the two squares: Square Panis and Square de la République. The pool of water that was missing as an accessory to these two hotels was offered by the new redevelopment of the Ahmed Bey square that prevailed the mineral at the expense of the plant. This “inhibitory scene” suggested the exhibition of the two hotels on Mustapha Benboulaïd Avenue.

- The isthmus, the articulation space, open to the two valleys of Rhummel and Hamma, was closed by an exogenous architecture against the historicity of the place. This closure is accentuated by the transformation of the facade of the El Khalifa building whose architecture is instituted in the history of the city. Today, she shows a new look by presenting her new outfit to the guests of the Capital of Arab Culture 2015. It highlighted a model inspired by Greco-Roman architecture, on a background in openwork walls drawing an arabesque.

The kiosks, which affirmed the public space of *La Brèche* as a place of shared sociability, located along the symbolic axis, have been replaced. From the “art deco” architecture that constituted the architectural apparatus of the urban entity, the architecture of the new kiosks concentrated on the southwest corner of Benasseur square (square Valée) is completely heterogeneous. Made in Alucobond, the urban entity was trampled with the aggressive colors of this material.

## CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the formation of the space of *La Brèche*, at the limits of the medina and at the foot of the hill CoudiatAty, the total urban form of the city is the primary data to which everything bends, the models of the buildings are only the consequence. After the project of connection of the two places, the result turned out to be confusing. The whole is reversed: the total urban form was not the object of the effort of the builders, the effort was focused only on the elementary buildings.

Undoubtedly, in terms of architectural language, the urban entity shows an astonishing homogeneity, and an extremely rich linguistic plurality governed by the alignment and template plans that give them coherence and harmony. However, from an urban point of view, the urban entity dissolves into isolated constructions. All the optical fascination emanates from the isolated architectural elements and their aesthetic perfection, and not from an urban space composed of geometrically definable squares.

The construction of the Main Post Office forming square return with the store of barley and that of the Palace of Justice forming square return with the axis of the grain market, translate and highlight the logic of the two geometric gestures. The arrangement of the two buildings combined with the grammar syntax of their architectures, which emphasize the concept of the “front” and the “rear” in *La Brèchespace*, accentuates the notion of the interior and the exterior. We can confirm the hypothesis of the notion of proliferated rupture in the space of *La Brèche*.

The French military engineers had tried to restructure the cities so that their plan could resemble that of the new French cities of the nineteenth century. However, the constraints of the project in Constantine, the town “Garrison” conquered after seven years of clashes with the Constantinois, were clearly announced from the outset, namely the relief and the shape of the ground.

Likewise, the organization of relations to be respected between the civilian and military establishments, the defense and the impossibility of placing the buildings necessary for the army in the former Turkish citadel, made that the interventions at the level of the space of the Breach have evolved by trial and error. France worked in hesitation until the celebration of the centenary of its occupation in 1937. For *La Brèche*, they did not think of a definitive and coherent plan, but of an assembly of partial pieces whose number and relations are subject to debate, are modified and are altered throughout the work, in contrast to the colonial model observed in the cities of Algiers and Annaba where it is conceived as an architectural object by taking two urban forms: a square or a large built boulevard whose boundaries are occupied by public buildings. The know-how was the prime contractor of the public space project.

After independence, a new organization of the space of the Breach was established since the 1970s when a particular value of the public/private relationship appeared. In addition, the various adjustments and adjustments, show that the break that was taking place was not obvious. They altered the urban landscape and the existing urban form. It is a new shift in the relationship between the urban form, “the city as a whole” and the architectural types that govern the built elements.

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