

# THE IMPACT OF COLONIAL ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN PRINCIPLES ON HOUSING AND URBAN PLANNING OF THE CURRENT ALGERIAN CITIES. CASE OF M'SILA

H. BOUTABBA\* & A. FARHI\*\*

\*Université de M'sila, Institut de Gestion des techniques urbaines, Algérie  
\*\*Université de Biskra, Département d'architecture, Algérie

## ABSTRACT

Architecture is the mirror through which we look at a society, its specificities, culture and identity. However in Algeria, like everywhere else in the Arab world, urban architecture generally and the domestic architecture in particular are at the crossroads, between the anvil of the cultural identity and the hammer of modernity. Due to the colonization, the Indigenous urban and domestic models of Hodna region, specifically the city of M'sila- considered to be like antiquated, exceeded and retrograde by the political elite- have evolved to give models similar to those of western colonial culture - currently recognized as contemporary and international in the direction of modern and modernistic. However, domestic models transmitted from the French colonial civilization did not reflect the identity of the Algerian user and his way of living. The spatial practices were in disagreement with the social practices.

The present paper aims to show the imprint left by the colonial city on the current Algerian city. It also attempts to show with which conceptual gymnastics, M'silis adopt these colonial architectural spaces so that they answer as well as possible to their way of life, their culture and their modern aspirations

**KEYWORDS:** Domestic architecture, colonial architectural model, modernity, urban principles, Hodna area, Algeria.

## RÉSUMÉ

L'Architecture est le miroir à travers lequel on regarde une société, ces spécificités, sa culture et son identité. Or en Algérie, comme partout ailleurs dans le monde arabe, l'architecture d'une façon générale et l'architecture domestique d'une façon particulière se trouvent à la croisée des chemins, entre l'enclume de l'identité culturelle et le marteau de la modernité. Du fait de la colonisation, les modèles urbains et domestiques autochtones de la région du Hodna, spécifiquement de la ville de M'sila- jugés comme archaïques, dépassée et rétrograde, par l'élite politique- se sont transformés pour donner des modèles proches de la culture occidentale coloniale- considérés comme contemporains et internationaux dans le sens de moderne et moderniste. Cependant, les modèles domestiques transmis de la civilisation coloniale Française ne reflétaient pas l'identité de l'utilisateur et sa façon de vivre. Les pratiques spatiales étaient en désaccord avec les pratiques sociales.

Le présent papier vise à montrer l'empreinte qu'avait laissée la ville coloniale sur la ville actuelle. Il tente de démontrer aussi par quelle gymnastique conceptuelle les habitants de M'sila adoptent- ils les espaces d'introduction coloniale pour qu'ils répondent au mieux à leur mode de vie, leur culture et leurs aspiration de se proclamer modernes

**MOTS CLES:** ARCHITECTURE DOMESTIQUE, MODELE ARCHITECTURAL COLONIAL, MODERNITE, PRINCIPES URBAINS, LA REGION DU HODNA, ALGERIE

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Following the colonization of Algeria by the French in 1830, the Algerian cities knew a true upheaval as for their social, urban and architectural structures. The area of Hodna and its capital M'sila were the theatre of a forced change actuated by the colonial iron arm. Proclaiming a

“civilizing modernity”, the French colonizers founded new ideologies having for goal to clean the indigenous city Aich, Cherbi and Oubouzar [1], to put order in the urban and architectural chaos, a long time defined and presented by the colonial descriptive tradition like “*barbaresque*”, “*unhealthy*” and “*closed*”.

In a vast chess-board, the colonizers set up the colonial district, support of a double ideological and cultural mission of civilizing and salutary, but actually mutilating and reducing of an ethnic and religious memory. While having exogamic material and mental structures, town planning and colonial architecture were established gradually by immolating the indigenous social forms and their urban and architectural support presented by the district ' *El Harra* ' and the house ' *El beyt* '.

Paradoxically with the total refusal of colonialism and its attempts at diverging the identity which lasted more than one century and half; the Algerian and as from independence, adopted foreign urban fabric, exogamic models of representation of the city with a system of signs and western emblems and a housing based on a typology of which morphological and dimensional aspects are taken again and systematically from colonial legacy by being unaware of the referential typology of the pre-colonial era. Many urban and architectural spaces grew blurred, others appeared and some changed.

Initially, both, an urban fabric analysis and pre-colonial housing study are carried out.

Secondly, the colonial district is investigated.

The third phase concerns the analysis of recent implementation in order to detect specificities of the urban and architectural elements borrowed from Western civilization

## 2 THE TYPO-MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AS DIACHRONIC APPROACH OF URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL READING

This research attempts to identify the terms of the typo morphological evolution of domestic architecture of the Hodna region, specifically that of its urban area: The city of M'sila. The goal being to include/understand the print of the colonial city on the current city in detecting blurred, appeared and transformed urban and architectural elements.

The corpus of the study must be uniform, representative and manageable Angers, 1997 [2], it will be limited to individual houses, single family and self constructed ones (produced by the resident, for its own use); It should cover all the urban area of the city of M'sila and must, ultimately, be distinguished by a historical basis

The corpus is therefore derived from "Stratified sampling" Gravel [3] which is subdivided into three categories, each corresponding to a time class. The first stratum corresponds to the pre-colonial period, it is coded "*P*". The second synchronizes with the colonial period, denoted "*C*". The third, to the period of independence, especially in the early decades (1960-1970-1980), it will be coded as "*Ia*". The code "*Ib*" will be attributed to decades (1980-1990). While the fifth stratum, it will match to the last two decades (2000-2010), and it will be denoted by "*Ic*".

The first layer has defined five neighbourhoods: *Djaafra P1*, *Chetawa P2*, *El Argoub P3* and *El Kouche P4*. We have

proceeded by elimination: thus, *P2* was excluded from the study, view that the domestic traces are difficult to identify and, largely, reduced to a state of ruin. *P3* and *P4* were also excluded because of their creation date (1940) after the advent of colonialism, and given that their boundary major axes formed the first colonists' settlement. This prompted us to limit ourselves to the study of specimens *P1*;

The second layer has automatically led to the unique colonial district *Edhahra C*;

As for the last three strata (*Ia*, *Ib* and *Ic*), we began by identifying all subdivisions and housing co-operatives in the city M'sila amounting to 55, perform as the second step, a detailed description of each of the urban fabric according to a grid of secondary predefined criteria (size, position relative to the various areas of the city, densification), Then we proceed by elimination of all those which are not representative and rather no illustrative compared to our assumptions, which led to the choice of study plots in 1200 batches, 46 batches and 924 batches

Within each stratum, we systematically select one building on ten (1/10) as regularly as possible. This has allowed of having varied specimens in terms of:

- Geographical situation compared to the city;
- Year of construction;
- Dimensions of the batch;
- Position of the house in the architectural islet: house of angle (codified\*), bar (codified \*\*), giving on main road (codified...) or minor road (codified //).

The Architectural islets of each allotment were codified by alphabetical letters (A, B, C...). Thus, the code *IaE1\**// means: first postcolonial strata, subdivision: 1200 batches, architectural islets number E, the first house used for the study in the subdivision, which is a corner house giving on minor road.

The corpus included 271 architectural surveys, distributed as follows: Strata *P*: 17 houses; strata *C*: 25 houses; Strata *Ia*: 120; Strata *Ib*: 105 and strata *Ic*: 4 houses

## 3 PRESENTATION OF THE CASE STUDIES

### 3.1 Geographical situation of the town of M'sila

From the green banks of the Mediterranean to the vast desert, succeed one another in Algeria, three large longitudinal zones: the Tellian Atlas, highland steppe and the Saharian Atlas overlooking the great desert. The median area is one of the most extensive sets of arid and steppe which stretches an 8500 km<sup>2</sup> basin. It is the Hodna area Sebhi [4]. Forming the capital of the Hodna, the town of M'sila is located 240 km East of Algiers the capital city, M'sila is located in the zone of the high plateaus. Its latitude is 35 42' 22" North, its longitude is 4 32' 31" and its altitude is 700 meters above sea level. It extends on an area of 232 Km<sup>2</sup> for an estimated population in 2006 of 146 741 inhabitants DPAT [5]. Located at the extreme east of

the wilaya (see Fig.01), the commune of M'sila is limited by: the commune of "Mtarfa" in the East; the commune of "Ouled mansour" in the West; the commune of "Ouled Madhi" in the South; the commune of "El Euch" (wilaya of BBA) in the North PDAU [6].

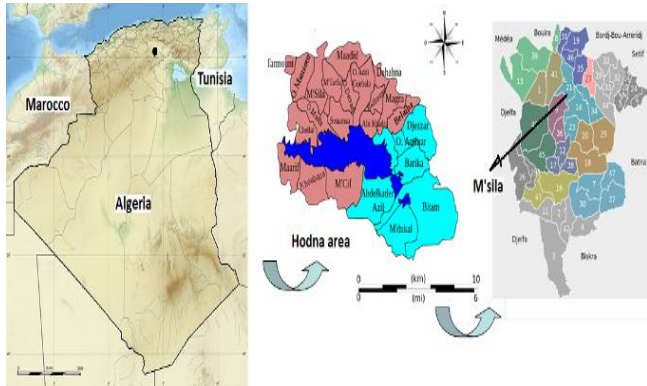


Figure 1: The area of study: portion of central Algeria [7].

### 3.2 Situation of the studied districts

The studied districts are: The pre colonial district "Djaafra" (Strata P) located at the South-East of the city in the old nucleus or sector 01; The colonial district "Edhahra" in the historic centre or sector 02; Allotments: 1200 (Strata Ia) located in the sector 04 or Second area of new urban habitat (ZHUN II), whose creation date goes back to the 1980s, the allotment 924 batches (Strata Ib) located in the sector 06 (ZHUN III), and whose creation date goes back to the end of 1980s, it was densely improved by the addition in 1996 of 131 plots to become the allotment 1055 batches and the allotment 46 batches (Strata Ic) located in Plan of land use 04 (POS 04), created in the beginning of 2000s (see Fig. 02).

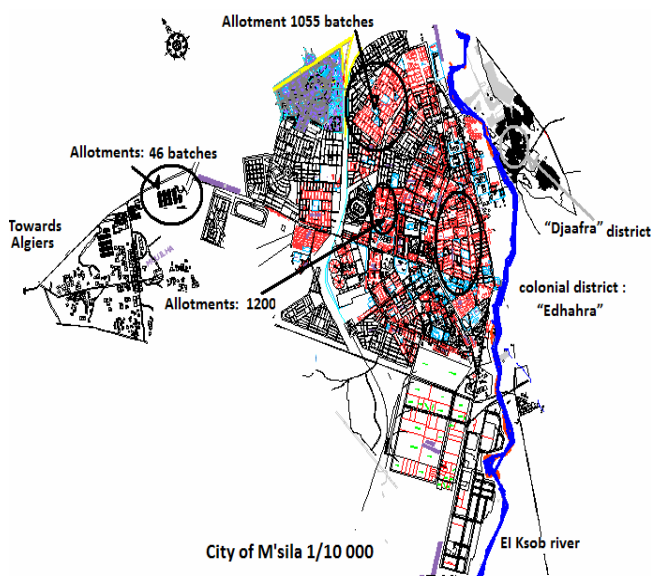


Figure 2: Situation of the studied quarters [6].

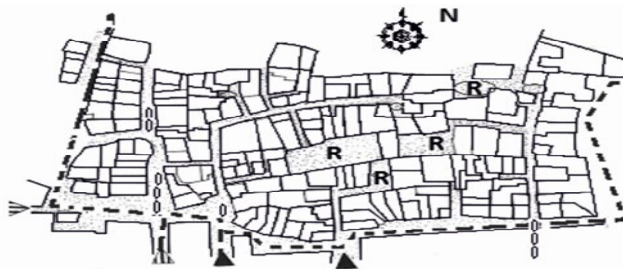
## 4 THE PRE-COLONIAL SETTLEMENT: "DJAAFRA" DISTRICT: URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL SPECIFICITIES

The capital of the area of the Hodna "El Meçila" constitutes the place where several civilizations amalgamated. Belonging to the kingdom of Masinissa, it was a Berber ground (Al Muqaddasi [8]; Brunshvir [9]), which became after the first colonialism a Roman ground. The latter, on a site distant 5 km to the East of the city set up a fort: "Zabijustiniana" current "Bechilga". During the VII century, the Arabs arrived at the "Maghreb El Aousset": Algeria, and like other areas bordering such as the Oases (Biskra) and M'Zab (Ghardaïa), the area of Hodna, after a fierce resistance to Arabs, the inhabitants of the area ended up opening with Islam and adopted it like a religion and a way of life. The first settlement implemented was on the East bank of "El Ksob" River. It consisted of three groupings "Rass el harra", "Chetawa" and "Kherbet Tellis" which took later the name of "Djaafra". Later it became the Hammadide city or El "Mohammedia".

During the XIV century, the city saw the arrival of the Ottomans who built according to the endogenous model a new district bordering the old one on the East bank of El Ksob River: the district was "Keraghla" for accommodation of Kull-Oghli, warriors Ottomans married to autochthones (Ancylopédie de l'Islam II, [10]). The made up city thus, was protected by a wall with several gates: Bab Essouk gate In Kherbet Tellis; bab Ibn El kadi gate which gave towards the small river; bab El kalaa gate which gave towards the kalaa beni Hammades and bab El Gharbi gate which gave later onto the Jewish districts of the city.

"Djaafra" district was characterized by an organic fabric, an irregular layout, a ramification of narrow and tortuous lanes making it possible to filter the strangers. We note various types of streets, of various functions for various categories of users: The principal streets called "Charaa" which delimited the district, varied from four to six meters in width that permit the access as well as the relation of the district with other parts of the city. This type of street is used both by the inhabitants and strangers. The secondary streets called "Zanga" served the various housing units from the district. The width varied from 4 to 2.5 meters; this type of street is used only by the inhabitants. While tertiary streets, which the width was not more than 2m, called "Douroub" were only used by the inhabitants of the same large family (Bentoumi & al. [11])

The housing compound or "harra" which is defined by the Arabic dictionary "lissane el arab" as a "groupings of dwellings occupied in most cases by people linked by the blood tie, as well as by social and cultural practices" Ibn Mandour [12]. These housing compounds when they did not end up by a dead end, they formed a T model of the enclosure a "Rahba" (see Fig.03) allowing a social solidarity whose core is the patriarchal family. This organized hierarchical proliferation, of compact houses constituted the city Grandet [13]. The family was thus the starting point of the community as is the house for the city.



Caption

- Principal streets called "Charaa"
- Secondary streets called "Zanga"
- R Small plots: "Rahba"
- ▶ Main access
- ▶ Secondary access

Figure 3: Streets, Lanes and Plots in "Djaafra" district [11].

#### 4.1 THE PRE-COLONIAL HOUSE OR "EL BEYT"

Like the Maghreban house or arabo-Islamic house «which goes from pair with that of an organization centered around the court symbolizing the fold of the family life and the crowned female field» Depaule [14]. El Beyt incontestably had a geometrical and functional center: the court or "M'rah", this current denomination undoubtedly coming from the Hammadite period indicates if one refers to his etymological origin at the place where one feels at ease, "raha" means rest. The "beyt" opened onto the "M'rah" and was organized around it in a centralized composition and defined by the interior frontages. This physical centrality is reinforced by a centrality related to the use. "M'rah" distributed various spaces of the house, It is considered to be a through space. It is also the place per excellence of daily and seasonal activities for all family. It is also considered to be both an inside and an outside space as defined by Noweir and Panerai [15], an external/internal space, a space of nature, air, light, water and greenery.

As the "M'sili" or inhabitants of M'sila were farmers, the M'rah was divided by the inhabitants and their animals. There were several enclosure spaces, one was reserved for the smaller live-stock for animals, and another of rectangular shape is limited by a small wall of 1 meter in height. It was used as grain and various provisions stock. *El "Makhzèn"*, sometimes this space which is a tiny room dug at 0.5 m in depth, with a diameter of 3 meters of depth. It is also called "Matmour» and a third enclosure in the form of portico covered by the stage in overhang: "n'cif»

In addition to the central courtyard, the house contained several rooms which stand for "Dar» in Arabic. They opened onto the courtyard and are opened on the level of their axes by a door, and on one side one or two windows constituted small openings, distributed according to the interior usage. Three rooms are to be noted: A room for the owner and his instruments called "Dar el aiel", another for the housework called "Dar el Nouel" and a third room only among easy people for male guests called "Dar diaf". The position and the access to the latter were made of two way but both guided by the same will to be hospitable

towards the strangers without those having temptation to throw an indiscreet glance on the interior of the house Despois [16]. Maybe that "Dar diaf" is inside the house, its position is at the entry of this one, one reaches it by a chicane called "Sabet " breaking all relations with the interior; Maybe that this part was detached straightforwardly from the house, it was just attached to the room and having a direct door towards outside (see Fig.04).

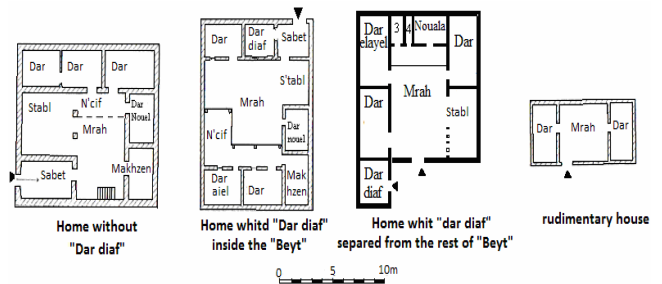


Figure 4: various types of pre-colonial houses [16].

In general, and except "Dar diaf", the rooms were occupied in a general-purpose way and no specialization makes difference between them, the rooms were conceived for the purpose of sleeping, eating, toilet and weaving practices. The precariousness of furniture and its mobility had undoubtedly strongly contributed to this poly functionality of the rooms.

The frontages of the houses were blind; sometimes some holes are pierced in top of the external wall, acting as windows allowing ventilation. The "Horma " or the honor (actually this word does not have a tangible French synonym) made that the house turns its back onto the street, moreover secondary spaces such as the toilets, the cattle shed, the "Makhzèn" leaned against the external wall . The noble spaces of the everyday life such as the rooms were inserted inside the house far from the wall of frontage.

#### 5 COLONIAL DISTRICT OR REGULARITY OF URBAN FABRIC

In 1863 the colonial administration operated using Senatus-Consults terrible surgical operations in the tribes of the Hodna which were divided into several *douars*. Thus in 1868, the tribe of M'sila became "Douar" M'sila Sebhi [4] and knew the first colonial construction on the west bank of "Ksob" river; like dissociating itself from the indigenous city "unhealthy" while seeking to subject it by solidifying it to the profit of the new transmitting European city of logic, civilization and new economic rationalities that the colonizer wants to promote. As underlined by A. de Tocqueville "France which work to make civilized communities and not savage hordes" De Robien [17]. There was thus very visible juxtaposition of two urban orders. On the east bank of the river "Ksob" with sinuous streets, whereas on the western bank of the river, a regular layout, orthogonal around two large axes; one driving towards Algiers the capital city, the other towards the town of "Bordj Bou Arreridj BBA".

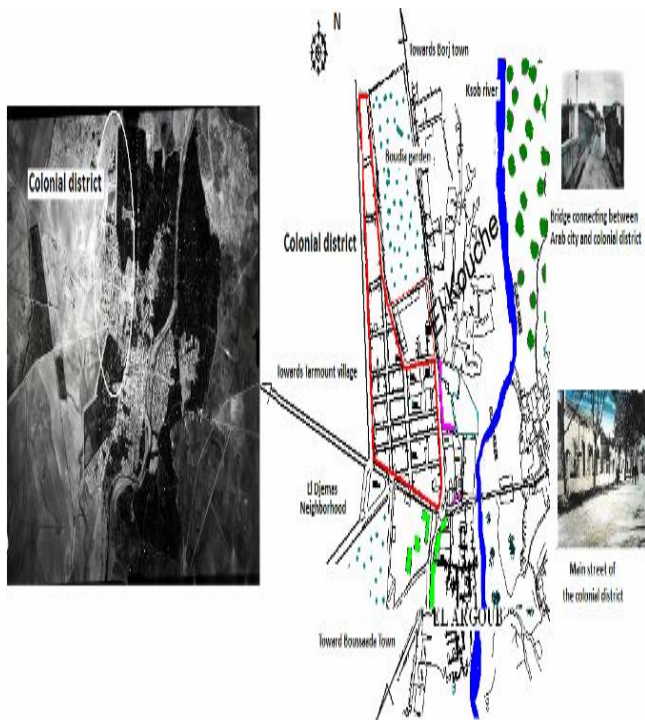


Figure 5: Establishment of the colonial district compared to the indigenous city [21].

For safety reasons (to keep an eye on the autochthones), a bridge connecting the two part of the city was built. For ostentatious and supremacy reasons, equipment of the administrative capacity (town hall, school, station and war memorial) were conceived as temples of modernity triumph; and for reasons of assertion of domination, a military barracks and a public place were set up as the theatrical site per excellence of domination and representation of higher civilization Bensmaine [18]. All in an intermediate position between the two urban fabrics while refusing the homogenization in these social, urban and architectural forms.

Although, being borne from the hygienic movement that emerged at the XVII century (Malverti and Pinon, [19]). M'sila colonial town planning was initially a military town planning which gave importance to large boulevards and avenues perpendicular the ones to the others which allowed the rationalization of flows, and the means of social and military control. The Boulevards and the avenues whose width exceeds 10 meters and 8 meters easily allowed the gathering and the movement of the troops. To note the almost absence of the dead ends in the plot layout of the city Mili, Moussa and Bensaada [20].

Generally, the regular layout of the lanes generated regular small blocks but in some cases triangular shape appeared. In the latter, the block division coincides curiously with what was done in metropolis, it obeyed the same principles of Haussmanian division of blocks known the bisector which angle of the streets shares the interior of the small block; the rigorous plot layout which is made perpendicular to the street as well as the in-depth principle of exclusion of the plots such as the plot stretched along the frontage along

the ways. The plots were also of regular forms in particular in the rectangular small blocks. Their surfaces varied from 150 to 300 m<sup>2</sup>.

The external open spaces were developed, the layout of the ways constituted the public support of the frontages. The urban frontages were made up in a neo-classic and sometimes Moresque style; may be in order to impose the order, the respect and to reinforce the idea of colonial supremacy (see Fig.05).

### 5.1 The colonial house or introduction of an architectural model

The colonial house is characterized by an arbitrarily, simplistic provision of spaces whose axis is a corridor on which the double alignment of the rooms opens Four rooms make the covered part of the house, followed by a courtyard sheltering to the one of its angles a water room (bathroom plus a lavatory). Sometimes behind the court and by the intermediary of a small corridor one reaches a small farm made up of a cattle shed, a hen house and a small barn. The four rooms composing the covered part of the house are laid out two to two. There are two types of functional divisions:

That is to say the living, kitchen in first position, followed-up by two rooms one for the children and the other for the parents.

That is to say the living, parents' room followed in second position by the kitchen and the children room.

It should be noted that the doors of the rooms were laid out symmetrically compared to the corridor; one faced the other.

The relationship to public space (the street) was done directly by the door of entry which was located at the medium of the frontage that is to say by the intermediary of a semi private space: the veranda, Sinou [22]. This space allowed a spatial hierarchy of outdoor spaces (street) towards the interior (house), it was made up of walls of low height not exceeding 1.20 meter, in the medium of which a small iron door was found. The veranda offered to the colonials a space for relaxation and rest, the possibility of maintaining a vegetable garden and the pleasure of having a space of plays for his/her children. M'sila colonial house consisted of a ground floor generally capped with a roof in tile with double slopes. Sometimes no matter what in a very rare way, there were houses at first level (R+1) with accessible flat roofs.

As for the façade, it ordered in a remarkable simplicity the layout. It had a perfect symmetry compared to an axis which coincided with the medium of the principal door of the house. Indeed on both sides of this axis rose with one meter of the ground level longitudinal windows that ended up on the first level by a long balcony whose rank body is also made out of wrought iron. In a generally Moresque style, the ornamentation was limited to a sober treatment of the angles of the houses and the walls of their terraces (see Fig.06).



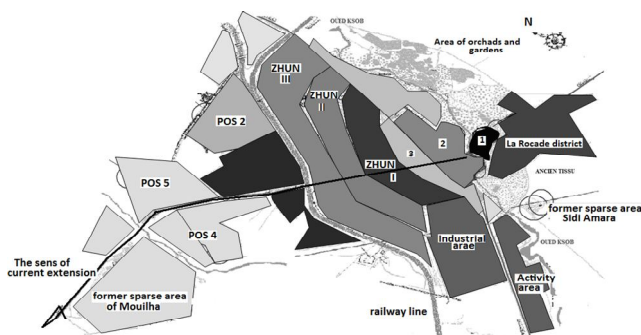
Figure 6: Various types of colonial houses in M'sila [21].

## 6 THE CURRENT CITY OR IDENTITY CRISIS

Shortly after independence, the inhabitants of M'sila occupied vacant housing left by the colonial legacy. The Algerian state announced its required impossibility to meet in such a short time the housing demand of the population because such a step would exhaust the national resources, Sid [23]. Then, time played in favor of a progressive adaptation of the Arab family to European housing design, however carrying values, virtues and ideals of the colonizers.

The exclusively French European formation of few architects, added to the lack of conceptual and methodological tools, resulting from the Algerian collective identity, culture and values as well as the alignment of the political elite to colonial and western architecture occurred in a final way the national urban and architectural memory .

Indeed the town of M'sila developed (while following the same direction of extension as the colonial city; in other words towards the west) in a spectacular way in particular after the creation of the two new urban housing zones (ZHUN). They had allowed the creation of several allotments (see Fig. 07).



Caption  
Djaafra district  
"El Kouche" et "El Argoub" districts  
Colonial enclosure  
ZHUN: Area of new urban habitat  
POS: Plan of land use

Figure 7: Development and direction of urban expansion of M'sila city [6].

The latter were copied on the colonial morphological structures which implicitly renewed the principle of uniform fabric in checker work, the regular small block, the rectilinear broad streets and perpendiculars the ones with the others as well as the abolition of the dead end and the Community life which it induced. On a corpus of 55 allotments conceived after independence (the informal districts are not taken into account), just two dead end were counted (allotment "Sheikh Taher"), 75% of these allotments were elaborated according to the checkerboard plan. The urban fabric is crossed by a system of parallel streets giving birth to small and lengthy blocks of which the thickness is that of two houses leaned one against the other, established according to the fixed and logic of the master plan, unsuited to all specificities and deeply deteriorating the plural experiments of the Community, Boutabba and Mili [21].

### 6.1 The current house or birth of exogenic model

As for the post colonial house, it seems to be the direct offspring of the colonial house and a very far away cousin from the formerly indigenous house. The evolution of the ways of life under the huge influence of the colonial model appeared by: The disappearance of several very significant spaces however important to their users; the transformation of several architectural elements; Appearance of new strange spaces to the ancestral way of life (see Fig. 08).

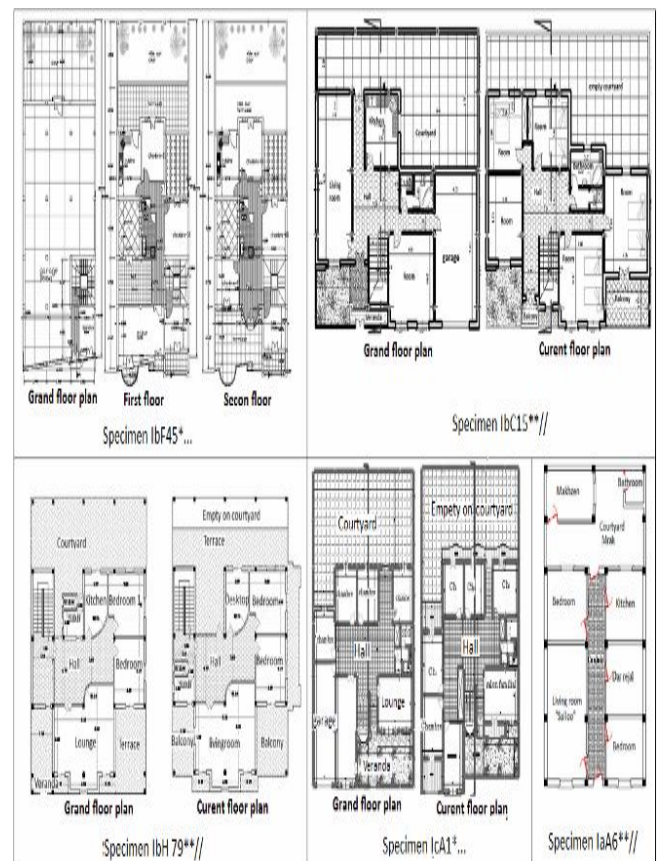


Figure 8: Examples of architectural plans of current houses.

### 6.1.1 Disappeared architectural spaces

“*N'cif*”: The covered and open enclosure courtyard or the higher prolongation of one side and where some orientalists called it "portico", straightforwardly disappeared from the houses in spite of its thermal regulation qualities. On a corpus of 271 analyzed houses of the postcolonial allotments, none comprises this space.

“*Makhzèn*”: this provision space seems to disappear from the post-colonial house but one finds it in some rich person residences occupying a space intended by the architect to be a wash-house; however this case of figure represents only one small percentage of the studied corpus (7%).

“*Sabet*”: the covered entry or chicane, this semi private space which allowed the filtration of male guests, guaranteeing the principle of the “*horma*” by the visual insulation that it provided, also disappeared from the quasi majority of the houses, except 2.5% observed through the first postcolonial stratum “*Ia*”

“*Stable*”: or the cattle shed accompanied by the “*Matmor*”, the silo with buried grain as “*Elm' dhaoued*” conceived along the low walls of the stable with an aim of nourishing the smaller live-stock straightforwardly disappeared. A actually many rural natures disappeared from the post-colonial house even in those whose inhabitants still practice agriculture can be because of their assimilation to spaces of under development more especially as the colonizer had seldom in his house. On the other hand “*Diky*” or the hen house remains until our days in a restricted number of houses representing a percentage of 5% of the whole of the studied corpus (see Fig.09).

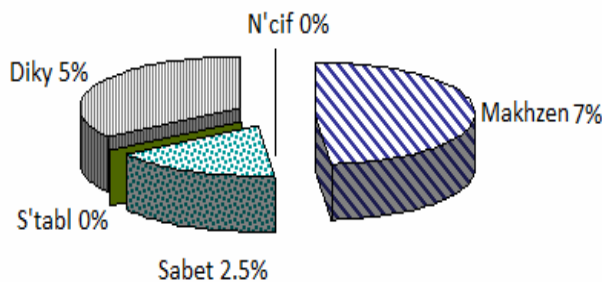


Figure 9: Disappeared architectural spaces

### 6.1.2 Altered architectural elements

The courtyard or “*M'rah*”, even essence of all traditional domestic architecture, seems to be the space which suffered the most from mixing of the Algerian society with the colonial community. Put aside, rejected backwards, it is not any more the geometrical center and symbolic system of the house. With more reduced dimensions than before, it became only one simple space component of the house. Replaced by the colonial corridor, the courtyard does not play anymore its distribution function, organization and transition, and according to our questionnaire nearly the users, 85% of the users judged inconvenient to cross a space to open sky to pass from a space to another. Because

of the specialization of the rooms, the court lost its functional importance. Indeed, it is stripped of the majority of day activities which it had. However, it remains necessary and essential. 100% of analyzed houses have a courtyard and according to the words of a user "a house without court is like a body without life".

The specialization of the rooms: Three main rooms of the pre-colonial house that is to say “*Dar diaf*” (guests room); “*Dar n'ouel*” (kitchen); “*Dar El aiel*” (family room) ramified to give rise to other more specialized rooms.

“*Dar diaf*” is not spatially any more excluded from the remainder of the house, is not any more in direct relationship to outside and is not any more exclusively for male use. It is not anymore independent and both genders use it. It occupies the same position as the colonial living just at the entrance of the house, with European furniture which replaced the carpets, the mattresses, the niches and generally the life by the ground. The colonial living with all its decorative elements was strongly adopted by the autochthones because its spatial-functional components do not refute in any way their manners, the customs and especially the “*horma*” of the inhabitants. This adoption is so total so much as it has taken the colonial name “*living*” with the profit of an old that radically grew blurred;

“*Dar n'ouel*” on the other hand does not have the same position (near the entry and opposite the living) as the kitchen in the colonial house. Its rejection at the back of the house in adjacency with the court is not pejorative inherent to the principle of clean, but for functional considerations. Actually the couple relation kitchen – courtyard is strong in the post-colonial house, and as the court is rejected with at the back, “*Dar n'ouel*” will follow obligatorily. Moreover, this space is female per excellence and must be dissimulated from inquisitive eyes. The major colonial influence on this space is not limited only to its installation (introduction of sink, work table, kitchen garden), nor with its new name: “*couzina*”, but with the reduction of its functional panoply: it is any more a space to take its bath, neither to make its ablutions, nor to make its washing in cold weather (following the appearance of the bathroom); but only to prepare the meal and to sit at table to eat

“*Dar El aiel*” or family room is the space which underwent the most transformations until its complete disappearance. Actually, this space gave birth to several spaces. It is considered to be the witness of the change in the manners of living and the integration of the new colonial practices. Indeed this space is divided into several other spaces such as the room of the parents, the room of the children, the family stay and the office; it is the symbol of the individualization of the Hodni family and M'sili according back to Ibn Khaldoun [24] that used to be so formerly welded, at the point to melt even in the spirit of the tribe and the clan. Of this new organization of space, the street seems to lose its negative connotation since the house opens towards it and the most significant rooms are shallow from it and conversely the dirty rooms are inserted deeply in the court.

6.1.3 New architectural elements

The corridor is an element of the colonial house; it was adopted by the autochthones without any reserve. Respectively 75.5% and 62% of specimens of stratum "Ia" and "Ib» have this space. his undoubtedly returns to the autonomy which it can give to the various rooms of the house. Deeply calling into question the distributive logic of the ancestral "Beyt", it strongly made space relations by: its tendency to separate the functions; its redefinition of the gender division of the space of all the house and its introduction of individualization within the family.

However, since the late 1990s, a new space came, not to replace the "colonial" corridor, but rather complement it: The Hall, which is observed in 85% of specimens of the stratum "Ic" and 28% of "Ib". The Hall is a covered space, with a width which is also large as its length. It is generally square in shape and sometimes rectangular. It is a space dedicated, mainly to, the transition and the spatial distribution. It is functionally sometimes intended to female reception. Usually occupies the physical centrality of the house; and because of this, recalls the emblematic figure of the ancient court of the pre-colonial house: the "M'rah"

The veranda: space allowing the spatial hierarchy from public to private one. From independence till the 90s, the veranda was very required during the development of the plans of architecture (52.5% of "Ia" and 71% of "Ib"). Currently this passion starts to weaken. This space is taken again from colonial architecture but with several reserves in particular those dependent on the height of its walls, its function and its dimensions. In post-colonial domestic architecture, the veranda is always this intermediate space which allows the passage of outside (street) towards the interior (house), but is not built any more with this colonial standard of 1.20m height, nor the same function to spend long hours to garden and contemplate the street and its movement; It has certainly a green space which remains not easily visible from outside considering the height of the walls which exceeds 1.80 m. Moreover the name of these walls summarizes their role: "Stara" which comes from the word "soutra" which is the equivalent "to be dissimulated in the direction to be protected" in the English language. Its integral use (with the same shape and the same dimensions of the colonial era) is 6% for specimens "Ic". As for its modified use, it is about 58%. The rest of the houses (36%) are built without veranda (see Fig. 10).



Figure 10: Examples of design of current houses veranda.

The cellar this space goes back to the colonial era was not only introduced by the French administration, but by the Jews well before the colonialism. Moreover, the Jewish houses located at the district "El Argoub" had in the majority of the cases of the underground caves without staircase which were very different from the cellars of French. Currently, in spite of the thermal advantages due to the buried volumetric mass that this space gets, only certain houses (about 8% of "Ia", 10% of "Ib" and 29% of "Ic") are provided with the cellar (see Fig. 11).

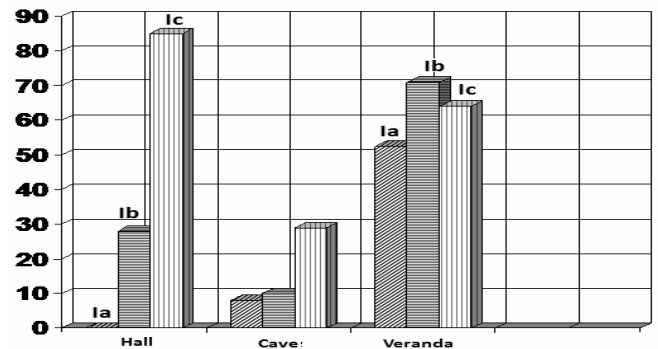


Figure 11: Altered architectural elements

The façade openings: the blind façade characteristic of the pre-colonial "el Beyt" exhibit in the postcolonial house the richness of its owners, gives the impression to open by broad openings, balconies and loggias are practiced along its wall; can be to proclaim a sought modernity, but actually these openings are only factitious because the shutters remain close during every hour of the day and every season; empty loggias and balconies and sometimes straightforwardly opaque by the use of blinds and thick fabric curtains (Cover) along these façades.

The change which the façade underwent after the colonial era is as striking as intricate (see table. 1). It is the place of privileged investment and symbolic system (Boutabba and Farhi [25]). They are saturated with openings and ornamentation, and one is tempted to put the following question: If the blind façade is the "psychic" symbol of ancestral compared to "retrograde", be what the completely open frontages would be –the symbol of modernity? The façade is the architectural component which shows the state of confusion and tearing of the inhabitant who wants to preserve his manners, his "horma" and affirm at the same time that it is not therefore retrograde. This inhabitant conceives modernity as an obligatory passage of the imitation of the old colonizer.

7 CONCLUSION

This investigation, which is mainly interested in typomorphology exploration of urban space and the living space of the Hodna area, had allowed discovering the socio-spatial patterns underlying of the city and the Algerian postcolonial home.



Like architectural studies, particularly the "The network of the city architecture" (Depaule [14]; Florin [26]), anthropological studies (Rappoport [27]; Ségaud [28]) and sociological studies (Bourdieu [29]; Pinson [30]), this research was able to identify contemporary types, by comparing them to older forms and by associating them their original semantics order .

This research has shown that the current city was subject to a colonial influence as well as an urban as architectural ones. The urban elements (*El Harra, Rahba, Douroub and Charaa*) changed to create rational cities which glorify the new forms in particular aesthetic and functional, a kind of prestigious wearing being unaware of all relationships to the identity, the culture and ancestral town planning considered like antiquated and obsolete.

Unlike the city, and over the time, the house, rejected some spatial components, adopted other. 'Submissive to the laws of nature', it went from the ancestral courtyard "*M'rah*" as distributive solution, to the 'colonial' corridor and finally, adopted the 'Hall', which is none other than, the covered version of the courtyard. This conceptual gymnastics, through the resurrection of "*M'rah* 'in the form of' Hall', shows the resistance of the latter to annihilation. This unwonted strength is due to its high plasticity, but also of the fact, that more than geometric and architectural form, "*M'rah*" is considered as unconscious scheme, formation, which structure the spatial imaginary of its occupants and expresses their particular ways of living, induced from their cultural background, their "inherited", drawn from their roots and traditions. Indeed, in spite of the changes and the evolution, which had known the way of life of M'sila, due to mixing with the colonial society, the house still keeps some architectural principles which are correlated with the family life principles: the intimacy or "*horma*." Its adoption of the borrowed spaces from the colonial era; it is still considered to be selective. The current house adopted certainly several colonial spaces but it adopted only those which do not go against its socio-cultural essence; spaces which never could transformed in a radical way the mentalities, but which contributed certainly to see life another angle

This study shows that for more than a century of incorporation, of transformation and syncretism, the Algerian contemporary city had finished by sacrificing the urban organizing principles of the pre-colonial city, to the difference, the house whose position gives onto the outdoor, whose form and used materials, tries to affirm a required modernity, remaining dummy, but which does not go beyond a proclamation

## REFERENCES

[1] Aich, B. Cherbi, F. and Oubouza, L. (2005) "Le patrimoine des XIX et XXè siècles en Algérie: Un héritage à l'avenir incertain", dans Abry. A et Carrabellir. R

[2] Angers, M. (1997), Initiation pratique à la méthodologie des sciences humaines, Casbah Université, Alger

[3] Gravel, J-R. (1980), Guide méthodologique de la recherche, les presses universitaires de l'université du Québec, Québec.

[4] Sebhi, S. (1987) Mutations du monde rural algérien le Hodna, office des publications universitaires, Alger, 1-5, 105

[5] DPAT (2006), Direction de la planification et de l'aménagement du territoire-, annuaire statistique de la wilaya de M'sila, M'sila

[6] PDAU, (2010), Plan directeur d'aménagement et d'urbanisme, analyse de l'état de fait phase I, M'sila

[7] Wikipédia en français. 2013, Article *Chott el Hodna*. [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chott\\_el\\_Hodna](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chott_el_Hodna)

[8] Al Muqaddasi (1950) Description de l'occident musulman au IV e = Xe siècle, traduction Ch. Pellat, Paris

[9] Brushvig, R. (n.d) La Berberie orientale sous les hafsidés I, sans année, p. 205

[10] Ancylopédie de l'Islam II, article "Kul-Oghli", sans année, p.1179

[11] Bentoumi, A., Bensaad, K., Sasci, F. and Boutabba, H. (2005) étude comparative entre la ville coloniale et la ville contemporaine, cas de la ville de M'sila, mémoire de fin d'étude non édité, en vue de l'obtention de diplôme d'ingénieur d'état en gestion urbaine, institut de GTU, M'sila, 8-18

[12] Ibn Mandour. Djamel eddine Med ben mokrane el anssari, (1980) lissan El arab, établissement égyptien d'édition et de traduction, le Caire, p.125

[13] Grandet, D (1988), architecture et urbanisme islamiques, office des publications universitaires, 2eme édition, Alger

[14] Depaule, J.C (1987), Espaces habités de l'orient arabe, in les cahiers de la recherche architecturale n°20-21 3e et 4e semestre, édition parenthèse, Cote d'azure, 8-20

[15] Noweir, S. and Pannerai, Ph. (1987) Le Caire : géométrie et centralité in les cahiers de la recherche architecturale n°20-21 3e et 4e semestre, édition parenthèse, Cote d'azure, 26-47

[16] Despois, J. (1953) le Hodna, presses universitaires de France, première édition, Paris, 105, 17-326.

[17] De Robien, G (2000), *Alexis de Tocqueville*, Paris, Flammarion

[18] Bensmail, S. (1995) la ville comme lieu du changement des pratiques et de représentation idéologiques dialogue et affrontements interculturels en Algérie in « The third Nordic conference on Middle Eastern Studies », pp.19-22 juin, Finlande

[19] Malverti, X. et Pinon, P. (1997) la ville régulière, modèles et tracés, colloque « Architecture urbaine » organisé par le certificat d'étude approfondie en architecture Picard, Paris, 215

[20] Mili, M.; Moussa, A., and Bensaada, M. (2009) Requalification urbaine du centre colonial de la ville de M'sila, cité Edhahra, mémoire de fin de cycle non édité, en vue de l'obtention de diplôme d'ingénieur d'état en gestion urbaine, institut de GTU, M'sila, 49

- [21] Boutabba. H and Mili. M, (2009), Le patrimoine architectural colonial en Algérie un héritage en voie de disparition cas de la ville de M'sila, actes de la troisième rencontre internationale sur le patrimoine urbain et architectural méditerranéen (RIPAM3), 15, 16 et 17 Octobre, Lisbonne.
- [22] Sinou, A (1993) Le Sénégal, in Rives coloniales architectures, de Saint –Louis à Douala sous la direction de Jacques Soulillou, éditions Parenthèses et de l'Orstom, Paris, 33- 62
- [23] Sid, B (1986) L'habitat en Algérie, stratégies d'acteurs et logiques industrielles, office des publications universitaires, Alger, 18
- [24] Ibn Khaldoun (1965), Histoire des berbères, traduction de Slane, W. M, tome 1, In bulletin officiel de l'Algérie, 1869. Imprimerie du gouvernement, Alger
- [25] Boutabba, H and Farhi, A (2013), Spécificités spatiales et logiques sociales d'un nouveau type d'habitat domestique du Hodna oriental, le type «*Diar Charpent*», thèse de doctorat non éditée, Département d'architecture de Biskra
- [26] Florin, B. (2000) Citadins ordinaires, citadins à part entière? Compétences individuelles et collectives mises en acte par les habitants d'une nouvelle cité au Caire, in les Compétences des citadins dans le monde arabe Urbama, Karthala, Paris.
- [27] Rapoport, A. (1977) Pour une anthropologie de la maison, éditions Dunod, Paris
- [28] Segaud, M. (2007) Anthropologie de l'espace habiter, Fonder, Distribuer, Transformer, éditions Armand Colin, Paris, pp 65-127
- [29] Bourdieu, P (1972) Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique. La maison ou le monde renversé, Droz, Geneve.
- [30] Pinson, D. (1992) Usages et architecture, l'Hrmattan, Paris