Toward a process theory of revolution: understanding the failure of the Islamist insurgency in Algeria

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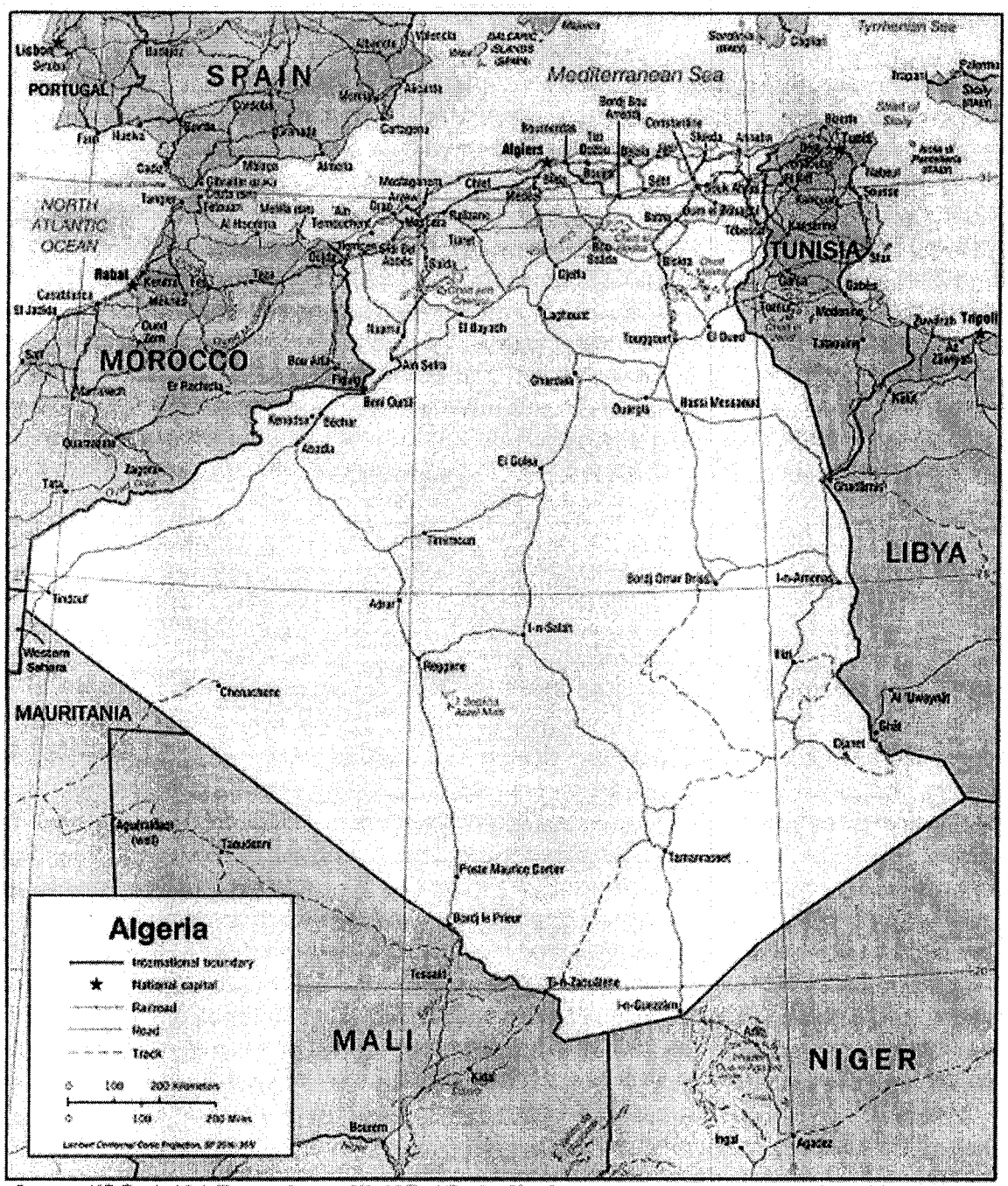
Abstract

In 1992, Algeria's government held its first ever democratic elections. With the *Front Islamique du Salut* poised to win the elections overwhelmingly, the Algerian military cancelled the democratic process and imposed military rule. Soon afterward, Algeria plunged into a civil war that claimed upward of 100,000 lives. Despite very significant popular support for the Islamist insurgency aiming to violently overthrow the Algerian government, the insurgency ultimately failed. Why? This paper will argue that while structural and actor-oriented approaches to understanding revolution are certainly important, they focus inadequate attention on contingencies that arise during a conflict, which in turn, affect structural and actor-oriented variables. Furthermore, a process-level approach enables us to factor in actor-oriented and structural variables dynamically, and is necessary to understanding the ultimate failure of the Islamist insurgency in Algeria.

Abstrait

En 1992, le gouvernement algérien a tenu les premières élections démocratiques dans l'histoire du pays. Alors que le Front Islamique du Salut s'apprêtait à remporter une victoire écrasante, l'armée algérienne annula les élections démocratiques et imposa un régime militaire. Peu après, l'Algérie était plongée dans une guerre civile qui a coûté la vie à près de 100 000 personnes. Malgré un soutien populaire considérable pour la révolte islamiste, visant à renverser de manière violente le gouvernement algérien, la révolte finit par échouer. Pourquoi? Cet thèse affirmera que, même si des approches structurelles ou orientées autour des acteurs sont certainement importantes pour comprendre le phénomène révolutionnaire, elles prêtent inadéquat attention à des éventualités survenant durant un conflit, qui à leur tour affectent les variables structurelles et celles orientées autour des acteurs. Par contre, une approche processuelle intégrant de façon dynamique ces variables, s'avère nécessaire pour comprendre l'échec ultime de la révolte islamiste en Algérie.



Source: US Central Intelligence Agency World Fact Book - Algeria

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Introduction

Widely viewed to be a response to popular discontent as a result of poor economic conditions and high levels of government corruption, the ruling party in Algeria – *Le Front Liberation Nationale,* (National Liberation Front, FLN) held the country's first ever democratic elections in 1992. With the *Front Islamique du Salut*, (Islamic Salvation Front, FIS) poised to win overwhelmingly in the second round of elections (parliamentary), the Algerian military cancelled the democratic process and imposed military rule. Soon afterward, Algeria plunged into a civil war that claimed upward of 100,000 lives.[1]

Despite very significant popular support for the Islamists who aimed to violently overthrow the Algerian government, the insurgency ultimately failed. Why? Existing theories of revolution offer different answers. These answers are dependent upon what point in time during the war one chooses to survey. Following the failure of the insurgency, structural theorists such as Skocpol might suggest that the state was simply too strong. However, this explanation is not sufficient in and of itself, given the level of popular support for the Islamists and the relative weakness of the Algerian state in the early 1990's. At the outset of the civil war, actor-oriented theories, such as those of Gurr or Olson, might have

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Figures on the number of civilian deaths vary. John P. Entelis in a forward to Luis Martinez's *The Algerian Civil War 1990-1998*, trans. Jonathan Derrick., (Columbia University Press: New York, 2000), ix. and William B. Quandt in a forward to Benjamin Stora's *Algeria, 1830-2000 – A Short History trans.* Jane Marie Todd. (Cornell University Press: Ithica, 2001), vii. report the death toll to be upward of 100,000. Human Rights Watch, *Time For Reckoning: Enforced Disappearances in Algeria,* Volume 15, No. 2, February 2003, 37 and the United States Central Intelligence Agency, CIA World Fact Book – Algeria, [http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ag.html] 1 January, 2004 report similar figures. The British Broadcasting Corporation, *Country Profile: Algeria,* [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/790556.stm], 22 March, 2005 and Al-Jazeera, "Algeria Poll Crisis Deepens", 14 February 2004 news agencies however, report the death toll to be upward of 150,000.

predicted that the insurgents had very good prospects at overthrowing the state given their ability to solicit the support of the population. A high level of popular support for an insurgent movement is a changing variable however.

This paper argues that while structural and actor-oriented approaches are certainly important in understanding revolution, they focus inadequate attention on contingencies that arise during a conflict, which in turn, affect structural and actor-oriented variables. Hence, what is required is a *process-level* approach to revolution. Put simply, this approach suggests that the outcome of any situation is dependent upon the chain of events during the process that led to that outcome, while each event during the chain is dependent upon the event that preceded it. I argue that understanding the downfall of the Islamist guerrilla movements during the Algerian civil war must be understood using process-level theories, which enables us to understand structural and actor-oriented variables interdependently through an ever-changing dynamic lens. In the case of the Algerian Islamist insurgency, factionalism, the application of fanatical ideology, and the commitment of terrorist atrocities by some Islamist guerrilla groups have doomed the entire Islamist movement to failure – despite their prospects for success at the outset.

Approaches to the Study of Revolution

Structural Approaches

A structural approach to the study of revolution focuses on the power of the state that rests on "structural variables". These variables are slow to change and can include a state's history, economy, political system, and the like. Theda Skocpol writes that existing revolutionary theories erroneously suggest that societal order rests on the needs of the majority being met, and where these needs cease to be met; the regime in power is doomed to collapse.[2] She cites the longevity of South African apartheid as an example that directly contradicts this argument since a state can remain fairly stable and invulnerable to domestic mass revolts even after suffering a loss of legitimacy, especially if the repressive apparatus remains solidly in place.[3] Skocpol argues that "historically no successful social revolution has ever been "made" by a mass-mobilizing, avowedly revolutionary movement."[4] She goes on to say that in no sense have revolutionary "[...] vanguards with large, mobilized, and ideologically imbued mass followings-ever create the revolutionary crises they exploited. Instead [...], revolutionary situations have developed due to the emergence of politico-military crises of state and class domination."[5]

Hence, a central point to her discussion is that revolutions are created by crises of state capacity. Such a decline can revolve around the structural variables listed above, and economic crises in particular. The "purposive image"

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[2] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 16
[3] ibid., 128
[4] ibid., 17
[5] ibid., 17

of how revolutions develop, argues Skocpol, wrongly suggests that the process and outcome of a revolution will depend upon the activities, intentions, or interests of the revolutionaries. Moreover, since a structural crisis is created at the state level, Skocpol believes that the general population is most likely to revolt when controls over them have been diminished. She writes that:

> Administrative and military breakdowns of the autocracies inaugurated social-revolutionary transformations....This result was due to the fact that widespread peasant revolts coincided with, indeed took advantage of, the hiatus of governmental supervision and sanctions [...][6]

In his classic study of the French Revolution, Alexis de Tocqueville makes a similar argument:

> [...] it is not always when things are going from bad to worse that revolution breaks out. On the contrary, it oftener happens that when a people which has put up with an oppressive rule over a long period without protest suddenly finds the government relaxing its pressure, it takes up arms against it.[7]

Hence for Skocpol, a *structural* crisis is required to precipitate a revolution. Since revolutions are not "made", but simply "come", the success of any revolutionary movement depends wholly upon the severity of the structural crisis at the state level, rather than the revolutionaries themselves.

Chalmers Johnson develops the idea that social institutions must be examined.[8] When various institutions of a society – the economy, the political

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[6] ibid., 112-113

[7] Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French revolution* ,trans. Stuart Gilbert, (Anchor: New York, 1955), 176

[8] Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* Second Edition, (Stanford University Press: California, 1982), 61-91

system, the training of job-seekers for new positions, grow at approximately the same rate, then the government should remain stable. However, if one of these variables begin to change independently, or changes faster than the others, the resulting imbalance will drive people to revolt. Increasing unemployment for example, is a symptom of such an imbalance. Therefore, Johnson would argue that the success of a revolution is dependent upon the degree of imbalance between social institutions.

Another variation on the ideas of Johnson, Samuel Huntington maintains that revolution "is most likely to occur in societies which have experienced some social and economic development and where the processes of political modernization and political development have lagged behind the processes of social and economic change."[9] This theory is based upon the idea that instability arises when some disequilibrium exists between the institutions in a society. Huntington believes however, that the system can survive a certain degree of disequilibrium so long as political institutions are capable of providing channels for the participation of politically aspiring social forces.[10] Huntington writes that:

> Revolutions are unlikely in political systems which have the capacity to expand their power and to broaden participation within the system. It is precisely this fact that makes revolutions unlikely in highly institutionalized modern political systems [...] which are what they are simply because they have developed the procedures for assimilating new social groups and elites desiring to participate in politics.

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[9] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1969), 265

[10] Samuel Huntington, "The Debate on Modernization" in ed. Jack Goldstone *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies*. (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers: Toronto, 1986), 43

Actor-Oriented Approaches

Actor-oriented approaches can be very much viewed as the opposite of structural theories. Whereas a structural approach to revolution examines institutions, an actor-oriented approach focuses on individuals and groups, and in particular, why individuals or groups are compelled to begin or join a revolutionary struggle. James Davies argues that a population will accept a miserable and oppressed life if they expect such misfortune to be their "destiny", so to speak.[11] Therefore, according to Davies, any change that raises people's expectations, or more likely, decreases their standard of living vis-à-vis their expectations is politically destabilizing:

> Revolutions are most likely to occur when a [...] period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal. [...] The actual state of socioeconomic development is less significant than the expectation that past progress, now blocked, can and must continue in the future. [...] Political stability and instability are ultimately, dependent on a state of mind, a mood, in a society.[12]

Similarly, Lyford Edwards notes that people develop "balked disposition" when they "[...] come to feel that their legitimate aspirations and ideas are being repressed or perverted, that their entirely proper desires and ambitions are being hindered and thwarted..."[13] Ted Gurr refers to this as the concept of "relative deprivation", and defines it as the "actors perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations are the

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[11] James Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution." *American Sociological Review* 27, (February 1962), 5-19

[12] _____., "Toward a Theory of Revolution" in ed James Davies, *When Men Revolt and Why* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 136

[13] Lyford P. Edwards, *The Natural History of Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 3-4, 30-33

goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping."[14] What is important to us however, is the link between some intensity of relative deprivation, and the potential for collective revolt. The more widespread and intense the relative deprivation is, then arguably, the greater the possibility of civil strife, and the greater its magnitude. Gurr notes however, that relative deprivation is less likely to provoke a violent reaction if the government is viewed as being legitimate – an admittedly tautological argument.[15]

Mancur Olson puts forward an approach to collective action. In many situations, including a popular revolutionary movement, all of the individual members of a large group can benefit from the results of actions of the group as a whole. The contribution of any single member to the movement will make little difference to that movement's success however. Therefore, an individual may choose not to participate in the movement, escaping its potential perils (loss of property, injury, death, etc.) while at the same time, benefiting from efforts of the collective group. Such an individual becomes a "free-rider". If too many people 'free-ride', the potency of the movement is attenuated, and hence, so are the collective benefits. Hence, Olson posits that people would participate in a

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[14] Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970, 24

[15] _____., "A Causal Model of Civil Strife: A Comparative Analysis Using New Indices" in ed. James Davies, W*hen Men Revolt and Why*, 295

movement only because they can derive some personal gain and that the fact that they wish the movement to succeed is secondary.[16] Olson notes that

> Though all of the members of [...] [a] group have a common interest in obtaining this collective benefit, they have no common interest in paying the cost of providing that collective good. Each would prefer that the others pay the entire cost, and ordinarily would get any benefit provided whether he had borne part of the cost or not.[17]

This "free rider" problem is offset by two assumptions. First, if the individual is provided with positive incentives (through direct gain of some sort) to participate in the revolution, and second, if the individual is provided with negative incentives to participate (physical violence, deprivation of property, etc). These two factors separated or combined must be sufficient to overcome the "free rider" problem if one is to contribute to a revolutionary struggle.[18] For Olson, the success of a revolutionary movement will depend largely on the ability of the revolutionaries to convince people (through positive and/or negative incentives) to aid the struggle.

Charles Tilly puts forth a theory of "resource mobilization".[19] He accepts Huntington's thesis that revolutions are an outgrowth of political processes, whereby political consciousness and the mobilization and demands of groups can not be accommodated by existing social (or governmental) institutions. Tilly believes however, that analysis of revolution must focus sharply on the groups involved in the entire process, (rather than the actual process of modernization

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[16] Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, (Harvard University Press: Boston, 1965), 12
Note: Olson is not addressing a revolutionary movement per se, but how people behave in groups and organizations.

[17] Ibid., 21

[18] Ibid., 60-61

[19] Charles Tilly, "Does Modernization Breed Revolution?" in ed. Jack Goldstone, 47-57

and political development) and their ability to mobilize resources. He argues that where there are groups that are advancing exclusively alternative claims to the government, and that where there is a commitment to those claims by a significant segment of the population, and finally a formation of a coalition between that segment of the population and the groups advancing the alternative claims, then there can be a serious revolutionary movement. Before the movement can become manifest, the government must be either unwilling or unable to suppress or accommodate the claims from this coalition of groups. If indeed competing groups succeed in mobilizing resources away from the government, a situation of "multiple sovereignty" arises:

> The revolutionary moment arrives when previously acquiescent members of [a] population find themselves confronted with strictly incompatible demands from the government and from an alternative body claiming control over the government – and obey the alternative body. They pay taxes to it, provide men for its armies, feed its functionaries, honour its symbols, give time to its service, or yield other resources despite the prohibition of the still-existing government that they formerly obeyed. Multiple sovereignty has begun.[20]

Taken to its end, a "revolutionary outcome is the displacement of one set of power holders by another."[21] Therefore, according to Tilly, *a successful* revolution is only likely when powerful groups *operating as a unit* press competing claims on the government, and the government lacks the resources to defeat the contending groups, satisfy their demands, and restore complete sovereignty over the population.

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[20] _____., "Revolutions and Collective Action," in eds. Greenstein and Polsby, *Handbook of Political Science,* vol. 3, *Macropolitical Theory,* (Addison-Wesley: 1975) 520-521

[21] _____., *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1978), 193

A Process-Level Approach

Considered simultaneously, structural and actor-oriented approaches have shortcomings that cannot compensate for one another. They do not do enough to account for a changing atmosphere in a conflict, and the consequences of those changes on the actors in the conflict. There are important questions that still must be answered: How has the character of the insurgents changed over the course of the war? What is the nature of the violence they are applying? What kind of strategies are they pursuing? How has the population reacted to these strategies? These variables affect both structural and actor-oriented conditions. Process-level theories attempt to address these questions in terms of their effect on the revolutionary war. Central to process theory is the idea that one change in a situation will lead to another change, and yet another, and so on, so that events that take place during a war are contingent upon previous events, not only the state of affairs at the outset of the war – a notion that should seem obvious, and necessary to the study of any conflict. Indeed, not only does the state of affairs change during a war whereby one event will often preclude or pre-empt the next, but the insurgents and their opponents change themselves. Although this seems like an obvious assertion, it should be applied to structural and actor-oriented variables in examining conflict, both of which are usually applied only statically. Albert Cohen aptly describes process theory:

> For example, while one is deliberating about breaking into a parked car, his buddy may get cold feet and "chicken out," or a policeman may just happen to turn the corner. These are now new problems and possibilities

> to conjure with. Certain moves are now foreclosed and others, scarcely anticipated at the outset, are now inviting or may even seem inescapable. *In short*, [process theories] *add [..] a conception of the act itself as a tentative, groping, feeling-out process, never fully determined by the past alone but always capable of changing its course in response to changes in the current scene* [italics mine].[22]

Hence, the importance of strategy and tactics on the part of the insurgents can not be overstated. Chalmers Johnson recognizes the importance of the strategies employed by revolutionary movements in affecting their success or failure. He defines a "rational quality of strategy" as "[...] particular courses of behaviour as promoting or impeding victory [...]".[23] There is nothing surprising about understanding revolution through the notion of contingency since it is through this lens that historians view conflict. Factors relating to the manipulation of ideology and strategy are inexorably wed to process theory. Successful revolutionaries operate according to process theory, despite claims after the conflict that their success was "inevitable."[24]

Revolutionary practitioners such as Che Guevara, Mao Tse-Tung, and Vo Nguyen Giap were theorists of process par excellence. Based on their own experiences in Cuba, China, and Vietnam respectively, these practitioners write at length on tactics of guerrilla warfare such as how to engage an enemy of superior size and strength, what the size and structure of a guerrilla band should be, or how to set up a hammock in the rainforest or jury-rig a mortar. What is most important to this study however, is their realization that the success of these

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[22] Albert Cohen, *Deviance and Control* (Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, 1966), 45
[23] Johnson, 139
[24] Johnson, 185

tactics will depend on changing variables that directly affect and are affected by their own strategies. On this note, Vladimir Lenin is an important theorist as well.

Writing on the Cuban revolutionary experience, Guevara viewed revolution as a process that must be accomplished in a number of stages, which I will briefly discuss here.[25] First, a guerrilla band strikes a successful blow against the enemy, which causes its popularity among peasants to rise. As more peasants join the struggle, guerrilla operations take place in increasingly populated and strategic areas, further increasing insurgent popularity. Second, the guerrillas establish a liberated area that is inaccessible to the enemy where it can operate freely, produce its own goods and weaponry, and establish greater organizational structures. Third, the guerrilla army gradually penetrates enemy territory, capturing weaponry, sabotaging and harassing the enemy. Small skirmishes gives way to decisive battles until ultimate victory is achieved. It should be noted however, that Guevara's belief that guerrillas can create the revolutionary conditions that they exploit has been discredited, as evidenced by Guevara's own failure and ultimate demise in Bolivia. With the accomplishment of each stage, Guevara writes that the guerrilla movement is shaped accordingly:

> To better understand the Cuban revolutionary movement up to January 1 [1959], we should divide it into the following stages: before the *Granma* landing; from the *Granma* landing until after the victories of La Plata and Arroyo del Infierno; from those days until El Uvero and the formation of the guerrillas' second column; from then until the formation of the third and fourth columns, the invasion of the Sierra de Cristal, and the establishment of the Second Front; the April strike and its failure; the beating back of the enemy's big offensive; the invasion of Las Villas. *Each one of those small historical moments of the guerrilla war framed different social concepts and different appraisals of Cuban reality. They*

[25] Guevara, 78-81

> *shaped the thinking of the military leaders of the revolution,* [italics mine] who in time would also reaffirm their status as political leaders.[26]

Similarly, Mao and Giap saw guerrilla warfare as a phase by phase process. Both believed that guerrillas must initially engage the enemy on a small scale. Unlike Guevara however, Mao and Giap believe that a certain degree of support of the population must exist before initiating guerrilla action; structural conditions favourable to fomenting an insurgency must be present to a certain degree. Hence, the first phase involves mobilizing peasantry and initiating small scale raids against the enemy. The second phase is reached when the guerrilla force reaches a point where there exists a balance of power between it and the enemy, during which, the guerrillas continue to harass the enemy. Finally, once the guerrilla force has reached a level of military superiority, a final attack is launched on the enemy using conventional warfare. In response to criticism for the lack of large-scale conventional offensives on the Americans, Giap spoke on tactics:

> The correct tactics for a protracted revolutionary war are to wage guerrilla warfare, to advance from guerrilla warfare to regular warfare and then closely combine these two forms of war; to develop from guerrilla to mobile and then to siege warfare.[27] [...] Between 1960 and 1965, the war in the South developed from a political to an armed struggle, from an armed insurrection to a liberation war [...] from guerrilla warfare to pitched battles and then to a combination of both. [...] Battles were fought involving large concentrations in which whole units of the enemy regulars were wiped out. [This is how] the revolutionary war gained offensive power.[28]

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[26] Che Guevara, *Notes for the study of the ideology of the Cuban revolution,* October 1960, in David Deutschmann, *Che Guevara Reader* (Ocean Press: New York, 1997), 109

[27] Peter Macdonald. *Giap: The Victor in Vietnam.* (W.W. Nortan & Company, Inc.: New York, 1993), 80

[28] John Colvin, *Giap: Volcano Under Snow* (Soho Press Inc: New York, 1996), 192

Again, guerrilla strategy will commensurate with structural and actor-oriented conditions. Mao writes that:

> It is apparent that we can gain and retain the initiative only by a correct estimation of the situation and a proper arrangement of all military and political factors. [...] Guerrilla commanders adjust their operations to the enemy situation, to the terrain, and to prevailing local conditions. *Leaders must be alert to sense changes in these factors and make necessary modifications* [...] *to accord with them. The leader must be like the fisherman, who, with his nets, is able both to cast them and to pull them out in awareness of the depth of the water, the strength of the current, or the presence of any obstructions that may foul them.*[29] [Italics mine.]

More pointedly, Lenin writes:

> As regards the form of fighting, it is unconditionally requisite that history be investigated in order to discover the conditions of environment, the state of economic progress, and the political ideas that obtained the national characteristics, customs, and degree of civilization. [...] *It is necessary to be completely unsympathetic to abstract formulas and rules and to study with sympathy the conditions of the actual fighting, for these will change in accordance with the political and economic situations and the realization of the people's aspirations. These progressive changes in conditions create new methods.*[30] [Italics mine]

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[29] Mao, 100-101
[30] Vladimir Lenin, cited in Mao, 49

Analytical Framework

So far we have seen that structural approaches focus on variables such as the economy, or the openness of a political system in determining the ripeness for revolution. Actor-oriented variables on the other hand, will focus on why individuals or groups are compelled to begin or join a revolutionary struggle. Although some of these theories focus on the outbreak of revolution rather than success or failure of the insurgency, they are useful in the respect that the severity of the factors they examine (structural crises, actor-oriented motivations for revolt, etc.) are indicators in measuring success or failure. For example, Skocpol asserts that revolutions are created by a crisis of the state. It should reasonably follow that a successful revolution would more likely emerge if the said crisis at the state-level is a malignant one rather than benign. It seems natural for some theorists to assert that both approaches should be incorporated into any study of revolution, since the actors (revolutionaries) and the contexts in which they operate (structural crises) are always married to one another.

Process-level theory will approach revolution with a dynamic view - that the propensity for revolutionary success or failure will depend on contingencies that arise during the conflict that effect changes in the context and the actors, which are both interdependent. I will evaluate the Algerian case through the lens of these perspectives which are important, and indeed necessary to the study of revolution. However, while acknowledging the necessity of a structural and actor-oriented approach, I argue that process-level theory most aptly explains the ultimate failure of the Islamist insurgency in Algeria.

Ideology and Fanaticism

The role played by ideology in recruiting a population into the ranks of an insurgent movement is an actor-oriented variable. Ideology in a revolutionary struggle, whether leftist, religious, fascist, etc. is to "facilitate the development of cross-cutting alliances between the active minorities of the society's major classes."[31] Ideology often appeals to national or religious identity (or both). In Iran for example, Shiite Islam is part and parcel of Iranian national identity, and was certainly important in the 1979 revolution. Religious appeals can unite people across social classes. Moreover, ideology can be used to legitimate a revolutionary movement. Revolutionary ideology is particularly important in both legitimizing the revolutionary movement, and de-legitimizing the regime in power, or vice-versa.

The *application* of ideology however – insurgent *behaviour* according to ideological rules, is a process-level variable. It is this aspect of ideology that I will focus on here. Thomas Greene argues that ideological justification for revolution is vital when violence is used over a long period of time, and is the principal technique employed by insurgents.[32] There is no question that there is a direct correlation between revolutionary ideology and insurgent behaviour. Andrew Molnar writes that ideology "is more than just a series of rationalizations and myths that *justify* the existence of a group, for it can be used to manipulate and *influence the behaviour* [author's italics] of the individuals within the group.

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[31] Thomas Greene, *Comparative Revolutionary Movements: Search for Theory and Justice* Third Edition, (Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 1990), 79

[32] Ibid., 6

Hence, ideology has a significant impact on organizational and group behaviour."[33]

Not only does ideology merely influence insurgent behaviour, it can prescribe certain actions as policies. Ideologies can be developed and adapted to particular social situations to the point where they become not only an alternative value system, but a template directing particular courses of action.[34] Insurgents that become fanatical in their methods usually do so on the basis of some ideology that they have manipulated. If this ideology is out of step with the general beliefs of the population, they are very likely to lose support or never gain it in the first place. The same holds true if the actions of the insurgents are out of step with the ideology of the general population, which fanatical ideology by definition, certainly is. Fanatical behaviour is "strongly influenced and controlled by ideology, where the influence of ideology is such that it excludes or attenuates other social, political, or personal forces that might be expected to control and influence behaviour."[35]

Maxwell Taylor lists ten characteristics inherent in all fanatical behaviour.[36] I will not list all of these characteristics since many of them express very similar ideas (namely that fanatics are so self-absorbed in their own beliefs that they either do not care or do not realize what the consequences of their actions may be), but Taylor's discussion is particularly telling when examined in reference to

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[33] David Krech, Richard S. Crutchfield, and Egerton L. Ballachey, *Individuals in Society* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962) and Richard T. LaPierre, *A Theory of Social Control* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1954) cited in "Organizational Structure" by Andrew Molnar in ed. Jerry Tinker *Strategies of Revolutionary Warfare*, (New Delhi, S. Chand & Co., 1969), 402-42

[34] Johnson, 86

[35] Maxwell Taylor, *The Fanatics: A Behavioural Approach to Political Violence,* (London: Brassey's UK: 1991), 33

[36] Ibid., 30-54

fanatical insurgent behaviour. Hence, I will highlight what I have identified to be three main themes raised in his discussion.

First, the fanatic will understand the logic of his own behaviour to the total exclusion of all other ideologies, regardless of public approval or sentiment. Since the fanatic's exclusive concern is with his own ideological constructions, his final disposition is one of complete ambivalence and insensitivity toward the end result of his actions.

Second, there is often an inconsistency between the purported ideology of the fanatic, and his actions, although this may not be a *necessary* character of fanaticism. A poignant example illustrates this case - Heinrich Himmler, an SS officer in Nazi Germany who is directly responsible for the deaths of millions of people, had "hysterical opposition" to hunting animals. He once said to his doctor, who enjoyed hunting as a past-time: "How can you find pleasure [...] in shooting from behind cover at poor creatures browsing on the edge of a wood, innocent, defenceless, and unsuspecting? It's really pure murder. Nature is so marvellously beautiful and every animal has a right to live [...]"[37] Quite obviously, there is a severe disjunct between Himmler's seemingly humane animal-saving philosophy and his efforts at genocide.

Third and finally, the fanatic is so absolutely certain as to the wisdom of his actions that little can be done to change his ideology or system of beliefs. This resistance to change usually manifests itself in his perseverance in pursuing his own goals, regardless of changing circumstances.

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[37] S. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1970) 185, cited in Taylor, 48

Terrorism

Violence in the form of terrorism is of course linked to ideology. Insurgents commit terrorist acts usually on the basis of some ideology. The level of violence, as well as the kind expressed is most likely sanctioned by the ideology of the revolutionary movement, as well as the particular circumstance in which the insurgents find themselves. Violence can be seen "as an instrumental quality of ideology, its incidence being determined by [...] the particular content of ideology, local and immediate contingencies, and situational factors."[38] A simple correlation could safely be made: fanatical ideologies will lead to fanatical behaviour, often taking the form of terrorism, which merits a definition:

> Terrorism involves the intentional use of violence or the threat of violence by the precipitator(s) against an *instrumental* target in order to communicate to a *primary* target a threat of future violence. The object is to use intense fear or anxiety to coerce the primary target into behaviour or to mold its attitudes in connection with a demanded political outcome.[39]

The *instrumental* target to which Paust is referring may be a crowded market, a public official, or an entire village. The instrument used in attacking the target is likely to be a bomb, an assassination, kidnapping, or wholesale slaughter, respectively. The ultimate *primary* target is of course, the state (barring intermediate targets, such as other insurgent groups, the population, etc). My discussion of terrorism will be limited to revolutionary terrorism, as opposed to non-political or state terror.

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[38] Taylor, 110

[39] Jordan J. Paust, "A Survey of Possible Legal Responses to International Terrorism: Prevention, Punishment, and Cooperative Action," *George Washington Journal of International and Comparative Law,* volume 5, 1975, 434-35 cited in Johnson, 152-153

The principal function of terror may be to convince the population that the insurgent movement is powerful enough to challenge the state and that the state is so weak that it can not provide for the security of its own citizens. Terror instils in the population feelings of isolation and helplessness which can have the effect of enhancing its susceptibility to the cause of the insurgency. Insurgents will attempt to accomplish certain strategic objectives to turn the population against their enemies.

First, given a solid base of popular support, terrorism is a particularly useful tactic at the outset of a revolutionary movement.[40] It is a tactic that could turn a structural crisis into a revolutionary situation by demonstrating to the population that the monopoly of force previously exercised solely by the state no longer exists. Terrorism creates the perception "[...] through indiscriminate violence that the existing regime cannot protect the people nominally under its authority. The effect on the individual is supposedly not only anxiety, but withdrawal from the relationships making up the established order of society."[41] Once a withdrawal from "established relationships" occurs, new relationships can be created with insurgents. Thomas Perry Thornton writes that "through the [terrorist] deeds which attract general attention, the new idea insinuates itself into people's heads and makes converts. Such an act does more propagandizing in a few days than do thousands of pamphlets."[42] Frantz Fanon, writing on the *Front Liberation Nationale* guerrilla struggle against the French, believes that

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[40] Greene, 106

[41] H. Edward Price, Jr., "The Strategy and Tactics of Revolutionary Terrorism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* volume 19, January 1977, 53

[42] Thomas Perry Thornton, "Terror as a Weapon of Political Agitation," in ed. Harry Eckstein, *Internal War: Problems and Approaches* (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 82

violence served as a means of psychological liberation for Algerians from the oppressive rule of French colonialism: "[...] it [terrorism] frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect."[43]

Second, terrorism can be intended to provoke the regime into overreacting to the insurgency with excessive force, which would create widespread sentiment against it.[44] Confounding the level of state response is the frustration felt by soldiers and police as a result of the difficulty of provoking a direct confrontation with insurgents - frustration which can cause them to act brutally and irrationally.[45] A disproportionate response by the state effectively elevates a political crisis to a full out armed conflict by dramatically increasing state police and military presence. This translates into house-to-house searches, transportation check points, curfews, and imprisonment and torture of suspected militants. In the eyes of the general populace, an excessive state response only confirms insurgent claims of state repression and authoritarianism. As the population feels increasingly under siege by the amplified presence of the state, they are likely to shift their loyalties toward insurgents who are apt to commit more terrorist acts which the state will once again overreact to, and so on, until popular support for the state has considerably waned and for the revolutionary movement considerably grown.

Third, terrorism acts as a "negative incentive" for the population to support the insurgency. This function also applies to the followers of the revolutionary

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[43] Frantz Fannon, *The Wreteched of the Earth* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1965), 73
[44] Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel.* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), 213
[45] Greene, 107

movement, and ostensibly functions to recruit new followers. The application of violence against a movement's own members functions as a way of protecting the security of its operations. Defectors and informers if found, are likely to be severely punished or killed. In this sense, terror serves an internal function of enforcement.[46]

So far, I have only discussed the possible incentives and rewards for an insurgent movement to engage in terrorism as a means of gaining new recruits, maintaining internal control and loyalty, and fighting the state. The above discussion however, is not necessarily characteristic of the effect of terrorism on the population and more importantly, their reaction to it and support for the revolutionary movement in the wake of terrorist acts. The effect of terrorism on a population is not easily predicted, and unless carefully orchestrated, may do more damage to a movement than good. The main theme running through the following arguments is that terrorism is likely to backfire against those who employ it as a principal method.

A consistent reliance on terrorism is usually a sign of the weakness of an insurgency. As it becomes familiar to the population, its psychological effects are blunted.[47] "Chronic terror"[48] occurs when repetitive and seemingly unending violence becomes the norm – a factor contributing to why terror is most likely to be the most useful in the initial stages of an insurgency. Hence, terrorism alone is unlikely to prompt revolutionary change.

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[46] Johnson, 160
[47] Greene, 106
[48] Martha Crenshaw Hutchinson, *Revolutionary Terrorism: The FLN in Algeria, 1954-1962* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 28

Second, any insurgency that poorly chooses its targets in terrorist attacks will lose popular support. Greene writes that "history is filled with examples of terrorists who generated counterproductive results by indiscriminate slaughter, and children, women, and political leaders with whom the public identifies are targets that must be scrupulously avoided."[49] This point can not be overstated. Che Guevara writes that terrorism is "a measure that is generally ineffective and indiscriminate in its results, since it often makes victims of innocent people [...]."[50] Lenin comments on his perceived futility of the use of terrorism in revolutionary struggle in reference to its ineffectiveness in mobilizing the Russian population:

> It is difficult to imagine an argument that more thoroughly disproves itself. Are there not enough outrages committed in Russian life without special "excitants" [terrorism] having to be invented? Is it not obvious that those who are not, and can not be, roused to excitement even by Russian tyranny will stand by twiddling their thumbs and watch a handful of terrorists engaged in a single combat with the government?[51]

Third, not only does persistent terrorism alienate the population from the cause of an insurgency, but the insurgency itself will become factionalized. As I have discussed above, fanatical ideology immediately lends itself to factionalism in a movement. Perhaps all of the participants of a revolutionary movement may agree that the regime must be brought down, but once fanatical terrorism begins, there will invariably be disagreement over the tactics to be used toward that end.

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[49] Greene, 107

[50] Che Ernesto Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 1998), 21

[51] V.I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement.* (International Publishers: New York, 1999), 161

As a movement becomes factionalized, its effectiveness will be dramatically reduced. Insurgents will likely end up fighting an uncoordinated attack against the state, and at the same time, will compete with each other over the loyalty of the population, sometimes violently.

Finally, the application of negative incentives to scare a population or a movement's adherents into supporting the insurgency is ultimately self-defeating. There is a limit to how long a population can be cowed into doing or not doing. One of the most important precepts of guerrilla warfare is that gaining the support of a population is essential to the struggle. Mao has written that "because guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their *sympathies* [italics mine] and cooperation."[52] Speaking on Chinese resistance during Japan's invasion, he writes: "The moment that this war of resistance dissociates itself from the masses of the people is the precise moment that it dissociates itself from hope of ultimate victory over the Japanese [...]"[53] That a movement can persistently force the support of a population is likely to be a dubious assumption. Ted Gurr writes that "[...] support [of the population] given under coercion is unlikely to develop into a more enduring allegiance [...] [to the insurgency]".[54] Furthermore, Mao notes that:

> A guerrilla group ought to operate on the principle that only *volunteers* [italics mine] are acceptable for service. It is a mistake to *impress* [italics mine] people into service. As long as a person is willing to fight, his social

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[52] Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (University of Illinois Press: Illinois, 1961), 44

[53] Ibid., 39

[54] Gurr, 213

> condition or position is no consideration, but only men who are courageous and determined can bear the hardships of guerrilla campaigning in a protracted war.[55]

Of course, support does not necessarily mean that individuals must take up arms against the regime. Support comes in different forms. It can come economically in the form of cash or supplies. It can come strategically, in the form of shelter or information. The application of terrorism for 'internal enforcement' will affect all aspects of support from the population. Rather than using coercion as a means of control, the insurgency must instead gradually earn the support of the population. Mao believes that there must be a "unity of spirit" between guerrilla fighters and the population. During the Chinese struggle against Japan's invasion, the Chinese Red Army put into a practice a list of do's and don'ts as guidelines to its fighters in dealing with rural peasants, which were designed to preclude alienating peasant support. They called them "The Three Rules and the Eight Remarks", and are worth listing here:[56]

Rules:
1. All actions are subject to command.
2. Do not steal from the people.
3. Be neither selfish nor unjust.

Remarks:
1. Replace the door when you leave the house.[57]
2. Roll up the bedding on which you have slept.
3. Be courteous.
4. Be honest in your transactions.
5. Return what you borrow.
6. Replace what you break.
7. Do not bathe in the presence of women.

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[55] Mao, 86
[56] Mao, 92
[57] In summer, doors were frequently lifted off and used as beds.

8. Do not without authority search the pocketbooks of those you arrest.

Although these guidelines are not particularly striking and only seem to describe respectful behaviour, "The Three Rules and the Eight Remarks" may be as important to successfully fighting a guerrilla war as it is knowing how to use a firearm.

The Algerian revolutionary movements that were launched following abortive elections offers us unique insight into the consequences of insurgent behaviour and the importance of understanding revolution through the notion of contingency. Unlike the study of other cases where the level of support for a movement (likely to be the most important factor in assessing its legitimacy) is roughly estimated or approximated, the level of support for Islamists in Algeria was counted, ballot by ballot. Although the ballots did not necessarily represent support for armed struggle, there existed a great deal of support for the armed groups that emerged between 1992 and 1994 (the connection between the popular support for Islamists running for political office and the initial popular support for Islamists taking up arms against the Algerian regime is very difficult to dismiss).

A number of developments (actor-oriented variables) precipitated the eagerness of ordinary Algerians to join the armed struggle against the Algerian regime at the outset of the civil war. A deep economic structural crisis existed at the state level that culminated into the 1988 October riots. This situation continued throughout the nineties, and was exacerbated by the civil war. A political structural crisis that translated from a further loss of legitimacy (the

regime was *already* illegitimate at this point, as evidenced by their performance at the polls) was precipitated with the cancellation of elections. Hence, structural variables at the outset of the conflict were conducive to revolutionary action. The loss of legitimacy of the Algerian regime following the cancellation of elections directly relates to popular ideology - an actor-oriented consideration. Many regard the cancellation of elections as proof that those in the military regime were apostates.[58] In 1992 there existed a severe economic and political crisis for the Algerian state, a population that solidly rallied behind the FIS, an ideology (political Islam) that the masses believed in and perceived that those in the government did not, and the formation of numerous armed groups committed to the overthrow of the state. At the height of support for the Islamists in 1994, their strength began on a steady path of decline.

A historical narrative follows this section, describing the nature of the Algerian structural crisis and how it began. Next, it describes actor-oriented variables, such as how the Islamist insurgency was able to rally such a great deal of support at the outset of the conflict. The narrative will also describe the steady decline of the Islamist movement, and the factors that contributed to it. Directly linking our previous theoretical discussion with the historical narrative, the conclusion will examine the structural and actor-oriented variables as they pertain to the Algerian case described in this paper. Further, it will become more evident how a process-level approach is useful to understanding how the variables examined in the Algerian case are affected by the notion of contingency

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[58] Luis Martinez, *The Algerian Civil War 1990-1998,* trans. Jonathan Derrick, (Columbia University Press: New York, 2000), 49

- a notion that structural and actor-oriented variables fail to consider independently. Ultimately, this thesis examines in detail how and why the Algerian Islamist insurgency has failed.

Algerian State Formation: French Occupation to the FLN

On June 12, 1830, 34,000 French soldiers landed in Algeria. The French were to stay as colonial occupiers in Algeria for ninety-two years, until 1962. The French, and other European settlers (commonly referred to as *les pieds noirs)*[59] systematically expropriated rural lands from native Algerians on an ongoing basis since their arrival. Resistance to French occupation began as early as the 1830's. Under the leadership of Abd al Qadir – leader of an Islamic brotherhood, he set about bringing Algerian territory under his control. By 1839, he controlled more than two-thirds of Algeria, and ran a full-fledged government. His government fought running battles with French forces, the latter of which ultimately succeeded in reasserting French control across all of Northern Algeria. A number of revolts continued throughout the late 1800's, exacting casualties upon the French authorities, and provoking stern security measures upon the Muslim population in response.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, a small but growing generation of Algerians emerged whose perception of their country had been shaped by their surroundings – a higher standard of living they witnessed in France during the war effort, democratic principles that France refused to apply in Algeria, and

[59] It is unclear whether the term *"pied noirs"* was initially attributed to the French because soldiers wore black boots or because French winemakers' feet became black after stomping on grapes.

the increasingly ever-present Arab nationalism in the Middle East. A number of groups began demanding the realization of their right to self-determination. The slogan "Islam is our religion, Arabic our language, Algeria our country" became increasingly popular as one of defiance against French rule, which was characterized by Christian values, French language, and the idea that Algeria was an integral part of France.

On November 1, 1954, *Le Front Liberation Nationale* (FLN) launched a number of attacks against French police posts, communication facilities and public utilities. The FLN called upon all Muslims in Algeria to contribute to the national struggle for the "Restoration of the Algerian state, sovereign, democratic, and social, within the framework of the principles of Islam." A war of liberation ensued for 8 consecutive years. The FLN estimated in 1962 that the war had cost 300,000 lives. In subsequent years, Algerian sources put the figure at approximately 1.5 million dead. A general cease-fire was signed in March 1962 (known as the Evian accords which for all intents and purposes ended French colonial occupation in Algeria), and in July, some 6 million Algerians cast their ballots in a referendum with a near unanimous outcome in favour of independence. The FLN became the sole political party in the creation of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria at the opening session of the Algerian National Assembly on September 25, 1962.

From Economic Crisis to October 1988

The roots of the Algerian civil war are often traced back to the socio-economic condition of Algerians throughout the 1970's and 1980's. Throughout the 1970's, Algeria enjoyed very substantial oil revenues made possible by the 1973 OPEC oil price increases, which tripled oil and gas receipts.[60] President Houari Boumédienne (1965-1978), who rose to power in a coup against the previous Ben Bella regime, saw the heavy industrialization of Algeria as a way of legitimating and asserting the presence of the state. Petro-dollars of course, were to finance the heavy industry planned by Boumédienne. Oil and gas revenues that went directly to the Algerian state were 880 million dinars in 1967, vs 3,200 dinars in 1972. Between 1969 and 1978, Algeria underwent a massive period of state-led industrialization, much of it focusing on expanding oil extraction capabilities. Oil and gas revenues that went directly to the Algerian government were 880 million dinars in 1967, vs 3,200 dinars in 1972.

Taking advantage of the relative windfall of petro-dollars, the state pursued socio-economic polices that assured the acquiescence of the population. During the 70's, Algeria could certainly be characterized as a rentier state.[61] Hence the state substantially subsidized housing, established free

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[60] Benjamin Stora, *Algeria 1830-2000 A Short History* Trans. Jane Marie Todd. (Cornell University Press: Ithica, 2001), 153

[61] Rentier theory presupposes that governments which receive substantial "rent" (often in the form of oil revenues) from the external economy can forge a social contract with the population whereby authoritarian rule is maintained without challenges from the population. In exchange, the government will provide goods and services to the population using the rents that they have received. These goods and services usually take the form of employment, heavily subsidized housing, food, and gasoline, and education and health care is provided at little or no cost. Since a rentier government does not tax its citizens, there is less of an impetus for it to respond to societal pressures for reform or popular political participation, and allows it to suppress or even destroy civil institutions that are opposed to the state with relative ease.

national healthcare for the population, and undertook to provide free education as well. Similar to other newly independent states of the Middle East, Algeria adopted statist import-substitution industrialization policies; the state used oil revenues to fund large industrial projects, ensured high levels of investment in strategic industries, and worked toward producing what it had previously imported.[62] In this sense, the Boumediene regime became very popular. Unemployment figures were low, education was becoming ubiquitous, and the standard of living in general had increased substantially relative to the years before 1973. Marc Cote writes that "[...] at the end of the 1970's, the country was one vast construction site. Everywhere roads, factories and schools were being built. Unemployment figures were going down, the standard of living was improving, diets now included meat every day. GDP per inhabitant was twice as much as in Morocco or Tunisia."[63]

Following Boumedienne's death in 1978, Chadli Bendjedid took the reigns of power in 1979. The new regime benefited from another oil price increase triggered by the 1979 Iranian revolution – the price of oil went from $13 a barrel to over $30 a barrel.[64] Bendjedid continued the expansive welfare policies the state had begun a decade ago, and lessened restrictions on civil society enforced by the Boumedienne regime. The "good years" would not last long however.

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[62] William Quandt, *Between Ballots & Bullets: Algeria's Transition from Authoritarianism.* (Brookings Institution Press: Washington, D.C., 1998), 25

[63] Marc Cote, *L'Algerie, (*Masson Press: Paris, 1996), 120 quoted in Martinez, 2

[64] Quandt, 35

Characteristic of most Middle East rentier states, the rapid growth in Algeria during 1970's triggered acute Dutch disease in the 1980's.[65] Despite the heavy industrialization of the previous decade, Algeria remained dependent on fossil fuels to fill state coffers. Excessive focus on industry was carried out at the expense of the agricultural sector[66] and hence, food imports grew by 450 percent during the mid-1970's.[67] By 1984, Algeria was importing more than 50 percent of its food.[68] Compounding the stress on the state was the population growth rate – a staggering 3.3 percent per year by 1985 with nearly 46.5% of its population below the age of fifteen.

This situation translated into a considerable rise in the urban population, deteriorating living conditions and substandard housing, and inadequate health coverage by the early 80's.[69] Workers in the public sector saw very little improvement in their purchasing power relative to private entrepreneurs, who saw their purchasing power increase by 56 percent.[70] Adding to the burden was the rising Algerian foreign debt. The state borrowed heavily after 1982 to maintain the social contract it forged at the outset of the boom years.

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[65] "Dutch Disease" refers to rapid and distorted growth of state services that rentier states provide. Symptoms of Dutch disease include budget deficits, overvalued currencies, rising levels of imports and subsidies, and increasing inflation and foreign debt. The result is usually a weakened state and a dependence on commodity imports that can not be sustained.

[66] Kevin M. Cleaver, in a World Bank study writes that "increased Algerian demand for food did not cause agricultural producer prices to increase which would have stimulated production. Instead, producer prices were kept artificially low by the Algerian government, and demand satisfied by imports. The government's objective was social rather than economic [...]" (Kevin M. Cleaver, "The Agricultural Development Experience of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia: A comparison of Strategies for growth", *The World Bank Group*, 1982, 8)

[67] John P. Entelis, *Algeria: The Revolution Institutionalized*, (Westview Press: Boulder, 1986), 133

[68] Stora, 186

[69] Benamrane, *Agriculture et Dévéloppement en Algérie* (NPDC-CREA: Algiers, 1980) cited in Stora, 168

[70] Stora, 168

As long as oil prices remained high however, this was a situation that the Algerian state could sustain. The boom years came to a swift end in 1986 however, when the price of oil fell to $10 a barrel (from $34 in 1982).[71] At the time of the drop in oil prices, Algeria derived 98 percent of its export revenues from the sale of oil. Oil export earnings declined from about $12.6 billion in 1985 to under $6 billion in 1986. Clearly the economic and social consequences of the drop were disastrous. Malley comments on the effects of the bust:

> Less money available meant less to go around, with obvious consequences for the state's ability to dispense benefits, purchase political peace with social largesse, and thus preserve the conditions of its legitimacy. Step by brisk step, the declining oil prices undermined the economic, social, and political predicates of the Algerian system.[72]

Indeed, foreign debt rocketed from 32.5 percent of the GDP in 1985 to 46.8 percent in 1988.[73] Algeria's unemployment rate rose to 40 percent by 1988.[74] Foreign debt was high, inflation soared to double digits and the basic cost of living rose as well, particularly since less than 50% of Algerian food was produced domestically and food imports were proving expensive. With the worsening economic situation, state corruption grew rampant. Government officials took private control of land that was owned by the state and constructed luxurious villas for themselves.[75] Gross domestic product[76] went on a steady path of decline, with a staggering drop in 1986 (see Figure 1).

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[71] Quandt, 38

[72] Robert Malley, *The Call from Algeria* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 209

[73] World Bank, National data; *Conjoncture*, November 1993, cited in Stora, 187

[74]. Rachid Khiari, "Hundreds Reported Dead in Five Days of Rioting" *Associated Press*, October 10, 1988

[75] Martin Stone, *The Agony of Algeria* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1997), 97

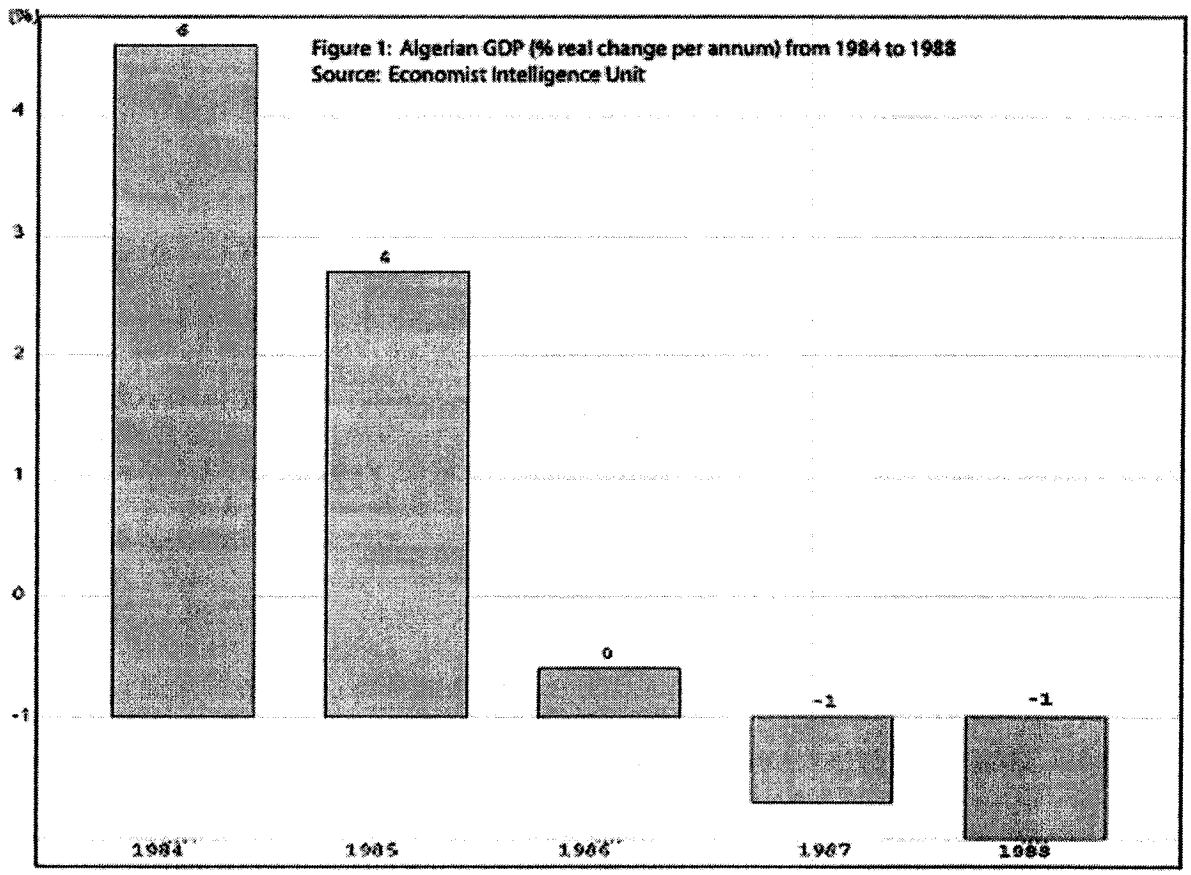

Figure 1: Algerian GDP (% real change per annum) from 1984 to 1988
Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

Thus, within a very short period of time Bendjedid needed to readjust his economic strategy; the state cut spending in social services, borrowed money on the international market, and embarked on economic belt tightening measures. As the crisis worsened, the International Monetary Fund was invited to intervene in 1987 and begin a structural adjustment program. Unfortunately, these measures were too little and too late.

In October 1988, nationwide protests began to occur and were viewed largely as a response to the dire economic situation. The protests rapidly turned

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[76] GDP is defined as the total value of all goods and services produced within a given territory during a specified period.

into riots, and October 1988 became the most violent and bloodiest period in Algeria's postcolonial history. By their end, between five hundred and one thousand people were killed.[77] Demonstrations began on October 4, composed primarily of young people. The rioters were mobilized by the slogan "Levez-vous, la Jeunesse; cette fois on ne finira pas!"[78] On October 5, the demonstrations turned into riots in downtown Algiers. Among the targets were public buildings, government-owned department stores, the information office of the Polisario independence movement of the Western Sahara, and a nightclub.[79] The army began stationing itself at strategic points in the capital, and on October 6, the government declared a "state of emergency" in Algiers. Police anti-riot squads regularly engaged youth around the city, and on October 7, the violence had spread to other major cities. Fires were set to government buildings, and looting became rampant. As the riots wore on, there seemed to be a consensus in the media that their cause was economic austerity measures and the dire housing situation in Algiers. The following is typical of the news reporting of the day surrounding the crisis:

> The violence climaxed several weeks of protests over food shortages caused by the government's economic austerity program, rocketing prices and the wretched, overcrowded housing situation in Algiers, where families frequently live 10 or 15 to a room and basic sewage services are lacking.[80]

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[77] *Le Monde*, (World News Connection-Foreign Broadcast Information Service), December 15, 1988

[78] Hugh Roberts, "Pulling up the State by its roots: Algeria's current crisis has grown from a political right turn that has rocked the State's foundations." *The Guardian* (London), October 13, 1988

[79] "Rioters take over Downtown Algiers", *Associated Press*, October 5, 1988

[80] David Bamford, *United Press International, U.P.I*, October 7, 1988

Unable to stop the rioting with the regular police force, Bendjedid called in the military to intervene. Soldiers supported by army helicopters attempted to forcefully quell the unrest, often killing people in the process.[81] Describing a confrontation with the military, one witness said that "there were bodies laying on all sides. The soldiers were piling them into trucks, one body on top of another."[82] There were reports that rioters who were arrested were "violently mistreated" by the military.[83] One week after the riots, a toll listed more than five hundred dead in Algeria.[84]

Throughout the riots, Islamist elements appeared on the scene and seemed to increasingly lead the charge against the state. Pictures of the unrest depict hundreds of youth gathered in the street surrounding older men wearing Islamic garb such as the "Afghan" outfit used by returning Algerian Islamist revolutionaries fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan.[85] Islamist sympathizers were reported to be clashing with troops on a daily basis. The previously unknown "Islamic Movement for Algerian Renewal" began to call for the satisfaction of people's demands for political reform. Among other leading Islamist leaders, Imam Ali Benhadj (who will later emerge as a radical leader of the Front Islamique du Salut) was particularly popular in poorer areas, and regularly gave

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[81] Michael Goldsmith, "Violence In Algeria Claims at Least 200 Lives", *Associated Press,* October 9, 1988

[82] _____., "Soldiers Fire on Protesters, Killing 25", *Associated Press,* October 10, 1988

[83] "Algeria says 159 dead, 154 wounded in riots", United *Press International,* October 22, 1988

[84] *Le Monde, World News Connection-Foreign Broadcast Information Service,* December 15, 1988

[85] Fawzi Rouzeik, "Chronique Algérie," *Annuaire de lAfrique du Nord, XXVIII, 1991,* quoted in Frédéric Volpi, *Islam and Democracy: The Failure of Dialogue in Algeria* (Pluto Press: London, 2003), 47

sermons denouncing the state and demanding the application of Sharia law. By the end of October, the rioters had been successfully put down by the military, and President Bendjedid had announced sweeping democratic reforms.

From New Elections to Military Coup

In a major step toward democracy, the Algerian government adopted a new constitution on February 23, 1989. Nowhere in the new constitution is the FLN identified, and the word socialism is never mentioned. It established three new branches of power: the executive, legislative, and judicial, and specifically guarantees "freedom of expression, of association and assembly" and the freedom "to form associations of a political nature". Moreover, military officers who were also FLN party members were obliged to resign from their latter role. This translates into freedom of the press, and the freedom to form new political parties that can directly challenge the FLN. It also means that the military was to strictly operate outside of the political sphere.

The moves toward democracy were real. Between 1989 and 1991, fifty new political parties came into existence including the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS).[86] Civil society was allowed to emerge with surprising vigor. Human rights leagues, independent women's organizations, independent press and media, and publishing houses were permitted to arrive on the scene. New municipal elections were scheduled for June 12, 1990, and legislative (parliamentary) elections were scheduled for June 27, 1991.

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[86] Stora, 198

Although other parties participated in the elections, the only two main contenders were the FLN and the FIS. At the municipal polls held in June, the FIS won in a landslide, garnering 54.3 percent of the vote versus only 17.5 percent for the FLN.[87] The results were a shock to the FLN, who had clearly underestimated the power of the FIS. Although parliamentary elections were scheduled for the following year, leaders of the FIS immediately called for the dissolution of parliament and immediate new elections. They did not call for the resignation of President Bendjedid however, most likely because he was seen to be willing to work with the FIS – a so called "conciliator". Following the election, one of two FIS leaders - the more moderate Abassi Madani declared: "Islam: the only solution. We cannot change the foundation without changing the summit", but that the FIS "is in no hurry" to see President Bendjedid's departure.[88]

Realizing its relative weakness and the stakes of the upcoming parliamentary elections, the FLN used a classic strategy to influence the upcoming election results. They redrew electoral boundaries to over-represent the south of the country at the polls - one of the only areas where the FLN had done well in the municipal elections.[89] Even more, the new electoral law abolished the practice of voting by proxy, where a husband can vote for his wife and children – a measure that was seen to have helped the FIS in municipal elections. The FIS reacted to the gerrymandering with a strike that lasted for one week demanding that elections be postponed until the electoral laws were

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[87] Stora, 203

[88] Howard LaFranchi, "Victorious Islamicists Call for National Election in Algeria", *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 15, 1990

[89] Quandt, 55

righted. The strike only ended when once again, the military was called in to clear the strikers by force – dozens of people were killed. The government subsequently appointed a new prime minister that promised free and fair elections (although the FLN's manipulations of the electoral districts were not reversed), and the first of two rounds of parliamentary elections were rescheduled for December 26, 1991.[90]

The three main contenders in the December elections were the "three fronts": The Front Liberation Nationale (FLN), Front Islamique du Salut (FIS), and the Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS).[91] The FIS took the lion's share of the seats – a total of 188 compared to an embarrassing 18 seats for the FLN.[92] Even the FFS came ahead of the FLN, garnering 25 seats.[93] The abstention rate was 42 percent.[94] Second round elections for the remainder of the 430 seat national assembly were scheduled for mid-January, and it was widely predicted that the FIS would do just as well, or even better. On January 12, 1992, the military[95] cancelled the upcoming second round of elections, dismissed President

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[90] Ibid., 57

[91] The FFS or Front des Forces Socialistes is a secular political party which boycotted the municipal elections in 1990.

[92] It should be noted that the Algerian election system worked to favour the largest party (deliberately engineered by the FLN which was expecting to win) If one party receives an absolute majority, then seats are distributed proportionally to all parties receiving more than 7 percent of the vote. If there is no absolute majority, then the largest party receives half of the seats plus one, while the rest are distributed to parties with more than 7 percent of the vote. In any scenario however, small parties end up being underrepresented in favour of the larger ones.

[93] "Fundamentalists Far Ahead in Algerian elections: official" *Agence France Presse – English*, December 30, 1991

[94] Stora, 210

[95] Controlled by the military, the High Security Council announced the cancellation of the elections.

Bendjedid from his position[96] and declared a state of emergency throughout the country.

It is important to note briefly however, the circumstances surrounding the cancellation. Soon after the first round of legislative elections, Algiers was hit by a wave of peaceful protests and demonstrations demanding that there be "no police state, no fundamentalist republic". Nora Benabdellah of the Association for the Defence and Promotion of Women's rights told a reporter: "We wanted multipartyism and we got it, but it is already compromised. We're finally able to cast aside the ruling party, and another monopolitistic party appears."[97] Nora's feelings seemed to resound among non-FIS supporters. Municipalities under control of the FIS were already facing dramatic social changes. Mixed classes in schools were abolished, many films were banned, as well as music concerts, shops were forbidden to sell alcohol, and the FIS had officially proposed a ban on married women in the workplace, enforcing so-called "Islamic dress", and scaled back the independent press.[98]

The FIS made it clear that they would declare an Islamic state, and many voices from the upper echelons of the FIS leadership openly declared an end to democratic elections once the FIS took control of parliament. Imam Abelkader Moghni, a spokesman for the FIS declared that democracy led to "perversions" and that "Islam is light. Why do you fear it? Democracy is darkness. Those who

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[96] Officially President Bendjedid resigned from his position, but it is widely known that the military "forced" him out.

[97] Elaine Ganley, "Algeria divided by fundamentalist fears" *The Independent* (London). January 2, 1992

[98] Victoria Brittain, "Islamic Victory Erases Algeria's Model Image" *The Guardian,* (London). January 2, 1992

refuse the light want to bring injustice into society."[99] Said Mekhloufi, one of the intellectuals of the FIS insisted, "The majority cannot be taken into account when preparing the Islamic state."[100]. FIS leader Ali Benhadj declared: "When we [the FIS] are in power there will be no more elections because God will be ruling."[101] Many in the FIS leadership regarded parliaments composed of political parties as "polytheistic" because they believe that "God alone legislates."[102]

If it were not enough that higher-ups in the FIS were declaring an end to democratic elections, Benhadj asserted that members of the former regime and current military would be prosecuted for alleged past crimes; Again, Benhadj declared: "We are going to catch all the thieves [...] the ministers and the military will be tried for having killed and tortured Muslims."[103] Radical positions such as those of Benhadj drowned out moderate voices within the FIS that supported a power-sharing pact with the FLN following the legislative elections. In light of the rhetoric emanating from the FIS, whether it was wise for the military to cancel democratic elections in the interests of "safeguarding democracy" is an ongoing subject of debate. Regardless of the answer, Algeria plunged into civil war soon afterward.

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[99] Ricardo Ustarroz, "Fundamentalists reaffirm plans for Islamic state, fraud charges lodged." Agence France Presse, January 3, 1992

[100] Ray Takeyh, "Islamism in Algeria: A Struggle between Hope and Agony" *Middle East Policy*, Summer 2003

[101] _____., "Islamism: R.I.P" *The National Interest (Washington Institute for Near East Policy)* Spring 2001, 63

[102] "GIA Communiqué #36" in *al-Ansar*, London, no. 101, 15 June 1995.

[103] "Belhadj Wars FIS Will Try Ministers, Military" *Paris International Service* – French, 12 May 1991, in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service,* 13 May 1991.

Revolutionary conditions following January 1992

Before the military coup of 1992, radical voices within the FIS that advocated *jihad* against the state instead of pursuing a democratic strategy existed, but were largely marginalized or ignored. The cancellation of elections discredited the moderates within the FIS. This combined with the fact that the FIS had been banned as a political party and many of its leaders jailed, allowed more radical elements of the Islamist movement to the fore, and for a time, flourish. Given the dismal performance of the FLN at the polls, the regime was already illegitimate before the cancellation. The coup put an end to any lasting shred of legitimacy for the regime among FIS supporters - a majority of the population.

In fact, Algeria had seen Islamist fringe movements surface during the 1970's and 1980's that met with very little success. As already stated, even those who advocated armed struggle before the events of January found very little resonance among the population. Following the coup however, charges by the FIS against the regime echoed louder than ever. Simply by the act of the coup alone, the regime was seen to have revealed its apostasy by opposing the creation of an Islamic state.[104]

It is often thought that many cast their ballot in favour of the FIS not because they wished for the establishment of an Islamic state, but because they so despised the FLN and that they believed that the FIS could set Algeria on a path of honest economic recovery, and fix problems in the healthcare and housing sectors. At the very least there is some truth to this idea given the

[104] Martinez, 49

widespread nostalgia for the Boumedienne era – a time of relatively high standard of living under the direction of a staunchly secular regime. Regardless of whether one voted for the FIS for religious reasons or for socioeconomic ones however, the military put an end to the hopes of people of both mindsets. The conditions post-January 1992 for the 'supporters of Jihad' were never as favourable in independent Algeria's history.

In an attempt to preclude any sort of popular insurrection, the Algerian regime went on the offensive immediately, and in doing so, only exacerbated feelings of resentment toward it. The regime pursued a policy of mass arrests of the FIS leadership, non-state appointed Imams, and FIS sympathizers, of which the lattermost is nearly all-encompassing[105], to the extent that security services arrested university students taking part in "subversive" activity on university campuses[106]. Although university student groups were little threat to the regime, the example serves to underscore the blanket iron-fist policy of repression practiced by the regime post-January 1992 to intimidate former supporters of the FIS. It should be noted that these policies were enforced in the communes of the greater Algiers region – bastions of support for the Islamists. An example of the constant harassment of the population in greater Algiers that that demonstrates

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[105] "Arrests of members of the Islamic Salvation Front." *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*. January 29, 1992 and
"Arrests continue in Algeria", *The Russian Information Agency*, January 27, 1992 and other reports from the *Associated Press, BBC, and the United Press International*, January 1992-March 1992

[106] In this context, "Subversive activity" as defined by the regime is the formation of university student groups that protested the military coup of January 1992
"Renewed disturbances at Algerian Universities" *Republic of Algeria Radio,* Algiers, in Arabic. *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, March 2, 1992
"Security forces intervene in Blida University centre and arrest 15 people" *Republic of Algeria Radio,* in Arabic. *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* March 5, 1992

growing disdain for the regime at the time, and the increasingly accepted belief that the military and government officials were *kaffar* (infidels); Youssef, a young drinks vendor in greater Algiers, recounted his story of how the security forces arrested and tortured him simply because he was seen accompanying a 'young bearded man':

> 'They tied my hands behind my back and all the policemen coming back to the station said, "Ah you're a friend of the bearded ones, take that!" They kicked me and spat on me. For two days I had nothing to eat, I thought they wanted to kill me. I did not even know why. They told me nothing – to them, I was with the "bearded ones", so they beat me. They released me when my family found me.' (Youssef, drinks vendor, 1993)[107]

State-security forces were quick to target innocent Algerians in greater Algiers – an area full of former FIS supporters. Even those who had little interest in politics became targets of harassment, arrest, and even torture by the gendarmerie.[108] In addition, curfew was imposed in seven districts of Algiers between ten pm and five am. Young people who were found breaking curfew faced reprisals by the security forces who believed them to be spies for armed groups, or "terrorists."[109] The military was often compared to the former French colonial government in Algeria for its methods in pursuing suspects, or even Israel and the occupied territories for its imposed curfews and district closures. More than 10,000 suspected FIS supporters were deported to internment camps in the desert.[110] Indiscriminate violence against villages thought to be under

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[107] Interview with 'Youssef'. Quoted in Martinez, 60
[108] Martinez, 60
[109] Ibid., 77
[110] Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Wanton and senseless: The logic of Massacres in Algeria" *Rationality and Society* Vol 11. (Sage Publications: London, 1999), 10

rebel control by the security forces occurred frequently. 'Khaled' describes a raid by the security forces in Rais, where perpetrators of a terrorist attack the previous day were thought to have originated:

> 'The security forces from [a nearby city] sent reinforcements to our village. They killed seven people in reprisal, people who did not have anything to do with the attack, people who were not even pro-FIS. They took these people to the gendarmerie in the city and their bodies were later found in the woods.'[111]

This sort of repression only served to bolster the legitimacy of emerging Islamist militants by exacerbating the hate for the regime among ex-FIS supporters and by turning formerly apolitical Algerians against the regime.

At the time, there seemed to exist a strong hope, perhaps even a certainty that emerging armed Islamist groups would succeed in supplanting the regime. This belief was in part fueled by the perception that the MIA was fighting for Islam, while the army only fought to keep positions of privilege.[112] More importantly however, former FIS supporters had suffered at the hands of the FLN regime or the military at some point or another, whether during the suppression of the October 1988 riots, or during the repression that followed the military coup. At the very least, people felt that their rights had been trampled upon as a result of the coup, in addition to blaming the current regime for their socioeconomic situation. Hence, they placed their hopes for revenge in the 'Mudjahidin'.

Between 1992 and 1994, quite a number of armed Islamic groups surfaced and began taking control of suburban Algiers. Those that commanded

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[111] "Algeria: Elections in the Shadow of Violence and Repression." *Human Rights Watch,* 1997

[112] Martinez, 70

the most influence were the Mouvement Islamique Armée (MIA or the "Bouyali Group"), the Groupe Islamique Armée (GIA), and the Armée Islamique du Salut (AIS). The strength of the insurgency grew rapidly during this period. In 1992, the strength of the MIA guerilla forces is estimated at 2000 armed men.[113] With the formation of the GIA and AIS, the combined strength of the insurgent forces by 1994 is thought to be at least 90,000 men.[114] This figure does not include the numbers of men devoted to smaller armed insurgent groups, and hence, the threat of the insurgency to the Algerian regime was a formidable one.[115] There existed a sincere belief among Islamist sympathizers that the 'Mudjahidin' would succeed in overthrowing the 'apostate' government:

> 'We had all voted for the FIS. When the party was dissolved we all felt that we had been cheated once more by those who govern [...] In 1992, 1993, 1994, taking up weapons was a great temptation. Everyone here was certain that the AIS was going to win and take power. There was Afghanistan, Yugoslavia. We had the impression that Islam was victorious everywhere. Our young men from the guerilla strolled in the village as usual. They were handsome [...] The military did not dare to pass between the houses. [...] Ten meters separated the territory of the AIS from that of the military. It was, so to speak, official; there were taxes, administration.'[116]

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[113] Algerie-Actualite, World News Connection – *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 7 Nov 1993

[114] *Al Hayat*, 2 June 1995, cited in Martinez, 215

Al Sharq al Awsat, quoted in *Courrier International*, no. 276, 1996, cited in Martinez, 202

[115] Among other armed groups that were formed, most of them before 1994, are the following: the *Amr bi-l Ma'ruf wa Nahi 'an al-Munkar* (Commanding the Good and Prohibiting the Forbidden), *Takfir wa'l Hijra, Jama'at al-Sunna wa'l Shari'a* (Group of the Sunna and Shari'a), *Ansar al-Tawhid* (Supporters of Unity), the MEI (*le Mouvement pour l'Etat Islamique),* the Salafiyya al-jama'a al-Salafiyya li'l-Da'wa wa'l-ital (Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat, formed 1998), *Al Afghan* (the Afghans), *Al Djaich al islami* (the Islamic Army), *Movement for an Islamic Society* (HAMAS)

[116] F. Aubenas, 'Algérie: "Nous Savons que Nous Sommes seuls." *Le Monde.* 10 February, 1998, quoted in Kalyvas, 283

The Insurgency: Groups and Ideology

Le Mouvement Islamique Armée, MIA

As already mentioned, there were a plethora of Islamist groups that took up arms against the state. I will focus on the ideology and actions of the most principal ones, namely the MIA, AIS, and to a larger extent, the GIA.

The existence of the MIA proved to be short lived. Predicting that the regime would never allow the FIS to ascend to power, the MIA had been formed before the cancellation of elections, and surfaced as a powerful group immediately following the coup. The MIA received a flood of support from former FIS sympathizers, and victims of the regime in launching guerrilla operations against the state.[117] The group was seen as a protector of the communes of greater Algiers from the security forces, and an organization that would avenge the injustices of the regime. Thousands of young people wished to join the organization, to the point where the MIA could not accommodate them:

> 'This is not going to last, [the MIA] will come down from the mountains, and I swear to you [they] will kill them [the regime/military] all.; One should'nt believe what they say in France: "They are terrorists". [...] [The MIA] has men, real soldiers, Mudjahidin, and there are more and more young men who want to go to the mountains.' (Abdellah, newsagent, Algiers suburbs, 1993)[118]

The group's objective was to set up an Islamic state exclusively through *jihad*, but did not operate at cross-purposes with the FIS and ex-FIS leadership. It was extremely rigid in accepting new fighters for fear of being infiltrated by the security services, as well as the desire to maintain a professional military-style

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[117] Hugh Roberts, *The Battlefield Algeria 1988-2002* (Verso: London, 2003), 131
[118] Abdellah, newsagent, Algerian suburbs, 1993 quoted in Martinez, 69

force, and hence, it recruited qualified jobseekers, military deserters, and former FIS militants.[119] Since the MIA could not satisfy the popular demand to join them, other groups such as the GIA surfaced. The arrival of the GIA on the scene combined with an effective government launched war against them had seen their demise by 1994.

Le Groupe Islamique Armée, GIA

In contrast to the MIA, the GIA operated as a loose agglomeration of armed groups. Of the armed Islamist movements, the GIA is by far the most militant and fanatical. The group made it clear from the start that it was not an armed wing of the FIS, and that it was not pursuing a strategy aimed at coercing the government into rehabilitating the FIS as a political party.[120] Instead, it viewed *jihad* as the *only* means of ending the conflict with the regime.[121] The GIA declared that there shall be "No dialogue, no cease-fire, no reconciliation, [...] with the apostate regime" and that "*jihad* is an Islamic imperative until judgement day".[122] They define *'jihad'* in Algeria as "an absolute religious obligation which is imposed on everyone, like fasting, prayer, the almsgiving required by law and the Pilgrimage, and the killing of foreigners forms part of this major obligation."[123] The GIA framed the war strictly as a battle of values and

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[119] Martinez, 200

[120] Stone, 184

[121] The GIA oft declared that "Power is in the range of our Kalashnikovs!"

[122] Slogan attributed to Qari Said, one of the ideologues of the GIA. (Martinez 209) Camille Al-Tawil, *Al-Haraka Al-Islamiyya Al-Musalaha fi Al-Jazair: Min "Al-Inqadth" ila "Al-Jamaa" (The Armed Islamic Movement in Algeria: From the FIS to the GIA)* (Beirut: Dar-al-Nihar, 1998) cited in Mohammed Hafez, "Armed Islamist Movements and Political Violence in Algeria" *The Middle East Journal.* Washington. Vol 54, Issue 4. Autumn 2000, 577

[123] *El Ansar*, July 1994. Quoted in Martinez, 210

religion – that they were fighting a war against *kuffar*[124] and apostates, rather than one against putchists.

Unlike the MIA, the GIA recruited all who wished to join, and allowing as many cells to emerge as necessary to accommodate new fighters. What the GIA lacked in professional military training, it made up for in numbers. This suited the GIA since the terrain in which they fought was urban and suburban, rather than mountainous. Since most that joined the GIA were young, the GIA leadership encouraged young people to join the struggle even if their parents did not authorize it: "As for the consent of one's family, seek it, but if it is not given to you, go ahead anyway, *jihad – fi sabil lilah* – is above ties of blood."[125] This strategy, combined with the mass desire to get even with the state was very successful in rallying new recruits into the ranks of the GIA.

The GIA has a strict interpretation of Islam and the war. They believe that they had the exclusive right to put to death anyone who does not subscribe to their interpretation, or their will. The GIA believe in 'total war' rather than a selective one; their interpretation of who can be deemed an enemy is particularly broad. They view anyone who directly or indirectly contributes to the stability of the regime as an apostate, and therefore can justifiably be marked for death. This includes all government workers – from ministers to tax collectors, educators, and so on.[126] Members of the press for example, that did not reflect the views of the GIA became targets. The GIA flatly declared that "Those who

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[124] *Kuffar* is the Arabic word for 'infidel'

[125] Excerpt from a cassette circulating in Algeria in 1994, later in France. Cited in Martinez, 208

[126] Stone, 192

live by the pen shall die by the sword".[127] Employees of the petroleum sector for the state were seen as legitimate targets as well. In a communiqué sent to the international Arabic daily *Al-Hayat*, the GIA "orders all employees in the petroleum sector to stop working" and "those who don't will be killed."[128] Teachers who taught French in schools were targeted. [129] Even women who happened to be the wife, mother, or daughter of any civil servant were targeted. The GIA declared that:

> 'Every renegade's wife must leave him because the marriage is considered annulled without the involvement of a judge, because of his [the husband's] heresy. Every man who after publication of this statement, marries a women under his authority off to a renegade whether it is his daughter, his sister or his mother leaves her exposed to death and himself to torture.'[130]

Clearly articulating their 'total war' as a general policy, the GIA issued a *fatwa* at the outset of the war on 2 December 1992: "Algerian leaders in this age, are without exception, infidels. Their ministers, soldiers, and supporters *and anyone who works under them, helps them, and all who accept them or remain silent toward their deeds are also infidels* [italics mine] outside of the creed."[131]

Zerrousky describes a GIA guerrilla's declaration at a village gathering in Sidi Moussa, who traced three circles in the sand in front of the villagers. He

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[127] "Press groups condemn wave of journalist killings", *Algeria-Media: Inter-Press Service/Global Information Network*, June 2, 1995

[128] "GIA threatens to kill oil industry workers" *Agence France Presse*, February 14, 1996

[129] "Primary school latest target in campaign against coeducation, French teaching" *Agence France-Presse* Paris. September 23, 1994

[130] Michael Binyon, "Algerian militants threaten to kill women". *The Times*, (Times Newspaper Limited) May 5 1995

[131] *Al-Hayat*, Title Absent, 25 July 1995

then told them: 'the first circle is us [the GIA]; the second is the *taghout*[132], the third is the people. We will not accept to hear from you: "we are neither for one camp nor for the other". You are either with us or against us'.[133] Given that the GIA has declared that "all holy fighters must join the GIA"[134], this policy effectively declares that any single person that has not joined the GIA can justifiably be put to death. This follows from their view that *jihad* is a prerogative in Islamic Algeria (and all those that participate in the struggle must do so under the umbrella of the GIA), just as prayer or the fast. Such an ideology is even more fanatical than the GIA's self-proclaimed inability to distinguish between soldiers and schoolteachers.

L'Armée Islamique du Salut, AIS

The AIS was set up in 1994 by the ex-leaders of the FIS as they realized that the MIA campaign was floundering and that the GIA would be incapable of overthrowing the regime. In contrast to the GIA however, the AIS evolved to become an armed wing of the FIS and primarily aimed to pressure the regime into re-legalizing the political party and resuming the democratic process.[135] The aims of the AIS were to establish an Islamic state, but it did not see *jihad* as the only means toward accomplishing that goal, as did the GIA. Nor did the AIS subscribe to the same brand of fanatical ideology as the GIA. The AIS saw its

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[132] *Taghout* is a word used by Islamists to refer to the Algerian regime. It literally means 'devil' or 'tyrant'. The term was fashionable following the Iranian revolution, when 'Taghouti' was attributed to supporters of the Shah

[133] H. Zerrousky, 1997. 'Le Jeune Capitaine et les Paysans." *L'Humanité,* 17 October, cited in Kalyvas

[134] *Al-Tawil*, 152-154, cited in Hafez, 577

[135] "Armed wing of FIS demands release of detainees, threatens Paris with reprisals." *La Chaine Info* (Paris) in French in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, August 9, 1994

struggle as a political one, and made countless declarations that specified the state and those who *directly* aided it as the only legitimate targets:

> The AIS [...] leads its movement within the strict bounds of the Islamic Shari'a which forbids killing of the innocent, mutilation of victims and attacks on those who are not concerned in the conflict, whether they are men or women, children or adults, Muslims or non-Muslims, Algerians or foreigners.[136]

By 1994, many of the communes of greater Algiers were under the direct military control of either the GIA or the AIS. This contributed to the general feeling that an ultimate Islamist victory over the regime was on the horizon. Depending on the leanings of the press, greater Algiers was described as an area that was 'liberated' or 'occupied' by the 'Mudjhahidin'.

The Islamists in Decline 1994 - Present

Attacks on security forces by insurgents took place as early as November 1991, even before elections were cancelled by the military. In November 1991 for example, roughly sixty armed men attacked a border guard post in the north eastern part of Algeria, killing the guards on site and stealing their weapons.[137] In unrelated incidents, security forces began uncovering weapons caches, detailed plans of the positions of the gendarmerie and border police posts, and

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[136] *Mots de verite (note 8)* quoted in Martinez, 202

[137] "Fundamentalists Attack Border Post, Kill 3 Guards" *Radio Algiers Network in Arabic, Foreign Broadcast Information Service,* 29 November 1991
"Armed clashes leave 16 dead", *United Press International,* December 10, 1991

discovered bomb-making supplies.[138] Evidently, Islamists were expecting a military coup and were preparing for war.

Sporadic clashes with security forces and assassinations of policemen and military personnel took place throughout 1993, and became very regular events in 1994. Up until this point, insurgent actions against the security forces received widespread popular support in urban and suburban Algiers. In addition to the high level of recruitment that the armed groups enjoyed, Islamist sympathizers or previous victims of the regime that had not actually joined the insurgency aided it with logistical and material support. The practice by insurgents of limiting attacks to the state security apparatus did not last however.

Between 1994 and 1996, the scope of violence perpetrated largely by the GIA expanded to include civilians. Attacks took the form of bombings in public places such as markets, cinemas, and coffee shops. The GIA followed through on the threats they issued in their regular communiqués, killing representatives of opposition groups, foreigners, journalists, intellectuals, schoolteachers, popular singers, women's rights activists, newspaper and cigarette vendors, hairdressers, and many others. Their strategy of 'total war', as discussed previously, targeted anyone who was seen to be directly or indirectly supporting the regime or who was deemed an apostate.

In addition to public bombings, targeted assassinations, and abductions of men and women, rape, and torture of suspected regime collaborators became

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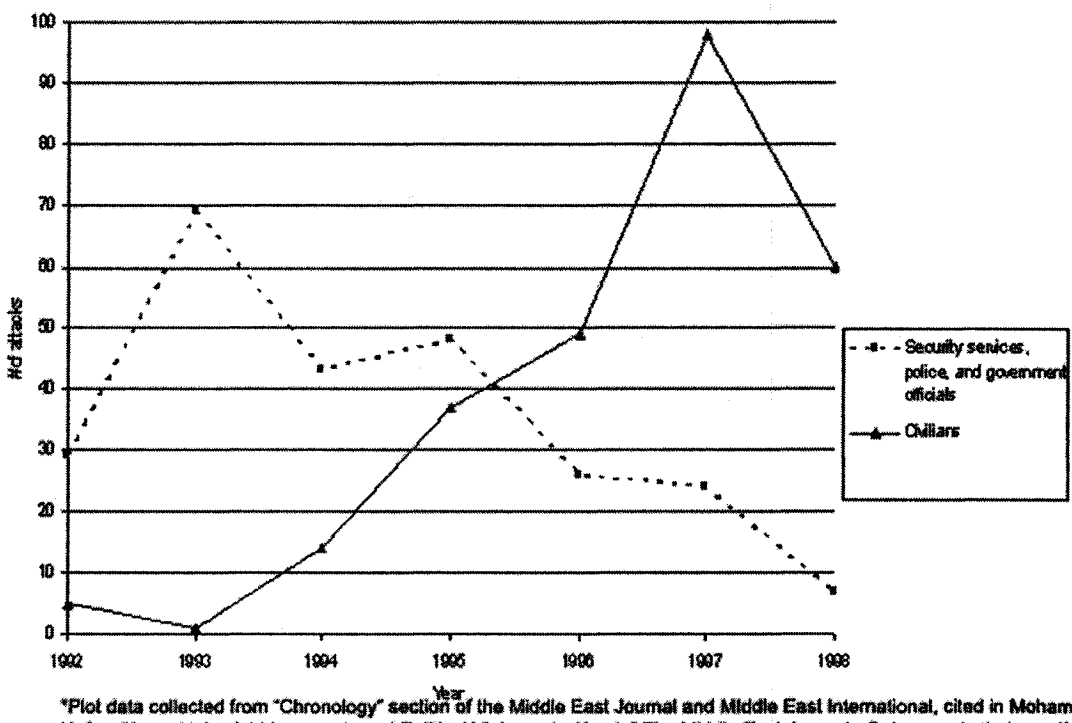
[138] "Authorities Discover Arms Cache" *Tunis TAP in Arabic*, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, November 29, 1991

commonplace in urban and suburban Algiers.[139] Since the GIA became the armed group with the greatest number of fighters, between 1993 and 1997 the number of attacks on security forces and government officials strikingly decreased in relation to the increasing number of deliberate attacks on civilian targets. See Figure 2.

Figure2: Targets of Islamist Attacks 1992-1998*



*Plot data collected from "Chronology" section of the Middle East Journal and Middle East International, cited in Mohammed Hafez, "Armed Islamist Movements and Political Violence in Algeria" The Middle East Journal. Only records that specify date and place of an attack are included. Graph produced by thesis author, Omar Badawi.

[139] Daily Reports - *Foreign Broadcast Information Service– Middle East/Algeria* 1994-1998

With the ever-increasing number of attacks on civilian targets, residents of greater Algiers became irate with the GIA. Although they still loathed the incumbents, residents saw no utility in the GIA's methods:

> They cut two young people's throats and placed their heads at the crossroads. That is no good, that. I think that if they go on doing that, people won't be with them any more. Let them kill the others, the thieves (criminals and political leaders), but they should'nt cut people's throats... They cut you up into pieces as if you were a sheep. I tell you, people are going to turn against them if that continues.' (40 year old Petty trader, Algiers suburbs, 1994)[140]

The Triangle of Death

Regular killing of civilians between 1994 and 1996 gave way to massacres between 1996 and 1999. During these years, the GIA committed upward of one hundred wholesale massacres against civilians that were grossly inhumane.[141] Civilians were targeted in an unprecedented manner by the GIA – the number of victims ranged from 10 to 400 in a single massacre. The attacks took place in an area approximately 150 km^2 south of Algiers in the Medea and Blida regions, including the Mitidja plain. – all former bastions of support for the FIS.[142] See Figure 3.

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[140] Martinez, 109

[141] Robert Fisk, "Brutal killers without faces; Civil war in Algeria has cost up to 150,000 lives, and there is no end in sight. Now difficult questions are being asked about who is really behind the massacres." *The Independent* (London). October 26, 1997

[142] "Algerian farming region a blood-soaked "Triangle of Death"" *Agence France Press* – English, September 23, 1997

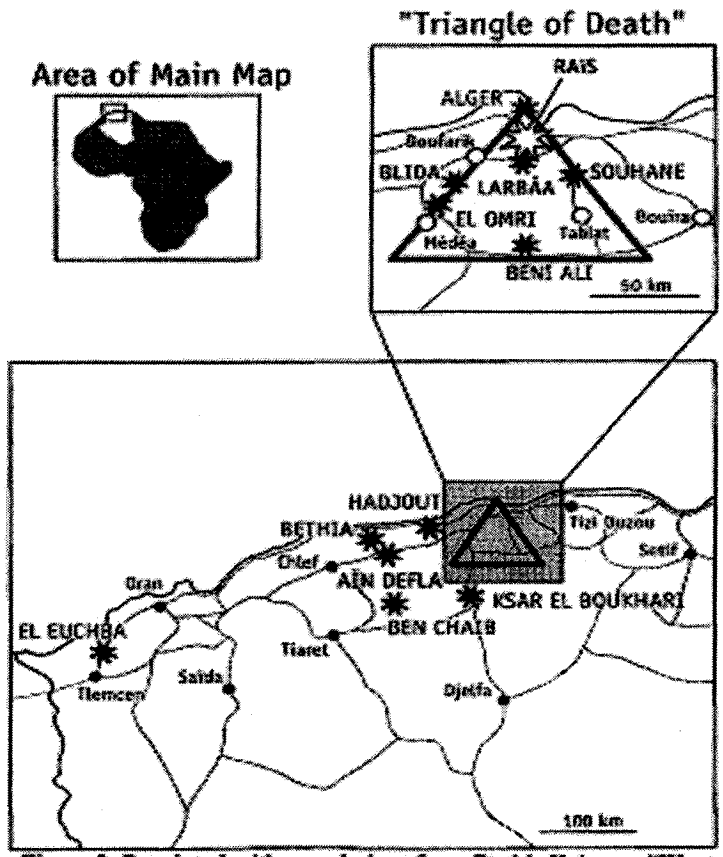

Figure 3: Reprinted with permission, from Stathis Kalyvas, "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria" in Rationality and Society, Vol 11, (Sage Publications: London, 1999), 248.

Massacres in this area became an almost daily occurrence in 1997 – the year most of the attacks occurred. The GIA descended upon small towns, typically at night with the sole objective of killing civilians.[143] The men broke into houses and killed their inhabitants, often in their sleep, or burned the houses

[143] It should be noted that many residents and international organizations have accused the security forces of complicity in the 1996-1999 massacres. Some massacres have allegedly occurred within less than 500 meters of security force barracks and outposts, where soldiers were able to hear the sound of gunfire and see the flames and smoke of burning houses. There is widespread agreement that these claims are in fact substantiated. There are some newspaper interviews of alleged former members of security forces claiming to have taken part in as many as 18 massacres, organized by the military but disguised to look as if they had been committed by Islamists. The overwhelming evidence surrounding the identity of the attackers however, points to the GIA. The most important of which comes from testimonies of survivors of the massacres who were able to identify local Islamists from among the attackers. Additionally, for survivors who accuse the gendarmerie of not intervening on their behalf, there is no doubt as to the identity of the attackers (the GIA).

while inhabitants were still inside. Villagers have been killed with brutal methods; slaughtered, decapitated, mutilated with knives, machetes, saws, and axes. Corpses were reportedly mutilated.[144] An Amnesty International reported noted:

> No one is safe from the brutality. Men, women, children, small babies and elderly people have been hacked to death, decapitated, or mutilated and left to bleed to death. Pregnant women have been disembowelled. Survivors, relatives of the victims and medical personnel are traumatized by the horror they are forced to witness. [...] Dozens of women are reported to have been abducted by the attackers, raped and then killed.[145]

These acts were ostensibly committed against targeted enemies of the GIA – members of the security forces and their families, informers, people who did not financially support the insurgency, members of other armed groups, etc.[146] However, there is also substantial evidence that the GIA were killing people indiscriminately.[147] The likely case is that both targeted and random slaughter occurred.

However incomprehensible these acts of violence are, the killing of former FIS sympathizers is the most perplexing. Why would the GIA want to kill former FIS supporters? A large proportion of those targeted that were former sympathizers of the FIS simply did not actively support the militancy of the GIA – particularly once civilians increasingly became targeted. Hence, they literally became victims of the GIA's 'those who are not with us are against us' doctrine.

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[144] Christopher Dickey, "Algeria: The Slaughter Goes on". *Newsweek, Atlantic Edition.* September 8, 1997

Cohn, Martin Regg, "Algeria villagers trapped in the 'Triangle of Death'. Attackers descend during the night to rape and kill. *The Toronto Star,* June 8, 1997.

[145] "Algeria - Civilian Population caught in a Spiral of Violence" *Amnesty International.* Report MDE 28/23/97, 1997, 14

[146] Kalyvas, 255

[147] "Algeria – Civilian Population caught in a Spiral of Violence" *Amnesty International.* Report MDE 28/23/1997, 14

Even more shocking, GIA members who attacked villagers were often from the same village they were attacking themselves.[148] Two sisters, speaking to an Amnesty International interviewer described the killing of their parents:

> We woke up at the noise; some armed men were hitting father with a shotgun. Mum ran towards them screaming and the other men grabbed her and hit her. They pushed father into the kitchen and the other two took mum out into the courtyard and tied her hands. They cut her throat. The other men called from inside the house and the one who slaughtered mum shouted: 'Wait, I'm finishing'. Before running away they threatened us and told us not to tell anyone and not to go to school. One of them was from the village; he is called Boudjema.[149] (11 and 13 year old sisters, greater Algiers, 1997)

Banditry

When civilians were not being killed by the guerrillas, they were being extorted from or harassed. Protection rackets were set up in the greater Algiers region by the Islamists. The business elite fled greater Algiers as soon as they began to be extorted by the Islamist forces, leaving only petty traders and salesmen that did not have the wherewithal to leave their cities. 'Checkpoints' were set up on major roads by the Islamists; supplies from business trucks were regularly taken by the Islamists and people asked to pay 'tolls' as a form of *zakat* for the cause.

> 'I was sitting down reading the sports newspaper, I was listening to music when two young men entered the shop and said, "turn off the radio!" I turned it off and as I got up, I saw the *klach*[150] they were carrying, then I understood that they were Mudjahidin. They told me to have no fear because I was a good Muslim. They told me I must give to help fight [the]

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[148] Ibid., 14
[149] Ibid., 15
[150] *Klach* is slang for the ubiquitous Kalashnikov assault rifles – usually in the form of an AK-47.

> *Taghout.* I said I had no money, what I earned was just enough to feed my family; then they said, "You give what you can", and in two days someone would come to collect the money, and they left.' (Brahim, petty trader, 35 years old, Algiers suburbs 1994)[151]

Quite obviously, extortion and theft did not go over well with Algerians. As civilians with any sort of economic power were increasingly extorted, more of them left greater Algiers, leaving poorer and poorer Algerians to fall victim to the Islamists. With less cash to go around, the Islamists became increasingly aggressive. Bakers, grocers, hardware merchants, jewellers, and other petty traders were killed if they were not judged to be giving enough.[152] According to a resident of the village of Rais in 1997: "80 percent of the villagers were against [the guerrillas], but we had no choice. During the evening, when they came to your place you had to give them money, clothes or lend them your car [...] We were living a nightmare".[153]

Factionalism and Internecine Fighting

Internecine fighting among the Islamist movement started as early as 1994, when the GIA is alleged to have executed approximately seventy members of the MIA.[154] Smaller groups such as the *Takfir wa-l Hijra* and the Algerian Hezbollah were competing amongst themselves and with the MIA for a monopoly of the Jihad.[155] Since the MIA did not last, the bulk of the fighting took place

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[151] Martinez, 108-109

[152] Martinez, 109

[153] T. Leclere, "Rais, Retour sur un Massacre." *Telerama* 22 October, 1997, cited in Kalyvas, 262

[154] The number of MIA dead is unconfirmed. "GIA says it 'executed' 70 members of rival Islamic group. *Agence-France-Presse*. February 7, 1994

[155] Martinez, 69

between the GIA and the AIS. With clearly different ideologies and strategies, the two largest armed groups were at odds with each other from the start. Both groups repeatedly laid claim to the sole legitimate bearer's of banner of *jihad.* The GIA did so on the grounds that it is fighting the apostate regime, and as already discussed, issued death threats to those who did not join them. The AIS claimed that since it represented the FIS, it automatically garnered the support of all of the former voters for the FIS.

Differing ideology and strategy moved from hostile rhetoric to violent confrontations between the two armed groups. The GIA issued an explicit declaration of war on the AIS and all former FIS leaders on 4 January 1996.[156] The GIA saw a threat in the AIS in that the latter consistently made appeals to fighters in the GIA to reconsider their methods and join the AIS.[157] The AIS declared: "we fight among men, we do not kill the old, women or children"[158] – a declaration clearly intended to shame GIA fighters into abandoning the fanatical group, while at the same time absolving the AIS of atrocities not already attributed to the GIA.

GIA militants, many of them important figures, did indeed defect from the GIA – likely due to their own revulsion of GIA methods than calls from the AIS. Mustapha, an Emir of a militia that split from the GIA explained "We flocked [to the mountains] to die as a persecuted people, not as persecutors or perpetrators

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[156] GIA communiqué #30, *Al Hayat*, 7 February 1996 cited in Hafez 582

[157] *Al-Hayat,* 26 August 1994, 20 March 1995, 14 December 1995, 16 October 1996, 6 January 1997. Cited in Ibid., 583

[158] See Madani Mezraq' letters issued in March and April 1995 in al-Tawil, *Al-Haraka*, 298-299 and 303-304 cited in Ibid., 583

of killing the innocent."[159] Hassan Hattab, currently the Emir of another militant group, the *Salafiyaa Group for Preaching and Combat*, stated that he split with the GIA because it was "spilling the blood of the nation, looting its property and kidnapping its women."[160] Moreover, the AIS often called for FIS initiatives to resolve the crisis peacefully with the regime – an anathema to the GIA.[161] In any case, fighting took place between the AIS and the GIA on a regular basis in greater Algiers, exacting high casualties on both sides.[162] The GIA did not only fight the AIS, but it instituted periodic 'purges' of its own ranks. In 1995, the GIA executed one hundred of its own members allegedly because they refused to follow GIA orders on abandoning un-Islamic "innovations."[163]

In 1997, the FIS/AIS negotiated a truce with the government, widely believed to make clear to Algerians that it was not complicit in the massacres committed that same year. The AIS respected the cease-fire, and even aided the government in fighting the GIA.[164] In effect, the fanaticism of the GIA drove the AIS off the battlefield.

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[159] Interview with *Al-Hayat, 8 February 2000* p. 8 cited in Ibid., 589

[160] Agence France-Presse International, 17 October 1997

[161] "Rival Algerian Islamist Guerillas groups could soon merge" *Mideast Mirror* May 19, 1995

[162] "Over 50 killed in fighting between Algerian factions" *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* January 4, 1996

"Algerian papers report growing strife between Islamist groups" BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, April 19, 1995

[163] Communiqué #35 in *Al-Ansar, no. 101, 15 June, 1995*, Mideast Mirror May 19, 1995

[164] Although the AIS respected the cease-fire with the government, it did not disband until January 2000

Political Developments and the State Security Policy

In January 1994, former Algerian Defence Minister Liamine Zeroual was appointed to the position of "President of the State" by Algeria's High Security Council. Zeroual was considered a *conciliator* – one that believed that a political track with the banned FIS leadership must accompany military attempts at solving the conflict (as opposed to an *eradicator*, a title attributed to those believing the exact opposite). Articulating a desire to negotiate with the FIS, he declared that "it is imperative to combine efforts in the domain of security with efforts in the political domain [...] security policy alone is insufficient to rescue the country from its crisis" and that it is necessary for "dialogue and participation of all national political forces, without exception."[165] This thinking shaped Algerian policy throughout the nineties.

In an act of good faith, Zeroual released from custody three FIS leaders in June 1994. In addition, he transferred the top FIS leaders, Benhadj and Madani from prison to house arrest, where they could communicate with insurgents under their control. The expectation from Zeroual was that these leaders would call for an end to violence and begin negotiations with the state. The release had little effect however.[166] Zeroual already faced significant pressure from *eradicators* in the regime. His government explained the partial release as an attempt "to explore every possibility of putting an end to the violence and bloodshed and of restoring security and stability."[167] Soon thereafter, the GIA

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[165] Robert Mortimer. "Islamists, soldiers, and democrats: The second Algerian war" *The Middle East Journal*, Winter, Vol. 50, Iss. 1, Winter, 1996, 7

[166] Mortimer, 7

[167] Le Monde, 15 September, 1994, cited in ibid, 7

issued a communiqué asserting that there will be no compromises with the "illegal government". This demonstrated that both Zeroual and the FIS leadership that were willing to negotiate were stuck between a rock and a hard place. The military already incensed with the release of FIS leaders, would not allow Zeroual to make any further concessions, especially under the backdrop of ever increasing insurgent attacks (mostly emanating from the GIA). At the same time, the FIS leadership did not have full control over the Islamist insurgency.[168]

With no hope of a negotiated settlement on the horizon, in November 1994, the FFS, FLN, and the FIS (as well as other less significant political parties) gathered for talks in Rome under the auspices of a catholic monastic order, Sant'Edigio.[169] Known as the 'platform of Rome', the multi-session talks led to a signed agreement on the following: the rejection of violence, support for democracy, open competitive elections, and respect for human rights. The Algerian regime boycotted the talks, accusing all political parties in attendance of allying themselves with the FIS.[170] The most likely reason for the boycott however, was that the Algerian government was not content that they did not control the process directly. [171] The same group held follow up talks nonetheless. The hope was that the resulting FIS pledge toward non-violence, pluralism, and democracy could be the first step toward a civic-pact with the government.[172] On the heels of the platform of Rome however, the GIA launched another round of attacks, which again only served to embolden the *eradicators* within the Algerian

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[168] Mortimer, 8
[169] Sant'Edigio had played a key mediation role in 1992 in the Mozambican civil war
[170] Stone, 118
[171] Mortimer, 8
[172] Stone, 118

regime. The conflict ensued as if the platform of Rome had never taken place – a disappointing development given the potential of the platform of Rome toward forging a civic-pact.

The government pursued a political track of its own through elections in an attempt to reign in the insurgency and garner more legitimacy, all the while excluding the FIS. Since the cancelled elections of 1991, the regime has held six elections: presidential elections in 1995 (the FLN and FFS boycotted these elections), 1999, 2002, and 2004 and for municipal, provincial and national assemblies in 1997 and 2002. The 1997 parliamentary elections witnessed relatively high turnout with two-thirds of eligible voters participating at the polls. A new party supported by the formerly hard-line FLN elements of the regime – the National Democratic Rally (RND), garnered the majority of votes in what many believed to be a fraudulent result. Still, they may have lent the regime more legitimacy.

The 1999 presidential election in which current President Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected was described as a seemingly free and fair process, although the opposition withdrew from the race on the eve of the elections, accusing Bouteflika of fraud.[173] Most important to the regime's efforts at undercutting the insurgency however, is the general amnesty instituted by Bouteflika following his inauguration. In September 2000, the Algerian government put the so-called *"Concorde Civile"* to referendum, which was publicly ratified en masse. It allowed for insurgents that were not guilty of rape,

[173] Bouteflika was re-elected in the presidential elections of 2004, in which he is accused of fraud as well. There is likely to be some truth to allegations of fraud, more so in 1999 than in 2004.

murder, or bombings, and who handed in their weapons to escape government sanction. The amnesty was somewhat effective in disarming insurgents – levels of violence decreased to a certain degree. At a minimum, it took some pressure off the government and allowed it to redouble its efforts at eradicating remaining insurgent strongholds.[174]

Militarily, from the start of the violence to the faltering of the insurgency in the late nineties, the Algerian security services became increasingly adept in its anti-guerrilla operations. Although the aggressive behaviour of the military immediately following the cancellation of elections (as I have described above) served to fuel popular anger toward the regime and nurture the nascent insurgency, Algerian military strategy against the Islamist armed groups has proven to be somewhat effective. The government created an army corps specialising in anti-guerrilla operations, which became the pillar of the anti-terrorist struggle.[175] The corps was equipped with modern military equipment (much of it supplied by France), including helicopters mounted with counter-guerrilla equipment and computers to track young men's military status.

Moreover, the military effectively competed for the allegiance of the same young men in greater Algiers as did the GIA, AIS, and other armed groups after

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[174] It should be noted that although the number of casualties decreased following the general amnesty in 2000, more than 1,000 people were killed by the GIA and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat in 2002. Gerrie Swart, Hussein Solomon, "Algeria: The Politics of Fundamentalism and Extremism" *AISA Electronic Monograph, World News Connection – Foreign Broadcast Information Service.* October 17, 2003

[175] Amnesty International. Algeria: Country Assessment *Country Information and Policy Unit*, October 2001

The crack anti-guerrilla corps were often referred to as *Ninjas* because they wore black masks.

the initial stages of the civil war.[176] Because of the difficult economic conditions, a job with the security services that provided a regular salary and fringe benefits proved appealing. The military trained elite police units which were permanently mobilized that patrolled the streets in hostile areas. Many of these anti-guerrilla corps were able to infiltrate GIA cells and provide intelligence to the government.[177]

Recruitment into the *Groupes de Légitime Défense* (GLD), more often referred to as *'les patriots'* increased dramatically in 1996. *Les patriots* were paramilitary groups that operated at the local level and were legally recognized, armed, and encouraged by the Algerian regime to fight the insurgency, and in many ways, proved more effective than the Algerian military itself due to their permanent presence in their home towns. In 1997, they increasingly became involved in all-out military operations as attachments to the military.[178] Members of *les patriots* who had survived the massacres perpetrated by the GIA were often compelled to fight by a deep-seeded desire for vengeance.[179]

Furthermore, the government pursued a policy of militarily neglecting non-strategic areas of Algeria – areas where insurgents did not pose a direct threat to the regime, while at the same time supplying and supporting *les patriots* in those areas. This policy worked in the government's favour in two ways. First, it allowed the regime to focus its counter-guerrilla operations in strategic areas of the country such as the capital. Second, *les patriots* fought the Islamists with an

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[176] Martinez, 154
[177] Stone, 187
[178] "Algeria – Civilian Population caught in a Spiral of Violence" *Amnesty International.* Report MDE 28/23/97, 1997, 18
[179] Kalyvas, 268

efficiency that involved wholesale extrajudicial killings that the Algerian military would never be capable of sustaining on a large scale. All the while, the military turned a blind eye to the excesses committed by *les patriots* in fighting the insurgency, and continued to supply them with weaponry and training.[180]

While the security services were prosecuting a counterinsurgency effort, they were also fighting an information war. Although in recent years the vitality of the independent Algerian press has resurrected itself, the Algerian state enforced a policy of censorship over the media. Information deemed 'sensitive' by the regime was not to be published in any form. Thus, pieces published that criticized the regime or revealed any 'security' related information often led to reprisals by the Algerian government. These reprisals took the form of either suspension or an outright ban on the publisher. Worse, journalists known to be critical of the regime disappeared on a regular basis.[181] For a time, Algeria was likely to be the most dangerous place for journalists in the world, reflected in the number of targeted assassinations and disappearances. As mentioned above, journalists were regularly targeted by the Islamist insurgency (particularly the GIA), in addition to being targeted by the government. One Algerian journalist said:

> Writing certain things is impossible, so you don't write; saying certain things is dangerous, even if you don't write it, so you don't say it; but what is worse is that it has become more and more dangerous to know things even if you don't say that you know it and you don't write about it. So you try not to find out too much, not to stick your nose where you are not supposed to; but sometimes you start looking into something and you find

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[180] Robert Fox. "Army's hands are not clean of blood" *The Sunday Telegraph*. October 26, 1997

[181] Amnesty International, *Civilian Population Caught in a Spiral of Violence*, 21

> out things, and then you realize that it's too big for you – so you try to forget what you know, but what if someone knows what you know? You're dead.[182]

Conclusions

Let us re-examine the failure of the Islamist insurgency through our initial theoretical discussion and analytical framework, keeping in mind the structural and actor-oriented variables explored above. First, let us recall Skocpol, who put forth a structural theory of revolution and asserts that "historically no successful revolution has ever been "made" by a mass-mobilizing, avowedly revolutionary movement"[183] but that instead, revolutions are created by various crises of state capacity. Indeed, Algeria was in a state of structural crisis for 15 years counting forward from 1985, which existed simultaneously at economic, political, and military levels, albeit in various degrees. Johnson's 'disequilibriated social system' refers in part to this structural condition. Algeria's economy was in tatters following the drop in the price of oil in the mid-eighties – a situation that persisted throughout the nineties.

Contributing to a public perception of corruption by government officials, poor economic conditions and a lack of regime legitimacy translated into the October 1988 riots, which left hundreds dead. Skocpol and de Tocqueville have noted that widespread revolt and insurrection are typical in situations where controls and government pressure over a population have been relaxed. Following "Black October", the Algerian government pushed through real, landmark democratic reforms, allowing civil society to emerge with a vigour never

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[182] Ibid., 22

[183] See note 4

experienced by Algerians then, and generations of Algerians past. It is during this time that the nascent Islamist movement began to emerge.

Certainly Huntington's assertion that revolutions are unlikely in political systems that have the capacity to allow broad public political participation rings true in the Algerian case. National protests were muted once the government permitted the expansion of civil society. Moreover, the Islamist insurgency only began to establish itself and expanded proportionately to levels of popular support once the government cancelled the democratic process and cracked down on Algerian civil society. In the early years of the insurgency, the regime found itself unequipped and unprepared to effectively combat a domestic insurrection, and irregular attacks on the state rapidly morphed into a long-term protracted conflict. Interdependent upon the actors in the conflict, namely, the Algerian population, the Islamist insurgency, and the government, the structural condition of Algeria changed over time.

Examining the actors in the conflict, we can draw further parallels. Remembering that in varying forms, Gurr, Davies, and Edwards put forward the concept of "relative deprivation" which predicts that people will revolt if they perceive that there is a discrepancy between their expectations of what they should receive politically, economically, or otherwise and what they are actually receiving. This discrepancy led Algerians onto the streets in October 1988. More importantly however, it fuelled the insurgency in its infancy. Already angry with the Bendjedid regime for perceived corruption, poor socioeconomic conditions, and its violent crackdown on protesters, the majority of Algerians

expected that their vote would be honoured, and that a new Islamist government would supplant the old and illegitimate secular regime. This too explains why widespread popular support for the violent overthrow of the state began only following the cancellation of elections.

Mancur Olson's approach to collective action posits that people would participate in a revolutionary movement because they can derive some personal gain. As we have seen, personal revenge for Algerians angry with the government and state security services was one of those gains – a positive incentive that partially offsets his "free rider" problem. Furthermore, Tilly's theory of resource mobilization can be applied to the Algerian case. Where the population supports an alternative body, "pay taxes to it, provide men for its armies, feed its functionaries, honor its symbols, give time to its service, or yield other resources"[184], then a revolutionary situation exists. The GIA and AIS controlled territory, collected taxes, recruited men, etc. The Islamists effectively mobilized resources away from the government, albeit only for a time without applying coercive force. Like structural conditions, the actors in the Algerian conflict have changed over time, and have in turn affected structural conditions, which have in turn affected the actors. Again, these approaches examine factors that are variably interdependent.

The theoretical considerations recounted above yield a different scenario when applied at later stages of the Algerian civil war. Remembering Molnar, Greene, and Johnson, ideology not only justifies the existence of a group, but is used to manipulate group behaviour and can serve as a template directing

[184] See note 20

particular courses of action. For the armed groups throughout the civil war, this meant the following: The manipulation of political Islam while at the same time taking advantage of the general popular disdain for the regime. Of course, the GIA, AIS, and other armed groups directed the population, largely through positive incentives at the start, to support them. As we have seen, there existed an initial jubilation among the young for an opportunity to support the MIA, hence, little or no coercion was needed to recruit Algerians to fight in the period between the military coup and 1995.

For all intents and purposes, the structural and actor-oriented variables discussed in the preceding paragraphs changed little until this point, if at all - structural crises for the state were exacerbated since insurgent strength was growing significantly while economic conditions continued to deteriorate. Also during this period, the number of attacks on the state security apparatus was high in comparison to attacks on civilians – here the previous discussion on terrorism is relevant. Initial attacks on the state demonstrated to the Algerian population that the government's hold on the monopoly of violence no longer existed. More, the regime reacted to terrorist attacks following the cancellation of elections by imposing martial law in former FIS strongholds – a reaction that solidified popular support for the insurgents.

In the early years of the war, the Islamists held territory with the support of ordinary Algerians, in defiance of the government. However, as competition between the Islamist groups increased, and the state began reasserting its authority through the reorganization of its security services and the formation of

les patriots, groups such as the GIA became increasingly fanatical. Here, Taylor's discussion on fanaticism becomes relevant. The GIA understood the logic of its own behaviour to the total exclusion of all other ideologies, including those of other insurgent groups, even upon realizing that their popular support was in decline. As we know, this behaviour is marked by a shift from initial attacks on the Algerian state to attacks on civilians, including the brutal countryside massacres of 1997-1998.

Killings and massacres by the GIA were above all an attempted instrument of control of the civilian population – an ironic motive given their ultimate consequences. The selective killing of the populace supporting the regime is certainly intended to prevent others from doing the same. The indiscriminate killing has a similar effect simply by nature of striking fear into the hearts of those who were spared or escaped. Clearly, this fear is induced by the likelihood of death should they or their relatives be deemed enemies. In a report on the massacres, Amnesty International states that these "atrocities have created an atmosphere of terror, where people fear not just being killed, but being killed in particularly brutal ways."[185] Dr. Houria Salhi, an Algerian psychiatrist believes the massacres were not senseless: "It's religious fanaticism, fascism. It's an ideological terrorism. Behind their acts, there is a strategy of destabilization. [...]"[186] Indeed, the GIA declared that the massacres in the Mitidja plain are part and parcel of their war strategy against the regime:

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[185] "Algeria: The Hidden Human Rights Crisis." *Amnesty International, 1996.* News Release, MDE 28/13/96

[186] M. Kaci, 'Pour Houria Salhi, les tueurs ne sont pas des "fous." *L'Humanité* 6 March, 1998, quoted in Kalyvas, 247

"A new stage of the struggle against the government has begun with the execution of apostates and their relatives in towns and villages."[187] Hence, although the massacres seem utterly incomprehensible from the perspective of an insurgency attempting to gain popular support, the GIA intended to coerce and scare the population from defecting to the regime.

Remembering Greene, persistent terrorism is a sign of a weak guerrilla movement. The level of violence and brutality perpetrated by the GIA intending to preclude defection toward the incumbents would not be necessary if the population was solidly supporting the insurgency in the first place. Since this was evidently not the case, GIA atrocities only served to dramatically exacerbate the problem of declining popular support for the insurgency. Revealing of the GIA's fanatical, and at the same time, myopic vision of the conflict, it acknowledged its decreasing support among the people all the while justifying their actions and admitting their responsibility for the 1997 massacres. Even more, the GIA declared that it will continue their fight regardless of the circumstances that surround them; in a communiqué released in 1997, the GIA declared that:

> 'the infidelism and apostasy of this hypocrite nation that turned away from backing and supporting the mudjahidin will not bend our determination and will not hurt us at all, God willing [...] All the killings and slaughter, the massacres, the displacement [of people], the burnings, and the kidnappings [...] are an offering to God.'[188]

There existed a severe disjunct between the purported ideology of the GIA and their actions, leading groups to splinter off from it such as the Salafi Group

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[187] H. Zerrousky "Antar Zouabri, Chef du GIA, Abattu." *L'Humanité* July 25, 1997. quoted in Ibid., 285

[188] *Agence France-Presse International*, 24 September 1997

for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in 1998. Defectors to the GSPC later acknowledged that the GIA's interpretation of Islam was the reason for their defection, and indeed also the reason for the decline of the insurgency. It is safe to say that the Algerian population did not regard atrocities committed by the GIA to be sanctioned by Islam, as the GIA claimed. Banditry, internecine fighting, atrocities, treatment of civilians, and the state security policy all contributed to the failure of the Islamist insurgency. The behaviour and policies of the GIA and other Islamist armed groups would be an anathema to revolutionary practitioners such as Mao, Lenin, Giap, or Guevara.

Falling back on our theoretical discussion, we find that a complete picture of the Algerian conflict and the failure of the Islamist insurgency in Algeria can not be drawn with only one approach to revolution, be it structural, or actor-oriented, remembering that the former will examine context, and the latter examine actors, both of which are continuously intertwined. Moreover, these approaches are best suited to predicting conditions at the outset of a potential revolution, or at one particular time. There is ongoing theoretical debate over the benefits and shortfalls of understanding revolution with either structural approaches, or actor-oriented approaches, respectively. The main debate centers on whether revolutions are products of purposeful intent and rational action. Many theorists argue a fusion of these approaches – a seemingly logical outgrowth of the debate.

It should be evident by now however that my purpose is not to argue that one approach is superior to the other in the Algerian context. Instead, I have

argued that both of these approaches lack perspective on situational occurrences and contingencies that surface during the conflict. Structural and actor-oriented approaches fused together would produce the following scenario: if rational and intelligent revolutionaries are operating in a state under severe structural strain, then a successful revolution would result.[189] At the height of the strength of the Algerian insurgency in 1994, with this perspective one would have expected a successful Islamist insurgent campaign. Understanding the failure of the Islamists through a processual lens enables us to factor in both of these approaches dynamically throughout the entire 'process of conflict'; the complete explanation for the failure of the insurgency is dependent upon all of the ever-changing and interdependent factors that these approaches consider, an idea that I hope has been made clear. Incorporating the variables structural and actor-oriented approaches examine into a process approach could be considered analogous to amalgamating a number of chronological still frame pictures of an event into one film.

Of course, structural theorists may simply argue that the Algerian state was too strong to fall. Equally, actor-oriented theorists may argue that the insurgents were too weak. Admittedly, both of these are tautological arguments, but either case can still be made. Even in hindsight, it is impossible to say with absolute certainty which argument deserves the most merit, given the strength of the insurgency in the early nineties. It *is* possible to say however, regardless of the true answer to the preceding question, that structural and actor-oriented factors become subordinate to process-theory throughout a civil war such as

[189] Johnson, 184

Algeria's. Meaning, the relative strength of the Algerian state was very much dependent upon the strength of the insurgency which in turn was dependent upon all of the process-level variables with regard to the behaviour of the Islamist insurgency that I have elucidated in this paper. In studying revolution, the Algerian case clearly shows us the importance of understanding the interplay between structural and actor-oriented factors. But more importantly, it shows us the potential for these factors to change in response to contingencies that may arise – whatever they may be. Theories of revolution must take Cohen's notion of contingency into account, whereby situations and actors change as a result of certain occurrences. These occurrences may foreclose a likely conclusion to a conflict, or make almost unavoidable an unlikely one by altering the interplay between structural and actor-oriented variables.

Currently, it is safe to say that the Algerian civil war has come to an end. Sporadic violence continues across the countryside, but the number of casualties has sharply dropped since 1999. At the polls, moderate Islamists took about 21% of the vote in the 2002 parliamentary elections, while the lion's share of the seats went to the RND and a reinvigorated FLN. Militarily, Islamists have fared far worse. It is estimated that numbers of the GIA have dwindled to only 30-40 fighters. The group has effectively been destroyed by the Algerian security services and loss of popular support. The GSPC continues to fight the Algerian government and has recently rejected any amnesties offered by the Bouteflika regime, but their numbers remain low. Despite their low numbers however, the

continued presence of the most radical of these insurgents (the majority of GIA/GSPC militants have either been captured, killed, taken advantage of the government amnesty, or have quietly reintegrated into Algerian society, and the AIS has quit the battlefield) explains the sporadic violence that continues throughout the Algerian countryside. In the wake of this bloody conflict, the future of political Islamists in Algeria remains uncertain. It is clear however, that the fifteen year effort of militant Islamists to topple the 'apostate' Algerian state has failed.

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Sure. Go ahead.

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Stathis N. Kalyvas
Arnold Wolfers Professor of Political Science
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Quoting Omar Badawi <omar.badawi@mail.mcgill.ca>:

> Dear Professor Kalyvas:
>
> I am an M.A. student at McGill University in Montreal, Canada writing my
> final thesis paper on the Islamist insurgency in Algeria, with
> particular emphasis on the nature of the violence and its consequences

> on the insurgency. I have read your article "Wanton and Senseless? The
> Logic of Massacres in Algeria" published in Rationality and Society, and
> have found it to be one of the most insightful pieces of research on the
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