Introduction

Hassiba Ben Bouali was nineteen years old when, on 8 October 1957, French troops dynamited her hideout in the Algiers Casbah. She died immediately, alongside Ali Ammar, otherwise known as Ali La Pointe, Mahmoud Bouhamidi and twelve-year-old Yacef Omar. They were all activists in the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front, FLN), which since 1954 had been waging an armed struggle to bring to an end more than a century of French rule. In the days following the 8 October explosion, the colonial press hailed the death of a group of dangerous criminals, whose urban bombing campaign in the previous months had terrorised the European population of Algiers. The *Journal d'Alger* triumphantly headlined 'Ali La Pointe and Hassiba Ben Bouali discovered blown to pieces by the blast'.[1] The FLN mourned the passing of men, a woman and a child whom it considered courageous freedom fighters. In 1960, a children's home run by the FLN in Morocco for girls displaced by the ongoing war was given 'the name of a young Algerian heroine, Hassiba Ben Bouali'.[2] In 1974, twelve years after Algerian independence in 1962 and seventeen years after Hassiba Ben Bouali's death, *El Moudjahid*, the official newspaper of the FLN single-party state, published a homage to the teenager entitled 'Hassiba Ben Bouali: a woman, an activist, an example'.[3]

Today, Rue Hassiba Ben Bouali is a major boulevard in Algiers. It is one of many street-sign tombstones in a city filled with the names of the war dead, an explicit attempt by the post-independence state to inscribe an officially sanctioned collective memory into public space. On 'Hassiba', as this commercial hub is colloquially called, lanes of heavy traffic crawl past lingerie shops run by bearded men, Made-in-China tea sets spill out of crockery outlets on to the pavement, young men lean on walls killing time and boys sell single cigarettes, chewing gum and peanuts from fold-out tables. If the men, women and children buying or selling on or simply trying to make their way along Rue Hassiba Ben Bouali were to look upwards, they would see Maqam al-Shahid, the Monument to the Martyr, composed of three concrete palms reaching more than ninety metres into the sky in remembrance of those who died to liberate Algeria. At the base of the monument, three statues are said to represent the different facets of *al-thawra* – 'the revolution', as the War of Independence is called in Algeria.[4] They are all figures of armed men.

Opposite Maqam al-Shahid is Mathaf al-Jaysh, the Museum of the Army, which provides a celebratory account of Algeria's most powerful institution. In the hushed space of the first floor, cabinet number twenty-three displays the child-size checked top of 'little Omar', the neatly folded white shirt of Ali la Pointe and the short-sleeved cream T-shirt of Hassiba Ben Bouali, alongside a watch and a pair of glasses with a cracked left lens. What on first glance look alarmingly like dried bloodstains on Hassiba Ben Bouali's top on closer inspection are revealed to be browning traces of the sticky tape of long-gone labels. Paintings, busts, miniature models and photographs of the FLN's 1957 urban guerrilla campaign and its participants surround the cabinet. A number of these artefacts are taken from, although not always credited to, the Italian director Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 film *The Battle of Algiers*. Co-produced by Yacef Saadi, the former head of the FLN's Algiers network, one of the most famous scenes in the film depicts the death of Hassiba Ben Bouali and her brothers-in-arms after their refusal to surrender to the French army.

Hassiba Ben Bouali's T-shirt, however, is not the star attraction in the museum. On the ground floor, groups of schoolchildren and young army recruits on organised visits excitedly gather round the shiny black and chrome Citroën DS of Algeria's second president – and wartime colonel – Houari Boumediene. Boumediene's choice of transportation is loaded with historical significance. It was the car of statesmen, whose speed and robustness is credited with saving the life of Charles de Gaulle in August 1962, during an assassination attempt perpetrated by members of the Organisation Armée Secrète (Secret Army Organisation, OAS). This right-wing paramilitary group, composed of hardliner European settlers and renegade French army generals, were enraged that the French president had ceded Algerian independence in July of that year. For the young

Algerian museum-goers, however, the value of the vehicle as a status symbol appears to lie in its material worth rather than the political references which it may or may not evoke. Ignoring the official ban on photography in the museum, youths adopt proprietorial poses next to the car and capture the moment with shots taken on their mobile phones.

Monuments, museums and street signs: these are tried-and-tested techniques of nation-building for states across the world since the nineteenth century. By making a certain version of the past ever present, the historical and contemporary legitimacy of rulers and political systems is reinforced. By creating a set of collectively recognisable symbols, the nation can imagine itself as one.[5] Since 1962 in Algeria, the top-down state message has insisted that independence was wrenched from the colonial oppressor by a united, courageous and pious Algerian people, who had led an unwavering campaign of armed and cultural resistance to colonial rule and settler expropriation since the invasion of Algiers in 1830. In this glorified national history, the key slogans are 'one sole hero, the people' and 'by the people, for the people'. Such a revolution was fought, it is claimed, to ensure liberty, social and economic justice and the recovery of a cultural identity based on Islam and the Arabic language.

Yet the Algerian state has failed to enforce a monopoly on the language of the past. The same vocabulary of bravery, self-sacrifice and patriotism has also been used to formulate critiques of the post-independence state. The memoirs of a number of veterans disillusioned with the failure of democracy in Algeria after 1962 refer to the revolution 'betrayed' or 'confiscated'.[6] Radical Islamist movements which emerged in Algeria from the 1980s onwards have also seized upon the idea of the values of the anti-colonial struggle 'betrayed'. Amassing electoral strength after the introduction of multipartyism in 1989, Islamists accused the Algerian state of neo-colonial mimicry and dismissed leaders with so much invested in perpetuating the image of a heroic struggle as being *hizb fransa*, 'the party of France'.[7] In a very different vein, Algerian feminists marching in 1992 against the Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front, FIS) and the looming spectre of a theocratic state carried placards bearing slogans such as 'Hassiba Ben Bouali, if you could see our Algeria' and 'Hassiba Ben Bouali, we will not betray you'[8] – an appeal to the 'memory' of Hassiba Ben Bouali, recast as a forerunner of women's rights campaigners.

In the battleground of the past, insisting on who is absent is as important as debating the merits of who is remembered. Alongside alternative nationalist movements to that of the FLN, or indeed FLN intellectuals and politicians pushed into the shadows of more powerful army generals, women who participated in the War of Independence – and notably women who, unlike Hassiba Ben Bouali, survived the conflict – are considered to be a forgotten group by those who challenge the state's self-satisfied narrative. The recurrent theme in the literature on Algerian female combatants, a burgeoning field since the 1990s, is the idea that the war was a brief parenthesis of new roles and status for women, brutally closed in 1962 by a patriarchal nationalist movement which removed them from the historical narrative, apart from as fetishised symbols, and denied them any real role in the post-colonial project. Djamila Amrane writes that '[E]ach woman [was put] back to square one'.[9] Women were 'effaced, forgotten' according to Malika El Korso.[10] For Khaoula Taleb Ibrahimi, 'all these exceptional women were ordered to return to their homes, to their tasks of mother, wife, sister and daughter'.[11] Monique Gadant argues that the FLN's wartime discourse on women's liberation not only was devoid of meaning but has been used to 'muzzle, since independence, all demands by women', whilst providing a convenient 'response to the West and its implicit accusation that Muslims mistreat their women'.[12] Marnia Lazreg critiques the view of Algerian women as having being duped by men 'for its derogatory connotations that deprive women of will and agency', but suggests that women who participated in the war almost forgot themselves:

> Women failed to score a revolution of their own by missing the opportunity of being the cultural conscience of Algeria through using their own historical circumstances as a metaphor for the impoverishment of Algerian culture, and a model for its renaissance in a new form. Instead, they waited for men's political failures to reveal to them their implicit complicity before they awoke to a feminist discourse that had already been scripted elsewhere.[13]

Such a vision of the post-independence order is not exceptional to Algeria. As Cynthia Enloe argues, 'nationalism typically has sprung from masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope'.[14] Algeria is nevertheless often depicted in the literature on gender and nationalism as the classic example of a nationalist movement 'turning' on its female supporters.[15]

Fifty years after independence, Algeria seems to provide a neat case in point of the processes which Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone describe in *Memory, History, Nation*: 'Contests over the meaning of the past are also contests over the meaning of the present and over ways of taking the past forward'.[16] Yet understanding how the language and frames of reference of the War of Independence are used in Algeria as a battleground for competing visions of the present is not straightforward. Using the war as a key to understanding post-1962 Algeria has masked the lack of historical research focused on the past half-century. With a few notable exceptions, such as James McDougall's path-breaking *History and Culture of Nationalism in Algeria*, there is very little history written about post-independence Algeria.[17] This in turn has dulled our sensitivity to shifts in the nature, political usage, relative importance and reception of the memory of the war at different points in the past fifty years. Powerful memorial discourses distort our view of history, shoe-horning it into a series of confrontations between binary opposites at dramatic moments, and at the same time we cannot deconstruct these memorial frameworks because we cannot historicise them.

This can be illustrated through the different images of Hassiba Ben Bouali and women at war presented thus far. These representations fall into two broad categories: on the one hand, glorification by the wartime nationalist movement, perpetuated by the post-independence single-party state; on the other hand, oppositional appropriation and academic recovery of lost voices. The first category has its origins in 1954–62, the second in the 1990s. Within and beyond Algeria, the independence struggle, one of the bloodiest wars of decolonisation of the twentieth century, has proved an inexhaustible subject for historical enquiry since 1962. The interest in the memory of the war dates from the 1990s, when memory studies began to flourish as a field, and the politics of remembrance, recognition and repentance made their way into legislation, courtrooms and public apologies in countries around the world. Significantly, this international historiographical and political movement coincided with the period in which Algeria experienced its biggest crisis since independence. In December 1991, the FIS won the first round of legislative elections. In January 1992, the Algerian army interrupted the electoral process. A decade-long armed struggle between the army and Islamist guerrillas for control of state and society ensued, during which an estimated two hundred thousand Algerians were killed.[18]

The almost exclusive focus on the War of Independence (or the colonial period preceding it) followed by the focus on the memory of the anti-colonial conflict seen through the civil violence[19] of the 1990s has resulted in the 'squashing down' of contemporary Algerian history. That is to say, reducing the recent past to two juxtaposed periods – 1954–62 and the 1990s – at once distinct and inextricably intertwined. This has a number of consequences. Firstly, it risks contributing to the caricature of Algeria as locked in an eternal, pathological cycle of violence: a popular and academic stereotype rightly denounced by James McDougall, amongst others, as essentialising and unhelpful as an analytical framework.[20] Secondly, such an approach encourages us to see Algerian history since independence through the perspective of its relationship to France, rather than also locating Algeria in other contexts, be they African, Middle Eastern or Third Worldist.[21]

Thirdly, the focus on the war, the memory of the war and the civil violence of the 1990s privileges reading the post-1962 nation-state through a prism of trauma and repressed memory. This has produced some fascinating works. Not least amongst these is Benjamin Stora's seminal *La Gangrène et l'oubli* (Gangrene and forgetting, 1991), in which the author argues that the unhealed wounds of the past are responsible for many of the contemporary social and political fractures in France and Algeria, as well as being a major obstacle to normalising Franco-Algerian relations.[22] Yet at the same time, borrowing from a discipline that by its nature is interested in the psyche of the individual and applying psychological and emotional mechanisms of remembrance and forgetting to the collective group has led to a bypassing of an evidence-based approach. Maurice Halbwachs's *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (first published in French in 1925, translated as *On Collective Memory*) remains enduringly influential for establishing that individual memory cannot be separated from the social context in which that memory takes shape. However, as Wulf Kansteiner argues, this does not mean that individuals' memories constitute the collective memory, nor that collective memory functions in the same way as individual memory: 'Nations *can* [his emphasis] repress with psychological impunity'.[23] Moreover, as Susannah Radstone underlines in her critique of trauma theory, 'even when (and if) memory travels, it is only ever *instantiated* [her emphasis] locally, in a specific place and at a particular time'.[24] The significance of an 'event' or 'past' to individuals and societies at needs to be substantiated, rather than assumed. No less a figure than Eric Hobsbawm, whose work has been so influential in shaping how we study the role of narratives of the past in nation-building, reminds us that the 'view from below, i.e. the nation as seen […] by the ordinary persons […] is exceedingly difficult to discover'.[25]

Fourthly, and from a gendered perspective, 'squashing down' Algerian history perpetuates a vision of women's rights, roles and status as on a downward trajectory since 1962. Malika El Korso presents this downward trajectory in the following terms: 'As a graph, the combat led by Algerian women would give us a rising curve before 1954, a plateau between 1954 and 1962, followed by a descending line'.[26] To the outside observer, the contrast seems even more dramatic. We leave in July 1962 with images of female urban bombers challenging the colonial and gendered order – a vision anchored in public consciousness in no small measure thanks to the film *The Battle of Algiers*. We come back during the 1990s civil violence, and the photographer Hocine Zaourar's gut-wrenching and award-winning photograph of a bereaved mother crying inconsolably in the wake of the 1997 Bentalha massacre, when more than two hundred villagers were killed by armed guerrillas. From inspiring Third Worldist revolutionaries, pan-Arab movements and left-wing sympathisers the world over with its fighting sisters in the early 1960s, by the early 1990s, at the height of the First Intifada, Palestinian women were using the Algerian example as a cautionary tale. Sherna Berger Gluck describes Palestinian women activists repeatedly vowing '"We will not be another Algeria"', considering post-independence Algeria as an example of women's interests being 'subverted to political processes'.[27]

Yet these are political discourses and not historical frames of analysis. The judgement of failure has largely overshadowed the study of the events of the past fifty years. As Lila Abu-Lughod argues in her volume on Egypt and Iran, post-colonial projects with women as their object should not be seen as part of a trajectory moving from patriarchy to liberation (or vice versa) but instead placed 'squarely within the messy situations of state building, anti-colonial nationalism, changing social orders, and the emergence of new classes'.[28] And the history of Algeria's post-1962 'messy situation' is only beginning to be written.

This book is about female war veterans and their relationship to the post-colonial state and narratives of the nation, in a context where they are widely considered to have been excluded from both. Based on interviews with women who participated in the War of Independence 1954–62 and who remained in Algeria after independence was achieved, it investigates these women's postwar lives and how and why they remember their wartime roles. Challenging the view of the post-1962 period as one in which female veterans were depoliticised, this book examines the intersections between interviewees' lived experiences and competing discourses about Algerian women which were produced both during and after the war. It explores the political, social and economic reasons which explain why women engage with, appropriate, reject or ignore these discourses about them.[29] Throughout, it reflects upon the shifting importance which interviewees attach to gender as a frame for understanding their lives and position in society at different points over the past half-century.[30]

The oral history interviews in this book were carried out with twenty-seven women who participated in the War of Independence, twenty-six of whom still lived in Algeria at the time of the interview. These were all nationalist women on the side of the FLN during the war, although the wide variety of political sympathies which this front could encompass, and how their definition of and relationship to 'the FLN' shifted both during and after independence, is central to this study. The women interviewed are from different socio-economic, educational and geographical backgrounds, but can broadly be divided into two main groups: a smaller group of rural women from villages in the region of Kabylia who provided logistical support for the FLN's rural guerrillas, and a larger group of urban women who were either engaged in the FLN's Algiers bomb network or joined rural guerrilla units, usually as nurses.[31]

This book is not a sociological or an anthropological study of 'women at war' or 'women after independence'. Nor does it have the pretension to be an all-encompassing account of post-independence nation-building in Algeria or a comprehensive study of memory from 1962 to the present. Instead, by following interviewees' wartime and postwar trajectories, this book aims to write a post-independence history of Algeria beyond the frames of violence, trauma, interminable decline and the Franco-Algerian lens.

At the same time, by examining how interviewees' life stories – what might be termed 'vernacular memory' – are articulated within pre-existing public frames, this book also seeks to make a contribution to wider debates about the relationship between oral history and social memory. Studying the construction of a national past through its artefacts (street signs, monuments and museums) and its formal practices (official speeches, national days and ceremonies) cannot provide a complete picture of its place within a society. Instead, we also need to explore how individuals interact with, respond to and appropriate this past and how and why a dominant narrative resonates and is refracted across different generations and different sections of societies. Research which engages with the question of how memorial discourses are understood and (re)interpreted have so far concentrated on the First World War, the Second World War, the Holocaust in Europe and American history, subject areas at the forefront of the field of memory studies.[32] Moreover, as Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes underlined in 2008, 'the significant body of interdisciplinary work on the construction of social and cultural memory [has] failed to engage directly with oral history'.[33] This book seeks to take up this challenge for the Algerian case, using oral history to demonstrate that narratives of the nation are not just the product of 'top-down' imposition but also the result of 'bottom-up' engagement, reappropriation or indeed misinterpretation.[34] Moreover, memories which are presented as radically opposed to each other can, on closer inspection, share many points of connectedness. By using the past to debate the present, I argue, Algerians of different ages, genders and social classes have developed a malleable set of codes through which political debate can be conducted without undermining the social importance of the War of Independence as the foundation of Algerian society. Far from being evidence of a nation at war with itself, participating in disputes over the past is also a way of asserting one's belonging to that past, and validating its collective significance.[35]

Structure

This book is divided into six chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 cover the period 1954–62, revisiting key elements of the nationalist construction of the story of the war from the perspectives of some women who participated in it. Central to any nationalist construction of the history of the nation are, firstly, lineage and, secondly, clear dividing lines between who belongs and who does not. Lineage refers not only to the ancestors who can be traced back through blood, language and culture but also to the genealogy of the nationalist movement: that is to say, the events, people and political predecessors which nationalist movements draw upon in order to present their existence as a historical inevitability, the logical culmination of everything which went before. These genealogies require clear distinctions between 'us' and 'them'. Picking a side, especially in times of conflict, is presented as a moral decision between right and wrong, devoid of any other context, and each side is presented as a homogeneous bloc.

By focusing on how interviewees explain their engagement in the FLN and talk about how they negotiated sides during the war, Chapter 1 ('Nationalist genealogies') demonstrates that the complexity and ambiguity of lived experience does not preclude interviewees sharing in an idealised vision of the war. It begins to explore one of the key themes in this book: the social, economic and political reasons which explain why diverse everyday experiences can acquire standardised symbolic meanings.

If we accept that lineage and clear dividing lines between 'us' and 'them' are key to nationalist imaginaries, the importance of gender becomes clear. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias set out five key ways in which women have been implicated in nationalism: as biological reproducers of members of the nation, as enforcers of the boundaries of national groups (through restrictions on marriage or sexual relations), as transmitters and producers of the national culture, as symbolic signifiers of national difference and as active participants in national struggles.[36] Algerian nationalism was and is gendered in all five of these ways. Chapter 2 ('Heroines and victims, brothers and sisters') examines colonial and nationalist discourses produced about women during the war, and how interviewees ignored, resisted or appropriated these discourses, then and now. It also considers how potentially seismic social change – increased contact between men and women as a result of war – subsequently has been made less socially disruptive through interviewees' insistence on a language of 'brothers' and 'sisters' when describing interactions between male and female participants.

Chapter 3 ('1962: Continuities and discontinuities') considers 1962 from two perspectives. Firstly, its symbolic importance, as the end of the war, the birth of a new Algeria, and what is, in many accounts, the beginning of the end – 'where it all went wrong'. It explores how interviewees fit into popular narratives about the 'winners' and 'losers' of independence which have developed since 1962, but, secondly, it also examines, on an individual level, the opportunities which independence presented. In 1962, the Algerian economy and the country's infrastructure were destroyed. The desperate need for a qualified, or at least literate, workforce presented new opportunities for educated women and men, although for many women and men without formal education the new roles available to them were much more limited.

Chapter 4 ('Embodying the nation') explores how the newly independent nation was (re)imagined through women under Presidents Ahmed Ben Bella (1962–65) and Houari Boumediene (1965–78), though examining official speeches, nationality law, discourses about marriage and naming, the creation of the Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes (National Union of Algerian Women, UNFA) and the selection of women to act as 'ambassadors' for Algeria on the world stage. Challenging familiar visions of 1960s and 1970s Algeria as locked in a struggle between 'tradition' and 'modernity', Chapter 4 argues that a puritanical revolutionary fervour could fuse religious and cultural conservatism with the desire to build a socialist state, thus 'making safe' women's entry into the public sphere. As a counterpoint to the obsession with women in official speeches, Chapter 4 concludes with an exploration of how interviewees resisted 'embodying the nation' by insisting that they were gender-neutral citizens.

Chapter 5 ('From national construction to new battles') examines in more detail urban, educated women's relationship to the state in the 1960s and 1970s. It looks at how these women participated in what were termed 'tasks of national construction' because they believed in the necessity of state-building, even if they might disagree with an authoritarian, and often socially conservative, political system. It then considers how the relationship between urban, educated interviewees and the state began to change in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The reactionary 1984 Family Code challenged the belief in genderless citizenship, leading some of these women to use their status as female veterans to produce a new feminist–nationalist narrative of the nation. Whilst the civil violence of the 1990s forced an accommodation of necessity between urban, educated veterans and the state, the 2010s have been marked by this particular group of women once more reframing their life stories for a new era, presenting themselves as the voices of the weak against the abuse of state power.

Finally, Chapter 6 ('Being remembered and forgotten') explicitly engages with questions about remembering and forgetting which thematically run through Chapters 1–5. It discusses how the end of the single-party state in 1989, alongside the international preoccupation with memory in the 1990s, has led to an explosion of memory about the war – without provoking a major qualitative shift in the language and frames of reference used to discuss it. The war continues to exist as a metaphor of solidarity, self-abnegation and unity of purpose. Exploring how the role of women in the War of Independence has been remembered or presented as 'forgotten' by the state, historians and interviewees themselves, Chapter 6 argues that the war continues to provide a space, albeit a space with shifting and contested limits, within which political criticism can be aired, without undermining the fundamental role of the War of Independence as a social glue. Underlining that remembering is not just a political act, Chapter 6 also examines the economic, social and personal motivations for why women remember their role in the war or omit certain parts of their stories both when invited to official commemorative ceremonies and within more informal networks of family and friends.

Time, myth and taboo: The difficulties of writing post-independence history

Writing post-1962 Algerian history is challenging. As Malika Rahal underlines: 'in contemporary Algeria, it seems no history is possible after the War of Independence'.[37] In part, this is due to a lack of access to archives: most ministries' post-1962 archives have not been transferred to the National Archives. Those that have are often not yet classified and access to archives held by ministries and state organisations, whilst not impossible, is arbitrary and uncertain. In 2005, at the offices of the UNFA in Algiers, I was delighted when the general secretary said that she would be able to give me access to its archives. These archives turned out to be not dusty internal documents packed with illuminating detail, as I was hopefully anticipating, but two boxes of the UNFA magazine *El Djazaïria*. When I asked what had happened to other archives, I was told that they had been 'lost in a fire'.

The difficulty of writing post-1962 history is also due to the political sensitivities of the post-independence years, which present far fewer opportunities to produce a glorious tale of heroism than the war period. Moreover, many of the historical actors of the past fifty years are not only still alive but still in positions of power. For Algerian historians in Algeria, this is a difficult history to write if you want to hold on to your job. For historians working outside Algeria, embarking on writing this history is an uncertain enterprise, with only a sketchy idea of what sources you will have available or whether eyewitnesses will be willing to talk to you. Whereas for the war, or earlier periods, there is a historiography into which one's approach and argument can be worked, this does not really exist for the post-1962 period. Instead, there are a series of commonly held ideas about post-independence Algeria, perpetuated within and beyond Algeria. Amongst these commonly held ideas we find generalising statements such as: 1960s and 1970s Algeria was a battle between 'tradition' and 'modernity' hence the origins of an ongoing 'identity crisis', women were sent back into the kitchen, contemporary political discourse is obsessed by the past, it was downhill all the way after 1962 … Such statements are in fact part of politicised narratives, full of coded meanings, allusions and rumours that all is not what it seems – a way of talking about politics typical of a political system which is neither totalitarian nor entirely democratic.[38] Such narratives need to be deconstructed rather than reproduced.

This is not to dismiss the wide range of sociological, linguistic, literary, anthropological and political science studies produced about post-independence Algeria, notably by Algerian scholars, which this book has relied on.[39] I am in no way making the dubious argument that Algeria is a historiographical virgin territory. What I am arguing is that historians have to think about how they are going to construct their sources (oral history is vital), how they might deal with subjects which are politically sensitive (especially if using oral history) and how they might identify an approach where there are plenty of opinions but very few signposts left on the way by previous historical studies.

For the ‘squashing down’ of history into 1954–62, or into two parallel periods of 1954–62 and the 1990s, is not just an academic or journalistic conceit. It is part of a much broader issue, relating to how time is experienced. This became evident very quickly as I began to carry out interviews. For example, Akila Ouared was born into a family of trade unionists in the eastern Algerian city of Constantine. She was a student activist and organiser in the FLN’s metropolitan France branch, the Fédération de France (Federation of France, FF–FLN). Most of her adult life, however, has been spent in politics, campaigning on women’s rights issues. I began – or tried to begin – the interview by asking about her current role as president of the Association de Défense et Promotion des Droits des Femmes (Association for the Defence and Promotion of Women’s Rights, ADPDF). After a brief response of two and a half minutes, Akila insists: ‘Right, me, I’d like to go back to before, how women came to join the National Liberation Front’.[40]

Unlike for the vast majority of my interviews, this one took place at Akila Ouared’s place of work rather than in the home and the most substantial part of her political activity was in the post-1962 period. It is therefore significant that *even* Akila Ouared insisted that we must start with the war. This is the dominant event which provides the key chronological marker, overshadowing what follows to the extent that some interviewees, notably those from rural areas, consider the post-1962 period as one in which ‘nothing’ happened. Seven and a half years of war – or even less for those whose engagement dates from 1955 or 1956 and whose active participation ended in 1960 or 1961 as a result of repression – last an age, punctuated by retellings of the events which marked women the most, whilst decades outside the war period are summarised in a few minutes. Fatima Berci, who cooked for and sheltered rural guerrillas in her village in Kabylia, describes the seven-year war as ‘the equivalent of fourteen [years] because day and night we did not stop, every day counted double’.[41] This is an explicit reference to the way in which the war years are experienced in a different time. Chérifa Akache, who carried out a similar wartime role to that of Fatima Berci, makes a similar comment: ‘I’d really need two weeks to talk about the revolution’.[42]

For these women, looking at the world from the perspective of the War of Independence is like looking through the wrong end of a telescope: compared to this seismic event, both the ‘before’ and 'after' shrink in significance. The following passage comes from an interview with Lucette Hadj Ali, a communist of European settler origin from the western city of Oran, who joined the anti-colonial resistance. She described how her uncle, also a communist working with the FLN, managed to escape capture by the French when gendarmes came knocking at a safe house he was staying in near Pointe Pescade, a coastal location a few kilometres outside Algiers. Her uncle's actions also protected fellow underground communists, including Lucette, who were anxiously hiding in the kitchen as he opened the door:

> During the [Second World W]ar, my uncle had been mobilised by de Gaulle or Giraud, I don't know which one. They had organised a departure [from Algeria] to contact resistance networks in France, my uncle had the job of doing it, he left in a submarine, he arrived in Spain, he crossed the Pyrenees and he went to do his thing, after he was decorated. And for this mission, they gave him a good fake French identity card, which he still had. When he presented this card to the gendarmes, one of the gendarmes was from the village [where the uncle had completed the mission], and so it was all really friendly, [the uncle] gave them a drink and they never stepped into the kitchen![43]

Despite being amongst the major global events of the twentieth century, in Lucette Hadj Ali's narrative, the Second World War is reduced to a fairly unimportant background story. This telescoping of time either side of the War of Independence is not specific to women, nor indeed to those whose main political activity was in the period 1954–62. Malika Rahal, who has carried out oral history interviews with mainly male informants on underground political movements after 1962, underlines that: 'Moving through time, elaborating a narrative, arranging events and periods, but also the emotional content, change compared to eyewitness accounts about the colonial period. In the end, it is the very texture of time which appears transformed in the course of these interviews.'[44] Catherine Merridale, an oral historian of Russia, describes her interviewees' difficulties when trying to place private memories without a public framework, that is to say, without an existing shape, order, place and meaning into which an individual can locate his or her story.[45]

Not only are different moments more important than others for the narrator, they also conform to a moral time, that is to say, periods are stacked against each other not only chronologically but also in terms of the differing degrees of moral exemplarity which each period is considered to represent. The war is *the* moral benchmark. This comes through very clearly in women's language of common purpose, idealism and courage when they talk about the war, which is often either implicitly or explicitly a critique of what are perceived to be post-independence or 'today's' values. As Chérifa Akache put it: 'If there were another war, I wouldn't participate. At the time there was solidarity, love, brotherhood, confidence, but it's not the same now.'[46] The value judgements brought upon different periods are remarkably similar across regions, gender and social class.

It would, however, be inaccurate to see women's (and men's) narratives as stuck in the war years. Whilst time is experienced relatively from both moral and chronological perspectives, these perspectives are also in a constant flux. Time contracts and expands and takes on different moral values, because, depending on the present, what once might have been considered bad times can metamorphose into the good old days. Moreover, a period which is not considered important in the life of the interviewee or is skimmed over as potentially controversial and problematic can simultaneously be morally significant in structuring a narrative of 'Algeria' – this became evident in the way women talked about the Boumediene period. Few women talked about him directly, but many expressed sentiments similar to those of Louisette Ighilahriz, a former member of the Algiers bomb network: 'For the black decade which we've just had, that wouldn't have happened with Boumediene'.[47] The interviews in this book were carried out in 2005, just as Algeria was beginning to emerge from the other side of the civil violence of the 1990s, and this inevitably shaped how these women revisited the 1960s and 1970s.

Identifying an object of study, in this case post-independence Algerian history, does not make the study any easier. Restoring chronological time does not neatly fill the gaps in our knowledge. The oral historian is dependent on how interviewees remember: what they consider to be relevant or important to state or conversely unimportant or politically sensitive. Moreover, to differing degrees depending on the individual, the moral prism is always present in shaping interviewees' narratives, and, whilst the interviewer might come to differentiate moral judgement or politicised frames of reference from the recounting of lived experience, this does not necessarily bring us any closer to recreating lived experience. These different 'textures of time', to employ Rahal's expression, account for some of the unevenness in this book – why some periods are given more space then others, why the patchwork of different sources used is different for different periods, why certain women appear to dominate at certain moments, why there are silences around events we would really like to know more about and why sometimes we seem stuck in explaining 'politicised interpretations' without getting down to any 'facts'. When we try to 'stretch out' the period 1962 to the present, inevitably time does not just spring back into shape, parts might remain deformed and misshapen, shadowy and unclear. It is hoped that, with further study and research, more of these shadows will begin to lift.

Terminology and methodology

When writing about Algeria, terms are often loaded with connotations. Word choices to describe individuals, groups or events can be interpreted as a political statement of intent and sometimes no neutral term or definition can be found to the satisfaction of all parties. How to refer to the women and men who participated in the War of Independence is an example of this.

Women who participated in the war are generically referred to in Algeria today as *mujahidat* – the feminine plural of *mujahid*. The religious connotation of this word varies depending on who is using it. During the war, and then in the post-independence period, the vocabulary of jihad, *mujahid*, *shahid* and *fida'i*, which literally translate as 'holy war', 'holy warrior', 'martyr' and 'one prepared to sacrifice his life for a cause', evoked a wider, transnational religious community in order to reinforce the nationalist message. Such terminology is today used by the state, and amongst many of the older generation who fought in the war, as fairly secularised terms: jihad, *mujahid*, *shahid* and *fida'i* are synonyms for war, soldier/veteran, war dead and urban bomber.[48]

In fact, various categories were created after 1962 by the Ministry of Mujahidin (Ministry of War Veterans) to officially classify participants in the war: including *musabbilin*, to refer to members of the civilian support network, and *fida'iyn* as a specific term for urban bombers (feminine plural: *fida'iyat*). There were reportedly between three thousand and six thousand armed combatants in Algeria in July 1962, but in subsequent decades the number of recognised veterans – certified as having either borne arms or participated in a support role – steadily increased.[49] In 1974, out of 336,784 officially recognised veterans, 10,949 were women.[50] Proving one's militancy and acquiring official war veteran status and its accompanying financial benefits are a complicated, opaque and corruption-riddled process. 'False *mujahidin*' scandals are regularly splashed across the Algerian press. If you were in a rural area in a logistical role or if you are not politically well connected you are likely to have difficulty obtaining veteran status, and one might reasonably surmise that the level of women's participation is underestimated by official figures.

Some of the women interviewed for this book have official veteran status; most do not. Interviewees in this book include women who are nationally and internationally well-known figures and unknown rural women who have never before told their story to anyone outside their family. These women accomplished a variety of roles during the war, from urban bomber in Algiers to cooking for guerrillas in remote villages. Women in rural and urban areas today tend to use *mujahidat* to describe themselves and others, although this is a post-hoc appropriation, and a rural woman baking bread in her home would not, at the time, have been considered or have considered her own role as that of a *mujahida*. This book does, however, use generic terms such as *mujahidat*, 'female combatants' and 'female veterans' to describe all women who participated in the war whatever their role, as this corresponds to a lived reality of a guerrilla war with no home front and women's contemporary forms of self-identification. Chapter 5 explores how, for one group of women, being part of 'the *mujahidat*' has become a specific political identity since the 1980s.

This book is not representative of all the different sociological profiles of women who participated in the War of Independence. Notably, uneducated women in the urban guerrilla campaign are underrepresented, and the wartime roles of women who were in the FLN in metropolitan France are not explored here in detail, although this book does pick up the trajectories of some of the women who were in the FF–FLN when they returned to Algeria after 1962.[51] Moreover, whilst the ages of the women I interviewed ranged from early sixties to mid eighties, the median age was around the late sixties to early seventies mark. This means that most women were in their late teens or early twenties when they participated in the war. This does not mean that this was a young woman's war, although in some ways it was, as Chapter 2 will explore. Clearly many potential informants who were older during the war had died in the forty-three years between the end of the war and the beginning of my research.

These broader methodological questions about how representative this study is exist in a context of highly charged discourses about the linguistic and ethnic identity of Algeria. These are a key feature of contemporary political debate and giving space to or recovering certain voices through oral history might be considered a political act. Looking at the profiles of the women I have interviewed, it could be claimed that I am studying Algerian history from the margins. Of the two main types of profile which I examine, one consists of women from a Francophone ('francisant') urban elite based in Algiers. These women were part of the tiny minority of men and women who received some degree of formal education under colonial rule, and are likely to read and write in French rather than in the classical Arabic (*fusha*) of 'arabisants'.[52] The other group of women are Tamazight (Berber) speakers from the region of Kabylia, who belong to a Berberophone minority, representing approximately twenty per cent of the population, compared to an Arabophone population of eighty per cent. In practice, these politicised linguistic divides are not so clear-cut: in Algiers, for example, 'francisants' use Algerian dialectical Arabic (*derja*) for everyday communication, and, given significant rural to urban migration after independence, especially from Kabylia, many Tamazight speakers living in Arabophone areas would also speak *derja*. The profile of my interviewees was not a deliberate choice when I set out on my research, but rather emerged from the inevitable snowball effect of how networks of contacts develop. However, this is not just a mishap of research methods, and I would make the following additional points about how representative the informants in this study are.

Firstly, we need to be wary of the notion that we can identify a 'real' or 'most representative' Algerian woman. This was a particular concern for Algerian sociologists and ethnographers in the 1960s and 1970s, imbued with the official discourse that Algerianness was about recovering an 'authentic' identity, embodied by Islam, the Arabic language and pan-Arabism. To take just one example, Nefissa Zerdoumi introduced her 1965 monograph on the education of children in the western Algerian town of Tlemcen – where many Muslims from Al-Andalus fleeing the Reconquista in the Iberian peninsula had settled in previous centuries – by stating that she had chosen this location for her case study because it 'represents in the eyes of all the national culture, with an unceasing belief in its authentic values'.[53] The fact that Zerdoumi sees her study as 'representative' is more a reflection of the dominant identity politics of the time than a factual statement.

The flipside of insisting on one's typicality are claims of exceptionality, which need to be treated with equal caution. From the early days of the French occupation of Algeria, the 'Kabyle woman' was subject to a particular ethnographic obsession, portrayed as more 'liberated' and with more 'rights' than her 'Arab' counterpart. Aside from the political ends of divide-and-rule served by these constructions, the factual basis of such distinctions is questionable, even using measures of 'emancipation' of the time.[54] Nevertheless, representations of the 'Kabyle' woman as benefiting from greater status and rights compared to her 'Arab' counterpart remain potent in the post-independence period, albeit for very different reasons. Writing in the 1990s – thus in the midst of the civil violence of the 'black decade' and in light of events including the passing of the highly conservative Family Code in 1984 and the 1980 Berber Spring (*Tafsut Imazighen*), when the inhabitants of Kabylia rose up against linguistic and cultural oppression – Mohamed Benyahia, a war veteran from the region of Kabylia, argued that 'Kabyle men have never considered women as inferior beings'. He insisted: 'Whilst today a campaign is in full swing for the rights of women, the Kabyle woman does not feel concerned, since the beginning of time, she has been associated with the life of the village and has had full rights'.[55]

Yet whilst recognising and documenting cultural and political differences between regions is entirely valid, assuming or claiming that these differences are inherited, hermetic and unchanging is much more intellectually dubious, and risks falling into an essentialism which is no more legitimate than colonial categorisations constructed to exclude and control colonised populations. Although the profile of each interviewee is an integral part of contextualising and analysing the interview, this profile should not create an expectation that responses will automatically be orientated in a certain way (for example, Kabyle *mujahida* equals resistance to the centralising, homogenising state; French-educated *mujahida* equals secular feminist). Indeed, whilst we are questioning what 'representative' means, we might also question what a 'minority' perspective might be and how we might define this: an interviewee could be in a minority because of her mother tongue, but representative of the majority of women of her generation because she never went to school; a woman might be in a minority because she was in the Algerian Constituent Assembly in 1962, but in the majority because her view of Algeria was broadly in step with the positions of the dominant political faction at the time. At the same time, because the majority of interviewees in this study might, depending on the categories which we employ, be described as in a minority, it makes it even more interesting to explore how they interact with – and indeed find their place within – the dominant discourse.

Notes

1 *Journal d'Alger* (11 October 1957). See also *L'Echo d'Alger* (9 October 1957). All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

2 Algerian National Archives (hereafter ANA), Algiers, Fonds du GPRA: Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (MAE), Box 252.

3 *El Moudjahid* (1 November 1974).

4 This book refers to the conflict 1954–62 as the Algerian War of Independence. As Sylvie Thénault argues, this term seeks to bridge the different expressions used on each side of the Mediterranean, encompassing all of the following: '"Algerian War" as a war to maintain French sovereignty, "War of Liberation" as a moment of resurrection of an Algerian nation suffocated by colonialism for more than a century, "Revolution" as a radical transformation of the country and its society.' *La Guerre d'indépendance algérienne* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005), pp. 14–15.

5 The works of Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Pierre Nora, Ernest Gellner and Anthony Smith, amongst others, have been fundamental in shaping our understanding of nations and nationalism. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London; New York: Verso, 2nd edn, 2006 [1983]); E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); P. Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French* Past, trans. A. Goldhammer, 3 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996–98); E. Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2nd edn, 2006 [1983]); A. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2nd ed., 2010 [2001]).

6 For example, F. Abbas*, L'Indépendance confisquée* (Paris: Flammarion, 1984), H. Aït Ahmed, *La Guerre et l'après guerre* (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1964) and A. Haroun, *Algérie 1962: la grande dérive* (Paris, L'Harmattan, 2005).

7 G. Pervillé, 'Histoire de l'Algérie et mythes politiques algériens: du "parti de la France" aux "anciens et nouveaux harkis"', in C.-R. Ageron (ed.), *La Guerre d'Algérie et les Algériens, 1954–1962* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1997).

8 S. Slyomovics, '"Hassiba Ben Bouali, if you could see our Algeria": women and public space in Algeria', *Middle East Report*, 192 (1995), 8–13; p. 8.

9 D. Amrane, *Les Femmes algériennes dans la guerre* (Paris: Plon, 1991), p. 262.

10 M. El Korso, 'Femmes au combat: hommage à Baya Hocine' paper presented at the Centre National d'Etudes et de la Recherche sur le Mouvement National et la Révolution du Premier Novembre, Algiers, Algeria, 17 June 2002.

11 K. Taleb Ibrahimi, 'Les Algériennes et la guerre de libération nationale: l'émergence des femmes dans l'espace publique et politique au cours de la guerre et l'après guerre', in M. Harbi and B. Stora (eds), *La Guerre d'Algérie, 1954–2004: la fin de l'amnésie* (Paris: Hachette, 2004), p. 314.

12 M. Gadant, *Le Nationalisme algérien et les femmes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995), p. 32.

13 M. Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 118, pp. 221–2.

14 C. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2nd edn, 2000 [1989]), p. 44. The view of women acquiring an 'emancipation on loan' during wartime is familiar to historians of non-colonial contexts: for example, this was a common interpretation in the early literature on women and the First World War, which subsequently shifted towards a more complex reassessment of how gendered relations were reordered in the postwar period. See U. Daniel (who coined the expression 'emancipation on loan'), *The War from Within: German Working Class Women in the First World War* (Oxford: Berg, 1997) and, for a more recent approach, K. Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class and Citizenship* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

15 The 'Algerian case' is explicitly referred to as a comparative example in a range of works not specifically focused on Algeria, for example, M. H. Alison, *Women and Political Violence: Female Combatants in Ethno-National Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 115, and J. Nagel,

'Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21:2 (1998), 242–69, p. 254.

16 K. Hodgkin and S. Radstone (eds), *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2006), p. 1.

17 James McDougall's *History and Culture of Nationalism in Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) explores the contribution of the *'ulama* (doctors of religion) to the construction of national history, including after independence. In a survey which historian Malika Rahal carried out amongst colleagues at ten Algerian universities in 2011–12, there were no doctoral students in a history department working on any topic dealing with post-independence Algeria. In the international research context, the growing interest and increasingly abundant number of publications on the colonial period and decolonisation has not been matched by similar output on the post-independence period.

18 M. Evans and J. Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. xiv.

19 This book uses the term 'civil violence', and not civil war or second Algerian war, to refer to the conflict between the state and Islamist groups in Algeria in the 1990s. In *The Battlefield Algeria 1988–2002: Studies in a Broken Polity* (London: Verso, 2003), Hugh Roberts underlines that it was the FLN as a political party which was defeated with the introduction of multipartyism after 1989, not its political ideas. Arguably, the FIS was simply a development of the Islamist strand which had long existed within the FLN. Moreover, by the end of the decade, the majority of the Algerian population were simply terrified bystanders caught between the violence of radical Islam and state repression.

20 J. McDougall, 'Savage wars? Codes of violence in Algeria, 1830s–1990s', *Third World Quarterly*, 26:1 (2005), 117–31.

21 Historians have begun to look beyond the Franco-Algerian binary for the period of the war, for example, Matthew Connelly's *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Jeffrey James Byrne's forthcoming monograph explores Algerian foreign policy in the post-independence period. *Mecca of Revolution: From the Algerian Front of the Third World's Cold War* (Oxford University Press).

22 B. Stora, *La Gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991).

23 W. Kansteiner, 'Finding meaning in memory: a methodological critique of collective memory studies', *History and Theory*, 41 (2002), 179–97, pp. 185–6.

24 S. Radstone, 'What place is this? Transcultural memory and the locations of memory studies', *Parallax*, 17:4 (2011), 109–23, p. 117.

25 E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1992 [1990]), p. 11. Some more recent publications have sought to take up Eric Hobsbawm's challenge, for example, M. Van Ginderachter and M. Beyen (eds), *Nationhood from Below: Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

26 M. El Korso, 'Une double realité pour un même vécu', *Confluences Méditerranée*, 17 (1996), 99–108, pp. 100–1.

27 S. Berger Gluck, 'Palestinian women: gender politics and nationalism', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 24:3 (1995), 5–15, p. 5.

28 L. Abu-Lughod (ed.), *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. viii.

29 Combining oral history with historiographical project, this book takes as its starting point Penny Summerfield's argument that hindsight, retrospect and rewriting are not a problem which the oral historian has to see beyond, instead 'these layers of meaning can become part of the object of study'. *Reconstructing Women's Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 12. The historian of the Second World War Lucy Noakes insists on the importance of considering constructed discourse alongside the agency of lived experience, and using the former as a framework within which the latter can be analysed and vice versa. 'Gender, war and memory: discourse and experience in history', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 36:4 (2001), 663–72, p. 666. Both authors refer to Judith Butler, who in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990) argues that 'Construction is not opposed to agency; it is the necessary scene of agency, the very terms in which agency is articulated and becomes culturally intelligible' (p. 147).

30 Studies of women and gender in nationalist movements in Morocco, Zimbabwe, Vietnam and Guinea have underlined the importance of understanding women's own frames of reference when taking a gendered approach, notably in terms of what consists of the 'public' and 'private' sphere, religious obligations and the differences in experiences and expectations between rural and urban areas. See A. Baker, *Voices of Resistance: Oral Histories of Moroccan Women* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998); E. Schmidt, '"Emancipate your husbands!" Women and nationalism in Guinea, 1953–1958', in J. Allman, S. Geiger and N. Musisi (eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); S. Ranchod-Nilsson, '"This, too, is a way of fighting": Rural women's participation

in Zimbabwe's liberation war', in M.-A. Tetreault (ed.), *Women and Revolution in Africa, Asia and the New World* (Colombia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1994).

31 The Appendix provides brief biographies of interviewees for reference. Interviews with women originating from urban areas were conducted in French and subsequently transcribed and translated by myself. Interviews with women in rural areas were conducted in Tamazight (Berber), which was translated into French by an interpreter present (Badia Benbelkacem or Ouerdia Yermeche), and then transcribed from the recording by a third translator (Mourad Bouchouchi). The subsequent translation into English is my own.

32 For example: J. E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meanings* (London: Yale University Press, 1993); J. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), R. Handler and E. Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum, Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, NC. and London: Duke University Press, 1997); A. Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919–1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994).

33 P. Hamilton and L. Shopes, *Oral History and Public Memories* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), p. ix. One notable exception which the authors cite is A. Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out: History, Memory and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). Increasing numbers of works are examining the intersections of social memory and oral history, for example, J. Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution: Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

34 Through its 'bottom-up' approach, this book distinguishes itself from works which analyse the 'top-down' institutionalisation, dissemination and manipulation of a homogeneous and unifying national history, providing key insights into a predominantly male, urban elite. For example, Gilles Manceron and Hassan Remaoun's *D'une rive à l'autre: la guerre d'Algérie de la mémoire à l'histoire* (Paris: Syros, 1993) and Benjamin Stora's *La Gangrène et l'oubli* examine the political uses of memory in post-colonial Algeria. Omar Carlier writes about the figure of the 'mujahid' (resister) in 'Le moudjahid, mort ou vif', in A. Dayan Rosenman and L. Valensi (eds), *La Guerre d'Algérie dans la mémoire et l'imaginaire* (Paris: Bouchène, 2004). Jim House and Neil Macmaster's path-breaking work *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) combines 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches in its use of oral history to explore the event and memory of 17 October 1961, when an FLN demonstration in

the French capital was brutally suppressed by the police. However, its primary focus is metropolitan France.

35 In *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), Michael Rothberg critiques the view of memory as a competition for space in the public sphere – 'a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources'. Exploring the interactions between memories of different events (the Holocaust, slavery and decolonisation), he instead argues that memory is multidirectional, 'subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing' (p. 3). My focus in this book is somewhat different: I examine the interactions of memories of the same event(s), including versions of the past which are often explicitly presented by those articulating them as in competition with alternative accounts. My argument, however, has some parallels with that of Michael Rothberg as I argue that these 'competing' stories are not as diametrically opposed to each other as they claim to be. On the contrary, they are part of the same set of references, thus providing a shared and easily accessible language for public debate in Algeria.

36 N. Yuval-Davis and F. Anthias (eds), *Woman, Nation, State* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 7.

37 At the start of 2012, Malika Rahal developed the collaborative website *Textures du temps / Textures of time* which seeks to explore some of the issues of writing the history of contemporary Algeria: http://texturesdutemps.hypotheses.org. She has also written about the lack of post-independence history in 'Fused together and torn apart: stories and violence in contemporary Algeria', *History and Memory*, 24:1 (2012), 118–51, and 'Comment faire l'histoire de l'Algérie indépendante?', *La Vie des idées* (13 March 2012), www.laviedesidees.fr/Comment-faire-l-histoire-de-l.html (accessed 19 May 2014).

38 As Hue-Tam Ho Tai highlights in her discussion of late socialist Vietnam, in regimes which are neither totalitarian nor fully democratic 'public discourse often has an oblique quality; it is full of hidden meanings and allusion […] Obliqueness depends on deep cultural familiarity.' *The Country of Memory: Remaking the Past in Late Socialist Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 9.

39 There is not space here to cite all the existing works, but in terms of sociological studies there are the works of Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence,* and H. Vandevelde-Dallière, *Femmes algériennes: à travers la condition féminine dans le Constantinois depuis l'indépendance* (Algiers: Office des publications universitaires, 1980). Anthropological studies include: C. Lacoste-Dujardin, *Un village algérien: structures et évolution récente* (Algiers: SNED, 1976); N. Plantade, *La Guerre des femmes: magie et amour en Algérie* (Paris: La Boîte à documents,

1988) and N. Zerdoumi, *Enfant d'hier: l'éducation de l'enfant en milieu traditionnel algérien* (Paris: Maspero, 1970). Works on the Family Code include M. Charrad, *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Post-Colonial Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), and L. Pruvost, *Femmes d'Algérie: société, famille et citoyenneté* (Algiers: Casbah Editions, 2002). For women in politics, see Gadant, *Le Nationalisme algérien et les femmes,* and F.-Z. Sai, *Les Algériennes dans les espaces politiques: entre la fin d'un millénaire et l'aube d'un autre* (Algiers: Editions Dar El Gharb, n.d.). There are also a number of journal articles and book chapters by scholars such as Rabia Abdelkrim-Chikh, Christiane Achour and Dalila Morsly, Nadia Aït Zai, Karima Bennoune, Sophie Bessis, Boutheina Cheriet, Baya Gacemi and Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas, to name but a few.

40 Interview with Akila Abdelmoumène Ouared, henceforth Akila Ouared (13 June 2005).

41 Interview with Fatima Berci (16 June 2005).

42 Interview with Chérifa Akache (21 June 2005).

43 Interview with Lucette Larribère Hadj Ali, henceforth Lucette Hadj Ali (18 December 2005).

44 Rahal, 'Comment faire l'histoire de l'Algérie indépendante'.

45 C. Merridale, *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2001), p. 99 and p. 212.

46 Interview with Chérifa Akache (21 June 2005).

47 Interview with Louisette Ighilahriz (8 June 2005).

48 This secularised usage is not universally accepted: in his 1966 publication *Siham al-islam* (Arrows of Islam) Abdellatif Soltani, leader of the *'ulama* movement, rallied against this secular appropriation and nationalist stylisation of such vocabulary, insisting that 'Those who died during the war against the infidels will go to paradise as "mujahidin" if they defended the glory of Islam; for the rest, they can no longer give themselves the title of "shuhada".' J. M. Salgon, *Violences ambiguës: aspects du conflit armé en Algérie* (Paris: Centre des Hautes Etudes sur l'Afrique et l'Asie modernes, 1999), p. 98.

49 R. Branche, 'The martyr's torch: memory and power in Algeria', *Journal of North African Studies*, 16:3 (2011), 431–43, pp. 431–2.

50 Amrane, *Les Femmes algériennes dans la guerre*, pp. 225–7. Djamila Amrane was one of the rare historians to have access to the archives of the Ministry for Mujahidin; she herself is a former combatant. In the 1995 census of war veterans, the figure of 26,078 female participants was put forward – double Djamila Amrane's figure. The Ministry of Mujahidin's official explanation was that the registration of women from Kabylia was not included in the 1974 census. See R. Seferdjeli, '"Fight with us, women, and we will emancipate you": France, the FLN

and the struggle over women in the Algerian war of national liberation, 1954–1962' (PhD dissertation, London School of Economics, 2004), pp. 148–51.

51 For a discussion of women in the FF–FLN during the war see N. Macmaster, 'Des révolutionnaires invisibles: les femmes algériennes et l'organisation de la Section des femmes du FLN en France métropolitaine', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 59:4 (2012), 164–90. In addition, none of the women interviewed for this book represent the profile of the small minority of Algerian Jews (often communist) who participated in the War of Independence. For an account of a woman of Jewish–Berber origin who participated in the anti-colonial struggle see H. G. Esméralda, *Un été en enfer: Barbarie à la française. Témoignage sur la généralisation de la torture, Algérie, 1957* (Paris: Exils, 2004).

52 According to the 1966 census, 63.3% of men were illiterate and 85.9% of women were illiterate. 9.5% of men and 1.5% of women could read and write only in Arabic, and 12.5% of men and 5.4% of women only in French. 14.3% of men and 6.9% of women could read and write in both languages, suggesting that the literate minority was more likely to be literate in French. The census, however, does not define what 'literate' means – knowing the alphabet, or being able to read a newspaper article. Statistics in A. Mazouni, *Culture et enseignement en Algérie et au Maghreb* (Paris: François Maspero, 1969), p. 213.

53 Zerdoumi, *Enfant d'hier*, p. 27.

54 For example, whilst France decried Muslim inheritance law as giving daughters only half of that given to sons, in Kabylia women inherited nothing until a decree of 1931, which gave them some inheritance rights. See D. Sambron, *Femmes musulmanes, guerre d'Algérie 1954–1962* (Paris: Autrement, 2007), p. 60. Moreover, for every representation of the Kabyle family as more 'liberated', one might counter a representation of the uncompromising 'moral code' in Kabylia, in which defending women's honour was a matter of life and death, and 'dishonoured' women were potentially put to death. See for example M. Feraoun, *Journal, 1955–1962* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1962), p. 185.

55 M. Benyahia, *La Conjuration au pouvoir: récit d'un maquisard de l'ALN* (Algiers: ENAP Editions, 1999), p. 224.