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DAKAM

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**THE EFFECT OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMICAL CHANGES ON ORGANIZATION
OF THE URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL TERRITORIES.
CASE OF HODNA IN ALGERIA**

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INTRODUCTION

This paper shows the effect of political and economic changes since the French colonization until the 2000's, the urban and architectural development of an agricultural region, which was long ago an enclave of Algeria: the eastern Hodna . This study focuses specifically on the effects of the economic boom that took place in this area, following the development of the so-called parallel economy promoted during the period of political instability in Algeria during the decade 1990/2000, by a certain segment of the population: the new barons of the informal

The study area consists of the chief place of four towns: Barika, Magra, Belaiba and Berhoum as well as a secondary agglomeration: Djezzar. These localities are situated on the extension of two major roads the NR 28 and NR 40 between different departments (Sétif, M'sila, Batna and Biskra) belonging to distinct geographical entities in the country, making this area an important point of passage. So far from being accidental, the urban development of these areas reflects a strong commitment to these new lords who enjoy the various economic benefits that can provide these roads.

This economic development has not only upset the urban setting of the region, but has given rise to a new domestic architectural framework that bears little affinity with its predecessor.

ORIENTAL HODNA AS A STUDY AREA

In Algeria from the green banks of the Mediterranean to the vast desert, there are three successive longitudinal zones: Tellien Atlas which is characterized by its varied and complex land, the highland steppe and the Saharan Atlas overlooking the great desert.

Ranging from a single piece, the middle area is one of the largest sets of arid steppe in Algeria. At the heart of this lies a zone enclave of 8500 km²: The Hodna. The study area is a fraction of Eastern Hodna . It includes the chief place of four localities and urban secondary departments, which depend on two different geographic areas: Barika (305.43 km²), Belaiba (5.92 km²), Magra (272 km²), Berhoum (89 km²) and a secondary agglomeration: the mechetta of Ouled Derraji. (See fig-01)

considered as one of the largest Algerian center, particularly the two national roads: NR 28 and the NR 40, that seem to guide their urban extensions.

II. THE EFFECT OF THE ECONOMIC EVOLUTION ON THE URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL SPACES OF EASTERN HODNA

II.1 THE PRECOLONIAL SOCIETY: PASTORALISM AS MAIN MEANS OF ECONOMIC SUBSISTENCE

A long time before the advent of French colonialism, the Hodna was a country of pastoral life, where the extensive livestock linked to transhumance was the main resource of the inhabitants. Ibn Haukel (1842), and El Bakri (1858), speak of "*Des nombreux troupeaux du Hodna, de ses moutons, de ses chameaux, de ses bêtes de selles mais aussi des bovins qui pouvaient vivre de la steppe seule*". The production system was therefore based primarily on complementarities.

To offer in every season, adequate food for its livestock, the Hodni society was doing important medium distance trips (toward '*Sebkha*') during the winter season, and long distances, toward the high plains, during the summer. Throughout this time, The area of Hodna was divided between a number of nomadic tribes, who maintained with the natural environment, a proper balance, thanks to the weakness of densities and to customary rules which organizing the route and travel. This seasonal transhumance formed the basis of the colonial pastoral economy.

III.1.a The '*Douar*', the '*Nezla*' and the '*tent*': An architectural and urban transcript of the prevailing socio-economic structure

The tent or mobile home, called in this region, '*Guittoune*' or '*Khaima*', was responding perfectly to this kind of life. According to official French documents (archives of the Governor, 1856; Senatus-consults, 1863) until the second half of the nineteenth century, no hard and fixed construction had been enumerated in the eastern Hodna, outside urban centers of the time. The Hodnis gathered in groups of 40 to 60 tents clustered and arranged in a circle around a central space called '*M'rah*'. These camps were known under the name '*Douar*' (circle). In order to controlling and better managing nomads, colonization proceeded to the internal destruction of the tribal group.

To this social dislocation corresponded a spatial disintegration. Small groups of three to six tents, materializing isolated settlements of households, based on patriarchal families, replace the '*Douar*'. These villages were temporary and mobile, they were known as the '*Nezla*'. These last ones left the clustering in a circle to a more individualistic arrangement favoring the linear disposition. Tents that comprised '*Nezla*' established themselves; according an organization based on one to two lines (see Fig-03-)

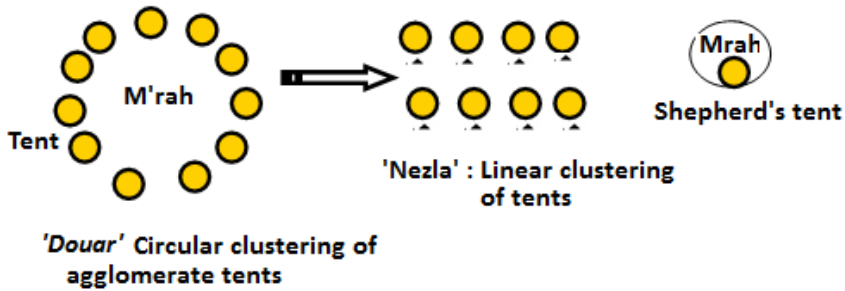


Figure 3: The Mode of urbanistic clustering: passage from 'Douar' to 'Nezla'
 Source: Author, 2011 according to the descriptions of Lacrois. N, 1906

According, Lacrois N. (1906), Raskow E. (1938) and Feilberg CG. (1944), mobile houses or 'Guittoune' Hodni, resembled, with some constructive differences, to that of North Africa. It is a space whose size ranged from 12 to 50 m² covered with a heavy cloth, tightly stretched on wooden stakes.

The 'Guittoune' was composed of two separate parts. The first, semi-private, is for the head of family, his elder son and possibly the reception of strangers. The second, essentially private is assigned to women and children. This gendered bipartite division, this gap between men, women and cattle has created its functional division (see Fig-04 and Fig--05 -).



Figure 04: Spatial and functional division of 'Guittoune': the two compartments
 Source: Author, 2013

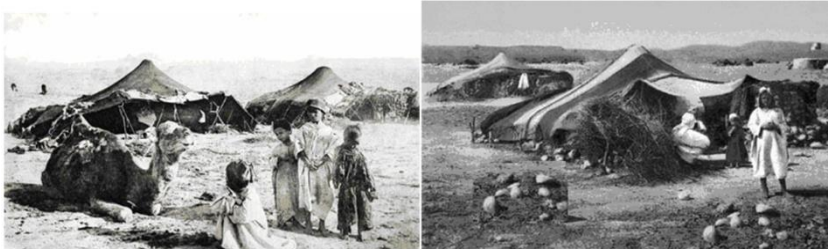


Fig-05-The mobile home: The 'Guittoune'
 Source: www.photos-algerie.fr

III.2 The colonization: Reintroduction and promotion of agricultural economics

Due to its political hegemony, colonization gradually introduced a new spirit in the Hodna : the individualization and rivalries, unknown until then, in this region, where the primacy of the collective and the tribal mind were stronger. Indeed through, on the one hand, the Senatus-consulte (1863) which caused real schisms among the tribes leading to their breakup in several douars, and secondly, by the promulgation of the Warnier law (1873) which made alienable land "arch.

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To survive, the people of Hodna were forced to cultivate portions increasingly important to their lands. The success of this cultivation required a permanent presence. From a nomad, the Hodni would gradually be transformed into a farmer, breeder and was compelled to leave his tent to settle in winter in a fixed dwelling. In this regard, Despoit J. (1953), noted the embarrassment with which "*The nomad Hodni abandoned their airy tents and easy to move, to be locked between four walls of a dark dwelling which gradually invaded by vermin.*"

III.2.a From 'Nezla' to 'Mechta': The Story of a necessary passage from a mobile home to a fixed one

The progress of the agricultural economy at the expense of farming so started in 1872 (Official Gazette, 1895) the movement of fixed residential construction, which peaked at the beginning of last century, between 1900 and 1910, Moreover, the 1911 census used by Bernard A. (1921), and De Flotte de Roquevaire R. (1928), showed a decline in tents inhabited throughout the year the number was around 3479 ahead the permanent structures which were of the order of 4545. Similarly, in 1936 these same colonial statistics denounced a sharp decline in mobile homes, which accounted for only one fifth of the total housing stock of the town of Barika.

The method of grouping these winter ('chta') houses was known under the name of 'Mechta'. Recent grouped a variable number of *gourbi* from 3 to 4 and sometimes up to 25 to 30 and even more. Several tens of meters separated the housing between them, in order to facilitate and permit movement of the flock. The set of 3 to 4 'Mechta' formed the "Douar of fixed habitation"(See Fig-06-).

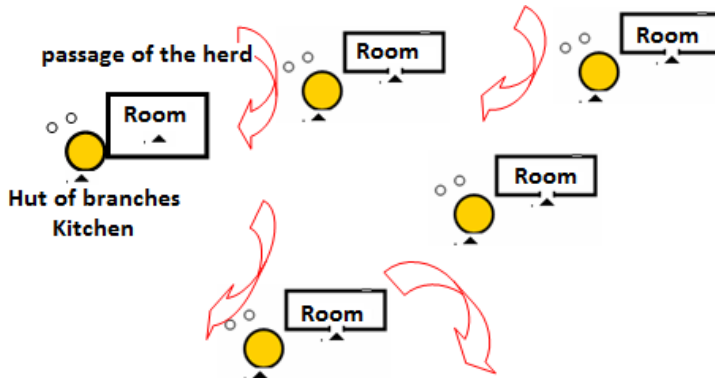


Fig-06 - mode of urbanistic clustering in Hodna induced by Agricultural Economics
Source: Author, 2013

The permanence of the winter camp near the cultures thus led to the construction of one or two "gourbi" used for storage or as a room. The 'gourbi' has never been the direct successor of 'Guittoune, besides it has never completely replaced it. It was first and firstly a winter dwelling. The rest of the seasons, Hodni still lived in a tent. The 'gourbi' was only a complementary housing, it witnessed an era of transhumance and semi-nomadism "[...] of temporary construction that it was (gourbi) became a permanent home for permanent sedentary "(Lacheraf M., 1971). The 'gourbi' was a crude rudimentary building constructed of mud brick, and sometimes with dry stone. It consisted of a single piece of modest dimensions of 3 to 4 m long and 2 to 2.5 m wide and high. The door was 1.50m high and 0.7m and was the only opening; however there is a second opening in the top of the opposite wall, there was actually a hole for ventilation. At this elementary type of habitat was added later, a temporary space more or less circular, serving as a kitchen: a hut of branches (see Fig-07-)

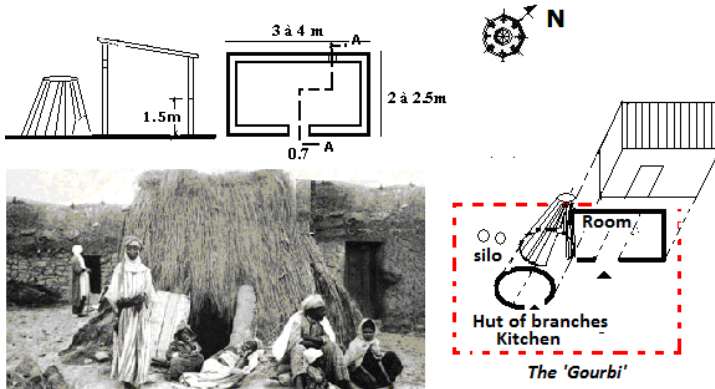


Figure 07: Le 'Gourbi': The First fixed home of Hodna
Source: Author, 2013. Photo: www.photos-algerie.fr

With the loss of almost permanent herd due to the years of drought (1930-1940), the Hodni, apart from the population of the shepherds, were completely determined to irrigate crops in winter and summer, which gave birth to a fixed and permanent home then: the '*Diar Sathi*'. Such was the materialization hard '*gourbi*' since the hut of branches, became a small rectangular piece of reduced dimensions, adjoining the main room and forming a right angle with it. This spatial configuration namely "a room-kitchen" or domestic type '*Diar Sathi*' was widespread in Hodna, however there was in this same time, a second spatial configuration consisting of a combination of two similar rooms, two home row and each one independent from the other, provided with two separate entries preceded by two non-communicating spaces '*M'rah*'. (See Fig-08)

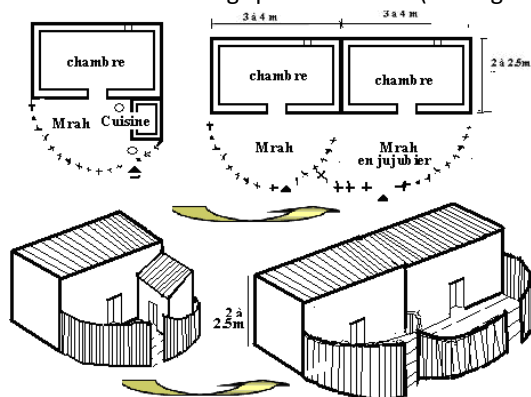


Fig-08-The first two spatial configurations of the type '*Diar Sathi*' of Hodna : "rare type" and "current type". Source: Author, 2012 according to the descriptions of Despois. J, 1953

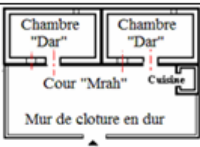
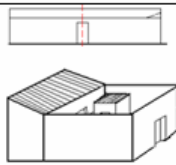


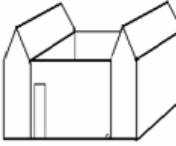


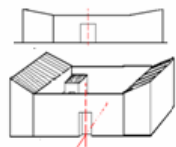


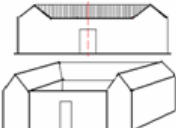

The type of '*Diar Sathi*' will be associated laterally, around 1948, to a space of the same shape and the same size as the first space called 'Dar' or room, probably designed when economic conditions were favorable. This space added new housing functions: meeting and weaving, gave birth to a new functional division, hence its name by 'Dar Layel' fully translated by "family room." This spatial configuration took the name of '*Diar Sathi intermediate type*.'

Taking advantage of the vast fertile land to the banks of river 'wadi Menaifa' in Berhoum and 'wadi Soubella' in Magra, farmers Tribe "Ouled Nadjaa" of Berhoum and tribe of "Ouled Amor" Magra were the first, after those in urban centers of the time, to lead a completely sedentary life (Despois J., 1953). They were among the first to be improved by making their homes by the addition of other rooms and moving from '*intermediate type*' to '*improved type*'

The improved type was therefore obtained by splitting the intermediate module of the type in relation to the longitudinal axis. This type of housing has remained operational in Hodna until the early years of independence; it had not really disappeared but has been accompanied by another type: '*Diar Be Reboe*'

From a conceptual standpoint, houses named 'Diar Be Reboe' stood out from those of previous habitations by a transverse extension of the court holding the third side of the house. Etymologically 'ReBoe' in Arabic means one quarter hence their name that refers to the side of the house which is not occupied and therefore not covered. This type of housing was that of the rich Hodni farmer. The third side was occupied by the kitchen, closet or 'Makhzen' store which now has a separate space. Note the penetration of the male reception area 'Dar Diaf' in the body of the house, but keeping direct access from the outside. (See table -01 -)

Table-01-Different spatial home configurations of Hodna at the colonial period

Plan	Volume et Façade	Vue
 <p>'Diar Sathi' type intermédiaire</p>		
 <p>'Diar Sathi' type Amélioré :V1</p>		
 <p>'Diar Sathi' type Amélioré :V2</p>		
 <p>'Diar Berboue'</p>		

Source: Author, 2013

III.3 The first two decades of independence: From an agricultural economy to the small industry

At the dawn of independence, Algeria had put his hopes and efforts for industrial development in the urban areas of the coast and in the agrarian

revolution of rural and pastoral areas, which gave birth to the first regional disparities. To remedy this imbalance, a basic industry was redeployed to the country (Preanant A., 1980). The Hodni recently settled in masses to the ancient centers of Barika and M'sila. To cope with this rural exodus, the government began the construction of socialist villages within the larger-scale operation had known rural Algeria: the Agricultural Revolution. Hodna was one of the pilot areas for the agrarian revolution.

III.3.a From 'Mechta' to new socialist agrarian villages: Birth of a new planning policy and imposition of an architectural exogenous model

Hodna entered the great movement of this agrarian revolution with a capital of 7 socialist villages made out of 20 other planned (Benatia F. et al, 1983). Thus, the region of Hodna attended to amorcement of the destruction of the social structure of its inhabitants and the spatial structure of its residential housing

. If "*Mechta*" is an offspring of the "*Nezla*" which is itself the offspring "*Douar*" primary Hodni ancient nomadic tents, the socialist village is an intruder powered by the Algerian State in order to establish one new ideology and transform habitat, by applying a new organization nurtured by constructivist ideas in the former USSR and it was designed as a social condenser (Bouchereb A., 1992). To this end, the Charter of Algiers (1964) stated that "the revolution has not only the task of liquidating all its survivals (patriarchal, semi-feudal semi tribal structure) but to prevent recurrence. Basically, it is to the Algerian citizens aware of a modern nation "(quoted by Leca S., 1981). While the construction of villages was intended, not only to put an end to the phenomenon of migration, but also to initiate a radical transformation of rural society and the building of socialism as a political doctrine "the scientific urbanism» as a tool (Aداire P., 1982).

The aspect of socialist village is the very opposite of that traditional Hodni '*douar*'. The straight streets brought a dishonorable "nudity" to its original spatial practice and the Houses suddenly found themselves in side by side attached to each other along the paved roads around a center equipped with administrative buildings, mosque, school, maure bath, market, administrative unit and commercial amenities, which had transformed a self-sufficient community into a community of consumption of manufactured goods. From the sociological point of view, socialist village was far from forming a community seen the different tribes that inhabited this village. Several authors (Ledru R., 1978 Lesbet D., 1984 and Boubekeur S., 1986) had demonstrated the incompatibility of these villages with the peasant culture, by demonstrating the loss of cultural identity they caused among nomads and rural people.


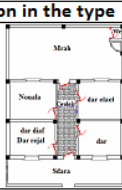


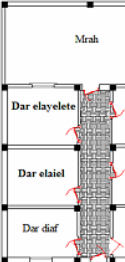

The Hodni of the past who built his house with the help of his family was confronted to another housing type foreign to his culture and lifestyle, which had violently shaken his traditional drawings and had changed at the same time its social and economic spatial relations

The study area was adjacent to these socialist villages and was heavily influenced by the idea of modernity. Spatial development of the different towns was oriented toward straight streets and suddenly the houses found themselves side by side attached to each other.

The new type of residential Hodna named 'Diar Belwizdad' was designed on the tables of architectural drawings, for the most part foreigners, normalized by specialists away from the socio-spatial locals. It was intended, in its entirety, to a radical transformation of the peasantry in structuring new social relationships through the organization of production and reorganizing the housing unit.

The house with a central courtyard that characterized the pre-colonial era was considered "archaic" view is abandoned in favor of a new concept: the house with corridor, called by Hodni 'Diar Belwizdad'. The Type 'Diar Belwizdad' was characterized by a simple arrangement which the axis is a corridor upon which opened the double alignment of parts. The covered part was generally composed of four bedrooms (DBW4) five times (DBW5) or six (DBW6), arranged in pairs followed by a courtyard 'Mrah' and a toilet in the corner of it (see Table - 02 -). The relation with public space was either made directly by the entrance door in the middle, or through a semi private 'Sdara'. This space served as a porch, when the house occupied a corner in the space, was equipped also with a gateway. Sometimes 'Sdara' confined to an unusable space, limited by walls of small dimensions. When these houses opened on the shopping streets, the front facing rooms were transformed into commercial premises to meet the needs of the family, because the economic conditions of the Hodni during the early 1980s were still insignificant (see Fig -09 -)

Table2: Different spatial configurations of the type called 'Belwizdad'

Type	Code	Spatial configuration	Variation in the type
'Diar Sdara'	Ds		
'Diar Belwizdad 4diar wmrh'	DBW4		
Diar Belwizdad 'set diar wmrh'	DBW6		

Source: Author, 2013



Figure 09: Various architectural facades of the type called '*Diar Belwizdad*'
Source: Author, 2013

IV. POLITICAL TROUBLES OF THE 80'S-90'S: TRAUMATIC AND BRUTAL SOCIAL AND SPATIAL DISRUPTION

In 1982, the agrarian revolution was abandoned as a philosophy of reviving agriculture. In this, Cote M.,(1983) noted that the weakening of the rural world in Algeria comes from the fact that the industrial revolution has occurred before the agrarian revolution is consolidated. This failure had caused the gradual abandonment of land working and the rural exodus to the hinterland of Hodna and toward its urban centers.

In the late 1980s, we witnessed a reversion of the economic trends in Hodna which was materialized by the direct passage of a large number of "Hodni" to the field of industry. However, the industry has never been the seat itself in the region of Hodna: Colonization had not established industrial units and the first decades of independence did not spare the study area of its chronic underdevelopment

While the country was spending large amounts of money (by borrowing) to import 80% of its food because of the economic crisis of 1983, which worsened in 1986 by falling oil prices and the dollar, the region of Hodna began to take its off economic development by the economy called "informal" which forcefully spread in various fields ranging from clothing, building materials, used cars, spare parts, through the importation of all prohibited goods to constitute a powerful socio-economic base of the entire region (Benchenouf D., 2006). Attracted by the strong demand for certain products, these "new barons of the informal" watched the spots where the state marked a real deficit: Building materials including iron and cement and spare parts. These two major parallel markets had enabled Hodna to know the beginnings of an economic boom, that would be one of the fastest and most significant that has this region ever known.

The political context marked by the thorny problems of the period of insecurity that the country had known during the 1990s had not slowed the flight of informal economic of this region. Instead, to the smuggling which was already in the region, came to add another type of traffic even more profitable: the weapons that enabled the establishment of an institution economically structured and generating huge profit.

IV.1 From center of agrarian socialist villages toward the commercial roadside: New urban settlements and new domestic spatialities

Following the huge tax evasion that allowed this informal trade. The inhabitants of Hodna, at least a fringe of them: the barons of the informal were converted into wealthy merchants.

This trade demanded specific urban locations. These should meet the new requirements for the issuance of goods, parking large vehicles and transport operations. Given the importance of national roads: NR28 NR40 in facilitating and linking the various provinces of the country, they were considered by the barons, not only as addresses easily spotted by potential customers who would come from all parts of the country, but also as places for solemn trade, emerging in the region. Therefore, began squatting borders of these roads, which in the first instance have become privileged places mainly for the implementation of storage merchandise sheds. (See Fig-10-)



Fig-10-Squatting roads by mechanical appliances in localities of Belaiba,Djezzar and Barika

Source: Author, 2013

"live in" was not the main concern, because living in such desert places where there were no neighbors except for a range of important cemeteries of mechanical appliances, meant to live "nowhere." The hangar construction was done at a very high speed. These new buildings occupied 500m² built surfaces that were completely covered, located on huge land areas that can reach two hectares (see Fig-11). However, given the huge economic interest represented by these premises in the eyes of the owner, living "on the spot" became a necessity.

These storage sheds formed now, the ground floor of a new type of dwelling that came to replace the previous type of '*Diar Belwizdad*'. A new spatial organization so appeared, that affected the first level to storage and trade, while the upper floors are destined to the family home.

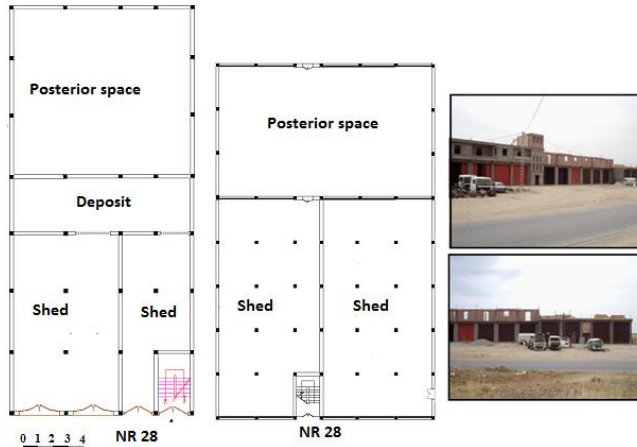


Fig-11: Example of spatial arrangements of storage sheds of the 1990s period
 Source: Author, 2013

In the manner of collective residential buildings, the staircase allowed to serve several independent houses that can be inhabited or not. The real goal was not to house his family, but to raise the maximum levels. The time is not to build "large" by necessity, but to build and raise the maximum levels over large areas built on the ground, to show his wealth, prove that clearly belongs to this new social-spatial class of the new rich of Hodna. The inhabitants of this area called this new type of habitat '*Villas on garage*'. Unlike other types of residential of Hodna, the internal organization of houses, villa garage 'was done, not in a clear way around a single space distribution and transition, as is the case for corridor of '*Diar Belwizdad*' or the central courtyard of the old types of the colonial period, but indiscriminately around both. In addition to the main places of life, these transitional spaces distributed large poles of receipt, richly decorated, large areas of food preparation, large toilet spaces, differentiated and categorized. (See Fig-12-)

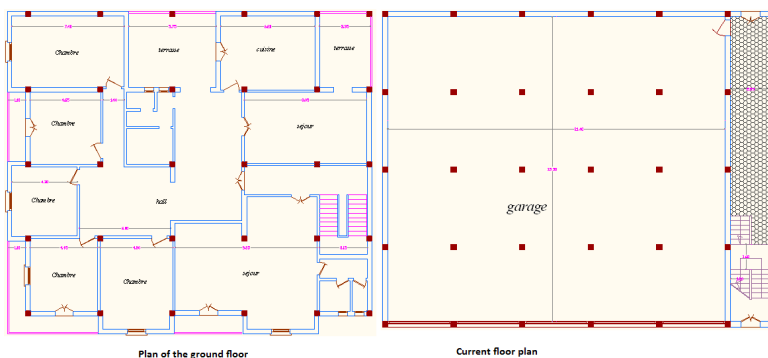


Figure-12: Example of spatial arrangements and shells of dwelling type "*Villas on garage*" in the town of Belaïba Source: Author, 2013

V.2 The decade of 2000s, liberalization of foreign trade: Switching to a 'domestic architecture of import'

The withdrawal of the state in the wake of structural adjustment imposed by the Berton Woods institution had been translated at the Hodna by two complementary aspects: On the one hand by installing dealers and wholesalers, following the trade liberalization, and this, since the enactment of the law 90-10 on money and credit, which was later supplemented by the Finance Act providing inter alia the opening of the Algerian market. Thus, an approved importer Hodni were interested, especially since the expansion of foreign monopolization measures of recent years, the import and sale of privately mechanical equipment for public works and buildings, new and used utility vehicles trucks and trailers, thus contributing significantly to the dismantling of the import monopoly. On the other hand, by facilitating procedures for the private sector to create an industrial base capable of boosting economic activity. This has encouraged the emergence of several companies and even international corporations that are in the process of drilling in all sectors including building, so many private units of production of building materials have found their share in the local market and regional levels. That it did propel this region and promoted it as a future major industrial center.

On the urban plan, the national highways NR 28 and NR 40 have become the scene of a spreading wealth through the establishment of a new type of dwelling: The type called '*Diar Charpent*'. Hodni called '*Diar Charpent*' the large massive blocks shaped buildings whose facades reveal richness in construction materials and architectural elements. Amalgam of various architectures as well as varied, sometimes reminiscent of western architecture of medieval castles - Continued to borrowing architectural elements similar to dungeons and towers to house the stairwells, to weep for materializing the main entrance, and sometimes walls stone fence with a look and dimensions of ramparts Sometimes to the European neoclassical architecture respecting the scheduling and symmetry. Their ground-floor support, except for the front door, several outstanding gates, while their floors are topped with roofs made of several superimposed slopes, sometimes filled with an imposing central pyramid based heptagonal, sometimes two superimposed rectangular pyramids dominating the stairwell, and terminated by a stele (see Fig-13-)



Figure-13: The new type of dwelling at the time of economic prosperity: The type '*Diar Charpent*'

Source: Author, 2013

CONCLUSION

Located at the crossroads of two of the most important road axis of the Algerian center namely RN28 and 40, the area of study includes the totality of its territory in the area rangeland, where developed until the early years of independence, population who were mostly nomads and semi-nomads, its society has always been associated to the notions of anchorage and enrooting represented as immutable and frozen in time. A region where social, moral and economical values are identically reproduced since generations and where residential habitat was not more than the reproduction of the socials practices on the ground a result of a slow endogenous development.

Following the restoration of the agrarian revolution of socialist Algeria, the post colonial period of the two decades 1970/1980 was characterized by a socio-political upheaval where the architectural and urban consequences were colossal to the point of modifying two models which remained stable along one century of existence. The first an urban model: that of '*Douar*', following the emergence of socialist villages, abandoned after; the other architectural: a model of dwell arranged and structured around a central courtyard whose abandonment was deliberately encouraged by the state, for the benefit of another, which was imposed by a political decision: the house with a corridor, called '*Diar Belwizdad*' by the Hodni

The economic changes that Hodna witnessed since the end of the 80's following the development of the economy of the informal, which little by little was converted since this last decade 2000 , due to a big number of laws, toward a legal economy, has led to big changes of the social structure of the inhabitants, as well as the urban and spatial structures of this region.

Thus, from nomad, poor inhabitants and disadvantaged, living only of low annuity, cumulated from the land work and pastoralism; Hodni became rich traders owing to immense tax evasion money. This economic boom led not only to a social manifestation but to a spatial upheaval. During this transition phase, the land question is not unimportant; the price of land was determined on pure economical criteria and has lost its social and symbolic value of the past. The necessity of gathering the houses in the ancient centers does not seem more attractive to new traders of Hodna, who find in these ancient cores hidden in the plains and badly disserved by the big axes of transportation, as inconvenient places for the development of their trade.

The commercial explosion and its spreading along these two important road axes, made us witness a continual urbanization which is made by the occupation of the buffer zones which constitute the extension of these two roads. This urbanization should make NR 40 and NR 28 the centerline of a new conurbation that develops linearly and perfectly conveys the rhythm of the new structuring of space in Hodna. Thus to the traditional form of '*Douars*' are substituted linear settlements in perpetual rapprochement, support new logics of living, due to the emergence of domestic typologies, generating a hazardous alliance of neoclassical style and an Asian one , witness of the birth of a new socio-spatial class : the new rich of Hodna: the barons of the informal

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