

The reality and prospects of local development in semi-urban areas, case study of the municipality of Al-Harouch

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Abstract:

This study aims to highlight the reality and prospects of local development in the semi - urban areas., A case study of the municipality of Al -Harush, Skikda State. Where it was found through the study that the municipality is of an ugly nature; Where Algeria has known in recent years the phenomenon of urban expansion in semi -urban areas, as a result of many economic, social and cultural factors and causes, and therefore we tried in this article to address the reality of local development in the semi -urban areas in the municipality of Al - Haroush, which define many problems resulting from urban urbanization and growth, and in the end it was reached to the conclusion that the semi -urban areas lack the lowest development public facilities and this is what requires Adopting local development plans concerned with fair and balanced development of various population communities.

Keywords:

Local development; urban growth; semi-urban areas; Al-Harouch municipality.

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Introduction

: It The concept of local development and the local actor and the extension and expansion of the percentage of participation are among the central and extremely important concepts today, at the level of international and local management of development policy and public policies through the loans it gives and the directives or interventions that were direct or indirect. These concepts are still very important and have become a magical recipe that can confront all forms of imbalance, marginalization, exclusion, poverty and LNONAD various urban, rural and semi -urban areas, thus seeking to achieve a kind of economic and social balance of various social segments at the national or international level. Raising the level and well -being By adopting a new strategy and pushing all concerned to participate in this, especially the societies concerned with this perception, given their demographic size on the one hand, and the size of the problems and accumulated issues that these semi -urban areas did not help to raise their population to higher levels in the development ladder.

a. Problem of the study:

In In light of the above; the subject of the study revolves around a fundamental problem and can be formulated as follows:

- What is the reality and prospects of local development in semi-urban areas; case study of the municipality of El Harrouch?

To address and analyze the studied problem, we can pose a set of sub-questions:

- What is meant by local development and semi-urban areas?
- What is the reality of local development in semi-urban areas, a case study of the municipality of El Harrouch?

What are the prospects for local development in semi-urban areas? Case study of the municipality of El Harrouch?

b. Study Hypotheses:

- Semi-urban areas have a role and importance in the adopted local development policy.
- Local groups have a role in the development of semi-urban areas.
- There are requirements to achieve local development programs in semi-urban areas.

c. Study objectives:

Through this study, we seek to achieve a set of objectives, which we list below:

- The scientific desire to know the reality and development prospects of semi-urban areas in the municipality of El Harrouch.
- Contributing through the field study and statistical data obtained from the municipality that were processed and analyzed; to provide a set of suggestions.
- Contribute to the implementation and application of planning tools adopted by local communities in the development of semi-urban areas.
- Identify the most important development programs and the goals they achieve in local communities.

d. Importance of the study:

This study derives its importance from the following aspects: The possibility of using its results related to assessing the reasons for the delay in local development in semi-urban areas in the municipality of El Harouch, providing those responsible for updating development programs in semi-urban areas; to encourage them to keep pace with the population shift and complete the necessary projects for the purpose of providing the local economic, social and

cultural development that citizens need, the results of this study can be relied upon to provide decision-makers with mechanisms to enhance urban transition to semi-urban areas, which contributes to developing appropriate mechanisms to provide the necessary requirements and appropriate development programs.

e. Study Methodology:

To achieve the study objectives and answer the questions raised, we will rely in this research on the descriptive analytical method; since this method suits the nature and objectives of the research, and this was done by describing the phenomenon that is the subject of the research, analyzing its data, studying the relationships between its components and giving a clear picture; using an analytical presentation of various tables and figures based on the information obtained; which helps us in providing an analysis and interpretation of the results. Regarding the tools and methods adopted in the study, and in order to analyze the partial problems and test the study hypotheses, it was evident that observation and interviews with the heads of departments were relied upon in order to obtain information that serves the study. The study also relied on many books and references in arabic and foreign languages on the subject, in addition to statistics related to the field aspect. Images were also obtained from Google Earth, as well as from local groups in Skikda province, through a case study in the municipality of El Harrouch as a model.

1. The theoretical and conceptual framework for local development and semi-urban areas:

1.1. The concept of local development:

The concept of local development emerged in the aftermath of World War II; this term has gained international popularity since it was adopted by the Cambridge Conference held in 1948; this conference was organized by the British Colonial Office to discuss some matters related to the African colonies. This conference preferred to use community development rather than the term "public education" to denote that movement aimed at uplifting communities at the initiative of their inhabitants, and if these inhabitants had not taken that initiative, it would have required the use of technical methods to awaken and stimulate those principles. In addition to the Cambridge Conference adopting the concept of local development in 1954 and its definition by the United Nations in 1955 and some researchers in this field, we will present some definitions of local development or local community development, which are:

- **Cambridge definition in 1948:** Local development is a movement designed to raise the standard of living in the local community as a whole with the active participation of the local community, and the spontaneous initiative of its residents if possible, and if it becomes clear that the local community lacks this spontaneous initiative, all technical methods can be used that include arousing the people to ensure their enthusiastic response to this movement. Local development includes all forms of improving the standard of living in the local community, and includes all types of development activities in the region, whether carried out by the government or non-governmental organizations.

1.2. Local Development Requirements:

Local development has important pillars on which to ensure the achievement of development programs; and they are represented by popular participation and the integration

of service projects; in order for the development project to achieve tangible results that benefit members of the local community by relying on local financial and human resources.

1.3. Popular Participation:

All members of the local community must be involved in thinking and working to develop and implement programs that aim to advance them; this is done by raising awareness of a better level that goes beyond the limits of their traditional lives; by convincing them of the new needs and training them to use modern means of production and accustoming them to new patterns of economic and social habits such as saving and consumption. The real problem facing development processes in developing societies is the weak response of these societies to them and the lack of participation of local community members with public authorities in their programs.

1.4. Accelerating the achievement of results:

This means that development programs should include services that provide quick results, such as medical services, housing, etc. If the planner starts to put productive projects in his development plan, he must choose those projects that have quick returns and low costs as much as possible; and that at the same time meet an existing need. If the planner starts to put productive projects in his development plan, he must choose those projects with quick returns and low costs as much as possible; and which can at the same time meet an existing need. The reason for this is to gain the trust of community members that there is a tangible benefit or advantage that they will receive as a result of establishing a project in their community. Therefore, trust is a necessary and essential requirement for the effectiveness of local development programs.

1.5. Relying on local community resources:

Relying on local resources is considered one of the methods of intended civilizational change; as we find that using the community resources known to its members is easier for them than using new, unknown resources. Also, the local manager, who is considered an influential and important human resource in the development process, is more effective in managing local resources. He is also able to change the members of his local community, unlike the foreign manager. Relying on local resources also has a return in the form of lower project costs, since the project depends on local resources. (Sabti, 2012/2013, pp. 29-30)

2. Theoretical Framework of Semi-Urban Areas:

2.1. Definition of Semi-Urban Areas:

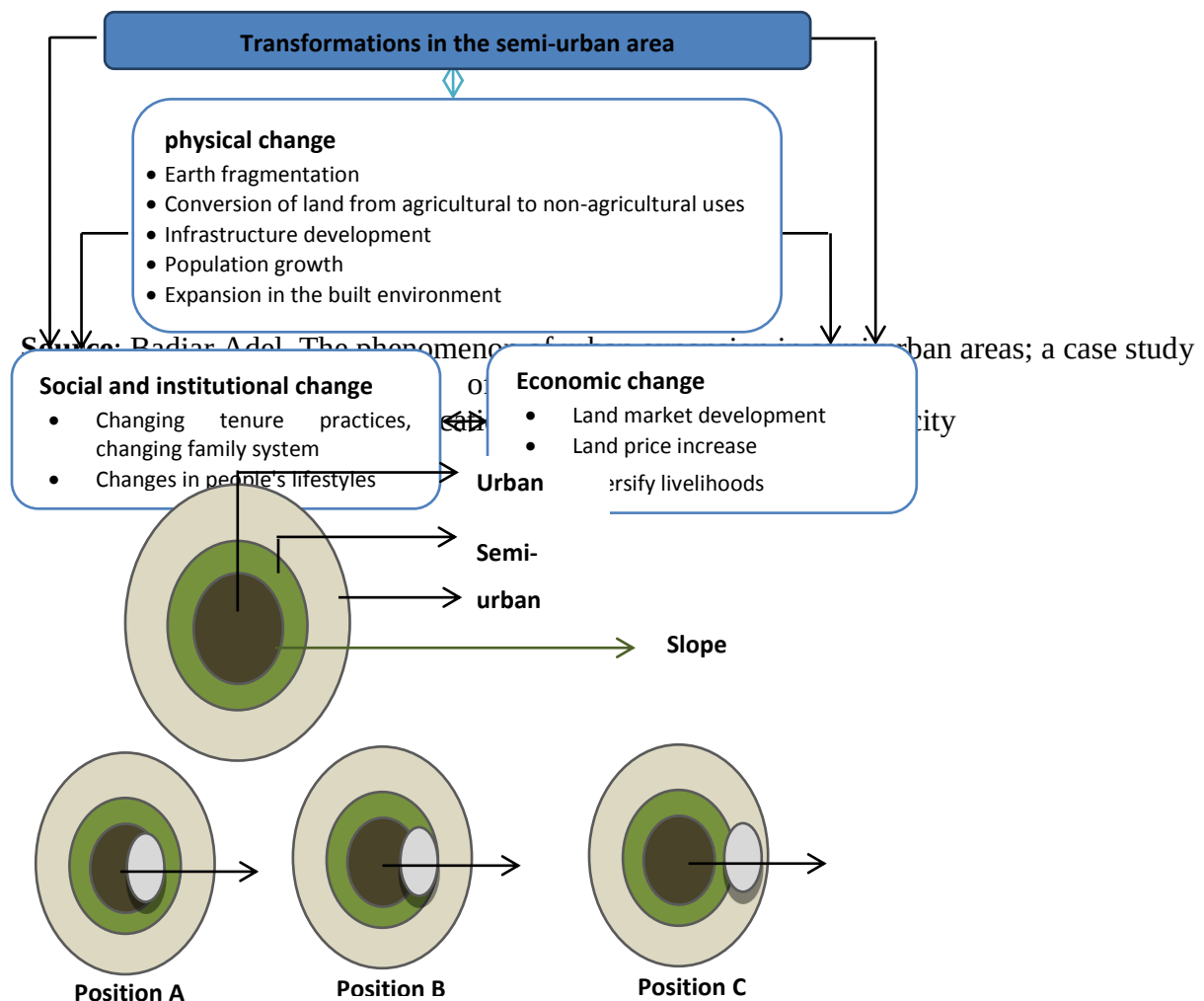
Semi-urban areas are generally defined as transitional areas located on the outskirts of a city, where rural and urban characteristics meet each other. It also represents the physical development and changes in land use that can cause various problems for developments that sometimes occur; which are not in line with existing spatial plans; so that rural areas undergo an uncontrolled transformation. A semi-urban area refers to a transitional or interaction zone, where urban and rural activities are placed side by side, and landscape features are subject to rapid modifications resulting from human activities.

Semi-urban areas are neither geographically nor conceptually defined, and they include both urban and rural characteristics and lie somewhere between the urban center and the rural landscape. It has been dealt with traditionally; from the perspective of urban

planning as a basis for urban expansion and regional infrastructure. We can say that they are transitional areas or areas surrounding urban areas that may provide non-urban activities to support the population in urban areas.

The novelty of the concept in the geographical field, and its handling in various situations, poses a difficulty in understanding and approaching it. There are those who call it the suburban area or the urban area. It has emerged to define a new spatial morphology, resulting from the process of urbanization creeping into the urban margins; it takes on its meaning within a specific social and economic context; its mobility and lack of clarity make it a complex field. According to the LAROUSSE dictionary and the LE PETIT ROBERT dictionary, the semi-urban area is “the area located in the suburbs and immediate outskirts of the city”. (Badiar, 2022-2023, p. 119)

Figure 1: Structural model of the interconnected transformation process of semi-urban areas.



Source: Badiar Adel, The phenomenon of urban expansion in semi-urban areas; a case study of the cities of Hadna.

Through the above definitions we can:

In this regard, some specialists from Western geographers defined semi-urban areas as: "An area that overlaps between the city and the village, characterized by urban characteristics and rural features, (DEZER, METTON&STEINBERG,1991) and this mixture leads to an imbalance at the level of the area and the population who inhabit these areas".

They live an incomplete life that is neither urban nor rural, in addition to the fact that these semi-urban areas are mostly popular places, where their residents live a new social life.(Al-Ansari, 2020); He also emphasizes that it is: "a mixed fabric between the rural and urban areas with unclear boundaries".

We can say that semi-urban areas are generally located on the urban fringe along the edges of the built-up area; they tend to form a scattered pattern of low-density settlements. Semi-urban areas may be a third space; they are mostly large open green spaces; such as agricultural land and nature reserves in the urban periphery with low population density but functionally belonging to the urban area. Semi-urban areas may also be an area of smaller settlements, industrial areas and other urban land uses within the functional agriculture matrix. From the above, we conclude that the semi-urban area is the sum of the processes that affect the neighbouring rural area, and contribute to the spread of urban functions through four elements:

3. The applied framework of the study: The reality and prospects of local development in semi-urban areas; a case study of the municipality of El Harrouch

3.1. Presentation of Al-Harouch Municipality:

Figure 03: Aerial photograph of the municipality of El Harrouch



Source: Google Earth

One of the municipalities of Skikda Province. It is the headquarters of the El Harrouch District. Its population is 48,995 according to the 2008 census. Bachir Boukadoum Street is the longest street in it; the main street is about 2.3 km long. It is bordered to the north by the municipalities of Saleh Bouchaour, AmjazEddchich and Sidi Mezghiche, to the south by the municipalities of Ain Bouziane and Zighoud Youcef (Constantine Province); to the west by Ain Bouziane and to the east by Zardaza. It is considered an important link in eastern Algeria, linking three major cities: Skikda, Annaba and Constantine, making it a vital crossroads.

The city is located in the plain of Oued Safsaf, which makes it predominantly agricultural. It is a crossing point between the three cities of Constantine, Skikda and Annaba via National Road No. (3), as it is about 32 km away from the city of Skikda, 58 km away from the city of Constantine, and 85 km away from the city of Annaba.

3.2. Development of the population of the municipality of El Harrouch:

The municipality of El Harrouch has witnessed a population development during the study period, as shown in the figure below:

Table No 01: Development of the population of the municipality of El Harrouch

Year	Population
2015	55000
2016	56000
2017	57000
2018	58000
2019	59000
2020	60000
2021	61000

Source: Statistics of the Municipality of El Harouch

This phase witnessed a large spatial expansion that consumed large areas; especially for the residential aspect through the continuation of the new urban area program with about 500 housing units; and the social allocation of 315 plots of land, in addition to urban development that included the old neighborhoods; and the construction of other neighborhoods. The construction of 165 housing units along National Road No. 3 in the direction of Constantine, and the construction of 64 housing units in the southeastern part of the city, all of which are collective housing units of a social nature.

On the other hand, the city of El Harrouch witnessed the completion of some important industrial projects such as the livestock feed unit; spices; electronic maintenance unit; and the expansion of the pasta complex in the eastern activity area towards Skikda. All of these contributed greatly to creating an economic and social dynamic in the city; enabling an increase in job opportunities, trade and consumption; the growth of the pace of attraction; and the doubling of the volume of internal and external movement. This pace also contributed to some extent to the emergence of activity areas across the main traffic axes, which enabled the creation of numerous investments and also enabled, in one way or another, the achievement of relative urban development. In contrast, the rate of demographic growth and internal migration increased, and the pace of construction continued until the features of the city emerged as a physical and social entity; affected by the constantly changing demographic structure, which led to the growth of social needs for housing and facilities such as education, health, employment, services, etc.

This stage was also characterized by the growth of the rural migration phenomenon, coinciding with the difficult security conditions that the country experienced between 1992 and 1998, as the city of El Harrouch witnessed a remarkable security stability that made it an area of attraction for immigrants coming from areas with deteriorating security, especially those located west of Skikda province; the mountainous areas in the region. (Boualmaiz, p. 11)

3.3. Geographical distribution of semi-urban areas in the municipality of El Harrouch

a. Bousbiaa Said area

Figure 04: A picture of the semi-urban area of Bousbiaa Said

Source: Google Earth

Toumiat area; This city is surrounded on the east and south by the Oued Nessa and on the west by the Constantine-Skikda national road. The only lands possible for development are those located on the north side. The land suitable for construction consists of compacted

silt, low slopes, easy to carry out excavation, digging and trenching works, and the bearing capacity can be estimated at 1 kg/cm². These lands are suitable for R+2 constructions.

Figure 05: A picture of the semi-urban area of Bousbiaa Said



Source: Google Earth

3.4. Residential patterns in the municipality of El Harrouch

Table No 02: Shows the residential patterns in the municipality of El Harrouch

Housing type	Number	Percentage
Individual	5780	17
Group	26000	77
Semi-Group	2000	6

Source: Statistics of the Municipality of El Harrouch

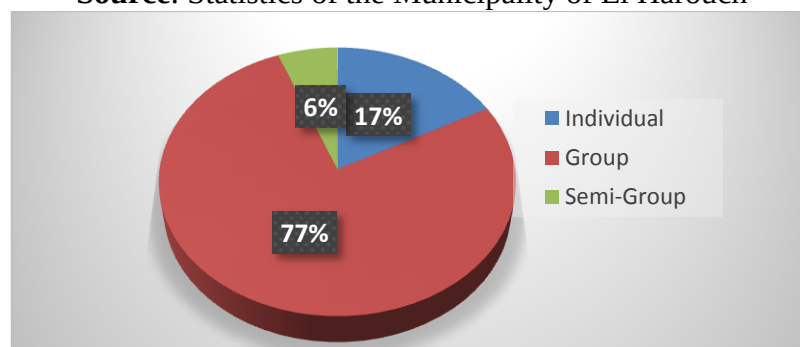


Figure 05: Shows the residential patterns in the municipality of El Harrouch.

Through the table we can distinguish three types of housing in El Harouche, which are:

a . Individual housing. Which is divided into:

- Old individual
- Modern individual
- Chaotic individual

b . Collective housing.

- Semi-collective housing

a . Individual type: It is distributed as follows:

1. Old individual style (European): This is the French colonial building style; it occupies 15.41% of the other styles. It consists of limited-height buildings of one or two floors, the building material is brick for the walls and tiles for the roof attached to it, and in many cases a garden. Most of the residences in this style have witnessed deterioration, which led to several changes being made to them by the residents and the authorities concerned with restoration; by using modern building materials such as reinforced concrete, with the ground floor being allocated for commercial activity; thus, the degree of focus on commercial activity in the center increased.

2. Random individual pattern: Chaotic housing represents a limited percentage; this type is located south of Road No. 18, represented by the Christian Cemetery neighborhood; and in some neighborhoods such as Al-Qabiya and Dimagh Al-Atrous. It does not have the minimum living conditions and there is a complete absence of necessary equipment.

3. Modern individual style:

Represented in the allocations that emerged in the eighties, and these dwellings are characterized by the diversity of designs in terms of architectural form and facades, and are distributed among the allocations as follows:

• **Allocation No. (1) (July 5, 1962):** Located west of the city, it has 180 plots with an area of 300 m², which was utilized in 1979, and is equipped with most of the necessary networks.

• **Allocation No. (2) (November 1, 1954):** Located at the southern Arab entrance, along National Road No. 03, it has about 68 plots, available on various networks.

• **Allocation No. (3) (Amar Qadid):** Located to the west of the city towards the Bir Satel area, it consists of 408 plots distributed in 1986, the percentage of carved buildings reached 91% but it still lacks development.

• **Allocation No. (04) (Bo Al-Rish):** Located in the northeast, it consists of 440 plots distributed in 1986. Most of the housing units are in poor condition, unprepared, and lack facilities.

b. Collective style:

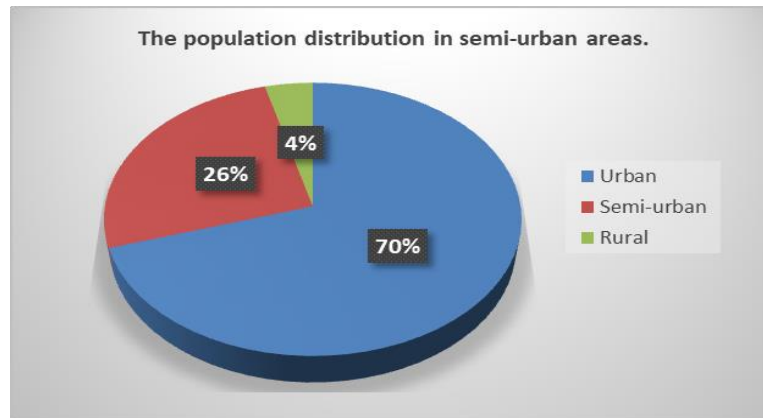
Buildings with a generally uniform geometric shape, dominated by monotony in terms of building materials or the shape of the facades. Their external areas are mostly unprepared and neglected. This style is dominant in the city at a rate of 81% of the total housing stock and is distributed in the following areas:

• **New urban residential areas:** located in the north-east of the city, completed in 1984 with about 1000 housing units in the form of 5-storey buildings.

• **Social housing buildings:** Located in the 164-dwelling neighborhood, along National Road No. 03; completed in 1994. Sonatiba neighborhood; located south of the new residential urban area; includes 148 homes, completed in 1976.

3.5. Population distribution in semi-urban areas.

Figure 06: Shows the population distribution in semi-urban areas.



Source: Prepared by the researcher

The urbanization that Algeria has witnessed, especially after the migration since independence, is due to several factors, which may be rural migration to cities and the natural increase in population, which created a large population density within urban areas. In addition; Rural communities that may experience economic transformations in terms of the availability of infrastructure, housing, employment and entertainment are reclassified into urban communities.

Many factors control how people spread and settle on the Earth's surface; Some of them are natural (topography, slopes, water sources, including historical ones; the existence of (ancient) cities, and administrative ones; (Government decisions to upgrade an urban center to a higher rank, for example).

Economic factors include the presence of industrial and commercial areas, for example, in addition to the real estate structure; where the population is often less in areas with individual ownership. The urban agglomerations (municipality center, Saeed Boussabaa, Toumiat, Bir Satel) are concentrated in the northeastern region of the municipality; which means that they are concentrated on the outskirts of the plains located on the borders of both Wadi Safsaf and Wadi Nisa, where these agglomerations are separated by lands of high agricultural value.

As for the areas of scattered population, they are located in the western part of the municipality, where the private sector lands are located, and in the foothills of the high hills south and southeast of the municipality, while the mountainous areas south of the municipality are almost devoid of any population presence.

This heterogeneous distribution was the result of many factors, including rural migration towards the city center and towards secondary urban centers, which significantly affected agricultural activity in rural areas. The population vacuum has had a negative impact on the agricultural exploitation of the land, in addition to neglecting many secondary agricultural activities. This has also led to severe pressure on the municipal center, the city of El Harrouh, as well as on the secondary urban centers, especially Said Boussabaa and Bir Satel, (the proposed expansion area in the 2011 master plan for development and construction). Where informal housing is densely spread, which is often at the expense of marginal agricultural lands belonging to the state; and collective and individual investments. (Boualmaiz Ben Saad, 2018-2019, p. 214)

3.6. Reality and prospects of local development in semi-urban areas, the municipality of El Harrouch as a model

a. Collective housing program

- 200 OPGI housing units under construction near the high school.
- 60 OPGI housing units (POS Oued Nessa) are currently under study.
- 100 OPGI housing units (POS Oued Nessa) completed.
- 32 OPGI housing units completed (POS No. 1).
- 37 housing units (real estate agency) completed (POS No. 1).
- 12 housing units + 12 OPGI buildings completed (POS No. 1).
- 50 OPGI housing units completed (POS No. 1).
- 16 housing units of the Land Agency under construction (sales point 1).
- 16 housing units + 08 promotional headquarters currently under study (sales point 1).
- 39 housing units (real estate agency) completed (sales point1).
- 32 housing units + 16 planned buildings (sales point 1).
- 200 OPGI housing units completed at the ZHUN level.
- 70 housing units completed (real estate agency) (sales point 1).
- 24 housing units of the Land Agency under construction at the ZHUN level.
- 80 social participatory housing projects at the ZHUN level.
- 20 AADL housing units under construction in ZHUN.
- 30 housing units under construction in the Sonatibaneighborhood.
- 16 housing units of the Land Agency near the Civil Protection.
- 32 social participatory housing units under construction (Marouj Chiad).
- 12 social housing units under construction (developer Polyber).

b. The reality of development programs embodied in semi-urban areas in the municipality of El Harrouch.

Program	Completion rate
Drinking water supply	100%
Sewage	100%
Electricalconnection	100%
Gas supply	Remainingunder construction 50%
Improvingchooling conditions	100%
Public transport	100%
Breaking isolation	100%
Public lighting	80%
Play areas	Under construction
Combatings and encroachment	Under construction of the afforestation project
Natural hazards	Projects not yet launched

Source: Statistics of the Municipality of El Harouch

In the context of promoting local development at the municipal level and improving the living conditions of citizens, we note that the development projects registered within the framework of municipal development plans or the regular program, including the shadow areas program and the local communities guarantee and solidarity fund, have recorded a weak rate of achievement, with a significant delay also recorded in some development programs related to playgrounds and natural hazards. It is necessary to ensure that the implementation of development programs is followed up, including examining the progress of registered

projects, ensuring that all obstacles raised in the field are removed, and then accelerating the pace of completion of unfinished projects.

Conclusion:

The city of Harouch has acquired an important strategic location, and its geographical location, which is a flat plain, has helped it to expand; and it is characterized by cultural and social diversity, as the city has witnessed great urban development and expansion, through the succession of several stages; which gave it a difference in population density between different sectors, which allowed it to be an important economic pole.

Results

The most important results reached through the study are as follows:

- The municipality of El Harrouch witnessed a population development during the study period; This is due to the development of population growth; this generates a population explosion that results in urban expansion of semi-urban areas.
- The municipality of El Harrouch knows the two most important areas classified as semi-urban areas in the municipality of El Harrouch; they are the Toumiat area and the Bousbiaa Said area.
- The majority of informal housing with a fragile urban pattern has spread in these areas.
- The spread of housing patterns in the municipality of El Harrouch; where the individual pattern represents 17%; collective housing 77%; semi-collective housing 06%.
- Population distribution in semi-urban areas is characterized by a high population density within urban agglomerations. It constitutes 70%; in addition, rural agglomerations represent 04%; and semi-urban agglomerations 26%; which may experience economic transformations in terms of the availability of infrastructure, housing, employment and entertainment. They are reclassified into urban agglomerations.
- Unplanned urban expansion is the ideal solution for obtaining government housing, which is often limited to vulnerable and weak groups in society. Rather, it has become one of the solutions that various groups resort to.

Recommendations:

From the results presented; we can make the following recommendations:

- Seeking to embody balanced local development in the various urban neighbourhoods within the region; especially between built spaces and public spaces.
- Beautifying semi-urban areas to create a public square, enhancing it and making it a place for rest and meeting, thus creating a lively and knowledgeable space.

Valuing and upgrading the living environment through optimal use of urban space that ensures social relations between individuals.

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