

Acemoglu and robinson's theory regarding to algerian government

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Abandon. What a word to be a headline in the news. Abandonment. The fear of loneliness and pure anguish in realizing that your government has left you stranded to die. Algeria's government is guilty of abandonment, leaving hundreds of forsaken and forgotten migrants to strive for mere survival in the Sahara Desert. When doing simple searches of developing African countries in the news, an article about this horror stands as a marker of the corruption and struggles Algerians have faced. Upwards of 13, 000 migrants have been left to die in the Sahara Desert by the Algerian government, many during the intense and deadly summer months. With such a horrific and recurring event surfacing in the news, my curiosity was piqued; I wanted to learn more about the history of the relationship between the Algerian government and its people.

With attempts at democracy in the past, Algeria currently sits in a deadlock between the president and the military. In the wake of a bloody civil war, the government continues to work in finding the balance between peace and another military coup. An "exemplary" extractive government so to speak, Algeria's economy is rooted heavily in the exportation of petroleum and natural gas; these exports make up approximately one-third of the country's economy. However, further analysis has shown the decline in previously critical sectors of the economy, particularly in agriculture and similar industries. The country has undergone several periods of imperialistic control, specifically as part of the Ottoman Empire and soon after was conquered by the French. While under French control, Algeria's economic emphasis was "largely on agriculture and complemented France's economy". However, since gaining independence on July 3rd, 1962, the

government's focus has shifted from supporting the agricultural industries to the exportation of fossil fuels, leaving Algerians with struggling farms and battles over land ownership. These struggles have left the Algerian economy in a predicament with the ability to grow due to natural resources but with the obstacle of discrepancies with Algerians and their own economic stakes.

Socially, the country has both a few high and several low points. Education has room for improvement. Adult literacy rates are calculated for those over the age of 15 and are approximately 80%; children, on average, stop receiving education after the age of fourteen. Teen pregnancies—calculated as those between the ages of 15 and 19—are low for global averages per 1,000 at about 11%. However, the unemployment ratio of women to men is 2:1, meaning for every one unemployed man, there are two women also actively seeking work. This statistic is difficult and staggering when compared to the 10.5% overall unemployment rate. Another struggling statistic is the median age for Algerians is approximately 27.5 years old, while the United States in comparison has a median age of 38. Overall, though Algeria is not the worst in some areas of social issues and topics, it is far from perfect. The United Nations Development Program ranks Algeria as 83 in the world based on their human development index. With nearly 200 countries in the world, this places Algeria barely above the median of the rankings.

Power is a fickle aspect of a government, especially in toxic struggles like those of Algeria. Though a proclaimed democracy, President Abdel-Aziz Bouteflika is held in check by the powerful military, leaving a deadlock in

progress and a question of who is truly in power. The initial attempt at democracy in 1991 led to an overthrow and disbandment of the general election by the government, which then led to a brutal and bloody civil war. Even with President Bouteflika coming to power in 1999 and the slight return to democracy, he remains under the watchful eye and mighty thumb of the government (Algeria).

Located directly east of Morocco and the Strait of Gibraltar, Algeria's prime location would have allowed for trade advantages in early civilization developments. However, this prime location was also seen as an advantage for other countries and powerful dynasties, such as the Ottoman Empire and France. The French also controlled the majority of Morocco for 44 years, allowing for capital exploitation of the people and resources in both countries for France's benefits.

These exploitations were the root of the future extractive government we see exhibited in Algeria today. The focus on resources by France, rooted in their imperialistic tendencies, have had impacts on the government and economy for many generations. Acemoglu and Robinson's descriptions of developing countries interactions with imperialistic powers are exemplified in Algeria. The "meddling" of these powerful countries in the critical stages of development—particularly France's colonization of Algeria in 1830 and the snatching of control not long after the Ottoman Empire in 1922—shows the long-term dependency and lack of structure these colonization tendencies can have. For example, the return to French reliance after the Ottoman rule

forced the country to once again rely on the trade and exportation to France for economic stability.

Another example of Algeria's government mirroring patterns and characteristics of extractive governments is the continual corruption it exhibits. Transparency International ranks Algeria as 112 of 180 countries with a score of 33%. Following his election in 1999, President Bouteflika said, "Algeria is a country sapped by corruption". In reaction to the high exportation of fossil fuels, the government attempted to turn towards public works and infrastructure, only to be met with questions from the public on where money was truly being spent. Reactions have been to attempt policies and campaigns to break down the patterns of corruption and misuse of money, but have been largely ineffective in the long run. The ineffective policies and the lack of commitment to the fight against corruption across the board in the government have left Algerians wondering when the end will be in sight for the corruptive tendencies.

A fascinating aspect of the government's power struggles is also tied to the religion and Islamic influences of the country. With official political parties associated with Islam and elected officials being members of these parties, the representation reflects the majority of the population's personal beliefs. The first president elected in the new democracy during the early 1990's was a member of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), a political party centered around Islamic beliefs. This allowed for the FIS to gain power quickly and Algeria became a nearly one political party government. As the years have passed, more diversity in party representation has surfaced in the

government, but the Islam-based political parties and individuals populate a majority of the government.

A struggling country both economically and socially, rooted in the exportation of resources and the seizing of power, Algeria faces a crossroads in the upcoming years. While extractive government tendencies and theories should not be used as generalizations, Acemoglu and Robinson's theory applies well to the Algerian government. From the patterns of imperialistic influence to the characteristics of power and resource mismanagement, the theory accurately describes the grappling government attempting to sort through corruption and economic mistakes. Extractive governments such as Algeria exist across the globe, though they may not all have the same past, present, or future statuses and struggles. However, this country does stand as a prime example of the theory and alludes to the fact that other nations may mirror the same situations present in Algeria.

To transition from an extractive government to an inclusive government, the Algerian government must make drastic cultural and political shifts in the immediate future. Focus on the rural and agriculturally based economics of the country is vital; policy supporting businesses and good faith infrastructure are necessary. Corruption runs rampant and must be addressed from all points of the government to build trust and hope for Algerians. Policy around public works and accountability for government spending are a must. Many other conversations must be had surrounding the accountability of the government, specifically in situations such as the abandonment of migrants in the Sahara Desert. Though plan and policy may

have impacts on the economy in the long run, they will ultimately be futile without transparency between the government and the people. The Algerian government must first take responsibility for their corruption, missteps, and crimes in the past if there is ever hope for a thriving and inclusive Algeria in the future.