

Bejaia city's: Regional Activity Center and Space of Pendular Immigration

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ABSTRACT

This study offers a comprehensive snapshot of Bejaia's economic landscape, highlighting the clustering of businesses and individuals. Our approach combines statistical analysis with on-site research, revealing Bejaia's pivotal role as a central hub for various activities and emphasizing its status as a magnet for pendular immigration.

Through a blend of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, we shed light on Bejaia's pivotal economic significance. Statistical insights underscore its position as a thriving activity nucleus, while on-the-ground investigations delve into Bejaia's role as a dynamic arena of pendular immigration.

Our findings underscore that Bejaia's economic vibrancy has its flip side, manifesting in challenges to urban infrastructure and quality of life. This raises concerns about the prevailing urban configuration's compatibility with holistic human development goals. In essence, the city's economic dynamism, while driving progress, reveals a complex interplay with the construction and sustenance of a conducive living environment.

In summary, our study provides a nuanced depiction of Bejaia's economic fabric, revealing its centrality in driving various sectors. By combining empirical data with experiential insights, we unravel the intricate dynamics of pendular immigration within Bejaia's urban landscape. Ultimately, our research highlights the need for a balanced approach that harmonizes economic growth with the well-being of its inhabitants, advocating for a comprehensive urban development strategy that nurtures both prosperity and human welfare.

1. Introduction

The economy of the Bejaia region is primarily driven by private capital, with several nationally-sized industrial groups that emerged in the late 1990s. Starting from the 2000s, the introduction of various investment incentives led to the establishment of numerous more or less successful and dynamic Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). Throughout this process, the city of Bejaia has been and remains the epicenter of this dynamic. It hosts nearly 32% of all SMEs in the province. This dynamism makes it highly attractive for the workforce, which sees the city as an opportunity and a source of improved well-being. As a result, a phenomenon of pendular immigration towards the city has developed, as it has become highly appealing to people in search of employment opportunities.

Immigration is a central element in the economy as it indicates the adaptation of the workforce to the productive apparatus and enables the correction of inequalities caused by development, facilitating the return of the labor factor to equilibrium.

Inseparable from the history of humanity and the peopling of the five continents, migration has been receiving special attention from development stakeholders, both in its internal and international aspects, since the early 2000s. From this prospect, the population of cities, in particular, has increased tenfold between 1900 and 2000, and 40% of this growth is attributed to internal migrations.

These dynamics of settlement impact economic activities. They influence the geographies of intervention, where populations gather, especially in urban areas, and where financial and professional counterparts can be more easily identified. They raise questions about the effectiveness of the development processes undertaken.

The determining factors of internal and international migrations remain indeed closely related: development inequalities, job prospects, income, and living conditions stand as some of the common underlying causes for both types of migrations.

Approaching migrations means to consider complex dynamic processes, including places of departure, arrival, and sometimes return. These internal mobilities can involve a significant portion of the population in developing countries (30% of the Indian population) and generate substantial wealth (16% of China's GDP is attributed to internal migrations of rural Chinese workers in the manufacturing and industrial sectors) (King R., Skeldon R., and Vullnerati J., 2008).

The distribution of migratory flows in a given region is not random. Indeed, urban centers can be more attractive than other less urbanized spaces for certain categories of people. In fact, individuals seek spaces that maximize their well-being. They assess different alternatives and choose the option that provides them with the most satisfaction given their human and financial resources. They decide to migrate, stay, or sometimes engage in regular back-and-forth movements. From a microeconomic perspective, potential migrants make a comparison between the income they expect to obtain if they migrate to a specific location and the income they would obtain by staying in their current place or engaging in regular back-and-forth movements. From a macro-economic point of view each area is equipped with a whole of resources (employment, residences, equipment) at least significant which directs migratory flows in a positive or negative direction.

Each space plays the role of a selective or magnetic force, attracting appropriate population elements towards it and repelling unassimilable elements; in other words, it is the power of repulsion from the point of departure and the power of attraction towards the destination area.

It is worth mentioning that the first models analyzing migratory flows refer to gravity models. Von Thünen was the first to venture into this field by proposing, in 1826, a modern idea about the organization of rural space, which is now widespread as urban organization. Several models were subsequently developed, particularly by Marshall (1890) and Hotelling (1929), which are more complex and provide a more accurate understanding of spatial mobility phenomenon.

In this context, a primary question arises: What are the economic and migratory dynamics of the Bejaia region in Algeria? In other words, what factors influence the attractiveness of Bejaia as an economic center and driver of commuter migration?

To better understand these phenomena, let's examine two secondary questions: First, why is economic activity mainly concentrated in the city of Bejaia compared to peripheral areas? Second, what are the underlying reasons for the phenomenon of commuter migration to the city, and how do individuals evaluate their migration options?

To address these questions, we propose two hypotheses:

Economic activity is more concentrated in Bejaia due to the presence of large national industrial groups and investment incentives launched in the 2000s, which have fostered the creation of dynamic and successful SMEs in the region.

The phenomenon of commuter migration to Bejaia is due to the city's strong economic attractiveness, offering better employment prospects, income, and living conditions for workers compared to less urbanized peripheral areas.

To answer these questions, we propose a combined approach involving:

- ✓ Statistical analysis: Gathering statistical data on the economy of the Bejaia region, such as GDP, dominant sectors of activity, growth rates, employment, and studying factors influencing the attractiveness of Bejaia city.
- ✓ Field survey on the motives for commuter migration: Designing a structured questionnaire for the field survey, including questions about the reasons for regular travel between the place of residence and the city of Bejaia, employment prospects, etc.

This work provides an opportunity to revisit two fundamental elements: The first one concerns the concentration of economic activity in the city of Bejaia compared to peripheral areas. The second one focuses on the phenomenon of commuter migration to the city of Bejaia. To better understand it, we conducted fieldwork in which we interviewed 300 people about the main reasons for their regular commute between their place of residence and their workplace.

2. City of Bejaia: The center of economic activity in the region

The economic activity in the Bejaia province is mainly concentrated in three industrial zones. The most significant one is located in the city of Bejaia, covering an area of 122 hectares. The second zone is situated in El Kseur, spanning over 42.84 hectares, and the third one is established in Akbou, covering an area of 38.08 hectares. In addition to these industrial zones, there are activity areas spread across 26 municipalities. In this section, we will focus on presenting the city of Bejaia as the central location for economic activity.

2.1. The town of Bejaia: space localization of SME of the wilaya

It is worth noting that before independence, the City of Bejaia served merely as a relay point in the production circuit of the French economy. It was only a link, a point of transshipment for supplying metropolitan industries. The city was not designed with the aim of becoming a "development hub" to influence its environment and promote progress. In the immediate outskirts of the city, traditional techniques and modes of production persisted, while the standard of living of the population declined.

After independence, the city had to turn towards its own territory and contribute to the industrialization movement of the country. The hasty industrialization and dependence on basic infrastructure led to a trend of locating industries in more or less structured urban spaces. Bejaia became part of this industrialization movement, accommodating several industrial units that transformed its structure without implementing significant reforms to adapt industry to its space. Here are the main public industrial units of the 1980s and their locations:

- Textile and leather industry: Jute Complex, Ecotex (Alcost), and TCB (Icotal).
- Construction materials: Somacob.
- Wood and cork: Transbois, BGS, and Bejaia Liège.
- Agri-food: ENCG (COGB).
- High-tech industries such as: Sonatrach, Naftal.

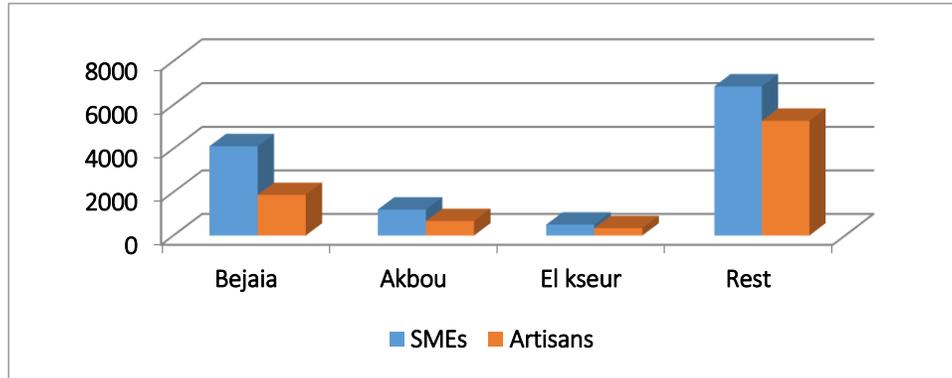
Today, Bejaia hosts a significant portion of the industry. These units will serve as a starting point for a systematic policy of industrialization capable of generating new forms of social, economic, and technological activities. However, the establishment of these units was not subject to principles of economic profitability or industrial synergies and complementarities.

Indeed, the distribution of businesses is uneven across the province's territory. Generally, the municipalities with the highest proportion of businesses are the most populous ones. The capital of the province, Bejaia, accommodates 12,246 SMEs, representing more than 30% of all businesses in the province as of the end of 2021. Notably, nearly half (49.9%) of the businesses are concentrated in the three municipalities of Bejaia, Akbou, and El Kseur, while the other half (50.1%) is spread across the remaining 49 municipalities (Figure 1).

The same pattern is observed in the artisanal activity, where we see that 22.9% of artisans are located in the City of Bejaia, compared to only 8.2% in Akbou and 4.17% in El Kseur, despite these two municipalities housing two industrial zones (Figure 1).

The province has a capital city that houses all the commanding functions within its territory. The City of Bejaia serves as the capital of the province, and its administrative status grants it several advantages: the concentration of key facilities and functions. The country's development strategy favors the concentration of industrial activities, public facilities (hospitals, cultural centers, etc.), government offices, universities, etc., in urban centers rather than dispersing them throughout the region's territory. In this case, capital cities like Bejaia become the main spaces of concentration. The rest of the territory maintains functional, administrative, and economic links with the provincial capital. The other two major industrial zones (Akbou and El Kseur) present similar characteristics and remain priority destinations for investors compared to other areas.

Figure 1: Distribution of SMEs and artisans in the Bejaia city as of the end of 2021.



Source: established by the authors based on CNAS and DPSB data.

2.2 Urban growth engines

If we consider the twentieth century, during which the urban population became predominantly and almost exclusively Algerian in both the interior and the ports, three urban systems have succeeded one another. The main engines driving this growth were initially rural exodus and accelerated urbanization, followed by the availability of human capital and the amenities necessary to support it, and finally the availability of more suitable basic infrastructure, which is far from being the case in rural areas.

2.2.1 Rural exodus and accelerated urbanization in the city of Bejaia

The system dominated by rural exodus corresponds to the worsening dependence of rural areas, which are by definition interior regions, on cities. An important aspect characterizing the spatial distribution of the population is the low level of urbanization, which stands at 34.34%, representing an urban population of 314,227 inhabitants compared to a rural population of 600,773. Bejaia constitutes the main urban center of the wilaya, accounting for 55% of the total urban population.

In 2018, more than 3 out of 5 inhabitants live in the chief towns; over a quarter reside in secondary agglomerations, and the rest in hamlets and scattered areas. It should be noted that not all chief towns are urban agglomerations. The ONS defines these entities as follows: an agglomeration is a group of 100 or more buildings, spaced less than 200 meters apart (2008 RGPH). The agglomeration where the town hall is located is called the Main Agglomeration; other agglomerations within the same municipality are called Secondary Agglomerations. Once all the agglomerations are demarcated, the remaining part of the municipality constitutes the scattered territory or Scattered Zone, which consists of small clusters of dwellings (less than 100 buildings), known as hamlets or localities. The agglomeration, as defined, should not be confused with an urban zone that incorporates other criteria, such as those related to the sectoral employment of the population (less than 25% agricultural employment) or the minimum threshold of agglomerated population (in Algeria, the adopted threshold is 500) to characterize urbanization.

2.2.2 Human Capital

Levels of education, vocational training, and higher education are essential prerequisites for the success of any development strategy. The enhancement of human capital is dependent on the existence and quality of social infrastructure (such as general and vocational education, higher education, healthcare coverage, hospitals, and social services). In this context, we use the training structure in the Bejaia region as an indicator of human capital potential, primarily concentrated in the city of Bejaia, represented by the university.

The sector of vocational training and higher education plays a significant role in developing human capital. The Bejaia province has 51 public and private vocational training institutions, distributed as follows: 24 public institutions with a capacity to accommodate 6,800 individuals, 4 public institutions outside of vocational training (a paramedical school with a capacity of 175 students, a Chamber of Commerce school with a capacity of 100 students, a maritime

school with a capacity of 100 students, and an accredited private school with a capacity of 1,457 students); and 23 private institutions, the CFPA. The courses offered in these institutions cover various specialties and provide four categories of diplomas: Higher Technician's Certificate, Technician's Certificate, Vocational Aptitude Certificate, and Vocational Mastery Certificate.

Regarding higher education, the Bejaia province has a university organized into 8 faculties and 33 departments or study programs, which welcomed more than 45,781 students for the academic year 2016/2017. This represents a 13.36% increase compared to the 2009/2010 academic year. However, with the proliferation of study programs and the growing number of students, the quality of supervision is decreasing. In response to this, a Higher School of Computer Science and Digital Technologies was established in 2019 in the municipality of Amizour, relieving some of the burden on the city of Bejaia and enhancing the value of Amizour.

2.2.3 The Infrastructure

The monograph of the Bejaia province published by the DPAT provides detailed information about the existing (and projected) infrastructure and development and planning facilities. Therefore, we will only mention the main infrastructures and essential facilities of the region.

Bejaia has a network of intra-province and inter-province nodes and networks. The road network consists of national roads with a total length of 444 km, of which 273 km are in good condition. The provincial roads total 659 km, with only 159 km in good condition as of 2008. There are also 3,467 km of communal roads, of which 2,445 km are paved. The region has a railway track that stretches 89 km along the entire Soummam valley, with 9 stations located in the main urban areas.

Additionally, Bejaia boasts several crucial infrastructures and basic facilities, including one of the most dynamic ports in the country, an international-class airport, industrial and activity zones, as well as cultural infrastructures and communication means, although these are heavily concentrated in the city of Bejaia.

The region also has a robust tourist infrastructure with 63 hotels totaling only 2,786 beds. However, due to the quality of local public services and planning, the existing infrastructure and basic facilities are not fully utilized.

At the same time, the glaring lack of equipment and infrastructure, especially in peripheral areas, drives the population to move towards the city center. In this case, the scarcity combines with the pressure on existing infrastructures. Without adequate resources for implementation and anticipation of needs, the existing facilities bear an excessive burden. Delays in housing and basic infrastructure development, amid rapid urbanization, will result in urban precarity on one hand and the proliferation of speculation on the other hand. Speculation leads to the growth of informal settlements, a major issue in Algerian cities today.

History teaches us that urbanization is a "natural" trend that accompanies the process of change, technical, economic, and cultural progress that every country undergoes in its journey towards progress and development. The transition from a rural way of life to an urban lifestyle is inseparable from the level of development. Any developing society experiences a connection between improving living standards and changing the living environment.

3. The City of Bejaia: A Space of Pendular Immigration

Internal mobilities, especially pendular movements, are dynamic and diverse. They can occur between rural areas, from rural to urban zones, between urban areas, or in a circular manner.

In order to grasp the phenomenon of pendular immigration within the Bejaia province, we conducted fieldwork during which we interviewed a sample of 300 individuals who regularly commute between their place of residence and the city of Bejaia. It is widely acknowledged that the primary incentive for pendular immigration is employment. Therefore, throughout this section, we will highlight the significance of the city of Bejaia in terms of employment within the entire province. However, before delving into this aspect, it is necessary to provide a brief definition of pendular immigration.

3.1 Definition

Pendular immigration is a phenomenon characteristic of large urban areas and spatial division of activities. The term refers to the daily movements of individuals between their homes and workplaces, back and forth. The term "pendular" is justified by the specific time frames within which these movements occur.

These individuals are referred to as "commuters" (those who shuttle back and forth). This term, originating from Belgian French, is also used in Switzerland and, more recently, in France, although it is worth noting that it remains rarely used. It is essential to emphasize that this phenomenon can encompass various social, economic, and tax-related realities.

All specialists (authors, institutions) agree that places with concentrated employment are generally located in city centers. These places are the sites of events, exchanges, and politics, as urbanization goes hand in hand with the tertiary sector's job concentration and administrative centralization. The city center is particularly attractive for various activities.

However, it is important to recall that after the war, the significant development of urban areas posed a housing problem that was resolved through the expansion of urban areas and the creation of suburbs. Consequently, housing is generally situated on the outskirts of cities, while employment remains concentrated in the city center. Nevertheless, more recently, a trend of outward migration from cities has developed for many people, with certain urban areas experiencing a portion of their population leaving the city in search of a better living environment while retaining their professional activities. As a result, it is evident that during the beginning and end of the active workday, workers move in the same direction (from outside to inside in the morning and from inside to outside in the evening).

3.2 The most attractive sectors for commuter immigrants

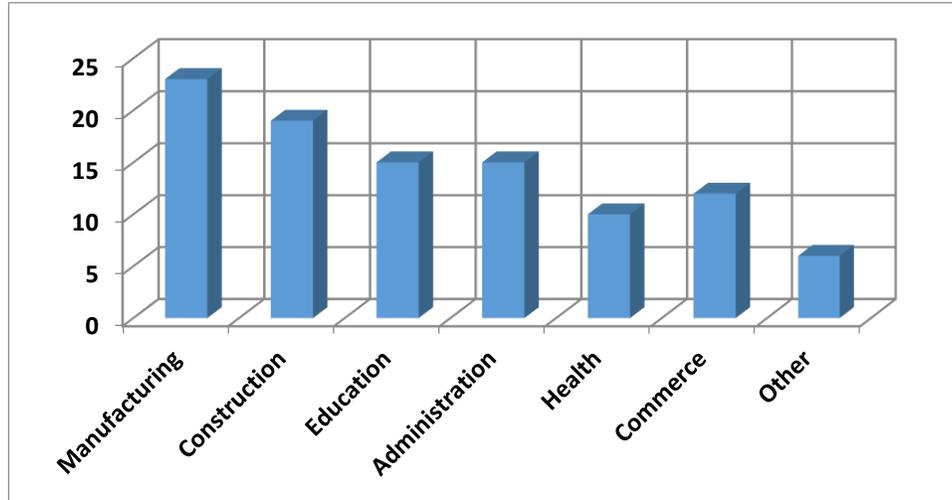
The distribution of migratory flows in a given region is not random. Indeed, some host regions may be more appealing than others for specific categories of people. Individuals seek a residential or work region that maximizes their well-being. They evaluate different alternatives and choose the option that provides them with the most satisfaction, considering their human and financial resources. Based on this, they then decide whether to migrate or stay. The analysis we will conduct will allow us to distinguish the explanatory factors behind the commuting mobility of individuals from rural and peripheral regions to the city of Bejaia.

The search for a more favorable economic situation and sources of income is one of the primary variables currently influencing mobility decisions, whether made by an individual or a community. This aligns with the findings of the OECD (2008) and the IOM (2009).

In some cases, we observe a dual inflection point, which warrants further analysis: a repulsion from the places of departure, sometimes incapable of offering sufficient income sources, and a temporary or permanent attraction to certain dynamic areas with qualifying or non-qualifying opportunities. This observation holds true in our case, where the city of Bejaia houses a significant portion of the province's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

It appears that the industrial sector attracts a considerable proportion of this workforce, with 23% of the respondents, closely followed by the construction sector (BTPH) at 19%. The public administration and education sectors, each with a proportion of 15%, are also attractive sectors. Trade and healthcare come next, with percentages of 12% and 10%, respectively (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: The most employing sectors of commuter immigrants in 2022 (%)



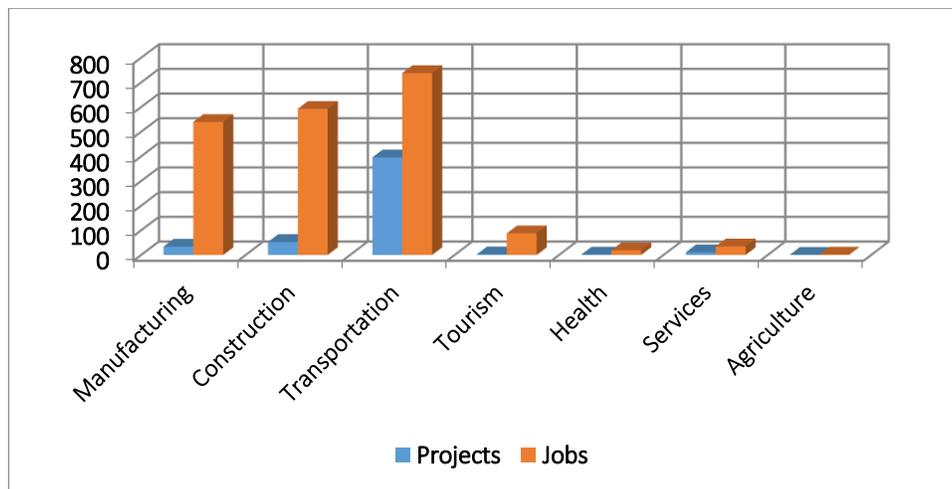
Source: compiled by the authors based on responses collected from the interviewed individuals.

The construction sector (BTPH) is frequently mentioned in the responses, and yet, the sector has experienced a decline in growth since 2014 due to the fall in oil prices, the main source of funding for this sector. Indeed, the Central Bank of Algeria (2019) points out that the economic fundamentals of recent years indicate the continuation of growth at a moderate pace, particularly driven by the 3.8% growth in the construction sector (BTPH). This is also entirely true for the Bejaia region, where several projects are underway (universities, schools, housing,...).

The industry, on the other hand, is well represented by the agri-food sector, which remains a favored segment. It should be noted that the Bejaia region exhibits a strong dynamic of business creation, especially in the agri-food domain. The most remarkably evolving niches include carbonated beverages, juices, milk, pasta, as well as the entire processing industry, notably olive oil and tomato processing, particularly in the Akbou region. There are also several processing units and a large semolina and pasta complex, affiliated with the public group ERIAD, in the Sidi-Aich zone. Additionally, the region benefits from significant industrial and transportation infrastructure, such as a port, an international airport, railways, and national roads 09 and 21. Its proximity to major cities and other urban centers (Sétif, Tizi Ouzou, Algiers, Constantine, Jijel,...) makes the Soummam valley a strategically important region for supplies and logistics.

When looking at the sectors that have witnessed the highest number of projects and job creations during the year 2019, it becomes evident that the construction sector (BTPH) and the industry remain highly promising niches with 11 and 15 jobs per project, respectively. The transport sector is the segment experiencing the most significant dynamic in terms of business creation, but with a limited job creation rate (less than 2 jobs per project).

Figure 3: Number of projects and number of jobs during the year 2019 in the province of Bejaia.



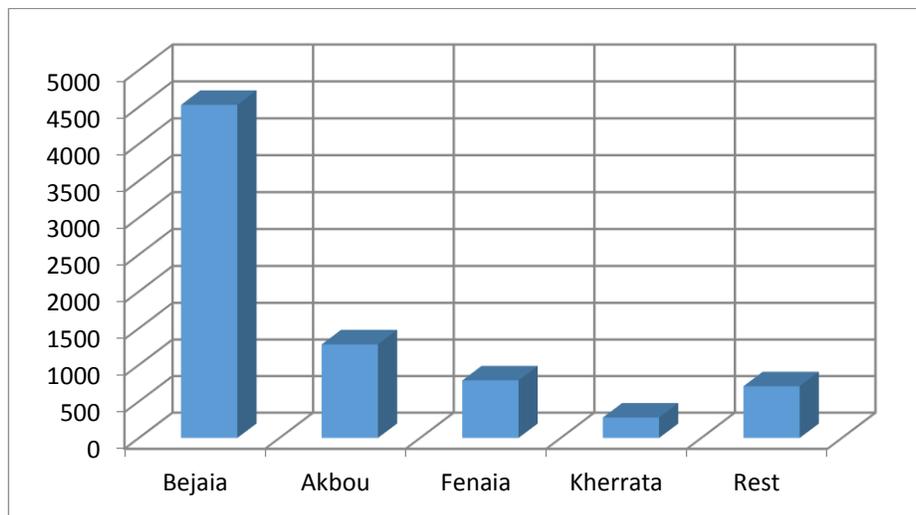
Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the National Agency for Investment Development (ANDI) (now known as AAPI - Algerian Agency for Investment Promotion).

The administration and education sectors highlight the significance of the public service as a recruitment niche in the city of Bejaia. The concentration of public facilities and educational infrastructure justifies the presence of a considerable number of individuals commuting to work in these sectors.

3.3 The city of Bejaia, the main recruitment center of the province

As of the end of 2018, out of 7,402 jobs in public industrial units, 4,528 are located in the city of Bejaia, accounting for 59.7% of the total (Table 1). The remaining jobs are located outside the city, particularly in the second largest industrial zone of the province, namely Akbou, with 1,280 jobs (16.88% of the total jobs). The commune of F enaia benefits from 785 jobs (10.35%), which is a significant number, primarily attributed to the company ALFADITAX Algeria Manufacturing Diversified, involved in the production of carded fabrics and non-woven articles (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Distribution of jobs in public industrial units by region as of the end of 2019.

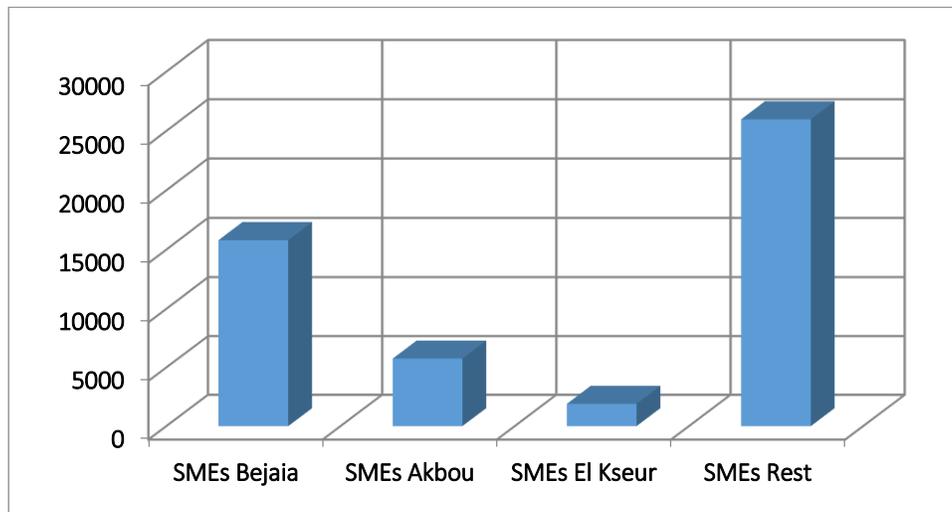


Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the Provincial Directorate of Statistics and Budget (DPSB).

In the private sector, more than half of the industrial workforce in the main units is located in Akbou. If we consider that the location of public enterprises is a historical trend, while the private sector reflects the current trend, we can observe that the historical location is largely centralized in Bejaia, where the basic infrastructure necessary for industrial development is available. This trend of concentrating industrial activity in urban areas will be somewhat abandoned with the rise of the private sector. However, the city of Bejaia still maintains its leading position in the region regarding small and medium-sized enterprises (Figure 1). This indicates that the city is undergoing a sectoral transition compared to the rest of the region.

However, the overall workforce (employment) of SMEs (both private and public) remains concentrated in the city of Bejaia, despite the growth of the industrial zone in Akbou, which has become more attractive to the private sector. In fact, the SMEs in the city of Bejaia employed 15,794 people as of the end of 2010, accounting for nearly 32% of the total jobs created by SMEs in the province. The Akbou industrial zone comes in second place with 5,762 jobs, representing over 11.6% of the total jobs. El Kseur remains less active in terms of SME location and job creation, with only 1,906 jobs created as of the end of 2018 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Share of SME employment in the major cities of the province of Bejaia as of the end of 2018.

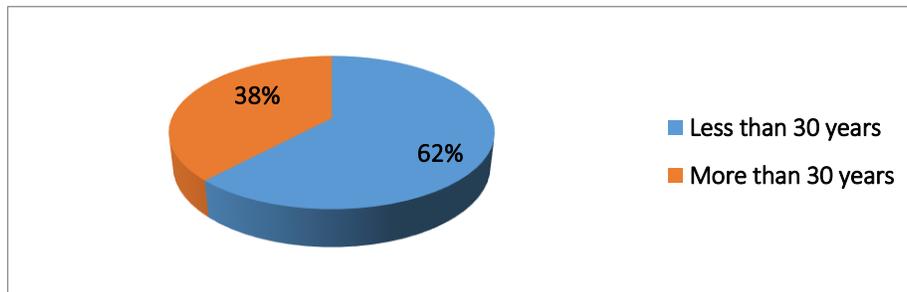


Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the National Social Security Fund (CNAS) and the Provincial Directorate of Statistics and Budget (DPSB).

3.4 Age and Employment (Formal and Informal) of Commuter Immigrants

What particularly catches our attention is that young individuals are more represented in our sample, with 62% of people being under 30 years old, while 38% are over 30 years old. This is mainly explained by the fact that most of the respondents were interviewed at the Bejaia bus station, indicating that they have not accumulated enough work years to acquire a vehicle.

Figure 6: Distribution of respondents according to age.

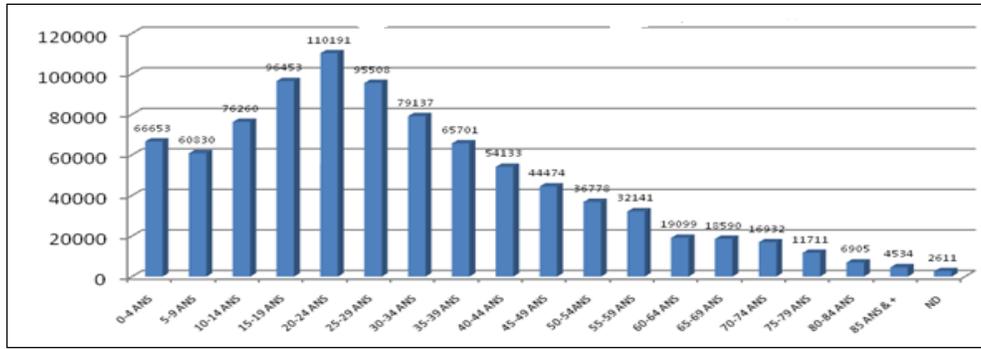


Source: compiled by the authors based on responses collected from the interviewed individuals.

However, when we closely examine the population structure of the region, everything becomes evident. Indeed, the population structure is an important factor that allows us to assess the workforce potential of a region, and this potential is even more significant when the population is large and young. The population structure of the Bejaia region satisfies both criteria. Since the gender structure goes beyond the scope of this work, we will assess the population potential based on the age structure for the year 2008.

The age group of 20-24 years is the largest, comprising 110,191 individuals, accounting for 12.04% of the population. The category of individuals aged between 15 and 30 years is strong, with 302,152 inhabitants, representing one-third of the population. Over a broader range, encompassing individuals aged 19 to 60 years, it can be observed that nearly 60% of the population is of working age, equivalent to 629,048 inhabitants (Figure 7). However, beyond the quantitative aspect, it is the level of qualification and education of the population that matters most in advanced countries. Therefore, let us attempt to assess the human capital of Bejaia.

Figure 7: Age structure of the total population (2008).

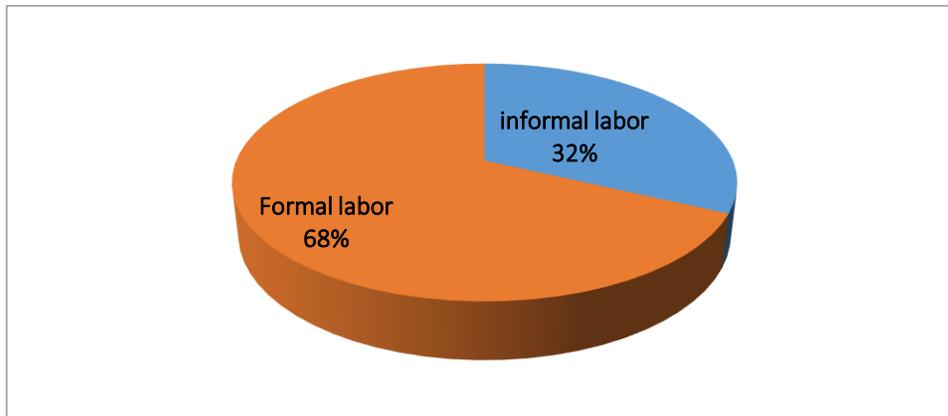


Source: Data from the National Office of Statistics (ONS) based on the General Population and Housing Census (RGPH) of 2008.

Our work shows that a significant proportion of individuals who commute are engaged in informal work, meaning they are not registered with the National Social Security Fund (CNAS) (Figure 9). The construction sector (BTPH) seems to employ the most informal workers, with 70.8%, equivalent to 68 respondents. In this context, it is important to mention that the current flexibility of migrant workers and accelerated mobility methods allow them to meet the evolving needs of the national labor markets. However, this flexibility can lead to violations of labor laws.

J-P. Cassarino (2008) and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (2008) show that certain migrants, particularly those vulnerable, work without protection, in illegality, and receive very low wages, if they are paid at all. This situation is detrimental to the integration of these migrants into their host societies or to their potential reintegration into their countries of origin upon their return.

Figure 8: Type of work carried out: formal or informal.



Source: compiled by the authors based on responses collected from the respondents.

Moreover, globalization, the development of affordable transportation, and easy access to means of communication enable people to explore the world and its socio-economic inequalities, fostering a desire to experience societies different from their own (perceived as more civilized), both at the national and international levels. These findings align with the results of the work conducted by Freire (2006).

As a result, migratory flows related to work are emerging, driven by trade, the attractiveness of wealthier and more dynamic territories, areas that welcome investments and consequently call for labor and entrepreneurship.

In a more general context, it should be noted that rural exodus in developing countries and the high rate of urban growth in the developing world are the most notable representations of internal mobility. Internal migrations within developing countries, combined with significant population growth, have facilitated the emergence of urban centers whose attractive force is challenging to control. Between 1900 and 2000, the urban population multiplied by 10, going

from 262 million (163 million in developed countries, 99 million in developing countries) to 2.856 billion (882 million in developed countries, 1.974 billion in developing countries) (King R., Skeldon R., and Vullnerati J., 2008). These researchers estimate that 40% of the urbanization in Asian, African, and Latin American developing countries is attributed to internal migrations.

We also want to emphasize that, as presented in the "Local Communities and Urban Development Strategic Framework" by the AFD (French Development Agency), these trends are expected to continue, as developing countries are projected to increase their current urbanization rate of 44% (compared to 74% for developed countries) to 70% of their populations by 2050 (UN-Habitat, 2008). This urban growth, varying across regions of the globe, is partly driven by the influx of migrant populations, alongside the in situ demographic growth of cities.

In the same vein, the UN DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs) (2008) shows that cities or areas offering basic services such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, telecommunications, economic services, and entrepreneurship exert a significant attractive force. They are perceived as places where one can find employment and educational opportunities.

At the same time, the underdevelopment of secondary urban centers can, in some cases, foster territorial imbalances, which may influence the direction of internal migrations and the growth rates of major urban centers. This observation has been demonstrated by Beauchemin C. and Schoumaker B. (2005) in certain African countries such as Ghana and Burkina Faso.

Furthermore, Losch B. (2008) illustrates that the economic needs of origin communities and families, as well as the limited capacity to absorb labor by local economies (both rural and urban), can lead to the mobility of some of their members (varying by age and gender).

Similarly, the works of UN DESA (2008) and IOM (International Organization for Migration) (2009) demonstrate that migrations can increase incomes and promote diversification of activities, thereby reducing the risks of sudden decrease in family resources, for example, in the event of climatic hazards. This explains the influx of commuter migrants to the city of Bejaia.

4. Conclusion

Based on this research, we can conclude that the city of Bejaia has undergone a rapid and intense transformation of its appearance. The city has been changing at a frantic pace and in a heterogeneous manner, following processes that result in various types of spatial occupations. These processes are linked to residential space occupation behaviors, economic activity spatial occupation, and national development policies. These dynamics of growth and urban expansion occur in the absence of a comprehensive action framework.

The current configuration of Bejaia is the result of economic development choices that have prevailed since independence, but these choices did not incorporate the urban dimension in their perspective. Dispersed industrial and service activities have turned this city into an attractive center for labor, but they have also contributed to the degradation of the living environment, leading to traffic congestion and various kinds of noise. Therefore, the economic dynamism experienced by this city negatively impacts the construction and development of a decent living environment. In other words, the current configuration unfolds at the expense of human development.

The city of Bejaia remains the main employment hub of the province. It concentrates two-thirds (2/3) of the jobs in the region. It benefits from several important and complementary areas, including:

- ✓ The city center, which brings together service activities, commercial establishments, and administrative facilities.
- ✓ The university area, housing the education sector and major public and private enterprises.
- ✓ The port area, extending towards the complexes of Cevital and Sonatrach.
- ✓ The major construction sites, where the bulk of the social and state-assisted housing program is concentrated.

The work we have conducted shows that the most attractive sectors for immigrants are construction (BTPH), industry, administration, and education. In fact, K. Feroukhi, Y. Belarbi, and M. Y. Ferfera (2009) demonstrate that in Algeria, having completed education beyond the third year of secondary school is not a significant factor in inter-provincial mobility. Migration tends to occur towards more urban provinces with high employment rates in the construction sector (BTPH), rather than towards provinces with high agricultural employment rates and high unemployment.

We are fully aware that a sample of 300 individuals cannot provide a complete understanding of the phenomenon of commuter immigration. However, it allows us to gain a better insight into the problem.

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