

A Framework for an Effective Public Participation Process in the Urban Development of City Centers – the Case of Alexandria, Egypt

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1 ABSTRACT

In the past half-century, researchers started paying attention to enhancing the performance of urban spaces. Their perception of performance comprised urban climate changes, space synthesis, economic performance, and enhancing the quality of life in spaces. However, it has been agreed that Good Governance(GG) is the key to achieving any of the previously mentioned enhancement projects. Good Governance(GG) pillars ensures the participation of the public.

Public participation is a cornerstone in any planning process. Nevertheless, the way in which the participation practices are accomplished guarantees its effectiveness as a planning tool. In these regards, Good Governance (GG) stands as a keyword. Having good governance allows citizens to participate freely in development projects, ensuring the deep fulfillment of users' needs, and the efficient use of city resources and assets.

This paper proposes a framework for effective public participation based on Good Governance (GG) understandings. Considering the implementation challenges in different conditions, it focuses on the third world countries and Egypt in particular. It identifies the keys to a successful participation process by correlating effective participation practices to the levels of participation, types of stakeholders, the stages of urban development, the city systems, and the participation process. Finally, this paper validates the proposed framework by analyzing the Elkhaleidin garden re-development project, one of the city center revitalization projects in the city of Alexandria, Egypt.

Keywords: stakeholders, participation, third world countries, urban development, governance

2 INTRODUCTION

Many cases considers governance as a separate element from governments, while in others, governance is equalized with the government. Therefore, a number of definitions were proposed to meet these interlocking interpretations. Keefer describes governance as no Sharpe definition would provide a convenient interpretation of the process (Peter Keefer, 2009).Weiss, on the other hand, lists seven different definitions of governance(Renée E. Weiss, 2000). The OECD compiles another seventeen definitions(OECD, 2009) describing governance as a political authority that exercises control over society. Not only do definitions vary across organizations, but they also vary within organizations. Even the World Bank has several definitions proposed.

A number of the above mentioned definitions include three words that demonstrate the governance system; Process, Power, and Management of the common affairs of a community (or a country, society, or nation). These numerous definitions suggest different criteria and standards against which the quality of governance can be assessed(Tosics, 2011). They claim that the presence of governance in a society is never enough to manage public affairs, good governance (GG) is a crucial element in the process. Good governance(GG) is a modern concept that does not only comprises the control of power and politics to control the public but incorporates all the authorities available(Rotberg, 2014). This new concept lies on three main pillars; Accountability, Participation, and Transparency.

Among the previously discussed pillars, public participation is considered the most accurate and illegible one to be used in such situations. Participation is widely considered to improve the quality and effectiveness of decision-making(Enserink, Witteveen, & Lie, 2009). It is used in many life aspects, from environmental development over urban and regional planning to general polities. Although its importance remains massive, it's not widely popular to use in most countries. Public participation alone does not ensure good governance (GG) practice. Even though it faces some serious troubles and challenges, the best way to achieve its goals is by ensuring the effectiveness of the public participation process. Integrating Demand for Good Governance (DFGG) mechanisms into projects involves setting up systems to ensure that beneficiaries have a greater

voice in planning and that the project is downwardly accountable and responsive to their needs. It can be initiated and supported by government, citizens, or both.(Enserink et al., 2009).

This paper aims to study the effective public participation process in urban development projects, several researcher’s proposals are analysed leading to the formulation of a framework that facilitates the flow of the process. This framework encompass four stages of the planning process, however, only the first stage will be tested in this paper by comparing its results with an urban development case study in Alexandria, Egypt that took place two years ago and the project reopening was ten months ago.

3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK METHODOLOGY FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK (EPPF)

This section introduces the proposal’s theoretical framework. The framework decends from a3 combination of the concept of Hudson Smith and Wilcox. It includes four main elements; the levels of participation, stakeholders participating, communication tool, and stage of urban planning. The results produced four main participation templets for each of the stages of the planning.

3.1 Concept of the framework

Hudson Smith designed a matrix that links the levels of participation, forms of communications, addresses, and the communication tool(Hudson-smith, Evans, Batty, & Batty, 2002). Wilcox, a researcher, and planner submitted a matrix between the levels of participation, the phases of participation, and the stakeholders(Wilcox, Kean, Ritchie, Smith, & Wilcox, 1994). The proposed strategy combines the two strategies creating relationships between four elements by using the levels of participation as the link between the two matrixes. The levels of participation, the communication tool, the stakeholders participating, and the stages of the process became the parameters of the new approach proposed.

Wilcox studied the ladder of levels of participation and then added two other dimensions to the ladder. The phase or stage of participation and the fact that stakeholders may be at different levels or stages of participation(Wilcox et al., 1994). He proposed a set of questions that should help decide the approach:

Who are you? For example someone in a position of power controlling funds or other resources. Someone with influence because you are planning or managing a participation process. Someone with professional expertise or knowledge?



Figure 1: the proposal of Hudson, and Wilcox parameters. source, author.

What do you want to achieve by working in a participatory style? To try and develop plans that meet people’s expectations. To give people a say in the plans. To give people control over the solutions. Who will have the final say over decisions? Yourself. A management team. Everyone who gets involved. A political institution or other body.

How ready are people, and organizations, to work in a participatory way? Do they have the desire? Do they have the skills? Do they have the authority?

On the other hand, Hudson's matrix is based on the concept of interactive participation. He believes that the key to successful participation is using the proper communication tool. He even gives big attention to new technological participation tools. He proposes a matrix that connects the participation tools with the levels of participation. His main goal is to transform participation from passive to interactive (Hudson-Smith et al., 2002).

The framework fosters the concept of both Hudson, and Wilcox by combining them to create the relationship between the parameters. Different levels of participation are appropriate for different situations, at the same time there isn't one 'community' but many interests – or stakeholders – to consider. The process itself takes time could be months or even years, so the precision of who should be involved and when need to be as accurate as possible. To achieve the best results the participants must be informed clearly about the part they do in the process, in what stage of the planning process and how is the level of their participation and how to participate exactly.

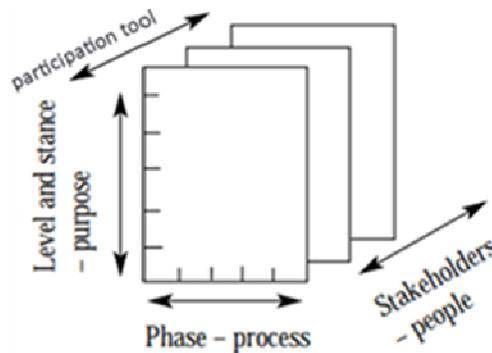


Figure 2: four-dimensional participation framework. Source, information based on Wilcox, 1994.

3.2 Parameters of the framework

3.2.1 Levels of public participation

The concept of involving the public in the development process is not new, a wide range of development agencies experimented with the people involvement technique. Many companies implement this technique to collect data, interactive analysis, develop power, and improve decision making. To achieve this goal, several researchers proposed their sets of participation levels. The typology used in this approach was proposed by Jules N. Petty in 1992. He divides the participation levels into seven different levels based on the extent of power given to the participants (Petty, 1994). The typology seemed very convenient to the study as the participants (stakeholders) were the key elements that link all the other cornerstones to one another.

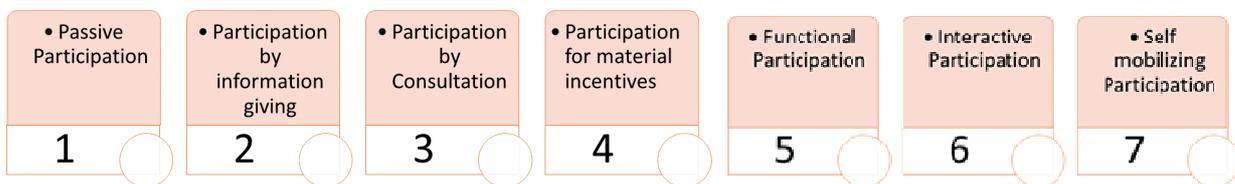


Figure 3: the levels of public participation according to Petty.

3.2.2 The Stakeholders' Involvement concerning the Levels of Participation.

The urban crisis center created a table for all possible stakeholders appropriate for every different context. The center also highlights that there is always a large number of stakeholders involved but that doesn't mean that it is needed to coordinate with all of them all of the time. The first category and the most important stage is The Affected Population. The affected population comprises many categories under its umbrella, they can consist of citizens of several cultural, social, ethnic, and economic backgrounds, and they can also be direct or indirect affected population. The urban crisis center recommends the participation of the affected population in all the stages of participation. The second category of stakeholders in the international actors and donors, such as UN bodies, international humanitarian organizations. The job of these commits varies

between the first four participation moods. National governments are also one of the important categories of participating stakeholders, they can be in form of planning offices, disaster management bodies, or specific ministries or departments. The next category is the local governments, which are the municipals, city councils, government institutions, their area of participation is mainly in the executive participation area. They're followed by the urban planning institutions, which could be specific government planning offices, their job in the planning and execution, and monitoring stages. The private sector is one of the acting stakeholders participating in the process, which could be any financial institution), large national businesses, and small local vendors. The private sector plays a big job in executing the projects, and planning stages. The next category is the community leader, this category is considered one of the most important categories of the stakeholders due to their ability to influence public opinions. The final category is civil society, local NGOs, community-based organizations, and non-state actors.

There is an ideal pattern for the participation of the stakeholders. This pattern was proposed by Zlatka Ljubimir, and the linkage between the levels of participation and the stakeholders was designed by Wilcox. However, this pattern does not happen in real-life participation projects because, as mentioned before, the city system controls the stakeholder's pattern of participation.

	passive participation	p. in information giving	p. by consultation	p. for material incentives	functional participation	interactive participation	self mobilization
Academia							
Affected population							
national government							
local government							
international actors and donurs							
urban planning institues							
private sector							
community leaders							
civil society							
NgGOs							

Table 1: interpretation of the participation of stakeholders in the ladder of participation of Petty.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN EGYPT

The Arab Republic of Egypt is a transcontinental nation in the northeast of Africa and southwest corner of Asia via the Sinai Peninsula. According to the latest constitution declared in 2014, The republic is a unitary country with a decentralized public participation pattern.

The Egyptian administration is designed on a vertical structure. Under Law 43 of 1979, local administration is divided into 3 subnational levels. At each level, there is a governing structure combining representative councils and government-appointed executive bodies headed by governors, district officers, and mayors, respectively. Governors are appointed by the president, and they, in turn, appoint subordinate executive officers. The backbone of the state apparatus runs downward from the Ministry of Interior through the governors' executive (Constitution of the arabe republic of egypt, 2012).

In 2012, The Shoura Council agreed on several key principles to guide reforms in local governance, including the devolution of authority from the central level to the local level, and the decentralization of taxation and budgetary authorities.

4.1 Effective public participation framework

The latest Egyptian Constitution (2014) states that "Citizen Participation in public life is a national duty," but limits participation as "the right to vote, run for elections, and express opinions in referendums, according to the provisions of the law." (Constitution of the arabe republic of egypt, 2014) This limited view of citizen participation is debatable since electoral politics and referendums launched by the executive branch will not be enough to absorb the pent-up and ongoing demands of the public for significant quality of life changes

and greater government responsiveness, accountability, and transparency (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2014).

4.2 Central level

At national level the Parliament adopts laws setting out the allocations of local authorities and carries out a tight form of legislative, executive and taxation/budgetary oversight (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2013, 2014).

Parliamentary oversight:

The People's Assembly holds overriding powers over the local councils:

- Members of the People's Assembly have the right to audit popular council meetings, participate in debates, and ask questions, offer suggestions and request information.
- The Minister in charge of local administration is required to present an annual report to the President of the People's Assembly on the activities and accomplishments of the local popular councils.
- The Assembly can take the form of a commission in charge of evaluating the activities and accomplishments of each local unit.

4.3 Executive oversight

Central authorities have the responsibility and power to create and disband local authorities. Irrespective of the established principle of electing local council, de facto "the possibility of nominating particular members – by central authorities – has not been excluded".

The Governors are appointed by the President of the Republic. The nomination of mayors and heads of urban subdivisions, as well as changes and transfers within or between local authorities, are carried out upon decision of the Prime Minister, with the agreement of the Governors in question.

4.4 Regional level

Law 475 of 1977 also divided the Republic into 7 economic regions without any administrative/political function. At regional level, within the governorates, the governors and the governorate local council have extensive powers over lower local councils especially at legislative and budgetary levels. In particular, they can approve or oppose decisions made by lower popular councils. Furthermore, governorate local popular councils have the power to stand in for local popular councils under the control of the governorate for projects that councils are unable to carry out themselves. As for financial issues, the Governor's approval is required for any taxes that a local town council plans to raise. They also have the power to oppose decisions made by local popular councils.

4.5 Local level

District local popular councils exercise oversight over the activities of local town and village councils within the district and can approve their decisions. They also have control over various local services covering more than one local unit within the district's framework.

Town popular councils: exercise powers of oversight over urban subdivision councils and guarantee coordination of their activities. They also control local services within the framework of the town or city's constituency. Urban subdivision popular councils have responsibilities and powers similar to those of town popular councils. The following tables propose a public participation pattern (based on the governance system of cities in Egypt previously mentioned) to ensure the effectiveness of the process, however, this paper will test the first table only.

in stage 1 : Initiation (assessment and analysis)							
	passive participation	p. in information giving	p. by conultation	p. for material incentives	functional participation	interactive participation	self mobilization
Academia			1				
Affected population							
national governement					1		
local governement							1
international actors and donurs		1					
urban planning institues			1				
private sector			1				
community leaders				1			
civil society				1			
NgGOs			1				

in stage 2 : Implement (design and monitoring)							
	passive participation	p. in information giving	p. by conultation	p. for material incentives	functional participation	interactive participation	self mobilization
Academia					1		
Affected population					1		
national governement						1	
local governement						1	
international actors and donurs			1				
urban planning institues					1		
private sector						1	
community leaders					1		
civil society					1		
NgGOs			1				

in stage 3 : Design and Planning (design and function)							
	passive participation	p. in information giving	p. by conultation	p. for material incentives	functional participation	interactive participation	self mobilization
Academia					1		
Affected population				1			
national governement				1			
local governement						1	
international actors and donurs			1				
urban planning institues					1		
private sector					1		
community leaders					1		
civil society					1		
NgGOs			1				

in stage 4 : Evaluation(evaluation and implementation)							
	passive participation	p. in information giving	p. by conultation	p. for material incentives	functional participation	interactive participation	self mobilization
Academia						1	
Affected population						1	
national governement						1	
local governement						1	
international actors and donurs						1	
urban planning institues						1	
private sector						1	
community leaders						1	
civil society						1	
NgGOs						1	

Table 2: effective public participation framework.

4.6 The re-development project of Elkhaleidin Garden

The khaleidin Garden is located in front of the Mosque of the Leader Ibrahim, and is slightly higher than the surface of the ground, including a garage with its area below, and the garden includes a group of statues of influential Egyptian figures, such as Sayed Darwish, pioneer of Arab music, Abdullah Al-Nadim, the

preacher of the Arab revolution, Hassan Iskandarani, nicknamed Amir The seas, and some other national symbols, whose names are engraved on marble pieces, have been extracted from the garden.



Figure 4: Ariel photo of the garden. Source, (Yom sabe3, 2021)

The garden began to deteriorate and the loss of its grass-planted ground, beginning with the January 2011 protests, as thousands flocked to it, despite the danger it poses to them with the increasing numbers, to erode its columns without any of them or those in charge of care.

Negligence struck the Immortals Park, which is part of the square of the Leader Ibrahim Mosque in central Alexandria, where it became a neglected garden for more than 10 years, despite its location in the middle of the Alexandria Corniche, and a garage under the garden turned into a den for outlaws, criminals and drug users at night.

Users and citizens began complaining about the situation of the garden, and years after, the government responded and the development project took place. The participation of the public need to be present in all of the development stages. However, this paper investigates the participation of the public in the first stage only.

5 DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

Due to the complex and diverse themes of the research, data for this research were collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Field observations, case study analysis, interviews and mixed questionnaires survey were used to collect the relative data.

Interviews with local residents, users and passing by persons took place while investigating the area.

The following questions were asked;

- Did you complained about the situation of this garden before(Complaint official filing/ social media)
- Were you informed/invited to any session hosted by your governor/ district depute introducing any project in your city?
- Did you propose any ideas to renovate or use the garden before?

An 8 minutes questionnaire was also published on all social media platforms to investigates the participation of the public . The form of the question may be either closed ended format or open ended format. Therefore, due to research's nature and intended goals, structured questionnaire was designed with mixed questions. The questionnaire into five main sections; this first section is dedicated mainly to know more details about the participant's lifestyle and background. The second section investigates the participant's relationship with the city system and the local governance system. The third section discuss the participation of the users in the planning stages of the process. The fourth evaluates the participant's experience in the project. The fifth and final stage investigate the respondent's perception of public participation.

The target respondents are people from the eight mentioned categories in the questionnaire. For this questionnaire to success, users form all of the eight categories need to participate and take this questionnaire. The eight categories are (urban planning institutes, affected population, national government, local government, participation moderator, academic researcher, civil society, private sector).

5.1 The renovation project

Last year(2020), the people of Mahatet El Raml, woke up a day on heavy voices of demolition. The responsables responded to the needs of the citizens. The development work was being carried out at the

highest level, and it contains the reopening of the garage to include two floors to accommodate 300 cars and a chain of stores, in addition to developing the upper yard, preserving statues, developing lighting systems, as well as adding many services to citizens and setting up a maintenance system to continue with us after.

The roof opposite the garage was a garden and then began to collapse from neglect, and the courtyard was replaced by a theater with cafeterias, and this was done two years ago, and the truth is that the people suffered from the control of thugs and street vendors, and with the darkness of the streets we see soil ready to receive drug users and a hotbed Street children who are exploiting the garden, besides the neglect that imposed control on the garden, but the governorate sought to develop it away from the control of these people, to open the mall and rent cafeterias towards the sea. As for the part of the garden and the seating of passers-by, some stairs resemble the Roman Theater as seating terraces, and I don't think it will be closed in the face of overpowering.



Figure 5: The location of Elkhaleidin garden after development project.

As previously mentioned, the feedback was collected using two methods, the one to one interviews, and the survey feedbacks. The interviews were conducted with users, administration, and shop keepers of the area.

5.2 Interviews feedbacks

The head of a central district indicated that the garage, in its current state, is not suitable for use, due to the weakness of the facilities because it is ramshackle, and a committee has been formed to study the construction situation of the garage and the committee's report recommended restoring the garage, which will cost the governorate more than demolishing and rebuilding it, what the current governor, Muhammad Abd, called Al-Zahir calls for a halt to restoration work and a comprehensive plan for the area as a whole.

Citizens, users, and even visitors to the place started raising complaints. "Unfortunately, it became a shelter for thugs and so-called revolutionaries until W.H.O. became deserted and permissible for thieves, pimps and girls of the night. Alas, I have lived near the mosque since 1958" (said a citizen living in the area)

"This garden and this project is a complete failure, even though its place is beautiful and promising, and unfortunately the place is not exploited at all "(an affected).

One of the interviews held was with an architect from the design team of the project who states that the design process did not take much time because they did not have any feedbacks from the public, and that they only anticipated their design vision.

Survey feedbacks:

500 citizens were asked 30 questions divided into 5 main categories: the first one for general informations, the second category maps the relationship between citizens and government, the third section investigates the public participation of users in the development project, the fourth part allows the citizens to evaluate the project, and the fifth and final one investigates the citizen perception of good governance. However, this paper will discuss the participation of public in the development project of the garden. The following tables presents statistical results of the participants responses. The survey was shared on surveymonkey platform, and it is available in the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CJPFV8S>



Figure 6: statistical review to the results of the survey’s responds (part 1).

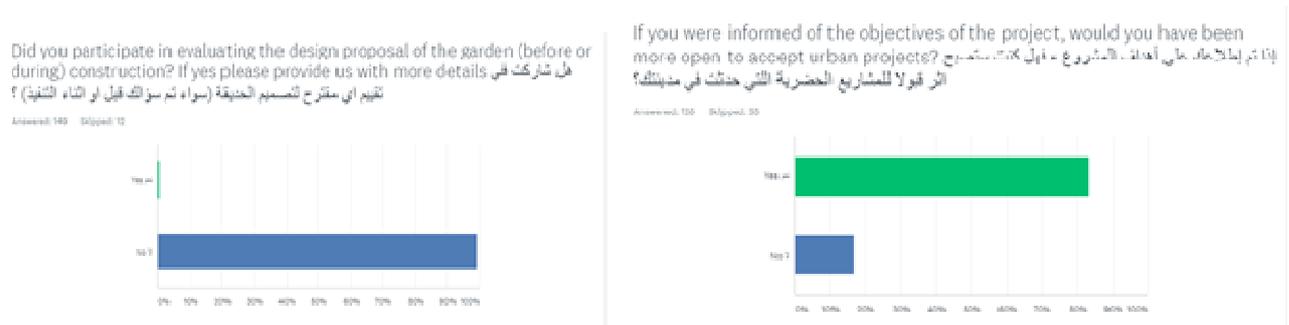


Figure 7: statistical review to the results of the survey’s responds (part 2).



Figure 8: statistical review to the results of the survey’s responds (part 3).

6 RESULTS

The results of the re-development project were divided between encouraging the new design and transformation and hating the outcome, the average rating of the project was 4.1 star (figure 8). Some citizens said “ The garden was destroyed and turned into cafeterias, and the people of Alexandria would not have an outlet because the cafes on the sea corniche occupied the public walkway and took the sidewalks for their benefit without supervision until it became a knot for the Alexandrian citizen. Painting the seats so that the majority do not sit in them and have to enter the exaggerated cafeterias.” While others were very happy with the results and enjoying how safe and clean the location became. Another citizen in Alexandria noted “The superiors will not let the people enjoy the development in the absence of oversight. It will not be in the interest of the simple citizen and not only in tourism development, as it does not increase his dissatisfaction, especially as the world is moving towards increasing green space.” One of the residents, said that successive cafes are being built and the features of the park are being blurred, and the statues have disappeared in the middle of the cafeteria buildings. There is a garden that the largest part was completely covered with "tiles", but restoring the heritage form is more important than creating an income or financial return for the governorate.

Participants of the survey were asked if they agree with the development project or they would prefer other project in the exact same location. Results were fascinating; only 32.47% of the total number of the participants were satisfied with the outcome that came out of the development project (transforming the garden into a food court) while 67.33% did not like the project and did not agree with the importance of creating a new food court in the city. 46.11% of the participants proposed altumitve projects that in their

opinion they need more than the food court. 70% of the participants agreed on renovating the garden while living it as it is (a public garden), others proposed projects like open auditorium, cultural center, towers, and museums. Knowing that 77.75% of the total number of the survey’s participants answered this question.

The participants were also asked if they have the chance to participate will they be opened to participate or not, 76.97% of the total number of participants will participate, 21.71% will still stick to not participating. Some participants even commented “ yes, because it took my needs and aspiration into consideration, and now I feel as a part of this”. Knowing that 78% of the total number of the survey’s participants answered this question.

Participants were also asked if they would be more acceptable of the urban projects fostered by the governments if they were aware of the results. The results show that knowing the goals of the project has increased the rate of acceptance to 83.13% to 16.58 % who will not accept the projects even if they know the goals. However, 2.02% of the respondents noted that they will not link their acceptance with knowing the goals, but the quality of the goal and how helpful it is to the citizens. Knowing that only 60% of the total number of the survey’s participants answered this question.

When comparing the framework proposed with the participation pattern that actually happened in the situation (the green slots present the actual participation pattern while the orange slots present the framework proposed), we can see that not all the stakeholders were involved in the process. Academia was just used as information givers. The affected population was also information givers, they only provided the authorities with complaints explaining the situation. The national government was consultant to the process while the local government was controlling the process. The rest of the stakeholders were not participants in this process.

The results of both; the interviews, and the survey concludes that the system is on the right track but it is on the first step to a successful effective public participation. The empowerment that was given to the local government over the central government in this project indicated a promising decentralized government. Presenting an area for the Academic field is a new approach, even though their participation was not at the expected level. Responding to the complaints of the affected population is also considered a type of participation. The urban planning institute is usually a part of any development project in the city but in this situation they were not part of this process. The private sector only participated as contractors and cafes owner but they were not part of the planning process. Community leaders, NGOs, civil society, and international actors and donors were not a part of this project even though they were recommended by the framework.

in stage 1 : Initiation (assessment and analysis)

	passive participation	p. in information giving	p. by consultation	p. for material incentives	functional participation	interactive participation	self mobilization
Academia			1				
Affected population							
national government					1		
local government							1
international actors and donors		1					
urban planning institutes			1				
private sector			1				
community leaders				1			
civil society				1			
NgGOs			1				

Table 3: comparison between what the framework proposal and the actual participation pattern.

7 FURTHER RESEARCH

Completing the investigation process requires more interviews with the current users, questionnaires to gather more detailed information about the participation process of this project. The investigation also needs to compare the participation process in the four stages of planning not only the first stage. The study also needs investigating similar participation of citizens in urban projects in unitary decentralized countries.

8 CONCLUSION

The paper presents an effective public participation framework for the stakeholders to participate in the decisions concerning their own cities. It proposes change conjointly with the governance system. The unitary system imposes different participation pattern than the federal system. This proposal connects the public participation levels with the stakeholders, the communication tool, and the urban development stages. The factors produce four tables, each table presents a development stage (assessment, design, monitoring , and evaluation). Each table proposes a relationship between the levels of participation, stakeholders participating and propose an effective public participation tool.

When applying the framework on the case of Alexandria, Egypt, the framework was compared with the actual situation that is happening now. This paper only compared the first table of the framework (the data collection stage) with what happened in the data collection stage in Elkhaleidin garden case. The results indicates promising development process in Egypt's system. However, further research will provide more details about the process of public participation in the cities of Egypt and how to modify the current situation to ensure more effective public participation practice.

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