
Problems of local development in the shadow areas in Algeria



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Abstract:

The study aims to analyze the reality of local development in the shadow areas in Algeria, in addition to highlighting the developmental role of local communities and the most important obstacles to achieving local development in these areas, especially in light of the powers assigned to them under laws and regulations, by answering the problem of identifying obstacles and problems that formed a barrier that prevents local communities from achieving their role in local development in the shadow areas in Algeria, based on the premise that local development in the shadow areas is achieved by expanding the powers of Local authorities as well as the activation of participatory democracy, which was proven by the research paper after studying and analyzing the various developments of the policy adopted for the development of shadow areas.

Keywords: local communities; local development; shadow areas; development problems.

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Introduction:

The term shadow areas is new on the surface, but it contains an old concept, it gets clear the follower of the history of economic development in Algeria that this concept reappeared for the first time during the rule of the late President Houari Boumediene, who worked to embody the actual reality of socialism through the establishment of the principles of social justice and achieving regional balance between the various regions of the country, especially those that suffered during the French occupation period from the lack of manifestations of development in various fields. Especially the social and economic ones, to return this concept to the fore again and was given great importance by the President personally and appointed a counsellor to follow up the situation in it continuously and periodically in order to achieve balance in development, as the term shadow areas refers to large areas living on the sidelines of development without facilities, without services and without the slightest necessities of life, these areas emerged due to the unstudied geographical division, in addition to the circumstances experienced by Algeria, especially in the Black Decade, where The displacement of citizens from the countryside to the cities is large, which caused the emergence of poor areas covering the four sides of the Algerian region.

Local communities sought by all means to achieve development in the shadow areas, but these efforts did not reap their planting as expected, this research paper came to highlight the most important problems that caused the low and unexpected results of the efforts made by local communities to promote these areas and create local development in them.

The problem that we seek to address through this research is embodied in the following main question:

What are the obstacles to the development of local communities in shadow areas?

The research was divided into three axes that answer the main problem and sub-problems as follows: the reality of local development in the shadow areas (the first axis), the role of local communities in local development in the shadow areas (the second axis) and finally addressing the development program of the Ministry of Interior, Local Authorities and Urban Planning and the challenges of local development in the shadow areas (the third axis).

1. The reality of local development in shadow areas:

Before addressing the reality of local development in the shadow areas, the concepts of the study variables must be accurately defined, which is the basis of any scientific study, which we will try to identify by defining the following concepts:

a. The concept of local development, shadow areas and local communities:

- The concept of local development:

There are many definitions of local development, but they all fall into one mold, which will be contained in the following definitions:

It was defined as: "a process by which effective cooperation between the popular and governmental effort can be achieved to improve the level of local communities and units economically, socially and culturally from the perspective of improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of those communities at any level of local administration in a comprehensive and integrated system." (Zwain, 2020).

It is also defined as "the process in which all people in localities come from all sectors and work together to stimulate the local economic trend and result in a resilient and sustainable economy, a process that aims to create new jobs and improve the quality of life for the individual and society. (Issawi, p. 2023)

From our extrapolation of the above definitions, it is clear that local development is achieved in a specific region or geographical area in itself and is in combination with the efforts of governments with the local people of those areas, in order to improve the standard of living and meet their needs.

- Dimensions of local development:

Local development is of great importance in solving the problems suffered by communities in the regions, so the local authorities paid great attention to it and made it their main concern in order to achieve balance in all fields, and from it it appears to us that local development has many dimensions that can be divided into traditional dimensions and new dimensions, the most important of which are:

Traditional dimensions:

The first thing that emerged was the interest of societies in development was limited to routine dimensions that hardly depart from the basic areas of life, the most important of which are:

Social dimension: It means changing the existing social conditions and cultivating social relations that keep pace with the times, and move from isolation to the formation of broad social relations so that members of the same community cooperate to improve their standard of living and participate in the management of their local affairs.

economic dimension: It is the development and increase of the material aspect represented in goods and services and the investment of capital in all fields, including economic, agricultural, industrial, commercial and others. (Rajraj, 2013-2012)

Political dimension: the response of the political system to developments in the societal and international environment and the regime's ability to build democratic institutions and strengthen democratic political practice through the political

mobilization of the masses to push them to greater political participation. (Boskran, 2022)

New dimensions:

After the United Nations General Assembly in 1997 established a World Decade for Cultural Development, new dimensions of development emerged, namely:

Sustainable development: Defined in 1987 by the World Commission on Sustainable Development, in its report entitled "Our Common Future", it emphasized that sustainable development works to meet the needs of the present without destroying the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (Haroush, 2014)

Human development: It means that human beings are the real wealth of nations and that human development is the expansion of human choices, meaning the right to a decent life. (Rajraj, 2013-2012, p.9)

The Algerian legislator has also enshrined the principle of holistic central and local environmental planning through the Environmental Law No. 03/10. (Bin Shuwaih, 2010-2011, p. 90)

Electronic development: After the world has witnessed tremendous developments in the field of technology, it has become necessary to keep pace with this development at the national level in general and the local level in particular, through the use of modern means of communication, the Internet and electronic management. (Rajraj, 2013-2012, p.11)

2. Definition of shadow areas:

The term shadow areas appeared during the meeting of the Government Council held on February 16, 2020, immediately after which it was decided by order of the President of the Republic to count all these areas at the national level in order to take care of them and place them within the development programs to create a balance in the fair distribution of wealth and live in dignity for all citizens, and many definitions were given to these areas, including:

"Shadow areas are defined as black spots spread across all regions of the country, which calls for a new approach in the management of these areas according to new mechanisms that work to establish clear rules that keep pace with projects on the ground in order to reduce the number of shadow areas to the maximum degree." (Belmiloud and Rabah, 2023, p. 517)

Shadow areas are defined as "remote, isolated and peri-urban areas". (Zeenat, 2022, p. 303)

It is also defined as "isolated areas that lack the minimum conditions of life (Zakri and Zankari, 2021, p. 642).

Shadow areas have also been defined as "those areas that are isolated, remote, marginalized and deprived of development, and these areas are characterized by the nature of their geographical location being mountainous, steppe, desert or border areas with neighboring countries or areas in the borders between the states.... These areas are also considered repellent to the population due to the absence of infrastructure such as municipal road networks, rural routes, natural gas, and the lack or absence of potable water" (Ben Maatouk, 2021)

From the above definitions, we find that they all agree that the shadow areas are those marginalized areas that suffer from poverty and the absence of all aspects of development in them.

3. Definition of Local Communities:

According to Article 17 of the 2020 Constitutional Amendment, local authorities are defined as "the territorial communities of the State are: the municipality and the state. The municipality is the grassroots community." (Official Gazette, 2020)

It was defined as the transfer of some administrative powers from the central authority to a local body that administered local affairs. (Meziani and Sarir, 2022, p. 593)

From the above definitions, it is clear to us the importance of local authorities through the tasks assigned to them in order to achieve local development and manage local affairs.

B. The reality of local development in the shadow areas before 2020:

The signs of the local development process for the shadow areas appeared during the era of the late President Houari Boumediene in 1967, when it was decided to take large-scale regional development measures in which priority is given to the most deprived areas in Algeria (Chalali, 2022, p. 605), and to embody development on the ground in these areas, local development plans were prepared, represented by municipal development plans PCD, sectoral plans for development PSD, in addition to other programs, and significant amounts of money were allocated to take care of these areas, but Things haven't changed and the situation has remained the same.

Until 2020, and before the initiative of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune to pay attention to them, these areas were suffering from all forms of deprivation, poverty and marginalization, and an almost complete lack of aspects of development in them, as they were meanings of:

-Poor services due to the unfair distribution of projects and investments, which led to their lack of necessary facilities such as health, education, recreation and other facilities necessary for daily life.

- Weak financial resources, both local and local, due to the nature of these areas or those allocated to them by the central authority.

- The absence of a clear strategy for development, as the development policy is implemented in the same manner in all regions of the country without taking into account the specificity of one region over another. (Boskran, 2022, p.269)

2. The role of local communities in the development of shadow areas:

The President of the Republic, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, initiated a cabinet meeting on February 15 and 16, 2021, where an advisor to the Presidency of the Republic was appointed in charge of the shadow areas file, where a map was developed by local officials after counting all the shadow areas in Algeria, which are 15,000 shadow areas inhabited by 8.5 million Algerians suffering from all forms of deprivation, poverty and marginalization, which led the Algerian government to launch an urgent plan that includes 12,000 projects for the benefit of this marginalized group.

The Ministry of Interior has adopted a comprehensive approach to achieve local development in shadow areas across all states of the country in coordination with the concerned sectors and the involvement of local citizens.

A closer look at the reasons for the introduction of the local administration system, represented by the increasing functions of the state, the disparity between the parts of the territory of the same state and the attempt to embody democracy (Boudiaf, 2021, p. 227), shows the important role played by local communities to achieve local development, including the development of shadow areas and achieve social balance in them. In this theme, we will try to address the competencies assigned to local authorities (municipal and state) under laws and regulations and how to activate their role.

a. The role of local authorities in achieving local development in shadow areas according to the indicators of good governance:

In order for local communities to contribute to local development in shadow areas, their role must be activated through the application of good governance indicators, including the following:

Participation: Participation means creating opportunities for local citizens to manage their affairs, as the residents of the region and those living in the shadow areas are more aware of their suffering and what they lack, as their participation in local decision-making positively returns to the development of their areas and improving their standard of living. (Salami, 2019)

Transparency: or what is termed the provision of information and the right to access it, which means placing the necessary information in the hands of the people of the region, in order to enable them to exercise and obtain their rights, in addition to the principle of transparency that allows them to impose control over the work of local councils. Article 32 of Act No. 12-07 allows everyone to have

access to the minutes of the deliberations of the People's Wilaya Assembly on site and to obtain a full or partial copy thereof at his own expense. (32, State Act 2012)

Accountability: It means that organizations and individuals are responsible for performance and provide explanations regarding the exercise of their powers. (Boudiaf, 2012).

It also means that those in power in the public and private sectors and in civil society organizations are accountable to the people as well as to those who are interested and have an interest in those institutions. (Tawahria and Ben Omar, 2023, p.51)

b. The role of local communities in achieving local development in the shadow areas in Algeria:

The role of local authorities in achieving local development in the shadow areas is reflected in the state and the municipality with all its bodies carrying out the powers granted to them by law as follows:

1. Role of the Municipality:

The role of the municipality in local development in shadow areas is determined by its intervention in:

In the field of urban planning and equipment:

- Preparation of the municipal development plan;
- Prior approval in the establishment of projects on municipal territory can be harmful to the environment;
- Preservation of natural sites and monuments of historical value. (Meziani and Sarir, 2022, p. 595)

It is noted that the legislator has granted these powers to the municipality in the urban field as it is the closest to the citizen and the most knowledgeable about the nature and characteristics of the area that it can preserve.

In the field of social and human development:

Social development: In the social field, the municipality plays a key role through its special services in the following areas:

Education sector: This is achieved through the establishment and equipping of various educational institutions in the region, working to maintain them, providing them with school feeding, and providing school transportation.

Health sector: Establishing medical institutions, centres and clinics, providing them with the necessary equipment and equipment, ensuring vaccination and caring for pregnant women by employing doctors and specialists, working on health awareness and respecting health standards in the supply of water, food and cleanliness of the environment. (Salami, 2016)

Housing and reconstruction sector: providing housing, eliminating fragile housing and eliminating slums.

- Distribution of social housing.
- Providing these areas with gas tanks.
- Laying the sewage network with a filter plant that is periodically treated. (Haddouche and Bessa, 2021)
- Establishment of sports facilities and youth homes in the region.

In the field of economic development:

As stipulated in article 05 of Decree No. 82/380, there are two types of development plans carried out by local authorities, one of which is carried out at the municipal level and includes several sectors that affect the daily life of citizens, such as water, sanitation, health centres and others. (Kashi, 2021)

2. Role of the State:

The role of the state is represented in its participation in development planning, the sectoral development program (PSD) and implementation, as the state contributes with the state in the management and preparation of the region and development in all important sectors related to local affairs, for example:

- **In the area of social development:** the functions of the mandate are mainly limited to social services such as health, education, housing and social security.
- **In the field of tourism development:** the development and prosperity of the arena by taking the necessary measures to encourage investments in the field of tourism, considering that tourism raises the standard of living of the local population and improves their lifestyle. (Hamdado and Bataş, 2022, p. 201)
- **In the field of economic development:** in the economic field, the wilaya intervenes through the implementation of the sectoral development programme (PSD), a plan of a national nature, in which all the investments of the wilaya are included and this plan is registered in the name of the governor, where he ensures its implementation. (Belqaloo, 2018/2019)

a. The role of elected local councils in supporting local development in shadow areas: Elected councils are considered the driving tool for development in shadow areas, with multiple roles and powers granted to them under laws and regulations, and these roles are as follows:

- Elected local councils play the role of mediator between the central government and the local people in the region and are the means to address local needs, especially the needs of the residents of the shadow areas, for decision-making authority in a conciliatory manner that satisfies all parties.

- Local elites play the developmental role by setting goals, developing, implementing and controlling plans, as well as by the flexibility shown by the elite in openness in dealing.

- Embodying decentralization through the production of new local elites who continue their developmental and reform tasks at the local level, especially working on the permanent follow-up of development in the shadow areas. (Belhadi, 2020-2021)

3. Development program of the Ministry of Interior, Local Authorities, Urban Planning and the challenges of local development in the shadow areas

a. Development Program of the Ministry of Interior, Local Authorities and Urban Development:

The development of shadow areas is one of the most important commitments of the President of the Republic, which formed the core of his instructions on the occasion of the government's meeting with governors in February and August 2020, and the government's action plan assigned it priority to eliminate development disparities across all states of the country.

The development of shadow areas was one of the sectoral priorities, as the Ministry of the Interior, Local Authorities and Urban Planning adopted a comprehensive and integrated approach with the involvement of concerned citizens, in coordination with the concerned sectors and the contribution of technical interests at the local level.

For local development in the shadow areas, a strategic development plan has been set to achieve 04 objectives:

1. Meeting the needs of residents of shade areas for potable water.
2. Popularization of electricity and natural gas interconnection.
3. Breaking the isolation from the citizens of remote and mountainous areas.
4. Improving the conditions of schooling of children.

To achieve these four objectives on the ground, modern mechanisms and means have been put in place at the disposal of local communities, namely:

1. Modern and participatory census of shadow areas.
2. Developing an information system at the local level that contains 16 evaluation criteria.
3. Programming operations with the involvement of citizens and local associations to accurately count the development needs of citizens.
4. Harnessing financial resources to remedy the shortcomings, as 18.42 billion Algerian dinars were mobilized through the reorientation of previously registered

programs under the Guarantee and Solidarity Fund for Local Authorities, local government budgets and municipal development plans.

5. Continuous and field follow-up of the extent to which the file of shadow areas is taken care of.
6. Periodic meetings with governors under the supervision of the Minister of Interior, Local Authorities and Urban Development.
7. Programming field inspection missions to follow up the stages of taking care of the shadow areas locally under the supervision of the General Inspectorate of the Ministry of Interior.
8. Assigning 169 cadres with inspection missions to follow up on the progress of programs and the implementation of operations, especially at the level of the southern regions and the high plateaus (2021)

Outcome of the activities of the Ministry of the Interior, Local Authorities and Urban Planning for the year 2020 with regard to shadow areas:

Within the framework of a series of periodic meetings to follow up the pace of implementation of the instructions of the President of the Republic, the outcome of the activities was discussed, which resulted in the following:

7276 of the 8143 registered transactions were actually received for the year 2020, i.e. 89.35% where

Number of operations performed	Type of activity
1641 operations	Breaking the isolation
1409 operations	Supply of potable water
1028 operations	Improving school conditions
1026 operations	Cleansing
685 operations	Connection to the electricity grid
482 operations	Public Lighting
394 operations	Gas Supply
250 operations	Neighborhood Health
231 operations	Recreation spaces
60 operations	Natural hazards

Prepared by the researchers based on the website of the Ministry of the Interior, Local Authorities and Urban Planning

That is, progress was made by more than 80% in 633 operations and 50% in 635 operations, and despite the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, there were tangible effects. (2021).

Progress rates in the fields were also calculated according to the table below by utilization per capita.

Cleansing	Supply of potable water
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rehabilitation of 1100 km of sanitation network Connect more than 79,000 homes to the network - Benefiting approximately 398,000 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening the water network by completing 2700 km new and rehabilitating 495 km. More than 173,000 homes have been connected to the water network. Approximately 870,000 people benefited.
Public Lighting	Electric Power
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completion of the equivalent of 600 new km of public lighting network and rehabilitation of 253 km 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of 2180 new km of - electricity network More than 33,000 homes connected to the network That is, the benefit of approximately 166,000 people
Breaking the isolation	Gas Supply
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the road network with the completion of 1323 new km and the rehabilitation of more than 2800 km - Opening 884 km of routes in isolated areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Completion of 2055 km of new gas network. -Supplying more than 56,000 homes with gas. Benefiting approximately 284,000 people
Neighborhood Health	Schooling conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completion of 32 new treatment rooms. Rehabilitation of 175 other halls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of 84 school canteens and rehabilitation of 51 other restaurants - More than 186,000 students benefited - Supporting the school transport hangar with 471 new buses. - Rent 515 buses.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the website of the Ministry of the Interior, Local Authorities and Urban Planning

Through our analysis of the outcome of the activities of the Ministry of the Interior, Local Authorities and Urban Development for the year 2020 with regard to the shadow areas, we find that there has been a great development after the implementation of the development program in the development of these areas, and if the state continues to follow this approach, it can completely eliminate the shadow areas .

b. Problems of Local Development in Shadow Areas:

Local communities have played great roles and efforts in order to develop the shadow areas, but everything that has been achieved has fallen short of ambitions, as a result of many problems that prevented the achievement of comprehensive local development in these areas, especially the Covid-19

pandemic, which caused a global financial crisis, not only national or in specific areas.

- The low educational level of citizens, ignorance of their rights and lack of participation in decision-making contributed to the difficulty of achieving local development in the shadow areas.

- Researchers' ignorance of the culture and specificities of the region and society prevents development and causes the failure of projects.

- The spread of indifference and the spread of bureaucracy with its negative manifestations, the difficulty of coordination between the new administrative units and the traditional administrative bodies, and the lack of qualified administrative competencies to take responsibility for the local development of these areas. (Farouk and Dardeesh, 2018, p. 122).

- The expansion of the Algerian state, especially in the southern provinces, has created difficulty in communication between citizens and thus involving them in decision-making, change and departure from shadow areas to civilized areas.

- The phenomenon of political alienation: This phenomenon is represented in the citizen's sense of separation from the existing political system, for example, the reluctance of elected officials to exercise the right to vote, which is an expression of the people's rejection of the political class. (Benaissa, 2022, p. 193)

Conclusion:

Despite the efforts made by the state in general and by local communities in particular, in the development of shadow areas, the challenges in these areas were greater than the efforts made, and this is mainly due to the characteristics of these areas and the nature of their inhabitants, but this does not diminish the developmental role of local communities in these areas, and the contribution of local communities in supporting local development in the shadow areas remains the only way to achieve local development because of their leading role through what the councils do. Local by activating good governance indicators such as participation, transparency, fairness, justice and other indicators.

Based on the above, we conclude that:

- The ill-considered geographical division of the country leads to the creation of a phenomenon of development imbalance between regions.

- The emergence of shadow areas is the result of the various problems and crises experienced by Algeria in general and marginalized rural areas in particular, and the resulting Black Decade of the displacement of the population of the latter.

- Activating the role of local communities through the application of good governance indicators that work to strengthen the role of elected councils, citizenship and participatory democracy is the only way to develop shadow areas.

- The weakness of local development in shadow areas is due to the citizen's reluctance to community initiatives and the lack of a culture of demanding rights.
- The difficulty of development in shadow areas is due to the electronic divide and the lack of manifestations of technology, which enables rapid communication of the state and citizens.

Proposals:

From the above analysis, study and conclusions in this research paper, some solutions can be proposed that would help break down the barriers that prevent development in the shadow areas, which are as follows:

- Reconsider the geographical division of states and municipalities, taking into account the geographical nature of the region, and study the characteristics of each region by specialized technicians in order to invest in it with appropriate projects.
- Allocating subsidy funds to each local community in order to renew the financing of projects in the shadow areas. - Programming projects that have a direct impact on improving the living conditions of citizens in the shadow areas.
- Involving citizens living in shadow areas in the conduct of their affairs and the selection of projects of interest to them.
- Establishment of micro-enterprises that provide jobs for young people only.
- Establishment of local committees to inspect neighbourhoods, listen to citizens and ensure that the minimum necessary needs are met.

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