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Impact of citizen participation in precarious housing resorption programs in Algeria (case of Sidi Slimane neighborhood, city of Boussaâda)

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Abstract. Citizen and inhabitant participation in public interests has taken its importance over the last two centuries in Europe and the United States, and by the end of the 20th century, it had become central to debates around the issue of urban governance, social and urban development projects in particular. In recent decades, many countries have increasingly organizing collaborative governance, participatory budgeting and other models in which citizens can intervene more directly. It is emphasized that Algerian cities experienced a massive rural exodus during the 1990s for several reasons: insecurity, urban disparities and the attractiveness of services. This research studies the impact of citizen participation in programmers to reduce precarious habitat in the precarious neighborhood of Sidi Slimane in Boussaâda, a medium-sized city in the Algerian high plains. Since the end of the 1990s, this precarious neighborhood has undergone several operations aimed at improving its living environment, including the programme to reduce precarious habitat (PHR). The World Bank finances the latter in 2000, followed by a national programme of the same kind during the two decades that followed. Several modes, media and actors, essentially define citizen participation in these programmes: individuals, citizen entities, organizations and local authorities. In the field, it has been noted that each menu operation (rehousing, preservation, completion), is an experience conditioned by several dimensions (temporal, social, regulatory etc.). Therefore, the impact of citizen participation in these operations needs to be studied and arbitrated.

Keywords. participation, precarious housing, impact, Sidi Slimane, Boussaâda

Introduction

During the mid-twentieth century and with the extent of democracy and the civil and political rights of society, a transition from civil citizenship in the 18th century to political citizenship in the 19th century and to social citizenship at the end of the 20th century was recorded (Donzelot, J.2009).

This phenomenon of the progression of forms of citizenship will push civil society to demand forms of participation in the decision-making process in public affairs, to move from "representative democracy to participatory democracy" (Bacqué, M&Sintomer, Y.2001). The sixties (60s) and seventies (70s) were a first step in participatory democracy in France and the

United States. Even if the term participatory democracy is not used in France, the theme is omnipresent in political discourse, self-management and citizen participation are finally the two udders of the critical political thought of the late sixties (60s) and early seventies (70s), we note that this policy could not be regulated in France until the year two thousand, notably by the Vaillant law of 2002 on the city, known as "local democracy", which establishes neighborhood councils in all cities with more than 80,000 inhabitants (Blondiaux, L, 2015).

Citizen participation is one of the ways in which society can get involved in urban policy decision-making at various stages of project planning and implementation. It is in a way a form of redistribution of powers that allows citizens to be resolutely included in the ci-vic, social, economic or ecological future of their living environment.

In Algeria, the opening to the idea of civil participation did not take place until the end of the eighties (80s) with the political and economic opening of the country. A panoply of laws and regulatory texts followed, starting with the recognition of the rights of creation of civil organizations to the involvement of these entities in public interests (territorial interests, communal, social life, economic life, urban planning and development plans... etc.). In this context, our study will try to focus on one of the experiences of citizen participation in Algeria and more specifically on the program of resorption of precarious housing. This is the Sidi Slimane district of the city of Boussaâda, a medium-sized city in the Algerian high plains.

Materials and methods

Definition and historical evolution of the concept (participation)

In order to better understand the concept of citizen participation, it is not better to go through the historical context of the evolution of the concept, we can note three significant experiences in the world :

- The participatory budgeting experience of the city of Porto Alegre in Brazil started in the late eighties (80s) it is part of the Brazilian transition to democracy, it has the particularity of developing the municipal budget in collaboration with the participatory councils that determine the needs of each district of the city.

- The American experience is based on the community movement (it is anchored in American history and culture, which value com-munity, as an intermediary instance between the individual and the state) and grassroots democracy which opposes "ordinary people" to power elites (Bacqué, M&Sintomer, Y, 2001), in the seventies (70s) and eighties (80s), the associations of the popu-lary neighborhoods will be transformed into a community enterprise financed by the banks and the private sector in line with the American economic model and they are now a key player in the development of these neighborhoods.

- In France and from the nineties (90s) and in the courses of relegitimization of power, good governance and criticism of the limit of representative democracy, citizen participation will become institutionalized from the Vaillant law of 2002 on the city, known as "local democracy", which establishes neighborhood councils in all cities with more than 80,000 inhabitants. Or, more recently, the planning law for the city and urban cohesion of 21 February 2014, which notably creates the councils citizens (Blondiaux, L, 2015).

By observing these experiences, it can be argued that citizen participation is the degree of involvement of civil society (individuals or organizations) in public interests in order to optimize projects to improve the living environment of citizens and make them more adapted to their needs and more sustainable over time. It can also be inferred that citizen participation is based on the following concepts:

- The close relationship of citizen participation with demands for rights and the degree of democratization of society.
- The imperative passage of participation through entities and organizations of society.
- The continuing need for a regulatory framework that manages the relationship between the company's entities and the state in general.
- The importance of financing tools in any form of participation.

The concept of participation in the Algerian context

Apart from what we have already mentioned on the history of the concept in the world, since its independence in one thousand nine hundred and sixty-two (1962) the notion of citizen participation in Algeria was almost absent in official speeches, the country has experienced some forms of citizen participation represented by massive state organizations annexed to the single dominant part where the initiative was limited by the orientations of the state.

With the change in the political doctrine and the economic model of Algeria at the end of the eighties (80s), and the promulgation of a new constitution in (1989), we witness the first regulatory texts that open to the right of social and political participation in common life. In addition, we note the promulgation of Law 87-15 on the creation of civil associations and their framework of management and interventions followed by Law 90-31 amended by Law 12-06 of 12-01-2012.

This trend will be perceived at the local level through the various laws and texts that manage local authorities such as GPAs (Governorate People's Assembly), CPAs(Communal People's Assembly) and urban planning instruments such as MPDUPs(Master plan for development and urban planning) and LUPs(Land use plan), for example in 2001, there were 800 associations and "non-governmental" organizations at the national level and 60,000 at the local level (Ferrah, A.2003).The following diagram summarizes the various regulatory texts that illustrate the relationship of civil society with state institutions and its role at the multiple stages of decision-making (fig 01).

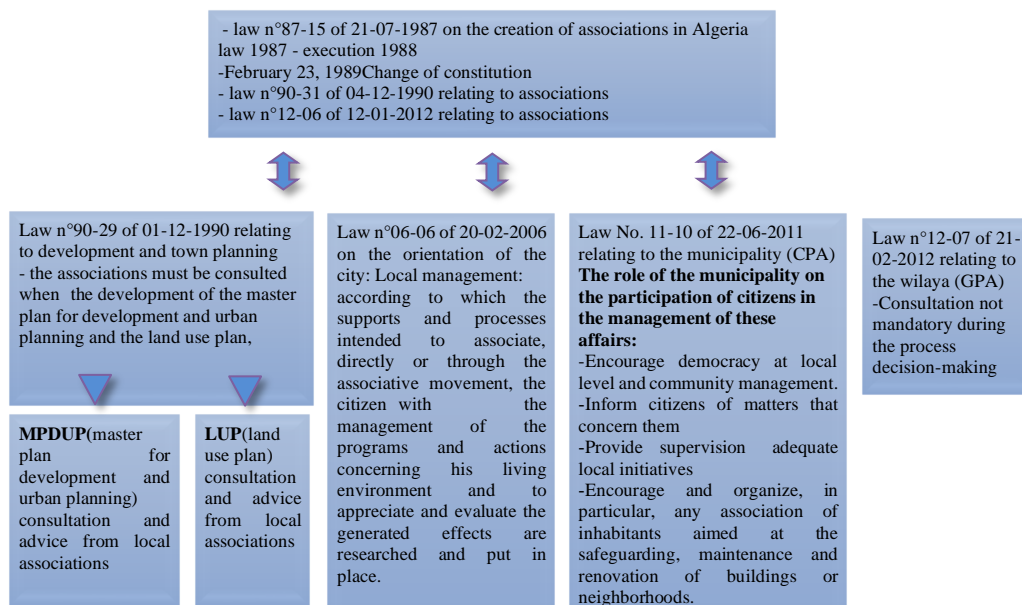


Fig 01: summary diagram of civil society relations with source state institutions
Source: Authors 2021

The policy of the precarious housing resorption in Algeria

Since its independence in (1962), Algeria has always been confronted with the problem of the spread of precarious neighborhoods, on the one hand inherited from the colonial period and on the other hand during the transition period of the sixties (60) with the promulgation of administrative decisions renewing the institutions, laws and urban planning regulations inherited from the colonial period and the dependence of the state on the vacant stock left by colonization. Later in 1976, it led to the project of "the disappearance of gorbis and slums-villes as representative images of poverty" (National Charter, 1976).

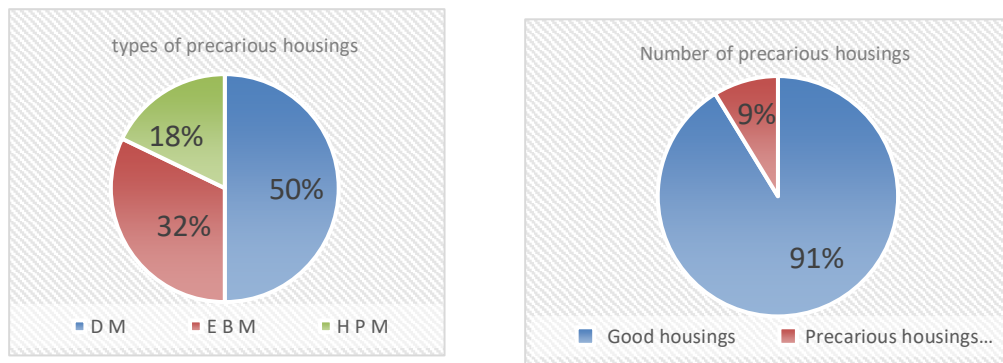
In the mid-seventies (70s), the state was turned towards a total nationalization of the construction and real estate management sector and attempted by the creation of public bodies such as the Office of Property Promotion and Management (OPPM) created in 1976, the National Office of Family Housing (NOFH) instituted in 1980, the concept of (NUHA) new urban housing area in 1975, Most of this policy is mainly carried out through 'heavy' rehousing operations in collective social housing financed 100% by the State, without any form of direct or indirect involvement of the beneficiary populations.

At the end of the years (80), beginning of change in the economic and political model of the country, the theme of resorption of the so-called "precarious housing" called slum disappears from the last national charter of (1986) announcing the will of the state to a gradual withdrawal from urban policy. Subsequently, with the decline in incomes, the state is moving towards an attempt called "dégourbisation", a form of brutal relocation against migrants who constitute the majority of the inhabitants of precarious neighborhoods of large cities. The advent of the nineties (90s) marked essentially by insecurity and the economic crisis will call into question all the small efforts previously and accentuate the rural exodus to the cities and consequently the massive return of precarious agglomerations in the outskirts of large cities, and even this time in the middle cities.

Under the pressure of the economic crisis, Algeria will launch operations with the cooperation with the World Bank to finance precarious housing reduction programs and thus signed in 1998 a financing and support agreement that covered 12 governorates of the country. This program extends over a period from 1998 to 2003 and all more than 13,000 homes, with the financial affluence of the 2000s.

A massive rehousing policy and resettlement of inhabitants in new urban neighborhoods has been recorded, accompanied by a policy of improving the built environment of neighborhoods that presents a moderate degree of precariousness. We note the presence of 584,000 precarious housings out of a housing stock of more than 6.40 million housings. Near 9%. According to the National Implementation Report of the New Urban Agenda (NIRNUA, 2021), the number of precarious housings is in three forms as follows (fig 02):

- Constructions made with heterogeneous perishable materials(H P M).
- Constructions made of durable materials without respecting the building standards or urban planning rules in force(D M).
- Constructions made using earth-based materials in arid areas(E B M).



Programmes	Number of precarious housings				Year	Governorate number
	Total number	Heterogeneous perishable materials	Durable materials	Earth-based materials		
PHR WORLD BANK	560.000	100.000	280.000	180.000	1998 -2004	12
NATIONAL PHR					2004-2009 2010-2014 2015-2019	48

Fig 02: number and types of precarious housings in Algeria
source: NIRNUA 2021

The Study Area

Sidi Slimane district occupies the southern peripheral part of the city of Boussaâda, a city located 250 km southeast of the capital Algiers (fig 03). The site is 03 kilometers away from the city center and spreads over an area of 115 hectares surrounded between Mount Kerdada and the wadi of Boussaâda to the east and Mount Azzedine to the west.

The constituent core of Sidi Slimane was created in 1975 with the creation of a subdivision initiated by the municipality of Boussaâda under the name subdivision five (Araba.M, 2012). After a few years, the site has experienced a massive development of the number of precarious housing. This phenomenon was accentuated with the security crisis in the early nineties (1990-2000), which led to the construction of several hundred housing of this type and aggravated the situation. Today, Sidi Slimane has essentially become a precarious neighborhood with a number of 2361 dwellings and 15000 inhabitants (Boussaâda Land Agency, 2021).

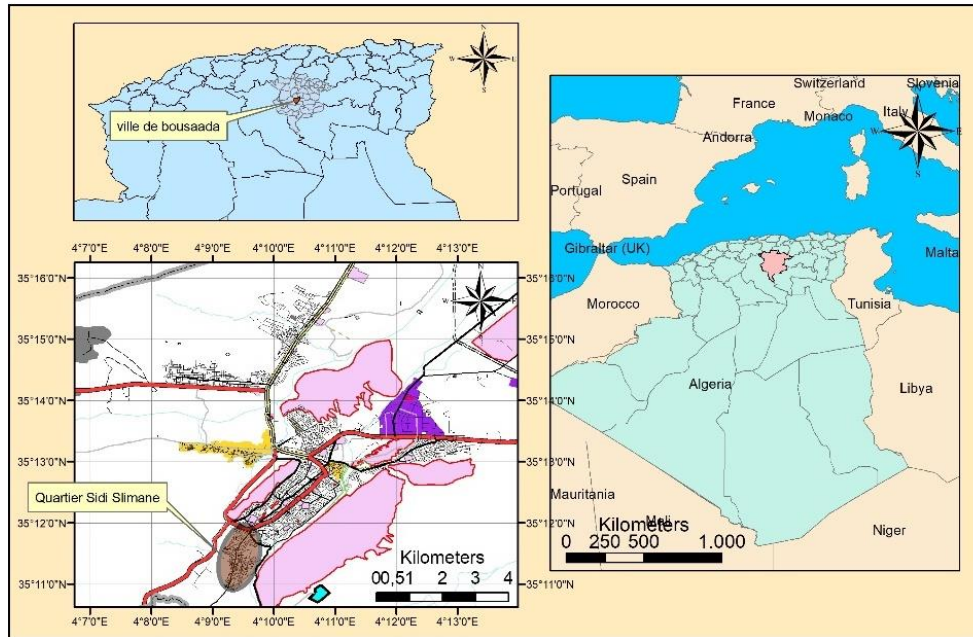


Fig 03: location of the city of Boussaâda and the Sidi Slimane district
source :Authors 2021

Analysis of participation patterns in PHR programmes

Within the framework of the National Habitat Control Programmes, two main programmes have been registered: the World Bank's Precarious Housing resorption programme (PHR) (1998-2003) and the national programme for the period (2014-2019).

PHR World Bank : The framework of the PHR World Bank project (1998-2003) spread over 12 governorates of Algeria, the programme has affected several municipalities of the governorate of M'sila (09 sites in total). The city of Boussaâda benefited from three sites among them the district of Sidi Slimane (fig 04) where the operation consisted of:

- Relocate 211 households on site or off site after a barracks census operation.
- Plan 391 prevention plots to accommodate new households.
- Plan 12 promotional plots for wealthy households.

On the relocation on site and the prevention phase, there were two modes of citizen participation, the 1st mode is financial with a participation rate of (10 to 25%) of the overall amount of the realization of the evolutionary unit, the 2nd mode of participation, it is a commitment on the permission to demolish the house and the move at the expense of the beneficiaries during the reconstruction period varying between 14 months and 24 months.

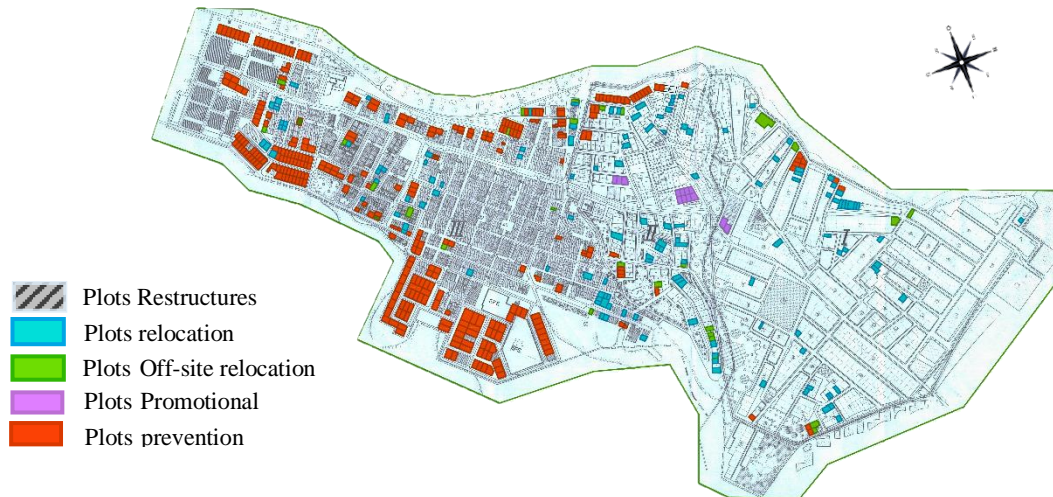


Fig 04: Intervention plan for the Sidi Slimane district 2001
source: Urban planning department of M'sila, Modify by Authors, 2021

By analyzing samples observed in *siti*, it was possible to notice after several years of the project the following:

- Completion not carried out, degradation of the built environment and lack of comfort in the rehousing cells.

- Partial or global completion with partial or global change of internal organization and external appearances in most prevention cells. To complete the information on the state of affairs, we conducted interviews with the inhabitants of the Islands (01.02) chosen at random (fig 05).

These habitats agreed on the main cause of the limitation of success of the programme, which is the inability to complete the beneficiary cells because of the insolvency of households and the standardization of the evolutionary cells in relation to the social and cultural characteristics of the inhabitants.

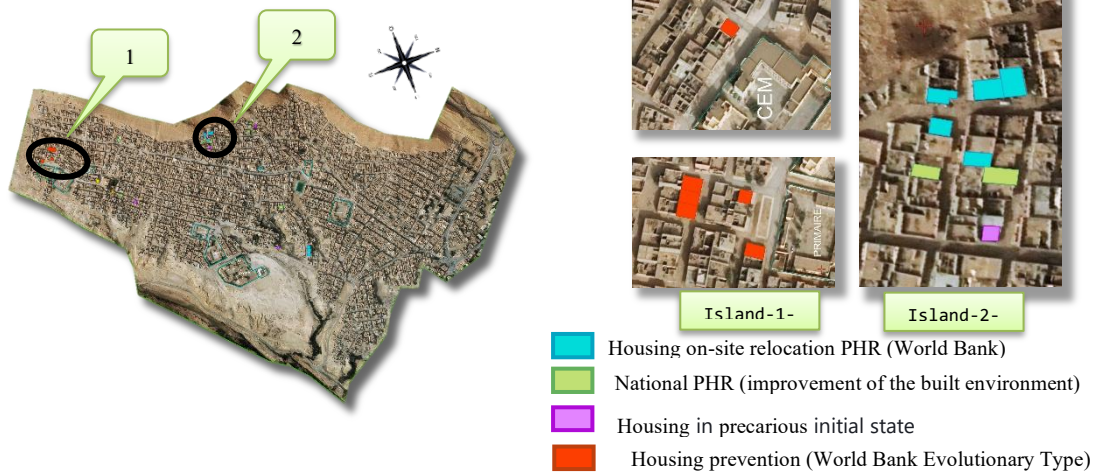


Figure 05: Current situation of the World Bank PHR Programme

source :Authors 2021



Housing on-site relocation PHR (World Bank)
source :Authors 2021



Housing prevention
source :Authors 2021



Housing in precarious initial state
source :Authors 2021

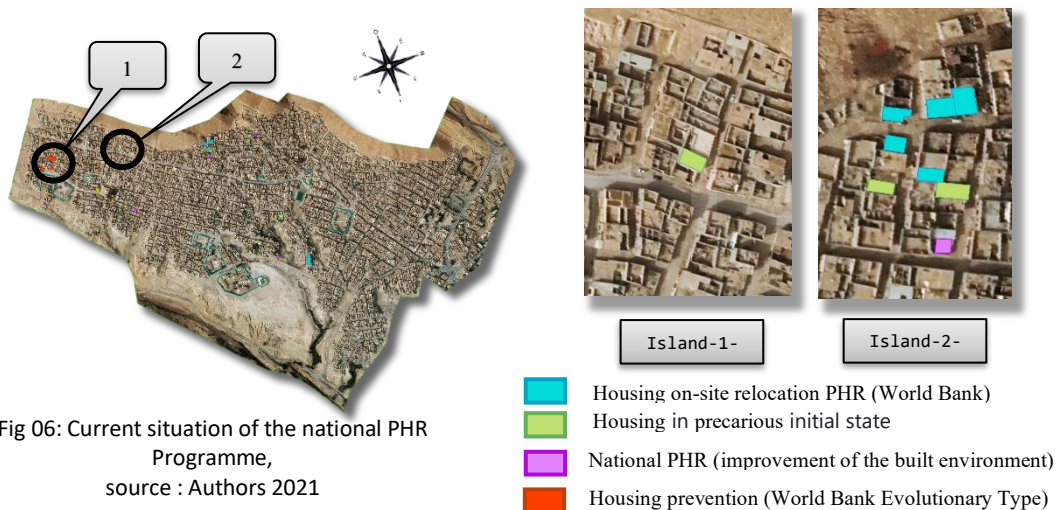
PHR national programme

As part of the national PHR project (2014-2019), the governorate of Msila received 3000 aids for the resorption of precarious housing, the Sidi Slimane district benefited from 100 aids (urban planning department of M'sila) which is far from the needs identified on the spot. This program consisted mainly of improving the built environment (completion of the structure, construction and facades).

In this sense, participation appeared to be the most appropriate mode for the success of the programme. Firstly, there is consultation by the local authorities with neighbourhood associations on the identification of cases and approval of the lists of beneficiaries. Secondly, a financial contribution and commitment to a set of specifications requires the beneficiaries to complete all the work recorded on the latter and which is, in most cases, 50 to 100% higher than the amount of fixed aid at seven hundred thousand Algerian dinars (700,000 DA).

Through observations and detailed interviews on site in the islands: 01- 02 (fig06), a relative success of the program was recorded in particular on the component of the improvement of the built environment of the dwellings which is due to the adaptation to the needs of the inhabitants and the encouraging formula (win-win) between beneficiaries with financial means to improve their living environment and the state seeking to recover the neighborhood from its precariousness, This formula has also shown limits because it focuses on the built environment and neglects other aspects of the living environment in the neighborhood such as servicing, public spaces, green spaces ... etc.

Apart from the two previous experiences, we can note other forms of citizen participation in the neighbourhood. The participation of neighborhood associations in several activities aimed at improving the general living environment: campaigns to clean public spaces, planting trees, complaints of the demands of the inhabitants of the neighborhood to the local authorities, representativeness at the various meetings dismaying the decisions to be taken, use of social networks (Facebook, YouTube, ...) by young people for the dissemination of information. etc.



National PHR (improvement of the built environment)
source : Authors 2021

Results and discussion

After these analyses, the different modes of participation observed in-siti can be summarized as follows:

Direct mode: This mode concerns individuals and civil society entities or organizations.

Contribution mode: this mode concerns individuals and organisations who contribute financially or by material means in order to achieve the aims of the programmes.

By commitment mode: this mode concerns individuals who participate through their commitments to accept the demolition of their homes, and the application of the clauses of the specifications including voluntary off-site relocation during the work, and neighborhood associations.

Indirect mode: this mode concerns in particular the entities and organizations of the neighborhood through consultations, social networks on the internet which have become a non-negligible force in the field of information dissemination, and the power of mobilization.

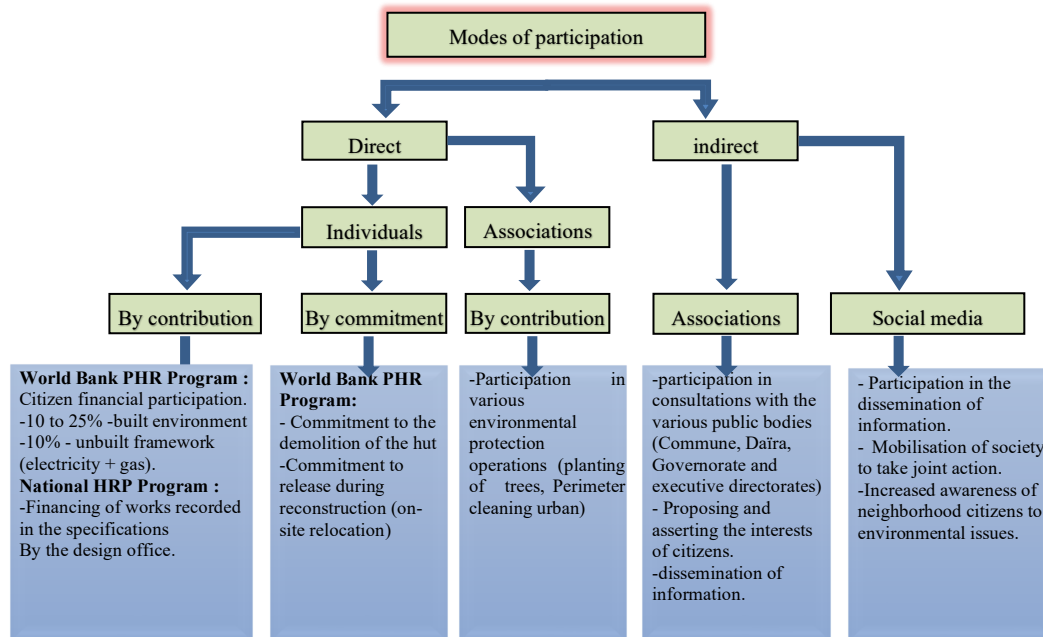


Fig 07: Summary diagram of modes of participation in the district
source :Authors 2021

The concept of citizen participation in Algeria and in particular in the field of spatial planning and urban planning is still in its infancy despite its integration on the regulatory platform ahead of other countries. The static character of society where initiative is often expected from the state, contained to rule and the legacy of sixty years of policies of dependence on the state is still dominant.

The almost optional nature of citizen consultation in the regulatory texts to be encouraged in most cases the administrative services has surpassed the citizen component of the decisions taken. The delay in the revision of laws and implementing texts (e.g. Law 29-90 on land use planning and urban planning) dates back more than thirty years. In return and using the legislation in force and the efforts of the components of civil society, individuals and entities, we see many successes on programs that affect the improvement of the general living environment and precisely the urban living environment.

The program of resorption of precarious housing studied on this paper testifies to an experience of the modes and ways of citizen participation raised in the precarious neighborhood of Sidi Slimane (city of Boussaâda) where the way of understanding the needs, the social and financial situation of the inhabitants and the good consultation of the entities of the local society of the neighborhood can guide us towards the most effective ways of participation. The first PHR programme 1998-2003 Although it succeeded in eradicating the most precarious forms of housing in the neighbourhood, it largely failed to produce comfortable and healthy housing in

the years that followed, because of the insolvency of the inhabitants and the failure of the authorities to follow up with encouraging participatory measures towards them. On the other hand, the second 2014-2019 programme was preceded by consultation and support from local authorities until its completion.

Conclusion

In order for participation to succeed, it is recommended to update the regulatory texts governing the integration of citizen participation in decision-making power as one of the imperative means for the improvement of the living environment and precisely of the prerogatives in the process of production of the built environment. Then this process must be broadened to take care of the needs of the social environment, and the improvement of the quality of intermediate spaces and public spaces. Local authorities, associations and inhabitants are the main actors who must constantly consult each other for the good and the site of urban operations.

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