Mechanisms for strengthening participatory democracy in functional decision-making

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Abstract:

This study seeks to analyze its contribution to the protection of the functional community against any kind of administrative and professional bureaucracy in institutions, whether it's public or private. Consequently, this study focuses significantly on the importance of strengthening the role of participatory democracy as a positive mechanism in functional decision-making, which will accordingly encompass the objectives set by professional institutions that are always related to the career path. Furthermore, effective functional decision-making contributes to establishing a state of administrative democracy and employee participation in the decision-making process, beginning with identifying the opportunity for the worker or professional up to the implementation of the decision they participated in and following up on its realization. Thus, that is an issue that improves overall performance in the work environment and suppresses a set of challenges and obstacles that highlight the need for the comprehensiveness and sustainability of participatory democracy in this manner.

Key words: *Competence; Transparency; Technology; Decision-Making; Public Office.*

Introduction:

In our endeavor to analyze the administrative activity of functional institutions, we seek in this research paper to review the effective mechanisms that contribute to transforming employee functional participation from traditional democracy, based on electing representatives who make administrative decisions on behalf of employees, to participatory democracy, in which the process of participation in decision-making by all employees and workers is embodied.

Today, administrative institutions seek to achieve a balance between functional objectives and employee needs equally, serving the goals of collective work on one

hand, and involving workers and employees in the decision-making process on the other hand. Accordingly, based on the above, we can pose the following problem: To what extent do mechanisms for strengthening participatory democracy contribute to functional decision-making?

To answer the above problem, the analytical method will be adopted, along with the following plan:

Topic One: The Importance of Strengthening Participatory Democracy in the Work Environment

A. Definition of Participatory Democracy in Public Office.
B. The Effectiveness of Functional Participation in Decision-Making.

Topic Two: Participatory Democracy Contributes to Decision-Making

A. Improving the Climate of Functional Dialogue.
B. Defending the Role of the Functional Community.

TOPIC ONE:

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The importance of participatory democracy in the work environment is not merely a slogan but a very important functional lifestyle, where employees feel their opinions are heard and taken into consideration, allowing for increased productivity and opening communication channels between management and employees. This encourages the presentation of new and creative ideas, which will be clarified through addressing the following points:

First requirement: Definition of Participatory Democracy in Public Office

The issue of participatory democracy is a very important matter, as previously mentioned, especially in the subject of entrenching rights and freedoms, because it plays a significant role in enabling workers and employees to participate in functional decisions and discuss working conditions. Participatory democracy today is one of the fundamental concepts aimed at enhancing citizens' participation in political, economic, and social decision-making at all levels.

Algeria is also witnessing significant developments in participatory democracy, especially with the existence of a legal framework encouraging popular participation. Participatory democracy was explicitly adopted for the first time in the 2016 Constitution through Article 15, then entrenched under the 2020 constitutional amendment. It is considered one of the most prominent contemporary reforms and a reflection of good governance in management. It is also among the mechanisms for improving and advancing public service (Chouireb & Akouche, 2022, p. 119).

In the public office specifically, we find that participatory democracy is embodied in the establishment of trade union organizations for workers and employees,

which is based on a democratic foundation guaranteed by law and regulation (Ben Guerouache & Zouatine, 2025, p. 131). This includes creating a targeted dynamism that seeks to provide mechanisms for entrenching right and law, strengthening reform workshops and social dialogue, individual and collective freedoms, and thus building a free and active civil society.

First section: The Importance of Participatory Democracy

Regarding the importance of participatory democracy in this field, it can be noted that its importance is embodied in enhancing citizens' participation in decision-making, building a free and active civil society, protecting workers' rights, driving the wheel of national development, and how to involve sectoral unions in developing legal mechanisms to evaluate union performance and separate union work from management responsibility and political affiliation, as stated in what we reviewed on the Council of the Nation's website.

Therefore, administrative judiciary is considered a control mechanism, as it monitors and penalizes the abuse of power by administrative bodies and the extent of free exercise of public rights and freedoms, which the administrative judge affirms in the field of organizing the exercise of public freedoms through the illegitimacy of prohibition and interdiction. If the administrative regulatory authorities have the power to intervene in the field of rights and freedoms, they must limit themselves to organizing the methods of exercising those rights in a way that ensures appropriateness and the preservation of public order only.

Its importance is also embodied in strengthening trust between citizens and the government and improving transparency and accountability, away from administrative interference (Belkadi, 2023, p. 28). However, there are challenges and obstacles that somewhat complicate this importance, which we believe may hinder effective functional decision-making. The most prominent of these are:

-There is sometimes a weakness in functional participation this could be due to several factors, such as:

- Lack of motivation
- Unsuitable work environment
- Unclear goals
- Lack of communication with management

-The need to enhance awareness of the importance of participation in institutions and public administrations, and even private ones. Therefore, we believe there are some prospects and aspirations that must be taken into account, including, for example but not limited to:

* The necessity of strengthening the role of the worker community, especially the union role, which is considered a professional association for representation and defense of economic and professional interests such as wages and allowances

(Mansoul, 2022, p. 245). Accordingly, taking any action that disrupts the practice of these activities is prohibited.

* Improving the legal framework to encourage worker participation in decision-making due to the necessity of achieving justice and social stability (Belkadi, 2023, p. 20). This is precisely why the Algerian legislator, in establishing union organization, made it a procedure that does not require prior permission from the public authority. The union organization, in its work and management, is subject only to its basic law and internal regulations, which the founding members freely and independently prepare, with the condition that the establishment does not violate national values and unity (Belkadi, 2023, p. 25).

It is prohibited for them to create or form organizations based on doctrinal, religious, partisan, or political foundations, or any formation that violates the provisions of the Constitution and other laws, or to participate in any of them, all in pursuit of making effective decisions that serve economic and social development.

Second requirement: The Effectiveness of Union Participation in Decision-Making

Economic and political systems that rely on the freedom of work parties make the latter an active party in defending workers' interests, participating in shaping economic policy, and confronting the dominance of employers (Ben Guerouache & Zouatine, 2025, p. 121). Union organization in Algeria has gone through several stages, starting from the stage of the one-party system. National constitutions have been concerned with this since independence, i.e., since the 1963 Constitution and the 1989 Constitution, which embodied all individual and collective union rights and freedoms, in which the right of employing bodies to practice trade union rights was established, until the issuance of Law 02/23 of April 25, 2023, relating to the exercise of trade union rights, which played an important role in moving away from political and partisan influences (Belkadi, 2023, p. 20).

According to the rules and procedures stipulated in this law, trade union organizations are formed according to the required legal conditions of age of majority and enjoyment of civil and political rights as per Article 28 of Law 23/02, under the supervision of a bailiff. The number of founding members varies depending on whether the trade union organizations are national, regional, provincial (wilaya), or municipal (baladiyah), with the obligation to announce the trade union organization in at least one national newspaper (Belkadi, 2023, p. 26).

On this basis, the role undertaken by unions today is not limited to defending the interests of the segment they represent only, but has expanded to include care, guidance, and active participation in the economic, social, and political development plans of society and the state, and to take a pioneering and leading position alongside the political and economic decision-making institutions as a supportive partner, consultant, and performance monitor (Baghdadi, 2020, p. 55).

In this regard, trade union organizations have the right to hold their members accountable for any of the reasons mentioned in their internal regulations, taking into

account the provisions of this law, in addition to some activities undertaken by trade union organizations (Baghdadi, 2020, p. 28). It is worth noting that in Algeria recently, some unions have played a role in enhancing and developing awareness among their members (Baghdadi, 2020, p. 66). Accordingly, we note that trade union freedom has become a tangible reality, through which individuals and groups seek to achieve their material and moral interests and demands according to the programs and ideas that each individual and group believes in. This is to protect public and private freedoms and enhance union awareness. We have also noted the participation of unions through their elected councils and members in many boards of directors of companies they contribute to, and their continuous presence in all planning and executive committees, councils, and bodies, where they are represented in their union capacity or through their active members, as well as their continuous defense of the national economy and its protection from foreign penetration, control, and influence (Baghdadi, 2020, p. 64).

TOPIC TWO:

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY CONTRIBUTES TO DECISION-MAKING

Strengthening participatory democracy requires expanding the scope of citizens' participation in decision-making. This can be achieved by enhancing national dialogue and active participation in it. It also requires enhancing transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, a task entrusted to the role of the functional community. Thus, democracy becomes more inclusive and effective.

First requirement: Improving the Climate of Functional Dialogue

Participation in social dialogue on social and economic policies is considered one of the effective civilized means for managing professional relations by developing strategies to avoid conflict (Ben Guerouache & Zouatine, 2025, p. 113). It is a fundamental entry point for implementing participatory democracy in the field of work, building consensus in labour relations.

Effective communication between management and employees is an opportunity to involve employees in the decision-making process and improve the work environment by listening to employees' ideas. Collective labour rights, represented in trade union rights, the right to collective bargaining, and social dialogue, did not come from nowhere nor all at once. Rather, they came based on a successive series of conflicts, demonstrations, and even bloody repressive clashes between workers and employers (Ben Guerouache & Zouatine, 2025, p. 111).

To activate the climate of functional dialogue, the following steps can be taken:

- Encouraging open and transparent communication between all parties.
- Promoting active listening and mutual understanding.
- Setting common goals and working towards achieving them.

- Enhancing trust and mutual respect.
- Managing conflicts constructively and resolving them effectively.

This is evident through:

- Encouraging open and transparent communication: Holding periodic team meetings to discuss projects and suggestions.
- Promoting active listening and mutual understanding: Allocating time to listen to colleagues' ideas and opinions without interruption.
- Setting common goals and working towards achieving them: Developing a clear action plan that includes specific goals and defined responsibilities for each individual.
- Enhancing trust and mutual respect: Providing support and encouragement to colleagues in facing challenges.
- Managing conflicts constructively and resolving them effectively: Using constructive dialogue and mediation to resolve disputes in a way satisfactory to all parties.

On this basis, dialogue is the foundation of democracy, as it allows citizens to express their opinions and participate in decision-making. Dialogue enhances transparency, accountability, and mutual understanding, contributing to building a strong and stable democratic society.

Second requirement: Defending the Role of the Functional Community

A healthy work environment enhances productivity and job satisfaction. Therefore, defending it improves communication, thereby supporting functional well-being and enhancing transparency, contributing to building a more positive workplace. This can only be achieved through:

First section: Strengthening the Legal Protection of Workers

Transparency at work means clarifying goals by explaining plans to employees, sharing information regularly, applying rules with complete fairness, and taking employees' opinions into consideration**.**

The Algerian legislator, through the Law on the Exercise of Trade Union Rights No. 23/02, worked to strengthen the procedures for protecting the exercise of trade union rights by granting wage-earning workers, public employees, and contractual workers the necessary protection (Hamed & Nabaya, 2023, p. 974), in accordance with the provisions of Article 125 of Law 23/02, whether from administrative prosecution or judicial prosecution (Hamed & Nabaya, 2023, p. 22), such as the freedom to establish unions and join them (Mansoul, 2022, p. 246).

Legal protection for employees and workers becomes more effective when:

- Defending workers' rights in courts: Unions defend workers' rights in legal disputes.
- Guaranteeing workers' rights to expression and participation in decisions.
- Promoting equality and justice at work.
- Enabling workers to participate effectively in political and economic life.

- Strengthening the role of unions and workers' organizations in representing workers.
- Monitoring the application of laws: Unions monitor the application of labour laws and report any violations.
- Participating in drafting laws: Unions participate in dialogue on amending or creating new laws that protect workers' rights.

Second section: Enhancing Transparency in Functional Affairs

The new law on trade union rights (23/02) is considered one of the fundamental laws that aligns with the provisions of the Constitution of November 1, 2020, and came in accordance with the broad outlines set by the President of the Republic to undertake deep social reforms, especially in the field of labour relations (Hamed & Nabaya, 2023, p. 974).

According to previous statements by the Minister of Labor, the new text came to correct the deficiencies that existed in the old text dating back more than 30 years, to control and regulate it so that it is not absolute. This is done to preserve the rights of workers and employees, guarantee the freedom of union activity within the framework of respect for the Constitution and the law, contributing to enhancing democratic practice for all parties.

The new text also clarifies more clearly the concept of exercising trade union rights by establishing principles based primarily on ensuring the independence and neutrality of unions, away from political and partisan tensions, and not combining union work with political work, and establishing the principle of equality among all unions without discrimination. Among the provisions included is what relates to the scope of application of the law, which includes employees, wage-earning workers, public employees, and public agents, regardless of the legal nature of their employment relationship. It does not include employees belonging to the National Defense and National Security sectors who are subject to special provisions. The new text prohibits combining the holding of a leadership position in a political party with a trade union organization, prohibits external financing of unions, and precisely determines the representation rate within trade union organizations, federations, and confederations (Ben Guerouache & Zouatine, 2025, p. 130). It also includes protection against dismissal or removal for union delegates and representatives directly elected by the group of workers for the purpose of collective bargaining and settling collective disputes.

The government discusses many issues with social partners, such as the restructuring and privatization of institutions, the problem of unemployment, and improving the conditions for the activity and financing of private institutions (Baghdadi, 2020, p. 61). At the social level, the union secures employment opportunities for its members and combats unemployment. It also works to secure a social insurance umbrella for its members. It also holds conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, intensive training courses, and scientific visits. It also undertakes many social activities, such as distributing supplies and aid to poor families and

supporting local charitable associations. Thus, unions become a destination for social participations and mass activities and influence the social and cultural fabric of civil society in a significant and effective positive way (Belkadi, 2023, p. 21).

On this basis, unions play a significant role in defending social rights and improving working conditions through:

Negotiating wages and benefits: Unions seek to improve wages and social benefits for workers. **"Unions need a solid negotiation strategy. The steps include:**

- **Setting clear objectives** such as increasing wages or improving working conditions.
- **Gathering data** on wages and conditions in the sector.
- **Communicating with members** to ensure their support.
- **Negotiating with management** with complete clarity and confidence."

- Improving the work environment: Unions work to improve working conditions and ensure worker safety.
- Defending basic rights: Such as the right to work and the right to health care.

For this purpose, interference in the functioning of trade union organizations by any means that places the trade union organization under the control of the employer is prohibited, as well as refraining from all pressures and actions antagonistic to the trade union organization, whether against its members or activities (Belkadi, 2023, p. 24), in order to achieve the goals that the trade union organization seeks. Accordingly, the union delegate enjoys a set of facilities to enable him to perform his duties according to Article 105 of Law 23/02.

Accordingly, the indicators are constructed as follows:

1. Participation in Decision-Making:
Involving employees in decision-making, encouraging them to submit proposals, and allowing their opinions to influence administrative decisions.

2. Transparency:
Providing employees with relevant information, clarifying administrative procedures, and making decisions accessible and understandable.

3. Accountability:
Establishing effective complaint mechanisms, monitoring decision-makers, and implementing mechanisms for performance evaluation.

4. Inclusiveness:
Ensuring the participation of different categories of employees and providing equal opportunities to participate in the decision-making process.

5. Responsiveness:
Ensuring the timely consideration of employees' proposals, requests, and complaints and providing appropriate responses.

6. Digital Participation:
Providing electronic platforms that facilitate employee participation, consultation, communication, and the submission of proposals.

7. Satisfaction:
Assessing employees' satisfaction with the available mechanisms and opportunities for participation in administrative decision-making.

8. Effectiveness:
Assessing the extent to which participatory practices contribute to improving the quality of decisions and enhancing administrative performance.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the strategy of participatory democracy and its strengthening in the public office or functional community is considered a modern approach in the work environment that contributes to creating an effective professional decision in which employees are involved in making it, so that we are faced with a more just and productive functional community, where enhancing functional innovation is achieved and the benefit is generalized to society as a whole. On this basis, the results of adopting the participatory democracy approach, in light of the increasing challenges facing institutions today in the modern era, contribute to creating effective decisions in human resource management and administrative governance.

The study reached the following findings:

- Participatory democracy can contribute to strengthening the position of public employees within the administrative decision-making process by creating opportunities for consultation and expression of professional views.
- The application of participatory approaches within the public service can support the principles of transparency, accountability, and administrative responsibility.
- Employee participation can improve the quality of administrative decisions by allowing decision-makers to take into consideration the practical knowledge and professional experience of public employees.
- Participatory mechanisms can contribute to establishing a more balanced relationship between the administration and public employees, particularly through dialogue, consultation, and the consideration of professional concerns.
- The integration of participatory practices into public administration can contribute to strengthening employees' sense of responsibility and their commitment to the objectives of the public service.
- From a legal perspective, effective participation requires clear regulatory mechanisms that determine the forms, procedures, and limits of employee involvement in administrative matters.

- The existence of legal and regulatory provisions concerning employee participation does not, by itself, guarantee its effective implementation. Their practical effectiveness depends on the extent to which administrative institutions apply them in a genuine and consistent manner.
- Administrative centralization and bureaucratic practices may constitute practical obstacles to the effective development of participatory democracy within the public service.
- The development of digital administration can provide additional mechanisms for consultation, communication, and participation, thereby facilitating interaction between public employees and administrative authorities.
- Strengthening participatory democracy within the public service requires not only legal regulation but also an institutional culture based on dialogue, transparency, cooperation, and respect for professional contributions.
- The effectiveness of participatory democracy ultimately depends on establishing an appropriate balance between the administration's authority to manage the public service and the employees' right to participate in matters affecting their professional environment.
- Accordingly, participatory democracy can be considered a complementary mechanism for developing public administration, provided that its implementation remains consistent with the principles of legality, continuity, equality, and efficiency governing the public service.

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