

Neighbouring and Sense of Community in Participatory Social Housing Estates in Algeria

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Abstract : Algerian cities experienced after the independence of the country a rapid urbanisation process fostered by population growth. In order to deal with the severe housing shortage resulted, large social public housing programs totally financed by the government were launched across the country during the eighty. Unfortunately, the standardized multistory buildings produced underwent intense deterioration and turned very quickly after their occupancy into sources of nuisance and distress. The government adopted a new housing policy in 2000, which aims to diversify housing types according to household incomes and encourage access to housing property. The model of participatory social housing emerged; it was designed for the intermediate groups, allowing them to benefit from direct financial aid and to borrow credit from banks in order to purchase their dwellings. Twenty years afterward, no assessment to date has been established to evaluate the real impact of such a strategy. The aim of this paper is to examine whether this type of housing helped to stimulate a participative dynamism among its occupants to strengthen their commitment, their involvement in the maintenance and keeping of their surroundings. For the purpose of the study, we focus our attention on various participatory social housing settlements in Batna and Biskra, two medium-sized cities in eastern Algeria. The investigation is structured in various types of analysis: a spatial analysis, observations, interviews with public authorities representatives, chief planners, and experts. In addition to this, informal interviews with occupants of various participatory social housing settlements were arranged to collect qualitative data. Occupants were asked open questions focusing on their daily life and practices in order to examine their degree of involvement in their neighbourhood's life.

Keywords : participatory social housing, rental social housing, involvement, maintenance, social interactions, community life

Conference Title : ICBAU 2024 : International Conference on Building, Architecture and Urbanism

Conference Location : Barcelona, Spain

Conference Dates : October 24-25, 2024