# DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN ALGERIA TO ELIMINATE THE HOUSING CRISIS

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**Abstract**:

Nowadays, Algeria is experiencing the housing crisis that is getting worse with demographic growth. According to the recent statistics which indicate that the population of Algeria is constantly increasing. This increase required to think about policies and projects to cover the deficit that cities are suffering to decrease the volume of needs related to space, housing, and other various facilities at the city level.

Considering that the establishment of "new cities" is one of the solutions pursued by most countries in order to eliminate the housing crisis, this political trend is evident in the path of many developed countries through their experiences in the field of establishing new cities...

In Algeria, the establishment of new cities was a political choice imposed by the unbalanced urban conditions and the stifling housing crisis. However, the many problems that Algeria suffers from hinder for instance; projects, especially the problems related to natural growth and migration towards cities.[1]

What is the reality of the new cities in Algeria? Was the state able to eliminate the housing crisis by establishing new cities?

**Keywords:** development policies - new cities - housing.

**Introduction:**

The city takes a crucial importance and interest as a social phenomenon in History. This interest appears especially after all the miserable conditions resulting from the industrial revolution appeared in Europe in particular, like many environmental and social problems.

It is necessary to propose solutions to resolve, reduce the damage of these issues, and avoid a crisis by treatment the reasons, analyzing and organizing social processes and respecting their historical aspects without neglecting the ecological and spatial aspect.

1. **Defining concepts:**

**1-1The city (means in language):**

City: (noun), city: source of an owner, city: a population gathering greater than that of the village, as a (verb), means owe someone a living. (Dower) means making it characterized by civility, taking the means of civilization. **[2]**

**1-2 Definition of the city:**

When we try to give a definition of the city, we face difficulty in doing so, as it does not relate to the term city alone because many researchers, especially social scientists, realize what we mean by the word city, but no one has provided a satisfactory definition for it, and this is because it is a complex phenomenon generated by the interaction of a number of intertwined factors. Hence, scholars differed in their definition of it, and different definitions emerged according to each scholar's point of view. **(3)**

**1-3 Definition of the new city:**

It is the establishment of an integrated city with a population exceeding 50,000 people, with multiple functions (residential function, work function...) with the possibility to frequent the old center. It is a distinctive creation with special technical and cultural requirements, and its final form was not the result of development over time, but was conceived as an integrated project according to a pacification that was prepared previously. **(4)**

2. **Essentials factors of the emergence of new cities:**

Many historians and scholars agree that the idea of new cities is not recent however it began thousands of years ago. In the fifth century AD, ancient Roman cities deteriorated due to the fall of the empire, the deterioration of trade, the weaknesses of their relation with Europe and its population is decreasing and politically weakened. However, it quickly revived at the beginning of the eleventh century, but the cities that appeared in this period were not an extension of the ancient cities, they emerged as new social entities. **(5)**

Foreign trade had the greatest influence that contributed to the emergence of these new cities. The idea of new cities is an old idea that responded to the problems of the old city, it remained as a way to solve these problems, and over time, changes were made to it by many countries. However, this idea remains very similar for a common reason, which is eliminating the housing crisis in terms of priorities.

Recent studies indicate that in many developing countries the rates of population increase in major cities have begun to decrease, while in less developed countries we find that the concentration factors are still very strong. Therefore, the city is growing much faster than medium and small cities, and this of course leads to multiple urban problems, due to the inability of these cities and their management to accommodate the increasing numbers of residents and economic activities. This is the behind reason which, less developed countries, began establishing many new cities of all types. **(6)**

Therefore, the solution to overcoming the problems in which ancient cities live is, considered as the main factor associated with the establishment of new cities, it aims to achieve a social and economic level that enables them to reach their goals.

In addition, new cities require four basic elements: the presence of an economic base, self-sufficiency, land uses and services, and finally the nature of society.

The last three elements depend on the first element in the emergence of cities, which depend on the existence of an economic base that creates financial savings concentrated in the location or place that is spatially and geographically appropriate for the formation of the city.

The ways and means of establishing new cities are controlled by two main factors: natural resources and human effort.

These ways, factors and components were sufficient to think about establishing new cities in Algeria, in addition to being considered the ideal means of exploiting the geographical area, such as rational exploitation to create a balance between the high plateaus and the south for avoiding the imbalance in the urban structure, and in cities due to the lack of justice in distribution and rural displacement resulting from rural poverty in addition to high natural growth.

However, those who observe the reality of the new cities in Algeria realize that there is a state of instability and fluctuation in relation to all the aforementioned components, which makes the inevitability of reaching this reality inevitable.

Starting to establish new cities requires the availability of all the elements... In Algeria, the main goal, which is considered primarily political, was to create the largest number of housing units, so no attention was paid to services or the nature of Algerian society; without paying attention to services or the nature of Algerian society.

### 3. Aims of the new cities:

The aim of modern architecture was to seek for a new model for the city, by proposing a new methodology or way of working separated from the institutional divisions of the past. Because the city; at that time; began to suffer from the growth of transportation and mobility and the concentration of trade and new urban equipment (gas, electricity, telephone, rail transport on the surface or underground). Finding themselves under pressure in the inadequate public spheres of the post-liberal city, European cities, as in the world, are growing and developing more quickly. These transformations weakened the traditional forms of management and required renewal of the built framework.

The increasing housing problem due to rapid demographic growth that has a heated debate, in this era, especially since the world today knows a violent population explosion in its various major cities. This is evident from the statistics contained in the World Bank report, which show that the population has more than doubled and is now increasing by a rate ranging between 80 to 90 million people per year. This terrible population increase is accompanied at the same time by the needs of individuals and groups for housing and other necessary collective facilities and equipment. **(7)**

The new city is one of the urban methods adopted by most countries to reduce population density in major cities.

In Algeria, new cities are a solution to the housing crisis that was the result of increasing rates of population growth and migration from the countryside to the city, especially in the nineties (the period of insecurity), which forced many residents to migrate to the cities. It created a new situation "Population belt" that surrounds the cities and made up of chaotic and tin housing.

After Algeria regained its security, stability and its economy recovered. Authority began Thinking about radical solutions to these phenomena that caused cities to suffer from congestion and the subsequent problems of transportation, housing, and public facilities. New cities were the ideal solution to eliminate these phenomena. **(8)**

### 4. International experience of new cities:

The idea of creating new cities as an urban development policy emerged in the early twentieth century, based on the writings of "Ebenezer Howard" which embodied in the establishment of two garden cities around London in England.

At the global level, the goals behind building new cities varied, including industrial development and reducing the gaps in development levels between regions, like the situation in Britain, in order to relieve pressure on major cities, such as in France and Egypt, and to build new capitals for countries such as Australia and Brazil, and Others aimed to exploit natural resources, as in the industrial cities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, "Jubail," and finally the new cities whose their expansion and prosperity were educational institutions or medical services, as is the case in the United States of America. **(9)**

### 4 New cities in developing country societies:

Most developing countries suffer from an increase in the population of their major cities. It is necessary to adopt an effective policy to control this phenomenon and the resulting problems. Most of these countries; in their development policy, turned to urban planning in order to reduce the urban issues they suffer from. Among those measures: the new cities policy as a tool for urban renewal, which has become a necessity required by the circumstances embodied in the world as a whole.

This policy has been implemented in many developing countries through the establishment of new cities of all kinds (independent and dependent). The sizes of these cities range from small residential communities such as suburbs to large independent industrial cities.

The purposes for establishing new cities vary from one country to another. For example: The city of "New Bombay" in India was established in 1971 in order to redistribute the population within the territory of the city of "Bombay" and for absorbing the huge immigration that flows into the city constantly, in addition to trying to solve The problem of the huge concentration of population and activities within the old city. **(10)**

### 5. New urban policies in Algeria since 1990:

Algeria inherited from the colonial era a capitalist economic structure that carries a lot of destruction, sabotage and fundamental contradictions, especially on the eve of independence, when about 35% of the settlers and businessmen left. After smuggling money and evacuating the treasury of the state. Most of the manufacturing industrial units have become in a state of confusion and inability to achieve national production, which has resulted in millions of unemployed people, in addition to the political conflict and the transition of a petty bourgeois class at the leadership level, which has further created some economic chaos.

Since independence, Algeria has worked to revive the country's development in order to improve the standard of living, education, health and services. Thus, over three decades, it achieved major transformations in political and economic life that clearly affected the social structure and transformation of

Algerian society. One of the effects of this policy was that the phenomenon of urbanization increased at record levels, as the number of communities doubled to more than 4,000 residents, and the policy of rural lighting, equipment, and poverty alleviation expanded. The number of workers increased from 810,000 in 1969 to 3,840,000 in 1985, thus increasing the incomes of Algerian families more than 10 times. **(11)**

The role of plans and state intervention played a major role in this structural change until the end of the eighties. However, this pattern of development showed countless flaws and shortcomings, which accumulated by the end of the eighties. Then, Algeria was affected by the global crisis in 1986; October 1988 was a decisive stage in the economic, political and social transformation within society. In addition, aspects of transformation began to appear in the direction of a liberal policy relying on structural reforms similar to many societies with a planned economy, and in this context, current legislation appeared in the field of development, reconstruction, and real estate management. The reality from which we start is the situation of the Algerian city and the crises it is suffering from, which necessitated the emergence of new urban policies. The crisis of the Algerian city is in fact a multi-level crisis of society. It is the physical and cultural field in which all political, economic and social crises intersect. It is also the context in which the attempts to promote the development of the Algerian city from the standpoint of continuous response to social needs have failed.

However, we have reached the stage of an observed crisis, both for the private and the public, perhaps because we did not understand well the specificity of the Algerian city, and therefore our approach to the city was not with a sufficient degree of understanding and analysis, meaning that the studies surrounding the city lacked theoretical unity. **(12)**

We are talking about the crisis of the Algerian city from this aspect; we look at it from two basic angles that constitute the core of all civilizational problems on several levels:

**5.1 On the physical level:**

The unbalanced urban and urban expansion across the city's surroundings and agricultural lands, where agricultural lands were excised in order to establish residential projects and industrial areas to meet social needs for housing and facilities on the one hand, and to implement the industrialization policy on the other hand. For example, the area of agricultural lands that were overrun by urban expansion was estimated at Algeria between 1962 and 1992, about 150,000 hectares. **(13)**

- Excessive consumption of land, as statistics at the level of Algiers, as a sample, indicated that 1550 AH of agricultural land had been consumed since 1990. The areas consumed within the framework of government housing programs in the period between 1967 and 1985 were estimated at about 25,000 hectares. **(14)**

- The lack of an integrative dimension to the implemented reconstruction and construction policies, which has made them described in many neighborhoods as shrines (Citée Dortoirs), in addition to their lack of various technical networks and necessary services.

- Relying on tools that do not reflect the actual reality of the Algerian city with its socio-cultural and social components.

- The absence of a comprehensive view of the city's reality and the clear disconnect between design and achievement.

## 5.2. On the social level and urban life:

- The inability of individuals and groups to adapt to urban life.

- The decline of values, the spread of individualism and indifference towards the urban sphere.

- The collapse of the framework of urban life and the spread of diseases and pathological manifestations (high density, poverty, begging, violence, unemployment, deviance, family disintegration, etc.).

- Transportation crisis, especially for major cities.

- The increase in unemployment and the increase in the job crisis.

- The housing crisis due to the imbalance between supply and demand, as the housing occupancy rate rose from 5.15 in 1966 to 8.5 in 1987. **(15)**

In the context of talking about the population of cities, statistics on housing and population for the year 1998 indicate that there is a sharp disparity in spread from one region to another. While central Algeria occupies about 44% of them, the western region is estimated at 37% and the eastern region is estimated at about 31%, and the most densely populated provinces are The coastal states, as the three coastal metropolitan cities (Algiers, Annaba, and Oran) contain 25% of the total urban population in the country, which many scholars and researchers attribute to economic trends focused on these regions and no other interior regions, which generated marginalization and inequality in other regions.

The second aspect of reading the features of Algerian cities is related to the semi-urban area, as recorded figures indicate that the number of cities reached 597 urban centers in 1998, including 32 cities with a population exceeding 100,000 people, while in 1830 there were only 5 cities with a population of 30,000 residents, and the number of cities increased. The number of medium-sized cities (100-200 thousand residents) increased to 115 cities in 1987, compared to only 18 in 1954. **(16)**

he Algerian city crisis is in fact an intellectual, economic, social, cultural, political and urban crisis with multiple aspects and horizons, and this issue has become the subject of private and public discussion to the point that we do not need a scientific formulation to describe the current urban crisis, and to ensure that our cities are actually experiencing a set of manifestations that constitute... Ultimately, there is a framework for talking about the crisis, the most important of which are: **(17)**

-Random growth.

- The absence of urban planning, high density, and the complexity of social and urban problems.

- Developing suburban areas and peripheries surrounding cities.

- Urban growth through the plan.

- Environmental destruction and environmental pollution.

Misuse of urban land and conflicts around it.

- The spread of so-called new cities that do not have the basic components.

- The spread of informal activities.

- Reliance on green spaces and areas.

**New cities in Algeria:**

As we mentioned, the new cities policy is one of the policies adopted by most countries to solve urban problems.

The authorities have adopted a new cities strategy to confront rapid urbanization in Algeria, especially along the coastal strip and hills, where urban saturation has reached its maximum in large and medium-sized cities, and the resulting serious repercussions on the natural environment, especially the decline in the area of agricultural land due to urban expansion. **(18)**

The establishment and development of new urban communities in Algeria falls within the national policy aimed at preparing the region and sustainable development, in order to rebalance the urban environment on the one hand and redistribute the population on the other hand, taking into account the cultural and social specificities of each region. **(19)**

In 1995, the government headed by Miqdad Seifi approved several new city projects to be established near the city of Algiers, namely: Al-Maalama, Bouinan, Nasiriyah, and Al-Afroun, and similar projects for the cities of Oran and Constantine, and similar cities in the high plateaus, such as the Boghzoul city project, to achieve balance in the urban network. Alleviating the housing crisis and eliminating the slums, in addition to reviving economic development in the high plateaus and the south, in order to attract the surplus population present in northern Algeria, and reduce the demographic pressure on the human settlements located across the coastal strip and the hills, where the degree of urbanization has reached the point of saturation. **(20)**

Algerian government try to strop urban problems, it followed several policies in order to surpass them, such as creating new urban housing areas, which were applied at the level of major cities such as: Algiers, Oran, Constantine, and Annaba, where it was able, even if relatively speaking, to contain the housing crisis and control the random expansion of urbanization.

Due to the lack of facilities, these communities remained merely sleeping neighborhoods due to their total dependence on the city and its center. The necessity of creating new, integrated cities became the most appropriate solution to relieve the stranglehold on major cities. However, the idea of establishing new, independent cities requires huge investments to achieve them. The new city in its contemporary sense does not express a place limited to creating shrines for humans. Rather, its urban plans stipulate the provision of all structures, equipment, and facilities, and economic institutions that allow it independence. Otherwise, these projects are considered just like a dormitory for humans.

In general, the idea appeared in the seventies and disappeared on the shelves, then talk about it resumed in the nineties. However, the years of embers, or as it is called the black decade, that the country suffered from were also reflected in the reconstruction law with years of drought that prevented the idea of new cities from crystallizing on the ground as projects of national benefit. Rather, it was initially adopted in a very modest way at the local level, and this legal vacuum remained until the year 2002, **(21)** when Law 02-08 came, relating to the conditions for establishing and preparing new cities. The law gave a clear picture of the idea of establishing new cities, especially with regard to conditions and management, and in the year 2004.This policy has begun to materialize on the ground.

The establishment of new cities is linked to conditions to ensure their effectiveness in order to become an attractive pole, which can be explained as follows:

**6-1 Site selection:**

The major cities in Algeria suffer from the phenomenon of unfair distribution of population. The greatest trend was towards the city of Algiers, which has always been an attractive pole, followed by the other three cities: Oran, Constantine, and Annaba. **(22)**

For this reason, the legislator decided in Law 02/08 regarding the conditions for establishing new cities to specify specific locations for the establishment of new cities. This choice is limited to three locations: the north, the high plateaus, and the south. He considered the establishment of new cities in the high plateaus and the south to be the basis. As for In the north, the establishment of cities is considered exceptional because it is subject to conditions, which is to remove the stranglehold on the four metropolitan places.

**6-2 Procedural mechanism for establishing cities:**

According to Article 6. of the law relating to the conditions for establishing and developing new cities, which states: "The establishment of a new city shall be decided by executive decree based on the approved territorial development tools, and after taking the opinion of the relevant regional groups." **(23)**

From the text of the article, it is clear to us that establishing a new city can only be done by an executive decree authorizing it, as it is a mandatory condition without which it cannot be achieved. The content of which the legislator specified in the text of the establishment, in particular, is the following:

*Designate or mention the municipality or municipalities concerned.

*Determine the city's protection perimeter.

*The general program of the new city and its functions. **(24)**

Article 8 of the law relating to the conditions for establishing and developing new cities stipulates that: "For each new city, a plan shall be created called the New Cities Development Plan. This plan shall cover the specific development area of this new city and its protection area, and shall take into account the cultural and social peculiarities of the region." **(25)**

In the same context and within the framework of celebrating the National Day of the city in Algeria, which hold on February 18 of each year. Presented by Mr. Kamal Touati **(26)** He explained the various issues

related to urban expansion, as well as the so-called new or smart cities, he stated that celebrating City Day is an opportunity to exchange experiences and take in everything that is new in developed countries despite the presence of training inside. Does this mean that urbanization in Algeria is developing to become like global urbanism? Mr. Kamal Touati adds in this regard that Algeria is young and urbanization is complex. If we compare the nature of urbanization previously with what exists currently, we find new problems, as there is renewal, digitization, and urban development. In the seventies and eighties, we created new residential areas and summarized the shortcomings. Today, we have created compact neighborhoods, and based on their diagnosis, we can begin developing smart cities. Regarding the reason for establishing residential complexes for the sake of housing only, without basic structures, public facilities, or other facilities. In his opinion, this is due to the circumstances that Algeria went through, including the Black Decade and the resulting migration to the cities and the resulting pressure on the cities. In 1966, the urban communities were 3.8 million, and in 2008 they reached 22.5 million and 31 million in 2017, which constituted a great pressure. An example of this is the major cities, Algiers, the capital, whose population in 2017 reached approximately 5 million people... which gave priority to housing and the review of urbanization laws to relieve pressure by creating new urban poles and new cities, the latest of which is the city Sidi AbdAllah, which, according to him, is still in the process of being completed and can be developed, and it is not integrated due to the failure to implement the plans as they are, which resulted in many problems due to the lack of the simplest services such as drinking water, broken elevators, etc., despite the billions spent on the project. However, the new city, Sidi AbdAllah, we find that it lacks the necessities of life. He adds that the priority was housing and the rest of the matters we are in the process of addressing. As for the issue of similarity in the urban pattern approved in the plans, the Ministry is in the process of technical consultations in architecture in order to come up with a result that eliminates the gradual extensional pattern in urbanization. In order to take into account the pure Algerian style. There is something that has been addressed, and that is what relates to the plateaus and the south, where a decree was issued setting standards for construction and reconstruction so that there is diversity in construction across the country according to each region and its peculiarities, while leaving the powers to the local officials of each region to determine its characteristics. The south, for example, is characterized by its buildings with basements as well as special building materials to take into account climatic conditions. **(27)**

**Conclusion:**

The current era, which bears the features of modernity, we find more open to the world in terms of modernity techniques, urban construction, and architectural styles. We do not deny that the rupture that occurred between our culture and our civilized history has inherited ignorance of heritage, which has led to the emergence of urban patterns that have stripped urbanism of its identity and authenticity, and we have become in a hybrid environment. It changed our local architecture.

With the increase in demand for housing, it was necessary for the concerned authorities to find solutions to these problems, as the authorities took upon themselves the task of establishing new cities as one of the alternatives to reduce the increasing population pressure on major centers and the associated pressure on the level of public services and facilities, but the experience of new cities is unable to Containing and meeting the needs of the population by first looking at the approved plans, as well as involving social workers and the local community in them can be taken into consideration and adapted to avoid all or most of the problems.

The Algerian authority should reconsider the strategies, policies and plans of the cities, in order to find acceptance and satisfaction by the citizens. Therefore, these new cities do not pose other problems with the greatest losses. The citizen's acquisition of housing does not mean eliminating all problems. The vision should be deep and the dimensions of the housing phenomenon go beyond simply moving individuals to live in other housing under the name of a new city. The new city means improving housing conditions, as well as providing job positions and various services within the city, which contributes to stability and relieves pressure on the mother city, as well as providing some vitality by creating green spaces and public spaces. For playing and entertainment, and most importantly of all the above, adopting an urban style that preserves the area's natural, climatic and social characteristics.

**Recommendations:**

1- Paying attention to the completion of basic infrastructure to provide job positions that guarantee the financial and moral stability of the population

2- Educating residents about the necessity of contributing to the integration process in urban areas through establishing and forming associations and clubs.

3 - Reorganizing the existing urban space according to the new urban requirements to highlight the center that forms the field.

4 - Responding to the aspirations of local authorities to raise the urban level of the urban fabric of the city.

5 - Addressing the various existing problems and shortcomings by creating mechanisms to overcome them.

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17. Bashir Al-Tijani: previous reference, p. 70.

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