



The Limits of the Top-Down Dialogue Approach in the Algerian Case

1992-2005

Dr Ali Kouaouci
Université de Montréal

Plan of the presentation

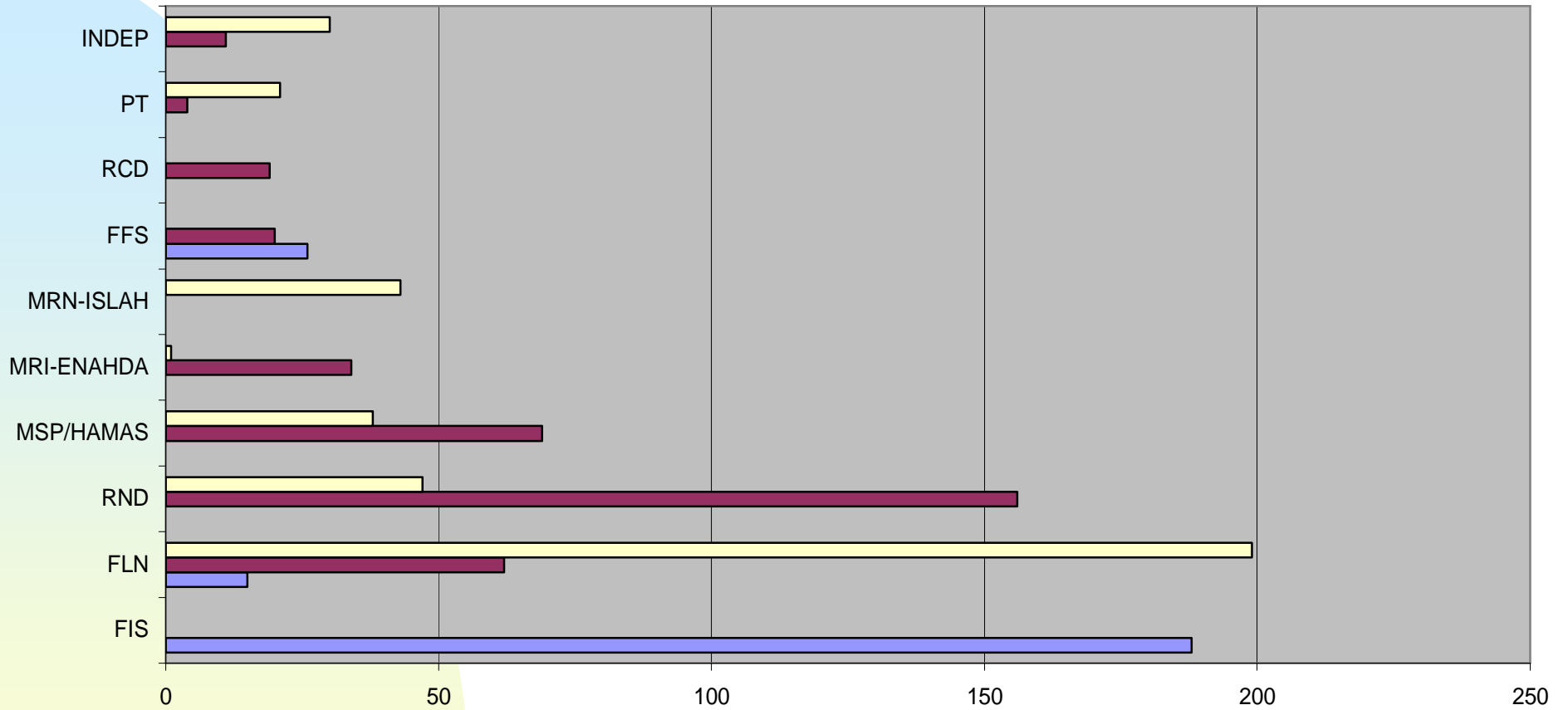
1. Short history of the conflict in Algeria
2. The main stakeholders
3. The peace and reconciliation referendum
4. Positions of main actors on the referendum
5. Positive and negative changes
6. Conclusion: are Algerians still willing to live by islamic rules?

1. Short history

- The state-party system, with a strong state and a weak party, FLN[1] has dominated the political scene from the independence in 1962. The socialist nature of the regime was at that time -1988 - abandoned for a multi-party system with elections to come in 1990 and 1991. Algeria entered political and economic transitions in the worst conditions: social unrest, unemployment, etc.
- Among the main political parties, the Islamic Front of Salvation (FIS)

- 1990 elections and scored important victories at local and provincial elections. In 1991, it obtains a near majority of the parliament seats in the elections of 1991 [2] At that time the army pushed President Chadli Bendjedid to resignation and cancelled the 1991 elections, banning FIS from a quasi-certain victory. At that time a reformist party was outlawed, its leaders sent to jail and the armed conflict exploded. Thousands of FIS militants were arrested, excluded from work, or even killed

Number of seats in the parliament elections in Algeria, by party



	FIS	FLN	RND	MSP/HAMAS	MRI-ENAHDA	MRN-ISLAH	FFS	RCD	PT	INDEP
□ 2002		199	47	38	1	43			21	30
■ 1997		62	156	69	34		20	19	4	11
■ 1991	188	15					26			

Conflict resolution

2. Main stakeholders

- The army is the most stable and coherent force
- Political Islam with an estimated one-fourth of the electorate
- The nationalists with FLN, UGTA[1], RND[2]
- The democrats with FFS[3] being the best organized party
- [1] Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens/Trade-union
- [2] Rassemblement National Démocratique/ National Democratic Rally
- [3] Front des Forces Socialistes/ Front of Socialist Forces

2. The invisible stakeholder

- **Youth: the invisible stakeholder**
- In a country like Algeria, social integration starts with employment and marriage. Youth aged 15-24 are the most excluded part of the population from these two crucial markets: labor market and matrimonial market. The males of this age group are also providing most of the foot-soldiers of terrorism. Unless this age-group is efficiently targeted by strong social policies, carrying a gun will give access to money, women and power over others

Main Armed Groups	Main Civil Society Organizations	Anti-terrorists groups	Top leaders in the government
Islamic Armed Movement (MIA)	Activist women	ANP: National Popular Army	Dialogists
Islamic Army of Salvation (AIS)	Secularists	Security forces	Eradicators
Armed Islamic Group (GIA)	Trade unionists	Groups for Legitimate Defense GLD (about 500000 armed men)	
Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)	Human Rights		
Islamic Front for Armed Jihad (FIDA)	Families of victims of terrorism		

3. The 2005 referendum

- Families of victims of terrorism to be compensated as martyrs of the liberation war
- Families of perpetrators compensated as well
- No prosecution for people who surrender if no participation to collective rapes, mass murders or use of explosive in public places ; the rule being to believe people
- FIS considered as the only responsible and so must remain excluded from the political life
- As corollaries:
- No questions about security forces eventual wrongdoing
- Extradited terrorists will benefit from the same conditions

4. Positions of main actors on the referendum

	PERPETRATOR	FACILITATOR	AGAINST THE REFERENDUM
AIS	1992-1997	2005	
GSPC	1992-	2005?	
FAMILIES OF VICTIMS		ONFVT (FLICI)	300,000 VOTING NO TO THE 2005 REFERENDUM PARENTS OF VICTIMS REFUSING THE CHARTER DJAZAIROUNA (BLIDA) LADDH
CITIZENS: OAPP		2005	

5. Positive and negative changes

	Contributing factor
Positive changes Less violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elimination of fighters by security forces• Some religious scholars recently outlawed terrorism
Negative changes Increased delinquency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth unemployment
Statu quo <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exclusion• Emergency state still in effect after 10 years and no change is on the agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eradicators vs. dialogists in the government• Media

6. Conclusion: Algerians and Islam

	Algeria	Morocco	Egypt
Democratic political system			
Very good	60,4	81,5	67,9
Fairly good	32,3	14,5	30,6
Fairly bad or very bad	7,3	4,0	1,5
Would it be better if people with strong religious beliefs held public office			
Strongly Agree or Agree	39,7	58,1	87,1
Neutral	30,4	18,5	8,6
Strongly Disagree or Disagree	29,9	23,4	4,3