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French Colonization: A critical factor for democratization  
question in northern Africa

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## Abstract

According to political science, the term “democracy” is strictly defined as “power of the people” or more specifically a way of governance which is based on the will of the people. This means, that people have the right to contribute in the decision-making processes for their lives and the fate of their society. Therefore, democracy can be understood as “the rule of the majority”. Since it is a majority-rules style of regime, it is not kingship, autocracy, monarchy or oligarchy. Despite the difficulties in establishing a precise meaning, democracy (in its’ many models) has been considered nowadays globally as the most legitimate type of regime (Haywood, 2013) . But there are still countries, many of them former colonies, lacking in democratic governance. One might wonder if Colonization had an impact, and which, on colonized nations. A contact with more advanced countries should bolster – theoretically - democratization. But in fact, we are met with different, more intriguing, results. By assessing the aforementioned minutiae, we are met with the examples of French ex-colonies in north Africa, the three countries that compose the region of Maghreb Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, which span the entirety of political spectrum.

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## Introduction

Numerous countries around the globe have been struggling for many years with their path towards democratization. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world was making a transition from agricultural economies and medieval autocracies in Europe and “arbitrary dictatorships” in Northern Africa to industrial economies and liberal regimes in Europe and “totalitarian democracies” in Northern Africa (Polk, 1965). However, diving into the reasons exclusively, the question of colonial influence comes up (Miles, 2005). The main question answered in this paper will be how colonization has affected the governing configuration in former colonies. The main case we will be examining is French colonization from 19<sup>th</sup> until 20<sup>th</sup> century. Three of the countries, which were colonized by the French and happen to be great cases for studying and extracting conclusions about the main question of this paper are Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, located in North Africa.

## CHAPTER 1: MOROCCO

### 1.1 Morocco: From French protectorate to independence and monarchy

Morocco will be the first country to be examined on this paper, due to the fact that even today it is far from creating a fruitful environment for the establishment of a democratic society. As of 2022, the formal regime of Morocco is constitutional Monarchy. A historical retrospect is a necessity before the political approach, in order to understand the current regime of the country, because history is vital in political analysis (Fitzsimons, 1975). The link between Morocco and France is weaved during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It all began in 1830, when the Moroccan leader, sultan Mawlay ‘Abd al-Rahman, sent aid to the Algerian people who were under attack by the French and allowed the Algerian leader Abdelkader in 1844 to take refuge in their country. Morocco dispatched its armies in Algeria but the French reacted by bombarding the city of Tangiers on August 4, meeting them in the field of battle in Isly on August 14, whose outcome resulted in the minor shelling of Essaouira in August 15 (Barbour, n.d.). Since the Moroccan armies were defeated in battle and Abd al-Rahman was forced to agree in either imprisoning or expelling Abdelkader should he be spotted on Moroccan ground again. Two years later, when the Algerian leader was forced to return to Morocco, he was attacked and delivered to the French. Afterwards, in 1859 Spain declared war on Morocco after a conflict between the two countries regarding the boundaries of a Spanish exclave at Ceuta, which is on Moroccan soil. Morocco was forced to buy peace, allow the Spanish to expand Ceuta’s borders and provide them with yet another enclave named Ifni, located in the southwestern part of Morocco. (Barbour, n.d.).

The efforts of Sidi Muhammad, the new sultan following the death of Abd al-Rahman in 1859, to restructure the armies of Morocco technologically were partially successful. He created a new army unit named “‘Askar Nizami”, update the artillery core with the newest available pieces. He also constructed a military factory located in Marrokesh, which produced modern weaponry for the army. After his death in 1873, he was succeeded by his son, Mawlay Hassan I, who strived

unsuccessfully to maintain the independence of the country (Barbour, n.d.). At this point, great powers like Britain and France wanted to exert their influence in greater parts of Africa in order to increase the size of their colonial empires. In conjunction with Al- 'Aziz, the new sultan of Morocco since 1894, who tried to implement a modern system of governance in the country by adopting European traits and undermining the existing customs, especially the religious ones, France was able to begin moving towards the establishment of its influence. After coming into an agreement with Spain, France made its move, when the sultan's brother, Mawlay 'Abd al- Hafiz, having gathered the support from the frustrated population of Morocco, decided to rebel against the sultan as a reaction to the European influence provided by his methods and depose him. After an unsuccessful attack at the French troops<sup>1</sup>, Abd al- Hafiz was proclaimed sultan in Fes by the European powers. Abd al-Aziz was forced to flee to Tangier. The stability of the country though was lost after these incidents and 'Abd al-Hafiz was forced to ask help from France in order to maintain both peace in the country and his position as its ruler. This was the final act for the French to enter Morocco and with the signing of the Treaty of Fez in 1912, Morocco officially had become a French protectorate. Furthermore, the French maintained their good relations with the Spanish<sup>2</sup>.

Following the signing of the treaty, the French decided to follow a pattern already used in the case of Algeria, which was also under their rule. This model however could not be used in the same way due to the fact that, firstly the World War I brought significant change in the ways of colonial powers and secondly because the country had also connections with the Spanish (Flitouris, 2016). Its northern part belonged now in Spain with the signed treaty of Fez (Anon., 1913) and due to its position with its port at the Atlantic, it was crucial for the French to take into consideration the reaction of the Spanish at every selfish act they made. It would seem that the sultan maintained his privileges and his power, but in reality, the French resident general appointed by Paris, Marshal Lyautey was in charge of the authorities and his only responsibility was to report and receive orders straight up from Paris. Regarding the educational sector, Lyautey wanted to improve the relatively disorganized system of Morocco. Before the colonization, there were two types of education, the Muslim and the Jewish. Both of them were run through local religious institutions, which covered the primary and secondary stages of education and were funded by religious donations. Muslim students who wanted to pursue a higher form of education attended relative universities in Fez, like "al-Qarawiyyin" and Jewish students respectively attended "Yeshivoth", which were the Jewish universities in Marrakesh or moved to Jerusalem (Boum, 2008). Lyautey, following his plan to respect local traditions at first, he was working towards the establishment of a French educational system while maintaining the already existing Muslim and Jewish. However, after the departure of George Hardy, an ethnologist who joined the resident General from 1912 to 1925, the approach towards the educational system changed. It was decided that it was important to distinguish the Berbers from Arab education. This decision resulted in Berbers being regarded as less Islamized and so Arabic education was prohibited (Boum, 2008). Moreover, Lyautey established three different types of native schools, which were matching the social hierarchy: "*L'Ecole des Fils de Notables*", "*Ecoles urbaines*" and "*Ecoles*

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<sup>1</sup> The French had occupied Casablanca in 1907

<sup>2</sup> Both countries agreed upon the declaration of Tangier as an international zone. It was then become a key city for all diplomatic activities.

*rurales*". The sons of the wealthy upper class were able to attend the first school, the children of middle-class citizens would attend the second and the third school accepted students from rural regions (Boum, 2008). These schools implemented curricula, that focused mainly on the French culture and reduced the instruction of Muslim and Arabic culture. The Arabic language was taught as twice a week in 'Ecoles urbaines but was not included in 'Ecoles rurales, due to the Berber attendance. In a report he submitted in the early 1920s, he said that "*a young generation is growing up which is full of life and needs activity. ...Lacking the outlets which our administration offers only sparingly and in subordinate positions they will find an alternative way out.*" (Amy McKenna, 2011, p. 114) The elites were lured by the opportunities in accessing powerful positions in the French hierarchy via attending French education. But they were also wary of the French influence on traditional institutions. This concern along with the hesitancy to increase the number of positions in Arabic education, led to the creation of a new type of educational system called "*Free schools*". These schools had modernized curriculum but focused on influencing the students against the French educational systems and policies (Boum, 2008). During the same decade, numerous educated young bourgeoisie Moroccans began to challenge the ideas of the protectorate treaty (Amy McKenna, 2011). Some of their demands were the construction of new schools, reforming the judicial system and terminating colonization. In addition to that, some efforts from the French side to disrupt the unity in the country in order to increase their own influence backfired at them and it led to the creation of several nationalist parties and several protest outbreaks throughout the French part of Morocco. This situation played a crucial role in the reaction of the country towards the outbreak of World War II. The sultan, Sidi Muhammad Ben Yusuf, wanting to join forces with France, was criticized by a large part of the public opinion, which was opposed to the French influence. Soon, when the fall of France took place in 1940, the sultan decided to part ways with the colonial power after the installment of the Vichy regime, by not signing any legislation against Jewish populations.

During the Casablanca Conference in 1943, which followed the American invasion during the "Operation Torch" in 1942, led to a meeting between the sultan and President of the USA, Franklin Roosevelt. (Anon., 1962) President Roosevelt expressed his negative opinion towards the French presence in the country, which led to stronger attraction towards the idea of independence. The nationalist movement was able to create a party named "Hibz al-Istiqlal (Joffe, 1988), which sided with the sultan and the reactions from the French led to several demonstrations by the Moroccans demanding to part ways with France. The sultan, after the cease of the demonstrations, asked for permission, which he was granted, to travel to Tangier for a speech. In his speech, he stressed out how the country is linked, after all these years, to the Arab world, skipping intentionally any reference towards the current state of Morocco as a French protectorate. The tense atmosphere continued to deteriorate after the change of the resident general who was in command by the French. The newly appointed general, Alphonse Juin, played a crucial part in the downgraded way of the Moroccan-French relations due to his whole acts, which contrasted the French officials (Holmes, 2004). He promised his people that he would hold elections for municipal authorities. However, in contrast to popular belief, he intended to give the positions to French officials. Furthermore, he deposed a member of the Council of Government and surrounded the palace with French military authorities while spreading lies to the people about the cause of this

action. As a result, he was replaced by France in August 1951, with this move signifying the regret of Paris for this situation. The sultan, later on, stressed the desire of the country for complete sovereignty but without interrupting the cooperation between Morocco and France. The situation did not improve after this statement and instead was further deteriorated in conjunction with several protests in Casablanca regarding the rumored assassination of the Tunisian union leader Ferhat Hached by French terrorists. Moreover, there were several movements that tried to depose of the sultan. The French, having to face both this situation and internal issues in Paris, saw fit to reform the entire legislative system via forcing the sultan to transfer his legislative authorities to a new council to sign and ratify every legislation that had been blocked. Said action did not satisfy the enemies of the sultan and the latter was deported by the French government and was replaced by the Francophile Mawlay Ben Arafa. This measure had two immediate results of equal magnitude. One was turning the previous sultan, Sidi Muhammad into a national hero and the second was an outpour of Moroccan nationalists towards Spanish-controlled areas, where their discontent towards the French authoritarian control started to fester. In order for France to deescalate the situation, the French moved towards the establishment of a constitutional government by the sultan. In 1956 the independence of Morocco was proclaimed. The sultan formed the new government by appointing native representations in key positions, which were formerly in the possession of French officials. The powers of the sultan would remain unhindered.

The transition of the control from the French to the Moroccan, under French guidance, occurred in a smooth rhythm. But there was one situation that could not help the relation between the two countries reach a higher level. The continuous war in Algeria with France found Morocco offering its support towards Algeria discreetly (Barbour, n.d.). As a result, Moroccans were in odds with France for assisting Algerian rebels, since they still depended on French assistance in technical and financial matters (Barbour, n.d.). Until the first elections took place, several political changes had shifted the political spectrum of the country. The Istiqlal party was split in two parts, leading to the creation of a new party, the “Union nationale des Forces populaires” (UNFP) under the leadership of the left-wing supporter Mehdi Ben Barka, which fragmented in 1972 and a new party named “Union socialiste de Forces populaires” was created. The other part of the Istiqlal party remained under the leadership of Muhammad Allal al-Fasi (Joffe, 1988). Major changes took places in the education of the country as well. From the beginning of the independence, al-Fasi made sure that the French influence would be minimized and that the country would shift towards a new homogeneity, which would be based in an Arab-Islamic identity. The first change was the implementation of the Arabic language as the main language of teachings and would also be used in all of “*national domains*” (Boum, 2008). Furthermore, he replaced the foreign teaching staff (mainly the French) with Moroccan or Arab teachers. These two measures would ensure establishment of the Islamic and Arab values, which the colonial influence had weakened throughout the years. Last but not least, the state would move on building more schools in remote areas and hire teachers from other Arab nations as well, in an effort to familiarize education among both rural and urban students (Boum, 2008).

Moreover, in the 1970s there were numerous reformations of the constitutions followed by 2 coups from ministers and army members, who were opposed to the king. The first one occurred in 1971 and it was followed by a second one a year later. The second coup was incited by the defense minister and the Interior minister of the then government. The reasons behind those attempts were the economic inequality among the population, the corruption in the political system and the fear of a “*Nasserist-style military takeover or a left-wing coup by junior army officers*” (Joffe, 1988, p. 213). A good example, which shows the complete mess the system was during those two decades, are the elections in 1977. They were considered by many as corrupted and it resulted in a victory for the king’s voters. After this victory, the situation in the country did not improve at all. By the end of the 1980s decade, according to Abdeslam Maghraoui, the majority of the Moroccans were uneducated, “*19% lived in abject poverty and 21% of the working-age urban population was unemployed*”<sup>3</sup> (Maghraoui, 2001, p. 14) . This was the result of the regional inequalities existing in the country. Until the end of the 80s-decade, scientific subjects in primary and secondary education were taught in Arabic. However, Arabization of education was not applied in the higher educational institutions, resulting in a large deficiency of students, who did not have the ability to attend scientific courses, which were taught in French. (Boum, 2008) Furthermore, consequences of the crisis inflicted a major strike on the countryside, since “*80% of the villages had not access to paved roads, potable water or electricity and 93% have yet to obtain basic health care facilities*” (Maghraoui, 2001, p. 14).

During the 90s however, king Hassan II made some last reforms before the end of his reign. The reforms targeted the improvement of the poor respect for human rights, the control of corruption, the creation of more opportunities for participation in the political scene of the state by the parties and the populous and to boost the power of the parliament (Riley, 2006). Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century and with the replacement of the previous king in July 1999 by Muhammad VI, who is ruling over the country up until now (2022), the difficulties did not cease. Morocco was entering an era where the women’s rights required necessary changes. And the population was asking for them. But this kind of liberal ideas were opposed by the conservative and religious circles of the country. This ended up in an increased fundamentalist reaction by certain Islamic groups, which led to the early 10s’ events, in conjunction with other countries of Middle East, which faced similar situations (authoritarian leaderships, economic recession, undermining of human rights). As a result, the king proposed a new constitution in 2011, which would guarantee that his power would lessen, the state would be under “rule of law”. In addition, it would warrant an independent judiciary system, that would affirm a division of powers. Last but not least, it ensured that the parliament would convene regularly and it granted to the role of the prime minister extended powers (al-Akhssassi, 2017). Because of the new constitution, the conflict shifted away from religion and towards the supporters of the royalty versus the supporters of the Arab Spring (Cavatorta, 2011). The whole 2010s decade was characterized by the numerous protests between the two sides, especially since the governments that were elected in the meantime supported the palace.

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<sup>3</sup> Among the uneducated citizens were 100.000 university graduates

## 1.2 Decolonization leading to Monarchy

Even from a single glance at the course of history of Morocco, we can deduce some interesting information about the evolution the country, since it gained its independence. One of the aspirations of the French colonialism was to instill European principles and western methods of governance to countries, which they considered to be “underdeveloped” (Kefala, 2015) and Morocco was no exception. A democratic regime was unknown to those parts of the world. It can be seen from the fact that since the signing of Treaty of Fez in 1912, where Morocco officially became one of the French protectorates, the governance and decision-making processes were coming straight from Paris. The officials in charge during their time in office, were just executing orders emanating from Paris. Some even disobeyed the capital and decided to act on their own, taking actions into matters, which required more delicate handling. The most infamous example was general Juin, who acted completely on his own and even circled the palace and the sultan with his troops and was forced to be replaced by Paris (Holmes, 2004). So, a primary result, that needs to be pointed out is that the democratization problem took place even during the time, when the “advanced” Europeans were supposedly modernizing the “underdeveloped” north African cultures.

Despite such extreme cases, the French proposed some procedures, such as the creation of the Parliament, legalization of political parties or partial separation of powers, which created an ostensible democratic environment, but it was still an authoritarian regime (Joffe, 1988). It followed the general characteristics of every colonial factor throughout history. The main objective was “*the subjugation of one people to another*” (Kohn, 2012). In order for that to be achieved, there is little to no room for democracy, as it is defined today. Observing the situation however from the side of the Moroccans, their leader was kept in its position, despite the fact that he was no longer in actual command. This was a logical move by the colonial ruler. Each country’s leader has his own influence over their people. Removing them from their position of authority can lead to severe problems and destabilization of the society, something which can ultimately lead to them being deposed. Instead, maintaining the leadership in its position is considered the most appropriate move accompanied with the proper source of influence (resident general) in order to maintain a sufficient balance of power (Guillaume, 1952). Said position of leadership is a small price for the colonizer to pay, since he acts as the presumed leader. Especially at a time, when colonial rule had proven to be more than inefficient to fulfill the needs of the populous residing in the colony. Furthermore, even if some of the new procedures could find a fruitful environment to flourish and were ultimately successful, the overstaffing of vital positions with many a times underqualified, usually French, individuals, was the norm personnel. As a matter of fact, resident general Theodore Steeg preferred a direct administration style and replaced the experienced Moroccan officials with inexperienced French. Three years after his departure in 1928, the number of French officials in lower and higher echelons of administration had tripled (Damis, 1970). The thirst for power by the French side was too obvious and the Moroccans did realize it and desired for it to cease.



However, there is more to the inability of France to pave the way for functional institutions in the country of Morocco. Another important factor, was the religious differences between the French and the Moroccans. The country was always dedicated to Islam. It may not have been under any Ottoman influence (Guillaume, 1952) before the French and having maintained its independence as a state, however the influence of the Islam ran deep inside the roots of the society. This was a major obstacle, since the French could not exert the necessary influence to control Moroccans. First of all, the discreet support towards Algeria, during its War of Independence with France is a very potent sign, that religious ties are way more impactful and outweigh the possible needs of the state. Additionally, with the influence from nationalist ideas rising in the global scene in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century with World War II massive nationalist movement was created. The movement eventually became an official political party<sup>4</sup> with enough power to be able to influence the population of Morocco and be recognized by the sultan as a power to be reckoned with. And despite the cooperation of the two in order to manage the desired independence of the country, both the sultan and Istiqlal strove for power over the next decades and brought instability in the country. However, the previously mentioned cooperation was the key factor that managed to keep the power of the sultan-then-king stable. Furthermore, the fact that Istiqlal decided to strive head on with the king over power added more to the difficult task of democratization. Even when the party was split and more parties emerged, it was too late for them to apply important pressure to the king for the transition towards a clean democratic regime. The population required more liberal institution and so did the parties. But the lack of any mechanism and power to move the kings from their office only led to the provision of a “pseudo-democratic” regime<sup>5</sup>. A regime, where there was a new constitution, political freedoms, several campaigns towards corrupted officials, new legislations for criminals but yet all the final decisions regarding the aforementioned would come from the king. And yet the situation remains the same. Even the educational institutions the French established during the protectorate period expanded the gaps in the social hierarchy. The rift between the Berbers and Arabs (Boum, 2008) and the job opportunities in powerful positions of the economic and political stage only through French education “haunted” the country for many decades. And add more to the question of the democratization of Morocco. The answer however is, that Morocco is still under constitutional monarchy and despite the European influence from the 44year French occupation, there seems to be no significant move towards the democratization of the country.

## CHAPTER 2: TUNISIA

### 2.1: Historical course of Tunisia

Morocco was definitely an important geographical part of the greater plans the French had during their time in northern Africa. However, it was not the most

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<sup>4</sup> The party was officially named Hizb al-Istiqlal, which meant “Independence Party”.

<sup>5</sup> The term became more and more famous after the World War II, when there was an emerging opposition towards nationalism.

renowned country when it comes to ex-colonial territories. Tunisia has been a part of France for almost the same amount of time as Morocco. However, the procedure towards the establishment of the country as French protectorate had some differences with the case of Morocco. As the French moved to occupy Algeria, they reassured the Tunisian Bey, Husayn, that they had no intentions of expanding their colonies over Tunisia. But the situation soon changed five years later, when the Ottoman empire decided to reestablish direct Ottoman rule on the country. Up until that point, Tunisia was under the provincial administrative structure of the Ottoman empire, maintaining semi-autonomous status (Barbour, et al., 2021). So, they ended in being in the middle of two great powers, France and Ottomans, and their conflicting interests. As a result, they had to satisfy the both of them in different manner.

The new bey of the country, Ahmad, attempted to make changes in conjunction to European advisors, mainly French, because he considered them preferable to the alternative Ottoman consul (Langer, 1925). During his reign, from 1837 to 1855, he strengthened the military powers of the country with expensive, state-of-the-art and lavishly decorated barracks, abolished slavery and attempted to include the Arab-speaking population in the governmental structure (Barbour, et al., 2021). All these changes were considered by some as an effort of modernization, but also the economic consequences led the internal situation of the country to a downward spiral. The next two rulers of the country had to face the consequences of the former's actions, with the biggest one being the inability of Tunisia to escape the European intervention. The continuously degenerating financial situation led to further reforms by the succeeding Bey, Muhammad, which included equal rights among the Muslim and non-Muslim populations, protection of property, judiciary and fiscal regulations, the establishment of a British-Tunisian bank and concessions of an equal level to the French. Following these reforms, in 1861, a constitution was introduced. However, the cost of the reforms was being paid by the regency (Tunçer, 2021). The growing debt led to the request of a foreign loan by the French bank "d'Erlanger", which had a value of "*35 million francs, with a 7% interest rate, 96 issue price and 15 years maturity*" (Tunçer, 2021). Due to specific terms and fees, the Bey resulted in receiving around 30 million francs and paying around 65 million. In order for this transaction to take place, he had to double the taxes and impose them on a countrywide level. The result of this move was the revolution of 1864, where the revolutionaries almost succeeded in overthrowing the regime, but they ended up failing. Following these events, the country went bankrupt in 1869. The European intervention from now on was unhindered. A financial commission was set up by British, French and Italian representatives in order to supervise the payment of the debt. By 1869, the debt had exceeded the 120.000.000 francs.

Despite the official sanction of the Bey in 1870, the commission could not begin operating before 1872. The reasons for this delay were the different estimates between the three powers regarding the actual size of the debt and also the contradicting interests of the countries behind the commission (Britain, France, Italy). As a result, there was constant conflict between diplomatic representatives and foreign bondholders making the function of the commission more complicated.

Despite the difficulties the commission began its operations and from 1872 to 1876 there were signs of financial recovery. British capital inflows were used for investments including railways and other infrastructures. Furthermore, the permission for the establishment of a private British bank was given. But all these initiatives eventually failed either by going bankrupt or being transferred in the hands of French capital groups (Tunçer, 2021). So, in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin, Britain consented towards France to take control over Tunisia. As a pretext for the implementation of the clauses of the Congress, the French used a raid of Tunisians on Algerian ground, known as “the Krumir Invasion” (Mckay, 1945), as an excuse to invade the country in 1881 and impose the Treaty of Bardo. With this Treaty, the occupation of Tunisia was officially approved and the authorities of the bey were transferred to France. Furthermore, it appointed a French resident of the country as minister, who would also act as a mediator between the two sides in objectives of common interests. This Treaty caused quite a number of uprisings in the country, which were all subdued by the French powers as they moved on with the occupation campaign. In 1883 the Convention of Al-Marsa was signed by the next bey (Houssi, 2017). This agreement included several reforms in the judiciary and administrative system as well as economy, which the French saw fit for their interests. On administrative level, the Bey gave up his key sovereign prerogatives<sup>6</sup> and additionally the French had the rights for reforms on the political stage via legislative acts, which would however be sealed by the reigning sovereign. (Catroux, 1954). Last but not least, the French decided to replace the Tunisian mixed courts with French tribunals, deeming this move as an upgrade to a defective judiciary system (Tunçer, 2021). The convention of Al-Marsa essentially solidified France’s dominance over the country.

During the first decade of the colonization (1881- 1891), the French started operating towards the improvement of the economy. Since the agricultural sector was the main financial activity in the pre-colonial Tunisia, France decided to attract private venturers and companies into buying lands, but not settling it. Instead, they took advantage of the existing “*social relations of production to cultivate their newly acquired estates*” (Bennoune, 1979, p. 91). The French also included the educational sector withing their plans. Before the beginning of the protectorate era, the Turkish provided institutions of primary and secondary education named “*kuttabs*” and higher education via the “*madradas*” and mosque colleges, with the most famous being the mosque college of Zaytuna all of which had the Quran as the “*center of the knowledge*”. (Kinsey, 1971, p. 173). When the protectorate era began, the French created two new institutions of higher education. The first one, named “*Al-Ta’dibiya*”, would include both Islamic and modern courses in order to prepare modernized teachers for the lower educational institutes. However, it was soon closed, due to the fact that the graduated students did not intend to work as teachers for kuttabs but instead strived for governmental positions. Those who did not succeed, remained unemployed. The second institution was named Khaldunyah. This institution was affiliated with a group called “Young Tunisians”, which consisted of European-educated individuals and inspired from political movements

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<sup>6</sup> International relations, security and defense of the state.

in Middle East (Mckay, 1945). The courses of the newly founded institutions did not include any Islamic studies and the only reference to the Arabic was with translation and calligraphy. Instead, the courses consisted of French language and literature, along with mathematics, geography, sciences and geography. The students of this school however, were coming from Islamic institutions and had to adapt to modern content of teaching along with French-educated teachers. The influence of the “Young Tunisians” though, led to the evolution of Khaldunyah, which organized later on colloquiums in Arabic subjects and tried to adapt to new Franco-Arab models of education (Kinsey, 1971).

Young Tunisians were an important factor for the rise of the Tunisian nationalism in the country. The group orchestrated campaigns against the French regime as well as called for bigger participation from the Tunisians in their government. Their efforts were made through a newspaper of the time called “*Le Tunisien*” (Barbour, et al., 2021), which was printed both in French and in Arabic and through demonstrations. This movement gained support both from Tunisian natives and from French settlers. The French authorities did not want to allow any sorts of opposition, even of this mild type of the Young Tunisians and so their activities ceased by 1911, where more than 3000 individuals were gathered at a cemetery and were demonstrating. The resident general asked of the police to calm the disturbance, the situation escalated into an open conflict, where almost 50 people lost their lives. After the World War I though, there would be a more powerful move towards nationalism, made by the formation of a political party called Destour. The goal of this party was the complete removal of the French from the country. According to Benjamin Rivlin, the party presented to the French authorities a “9-point program”, which included: “*Creation of a deliberative assembly composed of Tunisian and French deputies possessing equal rights and elected by universal suffrage, responsibility of the government to the assembly, separation of legislative, judicial and executive powers, official posts to capable Tunisians, equal pay for Tunisian and French officials performing equal work, elective municipal councils, compulsory primary education, participation of Tunisians in the acquisition of crown lands and lands for colonization and freedom of press and assembly*” (Rivlin, 1952, p. 169). Much like the group of “Young Tunisians”, Destour gained a lot of support but the French reaction towards this form of opposition caused functional problems at its leadership. As a result, the leadership was challenged in 1934, when a lawyer called Habib Bourguiba defected from the Destour party along with several colleagues and created a new party called the Neo-Destour party. Despite both parties’ desires for independency of Tunisia, the members of Destour preferred to spread their influence mainly in the city of Tunis, while the younger and more radical members of the Neo-Destour believed that the change will come from organized activities by the whole populous of the country. Its main goal was the independency of the country, but not necessarily the removal of the French. (Catroux, 1954). Immediately after its creation, this new party tried to attract mass support from the population and spread their influence, through a newspaper they printed called “*L’Action Tunisienne*”. Additionally, in order to surpass the older party, Neo-Destour created youth groups and organized demonstrations. The growing support towards this party led to the other members of

the Destour to join. Several attempts to cut off its growing influence only led to its numbers getting increased. Additionally, the collapse of the government of the Popular Front in France and the different approach of the new French government towards Neo-Destour and the suppression of the “*Comité d’action marocaine*” and “*Parti du Peuple Algerien*”, two sister organizations of the Tunisian party, signaled the discontent of Neo-Destour with the French and their desire to abandon any plans of collaboration with them (Rivlin, 1952). This situation led in 1938 to the arrest of the leaders of the party and its dissolution.

During the outbreak of the World War II, the leaders of the Neo-Destour party were sent to France. However, 3 years later, in 1942, they were handed by the Vichy French government to the Italians, since Hitler believed that Italy could have a lot of influence in Tunisia. In order for them to achieve that, they treated them nicely but Bourguiba refused to cooperate with the Axis. In 1943, all of them were able to return to Tunisia, where the new bey, Muhammad al-Munsif had formed a ministry with personnel who supported the Destour, during the Italian occupation. After the fall of the Nazi though, the French returned to their restrictive behavior towards the Neo-Destour party. Bourguiba was accused of cooperation with the Nazis, while al-Munsif was stripped of his title. Still the call for independence of the country was extensive and the French had to offer some rights. One of those was permitting the inclusion nationalists into the government. These changes let Salah Ben Youssef, the secretary general of the Neo-Destour party to become a member of the government and resulted in the return of Bourguiba, who was forced to move to Egypt in 1945 due to the accusations of cooperation with the Axis. However, when the request of the new government for a Tunisian parliament was proposed, tensions arose once again. Bourguiba was once again exiled and numerous members of the government were arrested. These actions led to the sprawling of units of nationalist guerillas, based in the mountains. In July 1954 Pierre Mendes-France proposed internal autonomy for the country of Tunisia. The same year, he allowed Bourguiba, who was arrested, to live and join the negotiations in Tunis for the independence of the country. In June 1955 several conventions took place in Tunis and eventually, the agreement was signed by the Tunisian delegates and the ministry was formed mainly with Neo-Destour participants (Callard, 1960/1961). Ben Youssef expressed his opposition to this agreement by refusing to attend the conventions, because he denounced the internal autonomy and fought for full independence (Callard, 1960/1961). As a result, he gathered a number of his supporters and tried to mount some resistance in the south with no success at all. Ben Youssef fled the country but was eventually assassinated in 1961. On March 1965, the French officially provided independence on Tunisia, with Bourguiba as the prime minister. The position of beys was terminated and after a year a republic was announced with Bourguiba as president. The country had entered a new era, where the democratic regime was about to be established, yet several incidents acted as obstacles to that goal.

From the start of its term, the government tried to quickly implement the reforms needed in several sectors like education or legislative system. More specifically regarding the education, Bourguiba planned for a modernized

educational system based on the French model. The first change he made was the nationalization of Zaytuna mosque college and the complete reform of its curriculum. Furthermore, he hired French teachers for the university, in order to undermine the sphere of influence of the “ulama” and deprive them from economic opportunities (SOFI, 2018). Following such reforms in said sectors that are expensive and difficult to set up, the economy developed much slower, if at all (SOFI, 2018). Furthermore, according to Dirk Vandewalle, Bourguiba believed that *“political development did not yet mean “finding institutional solutions for existing social realities” but rather “seeking to force realities within the mold of the single-party system”* (Vandewalle, 1980, p. 8). In 1975 Bourguiba was guaranteed presidency for the rest of his life by the Chamber of Deputies. The economic crisis through the 1970 decade was growing fast, despite all of the efforts from the prime minister, Hedi Amira Nouira. The elections in 1981 did not bring the long sought political freedom that the country required. The Destourian Socialist Party<sup>7</sup> had fused with the trade union movement into the National Front and managed to maintain the majority of the seats in the Parliament. Elected Prime minister, by the 1981 elections, was Muhammad Mazli, who persuaded Bourguiba to accept a multiparty system. The result of those elections caused a lot of frustration. Some of it was formed into opposition, part of which was represented by the Islamic Tendency Movement. The maintenance of the power by the National Front had caused several protests in the upcoming years around the country and Bourguiba was sure that the MTI<sup>8</sup> had incited them. The protests were subdued by the army but a campaign against MTI was ignited. The regression of what seemed to be a democratic regime continued the following years in conjunction with the deteriorating health of Bourguiba. In 1986, the opposition parties boycotted the elections and the National Front remained in power. A year later, Bourguiba was unable to govern the country and he was succeeded by Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, who was prime minister for the month before Bourguiba’s removal from the office.

The first promise of the new prime minister was a greater political liberalization for the country. At first, he legalized several political parties, except for the MTI and in general he tried to create a unity on national stage. However, the situation regarding the pluralism in the political environment did not change at all and the elections in 1989 prove it. The president gathered 99% of the votes and the Democratic Constitutional Rally won all the seats in the parliament. As a result, the local elections one year later were boycotted by the opposition parties and the ruling party emerged victorious. Despite the initial promises for political liberalization, the president and its party strove from that path the following years. The fact that Ben Ali retained the position of president for two and a half decades was a clear case of authoritarianism, which was supported by France in a discreet way, due to the close ties of the latter with Ben Ali (Mikail, 2011). Regarding the financial situation of the country, despite having received external funding in order to implement reforms, Ben Ali kept the banks under state control and foreign investors deemed the country’s stock exchange too small to invest. Furthermore, the unemployment

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<sup>7</sup> The Neo-Destour Party had changed its name to Destourian Socialist Party from 1964 to 1988 and after 1988 it was renamed once again into Democratic Constitutional Rally.

<sup>8</sup> Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique

had skyrocketed in 40-45% among young, university-educated individuals (Angrist, 2013). However, the period between December 2010 to January 2011 would signal the end of Ben Ali's reign. Due to Muhammad Buazizi's self-immolation on December 17 2010, the populous organized mass protests and demonstrations, demanding the removal of Ben Ali and the establishment of elections. But in order for those demands to be imposed upon the leader, the magnitude of the protests had to be nationwide. This is the exact case with Tunisia. The masses participating in the protests, were characterized with diversity: Islamic population, secular supporters, university students and young individuals under 30, urban and rural dwellers. All these large groups of the populous were able to coordinate their activities through the use of social media, which proved to be a very influential tool for the outcome of their efforts. Soon, even the army, despite being relatively small in numbers, joined the protestors, after the denial of General Rachid Ammar to help Ben Ali in suppressing the protests (Angrist, 2013). The demonstrations had become a revolution at this point. Ben Ali tried to suppress the revolution with the help of the domestic security forces<sup>9</sup>, but to no effect. As a final effort to calm the spirits and maintain his position, he promised to implement more approachable food prices and dissolve many internet restrictions, under the prism of freedom of speech. However, both promises were not kept and did not persuade the revolutionaries at all (Barbour, et al., 2021). The country entered an emergency state and elections were announced the following months. That was not enough for the clashes to stop either and so Ben Ali stepped down as president. The transition after Ben Ali's reign was very hard. The fact that members of his party took the power after his departure did not ease the situation at all. The country was divided in two sides, the secular policy and the Islamists, which in the beginning cooperated in order to prevent Ben Ali's party of maintaining the one-party rule. Up to March 2011, the Casbah demonstrations orchestrated both by secularists and Islamists, led to the legalization of Ennahda and to eventually elections in 2012 (Angrist, 2013). During the negotiations for the arrangement of the elections' date, the secularists and Islamists did not end up in an agreement, something which fueled their conflict for the next years. The following years up to 2014 were filled with tension and hostilities between the two sides. In 2014 there was the establishment of a new constitution, which was almost unanimously voted and showed for the first time a type of compromise within the country. The elections in 2014 led to a unity government for the first time in the country's history. However, the country still had serious financial and social issues to solve. By 2017, the foreign investments were still minimal and in order to attract some, the government raised the taxes and the prices of basic goods (Barbour, et al., 2021). In 2019, an underdog contender named Kais Saied managed to emerge victorious while participating with no party. However, the way Saied handled the economic regression and the COVID-19 situation led him to extreme measures in 2021. His decision to suspend the constitution until the vote of a new one by calling on state of exception show that there was a large hole in the democratic institutions of the country.

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<sup>9</sup> The police, the national guard and the presidential guard, the number of which in total would estimate around 130.000 to 150.000



## 2.2: A pioneer of the ex-colonial regions

Tunisia has come a long way since its years as a French protectorate. Unlike the case of Morocco, where it maintained the position of the king as the leader of the country and resorted to monarchy, Tunisia had the desire and the means to make the leap towards democracy. However, the aftermath of the colonial existence in the country left behind some conditions that instituted a distorted form of democracy. Just like Morocco, the French came at Tunisia in terms of cooperation with the local population and the officials of the beylic. They believed that their clash with Algeria would allow them to conduct good agreements with the bey of Tunisia and that the country would allow them to move onwards with their plans for north Africa. And despite their initial influence on the internal economic problems, Tunisia desired to remain autonomous, especially from the moment they had freed themselves from the Ottoman Rule. The issue lies in the fact that, the military reforms made by Ahmad bey in his period of reign (1837-1855) led to a large economic recession, which caused a number of foreign loans making the debts even larger and eventually deemed necessary the response from European powers. (Tunçer, 2021). So, it was the perfect opportunity for France to make a more official and long-lasting intervention. However, their intentions were similar with the case of Morocco. The transition to a protectorate took place via agreements and treaties, rather than violent occupation through army invasion, like the case of Algeria, which will be discussed later. And even after the independence of Tunisia, the latter maintained fine relations with France and the West in general. Both Bourguiba and Ben Ali believed in the West and its development methods.

So, despite some crises between the Tunisia and western countries on certain occasions<sup>10</sup> (Barbour, et al., 2021), the former has no interest of turning down the relations with the latter. The problem lies though in the way France ruled over Tunisia for 44 years. The administrative structure followed the same pattern with Morocco. The bey was denied of his external authorities on the sectors of international relations, defense and security. Furthermore, the French appointed a resident general, who would exert these authorities and additionally, he had the right to propose reforms, through the control of the legislative system. However, every legislative act initiated by the resident general, would carry the seal of the beylic (Catroux, 1954). This structure was meant to create a relation of protector and protected, following the typical pattern of a protectorate (Reisman, 1989). This structure led to a wide rising of critics among the natives. As a result, the emergence of nationalist ideas was inevitable at this point, especially with the influence of the World Wars. Firstly, there was the group of “Young Tunisians”, with their influence on the higher education institutions, and afterwards the creation of the Destour Party

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<sup>10</sup> France bombarded a Tunisian village called Sakiet Sidi Youssef while chasing a group of Algerian rebels in 1958, an incident in the town of Bizerte, where the French wanted to maintain their military base despite Tunisian reactions, the suspension of aid by the French side in 1964-66. With the United States of America there was dissatisfaction during their involvement in the Persian Gulf War and with their general plan about the developing world.



and its different branches took place. Just like in Morocco, nationalism had reached Tunisia and the provisions of the French minister were not enough for the situation to improve towards his interest (Rivlin, 1952). Furthermore, the maintenance of balance and control not only in Tunisia, but also in other countries as well, made difficult the efforts of the minister to regress nationalism. So once again there is a strong nationalist movement, who has not been satisfied by the regulations and the results of the colonial reign and desires its independence. This independence is not combined with hatred though. The Tunisians strove for their independence, but had no issue with the French remaining in their country. So, the cultural factor was not as extreme as in countries like Algeria.

The path towards the independence nevertheless required some extreme actions. The bey and his regressive methods towards the Neo-Destour party and its leaders was fought with guerilla tactics by the nationalists, reaching the borders of terrorism. It seemed inevitable for the side of the nationalists to avoid this method, since any peaceful method they used in the past was faced with strict oppression (Rivlin, 1952). Despite this clash nonetheless, the French acknowledged the independence of the country in 1956. A year later a republic was pronounced. It appears though that it was a republic only on paper. What followed the next decades was economic recession, corruption from the upper social classes at the rest of the populous' expense, rotten institutional system and a 40-year span service of the same president (Ben Ali 1987-2011) and ruling party. However, a positive step towards democratization was the desire of the first president of the country, Habib Bourguiba to modernize the educational system, by following the French model and minimizing the influence of religious schools. It is evident though, that despite the nationalists desperately fought the French for the establishment of a democratic regime, the neglect of the latter to bring institutions filled with clarity and liberalization, led to a regime that leaned more towards authoritarianism rather than democracy. Just like Morocco, the voice of the people was being silenced every time it rose in front of the interests of the strong politicians and upper classes. And just like the nationalists themselves fought the French with extreme measures, the same case applied during the Arab Spring between the secular population and the Islamists (Angrist, 2013). There had to be spilled a lot of bloodshed in order for president Ben Ali to finally step down from his long-term rule and allow elections. The problem is, however that even after the Jasmine Revolution and the reformation of a new constitution, the only moment the country of Tunisia was in the path towards democracy was with the unity government in 2014 (Barbour, et al., 2021).

The ideas of several sides were able to be addressed in the parliament of Tunisia that time, however the situation with the economy of the country, where the taxes and prices of basic goods were skyrocketed and foreign investors were not attracted, fueled more the critics of the government. Furthermore, with the election of Kais Saied the country seems to be moving away from the democracy rather than closer to it. The measures he applies expose an authoritarian leader, who suspends anytime he desires the functionality of a parliament or proceeds to arrests of people who express opposing opinions. So, the case of Tunisia differs from the one of Morocco. It is evident that in terms of democratization, Tunisia is still far behind. In

comparison with Morocco, the neighbor country has managed to establish officially democratic regime, with the official appointment of a government through electoral procedure with the free and fair votes of the citizens, the functionality of the Tunisian assembly and the separation of powers (executive, legislative and judiciary). (Hanlon, 2012). The main issue is that despite the independence of the country from the French, Tunisian leaders were holding it back regarding a liberal democratic system. They supported that a one-party system was more appropriate for the welfare of the country, but the main reason was the desire of maintaining their position. Furthermore, any voice of opposition was put in challenge, since it did pose a threat for the leaders. However, the transition from an authoritarian form of government to a more “democratic”, one based on free elections, legal participation of all parties, freedom of speech or religions, must happen through radical change (Guo, 2010). This led to the Jasmine Revolution in 2011, the first of a series of protests and demonstrations around the countries of middle East, which shared the exact same cause as Tunisia: the establishment of a multi-party system, the legalization of opposition parties, elections without corruption, freedom of speech and economic reforms for the less privileged walks of life (Angrist, 2013). The magnitude of the demonstrations was so large that Ben Ali had to step down from his position and finally allow more electoral participants to compete for the leadership of the country. Despite Morocco being in a similar situation as Tunisia regarding the French influence and reign, it did not follow the same path after its independence. However, one country that had suffered a worse fate under the French than the previous two countries but eventually found its way towards democracy and will be examined in the next chapter is Algeria.

## CHAPTER 3: ALGERIA

### 3.1: Violent colonial period, the War of Independence and the establishment of “Democracy”

The French presence in Algeria was entirely different from the cases of Morocco and Tunisia. While the cases where France cooperated with the latter countries and there were certain cases of armed conflicts, France colonized directly Algeria. The initial date of the French decision to invade Algeria was in 1830. However, a certain incident<sup>11</sup> three years before, in 1827 ignited the spark for France to believe that the only solution was warfare. At the arrival of the French armies in 1830, the Algerian forces proved to be too weak for them. As a result, Husayn agreed with the French to stop the invasion in exchange for his own exile. But the French violated the agreement and conquered several cities as well as looted properties of the population. Despite the internal events of the July Revolution in France and the rising of Louis-Phillippe on the throne, the stance of the colonial

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<sup>11</sup> During a meeting between a French consul and the dey of Algiers, Husayn, the conversation led to tension and eventually the dey hit the consul with a fly whisk. France answered with a blockade at the port Algeria and then the dey reacted with bombardment against the blockade.

power against Algeria did not change. Instead, the French tried to bargain with Tunisian leaders in order to rule regions of Algeria under the French. However, the agreements were not characterized by clarity on the French intentions and the Tunisians refused the offers. At their efforts at continuing with the campaign they conquered several other cities and villages<sup>12</sup> but they found significant resistance by the leader of the Sufi Brotherhood, Emir Abdelkader. In 1834 the French decided to sign a treaty with Abdelkader but since the terms of the treaty were pointed only by the French general Louis-Alexis Desmichels without any communication with the French government, it was deemed as invalid and so colonial armies marched into the regions of the Abdelkader. He responded with counterattacks in 1839 driving the French forces back to Algiers. Seemingly impossible to solve the situation with negotiations, the French decided to move to all-out war. Sending more troops to the campaign, France managed to counter Abdelkader's hit-and-run methods and managed to force him to surrender in 1847.

Despite the end of the war between France and Abdelkader, the former continued their conquest the next years. But Abdelkader's defeat was the main event that declared the fall of Algeria to the French. Following these events, Algeria remained under military administration until the fall of Napoleon III (Brown, 2022). After his fall, a large number of European populations decided to settle in the regions of Algeria. However, they had several privileges like the exclusion of the military rule implied on the rest of the native population. Luckily, for the natives, the military officers, who were organized into the Arab Bureaus, usually felt compelled for the natives, due to the conditions they lived into and several times leaned towards them rather than the direct orders from the French government. With Napoleon III in charge, the efforts for the transition of the responsibility for Algeria to a ministry in Paris were frozen. He always declared that *"Algeria is not a French province but an Arab country, a French colony and a French military camp"* (Brown, 2022). The Algerians were relieved by this statement, however after Napoleon's fall in 1870, their hopes were eliminated. The continuously rising demands of the "pieds noirs (Sherman, 1962)<sup>13</sup> for land expansions led to one more uprising of the natives under the commands of Muhammad al-Muqrani in Kabylie. However, it was brutally subdued by the French and further parts of the land were allocated and offered to European populations leading the natives to move towards the woodlands of the country. By the time the World War I occurred, France had bestowed complete domination over Algeria in every sector (financial, political, social). Nonetheless, their actions had led towards the development of several nationalist groups, which later contributed to the independence of the country. Firstly, the French educated scholars called évolués adopted the ideas of democracy and were positive to a merging with France under the condition that they Algerian natives would have the same rights as the Frenchmen. The second nationalist group was Arab reformists who dedicated themselves in religious beliefs and connected the identity of Algerians to Islam. The third one was organized in France by Arab proletarian groups and directed its influence to the supporters of the Algerian

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<sup>12</sup> Mitidja Plain, Mers el-Kebir (1830), Oran (1831), Bejaia (1833)

<sup>13</sup>The term "pieds noirs" applies to the French, who settled in the newly occupied grounds of Algeria.

independence. By 1936, there was a proposal in France known as “*The Blum-Viollette project*” (Cohen, 1972), which stated that a small number of Algerians would gain full French citizenship, while maintaining their cultural identities. However, the reaction by the settler population was so large, that it was never even brought to vote. As a result, the Algerians believed that the only way for them to eliminate the large differences with the French was violence. After the fall of France in 1942, the Algerian began demanding political autonomy. Specifically, Ferhat Abbas, an Algerian politician, drafted a manifesto which condemned the colonial rule and demanded a constitution providing equal rights to every Algerian inhabitant. A year later, the French did provide the Algerians French citizenship but to a certain extent, which proved too little to ease the demands of the population. Several protests the following years were faced by the French authorities by violence and brutal suppression and eventually France legally acknowledged the full citizenship of Muslim populations while maintaining their cultural rights and also attending higher levels of education. However, the law was poorly implemented and furthermore the next elections were rigged for the sake of the French. All these incidents led to the outbreak of the Algerian war of Independence led by several nationalist parties forming the Revolutionary Committee of Unity and Action (CRUA), which later was known as National Liberation Front (FLN). In October 31, 1954 CRUA made its move by declaring its aims and the two methods for achieving them: guerilla warfare on the internal stage and diplomatic actions in the international stage. The attacks of CRUA in several parts of the country led France to take action by declaring firstly the afflicted areas and afterwards the entire country in an emergency state. In 1955 Jacques Soustelle became the new governor-general of the country. However, his actions proved ineffective and a year later, after the elections in France he was replaced by Georges Catroux. This decision was condemned by the settlers and led to his immediate replacement by Robert Lacoste. Meanwhile, political leaders like Ferhat Abbas had joined the FLN leaders in a congress where the objectives of the war and the establishment of National Council for the Algerian Revolution and the Committee of Coordination and Enforcement were discussed. Furthermore, in the year 1956, independence in Tunisia and Morocco were granted, something which allowed the French to instead focus on the situation in Algeria. The leaders of the two countries, in desire to find solution to the problem arranged a meeting between them and several Algerian leaders like Ben Bella, one of the pioneers of the FLN. However, the plane, after French intervention landed in Oran instead of Tunis. There, the leaders were arrested by the French by the time they set foot on the ground. As a result, FLN began its actions by attacking both military and civilian targets in Algiers but they were prevented by the French forces. Furthermore, France cut the connections between Algeria and its neighbors, Tunisia and Morocco in an effort to isolate the country. Meanwhile, a congress named Maghreb Unity Congress took place in Tangier aiming to create an Algerian government-in exile. Later on, the FLN did form the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA) with Ferhat Abbas as its head. The settlers’ reactions however were increasing as time went by and more and more uprisings took place, especially with Charles De Gaulle’s intervention, who offered more rights to the Algerian people and supported the idea of the Algerian independence. After several

negotiations and the replacement of Abbas by Benyoussef Ben Khedda an agreement was finally reached. After the recession of terrorist hostilities as a reaction against this agreement, in 1962 Algeria held a referendum, where almost unanimously its independence was declared.

The newly appointed government under Ben Khedda had to deal with a lot of crucial matters, especially with the large areas of land several settlers abandoned during their departure. Apart from that, Khedda had to deal with the defection from several government members, who created parties to challenge his power. The main opposition power, the Political Bureau under the leadership of Ben Bella, managed to gather a lot of supporters and several of the voters of GPRA. As a result, he won the elections in September 1962 and managed to form the nation's first elected government. However, the following years were characterized by several internal conflicts within the ruling party and efforts of Ben Bella to eliminate targets, who threatened to strip him of his power. One of those targets, Houari Boumediene, who also had large support from the army managed to emerge in the leadership in conjunction with the disapproval of Ben Bella's poor administrative work. Boumediene managed to reorganize the FLN to some extent and achieve some constitutional reforms up until his death in 1978. After some fuss in the succession choice, in 1979 Chadli Benjedid received the support of both the army and the FLN and became the leader of the country. The situation in the middle East<sup>14</sup> however, led to a rapid emergence of Islamic appeal and the governing model established all those years kept fueling them with dissatisfaction. The reformations on the constitution in 1989, where political plurality was established, benefitted the rising of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), with supporters who completely disapproved the methods of the current government. The elections in 1991 belonged to the FIS after the results of the first round, but the resignation of Benjedid led the army to intervene and cancel them. All these events taking place under a tense environment between the Islamists and the army led to a continuous civil war for the following years. In 1995, Liamine Zeroual the leader appointed at that moment tried to legalize his position by proclaiming presidential elections. Due to the boycotting behavior of several parties, Zeroual gathered the majority of the votes and prime minister became Ahmed Ouyahia. In 1996 the constitution was once again amended. This amendment benefitted the emergence of a new political party, the National Democratic Rally, which achieved victory in the elections of 1997 both in regional and municipal stage. In the presidential elections in 1999, Abdelaziz Bouteflika was announced president. The hostilities from civil war however, continued to hurt the country with the casualties from both sides increasing rapidly. In 2004, Bouteflika was reelected and brought the end of the civil war by proposing the Charter for Peace<sup>15</sup> and National Reconciliation, which was approved by the council of ministers but met several negative reactions by the population and international human rights groups. Several of the Islamic groups, that did not want to compromise with the Charter gathered under the global Islamic group Al Qaeda and continued their actions (Tlemçani, 2008). In 2008, the parliament moved on the

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<sup>14</sup> The revolution of Iran in 1979, the continuous increase at oil prices in the 1980s and the war of Afghanistan.

<sup>15</sup> The charter was proposed in a referendum in 2005 and approved by 97% of all voters.

approval of an amendment, which ended the presidential service limit. This allowed Bouteflika to reelect in the elections of 2009, something that created several uprisings throughout the country. The Arab Spring enhanced these protests in conjunction with the events in Tunisia and Egypt. However, despite the resignation of the leaders in the latter countries, Algeria did not succeed in ending Bouteflika's residency in power. Furthermore, in the 2012 legislative elections the FLN emerged once again victorious. Promises for reformations were made, but never took place. In the presidential elections in 2014 Bouteflika was emerged victorious for his fourth service as president, however a serious health problem he suffered raised several questions on whether the decisions made were really his or he was unable to govern and others did it in his place. Despite those questions, several reformations took place, especially in 2016 where promised amendments by 2011 were finally approved. The announcement of a fifth possible term of Bouteflika in 2019 caused the outbreak of new protests in the country despite the functionality of the approved amendments, regarding the service limit. However, the escalation of the protests and the support of the military to the protesters led Bouteflika to back down from his initial desire to participate in the elections but he also announced a restructure of the government and a new constitution. Due to the increased dissatisfaction even by his political party, Bouteflika eventually resigned his position on April 2, 2019. After several cancelations of the electoral procedure due to the participation of mainly old participants and the desire of the population of an entirely new environment of participation, the elections took place in December 2019, where Abdelmadjid Tebboune was elected president. During his governance, a new constitution with enhancements in the judiciary and legislative sector of the government and with the Covid-19 measures, the protests were significantly reduced.

### 3.2: Democracy with non-democratic methods

A glance in Algeria's course over history shows several differences with the previously mentioned countries on the influence of the French colonialism was established but also similarities with Tunisia on the effects of that influence after their independence. First of all, the way Algeria became part of the French colonies was filled with brutal expressions of violence. There might have been military expeditions in Morocco and Tunisia but definitely not of that scale as in the case of Algeria. The country suffered a lot under the French and had to live through a large number of settlers occupying the natives' properties and lands. As a result, there was no desire for cooperation between the two sides by no means. So, the concept of the "Europeans coming into a developing country and show their ways of advancement" as well as the desire of Algeria to learn through cooperation did not exist at all. However, despite the brutal occupation of the country, the French were in control and still could proceed to the necessary procedures of establishing a fruitful environment for democracy. But this did not happen either. Just like the other two countries, France exerted its power over Algeria and in fact it even abolished any sign of the previous governance. The primary authority was once again a resident minister, who ruled over the occupied country with all the powers under his volition. He did manage to build some public facilities but all and all the

Algerians were used, especially at the outbreak of World War I as soldiers. So, if the other two countries can be mentioned as cases, where democracy did not have the necessary conditions to evolve, Algeria can be categorized beneath them.

Additionally, a major difference with the other two countries is the large population that moved and established themselves in the properties of the Algerians. There was no environment for cooperation between the two different cultures, for the Algerians to learn from the French and vice versa. Due to the violent occupation and the settling of the Europeans, the two cultures were in a constant conflict. Furthermore, the resident ministers, for the whole duration of the colonial rule refused to provide equal rights to the Algerians. Abandoning the principle of “égalité” the French Revolution stressed many years ago, they kept the natives within the primary stages of education and with limited to no rights at administrative and social positions. Furthermore, throughout the duration of the colonial rule, there is great influence of the events that eventually led to the Algerian War of Independence, by the settlers. The suppression of the Algerian rights directly benefitted them and every move towards equality was conceived as provocation towards them. The opposition to several such movements was large, but at the ending years of the war in conjunction with the influence Charles De Gaulle had, was unable to prevent the inevitable autonomy of Algeria. One more factor, that definitely should not be excluded from the whole case with Algeria, is religion. The devaluation of the Algerian population was seen in the religious aspect too. The French did not provide citizenship to the natives simply because they were Muslim. So, there was no ground for development of freedom of religion.

Moving on the independency of the country, immediate crisis is detected even from the start. With Ben Bella making efforts of eliminating possible threats for his position, the meaning of democracy has already been abolished. The situation in the Algeria after its independency required sensitive handling, but the governance of Ben Bella could not be described as delicate at all. Neither did the services of the succeeded presidents. Bouteflika reached the point, where democracy was seriously questioned with his four-time term, which was the outcome of constitutional amendments, in order for him to secure his position as head of state. The religion played a crucial role on the progress the country made towards democracy. Having been heavily suppressed during the colonial rule and not prospered in equal footing with Christianity, the Islamic belief grew way stronger during the days of the preparation for independence. As a result, the political scene of the country after 1962 took the shape of a structure, where the Islamic movements wanted to establish themselves in power and overthrow the secular governments of the country. The latter however, being influenced by the western ways of governance during their colonial rule on Algeria, found most appropriate to continue the suppression of the Islamic movements by attempting methods, which do not abide to the democratic principles. Once again, a great example is president Bouteflika, who amended the constitution, in order for him to maintain power while knowing that it was possible for him to reelect due to his appeal to the population but also fearing that the end of his term could possibly lead to an Islamic rise to power. Lastly, the army played a key factor to the development of the administrative

structure of the country as it functioned throughout the years of Algeria's independency. During the colonial era, there was a belief that the democratic regime adopted by the Europeans was an alien, a foreign approach on politics, what we call today as "bourgeois concept" (Bouandel, 2003). On this model, the needs of the citizens exceed those of the state. As a result, the Algerian leaders adopted the thought, that the state has to function in favor of itself, rather than the people. Naturally, the army was attracted to that thought and tried to implement this mentality by supporting the first party that governed, the FLN and helped in the suppression of other parties and organizations, which wanted to be a part of the governing process. Still, this whole concept has been misinterpreted by the Algerians due to the whole behavior of the French during their colonial reign. The lack of a healthy governance with equality, respect for human rights, freedom of religion and transparency between the two sides, would act as an example for the country after their desire for independence and as a go-to regime.

## CONCLUSIONS

The French colonization widely influenced the global scene and the political stage of the countries they reigned over. More specifically on this paper, the case of three countries in north Africa are examined. Three countries, which were under the French rule for almost half or more than a century: Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. All three of them share both common and different traits of influence by the French. The most important of the common traits, which is examined on this paper is the formation of their political scene after their independence from France and how the latter influenced it. The results showed that the French colonial rule led the established regime of the countries more towards an authoritarian regime rather than an authentic democracy. This result is based on a number of reasons, many of which relate with the colonial rule. The fact that in all three countries, the administrative authorities were gathered in the grasp of an appointed by the French capital minister shows the fear France had of the natives' power. Despite their preaching of "liberté" and "égalité", principles achieved by the French revolution, the desire for complete control and influence over the occupied lands drove the French in the abolishment of the latter. Even the preservation of the local political leader in Morocco and Tunisia, despite his essential lack of power, contrasts to the democratic principles. Furthermore, the fact that in all three countries the appointed ministers disobeyed the orders from the capital and imposed their own will on the population showcases the authoritarian atmosphere of the colonial rule. Despite the gradual establishment of democratic institutions such as the parliament, their functionality was characterized by a misinterpreted conception of democracy. The appliance of any voted parliamentary decision lied in the will of the minister. Moreover, as seen in the case of Algeria, the hostile environment between the French and the natives did not allow any provide any fruitful environment for healthy interaction between the two sides and thus the Algerians did not wish to follow any of the French ways of



governance. Adding to that the depreciation of the religious beliefs of the natives to a poorly established democratic regime in the two of the three countries (Algeria and Tunisia). Morocco returned to monarchy, however despite the official recognition of the democratic regime of the other two countries, they functioned throughout the years more as an authoritarian regime rather than a democratic one. This was the aftermath of the colonial rule. Having learned under suppression, all countries focused their struggles their independence from the French rule. They neglected though the voice of their own people due to the influence France had and the fear of losing their newly obtained identity, which came along with the independence. The Arab Spring effected more or less all three countries and, in some cases, led to a kind of improvement towards democracy.

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