

The Impact of Political Systems on the University's Achievement of its Social Objectives: The Case of Algeria

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Abstract:

The university represents a central institution in the construction of modern societies, not only as a producer of knowledge and scientific research, but also as a key social actor contributing to development, social justice, and inclusion. However, its ability to perform these functions is largely conditioned by the nature of the prevailing political system. The political environment plays a decisive role in either enabling or constraining the university's capacity to fulfill its societal mission.

This study examines the impact of political systems on the university's ability to achieve its social objectives, with particular reference to the Algerian case. It adopts a descriptive-analytical, historical, and sociological approach to analyze the relationship between higher education institutions and the political environment.

The findings indicate that universities operating in open and pluralistic political contexts-where institutional autonomy and academic freedom are guaranteed-are better positioned to contribute effectively to societal development. In contrast, within authoritarian or less democratic systems, universities often face structural and political constraints that limit their effectiveness as drivers of knowledge production and social progress.

Keywords: political systems, university, social role, knowledge production.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The university, as a social institution, is inherently embedded within the political structure in which it operates; its roles and functions cannot be adequately understood in isolation from the broader societal context that shapes it. Rather than being an autonomous entity, the university emerges from a complex interaction between internal factors-related to its organizational structure and academic functions-and external determinants linked to the nature of the political system and prevailing developmental choices. Accordingly, the roles of universities vary across societies, reflecting differences in governance patterns and the degree of priority accorded to higher education.

Within this framework, the issue of the relationship between the university and the political system becomes particularly salient. A crisis in the university's performance may arise when it is subjected to direct control that constrains its autonomy or when it is instrumentalized to serve narrow political interests. A decline in genuine commitment to higher education produces adverse societal consequences, weakening the university's scientific and enlightenment-oriented mission. In such circumstances, the university risks being reduced

to a mechanism for reproducing official discourse and legitimizing the existing regime, rather than functioning as a space for critical inquiry, accountability, and the production of knowledge.

Conversely, strengthening university autonomy constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for enabling it to fulfill its civilizational and academic mission, thereby contributing to intellectual and social development and enhancing its capacity for constructive engagement with its regional and international environment.

Accordingly, the core problematique of this study lies in seeking to understand and analyze the nature of the university's role in political life, and to determine whether its objectives converge with or diverge from those of the political system. From this perspective, **the principal research question** that the study seeks to address can be formulated as follows:

- ✓ **To what extent can the university transcend the objectives of political systems in order to achieve its own societal goals?**

This study derives its significance from its focus on the Algerian case as a model reflecting a complex interaction between the project of the nation-state and the requirements of building a knowledge society, within a broader Arab context characterized by profound political and economic transformations. It also seeks to contribute to the academic debate on the limits of university autonomy in transitional political environments.

For a more precise understanding of the research problem, a set of **subsidiary questions** is proposed:

- What is meant by university evaluation?
- What are the underlying justifications for the relationship between the university and society?
- What is the nature of the role played by political systems in enabling the university to achieve its social objectives?
- How does the Algerian political system contribute to enhancing or constraining the university's role in achieving its societal goals?

▪ **Study Hypotheses:**

The main hypothesis of the study is grounded in the assumption that the nature of the political system constitutes a decisive variable in determining the extent of university autonomy and its capacity to achieve its social and developmental objectives.

To further clarify this proposition, the study advances a set of subsidiary hypotheses that collectively reflect and support the central hypothesis:

- **First Hypothesis:** Political systems play an effective role in supporting universities in achieving their social objectives.
- **Second Hypothesis:** There exists a statistically significant relationship between the level of political freedoms granted within a political system and the prospects for building an effective knowledge society.

▪ **Objectives of the Study:**

- To highlight the strong interconnection between the university and its political environment.
- To identify the role played by political systems in either supporting or constraining the objectives of the university.
- To examine the repercussions of the crisis characterizing Arab political systems on the challenges of knowledge construction within their societies.

▪ **Methodology of the Study:**

The study is based on the following integrative methodological framework:

- **The Descriptive-Analytical Approach:** employed to examine the current state of the Algerian university and to analyze its roles in achieving social objectives.
- **The Historical Approach:** utilized to trace the stages of development of the Algerian university since independence, highlighting how this institution has been shaped by the country's political and social transformations.
- **The Sociological Approach:** applied to analyze the social dimension of the university's role, through examining its relationship with society, its capacity to fulfill functions of social and political socialization, and interpreting its interactions with the economic and cultural transformations experienced in Algeria.

For the purpose of comprehensively addressing all dimensions of the topic, the study is structured into four main sections as follows:

- **Section One:** The general framework of university evaluation.
- **Section Two:** The importance of the university in society.
- **Section Three:** The role of the university in political life: the Algerian university as a case study.
- **Section Four:** The problematique of knowledge production in the Algerian university and the role of Arab political systems in either supporting or constraining the university's objectives.

2. The General Framework of University Evaluation:

Higher education has witnessed a growing expansion in enrollment rates; however, this expansion is not always driven by purely cognitive or intellectual motivations. Rather, it is often shaped by social and economic considerations linked to obtaining a degree as a means of professional and social mobility. This shift has given rise to what may be described as a “credential-oriented” or “exam-driven” approach to education, whereby the university trajectory is reduced to passing examinations and acquiring qualifications, instead of focusing on the development of scientific competence and critical thinking skills.

This increasing pressure on higher education institutions-amid rising student numbers and disparities in their academic levels-has generated significant challenges related to the quality of educational services and the effectiveness of pedagogical performance. It has also had repercussions on the system of university evaluation, which is now required to strike a balance between quantitative demands and the need to ensure a qualitative standard of academic achievement and performance.¹

2.1. The Concept of Evaluation:

To grasp the concept of evaluation within the university context, it is necessary to situate it within a broader network of related concepts, foremost among them: measurement, testing, and assessment, as these notions constitute interrelated components within a unified process.

Measurement refers to the process through which performance or behavior is transformed into quantifiable indicators, using specific tools that allow for estimating the degree to which an individual possesses a given attribute. It thus provides the numerical data upon which subsequent analysis is based.

Testing, in turn, is considered one of the primary instruments of measurement. It consists of a set of questions or tasks designed according to specific standards, aimed at determining the level of a student's achievement or competence in a particular domain, with results typically expressed in numerical scores.

Assessment, in turn, represents the stage in which the results of measurement are interpreted, as the obtained scores are subjected to predefined criteria in order to formulate a judgment regarding the level of performance.

Evaluation, however, constitutes the broader framework that integrates both measurement and assessment within a structured process aimed at diagnosing strengths and weaknesses in the educational process, and at making decisions of a corrective or developmental nature based on objective findings. Accordingly, university evaluation does not merely involve measuring academic achievement; rather, it extends to guiding

¹ Abdallah Labouz & Omar Hajjaj, *The Reality of University Evaluation and the Necessity of Didactic Reform*, paper presented at the *First National Conference on the Didactics of Subjects in the University System*, Laboratory for the Development of Psychological and Educational Practices, Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla, April 2010, p. 2.

pedagogical policies and improving programs and teaching methods in accordance with standards of effectiveness and quality¹.

In this sense, evaluation in the university context is not limited to serving as a tool for measuring student achievement alone; it represents a comprehensive system that enables the identification of strengths and deficiencies within the educational process. This, in turn, facilitates the orientation of pedagogical decision-making toward continuous improvement, grounded in criteria of effectiveness, with such judgments leading to decisions of particular significance concerning students, teaching methods, and academic programs.²

2.2. Evaluation Between Function and Objectives:

Evaluation occupies a central position within the university system, as it is no longer viewed merely as a tool for judging students' performance. Rather, it has evolved into an organizational mechanism that contributes to regulating and enhancing the quality of education. Contemporary approaches to evaluation have shifted from an exclusive focus on final outcomes toward greater emphasis on its diagnostic and developmental functions accompanying the educational process.

In this regard, the relationship between the function of evaluation and its intended objectives becomes particularly significant, as does the extent to which actual practices align with theoretical frameworks that underscore its role in improving performance and ensuring quality.

First: Functions of Evaluation

Evaluation within the university performs multiple functions, which can be outlined as follows:³

- Enabling university instructors to review their pedagogical performance and adjust their teaching methods in light of the results obtained.
- Identifying the difficulties faced by students-whether academic or psychological-thereby allowing for early intervention through guidance or appropriate pedagogical support.
- Contributing to the development of curricula and academic programs in order to keep pace with scientific and educational advancements.
- Enhancing students' motivation toward learning, while moving beyond the seasonal nature often associated solely with examination periods.
- Providing objective indicators regarding the academic performance and effectiveness of faculty members.

¹ Abdelhamid Hannoura Masri, *The Importance of Statistical Treatments in Educational Sciences*, 1998, p. 10.

² Abdallah Labouz, *op. cit*, p 5.

³ Talal Farah Youssef Kilano, *The Optimal Use of Measurement and Evaluation Tools and Their Role in Ensuring the Quality of Higher Education Outcomes*, *Arab Journal for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*, Issue 9 (2018), p. 37.

- Enabling university institutions to produce periodic reports that reflect the level of progress in scientific and pedagogical activities, and to supply supervisory authorities with accurate data on the state of performance.

Second: Objectives of Evaluation

Evaluation is associated with a set of strategic objectives aimed at ensuring the quality of the educational process and its outcomes. This orientation stems from central questions related to the purpose of evaluation, its levels, and the domains of its application.

The overarching objective of evaluation can be defined as verifying the effectiveness of the educational process and its alignment with established standards. From this general aim, several subsidiary objectives emerge, most notably:

- Improving teaching performance based on the data generated through evaluation, and systematically addressing areas of weakness.
- Institutionalizing the principle of academic accountability by defining the responsibilities of bodies overseeing educational programs and policies, and assessing the extent to which declared objectives are achieved.
- Diagnosing the problems that hinder the achievement of quality in higher education and working toward their resolution.
- Assessing the extent to which the university meets the needs of key stakeholders in education, foremost among them students and society.

The societal dimension of evaluation constitutes a fundamental aspect of this study, raising the question of how evaluation—as both a system and a mechanism—can be employed to serve society through the university as one of its key institutions, and whether it genuinely contributes to enhancing the university's developmental role or remains confined to formalistic procedures¹.

Accordingly, university evaluation is not merely a purely pedagogical issue; rather, it functions as an instrument that reflects the philosophy and priorities of the educational system, as well as the extent to which it is aligned with broader public policy choices.

3. The Importance of the University in Society:

The significance of the university extends beyond its educational dimension to its capacity to reshape the social structure through the production of professional and intellectual elites, thereby positioning it as an indirect actor in guiding the trajectories of development within the state.

3.1. The University's Service Function in Society:

Higher education is, par excellence, a social institution, as it both influences and is influenced by its surrounding environment within a network of reciprocal interactions. Accordingly, the university is continuously required to adapt its organizational structure, academic programs, and research agenda to align with the transformations occurring in society. Its function is no longer limited to the mere transmission of

¹ Ibid,p38.

knowledge; it now encompasses contributing to the resolution of developmental issues and generating scientific solutions to contemporary challenges.

Sociologist Guy Rocher highlighted the rapid transformations experienced by higher education over recent decades, noting that many countries have reconsidered their higher education policies in order to align them with social objectives and developmental planning requirements¹. This analysis reveals

the integration of the university into a complex network of relationships with economic and political actors, which positions it to interact directly with decision-making, production, and service sectors.

In this context, the traditional dual function of the university-comprising teaching and scientific research-can no longer fully accommodate its emerging roles. Technological and scientific transformations have expanded the scope of its responsibilities to include service to society as a third dimension complementing its teaching and research functions. This has given rise to the concept of the university's "third mission," which reflects its commitment to contributing to local development and enhancing human and social capital.

Accordingly, achieving institutional effectiveness within the university requires the integration of administrative and academic actors' roles within a flexible organizational framework that ensures a balance among the triad of teaching, scientific research, and service to society. Leading universities no longer limit themselves to providing information; they strive to foster critical thinking and systematically build knowledge, thereby enhancing their capacity to drive societal transformations rather than merely responding to them².

3.2. Rationales for Strengthening the Relationship Between the University and Society:

According to Al-Harbawi, society's need for the university constitutes the primary justification for its existence, as he stated: "Universities do not represent academic or material prestige; rather, their existence is justified by society's need for them." Building on this perspective, and in line with the ongoing discourse on consolidating the relationship between the university and society, several rationales can be identified that have led many countries to adopt and reinforce this linkage:

First: Geographical Rationales

Every society exists within a specific geographical environment, which universities must take into account, as stipulated in their founding charters. The presence of a university serves as a pillar for community development, preventing geographical isolation and supporting the establishment of essential infrastructure, including transportation networks and accessibility.

¹ Ahmed Flouh, *Characteristics of University Professors from the Students' Perspective: A Field Study at the University of Mostaganem*, *Journal of Psychological and Educational Studies, Laboratory for the Development of Psychological and Educational Practices*, Issue 9 (December 2018), p 17.

² *Ibid*,p19.

Second: Economic Rationales

The establishment of a university within society aims to provide higher education opportunities to various social segments and to professionally qualify them in order to improve the community's economic conditions. This is achieved by integrating education with production, supplying a trained workforce to support economic development, and offering educational programs and curricula that are based on the actual needs of society.

Third: Social and Cultural Rationales

The university is considered a driver of social change, addressing social and cultural transformations through engagement and communication with the community and its members. It provides opportunities for women to acquire specific skills and plays a significant role in literacy programs, while also promoting a unified cultural identity at both the national and regional levels.

Fourth: Political Rationales

The university often contributes to political stability and mitigates the intensity of unrest and conflict by fostering networks of cooperation and generating relevant indicators. It actively seeks to reduce local conflicts by promoting a culture of peace and eliminating harmful customs and practices. Furthermore, the university sustains its mission toward society by enhancing citizens' political awareness and informing them of their rights and responsibilities¹.

Given the importance of the political dimension in consolidating the relationship between the university and society, and in line with the focus of this study, Sections Three and Four will address the role of the university in political life, dedicating particular attention to the Algerian experience.

4. The Role of the University in Political Life – The Algerian Case:

An analysis of the functions of higher education reveals a clear interconnection between the cognitive and political dimensions of the university, as the process of academic formation cannot be separated from the political context in which it operates. In addition to preparing professional competencies, the university undertakes the task of shaping students' personalities and fostering their critical awareness, thereby equipping them to understand and engage in public affairs. Consequently, it represents one of the fundamental arenas for political socialization and the cultivation of civic culture within society.

4.1. Dimensions of the Relationship Between the University and Political Systems:

The role of the university is no longer limited to individual research or academic formation; it has become a subject of concern for international bodies and organizations involved in education and culture, foremost among them the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO has devoted

¹ *Amira Mohamed Ali Ahmed Hassan, Documenting the Relationship Between the University and Society, paper presented at the Sixth Conference on Higher Education and Development Requirements, University of Bahrain, pp. 9–10.*

particular attention to studying the relationship between the university and political systems, especially with regard to the role of student organizations, the political pressures to which the university may be subjected, and the extent of its responsiveness to such influences.

The political dimension of the university became particularly pronounced from the late 1960s, notably during the wave of student protests in 1968, especially in Paris, where the university emerged as a space for demanding political and social reforms. Since then, the university has no longer been perceived as a neutral educational institution, but rather as a microcosm reflecting the prevailing political interactions within the state¹.

Some scholarly literature argues that isolating education from politics deprives the educational process of its formative dimension in cultivating civic awareness, leading to the production of technically competent individuals who lack political consciousness. This, in turn, may reinforce passivity and indifference, undermining participation in public life. Within this context, theoretical perspectives on the relationship between the university and politics can be categorized into **three main orientations**:

First Orientation: This perspective emphasizes the necessity of politicizing the university, viewing it as a social institution whose direct function is to contribute to political stability and ideological cohesion across segments of society. Accordingly, state control—particularly in developing countries—and its support of the university aim to achieve political objectives, including the politicization of both faculty and students, and the cultivation of a form of political consciousness aligned with the ideology of the ruling political system, thereby ensuring that the university operates under the auspices of the governing political apparatus

Second Orientation: This perspective advocates for the university's isolation and neutrality, arguing that linking the university to politics could negatively affect its other functions. Concerns include the potential spread of corruption within the institution or threats to its freedom and autonomy, which has led to a rejection of the university's direct involvement in political arenas.

Third Orientation: This view considers the university as a critical institution. The critical function is essential for identifying societal shortcomings and providing guidance. It is the university's responsibility, as a guardian of society, to perform this role.²

Each of the aforementioned perspectives has its justification; however, it can be argued that the university holds both scientific and political roles simultaneously. These roles can coexist in a balanced manner, ensuring that neither the academic-scientific function

¹ Mohammad Salim Al-Zuboun et al., *The Role of Jordanian Universities in Developing Concepts of Political Culture from the Students' Perspective*, *Studies: Humanities and Social Sciences Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 11–15.

² Khaled Salah Hanfi Mahmoud, *The Role of Arab Universities in Developing Students' Political Awareness in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring*, *New-Educ*, available at <https://www.new-educ.com/Arab-Universities-and-Political-Awareness/>.

dominates at the expense of the political role, nor vice versa. Achieving such a balance is essential.

Given the current global transformations—including knowledge and technological revolutions, globalization, and increasing demands for democratization in societies—coupled with the conflicts and unrest that have affected the Arab region since the Arab uprisings, the political role of the university becomes increasingly significant, particularly in fostering political awareness and contributing to the political socialization of students. Yet, the realization of this role largely depends on the political system, which must permit and provide a “green light” for student political engagement—an enabling condition that is generally lacking across universities in the Arab region.

4.2. The Status of the Algerian University within the Political System:

To understand the nature of the relationship between the Algerian university and the political system, it is necessary to examine the legal and historical framework within which it was established.

First: The Legal Definition of the University

According to Algerian legislation, the university is considered a public institution with an administrative character, contributing to the dissemination, preparation, and development of knowledge, as well as to the training of personnel necessary for national development¹. However, despite the importance of this legal definition, it is insufficient for fully understanding the university's position within the political structure. A thorough analysis of its historical emergence and developmental trajectory is therefore required.

Second: The Historical Emergence of the Algerian University

1. The Colonial Period:

The origins of higher education in Algeria trace back to the colonial era, when higher schools were established in 1909 in fields such as medicine, law, literature, and sciences, forming the initial nucleus of the university. However, at that time, its function was not national; rather, it was aligned with the needs of the colonial administration, whether in training technical personnel or producing intermediary elites to serve the colonial structure.

Accordingly, the university in Algeria was founded within a framework of cultural domination and functioned more as a tool for reproducing the French knowledge model than as an independent space for knowledge production.

2. The Post-Independence Period:

Following independence in 1962, the Algerian university faced significant challenges, including a shortage of national competencies and the continued pedagogical dependence on the French model, whether in terms of curricula, programs, or examination systems. During this period, efforts were focused on ensuring the

¹ *Official Gazette of 1983, Decree No. 83-544, dated September 24, 1983.*

continuity of higher education and on training national personnel capable of managing the sector effectively.

However, the preoccupation with quantitative expansion-driven by the significant increase in student enrollment-sometimes overshadowed qualitative considerations, affecting both academic supervision and research performance.

3. The 1970s and the Restructuring Phase:

The 1970s, particularly following the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, marked an important turning point in the trajectory of the Algerian university. The state sought to link higher education to the national development project within the framework of adopting socialism and centralized planning.

During this period, efforts were made to Arabize higher education, localize expertise, and restructure university institutions to serve economic and social development goals. Nevertheless, these reforms remained subject to a centralized political will, which limited the university's autonomy in determining its priorities¹.

4. The University Map Phase (1984):

The 1984 university map represented a pivotal milestone, as higher education was planned according to the needs of the national economy up to the year 2000. Slogans promoting the democratization of education, Arabization, and "Algerianization" were adopted with the aim of expanding university enrollment, strengthening national identity, and reducing cultural dependence.

However, the rapid expansion in the number of institutions and students was not always accompanied by qualitative improvements in scientific research or knowledge production, which reinforced the service-oriented character of the university at the expense of its productive and innovative functions.

An analysis of educational policy in Algeria reveals a close connection between the orientations of the university and the nature of the political system. University policy serves as a link between political authority, as the maker of public policies, and the university, as a social institution striving to achieve cognitive and developmental objectives. This connection is manifested in several dimensions, including:²

- Expanding opportunities for higher education to enable youth social mobility.
- Directing the university toward training personnel to serve the public administration.
- Focusing on infrastructure and institutional frameworks, often at the expense of investment in scientific publishing and research.
- Reducing the role of university professors to purely pedagogical functions, without empowering them to contribute meaningfully to the production of ideas and policy.

Within this framework, it is difficult to speak of complete educational neutrality, as education remains guided by an ideological context that reflects the nature of the

¹ Bouzeha Najat, The Issue of Knowledge Production in the Algerian University: A Sociological Approach, *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, No. 8 (June 2012), pp. 205–207..

² Arabi Boumediene, The Role of the Algerian University in Economic Development: Opportunities and Constraints, *Algerian Journal of Globalization and Economic Policies*, No. 7 (2016), pp. 252–253.

prevailing authority. The university can function as a tool for reproducing the social and political system, while simultaneously serving as a space for raising awareness and expanding the scope of critical thought.

Accordingly, understanding the current state of the Algerian university requires an analysis of the foundations of educational policy, as it reflects the philosophy of the political system in managing a strategic sector that directly impacts state-building and its continuity. No political system can afford to disregard education, given its critical role in shaping new generations and instilling the values necessary to ensure societal stability.¹

5. The Issue of Knowledge Production in the Algerian University and the Role of Arab Political Systems Between Support and Constraint:

In the modern state, the university constitutes a strategic pillar for knowledge production and human capital formation, positioning it as a central actor in processes of development and social transformation. However, the reality of Arab universities, particularly the Algerian university, reveals a clear structural paradox: a significant quantitative expansion in student enrollment, institutional frameworks, and university structures is contrasted by a relative weakness in the qualitative output of scientific research and the capacity to generate knowledge with a direct developmental impact. This paradox raises a fundamental issue concerning the nature of the political and institutional obstacles that limit the university's effectiveness in fulfilling its knowledge-producing mission.

5.1. The Issue of Knowledge Production in the Algerian University:

To understand this issue, it is necessary to consider the concept of the "knowledge society," which refers to a societal model in which knowledge becomes a strategic resource guiding economic, educational, and innovation policies, rather than merely a secondary cultural asset².

The 2003 Arab Human Development Report addressed the concept of the knowledge society as a prerequisite for effective positioning within the contemporary international system.

In the Algerian context, the university is expected to serve as the central driver of this transformation. However, knowledge production within it encounters several structural obstacles, including:

1. **The Issue of Funding and Financial Governance of Scientific Research:** The research system suffers from a lack of stable and transparent funding mechanisms, inadequate alignment of research grants with the actual scientific effort invested, and limited mechanisms for evaluation and accountability.

¹ Karima Hawamdeh, The Role of the Algerian University in Political Socialization as a Mechanism for Promoting and Strengthening Citizenship, *Al-Bahith Journal for Academic Studies*, No. 9 (June 2016), pp. 428–429.

² Naif Abu Khalaf, The Role of the Arab Political System in Hindering the Construction of an Arab Knowledge Society, Master's Thesis, An-Najah National University, 2005, p 10.

2.Weak Linkage Between Research and Development: Much of the research conducted does not translate directly into public policies or economic development pathways, limiting its practical impact and rendering it closer to theoretical academic production that is not integrated into the decision-making cycle.

3.Absence of a Clearly Defined Research Policy: Despite efforts made in recent years, research priorities continue to suffer from fragmentation and weak coordination between the university and economic and social sectors.

These imbalances indicate that the crisis of knowledge production is not merely a technical issue but is linked to a broader institutional context that shapes the nature of the relationship between the university and the state.¹

5.2. The Role of Arab Political Systems in Supporting or Hindering University Objectives:

Arab political systems-whether monarchical, republican, or hybrid-share common characteristics that have constituted the foundational obstacles to building a knowledge society, both in terms of core structures and the derivative outcomes they produce. This is largely due to the similarity of their objective conditions, rooted in shared history, culture, and religion, and, most importantly, the manner in which these systems came to power. As Bobtana notes regarding the Arab context: “Despite the significant achievements of higher education in the Arab world, particularly in its contribution to development, it suffers from a range of problems and bottlenecks that have markedly affected its internal and external efficiency.”²

The explanations provided for the crisis of the Arab university can be classified into three main analytical approaches:

First: The Issue of the Nature of the Political System

This perspective posits that some political regimes perceive university autonomy as a potential threat to their legitimacy, prompting them to subject higher education institutions to administrative and political control. In such cases, the university transforms into a tool for reproducing the official discourse of power rather than serving as an independent space for critique and knowledge production. This issue is particularly pronounced in contexts characterized by fragile political legitimacy, where education is employed to reinforce the official narrative of the regime.

Second: The Issue of Internal Governance

Another analytical perspective attributes the crisis to weak university leadership and the absence of reform-oriented elites within institutions. Here, administration becomes an executive mechanism subordinated to central authority, lacking an independent strategic vision for the development of scientific research.

¹ Bousaha Najat, Ibid, p 215

² Flouh Ahmed, op. cit, p17.

Third: The Issue of Mission and Function

A third perspective argues that in some Arab contexts, the university's role has been redefined to serve political stability rather than knowledge autonomy, thereby undermining one of its essential conditions for success: academic independence.

In the Algerian case, the trajectory of the university has been closely linked to the evolution of the political system since independence in 1962. At certain stages, political legitimacy relied on revolutionary credentials, which influenced the nature of the relationship between higher education institutions and the state¹, positioning the university as an integral part of the national state project and subjecting it to general governmental orientations in planning and development.

This demonstrates that the university crisis cannot be reduced to material deficiencies alone; rather, it is intertwined with political and structural factors that constrain academic decision-making autonomy. Consequently, any university reform detached from broader political reform remains a partial and limited-impact intervention.

6 .Conclusion:

The issue of the relationship between the Algerian university and the political system remains a contentious topic that continues to provoke scholarly debate, due to its close connection with the university's role in fostering development and building a knowledge-based society. This study has demonstrated that, despite successive reform attempts, the Algerian university continues to be influenced, to varying degrees, by the orientations of the political system, whether in terms of defining its objectives or directing its functions. This influence limits its autonomy as well as its critical and knowledge-producing roles. Furthermore, the study indicates that higher education reform cannot achieve its developmental objectives in isolation from comprehensive political reform that ensures academic freedoms and strengthens the role of the scientific elite in decision-making. Various national and international reports confirm that the crisis of the Algerian university is not merely technical, but rather structural, linked to political choices and the limited investment in human and knowledge capital.

▪ Study Findings:

- There exists a degree of functional dependency between the objectives of the university and the orientations of the political system.
- The influence of the inherited historical structure, including the legacies of the colonial period, persists despite recent reforms such as the adoption of the LMD (Licence-Master-Doctorate) system.
- Organizational and pedagogical imbalances have negatively affected the quality of university outputs.
- Building an Arab knowledge society remains unfeasible without political reform that strengthens legitimacy, democracy, and freedoms.

¹ Sajida Sharqi, The Role of Universities in Community Development, Center for Iranian Studies, University of Basra, Issue 10 (2008), pp. 183- 185.

- Human capital remains central, serving as the fundamental pillar for any developmental project.
- **Study Recommendations:**
 - Expand the scope of academic freedom and ensure university autonomy within a framework of balanced institutional partnership with the state.
 - Support scientific research through transparent and sustainable funding mechanisms, linking it to national development priorities.
 - Enable the academic elite to contribute actively to the formulation of public policies.
 - Consolidate a culture of citizenship and civic engagement within the university environment.
 - Redefine the university as a knowledge-producing institution rather than merely a service sector.

Additionally, this study opens avenues for future research comparing other Arab university experiences, aiming to explore patterns of interaction between universities and political authority in diverse contexts.

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[https://www.new-educ.com/Arab-Universities-and-Political-Awareness /](https://www.new-educ.com/Arab-Universities-and-Political-Awareness/).