

Conclusion

In the end, according to the investigations, it can be argued that based on Asilah's cultural and historical features and its strategic position along with great social-economic potential, revival project of Asilah's historical texture is done with the aim of "preserving its ancient texture and determining touristic function as its main role." On the other words, urban tourism as a great economic, social, and cultural situation and, acting as a motivation, has interfered in Asilah's historical texture. Affecting different dimensions of local landscape – as mentioned above – it has worked to physically revive and renovate Asilah's historical texture. Yet, as it was explained, these kinds of actions are not solely ended in positive effects. But, mono-dimensional attention to tourism concept and prioritizing it in the revival of the historical texture has led to negative and destructive effects, particularly in different social and cultural dimensions in the city. In this way, Asilah's historical texture nowadays is looked at with a museum-exhibitive like perspective and there is no trace of urban active and high-quality life in it. Due to these kinds of actions, despite medinah's improvement, the negative effects of

visitors presence in the texture has intensified the local people's migration and the city is turned to an exhibitivite entity, with no trace of active urban life. On the whole, there is a mutual relation between the expansion of tourism and the revival of the ancient urban texture; "the revival of Asilah medinah" confirms this argument. As a bilateral tool, urban tourism can both revive the historical texture and leave negative effects.

As a bilateral sword, the revival program of the medinah in Asilah buttresses city's local landscape in some aspects and disturbs it in some others. In the case of preservation and revival of the texture of urban alleys and passages as well as the renovation of proper building, the program has worked to maintain valuable local heritage. But, in the case of popular landscape and local life dimensions, the program has changed demographic texture, and traditional rituals and life, clearly disturbing local landscape. Though the holding of annual art festival has been successful in attracting tourists and developing local economy, it has disturbed the harmony of the city's traditional activity and destroyed the relation of locals with their background and that of city with people.

Endnote

*The article is based on a field trip entitled "The Tourism of Moroccan, native Landscape " which was held in September of 2016 and was funded by "NAZAR research center".

1. Urban Tourism
2. Responsible Tourism
3. The Cultural Moussem of Asilah

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and nonlocal visitors and are turned to villas that are only used in some times during the year. Due to this procedure, the historical texture is turned to an exhibitivite entity for tourists and the real identity of the neighborhood is changed. This city no more reflects public and active urban life. Now, the quiet passages are the distinguished feature of the texture. More than that, due to the strong cultural approach of the revival program, industrial factories or job opportunities that can improve the working situation of the jobless population of the region, are not anticipated (ibid); (Fig. 13 & 14).

In fact, local values are put aside by the pretext of creating touristic attraction to enhance the income and nonlocal culture is imposed on the city. Among the other noteworthy cases is the increase of social anomalies, particularly during

the artistic-cultural festival, including tourist scams, insecurity, drug distribution and use, and ... (The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1989). Among the other negative effects of Asilah medinah's revival are the fading privacy of residents, the emergence of improper models of behavior specifically among youths, change in demographic pattern (The increase of immigrants and reduction of local population), and the dramatization of people's life and the traditional rituals.

Besides, in economic dimension, this project has imposed negative effects on the texture. Among these effects are rising cost of living, rising land prices, income volatility, and the appearance of self-seekers and false occupations (The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1989).



Fig. 13. The dramatization of historical texture. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh, 2016.



Fig. 14. The fading identity of the neighborhood and its passiveness. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh, 2016.

in some parts of the texture (particularly in the touristic routs). Some business units are dedicated to the selling of handcrafts as well (El Harrouni, 2000 & Eunice, Nd). The construction of hotels within the historical texture is another work done in response to the needs of tourism industry. Moreover, the provision of some urban facilities including those of social, educational, and professional education are other reflections of the consideration of local needs (Fig. 9 & 10). Among the factors which led to positive effects on the historical texture of Asilah the improvement of emergency access network, construction and preparation of public parking, and establishment of sidewalks and entertainment places can be mentioned (ibid). In addition, the holding of Morocco's most important festival in this city in summer has enhanced its cultural perspectives, leaving positive influences on the revival of the activities related to handcrafting and the preservation of the cultural identity of the area. Though the holding of the very festival has turned Asila to Arab artists' the most significant destination in the year, it has led to popular protests against the unemployment of local forces and resources (Eunice, Nd). Yet, the holding of this festival has meaningfully improved the economic situation of the residents, leading to medinah's booming economy through the establishment of businesses related tourism industry. The construction of new operational places such as hotels, restaurants, cafes, or commercial ones related to handcrafting, tours, ... are all among the factors which create jobs and money for the residents, improving city's economic situation (Fig. 11 & 12).

The improvement of other urban substructures such as water, electricity, and telephone networks are other positive points seen in the historical texture of the city. In this way, the improvement of city's public lighting, electricity and telephone network has expanded the commercial and touristic activities in the region. Furthermore, the prediction of sewer collection system and waste collection one has increased the quality of urban atmosphere (ibid). Another observable case is the improvement of urban equipment in a way that buildings with social, educational, and



Fig. 11. The creation of business related to tourism industry. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh, 2016.



Fig. 12. The creation of jobs for residents. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh, 2016.

handcrafting commercial functions are anticipated within the historical texture.

Despite the entire of positive points mentioned above, which are following a policy of local landscape revival and preservation, visiting Asilah brings negative points into visitor's mind. On the other word, prioritizing tourism industry in revival of the historical texture, despite the most of positive points, has had a lot of negative effects, some of which are discussed below.

The most negative effect of the revival program is the disturbance of local popular landscape of the city. Today, Asilah medinah is turned to a place for the free time of nonlocal residents. Here, the local people's houses are bought by foreigners



Fig. 9. The placement of the handcraft selling shops in the texture. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh, 2016.



Fig. 10. The dedication of usages appropriate for tourism industry in the texture. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh, 2016.



Fig. 5. The wall paintings on the urban walls. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh (2016).

Among the other positive factors deserving to be mentioned are the improvement of urban view and the improvement of residential areas through the renovation of the houses which are exposed to destruction. Reconstruction is solely possible within the areas bordered by walls. New buildings follow the same style of the historical Spanish and Portuguese buildings. The beams and columns are made of reinforced concrete and in some parts brick barrier walls are set. The roofs consist of iron beams and hollow bricks. The most common material of the walls are concrete and hollow brick. The exterior view is shaped by concrete covered by lime. Usually, tiles with traditional decorations and wooden pieces from Cedar trees are used in renovation. It is noteworthy that in the present and usable



Fig. 7. The diversity of architecture in the historical texture. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh (2016).

buildings their renovation and revival operation is done by traditional materials and styles (El Harrouni, 2000 & Eunice, Nd); (Fig. 7 & 8). In Asilah medinah's texture, the change in the function of historical buildings and the insertion of new services into it for addressing both citizens' daily needs and that of tourism industry is recognizable. For instance, Raisouni Palace is changed into a cultural complex and spaces like studios are prepared there to host artists and tourists during the big artistic-cultural festival. Further, an amphitheater within the Portuguese walls, an anchorage in the existing port for the expansion of commercial activities and, finally, a small beach resort in the coast of the ocean are constructed. In addition, some functional places such as cafes and restaurants are added



Fig. 6. Considering the creation of public spaces in the texture. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh, 2016.



Fig. 8. The improvement of the floorings of streets. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh, 2016.

accessibilities are improved and public parking is predicted (ibid). By walking through the quiet passages of the city, wall paintings on the city's white walls are clearly observable, reflecting the effects of Morocco's art festival and the development of social-economic activities. Among the other cases in the medinah's texture is the development of tourism and culture in a way that covers the activities related to tourism industry, including the construction of hotels, cafes, restaurants, the stands that sell handmade products (Fig. 5).

The Effects of the Revival Project of Asilah's Historical Texture on the City's Local Landscape

As it was explained, the revival of Asilah's historical texture is done by giving priority to tourism industry. Due to this, variety of positive

and negative effects on the medinah's local landscape can be investigated. Now, Asilah as a touristic target and exhibition city is highly interesting for tourists. A noticeable point that comes to mind when walking through the passages of the city is the absence of public life and the local citizens' active life as it was in the past. This city no more reflects a trace of local identity and a traditional style of life. What is most evident when someone passes through the city's passages is the intensified silence and quietness which, in the first glance, brings a passive city into mind. To explain the subject more, the positive and negative effects of the revival project of Asilah's historical texture on its local landscape will be discussed.

Focusing on public spaces, this program has struggled to preserve the liveliness of the texture. As such, through the visiting of Asilah's medinah, positive features of the texture were recognizable. Among these features, enhanced situation and regulation of the public spaces can be mentioned. Accordingly, open public spaces are visible in the texture that simultaneously lead to social interactions and balance the density of historical texture. Among the other distinguished factors are the renovation of public passages and the improvement of their flooring. For an improved beautification of urban spaces, a wave-like model (kind of reference to the ocean on the beach of which the city is established) is applied on the flooring of the streets (Fig. 6).



Fig. 3. Raisouni Palace. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh, 2016.



Fig. 4. the quiet passages Asilah medinah. Photo: soheil Esgandarzadeh, 2016.

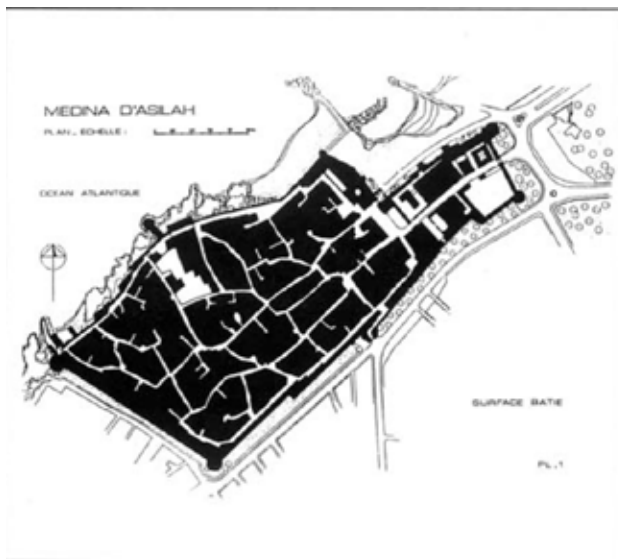


Fig. 1. Asilah's historical texture (The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1989), Source : <http://www.akdn.org/architecture/project/rehabilitation-of-asilah>

Tower, and Raisouni Palace were fully renovated and most of public spaces were revived for commercial functions. The flooring of streets was restructured and historical houses were reconstructed based on traditional models. In 1989, Asilah's revival and reconstruction project won the Agha Khan award. The reason of its selection was the focus on the harmony of the buildings with the residential texture and the creation of a mutual relation between the local and external skills (El Harrouni, 2010); (Fig. 3). Nowadays, due to this revival and renovation program, the city's medina is mostly regarded as a museum city with non-local residents and tourists (Fig. 4).

The historical elements and buildings of the medinah were reconstructed during the revival of it. In addition, the development of substructures and urban facilities are the other cases observable in the city. Throughout the medinah, the



Fig. 2. An aerial photo from Asilah's historical texture. Source: El Harrouni, K 2000, 'Urban rehabilitation of historical areas: The Asilah Medina', Rabat Instituts, Morocco.

the decisions which affect their life.

Reinforcing the positive involvement to preserve natural and cultural heritage, with the recognition of its diversity.

Helping to create satisfying experiences for tourists through meaningful interactions with local residents and deeper understanding of local cultural, social and ecological problems.

Providing facilities for tourists with physical disabilities

Increasing the sensitivity of tourists towards the culture of the host community, encouraging tourists and hosts on the other side for mutual respect and the establishment of the sense of pride and self-confidence.

Historical Texture and the local Landscape of Asilah

Asilah is located in northwest of Morocco in 42 kilometers south of Tangier. The population of this city is 30000 whose main sources of income are farming and fishing, while tourism is growing rapidly as one of the main sources of the city's income. Because of pleasant weather, the city hosts tourists throughout the year. The main art festival of Morocco is held there in summer³ (El Harrouni, 2010).

After visiting Asilah, the distinguished features of the urban landscape can be described as follows:

The Asilah medinah has features similar and dissimilar to other medinahs in Morocco. The main street of the city connects the main gates. The other streets serve the residential areas in north-east, south-west directions. The existence of narrow passages as well as newly constructed ones is a feature of this texture. The city borough is a rectangular citadel remaining from the Portuguese era and including an open space with small residential and business units. The variety of architectural styles inside the texture including traditional, neoclassic and modern new ones is another feature that can be mentioned. White facade is a distinguished feature of this texture. The white facades are decorated with wall paintings in different colors, showing off to the eyes of passersby. The decorations on the

entrance doors and windows are among the other landscape-creating features of the historical texture of Asilah. The narrow, twisted alleys with the play of light and shadow on their ground and the white walls of houses in the spaces within the texture which are used for neighborhood services, constitute the general landscape of Asilah. The vicinity of the beach and the wall which separates the city and beach, affects the visual understanding of the historical texture of Asilah.

In the new constructions in the vicinity of the historical passages of the city (mostly new passages) the functional places which address the needs of tourism industry, such as cafes, restaurants, as well as the shopping centers offering handmade products, are seen. The most notable point about visiting Asilah, which happened in the second half of September, was the extraordinary quietness of urban spaces and passages in the eyes of visitors. In other expression, the main difference of Asilah medina with other Moroccan medinas is that in Asila medina the local life is less evident. The shaping factors of Asilah's local landscape can be searched in the texture of its alleys and the center of districts, in the shaping facades of urban passages from the architectural form and style to colors and decorations, in the touching point of the city and the ocean beach, and more importantly, in the popular landscape active in the texture. What today is seen as the urban landscape of Asilah medina, represents the changes happened in the local landscape of the historical texture; it is traceable in the popular landscape and the shaping facades of passages. What is clear is that the project of the preservation of Asilah's historical texture has affected its local landscape. In the following parts, the effects of this project on the local landscape of the historical texture of the city and its reason will be discussed (Figs. 1 & 2).

The Revival Project of Asilah's Historical Texture

The revival project of Asilah's historical texture started in 1978. In this project, historical sites such as Portuguese defensive walls, Al-Kamara

Introduction

Nowadays ancient buildings and spaces are not focused merely for their cultural functions, but their commercial, official, and touristic values are also considered. The main motivation in the revival of urban historical buildings and spaces is the expansion of the milieu for human life. This aim is regarded and programmed with social, cultural, and economic approaches. In this way, actually the preservation of cultural values is one of the main motivations in the revival of urban historical texture. On the other side, cultural places and historical textures are crucial to the topics of urban tourism; there is a mutual relation between the expansion of urban tourism and the revival of historical texture. Of course it is important to know that urban tourism is a bilateral tool which can positively affect and improve the quality of historical textures and, yet, leave some damages, negatively affecting their existence. The ancient textures in Moroccan cities which are known as “medinas”

and, based on French developing program, are protected from the manipulation of modern, urban development, vividly reflect the tension between the developing goals of tourism and the cultural ones of the maintenance of heritage and local landscape.

This research will analyze the effect of urban tourism on the local landscape of the ancient Asilah’s urban spaces; the positive and negative effects of this analysis will be investigated as well. This research aims at answering these questions:

- What effects has urban tourism had on the revival of Asila’s historical texture?
- From physical, economic, and social aspects and regarding the accessibility, transportation and urban facilities and equipment, what have been the effects of the revival project of medina’s historical texture on the local landscape of Asilah?

Urban Tourism¹

Urban tourism is defined as travelling to city with different motivations and based on variety of interests, facilities and equipment which raise the motivation within the individual (Movahhed, 2007).

Local Landscape and Tourism

Local landscape refers to the conceptual dimension of that part of landscape that is resulted from the interaction of settled human being in a particular part of Earth with nature, acting as its shaping bed. As such, what is resulted from human being’s interaction with his surrounding environment during centuries, being regarded as the identity and part of the culture of that area or land, is the local landscape of that area. Based on this definition, landscape with its concrete-abstract feature (Mansouri, 2004); (Al Hashemi, 2016) is subjected to history and the pass of time. This involves the concept of locality as being related to an area, neighborhood or district (<http://www.jasjoo.com/books/wordbook/fa/>).

Though it is not easy to find these features on the changed background of the historical medinas of Morocco, this study attempts to understand and measure the amount of their observation in the program of the revival of the historical texture of Asilah by relying on field observation.

On the other side, regarding the importance of region and local culture in the development of tourism with focus on the target texture and local culture of tourism, kind of tourism under the title of responsible tourism is highlighted.² As such, responsible tourism is used to describe any type of tourism with the highest responsibility towards tourists, in different fields (ibid).

This type of tourism has the features listed below: Reducing the negative social, economic, and environmental effects.

Creating more financial benefits for local residents and enhancing welfare level of host society.

Assisting the improvement of working conditions and availability of industry.

Assisting the involvement of local residents in

The Historical Texture of Asileh: The Mutual Relation of Tourism Industry and Local Landscape

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Abstract

As the shaping and developing nucleus of human communities throughout history, historical texture has a significant role in the cultural heritage and reflection of local landscape. In recent decades, simultaneous to the development of tourism industry, these textures found another role in urban life. As touristic destinations, these textures extensively affect the economic life of cities. The multiplicity of aims in expanding tourism industry along with the revival and representation of cultural values and local landscape in these textures are the apparent challenges in the way of reviving and renovating historical textures, particularly in the developing countries. The historical texture of Moroccan cities reflects these challenges. The revival and renovation of the historical texture of Asilah, done with the aim of “preserving the ancient texture with a particular focus on tourism,” reflects the influence of the local landscape of historical texture of the city in various dimensions, either positive or negative.

Considering the total procedures and actions of revival and renovation of the historical texture of Asilah on the one side, and field observations on the other side, this work seeks to investigate the scale of the influence of these factors. The findings of this investigation shows that the program of the reconstruction and revival of the medina has acted like a bilateral sword, buttressing the local landscape of the city in one aspect and unsettling it from other aspects. On physical dimension, these actions have enhanced the readability and quantitative entity of the texture, but have negatively affected the qualitative dimension and local life. Though, the interferences preferred by tourists and their subsequent activities have been less destructive in comparison to other cities in Morocco.

Keywords

Historical texture, Urban renovation, Urban tourism, Local landscape, Asilah.