

Urban Expansions for the New City of Ali Mendjeli: Another Strategy of Urban Management that Disregards Quality of Life in Algeria

Soumia DJOUABLIA¹, Dr. Youcef Lazri², Dr. Saif Eddine CHETTAH¹

¹LAUTES laboratory, Faculty of architecture and urbanism, Constantine 3 University, Algeria.

²Department of architecture, University of Guelma, Algeria.

Abstract

Widely viewed as a fundamental imbalance between the availability of housing and the needs of local population, Algeria's housing crisis actually involves a much bigger quantitative and qualitative issue. As a strategy of controlling urban expansion, the majority of wilayas in Algeria prefer to build new cities. This is the situation with the new city of Ali Mendjeli in Constantine. The formation of this new planned town was governed by a program of regional planning and development. Its principal objective was to plan and organize the urban evolution of a metropolis that could no longer sustain the pressure of its rapid population increase and high immigration levels. Having successfully absorbed a substantial portion of Constantine's deficit, this new city is similarly saturated and unable to accommodate current or future population growth. In order to fulfill the growing demand for housing among city dwellers, urban extensions have been planned and launched concurrently with the urbanization of the new city. The objective of this article is to present an overview of this urban phenomena, which is associated with the creation of urban extensions on the outskirts of the new town over the past decade in response to the housing challenges that weighed heavily on the whole metropolis of Constantine. This feature needs both analytic and retroactive analyses to establish whether the government entities implementing the new policy are providing the necessary material and institutional resources for its implementation. As it illustrates certain effects and implications of this increased house production on the quality of life in Ali Mendjeli's new city.

Key words: Newtown, housing crisis, urban extensions, metropolis of Constantine.

INTRODUCTION

No one can deny that housing is one of the primary issues of cities around the world (Ballout, 2021), but in Algeria it is of even greater importance to economic and social policies (Largat et al., 2022; Ballout, 2014; Zerrouki, 2015). The rural exodus, population growth, and social change have exacerbated the housing situation in this country (Belguidoum, 2021), hence exerting irrefutable pressures on the housing and building industry (Mazouz, 2013). However, almost all urban areas have experienced a rise in land portfolio saturation for over two decades (Benidir, 2007). Moreover, tackling a chronic housing crisis and effectively managing it involves many, interrelated activities and even constitutional amendments within the sphere of good governance (Zerrouki, 2015). In the past two decades, new cities have been built on the outskirts of Algeria's major cities to alleviate some of this crisis (Sidi Boumedine, 2017; Ballout, 2015; Boumaza, 2006). In accordance with land use regulations and in the context of a state-led planning project, these cities are to be built thoroughly, not only on an urbanistic but also a functional level (Saidi, 2020; Safar-Zitoun, 2012; URBACO, 1991).

Similar to other major Algerian cities, Constantine has endured difficult, crucial, and testing times (Bendir, 2007; Cote, 2006). Its unusual and dense spatial development has led in major alterations to its spatial organization, which has undergone deep mutations followed by a chaotic urban thrust during the past several decades (Ballout, 2015). As a result of the proliferation of shantytowns and informal settlements on the periphery, there was a significant societal need for housing in this neighborhood (Nait Amar, 2013). Due to the crisis of the mother city's fabric, the spatio-functional anarchy, the limits of the fast-expanding population, and the scarcity of urbanizable territory, the authorities chose to build a new city from scratch on the plateau of Ain El Bey, 15 kilometers south of Constantine (Lakehal, 2017). With a surface area of 1,500 hectares, it can sustain the new urban entity over the long term and would be a crucial factor in regulating urban and spatial growth in the metropolitan area of

Constantine. This new city was thus founded to address the overcrowding of Constantine's capital, to solve the problem of available urbanizable land, and to relieve the everyday congestion in the city's core (Lakehal, 2014; Meghraoui-Chougat, 2006).

This city was formed in 1993, when the wali El-HachemDjiaar decided to begin the project following completion of its design (Benidir, 2007). It was given the moniker "ville nouvelle Al Mendjeli" and was organized into five districts, each of which is subdivided into five neighborhood units (NU) consisting of 2500 primarily collective dwelling units, for a total of 50,000 housing units (Lakehal, 2015). From 1993 to 2018, a variety of housing projects were initiated, the breadth of which not only impacted Ali Mendjeli's urban layout but also expedited its rise as a town (Belguidoum, 2021). Although the implementation of this city was primarily intended to relieve a metropolis that continued to expand in all directions, choking on its growth as a mother city (Djundjnski, 1983), no one could have predicted that over time, this planned city would face the saturation of its land portfolio, thus experiencing the same issue as its mother city that it had relieved of its demographic surplus. This town, which was originally designed for a population of 300,000 and a housing program of 50,000 units, is now home to 369,510 people and 73,902 dwelling units (URBACO, 2020). This densification has already resulted in an imbalance in the distribution of basic amenities intended for the first population when the new city was built.

Local authorities assumed they had overcome the housing issue by responding exclusively to the need for housing, while drastically underestimating the impact of this housing production on the quality of life and the environment of the population. The new town of Ali Mendjeli is a highly intriguing example since, due to numerous restrictions, it was subject to a reorientation by authorities who agreed on the need to construct urban extensions, despite the fact that the town itself has not yet been completed as intended (Saidi,2020). Without neglecting to connect them politically, administratively, or socially, these extensions are intended to give this city a unique identity and actuality (URBACO, 2020). In this regard, two essential questions arise: **What contribution do these urban extensions make to relieving Constantine's housing shortage? And what impact does this faster manufacturing of housing programs have on the quality of life in Ali Mendjeli's new city?**To overcome this difficulty, we have chosen to structure our research along three primary axes. The first purpose is to clarify the genetic characteristics of the future city of Ali Mendjeli and its significance as a housing option for the Constantine metropolitan region. The second focuses on the new strategy of urban extensions as a second approach of mitigating this situation's severity. The final section focuses on the effects and repercussions of this increased house development on the quality of life in the new metropolis of Ali Mendjeli.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study intends to provide light on the development of new cities and their extensions as a solution for absorbing the housing problem initially encountered by Constantine's mother city and afterwards by its annexed town. The housing dilemma faced by this new city mandates that we first create an inventory that illustrates the changes that this new city has through, its mutations and its inertia, particularly in terms of housing and the development strategies used to produce it. To do so, we combine the results of our historical reading with our observations and multiple field surveys, as well as the wealth of information gathered during our interviews with the source persons of various organizations involved in the conception of this city and its extensions as well as their actualization.

GENETIC FACTORS OF THE NEW CITY ALI MENDJELI

From Concept to Realization

In 1974, the concept of this new city was first introduced as a result of a regional development and urban planning policy and proclaimed as part of the Constantine Group's urban master plan (PUD) (Boumaza,2006). While its formation was sanctioned by interministerial order N°16 of January 28, 1988, following the completion of the PUD of 1982, which chose the Ain El Bey plateau south of Constantine as the site of the new city, the city did not officially come into existence until 1991. Between 1982 and 1983, Djundjnski, Cote, and their PhD students at the University of Constantine found that because the communes of El Khroub, Hamma Bouziane, and Didouche Mourad possessed high-quality agricultural land and were at risk of urbanization, there was no reason to waste it (Djundjnski, 1983; Benidir, 2007). Adoption of this PUD in 1988 signified the consolidation of the New Town concept into an official urban planning document that formed its own territory (URBACO, 1991). In addition, the in-depth study of the project in question did not begin until 1990, following the promulgation of Law 90-29 on urban planning and

development, when the local authorities of Constantine (wilaya and People's Communal Assembly) commissioned the URBACO consultancy to draft the study in close collaboration with the geographers and doctoral students in urban planning mentioned above (Côte, 2006). To alleviate the housing need, the approved site spans 1,500 hectares and has the capacity to house 300,000 people (see Figure 1).

In February 1993, the foundation stone of the new city was laid, following the launch of a program for 2,501 social housing units at the Neighborhood Unit NU6 level, while the benefit of the wilaya of Constantine's two national housing quotas (530 and 1,770 units) in 1997 was only and directly assigned to this new city (Cherrad&KassahLaouar, 2008). Nonetheless, the year 2000 represented a turning point in the completion of the project with the acceptance of the name "New City of Ali Mendjeli" rather than "New City of Ain El Bey" in appreciation of the crucial role this martyr played in the Algerian independence. Notably, the project was legally recognized as a "New City" at the national level by this classification, both by presidential directive N°2000-217 of August 5, 2000 and by the PUD and the Master Plan of Development and Urban Planning (PDAU). Since then, the local government has launched an emergency program of 2,000 homes for disaster victims in the city center, 900 homes under a national program for social rental housing, and 810 homes supported by the Saudi Development Fund (Lakehal, 2013). The agency for the improvement and development of housing (AADL) simultaneously launched the development of Neighborhood Unit NU5, where various private real estate developers initiated the building of promotional and socio-participatory housing (Foura&Foura,2005).

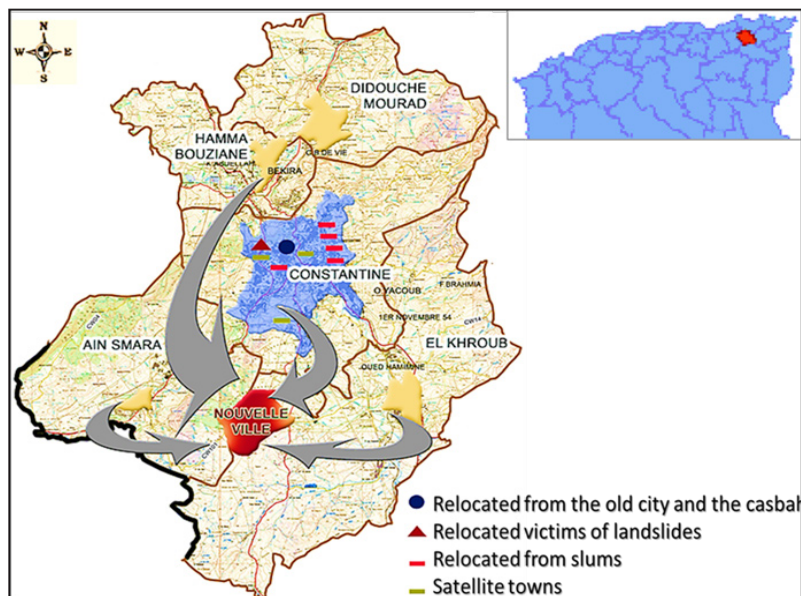


Figure1. Spatial allocation of housing needs. Source: Master Plan for Urban Development and Planning, Phase1, March 2020

From a Repository of Constantine's Demographic Overflow...

Following a comprehensive examination, local officials decided that Constantine's housing stock was in a perilous condition due to a shortage of 40,000 units, which were distributed as follows: 1000 housing units to eradicate slums, 3500 to rehouse the inhabitants of the in ruins medina, 10,000 dwelling units to allow the natural growth of the population, and finally 10,000 for the socially disadvantaged (Cherrad and KassahLaouar, 2008). The faster decrease in this rate (-1.34 %) between 2008 and 2020 is attributable to the continuation of population transfer policies. This gradual fall is not due to a lack of fertility, but rather to a governmental determination to eradicate slums and inadequate housing and promote a beautiful living environment with all of its attendant amenities (Lakehal, 2020). The other Constantine grouping communes have also contributed to the population surplus absorption, albeit to a far lesser degree (see Figure 2). Per the directives of the current PDAU and the wilaya (PAW) development plan, Ali Mendjeli is the current location for the transfer of the residents of the five communes of the Constantine grouping. In 2020, its overall growth rate has reached 16.1%, while its positive migration balance is predicted to reach 14.5%. (URBACO, 2020).

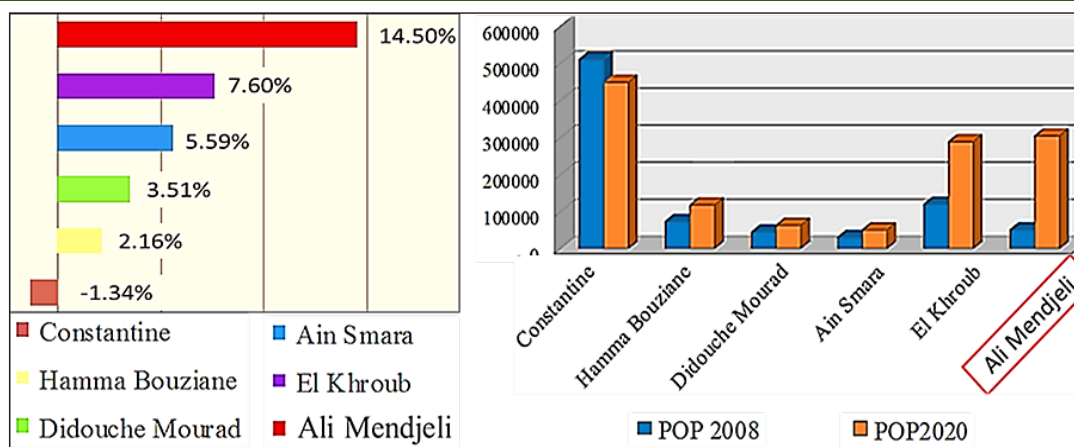


Figure 2. Population growth rate between 2008-2020 (Source: Authors 2022 based on the 2020 Intercommunal PDAU Review)

... to a pillar of socio-spatial equilibrium for the metropolis

Approved in 1994, the Orientation Report for the new city of Ali Mendjeli argues that this city offers an alternate solution to all of the spatial and demographic difficulties facing the Constantine metropolitan area (Lakehal,2020a). The new city was chosen to organize the growth of the several communes comprising the Constantine cluster and to assist in addressing their demographic, social, and cultural issues (Lakehal, 2014). According to the same report, this new town should be as self-sufficient as possible in terms of employment and services in the long term. It has been developed as a versatile urban hub that is autonomous from the mother city. It was part of an ambitious urban planning goal to make the new city an urban center with a strong, structured, attractive, job-creating hub that provides a comfortable living environment (Pachaud, 2006). This role was confirmed by the Master Plan for Urban Development and Planning (PDAU) of 1998, which not only envisioned it as a solution to the growth problems of the metropolis and its satellite cities, but also described it as a “new urban pole” that should contribute to balancing the urban growth of this group of municipalities, which is evolving in concentric waves and tending to become a conurbation (Saidi, 2020). This new town is the only viable alternative for addressing the urban surge (Nait Amar, 2013; URBACO, 2010).

A New City Rapidly Constructed and Developed in the Style of ZHUN

The city was initially created and maintained as new urbanization housing zones (ZHUN), housing estates, and peri-urban residential areas due to the urgency imposed by the local context, notably in the early 1990s, and the reluctance of national authorities. It has raised questions about the conceptual inadequacy of Ali Mendjeli’s new town and its implementation as a large-scale ZHUN (Boumaza, 2006; Foura&Foura, 2005). This choice was driven by the aim to decrease the workload of the design office, which, after the design and acceptance of the standard cell, will just need to do research on the adaptation to the soil. Even though the houses were built quickly and in very large quantities using building systems with formwork machines capable of ensuring a high production rate (OPGI, 2016), the social facilities and urban areas remained unfinished and the means of transportation were lacking until recently. In fact, the strategy of the local authorities is to finance the project solely with sectoral funds (wilaya budget) and by redirecting the housing allocations granted by national social housing programs for the entire wilaya to the New Town site. Up until the end of the year 2000, the urbanization of New Town did not extend beyond the second district (see figure 3). It was limited to the currently constructed and occupied neighborhood units in NU6 and NU8. Regarding the NU7 neighborhood unit, a social housing project with 4,300 units has been initiated.

It is, thus, an urbanization characterized by a vast production of social housing and the hesitant construction of facilities, mostly schools (Lakehal, 2017). In 2001, it was supplied with several tertiary services, including a branch of the town hall of El Khroub (municipality of the new city), a post office, and offices for the national company of electricity and gas and the Algerian water company (Lakehal, 2013). The reception of numerous housing, equipment, and infrastructure programs between 2001 and 2005 has given the New Town a new dimension. During this time, the city expanded to encompass all neighborhood units of the second district (NU6, NU8, NU7, NU5), the majority of the third district (NU11, NU9, NU10), and a sizeable portion of district one (NU1, NU3, NU2, NU4).

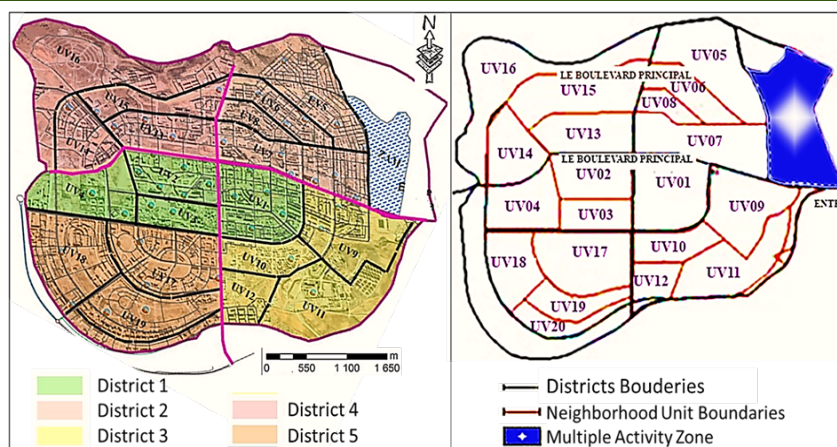


Figure3. Districts of the new city AliMendjeli and their neighbor hood units (source:authors based on the revision of the PDAU-2010)

By 2005, all of these districts, covering more than half of the New Town's urbanizable land, were occupied. End of that year also witnessed the participation of regular citizens in the construction of their individual residences on 955 serviced plots in the New Town (Lakehal, 2013).

The new city of Ali Mendjeli continues to experience a phenomenal increase in size and population (see table 1). It continues to enjoy the support of the state's senior officials and the goodwill of local authorities, who continue to promote it. It was the topic of three presidential visits and twelve cabinet visits between 2005 and 2010. Several housing programs, notably the military hospital and the university pole Constantine 3, were completed in 2005. These two large-scale projects were not only completed on time, but also with adequate architectural quality and careful management of green spaces. In addition, as a result of the state's retreat from the social housing production sector, private developers have taken over either within the context of home ownership assistance programs (rent-to-own) or within the context of private real estate development. Also involved in the development of service, commercial, and recreational facilities are private investors. The direction of urban planning and construction, in collaboration with the domains' services, auctioned off the land to promoters based on extremely stringent criteria for the realization of promotional housing or equipment programs (hotels, business centers, shopping centers, private clinics, sports centers of proximity). The urbanization of the new city has nearly reached all planned communities seventeen years after the project's conception and 10 years after the relocation of the first residents, although none of them have been completed as envisioned.

Table 1. Population and dwellings in the municipalities of the Constantine grouping

Municipalities	Area(HA)	Population		Dwellings	
		2008	2020	2008	2020
Constantine	23000	509811	447779	86588	86605
HammaBouziane	7320	72950	117096	13689	20925
DidoucheMourad	11400	44374	62654	7349	14779
AinSmara	17500	30114	49967	6434	9551
ElKhroub	24465	119539	287454	45972	57205
NewTown Ali Mendjeli	2761	50550	303295	11959	61379

Source: Authors based on data from the Inter-municipal PDAU Review, URBACO 2020

EMERGENCE OF URBAN EXTENSION ZONES IN THE NEW TOWN

As stated previously, the new town of Ali Mendjeli continues to expand daily through the addition of new housing programs and facilities. Its urbanization has occurred in stages and in accordance with the wilaya's financial resources (Lekhel, 2017). Despite huge house construction efforts, this region's housing needs continue to grow. In fact, despite the state's efforts to alleviate the housing shortage, the problem endures due to the saturation of the new town. Hence

the requirement for local authorities to establish new development scenarios and investigate alternatives to the present and future spatial expansion of the new town (URBACO, 2020). The concept of establishing urban extensions on the plateau of Ain El-Bey originated from this setting and this need. This concept was consequently imposed by the position of a city in continual crisis, in quest of spatial and demographic equilibrium, and desperate to deal with the unregulated and uncontrollable influx of persons and activity on its outskirts.

Objectives Allocated to the Development of Extensions

The direction of urban planning and construction of the wilaya of Constantine has tasked the consulting firm URBACO of Constantine with the development of extensions for the new city that were identified during the 2011 revision of the PDAU of the Constantine grouping. According to URBACO, the purpose of these extensions is to improve the functionality and quality of urban space in the new city of Ali Mendjeli, which has been studied and constructed in an emergency, giving rise to a permanent site whose neighborhoods do not offer a good visual or functional quality despite the many potentials of which the urban landscape of this city is comprised. The design office further specifies that this concept of extension is seen as a movement and process that leads to the modification of the initial city by expanding it, while keeping its uniqueness as a whole that evolves within a complex urban system. In addition to this symbolic purpose, there are a number of necessary prescriptions for the execution of these extensions, including:

- Create a fresh, contemporary, secure, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing urban area that is suitable for this location;
- Provide adequate infrastructure and facilities of high quality for the community;
- Provide the residential areas with all the appropriate facilities and natural spaces in order to foster in the residents a sense of identity and a strong sense of community belonging in order to minimize the feeling of rejection and suffocation created by the massiveness of the built-up areas;
- Provide a well-integrated circulation network with clearly hierarchical lanes, ample parking, and transportation services in close proximity to neighborhood residences;
- Accomplish population accommodation objectives while maintaining a good and balanced use of available developable space.

The new town of Ali Mendjeli was then given with four urban extension zones (see figure 4):

- NU05 extension with 1049 houses as a subdivision.
- NU20 extension with 5803 collected wellings.
- Southern extension with 4906 collected wellings.
- Western extension with 15652 collected wellings.

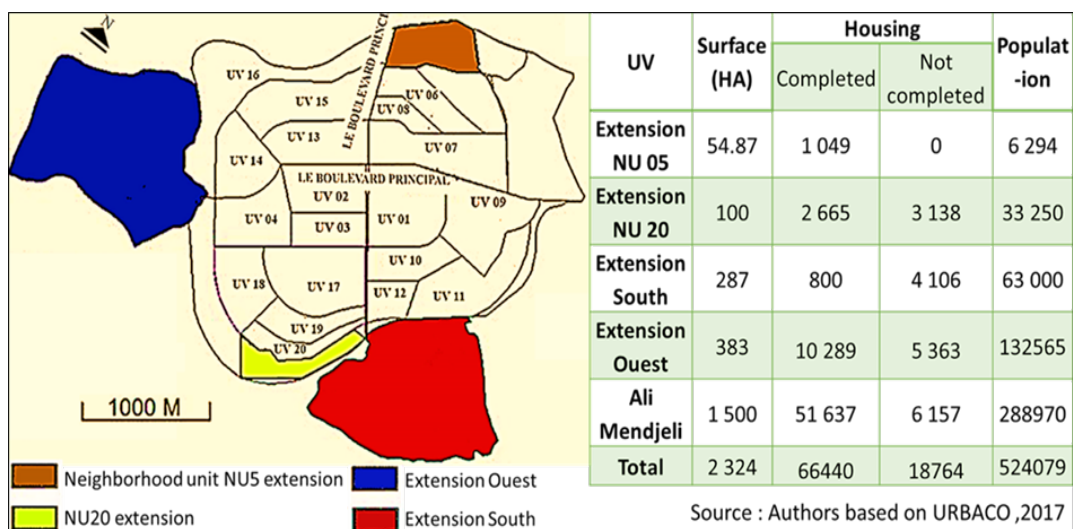


Figure 4. Population and housing stock distribution in the new town and its extensions by 2017 (source: authors, 2022)

We can say that these extensions have contributed significantly to the growth of the city of Ali Mendjeli through a variety of homes dispersed across five distinct programs. The program of public rental housing (LPL) has been given the largest allocation with 11150 units, followed by the program of aided promotional housing (LPA) with 6024 units and the program of the agency for the improvement and development of housing (AADL) with 5150 units. However, the free promotional program (PRO-LIBRE) has profited from just 3,157 houses, and the public promotional dwellings (LPP) have the smallest share with only 880 dwellings (see figure5).

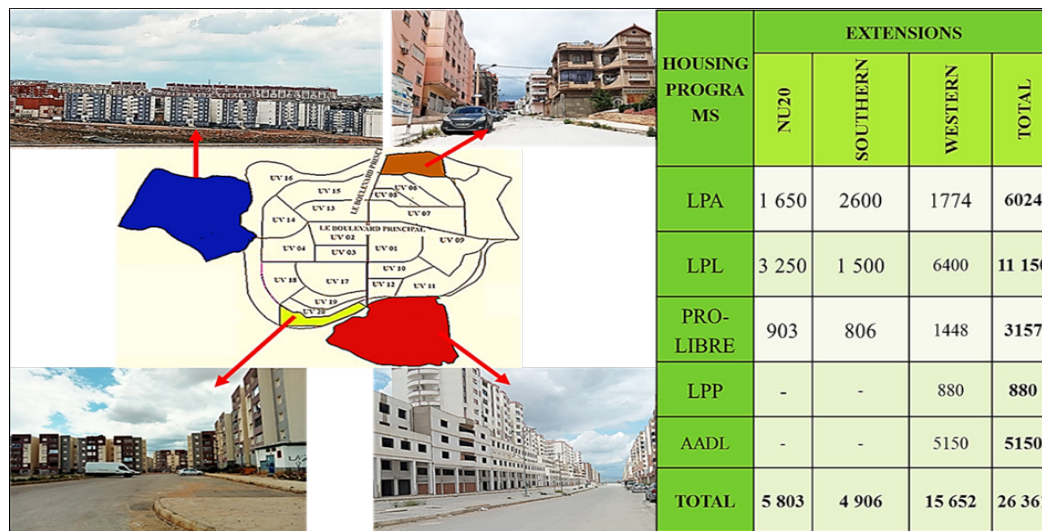


Figure 5. Distribution of housing programs in the new city Ali Mendjeli extensions by 2017 (Source: authors based on URBACO statistics)

The Western Extension Area

The Directorate of Urban Planning and Construction of the wilaya of Constantine has tasked URBACO with developing the western extension region of the new city. We note that this extension was issued as part of the revision the Master Plan of Development and Urban Planning (PDAU) of Constantine and encompasses 408 hectares to house 122,590 people in 24518 collective dwelling units under two types of social and promotional programs (see Table 2).

Table2. Distribution of Dwellings in the Western Extension

Typology	Numberofdwellings	Numberofinhabitants
SocialCollective	13908	69540
Promotionalgroup	10610	53050
Total	24518	122590

Source: URBACO,2020

This extension zone will be the management tool that will allow not only the organization of the immediate future of the New Town Ali Mendjeli, but also the translation of the objectives of the public authorities that are tasked with agreeing on the optimal use conditions for the zone, in particular:

- The adaptation of the most appropriate technical solutions consistent with the financial budget for the various developments based on the open floor space that can accommodate everything in the development program (constructions, accompanying space, networks...).
- The attainment of a level of safety and comfort, as well as an urban quality, in accordance with the goals and purposes of the development project.

To do this, three land use plans (POS) have been designated to cover the study and the design of this extension: POS10coveringanareaof120 hectares; POS11coveringanareaof141 hectares and POS12coveringanareaof147 hectares.

Southern Extension Area

The site reserved for the southern extension comprises 383 hectares and is situated 13 kilometers south of the city of Constantine. It is precisely placed on the territory of the municipality of Ain Smara and has a poor agricultural value that is conducive to development. It has varying but mainly gentle slopes. This expansion is intended to accommodate 72,000 residents for 14,400 collective houses of a single program type (see Table 3), with the occupancy rate per unit set at five persons.

Table3. Distribution of Population and Housing in the Southern Extension

Typology	Number of dwellings	Number of in habitants
SocialCollective	14400	72000

Source: URBACO,2020

URBAN DYSFUNCTIONS AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE NEW CITY ALI MENDJELI AND ITS EXPANSIONS

According to our many trips to Ail Mendjeli and its extensions, we were able to identify a number of urban and environmental problems. These also impact the quality of life of the residents and are most manifested by the proliferation of domestic rubbish that invades public areas, the lack of green spaces, the incompleteness of buildings, and the alterations made to the façades of collective housing....

Eternal construction sites: When visiting the new city of Ali Mendjeli, one of the most remarkable things is the pervasiveness of construction sites in areas where work has already begun. This is especially evident in the numerous subdivisions and at the level of development projects carried out by state-owned firms, which extend eternally from the city's core to its outskirts (see figure 6). This state of incomplete building is detrimental to the urban landscape and the intended image of this new town.



Figure 6. status of unfinished construction projects in the new town and its extensions (source: field surveys by Djouablia, 2022)

A town more arid than green: Almost no greenery exists in the new city of Ali Mendjeli, which is another of its most noticeable characteristics. Despite the climate and soil potential of the city, the satellite picture below depicts a vast area that is virtually completely desolate (figure 7).



Figure 7. The shocking lack of vegetation in the new metropolis of Ali Mendjeli and its suburbs

Even the few existing plantations are the product of community initiatives, particularly in the no-man's lands between housing units. In reality, they are only plantings of a few plant species, not usable green areas. Today, the majority of these areas are neglected and badly managed (see figure 8).



Figure 8 . Neglected and poorly maintained green spaces (source: Authors, 2022)

Undeveloped and poorly planned public spaces: In certain areas of the city, projects that have been postponed for years have locked public spaces in a state of disrepair, delaying their completion and impeding their proper usage. As for the interstitial areas close to the communal structures, they typically serve no use owing to bad design. In most situations, these no-man's lands are either abandoned and empty or squatted by the first-floor residents for personal use (transformation into a private garden, personal parking space...). De facto, the absence of care of these places contributes to the environmental and landscape deterioration of the city's many neighborhoods. Being a key element in the conception of the modern urban space (source xxx) and even an essential component of the ancient urban space, the square is absent in the conception of the new city Ali Mendjeli as well as in its realization, despite the abundance of free spaces of large surfaces which can fulfill this function but which are only used for pedestrian passage or even soccer fields for adolescents (see figure 9).



Figure 9. Abundance of spacious but undeveloped public spaces (source : Authors, 2022)

Domestic trash that threatens the environment and public health: Residents are really concerned about the piles of trash bags that have accumulated near the garbage receptacles. The uneven passing of the collection trucks in various areas of the city denounces and implicates this irresponsibility. Residents anticipate a major degradation of the urban environment and public health if this problem is not dealt with seriously in their areas, out of apprehension of disease transmission. In addition, our field research reveals a plethora of landfills that do not satisfy the needs of inhabitants or environmental standards, highlighting the need for street furniture that fulfills the demands of people and environmental standards (see Figure 10).



Figure 10: Garbage dumped in open spaces and dumps that do not meet the needs of residents or environmental standards (source : Authors, 2022)

The issue of cleanliness and storm water drainage is damaging to both the urban landscape and the ecosystem of this city. Even though the city has a sewage system, every time it rains, the issue of public cleanliness and hygiene resurfaces. The difficulty arises in the fact that this network evacuates both wastewater and precipitation and clogs with the first rainbursts; however, the lack of cleaning and maintenance of the gutters clogged with debris and stones is the root reason (see figure 11).



Figure 11. Poorly maintained drains with accumulated waste (source : Authors, 2022)

Lack of playgrounds and athletic fields: Although the city no longer lacks open areas that may serve as playgrounds and sports fields in general (see figure 12), it has a substantial deficiency in this area for different age groups and citizen categories. In response to this deficiency, the street, the parking lot, and the areas around the buildings are the only locations where children and young people may play their favored sports (soccer, card games, dominoes, etc.), demonstrating their significant demand for such spaces.



Figure 12. Public spaces that can fill the lack of playgrounds and sports fields (source : Authors, 2022)

Poor side walk: Despite the fact that a substantial portion of the sidewalks are adorned with a variety of colorful materials, the lack of care has expedited their deterioration, and the sidewalks leading to the many incomplete sites are either completely uncovered or not marked on the ground (see figure 13). We also observe that these sidewalks are not favorable to pedestrian movement due to the abundance of obstructions, such as the arrangements at the base of trees, the display of products along several sidewalks, and the parking of automobiles...



Figure 13. Absence of side walks at the level of the allotments and degradation of the coating of those which exist in the new city Ali Mendjeli and its extensions (source : Authors, 2022)

Building facades altered by citizens' interventions: The juxtaposition of many building types that lack global coherence and overall harmony already produces a bad urban picture. This appearance is further influenced by the facades of collective housing, which are utilized by the residents to mount satellite dishes, create or demolish apertures, or both such as windows, balconies, verandas... (see figure 14).



Figure 14. An alarming visual pollution generated by the satellite dishes and the modifications of the facades by the inhabitants (source: Authors, 2022)

CONCLUSION

This research examines Ali Mendjeli's birth and growth in the context of a housing shortage, utilizing a spatial viewpoint on urban reality. This city consists of 20 neighborhood units encompassing over 1,500 hectares that are already urbanized, as well as four extension areas encompassing over 824.87 hectares, of which extension UV5 has already housed 1049 inhabited lots, while the other three extensions are clearly evolving to accommodate a massive housing program. Although public authorities have been successful in releasing urbanizable surfaces in the immediate periphery of the new town to alleviate the housing crisis and give this town a relative urban reality, we believe that urban extension cannot be understood solely as a consequence inherent to causes and circumstances, but must also be understood as a mean of regulation within a complex urban system. It is evident that the extensions of the new city Ali Mendjeli have promoted the accelerated realization of large housing programs and facilities to alleviate the metropolitan housing crisis and meet the ever-increasing needs, but it should have anticipated to control these extensions, as their design should be based on several principles, including:

- Their articulation with the existing metropolitan area through the careful selection of their site, taking into account territorial balances. This is significant because communities excluded from the real estate market resort to marketplaces located far from metropolitan centers, making them more reliant on automobiles and, thus, more financially vulnerable. Depending on urban development expansions, it should be possible to increase housing supply while preserving equilibrium across a large area. This should also contribute to the variety of the supply in response to demographic shifts, particularly aging.
- The development of public spaces by enhancing nature's presence within the city and its environs, as well as the adoption of a global landscape and environmental strategy that eliminates all existing landscape and saptio-functional distortions and cuts. Due to the fact that it was planned in accordance with the principles of the contemporary movement, the new city lacks an abundance of urban life-generating and city-worthy spaces. Its ZUHN-like architecture has produced just residential and commercial spaces, with no meeting, leisure, or recreation areas. This new town has a number of deficiencies and defects that have a considerable impact on social life, particularly in terms of the quality of public spaces. These are fragmented and degraded due to lack of maintenance and neglect, which has led to various forms of appropriation, including at the feet of collective housing by residents of the the ground floors, the invasion of sidewalks by street sellers, etc. We note that the deficiencies inherent in the poor conception and lack of implementation of the external spaces, combined with the absence of the state, which has completely abdicated its management, maintenance, and organization responsibilities, on the one hand, and the absence of citizen initiatives aimed at creating a pleasant living environment, on the other, are the primary causes of all the dysfunctions observed and investigated in this city. These are exemplified daily by a heightened sense of fear, the loss of green spaces, the removal of playgrounds and gathering places, and a lack of social cohesion.

According to foreign experiences, particularly European ones, a complete and effective urban growth project must promote social and functional diversity with sustained density and adaptable urban forms. Only the expression of all of these elements will ensure the successful integration of these new developments and all of their residents. Regarding this, we highlight the urban areas of Ile-de-France, which are essentially the result of functional planning and zoning regulations. They have unnecessarily and extensively divided the numerous urban functions. Renewing the execution of ambitious and well-designed urban expansions that combine diversity and density is an opportunity to recreate the city in all of its components, including housing, activities, services, and amenities, interlaced with a high-quality public space.

REFERENCES

1. Ballout, J.-M. (2014). Territorialisation par « ville nouvelle » au maghreb. Regard croisé sur les projets d'alimendjeli (constantine) et de tamansourt (marrakech). Thèse de doctorat en Géographie et aménagement de l'espace, Page 704. Montpellier, Université Paul Valéry : École doctorale 60.
2. Ballout, J.-M. (2015). «Villes nouvelles et urbanités émergentes dans les périphéries de Constantine et Marrakech. L'Année du Maghreb, (n°12,), page 60-65.
3. Ballout, J.-M. (2021). « Politique(s) de villes nouvelles en Algérie : un serpent de mer de l'aménagement du territoire ? HAL archiveouverte Éditions, page36-39.
4. Belguidoum, S. (2018). Transition urbaine et nouvelles urbanités : la ville algérienne dans tous ses états. IREMAM, 7, Page 03.
5. Belguidoum, S. (2021). La nouvelle ville Ali Mendjeli (Constantine) à la recherche de son identité. Ambiances commerciales et nouvelles urbanités. Insaniyat, 29-44.
6. Benidir, F. (2007). URBANISME ET PLANIFICATION URBAINE. Constantine, Thèse de doctorat : UNIVERSITE MENTOURI –CONSTANTINE.
7. Bergel, B. B. (2016). Relogement des quartiers informels et conflits pour l'espace public. Le cas de la nouvelle ville d'Ali Mendjeli (Constantine, Algérie). Les Cahiers d'EMAM.
8. Boumaza, N. (2006). Entre la ville nouvelle de Aïn El Bey et les villes nouvelles : une démarche incertaine. Maisonneuve et Larose.
9. Cherrad, S;Kassah Laouar, (2008). La ville nouvelle Ali Mendjeli près de Constantine : de la villedu logement social à la ville à vocation universitaire. Cahiers du CREAD, Volume 24 (n°8384,), page 109-118.
10. Côte, M. (2006). Cité antique et ville nouvelle, Constantine. 121. (S. Hannach, Éd.) Constantine : Média-Plus.
11. Djundjnski, L. M. (1983). Ville nouvelle pour Constantine, post graduation d'urbanisme, Université de Constantine.
12. DUAC. (2020). Revision du plan directeur d'aménagement urbain intercommunal Constantine. Constantine : Direction d'urbanisme d'architecture et de construction.
13. Foura, M et Foura, Y. (2005). Ville nouvelle ou ZHUN à grande échelle ? L'exemple Ali Mendjeli à Constantine., Les Annales de la Recherche Urbaine (n° 98), 123-126.
14. Lakehal, A. (2013). La fabrication plurielle de centralités dans la périphérie de Constantine : le cas de la ville nouvelle Ali Mendjeli. Thèse de doctorat en Géographie /monde arabe.,544, page64. Université François -Rabelais de tours : Thèse de doctorat en Géographie /monde arabe.
15. Lakehal, A. (2017). La ville nouvelle d'Ali Mendjeli », Un espace façonné par les pratiques et les représentations des citoyens ordinaires. Les Cahiers d'EMAM.
16. Lakehal, A. (2020a). La dénomination des espaces dans la ville nouvelle d'Ali Mendjeli (Algérie) : l'expression d'une compétence habitante. Volume 01, (Numéro 01,), Page 1-2.
17. Lakehal, A. (2020). La ville nouvelle d'Ali Mendjeli à l'épreuve des modes d'habiter. Cahiers d'Outre-Mer. N° 282, pages 81 à 114.
18. Largat, M ; Farid, D et Chettah, S. (2022). Rural Housing Programs as a Panacea for Rural Exodus in Algeria, Case of El Khroub's Municipality. Int J Innov Stud Social Humanities. 2022 ;7(5):01-11. DOI :<https://doi.org/10.20431/2456-4931.0705001>
19. Makhloufi, L. (2005). La ville nouvelle de Constantine entre procédures participatives et démocratie représentative.
20. Mazouz, S. (2013). Fabrique de la ville en Algérie et pérennisation d'un modèle : le cas de la ville nouvelle Ali Mendjeli àConstantine. Courrier du savoir, pages 23 30.

21. Meghraoui-Chougat. (2006). Quel habitat pour l'Algérie ? La nouvelle ville de Constantine. 207. Constantine : éd. Média Plus.
22. Naït Amar N. (2013). « Constantine et la nouvelle ville d'Ali Mendjeli : un nouveau pôle sans repères ». Revue-urbanités, Page10.
23. OPGI. (2016). Dossier technique sur les opérations de relogement. CONSTANTINE : Office de Promotion et de Gestion Immobilière.
24. Safar-Zitoun, M. (2012). État Providence et politique du logement en Algérie. Le poids encombrant de la gestion politique des rentes urbaines. Revue Tiers Monde (n°210), pages 89 à 106.
25. Saidi, T. (2020). La nouvelle ville Ali Mendjeli àConstantine, vers une conurbation ? Sciences&TechnologieD (N°52), Pages 63-68.
26. Sidi Boumedine, R. P. (2017). « Les villes nouvelles en Algérie : une question apparemment réglée, mais une réalité complexe ». Les Cahiers d'EMAM, 29.
27. URBACO. (1991). Pourquoi une ville nouvelle, 1991. Centre d'Etudes de Réalisation en Urbanisme de Constantine. Constantine : URBACO.
28. URBACO. (2010). Plan Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme : Constantine, El-Khroub, Ain Smara, Hamma Bouziane, Didouche Mourad. CONSTANTINE : Centre d'Etudes de Réalisation en Urbanisme de Constantine (URBACO).
29. URBACO. (2020). Fiche technique de la ville nouvelle Ali Mendjeli. Constantine : Centre d'Etudes de Réalisation en Urbanisme de Constantine (URBACO).
30. Zerrouki, M. A. (2015). La nouvelle politique du logement en Algérie : quelles perspectives pour réduire la crise de logement ?(N° 01 /), page 02.

Citation: Soumia DJOUABLIA, Dr.Youcef Lazri, et al. *Urban Expansions for the New City of Ali Mendjeli: An other Strategy of Urban Management that Disregards Quality of Life in Algeria*. *Int J Innov Stud Sociol Humanities*. 2022;7(5):66-78. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2456-4931.0705007>.

Copyright: © 2022 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.