Introduction

On 23 February 2005, following an ordinary session of parliament, the French state passed an extraordinary law. Sponsored by a group of right-wing politicians from the ruling Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP) party and framed by France's history as a colonial power, the law combined national recognition of those who had participated in the imperial endeavour with a series of financial measures in favour of those displaced as a result of decolonisation, the *rapatriés* (repatriates). Reflecting the centrality of Algeria in France's colonial past, the law's provisions were aimed primarily at *pieds-noirs*, the former settlers of that territory, who had been instrumental in lobbying for the measures, and *harkis,* Algerians who had served as native auxiliaries with the French army during the War of Independence (1954–62). Of the thirteen articles that comprised the law, Article 4 stood out through its stipulation that French school curricula should 'recognise in particular the positive role of the French presence overseas, notably in North Africa'.[1]

Reactions to the law were swift and vehement, as various groups mobilised to decry what they viewed as an attempt to impose a partisan, official reading of history upon the educational establishment. Historian and long-standing anti-colonial activist Claude Liauzu led the charge, denouncing Article 4 as an attack on the principles of freedom of thought and educational neutrality, and thus on *laïcité* (secularism) itself. '[A]n official lie' that denied the reality of crimes committed under empire, including slavery and 'genocide', and their contemporary legacies, such as racism, Liauzu argued that the law would worsen the already considerable divisions within postcolonial French society.[2]

Liauzu's concerns were partly or wholly shared by a range of other groups and individuals, including the Ligue des droits de l'Homme (LDH), trade unionists, schoolteachers, academics and the Parti social-iste (PS), whose leader, Jean-Pierre Ayrault, described the party's initial lack of opposition, which had allowed the law to pass, as an 'oversight'.[3] Even key *harki* organisations, like Harkis et droits de l'homme, voiced their opposition to specific clauses, including Article 4, within a law that had been devised partly for their benefit, stressing their refusal to allow themselves to be manipulated in accordance with the ideologi-cal agendas of others.[4] Further afield, the Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika took time out of his re-election campaign to condemn Article 4 in the strongest terms as 'mental blindness bordering on Holocaust denial and revisionism'.[5]

Calls for the abrogation of Article 4 provoked bitter exchanges with those who had lobbied hard to get the measure onto the statute books in the first place and who were now determined to keep it there. Campaigning for the retention of Article 4 was conducted primar-ily by the political right and far right, with strong support from the *pied-noir* community. Wheeling out lists of France's contributions to the colonies – railways, sanitation, health care, education – defenders of Article 4 denounced the contemporary climate of 'political correct-ness' that would have the French deny these accomplishments out of a misguided sense of guilt and repentance.[6] Although opponents of Article 4 sought to dismiss such opinions as belonging to an anach-ronistic and irrelevant minority of colonial 'nostalgics', a survey con-ducted in December 2005 revealed that 64 per cent of French people approved of Article 4, suggesting that the narrative of benevolent colonialism continued to exert a certain appeal.[7] Sustained by a series of public petitions and Web-based polemics, the effects of this furore rumbled on throughout 2005, even prompting the cancellation of Interior Minister Nicholas Sarkozy's planned visit to France's overseas departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique.[8] Having privately admit-ted the law to have been 'a big screw up' [*une grosse connerie*], on 9 December President Jacques Chirac publicly announced the creation of a commission to evaluate the action of parliament in the domains of history and memory.[9] Less than a month later, Chirac made the fol-lowing declaration: 'The current text divides the French. It must be rewritten.' By 25 January 2006, he had gone against his own party and abrogated Article 4, using his presidential veto powers to avoid a new parliamentary debate on the matter.[10]

'Memory wars'

Ostensibly centred on the right, or otherwise, of the state to impose an official and legally binding interpretation of the past upon the education system, the issues at stake in these debates were, in fact, much broader. More than just a difference of opinion over how the past should be represented in the present, this was a controversy about national identity. It exposed the ongoing struggles of the Republic in trying to formulate a consensual narrative about one of the most divisive periods in its history that would be capable of satisfying the competing claims of the myriad postcolonial peoples and perspectives now contained within its metropolitan borders. The debates surrounding Article 4 furthermore constituted a particularly high-profile manifestation of the 'memory wars' deemed to be sweeping France. This problematic but increasingly commonplace phrase refers to the fierce competition between different groups for control over the representation of the past in the public sphere as it pertains, in this instance, to both the Algerian War and French colonialism more generally. The French have a long history of formulating strikingly different interpretations of foundational historical events premised on what Jim House and Neil MacMaster call 'competing myths of national identity'.[11] The French Revolution, the Dreyfus Affair, the Vichy years, May 1968 – to name but a few – have all been the subject of passionate and polarising debates that revolve less around what did or did not happen, and more around who possesses the right to speak about and thus define the contemporary meaning and significance of these events.

In recent years, these conflicts seem to have accelerated, an impression owing in no small part to the heightened visibility accorded to them by a technologically sophisticated, globalised and instant media culture.[12] In addition to the methods of debate and dissemination, what has also changed is the composition of and cleavages between the people fighting these 'wars'. The presence of a wealth of postcolonial minorities within France has placed the republican model of integration under severe strain, as evidenced by the controversial comments of the Front national (FN) regarding the racial composition of the 1998 World Cup team, the debates surrounding the wearing of Islamic dress in public, and the violence that periodically wracks the deprived *banlieue* suburbs where France's ethnic minorities are heavily concentrated. Coming hard on the heels of the 23 February law, the spate of urban unrest in November 2005 was so severe that a state of emergency was declared in metropolitan France for the first time since the Algerian War. France's

colonial past looms large in all of this, and it frames current social and political debates in ways that raise uncomfortable questions for a nation which has always promoted itself as a harbinger of progress and a bastion of equality.

Yet, in spite of its historical precedents and contemporary salience, the 'memory wars' phenomenon remains understudied from an academic perspective, particularly its present postcolonial incarnation. Beyond media commentaries, of which there are many, the little scholarly work that has been done has tended to focus on enumerating manifestations and the vectors of transmission that facilitate the appearance of commemorative conflicts.[13] In examining the symptoms, the underlying causes have been neglected, creating the impression that the current 'memory wars' over colonialism appeared suddenly towards the end of the 1990s with their battle lines already drawn, rather than evolving over time as a result of a series of changing contexts and interactions. The label 'memory wars' also risks creating a self-fulfilling prophecy, encouraging the various groups involved to see themselves as engaging in a 'battle' whose outcome is framed in terms of 'winners' and losers'. Rather than accepting them as simply 'a reality of our time', we instead need to critically probe the forms, functions and content of the current debates concerning colonialism, particularly the ways in which these have been packaged for public consumption by the media and the groups involved.[14]

In contrast to existing studies, this book argues that the current situation is the culmination of protracted processes of negotiation and contestation conducted, for a long time, beneath the radar of public attention by those with a personal investment in the empire and its legacies. Historicising the present situation by exposing its full gestation process allows for a better understanding of the nature of the conflicts themselves and of the agents involved, including their complex motivations and expectations, and their entangled relationships with each other. In using the Algerian War of Independence as its case study, this book seeks to reconceptualise the ways in which this conflict has been debated, evaluated and remembered in the five decades since it ended. The intention is to demonstrate that the current competition for control over the past, epitomised by the Article 4 controversy, is not a recent development, but merely the public culmination of long-running processes. To ignore this backstory is to ignore the diverse and dynamic historical contexts in which these debates are embedded and thus to potentially diminish our understanding of the present situation and its implications.

The 'war without a name'

At first glance, the vociferousness of contemporary debates over France's colonial past is a far cry from the obscurity in which this subject languished for many decades. Key to understanding the silence in which French society, but also French scholars, shrouded the colonial era is the Algerian War of Independence that sounded the death knell of the empire. Lasting from 1954 until 1962, the conflict pitted the independence-seeking forces of Front de libération nationale (FLN) against a French government and army determined, in the wake of the Second World War and Dien Bien Phu, to avoid another humiliating military defeat and under pressure from a settler population of just over one million to maintain the French flag in Algeria. Crucially, Algeria was not merely a piece of the empire; since 1848 the colony had been legally incorporated into the nation, making Algiers, Oran and Constantine France's southern-most *départements* (administrative regions). Consequently, while the neighbouring protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco gained independence relatively peacefully in 1956, Algeria was a different matter.

Noted for the brutality of tactics used by both sides, including the systematic use of torture by the French army, the conflict is estimated to have cost the lives of 250,000 to 300,000 Algerians, almost 25,000 French soldiers, and approximately 60,000 native auxiliaries.[15] Violence was, furthermore, not confined to the colonial periphery. The bitter struggle between the FLN and Messali Hadj's rival Mouvement national algérien (MNA) for the loyalty of the Algerian diaspora in France,[16] the terror tactics of dissident soldiers and settlers within the Organisation armée secrète (OAS),[17] and the ferocity of police repression of Algerian demonstrators on 17 October 1961 all brought bloodshed across the Mediterranean to the shores of metropolitan France.[18] The war fatally weakened the Fourth Republic, facilitating the controversial return to power of Charles de Gaulle and the creation of the Fifth Republic in 1958. Although ostensibly ending hostilities, the signature of ceasefire accords at Evian in March 1962 actually led to an escalation of certain forms of violence, while the declaration of Algerian independence on 5 July 1962 came amidst the exodus of almost the entire settler population. Widely deemed to have been a conflict won militarily but lost politically, the end of French Algeria was a major blow to national prestige that de Gaulle sought to assuage through recourse to the idea of an inevitable tide of history and by turning the nation's attention to modernisation, consumerism and Europe.[19]

The decision by de Gaulle to turn the page on this ingloriously con-
ducted and concluded conflict manifested itself in a potent state silence.
This was compounded by a series of amnesties granted to participants
on both sides, combined with a lack of official commemoration either of
the war or those who fought in it. Even the term 'war' was to be avoided
in favour of euphemisms such as 'the events', while historians wishing
to investigate these years were hampered by restricted access to state
archives.[20] Consequently, the events of 1954–62 were not inserted into the
nation's official memory. Instead, they were effectively forgotten in what
appeared to be a troubling case of national amnesia. Historiographically,
this situation was reflected in the dominance of the theme of absence
in works concerning the memory of the war, epitomised by the evoca-
tively titled *La Gangrène et l'oubli* [gangrene and forgetting] written by
the Algeria-born historian Benjamin Stora and published in 1991. John
Talbott's pithy phrase 'the war without a name' came to serve as an equally
useful shorthand for the perception of a conflict that had been buried
under a mound of shame and silence 'like a dark treasure of guilty family
secrets'.[21] State-sponsored occultation furthermore meant that there were
few popular cultural representations of the war in stark contrast, as is
often noted, to treatments of the Vietnam War in America, particularly
cinematically. Yet, this image of absence needs to be reconciled with the
reality of multiple texts, almost 3000 by the end of 1997, dealing with
the war across a range of genres, but especially personal testimony and
historical fiction as the lack of public discourse left those involved in the
conflict no alternative but to look to writing as a 'private substitute'.[22]

The juxtaposition of absence from above with proliferation on an indi-
vidual level from below persisted until the 1990s, when a combination
of social, political and cultural changes led the war to 'return' to public
consciousness in a range of guises. Following Robert Frank's observa-
tion that 'in matters of memory as in strategy, the French are often a
war behind', this development was prompted in large part by the renewed
attention being devoted to another 'dark' historical episode, the Vichy
years, which sensitised the general population to issues of memory and
silence with respect to traumatic pasts.[23] Between the broadcasting of the
widely viewed and hotly debated documentary series' *La Guerre d'Algérie*
(Peter Batty) and *Les Années algériennes* (Stora) at the beginning of the
decade,[24] and parliament's acknowledgement in 1999 that 'the events' in
Algeria had in fact been 'a war', the conflict was rarely out of the public
spotlight. These developments were framed internationally by a series of
conflicts involving Arab nations, including the first Palestinian Intifada
(1987–91), the first Gulf War (August 1990 to February 1991) and Algeria's

decade-long civil war, all of which were closely followed in France, not least by the country's growing Muslim population.[25] Domestically, the continued prominence of immigration and integration on the social and political agenda led to wide-ranging debates concerning the ability of the republican model to adapt to the challenges posed by the changing composition of the French nation.[26] From an academic point of view, the 1990s witnessed a renewed interest in colonialism and postcolonialism, particularly with reference to Algeria. Initially, much of this scholarship appeared in large edited collections whose short but wide-ranging chapters were designed to enhance knowledge at a time when the war was still a relatively unstudied area.[27] By the early 2000s, improved archival access and a new generation of scholars unconnected to the conflict led to a series of landmark monographs that defined or redefined the ways in which events, institutions and communities during the War of Independence were understood. Both Francophone and Anglophone academics, such as Raphaëlle Branche, Sylvie Thénault, Jim House, Neil MacMaster and Todd Shepard, have been at the forefront of what is today a dynamic and rapidly expanding field of research.[28]

'A kaleidoscope of splintered memories'

By 2004, these developments meant that Stora and the FLN militant turned historian Mohammed Harbi felt confident enough to proclaim 'the end of amnesia' with respect to the Algerian War.[29] Going further, Henry Rousso argued that the 'end of amnesia' had, over the course of the 1990s, evolved into a state of hyper-memory characterised by 'a continual and almost obsessive presence in contemporary public space'.[30] This broadly parallels the evolution of Rousso's 'Vichy syndrome', whereby the 'duty to remember' came to undermine the legitimacy of the 'right to forget', leading to a state of 'obsession'.[31] But while the 'dark years' of the Second World War were a broadly national experience, the Algerian War replaced universality with 'a multitude of solitudes'.[32] More than simply dividing France into those who supported the continuation of colonial rule and those who advocated Algerian independence, the conflict produced fractures that messily criss-crossed the boundaries of race, class, gender and politics.

At the extreme ends of the spectrum were those whose convictions had led them to break the law. *Porteurs de valises* (suitcase carriers), such as the Jeanson Network, actively aided the independence struggle by smuggling documents, money and, sometimes, arms across borders, while the terroristic apogee of the OAS saw them resort to the indiscriminate

targeting of civilians in their desperate attempts to keep Algeria French. Ranged between these poles were outspoken anti-colonial intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, whose views differed radically from those of the pro-*Algérie française* lobby. Even within supposedly cohesive bodies, divisions were to be found. In the army, for example, seasoned career soldiers determined to hold Algeria at all costs in order to prevent the fall of what they saw as another communist domino fought a very different war to the thousands of *appelés* (conscripts), most of whom were simply focused on reaching the end of their tour.[33] Equally, the approximately 350,000 Algerians who found themselves in France at the end of the war included those who had supported the FLN, those who had rallied to the MNA, and the *harkis* who had fought for the French against their compatriots.[34]

The result was a 'kaleidoscope of splintered memories', whose edges were sharpened by the fact that they stemmed from passionately held convictions and choices, which, in many cases, had had far-reaching impacts on the lives of these 'committed minorities'.[35] In examining these divisions, Stora coined the phrase 'cloistered remembering' to denote the phenomenon of partial memories carried by specific groups connected to the war, who, he argued, tended to seek out cultural representations and social interactions that affirmed their own experiences and perspectives.[36] While cloistered memories are a potential problem for all societies, they pose particular issues for the French whose assimilationist model of citizenship views group identities, especially those predicated on race, religion or ethnicity, as a threat to the integrity of the Republic. *Communautarisme* is the term most frequently used to describe the detrimental fracturing of the nation-state into competing factions, often cited as the destructive end point of Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism. Pierre Nora is only one of many to warn of the dangers of *communautarisme,* stating: 'Things begin to go awry when history, which belongs to no one and whose purpose is to make the past available to everyone, starts to be written under the pressure of groups with a shared past who want their particular reading of it to dominate.'[37] Within the heightened commemorative climate following the 'return' of the war to public attention, the French state, so its critics say, has been unable to create unifying official discourses and consensual commemorative gestures capable of transcending these entrenched divisions to the detriment of the national historical narrative and to the unity of the nation.[38]

This is the standard framework through which the history of the memory of the Algerian War of Independence is discussed and understood. There have been some attempts to nuance the absence/presence

dichotomy, with Rousso arguing for a four-stage evolution from amnesty to amnesia to anamnesis and finally hyper-memory.[39] Yet, even this periodisation is predicated on a pivotal shift, whereby a lengthy period of forgetting gave way to an era of recollection. Such conceptualisations are problematic in several respects. First, they assume that the silence imposed by the state was all encompassing. Yet, as Luisa Passerini argues, the key point about silence is not simply to note that it exists, but rather to explore 'its limits, its context and its references'.[40] In other words, just because the state was not talking about the Algerian War, we cannot assume that no one else was talking about it. This presumption nonetheless took root within the academic literature because of an equally problematic equation between silence and forgetting, whereby the 'amnesia' attributed to the state was deemed to have affected all constituent parts of the nation. A situation owing, in large part, to the focus on memory within the public domain. Looking only in one place, previous studies reached only one conclusion: that the Algerian War was effectively forgotten until the state came to remember it during the 1990s.

But if we shift the focus away from the public realm and the state as the principal actor, a different picture emerges. If, instead of concentrating on official memories, we investigate the group memories that Nora and others are so critical of, a much richer history emerges; one that challenges not only the absence/presence paradigm, but many of the other assumptions upon which histories of the commemorative aftermath of the Algerian War have previously rested. Two memories that illuminate the shortcomings of current interpretations are those carried by the *pied-noir* and *harki* communities whose postwar experiences and activities do not fit the established chronology. *Pieds-noirs* and *harkis* were connected by the fact that they heralded from the same place, in spite of having lived very different lives there, and by the fact that they felt compelled to leave this land to migrate to France at the conclusion of a war in which they had both been on the losing side. These connections strengthened but also evolved after 1962 as activists within both communities organised in order to compose, codify and articulate memories of the recent past. Examining the fruits of this labour, this book rewrites the conventional periodisation of a 'forgotten' war that made a dramatic return to public attention during the 1990s by revealing a continual presence of memory and commemorative activity within these communities. This in turn attests to the establishment of a particular kind of postcolonial civil society and to the development of new forms of participation.

Adopting a comparative focus makes it possible to trace how the mobilisation and transmission of memories by *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* reflect

and have been informed by the actions and discourses of each other, as well as by the behaviour of a range of additional actors connected to the War of Independence including veterans, Algerian migrants, academics and the media. Inevitably, the French state plays a crucial role and it is not the intention of this study to deny this, but, rather, to question the idea of the state as the sole agent and point of reference. Instead, identity politics are understood here as a creative dialogue between claims coming from below and a particular kind of republican culture that frames these from above. As Alon Confino reminds us, 'The history of memory should place the articulation of a particular perception of the past within the context of society as a shared symbolic universe.'[41] In foregrounding the interactive nature of these communal memories, this approach challenges the notion that cloistered memories are isolated memories, demonstrating that, although they may generally be created for and speak to particular constituencies, such representations are strongly influenced by external discourses and events.

Bringing to light the continuous activism within the *pied-noir* and *harki* communities enables the standard dichotomous absence/return timeline of the war to be replaced by a more nuanced chronological framework, which, in particular, fills the supposedly silent space of the pre-1990 era with a multiplicity of voices. The failure of these voices to reach the public ear does not invalidate them, but rather draws our attention to the power dynamics that determine which voices are heard, which are not, and what causes these categories to change over time. It is important because 'Silence, like memory and forgetting, has a life history, and – when new pressures or circumstances emerge – can be transformed into its opposite very rapidly.'[42] More than simply the fundamental changes brought about during the 1990s, the importance of which this study does not underestimate, silence, memory and forgetting have been subjected to constant processes of reframing as the many contexts which informed and shaped them have developed since 1962.

Framing memory

The concern of this book is therefore to understand the processes, contexts and agents that produce social and collective memories within particular communities connected to the War of Independence, and to trace how these have evolved over time. Focusing on acts of commemoration and their associated discourses, it explores the multiple ways in which narratives about the past are used to construct communal identities and what these reveal about how groups and their members have negotiated their

place within French society.[43] In line with the majority of theoretical scholarship, the memories traced and analysed here are understood as socially framed, present-orientated, relational and driven by specific agents.[44] Rather than an abstract entity floating somewhere in the cultural atmosphere, memory takes shape within the societies it concerns. As such, it has 'no existence beyond our politics, our social relationship and our histories'.[45] Memory is also considered to be social, representing the 'process(es) through which a knowledge or awareness of past events … is developed and sustained within human societies' and through which people 'are given a sense of a past that extends beyond what they themselves personally remember'.[46] Although a composite phenomenon, social memory is still only articulated through the actions of individuals. Just as there can be no individual memory without social experience, so there can be no social memory without individuals participating in forms of communal life; the two are, as Geoffrey Cubitt puts it, 'always crossweaving'.[47] Today, the term, 'social memory' is increasingly favoured over 'collective memory' because of the latter's essentialising and reifying implications.[48] Cubitt is right to point out that collective memory is an 'ideological fiction' when used to imply that certain entities possess 'a stable mnemonic capacity that is collectively exercised' and which casts representations of the past as the 'natural expressions' of that capacity. Nonetheless, given that many of the organisations and individuals featured in this study claim to speak in the name of the collective memory of particular groups, it is necessary to employ the term, especially in probing the extent to which there is an identifiable correspondence between the codified version of the past articulated by representatives of the group and the lived experience of its members.

In addressing the link between memory and identity, Paul Ricoeur noted 'we are what we tell ourselves'.[49] Recounting experiences gives them coherence and comprehensibility, both to us and to outsiders. This echoes Alistair Thomson's argument that 'Memories are "significant pasts" that we compose to make a more comfortable sense of our life over time and in which past and current identities are brought more into line.' Such processes are particularly important when the lives in question have undergone dramatic and often traumatic changes, as happened with the *pieds-noirs* and *harkis*. In such cases, the affirmation of memories by a particular public assumes a heightened significance as communal remembering serves to 'compose a safe and necessary personal coherence' out of the unresolved and painful fragments of the past.[50] By supporting the restoration of identity continuity in this way, memory cultures create unity and a sense of community with shared cultural scripts helping to establish the nature and boundaries of belonging to a group. People are

then tied into the collective by their endorsement of the representations offered, even if these are not based on directly shared experiences.[51]

A concept rather than an object, memory has no agency in its own right. It requires individuals to select, organise and articulate narratives; memory is therefore always mediated. Memory is also performative, brought into existence at particular moments in time by specific actors.[52] Borrowing from anthropology, Jay Winter labels these agents of remembrance 'fictive kin'.[53] Operating as part of civil society in the liminal space between the individual and the national, the tasks of collation and enunciation undertaken by these 'fictive kin' are vital, since it is they who pick from the range of available individual memories those that are best suited to the creation and codification of a cohesive collective memory for the group.[54] Such memories, which are strategically chosen, reflect an awareness of the need to organise the past in order to achieve certain objectives. The way in which individual recollections are connected in order to create a 'collective consciousness' via an ongoing process, involving 'inscription and re-inscription, coding and recoding', is thus as important as the content of the memories themselves.[55] Memory should therefore be conceptualised as a relational nexus of competing, even conflicting, representations, in which hegemonic interpretations are the temporarily prevailing results of constant contestation and negotiation.[56] It is this process of agency-driven, interactive creation that this book seeks to capture, and which concurs with Winter's pronouncement that 'multi-vocality' is the order of the day when attempting to convey the richness and complexity of memorial practices and cultures.[57]

'French memory is full of Algeria'

Winter's concept of fictive kin is particularly interesting because of the way in which he applies it to the 'dense networks of filiations' that emerged following the First World War, often in the form of associations. Dedicated to providing assistance, support and forums through which to campaign for recognition, recompense and respect, Winter views these networks as the 'hidden prehistory of many, more visible, forms of collective remembrance'.[58] In the context of the War of Independence, it could equally be argued that the absence of public commemoration and the attention this attracted worked to conceal a rich 'undergrowth of non-official activity' that preceded the state-sponsored statues and plaques now being unveiled across France. As Stora argues, 'the real memory of this war … has never ceased to function … No people, no society, no individual can exist and define its identity in a state of amnesia; a parallel, individual memory

always finds places of refuge when the powers want to render it captive or to forget it'.[59] Just as *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Winter's collaborative project with Emmanuel Sivan) was partly inspired by a desire to correct Nora's 'premature and misleading obituary' of popular memory by providing evidence of its vibrancy and ongoing relevance, so a similar corrective seems necessary with respect to the War of Independence.[60] By bringing to light the neglected wealth of commemorative activity behind official occultation, it becomes possible to at least begin to respond to Confino's call for greater account to be taken of memories 'produced away from the corridors of political, cultural and entertainment power' and to consider instead 'the construction of popular memories … and their links to the everyday level of experience'.[61] Moreover, it demonstrates, in the words of Robert Frank, that 'French memory is full of Algeria' and always has been.[62]

Such a project is particularly important given that many of the groups affected by the war – *pieds-noirs* and *harkis,* but also Algerian immigrants and veterans – have experienced extreme dislocation, have been denied social legitimacy and, consequently, do not feel part of the national symbolic heritage catalogued by Nora in his seminal multi-volume meditation *Les Lieux de mémoire* (published in English as *Realms of Memory*).[63] Indeed, while recognising the great potential in Nora's concept of a history of the 'second degree' and the attention it draws to the diverse and fluctuating processes through which representations of the past are created, disseminated and digested, this book echoes the concerns of other scholars about the limits of Nora's paradigm.[64] Instead, this study, through its engagement with empire as a central part of national history, its emphasis on private groups and their memories as contributors to a form of active civil society, through its acknowledgement that history and memory are distinct but closely interrelated, and through its grassroots focus offers a different perspective. Rather than *lieux de mémoire,* it situates itself closer to the idea of *nœuds* or 'knots' of memory. Formulated by Michael Rothberg as a conceptual antidote to Nora, this approach focuses on the 'knotted intersections' that Rothberg feels more accurately characterise the multi-directional nature of memory by deliberately cutting across national, ethnic and temporal boundaries to reveal a complex intersection of continually shifting elements and agents.[65]

Sources, conduits and reception

In addition to agents of remembrance, memories need conduits to ensure their dissemination.[66] In tracing these conduits, this study adopts Wulf

Kansteiner's belief that memories employed in the public realm are 'multimedia collages' and has therefore explored multiple source bases. Throughout, the intention has been to foreground outputs created by *pied-noir* and *harki* memory activists. The *pied-noir* community in particular has produced a vast amount of material pertaining to the history of French Algeria and to the war. Their activities include publishing testimonies, organising reunions and exhibitions, erecting monuments, launching law suits, diffusing their own press and propaganda, producing their own television documentaries and even building their own town; all of which testifies to 'a memorial dynamism independent of the state'.[67] However, with the exception of *pied-noir* literature and some limited work on film, very little has been done with this embarrassment of riches, particularly compared to works dealing more generally with cultural representations of the War of Independence.[68] In the same way as academics for many years have tended to regard the *pieds-noirs* as relics of a bygone era, so they have often dismissed their cultural production as nothing more than expressions of unassuaged colonial nostalgia. Yet, this material provides invaluable insights into how memory activists conceived of themselves, how they sought to construct and sustain a collective identity, what they were hoping to achieve, and how this has altered over time; painting a picture that, while heavily imbued with nostalgic hues, is more interesting than has previously been acknowledged. Similarly, with regard to the *harki* community, while there is a growing body of collected testimony and autobiographically informed fiction in the public domain, analysis of this corpus from a historical perspective remains limited.[69] Devoting more attention to these bodies of cultural work can, furthermore, act as a corrective to trends within social movement theory that privilege abstract conceptualisations over empirical studies of what those involved in these movements actually do and say, and why.[70]

Associations have been among the most visible vehicles for *pied-noir* and *harki* memories. This is in keeping with traditions of popular organisation and expression in a nation whose revolutionary lineage helped establish dissent as 'a national way of life', signalling not a breakdown of the system, but, in fact, healthy social and political participation. According to social movement theorists, the collective actions undertaken by associations enable 'ordinary people' to speak for themselves and to dictate the terms of their participation, rather than allowing others to speak for them. The importance of these bodies therefore lies in their ability to 'tell us a different story' to that of establishment institutions and actors;[71] therefore they can be especially useful for minority groups who are seeking to establish legitimacy with respect to public powers and society.[72]

Associations have been particularly important to the *pied-noir* community. As with all clichés, there is some truth in the saying 'when two *pieds-noirs* meet and start reminiscing, they create three associations'.[73] In the absence of commemorative discourses generated from above, these bodies, some of which have been continuously active since the latter stages of the War of Independence, have played a key role in the creation, codification and transmission of grassroots collective and social memories. It is, however, notoriously difficult to calculate the precise number of *pied-noir* associations in existence at any one time and few have attempted it. Dating from the 1990s, the most widely cited statistics put the number of associations at between 400 and 800, with 15 per cent of the total *pied-noir* population deemed to belong to one or more organisation.[74] Unfortunately, the source of the data on which these estimates rest is not clear; nor is any sense given of how these figures compared to previous years. More recently, Jean-Jacques Jordi has stated that approximately 5 per cent of *pieds-noirs* belong to an association, although, again, no indication is given of the origin of this figure.[75] Aside from such holistic assessments, all that exists are discrete and isolated snapshots of the size and strength of individual associations in particular regions at certain moments. In 1992, for example, Jordi claimed that the Cercle algérianiste had thirty-three local branches and 5000 members overall. Two years previously, Joëlle Hureau reported that the same association possessed 3500 adherents, in comparison to membership figures of 200,000 and 50,000 for the Association nationale des Français d'Afrique du Nord, d'outre-mer et de leurs amis (ANFANOMA) and the Rassemblement et coordination des rapatriés et spoliés d'outre-mer (RECOURS) respectively.[76] Such assessments sit alongside a limited number of small-scale case studies, usually based on a single association, such as Andrea Smith's excellent anthropological investigation of the Amicale France-Malte in the Bouches-du-Rhône.[77] Empirical data is even scarcer when it comes to *harki* associations. Although generally less established than the *pied-noir* lobby, such bodies, particularly those with a national reach such as the Association justice, information et réparation pour les harkis and Harkis et droits de l'Homme, have played a significant, though not unproblematic, role in shaping the public image and commemorative agenda of the wider *harki* community, particularly in recent years.[78]

As legal entities, associations possess an official status and visibility which makes them easy to find by the likes of journalists, filmmakers, government officials and academics.[79] This can lead to associations being accepted as representative even when such assessments are not supported by their membership statistics.[80] According undue weight to the

pronouncements of such bodies is therefore something to guard against. There clearly has to be some degree of common ground and sense of connection among members for an association to form and remain active, sometimes over decades as in the case of numerous *pied-noir* groups. Nonetheless, it is equally clear that neither all *pieds-noirs* nor all *harkis* subscribe to the positions of the associations that claim to speak in their name, not least because these entities have different agendas, memberships and target audiences. A further distinction must be made between the activists who create and direct associations and the members who belong to and participate in the activities of these bodies with fluctuating degrees of commitment, consistency and motivation. Yet, irrespective of these caveats, it cannot be denied that *pied-noir* associations have been one of the primary vehicles through which a public collective identity has been constructed and disseminated over the past fifty years, and this identity, rightly or wrongly, has been taken as representative by the general public and government officials. It has furthermore been the success of lobbying by *pied-noir* associations in obtaining recognition and concessions – initially financial but more recently commemorative – from the state that has prompted other communities connected to the Algerian War, including the *harkis,* to adopt similar forms of mobilisation. In terms of their impact upon the commemorative landscape with respect to the war, associations, as conduits of memory, therefore merit a prominent place in this study.

Also distinctive in this study is the extensive use made of television programmes featuring, and sometimes produced by, *pieds-noirs* and *harkis.* As an important vector of memory, particularly following the end of the state monopoly in 1982, television offers a different medium through which to trace the construction and diffusion of representations of the past. While conceding that the correspondence can be uncertain, Isabelle Veyrat-Masson argues nonetheless that the small screen provides a way of 'envisaging the nation, the past, identity and history'.[81] This point is echoed by Tamara Chaplin, who states that in seeking to understand fully how ideas and images become 'invested' in national histories, 'we ignore the medium of television at our peril'.[82]

Since the 1960s, the number of programmes dedicated to the Algerian War has risen steadily.[83] Whereas only fifty-two programmes relating to the conflict were broadcast between 1962 and 1974, the following decade saw this number rise to ninety-seven, while in the five years from 1987 to 1992 a further ninety-seven programmes aired. During this time, there was a shift from a unifying discourse strongly influenced by the state's control over the media, to more independent programmes determined

to investigate the war in all its complexity following the break-up of the Office de radiodiffusion télévision française in 1974. As well as diversity in terms of subjects approached, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a growing plurality in terms of the voices and viewpoints represented. It was in this spirit that *Les Années algériennes,* Stora's 1991 documentary, brought together multiple, non-consensual perspectives to create a 'mosaic' of representations, rather than a single linear or authoritative narrative.[84] There was also a move away from 'official' spokespeople, such as former politicians and senior military figures, towards the inclusion of 'ordinary' French and Algerian people, who had lived through the years 1954 to 1962. Memory activists who were keen to engage with television as a powerful and wide-reaching medium welcomed such developments. In particular, panel discussions and live broadcasts allowed community representatives the opportunity to voice their own opinions and to actively contest what they regarded as inaccurate representations of themselves and their history. In this way, television provides a unique and under-explored lens through which to study interactions between different memory carriers over time.

Although a greater range of actors and voices was being given air time in the 1990s, there nonetheless remained a certain hierarchy. Association spokespeople or famous *pied-noirs,* such as the singer Enrico Macias or the actor Robert Castel were generally preferred over anonymous individuals. The same small cast, including well-connected spokespeople like Jacques Roseau of RECOURS, tended to appear again and again. Looking at who was able to gain access to studios and who featured in what capacity in various kinds of programmes represents one way to gauge shifting power dynamics within and between the different communities and associations over time. Thus, although *pieds-noirs* were regular contributing voices to television programmes up to the late 1990s, since that point their representation has declined. In contrast, the presence of *harki* spokespeople has risen in line with the public profile of the community.

Occupying an equally central place in this book is testimony. In keeping with other studies of memory, personal narratives and reflections have been used extensively as evidence of the experiences, thoughts and feelings of a range of different actors connected to the War of Independence or affected by its legacies. However, no oral history interviews were conducted for this project. This was partly a product of logistical factors and partly owing to issues of access, particularly with respect to the *harki* community, both of which posed considerable challenges in terms of generating sufficient data for a meaningful analysis. But the decision not to gather oral histories also stemmed from the core aim of

the book, which is to explore changes in collective commemorative activities and discourses since 1962. This requires studying a broad array of narratives across a range of genres produced and transmitted by and on behalf of the *pied-noir* and *harki* communities at different moments over the last five decades and thinking about the impact of contemporaneous *cadres sociaux* [social frameworks] on these. Oral history interviews would have provided an insight into how certain *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* thought about themselves and their histories in the first decade of the twenty-first century. But they would not have offered the same potential to track evolutions in these narratives over time and to anchor particular representations in the historically specific contexts that produced them. Nor would they have provided the same scope for thinking about the ways in which different types of discourses have been packaged and disseminated by activists in the service of their respective political, cultural and commemorative agendas.

Taken together the nature of the sources used means that this is less a study of individual memories and more an exploration of the ways in which these, alongside other forms of evidence about the past, have been moulded by a series of memory activists and associations to create and legitimate public and collective discourses about the *pied-noir* and *harki* communities, and about the War of Independence more broadly. Consequently, although it does try to acknowledge the ways in which personal recollections may differ from the picture offered through associations and other collective conduits, this book cannot do justice to the range of different perspectives and experiences that exist within the diverse *pied-noir* and *harki* populations. Instead, it concentrates on those aspects of the past that have secured a place within the publicly proffered narratives about these two communities and on understanding why these particular elements were selected at specific moments over and above other available representations. It is therefore a study of memory in the public domain as opposed to private, familial memories, even as it recognises that these are by no means mutually exclusive arenas.

The *pied-noir* community

In order to contextualise the genealogies of memory and memory activism under discussion, it is necessary to establish the history of the communities within which these representations of the past have been created, circulated and consumed. *Pied-noir* has become the dominant term used to denote the settler community of French Algeria who made up approximately 10 per cent of the territory's population by 1954. Coming from a

wide range of European countries and for an equally diverse array of reasons, these men and women arrived in Algeria from the 1830s onwards, as France's newest possession was 'pacified' and settled. In 1889 and 1893, naturalisation laws unilaterally conferred French citizenship upon the settlers, placing them firmly at the top of the colonial hierarchy. Although bestowed rather than requested, Frenchness quickly became a key part of the identity embraced by the settler community.[85] At the same time, the colonial context complicated the nature of the relationship between the settlers and their 'motherland', creating what Ali Yedes terms an 'inferiority complex' that manifested itself in a desire to be close to and yet simultaneously distinct from the metropolitan French.[86] Distinction was achieved through the creation of an *Algérianiste* identity in the early twentieth century, which was voiced through the works of men like Jean Pomier and Robert Randau.[87] In harking back to the Roman presence in North Africa and seeking to construe Algeria as a vibrant Mediterranean melting pot of cultures and peoples, their intention was to create a historical narrative that would root the settlers in Algerian soil and legitimate their presence at a time when indigenous nationalist currents were gaining strength.[88]

Intimately entwined with France's colonial project in Algeria, the settlers considered themselves and their land to be integral parts of the French nation. *Algérie française* was not simply a phrase to them, but an indisputable reality. It was also a reality they wished to see perpetuated; hence their opposition to the FLN. When, in July 1962, after almost eight years of bitter and bloody conflict, Algeria ceased to be part of France the settlers were faced with a dilemma: should they stay or go? Ultimately, the rapidly escalating violence that followed the signing of the Evian Accords, including the scorched earth policy of the OAS, led the settlers to conclude that their lives would be untenable in an independent Algeria. As a result, over 90 per cent chose to depart, with the vast majority heading for France. The bulk of this movement took place within a highly compressed time frame: 1,064,000 people arrived in France from Algeria in 1962, with the months of May through to August comprising the peak transit period. Of these, 421,000 returned to Algeria, at least temporarily, leaving more than 650,000 in France at the end of the year. This was in addition to over 100,000 who had departed prior to 1962 and the further 200,000 who would leave between 1963 and 1967.[89] This migratory wave also encompassed 120,000 Jews, who, having been naturalised via the 1870 Crémieux Decree, opted at the end of the war to place their French citizenship above their historical, cultural and emotional ties to Algeria. Distinct from both *pieds-noirs* and *harkis,* the experiences of the Algerian Jewish community

once in France and their resultant collective mobilisation are unfortu-
nately beyond the scope of this study.[90]

The settlers believed that France had been victorious militarily and
therefore they regarded the Evian Accords as an act of incomprehensible
capitulation that unnecessarily sacrificed French Algeria; thus the pre-
dominant sentiments among them in 1962 were betrayal, abandonment
and anger. The hasty and improvised nature of departures, which took
place amidst ongoing FLN and OAS violence, as well as the sheer volume
of people leaving, rendered this a deeply traumatic experience, and one
that transformed 'exile' into the defining characteristic of the displaced
settlers. In this way, the death of French Algeria coincided with the birth
of the *pieds-noirs* as a population. The origins of the term *pied-noir* are
much debated. Evidence suggests that although the term existed prior to
the War of Independence, it only entered regular usage during the latter
stages of the conflict. Today *pied-noir* is primarily associated with the
postcolonial incarnation of the settler community. Although initially
perceived as pejorative, it has been progressively reclaimed by the set-
tlers and used as a positive marker of their cultural and historical speci-
ficity, even if the phrase has never fully shed its negative connotations
among the wider French population. Officially, however, the *pieds-noirs*
were designated as 'returning citizens' or *rapatriés*. Given that most were
'returning' to a land they had never previously lived in and, often, to a
land from which their ancestors had not originated, this label was prob-
lematic. But it did at least capture the uncomfortable sense of being both
French and yet somehow different that was common to many *pieds-noirs*
at the time. Similarly dualistic monikers such as the 'French of Algeria'
and the 'overseas French' were also employed, albeit less frequently.
The most apt term for the settlers, according to Yann Scioldo-Zürcher,
is 'national migrants', since this recognises the violence of the rupture
from Algeria experienced in 1962, but equally the protection offered by
the state to its own citizens; a combination of circumstances that will be
explored further in the first chapter.[91]

The racially hierarchical nature of colonial society meant that, in com-
parison to Algerians, the settlers led highly privileged lives prior to 1954.
Yet, while there were certainly some fitting the stereotype of the rich and
exploitative *colon* (large-scale farmer/landowner) who 'made the natives
sweat', the European population as a whole was socio-economically
and culturally diverse, not least because of their transnational origins.
Overall, the standard of living in Algeria was lower than that in main-
land France, while incomes varied between urban centres such as Algiers
and the countryside or *bled*. Location further affected the nature of

relationships between the settlers and the other inhabitants of Algeria, with interactions generally considered to be more frequent in rural areas, where proximity between the different ethno-religious communities was greater and the number of settlers much lower. In the postcolonial period, much of this diversity was bleached out by *pied-noir* spokespeople, who, for strategic reasons, emphasised the notion of a cohesive and homogenous *rapatrié* identity that revolved around the foundational moment of 'exodus' from Algeria. Finding unity in adversity, this shared experience bound the disparate settlers together, forging a new and distinct sense of community. By destroying the sense of security that had accompanied the dominant position of the settlers during the colonial era. Algerian independence jettisoned the *pieds-noirs* not only into an alien country, but also into an alien social and economic position. The trauma of this rupture produced a preoccupation with an idealised Algeria, the lineaments of which became more vivid and more perfect in direct proportion to the turmoil and distress of the present.[92]

The *pieds-noirs* therefore arrived in France in 1962 with few worldly possessions, but a long list of grievances. These were compounded by the lack of facilities initially available to assist with their installation, with the French having anticipated an exodus of 400,000 over four years, not one million in the space of a few of months. This difficult situation was further exacerbated by a lack of familial or kinship networks to help in easing their transition into their new world, and by the fact that the *pieds-noirs* felt themselves and their history to have been misunderstood by their metropolitan cousins. The settlers' imagined national community made it clear that they not only blamed them for the war and its associated violence, but also that they resented their presence with all the cost and disruption it entailed. Finding no wider community open to including them (indeed many considered the metropolitan French to be actively closing ranks against them), the *pieds-noirs* turned inwards. This propensity was further nurtured by their powerful sentiment of victimhood and by the range of perceived injustices they wished to see rectified. One of the principal ways in which *pieds-noirs* sought redress for their grievances was through associations which served as effective channels for a broader mobilisation rapidly instigated by a series of community leaders, As will be documented in the following chapters, this mobilisation focused initially on the material needs of the *rapatriés,* although by the mid-1970s efforts were being reorientated to the cultural realm, which remains the dominant sphere of activism today.

Pieds-noirs have always been prolific chroniclers of their own community. It took less than a year for memoirs of the war and its conclusion to

appear in print, forming the first waves of what would become a veritable tide of personal accounts that are still appearing.[93] Those unable to secure publishing contracts have found platforms and audiences for their recollections within the pages of association newspapers, magazines and periodicals, alongside their photographs, poems, cartoons and recipes. There have also been regular attempts by leading activists, such as the Cercle algérianiste's Maurice Calmein, to produce broader histories and collections of testimony aimed specifically at transmitting knowledge to future generations.[94] Academic interest was, however, slower to materialise. The most noted *pied-noir* historian is Jean-Jacques Jordi, whose extensive knowledge of national and departmental archives has produced a body of work that offers a factually detailed and sympathetic portrait of the community, particularly with respect to their arrival and early years in France.[95]

Since 2000, Jordi's work has been supplemented by more critically engaged scholarship that has focused on the relationship between the state and the *pieds-noirs.* Offering a welcome empirical rebuttal to the stereotype that all *pieds-noirs* vote for the far right, Emmanuelle Comtat has revealed a more nuanced picture of electoral politics and how these have evolved since 1962.[96] Similarly grounded in concrete data is Yann Scioldo-Zürcher's magisterial study of the 'politics of integration' put in place by the state in the 1960s, which underscores the extensive and innovative nature of the support that was made available to 'returning' citizens from Algeria. Scioldo-Zürcher is at his strongest when chronicling the provision of material aid, including financial compensation, in the twenty-five years following 1962, with findings based on a deeply impressive breadth of research. However, the focus on archival documents limits the presence of perspectives from within the *pied-noir* community itself.[97] Valérie Esclangon-Morin pays greater attention to the role of *pied-noir* associations in *Les Rapatriés d'Afrique du Nord* which explores the extent to which activists were able to influence policy and how that policy was then received by the *rapatriés.* Although primarily focused on vertical interactions between the state and the *pieds-noirs,* the book nonetheless gives a welcome flavour of the horizontal relationships between various associations, which this study aims to expand upon.[98] Esclangon-Morin is not the only academic to have focused on associations, although much of this work, particularly that by Clarisse Buono, has revolved around establishing chronologies and typologies of different organisations.[99] In contrast, this study seeks to capture the fluidity that characterises associational allegiances. It is therefore less concerned with mapping structures than the relationships between associations and the influence of these upon the creation and circulation of particular narratives.

Analysis of memory within the *pied-noir* community has been led by the political scientist Eric Savarèse and by the anthropologists Michèle Baussant and Andrea Smith, all of whom have collected extensive and invaluable testimony as part of their research. Savarèse was the first to engage, in 2002, with the ways in which *pieds-noirs* have strategically reinterpreted the past so as to construct a particular image of themselves. His work also emphasises the fundamental role of associations as vehicles for such endeavours.[100] Through their studies of the annual *pied-noir* Ascension Day pilgrimage to Nîmes and the activities of an association of *pieds-noirs* with Maltese heritage, Baussant and Smith respectively provide real-world examples of how the processes theorised by Savarèse operate in specific environments.[101] What remains to be done is to historicise memory creation and mobilisation by linking its evolution more closely to changing political and social contexts in the years since 1962 and by embedding it with reference to a broader source base.

The *harki* community

Harki derives from the Arabic word *harka,* meaning movement. Ethnologist Jean Servier created the first *harka* in the mountainous Aurès region, but it was the minister resident, Robert Lacoste, who, in February 1956, regularised and institutionalised their use as mobile units to undertake offensive military operations. By September 1957, there were approximately 10,000 *harkis*. This figure then rose to 61,600 in January 1961, before dropping back down to 5000 by April 1962.[102] As the conflict progressed, *harki* increasingly became a generic term signifying a range of native auxiliaries employed in both military and civilian capacities. These roles included the *moghaznis* assigned to protect the soldiers of the Sections administratives spécialisées (SAS), who were charged with winning the hearts and minds of the Algerian people;[103] the men who comprised the Groupes d'auto défense (GAD), who were tasked with guarding isolated villages; the Groupes mobiles de sécurité of the rural police force; and finally the *assas* or guardians. It is in this broad sense that the term *harki* will be used in this study. The number of *harkis* so defined fluctuated throughout the war, peaking at 210,000 in 1958, but falling considerably in the final months of the conflict as France demobilised its auxiliaries.[104] *Harkis* were enrolled on short-term contracts – either military or civilian depending on the kind of activities they were being recruited for – that allowed the men to be let go when no longer required. The terms of employment for soldiers of Algerian origin engaged in the regular army were different in terms of duration, pay scale, promotional

structure and benefits, such as pensions. In particular, being a soldier rather than an auxiliary guaranteed a transfer out of Algeria as part of the withdrawal of regular French units at the end of the war. Principally of rural origin, illiterate and unskilled, the status of *harkis* was also very different to the indigenous Muslim elite of colonial Algeria, who consisted of locally and nationally elected representatives, notables such as *caïds*, *bachagas* and *aghas*, members of the liberal professions, as well as career soldiers and officers. The support offered to the French cause by such men was often motivated by conviction rather than compulsion or necessity, indicated by the fact that many of them had obtained citizenship prior to 1958 when it was granted to all Algerians.

When the ceasefire was proclaimed, *harkis* were generally given three options: engage in the regular French army, which would mean going wherever the army went, resign with a small financial payment, or sign up as a civilian contractual agent for six months.[105] There was demonstrable disquiet among *harkis* at this time, most famously captured in a *Cinq colonnes à la une* interview with an auxiliary who feared that he would face reprisals for having 'worked under the French flag'.[106] Yet, with their lives and families in Algeria, *harkis* were understandably reluctant to leave. Reassurance that such a drastic act would not be necessary came from FLN tracts promising to 'forget' and 'pardon' the past, alongside guarantees from the substantial number of French troops still present that they would protect anyone who felt threatened. Furthermore, although the Evian Accords did not make a specific reference to the *harkis*, they did contain clauses stating that no one would be punished for actions undertaken during the war.[107] Consequently, 21,000 *harkis,* or 81.2 per cent of those still in active service, felt sufficiently reassured to accept their final pay and hand over their uniforms.[108]

Never having wanted to get caught up in the war in the first place, these men were keen to return to the lives they had been forced to suspend. 'I preferred to stay in the hope of finally living in peace in my country with my family', explained one *harki*, 'so I handed in my weapon and my kit.'[109] Such hopes were, however, quickly shattered as waves of terrible violence broke across the country. This bloodshed is often attributed to the so-called *marsiens,* last-minute FLN recruits who joined after the ceasefire on 19 March 1962, and who therefore felt it necessary to prove overtly their commitment to a cause to which they had rallied late in the day. Although compelling in their logic, such theories are, as François-Xavier Hautreux argues, hard to prove, not least because of the problems in identifying *marsiens*.[110] Equally difficult to determine is the exact role of the FLN leadership in the violence. Public documents claiming to forgive

and forget were often accompanied by verbal threats and instructions to isolate the *harkis* and their families from the wider populace, while the punishment of 'traitors' was a long-standing FLN practice. However, much violence seems to have been spontaneous and the chaos within the FLN leadership at the time, owing to its own bitter and bloody internecine struggles for power, must also be borne in mind.[111]

There is no agreement on how many *harkis* and family members were killed. Violence began in April 1962, but the intensity of the massacres varied from region to region and also chronologically, with July and August constituting the most acute months. The earliest casualty estimates came from *Le Monde* journalist Jean Lacouture who advanced a figure of 10,000 on 13 November 1962. Thirty years later, he revised his calculation upwards to 100,000. This is also the statistic quoted by the majority of *harki* and *pied-noir* associations, although some claims go as high as 150,000 – an inflation that demonstrates the symbolic weight and thus strategic claims being advanced on the back of such statistics. Academics tend to congregate around the lower figure of 60,000 to 75,000, although Charles-Robert Ageron always refused to be more specific than 'several thousand'.[112] The scale and ferocity of this violence pushed many, but by no means all, *harkis* and their families to attempt to migrate to France. This was contrary to what the French government had envisaged and, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, there was considerable anxiety about both the number and the nature of the people seeking to cross the Mediterranean.

Taking charge of the processes of protection and transfer in May 1962, the army placed *harkis* under armed guard in a series of holding camps in Algeria to keep them safe while transport to France was arranged. However, the numbers seeking refuge quickly overwhelmed these facilities. The same was true of transport vessels that, in any case, were being used for settlers and regular French troops as a matter of priority. A concern to 'maintain order' and to filter out undesirable elements or 'false refugees' produced a series of administrative controls that have often been interpreted as an active attempt to prevent the *harkis* leaving Algeria, fuelling claims that the French 'abandoned' their auxiliaries in 1962. Particularly damning are telegrams sent by Louis Joxe, the minister for Algerian affairs. The first, on 16 May, reminded officers that it was forbidden to bring auxiliaries to France outside of official channels in response to a number of SAS units who were using their own networks to secure passage to France for 'their' *harkis*. This was followed on 15 July by a confidential directive stating that any such auxiliaries would be 'sent back to Algeria'.[113] Yet, while highlighting the deep inadequacies of the

French response and the consequences of restrictive transportation criteria, both Hautreux and Chantal Morelle have argued that it is nonetheless important to acknowledge that measures were, in fact, put in place by the government and army in relation to the threats faced by *harkis* in 1962. The French authorities thus cannot be accused of having done nothing, even if they could have done a lot more.[114]

As with the numbers killed, statistics vary with regard to how many *harkis* came to France. William Cohen claimed that government organised repatriation programmes brought 25,000 *harkis* and their dependants to the French mainland between 1962 and 1967, while a further 68,000 entered the country by unofficial means, frequently with the assistance of their former officers.[115] This is broadly in line with figures provided by Hautreux, who lists 12,000 transferred to France by July 1962, rising to 20,000 by December, with a further 6600 arriving in 1963.[116] Such estimates are complicated by the fact that there was more than one wave of arrivals. Although 1962 saw the largest disembarkations, there was a steady stream after this with spikes in 1965 and 1968 when many *harkis* who had been taken prisoner by the FLN were released. In the light of this, the most commonly cited figure is drawn from the 1968 census, which listed 138,458 'French Muslims', the contemporary administrative label for *harki*s and former Muslim notables, of which 88,000 had been born in Algeria.[117]

Since the French government had not anticipated an arrival en masse of *harki*s, neither strategies nor structures were in place to provide for their accommodation. At least half of those who made it to France, and certainly the vast majority of those who came through official channels, were initially placed in a series of hastily constructed or modified camps, several of which had recently housed suspected FLN and OAS militants.[118] Isolated rural sites such as Larzac, Bias and Rivesaltes were conceived of as temporary expedients that would gradually become obsolete as the *harki*s assimilated into French society. Indeed, some of the estimated 42,500 people who passed through the camps between 1962 and 1969 remained there only briefly before being dispersed into the wider populace.[119] Others, however, were not so lucky and were simply transferred to other forms of government-allocated accommodation or became long-term camp residents after being deemed incapable of integrating into French society.

The camps have become emblematic of the experience of *harkis* and their families in France, and have come to stand as a symbol of the wider process of marginalisation and forgetting to which the auxiliaries were subjected.[120] These processes were compounded by the fact that, in spite

of the intensity and magnitude of their experiences, a *harki* memory of the war and its immediate aftermath was, for many years, notable by its absence. The reasons *harkis* were so reluctant to speak of their past were multiple and worked in varying combinations. Powerful external narratives, linguistic and cultural barriers, physical isolation, economic and social disempowerment, mixed with a potent sense of fear and exacerbated by the difficulty of articulating a past many were themselves still struggling to come to terms with all played their part in depriving the *harkis* of a voice in the years following their arrival in France. This situation persisted until the 1970s when a generation of *harki* children matured and mobilised to demand, amongst other things, the rehabilitation of the history and identity of their community.[121]

It took several decades for scholars to turn their attention to the *harkis.* Like memory activism within the community itself, this was also a development that owed much to the impetus of *harki* descendants such as Mohand Hamoumou, whose 1989 EHESS thesis was published in 1993 as *Et ils sont devenus harkis*.[122] Hamoumou is also representative of the dominance of sociological studies of the *harkis,* particularly during the 1990s, that tended to focus on the difficulties the 'second generation' have had integrating into France.[123] Continuing this trend, anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano maintains that even today the 'unhealed wounds' of the parental past over-determine the lives of current generations, trapping them within a politicised collective narrative of suffering.[124] In contrast, works by the ethnographer Giulia Fabbiano and the social scientist Rosella Spina present a more complex and nuanced picture. Both women point, in particular, to evolutions in the nature of relationships between children of *harkis* and Algerian immigrants, leading to what Fabbiano has termed a 'post-Algerian' generation for whom the war and the experiences of their ancestors are but one part of their identity and culture.[125]

In the light of the silence that for a long time prevailed within the community, considerable efforts have been made in recent years to collect and publish testimony from *harkis,* primarily by their descendants.[126] As will be explored in Chapter 6, this has led to an inverted process of memory transmission whereby the activism of younger generations, including making public their own experiences, in combination with broader changes in the way the Algerian War was discussed and understood, gave parents both the desire and the confidence to speak out in order to preserve a record of their past. Yet, although memory and its expression within the *harki* community is now a popular topic of academic research, to date there has been little attempt to historicise this growing body of testimony. One of the aims of this book is therefore to

begin to redress the balance by focusing on the processes through which representations of the history and memory of the *harki* community have been constructed and reconstructed over the years.

Archival-based histories of the *harkis* is another area in need of additional scholarly attention since there remains much that we do not know about the actions of auxiliaries during the war and about their lives in France in the years immediately following 1962. While few can rival the archival knowledge, built up over decades, of General Maurice Faivre, his many publications present a particular ideological reading of the *harkis* informed by his own service during the war.[127] This underlines the importance of the work of scholars with a greater critical distance, including Hautreux, Tom Charbit, Jeannette E. Miller and Sung Choi, whose studies offer the kind of empirical knowledge necessary to complement and properly contextualise the array of first-hand accounts to which we now have access.[128]

International comparisons

In seeking to situate historically the *pieds-noirs* and *harkis*, it is important to connect their respective experiences to the broader international currents of which they were a part. French Algeria may have been one of the largest, but it was by no means the only settler colony. Across Africa and Asia, places such as Kenya, Rhodesia, Angola, Mozambique, Suriname and the Dutch East Indies all contained sizeable European minorities. As the empires of the European powers progressively came to an end from the Second World War onwards the men and women who had made their lives in these imperial outposts were faced with the same decision as the *pieds-noirs*: should they stay or go? Responses varied. Some opted to remain and were able to maintain their existence under new ruling regimes, as evidenced by the continued presence of European farms in Kenya's White Highlands. In other cases, especially within the British Empire, settlers moved but not very far, crossing borders into African territories such as Rhodesia where white rule still prevailed in an, ultimately futile, attempt to preserve a particular way of life. However, for the majority of settlers the advent of independence proved an insurmountable obstacle to their continued presence abroad. This was especially the case when independence had been achieved through violent struggle such as in Angola, Mozambique and the Dutch East Indies. The one million *pieds-noirs* who left Algeria in 1962 therefore need to be seen as part of a broader migratory wave that saw five to seven million Europeans 'repatriated' in the thirty-five years following the Second World War.[129] The French of Algeria thus joined 800,000

Portuguese *retornados* (returnees), 300,000 Dutch citizens, 100,000 British from Africa and 120,000 from India in 'coming home' to lands that were often unfamiliar and to which they possessed varying degrees of ancestral connection and kinship networks.

To this number might also be added the 12–14 million ethnic Germans expelled from Eastern Europe and the 3.2 million Japanese civilians abroad in 1945 when these two powers were defeated in the Second World War.[130] Known respectively as *Vertriebene* (expellees) and *hikiagesha* (literally 'a person who has been lifted and landed') the contexts in which these men and women were forced to migrate were somewhat different, not least because the empires of which they were citizens ended as a result of defeat within a much larger global conflict.[131] Nonetheless, connections can be made with *pieds-noirs* and other post-colonial European populations, particularly at the experiential level where all had to contend with the sense of being 'internal strangers' and had to navigate metropolitan populations who were at best suspicious and at worst actively hostile to their presence.[132] These communities are furthermore linked by the fact that they all came to serve as central sites of negotiation as their respective metropoles were forced to grapple with the questions surrounding the meaning and legacy of colonialism, notions of belonging and exclusion, and the role of state and non-state actors in managing diversity.

Case studies comparable to the experience of the *harkis* are harder to find. All the European imperial powers had recourse to indigenous auxiliaries, who were used regularly to help maintain order in the empire. The fates of these men and their families upon decolonisation varied, but many were subjected to retributive violence like that endured by the *harkis.* However, very few wanted or were able to leave and, even when this was an option, no other group of a comparable size ended up in the metropoles of their former colonial rulers. The closest parallel would probably be the Moluccans, an ethnic group from Ambon and the sur-rounding islands of the Dutch East Indies, who made up a significant proportion of the recruits of the Royal Dutch Indian Army and thus became obvious targets for nationalists when the Republic of Indonesia was created in 1949. Unsure of what to do with this last remnant of their colonial army, the Dutch government eventually brought these men and their families, approximately 12,500 people in total, to the Netherlands. Initially seen as temporary residents who would ultimately return to the Moluccan islands, they were placed in rural camps where their daily lives were managed by a special agency, the Commissariaat Ambonezenzorg. Echoing the two-tier approach adopted in France, while repatriates from

the Dutch colonies were provided with a range of benefits designed to ensure their swift integration, the Moluccans endured many years of state-managed marginalisation resulting in a series of socio-economic problems similar to those faced by the *harkis* and their children. This bred significant frustrations which manifested themselves in a series of terrorist campaigns in the 1970s. In response, the government, having acknowledged that Moluccans were in the Netherlands permanently, undertook measures to enhance their participation in Dutch society. Educational and employment policies were combined with symbolic recognition of the community's history and identity. Since they were introduced in late 1970s, these initiatives have had considerable success. As with the *harkis,* although they have not resolved all the problems, government actions have significantly improved the situation of younger members of the community and resulted in a greater degree of integration for the Moluccans as a whole.[133]

Therefore, although distinctive in many ways, the fates of the *pieds-noirs* and *harkis* were not unique. Rather, they were shared to differing degrees by a range of populations caught up in some of the most significant historical episodes of the twentieth century. Yet, in spite of the appearance of several high-quality edited collections in recent years,[134] there remains much work to be done in order to bring the fates of what Andrea Smith terms 'Europe's invisible migrants' – and indeed case studies that fall outside Europe's borders – into a productive scholarly dialogue that balances acknowledgement of national particularities with an awareness of the international connections between these groups.

Structure of this book

Returning to this specific study, *pieds-noirs* were one of the most vocal memory carriers to offer interpretations of the *harkis* and their history during the period when this community was not speaking for itself. By no means a disinterested act, *harkis* were invoked by *pieds-noirs* in order to accentuate their own plight as marginalised and mistreated victims of decolonisation. Yet, these discourses also reflected the links between the two communities that developed initially in French Algeria but continued after they crossed the Mediterranean in the 1962. Exploring the similarities and differences in their memorial activism over time enables us to appreciate the continually evolving nature of social and collective memories, as well as to analyse the impact of changing broader social, political and cultural contexts upon these. By bringing together the histories and memories of the *pied-noir* and *harki* communities in the decades since 1962, this book aims to transcend the atomised nature of much

existing scholarship where detailed studies exist for almost all groups from the OAS through to the Jeanson network, but not on the relationships between these actors.

The benefit of examining the War of Independence from this new perspective is that in place of the previously dominant absence/return paradigm, a more nuanced picture of memory formation is revealed. This comprises a four stage chronology moving from emergence between 1962 and 1975, consolidation between 1975 and 1991, then acceleration from 1991 as the war became a publicly prominent topic again, culminating in the present heightened 'memory wars' state. The book is accordingly structured around these key phases, with each of the four main sections containing chapters charting developments within the *pied-noir* and *harki* communities respectively. Although presented in parallel for reader clarity, the chapters nonetheless stress the points of connection and interaction between the two groups. A final section, 'Memory Wars', builds on these prior links, its thematic structure offering a fully integrated comparison. Dividing the book into two halves, 'The Era of "Absence"' and 'The "Return" of the War', indicates the ways in which this new periodisation relates to and intersects with the previously dominant paradigm of memory evolution. A genealogy of memory is therefore provided that serves to historicise the present commemorative situation while simultaneously drawing attention to the actors involved, and their complex motivations and expectations. In so doing, it reveals that competition for control over the past does not date from the 1990s and the return of the War of Independence to the public spotlight. Rather, it is part of a larger process of contestation and reappropriation that has been maintained within and between groups such as the *pieds-noirs* and the *harkis* since 1962.

Notes

1 www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000444898&categorieLien=id [5 November 2014].

2 Claude Liauzu, Gilbert Meynier, Gérard Noiriel, Frédéric Régent, Trinh Van Thao and Lucette Valensi, 'Colonisation: non à l'enseignement d'une histoire officielle', *Le Monde* (25 March 2005), p. 15.

3 Out of a possible total of 577 deputies, fewer than forty were present for the two readings of the law on 11 June 2004 and 10 February 2005. On the day the law was passed by the lower chamber, there were only four left-wing deputies in attendance. Valérie Esclangon-Morin, François Nadiras and Sylvie Thénault, 'Les Origines et la genèse d'une loi scélérate', in *La Colonisation, la loi et l'histoire*, ed. by Claude Liauzu and Gilles Manceron (Paris, 2006), p. 47; Valérie Morin, 'Quel devoir de mémoire pour les rapatriés?', *Confluences méditerranée*, 53 (Spring 2005), 115.