

Rural family and the problem of urban adaptation (Social and economic dimensions)

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Abstract;

Recently Our cities, especially major cities, suffer from Ruralization appearances that have become exacerbated to the point where urban areas are losing their distinct characteristics. The presence of rural families in cities does not necessarily indicate their participation in urban life; rather, they may remain marginalized and isolated within this new community. This explains the emergence of urban Ruralization due to the lack of integration and adaptation of newcomers to urban environments.

In this field study, two main variables were selected to measure adaptation: firstly, marriage and partner selection. secondly, residential clustering and housing choices. Through these indicators, we found that adaptation cannot be solely linked to specific variables; rather, it is a long-term process influenced by economic and living conditions that may manifest across the second and third generations of migrants. Difficult living conditions compel migrants to cluster and maintain social cohesion through internal marriages based on kinship relations (tribes, clans, etc.).

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1. Introduction

Huge urban growth in Algeria cannot be demographically explained just by natural population increase, as natural growth rates have not reached significant highs (N.O.S, 2014). This growth is clearly due to rural-to-urban migration. Algerian society has witnessed this phenomenon as a result of historical, economic, and finally political circumstances, which have accelerated the massive flow of rural families into cities. This has resulted in urban-rural clusters burdened with crises due to pressure on urban resources and the loss of urban characteristics due to this large migration.

The presence of rural families in the city does not necessarily mean that their members participate in all aspects of urban life. Rural families certainly have structures and characteristics that distinguish them from urban families. Their move to the city compels them to make efforts to adapt and avoid exclusion and marginalization, as they are now in a heterogeneous society.

Adaptation requires abandoning rural practices, leading us to question the extent to which these families adjust to this new environment.

In this study, we investigate whether traditional social ties persist, hindering adaptation and causing rural migrants to maintain their rural way of life in the city. We examine the relationship between housing choices in the city, forming connections with urban residents, and the role of endogamous marriage and residential clustering based on kinship in the adaptation and integration process into urban life.

2. Traditional Society:

According to most studies, traditional societies are small, homogeneous communities where individuals strongly adhere to customs, values, and traditions, and are deeply connected to the land and family to the point of reverence. They live in one area and their communication methods are cooperative. Rural families, particularly in Algeria, are large and characterized by social cohesion and strong kinship ties.

3. Characteristics of Traditional Rural Families:

According to most research, rural families are known for their strong kinship ties, social cohesion, and sense of belonging. According to Murdock, a rural family is "a system of relationships through which individuals are connected by a complex and strong network of interrelated connections" (Murdock, 1972, p. 107).

4. Kinship Relations:

Kinship is "the social means by which social relations are determined, and like any social system, it is subject to a set of rules and principles" (Hassan Mahmoud, 2003, p. 13). Boumakhlouf sees it as a hierarchical system, starting with the family as the first unit in the kinship sequence, culminating in the village community, which often shares a common

origin and has a high degree of intermarriage (Boumakhlouf, 2004, p. 27). To understand the strength of kinship relations in rural society, we must observe rural families, which are usually large and extended, preserving their kinship ties. These families often descend from a common ancestor, forming clans. Clans, which consist of large families with common ancestry, form tribes.

The tribal system is one of the forms of organization in traditional rural society. A tribe consists of several clans organized according to mutually agreed-upon customs. Each clan retains relative independence in its affairs and decisions while maintaining nominal loyalty to the tribe as a whole. "The kinship basis within the tribe does not rest on shared residence but on the recognition of a common ancestor and belonging to them" (Ghazwi, 1993, p. 7).

According to Sabah Ayachi, "The tribe and clan system embodies the persistence of the concept of 'Asabiyyah (group solidarity) observed in North African countries, particularly Algeria. This is evident in the solidarity and cohesion during crises or self-defense and also in urban areas during election periods when certain candidates from specific clans receive strong support" (Ayachi, 2007).

5. Kinship Relations in Cities:

Human groups based on kinship relations are known as kinship communities, and one of the features of rural families is the preservation of their kinship ties. Kinship is a manifestation of cohesion, union, and solidarity. It refers to "the affiliation of two or more people to a common ancestor, or their belief that they share a common ancestor, whether real or imagined, as is the case with adoption" (Saleh, Imad, 1996, p. 59).

The persistence of traditional social ties, such as the strong kinship relations of rural families in the city, allows them to maintain their original social networks by clustering together in the city and preserving their relationships. Their migration to the city becomes merely geographic mobility. One manifestation of this change in kinship relations may be the way they select spouses for their children, a subject that we will explore in our field study.

6. Marriage as an Indicator of Adaptation:

In Algerian society, marriage and the process of selecting a spouse are governed by recognized legal, religious, and cultural ties. Marriage is not only the formation of a family but also the reinforcement of social ties between two families, thereby expanding the kinship network.

Rural families' adherence to internal marriage (marrying relatives) allows them to maintain their traditional kinship ties in this new society. Here, we observe two forms of marriage selection: the first is traditional and rural, often referred to as arranged or family-chosen marriage, and the second is individual or free choice, more common in urban families.

The first type "characterizes traditional Arab societies, occurring within relatives, extended families, or small communities like villages or tribes" (Choukri, 1996, p. 71). According to Chaulet, "The preference for marriage between relatives, or 'endogamous marriage,' is not only for forming a family but also for creating a family that develops based on its material and social resources, reproducing its specific relations, traditions, and vitality" (Claudine Chaulet, 1978, p. 208).

This type of marriage continues to occur in traditional societies and is associated with arranged marriage under the supervision of the family, clan, or tribe. Researchers in our societies justify it as a way to preserve family property and tribal inheritance by avoiding marriage with outsiders, though such motivations are diminishing in urban settings. Choukri Alia explains that "its persistence in our societies only expresses homogeneity among members in urban society" (Choukri, 1988, p. 425).

Marriage in urban society can either strengthen traditional kinship ties through endogamous marriage or create new kinship ties through exogamous marriage.

The latter can signify a departure from inherited rural kinship norms and the acquisition of some urban values.

According to Ayachi Sabah, "The changes occurring in families, in terms of their structure, way of life, and relative independence from extended families, did not prevent them from abandoning their traditional values such as cooperation, solidarity, and religious practices. Even as women's roles have changed due to education and employment, helping their families and husbands, spouse selection is influenced by the desire for social change and parity between partners" (Ayachi Sabah).

7. Field Study:

We conducted the field study in the city of Djelfa, which offers an ideal environment for studying rural migrant families due to the historical backgrounds of rural and nomadic origins that characterize the region. This transition from rural and nomadic life to urban living has occurred relatively recently.

We used a quantitative analytical method, which provided us with frequency and cross-tabulation tables, reflecting the relationship between two variables for the purposes of analysis and interpretation, relying on data collected from the field using a survey directed at rural families in the city of Djelfa as a data collection tool.

The research sample was purposive, a non-probabilistic sample, which required us to approach rural families living in different areas of Djelfa. It was difficult to fully survey the research community. A total of 206 valid questionnaires were accepted, reflecting the seriousness of the respondents in answering during the period from January to May 2024. We deliberately designed the survey with closed and simple questions, taking into account

the limited educational level of the community under study, resulting in a sample of 206 families.

Table 1. shows the relationship between the residence duration and the establishment of marriage ties with city habitants.

Relationships Residence duration	Not Available	Available	Total
Less than 5 years	12 ^{31.57}	26 ^{68.42}	38 ¹⁰⁰
From 5 to 10 years	03 ^{6.81}	41 ^{93.18}	44 ¹⁰⁰
From 10 to 15 years	11 ^{5.27}	61 ^{84.18}	72 ¹⁰⁰
More than 15 years	42 ^{89.76}	10 ^{19.23}	52 ¹⁰⁰
Total	68 ³³	138 ⁶⁷	206 ¹⁰⁰

Source: Designed by researcher.

This table aims to understand the connection between respondents forming marriage ties with city habitants based on how long they have lived in the city. We observe that the general trend indicates a lack of marriage ties between new rural migrants and long-term city residents, with a ratio of 67% versus 33% for those who have marriage ties.

When introducing time as a factor and its impact on establishing marriage ties, we find that recent migrants are less likely to form marriage relationships compared to older migrants. One-third of migrants who have lived in cities for less than 5 years have formed marriage ties with city residents. Additionally, 6.81% of recent migrants have entered marriage relationships, compared to 93.18% in the group who have lived in cities for 5 to 10 years. Moreover, 15.27% of this group have formed marriage relationships compared to 84.72% who have not. Among long-term migrants (more than 15 years), 80.76% have established marriage ties with city residents, compared to 19.23% who have not. It is evident that these relationships start to form clearly after more than 15 years of residence, likely due to the emergence of the second generation born in the city.

Endogamous marriage in urban areas is a highly significant topic, as it serves as a measure of the persistence of traditional rural social ties, linked to the customs and values of new rural migrants. Algerian society is no exception to this system, where economic, political, and social changes have played a significant role in shaping its social structure, including marriage patterns.

In examining the variable of marriage (rural vs. urban) among our sample, we seek to uncover the changes occurring in the lives of rural migrants in cities, as urban areas have

experienced rapid changes, leading to the emergence of new systems and the disappearance of others related to traditions and customs. In other words, individuals living in urban settings develop distinct traits and preferences due to the changes in lifestyle, making them more inclined toward exogamous marriages than endogamous ones.

Regarding previous studies on marriage between relatives in urban societies, the findings are consistent:

- The rate of marriage between relatives increases with higher illiteracy rates, as educated youth and families tend to favor personal choice in marriage.
- Marriage between relatives is more common among low-income families, as it is based on kinship and is easier to arrange with fewer social connections for families with limited means.
- The increase or decrease in this type of marriage is related to the degree of freedom allowed in partner selection.
- The desire to preserve family unity and traditions, despite the risks posed by endogamous marriages, which can have negative hereditary effects on children.

There is an inverse relationship between endogamous marriage and urbanization; the rate of marriage between relatives is higher in villages and rural areas due to the social pressures exerted by extended families.

For rural people, endogamous marriage is justified by the desire to keep family wealth within the extended family, strengthen family and clan ties, and maintain proximity to relatives, in addition to reducing dowries and costs. However, it is difficult to observe the relationship between the time factor and the existence of marriages with urban residents within such a short period, limited to one generation. This trend may require examination over two or more generations.

This leads us to discuss the mechanisms of abandoning rural culture, which may be tested by examining traditional values and relationships influenced by newly acquired social behaviors in the city.

Table 2. shows relationship between Migration method to the City and Relations with the Original Community.

Relationships Method of Transfer	Available	No	Total
Individual	42 ^{31.57}	26 ^{38.23}	68 ¹⁰⁰
Group	105 ^{76.08}	23 ^{23.91}	138 ¹⁰⁰
Total	147 ^{71.35}	59 ^{28.64}	206 ¹⁰⁰

Source: Designed by researcher.

This table aims to examine the relationship between the way rural migrants transitioned to the city and their connections with their original rural communities. The

general trend shows that 71.35% of migrants maintain relationships with rural inhabitants, compared to 28.64% who do not.

When we factor in how migration occurred, we find that more than two-thirds of our respondents moved to the city collectively. This supports our hypothesis that collective migration leads to informal housing settlements in the city, with migrants maintaining ties with their rural origins. Among those who migrated individually to the city, 61.76% still maintain connections with their original rural communities, compared to 38.23% who do not. However, these relationships are not as strong as in the case of collective migrants, where three-quarters have maintained ties with their rural origins. This collective migration can be explained by the poor security and living conditions during the Black Decade (Algerian civil war), indicating that this group, primarily representing the first generation of migrants, was forced to migrate, rather than moving by choice.

Table 3. shows relationship between the Reason for Choosing a Residential Neighborhood and Connections with City Residents.

Relationships Choosing the Neighborhood Reason	No Relationships	There is Relationships	Total
Proximity to the city	06^{37.50}	10^{62.50}	16¹⁰⁰
Presence of relatives	39^{82.97}	08^{17.02}	47¹⁰⁰
Presence of community members (Al-Aarch)	39^{82.97}	08^{17.02}	47¹⁰⁰
Financial circumstances	43^{69.35}	19^{30.64}	62¹⁰⁰
Other	09^{21.42}	33^{78.57}	42¹⁰⁰
Total	125^{60.67}	81^{39.32}	206¹⁰⁰

Source: Designed by researcher.

This table aims to assess how the choice of residential neighborhood among rural migrants to the city relates to their establishment of friendships and connections with city residents, whether in their neighborhood or across the city.

The general trend indicates that 60.67% of respondents have relationships with city residents, compared to 39.32% who do not. When we factor in the reason for choosing a residential neighborhood, we find that economic reasons are the main driver, with over 50% citing financial factors. Additionally, the presence of relatives or members of the same tribe plays a crucial role in selecting a neighborhood. Rural families tend to form fewer relationships with urban families due to limited interactions with city residents. Among those who chose their residence based on its proximity to the city center or other areas, 62.5% have formed relationships with city residents. This table gives a rough indication of how well newly urbanized individuals connect with their new surroundings and neighbors.

Urban sociologists argue that neighborhoods play a fundamental role in shaping the behavior of their residents, especially children. Social control and communication methods vary from one neighborhood to another, often reflecting the prevailing culture of the area.

These include adherence to neighborhood regulations, integration, and adaptation to collective neighborhood governance.

Migrants tend to choose their neighborhood based primarily on two key factors: the presence of relatives and acquaintances and their economic situation. It is unlikely that a wealthy rural migrant would reside in a slum or informal settlement.

At the same time, we see that the desire to belong to urban society varies among migrants. Some may feel embarrassed by their rural origins in the city and strive to change their residence within the city to gain greater urban status, seeking alternative communities or social circles to replace their rural ones. In doing so, they find a sense of social standing and belonging while maintaining ties with their tribe.

The new generation may belong to a different economic and social class than their parents based on profession, education, and income. "Families here have economically shifted toward individual independence through industrial, service, and craft professions" (Sourami Adel, 1999, p. 594). Parsons, in the mid-20th century, introduced the concept of the isolated nuclear family, which he precisely linked to kinship relations in modern societies. He noted that the greatest feature of the nuclear conjugal family is its relative isolation from the broader kinship network in daily affairs, with limited kinship networks (Khareef Hussein, 2005, p. 95).

This change is more noticeable in the second generation of migrants or nuclear families when they leave the extended or parent family. Their residential independence has led to changes in some values that were previously dominant.

Kinship is not only about family ties; it also includes marital relations. Kinship refers to blood relationships, while marriage creates ties through in-laws. Kinship is a social relationship built on family connections defined culturally, with culture determining which family relationships are particularly significant and the obligations they entail.

In urban residential clusters, migrants' interactions with one another are shaped by the groups they belong to, which form part of their social environment. These groups include those to which individuals are actually affiliated and reference groups, which determine whether or not someone is accepted or excluded.

According to the Dictionary of Sociology, reference groups can be categorized into two types: "comparative reference groups and normative reference groups." The latter establish or impose norms on individuals, according to symbolic interaction theory (Sourami, 2005, p. 594).

In this new social context, reference groups may be represented by neighborhood communities, residential areas, or work groups, which migrants use as a standard of value. If a person's social environment remains unchanged, with no shift or adaptation, it reflects the mere physical relocation of nomads and rural people to cities, without a corresponding desire for change or adaptation despite the geographic movement.

8. Conclusion

Rural migrant families in Djelfa are characterized by dual relationships in their new urban environment-both within the urban setting and through kinship ties, whether with their original rural communities or with relatives or tribal members in the city. Despite the variety of kinship ties and the diverse demands of urban life, traditional social bonds persist.

The factor of kinship and the continuation of traditional social networks in the city inevitably hinder social integration and adaptation. These relationships provide moral and financial support for rural families, who tend to live together in kin-based residential clusters or create new rural-like communities, often on the city's outskirts.

The homogeneity of rural families, their similar lifestyles, and their low educational levels reinforce traditional marriage practices for their children, extending even to the second generation of migrants. The choice of spouse often reflects their way of life and living arrangements, which can be explained by the desire to preserve family ties, protect family property, and minimize costs.

Most rural families are compelled to live together based on kinship ties because this arrangement offers both material and moral protection, particularly for families with lower living standards.

The adaptation of rural families to city life does not happen immediately but may become evident in the second or third generation, who differ significantly from their parent generation in terms of education, lifestyle, work, and social networks.

Modern rural families in Djelfa are characterized by low living standards and limited social relationships, maintaining strong connections with their rural origins. This explains their continued involvement in rural activities, which are sometimes transferred to the city to meet family needs.

Rural families often create homogeneous residential clusters, supported by rural ties like tribe and kinship, which are typically informal settlements located on the city's periphery. This leads to the ruralization of cities through informal housing and the practice of rural activities in urban spaces. Despite their ability to improve their housing situation in the city, most rural families refuse to sever their ties to informal neighborhoods, as they aim to obtain government-provided social housing.

Even when rural residents benefit from housing granted by the government to eliminate informal settlements, they often do not live in these homes. Instead, they rent or sell them, using the additional income to build or move to new homes in neighborhoods that align with their kinship networks.

The establishment of informal neighborhoods and rural communities in cities creates a link between rural migrants and the city, facilitating further rural migration to urban areas.

As well as, We have attempted to shed light on the role of collective migration in creating semi-urban rural communities, especially on the outskirts of cities. These communities maintain the rural nature of the families and contribute to their isolation in this new environment. Additionally, this study highlights the role of marriage and spouse selection in preserving traditional social networks, as rural families continue to practice endogamous marriages. Based on the independent variables of marriage and residential

clustering in the city, which are rooted in kinship ties, we conclude that the rural families' adaptation to their new urban environment occurs gradually over the first and second generations. Rural families' choice of marriage partners is influenced by their living standards and education, while residential clustering is primarily based on kinship, offering economic security and stability. These arrangements foster cooperation and mutual support within kin groups, such as tribes or extended families. However, the persistence of traditional marriage practices and rural family clusters in urban areas hinders the process of adaptation to urban life.

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