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The Role of the Participatory Approach in Promoting Local Development in Algeria in Light of Modern Human Rights Trends

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Abstract: *Participatory democracy is considered a model of effective democracies due to its focus on directly addressing problems and ensuring the involvement of all individuals in the local decision-making process. This form of democracy promotes meaningful and active participation by individuals and civil society organizations through various means such as access to information and consultation on local issues. The development of local governance also involves enhancing the political will of locally elected officials. Participatory democracy aims to ensure social protection, foster a culture of dialogue and consultation, prioritize and continuously update citizens' needs. Through this model, participatory democracy seeks to build a more transparent and inclusive administrative system, contributing to balancing diverse interests and promoting effective local development.*

Keywords: *Participatory approach, local authorities, local law, human rights, local governance, local development.*

Introduction:

In recent decades, there has been growing interest in mechanisms for achieving local development in developing countries. However, many of these mechanisms have failed to deliver the desired outcomes, prompting a search for more effective alternatives. In this context, the participatory approach has emerged as a strategic option, as it enables the genuine involvement of civil society in both the formulation and implementation of development policies. This approach has received increasing support from international organizations, particularly within the framework of promoting human rights, where community participation is now regarded as a fundamental right. In Algeria, although this approach has been adopted in official texts, challenges remain regarding its practical implementation, especially in light of global changes that require transformations in both discourse and practice in the fields of human rights and development.

Research Problem:

Based on this, the following research question arises:

How can the participatory approach contribute to fostering local development in Algeria in light of significant global trends affecting human rights?

Research Hypothesis:

This study is based on the hypothesis that:

"Adopting the participatory approach in Algeria can effectively contribute to promoting local development by establishing the principles of transparency, accountability, and empowerment, especially in the face of serious global threats and trends affecting the human rights system".

Significance of the Study:

The importance of this topic stems from its focus on one of the pivotal issues in Algeria's path toward sustainable development-namely, the effectiveness of the participatory approach as a mechanism for achieving local development. Its significance also lies in linking the developmental and human rights dimensions by referencing international human rights standards and their influence on national policies. The topic is strategic, especially since Algeria needs to develop a model that takes into account its local specificities while also responding to external pressures and international obligations.

Objectives of the Study:

This study aims to analyze the role of the participatory approach in promoting local development in Algeria by examining its concepts and theoretical dimensions, as well as highlighting its relationship with human rights in light of Algeria's international commitments. It also seeks to assess the extent to which Algerian public policies align with this approach, identify the challenges hindering its practical implementation, and propose concrete mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness of community participation in achieving balanced and sustainable local development in line with modern global trends.

Research Methodology:

This research adopts a multi-method approach, combining the descriptive-analytical, comparative, and legal methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The descriptive-analytical method is used to present and analyze concepts related to the participatory approach and local development, as well as to observe their reality in the Algerian context, focusing on the interaction between development policies and community participation. The comparative method is employed to compare Algeria's experience with that of other countries that have adopted similar approaches, allowing for the extraction of lessons learned and identification of strengths and weaknesses. The legal method is used to analyze the legislative and institutional framework governing local development and human rights in Algeria, and to examine its compatibility with international standards and modern trends in this field.

Structure of the Study:

This research raises several questions and sub-issues, which will be addressed through the following key themes:

- **Chapter One** addresses the conceptual framework: human rights, partnership, and local development. It discusses the concept of human rights in the context of local development and the importance of partnership between individuals and the state in achieving sustainable development.
- **Chapter Two** examines the reality of participatory democracy and human rights in Algeria, reviewing the Algerian experience in promoting participatory democracy through legal and political mechanisms and the realization of human rights within this framework.

Chapter One: Conceptual Framework – Human Rights, Partnership, and Local Development

Human rights are considered an independent variable, partnership an intermediary variable, and local development a dependent variable. Human rights values are a fundamental reference for civilizational progress and a challenge imposed both by societal development and external pressures in the name of human rights. The participatory approach is significant both for promoting human rights values and as a means to achieve local development.

Section One: The Concept of Human Rights in Islamic and International Perspectives

By tracing human rights in the religious and intellectual heritage of humanity centuries before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we find that no religion is devoid of texts related to human dignity, and no culture lacks the principles of compassion, justice, and fairness.[1]

[1] **Ibrahim Al-Bayoumi Ghanem**, *Universality and the Specificity of Human Rights in Islam*, Hayra Journal, Issue 19, Istanbul, Turkey, 2010, p. 25.

First: Human Rights in the Islamic Perspective:

In Islam, the concept of humanity is rooted in noble belief, where God Almighty made man His vicegerent on earth for its development and subjected His laws to him. God says in His Holy Book:

It is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you. (Surat Al-An'am, 165)
When your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.' (Surat Al-Baqarah, 30)

Thus, Islam views the human being as honored by God, granted dignity, and all people are equal in this dignity by virtue of their humanity, regardless of color, nationality, or lineage. Men and women are also equal in this regard. The Islamic concept affirms that the measure of dignity depends on a person's faith, as honor is determined by piety and adherence to the messages of the prophets and divine revelation. In this context, God says:

We have certainly created man in the best of stature. Then We return him to the lowest of the low, except for those who believe and do righteous deeds-for they will have a reward uninterrupted. (Surat At-Tin, 4–6)

mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. (Surat Al-Hujurat, 13)

The realization of human rights is linked to social reform; there can be no true implementation of rights in the presence of corruption and oppression. Hence, Islamic Sharia set out objectives for achieving social justice based on equity and ensuring that people receive their full rights under justice and equality. Sharia includes mechanisms to preserve human rights by imposing punishments on violators to deter them from harming others. These legal penalties correspond to the type of violation and its individual or public consequences. Examples include:

1. Apostasy: to preserve religion
2. Intentional murder: retribution to preserve life
3. Adultery: to protect lineage
4. Drinking alcohol: to preserve the blessing of intellect
5. Theft: to protect property
6. Slander: to preserve honor and reputation[2].

[2] **Lea Levin**, *Human Rights: Questions and Answers*, Arab Lawyers Union and UNESCO, 1986, p. 14.

7. The application of these punishments is intended as a deterrent against those who might undermine human values, not merely as punitive measures.[3]

Second: Human Rights from the Perspective of International Law

Human rights are fundamental entitlements that every individual possesses simply by virtue of being human. They are not granted by governments or regimes but are inherent rights, not linked to nationality, race, gender, religion, language, or any other status. These rights encompass a wide range of aspects, from the right to life to rights that ensure dignity and quality of life, such as the right to education, healthcare, food, work, and freedom. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, was the first legal document to establish a global framework for the protection of human rights. It remains the foundational document upon which the international human rights legal system is built. Its thirty articles set out key principles that have influenced subsequent international agreements, treaties, and instruments.

December 10 of each year is celebrated as Human Rights Day, commemorating the adoption of this historic declaration. Together with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, it forms what is known as the International Bill of Human Rights.[4]

Section Two: The Fundamental Principles of Human Rights and UN Bodies Concerned

Human rights are based on fundamental principles that guarantee human dignity, freedom, and equality without discrimination. These foundations represent the essence of social justice and stability in societies and can be summarized as follows:

First: Fundamental Principles of Human Rights

1. **Universality and Inalienability:** The principle of universality is one of the essential pillars of international human rights law. It affirms that all human beings, without discrimination, possess the same rights and enjoy them equally. This principle was first enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequently affirmed in numerous international conventions and UN declarations. Human rights are also inalienable, meaning no individual may be arbitrarily or permanently deprived of them, except within a defined legal framework and through fair judicial procedures.[5]

2. **Interdependence and Indivisibility of Human Rights:** All human rights are interconnected and indivisible. No right can be separated from another or prioritized over others. The full enjoyment of any right requires guarantees for the rest. For example, promoting civil and political rights enables individuals to claim their economic, social, and

[3] **Abdulaziz bin Othman Al-Tuwaijri**, *Human Dignity in Light of Islamic Principles*, Risalat Al-Taqeem Journal, Issue 21, 1998, p. 117.
[4] **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**, *International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict*, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2012, p. 6.
[5] **Patrice Meyer-Bisch**, *Methodology of a Continuous Humanitarian Law System*, in *Classifying Human Rights*, *Penser le droit*, BRUYLANT, Brussels, 2004, pp. 47–85.

cultural rights. Conversely, depriving individuals of their economic and social rights may limit their ability to exercise other rights, highlighting the close interrelationship among them.[6]

3. **Equality and Non-Discrimination:** Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

Protection from discrimination, as stipulated in Article 2, guarantees this equality. Non-discrimination is a comprehensive principle across several sectors of international human rights law and is enshrined in all fundamental human rights treaties. It is also a central focus of two key instruments: the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** and the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**.[7]

Second: United Nations Human Rights Bodies

United Nations human rights bodies form a core system working to promote and protect human rights globally by monitoring the implementation of relevant international conventions and treaties. These bodies include the Human Rights Council, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and periodic reporting mechanisms aimed at holding states accountable and achieving justice for victims of human rights violations.

1. **Human Rights Council:** The UN Human Rights Council is responsible for overseeing the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, a regular evaluation of the human rights situation in member states. This mechanism, conducted with the participation of the countries themselves, offers each state an opportunity to present the steps it has taken to improve the human rights situation on its territory and demonstrate its commitment to international standards.[8]

2. **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR):** The United Nations also includes a principal body dedicated to human rights-the OHCHR. Its mandate is to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights for all people. The UN may also appoint experts (Special Rapporteurs, representatives, or independent experts) to address specific human rights issues or situations in particular countries. These experts may conduct studies, visit countries, interview victims, issue appeals, and submit reports and recommendations.[9]

[6] **Ahmed Al-Rashidi and Adnan Al-Sayed Hussein**, *Human Rights in the Arab World*, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, Syria, and Dar Al-Fikr Al-Mu'asir, Beirut, Lebanon, 2002, p. 32.
[7] **Ahmed Al-Rashidi and Adnan Al-Sayed Hussein**, *Ibid,p 34.*
[8] **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**, *Previously cited reference*, p. 6.
[9] **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**, *Ibid*, p. 6.

Section Three: Participatory Democracy – Concept, Forms, and Rationale

1. **The Concept of Participatory Democracy and Its Rationale**: The concept of participatory democracy emerged as representative democracy failed to fulfill its role. Contemporary democracies suffer from a crisis of representation, as parliaments no longer reflect the desires and needs of the majority. Meanwhile, the public has lost trust in political parties and the political process as a whole.

Thus, participatory democracy arose as a complement-not a substitute-to representative democracy, aiming to bridge the gaps created by the latter. Participatory democracy also seeks to rationalize governance at all levels, particularly at the local level, which is often considered the most suitable arena for citizen participation and for restoring their power.

The aim is to reconcile the citizen with the political system-between rulers and the governed-after trust has eroded and political and civil disengagement have become common.[10]

The American philosopher **John Dewey** defined it as:

"The participation of all those affected by social institutions, where the individual takes part in shaping and producing these institutions and the policies that result from them"[11]
Researcher **Yahya Bouaafi** sees participatory democracy as an institutional proposal aimed at enabling citizens to collectively and directly engage in the discussion of collective choices. It seeks to ensure effective public oversight and sustained citizen involvement in decision-making, particularly in areas that directly affect their daily lives.

In its simplest terms, participatory democracy refers to:

"A set of mechanisms and procedures that allow civil society, the private sector, and the general population to participate in shaping public policy and to strengthen their role in decision-making related to the management of local public affairs".

2. **Forms of Participatory Democracy**: Participation may take either spontaneous or institutionalized forms. It may develop gradually from the bottom up (from citizens to authority) or take the form of delegation. Within institutional participation, two models can be distinguished: the hierarchical model and the negotiated model.

- The **hierarchical model** is characterized by top-down intervention from local or governmental bodies, which present their projects to stakeholders for consultation. This may involve minimal participation or simply sharing information with the population, or it may involve more genuine dialogue and exchange of opinions among the parties concerned.

[10] **Mohamed Al-Amin Kamal**, *Participatory Urban Governance*, *Academic Journal for Legal Research*, Special Issue, Vol. 10, University of Abderrahmane Mira, Bejaia, Algeria, 2019, p. 79.
[11] **Mohamed El-Ajaty and others**, *From Representative to Participatory Democracy*, Translated by: Nouran Ahmed, Cairo: Rawafed Publishing and Distribution, 3rd edition, 2011.

- The **negotiated model** is based on serious negotiations among all stakeholders involved in a given project. These parties are organized to foster a participatory culture. Participants may include individual citizens, representatives of organized civil society, interest groups, experts, etc.[12]

3. Pillars of Community Participation – Political and Constitutional References

- **Local Governance:** Local governance refers to a set of institutions, mechanisms, and processes through which citizens and organized civil groups can express their interests and needs, resolve conflicts, and exercise their rights and responsibilities at the local level in a democratic manner.

- **Open Governance:** Open governance refers to a system of rules, procedures, and mechanisms through which citizens can monitor and influence the decision-making process, thanks to their access to information and decision-making bodies. Open governance is embodied through initiatives that publish documents and data related to public institutions' activities via various media and communication channels such as newspapers, media outlets, and the internet.[13]

- **Participatory Culture:** This is the highest form of political and civic culture, according to **Gabriel Almond's** classification. In such a culture, individuals are aware of the components of the political system and the political process as a whole. They are fully conscious of their rights and duties, confident in their capacity to influence political life, and view their role as positive and effective.

Section Four: The Relationship Between Human Rights and Local Development

1. The relationship between human rights and development is deeply rooted and interlinked. True and sustainable development cannot be achieved without ensuring that individuals enjoy their fundamental rights, and rights and freedoms cannot be realized without a fair and inclusive developmental environment.

2. The United Nations General Assembly affirmed this interconnection with the adoption, on December 4, 1986, of Resolution No. 41/128: the Declaration on the Right to Development, which is considered a milestone in affirming peoples' and individuals' rights to development.

3. The declaration states that development is a comprehensive and multidimensional process, not limited to the economic aspect but also encompassing social, cultural, and political dimensions. At its core, it aims to ensure the continuous improvement of the well-being of all peoples and individuals, based on their free and meaningful participation in the

[12] **Abdelmajid Ramadan**, *Digital Democracy as a Mechanism for Activating Participatory Democracy (Case of Algeria)*, *Journal of Political and Legal Notebooks*, University of Kasdi Merbah, Ouargla, Algeria, Issue 16, January 2017, p. 78.

[13] **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**, *Previously cited reference*, p. 6

development process and the equitable distribution of its benefits. The declaration is based on the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and draws on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in addition to a broad range of legal instruments-such as treaties, resolutions, and recommendations issued by the UN and its specialized agencies-focused on integrated human development and promoting economic and social justice for all peoples, especially those still undergoing decolonization or suffering from discrimination and fundamental rights violations.

4. The declaration emphasizes the centrality of human beings in the development process: they must be the primary participants and beneficiaries-not passive recipients, but active agents guiding the process.[14]

The declaration also expresses concern over significant obstacles that hinder full human and societal development, notably the deprivation of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. It asserts that all human rights are interdependent and indivisible, requiring an integrated and balanced approach to their realization within development efforts. The main key articles of the Declaration on the Right to Development are as follows:

- **Article 1:** States that the right to development is an inalienable human right, encompassing the right of every individual and all peoples to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political development. This enables the full realization of all human rights. This right also includes the full realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, which, according to the two international covenants on human rights, includes their inalienable right to full sovereignty over their wealth and natural resources.

- **Article 2:** Emphasizes that the human being is the fundamental element in the development process and must be both an active participant and a direct beneficiary of the right to development. It also affirms that the responsibility for achieving development rests with each individual, both individually and collectively, while respecting the full range of human rights and fundamental freedoms, alongside the duties individuals owe to their societies. Fulfilling these duties enables development to be achieved in a free and inclusive manner. Article 2 also grants states the right and duty to formulate appropriate national development policies aimed at improving the welfare of all populations and individuals, based on their free and effective participation in development processes and the fair distribution of its fruits.

- **Article 3:** Clarifies that the state bears the primary responsibility for creating the necessary conditions-both at the national and international levels-to realize the right to development. This requires full respect for the fundamental principles of international law, especially those related to friendly relations and cooperation between states, in accordance with the

[14] **Ammar Abbas**, *Environmental Protection and Improving the Living Environment through Participatory Democracy*, *Journal of the Laboratory of Real Estate and Environmental Law*, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Mostaganem, Algeria, Issue 1, January 2013, p. 1.

Charter of the United Nations. States also have the duty to cooperate with one another to ensure development and remove barriers to its achievement, as well as to work toward establishing a new global economic system based on the principles of equality in sovereignty, interdependence, cooperation, and mutual interests, through the respect and effective implementation of human rights.

Chapter Two: The Reality of Participatory Democracy and Human Rights in Algeria

This chapter examines and analyzes the extent to which the Algerian state has embedded the principles of participatory democracy and human rights, particularly in light of the political and constitutional transformations the country has undergone since the beginning of the third millennium. The chapter aims to evaluate the reality of community participation, the role of civil society, and the contribution of local institutions in involving citizens in managing public affairs, with a focus on the challenges hindering this process, such as weak communication mechanisms, limited transparency, and shortcomings in the practical application of legal texts.

Section 1: The Legal and Political Framework of Participatory Democracy in Algeria

This section traces the legislative and political framework that establishes participatory democracy in Algeria, reviewing constitutional reforms-particularly those of 2016 and 2020-and legal developments related to municipal and regional laws. It also discusses provisions that promote citizen involvement in local decision-making, initiatives launched by authorities to solidify this direction (such as the creation of advisory councils), the role of civil society, and mechanisms for transparency and access to information. The section highlights the primary challenge of the gap between legal provisions and practical application.

First: The Reality of Legal Texts (Constitution, Municipal Law 10/11, etc.) :One of the reasons that led the Algerian legislator to amend the Municipal Law was the weakness of local council work and the absence of dialogue with citizens, which led to a deterioration of living conditions, especially in urban areas, due to a lack of coordination and cooperation between citizens, municipal officials, and local executive departments. Although Municipal Law No. 10/11 was not included in the legislative mandate linked to former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's speech to the nation on April 15, 2011-which was part of the political and constitutional reform project during the transformations in the Arab world-these reforms, as well as State Law No. 07/12, were the culmination of these efforts. This alone highlights the importance of local groups in any reform process, given that elected councils in general, and local councils in particular, are the main tools enabling citizens to contribute effectively

to managing public affairs, embodying the slogan of the Algerian state: "With the people, for the people."[15]

Second: Key Actors in Local Participatory Democracy in Algeria

1. **Official Local Bodies: Elected Councils and Regional Administration**: Local authorities include elected municipal and provincial councils, as well as the local administration represented by the governor and district heads. Local authorities are responsible for informing the population and civil society organizations and consulting with them on matters of local public interest. This process should go beyond information and consultation to higher levels of participation, such as discussion, dialogue, negotiation, and involvement in decision-making concerning local public affairs. Article 2/11 of Municipal Law No. 10/11 states:

The municipal council shall take all necessary measures to inform citizens about their affairs and consult with them regarding development options and priorities for economic, social, and cultural planning in accordance with the conditions specified by this law. In this regard, available media and means can be used in particular."[16]

A review of this article shows that the legislator included it in Chapter Three, titled "Citizen Participation in Managing Municipal Affairs," thus considering consultation as a mechanism for citizen involvement in managing municipal affairs. To activate this procedure, the legislator requires the municipal council to take all necessary steps to consult with all citizens of the municipality, not just a select group.[17]

2. **Civil Society Organizations**: Civil society is the second essential pillar for achieving political and societal partnership, acting as the best intermediary between the state and society. For cooperation and harmony between the state and society, the political and administrative authorities must involve civil society in policies and decision-making processes. In his remarks on civil society, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated on September 23, 2013:"If leaders do not listen to their people, they hear them in the streets or in squares or in battlefields. There is a better way: more participation, more democracy, and openness, meaning more space for civil society organizations."[18]

Article 16 of the 2020 constitutional amendment, in its third paragraph, states that the state encourages participatory democracy at the local level, particularly through civil society, as

[15] **Ammar Abbas**, *Ibid*, p. 1.
[16] **Abdelkarim Hicham**, *New Media and Mechanisms for Achieving Qualitative Democracy in Transitional Societies – An Approach to Participatory Democracy*, *Al-Mufaqir Journal*, University of Biskra, Algeria, Issue 12, March 2015, p. 138.
[17] **Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**, Presidential Decree No. 442-20, on the Publication of the Constitutional Amendment Adopted in the Referendum of November 1, 2020, Issue 82, December 20, 2020.
[18] **Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein**, *A Practical Guide for Civil Society*, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations, 2014, p. 3.

mentioned in Article 10, which ensures the activation of civil society's role in public affairs management.[19]

To expand participatory democracy and ensure the involvement of various sectors and groups in planning and preparing public and local policies and achieving development, the 2016 constitutional amendment created the High Council for Youth as an advisory body to the President of the Republic. In the 2020 constitutional amendment, the National Civil Society Observatory was established, with the mission of promoting the values of citizenship and participation in achieving national development goals, aiming to institutionalize a participatory approach and incorporate different movements and groups within a legal and organizational framework.[20]

What is the reality of access to information in legal texts and administrative practice?

Regardless of the form participatory democracy takes, the essential condition for any participation is that local authorities communicate with the population and civil society organizations to inform them of local projects and policies in all possible and transparent ways. This is the foundation and goal of open governance. There is a direct link between participation and transparency in communication and information. Transparency ensures access to information related to local policies, while participation allows involvement in decision-making about these policies.

While the current constitution guarantees the right to access information, daily practice often falls short of what is stated in the texts. The problem lies in the lack of mechanisms to implement these provisions or their ambiguity. Mechanisms may exist, but the absence or lack of a culture of participation within institutions or among employees is behind the failure to implement and protect this right. These mechanisms may be rudimentary and traditional, such as announcements posted at the entrances of public institutions and government offices, which are only accessible to those who frequent these institutions and may not be read by many people.

However, this does not negate the efforts made by the state to implement and protect this right through various initiatives and activities, particularly in the area of digitizing institutions and providing information on websites and electronic platforms, which still require further development and effort from those responsible. For effective participation to be possible, minimum standards of transparency must be established. Civil society organizations cannot influence decisions and policies if they are unaware of how they are made. Conversely,

[19] **Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**, Amended in November 2020, Article 213, Dar Belkess.
[20] **Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**, *Same reference*.

transparency can arise from the participatory process, as access to participatory bodies and procedures is a necessary condition for obtaining certain documents and information.[21]

3.Media, Publication, and Communications Used in This Context:

The mechanisms contributing to enhancing citizens' effective participation in local governance are diverse. Meetings and deliberations of elected local councils are regularly announced to allow citizens to follow discussions and decisions made. Open-door events are also organized to showcase the activities and projects of local councils and discuss issues of public interest with citizens. Additionally, regular reviews of the results of activities carried out by elected officials are conducted, where they review their commitments during election campaigns and receive opinions from citizens and associations about these activities, Local publications, municipal magazines, and local radio or television channels also contribute to disseminating information and fostering communication with citizens, while municipal websites provide interactive platforms through information banks, forums, or live broadcasts of meetings. Finally, public surveys provide a consultative mechanism aimed at gathering citizens' opinions on urban and environmental issues, helping authorities make informed decisions that consider everyone's interests, although the results of these surveys are non-binding but are taken into account when making decisions.[22]

Section 2: Mechanisms of Participation in the Algerian Experience

Mechanisms of participation in the Algerian experience are embodied through consultative workshops, the adoption of participatory budgeting, the activation of the role of civil society, and legal and institutional reforms that establish citizens' involvement in managing local affairs.

First: Neighborhood Committees and Local Councils (Neighborhood Democracy)

These councils play a significant role in enhancing local democracy and participation in the development of cities and neighborhoods through their activities. However, the lack of a participation culture in Algerian society has led to the ineffectiveness or absence of these committees in the first place. If they exist, their creation is optional and not mandatory.

In comparative local and international experiences, for example, the Italian law of 1990 stipulates the obligation to create elected neighborhood councils in cities with populations exceeding 100,000. For cities with smaller populations, the creation of these committees is optional.

In the French experience, according to the law of February 27, 2002, neighborhood councils became mandatory in municipalities with populations exceeding 80,000. The mayor can

[21] **Abdulrahman Bouchkhir**, *Towards a Genuine Implementation of Article 51 of the Constitution: The Right to Access Information and Administrative Documents*, *Al-Bahith Journal for Academic Studies*, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of M'sila, Algeria, Issue 10, January 2017.

[22] **Bakhta Dandan**, *Aspects of Participatory Democracy at the Local Level in Algeria*, *Journal of Law and Political Sciences*, University of Mascara, Algeria, Vol. 15, Issue 1, April 2022, p. 1186.

consult the neighborhood council on any issue related to the neighborhood or city, It can also participate in drafting, implementing, and evaluating neighborhood-related activities.[23]

City policy can significantly contribute to structuring participation at the local level and within neighborhoods. Numerous mechanisms provide wide spaces to implement local partnerships at the city and district level, such as city contracts, community participation funds, civil works funds, urban works funds, citizen training, etc, In Spain, district councils (sections within municipalities) were created, consisting of a representative of the municipal council and members selected according to sectoral (specialized associations) or regional (neighborhood committees, for example) criteria, There is considerable diversity in the powers of these councils, which work on formulating opinions on municipal priorities, enhancing participation in implementing concrete projects, and closely monitoring municipal services. In Tunisia, neighborhood democracy is institutionalized by organizing neighborhood meetings within the framework of formulating projects and programs related to their neighborhoods.[24]

Second: Advisory Committees: Advisory committees and councils established at the local level are the most common form of participatory democracy, sometimes finding their legal reference in binding legislative texts, which are created by municipalities.[25]

They are characterized by diversity in composition and subject, These councils and committees are tasked with expressing opinions on specific issues or areas and can be a youth council, an elderly council, a sports council such as municipal sports councils, or a culture council, such as municipal culture councils, etc.

Local public authorities may consult with these councils on matters or projects related to public facilities and local equipment that fall within the scope of the activities of the associations affiliated with these councils.

3. Participatory Budgeting

The 2016 constitutional amendment established the principle of partnership in action and decision-making at the local level, prompting efforts to draft several laws and create organizational mechanisms to unify them. In recent years, Algeria has seen several initiatives reflecting the authorities' efforts to institutionalize participatory democracy and strengthen the role of citizens in managing local public affairs. Workshops were organized for governors to discuss ways to involve citizens in decision-making processes. In this context, the Algerian

[23] **Law No. 06/06 dated February 20, 2006**, *City Orientation Law*, C.R.C., No. 15 of 2006, Article 4

[24] **Al-Amin Charit**, *Participatory Democracy: Foundations and Prospects*, *Al-Wasat Journal*, National Institution for Communication, Publishing and Advertising, Algeria, Issue 6, Second Semester, 2008, p. 25.

[25] **Saleh Boujelab and Fares Foudil**, *Participatory Budgeting: A Mechanism to Improve the Performance of Local Financing in Algeria – Between the Necessity of Activation and the Mechanism of Implementation*, *Al-Bahith Journal for Academic Studies*, University of Batna, Algeria, Vol. 8, Issue 3, June 2021.

authorities announced in 2017 their intention to prepare a draft law for a charter on participatory democracy, as a step toward enhancing this direction.

Additionally, the Ministry of Interior and Local Communities proposed a new law concerning municipalities and provinces, within a unified legal framework for local authorities, aiming to enable citizens to exercise their constitutional right to participate through clear legal and organizational mechanisms.

Practical Applications and Structural Reforms to Support Participation: In 2019, the Ministry of Interior issued instructions to various provinces to include special programs within supplementary budgets to implement the partnership principle, in accordance with Article 11 of Municipal Law No. 11-10. Some municipalities have already started applying the participatory budgeting mechanism by allocating financial provisions within the public facilities administration to execute developmental projects based on participatory work with citizens during the years 2019 and 2020. The political will was emphasized to support the development program for marginalized areas (areas of shadow). This is in addition to the new administrative reform that strengthened the principle of decentralization, aiming to bring administration closer to citizens, along with the constitutional amendment of 2020, which marked an important milestone in the deep political reforms in the country.

Conclusion

Through analyzing both the conceptual and practical dimensions within the framework of the relationship between human rights, partnership, and local development, it becomes evident that development is no longer merely an economic or technical process. Rather, it has become fundamentally linked to empowerment, participation, and human dignity. Integrating human rights into development policies enhances the inclusiveness of development and makes it more sustainable and responsive to individuals' needs. Moreover, the partnership between the state and society, based on rights and responsibilities, is considered a fundamental pillar for achieving the necessary balance between development requirements and respect for human dignity.

As for the Algerian experience, it has been shown that Algeria has made significant legal and institutional strides in adopting participatory democracy. However, the challenge remains in translating it into effective practices at the local level that ensure real citizen participation and guarantee their rights in managing public affairs. In light of the above, the following findings and recommendations were reached:

Findings.

1. The integration of human rights with local development enhances the legitimacy of public policies and contributes to building more just and stable societies.
2. The partnership between the state and civil society is a fundamental pillar for achieving sustainable development, provided it is built on mutual trust and consultation.

3. Despite the availability of a legal framework in Algeria to support participatory democracy, there remains a gap between the legal texts and their practical implementation.
4. The absence of a participatory culture and the weakness of executive mechanisms limit the effectiveness of local councils and civil initiatives in implementing human rights on the ground.

Recommendations:

1. Raise awareness of the culture of human rights and participatory development among citizens and local elected officials through training programs and awareness campaigns.
2. Move from legal texts to effective practical implementation by activating local councils and advisory committees with real citizen participation.
3. Expand the channels of dialogue between the state and civil society to ensure a lasting partnership and genuine participation in local decision-making.
4. Periodically review and update legal and institutional mechanisms to align with social and economic developments and to ensure their consistency with international human rights standards.

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