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Multi-causal Conflict in Algeria: National Identity, Inequality and Political Islam

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The conflict in Algeria has been about peoples' efforts to make sense of their identities, gain control over their lives and the direction of their society. In Algeria, post-colonial conflict has taken violent forms. With its considerable reserves of oil and gas Algeria has attracted substantial amounts of foreign capital. Extraction and exploration proceeded uninterrupted even during the worst years of violence. The revenues from oil have enabled the authorities to remain in power in the face of considerable social upheaval and political dissent. Global economic players have participated in the extraction of Algeria's resources but there has been little interest in the fate of the Algerian people.

In the first part of this paper I provide historical contextual material which leads into an account of the years of violence, attempts to build a peace process and the extension of the conflict with the uprising in Kabylie in recent years. The second part looks at economic and cultural global flows and their impact on the conflict, focusing on the growth of inequalities, the role of the diaspora, the new media and political Islam as a global cultural force.

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Introduction

The conflict in Algeria has been about peoples' efforts to make sense of their identities, gain control over their lives and the direction of their society. This paper does not consider claims to territorial sovereignty (such as the dispute about the Western Sahara), but focuses on conflict over political legitimacy, arising from questions of identity rooted in mounting inequalities.¹ Challenging authority and problems of identity have deep roots in Algerian history, but they have appeared in an acute form in the post-Cold war period, precipitated by the economic failure of successive governments and economic liberalization and democratisation which have been associated with greater social inequality.

This paper focuses on Algeria, with brief comparative references to Morocco and Tunisia. In Algeria, postcolonial conflict has taken an extreme and violent form, while in the two other countries similar ingredients are present but until now conflict has been contained. Algeria has considerable reserves of oil and gas and has attracted substantial amounts of foreign capital. Extraction and exploration have proceeded uninterrupted even during the worst years of violence. The revenues from oil have enabled the authorities to remain in power in the face of considerable social upheaval and political dissent. Global economic players have participated in the extraction of Algeria's resources but there has been little interest in the fate of the Algerian people.

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Historical background

A major problem in writing about conflict is deciding at what point to locate its origins; indeed, as with all histories, that decision alone can lead to different interpretations. I have chosen to take a long-term perspective. Algeria experienced an extremely violent colonisation, and the post-independence settlement failed to provide any closure on the different conflicts which had arisen during this period.

Algeria has had a particularly turbulent history: the area was first colonised during the second millennium B.C. by the Phoenicians and Romans. The native inhabitants, the Berbers, were a tribal people who lived across the whole territory known by the Arabs as the Maghreb, the West. The region was invaded in the seventh century by Arab armies carrying the message of Islam. Following a century of resistance by the Berbers, the region became part of the Arab caliphate, on the fringe of the Islamic empire which extended to Spain and Portugal by 711. The religious brotherhood of the *Almovid*s and the *Almohad*s swept across the continent into Spain. The dynasty of the *Almohad*s became the most powerful Maghrebian dynasty in history, a key reference point for Berber identity. Algerians still look back with nostalgia to the enlightenment of Islamic Andalusia, sometimes regarded as a lost paradise (Ouahnon

¹ . Global Cultural and Economic Dimensions of Self-determination in Developing Countries, funded by the Carnegie Foundation for the New Dimensions of Security Program (Self-determination initiative). Thanks to my colleagues in the research team, headed by Frances Stewart for their comments on this paper.

1998). As the Christian kingdoms gained momentum in Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries, they deployed troops to the North African Mediterranean coast. Truces were negotiated with Spain and tributes paid and a tenuous alliance was concluded with the Barbarossa pirates to prevent the Christian armies from approaching the African coast. Faced with the double threat of Christian troops and unreliable pirates, an alliance was entered into with the Turkish Ottoman Empire, and the region became a vassal state of this empire in the early 1500s. Under Turkish rule, the Arabs and Berbers of Algeria were excluded from government, Turkish became the official language and the country was controlled by a Turkish Dey, who further divided the country under the rule of Caids, usually tribal leaders.

During three centuries of Ottoman rule, the region's economy became further integrated into the permeable, mobile society of the Mediterranean. With the onset of French colonial rule in 1830 there was a fundamental change in government policies and approaches. In 1830 a dispute broke out between the French consul and the Dey of Algiers leading to a French attack on the city in the same year. In spite of decades of bloody resistance, the French military expanded across the coastal cities and into the hinterlands of Saharan Algeria, crushing its opponents including the popular resistance leader *Abd al-Qadir* in 1847.

Algeria was a French colony between 1830 and 1962, fully assimilated as three departments of France from 1848 until independence in 1962. It was a place of colonial settlement, in which the original population were deprived of their lands and their rights in 1881 on the basis of their religion and their 'race'. The European population grew from 833,00 in 1926 to 984,000 in 1954. By the mid 1950s 79% of this population had been born in Algeria (Stora 1991a). Throughout there was fierce resistance to French rule. *L'Algérie française* excluded the Muslim population from citizenship and rejected the Arabic language (Djebar 1992; Stora 1991a).

The war of independence between 1954 and 1962 was violent and protracted (Horne 1987 (first published in 1977); Stora 2002 first published 1993). After 1962 there was no process of reconciliation, or even recognition of the brutality which had taken place on both sides. In the 1950s only a few accounts of the violent methods and torture used against Algerian nationalists by the French escaped censorship by the French authorities among the most notable of which were (Alleg 1958; Sartre 1956; Vidal-Naquet 1962). To this day the responsibility of the French state for colonial violence before and during the war of Independence remains a controversial political subject. In recent years a series of memoirs have been published documenting the torture and atrocities committed by the French against Algerian nationalists and responding to new allegations of rape and torture, notably those of the *moudjahidat* Louise Ighilahriz (Ighilahriz 2001). The publication of her book precipitated 'confessions' from the French side. Only in 1999 did the French government officially recognise the war.² In the following year the newspapers *Le Monde* and *L'Humanité* published the 'Appel des Douze' signed by distinguished historians, human rights activists and opponents of the war in the 1950s calling for both sides to

² . The term 'war' was accepted by the French government as recently as 10 June 1999 in the Proposition de loi adoptée par l'Assemblée Nationale relative à la substitution de l'expression "aux opérations effectuées en Afrique du Nord" par l'expression "à la guerre d'Algérie et aux combats en Tunisie et au Maroc". <http://www.assemblee-nat.fr/2/textes-a.html>.

recognise that atrocities had taken place during the war, calling upon the French authorities to officially recognise its use of torture.³

The war of independence against the French was paralleled by a campaign by the *Front de Libération Nationale (FLN)* to assert its hegemony over the national liberation movement. This involved considerable violence and repression. After independence in 1962, earlier nationalist movements were erased from *FLN* documents, both to entrench its legitimacy and to eliminate any basis for a political alternative.

In Algeria the word 'revolution' is used to characterise this period... But it's a faceless revolution because the names of the main actors of Algerian nationalism have been erased: the image given is that of an anonymous people, standing unanimously behind the *FLN*, relying on an army which has been militarily victorious (Stora 1991b)p.8.⁴

Stora points out that the leaders of the Algerian revolution who were behind the events of the 1st November 1954⁵ emerged from a much older political tendency. The *Etoile nord-africaine (ENA)* established in 1926 had been replaced by the *Parti du peuple algérien (PPA)* in 1927, and then the *Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques (MTLD)* was established in 1946. There had been an erasure of the historic origins of Algerian nationalism which owed a great deal to processes within the migrant community in France (Stora 1991b) p.121-2. Stora argues that this monolithic view of political legitimacy enabled the *Front Islamique du Salut (FIS)* to pose as the inheritors of the *FLN* in the 1990s and in its turn to deny the legitimacy of a pluralist opposition (Stora 1994).

At independence in 1962 and the departure of the *harkis*⁶ and the *pieds noirs*⁷, there was a shortage of managers and technicians. The agricultural sector was geared to export to France and there was little industry apart from the newly discovered oil. The *FLN* offered the Algerian people a new social contract. Despite the references to socialism, this took an authoritarian-patriarchal form. Entelis suggests that the *mukhabarat* military-bureaucratic structure was a modernised version of the patriarchal sultanate (Entelis and Naylor 1992). Algerian society gave up its political rights to the one-party state which was expected, in return to underwrite the former's social rights.⁸ After 1962 the *moujhadin*⁹ became a new elite, obtaining special privileges such as licenses for private sector activity through state patronage (Harbi 1992) (Martinez 1999)p.128 (Joffe 2002).

³ . Appel des Douze à la condamnation de la torture durant la guerre d'Algérie (*L'Humanité* 31 octobre 2000). It was hoped that the official recognition of these events by the French state would make it possible for the Algerians to confront their history.

⁴ . All translations from the French are my own.

⁵ . The 1st November 1954 is the date normally given to the formation of the *FLN* from the Comité révolutionnaire pour l'unité et l'action (CRUA) and their first bombing campaign in major Algerian cities on 1st November 1954.

⁶ . The *harkis* were the Algerians who actively supported French rule during the war of independence and who had to leave for their own safety.

⁷ . *Pieds noirs* were the colonial settlers most of whom left Algeria in 1962.

⁸ . See also **Lazreg, M.** 1990 'Gender and Politics in Algeria - Unraveling the Religious Paradigm', *Signs* 15(4): 755-780..

⁹ . The *moujhadin* were those who participated in the national uprising.

The ‘social contract’ between the Algerian people and government was a tacit exchange combining social democracy and political despotism. Industrialisation would facilitate a measure of social justice particularly in the health and education sectors (El Kenz 1991; Moussaoui 1994). In order to defuse incipient power struggles the government awarded generous pensions and other privileges to the heroes of the Revolution while the *FLN* contained class conflict by providing the whole society with social services such as free medical care and education¹⁰ and subsidized food (Lazreg 1997)p.7. Although Algeria was to become a *rentier* economy, there was a contract with the people. According to Moussaoui:

‘The population conceived its relationship with the State through a tacit contract. It “gave” the state its oil, for which it had paid the high price of the blood of its martyrs, it expected to be looked after, for nothing. The state could dispose of its oil as long as it could guarantee in return the redistribution of its revenue in political wages and other gratuities’ (Moussaoui 1994) cited in (Martinez 1999)p. 128.

The constitution provided that Islam should be the state religion, but as Hugh Roberts points out, it had ‘really implied ... the subordination of Algeria’s religious leaders to the nation-state’ (Roberts 2001)p. 19. The majority of Algerians are Sunni, divided between a puritanical Islam and the Islam of the *mrabtîn* and the Sufi orders. Maraboutic Islam was the backbone of Algerian resistance to the French between 1830-71, but the reform movement were inspired by the *salafîyya* movement in the Middle East and they were active within the *FLN* at independence (Roberts 1993).

Control over Algeria’s increasingly important oil fields was an important aspect of the post-war settlement and negotiations with France.¹¹ Subsequently the oil industry was nationalised in 1971 and from a relatively small initial base, oil interests remained ‘at the core of the government’s energy policy and international relations’ (Aissaoui 2001)p.88. In the first four-year national economic plan (1970-73) hydrocarbons were to be used to trigger rapid state-led industrialisation. This in turn gave rise to substantial rural-urban migration.¹²

Reform of patterns of ownership in the countryside was subject to considerable struggle. Immediately after independence most of the French colons left, and many agricultural workers occupied these lands, thus largely pre-empting early plans for restructuring land tenure according to Islamic convention (Adamson 1998)p. 108-9.¹³

¹⁰ . Stora writes that there were only 1,700 Algerian teachers in the primary sector in 1962 and most of them were needed for the national administration after independence. A corps of Algerian teachers had to be rapidly trained: by 1982 there were 19,000 trained teachers in Algerian schools **Stora, B.** 1994 *Histoire de l’Algérie depuis l’indépendance*, Paris: La Découverte..

¹¹ . There is a full account of the history of the discovery of oil in Southern Algeria and the struggle over this important resource in **Aissaoui, A.** 2001 *The Political Economy of Oil and Gas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹² . The urban population grew from 30% in the early 1960s to 50% in 1988 **Stora, B.** 1994 *Histoire de l’Algérie depuis l’indépendance*, Paris: La Découverte..

¹³ . Adamson cites sources to estimate that about 1.5 million hectares of land about 13% of cultivable land, which accounted for one-third of cereal, a quarter of wine production and 45% of citrus production and involved some 80,000 agricultural workers but there is considerable discrepancy in the contemporary figures **Adamson, K.** 1998 *Algeria. A Study in Competing Ideologies*: Cassel. p. 114-5.

In 1971 a massive agrarian reform was announced and the state redistributed 50% of arable land, seizing large private estates owned by absentees.¹⁴ The success of the agrarian reform was only partial: by 1973 it was estimated that three percent of landowners still owned 25% of the land. Reforms had been fought by local landowners supported by conservative religious groups especially in the Constantine area (Rouadjia 1990)p.32-33. The small investments in agriculture contrasted with the priority given to industrial growth increased the disparity between different parts of the economy. The neglect of agriculture and other sectors especially housing, placed strain on the social fabric, particularly that of the family and its hierarchies, generational cleavages widened and earlier sources of authority were disrupted (Lawless 1984). Towns and cities were overcrowded and badly served for essentials such as housing and water supplies.

During the 1980s mounting social problems were compounded by a growing economic crisis linked to the falling price of oil, the impact of structural adjustment and political upheavals associated with democratisation (International Crisis Group 2001). By 1985 there was rapidly increasing unemployment, housing shortages and stretched educational resources contributing to a general disillusionment with the post 1962 settlement. Young people's ambitions were frustrated. The result was open questioning of the system and of the economic reforms which aimed to transform the economy into a diversified and market-oriented system (Aissaoui 2001)p.16. Instead, the opening up of a private sector gave rise to speculation and the misappropriation of funds.

There are two dimensions to the dynamic behind this growth of inequality: firstly the growing prosperity of an elite linked to the single political party, the *FLN*. After independence a small Algerian bourgeoisie began to form from the remnants of the old pre-colonial merchant class, descendants of the old tribal nobility and the religious *chorfa* and those members of the peasantry who had benefited from a French education (Roberts 1983a)p. 109. This regionally divided class operated through a combination of patron-client relations (which retarded both the public and private sectors of the economy) and struggles between clans. Hugh Roberts points out that the *FLN* was not in charge of these operations and mainly controlled the population through its mass organisations of trade unionists, peasants, youth and women. By the 1980s their economic position, previously sustained by living off the public sector was reinforced by economic liberalisation which gave rise to rampant profiteering:

‘There are few parallels in the rentier world ... to the wide-scale conversion of army officers and high ranking cadres into pseudo-private entrepreneurs and predators through privatisation, deregulation of importing, liquidation of local public companies and joint ventures between multinationals and the remnants of state companies’ (Dillman 2000)p. 134.

Secondly there was a growth of a parallel trading economy which depended on official protection and connivance as in other ‘transitional economies’ such as the ex-USSR.

¹⁴ . Some of the biggest colonial landowners who had left at independence did not surrender their ownership but arranged for their estates to be managed locally.

At the same time the government attempted to accommodate conservative interest groups who wanted to return to what they saw as an 'authentic' Algerian islamo-arabic society (for instance in the 1984 *Code de la Famille*¹⁵ or the law on Arabization)¹⁶ while yielding to competing pressures for democratisation and liberalisation. The increasingly tense social and political climate led to growing industrial unrest, violence and state repression.¹⁷ In this context Islamists began to garner support.¹⁸

Women were the first group to suffer from the new puritanical climate which accompanied the rise of Islamist influence. In particular there is evidence of very high levels of violence against women especially when they moved out of the private sphere. For example in the early 1970s women employed in state owned factories in *Sidi Bel Abès* were prevented from going to work by men throwing stones, and had to be given police protection. Women living on their own were particular targets, in June 1989 a divorced woman living with her children in the southern town of *Ouargla* was stoned by a mob and her house burned down.¹⁹ In 1990-1 women in university halls of residence were harassed by *FIS* militia who imposed a curfew on them after 6pm. Anyone opposing this was 'corrected' with the aid of a whip or bicycle chains.

Violence against women was symptomatic of the Islamist challenge to modernity. The appearance of women in public, educated and aspiring to employment had been for many one of the most important signs that Algeria was a modern country, on its own terms. The Islamists targeted women who they saw as 'westernised' and this

¹⁵ . Loi no 84-11, 9 juin 1984, JO de la République Algérienne, 12.06.1984 (SSAE, oct 1984).

¹⁶ . The most extreme expression of arabization was the bi n° 91-05 du 16 janvier 1991, *portant généralisation de l'utilisation de la langue arabe*, modifying the laws of 1968 and 1973. In 1996 it was slightly changed (Ordonnance no 96-30 21 december 1996 and most recently (and significantly) by the recognition of the Berber language Tamazight by the constitutional revision of 9th April 2002. Article 3 reads: 'tamazight is also a national language, and the State will work for its promotion and development through all its forms of expression and uses in the national territory' (www.cg.gov.dz/nouveaute2.htm).

¹⁷ . Although as Stora points out, Algeria, cushioned by its petrol revenues, escaped the bread riots which had shaken Morocco and Tunisia in 1984. With the falling price of petrol after 1986 this was no longer possible **Stora, B.** 1994 *Histoire de l'Algérie depuis l'indépendance*, Paris: La Découverte. p. 78.

¹⁸ The term 'Islamic fundamentalism' has been rejected by many because it is value-laden. The term fundamentalism was coined in the 1920s to refer to Christian fundamentalism in the Southern USA. *The Fundamentalism Project* directed by Martin Marty was criticised for privileging the study of Christian Fundamentalism and adopting an ethnocentric approach to other developments **Marty, M. and Appelby, R.** 1991 *Fundamentalisms Observed.*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, — 1993 *Fundamentalisms and Society*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, — 1994 *Fundamentalisms and the State*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, — 1995 *Accounting for Fundamentalisms*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.[Marty, 2000 #8507]. When we talk about Islamic fundamentalism we should remember that there is great variation in Islam – including the more radical contemporary variations **Rouleau, E.** 2001 'Visages changeants de l'islam politique. Expression religieuse d'un contenu radical' *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Paris.. There is also an important secular tradition which is rarely mentioned but which in Algeria relates strongly to utopian memories of Andalusia, **Ali, T.** 2002 'Mullahs and Heretics', *London Review of Books*(7 February): 7-14. Alternatives proposed to the term 'Islamic fundamentalism' are 'religious activism' 'intégrisme' 'conservatism', 'traditionalism' or orthodoxy are equally unsatisfactory. Other scholars reject all these formulations for the term 'political Islam' which is the one I favour as it helps to focus on the political use of Islam.

¹⁹ . Khalida Messaoudi, then member of parliament for the RCD, speech to Swiss Radical Feminists *Service Libre d'Information* No 25 1 juillet, 1999 www.worldlib.org/executive/interlaken/twilight_fr.html.

development reached its nadir with the abductions and rape of women by Islamist militants during the civil war.

The years of violence

In the next section I sketch the main events and comment on the protagonists in order to begin to indicate how the conflict has been perpetuated in such a complex form. I also show how through the years of violence different causes of conflict have come uppermost while others have shifted in and out of focus.

i. The early stages: the 1980s until the 'coup' of 1992

Post-independence Algeria has been marked by strong demographic growth: in 1962 the population was 10m and grew to 23.5m by 1988, when about 60% of the population were under the age of twenty.²⁰ In the early years after independence during the '*autogestion*' phase the government restricted its aims to keeping unemployment low (often by absorbing labour into the public sector) and providing for the population's subsistence. The 1976 National Charter was based on the idea of '*industries industrialisantes*', the development of industries focused on domestic needs and able to stimulate productivity in other areas. Agriculture was neglected, leaving Algeria increasingly dependent on food imports, while the new industrial projects often failed to meet the planned targets (Aissaoui 2001).

The fall in the price of oil after 1983, accelerating after 1986, made it impossible for the rentier economy to continue. After 1989 the government attempted to deal with the economic crisis by a policy of privatization and diversification accompanied by austerity measures which involved a catastrophic fall in purchasing power. Unemployment rose from 16% in 1983, to 19.2% in 1987, 23.6% in 1989 and 30% in the 1990s. Much of this was caused by the loss of jobs in the public and manufacturing sectors.²¹ This particularly affected urban youth, whose main employment was wryly expressed in popular Algerian Arabic as *hittisme*, or the 'employment' of propping up the walls. It was among these young people with frustrated ambitions, that the main critics of the regime were recruited (Lloyd 2002a).

On 5th October 1988, young people²² rioted in Algiers and the uprising rapidly spread to other parts of the country. It was essentially an uprising of the excluded urban youth, the *hittistes* who wanted work, decent housing and services (the failure of the water supply remains a key issue for many in the cities).²³ It is said that the rioters erected an empty sack of semolina – the basis of Algeria's staple *couscous* - in place of the national flag, to symbolise their demands.²⁴ Many contemporary accounts draw

²⁰ . Although fertility rates are now falling, the population is now estimated to be nearer 30m.

²¹ . Aissaoui estimates one-third of the unemployed in the 1990s to have come from manufacturing industry and points out that the dominant sector in the Algerian economy, hydrocarbons was the least labour-intensive **Aissaoui, A.** 2001 *The Political Economy of Oil and Gas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.p. 239.

²² . The Minister for Information is supposed to have dismissed the riots as the work of 'a rowdy crowd of youngsters' *un chahut de gamins*' Ibid.p.17.

²³ . For a recent account of the impact on daily life of continuing acute water mismanagement particularly in Algiers, see **Beaugé, F.** 2002 'L'approvisionnement en eau: un cauchemar pour les habitants d'Alger' *Le Monde*, Paris..

²⁴ . This is underlined by a recent paper by Hugh Roberts who argues that the rioters were against the contemptuous way in which they were treated by the authorities - *al hagra* - . They were demanding 'an intelligible and legitimate political order' **Roberts, H.** 2002 'Moral Economy or Moral Polity? The Political Anthropology of Algerian Riots', London: Crisis States Programme Working Papers, LSE.

parallels between link the actions of the *hittistes* and international events – notably the Palestinian *intifada* of 1987 - in terms of the youth of the demonstrators, their defencelessness compared with the well-equipped police and military who confronted them, and subsequently, the way in which Islamist organisations made political capital out of their demands. A contemporary account by the Paris-based *Radio Beur FM* cites popular sympathy for resistance in Chile and Poland as possible points of reference (Radio Beur 1988) p.10-11. There were demonstrations and strikes on the part of organised labour: the *Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens (UGTA)* had organised a demonstration the week before the riots, and there were strikes in the postal services and an automobile factory at Rouiba.

The government reacted in two ways: the riots and demonstrations were countered by massive military deployment in the streets of the affected cities. Several demonstrations (particularly those led by Islamic leaders, who began to organise in Algiers after 7th October) were dispersed, initially with water canons and tear gas, but later with live rounds of ammunition. It is estimated that upwards of 500 protestors were killed by the security forces and thousands sent to camps in the Sahara (Amnesty International 1993; Entelis 1992b)p. 75. In response to this heavy handed response there were further attacks on public buildings - mainly symbols of the regime, such as Government Departments, *Air Algérie* offices and shops. It took the army several days to bring the situation under control.

The second response to the uprising involved an opening up of the political arena to increased participation. President Chadli Benjedid dismissed ministers associated with more conservative perspectives and distanced his government from the *FLN*. In early November a programme of reforms was approved in a national referendum. These were enacted in the form of a new Constitution, approved (again by referendum) in February 1989. The Constitution formalised the separation of the *FLN* from the state apparatus, allowed for the creation of political parties and associations, strengthened the powers of the executive and reduced the role of the military in politics. A new electoral code introduced proportional representation.

Two tumultuous years of political activity followed. Independent newspapers were launched and associations were formed giving rise to a burgeoning civil society. In a review of North African and Middle Eastern politics, Entelis referred to the attempt at democratisation in glowing terms:

‘Only in Algeria has there been a serious commitment to political pluralism, despite the military’s effort to destroy this commitment’ (Entelis 1992a).

The proliferation of popular spaces can force regimes to change their policy agendas and lay the groundwork for democratisation. In Algeria,

‘Islamic, civic, secular, feminist, student, labour and farmer groups within civil society have had increasing opportunities to attract a following, develop an organizational structure and formulate policy alternatives’ (Entelis 1992b) p. 73.

Within a matter of two years some fifty new political parties emerged, the most successful of which was the *Front Islamique du Salut (FIS)*.²⁵ The *FIS* was established in 1989 as a political party following the democratic reforms after the 1988 riots. It was essentially a federation of organisations established over the previous three decades, ranging from charitable organisations, its own parallel trade unions and professional organisations, to groups and individuals linked to more violent strategies. At the centre of their ability to mobilise were the ‘independent’ mosques escaping official control by means of a loophole in the regulations which only regulated mosques when they were completely built. Benhadj was reported as saying of the mosques ‘We control them all. They are worth ten TV channel, a hundred radio stations ... They enable us to reach the real people’.(Devoluy 1994).

While it appealed to the dispossessed, the *FIS* focused on cultural rather than economic policies. The new electoral system (intended to favour the *FLN*) actually magnified support for the *FIS*. In June 1990 they won 54% of the total vote in local elections compared to 33% to the *FLN*, with a turnout of about 65% of those eligible to vote. The *FIS* won control over 1,265 municipal authorities compared with 1,520 remaining with the *FLN* (Entelis 1992b)p.77 (Lloyd 1999).

Although the *FLN* did not dispute the outcome of these elections, the government changed constituency boundaries and levels of representation so as to favour rural areas (where the *FLN* retained hegemony). Opposition parties reacted strongly: the *FFS* criticised the changes as leaving the electorate with ‘a choice between a police state and a fundamentalist state’.

The experience of local *FIS* rule remains to be thoroughly documented and there are contradictory views of it. Entelis refers to reports of municipal crackdowns on the use of beaches and the prohibition of alcohol. In some areas the numbers of women in public employment was reduced and banners proclaiming the rule of Islam replaced the national flag (Saadi 1991). George Joffe judges the *FIS* to have been conservative in its attitude towards social behaviour and radical in the stance it adopted as political opposition (Joffe 1998). In some areas extreme elements of the *FIS* became violent and the more moderate *FIS* leaders such as Madani were powerless to intervene (Entelis 1992b)p.78.

Cultural questions were of major importance for the *FIS*: after 1989 they attempted to clamp down on popular *rai* music. *Rai* is a hybrid of rural and cabaret music combining Andalusian flamenco, Berber and Arabic influences. Rai singers, including women, expressed popular resistance, love and the problems of life on the margins (Gross, et al. 1994). Opposition to *rai* was a central part of the *FIS* electoral platform in the December 1991 elections (Gross, et al. 1994). In Oran, the *FIS* city council cancelled funding for the 1990 *rai* festival and banned a concert by Chab Mami whose lyrics they found offensive. The following year they campaigned against the public performance of all music during Ramadan and people were injured when Islamists tried to burn down a concert hall. After 1992 the authorities sought popularity by reinstating the Oran *rai* festival, and Entreprise Nationale de Télévision *ENTV* broadcast *rai* music videos on *Bled Musique* (Gross, et al. 1994).

²⁵ . *Jabha Islamiyya li'l-Inqadh*.

The *FLN* was exhausted as a political force. Ghazi Hidouci, Head of the Department of Financial and Economic Affairs in 1984, describes it as ‘a meeting place of vacuousness, artifice and incompetence’ (Hidouci 1995) p. 105. While stressing the importance of the revival of civil society after 1988, he says that the *FIS* was the only party apart from the *FFS* which spoke in clear and pragmatic terms and mobilised at a popular level (p. 167). Civil society at this time was highly mobilised, with large numbers of women in particular taking part in demonstrations on 9th March 1990, some 10,000 women demonstrated against the Family Code and for democracy, on the following day a further demonstration against intolerance brought together some 100,000 demonstrators, about one-third of whom were women and in December a demonstration in favour of the *sharia* mobilized some 50,000 Islamist women (Amrane-Minne 1999).

Despite its success at mobilising disaffected youth, the *FIS* failed to build an alliance of social classes which would be necessary to bring about a consensus for lasting change in Algerian society. Gilles Kepel argues that the success of the Iranian revolution lay in its breadth of appeal to three key sectors: unemployed youth, the religious and commercial bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. In Algeria support for the *FIS* came almost exclusively from unemployed youth, and its electoral support tended to take the form of a protest vote (Kepel 2000). An article in the *Financial Times* summed up the opposing alternatives in Algeria at this time:

A climate of increasing “social terrorism” is being unleashed as *FIS* militants and their shady *shorta Islamiya* (Islamic police) take the law into their own hands. They have threatened journalists, beaten up women and, in one recent instance, burned down the house of a woman who in Annaba was leading a campaign against *FIS* pressure to impose ‘Sharia’ law. They have also smashed the windows of bars which serve wine and questioned university lecturers about the content of what they teach in history and literature. The courts dare not react.

The *FIS* also appeared better organised than the state when, last month, it rushed tents and blankets to the victims of an earthquake in the coastal town of Tipaza where the local governor seemed more intent on deploying riot police against the protesting victims (*Financial Times* 28.11. 1989).

Once Islamist parties were recognised as legitimate they began to draw in international resources, notably from Saudi Arabia and Islamic banks particularly *Al-Taqwa* (Piety) owned by the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, based in the Bahamas, which funded the social welfare activities in the Algiers region of Cheikh Mahfoud Nahnah’s party *Hamas* (Martinez 1999) p.131.²⁶ These welfare structures were put in place in the municipalities under *Islamist* control which organised the sale of cheap food-stuffs and other items and encouraged the building of squatter camps.

At the centre of this mobilisation were the ‘independent’ mosques which offered an unparalleled national structure to the *FIS* which was not open to the secular elements

²⁶ . *Le Soir d’Algérie* (23 01 2001)

of civil society.²⁷ After Friday prayers the agitation became apparent as young men left the mosques with improvised weapons, sometimes Molotov cocktails and firearms (Issami 2001)p.245. Its pre-election demonstrations in November used the slogans '*Pas de Charte, pas de Constitution, Dieu a dit, le Prophète a dit*' (Issami 2001)p.257. In an increasingly tense atmosphere in January 1991, a meeting of the RCD (Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie) were attacked by FIS supporters, leaving 48 people injured and there were increasing reports of areas being patrolled by a parallel FIS police force which intervened in industrial disputes and threatened the magistrates whenever their supporters appeared in court (Issami 2001)p. 129.

On May 25th 1991 the FIS called an indefinite general strike and civil disobedience. It was not well supported by the general population, but the organisers managed to paralyse the streets of the main towns by holding large demonstrations. *Afghan*²⁸ FIS supporters with guns built barricades and as the confrontation with the authorities grew they organised parallel power structures, notably controlling admissions to hospitals (Issami 2001)p. 64. On 5th June the government announced a state of siege and the FIS released a 22 point plan aimed at escalating civil disobedience. The strike officially ended on 7th June but throughout the country symbolic confrontations continued as FIS supporters put up banners reading 'Commune Islamique' replacing the official 'La révolution par le peuple et pour le peuple' and insisted on readings from the Koran at the opening and closing of town council debates. At this time it is thought that the FIS were being advised by Iranian experts in subversion (Issami 2001)p. 79(Jacquard 1991)²⁹.

The FIS pushed for early legislative elections. But there was an important power struggle within the government. By the end of June the Algerian authorities had arrested and imprisoned thousands of the protestors and the two most senior FIS leaders Abbassi Madani and Ali Benhadj. The military authorities obtained the resignation of Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche and a new more conservative government was formed under Sid Ahmed Ghazali. It is thought that while the military were not keen on proceeding with the legislative elections at this time President Chadli was attempting to manipulate both the new Berberist party, the RCD and the FIS in order to stay in power himself (Roberts 1993; Roberts 2001).

Nearly fifty political parties took part in the legislative elections on December 26th 1991, less than two years after the beginning of the democratisation process. The FIS was considerably ahead of the FFS (which won all 25 seats in Kabylie) and the FLN (in that order), and it completely overwhelmed the more gradualist Islamist parties-Nahnah's *Hamas* and Shaykh Djaballah's *al-Nahda*.

There were indications that support for the FIS had peaked and was declining slightly – by December 1991 their share of the votes had fallen to 47% compared with 54% in

²⁷ . Of 4,000 associations set up between 1989 and 1991 in the wilaya of Algiers, 3,500 were directly or indirectly controlled by the FIS. They were entitled to funding by the state **Issami, M.** 2001 *Le FIS et le terrorisme. Au coeur de l'enfer*, Alger: Le Matin. p. 124. .

²⁸ . Algerians who had fought in Afghanistan during the 1980s were known as *Afghans*. Some 3-4,000 Algerians are thought to have been recruited in 1980.

²⁹ . He cites links developed between the FIS and Teheran during the Gulf war and reports on Iranian support to their brothers in Algeria, published in Germany.

the last elections in June 1990, with national abstention levels running at 41%. However the *FIS* lead was large enough to make it possible that they would achieve a 2/3 majority in the National Assembly, which would enable them to enact Constitutional reforms. On January 11th 1992, just before the second round, President Chadli Bendjid resigned; the military stepped in and cancelled the elections. A state of emergency was proclaimed and a ruling body, the *Haut Comité d'Etat* was set up, presided over by the elder statesman Mohamed Boudiaf, who had returned from exile in Morocco, with Ghazali as Prime Minister.

There are several different accounts of these events. The version favoured by opponents of the regime was that army officers, the shadowy power behind the government, led by Major General Khaled Nezzar, forced the President to resign and cancel the elections. The *FIS* has always claimed that this took place at the behest of France. According to Friend, Jean Audibert, the French ambassador to Algeria had judged the elections to be risky and ill-organised with more than a million ballot papers missing and a further million blank or spoiled. Audibert pointed out that the *FIS* majority would have enabled it to make constitutional changes and create an Islamic republic. He saw no alternative but to stop the second round of elections. 'According to Hubert Védrine, Mitterand wanted to help Chadli until the end, hoping that he could escape from the hard-liners without having to ally himself with the fundamentalists. Thereafter, French policy was silent, because the president thought France would have little if any influence in Algeria or any right to a voice' (Friend 1998; Védrine 1996).

There is evidence that part of the non-Islamist civil society were broadly in favour of stopping the electoral process. Yahia Zoubir writes: 'A fact often overlooked in studies on Algeria is that a segment of civil society encouraged the military to annul the second round of the legislative elections in January 1992 because of the fears the radical Islamists provoked among many Algerians' (Zoubir 1999)p. 31-2. Thousands demonstrated in Algiers on the 2nd January against the *FIS* and its concept of an Islamist state (Boudjedra 2002).

A pro-government account is provided by Ali Haroun, Minister for Human Rights, who insists that there was widespread popular pressure for the electoral process to be stopped and that the army did not impose a wholly unpopular point of view.³⁰

It was a political earthquake of an unprecedented dimension. The next day, at the Governing Council, if some, a minority, we should say, preferred to see which way the wind was blowing, others thought that we couldn't possibly continue this pretence of elections which was taking us towards a situation like that in Iran. Some ministers had decided to put a stop to it, but didn't know how to proceed. Personally I was in this camp. Some contributors to the debate made it understood, without saying it overtly, that while we couldn't let the *FIS* come to power; we should follow events and react accordingly. But it wasn't the view of the majority. I should also say that for the Trades Unions, some political parties³¹ and a large part of civil society, especially women's

³⁰ . For a technical account of the ending of the elections see **Amirouche, H.** 1998 'Algeria's Islamist Revolution: The People Versus Democracy?' *Middle East Policy* V(4, January)..

³¹ . Ait Ahmed's FFS was one of the few parties to oppose the halting of the elections: he said that it would make Algeria look like a banana republic and focused on mobilising demonstrations against the *FIS*.

organisations, it seemed as though we were in uncharted waters. As Minister for Human Rights I had a meeting in my office with representatives of women's organisations who begged me to act to save them. Some of them fainted. Another begged me: 'I've got three daughters. I can't live in a country which is turning into the Sudan or Iran. I have nowhere to go. Don't abandon us!' A few days later some patriotic citizens met to discuss how to stop the descent into totalitarian theocracy. That led to the creation of the *Comité National pour la Sauvetage de l'Algérie (CNSA)* which was a structure outside government. It included the *Union Generale des Travailleurs Algeriens (UGTA)* the *Organisation des Moudjahidine (ONM)*, some political parties (not very powerful ones because at the time there was no party which counted apart from the *FLN* and the *FIS*), other personalities including a number of intellectuals, leaders of associations, artists, the editors of recently funded independent newspapers, some businessmen etc. (Haroun 2001-2)

Issami claims that the *FIS* were preparing for a military response to the election results. The initial reaction to the coup was surprisingly calm: in early January 1992 500,000 demonstrators marched in Algiers against the *FIS*³² and the *UGTA* stated that they would resist any Islamist government. At the same time 30,000 *FIS* followers marched in Algiers daily for almost two weeks, according to Hamouu Amirouche (Amirouche 1998). The government re-imposed a state of emergency, banned the *FIS* and dissolved the communal and municipal assemblies. Islamist political activity in and around mosques was banned, and activists were arrested and tried by military tribunals: 12,000 were interned in prison camps in the Sahara. Others were forced underground. The government also attempted to clamp down on the freedom of the press (Amnesty International 1997b).

Ending the elections was a controversial move, drawing attention to key dilemmas of democratisation, the problems surrounding the transition to democracy and whether political Islam was compatible with democracy. Bouandel and Zoubir argue that 'the process of 'controlled' democratisation is not democratic, but the end result might be the establishment of a democratic order' (Bouandel and Zoubir 1998). Other commentators make an important distinction between a democratization based on support for pluralism and the institutionalisation of respect for civil liberties (Bouandel 2002). It could be argued that Algerian civil society was showing a growing acceptance of a *restricted* plurality of political opinions but that the state was not concerned with respect for individual human rights.

Those who stopped the electoral process claimed that the commitment of the *FIS* to democracy was open to question and that had they come to power they would have been able to change the constitution in an anti-democratic direction. There was considerable evidence for this. To paraphrase several sources, notably Issami (2001), it was not a democratic party in any sense of the word: it was more like a social movement. It never published a comprehensive political programme (Amirouche 1998). Its members were not allowed to resign; such an act was seen as an act of apostasy punishable by death. There is evidence that the *FIS* rejected the idea of democratic debate or pluralism. It held that other secular or more moderate Islamic parties should be disbanded. It is suggested that its aim in participating in the

³² . *Daily Telegraph* 3 January 1992; *Libération* 3 janvier 1992.

democratic process was not to win democratic power but to end it. Its network of parallel militias and alternative state structures aimed to transform the existing state, not simply to take over the levers of power. It had attempted to organise a popular insurrection to overthrow the government in the spring of 1991 (Issami 2001). Its pronouncements made it clear that while they were prepared to use the electoral process to win power they were not committed to its continuation afterwards since they only recognised the law of God. For instance, Ali Benhadj is reported to have said that democracy was 'heresy' and at one Friday prayers: 'As for the secularists, pseudo-democrats, atheists, feminists, francophones, and other evil doers, the day when we gain power, we'll put boats at their disposal which will take them to their motherland, France' (Amirouche 1998; Attaf 1991). He stated 'we did not go to the ballot boxes for democracy'.³³ On December 28, Sheikh Moghni called for the institution of "popular tribunals to put on trial heretics and enemies of the people."³⁴ Then Sheikh Mohamed Said, chairman of the political commission of the *FIS*, was reported to have told the press that the Algerian people had to prepare for a radical change of their food and clothing habits.³⁵

'Amid sporadic outbreaks of violence and terrorism, the security forces took control of the *FIS* offices in early February 1992, the High Council of State declared a 12 month state of emergency and in March, following a court decision, the *FIS* party was formally dissolved' (United Nations 1998).

There were mixed international reactions connected to wider political concerns of the day. One was concern about what a *FIS* government might do in respect of the Gulf War. In January 1991, Ali Benhadj, wearing army uniform (this was against the law since he was not in the military) demonstrated at the head of thousands of his supporters at government headquarters to press the government to arm and transport them to Iraq to defend Saddam Hussein (Amirouche 1998). Advisors to the US Government reported that the *FIS* experience of political office at this time 'was neither especially radical nor especially effective', but that the *FIS* in national office would be 'unpredictable and dependant on political context' possibly leading to conflict with its neighbours (Fuller 1996).

There was fear that Islamist support would spread to the rest of the Maghreb: after the first election in December, both Morocco and Tunisia closed their borders with Algeria, and the French anticipated a wave of Algerian refugees with apprehension. In the days prior to the halting of the elections there were reports in the British press of Iraqi and Chinese support for an Algerian nuclear programme, and (despite the many real differences) Algeria was referred to as a 'second Iran'. The prospect of a situation reminiscent of Iran on the southern rim of the Mediterranean was alarming for many western governments. So there was little criticism of the cancelled elections from the international community: there was cautious relief from Morocco, Tunisia and

³³ . *Le Monde* 17-18 juin 1990 cited in Roberts, H. 1993 'From Radical Mission to Equivocal Ambition: The expansion and manipulation of Algerian Islam 1979-1992', in M. E. Marty and R. S. Appelby (eds) *Fundamentalism Project: Accounting for Fundamentalisms*, University of Chicago Press: Fundamentalism Project: Accounting for Fundamentalisms..

³⁴ . *Le Matin*, janvier 22 1992.

³⁵ . *Le Quotidien d'Algérie* decembre 27-28, 1991.

France³⁶ and only a very few dissenting voices: Iran and Libya commented that the *FIS* would eventually win power despite the cancelled elections.

There followed a period of considerable uncertainty about Algeria's financial situation, during which time government officials sought support both in Western Europe and the Middle East. After sticky negotiations, by the end of February 1992 major agreements had been achieved with a group of international banks led by the *Crédit Lyonnais* and loan guarantees from the European Community.³⁷

It is however important to acknowledge that the *FIS* were in harmony with a political logic which had been present during the Algerian revolution, and within the *FLN*. This had promoted the idea of an Arab/Islamic nation which excluded any other form of citizenship-membership; it rejected those Algerian revolutionaries who had attempted to turn the democratic principles of the French Revolution against the coloniser. For them the nation was divided into those who were 'authentic' Algerians and those who were not (these latter were described by Stora as Arab Socialists, Nasserians, Baathists and 'democrats' influenced by sections of the French left). It was very difficult to break the link between the Francophone and Francophile. The *FIS* portrayed itself as the legitimate inheritor of the *FLN* but had stripped itself of any ideology other than its fundamentalist interpretation of Islam (Stora 1994)p. 93. After the Gulf War anti-western sentiments rose to new levels and with them a rejection of those aspects of democracy which were perceived not a universal value but as a product of the west.

Doubts over the commitment of the *FIS* to democracy were reinforced by its links to those parts of authoritarian Islamic regimes which were encouraging political Islam. These ties with the Gulf Monarchies were the main reason why the *FIS* initially supported Saudi Arabia during the Gulf war of 1991. 'The *FIS* has long had good ties with Saudi Arabia and received a great deal of Saudi funding until recent years when the *FIS* adopted – rather belatedly – a pro-Saddam position in the Gulf War in keeping with the general mood of the population'(Fuller 1996). However, the *FIS* continued to receive funds from private Saudi benefactors and other wealthy businessmen who wanted to stake their money on an Islamic future (Anderson 1998). Iran also funded the *FIS* 'Algeria as a state enjoyed good relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran until 1993, when relations were broken because of Iranian support for the *FIS*'(Fuller 1996).

Rather paradoxically the international focus on the halting of the elections distracted attention from the democratic opposition in Algeria, who were trapped between the Islamists and the authoritarian military government. Due to Islamist death threats, many were forced into exile where they attempted to re-group.

Although the interrupted democratization appeared to be an internal Algerian affair, global factors were of crucial importance:

'The political developments of the late 1980s and early 1990s cannot be separated from their international and regional contexts, even though there

³⁶ . *The Guardian* 14 January 1992. A few days after the 'coup' President Mitterand commented that Algeria should renew its ties with democracy (*Independent* 20 January 1992).

³⁷ . *Financial Times* 27 February 1992.

were no apparent causal connections between the major political events in other parts of the world with those in Algeria. The collapse of single-party and single-ideology systems, the discrediting of socialist models, the weakening of nationalist and progressive forces in the Arab world, and the resurgence of 'political Islam' in the Middle East, all of these combined to offer a favourable environment which set in motion the widespread rejection of the *FLN*'s rule and the assertion of long-suppressed ideological, cultural-linguistic and political currents' (Aissaoui 2001)p,16.

ii. *The outbreak of armed conflict after 1992*

The period after the cancellation of the elections marks a new stage in the development of the conflict. The two biggest political parties the *FLN* and the *FFS* formed a tactical alliance to defend what remained of the democratic process, but also to oppose the *FIS*. The power vacuum within the *FIS* caused by the imprisonment of its leaders led to struggles which permitted the rise of radicals, backed by armed Islamist groups. The movement began to fracture into rival organisations, the most powerful of which was the *Groupe Islamique Armé*, formed in 1992.

At this time the international dynamics of the conflict became more apparent. Many of the young men who had left to fight the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the early 1980s, the *Afghans* began to return. They were able to fill the space left by the imprisoned *FIS* leaders. They brought an experience from their exposure to guerrilla warfare, and the ideas of the *Taliban*. They also began to use networks for the purposes of funding and recruitment which stretched beyond Algeria (Kepel 2000).

Like the *FIS* the *GIA* operated on both the cultural and the political fronts, seeking to impose its vision of pure Islam on Algerian society by violently eliminating Western cultural influences. In the period 1993-5 it targeted secular education which it sees as "undermining the jihad" by "taming" Algeria's youth. It sabotaged or destroyed some 700 schools and murdered over 200 teachers. It assassinated intellectuals, as symbols of the francophone elite that it wishes to destroy because of its secular and "Westoxicated" values. The *GIA* were involved in the killing of young women for not wearing the *hijab*. Other targets were satellite television dishes³⁸ and religious leaders with whom they disagreed.

Initially the Islamist groups continued the strategies they had formulated during the general strike by targeting the forces of law and order: the first major action being an ambush of police on the *rue Bouzrina* in the *Casbah* of Algiers 10th February 1992 (Issami 2001)p. 246. Then the target shifted to people who were associated with the government and intellectuals who could be associated in some way with the Algerian government, France or western values, and who were seen as having supported the suspension of the democratic process (Haroun 2001-2). This extended to people who dressed in certain ways, men who were clean-shaven or who wore ties, women without *hijab* or wearing what was perceived to be western clothes. Intellectuals were targeted: victims included well-known actors and writers and the head of the *Academie des Beaux Arts*. Journalists were particular targets: the *International Federation of Journalists* documented 90 killings during the period up to 1999 (Labter 1995). The attack on the independent press reached such dimensions that the independent newspapers were grouped together in a large building *maison de la*

³⁸ . For a discussion of these struggles based on 'cultural' sources see Lloyd, C. 2002b 'Thinking about the local and the global in the Algerian context', *Oxford Development Studies* 30(2): 151-163..

presse' near the centre of Algiers for their safety. Even this did not prevent bomb attacks.³⁹

Amnesty International reported that armed Islamist opposition groups singled out 'civil servants, wives and relatives of members of the security forces, journalists, artists, women's rights activists, newspaper and cigarette vendors, hairdressers and beauticians, and many others have been the targets of death threats'(Amnesty International 1997a). One of the first cases they reported was Karima Belhadj, a 20-year old secretary at the *Direction Générale de la Sûreté Nationale* (DGSN) who was shot dead near her home in the Eucalyptus suburb of Algiers in January 1993. In February 1994, Katia Bengana a 17-year old secondary school student was shot dead near her home in Meftah (Blida). She had received death threats for refusing to wear, and speaking out against the *hijab* (Amnesty International 1997a).

The depth of the crisis within the Algerian state apparatus was highlighted when President Boudiaf was assassinated while giving a speech in Annaba in June of the same year by a member of his bodyguard.

As the more extreme elements took control of the Islamist organisations in 1994, the insurgents attempted to isolate the Algerian government. A *fatwa* was issued instructing all foreigners to leave the country by the end of the year. In December 1995 an Air France airbus was hijacked at Algiers airport and flown to France, with threats to crash the plane into the centre of Paris. After flying to Marseille the hijackers were overpowered, but not without loss of life (Ryane 1997). In the course of the following year there was a series of bombings in the Paris metro that killed eight people and wounded 200 others.⁴⁰

In Algeria as the insurgents were driven out of the major cities, there were several extremely serious massacres, peaking towards the end of Ramadan in 1997 (Amnesty International 1997a). Since 1992 over 200,000 people have been killed, others injured and whole communities traumatised during this violence. In the period 1991-1998 violence in Algeria claimed an average of 200 victims a week. During this period attacks on women continued in the form of abductions '*mariages de jouissance*', sexual assaults and rapes, reaching a peak in the period 1995-8. They particularly affected women living in the countryside, prompting many families living in isolated areas to send their daughters to live with relatives in town (Lloyd in press).⁴¹

Qui tue qui?

After these events there were widespread allegations that the security forces were complicit in some of the massacres. According to Amnesty International's 1998

³⁹ . Personal interview with editor of *El Watan*, Algiers, October 1999. **United Nations Commission on Human Rights** 1994 'Question of the Human Rights of all Persons Subjected to any form of detention of imprisonment, Promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Report of the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Abid Hussain, pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/45', New York: United Nations..

⁴⁰ . The *GIA* claimed responsibility for this attack: two Algerian men were convicted of them in Paris in October 2002. The British authorities are still refusing to extradite a third, alleged to have been the 'banker' (*Guardian* 2 October 2002).

⁴¹ . *SOS Femmes en Detresse* reports that they are overwhelmed by calls for help despite Italian aid for a women's reception centre. They report an average of 5,000 births outside marriage every year (not all registered) many of which are a result of rapes during terrorist events (*Quotidien d'Oran* 8 mars 2001).

annual report, 'most of the massacres took place near the capital, Algiers, and in the Blida and Medea regions, in the most heavily militarized part of the country. Often, massacres were committed in villages situated close to army barracks and security forces posts, and in some cases survivors reported that army security forces units were stationed nearby.' The report goes on to point out that "the killings often lasted several hours, but the army and security forces failed to intervene to stop the massacres and allowed the attackers to leave undisturbed'. There was substantial evidence that the army had failed to act.

A broader debate began around the question '*qui tue qui*' – who is killing whom? There are a number of elements to this discussion. Benjamin Stora's book *La Guerre Invisible* is written around this theme: 'The opacity which for many years has surrounded the highest spheres of the Algerian authorities, has prevented the decoding of the situation and encouraged rumours' (Stora 2001)p. 41. The mystery surrounding the massacres became such an important issue partly because of the lack of transparency of the authorities in Algeria (what Stora calls '*la culture du secret*') and their refusal to allow foreign observers or journalists to investigate the situation. Stora points out that day after day, terrible killings were reported in the Algerian and international press (especially the French) without any explanation, building up a sense of bewilderment. His analysis of the discourse produced at this time draws attention to the suggestion that the war of independence of the 1950s was being replayed, with the 'francophone' elite sometimes cast in the role of francophile neocolonialists⁴² and on other occasions with the ex-moudjahidin forming the core of the self-defence groups armed by the government to defend the Algerian republic (Stora 2001)p. 53.

The magnitude and savagery of the massacres contrasted bleakly with the authorities assurances that the situation was 'under control' and that they were winning the war against Islamist 'terrorism'. There were undoubtedly divisions within the government, polarised between the 'eradicateurs' and the 'conciliateurs'.⁴³ There is considerable evidence also that there were dissident elements within the security forces, and that many involved had indulged in the settlement of scores either against individuals or groups. The Chief of Staff, General Mohamed Lamari told the journalist Robert Fisk that in the exceptional circumstances some excesses may well have taken place.⁴⁴

Another thesis was that some of the 5,000 self defence groups set up by the government to support the security forces were responsible for violent excesses against the civilian population. A UN team visiting Algeria in July-August 1998 criticised the way the government monitored the self-defence groups: it was the responsibility of the gendarmerie or the army depending on proximity. Despite affording limited access, the Algerian government gave the UN team evidence of 140 cases where action had been taken against members of the security forces for abuse of their powers (United Nations 1998). Discipline among these groups remains a

⁴² . This is the line argued by the journal of the *FIS, El Mounquid*. Stora suggests that this parallel with the struggle against the French lay behind the *GIA's* unsuccessful call for a boycott of schools in August/September 1994.

⁴³ . These terms describe sharply distinct positions of actors in governing circles towards the Islamist militia. They simplify a complex position.

⁴⁴ . *Independent* 5 November 1997.

problem, according to recent reports the army has had to disarm self-defence groups because they have been arming and supporting the Islamist militia.⁴⁵

The Islamists were not disciplined soldiers either and there were undoubtedly criminal elements among them, attracted by the allure of armed struggle (Martinez 1998). It is suggested that many of the massacres were attempts to terrorise the population or to take revenge on communities who were defying the Islamists. Another view was that the debate as an ideological smokescreen used by the Islamists as a way of covering up their own responsibility.

Allegations of government involvement in the massacres persist, most recently made by the organisation *Mouvement algérien des officiers libres MAOL*, thought to be close to the Islamistes, and in two recent books, one by a man claiming to have survived a massacre, another by a deserter from the Algerian army (Nesroullah 2000; Souaida 2001).⁴⁶ They claim that the *GIA* was created by the Algerian security services supported by the French through its military and financial support for the regime.⁴⁷ The television channels *Al Djazira* and the French *Canal +*⁴⁸ have examined new evidence and recently a group of French intellectuals, including respected authorities on Algeria such as the late Pierre Bourdieu and Pierre Vidal Naquet called for a committee of inquiry to examine the evidence.⁴⁹

iii. Peace processes

In 1994 the *FIS* participated in discussions in Rome (21-22 November) involving eight opposition parties.⁵⁰ In the following January a common platform was agreed by the *FLN*, *FFS*, *Mouvement pour la Démocratie en Algérie MDA*, *Ennahda*, *Parti Travailleurs* and the external committee of the *FIS* and the *Ligue Algérienne des Droits de l'Homme LADH*. This document (see Appendix 3) called for the 'progressive return of civil peace' based on the re-legalisation of the *FIS* and the freeing of imprisoned activists in return for a gradual end to violence and its rejection as means to attain power in favour of democratic processes. The Rome negotiations also called for a

⁴⁵ . "Algérie: 250 "patriotes" désarmés par la gendarmerie, selon la presse algérienne Algiers (AP) 29 Decembre 2002.

⁴⁶ . It is important to point out, for the sake of balance, that the French press is always willing to take a sensationalist line on developments in Algeria. See *Paris Match* 9 octobre 1997 on the 'land mafia', and most recently *Libération* 23 decembre 2002 on the alleged involvement of the Algerian army in the killing of the Trappist monks in 1996.

⁴⁷ . A further twist to this argument was given in a French television programme on *Canal +* broadcast shortly after the conviction of the Algerians accused of bomb attacks in the RER metro system. It alleged that they were agents of the Algerian security forces.

⁴⁸ . Both *Canal +* and *Al Djazira* are available by satellite in Algeria and these programmes have been discussed in the Algerian press.

⁴⁹ . *Le Monde* 8 fevrier 2001. The *qui tue qui* thesis is a major factor in Franco-Algerian relations and can be used to manipulate public opinion at times of rapprochement between the two countries. There are many ways into this debate, one of the most sensational being various attacks on the integrity of the Algerian military. This is exemplified by the controversy surrounding General Nezzar who attempted to respond to the allegations in Habib Souaida's book. When Nezzar went to Paris in April 2001 to publicise his memoirs, Algerian victims of torture filed charges against him⁴⁹ and he returned precipitately to Algiers with the help of the French authorities. **Saleh, H.** 2001 'The Kabyle Riots Repression and Alienation in Algeria', *Middle East Report* (PIN 56, May 11).. Subsequently, in July 2002 the charges against him were dropped and he began a court action against Habib Souadia.

⁵⁰ . The talks were facilitated by the *Saint Egidio* community

transitional government prior to multiparty elections, and investigations into the abuse of human rights (Maddy-Weitzman 1997). This agreement was unprecedented since it developed a consensus between secularists and Islamists and promised an end to violence (Amirouche 1998).

The Algerian government rejected this programme but the *FIS* continued to seek a return to the political arena. William Quandt points to the secret negotiations President Zeroual conducted with *FIS* leaders, which failed to produce concrete results. Instead of moving to isolate extremists immediately after the 1995 elections Zeroual concentrated on formalistic exercises such as the drafting of a new constitution and new electoral laws, but gave no clear indication to the various political forces in Algeria what role, if any, they might have in shaping the country's political future (Quandt 1998).

A military truce followed the release of two *FIS* leaders in the summer of 1997. By 1999 many of the militias had surrendered their arms or joined the regular army to fight the *GIA/GSPC* while others returned to civil society (Quandt 1998). Following the elections of Abdelaziz Bouteflika as President in 1999 a *Civil Concorde* was agreed by referendum.⁵¹ It provided for the dropping of any legal charges against persons who had not killed or made explosions but who had belonged to proscribed organisations and anyone who had killed but who surrendered arms and information about their offences to the authorities. Both groups were deprived of civil rights for a probationary period of up to ten years. Some penalties for acts of terrorism had been reduced except in cases of rape. Amnesty International reported that about 5,500 members of armed groups had surrendered and 1,000 benefited from the amnesty and others from lenient treatment by the authorities (Amnesty International 2000).

There has been little enthusiasm in Algeria for international intervention in their problems, although representatives of the *FFS* and the *FIS* in Europe have appealed for support at times. The European Parliament's Subcommittee on human rights sent an inter-parliamentary delegation to Algeria (February 1998). They recommended the maintenance of dialogue with Algerian deputies and a further delegation from the UN High Commission for Human Rights in July of the same year.⁵² Following this meeting Algeria was among the countries signing the Barcelona Declaration (Balta 1995). Under the Clinton administration US involvement was nuanced, focusing on the need to respect Algeria's autonomy and to take account of the complexity of the situation. In evidence to a Congressional Committee, the ex-US Ambassador to Algeria reminded his audience of Algeria's supportive role in the Iran hostage crisis and referred to continuing support on the question of Iraq. He said:

'The challenge is for the Algerian Government and people to obtain their own goals. Algeria is a country of great promise in the throes of a long crisis. Any action we take is meant to be supportive and in the direction of greater political openness, respect for human rights, marginalization of extremism,

⁵¹ . Loi n° 99-08 du 29 Rabie El Aouel 1420 correspondant au 13 juillet 1999 relative au rétablissement de la concorde civile [www.algeria_watch.de/infomap09/concorde1.htm](http://www.algeria-watch.de/infomap09/concorde1.htm)

⁵² http://www.epp-ed.org/Activities/ppubli/pub02_en.asp

elimination of terror and political violence, of market reform and of hope for the citizens of Algeria.’⁵³

iv. New sites of conflict: Kabylie

In Kabylie where opposition to the government erupted in the spring of 2001 political Islam is not an issue. The key issue in Kabylie is expressed as a rejection of *la hagra*: meaning abuse and exclusion of the population who demand equality in respect to access to resources, democracy and human rights. These are encapsulated in the *el-Kseur* platform of demands (see Appendix 4).

Approximately 17% of the population of Algeria are Berbers, although most Algerians are of mixed Arab and Berber parentage. The Berberist movement is a long standing cultural project, concentrated in the Kabyle region of Algeria, promoting Berber language⁵⁴ and culture closely intertwined with political demands. After independence these expressions of identity were unwelcome because they challenged the official definition of Algeria as an Arab-Muslim nation. Hugh Roberts argues that from independence the Kabyle bourgeoisie became more unified and acquired a stake in the language issue in opposition to the Algerian government’s policy of Arabisation which threatened their role in the public sector although the Berbers have never been systematically excluded from Algerian political life (Roberts 1980) (Lorcin 1995; Quandt 1972).

The protests of the Berber Spring began after the *wali* of *Tizi Ouzou* banned a lecture by Mouloud Mammeri on Berber poetry. This served as the catalyst to mobilise the whole region in March and April 1980; the protest included workers at the Sonitex factory at *Draa Ben Khedda*, village populations, university and school students. Demands were for the recognition of the Berber language and culture by the Algerian state. Subsequent anniversaries have been used to commemorate and reinvigorate the movement (Roberts 1980; Roberts 1982; Roberts 1983b).

The Algerian Constitution has now includes *Amazighité* as one of the three basic components of Algerian identity along with Islam and Arabic cultures and as an official language *Thamazight* is present on the national radio and television.

The two strongest political parties in Kabylie are the *Front des Forces Socialistes FFS* founded in 1962 and the *Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie (RCD)* established in 1988. The *FFS* is led by Hocine Ait Ahmed who had been member of *FLN* but organised an earlier uprising in Kabylie in October 1964. Between 1966 and 1989, the party was an opposition in exile grounded among Kabyle migrants. It has a broad social appeal, focusing on questions of social justice rather than Berber. The *FFS* was associated with democratic pluralism and the early movement for human rights (Roberts 2001)p.15.

⁵³ . Statement of Ronald E. Neumann, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs (and US Ambassador to Algeria from 1994-1997) Algeria’s Turmoil, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives 105th Congress Second Session February 5, 1998.

http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa47503.000/hfa47503_0.htm

⁵⁴ . *Thamazighth*

The *RCD*, led by Dr Said Saadi, is an offshoot of the *Mouvement Culturel Berbère*, *MCB* expressing Kabylie particularism, a modernist, egalitarian attitude towards women, and commitment to secularism and opposition to the Islamist movement. It is supported by the daily newspaper *Liberté*⁵⁵ (Roberts 2001)p. 40. Hugh Roberts sees the *RCD* as limiting the political reach of Berberism to Kabylie and its focus on secularism as polarising political debate and subverting the pluralist constitution of 1989 (Roberts 2001)p.18. He identifies Berberism (as distinct from other elements of protest against social injustice in Kabylie) as ‘*dissident* rather than oppositional’ and as drawing considerable support from Algerian migrants in France (Roberts 2001). While the *FFS* denounced the ending of the elections in 1992 as a coup, the *RCD* supported it.

In April 2001 a new uprising took place in Kabylie following the death in police custody of a young man Massinissa Guermah. Discontent has simmered since then, fuelled by a cycle of protests, violent repression by the authorities, which give rise to further protests and so on. It was expressed as against *la hagra* – abuse of authority and exclusion especially of the youth. The movement grew in response to the repression by the authorities which was in marked contrast to their lack of response to the grievances – Bouteflika accused ‘unnamed external forces’ of sowing discord in the country and called for a commission of inquiry. Both the *FFS* and *RCD* were overtaken by events; demonstrators burnt down their offices and ignored their pleas for calm.

Inequality and social injustice have been at the heart of the civil strife in Algeria through the years of Islamist protest and the more recent Kabylie uprisings. While the political mobilisation around Islam has declined, the key economic and many of the cultural issues remain unresolved.

Economic and cultural global flows and their impact on the conflict

In the first part of this section I focus on the economic situation in Algeria in recent years before examining the linkages which the Algerian authorities have with the rest of the world. The second and third parts survey the key cultural elements of diaspora and new media. In the final part I look at the impact of political Islam.

i. The Algerian economy and international links

Hydrocarbons (oil and natural gas) represent 97% of Algeria’s exports, 30% of its GDP and 65% of the national budget. This industry is largely controlled by the state through *Sonatrach* although privatisation is currently being negotiated. Despite its resources the Algerian economy is not robust. The country borrowed to fund investment and consumption and long term debt rose to nearly 50 percent of GDP in 2000. In the period 1994-5 Algeria’s debt was rescheduled twice through the IMF, World Bank and the EU, on condition that there was a major reform of the economy, and a reduced role of the state (Aissaoui 2001; European Commission 2001).⁵⁶ The

⁵⁵ . Owned by the millionaire businessman Issaad Rabrab.

⁵⁶ . According to the European Commission €163m was committed by the MEDA programme for structural adjustment, promotion of small and medium enterprises, support for industrial reorganisation, modernisation of the financial sector and the control of industrial pollution. In 2000-2001 €90m was committed for the reform of telecommunications, support for the media, modernisation of the security forces and technical and vocational training. The National Indicative Programme (2002-4) is intended to prioritise support for economic reforms, the development of infrastructure and human resources and promotion of the rule of law and good governance **European Commission** 2001

programme involved the devaluation of the Algerian dinar by 40% the abolition of subsidies on basic foodstuffs and substantial privatisation. Bouandel notes that between 1994 and 1998 more than 815 public enterprises were dissolved and 60% of the Public Economic Enterprises workforce lost their jobs (Bouandel 2002).⁵⁷ The measures made it possible for the military to recruit and upgrade its equipment, public housing and job creation programmes were planned. Military expenditure rose from 1.5% of GDP in 1990 to 3.5% in 2000.⁵⁸

The numbers of unemployed workers nearly doubled between 1985 and 1991 with about three-quarters of the unemployed under the age of 25 (Joffe 2002). New graduates find it increasingly difficult to enter the labour market (Bouandel 2002). This large increase in unemployment is linked to a decade-long economic crisis. Algeria's GDP fell by 7.9% pa between 1990 and 1995. Per capital national income was virtually halved from \$2860 in 1987 to \$1520 in 1997. The economic situation appears to have stabilised in the late 1990s. The 2002 report for the *Conseil National Economique et Social (CNES)* shows Algeria's growth rate at 2.5%, well below that envisaged to maintain even the current levels of unemployment.⁵⁹ The law 90-11 of 11 April 2000 ended permanent employment and introduced fixed term contracts throughout the public sector (Musette 2000).

Unemployment levels by age from 1985-1997, % of workforce

Age	1985	1989	1991	1992	1997
15-19	39.5	63.9	58.9	65.9	73.2
20-24	18.5	31.8	48.3	44.3	48.3
25-29	6.7	18.0	23.7	23.7	33.9
30-39	6.8	22.5	17.3	21.3	34.0
40-49	4.7	18.5	9.4	12.8	25.2
50+	13.2	34.5	25.5	29.5	44.0

Source: (Musette 2000).

The number of people living in poverty has risen. Youcef Bouandel summarises the situation:

'The standard of living of the majority of Algerians has deteriorated, the middle classes have almost disappeared and the gulf between the rich and the poor is greater than it has ever been. The acute socio-economic conditions also led to the disintegration of family solidarity ... it is difficult for anyone to provide for his immediate family let alone help the extended family. Consequently, suicides, prostitution, child labour, beggary, immigration ... delinquency, and drug abuse have been on the increase' (Bouandel 2002)p.39.

'Relationship between Algeria and the EU', Brussels: European Commission, External Relations DG (unit F4).. Also see **Tebbal, F.** 2000 'Algeria's Poverty Alleviation Strategy'. on the new strategy for poverty alleviation.

⁵⁷ . Figures are from Conseil National Economique et Social (CNES) 1998 *Rapport Préliminaire sur les Effets Economique et Sociaux du Programme d'ajustement Structurel* Alger, CNES novembre.

⁵⁸ . Human Development

⁵⁹ . 'La morosité de l'économie exacerbe les tensions sociales en Algérie' *Le Monde* 16.12.2002.

About 14% of the Algerian population are on incomes below the official poverty line.⁶⁰ Poverty is greater in rural than in urban areas. Consumer prices have risen by 66% since 1995 whilst wages have only risen by 45% over the same period; although inflation has now come under control income levels are stagnating (Joffe 2002; UNDP 2002).

Public investment has also fallen including in the social sectors: total expenditure on state education as a percentage of GNP fell from 9.8% in 1985-7 to 5.1% in 1995-7 and on health from 3.09% of GDP in 1996 to 2.67 in 1998. The decline in social services was exacerbated during the worst years of violence when the Islamist militias burnt down many schools and raided hospitals for medicine. The 1987 census showed very dense occupancy levels with 7.54 people per household and 10+ in 2-3 rooms as quite common. In 2002 the *CNES* reported a deficit of 1,300,000 housing units. However infant mortality, life expectancy and literacy rates show Algeria gradually improving, at levels between Tunisia with the lowest infant mortality and longest life expectancy, and Morocco with the highest in North Africa (see Appendix 5).

Some sectors of Algerian society have benefited from the general chaos arising from the civil conflict. Before privatisation, state economic patronage enabled people to engage in private commercial activities and public employees could provide access to commodities normally only available through state imports. Algerian migrants abroad were able to import goods and also contributed to a parallel trade based on smuggled goods, known as *trabendo*. Privatisation enabled a great many resources to be channelled into political organisations and used for patronage: for instance with the creation of the *Rassemblement National Democratique (RND)* in February 1997. The most recent privatisation have given rise to a further parallel economy, where large payments are made to 'submariners', a hidden body of entrepreneurs linked to the army and to the state.

Profits have been made by supporters of the government and of the armed islamist groups. For instance many of the leaders of the self-defence groups, armed by the government after 1995, have become a new elite, controlling men and resources, especially in areas where the state no longer exercised control (Barrada, et al. 1998; Martinez 1999).⁶¹ The parallel and *trabendo* networks became political and social, manipulated by both sides. *Emirs* leading some of the armed Islamist groups also forced some companies (notably transport and haulage) to close down leaving the space for them to develop their own enterprises. They also invested in import-export businesses and retail (Martinez 1995).

Private fortunes have been made out of the opportunities offered by the transitional economy and conflict. Rich Algerian families such as the Saharaouis control major construction contracts, while the Khalifahs own air transport, private banking and some communications.

⁶⁰ . See wbln0018.worldbank.org/dg/poverty.nsf/. The comparable figures for education in Morocco are lower, at 6.2 and 5.3.

⁶¹ . These constituted a force of about 200,000 men according to **Barrada, H., Ouazani, C. and Hazard, D.** 1998 'Luis Martinez, Demain les 'emirs seront les garants de l'Etat algerien', *Jeune Afrique Magazine* 1962-3 18-31 aout: p. 38-47..

The West has broadly supported the government throughout the conflict. At the international level Algeria's closest trading partner is France, accounting for about one fifth of exports/ imports, there are other important ties with countries of the European Union and the USA.

Relations between France and Algeria have been close but ambiguous. During the Boumedienne years partnership with France varied according to the direction taken by Algerian politics. France supported Chadli's government during the difficulties after 1988. By the early 1990s some 20% of all Algerian exports and imports were with France. After Bouteflika was elected President in 1999 there was renewed support from France, with the reopening of embassies, and the resumption of regular flights between Algeria and France.⁶² Trade between the two countries rose significantly from \$4 billion in 1999 to \$6.4 billion in 2001. France has a \$392million trade surplus with Algeria.

Algeria's trade with other European countries, particularly Italy and Spain are of increasing importance, see Appendix 7. One of the most important developments in recent years has been Algeria's integration into the European Union, initiated through a cooperation agreement in 1976. The Euro-Med Conference in Barcelona in November 1995 brought together all the countries of the Mediterranean in *EUROMEDEA* (including the Arabic, Maghrebi countries, Israel, Turkey and the European Mediterranean countries) with the aim of developing relations and building stability across this region (Balta 1995; Balta 1997). The EU accounts for 62.7% of Algeria's exports and 58% of its imports. In 2000 Algeria had a trade surplus with the EU of approximately €1,250million (European Commission 2001). This relationship is likely to increase in importance since Algeria signed association status with the European Union in April 2002.

Although officially 'the US has quite limited influence in Algeria' (Fuller 1996) they have substantial investments in the oil and gas industry. Indeed the US was involved in constructing many of the country's socialist enterprises in the 1970s in an attempt to reduce dependence on France. In the period leading up to 1991 the USA role increased as the Algerian government opened up the hydrocarbons sector to foreign investment (Dillman 2001). Major gas and oil exploration has involved major US companies including *ARCO*, *Exxon*, *Oryx*, *Mobil*, *Sun Oil* and *Anadarko*⁶³ and the Texas company *El Paso*.⁶⁴ The US company *Anadarko* also has significant exploration ventures in Algeria and since 1991, they have recently discovered twelve fields with some 2.8 billion barrels of oil in the Sahara.⁶⁵ The US construction firm *Bechtel* built the 600 km *in salah* to *hassi r'mel* pipeline for the BP -Sonatrach

⁶² . NY Times 5 August 1999

⁶³ . In 1996 *ARCO* concluded a \$1.5 billion investment and production-sharing agreement before merging with BP, *Amoco* invested \$900m in a project with *Sonatrach*. *Anadarko* has been the largest foreign investor in Algeria, developing oil and gas fields and running a pipeline consortium. In 2000 the US company *Amerada Hess* signed a contract to invest \$550m over 25 years in enhanced oil recovery **Dillman, B.** 2001 "'Round up the usual suspects": US policy toward Algeria and its Islamists', *Middle East Policy* VIII(3, September): 126-143..

⁶⁴ . During the 1970s *El Paso Gas* participated in large-scale importation of liquefied natural gas from Algeria but the project was short-lived due to a pricing dispute which halted deliveries in 1980. Since then it has been central to the building of gas pipelines www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles.

⁶⁵ . <http://www.anadarko.com>

partnership.⁶⁶ After 1997, coinciding with the failure of the rapprochement between the Algerian authorities and the FIS, US military aid to the Algerian government increased: the Clinton government approved a \$32m contract for *Gulfstream Aerospace* to sell radar-surveillance aircraft to the Algerian military to use against the Islamistes.⁶⁷ In November 2002 the Export-Import bank approved further loan guarantees of \$195m for the Algerian Ministry of Defence to buy surveillance aircraft (Dillman 2001).

ii. *The Algerian diaspora*

The Algerian diaspora we comprises several categories of people with different (historical) reasons for migration: economic migrants have been leaving the country in large numbers since the 1950s; several different waves of political exiles occurred, including the *harkis* and *pieds noirs* immediately after independence, since the early 1990s political exiles fleeing Islamist death threats, Islamists fleeing government repression and others simply seeking a way of making a living. This variation within the Algerian diaspora is reflected in its attitude towards developments in the country.

There is a long -established Algerian population in Western Europe, particularly in France, although the destinations have diversified since the 1980s and there are sizeable communities in Germany and Belgium and smaller numbers of refugees in other countries, particularly Switzerland and the United Kingdom, but also most recently other Mediterranean countries notably Spain and Italy (see Appendix 6). There are other smaller communities in North America and in the Middle East. For instance some 4,000 Algerians live in Syria, the community originally moved there in the 1840s century, following the exiled leader of the national resistance, *Abdul Qader al-Jazeri*.

The most organised and influential part of the Algerian diaspora is in France. On the eve of independence in 1962 there were 410,000 Algerians living in France (Weil 1996). This migration continued after the Evian agreements establishing Algerian independence, although after 1964 it was regulated and Algerians were channelled increasingly into the automobile industry (Samers 1997). The Algerian authorities encouraged immigration as it earned valuable foreign exchange and helped to solve the unemployment problem. At the same time a culture of immigration developed, although there were many problems, immigration did help meet individual aspirations and subsidised the family back home. Family reunification overseas intensified from the early 1970s and by 1999 there were some 700,000 Algerians living in France, together with some 1m French citizens of Maghrebi origin (Lanier 1991) and another estimated 300,000 North African Jews (Morin 1991). There are many more French citizens of Algerian origin who are the children of primary migrants but because they were born in France have disappeared from the ethnic statistics. French policies and widespread public hostility towards Algerian migrants has frequently caused tension between the two countries.

Algerians in France provided many of the resources for the nationalist revolution of the 1950s (Meynier 2002)p. 172-3 and (Ali 1986). Support for Messali Hadj's *MNA*

⁶⁶ . <http://www.bechtel.com>

⁶⁷ . Since September 2001 President Boutefkha has visited President Bush on several occasions, see Quandt, WB 2002 'Forty Years of Independence, violence and impoverishment. US and Algeria: just flirting' *Le Monde Diplomatique* juillet 2002

was solid until 1956 when serious violence within the Algerian community left the *FLN* as the dominant party (Meynier 2002)p. 454. The *FLN* raised funds on a voluntary and less voluntary basis through a system of fines for failure to respect their prescriptions against the use of tobacco, alcohol, use of French cafes, the non-respect of Ramadan or non-*FLN* marriages or circumcisions (Ali 1986)p. 472.

Since independence there has been nothing as well organised or hegemonic as this system to support any one political force in Algeria. Today any support the diaspora offer for political movements is more informal and fragmented between different political or ideological perspectives. There are offices for most of the major Algerian political parties in France and they have a presence at major political events.

The Algerian government makes provision for their expatriates to vote abroad, and the consulates in most countries where there are Algerian populations open polling booths during legislative and presidential elections. Thus during elections in Algeria there are provisions for the 680,000 registered Algerian voters in France and in other countries such as Syria there were two polling stations for the 2,500 Algerians eligible to vote.

The diaspora helps to maintain the cultural overlap between France and Algeria, while it embodies an ambiguous attitude towards France. The French language is still widely used in Algeria although the decades of arabization have widened the gulf between young people of Algerian origin who have been brought up in France and their extended families in Algeria. Questions of identity have been central to the younger generations in this population. Adil Jazouli interviews with young people of Algerian origin sums up their dilemma:

‘We don’t consider ourselves completely Algerian or completely French ... Our parents are Arabs. We were born in France (and only visited Algeria a few times). So what are we? French? Arab? In the eyes of the French we are Arabs... but when we visit Algeria some people call us emigrants and say we’ve rejected our culture. We’ve even had stones thrown at us’ (Jazouli 1982).

Studies have found that although this younger age group identify as Arabs and Muslims in France, they exhibit this identity variously. Some adapt their religious and cultural practices to the secular French context, while others are attracted by media portrayals of Islamists. Self-affirmation as a militant Muslim tends to arise among young people already subject to social exclusion (Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau 2001).

The older generation tends to be the ones to maintain their family obligations most clearly, and act as a conduit which feeds economic and cultural resources back and forth across the Mediterranean. Official figures for the financial transfers of migrants living abroad are available but these do not take informal transactions into account including the many amounts sent in kind.

Workers remittances and receipts as percentage of imports of goods, services and income

1980	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
2.79	2.82	2.41	2.39	3.04	4.93	3.58	2.94	2.83
1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
2.19	6.28	5.82	8.24	8.58	7.23	8.05	7.80	7.54

Adapted from 2001 World Development Indicators, World Bank.

The figures show that the contribution of such remittances remained steady in 1980-1 but increased sharply in the following decade, coinciding with the onset of the civil war.

iii. The new media

During the uprising of 1988 in Algeria the Paris-based radio station *Beur FM* mounted a round the clock news service as the news of the riots broke out. It probably provided a more complete news service than was available in Algeria, with people phoning through news as it broke. The support generated during this marathon gave rise to a variety of solidarity activities, including the collection of medical and other supplies (Lloyd 1999; Radio Beur 1988). This mobilised the associative network of Algerians in France, structured through neighbourhood associations, cultural groups and political associations.

After 1991 the steady flow of exiles from Algeria became involved in a wide range of different and competing activities, aiding new arrivals agitating for serious media and political attention and for a more open policy for Algerian asylum seekers (Ben Jouadi 1997; Lloyd 2000).

Much of this mobilisation was facilitated through the assertion of a plural notion of Algerian culture, especially music which brought different groups together:

‘The diaspora experience ... is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity: by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference, by hybridity’ (Gross, et al. 1994) p. 11.⁶⁸

A key component of this is *rai* and *chaabi music* which is stylistically acceptable to the more bicultural Franco-Maghrebi audience, associated with a certain kind of Algeria, ‘a contemporary relaxed, sophisticated, tolerant, urban Algeria – the vision of the homeland selectively privileged by the *rai* audience in France’ (Gross, et al. 1994). Music plays a symbolic and rallying role in bringing all generations of the Algerian community together. the Kabyle population which is heavily represented among migrants have promoted Berber cultural rights and provided significant support for the *RCD* and the *FFS* both of which have political offices in Paris.

Satellite television, the internet as well as more established media are crucial to the communication of diaspora. The expansion of these resources – which was a key part

⁶⁸ . See below for the international networks of *FIS* and other *Islamiste* activists in Afghanistan, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, UK and North America.

of the process of democratisation - opened up Algeria to global influences of different kinds. These influences have started to break down the uniformity of the state-controlled media such as the *ENTV* television network and in December 2002 the *ENTV* entered into an agreement with the private *Khalifa* group.⁶⁹ This promised to end the state monopoly and introduce more attractive programmes.

One of the most striking developments during the brief phase of democratization was the emergence of a national independent press. The *Algerie Press Service (APS)* set up in 1961 to disseminate information about the *FLN* was relaunched with its own internet site www.cerist.dz.

More than 150 new dailies, weeklies and other magazines were launched between 1990-4 (Merrill 1995). Circulation figures indicate the levels reached by 1995 (Azzi 1998)p.8 but they are certainly much wider in their reach now, especially by the diaspora and wider world, since they all have well-visited websites.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Circulation (1995)</i>	<i>Language/ status</i>
El Moudjahid	350,000	French/ founded by FLN in 1956
El Watan	250,000	F/ independent 1990
Liberte	240,000	F /independent 1991
Horizon	240,000	F / government 1985
Echaab	120,000	Arabic/ government 1962
An Nasr	100,000	A/ government 1963
El Djoumhoria	90,000	A/ government 1973
Le Matin	70,000	F/ independent 1992
El Khabar	60,000	A/ independent 1991
El Massa	30,000	A /government 1985

Source: (Azzi 1998)p.8

These independent newspapers are subject to limited state control. It is relatively rare for newspapers actually to be banned, but the authorities prefer to operate a policy of attrition against those who overstep boundaries, through the courts or by calling in payments for the supply of newsprint which remains a government monopoly.

The Government has given priority to broadcast rather than print media initially because of low literacy and more recently because of its mass reach. Radio was introduced by the French in 1926 expanding by 1947 with two further radio channels in Arabic and Berber. The number of radio receivers has increased from 1 million in 1965 to 3m in 1975 and 6m in 1992. The number of television sets has risen from 150,000 in 1965 to 500,000 in 1975 and 2,000,000 in 1992. Satellite television is of growing importance especially in the North. It is estimated that one in every four families are linked by satellite to many French and Arabic channels (Lloyd 2002b).

⁶⁹ . Les noces de Khalifa et de la télévision <http://www.afrik.com/journal/decouverte/?dec-666-1.htm>
This was a significant move away from the state monopoly, but the Khalifa group has had serious problems recently with investigations into currency irregularities and shortage of capital (Algeria-Interface 28th fevrier 2003 www.algeria-interface.com)

Recently the *Entreprise Nationale de Télévision*, *ENTV* has been rivalled by the new Arab satellite television channels like *Al Jazeera* which combine independent news coverage with lively programming (Bahry 2001; Karim 1998). Recently the *Khalifa* group has launched private television and radio channels through the London-based Arab News Network (ANN) a twenty-four hour satellite news channel.⁷⁰

Since 1997 access to the internet has been expanding rapidly especially in Algerian cities. Algeria only has five telephones for every hundred inhabitants with a waiting list of 500,000 for land-lines. In January 2003 the government signed a loan agreement with the African Development Bank for \$120.313 to improve telecommunications in the period up to 2005.⁷¹ This will involve the liberalisation of the sector through the introduction of private operators. There are 700,000 mobile telephones and a further 20,000 subscribers to the internet.⁷² The first 27 mediathèques were set up by the previous governorat of Algiers in 1997 but this has expanded to more than a thousand cybercafés which have democratised access to the internet. It is rapidly becoming the most popular form of recreation – that is for young people with the necessary 95 dinars for an hour on the net.⁷³

*iv. Political Islam as a global cultural force*⁷⁴

During the war for national liberation, religion had been a unifying factor for two main reasons. First, the French had used Islam to define the Algerian people: the category '*français musulmans*' was used by the French administration to limit citizenship and other human rights. Second, the *FLN* understood that the new government would need to use religious identities in order to maintain its legitimacy.

However Islam defines a conceptual space as well as a religious belief which is expressed in many different ways. While the majority of Algerians were practising Muslims, Islamic beliefs coexisted with local tradition and a strong current of tolerance in Algerian society. The first Algerian *Islamist* organisation to emerge after independence was the *Association El Qiyam* set up in 1963, inspired by the works of Hassen El Benna, Qotb and Mawdoudi (Issami 1998; Issami 2001). Another secret organisation came into the open, closer to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and affiliated to its international network. The Algerian section was led by Mahfoudh Nahnah (now leader of the *Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix*, *MSP*). These early organisations were rapidly repressed by the government but their members remained active throughout the 1970s and 1980s, occasionally surfacing to protest against aspects of popular culture, such as Kateb Yacine's play about immigration *Mohammed prend ta valise*, which they took to be an insult to the Prophet. Throughout the 1970s Islamist vigilante groups organised to impose their view of probity. These were known collectively as *al amr bil ma'âruf wa en-nayh ân el mounkar* (literally, 'commandos for the enforcement of good and the pursuit of evil'), who attacked known delinquents, threw acid at girls not wearing the *hijab*, and sought to ban mixed groups of men and women at university and even in family gatherings.

⁷⁰ . These activities must now be seriously compromised.

⁷¹ . Afrol news 6th January 2003 www.afrol.com/Countries/Algeria/index_news.htm

⁷² . *Panafrikan News Agency*, Dakar, April 9 2001.

⁷³ . *La Tribune* 7.11.2000.

⁷⁴ . Parts of this section are drawn from newspaper and internet sources and require careful collaboration, interpretation and evaluation. We need to be aware of the ideological conditions in which information of this kind is produced. Circumstances rarely allow us to draw unequivocal statements.

The actions of these groups developed into economic sabotage, notably the destruction of electricity pylons and telephone cables.⁷⁵

When President Chadli Benjhidh came to power, action was taken against these groups⁷⁶ and they limited their activities to publications, discussion and education meetings based in mosques, notably *El Achour* in Algiers where Mustapha Bouyali preached for an Islamist State. A network based on the Muslim Brotherhood organisation was set up at this time (the early 1980s) to send young men to train in the Middle East, travelling through Nice and Lille (Issami 2001)p.33. A variety of influences attracted young men to this cause: identification with the way they dressed, the examples of the Iranian revolution, and the struggle of the Islamist groups in Syria. While at the international level the Muslim Brotherhood retreated from its strategy of armed struggle after the killing of some 10-25,000 Islamists in fierce fighting with the Syrian army in Hama (January- February 1982), they still recruited, educated and armed young volunteers to go to Afghanistan.⁷⁷

During the 1990s many people who had been involved in Islamist activities fled Algeria and sought asylum in Western Europe and North America. Some of these people have been involved in setting up activist networks.

Islamist groups and political violence

The *FIS* leadership, like that of any other broad political party, included moderates and hardliners. The early leaders, who were arrested after the failed insurrection of May-June 1991, were Abassi Madani, a moderate and Ali Benhadj, more radical in his positions. With a doctorate in education from the University of London Madani maintained a benign tone and a stated commitment to political pluralism, although his stated aim was to a *sharia* state. On the other hand Belhaj was virulently anti-western: he tended to alienate intellectuals and the middle classes who had little confidence in his ability to develop a responsible economic policy. The record of the *FIS* when it held elected office at local level (see above p xxx) reflects these different tendencies. The *FIS* drew on many of the organizational aspects of the *FLN* including the collective leadership which enabled it to survive arrests (Roberts 1991). Many in the ranks of the *FIS* were more committed to achieving their ends by violence than through the democratic process. We have seen that these elements were already active before the elections were cancelled. Afghan veterans led the first national demonstration of the *FIS* on 20th April 1990 in Algiers and they became key figures in its insurrection in early 1991 (Issami 2001). On the eve of the legislative elections in the following November they led an armed attack on a police patrol in *Guemmar*.

The violence escalated rapidly after 1992. Initially the armed groups of the *FIS* were known as the *Mouvement Islamique Armé*, only later the *Armée Islamique du Salut* (*AIS*). The *AIS* launched attacks on police, military personnel and government targets. In early 1990 militant Islamists, many of whom had recently returned from

⁷⁵ . Mahfoud Nahnah was among these activists and was sentenced to imprisonment for economic sabotage.

⁷⁶ . Such as *El Moujtama'â* published with Kuwaiti money according to Issami, M. 2001 *Le FIS et le terrorisme. Au coeur de l'enfer*, Alger: Le Matin. p. 32.

⁷⁷ See *El Watan* 6 novembre 2001 on the role of Mafoud Nahnah in sending young men to fight in Afghanistan.

fighting in Afghanistan, formed the *Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA)*.⁷⁸ This group unleashed a violent campaign against civilian targets, including secular opposition leaders, journalists, artists, academics, and foreigners.

Groups such as the *GIA* are not strictly demarcated organisations but have a fluid structure. They are undoubtedly infiltrated by the Algerian security services. Though the *AIS/FIS* and *GIA* are separate organisations there appears to have been links between them, for instance it is thought that the bombing of Algiers airport and the offices of foreign airlines on 26th August 1992 were early joint actions (*El Watan* 4 octobre 2000) (Issami 2001)p.309.

The *GIA* is dominated by the ‘Afghans’⁷⁹ but many began their political activity in the *FIS*, for example Antar Zouabi.⁸⁰ Their slogan was ‘No dialogue, no truce, no peace’. Their activities triggered a wider conflict, pitting the fundamentalists against the Algerian army.

The emergence of the *GIA* as the main Islamist force after 1993 undermined prospects for a political compromise between moderate *FIS* leaders and the government. Following Bouteflika’s policy of national reconciliation, the *Concorde Civile* the *GIA* has been weakened and is no longer capable of large scale coordinated actions, though it still undertakes reprisals against civilians. Although the presence of Afghan veterans is widely documented, the *GIA* was also bound up with Algerian marginalised groups.

‘What came to be the *GIA* (Armed Islamic Group), I think, and not everyone agrees with this, was a kind of radicalized off-shoot of the Islamist movement that melded with neighbourhood gangs, criminal elements, and those who thought they could become the next big leader of the Islamist movement and realized that a lot of people bitterly hated the regime. They could count on, if not active support, a lot of tolerance from ordinary people.’ (Quandt 1999)

The *Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat (GSPC)* is thought to have the closest links to *Al Quaida*.⁸¹ It was formed in 1998, some accounts suggest that it emerged out of disagreements over the massacres in 1996-7. It is thought to have been funded largely through trading organisations who laundered the profits of rackets

⁷⁸ . It was linked to Bin Laden’s organisation through Abdelkrim Gharzadi (alias Kari Said). In Algeria the *GIA*’s leader was Abdelhak Layata.

⁷⁹ . For example, one of its leaders, ex-*FIS* member Sid Ahmed Mourad, alias Jaafar al-Afghani, fought against the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan. He became a symbol of the Afghans and Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria when he was captured after an attack on a police station at *al-Gummar* in southeastern Algeria near the Tunisian border in November 1992. He was killed by security forces in March 1994.

⁸⁰ Zouabri was killed in February 2002 by the Algerian army, he was 32. He began his political activity in an Islamist tribunal in Boufarik when it was controlled by the *FIS* in 1990-92 (Internet press release of the *FIS* 11 fevrier 2002).

⁸¹ . **Zerrouky, H.** 1999 ‘Le difficile combat de la presse algérienne’, *Recherches Internationales* 56/7(2/3). claims that Ben Laden chose the name. *GSPC* was formed by an ex member of the *FIS* Hassan Hattab alias Abou Haza who had also been a member of the *GIA*. Emad Abdelwahid Ahmed Alwan, alias Abou Mohamed from Yemen was recently killed in Algeria he is thought to have been involved in the organisation of support links between Bin Laden and *GSPC*. All press reports of a *GSPC* ambush of the Algerian military, in which more than 40 soldiers were killed claimed that there were links with *Al Quaida*.

(Salgon 2001). At the time of writing it was thought to have 350 to 400 armed men still active in different parts of Algeria, forming approximately a half of the total of Islamist militia. Its zones of activity are in the centre, the east and the south of the country, where their aim is to secure supplies of arms from the south.⁸² They were thought to be composed of some of the more extreme elements of the *GIA* and deserters from the armed forces. In the autumn of 2001 Spanish police announced that they had dismantled a *GSPC* cell with complex forgery equipment. In January 2002 the *Observer* obtained *GSPC* 'educational videos' of attacks in Algeria which show a car exploding and the detailed killing of survivors with knives.⁸³ Other arrests of people thought to be members of the *GSPC* have taken place in France, the Netherlands and Pakistan.

International support networks

Although Islamist movements were involved with global networks, local support, either freely given or extracted through protection rackets together with the profits of *trabendisme*, were the main source of support. Some support from the Algerian diaspora is also evident, especially through cultural resources such as internet websites. The *FIS* and the other Islamist political organisations are funded by informal networks and information about these is incomplete. Their funding has varied according to the international situation. The *Al Taqwa* bank, based in the Bahamas provided financial support for the social welfare programme of *Hamas* in Greater Algiers and facilitated contacts with the Muslim Brothers (*Le Soir d'Algérie* 23 janvier 2001). The *FIS* appears to have received financial backing from both Saudi and Iranian sources:

'The *FIS* has long had good ties with Saudi Arabia and received a great deal of Saudi funding until recent years, when the *FIS* adopted – somewhat belatedly – a pro-Saddam position in the Gulf War in keeping with the general mood of the population' (Fuller 1996)

According to Issami, Iranian support dates back to the very early 1990s when it is thought that the *FIS* gained support and advice from the Iranian embassy during the strikes of early 1991 (Issami 2001). US officials claim that the Sudan helped Algerian Islamists by allowing Iran to use their territory as a transit point for arms and ammunition which is then smuggled through Chad and Niger to Algeria. This would seem to be confirmed by the Algerian government which broke off relations with both Iran and Syria in 1993, charging both governments with supporting violent opposition in Algeria (Fuller 1996).

Afghanistan was another source of funding and training. Links between the Algerian Islamists and the Afghans goes back to the early 1980s. Two Algerian Islamists involved with the *FIS* set up *Human Concern International*⁸⁴ to provide support for

⁸² . Communication of lieutenant-colonel Zerrouk to the Colloque international sur le terrorisme les 26, 27 et 28 octobre 2002 à Alger. *Le Matin* 17.12.2002.

⁸³ . *Le Monde* 1 octobre 2001.

⁸⁴ . Human Concern International was linked to the *GIA* – providing an address for the *GIA*'s publications at its Swedish offices. The HCI was linked to the Islamic International Rescue Organisation based in Peshawar, funded mainly by Bin Laden **Issami, M.** 2001 *Le FIS et le terrorisme. Au coeur de l'enfer*, Alger: Le Matin.p.270, and from 1992 supported from London by the organisation

the Algerian Afghans (*El Watan* 24 septembre 2001). Further funding for the Afghans was found through the *World Islamic League*, initially through Mahfoud Nahnah's contacts⁸⁵ (Issami 2001) p. 262. The *GIA's* main base to the west of Niger is a source of arms and drugs which are transported through Europe through Italy, France and Spain (Labévière 2001).

There have also been reports of links between Algerian Islamists and Bin Laden's *Al Quaida* network.⁸⁶ According to the independent newspaper *El Watan*, Said Kari, a *FIS* activist during the strike of May 1991 became a follower of Bin Laden in Pakistan. He ran a reception centre for Algerian Afghans in Peshawar (*El Watan* 4 July 2001). Most recently there have been reports of contacts between the *GSPC* and *al quaida* and on 12 September 2002 Abdelwahid Ahmed Alwan, a representative of *al quaida* was killed in an ambush in Batna.⁸⁷ At the end of the year another of his lieutenants was being tracked down by the military.

Non-Islamic support for the Islamist is more difficult to document. In the early 1990s it was widely thought that Algeria was bound to become an Islamist country and in 1993 American diplomats began discreet talks with the *FIS* leadership through Anwar Haddam⁸⁸ a rather controversial asylum seeker based in Washington (Phillips 1995). This stance is confirmed by other commentators: for instance Yahia Zoubir argues that between 1993-5 the US appeared to be unconcerned about the *FIS* coming to power, compared to France which was more concerned about the conflict spilling over into Maghrebi communities in Europe. One of the turning points for international public opinion was the outbreak of fundamentalist terror in the summer of 1995 and the killing of Trappist Monks in May 1996. Since September 2001 the USA has been among the most enthusiastic supporters of the Algerian government, praising its leading role in the fight against Islamist 'terrorism' and selling counter-insurgency equipment to them.⁸⁹

Reports in 2002 estimated the number of Islamist militia in Algeria as 600-650, having fallen from an estimated high of 27,000. They are mainly active in isolated areas,⁹⁰ focusing on attacking the armed forces especially in the centre and the Kabylie mountains.

Conclusions

This study of the recent violence in Algeria has shown how economic, cultural and political forms have interacted and together account for the violent conflict. These developments have taken place in a context of the growing impact of global cultural forces – on the one hand political Islam and on the other the competing attractions of

The Algerian Community in Britain (according to Issami, p. 272). This organisation is listed as based at a PO box number in Southall, West London.

⁸⁵ . Nahnah has led a moderate Islamist party since the late 1980s, initially *Hamas*, then the *Mouvement de la Société Islamique (MSI)* now renamed the *Mouvement de la Société de la Paix (MSP)*.

⁸⁶ . Note that some of these links were documented before September 2001.

⁸⁷ . AP 2002 'Algérie: l'armée cible favorite des groupes armés en 2002' AP Alger 30 décembre.

⁸⁸ . Haddam was the President of the *FIS* Parliament in exile who fled to Morocco, then the USA after 1992. He applied for asylum but was later detained, see Washington Report on Middle East Affairs www.washington-report.org/backissues/0999/9909093.html.

⁸⁹ . See 'US arms Algeria for fight against Islamic terror' *Guardian* 10 December 2002.

⁹⁰ . AFP 26 juin 2002.

western consumerism. Global cultural and economic forces are not one-way in their influence: many Algerians are struggling to work out their own synthesis.

Struggles over identity have been an important dimension of the conflict, providing social fissures around different interpretations of history, different views about the place of religion in society, the appropriateness of linguistic prescriptions and Algeria's relationship with its neighbours, to the North in Europe, to the South in Africa and to the East with the 'Arabo-Islamic World'. The case of Algeria therefore confirms a multi-causal view of conflict in which global cultural and economic flows are strongly involved.

From the outset this study has been driven by a number of hypotheses which can now provide a useful structure for insights and conclusions.

A first hypothesis was that identities, which are constructed or accentuated by local leaders, are often heavily influenced by global cultural forces.

Algeria is located at a meeting point of Mediterranean, Arabic, and African influences. There are still important cultural links of affinity with its Andalusian heritage for example.

'Algeria's roots go far beyond its geographical frontiers. That is why when we speak of it, our lexicon oscillates between Algeria, Maghreb, Andalusia, Mediterranean. That is why "2000 years of Algeria" has to deal with a vast region with imprecise and fluctuating contours rather than a fixed and limited political geography which owes more to the will of the powerful than to the living force of men' (Gonzalez 1998) p.17.

In the post cold-war period new axes of conflict have opened between the west and the Muslim world. The Gulf War was a defining moment: the people of Algeria reacted strongly to the arrival of US troops on Saudi soil and their occupation of the Islamic Holy Places. This event, together with the continuing conflict in the Occupied Territories of Palestine, has compounded the growing sense of injustice expressed in different forms of anti-westernism (Ait-Chaalal 2000)p.214-. A similar dynamic has been played out with respect to Bosnia, Chechnya, Palestine, Afghanistan and the 'war against terrorism' since September 2001. At the same time the Algerian government has maintained good relations with the USA⁹¹: in the early 1980s Algerian negotiators played a central role in the freeing of the US hostages in Teheran 1979-81(Ait-Chaalal 2000) p.163-167 and most recently the US has announced sales of military hardware to help the Algerians combat "terrorism".⁹² Ties with the European Union are of growing importance through the Euro-Med agreements (1995) and the Association agreement of April 2002.

Most Algerian migrants live in France but in recent years the diaspora has extended to other countries of the Mediterranean, Northern Europe and North America. Migrant workers are influential in supporting their families and developing the taste for

⁹¹ . This relationship was an ambivalent one. After George Bush II had announced the 'war on terrorism', the independent press joked that perhaps the GIs would now come and sort out Algeria's problems and maybe even help them build the long-awaited Algiers metro.

⁹² . This was announced as part of an agreement for enhanced cooperation on security between the US and Algeria *Guardian* 10.12.2002

Western consumer goods. Algerian supporters of political Islam were present among the anti-Soviet *mujahideen* in Afghanistan, and they have formed links with members of the *FIS* who left Algeria after 1988 and 1991. Both groups of migrants have their own associative network with support, lobbying and media structures.

These multiple historical, cultural and economic ties have profoundly influenced the present conflict. In particular, Algeria's search for a post-colonial, post-cold war identity and the tensions this has engendered cannot be understood without reference to global cultural forces.

Our second hypothesis was that important socio-economic factors lie behind the cultural reasons for the conflict

In the case of Algeria the cultural aspects of conflict have been very prominent: notably gender relations, language, and religion. As already stated, other events in the Middle East, such as the first Palestinian *intifada* of 1987 and the Gulf War of 1991 had an important impact on events in Algeria.

But behind these cultural issues is a picture of acute economic crisis. Despite Algeria's vast resources in natural gas and oil which have cushioned the regime, the rapid demographic growth up to the 1980s, the impact of economic liberalization on youth unemployment and reduced standards of living have proved fertile conditions for mobilising protest.

While culture, identity and ideology define the main contested arenas in the present conflict, it is undeniable that the legitimacy of the regime would not have been contested so profoundly had there not been widespread popular disillusionment based on mass unemployment and deterioration of social and economic conditions.

Our third hypothesis was that global cultural links frame and help determine the source, nature and quantity of political and economic resources received by groups supporting or opposing the struggles.

The single most important global cultural force shaping the Algerian conflict has been political Islam, and specifically the influences emanating from Saudi Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan.

The Algerian government receives a significant amount of support in the form of investment in the oil and gas industry from countries of the European Union, the USA as well international organisations. The Islamists have well-established sources of funding from sources which depend on political alignment. Different currents among the *Islamists* were funded by a variety of sources such as Iranian and Saudi sources and Islamic banks.

In contrast, the 'democratic' opposition receives little, if any funding although they do benefit from political support from abroad, especially from the diaspora.

Migration is a very important global cultural and political resource for Algeria. For many years migration acted as a safety-valve to moderate the rise of unemployment. The well established migrant communities especially in France are able to support activities in their country of origin. However, we have seen that the migrant population is extremely divided. The exile of an important part of the Algerian

intelligentsia during the 1990s has increased the ability of the diaspora to distribute information about the country, making increasing use of the internet.

In terms of communications, Algeria is well connected to the Francophone and Arabophone world, and increasingly to Africa (relations with South Africa and Nigeria are of particular importance through the *Organisation for African Unity OAU*). But it is relatively insulated from the Anglophone circuits which dominate many globalized networks. International NGOs (especially human rights agencies) have tended to display a myopia to anything other than the conflict between the authoritarian military government and Islamist groups. In particular the cancellation of the elections in 1992 have tended to obscure the many signs of democratic life which are articulating a new political programme although more and more commentators are drawing attention to the development of civil society and the progress in forming a democratic political culture.

The early pluralism of the Algerian nationalist movement of the 1950s was destroyed partly as a result of the ruthless struggle for independence, which both protagonists (the French and Algerian) have yet to fully confront. The economic crisis of the 1980s to the present day has created new social pressures to which the authorities have not responded adequately. Democratisation saw the first signs of a plural civil society which was overshadowed by the emergence of a single political force: the *FIS* which many viewed as potentially anti-democratic. In the circumstances of a profoundly divided society the key question is not so much why the 1991 elections were cancelled as why they were planned in the first place. In its own way the country is beginning to confront the broad problem of how to move towards greater democracy, accountability and an equitable distribution of national resources. A key aspect is the development of a civil society based on historical precedents suited to Algerian society, which many see not in the narrow identity politics of Berber separatism but in the movement for social justice in Kabylie which has the potential of reaching to a wider public. These local aspects can also be influenced positively by global cultural forces such as the role of the diaspora, communications, the wider aspirations of young people, and a more open media.

Appendices

1. Chronology

- 1510 Beginning of Turkish rule in Algeria
- 1827 Dispute between Hussein, the Dey of Algiers and the French consul
- 1830 French land at Sidi Ferruch
- 1831 French occupy Oran
- 1832 Abd al-Qadir established as leader of resistance movement in Mascara
- 1843 Position of Governor General of French possessions in North Africa established
- 1835 Abd al-Qadir continues attacks on French posts
- 1837 French capture Constantine
- 1840-7 General Bugeaud pursues policy of total occupation and war takes on cruel character.
- Four recorded incidents of French officers ordering burning of defeated Algerians in caves.
- 1843 Amir seeks asylum in Morocco
- 1847 Abd al-Qadir surrenders to the French
- 1883 Abd al-Qadir dies in Damascus
- Cremieux decrees gives citizenship to Jewish population in Algeria, not to Muslims.
- 1954 Start of Algerian War of Independence
- 1962 End of Algerian War of Independence. De Gaulle grants Algeria independence
- 1968 Abd al-Qadir's remains transferred from Damascus to Algiers for burial
- 1991 May The FIS announces an unlimited general strike which leads rapidly to a state of emergency
- Dec FIS victory in first round of legislatives, but it has lost a quarter of its electorate since the previous year.
- 1992 Jan Suspension of electoral process and resignation of President Chadli Bendjedid
- March Dissolution of the FIS
- June Assassination of President Mohamed Boudiaf
- Dec Curfew in seven wilayas
- 1993 May-June Wave of assassination of Algerian intellectuals and violence against 'independent' women.
- 1994 Jan Liamine Zeroual nominated President
- Summer GIA destroy schools
- Autumn Fatwa announced against foreigners by independent religious authorities
- Dec Hijack of Air France airbus
- 1995 Jan Rome Platform of some opposition parties for a settlement
- Car bombings in Algiers
- Summer Attacks in France (RER)
- Nov Zeroual reelected President
- 1996 February Kidnapping and killing of the monks of Tibehrine
- November New Constitution – extends powers of the President
- June RND/FLN win legislative elections

1997	September	Massacre of 417 people at Bentalha
1998	June/July	Riots in Kabylie following the assassination of the singer Matoub Lounès
	September	Zeroual announces his resignation
1999	April	Abdelaziz Bouteflika elected President
	June	Armée Islamique du Salut (AIS – armed wing of FIS) announces it is abandoning the armed struggle
	Sept	Adoption of Concorde Civile
2001	April	Massinissa Guermah killed in offices of gendarmerie in Beni Douala led to protest demonstrations which spread across the region.
2002		Algeria becomes Associate state of the European Union. Legislative elections: <i>FLN</i> confirmed as the most powerful party

2. Legislative election results 1991-2002

Legislative elections December 1991 (first round only)⁹³

Party	No of seats	% of seats	No of votes	% of vote
FIS	188/232		3,260,222	
FLN	15	12.17	1,612,947	
FFS	25			

Legislative elections June 1997⁹⁴

Parties	No of seats	% of seats	No of votes	% of vote
RND	156	41.05	3,533,762	
MSP	69	18.15	1,553,185	
FLN	64	16.84	1,489,561	
Nahda	34	8.95	916,066	
FFS	20	5.26	465,957	
RCD	19	5.00	444,586	
Others	18	4.75	824,339	
Total	380	100.00	9,029,133	

Source: *Le Monde* 8-9 June 1997 amended by (Bouandel and Zoubir 1998)

2002 Legislative Elections⁹⁵

⁹³ . Turnout was 59%.

⁹⁴ . Turnout was 65.49%.

⁹⁵ . Turnout was 46.09%, with a virtual boycott in parts of Kabylie.

Parti		Nombre de sièges
F.L.N	Front de libération Nationale	199
R.N.D	Rassemblement National Démocratique	47
M.I	Mouvement Islah	43
M.S.P	Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix	38
IND	Indépendants	30
P.T	Parti des Travailleurs	21
F.N.A	Front National Algérien	08
Ennahda	Mouvement Ennahda	01
P.R.A	Parti du renouveau Algérien	01
M.E.N	Mouvement de l'Entente Nationale	01
Total		389

Source:<http://www.apn-dz.org/apn/french/index.htm>

3. The Rome Platform 13th January 1995

The parties of the Algerian opposition, meeting in Rome at the Community of San Egidio, declare, on this 13th January 1995:

That Algeria is going through tragic trials which have no precedent. More than thirty years after having paid dearly for its independence, the people have not realised the principles and objectives of the 1st November 1954 and have all their hopes, born in October 1988 are more distant than ever.

Today the Algerian people are living in an unprecedented climate of terror, made worse by intolerable social and economic conditions. In this war without images: sequestrations, disappearances, assassinations, systematic torture, mutilations and reprisals have become the daily burden of Algerian men and women.

The consequences of the events of June 1991 and the coup d'Etat of 11th January 1992, the interruption of the electoral process, the closure of political space, the dissolution of the FIS, the introduction of a state of emergency, the repressive measures and the reactions to which it has given rise, have engendered a logic of confrontation.

Since then, violence has continued to grow and expand. Attempts by the authorities to create militia in the population marks a new stage in this desperate politics. The risks of a civil war are real, threatening the physical integrity of the people, the unity of the country and national sovereignty.

There is an urgent need for a general solution, which is both political and equitable in order to open other perspectives to a population which aspires to peace and popular legitimacy.

The authorities have only initiated false dialogues which have been smokescreens to their unilateral decisions and the politics of the fait accompli.

The only way to obtain a peaceful and democratic solution is through real negotiations.

A – Framework: values and principles

The participants agree on the basis of a national contract according to the following principles and which are essential to any viable negotiation:

- The declaration of the 1st November 1954: ‘The restoration of the sovereign, democratic and social State of Algeria within an Islamic framework’ (art 1)
- Rejection of violence to achieve or remain in power
- The rejection of any dictatorship whatever its nature or form and the right of the people to defend its elected institutions.
- The respect and promotion of the rights of the human person as laid out in the Universal Declaration, international agreements on human rights, the international convention against torture and consecrated by legal texts;
- Respect for political alternation through universal suffrage;

- Respect for popular legitimacy. Freely elected institutions can only be questioned by the popular will.
- The primacy of the rule of law;
- The guarantee of fundamental, individual and collective liberties, regardless of race, sex, religious belief and language.
- A commitment to a multi-party democracy
- The non-involvement of the army in political affairs. Return to its constitutional function to safeguard the unity and indivisibility of the national territory.
- The constitutive elements of the Algerian personality are Islam, Arab and Amazigh identity; the culture and the two languages combine in the development of this personality. They should be allowed to exist and be encouraged institutionally promotion without being excluded or marginalised.
- The separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers.
- Liberty and respect for religious belief.

B- Measures which should precede any negotiations

- The effective liberation of the leaders of the *FIS* and all the political detainees. The leaders of the *FIS* should be given all the means and necessary guarantees needed to allow them to meet freely among themselves and with those who they think are necessary to take decisions.
- The opening up of politics and media. The decision to dissolve the *FIS* should be annulled. The activity of all political parties should be fully re-established.
- Lifting of the bans and suspension of newspapers and publication of books
- The immediate, effective and verifiable cessation of the practice of torture.
- The ending of executions, of extrajudicial executions and reprisals against the civilian population.
- A condemnation and an appeal to stop demands and attacks against civilians, foreigners and the destruction of public property.
- The constitution of an independent commission to enquire into acts of violence and serious violations of human rights.

C- Reestablishment of peace

A new dynamic for peace implies a gradual process of negotiations involving:

- On one side, measures for real détente, the closure of prison camps, the ending of the state of emergency and the repeal of the exceptional powers;
- And an urgent unambiguous appeal for the ending of confrontations. Algerians aspire for the return of civil peace. The modalities for the application of this engagement will be determined by the parties to the conflict with the active participation of the other representative parties.

This dynamic requires the full and complete participation of representative and peaceful political forces. They are able to contribute to the success of the process and the involvement of the population.

D- Return to constitutional legality

The parties agree to respect the Constitution of the 23rd February 1989. It can only be amended by constitutional means.

E- Return to popular sovereignty

The parties involved in these negotiations will need to define a transitional legal order to implement and monitor these agreements. For this to take place they will need to organise a national conference to be given real power, composed of the present authorities and representative political forces.

This Conference will define:

- The structures, means of implementation and length of the transitional period, the shortest possible prior to free and plural elections which will allow the people to exercise its sovereignty;
- Freedom of information, free access to the media and the conditions for the free choice of the people must be assured;
- The respect of the results of the elections must be guaranteed.

F- Guarantees

All those involved in the negotiations require mutual guarantees. While retaining their autonomy of decision, the parties:

- Are opposed to any interference in Algeria's internal affairs;
- Denounce the internationalisation of the situation which is the result of the politics of confrontation conducted by the authorities;
- Remain convinced that the solution to the crisis can only be the exclusive work of Algerians and should take shape in Algeria;
- Are committed to a campaign of information for the international community to publicise this platform and obtain support for it;
- Decide to launch an international petition for a political, peaceful solution in Algeria;
- Call on the international community for solidarity in action with the Algerian people;
- Decide to maintain contact with one another to establish permanent consultation

For the LADDH

Abdenour Ali Yahyia

For the FLN

Abdelhamid Mehri

For the FFS

Hocine Ait Ahmed; Ahmed Djeddai

For the FIS

Rabah Kebir; Anwar Haddam

For the PT

Louisa Hanoune

For the MDA

Ahmed Ben Bella; Khaled Bensmain

For Ennahda

Abdallah Jaballah

For the JMC

Ahmed Ben Mouhammed

4. Platform of El-Kseur

This document was agreed on 11th June 2001 by representatives of the wilayas of Sétif, Borj Bou Arréridj, Bouira, Boumerdès, Bgayet, Tizi Ouzou, Algiers and the Committee of the Universities of Algiers and was intended to be presented to the President of the Republic at the end of the demonstration of the 14th June.

We, representatives of the wilayas (...) have adopted this platform of demands:

1. For the urgent care by the state of all the victims of those injured and the families of the martyrs of repression during these events.
2. For a judgement by civil tribunals of all the actors and commanders of crimes and their dismissal from the forces of security and other public office.
3. For the status of martyr to be given to each victim of these events and for the protection of all those who witnessed them.
4. For the immediate withdrawal of the brigades of gendarmerie and the reinforcements of the URS.
5. For the dropping of all legal charges against all the demonstrators as well as the acquittal of all those who have already been judged during these events.
6. The immediate ending of all punitive raids, of all intimidation and provocation of the population.
7. The dissolution of the commission of enquiry set up by the Government.
8. The satisfaction of the demand for amazighe culture in all its dimensions (identity, civilisation, linguistic, cultural) without a referendum and unconditionally and the recognition of tamazight as a national official language.
9. For a State which guarantees all socioeconomic rights and all democratic freedoms.
10. Against the policies of underdevelopment, pauperisation and marginalisation of the Algerian people.
11. The democratic control of all the executive functions of the State as well as the security forces.
12. For an emergency socio-economic plan for the whole region of Kabylie.
13. Against the *tamhegranit (hogra)* and all forms of injustice and exclusion.
14. For the reorganisation of all regional examinations for pupils who were not able to take them.

15. Setting up of an unemployment benefit for all those seeking work at the level of 50% of SNMG.

We demand an urgent, public official response to this platform of demands.

6. Algerian population in Europe

Date	Germany	Belgium	France	Italy	Spain	UK
1946			22114			
1954			211675			
1962			428160			
1968			471020			
1975			710690			
1976			790200	198		
1977		9700				
1978			829600			
1979			819000			
1980	4975		782100			
1981	5010	10796	808176		600	
1982	5000	10900	805116	1054		
1983	5100	10900				
1984	5200					
1985	5200	10800	820900			
1986	5300	10000		1331		
1987	5400	10100		1403		
1988	4700	10500		1899		
1989	5100	10600	619900	2000	675	
1990	5924	10644	614207	2145		2000
1991	7386	10747	610000	4041	702	
1992	9073	10971	586000	2592	2263	
1993	14373	10443		4526	2664	5300
1994	23100	10200		4497	3377	
1995	19000					
1996				4020		

Source: (Giubilaro 1997) Table A. 4 p. 117.

Algerian refugee population (France and Britain)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
France		23,500	3,200	3,200	3,200	3,300	3,300	3,400	3,500
United Kingdom	275	996	1,865	715	715	1,260	1,385	1,636	1,145

Source: Adapted from Home Office Asylum Statistics UK (2002) Table 2.1 and UNHCR Statistics Yearbook 2001 Annex A7.

8. Abbreviations

AIS	Armée Islamique du Salut
CNES	Conseil National Economique et Sociale
CNSA	Comité Nationale pour la Sauvetage de l'Algérie
DGSN	Direction Générale de la Sûreté Nationale
ENA	Etoile Nord Africaine
ENTV	Entreprise Nationale de Television
FFFLN	Fédération de France du FLN
FFS	Front des Forces Socialistes
FIDH	Federation International des Droits de l'Homme
FIS	Front Islamique du Salut
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale
GIA	Groupe Islamique Armé
GSPC	Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat
HCA	Haut Commissariat à l'Amazighité
LADDH	Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme
LADH	Ligue Algérienne des Droits de l'Homme
MCB	Mouvement Culturel Berbère
MDA	Mouvement pour la Démocratie en Algérie
MAOL	Mouvement Algérien des Officiers Libres
MNA	Mouvement Nord Africaine
MSP	Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix
MTLD	Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques
ONM	Organisation Nationale des Moudjahidine
OS	Organisation Spéciale
PPA	Parti du Peuple Algérien
PT	Parti Travailleiste
RCD	Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie
RND	Rassemblement National Démocratique
UFTA	Union Générale des Femmes Algériennes
UGTA	Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens

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