

The Role of Economic Diplomacy in Strengthening Afro-Algerian Cooperation Relations

Le rôle de la diplomatie économique dans le renforcement des relations de Coopération afro-algérienne

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Abstract:

Economic diplomacy has become one of the key mechanisms for managing international relations and strengthening cooperation among states, particularly in the context of globalization and increasing competition over markets, investments, and resources. Diplomatic practice is no longer limited to political and security dimensions; rather, it has expanded to include the use of economic, trade, and investment instruments to serve national interests and strengthen the international position of states. In this context, Algerian economic diplomacy is gaining increasing importance in supporting cooperation with African countries through promoting trade exchanges, encouraging investment, developing economic partnerships, and activating bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms.

This study aims to examine the role of economic diplomacy in strengthening Algerian–African cooperation by analyzing its contribution to expanding economic partnerships, supporting intra-African trade, and taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the African Continental Free Trade Area. It also explores Algeria's ability to mobilize its economic potential, strategic position, and diplomatic relations to build more sustainable economic partnerships with its African environment, in a manner that serves national development objectives and enhances its economic presence on the continent. The study concludes that strengthening economic diplomacy represents an important approach for moving Algerian–African relations from traditional cooperation toward a more integrated and sustainable economic partnership.

Keywords: Economic Diplomacy, Algerian–African Cooperation, Economic Relations, Economic Partnership, Intra-African Trade.

Résumé:

La diplomatie économique est devenue l'un des mécanismes clés pour la gestion des relations internationales et le renforcement de la coopération entre les États, en particulier dans le contexte de la mondialisation et de la concurrence accrue pour les marchés, les investissements et les ressources. La pratique diplomatique ne se limite plus aux dimensions politiques et sécuritaires ; elle s'est élargie pour inclure l'utilisation d'instruments économiques, commerciaux et d'investissement afin de servir les intérêts nationaux et de renforcer la position internationale des États. Dans ce contexte, la diplomatie économique algérienne revêt une importance croissante pour soutenir la coopération avec les pays africains à travers la promotion des échanges commerciaux, l'encouragement des investissements, le développement de partenariats économiques et l'activation des mécanismes de coopération bilatérale et multilatérale.

Cette étude vise à examiner le rôle de la diplomatie économique dans le renforcement de la coopération algéro-africaine en analysant sa contribution à l'expansion des partenariats économiques, au soutien du commerce intra-africain et à l'exploitation des opportunités offertes par la Zone de Libre-Échange Continentale Africaine (ZLECAf). Elle explore également la capacité de l'Algérie à mobiliser son potentiel économique, sa position stratégique et ses relations diplomatiques pour bâtir des partenariats économiques plus durables avec son environnement africain, de manière à servir les objectifs de développement national et à renforcer sa présence économique sur le continent. L'étude conclut que le renforcement de la diplomatie économique représente une démarche importante pour faire passer les relations algéro-africaines d'une coopération traditionnelle à un partenariat économique plus intégré et durable.

Mots-clés : Diplomatie économique, Coopération algéro-africaine, Relations économiques, Partenariat économique, Commerce intra-africain.

Introduction:

The international system has undergone profound transformations driven by the forces of globalization and increasing competition over markets, investments, and resources, which have fundamentally reshaped the nature of interstate relations. Consequently, diplomatic practice is no longer restricted to traditional political and security dimensions; rather, it has expanded to incorporate the use of economic, commercial, and investment instruments to serve national interests and enhance international standing. In this context, Algerian economic diplomacy is acquiring growing importance as a pivotal mechanism for supporting cooperation with African nations through the promotion of trade exchanges, the encouragement of investment, the development of economic partnerships, and the activation of bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks.

Since gaining its independence, Algeria has sought to play an active role in promoting international peace and security and supporting the struggles of peoples under colonial rule, guided by the fundamental principles of its foreign policy, particularly the right to self-determination, respect for national sovereignty, and non-interference in internal affairs. Given its African identity and strategic geographical position as a crossroad between the Mediterranean and the African continent, alongside the pressing security and political

challenges in the Sahel region and their direct implications for regional stability, Algerian diplomacy has increasingly integrated developmental and economic dimensions alongside its political and security approaches. This orientation is clearly reflected in Algeria's founding contributions to major continental initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and its active engagement in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), aimed at translating its diplomatic and geographic capital into tangible economic gains that serve sustainable development and continental integration.

Despite this strategic significance, the research problem lies in the notable discrepancy between Algeria's substantial political and diplomatic influence in Africa and the relatively modest volume of its actual economic exchanges, which remain below expectations given its available potential. Accordingly, this study addresses the following main research question:

What is the role of economic diplomacy in strengthening Afro-Algerian cooperation relations, and what are the main challenges and future prospects for activating this role?

To address this problem, the study raises the following sub-questions:

1. What is the conceptual framework of economic diplomacy, and what are its contemporary strategic dimensions?
2. How have economic and trade relations between Algeria and its African environment evolved in recent years?
3. What are the key mechanisms and sectors relied upon by Algerian economic diplomacy to strengthen partnership with Africa (such as infrastructure, energy, and the Continental Free Trade Area)?
4. What are the primary structural and institutional challenges hindering the effectiveness of Algeria's economic diplomacy in the continent, and how can they be overcome?

This study derives its importance from the growing role of economic diplomacy as an essential lever for diversifying the national economy beyond hydrocarbons and building sustainable strategic partnerships with Africa, which serves as a vital geographic and economic extension for Algeria. The objectives of the study include analyzing the concept of economic diplomacy, evaluating the reality of Afro-Algerian trade and cooperation, identifying available mechanisms and opportunities (such as the AfCFTA), and pinpointing the structural and institutional barriers facing economic and diplomatic actors.

To achieve these objectives and answer the research questions, the study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach. The descriptive approach is utilized to clarify concepts related to economic diplomacy, while the analytical approach examines statistical indicators, official reports, and institutional documents concerning economic cooperation between Algeria and African countries. Furthermore, the paper is structured into successive sections covering the conceptual and strategic foundations of economic diplomacy, the reality of trade exchanges and applied mechanisms, and concluding with results, recommendations, and future research avenues.

I. Definition of Economic Diplomacy

Economic diplomacy is one of the most significant developments in contemporary diplomatic practice, resulting from the growing importance of economic factors in determining the position of states and shaping their foreign relations. Although the use of economic

instruments to serve states' external objectives is not a recent phenomenon, the concept of economic diplomacy has evolved considerably with the expansion of trade and investment relations and the increasing interdependence of national economies. In this context, the experience of the United States during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt is often associated with practices historically referred to as "Dollar Diplomacy," through which economic resources and instruments were employed to advance American interests abroad. From this perspective, economic diplomacy can be understood as the use of a state's economic capabilities and instruments to achieve national interests and foreign-policy objectives, while also mobilizing political and diplomatic influence to support its economic interests.¹

Contemporary economic diplomacy is no longer confined to economic aid, loans, or negotiations over trade agreements. Its scope has expanded to include strategic sectors that increasingly influence international relations, such as energy, technology, environmental protection, health, food security, supply chains, and the digital economy. This development reflects a shift from a predominantly political conception of diplomacy toward a more comprehensive practice in which economic considerations are closely intertwined with states' political and strategic objectives.²

Economic diplomacy can also be understood as an extension of the economic dimension of traditional diplomacy. It involves the use of diplomatic communication channels and international cooperation frameworks to identify new markets, attract investment, facilitate trade, and promote national economic interests abroad. Its effectiveness requires clearly defined economic objectives, the mobilization of appropriate resources, and coordination among the various institutions and actors involved in economic affairs. Such coordination enables diplomatic relations to be transformed into concrete economic opportunities and tangible gains.

From this perspective, economic diplomacy represents a field in which the political and economic dimensions of external action intersect. Major transformations in the international system have increased the relative importance of economic factors in international relations, making economic power an important determinant of states' ability to influence, negotiate, and pursue their interests. Consequently, it has become increasingly difficult to draw a strict distinction between political diplomacy and economic diplomacy, since political decisions may serve economic objectives, while economic interests may simultaneously influence foreign-policy orientations.³

Accordingly, economic diplomacy may be defined operationally as a set of mechanisms, skills, and practices employed by governmental and non-governmental institutions, directly or indirectly, to achieve economic objectives through political and diplomatic instruments, or to employ economic interests and resources in pursuit of political and strategic objectives. This definition allows economic diplomacy to be viewed as a multidimensional and interactive process based on the mutual influence between economic interests and foreign policy.

¹ Souria Trima, "The Strategic Dimension of Economic Diplomacy in Activating Algerian-African Relations," *Al-Naqid Journal of Political Studies*, University of Biskra, Algeria, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2022, p. 549.

² Souha Chouihna, *Economic Diplomacy*, Master's Thesis in International Law, Faculty of Law, Department of International Law, University of Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic, 2013, p. 13.

³ Halima Bassoud, "Economic Diplomacy: Dimensions, Concepts, and Applications," *Journal of Law and Humanities*, Djelfa University, Algeria, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2022, p. 649.

In the Algerian context, economic diplomacy has acquired particular importance in light of transformations in the regional and international environment and Algeria's efforts to diversify its economic partnerships and strengthen its presence in African markets. Algerian economic diplomacy should therefore not be understood merely as an external trade activity, but rather as an instrument of foreign policy through which diplomatic relations can be mobilized to support national development and strengthen economic partnerships with African countries.⁴

II. The Strategic Dimension of Economic Diplomacy

Economic diplomacy has acquired a strategic character in the contemporary international environment. Its objectives are no longer limited to achieving immediate economic gains; rather, they increasingly involve building national capabilities, strengthening the international position of states, and achieving long-term strategic objectives. The transformations experienced by the international system, particularly the expansion of economic globalization, increasing interdependence, and the growing mobility of capital and investment, have made economic power one of the major sources of international influence. Economic and trade decisions have consequently become an integral part of strategic decision-making and foreign-policy processes.⁵

The strategic nature of economic diplomacy is reflected in its ability to combine immediate economic interests with the political and geopolitical objectives of states. States may use trade and investment relations to strengthen alliances, employ financial assistance and economic projects to enhance their influence, or capitalize on political and diplomatic relations to facilitate the access of their enterprises and products to foreign markets. This demonstrates the close relationship between economic power and diplomatic influence, making the ability to deploy economic resources externally an important component of a state's comprehensive national power.⁶

Within this framework, economic diplomacy encompasses a broad range of activities, including trade negotiations and agreements, investment promotion, export development, economic assistance, financial and monetary cooperation, energy partnerships, infrastructure development, technological cooperation, and the search for new markets for national products. It also involves an expanding range of international actors, including states, international and regional organizations, international financial and economic institutions, multinational corporations, national enterprises, and various non-governmental actors.

The strategic dimension of economic diplomacy is particularly evident in Africa, where competition for markets, investments, natural resources, and infrastructure projects has become part of the broader international competition for influence. Economic relations with African countries can therefore no longer be separated from political and security considerations. Trade, investment, energy, transportation, and digital connectivity have increasingly become instruments for building long-term partnerships and strengthening regional influence.

⁴ Halima Bassoud, "Economic Diplomacy: Dimensions, Concepts, and Applications," *Journal of Law and Humanities*, Djelfa University, Algeria, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2022, p. 649.

⁵ Souria Trima, op. cit., p. 551.

⁶ Ismail Sabri Muqallid, *Strategy and International Politics: Concepts and Basic Facts*, Beirut, Arab Research Foundation, 1985, p. 418.

In this context, four major strategies can be identified for enhancing the effectiveness of economic diplomacy:⁷

1. Involving Political Decision-Makers and Senior Officials

The success of economic diplomacy requires the involvement of senior political decision-makers, together with administrative officials and specialized policymakers, in formulating and implementing external economic policies. Such involvement ensures greater coherence between economic objectives and the broader orientations of foreign policy.

2. Expanding the Circle of Economic Diplomacy Actors

Economic diplomacy is no longer the exclusive responsibility of government institutions. It increasingly requires the participation of economic institutions, the private sector, financial institutions, chambers of commerce, universities, research centers, and other actors capable of supporting international economic relations. This broader participation transforms economic diplomacy into a collaborative system extending beyond the traditional governmental framework.

3. Promoting Transparency and Economic Communication

Economic diplomacy becomes more effective when its objectives and programs are clearly communicated to economic actors and society. Transparency contributes to building confidence and generating support for external economic policies. It also facilitates the identification and promotion of investment and trade opportunities available to national and foreign enterprises.

4. Mobilizing National Institutions and International Organizations

Achieving external economic objectives requires the effective use of national institutional capacities and the mechanisms provided by regional and international organizations, particularly those concerned with trade, investment, finance, and economic cooperation. At the same time, digitalization and information technologies have become essential instruments for monitoring markets, analyzing data, promoting national products, attracting investors, and developing cross-border economic networks.

Accordingly, an effective economic actor is one capable of adapting to the transformations generated by globalization, digitalization, and the emergence of new international actors, while transforming these changes from potential challenges into opportunities for strengthening competitiveness and economic influence. From this perspective, the strategic dimension of Algerian economic diplomacy in Africa depends on its ability to move beyond the establishment of economic relations toward building sustainable strategic partnerships based on trade, investment, technology transfer, infrastructure development, and African economic integration.

III. Algerian Economic Diplomacy and Mechanisms for Strengthening African Cooperation

In recent years, Algerian economic diplomacy has become an increasingly important instrument for reshaping Algeria's presence on the African continent, particularly in light of transformations in the international economic system and the growing importance of African markets as promising spaces for trade, investment, and economic partnerships. While Algerian diplomacy has historically been associated with support for national liberation movements,

⁷Souria Trima, op. cit., p. 552.

respect for state sovereignty, and peaceful conflict resolution, regional and international economic transformations have required an expansion of diplomatic action to include the pursuit of economic interests and the strengthening of the competitiveness of national enterprises in foreign markets.⁸

The African dimension of Algerian economic diplomacy is based on a number of geopolitical and economic assets that provide Algeria with the potential to play a central role in strengthening connectivity between the northern and southern parts of the continent. Algeria's geographical position, its extensive borders with the Sahel region, its infrastructure projects connecting it with its African surroundings, and its experience in energy, industry, and services constitute important assets that can be mobilized to establish more integrated economic relations with African countries.

1. Promoting Intra-African Trade and Strengthening the Presence of Algerian Products in African Markets

The development of intra-African trade represents one of the principal mechanisms of economic diplomacy, as it provides an avenue for opening new markets for national products and reducing dependence on a limited number of trading partners. In this regard, Algeria seeks to promote non-hydrocarbon exports and encourage national enterprises to access African markets, particularly in sectors where Algeria possesses productive and competitive capacities.

African markets are particularly important for Algeria because of their geographical proximity and diversified demand, creating opportunities for Algerian products in sectors such as agri-food industries, pharmaceuticals, construction materials, chemical products, industrial equipment, and services. However, taking advantage of these opportunities depends on the ability of Algerian enterprises to improve product quality, comply with required standards, develop appropriate marketing strategies, and overcome challenges related to transportation, logistics, and financing.⁹

Economic diplomacy therefore goes beyond negotiating trade agreements. It also involves gathering information on African markets, supporting Algerian enterprises, promoting national products, facilitating contacts between economic operators, and contributing to the removal of obstacles that restrict trade exchanges.

2. Promoting Investment and Algerian–African Economic Partnerships

Investment represents a fundamental dimension of contemporary economic diplomacy because it allows states to move from traditional trade relations toward long-term productive partnerships. For Algeria, directing investment toward African markets represents an opportunity to expand the activities of national enterprises and benefit from the economic potential of the continent.

Economic diplomacy can play an important role in identifying promising sectors, providing investors with market information, facilitating contacts with African governments

⁸ Zakhrouf Amer and Dahou Slimane, "The Future of African Trade and Its Role in Developing Intra-African Trade between Africa and Algeria through Models of African Regional Economic Blocs," *Al-Bashaer Economic Journal*, Bechar University, Algeria, Vol. 8, No. 1, April 2022, p. 740.

⁹ Nabila Ladraa and Chatti Roumissa, "Algeria's Commitment to Promoting Its Exports Following Accession to the African Continental Free Trade Area: A Study in Light of the New Legislative Texts," *Journal of Legal and Political Research and Studies*, Tipaza University Center, Algeria, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2024, p. 261.

and institutions, and helping address legal and administrative barriers facing investors. Partnerships between Algerian and African enterprises can also contribute to developing regional value chains, transferring expertise and technology, creating employment opportunities, and strengthening economic integration.

This approach is particularly relevant in light of Algeria's efforts to promote productive investment and diversify its national economy. African markets can provide an appropriate environment for the internationalization of Algerian enterprises, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups seeking new markets for growth and expansion.

3. Infrastructure, Transportation, and Economic Connectivity

The development of Algerian–African economic cooperation cannot be achieved without infrastructure capable of facilitating the movement of goods, people, and investment. Consequently, land transportation and logistical connectivity represent areas in which economic diplomacy can play a strategic role.

In this regard, the development of road networks and transport corridors connecting Algeria with Sahelian countries, together with the strengthening of border areas and logistics centers, can contribute to reducing transportation costs and shortening delivery times to African markets. Such infrastructure development has not only economic implications but may also contribute to promoting development and stability in border regions and creating new spaces for trade and investment.¹⁰

Regional connectivity projects can therefore be regarded as instruments of economic diplomacy, as they involve more than the construction of physical infrastructure. They contribute to creating networks of economic interdependence among states, thereby strengthening opportunities for long-term cooperation and stability.

4. Energy as an Instrument of Algerian Economic Diplomacy

Energy occupies a central position in Algeria's external economic relations, given its experience and resources in the oil and gas sector, as well as its growing potential in renewable energy. These assets can be mobilized to strengthen Algerian–African partnerships, particularly in view of the energy needs of many African countries and their efforts to expand electricity generation and energy access.

Energy diplomacy is not limited to the export of resources. It can also involve the transfer of expertise and technology, the development of joint projects, professional training, and investment in renewable energy. This approach can transform energy from a conventional area of commercial exchange into an instrument for building strategic partnerships.

Furthermore, the global transition toward cleaner energy creates new opportunities for Algeria to strengthen its presence in Africa through cooperation in solar energy, green hydrogen, energy efficiency, and other emerging fields. Such cooperation could give Algerian economic diplomacy a forward-looking dimension extending beyond the traditional dependence on hydrocarbons.¹¹

¹⁰ Siham Kharfouche, "The Impact of Rules of Origin on Algerian Foreign Trade in the Context of the Afro-Algerian Partnership Agreement," *Journal of Law and Humanities*, Djelfa University, Algeria, Vol. 2, Economic Issue No. 33, 2022, p. 364.

¹¹ Siham Kharfouche, op. cit., p. 364.

5. Utilizing the African Continental Free Trade Area

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents an important institutional framework for developing Algerian economic diplomacy because it provides opportunities for expanding markets, reducing trade barriers, facilitating the movement of goods and services, and strengthening investment and regional value chains.

From an Algerian perspective, this framework can be used to increase the competitiveness of national products, expand non-hydrocarbon exports, encourage Algerian enterprises to enter African markets, and establish productive partnerships with African companies. Algeria can also capitalize on its geographical position to strengthen its role as a link between Mediterranean and African markets.

Participation in the AfCFTA can therefore be understood as part of a broader economic diplomacy strategy aimed at moving from limited bilateral relations toward engagement in a more integrated African economic space.¹²

6. Economic Diplomacy and Support for National Enterprises

The effectiveness of economic diplomacy depends significantly on its ability to connect foreign policy with the needs of national economic enterprises. Algerian embassies and diplomatic missions in Africa can play a role extending beyond traditional political representation by monitoring investment and trade opportunities, providing market information, connecting Algerian enterprises with African partners, and contributing to the resolution of problems faced by economic operators.

Coordination among government departments and economic institutions is equally important. Effective economic diplomacy requires complementary action by the ministries responsible for foreign affairs, trade, industry, energy, transportation, and finance, together with public institutions and the private sector. Weak coordination among these actors may lead to fragmented initiatives and limit the ability to transform diplomatic opportunities into tangible economic outcomes.

7. Trade Fairs and Economic Forums as Instruments of Economic Diplomacy

Trade fairs and economic forums have become important instruments of contemporary economic diplomacy because they provide direct platforms for communication among governments, enterprises, investors, and other economic actors. In this context, hosting African economic events in Algeria can strengthen the country's image as a platform for trade, investment, and economic cooperation.

The Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) provides a particularly relevant example of this approach. It constitutes a platform for connecting African enterprises with investors and commercial partners and contributes to developing intra-African trade and investment relations. Algeria's hosting of the fourth edition of the IATF in 2025 further illustrates the growing importance of economic diplomacy and the role Algeria seeks to play in promoting intra-African economic exchange.

8. Digitalization and Economic Intelligence in the Development of Economic Diplomacy

¹² op. cit., p. 365.

Digital transformation has required economic diplomacy to move from traditional methods of information gathering and economic promotion toward the use of digital platforms, data, and intelligent analytical tools. Diplomatic missions and economic institutions can use digital technologies to monitor market trends, analyze consumer needs, identify investment opportunities, assess competitors, and promote national products.

Consequently, contemporary economic diplomacy is increasingly associated with economic intelligence, which enables the collection and analysis of economic information and its transformation into knowledge supporting strategic decision-making. This dimension is particularly important in African markets, where effective competition requires a detailed understanding of the legal, political, economic, and social characteristics of each market.¹³

The preceding analysis demonstrates that Algerian economic diplomacy constitutes a multidimensional system that extends beyond trade and investment promotion to become a strategic instrument for strengthening Algeria's presence in Africa. It brings together trade, investment, energy, infrastructure, digitalization, and economic integration, while linking Algeria's national interests with broader objectives of African development and continental integration.

The success of Algerian economic diplomacy in strengthening African cooperation therefore depends not only on the availability of economic resources, but also on the capacity to mobilize these resources within an integrated diplomatic vision based on institutional coordination, support for national enterprises, the development of economic intelligence, and effective use of continental frameworks, particularly the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Such an approach can contribute to transforming Algerian–African relations from predominantly political and diplomatic relations into a strategic partnership with a sustainable economic and developmental dimension.

IV. The Reality of Algerian–African Intra-Regional Trade

Algeria's position remains relatively low in terms of competitiveness within the African continent. Algerian exports and imports with African countries amounted to approximately USD 3.46 billion in 2018 and USD 3.51 billion in 2019. Although these figures represented a significant increase compared with the previous trajectory of Algeria's trade with the continent, they remained below the desired level. Approximately 96% of Algeria's trade transactions with African countries were concentrated in only five African countries, while Algeria's imports from Africa accounted for approximately 4.03%. This limited level of Algerian–African intra-regional trade can be attributed to several factors:¹⁴

- The strong presence of Chinese products in the Algerian market: China has established a significant presence in the Algerian market, which represents an attractive destination for Chinese products due to the combination of relatively affordable prices, product accessibility, and the purchasing power of Algerian consumers. This situation creates strong competition for African products seeking to enter the Algerian market.

¹³ Nabila Ladraa and Chatti Roumissa, op. cit., p. 258.

¹⁴ Amer Zakhrouf and Slimane Dahou, "The Future of African Trade and Its Role in Developing Intra-African Trade between Algeria and African Countries through Models of African Regional Economic Blocs," *Al-Bashaer Economic Journal*, Bechar University, Algeria, Vol. 8, No. 1, April 2022, p. 740.

- Algeria's commitments under its partnership with the European Union: Algeria's economic relations with the European Union, particularly within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement, have also influenced the structure of its external trade. The repercussions of the Russia–Ukraine war further complicated global supply chains and contributed to disruptions in capital markets. The conflict also generated substantial increases in the prices of wheat and other food commodities, given the major role played by Russia and Ukraine in global supplies of energy, fertilizers, and agricultural products.
- As for Algerian products entering European markets, their competitiveness has been affected by several structural constraints, particularly high production costs, the tax burden borne by exporting companies, and complex customs procedures. These factors may delay the entry of Algerian products into European markets within the agreed deadlines, potentially resulting in contractual penalties and additional costs for exporters.
- This situation highlights the need for Algeria to reassess its external economic partnerships while simultaneously taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The latter provides a broader framework for expanding Algerian exports, diversifying external markets, facilitating intra-African trade, and strengthening the competitiveness of Algerian enterprises.
- Consequently, strengthening Algerian–African trade requires more than simply increasing the volume of exports and imports. It requires the development of efficient logistics, the improvement of product competitiveness, the diversification of export structures, the promotion of African products in Algeria, and the establishment of institutional mechanisms capable of facilitating trade and investment across the continent.

V. Algerian Diplomacy in Africa: From Political and Security Engagement to Economic Diplomacy

Despite being considered one of the major economies in Africa due to its diversified economic resources and its relatively advanced industrial capacities, Algeria's cautious and gradual approach to opening its economy to international markets and foreign investment has contributed to a relatively limited economic presence in Africa compared with major African economies and some external powers.

Available indicators have historically pointed to the relatively modest scale of Algerian–African economic exchanges, with trade between Algeria and African countries accounting for only approximately 1.5% of Algeria's total external trade. This limited share demonstrates the gap between Algeria's political and diplomatic influence on the continent and the actual scale of its economic engagement.

For a long time, Algeria's strategy toward Africa was largely shaped by what Mourad Goumiri, President of the Association of Algerian Academics for the Promotion of National Security Studies, described as a policy based on the distribution of part of the country's rent-based resources, which remain highly dependent on external conditions. Consequently, Algeria did not fully exploit the opportunities created by periods of high oil prices to accumulate capital and establish stronger positions within African economies.

Algeria gradually recognized the importance of strengthening its economic presence on the African continent,¹⁵ Several political and security issues affecting the continent—including the Western Sahara issue—demonstrated that Algeria’s traditional instruments of influence, particularly its diplomatic and security capabilities, together with its historical symbolic capital, were no longer sufficient on their own to achieve its national interests in Africa.¹⁶

This evolution has gradually encouraged Algeria to broaden the scope of its African policy by incorporating a stronger economic dimension. Economic diplomacy has consequently emerged as a complementary instrument to political and security diplomacy, allowing Algeria to pursue its national interests through trade, investment, infrastructure, energy cooperation, and economic integration.¹⁷

The transition from predominantly political and security-oriented engagement toward economic diplomacy reflects a broader transformation in Algeria’s conception of its role in Africa. It involves moving from a model based primarily on political influence and security cooperation toward a more comprehensive approach combining political, security, economic, commercial, and developmental dimensions.

Conclusion:

The analysis of the role of economic diplomacy in strengthening Afro-Algerian cooperation relations shows that Algeria’s relations with Africa are currently evolving toward a more comprehensive partnership that goes beyond traditional political and security cooperation. Economic considerations have become increasingly important in Algeria’s African policy, particularly in the fields of trade, investment, energy, infrastructure, and regional economic integration.

The current reality nevertheless reveals a gap between Algeria’s significant political and diplomatic influence in Africa and the relatively limited volume of its economic exchanges with the continent. Strengthening economic diplomacy therefore requires Algeria to transform its diplomatic capital and strategic geographical position into concrete economic opportunities, while supporting national enterprises and diversifying its African trading partners.

First: Findings

1. Algeria’s economic relations with African countries have traditionally remained at a relatively modest level, with intra-regional trade accounting for only approximately 1.5% of the country's total external trade.
2. Approximately 96% of Algeria’s trade transactions with African countries have historically been concentrated in only five African markets.
3. Algerian external trade structures face structural constraints, such as high production costs, tax burdens, and complex customs procedures, which affect the competitiveness of national products.

¹⁵ Samia Abid, “Trade Integration Potential of Algeria into the African Market: An Analysis Using the Gravity Model,” Centre de Recherche en Économie Appliquée pour le Développement (CREAD), 2021. p. 360.

¹⁶ Ameer Debaa and Omar Boudjelal, “Algerian Economic Diplomacy Towards Africa,” *Al-Naqid Journal of Political Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2025, pp. 430

¹⁷ Abdelwahab Hafiane, “Challenges of Activating Algeria’s Economic Diplomacy and Stakes of Security Problems in Africa,” *Review of Politics and Law*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2024, pp. 510.

4. Traditional instruments of political and security influence, as well as historic symbolic capital, have proven insufficient on their own to achieve Algeria's national and economic interests in Africa without a robust economic diplomacy component.

Second: Recommendations

1. Transform Algeria's diplomatic capital and strategic geographical position into concrete economic opportunities by actively supporting national enterprises and diversifying African trading partners.
2. Capitalize on the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to expand Algerian exports, improve access to African markets, encourage investment, and strengthen regional value chains.
3. Develop efficient logistics, improve product competitiveness, and establish institutional mechanisms capable of facilitating trade and investment across the continent.
4. Enhance infrastructure connectivity, energy cooperation, digitalization, and economic intelligence to consolidate Algeria's economic presence and foster sustainable economic partnerships.

Third: Future Avenues

Future research avenues in this field could focus on several key dimensions to deepen the understanding of digital and economic financial transformation in Algeria's continental strategy. Specifically, further studies might examine the mechanisms for optimizing transport corridors and logistics to overcome structural trade barriers, evaluate the concrete impacts of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on diversifying non-hydrocarbon exports, assess the alignment between security stability in the Sahel and the expansion of cross-border investments, and explore the institutional reforms required to enhance coordination among public and private actors in executing modern economic diplomacy.

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