

THE MOST IMPORTANT FOUNDATION OF FREE ZONES IN ARAB COUNTRIES (UAE, EGYPT, ALGERIA)

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Abstract:

The objective of this research is to introduce the most significant factors that play a role in the establishment of free zones in certain Arab nations (UAE, Egypt, Algeria). that are not subject to the customs regime of any subsequent State are called free zones and can be crossed without paying any levy or tax, They are referred to as fry. It has spread throughout the Arab world, especially in the UAE, Egypt, and other nations. Algeria also acquired a portion of its heritage, with the Ballara region being a notable instance.

Keywords: free zones, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Algeria, Ballara.

JEL Classification: A12 ; Q54.

Introduction:

The idea of creating free zones has recently developed, frequently due to their significant role and economic benefits. Their significant contribution to the liberalization of international trade and increased economic openness is essential for countries' progress and development. The provision of many facilities and exemptions has played a significant role in determining the trajectories of the global future, particularly when they liberalized trade. The gates are a crucial component of international trade and various partnerships between several States, offering transit ports, export and import windows at the least expensive costs. The following problems may arise: " **What distinguishes the establishment of free zones in the Arab State?**

Sub-questions:

- What are the areas that are not restricted?
- What are the foundations of free zones?
- What are the positive aspects of free zones in Arab countries such as UAE, -Egypt, and Algeria?

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Hypotheses:

Free zones are defined as relying solely on natural resources.

Curriculum used:

The analytical descriptive curriculum was employed to match the date of this research regarding free zones in countries such as the UAE, Egypt, and Algeria.

Research Structure:

The research was categorized into three axes to address the previous problem, with the first axis focusing on free zones. The second point is about the pillars of free zones, while the third point is about the benefits of free zones in Arab countries.

THE FIRST TOPIC: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR FREE ZONES

The definition of free zones as: "a spatially isolated geographical area, a custom controller, in which industrial activities are carried out and treated as outside customs borders, where they are free from customs restrictions, taxes, cash, export and import. These areas are established for the purpose of achieving several objectives, the most important of which is to attract foreign direct investment, which creates employment opportunities for the labour force and to attract hard currency."¹

FIRST REQUIREMENT: THE GOAL OF CREATING FREE ZONES

Free zones play an important role in the national economy, as they are in an area within the State at the State's land, sea or air outlets and are of great importance both to the State and to the investor. Therefore, one of the main objectives of the State's pursuit of free zones has been to achieve a profit and a trade and economic dividend at the level of the national economy, measured by the success or failure of the free zone in the light of the results of achieving these goals.

With the rapid and successive developments in all areas of production, consumption and services in the world, the philosophy of the function of States and the models of development, States seek to achieve many developments and prosperity in economic enterprises, including the pursuit of their objectives of establishing free zones:

- Using free zones as a tool to aid in the integration of their national economy into the global economic system, enabling them to keep up with developments in these economies and adapt to them before anyone else.

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- China's economic renaissance is accelerated by the role of free zones in the process of economic growth.
- To utilize the natural resources of host states in the establishment of a free zone, but their physical or technological potential does not allow them to make the necessary use of them.
- The growth of the industrialization base and the development of exports.
- Aid in the alleviation of host States' balance-of-payments deficits.
- Creating jobs in industries and companies located in free zones can help create new jobs and support the battle against unemployment.
- Educating skilled industrial workers to handle modern technology, where free zones typically encompass a variety of industries through modern scientific and technological means, 'technology transfer'.
- The need for local production in the free zone project is being met by the development of productive machinery and the national industry.
- Opening new sources of foreign exchange by exporting services such as labor component services, land leasing, installations, buildings, unloading, shipping, and other related activities that lead to others within the free zone;
- Expanding foreign trade by attracting transit trade to the free zone to become a centre from which to re-export to various countries of the world, as well as importing, reprocessing and converting raw materials into complete products;
- Improving the regional economy structure by emphasizing remote areas through regional -- development of various regions.
- The propaganda effect of an economic renaissance paid to attract foreign investments within or outside free zones is a result of attracting foreign investments as free zones.²

SECOND REQUIREMENT: IMPORTANCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF FREE ZONES

Firstly: the importance of free zones

The importance of free zones can be noted in the following points:³

The ability of free zones to attract domestic and foreign investment through their exemptions and incentives, which contributes to supporting the balance of payments in hard currencies.

- The development of trade in general and transit trade in particular, where the free zones philosophy of free movement of goods and services without any customs and quantitative restrictions, as well as the flexibility of procedures

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in order to reduce the cost to investors, thereby increasing their competitiveness;

- Exemptions for enterprises in free zones promote the establishment of industries with advanced technological standards and advanced production methods that enable them to produce with high quality and efficiency, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of such industries in international markets;
- Industrial integration through the establishment of industries that are complementary to those in other free zones or outside free zones, since many products are no longer manufactured in a single factory but are produced in factories located in several countries and assembled in free zones for export to world markets;
- Attracting modern technology and advanced methods of working and management. Modern technology has become more important in economic development, particularly in a time of economic globalization and increased competition for exports. Modern technology plays a crucial role in reducing production expenses and improving quality, thus improving the competitiveness of domestic products in global markets. The establishment of free zones aims to increase the productive efficiency of local industries and their export capacity by implementing technology transfer.
- Employment opportunities. Enterprises in free zones directly and indirectly contribute to the recruitment of national labour and acquire technical skills that can be transferred to sectors outside free zones, which has a positive impact on the productivity of these sectors;
- To contribute directly and indirectly to the development and development of areas and territories where free zones are established, as well as to the positive impact on the various economic sectors associated with free zones activity such as transport, transport, harbours and insurance;
- Exploitation of natural resources (raw and raw materials). Instead of exporting resources and resources in their initial form and at very low prices, industrial projects can be built in which manufactures and conversions of such materials are carried out and added values are created;
- Promotion of trade in services, including financial and advisory services, including banking, insurance, studies, mediation, communications, electronic commerce, port and airport handling services established within the free zone. Demand for such services in free zones increases to facilitate economic activities within and outside the free zones;

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- Training and human development by contributing to the provision of manpower training opportunities and enhancing the capacity of local human resources employed in investing companies in these areas and thereby having a positive return on local labour skills.

Secondly: Free Zone Features

Free zones have the following characteristics:⁴

- Isolation: in the sense that the free zone is delimited from the rest of the State's territory and, if necessary, an uninterruptible buffer can be placed, and no natural person can come to reside except for labor ;
- There is a free zone outside the host State's customs territory that is not governed by customs and legal legislation, regulations, and restrictions that pertain to the same activities that take place in the customs territory ;
- Tax disruption: The basic advantage of free zones is enabled by its tax system, to which users are subject and through various operations within free zones. Legislative regulations that encourage the free zone, especially in terms of taxation, as opposed to the economic environment in which it operates, are required to define it as it currently is ;
- Tax disruption: The basic advantage of free zones is enabled by its tax system, to which users are subject and through various operations within free zones. The free zone cannot be defined as it is, unless legislative regulations are granted that are encouraging, especially in terms of taxation, as compared to the economic environment around which they operate;

All customers who wish to invest in free zones can do so without any distinction in the original nationality of the invested capital ;

- Equality: All workers in free zones are treated equally, as the privileges are granted to all. There is no preference for treatment within the region ;
- Facilitation of administrative procedures: free zones are characterized by significant departmental withdrawal. Administrative procedures within the free zone are quick, flexible and simple.

THIRD REQUIREMENT: FREE ZONE DIVISIONS

The forms and types of free zones vary according to factors related to location, space and the quality of investment activities established therein, so we will divide free zones according to two criteria:⁵

Firstly: Division of free zones in terms of the number of activities in them

Free zones are divided according to this standard into three sections:

- **Public free zones:** an area established by the State and under the State's authority and sovereignty, often at or near a maritime, land or airport. It is determined by the State defines them with fences that isolate them from the rest of the State's territory. The State also ensures the necessary infrastructure for the

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conduct of activities within this area, such as electricity, water, roads, sanitation, lines of communication and others. The system of investment in these free zones is available to all investors, whether local or foreign.

- **Special free zones:** investment in this type of free zones is limited to only one project without obligation to reside in specific zones. According to the nature of the project, such as large space, which is difficult to provide within the limits of the free zone, in addition to the need to set up the project near the sources of raw materials necessary for the investment process or near the markets for the discharge of the production of such investment or project.

This type of free zone is resorted to by the State in order to encourage the private sector to invest. In such cases, the State shall permit such projects to operate through its own areas subject to the same regulations as are being applied in public free zones; Investors are also given various incentives and facilities, but the State is not committed to the direction of this type of area by providing services to public free zones.

- **Common free zones:** zones are established between two or more States and this type of free zones is often established in a common border area or in any part of the territory of the participating State. This type of free zone is used in order to achieve a kind of regional and global economic and trade integration among the States involved in its establishment, as well as to benefit from the benefits available in these States such as the use of domestic markets for the free zone's production. Enterprises in free zones common to two or more States are established by the public or private sector and operate within the concept and philosophy of free zones, defining legislation governing their work and administration, as well as formulating policy, incentives and exemptions that can be granted to investors and can take any kind of free zones.

Secondly: Division of free zones by nature of activity

Free zones are divided according to this standard into three zones:

- **Commercial free zones:** commercial free zones are the traditional form of free zones and their first forms of origin. The forms of free zones are thus emerging. Commercial free zones are often established within or near an airport or seaport. The activity of this type of free zone is based solely on business operations and activities, in particular import and export operations.

- **Industrial free zones:** zones that are allocated for the conduct of all forms of manufacturing, and allow for the establishment of units. National or foreign industrialization, which has the common denominator of creating a climate in which restrictions that impede economic activity, whether of a fiscal, customs or administrative nature, do not exist or at least diminish; Therefore, the developing countries and some developing countries have focused on industrial free zones as a

tool through which they have moved from the implementation of import substitution policy to a policy of export promotion.

- **Service free zones:** Perhaps the most prominent and widespread form of free zones is the financial or banking free zone. The concept of a free zone applies not only to productive activities, whether industrial or commercial, but also to a financial activity. The emergence of these zones dates back to the early 1960s, following the strict measures and restrictive regulatory measures to which the international financial system has begun to be subject. Exchange control and control of capital movements have been strengthened and the rates and ratios of compulsory reserves have been raised.

THE SECOND TOPIC: FREE ZONE ANCHORS

Notwithstanding the multiplicity of benefits to free zones that remain as a laboratory for experimenting with some new economic methods and procedures for fear of spreading their negative effects on the economy as a whole of their countries.

FIRST REQUIREMENT: THE BASIC PILLARS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FREE ZONES

One of the main objectives of the establishment of free zones is to encourage and attract investments, particularly foreign ones, in order to take advantage of the advantages of establishing and entering such investments into the national economy in general and the free zone in particular. The establishment of free zones and the continuity of their operation and the achievement of their objectives require a number of factors that are central to the success of these zones and have a positive impact on the process of attracting and developing investments. Therefore, the lack of such zones becomes an obstacle to the operation of free zones:⁶

- **Defining the objective of establishing free zones:** developing plans to reach it and linking this goal to the overall objectives of the State. A free zone is not an end in itself as much as a means of contributing to inclusive development. So a clear economic strategy should be developed for the free zone, as well as the preparation of economic, financial and technical feasibility studies for these areas as an investment project with economic, political and social dimensions;

- **Political and security stability:** one of the most significant problems impeding the attraction of investment in any country is the existence of conflicts, internal unrest, labour strikes, rapid change in government, wars and permanent change in economic policies related to investment activity, foreign investment and capital flight ". Security means stability, lack of unrest and the continuation of the country's "political relations with neighbouring countries", which will help to create markets for the disposal of free zone goods;

- **Appropriate geographical location:** Choosing the appropriate geographical location to create free zones is an important factor in attracting investments. Many free zones have failed to achieve their objectives, owing to poor location selection;

- **Legal and legislative frameworks:** An appropriate legal and legislative framework is a sound basis on which a successful free zone project should be built, since the existence of laws and legislation in support of free zones will undoubtedly lead to attracting and localizing investments within them;

- **Economic stability:** The high degree of stability of the economic situation and the State's adoption of the principle of freedom of trade and investment and its follow-up to regional and international economic developments provide a favourable environment for investment and if macroeconomic policies are constantly changed and unstable as a lack of stability and clarity of fiscal, monetary and trade policies, exchange rate, lack of clear private property laws and investment regulations, frequent conflicts and sometimes contradictions in economic decisions that affect the operation of free zones directly or indirectly and thus affect investors' performance and sometimes cause them to leave them elsewhere;

- **Good governance and management:** It can be said that where management methods are effective, they have a significant role to play in the streamlining of investors' work without complex procedures, significant efforts and high costs.

SECOND REQUIREMENT: CUSTOMS PROCEDURES AND CUSTOMS PARTICIPATION IN FREE ZONES

The establishment and operation of free zones are usually accompanied by additional economic incentives, for example, free zones have some advantages directly associated with customs procedures/controls, such as custom storage and indoor manufacturing benefits for an indefinite period of storage of goods; Streamlined administrative services (e.g., standardized window or integrated services), simplification of customs procedures, including requirements for few reports and limited customs inspections.

However, the characteristics of free zones that provide economic incentives are often not directly related to customs procedures/controls. Including the reduction of corporate income tax, tax exemptions, return of capital and profits without restrictions Unrestricted management of foreign exchange revenues, mitigation of foreign ownership, labour, environment, foreign exchange and land lease/purchase requirements as well as strengthening physical infrastructure, including enhanced access to logistics networks, télécommunications networks and utility services, population housing and service institutions.

Bearing in mind that customs procedures outside free zones have been significantly streamlined through the use of technology (compared to the 1980s/1990s with the beginning of the prevalence of free zones in different countries), and that free zones offer a variety of relevant non-tariff economic incentives; Customs procedures/controls in registered free zones should not be the main advantage at the expense of trade safety and security.

Furthermore, during the World Customs Organization workshops held in 2018/19, the operational bodies of the Free Zone and the private sector repeatedly stated that if customs became more involved in free zones, it would be appropriate for free zones to gain competitiveness and succeed. Misunderstandings or implementation of free zones can have negative effects on the competitiveness of free zones and customs can play an important role in contributing to the sound and sustainable economic development of free zones, Customs can play an important role in contributing to the sound and sustainable economic development of free zones by participating not only as a law-saving agency, but also as a commercial broker.

In addition, the Board's recommendation is aimed at combating illicit trafficking; Promotion in free trade zones (OECD recommendation), adopted by the OECD Council in October 2019, to assist Governments and policymakers in reducing and deterring illicit trafficking through and within free zones. Recognizing the OECD recommendation that some economic operators may benefit from adequate support and lack of transparency in free zones for illegal activities, it highlights the need to enable competent authorities, including customs administrations, to save the necessary supervision of goods and activities in free zones.⁷

THIRD REQUIREMENT: IMPEDIMENTS TO THE SUCCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF FREE ZONES

Free zones encounter many obstacles, whether related to the idea of establishing free zones or hindering them during implementation or resulting from unexamined applications during operation. All these impediments ultimately result in the lack of success of free zones. Therefore, maximum measures must be taken to overcome the difficulties that will impede free zone activities. Among the obstacles in circulation in most regions are the following:⁸

- Administrative constraints: lack of specialized administration in free zones, owing to lack of managerial compétences and conséquent duplication of responsabilités that ultimately leads to labour confusion;

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- Lack of public services: lack of or limited presence of branches of financial institutions, insurance, communications offices and other service areas in the free zone;
- Lack of specialization in space: failure to specify specific areas for each of the activities available in free zones such as industrial commercial activity - storage, discharge and handling;
- Legal impediments: laws in the free zone do not keep pace with global economic developments;
- Lack of basic equipment and transportation: (ports, airports, roads, railways, telecommunications, tourist equipment);
- Marketing constraints: some private enterprises belonging to local companies cannot market their products globally;
- Lack of foreign exchange: owing to its trend towards the domestic market because of the lack of production in the free zone and its inefficiency or adequacy for export.

THE THIRD TOPIC: ADVANTAGES OF FREE ZONES IN ARAB COUNTRIES (UAE, EGYPT, ALGERIA)

The free zones were characterized by many advantages that made them the focus of many countries' attention for their establishment within their geographical region, including Arab countries headed by the UAE, Egypt and Algeria, which had a distinct experience with their diverse events.

FIRST REQUIREMENT: UAE FREE ZONES

The UAE has been interested in establishing free zones to attract local and foreign persists. The number of UAE free zones now stands at 30, accounting for about a quarter of the total number of free zones of 123 in all Arab countries. In order to provide a number of factors that have helped it to be one of the most successful in this area, namely:

Advanced infrastructure in the field of services and productivity, especially transport and communications in addition to possessing the latest and largest seaports in the region where state-of-the-art methods are used as well as the grandparents of a range of modern international airports, In addition to the availability of some raw materials needed by the industry such as crude oil and natural gas In 1999, the UAE opened the world's first e-commerce free zone in Dubai.

The most important free zones in the UAE are:

- **Jebel Ali Free Zone:** Established in the Principality of Dubai in 1980 and is a major hub thanks to its Middle East-West position, as a point of navigation for

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the global trade movement. There is no doubt that the stability of regulations and regulations, telecommunications networks and advanced transport, as well as Dubai's trade-encouraging climate make Jebel Ali, one of the world's privileged free zones.

- **Ajman Free Zone:** This area is located near the Arabian Gulf and is at the meeting of the regional markets for the display and marketing of goods and products manufactured therein. It was founded in 1987 and is second only to the Jebel Ali region.

- **The Saadiyat Free Zone in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi :** is an island located 6 km from the shores of Abu Dhabi City. It has established by Law No. 6 of 1996, declaring it a free zone for the circulation of primary goods and materials.

- **Fujairah Free Zone:** Founded in 1987, the Free Zone has developed considerably in its projects, from 6 companies in 1990 to 54 in 1995 to 120 in 2000, reflecting the region's success in achieving its objectives.⁹

SECOND REQUIREMENT: FREE ZONE EXPERIENCE IN EGYPT

The establishment of a free zone in Egypt dates back to 1902 when a special agreement was concluded between the Egyptian Government and Suez Canal Company for the establishment of a land free zone maritime to expand and maintain Port Said port in accordance with the needs of trade in order to achieve the company's purposes exemption from customs duties on imports in the region's ability, As of 1920, the legislation and laws governing the activity of the free zones in Egypt have been passed. According to this statute, there are two types of free zones in Egypt:

- General free zones: which are under State sovereignty and are often located on or near one of the State's maritime, land or air outlets It is defined by buffer fences to be separated from the rest of the country's territories. The general area includes a series of investment projects to benefit from incentives and benefits of investment in this area. The State provides the necessary infrastructure For activity within these areas of electricity, water, sanitation... etc.
- Special free zones: plots located outside the general free zone are allocated for one investment project because of the lack of space in public free zones, or the positive impact of this site on the economics of the operation of this project such as the necessity of its proximity to raw material sources, an export port, or a specific land highway due to considerations that deepen the transfer of services or the export of products.

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- Egypt's total areas of public free zones amounted to about 10.7 2 million at the end of the fiscal year 2012/2013 The number of free zone projects reached about 1135 with capital exceeding \$9.25 billion and investment costs amounting to \$18.8 billion. 206 provides 1,000 jobs with total wages exceeding \$ 323 million annually, and total exports exceeding \$ 15.3 billion.¹⁰

THIRD REQUIREMENT: FREE ZONE BALLARA, ALGERIA

The Ballara area is located in the Melia Circle on the coast where it is 50 km east of the city of Jigel and the area has important base structures, which has made it a strategic location in addition to its proximity to the national routes 27 and 43 links between Jegel and Skikda and the gas pipeline connecting Jigel and Skikka States. Farhat Abbas Airport is 50 km and 45 km from Jengen Port. The area comprises an area of 523, of which 512 hectares are specially prepared for the construction of the iron compound and surrounded by a wall

205 meters long and 13000 meters long. As part of the State's work for the full development of the region, article 4 of Legislative Decree No. 24/320 of 17 October 1994 stipulates that:

- Linking the area with main roads linking the area of the national territory;
- Connecting the area to various gas electricity supply networks Water drinking telex phone;
- Connecting the area with rainwater drainage and wastewater clearance systems. In accordance with this decree, the free zone has also been created for
- The way in which public services are built, consisting of customs, national security, health and civil protection;
- The area was linked to the port of Jingen as well as to the city with a 7 km potable water pipeline and a large well with a capacity of 50 litres/s was drilled;
- Linking the city's free zone by way of a 6 km railway line and connecting the area to a telephone network containing 200 telephone lines through the telephone centre, which is also connected to the national and international network;
- Given the nature of the export-oriented industrial free zone, projects within the area will be geared towards export industries. Therefore, the State and its local institutions have had to provide raw materials, half manufactured materials and natural materials as necessary for industrial activity and the

production process of industrial enterprises in the free zone. Among these resources available in the State are:

- Textile and leather industry;
- Mechanical, glass, electronics and pharmaceutical industry;
- manufacture of building materials and exploitation of mineral resources;
- Manufacturing and packaging of marine and agricultural products;
- Forestry Transformative Activities.¹¹

Conclusion:

Free zones have become a window through which to pass the world with technical knowledge and communication in various fields, and to achieve high-quality and low-cost trade. These regions significantly seek to increase the productive efficiency of the economy's accredited countries and have secured their different natural capacities and potentials through the diverse presence of their activities. Add new concepts that have come with trade and contact new people with new cultures characterized by cultural openness that supports the liberalization of international trade that helps increase the inputs of payment features in different countries that depend on such regions.

Among the most important findings are:

- Free zones help economic openness that balances their countries' balance of payments;
- The activity of these regions contributes to the upgrading of local industries in accordance with the principle of competition in quality ;
- Free zones achieve commercial diversity and help deepen relations between traders from different countries;
- Commercial diversity is achieved and relationships between traders from different countries are deepened in free zones ;
- Areas that have customs and tax facilities distinguish themselves from other trading areas.

One of the most significant recommendations is:

- Free zones must be recognized while demonstrating their strengths and advantages, which help them spread and increase their adoption in many countries ;
- The risks that traders may encounter in these areas can be mitigated by the use of a guard mode that is both quality and effective ;
- Encourage the diversification of exports and services for individuals who reside in countries with free zones ;

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