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The effects of urban housing policies socio-spatial distance on families with different paths in Adrar neighborhood of Agadir

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INTRODUCTION

Our research paper is related to an issue of the different forms of influence of the Adrar neighborhood on family members in their relationship with the neighboring neighborhoods of the city by highlighting the problem of distance in the neighborhood; which means the dual distance between the location of the house and the various functional places inside and outside the neighborhood. The importance of this work is revealing the problem of proximity and spatial distance in the neighborhood that is the subject of the research.

The study aimed to analyze and understand the problem of social-spatial distance “in their intricacies and complex intersections to the issue of urban integration” (Elbhiri & Assebane, 2022) between two typologies of families with different paths. The first model refers to families that fall within the framework of the settlement policy, residents of shanty houses. The second model relates to families not targeted by the housing policy and who broke into the housing market due to their economic capital by purchasing the rights of slum residents within the neighborhood.

Our research case study focuses on the neighborhood of Adrar, located in the southern part of Agadir town, “with internationally renowned tourists” (Irifi & Assebane, 2021). The Tikiouine quarter delineates its southern edge, the *Mesguina* forest marks its eastern edge, while its northern boundary is indicated by the extension of the Tilila quarter (figure 1). “Greater Agadir now occupies an extensive area in the extreme north-west of the Souss plain. It is a new large urban agglomeration at the foot of the Atlantic High Atlas. It is bordered to the west by the Atlantic Ocean, and its urban expansion is constrained to the north and northeast by the High Atlas mountain range” (Irifi & Assebane).

METHODOLOGY

According to the gender approach, the study’s sample consisted of twelve people; there were six males and six females. The qualitative methodology employed in the study included observation and semi-directed interviews. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, either in front of the house doors, inside the guest hall, or at the entrance near the stairs. They took place once or sometimes twice, with either one partner or both together, and lasted anywhere from half an hour to two hours.

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We tried to address the problem through a central question: **What are the effects of the distance in the Adrar neighborhood on the residential stability strategy?**

This study used a purposive sample of twelve participants, equally split between males and females, and a qualitative sociological technique, which can be presented as follows :

In its completion, we relied on the technique of observation and semi-directed interviews included the following:

1. The distance between work and residence;
2. Distance between residence and school;
3. Residents and their relationships with commercial places (see the annexes).

In addition to photography, which “allows reference to the information at any time” (Jérôme-Chenal, 2006). This is why image formation has become increasingly important in social science practices for many years, whether in texts, seminars, or in the context of teaching. Therefore, the image is considered a model of expression, communication, and proof (May Du-Meyer, 2006), [...] and a tool combining the three basic principles of analysis: description, research into contexts, and interpretation (Fraser, 2018, p. 3).

We also focused on diversifying information sources and using mapping techniques, as in most Chicago School research. For example, in his Chicago neighborhood study, Harvey Warren Zorbaugh (Colon, 2012) used city books, maps, plans, statistical data, historical documents, and municipal reports. All of them are essential tools in achieving the goals of this research work.

RESULTS

As a result, this study came to several conclusions. For instance, the families who weren't covered by the resettlement program had no issues with the distance between the housing sites and the work locations. For the families covered by the resettlement policy, the distance between their place of residence and place of employment presents daily challenges because they do not have access to private transportation, except for one respondent who owns a motorcycle.

The process of division of the land in Agadir continued until new neighborhoods emerged in the center of south and east of the city, such as the Zaitoune and Asska neighborhoods, the Wefaq and Farah neighborhoods, the Mohammadi and Tilila neighborhoods, Adrar and others. It is typically regarded as one of the areas which was the focus of relocation initiatives for a large number of slum people, by a housing strategy that included the social mixing policy as a new mechanism in urban planning. However, the policy of social mixing that wasn't officially planned can be recorded as a result of some of the difficulties that followed subsequent housing strategies for fragile or poor families that were targeted in resettlement programs until the year 2008 (Adrar neighborhood, for example), where some families found themselves forced to sell their lands for many reasons. We mention among them: the burden of means of mobilization for construction, the inability to obtain official and informal loans, etc... (Assebane, 2023).

Given the importance of studying the course of these housing policies at the level of individual residential neighborhoods specific to Morocco, regarding what concerns the process of rehousing families who lived in shantytowns recently after suffering from forms of marginalization, spatial isolation, social exclusion, but today it has its official housing alongside families of different paths. However, despite the independence and the freedom provided by owning individual housing, the problem of the distance between the various physical components of the Moroccan cities still constitutes a central issue for researchers in many fields of knowledge, notably in sociology, geography, political sciences, and urban planning. The demographic growth of the city of Agadir has led to numerous housing programs and resettlement policies for slum dwellers, which have often led to the emergence of mixed residential neighborhoods, particularly those associated with individual houses.



These public policies have resulted in the construction of spatial disparities between the neighborhoods that make up the city as a form of inequality in the spatial distribution of various collective facilities on the one hand and then at the level of the compositional structure of the population in the neighborhoods on the other hand. The Adrar neighborhood was among these neighborhoods that were targeted by resettlement programs within the framework of the so-called “Cities Without Slums” program, as a practical program for state intervention in the fight against shanty towns in the city of Agadir, in which the city was declared in 2008 a city without slums.

CONCLUSION

We conclude from the above that the dual distance in the neighborhood, in general, presented various problems, as the distance separating the housing sites from the work sites did not raise any problem for the families that were not included in the resettlement policy because they all had their means of transportation, and the heads of families; most of them were retired from work, including one respondent whose job was in the neighborhood. Despite all this, they, on the other hand, complained about the absence of taxis in the neighborhood. As for the families that fall within the framework of the resettlement policy, the distance separating the home location from the workplace constitutes challenges for them that they live with daily as a result of their lack of access to private means of transportation, except one respondent who owned a motorcycle. Therefore, we noticed in this aspect that the majority of individuals in the neighborhood were more dependent on the public transportation system.

In 2017, the neighborhood provided various daily essential services, including Grocery stores, coffee shops, men’s barbershops, chicken and meat vendors, birds, and a photography studio. In exchange for the absence of many basic services, including stores that sell shoes and clothes, women’s salons, party and wedding suppliers, as well as electronic equipment stores of all kinds, as well as craft activities, such as; tailoring and cobbler shops. Concerning public services and educational, health, and social facilities, we have noticed a large presence of primary institutions. These include a kindergarten, nursery, and two primary institutions, including one under construction, as well as a health center, pharmacies, and a driving education institution. Meanwhile, we record the absence of private institutions at all levels, primary, preparatory, and secondary, as well as the absence of public educational institutions, both preparatory and secondary. As for other public services and facilities, cultural facilities are absent, and the role of the neighborhood in individual housing, the problem of the distance of the market, the provinces, municipalities, and various banking agencies, as well as the problem of the absence of entertainment places in the neighborhood, as well as the distance of places of worship, especially in performing friday prayers outside the neighborhood.

For families, the dual distance between the location of residence and places of study in preparatory and secondary educational institutions has constituted that aspect of daily suffering, especially those daily constraints that oblige mothers to accompany their daughters who are pursuing studies in preparatory institutions, which are located outside the neighborhood. The same is true for students studying in a secondary institution, as they suffer from the problem of the distance they travel daily, in addition to the danger posed by crossing the national road.