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# **Administrative and financial corruption: Its effects on economic development and mechanisms to combat it in Algeria**

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**Abstract**--This study aims to encompass the problem of administrative and financial corruption, which has become one of the most pressing issues facing countries worldwide. What was once a limited phenomenon has transformed into a critical topic at the forefront of debates on economic, social, cultural policy formulation, and other fields of human life. It has also become a burden for governments worldwide, particularly in developing nations. The study concludes that the growing awareness among governments, including Algeria, of the exacerbation of corruption and its severe repercussions, could lead to the collapse of governments. Consequently, fighting corruption and eliminating it, or at least reducing its spread and curbing it, requires sincere intent and collective will from all nations worldwide.

**Keywords**---Corruption, Administrative and Financial Corruption, Economic Development, Combating Corruption.

## **Introduction**

Administrative and financial corruption is one of the severe challenges facing countries worldwide. This issue, which was once limited in scope, has become a prominent topic in debates on economic, social, and cultural policy formulation, as well as other domains of human life. Moreover, it has become one of the significant obstacles to the developmental paths of various countries, especially developing ones. This phenomenon has gained considerable attention from both official and non-official international organizations, as well as many governments, including Algeria, since the second half of the 20th century, due to its negative effects on economic, social, and cultural development, as well as political stability and national security.

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This increasing awareness among governments of the escalating problem of corruption, its widespread nature, and its severe repercussions has prompted efforts to combat it. Corruption has the potential to bring about governmental collapse. Thus, fighting corruption and eliminating it, or at least reducing its spread and surrounding it, requires sincere intent and collective will among all nations.

**Research Problem:**

This study seeks to address the following research question:

**What are the effects of administrative and financial corruption on development, and what efforts has Algeria made to combat it?**

**Sub-research Questions:** To answer the main problem, it has been divided into the following sub-questions:

1. What are the main causes of administrative and financial corruption?
2. What are the economic and social impacts of administrative and financial corruption?
3. What is the state of corruption in Algeria based on corruption perception indicators?

Objective of the Research: The aim of this research is to:

1. Understand the reality of the spread of administrative and financial corruption and highlight related issues.
2. Examine the state of administrative and financial corruption in Algeria.
3. Identify the key measures taken to reduce this phenomenon in Algeria.

**Study Methodology:** Given the nature of the research topic and the objectives it seeks to achieve, this paper adopts a descriptive approach to cover the theoretical aspect. It also employs an analytical approach through the analysis of statistics from Transparency International.

To address the topic, it has been divided into three sections with results and recommendations as follows:

**First: The Concept of Administrative and Financial Corruption and its Forms**

**I. The Concept of Administrative and Financial Corruption:**

Corruption (in Arabic) refers to decay, damage, disturbance, and lack, indicating a departure from something being beneficial. Its opposite is righteousness. For example, corruption of meat or milk means it has spoiled or decayed. Corruption of a contract means it has been invalidated. A man who is corrupted means he has gone astray from wisdom. When matters are corrupted, they are disrupted and filled with imbalance (Abdel Haq Ahmed Hamish,2003,p04).

**In the Quran:**

"If there had been in them (heavens and earth) gods besides God, they would surely have been corrupted..." (Al-Anbiya22).

"Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by what the hands of people have earned..." (Ar-Rum 41).

According to Wikipedia, corruption is defined as: "A general concept that describes any organization or system where part of its duties or tasks are not performed in the usual or correct manner, or are performed incorrectly, deviating from the system's primary purpose." ( Hamdi Abdel Azim,2008,p13)

Transparency International defines corruption as: "Any act involving the abuse of public office for private gain." ( Loay Adeb Al-Issa,2014,p28)

The World Bank has defined activities under corruption as: "Corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain. Corruption typically occurs when an official accepts, requests, or extorts bribes to facilitate a contract, action, or public tender, or when agents or intermediaries for private businesses offer bribes to manipulate public policies or procedures, defeating competition and obtaining profits outside the legal framework. Corruption can also happen without bribes, such as by appointing relatives or directly stealing state funds." ( Loay Adeb Al-Issa,2014,p29)

It is notable that these definitions include all practices where public or private office is abused, such as bribery, tax evasion, fraud, misappropriation of public funds, or exploiting public office for personal gain without resorting to formal procedures. In the context of the Quranic verses, corruption is seen as a broader societal issue that results from imbalances in the social environment, causing disruption in the community.

From a macroeconomic perspective, the problem of corruption leads to significant benefits for the parties involved but results in high economic and social costs that are borne by society.

As a social and historical phenomenon, corruption is not limited to a specific society or historical period. It persists as long as there are factors such as ignorance, poverty, and repression of freedom, especially in poor societies. In wealthier and more developed societies, the absence of ethical and religious deterrents is considered one of the main causes of individual and societal corruption.

In conclusion, specialists agree that corruption is a technical term that reflects an individual's adoption of a culture of irresponsibility, leading to the abuse of public office or misappropriation of public funds. This phenomenon results in decreased efficiency and competitiveness within institutions, affecting the overall economy, leading to reduced investment, increased unemployment, lower wages, and higher inflation rates. These economic problems exacerbate social issues, further accelerating the spread of corruption, creating a vicious cycle.

## **II. The Historical Dimension of Administrative and Financial Corruption:**

Corruption has existed since ancient times; it is not a phenomenon of the present day, nor is it confined to any particular place or time. Its origins trace back to the

emergence of human society. The story of the two sons of Adam, "Qabil" and "Habil," is considered the first narrative of corruption on Earth, marking the first act of murder that took the lives of a quarter of the world's population at the time. This highlights that corruption is a human phenomenon that has been present since the birth of mankind, fueled by human desires and tendencies to take what belongs to others. "The first counterfeit coin in history was a gold coin minted by Polycrates, the ruler of the Greek island of Samos, in 535 B.C., made of lead and covered with a thin gold layer (Hashem Al-Shammari, Ithar Al-Fatli,2011,p62)." In 1997, a Dutch archaeological team discovered cuneiform tablets at the site of Raqqa in Syria, revealing an administrative location that could be compared to a modern-day audit office, exposing cases of administrative and financial corruption, including bribery among officials at the Assyrian royal court thousands of years ago(Alaa Farhan Taleb, Ali Al-Hussein Hamdi,2015,p25). Additionally, ancient Egyptian papyri document many corruption incidents, including collusion between tomb guards and thieves to steal treasures, and corruption even reached the point where some attempted to deceive the gods themselves. One papyrus states: "The scales are unbalanced... the truth is hidden... some even attempt to deceive the gods, slaughtering geese as offerings and presenting them to the gods, claiming they are cattle."( Alaa Farhan Taleb, Ali Al-Hussein Hamdi,2015,p25)

The heavenly scriptures have given great attention to the problem of corruption, especially the Qur'an—the final scripture of Islam, which calls for justice and truth. It describes corruption in its comprehensive form in numerous verses, emphasizing its dangers to individuals, society, and the environment. Corruption leads to negative consequences and results, and Allah warns the corrupters in the Earth in nearly 50 verses, covering various types of corruption. For instance, Allah says: "And do not follow the path of the corrupters" (Quran, 7:56). Reflecting on the meanings of these verses, Allah narrates the story of Qarun, who was from the people of Moses. He was arrogant with the wealth granted to him by Allah and sought corruption, despite being warned by his people not to rejoice in his wealth, and to use it for the benefit of the Hereafter and to avoid corruption. "Indeed, Allah does not like the corrupters" (Quran, 28:76-77). Corruption is considered one of the most reprehensible and forbidden actions in Islam. Over time, it leads to tyranny on Earth, and Allah promises severe punishment and loss for the corrupters, showing their fate in history, where some were swallowed by the earth, some drowned, others destroyed, and some obliterated. Thus, it can be concluded that Islam uses deterrent measures to reduce and prevent this problem, including strengthening spiritual values and a greater connection with the Creator, which plays a significant role in guiding human behavior and regulating it in all aspects of life.

Since the latter half of the 20th century, particularly in the 1990s, with the increasing calls for economic liberalization and the efforts to boost the competitiveness of products, as well as the growing freedom of global financial flows, money laundering activities, and organized crime, corruption has spread globally in a manner that cannot be fully monitored or estimated. This has made combating corruption a necessity more than ever before. Corruption exists in both democratic nations and military dictatorships, and at all levels and within all economic systems—ranging from capitalist economies like the United States and

Western European countries, to those that relied on central planning, such as the former Soviet Union and China, as well as weak economies in the Global South.

With the rise of globalization, especially after the Cold War, the activity of multinational corporations has increased, as has the role of organized crime in sectors such as drug trafficking, arms smuggling (especially to regions suffering from instability and extremist groups), human trafficking, money laundering, and other illegal activities. This has made corruption a global issue affecting all countries. It has evolved from being a national concern to becoming one of the key issues of globalization, which has been adopted by most international organizations (both governmental and non-governmental). These organizations now focus their efforts on addressing this problem.

Among the primary methods for combating corruption is the public disclosure of corrupt activities. Conferences and seminars have been held globally, research and studies have been conducted to seriously address the various aspects of corruption, its causes, types, and ways to mitigate its negative effects. Numerous organizations have been established at the global, regional, and national levels to detect, measure, and expose corruption, as well as hold the perpetrators accountable.

### **III. Forms of Corruption**

Corruption takes several forms, among the most notable are (Hashem Al-Shammari, Ithar Al-Fatli, 2011, pp22-23)

1. **Political Corruption:** This includes corruption by leaders, legislative, executive, and judicial corruption, as well as corruption within political parties and funding issues. It also extends to violations of the rules and regulations that govern the political system in a state.

2. **Social Corruption:** This includes:

- Moral scandals involving high-ranking officials in the state.
- The emergence of white slavery networks.
- The spread of immoral behaviors and scandals in society that are rejected by social customs, religion, and traditions.
- The exploitation of children in immoral activities, child trafficking, and their use in exhausting labor for minimal wages before they reach the legal working age.

3. **Administrative Corruption:** This pertains to signs of corruption and administrative, functional, or organizational deviations, as well as violations committed by public employees during their duties under the framework of laws, regulations, and individual values systems. It includes: bribery, favoritism, nepotism, fraud, and bureaucracy, among others.

4. **Financial Corruption:** This represents various financial deviations and violations of financial regulations that govern administrative and financial operations in the state and its institutions. It also includes violations of the instructions of financial oversight bodies. It involves: arms deals, organized crime

(mafia), tax and customs evasion, tax and customs fraud, waste of public funds, embezzlement, and money laundering, among others.

#### **IV. Characteristics of Administrative and Financial Corruption**

Among the main characteristics of corruption are the following:

1. **The Variety of Its Forms and Elements:** Such as bribery, expensive gifts in exchange for services, assault on public property like seizing state lands and properties to sell them unlawfully, embezzlement, forgery, favoritism, nepotism, bureaucracy, ignoring illegal activities, disclosing work secrets for material or non-material gain, or the misuse of political power for personal gain.
2. **Secrecy:** Corruption typically operates in secrecy, where arrangements, procedures, negotiations, and agreements are conducted under a veil of confidentiality, often complex. Even when corruption cases are revealed, the full truth is rarely disclosed, especially in large-scale corruption deals which are highly complicated, indirect, and usually entice senior officials and employees.
3. **Involvement of Multiple Parties:** Corruption typically involves multiple parties, as it is no longer merely isolated individual practices. It is described as occurring through "complex networks"(Abdel Kader Khalil,2009,p93) of multiple parties. There are often anonymous intermediaries facilitating services and needs of the original corrupt parties without them meeting face to face.
4. **The Element of Risk:** Corruption is often accompanied by an element of risk—gambling. "Corruption is more tempting when the element of risk is low. The temptation decreases as the risk increases. Large transactions tempt senior officials to take risks, as the larger and more complex the deal, the less likely it is to raise suspicion."(Nawaf Salem Kanaan,2008,p86)

**V. Causes of Administrative and Financial Corruption:** The main causes include (Qana Zaki,2010,p126)

1. **Misuse and Reuse of Discretionary Powers:** The misuse of discretionary powers granted to administrators, which opens the door to administrative corruption.
2. **Low Level of Oversight:** This includes unclear job responsibilities, conflicts between laws and regulations, poor organization in administrative and financial systems, weak coordination, and the prevalence of democracy.
3. **Excessive Freedom for Government Officials:** Public officials enjoy extensive freedom of action with little accountability. Legal provisions assigned to ensure accountability are often inadequate, and these officials exploit their positions for personal gain through bribery from companies (private sector) or citizens in exchange for privileges and exemptions.
4. **Creation or Cancellation of Laws or Policies:** Such actions are often driven by the desire for direct benefits to government officials.
5. **Low Official Salaries:** The low salaries of government employees often entice corruption, which in many developing countries, including Arab states, is a major motivator for staying in public service.

6. Impunity: Senior officials and politicians often enjoy immunity, shielding them from prosecution or legal accountability.

### **Secondly. The Impact of Administrative and Financial Corruption IIII Development**

Studying the phenomenon of administrative and financial corruption gives us an understanding of the severity of its consequences, which, if widespread in countries, can significantly hinder their development. Corruption acts as an obstacle to development by depleting resources, disrupting the infrastructure needed for development, and causing countries to suffer from heavy debt burdens. This, in turn, increases poverty and undermines the principle of social justice. It undermines laws and systems, impeding their enforcement, which threatens the sovereignty of states and delays the advancement and development of societies and nations.

#### **I. Development and Its Requirements:**

The concept of development has garnered attention from contemporary economists and sparked debates. Contemporary literature on development contains many attempts to define this concept, which has evolved over time within the theoretical and historical origins of development economics. The term development has moved beyond its narrow definition, evolving into a more advanced meaning that refers to expanding people's choices by acquiring capabilities and improving their opportunities to use these capabilities... among other interpretations. This complex and integrated process goes beyond economic aspects, encompassing all areas of political, social, and cultural life, requiring multiple inputs that align with its scope, as well as extensive planning, management, and governance. This creates the necessary environment for achieving development, which requires the following[Hashem Al-Shammari, Ithar Al-Fatli,2011,pp79-83]:

1. Capital: Capital is one of the elements of the production process. It takes the form of durable goods used to produce other goods, which may be either consumer or capital goods. Thus, capital goods are the result of long-term capital formation, which requires resources for investment. In efficient economies, the rates of capital formation are high (and are indicative of future economic growth), conditioned by a reduction in the production of consumer goods in the present. However, developing economies are characterized by the scarcity of this element.
2. Population and Labor: Economic development generally targets changes in all productive sectors, and human resources are considered a fundamental element in the production process and in the development process. Education and training are essential to the development of these resources, helping individuals in society enhance their knowledge and skills, which ultimately reflects the growth and advancement of the country. Just as economic development is linked to capital accumulation, human development is also linked to the accumulation of human capital.

3. **Technological Development:** Technological development has accelerated to the point where technology is now considered the key to development and a fundamental condition for achieving it. There is a dependent relationship between science, technology, and development, extending beyond economic growth through the use of technological advances in production. It also influences production and consumption patterns, employment levels, skills, societal needs, behavior, values, and aspirations.
4. **Natural Resources:** Natural resources are directly related to development elements, including:
  - Producing essential food for the population.
  - Producing raw materials for industry, which forms the base for industrial - development.
  - Producing raw materials for export, as external trade is central to development.
  - Providing transportation systems, as commercial transport is a key sector for development.
5. **Value System:** The development process must involve changes in economic, social, political, and cultural structures, which include:
  - Achieving political and economic independence.
  - Creating an effective political organization that represents the true interests of the people to ensure active public participation in economic and social change.
  - Ensuring the availability of capable political leaders and cadres who can lead the people and enjoy their trust.
  - Developing legislation, laws, regulations, and institutions to serve the development process.

Hence, the necessity of these requirements for achieving development in any country becomes clear. Many countries possess abundant resources but have not experienced development, often due to the political, social, and economic structures in place, which concentrate decision-making power in the hands of a specific social group, leading to weak planning, neglect of poverty alleviation, and continuous underdevelopment. This results in corruption becoming widespread as these groups amass wealth and control resources without accountability.

## **II. The Effects of Administrative and Financial Corruption on Development**

Administrative and financial corruption has a significant impact on development in all its dimensions, being considered the largest obstacle to it. Academic studies have highlighted the negative effects of corruption, with the most important of these effects outlined as follows:

### **1. Economic Effects:**

a. **Reduction in Economic Growth and Investment Rates:** Corruption negatively affects economic growth by reducing both foreign and domestic investment—capital seeks a safe environment. Investors avoid environments where corruption indicators are high, as they may be forced, for example, to pay bribes, both monetary and in-kind. These bribes often serve as taxes that increase project costs, leading investors to reduce their investments in such environments.

Consequently, aggregate demand decreases, which in turn lowers the economic growth rate.

b. **Weak Efficiency of Public Utilities:** Corruption diminishes the quality and efficiency of public services due to poor allocation of public spending on state resources. This misallocation often favors large projects at the expense of vital sectors such as education and health. Corruption also negatively affects the efficiency of public investments and the poor quality of infrastructure due to bribes paid to overlook required standards.

c. **Reduction in Development Rates:** Misallocation of resources limits direct investments, shrinks state resources, and leads to their mismanagement. This reduces economic effectiveness and the equitable distribution of wealth and national income, thus weakening the efficiency of resources allocated for development. As a result, economic development rates decline (Saleh Mahrez, Tariq Rashi, 2020, pp28-29).

d. **Increase in Poverty and Poor Income Distribution:** Corruption exacerbates social stratification by widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Public services become a matter of buying and selling, leading to discrimination and inequality within society. Corruption contributes to the decline in living standards, which particularly harms the poor. It also undermines social support policies aimed at improving the living conditions of the poor, thus deepening poverty and perpetuating living disparities within society.

## **2. Social Effects:**

The spread of corruption leads to negative social outcomes resulting from illegal practices. This creates a social environment filled with unhealthy behaviors and values. Some of the most significant social effects are as follows:

a. **Decline in Public Sector Ethics:** Corruption greatly damages the ethical standards of public service due to favoritism and nepotism resulting from the abuse of administrative positions for personal purposes. Corruption mechanisms thrive through the exploitation of family and patronage networks, which infiltrate important state positions, including high-level governmental and administrative roles. This undermines the authority of the state and government in the eyes of society due to the accumulation of unqualified personnel in positions of power.

b. **Spread of Alien Values in Society:** The worsening of corruption and the absence of legal mechanisms to control work behavior encourage many individuals to engage in unethical and illegal gain. The spread of bribery helps facilitate illicit activities such as drug trafficking, money laundering, embezzlement, and tax evasion (Hamad Abdel Aziz, 2015, p162). Additionally, the misuse of certain behaviors like commissions and brokerage becomes a new system of incentives in daily transactions.

c. **Expansion of a Corruption Culture:** Widespread corruption reshapes the cultural fabric of society, making corruption the foundation of success and quick wealth. It becomes one of the main criteria for wealth accumulation, leading to a lack of respect for laws and institutions. This results in the emergence of a

parasitic class that exerts significant influence over cultural matters, customs, and traditions.

d. **Collapse of Community Ethics:** The rapid growth of corruption, along with the spread of irresponsibility, indifference, and a lack of commitment, leads to the collapse of values related to community belonging and social cohesion. The religious, ethical, and academic assets of an individual are seen as signs of backwardness and intellectual stagnation, while financial status and connections with influential figures signify social prominence and progress. This dynamic threatens societal ethics and cohesion.

### **3. Political Effects:**

Corruption distorts the political climate both domestically and internationally. Some of the key political effects include:

a. **Political Instability:** The spread of corruption and its penetration into various state institutions directly impacts political stability. This prevents the state from implementing its economic policies, especially when tied to international treaties or loans, and hinders its ability to maintain internal security and order.

b. **Irrational Decision-Making:** Corruption leads to a lack of rationality among corrupt government officials when making political decisions, including sovereign decisions that affect the future of the country and its people. This results from the concentration of power at the top of the state apparatus and the absence of judicial fairness, making high-stakes political decisions taken by the state leader without consulting or benefiting from research institutions, which could provide detailed information about the challenges the country faces in specific areas, alternative decision-making options, and their associated costs and outcomes. This could result in international sanctions or a tarnished international reputation, or force the country to pay financial compensation when it is in dire need.

c. **Weakening of the Government Domestically and Internationally:** When corrupt elites dominate the country's resources and a healthy political environment based on competence, transparency, and integrity is lacking, the internal and external weaknesses of governmental institutions become apparent. Internally, corruption drives competent, honest individuals away from sensitive administrative positions meant for public benefit. Externally, this fosters a class that may compromise national interests for personal gain, diminishing the country's standing in the international arena.

## **Thirdly: The Reality of Corruption in Algeria and the Efforts Made to Combat It**

### **I. Algeria's Ranking in the Corruption Perception Index:**

Administrative and financial corruption in Algeria is not a recent phenomenon; it is the result of accumulated institutional failures, which in turn reflect the failure of economic development policies, despite significant achievements in capital production through factories, infrastructure, and more. In the absence of

accountability and transparency, corruption spread across various sectors. Algeria has been ranked among the most corrupt countries globally according to Transparency International's report.

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index for 2023 ranked Algeria 104th out of 180 countries, with a score of 36 out of 100. This represents an improvement from the 116th rank in the 2022 report and 117th in 2021. However, this remains a low ranking, placing Algeria in the lower half of countries with widespread corruption. Thus, Algeria remains at the same level in terms of scores, which range from 33 to 36 points.

Algeria's continued low rankings on the Corruption Perceptions Index are explained by the fact that it still experiences high levels of corruption. The overall performance in reducing this phenomenon is not encouraging, and the persistence of bribery and the absence of fair competition dominates administrative and financial performance, due to the ineffectiveness of government reforms and the fight against corruption.

### **Algeria's ranking table in the Corruption Perceptions Index for the period (2014-2023)**

year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
index	36	36	34	33	35	35	36	33	33	36
renk	89	88	108	112	106	106	104	117	116	104

**Source: Prepared by the researcher based on:**

**<https://www.transparency.org/ar/press>**

## **II. Anti-Corruption Mechanisms in Algeria:**

1. International and Regional Agreements (Talal Zoghba, Saad Berrika,2010,p17)
  - United Nations Convention Against Corruption (signed December 9, 2003, ratified with reservations on August 25, 2004).
  - United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (signed December 12, 2000, ratified with reservations on October 7, 2002).
  - Algeria is a founding member of the "Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force," established on November 30, 2004, a voluntary regional association to combat money laundering and financing terrorism.
  - The Algerian Anti-Corruption Association, which serves as a national liaison with Transparency International.

### **2. Institutional Efforts:**

Among the key measures to combat corruption are:

a. Law No. 06-01 dated February 20, 2006, concerning the prevention and fight against corruption which aims to enhance integrity, accountability, and transparency in both the public and private sectors, and facilitate international cooperation.( Law No. 06-01,2006,p04)

Article 2 of the above law also referred to the concept of corruption from the point of view of the Algerian state. It did not give a definition, but rather referred to the various manifestations that must be combated and prevented within the

framework of a national strategy to combat corruption. (Law No. 06-01,2006,pp07-08)

b. Creation of the National Authority for the Prevention and Fight Against Corruption, established by Presidential Decree No. 06-413 dated November 22, 2006, as an independent administrative body with legal personality and financial autonomy, responsible for the following tasks (Khaled Laitem, Abdel Hafidh Maskine,2018,pp346-347):

- Proposing comprehensive anti-corruption policies.
- Providing guidance to both public and private sectors on corruption prevention and suggesting legislative and regulatory measures.
- Raising awareness among citizens about the consequences of corruption.
- Collecting and analyzing data to detect and prevent corruption.
- Regular evaluation of anti-corruption laws and administrative procedures.

### **Conclusion**

The phenomenon of administrative and financial corruption is one of the most serious issues faced by countries, especially developing nations. Its profound impact on economic development involves the destruction of the economy, financial, and administrative capacity, leading to the inability of the state to face challenges in rebuilding infrastructure and achieving necessary economic growth.

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