



A dynamic urban landscape in Algeria: actors, mechanisms and governance challenges

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Received: 22/03/2024

Accepted: 14/05/2024

Published: 19/06/2024

Abstract :

The text highlights the major transformations undergone by Algerian cities and rural areas, marked by rapid urbanization and complex socio-economic challenges. Demographic growth and migration movements have led to uncontrolled urban expansion, deterioration of the urban environment, and an increase in irregular constructions. Cities struggle to meet the needs for housing, infrastructure, and services, while rural areas experience a relative decline after decades of migration to urban areas. The challenges of governance, urban planning, citizen participation, and effective human resource management are crucial to addressing current challenges and ensuring sustainable urban development in Algeria.

Key Words: Urbanization, Socio-economic development, Migration, Urban governance, Urban challenges.

JEL Classification : R14, O10, H70.

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Introduction

The urban landscape in Algeria is undergoing significant transformations, marked by rapid urbanization and complex socio-economic challenges. Demographic growth and migration movements have led to uncontrolled urban expansion, deterioration of the urban environment, and an increase in irregular constructions. Cities struggle to meet the demand for housing, infrastructure, and services, while rural areas experience relative decline after decades of migration to urban areas. Challenges related to governance, urban planning, citizen participation, and effective human resource management are crucial to address current challenges and ensure sustainable urban development in Algeria.

In this dynamic context, urban governance (Gilly J.P. et Perrat J., 2002) has become a crucial issue to ensure the harmonious development of Algerian cities. Challenges related to resource management, uncontrolled urbanization, and the provision of quality services demand innovative solutions and close collaboration among various stakeholders. This study aims to explore the diverse aspects of urbanization in Algeria, shedding light on the tensions and opportunities associated with this complex process. By closely examining urban dynamics and governance



mechanisms, it seeks to offer valuable insights to guide urban policies and promote sustainable development in the face of increasing urbanization.

The objectives of this article are manifold, aiming to deeply understand the challenges of urbanization in Algeria and explore potential solutions to promote sustainable urban development. Firstly, the article seeks to analyze the complex mechanisms that have led to the country's rapid urbanization, considering the political, economic, social, cultural, and sociological factors that have influenced this process. Secondly, it aims to examine specific challenges related to urban governance (Djedouani S. & al. , (2003).), resource management, and territorial planning. This includes assessing the effectiveness of housing policies, urban policies, and urban planning instruments in place, as well as their impact on urban growth and quality of life in Algerian cities. Additionally, the article seeks to identify tensions and opportunities associated with the country's rapid urbanization, such as pressure on infrastructure, spatial fragmentation, and environmental challenges. It also highlights the crucial role of civil society in the urbanization and urban governance process, along with the need for increased citizen participation to ensure inclusive and responsible urban policies. Finally, the article proposes innovative solutions to promote sustainable urban development in Algeria. This includes recommendations to strengthen urban governance, improve territorial planning, promote citizen participation, and integrate Algerian cities into the global economy. In summary, the overall objective is to offer clear insights and practical recommendations to shape a more prosperous and balanced urban future in Algeria.

I. Cities and countrysides undergoing transformation

Algerian cities and rural areas have undergone profound transformations due to demographic growth and socio-economic changes in recent decades. Under the pressure of population growth, urban fabrics have stretched and deteriorated, hindering cities from fulfilling all their functions and developing the necessary services and facilities for their proper functioning and influence. Despite having a dense scattering of cities, the urban system does not polarize the territory sufficiently to avoid significant imbalances. After experiencing long periods of rural exodus, rural areas are now undergoing a relative decline.

The proportion of Algerians living in cities has doubled compared to the 1960s, with over 70% of the population being urban (more than 30 million Algerians in 2018). Cities have significantly absorbed the country's rapid population growth over the past 50 years, growing faster than the population due to a combination of rural exodus and natural population growth. A notable change in trend is observed, with cities now growing more due to their internal dynamics than rural exodus, resulting in the emergence of second-generation urban populations.

**Table 1: Evolution of Urban Population between 1966 and 2023**

Year	Urban Population	Rural Population	Total Population	Urban Population Share
1966	3 778 482	8 243 518	12 022 000	31,40 %
1977	6 686 785	10 261 515	16 948 000	40 %
1987	11 444 249	11 594 693	23 038 942	49,70 %
1998	16 966 937	12 133 926	29 100 863	58,30 %
2008	27 840 000	6 960 000	34 800 000	66 %
2010	24 299 173	11 678 282	35 977 455	67,54%
2015	28 147 305	11 580 720	39 728 025	70,85%
2018	30 670 507	11 557 922	42 228 429	72,63%
2022	33 575 039	11 328 186	44 903 225	74,77%

Source: RGPHs and World Bank statistics.

The accelerated urbanization witnessed in Algeria since independence is the result of a spectacular demographic growth and equally significant migratory movements, especially during the first two decades. This transformation shifted Algeria from a predominantly rural to a predominantly urban country. According to the National Statistics Office (ONS), the urban population has consistently grown at rates higher than those of natural population growth, driven by rural exodus and the phenomenon of reclassification.

Between 1998 and 2008, only 55.7% of the urban population growth resulted from natural population increase, while the remaining 44.3% was attributed to migration and reclassification of urban areas. The growth of large cities with over 100,000 inhabitants practically doubled every 10 years between 1977 and 1998. Unfavorable economic and security conditions during the 1987-1998 decade encouraged the population to concentrate in urban centers closest to rural areas. This led to a significant urbanization of smaller agglomerations, especially those with a population size ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants.

Since the early 1990s, there has been a reversal in the trend observed in 1987 when the urban population share was only 49.70%. From 1966 to 1998, the country's total population multiplied by 2.4, while the urban population multiplied by 4.5. However, for the first time, a notable decrease in the pace of urban growth is observed. The urban growth rate, which exceeded 5% per year since 1966, dropped to 3.5% per year between 1987 and 1998, and to less than 1% between 2008 and 2018 due to declining birth rates in cities and stabilization of major migration movements. This urban growth has led to the widespread urbanization of the entire national territory, although there are still parts of the country that remain underserved.



II. Deterioration of the urban living environment

The forms taken by urbanization appear more problematic than its sheer magnitude (Anas A. 2002). A strong and fragmented urban growth characterized by sprawl and exurbanization has resulted in unstructured and centerless urban fabrics with unclear statuses and inadequate facilities (National Economic and Social Council, CNES, 1998). Paradoxically, old and historical urban fabrics are often neglected. In general, the growth in the number of households outpaces that of housing units, leading to chronic overcrowding. This situation has led to the marginalization of entire neighborhoods in both urban centers and peripheries.

Precariousness has increased with a proliferation of precarious and irregular housing, exacerbating poor management of urban spaces and facilities, as well as issues related to movement, transportation, and traffic within agglomerations. The number of precarious constructions is estimated at over 600,000 units. The notion of precariousness applies to constructions made using the following materials:

- Sheet metal and wood in northern regions of the country (shacks);
- Makeshift constructions with bricks or breeze blocks without anchoring in northern and High Plateau localities (degraded scattered housing);
- Earth constructions in the High Plateaus and in the South;
- Constructions made of traditional gypsum (Ksour).

These constructions are characterized by unsanitary and unstable conditions, posing risks to human health. They are not amenable to improvement or rehabilitation due to the absence of any architectural or urbanistic quality. The precarious housing stock represents slightly less than 10% of the total housing stock. By way of comparison, it reaches around 70% in sub-Saharan countries. Over the past seven years, more than 60,000 precarious constructions have been eradicated. However, the housing stock regenerates rapidly in the absence of effective control and deterrent actions.

III. The issue of irregular constructions

Irregular or illicit constructions are those built outside the regulatory framework. The exact number of such constructions is challenging to assess due to the variety in their nature, size, and the period of construction. The regularization efforts undertaken from 1985 to 1990 did not completely resolve the issue. To estimate the evolution of informal constructions, observations since 2004, the year of amendment of Law 90-27 dated December 1st, 1990, concerning planning and urban development, indicates around 20,000 units per year, while the decisions made are around 5,000 units per year. Thus, Boukhemis K. et Zeghiche A. (1997) and Belguidoum S. (2003) attribute the phenomenon of informal constructions to a sociological context: a refusal to submit to administration. Additionally, the administration's limited authority has allowed self-builders to act as they see fit.

The lack of control over urbanization exposes the city to pollution (water, soil, air) with negative consequences on health and quality of life. It also leads to vulnerability to major risks, including seismic risks in the North and flooding or landslides across almost the entire territory. Various dysfunctions in urban



governance and management hinder the control of urbanization, such as inadequate urban planning and management mechanisms and a lack of land control. In the face of substantial housing, infrastructure, and service needs, cities struggle to effectively fulfill their functions and ensure the quality of life for residents. One of the most significant factors exacerbating the situation in Algerian cities is institutional dysfunction that hampers the control of urbanization. Overall, the failures in city management can be primarily attributed to:

- The challenges in managing the needs generated by demographic dynamics, creating pressures at the limits of manageability for cities ill-prepared to absorb their effects.
- Constraints stemming from previous economic and social policies that did not allow the emergence of a civil society capable of assisting public authorities in managing urban dynamics.
- The mismatch between the assigned missions and the actors, primarily the municipal institution considered as the main player in city management.
- Constraints related to the application of legislative and regulatory frameworks and a deficient control system.
- The inadequacy of urban planning tools for the dynamics of cities.
- The understaffing of local authorities and technical services responsible for managing the urbanization process.
- Speculative practices in land management promoting the emergence of informal urbanization.
- Other challenges, including economic, financial, and local governance issues.

The number of urban agglomerations has significantly increased in recent decades due to demographic growth and rural exodus. There were 95 urban agglomerations in 1966, 211 in 1977, 447 in 1987, 580 in 1998, and over 600 in 2008 (data from Population and Housing Censuses). The urban framework is largely dominated by Algiers, followed by the three regional metropolises: Oran, Constantine, and Annaba. All major regional centers are located in the North, with three along the coastline. There are 29 cities with a population of over 100,000 serving as regional centers across the entire territory, but they often lack sufficient economic foundations to disseminate growth. Medium-sized cities are few in number, poorly distributed, and inadequately equipped. A multitude of small towns forms the base of the urban framework and results from the expansion of rural villages. Thus, we observe:

- A weak growth rate for the four major metropolises, Algiers, Oran, Constantine, and Annaba, each having an annual growth rate below 1% (0.6% for Algiers, 0.42% for Constantine, 0.8% for Oran, with Annaba being the exception at 1.28%). This can be attributed to their demographic slowdown but also to the growth shifting to their peripheries, leading to the formation of metropolitan areas. Nearly one in ten urban residents (8.5%) lives in the suburbs of these four metropolises: Algiers has a population of 2,987,160 and over 3,000,000 with its metropolitan area. It dominates in terms of demographic weight and functions. The West is polarized by Oran, the second-



- largest city in the country with 1,402,699 inhabitants, while Constantine and Annaba polarize the East with 925,634 and 629,362 inhabitants, respectively.
- Significant development in the stratum of cities with over 100,000 inhabitants (excluding metropolises).
 - Spectacular growth in cities with over 100,000 inhabitants, averaging over 10% per year. This category of cities, nonexistent in 1966, now constitutes a strong level of the current urban framework. It is dominated by cities such as Batna, Blida, and Sétif, each with over 200,000 inhabitants, and includes dynamic regional cities (Sidi Bel Abbés, Biskra, Chlef, Djelfa, Tlemcen, etc.).
 - Stagnation in intermediate medium-sized cities (50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants), with some of them moving into the higher category. These cities, being the capitals of wilayas or daïras, include Laghouat, Ain Beida, Ain Mlila, Bouira, Tamanrasset, Bir El Ater, Cheria, Maghnia, Sougueur, Ain Oussera, Ksar El Boukhari, Berrouaghia, Bousaada, Arzew, El Bayadh, Tissemsilt, Khenchela, Mila, Naama, Ain Temouchent, Ghardaia, Sig, and Mohamadia.
 - A proliferation of small towns: out of the 580 urban agglomerations in the network, 513 have less than 50,000 inhabitants, whereas there were only 79 in 1966. This situation reflects the "bottom-up urbanization" of Algeria through the transition from a rural framework to an urban framework. The larger ones can be capital cities (Boufarik, Aflou, Ain Defla, Oum El Bouaghi, Adrar, Azzaba, Oued Rhiou, ...), and the smaller ones contribute to the integration of the rural areas. The number of small towns with less than 20,000 inhabitants has multiplied (3,843 agglomerations, accounting for 94% of the urban system).

IV. Functional inadequacy of cities

There is an inadequacy of cities to fulfill their economic and social functions. With the exception of some major cities in the North, Algerian cities have experienced demographic urbanization without sufficient economic foundations, limiting their function to administrative oversight (Hafiane A., 2007). As a result, cities with weak productive foundations cannot ensure the spread of growth in their influence areas. Deficiencies in urban management, especially in transportation and circulation systems, hinder economic activity.

The spatial growth of cities is characterized mainly by a multidirectional spread of built-up areas (Semroud B. , 1998). The tendency toward exurbanization (Continuous and excessive extension of a city) is a constant for all cities, and it is significantly exacerbated in large agglomerations where conurbations emerge (e.g., Blida – Algiers – Boumerdès). Paradoxically, old fabrics are often neglected. Uncontrolled spectacular urban growth, due to a lack of control, has led to multiple dysfunctions, and Algerian cities evolve in such anarchy that neither legal, regulatory, and technical instruments nor planning actions have been able to eliminate until now (Nemouchi H. , 2005). These situations have continued to exacerbate transportation and circulation problems between centers and urban peripheries. This strong and fragmented urban growth has generated unstructured



and poorly equipped urban fabrics, leading to the marginalization of entire neighborhoods in both city centers and urban peripheries.

The extent of housing, infrastructure, and various services needs is met with the inability of public authorities to provide appropriate responses to the contexts of different cities. As an example, to illustrate the saturation of major cities, Algiers and Oran respectively record TOLs (persons per household) of 5.8 and 8.0 (2008 RGPH) (excluding precarious housing and those with only one room). Additionally, apart from the degradation of the living environment for populations, urban growth typically occurs in rural areas, which it disorganizes and weakens. This situation can also be explained by the complexity that characterizes urban issues in the absence of a city policy capable of organizing the urbanization process.

The urban system is nothing in itself if not associated with the network of interurban relations. We underline this specificity of the national urban system, where large cities are economic hubs, generating wealth, while medium and small cities are mostly administrative, providing population support and services through public financing. This economic role of large cities needs to be strengthened to meet job demand, ensure the country's growth, and maintain the overall balance of public financing, whereas institutional cities require support and assistance to internalize their economic development. Analyzing the urban system from a socio-economic and functional perspective allows for the distinction of two tiers of cities: those with an economic dominance (economic promotion) and those with a dominance of public services (institutional promotion). From an economic standpoint, another distinction arises between cities with poorly managed growth and those experiencing economic and social decline: not all cities present the same profile or potentialities. The SNAT 2030 highlights either the needs or the particular capacities of each. We particularly emphasize the following cases:

- The four metropolitan cities: Algiers, Oran, Constantine, Annaba. They alone represent half of the country's economic potential. This is where the upgrading of development and competitiveness will be crucial. Together, they act as the engine of the national economy;
- Cities with high economic potential, particularly in industry: Blida, Skikda, the pair Bordj Bou Arréridj - Sétif, the pair Sidi Bel Abbès-Tlemcen, Bejaia, Tizi Ouzou, Ghardaia, the pair El Oued-Biskra, M'Sila, and in a different category, the pair Ouargla - Hassi Messaoud;
- Cities with development potential that require public support to manifest: Mascara, Relizane, Chlef, Batna, Jijel, Adrar, Tiaret, Laghouat...;
- Cities in crisis and experiencing poorly managed growth: Bechar, Djelfa, Tébessa, Saida, Souk Ahras, Khenchela, Mecheria, El Bayadh, Aflou...;
- Cities experiencing economic decline: Miliana, Cherchell, Dellys, Tamanrasset, In Salah.

This classification would enable us to understand the strengths and weaknesses of Algerian cities, which could impact their future role in the urban system.



V. The game of actors and the mechanisms governing the urbanization process in Algeria

The national urban network is merely the outcome of a lengthy process, marked by the complexity of mechanisms that have led to the formation of urban systems. To better understand these mechanisms and thus grasp the issue of the city and the dysfunctions that characterize urban systems, it is important to analyze the game of actors while placing them within the framework of the political, economic, social, cultural, and sociological environment in which they have evolved. This will allow us to better understand the sectoral situations that coexist within Algerian cities. Thus, the complex issue of the city and the production of built environments must be approached through the relationships that exist between housing policy and urban policy. The treatment of city management and the problems associated with it are also inseparable from territorial planning policy. It is therefore interesting to verify whether territorial planning policy has indeed facilitated the networking of cities with a view to regional construction. The issue of the city, given its scope and various facets within the framework of territorial planning and development, cannot solely rely on fragmented sectoral actions thus far. It entails, as a top priority, a comprehensive, coherent, and integrated urban policy. To achieve this, adapting the roles of actors and the mechanisms governing the entire urbanization process to the demands of the city is necessary.

1. The constraints of the mismatched missions of local administration

The organization and functioning of municipalities rely on missions that exhibit inadequacies at various levels, which have had detrimental effects on the urbanization process and city management (Chibane N., 2007). Legislative texts have consistently assigned a multitude of tasks to municipalities, directly involving them in the implementation of various urban measures and operations. The functions assigned to municipalities have often constituted a burden too heavy for local administrations to bear, lacking the necessary legal, technical, and logistical support. While the competence of municipalities in all areas is consistently affirmed within the state apparatus architecture, the constant evolution over the past 40 years suggests otherwise, particularly in terms of urban management and control. Decentralization mechanisms have revealed dysfunctions in institutional relations (between the wilaya, municipalities, decentralized ministries' services, etc.). In the past, municipalities were often placed in quasi-hierarchical relationships with the wilaya. The authoritarian decisions of the wilaya regarding interventions in urban fabric have not always fostered the creation of harmonious conditions for city management, further complicating the role of the municipality as the primary actor (Khelil A., 1998). With the advent of multi-party systems, holders of local power have assumed a certain form of authority in their jurisdiction, now maintaining tense relationships with the oversight authority, particularly during financial arbitrations. This situation has led to blockages, making the city a hostage to the interests of local actors. The opacity characterizing this decentralization, often weakened by financial dependence, has not helped build a framework for local governance strengthened by better-adjusted institutional,



technical, and financial mechanisms, where the missions of different actors are clearly defined. This could have strengthened the territorial foundations of the state and the dynamism of cities.

2. A legislative arsenal with little real impact on urban growth control

The legislation put in place after independence regarding urban planning and territorial development aimed to prevent urban congestion and preserve agricultural potential. The promulgation of the ordinance of 1974 establishing land reserves for the benefit of municipalities and that of 1976 concerning expropriation for public utility reasons led to numerous excesses and abuses. Since the adoption of the new constitution in 1989, there has been the promulgation of a set of legislative texts relating, notably, to the wilaya and municipality codes, land use planning, and urban planning; the Master Plan for Development and Urban Planning (PDAU) and the Land Use Plan (POS). This arsenal of legal instruments has had little real impact on controlling urban growth. Today, the PDAU and the POS are difficult to implement due to:

- The temporal gap that exists between the deadlines for the elaboration and approval of instruments and the deadlines within which the various urban dynamics occur;
- Their standardization, which does not fit well with different geographical, economic, and institutional situations where the levels of complexity obviously vary from one city to another;
- The discrepancies between the expectations of urban actors and the effects produced by urban planning instruments.

3. Inadequate urban planning and management mechanisms

The alarming observation made earlier regarding urbanization is merely the result of urban dynamics not accompanied by suitable urban planning instruments capable of regulating and controlling urban growth. The logic behind these instruments, where they exist, relies solely on a mechanical approach to meet the demand for building space without integrating the urban phenomenon as a whole. The dimensions of horizontal and vertical spatial integration, the management logic of urban and regional economies, are disregarded, just like the environmental dimension of instrument practice. This inconsistency at the city level is one of the consequences of the overall dysfunction of the urban system. Legal, technical, and administrative mechanisms often operate within frameworks conditioned by sectoral or territorial logics, seldom aligning with the realities and imperatives of urban management.

4. Speculative and restrictive practices in land management

A first land regime was established starting in 1974. It was intended to result in a monopoly granted to municipalities over land by obliging them to create land reserves, but the necessary means to exercise this prerogative were not put in place. Thus, the development of urban land, in most cases, was not completed before being made available to various operators (self-builders or industrialists). This allocation was often done without publication to the land registry and without registration, contributing to the creation of many land disputes. Other adverse



effects were observed regarding the rational use of land: such as the disregard for urban planning standards, wastage of land reserves, proliferation of illegal constructions, etc. From 1990 onwards, a land law was enacted introducing a new land regime that restored property rights and freedom of land transactions, subjecting them to the required legal and administrative procedures for more coherent land management. The transition from the exclusive monopoly of municipalities over urban land to the restoration of property and its attributes did not occur without posing certain problems, such as the need to establish land management documents (cadastre) that were neglected in the previous period. The absence of registered land constituted a major obstacle to land management. Imbalances in land use, the lack of a comprehensive and coherent policy, under the influence of strong economic and social pressure, led to chaotic development and serious loss of land threatening any development, housing, or investment policy. Therefore, mastering land, ensuring its rational development commensurate with ambitions and projected studies, requires the implementation of a rigorous policy on the use and rationalization of areas designated for urbanization (Sidi Boumedine R., Taïeb M. , 1994).

5. A weak managerial capacity of local authorities and state services responsible for city management

Understaffing and instability of personnel and senior positions are the main characteristics of the human resources situation at the local government level. This situation does not favor effective handling of the complex problems associated with the urbanization process. Municipal services suffer from chronic weaknesses in terms of staffing (administrators, engineers, architects), while there is a strong concentration of professionals at the central administration level. All of this has obviously affected the quality of urban interventions and the daily management of the city's complex problems. Territorial management, a training policy, continuous development, and recycling, coupled with an objective and ongoing evaluation system, remain to be promoted at the municipal level.

6. The challenge of urban status

With the exception of a few particular cases (metropolises, major cities), cities are not recognized legislatively, and as a result, they do not benefit from an appropriate status that meets the specific requirements of their management. There is no legal distinction between a city and a small rural locality; both are generally governed by reference to the same local administration system, which therefore does not account for the remarkable diversity of existing situations. The administrative statuses of urban areas (municipal, district, provincial capitals) are the parameters that allow for the statutory positioning of cities. However, this administrative status does not have a decisive influence on the better organization and management of cities, considering the interferences in management powers and the conduct of urban strategies. Furthermore, the absence of city status constitutes a real constraint for the management of large agglomerations whose urban extensions spill over into several neighboring municipalities. This raises the entire issue of



managing metropolitan areas, knowing that urban actions have been fragmented so far, resulting in dysfunctions in urban fabrics.

7. The economic challenge and globalization

For Algerian cities, the challenge of integration into the international economy involves developing strategies focused on criteria and standards of modernity that allow cities to position themselves competitively against others in the Maghreb and Euro-Mediterranean regions. The challenge for Algerian cities would be to be able to "produce" a form of society whose characteristics offer them the maximum chances of integration into the international economy. The challenge of the quality of living environments and services for businesses requires actors to adopt a new form of city management. This involves managing, structuring, and creating urban spaces in line with universal satisfaction standards (standards in terms of quantity and quality of public facilities, infrastructure, transportation, communications, etc.). Algeria must engage in this context of globalization by evaluating its performance and clearly defining its territorial planning and management strategy. To do so, tools for evaluating the competitiveness of cities seem necessary (Castells M., 1989), especially for coastal and border cities.

8. The challenge of civil society involvement in the urbanization process

Citizens, who are stakeholders in the urbanization process (Duranton G., Puga D., 2000), are often distant from decision-making centers, which has in many cases generated negative effects through the actions implemented. The associative movement, weakly represented and lacking experience, has not yet fostered a civic culture of the city. Thus, by engaging in an effective associative dynamic, the efforts made by the state would be likely to yield significant results. The lack of experience of local elected officials in general, coupled with the lack of competent personnel in urban organization and management, should encourage local authorities to engage in consultation with residents and professionals in order to establish an action plan that would have the approval of all stakeholders. The participatory approach should allow professionals, whether architects, jurists, urban planners, researchers, administrators, etc., to find their place so that they can contribute their expertise in all phases of examination and handling of issues concerning the city or any other urban project. The absence of this participatory approach in urbanization has led citizens to live in perpetual conflict with their space, which they often alter to suit their needs, thus exacerbating the chaos and dysfunctions that characterize urban environments.

9. The challenge of good governance

Among the various challenges, the one related to human resources is the most decisive factor for the promotion of the city and the success of all actions to be undertaken. The new concept of governance no longer places authority solely at the central level but confers it at all levels of administrative hierarchy and at all levels of a given organization, whether public or private. Thus, from the manager of a building to the president of the municipal council, several actors can participate in the management of a territory, and the central government is just one actor among others. Good governance emphasizes the diffusion of responsibility



and the involvement of all agents at different hierarchical levels. It aims for efficiency, good management, rationality, and consistently provides quality services to meet the needs of users. In other words, governance refers to a qualitative process of administrative reform, the search for indicators of good management of city affairs, constant improvement of training, and continuous upgrading to effectively address ongoing changes. Good governance is also aware that it is no longer sufficient to denounce shortcomings, obstacles, and abuses, to formulate new regulations, or to announce additional measures, but rather it is necessary to ensure above all the imperatives of implementation.

Conclusion

The transformation of cities and countryside in Algeria reflects a dynamic process marked by significant socio-economic, demographic, and urban challenges. While rapid demographic growth has fueled accelerated urbanization, rural areas have experienced relative decline. However, these changes have brought about complex issues related to urban governance, migration management, and the inadequacy of urban infrastructure.

To address these challenges, a holistic approach to urban planning, human resource management, and economic development promotion is essential. It is imperative to adopt integrated urban policies, strengthen local governance, and foster citizen participation to shape sustainable and inclusive urban environments. By investing in innovative solutions and engaging all stakeholders, Algeria can turn these challenges into opportunities to build prosperous and resilient urban communities while preserving its rich rural heritage and promoting balanced development nationwide.

Research perspectives in the field of urbanization in Algeria offer fertile ground to explore various avenues and deepen understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with urban development. Firstly, longitudinal studies could serve as a powerful tool to track the evolution of urbanization trends over an extended period and assess the long-term effectiveness of urban policies and interventions. Additionally, comparative analysis with other countries facing similar urbanization issues could identify best practices and lessons learned, thus providing valuable insights to inform policies and governance strategies. Concurrently, research on community engagement and participatory planning could explore innovative approaches aimed at empowering local residents and enhancing the effectiveness of urban governance by fostering more inclusive decision-making and aligning policies with the real needs of communities. Furthermore, given the urgency of the climate crisis, studies on climate change adaptation strategies and resilience-building measures are essential to ensure the sustainability of urban development in the face of increasing environmental impacts. Finally, exploring the potential of technological innovation (Feldman M.P., 1999), including smart city initiatives and digital infrastructure development, opens new perspectives for addressing urban challenges innovatively and sustainably. By combining these different research approaches, it is possible to develop a holistic understanding of



urban dynamics in Algeria and formulate effective strategies for sustainable and inclusive urban development.

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