

Notions of Well-being through Urban Architecture and Planning: The Case of 'Course of the Revolution,' Annaba, Algeria

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Abstract

This study aims to research well-being in the city. Well-being refers quite systematically to the notion of an urban atmosphere and the quality of outdoor spaces. In Annaba, the central core of the city inherited from French colonialism, 'Course of Revolution,' constitutes one of the last places of 'well-being' par excellence for the inhabitants of the city. But mainly the backbone of the creation of the new town of Bône during colonialism. The emblematic artery is both geographically in the center and above all the route in an exceptional way; it is central because of the activities that it brings together and the interest that the population has in it. This centrality continues to operate today and is remarkable everywhere and with everyone. Consequently, a historical reading will allow us to identify the factory, the operating methods of the latter, and its involvement in the creation of the new town of Bône. Moreover, a morphological and functional diagnosis is essential to better understand its design and its components and its various and practical aspects, in the form of micro-developments. This project will serve as a starting point to identify and qualify the relationship between the urban space 'Cours de le Revolution' in downtown Annaba and its urban and architectural quality. A region of eastern Algeria, recognized by its rich and diverse urban structure. This diversity will lead us to seek its place and its value in the production of urban space by evaluating its role in strengthening urban resilience.

Keywords: Well-being; Place of 'The Cours of the Revolution; Morphological analysis; Historical analysis; Quality of outdoor spaces.

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1. Introduction

The global pandemic has shown us clearly that the layout of our cities and our homes has significant consequences on our physical and mental health (Lach et al., 2022). The problem of well-being in the city refers quite systematically to the notions of urban atmosphere and living environment; it implicitly refers to the notions of belonging, conviviality, and territorial identification (Newman, 1996).

Architectural quality, whether sensory or visual, whatever its status, helps to formulate beyond these urban atmospheres a fundamental character of the identity of the city capable of creating better conditions of harmony. Consequently, talking about well-being means establishing the relationship between man and the environment that surrounds him, whatever its scale (Muret et al., 1977). This relationship extends beyond architectural quality to include urban outdoor space. The latter, whatever its status (public, semi-public, semi-private, or private) (Lach, N et al., 2022), has a primordial function in the city (Redjel et al., 2019). and constitutes a determining element of the physical, psychological, and social well-being of the inhabitants and visitors to the city. It allows the perception of the physical image of the city and constitutes support for the social and spatial practices of users. (Hillier, 2009).

However, like other cities, the city of Annaba contains a rich and varied architectural and urban heritage. This real estate stock, which characterizes the historic center, is part of urban entities grouped according to various compositional principles and logics giving rise to homogeneous wholes, which define the urban image. The urban fabric is made up of the superposition or overlapping of three entities, namely the road network, land division, and

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construction. Indeed, in dense urban sites, formerly established, elements of strong permanence and elements of a certain plasticity, of a transformability of the urban phenomenon, coexist. The building presents a strong permanence but gives rise to substitution actions that renew it while the plot remains intact. At this level, what connections can we establish between the architecture of the city of Annaba and its urban form? And what are the architectural and urban codes inherent to the notion of well-being in the city?

The central core of the city, inherited from French colonialism, 'Cours of Revolution,' constitutes one of the last places of 'well-being' par excellence for the inhabitants of the city. A place for walking and relaxing, whether through the diversity of its public spaces or through the architectural quality contained in its buildings. The latter responds to the logic of the organization of their windowed networks, obeying harmonious and balanced arrangements (Boumaza, 2010).

The architectural and spatial qualities that generate well-being, cited above, are often lost in other districts of the city (suburbs, housing estates, etc.) supported by 'architectures' (Hillier, 1996) and configurations of different spatial spaces. We are witnessing more and more contemporary architectural productions without any architectural character, where the notions of harmony and balance are non-existent and where the feeling of unease is almost present. (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Cours of Revolution, Annaba. (By Author, 2018).

2. Space of 'Cours of the revolution', a chronology of appearance

The '*Cours de la Revolution*,' the emblematic artery of Bône, is both geographically in the center and above all the route in an exceptional way; it is central because of the activities that it brings together and the interest shown in it by the population. This centrality of the course continues to operate today and is remarkable on all sides and by everyone. The course articulates both the day before and the new city and distributes the streets that are perpendicular to it. It was at the center of the dissemination of the city's important roads in 1932. The body of the old town then acts as an emitting pole of urbanity. The strong identity of the course is attached to several historical and aesthetic facts that make the image of Bône herself. It is even the object of a sort of discursive inflation; it participates in a certain collective memory.

It is simultaneously part of the central urban and port areas. Its symmetry and its components, such as the church, the theater, and the town hall, are part of a general symmetry of the plan in which other elements also participate, such as the layout of squares and the statues. Within this whole, the 'Cours' constitutes in itself a coherent public space, the first idea of which dates back to the first projects proposing a differentiated framework from that found in place. But the course was carried out without a specific plan. It is the result of a bundle of particular but synchronous situations. To the defensive constraint of widening the walkway, was added a succession of urban events, such as the opening of doors, for example, but the most striking fact remains the construction of the church outside the walls. This was thus the denunciation of the beginning of the growth movement of Bône. (Figure 2).

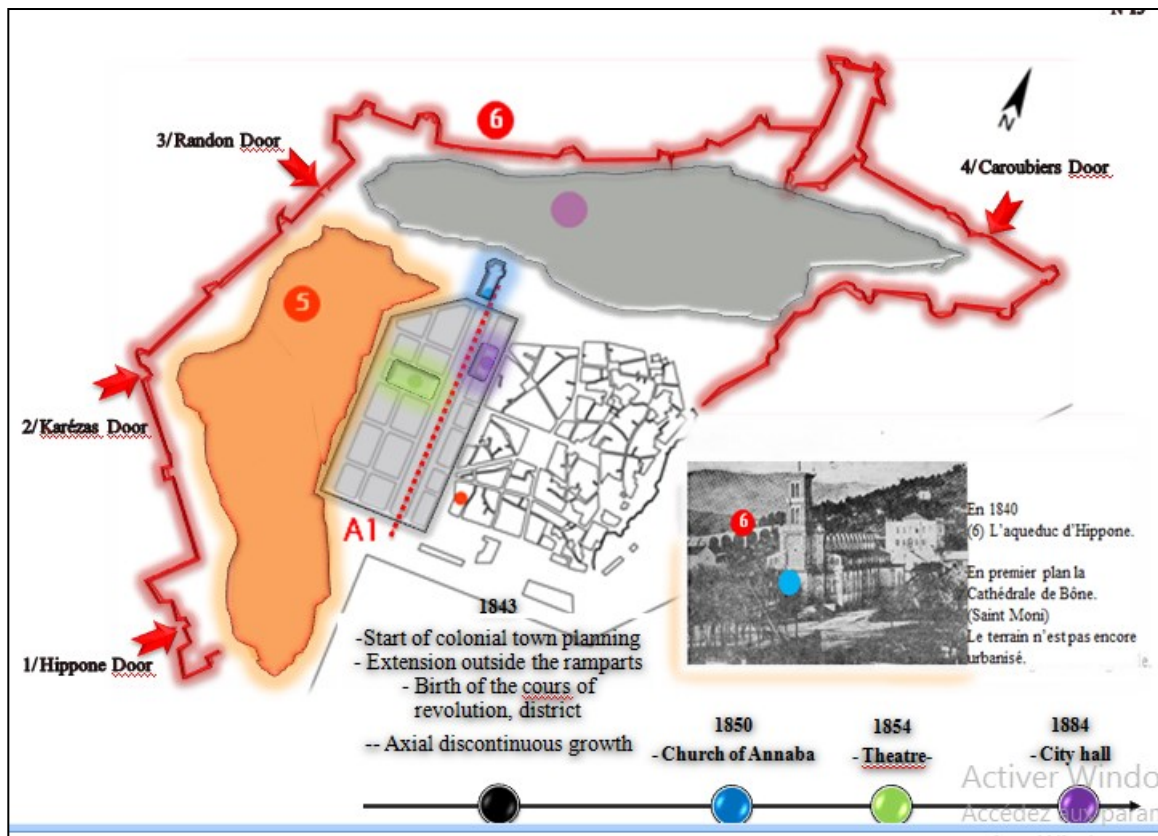


Figure 2. Birth of Cours of the Revolution. (By Author, 2018).

Several facts characterize this creation, 'the course.' Historically, there was a walkway that was necessary to maintain, widen, and regularize. This type of path runs alongside the enclosures mainly for surveillance reasons. Then it seems that the construction of the church outside the walls determined for many the idea of expansion; at least it provoked the opening of the door of Saint Augustine. The route of the Bône fortifications experienced an interesting episode where the two enclosures, old and new, co-existed side by side. This sparked long debates on whether to keep the old one or not. The resolution that finally leads to the choice of demolishing the old enclosure frees up land through this same strong action. The latter subsequently becomes the subject of a 'program plan' or 'construction program' (Pinon et al., 2005).



Figure 3. The Course and the conditions of its drawing. (BENSSAD, 2015, Review by Author 2020).

What follows is a most important urban planning operation because it involves different logic at the same time: we compare it to what is known as 'subdivision' because this action concretely subdivided free land to raise buildings there. buildings, to do this required the contribution of private builders. And this is the part that calls on buyers for

the lots then builders, promising through this succession of operations significant added value upon the arrival of the programs. Within this operation, the sale by auction or 'putting a price' known in French law of that time as favoring the sale at the highest price, finally signs the value of this location. It was commendable for him subsequently to submit the constructions to specifications. The latter is the only explanatory element of the coherence of the whole, taken to the extreme. Thus, the course was born from this succession of operations: a walkway, vacated land, a church, and islands that have become buildings, thus punctuating the itinerary of this achievement, and subsequently judged to be exceptional. (Figure 3).

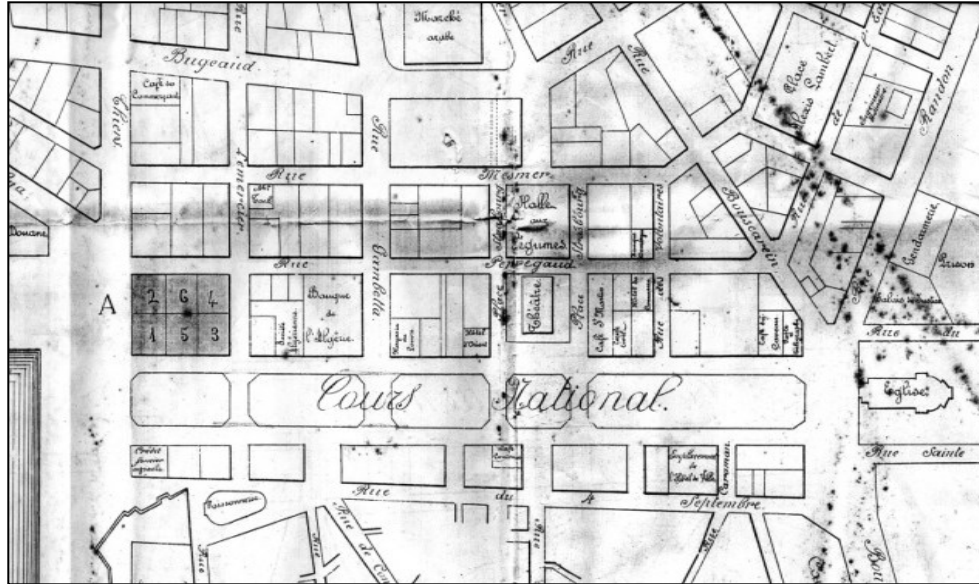


Figure 4. Ex Bône alignment plan drawn up by Edouard GONSSOLIN, 1883. (Municipal Archive).

The 'Course' is integrated into the planning of the city because, since 1840, it has been at the center of all proposals, but it is from the construction of buildings that the course has truly constituted a public, urban, delimited space. Identified in 1863, these buildings did not yet exist; there was no lot to be awarded. These lots are divided according to the plans of the surveyor Murat on the surveys carried out before him by the surveyor Ausset of the topographical service of Constantine. What distinguishes the side of the course is its colonnade; this presence of the colonnade on the east side only, which is often explained by the need for urban comfort [9], is there to ensure the much-celebrated symmetry of the course. Otherwise, the axis of symmetry of the church would have divided the course into two distances: one of 20 meters (west) and the other of 30 meters (east). The colonnade covers an additional ten meters. Thus, what was constrained becomes an aesthetic opportunity. The crucial dates for the contribution of genius to the realization of the course are 1861 and 1868. Bône is picturesque with its 'Cours of the Revolution,' but at the same time, this Bône signature only offers a view inside the city; there is no maritime facade for Bône like that of Algiers or the balconies of Oran. All the efforts made for the aesthetic of the facades and their Haussmann were recovered by the course. The course's manufacturing itinerary is also a particularity of Bône. It tells us about the physical, human, and financial support for this production. Above all, it provides information on the art of composition, which, beyond that of forms, unites actions and delivers a space as exceptional as the course. In addition, it informs us about this formation, which is undoubtedly comparable to others (walkway becomes esplanade, here becomes courtyard), but it must not obscure the fact that this esplanade is nothing without its banks, which physically delimit it, identifying it historically. By the effects of style and which connect it with this world of Haussmann's artistic creation. See Figure '4'.

3. Choice and principles of typo-morphological analysis

3.1 Definition of the corpus

Many attempts at typology remain unsuccessful because we did not take care to define from the start what we would study. The definition of the corpus is linked to the questions we ask ourselves, but two aspects intervene:

- *The choice of reading levels*

The typology begins with classification; it is preferable to classify objects belonging to the same level of reading of the urban fabric. Here the question of division and its relevance arises from a division external to the observer and before analysis. The built plot seems to constitute the level at which the analysis is the most fruitful because we immediately grasp the relationship of the building with the portion of urban territory that supports it. By favoring this level, we overlap many of the questions posed by the parcel analysis (Panerai et al., 1999). However, it is a question of going beyond the flat cadastral reading to see in the thickness of the building how the fabric is constituted.

- *Delimitation of the study area*

It depends on the means available (time, personnel), but it is important to determine whether we are doing an exhaustive analysis, where we will consider all the objects in detail, or a representative analysis (like a survey). or it will be necessary to determine samples, and then check, after having developed the types, that the entire area is properly covered. A good knowledge of the city in question and of more general 'urban phenomena' will allow, with a little intuition, to determine the relevant samples.

3.2 Prior classification

A certain practical experience of typology makes it possible to lighten this phase; it is considered here the case of all the operations explained. We will start with an inventory, this is the phase of careful observation of the objects that we seek to describe, and then highlight the properties that distinguish them to establish criteria. We have to go more slowly, almost stupidly. Forcing yourself to write what is of no interest, what is the most obvious, the most common, the dullest (recalled George Perec, 1992). As soon as the number of objects is a little high, this inventory has every chance of becoming systematic: each time the same questions will be asked, and depending on the answers, we will see similarities, relationships, or differences appear without having taken into account them. Keep in mind that we are already manipulating criteria, even if their determinations remain empirical. Once an initial classification has been made, it is necessary to verify that there is more difference between two objects belonging to two different families than between two families belonging to the same family. Possibly restart the classification and review the criteria to arrive at this result, which simply constitutes a first grouping, which will make it possible to develop types.

3.3 Development of types 'typologies'

The type is constructed. This construction by rational abstraction can be done in two stages; first, in each given family, we will explain the properties of the objects that compose it, and then we will bring together the common properties of the objects of a family to define the type; the set of non-common properties marks the different variations on the type. Typology leads to an understanding of architecture in a fabric. The built types appear doubly determined by culture and by location, but this determination has nothing to do with determinism: in a given place for a specific time, several solutions are possible. The history of the project is part of this opening.

4. Typo-morphological approach to the colonial historical core

4.1 Presentation and justification for the choice of the city of Annaba

The city of Annaba is known for its precious historical heritage; its past is woven by a multitude of civilizations, and the traces still present bear witness to the importance that characterized it from millennia to the present day. Indeed, it has gone through history through a multitude of names: Hippone, Hippo-Regius, Bouna, Bône, and finally Annaba (Béguin, 2003).

Each of these appointments was granted to him in a different period, from the Phoenicians to the present day. Each of these civilizations asserted itself through its architectural style and its specific urban forms, which were subsequently adopted with local know-how and the conditions of the climate and terrain. The city center of Annaba is the result of the extension work of the medina and the desire to show the power of the dominant French state. For this, we built an entire parallel city, which stifled the medina by putting it aside and where each architectural detail was made to assert more and more French dominance. located in the far northeast of Algeria at the mouth of the Seybouse River and about a hundred kilometers from the Tunisian border, it is the fourth largest city in Algeria in terms of several inhabitants, after the capital. Algiers, Oran, and Constantine, with around 350,000 inhabitants, known as Annabis (also called Bônois and Bônoises), Unnâb, that is to say, the city of Jujubes, because of the abundance of this fruit in this place.

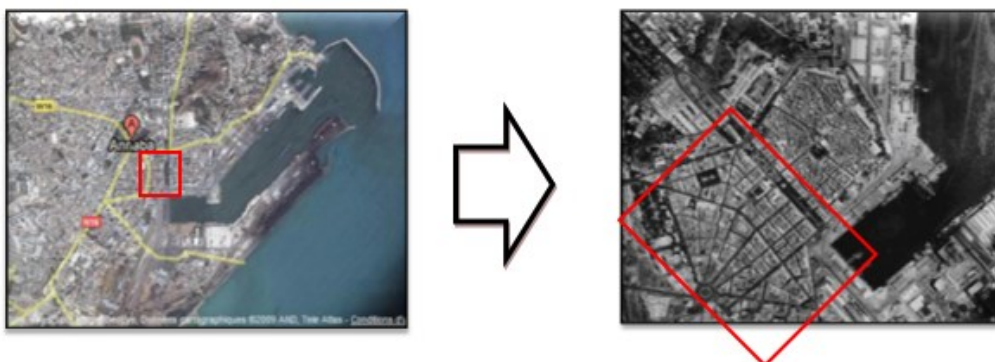


Figure 5. Annaba: geographical location. (By Author, 2017).

It was one of the oldest cities in Algeria, founded in 1925 BC, known under the successive names of Ubon, Hippo-Regius, Hippo, Bouna, Bled el *Annab*, and finally Annaba. She is the heir of several civilizations, hence her wealth from the heritage point of view of different cultures and beliefs. (Figure 5).

4.2 Presentation of the study area and choice of the sample

The research focused on highlighting and establishing the type of 19th and 20th-century rental buildings in the Annabi colonial core. The corpus on which this work was carried out is a set of buildings located in the 'grouping of blocks 1', namely 'Cours of the Revolution', (Figure 6) and this for the following criteria:

4.2.1 Historical criteria

Every singular building is linked to a type, a social product at a given historical moment, an object of reference both concrete and abstract whose characteristics are:

- The same temporality, because it is considered the first extension developed by French colonialism in 1868, which ties in with our interest in studying the first colonial constructions.
- The same geographical location linked to the development of the city.
- The same large class of social destination.
- The same mode of production.

4.2.2 Morphological and architectural criteria

The analysis revealed belonging to common organizational structures: a constant relationship linked to the shape of the plot, its mode of occupation, the way of distributing, superimposing, lighting, and serving the housing, and the principle of organizing facades. These constants generate the development of a canonical model within which the variants and languages specific to each unique building, such as ornamentation and materials, develop. The study of historical urban development and urban morphology allowed us to carry out the main quantitative and qualitative indications, which will help guide typological research. It, therefore, seems to us that any typological study, from the moment it takes into account vast fragments of the heritage built at a certain period, must take as its starting point the history of the urban morphology of a territory.

They constitute an essential instrument of control of urban morphology, which visually relates at the plan level the interior spaces (apartments, rooms) with the exterior spaces (courtyards, streets), giving a first idea of the problems of construction and class of buildings. These surveys constitute a much more real physical image than traditional maps, introducing an immediate understanding of the main issues relating to rehabilitation and being able to become, as such, intervention tools. It immediately induces the idea that the intervention must also be done at the block level, at the morphological level, and that each building is a unitary physical object. The facade of the building restored by the survey is an essential indicator of the type because it is this that signifies the building on the exterior and qualifies all the ranges of the 'standing' of the building and its social significance.



Figure 6. Annaba: choice of study area. (By Author, 2017).

5. Results and discussion

The different modes of reading (historical, morphological) of urban space allow the understanding of the urban form. Better analysis implies the recognition of all the potentialities contained within the city. The re-reading of the modes of composition is an opportunity to provide the urban form «with unity and diversity, a principle and the means to adapt it». At the macroscale, the analysis consists of defining the different levels of constitutions of the urban form as well as the relationships between them, and at the microscale, we proceed to an architectural typology of the different levels constituting the shape of the built framework.

5.1 Blocks

The block is, in the type of tissue that constitutes the support of our study, the first level offering a physically autonomous built object, a constructed entity. It is the basic element of the old urban space, which does not encroach on the collective domain of the space of streets and squares but constitutes it. The European city is characterized by a strong correlation between the shape of the island, which constitutes the primary component of the fabric factory, and the shape of the city itself. The history of the block as the urban form is like an introduction to the history of the city or cities, the blocks of a particular city having characteristics that are unique to it (Fredet, 2003). The city center of Bône is made up of blocks very heterogeneous in shape and size. This characteristic makes it a little difficult to identify and define a typical one. Any block whose shape results from the creation of the road system that surrounds it is considered here as 'Haussmann Island.' Consisting of a building mainly built

between 1840 and 1910, it is developed according to several principles aimed at serving the perception that users will have of the city. The study of all the blocks (52 blocks) allowed the constitution of classification; the Boos ones were grouped by typological families. The reading of the block typologies was made about three parameters: the geometric shape of the island, its relationship to the track, and its dimensions (Figure 7). Two large geometric shapes are distinguished: blocks of irregular shape with medium and small dimensions located from the west of the center, and those of regular shape characterizing the islets on both sides of 'Cours of the Revolution.'

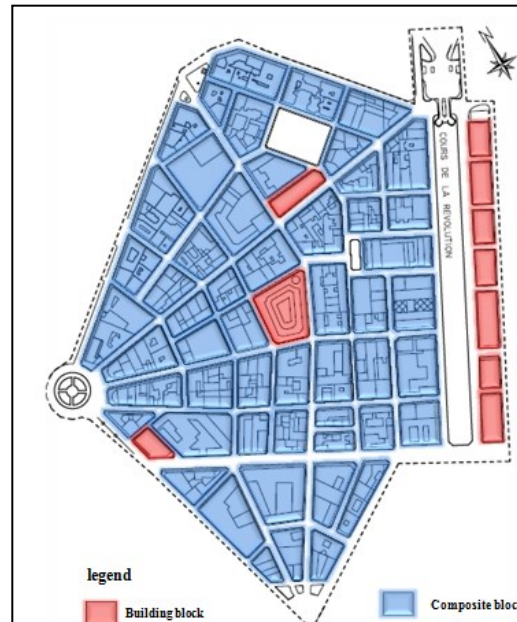


Figure 7. Map of block typology. (By Author, 2018).

5.2 Plots: form and mode of occupation

The process of identifying the different forms of plots and their modes of occupation calls for the use of a systematic methodological approach of typo-type nature morphological, which consists mainly of the definition of an exhaustive reading grid ordered by a suitable parameterization for this study. The downtown parcel has 4 types of plots: small, medium, large, and large. The average plot represents a large majority of 60%, which is in the upper part, unlike the exceptionally large plot that is found much more in the lower and east of the city. The shapes of the plots are regular (square, rectangle, trapeze, triangle) and irregular. The surface area of irregular plots is almost equal to that of regular plots because the plot's division follows the shape of the island and the road frame. Regular plots are located mostly in the center and east of the study area. They represent 41% of the total number of plots. It is noted that the plots located in the south and north have irregular shapes of 59% of the total number of plots. (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Map of plots typology. (By Author, 2018).

5.3 The building

It is an essential instrument for controlling urban morphology. It visually connects the interior spaces (apartments, rooms) with the exterior spaces (courtyards, streets), giving a first idea of the problems of building and building class. Generalized to all the entire city sectors, they constitute a physical image much more real than the classical maps, introducing an immediate understanding, because comparative, of the main issues on rehabilitation and can become, as such, the Commission's role to play. It immediately suggests the idea that the intervention must also be resolved at the block level, at the morphological level, and that each building is only a part of a whole that lives as a block, as rhythm, as a unitary physical object.

The facade of the building shown by a survey is an essential indicator of the type because it means the building on the outside and qualifies all the ranges of the 'standing' of the building and its social significance. The study specimens were presented in the form of descriptive technical sheets, each of which includes a presentation of the island specifying its position in the center city but also explains each specimen and its occupation of the plot as well as its location (Figure 9).

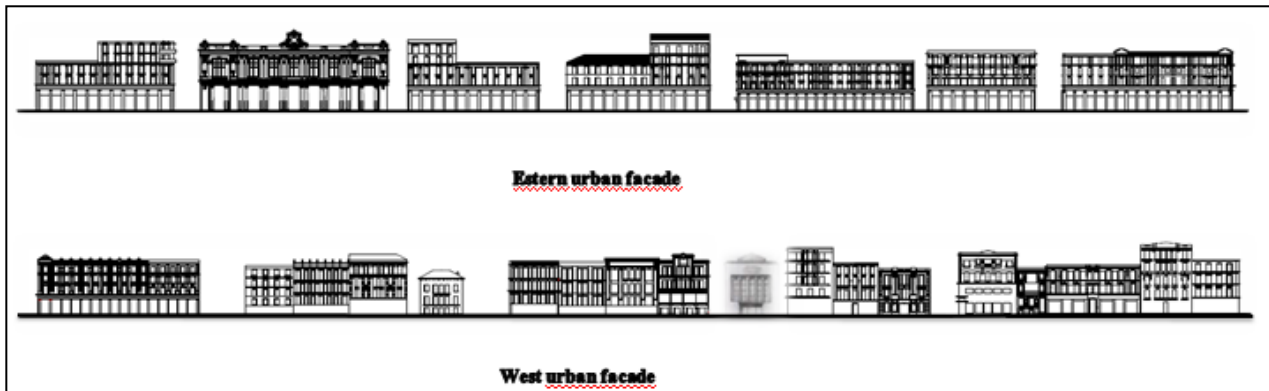


Figure 9. Continuous facades. (By Author, 2024).

6. Conclusion

The typographical morphological analysis helped us to better understand the organization of the inherited historical fabric as well as its compositional principles. Furthermore, we detected that the relationship with urban morphology is established according to modalities, which are:

- Unity and multiplicity

Blocks can be considered as assembled units; a block can become a single building or be made up of various independent units, according to a sometimes-irreversible process. It is also possible to renovate or rebuild certain units while keeping the logic of the whole intact.

- Geometry adaptability

As observed previously, the blocks can vary in size and shape (from triangle to square to polygon), with a perimeter measuring from 490 to 3869 m². This geometric diversity extends to the assembly of several blocks in the form of a macro batch.

- Reasoned vacuum distribution

Made up of aggregated built entities, the block is also characterized by its distributed and hierarchical voids whose location and dimensions respond to specific uses; the major voids correspond to the service courtyards as well as the chimneys, which also contribute to the natural ventilation of the apartments.

- Pooling of voids

For the most part, the Annabis colonial blocks are made up of more buildings than courtyards. The spaces within the same block are often divided by simple separating walls, sometimes completely shared. This aggregative form of emptiness, which limits the use of courtyards, makes maximum densification of plots possible.

- Continuous facade

The cases studied, representative of the majority of urban situations in Algerian cities, are defined by a continuous and uniform treatment of their contours: the block is a figure whose perimeter is completely surrounded by the facade. The latter, serving the street, is independent of the interior of the block and often also of the plot.

In the end, the historical study was a sort of prelude, a step aimed at understanding the urban place before approaching its analysis with the perspective of transforming it. The typo-morphological approach of this urban fabric will in turn proceed to the identification of each of these groups, the study of their logic and that of their relationships and will therefore help us identify homogeneous or heterogeneous groups as well. Only families of homogeneous and harmonious plots, generating urban and architectural well-being in the city.

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Conflicts of interest

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material; further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding authors/s.

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