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## Algerian neighbourhood committees' contribution to local development and participatory democracy

دور لجان الأحياء في تعزيز الديمقراطية التشاركية وتحقيق التنمية المحلية في الجزائر

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### Abstract:

One of the essential requirements of successful democratic governance is the participation of citizens in the decision-making process, which reflects the participatory democracy principle. In light of this, the Algerian government is working to engage the populace in the dynamics of development and to bring the administration closer to them. The purpose of this study is to clarify the part that neighbourhood associations and committees play in the advancement of local development as well as the modernization and development of the residential neighbourhoods in which they operate. It also looks at the barriers that prevent them from acting and reduce their efficacy. The analysis aims to demonstrate how the Algerian state has enshrined the principle of participatory democracy, acknowledging that citizen participation is essential to local governance. The impact and efficacy of the activities these committees carry out in different neighbourhoods are further supported by field observations.

**Keywords:** Associations; Neighbourhood committees; Local participatory democracy; Local development; New municipal law.

### المخلص:

تجسيدا لمبدأ الديمقراطية التشاركية يعتبر إشراك المواطن في عملية اتخاذ القرار وما يرتبط به من قضايا من أهم معايير الحكم الديمقراطي الرشيد، وعليه تعمل الدولة الجزائرية على تقريب الإدارة من المواطن وإشراكه في قضايا التنمية، تحاول هذه الورقة البحثية إبراز دور جمعية الحي في تنمية وترقية الحي السكني الذي تنشط به والمشاركة في تحقيق التنمية المحلية، وكذا المعوقات التي تحد من نشاط وفاعلية اللجان والجمعيات في تحقيق أهدافها.

تسلط هذه الورقة البحثية الضوء على هذا النوع من الجمعيات في الجزائر، التي مهدت الأرضية لتفعيل دورها بإصدار الدولة في السنوات الأخيرة لقانوني البلدية والجمعيات اللذان كرست بموجبهما مبدأ الديمقراطية التشاركية، لتكون فيها مشاركة المواطنين حجر الزاوية لإرساء الحكامة المحلية. وتبقى الممارسة الفعلية في الميدان دليلا على فعالية نشاط هذه اللجان.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الجمعيات؛ لجان الحي؛ الديمقراطية التشاركية المحلية؛ التنمية المحلية؛ قانون الجديد للبلدية.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous social, cultural, athletic, and political associations were established in the wake of the social changes that occurred in Algerian society, particularly the events of October 1988 and the rise of pluralism. In light of the challenges posed by globalization and the new international order, it is now imperative that the populace, especially the youth, actively and effectively participate in the process of development.

Involving local communities in problem-solving and development has become essential, as it is viewed as a voluntary shift that allows society to transition from its current state to its future one. In this way, the human element is essential to the success of development programs throughout their implementation.

The official authorities cannot continuously monitor every citizen's needs and problems, no matter how aware and concerned they are about them. Therefore, new media that directly reach all citizens must be created. Additionally, their training is based on the citizens themselves, allowing them to participate in the process of development.

According to this perspective, the relationship between neighbourhood committees and local government, especially the municipality, is one of cooperation and complementarity in order to accomplish shared objectives. The municipality must fulfil its duties and protect the public interest; the neighbourhood committee is not a replacement for it. By working together and coordinating with the municipality on all of the needs of the citizens in their

various areas, neighbourhood committees are a helpful and efficient way to communicate with the municipality, allowing for a better understanding of the needs of the people and the reduction of their suffering to the greatest extent possible.

The nature of municipal work is positively impacted by a positive relationship between the municipality and the neighbourhood committees, particularly when all citizens' ideas and goals are shared and subsequently turned into workable projects that benefit the citizens.

It's crucial to remember that neighbourhood committees are a new form of government that allows residents to voice their issues and daily struggles and participate in the operation of their municipality. This aids in directing the implementation of suitable actions to tackle these issues.

Consequently, this study seeks to answer the following question:

- How have neighbourhood committees contributed to local development in Algeria?

To answer this question, we formulated the following hypothesis:

- The greater the involvement of individuals in the development process, the more successful and sustainable local development will be in Algeria.

## 2. Study of the various concepts used:

Prior to conducting the research, it is necessary to specify the concepts and variables that the study was centered around. These are as follows:

### Firstly: Definition of local associations:

According to Law No. 12-06 of 12/01/2012 on associations, an association is a grouping of people and/or legal entities on

a contractual basis for a set or indefinite period of time. These people pool their knowledge and resources on a voluntary and non-profit basis to promote and encourage activities in the fields of, specifically, the professional, social, scientific, religious, educational, cultural, sporting, environmental, charitable, and humanitarian sectors. Additionally, an association is a structure that has three characteristics:

- The organisation and operating rules are determined by the members and set out in the "articles of association" (which may be supplemented by internal rules).
- The members of the association undertake to pool their knowledge or their activity, on a voluntary and often unpaid basis.
- Association members do not seek to make a profit, but only to take part in a social activity (although making a profit is not prohibited).

As for local associations, these are associations operating at municipal or regional level. Their number is constantly increasing: in 1992, there were an estimated 30,000 of them, compared with around 57,384 in 2001. According to another statistic produced by the Ministry of the Interior in April 2009, there were 77,361 local associations. The latest statistics for 2012 confirm the existence of 92,627 legally registered associations, including 20,137 neighbourhood associations, representing the majority of the association movement, estimated at 74.21%.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Secondly: Definition of a neighbourhood association (neighbourhood committees):**

An organization that represents the interests of a human group residing in a particular geographic area—the neighbourhood—is called a neighbourhood association. The area that embodies the everyday aspect of citizenship is known as the neighbourhood. Therefore, the neighbourhood has two dimensions: the social dimension, which is represented by the human relationships that form between its members as a result of their frequent movement in the same locations, which causes them to have similar concerns, and

the material dimension, which is represented by the natural space.<sup>2</sup>

Also have similar values and are impacted by one another's actions. A collection of information about the condition of the urban fabric, its composition, structure, and population size are used to define a neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup>

"An autonomous social unit governed by law, composed of several citizens connected by contractual social relations for non-profit purposes, with the aim of accomplishing common objectives"<sup>4</sup> is the definition of a neighbourhood association.

In various nations, neighbourhood committees go by different names. They are referred to as "citizens' committees" in Quebec, Canada, and "neighbourhood interest committees" in France. They offer a channel of communication between the local government and its citizens. They are inherently in charge of neighbourhood development matters and serve as the local conduit for citizens to share their plans and concerns with the city.<sup>5</sup>

The objective is to allow residents to voice their thoughts and opinions on local issues that are of primary concern to them, in addition to involving them in the decision-making process by inviting them to attend public meetings where local projects are presented.

Neighbourhood committees are groups of locals who get together and volunteer their time to make their neighbourhood a better place to live. Through their actions, the members of these committees hope to affect the choices made by the local elected officials and to get involved in local politics.<sup>6</sup>

(Neighbourhood committees' primary goals are to strengthen democratic foundations, give candidates the freedom to choose, and provide experience in discussion, dialogue, debate, empowerment, and reflection, planning, and execution. Additionally, they want to shift from egocentricity to community engagement and focus time, effort, and energy on the common good.

Given that residential neighbourhood committees are viewed as a means of fostering community involvement in the growth of the local community (municipalities), this feature aids in fostering a spirit of involvement and contribution to community work in local organizations for both present and future generations. Members of the community participate in residential neighbourhood committees in order to accomplish this because they want to grow and)

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Given that residential neighbourhood committees are viewed as a means of fostering community involvement in the growth of the local community (municipalities), this feature aids in fostering a spirit of involvement and contribution to community work in local organizations for both present and future generations. Since the municipality is the organization closest to the citizens' interactions and provides essential services, this is accomplished through the involvement of community members in residential neighbourhood committees. This is done because they want to improve and expand their communities, broaden and deepen their life experiences, strengthen their sense of belonging and teamwork, and participate in decisions that impact their lives and affairs.<sup>7</sup>

"A social organization that reflects within itself a type of social interaction aimed at achieving a specific objective that in itself reflects a type of will among these individuals" is another definition of a neighbourhood association.<sup>8</sup>

It is evident from the foregoing that neighbourhood committees are neighbourhood associations where locals

volunteer to accomplish a variety of goals in the public interest, which we will list below:

**Thirdly: Define the local approach to participatory democracy:**

In addition to monitoring completed projects and taking part in their evaluation at the local municipal level, the participatory democracy approach is founded on the right of citizens to be informed, consulted, and involved in elected local councils.

In order to participate in these procedures, elected local authority councils must encourage a culture of justice, communication, responsibility, and information exchange with the public. Additionally, they must involve all municipal stakeholders, especially those from neighbourhoods, youth, sports, associations, and the private sector, as well as be accessible to local stakeholders, particularly civil society organizations. The principles of giving up centralized authority over decision-making are embodied in these procedures.

Since local democracy is a cornerstone of local development, we view the local community as a school for learning about democracy and a judicial model for democratic practice through local representation of the local community. Residents have the right to access administrative decisions, public contracts, and agreements reached by elected local councils, as local democracy is a fundamental principle that forms the basis of local development. Additionally, they have the authority to ask for or organize consultations regarding the viability and validity of local executive decisions.<sup>9</sup>

**Fourthly: Neighbourhood committees' goals:**

Through their operations, neighbourhood committees aim to offer the community or individual a variety of services, either directly or indirectly, such as:

**a. Socialization:**

Participating in neighbourhood committees helps individuals develop socially acceptable behaviours like collaboration, selflessness, and

consideration for others' rights. Healthy urban behaviour is also taught by community living.

**b. Reaching social interaction and unity:**

As a result of joining these associations, members integrate with others, enhancing their social awareness and human connections while interacting with local authorities to accomplish numerous goals that benefit the general public.

**c. Establishing social discipline:**

Neighbourhood committees work to educate people about social values, engage in conversation with them to learn about their needs and concerns, and raise awareness. Thus, fewer protests and riots may result from coordinated efforts to identify suitable solutions within a strict framework and a civilized approach.

**d. Needs association:**

In order to demand that the local government provide the necessary services, neighbourhood committees are converted into forums where residents' concerns are discussed in a way that is both pragmatic and ideological.<sup>10</sup>

Neighbourhood committees are being used in innovative ways on a global scale; in many nations, they have evolved into neighbourhood councils with powers distinct from those of the local government. For instance, in towns with more than 100,000 residents, the Italian law of 1990 mandates the establishment of elected neighbourhood councils; however, in towns with more than 30,000 residents, the establishment of such councils is optional.

Since the law of February 27, 2002, neighbourhood councils have been required in France. ...and the municipal council chooses its makeup and methods of operation in towns with a population of over 80,000. The district council may be consulted by the mayor on any issue pertaining to the city or district, and it may be included in the planning, execution, and assessment of district-related initiatives.<sup>11</sup>

Given that they serve as a gauge of system governance, the aforementioned highlights

the significance of neighbourhood committees as direct representatives of civil society.

**Fifth: Definition of local development:**

The processes by which the efforts of local citizens can be unified and coordinated with government authorities to improve the social and economic conditions of these local communities and contribute to their development are known as local development, or local community development.<sup>12</sup>

Local development impacts all sectors, people with all of their material and spiritual components, and the environment with all of its interactions because development is an integrated whole that seeks to strengthen citizens' talents, increase their freedom, eliminate the challenges they face, and facilitate access to basic needs in accordance with realistic and planned projects that consult them, involve them in their implementation, or preserve them.<sup>13</sup>

In order to ensure that efforts are coordinated, integrated, and focused on a single objective, local development primarily depends on the cooperation of the government and its constituents. Beginning with the community and ending with its well-being, it is a collaborative and interactive process.<sup>14</sup>

We can infer several indicators of local development from these definitions, including:

- ❖ It is founded on grassroots, local initiatives.
- ❖ Improving unsatisfactory conditions necessitates ongoing efforts.
- ❖ It highlights the importance of paying attention to all groups, sectors, and areas.

Given that it seeks to balance development across various regions, it can be concluded that local development is one of the core pillars of development. In addition to playing a significant role in promoting local investment, job creation, and the development of small income-generating projects, its primary goal is to carry out infrastructure projects at the local level.

Given its significance, local development has drawn the attention of researchers and been defined in a number of ways. It is defined as the process by which citizens' efforts and those of public authorities (the State) can effectively cooperate to raise the economic, social, cultural, and civilizational levels of communities and local units with the aim of improving the quality of life in a global and integrated system.<sup>15</sup>

In his book 'Développement Communautaire dans les pays en développement', Dr. Farouk Zaki, local development is the process that combines the efforts of the populace and government officials to enhance the economic, social, and cultural circumstances of local communities, integrate them into the national life, and enable them to fully contribute to the advancement of the country.

These processes are founded on two essential elements: the population's own involvement in attempts to raise their standard of living and the availability of the technical and other services required to promote initiative, cooperation, and support amongst the various societal components, thus increasing their efficacy.<sup>16</sup>

### **3. Algerian neighbourhood associations' and committees' role in local development.**

The neighbourhood is regarded as the best level at which to accomplish its goals if local development, as previously mentioned, is primarily based on community members' participation. This is because the neighbourhood advantage enables citizens to participate in construction projects through participatory intervention.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, the neighbourhood association is a public body that considers the opinions, concerns, and perceptions of the people living in the neighbourhood. It tries to convey these opinions to the appropriate authorities and engage in the process of finding solutions. In this manner, the feeling of awareness and solidarity spreads from town to town and from neighbourhood to neighbourhood until it reaches the national

level. Particularly if the suggested projects directly address the needs of the local population, this is reflected in the development process and guides it in the right direction. When needs are met, people feel more confident and are inspired to collaborate and work together to make development projects a success.<sup>18</sup>

However, after years of changes in the nation at many levels, particularly political, economic, and even social, the establishment of neighbourhood associations in Algeria was the outcome of reforms associated with the democratic approach that the State adopted at the end of the 1980s.

Through a number of reforms implemented since that time, such as the revision of municipal and associative laws (law 11-10 of 22 June 2011 relating to the municipality), the events that took place in the Arab world in 2011 as part of what has been dubbed the "Arab Spring" have also had an impact on the policies pursued by the Algerian political system- Law 12-06 of 12 January 2012 concerning associations (Official Gazette No. 02 of 15 January 2012) and Official Gazette No. 37 of 3 July 2011).

In Chapter Three and its first section, "Citizen participation in the management of municipal affairs," the new municipal law introduced participatory democracy. It is now essential to inform and consult citizens on development options and priorities as well as on economic and cultural planning since, according to Article 11, "the municipality is the institutional framework for the practice of local democracy and neighbourhood management, based on the information provided to citizens."<sup>19</sup>

Regulations pertaining to neighbourhood committees or associations, however, did not follow the law; as a result, the outcomes of the latter do not obligate local elected officials to adopt the association's viewpoints.

Although the number of neighbourhood associations nationwide reached 20,137 in 2011, accounting for 21.74 percent of all associations, they have not been specifically mentioned in the new Associations Act.

Local religious associations are the next most common type of association.<sup>20</sup>

Although the regime has seen and continues to see real examples that reflect the spirit of solidarity between neighbourhood members and the capacity to manage local affairs represented by the councils of notables, which are strongly present in the southern and upland regions, Algerian neighbourhood committees were established as a result of its attempt to deal with and adapt to the demands of the democratic process in accordance with the standards stipulated by international bodies and organisations. However, these committees did not take into account the characteristics of Algerian society or the social fabric. Given the significant role that neighbourhood associations can play in local development in Algeria, if this structure is properly activated, nurtured, and directed according to programs and projects compatible with the district's nature on the one hand and the inclinations of its inhabitants on the other, or can we adopt the "cooperative" model as practiced, for example, in Morocco, where a development activity is created, whether it be agricultural or industrial, extractive or transformative, official bodies only need to revitalize these organizations and utilize them in the local development process, a group of residents from the same district participate, and they directly benefit from the production. Because the activity takes place in the same neighbourhood as the project workers, which lowers transportation, food, and other expenses, the returns are alluring. As a result, these cooperatives are thought to be a successful strategy for lowering unemployment in the area.

Articles 117 and 118 of Municipal Law 11-10, which state that "the right to establish public municipal institutions that enjoy legal personality and financial independence to manage their public interests: such as contributing to the development of spaces intended to contain economic, commercial, or service activities," provide support for this. These legal frameworks aid in the

creation of autonomous development projects for the district.<sup>21</sup>

### **First: Neighbourhood committees between marginalisation and oppression:**

The extent of the divide between local leaders and citizens has been made clear by the occasional protests that have taken place in several Algerian towns and cities. In order to voice their displeasure and lack of trust in the elected council, demonstrators frequently targeted the municipal headquarters. This demonstrates how many municipalities are left out of organizations that could act as a forum for candid discussion and a conduit for communication with the public, like neighbourhood committees, which are used in Western nations to organize urban life, find answers to many issues that interfere with day-to-day living, and safeguard the environment.

Algeria has made significant efforts to establish the principle of participatory democracy, as evidenced by the high percentage of approved neighbourhood committees, which outnumber other approved associations at the local level. However, the condition of our neighbourhoods does not warrant any remodelling because they continue to be unclean and poorly prepared, which makes the suffering of their residents worse.<sup>22</sup>

Some contend that neighbourhood committees, or intermediary associations, have grown to be a force that runs parallel to the state's authority and power. They are a manifestation of pluralism in free societies and serve as civic and social responsibility schools. "If the twentieth century was the end of civil societies, characterized by exclusion and marginalization, the twenty-first century represents their rebirth and revitalization," according to a modern civil society theorist. However, associations from Western political culture are viewed differently and less favourably.

These disparate interpretations of associations are rooted in the notion that private interests or concerns can cause the group to disintegrate and undermine the democratic process that embodies public

interests and concerns. In light of this notion, the state is thought to be against these groups of aspirational citizens who try to further their personal interests at the expense of the general welfare. According to the characteristics of the political sphere that regulates society's relationship with the established political authority<sup>23</sup>, the relationship between civil society (including its associations) and the state is intrinsically unstable and, as a result, fluid, with the boundaries between them occasionally dissolving.<sup>24</sup>

### **Second: The reality of the work of neighbourhood committees in Algeria:**

Even though volunteering has a long history in Algeria, the associative movement has always been impromptu throughout the country's history. It was particularly represented by the Sufi zaouïas, who promoted "brotherhood," provided financial aid to science students, and showed solidarity with the most marginalized members of society through various acts of mutual aid and support.

Tribal groups known as the Wazi'a have a long history in Kabylia. They plan the populace's public life and supervise acts of solidarity. The village committee, or Tajma'at, is a holdover from Algerian culture and traditions.

According to Algerian tradition, its function is to serve the people who live in the village, hamlet, or douar, regardless of the names. Aside from the Ghardaïa region and the Kabyles, for instance, who have maintained these traditional institutions that still exist alongside official institutions (elected municipal councils), this deeply ingrained culture has vanished in many Algerian regions due to the growth of villages and cities. The neighbourhood committee or association, however, strives to ensure that these institutions continue to operate within the framework of this integration between authenticity and modernity. For the benefit of the populace, Algeria's political leadership must thus endeavour to advance the function of these organizations by

incorporating them in the planning stages of sustainable local development.

Despite the importance of voluntary community work in the process of local development, it is observed that community activity in Algeria faces numerous challenges. These include the lack of respect for the true message of community work and its goals, which is a result of the efforts of numerous authorities. Similarly, many political parties restrict and control the activities of associations for temporary purposes, turning them into propaganda service offices. Other challenges include the existence of numerous administrative and legal restrictions and hurdles, a lack of professional workers in associative work, a lack of funds, a lack of resources and executives, and its limited participation in rural areas and other places, especially within associations or neighbourhood committees.<sup>25</sup>

Neighbourhood committees in Algeria are unique in that, although they exist in theory, they are essentially non-existent in reality. Furthermore, neighbourhood committees are absent from many residential communities, and many of them fall short of their designated responsibilities. Additionally, residents are not willing to volunteer or participate, and there is a lack of communication.

Because Algerians no longer practice citizenship, neighbourhood committees are non-existent, with the exception of some localities. Residents should be aware that the neighbourhood committee's operations encompass all aspects of neighbourhood organization and reform, such as security, lighting, and cleanliness.

This committee's responsibility is to instil a sense of civic duty in itself and spread that spirit to the rest of the population by means of awareness-raising initiatives. Local authorities have an obligation to serve the community and its citizens while protecting the environment. However, in order for the various neighbourhood committees to effectively fulfil their missions, elected

councils—whether state or municipal—must give them both material and moral support. Municipal councils' primary responsibility is to protect the interests of their constituents. According to the participatory approach, the interest of the citizen is directly tied to their capacity to take part in local development decisions, which can only be accomplished through organized volunteer work (the neighbourhood association), which is meant to be a key player in the planning process to achieve the desired development because of its year-round, non-seasonal activity.<sup>26</sup>

In light of the aforementioned, the neighbourhood committee, also known as the neighbourhood association, represents the neighbourhood's residents and works for the benefit of all the groups that comprise the neighbourhood, village, hamlet, or district, not just one. It is about supporting the municipal council in the context of voluntary work rather than acting as a barrier to its action, as some people believe. This is accurate if there is political will to support local development. Since they are a vital component in fostering civic engagement and social and collective responsibility, neighbourhood associations are a vital source of information.

When we discuss neighbourhood committees, we must distinguish between urban and rural municipalities, densely and sparsely populated municipalities, attractive and repulsive municipalities, agricultural and industrial municipalities, and rich and poor municipalities. When we do this, we must respond to the needs of the populace in accordance with each municipality's unique circumstances. Due to their proximity to the center, the majority of urban municipalities' neighbourhoods and specialties draw residents, which makes communication easier. However, we observe that remote municipalities, particularly those that are repulsive, consist of a municipal center and comparatively distant villages, hamlets, and neighbourhoods. As a result, the population's needs differ depending on the unique characteristics of each residential area. These needs and requirements may share

some similarities, but generally speaking, the distribution of priorities is where the differences lie.<sup>27</sup>

In this situation, municipal councils are principally in charge of managing local development. This does not, however, lessen the role that neighbourhood associations play in this area, which is carried out through: - A supervisory role over the performance of the municipal council, project implementation, service quality, costs, and equitable distribution; - A participatory executive role in the provision of services within its jurisdiction, the obligation to use its own resources for development objectives, and the right to municipal support, so long as this is done within the parameters of a jointly developed local development plan.

Accordingly, the elected municipal council is a key player with the main authority to oversee local development. The combination of its executive powers and functions granted to it by Municipal Law No. 11-10 and its broad representative role, on the one hand, results in its central role.

The establishment of social justice and regional and provincial balance within the local community (municipality) necessitates a systematic, organized, and institutionalized participatory effort by local actors in order to prevent chaos, haphazardness, and the waste of public funds. All of this is predicated on three requirements:<sup>28</sup> All stakeholders must effectively collaborate in order for local development to occur.

- ✓ Participatory development of a local development plan is both right and required.
- ✓ Local stakeholders working together to obtain central support and rights.

### **Third: Barriers to the implementation of the neighbourhood association's operations:**

As local associations, neighbourhood committees in Algeria face a number of issues that have undermined their operations and sapped their substance to the point where they are either non-existent or very

weak. The Ministry of the Interior claims that there are 20,137,000 neighbourhood committees nationwide, but this number does not accurately represent their actual number on the ground. These issues are primarily restricted to headquarters, funding, and civic sense issues; since headquarters is regarded as a prerequisite for accreditation, applications submitted to local authorities are denied because of the challenges in obtaining accreditation. There are 34 neighbourhood committees in the municipality of Algiers-Centre, for instance, but only five of them have been accredited because they fulfil all the requirements, including the seat. Similarly, only five neighbourhood committees have been approved in the municipality of Bab El Oued<sup>29</sup>, which is a small number considering the issues the neighbourhoods in the municipality face with urbanization, housing, and waste management.

On September 28, 2004, the governor of the capital established the principle of citizen participation in the management of local affairs in all the municipalities of the capital, strengthening the activity of the governorate of Algiers, which has 1,669 neighbourhood committees out of 7,199 local associations. The Municipal Committee serves as a forum for citizen and local elected official consultation and proposals. When it was first established, it was called the "Coordination Committee for Cleanliness, Public Health and Environmental Protection."

Wilayas, administrative districts, and municipalities make up its three tiers of organization. Since the majority of its members are representatives of neighbourhood committees and public industrial and commercial establishments (EPIC), its significance is especially clear at the municipal level. The municipal people's council president serves as its chair. Additionally, it can bring in local leaders who can help the city grow by utilizing the recommendations made by the committee at its meetings.<sup>30</sup>

A number of challenges also impede the neighbourhood association's ability to effectively contribute to the process of development. There are two primary levels to these obstacles:

1. At the official authority level:

- Officials' viewpoint on these associations: The neighbourhood association's work is limited because it is frequently seen as an enemy rather than a collaborator in the process of development and education in all of its facets.
- The lack of continuous interactive events that highlight the value of the neighbourhood association.
- The neighbourhood association isn't used to promote constructive activities that locals can take part in. Adopting policies that prioritize wealth distribution over production is a barrier to real development and indirectly contributes to the decline of participatory democracy, where the individual benefits. In the current era, for example, citizens are only concerned with housing, and once they have it, their enthusiasm for their demands and performance in the various development processes declines.

The disorderly nature of neighbourhood development erodes interpersonal harmony and contributes to "urban violence," which makes social structures resulting from these housing models more vulnerable.

2. At the neighbourhood associations' own level:

This raises a number of issues pertaining to the internal rules of the association and the makeup of its members. During their operations, some neighbourhood associations have discovered that they protect interests that are closely related to those of their members, with some concentrating on a single sector (typically housing) while neglecting other equally important areas within the previous sector. Furthermore, there is a lack of genuine desire to establish cooperatives or other

small development projects in areas where the neighbourhood's residents have a high priority.

- The perception of these associations as a way to gain access and the absence of a sense of citizenship.
- Despite being essential to the work of this association, which looks out for the neighbourhood's residents, women are not represented in this significant social structure. In addition to keeping them busy with income-generating activities and diverting their attention from everyday conflicts, women, particularly those who stay at home, can create a variety of housing projects that support neighbourhood development.
- The absence of cooperative relationships among neighbourhood associations: in certain instances, these relationships are confined to personal ones, and there is no common vision on matters of general interest that transcend a neighbourhood.
- The age group that comprises neighbourhood associations is dominated by the elderly, who restrict their involvement to planning basic clean-up or aesthetic enhancement projects like planting trees. Young people also lose their initiative when they are not present. Combining political work with neighbourhood association work.
- People are unable to join these associations because of the numerous issues they face and their worries about meeting their basic needs.<sup>31</sup>

#### ➤ 4. CONCLUSION

In Algerian society, neighbourhood associations are regarded as one of the most contemporary social structures. These are

public frameworks that give the populace a framework and support local development by paying close attention to the interests and concerns of the populace. This is because their members live in their neighbourhoods, giving them a direct voice in the body that the people elect, which is represented by the local People's Council. These organizations, which involve the local community in decision-making and represent local development, have arisen in response to the State's growing interest in participatory democracy mechanisms.

To summarize, we draw the conclusion that one of the most crucial requirements for effective democratic governance is citizen participation in the decision-making process, including related matters.

Therefore, by fostering a closer relationship between the people and the government and providing them with a platform to voice their concerns, the Algerian government is working to identify suitable means of accomplishing this goal. This goal has been accomplished in Algeria by establishing what are known as neighbourhood committees, a type of intermediary social structure that frequently contributes positively to the process of local development.

According to our research, neighbourhood committees are a crucial component of local development systems. Participatory democracy is strengthened as a result of their involvement in neighbourhood-level decision-making and development project implementation. Their accomplishments are disregarded by Algerian lawmakers, who purposefully keep their status unclear in order to undermine the power of locally elected officials. The State's slogans, which advocate for the consolidation of the participatory democracy principle—the success of which depends on communication with these local associations, which demand a strong voluntary commitment from their members—contain a noticeable contradiction to this.

In order to guarantee their participation in the development process and, consequently, increase community awareness, it endeavours to represent the needs and interests of local inhabitants to the various local authorities. This enhances the quality of life in the neighbourhoods and supports sustainable development by supporting the creation of local initiatives and keeping an eye on and enhancing the services offered by the local government, such as safety, health, and sanitation.

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