



Beyond Borders: The Role of Reputation in Algerian Foreign Policy

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Abstract: This paper explores the role of reputation in Algeria's foreign policy. It examines how Algeria's past actions have shaped its relations with other states. Empirical evidence is used to demonstrate the significance of reputation in Algeria's foreign policy and explain how the country has worked to cultivate a specific image of itself through its foreign policy since 1962. The study suggests that Algerian policymakers have long recognized the importance of reputation, believing that the state should prioritize maintaining a positive image to ensure international credibility and a favorable view of Algeria. However, Algeria faces the challenge of balancing its international reputation with national interests.

Keywords: Reputation, Foreign Policy, Algeria, Credibility, National Interest

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1. Introduction

Research in international relations has increasingly focused on reputation as a driver of state behavior. Scholars have used reputation to explain a wide range of phenomena, including military deterrence (Schelling, 1966 ; Alt et al., 1988; Huth, 1988; Nalebuff, 1991), recurring conflict (Leng, 1983 ; Diehl & Goertz, 2000; M. J. C. Crescenzi, 2007), multilateral cooperation (Milgrom et al., 1990; Downs & Jones, 2002), and international lending (Simmons, 2000; Simmons & Elkins, 2004; Tomz, 2007). In the foreign policy literature, the majority of scholars generally associate reputation with war, referring to "reputation for resolve" (Michael A. Goldfien et al., 2023; Weisiger & Yarhi-Milo, 2015) (Crescenzi et al., 2012, pp. 259-274). However, this study focuses on reputation as a goal in itself.

Since gaining independence in 1962, Algeria has continuously worked to establish a unique place on the international scene. In terms of foreign policy, reputation refers to a state's position in the eyes of other countries, which has a significant impact on its economic prospects, diplomatic contacts, and geopolitical influence. For Algeria, sustaining a solid international reputation is essential to its broader national security and development plan and extends beyond mere prestige.

Algeria's international reputation is primarily based on two factors: (01) its dedication to anti-colonialism and its backing of liberation movements in Africa and beyond. In addition to finding to resonating across African countries, this ideological stance earned the respect of many states in the Global South. Algeria has maintained its reputation as a supporter of sovereignty and self-determination over the years, frequently focusing its foreign policy discussions on concerns of equality and justice. (02) Its standing as a mediator in disputes throughout North Africa and the Sahel region. Algeria has established itself as a reliable and trustworthy actor in North African affairs thanks to its longstanding neutrality, which is demonstrated by its participation in the peace processes in Mali and Libya.

Nonetheless, the complexity of both domestic and global politics hinders Algeria's efforts to consolidate its position as a regional leader and poses challenges to its efforts to uphold a favorable international image. Therefore, Algeria must strike a balance between addressing pressing domestic challenges maintaining a strong international standing.

Therefore, this paper aims to: 1) Examine the significance of reputation in Algerian foreign policy and its influence on foreign policy behavior; and 2) Analyse how Algeria manages the complex relationship

between its international prestige and its national interests. One of the fundamental subjects of contemporary international relations is the study of reputation. But there are still important problems, such as whether reputations belong to leaders, nations, or both. For what precisely should nations cultivate a reputation? Does a person's reputation in one area of concern affect other areas of concern? (Renshon et al., 2018, pp. 325–339). Accordingly, this article seeks to answer the following questions: What role has reputation played in Algerian foreign policy? Or, how can reputation help explain and understand Algerian foreign policy?

This paper is organized as follows: the first section reviews the literature on reputation and examines how scholars have conceptualized and analyzed the concept in international relations. The second section explores the role of reputation in Algerian foreign policy by examining selected cases and foreign policy decisions. The third section analyses how Algeria is perceived by other states and assesses the impact of these perceptions on its international standing.

2. Reputation in Foreign Policy: Literature Review

The idea that reputation plays a significant role in global politics is as old as the field of international politics research itself. Thucydides frequently discusses reputation in his seminal historiography of the Peloponnesian War, both as a status indicator and as a quality that should be preserved at all costs (M. J. C. Crescenzi & Donahue, 2017). The Cambridge Dictionary defines "reputation" as "the overall perception that people have of someone or something, or the degree of respect or esteem that someone or something is accorded based on prior actions or character traits (Cambridge Dictionary). Or it's a set of perceptions that are built up over time (Sherlock Communications, 2022). It can also refer to "beliefs about an actor's persistent characteristics or tendencies based on that actor's past behavior" (Michael A. Goldfien et al., 2023, pp. 609 – 628). Accordingly, reputation in this context is a concept that is constructed by others based on the actions and language a country uses during decision-making (Reca, 2023, p. 03).

The study of reputation in international relations arose from the deterrence literature of the Cold War, namely Schelling's contention that disregarding Soviet interventions worldwide would encourage more aggressive action elsewhere. According to this viewpoint, a nation's commitments will be taken seriously if it continuously fulfills its promises and carries out its threats. However, a nation that has a track record of giving in during emergencies will be viewed as unresolute, and its future threats will be questioned. Observers are more likely to criticize such a nation because they anticipate that their opponent will concede when they challenge them, assuming that future actions will follow past patterns. This theory's fundamental premise is that commitments are interdependent, even across actors, regions, and issue areas. According to the strong version, a state's actions toward country A in an Asian territorial dispute will have an impact on country B's actions in a future regime dispute with that state in Europe. Since then, academics have created theoretical contentions in which reputation and the desire to preserve one's reputation are crucial.

2.1 Reputation as a Source of Information: Reputation for Resolve

In world politics, the term "reputation" usually refers to information that a state or its leaders hold about their deliberate or behavioral traits that relate to cooperation or conflict (M. Crescenzi & Donahue, 2017, p. 245). States or their leaders earn reputations for a crucial informational dimension that others use to forecast the state's course of action. For instance, a state may establish a reputation for dependability or trustworthiness, which could influence future agreements and accords with other states. Reputation in this context is defined as an opinion regarding the state's future conduct based on its previous behavior (Brewster, 2009, pp. 235–236). Additionally, states may have a reputation for being belligerent or unreliable, which could worsen relations with other countries. The research in this area discusses reputation as a source of information or a long-term, recurring information mechanism (Baser, 2024) that is derived from a variety of sources, including (1) previous behavior, (2) encounters, (3) contracts, and (4) statements (Goldfien, McManus, 2023, p. 609). Simply put, researchers aim to comprehend how a state's past deeds can either strengthen or weaken the legitimacy of its present or potential threats (Miller, 2020).

When foreign policy scholars discuss reputation, they typically refer to "reputation for resolve." In general, resolve refers to the willingness to act in spite of the costs. More precisely, we define "resolve" as the readiness to employ military force, in accordance with the literature on international security. One of the earliest authors to discuss reputations for resolve was Schelling. He maintained that since commitments are interrelated, giving in on one crisis casts doubt on the ability to handle all subsequent ones (Michael A. Goldfien et al., 2023, p. 613).

Although a state's resolve is a personal matter about its readiness to risk conflict, it is evidently of paramount importance to its adversary, whose own demands will be contingent upon its perception of the first state's commitment. The state's past actions are the main factor influencing this reputation. Giving up on a dispute gives spectators the impression that the state is not really concerned about the matter at hand, given the expense of fighting it, and as a result, it is likely to make concessions in future conflicts of a similar nature. Therefore, it is assumed that a state with a stronger reputation for resolve will be more inclined to resist any specific demand from an adversary and, if required, engage in combat. A state's reputation for resolution does not, however, guarantee that it will always be expected to battle in any dispute; one advantage of having a positive reputation is that it should persuade the opponent to offer more reasonable solutions in any dispute. The notion is acknowledged in passing by the press, which notes that it would be proof that reputations do matter if "a decision maker uses an adversary's history of keeping commitments to assess the adversary's interests or military power and, hence, credibility."

2.2 Reputation as an End

In foreign policy, "reputation as an end" refers to a state's deliberate investment in creating and maintaining a certain image as a valuable asset in and of itself, rather than just as a means of achieving particular, tangible goals. This entails intentionally creating and preserving the impression that one is respectable, trustworthy, dependable, or of high standing in the global community.

Pursuing reputation as a goal is justified by the possibility that it may radically change the nature of international interactions. Other states are more likely to cooperate and engage in negotiations, seek peaceful solutions, and form alliances when their reputation is favorable. For instance, a state's reputation for reliability increases its appeal as a partner in joint ventures and diplomatic relations. On the other hand, a reputation for being untrustworthy or unreliable can cause a state to become isolated and make it more difficult for it to accomplish its foreign policy objectives.

Additionally, having a solid reputation can discourage aggressiveness. Hostile actors may be less likely to target a state that is well-known for upholding international law and is prepared to protect its interests. The security and stability of a state can be greatly enhanced by this deterrent effect.

A state's particular objectives and strategic aims can influence the qualities it decides to foster in its reputation. A state may place a higher priority on establishing an honorable reputation by highlighting its adherence to moral standards and its promise to uphold its word. Another state might concentrate on developing a reputation for being face-saving, indicating that it can make concessions without sacrificing its standing or power. Others may try to convey a sense of prestige by emphasizing their military prowess, economic might, or cultural influence.

Ultimately, pursuing reputation as a goal shows an understanding that impressions are important in global politics. How other states view a state's intentions, understand its actions, and react to its initiatives can all be influenced by its reputation. A state can increase its influence, further its objectives, and help create a more stable and predictable international environment by carefully managing its reputation. Its foreign policy is based on this proactive approach to reputation management, which guides its alliances, diplomatic initiatives, and general participation in international affairs (M. J. C. Crescenzi & Donahue, 2017). In other words, reputation becomes a strategic goal unto itself, a precious resource that should be nurtured, safeguarded, and used for sustained national gain.

3.2 Reputation as an Instrument (Public Diplomacy)

The global perception of a nation is crucial because it helps the nation accomplish its foreign policy goals. According to Simon Anholt, national reputations react similarly to the brand representations of businesses and goods (Anholt, 2011) . According to Kotler, a nation's image is the sum of the various opinions, perceptions, and beliefs that individuals have about it. The picture is a simplified representation of certain associations and facts related to a nation. A nation's image frequently refers to its national brand, which is linked to foreign relations, public diplomacy, and worldwide perception. It develops respect and confidence in a product, policy, or culture of another country by connecting the trust that the people of one country have in another, their love for the other country, and their desire to engage with it (Saliu, 2017, p. 65) .

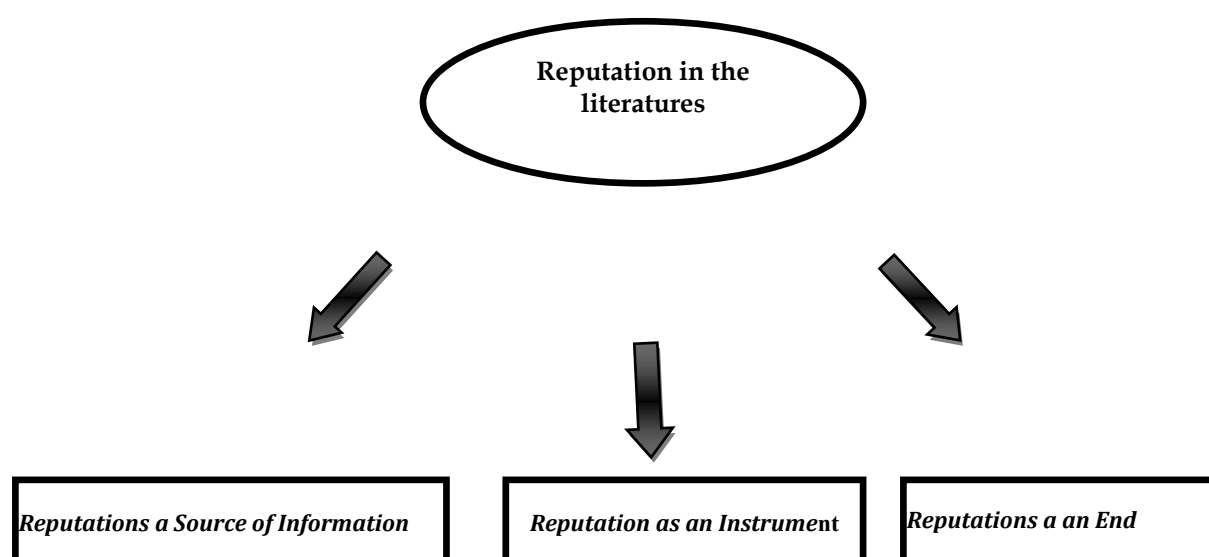
Reputation is a tool of power. An essential component of foreign policymaking and public diplomacy has been managing a nation's reputation and its relationships with stakeholders abroad. Having a positive reputation in the international community is the main goal of national reputation. It alludes to general assessments about a foreign nation's reputation and morals that are thereafter applied to forecast or elucidate its future actions. Simply described, it is a summary of a country's culture, laws, and behavior created by others(Wang, 2006, p. 91).

In cross-border interactions and transactions, national reputation is important. A desired reputation and image can frequently be "of greater use than a significant increment of military or economic power," as Jervis stated. As a result, it is a type of power, or "soft power," as Nye puts it . It is one blatant sign of a country's strength. It both reflects and influences the nation's reputation abroad. A country's reputational capital, for example, may have an impact on its capacity to form alliances and coalitions in order to accomplish global political goals, to sway opinions and decisions about the purchase of goods from particular countries of origin, to draw in foreign investment, or to draw in tourists (Wang, 2006, p. 92).

If the state's past behavior is a reliable indicator of its future behavior, that is helpful. Government leaders follow international regulations when they otherwise wouldn't because they want to seem like good treaty partners. In this case, reputation serves only as a tool. Reputation is important to states because it allows them to secure benefits by negotiating more cooperative accords, not because it is a sign of honor or prestige(Brewster, 2009, p. 236).

In addition to gaining advantages in trade, tourism, and the economy, nations seek to improve their image to forge military and political alliances, as well as cultural or ideological advantages. Therefore, improving one's image is a crucial aspect of the state's interest performance(Saliu, 2017, p. 65).

Figure.01: Reputation in Literatures



Source: The Author depends on previous information

3. Understanding Algerian Foreign Policy: The Key Themes

Algeria's foreign policy has historically been influenced by specific tenets and slogans. While the content and priorities of some have changed since the nation's independence, many have endured (Vasilenko & Kuznetsov, 2024). After gaining independence in 1962, Algeria adopted a set of enduring principles as the foundation for its foreign policy strategy. Motivated by its anti-colonial fight, Algiers sought to speak out against foreign military invasions, protect state sovereignty, and represent the voice of oppressed peoples.

Political scientists and policymakers have long held the view that governments should formulate policies with the preservation of their good name in mind, and Algeria is no exception. Algeria may take special measures to improve its reputation or uphold a favorable position in the eyes of other nations. This can benefit alliances, diplomatic discussions, and general credibility on the international scene.

3.1 Algeria as a Voice of Oppressed People

Since gaining its independence, Algeria has used anti-colonial and self-determination movements as a diplomatic ploy to increase its geostrategic power, particularly on the African continent. The Algerian government has consistently shown support for the Palestinian people, the Polisario Front, and African liberation movements by offering diplomatic, financial, and support services (Ghebouli, 2021).

Algeria started serving as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in January 2024 for the 2024–2025 term. During the opening ceremony, Ambassador Bendjama, Algeria's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, emphasized once more that during its tenure in the Council, Algeria will strive to strengthen pluralism to defend the rules and principles of international law, particularly the principle of peaceful dispute resolution in accordance with the UN Charter, and will be the voice of the oppressed peoples under colonialism to enable them to exercise their right to self-determination (Med.B, 2024).

3.1.1 Algeria and the Palestinian Cause

There has been a significant military escalation between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip since October 7. The continuous conflict has claimed thousands of innocent civilian lives, and the entire region is at risk of a wider conflagration. Like other nations in the region, Algeria is closely following these developments and maintaining its long-standing pro-Palestinian stance (Ghebouli, 2023). The Palestinian issue is one of the very few policy matters that all parties involved in Algerian politics and society agree on.

Palestine and Algeria share a long and emotional bond. On November 15, 1988, Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) officials gathered in Algiers to declare Palestine's independence. Since then, Algerian authorities have pushed for an end to the Israeli occupation and have consistently provided the PLO with political, financial, and diplomatic support. Furthermore, Algeria demonstrated its commitment to the independence and self-determination of peoples by hosting the Arab League meeting in Algiers on November 1, 2022. This coincided with the commemoration of the 68th anniversary of the start of the revolution against French colonization and the 44th anniversary of the Declaration of Algiers, made on November 15, 1988, by the PLO, and still regarded by the State of Palestine as its declaration of independence (Chikaoui, 2022).

In that regard, the Palestinian cause was always seen as a sacred dossier, and despite pressure from other countries, subsequent Algerian administrations opposed any compromises. Indeed, in 2021, current President Abdelmadjid Tebboune declared that Palestine is the "mother of all causes" and declined to sign the Abraham Accords, which he and most of Algeria's political elite believe do not address the conflict's underlying causes.

Following the announcement of the Hamas strikes, President Tebboune promptly called Mahmoud Abbas, his Palestinian counterpart. As anticipated, additional political figures from a variety of backgrounds, including those in the Algerian parliament, supported Algiers' official stance against the Israeli occupation. In a formal statement, Algeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs denounced Israeli actions in Gaza

and urged the international community to "take its responsibility." Additionally, Algerian officials declined to attend the Cairo Summit for Peace due to the potential presence of an Israeli delegation and delivered urgent and substantial humanitarian relief to Gaza via Egypt (Ghebouli, 2023).

Algeria has gained a solid moral reputation in Arab and African circles for its support of the Palestinian struggle since the 1970s. This has also enhanced the validity of Algeria's political discourse in regional and international organizations (Khechib, 2023).

3.1.2 Algeria and the Western Sahara Dispute

Following Spain's withdrawal of its troops and the transfer of sovereignty to Morocco and Mauritania, Algeria threw its support behind the Polisario movement, which was fighting on behalf of the local Sahrawi people and their demands for self-determination (Dworkin, 2022).

In the past, Algeria has backed the Sahrawi people in their fight for Western Saharan independence. In the current diplomatic impasse between Morocco and Algeria, this assistance has been a major source of concern. The rivalry is the result of decades of warfare, especially with regard to Western Sahara, where Algeria defends the rights of the Sahrawi people while Morocco attempts to strengthen its claims to the region.

For nearly the entirety of the Polisario Front's existence, Algeria has provided financial, political, and military support, and more than 170,000 Sahrawi refugees call Algeria home. At the official level and among many Algerians, the country's commitment to Western Sahara's self-determination is sincere and unlikely to alter (Lebovich, 2020).

Algeria's persistent refusal to make concessions on the Western Sahara dispute demonstrates that its view of self-determination has not changed. Algeria hopes for a referendum that results in the independence of the Western Sahara, similar to that of East Timor. This stance persists despite the Algerian public's indifference to this conflict, an increasing number of nations cutting ties with the Polisario, and the majority of Arab states and major international powers supporting a peaceful political solution. Algerian diplomacy continues to be motivated by the same goals that have shaped its strategy toward the conflict since it began in late 1975: delegitimizing Morocco internationally by blaming it alone for the impasse and mobilizing support for the Polisario as the only acceptable mediator of the Sahrawi tribes (Boukhars, 2013, p. 17).

3.2 Algeria as a Non-Interventionist State

Algeria is steadfast in its opposition to meddling in the domestic affairs of independent states. Even in the face of severe human rights abuses, the nation steadfastly opposes the implementation of the humanitarian intervention theory. For Algerians, state sovereignty continues to be the cornerstone that provides global order and stability. This puts the new international human rights standard of the "responsibility to protect" in conflict with Algeria's foreign policy paradigm.

Algerian foreign policy is based on well-known tenets: The anti-imperialist and anti-colonial attitude that has defined Algeria since its founding as an independent state is intimately linked to Algeria's steadfast adherence to the concept of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states (Cristiani, 2013, pp. 6–7).

Algeria has been a fervent supporter of regional collaboration over unilateral military and political operations ever since gaining its independence. Algeria consistently favored an unattainable political settlement and refrained from interfering in either Libya or Mali, even amid regional chaos.

3.2.1 In Libya

The Algerian government declined to denounce the Muammar Qadhafi dictatorship during the Libyan crisis. The Algerian government was publicly accused by the Libyan opposition of providing military support to the Libyan regime. Algeria's stance on the conflict became even more confusing when it initially declined to recognize the Libyan Transitional Council (NTC) following Qadhafi's death and the fall

of his state. It took Algeria six days to accept the new reality after the UN General Assembly's unanimously approved vote on September 16, 2011, to award Libya's seat to the NTC.

Anouar Boukhars claims that security and geopolitical considerations played a major role in the regime's choice. First, it worried about the hazardous precedent set by applying the theory of the "responsibility to protect" against the atrocities of authoritarian regimes, and it thought that the humanitarian reasoning behind the action was phony. Second, the government was concerned about how a change in leadership would affect the conflict in Western Sahara and the regional power dynamics. Third, Algeria was concerned that outside intervention in Libya would revive long-dormant ethno-tribal demands for sovereign identity, which had already been strengthened by the Arab Spring's pledges of self-determination.

Events that followed supported Algeria's risk assessment. In northern Mali, long-simmering historical grievances exploded as a direct result of the severe shock of the Libyan war. The Libyan war was the catalyst that turned the simmering insurgency in the north into a full-fledged armed insurrection, even if local, national, and international causes are inextricably linked to the breakdown of Mali. The militarization of a region rife with intrastate strife and internal dissident groups has been made worse by NATO's inability to regulate the weapons in Libya and stop their flow into neighboring nations.

However, Algeria faces the challenge of being expected to act as a regional stabilizer by its neighbors and the international community due to its military dominance and self-proclaimed role as a power broker. Its credibility and reputation are harmed by its incapacity or inability to carry out its function successfully. Algeria's foreign policy appears to be caught between the country's aspiration to be seen as a regional security leader and its unwillingness or incapacity to use its considerable assets to uphold stability in its own backyard and aid in bringing about peace when conflict does arise (Boukhars, 2013, p. 17).

Later, Algeria's relations with Arab nations—led by Egypt and the Emirates—that back Khalifa Haftar in Libya had deteriorated. Algeria has remained skeptical of those nations' attempts to block its diplomatic efforts to resolve the Libyan conflict on its eastern frontier. "Tripoli is a red line for Algeria" was Tebboune's tagline, which further represented its stance. It demonstrated that the nation is formally and remarkably giving up its non-alignment and non-interventionist stance toward the Libyan factions, as well as—above all—its "silent diplomacy" that has operated in closed diplomatic corridors. Instead, it has shifted to a more proactive and "louder" style of diplomacy (Khechib, 2023).

The Algerian stance has facilitated foreign meddling and prying by various regional and international actors (Egypt, the UAE, Qatar, France, Italy, Russia, and Turkey), in addition to Libyan Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, whose months-long offensive to seize Tripoli from the Government of National Accord (GNA)—despite Algiers calling the capital "a red line no one should cross"—is a case in point. The same can be said of fruitless diplomatic maneuvers, such as Algeria's opposition to Ankara's intervention in Libya. Turkey ultimately sent troops to back the GNA.

Algiers lost the chance to influence the start of the Libyan crisis in 2011 by diplomatic and military means. Instead, with the understanding that it would not elicit a forceful Algerian reaction, its guiding principle of non-intervention allowed for NATO's poorly thought-out military campaign (Ghanem, 2020).

3.2.2 In Mali

In January 2012, Algeria's neighbor to the southwest, Mali, requested immediate military support to help halt jihadists from advancing on its capital, Bamako, after overpowering Mali's military forces in the north. Following Muammar Qaddafi's overthrow in 2011, insurgents had profited by stealing Libyan weapons (Ghanmi, 2016, p. 10).

After an attack on the In Amenas gas facility in early 2013, Algeria was even more concerned about the spread of the growing unrest in its southern area. Algeria declined to participate in the military conflict because it could damage its reputation as a major peace-resolution mediator, a "stabilizing" role that

Algiers has traditionally used to increase its power in its southern neighborhood. A military involvement might have consequences for Algeria's internal security in addition to possible effects on its strategic stance in the area. Rather, it promoted a political solution through negotiation to the Malian conflict, where it once more took the lead. Following several failed attempts, the Malian government, the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA), and pro-government armed factions of the Platform finally negotiated and signed a peace deal under its auspices in 2015 (Weijenberg & Méryl, 2020).

However, Algeria supported the French intervention in Mali by permitting French military aircraft to fly overflights between Mali and France. This was a rather unexpected departure from its long-standing stance of not meddling in other nations' internal affairs and its previous declaration that it would not support any external military intervention in Mali. The shift is not a fundamental break from the Algerian concept of non-interference; rather, it is linked to a number of particular geopolitical conditions. Dario Cristiani suggests that under these conditions, a direct military confrontation between Algiers and the Malian war is still feasible but unlikely (Cristiani, 2013, pp. 6–7).

Algiers' strategy in Mali has remained centered on the national reconciliation process, despite the 2015 Algiers peace deal receiving harsh criticism, particularly for its sluggish execution. Authorities have reiterated that "the situation in the Sahel is linked to development and governance issues which have created a void filled by terrorist organizations"—a situation that cannot be addressed through an all-military approach—with the notable exception of Algeria opening its airspace to allow the French army to fly over its national territory.

Since President Tebboune entered office in December 2019, Algerian authorities seem to have taken a more active approach in recent times. In November 2020, a two-thirds majority of parliament in Algeria approved a new constitution that permits the deployment of troops overseas for the first time. According to scholars, Algeria is attempting to realign itself by departing from its strict non-interventionist tenets in the context of the new regional architecture, which is marked by several dangers along its frontiers. This will function as a deterrent, possibly preventing state and non-state actors from acting in an unwelcome manner or launching a military assault against Algeria's immediate neighbors. Additionally, it will provide Algeria a tactical edge by making its actions less predictable. More importantly, it will enable Algeria to project its military power and take the lead (Ghanem, 2020).

4. The Perception of Algeria by Other Nations Based on Its Reputation

When other nations attempt to establish any kind of relations with Algeria—be it collaboration, alliance, or conflict—they first look back at its previous behavior to determine whether or not they can trust it. In this context, reputation is regarded as a source of information, since a state's previous deeds can either strengthen or weaken the legitimacy of its potential threats or its capacity to be a reliable ally.

4.1 Algeria as an Assertive State

People frequently associate the word "assertive" with negative connotations. However, it describes a person or entity that acts with assurance and isn't afraid to express their desires or opinions. In this context, Algeria is an assertive state since it acts without hesitation, fear, or compromise, and according to its own beliefs.

4.1.1 The In Amenas Attack in 2013

The Algerian gas plant in In Amenas was attacked on January 16, 2013, by militants associated with al-Qaeda. Before dawn, gunmen launched the attack, murdering some employees and capturing many hostages. On January 19, however, the Algerian army took back control of the plant. The assailants, who had come from Libya to the installation, were ultimately routed by Algeria. During the four-day siege, 40 employees—mostly foreigners—and at least 29 insurgents were killed (Ghanmi, 2016, p. 10). Algeria was keen to prevent a protracted siege and was unlikely to engage in negotiations with the In Amenas insurgents. Two main issues were brought to light by the attack on the gas facility at In Amenas:

- Despite Algeria's dominance in the Maghreb/Sahel region, it is challenging to completely control

all of its borders due to their length and the unrest of its neighbors (Mali to the south, Libya and Tunisia to the east).

- For a while, several foreign oil corporations were psychologically discouraged from investing in Algeria or upgrading their facilities as a result of the attack at In Amenas (Cristiani, 2013, p. 7).

Given the regional instability marked by the overthrow of Qadhafi in Libya, the collapse of governments in Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen, and the ongoing Syrian civil war, it's understandable that Algeria views any resurgence of Islamist influence as an immediate threat. This is further underscored by Algeria's own history, having endured a devastating civil war with Islamist rebels in the 1990s that resulted in over 100,000 deaths. Consequently, the Algerian government is likely to prioritize a swift and decisive response to any perceived Islamist threat, with little room for negotiation, prolonged international crises, or concessions.

When the In Amenas gas plant was attacked, the Algerian government faced pressure from other nations regarding how to handle the crisis. The Japanese government specifically asked Algeria to avoid any actions that could endanger the hostages, and other governments wanted to be notified before any assault. However, Algeria, recognizing that a coordinated response would result in a protracted siege, decided to act swiftly, regardless of the risks to the hostages (Jenkins, 2013). This highlighted Algeria's decisive and assertive nature in matters concerning its sovereignty and national security.

4.1. 2. Cutting Off Diplomatic Relations with Morocco

The long-standing rivalry between Algeria and Morocco has significantly intensified in the past three years. This deterioration is marked by Algeria's decision to sever diplomatic ties with Morocco, its cessation of gas shipments that previously transited Morocco to reach Spain, and its accusation that Moroccan forces were responsible for the deaths of three Algerian citizens in the contested Western Sahara region.

Tensions between Algeria and Morocco escalated following a series of events that further strained their already poor relationship, particularly a shift in the stance of external powers. A key turning point was President Donald Trump's December 2020 decision to acknowledge Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara in exchange for Morocco normalizing relations with Israel (Dworkin, 2022). These developments culminated in Algeria's decision to sever diplomatic ties with Rabat in August 2021 (Khechib, 2023).

Algeria's concerns regarding Morocco extend beyond the traditional issues of alleged drug and other forms of smuggling and illegal emigration. Algeria also feels threatened by Israel's presence near its borders. These concerns were seemingly validated by two subsequent Moroccan actions: First, a journalistic investigation revealed Morocco's extensive use of Pegasus phone hacking software to spy on Algerian targets, which was particularly offensive to Algeria because the software was developed by an Israeli company. Second, Morocco countered Algeria's support for the Polisario Front by backing the separatist movement in Algeria's Kabylia region. This culminated in Morocco's UN ambassador, Omar Hilale, stating in a note that "the valiant Kabyle people deserve, more than any other, to fully enjoy their right to self-determination."

The situation escalated to the point where Algeria recalled its ambassador and severed diplomatic ties with Morocco. This decisive action followed accusations that Morocco, in collaboration with Israel and the Kabyle separatist group MAK, was responsible for the extensive wildfires that occurred in the summer of 2021. Algeria further increased pressure on Morocco in the fall of 2021 by closing its airspace to Moroccan aircraft and halting gas shipments through the Maghreb-Europe pipeline, which also supplied gas to Spain and provided roughly ten percent of Morocco's electricity (Dworkin, 2022). Then in September 2024, Algeria reimposed visas on Moroccans, citing that Morocco was exploiting the visa exemption agreement to undermine Algeria's stability and national security.

4.2 Algeria as a Reliable Partner

Establishing trust between nations is difficult, largely because there's no overarching authority to enforce agreements (GRIVEAUD, 2011, p. 1), and countries prioritize their own security, which can lead to mistrust. Despite these obstacles, trust is essential for international cooperation on issues like trade, security, and climate change (Jo & Carattini, 2021, pp. 926–931). Trust can be developed through consistent and dependable actions, clear communication, mutual respect, adherence to international rules, and diplomatic and cultural exchange. In the following sections, we will explore Algeria's reputation as a trustworthy partner in international relations, specifically within the realms of energy trade and counterterrorism.

4.2. 1. In Energy Markets

Algeria has become a key and dependable player in global energy markets, particularly for Europe. This reliability was highlighted in September 2022 when European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen, in her State of the Union address, described Algeria as a reliable supplier. This view was further supported by Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, who emphasized the EU's interest in strengthening energy ties with Algeria during his visit there in March 2023 (Tahchi, 2024, p. 3600).

Algeria has consistently demonstrated its reliability as a key aspect of its policy, as evidenced by several instances. During the 1990s, despite facing significant security and financial challenges, including terrorist threats and low oil and gas prices, Algeria successfully fulfilled its gas contracts with its partners. Following the 2004 explosion at the Skikda LNG plant, Algeria compensated for the reduced LNG production by increasing operations and capacity at the Bethioua and Arzew plants, and by boosting exports through the GME and GPDF pipelines. Furthermore, even after a major terrorist attack in 2013 on the Tiguentourine plant, which accounted for 15% of gas exports, Sonatrach teams skillfully managed operations to partially meet foreign client contracts until the plant was fully restored and foreign employees returned. More recently, a turbine failure at the same plant caused another production disruption lasting over 12 months (from June 2020 to July 2021), but Sonatrach mitigated any impact on LNG deliveries by redirecting liquefaction capacity to other terminals (Tahchi, 2024, p. 3610).

A number of key factors have contributed to Algeria's reputation as a reliable partner:

The Vast Reserves of Natural Gas and Oil

Algeria is a key African hydrocarbon producer with vast energy resources. The nation has the tenth-largest proven natural gas reserves globally (Algeria held an estimated 159 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of proved natural gas reserves at the beginning of 2023) (U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), 2023, p. 04), and is the world's fourth-largest gas exporter, where exports were reported at 52,037.000 Cubic meters million in Dec 2023 (CEIC Data, n.d.-b). Furthermore, Algeria possesses the world's third-largest untapped shale gas resources and ranks sixteenth in proven oil reserves, exporting about 60% of its production (CEIC Data, n.d.-a). There is also considerable potential for further growth, as Sonatrach—Algeria's national oil company—estimates that about two-thirds of Algeria's territory is underdeveloped or unexplored, with approximately 100 undeveloped discoveries already identified (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023).

The Country's Strategic Position

Algeria's geographical attributes provide it with a significant advantage in the global energy market. Its location in central North Africa, close to Europe, combined with its extensive coastline and large landmass that includes substantial desert areas (Benasla et al., 2024, p. 40), allows for efficient energy transportation, plenty of room for infrastructure development for both traditional and renewable energy, and the ability to reliably supply energy, particularly to European partners. Consequently, Algeria acts as a vital energy bridge connecting Africa and Europe, playing a crucial role in both regional and global energy security.

Algeria's Commitment to Diversifying its Energy Portfolio

To ensure a more sustainable energy future, Algeria is strategically moving away from its dependence on oil and gas. This transition involves a strong emphasis on renewable energy, especially solar power, leveraging its plentiful sunlight, and the exploration of wind energy (Benasla et al., 2024, p. 41). Algeria has established ambitious targets to significantly grow the share of renewable energy in its energy supply by 2035 (Hochberg, 2020). Furthermore, Algeria is working towards becoming a key producer and exporter of green hydrogen, particularly to Europe (Green Hydrogen Organisation), developing the required infrastructure through investments and collaborations (Goosen, 2025). Concurrently, Algeria is modernizing and expanding its existing oil and gas sector.

In essence, Algeria seeks to balance the optimization of its present hydrocarbon resources with considerable investments in renewable energy and green hydrogen, showcasing a dedication to a more diverse and sustainable energy approach.

Algeria's Relative Political Stability

Despite its history of instability, Algeria has achieved relative political stability, making it a reliable energy partner, particularly for Europe. Compared to other more volatile energy-producing regions, Algeria's stability ensures a consistent energy flow, which is critical for European energy security, especially considering the reliance on Mediterranean pipelines. Key institutions like Sonatrach maintain operational continuity, further reinforcing this reliability. Although internal socio-economic challenges and external geopolitical risks remain, Algeria's strategic importance and the resilience of its institutions position it as a vital player in the global energy market. As highlighted by the Italian journal "La Stampa," Algeria's vast natural gas reserves and potential make it a key strategic ally for Europe, especially given the disruptions in Russian supplies, solidifying its role in meeting European energy needs (ELIKHBARIA, 2025).

4.2. 2. In Fighting Extremist Groups

In the fight against extremism, Algeria has proven to be a crucial and dependable ally, especially in the troubled North African and Sahel regions (U.S department of state, 2022). The United States Department has described Algeria as a reliable, capable, and strategic partner in the Middle East and North Africa. This strong position is built on a dual approach that combines robust domestic actions with extensive international collaboration. Domestically, Algeria draws on its long and difficult history with terrorism, using its experience to inform its counterterrorism efforts. The country actively conducts operations and invests heavily in its military and security forces to dismantle terrorist cells and combat threats. Furthermore, Algeria has reinforced its legal framework by revising the penal code to expand the definition of terrorist acts, improving its capacity to prosecute and deter these activities.

Algeria is a key player in counterterrorism, both regionally and internationally. It actively engages with organizations such as the United Nations, the African Union (AU), and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). Furthermore, Algeria has established multilateral security frameworks, such as the Comité d'État-major Opérationnel Conjoint (CEMOC), to coordinate counterterrorism efforts with neighboring countries like Mauritania, Mali, and Niger, in response to rising concerns about jihadist activities in the region in the late 2000s (Kal, 2015, p. 16). Notably, Algeria takes a leading role in AU counterterrorism initiatives, hosting important institutions like Afripol and the AU's Center for Study and Research on Terrorism. Recognizing that terrorism transcends borders, Algeria collaborates closely with neighboring countries, particularly in the Sahel, to address cross-border threats. Algeria has also played a crucial role in stabilization efforts in the region, including its involvement in the Malian peace accords and attempts to resolve the Libyan crisis.

Beyond security measures, Algeria understands that tackling extremism necessitates addressing its underlying causes. To this end, Algeria employs a comprehensive strategy that integrates security operations with social and economic development programs aimed at reducing poverty, inequality, and marginalization. This comprehensive approach is coupled with Algeria's strict "no concessions" policy in

terrorist hostage situations, a vital component of its counterterrorism doctrine. Algeria's significance in counterterrorism is underscored by its current role on the UN Security Council (2024-2025) and its leadership of the UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). The CTC, created by Security Council Resolution 1373 in 2001, is tasked with monitoring and assisting member states in implementing UN counterterrorism resolutions. As the Committee's present Chair, Algeria is central to overseeing the implementation of counterterrorism resolutions and utilizes its well-established expertise to foster a global approach to combating terrorism (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad).

Overall, Algeria's dual commitment to domestic and international counterterrorism efforts solidifies its standing as a key and dependable partner in the international struggle against extremist organizations.

4.3 Algeria as a Non-Aligned Nation

During a May 2022 visit to Turkey, Algerian President Tebboune affirmed, "Our policy is non-alignment, and we are not going to give it up." Despite historical ties with Russia, Algeria has maintained a neutral stance in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This commitment to non-alignment was demonstrated by welcoming both US Secretary of State Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in close succession. On these occasions, President Tebboune stated, "Russia and the United States are our friends; all the others are our friends, except the one with whom we have a problem because of Palestine. Whoever wants to judge us, let him do it. We are trying as best we can to reinvigorate the Non-Aligned Movement. We see where the world is heading. Regardless of the number of poles, we are equidistant from all. Our commercial interests work with everyone, but when it comes to political interests and stability, we look first and foremost at our interests, the interests of the Algerian people" (Chikaoui, 2022).

These political declarations indicate Algeria's intention to revitalize the Non-Aligned Movement by modernizing its approach. This is evident in its non-aligned stance during the Russia-Ukraine crisis and actions such as Venezuelan President Maduro's visit to Algeria in June 2022, where a strategic cooperation agreement was signed, signaling a renewed commitment to the movement. Algeria's membership and dedication to the Non-Aligned Movement are deeply rooted in its foundation as a state, dating back to the Declaration of November 1954, which aimed to secure independence from French colonialism.

Non-alignment has historically been a cornerstone of Algeria's international policy, deeply ingrained in the nation's identity despite periods where it may have seemed less relevant (Ghilès, 2022). Algeria has consistently fostered diverse relationships with Western nations, Russia, China, and other developing countries, carefully avoiding alignment with any single power bloc. This balancing act was evident in Algeria's refusal to condemn Russia's invasion at the UN, despite its stated commitment to state sovereignty (Farrand, 2022). However, Algeria's subsequent vote against excluding Russia from the UN Human Rights Council, which some interpreted as support for Moscow, should be understood within the context of Algeria's long-standing effort to maintain a neutral position between Eastern and Western powers, a policy pursued since its independence in 1962 (Ghebouli, 2022).

Over the last decade, Algeria has skillfully navigated increased regional and global polarization, demonstrating diplomatic prowess by maintaining relatively neutral relations with regional powers like Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt. It has also fostered positive relationships with international rivals such as the US and the EU on one side, and Russia and China on the other, even during the heightened tensions of the Russia-Ukraine war. However, Algeria's non-aligned stance can create perceptions of unreliability in international relations. Therefore, Algeria faces the challenge of balancing its long-standing ties with Russia and China with the need to preserve its strategic partnership with the US and its economic relations with the EU.

5. Conclusions

In this article, we explored how Algeria's reputation influences its foreign policy. We first reviewed the literature, which highlighted three key roles reputation plays in foreign policy: as a source of information,

as an instrument, and as an end in itself. We then examined these three roles through two perspectives: Algeria's projection to the world and the perception of Algeria by other nations based on its reputation.

Based on our analysis, we can draw the following key conclusions:

- *Reputation as a Source of Information:* Algeria's past actions provide other countries with crucial information when considering engagement. These actions reveal:
 - An assertive stance regarding its sovereignty, demonstrated by cutting relations with Morocco and its handling of the In Amenas attack.
 - A commitment to non-alignment, as Algeria refuses to take sides in the competition between great powers (US/China/Russia) amidst increased regional and international polarization.
 - Reliability as a partner in energy markets and in fighting terrorist groups, showcasing consistent performance and cooperation.
 - A nuanced approach to intervention in other countries, as seen in the cases of Libya and Mali, where its non-interventionist principle has been prominent.
- *Reputation as a Tool and an End:* Algeria's foreign policy leverages reputation as both a practical tool and a strategic objective. A positive reputation can enhance a country's influence, attract investment, and facilitate cooperation. Simultaneously, Algeria seeks to build and maintain a perception of being honorable, trustworthy, reliable, and of high status within the international community for its own sake.

Ultimately, Algeria must successfully manage the intricate relationship between its international standing and its domestic interests. To preserve a favorable global reputation, Algeria must strike a balance between its domestic objectives and its standing abroad. While a solid reputation increases influence and collaboration, there are inherent tensions between short-term national benefits and long-term reputational standing. Therefore, tactics such as open communication, multilateral engagement, public diplomacy, and principled pragmatism are essential to align foreign policy with core objectives and desired international status.

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