



International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science

e-ISSN: 2544-9435

Scholarly Publisher
RS Global Sp. z O.O.
ISNI: 0000 0004 8495 2390

Dolna 17, Warsaw,
Poland 00-773
+48 226 0 227 03
editorial_office@rsglobal.pl

ARTICLE TITLE

THE IMPACT OF VERTICAL COLLECTIVE HOUSING ON SOCIAL
TRANSFORMATIONS IN CONSTANTINE CITY

ARTICLE INFO

Maanser Imad, Adad Mohamed Cherif, Bendebache Zine. (2024) The Impact of Vertical Collective Housing on Social Transformations in Constantine City. *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*. 4(44). doi: 10.31435/ijitss.4(44).2024.3059

DOI

[https://doi.org/10.31435/ijitss.4\(44\).2024.3059](https://doi.org/10.31435/ijitss.4(44).2024.3059)

RECEIVED

22 October 2024

ACCEPTED

18 December 2024

PUBLISHED

30 December 2024

LICENSE



The article is licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License**.

© The author(s) 2024.

This article is published as open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), allowing the author to retain copyright. The CC BY 4.0 License permits the content to be copied, adapted, displayed, distributed, republished, or reused for any purpose, including adaptation and commercial use, as long as proper attribution is provided.

THE IMPACT OF VERTICAL COLLECTIVE HOUSING ON SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN CONSTANTINE CITY

Maanser Imad

Institute of Urban Management Techniques, University of Oum El Bouaghi, Oum El Bouaghi, Algeria
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8999-2349

Adad Mohamed Cherif

Institute of Urban Management Techniques, University of Oum El Bouaghi, Oum El Bouaghi, Algeria
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7647-194X

Bendebache Zine

Institute of Urban Management Techniques, University of Oum El Bouaghi, Oum El Bouaghi, Algeria
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6278-0178

ABSTRACT

This research examines how vertical and collective housing in Constantine city affects residents' habits, traditions, and social relationships. We investigate the impact of these space-efficient architectural models on social dynamics and urban living patterns. Vertical construction and collective housing have emerged as preferred solutions to urban housing challenges, offering pragmatic answers to urgent shelter needs. However, the transition to high-rise and communal living presents residents with a markedly different lifestyle, often conflicting with their established cultural and social norms. Our study explores this sociological shift, examining how residents adapt to their new environment in vertical and collective housing. We investigate how this transition reshapes community interactions and traditional practices within Constantine's urban fabric.

KEYWORDS

Vertical Construction, Collective Housing, Social Transformations, Constantine

CITATION

Maanser Imad, Adad Mohamed Cherif, Bendebache Zine. (2024) The Impact of Vertical Collective Housing on Social Transformations in Constantine City. *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*. 4(44). doi: 10.31435/ijitss.4(44).2024.3059

COPYRIGHT

© The author(s) 2024. This article is published as open access under the **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)**, allowing the author to retain copyright. The CC BY 4.0 License permits the content to be copied, adapted, displayed, distributed, republished, or reused for any purpose, including adaptation and commercial use, as long as proper attribution is provided.

Introduction.

With the accelerating pace of demographic growth and the worsening housing crisis, humanity has found itself compelled to adapt to a new residential reality. This reality has led the vast majority of urban residents to accept diverse housing options, regardless of their quality or suitability for their basic needs. Amid these transformations, the vertical construction model has emerged as a practical and effective solution, gaining increasing popularity in the contemporary urban landscape.

This urban pattern is characterized by its space-saving design and efficiency in utilizing spatial dimensions, making it a preferred or even necessary choice in crowded cities. It offers a practical solution to meet the growing demand for housing, accommodating a large number of residential units within a relatively small land footprint. This feature makes it an ideal model for addressing the challenges of significant population growth and rapid urban expansion.

Algeria, like many developing countries, has adopted vertical residential construction as a national strategy to confront the escalating housing crisis. Since independence, the country has faced major challenges in providing adequate housing for the increasing urban population, especially with the massive internal

migration towards major cities. In recent decades, there has been a surge in the establishment of vertical housing complexes, particularly within social and supported development housing programs. This trend has not been limited to the capital alone but has extended to major cities such as Oran, Annaba, and Constantine - our study's focus- where new neighborhoods characterized by towering residential buildings have emerged.

Despite criticisms regarding construction quality and its impact on traditional social fabric, this model has significantly contributed to alleviating the housing crisis and providing millions of housing units for citizens. It has also led to a reconfiguration of the urban landscape of Algerian cities, accompanied by challenges and opportunities in urban planning and sustainable development.

The city of Constantine has witnessed a remarkable transformation in its architectural fabric with the adoption of vertical residential construction. Although not new to the city—having been introduced with the Constantine 1958 project. This approach was a response to the unique demographic and geographical challenges faced by the city. The rocky nature of Constantine and its location on a plateau surrounded by sandy valleys limited horizontal expansion possibilities, making vertical construction a strategic choice to meet increasing housing needs.

First: General Framework of the Research:

1- Research Problem:

In response to this new reality, the population has divided into two groups: the first sought to adapt to the new environment, gradually abandoning some old habits in favor of lifestyles more suited to vertical living. The second group, however, has strived to maintain its cultural identity, attempting to tailor the new environment to fit its customs and traditions.

Over time, a gradual transformation occurred in the social fabric of these vertical communities in the city. Residents began to develop new habits and traditions that blended their cultural heritage with the demands of modern life in high-rise buildings. Unique social relationships emerged among neighbors, characterized by a blend of privacy, community cooperation, and occasional isolation.

This transformation was not merely a change in living arrangements; it represented a profound cultural and social journey. Over time, residents found themselves deeply influenced by this new lifestyle, forming a new urban identity that combines authenticity and modernity, reflecting a positive adaptation to the challenges of contemporary urban life.

This leads us to the following question: **How has the expansion of vertical residential construction affected social transformations in the city of Constantine?**

This problem can be detailed through the following sub-questions:

- What are the main motivations behind the shift towards vertical construction in Constantine, and how has this affected the urban fabric of the city?
- What is the impact of vertical housing on the cultural practices and inherited social customs of Constantine's residents?
- What are the positive and negative effects of vertical construction on the social and economic life of Constantine's inhabitants?

2- Significance of the Study:

- Social Importance:

The significance of this study lies in its focus on the reality of social relationships within this modern housing model. Vertical living represents a paradigm shift in urban social fabric, directly affecting the nature of interactions between individuals and families.

- Practical Importance:

This study serves as a necessary application for understanding and assessing the impact of modern urban projects and patterns on the social and cultural fabric of the city. It provides a scientific basis for making informed decisions in urban planning and sustainable development.

3- Objectives of the Study:

Every research study must have objectives to achieve. Through this research, we aim to:

- Understand how vertical housing affects the nature of relationships among neighbors and families within vertical housing complexes, and how this type of living influences social interaction.
- Examine how residents of Constantine adapt to the new lifestyle in high-rise buildings, including challenges they face and opportunities provided by this housing model.

- Identify social issues that may arise from living in a vertical residential environment, such as tensions between neighbors.
- Investigate how transitioning to vertical living impacts local customs and traditions, and how residents can maintain their cultural and social heritage amidst urban changes.
- Measure the impact of vertical housing on residents' quality of life, including economic, social, and cultural aspects, and how these aspects can be improved through sustainable urban planning.
- Contribute to the development of urban planning theories by providing new data and analyses regarding the impact of vertical construction on social transformations within the context of Constantine.

Second: Conceptual Framework of the Topic:

- Vertical Construction:

Vertical construction is a modern architectural style characterized by the vertical height of buildings on the ground surface. Its aim is to efficiently utilize limited land spaces to accommodate the maximum number of residential units.

- Collective Housing:

Collective housing refers to a vertical building containing multiple residences, sharing a common entrance and communal outdoor areas. It is considered more economically viable than individual or semi-collective housing. This type of structure consists of several floors with an internal staircase serving all levels of the building, or it can refer to an apartment, which is a part of a building composed of one or more rooms with its own facilities and one or more entrances leading to all its components (Abdelhamid Dlimi, 2007, p 178).

- Social Transformations:

Social transformations refer to the ongoing process that extends over successive time periods during which specific changes or modifications occur in human relationships, institutions, organizations, or social roles (Al-Tanubi, 1996, p 52).

Third: Methodology:

Our approach was based on a descriptive analytical methodology, which is characterized by its ability to accurately describe and analyze phenomena. This methodology allowed for the quantitative and qualitative description of the social transformations experienced in the study area and provided a detailed analysis through the collection of data and information related to the phenomenon under study. Subsequently, this data was analyzed to offer precise and reliable interpretations.

Fourth: Scope of the Study:

The spatial-temporal framework of the study is a vital component of the overall scientific research framework. It refers to defining both the temporal and spatial dimensions of the study. This specification helps clarify the scope of research and ensures the accuracy of the results obtained.

1- Spatial Scope:

Our study focused on the urban area of the *20 August 1955* neighborhood, which represents new urban residential areas (Z.H.U.N) from the first generation in the city of Constantine, following urban planning directives. This neighborhood is characterized by a well-planned vertical residential construction model. It is located 2 km southwest of downtown Constantine along the road leading to Algiers. It is bordered by the *Ikhwan Arafa* neighborhood to the north; *Hassan Boujanana* neighborhood to the northeast; National Road No 05 to the east; *Blikaz* real estate development to the south; and the urban periphery of the city to the west.

2- Temporal Scope:

The study lasted approximately five months, accounting for variations in social practices across different seasons from January 2024 until late May of the same year.

3- Human Scope:

The human aspect represented in this study consists of the residents of the *20 August 1955* neighborhood in Constantine, which contains 1,039 housing units for a population totaling 20,125 inhabitants.

Fifth: The Vertical City, Social Relationships: Reality and Transformations:

Defining the contemporary "vertical city" is not sufficient as merely a result of urban planning for height or underground depth. The city has been moving vertically or developing its basements since ancient times,

dating back to its inception. If European cases are not convincing in determining the characteristics that establish the contemporary vertical trend in urban spaces, what about the pyramids or Arabic minarets, which have characterized urban scenes in different eras with a spirituality strongly associated with verticality? Additionally, consider the biblical writings that speak of the Tower of Babel or the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Certainly, verticality is inherent in urbanism, regardless of the era or cultural region involved. Thus, the "vertical city" is not merely a replication of verticality in the city; it is a comprehensive vision that requires precise planning and a deep understanding of the factors shaping urban life. This vision must transcend physical dimensions to include social, cultural, and environmental aspects to ensure its success and sustainability.

Although it is a recent topic for research and an emerging subject for public policies, verticality represents a new element—or rather a renewing element—for contemporary urban spaces. The issue of the vertical city has become global at the same time discussions around towers and skyscrapers have resurfaced. Before studying the effects of verticality in construction, we will explore its history in cities, its initial emergence, and its evolution.

1- Overview of Vertical Construction in Constantine: Introduction to the Neighborhood Under Study:

As previously mentioned, the emergence of vertical construction in the city is not recent; it began in the 1930s with the establishment of buildings along Sétif Road and then in the Kadour Boumédous neighborhood (Cilloc) between 1958 and 1962 as part of the Constantine Plan aimed at accommodating workers. It is bordered to the east by a scenic view, to the west by a sawmill, to the south by a radio station, and to the north by a bus stop. This neighborhood comprises five buildings with an estimated 651 housing units inhabited by 3,550 residents distributed across 640 families.

Its construction was primarily based on establishing numerous housing projects to accommodate Algerians to quell revolutionary sentiments and absorb popular discontent on one hand, while on the other hand serving as a high concrete barrier to protect French settlers' homes in the scenic neighborhood from winds and natural conditions. Regarding attempts to create coexistence between Algerians and French residents, Jean Pelletier stated in his book **Algeria 1955: An Attempt at Urban Geography**: "The coexistence between Algerians and Europeans in Algiers occurred like oil and water; we touch without mixing" (Jean Pelletier, 1955).

This reflects the conditions experienced by residents of these high buildings, which were akin to encampments alien to their accustomed nomadic lifestyle on one hand and their large familial structures on another, necessitating radical social and economic changes.

Collective and specifically vertical housing did not significantly emerge until the 1970s through the establishment of numerous new urban residential areas (ZHUN) defined by Ministerial Circular No. 335. By 1980, significant residential areas and facilities were constructed in the suburbs (like *20 August 1955*, Fadhila Saadan, Filali, Daqsi, Sidi Youssef Valley, Ziadia, industrial areas, sports parks...). From 1980 until today, housing policy for new urban residential areas has extended eastward and westward across the city (Boussouf neighborhood, DJabal Al-Wahsh) before giving way to a new strategy favoring individual housing that consumes large areas located in suburbs such as Ain Bay Plateau, Sarkina, Ben Cherki, Bardah, Qamas, Sissawi. Similar complexes were built during this period.

The *20 August 1955* neighborhood was designed specifically to respond urgently to high demand for housing amid a crisis context. The primary goal was to house people while often neglecting public space design and social-cultural facilities that should accompany these residences. Beginning in the 1970s alongside several other neighborhoods aimed at meeting this need under pressure from housing shortages; these "planned" neighborhoods built on city outskirts mostly suffer from inadequate facilities.

The neighborhood is located 2 km southwest of downtown Constantine along the Constantine-Algiers road. It consists of 1,039 housing units accommodating 20,125 residents over an area of 15 hectares with an overall density of 69 units per hectare. The residences are constructed in R+4 and R+5 buildings where each basic unit measures 14 meters long by 10 meters wide.

2- Living in the Vertical City: Between Strategies and Social Interaction Practices

Housing in the vertical city is viewed from two perspectives: the actual practices of residents and the strategies employed by stakeholders in providing apartments and offices in high-rise buildings (public policies, real estate promotion, architecture). Social and familial relationships, along with the use of private and

communal spaces in vertical housing and workplaces, allow for an exploration of perceptions and living methods (mobility, social interaction at home and work, use of private and public spaces).

Lewis Wirth posits that "the growth and diversity of the city weaken social relationships among its inhabitants, as formal social control methods tend to replace informal controls based on shared customs and traditions. Consequently, multiple spatially dispersed subgroups and cultures emerge, reducing the likelihood of individuals knowing their fellow city dwellers personally. Social relationships among residents become superficial and temporary, leading individuals to view social interactions as means to achieve specific goals" (Mohamed Atef Ghaith, 1995, p 129).

In reality, space does not remain neutral once it is inhabited. Regardless of the space, residents leave their mark on it, expressing their dominance through practice. Space cannot dictate behavior to its inhabitants. However, while spatial structures continuously evolve with technological advancements and scientific progress, cultures remain relatively stable, with their rhythms of change extending over several generations; "space contains forms, as we say, and regardless of the space in which it exists—whether imposed or chosen—the resident always seeks to make it their own" (Juan D. Lombardo, 1975, p 349).

We found that many residents of the studied neighborhood have transferred numerous habits and behaviors from their previous living environments, especially during occasions such as holidays. The behavioral approaches perceived by the social system as infringing upon certain recognized social norms and values are evident (Sobhi Muhammad Qanoos, 2000, p 272).

For instance, random slaughtering of sacrificial animals was observed along with the disposal of their hides due to the lack of designated spaces within residences for such activities. Additionally, residents wished to perform these rituals themselves as they were accustomed; however, due to limited living space, they resorted to renting event halls or limiting invitations to close relatives contrasting sharply with how weddings and celebrations were conducted in the past.

3- Living Together in Vertical Cities: Solidarity, Isolation, Control:

The vertical transformation of cities reveals new forms of privatization of public space not only horizontally but also vertically. Access to these spaces is restricted and raises questions about rights within urban environments. This vertical transformation also reflects strategies employed by some residents to avoid others while seeking isolation or security; sometimes it leads to control over urban space. How do horizontal social-spatial divisions intersect with vertical disruptions? What ideas can be developed regarding coexistence within vertical urban forms: what freedoms? What solidarity? What communities?

Spatial ownership is defined as "a set of practices related to structuring and organizing space with the aim of controlling it according to cultural representations associated with that space" (Assia Malki Allouani, 2000).

Through our study of the aforementioned neighborhood, we found that residents often feel a sense of public ownership but perceive that new tenants do not possess equal rights compared to long-standing residents; they feel deprived of many privileges. Consequently, many inhabitants experience control over even basic aspects of their communal lives leading them into a state akin to isolation from others as a form of protection.

Vertical living renders public spaces less manageable for long-term residents while fostering rejection towards newcomers; this could fracture social bonds because "the city is not buildings but rather a community laid upon a piece of land" (Henri Lefebvre, 1968). The neighborhood constantly suffers from conflicts over water supply issues, noise disturbances, and waste accumulation—particularly in shared spaces—due partly to elevator malfunctions or residents' unfamiliarity with frequent stair use or reliance on children for waste disposal; this leads them to throw refuse from their balconies or into nearby vacant areas—reinforcing values of indifference among residents.

The significant pressure on various networks leads to their accelerated deterioration; this negatively impacts urban environments resulting in degradation.

All this occurs within a neighborhood that fundamentally lacks public facilities; even its only park has been appropriated by the National Commercial Registry Center for conversion into a parking lot prompting collective action among all neighborhood residents against this process. Following this event, the neighborhood experienced a form of community solidarity that earned it recognition as one of the cleanest neighborhoods at the state level during a national competition organized by Algeria's General Directorate for National Security in coordination with the Ministry of Urban Planning and Environment in 2014.

4- Vertical Construction and Its Relationship with Social and Cultural Privacy:

In reality, the concept behind constructing vertical buildings relies on mechanical theory emphasizing repetition and diversity without considering residents' aesthetic preferences. This was underscored by French architect Le Corbusier when he was asked by Indian Prime Minister *Nehru* to design Chandigarh; he responded dismissively regarding Indian customs saying: "What do Indian customs mean today... you said yes to machines, yes to trousers, yes to democracy" (Abdelhamid Dlimi, 2007).

This statement implies that constructing buildings aims primarily at blindly replicating housing patterns indefinitely—a process that can lead individuals into conflict with excessive mechanization contrary to natural living conditions while neglecting human factors essential for selecting forms related to housing communities and cities.

This can manifest as an absence of genuine architectural consideration regarding relationships between architecture and society; evident through neglecting certain architectural elements both inside residential buildings and outside that hold cultural and social significance for their inhabitants. In neighborhoods like *20 August 1955*, similar to other Algerian urban areas, some architectural elements such as courtyards have ceased being part of vertical building designs elements that once served vital social functions during family gatherings or celebrations opening avenues for economic perspectives on space while introducing new structural systems governed by technical standards regarding wall dimensions and room sizes often adopting repetitive patterns from one building type to another.

5- Social Transformation: New Social Practices in Space:

In this type of transformation, changes generally encompass the population and their lifestyle. In sociology, the term social transformation (or social change) refers to "the totality of changes occurring in the structure of society over a specific period" (Peter Heinz, SIDLER, 2010). G. Rocher defines it as "all visible and verifiable transformations over time that permanently affect the structure or function of a society and alter its historical trajectory" (ROCHER, 1968, p 22).

To produce their living spaces, residents redefine, reconsider, and reorganize one or more parts, or even the entirety, of the proposed housing. This process is referred to as ownership/re-ownership patterns of space. It encompasses all attempts aimed at reshaping the proposed space according to the real needs expressed by the resident in their daily life.

According to E. Hall: "The home is not just an apartment or a detached house; it is a territory where some of life's most significant experiences are lived" (E. Hall, 1966).

Thus, the home is not merely the physical framework represented by living space; it is an entire territory, a part of space where the most personal expressions can occur.

Practice assigns a location to space: a space for this activity or that practice; it qualifies it. Through practice, space becomes social; it transforms into a place, but this place is not necessarily that which was proposed by the designer. At this moment, we can discuss the overlap in the relationship between practice and space through:

- Flexible methods are those that succeed in achieving their goals without making the reconsideration of housing apparent; they embody symbolic transformations.
- Restructuring methods demonstrate outright rejection of certain spatial characteristics of housing by removing them and replacing them with others; they embody usage transformations.
- Violent methods confront social and material characteristics; they demolish them while reconstructing others, even if this leads to distorting that housing; they embody material transformations.

Through observations and interviews with some residents of the *20 August 1955* neighborhood, it became evident that the level of social relationships among them like any community does not increase with their numbers or density but rather depends on increased opportunities for interaction. This is not guaranteed by vertical constructions, which complicate the establishment of relationships among residents. Such relationships may be fundamentally undermined due to previously mentioned issues such as environmental pollution, competition for shared spaces, and fear of others' control especially when there is a sense of not needing one another.

Sixth: Conclusion:

From this perspective, the inevitable outcomes of population density in the city become apparent. As the population increases and density rates rise, specialization and variation among its individuals also increase. The *20 August* neighborhood in Constantine, like other vertical neighborhoods, experiences high density

compared to areas relying on horizontal housing, making the impact of vertical construction on its residents and vice versa a foregone conclusion.

We observed that residents have intervened in their living spaces and their external environment. There has been a noticeable change in the habits of some residents who have attempted to adapt to the new reality by adjusting to the new conditions, such as reducing visits due to limited living space, restricting invitations to close relatives during celebrations and weddings, and creating a form of isolation while defining relationships based on utility.

The transformation has even extended to redefining family structures themselves. The apartments in high-rise buildings are unable to accommodate large numbers, leading to family size limitations on one hand and a focus on the nuclear family consisting of parents and children on the other, resulting in the absence of the extended family concept.

The concentration of residents in a limited area intensifies pressure on local resources while simultaneously generating increased waste production. The proliferation of waste incites feelings of discontent and protest among neighborhood residents, contributing to anxiety and concerns about public health; this inevitably diminishes opportunities for enjoying various aesthetic and cultural values.

Moreover, a sense of boredom and weakened loyalty or belonging emerges, leading to frequent disputes and mistreatment of neighbors or isolation from them as a desire to avoid conflict.

REFERENCES

1. Abdelhamid Dlimi: A Study in Urbanism / Housing and Accommodation, Dar Al-Huda for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, Ain Melila, Algeria, 2007.
2. Al-Tanubi, Mohamed Omar, 1996. Social Change, Manahij Al-Ma'arif Publishing House, Alexandria; Jalal Hazi and Partners, University of Alexandria, Libya; Omar Al-Mukhtar University.
3. Cf. Jean Pelletier, Algeria 1955, An Essay in Social Geography, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1955.
4. Mohamed Atef Ghaith: Urban Sociology - A Theoretical Introduction - Dar Al-Ma'arifa Al-Jami'iya, Alexandria, 1995.
5. Juan D. Lombardo and E. Barilleau, "Appropriation of Space in Multifamily Buildings," article published by the Institute of Sociology, Paris, 1975.
6. Sobhi Muhammad Qanoos: Studies in Sociology, Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya, Beirut, 1st edition, 2000.
7. Assia Malki Allouani: "Colonial Formation Neighborhoods; Processes of Reappropriation of Colonial Space; Case of Coudit-Aty, Constantine," p.128. Master's thesis, 2000.
8. Henri Lefebvre, The Right to the City, Paris, Anthropos, 1968.
9. Abdelhamid Dlimi: The Algerian City Between the Impossibility of Escape and the Difficulty of Conflict. Journal of Human Sciences, Mohammed Kheider University, Biskra, Issue (12), November 2007.
10. SIDLER, R., Social Mutation. Retrieved from Historical Dictionary of Switzerland, 2010.
11. ROCHER, G., Introduction to General Sociology (Vol. 3). Paris: HMH 1968.
12. E. Hall, "The Hidden Dimension," Edition: Le Seuil, Paris, 1966.