

Monument, Social Bond, and Duality: The Great Mosque of Tlemcen and Its Public Square as a Case Study

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Abstract

The central square of Tlemcen plays a pivotal role as a focal point for convergence and social interactions in the heart of the city. It constitutes a dynamic space that encourages exchanges among the urban denizens. However, what further distinguishes it is the imposing presence of the Great Mosque of Tlemcen, a majestic relic from the Almoravid era. Over time, this mosque has evolved within an ever-changing environment and now rests within a square boasting a Western configuration, an uncommon occurrence worth emphasizing. The expanse of this square suggests its potential as an additional lever for enhancing the monument, although the current situation differs from this perspective. This architectural coexistence raises fundamental questions about the relationship between the Great Mosque and its immediate surroundings, how the population perceives this space, and its impact on the social dynamics that animate the square. These queries form the very core of this in-depth sociological study. The objective of this research is to explore how this central square, as a focal point of the city's social life, interacts with the historical heritage represented by the Great Mosque. By highlighting the social dimension of this relationship, our approach seeks to unravel how the residents of Tlemcen incorporate this precious monument into their daily lives and how it shapes their understanding of the city's history and culture.

Keywords: Architectural Coexistence, Tlemcen's Cultural Heritage, Monumental Interaction, Social Dynamics, Urban Transformation