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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHADOW REGIONS AT THE PROVINCE OF CONSTANTINE CASE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF AIN SMARA

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ABSTRACT

In light of a massive and continuous wave of displacement for over a decade, as a result of terrorism and abandonment by the authorities of their developmental role, the countryside regions of Algeria have been found in a state of seeking for returnees who may be persuaded by the measures announced by the government in gradual manner. Besides, such a term “shadow regions” has emerged in December 2019 when the Algerian president M. Abdelmadjid Tebboune requested the preparation of a video report on the countryside regions of Algeria; however, upon presentation of such report on a giant screen to government officials after having conducted an inventory of these regions, the result was imaginably shocking, whereat 15,000 shaded regions have shown to be existing with a total population rate of more than 08 million people. Most importantly, it was much surprising that such regions are rural areas, villages and municipalities, inclusive of the surrounds the major cities such Algiers, as 299 shaded regions have been registered in the vicinity of Algiers. Subsequent to which, the Algerian government prepared an emergency program to provide basic necessities for the residents of such regions and reduce spatial differences between the territories, mainly between the countryside and the city in the same region, the same as for the Province of Constantine.

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Introduction.

Recently, the term shadow regions has come to be used in the political literature for the purpose of expressing the economic and social situation Algerian population, which was assessed to 8.5 million people, which is equivalent to 20% of the Algerian population, distributed over 15 000 shadow regions, as this has shown to be equivalent to 10 regions for each municipality as an average, as this is considered a result of the concentration of the economy in some regions without the others through the policy of previous successive governments. Nevertheless, the term “shadow regions” has emerged after the presidential elections of December 2019 and with the beginning of 2020, as per shown through a video report on rural regions of Algeria together with the marginalized areas, which was presented to government officials, governors and the media¹.

Besides, as a continuation of the presidential program that was prepared with the aim of moving the economy to take account of the shadow regions whose objective is not only reducing the

development disparities between the regions of the country, but alike stands for a form of human rights in social justice and human dignity in light of democracy and liberty, in addition to the fact that it makes the inhabitants of such regions feel to be citizens belonging heart and soul to this country, the fact of which makes them integrate and work for the success of this policy.

Reasons for choosing this search.

In fact, the choice of this research pertaining to the policy of shadow regions in Algeria, represented in the case of the Province of Constantine, is aiming at confirming the justifications and objectives thereof, this policy on which the strategy for the development of shadow regions is based, in terms of economic and social development. Besides, our particular intention from this research is to choose the Province of Constantine as model, and to be an entry point to project the overall problems of shadow regions on other Algerian regions, in other words, moving from the particularity of the Constantine Province's model to the whole territory of the country.

Justifications for choosing this research.

The development process, having occurred before and after independence, focused the main deployed efforts thereon along the Algerian coastal strip extending over a distance of 1 200 km, because of the legacy of the past and the ease of development on the coastal strip as a result of the availability of infrastructure therein. Further, it stands for an issue, although its negative aspects had yet to appear at the beginning of the development process, but the problems resulting from the failure to adopt the accurate regional planning method began to clearly excrete its negative aspects in recent years, in terms of the intensity of the population concentration and the provision of necessary services and job opportunities... etc., thus leading to the emergence of a spatial structure that is spatially different, representing a model for the prevalence of the degree of excessive concentration along this coastal strip; thus, the degree of this concentration can be measured throughout several indicators, in respect such as population density rate, urbanization rate, immigration, standard of living...etc.

In the light of which, this concentration means an exacerbation of the spatial polarization process in certain regions at the expense of stripping other regions of growth and development factors, the fact of which will turn in itself into a limitation to the growth stimulation in those regions that have lost not only the labour force, but alike the potential for self-financing.

As consequence, the final outcome of this introduction has significantly contributed to the concentration of the economy in some regions with the exclusion of some others, thus resulting in negative consequences that took place at national, territorial and local levels, in respect in the front position such as:

I. Migration.

In reality, the issue is related here to internal migration together with the accompanying semi-mass rural migrations towards industrial areas. Thus, the table hereunder demonstrates a picture, although a small one, of the volume of migration during a certain period of time.

Table 1. Internal migration between 1966 ~ 1977.

Year	The volume of internal migration (million people)
1966	1.6 million immigrants
1973	1.3 million immigrants
1977	2.1 million immigrants

Source. Bachir El Tidjani, Urbanization and Urban Planning in Algeria, Office of University Publications, Ben Aknoun, Algiers, p. 19.

In the light of the data illustrated in this table, it has shown clear how large is the internal migration experienced by the Algerian countryside areas, as it was assessed between 1973 ~ 1977 to around 130 000 immigrants per year, as a result of the marginalization of rural areas whose agricultural sector is considered as the backbone, in addition to the lack of necessary services, as well².

II. Urbanization.

Unquestionably, the high rate of urbanization had indeed a clear impact on the exacerbation of the number of shadow areas, as this fact has shown to be caused by the rapid urban growth experienced by most of the major cities in Algeria, essentially the Province of Constantine, which is considered as a violation of the urbanization stages, thus leading to a rise in the urbanization rate at the national level, from 43.2% in 1977 to more than 58% in 1998, and then reaching around 70% in 2020; as consequence, this has caused dangerous and unbalanced conditions in the urban environment. Above and beyond, the policy of shadow areas has come in Algeria based on this reality. Subsequently, instead of asking a central question, we should enquire about the objectives of such policy and whether or not it can stimulate the return of the displaced population to their areas of origin.

In virtue of which, and for attainment purpose of these objectives, the State has scheduled several development projects, whose number reached 5 171 projects, or 41%, with an amount evaluated approximately to 55 billion Algerian dinars, taking into account that the number of projects under completion is assessed to 4 309 projects, bearing in mind that the launch of the completion process of 3 010 projects has been announced³.

Additionally, these projects have allowed for the creation of a real dynamics of development in the shadow regions across the country, that have yet to be known, whose first and last objective is to endow citizens with a decent life together with a fair distribution of the country's wealth amongst the various regions of the country. Consequently, these regions, having previously been subject to marginalization for decades, have become living on the impact of a development revolution at a small financial cost and in a short time, with an effective and direct impact on the populations thereof.

Origin of the inhabitants of shadow regions.

In fact, the shadow regions have emerged after a massive and continuous wave of displacement for more than a decade due to terrorism and abandonment by the authorities of their developmental role in the nineties, as many projects were froze, thus the process of local development was suspended throughout the country, mainly in the isolated and rural regions⁴.

Previously, this division is due to the administrative division of 1984, which failed to take into account the homogeneity and capabilities of each region alongside the geographical, ethnic and topographical specificities thereof, the fact of which has undeniably increased the widening of the gap between the shadow regions deprived of the most basic necessities of life, in respect such as educational and health facilities, employment, services and housing, and the remaining parts of the country⁵. In consequence, this fact was illustrated through the video report on the countryside of Algeria, which was presented to government officials, governors and the media⁶.

In the light of which, this Paper will address the issue of shadow regions according to two main dimensions.

The first dimension representing the stage of concentration of economy.

This stage has significantly contributed to a set of factors, whether historical, natural or economic factors. However, with regards to the natural and historical factors, they were confirmed by the French colonialism when it intentionally focussed investments in the coastal cities and the plains at the vicinity thereto, in respect such as the plains of Mitidja, Oran and Annaba, whereat the suitable climate, water and the ease of linking Algeria to France across the Mediterranean have shown to be accessible, with a clear neglect of the countryside areas, for the main purpose of deepening the

development differences between the countryside and the city⁷, the fact of which has led to the migration of the rural population towards the cities with the aim of seeking for better living conditions. In virtue of which, the main reason for migration is first and foremost attributed to the brutal colonial policy against the countryside population, as the rate of urbanization has reached 30% immediately after independence. Nevertheless, Algeria witnessed during this stage economic transformations together with the intentions to adopt a directed economy and to apply development plans in addition to the application of special programs that have shown to be of benefits for 10 provinces. More to the point, among these policies, which were contained in these plans, we shed light on the industrialization policy, as it significantly resulted in the phenomenon of rural displacement at a rate of 49.41% of the total population in 1987 until the urbanization rate reached 70% in 2020. Hence, these rates trim down theoretically and practically all the development factors, which rates have alike resulted in the violation of urbanization stages. Consequently, these results can be recapitulated as follows.

- The urban housing crisis due to the natural increase among the urban population on the one hand, and due to the continuation of rural migration, particularly at the end of the eighties⁸ and the nineties that coincided with the black decade, the fact of which made the State unable to meet the increasing demands for housing in neighbouring cities or villages, on the other hand, notwithstanding the programming of projects for public and supported housing. In this respect, this crisis is clearly evident by comparing the same with the national standard (05 persons per housing unit), which is alike known as the “Housing Occupancy Rate”, which attained 8.5 in 1987⁹.

- The absence of utilities and services due to the suffocation of the cities by the high number of cars along with the weakness of the road network, mainly in major cities;

- The urban expansion at the expense of agricultural lands, as the surface of lands that was affected by urban expansion from 1962 to 1992 was estimated at about 1 500 000 hectares, which were directed to the realization of residential areas and economic facilities¹⁰.

- The extensive consumption of water, mainly in industry and industrial facilities, which has had a negative impact on the irrigated lands supplying the urban agglomerations with agricultural products.

As for the second dimension, it represents the stage of “moving the economy”, as this trend was evoked to by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune during his electoral campaign. To a certain extent, this interest is due, on the part of the majority of political formations that fought in the midst of the electoral campaign for the legislations of 12th November, to the great importance for development in the shadow regions and attaining social justice in terms of providing decent livelihoods for citizens, on top of which the National Liberation Front party, which party has shed light on the promotion of sustainable development in the shadow regions, border areas and regions of the Great South, for the main purpose of embodying the community security and confronting the external threats together with taking care of the natural and human characteristics and paying particular attention to the creation of infrastructure in such a manner that preserves the conditions of a decent life and the elimination of social, economic and security problems, in addition to ensuring the fair distribution of development processes. Subsequent to which, it has alike emphasised on the work throughout legislative and legal tools to provide health coverage, education, housing and transportation in various marginalized regions in the north, the high plateaus and the south¹¹.

Additionally, this trend translates the extent of sufferance sustained by Algeria from the historical, cultural and political remnants of colonialism. Likewise, we alike recapitulate the economic and social effects in the points listed hereunder, most importantly.

- The random geographical division of 1984, which raised the number of municipalities to 1 541 municipalities, without taking into account their capabilities, alongside the historical and cultural characteristics thereof.

- The remnants of French colonialism and the black decade (poverty, illiteracy, intellectual backwardness), thus hindering the interests of local authorities from achieving development.

- The investment projects directing towards major cities and urban centres due to the fragility, if not the shortage of infrastructures in these regions, mainly the mountainous areas and villages, and as a result of such economic, political and social conditions, together with the abandonment of remote areas.

- The shadow regions occupy an important geographical surface across the entire geographical territory of Algeria, which areas have a high population rate of more than 08 million people. As a consequence, taking care of such regions means eradicating the phenomenon of rural displacement.

In virtue of which, this explains the adoption of this government approach in the shadow regions since November 2019, instantly after President Abdelmadjid Tebboune took over the presidency, since it has become a necessity and a tool in the hands of government agencies and local authorities to stabilize the residents of these areas, inclusive of the suburbs of major cities, in particular rural areas, which represent a tributary reservoir of migration towards urban areas. In a consequence, directing the development projects towards the shadow regions will definitely contribute to the stabilization of population and the return of the immigrant population from these regions, mainly those who left their original areas during the black decade period. In light of which, this can be done through.

- Projects, provided that they should be carried out according to several steps, with an emphasis on the fact that the first step lies in removing the existing development obstacles.

- Popular participation through involving the population at the shadow regions or at the municipalities, seeing that the municipality is the smallest territorial unit and the closest administration to the citizens through diagnosing the residents of the problems that bother them; hence, this will contribute to facilitating the tasks for the concerned authorities to uncover the appropriate solutions. In addition, popular participation is an important component for progress and stands for a basic pillar to bring about development through the contributions of citizens, financially and morally, in the creation of facilities, along with ensuring the proper use thereof.

- Contribution of the civil society institutions to attaining development, considering civil society as an active component through the rational exploitation of resources, the fact of which requires the active participation of the local population within the shadow regions with the aim of giving more chances for the success of any development project¹².

The share of shadow regions in sustainable local development by sectors, within the scope of the economic recovery program (2020 ~ 2024) in Algeria.

The most important development projects devoted for shadow regions, within the Economic Recovery Program (2020 ~ 2024) are illustrated in the following Table.

Table 2. Development projects for shadow areas within the Economic Recovery Progra (2020 ~ 2024).

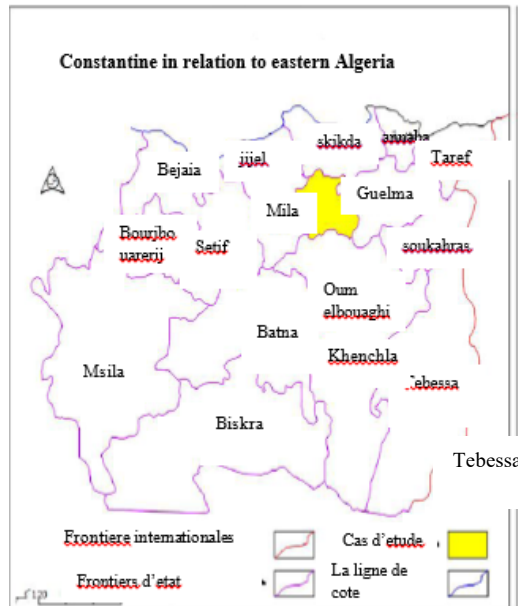
Sub-sectors	Funded development projects	
	Number	Amounts (billion dinars)
Drinking water supply	2 465	66.30
Sanitation	1 737	24.69
Electrical connection	1 352	16.77
Gas connection	998	23.96
Improving schooling conditions	1 436	49.11
Public transport	41	0.39
Removing isolation	3 216	67.73
Public lighting	693	4.75
Nearby health services	364	2.76
Playgrounds	356	3.27
Sand encroachment control	3	0.058
Security coverage	66	0.63
Natural hazards	114	1.26
Total	12 841	188 42

Source. People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, February 2021, p. 53.

In the light of the data illustrated in this table, it has shown clear the great interest in removing isolation from the shadow areas, with a share of 3 216 projects, with a financial value of 67.63 billion DZD, followed by the drinking water supply project with 2 465 projects, with an amount of 30.66 billion DZD, then comes sanitation with 1 773 projects, with a financial value of 24.69 billion DZD, followed by the projects of transportation, electricity, lighting, playgrounds and Sand encroachment control.

Statistics of shadow regions in the Province of Constantine.

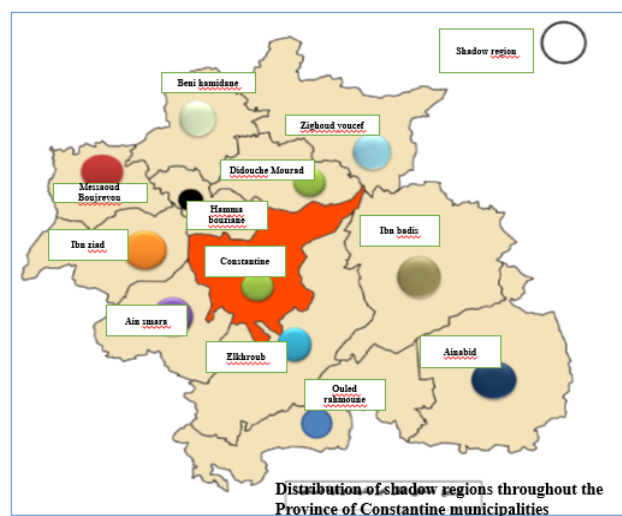
1- Location of the Province of Constantine in relation to eastern Algeria:



Map 1. Constantine in relation to eastern Algeria.

Source. Directorate of Planning and Territory Development, prepared by the researcher Benmebarek Farah.

2- Shifting from generality of the country to the specificity of the Province of Constantine as a model, the projects that Constantine benefited from are shown in Map 2 together with Table 2.



Map 2. Projects that Constantine benefited.

Source. Directorate of Programming and Municipal Budgets Follow-up at the Province of Constantine + Processing by the researcher Benmebarek Farah.

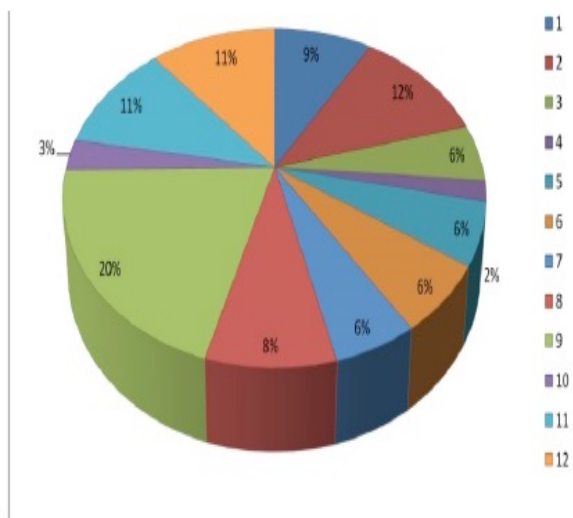
Table 3. Shadow regions. Distribution of shadow regions throughout the Province of Constantine municipalities.

No.	Municipality	Shadow regions
1	Zighoud Youcef	18
2	Beni Hmidane	24
3	Didouche Mourad	11
4	Hamma Bouziane	4
5	Messaoud Boudjeriou	12
6	Ibn Badis	13
7	Constantine	11
8	Ain Smara	17
9	El Khroub	41
10	Ouled Rahmoune	6
11	Aïn Abid	22
12	Ibn Ziad	23

Source. Directorate of Programming and Municipal Budgets Follow-up at the Province of Constantine + Processing by the researcher Benmebarek Farah.

Moreover, Figure 1 below illustrates the distribution rates of shadow regions for each of the Province municipalities.

Distribution of shadow regions throughout the Province of Constantine municipalities



No.	Municipality	Shadow regions
1	Zighoud Youcef	18
2	Beni Hmidane	24
3	Didouche Mourad	11
4	Hamma Bouziane	4
5	Messaoud Boudjeriou	12
6	Ibn Badis	13
7	Constantine	11
8	Ain Smara	17
9	El Khroub	41
10	Ouled Rahmoune	6
11	Aïn Abid	22
12	Ibn Ziad	23

Source. Directorate of Programming and Municipal Budgets Follow-up at the Province of Constantine + Processing by the researcher Benmebarek Farah.

In the light of the data illustrated in this table, it has shown clear the municipality of Al Khroub is the one with the largest rate of shadow regions in the Province, with the rate of 41, followed by each of the municipality of Ibn Ziad with 23 shadow regions, the municipality of Aïn Abid with 22 shadow regions, and then the remaining municipalities of the Province of Constantine.

Statistics of shadow regions for the municipality of Ain Smara:

1- Location of the municipality of Ain Smara in relation to Algeria:



1/200 000

Map 3. Vide the topographical map of Algeria.

Source. <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/>.

2- Location of the municipality of Ain Smara in relation to the Province of Constantine:

As per depicted by the Map 4.



1:200 000

Map 4. Location of the municipality of Ain Smara in relation to the Province of Constantine.

Source. https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/A%C3%AFn_Smara.

In fact, should we take the municipality of Ain Smara as a sample from the research, we figure out that it contains 17 shadow regions with a population of 3 655 inhabitants, representing the rate of residents in the shadow regions by 6.98%. Besides, 47 projects have been devoted for these areas, which represent the share of the residents of the shadow regions at the municipality of Ain Smara having obtained development projects; however, this rate has shown to be small, as per demonstrated hereunder in Table 4.

Table 4. Shadow regions at the municipality of Ain Smara (14 regions and 47 projects).

Region	Projects	Under realization (progress rate)
Km 13	Natural gas connection	100 %
	Realization of drinking water network	100 %
	Sanitation network	100 %
	Public lighting	Uncompleted (under progress)
Ain Zebira Part 01	Sanitation network	Under progress
	Natural gas connection	Under progress
	Public lighting	Under progress
Boushaba	Natural gas connection	Under progress
	Electrical connection	Under progress
	Roads are not created	Under progress
	Public lighting	Under progress
	Hunting division	Under progress
	Supply of drinking water	Under progress
	Roads are not created	Under progress
	Electrical connection	Under progress
Hamaid	Natural gas connection	Completed
	Sanitation	Completed
	Public lighting	Completed
	Natural gas connection	Administrative procedures
	Roads	Administrative procedures
Djandjan	Natural gas connection	Project stopped
	Supply of drinking water	Project stopped
	Sanitation network	Project stopped
	Public lighting	Project stopped
Kikaia Achour	Sanitation network	Completed
	Damaged roads	Under progress
	Supply of drinking water	Project stopped
	Sanitation network	Project stopped
	Supply of drinking water	Project stopped
Lababza	Supply of drinking water	Not started
	Natural gas connection	Not started
	Public lighting	Not started
	Electricity	Not started
Maa Barda (Lawyer's Club)	Supply of drinking water	Completed
	Public lighting	Completed
Oued Lebane	Natural gas connection	Completed
	Roads	Uncompleted
Safia Part 01	Roads	Completed
	Natural gas connection	Under progress
	Supply of drinking water	Not started
	Sanitation network	Completed
	Roads	Under progress
	Public lighting	Uncompleted
	Roads	Uncompleted

Source. Technical departments of the Town Hall of Ain Smara + Processing by the researcher.

Above and beyond, considerable sums of money have been allocated to finance the investment projects that are almost entirely confined to the supply of electricity and gas to the city, in addition to the connection to sanitation networks and potable water, together with removing isolation from these shadow regions within the municipality of Ain Smara by the concerned authorities together with the provincial and local authorities.

More to the point, we conducted a questionnaire on a sample consisting of 05 families from the shadow region of Ain Zebira, whereat we obtained the results hereunder, as shown in the questionnaire form:

A questionnaire about the shadow regions.

A questionnaire regarding: Ain Zebira, municipality of Ain Smara, Province of Constantine.

The questionnaire purpose: Identify the projects and the recorded shortcomings.

The research sample: 05 families from Ain Zebira.

Introduction of the researcher.

This research is entitled as: The new tools of development and their impact on the region, case of the Province of Constantine. Besides, it aim is to obtain real results about the new tools, inclusive of the development of shadow regions as a developmental tool in order to attain the development within the territory of the Province of Constantine and to stabilize the rural population and poor municipalities. Therefore, I would hereby like to request you to kindly answer with all objectivity and transparency the questions and phrases included in the questionnaire, within the scope of the shadow regions’ policy, what are the projects that the region of Ain Zebira has benefited from with regards to:

No.	Questions	Yes	No	Somehow
1	Education sector		5	
2	Heath sector		5	
3	Electrical lighting			5
4	Drinking water	1		4
5	Sanitation network	5		
6	Connection to road network			5
7	Rural building			4
8	Other projects	1		5
9	Your intention is it to stay or to leave this area?		1	4
10	Do you know some families who returned back to live in this area after having previously left it?	5		

Source. Prepared by the researcher.

Providing comments on the questionnaire results.

The shadow region of Ain Zebira represents an area that will soon find the light, with the global factors surrounding it.

The positive side (possibilities):

- Its proximity to the New City “Ali Mendjeli”.
- The existence of suitable grounds for construction.
- The road linking Ain Smara to the New City of “Ali Mendjeli”.
- The creation of investment projects in the separating area between Ain Zebira and the New City of “Ali Mendjeli” (housing and infrastructure development projects).
- The gradual transformation of the shadow region of Ain Zebira into an urban area.

The negative side (development constraints).

- Its proximity to the New City “Ali Mendjeli”.
- Completion of the realization of the project of a technical station and sewage purification, but it has yet to enter into service for purely technical reasons.
- Landforms and environmental pollution due to the existence of a quarry.

Conclusion.

In the light of the data illustrated in this the questionnaire, we find that the development projects devoted for the shadow regions have achieved most of their goals which have shown to be mainly represented by stabilizing the population in their areas of origin and creating productive activities for these areas that shall indeed improve the living conditions of the residents of such regions, mainly the villages, which were lacking the minimum conditions for a decent life during the past years. More to the point, the overall concerns of the residents of such regions appertained to the connection of rural electricity to homes, the supply of drinking water together with the request to benefit from financial supports for rural construction, in addition to the registration of projects for removal purpose of isolation, the realization of sewage networks and the provision of school transportation, thus allowing the return back of the original inhabitants who have left such regions for special security conditions in the black decade years.

FOOTNOTES

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2. Bachir El Tidjani 1988, Urbanization and Urban Planning in Algeria, Office of University Publications, Ben Aknoun, Algiers, p. 19.
3. An Article taken from "El Bilad" newspaper, the electronic version on Monday 21st December 2020 at 12:28.
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6. Ouarda Haddouche, Sami Bassa 1988, The Nature of the Shadow Regions and a Reading of the Status of the Emergency Program for the Shadow Regions, previous reference, p. 12.
7. Bachir El Tidjani, the previous reference 1988.
8. National Office of Statistics (1992) Regional Branch in Oran, Preliminary Provisional Results of the census conducted in 1987 with regards to population and housing, Oran.
9. Bachir El Tidjani, the previous reference, p.56 1988.
10. Dr. Bachir El Tidjani, the previous reference, p. 60 1988.
11. Algerian Press Service, Saturday 29th May 2021, at 11:30.
12. Ismail ben Mohamed ben Abdallah Nouira, Chaima bent Hamid ben Abdallah Al Aboubi (2021), The Role of Civil Society Associations in Local Development, Journal of Knowledge Fields for Social and Human Sciences, Volume 01, Issue 03 (2021), p. 08, Date of publication: 12th February 2021.

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