



International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science

e-ISSN: 2544-9435

Scholarly Publisher
RS Global Sp. z O.O.
ISNI: 0000 0004 8495 2390

Dolna 17, Warsaw,
Poland 00-773
+48 226 0 227 03
editorial_office@rsglobal.pl

ARTICLE TITLE

THE SUITABILITY OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN POLICY AND THE
REALITY OF ALGERIAN CITIES: BETWEEN LOFTY ASPIRATIONS
AND POLICY FAILURE

ARTICLE INFO

Naimi Khaled, Yahia Amina. (2024) The Suitability of Sustainable Urban Policy
and The Reality of Algerian Cities: Between Lofty Aspirations and Policy Failure.
International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science. 4(44). doi:
10.31435/ijitss.4(44).2024.3045

DOI

[https://doi.org/10.31435/ijitss.4\(44\).2024.3045](https://doi.org/10.31435/ijitss.4(44).2024.3045)

RECEIVED

16 November 2024

ACCEPTED

19 December 2024

PUBLISHED

30 December 2024

LICENSE



The article is licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0
International License**.

© The author(s) 2024.

This article is published as open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), allowing the author to retain copyright. The CC BY 4.0 License permits the content to be copied, adapted, displayed, distributed, republished, or reused for any purpose, including adaptation and commercial use, as long as proper attribution is provided.

THE SUITABILITY OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN POLICY AND THE REALITY OF ALGERIAN CITIES: BETWEEN LOFTY ASPIRATIONS AND POLICY FAILURE

Naimi Khaled (Corresponding Author, Email: khalednaimienseignant@gmail.com)
M.C.B., University of Oum El Bouaghi – Institute for Urban Techniques Management

Yahia Amina
M.C.A., University of Oum El Bouaghi – Institute for Urban Techniques Management

ABSTRACT

Sustainable development policy has faced, and continues to face, ideological and technical challenges when attempting to apply it to the developmental and local realities of Algerian cities, particularly. Despite efforts to bend Algeria's urban policies to conform to global ideologies, it is evident that Algerian cities have failed to achieve this alignment. Attempting to identify the reasons behind the failure to adopt sustainable urban development policies in Algeria is one of the most significant challenges in managing modern Algerian cities. This issue has triggered much speculation and debate. However, it is clear that addressing this topic has often taken an evasive approach, accompanied by violent closure of the file. This reluctance stems from the need to confront the significant gaps in the urban policies of Algerian cities. This research aims to provide an opportunity to examine the inability of urban policies to accept or adapt to effective ideologies and mechanisms like sustainable urban development, which has proven its success in creating cities and urban regions. Additionally, the study explores various challenges shaping urban policy in terms of standards, domains, and organizational forms. This highlights the weight and diversity of sustainable urban planning content, followed immediately by a brief review of Algeria's National Spatial Planning Policy and its National Sustainable Development Strategy. This occurs amidst the evident major deficiencies in Algerian urban policy, which is marked by significant shortcomings at many levels, if not all, from the top of the planning hierarchy to the grassroots of local urbanities.

KEYWORDS

Sustainable Urban Development, Reality Context, Policy Ambition, Algerian Cities

CITATION

Naimi Khaled, Yahia Amina. (2024) The Suitability of Sustainable Urban Policy and The Reality of Algerian Cities: Between Lofty Aspirations and Policy Failure. *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*. 4(44). doi: 10.31435/ijitss.4(44).2024.3045

COPYRIGHT

© The author(s) 2024. This article is published as open access under the **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)**, allowing the author to retain copyright. The CC BY 4.0 License permits the content to be copied, adapted, displayed, distributed, republished, or reused for any purpose, including adaptation and commercial use, as long as proper attribution is provided.

Introduction.

The variance in the application of the sustainable city system and its collision with local application and urban specificity for each city necessitated an analysis of the national development policy and the local policy of Algerian cities. This is especially relevant given the disparity and novelty of the concepts defining sustainability in our region and cities.

This analysis raises several questions, like Has the national development policy been reformulated after its adoption, and has it succeeded in accommodating these concepts?, If the policy is incompatible, what are the major challenges to adopting sustainable development?, or How are these issues reflected in Algerian cities, sow. What are the spatial, economic, and organizational challenges, and in finally How does the national policy fail to match the demands of sustainable cities under Algeria's urban development policy?

In addition, another's questions same, what are the policy's shortcomings? And what about the deficiencies in improving policies, implementation tools, and urban and regional management mechanisms? , finally, how does

this deficiency constrain national and urban development policy? What are the prospects for developmental efforts stemming from the 2030 National Spatial Planning Policy and subsequent urban projects?

This research seeks to address these questions through a critical and direct examination of the subject.

Sustainable Urban Policy:

Urban policy, or city policy, cannot be separated from its comprehensive organizational framework that is, general development. Economic development, social development, activity development, or any other form of development falls under the general, holistic approach known as the developmental methodology of the state.¹

The city is considered the heartbeat of civilizational progress. Advanced nations and developed societies place special focus on cities or urban areas, referring to them as a societal project.

With its complexity, the city represents the highest form of societal realization, particularly as economic, technological, and scientific advancements continue to grow. Cities play a central role in managing these developments as they serve as the structural backbone for their surrounding regions. However, cities are also the primary contributors to pollution and social inequality, which necessitates an urgent need for the rapid formulation of flexible urban policies to address the increasing challenges of cities.

1-1 The Sustainable Development and our Cities

Modern sustainable development has redefined our understanding of cities, particularly with advancements in urban ecological systems and changing boundaries influenced by conceptual planning approaches. Through governance and management tools, cities have shifted from exploiting land and economic resources toward leveraging human capital and redirecting development based on principles of sustainability.

This approach emphasizes integration across three key domains: economic, spatial, and social. Combined, these fields form the basis for integrated planning and sustainable development strategies.²

1-2 Challenges of Traditional Urban Policies

Today, more than two-thirds of the world's population resides in cities. As urban populations grow, classical urban policies—designed around adapting urban transportation systems, zoning, and changing urban structures—are no longer sufficient. Emerging needs, technological advancements, and a lack of creativity amid spontaneous growth, slum development, and informality have exposed the shortcomings of traditional approaches.

Furthermore, increasing responsibilities of local authorities, privatization of land, land-use control, taxation systems, and shifts in housing and production systems add to these pressures. Wars, conflicts, and disasters have collectively reshaped urban systems, prompting cities to expand their focus beyond local-scale planning and adopt broader frameworks that integrate natural, geographical, socioeconomic, and administrative characteristics.

2- Urban Policy

2.1 Definition of Urban Policy

Urban policy defines the major orientations and objectives of central and local governance. It incorporates a range of sectors and activities suitable for cities. Urban policy is inherently intersectorial, requiring collaboration among multidisciplinary experts, representatives of city residents and users, and officials and politicians across different scales, urban policy can be divided into two main components.

2-2 National Development Policy

The National Spatial Planning Policy focuses on establishing demographic and functional balance between urban and rural regions. It involves adapting the national or regional urban system within urban networks, redistributing functional hubs, addressing real estate policies, housing strategies, energy policies, and creating new cities. Devised in National Development Policy and a Regional and Urban Development Policy.

1-Roberto Camagni Et Maria Cristina (2008) GIBELLI - DEVELOPPEMENT URBAIN DURABLE (quatre Métropoles Européennes), Paris, 1^{er} édition. P80.

² Eva Berezowska Azzag (2012). Projet urbain (comprendre la démarche du projet urbain), Alger, la presse de l'imprimerie Diwan. P180.

2.2.1 National Spatial Planning Policy

This policy is based on coordinated efforts across all state sectors while considering the requirements of sustainable development, national solidarity, and the unique characteristics and challenges of each region. It defines a general strategy for optimizing the use of national territory and redistributing activities and urbanization in a balanced manner.

The policy outlines principles for , Organizing major intellectual and physical infrastructure and determining their locations, communication systems, and essential public services of national benefit , Harmonizing economic, social, cultural, educational, environmental, and housing policies to enhance living conditions , Ensuring equal financial and tax distribution , and Identifying development axes across borders to foster regional cooperation within the Maghreb framework.¹

2.2.2 National Strategy for Sustainable Urban Development:

Focusing on sustainable and equitable cities, a national strategy for sustainable urban development was created. This strategy builds upon a local urban policy framework capable of meeting its objectives. The urban policies established within this framework achieve both the strategic goals of regional development and urban developmental actions tied to local development policies.

Unlike segmented approaches, Algeria's urban policy under the National Spatial Planning Policy (SNAT) aligns closely with the principles of sustainable development. It integrates urban equity, functionality, and social and technological advancements within the urban fabric. This ensures both regional balance and structural integration, particularly in rural development.

2-3. Objectives of the National Urban Development Policy (Law 06/06):

The objectives outlined in the 06/06 directive emphasize sustainable urban development as a strategic priority. These include, Developing Modern Urban Tools Adopting governance tools such as good governance, participatory management, and urban marketing to ensure effective planning and implementation, Promoting Urban Sustainability Aligning urban development with sustainability goals, including social justice, economic efficiency, and cultural preservation.

Revitalizing Urban Areas like rehabilitating urban infrastructure through restructuring and upgrading projects. In addition, Strengthening Regional Connectivity, Improving the competitiveness and attractiveness of Algerian cities by integrating them into regional and global urban networks.²

2-4. Challenges of Urban Policy in Algeria:

Urban policy in Algeria faces several significant challenges that hinder its progress toward sustainable urban development and the revival of urban centers. These challenges are highlighted in the 2030 National Spatial Planning Policy and are categorized into four main areas.

2-4-1 Absence of Socioeconomic Integration:

The rapid increase in urban populations has widened the gap between economic feasibility and the integration of urban systems. This is evident in Concentration of Urban Populations: Population growth is concentrated in specific regions, leading to overpopulation in urban areas (macrocephaly) and creating employment crises in cities.

Labor Market Imbalance: Cities attract unskilled labor from rural areas, leading to increased demand for real estate and speculative real estate practices, Informal Economies: The lack of regulated urban economies leads to the rise of parallel economic activities and a weakening of the formal tax system, diminishing economic productivity and urban functionality.

2-4-2 Absence of Environmental Integration:

Scarcity of Environmental Resources, The demand for urban land, water, energy, and green spaces far exceeds supply, especially in cities established on fertile agricultural land.

The Urban Pollution Threats and the Pollution from urban centers increasingly affects both urban and natural systems. This includes the contamination of water sources, landscapes, and natural ecosystems. Since

¹ Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire de l'Environnement et du Tourisme(2030) Schéma National D'aménagement du territoire.Missin I.P14.

² Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire de l'Environnement et du Tourisme (2030). Schéma régionale D'aménagement du territoire. Mission I.P12.

a Weak Environmental Infrastructure, The environmental system lacks the capacity for waste management, recycling, and mitigating major risks in densely populated urban areas.

2-4-3 Absence of Urban Integration;

The lack of integration in Algerian cities is evident at various levels:

2-4-3-1 Structural Integration: The absence of serious efforts to protect agricultural lands from urban sprawl is concerning. Urbanization often expands toward politically targeted areas without assessing the impact on urban structures or functions.

2-4-3-2 Functional Integration: Urban areas suffer from a lack of functional connectivity, as evident in inadequate public services, poor infrastructure, and mismatched urban needs.

2-4-3-3 Urban Aesthetic: The architectural heritage of cities is eroding due to poor maintenance, haphazard renovation, and urban planning that disregards the cultural and historical value of urban landscapes.

2-4-4 Absence of Planning and Management Integration.

There is no cohesive strategy for urban development, particularly in inter-municipal areas, where smaller municipalities are often overshadowed by larger cities. The lack of regional equity exacerbates disorganization and weakens sustainable development efforts.

3. Indications of Urban Policy Failure in Algeria.

3.1 Levels of Urban Policy Deficiency

Urban policy deficiencies in Algeria occur across multiple levels, reflecting the complexity of planning frameworks, developmental models, and the involvement of numerous urban actors. These deficiencies are exacerbated by the extensive challenges of urban development, especially when sustainable development goals are factored in. The failures can be categorized as follows:

3.1.1 At the Level of Procedures and Urban Planning Mechanisms

3-1-1-1 Lack of Vertical and Horizontal Integration:

Urban planning frameworks in Algeria suffer from a lack of coherence between vertical (national) and horizontal (regional) planning levels. While some degree of coordination is evident, the centralization of planning remains a significant obstacle to implementing region-specific solutions. Local planners are constrained by rigid, centrally issued guidelines that leave little room for adaptability at the municipal level.

3-1-1-2 Mismatch Between Planning Processes and Urban Dynamics: The pace of urbanization in Algeria significantly outstrips the slow planning processes, leading to outdated and ineffective plans. Legal and procedural delays further impede timely responses to the rapid transformation of urban realities.

3-1-1-3 Failure to Incorporate Economic Realities: Planning decisions are often detached from economic feasibility and local developmental contexts. The absence of inter-ministerial coordination exacerbates this issue, resulting in poorly conceived projects that lack practical economic relevance.

3-1-1-4. Overemphasis on Numerical Targets: Urban planning tools frequently focus on quantitative indicators, such as land-use metrics, at the expense of qualitative and multidimensional urban analysis.

3-1-1-5. Housing Program Overload: Algeria's urban policies have prioritized large-scale housing programs without addressing the suitability of available land or integrating these projects within broader urban frameworks. This approach has led to significant inefficiencies, including mismatches between housing supply and social and technical needs.

3-1-1-6 Lack of Environmental Impact Assessments: Urban projects often proceed without adequate environmental evaluations, resulting in negative ecological, psychological, and social repercussions.

3-1-1-7 Absence of Comprehensive Urban Data: The lack of urban databases and reliable mapping systems further complicates urban planning and management processes.

3.1.2 At the Level of Urban Policy Improvement

3-1-2-1 Generic Urban Planning Tools: Urban planning tools are often standardized, ignoring regional differences such as climatic, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts. This results in ineffective and poorly adapted urban plans.

3-1-2-2 Institutional Weaknesses: Urban institutions lack the capacity to manage urban growth effectively. Insufficient enforcement of regulations against unauthorized construction is a notable challenge, with illegal settlements often legitimized under political pressure.

3-1-2-3 Weak Project Monitoring and Oversight: A lack of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms undermines the quality of urban development projects. Weak contractual frameworks and poorly conducted technical studies exacerbate these issues.

3.1.3 At the Level of Implementation Tools

3-1-3-1 Fragmented Resource Allocation: The disparity between financial and material resources and planned programs has led to inefficiencies. Large urban projects often overwhelm local capacities.

3-1-3-2. Lack of Inter-municipal Agreements: Coordination between municipalities is limited by the absence of legal frameworks to govern joint urban projects.

3-1-3-3. Deficient Financial Tools: Insufficient financial resources and weak fiscal mechanisms hinder the implementation of urban policies.

Conclusions

Algerian urban policy faces a significant challenge in incorporating sustainable development into a field characterized by complexity and contradictions. The deficiencies in urban governance are evident across multiple levels, from national planning frameworks to local management.

To overcome these challenges, Algeria must address the lack of socioeconomic, environmental, and urban integration while improving planning tools, governance frameworks, and civil society participation. Sustainable urban development remains the ultimate goal, requiring cohesive efforts across all sectors to ensure equitable and resilient urban growth.

The deficiencies in Algeria's urban policies underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reform. Centralized planning models, poor resource management, and the lack of intersectoral collaboration have hindered sustainable urban development.

Recommendations include like Decentralized Governance and empowering local authorities and fostering regional autonomy to address unique urban challenges. Integrated Planning Approaches, Adopting holistic urban planning frameworks that account for socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental dimensions based a Public Participation incorporating the voices of citizens and civil society organizations into urban policy discussions to ensure inclusivity and responsiveness, and a Strengthening Institutional Capacities Improving the technical and financial resources of urban institutions to support better planning and implementation , By adopting these measures, Algeria can address its urban policy shortcomings and transition toward sustainable, equitable, and resilient cities.

List of Abbreviations:

SNAT (Schéma National D'aménagement du territoire) 2030

SRAT (Schéma régionale D'aménagement du territoire) 2030

PDAU Plan directeur d'aménagement et d'urbanisme.

POS Plan d'occupation au sol.

PU Projet urbain.

SDAAM Schéma directeur d'aménagement de l'Aire métropolitaine.

SCU Schéma de cohérence urbaine. PNAEDD Plan national d'action pour l'environnement et de la développement durable.

PAVN Plan d'aménagement de la ville nouvelle.

PAC Plan d'aménagement côtier.

PAL Plan d'aménagement de latérale.

PPR Plan de protection contre le risque.

REFERENCES

1. Eva BEREZOWSKA-AZZAG (2012). Projet urbain (comprendre la démarche du projet urbain), Alger, la presse de l'imprimerie DIWAN.
2. Eva BEREZOWSKA-AZZAG (2012). Projet urbain (comprendre la démarche du projet urbain), Alger, la presse de l'imprimerie DIWAN.P180.
3. Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire de l'Environnement et du Tourisme(2030) Schéma National D'aménagement du territoire.
4. Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire de l'Environnement et du Tourisme (2030).Schéma régionale D'aménagement du territoire.