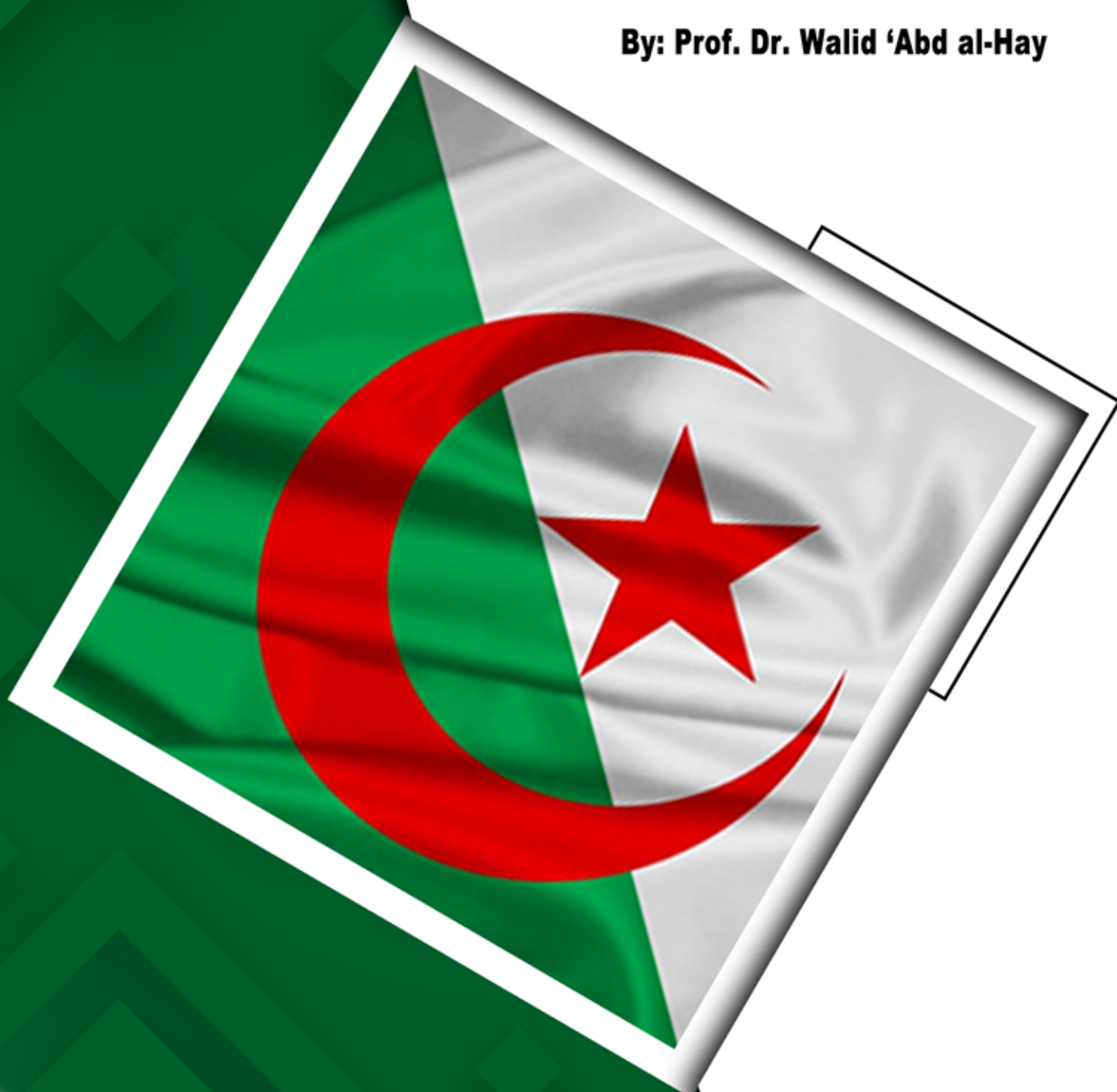




Strategic Situation Assessment

The Prospects of Algerian Policy Between Change and Adaptation

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Introduction

If we consider the phase of Algerian national liberation from French colonialism the fundamental turning point in contemporary Algerian history, studying the period 1962–2020 (about 58 years) helps us define the general features of the relationship between the Algerian society and the political authority on the one hand, and the relationship between the Algerian polity and the international and regional environments on the other hand. It would help us measure the mutual effect between the first and second dimensions, and the Algerian adaptation mechanism to internal and external changes.

First: The Political Sociology of Algeria

Contemporary Algerian history shows that the relationship between the political authority and the Algerian society is generally characterized by the following:

1. The Prevalence of Militarism on the Authority Structure

The period during which the military assumed the presidency has comprised 58.3% of the period extending from 1962 to 2020, including the terms of Houari Boumedienne, Chadli Bendjedid, ‘Ali Kafi and Liamine Zeroual. Civilians, in return, have ruled 41.7% of the period and are Ahmed Ben Bella, Rabah Bitat, Muhammad Boudiaf, ‘Abdelaziz Bouteflika, ‘Abdul Qadir bin Saleh and ‘Abdelmadjid Tebboune. Excluding Bouteflika’s term, most of the civilian periods are transitional periods, which have not been able to establish stable bases of civilian rule, thus allowing the military bases to be more sustainable. These include having an alliance with the National Liberation Front (FLN) (through the representation of the military establishment in its central committee or its political bureau, or through ministers or deputies with military backgrounds), and an alliance with government bureaucratic leaders and local administrations overlapping with representatives of the Interior Ministry and security forces.

Manifestation of military control are the following:

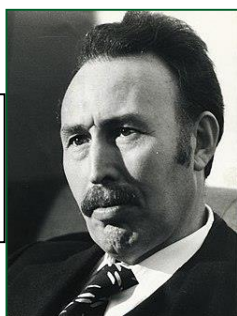
a. Militarization index: This indicator is based on a number of sub-indicators, including the comparison of the rate of military spending to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on the one hand, and the rate of health spending on the other hand. It also measures the number of members of the military establishment in relation to the number of doctors on the one hand, and the population on the other hand. Then comparing the number of heavy military vehicles to the total population. Notably, Algeria recorded high rates of the militarization index and this indicator even increased clearly before 2017 and 2018 to the following rates:¹

Table 1: Militarization Index in Algeria

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Militarization index	763.05	764.49	762.59	764.45	768.08	770.37	764.22	761.01	756.67

The table reveals a gradual decline in the rate of militarization in the post-2014 period, as a result of the sharp and continuous decline in the prices of oil which is the backbone of the Algerian economy.

**Houari
Boumedienne**



**Chadli
Bendjedid**



'Ali Kafi



**Liamine
Zeroual**



Measuring the correlation coefficient between the militarization and democracy indicators shows a high inverse correlation, for the higher the militarization rate gets, the lower the rate of democracy will be, which explains in one aspect the fragility of democracy in Algeria as we shall see later.

b. Military Expenditure Index:² Algeria ranks third globally in terms of the ratio of military spending to the GDP, reaching to 5.3%. The military spending represents 13.8% of the Algerian government's expenditures, thus ranking 13th globally. In the 2010–2020 period, the average annual military spending rate is about \$9.6 billion with expenditure vacillating with fluctuating oil and gas prices as shown in the following table:³

Table 2: Algerian Military Spending

Year	Defense spending (\$ billion)	Percentage of GDP (%)
2015	10.41	5.27
2016	10.22	6.01
2017	10.07	6.38
2018	9.58	6.27
2019	10.3	6

c. The Proportion of Military in Leadership Positions: According to a document disclosed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in February 2012,⁴ the rule in Algeria until that time was based on an alliance between three forces: the army, the government bureaucracy and the leaders of the FLN. In 1981, 42% of the FLN central committee was from military backgrounds. The document points to some aspects of competition between and within these forces as it indicates that the influence of the Berbers or Amazigh (Kabyle, Chaouia, Mizabia and Tuareg) in the military security forces (intelligence) is strong, which sometimes provokes sensitivities with the Arab majority of officers. Thus transformation was witnessed there, starting with the ouster of Kasdi Merbah from the military security apparatus and the later linking the apparatus to the presidency. Also, the regional tendencies within the army are sometimes a source of concern; however, they do not affect the general support of the central authority. During the transformations undertaken by Chadli Bendjedid, governmental bureaucracy and the FLN leadership became more pragmatic and less ideological than was the case

throughout the Boumedienne period. The document sees that the military controls bureaucracy, especially in strategic options. It cites the subordinate role of former Foreign Minister Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, however, Chadli had to a certain extent strengthened the role of bureaucracy. As for the party, the presence of military in the leadership ranks enables the army to control it.

After the overthrow of Chadli Bendjedid in 1992, and the outbreak of civil war until about 1999, the army took full control of the political decision, especially after the assassination of President Muhammad Boudiaf. New military elite started to appear, who are more professional and cultured than the old military elite. The new elite tried to establish their legitimacy on new foundations, most importantly their role in the stability of the state. This was unlike the old military elite, whose legitimacy was based on their role in the liberation war from French colonialism.



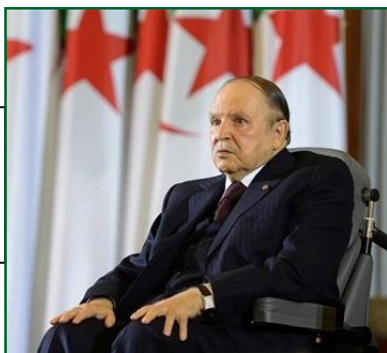
**Ahmed
Ben Bella**



Rabah Bitat



**Muhammad
Boudiaf**



**‘Abdelaziz
Bouteflika**



**‘Abdul Qadir
bin Saleh**

2. Democracy Index in Algeria

In most of the models approved by researchers, democracy index is based on a number of indicators, the most important of which are: pluralism in the electoral process, government performance, popular participation, political culture and civil liberties. Algeria recorded the following rates throughout 2000–2019:⁵

Table 3: Democracy Index in Algeria 2000-2019

Year	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015	2015-2019
Democracy index	3.17	3.44	3.95	4.01

The table indicates a slow and gradual improvement in democracy due to the decline in the militarization index mentioned earlier, related to two phenomena: the deterioration in income rates resulting from the collapse of oil prices, and the gradual replacement of traditional military elites with new military elites more aware of transformations in the environment. Yet, this positive change is not sufficiently consistent with the pace of rapid changes in the structure of society on the one hand, and the shifts in regional and international environment on the other hand. Consequently, the ability to adapt to these shifts remains less than what is actually needed, which does not rule out the possibility of renewed political instability, particularly in light of a number of indicators:

a. Subcultural Congestion in Algerian Society:⁶ This is manifested in: the continuous debate about the Amazigh identity with a great variation in estimating their population⁷ and the limits for expressing cultural identity, in addition to the debate about raising Amazigh flags and the arrest of some who raised these flags. In addition, their presence in public institutions, where reports indicate their high percentage in the technocratic sectors and less influence in the military and security institutions, especially after the change in military intelligence. The acceptance of the Amazigh language varies, where it is constitutionally accepted, while socially it is less accepted. Identifying it as a national language or an official language is also debated. The acceptance of the Amazigh movements of Algerian involvement in Arab concerns. Moreover, tension have appeared on several occasions such as the conflict in Ghardaia in 2013 between Mozabites (Berbers) and the Chaamba (Arab-Maliki) over such issues as water, land and jobs. There are also the 2017

events, including the arrest of some social media bloggers, such as blogger Marzouk Touati who was arrested after he interviewed the spokesperson of the Israeli Foreign Ministry and was released in March 2019, the arrests of hundreds of Ahmadis in 2017, besides the closure of churches in tribal areas, especially Protestant churches.⁸ Further, there are the periods of the so-called Berber Spring in 1980 and following tensions, such as in 1990 when the teaching of the Amazigh was permitted in some schools in Amazigh majority regions. In 2001, there were disturbances in the city of Tizi Ouzou (Algerian Amazigh capital), then in 2003 when Amazigh was considered a “national” rather than an official language. However, the elites and the Amazigh movements continued their pressure urging the state to include an amendment in the constitution, where in 2016, it was approved by the Algerian People’s Assembly to consider Amazigh as an “official” language.⁹



Marzouk Touati

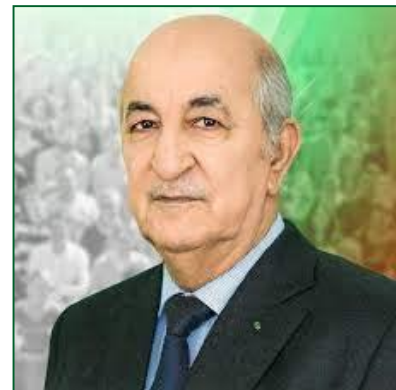
It is noted, for example, that the least-voting provinces for President Bouteflika in the 2014 elections were Berber dominated provinces of Batna, Khenchela, Béjaïa, Jijel and Tizi Ouzou.¹⁰



Perhaps the important observation is that the Berbers do not strategically adopt the idea of separation as a minority, given several factors. I have previously discussed these factors in a study on the indicators of measuring separatism tendency of minorities. The study included 27 indicators, of which the most important is the geographical indicator, a variable not available for Berbers in Algeria¹¹ despite all attempts by external parties to feed this trend.¹²

b. Gaps in the Democratic Process: The most prominent of these gaps could be traced in the following aspects:

- The presidential elections in December 2019, which saw the election of current President Abdelmadjid Tebboune. All five candidates whose candidacies were accepted (28 other applicants were rejected) were closely related to the official institution, while none of them represented significant Islamic forces since they are prohibited, and the chances of their victory remain valid in the event of fair elections.¹³
- According to the Algerian constitution, presidential seat was limited to two terms. However, this provision was amended in 2008 to allow a third term, but was again amended to two terms in 2016. Bouteflika sought to amend it again to run for a new term, but popular unrest forced him to back down and resign. This indicates a degree of constitutional instability and a reflection of deep political tensions between the generation of the revolution and the post-revolution generation, some of whose effects remain intact.
- The political participation, especially in the presidential elections, is an indication of the society's confidence in the political system. It is noticeable that the participation rate, excluding 2004, decreased from 75.8% in 1995 to 74.11% in 2009 to 50.7% in 2014 and to 39.93% in 2019.¹⁴
- This reflects the increasing gap between the political system and the society in terms of confidence in the results of the elections especially that the Algerian opposition forces (particularly Islamic forces) estimate election turnout in 2014 at no more than 20%.¹⁵



Abdelmadjid Tebboune

c. Family Disintegration Resulting From the Increase in Divorce Rates in the Algerian Society: Official statistics show that 20% of marriages end in divorce, and that divorce to marriage rate has increased dramatically since 2014, reaching more than 68 thousand divorce cases annually.¹⁶ This could be caused by the economic and political pressure, and the accelerating spread of social media networks with which the Algerian society have failed to cope, thus leading to social unrest with divorce as its most prominent manifestation. Ultimately, this creates social turmoil, which indirectly nourishes the political turmoil.

3. Political Stability Index in Algeria

The rate of political stability is an important indicator of the outcome of the interaction between all political, social and economic dimensions. It is measured based on 12 sub-indicators (security threats, factionalized elites, group grievance, economic decline, uneven economic development, human flight and brain drain, state legitimacy, public services, human rights and rule of law, demographic pressures, refugees and displaced persons and external interventions).¹⁷ A scale is used ranging from +2.5 (strong) to –2.5 (weak).

The following table indicates a continuous but slow improvement in the rate of political stability in Algeria throughout 2000–2018:¹⁸

Table 4: Algeria Political Stability Index

Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2018
Political stability index	–1.43	–0.92	–1.26	–1.09	–0.79

This result is consistent with the democracy and militarization indices in Algeria, which makes the mega-trend indicates that there is a continuous improvement of internal indicators, however, there is a need to restrict the impact of regional and international environments (as we shall see later in this study).

4. Economic Income Indicators

While acknowledging the importance of GDP rates (whether nominal or purchasing power parity) as well as individual income rates and growth rates, and in order to remain consistent with the topic of this study, we will address three important dimensions in this context. These are: the gap between population



growth and economic growth, the fairness of income distribution (GINI index), and liberating the Algerian economy from the control of the energy sector.

a. The Gap Between Population Growth and Individual Income

The Algerian Ministry of Health estimates the fertility rate in Algeria at 3.5 births per woman, which is one of the highest fertility rates worldwide. Accordingly, the Algerian population will reach 50–51 million in 2030, and more than 72 million in 2050.¹⁹ However, it is noticed that population growth rate in Algeria has declined throughout 1985–2000, but has been increasing since 2000, with an increase of more than one million persons annually.²⁰

If we link this increase to the rates of economic growth, we find that the economic growth in Algeria throughout 2010–2019 is 2.97%, with the lowest rate of growth seen in 2017 at 1.7%,²¹ while population growth rate is 1.76%.²² Compared to individual income rate we find:²³ the average per capita income (based on purchasing power parity) was \$5,493 in 2015, and it decreased to \$3,948 in 2019, marking a 19.13% decrease, which is a continuation of the fluctuation in the rate since 1993.²⁴ This might explain reaching an overall unemployment rate estimated at about 11%; yet, it is among the youths who constitute the broadest base in the Algerian population pyramid reaching 29%.²⁵

b. Income Inequality

The income inequality scale (GINI index) indicates an increase in poor distribution of income, although Algeria remains among the moderate countries in terms of class differences, and almost the best among the Arab countries regarding income distribution fairness. However, recently there was an increase in income inequality rates since 2011 as follows: (what is acquired by the 10% segment with highest income among the population):²⁶

Table 5: Income Inequality in Algeria

Year	GINI index
2011	27.60
2018	32.20
2020	35.3

This means that the rate of acquisition by the “upper-upper class” has increased during nine years by about 7.7% of total income. This might be related to the administrative and political corruption indicator, which, despite fluctuation, puts Algeria among the countries with high corruption levels as shown in the following table:²⁷

Table 6: Transparency Index in Algeria

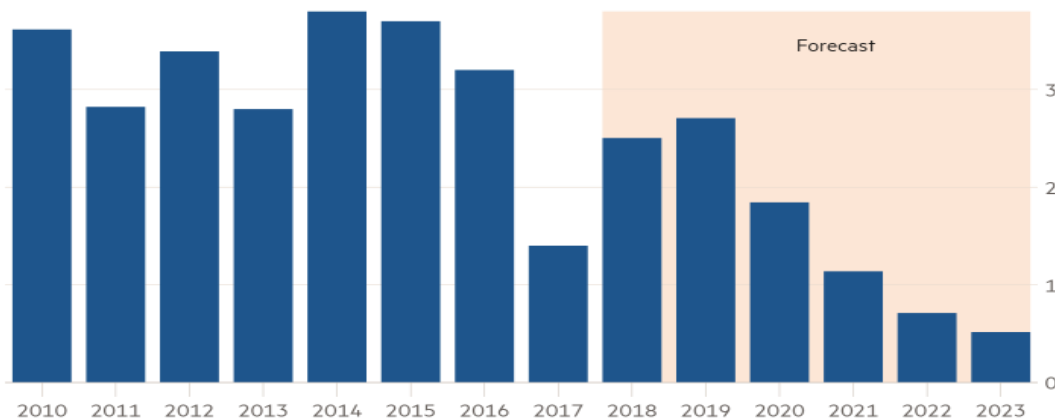
Year	Transparency index
2015	36
2016	34
2017	33
2018	35
2019	35

c. The Dependency of the Algerian Economy on the Energy Sector

95% of Algeria’s hard currency revenues depend on its exports, which constitute about 40% of the state budget. However, the collapse of oil and gas prices after 2014 led to the decline of Algerian financial reserves from \$193.6 billion in 2014 to about \$55.2 billion in mid-2020, a 72.5% decline.²⁸ It also led to a budget deficit of 9% of GDP at the end of 2018. The scene becomes further complicated if we add the depletion levels in some wells, the increased levels of domestic energy consumption, and the decline in foreign investment in this sector due to the security concerns of foreign companies (although 2/3 Algeria has not been excavated yet), especially after the bloody attack in 2013 on some gas installations near the Libyan border. High taxes were also imposed on foreign companies, while bureaucracy further complicates obtaining the authorities’ approval for investment. All of these lead the expectations that economic growth rate would continue to decline, which has already started in 2015 (the rate was about 3.5%), and in 2023, it is expected to reach 0.5%,²⁹ as shown in the following graph:



Economic Growth Rates in Algeria 2010–2023³⁰



All the above led to a contraction of economic activity by 6.5% in 2018, and 7.7% in Q1 2019, while the same period witnessed a slight increase in the growth of non-energy sectors at 3.4% and 3.9% respectively, thus making a slight compensation for the decline in this sector. Remarkably, Algeria is not burdened by debt with its external debt reaching only 2% of GDP, while the public debt stands at less than 20% of GDP.³¹

Second: The External Environment

1. Regional Environment

Algeria is surrounded by six countries (seven if we consider the “Sahrawi Republic”) with which it shares a land border of 6,393 km, in addition to 1,622 km sea border on the Mediterranean. This means a great security burden exists, which is exacerbated by the fact that most neighboring countries are not politically stable, constituting a major concern for the Algerian decision-maker regarding how to curb the impact of instability in neighboring countries on the internal situation in Algeria. Notably, the infiltrations across these long borders, together with the vast area of Algeria, especially the Sahara (which exceeds 1.990 million km²), indicate the gravity of the situation where protecting the Libyan borders only could reach \$500 million annually.³² The security threats due to these very long borders are:

- a. The infiltration of armed elements from the neighboring countries referred to above, whether African or Arab organizations.
- b. Migrants crossing towards Europe.
- c. The movement of smugglers to and from Algeria.
- d. Prospects for influx of refugees from neighboring countries in the event of widening turmoil in any of them.

Discussions in Algeria over the proposal to amend the Algerian Constitution (Articles 29 and 95) to allow the Algerian army to carry out missions “abroad” seem to indicate a kind of “proactive defense” to help neighboring countries to stabilize. The proposed text of the amendment states that “Within the framework of the United Nations, the African Union, and the Arab League, and in full compliance with its principles and objectives, Algeria can participate in peacekeeping operations abroad” (amendment to Article 29). The proposal also states that “(The President of the Republic) decides to send army units abroad, after the parliament approval by a two-thirds majority” (amendment to Article 95).³³



It is known that the Algerian army had actively participated in the 1973 war against Israel (i.e., beyond its national borders), and the statements of army leaders and Algeria’s army magazine indicate that the army was satisfied with the step or even proposed it.³⁴ Referring in the amendment text to “the United Nations, the African Union and the Arab League” could be an attempt to ensure legal and international legitimacy for external interference, while the approval of the parliament’s two-thirds majority could be meant to guarantee internal legitimacy of any Algerian military intervention in the future.

The conduct of Algerian diplomacy toward regional turmoil, especially in Libya, reflects a degree of incompatibility between Algerian political movements. Some Algerian movements have concerns about the progress of al-Wefaq government (with Islamic orientations in its general trends and allies, which



prompted Algeria to conduct covert military operations inside Libyan territory against groups with Islamic extremist tendencies³⁵), and the possible repercussions on the Algerian interior in the medium term. Other movements have fears concerning General Haftar's connections, his links with France and his connections to some extent with the US besides Egypt and some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. A third movement believes that the situation in Libya might come to an end with its division on regional or ethnic basis, which may lead to the transmission of the fragmentation model to the whole Arab Maghreb.



To address this regional condition bordering Algeria, the Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune participated, in his first foreign trip, in the Berlin International Conference in January 2020. Shortly after that, he agreed with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to implement the decisions of the conference. Tebboune then delivered a significant statement saying that Tripoli (which General Haftar attacked) was a “red line,” thus prompting pro-Haftar media outlets to launch media campaigns against Algeria. This was the same position Algeria faced after its officials met with officials from Haftar's government, but this time by the pro-al-Wefaq government media outlets.³⁶ This indicates that the congruence between Algerian politics and both parties to the Libyan conflict is not significant.



2. International Environment

The direct and indirect international intervention in the Libyan crisis (Turkey, Russia, Egypt and some GCC countries, in addition to the French, Italian and US interference, besides the influx of mercenaries from southern Libya or from far regions) has been a source of grave concern in the Algerian political decision-making circles, especially that the UN attempts, regional bodies' mediation or international individual efforts do not indicate an imminent settlement of the Libyan crisis. In addition, the regional and international competition over natural gas resources in the Mediterranean has its own repercussions, which might extend to all countries of the region. This could manifest in conflict over territorial waters boundaries or over the high seas borders, and it includes most of the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean.

The intertwining of Algerian interests and the interests of international parties involved in Libya (France, Russia and Turkey) makes the Algerian diplomatic movement more complicated. Apparently, Algeria is more inclined to a peaceful settlement as evident in its participation in international conferences as well as in hosting foreign ministers of countries neighboring Libya.³⁷ This position was reiterated at the meetings of the current Algerian president in February 2020 with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and with the Tunisian President Kais Saied.³⁸



**Abdelmadjid Tebboune and
Abdel Fattah el-Sisi**

Interaction Between Regional and International Environments

The Algerian government seems a little closer to the Libyan al-Wefaq government due to its control over the border areas with Algeria, and to the presence of some Algerian influence among the tribes of the western region in Libya,³⁹ besides international legitimacy enjoyed by al-Wefaq government. However, it is wary (especially at the level of Algerian security forces and some elites) of this Libyan government's relations with the Muslim Brothers (MB) movement, and of al-Wefaq government's alliances with Turkey, whose ties with NATO are a sensitive issue for Algeria. The latter remains keen on maintaining

relations with Ankara due to high percentage of Turkish investments in the country. In return, Haftar's international relations with France and Russia in particular, and his regional relations with Egypt and the UAE, make dealing with these disparate forces extremely difficult for Algerian diplomacy due to the non-zero game between Algeria and the forces involved in Libya. Here, it suffices to recall the US-Emirati-Egyptian objection to the appointment of an Algerian UN envoy to Libya, who is the former Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra, after the resignation of the Lebanese UN envoy Ghassan Salameh in March 2020, not to mention General Haftar's reservation about this nomination demanding, as expressed by his spokesman, that the UN candidate must "not be from countries neighboring Libya."⁴⁰



Ramtane Lamamra

Future Prospects

The last stage of Bouteflika's presidency manifests the Algerian confusion in dealing with the Libyan crisis as evident in the following indicators:

1. The collapse of oil prices and its impact on the internal and external conditions.
2. Growing corruption and political paralysis.
3. The conflict within the authority wings: between the revolution generation and the new generation, between military leaders, especially between the army and intelligence leadership, and between the president's entourage (specifically his brother Said) and its opponents. This has caused severe political congestion leading eventually to Bouteflika's resignation and to striking at "some" hotbeds of corruption.
4. The explosion of popular unrest against the general situation.
5. The occurrence of some attacks from political groups, which prompted the army to shift its intensified presence from the west (with Morocco due to historical grudges and the Sahara issue stuck for some time between the two countries) to the Libyan and southern borders.

6. The impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on the Algerian political scene as manifested in the difficulty to return to the major demonstrations, which makes the authority more able to catch its breath.
7. The Algerian concern about the expansion of foreign intervention in Libya, especially as Algeria has been against the position of the Arab League since 2011, which allowed foreign intervention in Libya and the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi's regime. This position was reaffirmed by the current Algerian president in his speech in Berlin in January 2020, and some⁴¹ even fear the repercussions of wide confrontations between Egypt and Turkey on Libyan soil, which widens the scope of Algerian security concerns.



Table 7: Algerian Interests and the Non-zero Game⁴²

Country	Importance for Algeria	Position toward parties of the Libyan Conflict
Russia	First weapon provider + traditional relations between the two sides	backs Khalifa Haftar
Turkey	Friendship and Cooperation Agreement in 2006 + \$3.5 billion investments in Algeria + trade exchange amounting to \$3.1 billion	supports al-Wefaq government
France	Third in exports and second in imports + traditional ties (immigrants, language, etc.)	supports Haftar
UAE	30 thousand Algerians in the UAE working in various sectors + \$10 billion investments + agreement to curb religious movements	supports Haftar
US	Annual trade of \$5.5 billion during 2013–2020 + US investment in the oil sector besides scientific and technical cooperation agreements + security coordination against terrorist organizations	fluctuating and unclear position
Egypt	Agreement to restrict religious movements	Supports Haftar

Table 7 shows that Algeria has important and strategic relations with most of the powers involved in the Libyan issue. Hence, Algerian diplomacy finds it difficult to stand with one side against another, given the negative effects this bias would have on its relations with the forces supporting the opposite Libyan side. Algeria's relations with al-Wefaq would affect its interests with Russia and France, whereas the relations with Haftar would affect its relations with Turkey and the US (to a certain extent).



General Haftar

Conclusion

It seems that the Algerian internal conditions (economic, political and social), as we explained in the indicators of these sectors, lead to thinking in two directions: the first is in-field involvement in the Libyan crisis to absorb internal congestion, which may result in great risks internally and externally. The second is sticking to the diplomatic settlement of the Libyan crisis, by playing the role of facilitator of international, regional and local meetings on Libya, hoping to reach a solution and ensure the return of stability to the country.

Based on available data, and given the Algerian interests intertwined with the contradicting international parties involved in the Libyan crisis, the second track seems to be more appropriate and less expensive than the first, especially if the economic situation continues to decline. The Algerian ability to change the structure of its economy to shift towards non-energy resources for its economic income appears to be unattainable in the short term (five years), which makes the second alternative more rational.

However, the international competition, turmoil in Libya and the persistence of tension to the south of Algeria, especially in Mali and Niger, might force the Algerian government to pursue the worst choice, as indicated in the above analysis of army interference abroad. Also, the persistence of tension, even without Algerian field intervention, keeps the Algerian decision in the hands of such institutions as the military and other security forces, and justifies the military spending. For Algeria ranks first in the African continent in this respect, despite

the decline in its oil revenues and despite the current government's decision to reduce its spending by 9%.

On the internal side, it seems that Algeria is heading very slowly toward political stability, which might see some tensions yet without affecting the general trend we have explained in our study.

The **future of the popular movement**, which started in February 2019 is governed by a number of variables that define the possible, probable and preferred scenarios. These variables are:

1. Current variables: The outbreak of coronavirus led to stopping gatherings and demonstrations, at the request of the official authorities and health bodies in the country, a year after the demonstrations have started (Feb 2019–Feb 2020). With the increasing severity of casualties, the conviction among the popular movement grew that preventing gatherings is not a political “ploy” to curb the movement but rather an objective fact.

Accordingly, the state's success in confronting the epidemic might enhance its balance and limit the movement to some extent. However, its failure might add a new congestion to the political and socio-economic congestions displayed above, which opens the way for the movement to return, but in a less systematic fashion, although there might be a rift within the movement between those who may “risk” organizing protests, and those whose concerns regarding the epidemic prevent them from participating.



2. The confrontations between the authority and the forces of the movement in 2019 were generally peaceful. The compliance of the regime with a number of demands, most notably the exclusion of Bouteflika and the imprisonment of some symbols of corruption (despite the arrest of some activists of the movement and some leaders for different periods), has enabled the authority to strengthen political stability, which it completely failed to achieve during the Black Decade.
3. There are weaknesses in the structure of the movement, which help the system to hold together facing the demands:
 - a. The absence of a central leadership or a pivotal force, which determines the movement's reaction toward the regime's policies internally and externally.
 - b. The escalation of regional concerns (especially the Libyan crisis) might push the forces of the movement to wait for the outcome of the Libyan developments. This trend might deepen in the event of the outbreak of international wars in Libya, or the escalation of proxy wars.
 - c. The movements' field practices have shown some cracks demonstrated in the subcultures dilemma mentioned in the previous pages.

Based on the foregoing, the trend of “relative” stability in Algeria is the most likely, and political forces would crystallize within the next 3–5 years that would be more responsive to the local, regional and international landscape. However, they will maintain their connections with their Algerian roots.

As for its future Arab relations, the composition of the existing Algerian government (the government of Abdelaziz Djerad), the orientations of its president as reflected in his speeches and his plan submitted to the Algerian parliament,⁴³ along with the internal economic conditions, would make Algeria less involved in Arab affairs, especially in the Palestine issue. Also, the Algerian diplomacy and the behavior of its military and civil institutions would show an increasingly pragmatic behaviour, especially with the paralysis of the Arab League and the rigidity of the role of the Arab Maghreb Union.



Endnotes

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