

CITIZENS' INVOLVEMENT IN MANAGING LOCAL COUNCILS

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Abstract:

Successive national constitutions, much like international ones, have emphasized the importance of participatory democracy. This principle emphasizes fostering citizen engagement in local decision-making by ensuring transparency in governance, alongside promoting effective democracy and active participation in the decision-making processes of the local council.

Although the Algerian constitution upholds this principle, especially with the constitutional amendments of 2016 and 2020 that strengthened it, numerous challenges persist. This includes poor practical implementation, insufficient legal safeguards for its enforcement, and citizens' reluctance to use this right.

Keywords: citizen, local council, participatory democracy, management.

INTRODUCTION:

Effective local governance is essential for sustainable development and the promotion of democratic practices at the community level. It relies on the active involvement of citizens, entrepreneurs, and civil society institutions in developing local public policies. This engagement plays a crucial role in diminishing the central authority at the local scale⁽¹⁾ and strengthening the principle of proximity to citizens in decision-making and its implementation.

To this end, the Algerian legislator has endeavored to establish a set of legal and institutional mechanisms that enable citizens to participate in the management of local public affairs, either directly or indirectly through the elected councils that represent them and express their aspirations. When an individual feels their active role in decision-making and implementation, their sense of belonging to their community is strengthened⁽²⁾ and His accountability towards it increased.

From this foundation, the importance of this subject arises as a key element of the state's initiatives to create local governance and participatory democracy, particularly considering the political and social changes that require increasing citizen involvement in public matters. Moreover, the significance rests in the crucial function that civil society can serve as a link between citizens and government, aiding in the attainment of sustainable local development and balancing the central authority with locally elected representatives.

Given this information, we raise the subsequent question:

Did the Algerian lawmaker manage to create a robust legal structure to guarantee citizen involvement in the administration of local councils?

This problematic raises multiple inquiries, among which we emphasize the following:

- What are the key types and methods of local involvement acknowledged by Algerian legislation?

(1)- Wafa Maaoui, *Rational Local Governance as a Mechanism for Local Development in Algeria*, Master Thesis, Hadj Lakhdar University, Batna, Algeria, 2010, p.31.

(2)- Wahida Bouraghda, *Human Rights and the Problem of the Dialectical Relationship between Rational Governance and Human Development*, Master Thesis, University of Ben Youssef Ben Khedda, Algiers, 2008, p.189.



- What part does civil society have in fostering this participation?
- Are legal texts implemented in real practices by local councils?

This research seeks to accomplish various goals, the most significant of which include:

- Emphasizing the legal structure regulating citizen involvement in the administration of local councils in Algeria.
- Highlighting the significance of participatory democracy as a means to promote effective local governance.
- Examining the function of civil society in promoting public involvement and decision-making within local settings.

We will seek to elucidate this by employing both descriptive and analytical approaches appropriate for examining this subject, by scrutinizing the pertinent legal and regulatory documents regarding citizen involvement in the administration of local councils, aiming to comprehend their substance and contrast it with actual practice.

The subject has been covered in the ensuing two sections:

Section One: Application of participatory democracy in the administration of the local councils

Section Two: Civil society as a basis for involvement in local decision-making

Section one: Application of participatory democracy in the administration of the local councils

The participatory vision broadens the areas of consultation and involvement to strengthen participatory democracy within all management institutions and levels. As a result, the use of participatory democracy has become more varied and widespread in local council management, with the goal of improving citizens' living conditions and enhancing the quality of services they receive.

1. The legal framework for participatory democracy

Elected councils, particularly local ones, are generally regarded as the natural framework for citizens to participate in managing public affairs.⁽¹⁾ They embody the Algerian state's slogan, "By the people, for the people." This is clearly reflected in the incorporation of the principle of participatory democracy within the municipal and provincial law, enabling citizens to take part in decision-making at the local level and to monitor their implementation.

1.1 The constitutional framework for participatory democracy

Successive Algerian constitutions have upheld the principle of citizen participation in public administration through their elected representatives within the framework of representative democracy.⁽²⁾ The constitutional amendments of 2016 and 2020 explicitly emphasized the dual nature of local democracy.

The principle of citizen participation in the context of participatory democracy, along with involvement in decision-making and project implementation at the local level, was explicitly recognized. The 2020 constitutional amendment highlighted the state's support for fostering participatory democracy within local communities. Article 16 of this Constitution sets forth the following provisions:

"The state is founded on principles of democratic representation, separation of powers, protection of rights and freedoms, and social justice".

The elected council serves as the framework through which the people express their will and oversee the work of public authorities.

The state promotes participatory democracy at the local community level, particularly through civil society".

(1)- Nour El-Houda Ibrahim, *Community Dialogue as a Decision-Making Mechanism (Local Councils as a Model)*, Egyptian General Book Authority, Egypt, 2016, p.11.

(2)- See Leila Ammour, *The Principle of Citizen Participation in the Management of Local Affairs*, PhD thesis, University of Larbi Ben M'hidi, Oum El Bouaghi, Algeria, 2021.

The text merely states the principle as a general rule without elaborating on the methods and forms of its implementation, except for the citizen's right to submit requests to the administration under Article 77 of the 2020 constitutional amendment. This is aimed at ensuring sound local public governance and strong citizen participation, which can enhance trust between citizens and their representatives.

1.2 The legislative framework for participatory democracy

Article 2 of Municipality Law N°.11-10 states that: "The municipality is the regional basis for decentralization, a place for exercising citizenship, and serves as a framework for citizen participation in the management of public affairs."

The third chapter of Municipality Law N°.11-10 entitled "Citizen Participation in Municipal Affairs," includes Articles 11, 12, 13, and 14, which provide opportunities for citizens to engage in local governance either directly or through committees' work.

According to the initial article of State (wilaya) Law No.12-07, "...its motto is by the people and for the people..." This indicates that the Local Communities Law has created opportunities for citizen involvement through different avenues.

2. Citizen participation through committees' work

The initial idea is that every committee member must belong to the local popular council. However, Article 36 of State (wilaya) Law N°.12-07 and Article 36 of Municipality Law No.11-10 permit the inclusion of additional members with specific expertise to fill skill gaps and enhance public involvement in the council's work.

This participation is optional and serves as an exception to seek guidance and leverage the knowledge of individuals who can offer valuable insights to the committee. These participants do not influence the council's processes or decisions.⁽¹⁾

The council's choice to request help from people beyond its members demonstrates the principle of participation, a crucial aspect of governance.⁽²⁾ This strategy allows community members to move from merely accepting information to engaging in active discussions and decision-making at both local and national levels. Their involvement at the local level ensures that the evaluations supporting different plans and programs are accurate.⁽³⁾

However, this participation is surrounded by a set of restrictions that practically render it non-existent. The most significant of these is granting the committee chair the authority to decide whether this participation will occur or not. It is an exceptional procedure that is solely at the discretion of the committee chair.

Additionally, there is a constraint regarding the expertise and competence of the individual whose consultation is permitted in the committee's work, as it is common to summon professionals in the committee's field.⁽⁴⁾ This practice diminishes the chances for citizens without any qualifications to participate and enhances the involvement of state agents, including officials and employees from public administrations.⁽⁵⁾

3. The citizen's direct participation in the conduct of the local council

According to Article 11 of Municipality Law N°.11-10, "The municipality establishes the institutional structure for implementing democracy at the local level and for managing neighborhoods..."

(1)- Ibid., p.102.

(2)- Ammar Boudiaf, *Explanation of the State (wilaya) Law*, First Edition, Bridges for Publishing and Distribution, 2012, p.218.

(3)- Wafa Maaoui, op.cit., p.5.

(4)- See: The minutes of the meeting of the Committee for the Construction and Housing Committee on August 18th, 2014, for the State (wilaya) Popular Council, Guelma, regarding the preparation of the third regular session of 2014.

(5)- Nadjla Bouchami, the Municipal People's Council under the Municipal Law N°.08-90- a tool of democracy: Principle and application, Master Thesis, University of Constantine, Algeria, 2007, p.103.

Local democracy is associated with efficient systems that enable citizens to oversee local public matters, which can only be realized if the municipality and province commit to a transparent approach concerning all municipal activities.

Effective management of local interests necessitates that residents of the municipality are kept informed about all decisions made by the popular council or the executive body at different stages. This should happen during the early discussions through the public nature of the meetings, and after a decision is reached, when it is put into action, by allowing access to local decisions.⁽¹⁾

2.1 The possibility of consulting citizens in local affairs

According to Article 13 of Municipality Law N°.11-10, "The President of the Municipal People's Council has the authority to request advisory support from any local individual, expert, or representative of a legally recognized local association whenever municipal matters necessitate it. This support should be based on their expertise or the nature of their work, contributing positively to the council or its committees."

This reflects the principle of local governance by involving citizens and civil society in the management of local issues.

2.2 The possibility of consulting citizens in local affairs

Citizens are consistently motivated to participate in local governance by the promise of access to information and transparency in administration.⁽²⁾ As a result, municipality law N°.11-10 and state (wilaya) law N°.12-07 have established a key principle for achieving transparent management of public interests: the public nature of council meetings.⁽³⁾

These meetings are an important avenue for citizens to engage directly with the activities of the popular council, with the goal of improving public oversight and ensuring transparency in the council's proceedings, which is a vital aspect of governance.⁽⁴⁾ However, the lawmaker has imposed several restrictions on this principle, making it more of a formal⁽⁵⁾ requirement than a practical reality.

a- Guarantees for the openness of the People's Council hearings

The local popular council holds open sessions for the public to discuss issues related to the municipality and state (wilaya) powers. Citizens are welcome to attend these sessions and watch all parts of the meeting from a designated area in the deliberation hall, as long as there are seats available.

The audience must remain quiet during the session and cannot take part in discussions or voting.⁽⁶⁾

While it is essential for the legislator to establish the principle of public sessions for the council, it is even more vital to ensure that there are guarantees for its effective execution.

Notifying citizens about the date and agenda of meetings is essential for ensuring the public nature of these sessions, as it enables them to participate in council sessions. According to Article 18 of Law N°.12-07, "The session agenda must be displayed right after the members of the provincial people's council are summoned, at the entrance of the deliberation room and in specific public information locations, especially online, as well as at the provincial headquarters and the associated municipalities."⁽⁷⁾

(1)- Ibid., p.143.

(2)- Omar Boubras, *The Relationship of the Municipal Administration to the Municipal People's Assembly*, Master Thesis, University of Algiers 3, 2012, p.73.

(3)- Article 26 of the Municipality Law & Article 26 of the State (wilaya) Law.

(4)- Ammar Boudiaf, op.cit., p.221.

(5)- Nadjla Bouchami, op.cit., p.143.

(6)- Articles 13 to 16 of Executive Decree N°.13-105 of 05 Jumada Al-Awal in 1434 corresponding to March 17th, 2013, which includes the rule of procedure of municipal popular council, JRJ 15, dated March 17th, 2013.

(7)- Article 22 of municipality law N°.11-10.

The aim of holding public council sessions is to enable as many local residents as possible to participate, promoting transparency and visibility of the council's activities to the community. This can be accomplished by offering large venues that can host all participants. If the council only has a small meeting room, attendance will inevitably be restricted because there won't be enough space for everyone to attend the meeting.⁽¹⁾

b- Restrictiobs on the openness of the Council's hearings

The rule of openness of hearings of the council are subject to two limitations: the council's ability to conduct a private session and the chairperson's power to oversee and arrange the meeting.

- The Council's right to hold a closed session

In a notable exception to the standard practice of public sessions, the council has the authority to choose to meet in a closed session. According to Article 26 of the State Law, the council can conduct a closed session when dealing with disciplinary issues involving its members and when reviewing natural and technological disasters. Additionally, Article 26 of the Municipality Law allows for closed sessions when discussing disciplinary matters concerning elected officials and when addressing topics related to public order.

The legislator's endorsement for the possibility of holding closed council meetings sharply contradicts his vision of the local council as a space for citizen engagement in governance and public affairs management. Additionally, it represents a clear violation of public oversight, as it removes citizens' vital role in monitoring activities.

This concern becomes particularly significant when dealing with issues related to maintaining public order, as the council is granted more freedom to hold closed sessions, given that public order covers a broad and unclear area.⁽²⁾

- The president's powers to manage and organize the session

The local government regulations allow the council president to remove any non-elected person who disturbs the orderly proceedings of the meeting after giving a warning,⁽³⁾ in order to preserve decorum.

Public sessions play a vital role in the governance of local councils, ensuring transparency and democratic management of local public interests. They also serve as a significant means for citizens to engage directly in the activities of the municipal council.

However, these sessions have not been given the attention they deserve by lawmakers. While the local government law acknowledges this principle, it fails to adequately regulate it or offer sufficient guarantees for its execution.

2.3 The Generality of the Council's deliberations and decisions

Simply allowing citizens into deliberation halls is not enough to create transparent governance; it needs to be supported by thorough information regarding all actions of the local council and the executive body. This enables citizens to participate in decision-making and oversee their elected officials. Information can be shared in different ways, such as by publishing deliberations and granting citizens access to relevant documents.

a- Reviewing the deliberations of the local council

Within eight days after the resolution is officially approved and takes effect, the law requires a summary of the resolution to be published in specific public information locations, at the state headquarters and the municipalities it governs, as well as in areas designated for posters and public notices, and through other media channels,⁽⁴⁾ allowing public authorities to carry out their oversight duties. However, the publication of the session minutes typically does not engage

(1)- Nadjla Bouchami, *op.cit.*, p.148.

(2)- Nadjla Bouchami, *Ibid.*, p.148.

(3)- Article 27 of the Municipality Law & Article 27 of the State (wilaya) Law.

(4)- Article 30 of the Municipality Law & Article 31 of the State (wilaya) Law.

citizens, as it is a formal process that is presented succinctly and uses complicated legal terminology.⁽¹⁾

All citizens have the right to view the minutes of the council's deliberations in person and can request a copy for a fee.⁽²⁾ These minutes act as the council's record, as the session secretary documents everything that happens during the meeting word-for-word, without any alterations.

b- Reviewing municipal decisions

Along with the right to access deliberations, the law provides citizens with the right to see decisions. Decisions cover a wider range than deliberations, as they can be made by the council president or the governor and can be individual, collective, or regulatory in nature.⁽³⁾

Acknowledging the municipality law that provides citizens with the right to information is the initial step in promoting good governance in the local council.⁽⁴⁾ To genuinely reach this objective, residents of the municipality need to actively and effectively use their right to information by:

- Enhancing and diversifying media: Local administration must extend beyond its headquarters and bulletin boards to reach citizens in their environments, utilizing all available spaces such as youth centers and cultural houses. It is essential to inform citizens about local council activities and promote a culture of citizenship and participation, while also leveraging all modern technologies to keep citizens informed.

- Streamlining administrative procedures that enable citizens to access the information they seek is crucial. The prevailing notion of professional secrecy within Algerian administration has created barriers to the implementation of media freedom and the citizen's right to obtain desired documents. Therefore, it is not enough to merely promote the principle of transparency in public administration; it is even more important to foster a culture of transparency and encourage a mindset that embraces democratic practices.

- Simplifying the language used in documents intended to inform citizens is necessary, as these documents often employ technical jargon and legalistic language that can deter citizens from engaging with them. Thus, it is imperative to use clear and straightforward language that is easily understood by the majority of citizens, regardless of their educational backgrounds.

- The municipality and the state (wilaya) should not limit themselves to merely publishing deliberations and decisions; they must also inform citizens about all their achievements, ongoing projects, future initiatives, and the challenges they face.⁽⁵⁾

Section two: Civil society as a framework for participation in local decision-making

The historical experiences of the Algerian people during the colonial era motivated them to seek a brighter future marked by justice and equality.

Achieving this goal requires the active participation of civil society in the execution, oversight, and direction of different development initiatives and strategies.⁽⁶⁾

In recent years, the concept of civil society has emerged as a prominent topic of discussion in academic, political, and social spheres, both domestically and globally, because of its significant influence in conjunction with the state in shaping societal and governmental institutions.

In Algeria, the introduction of the term "civil society" is linked to the political system's transition to pluralism after the constitutional changes made in 1989 and 1996.⁽⁷⁾ These amendments permitted

(1)- Nadjla Bouchami, Ibid., p.152.

(2)- Article 14 of the Municipality Law & Article 31 of the State (wilaya) Law.

(3)- Nadjla Bouchami, Ibid., p.153.

(4)- Sabrina Adjabi, *Governance of Elected Councils (Participation in The Algerian Legislation)*, Dar Al-Jami'a Al-Jadida, Azbartiya, Alexandria, Egypt, 2016, p.9 and beyond.

(5)- Nadjla Bouchami, Ibid., p.153.

(6)- Chouih Bin Othman, *The Role of Local Communities in Local Development - A Case Study of the Municipality* - , Master's thesis, Abu Bakr Belkaid University, Tlemcen, Algeria, 2011, p.78.

the formation of associations with various political, cultural, and social focuses, along with independent newspapers and labor unions.⁽¹⁾

Civil society is considered a key measure of governance, and nearly every global report emphasizes its importance because of the connections it can forge with international organizations, which in turn enhances governance standards.⁽²⁾

At the community level, civil society plays a more significant and impactful role because of the direct interaction between authorities and citizens.⁽³⁾ This effectiveness relies on having a clear definition and a structured framework for civil society. Citizens primarily participate through associations and political parties.

1. The associations' role of in local decision-making

Article 43 of the 1996 Constitution states: "The right to establish associations is guaranteed, and the state encourages the flourishing of the associative movement. The law defines the conditions and procedures for the establishment of associations".

According to Article 2 of Law N°.12-06 regarding Associations, an association is described as: "a group of individuals or entities that come together through a contractual agreement for a defined or undefined period, where these members willingly share their expertise and resources for non-profit objectives to support and foster activities, especially in areas such as professional, social, scientific, religious, educational, cultural, sports, environmental, charitable, and humanitarian endeavors".

The focus of the association needs to be clearly specified, and its name should indicate its connection to that focus.

Additionally, the areas of its activities and goals should align with the public interest and must not conflict with national principles, values, public order, general morals, or existing laws and regulations.⁽⁴⁾

A key feature of the new associations law is that it expands the definition of an association's activities to include charitable work, humanitarian initiatives, and environmental efforts, which is a departure from Law 90-31.⁽⁵⁾

In the realm of environmental protection, organizations choose suitable legal actions to fulfill their objectives. They might engage in activities such as raising awareness, education, and volunteer work in the field, or they could prioritize communication with local officials, monitoring for environmental violations.

Additionally, they may pursue legal appeals or strategically use a combination of these approaches to achieve their goals. The legal system views these organizations as a check on governmental power, helping to prevent misuse of environmental resources.⁽⁶⁾

(7)- Article 43 of the 1996 Constitution.

(1)- Mohammed Tahar Ghaziz, op.cit., p.42.

(2)- Ahmed Ben Aissa, *Popular Oversight and its Role in Managing Local Communities in Algeria Under Good Governance*, National Forum on the Problem of Good Governance in Managing Local and Regional Communities, December 12 and 13, 2010, University of Ouargla, Algeria, p.69.

(3)- Saïd Boulchair, *The Algerian Political System: An Analytical Study of the Nature of the Governing System in Light of the Constitutions of 1963 and 1973*, Part One, Office of University Publications, 2013, p.172.

(4)- Article 2 of Law N°.12-06, dated January 12th, 2012, relating to associations, Official Gazette N°.02 issued on January 15th, 2012.

(5)- Article 2 of Law N°.90-31 of December 4th, 1990 relating to associations, Official Gazette N°.53, issued on December 5th, 1990.

(6)- Ali Lokmich & Ouennas Yahia, *Implementing Good Governance in Local Administration in Algeria: A Study of Indicators of Independence, Transparency and Participation at the Municipality Level*, National Forum on the Problem of

The legal structure regulating associative activities in Algeria is characterized by various limitations that affect their efficiency. A primary issue is the necessity of obtaining prior approval to establish associations, coupled with the financial costs associated with preparing their administrative documents. Furthermore, the extensive oversight of associative operations presents obstacles that prevent many associations from forming, often leading to their failure and dissolution before they can be fully established.

The state implements legislation concerning associations and civil organizations, likely acknowledging the significance of revitalizing these entities. Concurrently, it enforces legal and administrative constraints that enable it to oversee these associations and organizations, disband them, or restrict their operational freedom.⁽¹⁾

Existing municipality and state (wilaya) laws do not place any obstacles or limitations on the involvement of different associations in overseeing local matters via municipal and state committees, nor do they prevent these associations from disputing the decisions of local councils once those decisions have been halted and legally contested.

On the other hand, it failed to create any systems for involving civil society organizations in the decision-making processes mainly carried out by local councils. For example, although it described the advisory role of municipal committees, it did not mandate these committees to seek input from specialized organizations or civil society representatives.

The situation of civil society organizations in Algeria reveals their lack of effectiveness in participation, primarily due to various factors, with the most notable being their failure to take part in developmental economic activities, even though this is recognized by the associations law.⁽²⁾ To improve the involvement of associations in local policy-making and development management alongside elected councils, it is crucial to create a regulatory framework that mandates their participation in the local development process.

This is important to overcome the shortcomings of local administration regarding human resources, both elected and appointed. Their role should go beyond offering advice; they should actively engage in decision-making and ensure that civil society is accountable for initiating projects by citizens, rather than just executing them.

It is crucial to adapt the functions of associations and turn them into professional development organizations that work in partnership with the private sector. This will help promote participatory democracy and monitor elected councils to improve public oversight.

Alongside the current frameworks, it is crucial to develop a system for elected councils that facilitates the creation of entities and processes aimed at involving civil society in collaboration with elected representatives in the direct oversight of local development initiatives. There is a noticeable absence of dedicated organizations or divisions tasked with overseeing local development programs, both at the local decentralized level and at the central level.⁽³⁾

2. The role of parties in formulating local decision-making

According to Article 03 of Law N°.12-04 related to Political Parties,⁽⁴⁾ a political party is defined as a group of individuals who hold similar beliefs and unite to pursue a shared political agenda, with

Good Governance in the Administration of Local and Regional Communities, December 12 and 13, 2010, University of Ouargla, Algeria, p.98.

(1)- Bouhania Goui, *The Role of Political Parties and Civil Society in Local Administration*, First Symposium entitled Regional Communities and the Challenge of Local Development under the Slogan “For Effective Local Development”, May 7th, 2013, University of Adrar, Algeria.

(2)- Article 29 of Law N°.12-06 of January 12th, 2012, relating to associations, Official Gazette N°.02 of January 15th, 2012.

(3)- Mohammed Tahar Ghaziz, op.cit., p.49.

(4)- Organic Law N°.12-04 of January 12th, 2012, relating to political parties, Official Gazette N°.02 of January 15th, 2012.

the goal of exercising powers, responsibilities and managing public matters⁽¹⁾ through democratic and non-violent methods”.

Having multiple political parties actively involved in elected councils is seen as one of the best ways to hold executive authorities accountable for their management of community issues. This involvement improves the ability to demand accountability and implement reforms when there are failures in execution.

Consequently, it is essential for the parties to train and prepare their members to take on governance and administrative positions if they gain a majority that allows them to influence or control the country's affairs.⁽²⁾ This preparation is especially important when the executive authorities stray from the wishes and needs of the populace.⁽³⁾

Political parties are crucial in shaping local councils since they provide the main candidates for council positions.⁽⁴⁾ After local officials are elected and join the councils, their involvement in discussions and meetings aids in the decision-making process. They represent the concerns and issues of the community, participate in conversations about these matters, and work towards finding solutions.

Although the political party plays a crucial role within the council, Municipality Law N°.11-10, Provincial (wilaya) Law N°.12-07, and Political Parties Law N°.12-04 do not clearly define how this role is organized to ensure the political party's effective participation in the elected councils.

This legal void has created led to disorder and disputes that many local councils, especially municipal ones, are facing. The function of council members has changed from being a valuable asset for promoting development to a real obstacle to local progress. Elected councils have evolved from being a means of addressing regional challenges to a source of persistent conflicts, divisions, and issues, which have adversely affected their effectiveness.⁽⁵⁾

It is important to reevaluate the function of political parties within local councils by encouraging true and active involvement in council meetings and discussions, participating in the committees formed by the council, and dismissing any actions that may create conflict and division among council members.⁽⁶⁾

CONCLUSION:

Although participatory democracy in Algeria is relatively new, the Algerian legislator has created a legal framework that facilitates meaningful citizen involvement in overseeing local matters.

Nevertheless, the core problem is not the lack of legal documents, but rather the disparity between the laws' provisions and the actual implementation of this right in a system designed to uphold participatory democracy.

An analysis of reality reveals a notable deficiency of trust between citizens and their representatives in local councils, even though there are numerous legal texts that establish the basis for meaningful participation.

Realizing the key objectives of participatory democracy relies on an engaged public desire, a genuine political and legal commitment, and a local administration that understands its motivating and participatory function.

(1)- Political Parties Law No.97-07.

(2)- Mohammed Didamouni Mohammed Abdelaal, *Political and Judicial Oversight of Local Administration Work: A Comparative Study*, Dar al-Fikr wa al-Qanun for Publishing and Distribution, al-Mansour, Arab Republic of Egypt, 2008, p.317.

(3)- Abderrazzak Souikat, op.cit., p.76.

(4)- Mohammed Tahar Ghaziz, op.cit., p.49.

(5)- Bouhania Goui, op.cit., p.23.

(6)- Ibid.



RESULTS:

- ✓ Even though legal recognition grants citizens a role in local decision-making, their involvement tends to be mainly superficial and fails to reach the anticipated standards of participatory democracy.
- ✓ The dominance of administrative authority in local decision-making marginalizes citizens, even though a legal framework exists.
- ✓ Although citizens are permitted to engage in local decisions, their participation is shallow and fails to embody the genuine essence of participatory democracy.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Enhancing the legal and institutional frameworks that facilitate genuine public involvement, transcending the abstract qualities of legal documentation.
- ✓ It is crucial to transition from a one-sided administrative approach to a framework centered around authentic collaboration between citizens and local governments.
- ✓ Strengthening efforts to raise awareness and educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities, enabling them to actively participate in decision-making rather than just in a ceremonial way.
- ✓ Improving the skills of local stakeholders, such as elected representatives and administrators, to foster a culture of dialogue and consultation with elements of civil society.

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- (2)- Ali Lokmich & Ouennas Yahia, Implementing Good Governance in Local Administration in Algeria: A Study of Indicators of Independence, Transparency and Participation at the Municipality Level, National Forum on the Problem of Good Governance in the Administration of Local and Regional Communities, December 12 and 13, 2010, University of Ouargla, Algeria.
- (3)- Bouhania Goui, The Role of Political Parties and Civil Society in Local Administration, First Symposium entitled Regional Communities and the Challenge of Local Development under the Slogan "For Effective Local Development", May 7th, 2013, University of Adrar, Algeria.

Documents:

- (1)- The minutes of the meeting of the Committee for the Construction and Housing Committee on August 18th, 2014, for the State (wilaya) Popular Council, Guelma, regarding the preparation of the third regular session of 2014.