

Manifestations of Dialogue with the Other in the Thought of Emir Abdelkader: A Sociological Reading

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Received: 23/11/2025 ; Accepted: 25/05/2026 ; Published: 03/07/2026

Abstract:

This article aims to analyze “the manifestations of dialogue with the Other in the thought of Emir Abdelkader from a sociological perspective,” by highlighting his vision as a civilizational model that establishes a comprehensive human awareness based on the values of tolerance and openness as components for building rational social action. The research addresses the Emir’s ability to achieve cognitive harmony between the Islamic reference in its original sources (the Holy Qur’an and the Prophetic Sunnah) and openness to rational and philosophical knowledge, reflecting a conscious communicative methodology that sought to produce a rational and humanistic conception of dialogue within contexts of conflict and social interaction. The article reviews his educational and health contributions as an expression of his reformist vision, which falls within a project of social modernization that balances material necessities and spiritual values in managing the relationship with the Other. The research relied on the sociological analysis method to deconstruct the intellectual and religious structures that formed the foundations of this dialogical system. The research concluded that dialogue for the Emir represents a deeply rooted civilizational strategy, whose relevance derives from its ability to promote coexistence and regulate the dynamics of social and cultural diversity within non-conflictual interactive frameworks.

Keywords: dialogue; Emir Abdelkader; the Other; sociology.

1. Introduction:

Dialogue is considered one of the most important features of Arab-Islamic culture, which rejects fanaticism and isolation. It is characterized by a degree of openness to the Other and respect for opinion and opposing opinion. When we refer to history through its narratives, reports, and testimonies, the matter becomes clearer through several landmarks, among them the figure of Emir Abdelkader Al-Jazairi, who represents a global historical personality. In his view of the Other, he relied on the comprehensive human understanding of Islam, not on the narrow and fanatical understanding. He considered difference a universal law, and that Allah created human beings different, as stated in the words of the Almighty: “Had your Lord willed, He would have made mankind one nation” (Surah Hud, verse 118).

Emir Abdelkader Al-Jazairi is considered one of the most prominent historical and intellectual figures in the Islamic world during the nineteenth century. He combined political and military leadership with spiritual and intellectual depth, which made him a unique model that brought together struggle and humanitarian principles. The most prominent feature of his thought and experience was his deep belief in the importance of dialogue with the Other, whether this “Other” differed in religion, culture, or thought. This conviction was reflected in his behaviors and positions, and in the depth of his civilizational vision. He gave a lesson in the ability to engage in dialogue with the Other.

Through his knowledge and wisdom, which he derived from Arab-Islamic and Amazigh culture, the Emir was able to engage in dialogue with different personalities, from the beginning of his resistance and struggle against French colonialism in Algeria, to his captivity and then his exile to Damascus. All these historical stages of the Emir's life in his struggle against injustice proved the extent of his awareness of the importance and value of dialogue as a civilizational and cultural dimension in dealing with the Other. This is what we will clarify through the dialogical models with which he interacted. Many studies have attempted to dig deeply into the intellectual, religious, and political dimension that characterized the Emir's personality, whether philosophical, literary, historical, or sociological studies. Nevertheless, there remains an urgent need for further research and deeper examination of his intellectual and militant biography, especially regarding the idea of dialogue, which was a strategic choice in his dealings with others. This dimension is one of the most important characteristics of his personality, through which he embodied the tolerance of Islam in various circumstances of challenge and crisis.

To clarify the idea of the article, this will be done by answering the following problem:

How was dialogue with the Other manifested in the thought of Emir Abdelkader as a human and social value? And what are its sociological implications within the historical and cultural context in which this thought was formed?

To facilitate answering this problem, we tried to break it down into sub-questions:

What are the religious, intellectual, and cultural references that established Emir Abdelkader's dialogical conception and shaped the cognitive framework of his dealings with the Other?

Who are the social actors who formed the circles of the "Other" in Emir Abdelkader's dialogical path, and how were their patterns formed within the historical and social context?

What are the sociological implications reflected by Emir Abdelkader's dialogical thought in light of the colonial context and the cultural transformations that characterized his historical period?

2. The Intellectual and Religious References of Dialogue according to Emir Abdelkader

The Emir is a unique example of a leader who combined deep spirituality with political wisdom. He formulated a vision of dialogue that transcended the limits of his time and touched broad human values. In his dialogical positions, he relied on intellectual and religious references rooted in Sufism, jurisprudence, and Islamic moral values. From this standpoint, this section raises a question about the elements that shaped this conception and how they guided his scientific path. Understanding these backgrounds provides us with an entry point for a deeper sociological reading of his dialogical experience.

2.1 Early Scientific Upbringing:

Emir Abdelkader was described, as French writings portrayed him, as the great master, the master of the people and their servant. He served his religion, homeland, people, and humanity, until he was considered one of the figures who most shaped the history of the nineteenth century. The writings that dealt with his scientific and cognitive formation revealed that he received a rich and diverse education from the most eminent scholars of his time, which was a fertile ground for the growth of his intellectual and spiritual personality, producing broad knowledge and literature. His religious lodge became a meeting place for students of knowledge. According to Amédée Desjobert, the Emir acquired much knowledge and many sciences under the supervision of his father, who invested all his educational effort in him. He grew up loving reading to the extent that a small library accompanied

him in his residence and travels. This educational atmosphere contributed to refining his scientific, intellectual, and contemplative personality. (Draou, 2022–2023, pp. 191–194)

The scientific biography of Emir Abdelkader was characterized by combining deep religious formation with rational and philosophical sciences. This was later reflected in his intellectual and political personality throughout history. The family is the first nucleus in shaping leaders and contributes greatly to instilling values and principles, as it is the appropriate environment for the growth of early leadership awareness. Emir Abdelkader's family was one of the noble families with a prominent religious and social status in Algerian society. The Emir's family descended from honorable origins going back to the Prophet's household, as it was one of the scholarly and Sufi families with prominent influence in Algerian society.

The origin of his family goes back to Morocco. It migrated from there to the outskirts of Oran, and some of its men became known for piety and were role models for people. He was born in the town of El-Qaitna near the city of Mascara in 1808, in a distinguished scientific and religious environment. His father, Sidi Muhieddine, was a Sufi scholar and a Hasani nobleman, the head of the Qadiriyya religious lodge. He was keen to teach his son from childhood the Holy Qur'an by memorization and recitation, the Prophetic Hadith, and the fundamentals of religion, in addition to the sciences of the Arabic language such as grammar, morphology, rhetoric, logic, and Islamic philosophy. (Abaza, 1994, p. 9)

It is therefore not surprising that the Holy Qur'an and the sciences that follow it, such as the authentic Sunnah and other books of the heirs of the prophets, were the first sources of his thought, knowledge, and learning. In addition to this, he had readings in other sciences, especially philosophy. He himself testifies to this by saying: "There is no light desired by those who seek it like steadfastness upon the Book and the Sunnah." Among what he said in the text of his pledge of allegiance: "I will not act according to any law other than the law of the Qur'an, and my guide will be none other than the teaching of the Qur'an, and the Qur'an alone. If my own brother made his blood lawful by violating the Qur'an, I would carry out the ruling against him." It is clear from this statement that the main source of the Emir's knowledge was the Holy Qur'an. (Ben Khalif, 2022, pp. 150–151)

Among the evidences of Emir Abdelkader's early scientific upbringing is his effort to establish a school of medicine and hospitals under the supervision of skilled doctors, under the supervision of his personal physician, Ibn Abdallah Al-Zerouali. This indicates his awareness of the importance of knowledge and wisdom wherever they are found, and his openness to benefiting from them in the service of his society. He also paid special attention to manufacturing, recognizing its role in the renaissance and development of nations. This orientation reflects his belief that material progress is not separate from faith-based and moral values. Thus, he established a practical scientific vision that combines the civilizational dimension with the religious reference. (Gourari, 2014, p. 71)

The early scientific and religious formation of Emir Abdelkader can be viewed as a cognitive and symbolic asset that contributed to building his dialogical awareness. It was formed within an environment that combined religious knowledge and rational sciences, which enabled him to combine value-based reference and intellectual openness, relying in his dialogical practices on the Qur'an as a normative framework based on justice and mercy. This was reflected in a leadership behavior that links the moral dimension with the requirements of civilizational construction.

2.2 Sufism as a Guiding Reference for Emir Abdelkader's Thought:

Sufi thought occupies a central place in shaping the spiritual and moral structure of Emir Abdelkader's personality, as he embodied throughout his life the model of the Sufi leader who sees no contradiction between faith and action, nor between reason and revelation. The Emir absorbed the thought of the Qadiriyya order from his childhood, and he had clear Sufi inclinations. Later, he was greatly influenced by Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, and this appeared in his concepts: the unity of existence, tolerance toward religions, and seeing God in the diversity of creation.

Sufism for Emir Abdelkader was not merely practices and rituals, but rather knowledge and action, and a mirror reflecting various dimensions whose goal is to elevate human dignity and make the human being a vicegerent on earth. These goals are the most appropriate for confronting current challenges based on civilizational conflict and fighting for material interests in the absence of the spiritual dimension, which the Emir clearly establishes in his various ideas and positions, as he presents many ideas about tolerance and humanization. (Hammadi, 2014, p. 118)

Emir Abdelkader views Sufism as: "striving against the self in the path of Allah, that is, for the sake of knowing Allah"; meaning for the sake of knowing Allah and bringing the self under divine commands, reassurance, and submission to the rulings of lordship, not for anything else outside the path of Allah. Thus, Sufism in his view is sincerity in worshiping Allah Almighty and observing Him in secret and in public. (Neqqaz, 2022, p. 637)

Thus, Sufism for Emir Abdelkader formed an intellectual and moral framework that contributed to shaping his vision of social relations and the concept of authority, especially in his interaction with his followers and his surroundings. It assumed the role of the spiritual reference upon which the values of tolerance and collective commitment were based, while focusing on establishing a culture of dialogue and coexistence among religions and peoples even in times of decisive crises. This concept intersects with Max Weber's analysis in his book *Economy and Society*, in which he sees Sufism as a source of charismatic authority that derives its legitimacy from collective recognition of the exceptional and distinguished qualities of the leader, not from official positions or social traditions. Therefore, the Sufi experience of Emir Abdelkader can be considered a leadership practice with moral and social dimensions, embodied in a discourse that emphasizes the importance of dialogue and coexistence as effective mechanisms for confronting challenges and crises. His charismatic personality was the basic pillar of his moral reference, which enabled him to go beyond individuality in order to establish a distinctive symbolic and social authority.

2.3 His Knowledge of Rational Sciences:

Rational sciences were an authentic part of Emir Abdelkader's scientific formation, as he benefited from rational sciences such as logic, philosophy, theology, mathematics, medicine, and astronomy, which were taught in religious lodges and major schools alongside religious and legal sciences. We can clarify the aspects of his benefit from these sciences through quotations from the Emir's works: Emir Abdelkader presents, in his book *The Reminder of the Rational and the Warning of the Heedless*, a conception that makes reason the basis for building social awareness and distinguishing ideas away from imitation. He affirms that knowledge is the product of the interaction of reason with the cultural environment, and that the results of this interaction may be beneficial or misleading according to their context. He also shows the limits of reason before metaphysical matters, which requires relying on revelation to regulate the system of values and meanings. The Emir believes that writing down knowledge represents a social function for preserving human experience from disappearance. Thus,

the role of both reason and writing appears in shaping collective memory and developing knowledge. (Muhieddine bin Mustapha Al-Hassani Al-Jazairi, p. 30)

The Emir believes that reason alone is incapable of perceiving absolute truth, and that another complement is necessary for the vision to be complete, namely the complement of guidance and divine success. It is like the seeing eye, which cannot perceive things except when the lights of the sun and the like appear. The Emir distinguishes between two levels of sciences: rational sciences without imitation or hearing, and legal sciences through the heavenly books. These sciences, according to the Emir's view, do not contradict reason but rather complete it. He calls, in turn, not to deny this. Being satisfied with rational sciences alone leads to arrogance, which in turn leads to obstinacy and fanaticism, and this is detested in the customs of all humanity. The Emir addresses the scholars of Europe with this and calls them to tolerance, brotherhood, humility, and the rejection of fanaticism, all of which are agreed upon by all human customs. (Benired, pp. 141–142)

The book *The Sharp Scissors for Cutting the Tongue of the One Who Belittles the Religion of Islam through Falsehood and Atheism*: This book is considered one of the most important works produced by Emir Abdelkader's thought, and it has a direct relationship with philosophy. In it, he explained and analyzed the human mind and the levels of reasoning. He also dealt with sensory perception and discussed it in detail. Through this book, he shows the importance of reason, saying: "If reason is absent, the distinction between the good and the bad is absent." The Emir cites the words of the Almighty: "O you who believe, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying." In this context, he linked knowledge to reason; whenever the second is absent, the first disappears and ignorance prevails, and knowledge becomes a calamity for its possessor. Through this book, the Emir wanted to clarify the relationship between knowledge and reason. He considered them two complementary parts, yet the one that occupies the first rank is "reason," then knowledge comes in the second degree, because the latter is useless if it is not controlled by reason. (Bouchrit, 2011, pp. 210–211)

His book *The Spiritual Stations*: This book is considered the most important and greatest work authored by Emir Abdelkader, according to the testimony of his son Muhammad Pasha, and many scholars, including the French orientalist Jacques Berque, who said: "The literary magnificence of many passages of *The Spiritual Stations* may overturn several assumptions, and the real renaissance undoubtedly may not be found where it is sought." (Feraoun and Wezzar, 2018, p. 219)

Emir Abdelkader indicates in *The Spiritual Stations*, Station 248, that the saying of Allah Almighty: "And none understand them except the knowledgeable," and He did not say, "And none know them except the rational," because the connection of cosmic matters and their analogy to divine truths is hidden from minds. Minds do not perceive it with their tools, nor what is beyond their limited boundary. Rather, they must act according to religious works and await the gift from the Almighty Giver, for these are gifted sciences, not acquired sciences. This is what is called divine knowledge, as in His saying: "And We taught him knowledge from Us." When these sciences come from the Giver, reason understands them and they become among its intelligible matters. (Muhieddine bin Mustapha Al-Hassani Al-Jazairi, 1966, p. 568)

In this text, Emir Abdelkader explains that reason is the highest tool of perception, and that understanding deep truths is only reached by people of knowledge. He believes that reason produces knowledge that may be beneficial or misleading according to its direction, but it remains incapable

of perceiving the unseen without the guidance of revelation. He affirms that writing down knowledge is necessary to preserve it, because reason alone cannot absorb all knowledge or protect it from loss. Through these books, it becomes clear that Emir Abdelkader saw reason as a tool for understanding religion and deepening faith, not as an opponent of it. He used reason in interpreting religious texts, responding to doubts, and building integrated Sufi and intellectual visions. This appreciation of rational sciences can be understood as a means of confronting the cultural challenges imposed by French colonialism, which attempted to present itself as a representative of civilization and rationality. By highlighting the place of reason in Islam, the Emir was confronting colonial discourse and affirming that rationality was not exclusive to the West. Thus, Emir Abdelkader was not only a man of religion or a revolutionary resistor, but also a thinker and critic, relying on reason as a means of building a more conscious society and defending Islamic identity in a civilizational manner based on integrating faith and thinking, and spirit and knowledge.

2.4 Political and Social Formation:

The political and social formation of Emir Abdelkader contributed to shaping his dialogical thought as a product of a complex interaction between social structures and historical experiences. His upbringing within a tribal society based on negotiation and the making of consensus contributed to strengthening his conviction that legitimacy is built on persuasion, not on domination, and that the stability of the group depends on the leader's ability to manage difference. The religious lodges and the Sufi environment in which his awareness was formed also reinforced the value of listening and respecting the Other as two essential pillars of leadership. With the confrontation of the reality of occupation and the accompanying social disintegration and multiplicity of loyalties, he gained practical experience in building alliances and containing conflicts, which made dialogue a central tool for restoring social bonds and organizing relations between actors. The effect of this political and social formation appears in a set of practices and principles that formed the basis of his dialogical thought and leadership behavior:

Homeland and Patriotism: Most French writings agreed that Arab patriotism was an important motive for the Emir's resistance. Léon Roches loudly states: "Yes, I loved the hero of Arab patriotism," but at the same time he admits his deception. Regarding this point, he mentions: "The Emir's resistance was theoretically subdued by the French forces for the hundredth time, but it reappeared again. Today, a strong Arab patriotism has been reconstituted in Algeria, with deep roots in this country..." (Draou, 2022–2023, p. 210)

As for patriotism according to Emir Abdelkader, social relations of cooperation and love are defined on the basis of shared life in one homeland, not on the basis of sexual or racial superiority. Through this practice, the Emir was able to bring together the inhabitants of Algeria. (Zeroukhi, 2000, pp. 1096–1097)

According to the expression of Abu Al-Qasim Saadallah, the Emir was the one who brought Algerian patriotism, which Hamdan Khodja had called for, into practice, after realizing the obstacles that stood in the way of his political project. (Draou, 2022–2023, p. 214)

Justice and Equality: Emir Abdelkader is considered one of the first Arab Muslims to practice it, since his political slogan in that practice was that "all citizens are equal," and that the law to which everyone submits is what was brought by the Holy Qur'an. He used to say: "I will not take anything other than the Qur'an. My guide will be none other than the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, and the Qur'an alone.

If my own brother made his blood lawful by violating the Qur'an, he would die." This is equality in its most complete form, and justice in its utmost limits. The policy of equality with which the Emir was imbued and which he practiced to the point of austerity in all aspects of his life is what earned him the loyalty of his subjects. The Emir points out that European nations did not reach that civilizational greatness except by relying on this rule. In this, the Emir follows what the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, indicated when he said: "Those before you were destroyed because when a noble person among them stole, they left him, but when a weak person among them stole, they applied the punishment to him. By Allah, if Fatimah, the daughter of Muhammad, stole, I would cut off her hand." (Zeroukhi, 2000, p. 1098)

Moreover, his upbringing in an Arab-Islamic environment known for solidarity and social cooperation reinforced this orientation, especially in light of what Algeria suffered under the burden of French colonialism, which sought to impoverish and make the people ignorant through repressive and brutal means. This explains his focus on this principle in the context of establishing the modern state.

Tolerance: One of the most important qualities that a good interlocutor must possess is the ability to tolerate. The Emir reached a high level of forgiveness and tolerance toward others, including his enemies from his own country and from abroad. He worked to reconcile people despite their different religions and rejected sectarianism wherever it existed. This made him occupy a great position among peoples and nations, as he embodied an ideal model of tolerance in the history of contemporary Algeria and presented practical lessons of high value in dialogue and tolerance among members of the same society, between human beings, between conflicting parties, and between different religions and civilizations. (Mezhoud, 2020, p. 75)

His Respect for His People: Among the social values that every scholar of Emir Abdelkader's life stops at is his respect for his people and his keenness to achieve justice, equality, and respect for others. Perhaps the first thing we record for the Emir is that his state emerged from the will of his people and a legitimate pledge of allegiance, whereby he adhered to the opinion of the group or the majority. Thus, everyone supported him and stood by his side. On the other hand, the Emir's main concern was the internal construction front of the state, which he considered more important even than the war front against the French. The Emir demonstrated his broad-mindedness and wide understanding, responding to his opponents and critics with great wisdom. He said: "The aim of my acceptance of assuming this position is that you may be secure in yourselves, your honor, and your property, reassured in wealth and men; and by this you will know that the benefits obtained from you return to you." This dialogue took place with complete transparency and freedom, in which the Emir did not use his authority to silence the voices of those who opposed him. (Cherif, 2019, p. 27)

From this, we conclude that the Emir's respect for his people made dialogue the basis of his legitimacy and political practice. In all his military and political decisions, he relied on the principle of consultation and listening, without monopolizing opinion or being fanatical about it. Through justice, equality, and acceptance of opposing opinions, the value of dialogue appeared as a pillar in managing the affairs of the state.

2.5 From Prophethood to Sheikhhood: Features of the Emir's Scientific and Spiritual Formation

The Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, to whom Emir Abdelkader traces his lineage from his pure descendants, is considered his first teacher, educator, and direction in knowledge, understanding, and faith. As for the spiritual master whom he held in high regard after his following of the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, it was the Greatest Sheikh Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, whom he considered an authentic Muhammadan heir whose words must be followed and whose knowledge must be submitted to, for he is the complete heir. Among the Emir's sheikhs was Sheikh Muhammad Al-Fasi, from whom he learned during his Sufi retreat in Mecca, which lasted two years. He praised Allah for what He had granted him through his master and sheikh Al-Fasi, whom he considered his refuge, support, and strength. Among the Sufi sheikhs from whom he also learned and by whom he was influenced were Sheikh Al-Naqshandi Al-Suhrawardi and Sheikh Mahmoud Al-Qadiri Al-Kilani, as well as other sheikhs mentioned in The Diwan and in his book Al-Mawaqif. (Barakat, pp. 33, 35)

These sheikhs had a major role in consolidating the spiritual dimension of his thought, as he drew from them the values of tolerance, openness, and rejection of fanaticism. This deepened his awareness of the importance of civilizational and religious communication. Through the convergence of the two dimensions—the spiritual dimension through the sheikhs, and the cultural and social dimension through travels—the Emir developed a dialogical vision based on justice and recognition of the Other, making dialogue a foundational value in his intellectual and political project.

Through the Emir's correspondence with Western figures, his dialogical culture is clearly revealed and reflects his civilizational awareness. His discourse was characterized by a number of interconnected principles, the most prominent of which are:

- **The etiquette of opening:** He opened his letters in a refined and calm style that prepared the atmosphere for understanding and established a tone of mutual respect.
- **Establishing proof and evidence for statements:** He built his discourse on rational and inferential foundations, presenting his arguments clearly and logically in a way that persuades before it compels.
- **Recognizing the strength of the opponent:** He acknowledged the status and ability of the Other, making dialogue more realistic and balanced. This is one of the manifestations of his political maturity.
- **The culture of truthfulness and loyalty:** He was committed to truthful speech and fulfillment of promises, seeing dialogue as a means of preserving peace before being an instrument of conflict.
- **The principle of tolerance and gentleness:** This is one of the most important features of his discourse, as it highlights the deep human sense that characterizes his letters and reduces tension with the Other.
- **Dialogue from a position of strength:** This strength was derived from deep belief in the legitimacy of the national demand, not from military or political superiority, which gave his dialogue a distinctive moral dimension. (Serir, 2022, pp. 13–18)

Addressing the intellectual, political, social, and even cultural dimension in Emir Abdelkader's experience allows the researcher to understand his leadership personality as an actor who combined political, military, and intellectual roles, while relying on dialogue as a central mechanism in managing conflict within the context of a long liberation struggle against French colonialism. He was

able to reconcile the requirements of armed resistance with a dialogical discourse aware of the reality of Islamic society and its historical constraints. The Emir also understood the importance of knowledge and dialogue in strengthening power, organizing collective action, and managing difference, which reflects an advanced conception of the relationship between knowledge, dialogue, and authority in building effective leadership.

3. Patterns of the Other with Whom the Emir Dialogued in the Colonial and Civilizational Context

The “Other” in Emir Abdelkader’s dialogues constitutes a fundamental axis for understanding his strategy of communication and coexistence within the colonial and civilizational context. His dialogues extended to include his father, French leaders, religious and Christian leaders, as he invested his symbolic and moral status to build bridges of dialogue and strengthen mutual recognition. Studying the patterns of the Other with whom he dialogued reveals how he used dialogue as a tool to establish the values of coexistence and justice in a politically and socially troubled society.

The question that arises in this context is: Who is the Other imposed by the circumstances of the context to be an interlocutor of Emir Abdelkader, and to what extent did these dialogues enable the reproduction of human recognition and the strengthening of social and civilizational values?

This problem represents an entry point for analyzing the patterns of the Other imposed by circumstances on Emir Abdelkader during his long militant path and his various dialogues, whether inside Algeria or in the Levant. Studying these patterns does not only reveal the nature of the dialogue he adopted, but also clarifies how dialogue became a means of reproducing human recognition and strengthening the values of coexistence and social and civilizational justice in an intertwined and complex colonial context. From here begins an in-depth reading of the others whom the Emir encountered in the context of these dialogues, starting with the father and the family environment, passing through French leaders and religious leaders, and reaching the diverse communities that contributed to shaping his humanistic vision.

3.1 The Father as a Source of Guidance, Dialogue, and the Building of Leadership Personality

The Emir’s relationship with his father is one of the most prominent and successful educational models that contributed to shaping his personality and building his intellectual and political project from early childhood. His father found in him distinction and harmony with himself, which led him to pay special attention to him over his other brothers. The father was the first “Other” who influenced him and was for him an example and symbol to emulate in terms of wisdom, chastity, courage, and justice. He inherited intelligence and rationality and was influenced by his father’s personality, because the personality of the father, Muhieddine, represented a vanguard in a society dominated by features of weakness, frailty, and political corruption. Accordingly, these circumstances were a direct reason for the development of revolutionary thought in the father in opposition to injustice and tyranny. When father and son were placed under house arrest (1823–1825) by the authority of the Turkish governor of Oran, Hassan Dey, this served as an opportunity for the son to learn from his father’s school. The pilgrimage and knowledge journey that lasted two years, which he had the chance to undertake with his father, was also a new path for him to know himself and discover new worlds. (Ahmed Al-Zaabi, 2016, pp. 11–12)

All these different circumstances and stages in which the son was together with the father were an opportunity for dialogue and discussion on various religious and political issues and on the affairs of the country under the burden of French colonialism.

3.2 Emir Abdelkader's Dialogues with French Figures and Leaders: The Dialogue of Justice and Power

His dialogue was embodied through treaties, the most prominent of which were:

The Desmichels Treaty: This is considered the Emir's first experience in negotiation and dialogue with one of the French military leaders, General Desmichels. This treaty was concluded on February 26, 1834, and in it national sovereignty was recognized and Abdelkader was recognized as Emir of the Believers. This was confirmed by the letter attached by Desmichels, in which he said: "You will undoubtedly notice that the terms of this treaty are equal in obligations for you and for us, and that they testify to the integrity of the arrangements made for the benefit of two peoples who will be considered brothers in the future." (Ait Habouche, 2021, p. 261)

In this treaty, the Emir's ability to negotiate, his diplomatic wisdom, and his ability to employ all elements in the service of a just cause became evident. In this treaty, which may be considered a dialogue with the Other, namely the French party, he sought the help of a third party in the dialogue process, a partner in the homeland, Ibn Duran, who was Jewish and served as his consul in the city of Algiers, in addition to appointing Monsieur Kazamani, an Italian and agent of the United States in Algeria. (Ahmed Al-Zaabi, 2016, p. 15)

The Treaty of Tafna: The Emir concluded it in 1837, under circumstances full of difficulties, surprises, and maneuvers between the Emir and Bugeaud. In the end, after marathon rounds of negotiation, both parties accepted it. The Emir presented the articles of the treaty, discussed them, and informed them of the secrets of French policy. Whatever the interpretations brought by the Treaty of Tafna, which was concluded between the two parties in the presence of their supporters on May 30, 1837, and despite Bugeaud's deception of the Emir to win the negotiation battle, most contemporary researchers later confirmed the Emir's sincere desire to build relations of peace and mutual recognition between the French government and his sultanate. (Belil, 2012, pp. 6–7)

The Treaty of Emir Abdelkader and General Lamoricière (Lamorcière) 1847: This treaty revealed an important sociological dimension, represented in the fact that the correspondence between them formed a mechanism for managing conflict through symbolic capital rather than military force. Through his precise language and his refusal to describe the agreement as surrender, the Emir sought to protect his position within the socio-political field as an actor possessing religious and jihad legitimacy, not as a defeated party. His letter to Lamoricière after the latter assumed the Ministry of War confirms this dimension, as he reminded him of the need to acknowledge the truth of what happened "so that it would not be believed that he defeated him in war and forced him to surrender." (Ahmed Al-Zaabi, 2016, p. 18) This reflects his use of dialogue as a tool to preserve social recognition and redefine his position within the relationship of colonial domination.

The historical debate over the nature of the treaty itself—between those who described it as surrender, such as Henry Churchill in his book *The Life of Emir Abdelkader*, and those who preferred to describe the event as "cessation of jihad and laying down arms" instead of "surrender" (Barkani and Barkani, 2021, p. 223)—reveals that the Emir's discourse aimed to reshape the social meaning of the event. Thus, dialogue between the two parties was not technical communication, but a sociological practice

to protect status and legitimacy within a conflict in which material power and symbolic power overlapped.

Among the French figures with whom the Emir dialogued during the war with France was the priest Suchet, on the occasion of the exchange of prisoners between the Emir and the priest. The latter transmitted what took place between him and the Emir in that dialogue, which he considered the first Islamic-Christian dialogue that took place in the previous century in Algeria. This supports the opinion that the Emir absorbed the culture of interreligious dialogue in Algeria while he was at the height of his power. As for what took place between him and Bishop Dupuch in 1840, when the latter asked the Emir to release one of the prisoners, the dialogue between them supports the idea of Islamic-Christian interreligious dialogue. (Hamamid, 2008, pp. 53–54)

The Emir expresses through the dialogue that brought him together with Father Dupuch that, despite the difference in religions and dialogical starting points, there is an intellectual connection whose starting point is the shared human and emotional dimension. The principles of dialogue based on love and encounter were manifested and expanded. The openness of both the Emir and the priest to the Other made narration and dialogue move in one direction, ending in the reconstruction of a flexible identity conception characterized by acceptance of the Other and transcendence of examples through “crossing cultures.” Today, identities have become transboundary, inclined toward participation, intersection, and shared histories. The levels of awareness between the Emir and the priest were revealed through the establishment of dialogical relationships everywhere and in all phenomena of human life that are perceived and contemplated. Wherever dialogue begins, awareness begins. At that point, open discourses are produced, tending toward openness and expressing a reality condemned from all sides. The common element in the dialogue between Father Dupuch and the Emir was religion, due to its importance in establishing war and peace throughout the ages. (Al-Saghir, 2018, pp. 22–25)

3.3 Emir Abdelkader’s Dialogues during the Levant Crisis

The Emir played a historical and highly significant humanitarian role during the Levant crisis, whose spark began in Mount Lebanon and extended to Damascus among religious sects. His position culminated in saving thousands of Christians from being killed by some extremists and armed gangs. The intellectual starting point on which the Emir relied to perform his humanitarian duty was the consolidation of the values of tolerance and the attempt to stop religious conflict and quarrel by opening a space for dialogue, refining the language of discourse so that it became compatible with the approach of religions, and establishing ways of brotherhood and equality between the heavenly religions, Islam and Christianity, in order to avoid the dangers of violence in the future. In this regard, Dupuch says: “Only a great man can do this... History rarely produces leaders who act under the inspiration of reason and religion, as the Emir acted. Such people are our pride before all humanity... etc.” (Taa, 2017, p. 48)

In the midst of this crisis, Emir Abdelkader presented a refined model of responsible dialogue. He wove a broad communication network that included the Ottoman authority, Christian leaders, and Western consuls, and worked to protect civilians and contain sectarian conflict with religious and humanitarian wisdom. He also confronted the extremist current within Muslim society with his symbolic capital made up of his scientific, jihad, and social status, relying on a rational discourse based on Sharia to deter violence without weapons. This enabled him to impose his moral influence

and restore balance within a fractured social space. The Emir received wide international appreciation and affirmed in his responses to kings and leaders that what he had done was a duty imposed by the Islamic religion and human rights, embodying the values of peace and coexistence that he applied on the basis of the principles of Islam and the Prophet's approach to protecting and respecting the Other. It becomes clear to us through analyzing the patterns of the Other with whom Emir Abdelkader dialogued throughout the period of his struggle against French colonialism that dialogue for him was not merely discourse, but a practice in which the value of human recognition and shared citizenship was formed. In his relationship with various patterns, dialogue served as a civilizational bridge linking different cultures, especially Western ones. On this dialogue he built mutual recognition, even at the level of the political Other represented by French colonialism. He dealt with it with a high moral spirit, and this was embodied in preserving the dignity of prisoners and rejecting all forms of torture, relying on his symbolic capital, which allowed him to stand above the logic of dispute and conflict.

4. Conclusion

Emir Abdelkader's experience reveals a complex dialogical model in modern Arab-Islamic history. It was not limited to the moral dimension or the religious reference, but was established as a social and intellectual system that made dialogue a mechanism for producing meaning, rebuilding legitimacy, and organizing social cohesion in a highly complex colonial context. Dialogue in his project was not merely a means of overcoming conflict; rather, it was formed as a structure guiding action, crystallized through a long path of political and social practice, and gradually transformed into a symbolic resource that strengthened his status within Algerian society and in the international sphere.

The analysis shows that the Emir's dialogical vision was not separate from social reality or from its deep structures. Rather, it came as a practical response to the imbalances imposed by colonialism and the accompanying fragmentation of social bonds and multiplicity of loyalties. He adopted dialogue as a tool for organizing relations among actors, regulating social balances, and reproducing collective cohesion, with a conscious understanding of the nature of conflict and the limits of material power. From this standpoint, recognition of the Other formed one of the basic pillars of his project, as he dealt with the different person as a social actor with rights and dignity.

This vision was also founded on a rational interpretation of texts and events, enabling the Emir to go beyond the logic of rigidity and closure and to adopt a communicative pattern based on persuasion and shared understanding instead of coercion. This gave his dialogical practices a preventive dimension, as he advanced dialogue before crises worsened, anticipating social tensions and limiting their transformation into open conflicts or structural violence. In this context, religious and cultural diversity was not viewed as a threatening factor, but rather as a resource for strengthening social cohesion.

The Sufi dimension represented an ethical and behavioral pillar in his dialogical project. It contributed to self-discipline and directed political and military action toward moderation and discipline. At the same time, the Emir understood the decisive role of discourse and language in absorbing tensions and reshaping social relations. In this way, he combined firmness in principles with flexibility in practice, within a leadership style that balances values with the requirements of reality.

Major sociological approaches allow for a deeper reading of the Emir's experience. They show it as a model that combines the charismatic legitimacy discussed by Max Weber, the mechanisms of

producing social solidarity formulated by Emile Durkheim, and communicative action based on mutual rationality according to Habermas's vision. It also reveals a prominent use of symbolic capital according to Pierre Bourdieu's perspective, making dialogue a political and moral resource at the same time.

Dialogue in the Emir's thought was not limited to the external sphere, but also included the internal sphere, as he was keen to involve the community and respect its opinion, which contributed to building a social legitimacy based on acceptance and participation. This led to the reproduction of social solidarity by overcoming tribal and ethnic divisions in favor of bonds based on shared interest and emerging collective and national belonging.

Accordingly, the rules highlighted by this research from Emir Abdelkader's thought do not represent abstract theoretical principles, but structural elements of a new political culture that made dialogue a means of rebuilding authority, consolidating collective identity, and formulating a comprehensive national project capable of confronting structural fragmentation and civilizational transformations. This gives this experience a special relevance in a contemporary world marked by the escalation of conflicts and divisions.

This study reached a set of basic results, which can be summarized as follows:

- Dialogue is manifested in the thought and practice of Emir Abdelkader as an effective social structure, not merely an ethical choice, which he employed to produce legitimacy and organize social relations under a turbulent colonial situation.
- The Emir relied on recognition of the Other as a central mechanism for building social interaction and regulating balances, and this was clearly manifested in his practical practices, especially during the sectarian events in Damascus.
- The Emir's dialogical vision was founded on a rational interpretation of texts and events, reflecting the adoption of a communicative pattern based on persuasion and shared understanding, approaching the logic of communicative action.
- Dialogue constituted a preventive tool in crisis management, as it was used to anticipate social tensions and limit their transformation into open conflicts or structural violence.
- The Emir viewed religious and cultural diversity as a resource for strengthening social cohesion and building unity, not as a factor of threat or fragmentation.

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