



PROJECT MUSE®

Algeria versus the Arab Spring

Frédéric Volpi

Journal of Democracy, Volume 24, Number 3, July 2013, pp. 104-115
(Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/jod.2013.0040



➔ For additional information about this article

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jod/summary/v024/24.3.volpi.html>

ALGERIA VERSUS THE ARAB SPRING

Frédéric Volpi

Frédéric Volpi is senior lecturer in the School of International Relations of the University of Saint Andrews (Scotland). He is the author of Political Islam Observed: Disciplinary Perspectives (2010) and editor of Political Civility in the Middle East (2011).

What accounts for continuing authoritarian success in the Arab world today? In light of the “Arab Spring,” explanations of “authoritarian resilience” in the region clearly need to be revised. Yet it is important to remember that many of these authoritarian regimes have weathered the storm well. As Sean Yom and Gregory Gause recently noted in these pages, most of the region’s monarchies have so far remained unbowed by the winds of revolutionary change.¹ It is much harder—though not impossible—to identify Arab republics that have not been deeply and adversely affected by the wave of uprisings. In the Republic of Algeria, not only did the regime survive this tumultuous period, but it hardly deviated from its habitual methods of authoritarian governance. Is Algeria the exception that confirms the rule? Or does it underscore the complexity of the mechanisms underpinning authoritarianism in the region, and the limitations of revolutionary models of regime change of the Arab Spring? In my view, Algeria illustrates a type of authoritarian resistance to popular challenges that is based on pseudodemocratization, redistributive patronage, and an effective use of the security apparatus.

It would be misguided to evaluate the prospects for political change in the Middle East simply in light of the recent uprisings. The patterns of democratic revolutions and authoritarian resilience observed during the Arab Spring indicate that specific combinations of factors can be conducive to regime failure, but they hardly provide a comprehensive map of all the causes that can lead to regime change in the region. For one thing, authoritarian elites do learn from their mistakes and those of others; in that respect, the Algerian regime is no exception.² Furthermore, and somewhat counterintuitively, just because a particular regime

survived this wave of revolts does not mean that it is strong or stable in the full sense, but only that it was not vulnerable to the particular forms of mobilization that marked those uprisings. Here again, Algeria is a good illustration. Despite its unsteady mode of authoritarian governance, the Algerian regime currently possesses the means to cope with the difficulties presented by popular uprisings. Yet it cannot survive in its current form for long, given its dwindling legitimacy, its lack of truly institutionalized mechanisms for transferring power, and the intrinsic limits of its system of patronage.

How did Algeria reach this pass, and what does that tell us about authoritarian resilience in the region today? Authoritarian stability during the Arab Spring was path-dependent and sprang from the combination of three sets of factors related, respectively, to institutions, the socioeconomic situation, and the security services. If an authoritarian regime survives mass protests, it does so because its mechanisms for decoupling social unrest from political mobilization—namely, pseudodemocratization, state patronage, and robust militarism—are effective. The authoritarian rulers prop themselves up with the help of a pseudodemocratic multiparty system that coopts and divides the opposition while generating a modicum of international recognition. They also entrench a patronage-based rentier economy that, in effect, buys social quiet with financial rewards. Finally, the well-resourced repressive apparatus is both willing and able to put down social unrest and armed rebellions.

A Hijacked Transition

What makes the case of Algeria during the Arab Spring all the more puzzling is that, compared to its North African neighbors (Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt), it had long been a troubled polity where social order remained elusive. Colonized by France in the nineteenth century, Algeria won independence in 1962 after a deadly eight-year war. The National Liberation Front (FLN) had led the fight for independence, and afterward formed a one-party state. The National Liberation Army would repeatedly impose its choices on the FLN after the military coup of Colonel Houari Boumediene in 1965. After severe rioting and social unrest in 1988, the government introduced a series of political and economic reforms, and the country held multiparty local elections in 1990 and the first round of national parliamentary elections in late 1991.

This first attempt at democratization saw an Islamic constituency mobilize and come close to gaining state power—until the electoral gains of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) were wiped out by the military coup of January 1992. The fallout from this ill-fated move was nearly a decade of civil conflict between the military-backed regime and the newly created Armed Islamic Groups. It engulfed ordinary Algerians in a vicious cycle of brutality and retribution that claimed around 150,000

lives. Although the general armistice that marked the end of the Islamist insurrection in 1999 reduced the fighting to a level that was manageable for the government of newly elected President Abdelaziz Bouteflika (b. 1937) of the FLN, residual violence has continued to plague the country—most notably due to the activities of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, an organization that in 2007 rebranded itself al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

A principal consequence of the civil conflict was a fragmented political community in which nationalists, secularists, liberals, and Islamists distrusted each other as much as they distrusted the regime. Although the state had reclaimed a degree of legitimacy through the reestablishment of a (rather unrepresentative) parliamentary system, the regime had also been rocked by powerful social and political protests. The Berber “Black Spring” of 2001, in which more than a hundred demonstrators in the Kabylie region were killed while protesting against the regime’s policies toward Berbers, showed how continuing failures of political dialogue—this time with Kabyle social movements—and heavy-handed repressive tactics ensured an atmosphere of mutual distrust in the country.

Algeria’s electoral system—which lacked credibility despite praise from the international community for the regime’s democratic reforms—did little to change these perceptions. Backed by the military, Bouteflika won the presidency unopposed in 1999. The other six candidates had withdrawn from the contest on the eve of the election, claiming that it was rigged. Bouteflika went on to win the 2004 and 2009 elections with 84 percent and 90 percent of the vote, respectively. (He was allowed to run in 2009 only after a constitutional amendment permitted him a third term.) Bouteflika’s administration has been careful to include the Islamist Movement for a Peaceful Society (MSP) and the National Democratic Rally (RND; a party founded in 1997 by entrenched elites who backed the then-president, retired general Liamine Zeroual) in the governing coalition in order to widen its support base. Yet the token Islamist participation of the MSP, former competitors of the FIS, is not an indication of a substantive political opening; rather, it shows how the regime uses cooptation and patronage.

During the 2000s, the socioeconomic climate in Algeria remained harsh despite state subsidies and infrastructural investments paid for by oil and gas rents. In a leaked 2008 cable, U.S. ambassador Robert Ford told Washington that Algerians were striking nearly every week and that “almost daily there are isolated demonstrations, with the occasional government office in some distant town attacked.”⁷³ In the year before the Arab Spring, Algerian newspapers regularly reported episodes of rioting in various parts of the country. Yet by the end of 2010, if the Algerian regime was not proving to be as solidly in control as its neighbors seemed to be, neither did it appear to be on the brink of collapse. Crucially, most Algerians did not consider the aging and increasingly

incapacitated Bouteflika to be the main driver of the country's predatory regime, and therefore did not think that ousting him would dramatically improve their lives. Moreover, the partial political opening that the regime had orchestrated kept the dissensions within the opposition alive while giving many a stake in the status quo.

Missing the Revolutionary Bandwagon

At the beginning of 2011, Algeria was one of the first countries in the region to be affected by the wave of uprisings that had begun in Tunisia as 2010 ended. In Algeria, a deregulation of the state-subsidized economy triggered price hikes and shortages just as Algerians could see unrest reaching a crisis next door in Tunisia. Protests broke out in several of the poorer suburbs of Algiers and Oran on January 3. By the next day, rioting had spread to other areas near the capital. On January 5, there was major unrest in Algiers, Oran, and many other towns all around the country. Algeria's relatively free press covered the events, and soon riots were reported in twenty regions (*wilayat*). As the rioters—mainly young men—blocked roads, burned tires, and ransacked government buildings and commercial centers, the initial discontent over a decrease in subsidized staple goods gave way to protests over a wide range of socioeconomic grievances.

The shadow of the October 1988 riots loomed over these events, and the connection was explicitly made in the domestic press. While the socioeconomic complaints did resemble those of 1988, the roles of the military and the Islamists were different. Although former FIS leader Ali Belhadj and his supporters turned up at the demonstrations in Algiers, Islamists did not lead the protest or even turn out in large numbers. Likewise, the response of the security forces was nowhere near as brutal or lethal as it had been in 1988, when the army fired live ammunition at the crowds. In January 2011, by contrast, the security forces targeted key urban areas—in central Algiers around the Parliament, the Senate, and other government buildings—and simply abandoned the suburbs to the rioters.

A few days after the riots began, the government announced a reversal of the price increases and put in place new policies designed to lower the cost of food imports. This swift action appeared to meet the protesters' demands. Within a couple of days, most protests had subsided and mass public disobedience was losing momentum. Moreover, the relative restraint of the security forces ensured that state repression itself did not become the cause of further protests (as had happened in Tunisia). In this context of subsiding revolutionary fervor, even radical acts, such as a self-immolation on January 12, failed to reignite the contestation.⁴

During the Arab Spring, popular unrest and regime responses in Algeria ended up following rather predictable patterns and thus strengthened preexisting dynamics of state-society interactions. This does not

mean that the Algerian regime used the “correct” combination of repression and cooptation to defuse a revolution, but merely that on this occasion what it did worked well enough. In 2011, popular unrest did not gather enough momentum to deinstitutionalize routine authoritarian practices and induce a reframing of the roles of the regime and the protesters. In the ensuing months, however, “normalcy” in Algeria still included regular protests—clashes with police, road blockades, strikes, ransacking of buildings, and so on—but these were disparate episodes rather than part of a nationwide event.

In the aftermath of the riots, however, a group of social and political organizations started a new and far less spectacular protest movement. On January 20, several opposition parties, nonlegalized unions, and civil society organizations joined forces to articulate the implicit political demands of the protesting crowds. These groups formed the National Coordination for Change and Democracy (NCCD) and issued a call for greater democracy, social justice, an end to the state of emergency, relaxation of media laws, and the release of imprisoned protesters, as well as more job opportunities.

As the movement signaled its intention to organize a demonstration against the regime, its call for public protest was swiftly echoed by the pro-Islamist activist network Rachad. Soon after, Saïd Saadi, the leader of the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), a Berber political party, announced that the RCD was organizing a march for democracy in Algiers on January 22. The demonstration, which gathered a few hundred activists in central Algiers, was quickly broken up by a large police force that also prevented busloads of activists from entering the city to join the protest. In its turn, the NCCD announced that it would organize its own march on February 12. The regime made good use of the lull between the two protests to ease socioeconomic and political tensions. On February 3, the government indicated that the nineteen-year-old state of emergency would soon be lifted, opposition parties would be allowed greater airtime on state-controlled television and radio, and a new job-creation scheme was about to be implemented.

On 12 February 2011—the day after Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak resigned—protestors in Algeria responding to the NCCD’s call converged on May First Square in central Algiers. In an event that some viewed as a miniature version of Cairo’s Tahrir Square protests, around three-thousand protesters managed to occupy the square for a while after breaking through police lines. Yet in Algiers, unlike in Cairo, security forces outnumbered protesters by ten to one; about thirty-thousand police had been mobilized for the occasion. Riot police blocked would-be protesters from neighboring suburbs and other towns from reaching the center of the capital to participate in the demonstration in May First Square.

One incident in particular illustrated the NCCD’s difficulties at unify-

ing the opposition: Former FIS leader Ali Belhadj and several dozen of his supporters were pushed back while trying to join the demonstration. The expulsion of Belhadj and his cohort was not the work of the police, however, but rather of the demonstrators themselves, who feared that the Islamists might hijack their protest. The impact of the 1992 military coup and the civil conflict on Islamic-secular relations is such that leftist and liberal actors prefer to go it alone against the regime at the risk of failure, rather than seek a potentially more powerful coalition with the Islamists.

The February 12 demonstration illustrated the limited capabilities of the NCCD to unite different opposition forces in the country and to connect with the large number of depoliticized youth who had driven January's social protests. Undaunted, the NCCD called for demonstrations to continue every Saturday in May First Square. The following week, on February 19, a similar protest was duly organized, with the same disappointing turnout. The choice of Saturday for weekly demonstrations—despite earlier calls by Islamic groups such as Rachad to hold the protests on Fridays—further entrenched the divide between liberal secularists and Islamists. The symbolic death knell for the NCCD was probably a March 7 rally in Algiers of tens of thousands of communal guards—local police auxiliaries that the regime had organized in the countryside to hinder the activities of Islamist guerrillas—demanding better pay and greater recognition for their role during the civil conflict. This rally mobilized far more protesters than the NCCD ever had and temporarily disrupted police control of central Algiers. It illustrated that even a well-oiled security apparatus could be outfoxed, as long as protesters had the numbers and surprise on their side.

Patronage and Militarism

Comparing Algeria to Tunisia, Jack Brown observed how counterintuitive it was that Algerian civil society had not done a better job of harnessing the momentum of the January 2011 riots for their February demonstrations, since Algeria under Bouteflika had a freer and livelier civil and political society than Tunisia under Ben Ali.⁵ What the February political protests showed, however, is that this greater political space can actually be a hindrance to large-scale mobilization if opposition forces are powerful enough to turn out their core constituencies but too weak to attract support beyond them, not least because of an unwillingness to create cross-ideological alliances. The political unrest in February was far less significant in scope than the social unrest in January, when the motley crew of demonstrators could join in the protest for any reason. In February, protesters had to subscribe to a particular agenda to join the movement, which disempowered the crowds by dividing them into competing factions. This same predicament prevailed throughout the 2000s and was most vividly illustrated by the Berber Black Spring of 2001.

By March 2011, it was clear that the initial wave of Arab uprisings would not affect Algeria in the way that it had its eastern neighbors. In Algeria, the return to normalcy meant the routinization of discontent and disorder through semi-institutional mechanisms designed to render such

Algeria's patronage system can expand and contract depending on the economic and political circumstances, and periods of contraction are costly for the regime.

displays of disaffection nonthreatening to the ruling elite. In March in Algiers, typical instances of social unrest included nearly two-hundred youths throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at the police, a crowd of several hundred protesters similarly attacking the police and contractors headed to bulldoze a shantytown, and the like. That same month, socioeconomic discontent generated at least seventy strikes throughout the country by professional associations and unions—from teachers to rail workers and doctors to court clerks. As Ali Chibani

remarked at the time, the regime's position of relative weakness "is well understood by Algerians who recognize that now is the time to obtain promotions and improve their working conditions and their social circumstances."⁶ The dynamics of these strikes, which would remain commonplace throughout the year, illustrate the continuing relevance of the traditional social contract proposed by the Algerian regime: The administration provides better socioeconomic conditions in exchange for continuing (albeit grudging) political quiescence.

In May 2011, in an effort to finance the concessions made to various striking sectors, the Algerian government unveiled a revised budget that increased public-sector spending by a massive 25 percent. This spending spree constituted an affordable short-term option for a regime seeking to buy its way out of trouble, Gulf-monarchy style. Yet, with an ever-expanding public sector—and a much larger population than in the Gulf—the Algerian state has burdened itself with a soaring wage bill that can only be paid as long as oil and natural-gas prices keep rising.⁷

As Luis Martinez has noted, the regime's ability to reorient system-challenging unrest into more mundane benefit-seeking protests stems from the economic system, which has been modeled over the years to buttress the patronage structures that ensure dependence of the population and local elites on the state elite's redistribution of oil and gas rents. In 2010, these rents "accounted for 60 percent of [Algeria's] budget revenues, 36 percent of its GDP, and over 97 percent of its export earnings."⁸ This patronage system can expand and contract depending on the economic and political circumstances, and as the events of the late 1980s and early 1990s illustrate, periods of contraction are costly for the regime. Tellingly, throughout the 2000s, the Bouteflika administration consistently and deliberately underestimated the price of oil and gas in

its budget calculations so as to build large reserves of foreign currency that could be used precisely at times when the regime needed to counter dissent with financial incentives.

In addition to the support that it derives from the patronage system, the regime also owes its resilience to the backing of the security forces, as the 2011 protests illustrated. This is not to be understood simply in terms of the sheer repressive capability of the state, impressive though it is—the police and the gendarmerie were bolstered during the civil conflict of the 1990s, and by the end of the 2000s they numbered more than 200,000 all told. The strength of the security forces stems more from the effectiveness of their response to the unrest. In that respect, the repressive apparatus of January 2011 was far superior to that of October 1988, when the army killed more than five-hundred demonstrators in just over ten days. During the week of rioting in January 2011, only three demonstrators died. In addition, at the end of February 2011, the government lifted the state of emergency that had been in place since the 1992 military coup. This symbolic concession was counterbalanced, however, by the adoption of new “antiterrorism” measures granting the security forces extensive freedom of action with regard to any matter that they deemed “a threat to the nation”—demonstrations in the capital included.

Some analyses of “robust” authoritarianism in the Middle East note that, in addition to the actual repressive capabilities of the security forces, two other aspects of repression are crucial to authoritarian rule: The first is the willingness of the military leadership (and other key security actors) to use force, and the second is the material and ideational interests of the military and other key security forces.⁹ For the Algerian military, these material interests have included not only a budget that has increased yearly during the 2000s in order to sustain existing levels of patronage, but also a more direct interest in various public and private-sector ventures. Steven Cook likened the 1980s-era generals to “godfathers” who intervened in the delivery of business licenses and exclusivity contracts.¹⁰ The 2000s, meanwhile, have seen the ongoing involvement of military figures in crony capitalism and corruption scandals—most spectacularly in relation to the national oil company, Sonatrach, in early 2010.¹¹

The rank-and-file security personnel have benefited, too. In December 2010, the government announced that the wages of most police forces—totaling 170,000 personnel—were to increase by 50 percent and would include a three-year back-pay deal. Similarly, in December 2011 military personnel saw their salaries go up by 40 percent, also with a three-year back-pay package. Unmistakably, the postcolonial social contract of socioeconomic gratification in exchange for quiescence applied even more to rank-and-file members of the security apparatus than it did to the populace at large.

Over the years, the upper ranks of the Algerian military have repeatedly proved willing and able to use lethal force on a massive scale to

secure their preferred system of political governance. This pattern of intervention—and the belief of many junior officers that their oversight of politics is good for the country—has entrenched a neopraetorianism that leaves little chance for a protest-induced regime-change scenario in which the military stands by and lets a revolt run its course.¹² Specialists have been predicting for years that the military would progressively lose influence—not least due to the dying off of the older generation of leaders—but this has not yet translated into significant institutional and behavioral changes. In the current international and sociohistorical context, it seems unavoidable that the military's influence will wane over time; the Turkish model and some steps taken by the Egyptian military illustrate such trends. In the short term, however, the neopraetorian dynamics in Algeria constrain the kinds of political changes that are likely to occur. The vicious circle created between low mobilization and low-cost repression is self-reinforcing. In addition, the population's weariness of conflict since the 1990s contributes to the perception that, even if a revolt were to succeed, it could generate more unwanted violence and misery.

Authoritarian Upgrading After the Revolts

In April 2011, President Bouteflika went on national television to tout his Arab Spring–inspired program of reforms. The president announced “political reforms to deepen the democratic process and to enable the citizens to better contribute to the choices that shape their future.”¹³ In practice, however, this initiative resulted only in the establishment of a commission to organize limited constitutional reforms, broader access to national television and radio for opposition parties, and a revision of the electoral code to facilitate the creation of new political organizations. The underwhelmed response of the main opposition parties and civil society organizations to these propositions was reflected in their decision to boycott the consultation process of the committee charged with drafting the constitutional amendments the following month.

In an effort to show that the electoral reforms had substance, the Interior Minister Daho Ould Kablia eagerly announced at the start of October 2011 that all new parties applying for recognition would be legalized before the end of the year. In practice, however, the proliferation of microparties—nearly doubling the number of existing political parties from 22 to 40—merely enabled the expansion of the regime's patronage network via business politics. Most of the new parties were either splinter groups of existing parties—especially the FLN and the RND—or vehicles for self-promotion by personalities and businessmen close to the regime.¹⁴

The electoral victories of Islamist parties in Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt raised some international observers' concerns about an Islamist resurgence in Algeria's 10 May 2012 elections for the National People's Assembly (the lower house of Parliament). Lending credence to these

fears was the MSP's withdrawal from the ruling coalition in January 2012 in order to join forces with two smaller Islamist opposition groups, *Islah* and *Ennahda*, to form the Green Algeria Alliance. Algerians, however, were skeptical of the credentials of this new Islamist alliance, which was dominated by political actors with a long history of cooperating with the regime—even during the unrest in 2011—and who only moved to the opposition during the run-up to the elections. Moreover, the regime reaffirmed its policy of containing the Islamist vote with legislative amendments that prohibited political actors previously associated with the FIS from creating new parties. In this context, as seasoned analysts of Algeria had predicted and as the regime had planned, the parliamentary elections brought few surprises.¹⁵

Most of the new parties struggled to win just 1 or 2 percent of the vote, and none—not even the vaunted Green Algeria Alliance, which stayed stuck in single digits and won only 49 of 462 seats—emerged as a significant opposition force. If anything, the regime's tinkering with the electoral rules may have been too effective for its own good. Although the country's proportional-representation, largest-remainder system with a 5 percent threshold for earning seats remained intact, having so many opposition parties compete considerably boosted the FLN's electoral performance. The ruling party won 45 percent (208) of the seats in the Assembly—an outcome that was all the more remarkable given that the FLN received only a little over 17 percent of the vote. The RND, also a member of the ruling coalition, was the next-highest seat earner with 69. The Front of Socialist Forces and the Workers' Party won 27 and 24 seats, respectively. The remaining seats were divided among independent candidates and more than twenty other parties.¹⁶

Internationally, the stability of Algeria's pseudodemocratic system was once again commended. The elections were “a welcome step in Algeria's progress toward democratic reform,” said U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton.¹⁷ Domestically, the election results generated the usual level of suspicion and incredulity from the Algerian public and political actors, and accusations of vote rigging and manipulation flew. In short, by encouraging an explosion of tiny new parties in an attempt to make the political field appear more pluralistic, the regime in fact (re)produced an ultradominant-party system. Yet in the new post-Arab Spring regional context, such authoritarian maintenance of the status quo suddenly appeared abnormal.¹⁸

The patron-client economic programs that the regime had devised in the run-up to the 2012 local and parliamentary elections helped to mobilize those voters who would directly benefit from these subsidies. The show of electoral strength by the pro-regime parties (FLN and RND) was akin to the mass demonstrations of public support that the state party organized in the 1960s and the 1970s. Indeed, since the 1992 military intervention, elections have always swung massively (and suspiciously)

in favor of candidates and parties representing the incumbent leadership. At the same time, this system of political patronage generates constant infighting in and among regime-aligned parties, as different networks try to maximize their gains and leverage vis-à-vis the central administration. In Algeria, the flurry of political activity leading up to the 2014 presidential election should not obscure the limited political opportunities that the country's electoral model allows. As long as the ruling elite makes sure to keep power within its ranks, it will be able to manage a smooth transition, and the state-party system and its pseudodemocratic successor will remain mere tools for this rotation of power.

Thus, who better to replace the current president in the forthcoming election than someone just like him? Who better to sit at the head of state than a longtime member of the ruling elite who knows how not to upset a system that works (at least for members of the elite)? The presidential election scheduled for April 2014 presents an opportunity for the regime to ease into office someone ostensibly new, but who would not upset the status quo in any significant way. Unsurprisingly, in the first half of 2013 the most touted potential replacements for Bouteflika are all well known to both the regime and the electorate—FLN secretary-general Abdelaziz Belkhadem, current prime minister Abdelmalek Sellal, and former prime ministers Ahmed Ouyahia, Ahmed Benbitour, Mouloud Hamrouche, and Ali Benflis.

As for the Islamists, will they eventually be able to mount a successful, institutionalized political challenge to obtain at least a share of state power, as has happened elsewhere in the region? For now, that seems an unlikely possibility in Algeria, even if we take into consideration the foothold inside ruling circles of former public-works minister Amar Ghoul, formerly of the MSP. Indeed, both Islamist and liberal opposition forces are still searching for a new kind of leadership and organization that will enable them to mount a convincing challenge to the ruling elites, either on their own or as part of a yet-to-be-imagined grand coalition. It is doubtful that will happen in time for the 2014 presidential election, but it is bound to happen at some point. When it finally does, the dynamics of authoritarianism in Algeria—patronage, neopraetorianism, and all—will change significantly.

NOTES

The author wishes to thank Francesco Cavatorta and Yahia Zoubir for their valuable comments on previous versions of this essay.

1. Sean L. Yom and F. Gregory Gause III, "Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On," *Journal of Democracy* 23 (October 2012): 74–88.

2. Steven Heydemann and Reinoud Leenders, "Authoritarian Learning and Authoritarian Resilience: Regime Responses to the 'Arab Awakening'," *Globalizations* 8 (October 2011): 647–53.

3. Ambassador Robert Ford, "Scene Setter for A/S Welch Visit to Algeria," U.S. Embassy in Algiers, 28 February 2008, <http://wikileaks.ch/cable/2008/02/08ALGIERS198.html#>.

4. There would be dozens of attempted or successful self-immolations across the country in the following few weeks. See Chawki Amari, "Je brûle, donc je suis," *Courrier International* (Paris), 21 January 2011.

5. Jack Brown, "Algeria's Midwinter Uproar," *Middle East Report Online*, 20 January 2011, www.merip.org/mero/mero012011.

6. Author's translation; Ali Chibani, "En Algérie, répression et opportunistes," *Le Monde diplomatique*, 8 April 2011.

7. "Economic Health Check: Algeria Should Reduce Reliance on Oil, Create More Jobs, Says IMF," *IMF Survey Magazine*, 26 January 2011, www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2011/int012611a.htm.

8. Luis Martinez, *The Violence of Petrodollar Regimes: Algeria, Iraq and Libya*, trans. Cynthia Schoch (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); for quote, see the Energy Information Administration, "Country Analysis Briefs: Algeria," 8 March 2012, www.eia.gov/cabs/Algeria/pdf.pdf.

9. Eva R. Bellin, "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring," *Comparative Politics* 44 (January 2012): 127–49.

10. Steven A. Cook, *Ruling but Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

11. John P. Entelis, "Algeria, Revolutionary in Name Only," *Foreign Policy.com*, 7 September 2011, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/09/07/algeria_revolutionary_in_name_only.

12. See Isabelle Werenfels, *Managing Instability in Algeria: Elites and Political Change Since 1995* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

13. "Discours du Président de la République à la Nation," Algiers, 15 April 2011, www.elmouradia.dz/francais/president/activites/PresidentActi.htm.

14. These include the Future Front, led by Abdelaziz Belaid; the Youth Party, led by Hamana Boucharma; the Party of Dignity, led by Mohamed Ben Hammou; the Front of Rightly Guided Governance, led by Aissa Bel-Hadi; the Movement of Free Citizens, led by Mustapha Boudina; and New Dawn, led by Tahar Benbaibèche.

15. See Yahia H. Zoubir and Ahmed Aghrout, "Algeria's Path to Reform: Authentic Change?" *Middle East Policy* 19 (Summer 2012): 66–83.

16. See National Democratic Institutions, "Final Report on Algeria's Legislative Elections, 10 May 2012," www.ndi.org/files/Algeria-Report-Leg-Elections-ENG.pdf.

17. Press statement of U.S. secretary of state Hillary Rodham Clinton on Algerian elections, Washington, D.C., 12 May 2012, www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2012/05/189811.htm.

18. Steven Heydemann, "Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World," Brookings Institution, *Saban Center Analysis Paper Series*, No.13, October 2007.