



The Role of Algerian Economic Elite in Achieving Sustainable Development- Between Development Strategies and Political Empowerment Mechanisms

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Abstract:

Undoubtedly, Global Communities base their developmental strategies on pioneering future perspectives through allocating all the natural, financial and human resources. Elites are the sensitive nerve worth investing in. Economic elites, in particular, represent key factors in revitalizing the economy within the Algerian society, and serve as a connection point between its institutions.

This paper highlights the role of economic elites in boosting the development process, especially when involved in developmental plans and granted a sphere of political empowerment. The latter allows for coordination and unifying efforts with all other elites to achieve the goals of comprehensive sustainable development.

Keywords: Economic Elite; Empowerment Mechanisms; Societal Institutions; Sustainable Development.

Introduction:

Following the history and development of human societies in their existence, stability and movement, reveals their recognition of a significant idea that not all people can exercise power. Moreover, there must be a group, class or minority that undertakes the tasks of leadership and guidance with the greatest role in affecting the course of their societies and decision-making. They are called elite.

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Elites are one of the concepts and topics that have drawn the interest of many researchers and political and social academics, due to the importance of this concept in organizing human societies and their governors, and recognizing how political, economic and social relations in society are managed.

Elites are a group of individuals with distinctive characteristics enabling them to play crucial roles in the course of their societies. This is mainly in directing society and making important sovereign decisions in various political, social and cultural fields.

It also represents social groups with distinctive characteristics and administrative and organizational positions, particularly those possess social, political and economic influence. Obviously, elites vary depending on their members and the social domain in which they act. This includes political, religious, bureaucratic, military, cultural, and economic elites... etc.

In spite of their diversity, there are elites with significant position in human society, most notably the economic elites. The latter run the course of the state regardless of its political system. They control the supply and demand for goods and services, the labour market, the financing of electoral campaigns, and the pressure on decision-makers to serve their interests.

Sustainable development has appeared as a new concept. It revolves around maintaining resources for future generations and accomplishing economic growth. In order to achieve this, institutions continuously innovate and improve their products and services relying on economic elites to execute development strategies through investment, innovation, and infrastructures.

According to the aforementioned, we ask the following question:

- What is the role of economic elites in the political trajectory in Algeria?

To understand the topic comprehensively, the study addresses the following questions:

- How did economic elites emerge?



- What are the mechanisms of political empowerment for economic elites and their role in establishing the bases of development?

THE FIRST TOPIC: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT:THE CONCEPT OF ECONOMIC ELITES:

Economic elites, like other elites, have gained significant importance among researchers and thinkers in political sociology, as they can control the economy of any country, regardless of its type.

There are various definitions of economic elites. The most important of which are as follows:

Mohamed Alaouna in his presentation, titled "Who are the Economic Elites", defined them, as "Economic Elites are those whose opinions are consulted on essential economic legislation. They cannot remain neutral or moderate in their proposals because of concerns for their personal interests. Most of them are businessmen or officials who own companies and have government shares. These elites are, of course, the key factor behind the continuing economic crises, unemployment, and poverty."¹

Ibrahim Nasser also states that these elites include individuals who have succeeded via trade or industry. They own properties, real estate, companies, and considerable financial assets and they gather in especial unions. Additionally, economic elites monopolize a society's production means and resources.²

They are also a group of individuals who, through trade, industry, politics, or speculation, have amassed wealth, as they form key figures in finance and business. They own properties, real estate, companies, and substantial financial assets, and they gather in their own unions. They are considered the most powerful elites influencing local and international political decision-making.³

Additionally, economic elites are the groups whose members constitute a social class controlling economic development and contribute to the building of the



state and society on financial, industrial, and commercial levels. They encourage scientific economic research to reform the state and society's economy.⁴

Depending on the above major key definitions of economic elites, we can provide the following operational one. "They are a group of individuals who owns considerable amounts of capital, real estate, and large companies, making them able to control the economy of any country by exerting pressure on decision-makers to serve their own interests or the national interest".

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT: EMERGENCE OF THE ELITE IN ALGERIA:

Undoubtedly, the progress and development of any society or people go through a historical trajectory and various stages. Similarly, the Algerian society, in general, and the formation of its cultural field in particular, has also passed through stages influenced by other civilizations, starting from the Phoenician Civilization, followed by the Arab-Islamic Conquest, the French colonial period, and finishing with the era of globalization.

History tells us that the Phoenicians, who settled in North Africa, left behind writings on agriculture, engineering, trade, and urban development... etc. The Romans, in turn, left various civilizational landmarks. Moreover, the efforts made by the Arab Muslim conquerors, who worked on establishing cities, mosques, and Quranic schools to promote education and spread the principles of the Islamic religion among the indigenous population are of great importance. Furthermore, the cultivation of knowledge and the production of scholars and elites spread widely during the era of the Andalusian and the Islamic Maghreb states (The Fatimids, the Almohads, the Almoravids) where encyclopedic scholars such as Ibn Rushd, Ibn Khaldoun, etc., and many others emerged.

The collapse of the Islamic Maghreb states and the fall of the Andalusian state and the Ottoman Empire afterwards culminated in the emergence of the colonial movement worldwide and the occupation of Algeria by French colonialism. The religious leadership elites, led by figures such as Emir Abd Alkader Al-Jazairi,



Sheikh Al-Haddad, Sheikh Al-Muqrani... etc launched a ferocious popular resistance to confront this invasion. In return, the colonial authorities focused on destroying the social, cultural and economic structures of the Algerian people. It strived to combat the religious and scientific authority, its spiritual leaders, and its institutions such as Quranic schools and mosques. Additionally, it spread superstitions and ignorance and instilled a spirit of defeatism among the people. This policy resulted in the spread of ignorance, poverty, diseases, and backwardness. After nearly a century had passed, no changes occurred until the establishment of the Association of Muslim Scholars under the leadership of "Abd Alhamid Ben Badis". Its members declared war on superstitions, innovations, and ideas that reinforced the common saying "colonization is nothing but fate and destiny". They also worked on spreading correct religious education and maintaining the pillars of Algerian identity (religion, language, history). Furthermore, they worked hard on enlightening citizens and encouraging them to reject colonization and preparing for the revolution against the colonization that caused this situation.

The Association of Muslim Scholars will later be responsible for the appearance of an elite group of intellectuals adopting a popular and national orientation, and working to revive the glories of Arab-Islamic civilization, which is still present. It influences the course of public life and some national decision-making centres.

The emergence of the second faction of the Algerian elite was helped by the French school during colonization. At the beginning, the French colonial authority aimed for the creation of a class of intermediaries between the occupation and the Algerian people, necessitating them to master both French and the local language (Arabic with dialect). Therefore, the French school undertook the task of educating and training a small group of Algerian youths, who were called "les Médirsien".⁵

This action was made by France to create loyal elite, believing it was a determined requirement to forcibly integrate Algerian society into the system of modernity and modernization experienced by the civilized world. It took until the sixties of the nineteenth century for the formation and crystallization of a nucleus of elite with these characteristics.⁶



This duality in building the Algerian intellectual elite (the intelligentsia) will cast its shadow on the struggle for positions and roles for the post-independence generations; where the division among the Algerian elite will come into being. An Algerian sociologist stated that university graduates with higher degrees would be the first to suffer from this division and sectoralism. Thus, graduates who studied in French and in technical fields will have the greater chance in assuming positions in industrial, administrative, health and military sectors, while Arabists are seen as ideologists who should be appointed in education, justice, sports, media sectors, etc.⁷

This discrimination in assuming positions and other social privileges will create a critical split. It will lead to an intensified ideological conflict between the intellectual elites, who will use all available platforms to confront each other. One of the serious outcomes was dragging the country into a ten-year conflict that almost obliterated everything, with victims from both sides and of the elite.

THE SECOND TOPIC: DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF THE ECONOMIC ELITE IN ALGERIA:

The political and economic reforms adopted by the political system through the 1989 constitution, the complete abandonment of the socialist policy, and the move towards the market economy policy have led to the emergence of many economic elites. These elites played a role in the growth of the national economy and the development of its policies to establish strong relationships with decision-makers in the political system and influence them to serve their personal interests.

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT: THE STAGE OF EMERGENCE AND STUMBLE (1989-1999):

Among the key principles mentioned in the 1989 Constitution is the necessity for institutions to ensure rights and duties equality among all citizens, and to appease obstacles that hinder everyone's effective participation in political, economic, social, and cultural life. In this context, it can be said that personal and political freedom is constitutionally guaranteed, the supremacy of the general will is upheld, and state intervention in economic life is relatively limited.⁸



In fact, the idea of shifting towards a free economy and paving the way for the private sector to invest nationally and internationally is very important. The economic and social crisis accelerated the failure of the restructuring policy and the adoption of radical measures to reform the national economy, reorganize it, move towards a market system, and privatize public institutions. Algeria has attempted, within the framework of shifting the economy from directed to market with minimal economic and social costs, to consider preparatory and organizational measures, including:

- Preparing the appropriate legal frameworks for economic activity.
- Relying on the public institution as a main factor in economic reform by positioning it as an economic institution, freeing it from bureaucratic practices, and enabling it to make independent decisions in the economic sphere.
- Considering the private sector as a future strategy and an alternative to the public sector.⁹

Privatization necessitates structural changes at work, implementing changes in the private sector, and avoiding a management style based on top-down orders and instructions. The state's role is limited to monitoring, regulating, and controlling the economy's movement without direct intervention, and facilitating investment through development, encouragement, and benefiting from various guarantees and special advantages.¹⁰

Since the principles of privatization are investment and competition to drive the process of development, private shareholders play a leading and prominent role in activating these principles and the different economic operations. When privatization is based on technological innovation and the introduction of new methods in managing the privatized enterprise, the ownership of companies by private shareholders is regarded as a significantly innovative financing method in cash flows. It strengthens a spirit of competition with the aim of increasing productivity and improving performance.

Following the aggravation of the economic crisis in the late 1980s due to the decline in oil revenues, the 88-25 Law, dated July 12, 1988, was enacted to pave



the way for the private sector. From this perspective, the first forum on enterprise creation was held in February 1988, bringing together representatives from the state and administration with employers. Thus, the Association for Business Creation and Promotion was established. This was the first meeting between private entrepreneurs to form an independent association that would aid in developing their businesses.

The economic influence of employers has evolved. It makes them social partners and thus participating in decision-making. This allows for the expansion of their activities, where many professional organizations and employers' associations have been established.

It can be said that the Algerian political system paved the way for the formation of unions after the adoption of the first pluralistic constitution. The number of recognized unions exceeded 60 organizations. They were subject to many pressures, compromises, and lack of recognition because they are a sign of awareness of change and union work. Among these unions, which consisted of businessmen, we mention the following:

- Employers' Union:

Employers expressed themselves in a pluralistic manner for the first time in 1990 through the General Confederation of Algerian Economic Operators (GCAEO).

In 1997, it ceased representing industrial institutions, including the Textile Union and another for food and construction... etc. A second union emerged in 1992, the National Confederation of Algerian Employers (NCAE), which represented 238 private industrial institutions, mainly found in the sectors of plastics, rubber, paper manufacturing, and tourism... etc. In 1999, a third union came into being, the Algerian Confederation of Employers (ACE) founded on 13 federations from different economic activities. These organizations have managed to form an exception in the trade union landscape because of their major role in the economic relationships, regarding the expected role they are to play in developing the national economy. This requires encouraging them, attracting their actors,



involving them in government programmes, and dealing with obstacles faced by their sectors.¹¹

The period 1990-1991 witnessed the state's policy based on liberalism and the encouragement of the private sector. It particularly led to amassing private wealth, misusing power within the system, and the privilege of trading foreign currencies lent to a large segment of the bourgeoisie in the government sector. The latter accumulated large fortunes despite the imbalanced trade balance. The private sector that actually benefited from the incentives was not liberal. Rather, it was a phenomenon of alliance between social classes that monopolistically enjoyed the redistribution of oil revenues.

In this context, Moloud Hamrouche, the Prime Minister, stated in an interview with the weekly newspaper "ntltmna", in 1995, as follows: "We cannot understand Algeria's policy except through these conflicting circles that are competing to defend their interests and strive to expand their influence. Since the crisis gave these circles an opportunity to get greater power with minimal rules and control, the interests of these circles have become dominant."¹²

In the 1990s, Algeria adopted two laws. The first, in 1990, was Law 90-10 related to currency and credit, which was not an investment law, but regulated the movement of capital. The second, in 1993, was Legislative Decree 93-12 concerned with the promotion of investment. The two laws reflect the Algerian government's desire to attract foreign capital, ensure the transfer of investable capital and its resulting profits, and avoid resorting to expropriation.

Additionally, the principles found in the constitutional amendment of 1996, Article 37 states the principle of freedom of trade and industry, which states, "Freedom of trade and industry is guaranteed and practiced within the framework of the law". It also encourages investment and all individual and collective initiatives in various fields and areas. Moreover, the GATT agreement, which established rules of conduct in international trade and laid the pillars for an international trade system, included principles of trade freedom, the freedom of international trade from restrictions, and the encouragement of the movement of capital and investments.¹³



The stage witnessed a civil war caused by the suspension of the electoral process in 1992. The country experienced a difficult situation of direct confrontation between the Algerian army and armed groups. This was as a reaction to the decision taken by the Algerian authority to prevent the Islamic Salvation Front from ruling the country after winning the majority in the local electoral elections and the first round in the legislative elections, in addition to the issuance of a decision 04 in March 1992 which dissolved the Islamic Salvation Front party.

In light of this exceptional political and security situation, transitional institutions lacking legitimacy were established to manage the country's affairs until the necessary conditions were met to return to constitutional and popular legitimacy. This culminated in the appointment of the High Council of State, headed by Mr. Mohamed Boudiaf, who was assassinated 06 months later, and was succeeded by Mr. Ali Kafi. Faced with the continued deterioration of the security situation in the country, and in an effort to resolve the on-going violence, the political leadership, headed by Liamine Zeroual, sought to establish a National Dialogue Committee that initiated contacts with various political parties and national figures aiming to restore civil peace and speed up the resumption of the electoral process.¹⁴

In spite of the policy of economic openness and encouraging investment, one of the Algerian political system's characteristics- which is an inflexible system- is that it rejects competition or threats, whether civil society or any political formations. Democracy has greatly cost Algeria (killing, displacement, sabotage, migration, and destruction of the national economy). This was recognized as the Black Decade and Algeria's entry into a political crisis and a spiral of political violence and the demand for a return to the era of the –one-party-system.¹⁵

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT: THE STAGE OF START-UP AND CENTRALIZATION (2000-2006):

The end of the 1990s, witnessed the inauguration of Abd Al-Aziz Bouteflika as president after winning the elections under the slogan- A safe and stable Algeria-, a slogan that summarized his political programme. Bouteflika promised to stop the violence that erupted after canceling the results of the 1991 parliamentary elections in which the Islamic Salvation Front won the majority. In



September 1999, the success of the popular referendum on the Civil Harmony Law led to the amnesty for militants and their integration in the Algerian society.

At the beginning of Bouteflika's presidency, the unprecedented economic recovery of Hydrocarbon prices on the international markets with the price of a barrel of oil reaching \$130, allowed for a rise on oil demand, as well as the economic growth rates of major countries such as China and the United States of America, which reflected on the revenues of Arab countries that depend greatly on oil rents, with total public expenditures reaching 290 billion DA in 2000. This marked a significant enhancement in Algeria's financial situation, which opened the way for constructing a developmental policy focusing on increasing public expenditures. This policy was realized through substantial financial allocations for public investments via three economic recovery programmes implemented between 2000 and 2014. In addition to the incentives granted to private producers through Decree No. 01-03 of August 20, 2001, and Law No. 01-18 of December 12, 2001, aiming for the privatization of the public sector, promoting domestic and foreign private investment, and increasing partnership.¹⁶

The Algerian authority managed to use hydrocarbon revenues to launch many public projects in different sectors such as transport, public works, irrigation, housing... etc. This made Algeria a large workshop in which some businessmen benefited from huge public projects and deals with a presidential support earning substantial amounts of money. Thus, they became very influential and entered the decision-making circle, nominating their loyalists in both chambers of parliament, as well as intervening in the appointment of governors, ministers and senior officials in the state.

The economic elites strongly supported President Bouteflika. Under his rule, a class of entrepreneurs has flourished and worked hard to strengthen itself. They benefited from the end of the civil war and the recycling of oil revenues into the national economy. Businessmen such as Ali Haddad and Karim Konyaev from Kougc Construction Company, and Mohieddine Tahkout from Automotive Company and others succeeded in diversifying their portfolios and built complexes that dominated the Algerian economy.¹⁷



Amine Jameel states in his article on Algeria's wealthy, based on the “Algeria Focus Website”. He presented a list of ‘Algeria's wealthy who constituted economic elites or billionaires holding large fortunes. The website mentioned its ranking of 11 Algerian businessmen, considering them the richest in Algeria, all of whom manage the largest industrial enterprises and have extensive investments in Algeria. Some even have significant investments outside the country. The following table illustrates this:¹⁸

Table 1. Represents List of the Wealthy in Algeria, the Value of Owned Wealth and their Institutions:

List of the Wealthy in Algeria	Value of Owned Wealth	Managed and Owned Institutions
Yassaad Rabrab	3.2 Billion Dollars.	The CEVITAL Group specializes in food industry.
Ali Haddad	About 400 Million Dollars.	- Head of the Business Forum. - Owner of "IT Rash B" company for construction - Owner of the second largest public works group in Algeria after the public group KOUSSIDAR.
Jilali Mehri	Less than 400 Million Euros.	Owner of many luxurious residences and hotels in Paris.
Kareem Konyaev	About 300 Million Euros.	- Owner of "Koryg" company active in the



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		hydraulic sector. - Owner of "Kougc" company specializes in the construction of water channels, wells, dams, and even bridges.
Mohamed El-Eid Ben Omar	180 Million Euros.	- Owner of "Ben Omar Group" and the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
Abd Al-Majid Karrar	About 200 Million Euros.	- Partner of the giant pharmaceutical "BioPharm".
Mohieddine Tahkout	About 120 Million Euros.	- Manufacturer for the assembly and installation of cars, the first for the "South Korean Hyundai" brand, and the second for the "Japanese Suzuki" brand. - Contract for the rental of dozens of buses for the benefit of the capital urban transport company "government".
Abd Al-Rahman Hamadi	About 100 Million Euros.	- Owner of Condor Electronics Complex.
Rahim Abd Al-Wahab	About 100 Million Euros.	- Owner of Ardis Commercial Complex.



		- Hilton Hotel.
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THE THIRD REQUIREMENT: THE STAGE OF OVERLAPPING AND RETREATING (2010-2019):

Financial groups have a major role in shaping the state's policy and pressuring decision-makers and members of the National People's Assembly, since political parties have failed to accomplish the desired goals. These financial groups prefer to remain within what is known as the silent or non-partisan majority. They may positively play a role in expressing the interests and demands of the public, as well as allying with the authorities and adopting their political agendas in exchange for fulfilling their own demands.

In a presentation by the writer Tayeb Doukhan, he asserts that for a long time, money has controlled the management of authorities, influenced decision-making centres, and the monopolization of the media sector by businessmen. They now own large institutions and have bought journalists and editors with advertisements and attractive salaries. They monopolized the largest developmental projects through privatization policies. They have started buying elected officials and ministers through campaign financing, as most former members of the Algerian government are still partners with the biggest businessmen. How can this not influence decision-making centres?¹⁹

The influence of businessmen in Algeria and their sway over the corridors of power, particularly in recent years with the intertwining of political events and economic developments, has made the role of businessmen in politics clear. Recently, prominent figures of Algerian businessmen have appeared, leading the economic and financial scene. They have begun to compete with politicians in field outings and even in decision-making.²⁰

For example, the government took advantage of the suggestions and opinions of private sector organizations, which have started to be considered, such as the



call of the "Private Employers' Organizations" for the government to return to the global weekend system, which has been their major demand since 1996. This prompted the government to issue a decision to change the weekend in July 2009. Additionally, this organization criticized the partnership between Algeria and the European Union without its consulting, as this partnership threatens national institutions with bankruptcy in exchange for facilitating the import of foreign goods. Moreover, the government's issuance of the supplementary finance law decisions in late July 2009 is an evident example of this disregard.

In recent decades, many businessmen have appeared, accompanied by discussions about the diversion of public funds and collusion with the ruling elites to seize the public sector and convert it into the private sector for a nominal amount. The power of businessmen has increased, and influential groups have begun to form. The money they acquired from often dubious deals in the context of a renter economic system gradually transformed into administrative, economic, and political influence, to the extent that stories began to leak about their appointment of ministers, governors, heads of public companies, and directors of departments to preserve their interests and the expansion of their influence.²¹

The case of "Tebboune" is the best evidence of what has been mentioned earlier, as most observers in Algeria agree that the former Prime Minister "Abd Al-Madjid Tebboune" approaching the "Red Zone" and his interference with the interests of businessmen is what caused his swift dismissal, despite not spending more than 80 days in his position. His close proximity to President "Abd Al- Aziz Bouteflika" and receiving a merit award from the Presidency did not save him. He entered into an open conflict with influential businessmen, including "Ali Haddad", despite the fact that he was implementing a programme approved by the Council of Ministers and then the Parliament in both chambers, which aimed at separating money from politics. "Ahmed Ouyahia" was appointed instead of "Tebboune" at the head of the executive body. "Sofiane Djilali," the head of the opposition party "New Generation", also confirmed regarding the dismissal of Abd Al- Madjid "Tebboune" that what happened proves a close relationship between businessmen and politics.²²



Obviously, businessmen have become part of the governance process in Algeria. Many of them have turned to participate in parliamentary elections to buy immunity to facilitate their access to deals and ensure their interests. Furthermore, they have even placed their men in positions of responsibility in the state, gradually taking over the national economy to penetrate the parties of governance, and interfere in the status of their leaders and determine the order of the candidate's names and take hold of the first positions. They have established suspicious relationships with the president's entourage and inner circle, then used money to buy power and political influence to amass their wealth and tighten their control over various domains, not only economic and system spheres.²³

One of the most important means of pressure for business organizations to influence policy-making in order for the government to respond to their demands include forming associations with investors and private employers to impose their proposals in the field of economic policy, communicate their demands to the government, and urge it to respond quickly, and holding meetings, such as the 10th Arab Business Community Forum held in Algeria, which was organized by the Arab Businessmen Union and the Forum of Entrepreneurs under the presidency Abd Al- Aziz Bouteflika. A major outcome of this forum was supporting economic recovery, including initiatives aiming at encouraging private investment and focusing on its modernization. Additionally, there were threats and strikes in response to unmet demands, such as the threat from the National Coordination of Private Transporters to launch a nationwide strike if the decision to grant 500 transport lines in the capital to the "Tahkout Company" was not frozen. This decision could result in the unemployment of private transporters, affecting 4,000 families.²⁴

However, Algerians marched on February 22nd, 2019 rejecting absolutely President Bouteflika's candidacy for a 5th term, and for a comprehensive change of the government regime with its corrupt symbols, especially since Algeria has regarded the fight against corruption through its ratification of the United Nations International Convention against Corruption in 2003. Algeria ratified this convention on April 19th, 2004 by presidential decree 04-128. Through it, a series of laws were enacted to confront this phenomenon, represented by Law No. 01-06 of April 2nd, 2006, related to the prevention of money laundering and terrorism



financing, as amended and supplemented by Decree 12-02 of 2012, and the revision of the Public Procurement Law.²⁵

After the demands of the February 22nd, 2019 movement (HIRAK) to fight corruption symbols, the explosion of corruption files began to follow, whether major files involving the largest state figures or minor files whose perpetrators are managers and secondary officials. Everyone strove to plunder public funds, leading to a succession of corruption cases for businessmen, such as the "Khalifa" file, the highway file, and the SONATRACH file, in addition to the case of the businessman Ali Haddad, who is close to the Bouteflika family, and his financing of the 2009 and 2014 election campaigns. Perhaps the most important charge against him is the "East-West" highway case" in which he was accused of wasting \$11 billion, in addition to benefiting from substantial loans and smuggling them abroad. The businessman (Mohieddine Tahkout) was accused in corruption cases related to obtaining unjustified privileges in investment projects in the installation and assembly of cars, and other files of university buses for students and urban transport in Algiers.²⁶

THE THIRD TOPIC: THE ROLES OF ECONOMIC ELITES:

It is important to address the key roles of the economic elites. These roles have been effective and positive for the development of human society and the contribution in the progress of the state or merely working for their personal interest, especially in influencing decision-makers to adopt economic policies suitable for them.

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT: THE POLITICAL ROLE:

Undoubtedly, money is a major pillar of political power. Through money, public opinion can be directed, and politicians, administrators, laws and existing regulations can be influenced, and thereby accessing governance. In most advanced capitalist countries, as well as in developing ones, there is small elite that receives a significant portion of the national income and enjoys different privileges granted by private ownership. Economic power holders tend to reinforce their control by getting political power.



The quick method followed by the wealthy is the use of money to reach political power by appearing in elections through newspapers and other mass communication means to conduct the necessary propaganda and influence public opinion. This will lead to winning the elections and defeating the competitor who might be the most qualified objectively. With money as a weapon, it might be possible to entice the opponent to withdraw from the competition by offering appropriate financial compensation. This is through a commercial transaction style, where there are intermediaries and election brokers dealing in voters' votes.²⁷

Additionally, the involvement of businessmen and employers in political activity and subsequently in the governance system has become a reality, despite its contradiction of the ethics of political practice that oppose the intertwining of interests. Businessmen aim at power and authority mainly to protect and multiply their personal wealth, and they deliberately manipulate political programmes for their interests.²⁸

Furthermore, the legislative institution is also pressured through the legislative process, whether by pushing for a specific legislation or opposing it. The legislative institution may allow businessmen to decide what they see fit directly before the different parliamentary committees. It may also intervene in the selection or election of judges in systems that use elections to appoint some of their judges.

Among the other means used by wealthy individuals in general and multinational companies in particular to influence the behaviour of those in power, politicians and directors, and direct their actions along with their interests is bribery. For example, in underdeveloped countries, bribes are paid in the form of cash payments to politicians and ruling elites, and financial aid is given to government employees who accept it under the pressure of need and low living standards. This is done in order to manipulate taxes, fees, fines, the distribution of contracts, loans, or the issuance of different types of permits.²⁹

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT: THE ECONOMIC ROLE:



Economic elites work to achieve their economic interests through various means and methods, regardless of the higher interest of society, and their role in setting and modifying monetary policies and fiscal policy to serve their interests in directing politicians towards their interests. Among their key economic roles, we mention the following:

- Adjusting the tax structure to serve its objectives, such as focusing on reducing the direct tax rate at the cost of indirect taxes (expenditure), so that they reap the profits and the consumer pays the tax.

- Influencing the size of governmental expenditure in a way that undermines major principles such as equity in distribution, serving the interests of economic elites.

- The constant push to complete privatization programmes, close existing factories, convert equipment into scrap, and speculate on it, exploit state-owned lands, build on them for nominal amounts, and then offer the constructed properties at exorbitant prices.

- Pressuring the government to expand the establishment of free trade zones solely to benefit from the advantages of tariff elimination.

- Market thirst through the shortage of supply of important products to raise selling prices after that.³⁰

- As for multinational companies, their size is indicated by the size of their capital, the volume of investments, the diversity of their production, their sales figures, revenues, the marketing networks they own, the amount they spend on research and development, their organizational structures, and the efficiency of their management. More than two-thirds of these companies' investments are concentrated in the United States and the European Union (Britain, France, Germany, and Japan), increasing the competitive capabilities of host countries through the availability of infrastructure, transportation facilities, advanced communication networks, and the absorptive capacity of the national economy.

- Establishing strategic alliances in order to achieve their common economic interests and improve their competitive and marketing capabilities. Alliances are



more common in similar industries, and sometimes the alliance is in the field of research and development, which necessitates large funding. An example of this is the European Centre for Computer, Information, and Communication Research, which consists of three major European companies producing computers: the French company Bull, the British company T.C.L, and the German company Siemens.

- The significant influence on the mechanisms and components of the global economic system, which is shown in the development of an organized framework for the globalization of the economy by unifying and competing in the markets for goods and services, capital markets, and technological markets, and the impact on the international monetary system through the international reserves available to companies. This leads to influencing international monetary policy and international monetary stability, and the impact on global trade and international investment trends.³¹

- Economic elites and their institutions provide jobs for the local population in a contribution to raising the economic level of societies and thus influence wages. Important institutions in society play a key role in determining wages, as the strength and financial weight of the institution raises its wages. This enhances the financial capacity of society individuals. Therefore, the success of the new economic policy depends on the success of the economic institution in activating the dynamics of employment as a basis for development because work is wealth.

THE THIRD REQUIREMENT: THE SOCIAL ROLE:

The role of economic elites towards social responsibility is to motivate young people to enter the system of businessmen, finance their economic projects on various activities, support humanitarian bodies and organizations in society, develop the incomes of poor families, and support social and humanitarian funds. Despite this aspect having an acceptable level from some businessmen, what it presents in this field doesn't match with the requirements of reality. Therefore, there must be a collective support from all businessmen for various social and humanitarian activities. Hence, society relies on the sector of businessmen in investing developmental plans and programmes for the benefit of the nation, and thereby ending poverty and unemployment among the youth who are the



productive force in every country. For example, the American (Warren Buffett), second rich man, donated 37 billion dollars for charities.³²

The importance of businessmen is shown in that they are an economic category. They have capital that can be harnessed in favour of social development, to help the state in developmental projects where a percentage of annual profits are allocated to be used in establishing a community development system outside investment project through their participation in charitable development areas with tax exemption for the percentage of their community contribution.³³

In addition to the aforementioned, the importance of businessmen lies in creating long-term jobs, contributing to increasing the size of developmental projects, redistributing income, achieving social justice and improving the living standards of local communities, creating a joint dialogue between business organizations and actors in local communities so that a full partnership is achieved that seeks to preserve the rights of all individuals, providing individuals with food, drink and clothing, especially on religious occasions such as Ramadan, establishing educational and technical institutes and donations for needy students, and encouraging them to continue their studies, nationally and abroad, establishing research laboratories in universities, supporting health fields by establishing medical centers and providing treatment for patients abroad.

Financial assistance in case of natural disasters, establishing green parks and combating pollution. For example, the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) annually sponsoring and supporting social, educational, cultural and sports activities. The company also provides the community with qualified national cadres through the scholarship system.³⁴

The Corona pandemic has negatively affected the economies of countries. In light of their war against the Corona virus, countries seek to achieve social solidarity and social responsibility. For example, businessmen must donate funds and provide in-kind contributions. The first of which is building hospitals, importing respirators and everything the country needs to combat the spread of the virus, distributing food meals to needy families in their homes and bearing the costs of sterilization and disinfection. The Chinese billionaire Jack Ma, the founder



of Alibaba declared to provide \$14 million from his foundation to help with studies that work to find a vaccine for the Coronavirus in his country.³⁵

THE FOURTH TOPIC: ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

The term globalization has been used mainly to describe the main aspects of the modern transformation in global economic activity. In line with these transformations and the emergence of the phenomenon of economic globalization, two financial institutions were established: the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank following the Bretton Woods Conference, then the formation of the World Trade Organization. These international institutions play a role serving as a framework and mechanism for the economic integration and unification of the units bound by geographical overlap or shared interests. This is influenced by the level of capital accumulation, the high cost of modern technology, and the intensifying commercial competition among global economies.³⁶

Reliance on international markets instead of the state, particularly in the field of development, focusing on growth based on free exports and the free movement of capital, and achieving human dignity, which includes personal freedom and the management of private life, and the full and unhindered availability of the participant in social life from combinations of oppressive forces and oppressive apparatuses.³⁷

Economic globalization is the uncontrollable forces of international markets and multinational corporations, which have no allegiance to any nation state. Some define it as the movement of goods, services, labour, capital and information across national and regional borders. Also, it is a new dynamic emerges within the circle of international relations by achieving a high degree of intensity and speed in the process of spreading information, and technical and operational means of civilization. The role of external factors increasingly determines the fate of national parties constituting this integrated circle.³⁸

Business circles heavily impact social and economic goals in global economy. In recent years, non-state actors have taken many initiatives to integrate labour standards, human rights, environmental protection, and other social values into the



global economy. A wide range of companies, sectors, and civic groups has been involved in seeking to promote respect for ethical and social objectives in the context of managing businesses.

Some companies have exceeded their own boundaries, aiming to improve working conditions and support other humanitarian and social goals within the global supply chains in which the countries and communities they operate belong. They achieve this by various means, mainly by participating in certification programmes and multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at monitoring and verification, as well as through their involvement in developmental partnerships with local communities and enterprises. The International Labour Organization provides significant global references, including the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, and the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.³⁹

Many factors have contributed to the emergence of the phenomenon of economic globalization. The most important of which are the reduction of restrictions on trade and investment, the integration of international financial markets, the increased importance of private capital flows and foreign direct investment, industrial development in some developing countries and their increased integration with the global market, the associated transfer of technical knowledge, production methods and the activities of multinational companies, as well as the technological and information and communication revolutions.⁴⁰

Algeria joined the World Trade Organization after realizing that there is no point in staying on the sidelines, especially after it embarked on economic reforms and the transition to a market economy that requires the liberalization of foreign trade, which is the basis and key condition for joining this organization. One of the most important conditions for joining is that local producers are forced to improve their products in terms of quality and management to stay in the market. On the other hand, increased trade exchanges may allow for a direct contact between local and foreign goods, thereby benefitting from technology and advanced techniques used in the production process. This heavily contributes in launching and reviving the Algerian economy. In addition to keeping up with international trade as Algeria



resorted to international and regional markets to obtain its necessities of materials and goods, as well as keeping pace with modern developments.

Therefore, the local Algerian economic elites are forced to keep pace with the global economy by utilizing technology in the provided services, regardless of their field of operation, and by adhering to international quality and standards set by global organizations specialized in the economic field. This is necessary for easy integration into global markets and to respect the economic laws of the country they operate in. Countries affiliated with the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization are obliged to comply with the agreements and conditions of these organizations, in order to facilitate trade exchange through global markets.

THE FIRST REQUIREMENT: NON-TRADITIONAL FINANCING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT:

It was resorted to this type of financing after the decline in oil prices, which negatively affected the financing of the general equipment budget and the amount of expenditures on infrastructure. Therefore, the issue of financing different infrastructure sectors in developing countries, and Algeria in particular, has become challenging, mainly in financing major projects launched in the public works, railways, and transport sectors, as well as the amassed financial deficit of the state and local communities, which has begun to deplete their financial reserves.

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT: ALTERNATIVE FINANCING IN ALGERIA:

The Algerian government sought to cover the financing needs of the treasury and public debt, and to provide financial resources into the National Investment Fund by launching a series of financial measures and programmes. The law related to currency and credit 11-03 was amended, allowing the central bank to launch a medium-term national loan to purchase treasury bonds. It was referred to as "the investment loan to support growth". The goal is to cover the budget deficit within 10 %. The unconventional financing mentioned in the government's programme also includes relying on funding through the printing of uncovered banknotes. The



programme has indicated that unconventional financing is based on the central bank directly lending to the public treasury to finance the state budget deficit, fund the internal public debt, and provide financial resources to the National Investment Fund. This unconventional financing measure will be implemented after the project is approved for accompanying the implementation of economic and financial reform programmes, which has a time frame of 5 years and two main objectives: restoring the balance of the state budget and achieving a balance in payments. This system was actually approved by the Council of Ministers on 06/09/2017 and included in the annual budget for 2018.⁴¹

THE FIFTH TOPIC: THE ALGERIAN EXPERIENCE IN FINANCING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS UNDER THE BOT SYSTEM:

Algeria has heavily relied on the concession model to finance public-private partnership projects. This model, one of the oldest forms of partnership, involves the private sector designing, constructing, and operating a specific project during a period known as the concession period. This type of financing has been limited to private commercial projects, which have not extended to infrastructure projects as a core responsibility of the state.

They have been focused purely on profitability regardless to the type of service provided due to several factors, such as the lack of necessary expertise and skills among local companies, the weakness of the financial and banking system to support such financing, the absence of a clear legal framework to precisely define the relationships between participating parties, the lack of administrative capacity for support, follow-up, and monitoring of such projects, and the difficulty in adapting the tax system to the revenue requirements of these projects, which require precisely determining taxes and fees. Additionally, the application of the 51/49 rule has made it difficult for foreign investors with significant capital and expertise to engage in such projects, at least currently.

Despite these challenges, foreign partners have not entirely prevented from participating in some major projects, such as the Central Port project, which is considered unique and the first of its kind in Algeria.



THE FIRST REQUIREMENT: THE CENTRAL PORT PROJECT MODEL UNDER BOT CONTRACTS:

Algeria has begun constructing the largest port in the center, particularly in the "Cherchell" area, "El Hamdania," in Tipaza province, 50 km west of the capital. A protocol was signed between the National Public Port Services Group and two Chinese companies, "CSCEC" to execute the largest port project in Algeria, with a total cost of about \$3.2 billion under the 51/49 % rule, with the "National Port Services Group" holding a 51% share, and the Chinese company "CSCEC" holding a 49 % share.

The Chinese partner is responsible for conducting studies, construction, and establishing the operational and management framework for the port. The project is expected to be completed within seven years, with the possibility of benefiting from long-term, low-interest loans from the Chinese government. The port is to become operational in phases. The first phase starting four years after the project's initiation with "Shanghai Ports" will manage the port's operations during the contractual period.⁴²

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ALGERIAN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FRENCH COMPANY RENAULT:

The inauguration and establishment of the Renault Algeria factory took place in the industrial zone of Oued Tlilat, Oran. It witnessed the birth of the first Algerian-made car, the "Renault Symbol", characterized by exclusive features and high design. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Industrial and Agricultural Equipment Management Company confirmed that the inauguration of the Renault factory and the rollout of the first car from the production line will mark the birth of the automotive industry in Algeria. The same official also indicated that the development of the subcontracting network has been one of the major concerns of this investment since the launch of the "Renault Algeria" factory project.

On May 25th, 2012, the Renault Group signed a protocol agreement with the Algerian government. This protocol determines the framework for studying the



establishment of an automotive industry in Algeria gradually to keep in line with the growth in the local market. The initial stages of this gradual process involve assembling car parts in greater quantities.

On December 19th, 2012, Renault Group, the National Industrial Vehicle Company, and the National Investment Fund signed a shareholders' agreement to establish a mixed company, under a partnership framework of 51% for the Algerian side and 49% for Renault, aiming at developing the automotive industry sector in Algeria to keep pace with the growth and development witnessed by the local market. The National Industrial Vehicle Company, previously known as SONACOME, along with the National Investment Fund, holds a 51% share, with 34% and 17% respectively.

The agreement stipulates the establishment of a factory in the Ouad Tlelat area, southwest of Oran, for the production of passenger (private) and utility vehicles bearing the brands owned by the Renault Group, primarily aimed at the local market.

On January 31, 2013, the company "Renault Algeria Production" was established at the headquarters of the National Industrial Car Company in Rouiba, and in the presence of the Directorate of State Property. The founding general assembly for the establishment of "Renault Algeria Production" was held with the attendance of the three shareholders: the National Industrial Car Company, the National Investment Fund, and Renault.⁴³

Like all the factories owned by the Renault-Nissan Group, the Oran factory adheres to all the strict quality rules known as the "Alliance Production Way (APW)", which is a set of stringent rules and principles followed in the production of cars by the Renault-Nissan Group.

The Renault Algeria factory operates production, as a first stage, according to the "S.K.D" pattern (Semi Knock Down). It is a mode limited to the assembly of separate parts: This mode is challenging in terms of supply, especially since these parts are manufactured and supplied from the Renault factory located in Pitesti, Romania. As a result, this represents more than 220 containers arriving from the port of Constanta (Romania) every week.



Eight weeks must be counted from the order's dispatch until the parts arrive and are available at the factory for installation at the Oran factory. This massive quantitative flow is managed thanks to the concerted efforts of all active parties (suppliers, factories, Oran port, and logistics engineering team, Algerian customs, billing and finance team).

THE THIRD REQUIREMENT: THE ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RENAULT ALGERIA PROJECT:

This project has a significant contribution in absorbing unemployment and providing job opportunities for various segments of society according to their specializations and qualifications. Since June 2016, a second group of more than 100 new workers has joined the factory as part of an initiative aimed at developing the human resources of the institution, bringing the total to more than 380 workers. This will allow the institution to achieve an annual production capacity of about 25,000 cars, with the open job positions meeting the institution's various labour requirements and covering all stages of car manufacturing locally. Additionally, the new workers will benefit from a training and retraining period at the factory workshops. Knowing that 51% of the Renault Algeria joint venture is owned by the Algerian side, with 34% by the National Company for Industrial Vehicles and 17% by the National Investment Fund (49% by the French company Renault).⁴⁴

It should be noted that this project, which has cost about 50 million euros to date, is expected to see an increasing investments reaching 400 million euros during the transition stage of production from 25,000 to 75,000 cars annually, before reaching around 800 million euros during the annual production stage of 150,000 cars.

This does not neglect the contribution of Algerian small and medium-sized enterprises in developing this project to increase the national integration rate, as the development of the subcontracting network has been one of the major concerns of this investment since the launch of the Renault Algeria factory project. The target is to achieve a national integration rate of 42% by 2019 in the production of Renault cars. The manufacturing of the first car from the Oued Tlelat factory, which includes some locally produced plastic parts, allowed for an integration rate of 17%, which will later increase to 25%. This stage will be followed by the



gradual integration of electrical networks, cables, and batteries produced by Algerian small and medium-sized enterprises.

Regarding the prospects for enhancing the integration rate in the medium term, it is expected that a higher level of integration will be achieved in the future. Work has begun to take on the production of the chassis, which is considered one of the most important car parts that requires a "huge investment". It involves assembling hundreds of spare parts onto the car chassis. Knowing that the spare parts manufactured by the subcontractor must comply with and be approved by the Renault Algeria Production joint venture, according to the international standards of the Renault brand, this requires small and medium-sized subcontracting companies to transition from the training stage to the qualification stage.⁴⁵

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the topic of elites is of great importance in various human societies, due to the effective role in their organization regardless to the field of operation. There are political elites working in the political sphere, military elites handling military issues and national defense, feminist elites focusing their efforts on women's issues and advocating for women's political rights, and economic elites whose core activities revolve around economic issues and maximizing profits and wealth, ...etc.

Economic elites are a determined requirement in any human society due to their effective and strong role in political, economic, and social aspects. They influence various decisions and economic policies pursued by decision-makers, which may serve their own interests or the national interest. This can even threaten the stability of political systems. Additionally, they aim to achieve sustainable development through investment in infrastructure and innovation to develop and advance the local economy by building good political foundations.



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