

Societal participation in
development
Activities: Algeria as an
example.

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المخلص:

تتطرق هذه الورقة تعريفا بحال المشاركة المجتمعية في التنمية المحلية بعد افتتاح السلطات الجزائرية بجداولها عند الصور و التفكير و التخطيط و التقويم و المتابعة و الرقابة علا الفعل التنموي من قبل السكان أو ممثليهم في مدينة عنابة. و لقياس مدى المشاركة لديهم صممت عدة أدوات فنية لجمع البيانات المتعلقة بطرح ثلاث فرضيات على عينة قوامها (54) مواطنا/ فاعلا اجتماعيا. و أخيرا، ذيلت هذه الدراسة بعدة نتائج.

Abstract:

The general aim of this paper is to investigate citizens' participation in development: Formulation of development aim, follow-up, monitoring and execution. It is claimed in Algeria that development failure is mainly due to the fact that the country had pursued a socialist – oriented course that implied alienating citizens, and focussing decision-making processes in the hands of large bureaucratic apparatuses. Presently, there exists a tendency on the part of local authorities to integrate Algerian citizens in the development processes. To test this notion three hypotheses have been formulated. They focus on an attempt to measure attitudes, valuation, inclinations and position regarding development as a “defacto affair”, and development as it should be. A sample of (54) citizens and (08) prominent executives who have been indulged in development process have formed the random sample.

Structured questionnaire and unstructured interviews open questions have been used to collect data. Results show that Algerians are prone towards welcoming taking part in development of their localities. Much hope is attached to interaction processes in the realm of development in which citizens have a say through their local neighbourhoods committees. In other words, participatory development seems to be the important issue, not sustainable development which is being the focus of research approaches in many countries.

Key words: Participation, Participatory Development Model, Socialist- Oriented Development.

This paper is based on Pilot Research Project led by the author prepared in Arabic. See: Moucharakat El-Mouatan fi Attanmia Almahalia, Fi Al-Aljazair . Citizens' Participation in Local Development in Algeria. URSTD (2001), Annaba University.

Introduction:

This research work focuses on citizens' participation and their social interactions in local development. While participation in its broadest sense proceeds development, the conjunction of their processes seems to characterise modern societies. The disguised interplay has been generating the current Algeria dilemma.

The 1970 s, Algerians began to discover the power of their newly acquired potentialities (oil and gas revenues). The seventies were characterised by material aspect of development within a general socialist oriented discourse.

Unfortunately, in the eighties one can discern disappointing development performances in equality, modernisation and democracy as well. However, these "induced concepts» have had vague emulsion when applied. Hence, They should not be equated with the western experiences. This is because of socio-cultural diversities. Unexpected accelerating social change had taken place in a short medium range of time and seemed to suggest that "development from above" as the case in the seventies was, was a corollary of "dependent participation». The 1980' s events especially 1989 's riots were bound to set a special framework for development and participation.

Backgrounds and previous studies: The conceptual framework of research was influenced by various sociological backgrounds. To begin with, it is inspired by theorisation on development issues (see: Geertz, 1963, Elliott 1975, Goldthorpe, 1975, Toffler, 1990) relating to the effect of economic activities on human relation ships in developed and under – developed societies.

Trends in the study of development seem to focus on the so-called sustainable development " Though, sustainability as alpha and omega of development is central, it is argued that even sustainable development is prone to collapse if citizens do not effectively participate. In other words, it is postulated in this work that citizens awareness, satisfaction and full support of development activities are indispensable for any genuine attempt to develop their own towns, fields, villages and construct their environment (Cawson 1985, Donati 1994, Geyer 1994, Toffler 1990, Saghour 1994) .

Distinctions should be made here between psycho-sociological and economical approaches to development issues in both poor and rich societies, Friedman; 1973 for example, see planning in its broadest terms as a change carrier involving the future of a community over time. Thus, he attaches to it some rational meaningful pattern, and the shaping of its history to the extent that control over environmental factor permits. However, studies on development conceptualisation are shaped by procedures, concepts and formulas related to its processes. In other words, the question seems to be how to provide sound understanding to decisions – makers on how effective actions can be taken to make the poor in Algeria better off? Myrdal's contributions focus on the so-called "vicious circle" of poverty and backwash effects. He is inclined to tackle development problems through inciting people to vote as a "civic participation" activity.

If we infer that economists tend to neglect almost totally "participation" we find that, by contrast many social scientists tend to recognise the usefulness of this process. Others, on the one hand, see participation as ill reputed process and waste of time (see: Sakhela, buhlingui, and 1999). On the other hand, the popular democratic approach to participatory development (socialist orientation) has had its own "distinguished model" The Algerian experience indicates with a great certainty that it has so far failed almost completely.

Why? Though various reasons can be given the absence of appropriate links between the governed masses and governing bodies appear as the most realistic reasons. This is because the popular democratic orientation is more often associated with red-tape partisan apparatus in the Algerian case.

Method and hypotheses: With the above as the theoretical background in mind, the empirical aspect of the study focuses on a sample of (54) citizens (08) top executives from Annaba area. Two instruments: A questionnaire and unstructured interviews are employed in data collection. The questionnaire consists of (29) questions derived from socio-cultural backgrounds of the sample. Many national problems are listed in the questionnaire in order to be classified in accordance with their degree of society concern. Three major local concerns are to be identified by the members of the sample. Twelve structured questions are advanced to explore psycho-

sociological interactions between governed masses and their governing bodies in the course of development processes.

Two open questions are set to evaluate current development performances and to show how to overcome their shortcomings in Annaba district. Regarding the open interviews, eight executives at regional and national levels originally from Annaba are questioned. Three hypotheses are to be tested by the data collected. They are the following:

- 1- In Annaba area, citizens' participation is still weak.
- 2- If governing bodies and governed masses agree upon the project allocations the likely local community resistance is contained and possible tension is reduced.
- 3- The current participatory development model in Algeria is ostensibly vague.

Interview data were selected to explain constructed matrices. These data are thoroughly analysed, simultaneously with surveyed data using statistical packages such as: Likert's scale; systems analysis approach etc...

Findings; The results drawn from the study can be summarised as follows:

- 1- The majority of the samples stress the lack of communicative links and defective dialogue between local authorities and their administrated masses in Annaba.
- 2- Officials try to impress their audiences by the use of an artificial caution when facing local community (halo-effect). There is a consonant agreement among interviewed is that social relationships are irrational and create more niches for social fermentation in the Algerian society.
- Therefore, any "rational" cultural change is bound to be "violent" and participation develops into micro-mobilisation.
- 3- Various societal associations are still in their embryonic gestation and their participation in decision-making is still almost absent.

- 4- The Algerian basic personality is more often qualified as “simple” “affective», “unbalanced” but “alerted” and ready for “action direct” to make self- realisation of the country possible.
- 5- “Youth” in the Algerian society suffers sharp cleavage in value orientations between the school and the larger institutions of society however, more than half the sample members’ stress the need for youth collective participation to a larger extent.
- 6- The majority seems to over – simplify the state of under – development and
- 7- The majority looks for a substantial change of paradigm in their interactions namely to be more democratic.
- 8- It is indicated that “citizens in Algeria are dismissed and above all careless about state efforts in development programs “. Almost all the sample responds positively to the above mentioned presumption with few exceptions.
- 9- Politics, economics, communication and understanding, social laws and order are regarded as “Key problems” with great concern at the national level in the Algerian society. Governed masses and governing bodies seem to be engaged in two divergent discourses of actions. This is considered as “the heart-matter” of the current Algerian dilemma. Thus, creating instability.
- 10- Urban planning adjustments are irregular in frequency; therefore, there is no guarantee that urban population is ready to participate effectively in joint-effort planning, follow-up and monitoring projects.
- 11- Objectives are largely determined in accordance with politico-administrative criteria, rather than populations’ consent. Algerians seem to live in a state of mind characterised as “powerlessness” which defies modernisers and modernised alike.

In the light of these findings, one can say that the first hypothesis is amply validated. Participation in the Annaba area is scarce. The local city council as “an institution” has failed to a large extent to meet population aspirations. Most Algerians are heavily affected by development but they are actually excluded. As regards to the second hypothesis, its implications are quite clear and local city council takes advantage of various civil society groups to brighten up its image,

rather than to solve real urban problems such as industrial and domestic waste, sewage repairs, water and electricity supply etc ... Tension is clear in the interactions within the framework of the meetings held in and out their scope.

Concerning the third hypothesis, the gathered data show that socialist-oriented model of participatory development has not been successful, it is widely viewed by the sample as "holistic", "centric", "bureaucratic", authoritarian " etc...

To improve the efficiency of participation, the sample members suggest a sort of contest in decisions – making and administration, so as to encourage competition between government agencies and authorities, which they believe, can ensure a reasonable level of efficiency.

In brief, one can say that the auto-centric model of participatory development "paradigm" has to a large extent failed to produce welfare for citizens and to promote spontaneous participation.

Algerian citizens seem widely interested in participatory development and authorities have begun to recognise the importance of the citizens' contributions. Presently, civil society groups are looked upon as "action groups" in the interactions of the governed and the governing alike. Although, one can not be quite sure to what extent their voice is being heard and taken care of by authorities on the micro – level, it can be said with certainty that participatory development is becoming gradually "twin facet" development processes in Algeria. It is not realistic to exclude participation conceptualisation from sustainability, although, the latter is placed in a paradigm excluding participation, the link between the two is still to be thoroughly investigated within and out Algeria.

CONCLUSION

The problematic of citizens' participation in Algeria in the development activities of their country is derived from the fact that the authorities imposed a socialist – oriented ways of participation to which, citizens do not respond positively. The traditional ways of participation within the tribe, hamlet, village etc ... were put aside, this created a dilemma. Presently, Algeria is experimenting with models that appear to be characterised by some traditional cultural elements. The empirical data of this paper have generally supported the phenomenon that citizens are more or less in favour of such models. Neighbourhoods' committees are examples per se, however; there exists much to be learned in the realm of constructive adaptation on the part of the citizens to this new approach and mechanisms. It is suggested that further social research is needed to define clearly on the micro level the pros and cons of the models.

Authorities are called up on to learn also about these pros and cons and take them into consideration. The Algerian dilemma can only be solved by mutual educational projects not only directed towards citizens but also directed towards authorities at all levels too. It is wrong to focus on one party and forget about the other. This is the greatest lesson we can learn from this social research paper.

INTRODUCTION

Les signaux de prime abord que le but essentiel du présent article n'est pas de procéder à une étude détaillée de la Convention de l'UNESCO du 20 novembre 1954 sur les biens culturels volés ou illicitement exportés, mais simplement d'en résumer le contenu et les caractères essentiels afin de comprendre les raisons qui doivent pousser toutes les nations à y adhérer, car elle constitue certainement un effort international sérieux à même de ralentir le trafic illicite des biens culturels, qui ne fait pas de distinction entre États importateurs et États exportateurs.

Avant tout, il serait indispensable, dans un premier temps de résumer les facteurs qui ont contribué à l'évolution rapide du trafic

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