

## New Challenges for Local Development in Algeria

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### Abstract:

The topic of development, particularly local development, occupies an important position in economic thought, social research, government policies and programs, as well as in the activities of international and regional organizations and social movements. Development includes processes, approaches, and inputs, along with plans and programs, that enable societies to transition from stagnation to progress and strength, adopting paths of growth and advancement.

The development of the country and the fulfillment of the basic needs of local populations are realized through their self-driven efforts, supported by government bodies. The needs of residents and users are regarded as potential demands, with the state formulating strategic approaches to meet these needs in a facilitated and highly efficient manner.

**Keywords:** Future Prospects, Development, Local Administration, State Strategy.

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### Introduction

This topic holds significant importance due to the crucial role played by regional bodies, which are highly valued by the authorities for their deep knowledge of the intricacies and specificities of the areas within their jurisdiction. These bodies serve as grassroots entities, forming the foundational base of the state, as all structural development begins with them. Local development is a vital area of research in the social sciences, focusing on the study of phenomena and challenges associated with advancing local communities and enhancing the quality of life for their members.

Scientific studies in this domain contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms through which local entities operate and the factors that identify the success or failure of local development projects.

From a legal perspective, the challenges of local development have become a focal point for Algerian legislators, prompting the enactment of several laws and regulations aimed at promoting the role of local entities in this field. These laws are essential for defining the powers and responsibilities of local bodies and for providing the legal framework necessary to implement local development projects and achieve their various objectives.

This study aims to analyze Algeria's new vision for local development, understand the emerging roles of regional administrations under the newly introduced laws (the Province Law and the Municipality Law), determine the orientations of local development in Algeria, and assess the environment and context to address anticipated obstacles and challenges.

This study is divided into two main parts: the first part examines the prospects and stakes of local development, while the second part explores its challenges.

### **First Chapter: The Conceptual Framework and Prospects of Local Development**

Local development is a key tool for governments to fulfill their goals, offering members of local communities the material and intellectual freedom and independence necessary for a dignified life. It holds great importance, as it represents the result of collaborative efforts between the government and local communities. To achieve its objectives, obstacles must be minimized and addressed by utilizing the best available resources.

#### **First Section: The Concept and Forms of Local Development**

Local development includes several concepts and approaches, both intellectual and legal, and is classified into multiple forms and types.

##### **First Subsection: Definition of Local Development**

The National Charter of 1976 highlighted the role of municipalities and provinces in addressing local issues, alongside the central authority's role in handling national-level matters. This emphasizes the significance of encouraging local participation in development and fulfilling regional developmental balance.

The National Charter of 1986<sup>1</sup> regarded municipalities as the foundational units of the state and an effective tool for achieving local development goals. Researchers in the domain of local development have worked to adopt an intellectual concept of development based on social and economic principles. This approach highlights cultural transformations by raising awareness of the local environment and ensuring the participation of community members in processes of thought, planning, and execution at all levels<sup>2</sup>.

As for **the legal definition in the foundational texts**, the Constitution and laws related to local communities, including the Municipal Law, encompass developmental projects and programs that have been established within the framework of national planning policy. The Constitution serves as a key reference for the concept of development, as it outlines the state's role in fulfilling it through constitutional revisions.

Despite the significance of the state's efforts in achieving local development, the active participation of local elected officials and citizens is also considered essential. Local development is defined as the process that combines the efforts of citizens and public authorities to economically, socially, culturally, and civilizationally develop local communities, with the goal of improving the quality of life<sup>3</sup>.

In conclusion, local development is the process through which comprehensive and organized change is fulfilled in local communities, especially within the framework of the state's overall plans.

## **Second Subsection: Forms and Manifestations of Local Development**

Development has several forms and manifestations, which we address as follows:

### **First - Forms of Development:**

#### **A - National Development:**

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<sup>1</sup> The National Charter of 1976, issued under Ordinance No. 56/76 dated July 5, 1976, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Issue No. 61 of 1976. The National Charter of 1986, issued under Ordinance No. 86/22 dated February 8, 1986, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Issue No. 07 of 1986.

<sup>2</sup> Kamel Al-Tabai, *The Westernization of the Third World: A Critical Study in the Sociology of Development*, Cairo, Dar Al-Maaref, 1993, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> The Constitution of 1963, Official Gazette, Issue No. 64 of 1963. The Constitution of 1976, Official Gazette, Issue No. 94 of 1976. The Constitution of 1989, Official Gazette, Issue No. 09. The Constitution of 1996, Official Gazette, Issue No. 76 of 1996.

National development aims to enhance progress in various aspects of people's lives, advancing them from one level to another. This development is revolved around a key focus: the implementation of major projects undertaken by national authorities that go beyond the scope of local communities. These projects include the construction of national roads, railway networks, airports, university hospitals, and others, which serve multiple regions across the country<sup>4</sup>.

National development includes several initiatives and programs organized at the national level, sought at fulfilling development in local communities, such as:

1. **Infrastructure Development:** Building and developing roads and transportation networks, improving health and educational services, and offering essential services in local communities.
2. **Promoting Local Investment:** Supporting local entrepreneurship and encouraging investments in local areas to stimulate economic growth and create job opportunities.
3. **Enhancing Civil Participation:** Encouraging active citizen participation in local decision-making processes and enhancing transparency and accountability in the management of local resources and services.
4. **Safeguarding the Local Environment:** Raising environmental awareness and implementing policies and programs to conserve the local environment and enhance the quality of air, water, and soil.
5. **Human Resources Development:** Promoting education, vocational training, and offering employment opportunities to improve the living standards of residents in local areas<sup>5</sup>.

### **B - Sustainable Development:**

Sustainable development is a comprehensive approach sought at meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs. This approach focuses on balancing the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development, striving to fulfill sustainable progress across various domains.

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<sup>4</sup> Mustapha Abdelatif, Ben Sania Abderrahman, *The Start of Development Between Positivist Theories and the Methodology of Islamic Economics*, Paper presented at the First International Conference on Islamic Economics: Reality and Future Challenges, University Center of Ghardaïa, February 23-24, 2011, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Mustafa Al-Gendi, *The Reference in Local Administration*, Manshiyat Al-Ma'arif, Alexandria, 1971, p. 94.

Sustainable development includes fostering sustainable economic growth that supports prosperity and creates new job opportunities without negatively affecting the environment and natural resources. It also seeks to fulfill social justice and offer equal opportunities for all, with an emphasis on poverty reduction and enhancing the standard of living.

In 2006, the first Algerian urban law was introduced to define provisions for urban organization and development. Municipalities play a significant role in promoting local development and achieving urban progress, contributing to city growth and improving quality of life. Their role is evident in organizing urban activities and construction, preparing urban plans, such as land use plans and urban development master plans, in collaboration with economic stakeholders and civil society. Municipalities work to coordinate efforts to fulfill sustainable urban growth and social well-being, with the state adopting this policy within the framework of global standards for good governance and sustainable development.

### **C - Local (Regional) Development:**

Local development is a variety of tasks assigned to local communities within their regions, according to established laws and regulations, including national programs. These tasks reflect the local community's desire to develop and promote their societies in coordination with the adopted legal and regulatory systems<sup>6</sup>.

### **D - Rural Development:**

Rural development in Algeria is not limited to the national context but mainly concerns the situation of rural populations and the deterioration of their living conditions, particularly during the 1990s. It is viewed as an effort to fulfill social and economic balance, providing developmental opportunities for rural populations and ensuring equilibrium between these areas and urban regions<sup>7</sup>.

The urgent need for a rural development policy is emphasized by the challenges encountered by rural municipalities in Algeria, such as excessive migration in

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<sup>6</sup> Ahmed Abdel Fattah Naji, *Development Planning in Developing Countries*, Sana'a, Al-Maktabah Al-Jami'iyah Al-Hadithah, 2011, p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Abdelatif Ben Achenhou, *Rural Migration in Algeria*, National Institution, Commercial Printing Press of Algeria, undated, p. 03.

some areas and the decline in rural population numbers. Rural conditions vary from one municipality to another, requiring diverse approaches.

A rural development vision should be established, and sustainable projects should be developed to satisfy the needs of the population and enhance local belonging. The rural development policy is grounded in the National Rural Development Strategy, which was prepared in June 2004, introduced to the Government Council twice, and became a reality after its approval in February 2006. The strategy was implemented in municipalities across all 48 provinces, and its effectiveness and success have been demonstrated, with each province creating its own strategy based on local conditions.

Thus, the Government Council highlighted the significance of the National Sustainable Rural Development Strategy and neighborhood rural development projects during its February 2006 meeting, defining its concept and scope, which confirms the importance of this policy for comprehensive development in rural areas.

### **E - Tourism Development:**

The focus on tourism development has positioned countries as key players in establishing appropriate mechanisms for rational investment in this sector. This effort seeks to contribute to community development by sustainably using local resources during the implementation of several development projects. It also takes into account the geographical, historical, and environmental features of each municipality. For example, coastal municipalities have a different tourism funding dynamic compared to those with natural reserves or historical sites<sup>8</sup>.

### **Second Section: Levels and Sources of Development Funding**

Achieving and implementing local development occurs at various levels and through multiple financial funding sources.

#### **First Subsection: Levels of Local Development**

Local development operates on various levels, including:

#### **A - Development at the Municipality Level:**

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<sup>8</sup> Atiyah Abir, *Tourism Development at the International and Local Levels*, Alexandria University, Egypt, undated, p. 44.

At the municipality level, various active entities collaborate to fulfill local development. This level includes the municipal council, which represents the municipality's residents as an elected legislative body, the elected mayor, who assumes executive responsibility for the municipality, and the local administration. Furthermore, associations and individuals play a crucial role in participating in the local development process.

There are various tools available to fulfill these goals, including the local budget, which is used to fund local projects and programs; local taxes and fees, which generate revenue for the local budget; partnerships with the private sector, which are utilized to attract investment and fund projects; and international cooperation, which contributes to exchanging experiences and learning from best practices in local development across 1541 municipalities<sup>9</sup>.

### **B - At the Province Level:**

At the Province level, multiple stakeholders collaborate to promote development and enhance the quality of life for the region's residents. The Wali (governor) serves as the highest representative of the local government, while the Province People's Assembly functions as the elected legislative body, representing the will of the population. The Province administration is tasked with implementing local policies and programs, supported by other Province bodies, such as directorates for planning, development, education, and health, which play significant roles in developmental efforts.

Furthermore, the Algerian legislator has placed considerable emphasis on this level by granting legislative and regulatory approval for initiatives like the establishment of administrative districts under Decrees 15/141 and 15/142. The creation of delegated Provinces further aims to activate and enhance local development<sup>10</sup>.

### **Second Subsection: Economic Potential**

The border areas between Tunisia, Mauritania, and Algeria are rich in diverse natural resources, encompassing minerals, agricultural resources, and livestock. These resources can be used in joint projects such as mineral exploration, the

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<sup>9</sup> Moloukhia Ahmed Fawzi, *Tourism Development*, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Jami'i, 6th Edition, Egypt, 2007, p. 670.

<sup>10</sup> Executive Decree 15/141, dated 9 Sha'ban 1436, corresponding to May 28, 2015, regarding the organization and operation of the administrative district, (Official Gazette, Issue No. 29, dated May 31, 2015).

development of sustainable agriculture, and the expansion of livestock production, contributing to the creation of jobs and enhancing the standard of living for local populations.

### **First :Potential Benefits**

- **Trade and Investment Exchange:** Developing infrastructure such as roads and border crossings facilitates the movement of goods and people, boosting trade and attracting investments.
- **Job Creation:** Joint projects in sectors like agriculture, mining, and renewable energy offer new job opportunities for youth in the border regions.
- **Improving Living Standards:** Investments in infrastructure and basic services such as health and education raise the standard of living for residents.
- **Security and Stability Enhancement:** Joint security cooperation contributes to combating organized crime and smuggling, fostering stability in border regions.
- **Environmental Preservation:** Sustainable projects and environmental initiatives help protect natural resources and preserve biodiversity.

### **Second: Challenges<sup>11</sup>**

- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Border regions necessitate considerable investment in essential infrastructure, such as roads, ports, and communication networks.
- **Weak Investments:** The absence of sufficient investments impedes sustainable development.
- **Limited Job Opportunities:** High unemployment rates lead to youth migration to major cities or abroad in search of better opportunities.
- **Insecurity:** Unlawful activities such as smuggling and organized crime threaten the stability and security of border areas.
- **Smuggling and Organized Crime:** The vast and difficult-to-monitor borders offer ample space for illegal activities.
- **Agreements and Joint Projects:** The three countries have signed various cooperation agreements and implemented joint projects, such as:

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<sup>11</sup> Hermouche Mouna, *The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Sustainable Development*, Previous Reference, p. 47.

- **Establishment of Border Crossings:**Enhancing infrastructure at border crossings to facilitate the movement of people and goods.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Implementing projects to develop roads, bridges, and communication networks.
- **Role of Government, Private Sector, and Civil Society:**The development of border regions necessitates the combined efforts of governments, the private sector, and civil society. Governments are responsible for setting policies and offering necessary financing for infrastructure. The private sector can invest in commercial and industrial projects, while civil society plays a role in raising awareness and participating in developmental initiatives.

## **Second Chapter: Mechanisms for Implementing the Strategy to Fulfill Local Development**

Implementing the strategy for achieving local development necessitates effective mechanisms to translate visions into tangible actions on the ground. The success of these mechanisms hinges on various factors, including promoting strong partnerships with the private sector and civil society to ensure coordination and collaboration in the implementation of policies and projects. Transparency and accountability are also critical for ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources and fulfilling the desired results to foster comprehensive and sustainable local development.

### **First Section: The Effect of Administrative Modernization on Local Development**

This section explores the key concepts associated with the modernization of administration and its role in driving local development.

#### **First Subsection: Administrative Modernization**

Administrative modernization includes developing organizational practices and promoting a new culture that leverages technology and transforms knowledge into services. This approach seeks to adapt to changes in internal and external environments, ensuring customer and employee satisfaction while improving the quality of services and products.

In the aftermath of the crisis experienced by public authorities and society during the 1990s, awareness grew concerning the need to bridge administrative gaps. This led to a focus on acquiring knowledge and adopting modern technologies, such as computing and internet-based systems, to enhance institutional management. However, despite these efforts, the results did not fully satisfy the growing societal demands at the time<sup>12</sup>.

### **Second Subsection: Good Governance as a Mechanism for Achieving Development**

Good governance serves as a cornerstone for implementing public policies effectively, connecting governance practices to development goals and broadening public participation. Understanding the concept of good governance is necessary to its successful application.

Key aspects of good governance involve the structure of the political system, the management of the state's economic and social resources, and the government's capacity to formulate and implement policies. These components reflect the methods of managing the public sector to ensure the proper usage of economic and social resources for development.

The World Bank highlights the significance of linking administrative development to broader development efforts, especially in developing countries, where the exclusion of beneficiaries and impacted groups from the design and implementation of projects has often undermined their long-term sustainability.

Therefore, good governance emerges as a significant necessity for promoting and sustaining a development-friendly environment distinguished by strength and justice. It is also a key complement to economic policies, ensuring that development initiatives are inclusive and resilient<sup>13</sup>.

### **Second Section: Strengthening Transparency, Monitoring, and Accountability Mechanisms**

#### **First Subsection: Transparency Mechanisms**

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<sup>12</sup> Fatiha Fertas, *Modernization of Public Administration in Algeria through the Implementation of E-Government and Its Role in Improving Public Services*, Journal of Economics, Issue 15, University of Djilali Liabes, Sidi Bel Abbès, 2016, p. 313.

<sup>13</sup> Zuhair Abdel Karim Al-Kalid, *Governance: Issues and Applications*, Arab Center for Administrative Development, Amman, 2003, p. 14.

Administrative transparency is embodied in systems and procedures that make public institutions and administrations operate like a "glass house," where their activities and decisions are relatively open to employees and the general public. These systems and procedures ensure clarity and transparency at every phase, enabling stakeholders to access relevant information and allowing effective oversight and accountability.

Transparency includes the seamless flow of information between public institutions, private entities, and the public, covering aspects such as financial transactions, objectives, expenses, and budgets. Its purpose in administrative and political work is to provide citizens with all relevant facts and information, thereby dispelling doubts regarding ongoing activities and actions, especially in cases involving corruption or unethical practices.

Globally, transparency standards are actively enhanced as a tool to fight corruption. For example, annual reports like the Corruption Perceptions Index evaluate and rank the public sector's corruption levels across 180 countries<sup>14</sup>. These efforts highlight the significance of transparency in promoting accountability and public trust.

### **Second Subsection: Monitoring Mechanisms**

Monitoring includes tracking the progress of implementing developmental projects and programs, ensuring the application of laws, instructions, and decisions in effect, determining mistakes, and reporting them to the relevant authorities for necessary corrective actions and accountability, seeking to prevent their recurrence in the future. Monitoring is conducted through several bodies and can be divided into the following sections:

- Parliamentary monitoring
- Judicial monitoring
- Media monitoring
- Monitoring by anti-corruption bodies, such as the Court of Accounts

The mechanisms and tools utilized to implement monitoring and ensure its success include:

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<sup>14</sup> Sami Mohamed Al-Toukhi, *Management with Transparency*, Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabia, Cairo, 2006, p. 185.

- Regular financial and procedural reports
- Books, records, and statistics
- Inspection and investigation committee procedures
- Central digital platforms that collect data and information

### **Third Subsection : Accountability Mechanisms**

Accountability assesses and evaluates the implementation of a task by an employee or official, examining their commitment to the assigned responsibilities and objectives, reviewing the decisions made, and evaluating their behaviors and actions. Furthermore, it includes reviewing the methods employed in managing matters. The accountability process takes place after analyzing the employee's performance and identifying effectiveness. In case of mistakes, the responsible individual is held accountable and subjected to appropriate penalties<sup>15</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

The application of local development in Algeria emphasizes the state's vision to establish a sustainable and balanced economy across municipalities and regions. It highlights inclusivity and active local community participation in decision-making processes and the implementation of development policies. By leveraging local resources and promoting partnerships between public, private, and civil society sectors, Algeria seeks to fulfill sustainable development rooted in innovation, environmental sustainability, and equitable wealth distribution.

Among the primary challenges facing local community development in Algeria are the improvement of infrastructure and the enhancement of essential services, such as education, health, transportation, and housing. Strategic investments in these sectors can catalyze a transformative amelioration in the quality of life for local citizens.

The state is intensifying its efforts to create a conducive legal, administrative, and regulatory environment that stimulates local and foreign investment. Such measures are significant for promoting economic growth, generating employment opportunities, and advancing local industries. This calls for the development of policies and procedures that encourage and attract investment.

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<sup>15</sup> Sami Mohamed Al-Toukhi, *ibid*, p. 186.

Furthermore, fostering transparency and fighting corruption are indispensable for the success of local development initiatives. The government must adopt robust measures to ensure transparent resource management and equitable distribution of opportunities. These efforts are vital for building public and investor trust and fostering participatory mechanisms in local planning and implementation.

Given the geographical, economic, and financial disparities among local communities, it is necessary to reform and update municipal and regional laws. These updates must address current deficiencies and align with the state's diverse regional features to effectively manage local development efforts.

### **Suggestions:**

Based on the preceding, we propose the following:

- Fostering decentralization and activating local governance.
- Participatory planning and programming for local development.
- Diversifying funding sources for local development.
- Building and developing local competencies.
- Developing infrastructure and public services at the local level.
- One of the suggestions is to amend municipal and regional laws to align with the expected outlook in terms of investment opportunities.

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