Representation, civil war and humanitarian intervention:

the international politics of naming Algerian violence, 1992-2002

Submitted by Jacob Andrew Mundy to the University of Exeter

as a dissertation for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Arab and Islamic Studies

In July 2010

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: …………………………………………………………..

Abstract

This examination criticises some of the main textual efforts within the self-identified politiography of Algeria that have attempted to help make the last twenty years of violent conflict in Algeria intelligible to Western audiences. It attends to the way in which particular representations of Algerian violence were problematised within, and cross-problematised with, prevailing international security discourses and practices, especially the concurrently emergent litterature on civil wars and armed humanitarian intervention. Unsatisfied with general international response to the conflict in Algeria in the 1990s, particularly the major massacres of 1997 and 1998, this study questions how certain problematisations were used to understand the violence and how those renderings contributed to the troubled relationship between the representation of mass violence in Algeria and international efforts to intervene against it.

As a study in politiography, the primary object of analysis here is not the entire discursive field of Algerian violence but rather select yet influential scholarly texts within the genre of late Algerian violence. While these works helped co-constitute the broader discursive formations of Algerian violence that enabled its own representation as such, this examination does not necessarily address them vis-à-vis unique, superior or competing representations drawn from the traditionally privileged sites of initial discursive production of international security. The primary method of critique here is deconstructive in so far as it simply uses the texts — their arguments, their evidence and their archival logic — against themselves. Borrowing insights from currents in recent neopragmatist thought, this study seeks to reverse engineer some of the more dominant international problematisations of Algerian violence, so as to unearth the deeper politics of naming built into specific representations of Algeria and more generic frameworks of international security.

After first exploring the conflict's contested political and economic etiology (chapter three), as well as its disputed classification as a civil war (chapter four), this study closely examines the interpretations of the most intense civilian massacres, those that occurred between August 1997 and January 1998 (chapters five and six). How these representations resulted in the threat of (armed) humanitarian intervention are of particular concern (chapter seven), as are the ways in which foreign actors have attempted to historically

contextualise Algeria's alleged tradition and culture of violence (chapter eight). The aim is not to produce — though it cannot but help contribute to — a new history or account of the politics of the Algerian conflict and its internationalisation. The intent is first to underscore the inherent yet potentially auspicious dangers within all problematisations of mass violence. Secondly, it is to advocate for ironic forms of politiography, given the politics always-already embedded within acts of naming, particularly when it comes to questions of mass violence. A politiography that is able to appreciate the contingency of representation and intervention, and so underscores the need for a more deliberately and deliberative ethical and democratic politics of representation in the face of atrocity.

Table of contents

List of Tables

Maps

Abbreviations

AIS	Armée islamique du salut (Islamic Salvation Army)
CNCPPDH	Commission nationale consultative de promotion et de protection des droits de l'homme (National Consultative Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights)
DRS	Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité (Department of Intelligence and Security, formerly the SM)
FFS	Front des forces socialistes (Socialist Forces Front)
FIS	Front islamique du salut (Islamic Salvation Front)
FLN	Front de libération nationale (National Liberation Front)
GIA	Groupement/Groupe(s) islamique(s) armé(s) (Armed Islamic Grouping/Group[s])
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
HCE	Haut Comité d'État (High State Council)
HCS	Haut Conseil de Sécurité (High Security Council)
MIA/MAIA	Mouvement (algérien) islamique armé ([Algerian] Armed Islamic Movement)
ONDH	Observatoire national des droits de l'homme (National Human Rights Observatory)
RCD	Rassemblement pour la culture et la démocratie (Rally for Culture and Democracy)
SM	Sécurité militaire (Military Security, now DRS)

Note on transliteration

Transliteration of Arabic terms in this study, whether standard (*fuṣḥā*) or Algerian dialect (*dārijah)*, mainly follows the system used by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* except that *tāʾ marbūṭah* is kept in the *-ah* form and *ʾiḍāfa* constructions, along with other contractions, are not rendered (e.g., *fī al-,* not *fī-l*). This study uses the Jaghbub font for Latin text with diacritical marks.

Acknowledgments

Dedication

In memory of Dr Stuart C. Black

1. Introduction

> Supposing that this also is only interpretation — and you will be eager to
> make this objection? — well, so much the better.

> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (§22)

This is not about Algeria. What follows are a series of critical readings of late Algerian violence as manifested within particular representational regimes. It is an exploration of, to use Edward Said's (1994 [1978]) concept, *imaginative geographies* of Algerian violence, chiefly those produced within particular international security disciplines. It is not a critique of the entire discursive field that constituted the various representational terrains of Algerian violence nor does it privilege traditional sites — political officialdom, military and security apparatuses, international bodies, non-governmental organisations, the mass media, business, trade and finance — in the investigation of questions concerning international relations. It is rather a chain of focused deconstructions aimed at the academic politiography of Algerian violence. This study identifies and problematises some of the main textual efforts within political studies that have attempted to make the last twenty years of violence in Algeria intelligible to Western audiences. The task here is to unpack the hidden assumptions, theoretical over-determinations and empirical lapses in various securitisations and de-securitisations of the violence in Algeria, whether, among others, as

a problem of Islamist terrorism, identity conflict, economic collapse, failed democratisation, the inherently violent history and culture of the global South, transitional justice or as a candidate for foreign humanitarian intervention. By reverse engineering these international problematisations of violence, this study aims to understand the deeper politics of naming, which often functioned as productive silences, built into specific representations of Algerian violence and generic security frameworks. The goal is not to produce a new history of the Algerian conflict and its internationalisation. The aim is to underscore the inherent dangers of problematising mass violence and to advocate for a more ironic approach to questions of representation and intervention, one that can accommodate contingency while advancing a more ethical politics of democracy.

Accounts of the Algerian 'civil war' — a deeply contested designation, as we will see in chapter four — often posit 1992 as the initial year of the armed conflict, though this is also a disputed claim, as chapter three makes clear. Where there seems to be widespread agreement is on the fact that Algeria experienced, as detailed and analysed in chapters five and six, some of the most atrocious and murderous violence of the 1990s, a decade frequently inscribed with unprecedented levels and kinds of violence. Appearing as it did during the 1990s, chapter seven makes it clear that the violence in Algeria quickly found its way into one of the leading international security regimes of the post-Cold War world, the discourse on armed humanitarian intervention. But the events of 11 September 2001, as chapter six notes, helped reformulate, hybridise, discard and fix competing readings of the violence in Algeria. The origins of the armed conflict in Algeria, whether the deep historical roots (see chapter eight) or the immediate trigger causes (see chapter three), have been as much a wellspring for the production of knowledge as a site for political and intellectual contestation. What is at least certain is that then Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid resigned in January 1992. The regime that replaced him decided to annul the electoral victories of the *Front islamique du salut* (FIS, Islamic Salvation Front), an Islamist party poised to take control of the national parliament, as it had numerous prefectures (*wilāyāt*) and municipalities (*baladiyāt*) in Algeria's first multi-party elections in 1990. Precipitous events followed the outlawing of the FIS in February 1992, though arguably salient developments had also preceded these. Acts of violence, frequently presented or interpreted as political, seemed to increase. By the mid 1990s, the Algerian government was reportedly fighting a major armed conflict against a now insurgent

13

Islamist movement. Yet the extent to which either side was so easily representable as competing monoliths came under implicit and explicit attack. On the one hand, the alleged unified interests of the government and the state, at all levels, found platforms of expression yet also found a number of critics. Even the regime itself was said to be fundamentally split into at least two camps, the anti-Islamist *éradicateurs* versus those favouring dialogue with the FIS, the *conciliateurs.* The allegedly pro-government roles of Algeria's secular civil society and private business interests were as much over-determined by observers as undermined by others who suggested their opaque participation in the violence, whether to support the cause of a divided regime or to advance their own interests regardless of the political contest between the FIS and the state. Likewise, the formation of a significant number of pro-government militias — numbering several hundreds of thousands by the late 1990s — contributed to a particular discourse of the Algerian violence in which it had been 'privatised'. Meanwhile, Algeria's inchoate Islamist insurgency had quickly spawned an alphabet soup of competing groups: *Mouvement (algérien) islamique armé* (MIA/MAIA, [Algerian] Armed Islamic Movement), *Front islamique du djihad armé* (Islamic Front for Armed Jihad), the *Groupement/Groupe(s) islamique(s) armé(s)* (GIA, Armed Islamic Grouping/Group[s]), *Mouvement pour l'état islamique* (MEI, Islamic State Movement), *Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat* (GSPC, Salafi Goup for Preaching and Combat) and now a branch of Al-Qaʿidah (*Tanẓīm al-Qāʿidah bi Balād al-Maghrib al-Islāmī*) that has been given the convenient yet inconsistent Latin abbreviations AQMI, AQIM, AQLIM, etc. The shifting and conflicting politics attributed to this rebellion, guerrilla movement or insurgency — another disputed set of designations — likewise provided an important condition of contestation and confusion to the international efforts to understand the violence in Algeria within the dominant epistemes of international security.

This study reconstitutes and revisits the archives deployed in the various theoretical and topical studies of the violence in Algeria. To a large degree, this study also draws upon the internationalised version of Algeria's *Qui tue?* (Who kills?) debate: the questions of identity, motive and political context surrounding intimate acts of violence, high profile assassinations and the most spectacular instances of mass slaughter. The culmination of these debates at the peak of Algeria's violence — the massacre crisis of 1997 and 1998 — constitutes a significant portion of the analysis. After first exploring the conflict's

ambiguous etiology (chapter three) and contested classification (chapter four), this study focuses on the major massacres that occurred in Algeria between August 1997 and January 1998 (chapters five and six), and the international reaction to them. These cumulative representations of the violence and certain re-articulatory events (e.g., 11 September 2001) resulted in Algeria's troubled appearance within, and quick disappearance from, contemporaneous discourses of armed humanitarian intervention (chapter seven). Lastly, this study looks at, within the context of debates about how Algeria should write the history of the 1990s, various efforts to endogenise the violence's cultural and historical causes (chapter eight). Unsatisfied with the way in which the international community responded to the conflict in Algeria, this study seeks to understand how the problem is possibly somewhat rooted in the very problematisations used to understand Algeria's violence in the first place. With this in mind, the purpose of this introduction is to set out the theoretical, philosophical and methodological contexts of this study, which is followed by a schematic description of each chapter.

The politiography of international security

Political studies lack a clearly defined space for meta-analysis. As with most scholarly traditions, meta-analysis has long been a part of political studies but its position within the disciplinary field is ambiguous. A longstanding division bifurcates the work of political studies into one of two camps. There is the empirical side (Political Science and International Relations) and then there is the philosophical side (Political or International Theory). Unlike the discipline of history with its subfield of historiography, there is no statement or institutional acceptance of a practice that might be termed politiography. This is, again, not to claim that politiography — more precisely, the study of politiography — has never been practiced; it is to claim that the analysis of politiography has rarely, if ever, framed itself as such.

In terms of this study, the analogy with historiography is one way to understand my aims and methods. This study is a critical assessment of the politiography of late Algerian violence. It ruthlessly interrogates various scholarly texts within a particular genre; those that have attempted to understand the violence in Algeria, but also some texts that should

have included Algeria within their accounts but did not. My investigation begins and ends with a return to the original source material and a close reading of key arguments. As such, the approach here is not all that different from certain forms historiographical analysis. The difference — the warrant for the term politiography — issues from the fact that the majority of texts under scrutiny here identify themselves as works of political analysis rather than history. It is not because of any insufficiency with the theories or practices of historiography that this warrant is realised; it issues from the lack of a clearly defined space within political studies for a similar level of self-reflexive analysis as found in historiography vis-à-vis history. Still, the question naturally arises as to whether or not I am reifying a nonexistent division of labour between politiography and historiography — a distinction without a difference. This question, however, should first of all be posed to the disciplines themselves with their maintenance of intuitionally rigid yet functionally invisible boundaries between history and political studies. Though the demarcation of a practice calling itself politiography indeed carries with it the danger of reinforcing arbitrary disciplinary boundaries, this is rather an argument for an awareness of these effects rather than a rejection of the distinction. More importantly, politiography can also serve as new channel of communication between scholars of history and politics, to exchange ideas on methods and theories.

Genealogies of politiography, even in the narrow field of international security studies, are not difficult to construct, particularly given the recent interest in discourse as an object of investigation and a method of analysis. Over the course of the past three decades, a number of international relations theorists have interrogated the foundations and practices of knowledge production in their discipline. The now widespread acceptance and adoption of so-called constructivist theories and methodologies is indicative of the extent to which ideas drawn from critical theory and post-structuralism have found a firm place within international political studies. When constructivism arrived on the scene in the 1980s, it often appeared as an attempt to question or undermine the dominant schools of international relations theory — (neo)realism, (neo)liberalism, political economy, world systems theory, the English school — and sometimes in the reflexive form of studies of the academic practice (Ashley 1986; Walker 1987; Onuf 1989; Walker 1993; Wendt 1999). By the end of the 1990s, however, constructivism's more post-positivist or norm-based wing (e.g., Kratochwil 1989; Finnemore 1996; Katzenstein 1996; Fierke & Jørgensen 2001) saw

increasing mainstream acceptance within international relations — at least in so much as it was openly portrayed as the paradigm's defining debate (e.g., Katzenstein *et al.* 1998; Fearon *et al.* 2002). Where there were still perceptions of danger came from the wing of constructivism regularly dismissed as being post-structuralist. The vectors of post-structuralism into international relations and security studies ran parallel to those of constructivism's foray. Indeed, similar names and studies are cited as foundational in the post-structuralist critique of dominant international political theories (Ashley 1981; Ashley 1986; Walker 1987; Walker 1993; Ashley & Walker 1990), though new voices have been included in this cannon as well (Der Derian 1987; Shapiro 1988; Der Derian & Shapiro 1989). Efforts to apply such insights drawn from the recent developments in continental philosophy — the statements of post-modernism of Jean-François Lyotard and Gilles Deleuze, the post-structuralism of Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida's deconstructive approach, Jean Baudrillard's theories of simulation, Paul Virilio's writings on speed and technology — soon took the form of empirical case studies within the field of international politics (e.g., Campbell 1992; Campbell 1998a; Der Derian 1992; Doty 1993; Klein 1994; Weber 1995; Debrix 1999; Weldes *et al.* 1999; Edkins 2002) and further theoretical critique (George 1994; Edkins 1999; Bleiker 2000; Albert *et al.* 2001). Given the degree to which some of the most dominant questions of international relations have been deeply inculcated with questions of international security, the development of a 'critical' branch of security studies was well incubated in the emerging constructivist and post-structuralist literature. Arriving shortly after the outpouring of constructivist critique in international relations theory, the main texts of critical security studies soon began directing similar attacks on the study of international security (Lipschutz 1995; Dillon 1996; Krause & Williams 1997; Buzan *et al.* 1998; Wyn Jones 1999; Booth 2005). Case studies — a label that would likely be rejected — had already arrived or were soon on the way (e.g., Waever *et al.* 1993; Katzenstein 1996; Campbell 1998a; Der Derian 2001; Dodds & Ingram 2009 and others cited above). Needless to say, this narrative, and the categories and debates it proposes, is as problematic as it is non-exhaustive. It merely serves as reminder that the practice of politiography — studying the studies — is not foreign to the analysis of international security questions. It also provides points of departure from which possible triangulations of this study's position within the field might be made.

One tradition of scholars expressing particularly keen interest in the 'writing' of international politics has been the eclectic constellation of scholars labelled post-colonialist. Possible traditions of post-colonialism are quite vast (see Loomba 1998 and Young 2001), though the work of such intellectuals as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Albert Memmi, not to mention leaders in African, Asian and Latin American revolutions, often take centre stage. Precursors to post-colonial theory and clear statements of its precepts have been located in, among others, Talal Asad (1973), Said (1994 [1978]), Partha Chatterjee (1986), Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Homi Bhabha (1994), including, in the case of the Maghrib, Réda Bensmaïa (2003). While the primary terrains of post-colonial analysis have been literature, social theory and history, its application to international relations and security has nonetheless been attempted (see Doty 1996; Krishna 1999; Soguk 1999; Darby 2000; Philpott 2000; Chowdhry & Nair 2004; Grovogui 2006). In hailing this literature, it is not to suggest that these thinkers will necessarily find this study of significant import. Rather, this study, in a way that will possibly resonate with some post-colonial writings, similarly explores the nexus of historically and geographically conditioned practices of intervention and representation.

Though many readers will situate this study within the disciplinary frameworks of international security studies, its relationship to these fields is an uneasy one. The problems addressed here are related to the study of international security but in a way that is antagonistic to the discipline itself. In other words, often the problem with Algeria in the 1990s, as identified in this study, was it being cast as such — a problem. It is not that this problem is accepted as a given fact but it is given by the objective of this study: to understand some of the ways in which Algeria was conceived of as a problem for certain members of the international community, primarily as a *security* problem. By 'international community' this study simply means the global network of structures and actors where membership is non-exclusive and often imposed, though effective participation is highly selective and hierarchically regimented by factors such as wealth, race, gender and geography. Like scholar Cynithia Enloe (2000), I believe that anyone can be both the subject and object of this network; there are those who claim to speak for it just as it, more often that not, speaks for others. The international community's problematisations of Algeria are partially achieved through disciplinary frames erected by the study and practice of international security. Understanding these becomes central to

reverse-engineering the problematisations of Algeria and so exposing their malfunctions and insufficiencies.

While the primary object of study here is scholarly texts, this is not to give the impression that politiography should be a considered just the production of self- or institutionally identified academic writing. I take it as given that politics, like history, can be written in almost any site imaginable, by almost any conceivable actor, taking any number of discursive forms. Academic interventions, I believe, are neither the most important, the most influential nor the most comprehensive form politiography can take. The impetus for this study rather begins with the observation that the politiography and international politics of Algerian violence both strike me as deficient. While the international community seemingly had little effect upon the conflict in Algeria from 1992 onward, academic observers have variously and conflictingly problematised that violence in ways that do not hold up to close scrutiny. To be clear, this study does not seek to test the causal claim that problematic academic representations of the violence in Algeria produced or helped contribute to the apparent incapacity of foreign actors to ameliorate the violence. Though such is certainly unintentionally implied throughout this study and particularly in its conclusion, the goal of these deconstructive exercises is to hold up the politiography of Algerian violence as a cautionary tale, a warning to those who will face the dangers of representing and intervening against mass violence today and in the future.

Assumptions

In so far as the primary form of critique deployed here can be termed deconstructive (i.e., using the text against itself), outlining the philosophical background to this study functions more as a caveat or confession than as the basis from which a theory will be grounded, hypotheses generated and abstract models constructed. However, this background offers us some insight into the basis of the methodological techniques used in the effort here to overhaul representations and problematisations of the violence in Algeria. The philosophical bias of this study owes to a specific group of late-twentieth century thinkers, primarily from the United States, who have situated themselves within the linguistic turn or, in some cases, constructed an intellectual lineage to underscore their break from it. The

linguistic turn refers to a discordant ensemble of thinkers and ideas that place language at the centre of analysis or very close to it. Depending on the disciplinary context or moment in time, the linguistic turn can signify a wide variety of claims and practices whose main theorists hold significant disagreements about fundamental philosophical precepts. The various intellectual personalities associated with the linguistic turn hint at the divided ranks of this 'movement'. Taking Ferdinand de Saussure as just one starting point, various lines of descent can be quickly constructed (e.g., Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, etc). In other settings, Ludwig Wittgenstein is often cast in the role of founding father based on the centrality of language in his later works. For others, the turn could refer to the ways in which many forms of Anglo-American analytic philosophy had already reconsidered language as essential, rather than instrumental, to inquiry — if it was not already to be understood a direct object of inquiry in itself. But for others, the linguistic turn took the form of a revolt against analytic philosophy generally and logical positivism specifically. In such cases (this study included), the linguistic turn is the turn *away* from realism or the idea that reality determines truth.

This study mainly finds purchase within neo-pragmatist currents, especially the work of the late American philosopher Richard Rorty. This group of thinkers has included a wide variety of contemporary philosophers, all claiming different ancestors both inside and outside the US pragmatist tradition starting with Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey. The revival of pragmatism in latter half of the twentieth century is often traced back to 1951, when Williard Quine attempted to dispatch the reductionist view that every true statement must be matched up to something in reality. Instead, Quine promoted the idea that the truth of individual claims depends upon the broader context in which they appear. Empirical verification, he believed, happens at the macro-level of theories and not the micro-level of isolated sentences. Additionally, Quine sought to take apart the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements where the former is considered true by definition and the latter is true based upon experience. Having already attacked reductionism and argued for holism, Quine (1963: 43) felt that, if meaning is not merely the sum of empirically verified statements, then analytic or synthetic truth tests no longer hold value. And so, by implication, 'no statement is immune to revision'.

Not too long after Quine's critique first appeared, Nelson Goodman (1960 [1955]) launched a more aggressive attack on the pillars of Realism. This consisted of an attempt to undermine the idea that there are objectively superior representations of reality independent of their own conventions. Cornel West (1989: 190) would later summarise this point as an attempt to highlight 'the theory-laden character of observation and the value-laden character or theory'. Hypothesis and theory building, Goodman would later argue, is not based solely upon empirical feedback but other criteria (e.g., simplicity) whose role is often in the front end of science rather than the back end. Goodman seemed quite willing to own up to, and even embrace, the epistemological pluralism — what many philosophical realists would dismiss as relativism — his arguments seemed to advocate (*ibid.*: 190-1).

Wilfrid Sellars contributed to this anti-foundationalist surge by suggesting that 'the given', an important premise of realism, is a 'myth'. He believed that the conflation of sensory experience with the justification of claims is untenable. Sellars did not think awareness outside of language is possible because any expression of awareness must take the form of a language to be a candidate for public justification. Without denying the existence of extra-linguistic phenomena as the cause of some sensations, Sellars nevertheless thought that the justification for a specific knowledge claim can only take place within the context of a system of beliefs. The foundations of knowledge are not to be found in the empirical confirmation of isolated individual claims to reality. Echoing Quine, Sellars (1963: 177; quoted in Rorty 1979: 180) instead thought the rationality of science issued from its ability to 'put any claim in jeopardy, though not *all* at once'.

Roughly twenty years after Quine's famous 'Two Dogmas' essay, Richard Rorty began to push these ideas further by suggesting that there is no theory free description of reality but rather competing theories of reality upon which descriptions are always based. Rorty (1989: 5) would eventually come to the conclusion that

> To say that truth is not out there is simply to say that where there are no sentences there is no truth, that sentences are elements of human languages, and that human languages are human creations.

Truth cannot be out there — cannot exist independent of the human mind — because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own — unaided by the describing activities of human beings — cannot.

Under this account, language becomes central to practices of knowledge production because we have moved away from a Cartesian picture wherein knowledge is constituted in the relationship between subjects and objects. Instead, it is replaced by one in which knowledge is produced and mediated inter-subjectively. This, of course, is not to suggest that all philosophers agree with this line of argumentation, that all of the thinkers cited above call themselves pragmatists or that even all self-identified pragmatists agree with Rorty's views. To run through all of the criticisms and rejoinders would, of course, neither do them justice nor serve the purposes of this study. The above has merely been offered to situate historically the epistemological assumptions guiding this study: anti-reductionist anti-realism, conventionalism, pluralism and historicism.

To summarise so far, this study accepts the label post-modern or post-structural in as much as post-modernism and post-structuralism have attended to the conditions under which knowledge is generated and been pre-eminently concerned with the uses for which knowledge is deployed. This study accepts the labels post-positivist and post-analytical because it employs techniques of argumentation familiar to realism but it does not accept realism's teleological ambitions or its assumption of superior representations. Lastly, this study welcomes the label post-colonial because it seeks to underscore the ways in which representations of the Other are always embedded within distributions and circulations of economic, political, social, historical and cultural power that are geographically asymmetrical.

Methods

Taking the linguistic turn seriously

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the profile of discourse, as either an essential tool for analysis or a key ontological entity, has increased markedly in the study of international relations and security (Milliken 1999), though also generally in the social sciences and humanities (Torfing 1999). However, discourse has also undergone constant reformulation in the past three decades. Before post-structuralists and post-Marxists began reinventing the concept of discourse, it was generally seen as specifically related to language and the analysis of its use both directly (e.g., vocabularies) and indirectly (e.g., the context of speaking). The influential work of Michel Foucault attempted to expand the ways in which people thought about discourse by arguing against the view that discourse can be reduced to language or, in the structural sense, sign systems. *Post*-structuralism thus commences from the claim that 'Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to language (*langue*) and to speech'. This move consists of not just 'treating discourses as groups of signs' but also 'as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 1972: 49). This has been interpreted to mean that discourse cannot be reduced to language (semiotics), thought (idealism) or a totality (realism). Instead, it presents a view that allows for the material but so long as we caveat that it must remain under the sovereignty of discourse (Kendall & Wickham 1999: 34-41). Pushing this even further, post-Marxist social theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have proposed that we think of a discourse as a 'structured totality' of 'articulatory practice[s]' that create differences of identity amongst its constituent elements. Among other points of affinity with Foucault, practices other than language are included, and so anti-reductionism is maintained (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 105-6; see Howarth & Norval 2000: 7). In the case of one text scrutinised in this study (Malmvig 2006: 3), discourse is rendered as 'an order, or a field, that makes specific being and practices intelligible and knowledgeable, and makes who we are and what we do and think'.

Whether or not Malmvig's representation of discourse reflects the conception held by most of its users, it nonetheless hints at the discomfort a neo-pragmatist might feel towards these re-conceptualisations. On one level, discourse has become so all encompassing that it no longer is a distinction that makes a difference. If everything is discourse, then there is no pragmatic difference between talking about the discourse of armed humanitarian intervention and talking about armed humanitarian intervention. This seems analogous to a

sentence that includes the redundant phrase 'is a true sentence' (e.g., Algeria was under threat of foreign intervention is a true sentence). The over-theorisation of discourse has drowned out its previously useful capacity to distinguish, on the one hand, between the language of things and practices and, on the other hand, the things and practices themselves, such that it was possible to suspend or evade the realist/idealist debate and focus on indelible linguistic articulations. That utility disappears when discourse is rendered tantamount to reality. This study maintains this distinction on the pragmatic grounds that effacing it, as we will see below, leads to untenable arguments against realism. Pragmatic evasion, on the other hand, allows us to walk past such old traps.

Additionally, there seems to be a discomforting process of reification underway. A concept that is initially presented as a useful means to think about problems without having to commit to ontological claims has since obtained a powerful ontological status all its own, one that transcends the contingency of its former exigency. For example, in her study of Apartheid, Aletta Norval (1996: 3) reprimands her readers for assuming a naïve, pre-Foucaultian conception of discourse as that through which reality is transparently conveyed. Norval is seeking to establish the historically constructed nature of Apartheid discourse but is unwilling to acknowledge the contingencies that produced her conception of discourse. Making the opposite mistake, Lene Hansen (2006: 1), in her post-structuralist analysis of the Bosnian war, claims, 'Without theory there is nothing but description'. Hansen has quickly forgotten a fundamental insight shared by post-structuralists and neo-pragmatists: description is already theory laden. As another example, the late critic Susan Sontag (see Sontag 2003) claimed that photographs merely depict rather than interpret reality, which has prompted Judith Butler (2009: 67-8) to highlight the elements of framing that shape the reception of photographs prior to or outside of production. Contrary to Mahmood Mamdani's (2001: xiii) critique of area studies' alleged fact fetishism, facts do speak for themselves. Theoretical context is as much embedded within concepts as it is necessary for concepts to function within a broader discourse.

The unfolding reification process is plain enough. Foucault's argument for a conceptualisation of discourse that goes beyond language is rooted in a reaction to the blind spots produced by structural linguistics' reductionism. He attempts to convince us that all of the practices we might accept as discursive include some that are not merely

language. If we accept this premise, then we begin to accept the idea and engage in debates about a realm that is pre- or extra-discursive, the kind of postulation that neo-pragmatists are not interested in addressing. Neo-pragmatists might certainly agree with Foucault (1988: 154-5) that 'critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right' but instead critique 'is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged modes of thought the practices that we accept rest'. However, Foucault's commitment to anti-realism comes into question when he follows this observation with claims such as this: 'Thought exists independent of systems and structures of discourse'. Laclau and Mouffe's dismissal of modern philosophy's most tiresome epistemological impasse — the idealism/realism debate — is likewise indicative of this problem:

> The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition. An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists [...] independently of my will. [...] What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence. (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 108)

The problem with Laclau and Mouffe, and likely with those following their theories, is that they have ceded too much ground by accepting the vocabulary of the debate they claim to circumvent, notions like 'a world', 'externally to thought', 'certainly exists', 'independent of my will'. For some neo-pragmatists, the main thrust and utility of the linguistic turn was to evade this problematique entirely by focusing on language alone. The risk run by Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe is that they have engaged in a process of theorisation that lacks reflexivity and irony, and so fails to insure itself against the contingency of its own actions. Instead of conceptualising discourse as a response to a particular moment (itself a contingency), discourse has been presented as something that transcends the context that has given birth to it. Recent discourse theory attempts to convince us that we need to expand our conception of discourse because it does not capture the ontology it claims. This is ironic (a different kind of irony) when we realise that discourse was promised as that which would transparently account for the way in which it constituted its own objects. Discourse has come to be used as an attempt to account ontologically for that which allegedly could not be captured by language alone, though discourse must eventually

submit, like Laclau and Mouffe's bricks and earthquakes, to symbolic representation. A concept once premised in anti-foundationalism with a unique relativist capacity to accommodate recursivity (i.e., discourse of discourse, discourse of discourse discourse, etc) is now treated as an objective, if not transcendent and metaphysical, foundation for knowledge.

The initial neo-pragmatist response to all of this conceptual work is not to ask the questions 'Is it an accurate account of discourse?', 'Is the argument cogent?' or 'Does it match our intuitions?' The first question for a neo-pragmatist is to ask 'Why do we need a concept of discourse?' or 'What do we want it to accomplish?' Indeed, to answer the latter is, for some neo-pragmatists, to answer the former. Responding to an intervention by Laclau on the subject of pragmatism, Rorty (1996: 71) posed this basic question in the form of an analogy:

> Although some mathematics is obviously very useful to engineers, there is a lot of mathematics that isn't. Mathematics outruns engineering pretty quickly, and starts playing with itself. Philosophy, we might say, outruns politics ("social engineering," as it is sometimes called) pretty quickly, and also starts playing with itself. [...] I suspect the notion of "condition of possibility and impossibility" is as useless to political deliberation as Cantorean diagonalization is to civil engineers. Surely the burden is on those who, like Laclau, think the former useful to explain just how and where the utility appears, rather than taking it for granted?

'As a good pragmatist', Rorty (1996: 74) later explains, 'I think that theories are like tools: you only reach for them when there is a specific problem to be solved'.

Problematising problematisations

While this study offers no definitive solutions, the problem can at least be identified. It emerges out of an ethical concern and begins with two contentious observations. On the one hand, several thousand Algerian civilians were literally slaughtered over the course of several years in repeated massacres. In a handful of these episodes, mainly between August 1997 and January 1998, it was reported that hundreds of victims were massacred in a

single night. On the other hand, the response of the international community to these atrocities apparently[1] did not go beyond inconsistent moral condemnation, tepid European diplomatic initiatives and very short-lived calls for a UN investigation. To me, these atrocities and the international response are both intolerable. Indeed, the international response seems particularly deficient when compared to the kind of humanitarian rhetoric and action that defined the international security landscape at that time. After all, the Algerian massacres came amidst events that defined the 1990s as a decade of humanitarian concern, just on the heels of the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the July 1995 Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and just before NATO's military intervention against Serbia in Kosovo. Of course these are not neutral observations, empirically or ethically. There are certainly those who think these questions have either been settled or should be relegated to the past. Though it might cause pain, frustration and anger to see these matters addressed at length, particularly amongst many Algerians, one of the goals of this study is to attempt an engagement with these issues in a less polemical, less partisan manner than has been witnessed so far. Approaching the problem of atrocities — the representation of and intervention against — from the starting point of politiography allows us to claim some distance from the contentious debates surrounding the violence in Algeria.

This is one of the ways in which this study owes an intellectual debt — mainly in the form of inspiration and some methodological techniques rather than total execution — to David Campbell's *National deconstruction: violence, identity, and justice in Bosnia*. In setting up his study, Campbell first makes a distinction between Bosnia and, in his words, 'meta-Bosnia', the Bosnia(s) that appears within concordant and conflicting representations of it. Then, borrowing from Foucault (see Foucault & Rabinow 1984: 388-90), Campbell address how various problematisations framed the violence in Bosnia as a problem-solution dyad: 'As such, [*National deconstruction*] can be read as the problematization of

---

[1] I do not rule out the possibility that the official public record of the events is woefully insufficient in terms of documenting all the actions taken by state actors in key sites such as Washington, London and Paris during the Algerian massacre crisis of 1997-98. However, in so far as such transcripts remain hidden, and given the extent to which existing accounts, especially those under scrutiny here, rely solely upon open-source content, this possibility must remain in the realm of speculation for now. New archival and declassification work could demonstrate a kind of covert diplomatic initiative against the massacres in Algeria, possible forms of non-state intervention (e.g., international oil companies) or it could just provide further evidence that the key officials in Europe and North America were as confused and apathetic about the massacres as the open-source record already suggests.

the problematizations that reduce Bosnia to a problem, thereby bringing to the fore the necessary concern with ethics, politics, and responsibility'. His ultimate purpose is to 'better appreciate our imbrication in the relationship to the other and invent better political responses attuned to the relationship to the other' (Campbell 1998a: x-xi).

Though an affinity with *National deconstruction* is deeply felt, this study nonetheless emerges as a unique response to the specificities of the way in which Algeria was problematised within, and cross-problematised with, some international security discourses. This study thus takes as its objects of analysis the various ways in which the violence in Algeria was represented as problematic within secondary accounts, whether as a function of the discourse of civil wars, Islamist terrorism, humanitarian intervention or Algeria-specific formulations. Also, the way in which this study approaches problematisation is not through an examination of the ways in which solutions and problems are mutually co-constitutive. Rather, this study is interested in the initial formulation of problems. When we examine these in detail, we often find that explanations are lacking, mechanisms are incomplete and arguments are in need of additional premises to reach their conclusion. Rather than simply note the insufficiency of accounts, another tack is taken here. One of the techniques of analysis deployed in this study is the effort to provide those missing pieces, to supplement. In the process of articulating otherwise immobile arguments we become more aware of what has to be assumed, the productivity of silence and the 'dark matter' of discourse.

Like Said's *Orientalism*, this study is indifferent to the distinction between primary, secondary and tertiary literature on the grounds that all discursive interventions are interventions and discourse nonetheless. As a work of politiography, the primary object of analysis here is not a discursive field or formation but rather select scholarly texts within the genre of late Algerian violence. Though a discursive formation is hailed by this genre and, to a certain extent, reproduced in this study, let it be clear that it is not my intent to represent or to pretend to analyse something on the order of, in the words of Foucault (1972: 26-7; quoted in Lloyd 1986: 260), a 'totality of all effective statements (whether spoken or written)' relating to the violence in Algeria since 1988. The much more modest aim of this study is to criticise certain texts grappling with questions and issue related to the violence in Algeria. Nor is the basis of critique in this study premised upon an attempt

to reconcile texts within the genre and the discursive formation they address. The approach is simpler than that. To problematise the ways in which Algeria's violence was problematised, this study only uses the arguments, evidence and archival logic advanced within the texts under scrutiny. In this way, the method of critique might be considered deconstructive in so far as it attempts to use the texts against themselves.

Neo-pragmatism offers a deconstructive method of analysis by way of three observations from the linguistic turn noted above: all claims can be subject to revision, facts are theory-laden and theories are value-laden. There are, however, at least two limits to what might otherwise been seen as a recipe for semantic anarchy given the contestability of all claims. One might be called the 'natural' limit to which meaning can be altered vis-à-vis other definitions. As noted above, precursors to contemporary neo-pragmatism suggested that while all truths are susceptible to revision or abolition, this cannot happen all at once. For example, chapter four studies the ways in which the term civil war has been contested within its own discourse and in its application to the armed conflict in Algeria. Our ability to question the definition of civil war, however, is only possible when we refuse to question related concepts with equal vigour. In other words, to modify the meaning of civil war is to maintain meaning elsewhere; though its constituent concepts — e.g., nation, state, violence, rebellion — are equally contested, we cannot contest them all at once. More importantly, a deeper, more implicit politics of naming becomes visible within individual concepts when we unpack which terms are fixed, assumed, questioned and ignored in the process of reconfiguring or stabilising meaning.

The other might be called a 'historical' limit. As Nietzsche (1992: 516) noted in a famous parenthesis: 'only that which has no history is definable'. The idea here is that, even if we accept that any claim can be revised, an important condition of its revision will be the ways in which any alteration accepts, modifies or challenges how concepts have been used in the past. It is recognised, at least amongst anti-essentialists, that words gain new meanings and lose older definitions over time. But the process by which this happens is often one of contestation marked by a tension between evolving needs. A prime example is the ways in which the highly contested terms terrorism and terrorist has evolved within changing political environments (see Der Derian 2005). History represents a kind of pull or drag on

meaning whereas the post-11 September 2001 world acts as a force pushing it in new directions.

The idea that 'only that which has no history is definable' also helps reveal a different kind of politics of naming. Politics of naming often refers to the ways in which terms — usually highly politicised terms, like terrorist (Bhatia 2005) or genocide (Mamdani 2007) — are applied inconsistently. This evokes a sense of the political in which politics is the organised hypocrisy manifest in exercises of power, whether as a tool of domination or resistance. An armed group can be simultaneously freedom fighters for some and terrorists for others (or even the same group in the case of the US government's recent relations with Afghanistan). However, politics of naming in this sense assumes that the meaning of the epithet in question is fixed and so the problem resides in the (ab)user's refusal to obey accepted definitions or recognise uncontested essential properties.

This study is keenly interested in examining the politics of naming within secondary accounts of the Algeria conflict, terms such as coup d'état, trigger cause, civil war, *jihād*, insurgent, (state) terrorism, atrocity, humanitarian and Moudjahidin/*Mujāhidīn*. However, this study is not interested in analysing the organised hypocrisy of political naming in scholarship. By politics of naming, this study seeks to examine the ways in which politics are embedded within particular definitions irrespective of their (mis)application. To make a distinction (that is loaded with its own implicit value judgements), this study is not interested in the superficial politics of naming but rather a deep politics of naming. Getting at the political assumptions embedded within acts of naming requires a reverse engineering of sorts. As noted above, neo-pragmatists are only interested in concepts so long as they adequately address the problem assigned to them. This, however, does not mean that concepts are useless until they are given an explicit role. Indeed, neo-pragmatism implies that problematisations are embedded within terms and the ways in which they are being deployed. Where there are problematisations, there is politics. Uncovering the unspoken problematisations contained within the context of how concepts are applied discloses the deep politics inherent in all acts of naming, hypocritical or not. In many ways, this approach is similar to political theorist William Connolly's (1995: 2) idea of the onto-politics of critique: 'Political interpretation is ontopolitical: its fundamental presumptions

fix possibilities, distribute explanatory elements, generate parameters within which an ethic is elaborated, and center (or decenter) assessments of identity, legitimacy, and responsibility' (see also Campbell 2005). The only difference between this study and the texts under examination is this study's ironic awareness of its ontological and political assumptions and effects, whereas the texts under scrutiny here are largely unaware such hidden machinery in their accounts.

In terms of using the 'archival logic' of the text as a method of critique, this means, on the one hand, revisiting as much of the original source material as possible while, on the other hand, examining equally valid sources — validity as determined by the logic of the archive under scrutiny. Though it might seem that this study is based upon an analysis of mass media accounts of the violence in Algeria, that is not the intent here. Media representations of the violence in Algeria —particularly written accounts in the Francophone and Anglophone press — are important to this study because these formed the basis of many secondary accounts, including several under examination here. The deployment of this empirical mode of critique is obvious in two cases: the deconstructions of Kalyvas (1999) in chapter six and Malmvig (2006) in chapter seven. It is also abundantly apparent when we examine the appropriation of Algerian violence by new discourses on civil wars (chapters three and four) that international media accounts have been and remain an important primary source material. This mode of critique, however, becomes extremely difficult in the case of scholarly studies that use interviews, given that the archive cannot be reconstituted unless one is given access to raw transcripts or allowed to re-interview the same or similar subjects. Within the politiography of Algerian violence, such methods were actually quite rare given the ferocity of the violence within the research environment, especially towards foreigners. While there have been recent efforts to develop new field-based data about the violence in Algeria in the last two decades (see Moussaoui 2006 and Belaala 2008), Martinez (1998) is the only extended account that brought significant new empirical knowledge to bear in the 1990s. Yet the critique of launched against Martinez in chapter eight is more analytical; it does not question the reliability of his source material, rather it questions the hypothesis that guided its collection and interpretation.

Given the excessive attention paid to French and English media accounts within the secondary literature on Algerian violence, questions arise as to the exclusion of other

European media, Arabic language press and, of course, Algerian sources. As a critique of the existing literature on the violence in Algeria, this study is certainly in agreement, especially when it comes to the scarcity of Algerian sources within much of the secondary literature. It is worth noting, for example, that only one account of the Algerian massacres makes extensive use of Arabic sources (Hafez 2000 and 2004). However, as a critique of this study, some clarification is in order. This study's various criticisms are not founded in a superior archive of primary sources. Indeed, the majority of attacks launched in this study are not empirical but rather analytical demonstrations of contradictions and insufficiencies within theories and hypotheses. To suggest that this study is based upon a paucity of source material is to misunderstand its approach and aims. If there is a strong criticism to be made of this study, it is its failure to incorporate a reading of relevant secondary works in other European languages (German, Spanish, Italian), Arabic (e.g., Ṭawīl 1998) and especially from Algeria. While there is a case to be made for a kind of slippery slope when it comes to the question of which European languages are most relevant (and then why not Turkish, Persian, Chinese, etc), the failure to engage Arabic and Algerian texts is a problem that must be flagged before moving on. One could argue that, when it comes to the politiography of Algerian violence by Algerian authors based in Algeria, there are few texts comparable to those produced by compatriots working abroad and which receive attention here. It will also become apparent in chapter eight that the questions addressed in this study are impeded by inconsistently applied constraints in Algeria, both formal (in terms of government censorship) and informal (in terms of socio-political discourse). More importantly, though, this study seeks to maintain a distinction — however problematic, unstable and dangerous — between externally produced representations of Algeria and those internally produced. Given this study's interest in the relationships between conditions of representability and conditions of intervenability, it is thus interested in the production of representations within the locations from which intervention would ostensibly be launched or disabled. That, therefore, gives us reason to attend to a limited number of sites of discursive production.

To help supplement the empirical or 'archival' critique, this study thus draws upon a personal collection of over 800 news items, mainly retrieved from the Nexis database (see bibliography for details). These mostly consist of articles and transcripts (radio and

television) in English and French. Collection began in 2003 for a project that examined how the Algerian massacres were portrayed in the New York Times, contextualised in terms of all the articles related to Algeria produced between 1990 and 2003 (according to the New York Times index), and supplemented with other prominent US and UK news outlets for comparison. An analysis was produced for a conference in 2007 (see Mundy 2007a) though never formally published so far. That summer, work began on a comprehensive database of all acts of political violence recorded on the Nexis database, coded for time, place, perpetrator, victim and kind of violence. Due to the quickly inflating time commitment that project required and subsequent changes in the design of this study, I was only able to complete the years 1991 through 1994. Nonetheless, it has served as a useful reference tool throughout the production of this study, particularly for chapters three and four. A more manageable database related specifically to Algerian massacre events, coded for time, place, number of victims and context, was constructed using data produced in the studies by Aït-Larbi *et al.* (1999), Kalyvas (1999) Sidhoum and Algeria Watch (2003a) and. It was supplemented with massacre lists produced in the media (see Table 2).

Lastly, this study is deeply, though indirectly, informed by a nine-month research visit to Algeria originally premised on the intent to study Algeria's foreign relations and national reconciliation during the first two terms of the current President, Abdelaziz Bouteflika. However, as my interests shifted to the more controversial issues of violence in the 1990s and my philosophical outlook became increasingly antagonistic towards the theoretical and methodological underpinning of my original research design, it became ethically untenable for me to use any of the primary data I collected. Indeed, it was my conflicted encounters with Algeria's proud nationalist heritage and the non-governmental organisations that advocate for victims' rights — whether victims of state terror or the terror of armed groups — that prompted me to rethink my attitude towards questions of violence and intervention, whether at the level of armed humanitarian invasion or my own intervention as a foreign researcher. This study, however, does make minor use of information — news clippings and photos — collected in the public archive of the Algeria's largest circulation Francophone daily, El Watan.

Overview

The organisation of this study is more topical than chronological. The way in which the following chapters are chronological is mostly in the fact that the first main chapter (three) deals with the escalation of armed violence in Algeria and the last chapter (eight) offers a bookend in the form of a brief discussion of Algeria's recent national reconciliation efforts a decade later. Chapters five, six and seven address the international debate surrounding Algerian violence during the middle period, at the height of the massacres in late 1997 and early 1998. That leaves chapter four, which picks up the debate raised in chapter three but addresses the politics of naming Algeria's violence a civil war across the entirety of the 1990s and into the early 2000s. It is this loose chronological unfolding that largely governs the ordering of the chapters. Each chapter in this study could stand, more or less, autonomously from the others, in so far as they could be read in any given order, though keeping in mind that some chapters can form a couplet when read sequentially (i.e., chapters three and four, five and six).

As the goal of this study is to deconstruct particular — though arguably the most dominant — problematisations of the violence in Algeria, the title of each chapter hints at the issue that will be addressed. Chapter three, however, is the most misleading in its title because it does not discuss the evolution of democratic practices in 1990s Algeria. Rather, it attends to the ways in which democracy, amongst other claims, was presented as an explanation for the outbreak of mass violence. More generally, chapter three examines the politics of naming and theorising causation, particularly the contentions surrounding the proximate causes and deeper conditions of the violence. It begins by questioning political problematisations of the violence, particularly those that locate the organising logic of the conflict's trigger exclusively in issues of political grievances related to government and power sharing, and so posit the violence's proximate causation in a specific political event or a delimited series of them. After excavating the inadequate accounts of the conflict's activation and highlighting the apparent failure of political initiatives to end the conflict, this study then delves into efforts to locate the permissive conditions of Algeria's violence in the bleak socio-economic picture in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Questioning the unstable boundary that separates political from economic causation, this study then highlights the limited effect economic initiatives also had when it came to the amelioration

of the violence. Delving more deeply into the generic literature on the economic causes of internal wars, we also find a paradoxical attitude towards the role of rebel agency and an inexplicable indifference towards the agency of the state. This chapter ends by noting the disparity between such macro-level accounts of civil war violence and the often opposed logics of violence at the micro-level. Resolving this agent-structure impasse, however, would require a prioritisation of the ethical and political over the historical and ontological, a theme that will be taken up again in the final conclusion.

Chapter four initially frames the Algerian conflict in terms of the allegedly unprecedented proliferation of intra-national armed conflicts at the end of the Cold War, which were often described as being qualitatively different from previous episodes of civil war. Explicating the new discourse on civil wars and the New Wars discourse, briefly mentioned in chapter three, consumes the opening efforts of this chapter. The objective of this is to understand the ways in which the new science of civil wars constitute their object of study along the dimensions of space, time, identity and practice. The resultant construction of the conflict in Algeria as a civil war, generally viewed as unproblematic, is contrasted with the domestic and international politics of naming Algeria's violence since 1992 a civil war, in which the use of that term was debated. This contestation is most acute when we consider the vehement rejection of this label by some of the most dedicated academic observers of Algerian politics. The point of this chapter, however, is not to reconcile these two camps; it is rather to show the ways in which concepts of civil war, whether explicit or implicit, determine their object of analysis. This chapter ends by considering whether or not the New Wars approach offers a way out, only to argue that such thinking should serve as a basis for a critique of rather than as a new ontology of war. In the final conclusion of this study, the problematiques and prospects for such a critique will be addressed.

The next three chapters deal more specifically with the period of the Algerian conflict that saw the most intense and recurrent massacre activity, from roughly mid 1997 through 1998. Though massacres had been witnessed in Algeria with increasing frequency in late 1996 and continued through the early years of the Bouteflika Presidency, it was a handful of mass civilian killing episodes — Raïs, Béni Messous, Bentalha, Relizane, Sidi Hamed — over the course of six months (August 1997 to January 1998) that became a crisis point in international dealings with the Algerian conflict. Chapter five's foray into this period

begins with a retelling of some of the horrific accounts to emerge from the massacres within major international press outlets in late 1997 and early 1998, so as to establish them as veritable atrocities. It then returns to the question of how to interpret acts of mass violence, especially when authorial intent is unclear or highly disputed. First, this chapter outlines the scope of the massacres — depending on the threshold used or implied — and then details the most prevalent hypotheses of the massacres' political logic and agency. These disparate theses of the Algerian massacres located their rationale in Islamist (non)ideology, guerrilla strategy, intra-insurgent rivalry, the brute authoritarianism of the state, a non-traditional counter-insurgency strategy, internal divisions within the regime, localised and privatised disputes, cynical economic interests or the general fog of war at all social levels. While the massacres' *Qui tue?* debate spawned a number of incompatible hypotheses, they nonetheless shared a tendency towards a reductionist view of the relationship between identity and violence (to know the killers or the rationale was to know the other), and also a tendency towards totalising logic (all massacres, by virtue of being a massacre, held the same rationale).

Chapter six begins by foregrounding the ways in which the violence in 1990s Algeria was used to contextualise the events of 11 September 2001. Appropriations of the Algerian massacres within the discourses of the 'war on terror' and trans-national Islamism, whether at the level of quotidian media representation or more erudite academic studies, often laid claim to a definitive narrative of the atrocities in Algeria problematised in chapter five. This narrative claims that the GIA had been the sole author of the massacres, though, as noted in chapter five and shown in chapter eight, this has not been definitively established by either the media or scholarship before 11 September 2001 or afterwards. Noting the post-Cold War debates about the role of identity in the generation of violence (i.e., identity causes violence), chapter five examines the failure of any serious study to obtain its objectives of providing an account of the agents behind the major massacres and their motivation. This is mainly accomplished by unearthing the fatal presumptions within several accounts of the massacres, but chapter six also deploys a rigorous analysis of the most cited effort to establish insurgents as the agents of the massacres. In the end, chapter six concludes by wondering whether or not it is violence, rather than identity, that holds the balance of agency in our efforts to understand the practices of mass killing. Together, chapters five and six also provide important background to the international debates

surrounding the massacres and the calls for intervention they precipitated, which come into focus in chapter seven.

Having exposed the insufficiencies in various efforts to account for the causes, conditions and proper categorisation of the violence in Algeria, as well as the failure to construct a viable understanding of the massacres, chapter seven examines the international response to the violence in Algeria at the height of the killing in 1997 and early 1998. First, it backgrounds the international practice of armed humanitarian intervention and related discourses, particularly those that seem ignorant of the potential role Algeria might play in their analysis. Second, it establishes the fact that Algeria was considered a major international humanitarian problem at the height of the massacres, whether in international media representations or in the rhetoric of foreign officials and politicians. Third, it examines the 'interventions' that took place in 1998 — the diplomatic initiatives and multilateral efforts that sought to understand the violence in Algeria. Lastly, chapter seven dissects the only sustained effort to make sense of the international response to the violence in Algeria. What presents itself as a demonstration of the spatial contingency of sovereignty can also be read as an argument for the contingency of intervention that makes neither reference to political will nor moral obligation but rather the contingency of representation. What we find is that humanitarian intervention was simultaneously enabled and disabled by the 'unprecedented' Algerian violence whose authorship was being represented as contradictory, contested, multifarious or undetermined. The theme of contingency, combined with a call for a more ironic politiography, is brought back into the final conclusion of this study to critique efforts to establish an abstract normative framework for armed humanitarian intervention.

The final chapter in this study turns away from the specific debates surrounding the massacres and returns to the general question of violence in 1990s Algeria. The ways that history have been deployed in the pursuit of an understanding of Algeria's recent violence is the topic of this chapter. It begins by offering a cursory look at the only public 'inquiry' into the violence and the massacres, one that highlights the historical and international terrains of later Algerian violence: a 2002 defamation trial held in a French court pitting former Algerian Defence Minister Major-général Khaled Nezzar against Habib Souaïdia, an Algerian officer who published a memoir of his military service during the 1990s that

detailed a number of abuses committed by the armed forces, including a massacre. This trial is worth describing because the outcome was inconclusive in terms of settling the *Qui tue?* debate; it thus raises serious questions about previous and subsequent efforts to construct authoritative accounts of the violence in Algeria based on the available evidence. Furthermore, the trial raised provocative questions about the role of history in the explanation of violence. During the Algerian conflict of the 1990s, the claim of historical precedent — mainly, Algeria's violent colonization by France and the vicious war of decolonization — was often cited as the sole explanation for Algeria's armed conflict. Rather than taking a position within this debate, this chapter instead examines the politics of naming, whether intentional or implied, in the historicisation — i.e., (de)colonization — of recent Algerian violence. Rather than treat historicisation as an unquestioned good, this chapter concludes by examining the way in which historicisation, as problematisation, is political before it can be descriptive and analytical. Given the convergence of history and politics in Algeria, and so historiography and politiography of late Algerian violence, the final conclusion to this study makes the case for more self-aware and more politically explicit discursive and practical interventions.

2. Literature Review

The representation of violence

New civil wars

This study engages with two bodies of generic literature in the field of international security. The first can broadly be described as the new civil war literature, which mainly comes under scrutiny in chapters three and four. The study of civil war is traced as far back to Thucydides in the European tradition of political thought, though the recent surge of interest in this phenomenon is remarkable. The extent to which this literature is 'new' stems from two factors. First, the appropriation and deployment of rational choice theory and quantitative methodologies — techniques associated with the study of economic thought applied to conflict-oriented large sample datasets — has featured prominently within these new accounts of civil wars. Also, they result, in part, from the apparent spike in episodes of intra-national armed violence near the end of the Cold War. This new literature often traces its origins to a series of papers authored by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (Collier & Hoeffler 1998; Collier & Hoeffler 1999; Collier & Hoeffler 2000), though there was already growing interest in the study of civil wars in the 1990s (Licklider 1993b; Brown 1996). This literature largely came in response to the suggestion that the disappearance of Cold War constraints had unleashed a wave of intra-national conflicts based upon identity claims. Rather than post-Cold War religious or ethnic conflicts, the new civil war studies argued that economic conditions were far more determinant (Keen 1998; Elbadawi & Sambanis 2000). Nor were some of these studies convinced that the civil wars of the 1990s represented an unprecedented wave; their results suggested the number of civil wars had been accumulating since at least the 1970s (Fearon & Laitin 2003). The debated mechanisms driving civil war were likewise considered to be mainly economic rather than political, religious or ethnic; also known as the greed (loot-seeking) versus grievance (justice-seeking) debate (Berdal & Malone 2000; Collier 2000; Kalyvas 2001; Ballentine & Sherman 2003; Sambanis 2004a; Arnson & Zartman 2005; Regan & Norton 2005). Other factors promoting the possibility of civil war were found in the kind

and level of exports (Le Billon 2001; Fearon & Laitin 2003; Ross 2004; Fearon 2005; Collier & Hoeffler 2005; Humphreys 2005; Ron 2005; Brunnschweiler & Bulte 2009), particularly the question of 'lootable' — i.e., easy to circulate — resources like diamonds (Lujala *et al.* 2005). The conditions that prolonged, shortened or brought civil wars to an end have been researched (Licklider 1995; Collier, Hoeffler & Söderbom 2001; Ohlson 2008), as have the kinds of political regimes that lend themselves to internal war (Henderson & Singer 2000; Lacina 2006; Vreeland 2008). However, only a small number of researchers have applied this approach to the study of the Algerian conflict: Abdelaziz Testas (2001; 2002c), Miriam Lowi (2005) and an unpublished paper by James Fearon and David Laitin (2006).

At about roughly the same time as the emergence of the greed-and-grievance approach, another group of theorists took an alternative approach, positing the idea that the seemingly intra-national mass armed conflicts of the 1990s were in fact a new ontology of war. The most influential and controversial of these accounts has been Mary Kaldor's 1999 work *New and old wars: organized violence in a global era* (see Kaldor 2007; Kaldor & Vashee 1997). There were arguably close precursors to Kaldor (Edward 1988; Holsti 1996; Snow 1996; Gray 1997) and contemporaries working similar terrains (Duffield 1998; Duffield 2001; Shaw 2003). Elaborations and revisions soon followed (Jung 2003; Münkler 2005; Kaldor 2005) but the new war thesis seemed to prompt more criticism than model building (Kalyvas 2001; Henderson & Singer 2002; Hegre 2004; Newman 2004; Duyvesteyn & Angstrom 2005; Melander *et al.* 2009).

Where are we to locate Algeria within these theories and debates? Both chapter three and four represent a deliberate departure from the traditional methods of civil war analysis; indeed, the goal is not to analyse Algeria as a civil war but to analyse how Algeria is analysed as a civil war. In chapter three, which deals with the politics of naming and the problematisation of causation, this study highlights some of the ways in which the new civil war studies produce their object of analysis through certain theoretical assumptions. In other words, it examines how accounts of causation put forward in the dominant econometric civil war models make possible their own exclusive interpretation of the conditions of mass armed political violence. This is juxtaposed against the more superficial politics of naming involved in the attempt to assign proximate causality to specific events,

in that they both must construct the causality they claim to find by de-contextualising the contingency of events. Similarly, in chapter four, the politics of naming Algeria a civil war is examined against a more extensive reading of the ways in which the new civil war studies are internally divided over the precise definition of the very phenomenon they claim to analyse. This lack of consistency within the paradigm's organising concept is then mapped over discussion of how Algeria accepts, evades or denies the applicability of the various criteria used to identify civil wars as such. By way of conclusion, chapter four discusses whether or not the intellectual resources provided by new war theorists can address the lacunas and over-determinations of Neoliberal approaches. Given that the warrant for new war theories is observation based, rather than reflecting political or ethical concerns, this study is sceptical that any such approach will offer an alternative.

The Islamification of violence

As will be argued in chapter three, the violence in Algeria following the resignation of President Bendjedid in January 1992 was initially difficult to represent. The appearance of a 'war' in Algeria was not sudden or immediately obvious in the year 1992, a year many observers cite as the conflict's first ('back-coding', in the terminology of the new civil war studies). Though there were increasing acts of political murder and violent state repression in 1992 and 1993 (not to mention 1991), the 'crisis' in Algeria — a common euphemism (e.g., Leca 1995) — often produced ambiguous and ambivalent readings. A specific discourse of an Algerian armed conflict was only able to mature as the mortality rates seemingly skyrocketed in 1994. It was not until 1995 that the violence, the widespread violence began to be addressed as a 'war' in some academic circles (e.g., Leveau 1995; Stora 1995).

Various problematisations have been offered to account for the violence, from politics, to economics, to the socio-cultural, to history, to identity and religion. Indeed, representations of Islam were seen as inescapable in discussions of the Algerian conflict, even if attempts were made to argue against problematising the violence as such. Such efforts were, however, dwarfed by the post-11 September 2001 appropriation of Algerian violence within the new discourse on Islam and terrorism (e.g., Lewis 2003; Cook 2005; Gerges 2005; Wiktorowicz 2005; Kepel 2006; Ayoob 2008; Tibi 2008). In more Algeria specific

accounts, significant attention has been given to the Islamist movement, whether in terms of accounting for conflict's etiology, as a narrative framing device or as a perceived threat to European and North American interests (Phillips 1995; Labat 1995; Martinez 1995; Shirley 1995; Fuller 1996; Willis 1997; Ṭawīl 1998; Wiktorowicz 2001; Mokeddem 2002; Takeyh 2003; Boukra 2002; Chasdi 2002: chapter three; Martinez 2003; Boumezbar & Djamila 2002; Willis 2006; Martinez 2007; Ashour 2008; Belaala 2008; Boubeker 2008; Roberts 2008). Whether or not various observers blamed religion generally or Islam specifically for the armed conflict in Algeria, chapter six attempts to establish the conditions under which particular readings of the 1997-98 massacres, ones that assigned Islamist agency to those acts, were possible. Amongst several permissive conditions (e.g., contested narratives and inaccessible spaces of violence), chapter six also notes that the concept of identity was allowed, as is often the case, to overcompensate vis-à-vis indeterminacy and contention. Yet this chapter also shows how the horrific violence of the massacres obtained agency itself and so challenged many observers to inscribe it into some form of identity.

Islam, of course, was not the only way in which the violence in Algeria was represented and problematised. Identity (Lloyd 2003; Hill 2009) and national culture (Carlier 1995; Carlier 1999; Martinez 1998; Martinez 2000a) often played central expository and explanatory roles; even a psycho-social account of the rebellion was attempted (Crenshaw 1994). Without painting a picture of mutual exclusivity, there were also observers who tended towards the political over the economic and vice versa. Economic problematisations of the violence (see chapter three), often explicitly related to claims of the Algerian state's dependence upon hydrocarbons, found voice (Aïssaoui 2001; Sari 2001; Testas 2001; Testas 2002a; Testas 2002b; Testas 2002c; Joffé 2002; Lowi 2004; Lowi 2005; Lowi 2009; Addi 2006; Sandbakken 2006; Dillman 2007). Others pointed to more specific socio-economic factors like demographics (Sutton 2001; Kouaouci 2004), unemployment (Testas 2004a) and food security (Zaimeche & Sutton 1998). The emphasis of more politically oriented interpretations of the violence's etiology frequently deployed a narrative of a failed, stalled, uneven or evolving democratic transition in Algeria (Addi 1995; Zoubir 1995; Quandt 1998; Volpi 2003; Martinez 2004; Heristchi 2004; Entelis 2005; Hafez 2005; Zoubir 2005; Volpi 2006; Guumlney & Ccedilelenk 2007; Cavatorta 2009). Others have approached the problem of Algerian violence from an analysis of the

regime's internal politics (Addi 1998; Roberts 2003; Mortimer 2006; Werenfels 2007). The confluence of political and economic factors has also been seen in the application of the failed state discourse to Algeria (Zoubir 1994; Layachi 1995) or, in the words of Réda Bensmaïa (1997: 93) 'a society that had lost all hierarchical social and political markers', in the sense that political institutions had failed them.

Some observers have taken the approach of using narrative political history to draw out the factors of violence behind the conflict in 1990s Algeria within the context of colonial and/or post-colonial Algeria (Malley 1996; Stone 1997; Derradji 2002; Evans & Phillips 2008; Hill 2009); simply presented narrative political histories of Algeria that include the 1990s (Stora 2001a; Ruedy 2005); or expressed scepticism towards such projects (McDougall 2005). Indeed, chapter eight, in the context of exploring Algeria's 'post-conflict' national reconciliation efforts, is primarily concerned with the ways in which Algeria's history is used to explain Algeria's violence. Some authors, but unfortunately very few, have looked at the conflict from a gendered perspective; mostly this has taken the form of attempts to analyse the effects of the violence upon Algerian women's lives (Lazreg 1994: chapter eleven; Skilbeck 1995; Moghadam 2001; Turshen 2002; Turshen 2004; Cheriet 2004). Though political, economic and historical factors might be salient, Moussaoui (1998; 2006) approaches the question of Algeria's violence from a self-described 'anthropological' point of view that takes ideational, spatial and practical issues as particularly informative.

Much of this study's critique of the new civil war literature is based upon the debates surrounding the large number of civilian massacres in Algeria. These massacres, particularly the largest ones between April 1997 and January 1998, are also at the centre of this study's analysis of the heightened interventionary rhetoric surrounding Algeria at that time. Chapters five and six, in particular, discuss and analyse the various hypotheses put forward to account for these massacres as a distinct ontology within the general field of violence of the broader armed conflict. Among the most sustained attempts to understand the massacres, scholars Gilles Kepel (2006: chapter eleven), Mohammed Hafez (2000; 2004), Lies Boukra (2002) and Salma Belaala (2008: chapter six) register as key interlocutors. Mainly their efforts offer an account through the religious aspects of the insurgency's discourse and practice. These readings stand in contrast to the more secular

analysis of the massacres (Bedjaoui *et al.* 1999; Kalyvas 1999). These two accounts come to opposing conclusions as to the identity of the massacres' perpetrators and logics driving them. Kalyvas (1999) analyses insurgent strategy, an approach that has been used elsewhere (Miller 2000). In a paper subsequent to his major monograph (Martinez 1998), Luis Martinez (2001) addressed the issue of the massacres head-on but refused to assign responsibility for the killings, instead opting to contextualise them domestically and internationally, and then analyse their political effects in both fields. In other words, Martinez maps out some of the terrain of the massacres' *Qui tue?* debate but refrains from making a strong intervention towards an answer to that question. The massacres have also been the subject of provocative memoirs published in France (Yous & Mellah 2000; Souaïdia 2001) and reflections by Algerian journalists (Charef 1998; Belloula 2000). Anthropologist Tassadit Yacine explored some of the possible historical roots of the massacres (Yacine 1999). The persistent *Qui tue?* discourse of the massacres has even been studied as an aspect of a specific Algerian penchant for conspiracy theorising (Silverstein 2002). The insights and deficiencies of all these approaches are analysed in chapters five and six (see Mundy 2009 for a more thorough critique, particularly focused on Kalyvas 1999).

The violence of representation

The second body of generic literature this study engages is the recent literature on armed humanitarian intervention. This is mainly addressed in chapter seven, though chapters five and six provide substantive background to the story of the humanitarianisation of the Algerian conflict. Like the literature on civil wars, the study of humanitarian intervention claims substantial a pedigree; seventeenth century legal scholar Hugo Grotius is often cited as principle original theorist. Since 1990, literally hundreds of books, chapters, articles and reports have been published on this topic (for starters, see Chopra & Weiss 1992; Lyons & Mastanduno 1995; Bailey 1996; Weiss & Collins 2000; Wheeler 2000; Holzgrefe & Keohane 2003; Chandler 2006; Weiss 2007; Barnett & Weiss 2008; Bass 2008). One of most common problems addressed in these studies, including Helle Malmvig's (2006) study of Algeria, is the alleged clash of norms inherent in the practice of armed humanitarian intervention: the norms of sovereignty versus humanitarian norms. Chapter

seven notes the overlap and cross-pollination between the literature on intervention and the literature on civil wars (Little 1975; Bull 1984; Regan 1996; Elbadawi, Sambanis 2000; Regan 2002; Balch-Lindsay *et al.* 2008; Misra 2008; Regan *et al.* 2009). The fact that Algeria is not considered in the literature on (humanitarian) intervention can be dismissed if we accept that we should only examine interventions when they take place. However, if we recognize that Algeria can be represented as a case of threatened intervention, then new possibilities arise.

Rarely has the question of intervention been treated in studies of the international response to the conflict in Algeria. While there are numerous texts devoted to the questions of identity and violence in Algeria in the 1990s, there are fewer that examine the evolving reactions of foreign governments to the crisis following the events of early 1992. The extent to which the violence in Algeria was co-constitutive of the international reaction to it is apparent in the numerous efforts to understand the international reaction, whether from more descriptive and analytical points of view (do Céu Pinto 1998; Darbouche & Zoubir 2009) or a policy-oriented normative outlooks (Gera 1995; Pierre & Quandt 1996). Other studies of international aspect of the Algerian conflict have taken the approach of analysing Algeria's foreign policy (Zoubir 2004), the policies of the French government (Sadiki 1995; Provost 1996; Spencer 1998a; Abi-Mershed 1999; Morisse-Schilbach 1999; Bonora-Waisman 2003), the US government (Mortimer 1995; Dillman 2001; Zoubir 2002; Testas 2004b), the United Nations (Spencer 1998b) and the European Union (Rich 1998; Roberts 2002a). Framings include the international approach to the question of democratisation (Akacem 2005; Cavatorta 2009) and — as addressed in chapter eight — national reconciliation (Martinez 2000b; Hadj Moussa 2004; Aggad 2005; Arnould 2007; Moussaoui 2007; Joffé 2008). Comparable with this study, questions of representation generally (Stora 2001b, see chapter eight) or critiques of media representations specifically (Slisli 2000) have been raised elsewhere. However, Malmvig's (2006) work is the most sustained attempt to understand the relationship between representations of Algeria's violence and the international response to it (see below).

Contemporary humanitarian framing, as will be discussed in chapter seven, often has the effect, if not the intent, of attempting to override the politics of a conflict in the name of alleviating the suffering of non-combatants or interrupting episodes of asymmetric mass

violence. Rather than the sometimes more urgent humanitarian framing, some chose the language of human rights to problematise the international response to the conflict in Algeria (Schwarz 2002; Zoubir & Bouandel 1998b). Not to mention the voluminous literature produced by human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Reporters sans frontières, Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme (see, e.g., Reporters sans frontières 1995; Reporters sans frontières *et al.* 1997) and other smaller human rights NGOs. Humanitarian framing, however, was actually quite rare in the studies of the Algerian conflict, even at the height of the massacres in 1997 and 1998. One reason for this is the brevity of the humanitarian window in Algeria, which lasted a mere six months, between the massacre of Raïs in August 1997 and Sidi Hamed in January 1998. As the massacres quickly shrank in their intensity and frequency, so too did international interest and thus its willingness to get directly involved. The logistic constraints of academic publishing certainly retarded any rapid textual intervention during such a relatively small window (e.g., Meynier 2000), outside of the commentary of scholars in the mass media (see chapter five and six for examples). Or, volumes were coincidentally published at the height of the violence that had been written months or years before (e.g., Grandguillaume 1998). More importantly, though, was the refusal of many observers of the Algerian conflict to adopt a humanitarian framing, either because they (subconsciously) did not think it applied or because they saw it as counterproductive to ending Algeria's violence. A 1998 collection of essays in the *Cambridge review of international affairs* (Bennison 1998; Zoubir & Bouandel 1998a; Rich 1998; Adamson 1998; Rupesinghe 1998; Benyamina 1998; Roberts 1998) is an example of both. Though proposed at the height of the massacres in late 1997, the collection appeared too late to make a direct intervention into the humanitarianisation of the Algerian crisis, except perhaps to encourage its further recession. Indeed, the contribution of Hugh Roberts is quite clear in its rejection of the humanitarian framing (*ibid.*: 238). Roberts would later reaffirm his assessment that international intervention was ill advised because it would merely exacerbate the Algerian conflict (Roberts 2001). In a collection of essays published under the auspices of *Médecins sans frontières*, Chawki Amari (2004) likewise expressed concern about whether or not humanitarian action in Algeria will be helpful or even possible given the alleged depth of nationalist sentiment. Even Amnesty International (1997), one of the groups leading the calls for international action to stop the violence in

Algeria, remained within the human rights framing of the issue, suggested the extent to which exclusively or predominantly humanitarian representations were contested.

As noted above, questions of representation and intervention have been most thoroughly addressed in Malmvig 2006. Malmvig's approach to articulating the sovereignty/intervention problematique and the Algerian and Kosovo crises is draws from the work of R.B.J. Walker (1993), Jens Bartelson (1995) and, most importantly, Cynthia Weber (1995). Despite some philosophical and methodological affinities between Malmvig's study and this one, her objectives are (1) to construct a narrative of the internationalisation of the Algerian conflict and, from it, (2) to demonstrate the spatial contingency of sovereignty by understanding the reasons for the non-intervention in Algeria versus the intervention in former Yugoslavia vis-à-vis the 1999 Kosovo crisis. This study, on the other hand, questions the theoretical assumptions of Malmvig's study regarding the nature of sovereignty and also highlights her empirical over-dependence upon problematic and elite French representations of the conflict. Indeed, it is argued that Malmvig's account has not so much demonstrated the spatial contingency of sovereignty but vividly demonstrated, within the logic of its own narrative and theoretical assumptions, the contingency of intervention given certain representations of atrocity and precedents of (in)action.

3. Democracy

In the final quarter of the twentieth century, over two-dozen governments underwent reforms that allowed for more popular constraints to be placed upon state power. Algeria often appears — if it appears at all — as a tragic footnote in this narrative of democracy's 'third wave' (Huntington 1991: 12). Year zero in Algeria's tale of failed democratisation is often begins in October 1988, when widespread riots were violently repressed by the Algerian military. The disturbances appeared to erupt on 4 October, widely reported in response to new government austerity measures; demonstrations continued for several days and spread from the capital throughout the country. On 8 October, soldiers from the national army fired on crowds in several major cities. Nearly a week later, the unofficial death toll was suspected to be 200[1]; over 3,700 had been detained.[2] Reacting to the turmoil, President Bendjedid announced plans for reforms and won a third term that December. A new constitution secured passage by popular referendum in February 1989. Among the nearly fifty political parties that subsequently formed, the FIS quickly emerged in March 1989. Algeria also witnessed the return of exiles and the emergence of dozens of new media outlets. Social discontent, however, continued to express itself in reports of smaller scale demonstrations, strikes and riots in locations across the country.

With sixty percent turnout, local elections on 12 June 1990 saw the FIS win over half (853) of Algeria's 1,535 municipalities and two thirds (thirty two) of its forty eight prefectures. The former sole political party, the Front de libération nationale (FLN), came in second, winning 487 councils and fourteen prefectures.[3] Elections for the national legislature were announced in April 1991 and scheduled for 27 June. Protesting new electoral laws instituted ahead of the national vote and the lack of a timetable for presidential elections, the FIS called for a general strike at the end of May. When confrontations with security forces resulted in the death of several protestors, the government postponed the elections and instituted a state of emergency on 5 June. After temporarily suspending the strike, the

---

[1] 'Chronology July 16, 1988 – October 15, 1988', Middle East Journal 43(1), Winter 1989: 87.
[2] 'Chronology October 16, 1988 – January 15, 1989', Middle East Journal 43(2), Spring 1989: 263.
[3] 'Chronology April 16, 1990 – July 15, 1990', Middle East Journal 44(4), Autumn 1990: 683.

FIS supported new demonstrations, demanding legislative and presidential elections. Scores died in the June clashes and several hundred were detained, though the FIS and rights groups claimed several thousand. The government began cracking down on the FIS leadership when Madani Abassi, then leader of the party, apparently raised the spectre of *jihād* during speech that month.[4] Though the state of emergency was lifted in late September, government repression of the FIS continued (e.g., officials were arrested, publications shut down, offices raided). At the end of October, Bendjedid finally announced legislative elections, to take place on 26 December. Even with Abassi and his deputy, Ali Benhadj, still in jail, the FIS announced its participation in the elections on 15 December and staged a rally of some 100,000 supporters a week later. A week after the vote, over 130,000 Algerians marched on 2 January to call on the government to protect democracy by cancelling the second round of elections.[5]

As with the results of the 1990 municipal and provincial elections, the FIS dominated the December 1991 national elections, winning 188 seats out of 430 total. The Front des forces socialistes (FFS) and FLN came in second and third respectively. With official figures suggesting roughly sixty percent turnout, the FIS had garnered support from a quarter of the electorate. Yet reports of fraud and irregularities put as many as thirty percent of the seats in question.[6] A runoff vote for the 199 undecided seats was scheduled for 16 January. President Bendjedid, however, resigned on 11 January. Having dissolved the legislature on 4 January, Bendjedid's replacement, as mandated by Algeria's constitution, the Speaker of the Parliament, was a vacant post. Next in line, Abdelmalek Benhabilès, head of the Constitutional Council, did not take the post. Thus a six-member[7] *ad hoc* body, the *Haut Conseil de Sécurité* (HCS) took the reins of government on 12 January and cancelled further elections, both legislative and presidential. The HCS gave way to the *Haut Comité d'État* (HCE) on 14 January, which would be chaired by Mohammed Boudiaf until the end

---

[4] Georges Marion, 'Algérie : le retour au calme', Le Monde, 8 July 1991.
[5] 'Chronology October 16, 1991 – January 15, 1992, Middle East Journal 46(2), Spring 1992: 303.
[6] 'Chronology October 16, 1991 – January 15, 1992, Middle East Journal 46(2), Spring 1992: 303.
[7] Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali, Defense Minister General Khaled Nezzar, Chief of Staff Abdelmalek Guenaïzia, Interior Minister General Larbi Belkhir, Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi and Justice Minister Hamdani Benkhelil. Members of this group, particularly those in the militiary (Nezzar, Belkhir and Guenaïzia), would become known as the *janvièristes*.

of Bendjedid's third mandate (i.e., December 1993).[8] Algeria's Supreme Court provided its imprimatur to the HCE two days later. When interim president Mohamed Boudiaf was assassinated that June, as many as one hundred civilians, security forces and armed opposition fighters had died in the violence. A year later, ten times as many were reportedly killed. At the end of the decade, the figure 100,000 had received widespread support, notably from President Bouteflika.[9]

Contrary to its title, this chapter is not about democracy. Democracy, rather, was one of the more prominent themes within the discourse on the causes of the violence in Algeria, whether found in claims of democracy's denial or claims of democracy's safeguarding. The causes that led to the violence Algeria has endured since early 1992 have indeed been widely debated. At one level, this chapter describes some of the politics of naming the causes of Algeria's violence, the various contingencies and conditions that have been put forward and denied in efforts to explain the armed conflict. At a deeper level, however, this chapter problematises various problematisations of Algeria's violence, whether as the effect of specific trigger events or the possible outcome of underlying socio-economic factors. In both cases, the problem-solution dyad is put into question by the failure of policies that privileged either deterministic political or probabilistic economic understandings of violence's cause. This chapter will also question the line often drawn between putatively economic and political causes by demonstrating the arbitrariness of such delineations. Looking more closely at economic models of civil war causation, we find that they are also internally undermined by two features: a contradictory attitude towards rebel motivation and an exclusive focus upon insurgents as the sole locus of causal agency at the expense of considering the actions of incumbents and the conditions of state repression. After identifying this series of destabilising features within the prevailing models of civil war causation, particularly the ways in which structures are arbitrarily conceived and overbearingly implemented, a bottom-up approach to understanding civil war violence is contemplated but suspended until the final conclusion of this study.

---

[8] Also on the Council was General Nezzar (Defence Minister), Ali Kafi (secretary-general of the *Organisation nationale des Moudjahidine*), Ali Haroun (recent Human Rights Minister) and Tedjini Haddam (rector of the Paris Mosque).
[9] See the following chapter for a discussion of these fatality statistics.

The politics of causation

Years after the Algerian government declared a state of emergency, there is still
widespread contestation amongst participants, victims, bystanders and observers — both
foreign and domestic — as to the precise moment or sequence that sparked the conflict.
Proposals sometimes suggest a singular event; others cite an ensemble of incidents,
decisions, reactions, accidents and consequences, whether working independently,
interactively or consecutively. Regardless of whatever cultural, social, economic and
political conditions were underwriting the possibility of mass armed violence in the late
1980s and early 1990s, the series of events in January 1992 has become a popular starting
point in narratives of the conflict's proximate causes . Designating the precise mechanisms
that translate the specific events of January 1992 into armed conflict is, however, fraught
with contestation. One route might suggest that we can identity the conflict's trigger by
noting that the levels of violence in Algeria increased considerably after the 14 January
HCS 'coup'. Therefore these actions triggered the conflict. Putting aside the question of
fallacious argumentation (*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*), such a construction also has the
burden of unpacking qualifiers such as 'considerably'. First is the implicit comparison
between pre-January 1992 levels of violence and those post-January 1992, which, in the
case of the former, tended to come in the form of confrontations between protestors and
security forces. While contemporary domestic and international news reports detail
fatalities resulting from demonstrations and clashes (as many as 103 deaths by the end of
February 1992[10]), significant acts of anti-government violence were relatively rare in 1992
when compared to 1993 and 1994. The two most infamous episodes in 1992 were a raid on
the Port of Algiers (13 February), which allegedly signalled the birth of the insurgency,
and a bombing at the Algiers airport (26 August), which indicated the rebellion's apparent
willingness to attack so called soft targets. Violent interactions between government forces
and armed groups were otherwise sparse in 1992; on average, less than one per week. By
the end of the year, estimates of the number of casualties ranged between 130 and 350. In
no recorded episode had more than a dozen casualties — insurgents, security forces or
civilians — been reported. Viewed as an intentional murder rate, even a total of 500 total

---

[10] AFP, '103 morts, 414 blessés et 6.786 détenus en Algérie depuis le début de l'année, selon un
bilan officiel', 12 March 1992.

casualties in 1992 would not put Algeria in the top twenty most murderous countries worldwide. For a state of Algeria's capacity, though arguably degraded at that time, the levels of violence in 1992 should have nonetheless been manageable as a simple policing issue. More importantly, though, reported casualty figures increased dramatically in 1993 and then skyrocketed in 1994 (see chapter four). This suggests that, if we are determined to locate a singular, necessary trigger point based upon drastic increases in the levels of violence, the events of January 1992 might not constitute that key event, unless the case could be made for a significant lag time in their effects.[11] Though this argument does not rule out the possibility that some of the events of January 1992 contributed to the formation of the conflict, it suggests that levels of violence alone do not provide sufficient evidence to advance this claim.

Another possible avenue of explanation is to propose that the events of January 1992 definitively induced Islamist activists to take up arms.[12] The immediate problem with this claim is that several of the Islamist organisations that would later take part in the violence had already formed, and were apparently carrying out acts of armed resistance, before January 1992. One group in particular, an Algerian *al-Takfīr wa al-Hijrah*, had reportedly been militating for armed Islamist rebellion since its inception in the mid 1970s and was portrayed as the natural home for Algerians returning from the battlefields of Afghanistan in the recently concluded war against the Soviet occupation. This group was also seen as a key instigator of the small acts of violence — murders, property destruction, riots — that marked the 1988-92 period, whether against the state, society or fellow Islamists. Additionally, members of the ill-fated 1982-87 Islamist rebellion of Mustapha Bouyali reconstituted their *Mouvement (algérien) islamique armé* (MAIA or MIA) as early as

---

[11] Possible lags could be located in rebellious Algerians waiting several months to a year before using violence to make sure the HCE was committed to its tack before committing to the maquis. Also, the detainment of significant numbers of suspected Islamists in the Saharan desert camps during most of 1992 might have retarded the formation the insurgency.

[12] For example, a former Egyptian ambassador to Algeria, Hussein Ahmed Amin, comparing each country's armed Islamist movements, claimed that the violence in Algeria was more intense because the political grievance was more substantial: 'They were robbed of the fruits of their victory when the army cancelled the election. The Egyptian Islamists cannot make the same claim' (Lara Marlowe, 'Why once similar conflicts in Egypt and Algeria now differ', Irish Times, 17 March 1997: 13).

January 1991 (Willis 1997: 206, 269).[13] In June 1991, the Algerian government claimed to have discovered arms caches in mosques around the country.[14] Several months later in late November, an armed group attacked a military outpost near Guemar (El-Oued préfecture/*wilāyah*), killing three soldiers. Both the MIA and *al-Takfīr wa al-Hijrah* were blamed for the incident in media reports, though Nezzar, then Defence Minister, reportedly took the opportunity to link the incident to the FIS (Khelladi 2002: 109-10). Thus it is difficult to claim that the events of January 1992 created the insurgency *ex nihilo*, though it cannot be ruled out that the events of January helped amplify the insurgency. Whether or not this amplification was decisive would require an analysis of the insurgency's capacity, bringing us back to the levels of violence and the low fatalities rates witnessed throughout in 1992.

In many ways, the search for proximate causation is not to ask who fired the first shot but to identify the point of no return. Where and when did the Algerian regime or the insurgency cross the Rubicon? Just looking at the government's actions, several events present themselves as obvious candidates. In addition to the HCE's abortion of the electoral process, there was the subsequent arrest the remaining top FIS leadership, including its interim head, Abdelkader Hachani, and the head of its international representation, Rabah Kébir, in late January. The Algerian government also created prison camps in the Saharan interior to house FIS members and other detained Islamist activists; several thousand, perhaps nearly twenty thousand, would end up spending time in one of those detention centres. Following violent demonstrations in early February, the HCE enacted a state of emergency, which banned such public manifestations and instituted a curfew. In March and April, the Algerian government respectively outlawed the FIS and dissolved all the localities under its control from the 1990 elections. Then, in July, Abassi and Belhadj, arrested on 30 June 1991, received twelve-year prison sentences. All of these

---

[13] In 1982, under the leadership of Amīr Bouyali, the MAIA/MIA began carrying out sporadic attacks against Algerian security forces from bases in the mountains near Larba. The group allegedly planned to attack larger symbolic and human targets, but its insurgency was effectively ended in 1987 with an ambush that killed Bouyali (see Burgat 1997: 265-8).

   Martinez (Martinez 2000a: 69) claims that an Algerian *Ḥizb Allāh* formed in early 1990, though whether or not the objectives or intentions of this groups were similar to their Lebanese counterparts (in terms of armed militancy, Iranian inspiration or actual Shīʿah devotion), is not mentioned. Willis (1997: 143) actually claims that 'Shi'ite Islamists', called *Sunnah wa Sharīʿah*, attacked an Algerian courthouse in January 1990 but he provides no source.

[14] Georges Marion, 'La traque des intégristes algériens', Le Monde, 4 July 1991.

events, it should be noted, derive their saliency from occurring during or after January 1992.

When we expand the scope of possible trigger events to developments before January 1992, the increasing number of candidates begins to complicate our efforts to pinpoint any decisive turning point. It is also important to consider this period in order to understand some of the motivations likely driving the actions of the HCE and those supporting them. During the thirty-eight months between October 1988 and January 1992, Algeria not only witnessed significant demonstrations relating to political tensions (e.g., the summer of 1991), but also smaller, and sometimes violent, protests and riots across the country expressing cultural, social and economic frustrations by a number of actor types and interest groups. Tensions between the FIS and the regime reached their first peak in June 1991. The former called for demonstrations against new electoral laws that seemed designed to hamstring the FIS in the upcoming national legislative elections. As these confrontations grew increasingly violent, the government initiated a four-month state of emergency and postponed the national elections indefinitely; several dozen to several hundred were killed and hundreds, perhaps thousands, were detained. A core FIS demand — a timetable for presidential elections — was apparently never addressed. Two days after Abassi reportedly threatened to call for *jihād*[15] against the Algerian government, the military seized the party's headquarters and arrested Abassi and Belhadj on 30 June, soon followed by Mohammed Saïd, FIS spokesperson. The government also shut down the French and Arabic FIS newspapers in August and arrested interim FIS head Hachani in September, releasing him a month later. A day after Saïd was released, several Algerian soldiers were killed and mutilated near Guemar. The government, in response to the December 1991 legislative elections, appeared to be wasting no time in taking measures to deny the FIS the seats it had won by claiming irregularities. Then, a fortnight after the

---

[15] Abassi reportedly said, in response to increased military deployments, 'If the army does not return to its barracks, the FIS will have the right to call once again a Jihad, as in November 1954' (Rachid Khiari, 'Military Deploys Around Capital, Bendjedid Resigns as Party Chief', Associated Press, 28 June 1991). One could certainly make the case that the analogy with November 1954, and the implicit comparison of the government to the colonial regime, would be received as more offensive than the use of the term *jihād* amongst some political leaders.

vote, reports indicated that the Algerian army was deploying throughout the country, at least three days ahead of Bendjedid's resignation.[16]

The only way to single out any of these events as the decisive proximate cause of the conflict in Algeria is to make a counterfactual inference. Regardless of the validity of counterfactual reasoning (for background, see Fearon 1991; Levy & Goertz 2007), no single development during the period of October 1988 to the Spring of 1992 presents itself as decisive *prima facie*. There is no Rubicon, there is no assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. That is to say, only when the events of January 1992 are taken out of context and disarticulated from the chain of contingencies that produced and followed them, do these developments seem paramount. Furthermore, it is worth considering to extent to which, given the low levels of violence recorded in 1992, the conflict was neither inevitable nor inexorable following the installation of the HCE or the outlawing of the FIS. Future historians of the conflict should consider whether or not the decisive turning point was reached well before January 1992 or perhaps months or even years later. January 1992 only presents itself as the strongest explanatory candidate because of the discourse of the conflicts protagonists. It is not vindicated by rigorous counterfactual argument but rather by counterfactual assertions or assumptions, whether emanating from the conflict's participants, their respective supporters or international observers.[17]

What is obvious is the politics of naming causation and its role in the construction of problematisations of the violence in Algeria. A clear example is the debate over whether or not Bendjedid's resignation constituted a 'coup d'état', a favoured construction of the conflict's trigger, well evidenced in its memorialisation a decade after the fact.[18] Framing these events as a coup not only attempts to de-legitimise the actions of the HCE juridically, it also provides moral legitimacy to the non-violent and armed resistance that followed. The denial of democracy provides the warrant for its restoration by any means. The

---

[16] 'Chronology October 16, 1991 – January 15, 1992, Middle East Journal 46(2), Spring 1992: 303.
[17] In recognising the insufficiency of all these accounts of the violence, Robert Malley (1996: 248) was among the few to suggest the possibility of randomness and contingency: 'In the end, the secret may well lie in the crass accidents of history [...]; or perhaps simply a wrong personality at the wrong place at the wrong time'.
[18] e.g., Arezki Aït-Larbi, 'Algérie : Dix ans après le coup de force de l'armée contre le président Chadli [...]', Le Figaro 11 January 2002; Le Monde, 'Dix ans après l'interruption des élections, l'Algérie demeure dans l'impasse', 12 January 1992.

counter-narrative to this framing is the assertion that the intervention of the HCE was necessary to preserve democracy from extremism and fundamentalism. As will be seen later in this chapter, those involved in the seizure of power in January 1992 depicted their actions as the preservation of the Algerian state, if not the republic itself. This framing likewise attempted to legitimise the regime and supporting its actions. The events of January 1992 are thus imbued with causal significance by the discursive battlefield bounded by protagonists and international observers.

The inherent danger in adopting or accepting such framings as indicative of the conflict's causes is the tendency to infer an exclusively political problematisation. Here politicisation of the causes is not the same as partisanship, though partisan readings of the conflict's causes, as shown above, were certainly present. In this sense, to say that the conflict was political often held that it resulted from an unwillingness to share power and so the ultimate site of contention and resolution was government and democracy. Without endorsing or rejecting this problematisation as adequate, contributory, accurate or misleading, it is important to note the danger in such political renderings of the conflict's cause given their tendency to lend themselves to a simple problem/solution dyad. This danger is particularly acute when the problematisation is presented as exclusive and sufficient. The belief that the conflict in Algeria could be resolved through dialogue, power sharing, elections and reconciliation is itself problematised by the fact that all such initiatives between 1993 and 1995 corresponded with the intensification of violence.[19] Worst still, the election of General Liamine Zéroual to the Presidency in 1995, the adoption of a new constitution in 1996, and the holding of local and national elections in 1997 came amidst the worst of the killing and massacres. Bouteflika's 1999 amnesty measures, which formalised the 1997 ceasefire agreement between the AIS and the government, seemingly did little to hasten the agonisingly slow denouement of violence.[20] From these observations, we might conclude that these measures were insufficient or ill-designed to address the root political causes of the conflict (e.g., the FIS was never allowed

---

[19] For example, the October 1993 *Commission du dialogue nationale*, which took over the HCE's role of attempting to abate the brewing crisis; Zéroual's dialogue with some political parties and a secret dialogue with Abbassi and Belhadj in 1994; and the January 1995 Rome Platform — signed by the major political parties who accepted the reinstatement of the FIS — outline of a path to return to multi-party elections (see Roberts 1995: 256-263).

[20] See the discussion on official fatality figures from the year 2000 in the following chapter.

back into the electoral game, reform never touched the real sources of political power in Algeria) or that the causes of the conflict have been entirely misdiagnosed or underestimated. While the former is still open to debate, the latter often found voice in socio-economic problematisations of the Algerian conflict, to which we turn to next.

The metrics of *Hogra*[21]

In addition to claims of proximate causation, an array of underlying conditions — historical, cultural, social and economic — have also been proposed to account for the violence in 1990s Algeria. Chief among these, economic accounts of the conflict have held a dominant position within the field of problematisations structuring the international discourse of Algerian violence. Central to these understandings is Algeria's financial crisis

---

[21] Deploying an Algerian vocabulary, the term *El-Hogra (al-ḥagrah)* has circulated as shorthand for the ensemble of grievances that backgrounded the conflict. Hogra is often read as a sentiment of contempt expressed towards the general population by those with more social, economic and political power. *Al-ḥagrah* or *al-ḥagrā* comes from the root *ḥaraqa*, which denotes scorn and disdain. In formal Arabic, a closer equivalent to the Algerian meaning of Hogra is *ẓulm:* inequity, oppression or tyranny as expressed from a position of relative power.

Examples of Hogra in contemporaneous news accounts: 'En 1973, on sentait déjà le mépris des citoyens pour le pouvoir, la hogra. Je me demandais quand ça éclaterait. Les premières émeutes remontent au début des années 80. Il suffisait d'une petite allumette pour que la violence se déchaîne à une grande échelle' (['In 1973, we already felt the people's contempt for the regime, the hogra. I was wondering when it would explode. The first riots started in the early 1980s. It only needed a little match for the violence to be released on a grand scale'.] Gilbert Grandguillaume in Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Algérie : l'histoire est partie prenante dans la violence d'aujourd'hui', Le Monde, 5 September 1997); 'It was hogra that helped to account for the FIS's success in the 1991 election' (The Economist, 'Algeria. Just what the president ordered', 14 June 1997: 48); 'Young people were fed up with la hogra — the government's contempt for them. Islam was their refuge' (Ali Habib/Daniel Huguet quoted in Lara Marlowe, 'The double life of Ali Habib', The Irish Times, 13 August 1997: 13); 'Rioting youths have denounced what they called the "hogra" of security forces, meaning contempt and injustice' (AFP, 'At least 15 dead in northeastern Algeria riots', 27 April 2001). See also the use of concept or term Hogra in François d'Alançon, 'Dans les banlieues d'Alger, les jeunes vivotent', La Croix, 30 May 1997: 5; Dominique Le Guilledoux, 'Algérie, l'horreur et le doute', Le Monde, 23 October 1997; Nadjia Bouzeghrane, 'Jours ordinaires à Annaba', Le Monde diplomatique, October 1997: 12-13.)

Hogra in academic and extended analyses: Adjerid 1992; Carlier 1998: 143; Evans & Phillips 2008: 297; McDougall 2005: 125; Quandt 2004: 86; Roberts 2002b: 13; Tlemçani 2008: 1-2. Though often seen as a term deployed by youth, it can also refer to specific oppression, as against women (e.g., Lazreg 1998: 43), Kablyis (e.g., Bouandel 2002: 99; Alilat & Hadid 2002), Islamists (Martinez 2000a: 67), the mothers of the 'disappeared' (Collectif des familles de disparu(e)s en Algérie 2004: 51), etc.

in the mid to late 1980s brought on by the 1986 collapse of global hydrocarbon prices.[22]
Following a peak in 1980, oil prices began to decline, hitting a plateau of roughly thirty
dollars per barrel (unadjusted) between 1983 and 1985, then plummeting in 1986 to half its
average price the previous year. The Algerian state, which had derived between half to
two-thirds of its budget from petroleum exports since 1974, was faced with its most
dominant revenue source being halved in 1986. Coupled with a weakened US dollar, the
oil price collapse resulted in an eighty percent decline in foreign exchange earning for
Algiers (see (Sereni 1992); cited in Quandt 1998: 177). To help make up for the loss, the
government reduced imports and increased taxes and foreign borrowing. The ratio of
export earnings to debt payments more than doubled between 1985 and 1993. At its 1988
peak, the debt service ratio was eighty six percent. As a whole, Algeria experienced
negative or marginal economic growth between 1986 and 1994; some areas outside the
hydrocarbon sector continued to experience significant contraction through 1997 (Dillman
2000b: 32-5).

The next step in laying the economic foundations of conflict is to show how this financial
crisis affected the daily lives of most Algerians by citing important indicators. According
to one account, unemployment nearly quadrupled between 1985 and 1993 (Joffé 2002: 38).
Another suggests that a third of the labour force found itself out of a job by 1991 (Testas
2002b: 90-2). Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, unemployment failed to retreat to low
point of 16.2 percent reached in early 1986. Across the board, wages decreased from the
mid 1980s through the 1990s; the public sector, accounting for sixty four percent of the
formal workforce, saw decreases in salaries, sometimes over thirty percent by 1996
(Dillman 2000b: 20, 29). Fifteen percent of the population in 1992 was listed as having
zero income (Kouaouci 2004: 36-7). Adding to this general stress on the population,
inflation also rose from eleven percent in 1986 to thirty percent in 1992, the latter, one
account noted (Testas 2001: 136-7), representing a rate 138 times higher than experienced
in the United States during the great depression. Though some have rejected comparisons

---

[22] Certainly, no one has suggested that the 1986 oil price collapse is a sufficient starting point. But
precisely which Algerian development policies (nationalisation, privatisation or both) and under
what government (Boumedienne, Bendjedid or both) exacerbated the crisis is a wide-ranging
debate that cannot be done justice here; see (Aïssaoui 2001). Nor is this study able to devote
serious attention to contribution of 130 years of colonialism to these conditions either; a good
starting point, however, would be Bennoune 1988.

between the October 1988 demonstrations and the 'bread riots' endemic to many countries undergoing International Monetary Fund structural adjustment programs (Roberts 1992: 435; Khelladi & Virolle 1995 cited in Quandt 1998: 39; see below), one account claimed that, before the demonstrations broke out, food prices had increased forty percent since the beginning of 1988 (Swearingen 1990: 25).

Further conditioning the possibility of conflict, it is also suspected that the economic crisis further eroded the legitimacy Algerian government and ruling elite. Borrowing resources from rentier theory[23], regimes like Algeria obtain political legitimacy, or at least minimal acquiescence to authoritarianism, by providing a modicum of employment and public services without putting any significant demands upon general population such as taxes. Rentier regimes are able to accomplish this by generating revenue ('rents') from exports rather than through taxation and private sector development. As the theory goes, the ability of the Algerian regime to govern without democratic constraints was predicated upon its ability to appease the population through public spending to provide employment and services. However, with the oil price collapse, these techniques of rule were no longer sustainable and, making matters worse, the response of Bendjedid's government was to place further burdens on the an already stressed population with increased taxes and restrictions on imports, which resulted in price inflation. If rule had been predicated on the ability to buy obedience with petrodollars, then that possibility no longer maintained after 1986. And, to make matters worse, the government began adopting very unpopular policies that targeted the low- and zero-income masses rather than the top ten percent of Algerians by wealth who were consuming a third of GDP alone (Kouaouci 2004: 36-7). This line of argument concludes that armed conflict was made possible, in part, by the economic engendering of widespread dissatisfaction with the government and thus the motive for regime change became more popular.[24]

---

[23] For a general account of rentier theory, see Bablawi 1987; on rentierism and conflict, see Collier 2000; Collier & Hoeffler 2005. For rentier theory and Algeria specifically, see, e.g., Anderson 1997; Waterbury 1997; Zaimeche & Sutton 1998; Aïssaoui 2001; Murphy 2001; Werenfels 2002; Henry 2004; Hodd 2004; Lowi 2004; Keenan 2006; Sandbakken 2006.

[24] A related yet almost unexplored avenue of explanation for the (failed) Islamist rebellion is to borrow resources from James Davies (1962) seminal article on revolutions. Davies proposes that when periods of economic improvement are followed by sharp decreases, then the conditions for revolution can obtain. The problem is not poverty *per se*, but a sudden and radical change that affects general perceptions of economic standing relative to the period before the downturn.

A closely related and important effect of the economic downturn is the weakening of the state and the engendering of perceptions of regime ('incumbent') vulnerability amongst potential adversaries ('rebels'). The most cited multi-country studies of civil war onset (Fearon & Laitin 2003; Collier *et al.* 2008) have found that low per capita GDP is the strongest predictor of significant intra-national armed conflicts. One way in which this indicator has been interpreted as contributing to the onset of civil wars, in addition to engendering widespread grievance and so the undermining of a regime's political legitimacy, is the weakening of the state itself. Poverty, accordingly, not only produces the possibility for new insurrectionary allegiances based upon social, economic and political injustices, but it also suggests that the state is unable or less able to defend itself. The more impoverished the state, the better the chances of rebel victory or, at least, the *perception* of being able to overthrow putatively weak incumbents. Whether or not this is actually the way in which low per capita GDP translated into the outbreak of armed fighting in Algeria is debateable. Fearon and Laitin (2006: 27-30) argue that the Algerian state — at least the military, security and intelligence apparatus — was relatively strong in 1992 though apparently unprepared to fight either urban or rural guerrillas. On the one hand, the Algerian military's budget was relatively low in 1992; only three percent of GDP, whereas Syria and Iraq spent ten to twenty percent. Compared to southwest Asian rentier states (e.g., Saudi Arabia), Algeria was relatively poor. On the other hand, amongst its Maghrib neighbours, who have yet to experience similar levels of conflict, Algeria was relatively prosperous economically, boasting one of the region's largest armies of over 120,000 in 1993 (though mostly conscripts) and a reportedly more robust infrastructure (*ibid.*: 2, 17; Testas 2001).

The conjunction of poverty, state weakness and conflict onset has also been hypothesised in terms of periods of political uncertainty. The presence of 'anocracy' or 'semi-democracy', when a government inhabits a zone between authoritarianism and democracy, is also a suggested factor behind the conditions of armed rebellion. The lack of reliable democratic means to express grievance non-violently and the diminished capacity of an

---

Martinez (2000a: 2-3) rejects this account, along with other economic explanations, on the grounds that Algeria's socio-economic crisis was already well in the making by the 1970s. For a discussion of Martinez's approach, see chapter eight.

authoritarian regime to repress opposition effectively are the supposed mechanisms that contribute to opposition frustration and the resort to arms (Hegre *et al.* 2001). Alternatively, a move from authoritarianism to democracy might condition rebel perceptions of regime weakness if the transition is interpreted as capitulation to pressure, such as the initiation of democratic reforms in Algeria following the 1988 riots. More recently, however, a meta-analysis of the literature has proposed that the relationship between anocracy and internal armed conflict is specifically related to the use of violent repression and resistance during such periods (Vreeland 2008). The inauguration of Algeria's anocracy is often located in aftermath of the October 1988 riots. After President Bendjedid secured a third term that December, the following months saw the institution of a multi-party constitution, the creation of dozens of new political parties (including the FIS), increased political freedoms (e.g., press, political association) and more moves towards economic privatisation. Yet following the FIS's electoral victory in local elections (June 1990), tension between incumbent authorities and new challengers escalated, notably in the May-June 1991 demonstrations, the central government's crackdowns on FIS governed municipalities and the detention of FIS leaders and activists. One analysis of this situation highlights the allegedly volatile combination of freedoms and repression at the zenith of Algeria's transition around 1990-91 (Testas 2002b: 109-11).

It has also been suggested that economic instability and poverty support the possibility of insurgency by opening new avenues for economic advancement for the dispossessed. As a rebel motivation, 'greed' in intra-national armed conflicts is thought to function at both a macro and micro level. Macro-level greed is the supposition that the ultimate prize of winning the state motivates insurgents, especially if the state derives most of its income from a valuable primary commodity export like hydrocarbons. At the micro-level, greed, as an incentive for rebellion, is construed as loot-seeking behaviour that sustains an insurgency. Though there appears to be a strong relationship between single-commodity export-dependent states and armed conflict, especially hydrocarbons (Fearon & Laitin 2003: 85), the way in which this triggers or reinforces intra-national mass violence is debated.[25] In the case of Algeria, the role of hydrocarbon exports seemingly could only function as an unstable foundation for the economy, the state and the regime, while also

---

[25] See Ross 2003, Ross 2004 and Brunnschweiler & Bulte 2009, as well as the collection following Ron 2005, especially Fearon 2005; Humphreys 2005; Collier & Hoeffler 2005.

presenting itself as the grand prize for those seeking to take control of the government. Yet hydrocarbons could also function as a massive disincentive for the entrenched elite to let go of power, thus reinforcing the impulse towards authoritarianism and repression, thus reinvigorating core grievances of the opposition. At the micro-level, however, Algeria's hydrocarbons could not have played much of a role sustaining the conflict by financing the insurgency. Compared to other 'lootable' resources (e.g., small minerals) that help start and drive conflicts (see Lujala *et al.* 2005), Algeria's hydrocarbons, predominantly natural gas, remained largely out of the grasp of armed opposition groups, both geographically and technologically.[26] Though there were reports of armed groups — often unidentified — attempting to sabotage hydrocarbon related infrastructure, such attacks were surprisingly rare given the importance of this commodity to the Algerian government.[27]

Another micro-economic factor considered possibly conducive to armed rebellion in Algeria is the extent to which black market activity was already prevalent in Algeria. While micro-level greed is not considered as important to the initiation of conflict as much as to its maintenance, how an armed rebellion finances itself is to be taken into account to understand a conflict's durability. In the case of Algeria, the existence of informal, parallel and illegal markets were seen as signs of both the legacy of Algeria's earlier experiments with socialism and Algeria's failing economy in the late 1980s, a source of funding for clandestine political interests and, later, insurgent activities. Before January 1992, one study reported that fifteen percent of the GDP could be sourced to the black market and upwards of half of the country's cash was circulating within it (Dillman 2000b: 26). Though other figures suggested that the Algerian black market accounted for as much as seventy percent of GDP by the late 1980s (see Lowi 2007: 135). Accounts of Islamist groups manipulating the black market to fund the insurgency are not difficult to find (e.g., Martinez 2000a: 137-46), as are insinuations that hybridised private-public 'mafias' have played an equal, if not greater, role in the evolution of the shadow economy (Joffé 2002). Though it is difficult to see how black-marketeering could constitute an incentive for

---

[26] Recent conflicts in Iraq (post-2003) and Nigeria's Delta have demonstrated that hydrocarbons are more lootable by resource poor non-state actors than previously assumed. See Lujala 2010.
[27] El Watan (Algiers) only reported attacks against a gas distribution centre in Blida (reported on 11 July 1995, No. 1429), a pipeline near Cap Djinet near Boumerdes (reported on 7 March 1996, No. 1623) and a pipeline from Hassi R'mel field in M'Sila (reported on 22 May 1998, No, 2307).

armed rebellion, its contribution to a 'conflict-poverty trap', once armed fighting is initiated, is not difficult to sketch out.[28]

Lastly, Algeria's demographics, to some observers, have likewise been considered key to an understanding of the drift towards armed conflict. Though the population growth rate fell in the 1980s, between 1962 and 1982 Algerians nearly doubled their number to twenty million, driven by one of the world's highest birth rates in the 1970s. An effect of this was a disproportionately large youth segment. A census conducted the year before the 1988 riots indicated that over two thirds of Algerians were under age thirty (Lowi 2009: 114-5). Within this group, nearly ninety percent were unemployed in 1992. For some models of civil war, this suggested a large and motivated pool of potential recruits for armed rebellion. In combination with unemployment, young Algerian males were said to be experiencing other social frustrations. Just as Algeria's youth segment was reportedly above average regionally, it was also one of the few Maghrib countries to experience an increase in household size, at three Algerians per bedroom on average in 1992.[29] The gender balance of Algeria's 'youth bulge' was tilted slightly towards males, who tended to favour younger spouses. Yet the birth rate peaked in 1970; so an eighteen-year-old male in 1988 would be facing a diminishing pool of younger potential mates. His chances of finding a job and housing (often pre-requisites for marriage) were also significantly constrained (Kouaouci 2004: 38-9) by the crushing youth unemployment, price increases and the housing crisis.

Given these developments in Algeria's economic picture between 1986 and 1992, some have concluded that the real causes of the conflict had little or nothing to do with the most cited political factors. In the context of EU policy towards the conflict in Algeria, political scientist Abdelaziz Testas (2002a: 102) argued for an entirely economic problematisation:

> [...] the view that the conflict is an Islamist-military war that was the mere consequence of the interruption of the 1991 election process to keep the Islamists from power. The facts that the crisis is inherently economic and that the initial rise of Islamism, as well

---

[28] For an explication of the conflict trap, as applied to 1990s Algeria, see Testas (2002c: 164-5).
[29] Dillman (2000b: 127) claimed an increase in average household density from 7.2 to 7.7 between 1987 and 1997, one of the highest in the world.

as the suspension of the political process, are themselves the result of economic collapse, has largely been ignored. This suggests that resolving Algeria's crisis effectively requires new thinking and a new approach [...]

Critics of such economic problematisations of the Algeria's violent conflict have underscored several deficiencies, if not fatal flaws, in this approach. Allegations of 'economic determinism' were already present before the outbreak of major armed violence[30] and have since proposing that Algeria's dim economic climate is not the sole basis of the crisis (e.g., Roberts 1995: 250-1; Quandt 1998: 122). The social and economic crisis of the late 1980s has even been dismissed as irrelevant to understanding the root causes of Algeria's armed conflict when compared to the allegedly more powerful cultural and historical forces at work (Martinez 2000a: 2-5; see chapter eight for critique).

Yet both proponents and critics of economic problematisations Algeria's share untenable delineations of sovereignty between the spheres of the economic and the political, not to mention the terrains of the cultural, the social and the historical. What field is reserved for the political and what is reserved for the economic, particularly in a post-colonial state that has been understood to be intimately involved in the daily operations of its economy, is hardly a given distinction. More often than not, it is only passively explicated and based

---

[30] Attacking the claims that the October 1988 riots and the popularity of the Islamist movement resulted from poor economic conditions, Roberts (1992: 434-6) points out that the demonstrations ended on 10 October following promises of political reform but without Bendjedid making any economic concessions. Roberts also unpacks three chants used during the riots that seemingly espoused a desire for better government leaders over economic concerns. As Robert's alleges, news accounts from that period indeed repeatedly — almost consistently — underscored the ostensibly economic nature of the riots, portraying them as the result of austerity measures, price increases, shortages of goods and unemployment. But what Robert's narrative does not mention is the fact that, just hours before Bendjedid's speech, the army shot into a crowd of demonstrators in downtown Algiers, reportedly killing several dozen. By the end of the protests, which lasted from 4 to 10 October, the official death toll was about 150 though other official sources claimed as many as 500, most resulting from the army firing indiscriminately into crowds (Associated Press, 'Death Toll Put At 159 From Algeria Uprising', 22 October 1988). To imply that promises of reform, rather than the excessive and murderous use of state coercion to confront the riots, stopped the riots all by itself is unconvincing. Moreover, Robert's effort to politicise the causes of the demonstrations (and so rule out an entirely economic account) is also problematic given the Algerian state's heavy hand in the operations of its economy (i.e., whether or not, in the minds of Algerians, the economic and the political were really seen as distinct terrains). Whether or not Roberts' argument holds up to empirical scrutiny, this example illustrates the two points about to be made: (1) the unstable distinction between economic and political causes of conflict and (2) the tension between agents and structures of conflict.

upon presupposition. That is to say, the political is constituted by claiming the economic or vice versa. Moreover, the claim that economic factors dominate the political is only possible given a distinction that must be maintained *a priori*. Proposing a holistic approach, while pragmatic, fails to appreciate the power of this critique. It is not just that the historical, cultural, social, economic and political need to be appreciated simultaneously. The problem is that concepts, such as the cultural, the political and the economic, must be asserted prior to investigation and analysis. They can never be arrived at synthetically without assuming them hypothetically or analytically. Such arbitrary delineations between these spheres are an important condition of possibility in the construction of causality, and thus the problematisation, of the Algerian conflict as either political or economic.

As with the failures that met both domestic and international efforts to address the violence's alleged political core (outlined above), the effect of economic interventions is difficult to read as well. Not only did an IMF loan in 1989 do little to stop the economic crisis from translating into armed conflict, Algeria later signed loan agreements with the IMF in 1994 and 1995, the latter lasting three years and proving Algeria with $1.8 billion in credit during the apex of the violence.[31] Even as the fighting intensified between 1993 and 1996, Algeria's macroeconomic picture improved, allowing the government to reschedule its bilateral debt with seventeen creditor nations following a July 1995 meeting of the Paris Club. The European Community, which had stalled disbursements between 1992 and 1994 of a significant loan to Algeria signed in late 1991 (Roberts 2002: 111-2), eventually extended Algeria $156 million to help government reform and privatisation efforts in late 1996, followed by $124 million to help Algeria with its debt burden. Amidst the bloodiest periods then witnessed in the fighting (Ramadan in early 1997), the

---

[31] Foreign oil companies seemed undeterred by the violence. With Algeria boasting new finds, British Petroleum signed a multi-billion dollar agreement with the Algerian government in late 1995 to develop fields around In Salah. France's Total and Spain's Repsol signed a twenty-year $850 million contract with Algeria in January 1996, with engineering assistance of US firm Brown and Root and Japan's JGC, to develop gas fields in the deep south-east (Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Algeria: Country Report', 9 February 1996).
   By 1997, new investments were launched or planned by the US companies Atlantic Richfield and Anadarko, Spain's Compañía Española de Petróleos and Italy's Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli, while governments in the United Kingdom, Canada, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy and Germany took steps to help cover investments in Algeria, particularly in the hydrocarbon sector (Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Algeria: Country Report', 7 February 1997: 8, 23-24).

Economist Intelligence Unit otherwise lauded 'Algeria's spectacular macroeconomic performance', driven by increasing hydrocarbon prices.[32] While massacres, bombings, assassinations and terrorism continued into the new millennium with less ferocity, Algeria continued to experience another decade of political violence, suggesting that the link between the macroeconomic picture and the microeconomics of violence remains poorly understood. Indeed, the disarticulation of the macro and the micro is not only a feature of the violence that puts into question economic problematisations of the conflict's causes, it is a disarticulation that challenges our ability to theorise causation in the first place.

Agents, structures and logics of violence

The issue of agency is likewise a formidable problem in the effort to explicate either the decisive causal moment or the underlying conditions of Algeria's violence, if not intra-national armed conflict generally. As explicated above, the dominant models of civil war causation (Collier-Hoeffler, Fearon-Laitin) simultaneously deny the efficacy of expressed individual or aggregate motivations to explain the conditions of armed conflict, yet they nonetheless require agents to actualise their models. In their various forms, grievances — political, ethnic, religious, etc. — have been dismissed for being either contradictory or difficult to discern (Kalyvas 1999: 246; citing Tilly 1975); omnipresent in most polities though also inconspicuous to a small insurgency (Fearon & Laitin 2003: 76); or for being based on misperception, non-rational or irrational behaviours, in that few rebellion might have been a mistake, few rebels actually gain from civil war or rebels seem to use violence for violence's sake (Collier *et al.* 2008: 4-5). In short, 'Grievance can be the constitutive grammar of conflict or simply its discourse, with no more explanatory power as to the determinants of observing violence than either perception or opportunity' (Collier & Sambanis 2002: 4).

The metrics used for gauging grievance, however, are based upon the degree of fragmentation (in the case of religious or ethnic grievance) and the level of freedoms (in the case of political grievance) in any given country. In other words, these explanatory

---

[32] Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Algeria: Country Report', 7 February 1997: 9.

models of civil war measure only inter-religious — i.e., not *intra*-religious —heterogeneity at the national level.[33] Thus the means by which religious grievance is gauged will be totally useless in a country that is reportedly almost homogeneously Sunni Muslims of the *Mālikī madhhab*. For an armed conflict whose putative master logics included a debate about the extent to which Algerian society should be governed by certain interpretations of Islamic norms, it is clear that prevailing econometric models of civil war etiology will fail to capture an allegedly paramount dimension of the Algerian conflict. This is not to suggest that the political violence in Algeria since, at least, 1992, can be sufficiently described or accounted for as an intra-religious conflict. It is simply to say that the conflict, whether at the level of day-to-day fighting or at the level of the clash between the regime and the FIS, involved Muslims fighting Muslims, often over competing claims to Islam.

This dismissal of actor-level motivations stands in sharp contrast to the function of the agent within these econometric models. The expressed motives of rebels (and *only* rebels; more below) are dismissed for being possibly confused, conflicting or irrational. Yet it is assumed that rebels, potential or actual, whatever their claimed grievances, will ultimately behave in ways that are nonetheless 'rational' or predictable. Prevailing economic models of armed conflict regularly espouse the 'Machiavelli Theorem' (Hirshleifer 2001: 10-1), which suggest that 'no profitable opportunity for violence would go unused' (Collier *et al.* 2008: 3).[34] The way in which this articulates with an otherwise inchoate, multidimensional or self-undermining set of rebel motives is through the agency of rebel leaders, who perceive they have the most to gain from taking up arms. What rebel leaders say in public is propaganda, but what they ultimately do is exploit opportunities for economic, social and political advancement. This seemingly paradoxical state of affairs — some agency is requisite, other agencies are not — is symptomatic of the way in which this approach to understanding the conditions of armed intra-state conflict has been constructed. That is, it is reflective of the way in which the model is built around 'economic' factors that lend

---

[33] Even in a specific case study of Algeria (Testas 2002c: 162), this method of apprising religion's contribution to conflict only in terms of inter-religious debates (framed in terms of the 'clash of civilisations') was adopted.

[34] Hirshleifer (2001: 10-1), however, does not endorse this view as wholeheartedly as Collier, *et. al.*, seem to suggest. 'Machiavelli Theorem standing alone is only a partial truth'. The other side of the coin is '[Ronald] Coase's Theorem', which is the claim that 'people will never pass up an opportunity to cooperate by means of mutually advantageous exchange'. Hirshleifer suggests that 'our textbooks need to deal with both modes of economic activity'.

themselves to quantification without being aware of the dangers of such reductionism.[35] Grievance, which does not lend itself to such easy measurements, has been insufficiently hypothesised as levels of freedom or inter-ethnic/religious dispute.[36]

The problem with such constructions of the rational agent is that it is a tool that cuts both ways. Though these econometric models claim to address the phenomenon of intra-national armed conflict, their approach is to address the issue of *rebellion*. The attempt to explain what causes intra-national conflict soon becomes the more specific tasks of discovering the conditions and motivations that push citizens to rebel against their government. An essential guiding assumption seems to be the idea that only rebels will see armed conflict as advantageous and so the model only needs to explain why national rebellion occurs. The model is structured in such a way that it is totally uninterested in the possibility that the other side of the coin — the incumbent authorities and state repression — is a contributing or overriding factor. This politics of naming rebellion, whether intentional or not, is problematic for two reasons. The term rebellion locates agency within the rebels, rather than co-locating agency in both the state and insurgents, or simply in the state itself. The fact that rebels often frame their violence as resistance, rather than rebellion, is often the counter-narrative of civil war onset. Rather than locating the agency of causation in the rebellion, the original causal location of agency is the state. In the minds of many, including the FIS, it is resistance to repression that causes rebellion. This leads to the second point. Prevailing econometric models of civil war are blind to these alternatives simply because the possibility of state agency being decisive or dominant is ruled out *a priori*.[37]

In the case of Algeria, there are certainly claims within the broader discourse, particularly with FIS activists and their supporters, who interpreted the actions of the regime as beckoning armed confrontation, creating the conditions for the violence. As will be seen in the following chapter, which presents the conflicted use of the term civil war vis-à-vis the armed conflict in Algeria, the idea was often expressed that it was not the rebels but the

---

[35] This is without even addressing the reliability of most economic data in the first place (see Nathan 2005).
[36] This is similar to a critique raised by Cramer (2002).
[37] Regan (2005) explores the role of the governments in the generation of civil wars but wisely does not consider state repression as the defining problematique of civil war.

regime that saw violence to its advantage. Indeed, if we flip the econometric model upside-down but maintain the Machiavelli Theorem, it is not difficult to construct an alternative account of the causes of the Algerian conflict in which it is the conditions for state repression, not rebellion, that seem most ripe in 1992. The discursive resources for such a counter-hypothesis are easy enough to assemble. Within the regime's elite, the threat posed by the FIS following the December 1991 elections was viewed as existential. As much was claimed by Nezzar during his testimony in a French court in 2002 defending the actions of HCE, in which he describes himself as a leading figure of the events of January 1992 (see chapter eight).[38] Nezzar's lawyer during that trial defended his client's actions in these terms: 'It was that or Afghanistan. The Islamist savages put the republic in danger'.[39] Former Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali, who joined the HCE, likewise testified in 2002 'that to allow the Islamists to take power was to allow the fall of Algeria'.[40] In May 1992, then head of counter-intelligence, Colonel Smaïn Lamari, reportedly told his deputies, 'I am ready and determined to eliminate three million Algerians if necessary to maintain the order that the Islamists threaten' (as reported by Samraoui 2003: 162).[41] Luis Martinez (2000a: 16), who penned the most detailed study of the early insurgency, nevertheless concluded that 'the choice of civil war' was 'made by the military leadership in January 1992'.

Did not the calls to Jihad and small acts of terrorism attributed to Islamists throughout 1992 provide the Algerian regime — then under threat from a multi-sided coalition demanding significant economic and political reform — with a 'profitable opportunity for violence'? Indeed, it would not be difficult to expand this narrative to demonstrate the ways in which the crisis of armed violence in Algeria allowed the regime to carry out

---

[38] See also the interview with Nezzar in Hamadouche (2004: 38-9).

[39] Lara Marlowe, 'Algeria a test case for war on terrorism', Irish Times, 14 August 2002: 14.

In his testimony in 2002, Nezzar had claimed that the FIS was pushing for the 'Afghanisation' of Algeria, 'in one word, a Taliban State' (Raphael Hermano, 'Un Algérien accable l'armée de son pays face à un ex-ministre de la Défense', AFP, 1 July 2002). Nezzar had likewise deployed the spectre of Afghanistan in his account of 1999 Algeria(see Nezzar 2001).

[40] AFP, 'Former Algerian PM defends cancellation of polls at Paris trial', 2 July 2002.

[41] Three million being roughly the number of Algerians who voted for the FIS in December 1991.

In his testimony during the Souaïdia-Nezzar trial in 2002, Samraoui claimed that high officers within the security elite were already planning 'total war' against the Islamists in the late 1980s and worked to create the conditions for the violent confrontation that followed (Florence Beaugé et Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, 'Un ancien du contre-espionnage algérien livre ses souvenirs', Le Monde, 25 September 2003).

otherwise difficult domestic reforms (e.g., further privatisation) while receiving international financial and diplomatic support that helped stabilise the power structure that had been under serious threat between 1988 and 1992. The armed conflict also allowed the state to create a massive security/social assistance program in the form of civilian militias, reportedly numbering between a quarter- to half a million by 2000 (Sidhouṃ & Algeria Watch 2003b: 8). Though it might be claimed that it would be irrational for a state to welcome or instigate armed conflict, the same has been said of motivations for rebellion — that they are irrational. If we take civil war as our problem, rather than rebellion, and we are willing to suspend an analysis of motivation in favour of an analysis of permissive conditions based upon the logic of utility maximisation, then there is reason to consider the war's profitability to incumbents and insurgents alike.

Suspending an analysis of explicit motivation, whether in terms of insurgent or state actions, remains problematic precisely because the disarticulation of a conflict's structure and agents results in the determination of motivation by structure. The ambivalent way in which in economic models of civil war suspend, dismiss or poorly hypothesise grievance, while requiring a totalising, abstract and subconscious theory of motivation, is indicative of this problem. This is not the same as the accusations of economic determinism noted above; there the issue was framed in terms of the causes of the conflict. Here economic determinism is being problematised as the determination of agency; more precisely, the production of rebel subjectivities by the theoretical apparatus that seeks to understand their actions. Which is to say, prevailing models of civil war studies co-constitute their very object of analysis.

If we decide that the motivations for violence at the grassroots level of a conflict are worth taking seriously, then a different problem arises. The logics of intimate violence in armed conflicts are often understood to be indirectly related or entirely unrelated to a conflict's putative structure (Kalyvas 2006: 364-5). In the case of 1990s Algeria, observers frequently advanced, and anecdotal evidence sometimes supported, claims that the violence on the ground was divorced from the larger questions supposedly driving the conflict. Chapters five and six of this study provide examples, which were presented under various guises though often as the problem of 'privatised violence'. This disarticulation between the 'macro' conflict and the 'micro' violence in Algeria mirrors observations that

have been made in other instances of intra-national mass violence. More generally, the problem of structural determinism has precipitated a debate within political studies, often treated as the agent-structure, micro-macro, parts-whole or levels of analysis problem. Whether as a legacy of Marxist analysis in comparative political economy or the structuralist turn in International Relations, accusations of top-down or bottom-up determinism have fuelled a lively debate for several decades[42] and inspired attempts to escape this frame trap.[43]

When it comes to the study of intra-state wars, the agent-structure impasse allegedly arises from reports that identities, intentions and practices at the micro- or agent-level do not match up with the alleged macro-level understanding of a conflict's politics. Put another way, the politics of violence at the grassroots level can, and often does, bear little resemblance to the politics of the conflict at the national level. Working through these problems, Kalyvas (2006: 371) suggests we redefine 'civil wars' as 'imperfect, multilayered, and fluid aggregations of highly complex, partially overlapping, diverse, and localized civil wars with pronounced differences form region to region and valley to valley, reflecting the rupture of authority'. In the following chapter, this study examines more closely the problematiques and politics of naming civil wars. For now, what is interesting about Kalyvas' approach to the agent-structure — politics of conflict, logics of violence — impasse is its espousal of a bottom-up approach. The agent-structure paradox has not been resolved but inverted. While the historical or empirical rationale for this re-conceptualisation is made clear, its ultimate pragmatic rationale is left un-stated. As will be seen in the following chapter, throughout this work and ultimately addressed in the conclusion, the politics of conceptualisation should become key to our assessment of mass violence and intervention.

---

[42] See, Singer 1961; Wendt 1987; Dessler 1989; Carlsnaes 1992; Hay & Wincott 1998; Gould 1998; Bieler & Morton 2001; Klotz 2006; Wight 2006.
[43] E.g., Giddens 1979; Migdal 1988; Doty 1997.

Conclusion

So far this study has examined the politics of naming the causes of the armed violence in Algeria that seemingly broke out following the events of January 1992. However, it was noted that threats and acts of armed violence, whether seen as Islamist resistance or state repression, preceded this date by months. Meanwhile, it was also acknowledged that the levels and acts of violence throughout 1992 were of a far smaller scale than the years that followed, making it even more difficult to identify the proximate cause of the armed violence in Algeria. Looking at the broader context of violent interaction in Algeria, it was even more difficult to locate the precise trigger of the conflict without engaging in acts of naming that would be essentially political (read: partisan) in its act of framing. The only way to establish the ultimate significance of a particular event as the trigger is to adopt a framing that is as contested as it is contingent.

Looking at the potential roots or permissive conditions of the violence in Algeria, several abstract models of intra-national armed conflict generally tended to favour economic factors over political causes. These models, based upon significant cross-comparative studies of other conflicts, seemed to reveal important underlying conditions of the Algerian violence, particularly in the economic crisis of the late 1980s and its putative socio-political effects. Critics of this approach, however, often alleged that such economic determinism had obfuscated the ensemble of causes behind the Algerian conflict. Such criticisms and the targets of that criticism both engaged in a set of contested delineations between the spheres of the economic and the political (as well as the historical, the cultural and the social). To privilege the economic or to denounce economic determinism is predicated on the maintenance of such distinctions that are not only given, but regularly trespassed in a variety of discourses and practices.

While this chapter has likewise been concerned by the problem of economic determinism, it suggested another way in which economics was playing an over-determinant role in the framing of the Algerian conflict. Rather than economics being seen as an unjustified privileging of certain arbitrary factors (considered economic, or not political, *a priori*), this study focused on the paradoxical way in which self-described economic approaches to civil war simultaneously dismissed or denied the efficacy of certain expressed motivations

72

(grievance) while requiring others at a subconscious or abstract level (rational self-interest). In this way, econometric models of civil war produce the very rebel subjectivities they seeks to understand. The 'real' insurgent is displaced to accommodate the insurgency in the abstract.

This focus upon rebel motivations points towards a larger, more debilitating feature within contemporary civil war studies. The key problematisation is not the causes of civil war but the causes of rebellion. What is initially troublesome with this bait-and-switch approach is the ruling out of the possibility of state-initiated intra-national armed conflict. In the case of Algeria, it was argued that one could construct a viable account in which it is not the rebels who wanted civil war but rather the regime. Though a full narrative of such an account would certainly receive severe criticism, the point is to suggest plausibility rather than actuality. The possibility of a state wanting to initiate armed internal conflict undermines the problematisation of rebellion as a sufficient substitute for a complete problematisation of civil war.

Finally, were we to capitalise upon these insights, we would nonetheless run into a series of difficulties in the construction of an alternative problematisation of internal war. Those who study the dynamics of armed conflicts at the local level often report a severe disjuncture between their findings and the alleged logic of the conflict at the national level. As they apply to Algeria, these issues are explored more thoroughly in chapters five and six. One solution to this impasse within the field of civil war studies proposed a re-definition of civil war based upon the idea that the micro is the macro. Or, in other words, the apparent incommensurability between the local and the national should be considered the essence of civil wars. How we conceptualise the structure is being shaped by our observations of the local, and so we have bottom-up rather than top-down determinism.

On what basis should we decide between these approaches: determinism by structure or by agent? Or should we consider alternative formulations?[44] But in keeping with the core aim of this study (the problematisation of problematisations), the goal is not to provide ultimate arbitration but rather to suggest that politics, rather than truth, should hold sway. The

---

[44] E.g., see the discussion of Kaldor's 'New Wars' in the following chapter.

question will not be so much a choice between the *lex parsimoniae* of the Collier-Hoeffler approach or the historically nuanced anti-reductionism of Kalyvas, but rather a question of what we want to do with these conceptualisations and models in the first place. This, of course, is not a shortcut to consensus; indeed, it will raise different, and possibly more thorny, problems than it solves. It simply demands that agendas, often hiding behind the mantle of history and science in theoretical representations of civil wars, account for themselves.

4. Civil War

The 1990s seemed to lack a master narrative to give it the same sense of meaning and purpose that had animated the previous four and a half decades of global politics. Various candidates were proposed — a Clash of Civilisations (Huntington 1992), a New World Order[1], an End of History (Fukuyama 1992), a Coming Anarchy (Kaplan 1994) — but none obtained dominance. Conflicting forces and contrary developments were shaping the new international environment, rendering a coherent reading of the world after the Cold War problematic. Optimists could point to trends indicating that an increasing number of countries were adopting political and economic reforms under the general rubric of Neoliberalism. Pessimists, however, could just as easily point to other indicators. The interstice between the end of the US-Soviet rivalry and 9/11 saw the outbreak of dozens of violent conflicts, some 'shocking the conscience' of the international community as much as anything witnessed during the previous ninety years of the twentieth century. While some of these conflicts were short lived, others simmered into the new millennium. The year the Berlin Wall fell, 1989, saw the emergence of two new armed conflicts in Africa (Liberia and Mali), compounding the conflict burden already born by that continent — e.g., Angola, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Morocco-Western Sahara, Mozambique, Somalia and Sudan. Moreover, the following year saw the eruption of a war in Rwanda, whose terminus led to the 1994 genocide and contributed to Africa's 'World War' in the Democratic Republic of the Congo four years later. Conflicts also arose in Yemen and Yugoslavia in 1990s, the latter becoming an iconic image of war in the 1990s as that country violently collapsed into five new states. Sierra Leone, Haiti and Indonesia joined the fray in 1991, followed by Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Tajikistan in 1992. Africa saw new conflicts surface in Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda between 1993 and 1998. The Chechen-Russia wars, Turkey's repression of Kurdish rebels and fighting between the Nepalese government and Maoist

---

[1] Heralded by US president George W Bush in a January 1991 televised speech, just as military operations began against Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

insurgents also marked the 1990s as a decade of violence.[2] According to one study, nearly a quarter of UN member-states were experiencing significant internal armed conflict in 1994 (Fearon 2004: 275). Another study claimed that the average length of such wars had tripled since 1944 (Hironaka 2005).

Algeria, likewise, had become a site of mass violence in the 1990s. And like most of the places listed above, Algeria was said to be in the throes of a civil war. Algerians were killing each other, and so a variety of observers, whether journalists, academics, politicians or activists, as well as participants in the conflict, applied the label civil war without hesitation.[3] Other observers and participants, however, vehemently rejected the idea that Algeria had become a situation of civil war. From Algerian political actors to long time observers of Algerian affairs, this camp asserted that the armed violence in Algeria had little in common with past civil wars. This disparity certainly prompts several questions. First and foremost: how could some observers unproblematically label the Algerian conflict a civil war while others found the term ill suited?

It is not the goal of this chapter to resolve this debate — to adjudicate between competing definitions of civil war. Rather, this chapter takes as its starting point this contest and, from it, elucidates the deep politics of naming involved in the designation (or de-listing) of certain episodes of mass violence as civil wars. While it is well recognised that political actors engage in the hypocritical use of the term civil war (recognising its positive and negative connotations), it is virtually unrecognised in the burgeoning literature on civil wars what effects are produced and what politics are implied in the use of the term civil war. Though the new school of civil war studies has achieved a consensus that Algeria reached a state of civil war in the 1990s (contrary to the opinions of many Algeria experts), this school has yet to achieve a consensus definition of civil war itself. The various criteria used to determine civil war status, when applied to the Algerian conflict's widely divergent

---

[2] Drawn from Fearon & Laitin 2001 (39) and Collier *et al.* 2004 (270).
[3] E.g., Leveau 1995; Phillips 1995; Martinez 1996; Mortimer 1996; Callies de Salies 1997; Reporters sans frontières 1997; Brahimi 1998; Lazreg 1998; Rich 1998; Yacoubian, Deeb 1999; Wiktorowicz 2001; Ellyas-Belkaïd & Peyroulou 2002; Cavatorta 2002; Turshen 2002; Lloyd 2003; Takeyh 2003; Volpi 2003; Hadj Moussa 2004; Henry 2004; Heristchi 2004; Smaïn 2004; Tessler *et al.* 2004; Le Sueur 2005; Lowi 2005; Szmolka 2006; Weinstein 2007; Werenfels 2007; Ashour 2008; Joffé 2008; Tlemçani 2008). Anthropologist Judith Scheele (2006) put civil war in inverted commas.

representations, fail to maintain purchase. The limits of space, time, identity and practice that are thought to make civil wars knowable instead over-determine Algeria as a civil war. Picking up on a major theme of this study, this chapter examines the disparity between the fuzzy 'realities' of the Algerian conflict at the macro-level (as determined by civil war theorists) and the very plausible scenarios of violence at the micro-level (as proposed by the competing representations of the violence in Algeria). This incompatibility — over-determination and indeterminacy — not only affects our ability to call the Algerian conflict a civil war under any definition, but it calls into question the utility of prevailing thinking about civil wars. Not only do recent studies of civil wars tend to over-determine their object of analysis, but they play a role in the (re)production of the very phenomenon they claim to study. Algeria does not exclusively provide an exemplar of a (new) civil war; it can be just as much read as model for the de-construction of 'civil wars'.

The new science of civil wars

The emergence of civil wars as a renewed problem for the international community in the 1990s brought with it a wave of novel research into this phenomenon. This school was quick to point out that intra-state wars — mass armed violence occurring primarily within a single territorial state — had already overtaken inter-state armed conflict as the dominant species of warfare since the end of World War II. According to one survey, three times as many states were involved in internal wars as had been participants in international wars by 1999; five times as many people had died in intra-state wars as inter-state wars during the same period; and civil wars had tended to last twenty four times longer than international wars (Fearon & Laitin 2003: 75). Another set of studies estimated that, during roughly the same period, civil wars accounted for twenty million deaths and sixty-seven million refugees (Collier *et al.* 2005: xiii). In fact, this school argued, the 1990s were not unique in their level of intra-national armed violence. While there was an upsurge in civil war outbreaks at the end of the Cold War, and a notable number of terminations, the number of ongoing civil wars in the mid 1980s was far higher (Fearon 2004: 275, 276; Hegre 2004). For the World Bank, one of the main benefactors behind the new school of civil war studies, the problem is clear enough. Civil wars have become 'development in reverse'. They represent as much a 'failure *of* development' as 'problem *for* development',

in that 'development can be an effective instrument for conflict prevention' (Stern 2002: ix, emphasis in original; see also Collier & Sambanis 2002: 3).

Not long into its career, this school began to claim a degree of 'consensus' among the various models used to determine the trigger causes, sustaining conditions and intensifying factors of civil wars (Lacina 2004). A lack of consensus, however, can be detected among the various definitions of civil war being deployed. One of the more noticeable effects of these differing standards is wide range of civil war cases that have been generated by different definitions. The proposed number of civil wars between 1960 and 1993, according one count, ranges from fifty-eight to 116 depending on the criteria followed by the study (Sambanis 2004b: 835).[4] This lack of rigorously enforced criteria is matched by a lack of semantic consensus on the meaning of civil war. In some cases, distinctions between civil war and other forms of international armed conflict and mass violence are maintained; in other studies, they are conflated. For example, a group of Nordic researchers (Gleditsch *et al.* 2002) has proposed a distinction between war (civil or international) and less violent armed conflicts, hinged on the widely accepted battle death thresholds (respectively, one thousand versus twenty-five). Another study, however, uses the terms civil war and intrastate conflict interchangeably, adopting a far lower combat death criterion of 200 over the course of a conflict (Regan 1996: 338).

To a significant degree, the definition of civil war deployed by the new school was inherited from a pre-existing effort to analyse war quantitatively. The first of the new civil war studies in the late 1990s (e.g., Collier & Hoeffler 1998) relied almost exclusively upon data collected by the long-standing Correlates of War (COW) project. The four basic COW criteria for a civil war are (1) internal military action, (2) at least one thousand battle deaths during the war, (3) the involvement of the national government and (4) the ability of participants to inflict casualties. Additionally, it is assumed that the site of a civil war must be an internationally recognized sovereign state with a minimum population of at least a half-million persons (Singer & Small 1994; Sarkees 2000: 129). Previously, the minimum

---

[4] How numbers are generated should be differentiated from how numbers are used. For example, in an effort to problematise international conflicts, one recent study claims civil wars have increased four times since the late 1990s (Misra 2008). While this is accurate, another study (Harbom *et al.* 2008) framed recent civil wars in an entirely different way. The year 2003 witnessed the lowest recorded number of armed conflicts since the 1970s.

threshold for a civil war had mirrored that of an inter-state war: one thousand or more battle-related deaths per year on average (Small & Singer 1982: 210-4; Sarkees 2000: 126). One researcher thought this criterion was reflective of civil wars necessarily involving '*large scale violence*' (Licklider 1995: 682, emphasis in original), though another study felt this rule had to be 'relaxed' (Regan 2000: 20). Yet even with such clear standards, exceptions were often made for 'civil wars' that did not meet these baseline criteria, such as the Basque and Northern Ireland conflicts (noted in Gleditsch *et al.* 2002: 617).

Across these studies, the lowest common denominators tend to be the spatial and practical aspects of civil wars. Spatially, civil wars occur within a single territory. However, there is a lack of agreement as to what kinds of territories — from internationally recognized sovereign states to non-self-governing territories — can host a civil war. Questions have been raised about the classification of historical and contemporary wars in former European colonies and disputed territories. A special yet contentious category for such wars as 'extra-systemic' (i.e., outside the international system of states) or 'extra-state' (i.e., outside the state's territory but not an international war) has attempted to bridge the arguments for and against them as constituting either international wars or civil wars. One study, however, saw 'no reason in principle to exclude [from their list of civil wars] anticolonial wars, such as the French versus the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria' (Fearon & Laitin 2003: 76). A less frequently voiced spatial concern is the extent to which foreign aid and fighters can be rendered to participants or the extent to which violence must be contained within a single geographic entity before the war risks being tipped into the international or extra-territorial category.

The question of territoriality, in turn, is closely linked to the questions of political identity and practice in civil wars. In the literature, the direct involvement of agents of a sovereign state, or some kind of governmental authority claming control over the territory of contestation, is considered a necessary condition; for others, this requirement is too strict, only that a civil war must take place within a sovereign state. Disagreement also exists over the necessary level of institutional and ideological coherence exhibited by opposition forces. While it is often assumed that state actors belong to a sizable organisation with an intelligible, publicly articulated political agenda in the conflict, there is no agreement as to whether or not this should be the case with armed opposition groups too. Certain

'conventional' (Licklider 1993a: 9) definitions of civil war holds that it is an armed conflict between at least two sovereign entities within the same territorial state. Civil wars should be a form of symmetrical armed conflict between rivals possessing relatively equivalent degrees of political, military, social and geographical organization. This notion of civil war has mostly been displaced to accommodate more asymmetrical forms of warfare; indeed, asymmetry is now built into some conceptions of civil war but baseline organisational benchmarks for the armed opposition — political, military and geographical — remain ill defined.[5] One study has assumed that participants in a civil war must be militarily organised before the fighting even starts (*ibid.*: 9). Otherwise, the assumption seems to be that the ability to engage in 'military action' and to inflict casualties are indication of sufficient organisational capacity (e.g., Sarkees 2000: 129). Indeed, the 'doing' of civil wars is often equated with killing generally or combatants specifically. In some cases, though, a high level of fatalities stemming from armed violence is considered only an indication of civil war; battle deaths merely stand as a proxy measurement for the overall devastation caused by civil war (Sambanis 2004b: 820).[6] Meanwhile, violence done to the natural or built environment during the course of a civil war, whether belonging to participants or not, remains a virtual silence within the literature.

As with many concepts, our ability to grasp its meaning often comes not from its positive attributes but more from its negative qualities. What a civil war *is* can be as important as

---

[5] In the world after 11 September 2001, it now seems possible for a group of individuals, if not a single person, to inflict mass casualties upon an opponent above and beyond the thousand-death threshold. However, effective resistance criteria might correct for this possibility. Most coding rules propose that there must be at least one hundred deaths suffered on either side, suggesting that an armed opposition group must be able to sustain at least one hundred losses to remain active in a civil war. Nevertheless, this still would not satisfy critics who believe civil wars necessarily involve large armies of several thousand formal soldiers and not guerrilla groups of several hundred informal fighters.

[6] Whether or not battle fatalities are a reasonable proxy for destruction (for critique, see Ghobarah *et al.* 2003), it also has to be asked whether or not it is sustainable. Advances and diffusion of medical technology might make it possible to minimize deaths while the overall level of human and environmental violence remains relatively the same. The notable decrease in the rate of injury related fatalities sustained by US soldiers between Vietnam (twenty four percent) and the Iraq-Afghanistan wars (ten percent) is suggestive of this possibility (Gawande 2004). Similarly, at-a-distance fighting technology (e.g., land, air and sea drones) or weaponry that inflicts massive amounts of military damage without killing (e.g., cyber or electromagnetic attacks) could have a similar effect. By measuring combat fatalities alone, we could be deceived into believing that wars are becoming less destructive, if not less frequent. Elaine Scarry's (1985: 63) argument that war is competitive injuring rather than simply killing seems all the more durable in this light.

what it *is not*. Civil wars are assumed to be distinct from other forms of mass intra-territorial violence: terrorism, insurrection, regional conflicts, communal violence, revolution, strife, insurgency, riots and uprisings. Nor are they one-sided slaughter — state and non-state terror, genocide — because violence is mutually inflicted (i.e., the effective resistance criterion). For others, however, the term civil war stands for an intensely violent form conflict occurring at the national level and is easily interchangeable with other terms. Some researchers also readily allow for the possibility that the typology deployed in the COW project is not 'sacrosanct' (Henderson & Singer 2002: 187). Others, however, assert as an article of faith that civil or internal wars exist as a unique form of violence (Sambanis 2004b: 815); a phenomenon whose essential properties transcend each instance (Kalyvas 2006: 17). Indeed, the existence of civil wars must be assumed *a priori.* Any empirical investigation that attempts to establish their existence *a posteriori* will only beg the question by assuming a historically conditioned hypothesis of civil wars in the first place.

Although the new school of civil war studies have yet to obtain a rigorously enforced definition of civil war, one with clearly delineated spatial, temporal, political and practical boundaries, it has never been in doubt, according to most of these studies, that Algeria experienced a civil war in the 1990s. Where disagreement exists, it mostly pertains to establishing the precise start and end dates.[7] After two years of armed fighting, Algeria had

---

[7] Algeria is not listed in the 1994 version of the COW but is included in the 1997 version. Attempting to explain this disparity, Sambanis (2004b: 818) argues,

> Perhaps the war had not caused more than 1,000 deaths in 1992 (it actually had), but the revised COW data set, which goes up to 1997 [...], includes the Algerian war with a 1992 start date. Because the coding rules were the same in the two COW data sets, unless this was a coding error in the 1994 version, the coded start of the war in the new version suggests that the war reached the 1,000 death mark only after 1992, and the start of the war was then back-coded to the start of the violence in 1992.

However, it is disputable whether or not the Algerian conflict had actually obtained the threshold of 1,000 war-related deaths by the end of 1992. None of the available estimates suggested that more than 600 people had died in acts of political violence — 'battle' deaths or not — a year after Bendjedid left office (Radio France Internationale, 6 February 1992; The Guardian, 31 January 1992; Associated Press, 6 February 1993). In March 1993, Amnesty International (1993: 1) reported a cumulative death toll since February 1992 of 600. Insurgents had killed twenty civilians and 270 security forces; the government had killed a total of 300 insurgents and, as collateral damage, civilians. Only by mid 1993 were foreign news agencies reporting more than 1,000 fatalities (Associated Press, 10 July 1993, claiming 1,200 killed; Agence France Press, 20 September 1993, claiming 2,000 killed).

easily met all the basic criteria outlined in these studies to qualify. A thousand battle-related deaths had quickly been reported in Algeria; if not surpassing the average of one thousand such fatalities per year by 1994 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 1995: 33). The Algerian state engaged in combat action against insurgents, who had articulated political goals, seemed militarily organised and, most of all, were able to inflict casualties upon government forces. Though episodes of violence allegedly related to the Algerian conflict occurred in Morocco and France, and all sides received support from non-Algerian sources, those acts failed to internationalise participation in the violence. By these standards, the Algerian conflict in the 1990s more than meets the basic criteria to be called civil war. And yet a survey of the domestic and international discourse of the conflict shows that the term civil war was often treated as a highly problematic description of what was happening in Algeria. Just as there were many participants and observers who were eager to call the situation a civil war (some even before armed violence began), others were reluctant to apply the label without qualification. Where the new science of civil wars has treated its object of study as an unproblematic concept, the case of Algeria suggests that this is not the case. Not only is the concept of civil war highly contested, suggesting that its ontological given-ness is not so obvious, there is also a deep politics of naming involved in its application.

Collier and Hoeffler (2004) give the dates May 1991 to the present (as of 1999) for the conflict. While the latter might not disturb too many observers, the May 1991 start date (which only coincides with FIS calls for a general strike) is at odds with the more popular period of January-February 1992 (coinciding with Bendjedid's replacement by the HCE, the cancellation of elections, and the outlawing of the FIS). Fearon and Laitin (2003) give the widely accepted 1992 to 'present' (as of 20 August 2001) period. The COW project (Sarkees 2000) gives 7 February 1992 as the start date, yet there is no significant violent event on that date, apart from *ongoing,* and sometimes deadly, clashes between demonstrators and security forces that started in January. Sambanis gives the start date 1992 and only follows the conflict through 1999; no end is given, though some of the civil wars in his list are up to date through 2002.

The more recent data set on armed conflicts produced by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) the Oslo International Peace Research Institute's (PRIO) Centre for the Study of Civil Wars(see Lacina & Gleditsch 2005) gives a start date of 1 June 1991 when the first battle-related death allegedly occurred and gives the date 1 December 1991 when twenty-five conflict related deaths had accumulated. The June date is likely a reference to deaths during that month's demonstrations. The December date is a reference to a series of attacks near Guemmar starting on 29 November 1991, in which reports indicated that three members of the Algerian security forces died in the initial ambush and roughly one- to two-dozen alleged Islamist guerrillas were killed in response. The UCDP-PRIO list considers the armed conflict in Algeria ongoing as of 2005.

War without a name

Whether or not one believes the violence in Algeria obtained civil war status, civil war talk pervaded the conflict from the very start. Algeria's tense interregnum, between the riots of October 1988 and the events of January 1992, brought with it occasional references to the possibility of a civil war. Indeed, only a week after the 1988 demonstrations had been crushed by the Algerian military, Bendjedid justified the harsh crackdown as the only alternative to 'chaos and, subsequently, civil war'.[8] Defending his calls for a general strike in May 1991, Abassi cautioned against seeing the act as precipitous of, in the words of AFP, civil war.[9] At the end of the strike, a reporter commented, 'It appears that the powerful FIS is not willing — or perhaps ready — to accept responsibility for setting Algeria on the road to civil war'.[10] But with the FIS's victory in the first round of the December 1991 parliamentary elections, the stakes became higher. Following the termination of the electoral process in January 1992, fears of a civil war began to crystallise. The leader of the Kabyle-dominated FFS party, Hocine Aït Ahmed, called on both the authorities and the FIS to 'prevent civil war'.[11] A reporter with US National Public Radio saw 'the specter of civil war in Algeria looming ever larger'.[12]

While the denial of victory to the FIS was frequently cited as a possible trigger for a civil war, one Algerian saw it the opposite way. 'If the FIS came to power, there would be a civil war in Algeria', a government functionary told to a British journalist. 'A civil war!'[13] Algerian lawyer and human rights campaigner Abdennour Ali-Yahia located the possible trigger for a civil war not in the denial of democracy but in the Islamists' failure to obey its rules vis-à-vis Algeria's 1989 constitution. '[T]hen it's civil war, the army will move in', he told a reporter.[14] Even a year after the FIS had been outlawed, the situation still seemed

---

[8] Reuters and Washington Post, 'Chadli pledges political reform', Sydney Morning Herald, 12 October 1988: 18.
[9] AFP, 'Moslem fundamentalists call for general strike', 23 May 1991.
[10] John Hooper, 'Militants back down to avoid civil war in Algeria', The Guardian, 8 June 1991.
[11] AFP, 'Le pouvoir algérien cherche à mettre en place une direction collégiale', 14 January 1992.
[12] Jackie Rowland, 'Algeria Cancels Elections, Upsets Opposition', Morning Edition, National Public Radio, 14 January 1992, transcript.
[13] Robert Fisk, 'The battle for Algiers', The Independent, 19 January 1992: 17.
[14] Elaine Ganley, 'Specter of Islamic State in Algeria Provokes Dreams, Nightmares', Associated Press, 1 January 1992.

ambiguous, fraught with dangerous possibilities. 'We fear a civil war is coming', a FIS supporter complained to a foreign reporter at that time.[15]

Even with the intensification of violence in 1993 and 1994, international opinions were still divided on the question of whether not the situation in Algeria qualified as a civil war. Towards the end of 1993, Le Quotidien de Paris expressed concern that the 'worsening civil war in Algeria' might spill over into France.[16] Likewise for the New York Times, there was little doubt what the situation constituted. An April 1994 editorial claimed the events of January 1992 had 'plunged [Algeria] into an abyss of terrorism and civil war with no end yet in sight'.[17] One of that paper's journalists even proposed that this was the second civil war Algeria had seen in the twentieth century, the French-Algerian war being the first.[18] Yet for the London Guardian, only by early 1997 had the fighting 'assumed the character of a civil war'.[19] During the early years of the armed conflict, and sometimes well into the height of killing in 1997 and 1998, qualifiers were frequently added to the term civil war, as if in deference to its contested status or the ambiguous relationship between violence and politics in Algeria. The Algerian civil war was 'low-grade'[20], 'de facto'[21], 'latent'[22], 'virtual'[23]. Algeria was 'sliding toward civil war'[24], in 'the shadow of

---

[15] Nora Boustany, 'Muslim Right Presses Battle For Algeria', Washington Post, 5 January 1993: A10.

[16] Quoted in Emmanuel Serot, 'Les événements en Algérie dans la presse parisienne', AFP, 5 November 1993.

[17] New York Times, 'Algeria: Descent Into the Abyss', 5 April 1994: A20.

[18] Craig R Whitney, 'History's fetters entangling France on Algeria', New York Times, 21 October 1995: I3.

[19] The Guardian, 'Vietnam on the Mediterranean', 23 January 1997: 16.

[20] Robert Fisk, 'Assassination of Boudiaf a strike at secular Algeria', Toronto Star, 30 June 1992: A3.

[21] Julian Nundy, 'Priests killed in Algeria after hijack rescue', The Independent, 28 December 1994: 1.

[22] Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, 'Blow to Algeria as France cuts back aid', Manchester Guardian Weekly, 7 July 1996: 19; Jean-Pierre Tuquoi 'L'Algérie entrouvre ses portes à une mission des Nations unies', Le Monde, 23 July 1998.

[23] Frank Sesno, 'Algeria Appears Poised for Islamic Revolution', CNN, 1 March 1994, transcript; Charles Bremner and Michael Binyon, 'British entry will be barred to key Algeria militant', The Times, 1 September 1994; Anna Husarska, 'The mean streets of Algeria', The New Republic, 29 July 1996: 19; The Guardian, 'Algeria condemned for "human rights disaster"', 4 January 1994: 9; AFP, '22 more slain in Algeria at outset of bloody Ramadan: press', 5 January 1998. See also International Crisis Group (2001b).

[24] Andrew J. Pierre and William B. Quandt, 'The "Contract" With Algeria', Washington Post, 22 January 1995: C1.

civil war'[25], in an 'undeclared civil war'[26], near 'the brink of all-out civil war'[27] or on 'the brink of open civil war'[28]. The violence was 'something like a civil war'[29], 'something approaching civil war'[30]; an 'essentially civil war situation'[31], a 'climate of civil war' (Stora 2001a: 216). '[A] civil war that does not speak its name'.[32] For others, Algeria was undoubtedly in a state of civil war. Qualifiers attempted to match the intensity, horror and opacity of the violence. The Algerian civil war was 'ruthless'[33], 'deadly' (*meurtrière*)[34], 'raging'[35], 'brutal'[36], 'desperate'[37], 'barbarous'[38] and 'gruesome'[39]. A civil war was 'ravaging Algeria'[40], 'bloodying the Algerian land'[41] and 'tearing apart Algeria'[42].

The opinions of foreign governments were as mixed. In December 1993, French Minister of Defence François Léotard spoke openly of the 'the ongoing civil war in Algeria' as 'a

[25] The Irish Times, 'Algeria's Ills', 30 June 1992: 11.

[26] John Phillips, 'SAS veterans benefit from Algeria panic', The Times, 28 January 1994; Mike Shuster, 'United States Takes Wait and See Stance in Algeria', All Things Considered, National Public Radio, 4 April 1995, transcript; Andrew Gumbel, 'Algeria on verge of first talks with FIS', The Guardian, 6 September 1994: 8.

[27] Howard LaFranchi, 'Algeria's New Leader Calls On Islamists and Army to Negotiate', Christian Science Monitor, 4 February 1994: 6.

[28] International Herald Tribune, 'Watching Algeria Explode', 8 February 1995.

[29] Susan Morgan, 'The terror that is preying on Algeria', The Independent, 20 February 1994: 11.

[30] Washington Post, 'Algeria's Choice', 24 November 1995: A28.

[31] Bob Edwards, 'Violence in Algeria', Morning Edition, National Public Radio, 2 January 1998, transcript.

[32] '[...] une guerre civile qui ne dit pas son nom' (Bruno Frappat, 'Algérie. Le sang d'un peuple', La Croix, 9 January 1997: 1). Frappat noted, '[I]n Algeria, wars never say their name', in reference to the undeclared Algerian war of independence as 'La guerre sans nom' (The war without a name).

[33] Martin Regg Cohn, 'Priest lives as marked man', Toronto Star, 15 June 1997: A12.

[34] Le Point, 'Algérie : l'armée au fond des urnes', 10 April 1999.

[35] Le Point, 'Algérie : le sang du ramadan', 1 February 1997; Pierre de Boisdeffre, 'L'Algérie de nos remords et de notre espérance', Le Figaro, 14 February 1997.

[36] The Times, 'Algeria's brave voters', 30 November 1996; Christopher P. Winner, 'Debate erupts in France over media's priorities', USA Today, 8 September 1997: 5A.

[37] Roger Cohen, 'Algeria's Main Rebel Faction Takes Risk and Calls Truce', New York Times, 25 September 1997: A8.

[38] David Hirst, 'Algeria drowning in an orgy of bloodletting', Manchester Guardian Weekly, 5 October 1997: 12.

[39] David Hirst, 'Fear as Algeria's leader quits', Manchester Guardian Weekly, 20 September 1998: 4.

[40] '[...] la guerre civile qui ravage l'Algérie'. Le Figaro, 'Algérie : 70 000 morts depuis 1992', 31 January 1998; Alain Frachon, 'Deux témoignages éprouvants sur l'itinéraire des membres du GIA en Algérie', Le Monde, 8 March 1999.

[41] '[...] ensanglante la terre algérienne'. Le Point, 'Algérie : La stratégie de la terreur', 26 April 1997.

[42] '[...] la guerre civile qui déchire l'Algérie'. Michel Massenet, 'L'engrenage algérien', Le Figaro, 13 January 1998.

challenge for the Mediterranean basin, France and the European community'.[43] And by early 1994, then French President François Mitterrand saw Algeria in 'the beginnings of a civil war'[44] and described it months later as unambiguously a civil war.[45] A year later, Washington insider Peter Rodman, in a critique of the Clinton administration's allegedly Quixotic search for 'moderate' Islamists worldwide, warned that 'Algeria stands on the precipice of civil war', suggesting that the conflict had not, but might soon, cross that line unless a new policy tack was taken.[46] Bruce Riedel, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence, cautioned the US congress in 1995 that a deterioration of the Algerian situation into a 'full-scale civil war' would seriously affect US strategic interests.[47] A 1996 report commissioned by the US army described Algeria as both in a state of 'virtual civil war' and 'ongoing civil war' (Fuller 1996: x, 64). Other observers bridging the academic-policy divide reflected this ambiguity. Robert Malley (1996: 204-5) saw 1994 Algeria 'on the edge of civil war' but also 'in the midst of a war that is civil in name only'. Algeria was 'hesitating between military rule and civil war' (*ibid.*: 1) and yet had undeniably suffered a 'bleak degeneration into civil war' (*ibid.*: 11). But for William Quandt, Algeria — even in early 1998 — had most certainly not yet crossed the unmarked boundary into civil war: 'Algeria is going through a severe internal crisis, but not a civil war' (Quandt 1998: 162).

Whatever torments Algeria had suffered during the initial four years of the conflict, the ambiguous civil war threshold was held out as something constituting an order of magnitude far worse than what had already come to pass. Yet even as the violence

---

[43] Jacques Charmelot, 'M. Leotard : «la guerre civile en Algerie est un defi pour la communaute europeenne»', AFP, 15 December 1993.
[44] Roy Towers, 'Europe is accused of inaction as Algeria teeters on brink of disaster', Glasgow Herald, 10 January 1994: 18.
[45] Le Monde, 'L'intervention télévisée du président de la République à l'occasion du 14 juillet M. Mitterrand', 16 juillet 1994. Cited in Roberts 1999: 390.
[46] Peter W. Rodman, 'The Time Bomb in Algeria', Washington Post, 1 January 1995: C1.
[47] Thomas W. Lippman, 'U.S. Stakes Are High, Expectations Low, in Algeria's Impending Election', Washington Post, 1 November 1995: A26.
    Though the period of August 1997 to January 1998 was the bloodiest in the Algerian conflict and precipitated the strongest foreign interventionary language, the Algerian crisis generated just as much attention three years prior, though much of it was indirect. Based on one simple metric, the disparity is noticeable. The total word count for New York Times articles relating to the Algerian conflict (as listed in New York Times index) is roughly 51,000 for 1995 but 47,500 for 1997 and 1998 combined (i.e., the two years that saw the massacre of thousands). The difference is largely a result of the coverage generated by the hijacking of an Air France flight in Algeria in the final days of 1994 and, more significantly, the series of bombings in Paris attributed to the GIA in 1995 in which eight people died.

appeared to worsen from late 1996 through early 1998, the most concerned European powers and the United States[48] seemed reluctant to call the conflict in Algeria a civil war. As late as the spring of 1998, shortly after the violence had peaked, then UN under-secretary-general for Peacekeeping Operations, Bernard Miyet, would only call the Algerian crisis 'a situation of quasi-civil war'.[49] And he of course received a strong rebuke from the Algerian government.

Indeed, not everyone saw the armed conflict in Algeria as a civil war, least of all the Algerian regime. Shortly after coming to power as the head of Algeria's interim governing body (HCE) in early 1992, Mohamed Boudiaf assured viewers of Algerian television that, had it not been for the intervention of the army into the elections, 'Algeria would face a civil war and become an area of foreign intervention'.[50] Even following Bouadiaf's assassination in June 1992, and amidst multiplying episodes of armed violence (notably, a bombing in Algiers' airport on 26 August), former President Ahmed Ben Bella insisted that the Algerian public would not accept a civil war.[51] 'There is no civil war in Algeria as some people claim', insisted then Interior Minister Salim Saadi at the end of 1993; he instead contextualised the turmoil as one of the most serious crises that the post-independent Algerian state had faced.[52] Then Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi also assured his ambassador corps in 1994 that 'there is no civil war in our country'. Instead, Sifi spoke of a serious 'crisis' and a problem of 'terrorism' affecting Algerian society.[53] Declaring Algeria's 'victory' over terrorism in early 1997, then Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia chastised foreign observers, calling on them to 'refrain from calling terrorism in Algeria political violence and a violence by all sides, and from seeing terrorism in Algeria as a

---

[48] For example, the term civil war was not used during US State Department daily press briefings throughout 1997 and 1998 (i.e., either by the spokesperson or by the journalists in attendance).
[49] '[U]ne situation de quasi-guerre civile'. Dominique Simonnet, 'Bernard Miyet «N'en demandons pas trop aux Casques bleus»', L'Express, 6 April 1998.
[50] In the same interview, Boudiaf added, 'If we want to destroy ourselves, we will descend into civil war'. BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Algeria interview with Boudiaf on his role and that of Higher State Council', 6 February 1992.
[51] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Algeria: Former President Ben Bella Rules out Possibility of Civil War', 11 September 1992.
[52] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Interior minister: present crisis "one of the most serious" since independence', 3 December 1993.
[53] Wolfgang Schweitzer, '«Il n'y a pas de guerre civile» en Algerie, declare le Premier ministre', AFP, 10 octobre 1994.

civil war'.[54] Algeria's then Ambassador to the United Nations, Abdallah Baali, likewise insisted, 'We do not have a situation of civil war in Algeria', which would warrant foreign intervention.[55] Defending his government's position in an academic journal, Algeria's ambassador to the United Kingdom, Ahmed Benyamina, paraphrasing French philosopher André Glucksmann, said 'there is not a civil war in Algeria but a war against civilians' (Benyamina 1998: 186).[56] A change of tone seemingly occurred under President Bouteflika. In an apparent effort to distance himself from his predecessors, he suggested that they had led Algeria 'to a civil war, and we are not afraid of using this expression, which led to the death of at least 100,000 Algerians. Every drop of blood adds to Algeria's strength'.[57] Nevertheless, official Algerian documents, such as the 2005 Charter for National Reconciliation, adopt the euphemism 'national tragedy' instead.

Civil society and opposition members convey just as much contention and hesitancy in their deployment or exclusion of the term civil war. 'Algeria on the brink of civil war', warned L'Evenement, a now defunct Algerian paper, the day after Chadli's resignation. 'When shall we witness the militias? Yugoslavia is at our door', it warned.[58] By then, Ali-Yahia also believed, 'All the ingredients of a civil war are there'.[59] But in an interview touching on the FIS's first round victory in the December 1991 elections, Rachid Mimouni, an Algerian author, said, 'I think that civil war is not a real possibility'. Though he could not speak for the Islamists, Mimouni felt democrats would stick to non-violent

---

[54] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'PM tells Transitional National Council Algeria has triumphed over terrorism', 7 January 1997.
[55] AFP, 'Algeria gives conditional green light to EU mission', 8 January 1998.
[56] Khalida 'Messaoudi' Toumi likewise voiced support for Glucksmann's turn of phrase (Messaoudi & Schemla 1998: 144).
    An official with the US human rights monitoring group Freedom House echoed this sentiment: 'call it a civil war or more precisely a war against civilians' (Roger Kaplan, Prepared Statement, Heaings on Algeria, US Congress, House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa, 11 October 1995). Carlier (1998: 135) likewise showed preference for the phrase 'war against civilians' over civil war (see also Tahon 1998). Highlighting accusations of the government's complicity in the violence, one journalist commented: 'The label civil war fails to capture the random viciousness of the violence. It would be better to call it mutual terror' (Alan Sipress, 'A most uncivil war', The Philadelphia Inquirer, 26 January 1997: E04). Jacques Derrida (2003: 121) noted the gendered aspect of the war: 'This civil war is for the most part a war of men. In many ways, not limited to Algeria, this *civil* war is also a *virile* war. It is thus also, laterally, in an unspoken repression, a mute war against women'.
[57] BBC Monitoring, 'Algeria: President Bouteflika interviewed on internal situation, ties with West, Mideast', 11 November 1999.
[58] Qutoed in David Hirst, 'Between Plague and Cholera', The Guardian, 13 January 1992: 19.
[59] St. Petersburg Times (Florida), 'Rights leader predicts war in Algeria', 15 January 1992: 7A.

measures.[60] For some, the sense of steep asymmetry in the political violence also undermined the feeling of a civil war. At the end of 1993, Said Saadi, a leader in the Kabylia-based secular opposition, argued on France Inter radio,

> Are we going to come to civil war? I hope not. All hypotheses are possible in Algeria today; nevertheless, we have not come to it. A civil war is when part of a society fights against another part of society. For the time being, one part is attacking a society which does not defend itself with arms.[61]

Similarly, but for different reasons, slain union leader Abdelhak Benhamouda, secretary-general of the *Union générale des travailleurs algériens*, Algeria's main trade union, explained in mid 1994 that,

> [...] the issue is not between Algerians, contrary to what is said by those who call for a civil war or predict civil war in Algeria, because when we say civil war this means that there is a group, social groups or social classes against other social classes, Algerian regions against other regions. This is the meaning of a civil war and we are not in a civil war

Benhamouda then explained that the source of the violence was 'implanted and corrupt politicians who are pushing terrorists to kill Algerians'.[62] Around the same time, a letter from a young Algerian woman to friends in France began circulating in the French press. In it, the woman expressed fear that Algerian conflict 'will soon be a full-scale Lebanese-style civil war'.[63] The fears of a veteran of the Algerian war of independence found their way into the pages of Le Monde: 'The day is coming that will see the disintegration of the

---

[60] Eldad Beck, 'Algeria's Prophet of Doom', The Jerusalem Report, 16 January 1992: 32.
[61] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'RCD leader dismisses dialogue with FIS "moderates", regime "discredited"', 31 December 1993. See (Tahi 1995: 206-7).
[62] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Trade union leader says Algeria suffering "assassination" by violence', 24 March 1994.
[63] Anonymous, 'Veiled and Afraid in Besieged Algeria', International Herald Tribune, 2 April 1994.

army. And at that moment, the true civil war will start. The real butchery'.[64] The Rome Platform, signed by several Algerian political parties, including the FLN and FIS, in January 1995, sought to bring the crisis to an end. The final document spoke of the risks of a civil war, as if the intensity of violence or popular participation in the fighting had not yet crossed that threshold. The fact that the Algerian daily Le Matin had ventured a comparison with political violence in Lebanon following a truck bombing in the Algiers suburb of Meftah in September 1995 was considered notable: 'a first in the Algerian press, which rejects the term civil war', commented one wire report.[65] For Louisa Hannoune, head of Algeria's *Parti des Travailleurs* (Workers' Party or *Ḥizb al-ʿUmāl*) the conflict was 'not as they say, a civil war but a war of decomposition, disintegration of our country'.[66] Even during the darkening period of early 1997, though shortly before the massive Bougara massacre, one exiled opposition leader with the FIS, Kamar Eddine Kherbane, was hesitant to say that the situation had crossed into one of civil war. 'War has been forced on us, and we have to fight', he said in response to a question about the government's encouragement of civilians to form self-defence militias. 'That's what I mean by being on the brink of civil war. The regime wants a civil war'.[67]

The fact that the term civil war had become politicised within the political discourse of the Algerian conflict is perhaps not surprising. For some, this lack of consensus is as easy to explain as it is to dismiss. One need only posit a distinction between rhetoric and reality, propaganda and truth, partisanship and objectivity. In his massive study of civil war violence, Kalyvas (2006: 17) notes at the outset,

> Civil war often refuses to speak its name. [...] Indeed, civil war is often the object of serious semantic contestation. The very use of the term is part of the conflict itself, conferring or denying legitimacy (or status equality) to the parties in the conflict. [...] During the war, the term is usually sought out by insurgents in search of legitimacy, and denied by incumbents.

---

[64] 'Le jour approche qui verra l'éclatement de l'armée. Et c'est à ce moment-là que la vraie guerre civile commencera. La vraie boucherie'. Catherine Simon, 'Algérie : l'introuvable « troisième voie »', Le Monde, 22 October 1994.

[65] AFP, 'Un islamiste modère candidat a la présidence, l'Algérie sous le choc', 3 September 1995.

[66] Julia Ficatier, 'Algérie. « On ne sait plus qui tue qui et pourquoi » Louisa Hanoune', La Croix, 9 October 1996: 24.

[67] Mark Dennis, 'Algeria on the brink', Newsweek, 14 April 1997: 60.

To some degree, this observation fits with the Algerian case, especially the way in which the Algerian regime, above all others, rejected the label civil war until the violence had significantly died down. War is, after all, in some contexts, considered legitimate violence. Terrorism, on the other hand is always illegitimate. However, the FIS never seemed to embrace the term civil war wholeheartedly either, perhaps for the same reason (i.e., it would bestow too much legitimacy on the regime or suggest the mobilisation of society) or because the armed Islamist opposition had its own vocabulary, where *jihād* is often preferred (Moussaoui 2006: 436). More importantly, though, there is also a lack of consensus among foreign observers, especially the small academic community that followed Algerian affairs closely throughout the conflict. As noted above, some academic — along with media and activist — representations of the conflict deployed the term civil war without so much as a second thought, though some expressed ambivalence. Others, including some prominent Algerian specialists, have explicitly rejected the term. It is too self-serving to dismiss such arguments as a mere 'spill over effect' (Kalyvas 2006: 17) of the politics of naming practiced by civil war participants. Even if definitions are not stated overtly, they are nevertheless implied in speech acts that hail the term civil war. A refusal to engage alternative definitions, because of an *a priori* belief about the true nature of civil wars, asserts much but proves little.

The most forceful rejection of the application of the term civil war to Algeria has come from Hugh Roberts (1999) in his critique of Luis Martinez's (1998) *La guerre civile en Algérie, 1990-1998*.[68] Apart from navigating the partisan use of the term civil war and some problematic features of defining them temporally (Martinez 1998: 14-6), Martinez otherwise thinks there are objective benchmarks. The three key and interrelated aspects are the occurrence of violence within one state, the intensity of that violence and the extent to which that violence is a function of opposing groups obtaining control over territory (*ibid.*: 12-3). While few would question the claim that the violence in Algeria had reached significant levels, Roberts doubts whether or not the rebel groups ever controlled any large

---

[68] Martinez's argument for calling the Algerian conflict a civil war inexplicably does not appear in the introduction of the English version (Martinez 2000a) where it does in the original; there seems to be no explanation from the author or the translator as to why this is the case. Roberts' review is based upon the French original.

spaces. Martinez's example — the centrepiece of his field research study and the epicentre of the major massacres in 1997 and 1998: the urban and semi-rural periphery of Algiers — is actually, according to Roberts, the exception. It is the only significant space of rebel control during the entire conflict. Furthermore, Roberts suggests other considerations that might prompt us to reconsider applying the term civil war to the Algerian conflict: the fragmentation of the insurgency, its lack of either a coherent ideology or clear political objectives to distinguish it from the regime; the related failure of the insurgency to win the support of the millions of FIS voters and to expand and mobilize that base; the relative neutrality of the majority of the population in the conflict, unless coerced to do so otherwise; the lack of significant rebel spaces and thus the lack of formal combat fronts (Roberts 1999: 391). What Roberts clearly has in mind is a more constrained view of civil wars where the political, military, geographical and social frontiers of international war are transposed to an intra-national context. Indeed, he explicitly distinguishes the conflict in Algeria from several other cases that are, for him, exemplars of civil war (England, France, the United States, Ireland, Spain and Greece).

In terms of the geographical element, Roberts' assessment of the Algerian conflict has recently been supported by Moussaoui (2006: 436-7), Evans and Phillips (2008: 225) and Darbouche and Zoubir (Darbouche & Zoubir 2009: 22). Moussaoui (2006: 13), for example, argues that the term civil war cannot be applied to the violence in Algeria because of its 'localisation' (his quotes) and the limited forms it assumed. To this 'war without a front' (*guerre sans front*), we might add, in the words of Stora (2001b: 59-60), 'war without faces' (*une guerre sans visage*) — the idea that the armed opposition lacked a coherent representation or politics. Further supplementing Roberts' evaluation of the insurgency, historian John Ruedy (2005: 257) agreed that the rebels' relatively small number (estimated at 25,000) and their lack of significant popular support undermined the case for civil war. Willis, anticipating Roberts somewhat, noted that the number of fatalities related to the conflict in 1994 suggested the possibility of 'full civil war'. Except, he argues, 'there remained no evidence to suggest that the armed groups were near winning the active support of the general population' (Willis 1997: 376). Quandt, likewise, highlighted this aspect of the conflict: 'Most Algerians have remained on the sidelines' (Quandt 1998: 162). One possible exception among country experts is Abdelaziz Testas, whose studies on the Algerian conflict have worked within the World Bank framework.

Yet Testas, for no clear reason, seemingly cannot bring himself to call the conflict in Algeria an unqualified civil war. It is rather a case of 'virtual' civil war (Testas 2002a: 83; Testas 2002c: 178), an unexplained qualification adopted by Bradford Dillman (2000a: 213, 214) as well.

Whether or not we believe a civil war includes these demanded or implied properties (e.g., an armed opposition with a coherent structure and political ideology, formal armies, massive popular support and significant territorial purchase for all sides within a sovereign state), it is interesting to note that conflicting definitions still have widespread currency among scholars. To dismiss alternative definitions as simply misguided or partisan is not only unreasonable, it is to engage in a politics of naming not unlike the one that has been rejected in the first place. The attitude of the new civil war studies seems to be this: There is one meaning of civil war whether you like it or not. Those who disagree are either engaged in a politics of naming practiced by civil war participants or the victims of it. There is the real meaning of civil war and then there are those who either naively misuse the term or use it rhetorically, possibly hypocritically for political gain. The task of real science is to ignore the propaganda and focus on reality regardless of its perceived political intent or possible consequences. However, Roberts raises a relevant point in his critique of those who use the term civil war to describe and analyse the Algerian conflict. Mis-conceptualising the Algerian situation in such a way, he argues, will have disastrous results for those seeking to have a positive influence on the course of the conflict. Not only does the label civil war mask the real nature of the conflict, Roberts believes, but it also serves to de-legitimate the view of the Algerian regime and so disable helpful foreign intervention.[69] Here we have a similar 'whether you like it or not' sentiment. 'Of course

---

[69] Another example of the political callousness of the new civil war studies, already cited above, touches on the politics of naming the Algerian war of 1954-62:

> We see no reason in principle to exclude anticolonial wars [from our list of civil wars], such as the French versus the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria. [...] to drop such cases would be like dropping the current conflict in Chechnya as a civil war in Russia if the Chechens succeed in gaining independence. Alternatively, it would make even less sense to include them as wars within "states" that did not exist (such as "Algeria" in 1954). (Fearon & Laitin 2003: 76)

To say that Algeria did not exist before 1962 might earn Fearon and Laitin several enemies in Algeria, just as calling the 1954-62 conflict a civil war will likely provoke rebuke from Algerians and French alike. Journalist Robert Fisk experienced the former first hand: 'Whenever I refer to

observers are free to describe the violence in Algeria as a civil war if they really want to', Roberts (1999: 391) argues. 'But, unless their purpose is to irritate Algiers by subverting its propaganda, what is to be gained from doing so?' Regardless of scientific intent, using the term civil war has political effects, not unlike other contentious violence-related concepts like genocide (Mamdani 2007) and terrorism (Bhatia 2005). In this way, the most objective and neutral academic observes of civil wars are implicated in a series of practices that can be deeply political (as well as historical) in their consequences. Not just in terms of playing into or rejecting the discourse of civil war participants, but also in terms of shaping international attitudes and responses. The difference between a civil war and other forms of intra-national armed conflict is not semantics alone. It is a distinction that now makes a world of difference in terms of both political (de)legitimation, writing history and marshalling the diplomatic, financial and intellectual resources of the international community.

A question of violence (in general): civil war, from centre to margin

Beyond elucidating this refusal to acknowledge the politics of naming inherent in the practices of coding and analysing civil wars, the ambiguity of Algerian case (*qua* civil war) presents a significant challenge to the prevailing theory of civil wars. Within the new civil war studies, certain aspects of civil wars are treated as fundamental. Civil wars are assumed to have political, spatial, practical and temporal boundaries that make them knowable and distinguish them from other forms of mass armed violence. Algeria reportedly meets all of the standard baseline criteria (Sarkees 2000; Fearon & Laitin 2003) and even seems to conform to the most refined coding rules (Sambanis 2004b: 829-30).

"civil war" in a report from Algeria for the Independent, an official of the foreign ministry or the ministry of communications or the ministry of interior chastises me for my exaggeration' (Robert Fisk, 'Scenes from an unholy war', Independent, 16 April 1995: 4). The case of the 1954-62 war, interestingly, opens way to the conflicting accounts as to what kinds of identities can be involved in a civil war. Is civil war a war between fellow citizens, members of the same ethnos or merely cohabitants of the same territory? More importantly, though, we can also see the slight of hand that makes much of the new civil war studies co-constitutive of the very object of its analysis: the subtle transformation of hypothetical conjectures into ontological givens. Where UN recognition is initially treated as an operational assumption or a provisional coding rule for the sake of model building (in this case, Algeria's ontological status prior to 1962), it quickly becomes a reified fact. Metric becomes object.

Despite these findings, several academic experts most familiar with the Algerian conflict have vehemently rejected categorising Algeria as a civil war. For them, the political, geographical and social dimensions of the conflict do not cohere with the meaning of civil war.[70] For two sets of observers claiming to describe and analyse the same phenomenon, the contrast could not be sharper. The simplest explanation for these divergent readings rests with the differences in their respective conceptions of civil war, whether implied or made explicit. However, this explanation only works if one assumes a degree of empirical consensus. A closer examination of the competing representations of identity, politics and violence in the Algerian conflict suggests three important facts: proposed casualty figures for Algeria are wide ranging and highly contested; these statistics are one dimensional aggregates lacking either demographic indicators or basic conflict distinctions (state, insurgency and civilian); and, in the majority of cases, the context of death (who, why and how) is unknown.

'Juking the stats'

In his recent study of political violence, Jeremy Weinstein (2007: 316) states that the conflict in Algeria claimed roughly 85,000 people between 1992 and 2000, 'a number about which there is little disagreement in the source literature'. On what basis he can claim such a consensus, apart from assertion or ignorance, is not clear. Not only are most fatality figures in the Algerian conflict wide ranging and grossly imprecise, they also do not differentiate between fatalities that are directly or indirectly related — if not totally unrelated — to combat. The most recent update of the COW project (Sarkees 2000) oddly claims 80,000 state losses as of 1997 but does not provide a total casualty figure. The source of this total is likely the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIRPI), which provides a similar figure for the year 1997 (1998: 28). The UCDP-PRIO dataset likewise relies on SIPRI's figures but augments them with data from, or related to, Project

---

[70] In response to these Algeria specialists, it would be reasonable to ask for some clarifications. How much popular support should both sides have in a civil war? How much military capacity, how much politico-ideological coherence, and how much (quasi-)sovereign territorial control should the rebels have in a civil war? Yet given that their conceptions of civil war are mostly implied, we can know that, according to these experts, Algeria did not meet these levels. We are unable to extrapolate what these levels are; not, at least, without creating a theory of civil war extracted from the classic European and American examples cited or seemingly implied by some of these observers.

Ploughshares, a Canadian faith-based organisation that monitors armed violence worldwide (see Table 1).[71]

Table 1

Estimates of annual fatalities in Algeria (1991-2001)

Year	UCDP-PRIO *Yearly Fatalities*		SIPRI Yearbook *Running total since 1992*	
	Low	*High*	*Low*	*High*
1991	100	100		
1992	600	600		
1993	2,400	6,000	1,700	3,000
1994	10,000	30,000	10,000	25,000
1995	6,000	12,000	25,000	45,000
1996	4,000	12,000	30,000	50,000
1997	6,000	12,000	40,000	80,000
1998	7,000	10,000	40,000	100,000
1999	3,000	3,000	40,000	100,000
2000	2,500	2,500	40,000	100,000
2001	1,650	1,650		
Total				
1993-2001	42,750	89,150		

Sources: (Lacina & Gleditsch 2005) and SIRPI Yearbooks 1994-2001

Using a different source, Sambanis (2004b) provides a rate of 1,200 deaths per month between 1994 and 1998 based upon figures provided by the International Crisis Group (2000a: i). The Crisis Group, which actually applies this rate to the entire period of 1992 through 1998[72], derives this average from a total figure first provided by President Bouteflika in 1999 (see below). That is, the rate of 1,200 deaths per month neatly puts the Algerian conflict over 100,000 fatalities in 1998.

---

[71] These include Eckhardt (1996), who provides the well rounded figure of 50,000 killed between 1992 and 1995; Leitenberg (2003: 79-80), who arrives at the figure 100,000 for the period 1993-2000 based on his 'private archives'; and see also http://www.ploughshares.ca/libraries/ACRText/ACR-Algeria.html, accessed March 2010.

The UCDP-PRIO arrived at its yearly data by first assuming the popular figure of 'battle deaths' 100,000 and trending yearly data (i.e., arbitrarily doubling or tripling SIPRI figures) so as to give 'preference to the estimate that totals nearly 90,000 battle deaths'.

[72] Sambanis likely means Miriam Lowi, who claims less than 1,200 deaths per month for 1992-1994 and 1,200 deaths per month for 1994-1998 (see Lowi 2005: 239).

Not only are most casualty figures for Algeria estimates, these are largely assumed, without supporting evidence, to indicate combat deaths. Even the most fundamental distinction between civilian, government and insurgent fatalities is nowhere to be found in these accounts, never mind basic demographic information (e.g., gender, age, geographical distribution). Based upon a simple threshold of one thousand combat deaths since the start or per year, a range of 40,000 to 100,000 does not affect the possible classification of the armed conflict in Algeria as a civil war unless it could be empirically demonstrated otherwise. For example, if we accept the lower figure of 40,000 for the first eight years of the conflict, battle deaths would, on average, have to account for less than twenty percent of deaths. However, if we take the higher figure of 100,000 for the same period, combat deaths could only account for less than eight percent of casualties on average. Considering the fact that insurgent losses are well over 10,000, according to the Algerian government, it is unlikely that Algeria would fail to clear this threshold whatever the total. Reconciling these wide ranging figures matters more in terms of constructing comparative studies where more precise statistics matter (e.g., the intensity of civil wars; see Lacina 2006). What is important to note here, in the Algerian case, is the inaccurate and arbitrary nature of casualty figures, the misleading assumption that these are all battle deaths and the corresponding lack of basic distinctions between victim groups and types of fatalities. As will be seen below, the context of violence, as well as victim and perpetrator identity, will certainly factor into a consideration of how to categorise and understand the Algerian conflict.

Another striking aspect of the various internationally generated death tolls for the Algerian conflict is their propensity either to ignore official Algerian figures[73] or to multiply them two to three times. Part of the problem is the Algerian government's reluctance to meet international demands for fatality figures, thus engendering suspicion that the violence has been worse than Algiers was willing to admit. So naturally, when numbers were released, elements of the international community launched objections that the scale of violence was being downplayed, especially in the case of the major massacres.[74] A case in point was

---

[73] Clodfelter (2002: 618; cited by Lacina & Gleditsch 2005) is an exception.
[74] In 2000, Amnesty International complained,

President Zéroual's disclosure on 6 September 1994 that there had been 10,000 conflict deaths since February 1992.[75] This was more than a twofold increase on the previous official figure (4,000[76]) but still half what some foreign human rights groups were maintaining. A reportedly secret Algerian army audit, published in the French daily Le Parisien at the end of 1994, carried a staggering tally of 48,530 total conflict-related fatalities during the first ten months of 1994 alone.[77] However, the Algerian government's human rights monitor, *L'Observatoire national des droits de l'homme* (ONDH), released official figures in June 1996 based upon a survey of official government statements carried in the Algerian press. These indicated that, between 1994 and 1995, 1,400 civilians had been killed and security forces had eliminated 5,029 insurgents.[78] Incredulous, Amnesty International (1996: 11-2) contrasted the latter figure with a tally of 20,000 slain insurgents offered by Algeria's Interior Ministry at the end 1994. A year and a half later, the Algerian government — then under intense international pressure — again offered updated figures in January 1998. Between 1992 and the end of 1997, 26,536 Algerian civilians and members of the security forces had died and 21,137 had been injured in acts of violence; a new figure for rebel fatalities, however, was not disclosed at that time.[79]

> Throughout the worst years of the conflict, up to the middle of 1999, the Algerian authorities systematically censured the information about the real number of victims, giving artificially low figures — less than half — and accusing those who provided accurate figures of deliberately exaggerating the seriousness of the situation. (Amnesty International 2000: 15-6)

Yet the basis on which Amnesty International can judge official Algerian statistics to be artificial is not clear. As readily acknowledged in its reports, neither the Algerian government nor domestic or international human rights organisations have been able to verify any figures, whether internally or externally generated.

[75] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Official death toll since February 1992 reaches 10,000', 8 September 1994 (Source: Radio France Internationale).

[76] AFP, 'Two more FIS leaders to be freed: reports', 8 September 1994.

[77] According to a Radio France Internationale broadcast, the report in Le Parisien indicated 38,500 civilian deaths (12,700 in Blida), 2,733 casualties among the security forces and 7,297 losses among the 'Islamists' for the January-October 1994 period. See BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Parisian paper publishes secret Algerian report on death toll', 30 December 1994 (Source: Radio France Internationale).

The London Times, however, reported slightly different figures from the same source ('25,000 civilians, 7,000 alleged terrorists and 2,700 members of the security forces'); Retuers too: '35,000 people killed in fighting' during the first ten months of 1994. See Reuters, '61 militants killed, Algeria says', The Globe and Mail, 30 December 1994; Adam Sage, 'Algiers admits air security lapses', The Times, 30 December 1994.

[78] AFP, 'More than 5,000 fundamentalists killed in year: report', 12 June 1996.

[79] AFP, 'Bombes et faux barrage les jours de l'Aid', 31 January 1998; AFP, 'Algeria PM defends actions, gives first global toll since 1992', 22 January 1998.

If the Algerian government had been minimizing or hiding casualty figures, this seemed to change under President Bouteflika, though not without controversy. On 26 June 1999, while in Switzerland for the Crans Montana political-economic forum, Bouteflika stated that 100,000 Algerians had died and one million had been touched by the violence.[80] It was widely noted that, up to that point, the official government figure had been one-quarter[81] to one-third[82] as much. The 'Islamic opposition', on the other hand, had reportedly already endorsed an estimate of 120,000 casualties[83] and one of Algeria's leading human rights activists, Ali-Yahia, had been claiming 190,000 as early as December 1996.[84] In early 2001, another alleged secret report of the Algerian military again found its way into the French press, covering just the year 2000. It reported 9,006 total casualties, including 1,025 insurgents, 603 government forces and 117 civilian militia members. If true, the year 2000 — that is, the first full year after the adoption of Bouteflika's *Concorde civile* — had perhaps been one of the most violent of the conflict.[85]

The following year, General Abderrezak Maïza, then commander of the first military region, seemingly contradicted Bouteflika's 1999 claim of 100,000 dead. In front of an international symposium on terrorism in Algiers, the General disclosed several new official statistics. Most importantly, he stated that the conflict had taken 37,000 lives between 1992 and 2000.[86] Of those, more than 15,200 had been insurgents.[87] Looking to the Algerian

---

Human Rights Watch (1999) and some media reports presented the 26,536 figure as encompassing all conflict-related deaths. See Clodfelter (2002: 618).

[80] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'President on peace, referendum, prisoners' release, OPEC, France', 28 June 1999.

[81] Charles Trueheart, 'Ignoring Army and His Own Iffy Election, Algerian Chases Peace', Washington Post, 30 June 1999: A25.

[82] AFP, 'Algerian president to set out terms with armed foes', 4 June 1999.

[83] Rachid Khiari, 'Amnesty plan moves toward Parliament', Associated Press, 28 June 1999.

[84] Francis David, '«Les dimensions d'un génocide»', Sud Ouest, 16 December 1996.

[85] Florence Aubenas, 'Plus de 9 000 morts cette année en Algérie', Libération, 5 January 2001: 12.

[86] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Algeria: Army general says there are 650 terrorists "all groups included"', 27 October 2002 (source Liberté web site).

[87] AFP, 'Fewer than 650 Islamic extremists active in Algeria: general', 27 October 2002.

Explaining the discrepancy between his figures and those of Bouteflika, Maïza said, '100,000 dead, that's a political number. [...] Me, I have the names' (quoted in Hugeux Vincent and Baya Gacemi Baya, 'Algérie: les généraux sabre au clair', L'Express, 7 November 2002: 38).

In October 2001, Algerian officials claimed that 20,000 'terrorists' had been 'neutralised' but did not indicate what percentage of these had been killed, captured or amnestied. Quoted in Amnesty International, 'Algeria' chapter in *Report 2002* (London: Amnesty International, 2002).

government's national reconciliation measures does little to clarify the situation. In March 2006, Farouk Ksentini, head of the *Commission nationale consultative de promotion et de protection des droits de l'homme* (CNCPPDH), a human rights advisory body attached to the presidency and successor to the ONDH, announced that 150,000 to 200,000 Algerians had died in the conflict.[88] Of those, the implementation commission for Algeria's 2005 national reconciliation charter revealed in 2008 that the state had recognised its responsibility for only 17,000 deaths of so called terrorists.[89] These accounted for the majority of claims made to the government for compensation by late 2009; the remainder came from families victimised by state-sponsored 'disappearance' (6,154 claims) and persons dismissed from work for their political affiliations (roughly 5,000 cases).[90] While this suggests a number for insurgent losses that is somewhat consistent with General Maïza's 2002 figures, it is possible that many families who had relatives in armed groups, for a number of imaginable reasons, decided not to pursue or were unable to claim state compensation (e.g., in the case of the latter, deaths resulting from insurgent-on-insurgent violence). Whereas government and civilian casualties, apart from persons allegedly 'disappeared' by state agents, have never been publicly declared, as such groups are not seen as key stakeholders in Algeria's national reconciliation process. What interest either side — the Algerian presidency versus the security, military and intelligence apparatus — has in either inflating or downplaying casualty figures is easy to hypothesise but it is speculation nonetheless. Minimally, such disparate numbers warrant caution as they might not correspond to real bodies at all. Rather, this politics of numbers might be indicative of ongoing factional struggles where the international community's sympathies — as Roberts (1998) has argued — are as much the real battlefield as the ultimate prize.

---

[88] AFP, 'Algérie: entre 150.000 et 200.000 morts depuis 1992 dans les violences (Ksentini)', 18 March 2006.
[89] Salima Tlemçani, 'Application de la charte pour la réconciliation nationale: 300 dossiers de terroristes ont été rejetés', El Watan, 11 May 2008: http://www.elwatan.com/archives/article.php?id=93925, accessed September 2010.
[90] Nazim Fethi, '25,000 victims of terrorism addressed', Magharebia, 1 October 2009: http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2009/10/01/feature-01, accessed October 2010.
     While the government has offered financial incentives to insurgents that surrender, it has not yet offered compensation to the victims of armed opposition groups or those who died in acts of social violence (e.g., vendettas).

Human rights groups are an obvious alternative place to look for non-partisan facts and figures. Yet, as the conflict progressed, these outlets became less a source for primary information and more an echo chamber for the wide-ranging claims already circulating internationally. Only in the early years did any organisations or governments attempt to offer statistics broken down by victim population. However, establishing the context of violence in each case (e.g., its political, social or economic rationale) was deemed impossible from the start. According to Human Rights Watch's (1992) world report for 1992, the Algerian government claimed to have lost 200 members of its security forces in armed attacks between January and November. To this, Amnesty International (1993: 1) provided a figure of 600 conflict related deaths (270 agents of the security forces and 20 civilians killed by armed groups; 300 killed by state agents) a year into the state of emergency (i.e., February 1993). For the following year, Human Rights Watch (1994) tallied some 100 civilian, 100 security forces and 500 insurgent deaths between January and September 1993 based upon press accounts. As gross fatality numbers ballooned to 20,000 to 30,000 over the course of 1994 according to 'unofficial' sources (Amnesty International 1994: 1; see also Human Rights Watch 1994), such figures ceased to carry distinctions between armed participants and civilians. Three years into the conflict, Human Rights Watch (1996) claimed 30,000-50,000 casualties and more than 50,000 by 1997 (Human Rights Watch 1997). For a time, Human Rights Watch even stopped providing its own figures and only noted the claims others. For example, one of its reports (1999) noted the death toll 70,000 for 1992-1997 'cited' by the US State Department (1998). Even though it was attempting to put pressure on Algeria at that time over the issue of the massacres, the State Department had still been careful to attribute such figures to others. The report used language like 'there were estimates' but without providing a source. The same pattern was neatly used the following year: 'estimates that as many as 7,000 civilians, terrorists, and security forces died during the year in domestic turmoil, and that as many as 77,000 persons have been killed during the past 7 years' (US Department of State 1999). Despite the fact that the Algerian government has actually provided widely conflicting statistics and has explicitly refused to create a truth commission, the range of 100,000 to 200,000 fatalities has become, since Bouteflika uttered it in 1999, commonly accepted as an official death toll for the years 1992 to 1999 (e.g., US Department of State 2003; Amnesty International 2009: 6; Human Rights Watch 2010: 482).

A major aspect of the violence in Algeria that has inhibited consistent description is the pervasive opacity that has surrounded it. Certainly, the wide range of basic casualty figures is symptomatic of this confusion. As is the fact that there still is no clear sense as to what portion of these totals can be accounted for by civilian casualties. As Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch 1996: 268) lamented four years into the conflict, 'Precise data was notoriously elusive on how many persons were killed, by whom and why they were targeted, owing to strict government censorship and the hazards of investigating the violence'. If we accept the government figure of 17,000 insurgent casualties, and estimate a one-to-one kill ratio (i.e., an equivalent number of government losses), that still leaves tens of thousands, if not over a hundred and fifty thousand, unaccounted for. These government figures could certainly be false or highly inaccurate. Yet domestic and foreign estimates for insurgent strength (i.e., active fighters) never rose past 30,000. Moreover, the highest kill ratio of insurgents to security forces ever reported was five-to-one by Human Rights Watch for 1993, followed by 2.66-to-one in 1994 according to an alleged secret Algerian government audit. From insurgent casualties, we would have to subtract cases where the state agents deliberately or unintentionally killed civilians only to brand them terrorists retroactively to justify their execution. However, we would have to add to insurgent losses those rebels killed during fighting episodes between armed opposition groups. Internecine insurgent fighting could be one of the most significant contributors to Algeria's death toll both in terms of combatants and civilians. Yet such intra-insurgency killing has also been one of the most obscure aspects of the violence in Algeria, whether it is Algeria 1997 or Algeria 1957 (see chapter eight).

Barring a significant government cover-up of its losses, there is little warrant to assume an equivalent insurgent-government kill ratio to help account for Algeria's massive casualty deficit. Internecine fighting between insurgents (e.g., the AIS versus the GIA[91]) might help bridge this gap, yet no one has attempted to estimate its scope. Likewise, fighting between paramilitary militias could possibly contribute to government losses, yet no figures exist for this possibility either. Clearly, non-combatants would have to make up a large part of the difference, yet civilian casualties were often reported as being *less* than insurgent

---

[91] Groupement/Groupe(s) islamique(s) armé(s), an armed insurgent group (or groups) founded earlier than the AIS and independent of the FIS; widely depicted as a rival of the AIS.

losses. A notable exception is the secret government report of 1994, which suggested a non-combatant to combatant casualty ratio of 3.83-to-one.

Furthermore, civilian deaths are perhaps the most difficult to tally. The government's incentive to monitor and report civilian casualties accurately depends on war's fortune. A large number of civilian deaths can either de-legitimate the armed opposition or undermine a government's claim to provide real security. Though it seems that civilians are the bulk of casualties in the Algerian conflict, it is difficult to account for the vast majority of them, especially if we accept the 100,000 to 200,000 range. The highest figure ever reported for civilian deaths is 38,500, and that was in 1994. Subsequent government figures have either downplayed or implicitly multiplied this figure. Looking to other sources provides little comfort. Even the most inclusive, non-discriminating and contestable list of civilian massacres (Aït-Larbi *et al.* 1999) can only account for roughly 8,000 casualties between December 1993 and December 1998. Algeria Watch's slightly more conservative list of massacres, covering January 1994 to December 2002, likewise only speaks to some 7,500 deaths. The highest official estimate for civilians who were 'disappeared' by security forces and allied militias is 12,000 (Human Rights Watch 2003: 15), though the Algerian government's *ad hoc* commission on disappearances only recognized only 6,154 claims at the end of its mandate in 2005 (see International Center for Transitional Justice 2005: 30;Joffé 2008: 217). As for persons abducted by insurgents who still remain unaccounted for, equivalent numbers have been suggested but no government agency or human rights organisation has attempted to compile an authoritative list.

The context of death

When it comes to classifying episodes of mass violence as a civil war, it is not just that people are dying. It is also a matter of answering the questions 'Who dies?', 'Who is killing them?', 'How are they dying?' and 'Why are they being killed'. In the case of the Algerian conflict, providing a precise answer to the first two basic questions was as difficult as answering the latter two difficult ones. It is only assumed that the 40,000 to 200,000 reported deaths in Algeria were actual combat fatalities. Yet the questions 'How' and 'Why' are critical in the identification battles and combat, which are key to categorising casualties properly and so affect the coding of civil wars.

As with other aspects of defining civil wars in the recent literature, combat and battle have different and inconsistent interpretations. Whether or not the deliberate targeting of civilians (rather than indirect civilian deaths as 'collateral damage') constitutes combat is a key aspect of this lacuna. Fearon (2004: 278), as an example, allows insurgent violence directed at civilians to count as resistance against the state though not vice versa. This is presented as a simple coding rule rather than a claim about the nature of civil wars, but it is still a questionable bias that lacks any clear rationale. This stipulation assumes a disputed ontology of civil wars where they are inherently asymmetric conflicts based upon guerrilla warfare in which insurgents and the state do not share the same interests vis-à-vis civilian populations. Yet even if we accept steeply asymmetric conflicts as civil wars, Fearon's rule still runs counter to most understandings of how states often conduct anti-guerrilla campaigns. Fearon allows insurgents to inflict damage on the state by committing acts of terrorism against civilians (resisting or not, allied to the state or not), yet he inexplicably does not allow acts of state terrorism against an insurgency's civilian supporters to count as damage done to a rebellion. This seems strange given the fact that engaging in the latter — sometimes called dirty wars — is a well recognised counter-insurgency technique. Draining the sea to kill the fish. Indeed, such actions might be more indicative of a significant armed conflict than anti-state terrorism against civilians. Looking at the consequences of this rule highlights its shortcomings. A biased view towards civilian casualties would rule out civil wars where insurgencies were defeated with massive state terror before they were able to mount effective resistance. Political violence in Syria in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, involved armed groups who inflicted casualties on the government. Thousands of civilians, allegedly allied with the armed opposition, were eventually killed but overwhelmingly in acts of state terror.

Hoping to obtain a better understanding of the devastation wreaked by war, Lacina and Gleditsch (2005) propose a distinction between battle deaths (soldiers and civilians killed in combat) and total war deaths (the sum of all direct and indirect fatalities related to an armed conflict). Their more graduated approach to the question of civilian casualties suggests that the essence of combat is the possibility of immediate violent resistance. A combat situation obtains if an act of violence *could* be met with counter-violence. One-sided violence, on the other hand, is situations where resistance is not possible, where

violence is inflicted with impunity and without fear of immediate reprisal (*ibid.*: 150-1). While these distinctions seem justified, their functionality is predicated upon a robustness of information that does not yet exist in the Algerian case. Given the low resolution of the data available for Algeria, it is impossible to determine whether or not many government and insurgent losses, as well as civilians, occurred in situations where effective resistance was feasible. This problem likewise applies to any effort to determine the extent or efficacy of state terror (e.g., Valentino *et al.* 2004), as the context of killing is key.

The broad indeterminacy of the violence in Algeria — the opacity of its agency and its logic — points towards a disturbing possibility. It is no longer impossible to imagine a violent conflict, in Algeria or elsewhere, where direct confrontations between incumbent forces and armed groups rarely take place, where there is no threat of immediate retaliation or fear of resistance. A conflict based upon the mutual infliction of casualties on non-resisting or captured populations, whether civilian or combatant. A conflict where the state fights insurgents by killing suspected rebel supporters and insurgents simply massacre civilians seemingly allied to the state.[92] Furthermore, a significant number of violent deaths could occur inside the temporal and spatial boundaries of a civil war yet whose rationale rests outside the conflict's putative political limits — violent crime, banditry and other forms of wartime opportunism. In most cases, the basic context of death is actually unknown: whether the victims were violently resisting their killers at the time of death; whether the motive of the killing was religious, political, economic, inter-personal; whether the identity of perpetrators was necessarily disparate to the victims. From a macro-level perspective, like the one normally assumed by the new civil war studies, Algeria appears as if it is a civil war because both insurgents and the state were able to inflict casualties upon each other. However, from a possible micro-level perspective, the situation could be one in which there is mainly violence but little 'war'. In other words, Algeria might not have been a civil war, in so far as anything resembling combat is unable to account for the majority of violent deaths.

---

[92] Samabanis (2004b: 823) certainly recognises the possibility of massive one-sided violence overtaking combat as the dominant form of killing, though he reserves this concern towards well known cases of state authored violence (e.g., Argentina, Cambodia). The possibility that an armed conflict could be composed of acts of reciprocated atrocities against non-resisting populations escapes him.

Identity

The questions of agency and politics surrounding the Algerian violence, and the massacres in particular, further exacerbate this irreconcilable macro/micro dissonance. As established in chapter five and six, and reinforced in chapter eight, the Algerian massacres have been, and remain, subject to debate — both domestic and international — about the identity and motive of the perpetrators. What was perhaps most striking about the massacres, beginning in late 1996, was that they came *despite* the increasing routinisation of electoral processes and the advancement of peacemaking overtures between the regime and the FIS. In other words, the intensity of the violence displayed manifold increases yet the politics of the conflict at the national level suggested de-escalation. While the regime, government and state seemed to be stabilising, and the FIS-AIS capitulating, grassroots violence spiralled out of control. If an intense level of violence is the sole criterion for terming an intra-national armed conflict a civil war, then Algeria had certainly reached those levels before the massacre upsurge in late 1996.[93] But if a civil war requires the articulation of violence and (1) a clear political cleavage with (2) easily identifiable participants in the fighting, then the Algerian conflict had only become *more ambiguous*. The withdrawal of the AIS from the battlefield on 1 October 1997, following a three-month ceasefire[94], only added to the lack of coherence in the violence. Indeed, it was the increasing *disarticulation* of politics from the violence that gave the Algerian conflict its most unique, most disturbing and most challenging characteristic for the international community in terms of representation and intervention.

Given the extent to which the fighting in Algeria seemed deliberately obfuscatory (e.g., the alleged psychological warfare and counter-insurgency techniques of the intelligence agencies and the military; the apparent wide use of '*faux*' attacks by insurgents, militias and criminal gangs), reliable information might be impossible to find, if it exists anymore. As Lacina and Gleditsch (2005: 148) noted,

---

[93] Whether or not the peak massacre period of November 1996 through January 1998 was the most deadly of the conflict is debatable. Liess Boukra (Boukra 2002: 265) claims that terrorist activity, and resulting casualties, actually peaked in 1994-95. This is not, however, an overall measurement of conflict intensity, as it does not include terrorist deaths. Nor is it very clear what are the sources of his data.

[94] El Watan, 'Opacité autour d'une « trêve »', No. 2107, 23 October 1997.

In today's dominant forms of conflict — civil wars, wars of insurgency, and asymmetric conflicts — the distinction between combatants and non-combatants may be very unclear or even entirely fluid, in sharp contrast to an idealised model of a conflict fought between formally organised state militaries.

While it is recognised that identities in a civil war can be heterogeneous and dynamic (Kalyvas 2008), this does not go far enough to account for either the intentional use of false identities during episodes of violence or the display of manifold identities by some participants in the fighting. In some cases, Algerian identities were purposefully masked to misdirect victims and participants, as well as domestic and foreign observers. In other cases, drawing the line between security forces, insurgents, militia members, criminal gangs was reportedly impossible on a day to day basis. While the evidence for such practices is anecdotal, suspect and contested, so is most of the information surrounding much of the violence in 1990s Algeria. But if we accept the idea that perpetrator identities and the motives of violence can be simultaneously multifarious, contradictory, hybrid and evolving, in each episode and across all of them, then another condition of possibility for essentially indeterminate violence is present.

Conclusion: from civil war to 'new' war ?

The idea that mass political violence could manifest such opacity in terms of its practical and spatial logic, as well as its participant identity, is not new. In response to similar concerns, though resulting from the experience and exploration of different conflict environments, a group of scholars have suggested that the conditions and practices of mass violence have evolved to such an extent that our concept of war needs to adapt with them. Mary Kaldor's (2007) New Wars thesis represents one of the most concerted efforts to articulate a novel vision of contemporary mass violence.[95] According to Kaldor, New Wars emerged as a distinct ontology of mass violence in the final two decades of the twentieth century. Contrasting New Wars with what she calls Old Wars helps engender the

---

[95] See also Kaldor & Vashee 1997; Shaw 2000 & 2003; and Münkler 2005. Alleged precursors of new war thinking include Edward 1988; Holsti 1996; Snow 1996; and Gray 1997

uniqueness of this new phenomenon. Where war — civil or international — once featured conventional forces fighting for national, geopolitical or ideological goals, New Wars are dominated by informal armed groups and localised logics of violence based on identity conflict. The hallmarks of New Wars are civilian directed violence and organised crime. The techniques of New Wars are a hybrid form of guerrilla, insurgent and terrorist tactics; these have been adapted from traditional warfare without retaining their original political logic. The violence of New Wars is intimately local yet the financing, whether for security forces or armed groups, is globalised. The politics of New Wars is likewise complex; distinguishing between private, economic and political agendas is impossible as they are often one and the same. As such wars are identity based, bodies, rather than space, have become the primary terrain of warfare.[96] A core aspect of New Wars is the de-centring of the state — an effect of globality — within the contemporary practice of mass violence. Where the state is essential to old wars (whether internal or international), New Wars evade the state practically as well as conceptually. As Mark Duffield (2001: 14) argues, 'Rather than expressions of breakdown or chaos [i.e., the discourse on 'failed states'], the new wars can be understood as a form of non-territorial *network war* that works through and around states' (emphasis in original). This displacement respects both the organisational sense of the term 'the state' as much as the territorial aspect. The state is often present, both in terms of practice and space, but the state is no longer necessary.

On the face of it, new war thinking seems to offer a number of resources to help us think through the problems of (representing) violence in the Algerian conflict. Unfortunately, the new war thesis has gained little traction. Instead of sparking a wave of novel empirical research, the new war thesis has mostly prompted a theoretical debate about whether or not armed conflicts have changed in such a fundamental way as to warrant conceptual reformulation. The most common critique claims that the allegedly novel characteristics of

---

[96] One aspect of this argument for the new terrain of wars being civilian bodies is a claim that the combatant/civilian ratio has gone from eight-to-one before World War I to one-to-eight in the 1990s (Kaldor 2007: 9). Critics have leapt upon this claim, noting the weakness of its sources and conflicting evidence (Lacina & Gleditsch 2005: 146; see also Melander *et al.* 2006). The reality, however, will be heavily determined not so much by the accuracy of statistics but the means of identifying non-combatant fatalities in wars where armed groups are highly informal, identities are deliberately obscured and turncoats abound. Indeed, it would seem more fitting with the New Wars model to note that the maintenance of these rigid categories — civilian versus combatant — has a tendency to determine observation.

New Wars are, in fact, not new at all (Newman 2004). Before and after the Cold War, many civil wars, one response noted, contained most of the features that distinguish New Wars from old wars (e.g., the privatisation of violence, degenerate warfare). The tendency to view old wars as homogeneously formal enterprises and New Wars as informal, one critique argued, likely stems from the tendency during the Cold War to view all international political phenomena through a bifurcating macro-level perspective (Kalyvas 2001). This distinction without a difference, advocated by new war theorists, also extends to the etiology of New Wars. According to a different critique, new war thinking does not produce distinctly different testable hypotheses, and so the purportedly different causes of New Wars are already accounted for under prevailing understandings of war; for example, as outlined in the COW project (Henderson & Singer 2002). Indeed, a group of researchers have recently tested some of the main empirical claims of New Wars and found them lacking (Melander *et al.* 2009).

This chapter, in its critique of certain representations of the Algerian conflict as a civil war, suggests an alternative shortcoming to new war thinking. In short, new war theorists have not gone far enough in their efforts to deconstruct the dominant paradigm of contemporary civil war studies. Such a project might begin, to paraphrase Judith Butler (2006: 34), with the premise that there is no civil war behind expressions of civil war. Civil war is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results. To be fair, such a deconstruction does not count among even the secondary goals of new war theorists. Their objective, rather, was to argue for conceptions of war based upon observations of an allegedly new ontology of mass violence. Assuming the persuasiveness of their insights, new war theorists failed to articulate a clear pragmatic rationale to necessitate the deployment of their proposed concepts over older, more entrenched views.

5. Violence

The horror

On 29 August 1997, various international news agencies began issuing reports of a massacre less than thirty kilometres from Algiers. This was not the first massacre in Algeria since 1992, but it was quickly pronounced the largest yet. An early dispatch indicated that 200 to 300 people had been shot, butchered, dismembered, disembowelled or burned to death in the small farming village of Raïs (or Sidi Raïs) in the Sidi Moussa *sous-préfecture* (*dāʿirah*) of Algiers.[1] Survivors, emergency workers and hospital personnel floated even higher figures.[2] The Algerian government had quickly provided an official death toll of ninety-eight, plus over a hundred wounded. Attempting to account for such discrepancies, an Algerian paper wrote that, in the case of those burned alive, one coffin was being used for several bodies.[3] An early outside witnesses to the scene, a photographer with AFP, described seeing dozens of bodies covered with blankets.[4] One survivor, a schoolteacher, claimed that the massacre had started around ten in the evening on 28 August and lasted four to five hours, though others said that the killing started early in the morning, lasting from one to six. Reports of the number of attackers ranged from dozens to three hundred. The Associate Press interviewed a survivor, 'Amar', who said, 'They took their time to cut throats and to burn the bodies'.[5] A villager who survived by barricading himself in his house had to listen to his neighbours die by fire; 'Burn them like rats', he reported an attacker saying, ordering his subalterns to lob Molotov cocktails through the windows.[6]

---

[1] AFP, 'Terrible carnage près d'Alger: entre 98 et 300 civils égorges', 29 August 1997.

[2] Hassane Zerrouky claimed 'other sources' had vouched for 375 casualties ('La barbarie intégriste s'abat sur le petit village de Raïs', L'Humanité, 30 August 1997).

[3] Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 'Algerian Islamic leader appeals for truce in wake of massacres', 30 August 1997.

[4] Boubker Belkadi, 'Hundreds feared dead in Algerian massacre', AFP, 29 August 1997.

[5] Rachid Khiari, '300 killed in Algeria massacre, witnesses and hospital workers say', Associated Press, 29 August 1997.

[6] Jean Hatzfeld, 'Près d'Alger, des villageois égorgés et brûlés', Libération, 30 August 1997.

Another survivor reported seeing one of the attackers slit the throats of thirteen of his neighbours. Dispatches described a house that appeared to have been in the midst of a wedding party when the door was blown off and the attendees all slaughtered.[7] Another family had been celebrating a circumcision.[8] After being decapitated, some of the villagers' heads were placed in front of their doors, survivors recounted.[9] One said,

> My baby son Mohamed was five and they cut his throat and threw him out of the upper window [...]. Then they cut the throat of my eldest son Rabeh and then my brother's throat because he saw they were kidnapping his wife and tried to stop them. They took some of the other girls. [...] They cut my throat and I felt the knife in my neck but I tried to shield myself and the man sliced me on the arm. My wife was so brave. She tried to help, to fight them, to save me. So they dragged her to the door where I was lying and slit her throat in front of me.[10]

The Algerian Medical Union later told a reporter, 'Even the fetuses have been taken from their disemboweled mothers to be mutilated and massacred'.[11] One witness claimed a child of two had been baked in an oven after having his throat slit.[12] Another survivor recalled several weeks later, 'I could hear a young woman begging to be shot in the courtyard below my house. [...] She began screaming but the noise suddenly stopped. Yet, there was no sound of a shot'.[13] The perpetrators, according to other testimonies, had also abducted some of Raïs' young women, taking as many as one hundred with them. The Raïs massacre was not an isolated incident. Two days before, sixty-four people had met a similar fate in the mountain town of Beni Ali; the night after, a massacre of three- to four-dozen occurred in Djelfa prefecture, three hundred kilometres south of Algiers. Five days

---

[7] Rachid Khiari, 'Government assures it's boosting security, but exodus continues', Associated Press, 30 August 1997. See also Amine Kadi, 'Algérie. "Moi, Messaoud qui étais à Raïs lors du massacre"', La Croix, 26 September 1997, p.24.

[8] Elaine Ganley, 'Algerian Survivor Rebuilds Life', Associated Press, 27 November 1997.

[9] Barry Hugill, 'Algeria Slides Deeper into Bloody Morass', The Observer, 31 August 1997: 9.

[10] Robert Fisk, 'Algeria, this autumn: a people in agony', The Independent, 22 October 1997: 1.

[11] The Houston Chronicle, 'Scores await burial as survivors describe massacres in Algeria', 31 August 1997: A32.

[12] John Lancaster, 'As Algeria's Savagery Grows, So Does Mystery Shrouding It', Washington Post, 18 October 1997: A1.

[13] Anthony Loyd, 'Algerian terror victims plead for death by bullet', The Times, 23 October 1997.

after Raïs, an editorial in the New York Times would declare the past week 'the most violent in Algeria's nearly six-year civil war'.[14]

At nine in the morning (GMT) on Monday, 8 September, Radio France Internationale carried a report of back-to-back massacres, both in the same district of Algiers, Béni Messous.[15] The first massacre had taken place on the night of 5-6 September. Early wire reports on 6 September indicated that between sixty and ninety people had perished, though two opposition parties — the secular-leftist FFS and Islamist MSP — claimed there were well over one hundred dead in the 'shantytown' of Sidi Youcef. The killers, reportedly numbering fifty and 'howling like jackals', used axes and other sharp objects, along with guns, during the killings. Reports from hospitals indicated that many victims had been mutilated, primarily by throat cuttings. One survivor recounted seeing a nursing mother's breast cut off after her child was decapitated.[16] Another, who escaped into trees nearby, told a reporter, 'They kicked the door in, took the men, forced them outside, slit their throats [...] They came back, took out my aunt and slit her throat, after slashing open her stomach'.[17] Though the attackers apparently fled when security sources arrived after several hours of killing, the very next night, 6-7 September, there was another massacre in the same area, claiming forty-five lives.[18] After the two massacres of Béni Messous, Algeria experienced what one international press agency called two weeks of 'relative calm'.[19] Of the three massacres recorded during those fifteen days, the death counts were all less than two-dozen.

On September 23, Algeria awoke to news of another massive killing spree from the previous evening. Almost a month after Raïs, and coming on the heels of the slaughter of some fifty residents of Beni Slimane (Médéa) on 20 September, the Mitidja plain once again played host to a massacre of several hundred. From the site of the killing, the Haï

---

[14] New York Times, 'Algeria's Agony', 3 September 1997: A22.

[15] Radio France Internationale, 'Forty-five killed in second massacre in two days in Beni Messous', BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 9 September 1997; see also Radio France Internationale, 'Toll of 63 people dead in Beni Messous massacre', BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 8 September 1997.

[16] AFP, '63 civilians massacred in Algeria', 6 September 1997.

[17] Rachid Khiari, 'Algeria Massacre Kills at Least 87', Associated Press, 6 September 1997.

[18] Rachid Khiari, 'Algerians Barricade, Arm Themselves', Associated Press, 7 September 1997.

[19] AFP, 21 September 1997; also, 'deux semaines d'accalmie' in Figaro, 22 September 1997.

Djilali/Djillali and Boudoumi neighbourhoods in the Bentalha quarter of Algiers' Baraki commune, an early report indicated that crews had already filled eight rows of eighteen graves (144) in the nearby Sidi Rezine cemetery. More coffins were still arriving.[20] While the Algerian government backed a figure of eighty-five dead, survivors, medical and relief workers spoke of at least two hundred.[21] During the killing, which lasted for several hours, victims either had their throats slit, were burned alive or shot. Several children were reportedly thrown to their death from rooftops, pregnant women were disembowelled, homes were bombed with Molotov cocktails while others were ransacked or looted. Said one survivor, 'It's an unimaginable butchery'.[22] In the week following the Bentalha massacre, very few eyewitness survivor accounts appeared in the international press. However, as the Algerian government prepared for local and provincial elections in mid October 1997, foreign journalists were granted visas and allowed to visit the Raïs and Bentalha massacre sites. The Guardian[23] and La Croix[24] both interviewed the same Bantalha survivor, who pointed to the spot in his kitchen where his wife had been shot, his daughter hacked to death with an axe and his son stabbed to death with knives. In all, forty-one people — including neighbours seeking shelter — died in his house. The Irish Times published an account from the Algerian press in which one of the massacre's participants allegedly made bets on the gender of unborn foetuses before cutting them out of their mothers.[25] One resident recalled, 'I stood here at the window and I could hear those poor people screaming and crying. When I looked out of my window, I could see them axing the women on the roof'.[26] The attackers allegedly burned alive a mentally impaired man.[27]

---

[20] Boubker Belkadi, 'Des dizaines de victimes enterrees pres de Bentalha', AFP 23 September 1997.

[21] AFP, '200 à 250 personnes massacrées à Bentalha, selon deux quotidiens', 24 September 1997.

[22] M.D., 'L'escalade de l'horreur', Le Point, 27 September 1997.

[23] David Hirst, 'The mystery of Algeria's murder squads: "This is where they shot my wife"', Guardian, 20 October 1997: 1.

[24] François d'Alançon, 'Algérie. A trois jours des élections municipales, Bentalhâa continue de panser ses plaies', La Croix, 21 October 1997: 10.

[25] Lara Marlowe, 'Families hid and listened to dying neighbours' screams', Irish Times, 21 October 1997: 11.

[26] Robert Fisk, 'Stench of death in Algeria's perfumed killing fields', The Independent, 23 October 1997: 16.

Other late October 1997 reportage from Bentalha includes Alain Bommenel, 'Suspicion and hatred stalk the streets of massacre village', AFP, 22 October 1997; Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Bentalha, ville martyre, ville fantôme d'Algérie', Le Monde, 22 Octobre 1997; Anthony Loyd, 'Villagers relive terror of night massacres', The Times (London), 22 October 1997; Florence Aubenas,

A second 'relative calm'[28] following Bentalha ended when the Algerian government announced two massacres on Christmas Eve 1997. This time the killing happened well south and west of the capital, localised in several villages on the border of the Tiaret and Tissemsilt prefectures. Reuters reported that, amongst the twenty-seven victims in the Zouabria village, one was a decapitated baby of twelve days, found still clutching his slain mother. At the same time, the Associated Press reported a smaller massacre of eleven civilians just west of Algiers, in which 'Their corpses were decapitated and dismembered, and the heads were attached to hooks that were hung from the walls of houses in the area'.[29] By the end of the ten days preceding Ramadan, over 300 killings had been reported, including the Tiaret-Tissemsilt massacres. 'Even after five years of slaughter some of the acts manage to shock', a reporter suggested, noting that 'the hacked-up and gutted bodies of 11 men, women and children were found strewn around a forest next to Algiers'.[30] Then, on the first day of Ramadan, reports began to circulate of a series of massacres in the western Ouarsenis mountains. Algerian state radio claimed that several villages in the prefecture of Relizane had been targeted on the night of 30-31 December, resulting in seventy-eight dead.[31] Yet subsequent reports in the independent Algerian press offered figures three to five times higher. The Algerian daily Liberté interviewed survivors who reported witnessing infants smashed against walls, bodies being dismembered and decapitated. For the most part, the killers had used rudimentary weapons: knives, hoes, shovels, hatchets. The village of Kherarba (or Khourba) was purportedly decimated; one report indicated that, of the 200 families living there, 176 had been killed; another suggested that, out of 260 residents, only two survived. One survivor claimed he had

'Bentalha, le récit de dix heures de tuerie', Libération, 23 October 1997; Youssef M. Ibrahim, 'Algeria Votes, Recalling Fateful Election of 1992', New York Times, 24 October 1997: A8; Youssef M. Ibrahim, 'As Algerian Civil War Drags On, Atrocities Grow', New York Times, 28 December 1997: I1.

[27] John Lancaster, 'As Algeria's Savagery Grows, So Does Mystery Shrouding It', Washington Post, 18 October 1997: A1.

[28] Of the two- (Algeria Watch website) to four-dozen (Aït-Larbi et al. 1999) mass killing episodes recorded between 28 September (Si Serhane, near Blida, forty-seven killed) and the 23-24 December Tiaret-Tissemsilt massacres, all reportedly claimed less than fifty casualties.

[29] Associated Press, 'Attackers kill 59 people in Algeria, government says', 24 December 1997.

[30] Alain Bommenel, 'Fasting and bloodshed: Algeria ushers in Ramadan', AFP, 30 December 1997.

[31] AFP, '78 civils assassines dans l'ouest algérien', 31 December 1997; Rachid Khiari, 'Algerian government says 78 massacred in Ramadan attacks', Associated Press, 31 December 1997.

helped remove eighty bodies from two different houses; 'I leave you to imagine the extent of the catastrophe in four hamlets'.[32] Another resident of the area recounted the death of his wife and three children by having their throats slashed. A young woman alleged surviving an axe blow to the stomach; several other women were seen abducted by the attackers.[33] The killing had started shortly after sunset and only ended the following dawn. Two police officers interviewed by the Algeria daily L'Authentique claimed that they had respectively collected seventy-five and 115 bodies from two different villages.[34]

While international attention and condemnation began to focus more intensely on the massacres in Algeria, the killing in Relizane had not yet reached its zenith. On 6 January, the international press announced a new wave of massacres. Citing several Algerian dailies, one early report claimed over one hundred murdered in the village of Meknassa and that a village near Had Chekala had been 'razed' during the weekend of 3-4 January.[35] Subsequent reports, again based on the Algerian press, offered figures between 150 and 500 killed. 'The village is completely destroyed, burned to the ground and all its residents shot dead, slaughtered or burnt alive', recalled one witness from a neighbouring area. 'Bodies of men, women and children still litter the area'.[36] Another witness, this one at the scene of the Meknassa, said, 'The bodies were mutilated, and many disfigured by axes'.[37]

---

[32] Rachid Khiari, '"Guerrillas" with walkie-talkies herded Algerians to slaughter', The Observer, 4 January 1998: 4.

[33] AFP, 'New bloodbath in Algeria: 412 massacred', 3 January 1998.

[34] Alain Bommenel, 'Les autorités et l'armée confrontées a l'escalade de la terreur', AFP, 3 January 1998.
    See also, Associated Press 'Report: Ramadan massacres killed more than 400 in Western Algeria', 2 January 1998; Associated Press 'Muslim militants hack 412 villagers to death in Algeria's worst massacre', 3 January 1998; Reuters, 4 January 1998; AFP '22 more slain in Algeria at outset of bloody Ramadan: Press' 5 January 1998.

[35] AFP, 'Algerian newspapers report 172 killed in latest massacres', 6 January 1998.
    While the Algerian government did not acknowledge these larger massacres, three smaller ones in the same area — Sidi Mammar (twenty nine killed), Ouled Bounif (twelve) and Ihdjaidia (twenty one killed) — were officially disclosed, having occurred on the nights between 5-7 January. See AFP,'More massacres hit Algeria as pressure mounts for inquiry',7 January 1998; Reuters in 'Massacres claim 62 more Algerians: Pressure grows for outside investigation', Calgary Herald (Alberta), 8 January 1998: A5. Other spellings included: Sidi Maamar/Oued Mâamar, Hedjailia and Kalaat Ouled Bounif.
    In 2006, a high government official said that one of the Relizane massacres had reached one thousand deaths. See F.M., 'Massacre de Ramka: 1000 morts!', El Watan, 22 March 2006.

[36] Reuters, 'Algerian massacre victims too many to bury', 10 January 1998.

[37] Associated Press, 'Algerian massacres kill at least 392 - including 200 in one village', 6 January 1998.

Others spoke of seeing people burned alive, pregnant women eviscerated and a baby killed with a hatchet. A donkey's head was allegedly placed on the body of a decapitated villager.[38] Confirming such accounts, however, proved difficult. Algerian journalists had difficulty reaching these sites; some were located hours from main roads, lacked phone lines and were accessible only by foot. By 8 January, Algerian government-run radio channel had reported three additional massacres in the same area, totalling, according to official sources, sixty-two deaths.[39]

The last of the major massacres of the Algerian conflict, the slaughter at Sidi Hamed on 11-12 January, brought the focus back to the outskirts of Algiers. Initially, news reports claimed that 'dozens of families' had perished, including children, women and the elderly.[40] The killing began in the evening after the residents had broken their fast. The Algerian government circulated an official death toll of 103 (along with seventy wounded)[41] shortly afterwards, while the some elements of the Algerian press put forward figures from 256 (La Tribune) to 400 (Liberté and El Watan).[42] Writing from the site of the killing, a foreign reporter saw, 'In one corner of the village, a crowd suddenly parted as four men emerged from one torched home, carrying the grisly blackened remains of yet another victim'. He added, 'Nearby, one pale villager scraped a gory mixture of flesh and bone off the side of a hut'. A survivor told the reporter, 'Look, on the other side of the road, you can see where they shot people and cut their throats'. Another said, 'My cousin also managed to keep them back, but only until his ammunition ran out. Then they killed him and cut off his hands'.[43] Two Algerian papers published a photo showing the body of a burned child, skin charred away to reveal a bare skull.[44] As the foreign press repeatedly underlined, the Sidi Hamed massacre brought the death toll during the first fortnight of Ramadan to over one thousand in Algeria.

---

[38] AFP, '"The dead are the lucky ones", says Algerian massacre survivor', 7 January 1998.
[39] Reuters, 'Massacres claim 62 more Algerians: Pressure grows for outside investigation', Calgary Herald, 8 January 1998: A5.
    See also Associated Press, 'Algerians flee horror, government rejects inquiry, West seeks solutions', 6 January 1998; AFP, 'More than 170 slain in latest Algerian massacres: Papers' 7 January 1998; Associated Press, 'Government rejects international inquiry into violence, Algerians flee', 7 January 1998; AFP, 'EU grapples for response to Algeria blood-letting', 8 January 1998.
[40] AFP, '"Dozens of families" wiped out in new Algerian massacre', 12 January 1998.
[41] AFP, '103 morts et 70 blesses a Sidi Hammed, selon un premier bilan officiel', 12 January 1998.
[42] AFP, 'Algerian government denies death toll of 400', 13 January 1998.
[43] AFP, 'Bloodbath at Sidi Hamed brings new horror in Algeria', 12 January 1998.
[44] AFP, 'Graphic accounts of latest Algeria massacre as EU to send team', 13 January 1998.

The massacres

The above sampling is just some of the accounts to come out of the largest reported massacres in 1990s Algeria. This wave of massacres, which brought widespread international attention to the violence in Algeria, began in late 1996 and peaked in January 1998. Civilian massacres continued past a popular referendum on national reconciliation in 1999 and were reported through 2002, though at levels far below the zenith of August 1997 to January 1998. There are also allegations of massacre activity before 1996. Algerian historian Mohamed Harbi, citing an alleged high-level source, said that state agents had massacred 'hundreds' of civilians in Ouled Asker (Jijel prefecture) in 1992 (Harbi *et al.* 1998: 169), a claim that is not supported by any other account. Dissident Algerian human rights activists have recorded allegations of state-authored massacres as early as 1993, though these have likewise never been independently confirmed and were not reported by mainstream sources at the time.[45] In his memoir of life in the Algerian special forces, Souaïdia (2001: 149-51; see chapter eight) recalls unwittingly taking part in a state-authored civilian massacre in March 1993 in a place called Douar Ez-Zaatria (or Zaâtria), which was allegedly blamed on Islamists in the Algerian press. However, a leading Algerian newspaper editor denied that such a story has ever been reported[46] and

[45] The most significant allegation concerns reports of a possible large massacre of 173 persons in the region of Tenes (Chlef) in May of 1994. However, the context provided by Algeria Watch's list of massacres indicates that 173 bodies were *found*, suggesting the possibility of mass grave or body dump, rather than a single mass killing episode. The two original sources for these claims (seen as close to the FIS) are out of print and could not be obtained by the author. They are Comité Algérien des Militants Libres de la Dignité humaine et des Droits de l'Homme, *Livre Blanc Sur La Répression En Algérie (1991-1994). Tome 1* (Geneva, Switzerland: Hoggar, 1994); and Comité Algérien des Militants Libres de la Dignité humaine et des Droits de l'Homme, *Livre Blanc Sur La Répression En Algérie (1991-1995). Les Vérités Sur Une Guerre Cachée. Tome 2* (Geneva, Switzerland: Hoggar, 1995). The French Interior Ministry blocked the distribution of the first volume in France on the grounds that it contained hate speech and sought to affect government policy. See AFP, 'Un «Livre blanc sur la repression en Algerie» interdit en France', 13 September 1995.

[46] Nadjia Bouzeghrane, 'Les fausses vérités de Souaïdia', El Watan, 20 February 2001. See chapter eight dealing with Souaïdia's response.

The debate surrounding a massacre in or near Douar Ez-Zaâtria, however, raises the possibility of some massacre episodes being lost to history. While it might not seem possible for a massacre to go unrecorded or unwitnessed, anthropologist Carolyn Nordstrom (Nordstrom 1997: 44) recalls circling over a decimated village in Mozambique in an aircraft. The killing, she estimated, must

when two French journalists were allowed to visit the putative site of the massacre, villagers denied that there had ever been any such thing.[47] In short, most massacres reports between 1992 and mid 1996 are highly contentious, apart from the Berrouaghia prison massacre of November 1994 (figures ranging between twelve and 500 prisoners killed) and the Serkadji prison massacre of February 1995 (109 prisoners reportedly killed).

Indisputable is the fact that public bombings caused a significant number of single-episode fatalities before 1996, and still remain a facet of Algeria's political violence through 2010. Whether or not to consider bombings as a kind of massacre is a question raised by some of the literature. Though both bombings and massacres cause a great number injuries and deaths, most studies of the Algerian massacres have either explicitly (Aït-Larbi *et al.* 1999) or implicitly (Kalyvas 1999; Hafez 2004) distinguished between bombings and other forms of mass killing. The Aït Larbi, *et al.*, (1999: 16-7) study codes bombings as 'random' and massacres as 'selective'. Yet even in the case of Algeria, this distinction does not always hold. Impersonal — as opposed to 'suicide' — bombings might have less of a chance of being as selective as face-to-face killing. But at-a-distance public bombings in Algeria frequently appeared to have specific targets, from civilian to military, and therefore specific victim populations. As will be examined in the following chapter, it has not been well established that each and every one of the hundreds, possibly thousands, of victims of the major massacres — e.g., Bougara, Raïs, Béni Messous, Bentalha, Relizane, Sidi Hamed (see map 1) — were specifically selected for murder. Just like a bombing, precision seems heavily determined by spatial location. It is also seems problematic to describe, as selective, massacres at 'false checkpoints' (*faux barrages*), where armed actors would establish barricades on roads, pretending to be either security forces or insurgents in order to engage in terror, racketeering or both. Moreover, the term massacre is often used to imply the collective murder of non-resisting persons, whether civilian or armed, which could easily apply to victims of both bombings and face-to-face killings equally.

---

have figured at least a thousand. When she inquired with local officials about the fate of the village, they knew nothing about it though they seemed unsurprised and indifferent.
[47] Blaise Robinson and Olivier Joulie, 'La version des habitants de Zaâtria: «Il n'y a jamais eu de massacre ici...»', Le Nouvel Observateur Nº1899, 29 March 2001.

Map 1

Approximate location of the largest Algerian massacres, 1997-98
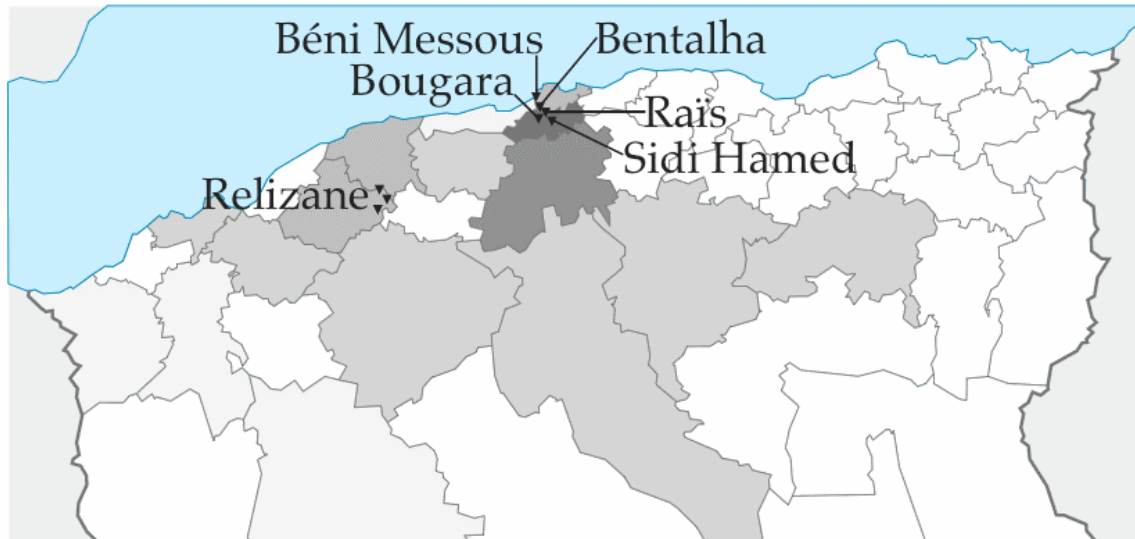
Note: See Map 2 for an explanation of the prefecture shading.

Just as the qualitative elements of the term massacre have been implicitly and explicitly debated within the literature on Algerian violence, so have the quantitative aspects. As with the analytical discussions about how many deaths are required for an intra-national armed conflict to make the leap to 'civil war' status (see chapter four), similar questions could certainly be raised as to the exact lower limits of a massacre. When does mass killing become a massacre? However, in the discourse on the Algerian massacres, no debate really existed on this question. In various media representations, the implicit baseline for a massacre appears to have been roughly nine or ten victims, though with possibly significant downward deviation (see Table 2). More rigorous studies of the massacres have used thresholds from four (Sidhoum & Algeria Watch 2003a; Kalyvas 1999) to fifteen (Hafez 2004: 54). While this debate might seem too pedantic, the consequences of adopting different massacre thresholds are plain enough. A threshold of fifteen fatalities, for example, eliminates over one hundred potential massacre episodes and roughly 1,100 victims from the Algeria Watch list between November 1996 and August 2001. On the other hand, no reason is given as to why the threshold was neither three nor two. What is the distinction between a massacre and other forms of targeted killing involving two or more victims? Depending on what answer is provided, and for whatever political, scientific

or pragmatic reasons, our understanding of the basic scope of the massacre phenomenon in Algeria will be heavily determined by it. Yet labelling the murder of four, fourteen, forty and four hundred people as a massacre also had the effect, at least in the case of Algeria, of amalgamating a wide variety of violent episodes into a single category. As will be argued in the conclusion of this chapter, this tendency to over-determine brought with it a predisposition to assign a single logic to every constituent act of the category.

Keeping this in mind, there have been four concerted attempts to measure the basic dimensions of the massacres in Algeria: Aït-Larbi *et al.* 1999; Kalyvas 1999; Hafez 2004 and the website of the dissident exile group Algeria Watch (Sidhoum & Algeria Watch 2003a) based in Germany. Within these studies, the number of massacre events ranges from a low of seventy-six between November 1996 and August 2001 using a threshold of fifteen deaths (Hafez 2004: 54), to a high of 335 massacres between December 1993 and December 1998 using a threshold of five deaths (Aït-Larbi *et al.* 1999). The latter study produces a figure of 7,931 massacre-related fatalities, though it must be stressed that claims of massacres before 1996 are highly contentious. The less controversial massacre period of late 1996 through the end of 1998 produces a total of 6,449 deaths from 295 massacre episodes in the Aït Larbi, *et al.*, study. Kalyvas, using a threshold of four deaths, counts eighty-six massacres for the same period; the result is a range of 3,147 to 3,865 fatalities. Algeria Watch and Sidhoum (2003a), also using a threshold of four victims, recorded 5,183 deaths from 182 massacres during this peak period (late 1996 to December 1998). The Algeria Watch list has also gone on to record massacres: nineteen in 1999 (297 killed), thirteen in 2000 (174 killed), thirty-two in 2001 (356 killed) and thirty-three in 2002 (375 killed).[48] Compared to the total number killed in acts of armed violence since 1992, with estimates ranging between 50,000 to 200,000 (see chapter four), it would appear that the number of massacre victims accounts for a relatively small fraction of total war-related fatalities.

---

[48] Algeria Watch has also recorded massacres as late as 2003 and 2004.

Table 2

Non-exhaustive list of widely reported massacre episodes in Algeria (1996-2002)

Approx. End Date (d/m/y)	Min. # killed	Max. # killed	Locality (Sometimes Approximate) or Context	Wilaya	Notes
17/8/96		63	Faux barrage road attack (contested)	Msila - Batna	
4/9/96		18	Faux barrage attack on road near Tunisian border	Batna	
6/9/96		12	Faux barrage attack on road	Ghardaia	
5/11/96		31	Sidi Kebir	Blida	
12/1/97		14	Tabainat	Blida	
19/1/97	30	49	Beni Slimane, Sidi Abdelaziz	Medea	
1/2/97		21	Medea	Medea	
17/2/97		31	El Karrech	Blida	
4/3/97		52	Thalit	Medea	
19/3/97		32	Ouled Antar	Medea	
14/4/97		30	Boufarik	Blida	
22/4/97	47	93	Bougara	Blida	
23/4/97		42	Omaria	Medea	
15/5/97	30	32	Chebli	Blida	
14/6/97		13		Alger	
16/6/97		50	Dairet Lebguer	Msila	
13/7/97		44	Ksar El-Boukhari	Medea	
23/7/97	37	56	Yemma M'ghita and Benachour	Blida	
25/7/97	28	38	Hadjout	Tipaza	
28/7/97	50	51	Larbaa	Blida	
30/7/97		41	Ain Defla	Ain Defla	
21/8/97		63	Souhane	Blida	
26/8/97		64	Beni Ali	Blida	
29/8/97	98	300	Sidi Raïs	Alger	Officially 98
30/8/97		42	Maalba	Djelfa	Often dated 28 Aug
6/9/97		63	Algiers (Beni Messous)	Alger	
20/9/97		53	Beni Slimane, Tablat	Medea	
23/9/97		250	Bentalha	Alger	
27/9/97		30	Sfisef	Sidi Bel Abbes	

Date					
13/10/97	43	54	Sig (attack on bus)	Mascara - Oran	
18/12/97		31	Djiboulo, near Larbaa	Blida	
21/12/97		30	El Bordj	Tlemcen	
24/12/97	48	120		Tiaret	Two attacks
26/12/97		27		Tiaret	
27/12/97	25	30	Safsaf	Mascara	
31/12/97	78	412	Souk El Had (3-4 villages)	Relizane	Multiple villages attacked
3/1/98		117	Meknessa	Relizane	
4/1/98	153	500	Had Chekala (area)	Relizane	
5/1/98		62		Relizane	Several attacks reported
11/1/98	103	400	Sidi Hamed	Blida	
27/3/98		47	Oued Bouaicha	Djelfa	
28/4/98		28	Arzew	Oran	
8/12/98	55	81		Chlef	
15/8/99		29	Beni Ounif	Bechar	
24/12/99		30	Faux barrage attack near Khémis Meliana	Ain Defla	
28/2/00		24		El Bayadh	
4/5/00		23	Faux barrage attack	Medea	
18/1/01		23		Chlef	
28/1/01		25		Chlef	
11/2/01		27	Berrouaghia	Medea	
27/9/01		22	Larbaa	Blida	
30/5/02		23		Chlef	

Sources: AFP, 'Les principaux massacres en Algérie depuis le début des troubles en 1992', 19 August 1996; Reuters/The Globe and Mail (Canada), 'Bombs shatter safety of big cities Muslim fundamentalists in Algeria take violence to urban areas in heightening conflict', 23 January 1997; Le Monde, 'Plus de 700 morts depuis juillet', 1 September 1997; Sud Ouest, 'Un terrible bilan', 24 September 1997; Reuters/Toronto Star, 'Algerian rebels kill 54 in night of bloodshed', 15 October 1997: A12; AFP, 'Following is a chronology of some of the worst known massacres of 1997', 31 December 1997; AFP, 'Les massacres les plus meurtriers en Algérie depuis le début de l'année', 31 December 1997; Associated Press, 'Major massacres of Algerian insurgency', 3 January 1998; AFP, 'Worst massacres in Algeria in the past year', 7 January 1998; La Croix, 'Algérie. Deux ans de violences sans précédent', 12 December 1998; AFP, 'Dix ans de violence en Algérie', 9 January 2002; AFP, Les attentats les plus meurtriers en Algérie depuis trois ans, 5 July 2002.

Geographically, massacres were reported in a large number of prefectures (*wilayat*), though very few in the Saharan areas or, before 1999, in the eastern prefectures (see map 2). According to the Aït Larbi, *et al.* (1999: 51-6), study, which has performed the most detailed geographical analysis, the highest concentration of massacres was in the central north: Algiers and the adjacent prefectures of Blida, Médéa, Tipaza and Aïn Defla. Together these account for nearly two thirds of massacre events in their database; the second highest concentration was in the northwestern prefectures. Moreover, two observed features of the massacres, which prompted much speculation about their political motivation, are apparently born out in the Aït Larbi, *et al.*, study. First, massacres tended to strike Islamist electoral strongholds in the elections of 1990 and 1991 (*ibid.*: 56-71) and, second, massacre activity greatly decreased, almost to zero, during voting periods (*ibid.*: 121-5). Indeed, the Aït Larbi, *et al.*, study develops a number of other indicators and performs a number of analyses on the political geography of the massacres. While there is reason to question the data, methodology and analysis of the Aït Larbi, *et al.*, study, it is more important, given the goals of this chapter and this study in general, to focus on the question of the massacres' political agency and logic.

While questions regarding the massacres' threshold, magnitude, frequency, distribution and intensity were all facets of the international debate, two closely related issues dominated all others: the identity of the perpetrators and their politics. Speculation was particularly charged and of heightened international political import during the period of the 'major' massacres of 1997 and 1998. This was especially the case between the Raïs massacre in late August 1997 and the Relizane massacres of early January 1998. This is not to suggest that speculation was not already detectable before or persisted afterwards. The Bougara and Sidi Hamed massacres form bookends to our analysis only in so far as they apparently represent the first and the last of the massacres to have reportedly obtained, albeit with some contention, at least one hundred casualties. Given that the intensity of the internationalised politics of naming Algerian violence tracked almost perfectly with the increasing and decreasing lethality of the massacres (as described in chapter seven), it is worth examining the debates as they occurring during this period to understand the relationship between representation and intervention at the core of this study. In other words, it is during this relatively brief window — September 1997 to January 1998 — that the Algerian conflict obtained its highest profile in international affairs. This is thus the

moment when preceding and contemporary discursive interventions could have the greatest affect on the unfolding internationalised crisis.

Map 2
Massacre activity in Algeria by prefecture (August 1996 - May 2002)
based on Table 2
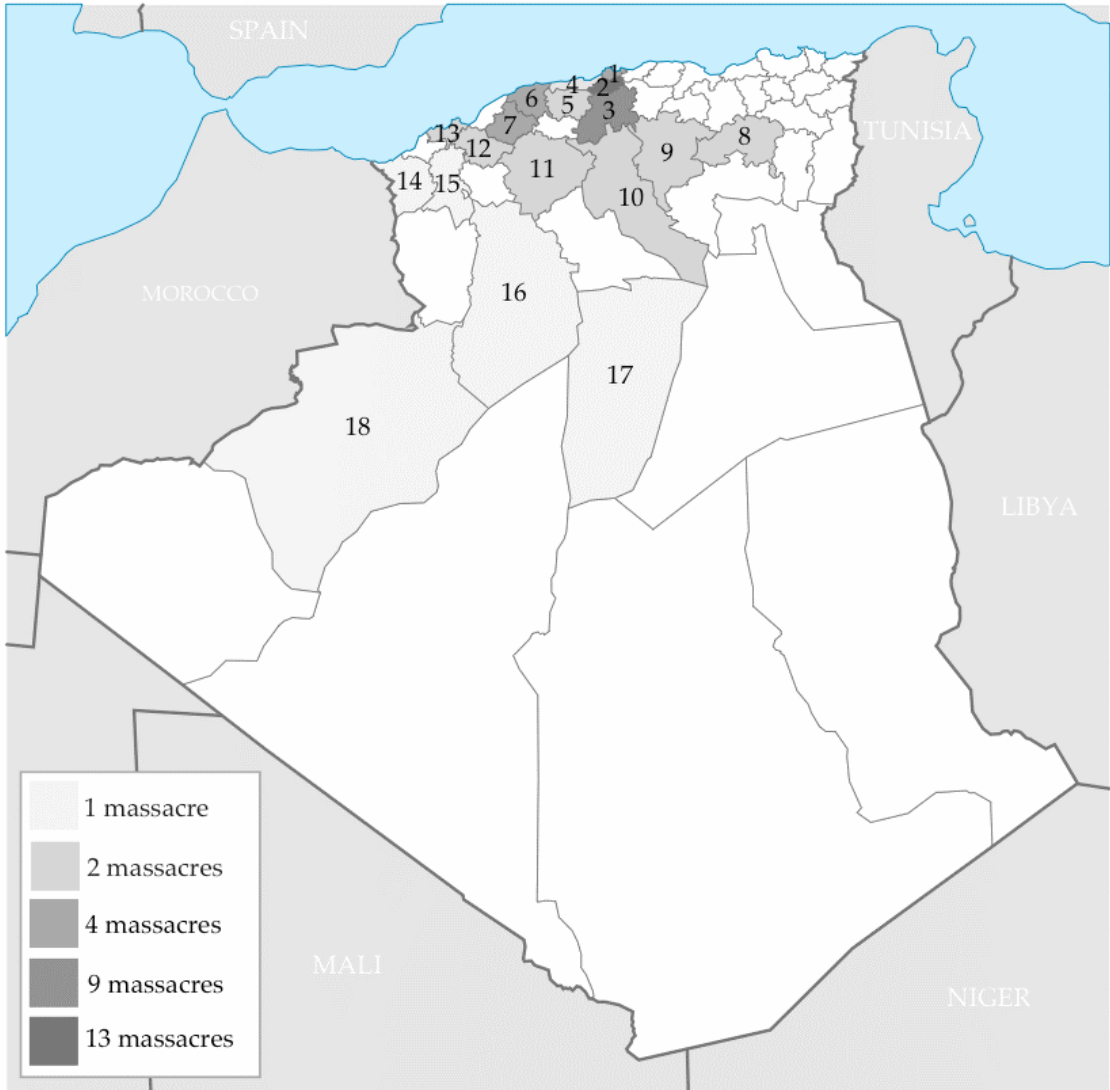
Key: #. Prefecture (Massacres): 1. Alger (4), 2. Blida (13), 3 Medea (9), 4 Tipaza (1), 5 Aïn Defla (2), 6 Chlef (4), 7 Relizane (4), 8 Batna (2), 9 Msila (2), 10 Djelfa (2), 11 Tiaret (2), 12 Mascara (2), 13 Oran (2), 14 Tlemçen (1), 15 Sidi Bel Abbes (1), 16 El Bayadh (1), 17 Ghardaia (1), 18 Bechar (1).

    Note: This map should only be treated as a cartographic version of Table 2 and not as a comprehensive or accurate representation of the actual geographical distribution of massacre activity by prefecture. It merely depicts the general location some of the most widely reported massacres.

The task at hand is to look at the most prominent theses regarding the identity of the massacres' perpetrators and the suspected motives for engaging in these mass atrocities. The scope of the inquiry in this chapter is limited to those theses mainly advanced by foreigners, whether journalists, academics, activists, officials, politicians or other international observer types. The following chapter examines more Algerian views of the massacres, though in terms of how they were represented. That is, how some were deployed — others curiously ignored — in the service of attempts to write the identity and logic of the massacres' authors. In no way should the effort here be read as an attempt to argue for or against any particular account of the forces driving the massacres. Rather, the aim is to compare these various theses of the massacres and draw out their differences and commonalities. It is hoped that the analysis here will go some way towards our understanding of the vexed relationship between writing mass violence and acting against it.

A question of violence (in particular): the massacres

As will be seen below, there were a number of theses offered to explain the massacres, to attribute an identity to the perpetrators and to explicate the reasons these atrocities. Not all of these were mutually exclusive; some overlapped, some were clearly discordant. Though there were likely several drivers behind the internationalised *Qui tue?* debate surrounding the massacres, two specific questions, frequently reiterated, significantly affected the framing of the discussion. First was the claim that the Algerian government had failed to stop any of the major massacres. 'The authorities have never been known to intervene in the four or five hours it takes to wipe out a village', Libération's José Garçon noted.[49] For French journalist Jean Hatzfeld, writing after the Raïs massacre, the 'determinant issue' of the massacres had become, 'How two to three hundred killers can operate in an area normally under tight police and military surveillance on the outskirts of the capital'?[50] The second issue was the alleged observation that the major massacres were occurring in areas

---

[49] Quoted in The San Francisco Chronicle (Staff and Wire Reports), 'Algeria's Agony Only Grows Worse: Uncertainty Over Who Is Behind Civil War's Brutal Slaughter', 23 October 1997: C2.
[50] Comment deux à trois cents tueurs peuvent-ils agir dans une zone normalement sous haute surveillance militaire et policière, en périphérie de la capitale, devient une question déterminante (Jean Hatzfeld, 'Près d'Alger, des villageois égorgés et brûlés', Libération, 30 August 1997).

assumed to be sympathetic towards the insurgency. 'Why would Muslim rebels attack in an Islamist area?', the Economist demanded following the Bentalha massacre.[51]

Both questions, however, only obtained warrant in the context of the official narrative of the massacres maintained by the Algerian government and internationally endorsed by a variety of actors and institutions. That is, the claim that the massacres were the work of the Islamist rebels, mainly the GIA. Accounts of the GIA's motivation for carrying out these massacres, as we will see shortly, varied and seemingly did little to alleviate the scepticism towards the official narrative. If the GIA was carrying out the massacres, why would they kill their supporters and why did the Algerian state not do more to stop them? But, as will be seen below, these two claims should not be treated as given facts. Neither (1) the suspected political geography of the massacres nor (2) the alleged categorical failure of the Algerian security forces to stop them was rigorously established, then or now. Nevertheless, various theses of the massacres were launched in response to these putatively nagging questions as well as other factors highlighted below. Though this list is not exhaustive, it treats the most prominent theses of the massacres.

Angry against God

Among the various efforts to explain the massacres, particularly at the height of the killing in 1997 and 1998, the most widely circulated contention held that Islamist insurgents were conducting this campaign of mass slaughter. A superficial examination of contemporary press accounts shows that this was the default assumption for many observers. Following the Bougara massacre of April 1997 a spokesperson for the US State Department flatly said, 'It is hard to remember a more vicious terrorist insurgency, a more cynical group than these Islamic terrorists'.[52] At the other end of the tunnel in February 1998, historian, and then MEP, Hélène Carrère d'Encausse visited Algeria as a member of an EU parliamentary

---

[51] The Economist, 'Algeria. Bloodstained', 27 September 1997: 48.

Rene Hardin, identified as a French specialist on Algeria, also felt the official version did not add up: 'Why would the extremists attack people who back the idea of an Islamic state and alienate much of the population?' (Bernard D. Kaplan, 'West losing faith in Algerian regime', Rocky Mountain News, 8 January 1998: 41A).

[52] AFP, 'Washington condemns massacre in Algeria', 23 April 1997.

exchange (see chapter seven). Afterwards she broached the question of government complicity in the massacres in the pages of Le Figaro:

> All interlocutors we met (that is to say all legal political parties, civil society associations), with one exception, say loudly that this is false. It is clear that the question '*qui tue qui*' should never be asked. Everyone in Algeria knows who kills.[53]

In her view, the GIA — encouraged by religious fanatics in Algeria and supporters abroad — was solely responsible. How this became the default assumption owes somewhat to the same general conditions that spawned the numerous *Qui tue?* theses in the first place; for example, the physical inaccessibility and unbelievable horror of the violence.

More important, though, were the Algerian government's emphatic assertions that armed opposition groups were behind the massacres. The Algerian state's strict controls over the production and circulation of knowledge during the conflict, and the fact that the government had become a dominant source of information for the domestic and foreign media (see the next chapter), arguably contributed to the wide transmission and acceptable of this thesis. In the government's parlance, the perpetrators of the massacres, as with all other insurgent groups, were simply 'terrorists' or 'criminal gangs'[54], as if to deny their relation to Islam or the political legitimacy of terms like rebel. Following the Raïs massacre, for example, an official statement carried on national radio assured the population that 'The state will continue to fight mercilessly against the barbarian criminals until their eradication'.[55]

One of the challenges facing any of the hypotheses of the perpetrator's identity was the apparent paucity of documentary evidence to highlight the possible culprits. One early exception, which perhaps proves the rule, is a report of a cardboard sign left at the scene of the massacre of thirty-one family members in Sidi Kebir in November 1996. "[A] rare

---

[53] Le Figaro, 'La terreur islamiste', 16 February 1998.
    The 'one exception' was likely Ali-Yahia's Ligue Algérienne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme, Algeria's most prominent independent human rights organisation.
[54] E.g., AFP, 'Terrible carnage près d'Alger : entre 98 et 300 civils egorges', 29 August 1997.
[55] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Radio reports "massacre" of 98 south of Algiers', 1 September 1997.

responsibility claim," noted the dispatch.[56] The sign carried a slogan associated with the GIA: blood and destruction. This is not to suggest that there was no documentary support for the hypothesis that rebels were perpetrating out the massacres. Indeed, this camp received a boost with the appearance document apparently linking the GIA to the recent atrocities. Communiqué 51 of the GIA, signed by then national *amīr* Antar Zoubri, appeared on 26 September in Al-Ansār, a GIA newsletter then published in London by the Egyptian-born activist Mustapha Kamel (Abu Hamza al-Masri). The Communiqué, dated 21 September (i.e., the day before the Bentalha massacre), seemingly offered a definitive claim of responsibility and a statement of intent. In part, it read, 'The world must understand that all the killings, the massacres, the burnings, the displacement of populations, the kidnappings of women, are an offering to God'.[57] The GIA justified these actions, and warned they would continue, on the basis that anyone supporting the regime, civilian or not, was an infidel.[58] Communiqué 51 also denounced the truce unilaterally proclaimed by the AIS on the same day, 21 September, to take effect on 1 October. In the wake of Bentalha, *Al-Ansār*, which reportedly hesitated to publish Communiqué 51, finally cut off ties with the GIA. 'We declare before Allah not being associated with this group', Kamel explained, 'its thinking and its actions which are all shameful'.[59] Given the general atmosphere of incredulity surrounding the information about the massacres, questions were

---

[56] Rachid Khiari, 'Macabre Syndrome of Violence Gains Momentum Ahead of Referendum', Associated Press, 17 November 1996.

    Similarly, a photo in the archive of the Algerian daily El Watan shows a sign left at the scene of an attack on a family in Oued El Alleug (Blida) on 12 November 1996. These words were written by hand on a piece of cardboard left at the scene:

<div align="center">

hadhā ḥukum tārik al-ṣalāh
« al-jamāᶜah al-islāmiyah al-musallaḥah »
dam dam, hadim hadim
[This is the punishment for those who abandon prayer
'Armed Islamic Group'
blood blood, destruction destruction]

</div>

What appears to be a small bloodstain is just right of the words. If authentic, this sign would offer a claim of responsibility and a statement of intent, though one apparently tailored to local circumstances. (See El Watan archive, Photo box: 'TERRORISM-MASSACRES/Bentalha - Sidi El Kebir - Rais - Chebli - Sidi Youcef'; File: 'Carnage de Oued El-Alleug (12/11/96)'; Title: 'Famille assassinée par by terroristes a Oued El Alaegue'. Maison de la Presse (Tahar Djaout), Algiers, Algeria).

[57] Quoted in AFP, 'Radical GIA group claims Algerian massacres', 26 September 1997.

[58] Elaine Ganley, 'Algerian Group Vows More Massacres', Associated Press, 27 September 1997.

[59] AFP, 'Underground Algerian newsletter withdraws support for GIA', 30 September 1997.

raised about the authenticity of Communiqué 51. The French Interior Ministry had vetted the document as 'seemingly authentic' (*semble authentique*).[60] Likewise, following military operations in Ouled Allel (an alleged insurgent stronghold in the Mitidja), the Algerian military claimed that it had found the GIA's blueprint for the Bentalha attack, sketched out of six pages of notebook paper.[61]

With the reported migration of the massacres westward in late 1997 and early 1998, it also became imperative to understand the new geographical logic of the insurgency's atrocities. In this context, AFP, citing a report in Le Matin, noted that a letter signed by a GIA leader, 'Abou Djamil', and found on the body of a slain rebel, had ordered the western massacres to draw government pressure away from the Mitidja.[62] To explain the massacres in Relizane, Tiaret and Tissemsilt, it was also proposed that the GIA, squeezed out of the Algiers-Mitidja region, was seeking to establish itself in the west with rear bases in Morocco. A GIA leaflet had reportedly warned the residents of western Algeria: 'We shall come here soon; we breakfasted in Algiers, we shall sup in Oran'.[63] One problem with this account is that armed activity and massacres in the Algiers-Blida-Médéa region continued while the world's gaze was drawn to the Ouarsensis.[64]

Besides documentary evidence implicating the GIA in the massacres, the Algerian government also produced captured rebels for the domestic and international media. For

---

[60] See AFP's photo of Communiqué 51, dated 27 September 1997, and accompanying caption (Document Reference: SAPA970927846740), available at http://www.imageforum-diffusion.afp.com, accessed August 2010. See also Lara Marlowe, 'Continuing campaign of violence claims lives of 11 women teachers', Irish Times, 30 September 1997: 9.

Sceptics of the communiqué's authenticity, are not difficult to find. Paris Match's Patrick Forestier wrote that, according to British intelligence services monitoring Kamel's phone, calls allegedly from the GIA were coming from an Algerian army facility (Patrick Forestier, 'Derrière les tueries, de sordides intérêts immobiliers et fonciers?', Paris-Match, 9 October1997: 93).

[61] Salima Tlemcani, 'Massacre de Bentalha: Un plan minutieux préparé par Laâzraoui', El Watan, No, 2096, 11 October 1997 (Folder: Terrorisme, File: Les GIA, El Watan archive, Algiers).

According to this account, the mastermind of the Bentalha massacre was the *amīr* of the Baraki commune, Salmi 'Laâzraoui' Mohamed, who enlisted approximately one hundred other GIA fighters from surrounding areas for the attack. The event that apparently triggered the massacre was apparently both personal and political: Bentalha's residents had kicked Laâzraoui's family out of the district, signalling the district's seemingly wholesale rejection of the GIA.

[62] AFP, 'New bloodbath in Algeria: 412 massacred' 3 January 1998

[63] David Hirst, 'Algerian slaughter claims 1,000 lives', Manchester Guardian Weekly, 11 January 1998: 1.

[64] See AFP, '22 more slain in Algeria at outset of bloody Ramadan', 5 January 1998.

example, Zohra (Nacéra) Ould Hamrane, alleged participant in the Bentalha massacre and sister of a slain local *amīr,* was brought before the Algerian press and television to describe the GIA's role. Her stated job during the massacre, helped by her mother, was to identify those to be killed and to loot houses and bodies.[65] In one of the foreign news outlets to pick up this story, La Croix's François d'Alançon interviewed a captured 'terrorist' (his quotes) who corroborated a similar account of the massacre.[66] Algerian security forces had also broadcast the capture of GIA leader Antar Zouabri's sister: Nacera (Khadidja) Zouabri. In one of the more macabre stories to emerge from the Algerian massacres, it was said that Khadidja and her fellow assailants admitted to placing bets on the gender of unborn foetuses and then slashed them out of their mothers' wombs.[67]

Explanations of such horrifically inexplicable behaviour on the part of the insurgency took on a variety of forms. Providing an answer to this question was of utmost importance: why would the rebels attack their apparent base of civilian support? As the insurgency was putatively Islamist, it was only natural for some observers to search for a corresponding Islamic logic behind these seemingly irrational massacres. To explain the violence of the insurgency, the ideas of Islamist thinkers, such as the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, and Islamist movements, such as al-Takfīr wa al-Hijrah, were cited in conjunction with the GIA's alleged authorship of the massacres.[68] Speculation that the GIA had become a Neo-Khawārij sect also appeared. When asked by Le Monde if there was any commonality between the 'methods' of the GIA and Shi'ah Ismā'īli of over eight hundred years ago, Egyptian author Gamal Ghitany replied, 'I would rather say there is an affinity with the

---

[65] Salima Tlemcani, 'Massacre de Bentalha: Un plan minutieux préparé par Laâzraoui', El Watan, No. 2096, 11 October 1997 (Folder: Terrorisme, File: Les GIA, El Watan archive, Algiers).
    Another strange aspect of Zohra's story was her claim that a number of the attackers allegedly spoke Arabic with Moroccan, Tunisian and Libyan accents (see Robert Fisk, 'Brutal killers without faces', Independent, 26 October 1997: 1).

[66] François d'Alançon, 'Algérie. A trois jours des élections municipales, Bentalhâa continue de panser ses plaies', La Croix, 21 Octobre 1997: 10.
    See also Robert Fisk, 'Brutal killers without faces', Independent, 26 October 1997: 1.

[67] Lara Marlowe, 'Families hid and listened to dying neighbours' screams', Irish Times 21 October 1997: 11. See also AFP, 'Troops discover mass grave in Algerian battle zone', 9 October 1997.

[68] For example, Jane's Intelligence Review (1 September 1997), cited by Kazuhiko Fujiwara, 'Algerian radicals change killer ideals', The Daily Yomiuri, 11 September 1997: 6.

movement of the Kharijites'. The simple reason being, 'The Kharijites resorted to collective massacres'.[69]

However, to explain the nihilistic excesses revealed in the massacres, other accounts were proposed. For example, 'islamistes du troisième type', who used violence for neither the goal of reform nor the ends of revolution but simply for violence itself.[70] As noted above, media accounts highlighted a favoured GIA slogan: '*dam dam, hadim hadim*' (blood blood, destruction destruction).[71] Also noted was the appearance, just before the Raïs massacre, of a GIA faction reportedly calling itself *al-Ghāḍibūn ᶜalā Allāh*. The extremism of this breakaway faction was allegedly revealed in two features: the headbands that bore their name — frequently translated as those 'angry' or 'revolting against Allah'[72] — and their missing right index finger. The latter signified their alleged rejection of *al-Shahādah* because Allah had forsaken the insurgency in favour of the '*Ṭāghūt*' in the government.[73] When conducting massacres, it was reported that attackers, their eyelashes and eyebrows plucked out, had howled like wolves. These '*dhabbāḥin*' — butchers — committed the

---

[69] Boutros Hani, 'Les personnalités culturelles influentes et crédibles doivent se mobiliser', Le Monde, 10 November 1997. See also Boutros Hani, 'Les kharidjites, précurseurs de la violence sectaire en terre d'islam', Le Monde, 10 November 1997.

   Such accusations were unrelated to the Berber-speaking Ibāḍī populations of Algeria's Mzab region in the Sahara.

[70] Quoted in José Garçon, 'Terreur et psychose aux portes d'Alger. Nouveau carnage sans intervention des forces de sécurité', Libération, 8 September 1997.

[71] Boubker Belkadi, '51 morts a Larbaa', AFP, 29 Jully 1997; Lara Marlowe, 'Axemen rule in Islam's killing fields', Observer, 8 December 1996: 18; Rachid Khiari, 'School massacre: militants kill 12 teachers; 19 other civilians killed', Associated Press, 29 September 1997.

[72] For example, 'fâchés contre Allah' in La Croix (10 September 1997) or 'Révoltés contre Dieu' in Libétration (8 September 1997); and then the 'madmen of Allah' (Washington Times, 14 September 1997).

   The original source for this claim was also Le Matin (27 August 1997), a fiercely secular paper representing the former communist tendency in Algeria. Whether or not the report is based in any fact, there is the possibility of a mistranslation. In some dialects, the preposition ᶜalā can mean alongside and, in some medieval settings, 'on the authority/strength of'. Indeed, the only precedent for something similar is in the Hadith, which speaks of the ghāḍibūn li-llāh, those who are angry for God. Le Matin (27 August 1997)

[73] Reuters report in Hamilton Spectator [Ontario], 'Blood stains village after "night of hell": Survivors describe massacre that killed 64 Algerian villagers', 28 August 1997: C5.

   Literally, Ṭāghūt means false god/idol, tempter or Satan, the negative connotations of which, within an Islamic context, are clear enough. In international press accounts, Ṭāghūt was often translated as tyrant (ṭāghiyah), which has a similar root.

otherwise incomprehensible practice of cutting foetuses from pregnant women's stomachs because they allegedly intended to stop more Muslims from being born.[74]

Given such horrific stories, it is understandable why there was even a thesis that the violence of the massacres in Algeria was being practiced just for the sake of murder and destruction. For example, conservative US journalist Roger Kaplan (1998: 22), following a visit to Algiera, came to the conclusion that

> The emirs and their drugged acolytes — drugged on evil brews of false religion and politics, and on every stimulant available, as autopsies of killed terrorists have repeatedly shown (I was told this by Algerian doctors assigned to hospital morgues) — had lost their bid to overthrow the Algerian state and were determined to bring down as many people with them as they could.

In the wake of Raïs, the official paper of the Vatican, L'Osservatore Romano, decried the 'blind and barbaric havoc wreaked by the Islamic extremists'.[75]

A rational slaughter

Accounting for the insurgency's massacres within Islamic or apocalyptic frameworks was not the only approach taken. It is possible to identify hypotheses that attempted to advance more 'secular' or strategic logics to make the allegedly counterintuitive behaviour of the rebels understandable. For example, one report suggested the goal of the massacres, and their astounding lethality, was simply a ploy to get domestic attention. Reporting on the massacre of over sixty persons in Beni Ali just days before the Raïs massacre, a Reuters dispatch claimed that 'analysts believe they are carried out to create such horror that even

---

[74] Lara Marlowe, 'Left to suffer and die in silence', Irish Times, 30 August 1997: 13; AFP, 'Les habitants d'Alger continuent a s'armer, la psychose s'etend', 8 September 1997.
  Le Point ('Alger: la terreur au jour le jour', 4 October 1997) contextualised the 'Ghadiboun' in terms of the rampant and unchecked production of rumours in Algeria during the most intense wave of massacres. Marlowe defined *dhabbāḥin* ('Dhebbahine') as 'egorgeurs: Literally, throat-slashers'. See 'Understanding the key words of war', Irish Times, 30 October 1997: 9.
[75] Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 'Pope condemns "barbaric atrocities" in Algeria', 31 August 1997.

Algeria's heavily censored press would have to carry reports on them'.[76] Another account proposed that armed opposition groups were committing massacres in the suburbs of Algiers to create a wave of internally displaced persons to flood the capital. This would result in a 'social explosion' in Algiers that would destabilise the government and bring down the regime.[77] The coincidence of massacre activity and elections suggested for others that the rebels were attempting to dissuade voters from going to the polls. For example, in the context of the Bougara massacre's apparent lack of either clear authorship or unambiguous intent, along with the upcoming parliamentary polls in the summer, this inference was made.[78] The massacres of Raïs and Bentalha likewise preceded local and provincial elections in October 1997.

A possibly related though slightly different hypothesis held that the massacres sought either to deter further civilian disloyalty (e.g., as evidenced in electoral behaviour) or to punish those that had joined the government's initiative to sponsor self-defence civilian militias. In some instances, these two goals were portrayed as one and the same.[79] Following the Bougara massacre, some survivors reportedly claimed that 'Islamic guerrillas [...] began killing villagers because they refused to "collaborate"'.[80] 'There seems to be no logic to the carnage', wrote a US journalist in a dateline from Paris, 'the villages targeted by the extremists of the Armed Islamic Groups have included traditional fundamentalist strongholds'.[81] Yet that was precisely the 'logic', as another wire report

---

[76] Reuters in The Guardian, '64 Algerian villagers murdered in "night of hell"', 28 August 1997: 11.

[77] Ray Moseley, 'Fanatics' war grips Algeria as death toll climbs into the tends of thousands', Chicago Tribune, 12 October 1997: 1.
    Whether or not there was any program to flood and overwhelm the urban centres with rural populations, a commonly mentioned figure for the number of internally displaced population in Algeria during the 1990s is 1.5 million (Joffé 2005).

[78] That is, the first national parliamentary elections since the FIS won the first round in December 1991. Le Figaro (23 April 1997) duly noted, 'Ce massacre intervient à six semaines d'un scrutin législatif décisif'. The Houston Chronicles' readers learned that the 'massacre was the latest violence in a campaign of terror by Muslim insurgents in advance of June 5 parliamentary elections, in which they are banned from running' (Houston Chronicle, 'World briefs', 23 April 1997: 17; based on Associated Press reports).

[79] For example, the case was made for Bentalha: Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, 'Algérie, autopsie d'un massacre', Le Monde, 11 November 1997.

[80] Rachid Khiari, '93 dead in biggest massacre of five-year Algeria insurgency', Associated Press, 22 April 1997.

[81] Andrew Borowiec, 'Carnage without logic dominates life in Algeria', Washington Times, 14 September 1997: A6.

argued in early 1998: 'the GIA, weakened by an army offensive and a burgeoning of village self-defense forces, has reacted with what has been called a "genocidal logic" of reprisals against the general population'.[82] The purpose of the massacres, wrote a US academic in the pages of Le Monde, was 'to dissuade its allies from defecting by making betrayal very expensive. The easiest way is terror. From the perspective of the guerrillas, it is a rational approach, which has nothing to do with Islam or religion in general'.[83] Following the Raïs massacre, one wire report pointed out, 'Many villagers are killed because the militants want to take revenge on those who have joined government-armed self-defense groups'.[84] Though the same journalist would later report that Raïs had not formed a militia, instead trusting the nearby barracks for protection.[85]

Nested civil wars

Betrayal and revenge were also motives citied in a slightly different thesis of the massacres. Some accounts suggested that the massive bloodshed of 1997 and 1998 was an effect of an escalating war between the GIA and the AIS. The basic narrative advanced by this thesis held that the GIA was perpetrating the massacres to take vengeance upon supporters of their rival, the AIS, because of the latter's ceasefire agreement with the Algerian regime. Indeed, the early 1998 massacres seemed peculiar to some because the Ouarsenis had traditionally been seen as a stronghold of the AIS and MIA, not the GIA.[86] Following the Tiaret, Tissemsilt and Relizane massacres of late 1997 and early 1998, an RFI correspondent in Oran concluded,

> It is also now fairly clear that the population targeted were in the grip of the AIS [...]
> Since the armed wing of the FIS declared its cease-fire which came into effect on 1st

---

[82] AFP, 'New bloodbath in Algeria: 412 massacred', 3 January 1998.
[83] Stathis N Kalyvas, 'Comprendre les massacres', Le Monde, 4 February 1998.
   In this article, Kalyvas presented the basic framework detailed in his 1999 paper on the massacres (see chapter six for a critique).
[84] Rachid Khiari, '300 killed in Algeria massacre, witnesses and hospital workers say', Associated Press, 29 August 1997.
[85] Rachid Khiari, 'Government assures it's boosting security, but exodus continues', Associated Press, 30 August 1997.
[86] Alain Bommenel, 'Carnages a répétition: la violence se déplace vers l'Ouest de l'Algérie', AFP, 1 January 1998; Alain Bommenel, 'Les autorités et l'armée confrontées a l'escalade de la terreur', AFP, 3 January 1998; AFP, 'New bloodbath in Algeria: 412 massacred' 3 January 1998; El Watan, No. 2183, 21 January 1998.

October 1997 these populations have become a little too exposed, having refused either to arm themselves or to leave their homes. They were, therefore, probably exterminated as a collective reprisal.[87]

Two reporters with L'Express reached a similar conclusion regarding[88] and even a publication sympathetic to the FIS in Germany claimed that the GIA's *al-Ahuāl* — 'Horrors' — faction (*katībah*) was carrying out such revenge attacks.[89] Indeed, it was with something like this in mind that, after the Béni Messous massacre, then French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine stated, 'The resurgence of violence in Algeria appears to be the response of Islamists opposed to any compromise with the Algerian government'. He added, 'We are not therefore talking about blind violence', but rather an attempt to sabotage 'dialogue between the Algerian government and certain legal Islamists which is bearing fruit'.[90] One alleged GIA defector, however, suggested a much more primitive logic: 'Some armed Islamists, hearing of the massacre of their own families, have gone to take revenge on the families of other armed Islamists'.[91]

A noted advantage of this thesis was its ability to explain one of the most troubling features of the massacres: the apparent failure of the Algerian state to prevent or stop any of the major massacres. As was repeatedly noted, some of the Mitidja massacres were happening within visual or aural range of police and military installations. More generally, these massacres were located in the First Military Region (Centre or Blida), the most heavily militarised zone in the entire country.[92] Press accounts cited circumstantial evidence of alleged state indifference, such as the denials that the army was on 'high alert'

---

[87] Radio France Internationale, 'Algeria: Recent massacres said to be reprisal against FIS Islamists', BBC Monitoring, 9 January 1998.

[88] Baki Mina and Baïla Karim, 'Ce sont nos enfants qui nous égorgent', L'Express 22 January 1998.

[89] AFP, 'Algeria gives conditional green light to EU mission', 8 January 1998.

Though often translated as 'the horrors', *ʾahuāl* (plural for *hawl*), also has the meanings terror, fright, alarm, shock, horror or dismay, possibly power.

In 1995, an AFP dispatch noted that the GIA slogan was 'No truce, no dialog, no reconciliation' (AFP, 'Le GIA, le «Djihad» jusqu'a la victoire', 4 March 1995). See also El Watan No. 2083, 25 September 1997 (Folder: Terrorisme / l'AIS - Accord Pouvoir -AIS - Trêve de AIS).

[90] AFP, 'Algerian upsurge aimed at stopping dialogue: French FM', 11 September 1997.

[91] AFP, 'GIA claims responsibility for recent massacres: newspaper', 22 February 1997

[92] Amine Kadi, 'Algérie. Une armée suréquipée', La Croix, 10 September 1997: 4.

following the Béni Messous massacre[93] and reports that Chief of Staff General Mohammed Lamari had issued an order in early August prohibiting any troop movements after dark without his permission.[94] Yet there were also reports that reportedly showed the government was taking steps to address its failures following Bentalha, such as the uprooting of an alleged GIA stronghold in the Mitidja (Ouled Allel)[95] and the removal of General Said Bey as the commander of the First Military Region.[96]

Though the Algerian government would never admit so publicly, it was suggested that the state was playing an indirect and passive role. The massacres were allowed because they were seen as part of an intra-Islamist civil war. As most of the victims of the massacres were reportedly Islamist sympathisers, it was only to the government's benefit to let the GIA and AIS fighters kill each other and their constituents. Scholar Mary Jane Deeb, then with the Middle East Institute in Washington, DC, speculated, '[T]he Islamic movement in Algeria has become fragmented and that certain groups are fighting other groups for leadership'. The regime's role in the massacres was thus indirect: 'The government is not interfering or protecting people because ... they're washing their hands of the intra-Islamic conflict'.[97] The Algerian government naturally denied accusations of cynical indifference to the massacres. In some cases, officials said that insurgents had placed mines around massacre sites to prevent security forces from intervening (e.g., Bougara[98] and Bentalha[99]). It was also said that using heavy weapons to stop the killing (e.g., tanks) would have caused more civilian deaths. [100] Algerian officials once asserted that they were unable to

---

[93] Al-Hayat (8 September 1997) in BBC Monitoring, 'Army said to be on "high alert" after Beni Messous killings', 10 September 1997; AFP, Over 127 Islamists killed by Algeria's armed forces', 9 September 1997.

[94] Julia Ficatier and Amine Kadi, 'Algérie. La nouvelle bataille d'Alger', La Croix, 10 September 1997: 3.

[95] The Economist, 'Algeria. A change of French tone?', 11 October 1997: 50

[96] He was replaced by General-Major Boughaba Rabah of the fifth region (East or Constantine). AFP, 'Le chef de la 1ere région militaire remplace', 29 October 1997.

[97] Daniela Deane, 'Algeria strife linked to religious rivalries', USA Today, 25 September 1997: 12A, ellipsis in original. The other two options Deeb offered were either government or insurgent complicity.

[98] Boubker Belkadi, 'Government calls for mobilisation in wake of brutal massacre', AFP, 23 April 1997.

[99] François d'Alançon, 'Algérie. A trois jours des élections municipales, Bentalhâa continue de panser ses plaies', La Croix, 21 Octobre 1997: 10.
   See also Robert Fisk, 'Brutal killers without faces', Independent, 26 October 1997: 1.

[100] François d'Alançon, 'Algérie. A trois jours des élections municipales, Bentalhâa continue de panser ses plaies', La Croix, 21 Octobre 1997: 10.

defend the general population because of the unprecedented 'brutality' of the insurgency. 'They simply have no idea how to fight it', a US television reporter claimed.[101]

The western massacres of New Years 1997-98 complicated the geography of these narratives of state incompetence and indifference. Where the Mitidja attacks had taken place within minutes of downtown Algiers and close to security installations, the new killing sites in the Ouarsenis were extraordinarily remote. One of the villages targeted in these attacks reportedly lacked phone lines and roads.[102] Even the Algerian press, according to another account, initially could not visit the Relizane massacre sites of 30-31 December 1997 for similar reasons.[103] With the expansion of significant massacre activity to the west, Algeria's vast size was brought into the argument. A dispatch from AFP noted that Algeria's landmass is five times that of France while its army, mainly conscripts, numbered roughly 130,000.[104] Explaining the apparent impunity of the perpetrators, a regional military commander in the west simply stated that he could not guard every house.[105] For a US audience, the Algerian ambassador in Washington 'reminded' a Congressional hearing that protecting civilians was difficult because 'Algeria is about four times the size of the State of Texas' (US Congress 1998: 33).

As with most aspects of the massacres, it is difficult to construct a consistent picture from the information available then, and this includes claims of state non-intervention. Throughout the wave of massacres in 1997 and 1998, the security forces failure to stop any of the massacres was treated as systematic. In the case of Béni Messous, for example, two reports claimed that the massacre came to an end at one in the morning on 6 September

---

[101] Lisa Ling, World News Tonight, ABC News, 12 October 1997, transcript.

[102] Rachid Khiari, 'Algerians flee horror, gov't rejects inquiry, West seeks solutions', Associated Press, 6 January 1998.

[103] Rachid Khiari, 'Algerian Killings Claim 78 Lives', Associated Press, 31 December 1997; Reuters, 4 January 1998.
    The 30-31 December killing sites, according to second-hand reports via the Algerian francophone press (e.g., L'Authentique, Liberté, El Watan, La Tribune, Le Matin), were reportedly clustered around the *baladiyah*/commune of Oued Rhiou: the *dawār*/villages of (Ouled) Kherarba/Khourba, (Ouled) Sahnoun/Sahnine, El-Abadel and (Ouled) Taieb/Tayeb, often with the latter two conjoined.

[104] Alain Bommenel, 'Carnages a répétition: la violence se déplace vers l'Ouest de l'Algérie', AFP, 1 janvier 1998.

[105] Le Point, 'Algérie; Une élection de plus pour Zéroual', 3 janvier 1998.

when security forces arrived.[106] Le Monde, however, highlighted two survivors' accounts, originally in El Watan, in which they attempted to phone for help from the security forces 'in vain'.[107] Following the Bougara massacre, a statement of the Algerian Interior Ministry indicated that security forces had intervened once they were notified, killing several of the attackers.[108] Following the Sidi Hamed massacre, accounts conflicted as to whether the local state-armed militia was present or absent during the attack, which lasted for several hours. A statement from the Algerian government claimed that the militia had helped defend the village while the 'swift intervention' of state security forces had prevented more from being killed.[109] But residents later pointed out to UK ambassador Francois Gordon, during his visit to the site on 14 January, that 'We had been asking for weapons for three months; we had a list of 200 names'. Another told the ambassador that he had alerted the local security officials when the attack started but they had failed to respond quickly enough.[110]

A dirty war?

While blame for the massacres has tended to fall on the shoulders of armed opposition groups (both then and now), there were those who suspected a more active direct or indirect state role. Given the two questions driving the debate (Why kill your supporters? and Why has the government done nothing to stop the massacres?), along with other factors (e.g., the general opacity surrounding the conflict), it should come as little surprise that alternative theses of the massacres appeared. Though not leading the charge, human rights organisations certainly helped fuel the incredulity towards the official story. In late 1997, Amnesty International laid out its case for questioning the Algerian government's narrative of the massacres. The three most disturbing facts, according to Amnesty, were the

---

[106] Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 'At least 80 people said slaughtered in fresh massacre in Algeria', 6 September 1997; Rachid Khiari, 'Algerians Barricade, Arm Themselves', Associated Press, 7 September 1997.

[107] Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Un sentiment de panique et d'abandon gagne Alger', Le Monde, 9 September 1997.

[108] Rachid Khiari, '93 dead in biggest massacre of 5-year-old insurgency', Associated Press, 22 April 1997.

[109] Alain Bommenel, 'Bloodbath at Sidi Hamed brings new horror in Algeria', AFP, 12 January 1998. See also AFP, '103 morts et 70 blesses a Sidi Hammed, selon un premier bilan offciel', 12 January 1998; AFP, 'Graphic accounts of latest Algeria massacre as EU to send team', 13 January 1998.

[110] AFP, 'We were denied guns, Algerian survivors tell British ambassador', 15 January 1998.

apparent impunity and freedom of movement enjoyed by perpetrators of the massacres; the geographical coincidence of pro-FIS voter sympathies and the recent massacres; and the potential value of vacated property in and around the Mitidja massacre sites that could be privatised (more on this last point below). Additionally, Amnesty noted the government's ability to protect the country against massacres during elections and its ability to secure hydrocarbon production and distribution centres coming from the vast Saharan south, which had rarely, if ever, been attacked.[111] Amidst the Ouarsenis massacres, Human Rights Watch's Joe Stork stated bluntly, 'The government is involved, definitely. The question is: How is the government involved?'[112]

Accusations that the Algerian government was directly, indirectly and secretly involved in atrocities had been around since the beginning of the conflict. One of the sources for such claims came from the outlawed Islamist opposition and its allied armed groups. Though FIS officials often indicted the GIA for the massacres, they also accused the government of either engaging in state terror or cynically allowing it (as others cited above also suspected). Following a spate of killings during Ramadan in early 1997, Kamar Eddine Kherbane, a founding member of the FIS, then in London, told a US magazine that these had been the work of the 'security services'. He explained, 'Just before any election they do the same thing. They kill, and then blame it on the mujahedin'.[113] Several months later and following ten days of killing in which 173 deaths were reported, a FIS activist in Brussels, Abdelkrim Ould Adda, described the GIA as 'made up of extremists, criminals and people from (Algerian government) military security who manipulate them'.[114] A newsletter associated with the FIS likewise claimed in early 1997 that the escalating killing

---

[111] Pierre Sané, 'Algeria: When the state fails', Amnesty International, AI index MDE 28/047/1997, News Service 222/97, 23 December 1997.
  As one might expect, the Algerian government did not appreciate Amnesty's efforts to highlight the accusations of state complicity in the massacres. The Algerian ambassador in Paris complained, 'Every time we have an election, Amnesty issues a report. It's as if they wanted to interfere in our domestic politics' (Quoted in Lara Marlowe, 'Amnesty accused over reporting on Algeria', Irish Times, 27 November 1996: 10). In February 1998, then Algerian ambassador to the United States, Ramtane Lamamra called Amnesty International Algeria's 'second FIS' before US congressional hearings (U.S. Congress 1998).
[112] Bob Edwards, 'Violence in Algeria', Morning Edition, National Public Radio, 2 January 1998, transcript.
[113] Mark Dennis, 'Interview: Algeria on the brink', Newsweek, 14 April 1997: 60.
[114] Brackets in original. Lara Marlowe, 'Slaughter goes on as 173 die in 10 days', Irish Times, 15 April 1997: 11.

was 'the work of the secret service and the militias whose recruits are paranoid drug addicts'.[115] After Raïs, a FIS newsletter published in Germany, El-Ribat, blamed 'armed groups created by the regime [*le pouvoir*], either as militias or death squads, formed at the beginning of 1994'. Yet some of these groups, the bulletin alleged, 'partially or totally escape the control of the regime' — e.g., 'mafia groups, clan or tribal groups, or organisations headed by secularists or communists'.[116] In a similar vein, the AIS statement that announced the truce with the government indicated that the motivation was 'so that the enemy hiding behind abominable massacres can be unveiled, as well as the GIA criminals and those hiding behind it'.[117] While this statement was read as an AIS condemnation of the GIA[118], it was actually more reflective of the thesis that the GIA had been infiltrated by, and so was acting on behalf of, other interests. Still, the FIS-AIS placed ultimate blame at the feet of the incumbent authorities: 'One way or another it's the regime in place in Algiers which is responsible for these massacres', read a FIS statement issued amidst the Relizane massacres.[119]

Similar allegations of state complicity were also voiced from other sectors of Algerian politics and society. As early as 1995, former Prime Minister Abdelhamid Brahimi, exiled in London, had suggested that the Algerian government was waging a kind of dirty war; he later even blamed its security forces for the massacre of thirty-one members of his family in Médéa ('because they voted for the FIS').[120] Brahimi later appeared on 60 Minutes, then the most watched US news program, in early 1998, amidst the internationalised massacre crisis. There he squarely accused the government of orchestrating the massacres.[121]

---

[115] Quoted in Robert Fisk, 'Algerian rebel group claims assassination', The Independent, 21 February 1997: 9.

[116] AFP, 'Un bulletin proche du FIS met en cause l'inaction de l'armée a Rais', 3 September 1997.

[117] AFP, 'Islamic Salvation Army calls for ceasefire', 24 September 1997.
   There was even some confusion as to the sequence of events. Both the Washington Times ('Algeria's bloody mess', 27 September 1997: C2) and Australia's Courier Mail ('Bloody massacre prompts ceasefire offer', 26 September 1997: 18) claimed that the Bentalha massacre had elicited the truce.

[118] Following Bentalha, the London Times' Ben Macintyre, in a dateline from Paris, noted that the perpetrators of the recent massacres were 'believed to be operating on the GIA leaders' orders', yet the only proof he cited was that the rival AIS seemed to have pointed the finger at the GIA. (Ben Macintyre, 'Rebels in Algeria urge ceasefire to expose "extremists"', The Times, 25 September.)

[119] AFP, 'Algerian killings "crime against humanity": FIS', 4 January 1998.

[120] Jacques Duplouich, 'Un transfuge accuse la police secrète d'Alger', Le Figaro, 10 November 1997; AFP, 'Algerian president calls for massive turnout in June elections', 7 March 1997.

[121] Christian Amanpour, 'Massacre in Algeria', 60 Minutes, CBS, 18 January 1998, transcript.

Likewise, Mohammed Larbi Zitout, a former member of the Algerian foreign service, came forward in late 1997 to claim, 'It's evident that the majority, if not all, of these massacres are the work of the Algerian secret service'.[122] Similarly, albeit somewhat more ambiguously, exiled former President Ahmed Ben Bella, ousted in 1965, told El País in late 1997, 'Algeria has many para-police organizations set up during the war for independence which have been transformed into infernal killing machines and turned against the people'.[123] The authority of such voices lent credence to claims of government complicity in the massacres and helped propel forward calls for an international inquiry. Yet their perceived distance from the mechanisms of power, in terms of time and space, meant that a first-hand narrative of government involvement was still lacking.

More generally, the thesis of state complicity in the massacres benefited from pre-existing allegations about the Algerian government's human rights abuses and criticisms of its counter-insurgency policies. For example, in mid 1996 a report of the French Defence Ministry was quoted as stating bluntly: 'The strategy of counter-guerrilla warfare utilized by the [Algerian] armed forces is the fairly simple technique of terrorizing the population'.[124] 'Terrified civilians', wrote Lara Marlow in Time magazine in early 1995, 'whisper of special execution brigades, dressed in civilian clothes, that roam the country hunting down and murdering Islamists'.[125] In September 1994, a recently exiled DRS officer told Le Monde,

> [...] when the terrorists started to massacre young conscripts, repression moved up a level. Fearing desertions, the hierarchy decided to strike blow for blow. It was then that the reprisals became systematic: combing a district as soon as an offence was committed, summary execution of three, four or five young people selected at random.[126]

---

[122] Associated Press, 'Ex-Diplomat Accuses Algeria Government', 8 December 1997.
[123] Quoted in AFP, 'Ex-president decries "killing machines" in Algeria', 16 November 1997.
[124] Quoted in John-Thor Dahlburg, 'Terror on All Sides in Algeria', Los Angeles Times, 24 June 1996.
[125] Lara Marlowe, 'Bloody days, savage nights', Time, 20 March 1995: 48-51.
[126] Mourad Mansour, 'Le témoignage d'un officier', Le Monde, 16 September 1994; translation in International Crisis Group (2001a: 11).

Following Raïs, one account, citing unnamed 'human rights groups', noted that 'many of the killings, estimated to be at least 1,500 since June, are carried out by security service police squads'.[127] There was, however, a problem with this thesis. If the Algerian government was conducting a secret undercover campaign of massacres, it would be extremely difficult to prove. By design, a successful strategy of misdirection, confusion and terror should have been nearly impossible to confirm without corroborating documents or participant accounts.

The latter — or what was presented as such — began to appear in late 1997. As Algerians were going to local polls on 23 October, Libération ran an interview with 'Omar', a young Algerian conscript seeking asylum in London. A week later, the Irish Times published a strikingly similar account from a man calling himself 'Reda'.[128] On French and British television, Reda/Omar had already admitted to participating in a massacre that June, albeit indirectly.[129] He had stood guard on the periphery of a village while another group of soldiers apparently massacred thirty civilians. Omar claims he did not see the killing but the government commandos allegedly returned wearing fake beards and 'typical Islamist' dress stained with blood.[130] The Independent's Robert Fisk then published an interview with an exiled Algerian police officer in London, on record as Inspector Abdessalam. He recounted acts of torture and internal police hit squads that murdered fellow officers suspected of Islamist sympathies or a lack of trustworthiness. Though this informant did not claim that security forces were behind the recent massacres, he recalled a massacre-like episode in Sidi Moussa where an anti-terrorist operation led to the death of ninety persons when police units bombarded the settlement in 1994.[131] Similarly, Germany's Der Spiegel ran an interview in January 1998 with a deserting intelligence officer, who recounted small-scale collective killings carried out by undercover DRS units, dressed as Islamists, in

---

[127] Barry Hugill, 'Algeria slides deeper into bloody morass', Observer, 31 August 1997: 9.

[128] Lara Marlowe, 'Algerians tortured by security forces', Irish Times, 30 October 1997: 1; Lara Marlowe, 'Ex-army conscript saw colleagues torturing and murdering villagers', Irish Times, 30 October 1997: 9. See also Robert Fisk, 'Conscript tells of Algeria's torture chambers', Independent, 3 November 1997: 10.

[129] 'Reda' was interviewed on Channel Four's *Dispatches* program for a featured titled 'Triangle of Death', which first showed on 21 October 1997.

[130] François Sergent, 'Ils avaient de fausses barbes et du sang sur leur pantalons', Libération, 23 October 1997; reprinted as 'Hands that wield Algeria's knives', The Observer, 26 October 1997: 15.

[131] Robert Fisk, 'Algeria's Horror: Nightmares of torture haunt exiled witness', The Independent, 1 November 1997: 17.

the suburbs of Algiers in 1994 and 1995. The recent massacres, he proposed, had in fact been the indirect fault of the government. Intending to disrupt Islamist *maquis*, the security services had deliberately released hundreds of criminals from prisons who naturally gravitated to the GIA.[132]

Soon after Libération , the London Observer interviewed a former member of Algeria's main intelligence body, the *Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité* (DRS). This man, calling himself 'Yussuf' or 'Joseph', had fled to Britain over two years prior, well before the upsurge in massacres. However, he reportedly saw documents discussing how the DRS had 'infiltrated and manipulated' the GIA. He also claimed first hand knowledge of special 'death squads' established by the DRS's counter-intelligence directorate, which, among its various alleged murderous activities, was massacres.[133] Le Monde's Jean Pierre Tuquoi upped the ante two days later, interviewing a serving 'senior officer' in the DRS. Using the pseudonym 'Hakim', this insider seemed to confirm some of the allegations of Yussuf/Joseph, especially the claims that the GIA had been heavily infiltrated by 'turned' Islamists and that some massacres (e.g., Béni Messous) were the direct handiwork of 'les services'. Raïs and Bentalha, on the other hand, were the product of GIA pseudo-insurgents run amok.[134] Finally, in January 1998 the Observer interviewed two former Algerian policemen who stated that they had participated in more recent massacres. Like Omar/Reda and Yussuf/Joseph, 'Robert' and 'Andrew' were also seeking asylum in the United Kingdom. And they, too, claimed to have helped elite units of the 'military security' (DRS) — 'wearing the costume of the Islamists: false beards, baggy trousers' —

---

[132] Lutz Von Krusche, 'Algerien: Mörderische Sippenhaft', Der Spiegel 3/1998, 12 January 1998, http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-7809924.html, accessed September 2010.

   Aggoun and Rivoire (2004: 373, 629) identify this officer is 'Captain Ouguenoune'.

[133] John Sweeney and Leonar Doyle '"We bombed Paris for Algeria"', Observer, 9 November 1997: 9. Joseph would later testify before a British parliament hearing of the human rights committee as Captain Haroun.

[134] Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Des fuites impliquent Alger dans les attentats de Paris', Le Monde, 11 November 1997.

   In June 1998, the Observer reported that Hakim had died that Spring, allegedly in a helicopter crash in the Sahara (John Sweeney, 'First, seven monks were killed. Now the man who told the world is dead', Observer, 14 June 1998: 22).

   A critical article in Le Monde attempted to render the claims of Yussuf-Joseph and Hakim suspect, mainly the allegations that the Algerian security forces had some hand in the 1995 Paris metro bombings. See Incinyan Erich, 'Quelques invraisemblances', Le Monde, 11 November 1997; Inciyan Erich, 'Les doutes persistent à propos des révélations sur les attentats de Paris', Le Monde, 12 November 1997.

carry out massacres, as recently as October 1997.[135] Thus, one thesis seemed to be that the Algerian government was using undercover or 'false flag' units to perpetrate the massacres. The other thesis suggested a more ambiguous or oblique state role in the killing.

Voodoo counter-insurgency

In addition to the claim that elements of the Algerian security, military and intelligence apparatus were directly conducting the massacres, there was also the thesis — as voiced by 'Hakim', 'Yussuf' and the FIS above — that the Algerian government was involved in the massacres by proxy. This picture of complicity painted an active yet indirect government role; the Algerian state was perpetrating the massacres by manipulating the insurgency. As seen above, it was widely suspect that the government's hand in the killing had been through the GIA, as a kind of 'Groupe infiltré armé'[136] or a pseudo-insurgency force of the Algerian military. For example, an early 1998 Financial Times editorial noted, 'The shadowy "armed Islamic groups" [...] are widely assumed to have been infiltrated, if not created, by the regime's military security apparatus'.[137] Created, infiltrated and controlled, however, are all different things. One version of this thesis held that the those tasked with infiltrating the Islamist *maquis* had slipped out of the control of Algeria's security, military and/or intelligence agencies. Yassir Benmiloud, Algerian commentator for the daily El Watan, sarcastically opined,

> The plan may have been to infiltrate the rebel groups in order to track them and better fight them. But the "infiltrators" were quickly seduced by the rustic and decadent lifestyle of the terrorists: raping of women, theft of money and jewelry, pedophilia followed by mutilation and free food. In short, life with the rebels was much better than what the Algerian Army could offer.[138]

---

[135] John Sweeney, 'Atrocities in Algeria. We were the murderers who killed for the state', Observer, 11 January 1998: 14.
[136] Martinez (2001) seems to be the only proponent for this clever wordplay.
[137] Financial Times, 'Algerian horrors', 6 January 1998: 15
[138] Yassir Benmiloud, 'It's the Generals, Stupid', Newsweek, 19 January 1998: 31.

The GIA as an out-of-control counter-insurgency Frankenstein was essentially the picture 'Hakim' and 'Joseph' had painted in the French and British media. Others, however, backed the idea that the GIA, or at least segments of it, remained under the control of the security services. For example, some Algerians reportedly told the Observer's John Sweeney in mid 1997 that 'the junta [...] is using and controlling the GIA to kill moderate Islamicists and anyone who gets in the way'.[139]

As noted earlier, there were suspicions that the Algerian government was indirectly and passive complicit in the massacres by not stopping them. The reasons given for this related to hypotheses of an internecine conflict within the insurgency and suppositions that the population victimised by the massacres was the base of rebel support. Whether cynical indifference or passive complicity, the political end, and thus the state's motive, was clear enough for some. Al-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadl-Allah, a popular Shi'a religious figure based in Lebanon, gave voice to the thesis of active and direct state complicity for obvious political goals: 'The information confirms the participation of the authorities in [the massacres], along with armed groups, to implement policies aimed at tarnishing the image of the Islamic current'.[140] Though describing a more passive and indirect state role, Saïd Saadi, leader of a secular-Left party, Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie, suggested that the Algerian government was allowing the massacres to be carried out by insurgents so as 'to immunise society from religious extremism'.[141] '[M]any Algerians', wrote a reporter from Algiers, accuse 'security forces of abetting the violence — or at least tolerating it — to discredit the militants'.[142] Likewise, an Algerian claiming to have been a member of the ALN during the war against France, told the London Times,

> The Government aids this present conflict. The GIA [...] terrorists are a weapon used
> by the authorities to justify the absolute power of the army here, as well as discrediting

---

[139] John Sweeney, 'Surviving Algeria', The Observer, 29 June 1997: 6.
[140] Barry Hugill, 'Algeria slides deeper into bloody morass', Observer, 31 August 1997: 9.
[141] Barry Hugill, 'Algeria slides deeper into bloody morass', Observer, 31 August 1997: 9.
[142] John Lancaster, 'As Algeria's Savagery Grows, So Does Mystery Shrouding It', Washington Post, 18 October 1997: A1.
    Or, as one US commentator speculated, Algeria's security forces were 'allowing the killing to continue at this horrific pace so that Algeria's 25-million people — or what's left of them — will finally get fed up with the Islamic fundamentalists' (Jack R Payton, 'While we watched the funeral, 500 Algerians were slain', St. Petersburg Times, 9 September 1997: 2A)

the opposition Islamic parties. They do not perpetrate the massacres themselves, but they do little to stop them and use them as a reason to oppress any voice of criticism.[143]

Following the first revelations from Relizane in early 1998, a front page story in Washington Post noted, 'The government also faces fresh accusations that its own security forces are sometimes involved in the killing or, when terrorists kill, that they look the other way to whip up anti-guerrilla sentiment among the people'.[144]

A regime divided

Amongst those suspecting the state's hand in the massacres, whether directly or by proxy, not all suspected that the motive was simply to discredit the insurgency or to benefit from intra-rebel fighting by remaining indifferent to mass murders. An alternative thesis of the massacres proposed that particular groups within the state were either perpetrating or allowing the massacres in order to leverage or undermine opponents within the regime. The precise motive was frequently seen as an effort on the part of regime 'hardliners' to derail the peace making efforts of the government vis-à-vis the FIS. Following Raïs, French politologue Bruno Étienne explained why he thought seventy-five percent of the massacre: 'these latest attacks appear to be the work of one faction of the military junta that refuses, contrary to another faction, to negotiate with the [FIS]'.[145] More concretely, Lahouari Addi, a political sociologist based in France, suggested that the 'army chiefs' had sought to undermine President Zéroual by going behind his back (i.e., circumventing the President's dialogue with the FIS leadership) to secure a truce with the AIS directly, thus robbing Zéroual of sole title as Algeria's 'artisan de la paix'. The massacres, Addi then proposed, could be related to various divisions within the military, supporting either the Presidency or the General Staff.[146] This view, however, was not only shared by elite intellectuals and journalists; 'In Algiers', two reporters with Libération claimed

---

[143] Anthony Loyd, 'Zeroual's zombies cast vote', The Times, 24 October 1997.
[144] Charles Trueheart, '400 Killed In Algerian Massacres; Slaughter Is Worst In 6 Years of Conflict', Washington Post, 4 January 1998: A1.
[145] Laure Mandeville, 'Bruno Étienne : «Ce sont les généraux qui se déchirent»', Le Figaro, 30 August 1997.
[146] Lahouari Addi, 'L'armée algérienne confisque le pouvoir', Le Monde diplomatique, February 1998.

immediately following Bentalha, 'any cigarette vendor will tell you it is all a sign of the internecine struggle within the circle of power'.[147]

Often this alleged split within the regime was articulated in terms of a dichotomy — conciliators versus eradicators — that had governed thinking on Algerian politics for several years. Definitions varied but normally pivoted on the question of dialogue with, or even rehabilitation of, the FIS (i.e., *conciliateur* or *dialoguiste*) versus those arguing for a tougher or repressive stance towards either the FIS or Islamism in general (*éradicateur*). The *éradicateur/conciliateur* discourse had traces dating back to, at least, the first months of the conflict in 1992.[148] Woven into this thesis, as the massacres were increasing in tempo and volume in 1997, were contemporary reports of ongoing negotiations between the elements of the government and the FIS-AIS.[149] Likewise, an even older Algerian discourse of 'clans' — geographical, familial, political, military or financial interest groups — also surfaced within writing on the Algerian conflict and the massacres.[150] Following the Raïs massacre, journalist José Garçon surmised: 'civilians are also the principal victims of the violence exercised by the paramilitary groups linked to different regime clans, violence which is as uncontrollable as that of the killers claiming Islam'.[151] In one story, the contest between the two sides, at the height of the massacres, had even resulted in screaming matches between their alleged leaders: President Zéroual (leading the *dialoguistes* or conciliateurs) and his Chief of Staff, General Mohamed Lamari (leading the hardline *éradicateurs*).[152] Yet instead of a binary contest, others postulated a tripartite system between the Presidency and the Military, moderated by a 'third clan' composed of

---

[147] Florence Aubenas and Jose Garçon, 'Killers close in on Algiers', Guardian, 24 September 1997: 16.

[148] See, e.g., Jacques de Barrin 'L'Algérie silencieuse', Le Monde, 26 June 1992.

[149] 'Since the coup of January 1992', Le Point's Mireille Duteil explained, 'it is an open secret that the military is roughly divided between "eradicators", who refuse any negotiation with even moderate Islamists, led by Lamari, and the "dialogists" around Zeroual'. (Mireille Duteil, 'Algérie: Les tueurs sont-ils manipulés?', Le Point, 13 September 1997; see also, Julia Ficatier, 'Ces dix généraux qui gouvernent l'Algérie', La Croix, 17 September 1997: 3).

[150] See, e.g., Labat 1995; Roberts 1995; Zoubir 1995; Callies de Salies 1997; Vidal-Hall 1997; Charef 1998.

[151] 'Une seule chose est sûre: les civils sont aujourd'hui les principales victimes des violences qu'exercent les groupes paramilitaires liés aux différents clans du pouvoir, violences qui sont aussi incontrôlables que celles des assassins se revendiquant de l'islam'. José Garçon, 'Quatre questions sur une tragédie. Censure, vengeances et conflits d'intérêts brouillent la vision du conflit, Libération, 30 August 1997.

[152] Julia Ficatier, 'Ces dix généraux qui gouvernent l'Algérie', La Croix, 17 September 1997: 3.

the intelligence services, headed by DRS chief Mohamed 'Tewfik' Mediene.[153] Scholar and North Africanist Lisa Anderson even saw a symmetry of interests between extreme elements of the regime and the insurgency: 'The recent upsurge in murders so vicious as to guarantee international media attention is part of efforts to derail such a process by hard-liners on both sides'.[154]

The privatisation of violence

Though the internationalized debate surrounding the massacres tended to focus on theses of either state or insurgent culpability, and the possible motives driving either side to kill, it was also insinuated that other actor groups and other rationales could elucidate the logic of the massacres. This alternative cluster of explanations sometimes fed into claims that the violence in Algeria had become 'privatised', a term that had several meanings. In some contexts, privatisation meant de-politicisation, in the sense that some of the war's violence no longer bore any relation to the conflict's putative raison d'être (e.g., the legal status of the FIS or the establishment of an Islamic state). Following the Raïs massacre, French anthropologist Gilbert Grandguillaume proposed a number of 'intermediate scenarios' between the two options of state and insurgent terror, including mafia activity, manipulation of armed groups by various actors and vendettas dating back to the war of independence.[155] Chief among these was the supposition that grudges dating back to the war of independence, especially concerning Algerians who supported or fought on the side of France (e.g., the *Harkis*), were bubbling to the surface.[156]

Just as Islamist violence was construed as either nihilistic or strategic, the view that Algeria was consumed by 'privatised' violence was also given rational and irrational motives. For some, like Grandguillaume, there were discernable logics to the violence, and

---

[153] Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Les luttes de clans s'exacerbent au sein du pouvoir algérien', Le Monde, 5 September 1997.

[154] Lisa Anderson, 'Moderates on both sides of Algerian conflict may hold key to peace', Boston Globe, 13 October 1997: A15.

[155] Jean-Christophe Ploquin, '«Alger se protège mais ne protège pas la société»', La Croix, 2 September 1997: 5. See also Jean Pierre Tuqoi, 'Algérie : l'histoire est partie prenante dans la violence d'aujourd'hui', Le Monde, 5 September 1997.

[156] Claims that Harkis and their children were a significant force in the armed opposition, and thus a source of motivation for the massacres, have not only penetrated scholarship (Boukra 2002: 133-5) but even the work of acclaimed novelist Yasmina Khadra (1998; see chapter eight).

these alternative logics, some argued, might be operating in tandem. A journalist with Le Point speculated a multi-faceted armed conflict driving the massacres: an insurgency strategy to sow fear and panic in Algiers with internally displaced persons from the countryside; internecine fighting between guerrillas; fighting between armed groups and paramilitary militias; plus land appropriation and privatisation schemes. In short, the war had become — explicitly borrowing from the French historian of Algeria, Benjamin Stora — 'privatised'.[157] But for others, the patterns of violence suggested incoherence. 'In 1993 and 1994, there was an ideological foundation for the violence', a Western diplomat told a US news magazine in mid1997. 'Now there is only barbarism'.[158]

In some settings, the privatisation thesis clearly meant that violence was no longer public (read: political). Algerian violence had become private — intimate, personal, familial, communal. Revenge was a common thread in this discourse. Providing a litany of possible factors behind the massacres, one acute observer of the conflict believed that 'there is hate and desire for revenge that fuels the cycle of attack-revenge-attack, notably between Islamists and militias armed by the regime'.[159] Following the Raïs massacre, Ronald Neumann, who had just left the post of US ambassador to Algiers, also felt that, even if GIA was responsible for the mass killings, one still had to take into account the 'many blood feuds out there'.[160] John Entelis, a US academic specialist in Algerian affairs, likewise suggested, in the wake of the Relizane, that the recent wave of massacres was possibly a confluence of vendettas and 'mafia-style gangsterism'.[161] Grudges between

---

[157] M.D., 'Algérie: L'escalade de l'horreur', Le Point, 27 September 1997.

[158] Stefan Lovgren, 'Algeria's state of fear: the power versus Islamic radicals, with villagers as pawns', U.S. News and World Report, 2 June 1997: 41.

[159] 'Au-delà, ce sont la haine et la volonté de vengeance qui alimentent l'engrenage exactions représailles exactions, notamment entre islamistes et milices armées par le pouvoir' (José Garçon, 'Quatre questions sur une tragédie', Libération, 30 August 1997).

[160] Nora Boustany, 'A Massacre That Leaves a World Frozen in Silence', Washington Post, 8 October 1997: A26.

[161] Alan Sipress, 'Aftermath of a massacre: Algerian Killings have some questioning the official story', Philadelphia Inquirer, 8 January 1998: A1.
    Attempting to account for the violence, though before the Bougara massacre, famed London Times journalist Jon Swain similarly told a US radio program, 'But this — this civil war almost has gone on now for so many years that, of course, what has happened is that there's a lot of tit- for-tat killings, that people who'd been slaughtered in villages by the GIA now take revenge on families who they know have GIA members amongst them'. He added, 'There are vendettas which go back many decades in Algeria, going back even to the French-Algerian War' (Linda Wertheimer, 'Algeria', All Things Considered, National Public Radio, 9 April 1997, transcript).

Algerians incurred during the recent years of fighting and during the war of independence from France (and immediately afterwards) were cited as possible vendettas motivating the massacres.[162] The slaying of over forty persons in El Omaria (Médéa prefecture) was reported as a possible revenge attack carried out by 'death squads' composed of civilian militia members and elements of the security forces seeking retaliation for the Bougara massacre perpetrated the day before.[163] Following the massacre of Si Serhane (29-30 September 1997; forty eight killed), Libération's José Garçon wondered whether or not — given the fact that a single family had been targeted and it had taken place close to another recent massacre — 'this locality has been the victim of a terrible cycle of killing/reprisals that has covered the Mitidja in blood?'[164]

Such claims of 'de-politicisation' of Algerian violence were also articulated as the de-governmentalisation of war-fighting capacity, mainly through the (auto-) formation, deputisation or legalisation of self-defence militias as proxies of the state. Different accounts painted a picture of these militias acting in concert on behalf of the state whereas others suggested a more disaggregated view where the Algerian counter-insurgency had been hijacked to serve local interests. Stora, who helped popularise the notion of privatised violence in Algeria, pointed towards the latter, implicating Algeria's 'peasant militias' in the cycles of violence pitting 'village against village, family against family'.[165] In May 1997, Pierre Sané, then Secretary-General of Amnesty International, blamed the escalating massacres on the state's 'deliberate strategy' of creating civilian militias. When combined with the fragmentation of the armed opposition groups, he argued, this had created a volatile mix resulting in the increasing bloodshed.[166] The Hadj Fergane incident[167] in

---

[162] José Garçon, 'Quatre questions sur une tragédie', Libération, 30 August 1997.

[163] Francis David, 'Nouveau massacre en Algérie : 42 civils tués', Sud Ouest, 25 April 1997.
    The Associated Press, however, reported, 'Witnesses identified the attackers [at Omaria] as Muslim insurgents', suggesting either bad reporting (on the part of AP or Sud Ouest), confused witnesses or both (Rachid Khiari, 'Muslim militants reported to kill 47 in new massacres in Algeria', Associated Press, 24 April 1997).

[164] José Garçon, 'Pression internationale sur Alger. Les demandes de commission d'enquête se multiplient', Libération, 1 October 1997.

[165] Quoted in Charles Trueheart, 'Hundreds Die In Massacre Near Algiers', Washington Post, 30 August 1997: A21.
    By the end of the 1990s, pro-government or self-defence civilian militias reportedly constituted the largest fighting force in the country, with estimates ranging between 200,000 and 500,000 (Sidhoum & Algeria Watch 2003b: 8).

[166] José Garçon, 'Algérie: «Qui profite de cette situation?»', Libération, 7 May 1997.

Relizane brought renewed international attention to the possible role of these militias in the atrocities, compounding earlier suspicions.[168]

Using another meaning of privatisation, some proposed the 'commercialisation' of Algerian violence, in that public and private business interests, whether legal, informal or 'black', were believed to be motivating or participating in the killing, both directly and indirectly. For some, the conflict in Algeria had even been hijacked by a hybrid class of

---

[167] The most well known case of militia abuse in Algeria was reportedly perpetrated by two mayors in Relizane, Hadj Fergane (Relizane municipality) and Hadj Abed (Jdouia/Oued El Djemaa municipality). On 14 April 1998, as the UN Commission on Human Rights was considering the Algerian crisis, the Algerian daily Liberté reported that these two mayors had been arrested and charged with murder. The accusations levelled at them and their allied militias included abductions, torture and executions; several mass graves were also attributed to them. One contemporary source reported, 'Those arrested were said to have killed 17 civilians in Sidi M'Hamed Benaouda — the scene of killings blamed on the GIA in the November-January period — and the deaths of 62 people buried in a mass grave in Relizane' (Middle East Economic Digest, 'Political Outlook: Algeria', MEED Quarterly Report — Maghreb, March 1998: 15). According to the Algerian daily El Watan, this was not an isolated incident; at that time, Algerian courts had 128 cases registered against security and militia officials for fifty four civilian murders (Robert Fisk, 'Militias implicated in Algeria's reign of terror', Independent, 23 April 1998: 13, citing El Watan; Le Monde, 'Algérie : des patriotes faisaient régner la terreur', 16 April 1998).

The original Liberté report suggested that some of the violence in Relizane could be related to an 'old rivalry' between two 'tribes', the Chouala and Bouabdelli (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Paper says tribal feud may have led to massacre in Relizane', 16 April 1998). Four days after the story broke, the two mayors were freed and never faced charges since (Human Rights Watch 2003: 27-28). In February 2002, the human rights activist who helped build the case against them was sentenced to a short prison stay for making false accusations. The activist, Mohamed Smaïn, claimed that he was just reporting the statements he had collected from 'dozens' of witnesses (Amnesty International 2002). Following heavy rains in November 2003, Smaïn was alerted to the unearthing of a mass grave in the 'Sidi Mohamed-Benaouda' municipality, made a video of the scene and showed it to the Algerian press (BBC Monitoring, 'Algeria: Rights activist accuses state militia of carrying out massacres', 28 December 2003, from Liberté). The grave was soon destroyed by local security officials before an investigation could be carried out (Giles Tremlett, 'Algerian massacre site "erased by police"', The Guardian, 26 January 2004: 12; Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, 'La gendarmerie est accusée de faire disparaître des charniers à Relizane', Le Monde, 13 February 2004). See also Smaïn 2004.

One of Fergane's assistants, Hocine Adda Mohamed, along with his brother, Abdelkader Mohamed (i.e., 'les frères Mohamed') had settled in France in 1998, using their wives' names on official documents to remain hidden. When the two men were arrested in Nîmes, France, in March 2004, the disclosed list of crimes attributed to Fergane and his militia amounted to over one hundred executions, dozens of unidentified bodies, two mass graves (found in 1998) and 200 'disappearances', as well as torture (see José Garçon, 'La «sale guerre» algérienne rebondit en France', Libération, 31 March 2004: 14).

[168] E.g., according to an article in *Courrier International*, an alleged 1997 report of the Algerian army's internal security apparently found that half of the faux barrage incidents ritually blamed on insurgents were actually being operated by civilian militias (Courrier International, 'Algérie : Les négociations secrètes', N. 361, 2 October 1997; cited in Martinez 2001: 56).

terrorists, private business interests and political figures who behind a number of the massacres, a 'mafia politico-financiere'.[169] One such view held that the primary actors in the conflict had been co-opted by moneyed interests. 'This is a war for land and wealth', suggested scholar Luis Martinez as the violence was increasing in mid 1997. Martinez speculated that both state and insurgent actors had become mercenaries, doing the dirty work of Algeria's elite, especially the task of vacating of land for commercial development.[170] Another view proposed that the incoherence of the situation had created the space 'for manipulation by powerful people using armed groups for their own ends', as entertained by British academic Michael Willis. One of those ends being 'to control and benefit from the abandonment of valuable land'.[171] Indeed, given the concentration of massacres in the Mitidja plain and the west, Algeria's most fertile farming areas, it was widely suspected that private land and agriculture interests were possibly behind some of the atrocities. Interviewed in Canada's Globe and Mail, journalist Jamal Khashoggi of Al-Hayat suggested that the purpose of the massacres was to push poor land tenants off nationalised or collectivised farmland so that the government could expropriate it for private interests.[172]

---

[169] La Tribune, 'Maghreb. Un terrorisme mafieux lie aux privatisations sévit en Algérie', 17 septembre 1997: 8.

[170] Newsweek, 'Land Clashes?', 7 July 1997: 5; see also Christopher Dickey, 'The Slaughter Goes On', Newsweek, 8 September 1997: 40.

In 1995, Martinez' assessment of the violence seemed closer to Grandguillaume, albeit in a time before the major massacres: 'In the majority of cases, we no longer know who kills who. There is the feeling of an immense settling of scores at the national level' ('Dans la majorité des cas, on ne sait plus qui tue qui. On a le sentiment d'un immense règlement de comptes, à l'échelle nationale, ajoute Luis Martinez'. Simon Catherine, 'Vertiges meurtriers en Algérie', Le Monde, 14 September 1995). Martinez, it should be recalled, published the only monograph on Algeria during the 1990s, which was based upon extended field research(Martinez 2000a). That he came to this conclusion after interviewing several actor types (e.g., participants and profiteers) is highly indicative of the opacity of the violence, even for those working on the ground.

[171] Michael Willis, 'Atrocities in Algeria: Why butcher your own people?', The Observer, 11 January 1998: 14.

[172] Marcus Gee, 'World treads softly around Algeria', Globe and Mail (Toronto), 8 January 1998: A12.

This suspicion was based on a 1995 law that attempted to roll back Algeria's 1971 Agrarian Revolution by de-nationalising farm land (see Dillman 2000b: 126).

Another possible factor in the general violence that received some attention was the economic space created by the privatisation of government enterprises and holding companies, along with the creation of over 25,000 import/export companies, during the 1990s (International Crisis Group 2001b: 13-5).

Conclusion

Encoded onto the bodies of the massacre victims was a message that some foreign observers found difficult, if not impossible, to decipher. What was the message and who was sending it? The most brute, undeniable fact to come out of the major massacres — at least in their international representation — is their shared horror. No other characteristic seems to carry as strongly across the set. While narratives of the vast majority of massacres are not available (and could be lost to history and politics), survivor accounts from the major massacres, like those presented in the beginning of this chapter, indicate a high degree of systematic brutality. It was not enough for the massacre perpetrators to kill; efficiency, it seems, was often not the priority. The implements of murder were reportedly crude; farming equipment and tools of everyday life repurposed. The archives of major international photo agencies demonstrate the ubiquity of slashed throats as a favoured technique of killing. When applied to the Algerian massacres, the term slaughter fulfilled two of its meanings. But perhaps the most agonising horror of the major massacres was their duration, lasting several hours. Time instrumentalised for terror.

But apart from horror, it is difficult to locate consensus on any other facet of these mass killing episodes, primarily the questions of perpetrator identity and their motivations for carrying out these attacks. There appears to be, however, an implicit consensus within these various theses on the massacres. A fixed relationship between identity and motive seemed to be in play. That is, if one could determine the perpetrators of the massacres, one could easily infer their logic, or vice versa. If Islamists were carrying out the massacres, the possible motives were religious duty, deterrence, revenge, nihilism, etc. If it was the state, the purpose ranged between punitive and commercial. Supposing private interests had a hand in the massacres entailed specific hypotheses, as did the possibility of localised politics playing into them. Very few accounts of the Algerian massacres were willing to admit the *possibility* of more than one explanation. Fewer still were willing to suggest that two or more explanations could account for them *concurrently*.[173]

---

[173] Following Bentalha in September 1997, Roula Khalaf of the Financial Times made a rare claim: 'Most observers believe that there is no single explanation for the atrocities in Algeria'. While this stands in contrast to the observations of this study, especially concerning foreign views on the massacres, her statement raises two possibilities: either she reached this conclusion by observing

To his credit, Bedjaoui (1999) stands out as the only author to make a sustained effort to reconcile several theses of the massacre with the aggregate data in a companion study (i.e., Aït-Larbi, *et al.,* 1999). Yet Bedjaoui only considers five possible agent-motive combinations: an insurgent punishment campaign, a covert state counter-insurgency campaign, intra-regime fighting, land grabs and social vendettas. Given the actual number of theses voiced, like those detailed in this chapter, these five options already filter out too much. For example, private or public business actors can only take part in massacres where land issues are present, civilian militias can only play a role in the massacres if it is a state counter-insurgency campaign and local level politics will only manifest in the massacres if vendettas are being pursued. Having pre-screened the explanatory possibilities in this way, Bedjaoui argues that certain macro-level indicators, especially patterns of intensity and frequency across all classes of massacres between late 1996 and the end of 1998 (as established in Aït-Larbi, *et al.,* 1999), suggest coordination and logic. If the massacres are the expression of a rational policy, then Bedjaoui claims that he can rule out the land grab and social vendetta thesis. He then rules out the possibility of Islamist agency, a problematic argument that will be addressed in the following chapter. This, of course, leaves the counter-insurgency and intra-regime theses as the default winners. The fact that Bedjaoui eliminates the possibility of local level politics and alternative agencies from factoring into the massacres is indicative of a belief that such violence could not be anything but, at best, totally divorced from national level politics or, at worst, entirely irrational. To be generous, Bedjaoui's argument is that localised or micro-level violence, no matter how logical, would not manifest rational patterns at the national or macro-level. Yet one counter-argument that has not been addressed is the possibility that the appearance of waves in the combined frequency and intensity of massacres results from the dampening effect of state security measures taken to help organise elections. What appears to be a macro-level pattern of escalating cycles of massacre activity could in fact be the accumulation of micro-level violence periodically limited government initiatives to secure polling sites and protect voters.

---

the wide proliferation of theories or media representations of the conflict tended to reduce multiple options to exclusive choices. Considering the fact that even scholarly representations of the conflict have tended towards a reductionist view of the violence, it is likely the former (Roula Khalaf, 'Panic and confusion over Algiers killings', Financial Times, 24 September 1997: 4).

More important than the plausibility of this counter-argument is the underlying assumption of a single logic. Almost entirely absent is any suggestion of an all-of-the-above approach. Instead, explanatory options were heavily conditioned by certain views about the nature of the conflict in the first place. The tendency to bifurcate identity and politics in accounts of the armed conflict in Algeria, like those identified in the previous two chapters easily transposed itself onto description and analyses of the massacres. Just as the perceived politics of the violence in Algeria was constrained by its international reception as a conflict between the state and Islamists, this rigid framework likewise filtered foreign interpretations of the Algerian massacres.

Another impediment to the theorisation of multiple agencies and logics to the massacres can be located in the act of categorization itself. Above, the issue of massacre threshold was briefly broached, where it was noted that, to count an episode of mass violence as a massacre, various observers have maintained baseline fatality rates of four to fifteen persons. Other proposed or implied conditions — none found to be convincingly necessary — included the methodology of killing, the selectivity of the murders (or lack thereof) and the behaviour of the victim population (i.e., whether or not it was in a state of active resistance to the violence). The question of threshold itself is not critical, but it does highlight a problematic feature of the discourse on the massacres, whether found in the media or more critical examinations. Once an episode of mass violence was tagged with the label massacre, that association implied much more than shared attributes of violence. Individual massacre events were stripped of their contingency and de-territorialised. In the discourse on mass violence in Algeria, all massacres, by virtue of being called a massacre, could be explained by a single logic.

This assumption of shared rationality then called into question the rational capacity of various actor types. It is interesting to note that there was never a suggestion that the state — or even rogue actors within it — was carrying out the massacres for irrational reasons of bloodlust or mindless revenge. Theses of state terror always carried with them apparent or implied strategic utility, as if there is always a one-to-one correspondence between the actions of government actors and the needs of the state they represent. Even accounts of the government's failure to intervene never suggested the possibility of an irrational

motive for such passive complicity in the massacres. Submerged violence — localised violence operating below the national-level political contest — was often rendered the most irrational because its strategic utility, within the logic of the national level conflict or the logic of massacres *qua* massacre, was not apparent. Most interestingly of all, the strongest defence of GIA culpability in the massacres, which will be examined in the following chapter, seeks to demonstrate why the massacres could be rational given the widely held presumption that they were a manifestation of barbaric senselessness on the part of the Islamists.

At this point, what should be apparent is that certain assumptions about, one, the politics of the Algerian conflict at the macro-level and, two, the possibilities of rational violence at the micro-level, created a perilous discursive environment in which the massacres were read and responded to. One of the troubling outcomes of which has been the vindication of certain narratives of the massacres by default. As will be detailed in the following chapter, the account of the massacres that has arguably gained a degree of hegemony within the discourse is the one that attributes these atrocities to Islamist agency and rationality alone. Yet the weakness of this account, vis-à-vis the very data it marshals to its cause, should not only trouble those that believe these questions have been resolved, it further problematises the international response to the Algerian massacres analysed in chapter seven.

6. Identity

From ideology to identity: armed conflict in the new world order

Not long after the events of 11 September 2001, the recent violence in Algeria was discursively redeployed to help frame the attacks in New York and Washington, DC. In an interview published three days after the events, philosopher André Glucksmann — who had left his own mark on the Algerian conflict three years prior (see chapter seven) — argued that it was Muslims, first and foremost, who needed to defend themselves against the 'fascisme vert' (green fascism) instantiated in 11 September. Why? 'Above all, the first victims of the Islamists are women and children, in Afghanistan as in Algeria'.[1] Author and newspaper editor James Haught had no problem blaming 'Islamic militants' entirely for having 'killed nearly 100,000 civilians in a nine-year struggle to create a theocracy' in Algeria.[2] Le Figaro's Max Clos wanted to believe that Islam is a religion of peace but this was apparently not the case, 'neither in Algeria, neither in Afghanistan, neither the past week in New York and Washington'.[3] Others agreed. Professor Walid Phares, 'an expert in Islamic radicalism', reminded his interviewer, 'In Algeria, for instance, jihad forces linked to bin Laden perpetrated massacres against Muslims, killing whole families'.[4] Before US congressional hearings a week after the attacks, 'terrorism scholar' Professor Christopher C. Harmon shortlisted the GIA second only to Osama Bin Laden and the Palestinian HAMAS in terms of shared 'willingness of these groups to kill a large number of civilians' (US Congress 2001: 112). Providing an 'Arab Perspective', writer Marwan Bishara explained 11 September in terms of the phenomenon of Arab veterans of the Soviet-Afghan war 'deserted and betrayed by America'. Returning to their home countries, 'They exercised their violence through Islamist groups [...]. Thousands of civilians have been slaughtered in Egypt, Algeria, and elsewhere in the Arab world'. He added, 'Not a week

---

[1] Alexis Lacroix, 'Terrorisme. Les conséquences du quadruple attentat aux Etats-Unis', Le Figaro, 14 September 2001.
[2] James Haught, 'What causes "true believers" to kill?', Charleston Gazette, 12 September 2001: P4A
[3] Le Figaro, 'Le Bloc-Notes de Max Clos', 21 September 2001.
[4] Andrew Duffy, 'New "superterrorism" may produce huge casualties', Ottawa Citizen, 14 September 2001: C3.

goes by without yet another massacre being committed against Algerian civilians'.[5] Compounding this narrative, the Globe and Mail recalled that the Arab Afghan veterans of the GIA, 'carried out a series of gruesome civilian massacres, wiping out whole villages'.[6] A commentary from Algiers noted that the events of 11 September 2001 confirmed the 'thesis' of the Algerian government regarding terrorism. The Algerian daily El Nasr snidely wrote that it was now United States' turn to ask itself the question *Qui tue qui?* (Who kills who?)[7] But for Ali Tounsi, head of Algeria's national police force, there was no question: 'After [11 September], the world now knows who kills whom'.[8]

Algeria's recent and ongoing experience with mass violence was also put to use in the immense volume of scholarly literature on Islamism provoked by 11 September 2001. Algeria of the 1990s had been the site of the 'most appalling example of violent Islamist activity' (Ayoob 2008: 18), a place where 'Emirs of differing extremist persuasions and various regions hunted and butchered one another and committed hideous massacres against civilians, government officials, and foreign nationals' (Gerges 2005: 101). Algeria's location in the 'genealogy of radical Islam' has become infamously bloody yet ominous in hindsight: a 1997 'fatwa shifted GIA operations away from the state and toward softer targets in society, eventually leading to widespread civilian massacres'. Furthermore, 'The underlying justification for the massacres portended the later Al-Qaeda justification for 11 September and purposeful civilian targeting' (Wiktorowicz 2005: 88). Algeria became inducted into new categories, interpretations and vocabularies of violent

---

[5] Marwan Bishara, 'Bush Versus Bin Laden: An Arab Perspective', International Herald Tribune, 21 September 2001: 11.
[6] Marcus Gee, 'The hydra's 10 biggest heads', Globe and Mail, 29 September 2001: F8.
[7] Amer Ouali, 'L'Algérie se sent confortée dans ses thèses', AFP, 13 September 2001.
    This thesis — essentially that Algeria had been fighting its own war on terror since 1992 — was summarised by former Defence Minister Khaled Nezzar a week after 11 September 2001: 'It is in the interest of modern societies and those who wish to become modern societies, to join together to combat this evil of the third millennium' (AFP, 'Algerian aide who thwarted Islamic party decries terrorism', 22 September 2001). Over a year after 11 September, the US government had picked up on this motif. Then Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, William Burns, during a December 2002 visit to Algiers, suggested, 'Washington has much to learn from Algeria on ways to fight terrorism' (quoted in Giles Tremlett, 'US arms Algeria for fight against Islamic terror', The Guardian, 10 December 2002: 13). Several months earlier, one journalist had commented, 'For the past decade, Algeria has served as a horrific test tube for a "war on terrorism"' (Lara Marlowe, 'Algeria a test case for war on terrorism', Irish Times, 14 August 2002: 14).
[8] José Garçon, 'Une aubaine pour Alger', Libération, 22 September 2001: 15.

conflict: 'In Iraq — and earlier in Algeria — jihadists were primarily killing fellow Muslims, accusing them of collaboration with the "infidels" these are crimes committed in the name of jihad' (Tibi 2008: 51). Algeria appears or functions as contextualising point, a reminder, a key element in the increasing preoccupation with Islam and terrorism as objects of security: 'While in Egypt and Algeria and other locales in the Leveant the full thrust of the radical Islamists movements had reached their apex in the mid to late 1990s' (Milton-Edwards 2006: 104). The conflict in Algeria now holds a prominent role in the narrative of Jihad failure against the 'near enemy' — governments of the Middle East — and the resultant trans-nationalisation of the Islamist movement against the 'far enemy' of West — primarily the United States (e.g., Ayoob 2008: 36; Cook 2005: 140; Gerges 2005: 130; Kepel 2006: 256; Wiktorowicz 2005: 94).

Perhaps the most prominent global narratives to emerge out of the 11 September 2001 attacks had already appeared years prior. In 1992, US scholar Samuel Huntington famously declared that the 'fundamental source of conflict in this new world', after the Cold War, 'will be cultural'. By that, Huntington meant 'the principle conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations' (Huntington 1992: 22). The debate triggered by Huntington's thesis was enormous and vigorous, to say the least.[9] Yet his grand master narrative of the New World Order — a challenge to Neoliberal triumphalism (e.g., Fukuyama 1992) — did not initially seem to correspond with reality. The immediate post-Cold War reality was more riddled with intra-national conflicts, a proliferation of violence seemingly rooted in ethnicity and sub-national communities rather than grand inter-civilization strife. Soon after the clash of civilizations was declared, US journalist Robert Kaplan (1994), in a kind of riposte, offered a much more bleak picture of world in which things at the micro-level would matter much more than at the macro-level. 'Loose and shadowy organisms such as Islamic terrorist organizations', Kaplan claimed, 'suggest why borders will mean increasingly little and sedimentary layers of tribalistic identity and control will mean more'. After 11 September 2001, both accounts seemed to still have merit yet the invocation of a clash of civilizations after 11 September — a fundamental, intractable conflict between Islam and the West — was quick, and

---

[9] Google Scholar, for example, suggests that Huntington's original essay and subsequent book have been cited over 8,000 times by 2009. Kaplan's 'Coming Anarchy' article has been referenced over one thousand times.

Huntington's thesis won a new lease on life. Belated critiques finally arrived from figures such as the late Edward Said and Mahmood Mamdani. Where Said (2001) challenged the stability and impenetrability of identities at the personal and civilizational level, Mamdani (2004) confronted the attempt to reduce all political matters to questions of a purportedly static culture. Wherever one falls within this field of debate, one thing is certain: Identity has played, and will continue to play, an important role in the discursive constitution of politics, whether as a contributing factor or as a contested concept under permanent erasure. Identity evidently is so important, that scholars Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett boldly claimed, 'No student of Middle Eastern international politics can begin to understand the region without taking into account the ebb and flow of identity politics' (2002: 2). Stuart Hall, explicitly borrowing from Derrida, likewise admitted, 'Identity is [...] an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all' (1996: 2).

One of those 'key questions' is certainly the relationship between identity and mass violence. For some, identity constitutes a sufficient condition for violence. Lebanese novelist Amin Maalouf (2003: 30) surmised that identity 'encourages people to adopt an attitude that is partial, sectarian, intolerant, domineering, sometimes suicidal, and frequently even changes them into killers or supports of killers'. Likewise, Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen (2006: xv) proposed,

[...] many of the conflicts and barbarities in the world are sustained through the illusion of a unique and choiceless identity. The art of constructing hatred takes the form of invoking the magical power of some allegedly predominant identity that drowns other affiliations, and in a conveniently bellicose form can also overpower any human sympathy or natural kindness that we may normally have. The result can be homespun elemental violence, or globally artful violence and terrorism.

In fact, a major source of potential conflict in the contemporary world is the presumption that people can be uniquely categorized based on religion or culture.

Here, in Maalouf and Sen, if not Huntington before them, we can see that the relationship between identity and violent conflict is direct. Violence flows out of identity. Identity is the cause of so many deadly conflicts and so it is in identity that a solution must be found.

While it was difficult to see how the Algerian conflict was a manifestation of a clash of civilisations, Algeria nonetheless seemed to provide further evidence of the enormous violent potential of identity unleashed after the end of the US-Soviet rivalry. Hugh Roberts, perhaps the most careful and sympathetic Anglophone observer of Algerian affairs, who has tended to eschew almost all reductionist tendencies, nevertheless described the period of 1989 to 1999 as one of 'ferocious identity politics' in Algeria (Roberts 2007: 16). Putting a historical veneer on this approach, scholar James Le Sueur (2005: 326) remarked that the 'civil war in the 1990s' saw efforts to 'recycle' the 'identity politics' seen in the war of independence. Few would claim that identity, all by itself, could sufficiently explain the outbreak, escalation, perpetuation or long denouement of violence in Algeria since 1992. Yet it now seems impossible to describe the conflict in Algeria without making some reference to the tension between differing claims to identity — what it means to be an Algerian citizen, a youth, a Moudjahid, a Berber, an Arab, a man, a woman and, most importantly of all, a Muslim.

While it would be a worthwhile project to interrogate claims that the last two decades of violence in Algeria represent a manifestation of something called 'identity politics', this chapter has a much more modest goal. As noted above and in the previous chapter, the organising logic of the Algerian massacres has frequently been attributed to the Islamic identity of the insurgency. While the issues of identity and motive surrounding the massacres remain alive for many Algerians and foreign observers, it is now commonly accepted among many others that elements of the insurgency, mainly the GIA, were the authors of the major massacres in 1997 and 1998. That this reading of the massacres has achieved hegemonic status might seem difficult to believe, given the debate that surrounded the massacres (outlined in the previous chapter) and the fact that neither the Algerian government nor any foreign body has carried out a formal inquiry into these events (see chapter eight). Yet the belief that the Algerian massacres were perpetrated solely or mainly by the insurgency now has the status of accepted truth among respected

scholars of Islam (cited above), other social scientists[10] and, of course, major international news outlets. What is also troubling about the dominant position of this thesis within the politiography of Algerian violence is the fact that its best arguments are either mere assertion or are undermined by their own evidence.

Problematic Constructions

While the atrocities in Algeria produced a vigorous internationalised debate, particularly between August 1997 and February 1998, very few works have attempted to address the questions raised by the massacres in a systematic manner.[11] The most ambitious is certainly the volume *An inquiry into the Algerian massacres* (Bedjaoui *et al.* 1999), a collection of articles and studies published by an independent Algerian dissident press based in Switzerland. In the previous chapter, we noted that the book's two central contributions are Aït-Larbi *et al.* (1999), which presents a substantial amount of data collected on the Algerian massacres from various sources (mainly mass media and NGO reports), and Bedjaoui (1999), which tests this data against five theses of the massacres. Both deploy a methodology and vocabulary highly reminiscent of sociological, criminological and epidemiological studies of mass violence. Yet for all their intensive data collection efforts and multi-dimensional analysis, Bedjaoui's (1999) attempt to derive the massacres' political motivation from their macro-level indicators suffers from a serious flaw. It concludes that elements of the insurgency could not be responsible for the massacres because the AIS had formally withdrawn from the conflict on 1 October 1997,

[10] E.g., Charles Tilly (2003: 105-6).

An exception worth noting is David Cook's (2005: 119-21) study of Jihad, which acknowledges that the massacres in Algeria in the 1990s 'were often difficult for outside observers to interpret. Were they conducted by the radical Muslim rebels in an attempt to solidify their rule or by the government trying to extirpate and terrorize populations sympathetic to the rebels? The question remains unresolved'. On the other hand, Bernard Lewis (2003: 106), attempting to demonstrate the West's hypocritical attitude towards Israeli state terror and the terrorism of Arab regimes, seemingly gives the impression that the Algerian conflict was entirely one-sided. The Algerian government carried out the 'slaughter tens of thousands' of its citizens with little protest in the West.

[11] Two other noteworthy efforts to address massacres and the *Qui tue?* questions take the alternative approach of either explicitly refusing to buy into this framework (Roberts 1998) or analyzing everything *except* the question of culpability (Martinez 2001). Even more indirectly, anthropologist Paul Silverstein (2002) examines the massacre debate in terms of Algeria's culture of conspiracy theorising.

well before some of the major massacres. As for the GIA, Bedjoui already believes, primarily citing another contribution to the same volume (Izel *et al.* 1999), that it is a pseudo-insurgent force operated or manipulated by the Algerian government. The claims that the AIS represented the entirety of the insurgency and that the GIA was entirely under the control of the Algeria government is enough reason to place serious doubt over the *Inquiry*'s findings.

Backing the converse thesis, scholars Gilles Kepel (2006: 254-75) and Mohammed Hafez (2000; 2004) have offered accounts attempting to explain why Islamist insurgents carried out the massacres through an analysis of GIA discourse and practices. However, both largely work from the premise that rebels carried out the massacres without offering any arguments against claims of state culpability, let alone claims of privatised violence. Kepel, at least, repeatedly caveats the existence of other explanations for the massacres but he is never able to resolve, nor does he really attempt to dispel, the tension between his effort to explain the insurgency's 'drift towards aimless violence' (Kepel 2006: 255) and his acknowledgement that 'we have no reliable way of knowing exactly which groups were responsible' for the major massacres in the latter half of 1997 (*ibid.*: 274).[12] A similar tension exists in Hafez. In his original 2000 article, Hafez admitted, 'One cannot affirm or discount all these arguments [i.e., alternative complicities] without a thorough investigation of all the facts surrounding the massacres'. This certainly buys him some insurance against his assertion that 'the evidence does not support the claim that security forces were the principal culprits behind the massacres'. But the only evidence Hafez examines are GIA statements, whose sufficiency to account for the massacres is pre-determined by the already operational assumption that the GIA is responsible for them. There is no argument or weighing of evidence. Hafez's 2004 chapter, a theoretically enhanced version of his 2000 article, is even more ambivalent, as it merely footnotes the

---

[12] Another indication of Kepel's (2006: 273) lack of rigour is revealed in his claim that 1997 is the zenith of the conflict; he cites Raïs, Beni Messous and Bentalha but fails to mention the massacres that proved just as lethal — those in Relizane and Sidi Hamed. This is clearly not a simple mistake because he compounds the error: 'The month of Ramadan (January-February) in 1997', Kepel (2006: 272) falsely claims, 'was the bloodiest of the entire war, with horrific massacres of civilians'. Though he acknowledges that 'the massacres continued unabated throughout 1998' (2006: 274), the elision over the Relizane and Sidi Hammed massacres, not to mention massacre activity past 2000, is disconcerting. Likewise, he claims that the GIA 'disappeared' (*ibid.*: 274) in 1998, though it in fact continued well past 2000.

existence of contrary hypotheses of the massacres — the claims of former Prime Minister Abdelhamid Brahimi, as well as Yous (2000) and Souaïdia (2001) — yet does not engage them (see Hafez 2004: 54).

Arguably the most influential publication to address the massacres in Algeria is Stathis Kalyvas award winning 1999 article.[13] Though Kalyvas shares the belief that the massacres were carried out by the insurgency, specifically the GIA, he provides theorising, argumentation and evidence to back up his position and makes a case against state culpability. Since publication, even the best of scholars have uncritically adopted its findings.[14] There are, however, serious problems with Kalyvas' paper. Unlike other treatments of the massacres, which tend to be undermined by fatal assumptions, 'Wanton and Senseless' suffers death by a thousand cuts. While there are some salvageable problems with the argument at the analytic level, the evidence Kalyvas marshals to his cause lacks reliability and comprehensiveness, as well as proper representation, interpretation and contextualisation. Given the extent to which Kalyvas' article has widely circulated yet received no critical interrogation, a careful examination is certainly in order.

The main thrust of Kalyvas' argument is to counter assessments of the Algerian massacres as acts of mindless terrorism on the part of the insurgency against its support base. He does so by building a hypothesis wherein massive yet selective violence against civilian populations formerly or contentedly under rebel control is deployed in order to raise the costs of defection to the side of the state. In brief, Kalyvas' develops a sophisticated version of the strategic or rationalist insurgent retribution thesis. Understanding that the available evidence is still thin, he simply tests the plausibility of his hypothesis against the available record. Yet he also defends his account from the counter-hypothesis of state complicity in the massacres (both the active and passive variants) by arguing against that

---

[13] Cited in over 125 other publications according to Google Scholar (as of 19 October 2009); ranked the most read article and the eleventh most cited in Rationality and Society (as of 1 December 2009); winner of the Gregory Luebbert Best Article Award of the Comparative Politics Section of the American Political Science Association, given to the best professional article in comparative politics published in the prior year.
[14] E.g., Weinstein (2007: 316-7).
    In an enormously popular article, Fearon and Laitin (2003: 80) cite Kalyvas (1999) as providing evidence for the claim that 'ethnic insurgents' benefit from local knowledge. This seems odd, as there was nothing 'ethnic' about Kalyvas' analysis or the insurgency in 1990s Algeria, whether in terms of grievance or participant identity.

possibility. While an obvious weakness in Kalyvas' argument is the failure to confront the full scope of possible agencies behind the massacres, the most important shortcoming in his treatment of the massacres is it over-reliance upon fragile data and its complete disregard of confounding information in the same sources or equally available ones. Not only is the available evidence significant under-represented, the viability of this hypothesis rests upon a problematic representations of geography and consensus.

Conditions of representability

Before addressing the arguments, it is important to first note a disturbing silence in these analyses of the massacres: the lack of consideration given to issues of source reliability.[15] The foremost archive for these studies has been reports in Algerian and foreign newspapers, whether reports generated inside Algeria or abroad.[16] First of all, the circumscribed manner in which domestic and foreign journalists were forced to operate in Algeria should be acknowledged. When deploying press accounts as primary sources of information, it should first be noted that, in the 1990s, Algeria was widely recognized as one of the deadliest places in the world for journalists to operate. By the time of the major massacres in 1998, seventy Algerian journalists had been assassinated, along with dozens of foreign citizens. In February 1996, a car bomb targeted the *Maison de la Press* in Algiers, killing three journalists and over a dozen others.[17] Though as of 1997, Amnesty International reported that not a single person had been held accountable for any of these slayings, a fact that likely added to an atmosphere of terror and impunity felt by media workers. Though rebels were widely blamed for these attacks, some Algerian journalists expressed fears of being killed or 'disappeared' by state agents (Amnesty International 1997: 26-9). Zeineddine Aliou-Salah of Liberté — one of the four journalists that lost to

---

[15] Bedjaoui, Kepel, Hafez and Kalyvas largely ignore these methodological questions. Kalyvas (1999:245-6) admits that the accounts of foreign journalists are 'fragmentary and incomplete' and 'the conditions of their investigation were far from ideal', but he argues that his 'theoretical lens' will 'help make sense of this tragic story'.

[16] Given Algeria's post-conflict 'amnesia consensus' (see chapter eight), it has not been generally possible to generate new data on the massacres, notable exceptions being Moussaoui (2006) and Belaala (2008). That contemporary press accounts remain the primary source for most of the writing on the Algerian massacres is well evidenced in recent works such as Evans and Phillips (2008).

[17] Committee to Protect Journalists, '60 Journalists Killed in Algeria since 1992', http://cpj.org/killed/mideast/algeria/, accessed September 2010; and 'Allaoua Ait M'barak', http://cpj.org/killed/1996/allaoua-ait-mbarak.php, accessed September 2010.

murder — was reportedly more afraid of the government than the Islamists who supposedly killed him.[18] A 1997 Reporters Without Borders report (see RSF *et al.* 1997: 9-45) charged, 'Many professional journalists admit in private that the government is behind certain assassinations, but all say they fear for their lives if they make their knowledge public'.[19] If true, such threats would certainly constitute a pervasive incentive to engage in self-censorship when it came to reporting on the government.

More overtly, the Algerian government took steps to control reporting on the armed conflict: seizing individual editions, suspending publications, placing steep financial burdens on newspapers through institutional controls, fining and imprisoning journalists and editors (Human Rights Watch 1997b: 26-33). Control was also possible because the near monopoly over domestic television and radio news broadcasts, as well as ownership of all the printing presses and paper supplies. From 1996 to 1998, state censors ('reading committees') were placed inside all the printing rooms to vet papers prior to publication. With respect to the unfolding massacres, a 1997 report from Human Rights Watch (*ibid.*: 29) found,

> [Algerian reporters] are permitted to cover killings and massacres of civilians attributed by authorities to armed Islamist extremists, although the press has at different times been instructed either to play up or play down this sort of news and has been prevented from conducting independent investigations into massacres and reporting on its findings.

In some cases, the Algerian government seemingly refused to acknowledge ongoing massacre activity, making it difficult for the journalists to report on it.[20]

---

[18] Spelled 'Zineddine Allian' in Ian Black, 'Algerian violence: Press holed up in no man's land', Guardian, 23 January 1998: 13; see Labter 2005: 133.
[19] Quoted in Lara Marlowe, 'Government may have ordered journalists' murders, says report', Irish Times, 19 March 1997: 13.
[20] Between the AIS ceasefire and the beginning of Ramadan at the end of 1997, there had been at least two-dozen reports of massacre, but there was no official government acknowledgement (Associated Press, 'Attackers kill 59 people in Algeria, government says', 24 December 1997). Unlike Bentalha and Raïs, none had obtained the casualty mark of one hundred; most figured below fifty. The final week of 1997 saw some 250 Algerians reportedly killed in acts of political violence (AFP, 'Algeria's bloody week: more than 30 murdered each day', 29 December 1997).

Beyond the systemic bias such conditions might create, there is also the question of ideological bias at the level of individual journalists and outlets. For example, the journalist with the most bylines in Kalyvas' bibliography is Hassane Zerrouky of L'Humanité. Zerrouky was also a journalist with the now defunct Matin d'Alger, a paper, like L'Humanité, with links to Leftist or (post-) Communist politics, and a staunch pro-secular, anti-Islamist ('erradicateur') editorial stance through the conflict.[21] Hafez (2004) uses Al-Hayat extensively without offering any consideration as to whether or not such dependency might actually undermine his goals of obtaining a clear picture of the massacres. On a number of occasions, the Algerian government and press singled out Al-Hayat for its allegedly erroneous reports. In terms of this chapter's scope, the most interesting case is the disputed Batna-M'sila *faux barrage* massacre of over sixty persons in August 1996 (see below) though other examples also exist.[22]

Given the environment of fear and terror generated by the assassinations of journalists and foreigners in the early years of the conflict, very few press agencies or major international outlets had a permanent presence in Algiers as the massacres were unfolding. Significant articles on the massacres in Le Monde and the New York Times, for example, were written in Paris, culling together bits and pieces from write reports, Algerian papers on sale in France and telephone interviews. Agence France Presse, Associated Press, Reuters and Deutsche Presse Agentur kept their Algiers bureaus open long after most other European press outlets had left.[23] These reporters, especially those working for AFP and AP, provided the bulk of international coverage of the conflict. However, operating from Algiers required walking a fine line between the government's 'red lines' and the foreign

---

[21] Mina Kaci, also identified as a 'left wing' journalist (Evans and Phillips 2008: 169) with L'Humanité, is frequently cited in Kalyvas' paper as well.

[22] The claims that a bomb had been placed at the Algiers airport targeting then French Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette during a visit (AFP, 'Rumours of de Charette attack were disinformation: Algiers', 3 August 1996); reports that the Algerian military had been placed on 'high alert' after Raïs (AFP, 'Over 127 Islamists killed by Algeria's armed forces: Press', 9 September 1997);

[23] A notable absence from this list is major Arabic papers (e.g., Al-Hayat and Al-Sharq al-Awsat) that had steady coverage of the Algerian conflict. Mainly these sources are not addressed because they have not been widely deployed except in Hafez, who assumes insurgent culpability as a given. And, as noted above, Hafez does not reach this conclusion based upon a preponderance of the evidence but rather assumes it and simply refuses to take the *Qui tue?* debate seriously. Nevertheless, some of the general constraints on basic newspaper reporting likely applies to the Arabic press as well as the Anglo-French coverage, if not the Spanish and German press as well.

appetite for information on the killing. Foreign journalists making *ad hoc* visits to Algeria would not have to worry as much about the repercussions of their reports unless there was a need to consider future visits, whether or the journalist, the outlet or the international press generally. For example, the Algerian government granted a large number of media visas for the October 1997 local elections and allowed supervised tours of some massacre sites; this period saw a number of reports accuse the government of direct or indirect complicity in the massacres. Wire services based in Algiers, however, would have to take into consideration possible government sanction for unflattering coverage, particularly those agencies with Algerian nationals on staff. Such was exercised against AFP in the case of the famous Bentalha 'Madonna' photo, though AFP had little control over the controversy generated by ways in which the image was received, circulated and re-presented internationally (see chapter seven and Doy 2002: 215-8).

Even more direct constrains on foreign reports also needs to be considered. Much of the on-the-ground international reporting on the Algerian massacres took place in October 1997 in the lead up to that month's local elections, when foreign journalists ostensibly covering the polls were granted access to several major massacre sites (e.g., Bentalha and Raïs). During these visits, members of Algeria's Interior Ministry and security services flanked foreign reporters as they recorded witness testimonies. One journalist quipped, 'It is not easy reporting when surrounded by 20 armed guards'.[24] Even months before then, another admitted, 'a tour of the "triangle of death" [Mitidja massacre sites] requested by Western journalists requires movement in a bulletproof armored vehicle, in convoy with three others packed with rifle-toting soldiers'.[25] The effects of this were apparent to Anthony Lloyd of the London Times: 'In no other zone of conflict have I seen people so afraid to speak their minds to a foreigner. This fear is not eased by the constant presence of armed plainclothes "minders" who shadow almost every move of foreign journalists'.[26] The late veteran war correspondent Peter Stranberg claimed that similar government minders later questioned the people he had just interviewed (in Human Rights Watch 1997b: 30). More generally, a 1997 Amnesty International (1997: 29) report concludes that

---

[24] Robert Moore, 'Hands that wield Algeria's knives', Observer, 26 October 1997.
[25] Scott Peterson, 'Algeria's Real War: Ending the Cycle of Violence', Christian Science Monitor, 24 June 1997: 1.
[26] Anthony Loyd, 'Zeroual's zombies cast vote', Times, 24 October 1997.

'foreign journalists were only able to gather information on killings and abuses committed by armed opposition groups' because witnesses alleging government 'killings and abuses' would likely face retribution. Some journalists even claimed, the report noted, that the Algerian government told them access was conditioned upon favourable coverage. In early 1998, a reporter with the London Independent was able to visit the recent Sidi Hamed massacre site. He claimed that survivors only began to speak critically of their government when 'you manage to find privacy from the armed men who seek to listen in to every conversation'.[27]

Unstable geographies of violence

Just as failing to acknowledge the constraints on the source material is problematic, so is any claim that a consistent picture of the massacres emerges from it. The same testimonies, reports and archive can equally produce oppositional or ambiguous narratives. Accounts of the massacres' geography are sometimes indicative of the confused and confusing nature of international press coverage and the way it has been re-circulated in secondary studies of the massacres. As noted in the previous chapter, basic distinctions between rural, urban and sub-urban massacre settings were often ignored or confused. Universal claims about the massacres, such as their alleged intimate proximity to, or extreme distance from, military and security installations, do not hold up. The infamous 'triangle of death' (*triangle de la mort*) in the Mitidja is perhaps emblematic of the gross spatial amalgamations and geographical caricatures within foreign press accounts of Algerian violence. For some, the triangle is constructed without clear limits or points; it is a 'zone'[28], a 'theatre'[29] or 'the Algiers region'[30], if not all the farmlands of the Mitidja[31] or the lands between Algiers and the Atlas Mountains.[32] More specific renderings constructed

---

[27] Steve Crawshaw, 'Algeria rejects UN help as stunned survivors tell of massacre horror', Independent, 21 January 1998: 7.

[28] Scott Peterson, 'Algeria's Real War: Ending the Cycle of Violence', Christian Science Monitor, 24 June 1997: 1.

[29] Sud Ouest, 'Aucune nouvelle des ambassadeurs', 18 July 1994.

[30] AFP, 'Suspected Islamists kill more Algerian security officials', 10 October 1994

[31] Newsweek, 'Land Clashes?', 7 July 1997: 5

[32] Martin Regg Cohn, 'Amid carnage, Algerians find will to vote', Toronto Star, 1 June 1997: A1.

the triangle as Algiers, Blida and Larbaa[33], though Larbaa was also a 'point'[34], an 'edge'[35] and the 'heart'[36] of the triangle — a designation ('*au coeu*r') it shared with the massacre site of Raïs six kilometres away.[37]

Even more spatially specific details of the massacre sites were given divergent representations. For example, support for the argument that the massacres were targeted often points to the apparent geographical specificity of certain attacks, such as the two neighbourhoods attacked in Bentalha or the 'shantytowns' of Béni Messous. 'The raid against Laarba', Kalyvas (1999: 254) notes, 'targeted in fact the neighborhood of Si Zerrouk'. Notwithstanding the fact that simply invoking the term neighbourhood seems insufficient to justify a claim of precision and selection, this area Si Zerrouk variously described in similar and concurrent sources as a 'hamlet'[38], 'gehucht [hamlet, township]'[39], a 'village near Larba'[40], 'a settlement on the outskirts of Larbaa'[41] ('un quartier pauvre de

---

[33] France Info Radio (5 August 1997) in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Armed groups said extending scope of attacks across whole country', 6 August 1997; Mideast Mirror, 'Perceived change in FIS's discourse and Zeroual's approach may bode well for Algeria', 7 August 1997; Reuters, 'A further 40 die in latest spate of killings', Irish Times, 8 August 1997: 9.

[34] AFP, 'Nouveau bilan du massacre de Larbaa', 29 July 1997.

[35] The Economist, 'Algeria. Mayhem', 2 August 1997: 28.

[36] Alain Bommenel, 'Les Algeriens elisent leur premiere Assemblee pluraliste', AFP, 5 June 1997.

[37] AFP, 'Tuerie de Rais: une population traumatisée, le gouvernement au pied du mur', 30 August 1997.

Another geographical mistake that is likely more embarrassing than consequential is Kalyvas' references to 'the Haï Bounab hamlet' (258), 'the Mitidja village of Haï Bounab' (269) or 'the Mitidja Haï Bounab hamlet' (270). This location comes from Algerian journalist Baya Gacemi's first-person retelling of the experiences of a woman she interviewed at length, 'Nadia', who was the wife of an insurgent leader. However, the name Haï Bounab is not a real place; it is a pseudonym used by Gacemi to protect the actual location (Gacemi 2006: 2), which Kalyvas fails to acknowledge. This is a minor misrepresentation that does not significantly affect the argument, though it is the kind of error that raises concerns about how sources are being handled.

Additionally, the frequent use of this text (referenced nine times) highlights concerns about the way in which anecdotal evidence is being used to justify categorical claims. Even though Gacemi presents a personal account of one woman's experience within a single suburban guerrilla cell, Kalyvas uses it exclusively to support substantial claims: 'Generally, militiamen are more prone to commit atrocities than security forces' (1999: 269); 'When possible, rebel relatives fled their village after the massacres' (1999: 282); and 'many (willing or unwilling) militiamen are former (willing or unwilling) rebel supporters' (1999: 266). By itself, a single woman's testimony could not support such broad claims; indeed, the third claim contains no page citations, simply referencing the book itself.

[38] Also citing Reuters: 'Villagers slaughtered in Algerian attack', Guardian, 30 July 1997: 12.

[39] de Volkskrant, 'Legeroffensief Algerije lokt bloedige wraak uit', 31 July 1997: 20.

[40] Reuters, 'Guerrillas slaughter villagers', Glasgow Herald, 30 July 1997: 11.

[41] The Economist, 'Algeria. Mayhem', 2 August 1997: 28.

la périphérie de cette localité'[42]) and the 'quartier Si-Zerrouk'[43] (i.e., 'district'[44]). Today one could easily find the means to see which term best describe the location but that is not the point. The issue at hand is the failure to disentangle the possible interpretive trajectories implied in such senses of space as settlement, village or hamlet over neighbourhood or district, particularly given that some of these could destabilise claims of precision and selection. The geographical logic of the massacres was also interrogated by two of Kalyvas' key sources. One speculates that specific areas of Bentalha were targeted mainly because of their isolation and lack of defences.[45] The other, contrary to the way Kalyvas' (1999: 254) presents it, actually expresses scepticism towards the overall claim that the massacres have been highly selective and precisely targeted.[46]

One of the larger massacres reported in Kalyvas (1999) and Aït Larbi *et al.* (1999) is indicative, though perhaps extraordinarily so, of these problems in the source material's spatial representation of the killing and the available interpretations of it. The massacre of over sixty bus passengers on 17 August 1996 at a *faux barrage* between Batna and M'sila is not only contestable in terms of politics but is contested in terms of its existence. Regarding the former, it is difficult to see how a theory of insurgent massacres premised on highly discriminating and intimate 'punitive'[47] terrorism could account for *faux barrage* incidents when the victim population would be highly randomized, particularly on a major route between two regional capitals such as Batna and M'sila. More importantly, though, there is also reason to suspect that this event never happened. On 19 August 1996, Al-Hayat (London) reported the massacre based on interviews with alleged witnesses. The identity of the attackers was not clear, only that they were armed and had ragged clothing. Some of Al-Hayat's 'Algerian sources' even said that the objective of this attack was to 'provoke insurrection between tribes'.[48] The Algerian government strongly denied that the

---

[42] Sud Ouest, 'La loi du sang : Massacres redoublés en Algérie. Les extrémistes ne désarment pas et s'en prennent à la population civile', 30 July 1997.
[43] AFP, 'Une centaine de personnes massacrées, selon la presse', 2 August 1997.
[44] Amer Ouali, 'Some 100 killed in more Algeria killings', AFP, 2 August 1997.
[45] Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, 'Algérie, autopsie d'un massacre', Le Monde, 11 November 1997.
[46] Indeed, it appears that Kalyvas has invented the entire quote attributed to José Garçon's 'Quatre questions sur une tragédie', Libération, 30 August 1997.
[47] Zerrouky calls the rebel massacres 'expéditions punitives' (Hassane Zerrouky, 'La barbarie intégriste s'abat sur le petit village de Raïs', L'Humanité, 30 August 1997).
[48] AFP, 19 August 1996, no title.

massacre had taken place and Al-Hayat, which stood by its story, remained the only source; no Algerian papers confirmed or disproved the report. According to one account, some of the local sources might have simply been confusing rumours about this incident with a recent and similar attack. Seventeen male bus passengers had been killed in Sidi Ladjel, near Ain Oussera (Djelfa prefecture), on 15 August, as reported in the Algerian daily El Watan.[49] Among the various studies under consideration here, only Aït-Larbi *et al.* (1999) records it. The inverse problem is the omission of other significant episodes. Such as the slaying of over forty persons in El Omaria (Médéa prefecture) the day after the Bougara massacre, which was reported as a possible revenge attack carried out by 'death squads' composed of civilian militia members and elements of the security forces.[50] Though widely reported (e.g., Associated Press, Agence France Press, Reuters), it is not mentioned by Kalyvas nor listed in his table.

In addition to the confused, inconsistent and possibly erroneous depictions of the massacres' geography within the primary source material, there is another concern: comprehensiveness. Among the three major studies that impute responsibility for the massacres to the Islamist insurgency (Hafez, Kalyvas and Kepel), all three focus on the major Mitidja massacres of 1997 to the almost total exclusion or ignorance of the massacres in the Ouarsenis in late December 1997 and early 1998. As noted in the previous chapter, and according to a recent government disclosure, the Relizane and

The following day, the Algerian Brotherhood, an Islamist organisation in France, 'confirmed' the attack and blamed it on 'the ideological (Franco-Berber) minorities' militias, backed by the intelligence service'. See BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, '"Neutral sources in Algeria" said to have confirmed Batna massacre report', 22 August 1996 (Source: Al-Hayat, London, Arabic 20 August 1996).

Hayat initially reported that two busses on the Batna-M'sila road were stopped and passengers were separated by place of residency; those from Batna were killed. While this indicates a degree of selectivity among the killers, it is not based upon kind of intimate relationship between insurgents and victims that Kalyvas' account is based upon. See BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, '"Al-Hayat" cites eyewitnesses on bus massacre of Batna citizens', 21 August 1996 (Source: Al-Hayat, London, in Arabic 19 August 1996).

[49] Africa News, 'Algeria Says Extremists Didn't Massacre Civilians', 29 August 1996. See also Sud Ouest, 'Polémique sur un massacre', 20 August 1996; Le Monde, 'Deux massacres, imputés aux islamistes, auraient fait 80 morts en Algérie', 20 August 1996.

[50] Francis David, 'Nouveau massacre en Algérie : 42 civils tués', Sud Ouest, 25 April 1997.

The Associated Press, however, reported, 'Witnesses identified the attackers [at Omaria] as Muslim insurgents', suggesting either bad reporting (on the part of AP or Sud Ouest), confused witnesses or both. Whatever the case, here is another instance where there is little consensus to be found in the 'available evidence' (Rachid Khiari, 'Muslim militants reported to kill 47 in new massacres in Algeria', Associated Press, 24 April 1997).

Tiaret-Tissemsilt massacres were as equally destructive, if not more so, as their more famous Mitidja counterparts. While Hafez (2000 and 2004) simply fails to even mention the Ouarsenis massacres, Kepel (2006: 272-3) dismisses them as mere after-effects of the GIA's putative collapse and the AIS truce following the Bentalha massacre. Kepel's claim that the GIA virtually disappeared in 1997 (when it seemingly fought on for several years) seems as uninformed as his assertion that the months of January and February 1997 (i.e., Ramadan) were the bloodiest of the conflict, when contemporary press accounts touted December 1997 and January 1998 as far bloodier.[51]

Kalyvas (1999: 259, 253) asserts that his findings apply to a majority of the massacres in Algeria yet he restricts the bulk of his analysis to the allegedly 'most puzzling' (256) and most deadly massacres between July and October 1997. That these massacres were the most qualitatively perplexing is mere assertion. Indeed, there is a case to be made that the massacres in Tiaret, Tissemsilt and Relizane are the more curious because they took place in an economic, social, political, and geographical milieu far removed and possibly quite different from Algiers and the Mitidja plain, yet they have received far less scrutiny for several reasons, including remoteness. While no foreign journalist ever filed a dispatch from the Relizane killing sites, Raïs, Bentalha and Sidi Hamed were all well visited by the international press. In the Ouarsenis, however, some initial accounts claimed that even the Algerian press was unable to visit some of the rural sites, which reportedly lack phone lines and roads (see chapter five). The evidence that was available then also challenges the claim that the July-October 1997 period was the most deadly in terms of massacre activity. Starting with the increasing frequency in massacres in mid December 1997 through the Sidi Hamed massacre of 11-12 January 1998, the Algeria Watch list and the Aït Larbi, *et al.* (1999) study both suggest that this one-month period was nearly as deadly as the three-month period Kalyvas scrutinises.

As with most treatments of the Algerian massacres, Kalyvas (1999) overwhelmingly focuses on Raïs and Bentalha, both mentioned roughly twenty times each in his paper.

---

[51] 'Up to 600 civilians have perished during the month of Ramadan in each of the past five years' (Reuters in Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 'Algerian Massacres Continue into Ramadan', 1 January 1998: A10). Four weeks later: 'More than 1,000 people have been killed in massacres and bombings in the past four weeks thought to the be the work of Moslem extremists' (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 'More than 1,000 killed during Ramadan in Algeria', 28 January 1998).

Other massacres, including Bougara and Béni Messous, receive one or two mentions; Sidi Hamed is only mentioned in a footnote; Had Chekala has two mentions, Relizane one. Given the range of casualty figures he presents, Raïs and Bentalha only account for six to fourteen percent of the deaths in Kalyvas' study. Yet the Algeria Watch list of massacres details nearly double the number of episodes during the same period, suggesting that Kalyvas has underrepresented the scope of the activity and so further diminishing the case for assigning special explanatory weight to Raïs and Bentalha. There is also a case to be made that major massacres like Raïs and Bentalha, with their exceptionally high death counts, should be treated as anomalies rather than the norm. The Algeria Watch list suggests that less than ten percent of massacres saw more than fifty killed and only three percent allegedly topped the one hundred fatalities mark between November 1996 and December 1998. While massacre activity seems to have been heavily concentrated in the three prefectures that encompass the Mitidja, over a dozen others also reported massacre activity as well. The five major massacres in the Algiers-Blida-Larba region — Bougara, Raïs, Bentalha, Béni Messous, Sidi Hamed — span an arc of just thirty kilometres.

This bias towards the Mitidja massacres brings us back to a point raised in chapter four regarding the exceptionality of this area: Was the Mitidja an exemplary or an exceptional space of conflict? As noted in that chapter, arguments were raised as to whether or not the armed conflict in Algeria could be termed a civil war based upon the notion that rebel groups boasted control over certain geographical areas. Where Martinez (1998) argued that the Algerian conflict met this criterion, Roberts (1999) argued that the sub-urban and semi-rural periphery of Algiers was perhaps the only area where insurgents seemingly exercised a degree of nominal territorial control. Moreover this claim of rebel sovereignty, which plays an important role in Kalyvas' explanation of the Algerian massacres, has questionable support. One needs to be cautious about relying on Martinez because his fieldwork was conducted during the initial years of the conflict and well before the massacre upsurge in late 1996. Indeed, by late 1995, Martinez had come to the conclusion that 'In the majority of cases, we no longer know who kills who. We have the feeling of an immense settling of scores on a national scale'.[52]

---

[52] 'Dans la majorité des cas, on ne sait plus qui tue qui. On a le sentiment d'un immense règlement de comptes, à l'échelle nationale, ajoute Luis Martinez'. Simon Catherine, 'Vertiges meurtriers en Algérie', Le Monde, 14 September 1995.

Kalyvas (1999: 263-4) nonetheless proposes that the reassertion of government control over the Mitidja, and thus the fragmentation of the rebel's monopoly of violence, helped provoke the major massacres of 1997. While there is nothing wrong with this thesis, the examples marshalled to its cause are problematic. The very first example is a considerably misrepresented quote from a 'Mitidja villager' — actually a combination of the voice of the journalist and a villager — that, in a more accurate translation, is not as supportive of the argument as claimed.[53] Another misquoted example, taken from an elderly resident of Bentalha, only suggests that the local guerrillas lacked arms, sometimes came at night to scare people but were also afraid of the local militia.[54] Similarly, a 'villager' is quoted as saying that the Mitidja in 1997 was a place with a 'government by day and an [Islamist] government by night' (*ibid*: 264, brackets in original). However, if we go to the original source, we find something quite different:

---

[53] Kalyvas writes, 'According to a Mitidja villager: "in 1996, the army regained control of the road. . . . The soldiers began to come in the village again. They came in jeeps, fired a couple of shots in the air and left as soon as they came. . . . Although they came less often, the guerrillas [sic] continued to govern us"'. Underlining the passages Kalyvas' uses, the original reads:

> Au début de <u>1996</u> apparaît un nouveau maquis, les GIA, rivaux de l'AIS, arrivant de l'Est. «Ceux-là, on ne les connaissait pas du tout. Ils ne sont jamais entrés dans le village et aucun de nous n'a jamais pris les armes pour eux. Ils ont commencé à se battre avec l'AIS. Il y avait des accrochages très durs, on entendait tirer dans la montagne. L'AIS s'est affaibli, quelques-uns ont même trahi pour rejoindre les GIA.»

> Dans le village, l'école a repris, <u>l'armée a récupéré le contrôle de la route</u>. «Cela s'est fait sans combat, les militaires se contentaient d'avancer. L'AIS ne tenait plus la position, tout occupé à se battre avec le GIA. <u>Les soldats ont recommencé à entrer de temps en temps chez nous. Ils arrivaient en Jeep, tiraient des coups de feu en l'air et repartaient aussi vite</u>», reprend Y. Dans tout le pays, des pressions des autorités tentent de convaincre les habitants de s'armer et d'entrer dans les «patriotes», ces groupes de civils armés par le ministère de la Défense. «<u>Même s'ils venaient moins souvent, les hommes de l'AIS nous dirigeaient toujours</u>. C'était plus cool», raconte D., qui se souvient comme d'un jour de fête d'avoir pu recommencer à fumer. (Florence Aubenas, 'Algérie: «Nous savons que nous sommes seuls»', Libération, 10 February 1998)

Here AIS has been exchanged with 'guerrillas' and the 'they' ('Although they came less often [...]') is not the army, as Kalyvas implies, but rather the AIS.
[54] Kalyvas (1999: 264, brackets in Kaylvas): 'a dozen of local young men had joined the guerrillas; they came to the town in late afternoons and left before being seen by the patriots [the militiamen]'. The original reads, '[Outre qu'] une douzaine de jeunes du village avaient rejoint les maquis voisins, des "terros" venaient, certains soirs, à cinq ou six pour nous effrayer. Ils ne portaient pas d'armes et ne restaient pas plus d'une dizaine de minutes. Avant que les patriotes les aient repérés, ils étaient repartis, raconte un vieillard' (Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Algérie, autopsie d'un massacre', Le Monde, 11 November 1997).

In 1994 and 1995, the rebels who ransacked villages would stay all night killing and looting. A saying went that there was a 'government by day and an [Islamist] government by night.' Now attacks rarely last more than a couple of hours, though they often occur within a stone's throw of police stations or militia camps — a fact that has puzzled observers.[55]

As we can see, this quote is neither attributable to a particular villager nor does it refer to the Mitidja of the 1997 massacres but rather a period two to three years prior.

The other main aspect to this argument is the premise that massacre activity is related to military initiatives targeting insurgent strongholds. However, this 'correlation' (*ibid*: 264) might be more directly causal. In the first example, it is suggested that the Bentalha massacre came amidst the Algerian military's attack on the alleged GIA stronghold of Ouled Allel, located mid way between the Bougara and Bentalha killing sites. In reality, the crackdown followed the Bentalha massacre by three days (i.e., on 26 September).[56] As the Economist editorialised, 'Apparently stung by press criticism of their failure to stop the massacres, the armed forces for the first time invited the local press to the theatre of operations'.[57] The earlier two examples seem to follow the same trend. The July 1997 military sweep near Hattatba (Atatba/Attatba, Tipaza prefecture) also came in direct response to recent bombings and mass killings in that area according to contemporaneous press accounts.[58] The early September 1997 military operations in the Chrea Mountains between Blida and Médèa were likewise launched just days after the Raïs massacre.[59]

---

[55] Scott Peterson, 'Algeria's Real War: Ending the Cycle of Violence', Christian Science Monitor, 24 June 1997: 1, brackets in original.
[56] 'Les tueries de dimanche et lundi [29-30 September 1997] coïncident en tout cas avec la poursuite de la vaste offensive lancée vendredi [i.e., 26 September 1997, 3 days after Bentalha] par l'armée dans les zones de Bentalha et de Beni Messous'. José Garçon, 'Pression internationale sur Alger. Les demandes de commission d'enquête se multiplient', Libération, 1 October 1997 [Mercredi].
[57] The Economist, 'Algeria. A change of French tone?', 11 October 1997: 50
[58] AFP, '21 killed in massacres in Algeria: press reports', 13 July 1997; AFP, 'Algerian security forces kill 60 Islamists: reports', 19 July 1997.
[59] AFP, 'Over 127 Islamists killed by Algeria's armed forces: Press', 9 September 1997.

Representing consensus

Another way to tease out the insufficiencies in our understanding of the massacres is to examine the way in which the *Qui tue?* debate is addressed. As noted in the previous chapter, both contemporary reports and subsequent analyses tended to underestimate the field of massacre hypotheses, often reducing the choice of perpetrator identities to either state agents or Islamist rebels. Hafez and Kepel acknowledge the contention but refuse to engage with its various claims. Kalyvas thus stands out, next to Bedjaoui, as one of the few efforts to engage the various theses of the massacres in a serious way. In his effort to defeat assertions that the Algerian state might have had a role in the massacres, an alleged consensus among survivors, witnesses, foreign governments and observers (both journalists and experts) is cited (Kalyvas 1999: 253). Yet when we look at the source material, even some of accounts cited by Kalyvas, this consensus is difficult to find.

Witnesses, survivors and perpetrators

To establish the identity of the agents behind the massacres, Kalyvas (1999: 253) states, 'The most important evidence ['that many among the deadliest massacres have been perpetrated by Islamist guerrillas'] comes from testimonies of survivors who were able to identify local Islamists among the attackers'. The problem with this claim is that similar media reports — indeed, some of the very sources cited by Kalyvas — also found victims who either suspected the involvement of state agents in massacres or expressed doubt about the identity of the killers. Pre-existing accusation that all sides of the conflict were using the other's uniforms and costumes[60] seems to be born out in some of the witness accounts from massacres, such as the 12 November 1996 massacre of eighteen family members reportedly by 'armed men dressed in security uniforms'.[61] Similar accounts followed the major massacres. A survivor of the Raïs massacre initially mistook the attackers as security forces until he recognized a local insurgent leader (*amīr*) was among

---

[60] By 1996 Amnesty International had already expressed concerns that civilian 'government-backed militias' were 'involved in counter-insurgency operations using military and security forces uniforms and equipment' (Amnesty International 1996: 1).
[61] Rachid Khiari, 'Macabre Syndrome of Violence Gains Momentum Ahead of Referendum', Associated Press, 17 November 1996.

them.[62] Others indicated that the killers — 'armed to the teeth' and arriving in trucks — had worn what they called 'Afghan' dress: headscarves, tunics and long beards. There were also reports of women among the attackers.[63] Yet another survivor of the Raïs massacre was able to tell the Sunday Times — shortly before Algerian security agents disrupted the interview — that 'Some of the attackers wore masks. Others were bare-faced or they wore false beards and wigs'.[64] A witness from the massacres of Béni Messous claimed that the attackers 'arrived in trucks, pretending they were members of the security forces and wanting to inquire about security in the area'.[65] Though some were bearded, two journalists reported witnesses as claiming that most reportedly bore jackets of the Sûreté nationale, the national police run by the Interior Ministry.[66] Likewise at Bentalha, it was reported that the attackers wore both 'Afghan costumes' and 'army uniforms'.[67] One survivor of the Sidi Hamed massacre claimed the attackers had worn the same uniform as used by Algerian paratroopers; others identified the uniforms as those worn by the state armed militias.[68] Another said that some of the killers had worn 'cachabias' (Algerian hooded tunics).[69] Of course none of these survivor accounts rules out the possibility of insurgents wearing police, army or militia uniforms when carrying out massacres (or vice versa); rather, the point is that few of these witnesses were able to identify their attackers either way.

Conflicting and confused witness statements also emerge within efforts to account for the government's alleged failure to top any of the massacres as they were being carried out in

---

[62] Survivors identified him as 'Ali Dellal', joined by two assistants, 'Ali Cherat and Rabah Bengouya'. See AFP, 'Terrible carnage près d'Alger : entre 98 et 300 civils égorges', 29 August 1997 ; and Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Algérie: les pires massacres en cinq ans de guerre civile', Le Monde, 1 September 1997.

[63] Rachid Khiari, '300 killed in Algeria massacre, witnesses and hospital workers say', Associated Press, 29 August 1997.

[64] John Phillips, 'Army link to Algeria slaughter', Sunday Times, 26 October 1997.

[65] AFP, '63 civilians massacred in Algeria', 6 September 1997 .

[66] Julia Ficatier and Amine Kadi, 'Algérie. La nouvelle bataille d'Alger', La Croix, 10 September 1997: 3.

[67] Lara Marlowe, 'Families hid and listened to dying neighbours' screams', Irish Times, 21 October 1997: 11.

[68] Nadim Ladki, 'Algerian village buries massacre victims', Reuters, 13 January 1998; Reuters, 'France rejects international force for Algeria', 12 January 1998.
See also Anthony Loyd, 'Algeria massacre village barred to EU visitors', The Times, 21 January 1998.

[69] AFP, '"Our village is a cemetery," says Sidi Hammed survivor', 13 January 1998.

close proximity. The previous chapter noted some of the representational inconsistencies and geographical assumptions within this strand of the *Qui tue?* discourse of the massacres, particularly those cases where state intervention was reported and those cases, such as the Ouarsenis massacres, where the killing sites, unlike the Mitidja, were actually quite distant from military and security installations. The consensus framing of the issue as simply a failure of the state to intervene elicits hypotheses of (1) cynical state indifference to the plight of former rebel supporters (as noted in the last chapter) or (2) more developed theories of a strategic counter-insurgency program that unfortunately could only select certain populations for protection due to resource constraints (e.g., Kalyvas 1999: 270-1, 281). The initial framing of the problem, however, fails to capture what was actually claimed by survivors in the international press, thus leading to awkward interpretations. It seems to suggest that the military was only accused of gross negligence, and so it is the only facet that requires explanation. In fact, the reported actions of government forced and militias during some of the major massacres were much more disturbing. It was not just the proximity of security installations to some massacre sites that was cause for concern but rather allegations that security forces were present, mobilised and active on the periphery of massacre as the killing was taking place (e.g., Bentalha).[70] Amnesty International (1997: 7-9) cited two instances where victims fleeing the massacre had been stopped by Algerian security elements from leaving and a militia from a neighbouring area was prevented from entering to stop it. A survivor of Sidi Hamed said that the military had arrived within fifteen minutes of being notified of the massacre but did not enter to stop the killing.[71]

Similarly problematic is the claim that 'Journalists working in the field have found credible testimonies in support of the thesis that most massacres are organized by the rebels' (Kalyvas 1999: 253). Yet journalists working in the field frequently expressed uncertainty about the identity and motive of the attackers, even after speaking to survivors. 'Accounts of the massacres remain contradictory', concluded a writer with the Associated Press.

---

[70] Speaking with a resident of Bentalha who allegedly survived the massacre and then fled to Belgium, Libération reported this 'Yahia' as claming that, two to three hours into the ten-hour massacre, he saw the army — soldiers and several tanks — arrive at the end of the only road leading into the district. They did not intervene and reportedly kept police, militias and even ambulances from entering during the massacre. Florence Aubenas, 'Bentalha, le récit de dix heures de tuerie', Libération, 23 October 1997.

[71] Steve Crawshaw, 'Algeria rejects UN help as stunned survivors tell of massacre horror', Independent, 21 January 1998: 7.

'None of the residents of Bentalha or Rais questioned during a visit Friday could describe with any precision how the massacres unfolded'.[72] Following a visit, Alain Bommenel of AFP described the attackers at Bentalha as 'unknown'.[73] Lara Marlowe of the Irish Times similarly concluded 'The basic facts of the massacre — who committed it and why — are still disputed' in Bentalha.[74] After visiting Algerian massacre sites in early 1998, celebrity reporter Christiane Amanpour of 60 Minutes, who won an Emmy Award for this segment, simply felt, 'it's not clear just who's doing it or why'.[75]

Journalists in the field also recorded suspicions and accusations of complicity in the massacres by state and pro-government agents. In one account of the Bentalha massacre published in Libération (citied five times by Kalyvas), a sceptical survivor remarked how 'extremely organised' the killers were, most of them 'normally dressed' though some were 'disguised in Afghan [dress], with beards and long hair'. When one of the attackers spotted the army on the periphery of the massacre site, another told him, according to this survivor, 'Do your work calmly, take your time, the soldiers will not intervene'. When directly asked 'Who killed', the survivor only replies, 'We're lost', adding that he no longer understands anything.[76] In an another article (which Kalyvas cites ten times), Le Monde's Jean Pierre Tuquoi noted that some of Bentalha's survivors underscored the 'professionalism' of the attackers: 'They behaved like the Ninjas [i.e., special anti-terrorism squads], acting very quickly. I saw one shoot single-handed'.[77] From Bentalha,

---

[72] Elaine Ganley, 'Mystery, contradictions plague site of largest Algerian massacres', Associated Press, 25 October 1997.

[73] Alain Bommenel, 'Suspicion and hatred stalk the streets of massacre village', Agence France Presse, 22 October 1997.

[74] Lara Marlowe, 'Families hid and listened to dying neighbours' screams', Irish Times 21 October 1997: 11.

[75] Christian Amanpour, 'Massacre in Algeria', 60 Minutes, CBS, 18 January 1998, transcript.

[76] Florence Aubenas, 'Bentalha, le récit de dix heures de tuerie', Libération, 23 October 1997.
For some advocating an inquiry into the massacre (e.g., Ait Larbi, *et al* 1999 and Mellah 2004), this article from Libération has cited as damning evidence of government complicity in the Bentalha massacre. Yet this survivor's account could be read as providing neither definitive proof for or against state or insurgent complicity.

[77] 'Les assaillants étaient-ils des militaires déguisés en terroristes? Quelques rares habitants de Bentalha mettent en avant le professionnalisme des assaillants. L'un d'eux raconte: Ils se comportaient comme des ninjas (les forces spéciales algériennes), agissaient très rapidement. J'en ai vu un tirer au fusil d'une seule main' (Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, 'Algérie, autopsie d'un massacre', Le Monde, 11 November 1997). Tuquoi was initially unable to wrest a satisfactory explanation from Bentalha's survivors (see Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, 'Bentalha, ville martyre, ville fantôme d'Algérie', Le Monde, 22 October 1997).

the Sunday Times' John Phillips found that 'survivors' accounts more than intimated a degree of army complicity'. He added, 'Some even claimed that soldiers — or army-backed militiamen — had taken part'.[78] An Algerian relaying a second-hand account from a massacre in Baraki claimed that some of attackers had been recognized as members of the *Garde communale,* a local security force.[79] One of the journalists Kalyvas repeated cites made this observation:

> In this murky conflict, GIA militants have disguised themselves as policemen or soldiers during attacks and set up fake road blocks to kill, for example, busloads of schoolchildren. Security units, meanwhile, have disguised themselves as guerrillas with beards and infiltrated — or assisted — the terrorist groups.[80]

A reporter with the London Independent found 'it is clear that many in Sidi Hamad fear some kind of complicity' between their attackers and the security forces that did not intervene.[81]

Even when survivors pointed their fingers at the insurgency, reporters were still not always convinced that other interests had been vindicated. Though the New York Times' Youssef Ibrahim unequivocally blamed the GIA for the Bentalha massacre, he still felt, 'It has become difficult in Algeria to figure out who is doing the attacking, because Islamic fundamentalist groups have splintered into spin-off groups and the Government has made a

---

Immediately after Bentalha, Tuquoi wrote, 'On the identity of the killers, no reliable information is available', though he mentioned media accounts indicating that the killers in Bentalha were 'well dressed and clean shaven'. This was 'not the caricature of terrorists normally conveyed by the regime' (Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Le bras arme du FIS ordonne un arrêt des combats', Le Monde, 25 September 1997).

[78] John Phillips, 'Army link to Algeria slaughter', Sunday Times, 26 October 1997.
A Bentalha survivor told Phillips, 'There were about 35 or 40 of them [i.e., attackers]. Half of them were dressed in military tunics. The others wore civilian clothes. The ones in military tunics had automatic weapons. The others were carrying knives and axes. They shouted to us, "Open up, we are the military."'

[79] Nidam Abdi, '«´C'est devenu une guerre de tribus»', Libération, 24 September 1997.

[80] Scott Peterson, 'Algeria's Village Vigilantes Unite Against Terror', Christian Science Monitor, 5 November 1997: 8.

[81] Steve Crawshaw, 'Algeria rejects UN help as stunned survivors tell of massacre horror', Independent, 21 January 1998: 7.

policy of matching terror for terror'.[82] After visiting the Bentalha massacre site and speaking to several survivors, the Guardian's David Hirst still asked 'who is behind these atrocities?' Despite the fact that the witnesses he interviewed blamed the GIA, the ease with which the attackers carried out their killing disturbed Hirst the most.[83] Often the non-intervention of the security forces prompted accusations of indirect complicity from locals. A survivor of the Raïs massacre, having lost his entire family, told the Irish Times, 'I want an international commission to investigate the massacres. [...] Why didn't the army intervene? Why didn't they come out of their barracks?'[84] Visiting several massacre sites in October 1997, Robert Moore of ITN found that 'witnesses started giving disturbing testimony about the role of the security forces and the behaviour of local militias. [...] More questions followed, all of which hinted at some collusion between the attackers and the security forces'.[85]

Not only has the scope of the confusion and contestation amongst witnesses and survivors been misrepresented, there are even problems with the ways in which Kalyvas presents ostensibly corroborating accounts. For example, a dialogue between a local youth and an AIS fighter, used to illustrate insurgent coercion against civilians, is misinterpreted. Supposedly, the rebel warns the youth, 'if you take weapons from the government, the first bullet will be for you' (*ibid.*: 271), when in fact the dialogue is the other way around:

> Z recalls one night in 1997, on a doorstep, where the village youth often talked with
> those in the insurgency [maquis]. 'Will you take weapons from the government?', an

---

[82] Youssef M. Ibrahim, 'Algeria Votes, Recalling Fateful Election of 1992', New York Times, 24 October 1997: A8.
    Returning to the scene of the crime, the New York Times conducted further, less supervised interviews with survivors in Bentalha about two months later. 'Residents said they have no doubt that guerrillas belonging to the Armed Islamic Group, one of the most violent in Algeria's fractured Islamic movement, were responsible for the killings here', wrote Ibrahim in a Sunday page one follow-up piece. Youssef M. Ibrahim, 'As Algerian Civil War Drags On, Atrocities Grow', New York Times, 28 December 1997: I1.
[83] David Hirst, 'The mystery of Algeria's murder squads: "This is where they shot my wife"', Guardian, 20 October 1997: 1.
[84] Lara Marlowe, 'Families hid and listened to dying neighbours' screams', Irish Times 21 October 1997: 11.
[85] Robert Moore, 'Hands that wield Algeria's knives', Observer, 26 October 1997: 15.

AIS guy asked. 'If I do take them, the first bullet will be for you', replied a youth. In the village, this is what one calls a joke.[86]

Though the AIS fighter does threaten the youth, mainly it is for embarrassing him in front of the group. Another example from this step in the argument is the claim that Le Monde's Dominique Le Guilledoux has 'further confirmed' that villagers did not want to trigger insurgent anger by forming local self-defence groups: 'it "is enough for the killers to learn that the residents [of a village] ask for weapons to protect themselves, a sign that they trust them no more, for reprisals to happen"' (*ibid.*: 271). The problem here is that it is not Le Guilledoux who is speaking but an Algerian arriving at the port of Marseille where Le Guilledoux is conducting interviews with people transiting to and from Algeria. Presenting this quote as a journalist who has 'confirmed' such facts suggests that it has been arrived at through multiple conversations, which carries more weight than a single Algerian's opinion — an Algerian who is safely removed from the fighting. If we consider the full context of this example, it is perhaps more interesting that this Algerian actually goes on to express doubt that only the GIA is behind the killings and not the government.[87] Le Guilledoux herself actually voiced the conclusion that 'Nobody can explain the logic of the massacres'. As an inverse example, a 'villager' is quoted as saying that the years between 1992 and 1995 were the 'black years' (*ibid*: 262). However, this villager is actually identified in the original source as a Dr. Bachir Ridouh, professor of psychiatry at a hospital in Blida.[88] The context that surrounds quote implies that this is a 'villager', like other villagers quoted, living amongst the sub-urban and rural Islamist insurgency, rather than a highly educated elite professional working in a major city hospital.

---

[86] 'Z. raconte ce soir de 1997, sur un seuil, où les jeunes du village discutaient comme souvent avec ceux du maquis. «Est-ce que vous avez pris les armes du gouvernement?» demande un type de l'AIS. «Si je les prends, la première balle sera pour toi», a répondu un jeune. Au village, c'est ce qu'on appelle une plaisanterie. Tout le monde a ri, mais pas le type de l'AIS. «Vous ne pouvez pas faire cela. En tant d'années, nous n'avons pas tué un seul d'entre vous.» Et pour blaguer à son tour, il manoeuvre sa kalachnikov contre la tempe du garçon et lâche: «Mais je vais commencer ce soir.»' (Florence Aubenas, 'Algérie: "Nous savons que nous sommes seuls"', Libération, 10 February 1998).

[87] 'Il suffit que les tueurs apprennent que les habitants demandent des armes pour se protéger signe qu'ils n'ont plus confiance pour qu'il y ait des représailles, reprend Ali. Est-ce toujours le GIA? C'est ça qui est insupportable: le doute. Si on savait que les militaires ne s'attaquaient qu'aux terroristes, on serait rassuré, mais ils nous laissent dans le doute'. Dominique Le Guilledoux, 'Algérie, l'horreur et le doute', Le Monde, 23 October 1997.

[88] Mina Kaci, 'A l'hôpital psychiatrique de Blida, on s'attend « à une explosion de troubles névrotiques »', L'Humanité, 6 March 1998.

There are other odd re-contextualisations and de-contextualisations as well. To back up his claim that the massacre perpetrators knew their victims, Kalyvas cites the story of a survivor of the Bougara massacre, who had been threatened by her former physics professor at a *faux barrage* incident 'well before' the massacre and then later recognised him as one the attackers during the massacre (*ibid.*: 257). While the survivor, identified as Hafida in the source, does talk about seeing her teacher at the *faux barrage* incident, she says nothing about seeing this man during the massacre.[89] If that had been the case, this testimony would enhance the argument that the victims' recognised their attackers; in reality, it does not. In another case the complete quote makes a world of difference:

> 'In rural areas this has become a tribal war. Some tribes are connected to the state, because someone is civil servant, policeman, or works for the military. The spiral of horror begins when the Islamists kill a member of this tribe. This tribe decides then to take ammunitions from the security services and then organizes a revenge operation against those who have children in the guerrilla' (quoted in *ibid*: 266)

Ending the quote at 'guerrilla' (*maquis*) leaves out the way in which this Algerian implicates the state in the reproduction of such violence: 'In the end, the Islamists return to massacre the tribe in vengeance. But it never ends, because the army has managed to involve people who, since 1992, never wanted to take sides in this war'.[90] State manipulation of social tensions for military gain is likewise hidden in another elided quote (*ibid*: 269): 'one thing is certain: civilians are also the principal victims of the violence exercised by the paramilitary groups'. Yet the rest of the sentence, which has been omitted, reveals the journalist's beliefs: 'civilians are also the principal victims of the violence exercised by the paramilitary groups *linked to different regime clans, violence which is as incontrollable as that of the killers claiming Islam*' (emphasis added).[91] Rather than merely

---

[89] Mina Kaci, 'Hafida : "Ce terroriste-là je le connaissais, c'était mon ancien professeur de physique"', L'Humanité, 6 March 1998.
[90] Nidam Abdi, '«C'est devenu une guerre de tribus»', Libération, 24 September 1997.
[91] 'Une seule chose est sûre: les civils sont aujourd'hui les principales victimes des violences qu'exercent les groupes paramilitaires liés aux différents clans du pouvoir, violences qui sont aussi incontrôlables que celles des assassins se revendiquant de l'islam'. José Garçon, 'Quatre questions sur une tragédie', Libération, 30 August 1997.

a thesis of Islamist retribution and privatised violence, this survivor also feels that the intra-regime conflict has to be taken into account.

Other Algerians

Outside of witnesses and survivors, contemporary news stories also found a number of Algerians who seemed deeply uncertain about the identity of the massacre perpetrators. As the pace of massacres quickened in late 1996, Louisa Hanoune told a French paper, 'We no longer know who kills who and why. You have false police, false Islamists, all kinds of armed groups, an Armed Islamic Group [un GIA], Armed Islamic Groups [des GIA], militias, real armed Islamists, real checkpoints, false checkpoints'.[92] Moustafa Bouchachi, a leading Algerian human rights lawyer, was one of them: 'I really don't know much about what is happening. [...] It's a mystery even for me'.[93] Though exiled former president Ben Bella suspected a possible state role in the massacres (see chapter five), he nonetheless admitedd that it was 'a situation in which no one knows who is a killer and who is not a killer'.[94] Even in the articles Kalyvas uses, these sentiments abound. One Algerian 'swears that everyone kills disguised as terrorists, Islamists as police or gendarmes, common-law prisoners set free as militia members'.[95] The Algerian at the port of Marseille (see above) says, 'That is what is unbearable: the doubt. If we knew that the military was attacking as terrorists, we would be reassured, but they leave us in doubt'.[96] Two well-connected French journalists — both Kalyvas holds in high regard and frequently cites — likewise reflected these doubts. 'On the identity of the killers', Le Monde's Jean Pierre Tuquoi admitted just days after Bentalaha, 'no reliable information is available'.[97] Libération's José Garçon described the situation as so complex, so uncontrollable, involving such a 'multitude of actors', that it prohibited a coherent reading.[98]

---

[92] Julia Ficatier, 'Algérie: « On ne sait plus qui tue qui et pourquoi » Louisa Hanoune', La Croix, 9 October 1996: 24.

[93] John Lancaster, 'As Algeria's Savagery Grows, So Does Mystery Shrouding It', Washington Post, 18 October 1997: A1.

[94] Quoted in AFP, 'Ex-president decries "killing machines" in Algeria', 16 November 1997.

[95] Nidam Abdi, '«C'est devenu une guerre de tribus»', Libération, 24 September 1997.

[96] Dominique Le Guilledoux, 'Algérie, l'horreur et le doute', Le Monde, 23 October 1997.

[97] Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Le bras arme du FIS ordonne un arrêt des combats', Le Monde, 25 September 1997.

[98] José Garçon, 'Quatre questions sur une tragédie', Libération, 30 August 1997.

Others Algerians outright blamed the government or other interest groups for the mass killing. In early 1998, an Algerian in Blida told a US reporter, 'In 85 percent of the cases. [...] It is the state'.[99] Several months earlier, another journalist wrote, 'In Algiers, taxi drivers and human-rights lawyers alike will tell you: "Le terrorisme? C'est le pouvoir"'.[100] One Algerian blamed the violence on 'gangsters posing as Muslim holy warriors'.[101] After Bentalha, a Financial Times reporter wrote, 'Even government officials admit some of the violence is related to banditry, rather than political motivation'.[102] A teacher at the Institut national d'agronomie told La Tribune that the initial victims of terrorism in the Mitidja were union activists organising against the 'mafia' of business interests surrounding agriculture. Now, she alleged, 'there are some agents as well as wholesalers and importers, mostly from the region of Blida, who sponsor the massacre of civilians'.[103]

Alleged members of the Algerian security forced expressed similar sentiments of uncertainty, fear and suspicion to Western news outlets. An Algerian solider, who claimed that he had been recently discharged because of wounds sustained during fighting, told a British journalist,

> Sometimes we fought an element who were definitely one type of GIA, sometimes we fought people who were another type of GIA. They all had different agendas and the only thing they usually shared was a brand of Islam and hatred for the Government. Sometimes we fought people of no particular definition at all. It was never concrete: neither their agenda nor ours.[104]

An Algerian policewoman, seeking asylum in Britain, said she was not sure who had murdered her husband, who was also a cop: 'The men who did this to him were dressed as policemen — and they killed him because he was a policeman. They kill without

---

[99] Charles Trueheart, 'Killers Spread Fear Among Algeria's Poor', Washington Post, 13 February 1998: A30.

[100] John Sweeney, 'Surviving Algeria', The Observer, 29 June 1997: 6.

[101] Words of journalist Charles Trueheart in 'Killers Spread Fear Among Algeria's Poor', Washington Post, 13 February 1998: A30.

[102] Roula Khalaf, 'Panic and confusion over Algiers killings', Financial Times, 24 September 1997: 4.

[103] A.E., 'Maghreb. Un terrorisme mafieux lie aux privatisations sévit en Algérie', La Tribune, 17 September 1997: 8.

[104] Anthony Loyd, 'Zeroual's zombies cast vote', London Times, 24 October 1997.

reason'.[105] Another police officer, also seeking asylum in Britain, told the same reporter his motivation for leaving Algeria: fear of being killed by special government hit squads. 'I began to suspect that most of the policemen who died were being killed by the authorities because they were not collaborating enough with the government or because they were suspected of having sympathies with the opposition. Many of my friends in the police were killed, often at home'.[106]

While such accounts, true or false, do not demonstrate government complicity in the massacres, some state agents did claim to have participated in massacres or have first hand knowledge of state authorship. Regardless of the veracity of these accounts (no one has ever conducted a thorough follow up public investigation), they have received marginal and almost flippant treatments in subsequent analyses of the massacres. As noted above, Hafez and Kepel do not even bother to engage these sources and their claims. Kalyvas is rhetorically dismissive of these accounts ('a few', 'alleged', 'as many as', 'an army conspiracy') and implies that survivors' counter or overcome such accusations. As just shown, survivors were often ambiguous and conflicting, especially in that they sometimes pointed towards the complicity of state, paramilitary or private agents. Reporters following the story, including the ones Kalyvas relies upon, likewise seemed much more ambivalent and sceptical in their actual writings.

Moreover Kalyvas does not detail the full extent of these accusations by alleged government participants and corroborators; he only cites two articles. One is the series of interviews with 'Robert', an asylum seeker in Britain reported in the Observer in early 1998. Robert claimed that 'he took part in 18 massacres, pretending that he and his fellow-ninjas ['paramilitary cops who sport black balaclavas'] were Muslims'.[107] The other source Kalyvas cites is Libération, which carried an interview with 'Omar', a young Algerian conscript also seeking asylum in London. Omar claimed to have participated, albeit indirectly, in an army-orchestrated massacre in June 1997, where special undercover troops

---

[105] Robert Fisk, 'Algeria's Terror: Witness from the front line of a police force bent on brutality', The Independent, 30 October 1997: 9.
[106] Robert Fisk, 'Algeria's Horror: Nightmares of torture haunt exiled witness', Independent, 1 November 1997: 17.
[107] John Sweeney, 'You want a desert war? Try this one', Observer, 8 February 1998: 27.

dressed as Islamists conducted the actual killing.[108] But as outlined in the previous chapter, there were others as well. To these two we should first add the Observer's November 1997 interview with 'Joseph'/'Yussef', an alleged former DRS officer who claimed to have seen documents discussing his agency's subversion and manipulation of the GIA and knowledge of special counter-intelligence 'death squads' that carried out massacres.[109] Second, Le Monde's Tuquoi — a journalist Kalyvas praises — published an interview with a serving DRS officer ('Hakim') who substantiated Joseph's claims that, in some cases, the government was behind the massacres indirectly (through an infiltrated yet uncontrollable GIA) or directly (through its own special forces).[110] Third is the January 1998 Observer interview with 'Robert' and 'Andrew', two asylum seekers in the United Kingdom who, as recently as October 1997, allegedly helped elite undercover units of the DRS carry out massacres.[111] To these we might add the accusations of former Prime Minister Brahimi and former diplomatic corps officer Zitout, who became proponents of the government complicity thesis from exile (see chapter five).

---

[108] François Sergent, '«Ils avaient de fausses barbes et du sang sur leurs pantalons». Un déserteur algérien accuse des soldats déguisés en islamistes d'avoir tué des civils', Libération, 23 October 1997. Reprinted as 'Hands that wield Algeria's knives', The Observer, 26 October 1997: 15.

See also Lara Marlowe, 'Algerians tortured by security forces', Irish Times, 30 October 1997: 1; Lara Marlowe, 'Ex-army conscript saw colleagues torturing and murdering villagers', Irish Times, 30 October 1997: 9. See also Robert Fisk, 'Conscript tells of Algeria's torture chambers', Independent, 3 November 1997: 10. 'Reda' was interviewed on the Channel Four *Dispatches* program for a featured titled 'Triangle of Death', which first showed on 21 October 1997.

[109] John Sweeney and Leonard Doyle '"We bombed Paris for Algeria"', Observer, 9 November 1997: 9.

He later gave a similar testimony before the UK parliament under the name 'Captain Joseph Haroun'. See Associated Press, 'Report: second secret agent blames Algeria for French attacks', 10 November 1997; James Landale, 'Zeroual secret agents accused of massacres', Times (London), 23 January 1998.

One of the more concrete international developments to come out of the Observer's interview with Joseph was an Italian push to launch a more robust investigation into the killing of seven Italian sailors in Algeria in July 1994. See John Sweeney, 'Algeria acts on massacre of Italians', The Observer, 23 November 1997: 14.

[110] Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Des fuites impliquent Alger dans les attentats de Paris', Le Monde, 11 November 1997.

[111] John Sweeney, 'Atrocities in Algeria. We were the murderers who killed for the state', Observer, 11 January 1998: 14.

Observers

Other governments

Another problematic claim of consensus is the assertion that other governments and various foreign experts were in agreement that the insurgents were solely responsible for the majority of massacres. Regarding the former, we find the statement that that 'European foreign ministries believe that it is Islamist guerrillas who are responsible for the massacres' (Kalyvas 1999: 253). However, the choice of sources is odd, as the article deals mainly with the claims of 'Robert' (see above) and the only foreign ministry mentioned in the article is the British one: 'If the Foreign Office doubts the evidence that the Algerian government is behind some of the massacres, it should get in touch with the Observer'.[112] In fact, the European foreign ministry widely seen as key to blocking or accelerating the internationalisation of the Algerian conflict, that of France, seemed to reflect the lack of reliable and consistent information about the massacres. After the April 1997 Bougara massacre, a French official stated,

> What's happening there is appalling, but there is no way to know for sure exactly who is doing what to whom [...] Some attacks on civilians are carried out by Islamic fundamentalists wearing army uniforms, and other times it's Government security people disguised as Islamists.[113]

Following the Bentalha massacre, Jospin seemed to indicate that his government had questions about the massacre. As the Economist wrote, 'Mr Jospin's reference to state violence and his assertion that the situation is not clear-cut are unprecedented from a French official'.[114] The day after Le Monde published its interview with 'Hakim' (see above) in November, Jospin's party backed calls for an international inquiry: 'It is the duty of the international community to establish what is happening in Algeria', said an official

---

[112] Cited as 'Observer, 9 February 1998 [sic]'. See John Sweeney, 'You want a desert war? Try this one', The Observer, 8 February 1998: 27.

[113] Craig R. Whitney, 'Algeria Says Rebels Killed 93, Many Women, in Village Raid', New York Times, 23 April 1997: A13.

[114] Economist, 'Algeria. A change of French tone?', 11 October 1997: 50.

with the party.[115]

The statements of the US State Department during the massacre crisis also indicate that, at least officially, Washington had serious concerns about the identity of the massacre perpetrators. On 5 January, State Department spokesperson James Rubin said that the US government was encouraging the Algerian government to allow 'international inquiries' because 'only then we can get to the bottom of some of these issues to determine the extent of the massacres, perhaps begin to pin more clearly the blame for them'.[116] Suggesting that this latter phrasing was not a mistake, Rubin followed on 6 January with this statemnet: 'Let's remember that the facts of many of these massacres are often unclear. The perpetrators are sometimes unclear'.[117] Though the US government quickly toned down its language (see the following chapter), John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, stated at the formal unveiling of its annual State Department human rights report, 'In Algeria, alarming brutality, including massacres, systematic rape and other sexual violence against women, continues. In light of the differing accounts about the origin of these abuses, the need for a credible, international fact-finding mission is clear'.[118] Two months later, then US ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson told the UN Commission on Human Rights, 'There were many allegations inside Algeria about the killings; the paramount need was for a credible, independent verification of the facts'.[119]

---

[115] Agence France Presse, 'French Socialists call for international inquiry into Algeria', 12 November 1997. Jospin was also responding to Algerian criticism for supporting the 10 November 'day of solidarity' with Algeria in Paris, organised by NGOs and featuring several celebrities — Gérard Depardieu, Isabelle Adjani, Cheb Khaled.
   In Germany, the opposition Green Party had already proposed a resolution calling for international mediation of the Algerian crisis, ideally to be led by France and Germany through the UN Security Council. This was watered down from an original proposal, which was to ban German arms sales to Algeria. European Union MEP Beniel Cohn-Bendit of the German Greens was one of the stronger European critics of Algeria. After Bentalha, he said, 'No one knows who is killing whom, no one knows who is protecting whom'. See Agence France Presse, 'Opposition party urges Bonn, Paris to help settle Algeria conflict', 25 September 1997; Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 'Halt military exports, loans to Algeria, German Greens say', 24 September 1997; Inter Press Service, 'Algeria: Europe powerless in face of Algerian horror', 26 September 1997.
[116] US Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 5 January 1998.
[117] US Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 6 January 1998, emphasis added.
[118] Federal News Service, 30 January 1998.
[119] 'United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Addresses Commission on Human Rights', M2 Presswire, 30 March 1998.
The US government reportedly asked Algeria's permission before submitting a resolution to that effect to the Commission; the response was no. Farhan Haq, 'Activists criticize inaction over massacres', Inter Press Service, 22 April 1998.

Again, it is difficult to understand such appeals if there was, as Kalyvas claims, a consensus regarding the identity of the massacre perpetrators. Indeed, it is difficult to understand the international clamour for an inquiry if there was a consensus either blaming the insurgents or vindicating the government.

Scholars and experts

The suggestion that scholars and other experts were mostly in agreement on the identity of the massacre perpetrators (not to mention the contested politics of the atrocities) also lacks firm grounding. Even the two works cited as evidence (see ibid: 253) actually undermine this claim. One, a book review by Barbara Smith of the Economist, seems ambivalent. 'Islamist terrorists are almost certainly to blame for most if not all of the recent ghastly killings', she writes, 'But many mysteries remain. There is little hard evidence for the GIA's responsibility'. She adds, 'There are, for now, no clear answers'.[120] The other, Algerian scholar Lahouari Addi (1998: 44; same page cited by Kalyvas), notes the 'skepticism' about the putative role of the GIA in the massacres vis-à-vis and 'suspicions' of infiltration by the government forces. While Addi places some distance between himself and claims of state culpability, he does the same for claims of Islamist responsibility as well. For Addi (1998: 49), the only way to answer question 'What is the truth?' of the massacres is an (international) inquiry, though the regime will always oppose it, he argued.

As the previous chapter made clear, the scope of academic opinions on the massacres mirrored scope of the international public debate. Two months before Raïs, Clement Henry, a US scholar of, said, 'I do give credence to some of these terrorist acts being made to look as though they're by Islamists when really it's internal security forces. [...] Some may well have been murdered by the government parading as Islamists'.[121] After that massacre, Ahmed Rouadjia, a specialist in the Algerian Islamist movement, told a reporter, 'The state encourages or closes its eyes to massacres'. He argued, 'If there is no complicity

---

[120] Barbara Smith, 'Algeria: The Horror', New York Review of Books 45(7), 23 April 1998.
[121] Mark Dennis and Carla Power, 'Try, Try Again. Have 60,000 deaths taught Algeria's leaders anything about compromise?', Newsweek, 16 June 1997: 12.

within the state, there would not be so many massacres'.[122] Far less cautious in his evaluation of the situation was French sociologist Etienne, who flatly blamed three-fourths of the massacres on the state based on logics of intra-regime struggles for control over the conflict and an alleged culture of violence.[123] In early 1998, Dale F. Eickelman, a US specialist in Islam and North Africa, expressed the opinion that 'the possibility can't be ruled out of hand elements of the military, such as military intelligence, have had a hand in some of these atrocities'.[124] Others, like Anthropologist Grandguillaume, were more sympathetic to the privatised violence thesis, suggesting that repressed social tensions, manipulation by wealthy interests, criminal activity and vendettas, some from the war of independence, had been catalysed and mobilized by the violence.[125] British political historian Willis echoed several aspects of this thesis,[126] to which Entelis, a US expert in North African affairs, included the possibility of struggles over valuable land and property driving the massacres.[127] In early 1998, Deeb, then editor of the Middle East Journal, speculated that a confluence of agents and factors. 'It's not one particular group that is responsible for the massacres', she proposed.[128] Claire Spencer, a UK academic, described Algeria as 'unique in its mystery' — 'a mysterious air which has been shrouding what has been going on there for the last five years'.[129]

---

[122] Elaine Ganley, 'In bloodied Algeria, there's no fathoming who is killing, or why', Associated Press, 29 August 1997.

[123] Laure Mandeville, 'Bruno Etienne : "Ce sont les généraux qui se déchirent"', Le Figaro, 30 August 1997. Le Monde's Jean Pierre Tuquoi explored this thesis as well, suggesting a 'third clan' in the form of intelligence chief Tewfiq Mediene, who arbitrates disputes between the military and the presidency ('Les luttes de clans s'exacerbent au sein du pouvoir algérien', 5 September 1997).

[124] Alan Sipress, 'Aftermath of a massacre: Algerian Killings have some questioning the official story', Philadelphia Inquirer, 8 January 1998: A1.

[125] Jean-Christophe Ploquin, 'Alger se protège mais ne protège pas la société', La Croix, 2 September 1997: 5; Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Algerie: l'histoire est partie prenante dans la violence d'aujourd'hui', Le Monde, 5 September 1997.

[126] Michael Willis, 'Atrocities in Algeria: Why butcher your own people?', The Observer, 11 January 1998: 14.

[127] Quote is Sipress paraphrasing Entelis. Alan Sipress, 'Aftermath of a massacre: Algerian killings have some questioning the official story', Philadelphia Inquirer, 8 January 1998: A01.

[128] 'Algeria's Agony', Newshour with Jim Lehrer, Public Broadcasting System, 20 January 1998, transcript.

[129] Emma Ross, 'Algerian exiles say authorities are responsible for massacres', Associated Press, 22 January 1998.

Human rights groups

One class of expertise omitted from this alleged consensus, which might otherwise be considered of paramount import to such questions, is human rights groups. What makes this exclusion even more strange is the fact that a 1997 Amnesty International report on the massacres is the most cited source in Kalyvas' paper. That report (Amnesty International 1997: 1) states unambiguously,

> there is growing concern, from testimonies of survivors and eyewitnesses of the massacres, that death squads working in collusion with, and under the protection of, certain units or factions of the army, security forces, and state-armed militias, may have been responsible for some of the massacres.

Several witness accounts therein 'add further weight to reports that armed groups who carried out massacres of civilians in some cases operated in conjunction with, or with the consent of, certain army and security forces units' (*ibid.*: 9, see 7-10). A Human Rights Watch (1997b: 13-14) report citied by Kalyvas, but published before Raïs, noted,

> The identity of those carrying out the violence is difficult to establish, as the security forces and the armed groups often conduct themselves in similar ways: The former often wear civilian clothes and do not identify themselves, while the latter sometimes disguise themselves as security forces [....]

Following the Bentalha massacre, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders and the Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme issued a joint statement in which they expressed concerns that 'The complex reality of violence and counter-violence has become increasingly confused with the clampdown on information and investigations'.[130] These same groups later expressed similar concerns to the UN Commission on Human Rights in April 1998: 'the massacres and other killings of civilians, the torture in security forces centres, the forced disappearances and other serious

---

[130] Press release, 'Algeria: A Call for Action to end a Human Rights Crisis', 15 October 1997.

crimes continue without respite and without any serious or credible Algerian government investigation into the facts or indictment of those responsible'.[131]

Conclusion: certain violence, ambiguous identity

To summarise, this chapter began by noting the ways in which the Algerian conflict, and the massacres in particular, were appropriated within the post-11 September 2001 discourse on Islamism and terrorist violence, whether in the immediate aftermath (in mass media accounts) or in the follow years (in academic treatments). Chief among these were claims that the insurgency, driven by its Islamist identity, had committed the massacres. Situating these appropriations within the more general discourses on new identity conflicts and the clash of civilisations, this chapter set out to problematise efforts to situate the agency and logic of the massacres within a particular identity group. This problematisation was accomplished by demonstrating the assertive character of several leading accounts of the massacres, and then it undermined the empirical and argumentative bases of the most lauded effort to explain the massacre. What we are thus left with is a series of conflicting images of the massacres and the politics allegedly driving them. The point of this chapter was not to account for the reasons that allowed particular accounts of the massacres to achieve hegemony over all others. Rather, this chapter has merely sought to problematise understandings of the massacres that posited Islamist or insurgent agency behind the majority of those acts. Yet even with these problems facing the most dominant reading of the Algerian massacres (not to mention any other reading), it should be kept in mind that such readings of Algeria's violence, warranted or not, were in play at the height of international efforts to address the ongoing massacres in 1997 and 1998, which will be analysed in the following chapter.

Instead of accounting for narrative dominance, it seems more important to account for the need for narrative. In the case of Algerian massacres, understanding this need brings into question the dominant meta-narrative governing the relationship between identity and violence. Normally, it is identity that is given agency as the cause of violence. Violence

---

[131] Press Release, 'Algeria: The Commission on Human Rights Must Act Now', 7 April 1998.

stands as an effect or a product of agency. But in the case of the Algerian massacres, identity was often difficult to establish. Yet the massacres were a violence that begged for explanation. Violence, especially on a massive scale, has a power over our imaginations that is little understood, especially the power to demand understanding. One need only think of the expansive literature on the Holocaust to realise this. For a short period in late 1997 and early 1998, the Algerian massacres became a powerful force that mobilised the some of international community's most prominent actors and bodies. The massacres also demanded interpretation and comprehensibility, which would eventually have to come in form of agency and so implicate identity. What was certain about the massacres (their brute, ghastly reality), called forth uncertain renderings of what was indeterminate about them (their agency, their rationale). If, under certain circumstances, identity produces violence, then it is possible for violence to interpellate identity. Here we have arrived at an understanding of how the major massacres of 1997-98 *became* Islamic. Violence wrote the warrant for its understanding, and many have attempted to serve it. Whether right or wrong in their efforts, this power of violence over our imagination has rarely been acknowledged or understood. Perhaps the enigma of the Algerian massacres lies not in the dictates of identity but in the dictates of violence.

7. Intervention

Arming humanitarianism

The state practice of military intervention for moral — rather than political or strategic — purpose has been narrated in recent years as a phenomenon triggered by the end of Cold War. One of armed humanitarian intervention's most esteemed proponents, former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans (2008: 284-8), recently reminded an audience at the University of Aberystwyth that the 'quintessential peace and security problem, it will be remembered — before 9/11 came along to dominate everything — became not interstate war, but civil war and internal violence perpetrated on a massive scale'. He went on to suggest, 'With the break-up of various Cold War state structures, and the removal of some superpower constraints, conscience-shocking situations repeatedly arose, above all in the former Yugoslavia and in Africa'. Author Samantha Power, a vocal US proponent for the use of military force for human rights ends, recently carved a possible gravestone for armed humanitarian intervention: Born 1991, northern Iraq — Died 2003, Iraq. By this, she meant to suggest that the *post hoc* humanitarian justifications for the 2003 Anglo-American invasion of Iraq had sabotaged the increasingly legitimate practice of moral armed intervention.[1] Six years before Power's eulogy, and a year before the occupation of Iraq, scholar turned politician Michael Ignatieff had already lamented the death of armed humanitarian intervention in the pages of the New York Times. In the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001, the 'human rights movement', as Ignatieff termed it, risked loosing its relevance after enjoying a decade of increasing legitimacy.[2] Author Robert Kaplan, a journalist who had documented some of the 1990's major conflict zones, argued that the end of war based upon humanitarian aims was a good thing. For the United States, he commented, less than a fortnight after 11 September, 'Foreign policy must return to what it traditionally has been: the diplomatic aspect of national security rather than a

---

[1] Samantha Power, 'Is Humanitarian Intervention Dead? History offers some sobering lessons', Slate, 29 September 2008: http://www.slate.com/id/2200971, accessed 17 June 2010.
[2] Michael Ignatieff, 'Is the human rights era ending?' New York Times. 5 February 2002.

branch of Holocaust studies'.[3] One does not need to entertain the pessimism of Evans, Power and Ignatieff, nor embrace the Hawkish realism of Kaplan, to understand the history they are writing, one that locates armed humanitarian intervention as a practice of that defined the global security landscape of the 1990s.

This narrative of humanitarian intervention, which often locates its organising logic in the lack of bipolar constraints in the immediate post-Cold War era (not unlike the narratives of unprecedented civil wars in the 1990s seen in chapter four), is disputed. Some of those defending these practices have constructed a significant genealogy to provide armed humanitarian intervention with as much historical legitimacy to match its putative contemporary moral, legal and political legitimacy (see, e.g., Bass 2008). In 1984, legal scholar Michael Akenhurst (1984: 95) had already observed, 'In the nineteenth century, there were no rules of international law forbidding a state to ill-treat its own nationals, but other states often claim a right o use force to prevent such ill-treatment'. He then noted that 'this right of humanitarian intervention, as it was called, was exercised on a number of occasion by European states, mainly to prevent Turkey ill-treating its Christian subjects'. The literature on humanitarian intervention even makes reference to Hugo Grotius' 1625 attempt to answer the question 'whether a war for the subjects of another be just, for the purposes of defending them from injuries inflicted by their ruler' (quoted in Stowell 1921: 56).

Humanitarian purpose was nonetheless invoked, either as a primary or secondary justification, in various interventions after World War Two. In 1947, Yugoslavia based its assistance to rebels in Greece on the grounds that they were defending themselves from persecution; Egypt claimed humanitarian purpose when its army invaded Palestine in 1948. The 1960, 1964 and 1978 interventions in Congo/Zaire all deployed humanitarian claims in their warrant, particularly the objective of protecting foreign nationals amidst conflict. This rationale was likewise used by the United States in its 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic and in 1989 in Panama. The 1983 US invasion of Grenada was underwritten by a request for help from the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States that also contained humanitarian aspects. In 1979, France had orchestrated regime change in

---

[3] Robert Kaplan, 'U.S. Foreign policy, brought back home', Washington Post, 23 September 2001: B05.

the Central African Empire (now Republic) partially on the basis of human rights concerns. In other post-World War Two cases of armed invasion, humanitarianism was not the intention but it seemed like a significant effect. India's 1971 intervention in the conflict in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) seemingly curtailed conditions that were possibly leading towards a massive humanitarian crisis. Likewise, Vietnam's 1978 foray into Cambodia at the height of the Khmer Rouge atrocities, though justified on grounds of self-defence, nonetheless stopped the genocide and brought down the regime. A year later, Tanzania invaded Uganda under a more internationally recognised claim of self-defence. In overthrowing the Idi Amin regime, Tanzania had also brought an end to his atrocities.

Though there is certainly justification for this historical debate, the practice of armed humanitarian intervention after the Cold War nonetheless constituted an important international context within which Algeria's violence was situated, particularly at the apogee of the massacres starting in late 1997. As Power suggests, the story of humanitarian intervention after the Cold War often begins with UN attempts to protect the Kurds of northern Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War. This, however, ignores the August 1990 intervention of the Economic Community of West African States into Liberia's two-year-old civil war. Another test for the emerging practice of armed humanitarian intervention also arose in 1991 with the break-up of Yugoslavia following the independence of Croatia and Slovenia in the summer of 1991. These events precipitated decade of conflict, presenting a complex of emergencies that challenged the ability of the international community to confront and ameliorate humanitarian catastrophes amidst mass intra-state violence. The subsequent secession of Bosnia and Herzegovina in October prompted further escalation in the fighting that eventually drew in the UN peacekeepers and, lastly, a NATO force. Then, in late 1992, the United States sent 20,000 troops to reinforce a United Nations led humanitarian mission in Somalia, only to have some of its soldiers infamously routed in a street battle in Mogadishu in October 1993. Still, the US government sent 20,000 troops to restore Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Artistide in 1994. This new deployment of humanitarian troops coincided with the reinstatement of a UN presence in Rwanda in the summer of 1994 to help restore order following the genocide — the very genocide that had triggered an international retreat of UN peacekeepers just months prior. The late 1990s saw UN authorised interventions in Sierra Leone and East Timor but it was NATO's March 1999 military intervention against Serbia in Kosovo — in the name of

protecting civilians but in lacking UN Security Council authorisation — that touched off a significant international debate about the question of humanitarian intervention.

Within a period of six years, the international community witnessed the Battle of Mogadishu, the Rwandan genocide, the coerced restoration of democracy in Haiti, the massacre at Srebrenica and NATO's intervention in Kosovo. While the first three (Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia) are often rendered failures to meet humanitarian obligations on the part of the international community, the intervention in Kosovo provoked contentious discussions as to the existence and consequences of any proposed right to humanitarian intervention. In September 1999, just months after NATO's bombing campaign, a meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement, representing 113 countries, denounced armed humanitarian intervention as having no legal foundation. The Group of 77 — then constituted by 133 nations — followed suit, stating, 'We reject the so-called "right" of humanitarian intervention, which has no legal basis in the United Nations Charter or in the general principles of international law'. Then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (2000: 48) offered this rejoinder in his 2000 'Millennium Report':

> But to the critics [of armed humanitarian intervention] I would pose this question: if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica — to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?

On the heels of Annan's report, presented at the UN Millennium Summit in early September 2000, the Canadian government launched the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS). The goal of the ICISS was scrutinise the practice of armed humanitarian intervention and develop recommendations for its future deployment. The narrative above — from World War Two to just before 11 September 2001 — drew heavily from that project, now widely known as the 'Responsibility to Protect' findings of the ICISS (2001).[4] For Evans (2008: 289), co-chair of the ICISS project, the idea of a 'Responsibility to Protect' is grounded in the hope that

---

[4] This introduction also makes use of the ICISS's Supplementary Volume (Weiss & Hubert 2001), which synthesises the history and debates surrounding armed humanitarian intervention during the Cold War and the 1990s, until right before 11 September 2001.

when the next conscience-shocking case of large-scale killing, or ethnic cleansing, or other war crimes or crimes against humanity come along, as they are all too unhappily likely to do, the immediate reflex response of the whole international community will be not to ask whether action is necessary, but rather what action is required, by whom, when and where.

The international response to the Algerian conflict of the 1990s, however, is nowhere to be found in the reports of the ICISS.[5] As with other efforts to assess what was a dominant security paradigm in the 1990s, the violence in Algeria, and foreign efforts to confront it, almost never receives scrutiny outside the work of country or regional experts. Why is it that Annan did not ask, 'How should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica, *to an Algeria*?' For the international community, as will be seen below, the peak wave of massacres that struck Algeria between August 1997 and January 1998 did, indeed, amount 'to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity'. The violence in Algeria was frequently represented as nothing short of, to borrow the words of Evans, 'war crimes or crimes against humanity' that were, for many observers, regardless of political standpoint, 'conscious-shocking'. Nor would it be outlandish to note that the prevailing international response to the Algerian massacres was indeed 'to ask whether action is necessary'. Yet it is unlikely that Algeria — as opposed to Bosnia, Rwanda or Darfur — is what Evens has in mind.

There is an obvious explanation for this elision — for Algeria's absence from this history. There was no intervention in Algeria. For a very simple reason, the now routine narrative of humanitarian intervention in the 1990s (e.g., Burgess 2002: 261) leapfrogs from Liberia, northern Iraq, former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Kosovo and East Timor. That is because those are the sites of intervention. Similarly, the Carnegie Endowment's Marina Ottaway (a noted Algeria expert) and Bethany Lacina (2003), in their attempt to draw 'lessons' from *humanitarian* interventions of the 1990s for the post-

---

[5] There is one telling mention of Algeria in the report: During a meeting with French officials and politicians, the ICISS noted, 'Nevertheless, participants recognized the potential for humanitarian fatigue and disinterest, as could be observed in the French public's relative lack of interest in the Algerian crisis' (Weiss & Hubert 2001: 380).

11 September world of *preventative* intervention, use the criterion of UN or coalition legitimation for the presence of armed foreign troops. But what about cases, like Algeria, that inhabit the margins of intervention? One could question the robustness of such lessons on the grounds that they do not look at instances where intervention was threatened or where intervention — according to the paradigm's logic — should have happened but did not. Thomas Weiss (2001: 419), lead researcher for the ICISS initiative, noted in 2001, but just months before 11 September, 'Precious little has actually been learned from military-civilian interventions in humanitarian catastrophes of the last decade'. Yet the case selection from which he draws his conclusions, and like those in the reports of the ICISS, are limited to those where armed humanitarian intervention actually took place.

The absence of 1990s Algeria, however, is not limited to just the literature on armed humanitarian intervention. While one might expect Algeria to be missing from an account of genocide in the twentieth century (e.g.Power 2003), it also seems to be missing from general studies of mass atrocities as well. French political historian Jacques Sémelin (2009), well known for his work on mass violence, recently offered only fleeting and dismissive reference to Algeria in his study of the politics of massacre violence. Genocide scholar Daniel Goldhagen's (2009) massive comparative study of the international response to atrocities in the twentieth century does not once mention Algeria, whether Algeria of 1957 or Algeria of 1997. Martin Shaw's (2003) study of 'organized killing modern society' does mention the Algerian war of independence but not the conflict and atrocities that followed three decades later. Conversely, area and country experts have rarely examined Algeria through the international context of armed humanitarian intervention. Whether by passive dismissal (e.g., Darbouche & Zoubir 2009) or direct rejection (e.g., Roberts 1998: 237; Roberts 2001) on practical or ontological grounds (or both), very few Algeria specialists have examined the international response to the Algerian massacres as a failure of humanitarian intervention to live up to its principles.

This is not to suggest that alternative framings are insufficient or poorly argued; it is to make the simple observation, based on what will be presented below, that the Algerian conflict, especially during the worst of the massacres, was interpellated by the discourse of humanitarian intervention — a discourse, as we will see, partially structured by the constellation of prior and recent interventions. Various voices throughout the international

community explicitly drew such linkages between Algeria and other instances of recent mass violence where there had been, and sometimes had not been, foreign military intervention. The point of examining the refraction of the Algerian conflict through a humanitarian lens is not to engage in a revisionist history. The objective here is to understand, as set out in the beginning of this study, the relationship between violence and intervention within certain representational logics that problematised the violence in Algeria in various ways.

In this chapter, we are specifically interested in the ways in which Algeria was, for a brief period, problematised as a matter of and for humanitarian intervention. Yet it is also worth considering why this problematisation of Algeria's violence was short-lived and did not deliver on its interventionary dictates. Like all of the terms and frameworks analysed in this study (e.g., economic causation, terrorism, civil war), intervention is also a highly contested and politicised concept. Whether or not there was an intervention in Algeria largely depends upon the definition of intervention brought to bear. Certainly no armed interventionary force — one mandated by an international body — landed on the shores of Algeria to stop the massacres, nor was one ever reportedly entertained by any government or international body in a serious way. In fact, as will be seen below, the militarisation of the discourse of humanitarian intervention often had the effect of ruling out humanitarian interference in Algeria because armed invasion was assumed to be the only option in the toolbox. The fact that arguments *against* using armed force did appear suggests the extent to which the conflict in Algeria had become embedded in the humanitarian intervention debate. More important than the question of intervention is the question of 'humanitarianisation' of the conflict.

As we will see shortly, the Algerian massacres were frequently viewed through this dominant security prism of the 1990s. The crisis generated by the seemingly inexorable wave of killing in late 1997 and early 1998 threatened to re-inscribe the armed conflict in Algeria as a predominantly humanitarian issue. The re-interpretation of violence in Algeria, as a 'conscience shocking' matter of humanitarian concern, brought with it a host of alternative international security discourses — knowledges and practices — readily associated with recent and contemporaneous crises in southeast Europe, Asia and Africa. The goal here is not to restore Algeria to some rightful place as a forgotten humanitarian

catastrophe by reconstructing a historical narrative that produces it as such. Nor is it to repave the well-worn paths that would likely govern such conversations vis-à-vis the international response to the Algerian massacres: the 'organised hypocrisy' of global interventionary politics or another failure of humanitarian will. Indeed, the only other study to address this apparent problem (the international community's apparent non-intervention against the Algerian massacres), analyses the discursive constitution of both the Algerian and Kosovo crises within the framework of sovereignty and intervention (Malmvig 2006). This chapter, however, will argue that there is another way in which to interpret the international reaction to the Algerian massacres. Rather than demonstrating the spatial contingency of sovereignty, the Algerian massacre crisis demonstrates an alternative way in which to understand the contingency of intervention without making reference to either Realist notions of sovereignty or Liberal notions of collective international will.

Intertextuality of intervention: reading the Algerian massacres in an international context

Contested framings

The point at which calls for intervention into the Algerian conflict were most frequent and intense coincided with the major massacres in 1997 and early 1998, when the violence in Algeria seemed to have spiralled out of control (Spencer 1998b: 126).[6] One way to understand the extent to which the violence in Algeria had become caught up in the international discourse of (armed) humanitarian intervention is to note the ease with which some observers, right or wrong, drew parallels with other contemporary humanitarian situations during this period. Such allusions were deployed to help contextualise the conflict for readers, often suggesting that the violence was worse by comparison. Others brought out such examples to suggest an equivalent or greater moral imperative for international action. Bosnia was one such example. On at least three occasions, the

---

[6] See also Barbara Smith, 'Algeria: The Horror', New York Review of Books 45(7), 23 April 1998, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1998/apr/23/algeria-the-horror, accessed September 2010.

Independent's Middle East correspondent, Robert Fisk, made direct comparisons with the war in former Yugoslavia. 'The slaughter of perhaps another 400 villagers in 24 hours puts the Algerian war on a Bosnian scale', Fisk wrote after Raïs, adding, 'but nothing, it seems, can match Algeria for animal savagery'.[7] Several weeks after Raïs, an official with the Red Cross suggested that the brutality of the massacres in Algeria even outstripped that of the Rwandan genocide: 'In Rwanda, people were machine-gunned by the tens of thousands. Here, humans are being made to suffer their own slow death through dismemberment'.[8] Visiting the scene of the Bentalha massacre, Washington Post's John Lancaster proposed that the violence in Algeria, given the unknown number of actors, was incomprehensible because it lacked the 'logic' characteristic of 'ethnic wars in Bosnia or Rwanda'.[9] The Bentalha massacre prompted the Chicago Tribune's European correspondent, Ray Moseley, to categorise the violence in Algeria as 'on a level that makes some of the atrocities of the Bosnian war pale by comparison'.[10] One journalist speculated, 'Sometimes a massacre like that in Bentalha will so shift international opinion, as perhaps Srebrenica did in Bosnia, that it forces changes of policy'.[11] Following the disclosure of the Relizane massacres, a Guardian editorial, critiquing the paucity of sustained media coverage of Algeria, seemed to suggest the situation had passed former Yugoslavia in terms of atrocious violence: 'We have reached this point much later in time than if Algeria had been Bosnia'.[12] Following one of the worst massacres in January 1998, Robert Novak, a conservative US media commentator, criticised the Clinton administration for having 'selective outrage', arguing that, in comparison to Haiti and Bosnia, Algeria was a far

---

[7] Robert Fisk, 'Hundreds die in Algerian slaughter', Independent, 30 August 1997: 9.

Fisk later wrote, 'Algeria is in the midst of a civil war of Bosnian proportions' ('The agony of Algeria', Syndey Morning Herald, 20 September 1997: 39) and described massacre sites as 'Bosnian-styled ghost towns' ('Algeria, this autumn: a people in agony', Independent, 22 October 1997:1).

[8] Christopher P. Winner, 'In Algeria, "unspeakable" horrors', USA Today, 17 September 1997. The accuracy of the comparison is debateable, given the dominant impression of the Rwandan genocide as being carried out more by machete than bullets.

[9] John Lancaster, 'As Algeria's Savagery Grows, So Does Mystery Shrouding It', Washington Post, 18 October 1997: A1.

[10] Reprinted in 'Algerian killing so grisly the world won't look', Star-Ledger (Newark), 12 October 1997: 11B.

[11] Martin Woollacott, 'Harsh symphonies of slaughter and identity', Guardian, 27 September 1997: 21.

[12] The Guardian, 'A much-needed start. But the EU needs strong words to wake Algiers', 7 January 1998: 14.

worse situation.[13] William Schultz, director of the US branch of Amnesty International, arguing in favour of a more aggressive policy towards Algeria, claimed that the crisis in Algeria was then one of the worst facing the international community: 'We have 80,000 people killed. That's more than all of those in Bosnia and Chechnya combined'.[14]

As much as words, images of the violence were also important, especially their international reception. No other image of the Algerian massacres is perhaps as important as the photograph taken by Hocine Zaourar, an AFP photographer at the Zmirli hospital in the El Harrach neighbourhood of Algiers the morning of the Bentalha massacre. The photograph captures a mother in a moment where she appears to be succumbing to grief after reportedly learning that her eight children had died in the massacre.[15] The following day, the photo, what Le Monde (26 September 1997) dubbed the 'Madonna in Hell', appeared on the front pages of several major newspapers worldwide.[16] The effects are noticeable. 'It was one of those photographs, like the little Vietnamese girl with her skin in napalmed tatters, that send reverberations round the globe'.[17] 'Just as Robert Capa's dying Republican soldier epitomised the Spanish Civil War [...] Hocine's photograph has become Algeria's icon'.[18] As 'a symbol of the struggle against barbarism and for the promotion of

---

[13] CNN, Capital Gang, 3 January 1998, transcript.

[14] CNN, Diplomatic License, 10 January 1998, transcript.

[15] In what seemed like an act of quick retaliation, the Algerian government removed the credentials of AFP's reporter in Algiers for inflating the death figures from Bentalha (Lara Marlowe, 'Continuing campaign of violence claims lives of 11 women teachers', Irish Times, 30 September 1997: 9). Then, several months later, Algerian government radio and television claimed that AFP had created a false image for profit and propaganda, and 'to tarnish the image of Algeria'. The report cited local officials who claimed that the 'Madonna' woman was not a resident of Bentalha and her true identity could not be established. 'The fact is', one reporter claimed, 'this lady was created by the European media for venomous propaganda campaigns against Algeria by diffusing false reports' (BBC Monitoring, 'Algerian Television slams anti-foreign media campaigns', 11 February 1998). The woman, Oum Saad (or Um Saad Ghendouzi), eventually emerged and sued AFP for defamation in 1998. She claimed that she had only lost her brother in the massacre and that she came under threat from her neighbours as a possible insurgent sympathiser. As a Muslim, she also took offence to being called a Madonna (Doy 2002: 215-8; Lara Marlowe, 'Visitors to chip away at Fortress Algeria', Irish Times, 29 July 1998).

[16] The New York Times decided to publish the photo on page three. See Roger Cohen, '85 Slain in New Attack Near Algiers, Setting Off Panic', New York Times, 24 September 1997: A3.

[17] John Henley, 'Political Islam's men of violence', Guardian, 26 September 1997: 17.

[18] Lara Marlowe, '"Madonna in hell" captures the grief and despair of war-torn Algeria', Irish Times, 20 October 1997: 12.

Historian Benjamin Stora (2001b) would later boil it down to this: '100,000 dead and one image'.

peace between men'[19], the Italian magazine Rivista del Cinematografo awarded the photo its top prize in October, among the several it earned. These include the prestigious World Press Photo, considered the top prize in photojournalism, awarded to Zaourar in early 1998.[20] In the 1990s, the winners of the World Press Photo award tended to highlight situations where international humanitarian concerns were focused — Kosovo (1990, 1998, 1999), Somalia (1992), Rwanda (1994) and Chechnya (1995). The award hinted that Algeria had become one of the defining human rights crises of the 1990s.

Perceptions that the violence of the Algerian conflict was outstripping its politics also made a humanitarian framing possible. At the end of 1997, The Economist felt that 'Earlier arguments for a negotiated settlement have been overtaken by the near-daily butchery of civilians'.[21] Indeed, following the January 1998 massacres, the language of genocide could be found in representations of the conflict. The Vatican's L'Osservatore Romano had no reluctance labelling the recent massacres a 'genocide' that the international community ought to confront.[22] Agence France Press reported that the daily El Wantan had described the Relizane massacres as evidence of an Algerian 'genocide of its own people'.[23] Following the Sidi Hamed massacre, the Australian headlined the Algerian atrocities a 'holocaust'.[24] A reporter with CNN also alluded to genocide: 'The ongoing massacres in Algeria seem nauseatingly familiar, echoes of the tribal warfare that claimed millions of people in Rwanda, the ethnic cleansing that tore apart Bosnia, the killing fields of Cambodia'.[25] Similarly, the Boston Globe editorialised on 22 January that the violence in Algeria resembled the 'ghoulish zealotry of Pol Pot's Cambodia'.[26] The image of killing fields — signifying the Cambodian genocide specifically and mass atrocities generally — was deployed on several other occasions[27] and had seen some circulation already.[28]

---

[19] AFP, 'Un prix pour la photo de la "madone" algerienne', 24 October 1997.

[20] AFP, 'Le photographe de l'AFP a Alger auteur de la meilleure photo 1997', 13 February 1998.

[21] Economist, 'Algeria. But Why?', 13 December 1997.

[22] AFP, 'More massacres hit Algeria as pressure mounts for inquiry', 7 January 1998.

[23] Alain Bommenel (AFP), '400 slaughtered: Algeria rings to cries of genocide', Australian, 5 January 1998: 7.

[24] AFP, 'Algerian terror campaign turns holocaust as massacre toll tops 400', Australian, 14 January 1998: 8.

[25] CNN, Worldview, 26 January 1998, transcript.

[26] Boston Globe, 'Algeria's unholy war', 22 January 1998: A20.

[27] '[T]he killing fields of Relizane' (Reuters, 8 January 1998); 'Areas of the mountainous province of Relizane were turned into killing-fields' (The Economist, 'Algeria. Villages into killing-fields', 10 January 1998: 36); Elie Chalala, 'In Algeria's killing fields: A hidden governmental role?', The

Allusions to genocidal political movements were not only used to make the violence comprehensible but also to delegitimise the insurgency and Islamism in general. As early as Raïs, British commentator Simon Hoggart described the GIA as 'terrorists of the worst unmentionable kind, massacring entire villages in a horrendously systematic manner like the Nazis'.[29] The day after the 17 November 1997 Luxor massacre of sixty-three tourists in Egypt, La Tribune, writing in the context of the Algerian massacres, noted the rise of a 'fascisme vert de l'ultra-islamisme' — the colour of Islam (green) being contrasted with the 'brown' fascism of National Socialism and the 'red' fascism of Leninism.[30] Playing with this idea of a 'green fascism', Algerian born philosopher and French media celebrity Bernard-Henri Lévy warned of Algeria's 'Khmers verts' in Le Monde, articulating identity (Islam) and intolerable practice (genocide).[31]

Comparisons, indeed, are double-edged swords. While juxtapositions with other humanitarian cases could provide a relative measure for the killing, help explain the violence, spark moral outrage and mobilise solidarity, they could as much see use in the effort to disable international action. That the violence in Algeria had 'reached levels of brutality hard to imagine apart from the genocide in Central Africa' led the foreign editor of one US paper to conclude, 'Sometimes, you just have to stand back and let people kill each other. Sometimes, there just doesn't seem to be any other choice'.[32] To explain the lack of international interest in Algeria, one US newspaper cited Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, speculating that 'sometimes the scope of evil seems too great for

Humanist, March/April 1999: 5-6; The Economist, 'Algeria: Villages into killing-fields', 10 January 1998: 36.

[28] In 1996, US journalist Judith Miller (1996: 169) had described the GIA as 'Algeria's own Khmer Rouge', an idea she might have gleaned from Daniel Pipes, her co-guest on a US public television program in March 1995. Pipes described Algeria's rebels as totalitarian Islamists bent on genocidal revolution. See The Charlie Rose Show, 'A discussion of the Algerian civil war', Public Broadcasting System, 22 March 1995, http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/6982, accessed September 2010.

    Also, e.g., Robert Fisk, 'Middle East: Stench of death in Algeria's perfumed killing fields', Independent, 23 October 1997: 16.

[29] Susan Stamberg, 'Week In Review', Weekend Saturday, National Public Radio, 30 August 1997 (13:05).

[30] La Tribune, 'Qui tue?', 18 November 1997: 28.

[31] 'Algérie: gare au syndrome Timisoara', Le Monde, 12 February 1998.

[32] Jack R Payton, 'While we watched the funeral, 500 Algerians were slain', St. Petersburg Times, 9 September 1997: 2A.

the human mind to deal with'.[33] Daniel Warner of the Graduate Institute of International studies in Geneva used the examples of Somalia, Haiti and central Africa (i.e., Rwanda) to argue in early 1998 that foreign intervention would be ineffective in Algeria. Intervention would not be able to interrupt the domestic logic of the conflict: 'the Algerian civil war is an internal affair [...]. Since the cold war has ended, more and more conflicts have become purely internal, and hence beyond the control of superpowers'.[34] There is also a sense in which humanitarian intervention was seen as synonymous with military action. Following Bentalha, UK foreign affairs commentator Rupert Cornwell ruled out 'Direct foreign intervention' for several reasons. For starters, 'the return French troops as part of a peacekeeping mission', Cornwell argued, 'would be akin to German soldiers imposing order in the Balkans'.[35] Assertions like 'Fundamentally, nobody knows what to do'[36], from Washington think-tank regular Andrew Pierre, or 'We are united by our absence of knowledge of what to do', from Dominique Moïsi of the Institut Français des Relations Internationales, were often structured by an opposition between inaction and military force.[37] Not knowing what to do depended upon knowing what had been ruled out.

Another comparison that seemingly undermined the case for intervention was attempts to draw distinctions between the relative stability of the Algerian government vis-à-vis other humanitarian catastrophes where the state had collapsed or the nation had balkanised. Either of these pre-conditions ranked for some as the *conditio sine qua non* for intervention. In early January 1998, both the London Independent and USA Today noted that, in almost the same language, the Algerian state, despite its apparent failure to protect its citizens from mass slaughter, remained functional. This was often contrasted with interventions in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia, where state collapse had allegedly

---

[33] Post and Courier, Editorial, 4 September 1997: A8.

[34] Daniel Warner, 'The deadly waiting game: The west has said it wants to help end the slaughter in Algeria but it is not that simple', Financial Times, 27 January 1998: 20.

[35] Rupert Cornwell, 'Savagery strikes at Algeria's heart', Independent, 28 September 1997: 11.

[36] Rachid Khiari, '100 Slaughtered in Algerian Attack', Associated Press, 12 January 1998.
    Pierre is also the co-author of two important policy-oriented works on Algeria(Pierre & Quandt 1995; Pierre & Quandt 1996).

[37] Moïsi explicitly acknowledged that dispatching peacekeepers was impossible, rendering all other forms of intervention, for him, 'symbolic' (Sarah Chayes and Linda Wertheimer, 'EU Mission to Algeria Frustrated', All Things Considered, National Public Radio, 20 January 1998, transcript).

obtained.[38] During the Relizane massacres, Joe Stork of Human Rights Watch, one of the groups leading the charge for international action, admitted that intervention would be difficult given that 'unlike, say, the situation in Rwanda — essentially without a government for this period of genocide — the [Algerian] government is very much in control, particularly in the areas that count'.[39] A Western diplomat suggested that, even in the face of allegations of state complicity in the massacres, the Algerian government had become more, not less, central to a solution: 'The [Algerian] government is the only authority in the land that can prevent the chaos worsening'.[40]

Internationalisation

Suspending questions about whether or not these representations and comparisons of the violence in Algeria were accurate, they nonetheless testify to the extent to which the massacres had become an important matter in world affairs. The response of governments, likewise, speaks to this new reality. When compared to statements before August 1997, it is clear that, while government's denounced the escalating violence, the warrant for intervention was still weak. For example, when asked by a magazine in February 1997 about the 'shocking silence' of France towards the violence in Algeria and responding to opposition calls for a more active French policy on the issue, then Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette's implied that even commenting on the conflict in Algeria was tantamount to interference. 'Algeria is not France; that has to be understood and admitted once and for all', he explained. 'It is a sovereign nation. It is up to Algeria to solve its problems, and up to the Algerian people to decide their fate'.[41] It is clear from such statements that the

---

[38] Independent, 'Dialogue is the only hope in Algeria's darkest hour', 7 January 1998: 18; Lee Michael Katz and Christopher P. Winner, 'The world's hands are tied', USA Today, 9 January 1998: 9A.

    Fisk had already made a case for intervention on the grounds that the violence represented nothing short of the disintegration of Algeria, drawing on the state collapse argument that had been prominent in the international mobilisation vis-à-vis former Yugoslavia (Robert Fisk, 'The case for intervention: No, Algeria, it's not an "internal affair"', Independent, 6 November 1997: 23).

[39] Bob Edwards, 'Violence in Algeria', Morning Edition, National Public Radio, 2 January 1998, transcript.

[40] Quoted in Susannah Herbert, 'United States, EU reaffirm confidence in Algerian rulers', Calgary Herald, 14 January 1998: D3.

[41] Lara Marlowe, 'Jospin breaks official silence on Algeria despite retaliation fear', Irish Times, 1 February 1997: 12.

French government was still operating under the premise that Algeria's sovereignty is sacrosanct. Indeed, sovereignty featured prominently, both implicitly and explicitly, within the international discourse on the Algerian problem (see *ibid.*: chapter five). Indeed, the levels of violence would have to reach new depths, far below the horrors of Ramadan in early 1997, to heighten Algeria's international profile. Even the Bougara massacre of over one hundred persons in April 1997 did not accomplish this. Days after that event, the Clinton administration denounced and condemned the perpetrators (simply yet conveniently identified as 'genocidal terrorists') but did not call for any clear international action, only for unnamed actors to end the violence.[42]

As has been noted elsewhere in this study, the Raïs massacre, which came amidst increasing reports of ever mounting atrocities in Algeria, was a watershed moment in the internationalisation of the Algerian conflict. Following Raïs, the UN Secretariat was quick to express its dismay and regret at 'the continuing loss of life', which had surpassed a 'horrendous level'. Yet its statement continued to frame the issue as an internal political matter, one in which 'the Algerian people' would have to find a solution.[43] The head of UNESCO, Fredrico Mayor, was likewise 'horrified'[44]. The new French government of Jospin shared this attitude; as its Foreign Minister, Hubert Védrine, told Le Monde, 'Algerians have to find a solution to their problems themselves'.[45] Even President Chirac ventured a comment, pronouncing his 'indignation at these acts of barbarity'.[46] The US State Department, while acknowledging that the massacres have 'reached yet another astonishing threshold of barbarity', towed the same line as France, placing its hopes in Algerian 'political system' so that the 'Algerian people can work their way back towards some modicum of civility and of peace'. When asked if the United States would support a UN inquiry, the State Department spokesperson suggested that Washington would if the

---

At the same time, de Charette was not unaware of the increasing violence in Algeria; he admitted that, to the best of his understanding, some two hundred Algerians were being killed each week.

[42] AFP, 'Washington condemns massacre in Algeria', 23 April 1997.

[43] Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 'Annan denounces massacres in Algeria', 29 August 1997.

[44] AFP, 'GIA commander and 46 other Islamist fighters dead: report', 31 August 1997.

[45] Quoted in Craig R. Whitney, '98 Die in One of Algerian Civil War's Worst Massacres', New York Times, 30 August 1997: 3.

[46] Xinhua, France condemns atrocities by Islamic extremists', 1 September 1997.

Algerians agreed it.[47] The Vatican, on the other hand, criticised the international community's unresponsiveness to the 'unprecedented crisis'[48]; Pope Jean Paul II said that his 'thoughts turn to the martyred Algeria', from where 'news of unheard-of violence, which unceasingly hits so many innocent people, continues to reach us'.[49]

Two days after the massacre, however, Kofi Annan gave reporters this off-the-cuff statement while attending the Venice Film Festival:

> It will be necessary to go beyond [rhetorical condemnation], quietly and discreetly. I hope we will find ways and means of encouraging the parties to cease violence. The killing has gone on far too long. [...] We are dealing with a situation which for a long time has been treated as an internal affair, and yet as the killing goes on and the numbers rise it is extremely difficult for all of us to pretend it is not happening, that we don't know about it and we should leave the Algerian population to their lot.[50]

The fact that Annan had intimated the need to internationalise the Algerian conflict was enough to elicit a strong response from the Algerian government. As had been the case since the first days of the violence, the Algerian government tended to reject, as interventionary, all forms of unsolicited help and even some commentary. Nevertheless, the international clamour was difficult to silence after Raïs. Le Monde[51] and the New York Times[52] both called for more international pressure to stop the killing. One proposal being floated abroad, an international inquiry, received backing from The Economist: 'Behind a wall of silence, Algerians are being murdered in their hundreds. The West should insist on finding out what is happening'.[53]

---

[47] US Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 3 September 1997.
[48] Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 'Pope condemns "barbaric atrocities" in Algeria', 31 August 1997.
[49] Charles Trueheart, 'U.N., Vatican Condemn Massacres in Algeria; Atrocities Intensify in Six-Year Civil War', Washington Post, 9 September 1997: A14.
[50] AFP 'UN leader appeals for dialogue in Algeria', 31 August 1997; AFP, 'UN denies Annan interfered on Algeria violence', 2 September 1997.
[51] Le Monde, 'L'horreur et l'invraisemblance', 1 September 1997.
[52] New York Times, 'Algeria's Agony', 3 September 1997: 22.
[53] The Economist, 'Algeria's ghastly secret', 6 September 1997: 17.

Strong reactions followed the Béni Messous massacres as well. Citing a photograph from Algeria showing the heads of two decapitated children in a bucket, Lisbet Palme of the UN Children's Emergency Fund urged the world to pay attention to the 'bloodbath'.[54] Though Amnesty International was not yet ready to call for an international inquiry, the rights group nonetheless warned, 'With tens of thousands killed, it is high time for the Algerian authorities to acknowledge that human rights protection is not an internal affair and to take concrete measures to protect the civilian population'.[55] A spokesperson for the White House, who apparently refused to assign blame for the killing, expressed the Presidency's feelings that the latest massacres were 'stupefying', breaking 'yet another astonishing threshold of barbarity'.[56] According to reports, the outgoing US ambassador in Algiers, Ronald Neumann, told President Zéroual that the United States 'support[s] military measures that are consistent with the rule of law to protect civilians'. This was read as a gentle prod from Washington telling the Algerian government to do more to stop the killing. As for an international initiative, an unidentified US official said, 'Any kind of mediation within the international context would have to be in agreement with all the parties. We haven't really gotten into this question'.[57]

A week passed before the European Union was able to express its collective 'shock' at these new massacres, condemning the 'terrorism and indiscriminate violence' while encouraging political and economic reforms in Algeria.[58] Georges Wolfhart, Foreign Secretary of Luxemburg, then holding the EU Presidency, expressed his 'concern' but reiterated the idea that 'Algerians must find for themselves a solution to the serious crisis afflicting their country'.[59] Likewise Védrine, in the context of Secretary-General's statement in Venice, asserted that no foreign actor could make a useful contribution to the crisis in Algeria.[60] ('It takes two to tango', Annan had already said, reinforcing the proposition that the international community could not act without the Algerian

---

[54] AFP, 'UNICEF calls on world to wake up to "bloodbath in Algeria"', 8 September 1997.
[55] Amnesty International, 'Algeria: Amnesty International condemns massacres and calls for urgent measures', Press Release, AI Index MDE 28/25/97, News Service 159/97, 22 September 1997.
[56] Charles Trueheart, 'U.N., Vatican Condemn Massacres in Algeria; Atrocities Intensify in Six-Year Civil War', Washington Post, 9 September 1997: A14.
[57] Carol Landry, 'US-Algeria', AFP, 14 September 1997.
[58] Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau, 'EU Condemns wave of violence in Algeria', 16 September 1997.
[59] AFP, 'Euro MP suggests peace dialogue with Algeria', 17 September 1997.
[60] AFP, 'UN agency warns against deporting Algerian refugees', 18 September 1997.

government's cooperation.[61]) Other actors within the European Union, however, were pressing for more engagement. The idea of an *ad hoc* delegation to the Algerian parliament surfaced in mid September. One of the key architects of the proposal, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, then with the German Green Party in the EU Parliament, favoured a more aggressive EU policy because France, in the face of allegations of Algerian government abuses, was not able to '*appeler un chat un chat*', he alleged.[62] French MEP André Soulier, chair of the EU parliament's subcommittee on human rights, also backed the proposal but only as a means to 'start down the road to peace', contextualising the initiative within the EU-Algeria association agreement then under negotiation. Soulier rejected notions that this initiative constituted a form of intervention. Algeria should 'avoid [...] thinking we are going to become involved in its internal affairs'.[63] The EU parliament adopted a resolution on 19 September backing the idea of an inter-parliamentary delegation.

Less than a week later came Bentalha. Védrine was quick to express his 'revulsion' at the 'monstrous', 'absolutely heartrending' massacres of 23 September. In terms of an international response, however, he suggested that all forms of intervention were unrealistic: 'We cannot do nothing. But what can we do?'[64] While the French government began to echo earlier US calls for civilians to be protected from the violence, it nonetheless would only support 'a political solution developed by the Algerians themselves to the crisis in Algeria today'.[65] An anonymous White House official said that the US executive was 'outraged by the savagery of the attack' and supported what they called 'national reconciliation' in Algeria.[66] Visiting Moscow, President Chirac, also refusing to get

---

[61] Christopher P. Winner, 'In Algeria, "unspeakable" horrors', USA Today, 17 September 1997. The accuracy of the comparison is debateable, given the dominant impression of the Rwandan genocide as being carried out more by machete than bullets.

[62] Emmanuel Defouloy, 'Algérie: "L'Europe peut jouer les médiateurs"', La Croix, 22 September 1997: 24.

[63] AFP, 'Euro MP suggests peace dialogue with Algeria', 17 September 1997.

[64] Aileen McCabe, 'Algeria's secret war leaves world feeling horrified, powerless', Vancouver Sun, 26 September 1997: A12.

[65] AFP, 'La France ressent avec "abomination" la tuerie de Bentalha', 24 September 1997.
    The former Foreign Minister, de Charette, took the opportunity to criticise France's policy of non-interference even though he had recently defended it. He claimed that the Algerian regime should explain themselves and that the international community was obligated to interfere (Herni Mamarbachi, 'La communauté internationale contrainte a la non ingérence', AFP, 24 September 1997).

[66] AFP, 'White House condemns "savagery" of massacre in Algeria', 24 September 1997.

involved, reiterated the call for 'national reconciliation' in Algeria.[67] British Foreign Office minister Derek Fatchett likewise condemned the killing but refused to support anything but an Algerian solution.[68] 'A solution to this conflict must come from the Algerians themselves', remained the position of the UK Foreign Office.[69] A more active approach was voiced by Klaus Kinkel, German's Foreign Minister. While he presented the problem as one of Islamic terrorism, he still asked 'How long can the international community look away?'.[70] The German opposition, however, passed a resolution calling for more aggressive international mediation, ideally led by France and Germany through the UN Security Council, citing the Algerian government's alleged inability to resolve the crisis.[71] Cohn-Bendit mocked Franco-American calls for protection in the vocabulary of the *Qui tue?* debate: 'No one knows who is killing whom, no one knows who is protecting whom'.[72] An official from Human Rights Watch concurred: 'One of the problems is that we don't know'.[73]

At the United Nations, it was announced shortly after Bentalha that then High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson would meet with then Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf. A UN statement claimed that Annan and Robinson had 'exercised their moral voice in expressing the international community's concern' but that 'of course they hope that the parties can settle amongst themselves what is essentially an internal conflict'.[74] Yet after the meeting, Robinson told reporters that 'Human rights have no borders. [...] The situation in Algeria cannot be considered an internal matter'. Algeria responded with a statement that 'deplored' her 'selective' remarks.[75] However, on the

[67] AFP, 'UN human rights chief to meet Algerian, UN peace role denied', 26 September 1997.
[68] Richard Norton-Taylor, 'Algerian massacre. The response: The West voices shock but little else', Guardian, 25 September 1997: 13.
[69] Rupert Cornwell, 'Algerian rebels' peace call shifts blame for slaughter', Independent, 25 September 1997: 14.
[70] AFP, 'Pressure mounting on West to intervene in bloody Algeria', 25 September 1997.
[71] AFP, 'Opposition party urges Bonn, Paris to help settle Algeria conflict', 25 September 1997.
    After Bentalha, the opposition Green Party had called for an arms embargo on Algeria (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 'Halt military exports, loans to Algeria, German Greens say', 24 September 1997).
[72] Inter Press Service, 'Algeria: Europe powerless in face of Algerian horror', 26 September 1997
[73] Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 'Former Algerian official claims military culpable for massacres', 29 September 1997.
[74] AFP, 'UN human rights chief to meet Algerian, UN peace role denied', 26 September 1997.
[75] Deutsche Presse-Agentur 'U.N. human rights chief calls for focus on Algeria's killings', 30 September 1997.

sidelines of the General Assembly on 24 September, Védrine and then US Secretary of State Madeline Albright had agreed over breakfast that they should discuss a joint policy together.[76] Two weeks after the Bentalha massacre, a journalist — prefacing a questions by claiming that 'list of atrocities there is getting almost genocidal in its proportions'[77] and citing the Clinton administration's recent commitment to stop mass atrocities worldwide — asked then US State Department spokesperson James Rubin if the White House was going to go beyond the 'platitudes from the podiums'. Rubin merely highlighted the meeting between Albright and Védrine as progress. When bluntly asked, 'Do you have a current policy towards Algeria?', Rubin said yes, 'It will be provided for the record' (i.e., delivered later in writing). Showing frustration, another question was launched: 'Is there a point at which the US does intervene?' Rubin simply answered that the United States and France had 'pledged to work together'.[78]

One European official summed up the situation in these words: 'The EU defers to the French, and the French are paralyzed. [...] I don't say that critically, because nobody including the United States pretends to have an idea of how to tackle the problem. We are all groping for answers, and there is a real paucity of ideas'.[79] One such idea, a UN peacekeeping force, was off the table according to Bill Richardson, then US ambassador to the United Nations. He argued that the violence in Algeria — evoking bitter US memories of failed peacekeeping Somalia — was too intense for an effective international protection force.[80] At the end of October, a meeting of EU foreign ministers stayed within the confines of expressing solidarity with the Algerian people while underscoring their right to be protected. The host of the meeting, Luxemburg's Jacques Poos admitted, 'Obviously, it's not a declaration that will have any immediate impact. [...] All we can hope is that they [i.e., the Algeria government] will listen to us'.[81] For several prominent rights groups, the proper course of action was clear. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the

---

[76] Reuters, 26 September 1998.
[77] The journalist noted that, on 5 October, sixteen school children were reportedly pulled off a bus and killed.
[78] US Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 6 October 1997.
[79] Ray Moseley, 'Hidden war: Algeria caught in web of terror', Calgary Herald, 13 October 1997: B4.
[80] From the Chicago Tribune, 12 October 1997, reprinted in Ray Moseley, 'Hidden war: Algeria caught in web of terror', Calgary Herald, 13 October 1997: B4.
[81] Jeffrey Ulbrich, 'EU sends sympathy but little else to Algeria and the Middle East', Associated Press, 26 October 1997.

International Federation of Human Rights and Reporters sans frontières called on the UN

Commission on Human Rights to hold a special meeting on Algeria and for an

investigation 'to ascertain the facts, examine allegations of responsibility and to make

recommendations in respect of the massacres and other abuses by all sides in Algeria'.[82]

Up to Bentalha and the initial weeks afterwards, international understandings of the

massacres were generally conditioned by several widely reported facts and a number of

constantly recirculated questions. Though the insurgency — mainly the GIA — was

thought to be behind these mass killings, the repeated occurrence of large scale massacres

near the capital and often reportedly within short distance from security and military

installations had been cause for concern.[83] The small number of survivor and perpetrator

accounts combined with the restricted access of the press had only intensified the

environment of uncertainty, contestation and confusion. On French television in early

October, Jospin had caused some controversy by commenting on the opacity of the

violence, adding, 'Here we have a fanatical and violent opposition fighting against

authorities who themselves, to a certain extent, use violence and the state power'.[84] Indeed,

the apparent ambiguity of the violence was considered a good reason not to get involved.

'I'm not sure outsiders can play a constructive role', an unnamed Western diplomat in

Algiers told Washington Post. 'As long as the situation on the ground is so fractious and so

murky, I mean, whose heads are we supposed to be banging together?'[85]

Then in late October and early November 1997 the French, Irish and British press

published a number of interviews with Algerian state agents who alleged that they had

---

[82] 'Algeria: A Call for Action to end a Human Rights Crisis', Press Release, 15 October 1997.
[83] In late1997, Pierre Sané, Amnesty International's Secretary-General, insisted, 'Human rights protection is not just an "internal affair," least of all when children are slaughtered next to army barracks. An international investigation must be established to uncover the truth. We owe it to the victims of the Algerian crisis' (Pierre Sané, 'Algeria: When the state fails', Amnesty International, AI index MDE 28/047/1997, News Service 222/97, 23 December 1997). Likewise Patrick Baudouin of the Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme, continued to stress in January 1998 what, for him, were the most worrisome details of the massacres: 'Why do the massacres persist, when the authorities keep claiming that all violence is now residual? Why do the massacres happen in Algiers or in the suburbs, near military barracks or police outposts, but without military or police intervening in favor of the victims?' (quoted in Inter Press Service, 'Algeria: Europe continues to back U.N. investigation in Algeria', 26 January 1998).
[84]Economist, 'Algeria. A change of French tone?', 11 October 1997: 50.
[85] John Lancaster, 'As Algeria's Savagery Grows, So Does Mystery Shrouding It', Washington Post, 18 October 1997: A01.

either participated in massacres or had first hand knowledge of government complicity (see chapter five for background). One of the most important appeared in Le Monde, the interview with 'Hakim', reportedly a serving DRS officer who corroborated claims that the intelligence services were responsible for some of the massacres directly (undercover) and indirectly (through an infiltrated and manipulated GIA). In the wake of these unverified revelations, the French Socialist Party backed calls for an international inquiry. 'It is the duty of the international community to establish what is happening in Algeria', said a party official.[86] Predictably, the Algerian government strongly rejected the idea. The Arab League likewise refused to imagine, 'no matter what the pretext', any 'intervention from any party, organisation or state'.[87] Amnesty International, on the other hand, charged Algeria with intimidating its critics and called upon the United Nations to press for an investigation.[88] In what was reported as an Algerian effort to diffuse some of this pressure, Attaf met with EU president Poos in Luxembourg and the EU Parliament's Foreign Affairs committee in Brussels on 26 and 27 November.[89] At the United Nations, Robinson continued to press for an inquiry into the massacres, claiming that negotiations for a mission were underway, though Algiers denied it and lobbied against the initiative.[90] One of the problems facing efforts to rally support for such a mission was the relative decrease in massacre activity and intensities between Bentalha at the end of September and the Ouarsenis massacres starting in late December. As Le Monde's Tuquoi noted, Algeria was no longer an international problem because it was no longer front-page news.[91] That was about to change.

Intervention

Between 31 December and 6 January, new mass killings in the western prefecture of Relizane began to be reported internationally, with consecutive death tolls purportedly in

---

[86] AFP, 'French Socialists call for international inquiry into Algeria', 12 November 1997.
   Jospin was also responding to Algerian criticism for supporting the 10 November 'day of solidarity' with Algeria in Paris, organised by NGOs and featuring several celebrities — Gérard Depardieu, Isabelle Adjani, Cheb Khaled.
[87] AFP, 'Arab League opposes outside interference in Algeria', 16 November 1997.
[88] AFP, 'Amnesty International alleges "bullying" by Algerian government', 18 November 1997.
[89] AFP, 'Algerian foreign minister to meet EU in Luxembourg', 25 November 1997.
[90] AFP, 'UN calls for inspectors to monitor human rights abuses in Algeria', 18 December 1997; AFP, 'Algeria protests UN rights envoy's call for monitors', 19 December 1997.
[91] Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Femme parmi d'autres', Le Monde, 30 December 1997.

the hundreds. By the time news of a new massacre near Algiers, Sidi Hamed, emerged on 12 January, the cumulative mortality in the past fortnight had, by several accounts, topped one thousand. 'One of the most savage civil wars of modern times is intensifying', a correspondent from the Chicago Tribune remarked, 'a shocked international community [is] finally being roused to try to intervene to stop the slaughter'.[92] Sentiments of outrage and condemnation from the Islamic world were just as vociferous as from Europe and the United States. Iran, which then supported the FIS and was also chairing the Organization of the Islamic Conference, criticised the 'unjustifiable' 'silence of international organisations' and the 'indifference' of fellow Muslim nations.[93] The Arab League, supporting the Algerian government, instead asked the 'international community to intensify its efforts to face terrorism'.[94] In St. Peter's Square, Pope Jean Paul II used the occasion of Sunday prayers (4 January) to denounce the massacres in and called on Algerian authorities to put an end to the violence.[95]

Germany was one of the first governments to propose action following the first reports from Relizane. Decrying the international community's 'silent and impotent' approach towards the Algerian crisis, Kinkel suggested on 4 January, 'It is possible to imagine an EU troika visit on the political level to propose to the Algerian government cooperation in the struggle against terrorism ... and aid to victims of terror'.[96] The French government had initially responded on 3 January with boilerplate condemnation ('atrocious and horrible'), expressions of 'solidarity' and calls for 'reconciliation' in Algeria.[97] France then joined Portugal's support for the German proposal two days later. Védrine described the proposed troika as 'very useful'.[98] The British government, then holding the EU presidency, suggested the limited response of offering humanitarian aid to the victims in coordination

---

[92] Reprinted in Ray Moseley, 'World Community Prepares To Intervene In Algeria', Seattle Times, 12 January 1998.

[93] AFP, 'Iran calls on Moslem world to end indifference to Algeria massacres', 3 January 1998.
    The Iranian parliament went as far as to accuse the Algerian government of being complicit in the massacres on 12 January (Les Echos, 'Le Parlement iranien condamne les massacres en Algérie', 13 January 1998)

[94] Associated Press, 'Arab League condemns killings, calls for an end to terrorism', 4 January 1998.

[95] AFP, 'Le pape condamne les massacres en Algérie et au Burundi', 4 January1998.

[96] AFP, 'Germany demands urgent EU action on Algeria', 4 January 1998 (ellipsis in original).

[97] New York Times, 'France Condemns Atrocities', 4 January 1998: I7.

[98] AFP, '22 more slain in Algeria at outset of bloody Ramadan: press', 5 January 1998.

with the Algerian government.[99] The Canadian government, whose Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, similarly dispatched an envoy to Algiers to offer humanitarian assistance.[100] Secretary-General Annan's office, not reacting until after the Sidi Hamed massacre, diplomatically used a passive sentence to reinforce the calls for protection.[101]

The US government, on the other hand, stated on 5 January that it was now willing to support an international inquiry because the Algerian government would allow a UN human rights rapporteur to visit.[102] Algeria not only judged France's policy 'unacceptable'[103], Cameron Hume, then US ambassador in Algiers, was quickly called in to explain Washington's claims. Hume was reportedly 'reminded of the categorical rejection by Algeria of any idea of an international commission of inquiry, no matter where it comes from or whatever its form or nature', according to Algerian state news agencies.[104] Of additional concern for Algiers was the fact that the US government appeared to be openly questioning the identity and politics of the perpetrators behind the major massacre. For example, on 5 January, Rubin had said that the point of any inquiry was to 'get to the bottom of some of these issues to determine the extent of the massacres, perhaps begin *to pin more clearly the blame for them*'.[105] This was followed, on 6 January, with, 'Let's remember that the facts of many of these massacres are often unclear. *The perpetrators are sometimes unclear*'.[106] The following day, with Algeria the top agenda item during the State Department's daily press briefing, the US government appeared to back away from its earlier claims of uncertainty: 'But let's focus first on the culprits. These terrorist attacks must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. The terrorists must be condemned by the entire international community'.[107] By the end of the week, the United

---

[99] AFP, Britain says aid to Algerian massacre survivors a possibility, 5 January 1998.

[100] Reuters, 'Massacres claim 62 more Algerians: Pressure grows for outside investigation', Calgary Herald, 8 January 1998: A5.
      The envoy, Claude Laverdure, was in Algiers 12-13 January.

[101] 'The Secretary-General considers it particularly urgent and vital that the innocent civilian population, especially women and children, be protected from the forces of violence in Algeria' (AFP, 'Annan appeals for protection of Algeria's population', 12 January 1998).

[102] US Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 5 January 1998.

[103] Le Figaro, 'Algérie: L'attitude de Paris jugée "inacceptable"', 6 January 1998.

[104] Rachid Khiari, 'Government rejects international inquiry into violence, Algerians flee', Associated Press, 7 January 1998.

[105] US Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 5 January 1998, emphasis added.

[106] US Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 6 January 1998, emphasis added.

[107] US Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 7 January 1998.

States appeared to be playing a semantic game: 'what we have said is that we encourage the visit by the UN rapporteur, but we're not seeking an international commission of inquiry'.[108] Algeria's position, however, was quite clear. According to then Algerian ambassador to the United Nations, Abdallah Baali, 'We have said repeatedly that the United Nations has no role to play in Algeria'. Robinson's desire to have either Senegal's Bacre Ndiaye, the UN expert on summary and arbitrary executions, or Nigel Rodley of Britain, the UN torture expert, visit Algeria was seemingly a non-starter.[109]

An unnamed 'European official' offered a *realpolitik* assessment of the situation, suggesting that the Algeria state, due to its access to hydrocarbon-based revenue, 'cannot be easily bullied around unless there is a concerted western pressure, perhaps even through oil companies, and this is very unlikely'. Saying such pressure was 'unlikely' was, for some, the same as saying it was unthinkable. 'We don't know what to do', another European official disparaged, 'so we might send a few ministers there and give money to victims, but it will not solve the problem'.[110] One of Algeria's rationales for rejecting a UN inquiry had already been made clear by Baali: an investigation 'would mean there are

---

[108] US Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, 9 January 1997.

    On 5 January, Rubin had said, '[...] we would like to see international inquiries get to the bottom of it'. An 8 January exchange between Rubin and reporters seemed almost facetious:

> QUESTION: Jamie, what exactly does a 'rapporteur' do? [...]
> MR. RUBIN: He reports. That's what you do.
> QUESTION: He doesn't investigate?
> MR. RUBIN: Well, again, I don't want to get too deeply into the — I've been in New York, and I know what sweat and blood goes into the distinctions between different UN organizations and their mandates and what titles people get and all that goes with that. A UN special rapporteur, I can say with confidence, is a UN special rapporteur.

Two critics (Waliken & Larioui 1999) would later compare this parsing to the US government's reaction to the unfolding genocide in Rwanda in 1994, when the State Department had been asked, 'How many acts of genocide does it take to make a genocide?' (quoted in Power 2003: 364).

[109] Philip Waller, 'International investigators may probe Algerian human rights With EU-Algeria', Associated Press, 6 January 1998.

[110] Roula Khalaf, 'West wonders what it can do in Algeria: But Algiers wants no outside interference', Financial Times, 8 January 1998: 4.

    As to the role of foreign oil companies might play in the evolving crisis, the Economist Intelligence Unit claimed in early 1998 that they would be opposed to interventionary efforts: 'for the first time, oil companies active in Algeria have shown concern that the conflict might be entering a new phase in which the international community is forced by public pressure to do something that might compromise investment activities in the country' (Country Report: Algeria, 5 March 1998: 7).

doubts over who is responsible for the massacres, while everyone knows who they are'.[111] Others had explicitly or implicitly recognised this major stumbling block to the inquiry approach. In November 1997, the Guardian's David Hirst acknowledged that 'any internationalising of the crisis must by definition focus on the state or the ruling regime, since by definition it will be an attempt by the international community to settle a crisis which the national authority no longer has the will or means to resolve'.[112]

Other framings seemingly disabled any international action. One was the belief that only direct military force — implicitly excluding diplomacy and sanctions — would have any effect. Eric Derycke, then Foreign Minister of Belgium, dryly commented in early January, 'I'd like to see the first country that will send its military there'.[113] The top Democrat on the US Senate's Foreign Relations committee, Lee Hamilton, bluntly echoed this sentiment: 'I think we all realize the limitations. [...] We're not going to send in the Marines'.[114] Not only had military intervention become the only means to address the issue, but the conditions for concerted international action were also rendered unmet in various ways. Alain Richard, then France's Minister of Defence, likewise nixed the idea of 'sending "blue helmet" peacekeepers' on the grounds that there was not 'sufficient reason for an internationalisation of the conflict'. Algeria, Richard observed, still did not fall into that category where 'a country is virtually without government and international intervention is justified'.[115] Related to such failed state arguments, others noted that the violence in Algeria, no matter how atrocious, did not affect the security of neighbouring states or the wider western Mediterranean basin. A role for the UN Security Council had been ruled out because, according to one press account, 'Western diplomats said that the situation in Algeria did not appear to threaten regional stability'.[116] Claiming the exact opposite, Britain's Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, arguing for a more aggressive European response, deployed a version of the terrorist safe haven thesis that would feature

---

[111] AFP, 'Algeria gives gives conditional green light to EU mission', 8 January 1998.

[112] David Hirst, 'Private view: Post-mortem Algeria authorities dread', Guardian, 1 November 1997: 17.

[113] Craig R. Whitney, 'Despite Carnage, Algeria Shuns Aid Offers', New York Times, 7 January 1998: A6.

[114] Lee Michael Katz and Christopher P. Winner, 'The world's hands are tied', USA Today, 9 January 1998: 9A.

[115] Reuters, 'France rejects international force for Algeria', 12 January 1998.

[116] AFP, 'Algeria gives conditional green light to EU mission', 8 January 1998.

prominently in post-11 September 2001 interventionary debates: 'If you allow terrorism to take growth and take root in any one country it very quickly can get exported to the rest of the international community'.[117] Austria's Foreign Minister, Wolfgang Schuessel and German Foreign Minister Kinkel both warned that a weak or failed state in Algeria would cause regional instability through a massive exodus of Algerians fleeing for safety in Europe.[118]

Whether or not one considers the visit of the EU troika an intervention, it was undoubtedly brief. On 8 January, Algeria had agreed to host a delegation from the European Union, but with the proviso that its mandate was to talk about Algeria's 'fight against terrorism'[119] and was not to be considered an 'inquiry'. Announcing the mission on 13 January, Cook said that the aim of the troika was 'to convey to the Algerian government the public concern felt in Europe at the massacres and to explore with them what can be done to end the violence, and what the EU can do'.[120] Once the European Union and Algeria had negotiated the right diplomatic level of the delegation, three deputy foreign ministers of the troika — Derek Fatchett (Britain), Benita Ferrero-Waldner (Austria) and Georges Wohlfart (Luxembourg), respectively representing the current, future and past holders of the EU presidency — set out on 19 January, joining EU Commission Vice President Manuel Marin in Algiers. The delegation's itinerary only included meetings with Prime Minister Ouyahia and Foreign Minister Attaf, several opposition parties and newspaper editors, along with humanitarian and human rights bodies attached to the state. Marin hoped that the breadth of discussion would be 'quite wide', yet he stressed the troika's need for a 'careful and constructive' engagement so as not to 'delegitimise' Algerian authorities.[121] Walking the same tightrope, the leader of the mission, Fachett, told the BBC before leaving, 'There is a need for candor. [...] That's not pointing the finger at anybody in the Algerian government for responsibility. But it would help their case ... if we had a very clear statement and a clear understanding of the cause of these events, who's responsible

[117] AFP, 'EU grapples for response to Algeria blood-letting', 8 January 1998.
[118] Nadim Ladki [Reuters], 'Algeria Agrees to visit by 3 European envoys', Philadelphia Inquirer, 16 January 1998: A17; Boston Globe, 'Algeria's unholy war', 22 January 1998: A20.
[119] AFP, 'Algeria gives conditional green light to EU mission', 8 January 1998.
[120] AFP, 'Britain sees chance for EU ministers' mission to Algeria', 14 January 1998.
[121] Alain Bommenel, 'EU delegation arrives to discuss Algeria violence', AFP, 19 January 1998.

for them'.[122] By the end of the visit, this was downgraded to 'improv[ing] our understanding of the problems faced by the Algerian Government and its people'. Securing Algiers' commitment to a UN rapporteur no longer counted as a 'key objective'.[123] During the same period, reports claimed that thirty-three people were killed in various attacks; a bomb ripped apart a bus in the hills above Algiers.[124]

The following week, a meeting of EU foreign ministers under Cook's chair produced what was seen as a more strongly worded reaction to the massacres than the troika's official statements. The EU had 'demanded' Algeria allow an inquiry, 'regretted' Algeria's refusal to allow a UN investigators and 'hoped' it would allow them in the future.[125] The Ministerial Council pressed Algeria for 'greater transparency' on the issue of the violence, but the statement explicitly blamed 'terrorist groups' for the 'indiscriminate violence' and 'cowardly and brutal attacks on innocent civilians' (quoted in Hill & Smith 2000: 346-7). Pierre Moscovici, France's Minister for European Affairs, even threatened that the European Union 'has its limits'[126] but the limits of such demands were well recognised by Cook: 'Our willingness to help has to be matched by a willingness of the Algerian government to accept the aid'. The Algerian government's reaction was, again, to blast calls for an inquiry. Then Communications Minister Habib Hamraoui Chaouki suggested on Al Jazeera that all such efforts aimed 'to control Algeria'.[127]

---

[122] Quoted in Elaine Ganley, 'European Envoy Visits Algeria', Associated Press, 19 January 1998, second ellipsis in original. See also AFP, 'EU mission regrets Algerian rejection of UN rapporteur', 20 January 1998.
[123] United Kingdom Foreign And Commonwealth Office, EU/Troika Mission to Algeria: Press Statement by Derek Fatchett', 20 January 1998.
[124] In the weeks preceding the troika's visit, several other notable 'interventions' had taken place. Widely reported in Algeria, yet receiving scant attention internationally, the UK and US ambassadors in Algeria had visited, with the Algerian government's permission and supervision, the massacre site of Sidi Hamed on 15 and 17 January respectively. Hume went to 'express sympathy', 'speak out against terrorism' and 'understand better', yet he arrived with the assumption that 'Islamist terrorists' were behind the massacre and was willing to accept that the 'it was impossible for the government to protect all such rural sites in the country' (Hume 2006: 36).
[125] Angus MacKinnon, 'EU demands Algeria opens doors to UN', AFP, 26 January 1998.
[126] Jeffrey Ulbrich, 'EU foreign ministers offer sympathy but little help', Associated Press, 26 January 1998.
[127] Inter Press Service, 'Algeria: Europe continues to back U.N. investigation in Algeria', 26 January 1998.

The next EU foray into Algeria occurred two weeks later. For five days in mid February 1998, a nine-member delegation from the EU parliament — five of them French — stayed in Algiers, meeting with officials, politicians and members of civil society. Though frequently framed in the international media as an extension of EU efforts to establish an inquiry (if not an outright 'fact finding mission'[128] itself), the visit was actually unrelated and preceded the troika's initiative. The invitation had ostensible come from the MEP's Algerian counterparts in November though, as noted above, the idea had come about in September in Brussels. Furthermore, the head of the delegation, Soulier, was adamant that it was not an investigation nor would they seek one.[129] For the most of their visit, the MEPs were cloistered in the isolated hilltop Djenane El-Mithak state residence. The dozens of foreign journalists accompanying them were placed in a separate hotel. Media, officials, personalities and activists who met the delegation were ferried to the EU parliamentarians' redoubt. Cohn-Bendit, who, in a small act of defiance, regularly absented himself from the daily press conferences, nevertheless refrained from acting on his threat to leave if the delegation was not allowed to tour massacre sites or visit Belhadj in prison.[130] Towards the end of the mission, Soulier dramatically tore apart an unopened letter from the FIS in front of the Algerian and international press. It had been delivered to the MEPs by Ali-Yahia, head of Algeria's main non-governmental human rights group, the *Ligue algérienne de défense des droits de l'homme*. Whether the letter was an invitation to meet or, as claimed by the FIS, simply an assessment of the situation in Algeria, this 'consensus' act of the MEPs reportedly pleased the Algerian government as much as it pleased Algeria's anti-Islamist press.[131] Back in Brussels, Soulier swore, 'We are supporting neither the Algerian Government nor the opposition [...] We support

---

[128] For example, 'The European Union's second effort in a month to do something about the horrific bloodletting in Algeria ended Thursday with no more success than the first' (Jeffrey Ulbrich, 'Another EU mission, another futile effort' Associated Press, 12 February 1998).

[129] Rachid Khiari, 'EU fact-finding mission claims nothing being left "in shadows"', Associated Press, 10 February 1998.

[130] Charles Trueheart, 'Europeans Stymied in Algeria Mission', Washington Post, 12 February 1998: A27.

[131] Stephane Barbier, 'Aucun contact avec le FIS: les élus du PE donnent satisfaction au pouvoir', AFP, 11 February 1998.

   One of the MEPs also attempted to hand over a list of 2000 'disappeared' persons to the Algerian government but it was not accepted. Her Algerian counterparts apparently claimed there were only thirty-one cases where people had gone missing while under government supervision (Marcus Mabry, '"We're Dead Already": Can a European fact-finding visit do anything to stop the anonymous massacres and human-rights abuses?', Newsweek, 23 February 1998: 17).

democracy'. As for an inquiry, Soulier rejected the idea: 'Who is killing who?', he asked rhetorically. 'Nobody, when speaking to us, pointed the finger at the army'.[132] As the mission had departed, a string of bombs exploded in the Algiers neighbourhoods of Birkhadem and Bab El-Oued.[133] In final two weeks of February, there were four reported massacres, claiming upwards of fifty lives total.

Outside of Algeria, there were just a small number of governmental efforts to examine the massacres and the ensuing crisis. The British Parliament's human rights group hosted a group of outspoken dissident Algerian exiles, including Brahimi, Zitout and Haroun on 22 January. They variously accused the Algerian government of complicity in the assassination of Boudiaf, the Paris metro bombings of 1995 and the recent massacres. Academic Clair Spencer, then of King's College, advised those present 'to continue to ask the difficult questions'. Ann Clwyd, chair of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group, expressed concern that the government might be involved in the massacres.[134] A far less provocative hearing was held on 5 February by the Subcommittee on Africa of the US Congress. It heard testimony from the former US ambassador to Algiers (Robert Neumann), the Algerian ambassador in Washington (Ramtane Lamamra), an area expert

[132] European Parliament, 'Algerian Parliament a reality', News Report, 12 February 1998; European Parliament, 'Algeria: Dialogue with Algerian Parliament must be pursued', News Report, 18 February 1998.

Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, one of the nine MEPs, echoed Soulier's words almost verbatim in the pages of Le Figaro ('La terreur islamiste', 16 February 1998). As an indication of how pleased the Algerian government was with the MEPs intervention (and their assertion that foreigners were only encouraging the GIA with their accusations of government complicity), Ramtane Lamamra, then Algeria's Ambassador to the United States, cited Carrère d'Encausse's article in a letter to Newsweek, which had recently summarized the five day visit as 'a symbol of the outside world's impotence' (Marcus Mabry, '"We're Dead Already": Can a European fact-finding visit do anything to stop the anonymous massacres and human-rights abuses?', Newsweek, 23 February 1998: 17).

Critics of the Algerian regime dismissed Soulier as a 'grand ami du FLN' (Aggoun & Rivoire 2005: 546-7) and 'godillot [lackey/stooge] du pouvoir algérien' (Ali-Yahia 2007: 116). Hugh Roberts (Roberts 2002a: 121) noted that some MEPs criticised the mission because there was already a Maghrib relations group in the parliament. The fact that Algeria allowed a 'human rights' delegation over a more neutral regional affairs group suggests Soulier's amenability with Algerian state interests at that time.

[133] Rachid Khiari, 'Three bombs rock Algiers as peace mission draws to close', Associated Press, 12 February 1998.

[134] Emma Ross, 'Algerian exiles say authorities are responsible for massacres', Associated Press, 22 January 1998; AFP, 'Algerian opposition in London blames Algiers for massacres', 22 January 1998; Sud Ouest, 'Des exilés accusent', 23 January 1998; Richard Norton-Taylor, 'Algerian violence: Security service linked to killings', Guardian, 23 January 1998: 13.

(Mary Jane Deeb) and a researcher from Human Rights Watch (Eric Goldstein).[135] But between the House representatives' statements, the four speakers and the questions asked by the congress members, there was little consensus regarding the issue of international action. Perhaps the strongest statement supporting internationalisation came from Democratic Representative Robert Menendez of New Jersey, who suggested that one of responses to the massacres could be an 'International War Crimes Tribunal' for the perpetrators. When asked by Menendez if the United States should sponsor a resolution during the upcoming UN human rights commission hearings on Algeria, Neumann said, 'We are, at this point, focusing on trying to persuade the Algerian Government that there are ways of meeting the needs of transparency which would help it and which are consistent with its sovereignty' (US Congress 1998: 8 and 20).[136]

Several weeks later, Neumann, along with Martin Indyk, then Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East, toured the Maghrib, meeting with Attaf and Ouyahia in Algiers on 13-14 March. The purpose of the trip was to 'orient' the new Assistant Secretary within regional affairs; it was not to address the Algerian crisis specifically. The two US diplomats carried a message from Clinton to Zéroual expressing the United States' desire to have better relations with Algeria. Indyk reportedly told his Algerian interlocutors privately that allowing some kind of foreign inquiry would help disperse the clouds of doubt hanging over the narratives of violence in Algeria. Yet based upon Indyk's public statements, Algerian state media lauded the visit as a 180-degree turnaround in US-Algerian relations from the low point of January.[137] Back in Washington, a State Department official, briefing the press on the visit, said, 'I welcomed the commitment that I received from the government of Algeria to a process of openness and transparency, and in particular to

---

[135] The hearings were prompted in part by a recent news exposé on the massacres, broadcast on the 18 January episode of 60 Minutes, then one of the most widely viewed television programs in the United States. Featuring celebrity reporter Christiane Amanpour, who won an Emmy award for the segment, the report featured interviews with survivors, describing the massacres; Brahimi, claming the government was behind the massacres; and Prime Minister Ouyahia, denouncing calls for an international inquiry (see Christian Amanpour, 'Massacre in Algeria', 60 Minutes, CBS, 18 January 1998, transcript). The segment was referenced several times during the hearings.
[136] The rhetorical shift, from supporting an inquiry (international onus) to calling for transparency (domestic onus), was quite perceptible. Testifying before the US Senate's Foreign Affairs subcommittee on the Middle East, shortly before visiting North Africa, Indyk thought the Algerian government 'should work to provide greater transparency', which did not necessarily 'impinge on Algerian sovereignty'.
[137] AFP, 'Algerian media hail US envoy's visit as Washington turnaround', 14 March 1998

allow American groups and journalists to visit Algeria and inquire for themselves'. But when pressed on what other forms of inquiry might take place, the US official admitted, 'They don't want a U.N. Human Rights Commission special rapporteur to come in. All right?'[138]

Indeed, if there was a definitive indication that the momentum for an inquiry had dissipating, it came during the fifty-fourth session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, running from the end March through most of April. The Commission adopted more than eighty resolutions during what was the semi-centennial anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These included, for example, resolutions on Sudan, Burma, Rwanda, Haiti, Palestine, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran and former Yugoslavia. But Algeria did not list among them. Despite strong urging from leading rights groups to press Algiers on its 'in principle agreement' to allow UN special rapporteurs in the country[139], the situation in Algeria did not even appear on the Commission's agenda. An official from Human Rights Watch lamented, 'Algeria was the main topic in the hallways and the cafeterias [...] but in the meetings, it couldn't be mentioned'. In front of the Commission in Geneva on 25 March, US representative Richardson cited, 'the paramount need for a credible, independent verification of the facts' in Algeria.[140] If Algeria allowed Ndiaye, the UN special rapporteur on summary executions, to visit, that would be a 'positive step for improving transparency in Algeria', Richardson argued.[141] Robinson reportedly supported a rumoured US resolution[142] but none ever materialised. The European Union, represented by Audrey Glover of the United Kingdom, made it clear that it would not sponsor a resolution, though Glover publicly noted Algeria's refusal to cooperate with the Commission's efforts to send a special rapporteur.[143] As the body's session came to an end on 26 April, Amnesty International strongly condemned the

---

[138] Federal News Service, 'US Policy towards Libya and other countries of Africa's Maghreb region', Special State Department Background Briefing, 19 March 1998.
[139] See the statement from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights and Reporters Sans Frontières, 'Algeria / UN: The Commission on Human Rights Must Act Now', 7 April 1998.
[140] Farhan Haq, 'Rights-Algeria: Activists criticize inaction over massacres', Inter Press Service, 22 April 1998.
[141] AFP, 'Kosovo cannot be ignored US diplomat tells UN Human Rights Commission', 25 March 1998.
[142] AFP, 'UN rights chief backs Algerian human rights abuse resolution', 31 March 1998.
[143] M2 Presswire, 'UN Human Rights Commission takes action on right to development, children's rights', 27 April 1998.

Commission's inaction vis-à-vis Algeria: 'During its six week session, thousands of people were killed or injured in Algeria, yet the Commission did nothing. If a blind eye is turned to such blatant and often publicized abuses, what hope can victims not in the international spotlight have'.[144] While the claim of 'thousands' was likely hyperbole, there were eight reported massacres in March and April claiming upwards of 170 victims; the largest being the slaughter of fifty people in Bouira Lahdab, Djelfa prefecture, on 27 March.[145]

Given the outcome at the human rights Commission and the waning of international attention (perhaps owing in large part to the significant drop in massacre activity and intensity) further action from the United Nations might have seemed unexpected. But on 29 June, Annan announced that Algeria had invited a UN 'panel of eminent persons' to 'gather information on the situation in Algeria'. It would have 'free and complete access to all sources of information necessary for the panel to exercise its functions, in order to have a clear vision and a precise perception of the reality of the situation in all its dimensions' (see United Nations 1998). As a panel designated by the UN secretariat, it fell outside of the UN Human Rights Committee's upcoming periodic review of Algeria's performance under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Indeed, the Committee's experts met on 20 and 21 July to discuss Algeria's periodic review, which was two years past due. As one news account noted, it was the first time since the cancellation of elections in 1992 that the Algerian government had 'to face harsh criticisms of its rights record' in an international forum.[146] The Committee addressed the touchy subject of the

---

[144] Amnesty International, 'UN Commission on Human Rights: Political Horsetrading Triumphs over Rights Protection', News Service 71/98, 24 April 1998.

[145] As the Commissions work came to an end, it likely did not help Algeria's case internationally that, in the region of Relizane, which had recently experienced the worst massacres of the conflict, local officials and militia members were arrested for reportedly killing dozens of civilians. As the headline in Le Figaro (15 April 1998) read, 'des "patriotes" [i.e., pro-government militias] accusés de massacres'. The original source of the accusations was surprising; the independent Algiers-based daily Liberté, known for its aggressive anti-Islamist agenda and alignment with the Kabylia-based RCD. The matter was the subject of a book by an Algerian human rights activist from Relizane, Mohamed Smaïn (2004). See also Le Monde, 'Algérie: des patriotes faisaient régner la terreur', 16 April 1998.

  The same day this news broke, fifty-seven winners of the Nobel Peace Prize (including Elie Wiesel, Demond Tutu and Jose Ramos Horta) issued a statement from Algiers denouncing 'the bloody acts of savagery committed by armed terrorist groups' (Amine Kadi, 'Algérie. À Relizane, les "patriotes" auraient massacré des civils', La Croix, 16 April 1998: 7).

[146] Gustavo Capdevila, 'Algeria: U.N. investigates human rights violations', Inter Press Service, 21 July 1998.

massacres and state-armed militias. Yet its findings, vigorously denounced by the Algerian government, were contextualised by the paucity of information available. The Committee's interaction with Algeria had been a 'dialogue of the deaf', according to its chair, French jurist Christine Chanet.[147]

Touring Algeria between 22 July and 4 August, the *ad hoc* UN panel, on the other hand, met with a wide variety of Algerian politicians, officials, personalities and members of civil society, families of 'disappeared' persons, a paramilitary self-defence group in the Kabylia mountains and visited the sites of the Béni Messous massacre and the recent Aïn Khelil (Tlemcen prefecture) massacre of 25 July (twelve casualties). Leading the mission was former Portugese president Mário Soares, supported by former prime ministers Inder Kumar Gugral of India and Abdel Karim Kabariti of Jordan, former US representative to the United Nations Donald McHenry, former EU president Simone Veil of France and Amos Wako, Kenya's attorney general. The Panel's report admitted that Algerian authorities did not permit meetings with FIS leaders, whether imprisoned (Abassi and Belhadj) or released (Hachani); nor were they allowed to interview members of the 'Berber cultural movement' or visit the house of the recently assassinated Kabyle singer Lounes Matoub.[148] From the outset, the Panel acknowledged that its itinerary and authorisation were heavily influenced by Algiers: 'We had neither the means nor the mandate to conduct investigations of our own'. The final report refrained from criticising the Algerian government directly. It concluded — recommendations were not allowed — that 'efforts to combat terrorism must take place within the framework of legality, proportionality, and respect for the fundamental human rights'. Still, the Algerian government's 'efforts to combat this phenomenon' of terrorism 'deserves the support of the international community' (*ibid.*). Amnesty International quickly and predictably denounced the report as a 'whitewash' (Amnesty International 1998). Soares did not agree. 'We listed evidence of human rights abuses by both sides. [...] But we didn't put them on the same level: the terrorists' slitting of children's throats is not the same as torturing detainees or holding

---

[147] Economist, 'Algeria. Guilty? Us?', 25 July 1998: 45; Associated Press, 'U.N. committee laments Algeria's "unsatisfactory responses"', 31 July 1998.
[148] Algerian authorities said that Matoub's house was not 'a source of information'.

people in prison without charge'.[149] If there was any ambiguity as to what the Panel's report meant by the term 'terrorism', Soares' comment should have dispelled it.[150] Though Human Rights Watch had warned, 'The diplomats' visit, in any event, should not be seen as a substitute for an in country investigation by U.N. human rights experts' (Human Rights Watch 1998: 3; see also Spencer 1998b: 129), it seems the Panel was just that in retrospect.

The contingency of sovereignty or intervention?

Given that the Algerian massacre crisis has been curiously omitted from most accounts of humanitarian intervention in the 1990s or, more broadly, histories of the international community's purported failure to coherently address mass atrocities in the twentieth century, it should perhaps come as little surprise that the Algerian experience has mainly been taken up in country and area studies. As noted above, those studies have tended to frame the international response in terms of a political, rather than humanitarian, crisis. Yet, as was also underscored above, the violence in Algeria was frequently located and articulated within the broader international security discourses of armed humanitarian intervention against mass atrocities, particularly during the height of the massacres from August 1997 through January 1998. Only one in-depth treatment of the Algerian massacres has taken up the questions of sovereignty, intervention and trans-national human rights obligations that could be raised in an analysis of the international reading and response to the Algerian conflict. Helle Malmvig's (2006) study actually begins with the observation that in both Algeria and Kosovo, mass atrocities were reported yet the international response was radically different in each case. While the effort to stop the massacres in Algeria in 1998 was limited to condemnation and diplomatic initiatives, a year later NATO launched a significant armed initiative against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) to stop atrocities occurring in the region of Kosovo. Malmvig's goal, however, is not to detail what could be summarily dismissed or superficially understood as the moral

---

[149] Barry Hatton, 'Head of U.N. team to Algeria laments president's departure', Associated Press, 26 September 1998.
[150] The entire document never mentions the GIA or even the AIS; instead, there are 'armed Islamic groups', but more often, just terrorists and a phenomenon of terrorism.

hypocrisy of international relations. Rather, her hypothesis is that these two episodes demonstrate the spatiotemporal contingency of sovereignty. Previous post-structural and constructivist accounts of sovereignty, Malmvig (*ibid*: 9-21) argues, focused on the temporally dynamic practice of sovereignty through various epochs (i.e., Walker 1993; Bartelson 1995 and Weber 1995), at the expense of rendering sovereignty spatially homogenous during each period under examination. Malmvig instead takes the cases of Algeria and Kosovo to demonstrate that sovereignty can be both temporally and spatially contingent. Excavating the conditions of sovereignty's spatial contingency — its disabling in the case of the FRY and its reaffirmation in the case of Algeria — consumes the bulk of Malmvig's analysis.

Even if we accept the theoretical assumptions and argumentative objective of this study, it nonetheless seems to fail in its ambitions. What is important to consider, with respect to Malmvig's reconstruction of the discursive elements that produced Algeria sovereignty, particularly her attention towards legitimations of non-intervention, is whether or not she is as guilty of over-representing the violence as were many of her sources (a number of them ironically cited in this study). The key to understanding 'how Algeria was constituted as a situation in which intervention was impossible' is how the violence was represented. Whereas the situation in Kosovo was read as one of clear violence (genocide) necessitating international action, she argues (*ibid.*: xxii-xxiii), Algeria was simultaneously a 'murky' conflict yet the site of a sovereign subject. Charting the emergence of Algeria as a concern for the international community following the events of early 1992, she traces the formation and re-articulation of a number of representations of the conflict and international practices towards it (*ibid* chapter five). The interventionary moment, for Malmvig, is early 1998. However, her legitimations of non-intervention mostly come from Védine, France's Foreign Minister (*ibid.*: 140-3). From then onwards, non-intervention is a *fait accompli*, and Malmvig cites numerous statements to that effect. But that anything has been demonstrated is as questionable as the approach underpinning it. That Malmvig set out looking for legitimations of non-intervention and found them mainly in the voice of French officials will likely convince neither country experts, who came to expect as much from France during the Algerian conflict, nor sceptics of such constructivist methodologies.

More generally we might ask whether or not these constructions of Algeria are North Atlantic constructions and, more importantly, one that is dominated by French representations. In her effort to explicate the conditions of Algeria's non-intervenablility, Malmvig deploys roughly 350 citations from about eighty sources, including academic studies, major news outlets and official statements from governments, bodies, organisations and individuals. Statements of the French government and its officials are the most dominant source, garnering nearly a third of the citations. Of these, the statements Foreign Ministers Juppé, de Charette and Védrine are the majority. The opinions of US representatives, spokespersons and bodies are the second most consulted government source (ten percent of citations), followed by statements or documents from the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (i.e., rights monitoring and pressure groups). Similarly, the single most used news source is Le Monde, accounting for roughly a quarter of the citations; second place goes to Washington Post with ten percent[151] and then British sources with about five percent. In short, just over eighty percent of the source material comes from either French, US or UK sources, though sixty percent of that is from the French government or press.

Highlighting this dependence upon a small number of French sources, particularly government voices and the pages of Le Monde, is not a powerful critique in so far as it could be argued that French representations, for very obvious historical and political reasons, played an important, if not dominant, role in international understandings of the violence in Algeria. It is problematic in so far as it goes unacknowledged and lacks context. For example, in her efforts to understand the de-legitimation of intervention into Algeria, Malmvig examines the construction of the Islamist insurgency as an 'internal' or 'terrorist Other' threatening the constructions of the democratic and pluralist Algerian 'self', both co-constitutive of the warrant to uphold Algeria sovereignty. Yet her major sources are the report of the August 1998 UN panel visit, an opinion piece by French politician Jack Lang, and the interventions of two French public intellectuals, Bernard-Henri Lévy and André Glucksmann, both well known for their antipathy towards political Islam. Given the constraints on the UN visit placed by the Algerian government, a visit

---

[151] This reliance upon the Washington Times might seem curious given the New York Times, which is not cited at all, has the reputation of being the US 'paper of record' as Le Monde is for France.

that occurred months after the interventionary moment had passed (see above), it is unsurprising that we should find ample resources for such constructions therein. Even less surprising that we should such constructions within the writings of Lévy and Glucksmann, who were invited by the Algerian government, and possibly encouraged by French authorities, to visit precisely because they would provide such testimonials.[152]

Malmvig does address the question of whether or not she has 'hegemonized a whole discursive field' by only selecting those texts that legitimize sovereignty (for Algeria) or de-legitimize sovereignty (for FRY). Her response is to argue that she is simply omitting an analysis of dominant and subordinate representations in the individual case studies so as to focus on her comparison of what prevailed. If her argument holds, she claims, the contrast between the roughly simultaneous interventionary and non-interventionary discourses at play in Kosovo and Algeria, respectively, will meet the task of showing spatial the contingency of sovereignty (see Malmvig 2006: 42-3). There are at least two problems with this approach. First, the reader must trust that Malmvig has mapped out, prior to writing, the entire discursive field and so presented us with the articulations that matter most. Second, this approach adopts and reaffirms, rather than disowns and interrogates, the logic of sovereignty and intervention.

On the first point, it is highly contestable whether or not Malmvig has presented the most dominant or effective representations of the violence in Algeria. For example, she suggests that Algeria in late 1996, 'a murky and complex civil war, which made it impossible and unwanted to choose sides', became a situation in late 1997 'which demanded action' given

---

[152] See Lévy (Le Monde, 8 and 9 January 1998) and Glucksmann (Malik Aït-Aoudia, 'Ce que j'ai vu en Algérie, carnets de route d'André Glucksmann', France 3, 6 March 1998); both came down on the side of the government in the Qui tue? debate. As an extension of Malmvig's study, it might be worth contrasting Lévy's stance on Algeria versus his well known agitation for intervention in the case of the former Yugoslavia, particularly Bosnia and Kosovo (for more background, see Johnstone 2000: 144-6).

As an example of the counter-discourses that Malmvig (2006: 43) admittedly leaves out, historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet and publisher François Géze answered with their own page one counter-polemic in Le Monde (4 February 1998), prompting a response from Lévy to defend his 'sentiment qu'il n'y a pas d'autre choix dans le combat contre les Khmers verts' ('Algérie: gare au syndrome Timisoara', Le Monde, 12 February 1998). Lévy's visit to Algeria was apparently also facilitated by Védrine (Naylor 2000: 242-3). In mid-April, when news reports revealed that Algeria had arrested local officials and militia members in Relizane on charges indicating massacre-like activity, the Observer's John Sweeney attacked Lévy in an 'open letter', suggesting Lévy 'will be remembered in history as an unwitting apologist for murder' (19 April 1998: 24).

the 'reports of massacres conducted by unknown perpetrators against innocent civilians unprotected by the government' (*ibid.*: 137). While both of these representations — 'murky' in 1996 versus 'unknown perpetrators' and 'unprotected' 'civilians' in 1997 — were present and widely circulated, chapters five and six clearly demonstrate that these were not the only representations available nor necessarily the ones the had the most effect upon the international response. Additionally, the final articulation of Algerian violence that disabled the warrant for intervention is the bifurcation of Algerian polity into a democratic and secular 'Self' (represented by the government and worthy of foreign support) versus a terrorist and fundamentalist 'Other' (represented by the insurgency and worthy of foreign condemnation). Malmvig (2006: 151-3) locates this dichotomy within texts produced after the interventionary moment of early January 1998 had passed, notably the UN panel report and the writings of Lévy and Glucksmann. Yet this rendering of the conflict was already prevalent, and arguably dominant within French understandings of the conflict, three years into the conflict (see Roberts 1995). Indeed, there is a strong argument to be made that what is remarkable about the period of August 1997 to January 1998 is the exact opposite. The intensity of the violence, the foreign outrage and the internationalised debate over the identity of the perpetrators overcame earlier (French) renderings of the conflict as a contest between the forces of secular democratic modernity and the forces of '*intégrisme*' and '*obscurantisme*'. From the viewpoint of politiography, what is most unnerving about this post hoc approach is that it works backward from its conclusion (the spatial contingency of sovereignty) to seek the evidence that makes it reasonable (the conditions of possibility).

This leads us to the second point. Malmvig's thesis works within one particular yet contested logic of sovereignty and intervention. A critical assumption is that intervention indicates an absence of sovereignty. Not all conceptions of sovereignty, however, are based on this conceptualisation (see Krasner 1999). Malmvig's argument is not unlike the claim that laws do not exist in spaces where they are broken. Though some might hold this view, others would argue that the rule of law, like sovereignty, exists even in spaces where it is contravened. Indeed, proponents of a right to humanitarian intervention or a responsibility to protect simply portray legitimations of intervention, whether on the basis of genocide or mass suffering, as new exceptions to the general prohibition against the use of military force against a sovereign state. This does not necessarily entail the notion that

sovereignty ceases to exist when certain practices of violence obtain, only that sovereignty does not immunise states or groups within states from intervention when they practice certain forms of violence like genocide. Only if we assume this contested view sovereignty can we accept Malmvig's conclusion. All is not lost, though. While her main argument rests on a weak foundation of partial, fragmentary and predetermined representations of Algerian violence, as well as a contested view of sovereignty, Malmvig has accidentally presented us with a compelling account of the contingency of interventionary practices that does not make sole reference to either the interests or immorality of powerful states.

Conclusion: Magic words or magic worlds?

The politics of naming sovereignty and intervention, in the case of Algeria, at least reveals that claims of both can be as politicised as claims of civil war, terrorism or Islam. More importantly, though, the international experience of the Algerian massacres suggests that humanitarian intervention is heavily, though not entirely, conditioned by the kinds of violence being attributed to a crisis that is ostensibly beckoning international action. To make this point, the example of NATO's intervention in Kosovo is again instructive. As Malmvig (2006: 137) asks, 'How could gross violations of human rights, extrajudicial killings and massacres be portrayed as a clear foundation for international involvement in terms of Kosovo and not in Algeria?' The answer, as Malmvig eventually shows, is that the violence in Algeria and Kosovo was not presented on such equal footing. Key to this was the claim of genocide. The history of the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium tells us that there are certainly no 'magic words' when it comes to armed humanitarian intervention. No single utterance that will automatically trigger an aggressive international response to extensive crimes against humanity. Nonetheless, it cannot be disputed that the term genocide has had a powerful effect in the effort to catalyse interventions. The vociferous debate about whether or not the term genocide applies to some of the violent practices witnessed in the conflict Sudan's Darfur region since 2003, and thus whether or not the international community should intervene, is suggestive of the word's power (see Williams & Bellamy 2005). Though the speech act of naming genocide is unlikely to constitute either a sufficient or necessary condition for humanitarian intervention, its wide deployment the case of Kosovo stands in sharp contrast to how the

violence in Algeria was and could be described. As noted above, there were a few claims that Algeria was experiencing genocide but in the broader picture such utterances were relatively rare.[153] By comparison, a search of the period between June 1998 and May 2000, encompassing the two-year period of the most heightened attention surrounding Kosovo and the eventual NATO bombing of the FRY in 1999, produces over two hundred headlines where the terms Kosovo and genocide appeared together.

A condition we should consider, one that serves as a pre-condition for declarations of genocide, is Algeria's failure to fit into the evolving schema of intervenable atrocities. Despite repeated attempts by observers to juxtapose the Algerian massacres with recent and concurrent humanitarian catastrophes in places such as Rwanda and former Yugoslavia, Algeria lacked a crucial element: identity politics, defined as inter-group conflict, particularly ethnic divisions. The importance of constructing oppositional identities in the mobilisation of a discourse of genocide is vouched by assertion that their deconstruction is sufficient to undermine the warrant for intervention (e.g., Mamdani 2009). Even putting aside the *Qui tue?* questions of perpetrators and motives behind the massacres, representations of Algerian violence did not easily lend themselves to the standard model of inter group conflict witnessed in places where international intervention took place, whether between nationalist groups, religious groups or ethnic groups. For the most part, the violence in Algeria was seen as intra-national, intra-religious and intra-ethnic. The use of the term genocide vis-à-vis the Algerian massacres was only operational if it restricted its meaning to mass killing. Other important elements to a claim of genocide, no matter one's position within the *Qui tue?* debate, were otherwise absent.

In so far as identities were involved in the massacres, those identities were overwhelmingly framed as political identities, political in the sense that the protagonists' contention centred on issues of government. This, of course, is not an all-encompassing account of the myriad ways in which Algeria's violence was represented, particularly given the discourse on privatised violence. Indeed, the diversity of proposed logics and

---

[153] For example, a search of headlines for all French and English sources in the Nexis news database for the years 1997 and 1998 reveals only two coincides of the terms Algeria and genocide (Latest search performed October 2010). The two sources (both English) were the Australian (see above), which attributed the claim of genocide to the Algerian press, and a US wire service distributing articles from college newspapers.

agents of violence was part of the problem. The various ways in which Algerian violence could be and has been represented was indicative the conflict's seeming refusal to lend itself to easy problematisation. Nor does this argument preclude alternative efforts to solidify or expand our conception of genocide (for background, see Levene 2008). But it is worth noting that the awkward and unpopular substitute term politicide — developed to account for the intra-national nature of the Cambodian genocide — rarely (if at all) reared its head in representations of the Algerian massacres.

As will be seen in the following chapter, the debate about whether or not the violence in 1990s Algeria was without precedent often took place on a historical terrain, and a particularly Algerian one at that. Yet there is a sense in which the Algerian massacres were another sort of violence without precedent. Another contingency guiding the intervention into Kosovo — one entirely lacking from Algeria — was the recent precedent in Bosnia. Similarly, the Rwandan genocide serves as the definitive context for the cry of 'never again' to rally support for intervention in Darfur. The importance of these precedents is more or less implicit in Annan's challenge to the G77 in 2000: '[I]f humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica?' But Algeria could not co-inhabit the magical world of Rwandas and Bosnias that structure so much of our understanding of what constitutes a situation in which foreign armed intervention is necessary. Embedded within the practical logic of humanitarian intervention is not only a criterion of moral warrant but also a criterion of moral narrative. Armed humanitarian intervention is a practice done on behalf of some group and against another: for Kurdish refugees and against the Iraqi government; for Somali civilians and against warlords; for the government of Haiti, against the regime; for Tutsis, against Hutus; for Bosnia and Kosovo, against Serbia; for East Timor, against Indonesia; for the Sierra Leone government, against chaos; for Darfur, against Sudan. Only though the constitution of a morally bifurcated, Manichean reality were recent instantiations of armed humanitarianism able to operationalise themselves. Humanitarianism historically presented itself as morality that was above politics yet now, in its armed interventionary form, can only act when it frames the world into good and bad, victims and perpetrators, evildoers and saviours. Armed humanitarianism abhors a moral vacuum. That a precondition for intervention — moral clarity — was the limited objective of interventionary initiatives for Algeria is a paradox that simultaneously enabled and

disabled the humanitarianisation of the conflict. For now, conscience-shocking atrocities are not enough. But we did not need the Algerian massacres to tell us that.

8. History

'History will judge'

Alongside the discourses on democracy, identity, civil war and humanitarian intervention, the practices of transitional justice also drew increasing attention in the 1990s. Since the end of World War Two, dozens of countries have carried out various national experiments with non-judicial, extra-judicial and formal legal proceedings to address the legacies of civil war, violent authoritarianism and sometimes both. Chief among these techniques has been the truth commission, a procedure now habitually recommended to countries emerging from mass armed conflict or brutally repressive governments. The genealogy of the modern truth commission is often traced back to Idi Amin's 1974 Commission of Inquiry into Disappearances and the 1976 World Council of Churches' attempt to document the abuses of Alfredo Strössner Matiauda in Paraguay. Since then, there have been roughly thirty to forty — depending on the definition[1] — truth commissions and commissions of inquiry of various scopes and mandates. Perhaps more than any other effort, South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1995-2000) has become synonymous with this form of transitional justice. Its precursors, however, were nonetheless instrumental in the evolution of the paradigm. Truth commissions in Argentina (1983-84) and Chile (1990-91) addressed each country's 'dirty war'; the truth commission in El Salvador (1992-3) was one aspect of the peace agreement signed under the auspices of the United Nations, inspiring a similar commission in Guatemala (1997-99) for the peace process there. Since the turn of the millennium, Nigeria, Peru, Uruguay, Grenada, Panama, Serbia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Democratic Republic of Congo, Paraguay, Indonesia, Morocco, Liberia and Ecuador have all either proposed, initiated or completed commissions to address the legacies of violent conflict and abusive government.

---

[1] As of 2007, there have been a total of thirty-two truth commissions in twenty-eight different countries according to Amnesty International; the United States Institute for Peace, however, claims forty-one, dividing these into twenty-six *bona fide* truth commissions and fifteen lesser 'commissions of inquiry'. For definitions, see Freeman (2006: xxiii-xiv) and Hayner (1994: 604).

Algeria's leaders have so far eschewed adopting similar measures, whether a domestic truth commission or, as proposed during the massacre crisis, an international inquiry. Presidents Zéroual and Bouteflika have instead simply opted for government measures designed to entice rebels to put down their arms in exchange for amnesty, social benefits and political rehabilitation. In the language of international conflict management professionals, these initiatives would be called DDR: demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration. In February 1995, Zéroual backed *La loi sur la rahma* (Clemency Law or simply *al-raḥmah*), which outlined the truce-for-immunity framework that has guided Algeria's peacemaking efforts. Bouteflika's 1999 *Concorde civile* adopted this approach and was endorsed in a popular referendum that September. The 2005 *Charte pour la paix et la réconciliation nationale* expanded the scope of amnesty to include insurgents who either ignored the Concorde or joined the Maquis after 2000. It also immunised all state agents (including civilian militias) from prosecution and set up punishments for those who publicly criticised them. Insurgents who committed crimes such as rape, assassinations, bombings and massacres were ostensibly exempt from amnesty but the process through which they were vetted, if at all, was criticised by foreign human rights organisations for lacking transparency (Human Rights Watch 2005; Amnesty International 2009). Victims of apparent state terror — the thousands of families who claimed a relative had been 'disappeared' by government agents — could seek compensation but at the expense of a formal inquiry and accountability, as could the families of slain insurgents. The victims of non-state terrorism, on the other hand, have not been addressed by these measures. New formal inquiries into questions still surrounding the major events of the 1990s — assassinations of Boudiaf and Matoub, the slaying of French seven monks in 1996, the major massacres — have been largely dismissed. When asked in 1999 why Algeria was not considering a truth commission like South Africa, Bouteflika explained to El País,

> The situation is far more complex than it was in South Africa. [...] The Truth
> Commission would be justified in a relationship of colonizer to colonized, such as
> France to Algeria or Spain to Western Sahara. [...] And if my memory does not betray

me, you [i.e., Spain] have never needed a commission to achieve democratic transition.[2]

Putting aside the question of the accuracy of Bouteflika's assessment (whether of South African history or the history of truth commissions), another explanation for Algeria's reluctance also exists. At the height of the massacre drama in late 1997, Le Monde's Tuquoi put forward the simple observation that 'There will be no international commission of inquiry into the massacres in Algeria. In a country where nationalism is worth more than the truth, it is inconceivable that a foreign team is allowed to come on site to shed light on the killings'.[3] Additionally, the basic assumptions guiding calls for an inquiry were patently offensive to many Algerians: the proposition that the state had committed or condoned significant human rights violations and was incapable of regulating itself or offering the most basic security protections to its populace. Despite the recommendations of those who advocated for the de-internationalisation of the Algerian conflict, particularly the rejection of demands for humanitarian intervention (e.g., Roberts 1998), domestic and

---

[2] Juan Carlos Sanz, 'Abdelaziz Buteflika, presidente de Argelia: "No soy un dictador"', El País: 28 July 1999: 4-5.

Clearly Bouteflika would not miss an opportunity to critique Spain's policy towards its former colony of Western Sahara (which Madrid abandoned to Algeria's regional adversary, Morocco, in 1975 and whose independence Algeria continues to support) or to critique France's refusal to apologise for colonialism and the war of independence in Algeria (see below and Stora 2001a: 113). More importantly, Spain's post-Franco 'amnesia consensus' might be one of the models of transition Bouteflika has most sought to emulate. Putting aside the debate about whether or not Algeria is a democracy on par with Spain, or if the transitions are even comparable, it is worth noting, in the context of this chapter, the cracks in Spain's amnesia consensus. Such was vividly illustrated nearly ten years after this interview by the case of Judge Baltasar Garzón, an investigator for Spain's National Court made famous by his effort to extradite former Chilean Dictator General Augusto Pinochet to Spain in 1998. Garzón's failed efforts in 2008 to investigate crimes against humanity committed during the Franco era, which included examining tens of thousands of cases of disappearance and possible excavation of mass graves, led to his indictment in April 2010 for violating Spain's 1977 amnesty laws. Though Garzón's case is pending (as of October 2010), it suggests that traumas of the past do not necessarily reconcile quickly or easily under amnesty laws, regardless of whether or not a country is 'democratic'. Additionally, Argentina, invoking the principle of universal jurisdiction that Garzón cited in the case of Pinochet, launched an investigation on 4 September 2010 into the crimes of the Franco regime committed during the years 1936-77. Such developments not only put into question the domestic stability of Spain's amnesia consensus, but it international durability as well (see International Center for Transitional Justice, *ICTJ Transitions*, October 2010: 8).

[3] Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Algérie, autopsie d'un massacre', Le Monde, 11 November 1997.

international efforts to press for a truth commission continued past 1999, though with far less urgency than had been felt in January 1998.[4]

The closest Algeria has ever come to an inquiry into the events of the 1990s, particularly the massacres of 1997 and 1998, was a brief defamation trial held in Paris in the summer of 2002. Seventeen months before that, Habib Souaïdia, a former officer in the Algerian military had published a small book titled *La sale guerre* (*The Dirty War*). Souaïdia's memoir of life in the Algerian counter-insurgency effort appeared in France on 8 February and quickly sold over 70,000 copies in its first three months.[5] Before then, Souaïdia had made his allegations public several months prior in an interview with Tuquoi. Like the insiders who came forward at the height of the massacres in 1997 and 1998 (see chapter five), Souaïdia recounted witnessing torture and other possible crimes against humanity committed by his fellow soldiers. However, unlike the other former and serving members of Algeria's security, military and intelligence forces who had appeared in the French, Irish and British media in 1997 and 1998, Souaïdia was willing to use his real name and show his face in public.[6] This initially provided his claims — '[s]erious allegations', in the words of Amnesty International[7] — with an air of credibility that had otherwise been

---

[4] In March 2007, several non-governmental victims advocacy groups from Algeria, mainly those opposed to 2005 *Charte*, met in Brussels to discuss the creation of a 'truth, peace and conciliation' commission. In April 2010, groups generally in support of Bouteflika's reconciliation policies held a meeting in Algiers to press for the claims of victims of non-state terror.

[5] The attention afforded to Souaïdia's memoir was reportedly of such a concern that then Chief of Staff Major-General Lamari considered it, in the words of José Garçon, 'une affaire d'État'. Unlike previous internationalised media crises related to the violence in Algeria (e.g., the massacres of August 1997 to January 1998), Garçon suggested that the Algerian government was not able to find prominent French intellectuals to come to its aid, partially as a result of the book's 'irreproachable' foreward, written by the Italian prosecutor Ferdinando Imposimato, known for his work against mafias and terrorism (José Garçon, 'L'armée algérienne veut rassurer Paris', Libération, 25 April 2001: 11). The day after Souaïdia's book was published, an open letter in Le Monde argued that *La sale guerre* and *Qui a tué à Bentalha* provided the evidence to warrant a new push for an international inquiry into Algeria's violence. Several intellectuals, including Pierre Bordieu and Vidal-Naquet, had signed the letter ('M. Védrine et le bain de sang en Algérie', Le Monde, 9 February 2001). Algerian writers Yasmina Khadra and Rachid Boudjedra quickly attacked Souaïdia's claims; 200 Algerian academics signed a letter denouncing *La sale guerre* (Times Higher Education Supplement, 'Algiers', 6 April 2001: 10).

[6] Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, 'Le témoignage d'un ancien officier algérien: On était devenus des sauvages', Le Monde, 3 June 2000; Lara Marlowe, 'Europe turns blind eye to Algeria's dirty war', Irish Times, 13 February 2001: 14.

[7] Amnesty International, 'Algeria: Habib Souaidia's trial highlights concerns over failure to conduct investigations', Press Release, AI Index MDE 28/040/2002, News Service No. 107, 28 June 2002.

lacking from previous accusers, whether anonymous (former) members of the security, military and intelligence forces, the assertions of exiled government officials (e.g., Brahimi and Zitout) and the inconsistent accounts of massacre survivors reported by the international media.

Though the violence in Algeria appeared to be subsiding in 2000 from the heights reached in the late 1990s, the internationalised *Qui tue?* debate still simmered and, in October 2000, it received a significant boost.[8] The tale of Nesroulah Yous (2000), a survivor of the September 1997 Bentalha massacre, provided a rich, though nonetheless contested[9], background to what had arguably already become the most internationally dissected of the major massacres. As with the initial claims of some survivors that were available shortly after massacres like Bentalha, Yous had come to the conclusion that the Algerian security forces had played a role in the killing. Thus when *La sale guerre* hit the shelves in early 2001, the market was primed for the kind of first-hand evidence of direct government complicity in the massacres Souaïdia was willing to provide (see Roberts 2001). A pivotal claim in Souaïdia's narrative is an alleged 1993 massacre near Douar Ez-Zaâtria, in which he recalls having essentially witnessed, though not directly, Algerian military units, disguised as Islamist rebels, slay several civilians.[10]

The war of words between Souaïdia and former HCE member Nezzar commenced shortly after the book's publication. Expressing his willingness to testify before an international inquiry into the violence in Algeria, Souaïdia voiced the opinion that Algeria's problems resulted from the concentration of power in the hands of ten senior military officers,

---

[8] The Economist, 'Thinking the unthinkable', 11 November 2000.

[9] See Mohamed Ghoualmi [Algeria's ambassador to France], 'A propos du livre Qui a tué à Bentalha?', Le Monde, 21 November 2000; Salima Tlemçani, 'Massacre de Bentalha: Un livre qui suscite des polémiques', El-Watan, 30 October 2000.

    On 11 November, the Algerian government organised a press conference where several residents of Bentalha countered Yous' narrative; a similar group was brought to France in January 2001 for the same purpose.

[10] As noted in chapter five, the claims about Douar Ez-Zaâtria proved controversial not only because few reliable accounts of massacres had been reported as early as the year 1993 (see *ibid.*), but also because no evidence could be found when El Watan (20 February 2001) and Le Nouvel Observateur (29 March 2001) looked into it after *La sale guerre* was published. Souaïdia, nevertheless, stood by his account, underscoring that the massacre was in the 'vicinity' of that locale (Habib Souaïdia, 'En Algérie, le roi est nu', Le Monde, 17 April 2001).

including Nezzar, whom he collectively accused of robbing the nation of its wealth.[11] Nezzar shot back in a Le Figaro interview, accusing Souaïdia of being a convicted criminal, an 'impostor' who was never in the Algerian Special Forces and a co-conspirator in the Islamists' international campaign to attack the Algerian military.[12] Unfortunately for Nezzar, when he travelled to Paris in April 2001 to defend the actions of his armed forcers and publicise one of his books, it was revealed that several complaints of torture had been lodged against him in French courts, forcing Nezzar to leave quickly before prosecutors could question him.[13] Undeterred, Nezzar announced his intentions to sue Souaïdia in a French court, reportedly after having consulted with his colleagues in the military and politics four months later.[14] The target of Nezzar's defamation complaint was not *La sale guerre* directly, but it seemed clear that the lawsuit intended to undermine Souaïdia's account and, more generally, confront the chorus of accusations facing the Algerian state and army.[15] The basis of the lawsuit was statements Souaïdia had made on a French television program, 'Les Droits d'Auteur', in May 2001: 'I cannot forgive French generals [Jacques] Massu and [Paul] Aussaresses for their crimes as I cannot forgive General Nezzar (...) They are cowards who have profited'. These 'crimes', Souaïdia claimed, including the killing of 'thousands of people for nothing'.[16] Marc Tessier, president of La Cinquième, the French public television channel in question, was also named in the case.[17]

---

[11] AFP, 'Habib Souaidia prêt a témoigner devant une commission d'enquête', 13 February 2001.

[12] see AFP, 'Les «dérapages» de l'armée algérienne ont été sanctionnes (général Nezzar)', 21 April 2001.

[13] Patrick Saint-Paul, 'Algérie: L'ancien ministre de la Défense est accusé de torture par des Algériens', Le Figaro, 26 April 2001.

Nezzar eventually spoke with French police in April 2002 (Ceaux Pascal, 'L'ancien ministre de la défense algérien est revenu s'expliquer devant la police à Paris', *Le Monde*, 8 April 2002). As the Nezzar-Souaïdia trial opened in July 2002, more torture charges were filed against Nezzar in a French court (AFP, 'Algerian general target of new torture allegations in French court', 1 July 2002). None of these cases, however, were successful.

[14] AFP, 'Former Defence Minister sues over "Dirty War" allegations', 23 August 2001; Jon Henley, 'Algerian ex-general sues over army massacres claim: Author and French TV station accused of libel', The Guardian, 24 August 2001: 12

[15] Notably, Captain Hichem Aboud, former Chief of Staff to General Mohamed Betchine (who briefly headed the Sécurité Militaire in the late 1980s); Aboud also became a political refugee in France. In June 2001, he gave a provocative interview to *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Farid Aïchoune and Jean-Baptiste Naudet, 'Hichem Aboud rompt la loi du silence', 14 June 2001) about the 1987 assassination of opposition lawyer Ali Mecili and, in March 2002, he published his own polemic (Aboud 2002).

[16] In French, Souaïdia reportedly said, 'Je ne peux pardonner au général Massu ou au général Aussaresses les crimes qu'ils ont commis comme je ne peux pardonner au général Nezzar. (...) Ce sont des lâches qui en profitent' and 'eux qui ont fait cette guerre, tué des milliers de gens pour

The Nezzar-Souaïdia trial was initially set for February 2002 but was postponed to July. The opening of the proceedings featured the testimony of Souaïdia and Nezzar on the first day. Subsequent days featured testimonies from both the plaintiff's side and the defence. Testifying in support of Nezzar were two members of the HCE, former Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali and former human rights minister Ali Haroun; two former ministers with intellectual backgrounds, Ahmed Djebbar and Leïla Aslaoui; Kamel Razzag-Barra, former head of Algeria's human rights monitoring body; Mohammed Sifaoui, a journalist who was the initial co-author of *La sale guerre* but later denounced Souaïdia and his publisher, François Gèze[18]; author Rachid Boudjedra; a militia leader from Bentalha; the founder of a

rien du tout' (Florence Aubenas, 'Le général algérien Nezzar débouté à Paris', Libération, 28 September 2002: 11, ellipses in original).

[17] In Algeria, however, *La sale guerre* earned Souaïdia an international arrest warrant and a twenty-year jail sentence following his trial there *in absentia* (AFP, 'Algerian soldier given 20-year jail term over critical book', 30 April 2002).

   Though widely attacked in the Algerian press, the accusations of Souaïdia, along with Samraoui, also helped provide cover for Algerians who had held suspicions about the informal role of private and security interests in the violence. In December 2001, the Algerian papers *Le Jeune Independent* (4 December) and *Le Quotidien d'Oran* (Abed Charef, 'Escadrons de la mort: l'aveu de Zeroual', 6 December) ran stories in which Louisa Hanoune claimed that Zéroual had 'confirmed' to her in 1998 the existence of 'death squads' in Algeria, autonomous from the security sectors and run by opaque 'interest groups'. Zéroual, who has remained largely out of the public eye since leaving office in 1999, apparently never confirmed or denied Hanoune's claim. Rumours of private, paramilitary or anti-Islamist death squads (e.g., *l'Organisation des jeunes algériens libres, OJAL*) emerged in the mid-1990s and have been an important feature within the *Qui tue?* discourse. A possible context of Zéroual's purported claim could be the allegedly intense intra-regime conflict in 1998 between Zéroual and his opponents in the military leadership (Roberts 2007: 10-1). The April 1998 Fergane affair in Relizane, for example, which included allegations of pro-government death squad-type activity (see chapter five), was often read an effect of fighting between rival camps in the elite. The late 1998 allegations of death squad activity (see *Demain l'Algérie*, 1 September 1998) were likewise read as high-level interest groups attempting to undermine each other.

[18] Sifaoui, apparently an early champion of Souaïdia before *La sale guerre* (see Garçon below), became one of the book's most prominent critics following publication. He was originally contracted as one of the co-authors and later claimed that seventy percent of the text was his writing (Mohamed Sifaoui, 'Une lettre de Mohamed Sifaoui', Le Monde, 12 Februrary 2001). Even before the Nezzar-Souaïdia trial, Sifaoui had become a useful device in the Algerian government's efforts to discredit *La sale guerre* (e.g., a letter to the editor from the Algerian embassy in Washington, D.C.: 'Terrorists in Algeria', Washington Post: 18 May 2001: A30). In his lawsuit against Editions La Découverte, Sifaoui also alleged that Gèze had manipulated the text, downplaying Souaïdia's account of insurgent violence in order to highlight state abuses (Hervé de Saint-Hilaire, 'Polémique autour d'un ouvrage', Le Figaro, 10 February 2001). Gèze counter-sued Sifaoui and Marianne (which had carried an extended interview with Sifaoui). Gèze alleged that, as co-author, Sifaoui was the one who had attempted to manipulate the memoir, adding accounts that Souaïdia had not experienced. The legal proceedings in September 2001, like the Nezzar-Souaïdia trial that followed the next summer, essentially became a 'political trial' about the question of

pro-government civil society group; and six survivors or family members allegedly victimised by armed Islamist groups. Among the last group, Mohamed Daho, testified that his son, Ali, was not burned alive by soldiers, as recounted by Souaïdia, but killed by insurgents.[19] Survivors Hadda Chaouche ('Khali Aïcha') and Hamid Bouamra, residents of Bentalha, seem to have been presented to refute Yous' *Qui a tué à Bentalha?* rather than Souaïdia's *La sale guerre*.

Souaïdia's corner also boasted an impressive list of personalities. It included dissident figures Hocine Aït-Ahmed and historian Mohammed Harbi; two former Algerian government officials selected to testify on the issue of finance and corruption (Ghazi Hidouci and Omar Benderra); journalists José Garçon, Salima Ghezali and Nicole Chevillard; two political refugees in Europe who served in the Algerian military, Colonel Mohammed Samraoui and Captain Ahmed Chouchène (Chouchane); human rights activists Patrick Baudouin (Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme) and Nassera Dutour (Collectif des familles de disparus en Algérie and who believes her son was disappeared by state agents); a victim of torture; and MEP Hélèn Flautre.[20] The trial was also attended by other civil society figures, especially activists straddling both sides of the *Qui tue?* debate. One of the attendees, Chérifa Kheddar, co-founder of Blida-based Djazairouna (*Jazāʾirunā)*, an advocacy group for victims of terrorism, hoped that the proceedings might lead to some answers and accountability: 'For the first time, a real trial is taking place about the question of who is killing whom [...]. It's no longer an impersonal question from the media, but real questions by lawyers in a real jurisdiction'.[21] Reviving the *Qui tue?* debate, however, was exactly the problem with the proceedings, charged L'Humanité's Hassane Zerrouky. 'But beyond the question of who is behind the massacres of civilians', he argued, 'those who testified in favour of Souaïdia have mainly sought to

massacres (José Garçon, '«La Sale Guerre» en procès à Paris', Libération, 7 September 2001: 9). And as with Nezzar, the court dismissed Gèze's libel complaint.

[19] Hassane Zerrouky, 'Pas de peine contre Habib Souaïdia', L'Humanité, 7 July 2002.

[20] Reportedly, Souaïdia had also hoped that a representative of the *Mouvement Algérien des officiers libres* (MAOL), a dissident officers group composed mainly of exiles, would also testify in his favour (see L.D.S., 'Les procès du général Nezzar embarrassent Paris', Libération, 11 October 2001: 21). This would likely have been Captain Hacine Ouguenoune (a.k.a. Captain Haroune), a political refugee in London who had formerly served in the Sécurité Militaire (Military Security, i.e., military intelligence, now called the DRS). Vidal-Naquet was also slated to speak on Souaïdia's behalf but was unable to attend for reasons of personal health.

[21] Elaine Ganley, 'Former defense minister confronts best-selling author over extremists', Associated Press, 1 July 2002.

clear the Islamists of their crimes and their willingness to establish by any means possible [par tous les moyens] — something they have never hidden — an Islamic republic'.[22]

Perhaps more than any other witnesses, Samraoui was actually in a position to verify Souaïdia's most sensational claim, the one most central to the international debate surrounding the massacres. Had Algerian soldiers dressed as Islamists and carried out massacres to discredit the FIS and the rebel groups? As an officer in Algeria's counter-intelligence division of the DRS, Samraoui claimed that he was on the frontlines of the state's efforts to monitor, penetrate and ultimately subvert the Islamist movement from March 1990 onward. 'Our mission was to break the FIS, infiltrate it, disperse it [*disloquer*], attribute violent actions to the Islamists', he testified. 'The GIA is a creation of the Algerian security services'.[23] Samraoui first appeared on the scene in early 2001, though he had lived in Germany since deserting and receiving asylum in early 1996. After Souaïdia's book was published, Samraoui was interviewed on the Al Jazeera Arabic satellite channel, where he claimed for the first time in public that his former bosses in the DRS had created the GIA in the summer of 1991 — months before the cancellation of elections in January 1992 — to subvert the Islamist movement.[24] Though Samraoui's testimony (Souaïdia *et al.* 2002: 229-46) and character seemed unimpeachable, his account suffered the same chronological problem as Souaïdia: neither were in a position to know if the massacres of late 1996 through early 1998 were the direct or indirect work of Algerian state agents. They could only conjecture based on previous state behaviour. Nor was this deficiency corrected by the testimony of Chouchène. A political refugee in Great Britain at the time of the trial, his superiors had allegedly offered him the job of helping infiltrate the Islamist movement to carry out high level assassinations of FIS leaders. When he reportedly asked why not go after GIA leader Djamel Zitouni, Chouchène claimed he was told that Zitouni was 'our man' (*ibid.*: 166). Shortly thereafter, Chouchène escaped to Europe, meaning that he was also not in a position to speak about the 1996-98 massacres first hand.

[22] H.Z., 'Pas de peine contre Habib Souaïdia', L'Humanité, 7 July 2002.
[23] Florence Aubenas, '«Le GIA est une création des services de sécurité»; L'armee algérienne devant la justice française', Libération, 4 July 2002: 11.
[24] Le Monde, 'Algérie: le général Khaled Nezzar saisit la justice française contre l'auteur de La Sale Guerre', 24 August 2001.

By the end of the proceedings, the French court began to realise that it was being assigned a much larger task than to render a simple verdict on defamation. To decide whether or not Souaïdia's comments held sufficient warrant to be labelled defamatory was to tempt the court to write contemporary Algerian history. In her concluding statements, the public prosecutor, Béatrice Angelelli, argued against going down that road. 'This week, two theses, two truths have clashed', she noted, recommending that Souaïdia not ultimately face any punitive measures even if he was found guilty. 'History will judge', she concluded in an explicit echo of Nezzar, who had defended his actions in the early 1990s with the same claim, '*L'histoire jugera*'.[25] Indeed, the court refused to judge history. Its 27 September verdict found that Souaïdia's claims were uttered in good faith and so rested well within the boundaries of French speech laws.[26] A brief Algerian state radio broadcast simply noted that Nezzar's evidence of slander had been 'insufficient'.[27] Nezzar opted not to pursue an appeal, claiming that the trial had served its purpose.[28] Rather than reinvigorate internationalised efforts to establish a truth commission, the Nezzar-Souaïdia trial seemed only to reinforce the inveterate deadlock reached in the *Qui tue?* discourse at the height of the internationalised massacres crisis. Indeed, Samroui's subsequent memoir (2003), though far more authoritative and penetrating than Souaïdia's *La sale guerre*, had far less effect. The Paris court's refusal to write Algerian history could be cited as a reason for the muted effects of the trial. Though one could also wonder whether or not the intervening events of 11 September 2001 played a role. Events so powerful as to reconfigure world politics likely had (de-)legitimising effects on particular narratives of the Algerian conflict as well (see chapter six).

Looking beyond the failure to establish an international inquiry for Algeria, there were detectible layers of historical irony in the July 2002 proceedings. France, having dominated Algerian history for over 130 years, was being asked by the Algerian regime to co-author the darkest pages of its history since 1962. By coincidence, the hearings had ended on 5 July, forty years to the date when Algeria first celebrated independence. Nezzar

---

[25] Marie-Estelle Pech, 'Fin, à Paris, du procès de Habib Souaïdia, qui avait dénoncé les «massacres» des militaires', 6 July 2002.
[26] AFP, 'French court dismisses Algerian defamation suit against author', 27 September 2002.
[27] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Algeria: Former Gen Khaled Nezzar loses "defamation case" before French court', 27 September 2002.
[28] Libération, 'Nezzar renonce à faire appel', 10 October 2002: 9.

was calling upon the very state he had 'fought' against for independence to do what his state could not: effectively silence Souaïdia.[29] Yet what was Souaïdia's paramount crime? That he had denounced Nezzar and his high-ranking colleagues in the military command as corrupt, thieves, murders and cowards? Or was it the implicit comparison with Massu and Aussaresses, infamous in Algerian nationalist history for their use of torture during the war of independence? Indeed, Aussaresses had actually released an unrepentant memoir at roughly the same time as *La sale guerre*.[30] As a collective of international and domestic actors were attempting to force Algeria to hold itself accountable for the 1990s, other actors were still waiting for France to hold itself accountable for the crimes it had committed during colonialism.[31] But by hosting the Nezzar-Souaïdia trial, France was contributing to the slow decomposition of a nationalist narrative Nezzar and so many others had erected around themselves. If ever there was an exemplar of the conflicting meanings embedded in the term *post*-colonialism, the Nezzar-Souaïdia trial seemed it. Souaïdia, on the other hand, had become an avatar of abstract international representations of disillusioned Algerian youth turned cynical by their government; reared on stories of national glory against the French and the unquestioned good of the ALN, only to see, first hand, how the victims had become executioners. Yet whether or not any of this mattered to the majority of people in Algeria is unknown. It is suspected that several thousand had died in acts of armed violence between 2000 and 2002.[32] As Algeria celebrated forty years of independence and a French prosecutor declared that only history will judge, a bomb placed in a pile of garbage in Larba killed some three dozen.[33]

---

[29] While Nezzar had 'fought' in the resistance against the French, his military career began in the French army. He defected to the FLN in 1958, nearly four years into the conflict, joining the Algerian Army of National Liberation on the borders outside of Algeria. Following independence, he pursued further military training in, among other places, France.

[30] The intertextual possibilities of this moment were indeed quite rich. In June 2000, a former female FLN guerrilla, Louisette Ighilahriz, accused Massu and others of physically and sexually torturing her over the course of several months (see Ighilahriz & Nivat 2001). While Massu seemed to have reconsidered the tactical utility of torture, Aussaresses doubled down, giving interviews and publishing a memoir (Aussaresses 2002) in which he defended such practices. Simultaneously tearing open others wounds, President Chirac asked for a national day to commemorate the French-Algerians who had fought on the side of France during the war of independence. This request was apparently made two days before the publication of *La sale guerre* (Raphaelle Bacque, 'Jacques Chirac demande une journée nationale d'hommage aux harkis', Le Monde, 8 February 2001). The date was set of 25 September, which has since become an official day of rememberance (see Le Sueur 2005: 292-295, 318-319).

[31] Some, like Vidal-Naquet, straddled both camps.

[32] AFP, 'Dix ans de violence en Algérie', 9 January 2002

[33] Lara Marlowe, 'Algeria a test case for war on terrorism', Irish Times, 14 August 2002: 14.

Civil war as simulacrum

History trailed closely behind the violence in 1990s Algeria. That is, attempts to understand the present conflict in Algeria frequently made reference to Algeria's past. The problem of violence in Algeria was termed a problem of history. Algeria had become a victim of its history. Yet which history was holding Algeria hostage was subject to debate. Whether or not it could be termed 'history', the 1988-92 interregnum was often seen as holding the key to an efficient understanding the violence that followed. For others, the post-colonial period often functioned as the sole context in which to assemble an understanding of the violence. The entirety of French colonialism (1830-1962) was also a suspect, though older lineages — some dating back to the Ottoman presence — were also drawn into genealogies of Algerian violence. For others, however, it was the idiosyncrasies of the French-Algerian war that provided either a necessary or sufficient condition for the violence that came thirty years later.

Possible intertextualities of the 1954-62 war and the conflict after January 1992 were not difficult to construct. Utterances of a 'second Algerian war'[34], a 'new Algerian war'[35] or a 'new battle of Algiers'[36] were enough to evoke this lineage, even in its rejection, anticipation or ironic observation. The alleged return, appropriation and redeployment of Algeria's particular vocabulary of repression and resistance could also form an initial

---

The irony reportedly affected historian Mohamed Harbi so deeply that he had to leave the proceedings at one point (Simone Catherine, 'La Mémoire Meurtrie de Mohammed Harbi', Le Monde, 12 October 2002).

[34] e.g., Catherine Simon, 'Psychose de guerre en Algérie', Le Monde, 25 July 1994; Youssef Ibrahim, 'As Toll Rises in Algeria's War, a Dearth of News', New York Times, 28 December 1994: A3; Fouad Ajami, 'France's poisoned chalice', US News and World Report, 9 January 1995: 39; Le Point, 'Pourquoi les islamistes frappent en France', 26 August 1995;Provost 1996; Martin Evans, 'Not counter-insurgency but a full-scale war', Independent, 25 June 1999: 7.

[35] e.g., Henri Tinq, 'La crise algérienne et ses répercussions', Le Monde, 10 August 1994; AFP, 'La presse parisienne et la nouvelle guerre d'Algérie', 2 November 1994; Jacques de Barrin, 'La guerre d''lgérie franchit la Méditerranée', Le Monde, 28 December 1994; Jacques Duquesne, 'Terrorisme: l'offensive des amateurs', La Croix, 6 September 1995: 20; Le Point, 'Chirac, la cote d'alerte', 28 October 1995;Malti 1999.

[36] e.g., Pierre Taillefer, 'La nouvelle «bataille d'Alger»', AFP, 24 March 1993; Sud Ouest, 'La nouvelle bataille d'Alger', 3 June 1997; Julia Ficatier and Amine Kadi, 'La nouvelle bataille d'Alger', La Croix, 10 September 1997: 3; Étienne 1997.

aspect of such constructions. The accusations and counter-accusations of torture and terrorism were only the tip of the iceberg allegedly linking the war of independence to 1990s Algeria. There was the revival of the rebel *maquis* (underground, bush, guerrilla) and the government's use of *ratissage* (combing operations) in urban and rural areas. There was new talk of the need 'eradicate' the armed groups, as there had been amongst those prosecuting the war against the FLN, coming from Algeria's political elite and anti-Islamist corners of the society. Insurgents allegedly expressed the inverse, characterising their opponents as *pied noirs*, a reference to the French colonials who were forced to flee *en mass* in 1962. The Moudjahidine of the FLN gave way to the *Mujāhidīn* of the armed Islamist groups. For historian Benjamin Stora, the danger of this vocabulary — the tension between 'analogy' and 'mimicry' — is clear enough. While there are important distinctions to be drawn between Algeria in 1957 and 1997, Stora (2001a: 232-3) nonetheless concluded that 'The contemporaneous actors dress in theoretical garments borrowed from the past'.

Other observers, however, felt that the relationship between Algeria's past and present violence was than symbolism. The past is not merely a lexicon of contention and the present is not a simulation of the past; there are direct material links connecting colonial and post-colonial violence. For Malley (1996: 247), it was both: 'without a doubt, the role of the war of national liberation is primary in this respect [i.e., 'the ubiquity of violence in Algeria's past'], as is the mythology it has spun'. For others, the relationship is one of simple cause and effect. As foreign governments contemplated what to do about the massacres in early 1998, two French intellectuals, Géze and Vidal-Naquet, argued that the problem in Algeria was not, as some their colleagues had suggested, Islam (e.g., Lévy and Glucksmann, see chapter seven), but rather 'a long history of violence and vengeance that the [Algerian] military regime manipulates and maintains for its profit'. That history commences with the 'unprecedented' violence of French colonisation and carries through to the war of independence, where the French military's manipulation of the insurgency inscribed itself into the culture of the Algerian nationalist movement. For Géze and Vidal-Naquet, the internecine assassinations and fighting within the FLN and between the FLN and other groups, and the killing of thousands of Harkis in 1962 were all signs that this

tradition had been successfully grafted into the Algerian polity.[37] Géze and Vidal-Naquet were not the first to propose this particular problematisation of Algeria's violence, nor were they the last. This thesis — a kind of battered child (of colonialism) syndrome — found voice elsewhere, though other observers were not so willing to attribute the original sin to France alone. Even an Algerian informant backed this hypothesis of the violence, even if he was not willing to apportion blame as symmetrically as others. 'Beheading and mutilation of women and children seem atrocious, they are atrocious', a serving Algerian military officer told the London Times in late 1997, 'but it is no more than a predictable evolution of violence in Algeria, seeded in our war with the French'.[38]

Likewise rejecting the view that the problem and the solution to Algeria's woes were entirely related to Islam, academic Lisa Anderson located the dynamics of violence in Algeria's unique post-colonial condition: 'The brutal tactics utilized by the Algerian regime and its opponents are the legacy of the singularly brutal war of independence from the French. Many of the techniques of modern torture and terrorism were perfected in the crucible of the Algerian revolution'. With the recent weakening of the Algerian state, Anderson argued, vendettas incurred during he war of independence were being pursued.[39] In this example, violent agency is shared by both sides — terrorism to the Algerians, torture to the French — but the violence itself seemingly comes from the war *ex nihilio*. Following Bentalha, a Canadian journalist argued, 'The throat-slitting, disemboweling and beheading described by survivors of recent massacres have been seen before in Algeria. The war of independence from France in the late 1950s was marked by the same kind of unspeakable atrocities. And the massacre afterwards of thousands of "harkis," or pro-French collaborators, was also coldly barbarous'.[40] Here the horror of 1990s is initially contextualised in an account of the French-Algerian war that lacks clear agency, though it is implied that, with France out of the picture, the Algerians are still capable of continuing the atrocities on their own.

---

[37] François Géze and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 'L'Algérie et les intellectuels français', Le Monde, 4 February 1998.
[38] Anthony Loyd, 'Algerian terror victims plead for death by bullet', The Times, 23 October 1997.
[39] Lisa Anderson, 'Moderates on both sides of Algerian conflict may hold key to peace', Boston Globe, 13 October 1997: A15.
[40] Aileen McCabe, 'Algeria's secret war leaves world feeling horrified, powerless', Vancouver Sun, 26 September 1997: A12.

Historical allusions could frame Algeria as an exceptional space of violence where questions of agency were suspended in order to remark upon the continuity of practices or the agency of violence itself (see chapter six). Visiting Bentalha after the massacre, journalist Robert Fisk wrote about finding an Algerian history book in one of the victimised houses: 'Several pages depicted the features of dead martyrs of the 1954-62 independence war against France, their faces disfigured by bullets and shrapnel. How little Algeria's suffering had changed'.[41] Scholar and US media commentator Fouad Ajami, invoking Camus, summarised Algeria as a landscape of violence: the 'second Algerian war has offered a vindication for Camus's bleak vision' from 1955 — '"Tomorrow Algeria will be a land of ruins and of corpses that no force, no power in the world, will be able to restore in our century"'.[42]

A more specific problematisation of Algeria's historical relationship to colonial violence proposed that the war of independence had seeded divisions and feuds that were revived in the turmoil of the 1990s. As noted in previous chapters, the vendetta theory of Algerian violence received significant attention from witnesses and participants in the killing. Chief among these hypotheses was the belief that much of the violence stemmed from the legacy of the Harkis, a term that has come to mean, generically, any French collaborator during the war of independence or, more specifically, native Muslim auxiliaries of the French army. Of the suspected 250,000 Algerians in this category, tens of thousands fled to France or were killed, often massacred, in 1962 as the war began to wind down (Horne 2002: 537-8). Dormant, repressed and sublimated anger, whether harboured by Harkis and their children, or maintained against them by neighbours, became an alleged driver of the conflict in the 1990s according to some accounts. Algerian media dispatches frequently took note of the fact that captured or eliminated 'terrorists' were children of Harkis.[43] In

---

[41] Robert Fisk, 'Middle East: Stench of death in Algeria's perfumed killing fields', Independent, 23 October 1997: 16.

[42] Fouad Ajami, 'France's poisoned chalice', US News and World Report, 9 January 1995: 39.
    See Albert Camus, 'Lettre a un militant algérien' (October 1955) in *Actuelles III* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958); Haddour (2000: 79-80) and Le Sueur (2005: 111-2).

[43] e.g., BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Fifty-seven people arrested in Laghouat Province for helping "terrorist group"', 8 May 1993 (Source: Republic of Algeria Radio, 6 May 1993); BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Seventeen "terrorists" killed in central and eastern Algeria', 6 December 1993 (Source: Algerian TV, 4 December 1993); BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Seven "terrorists" killed; imam shot dead outside mosque', 19 March 1994 (Source: Algerian radio, 17 March 1994); BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'Security forces "eliminate 27

his unsympathetic study of the Islamist rebellion, Boukra (2002: 134-5) likewise draws our attention to the alleged geographical coincidence between some of the most violent prefectures in the 1990s and those with the most Harkis participating in the insurgencies there. Even in cultural works this view has found expression. Mohammed Moulessehoul — i.e., Yasmina Khadra (1998) — provides a fictional account of a small town torn apart amidst the insurgency of the 1990s. This motive — a Harki family's desire for revenge — is eventually exposed as an important component in the logic driving the local Islamist rebels to massacre their neighbours.

Another framing saw the historical effects of the Harkis as more symbolic than material. Following the Raïs massacre, journalist José Garçon entertained the possibility that the mass killings were historically related to the massacres of the Harkis carried out at the end of the war of independence. However, the way in which these mass slaughters were related, Garçon speculated, was more like a reminiscence or simulation voiced through the appropriation of a particular vocabulary of de-legitimation deployed in the service of an endless cycle of revenge.[44] An object or agent of violence did not necessarily have to be a Harki or a child of Harkis to be subject to the way in which the legacy of anti-colonial violence affected the Algerian nationalist imaginaire. Here Garçon seems to be borrowing from Grandguillaume, who, like many others, saw a more direct link between the massacres of 1997 and 1962: 'Scores are being settled today whose origins lie in conflicts resulting from Algerian independence in 1962, such as the massacre of 60,000-100,000 harkis that took place only months after independence'.[45] Grandguillaume, however, did not present this as a totalising thesis of the violence; as noted chapter five, he also considered other possible dimensions. The lasting effects of French rule and violent decolonisation were only part of the story; another aspect was the fragmented (*éclaté*) nature of the Algerian nation from the times of the Ottoman Empire, a nation that could only express itself as the antithesis of French colonialism that had furnished its condition

terrorists''', 23 March 1994 (Source: Algerian TV, 21 March 1994); BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 'FLN activist assassinated in El Tarf', 27 September 1994 (Source: Algerian radio, 25 September 1994).

[44] José Garçon, 'Quatre questions sur une tragédie', Libération, 30 August 1997.

[45] Jean-Pierre Tuquoi, 'Algeria's horrific settling of scores', Manchester Guardian Weekly, 14 September 1997: 19

of possibility.[46] The ultimate result being a society that, if not violent, is at least 'hard' (*dure*), in his opinion.[47] As noted in previous chapters, Étienne agreed: 'It's more than a tradition. It's an extraordinary culture of violence'. He likewise located the roots of Algerian violence in an epoch predating French colonisation, during the Ottoman period.[48] For British scholar George Joffé (2002: 29-30), one of Algeria's most dedicated foreign observers, the important point of this 'tradition' is its utility maximising logic: 'the development of violence after 1992 [...] is legitimised within demotic culture by a tradition of the use of violence as a legitimate means of acquiring economic resources that goes back to pre-colonial days'.

In all these cases, a relationship between historical violence and contemporary violence is assumed to exist, and so the differences lie in, on the one hand, where violence is located in space and time, and, on the other, their implicit theories of agency. The kind of problematisation advanced by Géze and Vidal-Naquet, whether intentional or not, easily lends itself to an interventionary politics in which French guilt is mobilised in the name of addressing a historical wrong that produced atrocities. More to the point, it is not just that the French are morally wed to Algeria but that France is directly responsible for the violence that is taking place. Those arguments arguing for an older Algerian linage of violence, however, problematised the violence in an entirely different way, one that could either support a policy of apathy, non-interference or active support for the government and secular civil society. A more ambiguous problematisation, in terms of its practical consequents, arises when violent practices in Algeria are represented as a kind of country specific reservoir of symbolic resources or, in a more perfomative sense, 'repertoires of contention' (Tilly 2003) that constrain the limits of the think-able and do-able in Algerian conflict, whether as non-violent politics or violent revolution. In such a case, it might seem that we are tilting towards a thesis of a 'culture of violence'; but, as seen above and will be seen below, the idea of an Algerian culture of violence was always demonstrated through the production of an Algerian history of violence.

---

[46] Jean-Christophe Ploquin, '«Alger se protège mais ne protège pas la société»', La Croix, 2 September 1997: 5.

[47] Jean-Pierre Tuqoi, 'Algérie : l'histoire est partie prenante dans la violence d'aujourd'hui', Le Monde, 5 September 1997.

[48] Laure Mandeville, 'Bruno Étienne : «Ce sont les généraux qui se déchirent»', Le Figaro, 30 août 1997.

Minimally, we can say that historicisation becomes problematic when it is asserted *post hoc* with no supplementation. Making the case for truth commissions and national reconciliation after mass violence, philosopher Tzvetan Todorov based their necessity on the fact that

> Once violence is introduced into history, it continues to exercise its malevolent effects for decades, and even for centuries. Hitler's misdeeds continue to hurt people today, just as the cruelties of the Boer War continued to influence those of the apartheid regime; and the violence of the colonial war in Algeria in the 1950s explains in part the recent massacres in that country.[49]

In cases such as this, a history of violence becomes the *deus ex machina* of Algeria's conflict in the 1990s. Yet even when historicisation moves from mere speech act to actual argument, an important first step — explicating the vectors of historical circulation — is rarely taken. Scholars who have addressed this problem more seriously do cite various pathways of transmission. Algerian historian Hassan Remaoun (1997) is not only critical of the Algerian educational system's role in the reproduction of violence, but the entire 'socialisation process' in Algeria: 'a memory of violence which, sacralized and never yet demystified, has been integrated through the socialization process to an extent that it appears to constitute part of the "habitus" of Algerians' (Remaoun 2000: 41-2; quoted in McDougall 2006b: 62; see also Carlier 2002). Stora (2001a: 233) likewise portions some of the blame for the violence in the 1990s to the post-colonial Algerian educational system and its valorisation of anti-colonial violence. Algerian historian and archivist Fouad Soufi (1997) highlights the role of the media in the creation of these memories that helped provide the conditions for the violence of the 1990s. The problem with these historically informed accounts of Algeria's recent violence is their failure to present us with more than a rhetorical tautology. In other words, the same thing (the historical roots of Algerian violence) has been described twice, even if the second time has been more thickly detailed than the first. The mere coincidence of similar patterns of behaviour and adapted vocabularies of contention does not prove causation as claimed.

---

[49] Tzvetan Todorov, 'In Search of Lost Crime: Tribunals, apologies, reparations, and the search for justice', The New Republic, 29 January 2001.

Violent imaginations

For those supporting the view that Algerian violence was rooted in the colonial experience, the dominant assumption seems to be that Algerians were, individually, collectively or holistically, a blank slate on which the violence of French imperialism could easily imprint itself. The colonial subject, in this case, is the passive vessel of foreign domination. Certainly, if the war of independence is our year zero, then perhaps a hypothesis can be constructed; but if we assume that the genealogy of Algerian violence stretches two to several centuries into the past, then our understanding seems woefully inadequate unless we view Algerian violence as a material force that transcends agency and is capable of transmitting itself across time — what would be called, in other contexts, structural determinism. Culture is often conceptualised as the kind of structure that is capable of performing such feats of reproduction. The idea that Algerian society or culture had become inherently violent, for whatever historical reason, was also present within the explanations of the conflict and the massacres. Egyptian-American sociologist Dr Saad Eddin Ibrahim attempted to explain the more intense Islamist insurgency in Algeria versus the concurrent one in Egypt in terms of his native country's 'higher level of civility'. Yet the roots of Algeria's violent tendencies were nonetheless located in the war of independence: 'I mean we have a tradition of settling conflicts peacefully and respecting the rights of others', he explained. 'In Algeria, there is a belief stemming from the (1954-1962) war of independence that force is a way to solve problems'.[50] A former Egyptian ambassador to Algeria agreed. Algerians 'are good-hearted, but even in their daily dealings they are harsh, tough, devoid of the softer ways of a civilised people. This is mainly because of the hardship they endured at the hands of the French'.[51] British journalist Ian Aitken, recalling his visit to Algiers in 1961, warned his government that the roots of the 'inexplicable slaughter' in Algeria (that the then EU presidency in London was 'vainly trying to unravel') had been seared into that nation during the war of independence. At

---

[50] Lara Marlowe, 'Why once similar conflicts in Egypt and Algeria now differ', Irish Times, 17 March 1997: 13.
[51] Lara Marlowe, 'Why once similar conflicts in Egypt and Algeria now differ', Irish Times, 17 March 1997: 13.

best, Aitken believed, hopeless Algeria could serve as a cautionary tale to other warring groups — particularly in Northern Ireland — of what their society might become.[52] European MP Cohn-Bendit was more optimistic about Algeria's prognosis but nonetheless shared a similar, though somewhat more historically ambiguous, diagnosis: 'if we want to stop the culture of violence, we need to replace the culture of violence with a long tradition in Algeria by a culture of democracy and state of law'.[53]

Of these various attempts to historicise Algeria's unique cultural valorisation of violence, Luis Martinez's concept of an '*imaginaire de la guerre*'[54] stands out as one of the most concerted yet controversial attempts to provide such a hypothesis. His *imaginaire de la guerre* proposes that 'war is a method of accumulating wealth and prestige and is, for that reason, constantly being readapted by the participants in the conflict' (*ibid.*: 9). The danger, as critics have alleged, is that Martinez's concept is 'cultural-essentialist' (Roberts 1999: 388-9; Werenfels 2007: 128-9). Roberts equates Martinez's *imaginaire de la guerre* to a kind of Orientalism that sees Arabs and Muslims as harbouring higher propensities towards violence than other cultural or religious groups. Whether or not this is a fair reading of Martinez's hypothesis (see below), there is an entirely different way in which it is cause for concern. The warrant Martinez constructs to summon his hypothesis of an *imaginaire de la guerre* is weak and ambiguous.

In his study of the armed conflict in Algeria, mainly the years prior to the massacres, Martinez puts forward the *imaginaire de la guerre* to compensate for the alleged insufficiencies of alternative accounts of the war's causes. He identifies these as

---

[52] Ian Aitken, 'I've seen the killing game', Guardian, 22 January 1998: 19.

[53] Sarah Chayes and Linda Wertheimer, 'EU Mission to Algeria Frustrated', All Things Considered, US National Public Radio, 20 January 1998, transcript. See chapter seven for background on Cohn-Bendit's intervention into the Algerian field.

[54] In the English translation of Martinez's study, *imaginaire de la guerre* has been rendered 'war-oriented imaginaire'. The translator suggests that *imaginaire* is similar to the English term world-view or the German *Weltanschauung*, though the option of 'ideology' is not offered (Martinez 2000a: 1). Ideology (i.e., 'an ideology of war'), however, might be problematic because of certain meanings, particularly specific Cold War usages (e.g., Soviet ideology, Western ideology) that have clouded the term. Theorists have suggestion a neologism, 'ideational', to replace ideology for this reason and others. Certainly, Martinez is talking about something ideational but an 'idea of war' does not seem to hit the mark. As *imaginaire*, in its most basic sense, literally means imaginary in English, a 'war imaginary' is obviously confusing. Here I will leave the phrase in French though I think it is sufficient to translate it as simply 'war imaginaire' or 'imaginaire of war' rather than war-*oriented* imaginaire.

hypotheses that locate the conditions of violence either in the socio-economic 'crisis' (his quotes) of the 1980s or in the failure of Algeria's imported state. In what could be seen as an indirect refutation of the econometric literature on civil wars discussed in chapter three, Martinez (2000a: 2-7) argues that economic conditions and social unrest were already prevalent before the 1985-6 collapse in global hydrocarbon prices or even the installation of Bendjedid as President in 1979. In a sense, Martinez is not just explicitly deconstructing the 'myth of the Black Decade', defined as 1979-91, but also another myth, the myth of Algeria's golden age under Boumedienne in the 1970s. However, the way in which Martinez attempts to undermine this hypothesis is based upon a false comparison. He initially considers (citing only one study) a dynamic indicator: Algeria's nearly consistent *per capita* GDP growth following independence through the mid 1980s. To refute this, Martinez examines a static indicator: inequality and unemployment levels at the end of the Boumedienne period. For Martinez, this latter observation suggests that there was as much reason for social crisis in 1978 as there was ten years later, and so economic factors alone cannot explain Islamist mobilisation and thus cannot explain the outbreak of conflict. Martinez, in fact, notes one of the proposed mechanisms that translate such factors into revolutionary crisis: a sudden reversal of mass expectations (i.e., Davies 1962). Davies' hypothesis is unsupported by static indicators from the late 1970s but suggested by dynamic ones, like the precipitous drop in GDP after 1986, which was followed by significant increases in unemployment and the gutting of the Algerian middle class (see chapter three). Ultimately, Martinez's attitude seems ambiguous and possibly confused; it is unclear whether or not he is criticising efforts to posit economic conditions as either the sole cause of the violence or merely a contributing factor. Of those who support a rigorous economic approach to the causes of civil war, very few, if any, would hypothesise poverty and inequality as totally sufficient conditions for mass violence; otherwise, the phenomenon would be a lot more prevalent globally.[55] The point, however, in highlighting this possible contradiction in Martinez's argument against economic determinism is mainly to demonstrate the weakness of the warrant Martinez has written for his *imaginaire de la guerre* in the first place.

---

[55] The same goes for Martinez's approach to population growth; he claims a 'demographic crisis' but dismisses it as a sole cause without ever explicating how it could nonetheless function as a contributing factor (see chapter three on how demographics and intra-national armed conflict are often articulated).

A dissection of the arguments for Algeria's failed 'imitation' state forms the other aspect of Martinez's warrant for a new hypothesis. Here Martinez is addressing the claim that the armed conflict in 1990s can be understood in terms of independent Algeria's failure to emulate effectively the modern European model of a nation state. Counter to the French academic literature on the 'imported state' (e.g., Badie 1992; Badie 2000), which has clear echoes with the work on quasi-states (Jackson 1993) and failed states (Ghani & Lockhart 2008), the Algerian case specifically has been presented, according to Martinez, as a failure to overcome older modes of governance — precisely, the *beylicate* of the Ottoman period. Martinez rejects this view by claiming to the contrary that the Algerian civil war is a war of state building (à la Tilly 1985) rather than — to borrow from Mary Kaldor (2007) — a 'war of state unmaking'. One might first dispute whether or not this observation is consistent with the more radical proclamations and acts attributed to the GIA, which often seemed particularly illiberal — that is, anti-Liberal — in their vocabulary, intent and execution. Secondly, and more importantly, Martinez has, once again, erected a scarecrow argument whose ultimate purpose is to convince us that his ideational option — the *imaginaire de la guerre* — is necessary. There were certainly many more hypotheses available than the two Martinez poses, and so there is actually little reason to think that we have arrived at the *imaginaire de la guerre* because we have exhausted all other options.

Though he is frequently criticised for espousing a kind of essentialism, Martinez seems to suggest that he is arguing against a cultural reductionism that posits Islam(ism) as the principal or overriding condition for the violence. Martinez (2000a: 8-9) rejects the idea of a general Islamic imaginaire driving the armed conflict and instead opts for one that is specifically Algerian. The problem with his argument here is that he also establishes another weak and awkwardly framed foil in the voice of Grandguillaume. In early 1995, Grandguillaume noted that Islamism had assumed a dominant position within the debates surrounding Algeria's violence. From this point, Martinez launches into his argument against development-based approaches by falsely claiming that Algerian Islamism is always framed as an effect of social, economic and political-structural factors.[56] This latter claim is certainly not given. Some observers, irrespective or oblivious to the socio-

---

[56] A missing step in the argument might be the claim that the socio-economic crisis provoked political attitudes to become more sympathetic to the program of Algerian Islamists.

economic and political context, were willing to blame Islam(ism) entirely; others used those exact socio-economic and political contexts to argue that Islam(ism) was not a salient factor at all. For his part, Grandguillaume's (1995) introductory essay (see Grandguillaume 1998) makes it quite clear that the problem is not Islamism but in thinking it is the problem. What is also unsettling are the shifting targets of explanation. In the original French version, Martinez deploys Grandguillaume's observation in the context of explaining the outbreak of civil war vis-à-vis images of Algeria as a model of development in the 1970s and an exemplar of pluralism in the late 1980s. In the English translation, however, the context is revised to address the question of the 1997 Mitidja massacres.[57]

When we take Martinez's hypothesis seriously and unpack its assumptions, another avenue of critique becomes available. First of all, Martinez's decisive factor is framed in the same way that he frames Algeria's economic crisis — that is, statically. If the *imaginaire de la guerre* holds in all places and at all times in Algeria, then what factors prevented the outbreak of mass violence for thirty years after independence and during extended periods of French colonialism?[58] Unfortunately, Martinez has likewise rendered socio-economic and political (i.e., state building) factors static and negligible respectively. There is no accounting for the dynamics or mechanisms that provide proximate causation apart from the regime's 'choice of civil war', which was 'made by the military leadership in January 1992' (Martinez 2000a: 16). This, however, brings us to another point: the circularity of the argument. Martinez (2000a: 16) then suggests, 'The outbreak of the civil war can thus be seen as a socio-economic operation aimed at encouraging accumulation of wealth'. In attempting to understand how the violent conflict in Algeria emerged, the question is not so much whether people and groups see violence as a means to advance their personal or collective ambitions (which seems given in any armed conflict) but under what conditions can such an attitude flourish. For Martinez, they are one and the same. The *imaginaire de la guerre* is co-constitutive of the conditions where an *imaginaire de la guerre* can operationalise itself. Martinez, like many other observers (see chapter six), assumes that the general causes of the armed conflict, the conditions that perpetuated it and, ultimately,

---

[57] This significant revision of the text and the deletion of Martinez's (1998: 12-6) argument in support of naming the Algerian conflict a civil war — another aspect of his argument that drew attention (see chapter four) are not explained by the translator.

[58] Quandt Quandt 1998: 98-9 raised a similar point vis-à-vis generic attempts to locate the source of Algerian violence in culture.

precipitated atrocities like the massacres are one and the same. But whether or not his *imaginaire de la guerre* can account for all acts of violence is assumed by default; it cannot be demonstrated by his extensive textual research and sociological fieldwork because it is already present *a priori*. As such, it is indicative of a totalising structuralism that sees all instances of violence as a manifestation of a single logic.

Moreover, it is debateable whether or not Martinez's *imaginaire de la guerre* even departs from prevailing theories of human behaviour regularly deployed in the social sciences under the rubric of rational choice theory. The *imaginaire de la guerre* is not all that different from the Machiavelli Theorem — 'no profitable opportunity for violence would go unused' (Collier *et al.* 2008: 3) — that forms a central aspect to contemporary Neoliberal studies of civil war (see chapter three). In other words, what Martinez so controversially attributes to Algerian generals and GIA Amīrs specifically, other social scientists routinely attribute to humans generally. Rather than an expression of Orientalism, as Roberts maintained, Martinez's hypothesis seems, whether intentional or not, Occidenalist as well. And yet, unlike rational choice, which is an abstract theory of generalised human behaviour, Algeria's alleged *imaginaire de la guerre* seemingly only applies to elite (male) protagonists that choose to use violence to mediate conflicts, to enhance their prestige and to garner wealth. Martinez then goes looking for his *imaginaire de la guerre* amongst those whom he already assumes operate under its dictates. Martinez's hypothesis not only has a tenuous warrant, but it lacks the basic scientific criterion of falsifiability.

Lastly, it is worth considering whether or not Martinez's reading of Algerian history is equally problematic. Throughout this chapter, we have been looking at various ways in which history has been deployed in the explanation of Algeria's violence in the 1990s. To a lesser extent, culture has been another object of analysis here; yet the direct and indirect ways in which culture has been framed as an artefact of history (always-already) leads us back again to the question of historicisations of violence. Central to Algeria's supposed *imaginaire de la guerre* is the construction of a lineage of rebellious historical figures — Ottoman corsairs, colonial Qāʾids, anti-colonial Moudjahidine, Islamist Amīrs of the 1990s insurgency — that variously form the actuating thesis, antithesis and synthesis of Algeria's violent history. Yet for historian James McDougall (2005: 119), this constellation is only

possible through a reading of Algerian history — or, more precisely, a writing of Algerian history — that extracts the temporally specific logics and contexts from each epoch to formulate continuity. Though history certainly provides sufficient discursive resources in the efforts to (de)legitimate rebellion and repression, particularly the war of independence (*ibid.*: 125), McDougall believes that 'the instinctive reiteration of culturally entrenched patterns of political behaviour' (*ibid.*: 128) is not a given in Algerian history. That is, a condition of possibility for the *imaginaire de la guerre* is its inscription into Algerian history first. To borrow from historian Benedict Anderson's (1991: 205)

thesis regarding the counter-temporal processes of national narration, the true origin of Algeria's history of violence is the violence of the 1990s. Perhaps no other observation highlights the contingency, rather than historical inevitability, of Algeria's recent violence.

Conclusion: Historicisation and/as problematisation

One massacre that featured within the international response to the violence in 1990s Algeria, but has so far not been mentioned, occurred on a small hilltop settlement on the southern side of the Kabylia range. Reports indicated that the victims were brutally killed with guns, knives and other rudimentary implements. The International Herald Tribune carried a dispatch from Algiers claiming that 302 had been slaughtered, almost all the men in the village. It also read, 'In one house 35 bodies were piled on one another. It was the bloodiest single incident that observers here can ever recall in the modern history of Algeria'.[59] Officials denounced the attack as a 'nameless massacre'. The raid appeared to be the result of insurgent rivalries and the counter-mobilisation of the population into an armed militia by the authorities. What set this apart from the other major massacres of the late 1990s was the fact that it had occurred roughly forty years earlier.

As the intensity and frequency of massacres increased in late 1996, the voices with the international gallery sometimes made reference to the late May 1957 events in Mélouza.[60] Rejecting the claim that the violence in early 1997 Algeria was unprecedented, French

---

[59] International Herald Tribune, '1957: Arabs Slaughtered', 1 June 2007: 2.
[60] For background, see Stora (2001a: 59), Horne (2002: 221) and Ruedy (2005: 164); 'officials' quoted in Feraoun (2000: 211).

journalist Claude Jacquemart pointed to Mélouza as a prime example of how the 'methods' of resistance have not changed.[61] In October 1997, French politician and *pied noir* Pierre Pasquini expressed the frustration others felt in the face the ongoing Algeria massacres. He nonetheless believed they could not feign ignorance given the Maghrib's 'traditional forms of cruelty', as had been expressed by Algerians in such episodes as Mélouza.[62] For Vidal-Naquet and Géze, Mélouza was significant but for different reasons. Writing in early 1998, they felt the 'war within the war' of independence — fighting between the FLN and rivals — had been the outcome of a French tradition of violent repression coupled with the sowing division and strife amongst the nationalist groups. For Géze and Vidal-Naquet, the massacres just witnessed in Algeria, like the massacre of Mélouza and, before that, the massacres of Guelma and Sétif in 1945 — where hundreds, if not thousands, of Algerians were slaughtered by French settlers — were the natural outcome of French colonialism.[63] For scholar Omar Carlier (1998: 148), Mélouza functioned as another reminder that the extremes of violence attributed to the GIA went far beyond atrocities attributed to the FLN during the war of independence.

Nearing the end of the bloody decade in Algeria, anthropologist Tassadit Yacine (1999: 24) asked, 'How can one study the kinds of violence that Algeria is enduring without taking history into account?' Certainly, the account provided by Martinez has provoked justified scepticism and is in desperate need of supplementation to revive itself. And yet some of those who criticise Martinez's hypothesis, or similar reductionist/essentialist approaches, nonetheless feel that we cannot make the mistake of 'throwing out the baby with the bathwater' (Werenfels 2007: 128). For Quandt (1998: 99), this means rejecting the idea 'that Algerians have cultural values that predispose them to violence' while accepting the possibility 'that the political violence of today may have deeper and more shadowy roots than is often suspected'. After all, without historical context, how can we make sense of Belhadj's claim in 1989 that the 1954 *jihād* must continue (in Evans & Phillips 2008: 151)? Or when the Algerian government tells Human Rights Watch that the problem of three thousand disappeared in the 1990s pales in comparison to the fifty thousand

---

[61] Claude Jacquemart, 'Massacres en Algérie', Le Figaro, 9 April 1997.
[62] Pierre Pasquini, 'Des contraintes paralysent la France', Le Figaro, 1 October 1997.
[63] François Géze and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 'L'Algérie et les intellectuels français', Le Monde, 4 February 1998.

Algerians that allegedly disappeared during the war of independence (see Human Rights Watch 2001)? Without history, how can we make sense of the striking parallels between torture methods used by the French during the war of independence and the torture methods allegedly used by the Algerian security forces during the 1990s?[64] Or when knowledge gained during the war of independence was redeployed three decades later for guerrilla and counter-insurgency purposes?[65] History — like identity, as Stuart Hall has alleged (see chapter six) — seems inherently problematic yet unavoidable and indispensable when addressing mass violence.

In the case of Algeria in the 1990s, the role of history in the conflict has been framed in several ways: as context, as causality, as comparison, as prophecy. In this chapter we have seen the various ways in which these approaches are all insufficient. Though more than any other, the prophetic mode of interpreting the relationship between history and violence in Algeria — the 'doomed to repeat' school — has provoked strong reactions. 'It is important to insist that the new war in Algeria was not dictated by some inflexible, metahistorical fate', contends McDougall. Yet the basis on which McDougall contests this approach is rooted in historiography; the problem is not Algerian history or historicisation *per se*, but rather the ways in which histories have been constructed and mobilised. But

---

[64] The intimate links between colonial, anti-colonial and post-colonial violent practices in Algeria were alluded to in a 1997 interview with a former Algerian commando. Describing the 'killing room' where he tortured suspected insurgents and sympathizers, it was reported that 'Some prisoners were sodomised with bottles, a method used by the French during the 1954-1962 Algerian war of independence. The chiffon or rag, another French torture in which the victim is forced to swallow salty or soapy water, acid or his own urine, was also used' (Lara Marlow, 'Ex-army conscript saw colleagues torturing and murdering villagers', Irish Times, 30 October 1997: 9).

    Rendering the intelligibility of Algerian violence is not the sole use for Algerian history; recently it has also been put to good use in the enhancement of imperial capacity. As noted at the outset of chapter five, 11 September 2001 allowed Algeria's conflict in the 1990s to be recast as an example of how to fight a 'war on terror' by participants in the fighting and others looking for precedent. And when the 2003 US occupation of Iraq went sour, we were all advised to revisit in Gilo Pontecorvo's film *La battaglia di Algeri* (1966) and read Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace* (republished by New York Review Books in 2006). Even when construed as an academic study of a democracy-insurgency problematique (e.g., Merom 2003), it is difficult not to construct an ironic reading of the effort to derive normative imperial lessons from one of the twentieth century's most infamous wars of decolonisation (Lazreg 2008; Kemp 2008).

[65] For example, a January 1998 profile of militia leader Hadj Fergane, the mayor of Relizane who would soon face (and be acquitted of) serious charges several months later (see chapter five), emphasised the fact that Fergan had not only survived the war of independence but he had put that knowledge to good use in his fight against the AIS and the GIA (Le Point, 'Algérie : Voyage au bout de l'horreur', 17 January 1998).

perhaps the problem is not that Algerian violence has been over-determined by readings that have accentuated its history. An allegation of over-determination implies the possibility of proper or adequate levels of determination. The problem, rather, is history — or, to be more precise, historicisation. A productive silence within the historical problematisations of Algeria's violence in the 1990s has been the lack of any indication that this very practice is problematic in the first place. Historicisation is never able to imagine a world in which it is not operating, whether in the background (in the genealogy of our concepts) or in the foreground (as an explicit means of understanding). The fact that we cannot think outside history is as much an argument for engagement with it as it is a case for its danger in Foucault's (1984: 343) sense. In this way, we can begin to problematise historicisation — as with all problematisations discussed in this study — not as a process that is forever contaminated by partisanship but as a rendering that requires more ironic vigilance.

9. Conclusion

History, intervention and irony

My residence in Algiers was a short walk from place Addis Ababa, a roundabout midway between downtown and Bir Mourad Raïs. The Algerian government's human rights monitoring body, the CNCPPDH, is located there in a gorgeous Moorish building bathed in whitewash, perched overlooking the bay of Algiers. Every Wednesday — or what seemed like every Wednesday — a handful of women, and sometimes a few men, would hold silent vigil in front of that building. Some carried sheets of paper with enlarged identity photos printed on them; sometimes there was a sign in Arabic or French. These are Algeria's *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*. Yet unlike their Argentine counterparts, Algeria's mothers of the disappeared, so far, have been denied the right to know what happened to their children. The Algerian government acknowledges that it was responsible for disappearing some eight thousand of them and has offered compensation.[1] But for many other Algerians, like the victims of armed groups who seek the support services of the independent organisation *Jazāʾirunā* ('Our Algeria') in Blida, the government has refused to compensate them for their loss and suffering. Just as many Algerians feel a lack closure surrounding their experiences from the 1990s, I feel ambivalent concluding this study. Many of the issues raised here are very much live issues. Perhaps there is no stronger indication of this than the formal and informal efforts to censor those who wish to discuss them openly in Algeria and abroad.[2]

To the many appellations affixed to the violence in Algeria since 1992, the title *guerre sans fin* is perhaps as fitting as any other. Not solely because of the persistence of violence, though that is part of the argument, but given the lack of any event signalling a formal end

---

[1] Adlène Meddi, 'Gouvernement - familles des disparus : La rupture', El Watan, 26 March 2010: available at http://www.algeria-watch.org/fr/mrv/mrvdisp/gouvernement_familles_rupture.htm, accessed October 2010.

[2] This includes the 'amnesia' provisions in the 2005 *Charte* (i.e., the provisions barring critical discussion of state actions during the 'national tragedy') and even more recent examples (e.g., the 11 August 2010 demonstration of Algeria's mothers of the disappeared was violently disrupted by government security forces).

to hostilities. No comprehensive peace agreement, no United Nations supervised handshake between rebels and incumbents with the diplomatic corps looking on, no proposals to share power under a signed treaty, no symbolic burning of arms, no monuments to the losses on either side, no days of remembrance. Just as chapter three explored the slow and ambiguous evolution of armed fighting, chapter eight noted the tortuous denouement of violence in Algeria over the past decade. Perhaps such is the nature of mass violence though. Is it ever concluded definitively? Even the best efforts to end decades of suffering and strife have produced mixed results. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was by far the most thorough, transparent, robust and participatory experiment in transitional justice the world has ever seen. Yet whether or not it has succeeded in its goal of 'restoring' the nation is still up for grabs. Though Apartheid no longer exists on paper, social inequality, along with other disturbing social and economic indicators (e.g., rates of HIV infection), is amongst the worst in the world. Some critics of South Africa's experiment with national reconciliation allege that the Commission and its revered legacy have only served to mask a transition from *de jure* to *de facto* Apartheid (see Klein 2007: 194-217). The effects of Algeria's experiments with national reconciliation — the 1999 *Concorde* and the 2005 *Charte* — have likewise proven difficult to read. While the killing has sharply decreased since January 1998, the impact of the government's formal peacemaking efforts seems equivocal, given the persistence of lower levels of armed violence and the return to a political situation that has been interpreted as a virtual *status quo ante* (Roberts 2007). The parallel decline in violence and the increase in global hydrocarbon prices is only one hint among many that Algeria's formal reconciliation measures might not deserve too much credit.

Within the scope of this study, the idea of a *guerre sans fin* is also provocative when we consider the extent to which wars continue to be waged on different terrains once the violence stops. Ending this study on the theme of history served a dual purpose. It was not intended to stand as an act of closure, to say that politiography should now be handed off to historiography. If we accept Foucault's 'inversion' of Clausewitz (i.e., politics is war by other means), then history also becomes recruited into, as it was from the beginning,

Algeria's *guerre sans fin*.[3] The primary objective of chapter eight was to highlight the problematic features of efforts to ground the logic of Algeria's violence in either representations of Algeria's history or the putative cultural effects of past violence. The secondary object was to underscore the extent to which history, and not just politics, will become an important terrain of struggle in the efforts to come to terms with the violence that tore apart Algeria in the 1990s while pushing the intellectual and moral capacities of the international community beyond their apparent limits. Of course politics does not instantly yield to history once the fighting stops, nor is it ever clear that the distinction between the two is salient. The intersection and interplay of politics and history in post-conflict environments is evident enough in the continuing efforts to hold accountable key actors long after the violence has subsided. As I am writing this conclusion, it has recently been reported that Argentina began prosecuting its former dictators Jorge Rafael Videla and Reynaldo Bignone and has just sentenced eleven prison officials for crimes (including torture and murder) committed during the 1973-83 dictatorship. Brazil's Minister of Human Rights recently voiced support for the repeal of a 1979 amnesty law covering state abuses during the 1964-85 dictatorship (including torture and disappearance) and the country's top federal prosecutor asked the government to offer an official apology for the crimes it committed during that period. A special Cambodian court indicted four leading officials of the Khmer Rouge regime for crimes against humanity and increased the sentenced for one official to life imprisonment for his actions during the genocide (1975-79). South Africa began considering an additional 149 cases of pardon for crimes committed during Apartheid (1948-94) not addressed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. And, as noted in the previous chapter, internal and external investigations have been launched into crimes committed during the Franco regime in a direct challenge to Spain's 1977 amnesty laws.[4] This is not to suggest that justice will necessarily catch up with those Algerian state agents, insurgents and private actors who committed grave crimes against humanity in the 1990s. It is simply to note that, when it comes to mass

---

[3] Foucault (2003: 47-8) actually claimed that Calusewitz's dictum ('war is no more than a continuation of politics') was itself a conscious inversion of 'a sort of thesis ['Politics is the continuation of war by other means'] that had been in circulation since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and which was both diffuse and specific'.
[4] See International Center for Transitional Justice, *ICTJ Transitions*, October 2010: 4-7; International Center for Transitional Justice, *ICTJ Transitions*, November 2010: 4-6.

atrocities and trauma, the historical arc of national reconciliation is often more oblique than contemporary political developments in Algeria otherwise suggest.

The nexus of history and politics, as chapter eight suggested, is vividly illustrated in the legacy of French colonialism and the war of independence, both a source for strong feelings on either side of the Atlantic to date. Which is to say that the interchange of history and politics vis-à-vis the violence of the 1990s is now complicated by its interlocking relationship to similar yet older demands for recognition stemming from French colonialism and the war of independence.[5] Such was clear in the words of the Algerian official noted in chapter eight, the one who dismissed Human Rights Watch's concern about the disappeared of the 1990s given the fact that those unaccounted for after the war of independence figure an order of magnitude higher. Or when Bouteflika alleged 'The Truth Commission would be justified in a relationship of colonizer to colonized, such as France to Algeria'. Putting aside the cynicism such official juxtapositions might provoke, there is an important point being raised in all these assertions. In more nuanced terms, McDougall (2010: 47) has observed,

> In the making of social memory [...], 'history' is a register of concurrent claims to legitimacy and denunciation. Hence the narration of the crisis of the 1990s, and its significance in the longer span of Algerian history, especially, of course, relative to the war of independence and its fragmented inheritances, plays out a reiterated preoccupation with (private or partisan) guarding or preserving and (publicly) proclaiming the 'truth of history,' on the one hand, and simultaneously an incessant evocation of the betrayal, forgetting or irremediable absence of historical truth, on the other.

Those who would seek to make an intervention into Algerian politics in the name of truth, reconciliation and justice would do themselves a favour by first appreciating the politics of history McDougall is outlining. For all of the criticisms of Algeria's national reconciliation

---

[5] This notion of interlocking, and thus mutually enabling/disabling, concurrent claims to history in the context of ongoing political struggle is also instantiated in the case of Israel and the Palestinians. Witness the present-day entanglement of Anglo-French colonialism in the Levant, the Holocaust, the founding of Israel, the displacements of the Palestinians in 1947-48 (*al-Nakbah*) and 1967, and the continuing violence related to the contest between Israel and Palestinian nationalists.

measures, few have taken the time to note the similar measures adopted by the French government following its departure from Algeria, particularly the 1974 blanket amnesty for all crimes committed during the French-Algerian war and the 1982 law that even pardoned the perpetrators of the 1961 *coup d'état* against French President Charles de Gaulle. Adding insult to injury (from a certain Algerian nationalist points of view), the conservative-dominated French parliament passed a law in 2005 insisting that schools and textbooks highlight the 'positive' effects of French colonialism, particularly in North Africa. At the time that the law was passed, Algeria was about to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the 1945 Sétif massacres. And only several years prior, as noted in chapter eight, post-colonial tensions had resurfaced around the memoirs of Ighilahriz and Aussaresses, the response of Massu, and the creation of a holiday in France to celebrate the role of Algerians who helped Paris in the fight against the nationalist insurgency. While French President Nicolas Sarkozy was willing to admit that French colonialism had been 'profoundly unjust' during a November 2007 state visit to Algeria, it was not the formal apology some in Algeria have long waited to hear. Further compounding these interlocking claims of injustice and 'amnesia', both historical and contemporary, is the extent to which Algerian on Algerian violence during the war of independence and its immediate aftermath should likewise factor into our thinking about this problem.

The problem, to make it clear, is that history has not only been an important terrain of the Algerian civil war, history is also space for, and means of, outside intervention. As chapter eight made clear, the historical context and future historiography of the violence has already become a site of struggle and a pathway of foreign involvement. Regarding the latter, the final chapter of this study fixated on the theme of history because of the possibility that foreign actors, whether of their own volition or responding to invitations, will make rhetorical and practical interventions into Algeria's post-conflict environment, especially under the banner of transitional justice and national reconciliation. That history is, and increasingly will become, an important domestic and international terrain of political struggle over late Algerian violence, whether in terms of representation or intervention, reveals the convergence of the political and historical. In this respect, future politiography and historiography of Algerian violence would do well to see their work as intimately intertwined. But this insight also functions as a warning. As McDougall suggested above (see also McDougall 2006a: 1-2), history, like territory, is often

constituted a sovereign, sacrosanct and thus inviolable terrain of Algerian nationalism(s), though it is also one that has been subject to harrowing contestation.[6] Given this recognition of the convergence of the political and historical, and so politiography and historiography, future efforts to represent the violence in Algeria must acknowledge that their interventions are as much political as they are politiographic. The politics of naming violence is not only given by inaccurate inscriptions or hypocritical readings, it is constituted by the act it self. To name is to politicise.

When it comes to questions of the politics of mass violence, national trauma and the tension between claims to memory (both public and private), historiography certainly seems better positioned to offer resources for thinking our way through this impasse in the politics and politiography of the recent conflict in Algeria (as a starting point Torpey 2003; Olick 2007), though this is not to suggest that history, as opposed to other disciplines (e.g., Stover & Weinstein 2004), has a monopoly over these subjects. Yet it seems that both politiography (as established in this study) and historiography have yet to adequately address the phenomena of mass violence. Historical theorist Dominick LaCapra, whose long career has included an extensive engagement with questions of memory[7], representation and atrocity, recently attempted to develop a critique of violence by offering a wide-ranging discussion of several famous interlocutors on the subject.[8] From his readings, LaCapra concluded,

> [...] a key problem for contemporary critical thinking is to attend to various forms, modalities, and constructions of violence as well as to the forces in history that may help limit if not avert the occurrence and to counteract the effects of at least certain forms of violence, notably those involving sacralizing or redemptive valorization, the establishment of oppressive power differentials, and attendant forms of victimization. (LaCapra 2009: 122)

---

[6] In the midst of the international debate surrounding the massacres, Tuquoi recognised in November 1997, 'There will be no international commission of inquiry into the massacres in Algeria. In a country where nationalism is worth more than the truth, it is inconceivable that a foreign team is allowed to come on site to shed light on the killings' (Jean Pierre Tuquoi, 'Algérie, autopsie d'un massacre', Le Monde, 11 November 1997).

[7] See (LaCapra 1996; LaCapra 1998; LaCapra 2001).

[8] Including Émile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt, Frantz Fanon, Jacques Derrida and Slavoj Žižek.

After surveying a century of thought, LaCapra is basically admitting that we have yet to develop the intellectual resources to represent violence in an ameliorative way. One can imagine the obvious critiques that would quickly launch from the civil war and intervention theorists and researchers discussed in chapters three, four, six and seven. Their first claim being that LaCapra is reading the wrong texts and their second being that they have already done all this work, albeit in a far different vocabulary. It is the conclusions of this study, however, that, at least in the case of Algeria, the ways in which politiographers understood the 'forms' and 'modalities' of the violence, as well as the 'forces in history' that enabled it and could disable it, were all problematic, some calling for outright rejection.

If we accept the premise — hopefully vindicated by this study somewhat — that all representations are problematic (i.e., dangerous in Foucault's sense), then the task of politiography cannot be guided simply by the search for more descriptive accuracy, more historical coherency, more theoretical robustness, more articulate models and better empirical methods. One response to Nietzsche's (1992: 516) warning ('only that which has no history is definable') is William James' (1995: 53) call for an ironic attitude towards impasses of thought: 'Make the distinction, and there is no occasion for further dispute'. While the consequent is certainly questionable, the antecedent is important to consider — or, rather, the grounds upon which we make distinctions when confronting impasses of thought. The discourse surrounding the definition of the term civil war and the new war debate described in chapter four are perfect examples. The exclusive historico-ontological framework guiding the discussion has provided the conditions, as Nietzsche would have predicted, for its interminable reproduction and recirculation. Meanwhile, 'All these theories yet the bodies keep piling up'.[9] For all of the work poured into studying mass international violence in the past decade, not once has it been suggested that this prolific discourse is converging on a series of tools to prevent or disrupt civil wars.

---

[9] The phrase is attributed to a sign in Nicholas Wheeler's office (Zalewski 1996: 353); Wheeler is the author of an important work on humanitarian intervention (Wheeler 2000). Zalewski (1996: 352), who invoked this phrase to trouble her colleagues in International Relations and their quibbling over theory, nonetheless limits her intervention's final words to a call for a 'need to re-think the discipline'.

Following Rorty's ethical enhancement of James' insight, our approach should begin with the political and abandon what amounts to a faith that understandings of ontology and history alone will provide such tools for political action. For Rorty (1989) likens the effort to ground knowledge in a 'nonlinguistic' reality to efforts to ground political legitimacy in 'nonhuman authority'. The natural corrective for both, he argues, is democracy. If we are serious about confronting episodes of mass violence and not just documenting them, then we should adopt a politically informed rather than a self-proclaimed apolitical scientific attitude towards politiography and historiography. This entails the explicit acknowledgement that we are making distinctions for political reasons; political in the sense that we do them *despite* history rather than *because* of history. Politics, after all, is already embedded within, for example, representations of atrocity, designations of identity, definitions of war and practices of intervention. Pragmatism only reveals what was already there and then demands that we take responsibility for it. This is not to say that politics is a less contested or less difficult terrain than history; it is to say that the practice of politics, rather than of history, is ostensibly a field in which questions of human needs are supposed to be directly addressed. Whether we choose to reject, embrace or reformulate concepts such as civil war or humanitarianism, our justifications should not be based only on claims of alleged coherence with particular representations of history or the robustness of empirical findings from large number surveys. Rather, such concepts should also be judged in terms of their ability to address the very phenomena they seek to ameliorate.

Politiography in the face of atrocity

Concluding this study is also difficult because it has painstakingly, though not always successfully, avoided the generation of new privileged representations, findings to support existing research agendas or normative insights amenable to either Machiavellian or Grotian knowledges — to raise questions without the assumption that there are always answers. Tying up loose ends is difficult when you have gone to great lengths to unravel everything. To a large degree, unlearning — a notion put forward by Raymond Williams that partially motivated Said's *Orientalism* — is an important aspect of this study. 'We react to danger by attempting to take control', Williams believed (1983[1958]: 336), 'yet still we have to unlearn, as the price of survival, the inherent dominative mode'. Yet it still

seems that much has yet to be unlearned thirty years after *Orientalism* given recent international developments, such as the humanitarianisation of the discourse surrounding the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region, the lack of any effort to rally a similar interventionary force to stop the mass rape and killing in the Democratic Republic of Congo (even after five million reported deaths), the *post hoc* humanitarianisation of the US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the brutal civil war precipitated by the latter. If the reader feels uneasy at this point, then at least one worthwhile effect of this study has been attained.

Leaving Algeria in the summer of 2008, I felt very much unsettled by my experience and that is something I hoped to convey in this study. The Algeria I experienced for several months had, just ten years prior, been in the midst of violence that is unbelievable in its sheer terror and scope, but now seems totally effaced from the physical and, increasingly, political environment. Traces of the horror have been stashed away. One administrator with an Algerian newspaper showed me a portfolio assembled by the Algerian interior ministry in the mid 1990s, which he kept hidden in his desk. The cover read in Arabic and French

waḥshiyyah al-taṭarruf fī al-Jazāʾir

1995

La barbarie de l'extremisme en Algerie [sic]

1995

What followed were photos of severed heads, decapitated or dismembered bodies, gaping throat wounds, charred remains, bloated corpses and matching case details. Men, women, children, infants. The purpose of this folder, I was told, had been to help convince Algerian and foreign journalists that the armed groups were truly immoral.[10] And yet the violence in Algeria would soon reach new depths in the years immediately after those photos were assembled. The spectacular numerical horror of the Mitidja and Relizane massacres, whose visual, aural, nasal and tactile horror was mostly hidden from the outside world, was so

---

[10] Fisk reports being shown this folder too (Robert Fisk, 'Scenes from an unholy war', Independent, 16 April 1995: 4).

disturbing that it briefly brought Algeria to the centre stage of international affairs. Civilians had been literally slaughtered within walking distance from my residence in Algiers; I was a short bus ride from the Mitidja's 'triangle of death' and some of the most famous massacre sites. But by all accounts and by my own experience, Algeria is now a much safer and more stable country than it was ten or twenty years prior. The state does not seem on the verge of collapse (if it ever was) and society is not violently at war with itself; though ostensibly political violence persists, it seems that civilian massacres are a thing of the past for now. Forever, we hope.

That the violence in Algeria has abated despite either a coherent politiography of it or an identifiable, resolute and coordinated international effort to stop it — two observations that occasion this study — could serve as a vague call for better science and clearer rules for international intervention. This, however, would only compound the error. If there is any lesson to be distilled from the international representations and experiences of the last two decades violence in Algeria, it is minimally that utility of abstract models and norms cannot be guaranteed. The politiography of Algerian violence examined in this study suggest that theories of mass violence and algorithms of intervention are not problematised by merely constructing the Algerian case as an outlier, an aberration or uniquely opaque. At every moment possible, this study sought to establish the ways in which the case of Algerian, as produced within the logic of particular discourses on security, elucidated the ways in which various representations of Algerian violence were self-deconstructing. It was not the goal of this study to show the ways in which Algeria empirically challenged particular theories but to show how constructions of Algeria actually challenge the very regimes that produced them.

Realising, however, that we cannot make our way in the world — never mind advance a politics — without engaging in the always-already problematic act of representation, we are faced with the choice of either ignoring the problematics of representation or acknowledging them. As the latter is the more intellectually honest and inter-subjectively accountable option, we then have to ask ourselves this: What would an intentionally pragmatic, ironic or self-aware onto-political account of mass intra-national violence look like? The first danger lies in the initial act of categorisation itself, especially the tendency to reify hypothetical assumptions into ontological realities. Chapter three highlighted this

in the case of rebel agency, chapter four in the case of naming civil wars, chapter five in the case of designating massacre thresholds, chapter seven in the case of drawing the sovereignty/intervention barrier and chapter eight in the case of drawing a priori distinctions between historical and political causes (not to mention economic, social, cultural, etc.).

But it is also important to keep in mind the politics of naming inherent in processes of schematisation. Both realisations suggest that vocabulary is key. Not because the right vocabulary can cure these problems but because we must be conscious of the power of vocabularies to elucidate, produce and address the politics of naming within acts of naming. Prevailing Neoliberal approaches to understanding civil wars, as witnessed in chapters three and four, failed to recognise the historical contingency, political effects and politiographic over-determinations of their own nomenclature, particularly in the uncritical adoption of the term civil war. A critical debate in the future politiography of mass violence will be the interrogation of the term civil war. Chapter four has perhaps made the strongest case for, minimally, a more ironic attitude towards the historical contingency of our use of the term civil war or, better yet, the need to abandon its use.

The problems facing the use of new terminology, on the other hand, were made quite clear in the case of New Wars thinking at the end of chapter four. To borrow a phrase from Žižek, the thesis of New Wars advanced by Kaldor was the right step but in the wrong direction. It acknowledged the need for a new lexicon to guide the politiography of recent mass violence but then justified the case for its adoption on empirical rather than pragmatic grounds. This justificatory framing, in so far as it worked within the vocabulary of prevailing civil war studies, provided Neoliberal critics of New War thinking with ample means to de-legitimate its warrant, predictably on historical and empirical grounds. Instead, New War thinking should have justified its intervention into the politiography of mass violence by demonstrating the simple fact that the theories of war and civil war that we have inherited have yet to provide us with tools to combat these phenomena. Rather than claiming a new ontology of organised violence, New War thinking should have advanced a new vocabulary of violence. That is, rather than proclaiming the arrival New Wars, it would be to herald a new way to speak and think about war. The warrant for this should rest on the grounds that the international community has intellectually and

politically failed to confront the conditions of mass violence since the end of the Cold War and some of its most ugly manifestations, Algeria included.

Throwing out the baby with the bathwater also needs to be avoided. While the study has problematised various discursive interpellations of the violence in Algeria, the purpose was to excavate the politics hidden within them and not to undermine their legitimacy entirely. There has been good research done on civil wars, yet it has so far failed to recognise the politics in which it is embedded and the politics embedded within it. An ironic approach, which would actively embrace rather than passively evade the problematics of representation, would shift the initial terrain of debate to questions of ethics and politics. This, however, should not be understood as a call for the 'politicisation' of research on civil wars and humanitarian intervention, in the sense that governments and international bodies should take control of research agendas or that academic freedom should be curtailed for the sake of a more technocratic elite. This study has striven to demonstrate that politiography is already politicised whether we like it or not, but only so as to encourage politiographers to recognise and take control of the politics of their work. What irony demands is an approach that is simultaneously aware of its politically contingent nature, explicit in terms of its intervention and unequivocal in the ethical basis for it.

International politics in the face of atrocity

The ethical basis for the study of mass intra-national violence, ironic or not, should be clear enough to those already engaged in the politiography of it. At the outset and conclusion of chapter four, some of most disturbing trends in recent civil wars were underscored, such as their increasing proliferation, length and ferocity. In terms of the total cost to humanity, one estimate suggests that at least sixteen million people have died in such conflicts since the end of the Cold War (Regan 2009). Most of the victims appear to be non-combatants and children, such conflicts further impoverish nations and, once a country has experienced internal war, its chances of escaping violence or experiencing repeated episodes are greatly enhanced (see Stern 2002). And yet such statistics and findings often do not capture the complete toll wreaked by other forms of mass intra-

national violence (Hironaka 2005: 3) and, of course, the continuing devastation within the post-conflict environment (Ghobarah *et al.* 2003).

As noted in chapter seven, the most concerted effort to advance a new international paradigm against the perpetration of mass atrocities has been the efforts of the 'Responsibility to Protect' school. Emerging at the end of the interstice between the Cold War and 11 September 2001, proponents of the Responsibility to Protect have attempted a deontological reframing of the debate surrounding humanitarian intervention. Their rhetorical move — from a right to intervene to a responsibility to protect — is a vivid case study in the uses of naming, one that reveals, as good as any, the intimate relationship between language and politics. In practical terms, the idea is to establish a normative framework that operates as kind of checklist for intervention to stop certain forms of mass violence. Unlike the implicit attack upon notions of sovereignty embedded within professions of a right of humanitarian intervention, the Responsibility to Protect cleverly begins with an affirmation of the sovereignty of all states and places the onus of protecting civilians upon the government that claims them. When states fail to protect their citizens, it then becomes incumbent upon international actors to take a series of steps to secure civilians from organised violence, beginning with cooperative efforts to help the government in question meet its obligations. Military confrontation, on the other hand, should be treated as the option of last resort.

The Responsibility to Protect emerges out of a decade of failed or faulty international interventions into various kinds of conflict environments and humanitarian emergencies. Yet as chapter seven established, it is not informed by an analysis of the international response to the massacres in Algeria. Putting aside the *Qui tue?* debate of the massacre, this striking absence from the preparatory work that went into constructing the historical mandate for the Responsibility to Protect is rather conspicuous when we remember that much of the international consternation was driven by the Algerian government's allegedly systematic failure to protect thousands of its citizens from mass slaughter. A provocative thought experiment might consider whether or not the provisions of the Responsibility to Protect regime would have been able to compensate for the international community's apparent failure to affect overtly the violence in Algeria. However, it is not the purpose of this conclusion or this study to refract representations of Algerian violence through the lens

of the Responsibility to Protect. Rather, as was noted in chapter seven, Algeria revealed some of the problems of taking this kind of route. Even before the formulation of the Responsibility to Protect, David Campbell (1998b: 500-1) noted the oddness that would manifest in the deployment of abstract 'normative frameworks' to 'resolve political questions' at the concrete level: 'That a recognition of the complex and politicised nature of disasters gives rise to highly simplified codes, principles, and values as the means to address the politicisation of humanitarianism is more than a little paradoxical'. That Algeria demonstrates the need to appreciate the contingency of such complex phenomena as mass violence — and the international response to it — has hopefully been well demonstrated in this study. To a certain extent, the uneven response of the international community to mass atrocities and humanitarian disasters might already suggest a kind of passive or unconscious sensitivity to the contingency of each episode. Rather than make excuses for it, denounce it as organised hypocrisy or describe it as the effect of discursive forces competing for representational hegemony, an ironic politiography might commence from the premise that contingency is to be expected given the contingency of representation.

If it seems that I am avoiding the question of ethics (i.e., what are the foundations for ethical action after the linguistic turn?), then I have not made the point clear enough. The purpose of an ironic politiography is not to assume that ethics comes before or after representation, whether in the form of philosophical foundations or practical applications. Ethical concerns are central to the kind of politiography I am proposing. The foundation and application of ethical representation should constitute the primary terrain of debate within politiography. Not because ethics or politics guarantees consensus but because the tyranny of representation cannot be fought with counter-representations alone. The representation of politics, like political representation, must be grounded in struggle to expand the scope of democracy.

Bibliography

Newspapers, wire services and magazines

ABC, American Broadcasting Company, television news transcripts 1997-98

AFP, Agence France Presse, French and English (147)

Africa News (1)

Amnesty International, press releases (16)

ANP, Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau, Netherlands (1)

AP, Associated Press (58)

Atlanta Journal-Constitution (1)

Atlantic Monthly (2)

Austrailian (2)

BBC Summary of World Broadcasts / BBC Monitoring Service (28)

BBC News online (1)

Boston Globe (3)

Calgary Herald (4)

CBS, Columbia Broadcasting System, US, television news transcripts 1997-98

Chicago Tribune (1)

Charleston Gazette, USA (2)

CNN, Cable News Network, television news transcripts 1994, 1997-98

Christian Science Monitor (1)

La Croix, France (21)

The Daily Yomiuri (1)

DPA, Deutsche Presse-Agentur (14)

The Economist, United Kingdom (10)

Les Échos, France (1)

Esprit, France (1)

L'Express, France (2)

Le Figaro, France (22)

Financial Times, United Kingdom (10)

Glasgow Herald (1)

Globe and Mail, Canada (1)

Guardian Weekly, United Kingdom (4)

Guardian, United Kingdom (38)

Houston Chronicle (2)

L'Humanité, France (5)

International Herald Tribune (4)

In These Times (1)

The Independent, United Kingdom (28)

Inter Press Service (5)

Irish Times (37)

Jerusalem Post (2)

Libération, France (14)

London Review of Books (1)

Los Angeles Times (4)

M2 Presswire (2)

Middle East Economic Digest (1)

Le Monde, France (58)

Le Monde diplomatique, France (2)

NBC, National Broadcasting Company, US, television news transcripts between 1997-98

New Internationalist (2)

The New Republic, US (2)

New York Post (1)

New York Review of Books (2)

The New York Times, 1990-2003

Newsweek US edition and Newsweek International (9)

Le Nouvel Observateur (3)

NPR, US National Public Radio, news transcripts 1992 (1), 1995 (1) and 1997-98 (various)

The Observer, United Kingdom (18)

On the Issues (1)

El País, Spain (1)

PBS, US Public Broadcasting System, television news transcripts 1997-98

The Philadelphia Inquirer (3)

Le Point, France (12)

Politique Internationale (1)

The Post and Courier, Charleston, South Carolina (1)

Regards, France (1)

Reuters (19)

Rocky Mountain News (1)

San Francisco Chronicle (1)

Seattle Times (1)

Der Spiegel (1)

St. Petersburg Times, Florida (2)

Sud Ouest (9)

Sydney Morning Herald (2)

Time, US (15)

Times Higher Education Supplement (1)

Toronto Star (3)

La Tribune, France (3)

USA Today (4)

Vancouver Sun (1)

de Volkskrant (1)

Washington Post (20)

Washington Times (2)

El Watan, Algiers, archive, Maison de la Presse Tahar Djaout

Books, chapters, journals, other periodicals, reports and documents

Ali-Yahia, A. 2007. *La dignité humaine.* Algiers: INAS Éditions.

Abi-Mershed, O. 1999. The second Algerian crisis, 1992-1994: Algeria in the memory of France. *Arab Studies Journal* 7(1): 8-33.

Aboud, H. 2002. *La mafia des généraux.* Paris: Jean-Claude Lattès.

Adamson, K. 1998. La seconde guerre d'Algérie: The ambivalent nature of the French state's response to the Algerian crisis. *Cambridge review of international affairs* 11(2): 152-166.

Addi, L. 1995. *L'Algérie et la démocratie : Pouvoir et crise du politique dans l'Algérie contemporaine.* Paris: Découverte.

Addi, L. 1998. Algeria's Army, Algeria's Agony. *Foreign Affairs* 77(4): 44-53.

Addi, L. 2006. The political contradictions of Algerian economic reforms. *Review of African political economy* 33(108): 207-217.

Adjerid, A. 1992. *La hogra, ou, L'humiliation du peuple algérien.* Paris: Editions Babylone.

Aggad. 2005. *Overcoming terrorism in Algeria: the Rahma, the Concorde Civile, and now National Reconciliation.* Pretoria: Centre for International Political Case Studies, University of Pretoria.

Aggoun, L and JB Rivoire. 2005. *Françalgérie : crimes et mensonges d'états.* Paris: Découverte.

Aïssaoui, A. 2001. *Algeria: the political economy of oil and gas.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aït-Larbi, M, MS Ait-Belkacem, MA Belaid, MA Nait-Redjam and Y Soltani. 1999. An anatomy of the massacres. In *An inquiry into the Algerian massacres.* Y Bedjaoui, A Aroua and M Aït-Larbi (eds). Geneva: Hoggar: 13-195.

Akacem, M. 2005. The role of external actors in Algeria's transition. *Journal of North African studies* 9(2): 153-168.

Akenhurst, M. 1984. Humanitarian intervention. In *Intervention in World Politics.* H Bull (ed). Oxford: Clarendon: 95-118.

Albert, M, D Jacobson and Y Lapid (eds). 2001. *Identities, borders, orders: rethinking International Relations theory.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Alilat, F and S Hadid. 2002. *Vous ne pouvez pas nous tuer, nous sommes déjà morts: l'Algérie embrasée.* Paris: Éditions N°1.

Amari, C. 2004. Algeria: the utility of terrorism. In *In the shadow of 'just wars': violence, politics and humanitarian action.* F Weissman (ed). Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 247-266.

Amnesty International. 1993. *Algeria: deteriorating human rights under the state of emergency.* London: Amnesty International.

Amnesty International. 1994. *Algeria: repression and violence must end.* London: Amnesty International.

Amnesty International. 1996. *Algeria: fear and silence: a hidden human rights crisis.* London: Amnesty International.

Amnesty International. 1997. *Algeria: civilian population caught in a spiral of violence.* London: Amnesty International.

Amnesty International. 1998. *Algeria: UN Panel report a whitewash on human rights.* London: Amnesty International.

Amnesty International. 2000. *Algeria: truth and justice obscured by the shadow of impunity.* London: Amnesty International.

Amnesty International. 2009. *A legacy of impunity: a threat to Algeria's future.* London: Amnesty International.

Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.* Revised edition. New York: Verso.

Anderson, L. 1997. Prospects for Liberalism in North Africa: identities and interests in preindustrial welfare states. In *Islam, democracy and the state in North Africa.* JP Entelis (ed). Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 127-140.

Annan, KA. 2000. *'We the Peoples': the role of the United Nations in the 21st century.* New York: United Nations.

Arnould, V. 2007. Amnesty, peace and reconciliation in Algeria. *Conflict, security & development* 7(2): 227-253.

Arnson, C and IW Zartman (eds). 2005. *Rethinking the economics of war: the intersection of need, creed, and greed.* Washington, DC, and Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press.

Asad, T (ed). 1973. *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter.* London: Ithaca Press.

Ashley, R and RBJ Walker. 1990. Conclusion: reading dissidence/writing the discipline: crisis and the question of sovereignty in international studies. *International studies quarterly* 34(3): 367-416.

Ashley, RK. 1981. Political realism and human interests. *International studies quarterly* 25(2): 204-236.

Ashley, RK. 1986. The Poverty of neorealism. In *Neorealism and its critics.* RO Keohane (ed). New York: Columbia University Press: 255-300.

Ashour, O. 2008. *Islamist de-radicalization in Algeria: successes and failures.* Washington, DC: Middle East Institute.

Aussaresses, P. 2002. *The battle of the Casbah: terrorism and counter-terrorism in Algeria, 1955-1957.* Translated by RL Miller. New York: Enigma Books.

Ayoob, M. 2008. *The many faces of political Islam: religion and politics in the Muslim world.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Badie, B. 1992. *L'Etat importé.* Paris: Fayard.

Badie, B. 2000. *The imported state: the Westernization of the political order.* Translated by C Royal. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bailey, SD. 1996. *Humanitarian intervention in the internal affairs of states.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Balch-Lindsay, D, AJ Enterline and KA Joyce. 2008. Third-party intervention and the civil war process. *Journal of peace research* 45(3): 354-363.

Ballentine, K and J Sherman (eds). 2003. *The political economy of armed conflict: beyond greed and grievance.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Barnett, MN and TG Weiss (eds). 2008. *Humanitarianism in question: politics, power, ethics.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Bartelson, J. 1995. *A genealogy of sovereignty.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bass, GJ. 2008. *Freedom's battle: the origins of humanitarian intervention.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Beblawi, H and G Luciani (eds). 1987. *The rentier state.* London: Croom Helm.

Bedjaoui, Y. 1999. On the Politics of the Massacres. In *An Inquiry into the Algerian massacres.* Y Bedjaoui, A Aroua and M Aït-Larbi (eds). Geneva: Hoggar: 305-372.

Bedjaoui, Y, A Aroua and M Aït-Larbi (eds). 1999. *An inquiry into the Algerian massacres.* Geneva: Hoggar.

Belaala, S. 2008. *Ethnicité, nationalisme et radicalisation islamiste violente. Etude culturelle du djihadisme en Algérie (1989-2007).* Paris: PhD thesis, Centre d'études et de recherches internationales, Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris.

Belloula, N. 2000. *Algérie, le massacre des innocents.* Paris: Fayard.

Bennison, AK. 1998. Opposition and accommodation to French colonialism in early 19th century Algeria. *Cambridge review of international affairs* 11(2): 99-116.

Bennoune, M. 1988. *The making of contemporary Algeria, 1830-1987: colonial upheavals and post-independence development.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bensmaïa, R. 1997. The phantom mediators: reflections on the nature of the violence in Algeria. Translated by H Melehy. *Diacritics* 27(2): 85-97.

Bensmaïa, R. 2003. *Experimental nations, or, The invention of the Maghreb.* Translated by A Waters. Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Benyamina, A. 1998. Foreign interference in the situation in Algeria: the Algerian government's position. *Cambridge review of international affairs* 11(2): 184-196.

Berdal, M and DM Malone (eds). 2000. *Greed and grievance: economic agendas in civil wars.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Bhabha, HK. 1994. *The location of culture.* London: Routledge.

Bhatia, MV. 2005. Fighting words: naming terrorists, bandits, rebels and other violent actors. *Third world quarterly* 26(1): 5-22.

Bieler, A and AD Morton. 2001. The gordian knot of agency-structure in International Relations: A neo-Gramscian perspective. *European journal of International Relations* 7(1): 5.

Bleiker, R. 2000. *Popular dissent, human agency, and global politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bonora-Waisman, C. 2003. *France and the Algerian conflict: issues in democracy and political stability, 1988-1995.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Booth, K (ed). 2005. *Critical security studies and world politics.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Bouandel, Y. 2002. Algeria: A controversial election. *Mediterranean politics* 7(2): 96-104.

Boubeker, A. 2008. *Salafism and radical politics in postconflict Algeria.* Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Boukra, L. 2002. *Algérie : la terreur sacrée.* Lausanne: Favre.

Boumezbar, A and A Djamila. 2002. *L'islamisme algérien : de la genèse au terrorisme.* Algiers: Chihab.

Brahimi, A. 1998. Political turmoil in Algeria. *Cambridge review of international affairs* 12(1): 247-262.

Brown, ME (ed). 1996. *The international dimensions of internal conflict.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Brunnschweiler, CN and EH Bulte. 2009. Natural resources and violent conflict: resource abundance, dependence, and the onset of civil wars. *Oxford economic papers* 61(4): 651-674.

Bull, H (ed). 1984. *Intervention in world politics.* Oxford: Clarendon.

Burgat, F. 1997. *The Islamic Movement in North Africa.* Translated by W Dowell. Austin, Texas: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas.

Burgess, JP. 2002. Ethics of humanitarian intervention: The circle closes. *Security dialogue* 33: 261-264.

Butler, J. 2006. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. Second edition. London: Routledge.

Butler, J. 2009. *Frames of war: when is life grievable?* New York: Verso.

Buzan, B, O Wæver and J de Wilde. 1998. *Security: a new framework for analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Callies de Salies, B. 1997. Les luttes de clan exacerbent la guerre civile. *Le Monde diplomatique* October: 1, 12-13.

Campbell, D. 1992. *Writing security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Campbell, D. 1998a. *National deconstruction: violence, identity, and justice in Bosnia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Campbell, D. 1998b. Why fight: humanitarianism, principles, and post-structuralism. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 27(3): 497-522.

Campbell, D. 2003. Salgado and the Sahel: documentary photography and the imaging of famine. In *Rituals of Mediation: International Politics and Social Meaning*. F Debrix and C Weber (eds). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 69-96.

Campbell, D. 2005. Beyond Choice: The onto-politics of critique. *International relations* 19(1): 127-134.

Carlier, O. 1995. *Entre nation et jihad : histoire sociale des radicalismes algériens*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Politiques.

Carlier, O. 1998. D'une guerre à l'autre, le redéploiement de la violence entre soi. *Confluences méditerranée* Spring: 123 - 137.

Carlier, O. 1999. Guerre civile, violence intime and socialisation culturelle. In *Guerres civiles: Economies de la violence, dimensions de la civilité*. J Hannoyer (ed). Paris: Karthala: 69-104.

Carlier, O. 2002. Civil war, private violence, and cultural socialization: Political violence in Algeria (1954-1988). In *Algeria in others' languages*. A-E Berger (ed). Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press: 81-106.

Carlsnaes, W. 1992. The agency-structure problem in foreign policy analysis. *International studies quarterly* 36(3): 245-270.

Cavatorta, F. 2002. The failed liberalisation of Algeria and the international context: a legacy of stable authoritarianism. *Journal of North African studies* 7(4): 23-43.

Cavatorta, F. 2009. *The international dimension of the failed Algerian transition. Democracy betrayed?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Chagnollaud, JP and Y Haroun. 1998. J'en veux à mourir à ceux qui sont responsables. Entretien avec le capitaine Haroun. *Confluences méditerranée* Spring: 253-257.

Chandler, D. 2006. *From Kosovo to Kabul: human rights and international intervention.* New edition. London: Pluto Press.

Charef, A. 1998. *Algerie : autopsie d'un massacre.* La Tour d'Aigues: Aube.

Chasdi, RJ. 2002. *Tapestry of terror: a portrait of Middle East terrorism, 1994-1999.* Lexington.

Chatterjee, P. 1986. *Nationalist thought and the colonial world: a derivative discourse.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cheriet, B. 2004. Gender as a catalyst of social and political representations in Algeria. *Journal of North African studies* 9(2): 93-101.

Chopra, J and TG Weiss. 1992. Sovereignty is no longer sacrosanct: codifying humanitarian intervention. *Ethics & international affairs* 6(1): 95-117.

Chowdhry, G and S Nair (eds). 2004. *Power, postcolonialism, and international relations: reading race, gender, and class.* London: Routledge.

Clodfelter, M. 2002. *Warfare and armed conflicts: a statistical reference to casualty and other figures, 1500-2000.* Second edition. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Collectif des familles de disparu(e)s en Algérie. 2004. *Les disparitions forcées en Algérie. Dossier n°3.* Algiers: Collectif des familles de disparu(e)s en Algérie.

Collier, C and A Hoeffler. 1998. On economic causes of civil war. *Oxford economic papers* 50(4): 563-73.

Collier, P and A Hoeffler. 1999. *Justice-seeking and loot-seeking in civil war.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

Collier, P and A Hoeffler. 2000. *Greed and grievance in civil war.* Washington, DC: World Bank Development Research Group.

Collier, P and A Hoeffler. 2004. Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford economic papers* 56(4): 563-595.

Collier, P and A Hoeffler. 2005. Resource rents, governance, and conflict. *Journal of conflict resolution* 49(4): 625-633.

Collier, P and N Sambanis. 2002. Understanding civil war: a new agenda. *Journal of conflict resolution* 46(1): 3-12.

Collier, P and N Sambanis. 2005. Preface. In *Understanding civil war: evidence and analysis, Vol. 1—Africa.* P Collier and N Sambanis (eds). Washington, DC: World Bank: xiii-xv.

Collier, P. 2000. Rebellion as a quasi-criminal activity. *Journal of conflict resolution* 44: 839-853.

Collier, P, A Hoeffler & M Söderbom. 2001. *On the duration of civil war.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

Collier, P, A Hoeffler and D Rohner. 2008. Beyond greed and grievance: feasibility and civil war. *Oxford economic papers* 61(1): 1-27.

Collier, P, A Hoeffler and M Söderbom. 2004. On the duration of civil war. *Journal of peace research* 41(3): 253-73.

Connolly, WE. 1995. *The ethos of pluralization.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cook, D. 2005. *Understanding Jihad.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cramer, C. 2002. Homo economicus goes to war: methodological individualism, rational choice and the political economy of war. *World Development* 30(11): 1845-1864.

Crenshaw, M. 1994. Political violence in Algeria. *Terrorism and political violence* 6(3): 261-280.

Darbouche, H and YH Zoubir. 2009. The Algerian crisis in European and US foreign policies: a hindsight analysis. *Journal of North African studies* 14(1): 33-55.

Darby, P. 2000. *At the edge of International Relations: postcolonialism, gender and dependency.* Cambridge: Continuum.

Davies, JC. 1962. Toward a theory of revolution. *American sociological review* 27(1): 5-19.

Debrix, F. 1999. *Re-envisioning peacekeeping: the United Nations and the mobilization of ideology.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Der Derian, J and MJ Shapiro (eds). 1989. *International/intertextual relations: postmodern readings of world politics.* Lexington: Lexington Books.

Der Derian, J. 1987. *On diplomacy: a genealogy of Western estrangement.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Der Derian, J. 1992. *Antidiplomacy. Spies, speed, terror and war.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Der Derian, J. 2001. *Virtuous war: mapping the military-industrial-media-entertainment network.* Oxford: Westview.

Der Derian, J. 2005. Imaging terror: logos, pathos and ethos. *Third World quarterly* : 23-37.

Derradji, A. 2002. *A concise history of political violence in Algeria, 1954-2000: brothers in faith, enemies in arms*. Two Volumes. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press.

Derrida, J. 2003. Taking a stand for Algeria. *College literature* 30(1): 115-123.

Dessler, D. 1989. What's at stake in the agent-structure debate? *International organization* 43(3): 441-473.

Dillman, B. 2007. Illicit economies and reconstruction in Iraq, Palestine and Algeria. In *Rebuilding devastated economies in the Middle East.* L Binder (ed). New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 55-76.

Dillman, BL. 2000a. Parliamentary elections and the prospects for political pluralism in North Africa. *Government and opposition* 35(2): 211-236.

Dillman, BL. 2000b. *State and private sector in Algeria: the politics of rent-seeking and failed development.* Oxford: Westview.

Dillman, BL. 2001. Round up the unusual suspects: US policy toward Algeria and its Islamists. *Middle East policy* 8(3): 126-143.

Dillon, M. 1996. *Politics of Security: Towards a Political Philosophy of Continental Thought.* London: Routledge.

do Céu Pinto, M. 1998. European and American responses to the Algerian crisis. *Mediterranean politics* 3(3): 63-80.

Dodds, K and A Ingram. 2009. *Spaces of security and insecurity: geographies of the war on terror.* Burlington: Ashgate.

Doty, RL. 1993. Foreign policy as social construction: a post-positivist analysis of US counterinsurgency policy in the philippines. *International studies quarterly* 37(3): 297-320.

Doty, RL. 1996. *Imperial encounters: the politics of representation in North-South relations.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Doty, RL. 1997. Aporia: a critical exploration of the agent-structure problematique in International Relations theory. *European journal of International Relations* 3(3): 365-392.

Doy, G. 2002. *Drapery: classicism and barbarism in visual culture.* London: IB Tauris.

Duffield, MR. 1998. Post-modern conflict: warlords, post-adjustment states and private protection. *Civil wars* 1(1): 65-102.

Duffield, MR. 2001. *Global governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security.* London: Zed.

Duyvesteyn, I and J Angstrom (eds). 2005. *Rethinking the nature of war.* London: Frank Cass.

Eckhardt, W. 1996. Wars and war-related deaths, 1900–1995. In *World military and social expenditures 1996.* Sixteenth edition. RL Sivard (ed). Washington, DC: World Priorities: 17-19.

Edkins, J. 1999. *Poststructuralism and International Relations: bringing the political back in.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Edkins, J. 2002. *Whose hunger?: concepts of famine, practices of aid.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Edward, R. 1988. *Wars of the third kind: conflict in underdeveloped countries.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Elbadawi, E and N Sambanis. 2000. Why are there so many civil wars in Africa? Understanding and preventing violent conflict. *Journal of African economies* 9(3): 244-269.

Elbadawi, IA and N Sambanis. 2000. *External interventions and the duration of civil wars.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

Ellyas-Belkaïd, A and J-P Peyroulou. 2002. *L'Algérie en guerre civile.* Calmann-Levy.

Enloe, CH. 2000. *Bananas, beaches and bases: making feminist sense of international politics.* Updated edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Entelis, JP. 2005. The democratic imperative vs. the authoritarian impulse: the Maghrib state between transition and terrorism. *Middle East journal* 59(4): 537-558.

Evans, G. 2008. The responsibility to protect: an idea whose time has come ... and gone? *International relations* 22(3): 283-289.

Evans, M and J Phillips. 2008. *Algeria: anger of the dispossessed.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Étienne, B. 1997. La nouvelle bataille d'Alger. *Revue des deux mondes* (9): 104-119.

Fearon, J and A Wendt. 2002. Rationalism v. constructivism: a skeptical view. In *Handbook of International Relations.* W Carlsnaes, T Risse and B Simmons (eds). London: SAGE: 52-72.

Fearon, JD & DD Laitin. 2001. Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American Political Science Association.* San Francisco: Annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Fearon, JD and DD Laitin. 2003. Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American political science review* 91(1): 75-90.

Fearon, JD and DD Laitin. 2006. *Algeria.* Unpublished paper cited with permission. Stanford: Stanford University.

Fearon, JD. 1991. Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science. *World Politics* 43(2): 169-195.

Fearon, JD. 2004. Why do some civil wars last so much longer than others? *Journal of peace research* 41(3): 275-301.

Fearon, JD. 2005. Primary commodity exports and civil war. *Journal of conflict resolution* 49(4): 483.

Feraoun, M. 2000. *Journal, 1955-1962: reflections on the French-Algerian war.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Fierke, KM and KE Jørgensen (eds). 2001. *Constructing international relations: the next generation.* Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.

Finnemore, M. 1996. *National interests in international society.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Foucault, M and P Rabinow. 1984. Polemics, politics and problematizations. In *The Foucault reader.* P Rabinow (ed). New York: Pantheon Books: 318-390.

Foucault, M. 1972. *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language.* New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, M. 1988. *Politics, philosophy, culture: interviews and other writings, 1977-1984.* Translated by A Sheridan. London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. 2003. *Society must be defended: lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76.* Translated by D Macey. New York: Picador.

Freeman, M. 2006. *Truth commissions and procedural fairness.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fukuyama, F. 1992. *The end of history and the last man.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Fuller, GE. 1996. *Algeria: the next fundamentalist state?* Santa Monica, California: Rand.

Gacemi, B. 2006. *I, Nadia, wife of a terrorist.* Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press.

Gawande, A. 2004. Casualties of war — military care for the wounded from iraq and afghanistan. *New England journal of medicine* 351(24): 2471-2475.

George, J. 1994. *Discourses of global politics: a critical (re) introduction to International Relations.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Gera, G. 1995. *An Islamic republic of Algeria? Implications for the Middle East and the West.* Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Gerges, FA. 2005. *The far enemy: Why Jihad went global.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ghani, A and C Lockhart. 2008. *Fixing failed states: a framework for rebuilding a fractured world.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ghobarah, H, P Huth and B Russett. 2003. Civil wars kill and maim people, long after the fighting stops. *American political science review* 97(2): 189-202.

Giddens, A. 1979. *Central problems in social theory: action, structure and contradiction in social analysis.* London: Macmillan.

Gleditsch, NP, P Wallensteen, M Erikson, M Sollenberg and H Strand. 2002. Armed conflict, 1945-99: a new dataset. *Journal of peace research* 39(5): 615-637.

Goldhagen, DJ. 2009. *Worse than war: genocide, eliminationism, and the ongoing assault on humanity.* New York: Public Affairs.

Goodman, N. 1960. The way the world is. *The Review of Metaphysics* 14(1): 48-56.

Gould, HD. 1998. What is at stake in the agent-structure debate? In *International Relations in a constructed world.* V Kubálková, NG Onuf and P Kowert (eds). Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe: 79-98.

Grandguillaume, G. 1995. Comment a-t-on pu en arriver là? *Esprit* (1): 12-34.

Grandguillaume, G (ed). 1998. *Les violences en Algérie.* Paris: Editions Odile Jacob.

Gray, CH. 1997. *Postmodern war: the new politics of conflict.* New York: Guilford Press.

Grovogui, SN. 2006. *Beyond Eurocentrism and anarchy: memories of international order and institutions.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Güney, A and A Çelenk. 2007. The European Union's democracy promotion policies in Algeria: success or failure? *Journal of North African studies* 12(1): 109-128.

Haddour, A. 2000. *Colonial myths: history and narrative.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hadj Moussa, R. 2004. The imaginary concord and the reality of discord: dealing with the Algerian civil war. *Arab world geographer* 7(3): 135-149.

Hafez, MM. 2000. Armed Islamist movements and political violence in Algeria. *Middle East journal* 54(4): 572-591.

Hafez, MM. 2004. From marginalization to massacres: A political process explanation of GIA violence in Algeria. In *Islamic Activism: a social movement theory approach.* Q Wiktorowicz (ed). Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 37-60.

Hafez, MM. 2005. A tragedy of errors: thwarted democratization and Islamist violence in Algeria. In *Democratic development and political terrorism: the global perspective.* W Crotty (ed). Boston: Northeastern University Press: 301-333.

Hall, S. 1996. Introduction: who needs 'identity'? In *Questions of cultural identity.* S Hall and P Du Gay (eds). London: SAGE: 1-17.

Hamadouche, M. 2004. *Affaires d'état : interviews.* Algiers: Chihab éditions.

Hansen, L. 2006. *Security as practice: discourse analysis and the Bosnian war.* London: Routledge.

Harbi, M, R Dhoquois-Cohen and B Ravenel. 1998. Une exigence : la transparence. *Confluences méditerranée* Spring: 167-173.

Harbom, L, E Melander and P Wallensteen. 2008. Dyadic dimensions of armed conflict, 1946-2007. *Journal of peace research* 45(5): 697-710.

Hay, C and D Wincott. 1998. Structure, agency and historical institutionalsim. *Political studies* XLVI: 951-957.

Hayner, PB. 1994. Fifteen truth commissions — 1974 to 1994: a comparative study. *Human rights quarterly* 16(4): 597-655.

Hegre, H. 2004. The duration and termination of civil war. *Journal of peace research* 41(3): 243-252.

Hegre, H, T Ellingsen, S Gates and NP Gleditsch. 2001. Toward a democratic civil peace? Democracy, political change, and civil war, 1816-1992. *American political science review* 95(1): 33-48.

Henderson, EA and JD Singer. 2000. Civil War in the Post-Colonial World, 1946-92. *Journal of peace research* 37(3): 275-299.

Henderson, EA and JD Singer. 2002. 'New wars' and rumors of 'new wars'. *International interactions* 28(2): 165-190.

Henry, CM. 2004. Algeria's agonies: oil rent effects in a bunker state. *Journal of North African studies* 9(2): 68-81.

Heristchi, C. 2004. The Islamist discourse of the FIS and the democratic experiment in Algeria. *Democratization* 11(4): 111-132.

Hill, C and KE Smith. 2000. *European foreign policy: key documents.* London: Routledge.

Hill, JNC. 2009. *Identity in Algerian politics: the legacy of colonial rule.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Hironaka, A. 2005. *Neverending wars: the international community, weak states, and the perpetuation of civil war.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Hirshleifer, J. 2001. *The dark side of the force: Economic foundations of conflict theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hodd, M. 2004. Algeria: Economic Structure, Performance and Policy, 1950-2001. In *Algeria in Transition: Reforms and Development Prospects.* A Aghrout and R Bougherira (eds). London: RoutledgeCurzon: 35-57.

Holsti, KJ. 1996. *The state, war, and the state of war.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Holzgrefe, JL and RO Keohane (eds). 2003. *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Horne, A. 2002. *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962.* Revised edition. London: Pan Books.

Howarth, DR and AJ Norval. 2000. Introducing discourse theory and political analysis. In *Discourse theory and political analysis: identities, hegemonies, and social change.* DR Howarth, AJ Norval and Y Stavrakakis (eds). Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press: 1-23.

Human Rights Watch. 1992. *World report 1993.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 1994. *World report 1995.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 1996. *World report 1997.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 1997a. *World report 1997.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 1997b. *Algeria: Elections in the Shadow of Violence and Repression.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 1998. *Algeria's human rights crisis.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 1999. *World Report 1999.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 2001. World Report 2000. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 2003. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 2005. *Impunity in the name of reconciliation: Algerian President's peace plan faces national vote September 29.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

Human Rights Watch. 2010. *World report 2010.* New York: Human Rights Watch.

Hume, CR. 2006. *Mission to Algiers: diplomacy by engagement.* Lanham: Lexington Books.

Humphreys, M. 2005. Natural resources, conflict, and conflict resolution: uncovering the mechanisms. *Journal of conflict resolution* 49(4): 509-537.

Huntington, SP. 1991. Democracy's third wave. *Journal of Democracy* 2(2): 12-34.

Huntington, SP. 1992. The clash of civilizations? *Foreign affairs* 72(3): 22-49.

Ighilahriz, L and A Nivat. 2001. *Algérienne.* Paris: Fayard.

International Center for Transitional Justice. 2005. *Annual Report 2004/2005.* New York: International Center for Transitional Justice.

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. 2001. *The responsibility to protect: report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.* Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

International Crisis Group. 2000. *The Algerian crisis: not over yet.* Brussels: International Crisis Group.

International Crisis Group. 2001a. *The Civil Concord: a peace initiative wasted.* Brussels: International Crisis Group.

International Crisis Group. 2001b. *Algeria's Economy: the vicious circle of oil and violence.* Brussels: International Crisis Group.

Izel, B, JS Wafa and W Isaac. 1999. What is the GIA? In *An inquiry into the Algerian massacres.* Y Bedjaoui, A Aroua and M Aït-Larbi (eds). Geneva: Hoggar: 373-454.

Jackson, RH. 1993. *Quasi-states: sovereignty, international relations, and the Third World.* New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

James, W. 1995. What pragmatism means. In *Pragmatism: a contemporary reader.* RB Goodman (ed). New York: Routledge: 53-65.

Joffé, GE. 2002. The role of violence within the Algerian economy. *Journal of North African studies* 7(1): 29-52.

Joffé, GE. 2005. Algeria: recovery or stagnation. *Middle East international* 1(752): http://meionline.com/features/print368.shtml, on file with author.

Joffé, GE. 2008. National reconciliation and general amnesty in Algeria. *Mediterranean politics* 13(2): 213–228.

Johnstone, D. 2000. The French media and the Kosovo war. In *Degraded capability: the media and the Kosovo crisis.* P Hammond and ES Herman (eds). London: Pluto: 141-152.

Jung, D (ed). 2003. *Shadow globalization, ethnic conflicts and new wars: a political economy of intra-state war.* London: Routledge.

Kaldor, M and B Vashee (eds). 1997. *Restructuring the global military sector: New wars.* London: Pinter.

Kaldor, M. 2005. Elaborating the 'New War' thesis. In *Rethinking the nature of war.* I Duyvesteyn and J Angstrom (eds). London: Frank Cass: 210-224.

Kaldor, M. 2007. *New and Old Wars: organized violence in a global era.* Second edition. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kalyvas, SN. 1999. Wanton and senseless?: the logic of massacres in Algeria. *Rationality and society* 11(3): 243-286.

Kalyvas, SN. 2001. 'New' and 'old' civil wars: a valid distinction? *World politics* 54: 99-118.

Kalyvas, SN. 2006. *The logic of violence in civil war.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kalyvas, SN. 2008. Ethnic defection in civil war. *Comparative political studies* 41(8): 1043-1068.

Kaplan, R. 1998. The Libel of Moral Equivalence. *The Atlantic Monthly* 282(2): 18-28.

Kaplan, RD. 1994. The coming anarchy: how scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet. *The Atlantic Monthly.* February: http: //www.theatlantic.com/doc/print/199402/anarchy, accessed June 2010.

Katzenstein, P. 1996. *The culture of national security: norms and identity in world politics.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Katzenstein, P, RO Keohane and SD Krasner. 1998. International organization and the study of world politics. *International organization* 52(4): 645-685.

Keen, D. 1998. *The economic functions of violence in civil wars.* Oxford: Oxford University Press and the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Keenan, JH. 2006. Security and insecurity in North Africa. *Review of African political economy* (108): 269-296.

Kemp, MA. 2008. Re-readings of the Algerian war during the US 'war on terror'. Between recognition and denial. *Journal of European studies* 38(2): 157-175.

Kendall, G and G Wickham. 1999. *Using Foucault's methods.* London: SAGE.

Kepel, G. 2006. *Jihad: The trail of political Islam.* Translated by AF Roberts. Fourth edition. London: IB Tauris.

Khadra, Y. 1998. *Les agneaux du Seigneur.* Paris: Julliard.

Khelladi, A and M Virolle. 1995. Les démocrates algériens ou l'indisensable clarification. *Le Temps modernes* No. 580: 177-195.

Khelladi, A. 2002. *Le Fis à l'assaut du pouvoir.* Algiers: Marsa.

Klein, BS. 1994. *Strategic studies and world order: the global politics of deterrence.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Klein, N. 2007. *The shock doctrine: the rise of disaster capitalism.* New York: Metropolitan.

Klotz, A. 2006. Moving beyond the agent-structure debate. *International studies review* 8(2): 355-355.

Kouaouci, A. 2004. Population transitions, youth unemployment, postponement of marriage and violence in Algeria. *Journal of North African studies* 9(2): 28-45.

Krasner, SD. 1999. *Sovereignty: organized hypocrisy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kratochwil, F. 1989. *Rules, norms, and decisions: on the conditions of practical and legal reasoning in International Relations and domestic affairs.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Krause, K and MC Williams (eds). 1997. *Critical security studies: concepts and cases.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Krishna, S. 1999. *Postcolonial insecurities: India, Sri Lanka, and the question of nationhood.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Labat, S. 1995. *Les Islamistes algériens : entre les urnes et le maquis.* Paris: Seuil.

LaCapra, D. 1996. *Representing the Holocaust: history, theory, trauma.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

LaCapra, D. 1998. *History and memory after Auschwitz.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

LaCapra, D. 2001. *Writing history, writing trauma.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

LaCapra, D. 2009. *History and its limits: human, animal, violence.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Lacina, B and NP Gleditsch. 2005. Monitoring trends in global combat: a new dataset of battle deaths. *European journal of population* 21: 145-166.

Lacina, B. 2004. From side show to centre stage: civil conflict after the cold war. *Security dialogue* 35(2): 191-205.

Lacina, B. 2006. Explaining the severity of civil wars. *Journal of conflict resolution* 50(2): 276-289.

Laclau, E and C Mouffe. 2001. *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics.* Second edition. London: Verso.

Layachi, A. 1995. Reinstating the state or instating civil society: the dilemma of Algeria's transition. In *Collapsed States: The disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority.* IW Zartman (ed). Boulder: Lynne Rienner: 171-189.

Lazreg, M. 1994. *The eloquence of silence: Algerian women in question.* London: Routledge.

Lazreg, M. 1998. Islamism and the recolonization of Algeria. *Arab studies quarterly* 20(2): 43-58.

Lazreg, M. 2008. *Torture and the twilight of empire: from Algiers to Baghdad.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Le Billon, P. 2001. The political ecology of war: natural resources and armed conflict. *Political geography* 20(5): 561-584.

Le Sueur, JD. 2005. *Uncivil war: intellectuals and identity politics during the decolonization of Algeria.* Second edition. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press.

Leca, J. 1995. Crise algérienne: Le Point de vue d'un acteur politique: la Recherche d'une voie constitutionnelle. *Maghreb-Machrek* (149): 23-26.

Leitenberg, M. 2003. *Death in wars and conflicts between 1945 and 2000.* Ithaca, NY: Peace Studies Program, Cornell University.

Leveau, R (ed). 1995. *L'Algérie dans la guerre.* Bruxelles: Editions Complexe.

Levene, M. 2008. *The meaning of genocide.* London: I.B.Tauris.

Levy, J and G Goertz (eds). 2007. *Explaining war and peace: case studies and necessary condition counterfactuals.* London: Routledge.

Lewis, B. 2003. *The crisis of Islam: Holy war and unholy terror.* New York: Modern Library.

Licklider, R. 1993a. How Civil Wars End: Questions and Methods. In *Stopping the killing: how civil wars end.* R Licklider (ed). New York: New York University Press: 3-19.

Licklider, R (ed). 1993b. *Stopping the killing: how civil wars end.* New York: New York University Press.

Licklider, R. 1995. The consequences of negotiated settlements in civil wars, 1945-1993. *The American political science review* 89(3): 681-690.

Lipschutz, RD (ed). 1995. *On security.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Little, R. 1975. *Intervention: external involvement in civil wars.* London: Martin Robertson.

Lloyd, C. 1986. *Explanation in social history.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Lloyd, C. 2003. *Mutli-causal conflict in Algeria: National identity, inequality and political Islam.* Queen Elizabeth House Working Paper 104. Oxford: Department of International Development, University of Oxford.

Loomba, A. 1998. *Colonialism/postcolonialism.* London: Routledge.

Lowi, MR. 2004. Oil rents and political breakdown in patrimonial states: Algeria in comparative perspective. *Journal of North African studies* 9(3): 83-102.

Lowi, MR. 2005. Algeria, 1992-2002: Anatomy of a civil war. In *Understanding civil war: evidence and analysis.* P Collier and N Sambanis (eds). Washington, DC: World Bank: 221-246.

Lowi, MR. 2007. War-torn or systemically distorted?: rebuilding the Algerian economy. In *Rebuilding war-torn economies in the Middle East and North Africa.* L Binder (ed). New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 127-152.

Lowi, MR. 2009. *Oil wealth and the poverty of politics: Algeria compared.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lujala, P, NP Gleditsch and E Gilmore. 2005. A diamond curse?: civil war and a lootable resource. *Journal of conflict resolution* 49(4): 538-562.

Lujala, P. 2010. The spoils of nature: armed civil conflict and rebel access to natural resources. *Journal of peace research* 47(1): 15 -28.

Lyons, GM and M Mastanduno. 1995. *Beyond Westphalia? State sovereignty and international intervention.* Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Maalouf, A. 2003. *In the name of identity: violence and the need to belong.* New York: Penguin.

Malley, R. 1996. *The call from Algeria: third worldism, revolution, and the turn to Islam.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Malmvig, H. 2006. *State sovereignty and intervention: a discourse analysis of interventionary and non-interventionary practices in Kosovo and Algeria.* London: Routledge.

Malti, D. 1999. *La nouvelle guerre d'Algérie : dix clés pour comprendre.* Paris: Découverte.

Mamdani, M. 2001. *When victims become killers: colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mamdani, M. 2004. *Good Muslim, bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the roots of terror.* New York: Pantheon.

Mamdani, M. 2007. The politics of naming: genocide, civil war, insurgency. *London Review of Books* 29(5): 5-8.

Mamdani, M. 2009. *Saviors and survivors: Darfur, politics, and the war on terror.* New York: Pantheon.

Martinez, L. 1995. *Les groupes islamistes entre guerilla et négoce : vers une consolidation du régime algérien.* Paris: Les Etudes du CERI.

Martinez, L. 1996. Algérie : terrorismes et guerre civile. *Confluences méditerranée* Winter: 33-41.

Martinez, L. 1998. *La guerre civile en Algérie, 1990-1998.* Paris: Karthala.

Martinez, L. 2000a. *The Algerian Civil War, 1990-1998.* Translated by J Derrick. New York: Columbia University Press.

Martinez, L. 2000b. Algérie : les étapes de la réconciliation nationale. In *Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord.* Paris: CNRS:

Martinez, L. 2001. Algérie : les massacres de civils dans la guerre. *Revue internationale de politique comparée* 8(1): 43-58.

Martinez, L. 2003. Le cheminement singulier de la violence islamiste en Algérie. *Critique internationale* (20): 165-177.

Martinez, L. 2004. Why the violence in Algeria? *Journal of North African studies* 9(2): 14-27.

Martinez, L. 2007. The distinctive development of Islamist violence in Algeria. In *The Enigma of Islamist Violence.* A Blom, L Bucaille and L Martinez (eds). New York: Columbia University Press: 121-136.

McDougall, J. 2005. Savage wars? Codes of violence in Algeria, 1830s – 1990s. *Third World quarterly* 26(1): 117-131.

McDougall, J. 2006a. *History and the culture of nationalism in Algeria.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McDougall, J. 2006b. Martyrdom and destiny: the inscription and imagination of Algerian history. In *Memory and violence in the Middle East and North Africa.* U Makdisi and PA Silverstein (eds). Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 50-72.

McDougall, J. 2010. Social memories 'in the flesh': war and exile in Algerian self-writing. *Alif: Journal of comparative poetics* No. 30: 34-56.

McSweeney, B. 1996. Identity and security: Buzan and the Copenhagen school. *Review of international studies* 22(1): 81-93.

Melander, E, M Oberg and J Hall. 2009. Are 'New Wars' more atrocious? Battle severity, civilians killed and forced migration before and after the end of the Cold War. *European journal of International Relations* 15(3): 505-536.

Melander, E, M Öberg and J Hall. 2006. *The 'New Wars' debate revisited: an empirical evaluation of the atrociousness of 'New Wars'.* Uppsala, Sweden: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University.

Merom, G. 2003. *How democracies lose small wars: state, society, and the failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Messaoudi, K and E Schemla. 1998. *Unbowed: an Algerian woman confronts Islamic fundamentalism.* Translated by AC Vila. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Meynier, G (ed). 2000. *L'Algérie contemporaine. Bilan et solutions pour sortir de la crise.* Paris and Montréal: Harmattan.

Migdal, JS. 1988. *Strong societies and weak states: state-society relations and state capabilities in the Third World.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Miller, J. 1996. *God has ninety-nine names: a reporter's journey through a militant Middle East.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Miller, WH. 2000. Insurgency theory and the conflict in Algeria: a theoretical analysis. *Terrorism and political violence* 12(1): 60-78.

Milliken, J. 1999. The study of discourse in International Relations: a critique of research and methods. *European journal of International Relations* 5(2): 225.

Milton-Edwards, B. 2006. *Islam and violence in the modern era.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Misra, A. 2008. *Politics of civil wars: conflict, intervention and resolution.* London: Routledge.

Moeller, SD. 1998. *Compassion fatigue: how the media sell disease, famine, war, and death.* London: Routledge.

Moghadam, VM. 2001. Organizing women: the new women's movement in Algeria. *Cultural dynamics* 13(2): 131-154.

Mokeddem, M. 2002. *Les Afghans algériens : de la Djemaa à la Qaïda.* Algiers: ANEP.

Monk, DB (ed). 2011/2012. *A critique of the post-conflict environment.* Washington, DC, and Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, forthcoming.

Morisse-Schilbach, M. 1999. *L'Europe et la question algérienne : vers une Européanisation de la politique algérienne de la France?* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Mortimer, RA. 1995. Les Etats-Unis face à la situation algérienne. *Maghreb-Machrek* (149): 3-12.

Mortimer, RA. 1996. Islamists, soldiers, and democrats: the second Algerian war. *Middle East journal* 50(1): 18-39.

Mortimer, RA. 2006. State and army in Algeria: the 'Bouteflika effect'. *Journal of North African studies* 11(2): 155-171.

Moussaoui, A. 1998. La violence en Algérie. Des crimes et des châtiments. *Cahiers d'études africaines* 38(150-152): 245-269.

Moussaoui, A. 2006. *De la violence en Algérie : les lois du chaos.* Algiers: Barazakh.

Moussaoui, A. 2007. Algérie, la réconciliation entre espoirs et malentendus. *Politique étrangère* (2): 339-352.

Mundy, JA. 2007a. Forgetting as the first draft of history: The *New York Times*, the Algerian massacres and state memory. *Forgotten Conflicts, Permanent Catastrophes?* Conference Paper. Hamilton, NY: Colgate University.

Mundy, JA.2007b. Pyrrhic victory? Assessing Algeria's counter-terror strategy. *The Question of Algeria.* Montréal: Middle East Studies Association 41st Annual Meeting.

Mundy, JA.2009. 'Wanton and Senseless' revisited: On the interpretation of political violence and the Algerian massacres in particular. *Algerian Politics and the Politics of 'Algeria': Power, Knowledge and Representation.* Boston: Middle East Studies Association 43rd Annual Meeting.

Mundy, JA. 2010. Expert Intervention: knowledge, violence and identity during the Algerian crisis, 1997-1998. *Cambridge review of international affairs* 23(1): 25-47.

Murphy, EC. 2001. The state and the private sector in North Africa: seeking specificity. *Mediterranean politics* 6(2): 1-28.

Münkler, H. 2005. *The new wars.* Oxford: Polity.

Nathan, L. 2005. *'The frightful inadequacy of most of the statistics': a critique of collier and hoeffler on causes of civil war.* London: Crisis States Programme.

Naylor, PC. 2000. *France and Algeria: a history of decolonization and transformation.* Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida.

Newman, E. 2004. The 'New Wars' debate: a historical perspective is needed. *Security dialogue* 35(2): 173-189.

Nezzar, K. 2001. *Algérie : echec à une regression programmée.* Paris: Publisud.

Nietzsche, FW. 1992. *Basic writings of Nietzsche.* Translated by WA Kaufmann. 1992 Modern Library edition. New York: Modern Library.

Nordstrom, C. 1997. *A different kind of war story.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Norval, AJ. 1996. *Deconstructing Apartheid discourse.* London: Verso.

Ohlson, T. 2008. Understanding Causes of War and Peace. *European journal of International Relations* 14(1): 133-160.

Olick, JK. 2007. *The politics of regret: on collective memory and historical responsibility.* London: Routledge.

Onuf, NG. 1989. *World of our making: rules and rule in social theory and International Relations.* Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press.

Ottaway, M and B Lacina. 2003. International interventions and imperialism: lessons from the 1990s. *SAIS review* 23(2): 71-92.

Phillips, J. 1995. *The rising threat of revolutionary Islam in Algeria.* Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation.

Philpott, S. 2000. *Rethinking Indonesia: postcolonial theory, authoritarianism, and identity.* New York: Macmillan.

Pierre, A and WB Quandt. 1995. Algeria's war on itself. *Foreign policy* (99): 131-148.

Pierre, A and WB Quandt. 1996. *The Algerian crisis: policy options for the West.* Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace / Brookings Institution.

Power, S. 2003. *'A problem from hell': America and the age of genocide.* New York: Perennial.

Power, S. 2008. Is humanitarian intervention dead? History offers some sobering lessons. *Slate*, 29 September: http: //www.slate.com/id/2200971, accessed June 2010.

Provost, L. 1996. *La seconde guerre d'Algérie : le quidproquo franco-algérien.* Paris: Flammarion.

Quandt, WB. 1998. *Between ballots and bullets: Algeria's transition from authoritarianism.* Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press.

Quandt, WB. 2004. Algeria's transition to what? *Journal of North African studies* 9(2): 82-92.

Quine, WVO. 1963. *From a logical point of view.* Second edition. New York: Harper and Row.

Regan, PM, RW Frank and A Aysegul. 2009. Diplomatic interventions and civil war: a new dataset. *Journal of peace research* 46(1): 135-146.

Regan, PM and D Norton. 2005. Greed, grievance, and mobilization in civil wars. *Journal of conflict resolution* 49(3): 319-336.

Regan, PM. 1996. Conditions of successful third-party intervention in intrastate conflicts. *Journal of conflict resolution* 40(2): 336-359.

Regan, PM. 2000. *Civil wars and foreign powers: outside intervention in intrastate conflict.* Second edition. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Regan, PM. 2002. Third-party interventions and the duration of intrastate conflicts. *Journal of conflict resolution* 46(1): 55.

Regan, PM. 2009. *Sixteen million one: understanding civil war.* Boulder: Paradigm.

Remaoun, H. 1997. Pratiques historiographiques et mythes de fondation : le cas de la Guerre de libération à travers les institutions algériennes d'éducation et de recherche. In *La guerre d'Algérie et les Algériens, 1954-1962 : actes de la table ronde, Paris, 26-27 mars 1996.* C-R Ageron (ed). Paris: Armand Colin: 305-322.

Remaoun, H. 2000. La question de l'histoire dans le débat sur la violence en Algérie. *Insaniyat* (10): 31-43.

Reporters sans frontières (ed). 1995. *Le livre noir de l'Algérie.* Pérols, France: Editions Mimosa.

Reporters sans frontières. 1997. *Algérie: la guerre civile à huis clos.* Paris*:* Reporters sans frontières.

Reporters sans frontières, Amnesty International, Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme and Human Rights Watch (eds). 1997. *Algérie, le livre noir.* Paris: Découverte.

Rich, P. 1998. The Algerian crisis and the failure of international mediation. *Cambridge review of international affairs* 11(2): 134-151.

Richardson, JE. 2007. *Analysing newspapers: an approach from critical discourse analysis.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Roberts, H. 1992. The Algerian state and the challenge of democracy. *Government and opposition* 27(4): 433-454.

Roberts, H. 1995. Algeria's ruinous impasse and the honourable way out. *International affairs* 71(2): 247-267.

Roberts, H. 1998. The international gallery and the extravasation of factional conflict in Algeria. *Cambridge review of international affairs* 12(1): 209-246.

Roberts, H. 1999. Algeria's veiled drama. *International affairs* 75(2): 383-392.

Roberts, H. 2001. Truths about the dirty war. *Times literary supplement* (5141): 28-29.

Roberts, H. 2002a. Dancing in the dark: the European Union and the Algerian drama. *Democratization* 9(1): 106-134.

Roberts, H. 2002b. *Moral economy or moral polity? The political anthropology of Algerian riots.* London: Development Research Centre, London School of Economics.

Roberts, H. 2003. *The battlefield: Algeria, 1988-2002: Studies in a broken polity.* London: Verso.

Roberts, H. 2007. *Demilitarizing Algeria.* Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Roberts, H. 2008. Logics of Jihadi Violence in North Africa. In *Jihadi terrorism and the radicalisation challenge in Europe.* R Coolsaet (ed). Aldershot: Ashgate: 39-53.

Ron, J. 2005. Paradigm in distress? Primary commodities and civil war. *Journal of conflict resolution* 49(4): 443-450.

Rorty, R. 1979. *Philosophy and the mirror of nature.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Rorty, R. 1989. *Contingency, irony, and solidarity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rorty, R. 1996. Response to Ernesto Laclau. In *Deconstruction and pragmatism.* C Mouffe (ed). London: Routledge: 69-76.

Ross, ML. 2003. Oil, drugs and diamonds: the varying roles of natural resources in civil war. In *The political economy of armed conflict: beyond greed and grievance.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner: 47-70.

Ross, ML. 2004. What do we know about natural resources and civil war? *Journal of peace research* 41(3): 337-356.

Ruedy, J. 2005. *Modern Algeria: the origins and development of a nation.* Second edition. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Rupesinghe, K. 1998. NGOs in internal conflicts: The case of Algeria. *Cambridge review of international affairs* 11(2): 167-183.

Sadiki, L. 1995. The battle for Algeria and the French connection. *Current affairs bulletin* 71(6): 39-40.

Said, EW. 1994 (1978). *Orientalism.* New York: Vintage.

Said, EW. 2001. The clash of ignorance. *The Nation*, 22 October: http://www.thenation.com/doc/20011022/said/print, accessed June 2010.

Sambanis, N. 2004a. Using case studies to expand economic models of civil war. *Perspectives on politics* 2(2): 259-279.

Sambanis, N. 2004b. What is civil war?: conceptual and empirical complexities of an operational definition. *Journal of conflict resolution* 48(6): 814-858.

Samraoui, M. 2003. *Chronique des années de sang. Algérie: comment les services secrets ont manipulé les groupes islamistes.* Paris: Editions Denoël.

Sandbakken, C. 2006. The limits to democracy posed by oil rentier states: the cases of Algeria, Nigeria and Libya. *Democratization* 13(1): 135-152.

Sari, D. 2001. *La crise algérienne économique et sociale : diagnostic et perspectives.* Paris: Publisud.

Sarkees, MR. 2000. The Correlates of War data on war: an update to 1997. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 18(1): 123-144.

Scarry, E. 1985. *The body in pain: the making and unmaking of the world.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scheele, J. 2006. Algerian graveyard stories. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12(4): 859-879.

Schwarz, R. 2002. Human rights discourse and practice as crisis management: insights from the Algerian case. *Journal of North African studies* 7(2): 57-85.

Sellars, W. 1963. *Science, perception, and reality.* New York: Humanities Press.

Semelin, J. 2009. *Purify and destroy: the political uses of massacre and genocide.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Sen, A. 2006. *Identity and violence: the illusion of destiny.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Sereni, J-P. 1992. L'Algérie, le FMI, et le FIS. *Le Cahiers de l'Orient* No. 25-26: 225-235.

Shapiro, MJ. 1988. *The politics of representation: writing practices in biography, photography, and policy analysis.* Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

Shaw, M. 2000. The Contemporary Mode of Warfare? Mary Kaldor's Theory of New Wars. *Review of International Political Economy* 7(1): 171-192.

Shaw, M. 2003. *War and genocide: organized killing in modern society.* Cambridge, UK: Polity and Blackwell.

Shirley, EG. 1995. Is Iran's present Algeria's future? (Fundamentalism in Power). *Foreign Affairs* 74(3): 28-44.

Sidhoum, S-E and Algeria Watch. 2003a. Chronologie des massacres en Algérie (1994-2002). 2003. http: //www.algeria-watch.org/mrv/2002/bilan_massacres.htm, accessed October 2010.

Sidhoum, S-E and Algeria Watch. 2003b. *Les milices dans la nouvelle guerre d'Algérie.* Berlin: Algeria Watch.

Silverstein, PA. 2002. An Excess of Truth: Violence, Conspiracy Theorizing and the Algerian Civil War. *Anthropological Quarterly* 75(4): 643-674.

Singer, JD and M Small. 1994. *Correlates of War Project: International and Civil War Data, 1816-1992.* Ann Arbor: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Singer, JD. 1961. The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations. *World Politics* 14(1): 77-92.

Skilbeck, R. 1995. The shroud over Algeria: Femicide, Islamism and the Hijab. *Journal of Arabic, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies* 2(2): 43-54.

Slisli, F. 2000. The western media and the Algerian crisis. *Race & Class* 41(3): 43-57.

Smaïn, M. 2004. *Relizane dans la tourmente: Silence! On tue....* St. Denis: Bouchène.

Small, M and JD Singer. 1982. *Resort to arms: international and civil wars, 1816-1980.* Beverly Hills: SAGE.

Snow, DM. 1996. *Uncivil wars: international security and the new internal conflicts.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Soguk, N. 1999. *States and strangers: refugees and displacements of statecraft.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Sontag, S. 2003. *Regarding the pain of others.* New York: Picador.

Souaïdia, H. 2001. *La Sale guerre. Le témoignage d'un ancien officier des forces spéciales de l'armée algérienne, 1992-2000.* Paris: Gallimard.

Souaïdia, H, F Gèze and S Mellah. 2002. *Le procés de « La sale guerre » : Algérie, le général-major Khaled Nezzar contre le lieutenant Habib Souaïdia.* Paris: Découverte.

Soufi, F. 1997. La fabrication d'une mémoire : les médias algériens (1963-1995). In *La guerre d'Algérie et les Algériens, 1954-1962 : actes de la table ronde, Paris, 26-27 mars 1996.* C-R Ageron (ed). Paris: Armand Colin: 289-303.

Spencer, C. 1998a. Algeria: France's disarray and Europe's conundrum. In *The Middle East and Europe: The power deficit.* BA Roberson (ed). London: Routledge: 169-182.

Spencer, C. 1998b. The end of international inquiries? The UN Eminent persons' mission to Algeria July-August. *Mediterranean Politics* 3(3): 126-33.

Spivak, GC. 1988. Can the Subaltern Speak? In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture.* C Nelson and L Grossbert (eds). Urbana: University of Illinois Press: 271-313.

Stern, N. 2002. Forward. In *Breaking the conflict trap: civil war and development policy.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. 1994-2001. 'SIPRI Yearbooks'. Oxford: Oxford University Press and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Stone, M. 1997. *The agony of Algeria.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Stora, B. 1995. *L'Algérie en 1995: La Guerre, l'histoire, la politique.* Paris: Editions Michalon.

Stora, B. 2001a. *Algeria, 1830-2000: a short history.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Stora, B. 2001b. *La guerre invisible. Algérie, années 90.* Paris: Presses de Sciences-Po.

Stover, E and HM Weinstein (eds). 2004. *My neighbor, my enemy: justice and community in the aftermath of mass atrocity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stowell, EC. 1921. *Intervention in international law.* Washington, DC: John Bryne and Co.

Sutton, K. 2001. Demographic transition and regional population change in Algeria, 1987-1998. *The Arab World Geographer* 4(3): 206-216.

Swearingen, WD. 1990. Algeria's food security crisis. *Middle East report* No. 166: 21-25.

Szmolka, I. 2006. The Algerian Presidential Elections of 2004: An Analysis of Power Relationships in the Political System. *Mediterranean politics* 11(1): 39-57.

Tahi, MS. 1995. Algeria's democratisation process: a frustrated hope. *Third World quarterly* 16(2): 197-220.

Tahon, MB. 1998. *Algérie: la guerre contre les civils.* Québec: Editions Nota Bené.

Takeyh, R. 2003. Islamism in Algeria: a struggle between hope and agony. *Middle East policy* 10(2): 62-75.

Telhami, S and MN Barnett. 2002. Introduction. In *Identity and foreign policy in the Middle East.* S Telhami and MN Barnett (eds). Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 1-25.

Tessler, M, C Konold and M Reif. 2004. Political generations in developing countries. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 68(2): 184-216.

Testas, A. 2001. The economic causes of Algeria's political violence. *Terrorism and political violence* 13(3): 127-144.

Testas, A. 2002a. Algeria's economic decline, civil conflict and the implications for European security. *Contemporary security policy* 23(3): 83-105.

Testas, A. 2002b. Political repression, democratization and civil conflict in post-independence Algeria. *Democratization* 9(4): 106-121.

Testas, A. 2002c. The roots of Algeria's religious and ethnic violence. *Studies in conflict and terrorism* 25(3): 161-183.

Testas, A. 2004a. Unemployment in Algeria: sources, underestimation problems and the case for integration with Europe. *Journal of North African studies* 9(3): 19-39.

Testas, A. 2004b. The United States' approach to Algeria's civil conflict: implications for democratization, internal peace and anti-American violence. *Democratization* 11(2): 87-120.

Tibi, B. 2008. *Political Islam, world politics and Europe: democratic peace and Euro-Islam versus global jihad.* London; London: Routledge.

Tilly, C. 1975. Revolutions and collective violence. In *Handbook of political science.* FI Greenstein and NW Polsby (eds). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley: 483–555.

Tilly, C. 1985. War making and state making as organized crime. In *Bringing the state back in.* PB Evans, D Rueschemeyer and T Skocpol (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 169-91.

Tilly, C. 2003. *The politics of collective violence.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tlemçani, R. 2008. *Algeria Under Bouteflika: Civil Strife and National Reconcilaition.* New York: Carnegie Endownment for International Peace.

Torfing, J. 1999. *New theories of discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek.* Oxford and Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Torpey, JC (ed). 2003. *Politics and the past: on repairing historical injustices.* Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Turshen, M. 2002. Algerian women in the liberation struggle and the civil war: from active participants to passive victims? *Social Research* 69(3): 889-911.

Turshen, M. 2004. Militarism and Islamism in Algeria. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 39(1-2): 119-132.

Ṭawīl, K. 1998. *al-Ḥarakah al-Islāmīyah al-musallaḥah fi al-Jazāʾir: min "al-Inqādh" ilā "al-Jamāʿah".* Beirut: Dār al-Nahār.

United Nations. 1998. *Algeria: Report of Eminent Panel, July-August 1998. Report of the panel appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to gather information on the situation in Algeria in order to provide the international community with greater clarity on that situation.* New York: UN Department of Public Information.

US Congress. House Committee on International Relations. Subcommittee on Africa. 1998. *Algeria's turmoil.* One Hundred Fifth Congress: Second session edition. Washington, DC: US Government Publications Office.

US Congress. House Committee on Government Reform. 2001. *Preparing for the war on terrorism.* US Congress.

US Department of State. 1998. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 1997.* Washington, DC: US Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

US Department of State. 1999. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 1998.* Washington, DC: US Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

US Department of State. 2003. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2002.* Washington, DC: US Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Valentino, B, P Huth and D Balach-Londsay. 2004. 'Draining the sea': mass killing and guerrilla warfare. *International organization* 58(2): 375-407.

van der Gaag, N and C Nash. 1987. *Images of Africa: The UK report.* Oxford: Oxfam.

Vidal-Hall, J. 1997. The killing spree. *Index on censorship* 26(6): 17-19.

Viorst, M. 1997. Algeria's long night. *Foreign affairs* 76(6): 86-99.

Volpi, F. 2003. *Islam and democracy: the failure of dialogue in Algeria.* London: Pluto Press.

Volpi, F. 2006. Algeria's pseudo-democratic politics: lessons for democratization in the Middle East. *Democratization* 13(3): 442-455.

Vreeland, JR. 2008. The effect of political regime on civil war: unpacking anocracy. *Journal of conflict resolution* 52(3): 401-425.

Waever, O, B Buzan, M Kelstrup and P Lemaitre (eds). 1993. *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe.* London: Pinter.

Waliken, R and A Larioui. 1999. The US and the Algerian massacres. In *An Inquiry into the Algerian massacres.* Y Bedjaoui, A Aroua and M Aït-Larbi (eds). Geneva: Hoggar: 800-830.

Walker, RBJ. 1987. Realism, Change, and international political theory. *International studies quarterly* 31(1): 65-86.

Walker, RBJ. 1993. *Inside/outside: International Relations as political theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Waterbury, J. 1997. From social contracts to extraction contracts: the political economy of authoritarianism and democracy. In *Islam, democracy, and the state in North Africa.* JP Entelis (ed). Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 141-176.

Weber, C. 1995. *Simulating sovereignty: intervention, the state, and symbolic exchange.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weinstein, JM. 2007. *Inside rebellion: the politics of insurgent violence.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weiss, TG and C Collins. 2000. *Humanitarian challenges and intervention.* Second edition. Oxford: Westview.

Weiss, TG and D Hubert. 2001. *The responsibility to protect: supplementary volume.* Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

Weiss, TG. 2001. Researching Humanitarian Intervention: Some Lessons. *Journal of peace research* 38(4): 419-428.

Weiss, TG. 2007. *Humanitarian intervention: ideas in action.* Oxford: Polity.

Weldes, J, M Laffey, R Duvall and H Gusterson (eds). 1999. *Cultures of insecurity: states, communities, and the production of danger.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Wendt, A. 1987. The agent-structure problem in International Relations theory. *International Organization* 41(3): 335-370.

Wendt, A. 1999. Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics. *Theory and Structure in International Political Economy: An International Organization Reader* 46(2): 391-425.

Werenfels, I. 2002. Obstacles to privatisation of state-owned industries in Algeria: the political economy of a distributive conflict. *Journal of North African studies* 7(1): 1-28.

Werenfels, I. 2007. *Managing instability in Algeria: elites and political change since 1995.* London: Routledge.

West, C. 1989. *The American evasion of philosophy: a genealogy of pragmatism.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Wheeler, NJ. 2000. *Saving strangers: humanitarian intervention in international society.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wight, C. 2006. *Agents, structures and international relations: politics as ontology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wiktorowicz, Q. 2001. Centrifugal tendencies in the Algerian civil war. *Arab Studies Quarterly* 23(3): 65-82.

Wiktorowicz, Q. 2005. A genealogy of radical Islam. *Studies in conflict & terrorism* 28(2): 75-97.

Williams, MC. 2003. Words, images, enemies: securitization and international politics. *International studies quarterly* 47(4): 511-531.

Williams, R. 1983. *Culture and society, 1780-1950.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Williams, PD and AJ Bellamy. 2005. The Responsibility to protect and the crisis in Darfur. *Security dialogue* 36(1): 27-47.

Willis, M. 1997. *The Islamist challenge in Algeria: a political history.* New York: New York University Press.

Willis, MJ. 2006. Containing radicalism through the political process in North Africa. *Mediterranean politics* 11(2): 137-150.

Wyn Jones, R. 1999. *Security, strategy, and critical theory.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Wæver, O. 1995. Securitization and desecuritization. In *On Security.* RD Lipschutz (ed). New York: Columbia University Press: 46-86.

Yacine, T. 1999. Is a genealogy of violence possible? Translated by R Racevskis. *Research in African literatures* 30(3): 23-35.

Yacoubian, M and MJ Deeb. 1999. *Washington Institute for Near East Policy.* Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Young, RJC. 2001. *Postcolonialism: an historical introduction.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Yous, N and S Mellah. 2000. *Qui a tué à Bentalha : Chronique d'un massacre annoncé.* Paris: Decouvert.

Zaimeche, SE and K Sutton. 1998. Persistent strong population growth, environmental degradation, and declining food self-sufficiency in a rentier oil state: Algeria. *Journal of North African studies* 3(1): 57-73.

Zalewski, M. 1996. 'All these theories and the bodies keep piling up': theory, theorists and theorising. In *International theory: positivism and beyond.* S Smith, K Booth and M Zalewski (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 340-353.

Zoubir, YH and Y Bouandel. 1998a. Islamism and the Algerian political crisis: international responses. *Cambridge review of international affairs* 11(2): 117-133.

Zoubir, YH and Y Bouandel. 1998b. The question of human rights in Algeria: an analytical approach. *Journal of Algerian studies* 3: 1-18.

Zoubir, YH. 1994. Algeria's multi-dimensional crisis: the story of a failed state-building process. *Journal of modern African studies:* 741-47.

Zoubir, YH. 1995. Stalled democratization of an authoritarian regime: the case of Algeria. *Democratization* 2(2): 109-139.

Zoubir, YH. 2002. Algeria and US interests: containing radical Islam and promoting dmocracy. *Middle East policy* 9(1): 64-81.

Zoubir, YH. 2004. The dialectics of Algeria's foreign relations, 1992 to the present. In *Algeria in transition: reforms and development prospects.* A Aghrout and R Bougherira (eds). London: RoutledgeCurzon: 151-182.

Zoubir, YH. 2005. Resilient authoritarianism, uncertain democratization, and jihadism in Algeria. In *Democratic development and political terrorism: the global perspective.* W Crotty (ed). Boston: Northwestern University Press: 280-300.