

From Shantytowns To New Neighborhoods: Relocation To Belgaid (Oran) And Its Socio-Spatial Implications

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Abstract:

Resettlement constitutes a practical measure to address the housing crisis in major Algerian cities, particularly those affected by unplanned urban expansion and limited land resources. Suburbs, as peripheral spaces dependent on the urban core, have been designated by public authorities for the construction of collective housing complexes intended to accommodate families relocated from precarious settlements. In the city of Oran, these relocation operations have been accompanied by profound socio-spatial effects.

This study presents the findings of field research conducted with household heads from several informal and old neighborhoods that were cleared, with their residents resettled in the new urban hub of Belgaid, in the municipality of Bir El Djir. Using a descriptive–qualitative approach, the research relied on 600 questionnaires and 25 semi-structured interviews to analyze the implications of the resettlement process and the stakeholders' choices regarding relocation sites.

The results reveal that, although the operation succeeded in providing decent housing within modern complexes, it also led to a decline in traditional social ties and an increase in spatial isolation due to insufficient services and weak transport networks, which reinforced feelings of social vulnerability. These challenges highlight the need for more integrated policies that account for both social and spatial dimensions, while ensuring adequate living environments in line with the principles of sustainable development.

Keywords: Resettlement, Belgaid (Oran), Precarious neighborhoods, Urban policies, Social ties

INTRODUCTION:

Oran, the second largest city in Algeria in terms of population and economic role, has undergone major urban transformations since the early 2000s. These changes were driven by the state's ambition to restructure urban spaces and address the manifestations of uncontrolled urban sprawl and spatial deterioration, particularly in precarious and functionally degraded neighborhoods. This dynamic emerged in an exceptional political and economic context marked by abundant oil revenues, which enabled the state to launch successive five-year programs for economic and social development (2001–2004, 2005–2009, 2010–2014), as well as the Growth Consolidation Program (2015–2019).

Within this framework, the **resettlement policy (Relogement)** emerged as a central tool to address the inadequate housing crisis, while simultaneously redistributing populations and directing them toward newly planned urban complexes designed according to modern planning standards. This policy was incorporated into several national programs, including the **Program for the Eradication of Precarious Housing (RHP)**, which constituted a spatial practice with political and social dimensions.

The implementation of these projects involved the coordination of several key actors, primarily:

- The **Ministry of Housing, Urbanism, and the City**, as the central body responsible for planning, financing, and supervising national housing programs.
- **Walis (governors)**, as representatives of the state at the local level, with broad authority to designate neighborhoods targeted for relocation, oversee beneficiary lists, and ensure the enforcement of decisions.
- **Directorates of Housing and Urban Planning (DL, DEP, DUC)**, responsible for the technical and operational aspects of the projects, including construction supervision.
- **Municipal councils**, tasked with providing social support and field accompaniment, often situated at the center of local disputes over lists and allocation priorities.
- **Public Real Estate Offices (OPGI)**, which own and manage the newly constructed housing units, including maintenance and rent collection.
- **Police, gendarmerie, and local administrative units**, which ensure the organization and security of relocation operations.

- In addition, **the media and local civil society** played varying roles ranging from mobilization and support to opposition and protest.

These operations were conducted under the guidance of **Urban Development Master Plans (PDAU)** and **Land-Use Plans (POS)**, which regulate the logic of urban expansion at both municipal and provincial levels.

In this context, Oran became a prominent testing ground for such policies. The municipality of Bir El Djir, and particularly the neighborhood of Belgaid, emerged as one of the main destinations for relocated families. This transformation shifted Belgaid from a peripheral settlement into a dense, multifunctional urban hub.

However, despite its apparent urban success, this transformation carried profound socio-spatial challenges. Among them were imbalances between rapid population growth and urban infrastructure, weak social integration, and the erosion of traditional social ties that once constituted the vital fabric of original neighborhoods. Field observations and interviews with resettled residents highlight forms of spatial marginalization, such as inadequate transport services, a shortage of public spaces, and declining service quality.

This study aims to analyze this phenomenon through a dual lens that considers both the spatial-political structure of the project and the social experiences of the residents. It seeks to address the central research question:

To what extent has the resettlement policy in Belgaid contributed to achieving genuine urban integration and improving quality of life, without generating new forms of marginalization?

METHODOLOGY:

The study adopted a **socio-spatial analytical approach**, linking the spatial transformations resulting from resettlement with their social implications. At the field level, a predominantly qualitative approach was employed, which included the distribution of **600 questionnaires** to households relocated to the Belgaid neighborhood (of which **564 were completed and returned**), along with **25 semi-structured interviews** conducted with residents representing diverse social categories. In addition, **3 interviews** were carried out with local administrative actors (the municipality, the OPGI, and the Directorate of Housing).

Direct observation within the new neighborhood was also employed, complemented by the analysis of official documents and media reports related to the relocation operations. This combination of methods provided a rich empirical basis for understanding the multidimensional aspects—both spatial and social—of the resettlement experience.

1. Spatial Context: The Municipality of Bir El Djir:

The municipality of Bir El Djir is located on the eastern side of the city of Oran and constitutes one of the urban municipalities belonging to the Oran-East administrative district. It covers an area of approximately **32.46 km²**, bordered to the north by the Mediterranean Sea, to the south by the municipality of Sidi Chami, to the east by Hassi Bounif, and to the west by Oran's city center.

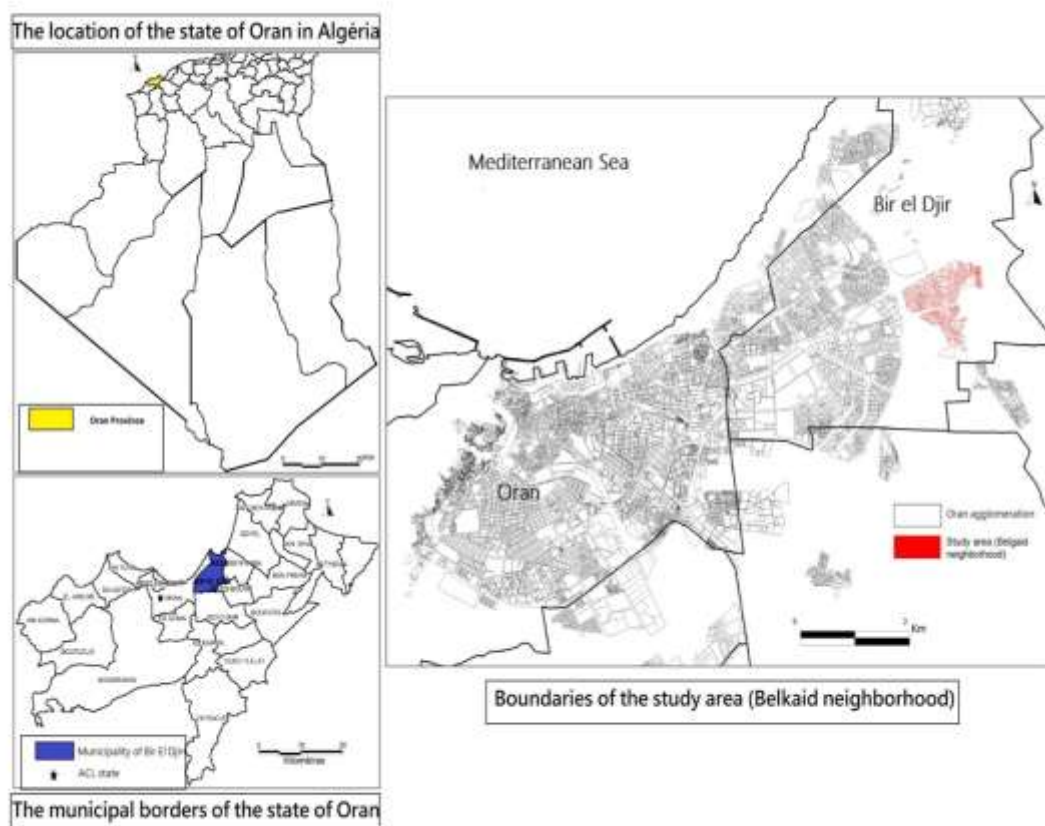
Bir El Djir is considered a promising urban area, identified in the **Urban Development Master Plan (PDAU)** as a zone of urban expansion designated to accommodate major projects. These include public rental housing, the university hub (University of Science and Technology of Oran – USTO, Oran 2 University Mohamed Ben Ahmed), the Miloud Hadefti sports complex, as well as technological and commercial zones. Today, it stands among the most attractive municipalities in terms of population influx, particularly as a result of large-scale relocation operations from the city center toward newly developed neighborhoods.

2. Study Area: Belgaid Neighborhood:

The Belgaid neighborhood is located within the urban perimeter of the municipality of Bir El Djir, in Oran Province, situated in northwestern Algeria (see Map 1). The neighborhood lies approximately **12 kilometers** from Oran's historic city center. It overlooks the Mediterranean Sea to the north and extends along the foothills of Mount "Kahr." Geographically, it is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Karshel area to the east, the municipality of Bir El Djir to the southwest, and the Canastel area to the west. The neighborhood is intersected by **Provincial Road No. 75** and **Secondary Road No. 75**.

According to the most recent **2022 population census**, Belgaid covers an area of approximately **162 hectares** and is home to more than **32,000 inhabitants**. It forms part of the municipality of Bir El Djir,

which is one of the **26 municipalities** comprising Oran Province. The province has a population of **1,213,839 residents**, spread across a surface area of **2,114 km²**.



Map 01: The Geographical and Administrative Location of Belgaid Neighborhood

The Belgaid neighborhood emerged as part of an officially planned urban vision and, within a short period, transformed into a densely populated residential hub that absorbed thousands of families relocated from precarious and overcrowded neighborhoods such as Sidi El Houari, El Hamri, and Es-Seddikia.

The urban fabric of Belgaid is characterized by a **standardized vertical typology**, dominated by repetitive-design collective apartment blocks, accompanied by a marked shortage of open public spaces. The neighborhood faces both spatial and social challenges, including insufficient basic infrastructure, delays in urban transport provision, and limited cultural and educational facilities. These factors make Belgaid a clear illustration of the outcomes of rapid housing programs implemented without fulfilling the conditions required for genuine urban integration.

Definitions of Precarious Housing:

The phenomenon of precarious housing is among the most complex urban issues, making it difficult to establish a unified definition due to the diverse geographical and social contexts in which it emerges. It often results from poverty, internal migration, poor planning, and the lack of urban regulatory mechanisms. Terminologies vary depending on regional and cultural contexts, yet they all refer to forms of informal, unauthorized, and spatially incomplete housing.

Gabriel Wackermann (2005), in the *Dictionnaire de la géographie*, defines precarious housing as “a set of dwellings constructed from recyclable or inexpensive materials, lacking basic services, but which may gradually evolve into more organized spaces through processes of legalization and connection to public services.” Similarly, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (**UN-Habitat**) defines a slum as “a household that lacks one or more of the conditions of adequate housing: legal security, infrastructure, sanitation, ventilation, space, and spatial stability” (UN-Habitat, 2003; 2015).

In the Maghreb context, terms such as “el ghorbi,” “el kassedr” (*shanty*), or “fragile houses” are commonly used to designate makeshift constructions on city peripheries, built largely with corrugated metal sheets, wood, and hand-made bricks (D. Augustin et al., 1931). In Algeria, precarious housing is most prominently

manifested in “*bidonvilles*” (*shantytowns*), which proliferated during the 1990s and early 2000s, particularly on the outskirts of major cities such as Algiers, Oran, and Constantine. Local research (Kacemi, 2012; Neït Ammar, 2017; Douik & Tassin, 2018) shows that these neighborhoods are marked by poor infrastructure, fragile legal status, and the absence of social security.

Globally, the terminology used to describe the same phenomenon is diverse: *favela* in Brazil, *villa miseria* in Argentina, *bidonville* in France, *shanty town* in India and Nigeria, *gecekondu* in Turkey, and *colonias marginales* in Central America. Such settlements are classified as “**informal settlements**” or “**slums**”, with researchers employing various descriptors such as irregular, informal, illegal, spontaneous, degraded, spatially incomplete, and disconnected from public services (Ngô-Thanh, 2006).

Although these housing clusters may begin as temporary and illegal structures, over time they are sometimes incorporated into processes of formalization, progressively equipped with water and electricity, and partially integrated into the urban fabric, as observed in certain neighborhoods of Algiers and in cases from Egypt, Brazil, and Mexico. Nevertheless, they remain fundamentally an indicator of the failure of housing policies to achieve spatial and social equity.

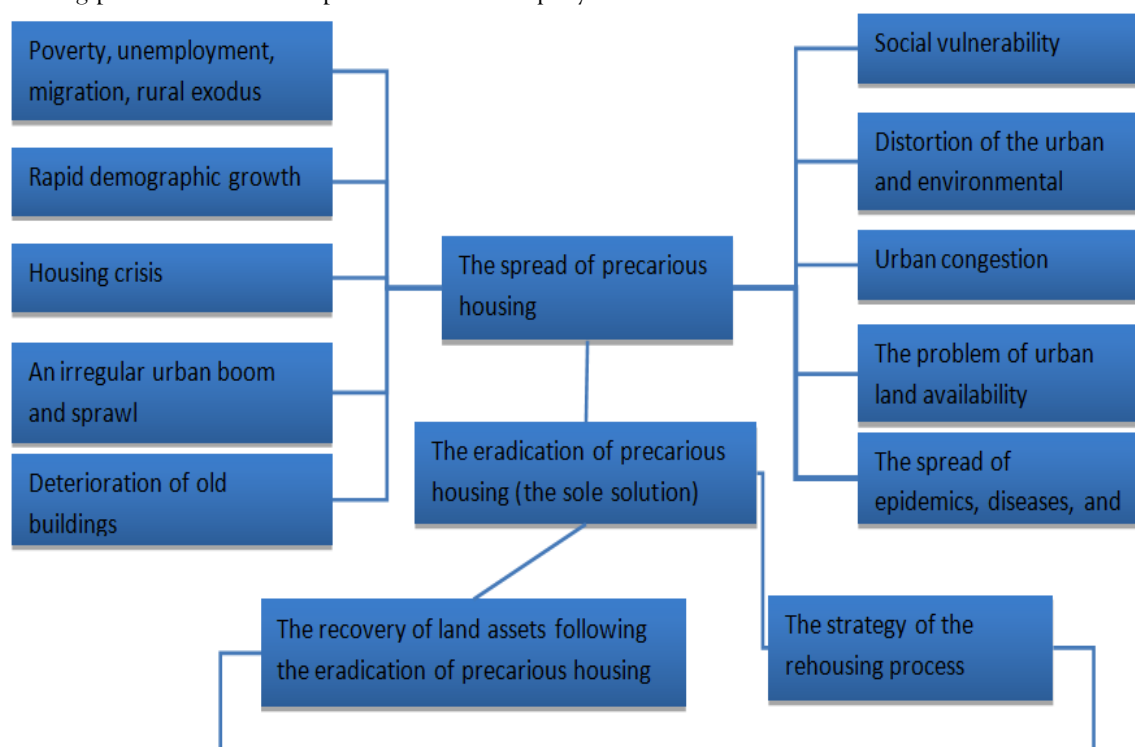


Fig 02. Causes and consequences of the spread of precarious housing

A Historical Overview of Housing and Resettlement Policies in Algeria:

Since independence in 1962, the housing sector has constituted a central priority in Algerian public policies, conceived as both an instrument for achieving social justice and a means of reducing spatial inequalities. The primary challenge was to address the persistent housing crisis affecting major Algerian cities through various policy frameworks designed to increase housing production. This crisis has deep, multifaceted roots (Boussouf, 2006).

Over time, Algeria’s approaches to housing have undergone profound transformations. The state shifted from a logic of direct public intervention—through large-scale public construction—to diversified forms of partnership and social support mechanisms (such as *social housing*, *LPA*, and *AADL*). Within this evolving policy landscape, **resettlement programs** emerged as a core tool for addressing precarious and deteriorated housing conditions.

In the first decades following independence, Algeria pursued a policy of mass housing production, particularly in major urban centers, through institutions such as the *OPGI* and later *ENPI*, reflecting a centralized and top-down planning model. However, these efforts failed to meet the rapidly growing demand fueled by urban expansion and rural–urban migration. As a result, extensive shantytowns proliferated, especially in Algiers, Oran, Annaba, and Constantine.

At the dawn of the 21st century, and particularly from 2005 onward, the government launched the National Program for the Eradication of Precarious Housing (**RHP**), accompanied by a strong political

commitment to “eradicate shantytowns” by 2014. This program entailed relocating thousands of families from shanty neighborhoods to newly built housing complexes, such as *Belgaid* and *Oued Tlélat* in Oran. The strategy prioritized quantity—delivering the largest possible number of housing units—which allowed the state to achieve significant figures. Yet, this was often at the expense of quality and sustainability, as highlighted by several studies (Remiki & Tahraoui, 2023; Asma, 2019).

Despite these quantitative achievements, the programs have faced wide criticism. Chief among these is the notion of “*housing without integration*”, whereby vulnerable families are allocated housing units without adequate mechanisms for social or spatial integration, nor any psychological or educational support. Furthermore, many resettlement operations lacked participatory approaches, thereby reinforcing feelings of alienation among relocated residents.

Another challenge lies in the uniformity of the new housing environments, which are often disconnected from local urban culture. Families are moved from spontaneous neighborhoods with cohesive social fabrics to vertical, enclosed housing complexes, without proper community preparation. In many cases, this has generated conflicts over shared spaces, weakened social ties, and fostered implicit resistance to the new living environments.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that housing policies in Algeria—despite their ostensibly social character—are embedded within complex economic and political logics. Housing allocation is sometimes used as a tool for regulating social space or appeasing urban protests, rather than as a genuine strategy for urban upgrading and achieving spatial equity.

RESULTS:

This section presents the main empirical findings of the study in Belgaid neighborhood, based on the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and the analysis of documents and media content. The results were organized into three main axes: housing conditions before relocation, social transformations resulting from the resettlement process, and spatial changes related to mobility and the daily use of space

Physical Characteristics and Social Environment of Households before Relocation:

This axis aims to provide a clear picture of the situation of relocated families before their move to Belgaid, in terms of the physical characteristics of housing, the social environment, and the extent to which they felt stability or marginalization in their former (precarious) neighborhoods.

According to the questionnaire and field interviews, the majority of respondents (more than 68%) lived in unstructured shanty dwellings, built with non-durable materials such as scrap metal and wood, without legal permits. The average housing area did not exceed 30 m², often accommodating a large number of individuals (between 5 and 9 members).

“My sister used to sleep in the same room with our parents. There was no privacy.” (Field interview, man, 43 years old, from El-Felalis neighborhood, Bir El Djir municipality)

More than 70% of participants reported the absence of regular access to potable water and severe sanitation problems. Electricity was often taken illegally (direct connection from electricity poles).

Regarding education and health, 52% of participants mentioned that their children had to travel long distances to reach a primary school, while most health facilities were located outside the neighborhood or were poorly equipped. These conditions have also been documented in field studies such as: Houcem Eddine REMIKI, Fatima TAHRAOUI (2023) *The Periphery – the Keystone of Rehousing in Algeria. The Case of Constantine City*.

Despite the hardship of living conditions, the social environment was cohesive. About 79% of participants stated that they knew their neighbors closely and felt a strong sense of belonging to the neighborhood, even under difficult circumstances. Studies in urban sociology confirm that communities living in precarious conditions tend to develop strong horizontal solidarity networks, as pointed out by Bourdieu (1993) in his concept of “social capital.”

“We were like one family, we knew each other, we helped each other... But we lived in shanties, that was not a real life.” (Field interview, woman, 37 years old, from El-Hamri neighborhood)

As for families’ attitudes toward relocation, and despite the majority’s desire to improve their housing conditions, some expressed fear of the unknown. Only 38% were aware of their resettlement destination before relocation, and 20% voiced concerns about losing social ties or failing to adapt in the new neighborhood.

“We didn’t know where they were going to take us... we only heard about Belgaid.” (Field interview, man, 50 years old)

Preliminary Analysis:

From this axis, it can be said that the resettlement process represented for many residents a dual experience: material liberation from miserable housing conditions, and a social risk of losing their old sense of belonging and entering an unfamiliar spatial environment.

Social Outcomes: (Transformation in Social Relations and Lifestyle):

Interviews with relocated residents revealed that the rehousing process affected the social bonds that prevailed in their original neighborhoods. A considerable number of respondents expressed a sense of social emptiness and a gradual breakdown of the relationships that used to connect them with neighbors and acquaintances.

This decline was explained by multiple factors: differences in cultural backgrounds among the new residents, spatial distance from acquaintances, the absence of the “neighborhood spirit” (*rouh el-houma*), and the lack of common spaces that could encourage interaction.

Topic	Before Relocation	After Relocation
Strong Neighborly Relations	78% of the sample	26% of the sample
Participation in Community Occasions	64%	19%
Sense of Belonging to the Neighborhood	80%	33%

Table (01): Distribution of interview themes according to the sense of social connectedness before and after relocation

Despite the availability of improved housing conditions, many beneficiaries pointed to a form of “*spatial alienation*” and an inability to integrate into the new neighborhood, particularly among the elderly and women. Expressions such as “*I don’t know anyone*” and “*everyone keeps to themselves*” were frequently repeated, reflecting the absence of a stable interactive base within the new housing complexes.

“The housing is new... but it feels soulless. I don’t know anyone, and everyone keeps their door closed.” (Field interview, man, 42 years old, relocated from El Hamri neighborhood)

This is consistent with Henri Lefebvre’s argument in *La production de l’espace* (1974), which posits that space is not merely a physical structure, but a social relationship embedded in spatial practices, meanings, symbols, and memories associated with place.

Moreover, 53% of respondents reported not having met their neighbors within the first month of settlement, confirming weak social cohesion at the outset. Only 26% expressed satisfaction with neighborly relations in the new neighborhood, compared to 78% previously in the slum areas.

Interviews and field surveys further indicated that the resettlement process had a direct impact on the pace of daily life, particularly regarding commuting to workplaces or schools. The survey revealed that 39% of household heads were self-employed, 25% worked in the private sector, 19% in the public sector, 3% were unemployed, and 14% retired. Weak public transportation and the absence of markets and nearby facilities in the early years following relocation forced some to change their economic patterns or abandon their previous jobs.

Fig 03: Occupational distribution of household heads rehoused in Belgaid (based on the survey)



Element	Before Relocation	After Relocation
Distance to Workplace	Less than 3 km (61%)	More than 6 km (74%)
Use of Public Transportation	Regular (73%)	Irregular or absent (66%)
Daily Purchases	Available within the neighborhood (82%)	Requires travel outside the neighborhood (59%)

Table (02): Comparison of Selected Lifestyle Elements Before and After Relocation**Spatial Findings: Use of Space, Facilities, and Services:**

The spatial field analysis of Belgaid neighborhood in Bir El Djir municipality reveals that the gap between the official planning vision and the residents' daily realities generates complex spatial transformations. While the Algerian state aims to establish a balanced and multifunctional urban design and housing complex, daily observations and residents' narratives highlight imbalances at several levels.

Belgaid is divided into several sub-complexes, most of which were subject to rehousing programs; however, the level of equipment and operational facilities differs from one area to another. Some complexes benefit from the presence of an elementary school or a mosque, while others suffer from relative urban isolation. One of the major spatial challenges faced by residents is the insufficiency of transportation—particularly public transit—to accommodate the population, as well as the weak integration of Belgaid into the city's overall network, whether in terms of public transport, pedestrian pathways, or service connectivity. Despite Belgaid's geographic proximity to Oran 2 Mohamed Ben Ahmed University and the highway corridors, spatial isolation is reinforced by the absence of functional interconnection between the neighborhood and the rest of Oran. For instance, Belgaid was only connected to the Krechtel area by a bus line in early 2024, following a visit by the then-Wali Saïd Sayoud to the area (Al-Anis TV channel). Field observation indicates that public open spaces (parks, squares, neighborhood playgrounds, etc.) suffer from two main deficiencies: either they do not exist at all in certain housing complexes, or they are prepared only symbolically but remain non-functional—lacking benches, lighting, and often surrounded by concrete walls. These areas are sometimes used as informal parking lots or dumping grounds for garbage.

We also observed a lack of visual coordination between the apartment buildings and their surrounding spaces, preventing the emergence of a “living” urban environment that could foster community interaction.

Type of Space	Number of Sites	Frequency of Use	Field Observation
Public Squares	6	2	Lack of lighting / presence of waste
Neighborhood Playgrounds	3	2	Lack of fencing / dilapidated condition
Parks or Urban Forests	1	Rare	Neglected / presence of garbage

Table 03: Public Spaces in Belgaid by Type and Daily Use

Over time, new practices began to emerge within the neighborhood that were not originally planned in the design vision. Examples include the rise of informal activities (mechanics, vegetable selling) around the buildings, the use of sidewalks and entrances as seasonal vending spots, creating a functional overlap between residential and commercial spaces, the absence of fresh water, and the spread of water vendors through tank trucks.

Although these phenomena reflect the residents' dynamism and their efforts to adapt the space to their needs, they simultaneously reveal the weakness of municipal regulatory mechanisms and the absence of social support.

As for the issue of security, the concern of “lack of safety” or a “sense of vulnerability” was frequently mentioned in several interviews, especially during nighttime. This was attributed to factors such as poor public lighting in certain corners and passageways, the absence of nearby police stations or regular patrols, and the presence of unsupervised youth groups in public squares.

Security Coverage & Perception of Safety	Number of Responses	Percentage of Sample
Good and relatively comfortable	158	28%
Moderate, with tension in the evening	271	48%

Absence of security and constant discomfort	135	24%
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Table 04: Residents' Assessment of the Perception of Safety in the Neighborhood (Based on 564 Survey Respondents)

DISCUSSION:

The physical characteristics and social environment of the families' housing before relocation: The results reveal that the majority of the relocated families were living in cramped informal dwellings (slums) that lacked basic services such as water, electricity, and sanitation. These findings clearly reflect the features of "precarious housing," as defined by UN-Habitat (2016), which emphasizes that the absence of services and the use of non-durable construction materials constitute the main indicators of inadequate housing.

However, the striking paradox lies in the fact that this spatially fragile environment was socially rich, as networks of solidarity and neighborhood relations constituted an essential source of moral strength for the residents. This is consistent with Bourdieu's (1993) thesis on "social capital," according to which marginalized groups can compensate for a lack of material resources through horizontal support networks. Thus, the relocation represented a shift from a space that was "materially deteriorated" but "socially rich," to one that is "spatially well-prepared" but "poor in terms of human connections."

Social Outcomes: (Transformation in relationships and lifestyle):

The data revealed a clear decline in the strength of neighborhood relations (from 78% to 26%), participation in social events (from 64% to 19%), and sense of belonging (from 80% to 33%). This regression can be explained by the transition from an open horizontal space to a closed vertical one, which reduces opportunities for daily interaction. In this context, Lefebvre (1974) explains that space is not merely an urban structure, but a social relation embodied in practices and symbols, where the absence of communal meeting places transforms the new housing into a kind of "functional void" lacking vitality.

Residents' testimonies confirm this reality, reflecting a form of "spatial alienation," particularly among women and the elderly. This indicates that relocation was not only a material process but also represented a social and cultural shock. Similar findings were recorded by Remiki & Tahraoui (2023) in Constantine, highlighting that relocation to peripheral areas often weakens the sense of belonging and increases the isolation of vulnerable groups.

Moreover, field data, as presented in Table (02), showed that commuting distances to work have doubled, public transport has become irregular, and daily shopping now requires trips outside the neighborhood. These transformations reflect the "hidden cost" of relocation, where access to basic services declines and residents' dependency on transportation increases.

In light of this, it becomes necessary to invoke the concept of "**spatial justice**" (Soja, 2010), which argues that the unequal spatial distribution of services generates new forms of marginalization.

Spatial Outcomes: Use of Space, Facilities, and Services:

Disparities in infrastructure among the sub-complexes reveal fragilities in program implementation and inequities in the distribution of services, leaving the new neighborhoods vulnerable to reproducing the very inequalities they were meant to eradicate. Despite their geographical proximity to major urban axes, the Belgaid district remained functionally isolated for years due to the weakness of public transportation. This paradox between "physical proximity" and "functional distance" illustrates what Castells (1996) refers to as the "gap between physical space and social space," whereby a neighborhood may be geographically embedded within the city yet remain marginalized in spatial terms.

Findings from Table (03) support this view, showing that most squares and green spaces are either underutilized or neglected, reflecting a lack of investment in the "social dimension of space" and hindering the emergence of a "neighborhood spirit." Urban studies literature, particularly Jacobs (1961), highlights that public spaces constitute the cornerstone of community interaction and urban safety. In the absence of such spaces, unregulated activities—such as car repair, street vending, and the appropriation of sidewalks—have emerged. These practices reflect residents' resistance to rigid planning models and their attempts to adapt space to their real needs, a process that can be understood through the lens of "bottom-up planning," where inhabitants innovate alternative solutions in the absence of municipal regulation.

Moreover, Table (04) indicates that 72% of residents report experiencing either "evening tension" or "a constant sense of insecurity," underscoring the close relationship between weak urban design (poor lighting, absence of vibrant public areas) and the perception of insecurity. This finding aligns with

Wacquant's (2008) work on "territorial stigmatization," which shows that peripheral neighborhoods often acquire a negative reputation that reinforces processes of social exclusion.

The preceding analysis reveals that the resettlement program in Belgaid represented a dual transition: a material and urban gain accompanied by a social and spatial loss. While the state succeeded in eliminating slum housing as a precarious environment, it did not achieve the same degree of success in fostering an integrated socio-urban space. This highlights the fundamental paradox between a "housing-as-quantity policy" and a "planning-as-comprehensive policy."

CONCLUSION:

This study, through the case of resettlement in the Belgaid neighborhood of Bir El Djir (Oran), demonstrates that Algeria's housing policies, despite their apparent effectiveness in eradicating informal settlements and improving the urban fabric, continue to suffer from functional and spatial imbalances that undermine the core principles of urban justice and the right to the city.

Resettlement has indeed improved the material living conditions of broad segments of the population by providing adequate housing within newly built complexes. However, field data show that these technical successes were not accompanied by social and spatial policies capable of sustaining social relations, strengthening the sense of belonging, and activating public spaces.

The study has uncovered a marked gap between the official planning vision—embodied in the PDAU—and the residents' lived spatial realities. Manifestations of isolation, functional marginalization, under-equipment, and lack of active local governance continue to hinder residents' appropriation of their new environment.

From this critical perspective, Belgaid may be considered an urban model that embodies the contradiction between housing as an urban objective and comprehensive urban planning as a strategic goal. This raises broader questions about the future of housing policies in Algeria and the necessity of moving beyond short-term solutions toward the construction of integrated, just, and participatory cities.

Recommendations:

In light of the findings and analytical discussion, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of resettlement projects and to ensure genuine socio-urban integration in newly created housing poles such as Belgaid:

1. At the level of public policy:

- Redefine the objectives of resettlement to go beyond technical dimensions (relocation and construction) and to include social, economic, and spatial integration.
- Institutionalize the *post-resettlement phase* as a mandatory component of every project, encompassing social follow-up, the activation of reception and integration mechanisms for residents, and systematic impact evaluation.
- Adopt a genuinely participatory approach in the selection of housing sites, the design of urban spaces, and the provision of neighborhood facilities, by involving representatives of beneficiary populations prior to relocation.

2. At the level of planning and urban development:

- Strengthen the functional integration of new neighborhoods by effectively connecting them to transportation networks, employment hubs, and administrative and health services.
- Ensure that *Directing Urban Development Plans (PDAU)* play a dynamic role in the equitable distribution of facilities and in reducing disparities between central and peripheral areas.
- Dedicate a share of land in each residential complex to the creation of vibrant public spaces (squares, parks, neighborhood playgrounds), equipped, safe, and supported by continuous management.

3. At the level of social and community intervention:

- Establish social support units at the level of municipalities or districts to accompany residents during the initial months of resettlement and to facilitate processes of community adaptation.
- Support grassroots initiatives for resident self-organization within buildings or neighborhoods by providing administrative and legal frameworks for co-management bodies.
- Develop awareness-raising and training programs for residents of new neighborhoods on collective housing practices, the preservation of shared facilities, and the rights and duties of the urban citizen.

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