



TECHNIUM
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Vol. 31, 2022

**A new decade
for social changes**

www.techniumscience.com

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

When the sacred organizes space in Timimoun (Algeria)

Mustapha Ameer Djeradi^{1 2}

¹Department of Architecture, Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University Mostaganem, (Algeria), ²ENERGARID Laboratory Tahri Mohamed University Bechar (Algeria)

mustapha.djerradi@univ-mosta.dz

Abstract. This paper attempts to show the hold of the sacred on the urban reality of Timimoun. This human settlement, where the permanence of the sacred is found in the structuring and management of space, is a disputed space. To illustrate this, using a hybrid historical-inductive method, a very significant case study has been chosen. It concerns a housing estate, where the *mrābṭīn* of the *zāwiya* of Sîdî -l- Hāj Belqāsam challenge the construction of housing close to the *hufra*: official reason invoked the *Sbû'*, a sacred element. Timimoun is a disputed space, even today, the traces of these confrontations persist in the social structuring and spatial configurations.

Keywords. conflict, urban space, sacred, holy, Timimoun

1. Introduction

The purpose of this contribution is to demonstrate that the sacred has a hand in the management and the socio-spatial configuration of the city of Timimoun. Explaining the urban morphology of Timimoun by physical constraints alone and the regulatory prescriptions enacted by the texts and laws of urban planning remains inappropriate. Compromise, negotiation and conflict seem to us to be equally decisive.

Timimoun is presented as a regional metropolis of southern Algeria, whose importance is justified by its geographical location. It was the crossroads of the caravans. It survived, to offer today, the spectacle of a settlement where urban planning governed by regulation remains unfit to be opposable to third parties and applicable. The urban space of Timimoun is structured by its own cosmogonic vision. The regulations and the technique try to upset this vision. In this respect, many projects are subject to blockages and conflicts. To illustrate this, we have chosen a very significant case study: the subdivision of the *Hufra* (abyss) of the *zāwiya* of Sîdî -l- Hāj Belqāsam.

L. Mumford in his work, "The city through history", showed how the man obeyed in the choice of his sites of implantations to diverse and difficult to quantify parameters [1]. In his book "For an Anthropology of the House", Amos Rapoport stated that explanations based on climate, materials, technology, site, and economy were insufficient to explain the form, other more complex parameters of a cultural, moral, and spiritual nature intervened, in a less obvious, but quite certain manner [2]. In the wake of such reflections, the present contribution takes the opposite view of the functionalist vision. Cities are not only the product of physical logic. They

are also the result of spiritual beliefs and attitudes. The choice of the city of Timimoun is motivated by the density of the sacred which "live" (1) there. The sacred determines both the choice of sites and the morphological organization. It is within the framework of this research agenda that this article proposes to question the way in which urbanism and the sacred have mutually nourished each other and how these fusions have shaped the city of Timimoun.

The problematic is based on our desire to go beyond the obvious, which is that the structures of inhabited space are dependent on environmental data. The starting question is: how does the sacred organize space in Timimoun? This question invites us to the interdisciplinarity developed within the ENERGARID laboratory (2). The article then opens up to many disciplines: human geography, history, urban planning and anthropology. The field of investigation is particular and difficult because it concerns a human settlement charged with the sacred. This contribution is positioned within constructivism, which consists of gathering a series of observations on the urban reality of Timimoun to arrive at a general conclusion [3]. Indeed, demonstrating that Timimoun is the result of facts pertaining to the sacred has led us to adopt a composite method: Historico-inductive, which consists of revisiting archives, historical writings and questioning collective memory.

This article is made up of four sections. The first concerns the general reading of the city of Timimoun, in its social, geographical and urbanistic dimensions, and the place of sanctity in the city. The second section is for the literature review. It serves to present the main works on the sacred. As for the third section, it is reserved for the method. It is a hybrid historical-inductive.

In conclusion, we have confirmed that the sacred impacts the socio-spatial organization of Timimoun.

2. Presentation of the studied area

Timimoun is not a city, in the true sense of the word. It is a group of small oases (Figure 1). It is located in the geographical center of a territory called *Gourara*.

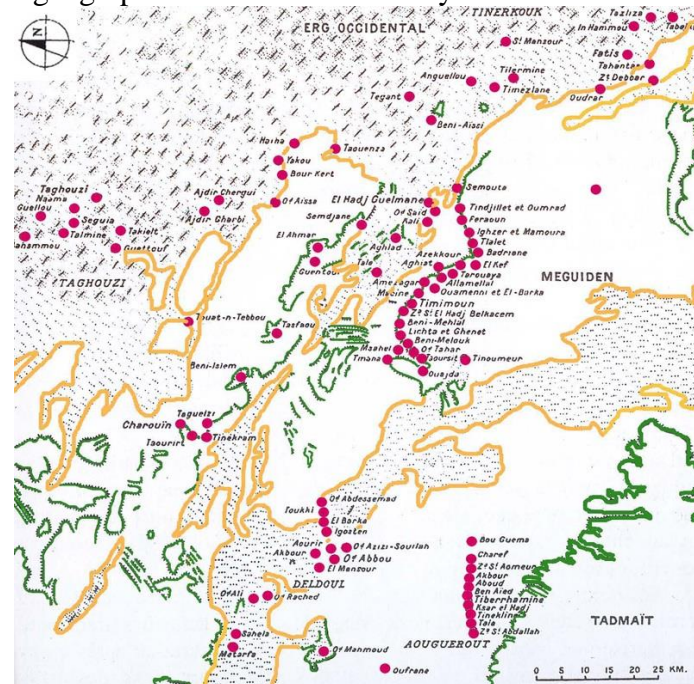


Figure 1. chapelet of the ḡṣur of Timimoun. Source: Author, 2021.

2.1. Population of Timimoun

The population of Timimoun is of multiethnic origin. There are the Zenets, considered the first occupants of the region [4]. The other ethnic group consists of the mĥājriya, (3) those considered to be of Judeo-Berber origin. This ethnic group is completely Arabized and Islamized. They are said to have coexisted peacefully with the Zenets, for centuries, until the arrival of the proselyte `Abd al-Krim al-Maghīlī, around 1490, who fought them and drove them out of the region, despite the disapproval of the fqĥ-s (religious scholars) of the time [5]. The Arabs did not appear in the region until the tenth century, but were strongly present from the fifteenth century onwards, as the stories and legends about the saints of the region show [6]. In addition to the ethnic discrimination, there is the social discrimination. To the Zenets and Jews came to be added other categories: the shurfā who claim an Arab origin and an ancestry having the Prophet as ancestor. The Mrābĥīn may be of Berber or Arab origin. With the shurfā, they ended up constituting, in Timimoun, the category of masters. They are exempt from taxes. The hrār (pl. of hurr, free man) are Arabs and Berbers. The `abīd (pl. of `abd, slave) are slaves as their name indicates in Arabic. With colonization and especially since independence, this status has practically disappeared leaving the place to that of harĥanī, freed slave. The hrāĥīn (pl. of harĥanī) constituted the linchpin in agriculture the craft industry and animal husbandry [7]. This social hierarchy continues, so today, but in a less obvious way.

2.2. Geo-morphological situation

The city of Timimoun is located 200 km northeast of the city of Adrar. It is promoted, in 2021, to the chief town of the *wilaya* (department) of the same name. It is centrally located in the Algerian territory, at the eastern edge of the Grand Erg Occidental (Figure 2). Timimoun has historically been a center of trade and commerce between the strings of oases, structured along the *sebkha* (4), in the foreground of the Grand Erg Occidental.



Figure 2. Situation of Timimoun's agglomeration. Source Google Earth, Formatted by the author

Two natural elements that impact the morphology of the Timimoun region:

1. The Great Western Erg: is a dune massif, crescent-shaped, spread over 80,000 km² and 300 m high (Figure 3);
2. *Sebkha*: It is a depression consisting of soils of intense evaporation that reaches the *Gourara* some 80 km long and 2 to 15 km wide (Figure 4).



Figure 3. View of the Grand Erg Occidental. Source: Author, 2019.

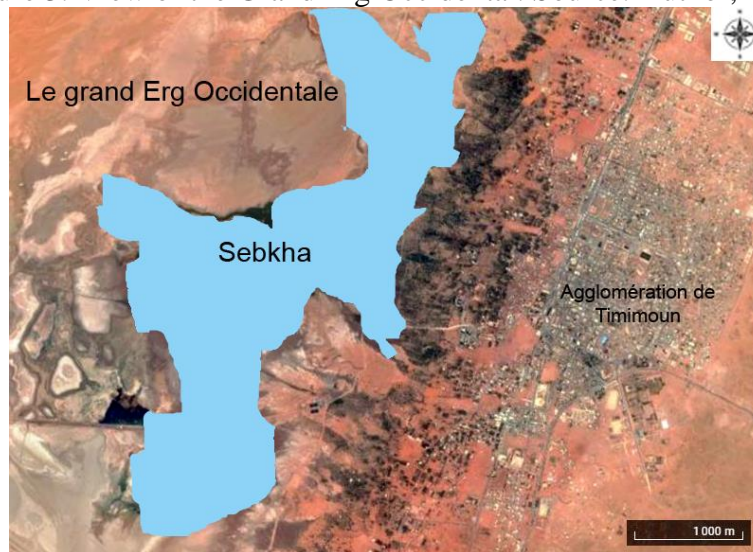


Figure 4. View of the Sebkha. Source: Google Earth, formatted by the author, 2021.

2.3. The urbanism of Timimoun

Timimoun is the territory of the *g̃s̃ur*, everywhere the traditional habitat is a *g̃sar* (5). The present towns and villages are all originally *g̃s̃ur* that colonization has transformed them into cities. The *g̃sar* consists of an inhabited part and the gardens [8]. The *g̃sar* was surrounded by a *S̃ur* (rampart). Among the main characteristics of the *g̃s̃ur* are the fortifications. They emanated from a collective mentality where order was symbolized by the materialized boundary. French troops followed the caravan trails to enter Timimoun on May 20, 1900. On the eastern side of the *g̃sar* of Timimoun came a modern village with checkerboard streets (Figure 5). Once Timimoun was chosen as the regional capital of the *Gourara*, colonization redefined its configuration [9]. Timimoun is no longer this old *g̃sar* but a new city.

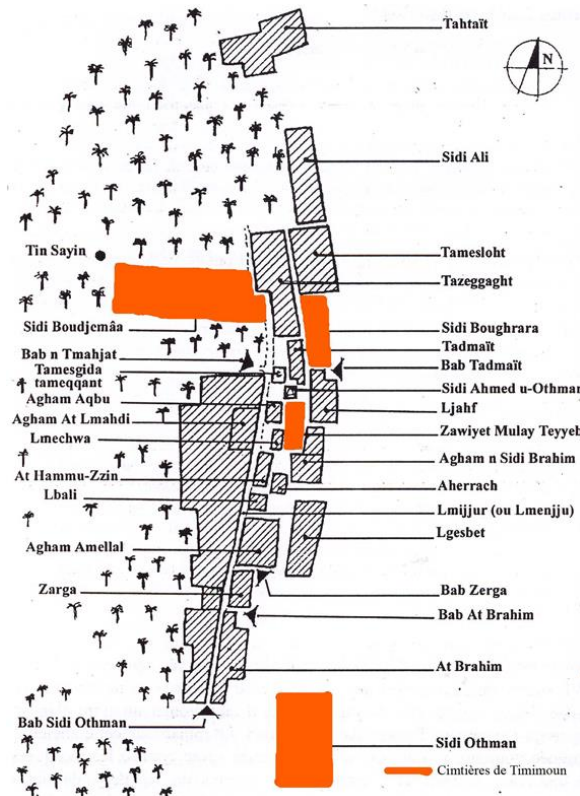


Figure 5. Ġșar of Timimoun. Source: author, 2019.

Today, Timimoun presents three distinct entities, by their morphological characteristics and the structure of their fabrics. The first is located in the northwest; it is dense compact, with narrow and winding streets. It has developed linearly and parallel to its boundary with the palm grove. This fabric constitutes the ġșar of Timimoun. The second entity, located in the southeast, is checkerboard, with wide and aligned streets. It developed on either side of the *foggara-s* (5) lines. It is separated from the ġșar by a large boulevard that constitutes the backbone of the colonial and post-colonial urban growth of Timimoun. This fabric constitutes the colonial village. The third urban entity is located on the eastern and western periphery of the city. It is composed of several private and planned operations of individual housing estates and public facilities.

2.4. Timimoun place of the Saints

Timimoun is signaled in the distance by the ġubba-s limed regularly and which shelters the Saints of the place (Figure 6). This building of death deserves a particular mention. Indeed, the term (the signifier) Cupola, retained in translation as the equivalent to "*Ġubba*", is inadequate to render the "Meaning" and "Representation" as conveyed by the signifier "*Ġubba*". It is not a geometric form as it appears through "Cupola". This architectural glorification if it often incorporates the signifier "Cupola" it does not stop there. For proof, many "*Ġubba-s*" are covered with terraces, or overhung with cones, pyramids, tile or thatched roofs. Moreover, we were led to discard the signifiers: "Mausoleum and Marabouts" given by some authors, as equivalent to "*Ġubba*". Indeed, the definitions seem to us insufficient to express all the semantic charge conveyed by "*Ġubba*". We therefore retain for the signifier "*Ġubba*" the signified that we try to make explicit below: Ġubba (plural: *Ġubba-s*, feminine gender), does not refer only

to a funerary building intended to commemorate the virtues of a Muslim saint. Beyond a temporal content, the signifier "*Ġubba*" refers to a notion of social landmark, as well, of the individual as of his social group. It is raised to signify this landmark provider of protective spiritual strength, the solidity of the lineage and the virtue that comes from belonging to an ethnic group and a chain of solidarity. It is through the "*Ġubba*" that solidarity relations and the bonds of common destiny are built. It is this landmark functionality that leads builders to reserve for them the most visible marks, everywhere and for everyone. There is practically no inhabited place in Timimoun that does not have a *ġubba*. Ougouag-Kezzal counts 138 *Awaliya* (7) for 71 localities. Twenty-two for the locality of Timimoun alone [10].



Figure 6. Ġubba of Sîdî Mûsâ, Ouled Saïd. Source: author, 2018.

Sîdî `Uthmân is considered the first patron saint of the ġsar (Figure 7). The inhabitants of Timimoun arranged for Sîdî Mûsâ, a place next to their first Saint, Sîdî `Uthmân, as attested by these accounts.



Figure 7. Ġubba of Sîdî `Uthmân, Timimoun. Source: author, 2018.

Narrative 1. Sîdî `Uthmān Holy founder of Timimoun

"Sîdî `Uthmān watched over Timimoun during the day. Sîdî Mûsā took charge of protecting it during the night" (Hadj Mulkhaloua, 2018).

Narrative 2. Single territory, shared power

"Sîdî `Uthmān agreed to share Timimoun with Sîdî Mûsā, splitting the times of sovereignty. Sîdî Mûsā was the patron of the day and Sîdî `Uthmān was the patron of the night" (Hadj Mimouni, 2017).

3. Literature review

The title "The hold of the sacred on the urban space of Timimoun", presents a key concept, the sacred, which it is necessary to define. The sacred is a concept difficult to wrap, a floating concept.

3.1. The sacred

The sacred is often confused and linked to the divine. The sacred is the fact of the Man, who creates it, installs it in adequate place. For Durkheim, the sacred is considered as a sociological notion of the religious. The sacred is synonymous with "religious" for Hubert and Mauss, who make the religious the administration of the sacred. These two authors consider it in what the Maoris call mana. It is the *baraka* among the Muslim Maghrebians. The mana would be a particular power that certain individuals have more than others and which explains their superiority [11]. For Smith, the sacred is synonymous with "devoted to"(8) [12]. Mircea Eliade was inspired by R. Otto and speaks of a sacred object of experience, which remains the same through the diversity of its manifestations [13]. The quoted authors hesitate between divine and religious, sacred and spiritual.

3.2. The sacred in Timimoun

Contrary to Durkheim, the sacred and the divine are intermingled because man has tried to communicate with the divine through the sacred. It is first of all social. It is the sacred which feeds and nourishes the religious [14]. The objects and the places become sacred in reference to a belief. The sacred is made of the splendid and the harmful. The positive sacred is captivating and sought after, and the negative sacred is dangerous and abject. The receptacle of good and evil belong to this world of the invisible that some manage to pierce; they are, in our case, the *Awliya-s* (Saints). The sacred becomes, then, the result of a whole system of belief under the aegis of the *Walî*. But first of all, what is a *Walî*? The signifier "*Walî*" is often associated with "*Allâh*" (God) or "*Salih*" (correct) (9), to constitute lexical groups "*Walî allâh*" or "*Walî Salih*". The proper name of the "*Walî*" is always preceded by "Sîd" the equivalent of Lord or more exactly of Master, proof by the speaker of his veneration and submission. This signifier is used to mean "the Holy Man", the character in relation to whom one or even several communities are defined. This character must bring together a number of qualities: he is a pious man, who is recognized as having a special relationship with the creator God and with the beyond. He is the protective force of the community that is attached to him; he is their spiritual source and their guide. A *Walî* was, in essence, considered the founder of something. This could be a *ġsar*, a lineage, or a brotherhood, with the possibility of multiple functions at the same time. The headquarters of the brotherhood is the *zāwiya*. Because a saint isolated himself to devote himself to his meditations, or because the chance of his peregrinations brought him there, or because he inhabited the place, it evolved into a place and sometimes gave birth to a *zāwiya*

[15]. The *zāwiya*, as it grew in size, became the space of the political. It was often in the shadow of the *zāwiya*-s that the great destinies of a territory and its settlement were played out.

4. Method

Constructivism has led us to seek an interpretative understanding of the urban reality of Timimoun. It is a question of explaining the spatial configuration from human behaviors that are endowed with a subjective meaning. These behaviors imply an inner look. The understanding of the facts and the causes of the hold of the sacred on the space of Timimoun was carried out gradually, as the investigation progressed. The approach is qualitative. Its singularity lies in the simultaneity of the analysis and the data collection. The analysis is done as the data starts to come in. The method used is hybrid: historical-inductive.

The historical method is based on facts belonging to a bygone era. It aims at reconstituting, from stories, hagiographic documents and manuscripts, the hold of the agents of the religious brotherhoods on the urban management of Timimoun, in a general way. It is a question of ferreting out the history of Timimoun and its inhabitants, in order to reconstitute everything that is linked to space and the sacred and that can contribute to the explanation of current situations. To do this, we carried out the following tasks:

1. The collection of documents: gather all the documents related to the space and the sacred of Timimoun;
2. Verification of the documents: authenticity, source and provenance, period, etc. ;
3. The interpretation of the collected documents.

As for the inductive method, it consists of moving from the concrete to the abstract, based on the observation of the behaviors of religious agents vis-à-vis the representatives of institutions, which are responsible for urban planning in Timimoun [16]. In the fourth section, we proceed to the analysis and interpretation of the results and information collected. The analysis itself is established on three levels:

1. Societal framework;
2. Anthropological dimension;
3. And the morphological configuration.

4.1. Data collection technique

The purpose of the interview is to give priority to the valorisation of the inhabitants' discourse, in an attempt to achieve a "reconstruction" of the object of study that integrates the local discourse [17]. The concern is to collect the maximum number of accounts that capitalize on the urban knowledge of Timimoun. This technique with a human face revalues people and refuses to consider social facts as things. The use of interviews is a necessity in a society where writing was, until recently, the prerogative of a minority of literates, often men of religion [18]. It allows access to lived reality by giving expression to the silent of history. The interview is characterized by a superiority of places over times. The history of the saint is translated into a journey of places [19]. As oral traditions are worked on as society changes, it is clear that I was in the presence of the latest version. This version includes both old, unchanging cores that constitute the central reference points of the narratives and of memory, but also successive additions that update the discourse and adapt it to new issues. These traditions have been subject to transformations (omissions, additions, evictions, deletions, idealizations...).

4.2. Experimental protocol

We conducted a number of field missions over two successive years. In Timimoun, we listened to descendants of maraboutic lineages tell me the story of their forefathers, of whom there are six. We consulted the operators in the field (director of the land agency, head of the urban planning department) who informed us of the difficulties of applying urban planning rules and laws designed out of context. They told us about the obstacles they had experienced, illustrating the inadequacies between the law they were responsible for applying and the customs of Timimoun.

For the interviews, it is rather a question of reactivating the collective memory, transcribing it is a task of extreme urgency because the transmission of this tradition is beginning to be seriously restricted with the disappearance of the elders. We have given particular importance to oral traditions and their transmission. It was necessary, therefore, to remain close to the empirical level, i.e. to the facts and representations as they were communicated by the informants. We collected information, anecdotes, local stories and legends, which we compared with other versions. By telling them to other interlocutors.

5. Result and discussion

The initial question, let us recall: how does the sacred organize space in Timimoun, has been elucidated. Indeed, in Timimoun, the sacred has had an impact on the urban organization system. This hold is found in the permanence of conflicts and compromises, between the *Mrābṭīn* and the state institutions. The *Hufra* allotment is very significant. It illustrates the part of the sacred and its appropriation of the management of the urban space of Timimoun.

Narrative 3 Hufra, a Sacred Space

"The mrābṭīn of zāwiya of Sîdî al-Hāj Balqāsam opposed and refused the building of housing near the hufra. For them it is a sacred space. Despite the intervention of the local authorities" (Ahmed Tennah, 2018).

The *mrābṭīn* of the *zāwiya* of Sîdî al-Hāj Balqāsam oppose an urban planning operation (250 housing units), approved by the P.O.S (10), supposed to be opposable to third parties, near the *Hufra*: objected motive: the *sbû'*(11) , sacred event. Indeed the *Hufra* is the culmination of the *sbû'* and the closure of a cycle that began a week earlier (Figure 08). He will reach his end only at the end of the seventh day (*sbû'*), at the moment of his arrival at the *Hufra* of Sîdî al-Hāj Balqāsam.



Figure 8. Hufra of Sîdî al-Hāj Balqāsam, the last stage of sbû'. Source Author, 2018.

This allotment, which dragged on for several years because of the fierce opposition of the *zāwiya's mrābṭīn* of Sîdî al-Hāj Balqāsam. The latter contested the boundaries of the allotment on the pretext that the land was a sacred space, intended episodically for the conduct of the *sbû'* festival. The *mrābṭīn* demand that this allotment be as far away from the *Hufra* as possible. The local authorities in charge of the file responded favorably to their grievance. The easement between the *Hufra* and the housing scheme's site was revised upwards by the *mrābṭīn* and the subdivision was set beyond the national road (Figure 09). The interviews revealed that behind this objection by the *mrābṭīn* lies a problem of social configuration. Indeed, the *Mrābṭīn* find the beneficiaries of this program are only their former *hrāṭīn* (12) or `abîd-s (13) dependent on the *zāwiya*. This turns them into a pool of free labor. Mobilized during the festivals and at any time to prepare the various jobs. Now, with such a separation in space, the social rupture is confirmed.

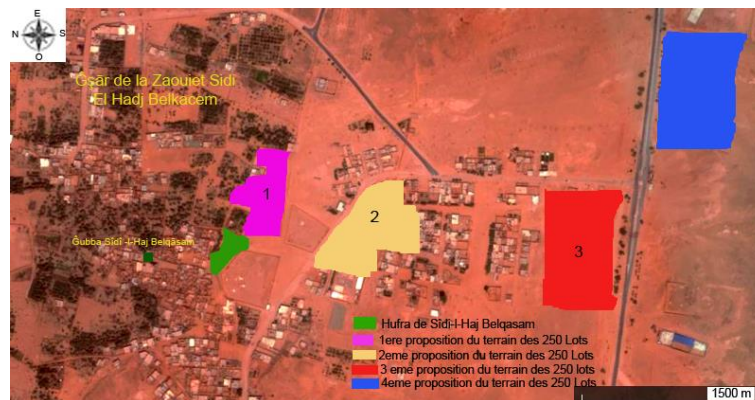


Figure 9. Various locations of the subdivision. Source: Google Earth, formatted by the author, 2021.

Another hidden face of the real cause of the *Mrābṭīn's* rejection of this project, the subdivision program calls for a mosque and a Quranic school. These two functions are contested because they are seen as competing with the *zāwiya* mosque, which is the property of the *Mrābṭīn* and their emblem. These religious officials are apprehensive about the realization of such facilities that infringe on the monopoly of the sacred that is in the hands of the *Mrābṭīn*.

Faced with the persistence of the *Mrābḥīn* for this subdivision to be pushed back spatially and temporally, the political-administrative officials tried to argue the refusal to grant the building permit to the beneficiaries, on the grounds of inappropriate gauges and non-compliance with the development indicators (COS (15) and CES (16)). In fact, behind this technical-administrative jargon hides the reluctance on the part of these officials, due to the pressure exerted by the *Mrābḥīn*. The last proposal, for the site of the subdivision, emanating from the services that are supposed to respect the regulations and laws of urban planning, is located in the non-urbanized sector, for seen that it is accepted. This concession has received a non receipt from the *Mrābḥīn*.

The determination of the urban configuration of the city of Timimoun is dependent on the sacred. Indeed, the organization and the urban configuration of Timimoun is linked, in the oral tradition, to the action of the *Walî*. He is the one who gathers and unifies the dispersed lineages. The Saint fixes and delimits the space of the future city. It is he who presides over the foundation of the city, as Détienne tells us: "*At the beginning of the founded city, there is the authority of a single person to draw, trace, organize (...)*"[20]. It is the Saints who punctuate the city, organize it and delimit it. The performance of the *Walî*, these buildings and the collective memory mark the city as a practiced space and its trace is an arrangement of spatiality. Timimoun has never been commissioned by specialists (architect, urban planner, etc.). This environment is the result of a popular architecture, fed by a socio-cultural belief system. In Timimoun, the layouts are not exclusively based on geometry and geography, a hold of the sacred is at the source. This human settlement is the product of a spontaneity that turns out to be the product of a rigorous planning and otherwise more complex than the current planning, in the sense that it has taken into account not only the rational but also and especially the immaterial: the sacred. Timimoun remains a disputed space, between official institutions and customary institutions, even today, the traces of these confrontations persist in the social structuring and the spatial configuration. Many projects and initiatives are lost because of these confrontations.

6. Conclusion

The city of Timimoun cannot be reduced to a juxtaposition of structures and agglomerates. It is, par excellence, the result of a cultural phenomenon. Its form, its development and its dynamics are strongly influenced by its cultural environment. The functionalist approach remains insufficient to explain the urban structure of Timimoun. At the end of this article, it is necessary to reconsider the way in which one approaches this type of human settlement. Indeed, the works that have questioned this type of space have stuck to the functionalist vision that considers the built environment as a functional response to objectifiable data.

One of the permanent features in the motives evoked by the collective memory is the sacred, which orders, organizes and creates the space. Considering all the stories, some striking elements emerged. The relationship to the past was deeply worked by the religious agents, by their direct action or through their influence. In other words, they managed to dominate all social groups, to impose their visions, which consist in attributing a central role to their ancestors (the Saints).

Even today, the traces of the hold of the sacred persist in the socio-spatial configurations. Timimoun is the illustration, par excellence, of the combination of the logic of the sacred of history and legends to govern the organization of space. This combination continues to reign. These same logics could constitute for the planner of today, stimulating

elements. A deep reflection must be initiated for the reactivation of the Jm'a, this customary institution that used to regulate conflicts and the management of social life, could be the emblem of participatory urbanism, in this context.

sur la théorie de la science. Paris : Plon.

7. References

- [1] L. Mumford, *The city through history*, Paris, Seuil, 1961.
- [2] A. Rapoport, *For an anthropology of the house*, Paris : Dunod, 1972.
- [3] F. Rasolofodistler, C. Zawadzki, Epistemology and methodology of CIFRE: Illustration by theses defended in Finance Control Strategy, *Finance Contrôle Stratégie*, (16), 4, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.4000/fcs.1406>
- [4] N. Marouf, *Reading the oasis space*, Paris, Sindbad, 1980.
- [5] A.A.A. Batrān, A contribution to the biography of Shaikh Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Karīm ibn Muhmmad, al-Tilimsānī. *The Journal of African History*, 14, 1973, pp. 381-394, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- [6] R. Bellil, *Ksour and saints of Gourara, in oral tradition, hagiography and oral chronicles*, Alger, C.N.R.P.A.H, 2003.
- [7] J. Bisson, *The Gourara, geographical and human study*, Paris, C.N.R.S, 1986.
- [8] F. Gendre, *The Ksour region of southern Oranais*, Tunis, société anonyme l'imprimerie rapide, 1910.
- [9] T. Otmane, Y. Kouzmine, Timimoun, evolution and current issues of an Algerian Saharan oasis, *Insaniyat*, 51-52, 2011, pp. 165-183, Oran, CRASC.
- [10] C. Ougouag-Kezzal, Religious and popular events during the festival of Mawlid in Gourara. Their meaning and scope, *Libyca*, 26-27, 1978, pp. 163-205, Alger, Crape.
- [11] H. Hubert, M. Mauss, *Introduction to the analysis of some religious phenomena*, Paris, Minuit, 1968.
- [12] R. Freddy, William Robertson Smith. *Lectures on the religion of the Semites*, *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, (52-1), 1972, pp. 119-120, Strasbourg, CNRS.
- [13] M. Éliade, *The sacred and the profane*, Paris, Gallimard, 1965.
- [14] P. Claval, The theme of religion in geographical studies, *Géographie et cultures*, 292, 1992, pp. 85-110, Paris, L'Harmattan.
- [15] L. Rinn, *Marabouts and khouan. Study on Islam in Algeria*, Alger, Jourdan, 1884.
- [16] J.P. Deslaurier, Analysis in qualitative research, *Cahiers de recherche sociologique*, (5- 2), 1987, pp. 145-152, <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1002031ar>
- [17] M.J. Herkovits, *The basics of cultural anthropology*, Paris, Maspero, 1967.
- [18] S. FRAY, The use of hagiographic sources in early medieval social history. *Cahiers d'histoire*, 34, 2016 pp.45-68, Paris, CSCE.
- [19] P. Henriot, Text and context, *Tendances récentes de la recherche en hagiologie*, 2003, pp.75-86, Renne, PUR.
- [20] M. Detienne, *Foundation layout*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1994.

8. Notes

1. An important number of Saints and their tombs.
2. Laboratory of energies in arid zones. Research team Thermal comfort of buildings and greenhouses (CTBS), Tahri Mohamed University, Bechar (Algeria).

3. The qualifier of *mĥājriya*, from the radical *ĥjr* which means to leave, to abandon. This appellation comes from their conversion to Islam. They left (*ĥajrū*) their religion for Islam.
4. Salt Lake, in the Sahara, occupying a depression.
5. It is a phonic alteration of the Arabic root *Qasr* which designates what is short, limited. It means a limited space, to which only a certain category of social groups has access (Auteur, 2021).
6. *Foggara*, from the Arabic *fgar* (to fan), gives a concrete idea of what a *foggara* is. It is a series of vents dug and connected by an underground conduit that leads water from an underground water table to the land to be irrigated thanks to an appropriate slope. It consists in creating artificial "springs" by digging galleries with a very slight slope that will join the water table. The water runs along the walls and forms a permanent stream. These galleries are marked on the surface by manholes for maintenance. A flyover of the region shows the extent of the network thus created.
7. Plural of "*walī*" which means Holy.
8. Belonging to the deity.
9. The one who possesses supernatural performance and a benefactor.
10. Land use plan.
11. It is, in large part, to the *mawlid* that the city of Timimoun owes its fame. Every year, inhabitants and pilgrims meet to live intensely this religious festival; the *sbū`* (seventh day). The seventh day, from the date of birth of the prophet.
12. Freed slaves.
13. Slaves.
14. Coefficient of land use.
15. Coefficient of land use.