

Cultural events in urban space the city of Oran as a model

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Received: 25.01.2025 ; Accepted: 26.03.2025 ; Published:26.04.2025
doi: 10.56334/sei/8.3.77

Abstract :

In this article, we focus on the urban space as a space to attract cultural and artistic events such as celebrations and festivals, in order to showcase the city's public places and its intimacy, and the one of these cities that we have adopted as a study model is the Algerian city of Oran in order to discuss its cultural balance in the areas of celebration as well as to get to know each other. Its tangible and intangible assets and potential.

Keywords: festivals, Oran, city, culture, Art.

Introduction:

The city is linked to several structures, including services, the economy, culture, etc, and is considered a space that offers many of the facilities needed by citizens, including cultural centers (theaters, youth centers, multi-service halls, cinemas, etc.). The urban space allows for the provision of these facilities alongside other structures. Given this information, we wonder what role

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Citation. Ezzine A. (2025). Cultural events in urban space the city of Oran as a model. *Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems*, 8(3), 1269-1275. doi: 10.56352/sei/8.3.77. <https://imcra-az.org/archive/358-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-3-volviii-2025.html>

these components and infrastructures play in launching cultural activities for various events in the Algerian city of Oran.

First: The concept of a festival from a linguistic perspective. We note that the word festival has several meanings. According to the Arabic dictionary, it is a Persian word composed of two parts: the first is "mehr," one of which means "sun," and the second part is "jan," one of which means "life" (dictionary). In a foreign language, the word festival comes from the Latin *festivus*, which designates a place where a celebration takes place (Christel, 2009, p. 11)

Technically speaking, there is no specific definition of a festival, but we can offer a general reading of a range of interpretations. A festival is defined as an event sponsored by a local or national government, service organizations, cultural associations, or private sponsors. It provides an opportunity for filmmakers, distributors, critics, producers, and all those interested in the world of the arts to showcase their productions, allowing for discussion of the latest developments in the arts. Some also present a definition based on a time-space approach, meaning that a festival is a cultural event with a known location and a specific timeframe. In Algeria, a festival, according to the law, is any cultural event related to the arts and literature, organized periodically in the form of successive performances in a specific location (Decree, 2003).

How Festivals Work:

Festivals are generally divided into two types: for-profit and non-profit, depending on the objectives of each institution behind its creation. However, most festivals around the world adopt the non-profit model, based on corporate sponsorship funding, through which festival management allows for the promotion of commercial advertising to the festival audience for these companies and through ticket sales. Some festivals also receive government funding, while others charge fees called entrance fees.

The basis for holding a festival is competition or contest, which is the examination of participating works for the purpose of judging them. There are also other types of festivals whose purpose is solely to exhibit and not to compete. (ABDELHAK, 2016)

Cultural Movement of the City of Oran:

In this section, we will focus on current events in the city. Discussing the city's cultural life inevitably takes us back to different eras. Historically, the city has had many colors for its own character, as it mixes different cultures that succeeded it: Arab, Spanish, Turkish and French. The State of Oran is located in western Algeria on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. It is administratively composed of nine districts (administrative district) and 26 municipalities (including 20 urban and 6 rural). It is bordered to the north by the Mediterranean Sea, (Ministry of Interior, 2017) to the east by the State of Mostaganem, to the south by the States of Mascara and

Sidi Bel Abbès, and to the west by the State of Ain Temouchent. It covers an area of 2125.98 km² and is characterized by its moderate Mediterranean climate, hot in summer and moderate in winter. Historically, the city of Oran was founded in the 10th century AD by Andalusian and Moroccan traders and was occupied by the Spanish in 1509. It was then invaded by the Ottomans, who liberated it from the Spanish. It was then occupied by the French from 1838 AD (Khadija , 2012) until Algerian independence in 1962. This is evident in some of its architectural monuments, including the Pasha Mosque, Oran Cathedral, and the Church of Santa Cruz.

One study indicates (DJamila , 2015) that the human composition of the city of Oran can be summarized into three groups: Algerians, Europeans, and the Kahila of Oran. The ethnic composition of Oran's inhabitants includes Jews, Karagla, and others. As for its economy, it is one of the cities that connects Europe (Spain and France) to Algeria through a transport network represented by its port and airport, in addition to railway lines with the rest of the interior regions of Algeria.

Cultural Life in Oran:

In this regard, it is impossible to limit the range of cultural activities in this city due to their multiplicity at certain times and their lack of continuity at others. The city of Oran is currently known as the environment that fosters the singing of opinion, as this type of music has become popular in both the Arab and Western worlds. In this regard, we will list some of the events that distinguish the city of Oran, with an emphasis on the cinematic aspect. The Oran Arab Film Festival is the largest in the city in terms of media exposure and its enormous budget (ABDELHAK, 2020), as well as its international reach compared to other events. We list them as follows:

Raï Festival:

This festival was established by a decision dated 4 Rajab 1426, corresponding to August 9, 2005, which included the creation of a national cultural festival for Rai music. *Its organization is subject to Executive Decree No. 03-297 of 13 Rajab 1424, corresponding to September 10, 2003, which sets out the conditions for organizing cultural festivals. However, it was quickly transferred to the province of Sidi Bel Abbès after two editions during which it experienced some organizational problems, and was replaced by a festival called the Oran Song Festival. (EZZINE & BENKADOUR, 2019)

Oran Song Festival:

This festival was established by a decision of 11 Rabi' al-Awwal 1429, corresponding to March 19, 2008, which includes the creation of a local cultural festival of Oran music and song. In its first article, this festival is subject to the provisions of Executive Decree No. 03-297 of 13 Rajab

1424, corresponding to September 10, 2003, which sets out the conditions for organizing cultural festivals, its location being determined within the State of Oran. This festival emerged as an alternative to the Rai Festival after its transfer to the state of Sidi Bel Abbes, so that this festival could focus on authentic songs from Oran.

The National Theater Festival in its ninth session:

This festival was organized jointly with the state of Mostaganem in 2017. It is the festival organized by the Arab Theater Authority, headquartered in the United Arab Emirates, so this festival is held each time in an Arab country.

Oran Arab Film Festival:

The Oran International Arab Film Festival was established by a decision dated 19 Rabi' al-Awwal 1428, corresponding to April 7, 2007. This festival, called the Arab Cultural Film Festival, is subject to the provisions of Article 2 of Executive Decree No. 03-297 of 13 Rajab 1424, corresponding to September 10, 2003, which sets out the conditions for organizing cultural festivals. However, this decision does not specify the festival's location, unlike other similar decisions.

The festival celebrated its tenth edition in 2017. It is managed by a governorate composed of a governor and directors from various technical and artistic backgrounds. Four governors presided over this festival until its eleventh session. It was chaired by the former director of Algerian television, Hamraoui Habib Shawqi, for three consecutive editions, starting in 2007. He was replaced during the fourth edition by the director of the Algerian Agency for Cultural Influence, Mohamed Arif, who only chaired the festival for one session in 2010. (oranfestival)

Then came the turn of the Director of Culture of the State of Oran, who was appointed governor of the same festival for three consecutive editions, from 2011 to 2013. She was replaced in the same position by the director of information and editor-in-chief of Algerian television, Ibrahim Sadiki, from the eighth edition in 2015 to the eleventh edition in 2018. With each new governor, the technical staff overseeing the management of the event changed. The governorate's headquarters are located in the capital, Algiers, and not in the city of Oran. This is why, at each edition, the Oran Arab Film Festival has launched a slogan based on the occasion and circumstances facing Algeria or the Arab and Islamic nation. At each edition, a corner was reserved for foreign cinema as a guest of honor.

The Oran Film Festival requires several conditions for participation in its competition, including films that have not already participated in the previous edition of the festival, and that have not been shown to the Algerian public before, with the exception of Algerian films, and that have not been broadcast on a television channel or via the internet. The festival administration also

requires that the film have an Arab identity in terms of production or direction. If the director does not have the nationality of an Arab country, their film may participate within one of the Arab film production companies. For films in progress, this must be clearly indicated in the notes section, specifying the film's preparation deadline. Regarding language, films must be presented in their original language, and if not spoken in Arabic, Arabic subtitles or dubbing must be included.

The Oran Film Festival is a competition between Arab cinematographic works and is one of the few festivals specializing in Arab cinema within the Arab world, along with the Amman Arab Film Festival in Jordan, for example. Other Arab film festivals take place outside the Arab world, such as the Arab Film Festival in Paris, the Berlin Arab Film Festival, the Arab Seasons Festival, and the Malmö Arab Film Festival in Sweden.

Over the past decade, the Oran Film Festival has undergone transformations, both in terms of its name and its competition. Initially, the festival was held under the auspices of the Golden Fennec Foundation and under the name International Arab Film Festival (FIOFA). Then, starting with the fifth edition in 2011, it was transferred under the sponsorship of the Algerian Ministry of Culture. This edition saw changes in the name of the award, going from Golden Ahaggar to Golden Wahran, in reference to Oran, meaning two lions. The name was later changed to Oran Arab Film Festival (FOFA). A documentary film competition was also added, after the competition was limited to documentaries and short films, coinciding with Tlemcen being the capital of Islamic culture. The name was reinstated as the Oran International Arab Film Festival with the eighth edition in 2015, which was scheduled to be held for a year before being postponed for organizational reasons. According to its organizers, the Oran Festival aims to encourage new filmmakers to showcase their productions, in addition to coordinating Arab cinemas and unifying efforts to advance the film sector in Arab countries. Here is a presentation of the results of the ten editions of the Oran Festival (EZZINE & BOUSSOUAR , 2025)

Oran Festival: Organization and Network Efficiency.

The film festival as an organization is composed of departments and a work team that share roles in order to distribute the work. Any organization or institution, whatever it may be, is based on the principle of prior planning. This is a process that relies on a comprehensive plan based on material and human resources, which applies to the festival institution. However, what characterized the sessions of the Oran Arab Film Festival was improvisation in the work, and this is evident in the organizational errors that are repeated at each edition. This planning relies on the production or technical coordination department (its name varies from one festival to another), which relies on finding venues to host shows and celebrations, such as cinemas, theaters, public squares, etc. At the Oran Festival, and depending on each edition, the venue for the opening and

closing ceremonies is subject to the festival's budget. Sometimes they take place in luxury hotels or convention centers, and other times on stage or in an open-air theater. As for film screening venues, they are limited to three halls: the Salle du Bonheur, the Salle du Maroc, and the Cinema Museum (Cinémathèque). According to experts in the field, the screening venue must be popular and easily accessible, especially for open-air screenings, which must also be in a central location. The choice of venues is calculated based on a set of considerations, including: facilitating public access, taking into account the audience's economic resources, as well as the film's programming schedule, in addition to the capacity of the halls and the number of seats. At the Oran Festival, the aforementioned halls are located close to each other and are on the same street. As for tickets, entry is free, but this doesn't prevent them from being distributed to control the number of guests compared to available seats. They also aid in the audience counting process and therefore in the evaluation of the festival. Since the festival is made up of stakeholders connected by a communication network, we seek here to dismantle this network. (ABDELHAK, 2017)

In general, the Oran Festival network consists of a set of stakeholders, namely: the governorate staff, which includes the governor and his deputies, including the artistic director, the press officer, and the logistics and financial director. These stakeholders also include guests from among the filmmakers, actors, directors, and critics. These stakeholders also include the general public, as well as the parties that fund the festival, in addition to the press.

Over the ten editions of the festival, several governors have taken over the festival, and with each new governor came a new team. The governor is considered the main face of the festival, and his strong personality and connections help in its management. This is why we see the difference in the editions of the Oran Festival, especially with the first governor, who was a television director and former minister. He mobilized all the available capacities under his authority and used them for the success of the festival, not to mention the budget he received from the state, which was close to a million dollars in a single edition. This means that the governor is a key player within the organization's network, that is, the festival, unlike the following governors, whose effectiveness was less than the first. This is due to several reasons, including their positions before becoming the governor of the Oran Festival (director of culture of the State of Oran, director of the Algerian Agency for Cultural Influence, director of information for Algerian television), which are positions with limited powers. The festival's participants, including directors, producers, actors, media professionals, and critics, are connected through a more interactive network through activities and works, whether official or parallel events, and this is done through a mechanism of direct communication between them.

Coclusion

The Oran Arab Film Festival is the largest in the city in terms of importance, as it has a regional and international scope and enjoys strong financial support. The Oran Song Festival, formerly known as Rai, is the most popular with local audiences, while the theater festival is limited to the elite and sometimes caters to children. The city of Oran has a set of components that qualify it to host cultural events, but it lacks experience in management and administration, as our observations revealed through the recording of numerous blunders at each edition.

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