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**AN ANALYSIS OF MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN RELATIONS**  
**FROM CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

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## Dedication

To my mother Fatma Zehra ÜLKER and father Ali ÜLKER  
who supported me in every aspect of life  
To my siblings İbrahim ÜLKER, Zeynep ÜLKER and Berra TOPBAŞ  
whome stand by me since the begining  
To my friends Elif Bike FAZLIOĞLU and Leyla VERÇİN  
who accompanied me along the way

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## ABSTRACT

### AN ANALYSIS OF MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN RELATIONS FROM CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE

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In 1956 Morocco gained its independence and had a claim over pre-colonial territories which were containing parts of Algeria and Spanish Sahara (today's Western Sahara). Eleven years later, in 1963 Algeria and Morocco went to war with each other due to border disputes carried out during the colonial period. Shortly after this incident, Sahrawis living in Spanish Sahara proclaimed their independence in 1975 and in 1976 established autonomy under the name Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic which was supported by Algeria. Following the Algerian support for the movement, Rabat and Algier had a military confrontation in 1976 at the Oasis of Amgala. Although both parties settled on this issue and never had another armed conflict after these confrontations, still the tension carried out between the two countries and the status of Western Sahara is an ongoing riddle. The claim of this thesis is that there are three main reasons for the conflict that can be framed through a constructive understanding of international relations. One of the reasons is that these two countries have different state identities and interests which made them stand on opposite sides of the balance of power from the establishment of both states. Secondly, the Security Dilemma that has occurred under an intersubjective understanding of the Western Sahara Issue is the most significant reflection and turnsole of the conflict. Lastly, long history of conflict and distinct identities creates a competitive security system and regional power competition in which both states play key points in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

**Key Words:** Algeria, Morocco, Western Sahara, POLISARIO Front, SADR, Constructivism, State Identity, Security Dilemma, Competitive Security System

## ÖZ

### FAS-CEZAYİR İLİŞKİLERİNİN İNŞACI BİR PERSPEKTİFTEN ANALİZİ

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1956 yılında Fas bağımsızlığını kazandı ve Cezayir ve İspanyol Sahra'nın (bugünkü Batı Sahra) bazı kısımlarını içeren sömürge öncesi topraklar üzerinde hak iddia etti. On bir yıl sonra, 1963'te Cezayir ve Fas, sömürge döneminde yaşanan sınır anlaşmazlıkları nedeniyle savaşa girdi. Bu olaylardan kısa bir süre sonra İspanyol Sahra'da yaşayan Sahraviler 1975 yılında bağımsızlıklarını ilan ettiler ve 1976'da Cezayir'in desteklediği Sahravi Arap Demokratik Cumhuriyeti adı altında özerk bir devlet yapısı kurdular. Cezayir'in Sahravi Bağımsızlık hareketine verdiği desteğin ardından Rabat ve Cezayir hükümetleri, 1976'da Amgala Vahası'nda askeri çatışma yaşadılar. Her iki taraf da bu konuda anlaşmaya varmasına ve bu çatışmalardan sonra bir daha silahlı çatışma yaşamamasına rağmen, iki devlet arasında devam eden gerilim ve Batı Sahra'nın statüsü hala çözüme ulaşmamıştır. Bu tezin iddiası, çatışmanın inşacı bir uluslararası ilişkiler anlayışıyla çerçevelenebilecek üç ana nedeni olduğudur. Sebeplerden ilki, bu iki ülkenin farklı devlet kimliklerine ve çıkarlarına sahip olmaları ve bu da onları her iki devletin kuruluşundan itibaren güç dengesinin karşı taraflarında yer almalarına neden oldu. İkincisi, Batı Sahra Sorunu'nun özneler arası bir anlayışla ortaya çıkan Güvenlik İkilemi, çatışmanın en önemli yansıması ve dönüm noktasıdır. Son olarak, uzun çatışma tarihi ve farklı kimlikler, her iki devletin de Orta Doğu, Afrika ve Avrupa bölgelerinde meydana gelen, rekabetçi bir güvenlik sistemi ve bölgesel güç rekabeti yaratır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Cezayir, Fas, Batı Sahra, POLİSARIO Cephesi, SADR, İnşacılık, Devlet Kimliği, Güvenlik İkilemi, Rekabetçi Güvenlik Sistemi



## TIME TABLE

1830 Invasion of Algiers by French forces  
1884 Spanish Colonization of Western Sahara  
1912 French Protectorate of Morocco  
1944 Independence Manifesto (Istiqlal)  
1954- 1962 Algeria's War of Independence  
1956 Morocco Gains Independence  
1956 Battle of Algiers (National Liberation Front)  
1962 Algeria gains independence  
1963 Moroccan–Algerian Sand War  
1969-1972 Good-Neighborhoodly Treaty between Morocco and Algeria  
1973 Foundation of POLISARIO  
1974 Spanish Census for independence in Western Sahara  
1975 International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion on Western Sahara  
1975 Green March  
1975 Spanish-Moroccan-Mauritanian Tripartite Agreement on Western Sahara  
1976 War between Morocco and POLISARIO  
1976 Oasis of Amgala between Morocco and Algeria  
1976 Morocco Severing Diplomatic Ties with Algeria  
1981 Hassan II accepts referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara at OAU  
1982 POLISARIO is admitted to OAU; Morocco suspends its OAU membership  
1988 Normalization Agreement between Algeria and Morocco  
1989 Treaty establishing the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) signed in Marrakech  
1991 UN-supervised ceasefire between Morocco and POLISARIO MINURSO  
1992 Civil war in Algeria  
1994 Morocco accused Algeria of the Terrorist Attacks at Marrakesh  
1994 Closing the Borders  
2005 Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahias visit to Morocco (Visit was Canceled)  
2013 Two States Called Back Their Ambassadors  
2020 Moroccan consul of Oran called Algeria an 'Enemy Country'  
2020 Abraham Accords  
2021 Morocco's Ambassador of UN Omar Hilale called for the Independence of the Kabyle  
2021 Algeria Called Back its Ambassador  
2021 King Mohammed VI Asked for New Page in their Relations  
2021 President Abdelmadjid Tebboune Accused Morocco of the 'Hostile Acts'  
2021 Algeria Severed Diplomatic Ties

## ABBREVIATION LIST

|                  |                                                                                                        |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>AMU</b>       | : Arab Maghreb Union                                                                                   |
| <b>APNA</b>      | : Algerian People's National Army                                                                      |
| <b>AU</b>        | : African Union                                                                                        |
| <b>EU</b>        | : European Union                                                                                       |
| <b>LAS</b>       | : League of Arab States                                                                                |
| <b>MENA</b>      | : the Middle East and North Africa                                                                     |
| <b>MINURSO</b>   | : United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara                                          |
| <b>NATO</b>      | : North Atlantic Treaty Organization                                                                   |
| <b>OAU</b>       | : Organization of African Union                                                                        |
| <b>POLISARIO</b> | : Frente Popular de Liberación de Saguia-El-Hamra de Oro (Popular Liberation Front for Western Sahara) |
| <b>RMAF</b>      | : Royal Moroccan Armed Forces                                                                          |
| <b>SADR</b>      | : Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara)                                                    |
| <b>UAE</b>       | : United Arab Emirates                                                                                 |
| <b>UN</b>        | : United Nations                                                                                       |
| <b>USA</b>       | : United States of America                                                                             |
| <b>USSR</b>      | : Union of Soviet Socialist Republics                                                                  |

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On 24 August 2021, Ramtane Lamamra, Algerian foreign minister declared severing diplomatic ties with Morocco. In his statement, Lamamra stated<sup>1</sup> “History has shown... Morocco has never stopped carrying out hostile actions against Algeria”. Ties between the two states since the independence of Algeria have been complex and unstable. In 1963 two states went into a war called Sand War due to a border dispute and thirteen years later another direct military confrontation called Oasis of Amgala took place in Western Sahara due to a conflict of interests over the region. After these occurrences, the two states never had another direct conflict. Algeria and Morocco have made continuous efforts to avoid major escalations that would lead to direct military confrontation (Lounnas and Messari, 2018). However, although there was no military confrontation between the two states, Morocco and Algeria had lots of non-direct conflicts. This dispute continued over the Western Sahara issue, under the leadership of the region and through the states with which they formed an alliance. Although the two states tried to improve their relations by neglecting their problems, they could not meet at a common point. These days despite all the efforts put by the two sides, there is no improvement in bilateral relations. Although both countries have comparable demographic structures, similar historical experiences, and mutual interests in their region, both states have not reconciled since their independence.

The first concrete reason underlying this conflict was the land dispute that emerged after the independence between the two countries, with a dispute over their territory, which resulted in the Sand War. Morocco in the context of the Maghreb al-Kebir ideology claimed Tindouf and Bechar, which were part of the colonial borders of Algeria. The second concrete reason was Morocco's claim over the Spanish Sahara, which also stemmed from the same ideology. Algeria's support for the independence of the Spanish Sahara in this regard increased the tension in the relationship. The main problem underlying these two events was the approach of the two countries to the events. Morocco's monarchy rule and imperialist expansionism compared to Algeria's republican and revolutionary character separated the identities and interests of the two countries. The second concrete reason was the attitudes that have been taken toward the independence of Western Sahara (Spanish Sahara) created an insecure environment between the two countries in the long term. This insecurity caused the good neighborly

agreements signed in 1969, 1972, and 1988 and the Maghreb Union to fail. The Western Sahara problem constantly puts the two countries in a security dilemma from which they can not get out, and the two countries expect the worst from each other. This attitude is reflected in the rhetoric and actions of both. Finally, the identity differences between the two countries, historical hostility, and perceiving each other as a security problem cause both states to behave in the context of a competitive security system. This pushes the two countries, which are not at different poles of the balance in the world, and deepens the problem. During the Cold War, Morocco's affinity to the West and Algeria's proximity to the Socialist bloc, today Morocco's rapprochement with the UAE and Israel, while Algeria's rapprochement with Iran has made reconciliation between the two countries a distant possibility. These approaches not only increase hostility and see each other as a security threat but also cause competition between the two countries. In the international realm, both are gateways for the African continent in terms of geopolitics and resources. In short, this thesis will examine the historical conflict between the two countries under three topics: First of all due to the discrepancy between Moroccan and Algerian identities and interests, secondly security dilemma that occurred through the Western Sahara issue, and lastly competitive security system.

## **1.1. Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

The different identities and state structures of Morocco and Algeria that occurred through their pre-colonial, colonial, and de-colonization periods will be considered the central cause of the conflict between the two states. Afterward, the concept of distrust that the two states developed against each other over their differences and their distinct perspectives on the events will be discussed especially over the Western Sahara issue. Lastly, external states' participation in the states' bilateral relations contributes to the growth and continuation of the problem will be discussed. These three issues created an environment of hostility and rivalry that has been going on for the last sixty years. In this thesis, the constructivist theoretical framework will be used when discussing the conflict between the two states and the contribution of the Western Sahara problem to this conflict. The constructivist framework can be explained under three main topics; firstly states identity and interest, secondly security dilemma with the case of Western Sahara and lastly, competitive security system.

In the first topic, Moroccan and Algerian state identities and interests will be framed. To do it, there has to be an elaboration on how constructivism explains state structure. States' identity and interest structure can be explained under four main headlines. First, constructivism argues that the international order is shaped by both structure and agency. Secondly, it states that state capabilities are both material and social. Thirdly, it argues that states' behavior is variable, in certain situations it can be hostile and in certain situations, it can be friendly. Finally, constructivism states that the policies are interrelated under both domestic and international elements. First of all, Constructivists argued that both the international order has an effect on the states, and at the same time states play an important role in the formation of the international order. So they argued that there is mutual construction and constitution among states and international structure (Onuf, 2012) Wendt (1992) argues that "Anarchy is what states make of it" and the behavior of states depends on self-actualization which is constructed both by agency and structure. According to him, states are rational beings that act based on their identity and interest and through these interactions form a system of a structure. As Finnemore (2001) puts it, these structures occur with the relationship that states build on material, historic and social ideational factors.

Constructivists argue that the structure of international politics is both social and material at the same time (Wendt, 1995) and there is no sharp distinction between material and social realities (Onuf, 2012) Social capabilities are as important as material capabilities. Because material capacity puts the state in a certain position within the hierarchy of power and social capabilities place states within a social structure in which their behavior becomes predictable. Through this predictability multilateral and bilateral relations, diplomatic ties and political blocs occur. According to Wendt (1995), these social structures consist of three elements which are shared knowledge, material resources, and practice. These are the three elements that lead countries to cooperate or confront. Thirdly, it argues that states may have different motivations in line with events and identities. In one event, they may adopt a friendly attitude (amity) and prioritize cooperation, while in another they may adopt a hostile attitude (enmity) and prioritize their safety. As Onuf (2012) puts it states construct worlds we know in a world we do not which means identities and interests are not static and can defer parallel to the event or interlocutor (Barnett and Duvall, 2005). Lastly, constructivists argue that international and domestic politics are interrelated and that there is an interaction between domestic politics and international order (Nugroho, 2008). States' internal turmoil reflects on their foreign policies and behaviors towards other states. So states act as autonomous parties

within the international arena and that creates a social system (Wendt, 1999). The norms that establish the international social system begin as domestic norms and then turn into internationally adopted regulations and laws (Finnemore, 1998). Hence domestic characters and events play an important role in explaining the international phenomena. In this regard, Morocco's and Algeria's state structures will be drawn and the differences between them will be portrayed in order to explain the ongoing rivalry between the two.

In the second chapter of the thesis, there will be a further explanation of how the identity and interest differences between Morocco and Algeria emerged as a security dilemma. In fact, the concept of security dilemma was first put forward by realists. But constructivists used and applied this concept in their theories over time. According to realists, the concept of security is the protection of the physical, regional, and administrative structure of the states. In addition, states take positions against each other in line with their material capabilities. As Mitzen (2006) puts it, the security perception of states and their relations with other states are related to their social capabilities beyond their material capabilities. In this direction, security appears in two categories, the first being security communities formed by states' trust in each other, and the second being security dilemmas consisting of states' distrust of each other. In addition, as realists claim, security dilemmas do not always determine the relationship between two states, these dilemmas may appear or disappear through time. "Security dilemmas are not acts of God: they are effects of practice. This does not mean that once created they can necessarily be escaped, but it puts the causal locus in the right place" (Wendt, 1995). The security dilemma between Algeria and Morocco is an indicator of these two discussions. Both states felt distrust towards each other due to identity conflicts beyond physical reasons. In addition, it has been observed that the distrust they have developed against each other has decreased and increased periodically throughout their history. Based on all these discussions, after the Oasis of Amgala incident in 1976, the main security issue in their bilateral relations of Algeria and Morocco became the Western Sahara issue. Hence the most concrete example of security dilemma between two states is the Western Sahara problem. Elaborating on the historical process of this problem will help to understand the issue of trust between the two countries. To begin with a constructivist understanding of security, Ontological security is one establishing a stable whole identity in order to realize its sense of agency (Giddens, 2020).

By creating such a state identity societies construct unity, sovereignty, and a common goal. Security in that term is society's protection of its values in an environment where there is

no fear (McDonal, 2008). In addition to this, states also form security communities with a mutual understanding of identity and interest (Adler and Barnett, 1998). These cooperations are strengthened within different settings such as politics, economy, and the military which creates mutual accountability. However, these communities are static structures and when there is a conflict of interest states tend to change their positions. In addition, for the formation of state identity, the perception of the 'other' must also be constructed. In this context, although the historical, political, and social structure is important to determine one's identity, it is also important for one to construct a dialectical identity through the 'other'. In the international realm, everything shifts quickly which creates uncertainty among states. "Uncertainty thus generates the tragedy of world politics, where a world of security-seekers can be a world at war" (Mitzen, 2006). These uncertainties in the long term create security dilemmas. "A security dilemma, for example, is a social structure composed of intersubjective understandings in which states are so distrustful that they make worst-case assumptions about each others' intentions, and as a result define their interests in self-help terms" (Wendt, 1995). When one state's identity is threatened by a security dilemma the discourse of us and them occurs (McDonald, 2008). After the decolonization period, Morocco and Algeria experienced trusting problems in many areas, and despite their efforts, both countries could not come to terms and took a stand over their distrust for each other on every problem they faced. A pattern has emerged in the relations of both countries that will take one step forward or two backward. In this regard, one of the most important reasons posing a security threat between Morocco and Algeria is the Western Sahara problem.

As in the concept of security, the constructivist school claims that there are two systems in security systems. The first of these is the competitive security system, which is based on a realistic perspective. According to this perspective, the distrust that states develop over a long period of time puts them in a system in which they are competing. The second is the cooperative security system, which is based on an idealist perspective. This school, on the other hand, emerges from the concept of the security community and explains the long-term alliances of states pushing them to deploy together. In this respect, although Morocco and Algeria tried to create a common security system in the late 80s, they formed the Maghreb Union, but this attempt was unsuccessful. Due to their identity and interest differences as well as their security dilemmas, Morocco and Algeria have been in power competition. Power according to constructivists is both discursive and material, and their interaction constructs the world order (Nugroho, 2008). Both power interactions among states and their nature of relations create an

international structure (Barnett, 2005). Because international order consists of interactions and there is no central governance world becomes an area where states either cooperate or compete. If states have a remote identity and long-term disputes then they form a competitive security system (Nugroho, 2008). The two countries have developed a competitive relationship due to their differences and the insecurity they have developed against each other. Morocco and Algeria, are located in a significant region in terms of geopolitics and resources, which led them to compete to become regional hegemons. These two countries, which are in a key region for Africa, the Middle East, and Europe, follow an active policy in the region both diplomatically and economically. However, they deepen the insecure and competitive structure between them by establishing cooperation with countries that compete with each other in the regional and global conjuncture.

## **1.2. Thesis Objective**

Tensions between Morocco and Algeria have been going on for nearly sixty years. Despite the efforts of both parties and external actors, no improvement has been observed in their relations. Although the two countries have made diplomatic attempts and efforts to repair their relations before, they always find themselves at two different ends of the issue. There are studies that reflect the history of conflict between Morocco and Algeria. Many books have so far been written about the Algerian and Moroccan dispute but most of them explained the conflict from the realist perspective. Such as in the works of Lounnas and Messari (2018), *Algeria–Morocco Relations and Their Impact On The Maghrebi Regional System*, Stora's (2002), *Algeria/Morocco: The Passions of the Past, Representations of the Nation that Unite and Divide* and Boukhars (2019), *Reassessing the power of regional security providers: the case of Algeria and Morocco*. Although it is an important school of thought it answers the 'what' type of questions rather than the 'why' type of question. In general, the dilemma between the two countries has been handled descriptively as a historical process or it was handled by the realist school as a simple power struggle between two states.

In addition, the Moroccan and Algerian issues generally have been discussed over the Western Sahara problem. Such as in the works of Jensen (1993) *Western Sahara, Anatomy of a stalemate*, Zoubir (2010) *The Unresolved Western Sahara Conflict and Its Repercussions*, and Besenyo (2019) *Western Sahara*. In these works, the tension between Algeria and Morocco is



generally read through the conflict in the region. In this respect, although Western Sahara constitutes an important part of this conflict, there are tensions between the two states before the annexation of the region. Even if the Western Sahara issue contributes to the growth and continuation of this issue, the core reason for this conflict relies on the different identities and perspectives between the two states arising from their histories. The problem of Western Sahara became a central issue in the relationship after a decade of the Sand War. Regardless of the region, the two states clashed or cooperated throughout their histories. In this context, it is one of the aims of this thesis to deal with the Moroccan-Algeria relationship in both ways, in line with the Western Sahara problem and independently of this issue. The issue between Morocco and Algeria has been read in this way, due to the fact that the problems between the two states have been going through Western Sahara since 1976. For this reason, it will be useful for the literature to examine this issue independently of Western Sahara. Although Western Sahara plays an important role in the conflict between the two states, the claim of this thesis is that apart from this conflict, the reason for the conflict between Morocco and Algeria has much deeper layers.

The reason for this dilemma is too deep to be explained only by the historical process and power conflict. In order to further explain and elaborate on the topic, the constructivism method will be used in order to illustrate the background of the conflict. In this direction, while describing the Moroccan-Algerian conflict, the constructivist perspective clarifies many aspects of the conflict. First, the most important issue that this theory explains is the context of progress and regression between two states. Depending on the period and conditions, both states have sometimes led to improvement and sometimes to conflict, depending on the period and conditions. In this context, the fact that their relationship has changed depending on the circumstances is explained by the constructivism theorem. In addition, constructivism reveals the identity differences between the two states. The different state structures that Morocco and Algeria created due to their historical processes made it difficult for the two states to reconcile and became the center of the conflict. In addition to this, using the theory of constructivism will attribute a meaning to the behavior of states by reading their identities that they have constructed accordingly to their social realities. In this matter, Constructivism is important when regarding the identity and interest differences between Morocco and Algeria and how it is relevant to the subject matter. After that, the issue of insecurity that occurred in the light of these differences between the two states will be discussed. In this direction, the Western Sahara problem, which can be considered an essential issue observed between Algeria and Morocco,

will be examined. Finally, in addition to these developments, the contributions of different powers to the growth and continuation of this issue will be discussed. This thesis aims to describe the Algeria and Morocco conflict through constructivism in order to understand the social, political, and historical aspects of the conflict.

## **CHAPTER 2: STATE IDENTITY AND INTEREST: DE-COLONIAL HERITAGE**

From the middle of the 20th century, colonial states began to disperse. In 1960, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Their Peoples. With this development, groups of people who previously had historical and traditional stakeholders mobilized to establish a nation-state. However, conflicts arose due to different ethnic groups claiming rights in the same region. In particular, in the North African Region, there was a mixed structure. Besides the existing ethnic groups, there were Arab communities that came to the region with the spread of Islam in the 8th century. Although many kingdoms and dynasties emerged in the region, none of them lasted long. Ultimately, due to the lack of central authority, the existence of rich resources, and strategic importance, the North African region came under colonial rule in the 19th century. However, the different administration models applied by the colonial governments, the reorganization of the borders, and the elimination of the minorities in the region caused the decolonization process to pass painfully. Due to being under the rule of colonial governments for a long time, this region hosted ethnic conflicts and disputes over the territories. “Before this political formation, communities in this region, as elsewhere, displayed a range of different forms of organization that challenge the basis of the territorial expression of identity that is so central to the discourse of sovereign statehood” (Castellino, 1999). Disputes over borders, resources, and population leftover from the de-colonization period brought along identity problems. As Castellino (1999), further describes it the North African region is a critical place to elaborate on national identity and its expression within the form of the territorial state.

According to constructivist arguments states identity and interests are the most essential components to understanding how states behave. “International relations are constructed by the

historic and social ideational factors, not only by material ones. Ideational factors if constructed collectively hold a significant part of states' interests and identities" (Finnemore, 2001). As material capabilities determine one's power and position, in addition, these social capabilities help to interpret the intentions of one's usage of those material capabilities. "Identities are necessary in order to ensure at least some minimal level of predictability and order" (Katzenstein, 2002). In this context, ethnicity, religion, language, and history, which constitute the structure of the nation-state that emerged in the international conjuncture, also played an important role in the formation of the states in this geography. The states in the Maghreb region of North Africa have a similar character and history. In general, Sunni Islam has an important role in the constitutional structures and administrative policies of states. "Main foundation of North African cultural background and political identity, Islam has been present in the political discourse since the very emergence of the Nation-states in the post-colonial era" (Macias-Amoretti, 2018). In addition, these states use Arabic, which is their mother tongue, and French from the colonial period in their administrations. According to Aitsiselmi and Marley (2008), after getting their independence from France, the states in this region adopted Arabization policies and tried to remove the French culture and influence from the public sphere. In the formation of the identity of the states in this region, it was important to eliminate French values as well as to create their own values.

In addition to all these, the Maghreb states share the same critical geography and play an important role in the stability of the region. States with such similar characteristics and interests are expected to have cooperative behaviors and good relations. However, since the decolonization period, there have been many conflicts between Morocco and Algeria due to differences of opinion and character. In the formation of nation-state structures, they clashed many times both in terms of national identity and material capabilities. These can be summarized by their contradicting national interest. Correspondingly, nations have four main goals; to preserve and further the physical security, autonomy, economic well being, and collective self-esteem (Wendt, 1999). Due to their identity and interest differences that occurred through the colonial period both parties have a repetitive pattern of establishing a consensus than having a contradiction that ends with an unsolvable conflict. "The political systems that emerged after the achievement of independence from colonial rule by the Maghrebi states were clearly the product of past forces, influences, and experiences" (Willis, 2014). Algeria and Morocco developed different state identities during the decolonization period, both in terms of their historical processes and different policies applied during the colonial period. "after

independence, it is a national geography that asserts itself most powerfully in the celebration of the triumph of anticolonial history” (Stora, 2002).

In order to understand this dilemma roots of this disagreement will be framed within the decolonization period. “The unavoidable truth of the historical experience and legacy of the Maghreb is that it is highly mixed. No one experience or influence can be seen as eclipsing all others. Similarly, debates over which influences are ‘authentic’ or ‘genuine’ and which are simply ‘imposed’ are also misplaced. Such value judgments can not be attached to historical processes. Countries and regions, like people, are simply the products of their experiences, no more and no less” (Willis, 2014). In this part of the thesis, we will examine the identity and interest formed by the ideology of Maghreb el Kebir, which Morocco initiated in 1956, after gaining its independence from the French. Then, the Sand War, which Algeria entered into with Morocco one year after its bloody independence in 1962, will be examined in the context of Algeria's revolutionist identity and interest. Finally, the establishment of POLISARIO in 1973 and the identity of Western Sahara will be discussed. From a constructivist perspective, this state's identities and interests will be examined under four characteristics of statehood; pre-colonial and colonial history, de-colonization and formation of state identity, and lastly, domestic politics and foreign policy.

## **2.1. MOROCCAN EXPANSIONISM ‘MAGHREB EL-KEBIR’**

### **2.1.1. Pre-colonial and Colonial History of Morocco**

In 788, the Arabs conquered North Africa, and the separatist group known as the Kharijites entered the Maghrib region. II. Idris fought the Kharijites in the region and established the Muslim Moroccan Dynasty. “Moroccan monarchy can be traced back to 8th century with Islam entering the region” (Macías-Amoretti, 2018). When he died in 828, the borders of the state extended to Algeria in the east and Sus in Southern Morocco. However, II. The death of Idris led to the disintegration of the state, with his sons establishing separate emirates. According to Islam Encyclopedia, the region became the battleground of the Kharijites, the Andalusian Umayyads, and the Fatimids (Harekât, 1995). Meanwhile, Zenate Berbers established authority and in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Almoravids directed the political developments until they established a strong state. The Almoravids formed

religious ideas based on the Maliki sect against the Kharijite and Shiite tendencies in the region. By the 1080s, the Almoravids had dominated western Algeria and southern Spain, as well as all the regions within today's Moroccan borders. The Almoravids broke the influence of the tribes they encountered during the establishment period and ensured unity, peace, and tranquility in Morocco for more than 100 years, and this played an important role in the reconstruction and material development of the country. But the Almohads also emerged in the name of religious reform and ended the Almoravid period. Seeing that the military power of the Almohads gradually weakened in the first quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the tribes in the far regions led the break from the state. Merinis belonging to the Zenate tribe, who carried out small-scale uprisings in Morocco, captured the capital city of Marrakesh in 1269, and established the Merini State filling the Almohad authority. After them, in 1472, he started the Vattasi period by ruling Morocco. But because they could not unite the whole region, the Portuguese expansion in Morocco began. During the Vattasi dynasty in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with the help of the Ottomans, the Portuguese invaders were repelled. After these events, the Alevi Dynasty emerged in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The strong and historical nature of the monarchy increased its legitimacy in the administration. The Alevi sheriffs, from the turn of the century, gradually increased their influence; but they did not show any political ambition until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. With the Spanish invasion of northern Morocco in 1860, the commercial rivalry between the European powers that would last half a century and gradually erode Moroccan sovereignty began.

The sovereignty of the Sultan, the territorial integrity of Morocco, and the principles of freedom of trade in the country were accepted and the task of maintaining security and peace in Morocco was given to France with the Algeciras (Ceziretülhadra) Treaty, which regulated the administration, finances, and customs of Morocco. At this conference, although Morocco was prevented from being under the domination of a certain state, the privileges given to France increasingly endangered the independence of the country. Sultan Abdulhafiz had to sign the treaty accepting the protection of France over his country. Morocco was officially colonized in 1912 by French forces but unlike its other colonies, during French rule, the Moroccan monarch was preserved. “Moroccan Arabo-Islamic “national” identity was forged during the Protectorate period” (Wyrzten, 2009). With the patronage treaty, the sultan's domestic dominance was accepted, but it was decreed that the interests of Morocco would be protected abroad by the French embassies and consulates, and administrative, judicial, financial, and military reforms would be made in the country. The regions under the influence of Spain, which

were outside the French protectorate, were given the protection of this state with a separate treaty. While the overall political dominance of Morocco was left to the French viceroy and the Spanish high commissioner, the existing monarchy was retained at the same time. Spaniards, on the other hand, settled on strategic coastlines in the regional division and stayed away from politics in the inner region of the country. Therefore, the Spaniards, who colonized regions such as Ifri and Western Sahara, which had a low population, also started the debate on the border integrity of Morocco, which is still a matter of debate today. The colonial period of Morocco can be divided into two. In the first period, between 1912-1925, the French Governor Hubert Lyautey tried to preserve the social and political identity of Morocco as much as possible in this period, and the Sultan's position was preserved as a political power. In the second period, the new French governors brought Mohammed V, whom they saw as inexperienced, to the throne.

However, contrary to expectations, anti-French nationalist movements emerged in this period (Aydın, 2021). With the merger of the main nationalist movements, the National Party and the Moroccan National Movement, in 1943, the Istiklal Party was formed. Under the rule of Sultan Mohammed V, feelings of independence developed against the colonial administration in the country, especially during the Second World War. The nationalist movement, which gained strength during World War II, paved the way for the establishment of the Istiklal Party (1944), which was supported by the sultan by Allal al-Fâsî. The uprising against the colonial administration in Algeria in 1954 forced France to compromise with the Moroccan leaders. Upon these events, the Moroccan king was exiled to Madagascar because he was associated with the Istiklal Party. However, this exile was short-lived and two years later, Sultan Mohammed V first visited France and ended his protection of France over Morocco with the La Celle Saint Cloud Declaration. Then the independence treaty was signed in 1956; then Spain recognized the independence of Morocco and abolished its protection in the lands except for Ifni, Sabte, and Melilla. With the end of the forty-four-year colony “Morocco is a centuries-old monarchy that made a more peaceful transition from French control” (Arieff, 2011). In the colonial period, unlike other states, the protection of the administration of Morocco facilitated an easier transition to the nation-state structure. After gaining its independence in 1956 from the French and Spanish protectorate after forty-four years, king Mohammed V established a constitutional monarchy with a democratic government.

### **2.1.2. Moroccan De-colonization and Formation of State Identity**

Two groups that stood against colonialism in the independent period came to the fore. First of all, the Alawi kingdom, which struggled for its historical legitimacy and independence, and then the nationalist Istiqlal group. “The early years of independence Morocco witnessed the adoption of combinations of nationalist and Salafist ideas as state policy as a result of these two groups reaching important levels in the state administration, and at the same time, this period was characterized by the institutionalization process of culture” (Ceran, 2012). After its independence, Morocco, as a newly formed national state, in the light of these two administrative groups, started to form an identity for itself. This identity was formed by a harmony of elements from the historical and colonial periods. Moroccan identity has four significant components; religion, ethnicity, territory, and Alawid monarchy (Wyrzten, 2016). “The Nation relies for its collective life on the federative constants [constantes federatrices], on the occurrence of the moderate Muslim religion, [on] the national unity of its multiple components [affluents], [on] the constitutional monarchy, and [on] democratic choice” (The Constitution of Morocco, Article 1).

That being said, these notions form the administration of the state, frames the Constitution, and generate the public institutes. Especially in colonized countries, maintaining the religious and ethnic structure and giving historical context is essential for the legitimacy of the state. As it was stated in the Constitution ‘Islam is the religion of the State, which guarantees to all the free exercise of beliefs’ and ‘Arabic is [demeure] the official language of the State’ (The Constitution of Morocco, Article 3-5). Religion and ethnicity form the homogeneous structure of nation-states and establish an organic bond among the nation. In addition, nation-states need to create a territory with definite borders with religious and ethnic consensus. The region legitimizes the boundaries within which the administrations of nation-states are exercised. Finally, after establishing a common religious and ethnic identity among the people within a certain territory, it is necessary to establish the administration of the country on legitimate and historical foundations. In this case, Morocco's Alawid monarchy plays an important role both historically and in terms of representing its people. “The Moroccan monarchy benefited not only from the historic legitimacy it enjoyed from its religious sharifs status but also from the central and active role it had played in uniting Moroccans behind attempts to bring an end to colonial rule” (Willis, 2014). Alawi dynasty played a significant role both in the decolonization period and the establishment of the kingdom which put the

monarchy at the center of religious and political legitimacy (Macias-Amoretti, 2018). After establishing national unity, the king again took power under his own command, claiming that he was also symbolizing and representing religion (Valensi, 1985). Along with this, the national movements that played an important role in the war of independence adopted the same rhetoric. “Nationalist movement’s use of religious and monarchical references to broaden its appeal, its reliance on Salafism and Arabism to create internal cohesion that provided for internal contradictions about its position on constitutionalism, monarchism, and Islam” (Stater, 2016). Both the Alawi dynasty and the national movements' struggle for independence based on a common religion and Arabism created a common identity construction among the Moroccan people.

### **2.1.3. Moroccan Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy**

The administration, which got rid of the colonies, promised to establish a secular, progressive, and modern state with the influence of its existing political authorities. But the King ruled the state with a group called the Makhzen, where all the powers were held by him and the aristocratic group around him. According to Çapar, after Morocco gained its independence, the King took all the powers and placed his own men in positions such as a prime minister, and interior and defense ministry. Mohammed V also took the national police force under his control and placed his son, Prince Hassan, at the head of the royal army (Çapar, 2020). Afterward, the first government was divided into different political forces. Istiklal Party sought more responsibility as it assumed the dominant role in independence. Wanting to appear as a reformist King, Mohammed V wanted all political parties to be represented in parliament. However, his son Prince Hasan was trying to dominate the Istiklal Party and supported the establishment of political parties for the division of Istiqlal. As a result, the Istiklal Party split, and in 1959 the party chairman, Bin Barka, left the Istiklal Party and joined the Socialist Unity and Popular Forces Party. In 1960, King Mohammed dissolved the current government and asked Prince Hassan, to form a new cabinet. “The cabinet established by Prince Hasan consisted of people loyal to him and members of the Istiklal Party that Bin Barka had eliminated.” (Howe, 2005) After the death of King Mohammed in 1961, King Hassan, who came to power, followed a democratic line and ordered the constitution of 1962. “Morocco eventually got its first constitution in 1962, the king was fully in control of all of the meaningful levers of power. The



monarchy enjoyed enormous popularity at independence as the symbol of national resistance and independence” (Willis, 2014). He made statements that were pointing out that there would be a parliament, a constitution, a multi-party system, and democratic freedoms. But in reality, power was concentrated in the King's hands, and the interior, justice ministries, police, and army were at his disposal. This showed that Hasan would retain all the authority. At this stage, the first elections were held in 1963 and as expected, the dynasty's coalition was chosen.

Morocco's domestic policy was significantly parallel to its foreign policy. In other words, Morocco's desire to protect its old authority is also reflected in its ambition to regain its pre-colonial borders. But there was a critical point, which was to determine where Morocco's borders stretched and what people were on those borders. Because the territories claimed by Morocco were still under colonial rule when Morocco gained its independence in 1956. Morocco supported the independence struggle of the surrounding countries during this period. The state especially supported Algeria's struggle for independence against the French, which began in 1954, and the partition of Western Sahara from the Spanish colony. However, their idea of establishing pre-colonial borders did not disappear. In this context, Morocco adopted and formed the idea of Maghreb el-Kebir, known as returning to its pre-colonial borders. In 1958, King Mohammed V initiated peaceful negotiations over the borders with Algeria and claimed the territory of Mauritania that same year. With this Allal El Fassi, the head of the important national movement of that time Istiqlal called for regional unity by recreating pre-colonial Morocco. “According to these ideas, Morocco's rightful borders stretched from the Senegal River in the south to the oasis of Tindouf in the east (in Algeria), including Mauritania and especially Western Sahara” (Hodges, 1983). However, at that time, Western Sahara was a Spanish colony and Algeria was a French colony. Moroccan King Hassan II put the border issue aside during the war of independence in Algeria. However, the border problems that started during the decolonization period became more insoluble with the presence of natural gas and oil reserves in the region. (Damis, 1983) Right after Algeria's war of independence in 1962, Morocco continued to claim Tindouf and Bechar which were on the border of Algeria. “Such claims and the problem of colonial borders caused that, regionally, Morocco's environment was characterized by Algerian–Moroccan irredentist claims and rivalry, which reached a climax during the Moroccan–Algerian October 1963 Sand War just one year after Algerian independence” (Stater, 2016).

## **2.2. 'Revolutionist' Algeria**

### **2.2.1. Pre-colonial and Colonial History of Algeria**

To begin with the historical process, different religious and ethnic structures caused the wide practice of tribalism which made it hard to form a central authority. Due to this structure, Algeria was either ruled by another central kingdom or was under a colonial protectorate. First of all, the region was invaded in the seventh century by Arab armies carrying the message of Islam. Rustami State was the first independent state established in Muslim Algeria. After that, the first Fatimid caliph Ubeydullah al-Mahdi and his successors succeeded in taking Africa and Central Maghrib (Algeria) under their dominion. Following a century of resistance by the Berbers, the region became part of the Arab caliphate, on the fringe of the Islamic empire which extended to Spain and Portugal by 711 (Lloyd, 2003). Following this period there was an Almovid and Almohad rule which was the most powerful Maghrebian dynasty. Later, the Almohads were subordinate to the Hafsid State in Eastern Algeria, Tunisia. Central and Western Algeria came under the rule of Abduldadis between 1235-1550. While the Bedouin tribes rebelled and captured some places, the Christian Spaniards occupied the cost cities. When the dominance of Abduldadis and Hafsids was limited to only a few cities, many cities such as Algeria declared their independence. In such an environment where political fragmentation and inter-tribal conflicts continued, the Spaniards captured important centers on the coast between 1505 and 1513. With the rise of the Christian kingdom in the 16th century, Algeria build an alliance with the Ottoman Empire and became a vassal state. The arrival of Oruç and Hızır Reis in Algeria and their struggle against the Spaniards constitutes the first step in the establishment of Ottoman influence. "Under Turkish rule, the Arabs and Berbers of Algeria were excluded from government" (Lloyd, 2003). The Ottoman rule, which lasted for tree centuries, began to weaken in the 19th century. Taking advantage of this weakening, France and Spain began to implement a rapid occupation policy in the region.

In 1830, with the French colonizing the region, many rebellions occurred. Protesting the French occupation of their lands, Algerians resisted in many regions. The most successful of these was the movement of Emir Abdulkadir. With the Treaty of Tafna in 1837, he even prevented the spread of France. But in 1839, Emir Abdulkadir declared jihad against the French, who brought a large number of soldiers to the country in violation of the Treaty of Tâfna. Emir Abdulkadir, who lost many soldiers and the attack of the French, took refuge in the Moroccan

Sultan Abdurrahman for his help, but the Moroccan sultan did not help Emir Abdulkadir and did not shelter him in his lands with the Treaty of Tangier, which he signed. But France suppressed these decades of bloody resistance including Abd al-Qadir in 1847 and spread to Algeria and took the country under its rule. Between 1830 and 1870, the French ruled Algeria with a military administration organization called "Arab Bureaus" these were based on oppression and persecution of the public. By 1881, the population was deprived of their lands and rights due to their religion and race. During World War I, Algeria which has been isolated from the outside world for years started to form relations with the outside world. General nationalist currents around the world and region shaped Algerian resistance movements. But these movements were more dispersed and lacked international support. After World War II, the deterioration of the economy, the pressures applied for years, and the independence tendencies awakened in the people triggered the liberation struggle. From the year 1954 until 1962, they fought for their independence. Its armed rebellion formed the central strand, the immutable core, of its campaign to drive France from Algeria, to bring an end to over a century of French rule (Hill, 2009). FLN established in 1954 has been the center of the independence movement by mobilizing and organizing thousands of Algerian men. "The long and bitter struggle Algerians had undergone to achieve independence had forced a unity of purpose on the population under the all-encompassing umbrella of the FLN" (Willis, 2014). The movement was supported by the neighboring countries Morocco and Tunisia. But unlike the Moroccan case, Algerians have not experienced a smooth transition from French colonialism. "After 132 years of French colonialism, during which they endured humiliation, pain, and forced servitude, Algerians revolted and wrested their independence through bloodshed" (Lagdaf and Flici, 2020). The independence was achieved through a bloody revolution which led the state to embrace military influenced republic. "The anti-colonial struggle remains a key foundation of Algeria's political identity" (Arief, 2013). This identity reflected itself when Algeria gained its independence in 1962. Tripoli Program stipulated Algeria's determination to fight colonialism and support liberation movements (Chikhaoui 2015). This program was formed under the development of economy and democracy within a 'nationalist' framework. The Tripoli conference aimed to establish both the goals and program of the Algerian 'revolution' and the political structures for the newly independent state (Willis, 2014). Which then formed the basis of the Algerian state identity.

### **2.2.2. Algerian De-colonization and Formation of State Identity**

Throughout its history, Algeria was suppressed and tried to gain its independence. This historical process has created a revolutionary structure on the basis of the nation-state. After 300 years of Ottoman rule and 132 years of French occupation, the lack of authority in the administration was filled by the military regime, as in many decolonized nation-states. At the same time, the soldiers, who were seen as the heroes of the war of independence, were also embraced by society. One of the first reactions of the Algerian state to independence was to create a new identity for themselves by erasing the French culture that had been forced for years. Although anti-French, anti-colonial, and anti-western rhetoric was one of the main components of the identity, still erasing the French colonial mentality and ideology was not enough to create a new national identity. In this respect, the strongest discourse of the FLN, which formed the basis of the state identity, was the oppression by the French and the independence obtained by struggle. “Algerians see as the fully legitimate necessity of eradicating French colonial discourse, ideological structures, and imperialist constructions aimed at destroying the collective memory of Algerians” (Gafaiti, 2002).

In addition to the dialectical identity developed against the West, a formula was developed that would make Algerian society adopt its historical ethnic and religious values again. Therefore, Algerians formed their identity under four significant components; religion, ethnicity, territory, and militaristic structure. “The construction of a national cultural identity was both a physical and psychological task, given the destruction of cultural institutions during the war of independence and the suppression of Arab-Muslim culture under colonialism” (Northey, 2017). In this context, Arabization became a ‘matter of cultural decolonization and social equity’ (Berger, 2002). This adaptation of the Arab-Muslim culture is also reflected in the constitution’s first page. Article 2 states that ‘Islam shall be the religion of state’ while Article 3 states that ‘Arabic shall be the national and official language’ (Constitution of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, Article 2-3). Along with the Arab and Muslim identity, the developing colonial and anti-Western discourse pushed the newly formed nation-state to the socialist pole in the bipolar order. “In the initial years after independence, the Soviet-inspired, nationalist model of the cultural policy promoted Arab-Muslim cultural identity as a unifying force for the nation” (Kessab, 2014). In addition, Algeria's soviet socialist model, which adopted the anti-Western model, supported the military administration and the strong state model. In addition to the strong state structure, the idea of sovereignty was one of

the most important components of independence. For Algeria, which gained its independence after years of oppression and resistance, the borderlines and sovereignty had a sacred value. As it was stated ‘ no case may it abandon or alienate a part of the national territory’ and ‘The sovereignty of the State shall extend to its territory, its air space and its waters’ (Constitution of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, Article 13-14).

### **2.2.3. Algerian Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy**

To recover and rebuild the state after the long colonial period and the exhausting struggle for independence “a small Algerian bourgeoisie began to form from the remnants of the old pre-colonial merchant class, descendants of the old tribal nobility and the religious chorfa” (Roberts 1983). Algeria gained its independence in 1962 and a year later the constitution was accepted and Ahmed ben Bella was elected president. The one-party-based socialist system established with this constitution started by nationalizing the institutions. In 1963 Ahmed bin Bella was brought to the head of the government and FLN closed all political parties as well as binding all political organizations to itself. “The National People’s Army shall have the permanent mission to safeguard national independence and the defense of national sovereignty” (Constitution of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, Article 28). In this respect, the head of state and the army were the two most important resources in the administration of the state. However, in the first years, there was an increasing economic and social issue, war with Morocco which weakened the position of President Bella. In addition to this, there was a division between the group holding the power and the military. This resulted in Bella's dismissal by the Minister of Defense, Huvari Boumediene, with a military coup in 1965. Boumediene became the sole ruler of the country and put the regime in a fully authoritarian state. Bu Madyen, who tried to establish the economy on socialist principles, made a socialist revolution in 1971 and nationalized the oil industry at the expense of relations with France. He then tried to collectivize private property and commerce, initiating an agrarian revolution; but this revolution caused protests among the people.

In terms of states, foreign policy “Diplomatic relations in Algeria have from independence been based on their own history and the principles they consider to be intangible” (Abderrahmane, 2020). This militaristic and revolutionary structure of Algeria, which was

formed during the colonial era and independence war, was under threat immediately after its establishment. Morocco's claim to Tindouf and Figuid, which are part of the nation-state right after Algeria gained independence in 1962, caused a setback between Algeria and Morocco. "Once Algeria achieved independence, Morocco again raised the issue and, after some initial stalling by the new Algerian government, was eventually informed by the Algerians that the existing border between the states was permanent and that Algeria did not intend to transfer the territories back to Morocco" (Damis, 1985). Angered by the Moroccan claim to its territory, the Algerian authorities found these claims unacceptable. The most important identity item of Algeria after independence was its territorial integrity. "FLN is charged to ensure the defense of the unity and territorial integrity of the country, as well as the protection of the territory, its air space and the different zones of its maritime zone" (Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Article 28). The state authority, which was exposed to bloody wars since the colonial period, did not remain indifferent to these discourses of Morocco. "Indeed, territorial issues lay at the root of the first conflict between Algeria and Morocco, the 1963 Sand War, the resolution of which would not resolve the border disputes between the two countries" (Thieux, 2017). In 1963, due to Morocco's claims on Algerian territory and the importance it attaches to Algeria's territorial integrity Sand War took place between the two states. "Ever since the Sand War, Algeria has viewed Morocco's nationalist elite as aggressive and expansionist, whereas Morocco sees the Algerian elite as untrustworthy and ungrateful" (Stater, 2016). But the real problem between these two states was Algeria's revolutionary idea that went beyond the borders of the state. "Ahmed Ben Bella indicated that the Algerian revolution was not only at states borders these statements alarmed Moroccan monarch" (Hodges, 1983). The main problem was Algerian support for the independence movements in the region.

### **CHAPTER 3: SECURITY DILEMMA: WESTERN SAHARA AS AN EXAMPLE**

Western Sahara is a region in the African continent its status remains to be haven't determined and it is far from being solved. It is one of the few states that could not gain its independence after the colonial period. Historically, politically and sociologically, different groups of people and countries claim rights in this region. Morocco in the first place, then Mauritania also advocate that the region was a part of their pre-colonial territory. But besides this, local communities currently living in Western Sahara demand that the land belongs to them and that they become a politically independent state. Because of these different claims, Western Sahara has been subjected to many conflicts and disputes, and the local people of the region have dispersed to many parts of the world, especially Algeria. POLISARIO established a government in exile in Algeria under the name of the SADR, and during this time, some asylum seekers migrated from the region to Algeria. With Algeria's support of refugees from Western Sahara and the POLISARIO Front, the tension between Morocco and Algeria in the past has increased even more. The Sahrawi people, who are caught between Algeria and Morocco, draw the attention of the international community as a solution and claim their rights in the region based on their independent cultural and political identities. "Moreover, there is no permanent human community within the borders of this country. Trying to compensate for this physical and human quasi-existence with diplomatic existence, SADR wants to prove its existence by increasing its 'capacity to establish relations with other states'" (Bayram, 2020).

This war is more between Algeria and Morocco than between Morocco and Western Sahara. "The dispute over Western Sahara is a bilateral, non-democratic, third-world struggle that encompasses a deep-rooted dislike between Morocco and Algeria. Because it has endured in a critical manner for many years, external powers have been unable to ignore the ensuing war that has had a spill-over effect on the surrounding community" (Hippel, 1995). As it was argued before one of the most conquered examples of the perspective difference between Algeria and Morocco is the Western Sahara Issue. Similar to the Sand War due to this distinction another war named Oasis of Amgala occurred between Algeria and Morocco with the gradient of Western Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania. "If they militarize, others will be threatened and arm themselves, creating security dilemmas in terms of which they will define egoistic identities and interest" (Wendt, 1992). Firstly, the Sand War than Oasis of Amgala

erupted the bilateral relations and caused unrepairable wounds between Algeria and Morocco. “In this climate of rivalry and distrust, the question of Western Sahara and the support given to the POLISARIO Front by the Algerian leaders would counterbalance and contain Morocco’s irredentist ambitions” (Thieux, 2017). Because both parties have dissimilar histories and identities they re-approach the issue through different lenses which creates one of the most essential security dilemmas between Algeria and Morocco. While Morocco perceives the Western Sahara region as an integral part of the Kingdom, on the contrary, Algeria recognizes and supports the independence of the region under the SADR regime. The fact that Morocco does not recognize and deals with Sahrawi authority because it is a threat to the Maghreb el-Kebir ideology and Algeria recognizes the region as a self-determined party makes it hard for both states to see eye to eye on this issue. “Part of the tension that undermines the resolution of the Sahrawi conflict is Morocco’s persistent call to negotiate directly with Algeria as an active party to the conflict. Algeria, however, fails to comprehend Morocco’s invitations to negotiations, as it does not view itself as a directly interested party” (Lagdaf and Flici, 2020). The tension between Algeria and Morocco predates Western Sahara. However, with the Western Sahara problem, the issue has deepened and has become an issue where both sides balance each other's power. “The relationship is clearly more complex than that and undoubtedly entwines elements of geopolitics, history, economics, and personality. Nevertheless, the two states’ confrontation over Western Sahara remains the centerpiece of regional relations and the single most important obstacle to greater regional cooperation and even unity” (Willis, 2014).

This chapter will frame the role of the Western Sahara polemic in the conflict between Algeria and Morocco. Therefore, rather than the two countries' direct conflict with each other, the balancing of each other's forces over Western Sahara will be analyzed through the security dilemma theory. In the constructivist theory, “Security dilemma threats and actor identity delineated each other through contrasting representations via discourse that construct us-them relationships” (McDonald, 2008). Through this dilemma, Algeria’s support for the Sahrawi cause reflects their revolutionist and liberational state identity while Moroccan claim over the region reflects its expansionist and imperialist structure. Furthermore “A security dilemma, is a social structure composed of intersubjective understandings in which states are so distrustful that they make worst-case assumptions about each others' intentions, and as a result, define their interests in self-help terms.” (Wendt, 1995). The most tangible and visible problem between Morocco and Algeria is undoubtedly the Western Sahara problem. Although the most important



break in the bilateral relations was over the border problem, this issue ended with the agreement signed in 1972. However, the identity and perspective differences between the two countries came to light again a few years later, on the ground of the Western Sahara issue. Both the ideological differences between the two states and the fact that they looked at the Western Sahara incident from the other side increased the already existing insecurity even more and made it fit in a more confined context. In this chapter, the difference in Moroccan and Algerian perspectives on the Western Saharan issue will be drawn and there will be a further explanation of how the identity and interest fractions turned out to be a security dilemma between Morocco and Algeria.

### **3.1. Is there a Sahrawi Identity?**

#### **3.1.1. Pre-colonial and Colonial History of Western Sahara**

The name Sahrawi is an Arabic word that means "Inhabitants of the Desert." Western Sahara was inhabited by Berber-speaking people who united with the Bani Hasan Arab tribes who migrated to the region in the 13th century. During this time, with the arrival of Islam in the region, these two different groups merged and formed a new community. "Historical studies on the region indicate that the present-day Sahrawis represent a fusion of the indigenous Sanhaja Berbers, Africans and Arabs who came from Arabia during the 13th century" (Mercer 1976). The concept of ethnic identity, on the other hand, does not require the belief of a common origin to be based on a physical basis, and in this sense, it is a concept that emphasizes similarities such as a common thought, belief, or language system rather than origin. In that sense, Sahrawi identity is based on the synthesis of religion and different ethnic groups. "Political alliances, the appeal of Islam intermarriage between the Berbers and the Maqil Arabs, and the Berbers' adoption of Hassaniya led to their assimilation of "Arab blood and culture." This period marked the emergence of the present-day Sahrawi as a people having a separate identity from other desert Berbers" (Bond, 1981). Although, they have the sense of a belonging to a distinct group still they were under the rule of different political groups. There were two prominent state formations in former northwest Africa. One of them is the Sharif Empire (present-day Morocco) and Bilad Shinguitti (Present-day Mauritania). During the pre-colonial period, they were ruled by these two political entities. Hence, "Both Moroccan and Mauritanian claims denied the existence of a distinct socially and politically organized pre-colonial Sahrawi

entity” (Omar, 2008). One reason for this argument is that the Sahrawi community did not form a collective political organization due to their nomadic life. “Early History of Western Sahara Among the arguments in favor of Morocco's claims to Western Sahara have been assertions that the local population is "too small" to form a nation or that there is no Sahrawi population distinct from other nomads who populate the Sahara desert” (Bond, 1981). Since they did not have any administrative system or a pre-colonial regional discourse, the political identities of the Sahrawi were mostly based on tribal leaders and local judgments. While it is difficult to indicate when exactly a common Sahrawi identity arose, it can be said that they existed as a distinctive community with a different population before Spanish colonialism.

“The majority of the inhabitants of the territory were able to ‘imagine’ themselves as a sociopolitical community with relatively demarcated borders before and after the Spanish colonial administration of their land during the 19th century” (Omar, 2008). The Western Sahara region, which was held by Spain as a colony for many years, was occupied in 1884. During the first years of the colony, people in the region resisted Spain. “Raids and rebellions by the indigenous Sahrawi population kept the Spanish forces out of much of the Spanish-claimed territory for a long time” (Bond, 1981). This was one of the earliest emergences of the political and martial structure that brought Sahrawis together. Although they have tried to resist the forces the region became a province of Spain in 1934. Now, the Sahara region had its own management system, with its borders and population in a certain area even though it was from an outside force. During the Second World War, Spain and France continued their advance in the North African region. However, Spain wanted to establish two different colonial administrations in the region to separate French territory from their own. In 1946 this plan was enured by strictly separating the lands in Western Sahara and Morocco. In 1958, Spain declared that Western Sahara was not a colony, but a province of Spain with the request of the United Nations. But Spain had never been able to control the interior effectively, and the merger of the Moroccan Liberation Army with the Sahrawi resulted in pressure on the independency. Meanwhile, the Sahrawi people, who established a political authority with POLISARIO Front, were supported by Morocco and Algeria.

### **3.1.2. Western Saharas' Decolonization and Independence Period**

Sahrawi people under the POLISARIO authority claim that they are a capable political unit that can accomplish self-determination within the Sahra territory. "Although SADR, which constitutes a government / political authority through the POLISARIO Front, claims to have a "defined country", they provide sovereignty in a small part of this country" (Bayram, 2020).

1975 The United Nations visited the Spanish Sahara, concluding that the POLISARIO Front was the strongest political force in the region. "With diverse experiences, and influenced by political developments in the neighboring French colonies, the Sahrawi in Western Sahara started demanding independence. Administrative and political institutions designed to entrench Spanish rule in which the Sahrawi were treated like 'little brothers'" (Marquez, 2003).

In addition, the group remaining in the Western Sahara region was mistreated by Morocco, causing their political and social identity to be more sharply separated from Moroccans. In addition, the support of the exiled Sahrawis by Algeria and their identification as independence fighters by African countries strengthened the Sahrawi identity. Sahrawi, claims that historically and sociologically they are a different society that lived in these lands. This group indicates that they have an identity other than the Moroccan identity and therefore they constitute a different nation. "The Sahrawi, culturally different from their immediate neighbors, are a hybrid people. Their music is predominantly African, place names are predominantly Berber, religion is Suni Moslem, and words of daily usage on small items are Spanish." (Munene, 2010).

### **3.2. Moroccan Perspective: Western Sahara as an Integral Part of the Kingdom**

"The unresolved conflict over Western Sahara has been the dominant issue in Morocco since 1974, in domestic and foreign policy" (Damis, 1990). Moroccan King Hassan applied to the United Nations in 1974 for the transfer of the Spanish Sahara to Morocco. UN The subjects of which state-owned the region when the Spaniards came to Western Sahara and the legal connections of Western Sahara, Morocco, and Mauritania were discussed. Morocco claimed historical rights over the region. But Spain, on the other hand, claimed that they took the region

through an agreement with the French, and left Morocco's claims inconclusive. After the lawsuit was inconclusive, Hassan the second decided to annex Western Sahara to Morocco. They rejected Spain's offer to form an independent government in the region and made a decision from his own courts that Western Sahara belongs to Morocco and announced it to the world. In 1975, Hassan started a mass demonstration with a group of 350,000 people in Western Sahara, which he called the "green march" (al-mesîretü'l-hadrâ'). Claiming that the region is an integral part of the kingdom. The Moroccan government denies an independent Saharan identity and argues that the local people are no different from the ancient Moroccan peoples.

“Spain terminated its colonial administration of the territory in 1976. Though it failed to fulfill its responsibilities in decolonizing it in line with the wishes of its indigenous population, it nevertheless created the conditions and structures on which a common sociopolitical and national Sahrawi entity would be founded” (Omar, 2008). With the Spanish leaving the region, the Madrid Accord was signed between Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania in 1975, giving Morocco and Mauritania the right to annex the Western Sahara region. According to this agreement, 2/3 of the region in the North was under the administration of Morocco and 1/3 part in the south become the Mauritania region. Through this act POLISARIO Front, defended the independence of the Sahara people and fought for it. In addition, with the Moroccans settling in this region and applying heavy policies, the Sahara people had to migrate from the region. “The Moroccan-Mauritanian invasion of Spanish Sahara in 1975 triggered a massive refugee exodus. Nearly half of all native Western Saharans fled the military onslaught, eventual. POLISARIO received strong backing and shelter from Algeria in 1975, especially after the Moroccan invasion. Within four years, Mauritania was driven out of the conflict” (Mundy, 2007). Most of these refugees had settled in the Tindouf region of Algeria, the neighboring country of Morocco. This enabled political and military movements in the region to continue. The identity phenomenon of the people now living as diaspora was much stronger.

“On 27 February 1976, the POLISARIO declared the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as a state -in-exile” (Farah, 2010). In addition, Algeria's recognition of the Sahara Arab Democratic Republic in 1976 caused the deterioration of relations with Morocco and diplomatic relations were suspended. Also, the group remaining in the Western Sahara region was mistreated by Morocco, causing their political and social identity to be more sharply separated from Moroccans. In addition to this, the presence of Morocco and Mauritania in the region made any political movement of the Sahrawis impossible. During this period, some of the

Sahrawis in the region took refuge in Algeria and the guerrillas remaining in the Sahara were supported by Algeria. Since Mauritania could not oppose the POLISARIO guerrillas, Morocco took the whole region under its protection. After the change of government in Mauritania in 1978, Mauritania- POLISARIO relations began to soften and in 1980 Mauritania gave up its rights in Western Sahara. Thereupon, Morocco planned to occupy the lands in the Western Sahara, which was under the control of POLISARIO from Mauritania, but the United Nations' intervention prevented this. In 1981, Western Sahara was recognized by forty-five countries; He was later admitted to the African Union Organization. However, Morocco opposed this and started to clash with POLISARIO again. Another consequence of the recognition of SADR was that Morocco left the AOU and turned to receive military aid from the United States. Although it was decided to hold a referendum in Western Sahara at the African Union meeting in 1983, it was not implemented. In 1986, the POLISARIO Front claimed Western Sahara and engaged in a struggle against foreign powers at sea and on land. In 1987, clashes took place between Moroccan forces and POLISARIO forces. In 1987, the United Nations decided to send a special delegation to Morocco, Algeria, and Congo to investigate the referendum in Western Sahara. He also wanted the Moroccan army to end its activities in Western Sahara. Hasan declared in 1987 that he would welcome the results of the referendum, taking into account Morocco's application to enter the European Community. However, POLISARIO wanted the control of the region to be provided by the United Nations or the African Union. "The referendum was first postponed due to differences among the parties' opinions regarding the eligibility to vote, but there were also further incompatibilities that characterized the relationship between the POLISARIO Front and Morocco, driving the parties through decades of conflict, negotiations, clashes, and changing demands" (Fregoso and Živković, 2012).

### **3.3. Algerian Perspective: Self-Determined and Sovereign State under SADR**

"The Algerian foreign policy conceived during the nationalist battle for independence was guided by two main principles: the defense of territorial integrity and sovereignty, and the defense of the right to the self-determination of nations" (Thieux, 2017). Algeria since its independence has supported eighteen liberation movements. Especially considering how profitable and difficult the independence struggle was, it was undeniable that Algeria would Show active support to the independence struggles in the continent. In addition to this, the support it showed against these movements strengthened its identity as an anti-colonial, anti-

western, and independence fighter. Along with this, the country's economic recovery, the 1973 oil crisis (OPEC), and the state's position as the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement have to strengthen its position in the region. "Algeria first began to develop an active foreign policy in the 1970s, designed to give the country an important foreign presence in the context of a favorable international situation" (Grimaud 1984). But it can be said that the independence movement that Algeria supported the longest and financially is the POLISARIO. Immediately after the region's annexation to Morocco and Mauritania in 1976, Algeria recognized the region's independence. By arguing "'principle of inviolability' of African borders, declaring that 'all member States are committed to respecting the borders existing at the moment they attain independence'" (Jouve 1984). According to Algeria, the region was already divided during the colonial period and formed its own identity. In addition, Algeria has not forgotten the trauma of Morocco's claiming rights in its own state as soon as it gained its independence. This caused Algeria to react against Morocco's repeating the same claim over Western Sahara this time. "Algeria's support for the POLISARIO Front and Sahrawi refugees brought an end to the 1972 border agreement between Boumediene and King Hassan II and to the Treaty of Ifrane that had proclaimed friendship, good neighborliness, and cooperation between the two states" (Chena 2012).

"Algeria interpreted the Moroccan offensive to occupy and annex Western Sahara as a new attempt to challenge the demarcation of the two countries' border" (Thieux, 2017). Also, President Boumediene accused Western powers of support to these acts and accused the West of re-creating colonial borders. The antipathy developed by the state against the West pushed it towards the Eastern bloc more than before. While Morocco was receiving the international support of the West and procuring weapons from the USA, Algeria was receiving military support from the Soviets. "In this climate of rivalry and distrust, the question of Western Sahara and the support given to the POLISARIO Front by the Algerian leaders would counterbalance and contain Morocco's irredentist ambitions" (Thieux, 2017). In particular, Algeria is active in the field, rather than just expressing an opinion against the international public on this issue. The state was also willing to host the four Sahrawi refugee camps set up on Algerian territory near Tindouf (Belkaid, 2009). In addition, the support of the exiled Sahrawis by Algeria and their identification as independence fighters by African countries strengthened the Sahrawi identity. "The Intifada reawakened nationalists sentiments in the refugee camps provided another focus of struggle and re-established the links between the refugees and the Sahrawis in the Territory" (Farah, 2010). All these developments accompanied by the external powers'

involvement in the conflict made it impossible for Algeria and Morocco to establish a mutual agreement on the issue. “Algerian support for the self-determination of the Sahrawi people also serves its strategic interests to the extent that it has been used as an instrument to contain Moroccan territorial expansion, which would challenge Algeria’s territorial integrity” (Mortimer, 2015). Through this period Algeria used the Western Sahara issue as a barrier against Morocco's ideology of Maghreb al-Kebir. From the '70s until the mid-80s, the two states brought the relations to a freezing point. Both states summoned their envoys and turned a blind eye to calls for reconciliation. Algerian support for the self-determination of the Sahrawi people also serves its strategic interests to the extent that it has been used as an instrument to contain Moroccan territorial expansion, which would challenge Algeria’s territorial integrity (Mortimer, 2015).

## **CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL COMPETITION BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA ‘COMPETITIVE SECURITY SYSTEM’**

Since the years of independence, the relationship between Algeria and Morocco has always been in a deadlock. “Morocco and Algeria are the largest countries in North Africa and are neighbors, but they had different colonial experiences and emerged as rivals with distinctly different forms of government” (Arief, 2011). The identity and interest differences between Algeria and Morocco have deepened with the Western Sahara issue and the two states have lost their trust in each other. Despite efforts to improve afterward, two states had already entered a security dilemma. Security dilemmas that continue for a long time can turn into competitive security systems. In competitive security systems between two states, distrust has arisen over very long conflicts. Although both tried several times to fix the bilateral relationship, they have constantly found themselves in volatility between conflict and cooperation. Algeria and Morocco constantly sought each other's vulnerability and the regional dominance that would emerge from it. Distinct identities and long history of conflict construct a competitive security system (Nugroho, 2008). As discussed earlier, the different structures of Morocco and Algeria starting from the pre-colonial period, as well as the different administrations they experienced during the colonial period, and the relations they established with different countries constitute the

basis of the state formation of the two countries. “The very different histories and natures of Algeria and Morocco have also made for significant regional rivalry” (Willis, 2014). The differences in perspectives, in their administrations, and their allies deepened this distinction between both states. This is also connected to the fact that the two states are in a constant rivalry in terms of geography, resources, and capacity. Constructivist analyses also see power as the ability to structure and constitute the nature of social relations between actors (Barnett and Duvall 2005). The biggest problem between both states can be traced to the border dispute between these in 1963 and the Western Sahara issue in which the most important reasons are the underground resources, the land, and the manpower.

“The persistence of Algerian-Moroccan rivalry can only in part be explained in geopolitical terms” (Willis, 2014). Two states are located at the intersection of three regions, which is a strategically important point for Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Being in the middle of these three regions pushes the two countries to implement a policy of balance and to cooperate with the powerful actors of these three regions. The fact that the region is rich in underground resources and human capacity makes it attractive for many actors in the world. In that sense, Algerian and Moroccan rivalry can be categorized under strategic rivalry. In this kind of rivalry “inherently, conflicts are about relative scarcity and overlapping interests and goals” (Thompson, 2001). In addition to this, the existence of the conquered reasons deepens the conflict. “Disputes about territory, influence and status, and ideology, therefore, are at the core of conflicts of interest between states” (Thompson, 2001). As will be discussed in the following sections, the fact that the two states received support from different countries at different times and had different resources caused a different problem. Without any central governance which has authority over all states in the world, the international system does certainly become a competitive security system. The most important reason for the Algerian and Moroccan rivalry is the absence of a hegemon state in the region. Algeria and Morocco were constantly in a race with each other to become a regional power. In this way, they directed other states in the region to support their own agendas. Beyond that, the fact that both states were placed on the opposite side of the balance of power in the world deepened the problems between them.

If we start with Algeria, the state constitutes a very important place in three respects. First, the country is appealing in terms of its location and ideology. “Algeria finds itself at the geographical crossroads of three of the strategic regions in the world: the Arab world, Africa, and Europe. Its seven land borders penetrate deeply into regional affairs, and it has the



economic and financial assets to support its policies” (Lagdaf and Flici, 2020). After the colonial period, it continued its economic relations with Europe and appreciated regionally by supporting the independence movements in Africa and the Arab world. Algeria has led and become an important actor both at the AMU established by its neighboring countries as well as in the OAU and LAS. “Algeria’s claims to regional leadership are complicated by Algerian leaders’ preoccupation with domestic politics, the opacity of Algeria’s decision-making apparatus, and regional tensions and rivalries” (Lagdaf and Flici, 2020). Besides its geography and ideological leadership, the state is rich in material capacities. The resource-rich state also leads the region militarily. “Hydrocarbon wealth and a sizeable geography fuel this promise to mould these overlapping spheres while acting as their focal point for the international level. Algeria boasts strong military power projection capabilities and recognized counterterrorism expertise” (Boukhars, 2019). In other words, Algeria uses its strategic position as well as its social and material capacities for regional leadership.

On the other hand, Morocco follows other methods in order to increase its political, diplomatic, and economic existence in the region. Morocco, which is at a strategically important point similar to Algeria, in terms of underground resources is not as rich as Algeria. In addition, due to the Western Sahara issue, the state could not fully support the independence movements like Algeria. Because of its underground resources, military capacity, and ideologically incapable of competing with Algeria, Morocco adopted a different Foreign policy tact. First of all, since its independence, Morocco has not adhered to a certain ideology, which resulted in states’ cooperation with several states and adaptation of the multi-partner system. Although it had strong Western support and partnership since the colonial period, it was in cooperation with many different states and unions. Although Morocco left the OAU due to the Western Sahara issue, it was an important actor at LAS and AMU and had good economic relations with the EU, USA, and USSR. In addition, as a regional power, it followed a different policy from Algeria. “Morocco has shrewdly displayed its ideational resources in its attempt for regional power projection. It has also gradually become more economically and culturally interconnected within its region” (Rousselet, 2016). The foreign policy that Morocco actively implements is based on religion and economy. “Morocco’s skillful mobilization of religion as soft power and the comparative advantage of its firms (including banking, insurance, and telecommunications), industrial companies (mainly phosphates), increasingly sophisticated manufacturing (aerospace, electronics, and cars) and rising capabilities in renewable energy increasingly place the Kingdom at the forefront of several issues affecting its region and

beyond” (Willis, 2014). In this respect, Morocco has become one of the important actors in the region by using its strategic position for religious and economic expansion.

In summary, Morocco and Algeria have entered into a competition to be the only power in the region due to their different identities, interests, and resources. The strategic importance of the region they are located in is due to the fact that the two countries are on equal terms even though they differ in terms of capacity, the absence of a hegemonic state in the region and the richness of the region in terms of people and resources has increased competition. In addition, the same reasons attracted the attention of powerful states in the world and increased the demand for the region. In this respect, the cooperation of the two states with the superpowers, which are generally at two different poles, was a factor that increased the hostility between them. In addition, regional cooperation with different countries and different unions attrited relations. In this part of the thesis, first of all, developments in bilateral relations from the 1980s to the present will be framed. In this direction, the reasons underlying the ongoing problems between the two states will be examined in more detail. Secondly, the foreign relations of Algeria and Morocco will be discussed and how these relations are reflected between the two will be examined.

#### **4.1. Regional Power Competition between Morocco and Algeria**

“From the 1960s to the 1990s Moroccans and Algerians were frequently hard put to transcend their mutual oppositional dynamic. It is only the application of democratic politics, as yet barely able to speak but undeniably alive, that might potentially reunite the Maghrib, and ever more closely reunify it” (Stora, 2003). Relations that were shaky after independence were perhaps at their best in the 1980s. This was due to the fact that the Maghreb region in the mid-1980s was suffering from an economic crisis due to the collapse of oil prices, European states founding new areas of interest, and plagues that damaged agriculture. Lossing their external trade ties and decrease in the resources that their economy is dependent on made these states rethink the regional unity. “The mid-1980s thus saw the formation of two sets of alliances in the Maghreb, consisting of the tripartite alliance of Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania and the new ‘union’ between Morocco and Libya” (Deeb, 2019). Although there were still different poles in the region, improvements were observed in relations in general. Although there still was an ideology behind these cooperations soon after states left these tendencies.

The environment of hostility and instability in the region was putting the states in difficulties and somehow pushed them to an agreement. “This period of difficulties at home coincided with a reorientation of Algerian foreign policy towards its immediate neighbors. The country abandoned its international ambitions to some extent and relegated the question of its support for the Sahrawis to the background” (Mortimer, 2015). The decrease in Algeria's support and aid to Western Sahara created a mildness towards the state on the Moroccan front. “Since the late 1980s, Morocco and Algeria seem, for the first time since independence, to have recovered a degree of social and political development in parallel, as both countries have moved towards political and ideological pluralism” (Stora, 2003). Thereupon, the first face-to-face meetings took place after the year 1976. “The first formal meeting between Chadli Benjedid and King Hassan took place in May 1987 and culminated a year later in the two countries re-establishing diplomatic ties that had been broken by Morocco following Algeria’s recognition of the SADR in 1976” (Willis, 2014). Benjedid adopted a more pragmatic approach rather than an ideological one due to the economic crisis that Algeria was facing. On the other hand, King Hassan II took a much closer stance on Algeria due to the fact that the Western Sahara issue was not on the table. After these events, the good neighborly agreement signed in 1972 came into play and in 1988, economic and diplomatic agreements were signed between the two states. The rapprochement between the two states caused a settlement and reconciliation in the region. A year after these events, the countries in the region came together and decided to form a union. “In 1989, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania signed the constitutive treaty of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) in Marrakech, aimed at creating a common economic market with free circulation of people and goods as well as a customs union” (Belkaïd and Stora 1999). In addition to this, the aim of this union was to create a political union that would create economic and political unity within the Maghreb region. The Constitution Act of the Union states: 'Strengthening the ties of brotherhood that binds the member states and their peoples... reaching consensus and establishing close diplomatic cooperation based on dialogue... preserving independence in the field of defense... ensuring commercial and social development in the economic field.' However, since the AMU did not fulfill its purposes, it became a dysfunctional structure. Due to the continuation of the Western Sahara issue and lack of economic integration, divergent foreign policy, and internal turmoil, the union lasted short and failed from creating a common sense in the region. These four reasons that cause the Association to be inactive will be explained below.

“The most important motivating factor of all, though, in the creation of the Arab Maghreb Union, which dwarfed all others, was the belief that the union might provide a means for a resolution to the Western Sahara dispute” (Willis, 2014). Therefore a peace agreement was signed between POLISARIO Front and Morocco which also helped the repair relations between both countries. In 1989 with the assignment of the peace treaty, both states ignored the Sahrawi issue and believed that the establishment of the AMU would resolve the conflict. “The King met with POLISARIO Front members in 1989 in Marrakech for ‘discussion’ not a ‘negotiation’” (Jensen, 2012). two years after this event and both Algiers and Rabat agreed to leave the resolving of the issue to the UN. “ In 1991, Morocco allowed the UN Mission for a Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) into the territory to organize a referendum based on UN Security Council resolution” (Sater, 2016). However, the UN could not resolve the issue due to the perspective differences. While Morocco wanted to handle the issue with Algeria, Algeria argued that the talks should be between POLISARIO and Morocco because they both were the agents of the issue. The UN put forward the I and II Baker Plans for the Western Sahara Occupation in 2001 and 2003. The initial plan proposed that the Sahrawi community was to have limited autonomy under Moroccan rule, but it was radically rejected by the POLISARIO Front. The Second Plan proposed a referendum vote covering three different options: independence, autonomy, and full integration into Morocco. Despite the intense conversations and diplomacy traffic led by Baker, Morocco rejected the II Baker Plan and again dragged the crisis to a dead end. Another problem was who was entitled to vote for this referendum. After the ceasefire was declared in 1991, POLISARIO argued that Moroccans who entered the region with the ‘Green March’ were not eligible to vote in the referendum and that these people did not represent the demographics of the region. Morocco, on the other hand, demanded that the Sahrawis in the Tindouf refugee camp within the borders of Algeria be prevented from voting. The disagreement between the two parties was also reflected in the union. With AMU's inability to resolve the Western Sahara issue and the union became a dysfunctional structure as it could not fulfill its objectives.

Secondly, the lack of economic integration of the states in the region damaged their relations and prevented the union from standing. “Trade among the Maghreb countries represents less than 3,6 per cent of their overall economic exchanges and contributes only 2 per

cent of the total GDP of the Maghreb region” (Lounnas and Messari, 2018). In addition, the absence of an economic and commercial structure among the states from the colonial period made things difficult. “The countries have many nontariff and regulatory barriers in place that impede trade and investment flows” (Brunel, 2008). The states in the region are in economic relations based on the historical ties they have established before rest of the Arab world, the rest of Africa, and Europe, rather than within Maghreb. Due to their economic dependency towards their trade partners and their different economic models Algeria and Morocco could not form an economic integrity and their trading percent remained low. “Political tensions between Algeria and Morocco—which together represent 77 percent of the region’s population and 66 percent of the region’s GDP—are a major obstacle to economic cooperation in the region” (Brunel, 2008). Therefore, the economic relations between the two states are also important for the AMU. However, the fact that the states are shaky in their domestic economies and that they adopt different economic models are among the factors that make cooperation between the two countries difficult. In addition, GAFTA (The Greater Arab Free Trade Area), which was established between Tunisia, Morocco and Libya, and The Agadir Agreement among Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and the bilateral economic relations such as between Tunisia and Algeria, made Maghreb Union ineffective.

Lastly, divergent foreign policy and internal turmoil in both countries caused the biggest rupture in the Maghreb union. To start with Algeria state, this period was a period of economic collapse and civil war. In this case, the decline in oil prices in Algeria in the 1980s and corruption throughout the country had dragged the Algerian people into a serious economic crisis. In Algeria, which switched to a multi-party system in 1988, after the Islamic Salvation Front won the first round of the elections, the army canceled the elections and many Islamic leaders were arrested. In 1991, the supporters of FIS started to protest by taking to the streets, especially in big cities. The FIS was supported by Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. However, after the coup, an armed structure known as Groupe Islamique Arme was established and foreign support was cut off as the conflict between the country became much more bloody. In the '90s there was a bloody civil war in Algeria which did not help them to repair their relationship with Morocco. “The descent of Algeria into a bloody civil war in 1992 further diminished Algeria’s regional aspirations” (Boukhars, 2013). This internal conflict reflected its effects on dual relations when there was a bombing incident at Marrakesh by the Algerian militant<sup>7</sup>. Rabat accused the Algerian state as a responsible party behind the attack. As a

response to this accusation, Algeria closed its borders and severed the diplomatic relations. Since then the conflicts between the army and Groupe Islamique Arme rapidly increased and caused the death of 100,000 people, the collapse of the Algerian economy, and the withdrawal of many foreign companies from the country. Abdelaziz Bouteflika won the elections in 1999 and the country stabilized, albeit a little, due to the boredom in the society in the last years of the civil war and the loss of the support of the Islamic section. “The primary objective of Algerian foreign policy in the 1990s was to prevent the isolation of the country and any regional or Western interference in its own internal conflict” (Boukhars, 2013).

During this period, Morocco witnessed political stability and economic progress in contrast to its neighboring country Algeria. Since the 1980s, Morocco has entered a successful economic reform process in cooperation with the IMF and the World Bank, and within this framework, the liberalization of the foreign trade regime, the new investment law, the privatization program, and the banking system have been improved. In the last 10 years, the Moroccan economy's dependence on agriculture and phosphate sectors has decreased and its manufacturing and service sectors have developed. At the same time, Morocco, taking advantage of Algeria's absence in the region, was trying to become a regional power by following an active foreign policy in the region. But during this period, POLISARIO was restraining Morocco's economic and diplomatic progress. After these developments, the regime change in the two countries warmed the relations. Algerian President Bouteflika started to follow a more liberal foreign policy for the recovery of the country. At the same time, Mohammed VI, who came to the throne with the death of his father, King Hassan II, strategically separated from his father and gave importance to the Middle East and Africa policy. “In 1999, after the funeral of Hassan II, there was a remarkably warm atmosphere between the new Algerian President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and the young Moroccan King Muhammad VI. Hopes of reconciliation between Morocco and Algeria returned with gusto to the forefront of political and media attention” (Stora, 2003). However, right after this visit perpetrated a massacre at Algeria Bechar, and Morocco was accused of assisting the armed groups. Then a few days later a drug smuggling from Morocco was detected at the Algerian border. These two events ended the possibility of a very short reconciliation. Bouteflika announced that these accusations did not have any ground and he stated ‘we will no longer be milked by our neighbors or by any state that holds its sovereignty in thrall to outside powers.’

In 2000 as Messari puts there was willingness from the Algerian side to repair relations with Rabat, but this move could not find a compensation (Messari, 2018). Newly emerged from the civil war, Algeria needed stability and cooperation in the region in order to recover. However, because there was no response from Morocco, the state adopted its old attitudes. According to Mürsel Bayram through the 2000s both parties continued to accuse each other of internal problems and regional instability<sup>8</sup>. Although in the 2000s, relations were partially stable and passed between some accusations and rapprochements. However, improvements remained insufficient and relations could not recover from that point. Also, this period was a chance for Morocco to regain its leading position due to the weakening of Algeria because of its internal turmoil. “During this decade, Morocco also took advantage of Algeria’s weak international position to try to regain the backing of some African countries and managed to convince some to withdraw their support for the SADR” (Mortimer, 2015). While Morocco gained its leading position in Africa and the Middle East it also strengthen the pre-established western ties. Algeria eager to restore its political stance tried to repair its relationship with Morocco and put the Western Sahara issue to the side. In 2004, the visa application was abolished by Algeria and Morocco, and rapprochement occurred between the two states. Both parties took initiative and took some steps for better relations. But these efforts remained at a superficial level and did not receive any results. In 2005 King Mohammed VI did not attend a regional meeting protesting Algerian support for the Sahrawi people and Polisario Front and Rabat canceled the visit of former Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia which was taken as an insult. Morocco reacted to Algeria's support of Western Sahara and repeatedly emphasized that it should correct this move. Algeria has not taken a step back and the interference of Morocco in its foreign policy increased the tension even more. Although the two states did not engage in a direct conflict, they continued the previous measurements of each other. In this period consistently, one party ignored the other's efforts to repair relations. “Since 2008, Morocco has repeatedly requested that Algeria reopen their land border, closed since 1994, but Algeria refuses to do so on the grounds that it would be detrimental to its national security and benefit Morocco more than Algeria” (Arieff, 2011). However, although there was no improvement in bilateral politics there was an improvement within the economic sphere.

After two years there was an emerging turmoil in the region due to the economic crisis and political injustice. In 2010 December in Tunisia Mohammed Bouazizi’s burning of himself triggered many people to went to the streets. In 2011 the social movement was spread all over the region. These events are rallies, protests, popular uprisings, and armed conflicts of an

unprecedented scale throughout the Arab world. With this movement, the demands for Islamic democracy have increased. The states of MENA faced this kind of revolt for the first time and were not prepared for it. “The Arab uprisings themselves have come to define the unpredictable nature of Middle East politics and MENA’s inter-state regional relations: the new normal of the region” (Ehteshami, 2016). Political mobilizations and demands for democracy in the region were a threat to both Algeria's military structure and Morocco's royal system. In the face of such a great threat, the two countries had to spend the energy they spent on each other on their public in order to establish the social order. Although these movements had great repercussions in both states, no government or system changes were made. But in Algeria, the 19-year state of emergency was lifted, and in Morocco, economic concessions were granted by King Mohammed VI, a referendum was decided, and steps were taken to prevent corruption. Countries had to cooperate at the state level in order to establish regional stability and clarity. These internal turmoils were also reflected in the already bad economy, making it even worse. In order to create stability and stability in the region, Morocco and Algeria, which were politically tense, had to compromise on their previous behaviors. In this regard, they first took economic steps. “During the year 2011, government ministers met for talks in both countries, and several economic agreements were signed, including for Morocco to import Algerian natural gas” (Arieff, 2013).

Also within these years due to the regional turmoil in the Sahel countries and the Arab Spring in North Africa. Both Morocco and Algeria started to compete for regional leadership as a mediator for the migration and fight against terrorism. Due to the history of the region, it has already gave important number of immigration to Europe. The economic crisis that increased after the Arab Spring increased this number to a great extent. “Unemployment remained high, and emigration to Europe continued largely unabated” (Willis, 2014). In addition to this, different African countries were also migrating from the region. Since the region is seen as a transit gateway to Europe, the refugee flow is on the main agenda of the two states. “Globalisation also saw the long peripheral regions of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia strengthen their connections with the Maghreb through the impact of migration and economic exchange respectively” (Willis, 2014). The European countries reacted to both the refugees from Algeria and Morocco and the refugee flow from the sub-Sahara Africa, and the two countries signed reconciliations and agreements on this issue. In particular, these agreements were about the security threats posed by incoming refugees. Another important issue in the Maghreb region is the terrorist movements that the Middle East has been exposed to since the



2000s. These movements spread to the European countries above and the Sahel countries below, and they play a leading role in stopping terrorism because Algeria and Morocco are at an important point. Armed terrorist organizations in Algeria emerged under the name of the "Islamic Salvation Front" during the civil war in the 90s and continued their existence in the country afterward. In addition, a few Islamic movements in Morocco took action on the university fronts and were suppressed by the government. Terrorist acts in both countries are supported by foreign-based terrorist groups. Al-Qaeda's North African arm, Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, has operated in Algeria for many years. In addition, most terrorist operations against DAESH in North Africa took place in Morocco. Both Al-Qaeda and DAESH were an important threat to the two states and the countries in the region. In this respect, both parties had to work together to maintain regional stability and prevent terrorist acts. However, security cooperation between Maghreb states remained limited to information sharing (Brunel, 2008). Algeria and Morocco, which were expected to provide regional stability by working together in this period, both in the refugee issue and in the war against terrorism, could not succeed. In both areas, cooperation remained superficial and insufficient. Even, according to Miguel Larramendi, this common goal despite creating cooperation has caused rivalry (Larramendi, 2018). In order to become a regional power, both states acted independently in this area and positioned themselves as the leaders of the refugee crisis and the war against terrorism in both Europe and Africa. This competitive environment between the two made political reconciliation even more difficult. In 2012 Algerian Prime Minister Ouyahia stated that opening borders between Algeria and Morocco was not a priority on the state's agenda. Since this year there was no high official meetings held between the two parties. Apart from the cooperation on migration and fight against terrorism and a few weak economic agreements, there was nothing that would make bilateral relations binding. In addition to this cessation of political talks between Algeria and Morocco, as well as still closed borders made the bilateral relations to be unrepairable.

The tension between Moroccan soldiers and the POLISARIO Front in Guerguerat on the Mauritanian border in November 2020, and the POLISARIO Front's announcement of withdrawal from the 1991 ceasefire decision, led to concerns that the problem would move back to the military arena (Kemiksiz, 2021). Algeria's support of these movements revived the long-standing frozen relations. Along with this, the already tense relations became even more strained when the USA recognized Western Sahara as the Moroccan territory as a consequence of the normalization agreement that the state signed with Israel. In addition, as a response to Algeria's long-term support of Western Sahara, Morocco started to support the separatist group

on Algerian soil. The parties stemmed from the fact that Morocco supported the long-debated autonomy and even independence demands of the Kabyle people in and around Kabul, one of the most important cities of Algeria. 17 July 2021, Omar Hilal Moroccan Ambassador to the UN called for the independence of the Kablye group in Algeria. This has been taken as a response to Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamras's call for the self-determination of the Sahrawi people<sup>9</sup>. This statement was condemned as a support for terrorism by the Algerian side. For this statement, Algeria demanded a clarification but could not receive any answers.

As a response to that Algeria cut its diplomatic relation with Morocco due to its 'hostile actions'. But these actions were not only containing Hilales's statement but also using Pegasus spyware, involved in the deadly fires, and cooperating with Israel which is a long-term Algerian enemy<sup>10</sup>. Following the severing diplomacy, Algeria also closed air space, cut the gas pipeline that crosses from Morocco, and rejected mediation that came from several states. In the upcoming days country also accused Morocco of killing three Algerian truck drivers at the Mauritanian border. As a response, Moroccan source from the kingdom rejected these accusations and stated that regardless of the situation and provocations Morocco would never attack the civilians<sup>11</sup>. Also, Mauritania falsified these claims and offered mediation between both parties, however, have not get any response from the Algerian side. In this regard, this is not the only mediation offer that Algeria rejected. Another development that occurred at the same time was the United Nations' call for a dialogue which also could not find any reply from the Algerian part<sup>12</sup>. Also, they have previously rejected the mediation of Spain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. As a matter of fact, Moroccan seems more moderationist in this regard. According to the news on France 24, Morocco is eager to turn the page on the conflict with Algeria with one condition which is the status of Western Sahara<sup>13</sup>. Although there is no conquered reason for the escalation of the tension, the possibility of reconciliation seems a long shot, and yet division is on the rise. As stated by the Morocco World News there is also the possibility of recalling its nationals, closing maritime space, and if necessary expulsion of Moroccons<sup>14</sup>. In addition to these developments, both sides are increasing their military spending and chancing their rhetoric to rigidity. Despite a remote possibility of peace between the two states with the involvement of external powers conflict seems yet to be unsolved.

## **4.2. External Parties Effects on the Conflict**

Algeria's revolutionary structure and the state identity formed by the long-lasting liberation struggle contradict Morocco's centuries-old monarchy and imperial state identity. The period of decolonization played a decisive role in the positions of the two states in the world conjuncture. When the two states gained their independence in the 50s and 60s, the prevailing order in the world was the bipolar order. Although it is not possible to see Algeria and Morocco completely in the camps of the Cold War, the two states formed an alliance in parallel with this order. During the governments of Ben Bella and Boumedienne in Algeria, strong socialist rhetoric and third worlds discourse prevailed. In addition, Makhzen in Morocco was conservative and the discourse of alliance with the West was dominant. To start with the economic integration due to the colonial heritage both states were highly dependent on the bilateral trade with their protectorate states which then evolved to cooperate with the different partners that are on the opposite sides of the Cold War. This asymmetric trading worsened the possibility of forming an economic union. While Morocco strengthens its ties with the states that are on the Western pole, such as the EU, the USA, and Saudi Arabia. At the same time, Algeria continued its anti-Western discourse on its economy as well as its politics and cooperated with Russia, China, and Iran. The second point is that as well as their economy Maghreb states had different partners and agendas for their foreign policies. Their identity and interest differences are also reflected in their diplomatic behavior. As a consequence, their perception toward other states and unions were formed. While Morocco got closer to the EU, LAS, and NATO, Algeria got closer to OAU, USSR, and Iran. Also, these unions supported and strengthened their foreign policy, especially on the Western Sahara issue. "When at the presummit meeting in 1982 a group of southern African states known as the Frontline States pressed for the SADR's election" (Jensen, 2012). With the joining of Western Sahara to the OAU, Morocco left the Union for thirty-five years. Meanwhile, LAS recognized the region as an integral part of the Kingdom, and the EU performed economic activities in the region with the Moroccan parties.

However, at the end of the 80s, both the countries experienced economic difficulties and the effect of the bipolar order of the world decreased, and both states stopped advocating for one side of the world order. In addition, this order came to an end with the rapprochement

between the two states, the establishment of the AMU, and the collapse of the USSR. “Since the fall of the Berlin wall, this bipolar ideological distinction between an Algeria on the 'Arab left' and a 'pro-Western' Morocco no longer holds water” (Stora, 2003). By the end of this period, Morocco and Algeria had a more open environment for political partnering and economic cooperation. With the rise of the West in the 90s and early 2000s, the two states were in competition with each other while strengthening their bilateral relations with Europe and America. As mentioned before, the two states cooperated and competed with the West in regulating the migration flow and in the fight against terrorism. When it comes to 2010, the Arab Spring that took place in the region pushed both states to cooperate with the region in terms of ensuring stability in the region and consolidating the regime. Government revolutions and foreign interventions, especially in Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia, caused fear of change. In addition to this, the terrorist movements and political activity spreading in the region pushed the countries to cooperate with each other and their previous partners. However, as Morocco and Algeria tried to seize regional power by taking advantage of each other's internal turmoil rather than cooperating, relations became even more strained, and by 2012, the relationship between the two states was only on the ground of economy. Diplomatic relations, which had been frozen for a long time, were further strained with the support of Algeria's POLISARIO between these years. By 2020, this tension came to a deadlock with Morocco's rapprochement with Israel. In response to this, on the Algerian front anti-Western and anti-Zionist rhetoric began to increase. In this period, Algeria, which started to get closer with Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, received a reaction from the West.

Since their independence, Morocco and Algeria have been positioned themselves by forces against each other in the world order. This first started with Morocco's closeness with the West due to its conservative structure and its colonial relations during the Cold War period and Algeria's rapprochement with the USSR due to its anti-Western discourse. Afterward, the two countries competed to be closer related to the West in the unipolar world order. Afterward in the multipolar structure of the world order, both parties formed a partnership with the regional and global powers that were also opposite each other. In this part of the thesis, the effect of foreign powers on the competition between Algeria and Morocco will be discussed, and both their regional and global. Foreign policy will be discussed. In particular, Algeria's relationship with Russia after the Cold War, and then its rapprochement with Iran and finally Hezbollah and even Syria will be discussed. In addition, Morocco's relationship with the West after its

independence, and its rapprochement with Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and Israel will be discussed.

### **4.3. Algeria's Relations with Regional and Global Powers**

#### **4.3.1. Algerian Relations with Global Powers**

Algeria's relationship with Russia can be observed through states independence. Although relations developed within the framework of military cooperation in this period, Algeria's anti-Western discourse can also be observed. The revolutionary, egalitarian and anti-Western attitudes of the state at the end of the colonial period brought the two countries closer to each other. Anti-Western rhetoric during the years of Algeria's independence placed Algeria at the pole of the USSR in the bipolar world. As an indicator of this rapprochement was also shown at the ideologically of the state through its socialist tendencies. Especially during Bella and Boumediene period, these tendencies were observable. In 1971 the state nationalized and nationalized energy resources (oil, natural gas), banks, and large industries. Thereafter he directed his power towards land reform and Arabization of the country. He succeeded in bringing Algeria into the "anti-imperialist states". In addition to this, there was a very strong military solidarity between Algeria and the Soviet Union. During Sand War, the Soviet Union and Algeria signed an agreement, and in the following year, this relationship strengthen until the point Algeria cut its relation with America. In 1960, the USSR became the main supplier of military equipment to the state. These two-decade relations between the two countries were strong both ideologically and militarily. According to Global Security until the 80s nearly 90% of the arm equipment was supplied by the USSR<sup>4</sup>. But the Soviets did not support Algeria in every way. Although Algeria was militarily supported by USSR and as Yahya Zoubir puts Soviet Russia hasn't supported POLISARIO Front as Morocco was their biggest trade and economic partner on the continent (Zoubir, 1987). The close relationship of the Soviets with Morocco, although it was an economic one, was suspicious from the Algerian side.

Although they were ideologically close, both states had formed a bilateral relationship based on their interests and did not form a solid foundation for each other. Algeria, which had lived under the rule of different countries for centuries, did not want to be under the same order

all over again. Not wanting to be a client state, Algeria also refused to be a tool of another country. In this regard, authorities did not allow the Soviets to establish a military base in their state and did not allow her to use their naval base. In addition, although some socialist tendencies were observed in the country, socialism was not fully implemented. In addition, with the weakening of the Soviet Union, alternative ways began to be sought by the Algerian authorities. “Algeria’s long and bloody liberation struggle meant that its adoption of a more radical anti-imperialist and Third Worldist policy following independence was almost inevitable” (Willis, 2014). Boumediene in the last years of his presidency, as one of the founders of the Third World countries, Boumediene argued that a new international economic order should be established under the name of the non-Aligned Movement. The movement had 120 member countries including almost all of the African continent and Arab Peninsula. This movement was defined as a third bloc formed alongside the USA and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and Algeria had become an important representative of this bloc. In this period, when Western countries were called "First World" and Eastern Bloc countries "Second World", these newly decolonized countries were called "Third World". Different from the ideological conflicts of the cold war period, countries were generally dealing with basic problems such as famine, drought, epidemics, ignorance, and backwardness. This social movement, which was established in this order, was in parallel with the domestic policy of Algeria. The state rationally assumed one of the leadership roles in this movement, increasing its regional influence. “Bendjedid, who took office in 1978, adopted a foreign policy focusing on regional problems outside of the bipolar world system in Algeria” (Kurt, 2021). This move was a significant Foreign policy maneuver in terms of Algeria's positioning itself according to the newly formed world order and providing regional leadership. There were two sides to this new opening regional effect and global effect. This period in regional foreign policy with the 'Africanism' and 'Pan-Arabism', which was formed on the state identity by Algeria was observed on a higher density. In Africa, it showed its anti-colonial and anti-imperialist attitudes most strongly in its border neighbor, Western Sahara. In 1981 SADR was recognized by 45 countries and a year later it became a member of the OAU. These developments were interpreted as Algeria's victory over Morocco in the region. Hence it resulted in the Moroccan dissociation from OAU in 1984. In addition, it established close relations with Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt and tried to isolate Morocco from regional politics. In 1983, the Brotherhood and Reconciliation Agreement was signed between Algeria and Tunisia. In addition, Algeria's Third Worldist policy was in parallel with Egypt and Libya’s state ideology. By the end of the 80s, Algeria had become an important

actor in the region. As a consequence, Marrakech Agreement was signed, AMU was established and the state hosted the Palestinian National Council in 1988.

In addition, it was possible to see global developments in the state. Benjedid's policy was warier than the Soviets and closer contact with the West was made. In 1985, high-level diplomatic talks took place between the two states. The hegemony of America and the end of the bipolar order observed in the world during this period brought Algeria closer to the West, even though the state was ideologically distant from this region. "The improvement in relations with the US was also facilitated by internal shifts inside Algeria which saw more ideological concerns being gradually replaced by priorities related to economic development" (Grimaud, 1984). In this period, the anti-Western discourse was alleviated and an economic, political, and diplomatic ground was tried to be accomplished. In this respect, Algeria managed to attract the attention of the Western states, through natural gas and oil which were the state's strongest cards. "Algerian trade with the US, primarily in oil and gas, increased, and by 1977 America had even supplanted France as Algeria's primary export market" (Seddon, 1987). In addition to the USA, there was a rapprochement with Europe as well, especially with France. Algeria which gives economy importance as well as this political activity has become an important participant in organizations such as the G77, OPEC, and the New International Economic Order (NIEO). But opening up to the West caused some problems in domestic politics. The FIS, which was established in the late 80s, caused internal turmoil and the civil war that took place in the early 90s caused the state to be isolated from the world and regional political conjuncture. During this period, the weakening of the central authority and the difference in foreign policy targets caused the country to miss a common Foreign agenda. Along with this, the worsening economy and political instability caused international actors to be cautious toward the state. This isolation weakened the possibility of Algeria becoming a regional power in the 90s and the state needed time to recover.

Bouteflika, who came to the head of the government in 1999, has shaped his foreign policy within the framework of two objectives since its early years. To regain the country's image abroad and attract foreign investors to the country (Kurt, 2021). In the same year, an OAU meeting was held in the country and it was announced to the international audience that the country was in a politically stabilized stage again. During this period, the distance between Europe and America from the MENA region due to terrorism and refugees pushed Algeria into its previous foreign policy strategy. At the beginning of the 2000s, the focus of Algeria's foreign

policy was on rapprochement with the former focus on regional states and Russia. To start with Russia, although there was a decline in relations in the 90s due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the civil war in Algeria, relations were restored when Bouteflika came to the power in 1999. "Putin became president of Russia only a few months after Abdelaziz Bouteflika became president of Algeria in April 1999. The two new leaders soon made an initial attempt to revive bilateral relations" (Katz, 2007). In 2001, the two states signed a strategic partnership agreement. With this agreement, there was an agreement on the resumption of arms sales and further developments in the fuel and power sectors. In addition, during his visit to Algeria in 2006, Putin write off the country's debt of 4.7 billion dollars (Barth,2019). Afterward, Russia began to see Algeria as a guarantor of its political presence both in North Africa and in the Sahel region. In order to establish regional security and stability, two states perform ongoing joined military drills. "Algeria responded by organizing massive military drills during the first half of 2018, including the Toufane 2018 (or Déluge 2018) military maneuvers held in May in Oran, in western Algeria, the largest military drill ever organized in the history of independent Algeria, in which it showcased its latest military acquisitions" (Lounnas and Messari, 2018). With these military drills, Russia provides a secure network over the continent through Algeria while Algeria gains military backup. Through economic and strategic ties Russia builds bilateral relations with Algeria as a strategic partner in the Middle East and African continent.

In this respect, Algeria's cooperation with global actors has been in parallel with its domestic policy. The state, which supports the anti-imperialist attitude in its foreign policy, has established alliances accordingly in the global conjuncture. In summary, after the country gained its independence, it got closer to the Soviets through anti-Western discourse and formed an alliance with the actors of the Eastern bloc. This process continued until the mid-80s when the state established strong partnerships with the Eastern bloc in terms of military and security. On the other hand during the same period, Morocco's closeness with the Western bloc caused the state to see Morocco as a traitor. However, weakening of the bloc in the late 80s and early 90s, the state started to get closer to the Western states as an alternative. In addition to this, an improvement was observed in the relations of the state with Morocco in the same period. However, the state was isolated from global politics due to the internal turmoil it experienced in the 90s. After these events, Russia reappeared in the foreign focus of Algeria and a rapprochement between the two states was observed in the 2000s.



#### 4.3.2. Algerian Relations with Regional Powers

Another issue is Algeria's alliances with the actors in the region. The state has based the relations it has established in the global conjuncture on the same basis in its regional alliances. After the economic and political prosperity of the state from the 1980s, Algeria got closer to the countries in the region and gave importance to Africa and MENA in its foreign policy. As mentioned earlier, the state had established close relations with its neighboring state and formed the AMU. In addition, Algeria, which has supported the independence struggles of African states since the years of independence, became an important member of the OAU by the 1980s. In addition, the state's adoption of the Palestinian issue was an example of its political activity in the Arabian Peninsula. But the 90s distanced Algeria from regional politics as well as global politics. The state, which recovered in the 2000s, re-adopted the policy of activity in regional politics. However, Algeria expanded its foreign policy with new actors in its regional policy. The most striking one in this new rapprochement is the rapprochement between Algeria and Iran. Along with this, the state got closer with actors from the region such as Syria and Hezbollah. Looking at the history of the bilateral relations between Iran and Algeria, the relations are at a stable level since the two states did not have a common political agenda after independence. Afterward, relations deteriorated with Iran's support for the FIS during the civil war period. With the end of the civil war and after the two states took a more active role in regional politics, there were convergences between the two parties. Especially since Iran was isolated from the region due to its Shia nature, it was important to find a state that which it could form an alliance. The isolation of Algeria from the region during this period played an important role in the rapprochement of the two states. In addition, the ideological similarities between the two and the rapprochement of Morocco with other actors in the region strengthened this alliance. In addition to this with the advancement of the relation with Iran, there is also rapprochement with Syria and Hezbollah with Algeria. To start with Iran Algerian Foreign Minister Lamamra stated that there will be a deepening relationship between the two states which would both strengthen their position in the region against the other blocks<sup>18</sup>. They had close views on important events such as the Syrian Civil War and the Yemeni Civil War in both states. Besides, Iran and Algeria also shared a common enemy. In this regard, Iran has cooperated and reflected its support to Algeria on the course of hatred towards Israel. Both countries throughout their history have conflicted backgrounds with Israel and this heritage reflects in their Foreign policy. In accordance with that as it was stated in the Middle East Monitor, this rapprochement is engorged itself from the intimacy between Israel and

Morocco<sup>19</sup>. Also, the complex history between Morocco and Iran has strengthened this cooperation significantly. In 2018, Morocco cut its relationship due to the support that Iran showed for the POLISARIO Front. Regarding this support as a part of the Iranian Axis, Hezbollah members founded Tindofu Camps to support and train armed Sahrawi groups<sup>20</sup>. In contribution to this both Iran and Syria recognize the independence of Western Sahara as a sovereign state. Morocco as a response to this cooperation indicates that Algerian and Iranian seek to destabilize the country and increase their regional influence by using POLISARIO Front<sup>21</sup>. “In this context, in May 2018 Rabat accused Iran and Hezbollah of providing missiles to the POLISARIO with the support of Algeria, which Algeria denied” (Lamlili, 2018). As a member of the Axis of Resistance, it can be observed that there is a new opening between Syria and Algeria. Even so, Algerian President Tebboune initiated the return of Syria to the Arab League which the Summit will be held in Algeria on this March<sup>22</sup>. Although it is early to speak about the matter still we can see the possible occurrence of new blocks through the given arguments.

In summary, a parallel behavior is observed in Algeria's regional foreign policy with its global Foreign policy. The diplomatic attitudes of the state in the region followed an equivalent course to its domestic policy. Immediately after its independence, Algeria established alliances with global states, both in its own recovery and in the recovery of other states in the region. Algeria through these times build regional relations based on supporting the independence struggles of the states in the region. In the 1980s, with the development of the region and the welfare of the state, Algeria, which took a more active role in both Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa, assumed the role of ensuring the security of the region with its military structure of state and equipment supplied from the Soviets. However, due to the internal problems experienced in the 90s, the state remained passive in the regional policy of this period. The active role of Morocco in the region in this period pushed Algeria to establish alternative alliances. In this context, the state got closer to Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah in the 2000s. As a result of these convergences, it is observed that a new block is formed in the region.

#### **4.4. Morocco's Relations with Regional and Global Powers**

##### **4.4.1. Moroccan Relations with Global Powers**

Having peacefully obtained its independence from the French, Morocco continued its relations with the former colony, and the king of the time, Mohammed V, wanted to transform his country into a modern nation-state. After its independence, Morocco continued to maintain its already established economic and political relations with the West from the colonial period. Like other kings of the Arab world, VI. Mohammed also promised to contribute to the modernization efforts in the country. The main focus of the new king was the international relations with Morocco, especially with the EU. In the general elections held since his accession to the throne, it was seen that the King supported the existing governments. However, as discussed before, Morocco's desire to return to its pre-colonial borders with the ideology of Maghreb el-Kebir after its independence also shaped its foreign policy. In 1958, a combined Franco-Spanish force waged war in Spanish Sahara against the Moroccan Liberation Army. Morocco financed indigenous Sahrawi rebels. Although the war ended with the victory of the Spanish Army, the Taryafa region was left to Morocco with the signing of the Angra de Cintra Treaty. During the decolonization period, although Morocco experienced a peaceful process, the border disputes after its independence caused conflicts between the Kingdom and the Western states. However, Morocco could not form an alternative alliance due to the lack of development in the region and the independence of its neighboring countries was not taken yet. Due to this reason the state was obliged and continued to maintain its economic and political ties with European countries.

With the accession of King Hassan II, Morocco desired to have multiple alternatives in its foreign policy, Morocco adopted a more diverse foreign policy. The state became more active in the Western alliance as well as in North Africa and the Middle East. Despite its closeness with the West, Morocco, with its multiple foreign policy focus, sided with the struggles for independence prevailing in the African continent and the Middle East. During this period, the state, sent arms to its neighboring country Algeria to help them win the war of independence, and also supported the independence struggles in other African countries. Because this period

provided the development of the countries in the region and an alternative for Morocco to form an alliance outside the West. However, the state was not content with being the regional power as well as having its old alliance with the West. Although Morocco was a non-aligned country it showed pro-Western tendencies in its policy and had developed strong economic relations with the Soviets. “Morocco also sought to mitigate the kingdom’s economic dependence on the West by seeking to expand trade links with the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. These links, however, remained modest in comparison with those with the West, and following Hassan II’s accession to the throne in 1961, Moroccan policy took a decisively pro-Western turn, a move aided by the domestic political marginalization of Istiqlal and its allies during the early 1960s.” (Willis, 2014) In every event occurring in World politics, Morocco has turned its face to the West for many reasons. These reasons can be summarized as, Morocco, which sided with the West in the world's bipolar order, was both ideologically closer to this pole, and Algeria's closeness with the Soviets, as its regional rival, was pushing Western countries to cooperate with Morocco. “This explains why the United States has since the inception of the conflict sided with Morocco. Indeed, during the height of the Cold War the US feared Soviet expansion into sub-Saharan Africa” (Zoubir, 2014). It was an expected move for America to be an active player in the region during this period and to form an alliance with Morocco, which was not against the West ideologically.

“The US played a major role in reversing the war over Western Sahara in Morocco’s favor through large-scale economic and military aid, military advisers, and logistical assistance” (Zoubir, 2014). America in addition to this modernized and trained RMAF and armed the military against the POLISARIO threat. Western Sahara which can be considered Morocco's most sensitive problem, the state received support from the United States due to several reasons. One of the first reasons for this was Algeria’s cooperation with USSR meanwhile increasing the spread of the Soviet threat. For this reason, as well as supporting Morocco in the Sand War between the two countries America continued to support the state in the Western Sahara issue. In addition to Algeria, POLISARIO's close relations with the Soviets in the region posed a risk for both Morocco and the West. “US was worried about the potential emergence of a pro-Soviet state in Western Sahara” (Zoubir, 1987). In 1986 two states performed joined military exercises at Western Sahara. Another reason for this was that POLISARIO had close relations with states such as Cuba and Libya, as well as the Soviets. It was in Morocco's interest that Algeria and POLISARIO acted contrary to the US foreign policy in the region. During the reign of Hasan II, both the Cold War environment and the problems of Western Sahara and Algeria pushed the

Rabat and Washington administrations to pursue a common foreign policy. In this respect, Morocco's close intercourse was observed with Saudi Arabia and Israel, which are America's allies in the region. "In the 1980s and early 1990s, Morocco secured about 1 billion dollars annually from Saudi Arabia to purchase arms and supplies from the United States to fight the POLISARIO and defend its claim to Western Sahara" (Spencer, 1993). However, in the 90s, there were changes observed in the dynamics and alliances in the region.

In this period, with the end of the Cold War, America's concerns about the region decreased. With the unipolar world order and American hegemony, an effort to increase cooperation between Algeria and Morocco against the West began. At the end of the Cold War because Algeria was no longer constituting a danger in the region US support for Morocco decreased significantly. However, with the support of the US in the 1991 Gulf War, instability and civil war in Algeria and the fight with the extremist Islamism state regained its Western support. However, this partnership did not last long and was interrupted due to the internal turmoil in Algeria. During this period, Morocco tried to turn the civil war in Algeria in favor of itself and strengthened its powers with the West. The instability and economic crisis in the region pushed Western countries to cooperate with Morocco, with which they were old allies. Mohammed VI, who came to the throne at the same time, gave importance to relations with the USA and the EU. In addition, terrorism and migration movements that took place in the 2000s made it important to establish security in bilateral relations between the West and Morocco. In the same period, reinforcing Algeria's relationship with Russia strengthened the bond between the two parties. By the 2010s, the Arab Spring's more stable course in Morocco compared to the region and the political stability of the state caused the USA and EU to strengthen their cooperation with the state in the region. Again in the same period, with the increasing migration movements, the agreement and joint action between the state and the state increased. But the real change between American and Moroccan bilateral relations took place in 2020. On 13 August 2020, Morocco in return for American recognition of Western Sahara signed Abraham Accords with the State of Israel, which is a normalization agreement. This agreement was followed by cooperation in the fields of economy, security, and socio-political relations<sup>15</sup>. But the most important and convincing part of this treaty was that the USA would recognize Western Sahara as Moroccan territory.

In summary, although Morocco tried to keep its relations with the Western powers strong after its independence, these relations were interrupted periodically. First of all, he did not

accept the colonial borders drawn in the region with the idea of Maghreb el-Kebir and entered into conflict with the existing colonial powers, but later he had to improve this relationship again. After that, the USSR's threat in the region pushed the Western states to cooperate with Morocco, but the collapse of the Soviets weakened this cooperation. However, the political instability and economic crises experienced in North Africa afterward pushed the West to cooperate with Morocco again, partially because it was more stable. In addition, the West has established a security bond with the state on issues such as terrorism and immigration. Finally, the Abraham Accords signed between Morocco and Israel in 2020 brought a new dimension to the relationship between the West and especially between the United States and Morocco.

#### **4.4.2. Moroccan Relations with Regional Powers**

When it comes to regional policy, although Morocco has established strong ties with the West and America, sometimes has positioned the state in an important place in the region, and in some cases, it has caused the country to isolate itself from regional politics. Morocco's decolonization process was relatively early and soft. In addition to this previously established economic ties with Western powers put the country in a better position compared to other African states. In addition, the fact that the kingdom was maintained in Morocco during the colonial period prevented the formation of a political vacuum in the country. In this manner, as soon as King Hasan II came to the throne, he set a foreign policy agenda for the state. According to this foreign policy, Moroccan foreign policy exhibited a cooperative understanding of the regional conjuncture. After its independence in 1956, it supported the independence movements in the region. In this context, it hosted the Africa Conference in Casablanca in 1960. This conference with the leadership of Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Libya, Mali, and Morocco, led to the accomplishment of the OAU.

But right after this period, Morocco started to be isolated from regional politics. There are two main reasons for Morocco's separation from the region, the first of which is Algeria's effort to take the regional leadership under its own protection by pointing out Morocco's active cooperation with the colonial powers. The second is Morocco's lack of following the political transformations in the region due to its relations with the Western powers. To start with the

basis of the matter, right after these developments, regional cooperation was interrupted by the Sand War, which occurred due to the border dispute between Algeria and Morocco. After the conflicts between Algeria and Rabat governments that started during this period, it played a decisive role in the foreign policy of both states. During this period, the fact that both countries were supported by different poles in the world during the war further opened the gap between Morocco and Algeria. It was in Algeria's interest that Morocco was close to the West at this time and Algeria was close to the Soviet Union. The discourses of non-aligned countries in the region and the movements against the west stemming from the colonial past have made it difficult for Morocco to share a common ideology in the region. The country, which could not be included in the Pan-Arabism movements spreading in the countries of North Africa, was isolated from the region. In addition, Algeria's military support to the independence movements in the region put the country ahead of Morocco in many respects. Especially Algeria's support to POLISARIO played an important role in the order in the region. In fact, Algeria's support of the groups in Western Sahara dragged the bilateral relations to an insoluble path. Algeria's support of the established SADR government, as well as its support for the state to enter as a member of organizations such as OAU, caused Morocco to leave the Organization in 1982.

After all these developments, Morocco was dragged into cooperation with the states in the region, with the economic difficulties it experienced and the weakening of its alliance with the West, which is experienced at the end of the 80s. Close to the end of the Cold War in 1988 two countries reopened their borders and signed an agreement that led to the Maghreb Union in 1989 and in 1991. However, as discussed before, Maghreb Union was not a long-term organization and regional cooperation could not be achieved. Although its regional relations with its neighbors were interrupted in the 90s, Morocco tried to maintain its activity in Africa and the Middle East. Mohammed VI stayed as far away as possible from the controversial issues of geography during this period (Aydın, 2021). It has played a passive role in crises such as Israel-Palestine and Iran-Iraq. As a fact, the state, which had strong relations with the West in this period, formed its policy in the region in parallel. In addition, the relations it established with the United States strengthened its relations with Saudi Arabia, which is the alliance of the state in the region. The 90s also enabled Morocco's activeness in the region in terms of Algeria being passive and the state is close to the West. Morocco, which turned Algeria's lack of active politics in this period in its favor, also caused many African countries to recognize Western Sahara as their own territory. In this period, the state, which got closer to Libya, Tunisia,

Mauritania, and Egypt, also began to be more active in Africa. In addition to this, in the 2000s, Morocco was in close relations with Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and Jordan. As a result, the economic and political stability of the state, as well as the easy recovery of the Arab Spring, facilitated the establishment of bilateral relations with Morocco in the states in the region. In the years following this event, the state kept its distance from democratic social movements such as Ikhwan Muslim. In order to try to preserve the conservative structure of the Crown, Morocco formed an intangible bloc with ideologically similar Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and Jordan. The closeness that the Moroccan government established with these predominantly Sunni states caused a rift between the Moroccan government and Iran, which follows a Shiite policy. In addition, the rapprochement of Iran and Hezbollah with Algeria further increased the distance between the two states. Finally, the affinity between Israel and Morocco has led to a dead-end in relations with Iran.

The rapprochement between Israel and Morocco was actually due to the rapprochement of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states with Israel. In 2020, a normalization agreement called Abraham Accords was signed between the aforementioned states. As a result of this agreement, the United States recognized Western Sahara as Moroccan territory. When the state considered the advantages of such a powerful country recognizing the region as its own territory, it abandoned its distant attitude towards Israel. Following these upcoming Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz paid an official visit to Morocco and Israel appointed David Govrin as an ambassador to Rabat. After that, the Israeli defense minister also visited Morocco and signed an agreement on regional security and defense. However, Algeria was frustrated about these developments and used aggressive rhetoric against this convergence between Morocco and Israel. Algerian Prime Minister Abdelaziz Djerad claimed that Morocco was supporting the 'Zionist Entity' who wanted to be near the Algerian borders<sup>16</sup>. Following this statement, Algeria also condemns Israel for having the observer status at the African Union with the help of Morocco. However, not every state in the region reacted to this new policy in Morocco. Another emergence in this regard is the rapprochement between Morocco and the United Arab Emirates which also signed Abraham Accords with Israel. Although UAE tried to mediate the conflict between Algeria and Morocco still the country invests to improve the bilateral relations with Morocco on a higher level. Even so, UAE opened a consulate in the Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara and became the first Arab country that recognized the region as an integral part of Morocco<sup>17</sup>.



Although Morocco wanted to play an active role in the region after its independence, it was isolated from the region many times due to the tensions with Algeria and the Western Sahara issue. First of all, Morocco which wanted to return to its pre-colonial borders attitude toward Algeria, Mauritania, and Western Sahara, drew a reaction in the region. Afterward, Algeria's support for the independence movements in the region moved the state away from regional politics. In addition, the strong economic and political relations with Western states also caused a reaction from neighboring countries. However, the regional integration that was trying to be established in the late 1980s and Algeria's exit from the regional policy due to the internal turmoil gave Morocco an advantage in this period. Morocco, which was stable in the region in the 90s and turned the absence of its biggest rival to its advantage, also made progress in the recognition of Western Sahara as its own region. Afterward, with Algeria's return to regional policy, the state approached the Sunni bloc. Along with this, Algeria getting closer to Shiite structures such as Iran and Hezbollah the blocks became more visible. Finally, with the participation of Morocco in the normalization process with the state of Israel in the region, new blocs began to emerge in the region.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Algerian and Moroccan dispute has been a long-standing agenda in North Africa and the Middle East. Although there has been an effort by the two sides throughout history still the issue seems to be unresolved and peace seems to be a far possibility. In addition to the historical background and support for separatist groups within their borders, the involvement of external powers in to the issue is one of the key reasons for the escalation of the conflict. Through this glance, it is possible to see what the future holds for the upcoming results of the conflict through the new occurring blocks and dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa regions. This thesis aims to explain the historical competition between Algeria and Morocco and the contribution of the Western Sahara problem to this conflict within the scope of constructivism theory. The purpose of using the constructivist theory is to try to give a deeper explanation of the conflicts between the two states. The main reason for these conflicts stems from the differences in perspective between the two states rather than the conflict of interest. As a matter of fact, although Morocco and Algeria have tried to improve their relations throughout their history, the slightest difference of opinion and attitude resulted in the two conflicting and breaking the relationship. In this way, constructivism shed light on the long-standing state identity difference between Algeria and Morocco. In addition, the identity and perspective differences between the two states cause them to develop a security dilemma against each other. If looked at the historical process, the most concrete example of this security dilemma is the Western Sahara problem. In this case, the differences in perspective between the two states and the resulting distrust are obvious to be observed. In addition, the identity difference between the two states and the perspective differences observed in the Western Sahara issue led the two states in different directions in terms of their foreign policies. The global and regional alliance structure created by this pattern is explained through the competitive security system. In this respect, this thesis has been explained under three main chapters. These sections are 'State Identity and Interest: De-Colonial Heritage', 'Security Dilemma: Western Sahara as an Example', and 'Historical Competition between Morocco and Algeria: Competitive Security System'.

Firstly, in the 'State Identity and Interest: De-Colonial Heritage' section, the difference between the state identities that emerged in the state identity formation of Algeria and Morocco has been examined. Morocco and Algeria both differ in their pre-colonial history. First of all, the fact that Morocco had a kingdom dating back to the 8th century caused the state to be politically conservative and had a strong central authority. On the other hand, Algeria has a

more revolutionary state structure with its 132 years of French colonial history after three centuries of Ottoman patronage. In addition, although both states were French colonies, Morocco was seen as a protectorate state and passed the period of being a colony and independence. Whereas, Algeria witnessed bloody conflicts during the arrival of colonial forces to the country and during the independence period. These two different colonial and independence periods played an important role in the formation of the states' identities. In 1956 Morocco gained its independence from the French after six years colonial powers were withdrawn from Algeria and the country became independent in 1962. The two states also diverged significantly during the decolonization period. After its independence, Morocco wanted to return to its pre-colonial borders, and in the context of the ideology of Maghreb el-Kebir, the state has argued that certain parts of Algeria and Mauritania, and Western Sahara should all be within its territorial integrity. On the other hand, the anti-Western, anti-imperialist, and anti-colonial argument that Algeria developed after its long-standing struggle for independence has led to the formation of a revolutionary state structure. In addition to this Morocco being a conservative monarchy and Algeria being a revolutionary military government affected both country's internal and foreign policy which deepened the conflict. Two states did not decide on the territorial claims which resulted in what is known as the Sand War in 1963. This war was initiated by King Hassan's sending troops to Tindouf and Bechar which are Algerian territories. This place was significant for Algerians due to their connection to Spanish Sahara. The war lasted for five months and with the mediation of the Organization of African Unity, it ended in 1964 September. According to Karen Farsoun, while Algeria won on the political front, Morocco won military victory<sup>3</sup>. Because as a result of this war, while Algeria supported the independence movements that were trending in the region, Morocco was isolated from the region. However, both states tried to come to an agreement based on their religious, ethnic, and historical similarities. In addition, both states understood the importance of cooperation in order to ensure stability and economic prosperity in the region. After this incident in 1969 and 1972, both parties signed the good-neighborly treaty. However, this treaty was a short-lasting one that could not establish its purpose. Although an agreement was signed between the two countries over the borders in 1972, three years later, with Algeria's support for the SADR state, which was established in the region claimed by Morocco, again the tension between the two countries re-occurred.

The second part, 'Security Dilemma: Western Sahara as an Example', aims to reveal the distrust and perspective difference between Algeria and Morocco with the example of Western

Sahara. According to Morocco, Western Sahara due to its separation from its own land during the colonial period, the region was a part of its own state's territorial integrity. On the other hand, Algeria put forward the Declaration of African Union which has supported the already established colonial borders. Hence, Sahrawis living in the region were the rightful owners to the land of Western Sahara. While Morocco argued that the region should be given to it, Algeria argued that a referendum should be held in the region. However, the territory after the withdrawal of the Spanish Mandate Madrid Accords was signed to determine the status of the region. In 1975 in the line with the Accord Western Sahara was divided and annexed between Morocco and Mauritania. After this, the UN argued that a referendum should be held among the population living in the region. However, after this decision, Moroccan King Hasan II send 350,000 civilians to the area which was later called the Green March in order to increase the presence of the state in the region. After the annexation of Western Sahara to Morocco in 1975 and undermining the referendum process, the Sahrawi group POLISARIO declared war on Morocco. With this, the tension between Algeria and Morocco increased due to the Algerian support for the independence movement of POLISARIO. The tension even increased more, Algeria hosts refugees from Western Sahara and helps POLISARIO with military training and equipments. In the same year, the Oasis of Amgala incident happened between two states in Western Sahara. This followed the establishment of the SADR in 1976 by the Sahrawi people that claimed the Western Sahara region as a sovereign state. This decision was recognized by the Organization of African Unity and Algeria. In addition to this Algeria hosted POLISARIO leaders and thousand of Sahrawis within its border<sup>5</sup>. The social and material capabilities differences between the two states in the Western Sahara issue created a security dilemma and until the end of the 80s, Algeria and Morocco were in a diplomatic crisis. In addition to the identity differences between the two states, the Western Sahara problem and the security dilemma between them have historically caused distrust against each other and created a competitive structure.

In the last section, 'Historical Competition between Morocco and Algeria: Competitive Security System', the bilateral relations between Algeria and Morocco since the 90s, as well as their foreign policies shaped as a result of these relations, were discussed. In 1988 both parties again signed an agreement to normalize relations and resume diplomatic ties. The Maghreb Union, which was established in this period, can be considered the last concrete step taken by the two states toward each other. Because, right after the establishment of this organization and the agreement of bilateral agreements, disagreements arose between the two states again. Due

to the turmoil that occurred in Algeria, the country went through a dark period of civil war at the beginning of the 90s. In 1994 borders between Algeria and Morocco were closed due to a terrorist attack at Marrakech which Morocco suspected and accused Algeria. Later in the century, due to the civil war in Algeria, Morocco evaluated the political absence of the state and established close relations with global and regional states. In the 2000s, with the recovery of the state, active politics were adopted. Although both states tried to take steps on behalf of the relations during this period, they were unsuccessful. In the early 2000s, their relationship was stable and rapprochement efforts are not yielding results. But by 2020, a radical break in relations was observed. The result of this rupture was that, in addition to historical conflicts, the two states took place in different blocks in the regional and global blocks.

Lastly, the involvement of the superpowers to the issue results with one of the key reasons for the escalation of the issue on this level. In summary, the fact that Morocco and Algeria were on opposite blocks during the Cold War can be taken as the beginning of this dilemma. Afterward, although there was a rapprochement between the two states with the deterioration of the bipolar order, this rapprochement turned into a competition in establishing cooperation with the Western powers. Later on, this rivalry was also observed in the establishment of the regional blocs. Morocco, which was closer to the Sunni Bloc and Kingdoms, and its rapprochement with Israel in the following period, clarified that there was a bloc. In addition, Algeria's rapprochement with Iran and Hezbollah shows that another bloc has emerged. Both states have attracted interest and competition from both global actors and other powers in the region. In addition, the ideologically different structure of the states of Morocco and Algeria has created an alternative in terms of being a regional power. Looking at the historical process, both states have led the region with alternative models, but they have never been able to take full authority in the region. One reason for this is that Morocco and Algeria cooperate with different states throughout their history, both in terms of their identities and their rivalries. This order made it difficult for the two states to come to terms with each other and brought their identity differences to light.

Overall, this thesis aims to explain the tension between Algeria and Morocco within the constructivist framework. In this context, the pre-colonial historical processes of the two states, the governing models applied during the colonial period, and the state structure formed during the decolonization process were examined. In this section the difference in the identity formation of the two states was asserted. A military and revolutionist state structure emerged

as a result of the long and oppressive colonization process that Algeria experienced. In addition, a conservative and imperialist state structure has emerged due to the monarchy structure that Morocco has maintained throughout its history. In the second part of the thesis, the differences in perspective and security dilemmas were discussed through the example of Western Sahara. In this section, a clearer analysis of the perspective differences between Morocco and Algeria through their positioning themselves in the face of events. In the last section of the thesis, it is discussed where the identity differences and perspective conflicts dragged the relations between the two states in a long historical process. Along with this process, the rivalry derived from the two states' domestic and foreign policies was discussed in detail. This thesis aims to explain the historical tension between Algeria and Morocco and the effects of this issue in the context of the identities, perspectives, and positions of the two states.



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