

Good governance as a strategic approach to reduce corruption in Algeria

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Abstract---Corruption is one of the most prominent obstacles facing developing countries, including Algeria, where this phenomenon has spread despite legal and institutional reforms. The concept of good governance is presented as a means of increasing transparency, accountability and improving the performance of institutions. This study seeks to analyse the relationship between good governance and the reduction of corruption in Algeria, to highlight the challenges that hinder the achievement of effective results, and to emphasise the importance of adopting comprehensive legal and societal approaches in order to increase citizens' trust in the state and to combat corruption effectively.

Keywords---Corruption, good governance, equality, transparency, accountability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Amidst the challenges faced by developing countries, corruption is one of the most prominent obstacles hindering sustainable development efforts and weakening trust in official institutions. Algeria is among the countries that have witnessed a significant spread of corruption in recent decades, despite adopting a set of legal and institutional reforms. From this standpoint, the concept of good governance has emerged as a theoretical and practical framework that contributes to enhancing transparency, enshrining the principles of accountability, and improving the performance of public institutions.

This study seeks to shed light on the relationship between good governance and reducing corruption in the Algerian context, by analyzing the effectiveness of good governance principles in supporting the state's efforts to combat corruption, and the challenges that hinder the achievement of tangible results

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in this area. It also aims to highlight the importance of adopting comprehensive approaches that take into account the legal, institutional, and societal dimensions to ensure the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies and enhance citizen confidence in state institutions.

Good governance is one of the modern concepts that has emerged in political and administrative literature as an effective mechanism for increasing transparency and accountability within institutions and improving the quality of public services. In view of the widespread phenomenon of corruption in many countries, including Algeria, the need to activate the principles of good governance has emerged as a strategic option to face this challenge. This raises the following question

To what extent can **the principles of good governance contribute to reducing the phenomenon of corruption in Algeria?**

In order to answer this question, we decided to divide the study into two axes. The first axis deals with the conceptual framework of good governance, while the second axis deals with the role of good governance in the fight against corruption in Algeria.

2. The Conceptual Framework of Good Governance

The emergence of the concept of good governance is linked to the change that occurred in the nature of the state's role, which is no longer the sole main actor in making and implementing public policies. Rather, there are other actors who participate in decision-making, such as civil society organizations and the private sector. The concept of good governance is also linked to the development of administrative science and political science. To fully understand the concept of good governance, it is necessary to address first the definition of good governance and its principles, and second, the dimensions and pillars of good governance.

2.1 Definition of Good Governance and its Principles.

In this element, we will address the definition of good governance and then its principles, respectively:

2.1.1. Definition of Good Governance:

The concept of Good Governance is considered one of the modern concepts that emerged at the end of the twentieth century, especially in the context of the interest of international institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations in finding mechanisms to improve institutional performance in developing countries. The definitions of good governance have varied, given that this term is considered one of the terms that has sparked academic debate among researchers and international organizations for a long time, due to the lack of a precise and agreed-upon concept of the term good governance. In this regard, several definitions of good governance have emerged, between the definitions of international institutions and academic definitions.

A- Definition of Good Governance by International Institutions:

Some international institutions have taken the initiative to define good governance, the most important of these institutions being the International Monetary Fund, as well as the World Bank in 1992, the United Nations Development Program, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Accordingly, we will try to address the definitions of good governance by these institutions.

The International Monetary Fund defines good governance as: "That approach that includes the rule of law, improving efficiency and accountability in the public sector, and combating corruption, as it is the appropriate general framework that enables the economies of countries to achieve development."¹

The World Bank in 1992 defines it as: "The exercise of political power in managing the affairs of the state"² or "The way in which power is exercised in the management of economic and social resources for the purpose of development,"³ that is, the way in which power is exercised for the management of economic and social resources of any country concerned with development, and it means those procedures and actions that ensure the intensification of all efforts in managing the economy and its social resources to achieve development."⁴

As for the United Nations Development Program, it defined good governance as: “A situation that reflects the progress of administration and its development as well, from traditional administration to an administration that responds to the requirements of citizens and uses appropriate mechanisms and processes to achieve the desired goals of projects with transparency and responsibility before citizens.”⁵ The Canadian International Development Agency also defines it “as a set of values, rules, institutions and processes through which individuals and organizations try to reach common goals, make decisions, extend authority and legitimacy, and exercise powers.”

While the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) defines it as: “The process through which public affairs and resources are managed, within a framework of transparency, accountability, participation and effectiveness.”⁶

As for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, we find that it believes that good governance is represented by the extent of the government’s legitimacy and its ability to respect human rights and build a participatory cooperative relationship between official and non-official bodies, based in its content on the values of accountability, transparency and oversight as a pattern of governance and rational management to achieve economic and social development⁷.

B- Academic definition of good governance:

The academic definitions of good governance are numerous. We find:

Jan Koeman defines good governance as “a new social contract based on a tripartite partnership between government, civil society and the private sector, with the aim of better mobilising society’s capacities and managing governance more rationally”⁸.

François-Xavier defined it as “a new form of effective management; so that actors of all kinds, as well as public institutions, participate with each other, making use of their resources and pooling all their experience and skills to create a new alliance of action based on the sharing of responsibilities”⁹.

Accordingly, good governance can be defined as “the application of sound management systems that contribute to increasing the efficiency of the performance of government institutions, all in order to increase quality rates and develop awareness of reform perceptions among workers in government departments, or it is an administrative system that aims to build transparent institutions, capable of providing public services efficiently and fairly, and operating in an environment of legal accountability”¹⁰. Good governance is therefore not limited to political aspects, but extends to administrative, economic and social institutions.

2.1.2 Principles of Good Governance:

Good governance is based on a set of fundamental principles that represent the reference framework for evaluating the quality of institutional performance in any country. These principles include:

A-Transparency:

This means that the decisions and actions taken by the authorities must be clear and reviewable by the public and civil society. Transparency is considered one of the main foundations for combating corruption, as it contributes to monitoring the work of the government and ensuring its compliance with the laws.

B- Accountability:

This means that officials in power are accountable for their decisions and actions before citizens and oversight bodies such as parliament and the courts. Accountability is the cornerstone of reducing corruption, as it leads to strengthening internal and external control.

C- Participation:

This emphasizes the need for citizens to participate effectively in making decisions that affect their lives. Participation includes exercising political rights, such as voting and participating in other civic activities, to ensure that the government reflects the wishes of citizens.

D- Rule of Law:

The rule of law ensures that all individuals, including officials, are subject to the same law. Respect for the law is one of the basic pillars of combating corruption by ensuring justice and equality in the

application of laws.

E- Effectiveness and Efficiency:

Good governance is linked to achieving positive development outcomes through the effective and efficient use of public resources. This requires improving the performance of government institutions and ensuring their responsiveness to the needs of citizens.

F- Responsiveness:

Responsiveness is considered one of the important pillars that focuses on the government's ability to meet the needs and expectations of citizens. This requires that the government be able to adapt to changes in society and keep pace with its economic and social developments¹¹.

2.2 the dimensions and pillars of good governance:

We will discuss the dimensions of good governance and then its pillars as follows:

2.2.1 Dimensions of good governance:

The dimensions of good governance are multiple and vary from one area to another and according to the trends to be achieved, perhaps the most important of which are:

A- The political dimension: The political dimension is related to the nature of political authority and the legitimacy of its representation. This dimension helps to establish the characteristics of the democratic system, which is a prerequisite for building good governance.

B- The economic and social dimension: This is the dimension that relates, on the one hand, to the nature of the structure of civil society and the extent of its independence from the State, and, on the other, to the nature of public policies in the economic and social fields and the extent of their impact on citizens in terms of poverty and quality of life, as well as their relations with the external economy and other societies.

C- The legal dimension:

This is the dimension related to the rule of law, the fight against corruption, the independence of the judiciary and the security of investors¹².

D- The technical dimension:

This is the dimension that concerns the work of the public administration and the extent of its efficiency and effectiveness, and it is a pillar of administrative rationality that imposes the independence of the administration from the financial and political authority, and the employees are subject only to their duties and the criterion for their selection is competence¹³.

2.2.2 Pillars of Good Governance:

The pillars of good governance are as follows:

A- The State:

the state includes the legislative authority, the judicial authority¹⁴, public interests, and the armed forces. What matters to good governance is the extent of the state's ability to provide the legislative and legal frameworks that allow participation and open the way for citizens to make decisions regarding addressing their problems, and to give administrative and financial powers to the governing bodies to perform their functions, and to create dialogue frameworks between all these parties and official institutions¹⁵.

B- Civil Society:

Activating good governance in the state requires the necessity of achieving cooperation between the various actors: the state, civil society, and the private sector, in light of the existence of a relationship between these actors based on negotiation and consensus on the major issues of society.

Therefore, civil society is the main pillar for the advancement of societies, and therefore it is the general framework that extends and links individuals and the state.

Civil society refers to the group of free, non-governmental and non-hereditary voluntary organisations that occupy the public space between the family and the State to advance the interests of their members for a cause or interest, or to express common interests, and that are committed to the values and norms of respect, consent, tolerance and the healthy management of diversity and difference.

It includes trade unions, non-governmental organisations, women's associations, cultural, linguistic and religious associations, charitable associations, business associations, social and sports clubs and cooperatives, local community development organisations, environmental groups, professional associations, academic and policy research institutions and the media, as well as political parties, although they are considered part of civil society as well as the State if they are represented in parliament¹⁶.

C- The private sector:

Most countries in the world have become aware of the importance of the private sector as the main source of opportunities that open all economic sectors to combat unemployment and employ the workforce at all levels through private projects for manufacturing, trade and banking.

Therefore, we find that the private sector is working alongside the state and civil society to achieve sustainable development, each of us to provide job opportunities and alleviate unemployment, in addition to providing experience, money and knowledge¹⁷.

3. Title The Role of Good Governance in Combating Corruption in Algeria Corruption is considered one of the most prominent challenges facing Algeria for many years, as it constitutes an obstacle to sustainable development and political and social stability. This phenomenon has been reflected in many sectors, such as the public sector, the judicial sector, and the administrative sector, which has led to erosion of trust in state institutions.

According to the Transparency International report for 2023, Algeria was classified among the countries with a high level of corruption. The report also indicated that corruption in Algeria is characterized by a lack of transparency in administrative procedures, as well as a lack of effective accountability for officials. Corruption has also been linked to a number of other negative phenomena, such as unfair employment and discrimination in administrative decisions¹⁸.

The World Bank, in its 2022 report, indicated that administrative corruption and bribery within government institutions had a significant impact on the flow of investments, which led to weak economic growth in Algeria. It explained that corruption reinforces the culture of political loyalty at the expense of efficiency and professionalism, which reinforces the spread of the phenomenon in public institutions¹⁹.

By enshrining the principles of good governance, corruption can be reduced, although it still faces several challenges

3.1 The Contribution of Good Governance Principles to Eliminating Corruption

The principles of good governance are among the most important strategies for preventing and combating corruption, considering that corruption is a phenomenon resulting from failure in governance and abuse of power. Therefore, in this axis, we will try to address each principle of good governance and its role in combating and preventing corruption in its various forms, first transparency and its role in reducing corruption, second accountability and its role in reducing corruption, and third equality and its role in reducing corruption.

3.1.1. Transparency and its Role in Reducing Corruption:

Applying the principle of transparency is considered a successful means of contributing to the detection and elimination of corruption. Through it, public issues, whether they concern a sample of society or the entire society, can be presented to public opinion, to be discussed freely and exchange ideas about them and circulate information, which inevitably leads to an understanding of what is happening at all political and economic levels.

Accordingly, we find that transparency contributes to revealing the facts and informing interested citizens of the details of those facts, and also allows them to view government policies, especially the state budget, through the various media, which play an important role in revealing government corruption. Therefore, the more information is available, the more it increases the opportunities to monitor the implementers of government policies and to reveal any defect that may occur in what inhibits the spread of corruption²⁰.

A. Accountability and its role in reducing corruption:

Accountability is one of the most important mechanisms in the fight against corruption, whether at government or institutional level. It allows public officials, whether elected or appointed, to be held accountable for their actions, to have their decisions reviewed and audited, to have their accounts made public, and to have the opportunity to clarify any ambiguities or allegations made against them. This also applies to public and private institutions, since in this case the officials are obliged to answer any questions put to them by citizens or beneficiaries of the service, which inevitably leads to the disclosure of shortcomings or failures to provide the service, embezzlement or otherwise.

It is worth noting that there are several types of accountabilities, including parliamentary accountability, judicial accountability and accountability to public opinion²¹.

3.2.2 Equality and its role in reducing corruption:

Equality in this area means equal opportunities for everyone to play their role in the management of public affairs, each in their place and according to their qualifications. This equality is before the law, as it is the general framework for the latter in its various forms, since its achievement requires the existence of legal texts, starting with the Constitution as the supreme document of the State, so that all individuals are equal before the law and have the right to participate, without exception, in the management of their affairs and their participation in the administration of the State. Equality also means that the State treats everyone equally and protects the rights of all without discrimination, exclusion or favouritism, and that everyone has the same right to review and vote in the event that officials discriminate between individuals, which undoubtedly contributes to fighting corruption in its various forms and preventing it in all State institutions²².

Second: Challenges Facing the Activation of Good Governance in Algeria:

Despite the importance of good governance in combating corruption, there are many challenges that prevent its effectiveness in Algeria:

Institutional Weakness:

The administrative system in Algeria faces significant challenges represented in the weakness of oversight institutions. For example, the Supreme Council of Accounts still faces difficulty in exercising its functions independently, which reduces the effectiveness of accountability. The absence of effective oversight reinforces impunity, which weakens citizen confidence in the state and increases the entrenchment of corruption. Institutional weakness is one of the most prominent obstacles to activating good governance in Algeria. This weakness translates into several aspects:

A- Limited independence: Many oversight bodies, such as the Supreme Council of Accounts or the National Authority for the Prevention of Corruption, lack full independence from the executive, which makes their reports and recommendations not effectively binding.

B- Weak administrative capacity: The lack of competence and training within the oversight and administrative institutions limits their ability to monitor and combat corruption effectively.

C- Bureaucracy and centralised management: The heavy reliance on the centralised system in decision-making slows down the response to abuse and creates a gap between the citizen and the control centres²³.

3.2.3. Ambiguity of legislation and lack of coordination:

Despite the existence of a legal arsenal to combat corruption, there are clear problems hindering implementation, making the laws mere ink on paper if they are not supported by clear implementation procedures and real institutional coordination. This means that:

a- Unclear or contradictory legal texts:

Some laws lack precision, opening the door to interpretation or exploitation by political and administrative actors.

b- Weak implementation mechanisms:

Even good texts remain ineffective if they are not institutionally activated through clear procedures and sound monitoring mechanisms.

c- Lack of cooperation between institutions:

Ministries, judicial and administrative bodies often work separately without real coordination, which weakens the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts²⁴.

3.2.4. Lack of political will:

Political will is the cornerstone of any genuine reform. Without a real will, supported by all levels of government, good governance efforts remain formal and do not bring about the desired change. What can hinder this will is

A- Reluctance to hold “big names” accountable: Accountability often concerns the lower categories of officials, while those with influence are overlooked.

B- Political exploitation of the fight against corruption: Anti-corruption campaigns are sometimes used as a means of settling scores rather than as a means of reform.

C- Weak transparency: There are no clear periodic reports to citizens on the handling of corruption cases, which weakens the culture of accountability²⁵.

4. CONCLUSION

As an inevitable result of this research, it can be said that corruption is one of the main obstacles to achieving development in Algeria. This is due to the failure of the state to embody a comprehensive and clearly defined strategy based on radical reforms. However, within the political and constitutional framework, Algeria has sought to adopt the principles of good governance in order to widen the scope of the fight against and prevention of corruption, which is an effective mechanism for preventing and combating corruption. This requires strengthening the position of good governance and developing an intellectual dialogue on the need to effectively enshrine its principles in order to reach the source of the deficiency and address it in order to contribute to the fight against corruption within the Algerian public administration, which achieves sustainable development.

However, the activation of good governance in Algeria requires a deep and comprehensive reform, starting with the strengthening of institutions, the regulation of laws, the coordination of agencies and, above all, a sincere political will that does not compromise with corruption and that works for the public good and not for private interests.

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