

## THE QUESTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ALGERIA BETWEEN THE WILL OF THE STATE AND REALITIES ON THE GROUND

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### **Abstract:-**

*Many economists have outlined the fact that the questions of growth, development, evolution are totally linked with the place of enterprises (notably the smallest ones) in the economy, meaning that entrepreneurship is dealing with the creation of this kind of enterprise, but also to resolve the fundamental problem of unemployment and to supply the government in many areas.*

*For this, this subject has been completely abandoned and ignored by deciders in the Algerian case, and now with the changes in the world economy, the collapse of petrol prices and the role of entrepreneurs in the economy, the government is trying to reconsider its place in the national, but the main question remain if this decision is conform with the real environment and realities of domestic economy.*

*That's our concern in this paper that we try to examine deeply concerning the case of Algeria.*

**Keywords:** - *Entrepreneurship-Algeria-Markets-Management-Employment-Local environment.*

## **PRELUDE**

In recent times, the debate on entrepreneurship has taken on national and even international dimensions, and calls on several researchers and experts to put this topic in a good light in terms of economic issues and to demonstrate its relevance and importance, particularly in the Algerian case, in a financial and economic context quite unfavorable and degrading following the fall in the price of oil and that of oil revenues which have lost in the space of two years more than 50%, thus causing unfortunate consequences on the economic program of development of the country.

Thus, the concept of entrepreneurship has become established and ingrained in the managerial culture of enterprises and as a logical and relevant response to ensure local and territorial development and a good path in terms of job creation, added value, profitability and financial and social performance, and above all allow an emergence and emergence of an elite able to lead economic projects in the direction of economic growth.

In Algeria, this issue was discussed on several occasions and occasions, both by the economic decision-makers at the level of the central hierarchy and by concerned analysts and researchers, seeing, in this ideology, a possible way to accompany and support the efforts made for a harmonious, sustainable economic development.

However, we must distinguish and differentiate between a legitimate and generous ambition and a conformity with the real world with its real characteristics and specificities, because the implementation of a project like the creation of young companies in the form of micro-enterprises, as decided by the State, and the nature of the local environment that is faced could be a source of discussion and analysis, as decisions may not reflect the realities of the environment.

In this sense, it is essential, in the case of the Algerian economy, to re-examine and study the question of entrepreneurship in its real context, in order to determine if this device is really well managed and driven by the initiators, in an economic and financial context in perpetual change and turbulent by factors and variables that are not necessarily internal or endogenous, which makes more the need for a study in this direction, as long as this approach (entrepreneurship) has become a stage and a crucial phase for economies like the case of Algeria, but with less pressure and constraints.

This remains within the framework of objectivity, clarity and reality, with the aim of conducting an analysis that will have to establish the ideal and appropriate context to reduce any possible errors and dysfunctions that may well occur

### **1) Some brief readings on the concept of entrepreneurship**

It must be said that this concept was, at length, debated, discussed and analyzed in various scientific occasions (colloquia, seminars, forums, papers published, round tables and others) mainly due to a certain renewed interest in recent decades , notably the latest statements by officials of the international financial institutions ( the World Bank) on the need to pay particular attention to the setting up of projects and programs that favor the creation of enterprises, especially small and medium-sized, in order to start local and territorial development leading to national one.

According to R. Zammar, "Entrepreneurship is a dynamic of creating and exploiting a business opportunity by one or more individuals through the creation of new organizations for the purpose of value creation", showing, thus, that this type of approach is undermined and argued by market considerations and by taking advantage of opportunities to achieve value-added objectives.

For their part, T.Verstraete and B.Saporta<sup>2</sup> attempt to shed some light on this concept by emphasizing the historical arguments and the economic (and especially industrial) development that has marked the international economy, defining entrepreneurship as the result of a historical process that has increased the attention and interest of small (and even very small) businesses to accelerate the process of growth and development, giving the example of the United States which has chosen this type following three steps: The Small Business Act (1953), the contribution of E.F. Schumacher (Small is beautiful) and the work of D. Birch.

For his part, Y.Pesqueux provides another definition, that "Entrepreneurship can be defined as an activity involving the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities, with the aim of introducing new goods and services, new organizational structures, new markets, processes, and materials, by tools that may not previously exist ", indicating thus that this concept is more based and oriented towards the need to create novelties either at the level of goods and products, organizations or even markets.

Also, E.M.Laviolette and C.Loue<sup>4</sup> define this concept taking into account two approaches: An approach by creating an opportunity and another by creating an organization, with the aim of achieving a complementarity between the emergence of an individual approach and a more organizational one.

Several other works and writings on the subject inform and learn us that this concept of entrepreneurship is a true copy of the idea of Schumpeter who defines it as an economic organization that projects itself towards long-term profit objectives, based on the new ideas in terms of creativity and innovation that the manager must introduce in his management, unlike the producer who is more concerned about how to exploit the available resources including those of human and financial resources.

In an excellent synthesis, T.Verstraete and A. Fayolle seem more determined and animated by the idea that this concept was largely approached and challenged to leave room for possible incursions of criticisms and paradigms, affirming, in this sense, that "To grow even further, it is necessary, among other things, to show the research community more clearly its schools of thought, its currents or, even more, its paradigms so that a relative consensus can, not govern the programs of research, but offer a minimal framework of knowledge accumulation ", thus returning researchers and experts in this field to go beyond the explanation and clarification of the theme, and to highlight the main ingredients for setting up effective and relevant.

Searching some good readings of the magazine of entrepreneurship, it seems to us that the concept of entrepreneurship, in an economic context marked by the multiplication of turbulence, does not mean just a setting up (or creation) of a young company (in recent times there is much more talk of female entrepreneurship) through the follow-up of some phases and stages previously studied, but the conversion of an individual idea animated by some consistent arguments for a project of an economic nature, profits and social dimensions.

Thus, we consider that entrepreneurship is boosted by certain factors and parameters, like motivation (will, self-realization, choice of time, self-diagnosis (entrepreneurial profile, leadership evaluation), potential evaluation, skills assessment, etc.) and sources of ideas (such as the nature of the project, marketing, new technologies, the nature of the products, services and goods to be manufactured and offered, etc.).

To sum it all up, K.Messeghem and T.Verstraete present this concept as "a practice expressed in contexts within the private sphere or the public sphere, or a combination of the two ... It interests areas also varied as art, culture, social and solidarity economy, high technology, etc., and concerns various organizational forms such as the association, the firm, the network, etc. ".

## **2) Entrepreneurship in the case of Algerian economy**

If this concept has emerged as an old topic of debate and discussion and it is just its adaptation with the context lived, it remains that it presents itself as a crucial and fundamental theme for the case of this economy and this practically since the process of economic opening that began three decades ago, starting with the launch of economic reforms and the implementation of the structural adjustment program with support from the Monetary Fund.

In this regard, W.Guechtouli and M.Guechtouli intervene in their comments that "The Algerian government is aware of the important role of SMEs / SMIs in the development of Algerian economic growth. Some initiatives are being taken to encourage their extension, in particular through the law on the promotion of SMEs in 2001. In addition, the government gives a strong political impulse, by creating a delegated ministry, a national agency for the promotion of SMEs, as well as deposit and promotion funds a way of justifying the creation of these micro-enterprises by the fact that the local economy cannot take off without the actual and realistic contribution of this type of enterprises.

For his part, A.Nafa refers this question on this subject to the fact that the act of undertaking and creating an economic entity is determined by a certain culture that must exist at the level of initiators, especially young people who do not see in this process only financial and pecuniary appetites, with little concern for the long-term prospects, preferring moving towards short-term projects and more advantageous in terms of profit and benefits.

In the same subject, A.Bereziga and A.Meziane discuss the relationship between entrepreneurial action and the need for an appropriate and compliant culture, stressing in their conclusion that "one of the shortcomings in the development of entrepreneurship in Algeria is the lack of an entrepreneurial culture among Algerians. However, this culture must be first and foremost the contribution of the Algerian state, which must sensitize and facilitate the entrepreneurial activities that must be seen as the heart of a nation's economic development ", insinuating that entrepreneurship is synonymous with a mix of knowledge in this business, to avoid any other interpretation or misreading that may prove less fruitful and advantageous for beginners and new initiators.

It must be recognized that this concept has gone through a few twists and turns, especially after the end of the structural adjustment program and the implementation of new economic liberalization mechanisms, because the private sector (main provider of SMEs / SMIs and therefore of entrepreneurship in Algeria) was, at its inception, faced with enormous complications, obstacles and delicate situations, because the environment was not ideally suited for launching this type of approach, a result of a long phase marked by the centralized and directed system, leaving little room for the private sector to develop.

Returning to the concept studied, N.E.Hammouda and M.Lassassi attempt an explanation through the national context marked by a historic break in the private sector since independence, and a concentration on public entrepreneurship consisting of companies dominated and exploited by the sector. without actually having the ingredients and elements of a good knowledge of this concept, affirming, in this sense, that "the creation and the development of the new companies are the fact of the entrepreneurs, that is to say, of those who mobilize and manage human and material resources, with the aim of creating, developing and implementing solutions to meet the needs of individuals ", a way to insist and point out

that creating an enterprise does not mean in any way business creation with a flagrant and grandiose ignorance of the concept of entrepreneurship.

In another intervention, our colleague W.T.Aouel Lachachi evokes the fact that the Algerian economy is still not able to detach itself from the centralized and controlled system and which is tormenting itself in the depths of the international economic indicators, which is reflected in the establishment of a system of entrepreneurship based on international criteria and pushing creators to the need to know these criteria and standards, indicating, as a result, that "The Algerian entrepreneur, living in an Arab Muslim environment, finds himself influenced by the principles of the Muslim religion, concerning first, the perception of work, the division of goods, the interest rate, and the interest of the community".

This leads us to consider that entrepreneurship in Algeria has become necessary and highly recommended, both at the level of local officials and international financial and economic institutions, with the aim of relieving and reducing the economic and financial burden supported by the State, and also to allow the emergence of a new managerial elite (private and public) that can lead economic entities in a perspective of national and international competitiveness national, in an economic context which is reflected in the questioning of several habits, in the first place, the rehabilitation of the private sector through SMEs / SMIs.

This non-exhaustive list of approaches to entrepreneurship in Algeria tells us that this reflection came late and relatively hasty, since that the economic transition started is not yet complete and achieved, and it seems that the private sector (a real engine and trigger for entrepreneurship) has not yet begun its real cruise in order to allow the concept to truly hatch. Of course, the various interventions identified have risen, in a unanimous and convergent manner that entrepreneurship in this country suffers from several obstacles and complications for its real conversion as a leitmotif of economic development, through local and territorial development and among these constraints we can mention:

- I. Confusing entrepreneurship with the establishment of an economic entity based on profit and gain goals (which is very legitimate) but without any real connection with the foundations of an entrepreneurial approach.
- II. The nature of the local environment that does not suit the expectations of local entrepreneurs, including relations with the components of public administration.
- III. The absence of an institutional economy (contribution of banks, tax and legal administration, markets, territorial administrations, insurance, and especially the State).
- IV. Absence of an entrepreneurial culture (which is very different from that of a company).
- V. Lack of training aimed at the question of entrepreneurship, especially for young entrepreneurs.
- VI. Disconnect between a desire to create an enterprise and the realities of the national economy, especially in the current economic context where all the macroeconomic indicators turn red.
- VII. A lack of synergy and coordination between the parties and actors in the question of entrepreneurship, namely between the ministries concerned, the services concerned, the targeted administrations and especially at the level of the organizations concerned with the implementation of the concept of entrepreneurship.

Thus, Y. Gasse's pertinent idea is that "Creating a business is one thing; to make it survive and develop it is something else. In fact, in the latter case, we do not use the same personal qualities, nor the same expertise", understanding that entrepreneurship is an approach, for the Algerian case, which requires and urges an effective collaboration and relevant to each partner and actor of the economic environment, according to the degree of his intervention and contribution, for a win-win spirit.

### **3) The entrepreneurial spirit and the State in Algeria: Real interest or simple administrative formality?**

The examined approaches are all convergent and agree that entrepreneurship can be a decisive factor for any economic development project, more concretely in the local and territorial economy, because of its proximity and direct contact with these areas.

This remains appropriate theoretically and literally, but what is really at the level of the central and economic hierarchy of Algeria, far from any political speech or debate.

It can be confirmed that the State's efforts in this area have focused on the system put in place in the mid-1990s, with the aim of making young jobseekers by setting up new mechanisms to the creation of small and young companies, headed by a few organizations, among others, ANSEJ, CNAC, ANGEM and others, with a double objective:

- 1) In the absence of job creation through public or even private enterprises, and taking advantage of the financial euphoria, young job-seekers were offered the opportunity to set up their own businesses and projects to reduce the employment rate and improve the labor market.
- 2) To ensure a certain social peace by guiding young people towards these projects and avoid financial suffocation in the case of taking care of them through unemployment insurance and other benefits.

In this sense, the words of AS.Rosa and M.Y.Ferfera mention that "the weakness of private capital and the inexperience of project promoters have led the public authorities to support and stimulate entrepreneurship. The three devices employed, ANDI, ANSEJ and CNAC, are part of two dynamics :business creation and job creation", a way to reveal the fact that state institutions have been granted assignments and tasks in the direction of entrepreneurship, especially for young first-time applicants and women beginners.

Nevertheless, the vision of public power, concerning entrepreneurship, was confused with the idea of supporting young people in setting up businesses and economic entities (notwithstanding the targeted activities), through the availability of financial resources (thanks to the involvement of national banks), tax benefits (thanks to the contributions of the tax administration), a variety of administrative flexibility (insurance, commercial register, civil status, various concerned departments, and others), but without this being followed (upstream and downstream) by the relevant officials, whether at the level of the agencies concerned (Ansej, Cnac, Andi, Angem) or others).

It seems that we are facing an unprecedented fact: A government that finances projects for entrepreneurs who do not yet understand (or totally) the meaning of the concept of entrepreneurship and who seek only the financing and some protection of this government.

Without much detail on the tasks of the device (even if we judge the need to contemplate and study), the question of entrepreneurship was undertaken in a hasty and precipitated manner by the decision's makers, surely in reaction to the phenomenon of the "Arab Spring" and the fear that this will affect the juvenile category, ignoring the basic and fundamental elements for such a concept.

Remaining in this direction, Mr. Boukrif reminds, once again, that "the State, therefore, will take care of its role as an agent of economic regulation and creator of favorable conditions for economic development through the creation of structuring economics, accompanying measures and facilitations to companies", meaning, therefore, the role that the Algerian State must play in this process of setting up young companies, in a relatively complicated context for such an approach.

The fact remains that there is a gap between the expectations of the State in this process and the real constraints experienced and faced by young entrepreneurs, because it seems to us that this question of entrepreneurship is developed with the help of massive investments and legal and administrative procedures, when first; we had to look at the real potentialities and especially the capacities of the markets (goods and services, employment, money and credit) in order to be able to evaluate the chances of success such an operation.

Taking a look at SMEs / SMIs, we note that the number has increased to more than 900,000 economic entities, much of which is dominated by TPE and the private sector, and focusing, to a large extent, on building, services, but does it mean that entrepreneurship has been successful in this country, or well design fits into the agendas of concern of economic decision-makers?

The 2001 SME Promotion Guideline clearly identifies the tasks assigned to state institutions in supporting, coaching and supporting these companies, but does not indicate the guarantee and assurance of the markets absorbing the goods, services and other goods produced by these enterprises.

This shows that the relationship between entrepreneurship and the state, in this country, is dictated by the need to solve the problem of unemployment and the unavailability of hiring positions on the government side, and to restore hope and a better future of young people and interested in this project, a legitimate and logical relationship, if we start from the principle and the hypothesis of a synergy between the two actors.

In another argument, Z.D. Debbih in his paper on women's entrepreneurship in Algeria, makes it clear that "the first measures to help start a business, which emerged in Algeria in the mid-1990s, targeted mainly the support of the enterprise at the time of its creation, the assistance usually taking the form of a loan or grant. These measures have sought to reduce the failure rate of businesses; the latter relied more on monitoring mechanisms so as to follow the evolution of the subsidized projects", revealing thus, that the contribution of the State is registered as a funder or a financial relays to allow the hatching and the emergence of this type of company.

This was materialized by the multiple financial interventions identified, whether for SMEs / SMIs, the job creation scheme (Ansej, Cnac, Angem, Andi, etc.) and other contributions, through the mobilization of funds in this direction. , as well as the number of companies created over the last two decades, thus giving rise to a particular interest for national and international opinion.

We can mention some measures taken in this direction (as described by S.Gherbi):

- ❖ Tax concessions and benefits.
- ❖ More flexible and simplified procedures for granting bank credits.
- ❖ Administrative facilitation (trade register, local authorities, local agencies, etc.).
- ❖ Improvement of bank interest rates.
- ❖ Extension of the repayment period (with a deferred period).
- ❖ Establishment of reception and listening structures.
- ❖ Possibility of rescheduling of credits following repayment difficulties.
- ❖ Establishment of guarantee funds.
- ❖ Establishment of coordination and synergy between the main stakeholders and stakeholders in this process (relevant agencies, banks and tax administration).

❖ Possibilities of agreements with companies and administrations.

#### 4) Entrepreneurship and realities on the ground

The opinions are convergent on the fact that the Algerian State has energetically and massively engaged in the question of entrepreneurship, either through the mechanism put in place, or by SMEs / SMIs, or by other mechanisms in the direction of job creation and especially the prospects for contributing to economic development.

Nevertheless, things do not seem to be going according to economic decision-makers, especially at the field level and the confrontation of entrepreneurs and creators of economic entities, constituted largely of young people who have no experience in the concept of entrepreneurship, with the realities of markets, suppliers, various administrations and especially with the too economic concepts often used in this field, among others, marketing, human resources management, accounting and corporate finance, the commercial and legal rules.

Summing up some interventions and approaches (mainly the statements of officials of ministries, entrepreneurs, agencies, directorates and others), it seems that the real problem faced by entrepreneurship in Algeria lies in the complexity and delicacy of the environment which is distinguished by an asymmetry between the laws and orders decreed and the real applications in the field, these are declined as follows:

- i. Although banks are invited to provide financial facilities for entrepreneurs in the performance of their activities, it has become apparent that some records have been rejected because of the lack of reliable and valid guarantees. , and some have waited a long time before receiving the agreement, accusing some financial damages (such as the payment of rents, equipment acquired, taxes...).
- ii. The tax administration has simply imposed tax rates and taxes before the launch of activities, without any real monitoring or control of contractors.
- iii. A terrible lack of communication between the agencies concerned (Ansej, Cnac and others) and entrepreneurs, causing a break in contact and rapprochement and leaving them to cope for economic tasks, mainly market research, consumers, sales and marketing channels, knowledge of banking and tax procedures and others.
- iv. A certain disconnect between the inflationary situations and the repayments of loans and credits allocated, because entrepreneurs are obliged to start repayment procedures even if their activities are prone to hiccups related to the high cost, such as the prices of raw materials, labor, rent increases, and other unplanned costs.
- v. A certain fatality, especially for young beginners in entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises, fueled by a wedge between real difficulties at the level of their companies and economic entities and the obligation of bank reimbursement and from the agencies concerned (remembering that the owners of entrepreneurship projects are required to make repayments at the banks, first, and then agencies that have agreed to projects).

This is also confirmed by K.Berrah and M.Boukrif who argued that the main constraints encountered in this question of entrepreneurship in this country are grouped around: Geographic, administrative, market, technological and financing constraints, and conclude that "significant efforts remain to be made to clean up the business environment in order to make it supportive and stimulating. But the fundamental question remains the establishment of conditions and mechanisms that support the emergence of the two key agents of the market economy namely the entrepreneur and the enterprise ".

Indeed, the scientific research developed as part of this entrepreneurship issue has emphasized that entrepreneurs (not to be confused with small and medium-sized enterprises) have been launched in nature, with only tools, funding and administrative support (especially at the beginning), but with no knowledge and apprehension in the environment in which they will exercise and activate.

Also, the latest statements have made it clear that the informal sector accounts for nearly 45% of GNP and employs more than 2.7 million people, constituting, as a result, another dramatic reality of the national economy and another constraint for young entrepreneurs (as well as SMEs / SMIs), who find themselves in unfair competition in their activities.

However, and in a spirit of equity and equality, the Algerian State has invested well in this process of entrepreneurship and the creation of enterprises, in particular through the setting up of incubators, nurseries, research centers dedicated to startups, and the number of companies created is edifying since it approaches one million, but we are still convinced that for the case of entrepreneurs (especially young people and women), the situation is not very positive and convincing if we judge by the recorded performances and the contributions in the creation of the wealth and the added value.

Our concern lies and focalizes in this fact, even if we are talking about a mortality rate that does not exceed 10% and the number of companies with deficits or financial difficulties of less than 15%.

Recalling the main functions of a contractor according to Marchesnay<sup>26</sup> who are the mobilization of financial capital for profit, the mobilization of available resources for a better performance, and the involvement of innovation in the proposed activities, it seems to us that the concept of entrepreneurship in this country deserves more interest in advance training for those concerned, knowing that this country is living a transitional phase of an economy administered to another more

liberal, which means that we must know the principles of such an economy, and admit to those concerned that the fact of starting a business or setting up a project, with the support of the state and its financial, legal and administrative arsenal, does not mean a plebiscite or a blessing that will last all the time.

A statement affirmed by A.Mouloud confirm that "Algeria has certainly made progress in the promotion of the private sector, with a renewed interest in the last decade with respect to the entrepreneur and the small and medium-sized enterprise ..... ..but fifty years after independence, twenty years after the opening to the market economy and ten years after the last reforms, the record of private investment is far from to live up to expectations, not to say disappointing. The reason for this is that this will displayed through the legislative texts is not combined on the ground and it is the reality of the latter that demonstrates it to us ".

That said, there are two basic facts to note:

- 1) The government has made enormous financial, human, technical and logistical efforts to implement the concept of entrepreneurship, either for young beginners (through the job creation scheme) or for small businesses and mid-sized companies that are already active, but the results are far for being satisfactory.
- 2) On the other hand, constraints and obstacles have tainted and handicapped this initiative, because of the total or partial ignorance of the foundations and conditions of such a concept, resulting, consequently, a series of mishaps and disappointments for the government and entrepreneurs.

## SYNTHESIS

The fact of posing this theme of entrepreneurship between the actions of the government and the confrontations with reality is based on our curiosity to understand if the government initiatives have not understood the content and meaning of this concept at the time when it was necessary to distinguish between the creation of a company in a classic and banal way and the real meaning of the concept as taught and proposed in the existing and available literature, with the realization that the theory cannot reflect the reality and the clash with the nature of the ground to invest and investigate.

Reading the works associated with this topic as well as the different reports and audits, this allowed us to reveal that the Algerian state has confused between the insurance of multiple support (financial, technical, human, administrative legal and other) and the behavior of entrepreneurs towards market behavior, even if one boasts of having a lower mortality rate and a smaller number of companies in financial difficulty.

Indeed, the government has worked to resolve the phenomenon of unemployment (especially at the level of young people and unemployed women), by the abundance of oil revenues at the beginning of the year 2000 (we speak of an amount included between \$ 500 and \$ 800 billion earned between 2003 and 2014), and has been active in the creation of a large number of entrepreneurial projects (some responsables indicate the creation of new projects just by the amounts reimbursed from old projects without recourse to state funding), but the economic reasoning that we know and that we teach to our students indicate some essential principles and values, like efficiency, performance and above all the profitability of an allocation of funds, especially if we know that these funds derived from the wealth of the State and taxpayers.

Thus, we cannot judge the failure of the State in this issue of entrepreneurship, but we must still raise the fact that reality has shown and unveiled some shortcomings, failures and unpleasant surprises to economic decision-makers, because entrepreneurs have confused the sense of entrepreneurship with that of the creation of a project, because the first is not limited to just starting a business and engaging in activities, but above all durability, sustainability and continuity of such an approach, in an economic and financial situation becoming execrable and disruptive due to the plummeting prices of the barrel (we evaluate financial losses of more than 50% of the financial revenues).

We believe that the government should encourage specialized agencies to understand the concept of entrepreneurship and do the same with the concerned, leaving behind the ideas based on quantity rather than the quality and insisting more on the relevance of projects.

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