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Shopping and Trade

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SHOPPING AND TRADE

In the exceedingly barren territory of the Sahara, trade had a central role in the economy of the nomads before the refugee camps in the territory of today's Western Sahara. Besides the local trade, once a year caravans with up to a few thousand camels used to go from the North across the desert to Timbuctoo and back. The move into the camps in 1975 made their life completely dependent on humanitarian aid. It is not surprising that the first action of the Saharawis after money came into the camps in 1991 was the reestablishment of the old trade relations and the opening of shops in the camps. How does this new way of trading influence Saharawi society? What function does the trade and the spaces of trade have in a society which does not otherwise have a formal economy? Are there signs of an interest in an independent economy which could be adapted in the case of an independent Western Sahara? Where are signs of urban parameters visible?

The work starts with a look back to historical forms of trade and economy, in order to understand the similarities and differences between the present day and their traditions. To answer the first three questions the camp of El Aaiún will be the theme of the first chapter. It seems to be much more original in its spatial organisation than the camp Smara, which is a good example for comparison to show how very small differences can create very different results.







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THE HISTORY OF TRADE

This chapter about the history of the trade will give an overview of the important changes in commerce and the economy of the Saharawis. Since trade is always dependent on a population's own production and, in our case, on the humanitarian aid during the time of the camps, these three parameters play a major role in historical and current reflection. The change in importance of these parameters gives information about international connections and dependencies and show quite plainly the extraordinary change they went through by moving into the refugee camps. Trade has always been an important factor in the history of the Saharawis. During the Spanish occupation which started in 1884 there has been changes in their habits through the exchange with the Spanish, however, the economical boom happened the 1960s. In the fifteen years before the formation of the camps more Spanish settlers were moving to the Spanish Sahara and the boundaries with the Saharawis intensified. Many Saharawis settled down semi permanent around the major centres of the Spanish Sahara. Although some were working in administrative jobs or in the phosphate mines of Bucraa, trading and owning a shop has still been a desirable way of making money.

The change to the collective community of the camps dependent on humanitarian aid, without differences in social status or wealth, forced a disconnection from one of their main economic activities: trade. The influx of money in 1991 was pivotal in defining the new economy.

Until 1960s

The economy consists out of nomadic pastoralism, trade, agriculture and raiding. The Saharawis live in autonomous, often conflicting, emirates, confederations and tribes: The strong clans protect the weaker ones and these have to pay tribute to the strong one mostly by being mercenaries.

1884: Spanish Sahara

Coexistence with Spanish settlements, trading ties with Spain

1958: Western Sahara gets a Spanish province.

Through this decision the Western Sahara is turning into a 'tax free' zone. This is the basis for the upcoming smuggling trade

1960s: Growing settlements

Big part of Western Saharans had partially abandoned nomadism by 1974. By then around 8'000 Saharawi were wage earners.

1972 Inauguration of the Bu Craa mine

Spanish workers enter from the Canaries

1975: Refugee camps

While the Saharawi men defend their territory in the Western Sahara the Saharawi women were left alone with the provision of food and goods for their children and the administration of the camps. They lived entirely on humanitarian aid.

1991 Cease-Fire

After the cease-fire all Saharawi man came back from fighting and studing abroad in aspiration of beeing able to go back to the Western Sahara.

1991: Eight congress of Posiario

Apart from the election of a National Secretariat a new constitution was formed calling explicitly for a free-market economy among other rights.

1991: Implementation of money in camps

Spain pays a rent to all Saharawis who worked more over a certain amaount of years in the mines of Western Sahara

90s: Vacaciones en Paz (Holidays in Peace)

This program offers between 7'000 and 10'000 places for Saharawi children in families in Spain for a two month's holiday in summer. Most children come home with presents and money.

BEFORE: PASTORAL NOMADISM 1884: SPANISH SAHARA



TRADE



Local trade: camels, sheep, goats, milk, butter
Export: dates, burnooses, woven strips of goathair
Import: tea, sugar, spices, guns, powder and shot, knives, cotton cloth, leather goods, trinkets, perfume



1970s: Saharawis open shops in urban settlement

Saharawis start using their age old commercial skills to set up shops in growing small towns. There is a flourishing smuggling trade from Canary Island over the Spanish Sahara to neighbouring African countries.

1980s: First shop state owned

SADR opens one shop per daira.



1991: SECOND PHASE OF CAMPS

1991: First shops in camps

Men open shops with money of families with Spanish rent

2007: Micro credit project

Introduction of micro credit program by hegoa to assist indigenous production and trade



INDIGENOUS PRODUCTION

1959 - 63: Drought

A Drought kills 46% of livestock of Saharawi

1968 - 74: Drought

Another drought kills 60% of lievestock of Saharawi

1975: Holding animals for family supply

Goats and sheep are still kept for milk supply for the family



90s: Camel butchers open their business

Camels from the liberated territory come back into the camp as food and milk supply



HUMANITARIAN AID

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1975 - 1985 Algerian Red Crescent

The Government of Algeria provided the main sources of assistance through the Algerian Red Crescent.

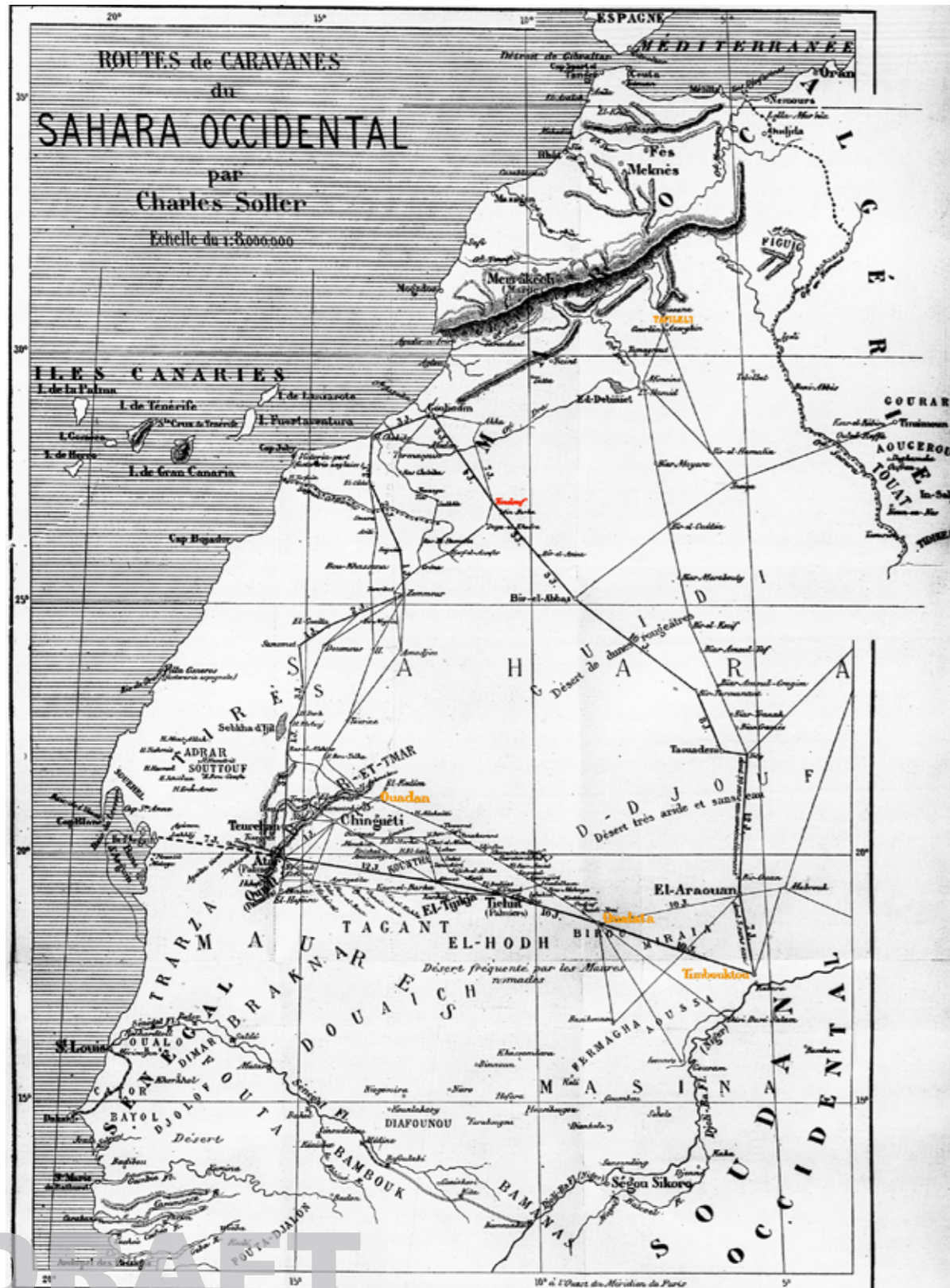


1986: Involvement of UNHCR and WFP

UNHCR and WFP assist the Algerian Government in meeting the refugees' basic food and non-food needs.

Timeline of Saharawi economy

TRADITIONAL TRADING Before the 1884



Economy of the nomads

The economy of the nomads in the region of today's Western Sahara consisted of nomadic pastoralism, trade, agriculture and raiding. Trade had been one of the economy's most important sectors, locally as well as the trade with the camel caravans from the North to the South and back. Having a few thousand camels per caravan the trade would not have been possible without animal husbandry, which has been the basis for all economical developments. Camel, sheep and goats were the livestock of the nomads and a sign for wealth. It is interesting to know that the social structure was not dependent on the factor of wealth. Compared to the caste system in India the nomads were able to change their social position, for example through exceptional achievements in a battle.

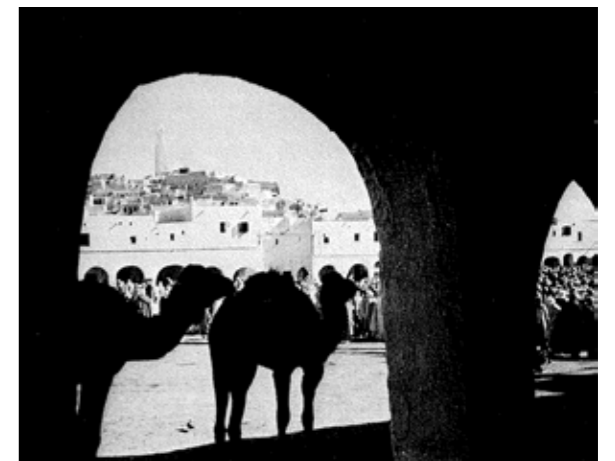


Camel caravan around Western Sahara
Source: Briggs 1958

The local trade was mainly based on the exchange of camels, sheep, goats, milk and butter. The main goods of export were dates, burnouses, woven strips of goat hair while the import was much more varied with tea, sugar, spices, guns, powder and shot, knives, cotton cloth, leather goods, trinkets and perfume. Some nomads started settling down. The settlements were either on road crossings as meeting points for main and lateral branch lines of commerce like Tindouf or big centers of exchange between North and South like Timbuktu. The nomads involved in trade were typically divided into freight carriers and shopkeepers.



Thereafter, in the first Spanish colonial period the economy and trade activities of the nomads continued as they were. They were living in coexistence with Spanish settlements.



Source: Briggs 1960, San Martin 2010

< Caravan routes of 1887

Tindouf was one of the many stops between the main centers of the trade routes in in the area of today's West Sahara.
Source: Corral 2000

Market place of Ghardaia in Algeria

Ghardaia developed towards a village because of its function as a centre for trade and commerce in the Sahara desert.
Source: Briggs 1958

PERIOD OF SPANISH SAHARA 1884 - 1975

Decline of nomadic pastoralism

A growing military presence and a change in the political system in 1958 (which made the Spanish Sahara a province of Spain) made the number of Spanish settlers increase significantly in the 1960s. They were attracted by good salaries in the public administration and tax benefits due to the tax free zone which was a result of the political change.

The Spanish Sahara became a tax free zone that acted as a bridge between the Canary Islands and Western Africa. Many Saharawis were able to amass a considerable wealth importing goods from the Canary Islands. Some even started using their age old commercial skills to set up shops in the growing small towns. By 1974 already 60 percent of the Saharawis were abandoning nomadism and settling down in one of the centers. This development was not only due to the change of commercial relations. With the inauguration of the

Bucraa mine in 1972 in the Spanish Sahara a few former nomads started working for the Spanish employer. They also started taking over work in the administration. This process has been accelerated by two droughts, one from 1959 - 63 which killed 46% of livestock of Saharawi and the other from 1968 - 74, which killed 60% of their livestock, that were taking away their economic basis for nomadic pastoralism, trade and agriculture. The nomads were used to such extreme situations but before there existed no other possibilities than continuing their former life, in contrast to the years 1960-1975 when other sources of income were possible. Other reasons for the choice of a sedentary life and abandoning traditions of pastoral nomadism were the better education and health situation in the towns.

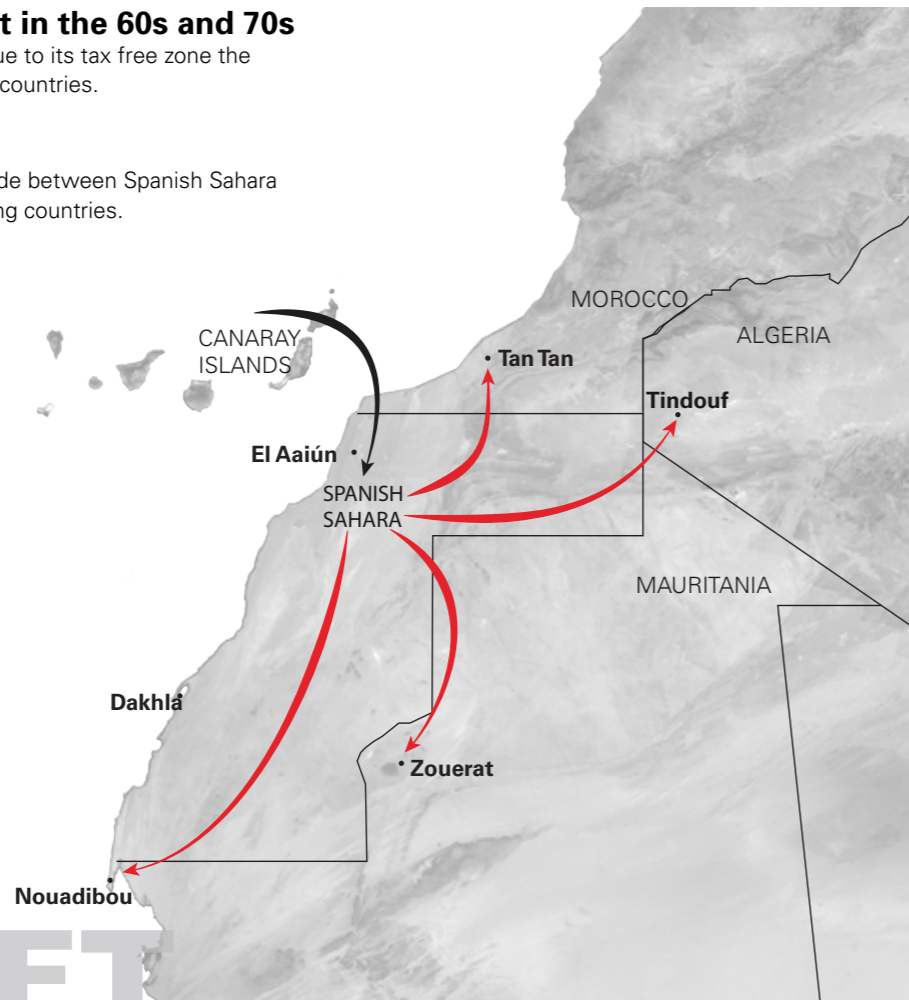
Source: Briggs 1960, San Martin 2010

Smuggling market in the 60s and 70s

The Spanish Sahara built due to its tax free zone the bridge to their neighboring countries.

Source: San Martin 2010

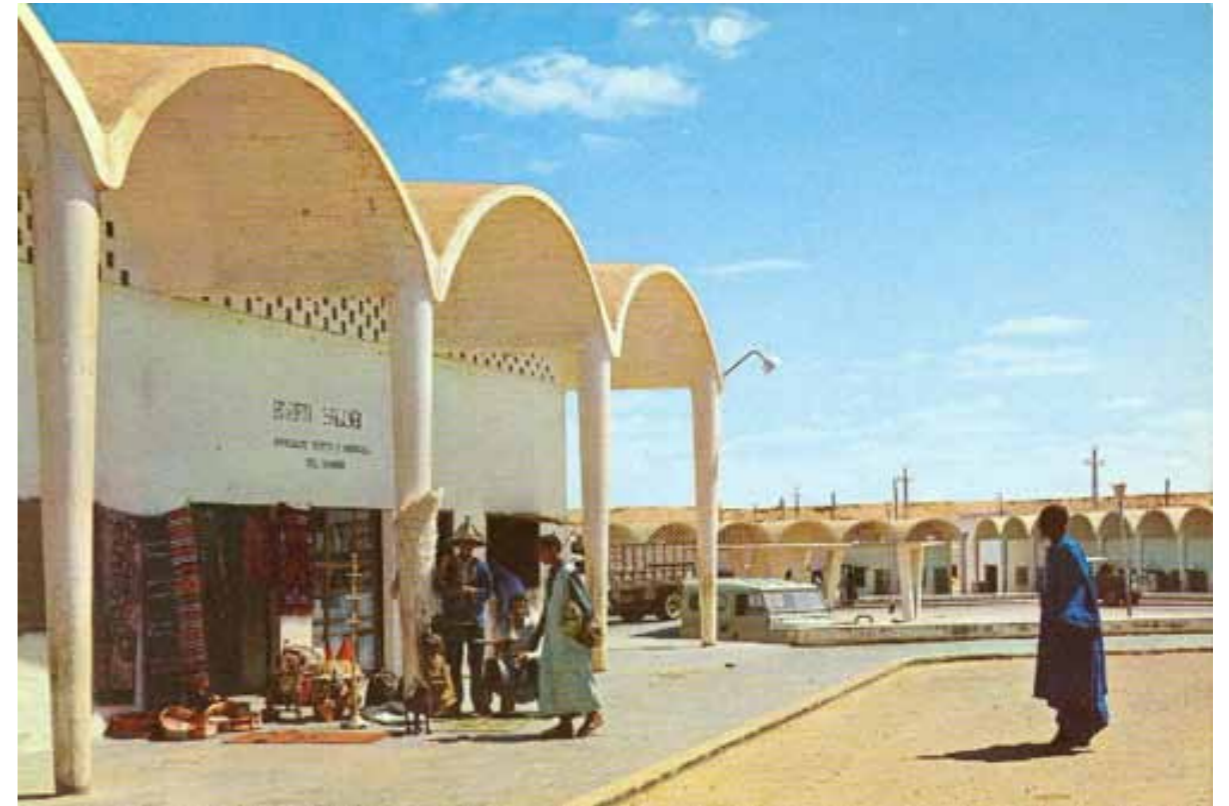
Smuggling trade between Spanish Sahara and neighboring countries.



Market of El Aaiún around 1960

The markets in the centers of the Spanish settlement in the Spanish Sahara where the exchange places between the Spanish and the Saharawi. In the case of El Aaiún it was placed around a central plaza.

Source: Lasonet 2007



FIRST PHASE OF CAMPS
1975 - 1991



Living off humanitarian aid

While the Saharawi men were defending their territory in the Western Sahara against Morocco the Saharawi women were left alone with the provision of food and goods for their children and the administration of the camps. They lived entirely on humanitarian aid. Most families were able to keep a few goats or sheep as milk supply.

Among the families there has always been an exchange of good, a barter trade limited on the goods of the humanitarian aid. This goods were offered in a very informal way in front of a house in rudimentary boxes. In the 80s a limited number of shops were established run by the SADR. There has been only one shop per daira.

Source: San Martin 2010

< Saharawi Red Crescent

They have always been responsible for the distribution of the humanitarian aid inside the camps.

Source: UNO Flüchtlingshilfe

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A family's possessions upon arriving in the camps in the 70s

This early picture shows how the refugees started in the camps with just basic supply. The situation did change very much since this picture as it will be visible further on in the work.

Source: UNO Flüchtlingshilfe

The Food Basket (WFP)

„The key components of the WFP food basket are: a staple such as wheat flour or rice; lentils, chickpeas or other pulses; vegetable oil (fortified with vitamin A and D); sugar; and iodised salt. Often these are complemented with fortified foods, such as Corn Soya Blend.“

This food basket is applied in cases of emergencies. **After a certain time the humanitarian aid is reduced.**

Source: WFP 2011



About per person per day	Total value Kcal
400g of cereal flour/rice/bulgur	1400
60g of pulses	186
25 g of oil (vit. A fortified)	225
50 g of fortified blended foods	200
15g of sugar	60
15g of iodized salt	0
Total nutritional value	2071

Source: WFP 2011

Full humanitarian Aid 1975 - 1986

The Government of Algeria provided the main sources of assistance through the Algerian Red Crescent. In the first time the refugees received the full humanitarian aid of 2'100 Kcal.

- █ Algeria (Algerian Red Cross)
 - basic food supply and other basic needs
- █ Bilateral contributions / NGO
 - additional supply



Humanitarian Aid 1986 - Today

By virtue of the big expenses for the Algerian state and the lasting situation of the refugees Algeria decided to ask for assistance at the UNHCR.

- █ Algeria (Algerian Red Cross)
 - additional goods (according to WFP and UNHCR)
- █ WFP
 - basic food supply
- █ UNHCR
 - other commodities (tents, etc.)
- █ Bilateral contributions / NGO
 - fresh food, powder milk, cheese,...



SECOND PHASE OF CAMPS 1991 until today



Introduction of money

With the cease-fire of 1991 between Morocco and Polisario the Saharawi men came back from fighting in the Western Sahara. There were different influxes of money through which the Saharawis were finding ways back to trading, one of their very traditional economic activities. The first influx started in the 1991 when Spain started paying a **pension** to certain Saharawis who had served in the 'Politica Territorial' and 'Tropas Nomadas' during the final months of the Spanish rule. The second influx started in the mid 90s when the **Vacaciones en Paz** (Holidays in Peace) started. This program offers between 7'000 and 10'000 places for Saharawi children in families in Spain for a two month's holiday in summer. The personal connection between the Spanish and the Saharawi families lets the children not only come back to the camps with bags full of presents but also money which is sent by the Spanish families support the refugees. The third official influx of money are the over 2'000 Saharawis **working abroad in Spain or the Canary Islands** and send money back home to their families. Other unofficial sources of money are not proved but talked about in many essays about the refugee camps. If there is any truth to these sources it would be just one example in a row of many other refugee camps in similar desperate situations which were developing a black market. At the **eight congress of the Polisario 1991** they were calling explicitly for a **free-market economy**. In the beginning the shops were very informal and improvised, usually a family selling onions, tomatoes and mehlfas (traditional women's dress) in their own house.

Source: San Martin 2010

Consumption of a Saharawi Family

This is an approximate list of goods for a family of 10 people. The humanitarian aid is reduced compared to the first years of the camp. However, this is a normal process. Significant is the small amount of everyday goods which count as indigenous production.

1 Euro = 100 DZD (Algerian Dinar)

Source: hegoa 2010 and author's interviews with Saharawis

Monthly

- 15 kg of sugar
- 100 l drinking water
- 3 kg of tea
- 8 kg of meet (mainly camel)
- 10 kg of flour
- 10 of lentils
- 4 kg of beans
- 25 kg of chickpeas
- 25 kg of rice
- 25 g of pasta
- 5 l of oil
- 120g of bread
- 10 l milk
- vegetables
- 20 cans of tuna
- 20 cans of meet

- telephone card
- expenses (gas, soap,...)
- transport (3 people x 20 trips)
- cloths

Annual

- There are three annual festivities:
- Aid el-Fitr (meet, cloths)
- Birth of Mahoma (meet)
- Aid el-Kebir (lamp, cloths, others)

- Household equipment
- Kitchen equipment

Sporadic expenses

- goats
- drinks
- dates
- others
- cistern
- habitation
- kitchen
- bath
- cover
- carpet
- solar panels
- battery
- lamp
- wardrobe
- fridge

Total Price

- 12 €
- 5 €
- 24 €
- 24 €
- 6 €
- 8 €
- 4 €
- 5 €
- 20 €
- 17 €
- 5 €
- 15 €
- 13 €
- 40 €
- 8 €
- 12 €

- 20 €
- 35 €
- 60 €
- 35 €

- 150 €
- 40 €
- 200 €

- 200 €

Price per unit

- 100 €
- 0.50 €
- 1.50 €
- 100 €
- 90 €
- ?
- ?
- 15 €
- 80 €
- 400 €
- 100 €
- 12 €
- 100 €
- 300 €



Wage earners in the camp

Source: Chapter 'Work and administration'



Name: Ali
Job: Camel butcher
Wage: up to 1000 € per month



Name: Hamad Salem Daf
Job: Teacher
Wage: 140 € per month



Name: Bechar Lamem
Job: Taxi driver
Wage: 450 € per month

Other inflows

SPANISH PENSION

WORK ABROAD

Relatives who work in Spain or the Canary Islands

'VACACIONES EN PAZ' PROGRAM (Holidays in Peace)
Spanish Families have Saharawi children for holiday and support the children's family.
200 - 1000 € per year in cash and kinds

OTHER UNOFFICIAL INFLOWS??

Reduced humanitarian aid today

According to interviews with refugees the humanitarian aid has gone down in the past years because of the crisis. The list of goods they give are far away from the 2'100 Kcal WFP suggests.

However, it is a usual process in humanitarian aid that refugees receive a reduced amount of goods. The **case of immediate emergency goes by** and the refugees are mostly able to generate other inflows.

Source: UNHCR 2007

List of Humanitarian goods from March 2011

Source: Interviews in the camps

Values per person per day	Kcal/100g	Total
WFP		
250g of flour	350	875
35g of lentils	310	109
35g of peas	300	105
35g of oil	900	31
35g of sugar	405	142
UNHCR		
green tea	0	0
5g yeast	313	16
Bilateral contributions / NGO		
15g of sardines in can	266	40
15g of tuna in can	347	52
Total nutritional value		1654



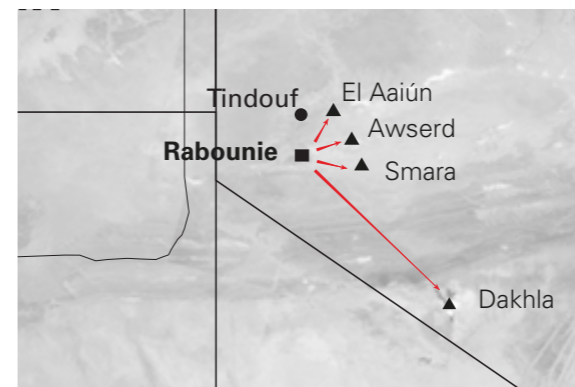
Flour from WFP



Sardines from a NGO from Sweden



Gas for cooking from UNHCR



Distribution in दौरا

After the humanitarian good arrived (here sardines from Sweden) from Rabounie in the administrative centers of the dairas every family received their contingent. The UNHCR forced the POLISARIO to keep a list about the distribution.

Indigenous production



Indigenous production

The own production of the Saharawis in the camps is very limited. For the moment there is no chance for the Saharawis to survive without foreign help.

There are small businesses like touristic artisan production, production of mud bricks, a poultry farm (central production and free distribution) or traditional medicine with herbs from the liberated territory



Source: Lasonet 2007

Is livestock still a symbol of wealth today?

In the past a comfortably well-to-do nomad family had something like twenty-five camels, fifteen sheep and forty goats. Even the poorer families did have at least two or three goats. Even though there might be other signs of wealth today animals are a very important provider of dairy products and meat, especially for their festivities.

Source: Briggs 1960, Picture: Lasonet 2007



Camel milk

Some shops are selling fresh camel milk from their own camels or the friend's in the camp.

Cost: 1.30 € per liter

Animal husbandry

Following their tradition of pastoral nomadism most families still have between two and fifteen goats or sheep for milk and meat mainly for the families own consumption. Additionally many families have larger herds of goats and camels in the liberated territory where the pastures are better than around the camps. A member of the family is looking after them. That is where many butchers of the camps have their meat from.



Small businesses

In 2007 Hegoa (Institute for international development and cooperation) started with the project of the micro credits which by 2010 had created 300 new projects. There were people opening shops, starting gardens, establishing workshops or starting taxi services.



Education for indigenous production

The schools for women (See topic 'Learning and health') have intense programs for developing knowledge in producing handcraft goods such as carpet, cups, paintings or cloths which they are selling to the visitors of the camps.



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Monthly consumption today

These numbers are average numbers for a family with 10 people.

Source: hegoa 2010

- 17g of sugar
- 33ml drinking water
- 10g of tea
- 30g of meet (mainly camel)
- 33g of lentils
- 14g of beans
- 14g of chickpeas
- 85g of rice
- 85g of pasta
- 33g of oil
- 120g of bread
- vegetables
- 67g of tuna in cans
- 67g of meet in cans



Camel stew on bread

Even though they were involved in trade from very early on the Sahrawis do like their meat without any spices.

Saharawi diet in the past

Milk and milk products have always been the main staples. Particularly the camel milk was often object of minor ritual observances. Cereals were important too depending on the season.

Goats and sheep are mainly used for milk and just slaughtered for festive occasions like marriage, childbirth or religious holiday. Camels were eaten old after they served throughout their lives producing milk and transporting goods around. Within many tribes poultry and eggs were forbidden foods but instead they ate various kinds of lizards.

Luxuries such as tea, coffee, sugar, salt and spices were brought by the trans-Saharan caravan trade though the Saharawi diet stayed simple. Mainly used were Tea, sugar and small amounts of salt.

Source: Briggs 1960



Bread baked in sand

A very traditional way of making bread is baking it in the sand. The dough contains just flour, water and salt.



Camel stew with vegetables

This stew they eat with pasta, rice or couscous.



Fried potatoes

Sometimes in the form of french fries or just cut fine



Unknown

Found in the kitchen of a restaurant



Grilled chicken

There is a poultry farm close to the camps though it is not the Saharawi's preferred meat.



Grilled camel meat

This is the expensive part of the camel: the shoulder.



Vegetable stew with pasta or rice

Meat does not come with every meal.

THE SPACES OF TRADE

After the very first shops (just one per *daira*) were built on top of the hills, unplanned shopping streets very quickly grew around the administrative centres of the *dairas*. At the eighth congress of the Polisario in 1991 the decision was made that there has to be a free market economy in the camps. Consequently there has not been any limitation on who is allowed to open a shop. Land was and still is free. Everyone has been free to decide about size and place of his shop though there must have been unwritten rules about the positioning, size and looks of the shop which emerged out of thinking as a collective community.

At the beginning there were not any cars, therefore the shops had to be at short distances from the houses, especially the food shops because of their everyday use. The food supply is still placed in the centres of the *dairas* including a few shops for cloths and household articles whereas the Main markets in the *daira* of El Gelta provides all kinds of non-food goods.





First shops

The first shops which were situated on top of hills for the reason that everyone could see it. There was just one shop per daira.

It is unsure if these shops already existed before 1991 or if they were the first to be built after the men came back from the war. Presumably they were the ones built in the 80s by the SADR.



Markets in El Aaiún

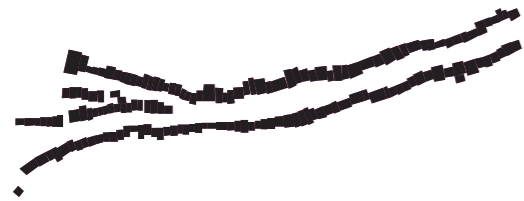
Every one of the six dairas has a market with around 30 shops. Since they provide the daily food supply the markets have to be easily reachable by foot for the residents of the daiira. For this reason they are centrally positioned compared to the main market in El Gelta which provides mainly non-food products and is allocated as close to the entry of the camp as possible. Since people do not buy cloths or pottery every day the proximity to the market in Tindouf and Mauritania was more important than the fact that many inhabitants reach the market just by car.

- Markets of Dairas
- Main market
- Separate shops
- Animal market

Overview markets of El Aaiún



I. MAIN MARKET



II. MARKETS OF DAIRA



III. INDIVIDUAL SHOPS



IV. ANIMAL MARKET







Main Market in El Gelta

In the context of the loose housing structures the wall-to-wall built shops of the main market stands in great contrast. The closed facade is like a wall on either side of the street though there are some very small gaps between some of the shops to pass through which are just visible on a second look. The social contact between the customers and the shop owners is important because there is just one street and few places to hide. Everyone knows who is buying his goods at who's shop. Customers choose their shops less by the quality of the goods than by connection to the person who sells them.



Continuous northern facade



Continuous southern facade

Only place of urban density

There is no other place in the camp with a continuous closed facade. Most shops have very similar proportions in their front facade which probably arises from construction parameters. Varieties arise from the type of door they use or from whether they paint their facade or not. There has been no planning of this market street but it is visible in the similar size and design of the shops that there has been some kind of social control between the shop owners arising from the collective community.

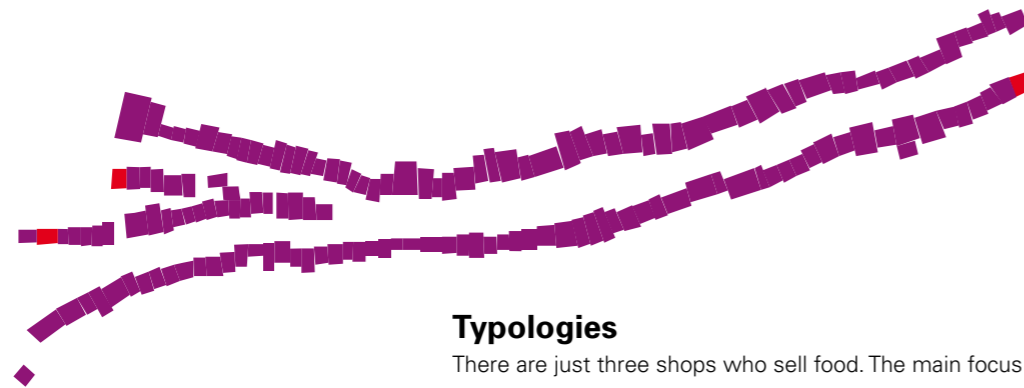






Customers

Customers come to this market from all six dairas due to its big choice of non-food goods, sometimes by car and sometimes by foot. Especially around the festivals people buy new dresses and goods for the house and the market is very busy.



Typologies

There are just three shops who sell food. The main focus is cloths, household articles, beauty products and some furniture such as carpet for the house.

- Cloths and household articles
- Food

Origin of goods

With the opening of the shops the Saharawis restarted their old trading connections to Mauritania. Many of the goods are preferred to the ones from Algeria because of a more similar tradition of living which is expressed in the way they dress or in the animals they keep. However, fresh products are all bought from the market in Tindouf and driven individually or organised into groups of shopkeepers into the camps. The animals which come from the liberated territory are bought from Saharawi families which still live a kind of nomadic pastoral life.

- From market in **Tindouf** (Algeria)
 - Food
 - Household article
 - Toiletries
- Direct Import into the camps **Mauritania**
 - Cloths
 - Textiles
 - Beauty products
 - Tea

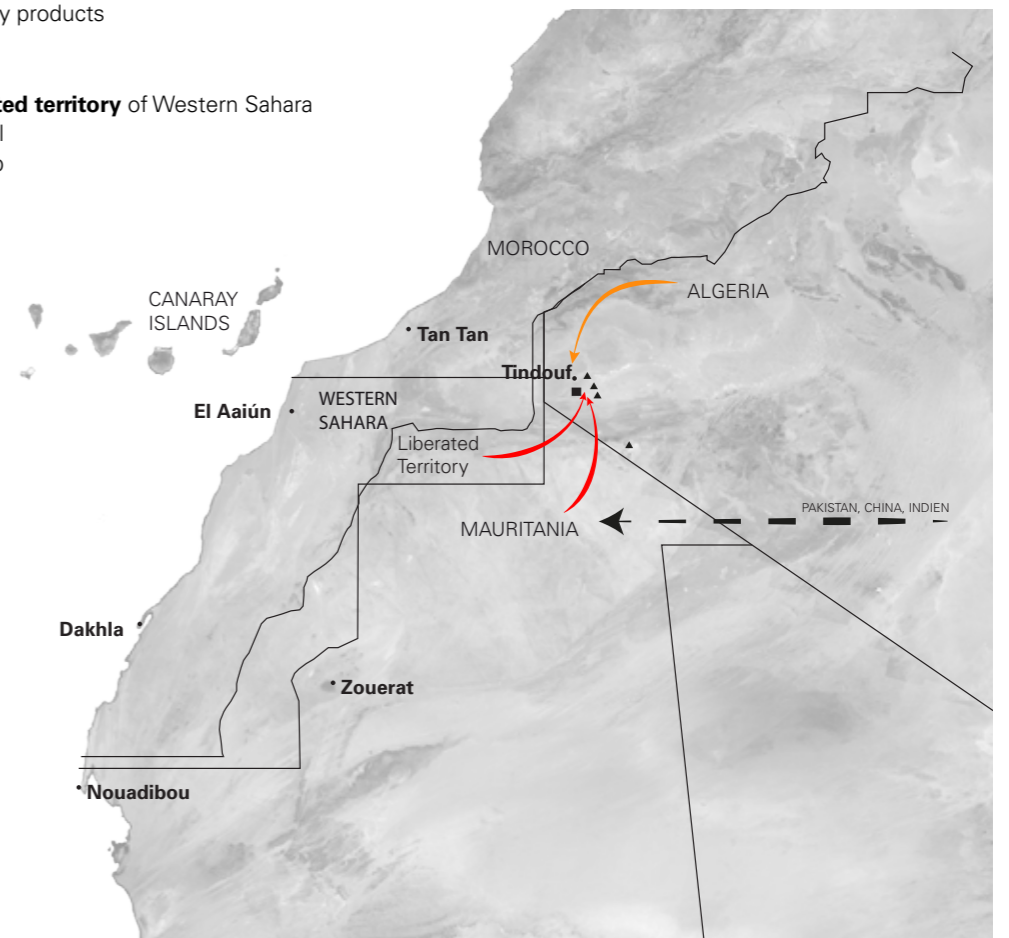
Liberated territory of Western Sahara

- Camel
- Sheep
- Goats



Trucks from Mauritania

The shopowners organise among themselves the delivery of the goods from Mauritania.







Market of Edchera

The atmosphere of the market in Edchera is very intimate. Most shop owners are somehow related to each other. The way how the shops are arranged is in its very centre similar to the main market. It has a continuous facade but the street in between is much more narrow. Around this street there are some more or less loose individual shops or shops grouped together.

This somehow more loose arrangement provokes a much less controlled and relaxed atmosphere compared to the Main market event though there are less people and everyone is somehow a relative. Children and women are more present than in the main market, probably due to its everyday function. The central plaza to the North is used a social space for the men to play their games in the mornings and in the evening.

Mixed Typologies

Closed facade

These shops open up to the plaza in the North of the main shopping street. This closed facade assist the public atmosphere of the plaza.



Closed facade with gaps in between

The shop with the yellow facade sells clothes while to two shops to the right sell soft-drinks and food. Compared to the main market the facades are very different from each other and there are always gaps in between the buildings.



Electronical shop

This shop is not open very often. It sells phone cards and other electronical equipment.

Beverage shop

There are a few shops in the dairas which sell exclusively soft drinks.



Food shop

This shop contains a very random mix of food, cloths and household articles.



Camel butcher

There are four camel butchers in the दौरا of Edchera. This is one of them.



Customers

The refugees buy their daily goods in the दौरا market. On one hand side it is close by and on the other hand side the people within one दौरا know each other well or are even relatives.



Typologies

This market is an every day market with shops which serve all kinds food and non-food supplies.

- Cloths and bla
- Food
- Butcher



Markets as social spaces

These men play their games on the little plaza in the north of the street with the closed shop facade. The markets open up new spaces for men to pass by their days.

The six markets of the dairas

They all have different shapes and number of shops. Out of the six markets Hagunia is the one that has the most diverse supply and the best kept shops. According to a shop keeper it is an area where many families have someone working in Spain and sending money home.



Bucraa



Edchera



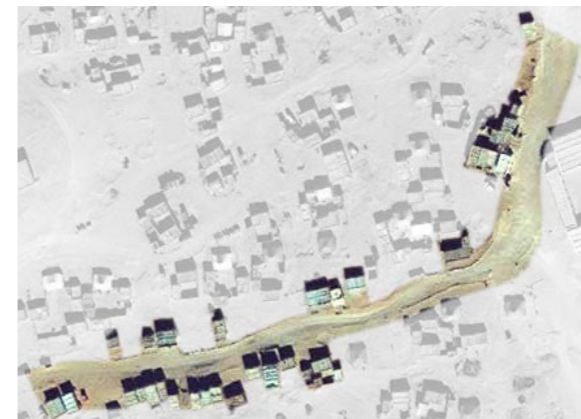
Hagunia



Amgala



Daura



El Gelta





DISCO

0636

للتوديو الاغراج



Individual shops

Spread around the camps there are several individual markets which are neither part of the Main market nor of the markets of the dairas. They are mainly placed along the main street or bigger side streets. From the 'Sahara Foto' over hairdresser to normal food shops there are very many different types.

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Cloths and beauty products



Cloths and beauty products



Hair dresser



Photo studio



Camel butcher



Spare parts retail



Grocery store



Snack bar



Clothes shop



Saharawi pharmacy



Fast food stall



Camel butcher



Cigarettes



Tailor's studio

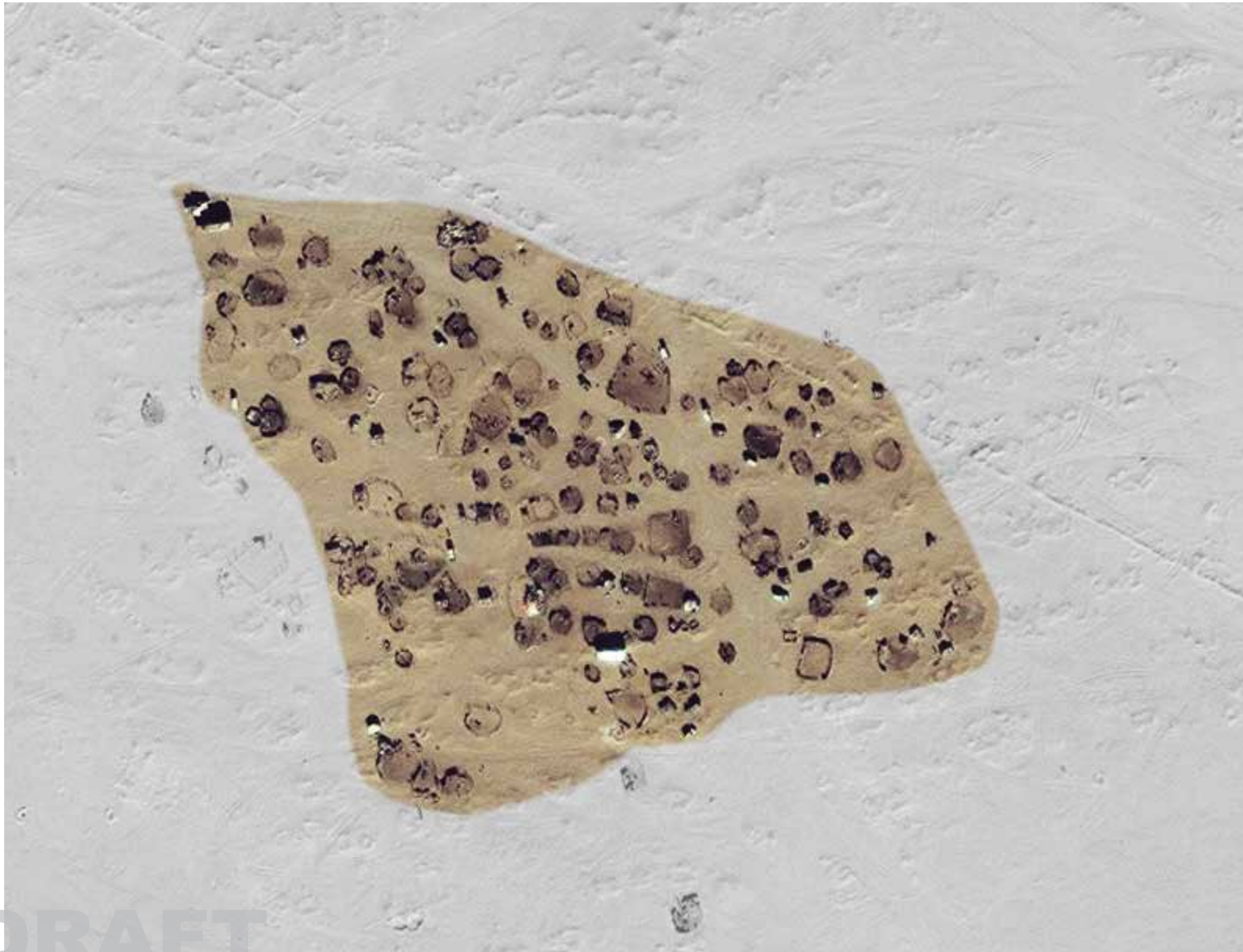


Shop for soft-drinks



Telephone box/house





Animal market

The animal market must have arisen in the last five years due to the fact that it is not visible on the Google earth pictures of 2005. The market is away from the housing parts of the camps and surrounded with nothing but sand. Every circle is a cage for a few animals, either sheep and goats or camels. They stay there all day and night until someone buys them. Similar to the cages which the families built for their livestock these bigger fences are made out of metal and other recycled materials. The number of animals increases coming closer to the big festive days when the families prepare their big meals with lamb or goat meat.



Indigenous production

Animal husbandry has always been the economic basis of the nomadic culture. The milk, meat, fur and skin was used for many different purposes.

Today many of the animals still come from husbandries in the Liberated territories of the Western Sahara. Other are imported from Mauritania. Every animal who arrives at the camp goes through a health check to avoid infecting other animals.

The meat and milk of the animals are the only products which can count as indigenous production within the camps. Partially they are growing the food for the animal directly at the market



Prices

The prices depend on the gender, age, origin and physical aspects. Considering the prices it is not very often that a family can buy an animal. Occasions like weddings or childbirth might bring a family into financial struggle if they have to organise a celebration which normally includes a sheep or a goat as a main dish.

Sheep: 200 - 300 €

Goat: 100 - 140 €

Camel: 1'000 - 1'200 €





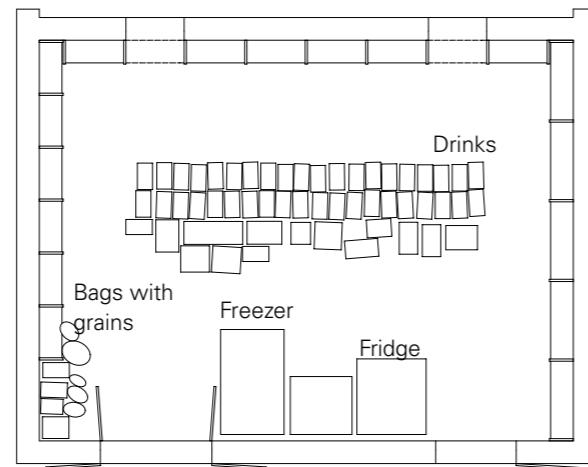
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
محل تجارة عامة بالجملة والتجزئة
COMERCIO De VENTA EN DETALLE Y BULTO

(por menor y grande)





- beans 1 € per kg
- blanket 15 €
- rice 0.80 € per kg
- biscuits 1.50 - 3 €
- fruit juice 1.50 €
- tissues
- Noutella
- instant coffee
- croissant
- canned sardines 0.60 €
- tea 0.80 €
- eggs
- cow milk 1 €
- flavoured milk drinks
- diapers
- canned peaches
- canned vegetables
- canned tuna 0.40 €
- ketchup
- fruit juice 1.50 €
- dates 1.50 €
- spaghetti 0.70 €
- riz 0.80 €
- Coca-Cola 1.30 €
- shampoo 2 €
- room spray
- canned tomatoes
- light bulb
- radio
- car audio system
- washing powder
- plastic cups
- batteries
- tea pot 7 €



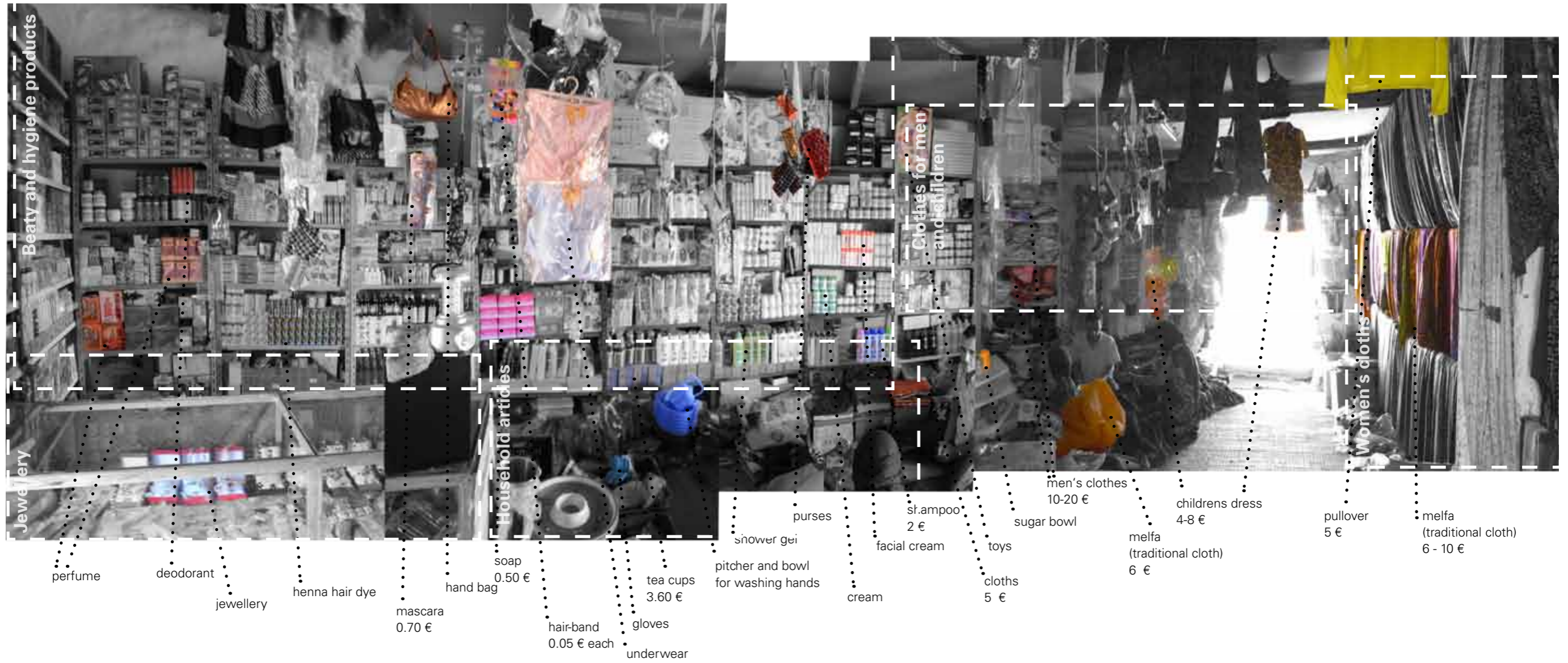
Name: Mahmoud
Age: 24
Customers per day: 100-200
Formation: 2005
Land tenure: Constructed by the owners themselves
Funding: Spanish pension
Origin of goods: Mainly Tindouf

Grocery store

The store is close to the main road in the market of Rabounie which provides for many customers every day. Not every shop has a fridge and freezer.

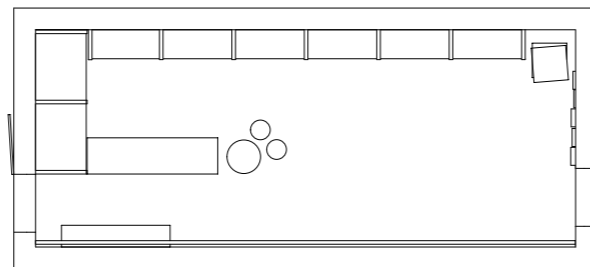
SHOP FOR CLOTHES AND BEAUTY PRODUCTS





Shop for clothes and beauty products

This is just a small shop in the market of the daira of Edchera but the incredible amount of beauty products is significant. Looking at the number of customers one wonders when he is actually going to sell all these products



Name: Mohammed Salim
Age: 26
Customers per day: 10-30
Formation: 2007
Land tenure: Constructed with friends
Funding: Money through work in Mauritania
Origin of goods: Mauritania, some from Tindouf

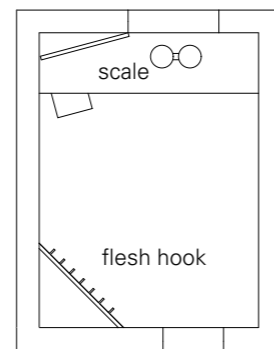




• camel meet with bones
3.50 € per kg

• camel meet without bones
4.50 € per kg

• innards
3.50 € per kg



Camel butcher

Being a camel butcher is one of the most profitable jobs in the camp. Very often the first shops in the markets were the camel butchers. It is one of the very few products which can be counted as indigenous product because many camels actually come from the liberated territory in the Western Sahara. The shop itself has a very simple layout. The most important parts are the scale and the hooks tho put up the meat.



Name: Ali
Age: 30
Customers per day: 50-200 (1/2 a camel per day)
Formation: 2007 (Two bucheries)
Land tenure: Shop built by his boss
Funding: Through friend who recieved a spanish pension
Origin of goods: Animal husbandaries in liberated zone of Western Sahara

بولو پي محمد باد





Social differences and consumption society

There have always been different social classes defined not by their wealth but by their status. This has changed today. Normal workers who had the luck of receiving a Spanish pension or who have a generous Spanish family sending them money can gain a certain wealth compared to others.

Although their social class system is still valid in certain parts of their life the fact that they all had to start from zero opened up new possibilities for families in lower social groups. The wealth of a family starts counting more.

With the growth of wealth, the growing shopping possibilities and the influence of Spanish society through the children's holiday in summer the step into a consumer society can not be avoided.

Markets as social spaces for bringing more normality into every day life

The markets of El Aaiún are the only places in the camp where a somehow urban density was constructed compared to the spaces of living where the loose compounds stand in the nomadic tradition. The markets are the spaces where the people find a rhythm for their every day life to be more 'normal' through the act of shopping.

Especially for the men the markets are very important social meeting points- both the shopkeepers and the ones who have no work or the older generation spend their time visiting friends in the shops or playing games around the centre. The lack of a feeling for competition and efficiency is not at all a result of their historical background but rather a sign for a lack of occupation for men and their tattered prestige within family and society.

Desire for economic independence?

The basis of every independent city or state is an independent economy which makes use of its resources and achieves a balance between income and outflow.

Analysing the economic requirements for an independent economy along mathematical and psychological parameters there is a enough physical money and projects of humanitarian organisations to advocate independent production. The micro credit projects in other countries show how efficient small amounts of money can be. The big unknown is the psychological/ cultural factor.

For one, the Saharawis would lose important parts of their refugee status and aid if their economy became strong enough to supply itself. Additionally, the strong society and collective spirit forms a very strong cultural background that makes it difficult for an individual to break out of the circle and start to think as a self-serving agent.

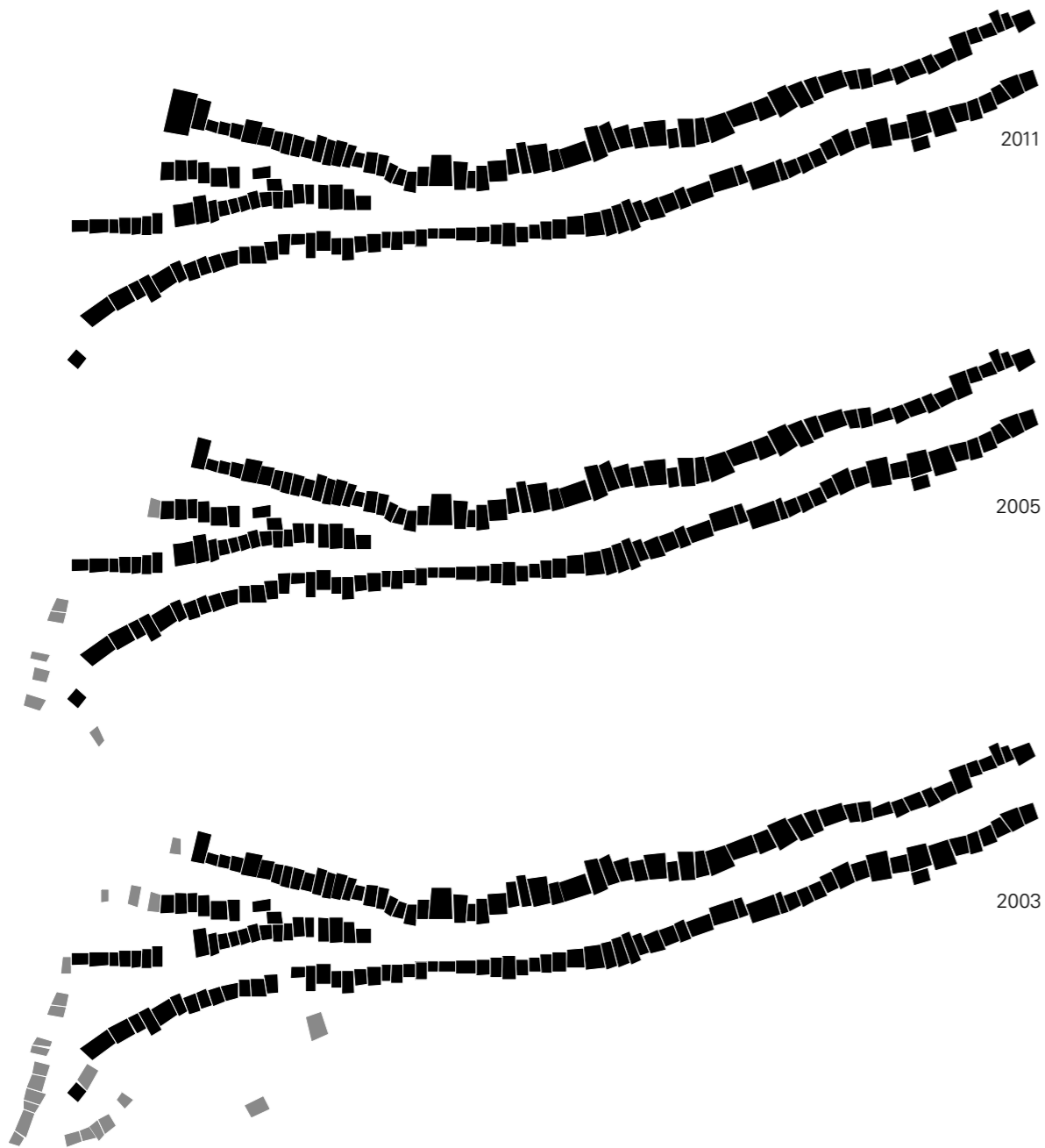
DIVERSITY AND COMPETITION

Smara and El Aaiún had the same conditions for developing their markets. Both of the camps are situated in the desert, they have populations from the same background and they went through the same development process. Nevertheless, in the population of Smara an interest towards the Western world of consumption seems to be much more present and is clearly manifest in the centres of consumption: the markets.

Smara is the most popular refugee camp. If NGO's come to the camps they mostly base themselves in Smara. Although it is further away from Tindouf than El Aaiún there are more families with electricity, the cell phone connection is more stable, there are internet cafes and, furthermore, it is closer to the border of Mauritania.

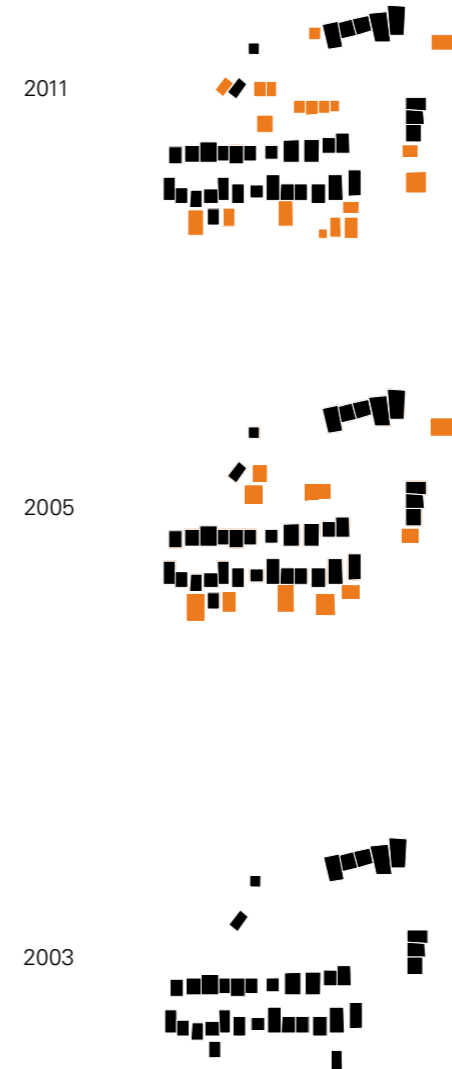
Compared to El Aaiún the markets in the dairas of Smara are small. The two main markets are the important shopping streets. Due to that the cross- section of shops is much more varied. There are food shops next to cloths, household articles, electrical repair shops and tourist shops.

EVOLUTION OF MARKETS IN EL AAIÚN



Shops removed today

Main market



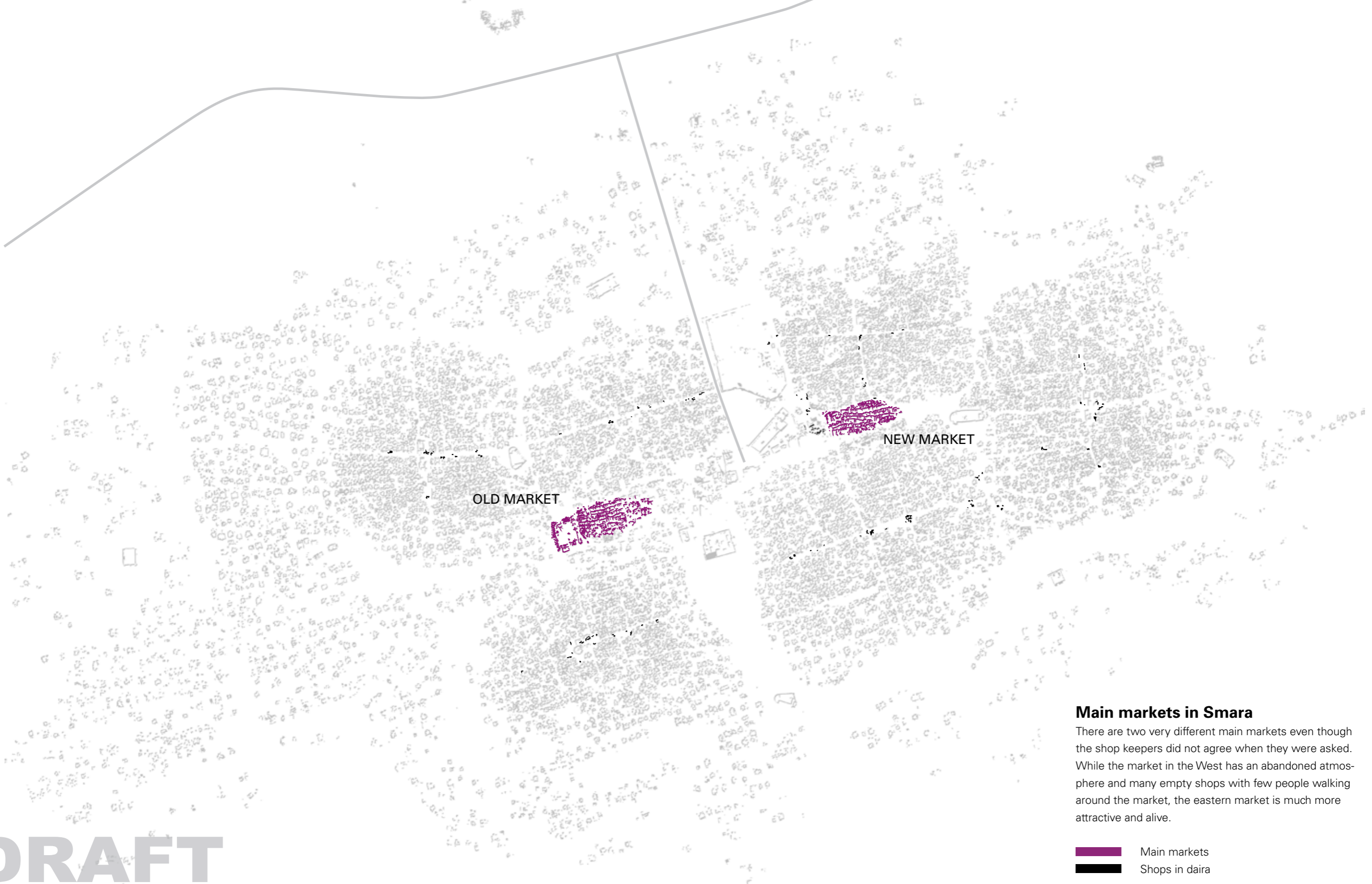
New Shops since 2003

Market of Edchera



Decentralization

While the market in Edchera increased the amount of shops the Main market lost a number of shops over the years. The spaces around the centres of the dairas seem to be much more attractive to the Saharawis.





OLD MARKET

NEW MARKET

Main markets in Smara

There are two very different main markets even though the shop keepers did not agree when they were asked. While the market in the West has an abandoned atmosphere and many empty shops with few people walking around the market, the eastern market is much more attractive and alive.

-  Main markets
-  Shops in daira







Evolution of Eastern market

In four years the New market in Smara did not only develop the number of shops but also the style. Most stores are white and have a blue door. The very clean and greek styled facades and interiors are a change both from the Western market in Smara and the markets in El Aaiún



Market in Nouâdhibou, Mauritania


This town on the coast in Mauritania has been an important stop for the goods from the Canary Island during in Spanish Sahara (See map p. 344). In the second phase of the camps the Saharawis restarted the commercial connection to this important centre of trade again.

Source: Nouâdhibou 2011



Limited space in the Eastern market

There is a street going around the whole market. Along this street are the repair shops for the cars. This belt limits the size of the market. Since this market is much more attractive than the one in the West many people want to have their shop in this new market. At this point land starts to be valuable.

 Car repair shops

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Buying a shop

The first shop at the market was the camel butcher. Opinion varies as to whether or not it is the one in the picture. However the owner of this shoeshop did buy the building of a camel butcher who was a friend of his.

Price: 200 €

Building activities

Compared to the market in the West there are a few building activities. The shops are getting renovated or newly built.



Renting a shop at the market

Mohamed is renting the building from a friend because he had no money to buy his own shop. He sells and repairs electrical equipment.

Rent: 30 € per month

International influence

Due to the big international presence from the International organisations, athletes during the marathon, the visits of the families from the Holiday in Peace program from Spain and other groups, a new type of shop was established: The handcraft shop or souvenir shop. Although there are similar shops in El Aaiún in Smara they are integrated into the markets.



El Aaiún



Smara



Centralisation versus decentralisation

There are very small differences in the conditions of Smara and El Aaiún.

Due to the spacial limitation created by the car workshops, which are surrounding the shops, the amount of stores is limited. This restriction is creating a new perception of the value of land. It requires a bigger investment to have a shop since they have to rent or buy the shop off someone else and cannot build it for free. A bigger investment does advocate a more carefully thought out concept for the shop which produces more variety in the goods offered for sale. The shop owners who rent their store need to have a secure income to pay the rent. The bigger dependency on the income from trade provokes a free market economy and a feeling for competition with varieties in goods and prices and economic efficiency.

These economic conditions provoke a spacial movement within the camps. Everyone wants to open a shop in the New market while the centers of the dairas loose their importance. The markets provoke a centralization. It is surprising how small differences between the camps, such as international presence and limitation of space can already change the mechanisms of trade.