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The developmental role of the municipality in Algeria and quality of life: A case study of a sample of municipalities in the province of Tlemcen

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Abstract---This study on the evaluation of the local development role of Algerian municipalities and quality of life aims to analyse and evaluate their contribution to local development and improve the living conditions of their citizens, through the provision of efficient and quality local services that meet the needs of individuals and groups and make them feel satisfied and accepted, especially those related to the powers granted to them by the law on the municipality and centred on basic local services such as education, health, environment, transport and others. One of the most important findings of this study is the weakness and failure to provide these services, which is due to the difficulties facing municipalities, especially those related to their own financial resources or external financial resources, weak levels of management and efficient administration, and the lack of citizen involvement in the local development process as a new method of managing local affairs, and this was done through an analytical study of a sample of municipalities in the province of Tlemcen.

Keywords---local development, municipality, public service, quality of life, local management, citizen participation.

JEL Code: H70, R10**Introduction**

Local development seems to be one of the most important topics of interest to various researchers and decision makers at the level of central and local public bodies because of its great role in improving the living conditions of various members of their communities, and has become the main concern of various government departments is how to reach an advanced degree of multi-faceted well-being for members of society, which has led to the allocation of significant material, financial and human resources for this purpose and the assignment of official and unofficial public bodies and various local actors to exploit these resources in order to achieve local development goals.

In Algeria, the municipality plays the role of mediator between the central authority and the local community, and is interested in achieving local development because it is linked to the local level, as the law granted it legal personality and financial independence and obliged it to provide and mobilise its financial resources, whether self or external, to carry out its development role, and also entrusted the municipality with a wide range of powers in all areas of jurisdiction legally assigned to it, so that it contributes with the state in managing and preparing the territory, economic, social, cultural and security development as well as working to develop and improve the framework.

However, in recent years, municipalities have experienced many difficulties and issues that hinder them from achieving the desired local development and providing quality local services and also hinder them from working to improve the living conditions of their citizens, and these difficulties have varied from financial to organisational to difficulties in the methods of managing local development.

Problematic :

To study this topic, the following question was posed:

How can we evaluate the developmental role of the municipality that contributes to improving the quality of life of the citizen?

Research objectives:

The intervention aims to identify the developmental role of municipalities and their contribution to improving the living conditions of their citizens by providing efficient and quality local services and the causes of weaknesses and shortcomings in the provision of these services, through an analytical study of a sample of municipalities in the province of Tlemcen.

Study methodology:

The inductive analytical method was used to clarify the developmental role of the municipality and the extent to which it contributes to improving the living conditions of citizens through a study of a sample of municipalities.

Study hypothesis:

To study the topic, we put forward the following hypothese:

- Weak financial resources and management methods negatively affect local development and consequently the living conditions of citizens.

The importance of the study:

The importance of the study lies in the fact that it is a research attempt to shed light on the difficulties faced by regional groups, especially municipalities, in providing financial resources by presenting the reasons that prevent this, and what is the impact of this weakness on local development.

Study sample:

In order to carry out this research, we will study a sample of the municipalities of the province of Tlemcen, including a rich municipality in terms of resources, medium-resource municipalities and poor rural municipalities in terms of resources to make the sample more representative of all municipalities of the country, while the years of study can vary from one municipality to another according to the available data and allowed from each municipality.

I. Introduction to local development, quality of life and municipality:

1. Definition of local development:

Local development can be seen as a process through which partners and stakeholders from the government and business sectors, together with the informal sector, citizens and civil society, work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and job creation (GWEN SWINBURN, September 2004).

Local development can also be defined as the process of making improvements in the social, economic and service levels of local communities within the limits of its objectives, foundations and principles that do not differ from comprehensive national development except in terms of its area of application (Laghouati, 2022). On the other hand, local development has been considered as a process that targets the factors of socio-economic progress of a community through the contribution and participation of its individuals and groups and the utilisation of their potentials and energies to raise the standard of living and achieve community development (Rashad, 2011).

The United Nations defined local development as 'those processes through which government and citizen efforts are combined to increase and improve the economic, social and cultural conditions in the community, leading to national development (Boumediene, 2022). From the above definitions, it is clear that local development has countless fields, including economic, social, political, administrative and cultural development, and is mainly based on the participation of citizens in supporting this development and improving their living conditions, and local development has objectives that are

- Strengthening the economic capabilities of a local area in order to improve the future of its citizens.
- Satisfy the basic needs of citizens by providing basic public services in an efficient and quality manner.

- Providing citizens with a sense of belonging by involving them in the local development endeavour and thus sensing the role of the state in their lives and the extent of its interest and concern for them.
- Improving the standard of living of citizens and achieving their well-being economically, socially, culturally and politically.

1.1. The relationship of local development to comprehensive national development:

Development has a cultural, social, economic, political and administrative meaning, it is an integrated and interactive societal process within a set of continuous links and various factors to create an interaction between the energies and capabilities of society (Rashad, 2011), so it is a process of activating the national economy to provide the basic needs of the citizen such as food, housing, health, education, work, etc. and it is also a process of directing the efforts of all individuals in society to create social, economic, political and cultural conditions that lead the country from underdevelopment to progress. According to the definition of comprehensive development, local development is also part of comprehensive national development and serves its objectives.

2.1. Citizen participation and local development:

Local development is based on a number of principles:

- Participation of citizens in the development process by mobilising their energies, which leads to improving their quality of life and standard of living at all levels.
- Adapting local development efforts to the basic requirements of the community by prioritising them, and this can only be done with the participation of citizens in prioritising them (Boumediene, 2022).

Through the definition of local development, it is clear that local development efforts lead to improving the standard of living of citizens in all areas, and this goal can only be achieved with the participation of citizens in making local development policies and making decisions about development projects at the local level, in addition to mobilizing their energies through dialogue and consultation to arrange their development priorities.

All this can only be in accordance with the modern method of managing public affairs, namely participatory democracy, which is indeed a tool whose main objective is to improve the quality of life of the citizen, and this is what Algeria seeks to do, based on pioneering international experiences in this field, by enshrining the method of participatory democracy in legal texts, and initiating its practical experience at the level of a group of pilot municipalities.

3.1. Relationship of local development to the equipment and investment section of the municipal budget:

All local development programmes, whether from self-financing (AF) "Autofinancement" or financing municipal plans for local development from the state budget (PCD) "Plan Communal de Développement" or from the province budget (BW) "Budget de la Wilaya" or from the Guarantee and Solidarity Fund (FGSCL) "Fonds de Garantie et de Solidarité des Collectivités Locales", are registered in the public equipment and investment section as the expenditures of this section directly affect the living conditions of the citizen at the local level

according to the social, economic, health and cultural powers granted to the municipality by law...

2. Quality of life:

1.2. Definition of quality of life:

The definitions of the term quality of life varied according to the fields in which it was defined. In the field of management and administration, it is defined as: 'Excellence in providing the required services effectively so that they are free of errors and defects, at the lowest cost and meet the expectations and desires of the beneficiaries and achieve their full satisfaction, present and future, through continuous improvement and development, commitment to performance requirements and standards, and performing the right work correctly the first time and every time (Al-Hams, 1431/2010).

In the social field, UNESCO defined quality of life as the satisfaction of basic needs and moral satisfaction that achieves psychological harmony for the individual through self-fulfilment (Kaddour, 2018).

In the health field, the World Health Organisation defines it as: 'An individual's perception of his/her status in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which he/she lives and the extent to which this conforms or does not conform to his/her goals, expectations, values and concerns related to his/her physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and relationship with the environment in general (Abouhlaoua, 2010).

It can be said that quality of life in general is measured by the extent of satisfaction with one's spiritual life, physical and psychological health, social life, occupational and material life, and relationship with the environment (Kaddour, 2018).

Quality of life also expresses the individual's physical health and mental health in addition to the cleanliness of his environment, as well as the satisfaction expressed by the individual with the services provided to him, such as education, health, transport, and means of communication, in addition to the extent of his satisfaction with moral needs such as democratic practices, social justice, the spread of the spirit of love between different groups of society, optimism, happiness, positivity, high morale, and the spirit of belonging and loyalty to the country, which are all aspects of life as perceived by individuals (Muammariya, 2020).

2.2. Aspects of quality of life:

Quality of life is a broad and complex concept that measures the level of satisfaction in relation to the most important aspects of an individual's life, including (ProgrammeQualityofLife, 2020).

- Developing an individual's lifestyle: Through environmental actions that contribute and support the creation of new options that enhance citizen participation in local cultural, recreational and sporting activities.

- Improving the quality of life: By developing appropriate activities that increase the quality of life of individuals and communities by creating jobs, diversifying the economy and raising the standard of living.

The quality of life is measured by several global indicators that are too numerous to mention, but most of them have adopted the most important aspects: Security, health, income, jobs, work-life balance, education, satisfaction, housing, environment, community and civic participation.

3. Definition of the municipality:

The municipality is defined by Law 10-11 on the Municipality as 'the territorial base of decentralisation and a place for the exercise of citizenship in a participatory framework that allows the citizen to contribute to the conduct of public affairs, and the municipality exercises its powers in all areas of jurisdiction legally vested in it, and contributes with the State in particular to the management and development of the territory, economic, social and cultural development, security, as well as maintaining and improving the living conditions of citizens.' The municipality has legal personality and independent financial capacity, and is created by law (Law11-10), so the municipality is the base cell and basic unit.

1.3. The powers of the municipality in the field of development:

In view of the importance of the municipality in the field of local development, the Algerian legislator allocated it a wide range of powers that seek to improve the quality of life of citizens: Planning and local development, reconstruction, infrastructure and equipment, municipal activities in the field of education, education, social protection, sports, youth, culture, recreation, tourism, hygiene and health, and municipal roads (Hocine Boumediene, 2016).

In addition to these broad and varied powers, the municipality is also responsible for providing for the collective needs of citizens and managing its property by ensuring the proper management of municipal public services, especially in the following areas:

Potable water supply, waste water disposal, household waste and other refuse, maintenance of roads and traffic lights, public lighting, covered markets, markets and public scales, barns and parking spaces, marshalling, mass transport, municipal slaughterhouses, funeral services, cemetery preparation and maintenance, including martyrs' cemeteries, cultural spaces, sports and leisure spaces, and green spaces (Law11-10).

2.3. Sources of funding for the municipality in Algeria:

Since the legislator has given the municipality all these powers with legal personality, this means that it has been recognised as an independent financial entity, which requires the provision of financial resources to enable it to perform its tasks and carry out its powers to the fullest for the benefit of its citizens.

Article 195 of the Municipal Code defines the various revenues of the municipality, as they are divided into revenues related to the management department and others related to the equipment department, which are summarised as follows (Law11-10).

- **Revenues of the Management Section :**

1. The revenue from tax resources authorized for collection on behalf of municipalities under the applicable legislation and regulations.
2. Contributions and operating revenues granted by the state and the Local Authorities Guarantee and Solidarity Fund.
3. Fees, duties, and service charges authorized under laws and regulations.
4. Revenue and income from municipal properties.

- **Revenues of the Equipment and Investment Section:**

1. Deduction from the management section revenues to the equipment and investment section, stipulated in Article 198 of the Municipal Code.
2. Contributions from the municipal development plans, which are considered subsidies from the state budget (Abdelhak, 2022).
3. The result of the exploitation of the concession of municipal public facilities.
4. The surplus realised from the public interests managed in the form of industrial and commercial enterprises.
5. The result of capital contributions.
6. The result of authorised loans, state and the province, the Common Fund for Local Communities, the result of ownership, gifts, accepted bequests and all temporary or circumstantial revenues.

3.3. Difficulties hindering the developmental role of the municipality:

Municipalities in Algeria have experienced many difficulties that hinder them from achieving the desired local development and improving the quality of life of their citizens, some of these difficulties can be summarised as follows:

- The chronic deficit of municipal budgets, which has become a structural deficit.
- The dependence of municipal incomes on subsidies in large proportions.
- The municipality's financial inability to finance local development due to poor self-financing.
- Local development projects are arbitrated at the provincial level, which limits the influence of municipal managers.
- Lack of human resources at the municipal level, which affects municipal finances.
- The current local management system does not allow local officials at the municipal level to take initiative because they are constrained by laws and regulations.
- There are no multi-year plans for local development.
- Lack of citizen participation in the local development process.

II. Study and analysis of local development financing for a sample of municipalities in the province of Tlemcen:

1. Internal resources (self-financing) and their impact on local development:

Self-financing or Internal Financing is a deduction made by the municipality from the revenues of the management section for the benefit of the equipment and investment section (Benaïssa, 1983), determined by regulation and generally ranges between 10% and 20% of the total revenues of the management department and is used to finance and maintain the socio-economic structures of

the municipality, school transport, and all operations that seek to improve the living conditions of the population (Samia Bekadour, 2022).

Table 01: Evolution of the ratio of deductions from the management section to the equipment and public investment section - Unit: Algerian Dinar (DZD)

Municipalities	2015			2016		
	Self-financing	Total management expenditure	%	Self-financing	Total management expenditure	%
Tlemcen	460.334.378.46	1533244000.00	30	338.990.044.87	1560766000.00	22
Chitwan	306.155.994.47	710985539.69	43	31.015.058.84	399603895.58	8
Mansoura	30.336.600.95	440117220.57	7	20.810.713.47	395955436.30	5
Ramshi	44.431.005.39	395767039.59	11	29.990.962.62	441481930.39	7
Sabra	41.518.372.80	245198379.66	16	20.536.675.43	234255513.91	9
Bab El Assa	4.198.733.83	141609368.84	3	4.198.733.83	147257488.39	3
Oulad Riah	6.400.091.75	82095722.42	8	4.322.513.90	71081329.71	6
Bouhlou	19.054.744.27	64383495.19	29	15.250.506.24	82429027.24	18

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the administrative account data for a sample of the study municipalities, 2015 to 2016

Through Table 01, we note that the deduction from the revenues of the management section to the equipment section is decreasing at the level of all municipalities of the study sample, where the percentage decreased, for example, in the municipality of Tlemcen from 30% in 2015 to 22% in 2016, which is one of the rich municipalities, and decreased from 11% in 2015 to 7% in 2016 in the municipality of Ramchi, which is a middle income municipality, and also decreased from 29% in 2015 to 18% in 2016 in the municipality of Bouhlou, which is a rural municipality, due to several reasons, including in particular the weakness of the revenues of the management section of the sample of the municipalities under study.

We also note that the development of self-financed expenditures allocated to local development is witnessing a significant decrease in various sectors from year to year, due to the decline in oil prices in that period, which affected the state and municipal revenues from petroleum revenues and various taxes.

2. External resources of the Equipment Section and their impact on local development:

The external sources of funding for local development are the subsidies provided by the state and the province in the form of municipal development plans (PCD), as well as the subsidy provided by the Guarantee and Solidarity Fund for Local Communities.

1.2. Municipal Development Plans (PCD):

The municipal plans for local development are considered one of the important sources on which the municipality relies, and because the municipality does not have sufficient self resources to finance all projects that meet the needs of the population, it was necessary for the state to provide this aid from its budget to achieve balance between municipalities across the country.

Table 02: The evolution of the PCD allocations for the municipal development plans for the municipalities of the study sample (2013-2016) - Unit: Algerian Dinar (DZD)

	Sabra Municipality		Bouhlou Municipality		Mansoura Municipality	
	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2016
	Total cost	Total cost	Total cost	Total cost	Total cost	Total cost
Irrigation Sector	/	/	5731102.17	7469362.50	49500000.00	/
Public Works Sector	/	/	65658629.60	24534228.49	75800000.00	/
Housing and Public Equipment Sector	/	/	8599385.10	/	/	8000000.00
Distribution and transport	/	/	/	/	/	/
Various networks	59800000.00	2540000.00	/	/	/	/
Industrial and commercial interests	/	/	/	/	/	/
Acquisitions	/	/	/	/	/	/
Total	59800000.00	2540000.00	79989117.10	32003590.99	125300000.00	8000000.00

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the data of the administrative account 2013-2014-2015-2016 for the study municipalities

We can see from Table 02 that the funds allocated to municipalities by the state within the framework of the PCD plans are constantly decreasing, and this is due to the fact that Algeria was in financial prosperity, so the higher the state revenues, the higher the allocations directed to municipalities.

We note that in 2015, the funds allocated to the municipality of Mansoura amounted to 125,300,000,000.00 Algerian dinars and decreased to its lowest level in 2016, estimated at 8,000,000,000.00 Algerian dinars. The number of programmes allocated was estimated at one programme in the housing and public equipment sector under the title 'Strengthening public lighting across the municipality' with a financial cover estimated at 80,000,000 Algerian dinars. The decrease also affected the municipality of Sabra, where the funds decreased from 59,800,000,000.00 Algerian dinars to 2,540,000,000.00 Algerian dinars, while in Bouhlou, the funds decreased from 79,989,117.10 Algerian dinars to 32,003,590.99 Algerian dinars.

From this we conclude that the lower the funds allocated to municipalities by the state in the form of PCD plans, the lower the development programmes programmed at the local level by the municipalities, and this is due to the decline in oil prices because Algeria is a rentier country that relies heavily on oil revenues to finance various projects, whether national or local.

In addition to the decline in local development due to low oil prices, there is also a technical issue at the local level, which is that in the normal case of any project, upon completion, it is handed over to the municipality, but through what we have observed, most of the projects of the municipal development plans PCD of these municipalities are either closed or the works are still ongoing despite exceeding the completion period, or are still pending at the level of the tender opening and evaluation committee, another reason that negatively affects the progress of the local development plan and hinders it due to weak control and monitoring of projects in the municipalities.

2.2. Subsidies from the Guarantee and Solidarity Fund for Local Communities:

This fund provides subsidies to the municipality in the field of management, equipment and investment, and the total allocation for equipment and investment allows the implementation of equipment and investment programmes to help develop the areas to be promoted and contribute by the fund to local development.

Table 03: Evolution of the amount of subsidies by sectors provided by the Guarantee and Solidarity Fund for the municipalities of the study sample (2013-2016) - Unit: Algerian Dinar (DZD)

	Sabra Municipality		Bouhlou Municipality		Mansoura Municipality	
	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2016
	Total cost	Total cost	Total cost	Total cost	Total cost	Total cost
Irrigation Sector	/	/	/	/	/	7200000.00
Public Works Sector	/	31989832.00	5600000.00	3600000.00	/	/
Housing and Public Equipment Sector	116661621.00	2100000.00	333183.18	5209378.47	/	/
Distribution and transport	/	/	/	/	/	/
Various networks	/	/	6336006.29	/	/	/
Acquisitions	/	/	20400000.00	/	14100000.00	6972793.72
Total	116661621.00	34089832.00	32669189.47	8809378.47	14100000.00	14172793.72

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the data of the Administrative Account 2013-2014-2015-2016, for a sample of the study municipalities.

Through Table 03, we note that these subsidies have witnessed a decrease in the municipalities of Sabra and Bouhlou, which is also due to the decrease in the revenues of the fund, especially since it also has a percentage of petroleum revenues, while the municipality of Mansoura has witnessed in the period (2015-2016) witnessed a stabilisation in the funds allocated from the fund, as these funds in 2015 were estimated at 14100000 Algerian dinars, while in 2016 the funds were estimated at 14172794 Algerian dinars for two projects, one in the housing and public equipment sector under the title 'Maintenance of primary

schools across the municipality' and another in the field of acquisitions 'Acquisition of small equipment and equipment'.

The subsidies provided by the Guarantee and Solidarity Fund to municipalities were small compared to self-financing projects or PCD for municipalities that are considered rich or rely on local levies, such as Mansoura, and large for poor municipalities or those that rely on aid and subsidies in large proportions, such as Sabra and Bouhlou, because the Fund's goal is to grant subsidies to promote poor municipalities and create a balance in incomes across the municipalities of the country through solidarity.

Conclusion

The study concluded that one of the main reasons that hinder local development is the weakness of the municipalities' own financial resources from tax revenues and their neglect of public property revenues, in addition to the low assistance provided by the state, the state and the Guarantee and Solidarity Fund, which negatively affects the local development process and the failure to provide quality services to citizens that contribute to improving their standard of living as stipulated in the municipal law.

The lack of local development is also due to mismanagement and poor human resources at the municipal level, as well as the lack of citizen participation in the management of local affairs, which is a new global method in the management and administration of public affairs, especially localities.

Despite the numerous financial sources allocated by law to municipalities to finance their local development, they always suffer from a weakness in their financial resources, and through the analytical study we carried out on the sources of financing local development in a sample of municipalities in the province of Tlemcen, some of which are rich in tax resources, others are middle-income and others are poor rural, we reached a set of results:

- Municipalities have a variety of internal resources, but they are continuously decreasing over the years due to the decline in municipal revenues from direct or indirect taxes and the failure to optimise the use of municipal property.
- Weak external resources for local development, whether provided by state or state subsidies or the Guarantee and Solidarity Fund, due to the decline in oil prices, as these sources depend on oil revenues to finance local development.
- As for loans, local communities have the right to borrow and this right is enshrined in law, but it is not applied due to the inability of municipal resources to cover loans and their interest, which leads to the state covering the deficit of local communities.
- The decrease in the deduction from management revenues to equipment and investment expenditures affects local development by weakening the financial cover directed to it, and this is what we have seen in the sample of municipalities under study.
- The reason for the decrease in the self-resources to finance local development at the municipal level is the decline in direct tax revenues and

the decline in subsidies from the Guarantee and Solidarity Fund, but despite their decrease, they remain the main source of funding for local development.

- As for the external subsidies provided by the state in the form of PCD funds, they are experiencing a significant decline, and this has affected local development, and we noticed this decline through the decline in the amounts allocated to all municipalities and the number of programmed projects.
- The subsidies of the Guarantee and Solidarity Fund have decreased significantly, and this has affected the annual amounts allocated to municipalities, thus affecting local development.

In order to overcome this weakness, it is necessary to think of new ways and alternatives to mobilise the necessary resources to finance local development, as well as to think about modern management methods using international experiences in the management of local development, and work to improve the quality of life of its citizens.

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