

Research Article		Civil Society and its Role in Consolidating a Culture of Political Participation	
Gaouaoui Ahmed		PhD Student	
		Laboratory of Social Change, University of Algiers 2	
		Algeria	
		Email: ahmed.gawaoui@gmail.com	
Remita Ahmed		Doctor	
		Laboratory of Social Change, University of Algiers 2	
		Algeria	
		Email: ah_remita@yahoo.fr	
Doi Serial		https://doi.org/10.56334/sci/8.8.23	
Keywords		Civil society, participatory political culture, active citizenship, public policies, elections.	
Abstract: This article aims to highlight the role of civil society in raising awareness about the increasing importance of citizen participation in managing public affairs at local and national levels, and in establishing a culture of active citizenship. It also seeks to identify the obstacles that hinder the consolidation of a participatory political culture among both elites and the general public. This participatory culture is expected to contribute to entrenching democratic practice, fostering political participation, encouraging the formation and renewal of civil society institutions, and achieving democratic transformation. Civil society in Algeria is nascent and requires study and analysis to diagnose its reality, enabling it to choose appropriate mechanisms for effective participation in the legislative process and to exercise its neutral oversight role over elections and public policies.			
Citation. Gaouaoui, A., Remita, A. (2025). Civil Society and its Role in Consolidating a Culture of Political Participation. <i>Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems</i> , 8(8), 251-263; doi: 10.56352/sci/8.8.23. https://imcra-az.org/archive/375-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-8-vol-8-2025.html			
Licensed © 2025 The Author(s). Published by Science, Education and Innovations in the context of modern problems (SEI) by IMCRA - International Meetings and Journals Research Association (Azerbaijan). This is an open access article under the CC BY license.			
Received: 20.02.2025		Accepted: 17.04.2025	
		Published (available online): 28.06.2025	

Introduction:

Civil society is a concept that has been widely circulated in recent years at academic, social, and political levels. Despite its widespread use, disagreements persist regarding its definition, the structures and formations it encompasses, and its role and relationship with the state, given its intermediate position between the state and society. It is also a historical concept that has undergone many changes throughout the ages, being a Western-originated concept shaped by various intellectual and ideological schools within Western civilization over several historical stages. Furthermore, those interested in the concept of civil society and active in its sphere have diverse political, economic, and social backgrounds and experiences, leading to varied understandings and expressions of it.

The concept of political culture is a modern concept that emerged in the mid-20th century, leading to a fundamental shift in political science from studying formal institutions to studying informal behavior. In light of this, the cultural approach became popular for explaining variations in patterns of values, attitudes, and beliefs from one country to another, and within the same country. It became apparent that there is a correlation between the prevailing political culture in a society and the nature of the political system in that society, as well as its influence on political stability.

The essence and role of civil society are to organize and activate people's participation in determining their destinies and confronting policies that affect their livelihoods. Additionally, it plays a role in fostering a culture of self-initiative, a culture of institution-building, emphasizing citizens' will, attracting them to the arena of historical action, and effectively contributing to major transformations. This stems from the premise that the existence of an effective civil society contributes to establishing a participatory political culture and aids in democratic transition and political development.

First: Civil Society:

1. Definition of Civil Society:

Civil society is defined as "the collection of free voluntary organizations that fill the public sphere between the family and the state, i.e., between kinship institutions and state institutions where membership is not optional." These organizations are established to achieve the interests of their members, provide services to citizens, or engage in various humanitarian activities, and are committed in their existence and activities to values and standards of respect, consent, tolerance, participation, and peaceful management of diversity and differences.

Some define civil society through a number of procedural indicators that distinguish its institutions, including, for example: "They are those organizations that occupy a middle ground between the family and the moral value system in society on the one hand, and the state and its institutions and agencies on the other.

Stephen Deloe defines it as: "The many different forms of associations, referring to an independent space that provides individuals with the freedom to pursue a diverse range of life experiences offered by various gatherings, which individuals can join."

Raymond Hinnebusch views it as: "A network of voluntarily formed associations that appear independent of the state and primary groups, but while working to contain social divisions and form a buffer zone between the state and society, they also connect them to the state and its authority."

In general, civil society is procedurally defined as the sum of economic, social, and cultural institutions that mediate the public sphere between the family and the state, and that operate in their various fields independently of state authority to achieve multiple purposes, including political purposes: participation in decision-making; trade union purposes: defending the interests of their members; cultural purposes: spreading cultural awareness, which is the aim of writers' unions, intellectuals, and cultural associations; and purposes for contributing to social work to achieve social development.

2. Pillars of Civil Society:

Civil society assumes the availability of three essential pillars:

a. First Pillar: Free Voluntary Act. Civil society is formed by the free will of its members. Therefore, it differs from kinship groups such as the family, clan, and tribe, where individuals have no say in choosing their membership, as it is imposed by birth or inheritance. Civil society is also distinct from the state, which imposes its nationality, sovereignty, and laws on those born or living within its geographical territory without their prior acceptance.

b. Second Pillar: Social Organization. Civil society is formed from a group of organizations comprising individuals

who chose their membership of their own free will, but under conditions agreed upon by those who establish the organization or who join it later. Membership conditions, rights, and duties may change later, but the organization and structure remain. This institutional organization is what distinguishes civil society from other formations in society.

c. Third Pillar: Ethical and Behavioral Pillar. This involves accepting difference and diversity, and the right of others to form civil organizations that achieve, protect, and defend their material and moral interests. It also entails commitment to managing conflict within civil society, between its institutions, and between them and the state through peaceful means, and in light of values of respect, tolerance, cooperation, competition, and peaceful conflict, which constitute what can be called "civil culture."

3. Determinants of Civil Society Effectiveness:

Most academic studies interested in civil society agree with the characteristics presented by Samuel Huntington, which are four essential characteristics that must be present in civil society:

a. Adaptability versus Rigidity: This refers to the ability to adapt to environmental developments within its operating context. The more adaptable an institution is, the more effective it becomes, as rigidity leads to a diminishment of its importance and possibly its demise. This includes sub-indicators such as temporal adaptability, generational adaptability, and functional adaptability.

b. Independence versus Subordination and Dependence: This means that civil society institutions should not be subordinate or dependent on other institutions, groups, or individuals, as this makes them easy to control and directs their activities towards the vision of the controller.

The independence of civil society from the state can be determined through the following indicators:

*** Financial Independence of Civil Society Institutions:** This is evident through funding sources, whether it is external funding granted by the state or some external parties, or self-funding through member contributions or donations.

*** Administrative and Organizational Independence:** This refers to the extent of their independence in managing their internal affairs, according to their internal regulations and laws, away from state interference, as well as the extent of state interference in the process of establishing and forming civil society institutions.

c. Complexity versus Organizational Weakness: This refers to the multiplicity of its organizational bodies and the wide geographical spread in which it operates. The larger and more diverse the number of sub-units, the greater the institution's ability to continue.

d. Homogeneity versus Division: This refers to the absence of internal conflicts within the institution that affect its activities. The more internal conflicts are related to the institution's activities and the more peaceful the conflict resolution method, the more the institution develops.

If the source of conflict is personal reasons and the method of resolution is violent, it indicates the backwardness of the institution. Talking about homogeneity does not mean that civil society institutions form a monolithic unit without variation, as the absence of variation, diversity, and difference makes the institution a rigid and lifeless organization.

4. Civil Society and Building Democratic Political Culture:

It is impossible to talk about civil society in isolation from democratic political culture, as the relationship between them is intertwined, highlighted by the basic functions of civil society: **a. Political Socialization:** This is one of the most important functions performed by civil society towards individuals who belong to these organizations, by training them in the foundations of sound political participation and the democratic cultural values that govern this

participation at various levels.

This socialization can take the form of developing individuals' awareness regarding issues and events in the surrounding system, whether local or global, or socializing individuals to develop attitudes or stances towards specific events.

In addition, it involves qualifying and training them in the fundamentals of oversight and accountability principles to ensure proper and sound performance within civil society organizations.

Thus, the role of civil society in spreading democratic civil culture emerges through the internal life of its institutions, which nurture and socialize members on democratic values (values of self-initiative, a culture of institution-building, acceptance of difference and diversity, and a tendency towards collective action), and train them practically through daily practice.

b. Establishing a Culture of Positive Participation: Voluntary work helps develop values of participation and cooperation among volunteers themselves to complete voluntary tasks, and between them and community members they seek to help, thereby providing an opportunity for individuals to participate in finding solutions to the problems they face. Thus, volunteering contributes to taking on responsibilities in society for its service. The purpose of participation is the voluntary contribution of citizens to development efforts, whether through opinion, work, or funding in voluntary activities aimed at development. Participation helps achieve belonging and increases society's self-confidence. It also instills the principle of cooperation to face problems, improve individuals' living conditions, and enhance the level of services.

Volunteering also allows individuals to be informed about and participate in community activities, and accustomed to practicing democracies, collective leadership, and consultation in their affairs, achieving cooperation among themselves, and contributing to the formulation of public policies and decision-making regarding their developmental future and participation in their implementation.

c. Interest Aggregation and Reconciliation: Through this function, members learn how to discuss their problems, study existing conditions in society, determine how to protect their interests in the face of other groups' interests, and acquire an increasing ability to negotiate with other parties.

Thus, the function of interest aggregation performed by civil society institutions is not limited to the direct work of these institutions but extends to society, providing its members with these important experiences (experience in formulating goals and demands, experience in collective action, and experience in negotiation and reaching compromises) essential for democratic political practice.

d. Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts: If democracy is a formula for managing conflict in society by peaceful means, then resolving disputes between members by amicable means within civil society institutions is the basis for peaceful conflict practice at the societal level between social and political classes and forces. When members succeed in resolving their disputes through amicable means within their civil institutions, they acquire the culture and experience necessary to practice class and political conflict in society by peaceful means. This experience and culture include recognizing the other and their rights and interests, engaging in dialogue with them, and reaching compromises through negotiation.

e. Producing New Leaders: Civil society institutions are an inexhaustible reservoir of new leaders and a renewable source of supply for society. They attract citizens to their membership, enable them to discover their capabilities through collective activity, provide them with opportunities for leadership practice through the responsibilities entrusted to them, and offer them the necessary experience to exercise these responsibilities. Field studies confirm that active elements in civil society institutions who assume leadership responsibilities are the primary base from which local and national community leaders emerge, starting from members of local popular assemblies to parliamentary leaders in legislative councils to political party leaders at all levels. Thus, civil society institutions contribute to advancing and maturing democratic development in society through their function of producing leaders.

Second: Political Culture:

1. Definition:

Definitions and concepts of political culture have varied due to the multiplicity of studies, trends, and specific interests of each researcher.

It is defined as "the set of attitudes, beliefs, and feelings that give order and meaning to the social and political process, and assign a distinct place to political beliefs, expressive symbols, and values that define the context in which political behavior occurs, and that regulate interactions between rulers and ruled."

It is a part of the prevailing culture in a given society, and with all its elements, it forms an organized structure with a political nature.

Political culture involves the attitudes of individuals towards the political institutions that make up the political system, or in other words, it relates to how these individuals perceive or evaluate existing political institutions.

From this, the impact of political culture on the relationship of individuals and groups with the political process arises. In political culture, the nature of the political system's relationship with social forces is determined, and therefore, the political participation of individuals and groups, as an expression of the relationship between the actor and the political system, is enshrined within a specific political structure.

Political culture consists of a set of knowledge and beliefs that allow individuals to make sense of the routine experience of their relationship with the authority that governs them, and also allow groups to use them as references for defining their identities. It therefore allows each of them to position themselves within the complex field of politics, by mobilizing a minimum of conscious or unconscious landmarks that guide their behavior: their behavior as a citizen, for example, or their behavior as an elector or a taxpayer.

Raad Hafiz Salem considers it a specialized branch of general culture, referring to a set of attitudes, values, and beliefs related to politics in any society. These attitudes, values, and beliefs include practical practices about what actually happens in society, and beliefs and values that may be related to politics, even though they are not originally political. Kamal El-Manoufi believes that political culture is part of society's culture, referring to the beliefs, values, feelings, orientations, and behavioral patterns related to the political system in society.

Therefore, the political culture of the masses differs from that prevalent among the ruling elite.

It also varies from one political system to another. Typically, a society with a pluralistic system is more inclined to support the values of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity and pluralism, and to emphasize the importance of democratic institutions. Authoritarian systems, on the other hand, are more concerned with and emphasize values of obedience and contentment.

2. Importance:

The importance of approaching political culture lies in its connection to systematic policies and behaviors, and it is studied as a set of standards that guide the attitudes and behaviors of the public and decision-makers. Because it expresses different individual preferences, one individual may give high priority to freedom and social harmony and prefer policies that reinforce these values, while another individual may emphasize independence, social distinction, and ambition in directing their actions, as personality dictates a choice between values. It can be said that the importance of political culture lies in the political domain of general culture, as it represents an aspect of this domain. In this sense, it is an integral part of that culture, possessing the same characteristics, influencing and being influenced by it. This importance is related to political life and its relationship with the ruler and the governed through the elements of political culture, mainly represented by values, norms, attitudes, and orientations.

3. Types of Political Culture and their Characteristics:

a. Parochial Political Culture: In this type of culture, the individual knows nothing about the elements that contribute to the input and output processes of the political system. They also do not perceive anything about their rights, powers, or role in influencing the political system.

Furthermore, they do not hold any feelings about their nation and its political system in general, nor about political structures and leaders. There are also no standards they rely on in forming their political judgments and opinions. This type of culture usually prevails in societies where there are no distinct political roles, and loyalties in such cultures are to individual and primary groups rather than to the nation and society, such as loyalty to a tribe, family, or throne.

b. Subject Political Culture: Under this type of culture, many orientations occur towards a distinct political system and its outputs, but orientations towards input topics, in particular, and towards the self as an active participant, reach zero, as shown in Table 01 below. The relationship towards the system at the general level and towards its outputs is essentially one of submission, obliging subjects to obey the law, show loyalty, and refrain from questioning or participating.

Under this culture, individuals may perceive democratic institutions but not grant them legitimacy. The government is viewed as a mysterious world understood only by those of high status and advanced education. Political violence often prevails in societies experiencing this type of culture due to the lack of widely accepted and practical civil procedures for conflict management.

c. Participant Political Culture: Members of society under this culture clearly perceive the existence of the political system, structures, leaders, and political proposals involved in processes of receiving popular demands and making decisions.

Individuals may be voluntarily or involuntarily oriented towards the political system and the input and output processes.

Furthermore, members of society within this culture are aware of their rights, duties, and their role in influencing the government.

Their feelings and evaluations towards this role may range from acceptance to rejection.

Other characteristics of a participatory culture include citizens' emotional orientation towards a primary sense of loyalty to the nation and its representative government, a low level of political violence, the prevalence of civil procedures for conflict management, a high degree of political trust among social groups, and the recognition of the legitimacy of the ruling system.

This tripartite classification of political culture does not assume that one orientation replaces the others. Thus, a subject culture does not prevent the spread of orientations towards the primary and intimate structures of society.

At the same level, a participatory culture does not eliminate subject and parochial orientations. The addition of participatory orientations to subject and parochial orientations does not leave the latter unchanged. The absence of a purely single type of culture is attributed to shortcomings in political socialization, personal preferences, and limitations in intelligence or learning opportunities.

The statement that there is no absolute single type of political culture leads to a discussion of mixed cultures, including, for example: parochial-subject culture, subject participant culture, and parochial-participant culture.

The following table:

Culture	System as General Subject	Input Subjects	Output Subjects	Self as Active Participant
---------	---------------------------	----------------	-----------------	----------------------------

Parochial	0	0	0	0
Subject	1	0	1	0
Participant	1	1	1	1

Source: Raad Hafiz Salem, Socialization and its Impact on Political Behavior, p. 160..

4. Dimensions of Political Culture:

a. Cognitive Dimension: This dimension refers to the political and non-political knowledge and information possessed by citizens regarding leaders, institutions, and political issues. This dimension is essential as it leads to a relationship between the individual and political institutions and issues, as well as between the individual and the existing political system. The degree of knowledge varies among individuals, as does the scope of their interests. When an individual's relationship with the political system lacks sufficient information, their political culture becomes limited.

b. Affective Dimension: This dimension relates to the values that influence the stability of the political system. It focuses on instilling and developing socially and politically desirable values in a cumulative manner within the souls of community members, thereby strengthening their social and, consequently, political relationships, which are difficult to change within society. Accordingly, values differ from one society to another. This dimension helps explain individuals' feelings of loyalty, belonging, citizenship, justice, equality, democracy, and sacrifice.

c. Skill Dimension: This refers to the specific activities of both ordinary citizens and political leaders in the political sphere, where individuals consciously participate in their community's political life as a right of citizenship. There are channels and levels of participation, beginning with interest, monitoring, and discussing political issues, voting, and participating in elections, in addition to attending political meetings. In contrast, there is political apathy, such as indifference, which leads to a loss of motivation for the individual, and may be limited to mere knowledge and awareness of the most important issues.

Third: Obstacles Preventing the Activation of a Participatory Political Culture and Mechanisms for Civil Society Involvement in its Consolidation:

1. Obstacles Preventing the Activation of a Participatory Political Culture in Algeria:

a. Prevailing Political Culture Pattern:

According to some studies, traditional value attitudes and values are prevalent in Arab society today, with the family being their most significant source. There are also other value orientations whose source is religion.

Among these values are: a tendency to emphasize loyalty to narrow traditional groups like the tribe more than individual independence and loyalty to the nation and society, a tendency towards submission and dependency at the expense of freedom and self-reliance, and the use of coercion and punishment more than dialogue and persuasion.

This has led some researchers to consider that the prevailing political culture in Arab society lacks many of the distinguishing features of democracy, as it has entrenched values of obedience, loyalty, a tendency towards self-absorption and family, and the promotion of egoism, individualism, and tribalism, and reliance on the group without innovation, distinction, and political initiative.

In his analysis of political culture in Arab society, Kamal El-Manoufi believes that this culture is not democratic, but rather a pastoral culture that entrenches political authoritarianism because it lacks several elements related to democracy: a sense of political efficacy, willingness for political participation, intellectual tolerance, spirit of

initiative, and political trust.

In the last decade, influenced by rising educational levels and the development of media, Western political concepts, values, and beliefs focusing on democracy, political pluralism, and respect for human rights have spread in Arab society. This has made the prevailing culture in Arab society today heterogeneous and diverse, containing values and beliefs from different sources and cultures. This also applies to Arab political culture today, which has become a hybrid and diverse culture, including non-democratic political values, beliefs, and orientations (mostly from traditional Arab culture) and democratic ones (mostly from Western culture), based primarily on the conflict between: the individual's immersion in the group and the individual's freedom and independence, between extremism and moderation, between rigidity and tolerance, between political monism and political pluralism, and between heritage and modernity. However, non-democratic value orientations continue to prevail among elites and masses in most Arab countries. These non-democratic orientations may weaken relatively, and conversely, democratic orientations may flourish – as in Arab countries like Lebanon, Algeria, Jordan, and Tunisia – which have been somewhat affected by the recent global wave of democratic transformation, introducing some liberal reforms in their political systems (parliamentary elections, party pluralism, encouragement of civil society institutions formation, reduced press censorship, etc.).

Talking about the political culture of a society refers to the characteristics that distinguish it, including values, norms, and beliefs related to political life, manifestations of power, and the political system, which are generated by geographical conditions, historical circumstances, religious beliefs, socialization patterns, in addition to government mechanisms and actions, and individuals' perceptions of authority and their obligations towards it.

The prevailing political culture in Algeria is characterized by a set of general features that do not differ much from the previously mentioned characteristics of Arab political culture. These include:

- * The repeated failures of the national state have contributed to increased distrust and political skepticism among individuals due to a lack of transparency and frank dialogue on societal issues.
- * The saturation of individuals' political culture with religious beliefs and superstitions, and the intermingling of the sacred with the political.
- * Individuals' conviction in the sanctity of narrow primary loyalties (tribe and region) and their priority over loyalty to society and the state, and the necessity of all their political behaviors conforming to custom.
- * Individuals' belief that political authority is unified in the person of the ruler and not vested in institutions, and that authority represents the "other," as the Algerian people experienced absolute rule for a long period, which formed their political heritage.
- * Individuals' reluctance to engage in political work and collective action, and their unwillingness to join associations and political parties or participate in political life through its various channels, unless a temporary interest dictates it, or it is linked to narrow loyalties. This is due to their belief that political action is futile and its results are uncertain or unbeneficial to society.

Through these characteristics, the prevailing political culture in Algerian society can be classified as a mixture of marginal culture and subject culture, or parochial culture and subject culture, while participatory culture is very limited, if not absent, based on the confinement of its convictions to the local community. Indicators of this include the absence of a spirit of initiative among individuals, who consider the state responsible for them, and individuals not possessing a minimum ability or desire to make judgments. In this context, magic replaces electoral propaganda strategies, face-to-face relationships replace political programs, invitations and blessings replace persuasive party discourse, lineage and tribal affiliation replace competence, and money replaces the length of struggle.

2. Abbreviated and Ineffective Civil Society:

Some comparative Arab studies conducted in the early 1990s on associations and civil societies gave the Algerian situation a positive and distinctive status when discussing the legislation governing associative work, especially in the process of forming associations. They described these laws as tolerant, relying on Article 7 of the Associations Law,

which discusses the conditions for establishment, theoretically requiring only a declaration to the competent authorities. However, a careful reading of Law 90-31, dated December 4, 1990, especially Articles 7, 8, 17, 18, 32, and 35, and the actual practices associated with it, might make the observer reconsider this optimistic judgment. This legal framework is criticized for a number of shortcomings highlighted by practical experience, which led to a practical restriction of associative activity after the declaration of the state of emergency in 1992. Law No. 12-06, dated January 12, 2012, which amended Law 90-31 regulating the work of associations, is considered stricter than its predecessor, and its amendments aim to achieve stability and facilitate the transition of civil society from a closed system to an open one.

Official data confirm that we are facing a very large number of associations, especially when it comes to local associations, whose number has almost reached one hundred thousand. The same observations can be made about the large number of national associations, which have exceeded one thousand, geographically spread throughout the national territory, even if to varying degrees, favoring major cities and some regions of the country, and usually characterized by the multiplicity of their activities.

These emerging associations developed quantitatively rapidly immediately after the approval of the associations law, despite the stagnation in their development during the second half of the 1990s due to the difficult conditions Algeria experienced.

These emerging associations are interested in various topics, primarily professional issues, neighborhood associations, religious interests, sports, and cultural matters, without neglecting social issues - health, people with disabilities, employment, etc. - which have worsened in recent years.

Civil society in Algeria has been reduced to associations and, partially, professional unions and human rights leagues, without political parties, whose institutions have been affected by the repercussions of the security and political crisis that Algeria experienced starting from the early 1990s. It still suffers from many different obstacles: weak leadership, lack of material resources (access to official financial aid is not sufficiently transparent, and associations do not have the freedom to receive donations and aid from abroad and do not have permanent headquarters), difficulty in defining objectives, dominance of seasonal work, and weak democratic life within associations, which negatively affects their financial situation and operations. In addition, the bases of these associations have not expanded socially over time to become a means of mobilizing citizens around issues that concern them. This is confirmed by some statistical data and field observations related to the Algerian case, which speak of a general membership rate not exceeding 5%, compared to 44% in France, and 2% for associations interested in the rural world, for example, in 2002. Regardless of the quantitative importance of the associative phenomenon and the diversity of its interests in Algeria, it suffers from an immature and incomplete level of structuring.

After more than two and a half decades of experience, the associative movement must move towards a kind of maturity and institutionalization to overcome the childhood phase it has experienced so far. In contrast, the characteristics of associations, the quality of their leadership, and the prevailing perceptions among their leaders suggest that we are facing an associative situation in a state of dormancy and inactivity, to the extent that the early death of associations and the loss of their members may become a general rule and a contagious condition. This reality has forced many associations to attempt to coalesce into networks and federations according to the nature of their interests, hoping to increase their effectiveness and lobbying power, but this does not mean that we are facing a real networking force of the Algerian associative movement, which still suffers from the shortcomings of individual work and the short lifespan of associations.

2. Mechanisms for Civil Society Participation in Consolidating a Participatory Political Culture:

Civil society organizations can participate in managing public affairs at both local and national levels by using various mechanisms that enable them to influence election monitoring, participate in legislation, make decisions, ensure transparency in public policy formulation and implementation, and play an important role in oversight and evaluation processes.

1. Participation in Election Monitoring:

In actual democratic systems, even though civil society is constantly active at different times, its activity also sees a kind of intensity during electoral events, to exercise its various functions.

Civil society is considered an important element and a key factor in ensuring the integrity of the electoral process and lending credibility to its results through its function as an observer. Some constitutions in democratic countries recognize this function for civil society organizations.

Civil society exercises oversight over all stages of the electoral process, from reviewing voter lists to candidacy, election campaigns, vote counting, and announcement of results. This process is carried out neutrally and objectively, as these organizations publish reports on the extent to which all stages of the electoral process conform to international standards for democratic elections, and they highlight any irregularities or commend their integrity and transparency. Civil society also monitors the roles of some parties in the electoral process, such as the role of public media and the extent of their neutrality and professionalism in covering the various stages and details of the electoral process. The role of these organizations begins with the process of selecting officials through their participation in election monitoring committees, which makes them a partner with the authorities in ensuring the integrity of elections and the resulting councils that manage local and national affairs. Among the most important mechanisms that enable civil society to ensure transparency and exercise its oversight role is giving an important role to these organizations in committees responsible for monitoring elections that lead to the election of members of local and legislative councils.

The political reforms initiated by Algeria resulted in the constitutionalization of the membership of civil society organizations in the High Independent Authority for Election Monitoring. Article 194 of the 2016 constitutional amendment stipulates that: "A high independent authority for election monitoring shall be established, headed by a national figure appointed by the President of the Republic after consulting the parties, and composed equally of judges proposed by the Supreme Judicial Council and appointed by the President of the Republic, and independent competencies chosen from civil society, appointed by the President of the Republic."

What can be concluded is that the 1996 Constitution and its amendments reflect the Algerian legislator's belief in the necessity of the associative movement flourishing, as it has an essential role in socializing, educating, and mobilizing citizens to contribute to the management of the country's public affairs. However, the issue of its compatibility with the environment and reality, which do not help in forming an independent and effective civil society due to the many obstacles surrounding it, remains. The constitution leaves it to the law, in more than one case, to specify the conditions for exercising these rights, highlighting the qualitative differences between what the constitution grants and what the laws specify in this and other cases. This observed reality in more than one Arab study, summarized by the Arab Human Development Report 2004, speaks of many freedoms granted theoretically by Arab constitutions that are often shackled by restrictive regulatory legislation. Thus, the report concludes that Arab constitutions refer to ordinary legislation to regulate rights and freedoms, but ordinary legislation often tends to restrict the right, and sometimes even confiscate it under the guise of regulating it. Thus, the constitutional text, despite its shortcomings sometimes, loses much of its usefulness and becomes merely a constitutional facade for the state to boast about to the international community, despite being an empty sign with no real content.

2. Civil Society Participation in Legislation:

It is impossible to talk about the contribution of civil society to the management of public and local affairs if it does not have a role in formulating public policies, expressing its opinion, and raising its concerns with the legislative institution, so that legal texts reflect its views and provide appropriate solutions to its concerns and aspirations, as well as the mechanisms and methods of its participation and practice in ensuring transparency and oversight at local and national levels.

Referring to the Algerian Constitution and the internal laws of both parliamentary chambers and the law regulating their work before the 2016 constitutional amendment, it is noted that they do not contain any article that allows civil society organizations to participate in parliamentary work by raising their concerns to be embodied in draft

laws or by contributing to monitoring and holding the government accountable in any way. Despite the absence of a binding and framework legal framework for the involvement of civil society actors, the legislative institution in Algeria has utilized its powers to seek assistance from some associations and benefit from their expertise and field practice, adopting several methods, the most important of which are:

First: Members of both parliamentary chambers can seek the assistance of representatives of civil society organizations as experts whom they consult on issues within their core interests, and the field experience of associations can benefit permanent committees in performing their tasks. For example, the health law project mentioned in its preamble consulting national representative associations in the health sector (health professionals, users of health institutions, and social partners, approximately 25 patient associations, unions, and scientific associations).

Second: The participation of some associations in legislative work through participation in seminars, forums, and parliamentary days organized by both chambers of parliament to raise awareness about the importance of the issues and texts under discussion and legislation, and to enrich some topics related to legal texts within their area of expertise.

These mechanisms remain limited in their impact despite their importance as a public forum for discussion and a meeting place for various actors.

Third: The presence of members in both chambers of parliament who were activists in trade unions and various associations, adopting their concerns. These mechanisms are considered very limited despite their importance, do not meet the demands of civil society organizations, and do not significantly contribute to positively influencing the quality of legal texts to the required extent. Any relationship between the two parties, Parliament and civil society, cannot be expected to yield positive results without expanding the powers of Parliament itself to play its role as an independent legislative and oversight authority and to utilize its existing powers stipulated in the Constitution in the first stage, before later considering expanding its constitutional powers explicitly. Nor can it be imagined that the relationship between the two parties would be beneficial for legislative work in Algeria and for citizens' interests without strengthening the capacities of civil society institutions themselves, to truly become a force for proposal and popular mobilization with clear objectives through improving the legal framework within which they operate and supporting them with the necessary material and human resources for their work. Strengthening relations between civil society and Parliament in Algeria involves:

* Including a provision (or more) within the internal rules of Parliament that defines the relations between the two parties and allows for the involvement of relevant civil society institutions in discussions within parliamentary structures and the expression of opinions, especially within specialized parliamentary committees, ensuring respect for the tasks, powers, and roles of each institution.

* Institutionalizing the relationship between the two sides of the equation, Parliament and civil society, and making it more permanent, continuous, and transparent.

* Diversifying and supporting parliamentary media towards citizens and civil society as an indispensable foundation for their direct or indirect participation in improving parliamentary performance.

* Developing a culture of listening and accepting others among various political and social actors.

3. Civil Society and Oversight of Public Policy:

It is not possible to speak of civil society's contribution to the management of public and local affairs without it having a role in formulating public policies, overseeing their implementation, and evaluating them.

Public policies are defined as the authoritative allocation of values at the societal level, considering that any public policy involves the allocation of material and moral resources. Due to the absence or weakness of popular participation resulting from the absence or weakness of democratic practice traditions in the Arab world, which entails manifestations such as the marginal role of the legislative

institution, restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, the weak independence of civil society organizations in most cases, and the lack of expertise and competencies with legal and administrative training within the associative movement that would enable them to submit petitions and legislative requests, identify and aggregate needs, prioritize, and manage negotiations, i.e., exercising the power of proposal rather than objection, and participation rather than protest.

Civil society organizations can contribute to public policies through three main avenues:

First: Attempting to bring about change in the legal structure governing all rights, especially for marginalized groups.

Second: At the popular level, by establishing a culture of active citizenship.

Third: Establishing a participatory political culture that makes the individual an active citizen in their community and organizations, aware of their rights and duties, and knowledgeable about ideas and issues related to the political system.

Conclusion:

Institutions and organizations are of utmost importance in contemporary society and a fundamental condition for progress.

The diversity and multiplicity of civil society's goals and objectives make it the reference framework and one of the essential mechanisms and main channels for exchanging views among different societal currents and spectra, and a source of consensus among them to reject fanaticism, extremism, and division. In conclusion, civil society forces and institutions undoubtedly influence the policies and decisions taken by the state, provided that in their pursuit of establishing a participatory political culture, active citizenship values, and social change, they remain committed to peaceful means and methods in exercising their activities, starting with expressing opinions, through demanding change, and ending with actual participation in the change process. This also requires peaceful coexistence and respect for law and order, meaning the necessity for civil society institutions seeking change in society to accept legal and constitutional rules and the prevailing system, and the principle of working within its framework and attempting to change it peacefully without using violence. This is linked to the degree of maturity in civil society on the one hand, and the extent to which the state respects human rights and allows for democratic practice, and the availability of legitimate channels for civil society forces to convey their demands and express their perceptions can deepen and entrench their legitimacy in society.

References:

1. Abd al-Ghaffar Shukr, Muhammad Moro, *Civil Society and its Role in Building Democracy*, Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'asir, Beirut, 2004.
2. Stephen Deloe, *Political Thinking, Political Theory and Civil Society*, trans. Rabie Wahba, 1st ed. Supreme Council of Culture, Cairo, 2003.
3. Al-Faleh Matrouk, *Society, Democracy and the State in Arab Countries: A Comparative Study of the Problem of Civil Society in Light of the Definition of the City*, Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2002.
4. Thamer Kamel Muhammad, *Civil Society and Political Development: A Study in Reform and Modernization in the Arab World*, 1st ed., Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2010.
5. Ahmed Shukr Al-Subaihi, *The Future of Civil Society in the Arab World*, 2nd ed., Center for Arab Unity Studies, Lebanon, 2008.
6. Ali Leila, *Arab Civil Society: Issues of Citizenship and Human Rights*, Anglo-Egyptian Library, Cairo, 2007.
7. Abbas Manal, *Volunteer Work Between Reality and Aspiration*, University Knowledge House, Alexandria, 2013.
8. Hussein Alwan, *The Problem of Building a Participatory Culture in the Arab World*, University Foundation for Studies, Publishing and Distribution, Beirut, 2009.

9. Philippe Braud, *Political Sociology*: trans. Muhammad Arab Sasilah, 2nd ed., University Foundation for Studies, Publishing and Distribution, Beirut, 2009.
10. Raad Hafiz Salem, *Socialization and its Impact on Political Behavior*, Wael Publishing House, Amman, 2000.
11. Kamal El-Manoufi, *The Concept of Political Culture: A Theoretical and Foundational Study*, International Center for Future and Strategic Studies, Cairo, 2008.
12. Raad Hafiz Salem, *Principles of Political Culture*, Zamzam Publishers and Distributors, 2012.
13. Tariq Abdel Raouf Amer, Ihab Issa El-Masry, *Institutions of Political Education and Socialization*, Taybah Publishing and Distribution Foundation, Cairo, 2013.
14. Mahmoud Mi'ari, *Political Culture in Palestine: A Field Study*, Abu Lughod Institute for International Studies, September 2013.
15. Mansour Marqouma, *Tribe, Authority and Society in the Arab Maghreb: An Anthropological Approach*, Ibn Nadim Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, 2015.
16. Linda Lattad Ben Mahrez, *Civil Society and its Role in State Building and Political Transformations*, Modern Book House, Algeria, 2016.
17. Hasanein Ibrahim Tawfik, *Arab Political Systems: Modern Trends in their Study*, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, 2005.
18. Abd al-Salam Nuweir, *Contemporary Trends in the Study of Political Culture*, in *Al-Alam Al-Fikr Journal*, No. 1, Vol. 10, July-September, 2011.
19. Saad Hussein Al-Shehab, *Political Culture and Elections in Jordan 1989-2013*, *Dirasat Journal, Human and Social Sciences*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 2016.
20. Mounir Mubarakia, *The Relationship between Civil Society and the State and its Impact on the Electoral Process in Algeria*, in *Daftaras for Politics and Law Journal*, April 2011.
21. Abdel Nasser Djabi, *Relations between Parliament and Civil Society in Algeria: Reality and Prospects*, *Al-Waseet Journal*, Ministry of Relations with Parliament, No. 06, Second Semester, 2006.
22. Amin Sweigat, *The Role of Civil Society in Consolidating Participatory Democracy: Case Study of Algeria and Morocco*, in *Daftaras for Politics and Law Journal*, April 2011, No. 17, June 2017.
23. Ahmed Chaterbach, *Political Culture of University Students "A Field Study at the University of Algiers"*, PhD Thesis, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Political Science and Information, University of Algiers, 2011.
24. Muhammad Khadawi, *Tribalism, Parties and Elections Under Pluralism in Algeria*, PhD Thesis, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History and Archaeology, University of Abou Bekr Belkaid Tlemcen, 2014.
25. Nadia Benouah, *The Role of Civil Society in Public Policy Making, Implementation and Evaluation: Case Study of Algeria 1989-2009*, Master's Thesis in Political Science and International Relations, Public Policies and Comparative Governments Branch, University of Hadj Lakhdar, 2009-2010.