

An Analytical Examination of Algeria's Economic Policy in 2022 through the Lens of Kaldor's Framework

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Abstract:

Many developing economies, including Algeria, heavily rely on hydrocarbons as the primary source of revenue and economic activity. However, such dependence exposes them to significant risks, including market volatility, environmental harm, and limited economic diversification. This paper argues that reducing Algeria's reliance on rent-based income and pursuing diversification is essential for developing policies that promote long-term stability, sustainability, and inclusive growth. Through an analytical approach, the study utilizes theoretical literature, empirical research, and statistical data from credible sources. The findings indicate that Algeria's current economic strategies and policies have largely failed, as evidenced by the country's ongoing economic challenges.

Keywords : Economic policy, economic development, Kaldor's Framework.

JEL Classifications : E60, E61, E65, E66.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Economic development is a dynamic and ongoing process involving the coordinated efforts of various stakeholders to maximize societal prosperity. A key element of this process is the accumulation of capital assets, which boosts productivity across sectors such as mining, manufacturing, and agriculture. Additionally, investments in infrastructure—such as roads, schools, and hospitals—are essential for building both social and economic capital, which underpins sustainable development. Among these sectors, agriculture plays a crucial role in national development by providing essential goods for consumption and raw materials for industry. Agriculture and industry are mutually reinforcing, with agriculture supplying critical inputs and benefiting from industrial outputs. However, in many developing countries, the manufacturing sector's declining share of GDP hampers structural transformation. Manufacturing is a key driver of employment and sustained growth, and remains a vital public policy tool for long-term development.

At the same time, the services sector, particularly in areas like telecommunications and ICT, has become a dominant force in modern economies. The rise of tradable services presents new opportunities for developing countries to engage in the global economy, with sectors like energy, transportation, banking, and healthcare playing critical roles in economic growth. In this context, Algeria's economic policy reflects the complex interactions between these sectors. Understanding how each contributes to the country's development is essential for assessing the effectiveness of its economic strategies and identifying pathways for sustainable growth.

➤ **The Problem :**

The discussion above emphasizes that sustainable economic development relies on the integration and synergy of various sectors within the national economy, supported by strong political will and advancements in information and communications technology. A country's economic performance reflects both its domestic stability and international influence, playing a crucial role in achieving sustainable development and improving citizens' welfare. In this context, a key question arises: ***How effective is the economic policy implemented by the Algerian government in promoting societal well-being and achieving long-term development goals?***

➤ **Study Methodology:**

This study adopts an analytical approach to evaluate and interpret the current economic conditions in Algeria. It is based on a critical review of relevant scholarly literature, complemented by reliable statistical data from reputable institutions. The research also examines how Algeria's economic policies align with the principles of economic prosperity outlined in Nicholas Kaldor's theoretical framework, assessing their effectiveness in fostering sustainable growth and structural transformation.

➤ **Previous Studies:**

- Driouche Dahmani and Mohamed Mounia Rekrak (2015), in their study "Revisiting the Relationship between Unemployment Rate and Economic Growth in Algeria, 1970–2014: A Co-Integration Approach Using the ARDL Model," highlight the need to reduce Algeria's dependence on the hydrocarbon sector. They argue that this capital-intensive

industry, with limited impact on employment, should not dominate the national economy. Instead, they advocate for a diversified economic structure to reduce vulnerability and promote sustainable, inclusive growth (Driouche & Mounia, 2015, p. 1).

- Karim Boudekhdekh and Rahma Kerbache (2017), in "Why Algeria Needs a Supply-Side Economic Policy," identify structural issues, particularly weak aggregate demand, as major contributors to Algeria's economic difficulties. They recommend shifting toward a supply-side economic policy that focuses on enhancing labor productivity, increasing labor force participation, and improving competitiveness and resource allocation through comprehensive market reforms (Karim & Rahma, 2017, p. 1).

- Zergoune Mohamed et al. (2018), in "Determinants of the Algerian Economy: An Autoregressive Distributed Lag Approach," confirm that, after independence in 1962, the Algerian government adopted an industrialization-focused development strategy. However, the surge in oil prices shifted policy attention toward the hydrocarbon sector, leading to substantial growth and revenue generation, though at the cost of the original industrialization agenda (Zergoune & al, 2018, p. 1).

- Brahim Bouyacoub (2024), in "Charting Economic Policy Trajectories in Algeria – An Empirical Exploration Across Global Dynamics (2000–2022)," notes that Algeria's economic reforms began in the early 2000s, driven by rising oil and gas prices. These revenues helped stabilize the economy by reducing external debt and increasing foreign exchange reserves. Despite this, the volatility of hydrocarbon prices prompted the government to implement reforms aimed at diversifying the economy through industrial and agricultural sectors. However, the study highlights that these reforms have been unevenly applied across sectors (Brahim, 2024, p. 1).

➤ **Knowledge Gap:**

This study builds on previous research by employing a similar methodological approach and focusing on key economic policy variables. However, it offers a unique contribution by applying Nicholas Kaldor's theoretical framework, providing new insights into Algeria's economic dynamics. The study is particularly valuable for policymakers, investors, and analysts assessing the effectiveness of current economic policies and identifying areas for reform. It also contributes to the ongoing discussion on economic diversification, employment generation, and sustainable development—essential for long-term stability and prosperity. Given Algeria's significant role as an energy exporter and its regional influence, this analysis is crucial for understanding broader geopolitical impacts. The study aims to promote evidence-based decision-making, transparency, and international cooperation, highlighting the need for structural reforms and industrial development to ensure sustained economic growth and improved living standards.

1. An Overview of the Economic Situation and Productive Sectors in Algeria :

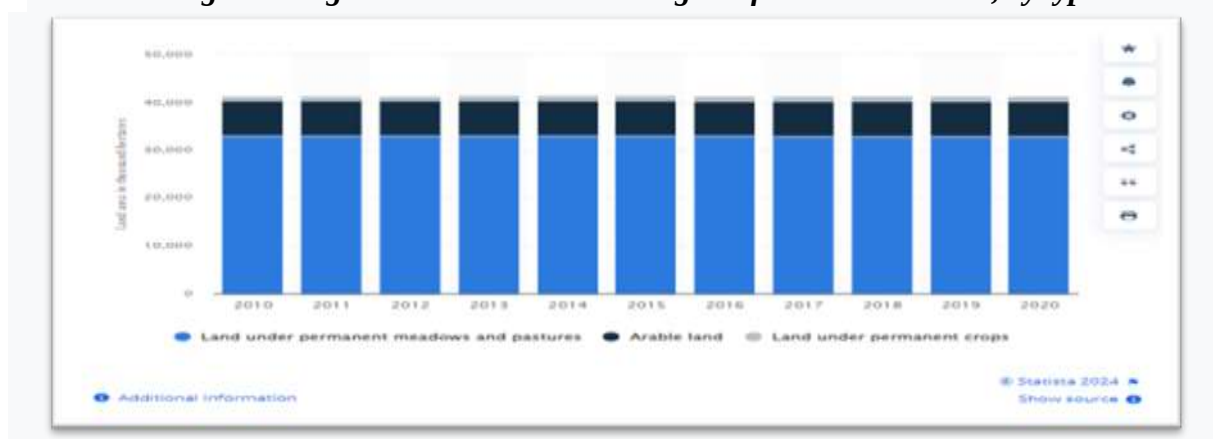
1.2. Agriculture :

Despite Algeria's heavy reliance on hydrocarbon exports, which account for about one-third of its GDP, the agricultural sector remains a key component of the economy. Although living standards have improved to middle-income levels, domestic food production still falls short of meeting consumption needs, preventing food self-sufficiency. Agriculture is the

third-largest sector, contributing around 14% to GDP in 2020 (L & Salah), with steady growth over the past decade. The sector also employs over one million people, or nearly 10% of the workforce (Saifaddin, 2023). As part of efforts to diversify the economy and reduce food imports, agriculture has gained greater importance as a potential driver of sustainable development and rural employment.

In 2020, Algeria's total agricultural land covered about 32,526 hectares, with 7.5 million hectares under cultivation. Between 1965 and 2020 (agriculture, 2022), the country's arable land fluctuated significantly, with a decline in per capita availability mainly due to rapid population growth. This issue is compounded by factors like land use changes, environmental degradation (e.g., desertification, soil, and water pollution), and economic shifts. These challenges threaten food security and strain natural resources, requiring effective strategies to boost agricultural productivity and manage resources sustainably.

Figure 1: Agricultural land area in Algeria from 2010 to 2020, by type



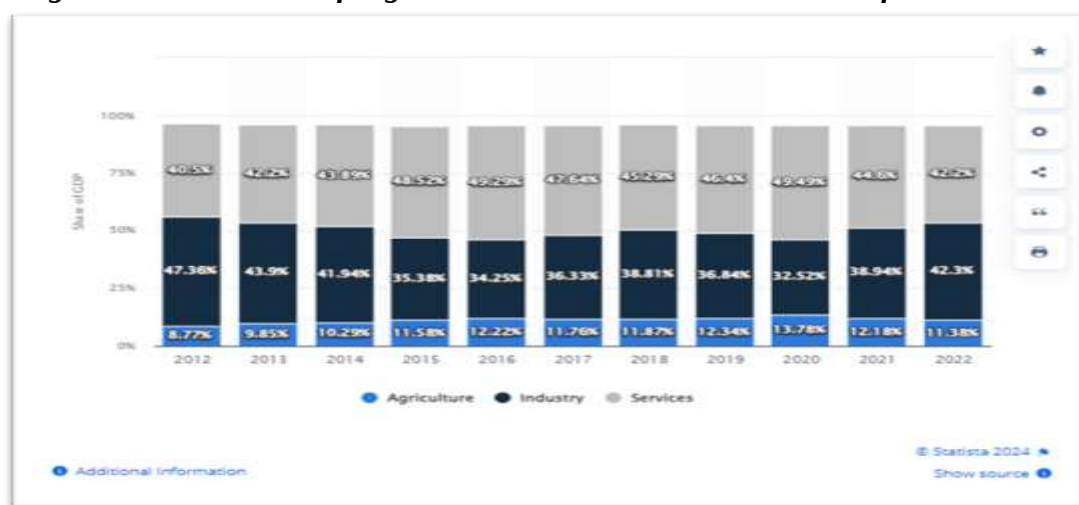
Source : <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1181177/agricultural-land-area-in-algeria-by-type/>

As of recent estimates, Algeria had about 7.5 million hectares of arable land and 1 million hectares of permanent cropland, with most agricultural land since 2010 devoted to pastures and meadows. In 2019, the sector contributed roughly 12% to GDP (Research S. , 2023), with total agricultural land exceeding 41 million hectares, highlighting its strategic economic significance. The agricultural sector's contribution to the Algerian economy has fluctuated in recent years. Although price and subsidy policies have influenced productivity, they have largely failed to achieve their intended outcomes. This underperformance is linked to ineffective incentive structures. Therefore, a supply response modeling approach is essential to assess the sector's role, evaluate policy effectiveness and guide the development of more efficient and sustainable agricultural strategies (BenMehaia, 2021, p. 85).

These policies encompass economic measures—such as taxation, subsidies, trade regulation, agricultural financing, and investment in innovation—that influence agricultural production. Their objectives include boosting productivity, raising farmers' incomes, strengthening food security, and promoting socio-economic balance between rural and urban areas. Agriculture remains a fundamental pillar of national food security, irrespective of a country's development level (Praburaj, 2018, p. 2). Policy serves as a key instrument for advancing agricultural development, outlining government objectives and the strategies to

achieve them. In Algeria, various agricultural policies have been implemented—often through strict measures—to enhance food security and move toward self-sufficiency (Laoubi & Yamao, 2012, p. 66), Algeria faces ongoing challenges in balancing food security with the preservation of natural resources, particularly land and water. In response, the government offers subsidies, price controls, and incentives to support key sectors, while promoting agricultural modernization through investments in equipment, seeds, and financing. Policy efforts prioritize land and water development, alongside improvements in field organization, supply chain structure, and technological, commercial, and regulatory frameworks (Amel & al, 2020, p. 2).

Figure 2: Distribution of Algeria's GDP across economic sectors from 2012 to 2022



Source : <https://www.statista.com/statistics/408037/algeria-gdp-distribution-across-economic-sectors/#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20agriculture%20contributed%20around,percent%20from%20the%20services%20sector>

The data illustrates the sectoral distribution of Algeria's GDP from 2012 to 2022. In 2022, industry accounted for 42.3% of GDP, services contributed 42.2%, and agriculture represented approximately 11.38% (O'Neil, 2023).

1.2.1 Livestock Production :

Livestock is Algeria's second-largest agricultural sector, primarily practiced at a subsistence level to supplement household income and food supply. Production patterns are shaped by farm size, cropping systems, and access to pasture and fodder. Although eleven livestock production systems have been identified, most are traditional, low-input models that lack formal institutionalization. Historically, livestock has been a key livelihood in mountainous, steppe, and arid regions, contributing not only to food security but also to biodiversity and landscape preservation. Much of Algeria's livestock is maintained within family systems, providing meat, milk, eggs, honey, wool, hides, and natural fertilizers (Bengouga & al, 2019, pp. 199-200). In 2021, poultry dominated national livestock production with over 137 million birds, followed by sheep at nearly 18 million. Pigs and mules represented a very small share, with around 18,000 and 5,000 animals, respectively (Statista, 2023).

1.2.2. Marine Fishing :

In 2019, Algeria produced approximately 105,000 metric tons of fish and seafood, a decline from the previous year's peak of over 120,000 metric tons. Marine fishing (Saifaddin G. , 2023), which plays a significant role in both the economy and culture due to Algeria's extensive Mediterranean coastline, remains an important industry. Despite the country's rich marine biodiversity, traditional fishing methods have been passed down through generations, although these practices do not fully reflect the potential of Algerian waters. The fishery yields a variety of species, including sardines (Saifaddin G. , 2023), anchovies, tuna, and grouper, with techniques such as net fishing and longline fishing being commonly used. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on sustainable fishing practices to preserve marine ecosystems and support the livelihoods of local fishermen. This sector not only contributes to Algeria's food security but also provides employment in coastal communities, making it a vital component of the nation's social and economic structure.

1.2. Industry :

Algeria pursued a planned economic development strategy with a socialist ideology to achieve its economic and social objectives, including growth, food self-sufficiency (Begga, 2014, p. 98), regional development, and equitable income distribution. The country's industrial sector is diverse, largely due to its rich natural resources, encompassing industries such as mining, food processing, and chemicals. However, the government's efforts to restructure the sector through limited reforms have faced challenges. While the industrial sector has the potential to support broader economic and social development, its performance has been weak, hindered by social, technical, and administrative issues (Khaled, 2024, pp. 166-167). Despite Algeria's adherence to free-market principles and policies aimed at promoting industrial growth and competitiveness, both domestically and internationally, the country's reliance on oil and gas revenues, along with external factors like global commodity price fluctuations, has hindered sustainable economic development since independence (Amine & Justin, 2024, p. 13).

Figure 3: Industrial production in Algeria



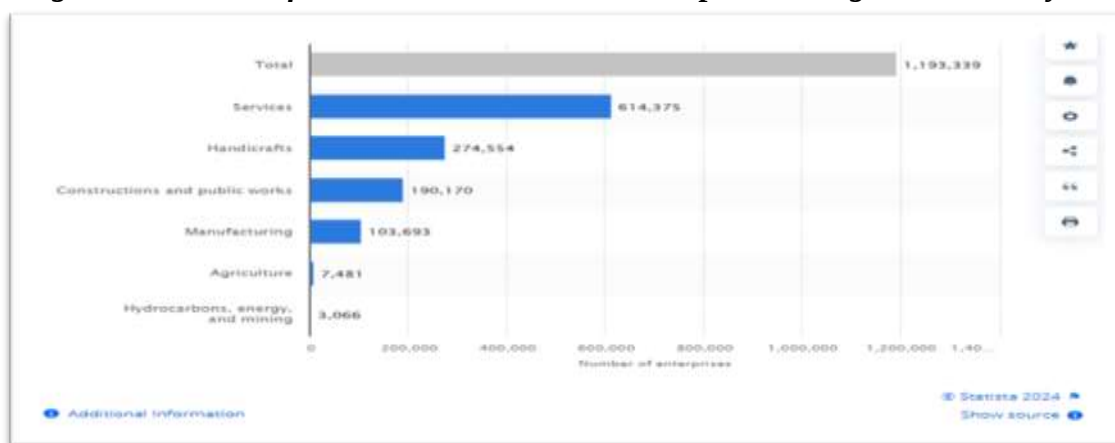
Source : <https://www.focus-economics.com/country-indicator/algeria/industry/#:~:text=Algeria's%20economy%20recorded%20an%20average,industrial%20production%20growth%20was%201.7%25>

Between 2022 and previous years, Algeria's industrial production grew at an average rate of 0.8%, below the Middle East and North Africa's average of 1.5%. However, in the third quarter of 2023, industrial production rose by 7.10% compared to the same period in 2022. Historically (economics.com, n.d.), Algerian industrial production peaked at 15.10% in the fourth quarter of 1998 and hit a low of -14.10% in the second quarter of 2020, averaging 0.72% from 1996 to 2023 (tradingeconomics.com, 2024). The oil and gas sector has dominated industrial output, with export revenues from hydrocarbons being the primary source of investment capital for other industries.

1.3. Services

The services sector accounts for over two-thirds of global GDP, with more than three-quarters of foreign direct investment in developed countries, creating significant job opportunities, though at varying rates. Driven by technological advancements, digitalization, and economic globalization (Cuadrado & Juan, 2016, pp. 107-108), the service industry has undergone rapid transformation. While developed economies show consistent service growth, emerging and developing economies experience more volatile trends due to structural changes and the effects of internationalization and market reforms. Economic diversification requires attention to sectors with high job creation and GDP contribution (Sara, 2021, p. 1), and the service sector is central to this, driving societal needs and public welfare. In Algeria, services contribute over a third of national income, spanning areas like trade, transport, health, education, finance, and tourism. Despite its critical role, the service sector remains vulnerable to internal and external crises. As automation and technological advancements reduce labor in production and agriculture, the demand for service sector jobs is expected to rise (Kon, 1997, p. 1). Despite its importance, the service sector is often underappreciated in economic analyses.

Figure 4: Number of small and medium-sized enterprises in Algeria in 2019 by sector



Source : <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1189126/number-of-smes-in-algeria-by-sector/>

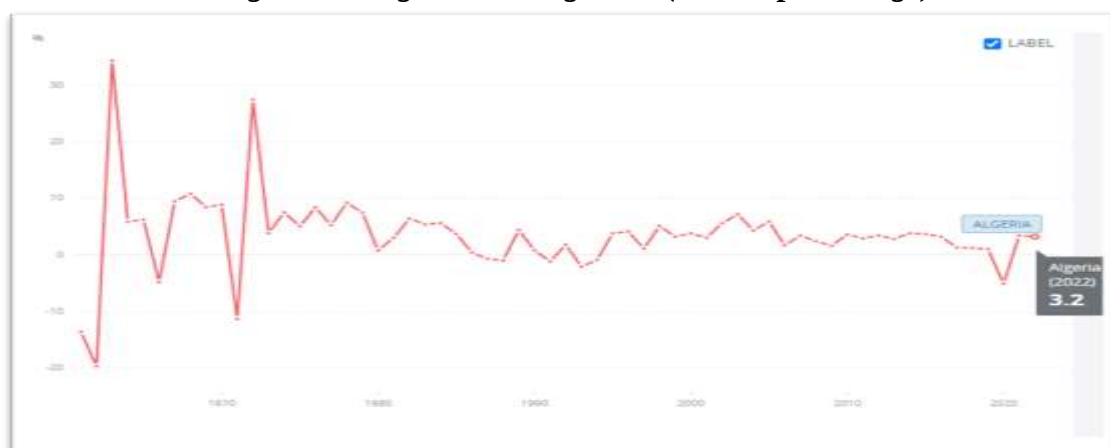
As of 2019, Algeria had approximately 1.2 million small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with nearly 51% of them operating in the services sector. The country also had many businesses in the construction and crafts sectors (Research.S, 2023). Despite social and economic challenges, Algeria's services sector has developed, with notable progress in information technology, telecommunications, and financial services. However, systemic issues like corruption, bureaucracy, and a lack of skilled labor persist. Political instability,

including protests and government transitions, has intermittently affected business activity and investor confidence. Nevertheless, Algeria has made strides in improving its digital infrastructure and expanding modern services. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital adoption while emphasizing the need for flexibility (Research.S, 2023). Moving forward, further reforms to improve the business environment, invest in human capital, and encourage innovation are crucial for sustainable growth. The services sector, which includes finance, telecommunications, tourism, and healthcare, is a key driver of economic growth, fostering innovation and improving quality of life. These industries play essential roles, from facilitating investment and enhancing communication to showcasing Algeria's cultural heritage and supporting public health.

2. Kaldor's Macroeconomic Policy :

In his 1971 paper, "Conflicts in National Economic Goals," Nicholas Kaldor explored how key macroeconomic variables—such as GDP growth, employment, inflation, and the trade balance—can be used to achieve and assess economic policy objectives. Although Kaldor's original analysis did not include a mathematical or graphical representation, Karl Schiller later developed the "magic square," a diagram that situates these four key policy goals at its corners (Hamdini & Gaidi, 2021, p. 699). This graphical tool helps diagnose a country's economic situation.

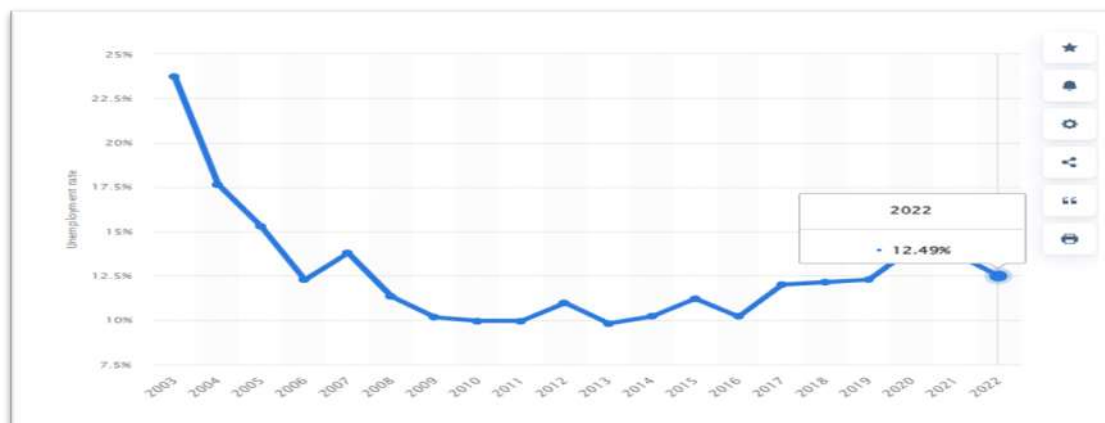
Figure 05: Algerian GDP growth (annual percentage)



Source : <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=DZ>

Algeria's GDP growth in 2022 is estimated at 3.2%, after experiencing various fluctuations in preceding years (Hamdini & Gaidi, 2021, p. 699).

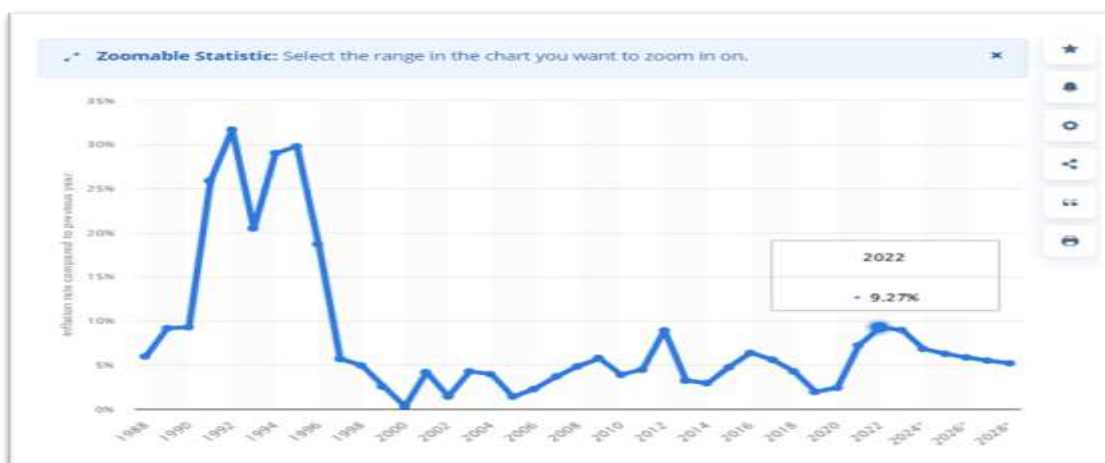
Figure 6: Unemployment rate in Algeria from 2003 to 2022



Source : <https://www.statista.com/statistics/408055/unemployment-rate-in-algeria/>

The figure above shows that Algeria's unemployment rate decreased to 12.49% in 2022. However (Aaron, 2024), this rate remains significantly higher compared to the previous years.

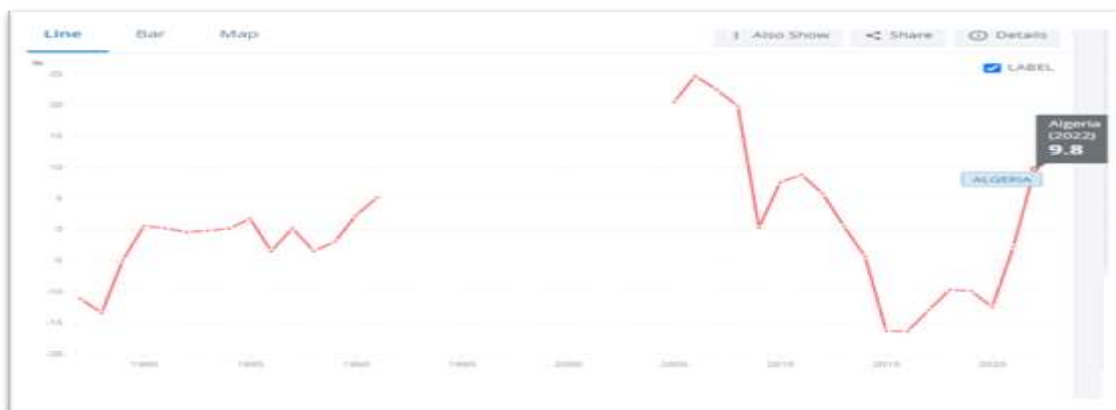
Figure 7: Inflation rate from 1988 to 2028



Source : <https://www.statista.com/statistics/439788/inflation-rate-in-algeria/>

Algeria's average inflation rate is projected to decline gradually by 2.5% from 2024 to 2029, with inflation reaching 5.02% in 2029 (Aaron O. , 2024), marking the sixth consecutive year of decrease.

Figure 8: Algerian current account balance (percentage of GDP)

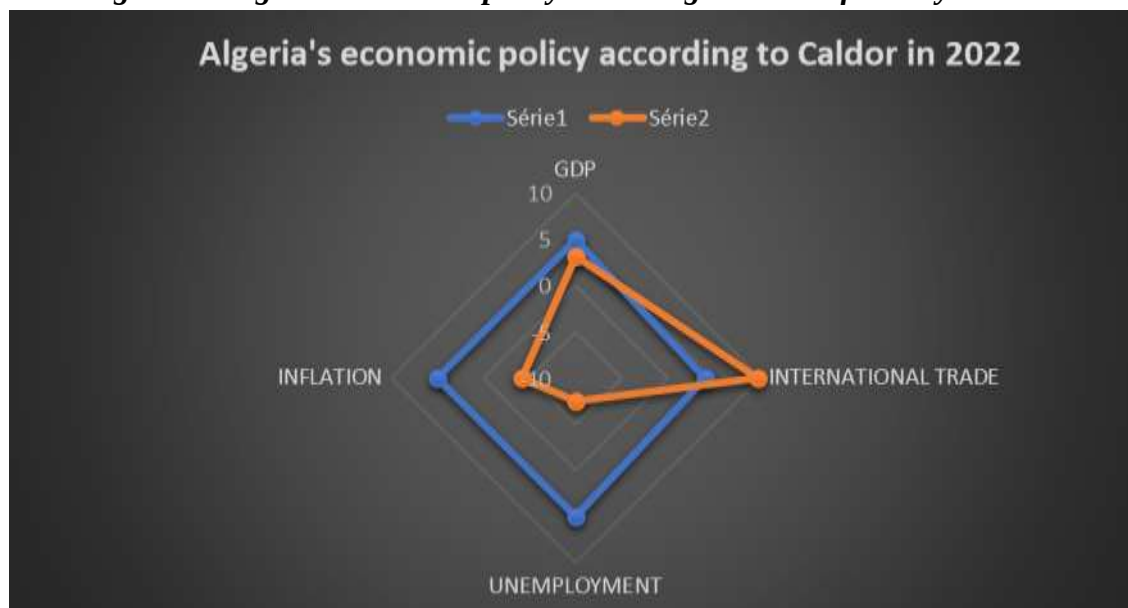


Source : <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BN.CAB.XOKA.GD.ZS?locations=DZ>

Algeria's current account balance was estimated at 9.8% in 2022 (Aaron O. , 2024), reflecting a consistent decline over the previous years.

The following diagram was created based on Figures 5, 6, 7, and 8, which represent the axes of Kaldor's magic square.

Figure 9: Algerian economic policy according to Kaldor for the year 2022



Source: Compiled by the authors based on data from *Les Yeux du Monde* (<https://les-yeux-du-monde.fr/ressources/14053-quest-ce-le-carre-magique-de-kaldor/>).

Algeria's GDP increased by 3.5% in the third quarter of 2022 compared to the same period in the previous year, reflecting a recovery from the sharp economic contraction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic—most notably a 10.2% decline in the second quarter of 2020 (Saifaddin G. , 2023). Despite a per capita GDP of \$4,342.64 and a trade balance surplus of 9.8%, these improvements did not translate into significant reductions in unemployment or price stability (worldbank, 2024). According to the Phillips framework, this scenario reflects features of economic stagnation.

Algeria is currently experiencing an economic downturn, compounded by a series of structural and external challenges. The economy's heavy dependence on hydrocarbon exports has made it particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices, while the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have further strained fiscal resources, reducing public revenues and constraining investment efforts. High unemployment and limited economic diversification have intensified the crisis, underscoring deep-seated vulnerabilities. In response, policymakers have initiated reform measures aimed at strengthening economic resilience, fostering diversification, and revitalizing growth to support a more sustainable recovery trajectory.

From a Kaldorian perspective, the assessment of Algeria's 2022 economic policy would likely highlight the need for balanced, sustainable growth and structural transformation. Central to Kaldor's approach is the emphasis on demand-led growth, which underscores the importance of stimulating domestic consumption and investment to drive economic activity. In this context, the evaluation would focus on the effectiveness of Algeria's policy responses in revitalizing aggregate demand and promoting productive investment beyond the hydrocarbon sector. Additionally, the assessment would stress the importance of reducing income inequality and fostering social cohesion, reflecting Kaldor's concern with equitable wealth distribution. Overall, such an analysis would advocate for policies that support demand-driven expansion, diversification, and inclusive development as pillars of long-term economic prosperity.

4. CONCLUSION:

Algeria's economic trajectory highlights the challenges it faces in achieving long-term stability and prosperity. Despite its abundant natural resources, the country's overdependence on hydrocarbons and limited economic diversification have constrained sustainable growth. Recent gains in GDP and trade have not translated into meaningful improvements in employment or inflation, underscoring persistent structural weaknesses. The ongoing recession reflects the limited effectiveness of existing policy measures. Nonetheless, Algeria holds considerable potential for economic transformation. Realizing this potential requires a strategic, integrated policy framework grounded in transparency, accountability, and innovation. By fostering a more dynamic and inclusive economic environment, Algeria can lay the foundation for sustainable growth, enhanced living standards, and greater resilience.

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