

RETHINKING FRANCE'S "MEMORY WARS": HARKI AND PIED-NOIR COLLECTIVE
MEMORIES IN FIFTH REPUBLIC FRANCE

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ABSTRACT

Laura Jeanne Sims: “Rethinking France’s “Memory Wars”: Harki and Pied-Noir Collective Memories in Fifth Republic France”
(Under the direction of Donald Reid)

This dissertation is a cultural history of the memory narratives and practices of two postcolonial communities in France. The Harkis, Algerians who fought with the French Army during the Algerian War of Independence, and the Pieds-Noirs, settlers of European origin in Algeria, were forced to migrate to France when Algeria gained its independence in 1962. Analyzing the various memory carriers, including “cyber” carriers, that Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants have used to transmit understandings of the colonial past reveals the evolving concerns of members of these communities and the changing ways in which they have imagined themselves, particularly in relation to the rest of French society.

Harki and Pied-Noir case studies offer insight into the politics of collective memory in Fifth Republic France. As groups with different racial and cultural backgrounds, they have radically dissimilar levels of power, resources, and visibility. Pieds-Noirs have constructed the only museum currently dedicated to the colonial past in France, the *Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie*, while children of Harkis have relied more heavily on the opportunities for social networking and the quick, public transmission of information afforded by the Internet. A comparative approach also highlights the different roles that gender and generation have played in shaping Harki and Pied-Noir collective memories. Finally, as products of the French colonial project, these communities and their collective memories provide an opportunity to

explore France's complicated rapport with its imperial past. I challenge the notion that conflicting memories of this period should be interpreted in the framework of "memory wars," as it obscures the productive work of memory. Harki and Pied-Noir narratives and practices have almost always been aimed at fostering inclusion, carving out spaces for reconciliation, and providing a basis for belonging in France.

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INTRODUCTION

The Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) constituted one of the longest, bloodiest, and most historically significant wars of decolonization. Algeria won its independence at a devastating cost of hundreds of thousands of casualties and nearly two million displaced inhabitants. The French made systematic use of torture and massacred entire villages as they sought to maintain control of the region. In their efforts to expel the French, independence fighters employed terror tactics against civilians of both European and North African origin. Following this internecine violence, Algerians faced the arduous task of building a new state amidst division and destruction. The French suffered as many as thirty thousand casualties, the displacement of approximately one million settlers of European origin, and the loss of a territory that they considered not as a colony, but as a constituent element of France.¹

The conflict revealed fundamental contradictions between the principles of republican universalism, predicated on ideals of equality and liberty, and colonialism, which depended on subordination.² Despite the state's claims that "Algeria was France" and its inhabitants were French citizens, the official legal and administrative category of "Muslim"³ excluded most

¹ Throughout its 130-year history, the territory of French Algeria held an exceptional, and often contradictory, status in the French Empire. Although the conquest of Algeria constituted part of the French state's imperial expansion project in the nineteenth century, the Second Republic extended French department status to the coastal regions of Algeria in 1848. In Fifth Republic (i.e. post-colonial) France, discussions of France's colonial project and its consequences have focused on Algeria.

² Republican ideology dictates that the state will treat each citizen as an abstract individual and remain blind to differences in gender, race, or religion. In French Algeria, however, the state used a language of religion to institutionalize social and political hierarchies between the colonizer and the colonized.

³ "Because of the role of Koranic law in all aspects of Muslim life, they were governed under a régime d'exception, designed both to recognize their individual identity via a statut personnel as Muslims and to exclude them from full

French of North African origin from exercising the same rights as “Europeans” in these departments of France.⁴ The paradox of French Muslim de jure versus de facto rights challenged French self-perceptions as defenders of the “Rights of Man.” In granting independence to Algeria and renouncing their imperial ambitions, however, the French reclaimed their place as proponents of liberty. They thus avoided grappling with the ideological inconsistencies of the colonial period and their implications for French identity and history.⁵

French Algeria and the Algerian War have remained controversial moments in French history due to the commemorative dilemmas they pose and the “existential” questions they raise.⁶ It has proven especially challenging to narrate and memorialize the history of French Algeria due to its ambiguous status in the French Empire. The bitter legacy of the struggle has persisted in the minds of participants and their descendants, making it particularly difficult to construct a historical narrative of the conflict that most parties accept. Moreover, “memory” of this conflict has stayed inextricably linked to the meaning ascribed to the colonial system and the

French citizenship and political equality. A decree of July 1865 introduced a measure of reform, giving them French nationality, but again withholding citizenship: ‘The Muslim native is French’, it declared; however, only by renouncing Islam could he ‘benefit from the rights open to a French citizen’.” P. Dunwoodie, “Postface: History, Memory and Identity—Today’s Crisis, Yesterday’s Issue,” *French History* 20, no. 3 (2006): 318–332: 325.

⁴ The Jewish Algerian population constituted a particular case. Algerian Jews were granted full citizenship by the Décret Crémieux of 1871 and, like the descendants of European settlers, most migrated to mainland France following Algerian independence. They have not always identified with the French Algerian community, however, and the *Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie* includes Algerian Jews in the category of “native populations.” While their unique trajectory in metropolitan France falls outside the scope of this project, they are an important group that deserves its own study.

⁵ As Todd Shepard has argued, “In 1962, invocations of “Muslim origin” gave way to descriptions of “North Africans” or “Algerians” who could not be “European” or “French.” With no public debate, the French government made common-sense understandings of racial or ethnic difference the basis of laws that denied most people from Algeria the right to remain French.” Distinguishing between “French” and “Algerian” thus became a question of national, rather than ethnic identity. Shepard, *Invention*, 12.

⁶ Scholars have documented the difficulties faced by individuals and societies in coming to terms with defeat. “Perhaps more than any other kind of episode, [defeat] opens people to the intellectual and political scrutiny of their own past while exposing them to the psychological consequences of what is a deeply threatening experience.” John Horne, “Defeat and Memory in Modern History,” in *Defeat and Memory: Cultural Histories of Military Defeat Since 1815*, ed. Jenny Macleod, First Edition edition (Basingstoke England ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 11–29, 26.

imperial project. As a result, controversies and debates about the memory of the Algerian War have often become proxies for difficult conversations about some of the thorniest issues in France today: racism, French identity, and the future of republican universalism. Acts of memory thus have important social repercussions.

The objective of this dissertation is not to trace the evolution of a collective memory of French Algeria and the Algerian War, as Benjamin Stora and others have done.⁷ Rather, my project explores how two groups of French citizens who were directly affected by the Algerian War have engaged with the evolving colonial legacy. The Harkis, Algerians⁸ who fought with the French Army during the Algerian War, and the Pieds-Noirs, settlers of European origin in Algeria, were forced to migrate to France when Algeria gained its independence in 1962. Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants have personally experienced these controversial events and their self-understandings are tied to how the events are “remembered” in France. The colonial system produced these groups. As such, they have served as awkward reminders of the now unpopular colonial ideology and the onerous defeat. How have members of these groups constructed a usable past and how has these practices changed over time? Analyzing their memory narratives and practices reveals the evolving concerns of members of these communities and the changing ways in which they have imagined themselves, particularly in relation to the rest of French society.

These case studies present three opportunities for the study of historical memory. First, they offer insight into the important dynamics between the processes of remembrance and

⁷ Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris : Editions La Découverte, 1992); Jo McCormack, *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).

⁸ I am referring to the native peoples of Algeria, whom the French called *indigènes*. Yet, before the 1930s, the European settlers and their descendants, rather than the *indigènes*, were called “Algerians.” Vincent Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), xi.

identification.⁹ My dissertation, like Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory*, challenges the premise that "the boundaries of memory parallel the boundaries of group identity."¹⁰ Since our identities are complex and our memories mutable, the correlation between memory and identity is not linear. The terms "Harki" and "Pied-Noir" do not reflect some basic and internal sameness. Instead, Harkis are united by a common past and a shared present; the same is true for Pieds-Noirs. Rather than approaching Harkis and Pieds-Noirs as cohesive memory communities, however, I have considered how acts of collective memory within these groups intersect with competing processes of identification, including gender and generation. Several important essays on facets of Harki and Pied-Noir memory have been published in recent years; however, my work is the first to analyze in detail the conceptual categories of generation and gender in the formation and dissemination of memory in these communities and within France.

The cases of Harki and Pied-Noir collective memories also provide an occasion to analyze the relationship between the ways in which memories are transmitted and the politics of collective memory. In *The Vichy Syndrome*, Henry Rousso identified four vectors—organizational, cultural, official, and scholarly—through which individuals, groups, and institutions contribute to the public memory of an event.¹¹ I argue that these memory carriers are invested with different types of authority, afford varying levels of visibility, and assert different

⁹ I understand "identity" as "the processual, interactive development of the kind of collective self-understanding, solidarity, or 'groupness' that can make collective action possible." Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 34.

¹⁰ Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory : Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 5.

¹¹ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991). I employ Hue-Tam Tai's definition of "public memory": "By 'public,' I refer to ritual performances, speech acts, visual media, and other cultural activities that are articulated and made available or accessible to others rather than kept secret. These representations may be the works of single individuals or the products of collective efforts. I am thus...referring...to individuals and groups who openly try to claim a piece of the past." Hue-Tam Tai, "Introduction: Situating Memory," in *The Country of Memory : Remaking the Past in Late Socialist Vietnam*, ed. Hue-Tam Tai (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 1–17: 7.

degrees of authenticity in the public sphere. My dissertation also updates Rousso's typologies to include a new "cyber" carrier that is faster, less filtered, and perhaps more democratic than the other vectors. I am the first to examine in comparative terms how members of these groups have used different vectors of memory. I analyze the memory narratives they have transmitted through organizational (association journals, monuments, museums), cultural (memoirs, films), and cyber (websites, discussion forums) carriers. My dissertation also shows how Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants have employed official and scholarly carriers, as well as how they have engaged with the historical narratives transmitted by those outside their communities (non-Harki or Pied-Noir historians and the French state). Harki and Pied-Noir case studies are particularly fruitful means through which to study the politics of memory in France. As groups with different racial and cultural backgrounds, they have radically dissimilar levels of power, resources, and visibility in French society. Pieds-Noirs, for example, had sufficient means to construct the only museum dedicated to the colonial past in France, the *Centre de Documentation des Français d'Algérie*. Children of Harkis, on the other hand, have relied more heavily on the opportunities for social networking and the quick, public transmission of information afforded by the Internet.

Lastly, Harkis and Pieds-Noirs are large groups, but the questions they raise about France's relation to its colonial past are larger still. The past decade has seen increased concerns among scholars, political leaders, journalists, and other public figures about the socially divisive potential of "memory," particularly that of the colonial era. Since 2005, several important postcolonial historians have employed a paradigm of "memory wars" to interpret the disparate memory practices and narratives of former colonial subjects, including Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, veterans groups, and others, who have a stake in this past. In 2006, Pierre Nora announced:

We have passed from a modest memory, which only demanded to make itself admitted and recognized, to a memory ready to impose itself by any means. I have elsewhere

evoked a ‘tyranny of memory’; it would be necessary today to speak of its *terrorism*. So much so that we are less sensitive to the suffering that it expresses than to the violence by which it wants to make itself heard.¹²

My dissertation calls into question the utility of this interpretation of collective memory as competitive. While French citizens had vastly different experiences of colonialism and the Algerian War, framing their discordant acts of memory as acts of war obscures the productive work of memory. Hyperbolic claims about the destructive power of “memory” overlook the basic function of *collective* or *shared* memory—to create a basis for cohesion and solidarity. In examining the intertwined histories of Holocaust and postcolonial memories, Michael Rothberg has likewise critiqued a competitive memory model. He explained that “many people assume the public sphere in which collective memories are articulated is a scarce resource and that the interaction of different collective memories within that sphere takes the form of a zero-sum struggle for preeminence.”¹³ Rothberg proposed instead that we “consider memory as *multidirectional*: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing: as productive and not privative.”¹⁴ I employ his model of multidirectional memory in this dissertation. In the context of my project, this entails recognizing discordant memory narratives and then exploring, rather than assuming, whether they are indeed constructed in conscious opposition. I identify efforts to build solidarity, or some shared sense of belonging, through acts of memory. Since I have observed that some Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants have internalized the memory wars paradigm and adopted its discourse, I have expanded this approach

¹² Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 269. Citing Nora in Jacques Buob and Alain Frachon, “La France est malade de sa mémoire’: Pierre Nora et le métier d’historien,” in “Colonies: Un débat français,” *Le Monde* 2, June 2006. Rothberg’s translation and emphasis. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹³ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 2-3.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 3.

to include highlighting the impact of the competitive memory model on how architects of collective memory frame their actions.

My dissertation reveals another level on which memory of colonial Algeria and the Algerian War has proven divisive. The competitive memory model focuses on conflicts *between* groups over memory; my project identifies important disputes *within* these groups over how to interpret their history. Members of these groups, of different genders and generations, transmit discordant narratives through various memory carriers, sometimes actively opposing each other. Such intra-communal conflicts are especially apparent on websites, which broadcast heated debates among members of both groups about how they should represent and commemorate the past. These findings call into question the fairly rigid battle lines that scholars depict in their explanations of the “memory wars.” At the same time, they remind us that the process of constructing a collective memory is naturally contentious and rarely converges easily on a single shared version of the past.¹⁵ The lack of a national hegemonic memory of colonialism and the Algerian War does not necessarily portend the destruction of the social fabric of the Republic.

Finally, the histories of Harki and Pied-Noir collective memories reveal that both groups are ultimately seeking a place for themselves in the national imagination. At the root of each intra-communal memory conflict is a debate over how best to foster solidarity with other members of French society. My dissertation shows that while some architects of Harki and Pied-Noir collective memory explicitly challenge specific narratives transmitted both within and outside their communities, others are more comfortable with coexisting conflicting memories.

¹⁵ As Mary Stevens has observed, it is the “nature of public memory to be a field of struggle.” Stevens, “Visibility, equality, difference,” 108. Iwona Irwin-Zarecka has likewise argued, “The expression ‘collective memory’ suggests a consensus. And yet, the social construction of ‘realities of the past’ is frequently a site of intense conflict and debate.” Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 67.

Their works demonstrate a wish to create a place for themselves in French history, not to deny others this same right.

Harki and Pied-Noir Case Studies

As Algerians of North African origin who supported the French during the Algerian War, the Harkis embody many of the complexities and tragedies of this conflict—and of the colonial period in general.¹⁶ The Harkis were auxiliaries who assisted the French Army in a variety of military and civilian capacities. They also played an important symbolic role in the war. The French portrayed the Harkis' assistance as evidence of “Muslim” loyalty to French Algeria. Following Algerian independence, the Army disarmed the Harkis and left them in Algeria, where they faced violent reprisals from the victorious nationalists for their perceived betrayal during the war. Despite restrictive French evacuation plans for the Harkis, approximately sixty thousand Harkis and their families were able to escape to France. Nearly half of these Harki families were placed in internment camps upon their arrival and some remained there for over a decade.

In Algeria and among Algerian immigrants in France, the term “Harki” became synonymous with “traitor.” The Harkis were linked to the injustices of the colonial regime through their decision to support the French. Harkis' wives and their children inherited the consequences of this choice and carried the stigma by association. Subject to discrimination in French society for their North African origins and rejected by Algerian immigrants in France, the Harkis and their families experienced a form of double rejection. In response to this exclusion, many Harki fathers stayed silent about their experiences and some Harki children have chosen

¹⁶ The term “Harki” has come to signify all French Muslim men who fought with the French Army, and indeed all “pro-French” Muslims, during the Algerian War. Historically, the Harkis were only one of several different groups of civil combatants (including *Moghaznis*, Auto-defense groups, and career soldiers) who performed various tasks for the French Army. Many scholars prefer to use the term “auxiliaries,” rather than “Harkis” to avoid this confusion. I will use the term “Harkis” since I am analyzing the discourses of those who identify themselves and their fathers as such.

not to identify as such. For those who do assume this identity, interpreting the Harki past has remained key to their understandings of themselves and their place in French society. My dissertation explores the memory work of these Harkis, their wives, and their children.

The first chapter of this dissertation details the interrelated histories of French and Algerian national memories of the Algerian War, Harki historiography, and Harki collective memory practices. In it I analyze the main subjects of historical inquiry and controversy. My dissertation contributes to the history of this group by identifying important debates among children of Harkis about how to interpret the past and by analyzing how Harki children use websites as a new memory technology. I employ a model of multidirectional memory to interpret Harki efforts to achieve recognition for their difficult past. Analyzing their references to the Holocaust and their claims of a Harki genocide allows me to situate the Harkis within a wider history of cross-referencing between Holocaust and colonial memories. It also enables me to critique the competitive memory model that has developed in France by demonstrating that most Harki and Pied-Noir memory work is aimed at fostering social inclusion. Finally, the comparisons I draw with the history of Pied-Noir collective memory, particularly with regard to the way they use different carriers and what this indicates about their access to resources, offers further insight into the politics of collective memory in Fifth Republic France.

The Pieds-Noirs, also known as French of Algeria,¹⁷ are the descendants of the settler population who came to Algeria from various European countries (mainly France, Malta, Italy, and Spain¹⁸) beginning in 1830 in search of economic and social opportunities. In 1962, at the moment of Algerian independence, unstable conditions in Algeria prompted most of the one

¹⁷ I use the term “French Algerians” in Chapter 9 when studying the *Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie* (CDDFA) because it is how they identify themselves in this institution.

¹⁸ Around 50% of the settlers migrated from France.

million Pieds-Noirs living in this territory to migrate to metropolitan France. Their historical trajectory has thus made this population both internal migrants and double exiles,¹⁹ with multicultural identities and heritages. They are also heirs to a complicated and painful colonial past in France.

The place of Pieds-Noirs in French society, like that of the Harkis, has been shaped by evolving French attitudes towards their Algerian territory and what it represented. In the French state's discourse during the nineteenth century, the settlers were glorified "as a civilizing force, exercising an influence both on people and on the environment."²⁰ At the same time, a French image of Algeria as "a colonial dumping ground"²¹ for the undesirables of European society translated into a lingering impression of the Pieds-Noirs as poor and uncultured. In the mid-twentieth century, as anti-colonial sentiment increased, the Pieds-Noirs were sometimes portrayed as *grands colons*, powerful landowners who exploited their privileged political and socio-economic positions as French of European origin. Many Pieds-Noirs had never been to mainland France²² and harbored their own misconceptions about the metropolitan French. They also resented Paris's control over their political and economic affairs.

Following Algerian independence, as France's colonial empire "turned from a point of pride to a source of shame,"²³ the hostile perceptions and relations continued. Throughout the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), much of the metropolitan French population

¹⁹ Michèle Baussant, "Caught between Two Worlds: The Europeans of Algeria in France after 1962," in *History, Memory and Migration : Perceptions of the Past and the Politics of Incorporation*, ed. Irial Glynn and J. Olaf Kleist (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 87–105: 88.

²⁰ Baussant, "Caught between Two Worlds," 90-91.

²¹ *Ibid*, 89.

²² *Ibid*, 93.

²³ Andrea Smith, "Settler Sites of Memory and the Work of Mourning," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 31, no. 3 (December 2013), 65–92: 67.

identified Pieds-Noirs “with those who fought to the bitter end to remain in Algeria,”²⁴ blaming them for prolonging the bloody and divisive struggle for Algerian independence. It was during this historical moment that the term “Pied-Noir,” a derogatory nickname for French Algerians that has since become widely used, emerged.²⁵ The sudden and unforeseen mass migration of Pieds-Noirs at the end of the war also colored mainland French attitudes toward these migrants.²⁶ The substantial financial and administrative challenges that their arrival posed made it difficult for metropolitan French to sympathize with their forced migration.²⁷

The identities of Pieds-Noirs and their relations with other members of French society today are informed by heated debates over how to interpret the colonial past. Many Pieds-Noirs mourn the loss of territory of French Algeria and celebrate their Algerian heritage. Anti-colonialists, historians, and others, however, have been outspoken against Pied-Noir memory practices, which they interpret as “*nostalgérie*, a pathological nostalgia for Algeria”²⁸ and their loss of a privileged position in this society.²⁹ At the same time, as well educated migrants of European origin and appearance, the Pieds-Noirs faced fewer barriers to integration in France than the Harkis and their families. My dissertation argues that Pied-Noir memory work has reflected twin desires within their community. First, rather than diminishing their cultural and historical differences, the Pieds-Noirs have used memory practices and technologies to express

²⁴ Eric Savarèse, *L’Invention des Pieds-Noirs* (Paris: Séguier, 2002), 63.

²⁵ The exact origins of this term are unclear. Baussant, “Caught between Two Worlds,” 96; Savarese, *L’Invention*, 15.

²⁶ Smith, “Settler Sites of Memory,” 67.

²⁷ Baussant, “Caught between Two Worlds,” 95.

²⁸ Smith, “Settler Sites of Memory,” 65.

²⁹ Critics of French Algerian memory narratives and practices were most vocal in reaction to the February 2005 law (Loi n° 2005-158), which stipulated that school curricula would “acknowledge in particular the positive role of the French overseas presence.”

their own particular collective memories and thus to resist complete integration in France. At the same time, Pied-Noirs have sought to challenge the understandings that others have of their history in French Algeria, namely that they were exploitative colonists, which have formed the basis for their exclusion in France.

The Pieds-Noirs are a well-documented community, as my historiography in Chapter 6 attests. My project is the first to analyze the *Centre de Documentation des Français d'Algérie* museum and *Mur des Disparus* monument in Perpignan. I show how Pied-Noir commemorative practices have developed in response to the evolving memorial climate in France and the changing needs of their aging community. They have shifted the focus of their commemoration away from a discussion of colonial ideology and glorification of colonial acts to an emphasis on their status as victims, so as not to alienate Pied-Noir youth and French public opinion. I also demonstrate that although the Pieds-Noirs are often perceived by scholars as some of the most active participants in the “memory wars” over the colonial past, their memory work is most often aimed at gaining acceptance and recognition from the French as well as on building a shared memory of French Algeria with other migrants from Algeria. Lastly, my analysis of Pied-Noir websites reveals that Pieds-Noirs are most interested in constructing virtual sites of memory to replace those sites that they lost in Algeria.

Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants share the experience of fleeing Algeria and settling in France, where they remained uncomfortable reminders of the nation’s imperial past. Both groups faced exclusion and hostility on the basis of their historical identities and the early history of their memories reveals a great deal of cross-referencing and joint memory work among their members. Harkis and Pieds-Noirs likewise navigated the same evolving memorial climate

in France, from the general silence following the Algerian War to the recent “resurgence” of collective memories and the emergence of an implicit theory of memory competition.

The memory practices and narratives of these two groups have also diverged in important ways. In addition to making use of cyber and other carriers of memory for different purposes, Harkis and Pieds-Noirs have transmitted their past to their children through different mediators. Gender has played a significant role in the transmission of Harki memory, as “Harki” is a specifically male-coded category and the legacy of colonialism impacts the perception of gender differences among French of North African origin. Due to the first generation’s silence about their experiences and to the rather tenuous place that young men of North African origin occupy in the French imagination, Harki daughters have taken the lead in constructing and challenging representations of the Harki past. In contrast, since the children of Pieds-Noirs have been easily integrated into French society, the Pieds-Noirs have agonized over how to persuade them to participate in specifically Pied-Noir memory practices. A comparative approach to these case studies thus attests to the importance of employing gender and generation as categories of analysis and reveals more about these memory communities than if they were approached separately.

The Study of Memory

Since “memory” emerged as a subject of historical inquiry in the late 20th century, scholars have explored the relationship between individual and collective memories. Historians, including Benjamin Stora and Henry Rousso, have applied explanatory schema developed by Sigmund Freud for individual memory, including repression and trauma, to understand how

nations have interpreted and remembered conflict, particularly defeat.³⁰ These analytical tools helped make sense of the public silences, identified as “collective amnesia,” that seemed to appear in the wake of violent events. Freud’s notion of the unconscious as “a repository of repressed memories, inaccessible to normal consciousness, but capable of disrupting our conscious lives”³¹ was also used as a metaphor for the various public manifestations or resurgence of this collective memory.³²

Although the work of Rousso and Stora has strongly influenced my dissertation, I am skeptical about the utility of extending the concept of “memory” from individuals to a collective, including the nation. Like Maurice Halbwachs, who emphasized the social nature of memory, I am more interested in how collective memory functions as a social process.³³ Collective memory, or “the way the past is represented, managed, and understood by societies,”³⁴ entails the careful selection of certain elements and the silencing of others to satisfy both the needs of the group and its members. It is this type of memory “that may have been initiated by individuals but that has been mediated through networks of communication, institutions of the state, and the social groupings of civil society.”³⁵ The challenge for scholars in studying “collective memory” is to avoid reifying what is invariably a process, and a highly contentious one, at that. For this

³⁰ Freud himself used these concepts in a collective sense. Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*. (New York: Vintage Books Inc., 1955); Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1957).

³¹ Daniel J. Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 1-2.

³² “Rather like the unconscious in Freudian theory, what is known as collective memory exists first of all in its manifestations, in the various ways by which it reveals its presence.” Rousso, *Vichy Syndrome*, 10.

³³ In this way my work ascribes to a Halbwachsian, rather than Freudian, tradition in memory studies.

³⁴ McCormack, *Collective Memory*, 3.

³⁵ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 15.

reason, terms that convey active meanings, such as construction, invention, representation or commemoration, often seem preferable to “memory.”

If we study about collective memory with the language and frameworks of individual memory, we can overemphasize the tendency of collective memory to merge into a single version of the past.³⁶ We can fail to identify the power dynamics involved in creating and maintaining “collective amnesia.”³⁷ As Jo McCormack has argued, “Forgetting divisive elements of the past once again goes hand in hand with nation building. Obviously though this nation is inherently exclusionary and built on unsure foundations.”³⁸ Like Daniel Sherman, I refuse “to privilege coherence over difference.”³⁹ I am interested in memory conflicts—the cracks and fissures, contentions and disputes in collective memory that have no clear parallel on the individual level.

At the same time, I would like to challenge a paradigm of memory competition that has emerged over the past two decades. I outline the development of this paradigm more fully in the section of this Introduction on France’s “memory wars.” While some memory competition does exist, my dissertation shows that just as often, memory serves as the basis for reconciliation. In examining these features of Harki and Pied-Noir collective memories, I employ a model of multidirectional memory. Approaching memory as “multidirectional” enables me to think about collective memory as “open-ended field of articulation and struggle” and to identify the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ On the politics of memory and nation-building, including practices of silencing, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (Verso, 2006); Johann Michel, *Gouverner Les Mémoires - Les Politiques Mémoires En France* (Presses Universitaires de France - PUF, 2010).

³⁸ McCormack, *Collective Memory*, 113.

³⁹ Sherman, *The Construction of Memory*, 5.

“complex acts of solidarity in which historical memory serves as a medium for the creation of new communal and political identities.”⁴⁰ As Rothberg explained:

It is often difficult to tell whether a given act of memory is more likely to produce competition or mutual understanding- sometimes both seem to happen simultaneously. A model of multidirectional memory allows for the perception of the power differentials that tend to cluster around memory competition, but also locates that competition within a larger spiral of memory discourse in which even hostile invocations of memory can provide vehicles for further, countervailing commemorative acts.⁴¹

My project diverges from Rothberg’s, however, in important ways. Rothberg studied the cross-referencing of Holocaust and post-colonial memory and the ways in which these two collective memories developed in tandem. While I analyze the ways in which Harkis invoke memory of the Holocaust in Chapter 3, my dissertation focuses on multiple, often contradictory, narratives of the same event. I show the multidirectionality of different collective memories of the Algerian War.

In *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France*, Sherman identified a historiographical gap in the study of memory when he argued, “Recent scholarship leaves little doubt that the construction of memory as a form of representation is a political and social process, but the materials, operation, purposes, and consequences of that construction have only just begun to receive the theoretical and historical attention they merit.”⁴² While Rothberg’s model of multidirectional memory helps evaluate the purposes and consequences of Harki and Pied-Noir memory practices, Rousso’s notion of memory carriers allows me to analyze the materials that members of these groups use. Rousso defined a carrier as “any source that

⁴⁰ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 11.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Sherman, *The Construction of Memory*, 2.

proposes a deliberate reconstruction of an event for a social purpose.”⁴³ The two vectors most commonly used by Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants are organizational and cultural. Organizational carriers are constructed by groups of people who “join organizations for the purpose of preserving and unifying the personal memories of group members. Groups sometimes become attached to a rather static image of the past, which they then promote actively as well as passively.”⁴⁴ Forms of organizational carriers include association publications and commemorative practices as well as their *lieux de mémoire*,⁴⁵ literal or figurative places that groups invest with mnemonic meaning. These memory practices are invariably concerned with consensus, as they must convey the shared memory of the organizations’ members.⁴⁶

Cultural memory carriers, on the other hand, present what appear to be highly individualistic memories through a variety of media, including literature, film, and television. These representations are created for public consumption and the publishers and producers of these narratives endow them with legitimacy and greater visibility in French society. Rousso noted that since these carriers present their message in artistic form, this message tends to be implicit rather than explicit. The authors of these works are less concerned with consensus, but still aim at influencing and contributing to both their group’s collective memory and the public memory of their past.

⁴³ Rousso, *Vichy Syndrome*, 219.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 221.

⁴⁵ Pierre Nora introduced the term *lieu de mémoire*, which he defined as “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” Pierre Nora, “From Lieux de Mémoire to Realms of Memory. Preface to the English Language Edition,” in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, ed. Lawrence D Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xvii.

⁴⁶ Avishai Margalit has explained the concept of “shared memory” in the following way: “A *shared* memory [...] is not a simple aggregate of individual memories. It requires communication. A shared memory integrates and calibrates the different perspectives of those who remember the episode...into one version...Shared memory is built on a division of mnemonic labor.” *The Ethics of Memory*, 51-52. Quoted in Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 15.

Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants have transmitted memories through Rousso's other vectors, official and scholarly, as well. When employing these vectors, they have engaged to a greater and more direct extent with the historical memories and narratives of those outside their communities. Official carriers of memory, including legislation, monuments, and other forms of commemoration, are produced by the French state, which often asserts itself as the ultimate authority on interpretations of the past. Scholars have documented the essential functions such mediations play in the process of nation building, particularly in the aftermath of defeat.⁴⁷ In the first thirty years following the Algerian War, the state did not attempt to commemorate the conflict and dedicated few public spaces to colonial memory. Since the 1990s, when the state began to re-evaluate its colonial past, Harkis and Pieds-Noirs have lobbied for official recognition of their memories. They have often been dissatisfied, however, with the overtures made by the state. My dissertation analyzes the efforts of Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants to establish official carriers of their memory as well as their resistance to other national, commemorative practices.

Scholarly carriers of memory, including works of history, "reconstruct the facts and propose ways of interpreting them,"⁴⁸ and their authority stems from the rigors of an academic methodology. Some Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants have produced scholarly work. They have also engaged with the work of other scholars on their communities and on the

⁴⁷ As Sherman has argued, "As a form of representation, commemoration seeks to reinforce the solidarity of a particular community or set of communities. It does so by forging a consensus version of an event or connected series of events that has either disrupted the stability of the community or threatened to do so." Sherman, *The Construction of Memory*, 7; John Gillis, *Commemorations : The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past : A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Jenny Macleod, *Defeat and Memory: Cultural Histories of Military Defeat Since 1815*, First Edition edition (Basingstoke England ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁴⁸ Rousso, *Vichy Syndrome*, 221.

histories of French Algeria and the Algerian War, more generally. Harkis and Pieds-Noirs have appropriated historians' narratives as frameworks for their own memory narratives. They have also, however, directly challenged and dismissed the findings of historians that do not fit with their understanding of the past.

The notion of scholarly carriers of memory raises another important issue in the study of memory- the dynamic between “memory” and “history” as competing sources of knowledge about the past. A distinction between collective memory and the practice of history as an academic discipline emerged in the late-twentieth century when scholars became interested in how and why people engaged with the past.⁴⁹ In his seminal work, *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Pierre Nora argued that history and memory were fundamentally equated from the time of the French Revolution until the early 20th century and both worked in the service of building the Republic. He conceptualized memory as “life” and a “bond tying us to the eternal present.” He understood “History, on the other hand, [as] the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer.”⁵⁰ The fact that memory emerged as an object of historical inquiry suggested to Nora that they are no longer joined and are, in fact, in opposition. Other historians have emphasized the differences between memory and history. While they acknowledge that the process of collective memory serves important legitimizing functions for a community, these scholars ultimately see collective memory as faulty, incomplete, and divisive. History, with its rigorous methodology and critical approach to sources, is presented as the objective,

⁴⁹ Ibid, 2.

⁵⁰ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History,” in *Representations* (Spring 1989).

dispassionate alternative to collective memory, and thus a more reliable and authoritative source of truth about the past.⁵¹

This understanding of the dynamic between memory and history is reflected in the competitive memory model. Rothberg has noted how struggles over memory of the Algerian War have translated into confrontations over pedagogy and the writing of history.⁵² Historians have reacted strongly to state intervention in the field of history, in the form of laws dictating how the past should be interpreted,⁵³ as well as to the demands of different group for historical narratives that reflect their interpretations of the past.⁵⁴ Nora and others have denounced “memory” as fostering social divisions.⁵⁵ In *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error*, Alan Megill argued that a return to objective, critical history is necessary for resolving the increasingly violent conflicts occurring on a global scale over competing interpretations, or memories, of the past. At the same time, historians of French Algeria have been well aware of the obstacles to producing scholarly works on this period, including a serious lack of sources and the politically sensitive nature of the subject.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Allan Megill, Steven Shepard, and Phillip Honenberger, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide to Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 22. “Only history is subject to the demands of scientific research- meaning, notably, particular demands in terms of questioning, of sources, and of validation of results.” Savarèse et al., “Rapport de recherche sur le projet de réalisation,” 4.

⁵² Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 267.

⁵³ Laws pertaining to the colonial past include the Gayssot law, enacted in 1990, which protects against anti-Semitic or xenophobic attacks, the Taubira law in 2001, which recognizes slavery as a crime against humanity, and the controversial law of February 2005, which stipulated that school curricula would “acknowledge in particular the positive role of the French overseas presence.”

⁵⁴ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 268.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 269.

⁵⁶ Eric Savarèse, Raphaëlle Branche, Jean Robert Henry, Jean – Charles Jauffret, Claude Liauzu, Gilbert Meynier, Valérie Morin, Guy Perville, Yann Scioldo – Zucher, Benjamin Stora, and Sylvie Thenault, “Rapport de recherche sur le projet de réalisation, a Perpignan, d’un site public de documentation et d’exposition sur l’Algérie : *en finir avec les guerres de mémoires algériennes en France?*” Université de Perpignan, (April 2007), 4.

Considering history as a “scholarly carrier of memory,” as Rousso does, downplays the distinction between memory and history. Rousso is more concerned with the reciprocal relationship between history and collective memory. He explains that while historians’ points of view and questions cannot help but be shaped by the collective memory of an event, the historian also helps to shape that memory through his or her research. This understanding stems from a postmodern critique of historical narrative. Jo McCormack has argued, “history provides a historical memory that is one representation of the past amongst others.”⁵⁷ In Eric Hobsbawm’s introduction to the volume, *The Invention of Tradition*, he argued, “all invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion.”⁵⁸ This critique interprets both memory and history as the product of power dynamics.⁵⁹

A new appreciation for the value of memory as a source of historical truth has developed alongside this postmodern critique of the distinction between history and memory. For those who are suspicious of, or silenced by, the process of historical production, memory can serve as a corrective to the exclusionary practices of historical writing.⁶⁰ Barbara Misztal has argued that memory, which derives its authenticity from personal experience, can “play an important role as a source of truth” in places “where political power heavily censors national history and where

⁵⁷ McCormack, *Collective Memory*, 4.

⁵⁸ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, ed. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 12.

⁵⁹ This understanding is shared by Trouillot in *Silencing the Past* and Fentress and Wickham in *Social Memory*.

⁶⁰ Since Ernest Renan, scholarly attention has been paid to the ‘collective amnesia’ that makes possible national memory. Milan Kundera considers memory a powerful weapon against the totalitarian conspiracy of silence: ‘The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.’ This struggle can be waged by constructing a counternarrative out of the suppressions and silences in official history.” Tai, “Introduction,” 7. “Testimony can be read as individuals’ search for a form to complete the gaps—the silences, the paradoxes, the incomprehension, the scars—of history.” Camila Loew, *The Memory of Pain : Women’s Testimonies of the Holocaust* (Amsterdam ;New York: Rodopi, 2011), 2.

oppressed nations have a profound deficit of truth.”⁶¹ This is also the case in societies in which national history is not censored, but is still being negotiated, as in France with regard to the colonial legacy. The cases of the Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants provide an occasion to observe how memory practices emerge in the context of historical silences and how history is written where there are limited sources and an absence of personal memories due to trauma. My dissertation ultimately argues that memory and history, as two approaches to understanding the past, are formed in relation, and not opposition, to one another. Historians’ lines of inquiry have been shaped by collective memories of the Harki past, but their work has also been used to contextualize and legitimate memory narratives.

Returning to Rousso’s typologies, I argue that the Internet constitutes an additional, significantly different type of memory carrier, which we might call a “cyber” carrier. This study is the first by an historian to examine how these groups use websites and online discussion forums to construct and transmit their collective memories. Analyzing “cyber” memory vectors provides an opportunity think about the role of media in the transmission of memory. The Internet offers a way of representing the past without the filters of French media, publishers, and the state, allowing more individuals to act as architects of collective memory. It enables those with limited access to financial and political resources to participate in the public sphere. For Harki children who cannot or do not want to publish a memoir or make a film, the Internet has provided a place to publicly disseminate a historical narrative. Moreover, as a free and easily accessible means of communicating information, these websites reach an audience “that is different and potentially larger than that of traditional audio-visual media.”⁶² At the same time,

⁶¹ Barbara Misztal, “Memory Experience: The Forms and Functions of Memory,” in *Museums and Their Communities*, ed. Sheila Watson (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 379–396: 383.

⁶² Sutherland, “Harki Autobiographies,” 200.

websites do not have the same authority that these more traditional media afford. Whereas memoirs published by daughters of Harkis have received attention in the national press, the Harki websites are not well known among non-Harkis. For the Pieds-Noirs, who have a longer history of constructing and transmitting a collective memory, websites supplement their other practices. They mainly draw attention to the works of their memorial associations, including their monuments and museum. They do not create discussion forums on which to debate the meaning of their past, as children of Harkis have.

The structure of the Internet imposes its own logic on the ways memories are presented and read online. The digital ontology of memory is one of storage and retrieval, which contrasts with the cognitive processes of recollection and association that comprise human memory.⁶³ Computers can be used as external memory repositories, but their software design does not reflect a cultural understanding of memory.⁶⁴ Unlike monuments or books, which offer a relatively fixed text for others to accept, reject, or reinterpret, digital memory is accessed in a continuous and fragmented manner. This interface limits how participants receive, process, and imbue meaning in the information that is stored. It makes it difficult, for example, for children of Harkis to present a coherent and consistent narrative of their past. At the same time, the non-narrative nature of digital memory opens up possibilities for contesting national, official history. As a collection of thoughts, conversations, and representations, online collective memory resembles an archive of sorts, a compilation of texts for people to assemble and interpret. Yet it is an alternative, subversive archive, which undermines the monopoly of the state in the

⁶³ Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Introduction: Did Somebody Say New Media?," in *New Media, Old Media : A History and Theory Reader*, ed. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan (New York ;London: Routledge, 2006), 1–10; Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "The Enduring Ephemeral, or the Future Is a Memory," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 1 (September 2008): 148–71.

⁶⁴ Chun, "The Enduring Ephemeral," 164.

preservation of memories. This counter-archive limits the state's ability to erase traces of the past that undermine the national narrative. Deleting practices are essential here. Since digital memory is less susceptible to the erosion of time than objects, documents, and the human mind, the Internet constitutes a potential "end of forgetting."⁶⁵ This safeguard against the transient nature of memory has reassured the children of Harkis, who have understood themselves as "those forgotten by history (*les oubliés de l'histoire*)," and the Pieds-Noirs, who fear that their "memory" will be lost with their generation.

As a new medium of communication, the Internet also offers social networking possibilities for physically dispersed and fragmented communities, such as the Harkis and the Pieds-Noirs. My dissertation explores how members of these groups make use of the Internet to create or recreate connections based on the idea of a shared past. In the case of the Harkis, their children have used the Internet to promote collective action, most often to publically contest official memory practices. Using websites as a means of communication and subversion, they have signaled their lack of ideological consensus and have organized national boycotts of the commemorations. Pieds-Noirs, who have a long associative tradition and greater access to means of protest and resistance to official memory, have used the social networking possibilities afforded by the Internet differently. By posting photos of public landmarks and private residences in Algeria, they have sought to digitally reconstruct the historically and symbolically significant places of their past. They have also attempted to reconnect with former Algerian and Pied-Noir classmates and neighbors with whom they can reminisce and commemorate their losses.

⁶⁵ Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

Ultimately, these websites also afford historians the opportunity to observe the contentious process of collective memory. One reason why scholars have not examined discord within groups over memory of the Algerian War is that they have not had access to these conflicts. Because of the public nature of discussions on websites, historians can observe quite clearly the construction and policing of memory. On Harki websites, administrators establish on the site an official memory for the association, which they update through various articles announcing the appropriate reactions to current events. Furthermore, they regulate what is posted in the discussion board forums both by removing offensive posts and by lecturing posters about the “proper” perspective on issues of collective memory and identity. Participants also use the sites to respond to and contest interpretations expressed by on other sites. Websites make visible to historians the conflicts that nearly always occur within groups when constructing a collective memory, and therefore constitute a valuable new source for collective memory studies.

At the same time, it is important not to overestimate the severity of these online conflicts. Certain features of “cyber” carriers have contributed to the emergence and dominance of the competitive memory model in France.⁶⁶ The “memory wars” metaphor emerged from the perception that disputes over the past had progressively invaded the public sphere. This impression has been due in large part to the rising influence of new media, which diffuse information more quickly and accelerate disputes.⁶⁷ The anonymity afforded by the Internet may have also contributed to the sense of fierce conflict in debates about the colonial past. Behind the protective veil of a pseudonym, online participants are less inhibited in their speech and their

⁶⁶ The relationship between the Internet and the “memory wars” concept has not been sufficiently explored. Louise Merzea proposes questions and theories about how it might work in “Guerres de mémoires *on line*: un nouvel enjeu stratégique?” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires*, ed. Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, pp. 287-298.

⁶⁷ Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, “Introduction,” 25.

exchanges take on a more aggressive tone, thereby heightening tensions. This phenomenon is compounded by the ability to react almost instantaneously, without the filters of time or institutions. Since the Internet affects the speed, tone and pervasiveness of confrontations over the past, it produces extreme versions of what are normal collective memory processes.

In my study of Harki and Pied Noir memory narratives and practices, I employ gender as a category of analysis. I agree with the observation of Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut that memory and gender are “multiply intertwined: gender is a product of cultural remembrance, is called up by memory and social practices and is constantly re-inscribed into the collective memory. Memories are, moreover, gendered.”⁶⁸ At the same time, gender functions differently depending on the particular context of remembrance. My dissertation is the first to analyze the relationships between gender and memory in Harki and Pied-Noir memory communities and to systematically explore the ways in which memory of the Algerian War has been gendered. I draw on methodologies developed through the intersecting fields of women’s history and oral history,⁶⁹ studies of women’s Holocaust testimonies,⁷⁰ and analyses of the gendering of war, national identity, and empire⁷¹ to address four sets of questions.

⁶⁸ Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut, “Introduction: Gender and Memory Culture in Europe- Female Representations in Historical Perspective,” in *The Gender of Memory : Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut (Frankfurt; New York: Campus-Verlag, 2008), 7–28, 10.

⁶⁹ Selma Leydesdorff, Luisa Passerini, and Paul Thompson, *Gender and Memory* (New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers, 2005).

⁷⁰ S. Lillian Kremer, *Women’s Holocaust Writing: Memory and Imagination* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Janet Liebman Jacobs, *Memorializing the Holocaust: Gender, Genocide and Collective Memory* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010); Camila Loew, *The Memory of Pain : Women’s Testimonies of the Holocaust* (Amsterdam ;New York: Rodopi, 2011).

⁷¹ Lynne Hanley, *Writing War : Fiction, Gender, and Memory* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991); Lucy Noakes, *War and the British : Gender, Memory and National Identity* (London ;New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998); Hue-Tam Tai, “Introduction: Situating Memory,” in *The Country of Memory : Remaking the Past in Late Socialist Vietnam*, ed. Hue-Tam Tai (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 1–17; Hagemann, Karen and Sonya Michel, “Introduction: Gender and the Long Postwar: Reconsiderations of the United States and the Two

First, how do collective memories of colonial Algeria and the Algerian War enforce or challenge understandings of gender roles? “Harki” is a male-coded category, since the Harkis were originally soldiers and their families became part of the Harki community through their association with this male figure. Daughters of Harkis, however, have become particularly vocal representatives of this community through their mainstream memoirs and novels. In Chapter 5 of this dissertation, I explore how Harki sons have resented the co-opting of this “male history” by female narrators. I also argue that the popularity of the Harki daughters’ texts reveals how the legacy of colonialism has continued to shape French understandings of gender roles among French of North African origin. As Joan Scott has explained in the context of debates over the headscarf in France, Muslim women have often been perceived as victims, “of Muslim patriarchy in general and of predatory Muslim boys in particular. In this way, the picture of the Muslim community as a homogeneous entity, dictating the lives of its female members, was systematically developed; its counterpoint was the individualism and gender equality of republican France.”⁷² Harki daughters’ writings, then, have been embraced as acts of emancipation from their fathers and brothers.

Second, I address the question of whether women remember differently than men by identifying gender specific practices of memory among the Harkis.⁷³ Harki daughters, for example, have published most of the memoirs on the Harki past, whereas the majority of webmasters for Harki websites are sons of Harkis. I also compare the content of the narratives

Germanys, 1945-1989,” in *Gender and the Long Postwar : The United States and the Two Germanys, 1945-1989*, ed. Karen Hagemann and Sonya Michel (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 1–27.

⁷² Joan Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 71.

⁷³ Sylvia Schraut and Sylvia Paletschek, “Remembrance and Gender: Making Gender Visible and Inscribing Women into Memory Culture,” in *The Gender of Memory : Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut (Frankfurt ;New York: Campus-Verlag, 2008), 267–87: 272.

transmitted by Harki sons and daughters. Several studies have explored the different language and framing techniques men and women use to convey their personal accounts of the past.⁷⁴ The “absence of emphasis on choice” that James Fentress and Chris Wickham identified in women’s memories is quite applicable in the case of the Harkis. Fentress and Wickham explained this phenomenon by observing, “women, however powerful, have tended to live their lives in environments whose public, external power structures have been under the control of men.”⁷⁵ The question of choice is central to interpreting the Harki past and Chapter 4 of this dissertation analyzes how Harki sons and daughters have disagreed on this issue.

The third set of questions considers how Algerian War commemorations and monuments have been gendered. I take up the call by Schraut and Paletschek “to examine gender-specific meanings attached to existing places of memory, the (national) symbols, values, concepts of power and history related with them, as well as the implicit images of masculinity and femininity they contain.”⁷⁶ In honoring the Harkis’ service to France as soldiers, the French state has ascribed a form of martial masculinity to the Harkis. This type of masculinity has been undermined by the collective memories of the Harkis and their families, who explain that the Harkis suffered the emasculating humiliation of abandonment and failure to protect their families. In Chapter 3, I argue that this is one reason why Harki children have created their own commemorations that reflect their understandings of their fathers as victims of French violence, rather than as soldiers.

Finally, since this dissertation focuses on the contentious process of collective memory, as well as its potential as a basis for reconciliation, I explore the roles gender has played in

⁷⁴ Paletschek and Schraut, “Introduction,” 20; Leydesdorff, Passerini, and Thompson, *Gender and Memory*, vii, 2.

⁷⁵ Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, 142.

⁷⁶ Schraut and Paletschek, “Remembrance and Gender,” 270.

memory conflicts. As debates among Harki sons and daughters demonstrate, gender constitutes yet another level on which memory is divisive. In their memoirs, women are more likely to present highly individualistic narratives that do not conform to collective understandings of the Harki past. This gendered division does not, however, figure into the “memory wars” model of competitive memory that I critique in this dissertation. I also consider whether forms of “multidirectional memory” appear gendered. Harki daughters tend to seek reconciliation with other French of North African origin through a shared history of colonial oppression. Some Harki sons, on the other hand, have presented the Harkis as patriotic Frenchmen and asserted their right to belong in French society.

Generation is another useful category in the study of memory. Scholars have examined how memory, particularly of a traumatic event, is transmitted from those who experienced the event to their children. In studying the work of second-generation Holocaust survivors, Marianne Hirsch introduced the concept of “postmemory.” “Postmemory” describes the relationship that the ‘generation after’ bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before—to experiences they ‘remember’ only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right.⁷⁷ I argue that generation functions differently in the Harki and Pied-Noir memory communities. The memory work of Harki children reflects the “structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience” that defines postmemory.⁷⁸ The second generation of Pieds-Noirs, however, do not seem to have inherited the traumatic experiences of their parents to the same

⁷⁷ Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (2008): 103–28: 106–107. Hirsch’s emphasis.

⁷⁸ Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” 106.

degree. Since their arrival in metropolitan France, Pieds-Noirs have struggled to transfer their memory to those who never lived in Algeria. Most of their memory practices are aimed at institutionalizing their narratives in monuments, museums, and archives so that it will not disappear after they are gone. First generation Harkis, in contrast, remain relatively silent about the past in comparison to members of the “postmemory” generation.

Historiography of the Algerian War and the “Memory Wars” Paradigm

The first thirty years following the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) were marked by a lack of public discussion in France about the meaning and significance of colonialism. Not only did the French find it difficult to commemorate the loss of their empire, but the trauma experienced by those who fought in the Algerian War produced an aversion to revisiting this past. This silence extended to academia, where historians faced a limited source base and remained ideologically divided. Beginning in the late 1990s, social and political developments in both France and Algeria, including the trial of Maurice Papon, revelations of torture, and the releasing of key documents regarding the Algerian War in French archives, prompted the French to publically confront their colonial legacy and to begin evaluating its contemporary significance.⁷⁹ The French state started to dedicate spaces to colonial memory, constructing war monuments to those who died for France,⁸⁰ and to produce laws aimed at

⁷⁹ Joshua Cole, “Massacres And Their Historians: Recent Histories of State Violence in France and Algeria in the Twentieth Century,” *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 28:1, Spring 2010, pp. 106-126, (107, 108). Raphaëlle Branche, *La torture et l’armée pendant la guerre d’Algérie: 1954-1962*, (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).

⁸⁰ Colonial war monuments include one erected near Paris’s Boulevard d’Algérie in 1996 to commemorate victims of the conflicts in North Africa, the ‘Memorial national aux combattants d’Outre-Mer’ unveiled in 1997 outside Avignon, and the 2002 North African War memorial on the Quai Branly in Paris to servicemen who died in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums, and Colonial Memories* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 136-156.

establishing “a normative vision of colonial history.”⁸¹

The turn of the millennium has ushered in a new phase in the history of this memory. This period has not only marked the end of amnesia regarding the Algerian War,⁸² but, according to some scholars, has also been characterized by the reverse trend—a surfeit of colonial memory.⁸³ Groups with a stake in the colonial past have engaged in a wide range of public memory practices: observing commemorations, constructing monuments, publishing memoirs, novels, and films, and participating in memorial associations. Their memory work is interpreted as a reaction to France’s inability, or unwillingness, to deal with its colonial legacy, which had made it difficult for descendants of colonial subjects to find a place in French society.

This most recent development has concerned French scholars of colonial history, who view this “explosion of memory” as a threat to the unity of the Republic.⁸⁴ As Nicolas Bancel has observed:

it is possible to think of this phase of colonial rehabilitation which has, since the early years of the twenty-first century, haunted France, as indicative of a far more profound preoccupation that relates to the widespread sentiment that France is disintegrating, on the verge of collapse, being systematically dismantled and its *grandeur* waning, a

⁸¹ Laws pertaining to the colonial past include the Gayssot law, enacted in 1990, which protects against anti-Semitic or xenophobic attacks, the Taubira law in 2001, which recognizes slavery as a crime against humanity, and the controversial law of February 2005, which stipulated that school curricula would “acknowledge in particular the positive role of the French overseas presence.” Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, Sandrine Lemaire, ed. *La Fracture Coloniale : La Société Française Au Prisme De L’héritage Colonial*, (Editions La Découverte, 2005,) 17.

⁸² Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora, *La Guerre d’Algérie: 1954-2004, La Fin de L’amnésie* (Paris: R. Laffont, 2004).

⁸³ Johann Michel, *Gouverner Les Mémoires - Les Politiques Mémorielles En France* (Presses Universitaires de France - PUF, 2010), 138-139; Bancel and Blanchard, “La colonisation,” 139; Henri Rousso, “La guerre d’Algérie et la culture de la mémoire”, *Le Monde*, 4 April 2002; Mary Stevens, “Commemorative Fever? French Memorials to the Veterans of the Conflicts in North Africa,” *French Studies Bulletin* 26, no. 97 (December 21, 2005): 2–4. This is not the first time that the French have worried about the presence of “too much memory.” Rousso identified a similar “surplus” of memory of the Vichy regime. Eric Conan and Henry Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas*, Édition : édition revue et corrigée (Paris: Fayard/Pluriel, 2013).

⁸⁴ Blanchard, Bancel, Lemaire, ed. *La Fracture Coloniale*, 11.

grandeur which historically has always been inextricably linked to the representation of the history of the nation.⁸⁵

Lingering colonial tensions in French society, identified by Pascal Blanchard and Nicolas Bancel as “the colonial fracture,”⁸⁶ appear to manifest themselves in disputes over the past.⁸⁷ More importantly, scholars perceive memory conflicts as heightening and reinforcing these social tensions: “it is growing more apparent that memory (especially when articulated in the plural) has generated conflicts, as sources of serious difficulties for the contemporary ‘vivre ensemble’ that is already so threatened.”⁸⁸

Most of these concerns emerged after the National Assembly passed a law in February 2005 defending France’s colonial project and the legislation triggered such uproar among anti-colonialists on the left, descendants of colonial subjects, and educators, that the government repealed the offending article in November of 2005.⁸⁹ The fallout from this law revealed the limits of the French state’s power to impose a national memory of colonialism. Outrage over the law may also have contributed to the widespread protests by immigrant and minority youth that erupted in the *banlieues* during the fall of 2005.⁹⁰ To Nora and other scholars observing the particular vehemence of the polemics surrounding the law, the incident seemed to highlight “the

⁸⁵ Nicolas Bancel, “France, 2005: A Postcolonial Turning Point,” *French Cultural Studies* 24, no. 2 (2013): 208–18: 212.

⁸⁶ Blanchard, Bancel, and Lemaire, *La Fracture Coloniale*, 26.

⁸⁷ Mary Stevens, “Visibility, equality, difference: drawing the battle lines in France’s ‘memory wars’,” *Journal of Romance Studies*, 9, no.3, Winter 2009: 102-109: 104. Savarese, *Algérie*, 7.

⁸⁸ Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, “Introduction,” 28.

⁸⁹ Loi n° 2005-158. The polemic centered on Article 4 of the law, which stipulated that school curricula would “acknowledge in particular the positive role of the French overseas presence.”

⁹⁰ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 268.

conflictual incompatibility of memories”⁹¹ and to signal a new degree of political and social polarization in France.⁹²

To make sense of the current state of colonial memory, some scholars have employed the paradigm of “memory wars.”⁹³ This conceptual framework was first introduced by Daniel Lindenberg in 1994 to describe how political and social movements since the French Revolution have used, and often misused, historical symbols and analogies for legitimizing purposes.⁹⁴ Lindenberg did not define the concept of “memory wars” in his article and it has remained a highly ambiguous, if evocative, term. Those who employ the term seem to understand “memory wars” as a pattern of memory conflicts in modern France in which various groups proclaim competing memory narratives and fracture the Republican ideal of a single shared history.⁹⁵ For postcolonial scholars Benjamin Stora, Eric Savarèse, Pascal Blanchard, and others, the colonial past, including the Algerian War, constitutes a particularly divisive “battlefield” of French memories.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 269. Citing Nora in Buob and Frachon, “La France est malade de sa mémoire,” *Le Monde* 2. Rothberg’s translation.

⁹² Bancel, “France, 2005,” 209, 215; Blanchard, Bancel, and Lemaire, *La Fracture Coloniale*; Michel, *Gouverner*, 157.

⁹³ Daniel Lindenberg, “Guerres de mémoires en France,” *Vingtième siècle, Revue d’histoire* 42, no. 1 (Apr-Jun 1994) : 77-95; Eric Savarese, *Algérie : La guerre des mémoires*, (Editions Non Lieu, 2007) ; Benjamin Stora and Thierry Leclère, *La Guerre des Mémoires: La France face à son passé colonial* (Paris : Editions de l’Aube, 2008) ; Pascal Blanchard, Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, and Collectif, *Les Guerres de Mémoires : La France et Son Histoire, Enjeux Politiques, Controverses Historiques, Stratégies Médiatiques* (Editions La Découverte, 2010).

⁹⁴ Lindenberg, “Guerres de mémoires en France,” 94.

⁹⁵ Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, “Introduction,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires*, ed. Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, pp.15-49 : 28; Jean-Michel Chaumont, *La Concurrence Des Victimes* (La Découverte, 2002).

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 21.

These historians identify the Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants as main participants in the “memory wars.”⁹⁷ Yet these cases challenge basic features of the “memory wars” paradigm. The war metaphor presents conflicts as battles between monolithic identity groups with highly codified collective memories. A war, after all, requires the existence of distinct “rival camps.”⁹⁸ Bancel and Blanchard identify “a polarization of colonial memories in France, with clearly distinguished opposing ‘camps.’”⁹⁹ In analyses of the conflicts over the February 2005 law, some scholars positioned the Harkis in the “camp” of those who are “nostalgic” for French Algeria.¹⁰⁰ Harkis have participated in Pied-Noir organizations, including those that express nostalgic sentiments toward French Algeria,¹⁰¹ and Article 5 of the law specifically protects the Harkis from insults and defamation.¹⁰² And yet, children of Harkis were among the most outspoken opponents of the law’s pro-colonial stance,¹⁰³ hinting at deep divisions among Harkis about how to understand and commemorate the colonial period.

The war metaphor also provides a deceptive sense of continuity between memory conflicts and the battles they are evoking. The actors, stakes, and causes of the Algerian War are

⁹⁷ Savarese, *Algérie*, 10; Stora and Leclère, *La Guerre des Mémoires*, 11; Michel, *Gouverner*, 153; Nicolas Bancel et Pascal Blanchard “La colonisation : du débat sur la guerre d’Algérie au discours de Dakar,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires*, ed. Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, (Editions La Découverte, 2010), pp. 137-154: 146.

⁹⁸ Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, “Introduction,” 38; Lindenberg, “Guerres de mémoires,” 93.

⁹⁹ Bancel and Blanchard, “La colonisation,” 142.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 146; Michel, *Gouverner*, 153.

¹⁰¹ Pied-Noir associations emerged shortly after their arrival in France and most claimed to represent the interests of all rapatriés, including the Harkis and their families. Independent Harki organizations started to develop in the 1970s. Abderahmen Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans En Vauchuse: 1932-1991* (Editions L’Harmattan, 2003), 139.

¹⁰² As Vincent Crapanzano has observed, Article 5 was the result of Harki associations’ lobbying efforts. Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 18.

¹⁰³ See “Appel d’enfants de Harkis contre les articles 4 et 13 de la loi du 23 février 2005” and “L’Association Harkis et droits de l’Homme dénonce la loi du 23 février 2005” on Harki.net. Some were also unhappy with the law because they thought it did not go far enough in protecting the Harkis.

not perfectly reproduced in disputes about how to interpret the past; instead, these disputes reflect the current social context in which they take place. The Harkis are defined by having sided with the French against the FLN during the Algerian War.¹⁰⁴ But the Harkis and their descendants have occupied an ambivalent place in a “fractured” postcolonial French society. They continue to be rejected as “traitors” by Algerian immigrant communities, where the term “Harki” has become an insult. The Harkis and their families are equally lost in a polarized political climate. Harkis have traditionally been portrayed as “collaborators” by the anti-colonial left and they are neither comfortable with the Gaullist right, given that Charles de Gaulle gave an order to abandon the Harkis in Algeria after the war, nor with the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the Front National. Their liminal postcolonial status, and not their status during the war, helps explain the Harki descendants’ conflicting understandings of the past and how they position themselves in relation to Algerian immigrants and the rest of French society. Moreover, the collective memories of Harkis and Pieds-Noirs have changed in important ways since the end of the war. Analyzing Pied-Noir association journals reveals that members of this community have adapted their memory narratives and practices in response to the evolving status of the colonial legacy in France and the general memorial climate.

The concept of a “war of memories” implies a zero-sum game of irreconcilable memories.¹⁰⁵ It evokes a scenario in which groups seek to annihilate other narratives to establish their own. As Savarèse explains, “The notion of ‘memory wars’ allows us – at least partially – to

¹⁰⁴ Francois-Xavier Hautreux, “Quelques pistes pour une meilleure compréhension de l’engagement des Harkis (1954-1962),” in “Harkis 1962-2012 Les Mythes et les Faits,” *Les Temps Modernes*, No. 666, Novembre-Décembre 2011, p. 44-53; Mohand Hamoumou and Abderahmen Moumen, “L’histoire des Harkis et Français musulmans : la fin d’un tabou?” in Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora (ed.), *La Guerre d’Algérie : la fin de l’amnésie* (Paris : Robert Laffont, 2004), pp.317-344, 318-324.

¹⁰⁵ This is a defining feature of a “framework that understands collective memory as *competitive* memory.” Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 3.

understand a novel situation: Pieds-Noirs, Harkis, former combatants, even drafted soldiers or ‘suitcase carriers,’¹⁰⁶ compete, through various militant actions, to have their memories converted into official history – to the detriment of the memories of competing ‘groups.’”¹⁰⁷ This understanding of memory conflicts, however, obscures attempts among groups to reconcile conflicting narratives. Some architects of Harki and Pied-Noir collective memories do explicitly challenge specific narratives, but others are more comfortable with coexisting competing memories.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, my research reveals that intra-communal debates among Harkis and Pieds-Noirs are ultimately about how to situate themselves within a France coming to terms with its colonial legacy. Their efforts to incorporate their past into competing national understandings of the Algerian War demonstrate their desire to create a place for themselves in French history, not to deny others a place in the national community.

Finally, scholars who employ the term “memory wars” have not fully interrogated how their use of the concept may reify it.¹⁰⁹ In her review of Savarèse’s *Algérie : La guerre des mémoires* and Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson’s *Les Guerres de Mémoires : La France et Son Histoire*, Mary Stevens notes that “the authors largely accept the concept at face value and in so doing they run the risk of affording it a potentially dangerous credibility.”¹¹⁰ Politicians,

¹⁰⁶ The “*porteurs de valises*” were French leftists who supported members of the FLN fighting in metropolitan France during the Algerian War.

¹⁰⁷ Savarese, *Algérie*, 10.

¹⁰⁸ For example, Fatima Besnaci-Lancou participated on a roundtable entitled “1962-2012 : comment réconcilier les mémoires?” at a symposium organized by the Senate on June 30, 2012. Fatima Besnaci-Lancou also argued along with Yazid Sabeg, the president of the Convention laïque pour l’égalité, that, “if there were to be any reconciliation between Algeria and France, all parties involved would have to respect their different memories.” Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 173.

¹⁰⁹ Many have suggested that the “memory wars” are unproductive and must be replaced by “la réflexion sur l’histoire des *interactions franco – algériennes*, saisies dans toute leur complexité.” They do not, however, consider the utility of the term itself. Savarèse et al., “Rapport de recherche sur le projet de réalisation,” 2.

¹¹⁰ Stevens, “Visibility, equality, difference,” 104.

including Presidents Francois Hollande and Abdelaziz Bouteflika, have, since 2005, adopted the “memory wars” terminology to describe memory conflicts in France and Algeria.¹¹¹ Scholars note that these politicians have denounced the “wars” as evidence of *communautarisme*, the desire to disassociate from the national community.¹¹² The specter of *communautarisme* provides both a justification for discrediting the memory work of various non-state actors and an excuse to impose a hegemonic interpretation of the past. Harki children and Pieds-Noirs have likewise co-opted the metaphor of “memory wars” to frame their memory practices and relationships to the memories of others. As this discourse of competitive memory has circulated out of academic settings, from historians of memory to the communities they study, it may have ultimately perpetuated fears about the potential divisiveness of memory.

My dissertation thus not only reveals the limitations of using this conceptual framework for analyzing the Harki and Pied-Noir memory practices and objectives, but also shows that as an incarnation of the competitive memory model that Rothberg has identified, it can be a highly problematic way of interpreting the current memorial climate. I argue that it reflects the concerns of this climate rather than providing a useful framework for studying them. A paradigm such as “multidirectional memory” is more appropriate because it allows analytical space for examining attempts at reconciliation through memory.

Sources and Structure

My dissertation is divided into two parts, one for each of the Harki and Pied-Noir case

¹¹¹ “En Finir Avec ‘La Guerre Des Mémoires’ (Hollande),” *Europe 1*, 19 March 2012, <http://www.europe1.fr/Politique/En-finir-avec-la-guerre-des-memoires-Hollande-995975/>, (accessed October 27, 2013); “Le Président Bouteflika Se Dit Opposé Aux ‘Guerres de Mémoires’ Entre l’Algérie et La France,” *Nouvelobs.com*, 08 May 2012, <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/monde/20120508.FAP3476/le-president-bouteflika-se-dit-oppose-aux-guerres-de-memoires-entre-l-algerie-et-la-france.html>, (accessed October 27, 2013).

¹¹² Savarese, *Algérie*, 7. Ahmed Boubeker, “L’immigration: enjeux d’histoire et de memoire à l’aube du XXIe siècle,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires*, ed. Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, pp.165-174:165-6; Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, “Introduction,” 27.

studies, consisting of eight chapters in total. I employ a thematic approach, focused on specific themes and vectors of memory. Thus, while this dissertation is organized chronologically, several chapters cover the same time periods. I investigate the different media that Harkis and Pieds-Noirs have used to construct and transmit memory narratives. As such, I consulted published primary sources, including memoirs, novels, and scholarly works by members of the communities, as well as association journals at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and films through the Inathèque de France. Harki and Pied-Noir websites, discussion forums, and blogs are available to the public online and I received additional materials through listservs. I attended protests, commemorations, film screenings, and conferences, and I conducted interviews with association members, website administrators, memoir writers, and other activists in the memory communities. Finally, my research took me to the former locations of two Harkis camps, Bias and Rivesaltes, as well as to the Pied-Noir museum and memorial in Perpignan.

In the Harki section, the first chapter traces the histories of Harki collective memory and historiography in the context of French and Algerian memories of the Algerian War. I also examine the main subjects of debate in the Harki past and analyze the stakes different groups have in how this history is interpreted. The themes of paternal and institutional silence have been well established in Harki scholarship. In the second chapter, I analyze the exceptions to first-generation Harki silence, in the form of association journals and memoirs. I also interrogate how the self-identification of second-generation Harkis as “*les oubliés de l’histoire*” has informed their memory work. The third chapter explores the reactions of Harki children to official commemorations of the Harki past. I show how they have organized boycotts and hosted their own counter-commemorations in order to challenge the state’s focus on the Harkis’ military service and to hold the state responsible for its role in the post-independence violence against the

Harkis. The fourth chapter analyzes the role of gender in the construction and transmission of Harki collective memories. I compare memory narratives communicated by Harki daughters through cultural vectors with those found on male dominated websites and discussion forums. I show that they disagree on two key historical questions: how to interpret the French colonial project in Algeria and the Harkis' motivations for siding with the French during the Algerian War. The fifth chapter studies how Harki children have employed cyber carriers of memory to contest narratives constructed by other Harki descendants and those outside their community. I highlight the intra-communal memory disputes that are revealed and even exacerbated through this medium.

The first Pied-Noir chapter constructs a history of Pied-Noir memory practices since their arrival in France and details the historiography of this group within the context of evolving attitudes towards the colonial period. I identify the dominant themes and narratives they have transmitted through cultural and organizational vectors and examine how they have constructed their identity in reaction to other groups in French society. The next chapter in this section traces the evolutions in Pied-Noir commemorative practices. I concentrate on the memory work of the *Cercle Algérianiste*, the largest Pied-Noir association and the founder of two of the most important Pied-Noir monuments: the reconstructed Sidi-Ferruch memorial and the *Mur des Disparus*. I argue that members of the *Cercle* have adapted the focus of their commemorations to reflect the current politics of memory, which reward positions of victimhood, and to facilitate the inter-generational transmission of memory. This chapter also describes the ways in which Pied-Noirs have employed websites as a new memory technology. The final chapter is a case study of the *Cercle Algérianiste's Centre de Documentation des Français d'Algérie*, which is the only museum site in France devoted entirely to the colonial past. I analyze the narratives presented in

the CDDFA and the functions this institution serves for their memory community. I show that even as they try to preserve their historical and cultural differences, the Pieds-Noirs who constructed this museum are ultimately seeking acceptance of their past from the rest of French society.

CHAPTER 1: MAKING SENSE OF THE HARKI PAST: HARKI HISTORY, COLLECTIVE MEMORY, AND HISTORIOGRAPHY 1954-2013¹

Since 1962, different groups with competing motivations, concerns, and perspectives have written about the history of the Harkis. In this chapter, I analyze the changing ways in which various historians, the French and Algerian states, participants in the Algerian War, Harkis, and their descendants have ascribed meaning to the Harki past. This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first, I present the interrelated histories of French and Algerian national memories of the Algerian War, Harki collective memory practices, and Harki historiography through three main phases. I focus in particular on sources of silence and what they signify. Historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot has observed, “Silences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance).”² The Harki past has been silenced, with varying degrees of intention, at each stage of the historical process. This chapter details how Harki memory practices emerged in the context of these historical silences. It also explores the difficulties of narrating Harki history in the face of limited sources and an absence of personal memories due to trauma.

The second section of the chapter presents the main areas of historical contention involving the Harkis and their descendants. These issues are often tied to larger debates about the

¹ This chapter previously appeared in *A Practical Guide to French Harki Literature*. Laura Sims, “Making Sense of the Harki Past: Harki History, Collective Memory, and Historiography 1954-2013,” in *A Practical Guide to French Harki Literature*, ed. Keith Moser (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 57–81.

² Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 26.

colonial past, including the paradox of French Muslim de jure and de facto rights, the unique status of French Algeria, and the violent nature of the Algerian War. I analyze what is at stake in these disputes, why they persist, and, since the past is re-constructed based on the concerns of the present,³ what they reveal about the continuing significance of the colonial legacy. Although revisiting the past, particularly a traumatic one, can be divisive, these debates ultimately constitute conversations about how to assign meaning to shared events and are part of the normal social process of coming to terms with the past.

Phases of Harki Historiography

1960s – 1970s

For the first thirty years following the Algerian War, the French pursued a policy of “active forgetting” regarding the conflict.⁴ The purpose of a national collective memory is to unite a country around a shared, and often celebratory, interpretation of the past. The Algerian War had ended in a costly and embarrassing defeat for the French, and a large part of the French population came to think of the conflict as a disaster. Moreover, leaders did not want to jeopardize France’s new economic and diplomatic relations with its former colonies by narrating or commemorating the history of colonialism. Thus the French state preferred to avoid the subject entirely. French citizens, including the Harkis, other former participants in the war, and historians generally followed suit. Pieds-Noirs constituted the notable exceptions, as they publicly mourned the loss of French Algeria.

French silence extended to the level of scholarship on the Harkis, a group whose history was particularly problematic to narrate. The Harkis were emblematic of the disastrous and

³ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 68.

⁴ Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène et L’oubli : La Mémoire de La Guerre d’Algérie* (Editions La Découverte, 1991).

divisive war, having made the “choice” to fight and defend the colonial regime. To say there were no academic studies on the Harkis during this time would be an exaggeration; there were, for example, some psychologists who studied the effects of trauma among the Harkis.⁵

Nonetheless, the perceived absence of scholarly interest in the Harkis was so pronounced that it earned the Harkis the label of “those who have been forgotten by History.”⁶ Chapter 2 of this dissertation explores how the perception of Harki children that they and their parents had been forgotten, or ignored, shaped their collective identity and memory work.⁷

Harkis and their wives had their own reasons for remaining silent, both in public and at home, about their past. Sociologists and other scholars have since argued that due to the trauma of the conflict, as well as a sense of guilt over its consequences for their families, most Harkis did not transmit memories of the war and their migration to France to their children.⁸ As a result, many sons and daughters of Harkis grew up with a fundamental lack of understanding of what had occurred, why they were in France, and why their family’s past constituted a source of shame. Harkis and their wives also generally avoided discussing their experiences in public because they wanted to integrate into French society, not draw attention to their role in the war. Many, particularly the wives, lacked the education and French language skills necessary to express themselves, even if they had wanted to. Thus, there was no Harki collective memory to speak of at this time. Yet, not all Harkis stayed entirely silent about the past. In Chapter 2, I

⁵ Mohand Hamoumou, *Et Ils Sont Devenus Harkis* (Fayard, 1993), 35.

⁶ Michel Roux, *Les Harkis, ou, Les oubliés de l’histoire* (Paris : Editions La Découverte, 1991).

⁷ I argue that Harki children have sought both to combat what they see as deliberate forgetting and to fill gaps in historical knowledge with personal testimonies.

⁸ Laurent Muller, *Le Silence Des Harkis* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1999), 199; Jean-Jacques Jordi and Mohand Hamoumou, *Les Harkis : Une mémoire Enfouie* (Paris: Autrement, 1999); William B. Cohen, “The Harkis: History and Memory,” in *Algeria & France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, ed. Patricia M. E. Lorcin (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 164–180: 172; McCormack, *Collective Memory*; Vincent Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

analyze the memory narratives of Saïd Ferdi and Brahim Sadouni,⁹ who published memoirs in the 1980s, and the Harkis who participated in the Union Nationale des Anciens Combattants Français de Confession Islamique (UNACFCI) association. I show that these Harkis engaged with the past in fragmented, and often individualized, ways.

In Algeria, the post-independence regime likewise avoided critical historical engagement with the war, so as to promote national unity. Rather than opting for silence, however, the Algerian state mythologized the event.¹⁰ Lydia Saadi-Bouras's analysis of Algerian textbooks has revealed "the Algerian school discourse transforms and reduces all of national history to an epic saga of the resistance against colonial forces that followed one another in Algeria, papering over every trace of fratricide and the unsettling struggles that might tear the nation apart."¹¹ This heroic narrative had the dual functions of legitimizing the FLN government and creating the foundation for a strong national identity.¹² As evidence of the fratricide of the war, the Harkis posed a challenge to the narrative of national unity through their very existence. Therefore the Harkis were presented simply as traitors and collaborators who did not belong to the national community.¹³ In order to avoid reanimating tensions,¹³ scholars have generally shied away from exploring the extent to which Algerians supported the French.¹⁴ Specialists certainly have not

⁹ Saïd Ferdi, *Un Enfant Dans La Guerre* (Seuil, 1981); Brahim Sadouni, *Français Sans Patrie : Premier Témoignage Écrit Par Un Harki* (B. Sadouni, 1985).

¹⁰ Stora, *La Gangrène et L'oubli*.

¹¹ Lydia Aït Saadi-Bouras, "Les Harkis Dans Les Manuels Scolaires Algériens," in *Harkis 1962-2012: Les Mythes et Les Faits*, vol. 666, Les Temps Modernes (Paris: Gallimard, 2011), 197–210: 209.

¹² Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 9.

¹³ Saadi-Bouras, "Les Harkis Dans Les Manuels Scolaires," 209.

¹⁴ Ibid, 198. Mohammed Harbi, who was a participant in the FLN, is the exception, as the only Algerian historian addressing the issue of the Harkis. He is no longer associated with the FLN, however, and lives in political exile. Abderahmen Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans En Vaucluse: 1932-1991* (Editions L'Harmattan, 2003), 11; Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Abderahmen Moumen, *Les Harkis, Idées Reçues* (Editions Le Cavalier Bleu, 2008), 120;

addressed the violence exacted on the Harkis immediately following independence.¹⁵ The power of the “traitor” narrative was such that in post-independence Algeria, former independence fighters became a privileged elite, while the Harkis and their descendants who remained in Algeria were marginalized in society.¹⁶

Mid-1970s – early 1990s

In 1974 and 1975, second generation Harkis drew French attention to the situation of the Harkis through protests and hunger strikes. Their immediate aim was to force the closure of the last Harki camps. This they accomplished. They were also, however, seeking to break the silence surrounding the Harki past. Scholars have documented a causal relationship between paternal silence at home, institutional silence in public, and the second-generation Harkis’ move to activism in the mid-1970s.¹⁷ In Chapter 2, I use the concept of “postmemory” to explore how Harki children inherited the weight of the Harki past without the “content,” or specific narratives.¹⁸ Harki success in raising national consciousness of their situation earned this period of protest the label of “Harki Spring.”¹⁹ Harki children continued these efforts in 1991 with another round of protests, or “revolts against oblivion.”²⁰ Another way in which second

Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora, *La Guerre d’Algérie: 1954-2004, La Fin de L’amnésie* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2004).

¹⁵ Saadi-Bouras, “Les Harkis Dans Les Manuels Scolaires,” 209.

¹⁶ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 116.

¹⁷ Mohamed Kara, *Les tentations du repli communautaire : le cas des Franco-Maghrébins en général et des enfants de Harkis en particulier* (Paris : Harmattan, 1997) ; Muller, *Le Silence Des Harkis*. Jordi and Hamoumou, *Les Harkis*; Cohen, “The Harkis”; Stéphanie Abrial, *Les enfants de Harkis: de la révolte à l’intégration*, Histoire et perspectives méditerranéennes; Variation: Collection Histoire et perspectives méditerranéennes. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002); McCormack, *Collective Memory*.

¹⁸ This form of transmission has produced the debates among Harki children about how to interpret the past that I analyze in Chapters 4 and 5.

¹⁹ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 17.

²⁰ Muller, *Le Silence Des Harkis*, 135.

generation Harkis addressed the gap in knowledge about the Harkis was by producing their own scholarly works. In the 1980s and 90s, several Harki children completed theses, and later published manuscripts, in the fields of history and sociology.²¹ These second-generation Harki scholars were particularly interested in the Harki camps and the integration of Harkis in France, which had been formative experiences for them.²²

Although France remained quiet about the war, the protests prompted some official gestures towards the Harkis. The French state awarded the same veteran rights to Harkis as those enjoyed by French soldiers from the Algerian War, and also provided financial assistance to some Harki families.²³ Increased awareness of the Harkis and their descendants also led to more scholarly interest in the group, particularly about the second generation and the integration challenges they faced. Joining these scholars in writing about and publishing on the Harkis were military officers who had led them during the war and had helped protect them in the aftermath.²⁴ These men were mostly interested in documenting the Harkis' abandonment by the French Army. This betrayal echoed one felt by many officers who believed the French had won the war on the battlefield, only to be defeated in the political arena. Most scholars, however, still

²¹ Hamoumou, *Et Ils Sont Devenus Harkis*; Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*; Nordine Boulhaïs, *Histoire Des Harkis Du Nord de La France* (Editions L'Harmattan, 2005).

²² Hamoumou and Moumen have documented the location and composition of the camps, including Bias and Rivesaltes, which were the most populated and constituted a particular type of camp, for the Harkis and their families considered "inclassable" or "irrécupérable." Moumen and Boulhaïs have investigated the integration of Harkis and their families into regions of the Vaucluse and the north of France, respectively.

²³ These measures included a commemorative stamp dedicated to the Harkis in 1989 and a law in 1994 acknowledging gratitude toward "repatriated former members of auxiliary or similar forces." Cohen, "The Harkis," 176.

²⁴ Bachaga Boualam, *Les Harkis Au Service de La France* (France-Empire, 1963); Abd-El-Aziz Méliani, *Le Drame Des Harkis: La France Honteuse* (Perrin, 1993); Maurice Faivre, *Les combattants musulmans de la guerre d'Algérie: des soldats sacrifiés* (Paris: Harmattan, 1995); François Meyer and Benoît de Sagazan, *Pour L'honneur... Avec Les Harkis : De 1958 à Nos Jours* (CLD, 2005).

did not engage to a large extent with the Algerian War and the events that brought the Harkis to France and to the camps. In Algeria, the status of the mythologized narrative of the war remained essentially the same during this time.

Late 1990s – 2013

Since the late 1990s, important social and political developments in France and Algeria have prompted both countries to confront and engage more fully with the history of the Algerian War. In Algeria, the Civil War of the 1990s weakened the FLN's authority, and, as a consequence, fractured the FLN's memory hegemony. New dissident narratives of Algerian history have emerged, along with increased opportunities for historical research and more space for debate about the Harkis in Algeria. The FLN, though, still controls the national narrative.²⁵ The Harkis' marginalized status in Algerian society was reaffirmed in 1999 when a legal measure was passed that excluded those who did not have a "patriotic attitude" during the war of independence from certain jobs.²⁶ Then, in 2001, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika compared the Harkis to Nazi collaborators and asserted that they were still not welcome to return. This comment sparked outrage among Harkis and their descendants and led to an intervention on their behalf by French President Jacques Chirac. The Harki question became a central issue in Franco-Algerian relations, and in 2005 Bouteflika altered his position toward the Harkis, saying, "We have committed errors with regard to the Harkis' families and relations and did not exhibit good sense."²⁷ Despite both Bouteflika's retraction and the growing pluralism of memory in Algeria, however, the Harkis remain marginalized in the official historical record.

²⁵ Saadi-Bouras, "Les Harkis Dans Les Manuels Scolaires," 197.

²⁶ Gilles Manceron, "Un Abandon et Des Massacres Aux Responsabilités Multiples," in *Harkis 1962-2012: Les Mythes et Les Faits*, vol. 666, Les Temps Modernes (Paris: Gallimard, 2011), 65–89: 72.

²⁷ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 119.

In France, a number of different factors, including the opening of the archives concerning the Algerian War, the trial of Maurice Papon, who had been Paris Police Chief at the time of the conflict, and the public admission of General Aussaresses that he had tortured suspected supporters of the FLN during the war, combined to break the official silence about the colonial past in the 1990s. In 1999, the French National Assembly officially recognized the conflict as a “war,” whereas before it had been referred to as “events” or “police operations” as a way to delegitimize the independence movement.²⁸ The French state also made commemorative overtures to the Harkis, whose history now appears in middle and high school textbooks—albeit in a distorted and fragmentary form.²⁹ In 2001 the state formally recognized the Harkis’ contributions during the Algerian War in the form of a plaque in the Invalides in Paris, a speech by French President Jacques Chirac honoring the Harkis’ service and sacrifices, and a national day of remembrance, September 25th, which has since become an annual commemoration.³⁰ Many Harki children remain dissatisfied with these gestures because they did not acknowledge France’s responsibility for its role in the post-independence violence.³¹ In Chapter 3 I analyze how second-generation Harkis have protested against and boycotted official

²⁸ Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 36; William B. Cohen, “The Algerian War and French Memory,” *Contemporary European History* 9, no. 03 (2000): 489–500.

²⁹ Pascal Mériaux, “Figures et Rôle Des Harkis Dans L’écriture Des Manuels Scolaires de 1998-2008,” in *Les Harkis: Histoire, Mémoire, Transmission*, ed. Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Benoit Falaize (Paris: Editions de l’Atelier, 2010), 187–96: 189-193). The Harkis began to appear in French textbooks in 1998 and are now regularly included when the Algerian War is covered. These texts, however, do not convey the complexities of their situation and remain silent about the conditions of their arrival in France and their difficulties in integrating into French society.

³⁰ McCormack, *Collective Memory*, 23; Géraldine Enjelvin, “Entrée Des Harkis Dans L’Histoire de France?,” *French Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (February 1, 2004): 61–75. The plaque reads, “La République française témoigne sa reconnaissance envers les rapatriés anciens membres des formations supplétives et assimilés ou victimes de la captivité en Algérie pour les sacrifices qu’ils ont consentis.” It was unveiled during the first ‘Journée d’hommage national aux harkis’ on 25 September 2001.

³¹ Boussad Azni, *Harkis, Crime d’Etat: Généalogie D’un Abandon* (Ramsay, 2001), 26-28; Cohen, “The Harkis,” 178; Johann Michel, *Gouverner Les Mémoires - Les Politiques Mémoires En France* (Presses Universitaires de France - PUF, 2010), 142 ; Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 64.

commemorations that recognize only the Harkis' status as soldiers. They seek instead an official apology and a law that would establish the Harkis as victims of the French state and protect them against defamation.³²

New interest in the colonial past has also translated into additional scholarly attention toward the Harkis. Second-generation Harkis continue to lead the charge in expanding our understanding of Harki history. The experiences of Harkis and their descendants in France, including the effects of paternal and institutional silences of processes of identification, collective memory formation, and integration, have been especially well documented.³³ Narrating the history of the Harkis in Algeria has remained more controversial, as the next section of this chapter will explore.

Since the 1990s, groups with a stake in the colonial past have begun to challenge the French policy of “deliberate forgetting” by engaging in their own memory practices: observing public commemorations, constructing monuments, publishing testimonies, participating in memorial associations, etc. France's inability, or unwillingness, to deal with its colonial legacy had made it difficult for descendants of colonial subjects to find a place in French society. Harki children have developed a particularly active memory community to compensate for these challenges to integration. In the absence of a family memory for many and an official history of the Harkis, second-generation Harkis have sought to construct a collective understanding of the past. Like other groups in France, they have created *lieux de mémoire*, literal or figurative places in which to invest their emotions. They have put plaques at the sites of former Harki camps and

³² Since the term “harki” does not correspond to a religion, ethnicity, or nationality, as it stands the Harkis do not constitute a legally recognized minority group and the term has no juridical protection. This leaves them vulnerable to public insults against which other minority groups are protected by French law.

³³ Régis Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis: Entre Double Rejet et Triple Appartenance* (L'Harmattan, 2001); Tom Charbit, *Les Harkis* (Editions La Découverte, 2005); Géraldine Enjelvin, “The Harki Identity: A Product of Marginalisation and Resistance to Symbolic Violence?,” *National Identities* 8, no. 2 (June 2006): 113–127; Spina Rossella, *Enfants de Harkis et Enfants D'émigrés. Parcours Croisés, Identité À Recoudre* (Karthala, 2012).

have contributed to the construction of a permanent exhibition in the town of Ongles, where there had been a sizeable Harki settlement, making it the first Harki museum.

Harki children have also published over a dozen novels, memoirs, and films, and created more than twenty websites to transmit their narratives of the past. Daughters of Harkis have become particularly influential architects of Harki memory and public representatives of Harkis and their descendants, having published the majority of the texts.³⁴ These Harki daughters are well known in France, as their works have received significant media coverage.³⁵ This predominance of female authors marks a shift from earlier periods of activism, including during the protests in the mid-1970s and early 1990s, when women held fewer leadership roles. Like these protests, such texts constituted a reaction to the silence of Harki fathers. Many of these works explore the central question about the Harkis: Why did these French of Algerian origin cooperate with the French in a conflict, which, in retrospect, most French and Algerians see as “wrong”? By investigating their father’s motivations, these daughters have provided explanations and justifications even when their fathers could not or would not. Through the individual narratives presented in their texts, most authors exonerate the Harkis of the “traitor” charge by arguing that they had no agency, that they were forced to fight for France in order to protect their families, and/or that they had also, at one time or another, supported the Algerian independence cause.

³⁴ Four women in particular paved the way, Dalila Kerchouche and Fatima Besnaci-Lancou with their respective memoirs, *Mon Père, ce Harki* (2003) and *Fille de Harki* (2005), and novelists Zahia Rahmani with *Moze* (2003) and Hadjila Kemoum with *Mohand Le Harki* (2003). Other Harki daughters have followed in their footsteps. Saliha Telali, *Les enfants de harkis : entre silence et assimilation subie* (2009); Malika Meddah, *Famille de Harkis Des Oliviers de Kabylie Aux Camps Français de Forestage* (2012); Miki Kilali, *Sous Silence... : La Tragédie Des Harkis* (2013). Two Harki sons have published memoirs, either privately or through smaller publishing companies, but these works have received little to no media coverage. Karim Brazi, *Le Vilain Petit Berbère* (Société des Ecrivains, 2007); Kader Hamiche, *Manifeste D'un Fils de Harki Fier de L'être* (Édité à compte d'auteur, 2007).

³⁵ Nina Sutherland, “Harki Autobiographies or Collecto-Biographies? Mothers Speak Through Their Daughters,” *Romance Studies*, 24:3 (November 2006), 193-201: 196. Sutherland, fn: 17.

My dissertation contributes to research on Harki collective memory by identifying and analyzing significant debates among Harki children about how to interpret the Harki past. In Chapter 4, I show that rather than constituting a unified memory community, Harkis have been divided over key historical questions. My project is also the first to explore how Harki children, particularly their sons, have employed “cyber” carriers of memory to construct and transmit competing memory narratives. I argue that whereas Harki daughters’ memoirs present the Harkis as victims of France’s exploitative regime in Algeria and appeal to Algerian immigrants to France as joint victims of colonialism, websites managed by Harki sons portray the Harkis as defenders of French Republican values in French Algeria and situate them within a French tradition of military commemoration. Chapter 5 also analyzes the ways in which Harki children have used the Internet to challenge non-Harki interpretations of their past.

In contrast to the earlier colonial “amnesia,” then, historians have argued that the colonial past has become “completely visible and recurrent in the heart of French society.”³⁶ Some scholars and politicians, particularly those who employ the paradigm of “memory wars,” fear the effects of the proliferation of colonial memories on the social fabric of the Republic. They perceive in competing expressions of collective memory a potential fracture of the Republic into different communities of interest. The history of Harki collective memories, however, suggests an alternative trend: Harki children are seeking a place for themselves in the national imagination. Their memory practices are often aimed toward highlighting shared experiences and creating a sense of belonging either with other French of Algerian origin. Thus, contrary to

³⁶ Nicolas Bancel and Pascal Blanchard, “La Colonisation: Du Débat Sur La Guerre d’Algérie Au Discours de Dakar,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires: La France et Son Histoire, Enjeux Politiques, Controverses Historiques, Stratégies Médiatiques*, ed. Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (Editions La Découverte, 2010), 137–154: 139.

current fears about the divisive effects of engagements with France's colonial past, such practices indicate a profound desire for inclusion in French society.

Debates Within Harki Historiography

Who are the Harkis?

The meaning of the term “Harki” has changed over time. Today, Harki can be applied to any Frenchman of North African origin seen as having been complicit with the French regime, including drafted recruits (drawn from the small portion of the population that had full French citizenship), career officers, elected representatives, civil servants, and veterans. This term has even been extended to their spouses and children, although “Harki” remains a primarily male-coded category. Their association to this male figure thus defines wives and daughters of Harkis. At the time of the Algerian War, by contrast, “Harki” had a far more specific meaning; the label was used to designate the largest of four groups of auxiliaries, each of which performed a variety of different functions for the French Army.³⁷

The Harkis were temporary formations of civilian auxiliaries who were attached to an army unit for the purpose of aiding in “order maintenance operations,” which was how the French referred to the Algerian War until 1999.³⁸ The second group, the *Groupes mobiles de protection rurale* (GMPR), were nicknamed the “police du bled,” and they were civil units charged with helping keep order in rural zones.³⁹ The Moghaznis, the third group, aided the

³⁷ There was also technically a fifth group: The Unités Territoriales (UT) were mainly made up of Pieds-Noirs, but “Muslims” were included after 1958.

³⁸ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 16. The name “Harki” is derived from the Arabic word for movement, *haraka*, which, as Jeanette Miller has observed, “aptly represented their function of patrolling the nearby countryside for supporters of the FLN.” Jeannette E. Miller, “A Camp for Foreigners and ‘Aliens’: The Harkis’ Exile at the Rivesaltes Camp (1962–1964),” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 31, no. 3 (December 1, 2013): 21–44, 23.

³⁹ Hamoumou, *Et Ils Sont Devenus Harkis*, 119.

Sections Administratives Spécialisées (SAS), organizations charged with the task of “re-establishing a direct link to the population [...] by way of social action: opening schools, hospitals, and construction sites”⁴⁰ and “demonstrating France’s benevolence.”⁴¹ This was the only group that engaged with and helped promote the ideology of French Algeria. The final group, the *Groupes d’autodéfense* (GAD), were formed in regions where the armed branch of the FLN had a strong presence and were made up of entire villages charged with informing the French Army about rebel movements. Nearly all of these individuals were volunteers, except for the leaders. Few were armed.

The auxiliaries had a tenuous relationship with the French Army—one that is not always conveyed in discussions of the Harkis.⁴² As Stora explains, “They were in the service of the army without being in the interior of the army.”⁴³ Although the organization of the auxiliaries resembled a military structure, they retained a civilian status.⁴⁴ The Harkis were essentially laborers for the army. If they were injured, for example, their compensation would fall under the category of a “work accident.”⁴⁵ Some auxiliaries signed contracts with the Army on a day-to-day basis. Several Harkis have since explained that they saw themselves as laborers, rather than soldiers, but it is difficult to gauge the extent to which other Harkis felt this way during the

⁴⁰ Ibid, 117-118.

⁴¹ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 15.

⁴² Stora has observed that the French Army had a long history of using the indigenous population in a combat zone for surveillance, supplies, translation, but also to learn local customs. Benjamin Stora, “Les Témoins Muets de La Tragédie Finale,” in *Harkis 1962-2012 Les Mythes et Les Faits*, vol. 666, Les Temps Modernes (Gallimard, 2011), 34–43: 34. Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen make the case that the French inherited a tradition of using auxiliary troops in North Africa from the Ottomans. Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 13.

⁴³ Stora, “Les Témoins Muets,” 35.

⁴⁴ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 14.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 16; Hamoumou, 116.

war.⁴⁶ Also, the Harkis' loyalty was never entirely trusted, as officers were suspicious of their political commitments. French soldiers thought the auxiliaries might betray France by running to the FLN with their weapons.⁴⁷ Some Harkis did switch sides; it is hard to estimate how many, but historians have documented that movements of people and resources between the groups were not uncommon.⁴⁸ As a result, the auxiliaries were often inadequately armed, particularly the members of the GAD.

Given their wide variety of experiences and informal attachment to the Army, it is unlikely that the auxiliaries possessed any sense of collective identity during the war. Following Algerian independence, when the violent reprisals began and the French left them behind, the Harkis united around a shared experience of persecution and exclusion. Other Algerians and French did not tailor their attitudes or conduct based on the specific function an auxiliary performed during the war. This moment is when the Harki label took on its larger sense.⁴⁹ In fact, the term "Harki" is usually only applied to the auxiliaries who fled to France and the paths of those who remained in Algeria do not feature centrally in Harki narratives. Harki children memory activists usually do not make a distinction between different types of auxiliaries because the global term is effective for forming a collective memory and mobilizing around shared causes. Memoirs and novels, however, demonstrate the wide diversity of experiences and functions of the Harkis during the war.

There is also an important historiographical debate about whether a particular group of French of North African origin who worked for the French Army in mainland France belongs

⁴⁶ Cohen, "The Harkis," 165.

⁴⁷ Manceron, "Un Abandon et Des Massacres," 75.

⁴⁸ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 26.

⁴⁹ Stora, *La Gangrène et L'oubli*, 200.

under the category of “Harki.” The Auxiliary Police Force (FPA) was created in late 1959 to help combat the FLN’s influence in Paris. Recruited from Algeria, they performed “important reconnaissance work by infiltrating Muslim areas.”⁵⁰ These FPA became known for their “volatile brutality” for several reasons.⁵¹ The context of a “veritable urban guerilla” conflict in Paris was particularly violent.⁵² Officers encouraged “a culture of brutality since the utilization of ‘native’ soldiers, with a reputation for savagery, had long been an instrument of divide and rule, as well as of punitive terror, in colonial armies,”⁵³ and they “constituted a kind of quasi-autonomous unit that operated outside the normal hierarchical control of the main police force and the checks and balances that operated to ensure some degree of restraint and accountability.”⁵⁴

Were members of the FPA “Harkis”? The answer to this multifaceted question depends on which scholar one asks. Hamoumou refers to the “Harkis de Paris” and House and MacMaster also identify them as Harkis, but Manceron asserts the term “Harki” was “improperly but commonly employed to designate members of the FPA.”⁵⁵ The FPA do not usually appear in works by Harkis and their children. This is probably partly because after the war, they were integrated into the Paris police force⁵⁶ and faced no violent reprisals or abandonment, foundational events for Harki collective identity. Another possibility is that their omission in

⁵⁰ Hamoumou, *Et Ils Sont Devenus Harkis*, 117.

⁵¹ Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (OUP Oxford, 2009), 82.

⁵² Hamoumou, *Et Ils Sont Devenus Harkis*, 117.

⁵³ House and MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 82.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 83.

⁵⁵ Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 72.

⁵⁶ Hamoumou, *Et Ils Sont Devenus Harkis*, 117.

Harki accounts is deliberate because of their reputation for brutality, which has had a significant impact on public perception of the Harkis. This absence would then demonstrate that the authors are constructing the past with a French audience in mind. The first time many French encountered the term “Harki” was in relation to the FPA and some in the metropolis had witnessed their violence first hand.⁵⁷ House and MacMaster note that “numerous letters of complaint and petitions” about the brutality of the Harki patrol officers exist in the historical archives.⁵⁸ Manceron argues that this perception of the Harkis, colored by the actions of the FPA, prevented the development of sympathy in France for the violent reprisals the Harkis faced in Algeria.⁵⁹ In general, works that are critical of the Harkis are more likely to stress their active participation in the war, including their complicity in acts of torture, while the memory narratives of Harkis and their children include very few incidents of Harkis committing violence.

Between the shifting meaning of the term “Harki,” the debates about who should be included, and the auxiliaries’ exterior status in the Army, it is difficult to determine how many Harkis there were during the war. Historians’ estimations range from 200,000 to 500,000.⁶⁰ Harki numbers have been widely disputed. Partisans of French Algeria present a high number of Harkis, as doing so suggests widespread support for the former colonial regime. Harki activists likewise employ a high figure to demonstrate that they were not part of a small, marginalized group who supported the French, and thus should not be easily dismissed today. The Algerian

⁵⁷ Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 72.

⁵⁸ House and MacMaster, *Paris 1961*, 82.

⁵⁹ Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 73.

⁶⁰ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen declare that around 250,000 or more men served as auxiliaries at one moment or another (Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 17), Hauteux suggests the figure is between 200,000 and 400,000 (Francois-Xavier Hauteux, “Les Supplétifs Pendant La Guerre d’Algérie,” in *Les Harkis Dans La Colonisation et Ses Suites*, ed. Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Gilles Manceron (Paris: Editions de l’Atelier, 2008), 37–50: 49), and Manceron states that the number is probably between 300,000 and 500,000 men (Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 67, fn:3).

state, however, advances the much lower figure of 125,000 pro-French auxiliaries in total, and depicts the Harkis as a minority of mainly of urban, westernized elites, who were politically invested in French Algeria.⁶¹ Incidentally, this argument is belied by the fact that while the four groups of auxiliary troops came from a variety of backgrounds, the majority were from rural areas, (where the FLN had the strongest influence), illiterate, and non-francophone.⁶²

Why did Harkis support the French Army?

The question of the Harkis' motivations for "enlistment" is the keystone to most memory narratives. No one was born a Harki; individuals became a member of this disenfranchised, heterogeneous group through their support of France. The Harki identity is thus tied to the question of why they fought alongside the French. The motivations of individual Harkis are largely inaccessible to historians, due to a lack of written sources and the Harkis' hesitancy to speak about their past. For these reasons, the Harkis' intentions have been the source of great debate. From 1962 until the 1990s, the most common explanation for the Harkis' participation in the war was that they had acted out of a patriotic attachment to France.⁶³ This explanation coincided with the French use of the Harkis during the war as a political weapon to undermine the FLN's argument that Algerians wanted independence, even if the Harkis' officers doubted their loyalty. Pieds-Noirs have likewise presented Harkis as evidence that colonial Algeria was

⁶¹ Saadi-Bouras, "Les Harkis Dans Les Manuels Scolaires," 198, 207. By way of comparison, the Ministère Algérien des Anciens Combatants, which has a stake in presenting widespread support for independence, has declared that 132,290 Algerians fought in the ALN, the military branch of the FLN, and an estimated 204,458 Algerians acted as civil supporters. Manceron, "Un Abandon et Des Massacres," 67, fn:3.

⁶² Manceron, "Un Abandon et Des Massacres," 84 ; Hamoumou, *Et Ils Sont Devenus Harkis*, 153-211. Although the Berber minority had been privileged by the French under colonialism, as a divide-and-rule tactic and with the justification provided by French ethnographers that they were descended from Europeans, a great many of the Harkis were Arab.

⁶³ Francois-Xavier Hautreux, "Quelques pistes pour une meilleure compréhension de l'engagement des Harkis (1954-1962)," in "Harkis 1962-2012 Les Mythes et les Faits," *Les Temps Modernes*, No. 666, Novembre-Décembre 2011, p. 44-53 : 46.

not an oppressive place for French Muslims. Officers who rescued and advocated for Harkis have cited the Harkis' patriotic motivations to make the case that they deserved better treatment in France and recognition for their service.⁶⁴

Historian François-Xavier Hautreux has argued, however, that considering the backgrounds of auxiliaries, the majority of whom were poor, non-francophone peasants from rural areas with only a rather vague notion of "France," it is unlikely that political ideology was indeed a main factor for the Harkis.⁶⁵ Historians Mohand Hamoumou and Abderahmen Moumen agree, arguing that while political ideology may have been a strong motivating factor for members of a Westernized elite (functionaries, career soldiers, notables, and caïds—local leaders who worked with the French) or former soldiers, it could not be a determining factor for the majority of the auxiliaries.⁶⁶ Although the argument that Harkis were motivated by patriotic attachment has generally fallen out of favor, it still appears on Harki websites, where some Harki children argue that since "Algeria was France" until 1962, the Harkis were in fact loyal to their state. This explanation helps to combat accusations that the Harkis had betrayed their nation by fighting for the French.⁶⁷

In the late 1990s, due to the changing memorial climate in France, scholars began to reexamine the war based on additional sources that had previously been unavailable. Their efforts to better understand wartime experiences and practices, including the extent of the

⁶⁴ Boualam, *Les Harkis*; Méliani, *Le Drame des Harkis*; Faivre, *Les combattants musulmans*; Meyer and Sagazan, *Pour L'honneur*.

⁶⁵ Hautreux, "Quelques pistes," 47.

⁶⁶ Mohand Hamoumou and Abderahmen Moumen, "L'histoire des Harkis et Français Musulmans: La Fin D'un Tabou?," in *La Guerre d'Algérie: La Fin de L'amnésie*, ed. Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2004), 317–44: 326; Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 25.

⁶⁷ Hautreux, "Quelques pistes," 47.

violence committed against civilians, produced two new interpretations of the Harkis' motivations.⁶⁸ These projects are controversial because they draw attention to the atrocities committed by both the FLN and the French state. The first reason, enlistments in response to FLN violence, is currently considered to be the principal factor. Hamoumou and Moumen explain that the FLN employed terror as a means of imposing itself as the only representative of the Algerian people. We know now that local FLN leaders killed more Muslim civilians than did French military officers.⁶⁹ As Hamoumou and Moumen underscore, "In this context, the majority of harkis and moghaznis became so in order to flee the terror of the FLN, in order to protect themselves and defend their families."⁷⁰ Hamoumou and Moumen have argued that many former auxiliaries were not necessarily against Algerian independence. Thousands of men fought first for the FLN and then became Harkis because they refused to participate in violent attacks against Muslim civilians or Europeans.⁷¹

The second explanation was that some enlistments were forced or brought about through "pressures" applied by the French Army. Hamoumou and Moumen explain that as Army officers tried to gain control over the rural Algerian population and to limit the FLN's influence, they used psychological tactics, including propaganda sessions in the villages. They also rounded up certain Muslims in positions of authority, intending to compromise and thus condemn them in the eyes of the FLN. Less commonly, Harkis were recruited through physical or psychological

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Hamoumou and Moumen, "L'histoire des harkis," 328.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 325.

⁷¹ Ibid.

coercion, in the face of threats of retaliation against their family,⁷² imprisonment and even death.⁷³

In the 1990s, economic factors emerged as an additional explanation for the Harkis' enlistment. As Hamoumou and Moumen explain, "The extremely difficult living conditions in the Algerian countryside, with a high unemployment rate, lands often arid and insufficient for feeding the whole family properly, could have prompted certain Muslims to enlist as auxiliaries."⁷⁴ This explanation, however, remains problematic. An oral study that these historians carried out among hundreds of former auxiliaries in the hopes of distinguishing a main motivating factor found that enlistment for economic reasons was the most rare.⁷⁵

Scholars have recently introduced an additional, culturally specific motivation: family or clan solidarity as an incentive for enlistment. Hautreux has explained that since the community is privileged over the individual in Algerian society, "enlistment can be understood as a collective action subject in part to the decision of a recognized familial authority figure."⁷⁶ Hamoumou and Moumen have added that "Obligations of loyalty encouraged the enlistment of entire families, and even entire villages or tribes, when one of its members were assassinated or when the head of the family, or village, or tribe, enlisted against the FLN."⁷⁷ These cultural limitations on the

⁷² Ibid, 327.

⁷³ Hautreux, "Quelques pistes," 48.

⁷⁴ Hamoumou and Moumen, "L'histoire des harkis," 326. Sung Choi has agreed with this assessment. She argues, "A secure income would have provided yet another incentive to many young men of poor origins, some as young as sixteen or seventeen years of age, who willingly signed up for daily, weekly, or monthly contracts for the modest pay of 7.50 francs or less per day (later 8.50 NF)." Sung Choi, "The Muslim Veteran in Postcolonial France: The Politics of the Integration of Harkis After 1962," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 29, no. 1 (April 30, 2011): 24–45, 26

⁷⁵ Ibid. It was only listed by 8% of those interviewed.

⁷⁶ Hautreux, "Quelques pistes," 48.

⁷⁷ Hamoumou and Moumen, "L'histoire des harkis," 326.

Harkis' agency call into question whether we can consider particular Harkis as having made a decision to support France.

Memoirs, novels, and films have been able to explore the Harkis' motivations on an individual level. Works of Harki literature tend to highlight the diversity of experiences during the war, and of the motivations behind enlistment, many of which were not patriotic. These texts complicate earlier understandings of Harkis by providing the justification that Harkis were trying to protect their families from the threat of violence. Some Harki fathers in the texts explain that they were actually in favor of independence, but against the methods the FLN employed to achieve this goal and a few confess to having originally fought with the FLN or even to have aided the FLN while they were auxiliaries. Memoir writers are responding to the exclusion they felt as children of traitors; their texts can be interpreted as attempts to frame the past in a way that eliminates former grounds for Harki exclusion, and as indications of a desire to become closer to Algerians in France.

Why were the Harkis left in Algeria?

On March 19, 1962, the Evian Accords, which marked the end of the conflict and signaled Algeria independence, went into effect. As the French planned the withdrawal of their forces, the decree of March 20, 1962 stated the Harkis were to be offered three options: enlist in the French Army,⁷⁸ return to civilian life with a bonus, or take a six-month provisional contract as part of the local forces that were being formed.⁷⁹ Vincent Crapanzano has observed that around 1,500 auxiliaries opted for the first choice, while the “vast majority” took the second

⁷⁸ Crapanzano notes that the Harkis would not be allowed to enlist “at the rank they had achieved as an auxiliary, but at a beginning one.” Moreover, if they chose this option, “their families would receive no support.” Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 86.

⁷⁹ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 13; Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 29; Cohen, “The Harkis,” 166.

option, “which they were often encouraged to do by their officers.”⁸⁰ The Army disarmed the Harkis before leaving, which left them defenseless against the impending threat of reprisals.

This is a controversial and significant moment in Harki history for several reasons. From a historiographical perspective, it has been difficult to document French conduct towards the Harkis and to evaluate their motivations. We do not know whether, and in how many cases, the three choices were proposed to the Harkis or, for that matter, whether the Harkis understood the options they were given.⁸¹ Several Harkis testify to simply waking up one morning, finding the barracks empty and discovering that French troops had left with all of their weapons. Even if the stipulations of the decree of March 20 were clearly communicated, scholars generally agree that the French plan for the repatriation of the Harkis and their families was rather limited and constraining. Historian Gilles Manceron has argued that because of the Harkis’ civilian status and their informal attachment to the Army, they simply were not eligible for the types of evacuation procedures and protection normally given to soldiers.⁸² As Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen explain, “Not having military status, they had to be returned to civilian life, disarmed and sent back to their homes.”⁸³

The plan’s restrictions may also be explained by the fact that French authorities underestimated the risk that the Harkis faced by remaining in Algeria.⁸⁴ They expected that Article X of the Evian Accords, which stipulated that the Harkis would not face reprisals for

⁸⁰ Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 86.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 87; Faivre, *Les combattants musulmans*, 184.

⁸² Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 87.

⁸³ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 29.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 19.

their support of France, would be enforced.⁸⁵ There is also evidence that the Harkis themselves did not realize the extent of the threat against them.⁸⁶ Moumen has argued that most Harkis did not want to leave Algeria, their families, and their livelihoods for France, especially because they seemed unaware of the danger they faced.⁸⁷ The main archival source that documents the violence against the Harkis indicates that the Algerian government reassured the Harkis that no harm would come to them.⁸⁸ Even when Pierre Messmer (Secretary of the Army) and Louis Joxe (in charge of Algerian Affairs) were made aware of the scope of the violence against the Harkis, however, they did not revise their plan. On May 12, 1962, Messmer sent a telegram sanctioning officers who had taken it upon themselves to evacuate groups of Harkis to France. On the same day, Joxe gave an order to send back to Algeria “any auxiliaries who arrived outside the general repatriation plan.”⁸⁹ Repeated restrictions, expulsions, and interdictions, then, suggest that authorities sought to prevent the arrival of too many Harkis and their relatives in France.

The next line of investigation, then, has been to explore why the French Administration wanted to limit the number of Harkis who came to France. Historian Benjamin Stora has argued that the French were afraid that if the Harkis came to France, then they might turn against the Army and join the OAS (the *Organisation de l'Armée Secrète*, a French terrorist organization committed to keeping Algeria French).⁹⁰ In May of 1962, the newspapers *Le Figaro* and *Le*

⁸⁵ Ibid, 29.

⁸⁶ Sylvie Thénault, “Massacre des harkis ou massacres de harkis? Qu’en sait-on?”, in Fatima Besnaci-Lanou et Gilles Manceron, *Les Harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites*, (Paris: Editions de l’Atelier, 2008), pp. 81-91 : 88. Thénault cites Chantal Morelle, “Les pouvoirs publics français et le rapatriement des harkis en 1961-1962,” *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire* 83, no. 3 (August 1, 2004): 109–119.

⁸⁷ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 13.

⁸⁸ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 37.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 33.

⁹⁰ Stora, “Les Témoins Muets,” 39.

Monde both published articles suggesting that Harkis in the metropole would likely support the OAS's position against the French government.⁹¹ As Crapanzano has observed, "Clearly, other factors—race, ethnicity, cultural difference—were also at play since, if the OAS were to find support in France, it would surely have been from among the *pieds-noirs*," whose arrival was not restricted.⁹² Even if this threat had little basis in reality, as Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen have argued,⁹³ it reinforced earlier mistrust of the Harkis and their motivations during the war.

Another explanation is that French authorities wanted to avoid a massive installation of Harkis because the Administration was already inundated by the logistical challenges posed by the arrival of one million Pieds-Noirs in the metropolis. This interpretation draws attention to the subordinate status of French Muslims, which contrasted with French republican values.⁹⁴ Todd Shepard has explained, "in 1962 the Algerians were French in law (*droit*), but, in all other domains, the vast majority of them were treated and represented differently and worse than their co-citizens. In the case of the Harkis, this tension between the 'legal' and the 'real' was particularly accentuated."⁹⁵ Pieds-Noirs were welcomed and provided for upon arrival, while "the government took measures to bar access to the metropole for French Muslim citizens from Algeria."⁹⁶ Through these actions, the French state made it clear that French citizenship was defined by religion and race, which it had denied while Algeria was part of France.

⁹¹ Roux, *Les Harkis*, 220.

⁹² Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 104.

⁹³ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 32.

⁹⁴ Hamoumou, *Et Ils Sont Devenus Harkis*, 41-57.

⁹⁵ Todd Shepard, "La République Face Aux Harkis: Questions Aux Historiens," in *Harkis 1962-2012: Les Mythes et Les Faits*, vol. 666, Les Temps Modernes (Paris: Gallimard, 2011), 53–64: 56.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 61.

In the realm of memory, the question of why France left the Harkis has been posed in terms of “abandonment.” Claims that “France abandoned the Harkis,” made by some former French officers, supporters of French Algeria, and Harki children, indicate that France failed to satisfy its moral obligations towards these auxiliaries. In Chapter 3 I show how the notion that Harkis were victims of France’s neglected responsibilities has become central to Harki identity and collective memory practices. Associations of first-generation Harkis and their children have begun commemorating May 12, the day when Messmer and Joxe sent orders to prevent Harkis from entering France, as the “Day of the Harki Abandonment.”⁹⁷ In 2013, this date was marked by a march of approximately one hundred fifty Harkis and their families, demanding official French recognition of the role the French played in the violence that followed by disarming the Harkis and preventing their departure to France.

What was the extent of the violent reprisals against the Harkis?

Scholars have found the history of post-independence violence against the Harkis and their families uniquely challenging to write. Whereas there has been a growing scholarly interest in French colonial violence, including three episodes related to the Algerian War, the 1945 massacres of Muslims at Sétif, the 1961 killings of Algerian protestors by Paris police, and the 1962 attack on protestors at the Charonne metro stop in Paris,⁹⁸ the extended violence against the

⁹⁷ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 33.

⁹⁸ Jean-Luc Einaudi, *La Bataille de Paris, 17 octobre 1961* (Paris: Seuil, 1991); Einaudi, *Octobre 1961: Un massacre à Paris* (Paris: Fayard, 2001); Michel Levine, *Les Ratonnades d’octobre* (Paris: Ramsay, 1985); Didier Daeninckx, *Meurtres pour mémoire* (Paris: Série noire, 1983); Joshua Cole, “Remembering the Battle of Paris: 17 October 1961 in French and Algerian Memory,” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 21, 3 (2003): 21-50. Jean-Paul Brunet, *Police contre FLN: Le drame d’octobre 1961* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999); Jean-Paul Brunet, *Charonne: Lumières sur une tragédie* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003); Linda Amiri, *La Bataille de France* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2004); Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Alain Dewerpe, *Charonne 8 février 1962: Anthropologie historique d’un massacre d’État* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2006).

Harkis has not received the same level of scholarly attention.⁹⁹ This historiographical gap can be explained by a significant lack of sources. Historians trying to construct a narrative of the violence have been forced to rely heavily on the only reliable archival document, a subprefect's account of the killings in one of Algeria's seventy-two districts. More potential archival sources are being made available in France, but access to any relevant records in Algeria remains barred. The main sources of information on the violence are eyewitness accounts given by French military officers and Harkis themselves, of which there are few since this violence initially produced a form of traumatic silence.¹⁰⁰

The main sources of uncertainty and debate revolve around the scope of the violence, including casualty figures, and determining responsibilities.¹⁰¹ Historian Guy Pervillé has argued that the number of Harkis and their families killed during this period of reprisal violence is the most uncertain figure in the history of the Algerian War.¹⁰² Since we do not know exactly how many auxiliaries fought for France, and as anyone who supported the French in a civil capacity or who was related to a Harki constituted a potential victim, it is impossible to calculate how many people may have been targeted for their supposed Harki status or association to a Harki. We also cannot determine how many likely targets of violence simply settled into life in a new, independent Algeria. As Manceron explains, "the great majority of those who were, at one

⁹⁹ No monographs have been dedicated to the subject. There have been chapters in edited volumes: Manceron, "Un Abandon et Des Massacres"; Thénault, "Massacre des harkis"; Abderahmen Moumen, "Les massacres de harkis lors de l'indépendance de l'Algérie" in *Les Harkis: Histoire, Mémoire, Transmission*, ed. Fatima Besnaci-Lanou and Benoit Falaize, (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 2010), pp. 63-76.

¹⁰⁰ Stora, *La Gangrène et L'oubli*, 202; Roux, *Les Harkis*; Moumen, "Les massacres de harkis."

¹⁰¹ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 35.

¹⁰² Guy Pervillé, "La guerre d'Algérie: combien de morts?" in Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora (ed.), *La Guerre d'Algérie : la fin de l'amnésie* (Paris : Robert Laffont, 2004), pp. 477-493: 486.

moment or another, employed as auxiliaries during the war continued to live in Algeria, integrating into social life, avoiding being designated by the stigmatizing term of ‘Harkis.’”¹⁰³

Historians’ inability to document the casualties has left the topic open to disputes and polemics.¹⁰⁴ In November 1962, journalist Jean Lacouture provided an initial estimate based on official French sources of 10,000, which he then revised to 100,000 in 2001.¹⁰⁵ Benjamin Stora has advanced the conservative estimate of 10,000 to 25,000 casualties,¹⁰⁶ while historians generally agree that it is probably closer to 75,000.¹⁰⁷ Some Harki activists, who seek material and symbolic reparations from the French state, have argued the figure is nearly 150,000.¹⁰⁸

Another important historiographical question, raised by historian Sylvie Thénault, is whether the violence constitutes a single massacre or multiple events—the “Harki massacre” or “massacres of Harkis.”¹⁰⁹ The notion of a “Harki massacre” as a single historical event emerged around 2001, when Harki children began to demand public recognition of the violence they experienced. Eyewitness accounts, however, suggest that attacks were sporadic, inconsistent, and varied widely according to the region.¹¹⁰ The severity and scope of the threats that the Harkis faced depended on the social and political dynamics in each individual village and changed over

¹⁰³ Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 72. This path is not part of the Harki narrative because those who came to France and who have created this memory and community all felt strong pressure to leave. On Harkis who stayed in Algeria: Moumen, “Les massacres de harkis,” 72.

¹⁰⁴ Charles-Robert Ageron, “Le “Drame Des Harkis”: Mémoire Ou Histoire?” *Vingtième Siècle* (2000): 3-15 : 11.

¹⁰⁵ Cohen, “The Harkis,” 168.

¹⁰⁶ Benjamin Stora, “1999-2003, Guerre d’Algérie, Les Accélération de La Mémoire,” in *La Guerre d’Algérie: La Fin de L’amnésie*, ed. Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2004), 501–14: 510.

¹⁰⁷ Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 86; Moumen, “Les massacres de harkis,” 71; Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 40.

¹⁰⁸ Azni, *Harkis, Crime d'Etat*, 43.

¹⁰⁹ Thénault, “Massacre des harkis.”

¹¹⁰ Moumen, “Les massacres de harkis,” 64.

time.¹¹¹ Moreover, Harki experiences of violent reprisals varied wildly: whereas some Harkis and their families do not report witnessing acts of violence, others describe in graphic detail acts of an exceptionally atrocious nature. It seems, therefore, that understanding the violence in terms of a plurality of massacres is more appropriate. For Harki activists, however, it remains useful to speak in terms of a collective, shared event.

A final contested issue revolves around identifying the perpetrators of violence, and thus assigning responsibility for the massacres. In their accounts of the war, many Harkis describe their perpetrators as neighbors or acquaintances, revealing the local and personal qualities of this violence. To what extent were the attacks centrally organized, and thus state supported? It is not clear whether the order to kill the Harkis came directly from the FLN government, which had signed and publicly backed Article X of the Evian Accords. At the very least, it appears that authorities enabled the massacres by encouraging lists of auxiliaries to be drawn up and placing Harkis under surveillance at the end of the war.¹¹² The exact role of the Algerian state probably changed over time as successive FLN leaders gained power and as the Algerian government went through phases of upheaval and stability.¹¹³ Most likely, individuals and groups, motivated by hate or vengeance, took advantage of a period of political anarchy following independence to carry out violence.¹¹⁴ Historians have argued that rogue members of the independence movement, who joined late and were anxious to prove their commitment to the cause, were

¹¹¹ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 36-39.

¹¹² Ibid, 42.

¹¹³ Moumen has identified 4 phases in the chronology of the violence. Moumen, “Les massacres de harkis.”

¹¹⁴ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 45.

among the main perpetrators.¹¹⁵ The Algerian government has supported this argument because it shifts blame off of the FLN and is less threatening to their heroic narrative of the independence struggle. The extent to which France can be considered responsible for the scope of the violence, for not intervening and preventing those threatened from escaping to France, has been disputed. When Messmer and Joxe received accounts of the violence from French Army officers, they gave orders not to increase tensions between France and Algeria by getting involved with “internal affairs” of the new Algerian state.¹¹⁶

The period of post-independence violence against the Harkis is a significant event in the collective memories of Harkis and their families. Commemorating the Harki massacre, or the “Harki genocide,” as some Harki children refer to it, establishes their status as victims, rather than traitors. Moreover, the pursuit of French recognition for their role in the violence has become a central, uniting cause for Harki children. In 2001, a coalition of fifty associations, led mainly by Harki sons, pursued a legal case against France for having committed a “crime against humanity.”¹¹⁷ Whereas Harki children had previously focused on the injustice of the internment camps in their protests, Harki associations have since claimed that their only demand is for France to acknowledge its role in the post-independence violence.¹¹⁸ While both Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande promised during their presidential campaigns to recognize France’s responsibility, neither have done so in their capacity as head of the French state.

¹¹⁵ Omar Carlier, “Violence(s),” in Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora (ed.), *La Guerre d’Algérie : la fin de l’amnésie* (Paris : Robert Laffont, 2004), 347-379 : 355, fn:1; Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 70, 85, 87, fn:9; Moumen, “Les massacres de harkis.”

¹¹⁶ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 44.

¹¹⁷ Azni, *Harkis, Crime d’Etat*.

¹¹⁸ “Notre seule demande - que la France reconnaisse son rôle dans l’abandon et les massacres.” Besnaci-Lancou, “La Tragédie des Harkis.”

The French state's public recognition of its role in the Harki massacres would situate the Harkis within the national historical narrative, giving them a symbolic place in the national imagination. Their desire for this status motivates Harki children to place responsibility on the French and seek retribution from the French state, rather than the Algerians, who were the direct perpetrators of the violence.¹¹⁹ Paradoxically, their charges against France indicate their attachment to French society, as the social context in which they recall this memory. Focusing on the responsibility of the French, as opposed to that of the Algerians who did the killing, can also act to bring the populations of Algerian origin in France together. It provides a basis for reconciling with Algerian immigrants, who have also experienced discrimination and injustice from the French state. In Chapter 3 I explore this “multidirectional” aim of some Harki memory work.

Why were the Harkis and their families put in camps?

Historians estimate that sixty to eighty-eight thousand Harkis and their families fled to France in total, with approximately twenty-five thousand arriving through government repatriation plans.¹²⁰ The rest escaped through their own means or with the aid of sympathetic military officers and were either set up in communities near the officers, who could assist them, or integrated individually into different regions of France.¹²¹ Most of those who arrived through official channels were placed in transit camps. A tradition had developed over the twentieth century, or what Denis Peschanski has called the “century of camps,”¹²² for the French state to use camps to manage populations it did not know how to integrate into mainstream society. The

¹¹⁹ Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 88. Moumen, “Les massacres de harkis.”

¹²⁰ Cohen, “The Harkis,” 169.

¹²¹ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 15.

¹²² Denis Peschanski, *La France des camps: L'internement, 1938–1946* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 15.

Rivesaltes camp, for example, was created as a solution to dealing with “undesirable foreigners” in 1939 and had housed refugees from the Spanish Civil War, French Jews in World War II and members of the FLN captured in France before the Harkis arrived in 1962.¹²³ The French had also employed camps on a massive scale during the Algerian War as part of a plan designed to disrupt FLN support and supply networks.

Conditions in the Harki camps varied, but were often appalling, partly due to the fact that even with the restrictive repatriation policies, the number of arrivals far exceeded expectations and preparations. The camps were intended as a temporary measure for managing the installation of the Harkis and their families. They remained open much longer than expected, however, due to logistical challenges in finding places for the Harkis to live and work. Certain prefects in regions with high percentages of Algerian immigrants did not want Harkis to reside there because they feared this would cause conflicts. Additionally, some employers were reluctant to hire the Harkis, and there was a substantial housing shortage in France. Thus, many Harkis and their families stayed in the camps until 1975, when the protests by second-generation Harkis prompted the French state to close them. Since they had been isolated from the French population for over a decade, many Harki families found it difficult to integrate into French society. This process was especially challenging for Harki wives who did not work outside the home or attend school, given that they had fewer occasions to leave the camps than their husbands or children.

Why did the French consider the Harkis a population that needed to be managed in camps? The auxiliaries had supported the French Army in Algeria and had French citizenship, yet were housed behind barbed wire, were subject to a military lifestyle with strict discipline, and

¹²³ Miller, “A Camp for Foreigners and ‘Aliens’,” 21-22.

could not leave without permission.¹²⁴ The French state has argued these camps provided a means of protecting the Harkis and their families from potential reprisals from Algerians living in France. There were a few incidents in the first few years following independence, but not enough to justify continued use of the camps. Historians have argued that placing Harkis in camps enabled the French state to hide them from public view, and thus calm fears of local populations who did not want a mass of migrants from Algeria living nearby,¹²⁵ as well as to avoid reminding French citizens of the divisive Algerian War,¹²⁶ and to control them from potentially joining the OAS.¹²⁷

Historians have considered the implications of the Harki camps for understanding the French state's attitude towards French Muslims at the moment of decolonization. As Jeanette Miller has asked, "What does their decision to put Harkis in the camp[s] indicate about their conception of this population as repatriates and French citizens?"¹²⁸ The Harkis and their families were officially considered repatriates (*rapatriés*),¹²⁹ but the way they were treated contradicts this status.¹³⁰ It has been debated whether the Harkis were actually imagined as refugees, and handled as though they were fleeing their Algerian homeland, rather than returning

¹²⁴ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 57.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 56.

¹²⁶ Miller, "A Camp for Foreigners and 'Aliens'," 24.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 26.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 23.

¹²⁹ Other names for the Harkis reflect their official status as repatriates: FMR (Français musulmans rapatriés), FSIRAN (Français de souche indigène rapatriés d'Afrique du Nord), and RONA (Rapatriés d'origine nord-africaine).

¹³⁰ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 62.

to France.¹³¹ If we compare the French state's treatment of Harkis and Pieds-Noirs at the end of the war, it becomes clear that religion and race formed the basis for discrimination and geographic exclusion. A certain "hierarchization of populations" is revealed through strikingly different conditions of arrival.¹³² Priority was given to finding and constructing housing for Pieds-Noirs,¹³³ who, it was believed, would be easier to integrate into French society. Moreover, the Harkis had to verify their French nationality with the French Administration,¹³⁴ whereas citizenship was automatically confirmed for Pieds-Noirs. Moumen, Besnaci-Lancou, and others have noted that a colonial dynamic was recreated in the camps, which were run by former Army officers and Pieds-Noirs, who supposedly were more familiar with Muslim culture and might have spoken Arabic.¹³⁵

Most Harkis and their children never lived in the camps and the experiences of those who did varied significantly according to how long they were there and what conditions they faced.¹³⁶ A shared sense of injustice over the existence of these camps, however, has become a defining feature in their collective memories. The Harki camps contribute to a shared narrative of victimhood and serve as another example of France's failed moral obligations to the Harkis. The term "camps" is powerful, as it calls to mind other persecuted populations, and garners sympathy for their past. In their mid-1970s and early 1990s protests and elsewhere, second-generation

¹³¹ Mohand Hamoumou, "Les Français-Musulmans : Rapatriés Ou Réfugiés ?," *AWR-Bulletin, Revue Trimestrielle Des Problèmes Des Réfugiés*, no. 4 (1987).

¹³² Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 62.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 54.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 66.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 73.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 60.

Harkis have referred to them as “concentration camps” or “ghettos” to accentuate this parallel.¹³⁷

The ways that Harki children evoke memories of the Holocaust to frame their own narratives, a practice of “multidirectional” memory, is further explored in Chapter 3. The sites of former camps have become important *lieux de mémoire* and Harki associations organize visits there to commemorate this period of their history.¹³⁸

Conclusions

Exploring this set of questions about the Harki past reminds us that the history of the Harkis, and the Algerian War more generally, remains highly contested. Silences about the Harkis have occurred at every level of historical production. Even as awareness of the Harkis and their descendants grows in France, historians often lack the sources necessary for constructing narratives and historical understanding, and thus leave parts of this past open to speculation. In this context, Harki memory work takes on extra importance. Harki memoirs, associations, and websites address subjects that historians often cannot. They respond to the absence of a wealth of individual memories, particularly those of Harki wives, and offer a potential basis for collective memory. Works of Harki literature present a diversity of experiences, which are meant to combat prejudices about Harkis’ motivations and simplified versions of Harki history. Associations and websites offer a different view on the Harki past by representing their collective history. All of their memory narratives constitute interventions in historiographical debates and reactions to the sense of exclusion Harkis and their children have experienced in France and Algeria. By responding to French interest in the Harki past, Harki memory work reveals a desire to carve out a place in France for the Harkis and their families.

¹³⁷ Miller, “A Camp for Foreigners and ‘Aliens,’” 37; Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 17.

¹³⁸ Abderahmen Moumen, “Les Lieux de Mémoire Du Groupe Social ‘Harkis’. Inventaire, Enjeux et Évolution,” in *Les Harkis: Histoire, Mémoire, Transmission*, ed. Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Benoit Falaize (Paris: Editions de l’Atelier, 2010), 139.

CHAPTER 2: “*LES OUBLIÉS DE L’HISTOIRE*”: HARKIS, TRANSMISSION, AND THE GENERATION OF POSTMEMORY, 1962-1990S

This chapter analyzes the roots and emergence of Harki collective memory. The protests of 1975 and 1991, which first drew French public attention to the plight of the Harkis, also constituted the Harkis’ first concerted engagement with their shared past. As Claire Eldridge has observed, in contrast to the case of the Pieds-Noirs, “there was neither initial outpouring of memoirs nor any politicized collective mobilization from the harki population. Instead, it took over a decade and the emergence of a new generation for this silence to be definitively broken.”¹ The protests also marked the first time that the Harkis and their families understood themselves as a collectivity and identified on a national scale.² Indeed, it was during the 1991 revolt that descendants of Harkis affirmed the name “Harki” and “claimed it as a rallying call.”³

Participants and scholars have framed the 1975 and 1991 protests as “revolts against oblivion.”⁴ These demonstrations, and subsequent forms of second-generation activism, have been interpreted as responses to the paternal and institutional silences that have enveloped the

¹ Claire Eldridge, “‘We’ve Never Had a Voice’: Memory Construction and the Children of the Harkis (1962–1991),” *French History* 23, no. 1 (2009): 88–107, 94-95.

² Eldridge, “We’ve Never Had a Voice,” 89.

³ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Abderahmen Moumen, *Les Harkis*, Idées Reçues (Editions Le Cavalier Bleu, 2008), 79.

⁴ Laurent Muller, *Le Silence Des Harkis* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1999), 135. Although the protestors’ demands were not systematically articulated in terms of “oblivion” and “forgetting” during the 1975 events, they were during the 1991 revolt and both rounds of protests have been presented in this way by scholars.

Harki past.⁵ Political scientist Johann Michel has explained, “In the absence of responses from the central government, resentment and bitterness have carried even more radically and violently among the children of Harkis, while the fathers have often tended, out of trauma or shame, to withdraw into silence.”⁶ Stéphanie Abrial has agreed that the second-generation Harkis’ actions reflected their frustration at institutional silence: “The violence they use is a mirror image of the tensions felt with the absence of recognition, from France, of their fathers’ history.”⁷ Mohand Kara, a second-generation Harki, focused on paternal silence as the cause for his generation’s activism in his work: “the more the parents have not talked...the more the son today rebels.”⁸

The lack of transmission within Harki families, which I contextualized in Chapter 1, has been well documented by scholars.⁹ Yet the first generation’s silence about the past was not complete. Since the early 1970s, Harkis had created and participated in their own associations. Two Harkis, Saïd Ferdi and Brahim Sadouni,¹⁰ published memoirs in the 1980s and two others,

⁵ Muller, *Le Silence Des Harkis*; Abderahmen Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans En Vaucluse: 1932-1991* (Editions L’Harmattan, 2003), 17; William B. Cohen, “The Harkis: History and Memory,” in *Algeria & France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, ed. Patricia M. E. Lorcin (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 164–80; Jean-Jacques Jordi and Mohand Hamoumou, *Les Harkis: Une Mémoire Enfouie* (Autrement, 2009); Jo McCormack, *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Lexington Books, 2010), 113-116.

⁶ Johann Michel, *Gouverner Les Mémoires: Les Politiques Mémoires En France* (Presses Universitaires de France, 2010), 140.

⁷ Stéphanie Abrial, *Les enfants de Harkis: de la révolte à l’intégration*, Histoire et perspectives méditerranéennes; Variation: Collection Histoire et perspectives méditerranéennes, (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002), 175.

⁸ Mohamed Kara, *Les tentations du repli communautaire : le cas des Franco-Maghrébins en général et des enfants de Harkis en particulier* (Paris : Harmattan, 1997). Cited in McCormack, *Collective Memory*, 114. Translation by McCormack.

⁹ Muller, *Le Silence Des Harkis*, 16; McCormack, *Collective Memory*, 113-116; Jordi and Hamoumou, *Les Harkis*; Abrial, *Les enfants de Harkis*; Kara, *Les tentations du repli communautaire*, 118.

¹⁰ Saïd Ferdi, *Un Enfant Dans La Guerre* (Seuil, 1981); Brahim Sadouni, *Français Sans Patrie: Premier Témoignage Écrit Par Un Harki* (B. Sadouni, 1985).

Messaoud Kafi and Abdallah Krouk, did the same in 2009 and 2010.¹¹ These sources constitute an important component of early Harki collective memory, yet they have not received the attention they deserve in Harki scholarship. Even Vincent Crapanzano, who has conducted a number of interviews with first-generation Harkis, does not analyze their memory practices and narratives between the 1970s and 90s. In the first section of this chapter I outline the context of this memory work and in the second, I analyze these exceptions to the rule of silence. I explore how first-generation Harki memoir writers and participants in the Union Nationale des Anciens Combattants Français de Confession Islamique (UNACFCI) engaged with the past. I also consider how the memories expressed through these organizational and cultural carriers have influenced the ways in which Harki children have constructed their collective memories.

In their fragmented, individualized approaches to the past, these sources reveal a lack of consensus on the central question in Harki history: why the Harkis supported France. The UNACFCI's association journal, *Français Musulman*, included the voices of French army officers, politicians, and Pieds-Noirs, who all highlighted the Harkis' ideological commitment to French Algeria and their subsequent sacrifices. Harki themselves in the association were more critical of the decision, in light of the rejection they had experienced in France. The four memoir writers offer a different perspective on the Algerian War than the Harkis who participated in the UNACFCI. The memoir authors were all young Harkis—at the start of the war in 1954, Ferdi was ten years old, Kafi was eleven, Sadouni was twelve, and Krouk was twenty-two—and three of them were underage when they “enlisted.” Their age may account for why they felt comfortable sharing their experiences. As children, or young men, drawn into the war, they cut sympathetic figures. Moreover, in their texts, they all minimized their own participation in the

¹¹ Messaoud Kafi, *De Berger à Harki* (Édité à compte d'auteur, 2009); Abdallah Krouk, *Harki* (Edition de l'Excéa, 2010).

violence. It may have been that they were not commanded to perform the most despised tasks, including translating during interrogations, due to their youth, or perhaps they chose, whether consciously or not, to leave out these aspects of their tenure as Harkis. Harki memoir writers most often demonstrated a lack of political motivations, or even of agency to make a choice, and many expressed regret with this “decision” that landed them in France. Their position on the question of the Harkis’ motivations in many ways resembles that of Harki daughters, whose memoirs I explore in Chapter 4. The texts by these young Harki memoir writers, then, serve as a bridge between the works of first and second-generation architects of Harki memory. The lack of consensus among the Harkis themselves, the historical actors at the center of this identity, has translated into debates and even memory conflicts, which I present in Chapter 4, as Harki children have attempted to make sense of their shared past.

In the third section of this chapter, I explore why second-generation Harkis have, since 1975, understood themselves and their families as “*les oubliés de l’histoire*,”¹² those who have been forgotten by history.¹³ Scholars have used this label as well, without critically engaging with its significance. I argue that this (self-) designation has served three functions for the Harki community. First, in declaring the specificity of their past, it has enabled Harkis to distinguish themselves, and their place in French society, from that of Algerian immigrants. Second, it fits with the narrative that they have constructed of their parents as victims of France’s failed obligations towards its citizens. Lastly, as a shared cause, it has effectively united the Harki children in the face of their vastly different personal experiences.

¹² Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 77; Eldridge, “We’ve Never Had a Voice,” 89; Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 17; Michel Roux, *Les Harkis, ou, Les oubliés de l’histoire* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1991).

¹³ This expression could also be translated as “the forgotten ones of history” or “history’s forgotten people.”

Historical Context

The memory work of the Harkis and their children must be situated in the context of the evolving place of North Africans in French society. In the immediate aftermath of the Algerian War, an influx of Algerian migrant workers arrived in France. At this time France was experiencing a period of steady economic growth. Algerians took profited from the liberal migration laws outlined by the Evian Accords in 1962 to pursue economic opportunities in France, while French industries profited from this source of cheap labor.¹⁴ As a result, over 400,000 Algerians came to work in France in the first three years following Algerian independence.¹⁵

This mutually beneficial arrangement halted following the economic crisis and global recession of the early 1970s. Persistent unemployment led to anti-immigrant sentiment, and anti-Arab racism, among out-of-work French who were frustrated at having to compete with foreigners for jobs. The 1970s were also marked by a steep increase in anti-Algerian violence in France.¹⁶ As a result of this violence, France closed its borders to additional migrant workers in early 1974. At the same time, the state implemented family reunification policies that enabled workers who were already in France to bring their families from Algeria. This change led to new forms of anti-immigrant racism as it became clear that immigrants were settling down more permanantly in France.¹⁷

¹⁴ Sung Choi, "The Muslim Veteran in Postcolonial France: The Politics of the Integration of Harkis After 1962," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 29, no. 1 (April 30, 2011): 24–45, 28.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. Citing Yvan Gastaut, *L'Immigration et l'opinion en France sous la Ve République* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 282.

¹⁷ Regis Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis: Entre Double Rejet et Triple Appartenance* (L'Harmattan, 2001), 69.

The Harkis were likewise targeted during this period of anti-Algerian sentiment, despite being French citizens.¹⁸ French of European origin, who either did not know of the Harkis' particular history or did not care, discriminated against them on the basis of their race and religion. Régis Pierret has observed that, "North African origin is lived as a barrier that racism makes uncrossable. The color of the skin, the first name and the family name are identity markers."¹⁹ Yet, while they experienced the same forms of exclusion in France, immigrant workers actually enjoyed more employment opportunities than the Harkis, many of whom had been isolated in the camps and had not received training, as the immigrants had.²⁰

Sung Choi has observed that during this moment of heightened anti-immigrant feeling, the French state began to implement programs aimed at promoting the status of Harkis over immigrant workers.²¹ Harkis were awarded official veteran status, with all of the rights and benefits that this status accords, in November of 1974. In addition, prefects received directives stipulating that "there should be no difference between rights accorded to the harkis and to metropolitan French [nationals]."²² While they demonstrated a degree of French attention towards the Harkis, these measures did not eliminate the significant difficulties Harkis and their families faced in securing lodging and employment. It is important to note, however, that "Even as officials promoted the harkis, and made much of their French status, they showed little interest in dismantling the camps. Instead, the emphasis on the citizenship of the harkis served mainly to

¹⁸ Ibid; Roux, *Les Harkis*, 337.

¹⁹ Ibid, 70-71.

²⁰ Choi, "The Muslim Veteran," 30.

²¹ Ibid, 29-30.

²² Ibid, 31.

disparage other Algerian immigrants.”²³ Stéphanie Abrial has likewise identified a lack of genuine concern for the Harkis’ situation in the state’s gestures towards them. For her, the period of 1973 to 1979 highlighted the significant discrepancies between these gestures and the material needs of the Harkis and their families.²⁴

These measures also did not reduce tensions between Algerian immigrants and Harkis. In the decade following the Algerian War, the conflict was still fresh in the minds of the participants. Michel Roux has argued, moreover, “If the extreme proximity between migrants and auxiliaries stricken by marginalization and exclusion theoretically incites solidarity, it in fact exacerbates rivalries.”²⁵ Harkis resented what they saw as the privileged employment status of immigrant workers. Roux quotes one Harki activist as proclaiming, “You say that we are French and yet you confuse us with Algerian workers, those of the FLN, our former enemies, who are treated better today than we are.”²⁶ Another point of contention centered on the question of the “right of return” to Algeria, also known as “free circulation” between the countries. Several Harkis had attempted to return to Algeria in the 1970s, but most were refused entry. Their French passports marked them out as Harkis.²⁷ Pierret has argued that this experience of being rejected at the border symbolized the Harki’s “banishment” from Algerian society, since he could no longer return to his land of origin.²⁸ Immigrants, with their Algerian passports and French work

²³ Ibid, 30.

²⁴ Abrial, *Les enfants de Harkis*, 45.

²⁵ Roux, *Les Harkis*, 339-40.

²⁶ Ibid, 338.

²⁷ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 166.

²⁸ Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis*, 97.

permits, were allowed to move freely, including with their families after the reunification policy that was implemented in 1975, between the two countries.

At this historical moment, Harki children erupted in protest. Their activism began with a series of hunger strikes in 1974. Then, in April and May of 1975, Harki children occupied two camps—Bias and Saint-Maurice l'Ardoise. On June 19 the movement turned more violent as protestors took two secretaries and the director of the Saint-Maurice l'Ardoise camp hostage. This phase of the revolt clearly constituted a reaction to the Harkis' isolation in the camps and their lack of integration into French society.²⁹ The next period of the movement was aimed at attracting the attention of the Algerian state. On August 6, Harki children abducted four Algerian workers after they heard that the son of a Harki had been detained in Algeria.³⁰ Ten days later other protestors kidnapped the secretary of the Amicale des Algériens en Europe. Through this act, second-generation Harkis were demanding that their fathers be able to return to Algeria.³¹ Manifestations of Harkis and their children continued into the next year. Their efforts were, in large part, successful. They raised awareness of their situation,³² the camps were closed the following year, and the state created a ministerial position, the *Secrétariat d'Etat Chargé des Rapatriés*, filled by Raymond Courrière, to assume responsibility for their affairs.³³ The Harkis have still not, however, been awarded the “right of return” in Algeria.

²⁹ Ibid, 63.

³⁰ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 154.

³¹ Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis*, 63.

³² Over four hundred newspaper articles were published on the Harkis between 1962 and 1994. Abrial, *Les enfants de Harkis*, 53.

³³ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 159.

When President François Mitterrand was elected in 1981, his socialist government implemented a multicultural integration policy aimed at combating anti-Arab racism and anti-Muslim discrimination. By affirming immigrants' "right to be different," immigrants would be allowed to integrate into French society without renouncing their specific cultural heritages.³⁴ This policy extended to the Harkis. Rather than insisting on a one-size-fits-all policy for *rapatriés*, a status that the Harkis and their families shared with Pieds-Noirs, Courrière proclaimed the Harkis' "Right to be considered as a citizen equal to others, a citizen who has a particular culture, a particular religion, a particular past, but who is a French citizen."³⁵

The rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen's far-right party, the Front National, in the mid-1980s marked the failure of Mitterrand's approach to immigration and cultural reform. Le Pen's blatantly racist, anti-immigrant stances appeared to resonate with French of European origin who ascribed to a singular, unitary republican vision of French culture and who preferred an assimilationist approach to immigration. Rather than carving out a place for immigrants in French society and identity, then, affirming their difference seemed to further isolate them. In response, the state stressed the value of the republican ideal, arguing that anyone who highlighted distinctions between French citizens, including groups representing immigrant interests, was, in effect, strengthening the Front National.

It was during the period of Mitterrand's "*droit à la différence*" policy and Le Pen's challenges to it that second-generation Harkis and Algerian immigrants were most closely allied.³⁶ After the son of a Harki was injured by police in 1983, six Harki children and four

³⁴ Choi, "The Muslim Veteran," 35.

³⁵ Raymond Courrière, in Port Leucate, on October 5, 1982. Cited in *Français Musulman*, No. 28, 1er trimestre 1983.

³⁶ Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis*, 66.

immigrant youths united around a common cause and organized a “March for equality and against racism.”³⁷ The protestors began in Marseille and six weeks later arrived in Paris, where 60,000 people gathered for a demonstration. The March was successful for the children of North African immigrants, who acquired a more secure citizenship status as a result. Harki children, however, did not obtain any particular measures in favor of their community. The protest can even be considered a failure for second-generation Harkis since, following the March, they were equated with second-generation immigrants and their specificity was denied.³⁸ While it was the Harki children who took the initiative in organizing the March, it has since become known as the “Beur March,” after the slang term for North African immigrants in France.³⁹ The period of rapprochement appears to have ended shortly after the event.

During the 1991 Harki protests, which began in the cité des Oliviers in Narbonne and spread throughout the south of France, Harki children asserted both their specificity from Algerian immigrants and their desire to integrate into French society. During this series of demonstrations, second-generation Harkis, the majority of whom had been born in France, occupied the town hall of Saint-Laurent-des-Arbres, the town where the Saint-Maurice l’Ardoise camp was located, and the Direction Départementale du Travail et de l’Emploi in Carcassonne.⁴⁰ They sought to bring attention to the Harkis’ continued exclusion from French society, despite their special historical relationship to France. Their efforts were rewarded in 1994 when the French state passed a law stipulating, “The French Republic shows its recognition toward the

³⁷ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 181.

³⁸ Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis*, 67.

³⁹ Spina Rossella, *Enfants de Harkis et Enfants D’émigrés. Parcours Croisés, Identité À Recoudre* (Karthala, 2012), 86, 96, 218. “Beur” is backward slang for “Arab.”

⁴⁰ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Gilles Manceron, eds., *Les Harkis Dans La Colonisation et Ses Suites* (Editions de l’Atelier, 2008), 182-3, 217.

repatriated former members of the auxiliary forces, assimilated or victims of captivity in Algeria, for the sacrifices they bestowed.”⁴¹ It was accompanied by financial compensation for those who had been held prisoner in Algeria following the war because of their status as Harkis.

First Generation Memories

“We have recently been reunited and, of course, we talked about the past, about everything we have lost and haven't found again.”⁴²

The phenomenon of paternal silence has constituted a main focus of studies on the Harkis. The “deafening silence” described by Mohamed Kara, appears to have been pervasive among Harki families.⁴³ Scholars have identified a number of reasons for this refusal to discuss the past. Harkis may have felt guilty about any violence they had committed during the war or ashamed of their failure to protect their families from the exactions of the FLN and/or the French army and their forced exile in France. Harkis may also have preferred not to make waves in France, where most people wanted to forget the Algerian War, by bringing up the divisive conflict. Some scholars have explained their silence as a product of Algerian masculinity. Vincent Crapanzano has argued, “The Harki’s silence is, perhaps, the one token of masculinity they would not lose. Silence before hardship is a masculine virtue among traditional Algerians. It is one of the characteristics of *sabr*- one their most important values. *Sabr* is usually translated as *patience, perseverance, forbearance, or endurance*, but can also mean “resignation,” “submission,” and even “renunciation.”⁴⁴ This idea is supported by research demonstrating that

⁴¹ Besnaci-Lancou and Manceron, *Les Harkis Dans La Colonisation*, 217.

⁴² “Lettre ouverte aux jeunes,” *Français Musulman*, No. 36, 1er trimestre 1985.

⁴³ Kara, *Les tentations du repli communautaire*, 118.

⁴⁴ Vincent Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 84.

fathers who fought for the FLN likewise refused to discuss the past.⁴⁵ In spite of these reasons for silence in the familial sphere, there were some Harkis who wished to discuss the past publically, either by participating in associations with fellow Harkis or through publishing memoirs about their personal experiences. This chapter identifies some of the ways in which these Harkis constructed and transmitted their memories.

Associations of *rapatriés* from Algeria were formed immediately upon their arrival in France, as the *rapatriés* quickly realized the necessity of organizing themselves in order to defend their collective rights.⁴⁶ These associations, the most famous of which were the Association Nationale des Français d’Afrique du Nord, d’Outre-Mer, et leurs amis (ANFANOMA) and the Front National des Rapatriés (FNR), were created in order to address the practical concerns of the entire repatriated population. Yet, they were overwhelmingly led and dominated by Pieds-Noirs. While the organizations recognized and concerned themselves with the problems of “our Muslim brothers,” it was clear that the Harkis constituted a distinct subset among this group, distinguished by their religion and ethnic origin.

The Harkis therefore decided, in the early 1970s, to form their own organizations that would focus on the specific challenges they faced. This occurred at the moment of increased racism in France, which had highlighted the difficulties of Harki integration. Most of the early Harki associations did not publish journals and many disappeared by the end of the 1970s. The number of associations grew exponentially, however, following the rise in collective consciousness prompted by the 1975 protests and with the participation of second-generation Harkis in these groups. “Although there were only forty such associations in 1973, by 1991 up to

⁴⁵ Roux, *Les Harkis*, 22.

⁴⁶ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 139.

400 were believed to exist and the most recent surveys put the total at over 540. This new-found visibility has been overwhelmingly inspired and led by the second generation.”⁴⁷ Indeed, second-generation Harkis carried out a veritable “revolution” in the Harki associative movement. Yet the proliferation of associations also highlights some of the main challenges that the Harki community has faced in its activism: “the heterogeneity and incapacity of repatriated French Muslims to steadfastly unite in the defense of a cause.”⁴⁸

Since this chapter explores the first generation’s memory practices, it focuses on one of the earliest associations, the Union Nationale des Anciens Combattants Français de Confession Islamique (UNACFCI), which was created in 1973⁴⁹ and had approximately one hundred members at its inception.⁵⁰ A former French army captain of North African origin, Rabah Kheliff, headed this organization.⁵¹ As such, the UNACFCI has maintained close ties to former veterans’ associations and reflected, to a large extent, the ideology of the French army.⁵² Yet, it also sought to promote a particularly French Muslim culture, as the name of its journal, *Français Musulman*, indicates. While the ideas expressed by one association cannot be considered representative of the Harki organizations at this time, its journal offers a glimpse into how some

⁴⁷ Ibid; Harkis.com, “Associations de Harkis,” AJIR Pour les Harkis, http://www.harkis.com/article.php?id_article=71, (accessed April 15, 2008).

⁴⁸ Abrial, *Les enfants de Harkis*, 50.

⁴⁹ Besnaci-Lancou and Manceron, *Les Harkis Dans La Colonisation*, 215. Abrial writes that the association was created in 1978. Abrial, *Les enfants de Harkis*, 49.

⁵⁰ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 152. The association changed name in 1997, becoming l’Union Nationale des Anciens Combattants Français Musulmans (UNACFM), and is still active.

⁵¹ Kheliff remained President of the Association until his death in 2003. It is now led by Colonel Aziz Méliani, another French military officer of North African origin.

⁵² Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 152.

first-generation Harkis identified themselves, what they were concerned with, and how they understood the past.

As I demonstrated in Chapter 1, the question of the Harkis' motivations for supporting the French army has become the linchpin of Harki history. Did the Harkis make a deliberate choice to help maintain French Algeria? Chapter 4 demonstrates how Harki sons and daughters have been divided over how to interpret the Harkis' decision. Among the Harkis themselves, there was a similar lack of consensus. The spectrum of positions on this question ranged from an affirmation of the Harkis' ideological commitment to France, expressed in the *Français Musulman* journal, to repeated declarations of sympathy for the nationalist movement and anti-colonialist sentiments in Ferdi's memoir. On the whole, these Harkis appeared generally ambivalent about their "choice," particularly in light of the consequences of this decision for themselves and their families.

It is unsurprising that the UNACFCI, with its close ties to other associations of veterans, asserted the position that the French state and army supported, which was that the Harkis acted out of patriotic attachment to France. They expressed this view through republishing statements by veterans, Pieds-Noirs, and French politicians. For example, they cited a speech by Defense Minister Charles Henru in 1984 in which he declared, "I'm thinking in particular of those Muslims who have made the most difficult choice, the one to stay loyal to France."⁵³ In 1984, then Prime Minister Jacques Chirac stated, "We are, indeed, determined to ensure our fellow citizens from Overseas territories, who have made their choice, in order and security, their future

⁵³ Charles Henru, Ministre de la Defense, in Villeurbanne, on March 19, 1984. Cited in *Français Musulman*, No. 33, 2eme trimestre 1984.

in France, a France that, without them, would be far from what it is today.”⁵⁴ He went on, as President of the Republic, to institute the National Day of Homage to the Harkis in 2001. Raymond Courrière, likewise observed, “During Algerian independence, the Harkis chose France as their homeland.” Yet, he also pointed out, “Back in metropolitan France, these 60,000 Frenchmen have most often been forgotten and disadvantaged.”⁵⁵

When the Harkis themselves raised the question of their motivations in *Français Musulman*, it was always in response to an experience of discrimination in France. Interestingly enough, France’s injustices towards the Harkis prompted both affirmation and questioning of their decision. The president of the UNACFCI, Rabah Kheliff, declared in 1985, “As for French Muslim veterans from North Africa, everybody recognizes their sacrifice. I will simply say that these dark skinned Frenchmen paid very dearly and keep paying for their engagement with to serve France. [...] This Homeland that they chose despite all oppositon, often with tears and blood.”⁵⁶ The specific trigger of this affirmation of French loyalty and sacrifice was an attempt by “some people, more stupid than racist, who would like to forbid them the right to practice the religion in which they were raised and that France has always respected.”⁵⁷ In this way, Kheliff invoked the Harkis’ ideological commitment in order to support their right to have their cultural differences respected.

⁵⁴ Jacques CHIRAC, Premier Ministre, Discours Programme, Paris 9 Avril 1986. Cited in *Français Musulman*, No. 40, 1er trimestre 1986.

⁵⁵ Secrétariat d’Etat aux Rapatriés, Service De Presse, Mardi 24 Juin 1986, Conférence De Presse, Plan Programme Gouvernemental Pour Les Harkis et Leurs Familles. Cited in *Français Musulman*, No. 41, 2eme trimestre 1986.

⁵⁶ Rabah Kheliff, Président National, “Le Mot Du President: Controverse Sur La Mosquée,” *Français Musulman*, No. 37, 2eme trimestre 1985, p.1.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Yet the association's position on the question was not unequivocal. In early 1986, when discussing the problems of unemployment and other challenges facing the second generation, Kheliff expressed some ambivalence about the Harkis' decision, as he noted that some Harki children "reproach their parents for having served France."⁵⁸ Another article, published in 1983, explored the "paradox" of being both French and Muslim. In light of French injustices towards the Harkis, including "discrimination in hiring; almost total indifference by the media; permanent hypocrisy in the manipulation of the electoral cattle that we are; segregation in housing; educational segregation that leads our youth to a deliberate under-education; permanent racism and insecurity," the author questioned his own decision. "If it had to be done again, I would do it again... Not so sure! What use is an unconditional patriotism in the face of almost total ingratitude?"⁵⁹

The UNACFCI generally approached the question of the Harkis' motivations by speaking about the Harkis as a collectivity. The memoirs, however, reveal the diverse set of conditions that framed individual Harkis' decisions. A common thread through these texts is that none of the memoir authors expressed a clear ideological commitment to French Algeria. Brahim Sadouni declared that he was "too young to understand and get involved in politics"⁶⁰ and that he "remained ignorant of all the reasons for the war."⁶¹ Abdallah Krouk, the oldest of the memoir writers, had enlisted in the French army at age twenty, two years before the Algerian War began. In his memoir, though, Krouk did not identify any patriotic motivations for this action. Saïd

⁵⁸ Rabah Kheliff, Président National, "Le Mot Du President: Fils De Harki," *Français Musulman*, No. 40, 1er trimestre 1986, p.1.

⁵⁹ "Etre français et musulman en 1983..." *Français Musulman*, No. 29, 2eme trimestre 1983.

⁶⁰ Sadouni, *Français Sans Patrie*, 50.

⁶¹ Ibid, 103.

Ferdi actually expressed clear anti-colonial sentiments. He described how, in school, “We read poems that we had written ourselves and that evoked the liberation of our land and the necessity for our people to take charge of their own destiny.”⁶² Two of his brothers fought for the FLN. Ferdi recounts how father explained “that it was normal for each family to participate in this fight if we wanted to be free [...] It was better that they defend a fair cause by helping the revolutionaries.”⁶³

Two of the memoir writers presented economic motivations for joining the French side in the conflict. Sadouni explained that he ended up as a Harki because he took a job fixing vehicles for the French army when he needed work. He did not consider, or was not aware of, the implications of this decision. Messaoud Kafi also attributed his actions to the necessity of finding employment. He explained, “Now it was my turn to provide for the family since my father couldn’t take it anymore. I had to find a job. Therefore, I introduced myself to the captain who was in charge of the military post.”⁶⁴

In their texts, the memoir writers identified factors that limited their agency in making this “decision.” Sadouni ultimately blamed his actions on fate. In a poem that prefaced his memoir, he exclaimed, “I am here, I don't have a choice anymore, I could have gone underground, Alas, fate wanted me to be a HARKI!”⁶⁵ Like Sadouni, Kafi also demonstrated that ultimately he was not responsible for this decision. He explained, “I became a harki because my father was a harki. If he had fought on the opposite side, I would no doubt have done as he

⁶² Ferdi, *Un Enfant*, 20.

⁶³ Ibid, 37.

⁶⁴ Kafi, *De Berger à Harki*, 105.

⁶⁵ Sadouni, *Français Sans Patrie*.

did.”⁶⁶ His father had not made the decision to fight out of loyalty to France either. He had become a Harki because his brother, Kafi’s uncle, registered him without his knowledge, “knowing that given a choice, he would have refused.”⁶⁷ For his part, Ferdi blamed his youth, arguing that without maturity, “one cannot choose freely.”⁶⁸ Ultimately, according to Ferdi, people did what they needed to in order to survive during the war. He wrote, “The climate of fear in which we lived dictated our actions in this or that direction and it was often the instinct of self-preservation that reigned over us.”⁶⁹

Based on his oral interviews with Harkis, Vincent Crapanzano has observed, “I have never met a Harki who admitted that he had made a mistake, although, when I asked Yamina whether she thought her father regretted his decision, she reluctantly said yes. The old Harkis, however, said stubbornly that they would not hesitate to make the decision again. Most of them did add—and quickly—that they were not against Algerian independence, only against the FLN.”⁷⁰ Krouk did not profess regret over his decision, but he did admit, “I have experienced doubts, did I make the right choice? [...] I was fighting for a country that was mine only through annexation, wasn't Algeria my motherland?”⁷¹ In this way he showed that he too was not necessarily against Algerian independence. Yet his narrative also contained an explicit refusal of the FLN’s tactics of violence. When the conflict started, the FLN had targeted Krouk because of his service in the French army. He was later offered an opportunity to join the FLN, but he would

⁶⁶ Kafi, *De Berger à Harki*, preface.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 51.

⁶⁸ Ferdi, *Un Enfant*, 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

⁷⁰ Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 184.

⁷¹ Krouk, *Harki*, 29.

have had to prove his loyalty by killing a Pied-Noir. When Krouk refused, he and his father were condemned to death by the FLN and thus, he declared, “my choice was made.”⁷²

Sadouni, in contrast, expressed nearly immediate regret at finding himself on the side of the French. He confessed, “In this moment of suspense, regret consumed me”⁷³ and he continued to question his decision. “After all, wasn't it a bad path that I had taken?”⁷⁴ Yet when his cousin approached him with an offer to join the FLN, he ultimately refused because such a move would have required him to betray his French comrades and participate in an attack on the base where he was stationed. He declared, “Fully, in body and soul, I was revolted by the idea that I could be the instigator of such carnage. How could I live, being responsible for so many deaths, my conscience stained with their blood?”⁷⁵ Thus, while Sadouni was sympathetic to the nationalist cause, he too rejected the FLN's approach.

Ferdi appeared even less comfortable with his status as a Harki and in fact does not self-identify as such in his memoir.⁷⁶ The back cover of his text describes him as a “traitor in spite of himself.”⁷⁷ At first he had assisted the FLN as a boy, having been introduced to the local leaders through his brothers. In addition to expressing his nationalist sympathy, he described how French “savagery” led people to join the FLN.⁷⁸ In the end, however, he too ultimately rejected the FLN's methods. Ferdi declared, “Of course I wanted freedom for our people, but after realizing

⁷² Ibid, 24.

⁷³ Sadouni, *Français Sans Patrie*, 80.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 124.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 125.

⁷⁶ Ferdi published his memoir ten years before the term “Harki” became widespread.

⁷⁷ Ferdi, *Un Enfant*, back cover.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 30-32.

what methods the *fellas* were using to be heard and respected, I was sickened and I had absolutely no desire to become their accomplice.”⁷⁹

The Harki memoir writers conveyed through their narratives that their ability to make a choice was constrained by a number of factors during the Algerian War. They ultimately chose France not out of patriotic attachment, but rather as the lesser of two evils, taking the path that required them to contribute to the least degree in the brutality of the conflict. They also explicitly responded to the accusation that they were traitors. Ferdi declared that he never denounced anyone to the French.⁸⁰ Sadouni proclaimed, “No doubt, I witnessed fighting, but no one has ever killed a man before my eyes. I am not a murderer, believe me!”⁸¹ Krouk likewise asserted, “As for me, if I participated in actions against the enemies of France, I never accepted missions that targeted civilians, like the day when I refused to throw a grenade into a mosque.”⁸² In this way, they revealed themselves to be both victims of the situation and honorable men.

The question of choice and other engagements with the past were often linked to the Harkis’ place in French society. Their ambivalence regarding their decision thus reflected an uncertainty over how to position themselves in relation to Algeria, to which many continued to profess an attachment, to France, who had offered the Harkis a less than warm welcome, and to the influx of Algerian workers who arrived in France following independence.

The fact that the memoir authors deemphasized their own role in the violence and expressed their support for Algerian independence may indicate a desire for reconciliation with Algerians. Ferdi stated that he did not hold a grudge, either against Algerians or the French, over

⁷⁹ Ibid, 43. “Fellaga” referred to an Algerian who fought for independence from the French.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 42.

⁸¹ Sadouni, *Français Sans Patrie*, 9.

⁸² Krouk, *Harki*, 26.

what occurred. He explained, “I would also speak to those who have seemed to me more responsible or guilty to tell them that I have no hatred against them. Certainly I condemn their actions, their violence, and the injustices they have committed, but I don't hold it against them, knowing that they were then oblivious and not responsible.”⁸³ The Harki concern at this time with the problem of free circulation likewise demonstrated a continuing attachment to Algeria and a desire to be welcomed there.⁸⁴ In *Français Musulman*, Kheliff declared, “we don't have any score to settle, neither with Algeria, nor with Algerians, let that be clear and definitive. However, we ask the Algerian rulers, good Muslims as they are, to turn the page, as we ourselves did regarding members of the FLN who are well established in France, and to quickly grant free movement between France and Algeria to all French Muslims and to all “Pieds-Noirs” no matter what their past was during the Algerian War.”⁸⁵

Yet for some Harkis, the symbolic, and literal, rejection of Harkis who were denied the “right of return” confirmed their break with Algeria. Sadouni decried the “injustice” of the issue after he was refused at the border.⁸⁶ Kroux expressed complicated feelings towards “Algeria, this beautiful and vast country, the one of my childhood, of my teenage years, of my adult life, the one which because of my choices has rejected me, disowned me, sentenced me to death, forced me into exile.”⁸⁷ Moreover, in decrying the violence of the FLN, the Harki memoir writers criticized the Algerian government, which had been dominated by the FLN since 1962.

⁸³ Ferdi, *Un Enfant*, 14.

⁸⁴ Associative efforts have come to focus less on this issue as the first generation ages and passes away.

⁸⁵ Rabah Kheliff, Président National, “Le Mot Du President,” *Français Musulman*, 2eme trimestre 1982, p.1. Original emphasis.

⁸⁶ Brahim Sadouni, *Destin de Harki. Le Témoignage D'un Jeune Berbère, Enrôlé Dans L'armée Française À Dix-Sept Ans* (Cosmopole, 2002), 147.

⁸⁷ Kroux, *Harki*, 19.

The Harkis' memory narratives also reflected their uncertain place in French society during the 1980s. Not only did the memoir writers fail to declare their support for France, they also described numerous instances of French brutality during the war. Their focus on their abandonment by the French army in Algeria also conveyed their disappointment in and frustration with France. Vincent Crapanzano has argued that "as products of colonial paternalism as well as the paternalism fostered by the military, the Harkis found themselves particularly dependent on the French and, therefore, suffered their abandonment and betrayal with exceptional intensity. As they described how they had been sent back to their villages unarmed, with a small bonus and the assurance that they had nothing to fear, they could barely contain their rage and give adequate expression to their disillusionment."⁸⁸ Sadouni expressed this disenchantment when he observed following the French army's withdrawal, "It's a real pity to have believed in such a powerful country that preaches liberty and equality transcending narrow-minded beliefs."⁸⁹ Krouk vented similar frustration by wondering, "Have we been used as tissues that can be thrown away once used, are we only fit for History's trash?"⁹⁰ Even in *Français Musulman*, which published articles on the French state's efforts to aid the Harkis, Kheliff catalogued the mistreatment of the Harkis: "In spite of all they have suffered, when they have been deceived, betrayed, then abandoned to their sad fate, they have still survived only to better love and continue to serve France."⁹¹ It is important to note that the theme of abandonment is such "an insistent leitmotif" in Harki narratives because "It also buffers, in complex ways, the

⁸⁸ Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 83.

⁸⁹ Sadouni, *Français Sans Patrie*, 167.

⁹⁰ Krouk, *Harki*, 38.

⁹¹ Rabah Kheliff, Président National, "Le Mot Du President: Controverse Sur La Mosquée," *Français Musulman*, No. 37, 2eme trimestre 1985, p.1.

subjugent theme of betrayal. They trusted the French, and the French breached that trust as they themselves were accused of doing. (It should be remembered that some Harkis betrayed the French by secretly abetting the FLN.)”⁹²

Through *Français Musulman*, members of the UNACFCI also conveyed a contradictory attitude towards Algerian immigrants. During the 1980s, in line with Mitterand’s “*droit à la différence*” policy, the journal proclaimed its Algerian culture and Muslim heritage. As one article announced, “The Muslim Community, French by its civil status, in no way renounces its ancestors' religion, quite the opposite, it intends to keep its spiritual and moral heritage.”⁹³ Even the selection of the name “*Français Musulman*” as the title of the publication fit with this policy. It is one of the many names that the French state used to categorize this population and that the Harkis and their families themselves employed before the term “Harki” became widespread following the second generation’s 1991 protests.⁹⁴ Self-identifying as French Muslim brought the Harkis closer to Algerian immigrants, who shared the same culture. At times, however, articles in the journal asserted their disdain for their fellow French of Algerian origin. One title proclaimed, “What Arab junk, these immigrants.”⁹⁵ Another article, written by an active supporter of the Harki cause, André Wormser, affirmed the differences between Harkis and immigrants. He declared that his organization, the *Comité National pour les Musulmans Français*, “has strongly stood up, and will continue to do so, against racist and xenophobic

⁹² Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 83.

⁹³ Abdelkader Barakrok, Ancien Secrétaire d’Etat, “Aux Français Musulmans,” 2ème trimestre 1982.

⁹⁴ It is important to note that during the colonial period this term was applied to members of the indigenous population who acquired French citizenship. Gilles Manceron and Hassan Remaoun, *D’une rive à l’autre*, (Syros: 1993), 109.

⁹⁵ Sadreddine Chabaga, “Quel fourbi arabe, ces immigrés : Réflexions d’un Jeune Français Musulman sur l’Immigration,” *Français Musulman*, No. 40, 1er trimestre 1986.

intolerance that makes no distinction between those who have chosen our Homeland and the foreigners, that judges not by the hearts but by the skin and the hair.”⁹⁶

“Les oubliés de l’histoire”

“We are and always will be those who are forgotten by history.”⁹⁷

The second-generation activists who participated in the 1975 and 1991 protests have framed their demonstrations as “the Harkis’ emergence from oblivion.”⁹⁸ As Hacène Arfi, who led the occupation of the Saint-Laurent-des-Arbres town hall in 1991 has explained, “We broke the wall of silence [surrounding the Harkis].”⁹⁹ Why did these activists explain their actions through a discourse of memory? It is true that before this time, most French citizens were unaware of the existence of the Harkis and their suffering. The state, however, was not. The measures that they implemented addressing the Harkis’ situation indicated their awareness of the Harkis’ plight. I do not wish to challenge the notion that France “forgot” about the Harkis. Rather, I want to highlight the fact that second-generation Harkis selected this term because they found it an effective way of articulating their grievances. It has enabled Harki children to express their desires for inclusion, consideration, and validation without employing a politically sensitive language of race or religion. Following the protests, scholars took to labeling the Harkis “*les oubliés de l’histoire*” and it “remains the phrase most frequently employed to describe the harkis,

⁹⁶ Comité National Pour Les Musulmans Français, (President Andre WORMSER). Cited in *Français Musulman*, No. 33, 2ème trimestre 1984.

⁹⁷ Cleopatre, post in response to “Le film “harkis” avec Smaïn diffusé sur France 2,” *Coalition Nationale des harkis*, 17 October 2006, http://www.coalition-harkis.com/component/option,com_fireboard/Itemid,194/func,view/id,272/catid,4/ (accessed February 18, 2008).

⁹⁸ Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 146.

⁹⁹ Ibid 143.

[even if] it is, historiographically speaking, no longer accurate”¹⁰⁰ As second-generation activist Boussad Azni declared in 2006, “the appellation of ‘*oubliés de l’histoire*’ sadly remains accurate. This psychological dimension is the foundation of our community’s identity.”¹⁰¹ This section explores why it has remained synonymous with the Harki community.

The timing of the protests offers one key to understanding why protestors and analysts have employed a language of memory to describe these events. The first occurred in 1975, at the height of anti-immigrant sentiment in France. “Breaking the silence” about the Harki past meant insisting on their specificity. By declaring themselves “*les oubliés de l’histoire*,” Harki children distinguished themselves from Algerian immigrants with whom they had been linked, on the basis of their race and religion. The next round of protests, in 1991, came in the aftermath of Mitterrand’s failed “*droit à la différence*” policies. While the decade of the 1980s saw some solidarity among second-generation Harkis and Algerian immigrants, Harki youth remained more disadvantaged in terms of education and employment than their peers of European origin. When it became clear that embracing their particular heritage would not lead to acceptance, Harki children chose to focus on their unique past. Recognition of their particular history offered a way of differentiating themselves once and for all from other French of North African origin.¹⁰² We can understand their selection of the term “Harki,” rooted as it was in the Algerian War, as a way of deemphasizing their cultural and religious differences in favor of proclaiming their historical specificity.

¹⁰⁰ Eldridge, “We’ve Never Had a Voice,” 90.

¹⁰¹ Boussad Azni, “Discours de Clôture” (presented at the Etats Généraux de la Communauté Harkie, FIAP Salle Jean MONNET (Paris), November 18, 2006), <http://www.blogg.org/blog-54218-date-2006-11.html>.

¹⁰² Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis*, 164.

Portraying the Harkis as “*les oubliés de l’histoire*” also helped challenge the notion that their fathers were disloyal to their Algerian brothers. The image of “the forgotten ones,” an image of victimhood, replaces that of traitors.¹⁰³ First-generation Harkis had deflected accusations of their own treachery by depicting France’s behavior towards the Harkis as a betrayal. The 1991 protest slogan, “After betrayal, abandonment; after abandonment, exile; after exile, oblivion,” reveals how second-generation Harkis framed “oblivion” as a new form of treason.¹⁰⁴ Describing them as “*les oubliés de l’histoire*” thus fit neatly into a narrative of France’s failed obligations to the Harkis. It has also allowed them to make demands, including for reparation, from the French state.¹⁰⁵ Harki children continue to employ this phrase to express their disappointment in the French state’s failure to deliver on electoral promises and what they perceive as political betrayals. On the website *Monharki.com*, one article declared, “Harkis, neither the right nor the left has resolved the question of these *oubliés de l’histoire...*” in the lead up to the 2012 French presidential election.¹⁰⁶ Another proclaimed, in reference to Nicolas Sarkozy’s un-fulfilled 2007 campaign promise to officially recognize France’s role in the post-

¹⁰³ Ibid, 181.

¹⁰⁴ Eldridge, “We’ve Never Had a Voice,” 89. Translated by Eldridge. In order to understand how “oblivion” came to be equated with other offences France committed against the Harkis, we must consider the state of WWII and Holocaust memory at this time—the Jewish community in France proclaiming memory as a right and duty—which I outline in Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁵ Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis*, 181. I explore this narrative further in Chapter 3, in particular the Harkis’ focus on abandonment in commemorative practices.

¹⁰⁶ Le Petit Harki, “Harkis, ni la droite ni la gauche n’ont réglé la question de ces oubliés de l’histoire...,” *Monharki.com*, 25 April 2011, <http://www.monharki.fr/article-harkis-ni-la-droite-ni-la-gauche-n-ont-regle-la-question-de-ces-oublies-de-l-histoire-72253979.html>, (accessed November 9, 2014).

independence violence against the Harkis, “Harkis, deceived then forgotten in 2007 but definitely not in 2012!”¹⁰⁷

The realm of memory, then, constituted yet another place where the French failed the Harkis. As one participant in the 1991 protests explained, “They have stolen our past and our memory, France has made us bastards of history.”¹⁰⁸ It also, however, provided a way for Harkis and their descendants to regain control of their situation. Whereas the first generation had been betrayed and subjected to the will of the state, second-generation Harkis could exercise agency by “breaking” France’s silence. While Harkis have had reason “to fear the judgment of History,”¹⁰⁹ Harki children can exonerate their fathers through their memory work and carve out for them a dignified place in history. Indeed, their protests have been presented as narratives of redemption. Claire Eldridge has written, “Tired of being *les oubliés de l’histoire*, the children of the harkis were determined to gain recognition on behalf of their parents for the sacrifices they had made for France and the suffering they had endured as a consequence.”¹¹⁰ Abderahmen Moumen, a second-generation Harki, has similarly declared, “The big exploits undertaken by the French Muslims, at that time ‘*les oubliés de l’histoire*’, brought them to the forefront of the national stage.”¹¹¹ Régis Pierret has explained why resisting forgetting has remained such a vital task for second-generation Harkis. Their own identity is tied to how the Harkis are remembered. As Pierret observes, “Allowing forgetting would mean validating the official versions regarding

¹⁰⁷ Le Petit Harki, “Harkis, trompés puis oubliés en 2007 mais surtout pas en 2012!,” *Monharki.com*, 4 April 2011, <http://www.monharki.fr/article-harkis-trompes-puis-oublies-en-2007-mais-surtout-pas-en-2012-70988447.html>, (accessed November 9, 2014).

¹⁰⁸ Eldridge, “We’ve Never Had a Voice,” 103. Translated by Eldridge.

¹⁰⁹ Dalila Kerchouche, *Mon Père, Ce Harki* (Seuil, 2003), 13.

¹¹⁰ Eldridge, “We’ve Never Had a Voice,” 89.

¹¹¹ Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans*, 17.

the harkis, assigning them forever the role of traitors. This designation, besides, is not without consequence because it means the children and grandchildren [of harkis] will forever have to bear this despised image.”¹¹²

The aim of “preventing forgetting” has also played an essential role in uniting the community, which is especially significant given the diversity of second-generation Harki experiences. The Harki identity does not reflect an internal “sameness.” It is based on a shared past, yet the personal relationships of Harki children to this past varied widely depending on whether they experienced the war and whether they were part of the “hinge generation,” those Harki children who grew up in the camps.¹¹³ In her memoir, Harki daughter Zahia Rahmani described the differences between her experiences, as a Harki child born in France, and those of her older sister, whom she called “a forgotten one. A time bomb. A child of war, timid and fearful, suffocated by her desires.”¹¹⁴ Karim Brazi, the son of a Harki, framed his novel as a comparison of the lives and opportunities of two Harki sons, one who found it relatively easy to integrate in France and the other who was confined to a camp and remained isolated.¹¹⁵ Yet, the experience of having been “forgotten by history” allows Harki children to rally around a shared cause. Their status as victims of France’s neglect strengthens the bonds between members of the community.

¹¹² Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis*, 165.

¹¹³ Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, xii. This expression refers “to those Harki children who spent at least part of their life in one of the camps or forestry villages in which their parents were housed as *Harkis of the hinge generation* (*les Harkis de génération charnière*), an expression first used, I believe, by General Abd-El-Aziz Meliani (1993).”

¹¹⁴ Zahia Rahmani, *France, Récit D'une Enfance* (Sabine Wespieser, 2006), 31-32.

¹¹⁵ Karim Brazi, *Le Vilain Petit Berbère* (Société des Ecrivains, 2007).

Conclusion: Postmemory

Marianne Hirsch's concept of "postmemory" is useful for understanding how the Harki past was "transmitted" to Harki children. Hirsch has explained that "Postmemory describes the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right."¹¹⁶ Harki children did not receive coherent collective memory narratives of the Harki past through the first generation's organizational and cultural vectors of memory, or from official and scholarly carriers, as I demonstrated in Chapter 1. Their fathers also did not transmit personal memories within the family sphere. Second-generation Harkis nonetheless inherited the weight of this past. As Vincent Crapanzano has phrased it, "They have suffered from the consequences of their father's decision and from the effects of their father's wounds—a silent but emotional transfer—without knowing what they were."¹¹⁷ The notion of "postmemory" helps explain why second-generation Harkis care about the Harki past. They may not have experienced the traumatic events, but these events continue to shape their identity.

There is convincing evidence that second-generation Harkis have been motivated in their memory work by the silences of their fathers and the state about the Harki past. It is useful, however, to complicate the notion of complete institutional and parental silence before the 1990s. Examining two sets of sources, Harki association journals and the memoirs of young Harkis, reveals that debates about the Harkis' motivations have a long history in the Harki community. It also allows us to consider why it has been useful for the children of Harkis to self-identify as the victims of these silences.

¹¹⁶ Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (2008): 103–28, 103.

¹¹⁷ Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 187.

CHAPTER 3: OFFICIAL COMMEMORATIONS AND HARKI RESPONSES, 1990-2013

The state employs official carriers of memory, including legislation, court cases, monuments, ceremonies, and other forms of commemoration, to impose a hegemonic interpretation of events of national significance. The purpose of official memory is to reinforce the unity of the national community through a shared orientation to past events¹ and this function is particularly essential in the aftermath of defeat.² In the case of the Algerian War, and the colonial period more generally, however, the French state has been unable to forge a national consensus. Harkis, members of the FLN, drafted soldiers, Pieds-Noirs, former colonial subjects, and their descendants have expressed differing perspectives on this period.³ Commemorative activity has become further politicized as parties on the left and right have aligned with various groups and their memorial causes. To some scholars and politicians, especially those who privilege a single shared national narrative, this lack of agreement on how to interpret the past has indicated a troubling new degree of social polarization in France.⁴ It has also prompted them

¹ Allan Megill, Steven Shepard, and Phillip Honenberger, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide to Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 30.

² Daniel Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); John Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Jenny Macleod, *Defeat and Memory: Cultural Histories of Military Defeat Since 1815*, (Basingstoke England; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

³ Jo McCormack, *Collective Memory: France and the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Lexington Books, 2010), 5.

⁴ Johann Michel, *Gouverner Les Mémoires: Les Politiques Mémorielles En France* (Presses Universitaires de France, 2010), 157; Nicolas Bancel, "France, 2005: A Postcolonial Turning Point," *French Cultural Studies* 24, no. 2 (2013): 208–18: 209, 215.

to employ the “memory wars” paradigm to interpret competing commemorative acts.⁵ Yet, as John Gillis has observed, even when commemorative activities seem consensual, “they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation.”⁶

I am the first to study how Harkis and their descendants have responded to official commemorations of the Algerian War and to analyze what this reveals about their evolving relationship to the national community.⁷ Their reactions are more apparent on Harki websites than in other sources.⁸ Indeed, they employ cyber carriers precisely in order to express their lack of ideological consensus. It is through these sites that we can observe the extent of their resistance and examine how they have used the Internet to publically contest official memory practices. The Harkis and their descendants constitute a dispersed community and have restricted access to financial and political resources as well as limited visibility in France. The Internet has served as an indispensable communication medium for them. They have used the web to organize and promote collective action. Cyber carriers have enabled Harkis and their children to participate more actively in the process of negotiating a collective memory of the Algerian War.

⁵ Eric Savarese, *Algérie : La guerre des mémoires*, (Editions Non Lieu, 2007) ; Benjamin Stora and Thierry Leclère, *La Guerre des Mémoires: La France face à son passé colonial* (Paris : Editions de l'Aube, 2008) ; Pascal Blanchard, Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, and Collectif, *Les Guerres de Mémoires: La France et Son Histoire, Enjeux Politiques, Controverses Historiques, Stratégies Médiaques* (Editions La Découverte, 2010).

⁶ Gillis, *Commemorations*, 5.

⁷ On official commemorations of the Algerian War, see: William B. Cohen, “The Algerian War and French Memory,” *Contemporary European History* 9, no. 03 (2000): 489–500; Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums, and Colonial Memories* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Michel, *Gouverner*.

⁸ My main sources for this chapter are the works of second generation activists and associations- their memoirs, scholarly texts, and websites. In particular I analyze the reactions of the following key players in the Harki memory community: Boussad Azni, who led the coalition to bring the crimes against humanity case against France and wrote a text explaining the case; Hacène Arfi, who was a leader of the 1991 protest and an active opponent of March 19th as a commemorative date; Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, who has written a memoir and published collections of Harki stories, organized a number of scholarly conferences on the Harkis, and has served as president of the association Harkis et Droits de L’Homme, which has a website; Abderahmen Moumen, who is a second-generation Harki scholar; and Khader Moulfi, who founded the Coalition Nationale des Harkis and ran its website.

I also examine how and why Harki children have borrowed from French Jewish memory narratives and practices when articulating their collective memories. Other scholars, including William Cohen and Régis Pierret, have identified some of the parallels that Harkis and their descendants have drawn between their own experiences and those of Jews during the Holocaust.⁹ I argue that these multidirectional invocations have proved most productive for Harkis and their children in understanding and constructing their relationship to the French state. Their actions fit within a larger pattern of cross-referencing in the histories of Holocaust and colonial memories that Michael Rothberg has observed.¹⁰ The case of the Harkis seems to confirm “the rhetorical and cultural *intimacy* of [these] seemingly opposed traditions of remembrance.”¹¹

This chapter explores state commemorations and Harki reactions to them in a chronological fashion. In the first section, I analyze the state’s attempts during the 1990s to celebrate the Harkis’ military service to France. This interpretation of the Harkis’ place in French history corresponded with the French republican memorial model, in which citizens were honored for their sacrifices to the nation.¹² This designation, however, did not accurately reflect the Harkis’ status during the war or their motivations for supporting the French, and did not meet

⁹ Régis Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis: Entre Double Rejet et Triple Appartenance* (L’Harmattan, 2001); William B. Cohen, “The Harkis: History and Memory,” in *Algeria & France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, ed. Patricia M. E. Lorcin (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 164–80.

¹⁰ Parallels between these two histories began during the war itself, when supporters of Algerian independence who were tortured by the French compared themselves to French resisters in WWII. Rothberg has argued that “The practice of torture and the use of detention camps by France in its war against the Algerian independence movement provide triggers that stimulated remembrance of the Nazi occupation and genocide and inspired new forms of testimony and witnessing.” He has likewise made the case that “the emergence of Holocaust memory has contributed to the articulation of other histories,” including that of the Algerian War in France. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 6, 228. In addition, French Jews in Algeria spurred Jews in France to be more vocal about their particular experience during the Holocaust and to enter into Holocaust memory culture.

¹¹ Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 7.

¹² Michel, *Gouverner*, 72.

the needs of their community. Second-generation Harkis have instead positioned themselves and their fathers within a competing memory model in France, a “victim-memorial regime,” in which groups are memorialized as the nation’s victims.¹³ This commemorative framework emerged during the 1970s to 1990s as French Jews prompted the state to engage with its complicity in the Holocaust. The historian Serge Barcellini has described a commemorative shift from honoring “those who died *for* France” to “those who died *because* of France.”¹⁴ The status of French Jews as victims of the state provided them with political and social capital that they could leverage for material and symbolic concessions. This model has appealed to the Harkis and their children, who have felt that they have been isolated, rejected, and “forgotten” by the rest of the French. Instances of Harki multidirectional memory began in the 1975 protests, during which activists used the platform of Holocaust memory to articulate their experiences of suffering. In particular, they drew comparisons between the camps Harkis had been relegated to by the French and the Nazi concentration camps.

The second section details a crimes against humanity case that a group of second-generation Harkis filed in 2001 against France for its role in the post-independence reprisal violence against the Harkis and their families. This case occurred in the context of France bringing perpetrators to justice for WWII crimes. It demonstrates how second-generation Harki activists have positioned the Harkis within the republic. I argue that, paradoxically, their charges against France, as opposed to against the Algerians who did the killing, indicate their attachment to French society. At the same time, focusing on the responsibility of the French provided a potential basis for reconciling with Algerian immigrants, who have also experienced

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Serge Barcellini, “L’Etat Républicain, Acteur de Mémoire: Des Morts Pour La France Aux Morts À Cause de La France,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires*, ed. Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, (Editions La Découverte, 2010), pp. 209-219.

discrimination and injustice from the French state. In addition, the crimes against humanity case points to an evolution in how Harki children have framed their memory practices. After this point, second-generation Harkis focused their activism on the post-independence violence against the Harkis and on France's neglected responsibilities that led to this tragedy. The case constituted the first time that they had presented the violence as a collective, shared event. It broadened the Harki identity to include not just the men who supported France during the Algerian War, but all who were threatened in the aftermath. This shift has carved out a larger place for Harki wives and daughters in their collective memory narratives and commemorative practices. Some second-generation Harkis also began to employ the term "genocide" during the case. Framing the violence as such solidified their victim status and buffered against accusations that Harkis were "traitors." In sum, this case was designed to afford the community a dignified place in French society.

In the third section I analyze the French state's attempts to establish a hegemonic national narrative of French Algeria and the Algerian War in the first decade of the 21st century. Their efforts to create annual commemorations for the Harkis and veterans of the Algerian War as well as the infamous 2005 law designed to impose a normative, positive interpretation of colonialism have met with considerable resistance in France. The polemics that these projects, and this last endeavor in particular, have sparked have prompted some scholars to employ the "memory wars" paradigm. Yet this paradigm cannot explain the Harkis' reactions. It is more useful instead to think in terms of shifting memorial affiliations. With respect to commemorating March 19th as the end of the war, Harkis and their descendants have been united with Pieds-Noirs, the right, and far-right in opposition to this date. Scholars have positioned them the same way for the 2005 law, yet they have been among the most outspoken against the law, which has created a

foundation for solidarity with colonial subjects and the left.¹⁵ These incidents reveal how the Harkis and their families do not fit neatly into political struggles over commemoration.

The final section explores how Harki children have responded to what they see as the continued failure of the French state to officially acknowledge the Harki massacres and to apologize for France's role in this violence. While French presidents Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande each promised to do just this during their respective campaigns, second-generation Harkis have spoken out in newspapers and on websites and have organized boycotts of the annual commemoration for Harkis to express their frustration that these promises have not been satisfactorily fulfilled. They have also organized their own counter-commemoration on May 12th, the day in 1962 on which Pierre Messmer, then Secretary of the Army, sent an order to prevent French officers from helping the Harkis escape to France. This commemoration conflates France's original betrayal in abandoning the Harkis with the continuing lack of apology for this treachery and has evolved from an intimate, solemn event in 2010 to a mass protest in central Paris in 2013. The Harkis' quest for recognition and official apology from France serves as the main unifying cause for their community. Ultimately, Harki resistance to official commemoration has been designed to ensure their understanding of their place in France is reflected in this commemoration.

Official Memories of the Holocaust and the Harkis, 1970s-1990s

During the 1970s to 90s, Jewish memory of WWII in France underwent an “awakening,” as Henry Rousso has described it.¹⁶ While the French state had emphasized a collective narrative

¹⁵ In Chapter 4 I will show that second-generation Harkis are divided over the subject of the 2005 law—how to interpret the colonial past.

¹⁶ Henry Rousso, *Le Syndrome de Vichy de 1944 À Nos Jours*, 2e éd. (Seuil, 1990), 132. Translation by Cohen, “The Harkis,” 176.

of resistance to Nazi Occupation in the immediate postwar period, French Jews sought to hold the state accountable for its role in the Holocaust. They also challenged the republican model of a single shared national memory by proclaiming their right to express their own particular collective memory, which they called their *devoir de mémoire*, and to form their own memory community. In a sense, this move fractured the national narrative and changed the relationship between citizen and nation, but it also ensured their memory was not annihilated. Since they focused on France's responsibility, their memory work ultimately affirmed their attachment to France.

The efforts of French Jews produced a number of commemorative measures in their favor. In addition to constructing monuments and plaques around France, the state enacted the Gayssot Law in 1990, which prohibited Holocaust denial and protected against anti-Semitic or xenophobic attacks. This legislation enabled French Jews to bring suit against anyone who disparaged their community. Then, in 1995, President Jacques Chirac officially apologized for the state's compliance in the deportation of French Jews during the Occupation.¹⁷ In his speech at the Vel d'Hiv, the site of a massive round up of Jews in 1942, he acknowledged a "collective fault," saying that France had betrayed its own "values, principles and ideals."¹⁸ He declared, "It is no longer only a government (Vichy) who is judged responsible for the Deportation of French Jews, but through it a whole state apparatus (local and national police, magistrate, civil service...) is incriminated." Chirac thus shattered the idea that the majority of French were resisters and only a handful of Vichy politicians were actually responsible for the deportations.

¹⁷ Michel, *Gouverner*, 94-97.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 95.

These symbolic gestures were important because they established French Jews as victims of state violence. Moreover, these commemorative developments significantly altered the politics of memory in France.¹⁹ Johann Michel has argued that within the current memorial context, “The construction of a victim position allows us to recognize past events as traumatic and to translate these traumas into political demands for the given group. These demands for recognition not only concern material claims (indemnities, restitution of lost goods...) but also touch upon the symbolic construction of individual and collective identities, with the aim of restoring self-esteem.”²⁰ Official victim status was appealing for the Harkis who had both financial concerns as well as an ambiguous place in French society.

From early on, then, the Harkis, their supporters, and their descendants have used the framework of Holocaust memory to formulate their demands for recognition and retribution from France. During the 1975 and 1991 protests, second-generation activists compared the treatment of the Harkis to that of Jews during WWII, referring to the camps as both ghettos²¹ and concentration camps.²² This parallel seemed particularly fitting, given that some of the Harki camps had previously held French Jews during WWII. This analogy had a long history as well. French use of “regroupment” camps to resettle the Algerian population during the Algerian War had prompted remembrance of Nazi use of camps. Harkis in turn invoked the memory of Nazi camps to articulate their own experiences and expresses the gravity of the situation and their

¹⁹ This shift was part of a larger global process. As Barbara Misztal has observed, “Today, due to the proliferation of the language of human rights and the new strength of the politics of identity, we see an increase in demands for governments to address historical injustices committed in their name.” Barbara Misztal, “Memory Experience: The Forms and Functions of Memory,” in *Museums and Their Communities*, ed. Sheila Watson (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 379–96: 389.

²⁰ Michel, *Gouverner*, 72-73.

²¹ Stéphanie Abrial, *Les Enfants de Harkis: de la révolte à l'intégration*, Histoire et perspectives méditerranéennes; Variation: Collection Histoire et perspectives méditerranéennes. (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002), 18.

²² Cohen, “The Harkis,” 177.

demands. It proved to be an effective strategy, as they drew national attention to the Harki cause and forced the state to close the camps. It is important to note, however, that their rhetoric “grossly overstated the number of harkis who resided in [the camps]. Focusing the protests on these spaces, which housed only 16,000 of the 180,000 harkis in 1974 (not the “vast majority” as the leader of demonstrations in summer 1975 claimed), and making parallels with Jews during the Second World War resulted in essentializing the plight of all harkis.”²³ Over half of the Harkis and their children never lived in the camps and the experiences of those who did varied significantly.²⁴ They thus constitute a problematic focal point for Harki collective memory. Yet these comparisons, and the vivid images they evoke, continue to be employed today. As one Harki son remarked when he returned to Bias in 2006, “the images that march through the mind are truly atrocious ... humiliation, oppression ... a concentration camp.”²⁵

After decades of relative public silence, the French state’s first symbolic gesture towards the Harkis came in 1989, when it issued a commemorative postal stamp that read, “Homage to the harkis, soldiers of France.” Eleven and a half million of these stamps were sold.²⁶ The French state had recognized the Harkis’ status as veterans in 1974, despite their rather loose attachment to the army, as many had not participated in direct combat. French soldiers who fought in Algeria also received official veteran status this year, even though the Algerian War was still formally considered an “operation to maintain order,” and would not be classified as a war until 1999. The move to officialize the Harkis’ status had been taken to help distinguish them from

²³ Miller, “A Camp for Foreigners and ‘Aliens’, 37-38.

²⁴ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Abderahmen Moumen, *Les Harkis, Idées Reçues* (Editions Le Cavalier Bleu, 2008), 60.

²⁵ Claire Eldridge, “‘We’ve Never Had a Voice’: Memory Construction and the Children of the Harkis (1962–1991),” *French History* 23, no. 1 (2009): 88–107, 105-106.

²⁶ Cohen, “The Harkis,” 176.

Algerian immigrants and to award financial compensation to the Harkis and their widows. At the issuing of the stamp, an official from the Ministry of Defense recognized the “difficult circumstances” under which the Harkis were repatriated to France, but emphasized the Harkis’ military service, declaring, “By this ceremony the Government of the Republic wishes to thank the veterans, tell their children and grandchildren they should be proud of their parents.”²⁷ Thus, France situated the Harkis in a tradition of military sacrifice. Many Harkis were undoubtedly pleased to be recognized as veterans by the state, but others were likely uncomfortable with this status, given the diversity of motivations for “enlistment” and their restricted agency in making this choice. This type of commemoration also ascribed to the Harkis a form of martial masculinity that was undermined by their inability to protect their families following Algerian independence. One Harki association demonstrated their ambivalence towards this status in 1992 when they unveiled a plaque at the Harki camp Saint-Maurice l’Ardoise that read, “Homage to the Harkis 1954-1962 – morts pour la France.”²⁸ The language of the plaque echoed that of the 1989 stamp, meaning it was republican in spirit, yet it was placed in a location that symbolized France’s mistreatment of the Harkis and highlighted their victimhood.

Following the second-generation Harkis’ 1991 protests, during which they self-identified as “those forgotten by history” and demanded greater public recognition of the Harki past, the French Parliament unanimously passed law n°94-488 in June 1994.²⁹ This measure officially acknowledged French gratitude towards the Harkis for their military service. It read, “The French Republic shows its recognition toward the repatriated former members of the auxiliary

²⁷ Ibid. Translation by Cohen.

²⁸ Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire*, 148.

²⁹ Cohen, “The Harkis,” 176.

forces, assimilated or victims of captivity in Algeria, for the sacrifices they bestowed.”³⁰ While this law was accompanied by more material assistance for the Harkis and their descendants, it did not address the particular situation in which many Harki families found themselves. The Harkis had been honored by the state for their sacrifices as French soldiers, yet they and their children continued to face systemic discrimination in France based on their appearance and origins. Even those who had not grown up isolated and scholastically disadvantaged in the Harki camps had difficulties finding employment and housing. Indeed, in 1999 Martine Aubry, Minister of Employment and Solidarity declared it was time to translate France’s “recognition” in the law of 1994 into results for the Harkis.³¹

A Crime Against Humanity: Representing the Harki Massacres in France, 2001

The French state, not fully prepared to confront the meaning of the Algerian War, thus relied on the traditional, republican commemorative model to represent the Harkis and situate them into a national historical narrative. In August 2001 the disconnect between how the state positioned the Harkis and how second-generation Harkis understood their relationship to France came to a head when nine individuals, supported by a coalition of 50 Harki associations, brought a case against France for having committed a crime against humanity.³² The Harkis’ case was designed to hold France responsible for its role in the massacres following the Algerian War and to insist on the Harkis’ status as the nation’s victims, rather than its protectors. They accused the French state of having abandoned the defenseless Harkis, prevented their escape to France with

³⁰ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Gilles Manceron, eds., *Les Harkis Dans La Colonisation et Ses Suites* (Editions de l’Atelier, 2008), 217.

³¹ Abrial, *Les Enfants de Harkis*, 46.

³² Abderahmen Moumen, “De L’absence Aux Nouveaux Porte-Parole: Évolution Du Mouvement Associatif Harki (1962-2011),” in *Harkis 1962-2012: Les Mythes et Les Faits*, vol. 666, Les Temps Modernes (Paris: Gallimard, 2011), 159–69, 166.

their families, and refused to intervene to protect their former auxiliaries, even though they were aware of the retribution violence.

This act was prompted by a series of trials and public debates about how to contend with the legacy of WWII and the colonial past on a judicial level. In 1998, Maurice Papon was convicted of crimes against humanity for deporting 1,600 French Jews in his capacity as secretary general for police in Bordeaux during WWII. The crimes against humanity legal precedent had been established in 1945 in an attempt to address the particularly atrocious nature of the crimes committed during the Holocaust. A crime against humanity was defined as “murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane act, directed against any civilian population, before or during war, or persecution on political, racial, or religious grounds.”³³ It has been reserved for particularly atrocious situations, in which offenders have denied the humanity of their victims. The charge was applied retroactively to the Nazis and has been very sparingly applied outside the context of the 1939-1945 period.³⁴

Papon’s trial constitutes an important example of the interrelated histories of Holocaust and colonial memories. Papon had also been police chief in Paris during the Algerian War and was considered responsible for an attack against Algerians protesting peacefully in Paris on October 17, 1961 in which at least forty were killed. Although he was not charged with this crime, his trial for crimes against humanity during WWII brought the event into French consciousness and stirred up memories of the Algerian War. Following a number of revelations about the systematic use of torture by the French army during the Algerian War, a debate sprang up in France about whether perpetrators of this violence could be tried for having committed a

³³ La Charte du Tribunal de Nuremberg du 8 aout 1945, en son titre 2, article 6. *Temps Modernes*, 226. André Frossard, *Le Crime contre l’humanité*, (Robert Laffont, 1987), 57.

³⁴ Alan Jakubowicz, President of Licra (Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l’antisémitisme), *La Tragédie Des Harkis: Crime Contre l’Humanité* (presented at the LICRA Conference, Maison du Barreau, Paris, 2012).

crime against humanity. Those who advocated bringing this charge against French military officers were spurred on by the publication of General Aussaresses' memoir in 2001, in which he boldly and unapologetically described the practice of torture he had inflicted in Algeria. The post-Algerian War amnesty laws ultimately protected Aussaresses and other members of the French army from being persecuted for their actions during the war, but Aussaresses and his publishers were tried and fined for publically defending the practice of torture.³⁵ The state avoided intervening on the question of establishing fault in the Algerian War, but in May of 2001 the French Parliament passed the Taubira Law, recognizing slavery as a crime against humanity. This piece of memorial legislation highlighted the racialized nature of slavery and the slave trade during the colonial period.

In filing their case of crimes against humanity, the Harkis were undoubtedly influenced by the public debates about whether and how to hold the French army accountable for its actions during the Algerian War. The case may have been designed to deflect discussions of the Harkis' role in the torture carried out by the French. Some Harkis had translated during the interrogations and therefore could have been seen as complicit in the violence. Harkis who served in Paris had a reputation for having been particularly brutal during the war. These perceptions informed the way Harkis and their families were treated in France. We can understand this case as an attempt to buffer against accusations of Harki treachery and cruelty by focusing on France's betrayal.

Another factor motivating this coalition of Harki associations was a visit to France by Algerian President and veteran of the Algerian War, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, in June of 2001.

When asked whether the Harkis would be granted the right to return to Algeria, as Bouteflika

³⁵ The Law of July 31, 1968 offered "amnesty for all infractions committed in connection with the events in Algeria." Benjamin Stora, "The 'Southern' World of the Pieds Noirs: References to and Representations of Europeans in Colonial Algeria," in *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies*, ed. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (New York: Routledge, 2005), 225–41, 227.

had invited Pieds-Noirs to do, he replied by comparing Harkis to Vichy collaborators during WWII. He declared, “It is exactly as if,” he continued, “one were to ask a French resistance fighter to shake the hand of a collaborator.” Bouteflika thus drew a parallel to WWII that was antithetical to the one Harkis and their descendants imagined and were trying to establish in French memory. This comparison confirmed their fears that they were perceived as torturers and collaborators, rather than as victims, and Bouteflika’s remark was as a defining moment for second-generation Harkis. His insult via historical analogy appears to have compelled many Harki children to become involved with the Harki cause. Vincent Crapanzano has observed that Harkis and their children mentioned Bouteflika’s comments in nearly all of his conversations with them.³⁶ Second-generation Harki activist Fatima Besanci-Lancou declared in her memoir that she had essentially forgotten that she was the daughter of a Harki until the Algerian President’s remarks.³⁷

Bouteflika’s insistence that the Harkis were not welcome to return to Algeria reinforced their symbolic “banishment”³⁸ from Algeria and, I would argue, affirmed their attachment to France. Crapanzano has explained that after Bouteflika’s insult, “The Harkis were furious at the Algerian president and, if one can compare levels of fury, even more so at the French president for not having responded immediately to Bouteflika’s insult—‘an insult addressed to French citizens,’ several of the Harkis said. [...] Chirac’s failure seemed to be a replay of their abandonment by France.”³⁹ It is significant that in pursuing the case against France for crimes against humanity, Harki children did not demand retribution from Algerians, the actual

³⁶ Vincent Crapanzano, *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 172.

³⁷ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, 16.

³⁸ Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis*, 97.

³⁹ Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 172-173.

perpetrators of the post-independence violence, but rather from the French.⁴⁰ The failures of the French Fifth Republic are of greater concern to them than those of the FLN government in Algeria, just as today the descendants of deported French Jews direct their attention to the French, not the Germans. Second-generation Harkis thus asserted their French identity by insisting on their rights as aggrieved French citizens.

Through this case, Harkis and their descendants simultaneously demonstrated that they shared an experience with Algerian immigrants in France—that of having been mistreated by the French. The Harkis claimed that the French had abandoned and betrayed them in 1962 because they were Algerian and therefore not seen as fully French. The case followed a short-lived period of joint militancy among second-generation Harkis and Algerian immigrants for the rights of North Africans in France during the 1990s and it acted as a means of bringing the populations of Algerian origin together. While they might disagree about whether the Harkis more closely resembled Vichy collaborators or Jewish victims, both groups were comfortable with positioning the French as the Nazis in this analogy between WWII and the Algerian War.

The crimes against humanity case was unsuccessful for several reasons. Not only did amnesty laws protect the French army, but also it was difficult to charge the French with complicity in violence carried out by Algerians. The legal claim on which the case was based was also weak. Boussad Azni, a Harki son leading the coalition, argued that the Harkis had been killed because of their political views, which fit with the criteria established by international

⁴⁰ Gilles Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres Aux Responsabilités Multiples,” in *Harkis 1962-2012: Les Mythes et Les Faits*, vol. 666, Les Temps Modernes (Paris: Gallimard, 2011), 65–89, 88. As Besnaci-Lancou and Manceron have observed, “They certainly did not expect recognition of responsibility, recompense, or an apology from the Algerian government, although on March 4, 2006, in a declaration following a symposium on the Harkis, the participants expressed the desire that the Algerian government stop demonizing the Harkis and express regret over their massacre.” Besnaci-Lancou and Manceron, *Les Harkis Dans La Colonisation*, 209.

tribunals to define a crime against humanity.⁴¹ However, this charge has mainly been applied to acts in which victims were targeted based on race, religion, or nationality. This premise was also problematic because evidence suggests that many Harkis did not support France for political or ideological reasons. The claim had thus, ironically, been predicated on the understanding of the Harkis as patriotic supporters of France, which the French state supported, but many second-generation Harkis rejected. The highest court in France dismissed their case in 2003, but they continued to pursue it at the European level.⁴² In March of 2012, Harki children organized a conference on how and whether they might be able to proceed with the help of Licra, the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism, which promised to take up their cause.

The way that second-generation Harkis argued the case and explained their motivations is significant. The children of Harkis were consciously followed the Holocaust memory model in France and they drew clear parallels between the extermination of Jews during WWII and the post-independence attacks against the Harkis. During the case, Harkis began to employ the term “genocide” to describe the nature of the violence. In a book published on the case, Azni justified their use of this term, which he admitted, “might seem strong.” He repeatedly pointed to a “logic of extermination,” or an “extermination attempt,” which suggested the violence was systematic, organized, and cohesive.⁴³ Not all Harkis, including second-generation Harki activist Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and scholar Abderahmen Moumen, are comfortable with applying the term “genocide.”⁴⁴ Yet some Harkis and their children have continued to describe the attacks against

⁴¹ Boussad Azni, *Harkis, Crime d'Etat: Généalogie D'un Abandon* (Ramsay, 2001), 61.

⁴² It was rejected by the “chambre criminelle de la Cour de cassation.” Moumen, “De L’absence,” 166. Certain Harki organizations are charged with continuing to pursue the Harki cause in the justice system.

⁴³ Azni, *Harkis, Crime d'Etat*, 28, 30.

⁴⁴ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *La Tragédie Des Harkis: Crime Contre l'Humanité* (presented at the LICRA Conference, Maison du Barreau, Paris, 2012).

the Harkis and their families as such and to make comparisons with the Holocaust in order to solidify their claims to victimhood. As the president of the association 3H, Nasser Sahour, declared on the group's website, "Memory binds us, reminds us, and orders us not to forget evil and to fight so it is not repeated. I am thinking of the Holocaust, of these men, these women and children who had to endure Nazism, I am thinking of the resistance fighters who rose up and refused the human chaos. [...] Our desire: that everyone knows the Honor of the Harkis, the History of these men, and of all who have suffered from genocide!"⁴⁵

Historian Régis Pierret has observed that drawing these comparisons has afforded a certain dignity to the Harki community.⁴⁶ I argue that it has also indicated their desire to have legal protection against defamation and denials of their victimhood, as French Jews had acquired under the Gayssot Law. Since the term "Harki" did not correspond to a religion, ethnicity, or nationality, they did not constitute a legally recognized minority group. This left them vulnerable to insults such as the one made by the Bouteflika and his comment reminded the Harkis that these accusations remained prevalent. Despite their lack of success with the crimes against humanity case, second-generation Harkis have continued to seek their own form of the Gayssot Law.⁴⁷

It is also noteworthy that an understanding of the attacks against the Harkis as a shared, historical event emerged for the first time in the context of this case. Previously the post-

⁴⁵ 3H, HARKIS HONNEUR HISTOIRE, "Le Génocide Des Harkis Et De Leur Famille Défendu Par Le Droit : Le Mot du Président Nasser SAHOUR," accessed January 27, 2011, <http://3hcotedazur.vpweb.fr/Qui-sommes-nous.html>

⁴⁶ Pierret, *Les Filles et Fils de Harkis*, 166.

⁴⁷ A Harki association has charged Pierre Nora with 'revisionism and negationism' "because he refused to agree that the massacre of harkis at the end of the Algerian War had been a 'genocide'." P. Dunwoodie, "Postface: History, Memory and Identity—Today's Crisis, Yesterday's Issue," *French History* 20, no. 3 (2006): 318–32, 323, fn: 14.

independence violence had rarely been discussed in memory accounts, and then only on an individual level. Brahim Sadouni's 1985 memoir offered one of the first public expressions of this violence. In his text, he recounted rumors of attacks against Harkis and their families and described one incident that he personally witnessed, in which a Harki was dragged behind a car.⁴⁸ He refers to these as "acts of vengeance" and "reprisals," never using the word "massacre" in the plural or singular. The violence is not referenced at all in the journal *Français Musulman* for the Harki association UNACFCI. The Harkis' fragmented approach to recalling the violence reflected how it was likely experienced at the time. There is little evidence of organization behind the attacks, which were sporadic, inconsistent, and varied widely according to the region.⁴⁹ The severity and scope of the threats that the Harkis faced depended on the social and political dynamics in each individual village and changed over time.⁵⁰

This case and the way it was argued turned inchoate experiences of violence into politicized memories that extended to the post-independence attacks the collective sense of injustice they already felt about the camps. To make their case, children of Harkis created a repertoire of representations for this event, presenting the violence as a single massacre. The associations collected eyewitness accounts of assaults, particularly against Harkis' wives and children, as well as several photographs of mutilated Harkis, which served to symbolize the massacre. Azni included these in his text and they have since been reprinted in other texts and on

⁴⁸ Brahim Sadouni, *Français Sans Patrie: La Reconnaissance; Premier Témoignage Ecrit Par Un Harki*, 1985, 5.

⁴⁹ Abderahmen Moumen, "Les Massacres de Harkis Lors de L'indépendance de l'Algérie," in *Les Harkis: Histoire, Memoire, Transmission*, ed. Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Benoit Falaize (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 2010), 63–76: 64.

⁵⁰ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 36-39.

Harki websites.⁵¹ Particularly terrible anecdotes of violence have become central to Harki collective memory—not associated with individual victims, but presented as if done to any and all Harkis. Vincent Crapanzano has observed this phenomenon, which I argue emerged with the crimes against humanity case, in the course of his oral interviews with Harkis. “The individual stories that are subsumed in *the* Harki story have become what the Harkis themselves refer to as *testimonies, témoignages*, evidence of what they experienced that they use in the demands they make on the French government (and, often enough, in justifying their own particular circumstances).”⁵²

A number of the stories and images that came to represent the Harki massacre depict acts of sexual violence against the Harkis.⁵³ The perpetrators of these acts sought to emasculate and humiliate the Harkis in front of their families. The fact that second-generation Harkis transmit accounts and illustrations of this violence, including a particularly graphic photo of a decapitated Harki with severed genitals in his mouth, attests to how important it is to them that the Harkis are established as victims. The nature of this violence contrasts sharply with the state’s celebrations of the Harkis’ martial masculinity and remembering the Harkis through these representations is designed to upset viewers and evoke compassion.

The Harki massacre has become the focus of Harki collective memory practices. Nearly all Harkis felt threatened following the Algerian War—it is, after all, why most ended up in France—even if they did not personally witness or experience violence. Concentrating on the

⁵¹ Azni, *Harkis, Crime d'Etat*, 31-32. Besnaci-Lancou and Manceron, *Les Harkis Dans La Colonisation*, 100-101. Harkis.org, « Histoire », http://www.harkis.org/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=3 (accessed April 15, 2008).

⁵² Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 10.

⁵³ In the only reliable document that describes the Harki massacres, a subprefect’s account of the killings in his district, the subprefect describes the “tortures of men who were dressed as women, their noses, ears, and lips cut off, castrated, buried alive in lime or cement, or burned alive.” Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 90.

Harki massacre has also expanded the meaning of the Harki identity to include family members of the soldiers who were vulnerable in the aftermath of the war. This move has enabled Harki wives and daughters to become far more active in the Harki memory community.⁵⁴

State Commemorations and Harki Reactions, 2001-2005

In the wake of the announcement of the crimes against humanity case, Jacques Chirac made a symbolic overture to the Harki community by declaring September 25, 2001 a National Day of Homage to the Harkis. It has since become an annual commemoration.⁵⁵ This act was clearly aimed again at honoring the Harkis' sacrifices for France. Ceremonies were held in twenty-eight locations in France, including in Paris, where the eternal flame was relit in the Harkis' honor at the Arc de Triomphe. Chirac decorated one hundred and fifty Harki veterans at the Invalides while he unveiled a commemorative plaque with the text from the 1994 law that had acknowledged France's gratitude towards the Harkis for their military service.⁵⁶ Chirac praised "the proud and courageous combatants" who fought for France and for the ideals she represents.⁵⁷

While the ceremonies officially focused on the Harkis' status as soldiers, Chirac alluded in his speech to what the Harkis had suffered. He declared, "France wishes to pay homage, a solemn homage, to those of its children who were so cruelly battered." [...] 'Separated from the

⁵⁴ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *La Tragédie Des Harkis: Crime Contre l'Humanité* (presented at the LICRA Conference, Maison du Barreau, Paris, 2012). Following the crimes against humanity case, the Groupe Femmes et Filles de Harkis was created and this association led the first protest by wives and daughters of Harkis in 2004. Their "peaceful march" demanded French recognition of its responsibility in the abandonment of the Harkis. In 2005 the Groupe Femmes et Filles de Harkis became the Association Harkis et Droits de l'Homme, run by Fatima Besnaci-Lancou.

⁵⁵ McCormack, *Collective Memory*, 23; Géraldine Enjelvin, "Entrée Des Harkis Dans L'Histoire de France?," *French Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (February 1, 2004): 61–75.

⁵⁶ Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums, and Colonial Memories* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 149.

⁵⁷ Azni, *Harkis, Crime d'Etat*, 25.

land in which they were born, they found refuge only in their loyalty to this France of which they had dreamed before they knew it, but which did not give them the place that was their due.”⁵⁸ He also expressed regret that “France had failed to save its children.”⁵⁹ In this way Chirac suggested that the Harkis had been victims, but did not officially recognize the responsibility of the state or offer an apology as he had done for French Jews at Vel d’Hiv six years earlier.⁶⁰

Harkis and their children expressed mixed reactions to the event. While hundreds of Harkis participated in the ceremonies, others were likely uncomfortable with this public tribute to the Harkis’ status as soldiers, given the recent discussions of the army’s brutality during the Algerian War. Mohammed Haddouche, son of a Harki and president of the organization AJIR (Association, Justice, Information, Reparation) pour les Harkis, reflected a common concern when he declared in *Le Monde*, “This commemoration is welcome on condition that it represents an explicit recognition of the abandonment, disarming and massacre of *harkis* with the complicity of France.”⁶¹ Ultimately the event did not meet this demand and while Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen have argued that Chirac “hints at a first admission of responsibility on the part of the rulers at the time by these words: ‘France failed to save its children,’”⁶² many Harki children expressed frustration at this missed opportunity.⁶³ Azni took issue with Chirac’s focus on commemorating the Harkis’ sacrifices as soldiers at the exclusion of the rest of the

⁵⁸ Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire*, 149.

⁵⁹ Sung Choi, “The Muslim Veteran in Postcolonial France: The Politics of the Integration of Harkis After 1962,” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 29, no. 1 (April 30, 2011): 24–45, 40.

⁶⁰ Michel, *Gouverner*, 142.

⁶¹ Sylvia Zappi, “Une journée d’hommage unique reconnaît officiellement le drame des harkis,” *Le Monde*, September 25, 2001. Translation by Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire*, 150.

⁶² Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 107.

⁶³ Manceron, “Un Abandon et Des Massacres,” 64.

community. He observed, “A soldier dies with honor. But his wife, his children, his parents, did they ask to have their throats slit by ‘resistance fighters’?”⁶⁴ This observation highlights the distance he saw between the republican memorial model and the case of the Harkis.

Chirac and his government selected September 25 as the National Day of Homage because it was a date that lacked any commemorative significance for the Harkis. They were attempting to avoid the type of controversy that had arisen over the choice of the date on which to commemorate the Algerian War. The positions on this issue had become fairly well entrenched and it seemed to epitomize the perpetual failure to agree on how to remember the conflict. To some scholars, this question has constituted a central example of the “memory wars,” because it has highlighted “the virulence of ‘symbolic battles’ around the memory of conflicts in North Africa.”⁶⁵

Since the 1970s, an association called the Fédération Nationale des Anciens Combattants en Algérie, Maroc et Tunisie (FNACA), which had been created by former drafted soldiers in 1958 “to oppose a continuation of the war,” has commemorated the 19th of March as the end of the war and the granting of Algerian independence.⁶⁶ March 19, 1962 was the day on which the cease-fire between the FLN and the French state went into effect. FNACA has organized a ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe each year and proposed that streets be named in honor of this

⁶⁴ Azni, *Harkis, Crime d'Etat*, 27.

⁶⁵ Nicolas Bancel and Pascal Blanchard, “La Colonisation: Du Débat Sur La Guerre d’Algérie Au Discours de Dakar,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires: La France et Son Histoire, Enjeux Politiques, Controverses Historiques, Stratégies Médiatiques*, ed. Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (Editions La Découverte, 2010), 137–54, 147. Abderahmen Moumen, “Les Lieux de Mémoire Du Groupe Social ‘Harkis’. Inventaire, Enjeux et Évolution,” in *Les Harkis: Histoire, Mémoire, Transmission*, ed. Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Benoit Falaize (Paris: Editions de l’Atelier, 2010): 135-146, 136.

⁶⁶ Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire*, 136.

date.⁶⁷ In general, the left supported this commemorative date. While Socialist president François Mitterrand never officially recognized the date, he did send a representative to the Arc de Triomphe commemoration.⁶⁸ In 2002, for the 40th anniversary of the end of the war, the left submitted a proposal to adopt the March 19th date as a national commemoration. It was passed by the National Assembly, but not by the Senate.

Those on the right have opposed this commemorative date because it represented a defeat. President Charles de Gaulle vehemently rejected the choice and President Giscard d'Estaing also “declined to send military detachments to the Arc de Triomphe” when he was in office.⁶⁹ The far right has been more strident in its opposition. Jean-Marie Le Pen of the Front National established an “anti-19 March committee”⁷⁰ and the Harki association journal *Français Musulman* printed a story in 1986 of a FN deputy who tore down the plaque from the Place du 19 mars 1962 in the city of Villefranche-sur-Saône. He explained that, “for him, ‘this date of mourning and shame’ did not deserve to be commemorated in this way.”⁷¹

Pieds-Noirs and Harkis have remained united in vehement opposition to this date. Tens of thousands of Pieds-Noirs were killed after March 19th and it marked the loss of French Algeria, a traumatic event for them. Likewise, the defining moments for the Harkis—French withdrawal and abandonment as well as the post-independence reprisal violence—occurred after then. commemorating this date thus occludes recognition of the Harki massacres, which is key to their

⁶⁷ Ibid, 137.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “Guerre d’Algérie : la polémique. La plaque de la ‘place du 19-Mars-1962’ à Villefranche,” *Français Musulman*, No. 42, 3ème trimestre 1986.

victim position. The *Français Musulman* journal declared in 1983 the UNACFCI's "refusal of the choice of the date March 19 to commemorate the 'end of the Algerian War.'"72 The Coalition Nationale website proclaimed in 2010 that it "is hostile, in an unequivocal and entrenched way, to the treacherous **celebration of March 19 1962**, for obvious reasons, namely, **the massacre of 150,000 harkis that occurred after this date** and, the particular commemorations on the part of associations of former French soldiers (FNACA, ...), are considered, by our group, as an attack on the memory and dignity of the former auxiliaries (no less French soldiers)."73 Hacène Arfi, a leader of the second-generation protests in 1991 announced in the newspaper *Midi Libre* in 2011, "Commemorating March 19 as the end of the Algerian war is an insult to the harki community."74 In the comments section following this article on the *Midi Libre* website, Arfi entered into a dispute with a reader using the pseudonym "le jeune," who expressed his support for this date. Arfi declared, "Today you celebrate the end of the Algerian War with great pomp, whereas on this date the harki genocide began; you are men without honor, you are cowards." To which le jeune responded, "Well, the war continues!!!!!!!" This interaction attests to the fact that tensions surrounding this issue have remained high.

In an effort to resolve the dispute over an appropriate date to commemorate the end of the war, Chirac employed the same strategy that he had with the Harkis—he selected a day without any special significance. On December 5 2002, he dedicated a monument near the Quai Branly

⁷² "Groupement Des Associations De Repliés Pour Une Coordination De L'information et De L'action," *Français Musulman*, No. 28, 1er trimestre 1983.

⁷³ Khader Moulfi, "19 mars 1962, jour de deuil pour la Nation!!!" March 19, 2008, *Coalition Nationale des Harkis*, accessed June 30, 2010, http://www.coalition-harkis.com/component/option,com_fireboard/Itemid,194/func,view/id,143/catid,4/. Original emphasis.

⁷⁴ "Cérémonie du 19 mars : Hacène Arfi souhaite répondre : Saint-Laurent-des-Arbres," March 29, 2011, *Midilibre.com*, accessed March 13, 2012, <http://saintlaurentdesarbres.blogs.midilibre.com/archive/2011/03/29/19-mars.html>.

to the 24,000 soldiers who died in the Algerian War and the wars of decolonization in Morocco and Tunisia between 1952 and 1962. The next year he announced that an annual “National Day of Homage to those who died for France in North Africa” would take place on December 5. As the newspaper *Libération* observed, the selection of December 5 was “simply due to the fact that Jacques Chirac was free this day!”⁷⁵ Many of those invested in the commemorative conflict, particularly members of the FNACA, rejected this compromise and Robert Aldrich has observed that “A date meant to be consensual and neutral immediately proved conflictual.”⁷⁶

Whereas the Harkis and their descendants fit into a clearly defined position on the issue of March 19th, this is not the case for the 2005 law. On February 23rd 2005, the National Assembly ignited controversy when it passed a law defending France’s colonial project. The polemic centered on Article 4 of the law, which stipulated that school curricula would “acknowledge in particular the positive role of the French overseas presence.”⁷⁷ This law was a product of Pied-Noir lobbying and efforts on right to court this electoral group. By institutionalizing a normative, pro-colonial version of the past, lawmakers on the right also sought to quell the fierce debates that had sprung up in France about the colonial legacy.⁷⁸ Rather than diffusing social tensions, however, this legislation triggered such uproar among anti-colonialists on the left, descendants of colonial subjects, and educators, who objected at being told how to teach this history, that the government repealed the offending article in November of 2005. Throughout the fierce debates over the 2005 law, polemical issues of immigration and insecurity were deliberated through the

⁷⁵ Jean-Dominique Merchet, “Guerre d’Algérie, Un Jour Qui Ne Fait Pas Date,” [Http://www.liberation.fr](http://www.liberation.fr), accessed January 21, 2015, http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2003/09/18/guerre-d-algerie-un-jour-qui-ne-fait-pas-date_445275.

⁷⁶ Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire*, 155.

⁷⁷ Loi n° 2005-158.

⁷⁸ Peter Dunwoodie, “Postface: History, Memory and Identity. Today's Crisis, Yesterday's Issue,” *French History*, 20(3), 2006, pp. 318-332, 323.

discourses of memory and history.⁷⁹ The memory disputes thus not only reflected lingering colonial tensions in French society,⁸⁰ but also appeared to exacerbate and reinforce them.⁸¹

In analyses of the conflicts over the February 2005 law, some scholars have positioned the Harkis in the “camp” of those who, like many Pieds-Noirs, support a positive interpretation of French Algeria.⁸² Harkis have participated in Pied-Noir organizations, including those that have expressed “nostalgia” for French Algeria, particularly in the period immediately following their arrival in France.⁸³ Pied-Noir associations were the first to emerge and most claimed to represent the interests of all *rapatriés*, including the Harkis and their families. Even after independent Harki organizations started to develop in the 1970s, Pieds-Noirs often invoked the Harki case in their memory work and pursued causes of joint interest, including opposition to March 19th as a commemorative date.⁸⁴

Article 5 of the February 2005 law was also specifically designed for the Harkis. It forbade “all insults or defamation committed against a person or group of persons because of their real or supposed status as a harki” and “all apologia of crimes committed against the harkis et members of auxiliary forces after the Evian Accords.” This article was the result of Harki associations’ lobbying efforts, particularly on the part of the association AJIR pour les Harkis and the scholar

⁷⁹ Michel, *Gouverner*, 73; Bancel, “France, 2005,” 208, 212.

⁸⁰ Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire, ed., *La Fracture Coloniale: La Société Française Au Prisme De L’héritage Colonial*, (Editions La Découverte, 2005,) 26; Savarese, *Algérie*, 7; Mary Stevens, “Visibility, equality, difference: drawing the battle lines in France’s ‘memory wars’,” *Journal of Romance Studies*, 9, no.3, Winter 2009: 102-109: 104.

⁸¹ Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, “Introduction,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires*, ed. Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, pp.15-49: 28; Bancel, “France, 2005,” 208.

⁸² Bancel and Blanchard, “La colonisation,” 146; Michel, *Gouverner*, 153.

⁸³ Abderahmen Moumen, *Les Français Musulmans En Vaucluse: 1932-1991* (Editions L’Harmattan, 2003), 139.

⁸⁴ Claire Eldridge, “Blurring the Boundaries between Perpetrators and Victims: Pied-Noir Memories and the Harki Community,” *Memory Studies* 3, no. 2 (2010): 123–36.

Mohand Hamoumou.⁸⁵ The Harkis' desire for this type of legal protection dated back to the passage of the Gayssot Law and the crimes against humanity case.

Despite their connection to Pied-Noir associations and their own work to get Article 5 passed, many Harki children have voiced discontent with the law on their respective websites. Their first concern was that the law did not provide strong enough judicial protection for the Harkis because it did not establish repercussions for violations of Article 5. Khader Moufï denounced the 2005 law and its "arbitrary application" on his *Coalition Nationale* website.⁸⁶ These concerns seemed to prove founded in 2006, when the Socialist mayor of Montpellier, Georges Frêche, called Harkis "subhuman," yet attempts to charge him with defamation under Article 5 were dismissed by French courts. As the *Monharki.com* website declared, "the law in its current form unfortunately is and will be of no use to the harki community and most especially to the children."⁸⁷ This later point constituted another source of disappointment for the Harki community. The moderator of *Monharki.com*, le petit harki, denounced the fact that Harki children were "completely excluded from this measure, despite the efforts of Harki associations and the promises of politicians."⁸⁸

Second-generation Harkis were also among the most outspoken opponents of the law's

⁸⁵ Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 18. Choi, "The Muslim Veteran," 40-41.

⁸⁶ Khader Moufï, "Billet d'humeur de "coalition-harkis.com" : Le "benouioui de service du mois" est Charles TAMAZOUNT, d'un certain Comité Harkis et Vérité !!!" April 13, 2007, *Coalition Nationale des Harkis*, accessed October 16, 2008, <http://www.coalition-harkis.com/content/view/140/109/>.

⁸⁷ "Harkis, La Loi Du 23 Février 2005 Une Faiblesse Juridique Dans Le Texte..." March 7, 2012, *Monharki.com*, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://www.monharki.fr/article-harkis-la-loi-du-23-fevrier-2005-une-faiblesse-juridique-dans-le-texte-101072464.html>.

⁸⁸ Le petit harki, "Malaise des enfants de Harkis: Les enfants de harkis veulent être reconnus dans la loi du 23 février 2005," July 10, 2006, *Monharki.com*, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://monharki.com.over-blog.com/article-3252303.html>.

pro-colonial stance.⁸⁹ Nine association leaders, led by Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, signed the “Appel d'enfants de Harkis contre les articles 4 et 13 de la loi du 23 février 2005.” This document proclaimed, “We, daughters and sons of parents of Algerian origin, descendants of harkis [...] declare that: colonization is an indefensible enterprise; wanting to dominate a population, even in the name of a “civilizing” project, is contrary to any notion of human rights.” These Harki children thus emphasized their Algerian background and affiliated themselves with descendants of colonial subjects who were critical of the colonial project. They also presented the Harkis as casualties of colonialism. Responding to Article 4’s insistence on the “positive” role of colonialism, the Appel asserted, “the harkis, against their will, are the products of colonial history [...] The abandonment, by the French state, of the harkis at the moment of Algerian independence and their confinement in the camps, are, also, living proof of the “negative” aspects of colonization.”⁹⁰ This understanding of the Harkis’ role in the colonial project challenged the idea that they were ideologically motivated, patriotic defenders of France.

Second-generation Harkis also expressed frustration that Article 5, for which they had fought so hard, was embroiled in the polemic over Article 4.⁹¹ They saw it as an instance of their case being instrumentalized by Pieds-Noirs and by the right in order to gain electoral support for their own cause. Besnaci-Lancou’s association, Harkis et Droits de l’Homme, declared, “After the camps, behind the barbed wire, the harkis and their families are now being imprisoned in a despicable law voted by those who are nostalgic for French Algeria. [...] The parliamentarians

⁸⁹ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou ultimately won the Françoise Seligman Prize “in recognition for her work against the law.” Crapanzano, *The Harkis*, 157.

⁹⁰ “Appel d'enfants de Harkis contre les articles 4 et 13 de la loi du 23 février 2005,” *Harkis et Droits de l'Homme*, accessed September 21, 2011, <http://www.harki.net/article.php?id=50>.

⁹¹ Amar Assas in *Treize Chibanis Harkis*, ed. Fatima Besnaci-Lancou (Tirésias, 2006), 85.

associate the harkis, against their will, with the promotion of colonialism.”⁹² They thus situated the law in a narrative of continued betrayal by the state.

These reactions reveal two important features of Harki collective memory. First, the different positions on the law hint at deep divisions among the Harkis about how to interpret and commemorate the Harki past. The Harkis and their children do not constitute a unified memory camp. The incident also highlights the fact that, despite their affiliation with the right over the issue of March 19th, Harkis and their families have felt politically marginalized since their arrival in France. They have been portrayed as collaborators by the anti-colonial left, “betrayed” and put in camps by the Gaullist right, and touted as “good” Algerians by the Front National for their supposed support of French Algeria. No party in power since 1962 has recognized France’s role in the Harki violence. Yet, the Harkis and their descendants have been promised this and generally solicited by the various parties, who consider them a significant potential electoral group. As a result, they have felt used by those in power, including politicians, Pieds-Noirs, and the Army, then continually betrayed and “forgotten.” This sense of political marginalization is an important feature of their collective memory and helps define their relationship to France. It also accounts for why websites have become an important memory vector for them. Since they are not represented by a political party, they have sought other means of expressing and defending their own memorial causes.

Harki Resistance: Commemorative Acts, 2005-2013

Harki commemorative activity in the aftermath of the 2005 law has been designed as a response to this continued political “betrayal.” In March 2007 Nicolas Sarkozy made a presidential campaign promise, announcing that if elected, he would recognize France’s role in

⁹² “L'Association Harkis et droits de l'Homme dénonce la loi du 23 février 2005,” March 1, 2005, *LDH-Toulon*, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://ldh-toulon.net/l-Association-Harkis-et-droits-de.html>.

the Harki massacre, “so that our forgetting does not assassinate them a second time.” When Sarkozy invited the Harkis to the Elysee Palace for his first December 5 commemoration of Algerian War veterans as president, the press announced that he would be following through on his commitment, effectively raising the Harkis’ hope.⁹³ During his speech, Sarkozy declared that the Harkis deserved “the nation’s solemn homage,” again invoking the republican memorial model. He also referred to the suffering that the Harkis had experienced in the aftermath of the Evian Accords and announced that France “must make amends for the mistakes that were committed.” Yet he stopped short of officially acknowledging the Harki massacre and apologizing for France’s responsibility.

Harki children were disappointed and outraged. In an article entitled, “The harkis and N. Sarkozy: the promises of a candidate compared to a weak-willed President,” which she posted on her association’s website and was reposted on other sites, Fatima Besnaci-Lancou denounced “the affront inflicted on the harkis and their family.” She explained, “At the end of the ceremony at the Elysee Palace, it’s a cold shower. A certain disillusionment reaches the French harki community.”⁹⁴ Others pointed to Sarkozy’s apparent tendency to make competing promises to different groups. On the Coalition Nationale website, Khader Moufî had observed a few months earlier that in public Sarkozy said, “the Harkis were victims of a genocide...” but in front of a “FLNist” audience, he says that “the Harkis chose their camp and they lost...” (meaning they deserved what they got !)⁹⁵ A few days before Sarkozy’s December 5th speech he had made a

⁹³ “Les Associations Répondent Au Président de La République...,” December 7, 2007, *Monharki.com*, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.monharki.fr/article-14442754.html>.

⁹⁴ “Les Associations Répondent Au Président de La République...,” December 7, 2007, *Monharki.com*, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.monharki.fr/article-14442754.html>.

⁹⁵ Khader Moufî, “SARKOZY sait-il que le principal crime colonial fut la décolonisation ?” July 30, 2007, *Coalition Nationale des Harkis*, accessed September 21, 2008, <http://www.coalition-harkis.com/content/view/167/109/>.

trip to Algeria, during which he “acknowledged the injustices of the colonial system before he quickly denounced the violence on both sides during the Algerian War.”⁹⁶ The next day, he and Bouteflika “signed major contracts for over 2.8 billion euros worth of investments in Algeria by French oil, gas, and engineering companies.”⁹⁷ The timing of this visit was not lost on the Harkis⁹⁸ and it points to the difficulties Sarkozy may have perceived in satisfying competing memorial claims.

As Sarkozy failed at every conceivable opportunity to fulfill his promise, Harkis and their children continued to voice their discontent. In 2009, two Harki sons and a Harki daughter created a group called Mouvement Resistance Harki and traveled throughout France organizing protests. The trio finally settled in front of the National Assembly in Paris, where they camped out for nearly two years in an effort to hold Sarkozy accountable for his promise. The Mouvement Resistance Harki advertised their progress on their website and displayed signs with provocative slogans around their camp site in order to attract attention to their cause.⁹⁹ On some of the posters they attached photos of mutilated Harkis alongside an image of Sarkozy, thus conflating the original betrayal with his.

⁹⁶ Choi, “The Muslim Veteran,” 41.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ “Les Associations Répondent Au Président de La République...,” December 7, 2007, *Monharki.com*, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.monharki.fr/article-14442754.html>.

⁹⁹ “Mouvement Résistance Harkie,” accessed January 26, 2011, <http://mouvementresistanceharkie.blogspot.com/>.



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Every September 25th, on the National Day of Homage to the Harkis, Harkis and their descendants anticipated that Sarkozy would use the occasion to follow through on his promise, yet most years he did not even personally attend the ceremonies. The Harkis exasperated with the state's insistence on the republican model of commemoration and refusal to establish the Harkis as its victims. On September 25, 2010, Besnaci-Lancou's association passed around a tract that declared, "YES to Sarkozy keeping his promise" and "NO to medals; NO to nice speeches."¹⁰¹ The following year, Harki Serge Carel expressed his frustration that "rather than keeping his commitment, president SARKOZY prefers to repeat a medals ceremony for the umpteenth time in response to the expectations of the harkis and their families."¹⁰² Carel declared to the newspaper *Libération*, "Now we are fed up with these medals!" and announced that he would be returning his own Legion of Honor medal. He said, "I am putting this medal back at the disposal of the republic until the state recognizes its responsibility in the tragedy experienced by the

¹⁰⁰ Photograph taken on June 13, 2009 at Place du Président Edouard Herriot, Paris.

¹⁰¹ "Le Collectif HARKIS : 'La Responsabilité, Maintenant !'" *Harkis et Droits de l'Homme*, http://www.harki.net/docs/tract_25_sept_2010.pdf

¹⁰² "Un harki exprime sa colère dans le grand quotidien 'Libération'," September 23, 2011, *Harkis d'Ile-de-France*, accessed December 10, 2011, <http://www.harkis-idf.com/article-un-harki-exprime-sa-colere-dans-le-grand-quotidien-liberation-84989420.html>.

harkis.” The association Harkis d’Ile-de-France commended this gesture, proclaiming, “After such a truthful perspective from a former harki on the current attitude of the highest authorities of the state, an umpteenth medals ceremony next September 25 will not be able to hide the real face of Nicolas SARKOZY: he seriously deceived the *rapatrié* electorate in order to get himself elected to the presidency of the Republic.”¹⁰³

That same year, which was the 10th anniversary of the commemoration and the eve of the 2012 presidential election, there were calls from numerous associations to boycott the ceremony entirely as a form of resistance. Their actions highlighted the disconnect between the recognition Harkis received as soldiers and the type of acknowledgement they really wanted—as victims. Harkis du Loiret.com declared, “It would only be logical for the harkis not to participate in the next September 25 ceremony in order to indicate their discontentment and to demand the vote, before the presidential elections, of a law recognizing the responsibility of the French state in the abandonment and massacre of the Harkis.”¹⁰⁴ The site Monharki.com republished their proposal, adding their agreement, “Indeed, we cannot help but agree with this resolution not to participate in the official ceremony to show our dissatisfaction with our situation.”¹⁰⁵ The Besnaci-Lancou’s association, Harkis et Droits de l’Homme, was the most forceful, urging Harkis to boycott this event that had become devoid of meaning and through which the state was trying to “lull them to sleep and manipulate them with a medal, a trip to Paris, and little cakes.”¹⁰⁶ Following the event,

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ “Et si les harkis boycottaient le 25 septembre,” September 15, 2011, *Harkis du Loiret.com*, accessed September 21, 2011, <http://2id-harkis.over-blog.com/article-et-si-les-harkis-boycottaient-le-25-septembre-84319594.html>.

¹⁰⁵ Harki45, “Harkis, si on boycottait le 25 septembre selon 2ID-Harkis du Loiret...” September 16, 2011, *Monharki.com*, accessed September 21, 2011, http://www.lepost.fr/article/2011/09/16/2591862_harkis-si-on-boycotait-le-25-septembre-selon-2id-harkis-du-loiret.html.

¹⁰⁶ “Les manipulations vont bon train : Panique à l’Elysée et à la MIR : tout est bon pour attirer les "bons" harkis à Paris le 25 septembre,” *Harkis et Droits de l’Homme*, accessed September 21, 2011,

the association directed this message to those who had participated: “To all those who attended this masquerade with great pomp, the association Harkis et Droits de l’Homme asks them to remember their honor, the honor of the harkis and their family, sadly besmirched by the images of this day.”¹⁰⁷

During the 2012 presidential campaign, which coincided with the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, Sarkozy’s opponent, François Hollande, likewise pledged to recognize France’s responsibility in the Harki massacre. He announced, “As I promised, if the French people give me their trust, I promise to publicly acknowledge the responsibilities of the French governments in the abandonment of the Harkis, the massacre of those who remained in Algeria and the conditions faced by the families transferred to the camps in France.” He capitalized on the fact that Sarkozy had not kept his promise to do the same, referring to “this recognition long hoped for and long-awaited, that the outgoing current president refused to bring about.”¹⁰⁸

Hollande revisited the Harki question four months after being elected on the occasion of the National Day of Homage to the Harkis. Like Sarkozy, he did not personally attend the ceremony, but rather he composed a letter to be read by his Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs, Kader Arif. In the document, he observed that “France abandoned her own soldiers, those who had trusted her, those who had placed themselves under her protection, those who had chosen her and had served her. Then the harkis and their families were received and treated in an often disgraceful way on French soil.” Hollande added that “France always improves when she

<http://www.harki.net/article.php?id=584>.

¹⁰⁷ “Une triste journée, Sarkozy et les harkis : la grande mascarade du 25 septembre 2011,” *Harkis et Droits de l’Homme*, accessed October 6, 2011, <http://www.harki.net/article.php?id=588>.

¹⁰⁸ “Message de François Hollande aux associations de Harkis; Paris, le 5 avril 2012,” *Harkis et Droits de l’Homme*, accessed November 16, 2014, http://www.harki.net/docs/hollande_engagement_avril_2012.pdf.

recognizes her mistakes.”¹⁰⁹ The Harkis and their children were yet again dissatisfied, arguing that he did go so far as to actually recognize these mistakes. A representative of the Harki association Comité de Liaison National des Harkis was quoted in *Le Monde* as proclaiming, “All we got were empty words that don’t mean anything; it’s a missed opportunity.”¹¹⁰ He asserted that such a speech should be accompanied by “a law or decree that recognizes the responsibility of France, as was done for the Jewish community.” Besnaci-Lancou and her association reacted to Hollande’s message by wondering, “Are we headed towards a remake of Sarkozy’s 5-year tenure?”¹¹¹

Following Serge Carel’s symbolic gesture the year before, Harki son Hacène Arfi declared he would return his Knight of the National Order of Merit medal in protest. He had received this honor from Chirac on the first National Day of Homage to the Harkis for “services rendered to his community,” including his leadership in the 1991 demonstrations. In a letter to Hollande, Arfi explained:

Once proud of this distinction, I have no desire to brandish this medal in the current context [...] you have deliberately ignored the massacre, abandonment and sacrifice of these valiant soldiers who paid for their enlistment under the tricolor flag with their lives. Today I am not proud of France, I’m ashamed for you, Mr. President, and yet my father fought for the French values: liberty, equality and fraternity.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ “Message du Président de la République lu par Kader Arif; Cérémonie nationale en hommage aux harkis 25 septembre 2012,” *Harkis et Droits de l’Homme*, accessed November 16, 2014, http://www.harki.net/docs/hollande_lettre_lue_25_sept_2012.pdf.

¹¹⁰ “François Hollande reconnaît la faute de la France dans l’abandon des harkis,” September 25, 2012, *Le Monde.fr*, accessed January 15, 2015, http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2012/09/25/francois-hollande-reconnait-la-faute-de-la-france-dans-l-abandon-des-harkis_1765592_823448.html.

¹¹¹ “Après sa lettre du 25 septembre 2012, Hollande, les harkis et la reconnaissance de la responsabilité : vers un remake du quinquennat de Sarkozy ?” *Harkis et Droits de l’Homme*, accessed November 30, 2012, <http://www.harki.net/article.php?id=719>.

¹¹² “Harkis, Hacène Arfi S’adresse À M. Hollande,” December 10, 2012, *Monharki.com*, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.monharki.fr/article-harkis-hacene-arfi-s-adresse-a-m-hollande-113334282.html>.

In this way, Arfi managed to blend images of the Harkis as both defenders of the state and its victims. On their website, the administrators of Monharki.com declared their support: “please know Monsieur Carel, Monsieur Arfi, that you deserve all our respect and all our admiration.”¹¹³

In the absence of an official commemoration that reflects their understanding of the Harki past and represents their relationship to the French state, first and second-generation Harkis have created their own counter-commemoration. Since 2010, they have observed the 12th of May as the “Day of the Harki Abandonment.” On this date in 1962, Pierre Messmer sent a telegram sanctioning officers who had taken it upon themselves to evacuate groups of Harkis to France and ordering them to be sent back to Algeria.¹¹⁴ To the Harkis and their children, this document proves the state’s willful intent to abandon the Harkis and ultimately enabled the Harki massacres to occur. As the Collectif de la Journée de l’Abandon, which has been joined by over forty Harki and veterans’ associations, explained in an announcement sent out to other associations and websites, “Even if Pierre Messmer was not the only one responsible for the tragedy of the Harkis, this telegram, which he signed, is a symbol.”¹¹⁵ To illustrate France’s betrayal, the Collectif contrasted an image of the telegram with photo of Messmer personally arming a Harki during the war. May 12 thus symbolized France’s failed obligations to the Harkis and commemorating this date has reinforced the Harkis’ perceptions of themselves as victims of the French state.

For the first three years, the association Harkis d’Ile-de-France led the May 12th ceremony, which was held at a monument to the victims (soldiers, civilians, and Harkis) of the Algerian

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 33.

¹¹⁵ “Journée de l’abandon des harkis le 12 mai 2013 : rassemblement de nombreuses associations à Paris,” *Harkis et Droits de l’Homme*, accessed May 17, 2013, <http://www.harki.net/article.php?id=750>.

War in the Butte au Chapeau Rouge Park in Paris. On this occasion, the president of the association, a Harki son, flanked by a few former Harkis, read Messmer's telegram and then the men placed a wreath of flowers on the monument.¹¹⁶ It was an intimate ceremony, attended by approximately thirty Harkis and their families. In 2011, a conference on the theme of "Justice for the Harki Drama" that was held before the ceremony gave the event an additional layer of significance. A banner that read, "Mr. President, respect your commitment to the Harki families!!!" was displayed during the conference and then affixed behind the monument, effectively linking the ceremony to the French state's continued failure towards the Harkis.



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In 2013, Hollande's failure to recognize France's responsibility in the Harki massacres became a focal point of the May 12th commemoration. It was at this moment that the Collectif de la Journée de l'Abandon was formed and members organized a march in central Paris designed

¹¹⁶ *Association culturelle des harkis d'île de France*, <http://harkis-idf.over-blog.com/>. Photos from the 2010 (<http://harkis-idf.over-blog.com/album-1635372.html>), 2011 (<http://harkis-idf.over-blog.com/album-1877443.html>), and 2012 (<http://harkis-idf.over-blog.com/album-2067298.html>) ceremonies.

¹¹⁷ Photograph taken on May 12, 2011 at Butte au Chapeau Rouge, Paris. On the left is Serge Carel, the Harki who returned his Legion of Honor medal to the French state in protest, four months after this commemoration.

to hold Hollande accountable for his promise.¹¹⁸ At the event, a Harki daughter led the 150 participants, approximately half of whom were women, in a chant, “Abandonment, betrayal, the Harkis are marching on Paris!” The protesters carried two large banners and many small flyers with the words, “Mr. Hollande, keep your word!” accompanied by a photo of Hollande and the text of his campaign promise. Another large banner displayed the image of Messmer’s telegram. In this way, the commemoration essentially fused the French state’s past and present betrayals.



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Conclusion

It has been difficult for the Harkis as a dispersed, heterogeneous, and politically marginalized “community” to construct their own monuments and other official carriers of memory. Until recently, their memories were grafted onto those of other communities, including Pieds-Noirs and veterans, with greater resources and visibility.¹²⁰ Since 2005, they have used cyber carriers as means of organizing resistance to official memory narratives and as platforms to

¹¹⁸ “Journée de l’abandon des harkis le 12 mai 2013 : rassemblement de nombreuses associations à Paris,” *Harkis et Droits de l’Homme*, accessed May 17, 2013, <http://www.harki.net/article.php?id=750>.

¹¹⁹ Photograph taken on May 12, 2013 at Place Saint-Michel, Paris.

¹²⁰ Moumen, “Les Lieux de Memoire,” 137.

establish their own interpretations. These websites have not replaced the Harkis' other memory practices, but rather open up more spaces for commemorative, memorial acts.

Harki associations have started to use websites to publicize their practices and activities, enabling them to reach a wider audience of fellow Harki children than ever before. The sites also offer new ways to create or recreate connections based on the idea of a shared past as second-generation Harkis can meet and communicate regularly in discussion forums. This technology increases the number of occasions for commemorative activity as well as the number of participants, thus building, reinforcing, and sustaining the Harkis' community of memory.

Meanwhile, Harki associations have started to create sites of memory dedicated to commemorating their suffering in France. They have put plaques at the sites of former Harki camps and have contributed to the construction of a permanent exhibition in the town of Ongles, where there had been a sizeable Harki settlement, making it the first Harki museum. They have also joined with historians to create a museum at the Rivesaltes camp, which had held refugees from the Spanish Civil War, French Jews in World War II and members of the FLN captured in France before the Harkis arrived in 1962.

As the French state has sought to establish a monopoly on the memory of colonialism and the Algerian War, it has positioned the Harkis as soldiers and commemorated their sacrifices to the nation. Yet the state's authority has been challenged in the second-half of the 20th century, not least by the Harkis and their descendants, who remember this past differently. The Harkis' pursuit of French recognition for their role in the massacres has become their central, uniting cause.¹²¹ While the Harkis and their children are adamant about holding France responsible for the post-independence violence, they are also, paradoxically, indicating their continuing

¹²¹ Moumen, "De L'absence," 168.

attachment to France, their desire to be represented in the French political system and their wish to construct a positive historical legacy for Harkis and their families in French collective memory. They would like an official apology, and protection from defamation, as French Jews have acquired, yet what they ultimately seek is the complete acceptance and full integration into French society that they have been denied as French of North African origin.

CHAPTER 4: COMPETING MEMORIES, GENDERED NARRATIVES, 2003-2013

In their edited volume *The Gender of Memory*, Sylvia Schraut and Sylvia Paletschek posed the question, “Do women remember differently than men?”¹ While they were careful not to assume “an essential dichotomy in memory culture,” they were interested in the “historical effectiveness of gender topoi and their impact on memory politics.”² I explore this question in the case of the Harkis by identifying and analyzing competing narratives about the Harki past transmitted by Harki sons and daughters.³ “Harki” is a male-coded identity, created in the context of a war of liberation. War has historically been gendered male and in *Writing War*, Lynne Hanley has argued that “women are robbed of the authority to express themselves on the subject of war because they are assumed not to be in war.”⁴ Indeed, Harki wives and daughters originally occupied a marginalized place in Harki memory narratives. Yet since the early 2000s, Harki daughters have become important architects of Harki collective memory. The ways they have disseminated their memories and the aspects of the past that they have chosen to focus on differ significantly from those of Harki sons.⁵

¹ Sylvia Schraut and Sylvia Paletschek, “Remembrance and Gender: Making Gender Visible and Inscribing Women into Memory Culture,” in *The Gender of Memory: Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut (Frankfurt; New York: Campus-Verlag, 2008), 267–87: 272.

² Ibid, 273.

³ While Nina Sutherland and others have analyzed the way Harki daughters have constructed their memory narratives, I am the first to study Harki websites and thus the first to identify the competing interpretations among Harki children. Nina Sutherland, “Harki Autobiographies or Collecto-Biographies? Mothers Speak Through Their Daughters,” *Romance Studies*, 24:3 (November 2006), pp. 193-201.

⁴ Lynne Hanley, *Writing War: Fiction, Gender, and Memory* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 134.

⁵ In Chapter 5 I discuss the nature of Harki memory carriers and why they are gendered.

Harki children are conflicted over two key historical questions: the nature of the French colonial project in Algeria (also the focus of the February 2005 law) and the Harkis' motivations for supporting France during the war (the keystone to Harki memory narratives). Through cultural carriers such as memoirs, Harki daughters have taken an anti-colonial stance and portrayed the Harkis as casualties of France's exploitative regime in Algeria. Sociologists James Fentress and Chris Wickham have found an "absence of emphasis on choice" in women's war narratives, which appears to hold true in the case of the Harki daughters as well.⁶ They explained this phenomenon by observing, "women, however powerful, have tended to live their lives in environments whose public, external power structures have been under the control of men."⁷ In their accounts these women have stressed the lack of agency of their mothers, whose marriages bound them to the fate of the Harkis. Yet they have extended this vulnerability to their Harki fathers as well. Harki sons, however, have employed cyber carriers to express their understanding that Algeria was French and that the Harkis chose to defend their nation, and its values, against the FLN terrorists.

Debates among second-generation Harkis about how to interpret the past indicate that Harki sons and daughters have inherited a different relationship to the Harki identity. Both narratives are designed to challenge the traitor connotation of this identity, which was the source of rejection from Algerians, Algerian immigrants, and even the French. Yet Harki daughters have maintained greater distance from the Harki identity and expressed more ambivalence towards it. Fentress and Wickham found in their research that few women "had any ideological

⁶ James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1992), 142.

⁷ Ibid.

stake in the (male) self-image of the fighter.”⁸ In their texts, Harki memoir writers considered whether their fathers were indeed traitors before ultimately exonerating them. Harki sons, on the other hand, have appeared far more invested in the legacy of their fathers as soldiers and have proclaimed their pride at being the offspring of Harkis.

Harkis and their descendants do not constitute a unified memory “camp,” as historians who employ the “memory wars” paradigm have suggested. Their competing narratives are accompanied by outright disputes over how to interpret the past. These narratives also, however, reveal the productive work of memory for the Harkis. Both interpretations are aimed at establishing affiliations with parts of French society based on a shared past. Harki daughters have appealed to Algerian immigrants as joint victims of colonialism. They have focused on their experiences of racism and discrimination in France and displayed a lingering attachment to Algeria. Harki sons have sought acceptance and admiration from the French for the Harkis’ service. They have clearly distinguished themselves from Algerian immigrants and remained critical of the current Algerian regime.

In the aftermath of Bouteflika’s insult towards the Harkis in 2001 and the crimes against humanity case, women have become more involved in the Harki cause. Since 2003, they have produced a number of memoirs designed to make the Harki past known to the rest of French society. As cultural vectors of memory, these texts present individual narratives of the past, with the goal of contributing to a collective memory.⁹ Dalila Kerchouche and Fatima Besnaci-Lancou paved the way with their respective memoirs, *Mon Père, ce Harki* (2003) and *Fille de Harki* (2005). These Harki daughters have become public representatives of the Harki community, due

⁸ Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, 141.

⁹ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 219.

to the significant media coverage their works received in France.¹⁰ Kerchouche, a journalist at *L'Express*, followed up this memory work by contributing to a collection of life histories from Harkis, their wives, and children,¹¹ as well as producing a memoir based on her sister's life.¹² The latter was made into a TV film, entitled *Harkis*.¹³ Since 2005, Besnaci-Lancou has published three collections of Harki life stories,¹⁴ founded the association, Harkis et Droits de l'Homme,¹⁵ organized conferences, and edited scholarly works on the Harkis. Other Harki daughters have followed in their footsteps. Novelist Zahia Rahmani wrote her own memoir in 2006¹⁶ and socialist politician Saliha Telali published her memoir in 2009 through the major French publishing house, L'Harmattan.¹⁷ Two Harki sons¹⁸ and three Harkis¹⁹ themselves have published memoirs, either privately or through smaller publishing companies, but these works have received little to no media coverage.

¹⁰ Sutherland, "Harki Autobiographies," 196, fn: 17.

¹¹ Dalila Kerchouche and Stéphan Gladieu, *Destins de Harkis*, (Paris: Autrement, 2003).

¹² Dalila Kerchouche, *Leïla: Avoir Dix-Sept Ans Dans Un Camp De Harkis*, (Paris: Seuil, 2006).

¹³ *Harkis* was shown on 10 October 2006 on France2. It has been released on DVD, Alain Tasma, *Harkis* (France Télévisions Distribution, 2007).

¹⁴ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Nos mères, Paroles blessées: Une Autre Histoire De Harkis*, (Léchelle: Emina soleil, 2006); Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize Chibanis Harkis. Ces oubliés De l'Histoire*, (Paris: Tirésias, 2006); Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Des vies: 62 enfants de Harkis racontent*, (Paris: Editions de l'Atelier, 2010).

¹⁵ Originally the Groupe Femmes et Filles de Harkis.

¹⁶ Zahia Rahmani, *France, récit d'une enfance*, (Paris: Sabine Wespieser, 2006). She has also published a novel about a Harki and his family, Zahia Rahmani, *Moze*, (Paris: Wespieser, 2003).

¹⁷ Saliha Telali, *Les enfants de Harkis : entre silence et assimilation subie*, (L'Harmattan, 2009).

¹⁸ Karim Brazi, *Le Vilain Petit Berbère* (Société des Ecrivains, 2007); Kader Hamiche, *Manifeste D'un Fils de Harki Fier de L'être* (Édité à compte d'auteur, 2007).

¹⁹ Brahim Sadouni, *Français Sans Patrie: Premier Témoignage Écrit Par Un Harki* (B. Sadouni, 1985); Messaoud Kafi, *De Berger à Harki* (Édité à compte d'auteur, 2009); Abdallah Krouk, *Harki* (Edition de l'Xccéa, 2010). The only exception is a second version of Sadouni's memoir, which was published by Cosmopole. Brahim Sadouni, *Destin de Harki. Le Témoignage D'un Jeune Berbère, Enrôlé Dans L'armée Française à Dix-sept Ans* (Cosmopole, 2002).

Since 2005, some Harki children, mainly Harki sons, have used the Internet to transmit their understandings of the colonial past.²⁰ There are different types of Harki websites. All of the sites aim to increase historical understanding of the Harkis. Some are connected to a memorial association, such as the website for Fatima Besnaci-Lancou's association Harkis et Droits de l'Homme, and provide information about the association's activities. Others, including the site for the Mouvement Résistance Harki campaign, are intended to encourage participation outside the site in protests and demonstrations. In this chapter, I focus on websites that have been designed for discussion and participation directly on the site. These sites either have an open discussion forum or invite potential participants to post articles or comments, and are run by a moderator or webmaster who regulates the content. The four Harki discussion-oriented websites examined are *Harkis.info*,²¹ *Le Blog de Harkis*,²² the "*Coalition Nationale des Harkis et des Associations de Harkis*" [hereafter *Coalition Nationale*]²³ and *Monharki.com*.²⁴ All four sites are

²⁰ I analyze posts between 2005, when the first websites were created, until 2010. This is approximately the same period during which the Harki daughters' memoirs and collections of testimonies were published.

²¹ This website was active from September 1, 2005 to December 7, 2007. As of February 20, 2013 it had been visited 4,912,596 times. The Webmaster, who uses the pseudonym Massi, is the son of a Harki. Massi wrote most of the articles on the site and he moderated the site's discussion forum. He has explained that he created the site in order to eradicate clichés and delusions about the Harki past. "Pourquoi ce site?" *Harkis.info*, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/sections.php?op=viewarticle&artid=9> (accessed April 15, 2008).

²² This blog was active from January 29, 2006 to September 27, 2011. As of February 20, 2013 the site has been visited 17,319 times, making it the least frequented site of the four. The moderator, who uses the pseudonym "harkis," is either the son or grandson of a Harki and was in his mid-thirties during the time that the site was active.

²³ This website was active from April 10, 2006 to August 2011. The site does not offer a total count of the visits the site has received, but by February 20, 2013, each of the 296 articles had averaged 1,500 views. The moderator, Khader Mouffi, is the son of Harki and he has described himself as an apolitical freethinker, full French citizen, and fervent republican. "Khader Mouffi Sur LePost.fr," *Le Post*, <http://archives-lepost.huffingtonpost.fr/perso/khader-mouffi/>, (accessed October 27, 2013). He created the site in order to "rehabilitate the historical truth" and to create "a link between the harkis and their Families and the rest of the Nation." Khader, "Bienvenue sur le site de la Coalition Nationale des Harkis," *Coalition Nationale des Harkis*, 08 April 2006, <http://www.coalition-harkis.com/menu-principal/presentation.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

²⁴ This blog opened on June 25, 2006 and is still currently active. As of February 20, 2013 it had been visited 217,953 times. The Webmaster, who uses the pseudonym "le petit harki," is the son of a Harki and is helped by four men and two women in the maintenance of the site. Many different authors contributed articles to the blog and therefore this site offers the widest variety of opinions and narratives. The objectives of the blog include "to make

run by male descendants of Harkis who either describe themselves as apolitical or are equally critical of leaders from both sides of the political spectrum. They have created these sites precisely because no political organization or party has addressed their needs and concerns. The number of visits to each site varies widely and it is impossible to distinguish how many different people access the sites.²⁵ Even if that figure were relatively small, however, the sites' significance is rooted in the ways they publicize dissenting views of Harki history and can be used to mobilize Harki children.

History of French Algeria: The “Independence” Narrative

The February 2005 law sparked debates in France about how to interpret the nature of the French colonial project in Algeria. The pro-colonial law emphasized the positive impact of the French presence in Algeria, featuring improvements in agriculture, medicine, education, and infrastructure. Opponents described the French presence as exploitative, arguing that European settlers took the best land from the indigenous population for their own profit and offering statistics that show adult literacy rates actually declined in French Algeria from 40 percent in 1830 to 10 percent in 1962.²⁶

The history of French Algeria is of fundamental importance to the self-conceptions of Harki children, whose fathers played a part in maintaining this system. They have proposed competing narratives of this period that parallel wider arguments in France. A key disputed issue has been the initial relationship between France and Algeria. The anti-colonial narrative of

the harki history, which has for too long been concealed and falsified, officially known.” “La Charte du Blog,” *Monharki.com*, <http://monharki.com.over-blog.com/>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

²⁵ *Monharki.com* claims to have had 85,320 unique visitors between June 25, 2006 and November 20, 2008. “Harkis, Statistiques Du Blog Mon Harki.com de La Journée Du 20 Novembre 2008,” *Mon Harki.com*, accessed January 30, 2015, <http://www.monharki.fr/article-24952565.html>.

²⁶ Matthew Evangelista, *Gender, Nationalism, and War: Conflict on the Movie Screen* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 32.

French Algeria posits France as having conquered Algeria in 1830. This narrative depicts France as a foreign, invading power and situates French Algeria within the traditional patterns of colonization. It highlights the French invasion and occupation of Algiers and surrounding territories, as well as the brutal, protracted campaigns in the countryside to gain control and quell resistance. On the whole, the Harki memoirs as a genre have focused more on conveying personal experiences of decolonization than on exploring the origins of French colonialism in Algeria. Yet in Fatima Besnaci-Lancou's memoir, *Fille de Harki*, she began her chronology of Harki history in 1830 with the "Conquest of Algeria by France," thus ascribing, at least superficially, to the anti-colonial position.²⁷

Participants on all four of the websites have explicitly challenged this narrative by arguing that Algeria did not exist as a country before the French arrived and, as the moderator of *Harkis.info* summarized, "Algeria was a French creation."²⁸ Khader Moufî, the moderator of the *Coalition Nationale* website, expressed an essentialist understanding of the past when he confronted the conquest narrative by arguing that "The falsification of History resides precisely in considering Algeria as a sovereign and constituted country that was invaded and occupied by a colonial power."²⁹ In an article on *Monharki.com*, one Harki son asserted that "Algeria never existed as a nation-state before the French colonization" and argued that not only was it "France that fashioned the Algeria of today as a country, it is she who [...] gave Algeria its body and soul

²⁷ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, 123. Besnaci-Lancou more explicitly opposed the pro-colonial narrative in her petitions against the 2005 law. "Appel d'enfants de Harkis contre les articles 4 et 13 de la loi du 23 février 2005," *Harkis et Droits de l'Homme*, accessed September 21, 2011, <http://www.harki.net/article.php?id=50>; "L'Association Harkis et droits de l'Homme dénonce la loi du 23 février 2005," March 1, 2005, *LDH-Toulon*, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://ldh-toulon.net/l-Association-Harkis-et-droits-de.html>.

²⁸ Massi, post in response to "[Résolu] - kerchouche Delila," *harkis.info*, 15 May 2006, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/viewtopic.php?topic=211&forum=5>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

²⁹ Khader, post in response to "Le film "harkis" avec Smaïn diffusé sur France 2," *Coalition Nationale des harkis*, 17 October 2006, http://www.coalition-harkis.com/component/option,com_fireboard/Itemid,194/func,view/id,272/catid,4/ (accessed February 18, 2008).

and allowed its administrative organization.³⁰ On *Le Blog de Harkis* one participant pointed out that even the name “Algeria” was given to this territory by the French.³¹ While historians would generally agree with this statement,³² Martin Evans and John Phillips have argued that it was the Ottoman period (1529-1830) that “defined the territorial identity of the country and created the basis for the Algerian nation state as a geopolitical entity.”³³

The website participants have also emphasized that after France created Algeria, this region was integrated into France as three departments in 1848, making it a unique case in France’s colonial history.³⁴ On *Le Blog de Harkis*, one contributor explained that, “Algeria was like Alsace, Brittany or Corsica today. No one thought it was a separate country. People who were born in Algeria at the time were French, their parents were, and their grandparents as well.”³⁵ Their main point was that “**Algeria was France, one and indivisible!!!**”³⁶ Although the Second Republic extended department status to the coastal regions of French Algeria and

³⁰ Belkacem, “Point de vue d'un fils de Harkis sur la guerre d'Algérie,” *Monharki.com*, 12 October 2007, <http://monharki.com.over-blog.com/article-13029573.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

³¹ Harkis, “Brefs Rappels,” *Le Blog de Harkis*, 29 January 2006, <http://harkis.skyrock.com/343396248-Brefs-rappels.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

³² Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*, 2nd ed. (Cornell University Press, 2008), xiii, 4; Jordi, *Les Harkis, Une Mémoire Enfouie* (Autrement, 2008), 131; Mohamed Benrabah, *Language Conflict in Algeria: from Colonialism to Post-independence* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2013), 29.

³³ Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 24.

³⁴ Harkis, “Brefs Rappels,” *Le Blog de Harkis*, 29 January 2006, <http://harkis.skyrock.com/343396248-Brefs-rappels.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

³⁵ Zinc, post in response to “Un Crime d’Etat,” *Le Blog de Harkis*, 25 March 2008, <http://harkis.skyrock.com/343398314-Un-crime-d-Etat.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

³⁶ Khader, “L’Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!!” *Coalition Nationale des Harkis*, 02 October 2007, <http://www.coalition-harkis.com/content/view/192/#comment561>, (accessed October 16, 2008). Original emphasis.

claimed “Algeria was France,” the administrative category of “Muslim” excluded most French of North African origin from exercising the same rights as “Europeans” in these departments.³⁷

Ultimately, these Harki sons have constructed a historical narrative of colonization that was designed to refute the idea that Harkis were traitors. If France created Algeria and Algeria was part of France, then the Harkis could not be considered to have betrayed their country by fighting with the French army. As one participant on *Monharki.com* explained, “We do not believe our parents were traitors because Algeria was a French department at the time and they put themselves on the side of order to defend their lives and those of their families.”³⁸ An article on *Le Blog de Harkis* echoed the same idea: “That is why the harkis fought for France. It was their country. It’s normal to fight for your country against those we call ‘terrorists.’”³⁹

Another key question in the 2005 debates that has also divided Harki children concerns the quality of life in French Algeria. When Harki daughters discussed the colonial period in their memoirs, they tended to stress the wretchedness of life under colonialism. Saliha Telali described “the suffering of a people that lives under the domination of another country.”⁴⁰ She challenged the idea that colonialism had a positive effect on the population. Telali wrote, “If there was a ‘civilizing mission,’ it was not apparent in the living conditions of families in the countryside.”⁴¹ This theme was also present in the testimonies that Fatima Besnaci-Lancou collected from Harkis themselves. One Harki declared, “It is the injustice done to Algerians, for

³⁷ Shepard, *Invention*, xiii.

³⁸ Gaga, post in response to “Point de vue d'un fils de Harkis sur la guerre d'Algérie,” *Monharki.com*, 13 October 2007, <http://monharki.com.over-blog.com/article-13029573.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

³⁹ Zinc, post in response to “Un Crime d’Etat,” *Le Blog de Harkis*, 25 March 2008, <http://harkis.skyrock.com/343398314-Un-crime-d-Etat.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

⁴⁰ Telali, *Les enfants*, 28.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 18.

130 years, that is responsible! We walked with bare feet and were starving throughout all the years that Algeria was French.”⁴² Another blamed colonialism for the tragedies all parties experienced during the Algerian War. “Without the colonization of Algeria,” he argued, “there never would have been all these misfortunes.”⁴³

Participants on the Harki websites almost never went so far as to praise colonialism. A notable exception was Kader Hamiche, the son of a Harki, who occasionally guest authored articles for the website *Harkis.info*. In his memoir, one of only two written by Harki sons, Hamiche argued that “Many [Harkis] understandably thought in 1955 that Arabs were not capable of governing Algeria, which those in power have worked hard to prove true through forty years of neglect, dictatorship et pillage. It seems to me that no one today questions France’s civilizing mission in Algeria, except for the Arabo-Islamist fanatics.”⁴⁴

Most Harki children posting on the websites, however, defended the colonial period only in contrast to the current state of Algeria, arguing that Algerian misery under the rule of the FLN was worse than any that existed in French Algeria. Khader Mouffi asserted that the Harkis and their families were not victims of French colonialism, but rather “victims of decolonization,” as it was carried out by the FLN. He expressed the belief that Algerians today have the FLN, and not France, to blame for their current misfortunes.⁴⁵ Massi agreed, declaring, “If Algeria presently suffers (unemployment, misery, massacre...), it is no longer the fault of France and the

⁴² Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize Chibanis*, 19.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 49.

⁴⁴ Hamiche, *Manifeste*, 35.

⁴⁵ Khader, “Les Kabyles sont hétérogènes !” *Coalition Nationale des Harkis*, 06 October 2006, <http://www.coalition-harkis.com/content/view/192/#comment561>, (accessed October 16, 2008); Khader, post in response to “Les Harkis Vs Les Marianne de la Diversité et le FLN !!!”, *Coalition Nationale des Harkis*, 04 November 2006, <http://www.coalition-harkis.com/content/view/97/109>, (accessed September 21, 2008).

harkis, 43 years after the end of hostilities, but that of the ‘pseudo heroic resistance’ of the FLN, who spoiled all the riches of the country. They live like billionaires... while the people suffer all kinds of harm.”⁴⁶

We can situate the Harki children’s conflicting interpretations of the colonial period within a longer history of the decolonization narrative. Historian Todd Shepard has argued that, “From the 1830s on, French officials maintained that Algerian territory was part of France and that Algeria’s inhabitants were all French subjects.”⁴⁷ After 1961, however, “French bureaucrats, politicians, and journalists rewrote the history of imperialism and anti-imperialism so that decolonization was the predetermined end point.”⁴⁸ Thus, “In the last years of the Algerian War, French discussions transformed this descriptive term into a historical category, an all but inevitable stage in the tide of History.”⁴⁹ This discursive move allowed the French to avoid confronting problems of racism and religious discrimination in their empire.⁵⁰ By labeling their former Muslim subjects “Algerians,” the French could use nationality to articulate what made them different from French citizens of European origin.

The argument that decolonization was inevitable has been reflected in the Harki daughters’ memoirs. They have suggested that most Algerians wanted autonomy because, in the words of Saliha Telali, “How could one not imagine an independent Algeria?”⁵¹ The texts have maintained that some of the Harkis actually supported Algerian independence. In the film

⁴⁶ “Pourquoi ce site?” *Harkis.info*, accessed July 1, 2010, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/sections.php?op=viewarticle&artid=9>.

⁴⁷ Shepard, *Invention*, 20.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 11.

⁵¹ Telali, *Les enfants*, 27.

Harkis, for which Dalila Kerchouche co-wrote the script, Saïd Benamar, a Harki, declared that even though he fought with the French, he was not “for French Algeria.”⁵² Besnaci-Lancou has corroborated this assertion by presenting the testimonies of numerous Harki soldiers who explained that they were generally in favor of Algerian independence. The reason they ended up supporting the French, however, was that they disapproved of the way in which the FLN was fighting for this independence. As one Harki stated, “Of course I wished for Algerian independence. Only, I refused the violence, especially toward civilians.”⁵³ Another Harki explained, “We weren’t against independence, but against the injustices and abuses.”⁵⁴

Some Harki children have used the Internet as a forum for challenging the dominant post-1961 narrative of decolonization that situates decolonization as “the predetermined endpoint.”⁵⁵ These second-generation Harkis have contested the notion that most Algerians favored independence by comparing the number of Harkis with the number of FLN fighters. The moderator of *Harkis.info*, Massi, warned, “don’t let yourself be seduced by the popular myths of the Algerian revolution spread by the FLN and all the Algerian people. The harkis, far more numerous than the members of the FLN, are the proof that this myth is false and that’s what bothers them. Know that up until ’61, everyone was behind France.”⁵⁶ He further argued that “no one had this notion of independence” and that, out of ten million Algerians, only a few thousand

⁵² Tasma, *Harkis*.

⁵³ Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize Chibanis*, 17. In this case, he is talking about the FLN’s violence toward civilians. Other Harki testimonies and daughters’ memoirs spoke extensively about the French army’s violence toward civilians as well.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 61.

⁵⁵ Shepard, *Invention*, 4.

⁵⁶ Massi, post on the subject “[Résolu] - kerchouche Delila,” *Harkis.info*, 15 May 2006, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/viewtopic.php?topic=211&forum=5>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

decided to act in favor of it.⁵⁷ Historians do not have reliable statistics on the amount of indigenous support for Algerian independence, although the figure is certainly higher than several thousand. In the absence of historical consensus, participants in the war and their descendants have employed figures that support their particular ideological stances. The Ministère Algérien des Anciens Combattants has advanced one of the highest estimates, declaring that 132,290 Algerians fought in the ALN, the military branch of the FLN, and 204,458 Algerians supported the FLN in a civilian capacity.⁵⁸ In contrast, a contributor on the *Coalition Nationale* website stated that there were four times as many Muslim soldiers in the French ranks than there were members of the ALN⁵⁹ and another on *Le Blog de Harkis* argued, “There were more than 250,000 harkis and not more than a thousand members of the FLN, that’s where we can see the great lie of the FLN being founded on national unity.”⁶⁰ An additional participant on *Le Blog* articulated the significance of these figures. “It’s true that colonization is worthy of criticism and fighting for one’s independence is legitimate, but you know that in the beginning the nationalists were less numerous, which clearly means that the French presence wasn’t all that terrible...”⁶¹

⁵⁷ Massi, post on the subject “l’histoire des harkis expliquée aux enfants,” *Harkis.info*, 21 December 2005, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/viewtopic.php?topic=99&forum=5>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

⁵⁸ Manceron, “Un Abandon,” 67, fn:3. Guy Pervillé, *Pour Une Histoire de La Guerre d’Algérie: 1954-1962* (Paris: Picard, 2002), 137.

⁵⁹ Prosunt, post in response to “19 marsjour de deuil,” *Coalition Nationale des Harkis*, 23 August 2006, http://www.coalition-harkis.com/component/option,com_fireboard/Itemid,194/func,view/id,143/catid,4/, (accessed February 18, 2008).

⁶⁰ Axel, post in response to “Un monument de plus,” *Le Blog de Harkis*, 07 August 2006, <http://harkis.skyrock.com/398312868-Un-monument-de-plus.html>, (accessed October 27, 2013).

⁶¹ EmiGo, post in response to “Un monument de plus,” *Le Blog de Harkis*, 29 May 2006, <http://harkis.skyrock.com/398312868-Un-monument-de-plus.html>, (accessed October 27, 2013).

Harkis' Motivations: The Choice Question

The second debate has centered on the Harkis' reasons for supporting the French army. Since Algerian independence, the question of the Harkis' motivations for "enlistment" has been the cornerstone of most Harki memory narratives. The Harki identity is tied to the decision to fight for France. The motivations of individual Harkis, however, have remained largely inaccessible to historians, due to a lack of written sources and the Harkis' hesitancy to speak about their past. Did the Harkis make a deliberate choice to help maintain French Algeria? This question moves beyond interpreting the colonial legacy to understanding the Harkis' particular role in the colonial project. The ways in which children of Harkis have sought to answer it inform how they have related to the colonial past and situated themselves in the postcolonial present.

In their memoirs, daughters of Harkis have engaged with this historical question through an interrogation of their particular family's past: why their father supported the French and how this decision impacted their own life and identity. They highlighted how their father's silence on this subject prompted them to search for an answer. By the end of their memoirs, most of these Harki daughters have absolved their fathers of the traitor charge by arguing either that the Harkis had no agency, and therefore could not make a deliberate choice of their own free will, or that they had been forced to fight for France in order to protect their families.⁶² They demonstrated that this "choice" was not made under normal circumstances and that portraying the Harkis as having "chosen" France deceptively implies that viable alternatives existed. Talila repeatedly referred to her father's decision to support the French as a "non-choice." She blamed colonialism for constructing a situation that restricted her father's agency. "I watched him, he who did not

⁶² Rahmani does not do this, but has a more difficult relationship with her father.

have a choice, born in a colonized country, rallied to the harki formation during the conflict. He had lost all form of liberty. When he had to take refuge in France, all he had left were his courage and his dignity.”⁶³ Kerchouche echoed this sentiment saying, “Because he ‘chose’ France, my father has since been considered as a traitor by the Algerians, and has been suspected of becoming one by the French [...] Now, in hindsight, I realize [that he] perhaps didn’t have a choice.”⁶⁴

When the daughters did give a justification they entertained a variety of possible motivations. The most common explanation was that their fathers fought with the French in order to defend their families. They described a situation in which civilians were caught between the violence of both the FLN and the French army. Historians of the Algerian War, Francois-Xavier Hautreux, Mohand Hamoumou and Abderahmen Moumen have considered enlistment in response to FLN violence to be the principal factor.⁶⁵ These historians also note that some enlistments were forced or brought about through “pressures” applied by the French army.⁶⁶ Besnaci-Lancou cited the work of Hautreux in her memoir and identified “Harkis” as Algerians who had either been “veterans of previous wars or became harkis to protect their families from exactions of the French army or from those of the FLN.”⁶⁷ She has also asked whether the Harkis could be condemned for having fought with the French if they were acting out of necessity to

⁶³ Telali, *Les enfants*, 74.

⁶⁴ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, 28.

⁶⁵ Besnaci-Lancou, “Lexique,” *Treize Chibanis*; Mohand Hamoumou and Abderahmen Moumen, “L’histoire Des Harkis et Français Musulmans: La Fin D’un Tabou?,” in *La Guerre d’Algérie: La Fin de L’amnésie*, ed. Mohammed Harbi and Benjamin Stora (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2004), 317–44: 325.

⁶⁶ Francois-Xavier Hautreux, “Quelques pistes pour une meilleure compréhension de l’engagement des Harkis (1954-1962),” in “Harkis 1962-2012 Les Mythes et les Faits,” *Les Temps Modernes*, No. 666, Novembre-Décembre 2011, p. 44-53: 47; Hamoumou and Moumen, “L’histoire des harkis,” 327.

⁶⁷ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, 13.

protect their children. She pondered, “A question haunts me: just how far must one fight for a country? Is it better to defend one’s children or one’s land?”⁶⁸ Besnaci-Lancou concluded that while the FLN members were good independence fighters and Algerian nationalists, the Harkis had no choice if they wanted to be good fathers. Her explanation offered a morally acceptable justification: since the Harkis were acting as good fathers and husbands, they are exonerated from the traitor stigma.

In addition to “fear for one’s life” and “forced enlistment in response to threats against one’s family,” Telali offered additional motivations: economic necessity and family solidarity. She presented “military pay enabling survival in the context of misery” and “enlistment of a family member and family loyalty” as reasons given by the Harkis themselves.⁶⁹ Although historians have found that enlistment for economic reasons was the most rare, it fit into the memoir writers’ narrative of fathers doing what was necessary to provide for their families.⁷⁰ The contention that Harkis may have enlisted due to family or clan solidarity is relatively new among scholars. Hamoumou and Moumen have argued that “Obligations of loyalty encouraged the enlistment of entire families, and even entire villages or tribes, when one of its members were assassinated or when the head of the family, or village, or tribe, enlisted against the FLN.”⁷¹ This cultural limitation on Harkis’ agency calls into question whether we can consider particular Harkis as having made a decision to support France.

In most of the memoirs, the patriotic explanation, which presents the Harkis as having been motivated by their love of France, was conspicuously absent. Telali explicitly rejected

⁶⁸ Ibid, 19.

⁶⁹ Telali, *Les enfants*, 36.

⁷⁰ In a survey, only 8% of harkis responding said this was their motive. Hamoumou and Moumen, “L’histoire des harkis,” 327.

⁷¹ Ibid, 326.

arguments that Harkis chose France for ideological reasons, arguing, “It is easy today to construct a simple history, limiting actors to two camps with ideologically entrenched convictions.”⁷² She claimed, “If certain harkis’ enlistments were the result of a conscious ideological choice, this was not the case for the majority of enlisted volunteers.”⁷³ Besnaci-Lancou too declared that the Harkis were not politically motivated when fighting the FLN.⁷⁴

Their understandings of their fathers’ motivations enabled the authors to challenge the historical barriers that have existed between the Harkis and Algerian immigrants. They suggested that the Harkis and other Algerians were not ideological enemies during the war, but rather compatriots struggling in the same tragic situation. This interpretation painted the Harkis and their families as victims of the colonial system, a status that gains traction in the current politics of memory in France. Their narratives also blurred the lines between the categories of “Harki” and “independence fighter.” Historians have argued that thousands of men fought first for the FLN and then became Harkis because they refused to participate in violent attacks against Muslim civilians or Europeans.⁷⁵ Besnaci-Lancou affirmed this idea, writing, “During the Algerian War, with the blind terror of certain independence fighters, each Algerian was a potential harki.”⁷⁶ In her collection of Harki testimonies, one Harki admitted to having initially fought for Algerian independence before switching sides. He explained, “I was very enthusiastic about leaving to join the combatants of the FLN. For me, this struggle was a chance to retake in

⁷² Telali, *Les enfants*, 35.

⁷³ Ibid, 36.

⁷⁴ Besnaci-Lancou, “Lexique,” *Treize Chibanis*.

⁷⁵ Hamoumou and Moumen, “L’histoire des harkis,” 325. The reverse scenario undoubtedly occurred as well, as Algerians joined the independence movement in response to French violence against civilians and torture tactics.

⁷⁶ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, 19.

hand our country and to get out of the permanent humiliation that the Arabs and Berbers endured.”⁷⁷ This Harki declared that he and his fellow combatants did not have much ammunition and lacked weapons but were “supported by our belligerent determination to end colonialism.”⁷⁸ He concluded, “I could have continued to fight like that until independence, but unfortunately I was disgusted by the behavior of some of my companions.”⁷⁹ In her memoir, Kerchouche retraced her family’s past in an effort to determine why her father became a “traitor” to Algeria, only to find that he had actually been aiding the FLN as well. Her family’s story and those of the Harkis interviewed by Besnaci-Lancou thus suggested that the Harki history was too complex for a simple Algerian/Harki dichotomy. Their interpretation has carved out a space for the Harkis in an Algerian collective memory of colonial injustice.

In the discussion forums on the websites, Harki descendants have expressed a wide variety of ideas about why Harkis enlisted, including many of the same motivations discussed in the memoirs. Website moderators, however, have insisted that the Harkis made a decisive choice to fight for France, both in response to FLN violence and for ideological reasons. These Harki sons have tended to speak generally about the Harkis, not evoking their own family’s particular case, and they have based the Harki identity on the deliberate decision to defend France and French values. On a page entitled, “Who are the Harkis?” the website *Harkis.info* described the Harkis as “those who chose to remain French.”⁸⁰ The site’s administrator, Massi, stated that claiming the Harkis did not make a conscious political choice for France, as some of the memoir

⁷⁷ Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize Chibanis*, 65.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ “Qui sont les harkis ?” *Harkis.info*, http://www.harkis.info/portail/encapsulation.php?page=qui_sont_les_Harkis_?, (accessed September 18, 2008).

writers have, is “an insult to our ancestors.”⁸¹ According to Massi, “you cannot say that the harkis are simply mercenaries. They fought for their families, their villages and their security. And they loved this country that was France.”⁸² He suggested that no one forced the Harkis to serve, but rather they courageously rose to the occasion and fought to defend both their families and their country. One Harki son posting on this website agreed, explaining that a central aspect of the Harki identity was the ideological decision to defend France. He stated that “Harki” means “being of Algerian origin, being French and having made a humane, responsible choice.”⁸³

Some Harki children posting on websites have justified the Harkis’ decision by arguing that not only did they make a clear choice in favor of France, but also, based on the course of Algerian history, it is apparent that they made the right choice. They have drawn attention to the high numbers of Algerian immigrants who came to France following the Algerian War for economic opportunities and suggested that in the end, these Algerians made the same choice for France. On *Le Blog de Harkis*, one participant wrote, “The harkis made a clear choice, one to come live in France; explain to me why there was a large wave of Algerian immigration in the 1970s composed of former members of the ALN and FLN, the same ones who wanted Algerian independence came to France later. There is really something illogical in this process.”⁸⁴ On the blog *Monharki.com*, a Harki son declared that the Harkis were smart to have chosen France earlier than their compatriots because they avoided the serious integration problems that North

⁸¹ Massi, “Harkis ou Harki?”, *Harkis.info*, 17 October 2006, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/article.php?sid=10924094&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>, (accessed September 18, 2008).

⁸² Massi, post in response to “[Résolu] - kerchouche Delila,” *Harkis.info*, 15 May 2006, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/viewtopic.php?topic=211&forum=5>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

⁸³ Zozo, post in response to “Etre un(e) enfant de harki,” *Harkis.info*, 19 October 2006, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/viewtopic.php?topic=293&forum=5>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

⁸⁴ Sam, post in response to “Amère Patrie,” *Le Blog de Harkis*, 03 August 2009, <http://harkis.skyrock.com/2180023201-Amere-Patrie.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

Africans face in France today. He proclaimed, “In light of what is going on in France today with the problems created by immigration, I can say that they were visionaries, and that by their enlistment in the French Army, they anticipated the course of History, which has proven them right.”⁸⁵ Of course, this argument does not take into account the Harkis’ own integration problems, especially for those who had been placed in camps.

Just as the memoir writers acquitted their Harki fathers of the traitor stigma, children of Harkis posting on websites have challenged this label on the basis that they were defending their country, namely France. Some Harki children have also suggested that perhaps the Algerians who immigrated to France in the 1960s and 70s were the actual traitors. As the daughter of an Harki asked on *Le Blog de Harkis*, “Who are the real traitors? The Harki who saved his skin or made his choice for the good of everyone? [Or] the immigrant who abandoned everyone, including the most poor who are dying of hunger, to think only of himself.”⁸⁶ A participant on the forum for the *Coalition Nationale* added, “I will remind you that the harkis are not traitors, but rather men who made a choice, whether or not this pleases the fugitives who deserted their country that had gained total independence!”⁸⁷ Thus, they drew a clear line between Harkis and Algerian immigrants and their descendants in France.

Some Harki sons have openly objected to Dalila Kerchouche’s memoir because its narrative runs completely counter to the image of the heroic Harki that they have tried to construct. Kerchouche argued in her memoir that, “Like my father, nearly 40% of the harki

⁸⁵ Le petit harki, “Apprenti harki, j'arrive,” *Monharki.com*, 10 October 2006, <http://www.monharki.fr/article-4124055.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

⁸⁶ Filledeharki, post in response to “Intro...” *Le Blog de Harkis*, 29 April 2007, <http://harkis.skyrock.com/343393883-Intro.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

⁸⁷ Azur, post in response to “Affaire BENYOUCEF, soutien à Amid TOUALBIA,” *Coalition Nationale des Harkis*, August 2007, <http://www.coalition-harkis.com/forum/4-forum-accessible-a-tous-/98-affaire-benyoucef-soutien-a-amid-toualbia.html>, (accessed October 26, 2013).

soldiers, according to Michel Roux [a historian who has studied the harkis], helped the FLN fighters.”⁸⁸ One Harki countered on *Coalition Nationale*, “I know very few harkis (in fact, none at all), despite my constant presence in the field, who gave information, arms, and ammunition to the FLN, since their principle reason for enlisting, was precisely to fight these mafia, bloodthirsty terrorists.”⁸⁹ Khader Moulfı responded to the text by saying that Kerchouche has “declared, with pride... THAT HER HARKI FATHER HAD BETRAYED HIS COUNTRY, FRANCE, IN GIVING ARMS, AMMUNITION AND INFORMATION TO THE FLN!!! Which makes him, in this context, A REAL TRAITOR, BUT TO FRANCE BECAUSE HE DOUBLE-CROSSED THEM!!!”⁹⁰ Harki sons stressed repeatedly on the forums the degree to which this memoir did not accurately represent the Harki experience.

Inheriting the Harki Identity

The memory work of Harki children has been designed to address the traitor connotation of the Harki identity. Through their memoirs and the websites, second-generation Harkis have described being actively rejected by their Franco-Algerian and Euro-French peers. Kerchouche explained that “Because he had ‘chosen’ France, my father was thereafter considered as a traitor by the Algerians, and was suspected of becoming one by the French.”⁹¹ She described the taunting she used to receive from Algerian immigrants when she was growing up, who yelled insults such as “Go away, you stupid hick, you harki!”, and wrote that “In front of me, these

⁸⁸ Cited on Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on February 18, 2008). Posted by cleopatre on January 11, 2007, on the subject “forum libertyvox, des fachos pas rigolos”.

⁸⁹ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on February 18, 2008). Posted by Khader on October 17, 2006, on the subject « Le film "Harkis" avec Smaïn diffusé sur France 2 ».

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, 23.

exiles used the word ‘harki’ as an insult.”⁹² Other Harki children described similar experiences of name-calling and rejection. One daughter on *Harkis.info* described both the anti-Harki discrimination and the racism against French of North African origin that she faced: “I recall a period of my childhood when I was rejected by the “100% French” (to simplify) children because my last name wasn’t French and my hair was not straight; but at the same time I was also rejected by the children of Algerian immigrants (whose parents weren’t harkis) because my first name was French (my father wanted his children to have French first names).”⁹³ Second-generation Harkis commiserated about this continuing discrimination against their “community,” with one participant alerting the others that she had discovered a website from which Harkis were “banned.”⁹⁴ The Harki identity has remained relevant for even the third generation because of this anti-Harki sentiment. Besnaci-Lancou wrote that “Being harki is not hereditary. Alas, the unhappiness is transmitted (from one generation to the next).”⁹⁵ Her son, the grandson of Harkis, has experienced forms of rejection in school. This perpetual exclusion has bound them as the descendants of Harkis.

Yet second-generation Harkis have reacted differently to this rejection. Many of the female Harki memoir writers entertained the idea, particularly in the absence of any clear explanation or justification from their fathers, that perhaps the Harkis had indeed been traitors. Kerchouche began her memoir by writing, “During the Algerian War, my father, an Algerian,

⁹² Ibid, 29.

⁹³ Harkis.info, (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by tongwoman on October 17, 2006 at 23:43, on the subject « Etre un(e) enfant de harki ».

⁹⁴ Harkis.info, (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by harki62 on August 21, 2006 at 11:30, on the subject « UN SITE INTERDIT AUX HARKIS ET LEURS DESCENDANTS!!!! »

⁹⁵ Besnaci-Lancou, *Fille de harki*, 17.

fought in the ranks of the French army against the FLN, the National Liberation Front of the country. How could he support colonization against independence, preferring submission to liberty? I don't understand. He has never spoken to me about it."⁹⁶ Since she learned from her French and Franco-Algerian peers to be ashamed of her Harki identity, she struggled to understand why her father committed the shameful act of defending the colonizer. As Telali wrote in her memoir, "I noticed that my father hid the history of his country. He never referenced the past and [...] I held him responsible for our isolation. Wasn't he responsible for this choice? Wasn't he a traitor to his nation? Why this silence about the war?"⁹⁷ In the film *Harkis*, the main character Leïla, who is a Harki daughter, questioned her father as to why he fought with France and then declared he must have been a traitor.⁹⁸

These women also expressed a certain ambivalence about their status as Harki daughters. Kerchouche confessed, "I am the daughter of harkis. I write this word with a lowercase 'h', as in *honte* [shame]."⁹⁹ One Harki daughter explained, "We, the children, inherited from our fathers the identity of traitors, collaborators, harkis. These words hurt me. Now I don't say (harki) anymore. People have taught me all too well that it means "traitor."¹⁰⁰ Their chagrin indicates a particular relationship to the Harki identity. Harki daughters seem to have inherited the weight of the Harki past, but appear less invested than Harki sons in the soldierly connotation of the identity. As women, they are visibly not Harkis themselves and this distance has allowed them to

⁹⁶ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, 13.

⁹⁷ Telali, *Les enfants*, 55.

⁹⁸ Tasma, *Harkis*.

⁹⁹ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, 13.

¹⁰⁰ Kerchouche and Gladieu, *Destins de Harkis*, 92.

more fully engage with the traitor accusation and be more critical of the Harki past. It may also have made them particularly well suited to ultimately pardon their fathers.

Harki sons have employed a different approach in response to the exclusion they have experienced from other French and Algerians. They never entertained the idea that their fathers may have been traitors. Instead, they have used websites as public spaces in which to proudly self-identify as children of Harkis.¹⁰¹ For them, this act, coupled with their heroic interpretation of the Harki past has emptied the label of its shameful stigma. A common refrain on these websites has been, “proud to be the son of a Harki.”¹⁰² One Harki posted, “AS I OFTEN CELEBRATE, I AM BERBER, MY FATHER HARKI, AND I AM PROUD OF HIM AND HAPPY MYSELF AND I DON’T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THE PREJUDICES OF OTHERS.”¹⁰³ As an interesting counter-example, one Harki daughter, a frequent participant on *Coalition Nationale*, expressed this same pride. She explained, “to me, my father is the man with the most integrity, the most honest and courageous that I know and how could I repudiate him, since he has taught me honor, and has given me everything? In fact, I think that what bothers [the French and Franco-Algerians], all of them, is that we, children of Harkis, we are proud of our parents and ready to sacrifice in order to render them the homage they are owed.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ In most cases, this identity work occurs in addition to that carried out in other contexts, for example in associations and at demonstrations.

¹⁰² Harkis.info. (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by Achour on March 8, 2006 at 18:11, on the subject « FIERE DE L'ETRE FILS DE HARKIS » ; “Harkis et Fier de L Être,” *Facebook*, accessed February 1, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/HarkisEtFierDeLEtre>.

¹⁰³ Harkis.info, (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by LECHAOU188 on March 7, 2006 at 02:36, on the subject « FIERE DE L'ETRE FILS DE HARKIS ». The Chaoui are a Berber ethnic group in Algeria.

¹⁰⁴ *Coalition Nationale des Harkis*, (accessed February 18, 2008). Posted by cleopatre on November 11, 2006, on the subject « La pression des Algériens sur nos pères est là ! ».

This woman and the Harki sons on the websites have found the ambivalence of the memoir writers towards the Harki identity problematic. One contributor to *Harkis.info* posted with regard to Kerchouche's memoir that "this book is shameful. She doesn't give a damn about her father."¹⁰⁵ Khader Moulfı agreed that "We know that Dalila KERCHOUCHE is ashamed of being a "harki's daughter".¹⁰⁶ Moulfı also repeatedly described Kerchouche and Besnaci-Lancou as the representatives of the "*Harkis, malgré nous*," the "Harkis against our will," a reference to the "malgré-nous," a group of Alsations who were drafted into the German forces during World War II.¹⁰⁷ He argued that when Besnaci-Lancou appeared on France 3, a major French television station, and claimed that the Harkis were forcibly enlisted to support the French, she called into question the patriotism and loyalty of the Harki soldiers.¹⁰⁸ He and Massi have asserted that by not proudly affirming the Harki identity and celebrating the Harkis' decision to fight for France, these women have contributed to the image of Harkis as traitors.¹⁰⁹ As Massai explained, "We could behave like some and ask forgiveness from the executioners, or we could behave in a manner worthy of our fathers."¹¹⁰ For them, the only way to fight exclusion and anti-Harki discrimination has been to publicly embrace their Harki history.

¹⁰⁵ Harkis.info, (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by Anonyme on April 4, 2006 by 00:39, on the subject « [Résolu] - kerchouche Delila ».

¹⁰⁶ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on September 21, 2008). « Supercherie racoleuse sur France 2, Les Harkis n'étaient qu'un !!! » Posted by Khader Moulfı on 11-10-2006.

¹⁰⁷ Sarah Farmer, *Martyred Village: Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « Encore une donneuse de leçons !!! » Posted by Khader on 29-10-2007 in response to the article « Supercherie racoleuse sur France 2, Les Harkis n'étaient qu'un !!! ».

¹⁰⁸ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « Attention une pro-harkis présumée peut c » Posted by Khader on 04-11-2006 in response to the article « Les Harkis Vs Les Marianne de la Diversité et le FLN !!! ».

¹⁰⁹ Harkis.info, (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by Massi on May 15, 2006 at 14:45, on the subject « [Résolu] - kerchouche Delila ».

Emphasis and Affiliations

The narratives that Harki children have constructed about the colonial past and the Harkis' motivations indicate how they wish to situate themselves in postcolonial French society. This is also conveyed through the moments they have chosen to emphasize. In addition to denouncing French colonialism in Algeria, the memoirs concentrated on describing the internment camps and articulating the injustices Harkis suffered in France. For the Harki daughters writing memoirs, living in these camps constituted a defining aspect of the Harki experience. Kerchouche's memoir focused on her family's journey through different Harki camps and her second text, *Leïla*, took place entirely in 1972 in a camp. She only occasionally referenced what her family had experienced before they arrived there. The first feature film on the Harkis, *Harkis*, was based on *Leïla* and was also situated firmly in France. Kerchouche thus suggested that even if Harki history did not begin with their arrival in France, this period was a pivotal moment in their past.¹¹¹ One of the two Harki sons who published a memoir, Karim Brazi, also focused on the post-1962 period and compared the fates of a Harki son who grew up in a camp with one who escaped that lot and was able to integrate more easily into French society.

The memoir writers depicted the camps as reproductions of the colonial system, with its inherent structural racism, in mainland France. Their texts described the deplorable living conditions in these camps and on the hardships they endured. The Harkis and their wives that the memoir writers interviewed told stories of children and the elderly who froze to death in the

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ While conducting the research for her memoirs, Kerchouche encountered many Harkis and recorded their stories in another work she published in 2003, *Destins des Harkis*. Like Kerchouche's own narrative, most of the life histories in *Destins* stressed the hardships of life in post-1962 France.

camps.¹¹² They recalled dirty and humid barracks, full of cockroaches, and explained that they were subject to curfew and essentially imprisoned. One Harki evoked “the misery of the Harkis” and declared that “No one can live in such a place for long without losing some of their mental health there.”¹¹³

Harkis, their wives, and their children also depicted the blatant racism of those in charge of the camps. Some of the camps were run by army officers, who instituted military-style discipline, and others were controlled by Pieds-Noirs, who spoke some Arabic and were considered to be “familiar” with Algerian culture. The memoirs contain tales of being infantilized, mocked, and humiliated by the heads of the camps, their wives, and French police officers.¹¹⁴ In Brazi’s text, the Harki son growing up in the camps recalled “the harsh isolation of successive camps where he and those like him were *concentrés* (assembled). He told of how permanent mental slavery secluded and conditioned his community, how hard it was to mingle with the local population.”¹¹⁵ While he “just wanted to be normal, like everyone else, just a young Frenchman,” the girl he was pursuing was chastised for hanging around with “those people.”¹¹⁶

The memoir writers devoted significantly more time in their works to criticizing the French state and its treatment of the Harkis in France than they did to condemning the FLN for the 1962 massacres that precipitated the Harkis’ departure for France. They stressed that it was the French who treated them unjustly on the basis of their appearance, names, and/or religion and

¹¹² Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize Chibanis*, 43.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹¹⁴ Kerchouche and Gladieu, *Destins de Harkis*, 96.

¹¹⁵ Brazi, *Le Vilain Petit Berbère*, 57.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

in this respect many Harki sons and daughters faced the same discriminatory practices as other Muslim North African immigrants. In her memoir, Saliha Telali explained that being the daughter of a Harki meant she too had immigrant origins and therefore faced similar challenges in France. “The feeling of rejection is part of me. Through our family’s history, I am the *child* of a Harki. I am the product of immigration. The way I am perceived remains stained by the colonial history despite the years that have elapsed.”¹¹⁷ Female memoir writers have thus identified with Algerian immigrants as common victims of colonialism in Algeria and continued discrimination in France. Seeking reconciliation with the Algerian immigrant community has proven challenging, given the historical legacy of the war and the climate of historical memory that positions memory collectives against each other. However, Harki daughters’ distance from the soldierly identity of their fathers has allowed them more freedom to successfully seek such reconciliation.

The first-generation Harkis and their wives cited in these memoirs also tended to emphasize their Algerian identity more than the sons writing on Harki websites. Many Harkis referred to Algeria as “my country” or “our country,” and expressed the wish they had been able to remain there following Algerian independence. Dalila Kerchouche observed that her parents clung to their Algerian identity in the face of exclusionary practices in France. She explained that the “certainty of being Algerians never left them. Algerians who were humiliated and detested, but Algerians nonetheless. Better that than nothing at all.”¹¹⁸

Harki wives in particular seemed more willing to admit a longing for and attachment to Algeria. For most, it was not due to their own actions, but rather those of their husbands, that

¹¹⁷ Telali, *Les enfants*, 92.

¹¹⁸ Kerchouche, *Mon père*, 29.

they ended up in France. One Harki wife, Khatidja, declared, “It was our husbands who waged war, not us. And yet we paid, like them.”¹¹⁹ Stéphan Gladieu described the Harki wives he and Kerchouche interviewed as “these women who were never able to choose” and explained how they “they told us of their suffering, their regrets, their private heartbreaks, their nostalgia for Algeria.”¹²⁰ Saliha Telali spoke of her mother’s regret at having to leave her country that had just been liberated. Telali stressed the importance of understanding “the tragedy of all these women who never made a choice. They followed the choice of their husbands, which, as has been pointed out, was in most cases a ‘non-choice’.”¹²¹

Harki wives also retained stronger ties to Algeria because they generally had a more difficult time integrating into French society than their husbands and children. They had fewer opportunities to leave their homes and the camps and to participate in French society. Telali has argued that “We rarely talk about the female experience of immigration. And yet, women paid the most for the barrier that was imposed between ‘us’ and ‘them’ [...]”¹²² Harki wives were also not completely “banished” the way their husbands had been and could more easily return to Algeria. The first generation in many cases passed on this memory of, and nostalgia for, Algeria to their daughters. The importance of the “native country” created a link between these Harki descendants and Algerians that Harki sons writing on websites have not expressed.

Harki sons have focused on a different moment in the Harki past on their websites. For them, the defining event in Harki history occurred between April and September of 1962, when French troops pulled out of Algeria and left the Harkis vulnerable to the exactions of the FLN.

¹¹⁹ Kerchouche and Gladieu, *Destins de Harkis*, 96.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 18.

¹²¹ Telali, *Les enfants*, 38.

¹²² Ibid, 52.

They have seemed far less interested in the experiences of the camps and French racism than in the crimes committed by Algerians. Website administrators explained that setting the film *Harkis* in 1972, for example, was misleading because it occludes the events that came before, thus leaving the novice French viewer uninformed about what they have considered to be the true “harki drama.”¹²³ While *Harkis* stated that between fifty and eighty thousand Harkis and their families were died in the post-independence violence,¹²⁴ the website administrators have claimed that one hundred and fifty thousand were killed.¹²⁵ Also, unlike Kerchouche and Besnaci-Lancou, these sons often referred to the massacres as the “harki genocide,” the term that came into use during the 2001 crimes against humanity case. In response to efforts made by memoir writers and their associates to speak out about human rights violations in the camps, a post on *Harkis.info* read, “On that day [in 1962], how many granddaughters did not have the privilege of going to the camps and were sent back to be massacred on the Algiers port? Where was the League of the Rights of Man then?”¹²⁶ This renders members of the FLN, those who committed the “harki genocide”, as the clear antagonists in this narrative.

The webmasters’ emphasis on the massacres was also reflected in the chronology of events they posted their mission statements and in their discussions about Harki identity on discussion board forums. On “Le site de la communauté harkie,” website administrators posted a timeline of events in Harki history. They highlighted in bold the entry, “July: Algerian

¹²³ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on September 21, 2008). « Supercherie racoleuse sur France 2, Les Harkis n'étaient qu'un !!! » Posted by Khader Moufki on 11-10-2006.

¹²⁴ Tasma, *Harkis*.

¹²⁵ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on October 16, 2008), « Benjamin STORA flnise mais ne colorise pas l'Algérie » Posted by Khader Moufki on 08-06-2006.

¹²⁶ Harkis.info, “Portail d’Information de la Communauté Harkie, de leurs enfants et de leurs amis,” <http://www.harkis.info> (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by Massi on September 28, 2006 at 15:30, on the subject “Indigènes.”

independence after 130 years of French presence – Beginning of the harkis massacres,” and provided a link through the word “massacres” to gruesome photos of mutilated Harki bodies. Administrators described the Harkis arriving in France and settling in camps and then ended their chronology in the winter of 1962.¹²⁷ On *Harkis.info*, the webmaster Massai did not mention the camps in the sections entitled “Who are the Harkis?” or “Why create this site?”¹²⁸ Similarly, besides a vague reference to the mistreatment of four generations of Harkis, the *Coalition Nationale* website virtually ignored the internment camps experience in favor of descriptions and passionate denunciations of the “harki genocide.”¹²⁹

Harki children posting on the websites proudly affirmed their French identity, despite any discrimination they may have faced in France. As one participant explained, “It’s true that France locked us up in harki camps, we did not go to school, we were discriminated against everywhere, we were treated as Arabs, but it’s France. It’s like a mother who hits her children, but she’s nevertheless our mother and we must pardon her and love her. This is what my father told me. This is why I love this country. Tomorrow will be better, God willing. Long live the harkis. Long live France.”¹³⁰ For many of the second-generation Harkis writing on these websites, “my country” referred to France, and they even even more patriotic than their “native French” peers. On *Harkis.info*, Massi used an icon that included the tricolor flag. One Harki

¹²⁷ Harkis.org, « Histoire », http://www.harkis.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=3 (accessed April 15, 2008).

¹²⁸ Harkis.info, « Qui sont les harkis ? » http://www.harkis.info/portail/encapsulation.php?page=qui_sont_les_Harkis_?, (accessed April 15, 2008). Harkis.info, « Pourquoi ce site ? » <http://www.harkis.info/portail/sections.php?op=viewarticle&artid=9> (accessed April 15, 2008).

¹²⁹ Coalition Nationale des Harkis et des Associations de Harkis, « Bienvenue sur le site de la Coalition Nationale des Harkis » <http://www.coalition-harkis.com/content/view/13/167/> (accessed April 15, 2008).

¹³⁰ Zalamit, post in response to “FIERE DE L'ETRE FILS DE HARKIS,” *Harkis.info*, 08 March 2006, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/viewtopic.php?topic=174&forum=5>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

child wrote, “I am happy to live, to have grown up on French soil (LAND OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN, HOMELAND OF VICTOR HUGO AND JULES FERRY).”¹³¹

Unlike some of the Harkis and their families in the memoirs, these particular Harki children did not express a desire to be able to go back to Algeria, but instead sought more recognition for their services from France. One daughter of a Harki wrote that she was not interested in the Algerians and their “FLhaine,” declaring instead, “I am going to demand reckoning from MY country, this France that my father calls ‘the mother country.’”¹³² These second-generation Harkis have situated themselves firmly in France and renounced their Algerian identity. They have also distinguished themselves from Algerian immigrants, whom they argue have not earned the right to be French the way that the Harkis have. As one Harki son wrote, “Yes, I am proud of harkis [...] the harkis remain the most courageous men and fully worthy of being French, not like those who want to be French, yet who don’t want to love France. The harkis spilt their blood, and through their spilt blood they proved their love for this country.”¹³³

Conclusion

The Harkis and their descendants do not act as a monolithic memory collective. Rather, children of Harkis have constructed rival interpretations of the colonial past based on how they would like to situate themselves in postcolonial French society. The fact that their competing narratives fall along gender lines indicates that the masculine Harki identity is transmitted in distinct ways to Harki sons and daughters. The Harkis are a particular group, but the different

¹³¹ LECHAOU188, post in response to “FIERE DE L’ETRE FILS DE HARKIS,” *Harkis.info*, 07 March 2006, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/viewtopic.php?topic=174&forum=5>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

¹³² Zalabia, post in response to “Etre un(e) enfant de harki,” *Harkis.info*, 11 October 2006, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/viewtopic.php?topic=293&forum=5>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

¹³³ Harkis.org, (accessed February 18, 2008). Posted by Anonyme on March, 2 2006, on the subject “Tres fière”

content of their narratives raises important questions about the relationship between gender and memory.

The case of Harki memorializing also calls into question the utility of the “memory wars” paradigm by revealing another level on which memory of the Algerian War has proven divisive. At the same time, it serves as a reminder of the reconciliatory potential of collective memory. A consistent feature of Harki collective memories is that they are not self-sufficient; their narratives are always formed in relation to wider French understandings of the colonial period and ultimately reflect a desire to belong.

CHAPTER 5: CYBER CARRIERS OF HARKI MEMORY, 2005-2013

The Internet has offered new ways of producing, transmitting and accessing information, including narratives of the past. My project is the first to analyze how Harkis and their children have made use of this technology in their memory work. I argue that websites, discussion forums, and blogs constitute a type of memory carrier that is distinct from those—organizational, cultural, official, and scholarly—identified by Henry Rousso.¹ Analyzing how Harkis and their descendants have employed cyber carriers, particularly in relation to other vectors, provides an opportunity to consider the role of media in the transmission of memory. Collective memory is, after all, “an inherently mediated phenomenon.”² While Chapter 4 explored the different content of the narratives expressed through cultural and cyber carriers, this chapter compares the way these carriers have functioned and considers why they have been gendered in the case of the Harkis.

In writing memoirs and collecting oral histories, Harki daughters claim to speak for individuals. This is typical of cultural memory carriers³ and Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut have found that women tend to “individualize their memories to a higher degree than men. Women say *I* when men withdraw to *one*.”⁴ The female memoir writers assert that Harkis and

¹ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

² Oren Meyers, Mordechai Neiger, and Eyal Zandberg, *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3.

³ Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome*, 219.

⁴ Sylvia Schraut and Sylvia Paletschek, “Remembrance and Gender: Making Gender Visible and Inscribing Women into Memory Culture,” in *The Gender of Memory: Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut (Frankfurt ; New York: Campus-Verlag, 2008), 267–87: 273.

their descendants are marked by diversity. For this reason, they are more comfortable with a plurality of memories, of co-existing, competing memories. On the Harki websites, however, webmasters claim to speak for a collectivity and seem to have stricter notions about what constitutes the “true” Harki history. Administrators establish a specific interpretation of the past on the site, which they update through various articles announcing the appropriate reactions to current events. They regulate what is posted in the discussion board forums both by removing offensive posts and policing diversions from the established interpretation. Webmasters do not provide information on their own family histories, which they may consider tangential to the collective history of the group. In fact, at times they contest the authority given to memoir authors as representatives of Harki collective memory, since they only offer individual experiences.

The structural logic of the Internet also influences the way memories are transmitted through cyber carriers. As Michelle Henning has observed, “technologies of data retrieval and now digital processing, make it possible to replace historical narrative by cross-referencing and the mere ‘co-presence’ of objects. A form of memory akin to computer RAM (Random Access Memory) replaces historical narrative.”⁵ Digital memory is accessed in a continuous and fragmented manner and this interface limits how participants receive, process, and imbue meaning in the information that is transmitted. It can be challenging for sons of Harkis to present a coherent and consistent narrative of their past online. Harki daughters’ memoirs, in contrast, offer relatively fixed texts for others to accept, reject or reinterpret. In many ways, the narrative quality of their accounts reflects the tradition of oral transmission within families, which has

⁵ Michelle Henning, *Museums, Media and Cultural Theory* (Maidenhead, England; New York: Open University Press, 2006), 136.

often been a female-dominated practice. Nina Sutherland has argued that through their memoirs, Harki daughters have fused a European written cultural form with a North African ritual of storytelling.⁶ Their familial, personal stories differ greatly from the collective accounts expressed through websites.

The Harki children's use of competing carriers has led to important, and often hostile, conflicts about authority and representation. Cyber carriers have allowed more children of Harkis to participate directly in building a shared memory. Using the Internet to share and construct traces of the past is a public memory performance devoid of traditional mediating influences such as those of institutions or publishers. As such, cyber carriers have fragmented authority on the past and democratized the process of collective memory formation. Yet, they also lack the legitimacy of older, more traditional carriers. Websites are often created by individuals and associations without access to the resources necessary to publish a memoir or make a film.

Harki daughters have become particularly vocal, and popular, representatives of this community through their memoirs. These women have spoken for the Harkis and their descendants at conferences and colloquiums on the Algerian War, and have been most frequently interviewed on television and in print media about the Harkis. Whereas their memoirs have received national press and been celebrated by the French media, the Harki websites are not well known among non-Harkis. The reception of Harki daughters' works reveals how the legacy of colonialism has continued to shape understandings of gender roles among French of North African origin. The French colonial administration justified its rule in Algeria by contrasting

⁶ Sutherland has explained that "story-telling has long played an important role in Algerian society" and that it "has traditionally been a female-dominated domain, because of their lower literacy rate and the extended and intergenerational nature of female communities, especially in rural districts." Nina Sutherland, "Harki Autobiographies or Collecto-Biographies? Mothers Speak through Their Daughters," *Romance Studies* 24, no. 3 (2006): 193–201: 198.

“Muslim’ Algerian misogyny and backwardness” with “the moralizing and civilizing premises of French domination.”⁷ It portrayed the Algerian woman as “humiliated, sequestered, cloistered” by her husband and claimed to make her liberation their aim.⁸ Women of North African origin continue to be perceived as victims of Muslim patriarchy in postcolonial France.⁹ Harki daughters’ narratives may therefore be embraced as acts of emancipation. Harki sons have remained aware of the greater popularity of the memoir writers’ works and have resented the co-opting of this “male history” by female narrators. This has led to disputes over representation and contributed to the contentious process of constructing a collective memory.

Harki children have used websites not only to challenge the authority of the memoir writers, but also as platforms for publicly contesting the narratives and interpretations of non-Harkis. As I demonstrated in Chapter 3, Harki children have used cyber carriers to organize resistance to official commemorations. Through these sites, they have also objected to representations put forth by historians that do not conform to their own understandings. Webmasters appear to value scholarly carriers as sources of truth about the past, but also to blame scholars for the lack of historical knowledge about the Harkis and their experiences. Finally, they dispute the practices and narratives of other groups with a stake in the memory of the Algerian War. I focus on their reactions to two films that they consider to be ideologically oriented towards the FLN. Their posts reveal a sense of frustration over the fact that whereas

⁷ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*, 2nd ed. (Cornell University Press, 2008), 192.

⁸ Frantz Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled,” in *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 37-38. Translation by Matthew Evangelista, *Gender, Nationalism, and War: Conflict on the Movie Screen* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 33.

⁹ Joan Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 71.

films are an important way of educating the French public about the colonial past, their own websites have remained less influential.

Webmasters also seem to have borrowed the “memory wars” model, created and employed by scholars, to frame their relationships to the collective memories of these other groups. Harki children’s websites offer an opportunity to consider the role of the Internet in the emergence and popularity of the competitive memory framework in France. Conflicts over how to interpret the past are both revealed and exacerbated by the public nature of the Internet. Because of the superficial anonymity afforded by pseudonyms, online participants are often less inhibited in their speech and their exchanges take on a more aggressive tone. This phenomenon is compounded by the ability to react almost instantaneously, without the filters of time or institutions. Yet while the Internet affects the speed, tone and pervasiveness of confrontations over the past, it produces extreme versions of what are normal collective memory processes.

Nature of Cyber vs. Cultural Carriers

As cultural carriers of memory, Harki daughters’ memoirs and films offer highly individualistic memories and leave their past open to interpretation. In these texts, the authors have presented not only their own narratives, but also numerous other stories, which demonstrate the diversity of Harki experiences. For them, being a Harki, or the child of a Harki, is a very individual experience, full of complexities and contradictions. As Amar Assas observed in the post-face of one of Fatima Besnaci-Lancou’s works, the question of “choice,” which is so central to Harki memory and identity, can only find its answer in each individual story. As we know, there was no autonomous and organized system of Harkis.”¹⁰ Each story included certain aspects of the Harki narrative (threat of massacre, abandonment, time in internment camps,

¹⁰ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Treize Chibanis Harkis* (Tirésias, 2006), 86.

discrimination), but not everyone had or described all these experiences. Moreover, many Harkis, even within the same book of memoirs, had differing perspectives on their lives. Thus, instead of arguing that there was a single Harki past, the memoirs presented multiple interpretations of the past, and the overall effect was a very heterogeneous understanding of the Harkis.

In *Nos mères, Paroles blessées*, for example, Besnaci-Lancou presented the varied stories and experiences of thirteen wives of Harkis. These women expressed views that ranged from gratitude toward France to hatred of the country. One woman believed that she and her family were fully integrated in France and two others claimed they were happy to be in France because there was running water and their children had access to education. Another Harki wife avoided criticizing the way France treated the Harkis and their families because she was simply grateful to have been saved from the massacres. Some of the testimonies, however, presented more ambivalent attitudes toward the French and the FLN. One woman said she just wanted to be accepted in France; another admitted that although the French looked after her and her family in the camps, they did not care for them well. A third blamed both the French and the FLN equally for her misfortune. Finally, two of the women placed all of the blame for their tragic lives and their unhappiness on France.¹¹ By making public the diversity of Harki experiences, then, the memoir writers have challenged the existence of a single Harki collective experience. In response to the negative perception of Harkis held by many Euro-French and Franco-Algerians, they have refuted the idea that “Harki” means any one particular thing. They have generally presented the Harkis as victims, but they have also left room for other interpretations.

¹¹ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, *Nos mères, Paroles blessées: Une Autre Histoire De Harkis* (Léchelle: Emina soleil, 2006).

The websites, on the other hand, have actively promoted a far less nuanced version of the past. Webmasters have sought to educate Harkis and non-Harkis on the “right” version of history. Each site has provided a specific explanation of who the Harkis were and a single understanding of their history. This narrative served as the basis for their “apolitical and militant collectivity” and allowed little room for variation.¹² Their interpretation entailed a rigid, Manichean understanding of the past in which the Harkis were the heroes defending their land, values and families against the evil members of the FLN. As one post explained, “the reasons why our parents enlisted in the French army were, as most of us on this site know, the barbaric acts of the FLN toward our brave parents, who took up arms to avoid falling into the yoke of despotism.”¹³

Although Harkis and their descendants presented a range of views and interpretations on the discussion board forums, each site had a moderator who regulated what people posted. These moderators reserved the right to remove posts, usually made by visitors to the site, that they found offensive.¹⁴ One contentious interaction that was not removed took place between a person calling himself “de Gaulle” and the moderator Massi on *Harkis.info*. “De Gaulle” attempted to start a dialogue about General de Gaulle’s responsibility for the Harki massacres, arguing that it was not necessarily his fault that the FLN did not honor its promise to protect the Harkis as stipulated in the Evian Accords. Massi’s response was swift and harsh, declaring that “If you

¹² Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). « Harkis : la France ‘reconnaissante’ mais pas ‘responsable’ » Posted by Khader on October 28, 2005 in response to the article « B. STORA, les Harkis : la France ‘reconnaissante’ mais pas ‘responsable’ ».

¹³ Harkis.info, (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by harki62 on March 2, 2006 at 14:06, on the subject « Mohand HAMOUMOU »

¹⁴ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, “Forum” http://www.coalition-harkis.com/component/option,com_fireboard/Itemid,194/ (accessed April 15, 2008). *Coalition Nationale* provides a symbol “signifying that this forum is moderated: new messages are examined before they are published.”

wish to participate in this forum, then stop your paternalism and quit acting like we're morons.”¹⁵ “De Gaulle” retorted that he had hoped there would be more freedom of discussion and openness toward non-Harkis on *Harkis.info*,¹⁶ but another Harki son congratulated Massi for regulating the nature, substance, and tone of the site.¹⁷

Website administrators also regulated the views and memories that members of the site, predominantly Harki descendants, presented.¹⁸ When one Harki daughter, Nora, dissented from Massi's narrative about the reasons why the Harkis enlisted, Massi made it clear how he understood the relationship between individual experiences and Harki collective history. Nora wrote, “No, our fathers or grand-fathers did not fight out of love for France or contempt for Algeria, far from it! No, I don't believe it for a second!” on the *Harkis.info* site.¹⁹ Massi corrected her version of the past, replying, “You conflate all the harkis in reducing it to your particular case. But you are on a harki site and your History is ours.”²⁰ He expressed a fear that presenting contradictory interpretations threatened the integrity of the Harki memory and identity as a whole. Massi added, “You don't have the right to say, in taking the example of your father, that the Harkis did not fight out of love for France. You also don't have the right to speak in their name. Everyone knows the motivations of one another, whether it be for love of France, for

¹⁵ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). Posted by Massi on 11-10-2006 at 14:58 on the subject “Débat sur le FILM "HARKIS" et De Gaulle ».

¹⁶ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). Posted by deGaulle on 11-10-2006 at 16:55 on the subject “Débat sur le FILM "HARKIS" et De Gaulle ».

¹⁷ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). Posted by zalabia on 11-10-2006 at 17:36 on the subject “Débat sur le FILM "HARKIS" et De Gaulle ».

¹⁸ In order to become a member, you must register with the site. Visitors, however, can still post on the forum.

¹⁹ TITI, post in response to “[Résolu] - kerchouche Delila,” *Harkis.info*, 12 May 2006, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/viewtopic.php?topic=211&forum=5>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

²⁰ Massi, post on the subject “[Résolu] - kerchouche Delila,” *Harkis.info*, 16 May 2006, <http://www.harkis.info/portail/viewtopic.php?topic=211&forum=5>, (accessed March 12, 2008).

reasons of security, through necessity. We don't have the right to minimize their enlistments or their sacrifice."²¹ Thus, the image of the Harkis sacrificing themselves for France reigned supreme over any individual experience that might undermine that of the collective.

Website administrators controlled the discussions so that they did not challenge the collective Harki identity. When an anonymous participant on *Coalition Nationale* mentioned the role of the Berbers in the Harki past, the moderator Khader Moulfi strongly denounced the issue of the Harkis' racial origins as "off-topic and suspicious."²² Harkis came from diverse backgrounds and some Harki sons expressed pride in their Berber heritage on the websites. Yet Moulfi preferred to focus on the Harkis' shared history, rather a potential source of division. As he explained, he saw this site as "a place of information and militancy, in favor of the Harkis and their Families, and not at all a place for group therapies of any kind."²³ According to him, the Harkis were a unified identity group and the site was only available for discussion on their common issues. He wrote, "We won't let people take over our site who just want a forum (that is very popular among internet users) and who want to launch debates that have nothing to do with our profession of faith."²⁴ Furthermore, he warned the anonymous contributor, "don't try to claim freedom of expression because when someone insults my parents and me in the street, I would rather correct him than discuss with him, and it's the same thing on this site."²⁵ Thus, the forum was available for only a particular, limited discussion about the past.

²¹ Ibid, 15 May 2006.

²² Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008) "Mise au point !!!" Posted by Khader on 09-10-2007 in response to the article "L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! ».

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Internal Memory Conflicts: Contested Representation

Webmasters have objected to the texts published by Dalila Kerchouche and Fatima Besnaci-Lancou for a number of reasons. For one, they have found the individualistic quality of the memoirs problematic. Massi, for example, disapproved of the title of the film *Harkis*, which was based on one of Kerchouche's texts, arguing it was "pretentious" to use the name "Harkis" in the plural since it focused on the story of a single family. In an article entitled "Harkis or Harki?" he deplored the fact that the only feature film on the Harkis was "simply an extended version of Kerchouche's *Mon Père, ce Harki* and not the history of all the Harkis!"²⁶ Similarly, Khader Moufï on *Coalition Nationale* declared that if Besnaci-Lancou "had a conscience, she would stop usurping the name 'harkis'" for her association Harkis et Droits de l'Homme because it served her own personal interests, rather than those of the Harkis as a collective.²⁷

Harki sons have also taken issue with the content of the memoir writers' narratives, as I demonstrated in Chapter 4, and they have questioned the ability of women to represent the male-coded category of "Harki." Webmasters disapproved of the fact that the film *Harkis* was told from the perspective of a young woman, Leïla, and of how the Harki history was used as the background to a "coming of age" film. The film documented Leïla's teenage rebellion and depicted her acting "French" by smoking, flirting, and reading adolescent magazines, which Moufï found unsettling.²⁸ Massi also regarded her romantic interlude with a young Frenchman in the film as distasteful because he felt it has no place in the Harkis' serious history.²⁹

²⁶ Harkis.info, (accessed on September 18,2008) « Harkis ou Harki? » Posted by Massi on 17 octobre 2006.

²⁷ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on September 21, 2008) « Les Harkis Vs Les Marianne de la Diversité et le FLN !!! » posted by Khader Moufï on 03-11-2006.

²⁸ Ibid.

Moreover, Harki sons posting on websites found it problematic that throughout the film, Leïla continually challenged her father's authority. She disobeyed him by going behind his back to confront the head of the camp, having a romantic relationship with a Frenchman, and eventually running away. Leïla also declared that her father was a traitor during the war for supporting France. Moulfi wrote, "can you imagine **that the daughter of a harki would dare shame her father by misbehaving** in front of the whole camp...and by denouncing him to her own mother **as a coward and a traitor?**"³⁰ Massi pointed out the hypocrisy he saw in the fact that Leïla treated her father "like a coward and a traitor between two cigarettes and a flirt."³¹

Interestingly, this conflict was not centered on religion. When denouncing Leïla's adolescent behavior in *Harkis*, the Harki sons did not describe her as betraying the Muslim faith. They did not criticize the fact that unlike her mother, she did not wear a hijab in the film. In general, neither the memoir writers nor the Harkis writing on the websites evoked religious sentiment as part of their identity as Harkis. This may reflect either their successful integration into the French model of secular republicanism, or their desire not to alienate the rest of Euro-French society, which adheres to this model.

The main reason why the webmasters have objected to the works of the memoir writers, however, is that they have realized that these women have greater influence outside the community. The websites have constituted an important voice among self-identified Harkis, but Kerchouche and Besnaci-Lancou, through their memoirs with major publishers and reviews in

²⁹ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). Posted by Massi on 12-10-2006 on the subject "Débat sur le FILM "HARKIS" et De Gaulle ».

³⁰ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on September 21, 2008) « Les Harkis Vs Les Marianne de la Diversité et le FLN !!! » posted by Khader Moulfi on 03-11-2006. Original emphasis

³¹ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). Posted by Massi on 12-10-2006 on the subject "Débat sur le FILM "HARKIS" et De Gaulle ».

the national press and their feature film, have remained far more influential. Mouffi wrote, “I have nothing personal against Dalila KERCHOUCHE, but I argue that she brings disgrace to the community of harkis and their families by her positions and her unorthodox life because the media has the tendency to conflate her history with ours.”³² Mouffi also deplored the fact that people read Kerchouche but not “our writings here or on harkis.info or harkis.org to know what we think.” Massi expressed frustration that “our associations do not have any say in what is written on the harkis.”³³ According to him, the media only gives voice to Harkis who “have atoned for their ‘faults’” and ambivalent Harkis who are not proud of themselves like “real Harkis.”³⁴ Indeed, they suggested that the female memoir writers have been accepted as representatives of the Harki community because they gave in to the demands and expectations of Algerian immigrants and the rest of French society. Mouffi framed the dynamic as “The Harkis and their Families vs. the Mariannes of Diversity and the FLN !”³⁵ Thus, their critiques of the memoir writers have resulted from the frustration that their own voices are marginalized in the process of collective memory formation.

This frustration is reflected in how vehemently participants on the websites have denounced the Harki daughters’ texts and contested the right of these women to represent the Harki community. In reference to Kerchouche’s memoir, *Mon Père, Ce Harki*, one participant on *Harkis.info* wrote, “I see that you have read this shameful book, so...we the HARKIS can sleep

³² Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on February 18, 2008). Posted by Khader on October 17, 2006, on the subject « Le film "Harkis" avec Smaïn diffusé sur France 2 ».

³³ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). Posted by Massi on 14-04-2006 on the subject “Débat sur le FILM "HARKIS" et De Gaulle ».

³⁴ Harkis.info, (accessed on September 18,2008) « Harkis ou Harki? » Posted by Massi on 17 octobre 2006.

³⁵ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on September 21, 2008) « Les Harkis Vs Les Marianne de la Diversité et le FLN !!! » posted by Khader Mouffi on 03-11-2006.

soundly knowing we are defended by this kind of people.”³⁶ A contributor to *Coalition Nationale* described “the worthlessness of (Kerchouche’s) representation among the harki and pieds-noirs”³⁷ and Mouffi, the moderator of the site, expressed similar distaste for Kerchouche’s books, calling them “anti-harkis.”³⁸ The websites contained equally vehement critiques of Besnaci-Lancou’s works. Mouffi claimed that Besnaci-Lancou hates the Harkis and accused her of carrying out an anti-Harki crusade.³⁹ In response to Besnaci-Lancou’s efforts to reconcile with immigrants of North African origin, Mouffi declared that they should revoke her status as the daughter of a Harki “to make her a ‘beurette’⁴⁰ she loves them so much!!!”⁴¹

Webmasters and other participants have accused the memoir writers of “using” the Harki history for their own personal interests, including money and fame. On *Harkis.info*, Massi wrote that contrary to the memoir writers, “We don’t have anything to sell. No novels, no conferences, no phony films. Nothing to sell, anyway, to make dough off the 150,000 Harkis slaughtered.”⁴² On the *Coalition Nationale* site, Mouffi declared that Kerchouche “does not care about the struggle of harkis and their families because her only goal is to get publicity to sell even more

³⁶ Harkis.info. (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by Anonyme on April 5, 2006 at 15:26, on the subject « [Résolu] - kerchouche Delila ».

³⁷ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on February 18, 2008). Posted by cleopatre on January 11, 2007, on the subject “forum libertyvox, des fachos pas rigolos”.

³⁸ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on February 18, 2008). Posted by Khader on October 17, 2006, on the subject « Le film "Harkis" avec Smaïn diffusé sur France 2 ».

³⁹ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on September 21, 2008) « Les Harkis Vs Les Marianne de la Diversité et le FLN !!! » posted by Khader Mouffi on 03-11-2006.

⁴⁰ Beurette is a name for women who are second-generation French of North African origin.

⁴¹ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « L’instrumentalisation de la cause harkie », Posted by Khader on 02-12-2006 in response to the article « Procès FRECHE, le Seigneur de Septimanie "porté disparu" !!! ».

⁴² Harkis.info, (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by Massi on November 19, 2006 at 17:51, on the subject « colloque de Boussad Hazni à Paris ».

copies of her bad book!!!”⁴³ He called Kerchouche and Besnaci-Lancou “unscrupulous social climbers” who took advantage of the “harki drama” to benefit personally.⁴⁴ Finally, he summed up his critique of the memoir authors by saying that the problem with these “megalomaniac characters (Dalila KERCHOUCHE, Fatima BESNACI-LANCOU, ...)” is that they “will do anything to get people talking about them and to satisfy their ego.”⁴⁵

Some participants on the websites held a more positive view of the *Harkis* film and Kerchouche’s efforts to make any version of the Harki history known in France. One woman posting on *Harkis.info* responded to *Harkis* by declaring, “it has the advantage of being the only film to deal with our history; what is more, it was shown in primetime.”⁴⁶ She also explained that the film participated in “the transmission of our history” as it offered a way for her nine-year-old son to learn about his family’s past, and she was moved when it made him cry.⁴⁷ Another woman posting on the site said that the film provided an occasion for her father “to break his silence of forty years” and finally speak about his experiences, and that he recognized himself in the character of Saïd Benamar, Leïla’s father.⁴⁸

The website moderators responded to these observations by explaining that poor representation is not necessarily better than a lack of representation. As Massi wrote, “Certain

⁴³ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed February 18, 2008). Posted by Khader on October 17, 2006, on the subject « Le film "Harkis" avec Smaïn diffusé sur France 2 ».

⁴⁴ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « KERCHOUCHE et FBL » Posted by Khader on 14-10-2006 in response to the article « Amères Patries" sur France 5, le service public versus les harkis ? ».

⁴⁵ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed February 18, 2008). Posted by Khader on October 23, 2006, on the subject « L'émission "ESPRITS LIBRES " du 21/10/2006 ».

⁴⁶ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). Posted by Anonyme on 10-10-2006 on the subject “Débat sur le FILM "HARKIS" et De Gaulle ».

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). Posted by Anonyme (zohra) on 11-10-2006 « Débat chez moi autour du Film Harkis ».

people, just happy to hear the word 'Harkis' on TV, think that it's better than nothing. I would answer that 'better than nothing' isn't much."⁴⁹ This film portrayed the Harkis as "melodramatic" and defined them as victims of suffering in these internment camps. Massi proclaimed, "No, the Harkis are worth more than that."⁵⁰ He argued that the image of the Harkis that the French would retain from this film was potentially more damaging than if there had been no film at all.⁵¹ One Harki son declared that "We must no longer give the right to speak to this type of person who discredits us more than they bring anything positive to our cause."⁵² Another Harki son agreed, lamenting that he was "impatiently waiting for another person who will really defend the Harki cause and participate in writing the real Harki drama."⁵³

Challenging the Politics of Collective Memory in France

The Harkis writing on websites have been concerned not only with correcting the claims made by members of their own community about the Harki past, but also with policing interpretations of this past produced by non-Harkis. Indeed, the reason representation is so important and contested is that Harkis writing on the websites have perceived they are engaging in a battle with the FLN over the interpretation of Harkis in French collective memory. When a Harki granddaughter questioned the logic of denouncing the work of Harki daughter memoir

⁴⁹ Harkis.info, (accessed on September 18,2008) « Harkis ou Harki? » Posted by Massi on 17 octobre 2006.

⁵⁰ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). Posted by Massi on 12-10-2006 on the subject "Débat sur le FILM "HARKIS" et De Gaulle ».

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed February 18, 2008). Posted by cleopatre on October 23, 2006, on the subject « L'émission "ESPRITS LIBRES " du 21/10/2006 ».

⁵³ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), "... " Posted by azur on 15-10-2006 in response to the article « Amères Patries" sur France 5, le service public versus les harkis ? ».

writers on *Coalition Nationale*,⁵⁴ her post elicited a very hostile and defensive response from the moderator, Khader Moulfi. He wrote, “I want to remind you that we are [...] at the heart of a ‘very arduous combat’ in which our detractors are ready to do anything to stifle the active militant movements.”⁵⁵ As another Harki son explained, if the Harkis are not vigilant, and do not denounce anyone whose interpretations are against “the general interest,” they “will lose everything.”⁵⁶

In framing their memory work this way, it appears that the webmasters have internalized the competitive memory model, of which the “memory wars” paradigm is a product. Like the scholars who introduced this paradigm, Harki sons have deplored the threat that memory conflicts pose for national unity. Moulfi explained that this “war of memories” was also a war of propagandas and nationalisms, initiated by foreign and bi-national immigrants.⁵⁷ He argued that in trying to influence how history is written, these “bi-national immigrants,” namely Franco-Algerians, have been undermining the unity of the Republic. Moulfi proclaimed that “we’re on the brink of the disintegration of the republic” and feared that “soon history will be revised by polls and ‘pressure lobbies’ who make demands.”⁵⁸ For Moulfi, this is evidenced by the fact that “there is a Franco-Algerian intelligentsia, a ‘bourgeoisie’ who is placed, thanks to its important networks, in our ministries, our administrations, our places of influence, which contributes to the

⁵⁴ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), “Désolation.” Posted by Guem on 29-10-2007 in response to the article “Supercherie racoleuse sur France 2, Les Harkis n'étaient qu'un !!! »,

⁵⁵ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), “Débat stérile voire puéril” Posted by Khader on 09-11-2007 in response to the article “Supercherie racoleuse sur France 2, Les Harkis n'étaient qu'un !!! ».

⁵⁶ Harkis.info, (accessed on September 18,2008) « De faux Harkis contre les Harkis » Posted by Abdelkader Hamiche on February 7, 2006.

⁵⁷ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « Guerre des mémoires ou de propagande ? » Posted by Khader on 05-10-2007 in response to the article « L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! »

⁵⁸ Ibid. He argued this already happens in the United States.

FLNisation of attitudes in our own country!!!”⁵⁹ The website administrators have presented their interpretation of the Harki past as the true history, not the memory of a special interest group, and they have regretted the existence of this so-called “war.”

This “war of memories” exists, according to the website administrators, because the French state and national education system have not done their job in establishing an official memory of the Algerian War. Since, “excluded memories don’t wait for historians to make them heard,” the survivors and descendants of both sides have been forced to mobilize their own versions of history.⁶⁰ Yet Harkis sons writing on the websites have recognized that scholars act as important sources of authority about the colonial past. They have therefore sought recognition of their history by scholars who could in turn represent this history in public debates. However, they are suspicious of non-Harki scholars who might be influenced by the Franco-Algerian lobbyists. As one Harki son wrote, “it is scandalous that non-harkis are in charge of harkis. Our history is our own and no one has the right to modify it.”⁶¹ Therefore, they have most fully embraced the scholarly works of second-generation Harkis.

One such scholar is Mohand Hamoumou, the son of a Harki, a doctor of sociology, founder of the association “AJIR pour les Harkis,” and the author of numerous books and articles on the Harkis. His monograph based off his doctoral dissertation, *Et Ils Sont Devenus Harkis* (1993), was one of the first important scholarly works on the Harkis. The website *Harkis.info* has

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), “...” Posted by yannick on 04-10-2007 in response to the article “L’Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! ».

⁶¹ Harkis.info, (accessed March 12, 2008). Posted by zalabia on October 4, 2006 at 12:51, on the subject « Exposition de 13 chibanis ».

called him “a member of the elite of the Harki community”⁶² and on *Coalition Nationale* he was referred to as one of the Harkis’ “well-known intellectuals.”⁶³ Yet Hamoumou’s research has not always confirmed the website administrators’ interpretations with the Harki past. For example, his treatment of the question of choice more closely resembled the perspective of the memoir writers, since he has described a diversity of experiences and motivations. He wrote, “The ‘pressures’ of the French army and the injustices committed by the FLN were the major ‘causes’ ...of the [Harkis’] enlistment.” Other “motivating factors” in their decision to enlist included “the economic situation, the sense of honor in rivalries between clans, and even membership in a confraternity.”⁶⁴ Harkis on the websites, however, have not denounced Hamoumou or his work as they did that of the memoir writers. This indicates that they have been willing to make concessions for a scholarly narrative, since they have considered it essential for their community to have that kind of representation.

Perhaps precisely because the Harki sons have made these concessions, they have been especially offended when they thought Hamoumou was being discriminated against as a member of their community and was not being perceived as an objective historian. Moulfi was outraged when Hamoumou was excluded from an important colloquium on Franco-Algerian history in Lyon, supposedly because he is too “engaged” in the Harki community. He posted a letter from Hamoumou to the journal *Le Progrès de Lyon* accusing the conference organizers of not allowing him to participate because they did not want him to mention the Harki massacres and

⁶² Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). “La Loi du 23 Février 2005 : La gestion "coloniale" des Harkis par la presse » by Khader Hamiche, Posted on January, 6 2006 by Actus.

⁶³ Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008) « Colloque de Lyon : Mohand HAMOUMOU frappé de censure !!! » Posted by Khader Moulfi on 22-06-2006.

⁶⁴ Mohand Hamoumou, *Et Ils Sont Devenus Harkis* (Fayard, 1993), 189.

were afraid of having a real debate.⁶⁵ Hamoumou responded to their accusation that he was too “engaged” in his subject matter by arguing in favor of objective, non-ideological research and by citing the many scholars who praise the scientific quality of his work.⁶⁶ Harkis writing on the websites were frustrated because they believed that despite his status as a scholar, Hamoumou’s influence in the public debate about the role of the Harkis in the Algerian War was being diminished because he was a member of the Harki community.

Since they have recognized the significance of scholars in debates about the colonial past, the Harki children writing on the websites have contested the work of historians that they perceived as having an ideological bias towards the FLN. The main focus of their critique has been Benjamin Stora, arguably the best-known historian of the Algerian War. They repeatedly denounced him as “anti-harki” and called him “our official FLN historian.”⁶⁷ Their first piece of evidence for this claim was Stora’s claim in an article on *afrik.com*⁶⁸ that the Harkis “chose France and they lost.”⁶⁹ One Harki son posting on *Harkis.info* saw this article as hinting at a justification of the Harki massacres.⁷⁰ Moulfi agreed, explaining that Stora’s statement suggested that by making the choice to fight for France, the Harkis deserved the consequences, namely their “genocide” and their current marginalized place in metropolitan France. Moulfi further extrapolated from Stora’s comment to argue that by saying the Harkis chose their camp, he tried

⁶⁵ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008) « Colloque de Lyon : Mohand HAMOUMOU frappé de censure !!! » Posted by Khader Moulfi on 22-06-2006.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « SARKOZY sait-il que le principal crime colonial fut la décolonisation ? » Posted by Khader Moulfi on 30-07-2007.

⁶⁸ This forum is significant because the webmasters believed he was addressing himself to the Algerian population.

⁶⁹ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). « B. STORA, les Harkis : la France ‘reconnaissante’ mais pas ‘responsable’ » Posted by Actus on November 8, 2004.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

to “justify the unjustifiable,” suggesting “the harki genocide was (almost) ‘normal’,” and implying “that they deserved the massacre.”⁷¹ In response to Stora’s statement, Moulfi declared that his interpretation is a falsification of history and a misrepresentation of the chronological context.⁷² According to the websites’ narrative of the independence struggle, “When the harkis enlisted, Algeria was French and decided to stay that way, so harkis are neither traitors nor vulgar “mercenaries” but Frenchmen enlisted in the national army.”⁷³ Thus, “the only [choices] in the conflict were France on one side (including Algeria) and the FLN on the other (which had no legitimacy among the Algerian people and acted out of terror and forced enlistment).”⁷⁴ Therefore, for Harki sons posting on the websites, the choice of France was clearly the right one, and deserved to be rewarded through official recognition, not through massacres and injustices, as they claim Stora suggested. Webmasters also contested Stora’s use of the term “Algerian War” to describe what they saw as the “pacification efforts” in Algeria.⁷⁵ Even though Moulfi occasionally slipped into using this term himself, he proclaimed it to be a “revisionist and negationist term,” “a purely political and ideological intervention” whose use was unbecoming for an objective historian.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). « Benjamin STORA nous remet cela dans Le Monde !!! » Posted by Khader Moulfi on November 28, 2005.

⁷² Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). « Harkis : la France ‘reconnaissante’ mais pas ‘responsable’ » Posted by Khader Moulfi on October 28, 2005 in response to the article « B. STORA, les Harkis : la France ‘reconnaissante’ mais pas ‘responsable’ ».

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ The conflict was officially considered an “operation to maintain order” until it was classified as a war until 1999.

⁷⁶ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « STORA vers la rédemption ? » Posted by Khader on 04-10-2007 in response to the article « L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! ».

Second-generation Harki webmasters denounced Stora's lack of objectivity and refuted his version of history on their websites. In an article posted on *Harkis.info*, Mouffi claimed that "his sources are too unilateral to tell the absolute and definitive 'truth' on history."⁷⁷ He called on Stora to renounce his role as an objective historian and to take his place openly as a "quasi-militant pro-FLN et anti-harkis" so as not to mislead the French public. He also encouraged other Harki associations to discredit Stora and to try to counter some of his influence.⁷⁸

These webmasters believed that they could not only engage with, but also alter, the interpretations of Stora and other historians through their sites. One participant on *Coalition Nationale* posted that he thought he recognized some of Mouffi's ideas in Stora's work, when, "contrary to his previous writings," Stora rejected any comparison between the Vietnam War and the Algerian War.⁷⁹ Mouffi responded that he was very happy to see Stora was "inspired" by his analysis.⁸⁰ Moreover, Mouffi conveyed optimism about the his website's influence when he observed that "since the creation of the Coalition Nationale des Harkis et des Associations de Harkis (including the contribution of your humble narrator!), on the Net and on 'the ground', things seem to be evolving in the right direction, because a number of 'ideologist historians' begin, little by little, to modify their antiquated, dubious positions."⁸¹ He concluded by reminding the association Harkis that one must always remain "vigilant and reactive."⁸²

⁷⁷ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). « Benjamin STORA nous remet cela dans Le Monde !!! » Posted by Khader Mouffi on November 28, 2005. <http://www.harkis.info/portail/article.php?sid=1092186>.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), "Stora parle comme Mouffi ?" Posted by Paul on 04-10-2007 in response to the article « L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! ».

⁸⁰ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « STORA vers la rédemption ?" Posted by Khader on 04-10-2007 in response to the article « L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! ».

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

One explanation for Moufî's perception that he was participating in a dialogue with Stora lies in a minor media battle that the websites publicized. Two left-leaning newspapers wrote articles reacting to Moufî's critiques of Stora's work. *La Tribune*, which Moufî described as "one of the numerous FLN newspapers," wrote an article saying that Stora was the target of the Harkis.⁸³ Moufî responded to this with an article entitled, "When the FLN comes to the rescue of Benjamin STORA!"⁸⁴ The newspaper *L'Humanité* also wrote an article against Moufî in response to his comments on Stora, rejecting Moufî's criticisms and referring to him as a "sad character."⁸⁵ Massi and the participants on *Harkis.info* came to Moufî's defense, re-posting his articles, declaring their support for his work, and encouraging Harki associations to write to the newspapers in protest. Although the articles outraged Moufî and other Harkis on the websites, they also made it clear that people outside their community were reading his posts.

Webmasters and other Harki children posting on their sites have also challenged what they see as pro-FLN narratives expressed through films. These cultural carriers are influential contributors to French collective memory of the Algerian War and second-generation Harkis have remained aware of their significance. Khader Moufî and Boussad Azni, the Harki son who led a case against France for crimes against humanity, both scornfully observed that one had to make a film in order to be heard.⁸⁶ The years 2006 and 2007 saw an influx of films dealing with

⁸³ Harkis.info, (accessed October 17, 2008). « Propagande : Quand le FLN vient à la rescousse de Benjamin STORA ! » Posted by Khader Moufî on December 4, 2005. <http://www.harkis.info/portail/article.php?sid=1092218>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Harkis.info, (accessed October 17, 2008). « L'Humanité, le torchon brûle avec les Harkis... » Posted by Massi on December 6, 2005. <http://www.harkis.info/portail/article.php?sid=1092222>.

⁸⁶ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « Les Indigènes sont venus coloniser la journée des Harkis !!! » Posted by Khader Moufî on September 29, 2006. Harkis.info (accessed October 17, 2008). « La journée d'hommage... des indigènes ! » Posted by Massi on September 28, 2006. <http://www.harkis.info/portail/article.php?sid=10924076>.

the subject of the Algerian War.⁸⁷ The most popular of the six films to come out in this two-year span was the film *Indigènes* (in English, *Days of Glory*), about soldiers of North African origin who fought for the French during World War II.⁸⁸ This film was nominated for several awards and created a stir in France as it raised awareness of the sacrifices of these soldiers who had never received their pensions. It caught the attention of President Jacques Chirac, who was reportedly very moved by the film and responded by ordering that full pensions be paid to these soldiers.

Although the attention and support given to French soldiers of North African origin would seem to bode well for the “Harki cause,” Harki sons writing on the websites were suspicious of the film from the start and ended up denouncing it as a “Trojan Horse of the FLN.”⁸⁹ Moufî admitted that he believed it was both good and necessary to have a film that rehabilitated the history of soldiers in World War II who came from the former colonies, and noted that his father was one of these soldiers.⁹⁰ Moreover, a film that shed light on this period in French history could benefit the Harkis because their participation in earlier wars (such as World War II and Indochina) demonstrated their patriotism. And yet, Moufî denounced the film before he had even seen it. The problem, he explained, was that this film was made by a French-Algerian director, had bi-national actors, Algerian and Moroccan silent partners, and was the

⁸⁷ 2006: *Harkis, Indigènes, Mon colonel, La Trahison*, 2007: *L'Ennemi intime, Cartouches gauloises*

⁸⁸ *Indigènes* sold over 3 million tickets at the box office, making it the 9th most successful film in France in 2006. Stora, *La Guerre des Mémoires*, 55.

⁸⁹ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on February 18, 2008). Posted by Khader Moufî 2006/05/27 in response to the subject “Indigènes.”

⁹⁰ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « Les Indigènes sont venus coloniser la journée des Harkis !!! » Posted by Khader Moufî on 29-09-2006.

Algerian (aka FLN) submission at the Cannes Film Festival.⁹¹ Therefore, he claimed he did not have to watch it to know that the film would be a vehicle for the “misinformation and propaganda” of the FLN.⁹²

The particular issue that Mouffi perceived in this film was that “certain ‘sad revisionist and negationist’ (anti-harkis racists)” were trying to distinguish, arbitrarily, between supposed “just wars” (such as World War II) and the “pacification efforts” in Algeria between 1954 and 1962 against the FLN.⁹³ He used the terms “revisionist” and “negationist,” which have typically been ascribed to Holocaust deniers, to emphasize the injustice of this interpretation. Massi noted that the makers of *Indigènes* fabricated a myth, which was then accepted and perpetuated by the media, that Algerians spontaneously joined the army to liberate the Mother Country (France) from Nazism.⁹⁴ Yet, he explained, people still did not believe that the Harkis had joined the army to liberate the Mother Country from the threat of the FLN. When he overheard spectators contrasting the *indigènes* in WWII and Harkis in the “Algerian civil war,” he responded by saying, “What are these people suggesting? That Algeria became independent in 1954? That the *indigènes* are patriots for having defended France from the Nazis and that the Harkis are traitors for having chosen the side of French Nazis?”⁹⁵ He argued that ultimately this film proclaimed the bravery of the FLN, not of the soldiers who fought loyally for France. As one participant on

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed on February 18, 2008). Posted by Khader Mouffi 2006/05/27 in response to the subject “Indigènes.”

⁹⁴ Harkis.info (accessed October 17, 2008). « La journée d'hommage... des indigènes ! » Posted by Massi on September 28, 2006. <http://www.harkis.info/portail/article.php?sid=10924076>.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Harkis.info phrased it, the film was “a new ‘thumbing your nose’ at the Harki community by the little immigrants from the *banlieues*.”⁹⁶

The Harki sons posting on the websites also saw this film as an insult because it was released on the “National Day of Homage to the Harkis,” September 25, 2006. When President Chirac and his Defense Minister evoked *Indigènes* during their speeches that day, Moufî perceived that they had “snubbed” the Harkis by excluding them from their own commemorative ceremony.⁹⁷ He declared that it was “shocking and indecent” that this date had been chosen and announced that the *indigènes* had “colonized” the Harkis’ day.⁹⁸ Moufî was also concerned that French audiences would end up conflating the Harkis and the *indigènes*, thereby “creating more trouble and confusion in public opinion.”⁹⁹ His main contention, then, was that Chirac and his government did not make a distinction between the Harkis, who chose to fight for France, and the *indigènes*, who were forced to. Moufî proclaimed that by letting their “Day of Homage” be hijacked by *Indigènes*, the French state had once again betrayed the Harkis. Moufî argued that Chirac’s actions proved “the French State doesn’t care about the harkis, even during their own celebration, and is more concerned with serving “other interests.”¹⁰⁰ In response to this affront, Moufî called for the Harkis to boycott the 2006 commemoration, which had become “a day of national hypocrisy against the harkis.”¹⁰¹ Finally, he urged the Harki “collective” to remain

⁹⁶ Harkis.info, (accessed September 21, 2008). Posted by jk8826 on 26-05-2006 on the subject "Indigènes".

⁹⁷ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « Les Indigènes sont venus coloniser la journée des Harkis !!! » Posted by Khader Moufî on 29-09-2006.

⁹⁸ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « L'OVNI DU MOIS : "Indigènes" un film binational et caméléon !!! » Posted by Khader Moufî on 27-01-2007.

⁹⁹ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « Les Indigènes sont venus coloniser la journée des Harkis !!! » Posted by Khader Moufî on 29-09-2006.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

vigilant in the “competition of memories and prejudices” taking place and to not “just accept passively what we are given.”¹⁰²

The following year, these Harkis were offended again when the feature film *L'Ennemi Intime* was released in theaters during the same week as the “National Day of Homage to the Harkis.”¹⁰³ This film was a dramatic account of the psychological effects of the Algerian War on French soldiers and was implicitly critical of French military actions, including those of the Harkis, during the war. One Harki son posting on *Coalition Nationale* declared that *L'Ennemi Intime* had the “Manichaeism of an American film.” He deplored the fact that the two Harkis in the film were presented as contemptible underlings, while the FLN fighters were portrayed as heroic and dignified.¹⁰⁴ One of the Harkis in the film, he explained, was a former member of the FLN “who doesn’t hesitate to put his family in danger in order to get information.”¹⁰⁵ The other Harki in the film was a veteran of the battle of Monte Cassino “who risks his life for his superiors but who is treated in return as less than nothing... We even see him kill a prisoner by shooting him in the back.”¹⁰⁶ In contrast to these Harkis, the film depicted “dignified FLN combatants” who prayed before being killed by the French and one who lectured a Harki saying,

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Six years later, calls to boycott the ceremony became widespread in response to the state’s repeated failure to officially recognize France’s role in the Harki massacres.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ *L'Ennemi Intime* was released in theaters on October 3, 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed October 16, 2008), « ennemi intime », Posted by salim on 31-03-2008 in response to the article “L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! ».

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

“you are no longer an Algerian, you will never be French.”¹⁰⁷ Harkis children writing on the websites condemned what they saw as the biased portrayal of Harkis in the film.

Khader Moulfi denounced this film as well before seeing it, this time because the screenplay was written by Patrick Rotman, whom he described as pro-FLN. He based this accusation on the fact that Rotman had also written the screenplay for the film *Nuit Noire* about the massacre of Algerians in Paris on October 17, 1961, which is an event of great historical significance for Algerians and immigrants of Algerian origin. Moreover, since Rotman is a historian and *L'Ennemi Intime* was based on a monograph and documentary that Rotman had produced, Moulfi endeavored to contest the film's historical and journalistic value. He denounced Rotman's research methods, proclaiming that “Interviewing the draftees does not constitute the ‘truth’ if the ‘harnessing of individual memories’ is not supported by authentic and proven facts. That's where these very dangerous derivatives begin, these famous ‘memories’ because they only call on ideologies, misgivings, and ‘subjective slices of life.’”¹⁰⁸

Moulfi was especially concerned with contesting the film's historical objectivity when he saw that an article in *Le Figaro*, a popular right-leaning newspaper, declared that the film has “the moderation and impartiality of a well-researched documentary.”¹⁰⁹ He feared the film's interpretation of Harki participation in the Algerian War would influence “the very vulnerable targeted public” who are uninformed of the Harki history and who will mistake the film as

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! » Posted by Khader Moulfi on 02-10-2007 at 16:56.

¹⁰⁹ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed October 16, 2008), « le Figaro gaulliste s'y met aussi ! », Posted by Khader on 04-10-2007 in response to the article « L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! ».

historical.¹¹⁰ He condemned *L'Ennemi Intime* as a “total misjudgment of the ‘History of France’” and compared it to “a toxic product,” saying that if it were “used improperly” and seen as historical instead of entertaining fiction, then it could be dangerous. Finally, he challenged Rotman and the director of the film to a debate about the real, factual history of Harki participation in the Algerian War.¹¹¹

These Harki sons received assistance in their protests against this film from French military officers. General François Meyer, who wrote a book honoring the Harkis and who rescued a number of Harkis at the end of the war, posted a response to Mouffi’s article on *L'Ennemi Intime* agreeing that the film falsified history. Meyer wrote, “It’s a militant untruth, disguised as a concern for morality, a fiction passionately hostile and unjust for French troops.”¹¹² Furthermore, the Circle for the Defense of the Combatants in French North Africa (CDCAFN)¹¹³ wrote a letter to Rotman detailing their objections to the film, which Mouffi posted on *Coalition Nationale*. The letter said that the presidents of these associations decided unanimously that the film was “oriented preferentially against the French army and is manifestly harmful to France for the way it incites racial hate.”¹¹⁴ They explained that showing scenes of the French army massacring a village, and other acts of military misconduct, caused conflicts between the

¹¹⁰ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed October 16, 2008), « Voir le film n'est pas grave en soi ! » Posted by Khader on 05-10-2007 in response to the article « L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! »

¹¹¹ Coalition Nationale des Harkis (accessed September 21, 2008), « L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! » Posted by Khader Mouffi on 02-10-2007 at 16:56.

¹¹² Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed October 16, 2008), « Réactions outrées du Général MEYER » Posted by Polo on 23-11-2007 in response to the article “L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! ».

¹¹³ The CERCLE POUR LA DEFENSE DES COMBATTANTS D'AFRIQUE FRANÇAISE DU NORD includes 18 veterans associations.

¹¹⁴ Coalition Nationale des Harkis, (accessed October 16, 2008), « Lettre ouverte du Général GILLIS à ROTMA » Posted by Polo on 23-11-2007 in response to the article “L'Ennemi Intime : un film de propagande à la sous-Rambo !!! ».

grandchildren of both sides living together in France. They demanded specific examples of such massacres if Rotman wished to claim this film was based on historical truth.

These former officers also defended the Harkis in particular, claiming that they were unfairly portrayed in a negative light. They declared that having actually fought alongside the Harkis, they could say definitively that they “were good soldiers, good Frenchmen incapable of committing these crimes that you attribute to them in the film.”¹¹⁵ Moreover, they explained that the Harkis “wouldn’t have just accepted killing women and children; they weren’t stupid or cowardly and you insult them by treating their wartime behavior that way.”¹¹⁶ Thus, the military officers acted as the Harkis’ protective allies in response to their unflattering depiction in *L’Ennemi Intime*.

Conclusion

The case of the Harkis reveals that collective memory is also not as cohesive as the concept might imply, and demonstrates the considerable potential for contestation inherent in Rousso’s carriers of memory. Communities transmit memories in a variety of ways, each of which can express not only different, but also conflicting memories. Websites constitute a particular kind of collective memory carrier, theoretically open to all who seek to make a post, unlike most traditional vectors. Enabling more members of the community to participate in the construction of a collective memory may naturally lead to more disagreements over how to construct this memory. At the same time, websites also offer historians the opportunity to observe the continuous policing of memory that can only be inferred in other instances. These sites make visible the intra-communal conflicts and reveal the full extent of contestation over representation.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Harki websites also allow us to consider the role of Internet in the dominance of the competitive memory model in France. Website administrators consciously engage in what they see as “battles” over how to construct a collective memory of the Algerian War in France. The ways in which the “memory wars” metaphor has been co-opted by the Harkis on websites reminds us of the close, reciprocal relationship between historians of memory and the communities they study. In the current context, the discourse of memory circulates in and out of academic and popular settings, acquiring new meaning in different contexts. Thus, what began as a heuristic device has become for these Harkis a framework through which they interpret their relationship to the rest of society. Although the antagonism began long before scholars gave it a name, it is arguably perpetuated through the language of “memory wars.”

CHAPTER 6: MAKING SENSE OF THE PIED-NOIR PAST: PIED-NOIR HISTORY, COLLECTIVE MEMORY, AND HISTORIOGRAPHY, 1962-2013

In the months following Algerian independence, French officials were caught off guard by the waves of French Algerians arriving in metropolitan France. Initially expecting four hundred thousand over four years, the state was overwhelmed by the challenges of housing and supporting the nearly one million former settlers who appeared in the hexagon in just three months.¹ Many leaders and a large portion of the French population were also dismayed to find that so many French Algerians, whom they had come to consider as foreign, different, and dangerous during the Algerian War, were “returning” to France. The government expressed the hope that this migration was temporary; after their “vacations” in the metropole, French Algerians would go back to their now independent homeland, where they belonged.²

The French Algerians cherished a similar desire. For a number of reasons, including concerns for their security, the destruction of their livelihood, and a wish to rejoin family members, these settlers had traveled en masse to mainland France in the summer of 1962. Yet many believed that once the situation calmed in Algeria, they would be able to go back to their beloved land. Most French Algerians had never been to the hexagon, half had descended from non-French Europeans, and the conditions of their reception made them feel rejected and

¹ Claire Eldridge, “Blurring the Boundaries between Perpetrators and Victims: Pied-Noir Memories and the Harki Community,” *Memory Studies* 3, no. 2 (2010): 123–36, 124.

² Todd Shepard, “Pieds-Noirs, Bêtes Noires: Anti-’European of Algeria’ Racism and the Close of the French Empire,” in *Algeria & France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, ed. Patricia Lorcin (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 150–63, 157.

betrayed by France.³ Within a few years, however, it became clear to the French Algerians, the state, and the rest of French society that these former settlers had permanently “returned.”

In this chapter, I analyze how the Pieds-Noirs, as the French Algerians came to be known following their migration to France, have understood their place in the French nation and its history since 1962. I explore the changing ways in which historians, the French state, participants in the Algerian War, and the Pieds-Noirs themselves have ascribed meaning to the Pied-Noir past. All have been informed by evolving understandings of the colonial project in France. As France’s empire has “turned from a point of pride to a source of shame,” Pieds-Noirs have served as unconformable reminders of France’s imperial past.⁴

I also examine how the Pieds-Noirs have constructed their collective identity in relation to other groups in French society. Eric Savarèse, a prominent scholar of the Pieds-Noirs, has observed, “In colonial Algeria, perhaps more than anywhere else, issues of naming are issues of power.”⁵ Pied-Noir efforts to define themselves with regard to the Harkis, Algerian Jews, Algerian Muslims, and metropolitan French reveal the continuing significance of the politics of naming in postcolonial France. I argue that rather than diminishing their cultural and historical differences, as other populations from former colonies have done, the Pieds-Noirs have used memory practices and technologies to express their own particular collective memories and thus to resist complete integration in France.

³ Approximately 50% of the European settlers in Algeria migrated from France. The rest came from Malta, Italy, and Spain, but automatically received French citizenship in 1889. By 1954, when the Algerian War began, 79% of French Algerians had been born in Algeria. Claire Eldridge, “Remembering the Other: Postcolonial Perspectives on Relationships Between Jews and Muslims in French Algeria,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 11, no. 3 (November 2012): 299–317, 299; Benjamin Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World of the Pieds Noirs: References to and Representations of Europeans in Colonial Algeria,” in *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century : Projects, Practices, Legacies*, ed. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (New York: Routledge, 2005), 225–41, 226.

⁴ Andrea Smith, “Settler Sites of Memory and the Work of Mourning,” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 31, no. 3 (December 2013), 65–92: 67.

⁵ Eric Savarèse, *L’Invention des Pieds-Noirs*, Paris : Editions Segquier, 2002, 14.

The final section of this chapter explores the lexicon of Pied-Noir collective memory narratives and tropes. While the Pieds-Noirs are a diverse group with a wide range of memories and experiences, certain narratives have become central to their shared memory because they serve essential functions for their community. Pieds-Noirs have perceived alternating apathy and antipathy in France towards themselves and their memories. They have sought, through their memory work, to challenge the historical narratives and colonial stereotypes that have formed the basis for their exclusion in France. In Chapters 7 and 8, I analyze the carriers they have used to transmit these memories. I show how their practices have changed over time in response to the evolving needs of their community.

Phases of Pied-Noir Historiography

1830 – 1962

During the 19th century, the French state advanced the myth of the “civilizing mission” in order to justify French imperial presence, particularly in Algeria. The Europeans who settled this territory were glorified for their influence on the land, which they cultivated, and its inhabitants, whom they educated and refined.⁶ French scholars lauded this mission; few challenged the supposed superiority of European culture. Historians constructed narratives that likened European settlers to the Phoenicians and Romans who had also brought European “civilization” to North Africa. Colonialism was also portrayed as politically and economically indispensable for maintaining France’s status in the world.⁷ At the same time, as Algeria was settled by poor Europeans and political exiles, Algeria also came to be seen as “a colonial dumping ground” for

⁶ Michèle Baussant, “Caught between Two Worlds: The Europeans of Algeria in France after 1962,” in *History, Memory and Migration : Perceptions of the Past and the Politics of Incorporation*, ed. Irial Glynn and J. Olaf Kleist (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 87–105, 90-91.

⁷ Eric Savarèse, “Des récits à l’histoire. Penser la relation coloniale,” in *L’Algérie dépassionnée : Au-delà du tumulte des mémoires*, ed. Eric Savarèse (Paris: Editions Syllepse, 2008), 55–66, 56.

the undesirables of European society.⁸ French Algerians, in turn, harbored their own misconceptions about metropolitan French and resented Paris's control over the political and economic affairs in their departments.

Starting in the early 20th century, scholars and other public figures became more critical of the colonial project and of the French Algerians, by extension. This period was marked by increased scholarly interest in the native Algerian population and sympathy for the “oppressed” Arabs and Berbers.⁹ French Algerians, in contrast, were portrayed in the French imagination as *grands colons*, powerful landowners who exploited their privileged political and socio-economic positions as French of European origin. The *grands colons* stereotype was misleading. Most European settlers were “poor whites,” as historian Benjamin Stora has termed them, predominantly industrial workers and civil servants.¹⁰ Agriculturalists made up only nine percent of the settler population in Algeria, as compared to twenty-six percent in metropolitan France, and most owned small properties.¹¹ The standard of living was, on average, lower for French Algerians than it was for French in the metropole.¹² Yet, the settlers' privileged status in French Algeria was undeniable. With the aid of the French government, they had displaced and impoverished tens of thousands of Muslim Algerians in the process of establishing themselves in

⁸ Baussant, “Caught between Two Worlds,” 89; Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 230.

⁹ Shepard, “Pieds-Noirs, Bêtes Noires,” 154.

¹⁰ Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 231.

¹¹ Andrea L. Smith, *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 242.

¹² Only three percent of French Algerians had a higher standard of living than metropolitan French. Seventy-two percent of French Algerians earned fifteen to twenty percent less than those in the hexagon. Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 231.

Algeria.¹³ In the political sphere, French Algerians vigorously defended the rights that separated them from the native population and protected their advantaged positions.¹⁴

During the Algerian War, metropolitan French horror at the actions of the *Organisation de l'Armée Secrète* (OAS), a French terrorist organization committed to keeping Algeria French, accompanied this shift. French media and politicians in the hexagon conflated members of the OAS, who numbered approximately three thousand, with French Algerians as a whole and blamed them for prolonging the brutal struggle for Algerian independence. Male Pieds-Noirs in particular came to be associated with “fascist terror.”¹⁵ Historian Todd Shepard has observed that in response to the violence of the OAS, Pied-Noir men were “accused of embodying abnormal masculinity in ways that recalled charges that orientalist writers and apologists of colonialism in North Africa long had leveled at ‘Arabs’ and ‘Muslims.’”¹⁶

Thus, mainland French differentiated themselves from French Algerians during the war by demonizing them and portraying them as “not French.”¹⁷ Shepard has argued that the New Left and its historians, including Pierre Nora, led this process of vilifying and othering the French Algerians.¹⁸ Describing Nora’s 1961 monograph *Les Français d’Algérie*, Shepard explained, “Usually cited as a scholarly study, [...] the book synthesized a racist and self-

¹³ Matthew Evangelista, *Gender, Nationalism, and War: Conflict on the Movie Screen* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 29.

¹⁴ Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 231.

¹⁵ Shepard, “Pieds-Noirs, Bêtes Noires,” 161.

¹⁶ Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*, 2nd ed. (Cornell University Press, 2008), 186.

¹⁷ Shepard, “Pieds-Noirs, Bêtes Noires,” 151.

¹⁸ Albert Memmi’s widely read and cited work, *The Colonizer and The Colonized*, for example, presented the French Algerians as unquestionably inferior. Albert Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé, précédé de : Portrait du colonisateur* (Paris: Payot, 1957).

righteous anti-*pied-noir* discourse among French intellectuals.”¹⁹ Nora and others blamed Pied-Noir fascism for French abuses, such as torture, during the Algerian War.²⁰ Fiona Barclay has observed how French Algerians were also “othered” in print media, for example by celebrated left-leaning journalist Eugène Mannoni. Writing in *Le Monde*, Mannoni argued with regard to French Algerians “that this new people represent a profound otherness, a difference as much physical as it is behavioural.”²¹ These intellectuals contributed to the impression that French Algerians were wholly different from the French. Their perceived foreignness explains why the French government so underestimated the number of former settlers who would “return” to France.

1962 – Mid-1990s

For the first thirty years following Algerian independence, the French generally pursued a policy of “active forgetting” regarding the Algerian War. Scholars who were interested in the French Algerians, however, generally concerned themselves with the conditions of repatriation.²² In 1968 Bruno Etienne published the first important scholarly work on this group in France and focused on their migration to France.²³ Twenty-five years later, historian Jean-Jacques Jordi analyzed the reception French Algerians faced in the city of Marseille, the main point of entry for most members of this population. He highlighted the weaknesses in the government’s

¹⁹ Shepard, “Pieds-Noirs, Bêtes Noires,” 153.

²⁰ Ibid, 152.

²¹ Fiona Barclay, “Reporting on 1962: The Evolution of Pied-Noir Identity across 50 Years of Print Media,” *Modern & Contemporary France*, (2014): 1–15, 4.

²² André Figueras, *Les pieds noirs dans le plat* (Paris: les Presses du Mail, impr. Renard), 1962); Pierre Baillet, “L’intégration Des Rapatriés d’Algérie En France,” *Population* 30, no. 2 (1975): 303–14; Alain Charrier, *Algérie 1962: l’exode, pourquoi?* (Chalon-sur-Saône: Éditions Le Chenoua, 1981); Robert Garcia, *Genèse de l’exode des Européens d’Algérie, 1830-1962* (Nice: Editions Gilletta, 1982).

²³ Bruno Etienne, *Les Européens d’Algérie et l’indépendance algérienne* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1968).

handling of the repatriation process and attributed its failings in part to the fact that the city was overwhelmed by the unexpectedly large influx of French Algerians.²⁴

Jordi also identified the rejection French Algerians experienced from metropolitan France. The significant financial and administrative challenges that their arrival posed made it difficult for French in the hexagon to sympathize with their forced migration.²⁵ The hostile perceptions also stemmed from the fact that they were remnants of France's now shameful colonial past and intimately associated with images of violence. It was during this historical moment that the derogatory term "Pied-Noir" emerged and was systematically applied to the French Algerians.²⁶ Jordi documented accounts of how some Marseillais had insulted the Pieds-Noirs and expressed a desire for them to return to Algeria. He has argued that even for the 25% of *rapatriés* who did not pass through Marseille, this city's reception of the Pieds-Noirs became a symbol of their rejection and abandonment by France and the center of their traumatic collective memory.²⁷

The relative dearth of scholarly works during this period on the lives of Pieds-Noirs in Algeria paralleled larger trends of avoiding the colonial past in France.²⁸ In the context of this general silence, however, the Pieds-Noirs themselves were highly active. They began organizing

²⁴ Jean-Jacques Jordi, *De L'Exode à l'exil : Rapatriés et Pieds-Noirs en France*, Paris : L'Harmattan, 1993.

²⁵ Baussant, "Caught between Two Worlds," 95.

²⁶ Baussant, "Caught between Two Worlds," 96; Savarèse, *L'Invention*, 15.

²⁷ Jean-Jacques Jordi, *1962 : l'Arrivée des Pieds-Noirs*, Paris : Autrement, 1995, 14-15.

²⁸ Jean-François Guillaume, *Les Mythes Fondateurs de l'Algérie Française* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan; 1992) and Pierre Mannoni, *Les Français d'Algérie: Vie, moeurs, mentalité de la conquête des Territoires du Sud à l'indépendance* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1993) are notable exceptions. There were also a number of texts published in English on the French Algerians at this time: Mahfoud Bennoune, *The Making of Contemporary Algeria, 1830-1987: Colonial Upheavals and Post-Independence Development* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); David Prochaska, *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bône, 1870-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

into associations, first in order to address their practical concerns—including housing, employment, material indemnities, and amnesty—and then to meet their commemorative needs. Pieds-Noirs published historical accounts²⁹ and collected testimonies of Pied-Noir experiences in French Algeria and during the Algerian War.³⁰ These accounts reflected diverse backgrounds and political views—from members of the OAS to anti-colonial activists. All focused in some way, however, on documenting a lifestyle and place that had been permanently lost. The preface to *Mon Algérie*, a collection of sixty-two personal accounts published in 1989, explained the need to preserve the fading traces of the past: “Of their Algeria today, there remains only this emotional memory that ceaselessly recovers fleeting impressions and sensations.”³¹

Women wrote a number of the popular Pied-Noir memoirs published at this time.³² The fact that Harki daughters have also employed this memory carrier suggests memoirs are a gendered genre. Women may draw on their roles as storytellers within families and feel more comfortable and better prepared to transmit personal, individual memory in the public sphere. Their reception is also informed by understandings of gender roles. Images of violent Pied-Noir men loomed large in metropolitan French imagination during and after the Algerian War. Women, however, cut more sympathetic figures. They were assigned less responsibility and guilt for the failed colonial project. Indeed, three memoir authors—Anne Loesch, Francine Dessaigne,

²⁹ Daniel Leconte, *Les Pieds-Noirs: Histoire et Portrait D'une Communauté* (Paris: Seuil, 1980); Marie Cardinal, *Les pieds-noirs, Algérie 1920-1954* (Paris: Belfond, 1988).

³⁰ Emmanuel Robles et al., *Les Pieds-Noirs*, trans. Albert Bensoussan, *Les minorités qui font la France* (Paris: Ph. Lebaud, 1982); Monique Ayoun and Jean-Pierre Stora, eds., *Mon Algérie: 62 personnalités témoignent* (Paris: Acropole, 1989); Danielle Michel-Chich, *Déracinés* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1990); Jeanine de La Hogue and Simone Nerbonne, *Mémoire écrite de l'Algérie depuis 1950: Les auteurs et leurs oeuvres* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1992).

³¹ Ayoun and Stora, *Mon Algérie*, 16-17.

³² Anne Loesch, *La valise et le cercueil* (Paris: PLON, 1962); Francine Dessaigne, *Journal d'une mère de famille pied-noir* (Paris: France-Empire, 1972); Marie Cardinal, *Les Mots pour le dire* (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1977); Micheline Susini, *De soleil et de larmes* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1982).

and Micheline Susini—framed their participation in, or support of, the OAS as an act of emancipation from the patriarchal colonial system.

Late 1990s – Mid-2000s

In the last decade of the 20th century, important social and political developments in France contributed to renewed interest in the colonial past. Scholars began to analyze how Pieds-Noirs created and transmitted a collective identity (and memory) in France. Ethnologist Jeannine Verdès-Leroux interviewed one hundred and eighty self-identified Pieds-Noirs to investigate both who the French Algerians were and why they had been regarded so “suspiciously and disparagingly.”³³ She felt historians had “cast this problem aside.”³⁴ Verdès-Leroux argued that the Pieds-Noirs posed no “integration” troubles for society as whole, but rather society posed problems for the Pieds-Noirs.³⁵ Historian Joëlle Hureau pursued this issue of integration by analyzing French Algerian associations and published texts.³⁶ She argued that following their exile from Algeria, some Pieds-Noirs fully integrated into French society, while others chose to exclude themselves in order to conserve a particular “*algérianité*,” a cultural mix of French, Algerian, and Mediterranean influences.³⁷ Political scientist Eric Savarèse has interrogated the category of Pieds-Noirs and analyzed the “identity strategies” that the Pieds-Noirs employed to

³³ Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, *Les Français d'Algérie de 1830 À Aujourd'hui : Une Page D'histoire Déchirée* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), 8.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid, 8-9.

³⁶ Joëlle Hureau. *La mémoire des pieds-noirs*, Paris : Librairie Académique Perrin, 2001.

³⁷ Abderahmen Moumen and Jean-Jacques Jordi, *Entre histoire et mémoire : les rapatriés d'Algérie : Dictionnaire bibliographique* (France: Editions Gandini, 2003), 46.

produce a collective group that has been politically influential.³⁸ He argued that they invented a shared memorial tradition—that of pioneers—to unite them.

The most recent work on Pied-Noir memory and identity practices has stressed the heterogeneity of this group. Savarèse has argued that despite the attempts of certain Pied-Noir associations to present themselves as representative and in the face of efforts among politicians to win over a supposed Pied-Noir electorate, there is no such thing as a Pied-Noir vote, Pied-Noir culture or a Pied-Noir memory. Rather, Pieds-Noirs have expressed a wide variety of political views and competing memory narratives of the Algerian past.³⁹ Anthropologist Andrea Smith has also challenged the notion that Pieds-Noirs have shared a common culture. She argued that the descendants of Maltese settlers in Algeria have constituted a subaltern group within the Pied-Noir memory community and that the Maltese Pied-Noir social clubs in which she conducted her fieldwork reveal “the continued salience of intrasettler cultural distinctions.”⁴⁰

2005 – 2013

Historians have argued that in contrast to the earlier “amnesia” about the colonial period, this past has, since the early years of the 21st century, become “completely visible and recurrent in the heart of French society.”⁴¹ As groups have begun transmitting and commemorating different memories in the public sphere, scholars, politicians, and journalists have become concerned about the divisive potential of memory. They have argued that conflicting

³⁸ Savarèse, *L’Invention*, 17.

³⁹ Eric Savarèse, “After the Algerian War: Reconstructing Identity among the Pieds-Noirs,” *International Social Science Journal* 58, no. 189 (2008): 457–66, 458-60.

⁴⁰ Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 2, 25-27.

⁴¹ Nicolas Bancel and Pascal Blanchard, “La Colonisation: Du Débat Sur La Guerre d’Algérie Au Discours de Dakar,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires: La France et Son Histoire, Enjeux Politiques, Controverses Historiques, Stratégies Médiatiques*, ed. Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (Editions La Découverte, 2010), 137–154: 139.

interpretations of the colonial past, and the Algerian War in particular, have exacerbated social tensions.⁴² In *Algérie, La Guerre Des Mémoires*, Savarèse explained, “Harkis, pieds-noirs, descendants of slaves or grand-children of colonial subjects...The war of memories swells. Each community, real or self-proclaimed, demands a plaque, a monument, a law.”⁴³ Savarèse, Stora, and others have increasingly come to rely on a competitive memory model, in which groups aim to supplant the memories of others with their own, to interpret memory practices.⁴⁴

These scholars have also understood the Pieds-Noirs as instigators of disputes over how to remember the colonial past.⁴⁵ They note how, since the 1990s, Pied-Noir associations have vigorously demanded symbolic gestures from the state.⁴⁶ Pied-Noir lobbying was at the root of the February 2005 law, which sparked fierce debates about the colonial past and prompted scholars to start employing the “memory wars” paradigm. Their monument and museum in Perpignan, which I will analyze in Chapters 7 and 8, also met with resistance from scholars, who have questioned the objectivity and historical accuracy of the narratives they transmit.⁴⁷

Jean-Jacques Jordi has accused historians of letting their ideological leanings and value judgments compromise the objectivity of their own scholarship. According to Jordi, historians have distinguished “between good and bad terrorism, between those killed on the right side of history and those killed on the wrong side,” essentially privileging victims who fought for

⁴² Ibid, 138.

⁴³ Eric Savarèse, *Algérie, La Guerre Des Mémoires* (Editions Non Lieu, 2007), 10.

⁴⁴ Savarèse, *L’Invention*, 13.

⁴⁵ Todd Shepard has observed that “Benjamin Stora seeks constantly to challenge, even undercut, the political valence of ‘pied-noir memories.’” Shepard, “Pieds-Noirs, Bêtes Noires,” 150.

⁴⁶ Bancel and Blanchard, “La Colonisation,” 138.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 146; Eric Savarèse, ed., *L’Algérie dépassionnée: Au-delà du tumulte des mémoires* (Paris: Editions Syllepse, 2008).

liberation over those who fought to keep Algeria French.⁴⁸ As a result, historians have not studied the fates of European civilians and members of the OAS who disappeared, and were presumably killed, at the end of the war. Yet, Jordi has noted, these same historians have criticized the “memorial one-upmanship” that has occurred as memorial associations and witness testimonials have tried to fill this gap in historical research.⁴⁹ The pro-colonial content of dominant Pied-Noir memory narratives has remained unpopular in France⁵⁰ and this gap in historical research may indeed reflect the “politicization of history” that scholars have decried.⁵¹ I am interested in how scholarship on the Pieds-Noirs has informed the way they understand their place in France. In Chapter 7 I show how the perception among Pieds-Noirs that they have been marginalized in academic literature contributes to their self-image as victims in the current memorial context.

Naming the Pieds-Noirs

Scholars have convincingly demonstrated that French Algerians constituted a heterogeneous group in Algeria and did not form a unified community until their arrival in France. Settlers brought different European cultural heritages with them to French Algeria and their countries of origin informed their status in the colony. Maltese, for example, occupied a liminal place in French Algerian society.⁵² Even after their migration to metropolitan France, some French Algerians formed associations and self-segregated based on the specific nationality

⁴⁸ Jean-Jacques Jordi, *Un Silence d’Etat: Les Disparus Civils Européens de La Guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: SOTECA, 2011), 163.

⁴⁹ Jordi, *Un Silence d’Etat*, 8.

⁵⁰ Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 5.

⁵¹ Savarèse, *L’Invention*, 14.

⁵² Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 21.

of their forebearers. In defiance of assimilation policies in both French Algeria and the hexagon, then, these French Algerians have retained their Spanish, Italian, and Maltese identities.

The spatial reality of French Algeria also informed the different experiences of the settlers. The population of European descent was concentrated in urban areas, particularly around the coast. The four largest cities—Algiers, Oran, Constantine and Bône—contained over half of the settler population following WWII.⁵³ Through much of the countryside, however, “French Algeria” was a remote reality for many native Algerians and the few Europeans who settled there.⁵⁴ Travel was difficult in Algeria, even among the cities, and the settlers’ identities became closely tied to their municipality.⁵⁵ Andrea Smith has demonstrated that following their arrival in the metropole, many French Algerians still thought “in terms of their colony-based sociogeographical coordinates.”⁵⁶ French Algerian society was also stratified into different economic groups with workers employed in a variety of professions.⁵⁷ Smith has argued that lower class whites actually constituted “a colony within a colony.”⁵⁸ Lastly, French Algerians expressed diverse political views that “encompassed the whole political party spectrum.”⁵⁹

⁵³ Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 231.

⁵⁴ Eric Savarèse, “En finir avec les guerres de mémoires algériennes en France,” in *L’Algérie dépassionnée: Au-delà du tumulte des mémoires*, ed. Eric Savarèse (Paris: Editions Syllepse, 2008), 175–99, 180.

⁵⁵ Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 190.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ In 1954, there were 90,000 industrial workers, 92,000 civil servants, 56,000 middle ranking or senior executives, and 60,000 merchants, artisans, or members of the liberal professions in French Algeria. Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 231.

⁵⁸ Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 23.

⁵⁹ Savarèse, “After the Algerian War,” 458.

“French of Algeria” was one among a number of different administrative labels used to refer to the descendants of European settlers at the time of the Algerian War.⁶⁰ It was misleading to apply this term only to settlers of European origin because by 1958 the entire population in Algeria had been awarded full French citizenship.⁶¹ For the previous century, however, the official legal and administrative category of “Muslim” had excluded most French of North African origin from exercising the same rights as “Europeans” in these departments. A decree in July 1865 had given Muslims in Algeria French nationality, but not citizenship. According to this measure, “the Muslim native” held the status of “non-citizen French,” French deprived of voting rights,⁶² and “only by renouncing Islam could he ‘benefit from the rights open to a French citizen’.”⁶³ In contrast, the law of June 26, 1889 had granted full French citizenship to descendants of Europeans in the colony.⁶⁴ Civic and religious identities were thus entwined and important economic, social, moral and sexual barriers accompanied the administrative and legal divides.⁶⁵ Members of these groups had opportunities to interact and develop connections, but, as Stora has explained, “only so long as each understood his place.”⁶⁶ According to Savarèse, for

⁶⁰ *Français d’Algérie*; they were also referred to in an official capacity as *la communauté de souche française d’Algérie*, *les Algériens de souche française*, and *les Algériens de souche européenne*. Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 163.

⁶¹ Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 19.

⁶² *Français non-citoyen, Français privé de droit de vote*. Savarèse, “Des récits à l’histoire,” 59.

⁶³ “Because of the role of Koranic law in all aspects of Muslim life, they were governed under a régime d’exception, designed both to recognize their individual identity via a statut personnel as Muslims and to exclude them from full French citizenship and political equality. P. Dunwoodie, “Postface: History, Memory and Identity—Today’s Crisis, Yesterday’s Issue,” *French History* 20, no. 3 (2006): 318–332: 325.

⁶⁴ Savarèse, “After the Algerian War,” 464.

⁶⁵ Eric Savarèse, et al, “Rapport de recherche sur le projet de réalisation, a Perpignan, d’un site public de documentation et d’exposition sur l’Algérie : *en finir avec les guerres de mémoires algériennes en France?*” Université de Perpignan, (April 2007), 8.

⁶⁶ Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 233.

example, among French citizens and French Muslims in Algeria, “you could be comrades (*frères*), but not brothers-in-law (*beau-frères*).”⁶⁷

The Jewish Algerian population constituted a particular case. Jews and Muslims had experienced centuries of cultural exchange and close cohabitation in Algeria before the French arrived. The Décret Crémieux of 1871, which granted Algerian Jews full French citizenship, separated these communities on a legal level, yet they remained bound by their shared heritage. Meanwhile, European settlers, who sought to protect their superior status within the colonial hierarchy, continued to consider Algerian Jews as racially and religiously distinct.⁶⁸ The Jews themselves remained suspicious of French anti-Semitism, particularly in the aftermath of the Dreyfus Affair.⁶⁹ Thus, as historian Claire Eldridge has argued, this community was “characterized by plural identities and allegiances which defied simple categorization, causing the Jews of Algeria frequently to fall between, rather than within, the various binaries and hierarchies that the colonial system sought to impose.”⁷⁰

The migration of over ninety percent of Algerian Jews to the metropole following Algerian independence attested to their ultimate affiliation with French culture and society.⁷¹ During the first thirty years following their arrival in the hexagon, they were generally subsumed within the larger Pied-Noir community. Scholars did not treat them as a separate group and Algerian Jews themselves did not assert their specificity. Yet Pied-Noir memory work from this period reflected a complicated relationship among Algerian Jews and the rest of the Pieds-Noirs.

⁶⁷ Savarèse, “Des récits à l’histoire,” 63.

⁶⁸ Eldridge, “Remembering the Other,” 299.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 300.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 301.

The editors and many of the contributors to the *Mon Algérie* volume, for example, were Jewish, and most downplayed their religious identity. Indeed, one declared that the Algerian city of Constantine had replaced Jerusalem in his imagination.⁷² For others, their Jewish, Algerian, and French identities appeared inextricably linked. Among the non-Jewish contributors, one described his father's anti-Semitism⁷³ and another told of an interaction he and his wife had with Palestinian exiles in Algeria, who bonded with them over the loss of their land.⁷⁴ Andrea Smith observed the social segregation of Christian and Jewish Pieds-Noirs during her fieldwork in France in the 1990s and described a distinct discomfort among Maltese Pieds-Noirs at the presence of Algerian Jews at their functions.⁷⁵ According to Claire Eldridge, many of the same factors that produced a growing interest in the colonial past in France over the past few decades have prompted Algerian Jews to construct their own memory community.⁷⁶

The religious identity of French Algerians, then, was central to how they understood themselves in relation to the rest of the population in Algeria. In the face of Islam, the Catholic Church served as a bastion of French culture during colonial period.⁷⁷ Catholic rituals also provided continuity for the settlers and “cushioned the shock of rupture with the native land.”⁷⁸ Ethnologist Michèle Baussant has demonstrated that religious practices have retained their

⁷² Ayoun and Stora, *Mon Algérie*, 52.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷⁵ Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 193-194.

⁷⁶ Eldridge, “Remembering the Other,” 300; Moumen and Jordi, *Entre histoire et mémoire*, 12.

⁷⁷ Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 232.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

importance to French Algerians in the metropole.⁷⁹ She analyzed their annual religious pilgrimage to Notre-Dame-de-Santa-Cruz in Nimes, arguing that this *lieu de mémoire* has served as an essential site of sociability for French Algerians and means of preserving their shared identity.

Efforts to name the French Algerians following their arrival in the hexagon continued to reflect colonial politics of inclusion and exclusion. The French state initially labeled the French Algerians “*rapatriés*”—a term that suggested a population returning to their homeland or country—which it had also assigned to groups from other former colonies, including Indochina.⁸⁰ Although most French Algerians had not actually originated from metropolitan France, the name was designed to emphasize their French identity, in contrast to the “othering” of French Algerians that had occurred in the metropole during the war. French Algerians officially shared *rapatrié* status with the Harkis and their families, but these populations were treated differently in practice. Some scholars have argued that the Harkis were imagined and handled as refugees fleeing their Algerian homeland, rather than as Frenchmen returning home.⁸¹ Indeed, a certain “hierarchization of populations” was revealed through strikingly different conditions of arrival and the state quickly came to distinguish between French Muslim *rapatriés* and European *rapatriés* from Algeria in their policies.⁸² French Algerians included the Harkis in their *rapatrié* associations, although it was clear that they considered the Harkis a distinct subset

⁷⁹ Michèle Baussant, *Pieds-Noirs : Memoires d'exils*, Paris : Stock, 2002.

⁸⁰ French prisoners of war who returned from Germany at the end of WWII were also called *rapatriés*. Andrea Smith has argued that using the same name for French Algerians created a “false sense of continuity with previous repatriations.” Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 163-4.

⁸¹ Mohand Hamoumou, “Les Français-Musulmans: Rapatriés Ou Réfugiés?,” *AWR-Bulletin, Revue Trimestrielle Des Problèmes Des Réfugiés*, no. 4 (1987); Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 62.

⁸² *Français musulmans rapatriés and Européens rapatriés d'Algérie*. Besnaci-Lancou and Moumen, *Les Harkis*, 62.

of this group. Eldridge has argued that the affiliation of the two communities served the interests of the French Algerians because the Harkis constituted a more conspicuous victim population. Indeed, European *rapatriés* often drew attention to the plight of the Harkis as evidence of the “folly of decolonization” and the state’s mismanagement of the repatriation process.⁸³

The label of Pieds-Noirs was originally applied to French Algerians as an “expression of rejection,” signifying their exclusion from rest of French society.⁸⁴ The exact origins of this term are unclear. Some believe the native Algerian population invented it, possibly in reference to the black boots of the French soldiers who arrived in Algeria in 1830.⁸⁵ Others argue that metropolitan French created it, either to describe poor, barefoot Algerian natives or the Algerian winemakers who trod grapes to make wine.⁸⁶ No matter the specific root of the label, it was meant to connote backwardness and foreignness.

The eventual decision among some French Algerians to embrace the name “Pied-Noir” is significant for what it reveals about how they understood their place in France. By the 1970s, most French Algerians were prospering and because of their socio-economic successes, European appearance, native French fluency, and familiarity with French culture, they could “pass” as metropolitan French. They were not subjected to the same discrimination that had accompanied their arrival in the metropole. Their “Frenchness,” so to speak, was no longer in question. At this point, then, French Algerians faced a choice as to whether to assume a separate identity or to reject it. Many fully assimilated into French society. To others, integrating, or “passing” as metropolitan French, could imply that they were ashamed of where they came from,

⁸³ Eldridge, “Blurring the Boundaries,” 127; Hureau, *La mémoire des pieds-noirs*, 174.

⁸⁴ Hureau, *La mémoire des pieds-noirs*, 7.

⁸⁵ Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 225.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

or suggest that they were choosing to deny their particular background.⁸⁷ These French Algerians began to self-identify as Pieds-Noirs.⁸⁸ Adopting this label allowed them to participate in the therapeutic process of proudly owning and reinventing the term and to avoid the risk of becoming too assimilated.⁸⁹

The Cercle Algérieniste: History and Objectives

Assuming this identity also required the Pieds-Noirs to prove that they had a common history, including founding events, tropes and narratives, and shared traditions and values. Their collective exodus from Algeria, identified by Jordi as the foundational experience for their community, would not be enough to sustain the community in the struggle against integration. They needed to convince themselves and others that their identity and culture had a long history in order to overcome the diverse political and social and cultural backgrounds that had divided them in Algeria. Associations have played an integral role in giving fuller meaning to the Pied-Noir identity. French Algerians have created as many as eight hundred associations, representing approximately ten to fifteen percent of the total French Algerian population, although many consist of only a few members.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Gerard Noiriel has identified this process of accepting shame and denying difference as often accompanying assimilation for immigrant populations. Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity*, trans. Geoffroy de Laforcade, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

⁸⁸ Other French Algerians have selected variations of the “Pied-Noir” name to distinguish themselves from those who have adopted this term. “Pieds-verts” refer to the French Algerians who remained in Algeria following the war. One French contributor to the *Mon Algérie* volume explained that he was in favor of Algerian independence even before the Algerian War began and described himself as “a special Pied-Noir, a black sheep, I might say, or a Pied-Blanc.” Ayoun and Stora, *Mon Algérie*, 54.

⁸⁹ In challenging the assimilation process, these Pieds-Noirs were echoing the efforts of regional communities during the 1970s to create their own, local identities. Herman Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home: France in the Global Age*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁹⁰ Jordi, *De L’Exode à l’exil*, 179; Eldridge, “Blurring the Boundaries,” 124.

One of the most influential of these associations has been the *Cercle Algérieniste*.⁹¹ It is not representative of all Pieds-Noirs, as no organization could be, but the history of this association parallels wider developments in the Pied-Noir community. It has become the largest association of Pieds-Noirs in France and the most active in the public sphere in the past decade. The *Cercle Algérieniste* helped create and fund the controversial *Mur des Disparus* monument and the first colonial museum in France, the *Centre de Documentation des Français d'Algérie*, which I analyze in Chapters 7 and 8. It has transmitted the dominant Pied-Noir narratives since it was founded in 1973 and through its practices we can trace how Pied-Noir collective memory has changed over time.

When the *Cercle Algérieniste* was established, its founders and adherents sought to develop a separate, provincial identity for the French who came from Algeria and to establish a lasting community based on the belief in a shared past and culture. These Pieds-Noirs declared that they were plainly different from the metropolitan French. As the first president, Maurice Calmein, explained, they must embrace being Pied-Noir, rather than “masking our specificity [and] trying clumsily to make ourselves into Parisians, Provençals, Bretons, or Auvergnats that we can never TRULY be.”⁹² At the same time, they expressed a fear that what made them unique was at risk of disappearing, due to the assimilation process. Their original mission statement read, “before our community completely dissolves, we are creating a *cercle* [...] in order to give new life to the ‘French Algerian’ community” and to “save a culture in peril.”⁹³

⁹¹ Other important Pied-Noir associations include Jeune Pied-Noir ; Véritas ; the Association nationale pour des français d’Afrique du Nord, d’outre-mer, et de leurs amis (ANFANOMA) ; and the Rassemblement et coordination unitaires des rapatriés et spoilés (RECOURS).

⁹² Cercle Algérieniste, “Jean Brune, L’algérianisme et la fatalité africaine,” *L’Algérieniste*, special issue (1976): 21.

⁹³ Cercle Algérieniste, “Le Cercle Algérieniste,” *L’Algérieniste*, special issue (1975); Alain Martin, “Un journal pour tous les Pieds Noirs,” *L’Algérieniste*, special issue (1977): 29.

For members of the *Cercle*, affirming their difference entailed re-defining themselves. In the early years of the association, they discussed the label “Pied-Noir” and what it signified. Some were uncomfortable with the term’s negative connotation and sought a more “legitimate” name for their community.⁹⁴ This sentiment was reflected outside the *Cercle* as well; as one self-identified Pied-Noir declared in *Mon Algérie*, “I hate this expression.”⁹⁵ Their ambivalence towards the name “Pied-Noir” led the *Cercle*’s adherents to choose a new label for themselves, that of “*algérianiste*.” Selecting a new name was appealing, particularly in the association’s formative years, because members could invest it with the meaning they desired. Calmein wrote, “If it is indispensable that we control our appellation, it, however, is not simply a question of changing the words. Imposing this new expression will be the first step in a collective restructuring of our Community.”⁹⁶

To members of the *Cercle*, being “*Algérianiste*” meant embracing a particular spirit, way of thinking, and lifestyle that were historically rooted in Algeria. The term was a reference to *Algérianisme*, a literary genre that emerged in Algeria in 1911 and was defined by a close connection to the land.⁹⁷ Authors Robert Randau, Jean Pomier, and Jean Brun, who was later associated with the OAS, established the genre and gained acclaim in the metropole for their work. In the decades that followed its creation, *Algérianisme* became a movement that sought to further develop and celebrate a shared culture among the descendants of European settlers and

⁹⁴ Hureau, *La mémoire des pieds-noirs*, 7.

⁹⁵ Ayoun and Stora, *Mon Algérie*, 38.

⁹⁶ Maurice Calmein, “Appellation contrôlée,” *L’Algérianiste*, special issue (1977): 4.

⁹⁷ La Hogue and Nerbonne, *Mémoire écrite de l’Algérie*, 11.

the native Algerian population. In 1920, Jean Pomier declared of the proponents of *Algérianisme*, “We are Algerians and nothing that is Algerian is foreign to us.”⁹⁸

By selecting the name “*Algérianiste*,” members of the *Cercle* constructed strong ties to their Algerian past and established the legitimacy of their claim to that heritage. They affiliated their organization with the founders of the genre, naming Pomier, who had passed away in 1962, Honorary President of the *Cercle*. The *Cercle* declared as one of its purposes “to diffuse the works of *Algérianiste* authors” and created a literary prize in the tradition of the *Grand prix littéraire de l’Algérie*.⁹⁹ They also reinforced the idea that Algeria had, since the Roman Empire, been a “melting pot of civilizations, where East and West met” and affirmed the aim of *Algérianisme* to honor this distinctly Mediterranean culture.¹⁰⁰ Calmein explained in 1973, “*Algérianisme* is not simply a literary movement, it is a state of mind, a human and historical reality, a blending of souls, a culture that has manifested itself in behaviors, a language, a folklore, a cuisine, that has been expressed, and continues to be expressed, in the arts, theatre, cinema, song.”¹⁰¹ He and the other members sought to recreate this culture expressed through the *Algérianiste* literature.

The *Cercle Algérianiste* reinforced the meaning of this identity through various forms of cultural and communicative memory practices.¹⁰² The association created monuments, including

⁹⁸ Maurice Calmein, “L’Algérianisme,” *L’Algérianiste*, special issue (1975): 2-3.

⁹⁹ Hureau, *La mémoire des pieds-noirs*, 252.

¹⁰⁰ Maurice Calmein, “L’Algérianisme,” 1973, accessed January 12, 2015, <http://www.librairie-pied-noir.com/content/6-algerianisme>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² According to Jan Assman, cultural memory takes the form of “objectivized culture- whether in texts, images, rites, buildings, monuments, cities, or even landscapes- and “organized or ceremonial communication.” “Communicative memories,” on the other hand, are “varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications.” Assman explains, “Everyday communication is characterized by a high degree of non-

the reconstruction of the Sidi-Ferruch monument and *Mur des Disparus*, and members took part in commemorative ceremonies. The *Cercle* published a quarterly journal, *L'Algérieniste*, organized an annual national conference. Members produced and collected texts, objects, films, and artwork from and about Algeria. The association created spaces—a library, documentation center, museum, theatre, and website—in which to display and preserve the traces of their past. The *Cercle*'s adherents also gathered in these places to informally share their private, individual memories of life in Algeria. Through communicating their personal recollections at meetings and commemorations, members established the social basis of their community.

Positively Colonial: Common Themes and Narratives

Pieds-Noirs are bound by shared memories of suffering. Scholars have argued that the twin experiences of exile from Algeria and rejection upon arrival in France created the possibility of a unified Pied-Noir community. Jean-Jacques Jordi has explained, “It is not 1830 that created the Pied-Noir, but 1962. The massive and tragic repatriation of that summer became the founding element of the exile community.”¹⁰³ No matter how they felt about the colonial project or what their particular background was, all Pieds-Noirs experienced the loss of Algeria and most have resented carrying the weight of the colonial legacy in the metropole.¹⁰⁴ A form of “*nostalgérie*,” a pathological nostalgia for the landscape, lifestyle, and sites of personal significance in Algeria, has dominated Pied-Noir collective memory.¹⁰⁵ Many Pieds-Noirs, especially those who have returned to visit, have mourned the fact that “their” Algeria is gone

specialization, reciprocity of roles, thematic instability, and disorganization.” Jan Assman, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” trans. John Czaplicka, *New German Critique*, no. 65, (Spring - Summer 1995): 126-128.

¹⁰³ Jordi, *L'Arrivée des Pieds-Noirs*, 114.

¹⁰⁴ Savarèse, “En finir avec les guerres de mémoires,” 194.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, “Settler Sites of Memory,” 65.

forever. Central to their shared memory, then, is their understanding of themselves as victims of exile and rejection following Algerian independence.

The Pieds-Noirs' memories of the Algerian War have proven more divisive and controversial for their community. In Chapter 7 I explore how Pieds-Noirs, and the *Cercle Algérieniste* in particular, have commemorated the deaths and disappearances of French Algerian civilians during the war. Pied-Noir efforts to portray these civilians as innocent victims of state violence have been undermined by the fact that many of those killed had supported or fought for the OAS. Pieds-Noirs have commemorated the French army's repression of settler protests to keep Algeria French on March 26th in Algiers and July 5th in Oran in 1962. Some associations have also constructed plaques specifically honoring OAS members. Yet they have also recognized the degree to which their affiliation with the OAS, and its fierce support of the colonial project, has tended to alienate the rest of the French population from them and their memory work.

It is useful to analyze the gender-specific meanings attached to Pied-Noir commemorations.¹⁰⁶ Todd Shepard has demonstrated how the image of the violent OAS male informed how French Algerians were perceived in metropole during the Algerian War. He argued that once it became clear that the French Algerians would “return” to the hexagon following Algerian independence, the French state used depictions of the “mythic heterosexual family” to encourage metropolitan French to accept them.¹⁰⁷ Shepard explained, “The family—

¹⁰⁶ Here I am taking up the call by Sylvia Schraut and Sylvia Paletschek “to examine gender-specific meanings attached to existing places of memory, the (national) symbols, values, concepts of power and history related with them, as well as the implicit images of masculinity and femininity they contain.” Sylvia Schraut and Sylvia Paletschek, “Remembrance and Gender: Making Gender Visible and Inscribing Women into Memory Culture,” in *The Gender of Memory: Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek and Sylvia Schraut (Frankfurt; New York: Campus-Verlag, 2008), 267–87, 270.

¹⁰⁷ Shepard, “Pieds-Noirs, Bêtes Noires,” 160.

above all the necessary place of males within it as fathers, brothers, and even children—was a privileged trope, mobilized to cleanse the *pieds-noirs* of the OAS stain and to guarantee their Frenchness.”¹⁰⁸ We can understand Pied-Noir depictions of families migrating to the metropole in their memory work as a continuation of this practice; it constitutes an effort to gain acceptance, and even sympathy, by distancing themselves from the violent OAS male.

Pieds-Noirs have also celebrated the contributions of the African Army, which had been composed of French Algerians and Muslim Algerians, particularly during World War II. In this way they have ascribed to the republican memorial model that honors citizens for their sacrifices to the nation.¹⁰⁹ Pieds-Noirs have constructed plaques and monuments and have organized ceremonies for the anniversaries of the Allied invasion of southern France. These commemorative acts have enabled the Pieds-Noirs to assert their Frenchness and solicit respect from the rest of the French population. At the same time, they have provided an opportunity to proclaim their particular martial prowess; a common refrain among Pieds-Noirs has been, “It is we Africans who saved Europe” during WWII, a reference to the significance of colonial North Africa for the Allied forces.¹¹⁰ Commemorations of the African Army have thus offered a way to celebrate French Algerian soldierly masculinity without reference to the Algerian War. Finally, the inclusive composition of the army supports their narrative, which I discuss below, of fraternity and productive cohabitation among descendants of European settlers and the native population in French Algeria.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 162.

¹⁰⁹ Michel, *Gouverner*, 72.

¹¹⁰ Sung Choi, “Remembering the African Army: French Algeria in World War II Memories” (presented at the Algeria Revisited: Contested Identities in the Colonial and Postcolonial Periods, University of Leicester, April 12, 2012).

In their cultural memory carriers, many Pieds-Noirs have gendered Algeria female, echoing early colonial depictions of Algeria. Images of Algerian women who were “submissive, sensual, and inviting,” for example those painted by Eugène Delacroix, conveyed the message that Algeria was a fertile land, ripe for colonization.¹¹¹ Algeria inspired orientalist fantasies in the metropole, where erotic postcards that featured the highly fetishized veil, were circulated.¹¹² The metaphor of Algeria as a “voluptuous and voracious” woman, then, encouraged colonialists and added a sexual dimension to the conquest.¹¹³ Benjamin Stora has observed how Pieds-Noirs have portrayed Algeria as a mother or a beloved and lost woman in their memory narratives.¹¹⁴ The editors of *Mon Algérie* explained how Algeria has become “the land of paradise, the land of childhood, the land of a mother who nourishes them” in the memories of the Pieds-Noirs and “with her are associated all of the scents, all of the fragrances, all that link mother and child.”¹¹⁵ One contributor to their volume described his relationship to Algeria as one to an ex-wife who has married another man. He proclaimed that while he continued to think of her often and remained faithful to her memory, the woman he once loved had become a stranger to him.¹¹⁶ Thus, in their memoirs, novels, and films, Pieds-Noirs have continued to employ gendered colonial imagery.

Pieds-Noirs have narrativized the colonial period in three distinct ways. Each narrative has served a particular function for the community. The first, the myth of the civilizing mission,

¹¹¹ Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 4.

¹¹² Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 189.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 227-228.

¹¹⁵ Ayoun and Stora, *Mon Algérie*, 16, 45.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 54.

emerged during the colonial period. According to this narrative, the French settled in Algeria in order “to civilize, construct roads, ports, cities, railroads, to teach, [and] to heal” and its purpose was to legitimize colonialism.¹¹⁷ Scholars have thoroughly discredited the myth of the civilizing mission, which belied France’s more self-serving motivations and in which “the colonized” were noticeably absent.¹¹⁸ It has generally fallen out of favor with Pieds-Noirs as well, as its association with colonialism has tended to alienate metropolitan French. Yet Article 4 of the February 2005 law, which stipulated that school curricula would “acknowledge in particular the positive role of the French overseas presence,” reflected the language of the myth and demonstrated that it has endured.¹¹⁹

Pied-Noir associations in the metropole, including the *Cercle Algérieniste*, invented the second interpretation, which Eric Savarèse has identified as the “pioneering myth.”¹²⁰ According to this narrative, Algeria constituted an “empty space devoid of civilization,” much like the American West, before the French arrived.¹²¹ Then, through their “industrious and pioneering spirit,” European settlers tamed and transformed this barren landscape at great personal expense.¹²² The pioneering myth established a connection to a rural past that was wholly fabricated, given that most French Algerians had lived in urban areas and did not work the land. Still, it has allowed the Pieds-Noirs to memorialize their modernization of Algeria without

¹¹⁷ Savarèse, “Des récits à l’histoire,” 57.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. Loi n° 2005-158.

¹²⁰ Savarèse, “En finir avec les guerres de mémoires,” 181.

¹²¹ Evans and Phillips, *Algeria*, 4; Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 229.

¹²² Evans and Phillips, *Algeria*, 4.

reference to colonialism, since this interpretation presented Algeria not as a colony, but rather as a French invention.¹²³

In response to growing French interest in the Algerian War, Pieds-Noirs have constructed a new narrative, which Romain Bertrand has called “the theory of the two phases of colonialism.”¹²⁴ This interpretation contrasts the regrettable violence of the conquest and Algerian War with the generally harmonious and prosperous colonial period.¹²⁵ Pieds-Noirs have stressed the importance of not reducing the history of French Algeria to short-lived periods of violence.¹²⁶ In doing so, however, they have ignored the armed resistance to French presence that continued throughout the colonial period. Moreover, the narrative is predicated on the idea of a fraternal relationship among European settlers and native Algerians that ignores the significant legal, economic, and social barriers erected between these populations.

Conclusion

The case of the Pieds-Noirs expands our understanding of postcolonial migration in France. Unlike most migrants from former colonial territories, including the Harkis, they did not face lasting problems of insecurity.¹²⁷ Their repatriation was hectic and disruptive, and they faced rejection from metropolitan French. Yet the majority of the Pieds-Noirs encountered no serious socio-economic barriers to integration. Some scholars have argued, in fact, that they will “soon vanish as a subgroup in French society” and that “any sense of *pied-noir* distinctiveness is

¹²³ Savarèse, “After the Algerian War,” 459.

¹²⁴ Romain Bertrand, *Mémoires D’empire: La Controverse Autour Du “Fait Colonial”* (Editions du Croquant, 2006).

¹²⁵ Savarèse, “Des récits à l’histoire,” 60.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 61.

¹²⁷ Anna Hayes, Robert Mason, and Niklaus Steiner, *Migration and Insecurity: Citizenship and Social Inclusion in a Transnational Era* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

now generated from within their community.”¹²⁸ Pieds-Noirs, then, have faced the unusual challenge of trying to resist complete, successful integration. Of course, their “Frenchness” was never challenged on a legal and administrative level, as it was for the Muslim population in Algeria, thus giving them the freedom to explore and embrace their specificity.¹²⁹ The case of the Pieds-Noirs thus highlights the salience of categories of race, religion, and cultural “difference” in debates about immigration.¹³⁰ At the same time, the ways they have constructed narratives of the past reveal that many Pieds-Noirs ultimately desire and seek empathy in France for their plights. Although the Pieds-Noirs are often perceived by scholars as some of the most active participants in the “memory wars” over the colonial past, their memory work is most often aimed at gaining acceptance and recognition from the rest of the French.

¹²⁸ Smith, “Settler Sites of Memory,” 67; Barclay, “Reporting on 1962,” 13.

¹²⁹ Claire Eldridge, “Returning to the ‘Return’: pied-noir Memories of 1962,” *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* 29, no. 3 (January 20, 2014): 121–40, 126.

¹³⁰ Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 11.

CHAPTER 7: PIED-NOIR COMMEMORATIVE MONUMENTS AND CEREMONIES: FROM SIDI-FERRUCH TO THE *MUR DES DISPARUS*, 1973-2013

If one considers collective memory as a narrative or set of tropes, then Pied-Noir memory has remained remarkably stable over the past forty years. The Pied-Noir community has cultivated the impression that their collective memory is static, both suggesting that the stability of a memory is evidence of its truthfulness,¹ and employing it as a strategy for overcoming the diverse backgrounds and opinions that threaten to divide them.² Although their memory narratives have indeed stayed relatively consistent, the discursive and material practices they have used to express their memory have changed. Examining the *Cercle Algérieniste*'s memory work since its creation in 1973 reveals that members have adapted their practices to meet the changing needs of their aging community and in response to the evolving politics of colonial memory in France.

The founders of the *Cercle Algérieniste* declared their intention to “give new life to the ‘French Algerian’ community” and to “save a culture in peril.”³ The reconstruction in 1986 of a monument commemorating the conquest of Algeria, originally built in Sidi-Ferruch to celebrate the centennial of this event, and an annual ceremony helped them pursue their aims. These memory practices served the dual functions of establishing a common historical narrative for the Pieds-Noirs and allowing them to honor their collective accomplishments in Algeria. It was

¹ Claire Eldridge, “Blurring the Boundaries between Perpetrators and Victims: Pied-Noir Memories and the Harki Community,” *Memory Studies* 3, no. 2 (2010): 123–36, 133.

² Eric Savarèse, *L'invention des Pieds-noirs* (Paris: Séguier, 2002).

³ Cercle Algérieniste, “Le Cercle Algérieniste,” *L'Algérieniste*, special issue (1975); Alain Martin, “Un journal pour tous les Pieds Noirs,” *L'Algérieniste*, special issue (1977): 29.

through recollecting, celebrating, and commemorating an Algerian past together that they forged the social foundations of their community and resisted full integration into French society.

Since the turn of the 21st century, however, the *Cercle Algérianiste*'s memorial landscape has changed dramatically. The monument to Sidi-Ferruch no longer serves as an object that concretizes the group's memory or a site where they perform their belonging. It has been replaced in the *Cercle*'s imaginary by the *Mur des Disparus*, a memorial to the French Algerians who disappeared during and after the Algerian War. Through this monument, Pieds-Noirs have understood themselves not as heirs of a pioneering, Algerian tradition, but as inheritors of a duty to mourn and defend the forgotten and missing. Collective performance of this duty has bound their community over the past decade. In this way, they have distanced themselves from the contentious colonial legacy.

This change in the focus of their commemorative activity indicates a wider shift in the ways that Pieds-Noirs have used the past to secure their place in French society and ensure the future of their collective identity. As the Pieds-Noirs have aged, they have faced new challenges in sustaining their community. The original members of the *Cercle Algérianiste* have found it difficult to transmit their “*algérianiste*” culture and mindset to a generation that has never lived in Algeria and has no personal memories of this place. In order to make the Pied-Noir identity relevant and accessible to their children, and therefore to increase the chances of their community's survival, they have been obliged to develop new memorial practices. These practices are designed to create different affective ties to the Pied-Noir history and to form additional social foundations for their community.

Pieds-Noirs have been both restrained and helped in this endeavor by the pervasive and highly developed memory culture in France. The politics of memory have dictated the terms,

carriers, and ways of framing that they must use in order to gain the most social capital. In the post-World War II commemorative era, the “victim-memorial regime” has triumphed over the republican memorial model and victim status is highly sought-after.⁴ In this context, the *Cercle Algérieniste* has tailored its memory practices to a wider audience and has moved away from references to the controversial colonial past. Since the late 1990s, there has also been a growing interest in the Algerian War in France. The *Cercle Algérieniste* has responded to these shifts by constructing a memorial to the Pied-Noir casualties of this war, even though they understand their identity and history as beginning long before 1954.

Pieds-Noirs have also been able to make use of the new memorial context to address their problem of transmission. The *Cercle Algérieniste* has begun to employ the scholarly and popular discourse of “*mémoire*” to articulate their right to commemorate their version of the past. Members have also internalized the competitive memory model and have adopted the “memory wars” paradigm for interpreting responses to their commemorative acts. Upon witnessing resistance to the *Mur* on the part of other groups with a stake in the colonial legacy as well as scholars, they have argued that their interpretations of the past are under attack and that their right to memorialize is being denied. Participating in what they perceive as the so-called “memory wars” has allowed the Pieds-Noirs to self-identify as victims of this “war.” Pieds-Noirs have understood themselves as civilian victims of the Algerian War and the move to decolonize, more generally. Shared memories of suffering, including exile from Algeria and rejection upon arrival in the metropole, have remained central to their collective identity. In the past decade, they have come to believe that they are again being betrayed and sacrificed, this time by French

⁴ Serge Barcellini, “L’Etat Républicain, Acteur de Mémoire: Des Morts Pour La France Aux Morts À Cause de La France,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires*, ed. Blanchard and Veyrat-Masson, (Editions La Découverte, 2010), pp. 209-219; Savarese, *L’Invention*, 14; Eldridge, “Blurring the boundaries between perpetrators and victims,” 125.

efforts to write a “politically correct” interpretation of the colonial period. They have thus re-deployed the trope of victimhood in a new context.

The *Mur des Disparus* has enabled the Pieds-Noirs to commemorate their losses during the Algerian War and has offered the opportunity to merge past and present offenses against their community. Visiting the monument and observing attacks against Pied-Noir memory practices have allowed younger generations to share the experience and bond of victimhood. In the 21st century, then, members of the *Cercle Algérieniste* have become less concerned with establishing the content of their memory and more focused on proclaiming their right to have a memory. Defending their right to a memory is, after all, an act in which Pieds-Noirs of all generations can engage.

Commemorating the Conquest: The Sidi-Ferruch Monument

The Sidi-Ferruch monument was constructed in 1930 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of French presence in Algeria. The location of Sidi-Ferruch, a coastal town 25km west of Algiers, was chosen because it was the point of landing for French troops, led by General de Bourmont, on June 14, 1830. Emile Gaudissard, an artist born in Algiers, designed the monument, which stood 15m high, on a pedestal of 3.5m². Bas-reliefs in marble depicted the figures of two women embracing, symbolizing the union of French and Algerian populations. One plaque on the monument detailed the Sidi-Ferruch victory, while another read, “One hundred years later, the French Republic having given this country prosperity, grateful Algeria addresses to the motherland the tribute of its enduring attachment.”⁵ On the back of the monument an additional inscription quoted General de Bourmont’s words to his men before the landing: “The cause of France is that of humanity. Show yourselves worthy of your noble (*belle*) mission. Be just and

⁵ Alain Amato, *Monuments en exil* (Paris: Éditions de l’Atlantique, 1979), 180.

humane after the victory.” On June 14, 1930 the president of the French Republic, Gaston Doumergue, unveiled the monument between speeches by local leaders proclaiming the great accomplishments of French Algeria. The occasion of the centennial and its commemorative monument, then, were intended to celebrate the triumph of the civilizing mission.

Following Algerian independence, many conspicuous symbols of French imperial rule were destroyed in the so-called “statue war” of the summer of 1962.⁶ A group of paratroopers from the 3rd Marine Infantry Parachute Regiment endeavored to save the Sidi-Ferruch memorial from the same fate on July 5, 1962, the day of Algerian independence. Pied-Noir Alain Amato has recounted how the parachutists removed the marble plaques of the monument while surrounded by a mob of Algerians, who hurled insults at them and attempted to destroy the structure.⁷ The parachutists completed the task by dynamiting the pedestal and transporting the plaques to the metropole.⁸

In the mid-1980s, two members of the *Cercle Algérianiste*, Hélène and Roger Brasier, undertook the project of reconstructing the Sidi-Ferruch monument. The bas-reliefs, which measured 5.5m high and 2.5m wide, were reassembled along with the inscriptions. A dedication to the African army was added to the monument. This new incarnation was placed in Port-Vendres, a coastal town in the Pyrénées-Orientales department of southern France. The *Cercle*'s first president, Maurice Calmein, found the setting “majestic and highly symbolic,” as the memorial was facing the sea and “new Algeria.”⁹ The Brasiers, along with the *Cercle*, also

⁶ Andrea Smith, “Settler Sites of Memory and the Work of Mourning,” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 31, no. 3 (December 1, 2013): 65–92, 69-70.

⁷ Amato, *Monuments en exil*, 180.

⁸ The remnants of the monument were stored in the basement of the military school in Saint-Maixent-l'École (Deux-Sèvres) during the 1970s.

⁹ Maurice Calmein, “Les portes de l’histoire,” Editorial, *L’Algérianiste*, no. 43 (Septembre 1988): 2.

constructed a small museum that contained photos and documents depicting life in French Algeria between 1930 and 1962. These visual records focused on subjects that are central to the civilizing mission and pioneering myths: education and agriculture. The museum also presented artifacts from the African army, including “weapons, insignia, and the military uniforms of African combatants from France’s different conflicts.”¹⁰ The reconstructed Sidi-Ferruch monument was unveiled on June 14, 1986, the 156th anniversary of the conquest. The *Cercle Algérieniste* had established June 14th as the date for their annual associative celebration and Port-Vendres became the site of this event for the next decade.¹¹

The new Sidi-Ferruch memorial occupied an important place in the association’s imaginary. From the 1970s to 90s, *Algérieniste* memory practices were insular, aimed at “reminding” a small population of who they were and preventing their assimilation. When introducing the plan to reconstruct the Sidi-Ferruch monument, the *Cercle* mentioned that others might consider the subject of their commemoration, the conquest of Algeria, “a bit provocative.”¹² Indeed, the celebration of this event had fallen out of favor among the rest of French society. Yet, the leaders of the *Cercle* were predominantly concerned with how other Pieds-Noirs would interpret the monument. President Maurice Calmein, declared, “Because it is for our Community, for its honor, its history and its future that we fight, and it alone can tell us whether, through one action or another, we have succeeded or failed.”¹³ When the monument

¹⁰ While the Sidi-Ferruch monument can still be found in Port-Vendres, the museum has since been closed. *Les Pyrénées Catalanes*, “Musée Sidi Ferruch,” (accessed on March 2, 2015), <http://pyreneescatalanes.free.fr/Tourisme/Musees/MuseeSidiFerruch.php>.

¹¹ The association ceased holding the “fête du *Cercle Algérieniste*” on June 14th in 1996. Members now gather each year in November for the *Cercle*’s national conference.

¹² Cercle Algérieniste, “Fête national algérieniste,” *La Vie Algérieniste*, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 31 (September 1985).

¹³ Calmein, “Les portes de l’histoire,” 3.

was unveiled, Calmein asserted that it did, in fact, exemplify the association's goals. He reminded members that "The *Cercle Algérieniste* was created to bear witness, to denounce lies, to make the real face of French Algeria known, through all possible means of expression."¹⁴ This "real face" included the pioneering spirit of the original settlers and the success of the civilizing mission. Their addition of a plaque honoring the African army signified a desire to "bear witness" to the sacrifices of this organization.

The reconstructed Sidi-Ferruch monument also represented the tragic destruction of their homeland in 1962. In 1979, Alain Amato published a text, entitled *Monuments en Exil*, that traced the fate of over one hundred and fifty commemorative symbols, including plaques, busts, monuments, and church bells, that had been rescued from Algeria. Amato explained how these monuments had been uprooted and exiled, "reinstalled far away from the places and spaces for which they had been initially conceived." He suggested that the memorials had been degraded through the process: "Downgraded location, mediocre pedestal, destroyed pedigree, often all three at once, yes, these souvenirs live in exile."¹⁵ Sidi-Ferruch and other monuments thus served as "bitter reminders" for the Pieds-Noirs of their lost homeland as well as symbols of their own exile and difficult repatriation.¹⁶

Reenacting, celebrating, and remembering at this site also served key social functions for their community. In addition to representing the achievements of French Algeria, the conquest constituted the founding event for the French Algerian community. It was a reminder that the collective history of the Pieds-Noirs began long before their arrival in the metropole. In 1989, the

¹⁴ Ibid, 2.

¹⁵ Amato, *Monuments en exil*, 22.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Cercle described the June 14th commemorative event as “a popular festival of national scale to which the community withdrawn from Algeria is invited in a vast pilgrimage to the sources of its history that the monument to the Centennial symbolizes. The program was conceived to combine the joy of reunions with the fervor of remembrance in a site of which the still-intact natural beauty could not be praised more.”¹⁷ This commemoration was the occasion that rallied the most *Algérianistes*.¹⁸

“Mémoire d’avenir”

In 2002, the *Cercle Algérianiste* dedicated its annual conference to the theme of “*mémoire d’avenir*” and employed the following quote by fellow North African, Saint Augustine, as its credo: “The present time of things past is memory; the present of things present is action; the present time of things future is expectation.”¹⁹ Members of the *Cercle* were playing with the relationship between past, present and future and this conference was a product of the *Cercle Algérianiste*’s awareness that they needed to re-imagine their project for the younger generation and new memory culture. The purpose of thinking about “*mémoire d’avenir*,” then, was to “imagine what we still need to accomplish, at the moment when we pass the baton to the youngest among us.”²⁰ Pieds-Noirs recognized that as those with personal memories of Algeria passed away, their future as a community rested on reconsidering how they used their past to forge social bonds. Whereas they had built their community by creating and celebrating a shared Algerian past, their practices would no longer work for a generation who did not share this past.

¹⁷ Cercle Algérianiste, "Journées de Sidi-Ferruch du 10 au 14 juin 1989 à Port-Vendres," *La Vie Algérianiste*, *L'Algérianiste*, no. 45 (March 1989): v.

¹⁸ Cercle Algérianiste, "Fête national algérianiste."

¹⁹ Boris Kan, supplement, *L'Algérianiste*, no. 99 (September 2002): 1. Translation in James Olney, *Memory and Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing* (University of Chicago Press, 1998), 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

“Above all,” wrote one influential *Cercle* member a few months after the conference, “*locking ourselves up in a ghetto of nostalgia* can only have the principal effect of tearing our own youth from our ranks [...] [for] their efforts are principally and understandably oriented towards the future, towards their future, towards that of their own children.”²¹ The time had thus come to develop not a new understanding of the past, but a new approach and relationship to it.

The *Cercle Algérieniste* had always been aware that the youth, their children, were their community’s key to survival. In the first issue of *L’Algérieniste*, President Maurice Calmein announced that “Appreciation (*connaissance*) of the past must be deepened and widely spread, especially among the young generations.”²² Over the years the *Cercle* introduced a variety of initiatives designed to involve their children and young Pieds-Noirs in the association. As early as 1977 they tried to organize a youth branch, the *Mouvement de Jeunesse Algérieniste* (MJA), that would meet the particular needs of Pieds-Noirs who were too young to recall life in Algeria.²³ Yet the members of the *Cercle* were continually aware of and disappointed by the younger generation’s general lack of interest. In 1979 one of the organizers expressed his frustration, declaring, “Having, over the past two years, tossed and turned the problem, I have only up until now met with failures. I have the disagreeable impression that the MJA does not interest many people. If this is the case, please tell me, and I will learn a lesson.”²⁴ After 1986, there were no more proposals to start a youth group. By 1993, Calmein had identified the need

²¹ René Mayer, “Réflexions,” supplement, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 101 (March 2003): 1.

²² Maurice Calmein, “L’Algérianisme,” *L’Algérieniste*, special issue (1975): 2-3.

²³ Marc Ribes, “Message,” *L’Algérieniste*, special issue (1977): 54-55.

²⁴ Marc Ribes, “Mouvement jeunesse algérieniste,” *L’Algérieniste*, (15 December 1979): 51.

not simply to interest the youth in their project, but to actually “redefine our project for a new generation of *algérianisme*.”²⁵ Now it was not just a “culture” but also a “civilization in peril.”²⁶

For members of the *Cercle*, focusing on “*mémoire d’avenir*” also entailed tailoring their memory practices to a wider audience. In the early years of the association, the *Cercle* mainly directed its initiatives at fellow Pieds-Noirs. As interest in the colonial past grew in France during the 1990s, however, the *Cercle* became aware that they needed to engage with a larger audience. They had to educate not just their children, but the rest of France as well about their history. Hence in 2004 the *Cercle* announced its intention to publish “‘testimonies’ by families of our compatriots who disappeared in Algeria so as to demonstrate to the ensemble of authorities, public powers, and also the media, the reality of this drama and the intensity of attacks.”²⁷ Memory practices such as these were the only way to bring about the national recognition of their suffering that the new memory culture demanded and that the *Cercle* has come to value. As President Thierry Rolando explained, “beyond our community’s recognition of these sufferings, the Nation’s recognition of them is our dearest wish, because the Republic is grand when she is the mother of all her children, the Republic is grand when she is the Republic of all memories.”²⁸

Members of the *Cercle* have not only sought new audiences and developed new practices; they have also shifted the time period on which most of their memorial practices focused. Since in the wider French memory culture people have been most interested in the

²⁵ Cercle Algérieniste, “Le billet de Maurice Calmein, La Noria des générations,” *La Vie Algérieniste*, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 62 (June 1993): 145.

²⁶ Jo Sohet, “Demain l’Algérianisme,” *L’Algérieniste*, no. 66 (June 1994): 62-63.

²⁷ Thierry Rolando, “Notre combat,” supplement, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 104 (December 2003): 1.

²⁸ Thierry Rolando, “Nous ne souhaitons pas qu’une vérité s’impose à la place d’une autre, mais nous voulons que toutes les mémoires soient entendues,” supplement, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 120 (December 2007): 4.

Algerian War, Pieds-Noirs have been forced to position themselves in relation to this event, even though they consider that their history began long before 1954. The monument to the “*disparus*” during Algerian War is evidence of this shift, as are the protests against using March 19th as the commemorative date marking the end of the Algerian War. In 2002, the National Assembly passed a measure to adopt March 19th as a national commemoration.²⁹ Pieds-Noirs have claimed that this decision willfully ignores the massacres of French Algerians on March 26 and July 5, 1962 and the disappearances that occurred after this date. Demonstrations against March 19th commemorations have become an integral part of the *Cercle*'s memorial repertoire. Some members of the *Cercle* have become frustrated with the dominant focus on the period of the Algerian War, however, because they do not believe that these years define them as a people. These *Algérianistes* have argued that emphasizing the dark era of the war distorts their history.³⁰ Yet the *Cercle* has found that events commemorating these dates attract the most participation within their community.³¹

The 2002 “*mémoire d'avenir*” conference was also significant because it introduced a new language for articulating their relationship with the past—in terms of “*mémoire*.” Members of the *Cercle* have understood “*mémoire*” as narratives and tropes that can be transmitted to others, collective losses and victories that can be commemorated, and, perhaps most importantly, duties and rights to be fulfilled and defended. Before the conference, this word was only one of many, including *souvenir*, *passé*, and *témoignage*, that they used to talk about how they recalled

²⁹ The Senate did not pass the measure, however.

³⁰ Maurice Calmein, "Le cercle algérianiste part en guerre contre l'enseignement," *Vie Algérianiste, L'Algérianiste*, no. 14 (15 May 1981) : I-II.

³¹ Thierry Rolando, "A Valence une communauté unie et rassemblée pour dire non au 19 mars," supplement, *L'Algérianiste*, no. 126 (June 2009) : 1 ; Maurice Calmein, "Emotion et maturité," supplement, *L'Algérianiste*, no. 108 (December 2004).

and commemorated their collective past. Several of the association's original aims focused on preserving their connections to French Algeria. They declared their intention "To keep alive the flame of memory (*souvenir*) of French Algeria" and "to denounce the lies and hypocritical silences that surround our past (*passé*)."³² Yet these goals were not expressed in terms of "*mémoire*." After the 2002 conference, the *Cercle* identified "the field of memory" as its "major battle today"³³ and continued to dedicate annual conferences to this theme.³⁴

Members of the *Cercle Algérieniste* were not alone, of course, in their recent, and growing, interest in "*mémoire*." They have co-opted a popular and scholarly discourse that has become increasingly ubiquitous. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, as French Jews prompted the state to take responsibility for the deportation of Jews during WWII, the focus of commemorations shifted from honoring "those who died *for* France" to "those who died *because* of France."³⁵ French Jews proclaimed their status as victims of the French state in terms of "*mémoire*." They declared their right to express their own particular collective memory, which they called their "*droit de mémoire*," as well as their duty to commemorate their dead, their *devoir de mémoire*.³⁶ Eric Savarèse has argued that "*devoir de mémoire*" and "*droit de mémoire*" have come to constitute new moral and civic norms in French society and that the devotion to

³² Cercle Algérieniste, "Le Cercle Algérieniste," *L'Algérieniste*, special issue (1975).

³³ Rolando, "Notre combat," 1.

³⁴ The theme of the Cercle's conference in 2004 was "Acte de mémoire," focusing on the issue of the *disparus*, in 2008 "Quel droit à la mémoire pour les Français d'Algérie?," in 2009 "Transmettre. A qui ? Comment ? Pourquoi?," and in 2010 "France-Algérie : une bataille mémorielle, pour quels enjeux?"

³⁵ Barcellini, "L'Etat Républicain," 209-219.

³⁶ Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, "Introduction," in *Les Guerres de Mémoires: La France et Son Histoire, Enjeux Politiques, Controverses Historiques, Stratégies Médiatiques*, ed. Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (Editions La Découverte, 2010), 15-49.

collective memory is a new republican value.³⁷ Pieds-Noirs in the *Cercle* have employed this language of memory to frame and justify their commemorative practices since 2002.

As members of the *Cercle* have become interested in transmitting their “*mémoire*” to younger generations and on a national level, they have identified the particular importance of expressing this memory through “*lieux de mémoire*.” Pierre Nora introduced this term, which he defined as “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” in the 3-volume series he edited, called *Lieux de Mémoire*.³⁸ Andrea Smith has observed that Pierre Nora’s volumes “achieved such widespread popular appeal in France that they themselves now play a role in shaping the very activities that he set out to analyze and critique in the first place.”³⁹ Indeed, members of the *Cercle* have adopted the term and used it to shape their memory work. Members have interpreted the expression literally, as a place where they store and through which they represent their memory. In 2008, panel members at their national conference on the theme, “What *droit à la mémoire* for French Algerians?” articulated their understanding of the meaning and significance of “*lieux de mémoire*” as memory practices. They explained, “To implant and cement the facts of history in the spirit that those who, not having lived through them, do not end up moving away from them to the point of forgetting them. Nobler still: to fix the truth in stone, so that it can defy time...and lies.”⁴⁰ After all, they

³⁷ Savarèse, *L’Invention*, 13.

³⁸ Pierre Nora, “From *Lieux de Mémoire* to Realms of Memory. Preface to the English Language Edition,” in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, ed. Lawrence D Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xvii.

³⁹ Andrea L. Smith, *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 24.

⁴⁰ Gérard Rosenzweig, “La transmission mémorielle impose-t-elle la création de lieux de mémoire ?” supplement, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 124 (December 2008): 5.

claimed, “the *lieu de mémoire* teaches history. It is therefore the principal and perhaps unique vector of memory transmission, ‘especially when the actors and witnesses have disappeared.’ To this history of blood and pain, the *lieu de mémoire* brings skin and spirit.”⁴¹ They thus definitively declared, “There is no memory transmission without *lieux de mémoire*.”⁴²

Pieds-Noirs certainly always had such sites of memory, but the *Cercle* was now articulating a conscious policy of using them to ensure the future of their community. They discussed the status of a museum project, the *Mémorial de la France d’Outre-Mer*, that was being considered in Marseille and likely evoked the *Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie* project they were developing in Perpignan in the minds of many conference attendees. The panelists cited the *Mur des Disparus* as their crowning achievement in this effort, however, because “What are in this old country the most visible and popular *lieux de mémoire*? The *lieux de mémoire* justifiably burdened with the transmission of memory? You guessed it: monuments to the dead.”⁴³

Remembering Violence: The *Mur des Disparus*

The *Mur des Disparus* thus reflects the ways in which members of the *Cercle* have adapted their practices in the new millennium. This memorial, dedicated “to the memory of the *disparus*, who died without burial, Algeria 1954-1963,” consists of a wall that is 15m long and 2.5m high. On this wall, 2,619 names of “*disparus*,” mainly French Algerian civilians, along with several hundred French soldiers, some Harkis and a few known OAS members, are engraved in bronze. In the center of the wall is a sculpture, designed by Pied-Noir Gérard Vié, of

⁴¹ Ibid. Original emphasis.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

a male torso that is gagged and contorted, as if in pain, with a cavity where his heart should be. Plaques on either side of the sculpture feature dedications “to ALL disappeared harkis, whose names have been erased” as well as quotations by Jean Brune, an *Algérianiste* author and partisan of French Algeria, and Rene de Chateaubriand, a French romantic author. The citation from Brune reads, “The only irreparable defeat is forgetting,” suggesting it is the Pieds-Noirs’ *devoir de mémoire* to commemorate the *disparus*. Chateaubriand’s quotation declares, “Society’s downfall lies not in killing an innocent man even though he is innocent, but in killing him as though he were guilty,” and thus emphasizes the Pieds-Noirs’ victim status. The *Mur des Disparus* monument was inaugurated in November of 2007 in Perpignan, France. It is located in the courtyard of the Couvent Sainte-Claire de la Passion, which would house the *Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie* in 2012.



The shift to commemorating the “*disparus*” can be interpreted in part as a reaction to the current cult of victimhood in France. While Pieds-Noirs have always understood themselves as non-combatant casualties in the war between the FLN and the French state, the *disparus* attest to the extent to which the Pieds-Noirs were also victims of the French rush to decolonize. In his work on the civilian Europeans who disappeared during and after the Algerian War, historian

⁴⁴ Photographs taken on May 27, 2013 at the Couvent Sainte-Claire de la Passion in Perpignan.

Jean-Jacques Jordi defined the category of “*disparus*.” He explained, “Disappearance is at once an abduction, a concealment, and a deprivation of freedom, yet must also be accompanied by a complete denial on the part of those who took the person and a cover-up of the fate reserved for the disappeared person.”⁴⁵ The “*disparus*” constitute visible, accepted symbols of victimhood. In 1998 the International Law Commission branch of the United Nations defined “enforced disappearance” as a violation of human rights and when the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court went into effect in 2002, it declared that “enforced disappearance” constituted a crime against humanity.⁴⁶ Moreover, most “*disparus*” were taken after March 19, 1962, in violation of the terms of the Evian Accords.⁴⁷ Jordi has argued that the French state knew about the disappearances but that due to the ideological climate of the postwar period, the government did not want to investigate “the abuses of the FLN and those of the new Algerian government in power.”⁴⁸ To hold the French state accountable for its role in the disappearances, eleven families of French Algerian “*disparus*” followed in the footsteps of the Harkis and filed a case against France for crimes against humanity in 2002.⁴⁹ Their case, like that of the Harkis, was ultimately unsuccessful.⁵⁰

The cause of the *disparus* has provided the *Cercle* with a way of blending public and private memories and of mourning their collective losses. The monument was first conceived in

⁴⁵ Jean-Jacques Jordi, *Un Silence d’Etat: Les Disparus Civils Européens de La Guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: SOTECA, 2011), 13.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 158.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 162.

⁴⁹ Benjamin Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World of the Pieds Noirs: References to and Representations of Europeans in Colonial Algeria,” in *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century : Projects, Practices, Legacies*, ed. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (New York: Routledge, 2005), 225–41, 227.

⁵⁰ Amnesty laws have protected the French with regard to charges of crimes committed during the Algerian War and Pieds-Noirs’ legal premise for the crimes against humanity charge was weak.

2004, when the *Cercle* dedicated its annual conference to making the plight of the *disparus* and their families known to the entire Pied-Noir community and the rest of French society. At this event, Pieds-Noirs whose loved ones went missing during the Algerian War shared their personal memories. One of the conference organizers announced, “Today, we are all families of the *disparus*,” making their disappearance part of the Pieds-Noirs’ shared memory.⁵¹ The *Cercle* made a video of this conference available for those who were unable to attend the event to purchase. When the *Mur des Disparus* was unveiled in 2007, *Cercle* president Theierry Rolando assured the families of *disparus* that “an entire community shares your pain, appropriates your history, recognizes itself in your ordeal, and remembers this tragedy.”⁵² Four thousand people attended the ceremony and the memorial has since become a site of pilgrimage for Pieds-Noirs.

The monument also offers an opportunity to gain sympathy and acceptance from the rest of French society. Whether consciously or not, the designers of the *Mur des Disparus* have drawn on conventions for commemorating traumatic and divisive events that emerged following World War II. For example, WWII and other post-traumatic monuments have often employed universal symbols of mourning and religious imagery in order to overcome social and political divisions in the commemorative process.⁵³ Serge Barcellini and Annette Wiewiorka have observed that in WWII monuments, “the majority of symbols that cross the different memory families are funereal symbols.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ Cercle Algérieniste, supplement, *L'Algérieniste*, no. 108 (December 2004).

⁵² Rolando, “Nous ne souhaitons pas,” 4.

⁵³ Daniel Sherman, “Naming and the Violence of Place,” in *Terror, Culture, Politics: Rethinking 9/11*, ed. Daniel J. Sherman and Terry Nardin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 121–45, 128.

⁵⁴ Serge Barcellini and Annette Wiewiorka, *Passant, souviens-toi!: Les lieux du souvenir de la Seconde Guerre mondiale en France* (Paris: Plon, 1995), 20.

Through the *Mur*, Pieds-Noirs have universalized their losses, so as to make their past more acceptable and to facilitate acceptance of their monument. The sculpture located in the middle of the monument depicts a Christ-like figure. The wall has also acted as a tombstone for those who disappeared and died without being buried by their loved ones. It was referred to as a “symbolic gravestone” by the president of the Perpignan branch of *Cercle Algérieniste*, Suzy Simon-Nicaise, at the unveiling ceremony.⁵⁵ At the same time, Simon-Nicaise was careful to state that the religious overtones were not meant to exclude non-Christian mourners. The *Mur* was, after all, meant to honor missing Harkis as well. She proclaimed to the “dear *disparus*,” “you who were not entitled to crosses of wood, of iron, or of stone, you who were not entitled to the star or crescent or even the broken column of agnostics, men, women, children of all confessions, receive here the emotion-filled tribute of your own who have not renounced any of their past and who have not forgotten you.”⁵⁶ Footage from the ceremony reveals that attendees placed flowers at the foot of the wall as they would at a grave and the occasion had the somber feel of a funeral, with many people crying.⁵⁷ Thus, the monument was presented as a universal site of mourning.

Moreover, in naming 2,619 “*disparus*,” the monument fits into an important trend in commemoration. An imperative to honor the individual soldiers who gave their lives for France was first manifested on WWI monuments. The practice of identifying the dead was expanded following WWII, when victims were divided into categories, including military, deportee, and

⁵⁵ Suzy Simon-Nicaise, “Discours de Mme Suzy Simon-Nicaise,” *Gazette de la-bas*, November 25, 2007, http://mdame.unblog.fr/?page_id=679 (accessed on October 26, 2009).

⁵⁶ Ibid. The “broken column” symbol was used by the Free Masons as well as on monuments to fallen soldiers in World Wars I and II.

⁵⁷ *Dailymotion*, “Guerre d’Algérie : au Pied du Mur,” http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x315st_guerre-dalgerie-au-pied-du-mur_news (accessed November, 19, 2009).

civilian.⁵⁸ The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, completed in 1982 in the United States, adapted the practice by engraving names onto the monument, thus adding an interactive element to heighten its ability to heal. Kristin Hass has explained how “the carving invites tangible interaction. Each name has a physical presence. It asks to be touched.”⁵⁹ The fact that the names of the *disparus* are raised on the surface of the *Mur* allows them to become a physical connection to the disappeared. This is evidenced by the fact that in most photos from the unveiling ceremony, attendees are shown touching a name. Visitors also took pictures of the names, making them souvenirs of the *Mur des Disparus* that they can take home. The ceremony was recorded on a DVD, which people could purchase to remind themselves of this experience.

The designers of the *Mur des Disparus* also called on WWII tropes and traditions of remembrance that give the “bystander (*passant*),” whomever he or she may be, an injunction to remember.⁶⁰ A plaque near the wall reads, “*Passant*, come, read these names/ Men – Women – Children/ Do you know that one unlucky (*mauvais*) day they walked out their doors to disappear forever/ Abducted – Abducted – Abducted/ no scream – no body – no trace/ Nothing left of them! *Passant*, linger here/ This is their first and final tombstone.”⁶¹ In doing so, they have drawn a connection to World War II and the Holocaust commemorative practices and the duty to remember the losses incurred during these tragic events.

⁵⁸ The distinctions drawn between these categories reflected debates about the different kinds of recognition each group deserved.

⁵⁹ Kristin Ann Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 14. In recent incarnations of the therapeutic monument, for example in the Oklahoma City (unveiled in 2000) and Pentagon 9/11 (unveiled in 2008) memorials, the interactivity of the monument has become even more emphasized, as people are represented not only by names but also by objects, chairs and benches, respectively. Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2007).

⁶⁰ Barcellini and Wieviorka, *Passant, souviens-toi!*, 27.

⁶¹ *Gazette de la-bas*, “Le Mur- Recueillement à Perpignan,” November 26, 2007, <http://mdame.unblog.fr/2007/11/26/mur-des-disparus-recueillement-a-perpignan/> (accessed on October 26, 2009).

In order to have their victims publicly recognized, Pieds-Noirs have gone to great lengths to portray the monument not as belonging not to one particular group, but to the nation as a whole. The *Cercle* has downplayed the fact that the *Mur des Disparus* was designed by Pieds-Noirs and privately funded, instead portraying it as apolitical and as originating from the state. The website for the city of Perpignan explains that the names on the wall came in part from the state's official records and that the monument has prompted the state to investigate the subject further.⁶² The monuments' designers also made overtures to inclusion when identifying the victims that the *Mur des Disparus* is ostensibly commemorating. On the *Cercle Algérieniste* website, the association proclaims that the memorial honors "everyone who disappeared between 1954 and 1963 without any distinction on the basis of sex, age, origin, or religion,"⁶³ despite the fact that the wall names only victims of the FLN. This sentiment of inclusion was echoed by one of the invitees to the event, the Minister of Veterans' Affairs, Alain Marleix. In his speech, Marleix declared that the memorial commemorated "Men and women, without distinction of origin, social status, religion, who remained without a tomb in Algeria."⁶⁴ The presence of Marleix and other national and municipal officials at the unveiling ceremony revealed efforts to give the ceremony an official tone. These figures participated in a parade, which included a military band, that was orchestrated to convey the impression that the unveiling was an important national event. To further communicate this message, in her speech Suzy Simon-Nicaise described mobilization for the monument as taking place on a national level and the association

⁶² "Le Mur des Disparus," *Mairie-Perpignan.fr*, <http://www.mairie-perpignan.fr/culture/cddfa/mur-des-disparus> (accessed December 9, 2013).

⁶³ Cercle Algérieniste de Lyon, "Mémorial des Disparus," <http://www.cerclealgerianiste-lyon.org/memorial.html> (accessed October 26, 2009).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

emphasized the role of Perpignan officials in the design, funding, and construction processes in interviews and articles.⁶⁵

As another way of portraying the monument as apolitical, the *Mur des Disparus* avoids identifying the perpetrators of the disappearances. Barcellini and Wiewiorka have observed this practice in World War II monuments, noting, “In the vast majority of cases, the identity of those who caused the death is not mentioned.”⁶⁶ Hass has remarked that the designer of the Vietnam Memorial, Maya Lin, likewise “gave form not to the event that caused the deaths but to the names of the dead, to the fact of the deaths.”⁶⁷ In her speech at the unveiling ceremony, Suzy Simon-Nicaise described the victims as “Apprehended, abducted, kidnapped, never given back, never returned, hidden, abandoned, concealed, these are our *disparus*.”⁶⁸ The only reference to the context in which the losses occurred is the word, “Algeria” and the dates 1954-1963. Thus members of the *Cercle* avoid identifying those responsible for the abductions, although they have admitted elsewhere that members of the FLN and ALN committed these acts.⁶⁹ Pieds-Noirs have also criticized the French state for its failure to investigate the disappearances and to recognize the *disparus* as victims of the state, yet these critiques are offered only implicitly through the memorial.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Simon-Nicaise, “Discours de Mme Suzy Simon-Nicaise.”

⁶⁶ Barcellini and Wiewiorka, *Passant, souviens-toi!*, 21.

⁶⁷ Hass, *Carried to the Wall*, 14.

⁶⁸ Simon-Nicaise, “Discours de Mme Suzy Simon-Nicaise.”

⁶⁹ Thierry Rolando, “Y a-t-il encore un droit à l’expression de la mémoire pieds-noire ?” supplement, *L’Algérieniste* no. 115 (September 2006): 1.

⁷⁰ Thierry Rolando, “La reconnaissance en demi-teinte de la Nation,” supplement, *L’Algérieniste* no. 109 (March 2005): 1.

Reactions to the *Mur des Disparus*

The *Mur des Disparus* memorial sparked controversy and strong objections even before it was unveiled. Analyzing these reactions reveals that the monument was not perceived as inclusive, but rather as privileging some victims over others. The most divisive feature of the monument lay in its identification of individual *disparus*. Marita Sturken has observed that “naming is a notoriously fraught aspect of memorials, one that more often than not reveals the desire to create hierarchies of the dead and that entails problems of inclusion and exclusion.”⁷¹ Indeed, including only the names of victims of the FLN on the wall ultimately undermined efforts to portray the monument as a national memorial and to appeal to universal emotions of grief and devotion.

A number of prominent French colonial historians, who gathered in 2004 at the Université de Perpignan to discuss their concerns over the monument and the proposed *Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie*, anticipated the difficulties that would arise from the practice of naming. They observed that it would be impossible to list the names of all of the disappeared without including members of the OAS, yet they feared that commemorating these *disparus* would offend the families of victims killed by OAS actions.⁷² The scholars therefore proposed two solutions. One was that the proposed memorial be abandoned because “this project, having been inspired by memory politics, cannot win unanimous support.”⁷³ If the *Cercle* insisted on pursuing the project, then the historians declared that they must inscribe the

⁷¹ Sturken, *Tourists of History*, 13.

⁷² Eric Savarèse, Raphaëlle Branche, Jean Robert Henry, Jean – Charles Jauffret, Claude Liauzu, Gilbert Meynier, Valérie Morin, Guy Perville, Yann Scioldo – Zucher, Benjamin Stora, and Sylvie Thenault, "Rapport de recherche sur le projet de réalisation, à Perpignan, d’un site public de documentation et d’exposition sur l’Algérie : *en finir avec les guerres de mémoires algériennes en France?*" Université de Perpignan, (April 2007).

⁷³ *Ibid.*

names of all *disparus*, including any known victims of OAS actions, on the wall. According to the historians, these solutions would prevent the *Cercle* from having to make “*a choice between different categories of victims*” and thus avoid the conflict that would stem from such a decision.⁷⁴ The committee charged with designing the *Mur* did not adopt either suggestion.

Two incidents that occurred before the monument was unveiled appeared to confirm the scholars’ predictions that the naming of *disparus* would be a problematic aspect of the *Mur*. The first was a dispute over the monument’s inscriptions. The original design featured quotations, which had already been engraved on the marble plaques, by Albert Camus and Algerian author Slimane Benaïssa. The citation by Camus, a reference from *The Plague*, read, “To not be among those who bear witness (*témoigner*) by keeping quiet, to leave at least a reminder (*souvenir*) of the injustice and violence that was done to them.” Camus is arguably the most famous French Algerian and members of the *Cercle* have referenced his work often in their publications. It is likely that the monument’s designers wished to draw on the authority of this highly respected figure in metropolitan France to establish their victimhood. The quote by Slimane Benaïssa read, “You are in the hands of God for eternity, in our hearts for life, and in our memory for peace.” It was probably selected to emphasize the inclusive nature of the monument, evoke universal symbols of mourning, and reinforce the Pieds-Noirs’ ties to their Algerian past. Yet when Camus’s daughter and Mr. Benaïssa found out that the monument would include the names of members of the OAS, they both sent letters requesting that the quotations not be used.⁷⁵

Benaïssa asked to have his message of harmony and faith removed from the wall because “One

⁷⁴ Ibid. Original emphasis.

⁷⁵ Les Droits de l’Homme, Section Toulon de la LDH. “Le ‘Mur des disparus’: travail de mémoire ou entreprise de manipulations?” November 24, 2007. <http://www.ldh-toulon.net/spip.php?article2073> (accessed October 26, 2009).

does not construct peace in a partisan manner and especially not with people who continue the war on the terrain of memory.”⁷⁶

As a result of these objections, the *Mur*'s designers chose the quotations by Jean Brune and Rene de Chateaubriand, engraved them on new marble slabs, and placed them over the original inscriptions. These selections contradicted the universal moral duty and right to remember that designers had invoked in order to justify the *Mur des Disparus*. Brune is considered one of the leaders of the *Algérianiste* literary movement and thus evokes a connection to the Pieds-Noirs' Algerian past, as the other authors were intended to do. Yet this choice also risked alienating the public, as Brune has been associated with the OAS. His declaration that “The only irreparable defeat is forgetting,” seemed to suggest one must avoid forgetting the OAS members who were killed in particular, so that their cause was not ultimately defeated. Chateaubriand, a French Romantic author, was far removed from the conflict, yet the content of his quote engages with controversial issues of innocence and guilt. In asserting, “Society's downfall lies not in killing an innocent man even though he is innocent, but in killing him as though he were guilty,” the monument conveys the message that all victims of the FLN were equally innocent.

The other incident involved the accidental inscription of the names of Pieds-Noirs who had not actually disappeared, but rather migrated to France. According to Jordi, between the soldiers whose names were already honored on Quai Branly memorial, Pieds-Noirs who returned to France, victims who fall outside the *Mur*'s parameters (dead, rather than disappeared; outside the dates of the conflict), repeated names, and spelling mistakes, as many as forty percent of the

⁷⁶ Ibid.

names on the wall are inaccurate.⁷⁷ These errors have called into question the authority of the monument. Moreover, some of the French Algerians, including an ardent anti-colonialist and communist and his family members, who were mistakenly included on the *Mur* have been publically outraged over being included on a memorial that also named members of the OAS. Their reaction highlights one of the inherent problems with naming: the fact names are not empty signifiers that can be put to use un-problematically for a commemorative purpose. They represent individuals with backgrounds and ideas, which can undermine attempts to portray the commemoration as apolitical.

Opposition to the *Mur* culminated with a protest by 200 members of the coalition “No to the wall-museum of the Perpignan town hall and the *Cercle Algérieniste*” near the site the evening before the monument was unveiled. This coalition consisted of 50 organizations, including “human rights defense groups, parties on the left, trade unions, veterans associations and even certain harkis.”⁷⁸ Organizers announced that they were opposed to “this shameful wall” because it “organizes a selective sorting of victims of colonialism.”⁷⁹ Mouloud Aounit, one of the organizers, called it a “wall of division” and another leader declared, “all of the ideological ingredients are present to ignite a new war of memories, to divide and arouse hate and *communautarisme*.”⁸⁰

The Harkis were identified on the monument as a particular group to be commemorated, with the dedication, “to ALL disappeared harkis, whose names have been erased.” Yet most

⁷⁷ Jordi, *Un Silence d’Etat*, 145.

⁷⁸ AFP. “Protestation à Perpignan contre un mur dédié aux seuls disparus français d’Algérie.” November 24, 2007.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Nouvel Obs. “Le ‘Mur des Disparus’ fait polemique a Perpignan.” June 23, 2008. “*Communautarisme*” suggests a desire to disassociate from the national community.

Harki victims were not individually named. Children of Harkis were divided in their reactions to the monument. For participants on the *Coalition Nationale des Harkis et des Associations de Harkis* website, the effort to include the Harkis among the *disparus* constituted a reason to support the memorial.⁸¹ Fatima Besnaci-Lancou, President of the Association des Harkis et Droits de l'Homme, however, was opposed to *Mur des Disparus* because it singled out specific groups of victims. She declared, "The AHDH is not against the commemoration of *disparus*, but rather against the commemoration of selected *disparus*."⁸²

Participating in France's "Memory Wars"

Members of the *Cercle Algérieniste* have interpreted reactions to the *Mur des Disparus* and their other memory practices within the framework of the "memory wars" paradigm. They have employed the current discourse of memory to declare their right to express their version of the past and to commemorate their dead and to claim that historians, the French state, and other memory communities are violating this right. In understanding themselves as victims of a current "memory war," members of the *Cercle* have thus reinvented familiar themes of victimhood. This contemporary victim status has offered opportunities to develop new memory practices that are highly unifying and participatory. Pieds-Noirs of all generations have experienced indignation over being denied a memory and this righteous anger has united them. The *Mur des Disparus* is central to their new project because it has provided a site for their community to defend collectively.

⁸¹ *Coalition Nationale des Harkis et des Associations de Harkis*, "Mur des Disparus de Perpignan: les Rapatriés interdits de célébrer leurs défunts?" November 17, 2007. http://www.coalition-harkis.com/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/ (accessed October 26, 2009).

⁸² *Harki.net*, "Le "mur des disparus" et le projet de musée de Perpignan à la gloire du colonialisme," L'Association Harkis et Droits de l'Homme. <http://www.harki.net/article.php?id=235>, (accessed on October 26, 2009).

Building the tradition of “*devoir de mémoire*,” these Pieds-Noirs have claimed that paying homage to one’s dead is “a natural, imprescriptible right of all men.”⁸³ They have extended this line of reasoning to argue that having a “*lieu de mémoire*” is the inviolable right of all communities. “For,” as one member of the *Cercle* argued, “these *lieux de mémoire* establish the present and enable the future. Contesting *lieux de mémoire* means denying the history of man, denying history and finally denying man.”⁸⁴ President Rolando likewise claimed that “all suffering has the equal right to be recognized”⁸⁵ and declared the need to “respect the legitimate right of each community touched by the Algerian War to express in peace its memory and suffering.”⁸⁶ The language of memory has thus infused their memory practices with moral justification. Their statements also suggest that the *Cercle* would not infringe on the ability of other groups to commemorate their losses.⁸⁷

Yet, they have claimed that their own “legitimate right”⁸⁸ has been rejected by others and that all of their “*lieux de mémoire* are contested, their existence fought and threatened.”⁸⁹ In 2008, when the mayor of Marignane dismantled a commemorative monument dedicated to partisans of French Algeria, Rolando described this move as “the first concrete manifestation of

⁸³ Suzy Simon-Nicaise, “Plus de 8 000 personnes rendent hommage aux Disparus en Algérie,” supplément, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 120 (December 2007): 1.

⁸⁴ Rosenzweig, “La transmission mémorielle,” 5.

⁸⁵ Rolando, “Y a-t-il encore un droit,” 1-2.

⁸⁶ Thierry Rolando, “Insupportable profanation, inacceptable provocation,” supplément, *L’Algérieniste* no. 124 (December 2008): 1.

⁸⁷ The president of the *Cercle* has also explicitly asserted this. Rolando, “Nous ne souhaitons pas,” 4.

⁸⁸ Thierry Rolando, “Une année d’exception,” no. 123 (September 2008): 1.

⁸⁹ Thierry Rolando, “Les Français d’Algérie ont-ils droit à l’expression de leur mémoire ? Les Français d’Algérie ont-ils droit à leurs lieux de mémoire ?” supplément, *L’Algérieniste* no. 124 (December 2008): 3.

a will to eradicate all trace of our painful memory.”⁹⁰ At their annual conference that year, Rolando presented “those who demand the destruction of a *Mémorial des Disparus*, those who want to ignore the thousands of men and women and children who were kidnapped and assassinated simply because they were French Algerian,” as morally corrupt.⁹¹ He has declared that Pieds-Noirs must mobilize themselves, along with “all democrats and those passionate about justice and fairness in order to denounce the sectarianism and intolerance” committed against them.⁹²

The *Cercle Algerianiste* has adopted a language of memory originally developed by scholars to make its case that the Pieds-Noirs are being excluded, denied, forgotten, and sacrificed by the way history is being written. As they have understood it, in the context of the “infamous memory wars,” “some are favored by the still dominant ideology, the one that uses the word ‘colonialism’ to discredit the colonial enterprise, the one that benefits from easy access to the media and the force of the law [...] while others, ours for example, because it goes against the grain, is threatened with suffocation.”⁹³ Rolando specified that while the *porteurs de valises*⁹⁴ and FLN militants have been honored in France, “French Algerians are denied the right to honor their dead in dignity and peace.”⁹⁵ Echoing a debate among scholars about the relationship between “history” and “memory,” the *Cercle* has maintained that the notion of “the Universality

⁹⁰ Rolando, "Insupportable profanation, inacceptable provocation," 1.

⁹¹ Thierry Rolando, as cited in Marie Carteaux, "Saint-Raphael, 24, 25 et 26 octobre 2008: 1 200 congressistes au 35^e congrès du Cercle algérieniste," supplement, *L'Algérieniste*, no. 124 (December 2008): 1.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Yves Sarthe, "Quel droit à la mémoire pour les Français d'Algérie ?" supplement, *L'Algérieniste*, no. 121 (March 2008) : 3.

⁹⁴ “The suitcase carriers” is a term applied to metropolitan French who aided the Algerian nationalists.

⁹⁵ Rolando, "Insupportable profanation, inacceptable provocation," 1.

and the Truth of History” has been used to discredit their memories, which challenge the dominant understanding of the colonial period.⁹⁶ Again employing the metaphor of war, they have added that “a collective of political parties and leftist associations is in war against our *memory* in waving the ultimate weapon: *history*.”⁹⁷

Members of the *Cercle* have contended that historians in particular have refused the Pieds-Noirs’ right to “*mémoire*,” and compromised their own obligation to be objective, in the name of writing a ‘politically correct’ version of history. They have argued that rather than helping the Pieds-Noirs reconstruct their past based on the fragments and traces that remain, historians have ignored subjects that pertain to their past, including the fate of the *disparus*. Moreover, Pieds-Noirs have claimed that scholars have contributed to the inverse process, actually aiding in “the dispersal and deliberate effacement of memories of our lives in Algeria.” One member therefore asked, “Is that not the real war against memory, this slow and devious process?”⁹⁸ Pieds-Noirs have expressed the sense of again being sacrificed, as they were in 1962, to the general political will. They have explained that they simply wished to preserve what is left of their memory because, in the words of fellow French Algerian Camus, “giving the floor to he who passes away, to he who does not have voice, to those who do not have a voice, is to make the vanquished speak, those that history has stricken down, soon to disappear into oblivion,

⁹⁶ Hélène Martin Berthet, “Mémoire des Français d’Algérie : transmission interdite ou impossible?: Passeurs de mémoire : une exigence “dans” la transmission,” 1ere Table Ronde du 36ème Congrès, <http://congraix.over-blog.com/> (accessed August 15, 2010).

⁹⁷ Jean-Pierre Darmani, “Puisque pestiférés nous sommes...” supplement, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 118 (June 2007): 3. Original emphasis.

⁹⁸ Evelyne Joyaux, “La guerre des mémoires n’aura pas lieu,” *L’Algérieniste*, no. 120 (December 2007): 7.

swept up by the secular rumor of history.”⁹⁹ As the excluded from history, then, members of the *Cercle* have claimed subaltern status for their memory and strengthened their identity as victims.

Through the *Mur des Disparus* and their reaction to attacks against it, then, members of the *Cercle* have conflated their sense of being “wounded” and “betrayed”¹⁰⁰ in the “*guerre de mémoires*” with the victims status of the “*disparus*” and that of their families. Pieds-Noirs have also used the cause of the *disparus* to rally their aging community. In the issue of *L’Algérieniste* preceding the 2007 inauguration of the *Mur*, a member of the *Cercle* urged his fellow Pieds-Noirs to join him at the ceremony in Perpignan on order to preserve the collective memory of the *disparus*. He declared, “The souls of our *disparus* will find in this place the anchor point that History and men have refused them. These souls will come live in this marble. But in order to do this, they need the countless bodily presence of the living, of our physical presence. It is thus a formidable *rendez-vous*. Even worse, it is a duty that History burdens us with.”¹⁰¹ This moving entreaty considered the Pieds-Noirs’ united presence to be the only way the tragedies of the past could be laid to rest. Collective action is also necessary for ensuring the future of their community. Rolando and other members of the *Cercle* have recognized that defending the *Mur* offers “opportunities to affirm that we are a community that is standing up, a community that assumes its historic past, a community that is proud of the work accomplished in Algeria, a community proud of its roots.”¹⁰² Pieds-Noirs in the *Cercle Algérieniste* affirm that, just as in 1973 when the association was founded, they have remained “proud to be French Algerian.”¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Darmani, “Puisque pestiférés nous sommes...” 3.

¹⁰⁰ Rolando, in Carteaux, “Saint-Raphael,” 1.

¹⁰¹ Gérard Rosenzweig, “Rendez-vous avec notre passé,” supplement, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 118 (June 2007): 11.

¹⁰² Rolando, “Nous ne souhaitons pas,” 4.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Members of the *Cercle* have expressed optimism that their new way of understanding their past has given new life to their community. One adherent wrote that the 2008 conference drew 1,200 participants, who came “to affirm the legitimacy of their right to express their memory and to have their *lieux de mémoire* respected.”¹⁰⁴ The *Algérieniste* publication proclaimed that defending their *devoir de mémoire* has “contributed to forging our spirit of resistance, and to sharpening our Pied-Noir consciousness and ability to rebel yet again against the betrayal of our history.”¹⁰⁵ In response to protests against the *Mur*, another member declared that attempts to destroy the Pieds-Noirs by refusing them their right to memory have had the opposite effect. “We have understood in Perpignan,” he exulted, “that we are, more than a ‘community,’ we are a family...thank you, gentlemen!”¹⁰⁶ Once again, then, the Pieds-Noirs have ensured the future of their community by evoking their past.

The disappearance of the Sidi-Ferruch monument from the *Cercle*'s memorial repertoire after 1994 is a striking indicator of their move away from celebrating the pioneering aspects of their memory and identity. This commemoration has remained part of how they understand themselves and their past. It is no longer featured, however, at the center of their memorial practices. One member of the *Cercle* who noticed this shift felt that they had gone too far. He explained that while the association has realized an indispensable “*devoir de mémoire*” through the *Mur des Disparus*, educating people about “the incontestable benefit that our compatriots from diverse origins, with few resources contributed to the metropole [...] is equally a *devoir*.”

¹⁰⁴ Carteaux, "Saint-Raphael," 1.

¹⁰⁵ Cercle Algérieniste, “Pour l’honneur de notre communauté,” supplement, *Les Informations de l’Algérieniste*, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 97 (March 2002).

¹⁰⁶ Michel Lagrot, "Les nouveaux assassins de la mémoire," supplement, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 120 (December 2007): 8.

He argued that doing so is essential for combating the stereotype of the Pieds-Noirs as exploitative colonists that their youth have received through the press and from textbooks.¹⁰⁷ The majority of the *Cercle* no longer shares this view.

Conclusion: Online Sites of Pied-Noir Memory

As the *Cercle* has sought a wider French audience and identified the need to attract the interest of the second generation, members have searched for new ways to communicate their collective memory. One initiative has been to start employing cyber vectors of memory. Leaders of the *Cercle* have established a website for their national association, sites for local branches, and a blog to publish the proceedings of their national conference.¹⁰⁸ As H el ene Martin-Berthet, an adherent of the *Cercle* who advocated this development explained, “We must be conscious of the behavior of those to whom we wish to transmit our memory.”¹⁰⁹ Martin-Berthet cited evidence that fifty percent of the French public surf the Internet and that younger generations spend half of their free time online as proof of “the upheaval of cultural practices to which we need to adapt ourselves.”¹¹⁰ Martin-Berthet concluded her defense of cyber vectors by declaring, “we owe it to ourselves to be present in this ‘era of ubiquitous memory’ as Emmanuel Hoog notes in his work *M emoire ann ee z ero*, where everything is called to be preserved and to be accessible to everyone, thanks to the introduction and the democratization of these new

¹⁰⁷ Jean Gandolfo, “Le faire savoir,” supplement, *L’Alg erianiste*, no. 107 (September 2004) : 3.

¹⁰⁸ *Cercle Alg erianiste*: <http://www.cerclealgerianiste.fr/>, *Cercle Alg erianiste de Lyon*: <http://www.cerclealgerianiste-lyon.org/>, *Cercle Alg erianiste d’Aix-en-Provence*: <http://congraix.over-blog.com/>.

¹⁰⁹ H el ene Martin-Berthet, “Pour poursuivre notre dialogue,” supplement, *L’Alg erianiste*, no. 128 (December 2009) : 9.

¹¹⁰ Martin-Berthet, “Pour poursuivre notre dialogue,” 9.

technologies that are digital, the Internet or mobile communications. A blog has the advantage of being very reactive and interactive while still remaining serious.”¹¹¹

The *Cercle*'s website publicizes the association's projects, including the *Mur des Disparus*, and offers a history of the *Algérianiste* movement. In this way, it resembles Harki websites that are connected to memorial associations. Other prominent Pied-Noir organizations have set up sites to communicate their activities as well.¹¹² Pieds-Noirs have also established websites that are intended to encourage participation in protests and demonstrations.¹¹³ As with the Harki site, all aim to educate the public about their collective past. Unlike the Harki websites analyzed in Chapters 4 and 5, however, most Pied-Noir cyber carriers do not have public discussion forums and are not designed for participation directly on the site. This suggests that the Pieds-Noirs have been more interested in attracting involvement in their memory practices and activism than in negotiating collective understandings of the past. For many Pieds-Noirs, these narratives and tropes are, by now, well established.

Pieds-Noirs employ cyber vectors for an additional, commemorative purpose that is not common among second-generation Harki sites. Most websites are devised to help Pieds-Noirs reconstruct and maintain traces of their homeland. The majority of Pied-Noir websites are dedicated to particular cities, towns, and villages in Algeria.¹¹⁴ They provide photos and personal

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² *Association Nationale des Français d'Afrique du Nord, d'Outre-Mer et de leurs Amis* (ANFANOMA): <http://s317630649.onlinehome.fr/anfanoma/index.php>; *Comité Veritas*: <http://www.comite-veritas.com/>; *Jeune Pied-Noir*: <http://jeunepiednoir.pagesperso-orange.fr/>; *Rassemblement et coordination unitaires des rapatriés et spoilés* (RECOURS) and *Mémoire de la France d'Outre-Mer*: <http://francememoire.pagesperso-orange.fr/index.htm>.

¹¹³ *Algerie-francaise.org*: <http://www.algerie-francaise.org/>; *Bab el Oued Story*: <http://babelouedstory.com/>; *Manifestation Pieds-Noirs 2012*: <http://manifpn2012.canalblog.com/>; *Pieds-Noirs d'Aujourd'hui*: <http://www.piedsnoirs-aujourd'hui.com/>.

¹¹⁴ For a list of these sites, organized by region, see Jean-Pierre Bartolini's personal site: "Tous les Liens et Sites Pieds-Noirs," <http://bone.piednoir.net/page%20tete6.html>.

memories of these locales; sites that are affiliated with associations also organize gatherings for former residents. These sites attest to the lingering importance of regional identities for the Pieds-Noirs. Other sites provide information on the whereabouts of vestiges, such as monuments, plaques, and church bells, of French Algeria or the fate of French Algerian cemeteries.¹¹⁵ A few of the blogs and websites provide a guest book as well, where Pieds-Noirs can post inquiries or share reflections about places, symbols, or fellow French Algerians.¹¹⁶ These sites, then, offer a means of assuaging the loss of French Algeria and resisting the process of forgetting. The *Centre de Documentation des Français d'Algérie*, discussed in Chapter 8, addresses these same needs.

The case of the *Cercle Algérianiste* not only offers insight into how the Pied-Noir community has adapted its memory practices in response to its current needs and desires for the future; it also presents an opportunity to study 21st century French memory culture and to evaluate the tools that other scholars have developed for analyzing it. As France has come to terms with its colonial past, the clear distinction that historians have claimed exists between their own work and that of architects of memory (memorial associations and amateur scholars with access to testimonial evidence) is now being challenged. The fields of history, memory, and politics have become intertwined and share the same language. Thus, like the term “*lieu de mémoire*,” the notion of “memory wars” has migrated from the academic setting in which it was created and has actually contributed to a politically charged culture of memory competition. As groups have engaged with this scholarly discourse, it has reinforced an antagonistic framework through which they interpret responses to their memory work and competing narratives.

¹¹⁵ Smith, “Settler Sites of Memory,” 71-80. *Algerie-francaise.org*: <http://www.algerie-francaise.org/cimetiere/index.shtml>; *Bab el Oued Story*: http://babelouedstory.com/thema_les/cimetieres/cimetiere_accueil/cimetiere_accueil.html; RECOURS and *Mémoire de la France d'Outre-Mer*: <http://francememoire.pagesperso-orange.fr/actions.htm>.

¹¹⁶ *Denis Dar.com*: <http://www.denisdar.com/index.php?rub=livres>; *Cercle Algérianiste de Montpellier*: http://algerianistesmtp.free.fr/livre_d_or.htm.

CHAPTER 8: MEMORIALIZING FRENCH ALGERIA IN THE *CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION DES FRANÇAIS D'ALGÉRIE*, 2012

In 2012, the *Cercle Algérianiste*, in conjunction with the city of Perpignan, opened the *Centre de Documentation des Français d'Algérie* (Resource Center on French Algerians, CDDFA), the only museum and archive site in France currently devoted to an episode in the colonial past.¹ As the first scholarly evaluation of the CDDFA, this chapter places the site in the context of recent French museum projects that deal with themes of cultural difference. A number of successful exhibitions on colonial topics in the 1990s reflected a growing interest in colonial history in France,² yet the state has not been able to produce a national museum that successfully and directly engages with its controversial colonial legacy. I argue that the CDDFA exists because it is the work of an association that shares a clear, if narrow, vision of the nature of French Algeria. Its roots are also the main source of criticism toward the project. As an act of memory for French Algerians, the CDDFA does not have the same imperative to be inclusive that a national, historical museum project would have, yet it relies on public funding. To demonstrate this point, this chapter also constructs a history of the CDDFA as an institution and analyzes how French Algerians use the museum and archive as memory technologies. I argue that the *Cercle Algérianiste*'s goals for the site and its museological choices reflect twin desires: to preserve the cultural and historical differences that make French Algerians unique and to

¹ While there is no colonial museum in France, there are national archives dedicated to the colonial French presence overseas. The *Archives nationales d'outre-mer* are located in Aix-en-Provence.

² Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums, and Colonial Memories* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 326-7, 332.

challenge the understandings that others have of French Algerians and their lives in Algeria that have formed the basis for their exclusion in France.

French Colonial Museum Context

During the colonial period, museums served to construct and perpetuate the cultural hierarchies that underpinned the imperial enterprise. Objects looted by colonists were displayed “as glorious symbols of geopolitical power,”³ and France was exalted through her comparison with the colonial “other.” In the aftermath of colonialism, France and other Western nations have had to rethink the institutionalized presentation of difference. The French have made several attempts to update museums to be more inclusive and appreciative of other cultures, but have failed to successfully engage with the subject of colonialism, and in most cases, these projects are still framed as an encounter with the “other.”

The *Musée du Quai Branly* (MQB, Paris), which opened in 2006, re-appropriated art acquired during the colonial era with the goals of “of abolishing aesthetic hierarchies and paying homage to non-Western societies.”⁴ Curators, however, selected an approach that privileges the aesthetics of non-Western art⁵ at the expense of ethnographic or historical context. As a result, these works are presented in a cultural vacuum, and we learn little about the societies from which they originated. There is no discussion of how the pieces were collected or of the consequences of colonialism for these societies.⁶ For the *Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration* (CNHI,

³ Dominic Thomas, *Africa and France: Postcolonial Cultures, Migration, and Racism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 16.

⁴ Daniel Sherman, *French Primitivism and the Ends of Empire, 1945-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 204.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁶ Sally Price, *Paris Primitive: Jacques Chirac’s Museum on the Quai Branly* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Sherman, *French Primitivism*, 203; Thomas, *Africa and France*, 17.

Paris), which opened a year after the MQB, the state repurposed a former colonial museum—built as “an architectonic colonial manifesto” for the 1931 *Exposition Coloniale*⁷ to memorialize the contributions that immigrants have made to French society. In this way, a celebration of post-colonial immigration, including that of Algerians of non-European origin who migrated to France following Algerian independence, has substituted for a thorough examination of colonialism. The aim of this institution is to incorporate the history of immigration into the national historical narrative, yet this museum project is still framed as an encounter with the “other.” As Dominic Thomas has argued, “the defining umbrella rubric for the project is specified by the statement, ‘*Leur histoire est notre histoire*’ (Their history is our history)” while “the relationship between the *other* and the *we* remains exceptionally vague, confused and complicated by the question of appropriation, as well as the specter of republican ideals and values.”⁸ The *Musée des civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée* (MuCEM) that opened in Marseille in 2013 documents cultural encounters and exchanges in Euro-Mediterranean history since 1000. The impact of European colonialism is essential to narrating this history, and yet it has not constituted a main focus in the institution.⁹ This omission is particularly noticeable because the MuCEM is located in a city where a large post-colonial immigration population has settled, and thus the weight of the colonial past is apparent.¹⁰

France continues to struggle with how to memorialize what many consider to be a shameful and disputed phase in its national history. Two national projects that, like the CDDFA, are specifically dedicated to colonial themes, have met substantial resistance. In 2000, the city of

⁷ Thomas, *Africa and France*, 15.

⁸ Ibid, 48. Original emphasis and author’s translation.

⁹ Sherman, *French Primitivism*, 199.

¹⁰ Ibid, 200.

Marseille joined with the national government to propose a *Mémorial National de l’Outre-Mer*, which, despite the reference to memory in its name, was intended to provide an objective historical narrative of colonialism. The project was placed under the direction of Jean-Jacques Jordi, an historian who specializes in the decolonization of Algeria, while “associations of *pieds-noirs*, former colonials or special interest groups with personal links to the former empire” were excluded from participating on the committee he headed in order to protect the goal of impartiality.¹¹ The initiative, however, encountered significant logistical obstacles and sustained opposition from these associations. The committee found it difficult to maintain the neutrality of the project in the current heated memorial context and the venture has been abandoned.¹² Plans to create a *Musée de l’Histoire de la France en Algérie* in Montpellier have likewise been cancelled following disputes among historians, associations, and politicians over the intended purpose and focus of the institution. The mayor of Montpellier proposed to create a contemporary art museum in the space that had been chosen for the project, since it seemed likely to attract more visitors and incite less controversy.¹³

The CDDFA is predominately the work of one association representing a particular community in France, even though it is supported by its locality. Its existence and ability to employ public funds for its own purposes reflects a broadening access to the power to display in France. In the wake of the colonial era, the French state has been unable to impose a single interpretation of its imperial past, and architects of collective memory have proliferated to fill

¹¹ Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire*, 329-331.

¹² Julie Rannoux, “Le Mémorial National de La France Outre-Mer À Marseille. Définitions et Appropriations Concurrentes D’une Politique de La Mémoire” (presented at the 11ème Congrès AFSP, Strasbourg, 2011).

¹³ Sandrine Blanchard, “Montpellier exile son Musée de l’histoire de la France et de l’Algérie,” *Le Monde.fr*, May 29, 2014, http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2014/05/29/montpellier-exile-son-musee-de-l-histoire-de-la-france-et-de-l-algerie_4428656_3246.html.

this gap. Various communities, associations, and individuals have marked the public sphere with their private memories, competing for public resources and spaces through which to transmit their memories. Different actors often present contradictory perspectives on the past, particularly with regard to narratives of the colonial period. Some historians and other public figures have interpreted this situation as a crisis. They perceive the competing expressions of collective memory as a potential fracture of the republic into different communities of interest.¹⁴

Reactions to the CDDFA reveal concerns over who should have the power to transmit, and ultimately impose, understandings of the past. In 2004, a collection of historians and other scholars met at the Université de Perpignan to discuss their concerns over the plans for the CDDFA and the *Mur des Disparus*. They argued that as a project financed by the municipality of Perpignan, a research center on Algeria “concerns all citizens and should not address itself to only a single category of individuals.”¹⁵ In addition, eighty members of the group “for a non-falsified Franco-Algerian history” protested against the inauguration of the CDDFA, chanting, “No! No public money for those who are nostalgic for French Algeria.”¹⁶ They considered the allotment of 1.8 million Euros to pay for the CDDFA a “misappropriation of public funds for

¹⁴ Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, “Introduction,” in *Les Guerres de Mémoires: La France et Son Histoire, Enjeux Politiques, Controverses Historiques, Stratégies Médiatiques*, ed. Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (Editions La Découverte, 2010), 15–49: 28.

¹⁵ Eric Savarèse, Raphaëlle Branche, Jean Robert Henry, Jean – Charles Jauffret, Claude Liauzu, Gilbert Meynier, Valérie Morin, Guy Perville, Yann Scioldo – Zucher, Benjamin Stora, and Sylvie Thenault, “Rapport de recherche sur le projet de réalisation, à Perpignan, d’un site public de documentation et d’exposition sur l’Algérie : *en finir avec les guerres de mémoires algériennes en France?*” Université de Perpignan, (April 2007), 3.

¹⁶ L’Association Nationale des Pieds Noirs Progressistes et leurs amis, “Perpignan, Capitale Des Nostalgiques de l’Algérie Française. Par Roger Hillel. (publié le 16/02/2012),” accessed January 16, 2014, <http://www.anpna.org/?p=754>.

partisan purposes.”¹⁷ Protesters argued it was “scandalous” to grant a subsidy of this amount to institutionalize one association’s interpretation of the past.¹⁸

Other significant concerns with the site stem from the desire to maintain a distinction between sites of memory and works of history as competing sources of knowledge about the past. Barbara Misztal has argued that memory, which derives its authenticity from personal experience, can “play an important role as a source of truth” in places “where political power heavily censors national history and where oppressed nations have a profound deficit of truth.”¹⁹ This is also the case in societies in which national history is not censored, but is still being negotiated, as in France with regard to the colonial legacy. History, in contrast to memory, derives its authority from a rigorous methodology: “only history is subject to the demands of scientific research--meaning, notably, particular demands in terms of questioning, of sources, and of validation of results.”²⁰ Historians of French Algeria have been well aware of the obstacles to producing scholarly works on this period, including a serious lack of sources, particularly on the lives of the indigenous population, and the politically sensitive nature of the subject.²¹

The CDDFA can be interpreted as a response to the relative dearth of historical works and knowledge about the lives and experiences of people in French Algeria. Two of the CDDFA’s stated goals are to “give witness to the history, memory and identity of French

¹⁷ Henri Pouillot, “Le Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie à Perpignan ne sera pas autre chose qu’un ‘musée’ d’apologie de l’Algérie Française,” accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.henri-pouillot.fr/spip.php?article258>.

¹⁸ “Deux Visions de L’histoire Franco-Algérienne, Un Seul Musée,” *Lindependant.fr*, accessed January 16, 2014, <http://www.lindependant.fr/2012/01/24/deux-visions-de-l-histoire-franco-algerienne-un-seul-musee,109860.php>.

¹⁹ Barbara Misztal, “Memory Experience: The Forms and Functions of Memory,” in *Museums and Their Communities*, ed. Sheila Watson (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 379–396: 383.

²⁰ Savarèse et al., “Rapport de recherche sur le projet de réalisation,” 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Algerians” and to “enhance the teachings of history by opening the Center to reflection on the totality of exiles.” Critics of the project, however, argue that any attempt to address this history must do so in an inclusive and objective manner, which can only be accomplished by having a group of scholars on the advisory committee. The collection of historians who met at the Université de Perpignan declared, “the research and exposition center must offer a vision of Franco-Algerian history that is at once neutral and impartial, designed to *inform* and not *influence* the public of potential visitors. To this end, only the constitution of a scientific committee endowed with autonomy and decision-making powers is likely to satisfy this demand.”²² Likewise, the group who protested against the CDDFA announced, “We do not challenge the creation of an information center, provided that it focuses on French-Algerian history, that it is a shared site of memory and that it is managed by a scientific committee composed of historians.”²³

To some extent, no history can be “neutral and impartial.” The CDDFA does not meet the standards of a critical work of history, even if its curators may want to portray it as such in order to give the site legitimacy. A brochure for the CDDFA, for example, describes its archive as “a real tool for scientific research” and the *Cercle*’s website boasts about the “numerous researchers from around the world”²⁴ who visit the museum. Yet the museum is the product of a memory community and presents an idealized, simplified interpretation of Franco-Algerian relations with a one-sided perspective of their shared history. Within the CDDFA, the native populations of Algeria can only be viewed through European perspectives of them during the colonial era.

²² Ibid, 3. Original emphasis.

²³ “Deux Visions de L’histoire,” *Lindependant.fr*.

²⁴ “Historique du Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie,” Cercle Algérieniste, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.Cerclealgerianiste.fr/index.php/le-centre-de-documentation/historique>.

There is no reflection of the dynamism of these populations or acknowledgement that they might have experienced this period differently. Nor is there recognition of the fact that French Algeria was a political construct with shifting criteria of belonging. The CDDFA's displays do not engage critically with the imperial motivations behind the creation and use of particular objects or images, but merely present them as evidence of the past. This is a common museum practice and one that is fairly understandable in the context of a site of memory. Claire Farago and Donald Preziosi explain, "all museums *stage* their collected and preserved relics in such a way as to enhance the facticity of these surviving objects, documents, and monuments."²⁵ In describing an earlier incarnation of the CDDFA, Robert Aldrich wrote, "The goal is to preserve these souvenirs and to reaffirm the heritage of *pieds-noirs*. A critical appraisal of colonialism is not to be expected."²⁶ Visitors should not expect this of the current CDDFA site, either.

The CDDFA Project

Since its inception, the *Cercle Algérianiste* has been interested in "any action aimed at saving our culture from oblivion (museums, libraries, resource center...)" and association leaders immediately began collecting documents and objects related to life in French Algeria from its members.²⁷ By 1983 they had opened a small *Centre de Documentation et de Culture Algérianiste* in Perpignan, a precursor to the current institution. Within five years, this center had doubled its holdings and became the *Musée de l'Algérie Française*, inaugurated in early 1989.²⁸ The goals for this institution were both private and public: to help French Algerians "maintain a

²⁵ Claire Farago and Donald Preziosi, "Introduction: Creating Historical Effects," in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., 2004), 13-22: 13. Original emphasis.

²⁶ Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire*, 223.

²⁷ Cercle Algérianiste, "Le Cercle Algérianiste."

²⁸ Fernand Arnaudies, "Le Musée de l'Algérie Française, *L'Algérianiste*, no. 47, (September 1989), xxi.

connection to the past” and to make the accomplishments of the settlers in Algeria known and appreciated in France.²⁹ The museum also reflected the myth of the civilizing mission. *Cercle* president Maurice Calmein explained that the site was intended to “demonstrate that French Algeria was a beautiful and grand endeavor (*œuvre*).”³⁰ In 2005, historian Robert Aldrich described this museum as “an amateur effort, a collection of treasured bric-a-brac associated with Frenchmen who lived in Algeria, many of whom died in Perpignan.”³¹

The location of these early incarnations of the CDDFA is evidence of a special relationship between the *Cercle* and the city of Perpignan. French Algerians exercise considerable political weight in the south of France, where most of them settled following their migration in 1962. Their electoral strength is especially felt in Perpignan, which is situated on the Mediterranean, near the Spanish border. The city’s website boasts of a particularly warm welcome offered to the French Algerians in 1962 by then mayor Paul Alduy of the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* party (UMP, right-of-center), “contrary to what was occurring nearly everywhere else. Paul Alduy had the heart to reduce the traumas stemming from the exile of French populations at the moment Algerian independence was declared.”³² Alduy made a symbolic gesture towards the French Algerians in 1986 when he inaugurated the Sidi-Ferruch

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Maurice Calmein, “Les portes de l’histoire,” Editorial, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 43 (Septembre 1988): 2.

³¹ Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire*, 223.

³² “Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie (CDDFA),” *Mairie-Perpignan.fr*, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.mairie-perpignan.fr/culture/cddfa>.

memorial at Port-Vendres.³³ Alduy's son, who succeeded him as mayor, continued to support the interests of French Algerians.

In the early 2000s, members of the *Cercle* decided that their collection of documents and objects had grown too expansive for their home in the *Musée de l'Algérie Française* and began looking for a more "fitting" location that would draw a larger public. Suzy Simon-Nicaise, vice president of the *Cercle* and also adjunct mayor of Perpignan, discussed enlarging the museum and archive space with the current mayor, Jean-Marc Pujol, who was also French Algerian.³⁴ The Perpignan City Council approved the *Cercle*'s expansion project in 2006 and agreed that the city would renovate the proposed location, the Couvent Sainte-Claire de la Passion (a 16th century convent that was used as a prison from the French Revolution until 1989)³⁵ while the *Cercle* would provide the content.³⁶ The city financed the project with approximately one million Euros to create the CDDFA and provided an annual operating budget of 150,000 Euros.³⁷ The final renovation costs were approximately 1.8 million Euros.

The original name of the institution was to be the *Centre de documentation de la présence française en Algérie*, (Resource Center on the French Presence in Algeria) but was changed to the more specific *Centre de documentation des Français d'Algérie* before its inauguration on Sunday, January 29, 2012. The timing of this inauguration was auspicious because 2012 was an important election year and the CDDFA was interpreted by some as the

³³ "Un Centre Dédié Aux Français D Algérie À Perpignan Décrit Par Des Militants Anticolonialistes," *Algerie360.com*, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.algerie360.com/algerie/un-centre-dedie-aux-francais-d-algerie-a-perpignan-decrie-par-des-militants-anticolonialistes/>.

³⁴ "Historique du Centre de Documentation," Cercle Algérieniste.

³⁵ "Le Couvent Sainte-Claire," *Mairie-Perpignan.fr*, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.mairie-perpignan.fr/culture/cddfa/le-couvent-sainte-claire>.

³⁶ Savarèse et al., "Rapport de recherche sur le projet de réalisation," 2.

³⁷ Ibid.

UMP's attempt to cater to French Algerian voters.³⁸ Pujol denied that this was a political project,³⁹ but the fact that the CDDFA is funded by the city reveals that the French Algerians have significant electoral influence.

The CDDFA is made up of a permanent exposition space of three hundred square meters on the second floor of the building, an adjoining space for temporary exhibitions, and a reading room on the first floor in which to consult the institution's archival holdings. The CDDFA archive is part of the Perpignan municipal library system, whose website states that the collections of the *Centre* "are composed of more than 5,000 books, periodicals, files, postcards, photographs and maps."⁴⁰ The *Cercle* website, however, asserts that the CDDFA document database holds more than thirty thousand items, including over eight thousand books, journals, and magazines and five thousand postcards.⁴¹

Within the permanent exhibition space, signs on the walls highlight key episodes and themes in the history of French Algeria. The displays are organized chronologically so that the section to the right upon entering the exposition room covers the Algerian territory before the arrival of the French, identified by a sign as the period of "Algeria before Algeria." This portion of the museum has been set up to support the "pioneering myth," which depicts Algeria as a

³⁸ "Perpignan Dédie Un Lieu Aux Français d'Algérie, Le Pen Pas Loin - L'Express.fr," *L'EXPRESS.fr*, accessed December 9, 2013, http://www.lexpress.fr/actualites/1/politique/perpignan-dedie-un-lieu-aux-francais-d-algerie-le-pen-pas-loin_1076172.html; "Français d'Algérie: Un Centre Controversé," *MidiLibre.fr*, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.midilibre.fr/2012/01/28/francais-d-algerie-un-centre-controverse,449944.php>.

³⁹ "Français d'Algérie: 'Ne Pas Politiser' Cette Inauguration," *Lindependant.fr*, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.lindependant.fr/2012/01/17/francais-d-algerie-ne-pas-politiser-cette-inauguration,107424.php>.

⁴⁰ "Réseau des bibliothèques de la ville de Perpignan," *Mairie-Perpignan.fr*, accessed December 9, 2013, http://mediatheque.perpignan.fr/medias/medias.aspx?INSTANCE=exploitation&PORTAL_ID=portal_model_instan ce_centre_doc_fr_algerie.xml.

⁴¹ "La Bibliothèque et le fonds documentaire," *Cercle Algérieniste*, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.cerclealgerianiste.fr/index.php/le-centre-de-documentation/bibliotheque-et-fonds-documentaire>; "Le Centre de Documentation," *Cercle Algérieniste*, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.cerclealgerianiste.fr/index.php/le-centre-de-documentation>.

French invention, that French Algerian associations have constructed.⁴² Significantly, the section on the centuries before the French occupation is given much less space than the comparatively short period in which the French dominated.

The section on the left presents particular features of life in French Algeria (Public Health, Infrastructure, Education, Politics, Daily Life, Culture) and significant events (the centennial of French Algeria, the World Wars, the Algerian War), ending with the migration of French Algerians from Algeria in 1962 (Exile). The signs guide how the corresponding images and items in the display cases should be interpreted. These items, most of which were donated by French Algerians, include what we might call “banal” objects: trinkets and souvenirs such as stamps, playing cards, fans, a bottle opener, a shoe horn, a box of matches, cigars, and ticket stubs. The museum presents some works of “high culture”—paintings, drawings, and sculptures—as well, but provides little context for reading them, often not even providing the artist’s name, other than as evidence of the aesthetic beauty of French Algeria. The courtyard of the building includes the *Mur des Disparus*, which was unveiled five years before the CDDFA opened. The *Cercle*’s website boasts of having welcomed over fifteen thousand visitors to the *Mur* and CDDFA in under two years.⁴³

“A Safeguard Against Oblivion”: Memory Transmission

Even though it is the product of a single organization’s efforts, the CDDFA project allows us to evaluate the concerns of the wider French Algerian community. The fact that the *Cercle* was able to get the CDDFA built, particularly in light of the multiple failed colonial museum projects in France, shows that French Algerians constitute a well-organized, influential

⁴² Eric Savarèse, “En finir avec les guerres de mémoires algériennes en France,” in *L’Algérie dépassionnée: Au-delà du tumulte des mémoires*, ed. Eric Savarèse (Paris: Editions Syllepse, 2008), 175–99, 181.

⁴³ “Historique du Centre de Documentation,” *Cercle Algérieniste*.

group. Why is having an archive and museum site so important to their community? Convincing research has been done on the important social functions that museums can serve for groups by connecting past and present.⁴⁴ Elizabeth Crooke has explained how objects in a museum “can authenticate the nation,” or other imagined community, like the French Algerians, “provide inspiration for the future, and legitimise present actions.”⁴⁵ Similarly, archives have proven valuable to migrant groups for sorting out the “meaning of memory.” Through selecting and preserving particular traces of their past, migrants consciously construct their collective identity and a place for themselves in their new society.⁴⁶ The *Cercle*’s goals for the CDDFA hint at two related challenges that the French Algerian community in particular faces and hopes to address through this institution.

First, since French Algerians come from an absent place, a geopolitical entity that no longer exists, their connection to the land and domestic items associated with Algeria has been irrevocably severed. Barbara Misztal has explained the significance of places to the construction and transmission of collective memory: “a group’s memory is linked to places, ruins, landscapes, monuments and urban architecture, which – as they are overlain with symbolic associations to past events – play an important role in helping to preserve group memory. Such sites, and also locations where a significant event is regularly celebrated and replayed, remain ‘concrete and distinct regardless of whether they are mythological or historical.’”⁴⁷ The power of place is especially evident among migrants, who have lost the historically significant places of their past.

⁴⁴ Sheila Watson, ed., *Museums and Their Communities* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007).

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Crooke, *Museums and Community : Ideas, Issues and Challenges* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 14.

⁴⁶ Arjun Appadurai, “Archive and Aspiration,” in *Information Is Alive: Art and Theory on Archiving and Retrieving Data*, ed. Joke Brouwer and Arjen Mulder (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2003), 14–25: 23.

⁴⁷ Misztal, “Memory Experience,” 385.

In examining migrant practices, Anna Hayes and Robert Mason have observed that local spaces, such as migration museums, “have become vital sites, providing space in which to enact identifications with multiple localities beyond that immediately experienced.”⁴⁸ Beyond the symbolism of the place, the CDDFA performs an essential social function for French Algerians as a place to visit, gather and discuss the past: one brochure describes it as “a site for debates, conferences, meetings, lectures, and screenings.”

French Algerians also have a particular need for new, local sites. Many French Algerians have been unable or unwilling to return to Algeria and those who did go back found most of their symbolically important places changed or gone. Cemeteries with the remains of their loved ones have fallen into disrepair and many monuments and other symbolic reminders of the colonial past have been destroyed.⁴⁹ The inclusion of the *Mur des Disparus* at the CDDFA invests the museum with emotional and commemorative significance, serving as a proxy monument for those who cannot visit the graves of loved ones. Evelyne Joyaux, the president of the Aix-en-Provence branch of the *Cercle*, observed that the choice of a former convent as the location of the CDDFA gives it an added spiritual dimension. In a report on her visit to the site, Joyaux exclaimed, “Yes, places can inspire! Even a famous French politician who proclaimed himself an atheist [Maurice Barrès] nonetheless affirmed that he was sensitive to ‘these places where the Holy Spirit breathes.’ How could it be possible for the prayers of the nuns, whispered over such a long time, not to have permeated the walls?”⁵⁰ At the same time, however, the site has retained some of the trappings of its former function as a prison. A plaque that reads “prisons” remains on

⁴⁸ Hayes and Mason, “Securing Twenty-First Century Societies,” 3.

⁴⁹ Smith, “Settler Sites of Memory,” 69-70.

⁵⁰ Evelyne Joyaux, “VI - Congrès des Français d’Algérie à Perpignan: Le Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie,” *OverBlog*, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://congraix.over-blog.com/article-vi-congres-des-fran-ais-d-algerie-a-perpignan-le-centre-de-documentation-des-fran-ais-d-algerie-98500626.html>.

an exterior wall of the building and there are bars on several windows. These reminders of captivity lend a very different kind of solemnity, one that evokes specular supervision and the power of the state, to the site.



Objects are equally significant following displacement: for migrants who face “loss of homes, livelihoods, and even a whole sense of themselves in the world, in addition to their social ties [...] objects of memory, no matter how mundane, would prove important mnemonics offering at least temporary reassurance of social continuity in a world in great flux.”⁵² French Algerians do not have many personal objects that connect them to Algeria, making the remaining ones especially precious to them. Scholars have observed a trope of the “two suitcases” in the personal narratives of French Algerians; many explain that they could only bring what would fit into two suitcases.⁵³ In fact, the objects presented in the CDDFA attest to the abrupt and permanent nature of the French Algerians’ departure from Algeria. Their banality serves as evidence of migration under duress and reinforces the claim of some French Algerians that they

⁵¹ Photograph taken on May 27, 2013 at the Couvent Sainte-Claire de la Passion in Perpignan.

⁵² Smith, “Settler Sites of Memory,” 68.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 79.

preserving memories but also in re-ordering them and making sense of them for later generations.”⁵⁶ The *Cercle*’s desire for the CDDFA to serve this function for the French Algerians is reflected in a brochure for the institution, which declares in bold-faced print, “Transmission to the youth is an absolute priority.”

In the face of an uncertain intergenerational transmission, the CDDFA preserves the shared material culture of the French Algerian community and is essential to its members as a “safeguard against oblivion.”⁵⁷ Tangible reminders of the past help to “combat the transitory nature of memory”⁵⁸ and provide a means of corroborating the existence of French Algeria after its inhabitants are gone. Simon-Nicaise explains, “This world having disappeared, we have an obligation to transmit it through books, works of art, digitized documents, personal accounts...”⁵⁹ In fact, a flyer for the CDDFA describes its collection as originating mainly from private archives and consisting of items such as “letters, notebooks, manuscripts, journals, tracts, administrative papers, objects, photos, post cards, and drawings” that were “among a family’s most precious goods, often the only trace of a life spent in Algeria.”⁶⁰ Advertisements for the CDDFA emphasize the permanence the institution endows on records of the past and, by extension, individual memories. One flyer announces to French Algerians, “Your memories constitute tomorrow’s archives.”⁶¹ The CDDFA’s brochure states that one of its missions is to

⁵⁶ Sheila Watson, “Introduction: Museums and Their Communities,” in *Museums and Their Communities*, ed. Sheila Watson (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 1–23: 4.

⁵⁷ From a flyer announcing the opening of the CDDFA in 2012.

⁵⁸ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 6.

⁵⁹ Suzy Simon-Nicaise, “À Perpignan, auprès du Mémorial des Disparus, le Centre de Documentation des Français d’Algérie est désormais sur les rails,” supplement, *L’Algérieniste*, no. 131, (September 2010): 4.

⁶⁰ From a flyer announcing opening of the CDDFA in 2012.

⁶¹ Ibid.

“Save the material and immaterial elements of the French Algerian heritage,” including, for example, a fragment of the destroyed Sidi-Ferruch monument. The city of Perpignan’s support for the museum and archive provides the remaining traces of their past with added protection: “The coordinated inscription of our archival funds in the city registers, those of the national museums, and those of the province of Catalunya will assure their permanence and the impossibility of their destruction, disappearance, or transfer.”⁶² Thus, the museum curators claim that the CDDFA “of the *Cercle Algérianiste* forever preserves the memory of those who lived in French Algeria”⁶³

“To Colonize is to Settle and Make Prosper”: Narratives of French Algeria

The CDDFA seems designed as a response to the continuing exclusion that some French Algerians feel based on the unpopularity of the colonial past in France. Andrea Smith reports that in her interviews with French Algerians, they often bemoan “metropolitan ignorance of their history.”⁶⁴ This ignorance appears to them to stem from disinterest in their misfortunes, contempt for their attachment to French Algeria, and shame over colonialism. Museum curators and leaders of the *Cercle Algérianiste* avoid using the term “colonial” in their brochures, websites, and other publications related to the CDDFA. They would prefer to frame French Algeria as a lost part of France, which all Frenchmen should mourn, rather than as a former colony. Within the museum, however, they engage with the subject of colonialism so as to put their own, more positive spin on the nature of French Algeria. Curators justify French presence in Algeria through the pioneering myth. As one of the signs in the CDDFA proclaims, “To colonize is to

⁶² Simon-Nicaise, “À Perpignan, auprès du Mémorial des Disparus,” 4.

⁶³ From a flyer announcing opening of the CDDFA in 2012.

⁶⁴ Smith, “Settler Sites of Memory,” 82.

settle and make prosper.” By transmitting an idealized version of French Algerian history, the CDDFA constitutes an attempt to eliminate the sources of French apathy or antipathy regarding their community.

This museum and archive offers an important means of making their past known to the rest of the French and of validating historical narratives. As Sharon Macdonald has argued, “Although museums have much in common with other institutions of memory, their authoritative and legitimizing status and their role as symbols of community constitute them as a distinctive cultural complex.”⁶⁵ The CDDFA can thus lend credibility to their accounts of the past in ways that other media cannot, which is especially valuable as members of the community seek greater recognition for their past.

The significance of the larger French public as an audience also helps explain why leaders of the *Cercle* updated their museum. The *Cercle*’s shift from the amateur feel of their early museum to a more professional and therefore authoritative design can also be seen as a way of harnessing the legitimizing power of museums and archives as institutions. Amy Levin has argued with regard to local museums, “To be successful, museums must adopt the technology and display methods that will most attract visitors at a given time. [...] In fact, throughout the world of these museums, an imperative toward professionalism as opposed to volunteer or amateur staff is evident.”⁶⁶ This same compulsion can be observed in the CDDFA.

Many of the signs in the permanent exhibit construct clear narratives about the modernizing and civilizing efforts of the French Algerians and the ways they improved Algeria

⁶⁵ Sharon Macdonald, ed., *A Companion to Museum Studies* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2006); cited in Misztal, “Memory Experience,” 389.

⁶⁶ Amy K. Levin, “Why Local Museums Matter,” in *Defining Memory: Local Museums and the Construction of History in America’s Changing Communities*, ed. Amy K. Levin (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2007), 9–26: 13.

in the fields of public health, education, infrastructure, and agriculture. These signs offer simplistic chronologies, contrasting Algeria upon French arrival and departure. The one on public health, for example, explains that in “1830: The (Ottoman) Regency had no sanitary equipment or medical structure.” This signage confuses temporality with causality, since metropolitan France also lacked adequate sanitation facilities before 1830. By 1954, when the Algerian War of Independence began, however, “half of the population benefitted from free medical assistance.” Photos of nurses distributing quinine and bathing Algerian children supplement this assertion. The same pattern holds for the signs on education and infrastructure. The statement that in “1830: public education did not exist” is accompanied by workbooks and other school supplies that provide evidence of instruction during the period of French Algeria. The claim that there was no public education in Algeria before French arrival is misleading, since a vast network of religious schools had educated the population in this territory under the Ottomans. Moreover, the French ultimately had a deleterious impact on the education of Muslims in Algeria, which is belied by the triumphant tone of this section.⁶⁷ With regard to infrastructure, maps of electricity lines and train routes are contrasted with an explanation of how in 1830, “In a country with a challenging terrain, communication routes were scarce and inadequate.”

The CDDFA also manifests a desire among French Algerians for greater French appreciation of their ancestors’ contributions and sacrifices in Algeria. The sign on agriculture describes the difficult process of cultivating the land in Algeria and presents French settlers in heroic terms: “The concessions of land, modest and granted under specific conditions, had to be cleared, drained, irrigated, and decontaminated in conditions of precarious hygiene and

⁶⁷ Matthew Evangelista, *Gender, Nationalism, and War: Conflict on the Movie Screen* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 32.

insecurity. Irregular and often disappointing results did not prevent these impromptu settlers from clinging to this land, and making it thrive, at the cost of their health.” It is true that life in French Algeria could be extremely challenging, due to the inhospitable climate and soil, widespread disease, and often hostile resistance from the native population. In fact, most early settlers decided not to remain in French Algeria. Between 1842 and 1846, there were 198,000 arrivals and a staggering 118,000 departures from this territory.⁶⁸

The *Cercle* uses the CDDFA as a public forum for attempting to “alter received notions and perceptions” of French Algerians as well.⁶⁹ Through a sign titled, “The socio-professional distribution,” these French Algerians argue that not all the settlers in Algeria were powerful landowners: “Contrary to the common preconception of an omnipresent ‘colonial’ agriculturist, the distribution of the European population among major professional categories demonstrates the existence of a middle class and a significant working class.” This assertion is accurate, as most European settlers were industrial workers and civil servants and could be characterized as “poor whites.”⁷⁰ Another sign, “The colonists in agriculture,” explains that those who were involved in agriculture did not entirely dominate the profession. It notes, “27% of the cultivated land belonged to Europeans,” while “36.30% of European farms had fewer than 10 hectares.” At the same time, they address and try to correct the perception that settlers of French Algeria were backward or uncivilized. A sign called “An exuberant culture” proclaims, “the mainland Frenchman who landed in Algeria was surprised by the wide range of ‘cultural offerings.’ [...] We acted, we sang, we performed, we drew; Algeria was a veritable cultural breeding ground!”

⁶⁸ Benjamin Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World of the Pieds Noirs: References to and Representations of Europeans in Colonial Algeria,” in *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies*, ed. Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen (New York: Routledge, 2005), 225–41, 230.

⁶⁹ Thomas, *Africa and France*, 46.

⁷⁰ Stora, “The ‘Southern’ World,” 231.

Not surprisingly, the curators of the CDDFA and members of the *Cercle* also seek empathy for the struggles faced by the French Algerians, including the loss of loved ones during the Algerian War and their difficult migration to France. *Cercle* President Thierry Rolando has explained how important it is to French Algerians to have their status as victims known. At the *Cercle*'s annual conference in 2012, he insisted on "the eternal need for recognition of the drama that we lived through, of the memory of those whom we left on the other side of the Mediterranean."⁷¹ The CDDFA includes somber images from the "exodus"—photographs of masses of French Algerians boarding the boats with their suitcases—along with a sign describing their experiences of exile. Simon-Nicaise explains, "We want to show through our history that exile always leads to the obligation to quit one's country under the duress of banishment or deportation, the threat of death or persecution, obliging one to go live in a 'foreign' country with all that implies in terms of specific social constraints and this feeling of remoteness from the homeland (for us of abandon), with its share of nostalgia, of uprooting."⁷² This approach situates the French Algerians in a position similar to that of other migrants from French colonies, which some might consider disingenuous. The suggestion that French Algerians were forced to quit their country also undermines their argument that French Algeria constituted an integral part of France.

The images in the "exodus" section concentrate on the trope of the family. This focus may constitute an effort to distance the French Algerians from the notion of the violent OAS male that was ubiquitous in the metropole during the Algerian War. The photographs suggest that rather than embodying an aggressive, abnormal masculinity, as the French media had

⁷¹ "Pieds-Noirs: 'L'éternel Besoin de Reconnaissance,'" *Lindependant.fr*, accessed January 16, 2014, <http://www.lindependant.fr/2012/01/29/pieds-noirs-l-eternel-besoin-de-reconnaissance,111816.php>.

⁷² Simon-Nicaise, "À Perpignan, auprès du Mémorial des Disparus," 4.

proposed, French Algerian men were instead husbands and fathers who were powerless to protect their families from exile. A sculpture of the male torso featured on the *Mur des Disparus* reinforces this idea. Like the version on the memorial, the area where the figure's heart should be is represented by an empty space. In this incarnation, however, there is also a hollow cavity in place of the figure's genitals. The image of the emasculated Pied-Noir male appears more likely to garner sympathy from the rest of French society.



In contrast to these sentiments of loss, displacement, and vulnerability, museum curators convey through the CDDFA the sense of a cohesive, singular French Algerian identity that began in 1830 and thus has deep historical roots in this territory. They display souvenirs, including a commemorative plate and blanket, posters, and images, of the “Centenary of the Conquest” celebrations, which remind visitors that by 1930, the French Algerians were well established in Algeria. As historian Michèle Baussant has argued, the figure of the European settler, glorified, for example, on posters during these celebrations, has “symbolized the deep-rootedness of

⁷³ Photographs taken on May 27, 2013 at the Couvent Sainte-Claire de la Passion in Perpignan.

France in Algeria (in contrast to the ‘mobility’, in the sense of ‘nomadism’, attributed to what were called the ‘native’ populations, especially the Bedouins).”⁷⁴

Depictions of the “Centenary of the Conquest” celebrations also convey how well the French Algerians believe they were accepted and supported by the indigenous population. Baussant has explained the myth among French Algerians of the “melting pot,” which “refers not only to the idea of their taking root in a land that some of them believe they helped to create, but also to a sort of ‘mythical Andalusia’ where inter-community relations were harmonious, at an interpersonal level.”⁷⁵ Historians have argued that it is possible, and even likely, that positive cross-community relationships existed among individuals, but it is essential to remain aware of the significant legal, political, economic, social, and even moral and sexual, barriers and inequalities that existed between groups in Algeria.⁷⁶

Thus, the site projects a model of an integrated Muslim-European Algeria that was lost upon Algerian independence.⁷⁷ The curators convey a paternalistic view of native Algerian populations, but suggest coexistence overall. The displays include photos of “Europeans” and “Muslims” working and attending school together and of side-by-side synagogues, mosques, and churches. A sign on “Daily life” describes a simple life, in which everyone got along: “The numerous *boulodromes* (bowling pitches) were places for meeting, sharing, and friendship that gathered citizens of all origins.” A display on the World Wars argues that joint participation in

⁷⁴ Baussant, “Caught between Two Worlds,” 91.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 100.

⁷⁶ Savarèse et al., “Rapport de recherche sur le projet de réalisation,” 8.

⁷⁷ The CDDFA not only presents positive relations with Muslims, but also challenges the historic divide between French Algerians and members of parties on the left of the political spectrum. Signs announce, “You might be surprised to learn: one could be a communist and attend church, could campaign for the left without contesting French presence in Algeria, and even defend it, weapons in hand (particularly in 1961-1962).”

the African Army was one of the most effective means of fostering mutual understanding and friendship. The curators provide evidence that “Muslims” supported the French presence, in the form of speeches at the “Centenary of the Conquest” celebrations, including one titled, “To our homeland, France,” given by “representatives of Muslim intellectuals, elected officials and influential indigenous families in Algeria” and another marking “the centenary of the definitive establishment of France in North Africa” attesting “once more and in a formal manner our unflinching attachment to the mother country.” The display also gives figures from the Algerian War to show that more “Muslims” fought for France to maintain Algeria than for independence. “In 1961: the Algerian National Liberation Army (ALN) strung together 24,000 combatants and 22,000 auxiliary troops.” By contrast, “225,000 Muslims served under the French flag.”

Conclusion

In 2005, Robert Aldrich remarked, “France has many colonial sites, but no museum of colonial history.”⁷⁸ Eight years later, this observation remains true, due to the state’s failure to impose a dominant narrative and scholars’ inability to agree on a historical interpretation. The CDDFA constitutes both a response to the lack of a colonial museum on the national level and an attempt to establish the former colonists’ interpretation of French Algeria as definitive. French Algerians interpret silence about the colonial past as apathy, even antipathy, towards them. They are aware of the symbolic capital of museums and archives in influencing how their past is interpreted. Through the CDDFA, they attempt both to promote a favorable impression of their past in the French public sphere and to maintain a separate community, identity, memory, and culture. These French Algerians are not, however, necessarily acting at the expense of others and their memories. They do not include other memories and interpretations, but the institution’s

⁷⁸ Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire*, 328.

name change is essential evidence of their intentions: a Museum of French presence in Algeria would have positioned their narrative as authoritative.⁷⁹ The name *Centre de documentation des Français d'Algérie* makes it clear that the CDDFA constitutes another site of colonial memory, not a museum of colonial history from multiple perspectives.

⁷⁹ Le Cercle Algérieniste, "On nous conteste le droit de revisiter notre mémoire: Interview avec Maurice Halimi," supplement, *L'Algérieniste*, no. 131 (September 2010): 4.

CONCLUSION

Today, the return of the colonial, and the return of the colonized, does not spare any terrain, from the political to the cultural, the academic, and the popular, and the land of the imagined universals. Everywhere the colonial paradigm has proved, for better or for worse, highly disruptive of established routines and polite discussions. Syndrome or revulsion, the freezing of the past has broken down, and a few deceptions with it.¹

The “unfreezing” of the colonial past in France has elicited dismal predications for the future of the Fifth Republic. The law of February 2005, the fierce debates it sparked, and the social unrest in the *banlieues* later that year seemed to confirm fears that engaging with the history of colonialism portended disastrous social upheaval and strife. Confronting this past has seemed such a perilous endeavor because some of the most sensitive and visible political challenges France faces today are rooted in the colonial period. Scholars, politicians, and the French public alike fear the questions about race, identity, and French universalism that must be raised through close investigation of the colonial regime and its inconsistencies. It is in this context that the competitive memory model, and the “memory wars” paradigm in particular, have come to dominate in France.

The Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants are at the center of efforts to break silences and negotiate competing understandings of the colonial past. Members of these communities have an evident stake in how the colonial legacy is interpreted in France, since their identities are tied to this period. Both groups have served as uncomfortable reminders of the colonial era in Fifth Republic France. They have been marginalized in scholarship and in French

¹ Florence Bernault, “Colonial Syndrome: French Modern and the Deceptions of History,” in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*, ed. Charles Tshimanga, Didier Gondola, and Peter J. Bloom (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 121–45, 141.

society more generally. Pieds-Noirs have borne the image of oppressors and the burden of colonialism. Harkis have been assigned the label of traitors and, along with their families, have suffered rejection from the rest of the North African community in France and Euro-French society. In the past decade, Harki and Pied-Noir resistance to official silences as well as their attempts to commemorate their suffering and to shape national understandings of their past have been interpreted by scholars as acts of war.

I have argued that the “memory wars” metaphor does not offer a productive way of interpreting the memory work of these communities. Harki and Pied-Noir memory practices have at times triggered strong reactions, particularly online, in this highly charged memorial context. Yet focusing on these responses distracts from the intent behind their acts. Their narratives and practices have almost always been aimed at fostering inclusion, carving out spaces for reconciliation, and providing the basis for belonging in France. Even the Pieds-Noirs, who have resisted full integration into metropolitan French society, have identified closely and consistently with France. Pieds-Noirs have struggled to preserve their cultural and historical differences precisely because they are so secure in their French identity. The Harkis and their children have likewise exhibited a fierce attachment to France. Due to their North African origin, Harkis have had to fight for full acceptance in French society in ways that Pieds-Noirs have not. The question of how best to frame their past in order to accomplish this aim has served as a point of contention among second-generation Harkis.

Both groups have sought validation of their victimhood from the rest of the French. Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants have made demands on the French state for recognition, reparations, and official apologies, which are central to establishing their status as victims. In doing so, they have followed a precedent established by French Jews in the aftermath

of the Holocaust. Benjamin Stora, one of the most prominent advocates of the memory wars paradigm, has observed that in France, “a kind of separation, of memory communitisation (*communautarisation*) by victim position, has taken hold in a competition for the status of the best victim. From there, the different memory groups, already on the fringes of society, do not hold the state or political leaders accountable, but rather the other communities.”² My research has revealed that while Harkis and Pieds-Noirs may wish to establish their interpretations in the national canon, they have not attempted to annihilate other communities’ collective memories. There is evidence that Harkis and Pieds-Noirs are comfortable with the co-existence of competing memory narratives. Indeed Pieds-Noirs in the *Cercle Algérieniste* have professed that they respect the right of all groups to their own narratives and commemorations.

I disagree, then, with Benjamin Stora’s assertion that the most significant memory conflicts occur between groups in France. Harkis and Pieds-Noirs have most often directed their efforts towards the state and I would argue that the struggle between a state and its citizens is not best understood through the metaphor of war. It is more appropriate to situate their work in the important tradition of offering personal testimony in the face of official silence. Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants have challenged the ideal of a single, hegemonic narrative and have resisted attempts to ignore those interpretations not sanctioned by the state. Yet, even in holding France responsible for its role in the post-independence violence against the Harkis and their families, the Harkis have asserted their Frenchness. France wronged the Harkis as French citizens and their children have demanded recompense from their state.

² Benjamin Stora, “Quand une mémoire (de guerre) peut en cacher une autre (coloniale),” in *La Fracture Coloniale : La Société Française Au Prisme de L’héritage Colonial*, ed. Pascal Blanchard et al. (Editions La Découverte, 2005), 59–67, 66.

A further drawback of the “memory wars” paradigm is that it obscures the diversity of memory narratives within these communities. Although he has advocated this model, which focuses on conflicts between groups, Eric Savarèse has conceded “the Algerian memory wars also run through the webs of Pied-Noir groups.”³ The case of the Harkis makes it clear that both memory conflicts and multidirectional memory practices cut across communities. Studies of the Harkis and Pieds-Noirs afford the opportunity to explore how the categories of gender and generation inform the ways in which memories are constructed and transmitted. These identities intersect in different ways within Harki and Pied-Noir memory communities, owing to the disparate situations of the two populations in France. Comparing these groups highlights the important roles that race, religion, and perceived cultural difference have played in French memory politics.

Both communities have struggled with the inter-generational transmission of memory, though for different reasons. First-generation Harkis have generally remained silent about their past due to fears about jeopardizing their place in France, lack of visibility and access to resources, and shame about their role in the Algerian War. Pieds-Noirs, on the other hand, were immediately active in constructing shared memory narratives in France. They were motivated by the perception that unless they acted decisively to preserve traces of their Algerian heritage, this aspect of their identity would quickly vanish. Second-generation Harkis have inherited the weight of the past from their fathers, but not the specific content, which they have had to negotiate themselves. Pieds-Noirs, in contrast, have found it difficult to interest their children in their Algerian past. They are struggling against the forces of integration, the unpopularity of the

³ Eric Savarèse, “After the Algerian War: Reconstructing Identity among the Pieds-Noirs,” *International Social Science Journal* 58, no. 189 (2008): 457–66, 460.

colonial past, and their image as oppressors. As a result, they have adapted their memory practices away from commemorating the conquest of Algeria and towards honoring the *disparus*.

My investigation of whether men and women remember differently reveals that memory practices are indeed gendered in the cases of the Harkis and Pieds-Noirs. The memoir appears to be a feminine genre in these communities. Women have served an important role as storytellers in Algeria, transmitting personal memories within families. Harki daughters and Pied-Noir wives and lovers have also sought to exonerate their “traitor” fathers and “violent” partners, respectively, through their stories. There is also evidence that colonial understandings of gender have persisted in Fifth Republic France. These emerge in Pied-Noir depictions of Algeria as a woman and the ways in which the French public has embraced Harki daughters’ writings as acts of emancipation from their fathers and brothers.

Women’s contributions to memory practices have followed different trajectories in Harki and Pied-Noir memory communities. Pied-Noir women have been more active since their arrival in France; female memoirs were published in the 1960s and 70s and the *Cercle Algérieniste*’s second president was a woman. Harki daughters, on the other hand, did not become leaders in their community until the early 2000s. Another difference is that memory narratives are gendered among second-generation Harkis. Harki sons appear more invested in the Harkis’ soldierly identity and their martial masculinity. They have situated their fathers’ contributions to France within a republican memorial tradition. Daughters may feel more secure in France, as North African women seem to fare better than their male counterparts in contemporary France, and have more freedom to challenge the narrative of the Harkis’ patriotic sacrifices. They also have an easier time seeking reconciliation with Algerian immigrants because of their distance from their fathers’ wartime past.

Harkis and Pieds-Noirs are memory communities, each united by the shared experiences, predominately of suffering, of their members. At the same time, they are highly diverse groups with respect to their backgrounds and political views. This diversity explains why it would be inaccurate to say that there is such thing as a “Pied-Noir vote.”⁴ It is clear from the Pieds-Noirs’ successes in getting the February 2005 “pro-colonial” law passed and securing public funds for the CDDFA, however, that they have considerable political resources at their disposal. Indeed, they wield significant lobbying power and electoral influence, particularly in southern France, where they are concentrated. Nor does a “Harki vote” exist, although the campaign promises of Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande to the Harkis suggest that they are seen as an important potential electoral bloc. Harkis have historically been more politically marginalized than the Pieds-Noirs and their children have expressed a general distrust of the political system.

The Harkis’ political marginalization may account for the significance of websites as memory vectors among the Harkis’ descendants. The memory carriers that groups choose to employ depend on their access to financial resources and political influence. Monuments and museums have more authority and visibility in France’s memorial landscape. Cyber vectors, however, offer more opportunities to participate in the production of a shared memory. When Harkis and Pieds-Noirs have made use of the same types of memory carriers, they have employed them differently. The Harkis’ memorials have centered on their collective experiences in France, while Pieds-Noirs have concentrated entirely on the period up to their arrival in France.⁵ This difference between the groups extends to how they use websites as well. Harkis

⁴ Eric Savarèse, “After the Algerian War: Reconstructing Identity among the Pieds-Noirs,” *International Social Science Journal* 58, no. 189 (2008): 457–66, 459.

⁵ Abderahmen Moumen, “Les Lieux de Mémoire Du Groupe Social ‘Harkis’. Inventaire, Enjeux et Évolution,” in *Les Harkis: Histoire, Mémoire, Transmission*, ed. Fatima Besnaci-Lancou and Benoit Falaize (Paris: Editions de l’Atelier, 2010), 135–46, 139.

have utilized cyber carriers to construct narratives and carve out a place for themselves in France, whereas the Pieds-Noirs have remained focused on preserving their connections to French Algeria.

Pied-Noir memory carriers reveal that certain distinctions among French Algerians during the colonial era have remained significant in the metropole. Most of their websites and associations are dedicated to particular places in French Algeria, highlighting the continuing relevance of their particular regional affiliations. Their attachment to their different European heritages has persisted as well, although to a lesser extent. Some Pied-Noir organizations are designed to safeguard their Spanish, Italian, and Maltese cultures.

Harkis have not organized themselves around their specific places of origin since their arrival in France. Their different Arab and Berber ethnic identities have also not played a significant role in their community. The French had emphasized these ethnic distinctions as a divide-and-rule tactic during the colonial period. They awarded the Berber minority a privileged status in the colonial hierarchy with the justification, provided by French ethnographers, that they were descended from Europeans. Even though Berbers had a greater stake in the colonial regime, Arabs were just as apt to become Harkis, as this was not necessarily a politically or ideologically motivated decision. The Berber identity has remained important in post-independence Algeria and Berber activists have challenged the dominance of the Arab culture and language, particularly in Algerian schools. While some second-generation Harkis have self-identified as Berber, mainly on websites, it has not served as a source of division among them. The exclusion that Harkis and their families have faced from French of North African origin and Euro-French has united them and has made ethnic differences less significant. The absence of tension between Arab and Berber Harkis also attests to their definitive break with Algeria.

Religion has provided an additional source of continuity for Pieds-Noirs and change for Harkis. Religion was a key category in French Algeria, as civic and confessional identities were intertwined in this territory. Pieds-Noirs have continued to participate in activities, including pilgrimages to holy sites, that affirm their Christianity in the metropole. Some first-generation Harkis, including those who participated in the UNACFCI association during the 1980s, expressed a desire to preserve and celebrate their Muslim heritage and rituals. Religion provided a means of distinguishing themselves from other French soldiers as well as from other repatriates at this time. In the context of François Mitterrand's *droit à la différence* policy, embracing their Muslim identity also allowed them to seek rapprochement with other French of North African origin. The backlash from the far-right and the ultimate failure of this policy, however, have led second-generation Harkis to avoid referencing religion in their memory work. Even the female memoir authors who seek reconciliation with Algerian immigrants do so as secular French women and do not wear headscarves. Their adherence to France's secular tradition is another indication that they wish to situate themselves firmly in France and to be accepted.

This dissertation is a history of two collective memories. Analyzing how Harkis, Pieds-Noirs, and their descendants have adapted their memory narratives and practices since 1962 provides an occasion to examine the evolving politics of memory in France. The return of the colonial past to public consciousness has, as Florence Bernault has observed, disrupted “established routines and polite discussions.”⁶ It has shown that race and religion have remained important categories in postcolonial France. Still, for all the unease that this disturbance has caused, there are indications that engaging with the history of colonialism offers possibilities for rapprochement. Focusing on the productive, rather than competitive, work of collective memory,

⁶ Bernault, “Colonial Syndrome,” 141.

uncovers the multiple, shifting allegiances that have been built based on understandings of a shared past. It is possible that a more stable, and indeed more ethical,⁷ society, one that respects a plurality of interpretations of the colonial period, may emerge from these struggles.

⁷ I agree with Michael Rothberg that “An ethics of multidirectional memory involves creating fidelity [...] with the multiple events and historical legacies that define any situation. A politics built on that ethical foundation will require a notion of transnational, comparative justice that can negotiate conflicting and sometimes mutually exclusive demands made on unstable and shifting terrain.” Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory : Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 22.

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