

AN ASSESSMENT of DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION in the ARAB WORLD: THE CASE of ALGERIA

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ABSTRACT:

This paper aims at reviewing the theoretical and empirical literature related to the evolution of democracy in the Arab world with specific focus on Algerian democratic transition in the last two decades. The paper attempts to find answers to a number of questions related to the nature and directions of how Algeria has been ruled since independence and to show how democracy is interpreted and perceived by the rulers and people. In order to understand the democratic development and transition of Arab states including Algeria, light will be shed on the modern theory of democracy from multiple perspectives. In this case the paper is descriptive in nature. This approach is often pursued by researchers assessing political phenomena (Rose, 2001; Talbi and Spencer, 2000). It has long been debated that the root causes of a “democratic deficit” in Arab societies are linked to cultural issues, lags in economic development and to colonial history and international factors that continue to play a significant role in shaping the political landscape in the region. However, this paper assumes that, taking Algerian case as an example the control of one-party rule or one-individual rule is taking priority over democratic choice. There is evidence that there is no real circulation of power, as it is the case in modern democratic systems. Continuing violence and bloody military coups that accompanied the evolution of democratic transition supports this conclusion. In Algeria, the president is the person who receives the blessing of the military and western support. This is evident in the exclusion of rivals for the presidency under false pretenses.

Keywords: Democracy • Algeria • transition • Arab world • conflict.

ARAP DÜNYASINDA DEMOKRATİK GEÇİŞ SÜRECİNİN BİR DEĞERLENDİRMESİ: CEZAYİR ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZET:

Bu çalışma, geçtiğimiz yirmi yıllık dönem içerisinde Cezayir’de yaşanan demokrasiye geçiş sürecinden yola çıkılarak Arap dünyasında demokrasi evrimi ile ilgili kuramsal ve deneysel literatürün incelenmesi amacıyla yapılmıştır. Cezayir de dahil olmak üzere Arap devletlerinin demokratik gelişimi ve geçiş sürecini tam olarak kavrayabilmek için çağdaş demokrasi kuramına çeşitli bakış açılarından yaklaşılması ve ışık tutulması yerinde bir yaklaşım olacaktır. Arap toplumlarında “demokrasi eksikliği”nin altında yatan nedenler uzun zamandan beri tartışıla gelmekte olup bu eksikliği kültür, ekonomik kalkınmanın önündeki engeller ve sömürge tarihinin yanı sıra bölgedeki siyasi ortamın şekillenmesinde önemli rol oynamaya devam eden uluslararası etkenlere bağlayan

macro-yapısal açıklama arayışları devam etmektedir. Bununla birlikte çalışmamızda; Cezayir örneğinde olduğu gibi tek parti veya tek kişi iktidarının demokratik seçeneğe göre öncelik kazandığı savunulmaktadır. Demokratik geçiş sürecinde bir türlü bitmeyen şiddet, terör ve kanlı askeri darbelere sahne olan Cezayir’de güç dengelerinin gerçek anlamda sağlanamaması da bu savı desteklemektedir. Cezayir’de halen başkanlık koltuğunda ordunun ve batının desteğini alan bir figür oturmaktadır. Başkanlık seçimlerinde rakiplerin hilelerle bertaraf edilmesi de bunun açık kanıtıdır

Anahtar sözcükler: Demokrasi • Cezayir • geçiş süreci • Arap dünyası • çatışma

Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that the advent of democracy in Algeria was a direct reaction to the events of October 1988 when a partial amendment to the constitution was approved to include the adoption of political pluralism. However the stage of Algerian transmission from one-party rule to multi party system witnessed serious events that threatened the whole democratization process. Reformists and opponents of political and economic reforms were major obstacles to the democratization process .The various parties had conflict of interests and these conflicts worsened the situation and gave politicians the pretext to have a one-party rule. The military welcomed such trends as they saw them serving their interests too. It should also be stated that the period of 1989-1991 was the beginning of the democratic breakthrough when Hamroush was appointed as Chairman of the Government in September 1989, who in turn tried to continue the economic reforms, control the National Liberation Front and to turn it into a tool to strengthen his power. However, Hamroush helped in the coup on democracy in 1992 when the Islamic Salvation Front won 188 seats out of 220 in the legislative elections on 26 September 1991.

This was followed by a step taken by the army which seized the authority ,removed the President Chadli and deleted the election results claiming that the Islamic Salvation Front was seeking to seize power and that gave the excuse to Putschists to use all means of oppression. Indeed some researchers believe that the political crisis between the opposition parties and political system was non-permanent conflict and could be easily terminated

because many forces had the ownership of political violent expression means with the absence of intention to absorb the political opposition in the system.

It should also be stated that Algeria has known four constitutions since independence imposed up down without the involvement of the forces of society actors even in the era of pluralism in 1989. The Constitution of 1989 was supervised and edited by some reformists of the National Liberation Front (Mawloud Hamroush). In 1996 the Constitution was amended by legal professionals while maintaining the conditions of presidential power, which limits its political legitimacy or limits the possibility of national consensus achievement on the reference document. The Constitution of 1989 opened the door of political pluralism whereas the Constitution of 1996 came to close the legal loopholes found in its predecessor and to expand presidential powers.

The Algerian political system is fraught with ambiguities and land mines. What the army views as the best examples of democracy others regard as oppressions suffocating democracy. In this case it is often said that all types of paradoxical issues surround the political scene in Algeria. It is also known that like many Arabs the Algerian people stand to support their regime despite violations committed against democracy. Such a stance may be attributed to political, social, cultural, psychological or historical reasons. This paper is only a modest effort that aims to highlight some of the aspects of political mechanism in certain Arab countries in general and Algeria in particular.

The current paper is descriptive and qualitative in nature as it sheds light on historical developments in the political, economic and legal fields in Algeria. This descriptive approach allows us to answer the paper's major questions.

An Assessment of Democratic Transition in the Arab World

A Theoretical Detour through Democratization Literature

In the last two decades, democracy as a form of government has drawn global appeal both at the popular and elite levels. The comparative literature closely followed and analyzed the collapse and dismembering of authoritarian regimes in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere. Indeed, the highly unexpected transition to "democratic" politics in

ex-communist countries clearly illustrates the tenacity of the democratic movement and shifting towards more competitive politics.

However, this universal spread of democracy has not made a significant impact on the political realities of the Middle East and North Africa. According to major freedom rating indexes, few Arab countries have made moderate steps towards political liberalization and much of the region lingers in decades of bureaucratic rule. Scholars agree that the Arab region lags other world regions in terms of voice and accountability and it ranks among the lowest with regard to individual freedom and respect for human rights (Anderson, 1999; Arab Human Development Report, 2003).

The enduring status quo and absence of democratic politics, in addition to the two Gulf Wars and events of September 11, 2001 energized the debate over the relevance of the “Clash of Civilizations” theory. Whereas most studies limited their analysis to reductionist and socio-cultural explanations (Huntington, 1993) and Lewis, (2003), recent research has turned to the study of public opinion in order to better map the values and attitudes of Arab citizens (Tessler & Gao, 2005; Jamal & Tessler, 2008). Democracy has become the norm rather than the exception in political systems across the globe; variations in how democracy is practiced can be expected. Conceptualizations of democracy range from minimalist views that emphasize the holding of fair and open elections to more expanded views that deal with issues such as individual freedom and liberty and with social and economic equality (Bellin, 2004).

Many studies focus on comparative democratization experiences by exploring the gap that develops between the norms of democracy and regime performance in practice (Lagos, 2005; Rose, 2001). For instance, Daltin (2004) and Norris (2004) investigated the underlying factors that contribute to the lack of political trust and increasing levels of skepticism in the “disaffected democracies” of the West and whether such trends are associated with an “erosion in political support” Similarly, Inglehart (2004) contends that value change and “cognitive mobilization” affect what people expect from democracy. Democracy can therefore be seen as a continuum of political governance that varies between ideals and practice. This view raises the question of congruence between the

behavioral and attitudinal dimensions of democracy. Diamond and Morlion (2005) qualify a “high-quality” democracy based on the high degree of individual freedom and political equality it provides, popular “check” on the decision-making and policy making processes, as well as an institutional framework that respects the rule of law. In practice, this definition gives citizens “the freedom to oppose, guaranteed by the procedural political freedoms of speech, assembly and organization as well as the right to vote and run for office” (Muller, et al. 1987: 23). Dalton et al. (2007) highlight this point by saying that: “now that we can finally systematically study public opinion in the developing world, the democratic potential among the citizenry is greater than previously presumed” (Dalton et al. , 2007, p.153). This view is emphasized by Kornberg and Clarke 1992 as they note : “Citizens beliefs, attitudes and opinions lie at the heart of democratic theory and practice” (1992, p. 61). This support seems to transcend cultures, religions and economic status, making democracy the most desired political order at least by name (Tessler & Gao, 2005; Mcallister, 2008).

A number of scholars have noted the importance of culture in shaping individual attitudes toward the system in general. For instance, Anderson and Tverdova (2003) contend that “culture provides a lens for how people view the world, motives for human behavior, criteria for evaluating actions, and, more generally, orientations to action, all of which are learned during cultural socialization” (2003, p. 93). Noting the relationship between support and political culture, Kornberg and Clarke (1992), suggest that “Political support and political culture are inextricably linked” (1992, p. 34).

The role of authoritarian past has also been related to political culture as a factor in shaping popular support for the newly established democratic regime. In a study on mass and elite conceptions of democracy in Post-Soviet societies, Miller al. (1997) note that such authoritarian past may prevent citizens from forming a “coherent belief system that informs their political attitudes”. According to the authors “authoritarian systems did not provide sufficient political information or levels of mass elite discourse for average citizens to form stable and meaningful political opinions”. This, in turn, would lead to incoherent political attitudes and a “citizenry that cannot provide a stable foundation for the development of democracy” (Miller, et al., 1997, p. 160).

Empirical evidence has shown that such an indicator may hinder democratic consolidation because of the challenges that face a newly democratic regime (Lagos, 2005). Individuals who lived for decades under authoritarian rule tend to have a perceived sense of “nostalgia” towards past regimes as they feel dissatisfied with policy outputs of the new regime. For instance, the economic difficulties or unsatisfactory performance of political authorities due to corruption and inefficiency may revive popular support for previous authoritarian regimes which are perceived as less corrupt and more securing of citizen’s prosperity. The widespread democratic rule in countries that had no history with democracy has also been linked to theories of modernization and demonstration. For instance, modernization theory stipulates that economic and social development would lead to higher levels of political awareness and citizen involvement in the social and political affairs. This, in turn, will stimulate the independent thinking among citizens and promote calls for further political liberalization.

Bratton (2002) notes that African support for democracy is shallow because early socialization with democracy has not taken place and therefore African citizens tend to associate democracy with instrumental rather than intrinsic dimensions of support. Using data drawn from more than fifty countries, Huang et al. (2008) investigated the basis of democratic legitimacy and attributed political support to three main theories: “modernization and post-modernization”, “institutionalism” (i.e. presidential or parliamentary) and “rationality” (2008,p. 50). On the other hand, Sarsfield and Echegary (2005) advanced three reasons why people support democracy: “utility rationality” which reflects a cost benefit assessment of outcomes of democracy, “instrumental rationality” where people evaluate the degree of democracy effectiveness in reaching certain goals, and “axiological rationality” which translates an unwavering regime support regardless of the outcomes or results achieved (2005, p.157).

On the other hand, Samuels(2003), stresses that “familiarity with democratic norms is not a necessary condition of democratic support” (2003, p. 108). He further suggests that the historic lack of democracy in a particular setting does not prevent the attainment of democracy; rather it can “provide a fresh impetus for its popularity” (2003, p.107). Claims

made by modernization theorists regarding the effects of economic development on support for democracy have also been countered by the fact that several non-wealthy nations in Africa and Asia have made a transition to democracy without having the “required” levels of economic development and modernization. This has also been the case of many Arab oil exporters which have accumulated considerable levels of wealth at the individual and national level but failed to democratize (Hinnebusch, 2006).

Given the fact that democratization is a long and unpredictable path, deeply rooted values among ordinary citizens are essential ingredients for democracy to be attained and sustained. In other words, Arab political culture is expected to emphasize the need to “accept or even welcome political and ideological pluralism” which is “hospitable to independent judgment, dissent, and political bargaining” (Handeman & Tessler, 1999, p. 273). Similarly, a renowned scholar on Middle East politics notes that democracy can be “created” and “sustained” if three conditions are present including a “political culture with at least some regard for openness, pluralism, tolerance, and compromise is also important” (Brumberg, 1991, p.60).

Shin (1995) raises the need for a commitment to democracy not only at the attitudinal level but also at the behavioral level for democratization to take place. This view agrees with a study by Tessler and Jamal (2008) which places emphasis on behavioral as opposed to abstract expressions of support for democracy. For instance, in a comprehensive public opinion study on democratic values in the Muslim world which included a significant number of Arab countries, Fattah (2006), noted the existence of diverging attitudes between support for “democratic norms” and support for “democratic institutions” among Muslim respondents. The author concluded that survey respondents tend to express support for democratic values whereas their commitment to democratic institutions and political tolerance are less pertinent.

Arab societies are characterized by deeply-rooted cultural values and norms that stem from religious principles such as the role of tradition and hierarchical authority on individual behavior (Al- Makawi 1998). Arab citizens have long socialized with autocratic rule, which in many cases draws its legitimacy from historic as well as religious legacies,

leading to submissive behavior and lower levels of contestation. On the other hand, government performance particularly at the social and economic levels is hypothesized to affect support among ordinary Arab citizens whose reliance on government services and patronage impede their involvement in political participation and activism (Jamal et al.2008).This may explain why the Arab political system continuous to rely on one-party rule and that there is no serious resistance to this form of ruling power. Economic and social as well as cultural sufferings may have also exasperated the situation in this context.

The scholarship on Arab politics has long debated the root-causes of democratic gap in this region, with explanations varying between religious and cultural factors, and economic and developmental ones (Hoffmnn, 2004; Bellin, 2004; Badawi and Makdissi, 2007). Other studies have noted the role of colonial history and international actors that continue to play a significant role in shaping the political landscape of Arab countries (Harik, 1994; Hinnbusch, 2006). By the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, democracy had become the preferred system of governance at least by name. According to Freedom House (2007), between 1976 and 2006, the percentage of countries that are rated “Free” increased from 26 percent to 47 percent (Freedom in the World, 2007, p. 21). However, Talbi and Spencer (2000) note that democracy is spreading across the globe “even in Serbia and China, everywhere except the Arab world” (2000, p. 58).

Whereas democratization is a “fluid” and “open ended” process (Whitehead, 2002), there is an agreement among scholars about the importance of certain prerequisites that make transition to democracy more achievable. For instance, a country's political legacy, class structure, culture, the state of the economy and international environment are cited among the factors that may help attain and sustain democracy (Lipset, 1959; Linz and Stepan, 1996; Moore, 1993). At the same time, many countries transitioned to democracy regardless of their level of economic development, their previous experience with democracy, or the extent of their social capital networks.

In a wider investigation, it can be claimed that internal, regional and global developments have played a significant role in the promotion of democratic life in the Arab world. In spite of that, the democratic process has passed a reasonable way in several Arab

countries recently; it has had many difficulties and obstacles that negatively affected its function since the beginning of its development. These difficulties include the lack of the necessary conditions for democratic development, such as legal and institutional guarantees for the protection of this process, and the lack of democratic values such as tolerance, flexibility and compromise. The political weight of the Islamic currents has also played an important role in threatening the ruling elites in many Arab countries, resulting in taking steps and enacting laws limiting freedom and democracy in many of these States.

It should be noted that it is difficult to release generalizations on the evolution of the democratic process in Arab countries because of the different circumstances and motives that distinguish each case from the other. But despite these differences, it can be said that most Arab states are linked with similar factors paid to democratization. These include economic and social problems due to the increase of population and urbanization, and thus the public claim of political pluralism and democratization. The emergence of Islamic movements - unevenly – have forced the political system in many Arab countries to adopt democratic transition, especially after the failure of many of these countries to provide the basic needs of the population. These groups, therefore, took advantage of the inability of the State to provide social assistance to attract the largest number of people to the outskirts.

The case of disintegration and weaknesses of the Arab rank, particularly after the Gulf crisis which posed the lack of credibility of many Arab political systems toward unity and cohesion, formed other factors in the transformation of many Arab countries toward democracy. The outside pressure, which represents the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the new world order led by the United States of America imposed a democratic transformation on the Arab countries adding another factor in this political dimension. In addition, the effective role played by the communications revolution in raising awareness among the public to adopt democratic transition formed a further reason for democratization in the Arab system (Al- Makawi, 1998, p. 20). The following section will discuss the democratic transformation in Algeria.

The Dynamics and Impasses of Democratic Transformation in Algeria

A historical overview

Algeria gained its independence from French colonialism in 1962 after a bloody war that lasted for more than a hundred years, resulting in hundreds of thousands of victims and left in the national Algerian memory bloody scenes of the political life. As a result of the long war of independence led by the National Liberation Front, Algeria has been spared to respect the popular front. This high position of the National Liberation Front enabled it to impose a one-party rule policy in the post-independence era. However, this policy began to show features of administrative and financial corruption after two decades of achieving independence. Corruption manifestations represented in the large public debt which led to a significant economic situation of inflation, and thus prompted the mass protests at the end of the eighties of the twentieth century. As a result, signs of change in the ruling party's handling with components with the Algerian people began to appear. This party found in many internal and external factors some motives to move towards democracy.

The beginning of transition towards democracy in Algeria was a direct reaction to the events of October 1988 when a partial amendment to the Constitution was approved to include the adoption of political pluralism. The prime minister became accountable before the legislature (parliament) and not before the ruling party. After the referendum and the approval of constitution by the people, Algeria took a major step by declaring the Constitution of 1989, which passed the full transition towards pluralism and the right to establish associations of political nature for various forces. Efforts were exerted to separate the ruling party from the state and to neutralize the role of the military institution.

Depending upon the Constitution of 1989, the democratic process was launched since it ensured the recognition of a multi-party system, human rights, the principle of separation of powers, the composition of the Constitutional Council and the right of private property. From this point, the draft of political society began to take shape completely different to the principles that went by since independence. Some considered this constitutional transformation" an absolute abandonment of the Constitution of 1976" (LAMCHICHI, 1990: 291). Thus a real revolution against foundations of the state and civil

society of Algeria was formed (Bahloul, 1993). The constitution also confirmed the right of opinion and expression, information and press in Article 36. However, the constitution imposed conditions on parties such as: recognizing the fundamental principles of the state, maintaining national unity and sovereignty of the people, and the independence of the country (William, 1998).

It also reduced the power of the President of the country, especially the right to put forward legislation to Parliament. This became the prerogative of the prime minister while retaining the right of the President to appoint or dismiss the Prime Minister (Laşep, 1997). The new Constitution gave more independence than its predecessor which had considered the Parliament a defender of the socialist revolution in the legislation process. The 1989 Constitution established the right for the parliament to oversee the government and discuss its programs in article 82, with a condition that these discussions are to be limited by articles 126 and 127 which demand previous applying for conducting. This meant that autonomy remained in a relative case (Laşep, 1997, p. 104-116). According to the new Constitution, the judiciary became independent and the Constitutional Council was established to protect the constitution and to hold referendums and elections of the President of the Republic and members of the National Assembly.

Obstacles to democratic consolidation

As soon as the democratic transition first stage had started, it witnessed serious events that threatened the whole democratization process. The biggest obstacle was the conflict of interest between supporters of political and economic reforms as a starting point for democratization, and opponents of the reforms who would like to continue in maintaining the whole political and economic structure of Algeria since its independence in 1962. Some trends called for conditional reforms as a compromise between the two extremely teams and succeeded in pushing the process towards conditional democracy. (Avaz, 1990, p. 8-13). The inability of Algerian authorities to secure education, health services and housing for the citizens or to provide jobs to maintain social security and stability in life contributed to compounding the political problems. Further, the authority

cancelled all what had been received by citizens as free of charge, and removed subsidies on resources. These conditions led to an increased collapse of the economic situation.

Therefore, many Algerians were ready to engage in hostile acts against the political system, especially in light of the spread of corruption in some government sectors (Hüseyin, 1992, p. 81). These economic situations encouraged Algerian citizens to engage in protests which led to the events of the fifth of October 1988, forcing the Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid, publicly, to recognize the economic difficulties, the burden of external debt crisis and the relationship crisis between the political and social system (Avaz, 1990, p. 8-13). The rise of new social groups opposing order and debating the political decisions and accountability were not accepted in the Algerian political system, which only acknowledged mobilizing the public through conferences, marches and popular electoral campaigns, not for real democratic participation but as a tool to support the system's decisions and policies. (El- Hermasi, 1987, p. 98). The new groups demanded active participation in governance which meant explicit threat to the ruling groups who were not willing to accept the participation of new social forces (El- Esvet, 1986, p. 334).

That's why the Algerian political system's ability to cope with internal pressure, by force if necessary, was not parallel to its ability to cope with global changes and external pressures. Therefore, it is believed that the events of October 1988 had been set up as a response to the crisis of the political system and pressure made by the external environment. At the same time, those events were an impetus to force the system to head toward a democratic transformation. That took place after the contradictions level got beyond the capacity of the existing institutions to control, contain and manipulate in a democratic manner, particularly that political system did not have any democratic tradition earlier, which affected its credibility among the most broad categories and classes of the society (Derdur, 1996, p. 49-62).

Ebrahimi (2001) believes that acts of violence in Algeria from 1989 and which had been a turning point in the direction of establishing a democratic system was designed to save the current system and to transfer the power in favor of those who were close to the French influence. Hamroush who was appointed as the Chairman of the Government in

September 1989 tried to continue the economic reforms, control the National Liberation Front and turn it into a tool to strengthen his power. However, he helped in the coup on democracy in 1992 when the Islamic Salvation Front won 188 seats out of 220 in the legislative elections in 1991. This was followed by a step taken by the army which seized power, removed President Chadli and deleted the election's results claiming that the Islamic Salvation Front had sought to seize power and that gave the excuse to use all means of oppression (Ebrahimi, 2001, p. 160-161).

National identity crisis and its negative impacts on democratization

One of the reasons for the political violence that characterized the movement of the democratic transition in Algeria was the identity crisis extended since the French occupation of Algeria. The passage of 132 years of French colonialism led to the destruction of the Algerian Culture and National Heritage represented in Algerian books and manuscripts. The best example of this was the burning of the library of Shahid Amir Abdul Kadir and the issuance of laws that prevented the teaching of the Arabic language, regarding it as a second foreign language. The problem of Algeria also lies in the presence of two trends of intellectuals: nationalist's intellectuals who speak Arabic and Western intellectuals who speak French, leading to the obstruction of democratization (Ebrahimi, 2001, p. 163). Neither of them advocate the kind of democracy that suits Algeria.

The power crisis in Algeria emanated from the political elite who seized power since independence, motivated by liberation, unity and development. Therefore, the elite class narrowed freedoms and used the means of suppression, especially in light of the absence of strong political opposition, making the violence the dominant language between the opposition and the state. This method was clear in the cancellation of Parliamentary elections in 1991. Thus, the institutions of civil society remained incarcerated for the will of the State jurisdiction for a long period of time. The state occupied, monopolized and deprived the vital functions of the society. It also stripped people of their human rights including the right to participate in political life and the right to express their independent views (Berakat, 2001, p. 923) without working to create the healthy climate for the growth

of civil society and its institutions or to allow multi-diversity and different views which is the most prominent feature of democracy. (Hıdır, 1986, p. 2).

The transition to a multi-party system formed the essence of political reforms which have been expressed towards democracy in Algeria. Therefore, it is noted that Algerian citizens, from different directions, rushed to the establishment of political parties as soon as the new Constitution of 1989 was declared, by which the multi-party system was approved. The number of those parties was 60 following two and a half years of law activation. This indicates the thirst of the Algerian people for freedom and for partisan political participation. Since the elections were the first test of the democratic experience in Algeria since independence, some expected fraud of results by the ruling party which controlled the municipal councils and states (Busiyaha, 2006, p. 59; Behlül, 1993, p. 80-82).

Electoral paradoxes of Algerian democratization

However, municipal elections were held in 1990 quietly with a moderate participation of 25 parties. Among the parties participating was the National Liberation Front, the Islamic Salvation Front, the Social Democratic Party, the Assembly for Culture and Democracy, the Leading Socialist and other (Behlül, 1993, p. 125-127). Results revealed a very significant victory for the Islamic Salvation Front, followed by the National Liberation Front and independents (Busiyaha, 2006, p. 65). The victory of Salvation Front, which imposed itself as the biggest opposition party with a major control on cities, could be explained by its ability to attract young people who were very angry with the regime regarding economic and social issues. It also adopted a valuable mobilization of masses of people using simple speech aimed at breaking the fragile image of the regime, and using religious discourse and mosques in the electoral campaign. There were two options before the Algerian voters: either to respond to address the nature of religious emotions, or move toward secular side, which is alien to the Algerian people. The religious discourse of the Front focused on ethics and individual aspects of women and their position in society and calling for the elimination of bribery and corruption and punish the perpetrators (Gabi, 1998, p. 84-87).

As for the Legislative elections of 1991, the number of seats was 542 instead of 295. This angered the Algerian political party arena, especially after its ratification by Parliament which was still under the control of the National Liberation Front. The parties' threats of general strike led the President to respond positively and determined the number of seats by 430 according to a new law No. 91/18 that eliminated law No. 91 / 7. However, the Salvation Front implemented its threat of political strike but security forces, in turn, evacuated public spaces claiming that the strike was illegal (Busiyaha, 2006, p. 62).

The elections were held on time and produced another victory for Salvation Front which won 188 seats, followed by the Socialist Forces Front with 25 and the ruling Liberation Front with 16 seats, while Liberals won only 3 free seats. The 198 seats remained to compete on in the second round. The growing strength of the Salvation Front and the erosion of Liberation Front bore possibilities of crisis with many facets, especially that not all Algerians were in agreement with these results, not to mention the spread of the conflict, especially in areas with secular audience, who worked to prevent any authority of the Islamic Salvation Front. Verbal violence began to change into a physical conflict threatening the country by a civil war (Boudhenoun, 2000, p. 82). Those daily violent protests for supporters of the Salvation Front led to declare a state of emergency by the President. This threat was viewed by some as a declaration of war against the Algerian state. The Algerian authorities, in turn, arrested the Chairman and his Vice on charges of plotting against state security (El- Saydavi, 1999, p. 25-42). These developments also led to the resignation of the government, and its successor amended the previous laws and called for legislative elections in 1991.

The military institution played a negative role in the process of democratization in Algeria through early suspension of elections. By this act, it violated the Constitution of 1989 which absolutely ended to the political role of the Army, which had been granted by the Constitution of 1976 for the aim of constructing socialism. This led to fears from the military institution's attitudes toward the elections, leaving a general impression of either to allow a second round of legislative elections which means, for the army, that it was its end for the favor of the Salvation Front which would gain the power, or disrupt the electoral process, an action which does not but lacks the means to reach.

The second option tipped when the military institution sought the direction of disruption of elections. The democratic process was stalled until the election of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in April 2004, as many manifestations of the crisis experienced by Algeria since the suspension of elections in 1992 began to drop, and the role of the military became less pronounced. It seems that among the reasons for this was lack of maturity by the military institution to see the meaning of separation of powers. It also seems that the growing role of the military did not continue after the division among leaders on the unity of vision in dealing with crises, which lacked the military institution at the height of its power during its Algerian rule i. e., during the rule of the Supreme Council of States. Further, there was contradiction between the role of the military, its continuation and the need for democratization. Therefore, it became necessary to search for greater coherence between the traditional function of the military - professionalism and the institution of the presidency.

The external pressure had also prevented access to military power to obtain presidency in line with the trend those external forces were trying to impose which represented in changing regime into democratic governance. These external forces, therefore, had accepted the military as a coordinator for the democratic transformation, and refused its direct military rule. By this stage, it was believed that a minimum level of democratic principles began to appear since they were set forth in the Constitution of 1989 and 1996 . As for the legal development of the Constitution of 1996, it included some useful provisions for the democratic principles such as the broad powers of the President accompanied with some of the laws governing the Supreme Constitutional councils such as security, judicial and Islamic and linguistic, and how the composition of the Council of the Nation whose independence was restricted through confirming the appointment of third positions of its membership.

The nature of democratic transformations in Algeria shows political parties favors the changes that limit their roles. This was confirmed by their negativity toward the democratic texts of the provisions in the Constitution and their inability to exploit those texts (Elhadi, 1992, p.31).

The constitutional barriers in the road to democratization

The legal constitutional structure in Algeria is characterized by its overstated adoptions of special emergency laws and the expansion of its powers, which eliminate most of the principles of democracy recognized by the Constitution (Kayre et al., 2002, p. 136-138). With regard to civil society and trade union freedoms, they were ensured according to the text of the Constitution. However, it was noted that there were many obstacles practiced against union freedoms by some of the directions following the General Union of Algerian Workers, which was loyal to the authority. This meant that the trade union pluralism, which was a prerequisite for democratization, and the obligation of neutrality in the deal with various unions, was uncertain (News Newspaper, 1999, p. 5).

Generally speaking, the successive Algerian constitutions do not suffer from the problem of the texts as they suffer from the problem of applications, where the ruling power in Algeria does not accept challenge from any other authority, whether individual, partisan, popular, religious, ethnic or political. Therefore, Algeria has been witnessing four constitutions since its independence.

Some believe that the continuation of Bouteflika in his campaign, his courage in the face of the public and putting forward aware programs of Algerian situation realities led to the acceptance of the people of their president (Şayip, 2004, p. 69) by approval of 73% of voters who also voted for the withdrawn candidates such as Al-Ibrahimi who gained about 13% of the vote. The first work of the new president was an attempt to restore security to the country by the law of " Restoring National Harmony" of 1999 which was submitted to parliament and then to the people to be referendum and to replace the law of Mercy in 1995, which only provided a reduction in penalties for those sentenced militants (Vali , 2003, p. 197 -198).

Preparing for the parliamentary elections in 2002 began with greater transparency and professionalism in applying law. A supervisory committee, made up of political parties only, has been formed to oversee the elections. Then number of party that participated in the elections was 23 party where the government wrote off all repentant armed Islamic groups from the register of voters or candidates claiming that they lack consent of the

victims' families of terrorism (The Annual Report of the Programme of Governance in the Arab States, 2002) parties' platforms remained centered on peace, reconciliation, missing persons and prisoners of conscience (News Newspaper, 2002, p. 3). The elections were held at a time some active parties boycotted them such as the Socialist Forces Front, the Democratic Front, Al-Wfa'a Movement and the Assembly for Culture and Democracy. Results indicated an overwhelming victory for the Algerian National Liberation Front which managed to win 199 seats out of 389.

Presidential coalition, which called for re-election of Bouteflika for a second time, coordinating efforts in parliament and unifying forces in the 2007 parliamentary elections, appeared once again. The coalition consisted of the National Assembly, the Movement of Peaceful Society and the Corrective Movement (The Annual Report of the Programme of Governance in the Arab States, 2004). The campaign for the presidency launched under the split within the Liberation Front between supporters and opponents for the Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run again or to nominate Ali Benflis instead. The number of accepted candidates to enter the competition field was six candidates, including one woman, Louisa Hanoun.

The election was considered the third multi-candidate presidential election, which was conducted under international control represented by 124 observers from the European Union, the Arab League and the African Union. Bouteflika won a landslide victory despite warnings from other competitors to rigging the elections prior to the announcement of the results. Bouteflika won 83% percent of the vote, although this was not recognized by other competitors, raising tension in the Algerian street. the observers stressed the integrity of the election despite the existence of gaps that do not affect the credibility (The Annual Report of the Programme of Governance in the Arab States 2004).

As for the society institution after independence and according to Article 23 of the Constitution of 1962, the Algerian authorities prevented the formation of opposition political parties issuing a decree in this regard. this enabled the National Liberation Front the single party that practiced political work before the Constitution of February 1989. However, some parties worked in secret at that time calling for an end to one-party rule, the need for

parliamentary elections and enabling the Algerian people the empowerment decision making of its affairs. Active Algerian parties emerged before and during the first stage of democratic transition and affected it discourse included *National Liberation Front*, *The Socialist Forces Front* and *The Social Democratic Party*. However, the major opposition parties after the 1996 Constitution included The Assembly for Culture and Democracy, The Islamic Salvation Front, Movement of the Islamic Community, Party of the Islamic Renaissance Movement, Labor Party, and the National Democratic Assembly party.

Manifestations of the transition period in the Algerian democracy

One of the strange notes on Algerian democratic experience that democracy coup leaders justified the cancellation of election results claiming that "elections produced a current which threatened democracy", citing "internal and external pressures exerted on them to repeal the introduction of Algeria in a bloody conflict" according to Khalid Nizar, one of the pillars of the Algerian coup on democracy in his memoirs (Nizar, 1998, p. 218). Following the resignation of President, Algeria found itself living a constitutional vacuum that soon was filled by the army which announced the formation of the Supreme Council for the Security. That council formed a collective leadership of the State in the 16/1/1992 and was called the Supreme Council of State enjoying the constitutional powers of the Head of State (Rassi, 1997 p. 373-420). The first work of the Council was calling Mohamed Boudiaf to chair it and to resolve the Salvation Front, which won seats almost qualify to handle the Algerian presidency. On the same date, municipal councils controlled by the Islamic Salvation Front were also dissolved. Therefore, democracy began to break down, especially after suspending some parties and associations of religious, regional and linguistic nature from work and reconsideration of the Law on Public Information (Saadaoui 2000, Net). Given that the Council which started to run the country until the completion of the term of outgoing President was unconstitutional (Callies, 1999, p. 40-121).

As a tool to fill the apparent constitutional vacuum, and as a result of the lack of control over the course of events in Algeria by which the proliferation of armed violence, the National Consultative Council and the National Assembly were established to compensate for

the lost democracy. Those two institutions were also considered against the Algerian Constitution (Jabbari, 2000, p. 99-108). The terms of reference of the Advisory Council was limited for studying the regulatory issues and make recommendations in the form of consulting the Supreme Council of State before issuing presidential decrees legislative (Official Gazette, 1992, p. 28). Its decisions were, thus, not bound which prompted the expansion of its powers to lower level of Parliament and were subsequently called National Transitional Council (Rassi, 1997, p. 373 - 420).

However, those procedures did not succeed in restoring normal life for the course, forcing President Boudiaf to call for the formation of what was known as the national assembly, which included political parties, associations and citizens under the authority of the Supreme Council of State (The Evening Newspaper, 1993). The assembly goal was the re-cohesion between the leadership and people under the slogan "Algeria first and foremost" (Jabbari, 2000, p. 99-108). It also aimed at re-establishing public freedoms, political pluralism and openness on the market gradually (Bahloul, 1993, p. 80-98). some researchers Considered that this new attempt to return to the one-party system through indefinitely a new assembly name (Bin Salman, 1992, p. 13). As soon Boudiaf was assassinated, his projects failed, particularly the assembly.

Afterwards, Ali Kafi was installed as the President of the Council who believed that there could be no elections because of the Salvation Front's ability to threaten democracy and infiltration of power through the ballot and that regime must walk gradually in the democratization process (Jabbari, 2000, p. 99-108). This is why the new president to use excessive force in an attempt to recover the dignity of the state and eradicate the so-called terrorism. Therefore, special laws were re-issued after having been abolished in 1989 according which the judiciary had to work. This has led to increased severity of the crisis, prompting the political system for conducting meetings with various civil society institutions from 1992-1994 in order to create a minimum national consensus about the political development in the country and to make a constitutional amendment in preparation for a return to constitutional life represented in the presidential and legislative elections (Callies,

1999, p. 40-121) and Bumdumi, 1994, p. 3). The meetings, conducted in the absence of opposition, reached an agreement on the composition of the transitional council that aimed at administrating the country (Hannachi, 1994, p. 3). The results of these meetings have failed and the various political parties blamed the authority as being responsible on the failure (Tamlet, 1999, p. 127-128). Some viewed those meetings as attempts seeking to achieve lost legitimacy by providing some gradual political and social stability (Hadeif, 1995, p.182-183).

However, the Symposium Of National Reconciliation appointed Aliamin Zeroual as head of state who, in turn, worked on the composition of the Transitional National Assembly, keeping the opposition seats vacant (Rassi, 1997, p. 373-420) and called for presidential elections in 1995 which had been seen impossible by political forces for violence at its worst cases in the country under the terms put by the Islamic Salvation Front for the resumption of activity (Callies, 1999, p40-121). In such a climate, active parties met in Rome, where the meeting held known as "Rome Contract". This meeting concluded that the causes of the crisis in the country were due to cancellation of elections. Although the Liberation Front was one of the parties which participated in the meeting, the authority rejected its results and considered participators traitors while the armed opposition called for continuance of fighting until the establishment of the Islamic State (Callies, 1999 p.40-121). The authority attempted to negotiate with the opposition leaders in prison, but failed to achieve a compromise, which led to actual preparation for the presidentialelections.

Since the presidential elections process was the first of its kind in Algeria, some believe that it was a historic turning point. Others think they were an attempt to reassure western governments that the authority could resolve the crisis and achieve stability, and thus achieving the commitments of Algeria to the international financial institutions (Abdenmour, 1997, p 97). In the meantime, election law was put by the National Transition Council (Callies, 1999, p40-121), which stipulated that a candidate should receive 75 thousand signature distributed to all states with 1500 signing of each at least and which led to the inability of many to achieve the requirement to enter the competition, including the first Algerian woman. Only four members could achieve this condition (Gabi, 1998, p. 84-187). About 72.6 of Algerian voters participated in these elections in a calm atmosphere which was surprising

for political actors due to the threats of the Islamic forces. Aliamin Zeroual won by 61% (Official Gazette, 1995). The other three candidates acknowledged the fairness of the elections (Quotidien, 1995, p. 420). This is why the international order represented by the United States and France gave more support to Algeria despite the criticism of opposition parties for those elections (Rassi, 1997, p. 373-420). The first concerns for the new president was to establish and reinforce a market economy to support institutions of the new system and to appoint a government derives its legitimacy from the system (Khalidi, 1996, p. 35). The president started seeking to hold legislative and local elections trying to avoid former obstacles (The Truth Paper, 1995, p. 2).

In consequence, national meetings started revising the constitution and the law of election and political associations to prepare for coming legislative and local elections. The authority called for amending the constitution before the elections and not after in order to avoid divisions and to arrange the political system seriously (Wali, 2003, p. 197-198). The constitutional amendments include the definition of national identity with its the three components of Islamic, Arab and Berber, conditions of the founding of parties and the establishment of a second chamber called the National Assembly (Mahaba, 1997, p. 181-185) . The new constitution of 1996 ensures human rights and work toward their promotion unlike its predecessor of 1989 (Mahiou, 1996, p488), by the referendum on the constitution, the position of President was strengthened to take actions (Ben Jupp, 1999, p. 51-53) the referendum got an approval of 84.6% of the voters. Perhaps this second victory paid President Zeroual to resume contact with the national forces to prepare for elections and to begin the reform of the partisan system and electoral formula by which ballot would be relative on the list rather than the majority vote in two turns that was active.

We, therefore, find that 38 parties participated in the legislative elections of 1997 in addition to the independents. One of the new parties was the National Democratic Alliance, which represented the aspirations of the President himself (Mahaba, 1997, p. 140) . It was noted in these elections the entry of women to participate in the running by 20% of the number of candidates which was 7747 candidates. Percentage of the vote reached 65.6% of the total electorate . elite of parties and community also participated in this election which

went without security and acts of violence (Official Gazette, 1997). Results of elections produced a big win of the majority for the new party "National Democratic Alliance which won 156 seats to gain 33.69% of votes (Callies, 1999, p. 40-121). There were implications of these results represented in the regression of the opposition forces, in particular Islamic ones and the Rome Contract. The results also indicate authority's acceptance of coexistence with the Islamists (Saidawi 1999, p. 25 - 42). Moderate Islamists Participated, after this Election, in forming the government, which has begun preparations for local elections through consultations with the Salvation Front in order to calm the situation (Ben Jupp, 1999, p. 51-53). About 38 parties participated in the municipal and states with a participation percentage of 66% of the municipality and 62% for the states. National Alliance achieved the majority when it won 55%, followed by the Liberation Front by 19% (Gabi, 1998, p. 84-187).

Generally speaking, the final results of the election of members of the National Council, whose one third members are appointed by the president, were in favor of the control of the National Alliance, which got 80 out of the 96 members that forms the two thirds. This suggested that the political action was marching in one direction. However, the severe deterioration of economic and security conditions push President to withdraw from the presidency and to call for early elections, two years ahead and a half earlier than the original schedule (Al-Basil, 1999, p. 200).

Post-1991 Electoral Developments:2004 Presidential Elections and Democratization

Preparing for the parliamentary elections in 2002 began with greater transparency and professionalism in applying law. A supervisory committee, made up of political parties only, has been formed to oversee the elections. Then number of party that participated in the elections was 23 party where the government write off all repentant armed Islamic groups from the register of voters or candidates claiming that they lack consent of the victims' families of terrorism (The Annual Report Of The Program of Governance in the Arab States, 2002) parties' platforms remained centered on peace, reconciliation, missing persons

and prisoners of conscience (News Newspaper, 2002, p. 3). The elections were held at a time some active parties boycotted them such as the Socialist Forces Front, the Democratic Front, Al-Wfa'a Movement and the Assembly for Culture and Democracy.

Results indicated an overwhelming victory for the Algerian National Liberation Front by obtaining 199 seats out of 389 seats. The ballot percentage was 46% registering the lowest polling since Algeria's independence due to the continuing violence in the tribal areas and to the rigid procedures on women voting process where they had to participate in voting personally after it was allowed to leave others carry out the balloting on behalf (The Annual Report Of The Program of Governance in the Arab States, 2002) the National Democratic Alliance came in second order with 48 seats (Arafa, 2002). In this way, the military of the Front and of the Assembly mutually controlled access to the parliament in two consecutive terms. It is also noted that the arrival of 82 deputies from the Islamic trend by 19% only.

Presidential coalition, which called for re-election of Bouteflika for a second time, coordinating efforts in parliament and unifying forces in the 2007 parliamentary elections, appeared once again. The coalition consisted of the National Assembly, the Movement of Peaceful Society and the Corrective Movement (The Annual Report of the Program of Governance in The Arab States, 2004). the campaign for the presidency Launched under the split within the Liberation Front between supporters and opponents for the Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run again or to nominate Ali Benflis instead. The number of accepted candidates to enter the competition field was six candidates, including a woman, Louisa Hanoun.

The election is considered the third multi-candidate presidential elections, which was conducted under international control represented by 124 observers from the European Union, the Arab League and the African Union. Bouteflika won a landslide victory despite warnings from other competitors to rigging the elections prior to the announcement of the results. Bouteflika won 83% percent of the vote, which was not

recognized by other competitors, raising tension in the Algerian street. The observers stressed the integrity of the election despite the existence of gaps that do not affect the credibility (The Annual Report Of The Program Of Governance In The Arab States, 2004). This is normal practice in countries where real objections to election results fall on deaf ears. The integrity of the elections is judged by the winner's blessings. So leaders bless and people believe that election results were valid and 99.99% valid.

In a nutshell, it is strongly believed based on previous discussion in this paper that circulation of power represents the most important indication of the level of democracy in Arab countries in general and Algeria in particular. As long as monopoly of political authority remains, with no peaceful circulation, then democracy will remain in its weakest situation. Another important indicator on the nature of democracy in Arab countries is the level of violence and peace that have accompanied the electoral process. The researcher believes that this indicator is better in Jordan than in Egypt or Algeria. Tens of thousands of victims to political violence, in Algeria have fallen, especially as a result of the coup on democracy. Bloodiest clashes between, the ruling National Democratic Party and the Islamic current, have been also practiced in Egypt in recent parliamentary elections. However, Jordan has not seen such situations since the resumption of parliamentary life in 1989, indicating that the level of democracy in Jordan is higher than its counterparts of Egypt and Algeria. Generally speaking, democracy in these three countries represents the nature of democratization in the Arab world. Perhaps the major reason underlying the inability of Arab regimes and peoples to achieve full democracy or almost semi-democracy lies in the permanent cultural conflict with Israel and the western world in general, where Arab regimes still under pressure to achieve democracy with a condition that prevents any emergence of forces that threaten the security of Israel and the Western world or their interests. This led to the depletion of the attempts of democratization in Algeria and sometimes in Egypt.

Conclusion

This historical and descriptive paper attempted to shed light on the democratic transition in the Arab world with specific focus on Algeria as a case of democratic consolidation. The sharp internal level of popular pressure on the Algerian regime manifested in even sharper popular protests brought quickly the political system to the imperatives of change toward democratic direction. The Algerian people were motivated by their demands of pressing in the direction of democratization for the lack of public freedoms, particularly opinion, the formation of parties and sharing power. It is believed that the Algerian elections' results were a blow to the ruling institution and political stability, and was thus a real threat to the entire democratic process. The loss threatened the entire political system. Hence, it can be said that the presence of an Islamic regime at the head of authority is not welcomed by Algerian traditional rulers.

Within ten years of bloody conflict in Algeria about democracy, the political system was able to recover its legitimacy and to replace the revolutionary legitimacy that prevailed before the process of democratization. Bouteflika worked through the law of civil concord and the charter for reconciliation. The researcher believes that initiations and signs of re-devoting to democratic life have begun in Algeria after the country witnessed presidential, parliamentary municipal elections that have been monitored by institutions of the international community. What supports this view is the significant withdrawal of the military from the political affairs of Algeria. One can conclude from this analysis that the Arab political systems are generally characterized by the control of one-party rule or one-individual rule as this control gains priority to democratic choice. This vision is supported by an evident that there is no real circulation of power, as it is the case in modern democratic systems. Circulation of power in the Arab World is often done through violence and bloody military coups. In Algeria, the president is the person who receives the blessing of the military and western support. As long as monopoly of political authority remains, with no peaceful circulation, then democracy will remain in its weakest situation in the Arab world. Another important indicator on the nature of democracy in Arab countries is the level of violence where tens of thousands of victims in Algeria have fallen, especially as a result of

the coup on democracy. Advocates of democracy denounce such coups but feel powerless to face the military machine. Compromises sometimes make them join the regime they oppose. This case is evident in the majority of Arab countries that are ruled by a dominant party.

It should also be stated and stressed that the power crisis in Algeria has always resulted from the political elite who has seized power since independence motivated by liberation, unity and development. Therefore, the elite class has narrowed the freedoms and used the means of suppression; especially in light of the absence of strong political opposition, making the violence is the dominant language between the opposition and the state. This method was clear in the cancellation of Parliamentary elections in 1991. Thus, the institutions of civil society remained incarcerated for the will of the State jurisdiction for a long period of time. The state occupied, monopolized and deprived the vital functions of the society. It also stripped people of their human rights including the right to participate in political life and the right to express their independent views (Barak, 2001, p. 923) without working to create the healthy climate for the growth of civil society and its institutions or to allow multi-diversity and different views which is the most prominent feature of democracy. (Khader, 1986, p. 2).

The political system entirely depended on the army in decision-making. That is why most heads of state were militants who kept the Defense Ministry for themselves. Algerian regime has been also characterized by internal conflicts and acts of physical liquidation to retain power. This shows why Algeria has been ruled by a single party at the expense of opposition parties. It is no wonder therefore that the Arab political system in general and Algerian system in particular still depends to a larger extent on one-party or one-leader fabric. We have presented why such state prevails in the region. However it should be stated that there are Arab forces that aspire to democratic rule, but such aspirations are often suppressed by the majority of Arab rulers who pretend to defend democracy. Events of post-1991 elections in Algeria were not as good as many observers and politicians had expected giving the impression that the country will continue to be ruled by one dominant party at the expense of democracy. This situation also applies in the case of other Arab countries where

the one-party system is viewed as a sign of democracy as long as the regimes there continue to hold elections where the results are known in advance. Furthermore, the political system in the Arab world in particular depends on the one-party system or individual ruling or leadership. This is a common practice now as these leaders claim that they are the ones who can serve democracy better than having conflicting parties in power. This is often viewed as actions enhancing democracy. The Algerian, Egyptian, Tunisian and Libyan political systems advocate such claims and the people in these countries are led to believe such claims. So dictatorships are seen by the ruling parties as great democracies and the people seem to believe in it. To conclude with a touch of optimism it can be said that in keeping with its amended Constitution, the Algerian Government espouses participatory democracy and free-market competition. The government has stated that it will continue to open the political process and encourage the creation of political institutions. More than 40 political parties, representing a wide segment of the population, are currently active in Algerian national politics. The most recent legislative election was 2002. President Bouteflika has pledged to restructure the state as part of his overall reform efforts. However, no specifics are yet available as to how such reforms would affect political structures and the political process itself.

In the 2002 elections, there were 17,951,127 voters, and 8,288,536 of them actually voted which made a turnout of 46.17%. Out of the ballots cast, there were 867,669 void ballots according to the Interior ministry and 7,420,867 which went to the various candidates.

The most recent legislative election now is the 2007 one. Turnout was quite low with only 35.61% of the 18,760,400 voters who did vote, which makes 6,687,838 voters who voted. Out of those, 961,751 ballots were considered void, so only 5,726,087 ballots have been cast in favor of the various candidates (85.62% of the ballots cast were considered valid). An investigation into the history of the heroes of Algeria's democracy namely; Ahmed Bin Bella, Hamroush, Chadli, Al-Ibrahimi and Bouteflika reveals that all these leaders had claimed to be protectors and guardians of democracy. All of them said they had served

democracy in the most appropriate manner and that none of them had acted against the interests of Algerian people. This is politics!

The current study was mainly limited to one country Algeria. Further studies are needed to compare the Algerian case with other Arab countries to see whether there are similarities in political setups and systems. Other studies may investigate the reasons behind Arab people's compliance with some of the regimes in the region despite knowing in advance that these regimes are far away from democracy and its ideals. Could this be attributed to cultural, ethical or social reasons, or because of fears? Empirical research is therefore needed in this domain. Also, the current paper is a historical presentation of events with comments and arguments. It is a subjective study that needs to be supported by empirical research and documented. Its approach as a descriptive study can help other researchers to get historical information that might be added to their secondary data. Primary data are difficult to obtain in the political realm, especially in the Arab world. Besides ,there are numerous questions about the political systems in the Arab world that need to be answered. Major among them is the role of the military in forging Arab policies and strategies and whether democracy is truly protected or buried by the Arab military machine.

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ÖZET

Bu makale kuramsal ve tarihsel bir perspektiften Arap dünyasının önde gelen demokratikleşme serüvenlerinden birini oluşturan Cezayir örneğinde son yirmi yılda demokrasinin evrimine odaklanmaktadır. Makale, bağımsızlıktan itibaren demokrasinin Cezayir’de özellikle yönetici sınıf tarafından nasıl yorumlandığını ve algılandığını irdelemektedir. Tarihsel ve betimsel bir perspektiften makale anayasal süreçler ve yasal düzenlemeler başta olmak üzere kurumsal dönüşüme odaklanmakla birlikte başta ordu olmak üzere siyasal aktörlerin demokratikleşmeye etkisine odaklanmaktadır. Arap dünyasında demokrasinin içinde bulunduğu zafiyeti kültürel, ekonomik ve siyasal süreçler kadar kolonyal deneyim ve uluslararası etkileri gözönüne alarak değerlendirmek gerekir. Dolayısıyla Cezayir’de demokrasinin içinde bulunduğu durum çok katmanlı bir sürecin sonucu olarak düşünülmelidir. Ancak bununla birlikte içsel dinamiklerden tek-parti yönetimi ve tek-adam yönetimini demokratik yönelimin önündeki temel engel olarak tanımlamak yanlış olmayacaktır. İktidarın demokratik yollardan el değiştirmesinin önündeki engeller ana hatlarıyla bu değişkenlerce belirlenmektedir. Bir yandan iç savaş tarzında devam eden şiddet diğer yandan da askeri müdahaleler ve darbeler demokratik yönetime geçişin önünde ciddi sorunlar olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Askeri yapının ve uluslararası desteğin de yardımıyla, Cezayir’de cumhurbaşkanlığının konumu –tarihsel olarak- muhalefetin siyasal sistemden dışlanması ve demokrasiye geçişin önündeki temel engellerden biri olarak da kabul edilebilir.

Bu koşullar altında demokratik olmayan yönetimlere karşı düzenlenen kitlesel protestolar ve yurttaşların farklı biçimlerde dile getirdikleri rahatsızlıklar özellikle siyasal partilerin örgütlenmesi, düşünce özgürlüğünün yaygınlaştırılması ve keyfi uygulamalara karşı hukukun üstünlüğü ilkesinin gözetilmesini içermektedir. Makalenin temel iddiası geçtiğimiz on yıllar boyunca süren çatışmanın ardından cumhurbaşkanının system içindeki rolünün de değişmesi ile birlikte, cumhurbaşkanı Bouteflika’nın bir yandan diyalog yoluyla ülkede istikrarı sağlamaya çalışırken, diğer yandan da uluslararası toplum tarafından geçtiğimiz dönemde tartışmalara konu olan cumhurbaşkanlığı, parlamento ve yerel yönetim seçimlerine gözlemcilerin katılmasına izin verilmiştir. Düne kadar tek-parti ve tek-adam yönetimlerinin meşrulaştırılmasına olanak sağlayan kolonyal ve uluslararası etkilerin, günümüzde demokratik dönüşüme de etki sağlamaya başlamış olması, şiddet sarmalının ve askeri müdahalelerin

etkisinin azaltılmasına ve demokrasiye geçiŖe de olanak sunabilecektir. Makale, isel ve dıŖsal dinamiklerin etkisi altında Ŗekillenen kurumsal srelerin, Cezayir’de nasıl karŖılıklı etlileŖtiđini tarihsel ve betimsel olarak serimlemeye alıŖmaktadır.