

## Community Participation and Urban Development: Evaluation of Community Participation practice in the Sudanese Capital region.

Bahreldin Ibrahim Zakaria  
Takashi Ariga

One of the main obstacle that hinder meaningful community participation in Sudan is the nature of the successive governments that rules the country since independence, as community participation is considered a “democratic process” the country has witness less than 11 years of multi-party democratic governance since independence in 1956, frequent military coup dominates the political sphere in the country, in contrast, citizens has “ *a strong sense of egalitarianism and a tradition of electing tribal and local notables, coupled with an easily observable insistence on verbal give-and-take regardless of rank or position of the authority* ” (P.K.bechtold,1990), yet, it was very hard for the two democratic periods in the country history to promote the concept of community involvement as they have implies a very central decision making process that makes it hard to monitor the very vast country , thus ,limiting it to a certain process of Squatter development and illegal settlements upgrading, or small scale citizens initiated practices that mostly goes to the level of “self-help” rather than community participation. This has created a situation that citizens has been denied access to planning process, allowing state to decides what is suitable for them.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the process of community participation in Sudan in legislative planning (planning acts and bylaws) and community level plans based on several projects studied to determine to what extend the concept of community participation has been used or abused in Sudanese planning practice. The methodology used in this paper is based on literature review backed-up with a fieldwork and semi-structured interviews with community leaders, local councillors and members of legislative council, the subject of this paper is the capital region of Sudan (Khartoum), three case studies that represents the local level at the city of Khartoum has been chosen for the study (Fig-01).



Figure 1: Location of the country, City of Khartoum and the Case-studies Areas.

### 1. Legislative Planning and Community Participation:

#### 1.1 Legislative Planning and Community Participation:

Planning legislation and planning laws in Sudan (which are mostly inherited or deprived from the British colonial administration) have very few contents that related to community



**1986 Spatial Planning Act:**

1986 planning acts has witness some minor changes towards involving citizens in the planning process, first this law has been enacted during the second democracy in the country, so the political environment was somehow assisting the act to be put forward. As a result of this act a new set of planning measure at both state and federal level has been introduced. For the first time the “Village re-planning Committee” has been established to be responsible of tackling the growing squatters settlements re-planning projects of the big cities like Khartoum and Port Sudan, this act also introduce the National Physical Planning Committee (NPPC) of which four of its members are nominated by the minster, this Act has also maintained the government responsibility of informing public about their intension to initiate plans.

**1994 Spatial Planning & Land Disposition Act:**

The 1994 Spatial Planning & Land Disposition have been widely looked at as a noticeable transformation in the legal reference of the Physical planning development in the country as it was the first act that combines together both Physical Planning and Land Administration Laws in a single legal Document, A part from increasing the number of (NPPC)<sup>ii</sup> to Five members (Also Nominated), 1994 act has initiated a good Moves in lowering the decision-making process to state level by requiring all states to form their own planning committees that are responsible of approving plans<sup>iii</sup>, this act also has given for the first time the state minster of planning the right to initiated re-planning projects in their areas without asking the state governor approval.

Planning acts and bylaws has always addressed the issue of community involvement in the Scope of “re-planning process”; it’s until 1994 (Spatial Planning & Land Disposition act) that C.P process has been apprehensively introduced to the sphere of urban areas Development. However, at both federal and state level, there is no legal procedure for neither direct nor representative citizens participation; a part from the four/five “Appointed” members of the planning committee (as Noted in 1985,1994 physical planning acts), “those members are mostly either previous Planning Practitioners or University Professors”. Yet, there is no legislation that solely dedicated to community Participation, the legal references of planning machines in Sudan has failed to addressed clearly the concept of C.P a part from the following four issues:

- The obligation of the government planning Institutions to show their interest to initiate Planning/re-planning projects to public through an appropriate media and/or public Gazette<sup>iv</sup>.
- Obligations of the government to publish approved plans for “re-planned” areas in public Gazettes accompanied by schematic layouts and details and information about where citizens can see the Approved plans<sup>v</sup>.
- The structure and members nomination procedure of the Planning / re-planning committee at national and local level<sup>vi</sup>.
- The right for the re-planning projects effected citizens to appeal<sup>vii</sup>.

The Sudanese planning laws and legislation therefore have apprehensively addressed the question of who participates, how and when in quite few of the previous planning acts, yet, the Focus of C.P articles in Sudanese Planning acts focuses more on Squatters settlements and re-planning issues through a very informative nature of involvement rather than urban areas development.

## 2. Community participation at the local level (Case Studies):

Three case studies (4 projects) has been chosen representing three different planning approach, a re-planning project, squatter settlement relocation project and a service provision projects for an already planned and newly re-planned area, the three case studies are Al-shigla (an old settlement in Omdurman), Ishash Fallata (a relocation project in Khartoum) and Cafoory project as been studied by (Hamid,G.M.2000) in Khartoum North.

### 2.1 Al-shigla Study Area:

Soon after the preparation of the Khartoum new master plan of 1990, several re-planning projects has been initiated at the capital region mainly under the supervision of the Village planning committee, yet its important to note that the result of many of these projects besides residents getting legal land ownership document “*is neatly demarcated streets and nothing more*”<sup>viii</sup> Al-shigla which is geographically composed of three physical segment “ east, wasat (Central) and west” is one of these areas that have been re-planned accordingly.



Figure 3: layout of Al-shigla Case study. Source: redrawn from the original Plan obtained from Survey Department, Omdurman Office.

Al-shigla is a very old village that is rapidly been swallowed into the urban fabric, lays in the west bank of the White Nile south Omdurman province, represents a natural extension of its urban neighbour (*Abu-Seid*). Extending some 189.6 Hectare with a very high density and poor living conditions. Al-shigla represents a homogeneous social group dominated by three tribes mainly (*Gawamaw, Kawahla and Gomoeia*). Located 8Km from the Centre of Khartoum, has given the area some importance especially that it lays along the arterial road to the new “under construction” international Airport, which divide the area into two main parts.

#### 2.1.1 Community participation in the re-planning Process<sup>ix</sup>:

Al-shigla area has gone under a re-planning process since 1992 (*approved 1994*) as part of the state of Khartoum efforts to cope with sprawl and squatters, the planning decision that was taken at the state level followed by forming a re-planning committee from both state and municipal planners (backed up with land surveyor, sociologist and councillors), this committee has then been backed up at the local level by the public committees and *Irefien*<sup>x</sup>. Community participation in the 1992 re-planning process at the area was conceived mainly in three forms of involvement including:

- "Nominated" members in the re-planning committee (As per 1950,1985 & 1994 planning act). To provide some technical and administrative advice.
- Popular committees (which is considered as citizens representatives as per 1989 and 1992 Popular committees law) to mobilize citizens and carry out administration work in regards to the planning committee.
- Irefien whom were the Primary reference for the re-planning committee to get decisions about who is liable to own a land.

The re-planning committee normally held face-to-face meetings with selected families that are affected by the re-planning to define landownership, no public meeting is conducted, Public committees (which were not elected) represents citizens at this process, many citizens has complained that public committees represents some individual interest and not necessary the public interests.

### **2.1.2 Community participation in citizens initiated after re-planning:**

Soon after the re-planning process is finished and the plan was approved in 1994, citizens has started mobilizing themselves to sustain a proper water and electricity service, a committee is then composed of some citizens (backed-up at later stage with public committees) to deal with the issues. The committee held a several meetings with the state planning authorities and the water department that results on an agreement that citizens will get a subsidized price for water pipes plus the necessary technical support. Citizens in return should bear the rest of the cost which has been divided among the households to be paid in instalments, electricity and water departments has supervised the Installation work that is done by a private contractors (with some financially incapable citizens as workers for the water service project), by the year 2003 the electricity provision project was finally finished followed by the water service. Soon after this project is completed and despite the fact that the 1994 plan was not satisfactory implemented, the land price has risen at the area, resulting in many people selling their lands and re-settling in other cheaper places.

### **2.2 *Ishash Fallata Case Study***

Ishash Fallata relocation project has started as part of the greater Khartoum Action program in the 1990s Master Plan developed by Doxiadis associates and A.Moneim Mustafa, the project has got a great importance as an important Urban renewal program since it was one of five pilot projects assigned to promote the urban development of the city of Khartoum,

The original settler of this neighbourhood descends from (Fallata tribe) which is originally from West Africa, Their old site of "Ishash Fallata" was located south of Khartoum race course, 5 kilometres from the city centre extending 77hectare, well serviced with transportation access and electricity, but with very vulnerable health and security conditions.

A limited participatory approach has been achieved during the relocation stage; citizens have been consulted and asked to contribute to the city planning department efforts through a relocation committee composed locally form planners, councillor, sociologist, NGOs, Irefien and Native Leaders, the area social structure "as much as Al-shigla" was very Homogeneous, resulting in strong social capital that makes it easy to reach a consensus among citizens. Many local /international NGOs and research institutions were either involved directly in the project or indirectly through frequent advices as part of relocation committee. Popular committees have no role in this specific project.

Citizens with the assistance of the committee members has disassemble their houses, taking the parts that can be used in their new neighbourhoods, NGOs were involved in teaching citizens some Various low-cost construction techniques, although citizens has not participated in the plan making process of their new homes, the project has resulted in a surprisingly peaceful relocation process, the new area was named by citizens as “*Al-wazeer Dagas*” showing not their satisfaction but also their surprise that the process was so smooth.

### **2.3 *Cafoory Case Study:***

The third case study, which was explained by (HAMID.G.M 2000) is Cafoory area in Khartoum north. Unlike the first two Cases, this area has a higher income groups and relatively higher level of education among citizens, the area thus is classified as a second and first class residential area according the country land subdivision structure.

(HAMID.G.M 2000), has provided the example of community initiated project in the sphere of legislative planning in Cafoory area, which is originally an agricultural land in Khartoum, covered by a land readjustment scheme, it has then been classified as a residential area. According to the readjustment process the government has to provide basic services and infrastructure to the land and sells it in relatively higher prices than the market, and then the profit is divided between the original landowners and the investor (Government). However, Practice has shown that the government mostly failed to provide the land with neither the infrastructure nor the basic services, even though those lands are always rapidly sold out due to the high land demands.

Having suffered from lack of water, citizens (who has formed some sort of committee) With the assistance of some volunteered engineers (some are from the water Department) has formed proposal of implementing a private water service system of 24 Km lengths of pipeline, two water wells and a 5000-gallon water Tank. Citizens groups has contacted the respective government authorities (State level) which accordingly provided them with some technical assistance the cost of the network installation has been divided by the households of the area, Later the water department engineers supervised the installation of the pipe lines to insure it fits their specifications which will make it easy for the water department to mange and administered the network after installation, the project finished after six months, and the water department has taken over the administration soon after that ,the project has also been looked at as and important project that has been inaugurated by the state Governor.

## **3. Discussions and arguments**

### **3.1 *How participation is achieved in the three case studies;***

To assess how participation is being done in these three project we looked at four evaluation criteria shown in Fig.04 that are based on both interview results (al-shigla and ishash fallata) and literature review (Cafoory).

	Evaluation Criteria																				
	Stakeholders Involved (Who Participate)					Stage of Citizen Involvement				Role In Participation			Method of Participation								
	Planners	Bureaucrats	Community	Popular Committees	NGOs /CPOS	Traditional/Tribal Leaders	Project Initiation	Objective Definition	Project Plan Making	Project Implementation	Project Monitoring	No Role	Receipt	Source of Information	Participant	In Control	Sharing Cost/Asset	Workmanship	Sharing Expertise /Ideas	Taking Decisions	Being Informed
Al-shigla Re-planning	●	●	○	◐	-	○	-	-	-	◐	(N/A)	●	●	◐	○	-	●	◐	○	-	●
Al-shigla Service Provision	◐	●	○	◐	-	○	●	●	-	●	-	-	○	◐	◐	-	●	◐	○	-	●
Ishash Fallatta Relocation	●	●	◐	(N/A)	◐	◐	-	-	◐	-	●	●	●	○	-	◐	○	○	-	●	
Cafoory Service Provisison	●	●	●	-	-	-	●	●	○	◐	-	-	○	◐	●	-	●	△	◐	○	○

Figure 4: how participation is achieved in the three case studies (4 projects).

### 3.1.1 Who’s involved in the planning process?

The diagram shows that in the three case studies bureaucrats and planners dominates the planning process, community has some influence in case of community initiated services projects (Al-shigla and Cafoory) especially at the early stages of project (project initiation and objective definition). Popular committees have started to show up as an important player in al-shigla project (that was very soon after P.C were officially introduce in 1989). Traditional leaders from the other hand generally seem to have a very poor role in the participation process a part from ishash fallata relocation project.

### 3.1.2 Stage of citizen’s participation:

The diagram also shows that participation in project initiation and objectives definition stages of government-initiated projects (Re-planning of al-shigla and relocation of ishash fallata) doesn’t exist. Plan implementation is the planning stage that is favoured with most of the participation efforts in all the four projects types studied. Project monitoring and of course plan making are actually the sole responsibility of the planning institution. Yet its interesting to see that Cafoory project has a relatively higher level of participation in plan making, this is basically due to that some engineers from within the community participated in the first feasibility study of the project (Hamid.G.M.2000), (Bhattacharyya.2006) argument of that literacy and education increases the quality of participation seems to be evident here.

### 3.1.3 Citizens Role in Participation:

In most of the case studies the role of citizens in the participation process is mostly seen as a receipt of a product that is being planned by an outsider or a source of information for planners and bureaucrats, citizens initiated project has slightly higher value of citizens participation, yet, its obvious that citizens has no control over project in their local communities including the ones that are initiated and financed by them, accordingly citizens are totally excluded from the governance of local projects which always goes back to government institutions.

### 3.1.4 Method of participation:

Three forms of participation methods seem to dominate citizen’s involvement, these are sharing project cost, workmanship (physical participation) and of course being informed



about the project as required by Town re-planning act of 1950 and 1994 physical planning act. Again Cafoory comes out as the project that has more varieties of participation method and that is basically due to that citizens representative have some competence with planners. However it's obvious then that the least participation method used was to allow citizens to take decisions. Decision-making about projects that affect citizens are always the responsibility of the state.

As (Fig.04) has generally shows how C.P is accomplished in the three case studies, it fails to show the relationship between participation level and project stages, which have been explained in (Fig.05) that shows the plan-making stage and monitoring are the stage that gets the lowest level of participation, a noticeable increase on the participation In project implementation in all case studies is evident here, this strongly shows that participation in government-initiated plans (Al-shigla & ishash Fallata) is very much implementation-oriented. project monitoring is always the responsibility of the government institutions.

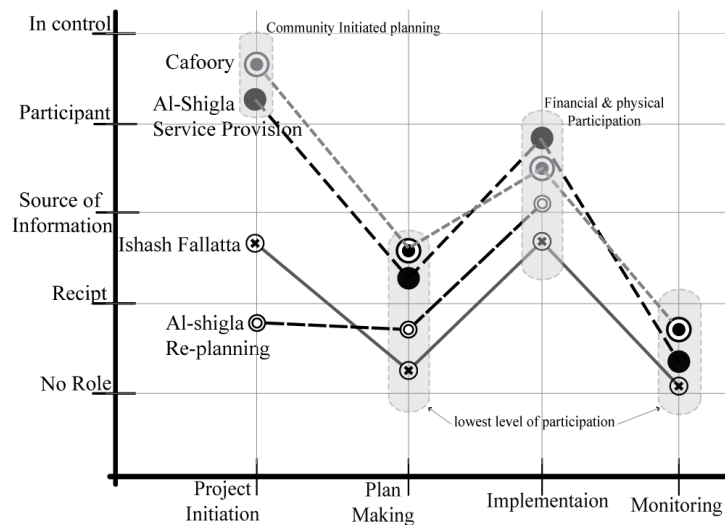


Figure 5: level of participation in relation to participation stages in the three case studies.

#### 4. Findings and conclusions:

Generally speaking, The process of C.P in the Sudanese capital region seems as if the government is taking the advantage of people as a source of funds and cheap labour for projects that serves them without actually involve them in the decision-making (as was shown in the example of al-shigla, ishash fallata and Cafoory). Khartoum state evaluation program of the National Comprehensive Strategy (NCS 1992-2002) has also supported this as it has shown that (55% to 93%) of cost of projects implemented during this period was being covered by citizens (see Kafeel, 2001), yet, Although NCS calls for involving citizens "community must be included to decide upon their planning priorities, plan implementation, housing project, public building provision, public space development and greening" (Government of Sudan, 1992), yet, practices in the projects studied here shows citizens has limited access to decision-making.

Lack of comprehensive, approved and Binding plans for the city of Khartoum at both local and state level from the other hand is one of the drawback of the city participation practices, uncertainty and fear of planning project delay due to the lack of comprehensive plans might force planners/politicians to take decisions immediately without further consultation, this "Re-active" planning approach seems to be preferred by planner when comparing it with participatory planning in terms of financial and time resources. The case of



ishash fallata had shown that when a project is being conducted as part of an approved plan (in this case Khartoum Structure plan of 1990) its chances to get a large spectrum of stakeholders involved (city planners, politicians, community leaders, NGOs CPOs and research institutes) is much higher.

Planning acts/laws from the other hand, although in principle requires some sort of C.P Measures to be taken, yet, these measures has a very informative nature. Citizens right to appeal against re-planning committee decisions that has been granted to them by planning acts is not structurally supported, the local administration department of al-shigla for instance has no office that accept citizens appeals, a former councillor has noted that "citizens kept complaining that their complaints has not get any attention from neither decision-makers nor the planners"<sup>xi</sup>.

It's then necessarily that certain policies and capacity building strategies to be set for an effective community participation in the capital region especially in the recently booming and rapidly growing urban development projects, It's also important to insure that citizens voices are being heard either directly or through their "elected" representatives to insure that they speaks for the community and not for themselves (as was shown in al-shigla).

In conclusion, Citizens initiated project in al-shigla and Cafoory despite their relatively small scale, but they have very clear and shared Goals among various participants these two elements are very essential for successful participation.

## References

Bhattacharyya ,R (2006). *Qualitative Participation and Social harmony: A study of the literacy movement*. Conference of the (NAPSIPAG) Proceedings. PP.40-56. Beijing; NAPSIPAG.

Government of Sudan (1992). *National Comprehensive Strategy (1992-2002)*. Vol. 01. GOS.

HAMID.G.M (2000). *Local Level Authorities and Local Action in Creator Khartoum, Sudan*, Population Council Regional Papers 2000 No.47.

Kafeel,M. Abdella (2001). *The role of Voluntarily self-help efforts in Municipal Projects (Khartoum State Experience 1991-1999)*, Development and planning of local Financial resources Forum, Arab Urban development Institute, Riyadh-Saudi Arabia (In Arabic.).

P.K.Bechtold(1990) "*More turbulence in Sudan: A new Politics this time?*" Middle east Journal, Vol.44,4, pp.579-595.

---

<sup>i</sup> Sort of explanations of federal and state level planning acts at the local level.

<sup>ii</sup> The NPPC has been renamed by 1994 planning law as National Council of Physical Planning (NCPP).

- iii According to the same law, the state planning committees should also form Municipal planning committees for easy decision-making mechanism.
- iv Lands Settlement and Registration Act, 1925, article 19-c -Town Re-planning Act 1950, Article 3 & 9 - Physical planning Act 1985,Article 7- Physical Planning Act 1994,Article 12 and 19.
- v Town re-planning act of 1950 and1985.
- vi Town re-planning act 1950,Article 12; Town Planning Act 1985,Article 5-1; Physical planning 1994,Article 4-E & 27.
- vii Town re-planning act 1950,Article 4 & 22Physical planning act 1994,Article 21 and 28.
- viii Agnès de Geoffroy (2005). *IDPs and urban planning in Khartoum*. FMReview .No.24.Nov.2005.
- ix The 1994 approved plan of Al-shigla has not yet been completely implemented up to the time that this paper was written.
- x Old people that are known for their wisdom and knowledge about the community.
- xi Personal Interview with A. Al-Nasri (Former Councillor in Al-shigla)