

Fake Importers Behavior in the Algerian City - The Case of the City of Eulma

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Abstract : The informal trade has invaded the Algerian cities, especially in their peripherals. About 1368 informal markets have been registered during 2013 where the important ones are known by Doubaï Markets. They appeared since the adoption of the new system of the economy market in 1990. It permitted the intervention of new actors: the importers but also the fake ones. The majority of them were 'ex-Trabendistes' who have chosen to settle and invest in big and small cities of center and east of Algeria, mainly Algiers, El Eulma, Aïn El Fekroun, Tadjnemet, and Aïn M'lila. This study will focus on the case of the city of El Eulma which contains more of 1000 importers (most of them are fake). They have changed the image and architecture of some important streets of the city, without respecting rules of urbanism such as those included in the building permit for instance. The case of 'Doubaï' place in El Eulma illustrates this situation. This area is not covered by a Soil Occupation Plan (responsible of the design of urban spaces), even if this last covers other zones nearby surrounding of it. These importers helped by the wholesale and retail traders installed in 'Doubaï' place, have converted spaces inside and outside of residential buildings in deposits and sales of goods. They have squatted sidewalks to expose their goods imported predominantly from the South-East Asian countries. The scenery that reigns resembles partly to the bazaar of the Middle East and Chinese cities like Yiwu. These signs characterize the local ambiance and give the particularity to this part of the city. A customer tide from different cities and outside of Algeria comes daily to visit this district. The other zones surrounding have underwent the same change and have followed the model of 'Doubaï' place. Consequently, the mechanical movement has finished by stifling an important part of the city and the prices of land and real estate have reached exorbitant values and can be compared to prices charged in Paris due to the rampant speculation that has reached alarming dimensions. Similarly, renting commercial premises did not escape this logic. This paper will explain the reasons responsible of this change, the logic of importers through their acts in different spaces of the city.

Keywords : Doubaï place, design of urban spaces, fake importers, informal trade

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