

Kindergartens in urban areas: An urgent necessity amid changing family patterns: A field study in the capital

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Abstract---This study examines kindergartens in the urban Algerian context, focusing on their role in addressing the social and economic transformations affecting the family, particularly the shift from extended to nuclear families and the increasing participation of women in the labor market. The findings indicate that kindergartens have become vital institutions contributing to the social, psychological, and cognitive development of children. They provide a safe and stimulating environment that fosters skill development and enhances children's social and cognitive abilities. The research also shows that the reasons for enrolling children in kindergartens vary, including improving social skills, providing an advanced educational environment, and facilitating work-family balance, especially for working families. The study highlights kindergartens as comprehensive educational and social institutions that compensate for some of the functions lost by nuclear families and ensure better integration of children into school and society.

Keywords---Kindergarten, Nuclear Family, Socialization, Urban Environment, Early Childhood Education, Working Women, Childcare.

Introduction

The contemporary urban environment is undergoing profound transformations in its spatial and social structure, accompanied by new patterns of daily practices—particularly in light of rapid urban expansion and population growth. Cities, as complex and systemic spaces, generate emerging needs linked to the nature of lifestyles within them, especially with the rise of the nuclear family, the increasing participation of women in the workforce, and the growing social and economic pressures on family

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units affected by these changes. These dynamics have contributed to shifts closely tied to various aspects of urban family life.

Among these aspects is the realm of childhood, which has evolved in tandem with such transformations. Kindergartens have emerged as one of the modern urban spaces that have expanded noticeably, shifting from limited educational institutions to essential components of the city's social and service infrastructure. Consequently, kindergartens have become a social necessity rather than merely an educational option, as they respond to dual needs: providing safety, care, and early socialization for children within an organized institutional environment, and enabling parents—particularly mothers—to balance the demands of work and family life.

Although this phenomenon may initially appear to reflect a natural growth in health and educational awareness among urban families, it raises deeper sociological questions about its underlying meaning. Is it a matter of objective needs linked to the transformations of urban childhood? Or are we witnessing a form of symbolic consumption that reproduces patterns of social distinction under the guise of welfare and education?

Problem Statement

Urban families have shifted from extended family structures—comprising grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren—to nuclear families consisting of parents and their children. This transformation has reshaped the internal structure of households and redefined traditional social roles and divisions of labor (Parsons & Bales, 1955). A key manifestation of this shift is the increasing participation of women in the labor force, which has had a noticeable impact on the functioning of the entire family system (Becker, 1991).

One of the most prominent outcomes of these changes is the rising need for supportive social institutions, particularly kindergartens, which have become a social necessity driven by the demands of urban life. Kindergartens have evolved into essential facilities that reflect both functional necessity and indicators of family well-being within urban settings (UNICEF, 2019). They provide practical solutions that help families maintain work–life balance while offering children a safe and structured environment that supports their social and emotional development (OECD, 2020).

Given the growing importance and rapid expansion of kindergartens in urban contexts, this study raises the following question:

To what extent have the transformation of the Algerian family—from an extended to a nuclear structure—and the increasing participation of women in the workforce contributed to families' reliance on kindergartens?

To address this question, the following hypothesis was formulated:

The transition of the Algerian family from an extended to a nuclear structure, combined with the rise of women's employment, has significantly contributed to families' increasing reliance on kindergartens.

2. Significance and Objectives of the Study

This study is of particular importance as it addresses kindergartens and their emerging role within urban environments—an issue closely tied to contemporary dynamics of social change. The study aims to highlight kindergartens as active components of the urban social structure and as institutions that mirror new patterns of urban living (Giddens, 2013). It further seeks to examine how social roles are redistributed within the nuclear family and how the increasing need for alternative institutions contributes to children's socialization alongside the family.

Additionally, this research aims to clarify how these institutions contribute to understanding the relationship between urban organizational requirements and the evolving social needs of families. It also seeks to explore the educational and psychological motivations that drive urban families to enroll their children in kindergartens (Brooks, 2011).

3. Conceptual Definitions

3.1. Urban Environment

Louis Wirth defines the urban environment as a distinctive form of modern social organization characterized by the concentration of large populations in dense settlements shaped around specific centers (Wirth, 1938). He describes the city as a relatively large and permanent settlement inhabited by heterogeneous individuals who share a common spatial and cultural framework.

3.2. Socialization

Socialization is defined as the lifelong process through which individuals internalize the values, symbols, and shared goals of the social systems to which they belong (Durkheim, 1956). This process is expressed through the roles performed by individuals and others around them, allowing the person to learn culturally appropriate behaviors, norms, and expectations (Mead, 1934).

3.4. Kindergarten

Kindergartens are educational and social institutions that provide care for children in the three years preceding primary school. They support children's linguistic, physical, social, psychological, emotional, and cognitive development by offering structured programs that combine play, recreational activities, and early learning (UNESCO, 2017; OECD, 2020). Their mission is to ensure balanced and healthy child development within an organized institutional environment.

4. Methodology

The quantitative method was adopted as the most appropriate approach for addressing the research question. Quantitative research is best suited for topics characterized by observability, clear causality, and high objectivity (Creswell, 2014). It relies on systematic, empirical investigation through measurable variables, statistical tools, and structured questionnaires to obtain accurate and reliable field data that lead to objective and realistic results.

In the empirical phase, a questionnaire was used as the primary research tool. A questionnaire consists of a set of logically connected questions designed to achieve the research objectives and address the central inquiry. The number of questions varies depending on the nature of the topic and the volume of data required for analysis.

5. Sampling

A probability-based simple random sample was selected, ensuring that all elements of the study population had an equal chance of being included (Bryman, 2012).

A total of **50 respondents**—parents with children enrolled in various kindergartens in municipalities across the capital—were selected.

Theoretical Framework

1. Concept of Socialization

According to *The Dictionary of Social Sciences*, socialization is the process through which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next, shaping individuals from early childhood and preparing them to live within a specific cultural context (Sills, 1968).

Through this process, individuals are transformed from biological beings into social actors capable of interaction, integration, and adherence to societal norms and values (Durkheim, 1956). Socialization reinforces behavioral patterns essential for the preservation of society, enabling individuals to internalize roles and expectations that facilitate their participation in community life.

From a sociological perspective, socialization is understood as the process through which individuals learn the symbols required for membership in a social group and develop the capacities necessary for engaging in collective life (Mead, 1934; Giddens, 2013).

2. Characteristics of Socialization

Socialization possesses several defining characteristics:

- **A social learning process** that begins in the family and expands into broader social settings as individuals interact with society and assume age-appropriate roles (Parsons & Bales, 1955).
- **A directed process**, aimed at teaching children socially accepted attitudes and behavioral patterns.
- **A transformative process**, shifting individuals from self-centered biological beings into socially engaged members aware of their responsibilities.
- **A continuous and lifelong process**, extending from childhood to old age.
- **A psychosocial process**, concerning both the individual and the group.
- **A dynamic and changing process**, as individuals acquire norms, roles, and attitudes through ongoing social interaction.
- **A culturally contingent process**, varying with the historical and cultural stage of each society.

3. Objectives of Socialization

The objectives of socialization include:

- Transforming natural needs into socially acceptable ones, enabling individuals to acquire the moral and behavioral rules of society.
- Achieving social control through the internalization of collective values and norms.
- Preparing individuals to become productive members capable of facing life challenges.
- Supporting the transition from biological existence to full social participation.
- Facilitating continuous social adaptation by equipping individuals with necessary social skills.
- Providing individuals with religious, moral, and social values and developing the ability to apply them across life stages.
- Ensuring language acquisition, allowing the individual to communicate, interact, and establish a respected social position.

In summary, the ultimate aim of socialization is to prepare the individual for life within society by guiding them through various social institutions that contribute to their holistic development.

4. Nature and Origin of Kindergartens

Scholars of childhood studies generally agree that kindergarten is an educational stage preceding primary school, although the terminology varies. In Algeria, the legislator refers to these institutions as Early Childhood Reception Centers, reflecting their status as a pressing social, educational, and economic need. Governments around the world, in pursuit of citizen welfare, have established early childhood centers to provide children with proper and acceptable early socialization (UNESCO, 2017; OECD, 2020).

4.1 Concept of Kindergarten

The concept of kindergarten is closely associated with Friedrich Froebel, who is considered the pioneer of the modern kindergarten system (Froebel, 1887). Froebel defined kindergarten as an educational institution situated between the home, nursery, and primary school. Its purpose is to nurture young children before formal schooling, supporting their socialization, moral development, and holistic care—physical, psychological, intellectual, spiritual, and social.

Educational methods in kindergartens are based on structured play, practical experience, and responsiveness to the needs, tendencies, and characteristics of children aged three to six. Froebel

emphasized the use of discipline guided by love, respect, tolerance, and flexibility, treating the child as a child rather than a “small adult” (Brooks, 2011; Froebel, 1887).

4.2 Historical Development of Kindergartens

Historically, civilizations have long shown concern for early childhood. In ancient Greece, the care of children was prioritized from birth to age seven, and Roman approaches were similar, viewing children as beings in preparation for adulthood. Early Islamic education also emphasized holistic child development, combining religious and worldly education and ensuring the fulfillment of childhood needs. Notable scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun contributed educational philosophies and values relevant to early childhood pedagogy (Al-Ghazali, 2000; Ibn Khaldun, 1967).

The modern idea of kindergarten emerged in 19th-century Europe, largely due to Friedrich Froebel, who transformed abstract educational ideas into practical institutions (Froebel, 1887). Froebel emphasized flexibility as the most important characteristic of early childhood, enabling educators to instill morality, ethics, and appropriate social behavior.

Key principles of Froebel’s kindergarten include:

- Providing a natural environment conducive to child development, teaching children universal laws of living organisms and moral principles (Froebel, 1887).
- Developing the senses, which underpin physical, intellectual, and emotional growth, through structured play and cooperative social interaction.
- Promoting early social relationships among peers, considered essential for personal and social development.

Similarly, Robert Owen highlighted the importance of early years, emphasizing that children acquire many new behaviors and impressions before age two. He advocated for experiential learning, avoiding formalized instruction and textbooks that might hinder the natural development of the child (Owen, 1814; Brooks, 2011).

5. Legal Definition of Kindergarten in Algeria

In Algerian law, kindergartens are officially recognized as Early Childhood Reception Institutions under Executive Decree No. 12-245, dated July 3, 2012. These institutions provide regular or temporary care for children under six in a safe and healthy environment, ensuring comprehensive physical, psychological, intellectual, and ethical development (Ministry of Education, Algeria, 2012).

The objectives include fostering holistic personality development and enhancing cognitive and social capacities through age-appropriate educational and recreational activities. Kindergartens also support families, particularly working parents, by enabling them to balance professional and family responsibilities. Hence, a kindergarten is not merely a place of supervision but a pedagogical space operating under precise legal and organizational regulations to guarantee high-quality services and respect for children’s rights.

5.1 Kindergartens in Algeria

Kindergartens in Algeria are relatively recent compared to other countries due to the colonial context. During French colonization, kindergartens primarily served French children and a small number of loyal Algerians, while most Algerian children received early education in mosques or traditional schools. After independence, pre-primary education received limited attention due to resource constraints, and existing kindergartens were repurposed for primary education. A presidential decree issued on April 16, 1976, mandated pre-primary education, but it was not widely implemented until the early 1980s. During the economic liberalization period, private pre-primary schools emerged, mainly in urban centers, still catering predominantly to children of working mothers, leaving rural children with limited access (Ministry of Education, Algeria, 2012).

5.2 Motivations for Establishing Kindergartens in Algeria

Kindergartens initially emerged as a **social necessity** rather than a pedagogical one. Economic and social developments—especially the increasing participation of women and men in the workforce—necessitated institutions that could care for children during working hours. This expansion was driven more by societal and economic needs than by pedagogical arguments, although the educational and psychological importance of early childhood care was later recognized (Brooks, 2011; UNESCO, 2017). In Algeria, the entrance of women into the workforce significantly altered family structures, especially the shift from extended to nuclear families. This reduced the availability of adult family members to care for children during the day, making kindergartens essential for ensuring children’s socialization and holistic development. In these institutions, children receive not only supervision but structured educational experiences that supplement familial socialization, fostering the cognitive, emotional, and social growth necessary for participation in society (Froebel, 1887; Owen, 1814).

Types of Kindergartens in Algeria

In Algeria, there are two main types of kindergartens: those operated by municipalities and those affiliated with companies and public institutions.

6.1 Municipal Kindergartens

Municipal kindergartens accept children aged between three and six years. Admission criteria include the child’s age and the mother’s employment status or, alternatively, her incapacity to provide adequate care due to health reasons (Ministry of Education, Algeria, 2012). These kindergartens are generally characterized by limited resources, inadequate facilities, and overcrowded classrooms, which may affect the quality of care and education.

6.2 Kindergartens Affiliated with Companies and Institutions

In accordance with Article 21 of Decree No. 76/35, issued on April 16, 1976, some national companies and ministries established kindergartens for the children of their employees (both mothers and fathers) (Ministry of Education, Algeria, 2012). These institutions serve children aged three to six and are relatively few nationwide, mostly concentrated in urban areas. Despite their limited number, these kindergartens are generally better equipped with educational resources compared to municipal kindergartens.

7. Importance and Objectives of Kindergartens

7.1 Importance of Kindergartens

Enrollment in kindergarten provides children with numerous benefits, including:

- **Health care:** ensuring proper physical growth and development.
- **Cognitive development:** nurturing mental abilities and maintaining cognitive health.
- **Self-care and hygiene:** teaching children to take care of themselves and adopt healthy habits.
- **Age-appropriate curriculum:** unlike nurseries, kindergartens offer structured programs tailored to children’s capacities (Brooks, 2011; UNESCO, 2017).

7.2 Objectives of Kindergartens

Kindergartens aim to achieve multiple educational, social, and developmental goals, including:

- Providing a nurturing and caring environment that promotes emotional security.
- Introducing children to simple concepts and knowledge that stimulate their talents and interests.
- Creating an engaging learning atmosphere through music, songs, and physical activities.
- Developing moral habits such as self-reliance, courage, responsibility, cleanliness, and honesty.
- Offering healthcare and protection against common childhood diseases, while creating conditions conducive to holistic growth encompassing physical, cognitive, and social domains (OECD, 2020).

- Enhancing communication and interpersonal skills to prepare children for future educational experiences.
- Promoting social interaction and cooperative play with peers, as well as reading and comprehension skills, through activities such as visits to children’s libraries.
- Developing verbal and emotional skills, literary appreciation, and storytelling comprehension.
- Supporting proper social and health-related upbringing within the values, principles, and objectives of the community.
- Meeting the developmental needs of children at this stage, fostering self-actualization and contributing to personality formation for societal engagement.
- Preparing children for primary education through a gradual transition from the family environment to the school setting.
- Satisfying fundamental needs, including nutrition, safety, love, security, play, activity, freedom, socialization, independence, and curiosity.
- Providing safe equipment, toys, and diverse services that enable self-expression and guided play, promoting development in a healthy and constructive direction (Brooks, 2011; Froebel, 1887; UNESCO, 2017).

Field Research Framework

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Reason for Preferring the Nuclear Family

Gender	Preferred Family Type	Male	Female	Total
Frequency	Seeking privacy and independence	9	26	35
Percentage	Seeking privacy and independence	75%	68.42%	70%
Frequency	Small housing size in cities	2	7	9
Percentage	Small housing size in cities	16.66%	18.42%	18%
Frequency	Changes in lifestyle and high cost of living	1	5	6
Percentage	Changes in lifestyle and high cost of living	8.33%	13.15%	12%
Total		12	38	50
Total Percentage		100%	100%	100%

The results in Table 1 indicate that the primary reason for preferring a nuclear family is **seeking privacy and independence**, reported by 70% of respondents—75% of males and 68.42% of females. This demonstrates a growing trend toward the adoption of the nuclear family model.

- The second most common reason is the **small housing size in urban areas**, representing 18% of respondents (16.66% of males and 18.42% of females), highlighting the impact of urbanization, changing residential conditions, and limited living space on family lifestyle choices.
- Lastly, **changes in lifestyle and rising living costs** accounted for 12% of responses, suggesting that some respondents perceive the nuclear family as a solution to recurring family conflicts (8.33% of males and 13.15% of females).
- Overall, females show a slightly higher tendency to prefer nuclear families for varied reasons, while males primarily emphasize privacy as the key factor. These findings reflect the **social and economic changes driving the adoption of the nuclear family model**, particularly in urban environments (Wirth, 1938; Brooks, 2011).

Field Research Results

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Reasons for Preferring a Nuclear Family over an Extended Family

Reasons for Preferring a Nuclear Family	Frequency	Percentage
Seeking privacy and independence	5	10%
Small housing size	7	14%
Frequent conflicts among members of the extended family	16	32%
Changes in lifestyle and high cost of living	22	44%
Total	50	100%

The data in Table 2 indicate that **44% of respondents prefer living in a nuclear family** due to changes in lifestyle, particularly in urban environments, coupled with the complexity of modern urban life, rising living costs, and reduced purchasing power. For these respondents, the nuclear family provides an appropriate solution to meet daily life demands.

- A smaller proportion, **32% of respondents**, believe that extended families are prone to frequent conflicts and disputes among members, despite living in urban settings. In many cases, these extended families reside in individual multi-level houses where all children occupy separate floors or units under parental ownership. Consequently, smaller family units within these residences prefer to live independently in their own spaces without interference from extended family members.
- Finally, **10% of respondents** prefer nuclear families primarily to maintain social and economic privacy and independence. This is reflected in practice, as neither the parents of the spouses nor their extended families interfere in the couple's personal, social, or economic life, including decisions such as the number of children they wish to have or child-rearing practices. This underscores the nuclear family's role in preserving autonomy and self-determination within urban Algerian society (Wirth, 1938; Brooks, 2011).

Field Research Results

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation and the Child's Location Before Enrollment in Kindergarten

Occupation	Child's Location Before Kindergarten Enrollment	Worker	Homemaker	Total
Frequency	With relatives or neighbors	9	0	9
Percentage	With relatives or neighbors	25%	0%	18%
Frequency	With parents (mother/father)	18	9	27
Percentage	With parents (mother/father)	50%	64.28%	54%
Frequency	With private nanny at home	9	5	14
Percentage	With private nanny at home	25%	35.71%	28%
Total		36	14	50
Total Percentage		100%	100%	100%

This table was designed to examine the relationship between **parents' occupation** and the **child's location before kindergarten enrollment**. The data show that **54% of respondents leave their children with their parents (grandparents of either the husband or wife)**, while only 18% leave them with other relatives or neighbors.

Among the homemaker group, **64.28% leave their children with grandparents** when they need to step out temporarily. In contrast, **50% of working parents** regularly rely on grandparents for childcare. This arrangement can sometimes create challenges, particularly when the grandparents are over seventy years old, potentially causing physical strain or health concerns while caring for grandchildren at home. Additionally, **28% of respondents leave their children with private nannies at home**, usually in exchange for a moderate fee. However, this group tends to be cautious, as private nannies are often **not legally registered**, raising concerns about potential accidents or incidents that may occur under their care (Brooks, 2011; OECD, 2020).

◆ Field Research Results

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation and Their Opinions on Achieving Work–Family Balance

Occupation	How to Achieve Work–Family Balance	Working Women	Homemakers	Retired	Total
Frequency	Relying on kindergarten during mothers' absence	20	10	2	32
Percentage	Relying on kindergarten during mothers' absence	46.52%	45.46%	0%	46.38%
Frequency	Providing flexible working hours	13	6	0	19
Percentage	Providing flexible working hours	30.24%	27.28%	0%	27.54%
Frequency	Encouraging family members' participation in household tasks	10	6	2	18
Percentage	Encouraging family members' participation in household tasks	23.26%	27.28%	0%	26.09%
Total		43	22	4	69
Total Percentage		100%	100%	100%	100%

The results in Table 4 show several strategies suggested by respondents to achieve a balance between **women's work in urban areas and family life**, with notable variations depending on occupation. The most widely supported strategy was **relying on kindergarten during mothers' absence**, accounting for 46.38% overall. Among working women, this reached 46.52%, compared to 45.46% among homemakers, while retired women had minimal contribution to the options.

The second most supported strategy was **providing flexible working hours** at 27.54%, with support from 30.24% of working women and 27.28% of homemakers, reflecting the significance of institutional and practical solutions in supporting working women.

Finally, **encouraging family members to participate in household tasks** was preferred by 26.09% of respondents, particularly homemakers (27.28%) compared to working women (23.26%), indicating a growing awareness of the importance of equitable role distribution within the family.

These results highlight the diversity of perceptions regarding solutions to the work–family balance issue. Working women tend to emphasize practical institutional solutions, whereas homemakers focus more on familial and social dimensions (OECD, 2020; Brooks, 2011).

Field Research Results

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents According to Criteria for Choosing a Kindergarten

Programs Encouraging Enrollment in Kindergarten	Frequency	Percentage
Advanced educational programs	20	40%
Various recreational and creative activities	18	36%
Discounts or financial assistance for families	5	10%
Programs for children with special needs (e.g., autism)	2	4%
Educational programs and safe care for children during late hours	5	10%
Total	50	100%

According to the data presented above, **40% of respondents enrolled their children in kindergarten due to advanced educational programs**, which are carefully designed, modern, and aligned with current pedagogical and educational requirements. These programs often integrate technological and medical developments, especially for children with special needs.

A slightly smaller proportion, **36% of respondents**, chose kindergarten for the **variety of recreational, educational, and creative activities** offered by these institutions. These programs play a significant role in the proper social and cognitive development of children.

Additionally, **10% of parents** enrolled their children in kindergarten due to a combination of educational and recreational programs while also ensuring their children are in a **safe environment** during late working hours, which is particularly important for working parents. Programs tailored to children with special needs accounted for 4% of enrollments.

Thus, it can be concluded that **kindergartens serve dual roles**: as educational and recreational institutions, and as safe childcare centers. This dual function is especially critical for working parents and employees, effectively acting as both a kindergarten and a daycare center (Brooks, 2011; OECD, 2020).

Table 6: Factors Influencing Parents to Enroll Their Children in Kindergarten According to Child's Previous Care Arrangement

Child's Previous Placement	Factors Encouraging Kindergarten Enrollment		Relatives		Mother/Father		Nanny at Home		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Improving the child's social skills	2	12.5%	18	41.86%	8					
Providing a modern educational environment	6	37.5%	10	23.25%	6					
Balancing work and childcare	8	50%	12	27.9%	9					
Recommendations from family and friends	0	0%	3	6.97%	1					
Total	16	100%	43	100%	24					

From the results presented in the table, **the most influential factor is balancing women's work and childcare**, accounting for **35% of the total sample**. This factor is particularly pronounced among children who were previously cared for by **relatives (50%)** and by **nannies at home (37.5%)**. These

findings indicate that **professional pressures are the primary reason families turn to kindergarten**, especially when stable home-based care is unavailable.

The second most important factor, **improving children's social skills**, represents **33.73%** of the total sample. It is especially significant for children previously cared for by **parents (41.86%)**, reflecting a growing awareness among families of the importance of peer interaction and early social skill development, which may be limited in home isolation.

Regarding the factor **providing a modern educational environment**, **26.5% of respondents** considered this important, most notably for children who were previously cared for by relatives (**37.5%**). This suggests families' desire to move from traditional home care to kindergarten, which offers structured educational content, while also assisting parents in balancing work and childcare responsibilities.

In contrast, **recommendations from family and friends** were the least influential factor at **4.81%**, indicating that the decision to enroll children in kindergarten is predominantly **rational and functional** rather than socially or familially pressured.

These results highlight a **shift in family childcare patterns in urban areas**, where kindergartens increasingly serve as alternative or complementary institutions to traditional family care. This change is driven by **social structural shifts, increased female workforce participation, and growing awareness of early childhood education**. The findings underscore the critical role of kindergarten in meeting modern urban family needs, supporting the balance between professional and family life, particularly for households with limited income (OECD, 2020; Brooks, 2011).

Conclusion of the Analysis

The sociological analysis of structural transformations in Algerian urban society indicates that the transition from the extended family model to the nuclear family model is not merely a formal change in family structure. Rather, it represents a fundamental shift in the system of family functions and roles. In the context of shrinking family size and the decline of traditional support and socialization networks, the nuclear family has increasingly lost the capacity to perform certain social functions historically fulfilled by the extended family. These functions include early socialization and daily childcare. With the growing roles and responsibilities of individuals in urban areas, coupled with the rising participation of women in the workforce, a significant gap has emerged between the child's basic needs and the limited capabilities of nuclear families.

This gap has led to the **institutional redistribution of childcare and socialization functions**, primarily toward modern educational spaces, most notably kindergartens. These institutions now compensate for the reduced role of traditional socialization bodies, such as extended family members (grandparents, uncles, etc.). Based on these observations, kindergartens can be regarded as **alternative social institutions** that facilitate the early socialization of children in ways that align with school readiness and psychological development.

Kindergartens do not merely play a compensatory role; they also contribute to the **production of new social and cultural capital**, providing children with developmental competencies that nuclear families alone are unable to supply. Thus, the presence and proliferation of kindergartens in urban areas represent a **structural response** to evolving social realities. As essential institutions, they complement the roles of families and other educational bodies, ensuring a form of socialization more consistent with the demands of contemporary urban life.

Final Conclusion

Kindergarten institutions in urban Algeria are no longer simply supplementary educational spaces; they have become **central actors in the modern social system**, driven by profound transformations in family structure, labor market participation, and the urban economic context. The shift from extended to nuclear families, coupled with women's entry into the workforce, has created a pressing need for institutions that provide comprehensive childcare and early socialization before formal schooling begins.

Consequently, kindergartens are not merely recreational options or indicators of social welfare; they have become **a social and educational necessity**, addressing the needs of contemporary urban families. These institutions facilitate the balance between professional and family life, particularly for working parents, by offering children a safe and stimulating environment while serving as a functional alternative to traditional family care, which is increasingly constrained by changing lifestyles.

However, the effectiveness of this role depends on **socioeconomic accessibility**, as the ability of families to utilize these institutions varies according to income and financial capacity. Thus, kindergartens represent both a **practical solution for families** and a **means to enhance the quality of early childhood socialization**, merging social, educational, and developmental functions in the urban context.

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