

## THE ANALYSIS OF THE ALGERIAN TERRITORIAL RECONFIGURATION PERCEPTIONS AND METHODS; CASE OF THE MUNICIPALITIES OF THE PROVINCE OF TIZI-OUZOU

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this article is to examine the Algerian territorial reconfiguration perceptions and methods through the case of the municipalities of the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou. In fact, the investigation that is based on almost direct entertainments and dealt with local actors has therefore allowed to highlight the current territorial division limits. Furthermore, the insufficiency of the criteria taken into account is emphasized by the delay in the decentralization process. Be based on these limits, we have drawn several possible scenarios of the territorial mesh evolution which may give birth to a participative and a permanent local development.

**Keywords:** Perception, territorial configuration, municipalities, Algerian, scenarios

**JEL classification:** H1, H7, O2

### **Introduction**

The size of a territory refers to a fairly wide geographical perimeter. Besides, the issue of the optimum size refers actually to fairly municipality dimension. Thus, this issue is raised with sharpness further to the implementation of decentralization in most countries where we regularly proceed with the expansion, the combination or with the restriction of the territorial communities size. This permanent backward and forward motion is interpreted as the impossibility to get an ultimate optimal and theoretical definition of a territory. Indeed, there is no optimum size rather it depends either on the practiced qualification or on the target purpose.

In the light of theoretical and empirical bases of the territorial divisions, we suggest in this article an evaluation attempt of the Algerian territorial and reconfiguration methods through the analysis of the perceptions led by the actors who are daily involved in the management and the development of territories.

The work is structured in three main points. The first deals with theoretical and empirical backgrounds of the territorial divisions. The second point examines the bases of the several divisions carried out in Algeria since the Ottoman time till nowadays. Finally, the last point provides the results of our investigation with the territorial actors.

#### **1. The theoretical and empirical bases of a territorial division**

The administrative configuration of a territory often clashes with choices made by the State, trying to find out an arrangement between the level of decentralization as well as the qualifications that are to be assigned to the infra-State territorial entities. These elements lead us to wonder what are the empirical and the theoretical criteria (optimal size of communities) used for defining a division of the territory in decentralized entities that underline the appropriate echelons (municipality, province, region...).

The Territorial division leads mainly to a territorial mesh which is considered as both “ a socialized and an operating partition principle and as a social and a political construction that

is deeply related to history and relevant to the leading political choices and even ideological ones” (Raham, 2004, p57).

Thus, the spatial planning is closely related to the appropriation and the territorial mesh . The Organization of the space is the projection of social relationships occurred there. In this context, the spatial planning appears as a reorganization of space and men, taking into account the activities that configure and qualify the territories. Furthermore , the enquiry concerning the territorial equity and the social welfare seems to be a tiring task for managers, because of the disparities induced by the activities and the strategies of the involved actors (companies, economic agents, institutions, etc.). Therefore, the planning must underline the correction of the spatial effects resulted by human activities as a target aim.

Indeed , the analysis of the administrative mesh may allow to highlight several purposes such as the exercise of authority, the role of framing a social project and the optimization of the territorial division (Raham, 2004). Thus , the administrative division requires to devote a great importance to the organization of the space, the formation of the urban framework and the establishment of the urban system basis.

From a technical point of view, the territorial division requires a geometric knowledge in order to take into account both of the spatial dimension (size) as well as the concentration of the population (inhabitants). The technical and theoretical instrument which is set up to be able to define a technical division seems to be that of THIESSSEN polygons.

This method, which is applied in most countries, has been the item of criticism (Bartlett, 1989). The problem that is raised by the public management concerning the territorial mesh is relevant to a dimensional order, having regard to the weight of the administrative center ; that of the optimal surface which ensures the best coverage of the services and facilities, and that of the optimum population. Here are the criteria of the optimal size of a territorial community.

According to PINCHEMEL (1997, p 116) , any optimal mesh must fit four requirements:

- **Equality** : it concerns changes in the bond lengths linked to centers and the sides which must be minimum;
- **Compactness** : the ratio of the length of the perimeter to the surface should be minimal;
- **Adjacency** : the paving should cover all and not leave of interstitial spaces;
- **Practicality** : adapting the design to the function.

These four conditions are relating to the administrative organization that may structure and configure the territories divided into entities of different ranks. The ultimate aim consists of looking for a division of space in regular and balanced mesh in order to reduce the disparities and the inequalities between the various entities which consist of territorial municipalities having the same rank.

In addition to the criteria within the model of THIESSSEN polygons that has been presented briefly, it must be said that other parameters come into account in the definition of the entities that are behind the development of the territories.

For an optimal administrative division of a territory, it seems that the taking into account of technical, economic, sociological and political criteria would be essential to manage the heterogeneity. This is what we will discuss in the point following this section and which handle the practice of the territorial divisions in Algeria.

## **2. The restructuring of the municipal territorial frameworks operated by the administrative divisions in Algeria**

It is important to note that any territorial mesh, being set , will have direct implications on the future of the territories. The administrative division is a way of understanding the spatial logic. It is designed to identify and establish the boundaries of the ranges. This allows to take possession of the space by releasing the design owned by the governments of their area and its configuration.

It is in this context that one can judge the interest that bear the populations in the territorial frameworks which they are inserted in (Beladjal, 1998). Algeria, which does not escape this reality, is looking for a division that would be operational and practical on the economic level and would establish the authority of the State and support the development of the territories.

In this point, it will be an opportunity to present the various divisions seen by the independent Algeria but before to do so we will draw a brief overview of the different territorial units that prevailed before 1962.

### **2.1. The pre-independence territorial organization**

During the Ottoman time, we attended an early territorial mesh ; that of the tribe based on a relationship between a social organization and the living space of the tribes. The context was characterized by a net decrease of central power held by the Turkish Sultan (Coulot, 1987). The territory is divided into three provinces or Beyliks. The Beylik of the Levant to the East with Constantine for capital, the Beylik of Titteri in the Central with capital Medea and the Beylik of the Ponant corresponding to Western Algeria with Oran to capital. This system that has prevailed during the three centuries of Turkish regency was not a criterion for defining the development entities. It is essentially a zoning authority.

The Turkish organization system which had been useful for three centuries until 1830 , had been kept by the French colonizer. We have seen just after the occupation the transposition of this model in the three departments of Constantine, Algiers and Oran which lasted a century (Coulot, 1987). However, the principles of the organization have taken other forms. The French colonial administration had proceeded with the establishment of a political system imposing social and spatial segregation. This new reorganization has accentuated the process of disintegration of the tribes and the tribal system. On the eve of the colonial era which is accompanied by the population growth and the intensification of economic activities, a new administrative reorganization of the territory became an imperative for conducting the affairs of the country. Thus, the number of departments was multiplied by five to 15 in 1956, while the number of joint passes to 1525. This was a frame of basis for the reforms after the country independence.

### **2.2. The post independence territorial Organization**

#### ***The reform of 1963***

In the day after the independence, the actions taken within the territorial mesh, were involved in a situation where the control of the territory is carrying it away of the logic of development. A reconsideration and appropriation of a territorial space effort was deployed in attempting, as a first step, to redefine the names of the entities. Indeed, the number of departments that was 15 was kept but renamed Wilayahs. The number of municipalities increased from 1525 in 1958 to 676 in 1963. This grouping was to affect the loss of the municipalities identity, resulting in regional disparities.

#### ***The reform of 1974***

The territorial division of 1974 was characterized by the fact that he has expressed the desire to promote the development of landlocked and mountainous regions. Therefore, a new territorial configuration is implemented. It resulted in the birth of 16 new wilayahs bringing the total number to 31, so that the number of municipalities has increased of 676 to 704. This division of 1974 comes at a time when Algeria knows massive industrialization and strong urbanization. The aim is the establishment of administrative structures that could take in charge the spatial, economic and social transformations and reduce the phenomenon of rural exodus (Côté, 1983).

#### ***The reform of 1984***

From 1984 and following the major economic transformations experienced by Algeria, the imperfections of the territorial division of 1974 are come into effect (Raham, 2001). The redivision of 1984 has doubled the number of municipalities, from 704 to 1541. The Wilayahs also increased to reach a total of 48 in the national territory. This new fragmentation of the territory was mainly conceived for setting an effective decentralization through the omnipotence of the municipality which is regarded as a principal basis for the development of the country. The aim is to achieve equilibrium between the different meshes in order to apply single rack equipment (Côte, 1993).

#### ***What balance sheet and prospects of the territorial reform in Algeria?***

The succession of these various reconfigurations prompts to proceed with an assessment of their relevance in relation to the criteria and the target aims. The current division raises

several questions especially on its efficiency and its future transformation. Thus , a new reform has already been undertaken in the interest of the authorities. It aims to create new delegated wilayahs for managing and responding to demographic changes in the country. However, it seems to us that before launching into a new reform, it remains necessary to examine the strengths and lacunas of the current divisions. Besides , It comes to analyze the perceptions of the local involved actors (elected officials, mayors, heads of district... etc.) to subsequently try to build possible scenes of transformation , the main topic of this article and the following development.

### **3. The analysis of the perceptions of the current division and the methods of reconfiguring: case of the municipalities of the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou**

This last point has as its main objective to analyze the perceptions of the local actors (including: mayors, elected officials, territorial administrators... etc.) of the different territorial divisions having characterized the Algerian territorial backbone since its independence. It is thus to highlight the criteria taken into account during the divisions as well as the expected methods of restructuring.

#### **3.1. The profile of respondents**

The chart below lists all the people surveyed by function and municipality belonging. We interviewed profiles which are varied from mayors and current elected to the ex-mayors and the ex-elected moving through the heads of district and communal administrators. We have considered in our entertainments the three scales basing the territorial framework of the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou namely the municipalities, the districts and the wilayah . Furthermore, we have taken into account the elected and the non-elected administrators so that we would arise the different points of view.

**Tab1. Respondents by function and commune of belonging**

<b>Local actors</b>	<b>Mayors/PMAP</b>	<b>The elected municipalities</b>	<b>The elected PAW /committee president</b>	<b>Heads of district</b>	<b>E.g. elected PMAP</b>	<b>Administrators</b>
<b>Total</b>	15	17	5	2	2	7

The selection of our sample by function shows that the majority of respondents are elected municipal officials and presidents of municipal people's assemblies in function. The non-elected administrators and the elected representatives of the People's Assembly of the wilaya come in second position. Finally, the non- elected heads of district come in last position. It is to note that most of interviews were conducted at the municipal level. This scale is that we are interested in first and foremost in our research. We have thus voluntarily privileged this territorial level.

Our investigation was greeted positively by the elected both at municipalities and at the wilayah level. Our research is indeed at the head of the concerns of these elected representatives., we have Often been welcomed in the communal seats during our moving on the ground of the wilaya. Nevertheless, several interviews were led at the level of the PAW of Tizi-Ouzou, taking profit from of the regular meetings of the local elected representatives at the seat of the wilayah.

#### **3.2. Element of methodology**

Our investigation has taken place during the last quarter of the year 2014, over a period of four months. Indeed, it consists on a period which was busy for local politicians and outraged by several pitfalls. We have nevertheless managed to keep our aims and gather the optimum conditions for the conduct of our interviews. Our methodology has been focused on grid interview with open-ended questions. This approach is greeted by local actors because it allows them to express themselves freely taking their whole time to refine their arguments.

The elaboration of the survey's grid was based on the theoretical elements developed in the first topic on territorial configurations. Each time, we have reminded the historical context in which new territorial reconstructions have been made in Algeria. Also, we have introduced an originality within our approach by supplying thematic maps accompanied by administrative boundaries, the number of inhabitants, the surface for each municipality as well as highlighting the relief. This process has helped us to be engaged in rich discussions with concrete illustrations on maps.

#### **Methodological framework**

**Aim** : to examine the perception of local actors on the terms of the current territorial division in Algeria. The analysis focuses on the criteria of division and their limits.

**Period** : September - December 2014

**Course** : Interview's grid

**Places** : Municipalities of the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou

**Tools**: Thematic maps, demographic and geographic data

**Data** : Semi-direct interviews

**Sample** : 48 elected officials, presidents of PMA, heads of district and local officials at the level of 30 municipalities in the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou

**Representativeness** : our sample takes into account almost half of the municipalities of the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou.

**Mode of management**: interviews face-to-face for an hour at least.

**Method of the analysis**: the analysis of the profile of local actors and their perceptions diagnosis through a reading grid has been adapted from literature and based on our research hypotheses.

**Limits**: the limits of this series of interviews are mainly related to the methodology followed and that can be criticized because it is essentially qualitative in nature.

The interviews were mainly led at the level of the people's assemblies of the wilayah and municipalities. We had referred to several people considered as resources occurring within the University of Mouloud Mammeri in Tizi - Ouzou so as to get appointments and be engaged in talks. The investigated sample is representative as we interviewed almost forty-eight people on half of the municipalities of the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou. The interview face to face is a process stimulated by all the advantages and the terms that can offer. This technics allows to collect original and exclusive information. However, this qualitative analysis will be completed later on by a quantitative analysis for illustrating the results of our research well and efficiently.

### **3.3. The main results of the investigation**

#### **3.3.1. The lacunas of the current division criteria**

The current territorial division at the municipal level is qualified by the majority of respondents to be inefficient. The criteria taken into account in the structuring of the territories are often provided by the population variable which remains insufficient to understand the complexity of a territory that consists on a multiple composite having different sizes should be taken into account (Hadjou, 2009).

The wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou has particularly many characteristics related to its mostly mountainous terrain, its high mass population and its many remote mountain villages. These characteristics have not taken into account in the various territorial divisions implemented throughout the post-colonial period. It comes then to review the division to stick closer to the territorial realities of the aforesaid wilayah as well as of other wilayahs of the country. This is the main conclusion raised by the all surveyed local actors.

According to many elected officials in the PMA and the PA of the Wilaya, the '*current territorial division is not in favor of the economic development*'. Some people consider that there are «*too many municipalities* », others think instead that "*there are not enough municipalities.*" The wilayah level is also regarded as an obsolete due to the weight of the population. Another category of people refers to the need to subdivide into two or even three

wilayahs. Indeed, this consideration must also concern the regional level because at this level “*the process of economic development must be considered and implemented*”

**The total population criterion term - need to add the criterion of dispersal**

The taking into account of the criterion "total population" is important in the division of territories but it is not exhaustive. The mayors of the municipalities of Souamaa and Wassif underline that “*this criterion must be strengthened by that of the dispersal of the population. A commune having a population mostly agglomerated in the center and another commune with a population highly dispersed in scattered areas referring to different management problems*”. Indeed, the first type of municipality is easier to administer according to the mayors, while the second type poses great difficulties in management. The means to endow these municipalities are much more important than those needed for the first type of communes.

This criterion of the population dispersal is not taken into account in the allocation of resources. The mayors wonder about the logic behind the fair allocation of some resources without taking into consideration the municipal characteristics '. All the municipalities receive the same amount under management plans, those of arrangement and urbanism.

**Number of villages by municipality : criterion to be considered**

This criterion is respected for several times in our interviews with the mayors of larbaanathirathen, Ouagenoun and those of Tizirt. The number of village by commune varies significantly. More the villages are large ; more the means necessary to connect them for example to AEP networks are high. The poor municipalities in mountainous areas are particularly suffered from this issue , moreover , they are not taken into account neither in the current division nor in the allocation of budgetary resources to municipalities.

**Surface - relief: two criteria to be indissociable**

The size of the municipalities of the wilayah is relatively homogeneous. Two municipalities, namely Azzefoun and Tizi-Ouzou stand with an area on average twice much larger than the other. However, this conformity of size hides in fact outstanding differences in the relief of the municipalities and it is especially binding in the process of socio-economic development. Nevertheless, this criterion is not taken into account in the successive divisions that marked the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou.

The elected representatives of the mountainous municipalities as those of Djebel Aissa Mimoun, Beni Acharya, Beni Douala and larbaanathirathen feel «*wronged, relegated and even abandoned* according to their echo. The relief of these municipalities creates a lot of extra costs to the projects (roads, sanitation, connection to EPA, city gas and fiber-optical networks)

**Cultural and territorial unity: an ignored dimension**

The interviewed elected officials are aware of the fact that successive divisions having characterized the territory of the wilayah in particular and Algeria in general «*are the work of central authorities with the will to break with the local tribal logics that are meant to represent a danger to the territory's unity*. This is interpreted as «*the aggression and the impairment of local solidarity, based essentially on a cultural and geographic unity* '.

According to the elected officials, the division is far from fitting this criterion of cultural and territorial unity. However, this criterion is considered essential to promote a sustainable local development. Some populations are joined to municipalities in which they do not identify themselves. Thus, their living spaces does not coincide with their administrative membership space, this creates a sense of injustice that puts more local populations off the center State. This dilution of confidence in public institutions is unfavorable to any point of view concerning the process of the local territories emergence.

**3.3.2. The decentralization process is at the heart of the logics opposite to the local development process**

Beyond the deficit of the territorial division within the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou in particular, and in Algeria in general, the elected official respondents raise the problem of decentralization as a major obstacle to the development of the local territories. In this context, all mayors and elected officials are unanimous to underline the weakness of their prerogatives and the inadequacy of the municipal code with the economic development logics.

**Lack of prerogatives of the elected officials - municipal code to be reviewed**

Elected officials feel " *powerless and without prerogatives.*" They consider that their work margins are reduced. Thus, according to respondents, the municipal code is still encroaching on their authority. The decentralization process must "promote the involvement of elected officials and local populations in the development of territorial project". This contributive approach is lacunar and the mayor is often powerless to respond «to *the complaints of his staff*» .

The elected officials consider themselves as they are ' facing the bureaucracy of their own administration - the financial supervisor has a freezing power which is often exercised to the detriment of the municipalities interests '. Their decisions and their projects must be endorsed by communal administrators, then by the district Chief and the authorities of the Wilayah. This process slows deeply the decision-making and the implementation of the projects. Moreover, the district level is perceived as a " bureaucratic, unnecessary and without contributions to the local dynamics.

Thus, sectorial policies come over the territorial policies, giving that they are likely to meet the specific needs of the populations and the municipalities. Without reforming of the municipal code and without awarding the necessary prerogatives to the elected, it has been stated by the respondents that" *any operation aimed at restructuring the territory of the wilayah and/or that of Algeria will be doomed to failure*» .

### **3.3.3. The backgrounds of the current policy related to the territorial arrangement are suspected**

Finally, it is the Algerian policy of the territorial planning that has been suspected. Indeed, the latter is contrasted by the elected respondents regardless of their political allegiance or their rank in municipalities (mayors, elected PMA, elected PAW) because of its inconsistencies and its lack of realism. Local characteristics are not at the heart of this policy while the population and the local elected are not associated in its definition. The award-winning sectorial logic comes at the head and the «*lack of confidence is evident between the different levels of decision-making, between the different territorial degrees, between the central State and the local elected officials, between the elected representatives and the elected officials, between the people and the State*» .

Furthermore, according to the surveyed mayors «there is a wide gap between the legal texts and their state in force, thus, it can be defined as a serious problem of credibility of the institutions in the country." The coherence of the territorial planning policy in its texts and practice is necessary to redefine on a sound basis the relationship between the local territories and the State .

#### **Lack of link features between the municipality and the wilayah and between the wilayah and the central State**

The respondents have underlined the lack of two territorial link features between the municipality and the wilayah and between the wilayah and the central State. This lack is likely to weaken the logics of local sustainable development. Indeed, these two features exist but in a form that does not allow them to fully accomplish their role in local dynamics.

Between the municipality and the wilayah , the district is a relevant inter-municipal echelon to impulse the structural projects which have been failed on a municipal level. According to the respondents, the district in its present form plays only a role of a managing perceived as «*bureaucratic and useless* ". Between the wilayah and the central State, the area program becomes a reality. However, its configuration, its aims and fixed challenges pose real problems in terms of spatial planning. According to the elected, these program areas have been defined according to criteria that are as questionable as those of municipalities. Thus, their geographical and cultural coherence is suspected. In this context, according to the respondents ' *this policy is already doomed to failure.*

### **3.3.4. The expectations of local actors – building scenarios attempt**

In the chart below, we have tried to synthesize the different scenarios built according to the surveyed local actors. Green gradient refers to the urgency of the scenario in question and the eagerness of the elected mayors to move in this direction.

The first scenario refers to a new configuration of the territories at all levels: local, municipal, wilayah and region. This new configuration is meant to bring an overall consistency in the management of the territories by facilitating the work of local actors. It may nevertheless be faced with objections on the part of the local population reluctant to change.

The second scenario is involved in the logic of streamlining the process of allocating the resources that can remedy the inconsistencies in the current division. This scenario seems interesting provided that it is easy to be implemented and as long as it does not commit deep territorial changes. The municipalities which may witness the disgrace of their resources may interfere to slow down the process.

The third scenario refers to the revision of the municipal code and the deepening of the process of decentralization. His main interest lies in the fact to reconsider the role of elected officials and territorial policies. This scenario may take a lot of time and be faced with objections from some parties in power.

**Tab2. Scenarios of reconfiguration of municipal territories in the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou - built according to respondents**

<b>Scenarios</b>	<b>Conceivable Options</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>terms</b>
<b>1<sup>er</sup> scenario</b>	<b>The revision of the current division so as to promote the local development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The redefinition of the municipalities with objective criteria close to the daily facts of populations: cultural and geographical unity</li> <li>- The promotion of a new economic dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The opposition of the local population</li> <li>-the heaviness of the process</li> </ul>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> scenario</b>	<i>The streamlining of resources allocation under the PDAU - objective criteria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Simple to be implemented</li> <li>-rebalancing the allocation of resources for the benefit of the poor municipalities, particularly those in mountain areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the opposition to the wealthy municipalities which are likely to feel aggrieved</li> </ul>
<b>3<sup>th</sup> scenario</b>	<i>The reform of the municipal code and decentralization: more prerogatives and territorial policies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-to put the territory at the peak of development</li> <li>- to reconsider the elected as the real actors behind the local development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-the heaviness of the process</li> <li>-the opposition to the parties in power</li> </ul>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> scenario</b>	<i>Creation of new territories of cooperation – inter-municipal strategic alliances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- easy to be implemented</li> <li>- the streamlining of human and material resources</li> <li>-the relevance of this scale for economic development</li> <li>-easy alliances to be undone or reconfigured</li> <li>-dynamic process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-alliances not based on objective criteria</li> <li>-political alliances</li> <li>-difficult cultural change</li> </ul>

Scenarios	Conceivable Options	Interest	terms
5 <sup>th</sup> scenario	<i>Redivision, decentralization and territorial strategic alliances</i>	-initiate a new dynamic of sustainable development in the municipal, departmental and regional territories	-difficult to implement -time long needed

The fourth scenario refers to implementing strategic alliances inter-municipalities, inter-wilayahs and inter-regions (Chenane, 2007). These alliances are conceived to be very flexible and do not require much time for implementation (Buclet, 2011). They are likely to promote a better distribution of resources and a streamlining of human and material resources as well as recovering the problem of the territorial division's irrelevance (Bourjol, 1995). In fact, it is a strategy that can represent another possibility of division as it can complement any territorial division. These alliances may nevertheless produce opposite effects by encouraging cooperation based primarily on political criteria even ideological, non-economic, and social (Le Saout, Madore, 2004).

The last scenario is the most interesting because it combines both the first four. Therefore, it involves the country and the wilayahs in a difficult process but at least it helps in restructuring territories, planning policies and territorial culture. It is thus a territorial upheaval which will necessarily require much time and which might be hampered by several challenges of institutional actors as well as administration and local populations.

Our research demonstrates obviously the need to reform the territorial framework in the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou. It remains to define the most appropriate modalities and the easiest ones to be implemented, without too many 'quickenings' territories. The chart above shows a few scenarios on the basis of the surveyed elected mayor's words.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis of the local actors perceptions concerning the current division shows that this latter suffers from several terms that hinder the municipal local development process. The restructuring of the municipalities has become a necessity to overcome the deficits and give birth to initiatives. This can be done gradually and in different ways. The scenarios that have been suggested in our study are directly inspired by the several experiences of the territorial actors. There are several restructuring methods; each has its own advantages and terms.

Whatever the scenario taken into account, three variables seem essential to promote sustainable local development. First, it is necessary to review and especially to broaden the criteria for division. Then, it is important that the decentralization process would follow its journey giving more prerogatives to the elected. Finally, the population must take part in the projects because without its involvement, initiatives and projects will be hampered or even frozen.

This research should be extended to reach more municipalities and more actors likely to endorse the findings. It is the main term of our approach since we have been limited to the only municipalities of the wilayah of Tizi-Ouzou.

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