Active Citizenship in the Cognitive, Behavioral, and Affective Practices of Algerian Youth-A Field Study Conducted on a Sample of Youth in the City of Sétif-

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the level of active citizenship among Algerian youth by measuring three main dimensions: cognitive, behavioral, and affective. It also examines their relationship with institutions and the extent of their participation in civic and political life. The study adopted a survey-based approach by administering a questionnaire to a sample of youth. The findings indicate that an apparent disparity between a high level of awareness of socio-economic rights and a low level of awareness of political and civil rights and of participation mechanisms characterizes active citizenship. The results also reveal limited involvement in associative and voluntary activities, except for simple charitable actions. Nevertheless, youth expressed a strong emotional attachment to the homeland and national symbols, as well as feelings of pride and belonging to Algerian identity, despite a decline in trust in official institutions. Overall, the study concludes that active citizenship among Algerian youth remains more at the level of affective and cognitive representations than as an effective practical engagement in public life.

Keywords: Citizenship, Active Citizenship, Algerian Youth, Civic and Political Participation, Rights and Duties

Introduction

Active citizenship is considered the most essential requirement in contemporary Algerian society, given its role in achieving national unity and strengthening the sense of belonging, human fraternity, and the rule of law. Algerian society faces numerous economic, social, political, and cultural challenges due to internal and external factors. These challenges have caused citizens to suffer from several problems that threaten their security and stability, most notably rising unemployment rates, weak public services, high living costs, and an unprecedented increase in crime rates. Despite numerous attempts to adopt strategies aimed at addressing these problems, they have not effectively contributed to achieving their intended goals, which has led to a widening gap between citizens and state institutions and deepened feelings of marginalization, exclusion, and social disparities, particularly among youth.

The failure of governmental policies and procedures to address the problems of Algerian society in general, and youth-related issues in particular, calls for examining the matter from another perspective based on the philosophy of involving citizens themselves in solving their problems, which is known as active citizenship. This concept is founded on initiative, participation, awareness, a sense of responsibility, social solidarity, and engagement in civil society institutions, contributing to the realization of the public interest and the protection of rights and freedoms. Social and economic development is no longer solely the responsibility of the government and its official institutions. In this context, Algerian society has witnessed in recent years several initiatives aimed at supporting active citizenship and promoting the principles of civil society, reflecting political will, such as the establishment of the National Observatory of Civil Society within the 2020 constitutional amendment as a foresight body and an active partner in development, public policies, and the promotion of the system of rights and freedoms. In addition, the Supreme Council for Youth was established in 2021 as an advisory body that provides opinions and recommendations on issues related to youth needs and well-being in the economic, social, cultural, and sports fields, promotes national values, civic responsibility, and social solidarity among youth, encourages their participation in public and political life and comprehensive development, and combats discrimination, extremism, and social problems.

However, despite their significant importance, political initiatives remain insufficient to integrate youth and firmly establish the principles of active citizenship, as empirical evidence indicates that many young people refrain from participating in public life, ranging from elections and political issues to economic matters. This situation raises the issue of awareness of the importance of active citizenship, positive participation, and responsible behavior toward society's public interest. Demonstrations, slogans, or images do not measure active citizenship; instead, it is measured through a set of ideas and tangible behaviors in the daily lives of young people. This leads to the following question: To what extent are Algerian youth aware of the concept of active citizenship?

The following sub-questions fall under this central question:

- To what extent do young people possess sufficient knowledge to practice active citizenship?
- To what extent do young people engage in behaviors that reflect active citizenship?
- To what extent do Algerian youth feel a sense of belonging and pride toward the homeland?

I. Methodological framework of the study

1/ Study Methodology

The most appropriate approach for the present study is the field research method, which is considered one of the main approaches used in descriptive research. This method is employed to study phenomena that exist in the current period and is often applied to large population groups. It allows for the examination of patterns of action, thinking, and feeling within these groups. (Angers, 2006, p. 106)

2/ Data Collection Instrument

The questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. It is a direct technique for posing questions to individuals in a structured manner. The questionnaire was developed through a conceptual analysis of the concept of active citizenship, which is embodied in three dimensions: (1) the cognitive dimension, (2) the behavioral dimension, and (3) the affective dimension. These dimensions correspond to the sub-questions of the study and constitute the main axes of the questionnaire.

3/ Research Population and Sample

The target population of the study consists of youth without specifying particular characteristics, except for age, which ranges from 18 years to 35 years (despite the existing differences among researchers regarding the definition of youth age). Accordingly, the research population in this case is characterized by its large size, which makes it difficult to enumerate due to the absence of a clearly defined sampling frame. Therefore, an accidental (convenience) sampling method was adopted by approaching some public places in the city of Sétif, where the selection of sample units was carried out randomly. Regarding sample size, the questionnaire was distributed to 100 individuals, a number considered appropriate and sufficient to obtain relevant results within the available resources, given that the research population, although large, is relatively homogeneous, as it consists of youth without specific distinguishing characteristics.

4/Previous Studies

Previous studies have addressed the concept of active citizenship from different perspectives and contexts.

The study conducted by **Mona Nasser Abdullah Al-Shehri (2020)** examined the role of

both active and inactive citizenship in promoting stability and social development in Saudi society. It sought to clarify how citizens' conscious or unconscious practices influence the path of social development. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, the study concluded that nationality constitutes the primary identity of citizens in Saudi Arabia without negating their religious or cultural affiliations. It also regulates the relationship between the individual and the state in terms of rights and duties, and reflects the individual's interaction with the homeland, which in turn affects participation in stability and development.

The study by **Ratiba Hadj Moussa (2021)** aimed to understand patterns of youth activism in Algeria and analyze forms of participation in public affairs by examining protest, digital, and civic practices, as well as how youth express their positions toward political and social conditions. Adopting a descriptive-analytical approach based on four field case studies, the study found that Algerian youth develop new forms of participation that transcend traditional institutional frameworks by creating alternative spaces for expression, demands, and influence. This indicates the presence of actual practices of active citizenship despite political constraints.

The study by **Bouchra Ben Zinen and Francesca Volpi (2025)** sought to understand the position and practice of citizenship in Algeria during the Hirak movement and to analyze how citizens express their rights and duties under political restrictions. Using a descriptive approach, the study traced manifestations of popular protest and analyzed the strategies of both the Hirak and the ruling elite. The findings showed that the Hirak gave "voice" to new citizenship projects, revealing tensions between demands for participation and expression and narratives of loyalty to the regime. It also demonstrated that some citizens resort to withdrawal, such as abstention or migration, as an alternative strategy to constrained formal citizenship.

Finally, the study by **Nawal Lasladj (2017)** focused on the role of active citizenship in improving the performance of public services in Algeria, emphasizing the interactive relationship between citizens and public administration. By analyzing constitutional and legal foundations related to citizens' rights and duties, the study highlighted the contribution of active citizenship to strengthening public service performance and genuine democracy based on popular participation. The results emphasized that activating active citizenship requires not only legal frameworks but also citizens' awareness of their responsibility to develop their skills and capacities to ensure service quality. The absence of such awareness leads to declining performance and transforms society from one of active citizens into a society of subjects.

5/The Concept of Active Citizenship

The term *active citizenship* is considered a problematic concept, as it is laden with multiple meanings and connotations. It largely depends on the specificity of each state and its particular context, which makes it difficult to provide a universal definition. The concept has roots in politics and is often used as a slogan that corresponds to the policy orientation

of a given period. Nelson and Kerr describe active citizenship as being primarily related to engagement and participation, whether through citizens' interaction with the state, such as voting, or through their interaction with one another (civic engagement) (Carroll, 2015, p. 15)

Active citizenship also refers to a set of rights and duties that enable individuals to participate consciously and responsibly in public life, express their opinions, contribute to decision-making, and monitor the performance of governmental and non-governmental institutions. (Khaldoun, 2025, p. 120) An active citizen is one who possesses three essential pillars: belonging to the land, participation in its development, and equality with other citizens and rulers in decision-making for the public interest. In contrast, a person who resides in the homeland while merely complying with orders, without actively contributing to their formulation, preparation, or issuance, is described as a subject rather than an active citizen. (Al-Ardawi, 2019, p. 7)

Active citizenship represents a condition in which the citizen takes the initiative to exercise the right to shape the environment in which they live, based on confidence in the ability of their efforts to influence the management of public life. This participation extends to involvement in various stages of national life, including the formulation of legal and institutional frameworks, policy-making, identifying appropriate pathways to achieve objectives, evaluating implementation, and participating in their modification. (Al-Beltaji, 2016, p. 32)

In another definition, active citizenship is viewed as a practice based on acts of citizenship. In this sense, it refers to the practice through which individuals claim their rights, assume responsibilities, and participate in public affairs, thereby becoming citizens through action rather than merely through legal status. Active citizenship thus has a dual nature: it is emancipatory in that it enables individuals to participate and exert influence, and disciplinary in that it may become a civic duty supported by the state. (Kukovetz, 2025, p. 23)

Based on the foregoing, active citizenship can be understood as citizens' participation in managing the affairs of their society through conscious and responsible engagement in public life, whether by expressing opinions, participating in decision-making, monitoring institutional performance, or engaging civically with other members of society. Such participation reflects a sense of belonging to the homeland and a commitment to contributing to its development.

II. Data Presentation and Analysis

Axis One: Sociodemographic Data

Sociodemographic data constitute the primary entry point for understanding the structure of the sample and analyzing patterns of behavior and attitudes related to active citizenship. They provide an interpretive background that helps link respondents' personal

and social characteristics to their level of awareness and civic practices. The analysis of responses shows a perfect balance between males and females, with each representing 50% of the sample. This symmetry provides a balanced basis for analyzing other variables without statistical bias.

Regarding age, the sample is distributed across several age groups. The first group (18–23 years) represents 34% and includes youth in the university stage or at the beginning of professional integration. The second group (24–29 years) is the largest, accounting for 36%, and represents youth at the peak of social and professional activity, which increases their interaction with institutions and public services. The third group (30–35 years) constitutes 30% and includes youth approaching professional or family stability, which may be reflected in varying attitudes toward civic participation. This age diversity gives the study a greater capacity to understand differences in civic behavior across life stages.

With regard to educational level, the sample is predominantly university-oriented, indicating a strong presence of students or recent graduates from higher education, which is associated with greater awareness of civic issues and public services. Participants with higher education represent the largest proportion at 68%. In contrast, 20% of the sample have secondary education, while 12% have an intermediate level or less, providing a minimum level of educational diversity that allows comparison of perceptions and civic behaviors according to differences in cognitive capital.

As for occupational and social status, job seekers represent the largest category at 28%, a group that is often sensitive to institutional performance and public services due to their dependence on employment opportunities. They are followed by employees, who constitute 30% and represent the most stable group, which may influence their perception of citizenship through daily interaction with administrative structures. Self-employed individuals account for 23% and are typically associated with professional contexts based on individual initiative. University students represent 19% of the sample and remain in a formative stage, making their attitudes more closely linked to their experiences within the university environment and their sense of social integration.

Axis Two: Cognitive Dimensions of Active Citizenship

The cognitive dimensions of active citizenship constitute the cornerstone in building a conscious individual who understands their position within society and their role in enhancing public life. Knowledge in this context is not limited to familiarity with legal texts, but extends to understanding the rights enjoyed by citizens, the duties expected of them, as well as awareness of participation mechanisms and the dynamics of civic action. Within this framework, this section aims to analyze the level of cognitive awareness among Algerian youth through several key elements:

Regarding knowledge of rights and duties, based on Question No. (5) Related to respondents' awareness of constitutional citizenship rights, the high overall rate of

acknowledged knowledge, reaching 85%, indicates the existence of a general cognitive base. However, a qualitative analysis of specific rights reveals a structural disconnection between awareness of socio-economic rights and awareness of civil and political rights. The highest levels of awareness are concentrated in areas related to living conditions and services, with awareness of the right to housing and work reaching 25%, followed by education rights at 23.52% and health rights at 23.23%.

This focus can be explained by the direct connection of these rights to basic daily needs and their deep-rooted presence within the welfare-state model that has prevailed in Algeria for decades, where the provision of such services is considered a fixed obligation of the state rather than rights requiring civic participation by citizens. Official data support this interpretation, as households benefiting from social support programs reached approximately 31%, equivalent to about USD 7.597 billion from the state's general budget in 2022, with a focus on direct support for fuel and electricity, health, housing, work, and employment. Support also includes free education, healthcare, health insurance, scholarships, housing programs, and wages for young workers in both the public and private sectors through the National Employment Agency.(Nouri, 2023)These policies have made economic and social rights more visible and tangible in the awareness of Algerian youth, while civil and political rights, such as voting, freedom, and dignified living, have recorded very low levels of awareness. This decline reflects the fragility of civic education and the clear failure of political socialization mechanisms. Researchers noted in a 2019 study a near absence of active associations and community initiatives, particularly in rural areas, where associations face difficulties in operation, continuity, and volunteer recruitment. This distance from civic experiencesamong youth helps explain the low level of awareness or interest in this category of rights. (Omrane, 2019, p. 9)

With regard to duties, Question No. (6) reveals a clear variation in the level of awareness of each duty individually, which allows for a deeper understanding of the nature of civic awareness among youth. Voting is identified as the most frequently mentioned duty, with a rate of 29.35%, reflecting the institutional priority placed by the Algerian state on this process as a mechanism for renewing political legitimacy. This form of political socialization appears to resonate with youth through the consolidation of a formal duty that does not require deep daily engagement, representing an instrumental form of awareness that emphasizes official knowledge without necessarily translating into practical commitment.

The relatively high level of awareness of the duty to respect the law also reflects the authorities' emphasis on reinforcing concepts of order and social discipline. From the perspective of youth, this duty is understood as being linked to compliance and everyday behavior that enables them to avoid punishment and maintain social stability. The duty to protect public property, which accounts for 14.42%, indicates youth awareness of their responsibility toward shared assets and state infrastructure. However, the fact that this percentage ranks below voting and respect for the law may reflect a gap between theoretical

awareness and actual practice. While young people recognize the importance of public property as part of the shared social environment, this duty does not receive the same priority as duties directly related to "order" or "legitimacy."

As for duties of a national and defensive nature, such as protecting the country, they recorded a notable presence at 16.41%. This level of awareness indicates youth acceptance of defensive responsibility as part of the collective identity of the nation. Nevertheless, the low percentages recorded for applied duties, such as maintaining security (8.95%) and national service (8.45%), suggest that awareness is centered on the symbolic value of protecting the homeland. At the same time, these findings reflect a degree of youth reservation toward duties that require a significant time commitment or direct individual engagement within security structures.

Knowledge of the Functions of State Institutions: With regard to knowledge of governmental functions, the data derived from responses to Question No. (7) show that 61.22% of participants confirmed their awareness of this issue, while 39% reported insufficient knowledge. This distribution indicates the presence of a moderate and notable level of awareness among Algerian youth concerning the role of government in society; however, it also highlights the existence of a significant segment that requires further civic education.

Sixty percent of the participating youth considered serving the people to be one of the government's core functions. This reflects the dominance of a cognitive orientation centered on the citizen as a beneficiary, whereby the Algerian government or state is perceived as an entity responsible for improving living standards and guaranteeing basic rights. In contrast, the function of protecting the homeland and citizens ranked second, with 13.26% classifying it as a fundamental governmental task. This finding points to the success of the Algerian state in ensuring internal and external security and safeguarding borders effectively, to the extent that these functions have become backgrounded and largely invisible in citizens' awareness. Youth no longer view protection as a prominent governmental function, considering it self-evident and confined mainly to the military domain, without recognizing that protection also encompasses economic, cyber, and environmental security.

As for maintaining general stability and enforcing the law, the percentage is very low, at 10%. This indicates that youth have a limited understanding of the government's supervisory and legal role. While daily services are perceived as clear and direct, efforts to ensure law enforcement and uphold justice are viewed as merely formal duties that are distant from their everyday lives and therefore do not feature prominently in their awareness.

Regarding administrative, strategic, and financial functions, levels of recognition are extremely low. Only 2% identified the management of public facilities as a governmental function, while just 1% each recognized the implementation of presidential programs, the formulation and execution of public policies, and the preparation of the state budget. These

figures illustrate that youth tend to focus on the government's direct, tangible functions. In contrast, tasks related to the daily administration of public services, the implementation of high-level policies, and financial planning remain largely invisible to them.

With regard to the functions of the municipality, and based on the results of Question No. (8), the findings show that the majority of youth possess a relative level of awareness of municipal functions. The detailed responses indicate that 61% are familiar with its roles as the administrative institution closest to citizens. However, 39% lack knowledge of its functions, indicating a significant disparity in awareness levels.

A high proportion of youth associated municipal functions with housing, as housing currently represents one of the most pressing social concerns in Algeria. This has led respondents to attribute this responsibility directly to the municipality, given its status as the closest local institution. This indicates that their perception of the municipality's role is shaped by major expectations rather than precise knowledge of the centralized administrative structure. Accordingly, this reflects a lack of clarity in institutional communication, as municipalities and higher-level institutions do not sufficiently highlight their respective roles, thereby contributing to an imprecise understanding among youth.

While youth awareness of municipal functions is concentrated on the social dimension, particularly housing, the second-highest level of recognition relates to direct daily services, notably public cleanliness, which accounts for 12%. This suggests that the presence or absence of cleanliness becomes a direct indicator of the presence or absence of the municipality and is perceived as evidence of institutional effectiveness. Such a form of awareness places the municipality under immediate public accountability and contributes to creating a favorable foundation for enhancing civic participation through volunteer work or local pressure groups.

Indicators related to administrative functions follow, with 11% of respondents considering the provision of administrative documents and services to municipal residents as core municipal tasks. This shows that youth associate the municipality with services closely linked to their daily lives, such as issuing official documents and providing support to residents. In contrast, the planning, economic, and developmental functions of municipalities remain less visible. They are nearly absent from youth awareness, as reflected in the low percentages attributed to job creation (7%), development (6%), and public facility management (2%).

Only a small proportion of youth associate the municipality with creating a local environment conducive to employment or supporting small initiatives, despite the importance of unemployment in their concerns. Their awareness remains confined to the national central role in employment, without recognizing the supportive role of municipalities. Similarly, development, which constitutes the core function of municipalities within any decentralized system and includes urban planning and infrastructure improvement, is weakly perceived by youth. This limited awareness reduces their

participation in evaluating local projects or monitoring their implementation. Overall, this reflects a lack of knowledge of the administrative and organizational dimensions of municipal governance, including resource management, market regulation, and service continuity, which in turn limits youth capacity to engage in accountability grounded in an accurate understanding of how municipalities operate.

Knowledge of Laws and Methods of Accessing Legal Information Based on the data derived from responses to Question No. (9), awareness of constitutional law suffers from a clear cognitive deficiency. Weak and non-existent knowledge together account for 68%, while good knowledge reaches 21%, and moderate knowledge 11% among responding youth. This indicates that young people lack the necessary reference framework to understand governance mechanisms or to claim their rights on a sound constitutional basis. Consequently, they are unable to practice effective accountability or engage meaningfully in political participation and national debates within the public sphere. This situation risks transforming the Algerian Constitution from an empowering instrument into a mere text that remains inactive in public life.

With regard to contract law, it recorded the lowest level of awareness among all laws, with only 2% reporting good knowledge, while weak knowledge reached 42% and non-existent knowledge 36%. This lack of awareness exposes youth to exploitation through informal employment contracts or unclear financial transactions. It also hinders their ability to engage in economic risk-taking and undermines their confidence in legal protection for commercial dealings. As for consumer law, the combined proportion of good and moderate knowledge reached only 17%, whereas weak and non-existent awareness amounted to 67%. These figures indicate that the majority of youth are unaware of accountability and complaint mechanisms related to goods and services, resulting in passive consumer citizenship. Such passivity contributes to implicit acceptance of declining product quality and weakens the citizen's role in improving quality standards.

Family law recorded the highest proportion of good and moderate knowledge among the previously mentioned laws, given its capacity to protect youth rights and civil duties more directly. This stands in contrast to labor law, which shows a good knowledge level of 40% and a moderate level of 25%. Finally, traffic law registered the highest level of good knowledge at 71%. However, this high level does not necessarily reflect civic awareness, as knowledge of traffic regulations is primarily driven by the need to avoid penalties and fines and to ensure personal safety.

Question No. (10) measures a vital dimension related to access to legal information, revealing how youth rely on modern and social sources to learn about their rights and duties rather than official channels. The results show that 77% of youth confirm that they seek information about laws, indicating a high level of awareness of the importance of law in their lives and a recognition of the need for legal knowledge. A dominance of informal sources is evident, with the internet and social media accounting for 43% of legal

information sources for youth. This confirms that digital citizenship constitutes the main environment in which Algerian youth search for their rights.

Friends and acquaintances represent the second most frequent source at 10.23%, as youth often find discussing legal issues with a friend or relative more comfortable and reassuring than dealing with an administrative employee or a lawyer. At the same time, the results indicate that 32% of respondents rely on the Official Gazette as a source of legal information. This proportion is relatively positive compared to the general situation, as nearly one-third of participants continue to consult official sources to verify information. This reflects a methodological awareness among this group regarding the importance of verifying official sources rather than relying solely on orally transmitted information or less reliable platforms.

In contrast, the findings show that reliance on specialists, lawyers, and the constitution stands at 4% for each, amounting collectively to only 12%. This indicates a severe weakness in turning to professional and direct channels for obtaining accurate legal information, whether due to the high cost of consultation, difficulty in accessing specialists, or a lack of full trust in these sources. As a result, youth tend to rely on more accessible and less formal sources. Overall, these results clearly demonstrate that only a limited segment of youth engages with legal information through a systematic and professionally grounded approach.

Knowledge of How to Participate in Political Life: Question No. (11) revealed varying levels of understanding among youth regarding ways of participating in political life. The results show that knowledge is concentrated in certain aspects while remaining limited in others. Engagement in political parties and voting received the same level of recognition among youth, at 31%, indicating that political awareness is largely focused on traditional and institutionalized channels of participation. Voting is considered the minimum level on the scale of citizenship, as it is an easily understood and accessible mechanism, which explains its prominent position in the cognitive awareness of youth. Similarly, party membership is perceived as a clear and officially recognized channel for accessing the public sphere and engaging in effective democratic participation.

In contrast to these traditional mechanisms, direct forms of political influence recorded a sharp decline. The percentages for running for local or legislative office and volunteering in electoral campaigns were equal, at 9%. This low level reflects a form of cognitive disengagement among youth regarding mechanisms of leadership and effective influence, and also points to a deep sense of exclusion and a perceived inability to access positions of power.

Knowledge of rights and duties recorded the lowest level of awareness among all indicators, at only 4%. This suggests that even when youth participate, they lack awareness of the theoretical and legal foundations of such participation. Since knowledge of rights and duties constitutes a fundamental condition of citizenship, this finding indicates that youth political awareness lacks the necessary legal and conceptual structure.

Following the National News Question No. (12) indicates the level of youth interest in following national developments, as this constitutes an important indicator of engagement with public life. The findings show that 51% of youth stated that they follow national news on a regular basis, which is a significant proportion reflecting sustained interest in what is happening in the country at the political, economic, and social levels. This behavior points to the existence of a broad audience base with access to information, which represents a necessary foundation for the formation of public opinion and for holding authorities accountable.

In contrast, 32% of respondents reported that they follow national news occasionally. This suggests a situational or selective relationship with current events, often linked to major developments, crises, or issues that directly affect their personal interests. This pattern is commonly referred to in media studies as selective news consumption. This group may have a limited capacity to comprehensively evaluate public policies due to their partial exposure to national issues, which in turn hinders their civic and political participation.

Meanwhile, 17% of respondents represent youth who rarely follow national news. Although this proportion is relatively low, it reflects a segment that is behaviorally withdrawn and lacks motivation to follow national affairs. This disengagement may be attributed to a lack of trust in state institutions, particularly the media. This interpretation is supported by a study conducted by Moussaoui and Faiza, which indicates that youth perceive official media outlets such as Algerian television, print newspapers, and national radio as being used by the state as instruments of propaganda and as means of concealing failures. (Moussaoui, 2024, pp. 817–818) This perception helps explain this particular cognitive orientation among youth.

Axis Three: Behavioral Dimensions of Active Citizenship

The behavioral dimension represents the practical extension of awareness and knowledge, whereby citizenship moves from the level of theoretical understanding to that of everyday practice. Civic behavior encompasses a range of actions through which individuals express their commitment toward society and the state, such as respecting the law, protecting public property, participating in public life, and acting in accordance with values of responsibility and solidarity. This section aims to analyze the nature of the behaviors through which Algerian youth express their citizenship and to examine the extent to which these behaviors are consistent with the principles they cognitively endorse. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the gap or alignment between awareness and practice.

Association Membership and Participation in Volunteer Activities: Based on the data from responses to Question No. (13) Concerning youth participation in national associations, the findings reveal a clear weakness in associative engagement. A total of 81% of respondents reported that they do not belong to any association, compared to only 19% who indicated having membership experience. This result highlights the limited level of participation in the organized civic sphere.

This finding aligns with what is indicated in the literature regarding contemporary Arab societies' perceptions of youth. Some studies suggest that Arab societies still tend to view young people as a group that is "not capable" of assuming political and social responsibilities. This perception contributes to the marginalization of youth from public life and fosters a sense that their roles are neither recognized nor welcomed within institutional structures. (Gatti, 2019, p. 7_28)

In this context, membership among those who are engaged is distributed across only three types of associations. Charitable associations account for the largest share at 73.68%, followed by health-related associations at 15.78%, while mosque-based associations represent 10.2%. This concentration on charitable organizations reflects Algerian youth's tendency to engage in activities that generate immediate and tangible social impact, rather than joining civic or developmental associations that require planning, continuity, and a higher level of political engagement. This pattern also indicates that when youth do participate, their involvement is mainly confined to solidarity- and service-oriented initiatives, without extending to broader organizational roles that foster active citizenship. As a result, limited associative engagement constitutes one of the main obstacles to youth participation in civic life and to their effective contribution to processes of social change.

With regard to active participation within associations, the findings show that levels of commitment among engaged Algerian youth vary significantly. A very small group contributes on a regular and sustained basis, representing only 2%, which indicates the rarity of highly committed and continuous membership among youth within Algerian associations. In contrast, the category labeled "often" constitutes the largest proportion at 7%, reflecting a flexible and situational form of engagement, where most activities rely on intermittent but repeated contributions. The "sometimes" category represents another pattern of involvement at 10%, in which individuals participate only when time or need allows, revealing a low-intensity form of membership in terms of commitment. These varying levels of participation highlight that associative work depends not on the number of members but rather on the quality of their engagement. A significant portion of members display a form of nominal belonging without translating it into sustained and effective participation in association activities. This situation poses a challenge to the effectiveness of associations, as weak regular commitment undermines their organizational strength and limits their ability to embody active citizenship as intended. Moreover, fluctuating participation reflects everyday realities experienced by Algerian youth, such as time constraints, academic or work pressures, and the absence of appropriate incentives, which make selective participation more prevalent than continuous engagement. Consequently, while charitable associations play a positive role in Algerian society, they remain in need of enhancing continuity and commitment among their members in order to evolve from spaces of occasional assistance into spaces of genuine participatory citizenship.

Regarding participation in volunteer activities, the results of Question No. (14) show that only 32% reported having taken part in voluntary activities, while 68% stated that they had

never engaged in such actions. This significant gap reflects a high level of what may be described as "passive citizenship" among a large segment of youth, meaning that they hold legal citizenship status without practicing their civic roles in the public sphere. This abstention indicates either a weak sense of the usefulness of participation or the absence of organizational pathways that facilitate youth involvement in community activities that make them feel their contribution is meaningful and impactful. The 32% who reported participating in voluntary work may be viewed as an "active core" with a readiness to take initiative, yet this group still requires clearer structuring and institutional support to ensure greater continuity and stability in their engagement.

An analysis of the nature of voluntary activities shows that the most common forms of participation were mosque cleaning at 30%, fundraising at 29%, and mosque construction at 11%. These activities are closely linked to the charitable sphere, indicating that youth tend to favor actions that yield immediate and visible results in line with values of social solidarity. This reflects a preference for addressing urgent community needs rather than engaging in forms of participation that require long-term planning or sustained developmental awareness. In contrast, tree planting accounted for only 2%, revealing one of the most significant indicators in this question: weak environmental awareness, along with limited recognition of the importance of activities that serve sustainable development and future generations. Active citizenship is not confined to religious or charitable volunteering alone; it also encompasses care for public space, environmental protection, and responsibility toward the future—dimensions that are largely absent from current youth choices.

Axis Four: The Affective Dimension of Active Citizenship

This dimension represents the emotional aspect that connects individuals to their homeland and reflects the extent of their attachment to national values and symbols. It highlights positive or negative feelings toward the country, such as pride in belonging, optimism about the future, a sense of responsibility toward society, and the desire to protect the national image. This analysis aims to examine the feelings of Algerian youth toward their homeland and to explore the extent to which these emotions align with their civic practices and behaviors, while also identifying any contradictions between emotional loyalty and actual engagement in national life.

Based on respondents' answers to Question No. (24), which focuses on the affective dimension of active citizenship, the results reveal a strong and significant presence of positive feelings toward the homeland and its symbols. All respondents expressed pride in their belonging to Algeria, and 100% reported feelings of pride when hearing the national anthem. This reflects a deeply rooted emotional attachment to national symbols. Such strong emotional loyalty indicates that value-based motivation remains a powerful driver of active citizenship. However, this love for the homeland is not accompanied by equivalent trust in state mechanisms. At the same time, 81% of respondents stated that manifestations of

neglect within society evoke negative feelings, indicating a high level of sensitivity toward dysfunctions affecting public space.

Regarding the hierarchy of value priorities, 71% of youth stated that the public interest outweighs personal interest, while 29% disagreed with this view. This reflects variation in the internalization of the value of the common good within society. In terms of trust in the state, opinions are clearly divided: 43% believe that state institutions genuinely work to achieve the public interest, whereas 57% do not agree. This division points to a gap between emotional attachment to the homeland and the evaluation of institutional performance.

With respect to optimism about the future, 51% of youth expressed hope in building a better future for Algeria. The same proportion believes in their ability to make a difference in the country's future, while 39% remained neutral, indicating hesitation or a lack of certainty among a considerable segment of respondents. Defensive national sentiment remains strong, as 81% reported feelings of anger when hearing insults directed at Algeria, reflecting a desire to protect the country's image. Nevertheless, these positive emotions do not prevent 69% of respondents from expressing a desire to emigrate, which highlights a contradiction between love for the homeland and the pursuit of improved living conditions outside Algeria in light of ongoing social and economic challenges.

Behavioral Practices of Active Citizenship: With regard to donation practices, 85% of youth reported that they engage in donating, compared to only 15% who do not practice this behavior. This high percentage indicates that donation represents one of the most accessible and widespread forms of community participation among youth. It does not require organizational involvement or a long-term time commitment, but rather relies on direct individual initiatives that allow young people to feel that they are providing support with immediate impact. This is particularly evident in light of the economic and social conditions experienced by Algerian society, where cases of need and poverty are recurrent, making individual intervention more visible than institutional action. From the perspective of active citizenship, this behavior demonstrates that youth possess a high degree of social responsibility, as moral and value-based motivations strongly drive them toward solidarity. However, this motivation remains primarily focused on assisting individuals in need rather than extending to broader regulatory or developmental dimensions, such as monitoring institutional performance or contributing to the correction of structural imbalances that generate such needs in the first place. These results also reveal a clear preference among youth for low-cost forms of engagement, as they choose channels that enable them to express solidarity without entering into complex organizational commitments or sustained responsibilities, such as association membership, regulatory actions, or reporting violations. This preference reflects a desire to contribute as much as possible while avoiding the challenges often associated with formal or structured participation.

Regarding the reporting of improper behaviors: Question No. (15), which addresses reporting through the green hotline, reveals a significant limitation in youth engagement in

oversight-related citizenship roles. A total of 82% of respondents reported that they do not report violations or misconduct they encounter, compared to only 18% who confirmed engaging in this behavior. This indicates the dominance of behavioral neutrality among the majority, meaning that youth are less inclined to intervene in protecting the public interest or contributing to reducing harmful behaviors within society. This reluctance may be explained by several possible factors, including a lack of awareness of the existence of the hotline itself, insufficient information about its role and how to use it, or the absence of a sense that reporting constitutes an individual responsibility within their civic duties. It may also be linked to fears of legal consequences or doubts regarding the effectiveness of the relevant authorities' response, which weakens motivation to participate. In contrast, the 18% who do report violations represent a segment that embodies an aspect of active citizenship through their willingness to intervene and report as a means of protecting public order and limiting misconduct. Although limited in size, this group signals the emergence of an initial level of oversight awareness that could be strengthened through awareness programs and institutional measures that enhance trust in reporting mechanisms. Overall, these findings reflect an urgent need to deepen civic culture among youth and to encourage them to move from the position of passive observers to that of active contributors.

With regard to the disposal of household waste: data from Question No. (16) indicates that youth demonstrate a high level of commitment to environmental behaviors when these are simple and directly implementable. A total of 84% stated that they "always" dispose of waste in designated places, reflecting a clear response to the prevailing social norm that rejects littering in shared spaces. However, this level of commitment declines markedly when the practice requires time organization or regular follow-up. Only 49% reported "always" disposing of waste at the designated time, while a considerable proportion, 43%, shifted to the "often" category. This suggests that compliance weakens when behavior requires planning or sustained regularity. This variation indicates that youth environmental awareness is primarily linked to immediate actions that can be performed instantly, while it diminishes when behavior is tied to periodic procedures or time constraints. This pattern suggests a tendency to treat environmental responsibility as a situational practice rather than a permanent habit or organized commitment. Such a pattern highlights a clear challenge to the consolidation of environmentally conscious citizenship, as it requires moving from momentary compliance to the adoption of more regular and sustainable practices in daily life.

As for waste disposal in public spaces, based on Question No. (17), there is a very low level of civic commitment. A total of 88% of youth reported that they engage in this behavior only occasionally, with an almost complete absence of regular behavior (0% "always" and 0% "often"). This pattern indicates that waste management in shared public spaces is not perceived as a fixed daily duty, but rather as an occasional act performed only when circumstances allow. This contrasts sharply with behavior in private spaces, where individuals demonstrate a strong commitment to proper waste disposal, with 84% reporting

"always." This disparity points to a clear difference in how the concept of citizenship is perceived in private versus public spaces. While individuals maintain a minimum level of discipline in their private environments under direct social oversight, this discipline diminishes entirely in shared spaces where supervision and accountability are absent. This reinforces a pattern of "incidental citizenship," practiced only when conditions are fully conducive or when others engage in the same behavior. Many youth perceive these tasks as the responsibility of the state rather than their own, leaving them to sanitation workers. This behavior also reflects weak attachment to public space, in line with what Abdelwahab Elmessiri noted: "When people perceive that the state is run for the benefit of an elite rather than for the nation, the individual becomes incapable of sacrifice for the homeland and turns instead to pursuing personal interests." Accordingly, declining commitment to public cleanliness does not merely reflect a lack of environmental awareness but rather suggests a deeper crisis in which shared space loses its value as part of collective responsibility.

Regarding participation in presidential and local elections and the submission ofproposals:data from Question No. (18) show similar patterns of electoral participation at both national and local levels. A total of 64% reported that they participate in elections, compared to 35% who abstain. This indicates a relatively acceptable presence of political citizenship, particularly since electoral participation is considered one of the simplest and most important expressions of civic will. However, the 35% abstention rate remains indicative of weak trust, either in the effectiveness of elections or in the institutions responsible for organizing them. The equal levels of participation in local and national elections suggest that youth do not strongly differentiate between levels of decision-making, which may reflect a lack of precise awareness of the nature of each level and its direct impact on their daily lives. As such, electoral participation among youth oscillates between a symbolic presence that reflects a minimum level of political engagement and abstention that reflects declining belief in the ability of individual votes to influence the general course of affairs.

With regard to submitting proposals to local authorities, data from Question No. (19) show that 98% of youth do not submit any proposals to municipalities, indicating an almost complete withdrawal from their role as citizen partners in shaping local policies. This abstention does not merely reflect a lack of initiative but rather reveals a deep level of disengagement from institutions and a lack of belief that citizens' opinions can find a place within administrative mechanisms. Submitting proposals typically requires cognitive and organizational effort to define problems, envision solutions, and draft formal submissions, whichcosts that youth appear unwilling to bear amid a widespread belief that institutions do not respond to citizens' proposals. Thus, abstention here represents not simple inactivity, but a position shaped by long-standing experiences of perceived ineffectiveness. In contrast, only 2% reported having actually submitted proposals, representing a very small group of youth who possess a minimal level of trust and civic courage to attempt engagement.

Similarly, with regard to signing legitimate protest petitions, the results mirror those observed for submitting proposals. Only 2% reported using this mechanism, compared to 98% who never use it. Consequently, petitions as a means of influencing public decisions do not occupy a place within youth civic practices. This is attributed to a lack of confidence in their effectiveness or to the absence of clear pathways through which such demands can reach relevant authorities. Youth tend to avoid written methods that require organization and coordination, preferring either silence or informal individual expression. Therefore, abstention from petition signing does not merely indicate withdrawal from participation, but also highlights the absence of a firmly established culture of petitions as a tool of civic pressure.

Regarding the monitoring of local officials' performance, data from Question No. (21) reveal an almost complete absence of this behavior among youth. A total of 98% reported that they do not engage in any form of monitoring or follow-up of elected officials' work, compared to only 2% who practice this role in some capacity. These findings do not simply indicate disengagement or a gap, but rather reveal a particular way in which youth conceptualize their role within the political and administrative system. The majority do not view themselves as part of the natural chain of public accountability, instead perceiving the monitoring of officials as an internal matter related solely to government institutions rather than a civic responsibility of citizens. This perception creates an imbalanced relationship between citizens and officials, wherein the citizens' role is confined to receiving decisions and services rather than evaluating them or holding decision-makers accountable. These figures also reflect the absence of oversight tools within youth civic awareness, as many lack knowledge of the criteria by which local officials' performance can be assessed, as well as the channels and civic culture needed to evaluate programs, read budgets, or understand decision-making processes at municipal and district levels. Furthermore, a significant proportion of youth perceive local oversight as a domain that may carry undesirable social or administrative consequences, reinforcing their avoidance of such engagement. In contrast, the 2% who monitor officials represent a very small group. Accordingly, the absence of a monitoring culture among the majority should not be understood merely as weak political participation, but as a lack of self-perception as a component of local decision-making. This weakens one of the most important dimensions of active citizenship: the sense of being able to influence public affairs as part of everyday life rather than as a distant responsibility.

Regarding ethical practices of content sharing on social media and defendingjust causes, data from Question No. (22), which concerns verifying news sources, indicates a high degree of inconsistency. Only 8% reported that they always verify information, meaning that the vast majority contribute, directly or indirectly, to the circulation of unverified news. The majority rely on selective and inconsistent behavior, with 52% stating that they verify sources "sometimes," while 39% do not verify at all, and only 1% do so rarely. This suggests that the culture of information verification has not yet become

systematically embedded among youth, and that engagement with digital content remains driven by speed and immediate impressions rather than by professional or ethical standards of information dissemination. This threatens public awareness and exposes youth to polarization and misinformation. These figures also indicate that a large proportion of youth do not consider source verification a fundamental step prior to sharing information, but rather an optional practice undertaken only when doubt is evident. In contrast, the 8% who consistently verify information represent a small group that practices a more mature form of digital citizenship, recognizing the impact of misinformation on public opinion and on trust between individuals and institutions.

As for defending just causes through social media, Question No. (23) reveals that 88% of youth engage in this behavior, compared to only 12% who do not. This high percentage illustrates that the digital space has become a preferred arena for youth to express their ethical and social positions, as it enables rapid, low-cost participation without requiring integration into formal channels or organizational structures. Social media platforms provide youth with a sense that their voices can reach a wide audience, leading them to view these platforms as effective means of solidarity and advocacy for the oppressed, especially when compared to traditional participation mechanisms that they perceive as slow or ineffective. The remaining 12% represent a limited group that is either uninterested in public debate or reluctant to express public positions, regardless of their legitimacy, due to fear of social interaction or skepticism regarding the effectiveness of digital expression.

Conclusion

This field research aimed to investigate the ways in which young people in Sétif, Algeria interact with citizenship by focusing on three main perspectives: awareness (cognitive) involvement (behavioral) and emotional attachment (affective). Additionally it analyzed their relationship with institutions and their participation, in political activities.

The results indicate that although young individuals, in Sétif display a national identity and emotional attachment to their nation this sentiment does not consistently lead to steady structured civic engagement.

From a perspective young people show a strong grasp of their social and economic rights especially concerning housing, education, employment and healthcare. Nonetheless their level of understanding is inconsistent. Their familiarity with political rights, constitutional processes and institutional duties—particularly, at the local government level—is significantly less developed. This indicates a citizenship perspective primarily informed by the anticipation of state provisions than rooted in legal entitlements or active participatory obligations.

From a perspective there is an evident absence of organized civic participation. The majority of individuals are not active in organizations and when they do get involved it tends to be via charitable or religious efforts that provide direct concrete results. While solidarity

actions such as donating are other types of engagement like signing petitions overseeing public officials or lodging complaints are infrequent. This reflects a tendency towards low-risk involvement rather, than consistent formal participation.

Emotionally the connection to the nation is unquestionably intense. Numerous young people convey a pride in their Algerian heritage and national emblems. Nevertheless this intense emotional connection exists alongside increasing skepticism, toward institutions. A significant wish to leave the country. This illustrates a conflict: although they feel symbolically linked to the nation many are disappointed by its socio- conditions.

In summary, youth citizenship in Sétif is marked by a compelling paradox: strong emotional ties and partial awareness, but limited civic action. These young people care about their country and its future but often from the sidelines. To bridge the gap between awareness and action, efforts must go beyond legal reforms or political outreach. What's needed is long-term investment in civic education, more transparent communication from institutions, and the creation of accessible, youth-friendly spaces that make real participation not only possible but meaningful.

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