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Abstract

During the Algerian war of independence, which lasted from 1954-1962, about 3,525,000 Algerians were forced to leave their homes. 2,350,000 of them were resettled in camps created ex-nihilo by the French army and 1,175,000 of them were resettled in pre-existing villages near French military outposts. This practice of resettlement, euphemistically referred to as regroupement in the French official terminology, was an essential tool of the French military policy of pacification.

This thesis presents a microhistory of the resettlement of Algerian Muslims by the French military. It focuses on one case, the village of Mansourah, located in the South of Kabylia, 220 km East of Algiers. By juxtaposing and putting into dialogue memories of both the Algerian Muslim population and the French army, and with the aid of archival documents, I seek to illuminate the history of regroupement in Mansourah. By using a Foucauldian conception of subject and power, this thesis shows how the French colonial powers used disciplinary methods and brutal means of repression to create docile bodies, perpetuate their domination over Algeria, and affect the subjectivity of the colonized. Regroupement in Mansourah becomes a motif for analyzing how material structures and systems of representations create a new disciplinary order. In addition, a microhistorical examination of regroupement in Mansourah brings to light how
Algerians found themselves caught up in the "web of power" tied by the colonial authorities and how they challenged it from within.
Acknowledgements

Over the past two years I have accumulated a number of debts to colleagues, family and friends in the process of conducting my research and writing this thesis. This project began in the fall of 2010 with a study of *regroupement* in the particular setting of the village of Mansourah, Algeria.

I would like to thank Dr. Osama Abi-Mershed for encouraging me to pursue this research and overcome the emotional and intellectual challenges it posed to me.

I also would like to thank Dr. Judith Tucker with whom I have continued working on this research in the framework of her research seminar *History and the Middle-East*. I also would like to thank Dr. Adel Iskandar and Dr. Sylvie Durmelat for their constant support and belief in my work. I also would like to thank Dr. John Esposito for providing me with the financial means and time to write this thesis. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Dr. Rochelle Davis who I first had the opportunity to meet during an undergraduate year abroad at Georgetown in 2006-2007 and who was a wonderful source of encouragement and support in my decision to pursue a MA in Arab Studies at Georgetown University.

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not least, I want to thank Malika Dekkiche for her encouragements and close reading of my work.

In France, I would like to thank Dr. Michel Cornaton and General Maurice Faivre, for granting me an interview and giving me access to their personal archives. I also want to thank Dr. Gilbert Meynier and Michel Sabourdy, editor in chief of the association of veterans of the Algerian war (Fédération Nationales des Anciens Combattants d'Algérie, FNACA) for helping me in my research of witnesses of regroupement.

I also want to thank those who replied to my announcement published in the newspaper of the FNACA and accepted to share their often-painful memories.

In Algeria, I would like to express my gratitude to the people of Mansourah and El-Hamra for their hospitality, invaluable testimonies and the trust they placed in me. I would like to thank in particular Abdelhamid Benhacen, a local historian, who has helped me in numerous ways to fully grasp the history of this place. I also want to thank Abdallah Aggoune for providing us with a home during our visit to Algiers.

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I would like to extend my deep gratitude to my father and my mother, Abdelmalek Kellou and Catherine Sommier, without whose support and encouragement conducting this research and writing this thesis would never have been possible.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to the youth in France and Algeria and in particular to my sister Malya Kellou and my niece and nephew Noa and Côme Mascherin, with whom I hope to
visit Mansourah one day. May we learn from the lessons of past violence in our respective countries.

This thesis is richer due to the contributions of all those I have mentioned, and many I could not. Its failings, however, are solely my own.

Dorothee M. Kellou
Glossary of French and Arabic terms

ALN, French acronym for Armée de Libération Nationale, National Liberation Army. It is the military wing of the Front National de Libération (FLN) that commenced guerrilla operations on November 1, 1954.

bureaux arabes, Office of Arab affairs, were created as early as 1833. They were headed by French officers whose functions were to collect information on the indigenous people and to carry out administrative functions (police, taxes, education etc...). They were crucial instruments of French penetration in Algeria.

chouf, an Arabic word, meaning looking and by extension guarding. It entered the French military slang

djebel, an Arabic word, meaning mountain. It entered the French military slang

douar, administrative framework created by the Senatus-Consulte of April 22, 1863. By extension, it designates in the French language a village in North Africa.

fellagha, an Arabic word used to designate bandits and highwaymen. It entered the French military slang to refer to Algerians combating French colonial rule.

FLN, French acronym for Front de Libération Nationale, Liberation National Front. Revolutionary movement seeking independence of Algeria from French colonial rule by the use of military force.

gendarmerie, a military body charged with police duties.

gourbi, huts of mud and dung.

harka, mobile territorial unit composed of Algerian Muslims enrolled by the French army as auxiliaries during the war

harki, Arabic term used to refer to Algerian Muslims recruited among local population to fight along French troops.

maquis, a guerrilla fighter in the French underground during World War II, by extension refers to a member of an irregular armed force that fights a regular army.

moghazni, Arabic term used to refer to Algerian Muslims recruited among local population to serve along the French troops. They were often assigned to protect SAS officers

MNA, French acronym for Mouvement National Algérien, former Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques- Parti du Peuple Algérien (MTLD-PPA), reorganized by its leader Messali Hadj as the MNA in December 1954.

pied noir, French term used to designate the settler community of European descent in Algeria.

ratissage, sweeping operations

regroupement, term used by the French military during the war to refer to the practice of resettling the population.

Sections Administratives Spécialisées (SAS) were created in 1955 during the war. SAS officers were charged with establishing a French administration in areas considered underadministered. They were notably in charged of administering regroupement "centers."
Preface

My research goals and purpose were in no small part a function of my deep personal connection to the topic. My father and his relatives were indeed children of *regroupement*, making me in some way the grandchild of colonialism/*regroupement*. I have been deeply affected by these testimonies. As I immersed myself in churning this sea of memory, I was and am at times still overwhelmed with feelings of fear and anxiety, experiencing the trauma from afar, in time and distance, and yet still so close. I do not live in Algeria and have never lived there. Yet, I have been drawn into my Algerian naturalized French father's partial and often denied exilic state. Fifty years have passed since Algeria acceded to its independence. Most eye-witnesses I have interviewed are above 60 years old and are, as one of them told me metaphorically, "on the verge of falling from the cliff of death to meet the emptiness of the soul."¹ Despite this geographical and temporal distance, the topic is near to me, because I have collected testimonies from family members whom I had not met before starting this research and yet with whom I immediately identified and sympathized. My father who had only told us bits and pieces of his childhood experience during the war and who had never returned to his village since the war ended, i.e. for fifty years, finally told me his story and gave clarity to those undecipherable yet palpable images of my youth. Behind the sometimes innocuous accounts I collected, lay the latent, seething violence of the war. I was deeply troubled and saddened by the horrors and senselessness that haunt the memories of many, among them my close relatives. On this matter, Maria Török and Nicolas Abraham in *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewal of Psychoanalysis* (1978) spoke of the

¹ Abdelmounem. Interview by author, July 10, 2011.
"transgenerational phantom" or "work of the ghost in the unconscious."\textsuperscript{2} I experienced this "direct sympathy with the unconscious or the repressed psychic matter of a parental object."\textsuperscript{3} It took time and patience to find the right emotional distance to pursue my research. Despite the emotional hurdles, I felt compelled to write and analyze the past and "the present of the past," as "a reconstructed or reconstituted presence that organizes itself in the psyche of individuals around a complex maze of images, words and sensations," in the words of Henry Rousso.\textsuperscript{4} I felt as he described a "pressing need" to "tackle this past with the will to analyze it rather than merely endure its effects."\textsuperscript{5} (sic).

Holding dual citizenship in France and Algeria greatly facilitated my research on both shores of the Mediterranean. In Mansourah, I had an easy entry to the research field because despite my father's long absence from Algeria, he was considered to be "from there." Because of the non-transmission of the Kabyle language (\textit{tamazight}) and Algerian dialect, I relied mostly on my father's translation to conduct interviews with Algerians. Of course, some of them spoke French, but those with whom I communicated in French were mostly emigrants to France and Francophone Canada or were educated in French schools during the colonial period, meaning that they belonged to a somewhat educated and economically privileged indigenous rural elite. To have access to a multiplicity of viewpoints and experiences on \textit{regroupement}, my father's presence as a known, trusted and respected individual in the community and his translations appeared crucial. His added knowledge, access, and insight by far overshadow the complications

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., 2.
introduced by translation as the "re-formulation of meaning in the terms of a different culture, life-form, or world-view." In France, it was in some respects much easier to conduct interviews; yet, with the inevitable disclosure of my identity as a daughter of a French-Algerian, conscripts I interviewed were curious to know why I took interest in that village in particular, "a rather small town in Petite Kabylie and not a typical regroupement camp." To generate trust and establish meaningful relationships with informants, I revealed my father's origin. This perhaps made them more cautious about what they said regarding violence. Despite imperfections and limitations of the data, these rare testimonies tell a poignant story that has never been told: the history of regroupement and of the war in Mansourah through agents and victims caught in the colonial web of violence.

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7 Joseph. Interview by author. Angoulême, January 5, 2012. This statement shows that regroupement in already existing villages on the map are largely dismissed - both in literature and personal memory, as if experiences of Algerians resettled in regroupement camps were the only ones worthy of attention.
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- C'est une sale époque mais je ne comprends pas qu'on ait pas le courage de dire la vérité.
- Those were dark days but I don't understand why we don't have the courage to tell the truth.
  Interview with Paulin, French conscript in Mansourah, Algeria (July 1958, April 1960)

- "Rien ne distingue les souvenirs des autres moments. Ce n'est que plus tard qu'ils se font
  reconnaître, à leur cicatrice." Chris Marker, La Jetée, 1963.
- "Nothing distinguishes memories from ordinary moments. Only later do they become
  memorable through the scars they leave." Chris Marker, La Jetée, 1963.

- "Redonner à l'événement son épaisseur temporelle." Raphaëlle Branche. L'embuscade de
  Palestro, Algérie 1956.
- "Giving again to the event its temporal thickness." Raphaëlle Branche. L'embuscade de
  Palestro, Algérie 1956.

Introduction

During the Algerian war of independence, which lasted from 1954-1962, about 3,525,000
Algerians were forced to leave their homes. 2,350,000 of them were resettled in camps created
ex-nihilo by the French army and 1,175,000 of them were resettled in pre-existing villages near
French military outposts. This practice of resettlement, euphemistically referred to as
regroupement in the French official terminology, was an essential tool of the French military

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8 Michel Cornaton, "Les camps de regroupement de la guerre d'Algérie", (paper presented at the Conference "Pour
une Histoire Critique et Citoyenne: Le Cas de l'Histoire Franco-Algérienne", University Lyon II, Lyon, June 21,
in 1954, these camps were makeshift and shoddy with no running water and no electricity. The most "viable" camps
were transformed into modern "villages" in the framework of the Mille Villages program initiated in 1959 by the
Delegate-general of Algeria Paul Delouvrier. The publication in the French media of a leaked official document in
1959 revealing the extremely precarious living conditions in which the Algerian Muslim population was forced to
live, created an uproar in French public opinion. This scandal arguably prompted the government's belated effort at
improving the living conditions within regroupement camps. Vincent Duclert, "Un rapport d'inspecteur des finances
en guerre d'Algérie. Michel Rocard, des camps de regroupements au devoir d'information." Outre-Mers: Revue
pacification policy. It aimed at preventing the Algerian population from providing material support to the National Liberation Army (FLN) and at isolating it from the rebels' influence.\(^9\)

To begin, a reflection on the term *regroupement* seems crucial. The term *regroupement* in French describes the act and result of "gathering together." Therefore, the term tends to downplay or even ignore any violent connotation. The resettled population is composed first and foremost of displaced persons coerced into forced migration. In an interview that I conducted with him in June 2011, Michel Cornaton, author of *Les Regroupements de la décolonisation en Algérie* (1967), an exhaustive dissertation on the topic, referred to *regroupement* camps as "concentration camps." He added that the use of the term "concentration camp" was problematic because of the historical reference attached to it. The term is often used to describe Nazi camps.\(^{10}\)

Referring to *regroupement* camps as concentration camps might be all the more misleading since the intent of *regroupement* camps differed significantly from that of Nazi concentration camps. In *regroupement*, the objective was not to isolate the "undesirables" from society (Jews, criminals, homosexuals, gypsies, the mentally ill, political prisoners)\(^{11}\), but to isolate the population from the "undesirable" - the FLN. The logic was reversed. Nonetheless, parallels can be drawn in terms of the techniques deployed within camps to control and transform the subject. I could opt for the term "resettlement", which by definition refers to the act of settling people in another place, and is often used to speak of refugees fleeing a war zone and

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\(^{10}\) Michel Cornaton. Interview by author. Lyon, June 5, 2011.

seeking protection. But even this term is misleading insofar as it accepts the French army's
discourse on *regroupement* camps - providing protection for the population. Can the one forcing
displacement provide protection at the same time? There is no perfect terminology to translate
this reality. Therefore, somewhat arbitrarily, I have decided to use interchangeably *regroupement*
and resettlement in reference to the coerced resettlement of local communities into camps placed
under the French army's control.

The practice of *regroupement* was rooted in counter-revolutionary doctrine. Roger
Trinquier, who participated in the Indo-China war (1946-1954) and served as an officer in
Algeria during the war, explained in his book *La guerre moderne*\(^\text{12}\) (1961), in a paraphrase of
Mao Zedong's words, how vital the support of the Algerian population was to the rebellion.\(^\text{13}\) He
wrote that the support of the population is as "crucial for the fighter as water is for the fish."\(^\text{14}\) He
followed the logic of his argument and spun the metaphor still further by writing: "If the rebel
lives among the population like a fish in water, then empty the water and the fish will die."\(^\text{15}\) The
French army applied the metaphor literally by forcing on the Algerian population *regroupement*
en masse.

Historically, the theories and techniques of counter-insurgency were used by the French
army during the war in Indochina (1946-54) before being introduced in North Africa. The French
army built its first *regroupement* centers in 1946 in Indochina. In Conchinchina, *regroupement*
appeared quite ineffective in fighting the Viet-Minh rebellion. In Cambodia, more than one million people, two-thirds of the rural population, were resettled in "centers".\textsuperscript{16} In this manner, the Viet-Minh forces who had extended their influence beyond Cochinchina, were isolated from the support of the population. Although built after independence at the request of the Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk and with the aid of France, the \textit{regroupement} "centers" were to become models for those later built in Algeria.\textsuperscript{17} Yet, the French military had largely ignored in its analysis of the success of the policy of \textit{regroupement} in Cambodia the legitimacy that the King of the newly independent state of Cambodia enjoyed.

The genealogy of the practice of \textit{regroupement} of civilians in camps predates the war in Indochina. It was used by the Spanish military as a counter-insurgency strategy to isolate the civilians from the rebels in 1896 during the Cuban war of independence and later by the British army during the Second Boer War (1899–1902) launched by the Afrikaans-speaking Dutch settlers seeking independence from the British Empire.\textsuperscript{18}

Additionally, the practice of \textit{regroupement} during the Algerian war was in many ways reminiscent of practices of confinement of Algerians in the early decades of colonization. The practice of regrouping inhabitants dispersed in \textit{douars} by officers of the Office of Arab Affairs (\textit{Bureaux Arabes}) was not only a means of "pacification" but also a means of conquest of souls and minds.\textsuperscript{19} The military goal was coupled with civilizing motives. Therefore, "regrouping as a policy was not new to the French army. It was used by French forces in Algeria during the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 38.
\item Joël Kotek et al., \textit{Le siècle des camps : détention, concentration, extermination, cent ans de mal radical.}
\item Michel Cornaton, \textit{Les regroupements de la décolonisation en Algérie}, 42.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
nineteenth century to put down rebellions and to pave the way for settler colonization. It enabled the colonial powers to destroy resistance by weakening tribal structures and to expropriate the most fertile lands for European settlers.\textsuperscript{20} Although it did not facilitate settlement and colonization of the Algerian countryside, the practice of \textit{regroupement} as used during the Algerian war was a continuation of these longstanding colonial strategies of control.

**Argument**

This thesis is a microhistory of the \textit{regroupement} of the Algerian Muslim population during the Algerian war of independence (1954-1962). I employ an oral history approach to illuminate the experiences of those affected by the policies of \textit{regroupement} in the village of Mansourah. I try to answer the following questions: How did the \textit{regroupement} of the population in Mansourah unfold? What is remembered and how is it remembered? I am not only interested in interpreting the workings of memory, but also of power. How did power function within the militarily-guarded village of Mansourah? In an attempt to document power, I examine the particular mechanisms, techniques, and procedures that were used by the French army to transform the population into subjects of power and objects of knowledge.

I approach the concept of \textit{regroupement} as a colonizing practice. I argue that \textit{regroupement} was not solely a military strategy. The French colonial administration was perpetuating a process of colonization that had been pursued since 1830. The French colonial powers employed strategies to inscribe "in the social world a new conception of space, new

forms of personhood, and a new means of manufacturing the experience of the real."21 The argument of this paper is grounded in a Foucauldian conceptualization of power as an inescapably dense web in which the colonial subject finds itself entangled. A microscopic observation of the space of Mansourah reveals the constant interplay between techniques of power to control the colonial subject. This paper shows that the colonizers made use of disciplinary means and brutal forms of physical punishment to make "docile" bodies which suggests the symbiotic coexistence, instead of replacement, of "classical" and "modern" forms of punishment in colonial Algeria during the war.22

In *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison*, Michel Foucault offers an analysis of Western penal systems and points to a major shift in forms of punishment. From 1760 to 1840, public forms of corporal punishments progressively disappeared and were replaced by more "gentle" and "correctional" forms. "The old partners of the spectacle of punishment, the body and the blood, gave way. A new character came on the scene, masked."23 The body is no longer the target of punishment, the "anchoring point for a manifestation of power."24 Punishment now targeted the soul, "in depths on the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations."25 This new type of power, disciplinary power, relied on a whole set of techniques of control, a complex system of surveillance and documentation, to exercise power without the exclusive use of physical violence. Prison is emblematic of this new form of power that has come about, which seeks to control and transform the deviant individual into an obedient subject. Yet, disciplinary power.

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23 Ibid., 16.
24 Ibid., 68.
25 Ibid., 16.
does not operate only within prison walls. It operates constantly and insidiously. It is invisible and all pervasive. According to Foucault, these forms of discipline have become "general formulas of domination" in Western modern societies.  

Foucault's analysis of a shift from corporal to carceral forms of punishment has been extremely insightful, but the incompleteness of the transformation he describes is all too apparent in the colonial context, where as I will show, both forms of punishment coexisted and complemented each other. Yet, Foucault's approach to punishment as "a political tactic" will be useful to my analysis. Hence, I will consider the effects on the colonized subjects of the colonial repressive and disciplinary apparatus and how they are resisted. Power, resistance and its effects cannot be studied separately, because "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power."

The organization of this thesis is as following: this introductory chapter provides necessary background information on the definition of regroupment, previous literature on the process of regroupment, a description of the village of Mansourah, the sources and research methodology used for this thesis, and the theoretical framework utilized to understand the historical process of regroupement. The first chapter examines the rationale behind the resettlement of the population from the nearby village of El-Hamra in Mansourah, and draws on memories of highly emotional events remembered clearly, as if they had left "a scar upon the

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27 Ibid., 23.
cerebral tissues”29 (military battles, resettlement operations), to illuminate the course of events and show the lasting effects upon the psyche and the mind of direct witnesses. The second chapter shows the acceleration of the colonization of the minds and attitudes of Algerians subjected to the power of the French military by being placed under its direct and constant control through the operation of regroupement.

**Literature review**

The practice of regroupement was generalized during the war. It affected half of the Algerian rural population.30 Yet despite its importance and prevalence, the issue of regroupement remains a largely unknown and relatively understudied aspect of the war.31 Why does it remain largely ignored? According to historian Jacques Le Goff, "the discipline of history nourishes memory in turn, and enters into the great dialectical process of memory and forgetting experienced by individuals and societies.”32 This quotation partially explains the quasi-absence of collective memory of regroupement. Only a few historians have taken an interest in the topic. Additionally and relatedly, few testimonies have been published on regroupement, and most of them are French by origin. During the war and in its immediate aftermath, a few French scholars recorded the experiences of Algerians resettled during the war. Since then, voices of Algerians who are in a position of subalterity in relation to colonial, national and scientific power have been

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31 Ibid. In 1962, Pierre Vidal-Naquet noted that "nothing, in the war of Algeria, is as important as the problem of regroupement. Yet, nothing has been so late and so little known by the French public opinion." In 2006, Michel Cornaton asserted that this observation remained valid. For example, only one French school textbook mentioned regroupement camps.
muffled. If one compiled chronologically all the works published on *regroupement* since the war, one would see the voices of resettled Algerians fade away.

During the war, the massive *regroupement* of the Algerian rural population was totally ignored by the French public opinion until the daily newspaper *Le Monde* released, on March 12, 1959, sections of a report written by Michel Rocard, a young inspector of finance in Algeria.\(^3\) The report drawn from monitoring visits in the camps and data collected from French officers in charge of the resettled population stressed the extremely precarious living conditions in the camps in which more than one million civilians were placed by the French military. The report leaked to the press brought out scandals and notably called on the government to make public Rocard’s concerns and act to improve conditions in the camps.\(^4\) Though of relative importance during the war, most of the public soon forgot it.

This report was republished in a new and expanded edition: *Rapport sur les camps de regroupement et autres textes sur la guerre d'Algérie* (2003). In this edition, Vincent Duclert paints a rather flattering portrait of Michel Rocard, who had the courage to report the inconvenient truth about *regroupement* camps. He points to the progressive abandonment of repressive methods and the adoption of more "humanist" policies by the French authorities as the result of the publication of the report, in order to make *regroupement* more morally acceptable to the French public. In doing so, Duclert does not consider of the Algerian experience and memories of *regroupement*, nor does he stress the fact that the policy of *regroupement* did continue. The article is more concerned with analyzing the response of French society and the

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\(^3\) Michel Rocard and Vincent Duclert, *Rapport sur les camps de regroupement et autres textes sur la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2003), 16.

\(^4\) Ibid.
government to the report, and Rocard's honourable legacy to the Left, which was severely compromised during the war.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, in collaboration with Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad, wrote *Le déracinement: La crise de l'agriculture traditionnelle* (1964), an eminent academic study of the alienating effects of *regroupement* on the Algerian rural population. Drawing upon a variety of quantitative and qualitative techniques, they culled data from questionnaires with the resettled population and conducted ethnographic work during the war. They measured changes in the attitudes of the group studied and concluded that there was a crisis vis-à-vis traditional agriculture which ensued from *regroupement*. *Regroupement* contributed to upsetting the values of the rural population, and accelerated its alienation from traditional structures in favor of exploitation by a capitalist system. As stressed by the authors themselves, *regroupement* was by no means the first challenge to traditional agriculture and settlement by a “capitalist order” in colonial Algeria. By the time of the war of independence, settlement and agrarian production had experienced successive upheavals in the fact of encroachment by French settlers and colonial authorities who used a range of practices such as land reform, resettlement, punitive campaigns to dispossess the rural inhabitants of Algeria in favor of settlers and large landholders operating under a new regime of private property. Thus, *regroupement* was in many ways the grand finale of years of displacement and settlement policies variously posed as civilizing, ameliorative, or punitive but always a means of expanding the control of the colonial regime over the Algerian countryside.

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through uprooting and dispossessing its communities. Regroupement during the Algerian war was, far from being a departure, the manifestation of colonial agrarian policy stripped down to its most basic and unsophisticated form of expression.

French sociologist Michel Cornaton, who had served as a conscript during the war, returned to Algeria after independence and became aware of the scale of regroupement and its deep upsetting effects on Algerian society. In Les Regroupements de la décolonisation en Algérie (1967), he examined the types of regroupement camps created by the French army, the socioeconomic conditions of the regrouped population, and the development of the policy of regroupement over time. He drew on individual interviews and questionnaires conducted with Algerians who, despite the claims of Algerian officials, were still living in regroupement "centers." He also consulted the personal archives of General Parlange, who created the first regroupement camps in 1955 and produced an invaluable source of information on the subject. Despite the comprehensiveness of his study, he only marginally touches upon the mirroring effects of violence used by the French army and the FLN within the camps.

In 1973, Mahfoud Bennoune, in "La doctrine contre-révolutionnaire de la France et la paysannerie algérienne: les camps de regroupements" (1973), analyzed the political and military doctrine of the French counterinsurgency war and how it was conceived and applied by the French army during the Algerian war in 2392 regroupement camps. Drawing mainly on his own experience in the camp and on the thin scholarly literature on the subject (Cornaton, Bourdieu

37 Cornaton, Les regroupements de la décolonisation en Algérie.
and Sayad), he also wrote about the dislocating and homogenizing effects of *regroupement*.38

In 1978, British historians Keith Sutton and Richard Lawless wrote an article on population regrouping in Algeria "Population regrouping in Algeria: traumatic change and the rural settlement pattern" (1978). They examined the stressful and traumatic effects of resettlement during the Algerian war of independence, speaking of a "crisis of continuity".39 They stretched the analysis further and considered the agrarian reform launched by the newly independent state of Algeria and its resemblance not in form but in effects with the regrouping policies during the war. The originality of their work resides in their analysis of two periods: the colonial and postcolonial period in Algeria. By expanding their research greatly to go all the way back to the colonial era up through the post-independence era, they examined resettlement in the *longue durée* so to speak. Their analysis of *regroupement* during the war, which mostly builds on Cornaton and Bourdieu, focuses on the disintegration of the traditional rural social structures and the population's integration into capitalist relations of production and emphasize the broader effects of colonialism. However, they do not consider the personal effects of *regroupement*, by including voices of Algerians resettled during the war.

More recently, historians like Charles-Robert Ageron and Keith Sutton have written on *regroupement* in light of recently available military archives. In "Army Administration Tensions over Algeria's Centres de *Regroupement*, 1954-1962"40 (1999), drawing from army memoirs and in light of newly available military archives, Keith Sutton re-examines the French army's

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38 Bennoune, "La doctrine contre-révolutionnaire de la France et la paysannerie algérienne : les camps de *regroupements* 1954-1962."
39 Sutton et al., "Population Regrouping in Algeria: Traumatic Change and the Rural Settlement Pattern,
strategy of resettling the rural population into camps. He confirms the scope and pace of regrouping the population into camps, previously assessed by Michel Cornaton. He also examines the role of the Section Administratives Spécialisées (SAS), headed by officers in charge of monitoring and supervising the population, showing that regroupement camps came to be conceived as a means of social and economic improvement.41 Charles-Robert Ageron in "Une dimension de la guerre d'Algérie: les regroupements de populations" (2001) made use of the archives to study the policy of regroupement and the failed attempt to reverse the practice in the early sixties. He also examined the reaction of the French public to the disclosure of conditions of living of the regrouped population, stressing the role of the Red Cross and CIMADE in bringing humanitarian aid and somehow alleviating the effects of displacement. However, he only uses the official FLN newspaper, El-Moujahid, which presented regroupement camps as concentration camps to capture international attention and legitimacy, and French official reports, to decipher Algerian voices.

As the memory of colonialism's “positive aspects” in Algeria has experienced a modest revival, some have sought to revise the slowly emerging historical critique of regroupement. In Les 1000 villages de Delouvrier : Protection des populations musulmanes contre le FLN42 (2009), General Maurice Faivre offers a revisionist historical account of the policy of regroupement. Faivre, the author, was assigned to train and command a harka and served as a commander-in-chief in the French army's intelligence section during the war. Echoing the rhetoric of the military, and embracing the official discourse on regroupement during the war, he

42 Maurice Faivre, Les 1000 villages de Delouvrier, Protection des populations musulmanes contre le FLN (Sceaux: L'esprit du livre éditions, 2009).
presents *regroupement* in positive terms. In his view, it helped the French army protect Algerian civilians from the FLN’s acts of violence. Based solely on testimonies from SAS officers and on reports produced in the framework of the Mille Villages program initiated in 1959 by the delegate-general Paul Delouvrier in order to transform *regroupement* camps into "modern" villages, he argues that *regroupement* was a vehicle of social and economic development of Algeria. Therefore, this historical account (a self-congratulating narrative stressing France positive's role in Algeria) obscures the voices of the resettled population even further through its sole use of testimonies from SAS army officers, who the author claims were in “close proximity to the population” and could tell that the population was “happier” in the resettlement “villages” than in the “*djebel*”.43

In addition to the fading of voices of Algerians resettled during the war, the literature has entirely ignored the experience of Algerians resettled in villages by focusing largely, if not entirely, on *regroupement* camps. Yet in Mansourah, the population was not resettled in a newly built camp but in a preexisting village. Cornaton has developed categories to distinguish the practice of *regroupement* in newly built camps (*regroupement*) from that into villages already on the map (*recasement*)—categories that he argues are conflated within the official French typology.44 The realities of *regroupement* varied across regions, camps, and villages45 but when

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43 Maurice Faivre, interview by author, Paris, July 3, 2011. To prove his point of an improved situation in the resettlement “villages for the population, he showed me two pictures, one with children looking sad, another with children smiling. “See the population, especially the children before the *regroupement*. And then, look at them. Look at the change. You see these kids. They are wearing new clothes, they look happy.”


45 There is an actual difference in experience between the individual or collective *recasement* of people in already existing villages and the *regroupement* en masse of people in camps with insufficient ressources. The living conditions in camps were arguably much harder. For instance, doctor Colonel Soulages stressed the extremely hard
one takes intention, cause, practice and effect into account, the distinction between *regroupement* and *recasement* seems overstated. A broader conceptual approach would encompass the reality of these categories, which affected millions of individuals. By excavating more silenced voices and focusing on a case ignored by the literature, I want to show the continuation of a practice that varied in form but was similar in content. Beyond the clearly stated strategic objective of *regroupement* to wrest the population from the "grip" of the FLN lies the true logic of the practice: transforming the individual into a subject of power by bringing them under the direct surveillance and control of the colonial military apparatus. Additionally, in this study, I am concerned with the psychological effects of *regroupement*. The testimonies I have collected provide a personal and deeply intimate perspective that restores the emotional and psychological aspects of this traumatic history, albeit through the filter of present memory.

**The village of Mansourah**

My study focuses on the village of Mansourah El-Kabira, in which the population of El-Hamra was resettled. Yet, I place it in its larger geographical and historical context to grasp the dynamics of power at play in the region. Mansourah El-Kabira cannot be studied in isolation; it is necessary to consider its relationship with the rest of the region. The French military had a large and all-encompassing vision for the military and political pacification of the region in particular and Algeria in general.

The village of Mansourah, which is my father’s village, is located in South Kabylia, 210

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living conditions of people regrouped in camps made of "tents or grass huts that did not correspond at all to the needs of people and children especially, both in summer and in winter." Ageron, "Une dimension de la guerre d’Algérie: les regroupements de populations," 71.
km East of Algiers. According to the National Liberation Front's military-administrative division of Algeria adopted during the war, Mansourah was part of mintaka (zone) 2 of Wilaya (province) 3.46

The official town of Mansourah, known as Mansourah des Biban in French, was composed of a small town and two indigenous villages: Mansourah Centre, Mansourah El-Kabira (Taddart in Kabyle) and Mansourah El-Seghira (Tighilt in Kabyle).

View on Mansourah Centre, July 2011 (photo by author).

Mansourah Centre, located 2340 ft. (713 m) above sea level, was a typical small town in colonial Algeria with its French school, a post office, a town hall, a gendarmerie, a market, a few shops, "Moorish cafés" frequented by the male indigenous population and a restaurant held by a

pieds noirs couple. Mansourah Centre was connected to Algiers and Constantine by train and by car through a national road (RN 5). The National road crossed Mansourah Centre and ran parallel to the mainline train tracks. Along the road and on both sides of it in a continuous line were "hard stone houses" with red tile roof and "gourbis," huts of mud and dung. According to a census conducted by the French authorities on the eve of the war, 1152 people lived in Mansourah Centre.⁴⁷ During the war, large houses and the school were requisitioned by the French military to serve as barracks for the army (3rd Battalion, 57th Regiment). The French intelligence service or Deuxième Bureau and the Section Administrative Spécialisée (SAS) occupied premises in Mansourah Centre.

The village of Mansourah El-Kabira, July 2011 (photo by author).

⁴⁷ Census of the population in Mansourah, October 10, 1954, Personal Files of Abdelkamel Touati, Mansourah, Algeria.
Just a few meters above Mansourah Centre was Mansourah El-Kabira located at 2897 feet (880 meters) above sea level. A dirt road linked Mansourah Centre to Mansourah El-Kabira where 1047 people lived. The village was comprised of a French school, a "Moorish café", two small mosques, including a madrasa, a public fountain, "hard stone houses" and "gourbis with tile roof." The village of Mansourah El-Seghira housed 294 people. It is situated a few hundred meters away from Mansourah El-Kabira.

The population resettled in Mansourah El-Kabira came from El-Hamra and Ouled Abbas. El-Hamra and Ouled Abbas are situated 10/15 kilometers away in the mountains. El-Hamra is situated at 3328 feet (983 meters) above sea level and contained about 1000 people. Ouled Abbas is situated 5 km South West of El-Hamra. Ouled Abbas was composed of two mechtas (hamlets) known as Djedida et Merdja. The number of inhabitants during the war is unknown.

The population in the region lived mostly as sheep and goat herders and farmers. Wheat and barley were the main crops of the region. Crafts included alfa-grass plaiting for baskets, rugs and hats. It is worth mentioning that in Mansourah, many worked with the French administration and notably in the Railroad company (Société nationale des chemins de fer français).

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48 Census of the population in Mansourah, October 10, 1954, Personal Files of Abdelkamel Touati, Mansourah, Algeria.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 SAS 120 - ANOM
52 1H 1890/D1
53 Ibid.
Sources

My sources consist of military archival documents and oral history interviews with different actors involved in the process of *regroupement*, the Algerian population, and the French army.

I conducted twenty interviews in Mansourah with people resettled during the war, former National Liberation Army soldiers, and sympathizers. Such testimonies form the core of my research project, a social history of *regroupement* in Mansourah. Therefore, their testimonies are crucial to documenting and exploring the Algerian Muslim population's perceptions and recollections of *regroupement*.

To supplement the testimonies collected in Algeria, and to shed light upon the contrasts of discourses, I also interviewed former French conscripts who served in Algeria during the war. A member of an association of veterans from the Algerian war helped me to identify former conscripts who served in Mansourah or its region during the war by publishing an announcement in the association's monthly newspaper. A few of them contacted me, willing to share their own stories and memories of the war. Their testimonies provide valuable corroborative evidence to verify other information that I have gathered on historical events in the region during the war. The experiences of these soldiers themselves are indeed part of this total experience of *regroupement* during the war.

Such testimonies are all the more crucial since France has placed restrictions on access to archives. After fifty years, the archives on the Algerian war are now open to the public. Yet, the state has placed a seventy-five year restriction on archives that concern national security and
private life. Additionally, although apparently more anecdotal in nature, not all archives on the Algerian war have been classified. In the national archives in Aix-en-Provence "out of 10 kilometers of archives, only 8 have been listed."\textsuperscript{54} This includes judiciary and police records. According to an archivist at Aix-en-Provence, "the files of authors of deadly attacks are not available for consultations for instance, to prevent the settling of scores."\textsuperscript{55} Restricted access to certain documents and the absence of written traces for all events of the war proves the importance of oral history in overcoming lapses and silences imposed on history by officials.

The French administration generated more documents than the population in Mansourah. Except for the testimonies gathered, I have found no historical traces of \textit{regroupement} in Mansourah. In fact, it is in France, first in the military archives at "Le Service Historique de la Défense" (SHD) in Paris, and then in the colonial archives, "Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer" (ANOM) in Aix-en-Provence that I have found precious data to complement the interviews. Of crucial value in my endeavour to reconstruct the history of \textit{regroupement} in Mansourah are the military reports signed by Colonel Buis, commander in chief of the sector.

The collections that I have found in Aix-en-Provence from the Sections Administratives Spécialisées (SAS) of Mansourah, which were charged with the administration of the population in Mansourah and in other villages, are in line with Colonel Buis’s objective to give a feeling of a betterment to the resettled population. The documents are useful for highlighting the work of SAS personnel in Mansourah to win over the population through social and economic services

\textsuperscript{54} Archives' curator. Interview by authir. Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer (ANOM), Aix-en-Provence, August 9, 2011.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. It is a debated measure taken to maintain civil peace in a society life France, where in essence all actors of the war are represented (French military officers and conscripts, former French settlers, Algerians loyal to the French colonial regime "harkis" and Algerian civilians). To what extent does oblivion bring peace?
(among the most salient being healthcare and rudimentary education, employment, and agricultural support).

**Methodology and theoretical frameworks**

I will use mainly the works of Alessandro Portelli on oral history and Paul Ricoeur on memory and history in my own research.

First, in the style of Kimberly Katz, who puts Sami Amr's diary into a broader context in order to explicate it, I will situate the narratives that I have collected into a broader framework and examine their historical context to illuminate the history of regroupement in Mansourah.

Yet, I will not accept narrative accounts as literal recordings of events of the past. I am aware that the recollection of personal experiences and the emotions associated with them necessarily involves an aspect of memory. Thus, it is crucial to engage in a theoretical discussion of memory in order to deal with the testimonies that I have collected, for oral history interviews are grounded in memory, and memory is subjective. Identity constitutes the self but is anchored in the collective memory. Personal memories and the stories of the group interrelate in complex and dynamic ways. In sum, each personal narrative is grounded in a larger narrative. Therefore, the larger discourse in which the narratives are grounded should be deciphered in the analysis of personal memories.

In addition, memory is a reconstructive and selective process. Any testimonial account is made of silences and leaps. Forgetting is part and parcel of remembering. Memory is

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fundamentally fragile and fickle, because it "results from the absence of the thing remembered and its presence in the mode of representation."\textsuperscript{59} However, "the deficiencies stemming from forgetting (...) should not be treated straight away as pathological forms, as dysfunctions."\textsuperscript{60} We shall instead explore how the past is represented and reworked.

Memory is of the past, but is influenced by present issues and understandings. Therefore, we should try to understand their interests and motivations in remembering the past as they do. This implies deciphering what in their past and present history may influence the way they remember and tell the past. For that, we should identify their present and past positions in the field of power relations. What were the interviewees' social status during the war? Were they educated in the French colonial educational system? Were they members of the FLN? What is their present relationship to Algeria or France?

Also importantly, the interviewee "does not speak in this abstract but speaks to the historian and with the historian."\textsuperscript{61} This leads me to tackle the question of the positionality of the historian. The historian projects his or her own voice and brings his/her own perspective. The awareness and the clear statement of his/her perspective and position in the field appears crucial in the content and literary analysis of the recorded narratives. For the historian is not outside the field of power but rather within it.

In addition to understanding how the past is reworked, for which reasons and how my own shadow may project onto the forms and content of the interviewees' recollections, we should pay particular attention to what is remembered. Paul Ricoeur suggests that we put

\textsuperscript{59} Ricoeur, \textit{Memory, History, Forgetting}, 58.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{61} Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," 105.
"discordant testimonies" side by side and into dialogue. Through this method and aided by other documents (official reports, administrative documents, official correspondences, maps, personal letters), I will be able to understand what is present and what is absent in their accounts. In other words, I will analyze what is remembered and forgotten.

In addition to the theoretical approaches that I utilize to understand the significance of memory work, I will employ Foucault's theoretical conception of power to document power within the military-guarded village of Mansourah.

I am concerned with understanding how colonial power established its dominion in Mansourah and symbolically beyond the realm of Mansourah. Power is not located in one specific place, but is diffused throughout society. Power, by nature fluid and fluctuating, is made up of a multiplicity of points. Therefore, many (if not all) of the points at which the colonized came into contact with the colonizer should be examined. Foucault's innovative conception of power will help me to trace the effects of colonial power on people. How does it diffuse itself, and how does it permeate people? To answer these questions, I will pay particular attention to the material and ideological structures of colonial power and analyze their structuring effects upon individuals.

I will also employ the Gramscian concepts of *egemonia* (consent and persuasion) and *dominio* (coercion and force) to document the deployment of power in Mansourah and beyond. We can distinguish two types of strategies deployed by the French military for dealing with the population and ultimately maintain French domination over Algeria: the first relies on persuasion and rewards (through schools, health and public services, etc.), and the second is based on
coercion and repression (through arrests, imprisonments, torture, and executions). Interestingly and of relevance to my research, Gramsci showed that in the communal regime of medieval Italy, "the Communes established a dominio, but they failed to create an egemonia and so failed to evolve an integrated society."62 This is to point to the coexistence of two regimes of governance, apparently contradictory, but in the French eyes complementary: one based on persuasion and consent and the other on coercion and repression.

The Bourdieusian definitions of symbolic violence will help me further highlight this idea. Bourdieu defines "symbolic violence" as the power that "is exercised through rational communication, that is, with the (extorted) adherence of those who, being the dominated products of an order dominated by forces armed with reason (...) cannot but give their acquiescence to the arbitrariness of rationalized force."63 Symbolic violence is a form of disguised domination which operates insidiously and with the complicity of the individual. Violence is pervasive and ubiquitous. It is "everywhere in social practices. It is misrecognized because its everydayness and its familiarity renders it invisible."64 Yet, it must be taken into consideration. The ways and means by which the French military, but also the FLN, related to the people should be carefully analyzed.

Bourdieu's concept of the field, i.e. "a space of conflict and competition, in which participants vie to establish their monopoly"65 will also be of great use. The dynamic of the field, a metaphor for power relations, is determined by the struggle between differently positioned

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agents seeking and using different forms of capital (social, economic, and symbolic) to maximize their interests and power. The enclosed space of the village of Mansourah can be viewed as a field of power within which two main agents, the French military and the FLN, were competing over a claim to legitimate authority. But in order not to fall into the conceptual trap of the dualism between colonizer and colonized, I will highlight the infinite variety of forms of participation and resistance within practices and discourses on each side, hence revealing the complexity of power relations in the colonial context, in Mansourah and beyond.

Lastly, I will draw on the work of Michel de Certeau in *The practice of everyday life* (1984), to document the subtleties of quotidian practices of resistance among the population and the FLN within the field of power defined by the French military. The concept of "tactic" defined by Michel de Certeau as "the trickery of the weak within the order established by the strong"\(^{66}\) will help me to read and theorize creative acts by the population and the FLN to evade the control of the French military. In this thesis, I will account for practices that *insinuate themselves "into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance"*\(^{67}\), thereby restoring some agency to those in a structurally subordinate position to power.

By engaging with such theoretical frameworks, this work challenges the French colonial narrative. The topic is one pregnant with intense emotional experiences, which have left dark scars that linger to this day. These old, dark pages of French and Algerian history, which at the time of their composition were too thoroughly drenched in blood and tears to offer any sort of

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\(^{67}\) Ibid., xix.
legibility, have been cleaned and redacted through erasures, omissions, and rationalizations enacted by historians and rememberers that have with varying degrees of earnestly sought to make sense of the colonial period and its legacy, thereby imposing some semblance of order upon a writhing mass of experiences that were in their origin much more chaotic and visceral. Memories of these traumatic events, while rarely discussed in a public or systematic way, continue to operate at the deepest levels of consciousness and silently influence the way French, Algerians and those in between engage with contemporary social and political issues and the world around them.

While entertaining no illusions that this work will not in some respects be guilty of the same sort of epistemic violence that all writing of history imposes on past experiences, I hope to highlight the psychological and emotional aspects of the memory of these powerful episodes that lie buried but not wholly forgotten beneath the stacks of memoranda in the colonial archives and the sediments of time layered in the consciousness of those who experienced these events first-hand as well as those who followed in their weary footsteps.
Chapter One: Regroupement as a means to pacify an area, still largely escaping the control of the French military

In this chapter, I will reconstruct the history of the regroupement of the population of El-Hamra and Ouled Abbas in Mansourah El-Kabira with the aid of archival documents and the memories of direct witnesses. I seek to answer the following questions: why, when and how was the population resettled in Mansourah? Additionally, I will draw on memories of these events to uncover the violence, symbolic and physical, silenced by the military archives and hidden behind the colonial discourse on resettlement.

Launching "the liberation struggle" 68

On March 1954, a small group of young activists, "disgusted by political action" 69 to achieve independence of Algeria and committed to military action left the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties (Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques, MTLD), the main Algerian nationalist party at the time, which was crippled by internal disputes and formed the Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action (Comité Révolutionaire d'Unité

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et d'Action, CRUA). That small group became the National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale, FLN).  

On November 1, 1954, the FLN broadcast a proclamation from Cairo declaring the beginning of the War of Liberation. The Proclamation called on Algerians to unite in the struggle for national independence. The FLN believed that the circumstances were favorable to launch the struggle against French rule "by every means (...) at home and abroad through political and direct action." A few months earlier, France had been military defeated by Ho Chi Minh guerilla forces and had granted independence to Indochina.

The same day of this historic proclamation, the National Liberation Army (Armée de Libération Nationale, ALN), the FLN's military wing, launched a series of clandestine attacks in various parts of Algeria against military installations, police posts, communications facilities and public utilities. Although the proclamation stated that "at home, the people are united behind he watchwords of independence and action", the movement had no popular base and had a strong rival: the MTLD under Messali Hadj's historical leadership. The FLN had to impose itself on the population and other parties as the sole nationalist force.

Gradually, the FLN gained control of large sections of the country, especially in the mountainous areas in Kabylia and the Aurès. The FLN established military administration in these areas and set up clandestine six-member cell structures in villages. These cells were in

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72 Ibid.
charge of providing supplies, intelligence and to spread the words of the revolution.\textsuperscript{76} By 1957, the ALN counted nearly 40,000 soldiers and carried out about 800 shootings and bombings per month.\textsuperscript{77} By the same date, 415,000 French soldiers were deployed in Algeria, 57 per cent of whom were conscripts.\textsuperscript{78}

"Algerians: The FLN is your front; its victory is your victory"\textsuperscript{79}: The FLN's assertion of power in Mansourah.

In Mansourah, people recalled, the revolution started in 1955 with the burning of the French school. The burning of the French school by the FLN at the onset of the war could be read as an attempt to destroy signs of material and symbolic colonial power. As evidence for that idea, an FLN leader said to a French teacher in 1955: "we shall destroy all the schools because they represent French culture."\textsuperscript{80} This shows that the FLN struggled with the colonizing powers over representation of identity, and spectacular violence (some interviewees recalled the flames burning the school) was a means to assert its power.

This event was followed by another decisive episode deeply entrenched in the memory of inhabitants in Mansourah: the killing of three Algerians from the village who had worked for the French administration. The revolution carried with it the obligation to take sides. Jawed, an inhabitant from Mansourah who now lives in France, formulates this idea as follows: "The

\textsuperscript{78} Hendrik Spruyt, \textit{Ending Empire: Contested Sovereignty and Territorial Partition} (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 94.
\textsuperscript{79} Proclamation of the Algerian National Front, Liberation Front, (FLN) November, 1954.
\textsuperscript{80} Horne, \textit{A savage war of peace: Algeria}, 403.
method was to impose fear, so that there is no more hesitation and stalling; France or not France? They imposed fear on us, and everybody submitted to it.81 Those considered "loyal" to the French were "traitors" to the FLN. Among them were harkis and Algerians working for the colonial administration. Jawed remembers that members of his family were killed by the FLN:

> When the FLN wanted to prevail among us, there was an initial shock. They took three members of my family and cut their throats. There was a policeman (garde champêtre), a Caïd and an employee of the railroad working for France. We found them dead on the road.82

The public display of dead bodies—bodies of "traitors", "collaborators" with colonial authorities—is an example of punishment as spectacle. The visible display of dead bodies was meant to instill fear of a monarchy without throne: the FLN. The public display of dead bodies and blood was a technique to assert power in the face of the colonial powers.

The final and decisive episode in the history of the implantation of the FLN in Mansourah was the harangue delivered to the population "that night in spring 1956"83, which marked the first physical contact with the FLN, who had only existed thus far in the form of words, blood and ashes. That night, the FLN imposed its definition of the struggle: merging the FLN and all the people together towards independence: "They asked for ten volunteers to join the maquis. My brother volunteered. That day was the last day I saw him. He was killed in the war."84 In addition, a cell was constituted. Some were charged with collecting funds from the population, others with intelligence and surveillance. In this division of labor, the women were

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82 Ibid.
83 Mourad, Interview by author, July 13, 2011.
84 Kahina, Interview by author, July 7, 2011
charged with cooking and nursing.\textsuperscript{85}

\textbf{El-Hamra, a village on the side of the FLN.}

According to Salim, an FLN combatant in the region, "the population of El-Hamra was entirely on the side of the FLN." The FLN soldiers recruited heavily from the village of El-Hamra, and found widespread emotional and logistical support among the population. In fact, almost all the males of fighting age had joined the rebellion.\textsuperscript{86} By the same token, kinship ties with the rebels made popular support for the FLN almost inevitable. Bakir, originally from the village of El-Hamra, explained that his father and uncle were fighting with the FLN and his mother would hide food for the FLN fighters. He recalls, "My father had brought dozens of kilos of coffee and sugar, because they used to come in groups. My mother prepared the coffee to be served to them during nighttime visits."\textsuperscript{87}

Additionally, El-Hamra was strategically positioned, 1.5 kilometers away from "an impregnable refuge for the rebels."\textsuperscript{88} Joseph, a French conscript who served in the region between 1958 and 1959, recalled: "on their way back and forth to Tunis, the FLN fighters stopped in El-Hamra to get food and then hid at grid point 1052 1 kilometer 500 South West of El-Hamra."\textsuperscript{89} There, in an abandoned safe house, they hid arms and provision and found much-

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\textsuperscript{85} Mounira, Interview by author, July 13, 2011. "They would bring us food and I would prepare it for them. They would come and eat, mostly at night."
\textsuperscript{86} Jean-François Lyotard, Bill Readings, and Kevin Paul Geiman. \textit{Political Writings} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 200. On this aspect, Lyotard writes that all young Algerians between the age of eighteen and twenty-five were recruited. He notes that the mass of the Algerian combatants was made up of "young peasants with an average age of around twenty."
\textsuperscript{87} Bakir. Interview by author. Mansourah, July 18, 2011.
\textsuperscript{88} Joseph. Interview by author. Angoulême, January 5, 2012.
\textsuperscript{89} Battle of El-Hamra, Personal files of Joseph, Angoulême, France.
\end{flushright}
needed rest.\textsuperscript{90} High up on the slope of the mountain, they had found a natural hideout in the cliffs.\textsuperscript{91} Joseph recalled the hideout of the FLN in the mountain of El-Hamra as follows: "We called it 'stone house,' but it was simply a scree of rocks and debris."\textsuperscript{92}

View from the "stone house", hideout of the FLN soldiers during the war, July 2011 (photo by author)

El-Hamra's strategic location in the mountain next to an "impregnable refuge" as well as the political reality that its inhabitants were on the side of the FLN facilitated the transit of large

\textsuperscript{90} In a testimony, Ali a very young FLN soldier at that time, told me about the war conditions. Quite \textit{unexpectedly}, he told that he did not suffer from fear or hunger, but first and foremost from the lack of hygiene and sleep. He said: "Making ambushes and assaults, it was a game for me. I was only 14! (...) "And I have never felt hunger (...) I suffered above all from the lack of hygiene and the lack of sleep. I had lice, I scratched myself until I bled. The problem also is that we wore Pataugas (light wearing shoes) that we never took off because we could leave anytime. I used to take them off once a day, when I woke up. I would then pour water in them to unstick my bleeding feet from the shoes. (...) The hardest thing was the lack of sleep. It was hell. I had the impression of walking at least 15 miles. It was perhaps 3 or 6 miles. I remember I walked aware. I dreamt of sleeping with animals in a stable, anywhere, but just to sleep!"

\textsuperscript{91} Fruit of my own observation, as I went there with a FLN soldier on July 22, 2011.

\textsuperscript{92} Joseph. Interview by author. Angoulême, January 5, 2012.
numbers of FLN fighters, arms, and funds across Algeria. The FLN combatants would stop by El-Hamra to go to Tunis, but as stressed by Talib, a former FLN political commissar in the region, "When they leave Palestro, they were not armed. They leave carrying sticks and returned with at least two weapons. But they do not all make it there." Talib's use of the word "stick" should be read symbolically. It represents the differential of power existing between the ALN and the French military. In the same vein, Bakir said, "They had bullets and we had sticks." Yet, in fact, the ALN was supplied with arms and ammunitions, including military rifles, submachine guns, automatic rifles, mortars, bazookas, grenades and anti-tank rockets. But they faced forces equipped with heavy artillery, tanks, and planes. Additionally, at certain times and in some areas, the ALN suffered from weapons shortages. Talib uses the present tense, as if he described a war routine of walking through the narrow gorges of Palestro, which Marcel, a French soldier serving the region, describes as "a cut-throat area."

Palestro was a transit point to Tunisia, a country, which along with Morocco, had served as a base for the FLN troops since their independence in 1956. In Tunisia, as in Morocco, the FLN could rest, train and find arms and supplies. In 1956, the *maquis* in Algeria received about five hundred weapons per month from Tunisia and three hundred weapons per month from Morocco. Yet, at the time of our study, 1959, France had completed the construction of the

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93 Joseph. Interview by author. Angoulême, January 5, 2012
94 Talib. Interview by author, July 17, 2011.
96 Marcel, Interview by author, June 17, 2011. Palestro is a place echoing in the colonial imagination with the FLN ambush against the French military, and the loss of 19 French reservists from the Paris region and the gruesome memory of bodies being castrated, disemboweled and stuffed with stones. Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's undeclared war* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 166.
98 Ibid.
"Morice line," a "network of electrified and mined barbed wire" that served to isolate the two countries from Algeria and prevent arms smuggling. In the Sahara, smugglers operated under the gaze of French military surveillance. The barbed wires were "supplemented by batteries of cannons that would fire automatically when set off by radars." By mid-1958, the Morice line had significantly limited the supplies of weapons to Algeria. Shrader gives significant figures: "Of 23,000 weapons delivered to the FLN in Tunisia in the first three quarters of 1958, only 4,300 passed into Algeria, in the first quarter, 1,300 in the second quarter, and none in the third quarter."

**El-Hamra, an under-controlled village**

Despite *harka* surrounding El-Hamra, the village still largely escaped the French military's control. In El-Hamra, there was no school or clinic run by SAS officers charged with the administration of rural areas. Contact with the French military was intermittent and often took sudden, violent and terrifying forms. Bakir remembers that the French army would come by the road. "They had repaved the road to access the village," he said. General Faivre, who served in Algeria during the war, remembers the construction of roads during the war as an example of progress brought to Algeria by French rule. However, as clearly stated by Colonel Buis in a report dated from March 3, 1959, the road infrastructure helped the French army "destroy the

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101 Shrader, *The first helicopter war: logistics and mobility in Algeria, 1954-1962*, 221-222. These figures varied along time. "The flow of men and weapons to the rebels in the Wilayas was not stopped, but after mid-1960 it was reduced to insignificance."
102 Ibid., 221.
organized rebel forces and ensured easy control of the populations.”\textsuperscript{104} In El-Hamra, the French army would come by the road to conduct thorough searches, moving from house to house. Yet, because of El-Hamra’s location on the slopes of a mountain, the population had time to see the French army coming up the road. Bakir recalls the organization of the resistance in El-Hamra. Each had a specific role to play: "There was always a guard who would shout: "France is coming!' We would hide our belongings. We would take care of that.”\textsuperscript{105}

His most vivid memory of the French army’s presence in El-Hamra is associated with a combing operation conducted in El-Hamra. That day, the French military was looking for them. He recalls: "My brothers, my mother, and I were always moving from one house to another. The army was looking for us because my father and my uncle had joined the struggle and my mother worked for the \textit{fellaghas} (FLN). She prepared food for them. My father or grand-mother would arrange for us to stay with distant relatives." Interestingly, Bakir employed the pejorative term \textit{fellagha} to describe the FLN combatants. The French army would use that term to vilify their enemies and criminalize their action. The FLN fighters were, as the word implies in Arabic, only bandits and highwaymen. The reappropriation of the term \textit{fellagha} does not necessarily connote a negative meaning. It could be read as a positive statement about the strength and will of resisters defined as criminals by the colonial discourse.

The French army kept a record of rebels full of information obtained by various methods, including the use of torture and Algerian informants. Joseph, a French conscript who served in the region, said: "the French army had files on all the rebels of all \textit{douars} (villages in Algerian

\textsuperscript{104} IH 2947/1
\textsuperscript{105} Bakir. Interview by author, July 18, 2011.
These techniques of surveillance exemplify the colonial powers' capacity at gathering information to constitute the knowledge necessary to identify and map the enemy. In the words of Foucault, the goal was "to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals" to better control them.

Bakir's mother and her children constantly moved and stayed with relatives in El-Hamra. In the course of their escape, they felt hunted, always under the threat of being detected. Bakir recalls with great pain the strong feelings of anxiety his mother experienced when the French military conducted a *ratissage* (raking-up), searching the village of El-Hamra by force.

We had hardly settled down in another house. We were staying with the sister of my grandmother. In this house, there was a yard with a chicken coop. They (the French military) had settled on our doorstep. An Algerian, a conscript in the French army, not a *harki*—came to talk to us. He told us: 'They are looking for you but don't be afraid. Don't do anything that could be deemed suspicious. We will stay here for three days, and I will be the guard. Everything they request from you, you give them. If they ask for eggs, you give it to them, if they ask for chicken, you give it to them. You do not refuse. You do not say no! I'll take care of the rest!' The guard would usually be changed daily. But he bribed them with food. The grandmother was smart. She gave them chicken. She made coffee and eggs for them. We were just scared her daughter, who was mentally retarded, would talk. My mother was scared to death because she had 20 kilos of coffee and sugar hidden in one of the rooms we occupied. She remained sick from these three days until the end of her life.

Through this poignant anecdote that exhibits the power relations between the population and the French military, we can go beyond the strict roles of the colonizer and colonized and the

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106 Joseph, Interview by author, Angoulême, January 5, 2012.
107 Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 143.
109 Bakir, Interview by author, July 18, 2011.
dichotomy of domination and subjugation in order to capture human agency and strategies of resistance. The Algerian conscript, who by definition was compulsorily enrolled for service in the French forces, helped Bakir's family to evade the French army's control by advising them not to show any sign of resistance. In addition, this anecdote tells us about the state of fear and apprehension that accompanied *ratissage* operations, which entailed house-to-house raids. This military tactic falls under the category of psychological warfare as Bakir’s account testifies. This situation of potentially uncontrollable events was a source of great anxiety for Bakir's mother. She was certainly fully conscious of the danger involved. The risks were indeed high. A report by Colonel Buis states, "The circulation of food goods (through the sector) is controlled, including those for family meals, namely: cereals, wheat, barley, maize and derived products (flour, meal), rice, pulses, grain, sorghum, pasta, beet and cane sugar, coffee, milk with or without sugar in liquid, solid or paste, olive oils, peanuts and other seeds, crude or refined, dates, dried figs, canned meat, sardines, tuna."

The idea was to prevent the population from "misappropriating" food supplies by giving them to the FLN.

**Getting the rebels out of their hideout**

On their way back and forth to Tunis, the FLN fighters stopped in El-Hamra, and more precisely "at the grid point 1052 1 kilometer 500 South West of El-Hamra." High up on the slope of the mountain, they had found a natural hideout in the cliffs. Joseph recalls:

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110 IH 1890/D1
111 Battle of El-Hamra, Personal files of Joseph, Angoulême, France.
112 Fruit of my own observation, as I went there with a FLN soldier on July 22, 2011.
Many of us had died [there]. Their hideout was about 100 meters square. They knew that with light weapons, we could not get them out. That day, the airplanes got them out.113

"That day", the French military did "get them out," yet not alive. Joseph alludes, in the above lines, to a military operation led by Colonel Buis on March 20 to March 22, 1959, which caused the death of 72 FLN soldiers.114 Not all were killed. Many ALN soldiers managed to escape, among them Colonel Amirouche, chief of Willaya 3 since 1958.115 Joseph, who arrived on the scene of the battle on March 23 to count and identify the dead, said: "It was not every day that we caught that many!" To “catch that many" and Colonel Amirouche, in particular, Colonel Buis, who commanded the military operation, had deployed all means he judged necessary, including manpower, heavy artillery, armored tanks and airplanes.116 Bruno, a French soldier who served in Mansourah and witnessed the arrival of the French troops recalls, "I really know about it because the whole bataillon took part in it. They came from the roads and by train. There were many bataillons--at least 3000 men. It was really big. The air forces even came along!"117 On March 20, the whole area was closed off and they searched for traces of the rebels. On March 22, the traces of a katiba, or company were found "at grid point 1052."

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114 Battle of El-Hamra, Personal files of Joseph, Angoulême, France. According to the archival document, 72 FLN soldiers were counted dead. Yves Courrière in La guerre d'Algérie writes that 73 FLN soldiers were killed. (428) Yet, at the time of the publication of his book in four volumes (1968-1971), he did not have access to the public military archives on the war. His work remains an invaluable source of information on the Algerian war, based on documents that he had collected during the war, while serving in the military, and testimonies of eyewitness accounts.
115 Joseph. Interview by author. Angoulême, January 5, 2012. Joseph said : "Personally, I had never seen such an operation, where 100% of them were killed. I think they were betrayed by the GPRA (French acronym for Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne). This is also what Yves Courrière suggests (he reads the line): 'the GPRA could then sleep in peace.'"
116 Joseph. Interview by author. Angoulême, January 5, 2012. Joseph said in a sarcastic tone: “Buis would have been happy to find Amirouche there. It would have been a nice catch and he would have got promoted!” But Amirouche was caught a few days later on March 29, 1959.
117 Bruno, telephone interview with author, December 27, 2011.
In the afternoon started what Joseph described as "a ballet of airplanes." The population of the region in El-Hamra and in Mansourah all vividly remembered the "spectacle" of bombings and utter violence - a "gloomy festival of punishment"\textsuperscript{118} in Foucault's words. The villages situated close to the battlefield, like that of El-Hamra or at a greater distance such as Mansourah, were linked through the collective memory of a shared experience: the intensely visible orchestration of killings. Talib, a former FLN political commissar in Mansourah, recalls massacres cloaked in the colors of the red flag, saying, "they (the French military) used asphyxiating gas, blue and red-colored smoke." Bakir from El-Hamra, remembers watching with alarm as the sky darkened. "It was a sunny day. The sky suddenly turned black. It was the afternoon. The sun was in the West. We thought they were using gas. We later learned it was napalm." Jawed from Mansourah remembers the image of "fluorescent flames, which came down the sky." He made a hand gesture to represent the shape of the flames falling on the ground and burning everything around. "They bombed with napalm! [The FLN soldiers] waved white flags, but they bombed them!" All made mention of that day, remembering their experience of the "spectacular" violence of the bombings from afar, memories of a vivid sensory experience belying a reality not wholly perceived. The faraway witnesses' memories of past bombings in the present may be different in content, but similar in effect. The violence of the bombings was a sheer manifestation of colonial power. In the words of Hannah Arendt, "violence is nothing more than the most flagrant manifestation of power."\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{118} Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 8.
It is interesting to note that the very nature of the killings is still cause for controversy and anxieties. Did the French military use napalm or gas? Talib said with a quick and almost scientific deduction:

They did not use napalm. They killed them with gas. Napalm burns everything. They were asphyxiated, and to make sure they were dead, they shot them down. They cut off their ears, took off their clothes and took away their weapons.120

Joseph, who arrived on the scene of the battle the day after, made an inductive argument based on his own observations:

I don't think they used a lot of napalm. I've seen people who were bombed with napalm, and the guy who is 1.80 meters tall, he shrinks to 1.60 meters after that. He has no shoes left, nothing, entirely naked. Napalm is 1000 liters of gasoline that falls on your head and when it hits the ground, it burns.121

Yet, according to an archival document obtained by a French veteran of the Algerian war, the French military did use napalm during the battle of El-Hamra.122 It does make mention of "the machine-gunning and dropping of bidons spéciaux (special cans)" on the position of the rebels. In fact, the French military made wide use of napalm, known under the military code name "bidons spéciaux" during the war.123 Paulin, a French conscript who served in the region from July 1958 to April 1960 said in a frank manner on a still-controversial subject: "Yes, during

120 Talib. Interview by author, July 17, 2011.
122 Letter from the Ministry of Defense and Veteran affairs, July 11, 2011. Personal file, Nancy, France. The letter gave me permission to consult archives which are subject to an access restriction, under certain limited conditions. The access to military archives on the use of napalm during the Algerian war is restricted. One needs special permission from the Ministry of Defense and Veteran affairs to consult these archives. Once obtained, reproductions from archive materials are not allowed. Additionally, no information likely to harm "state security, national defense and the protection of privacy" can be disclose.
all major military operations, we used napalm. Whenever the air forces were there, we used the napalm.”

Joseph described the effects of napalm on the body with a "scientific" detachment, carefully avoiding considering any psychological effects:

It's an explosion for a few seconds, the guy is not burnt, his skin does not become black, it is barely red. Muscles contract. The body shrivels, in an almost fetal position. The legs are slightly bent (...) I’ve seen all the dead from the battle of El-Hamra. One of the fellagha we had caught, the one with the backpack full of stones (that the French army had forced him to carry as a means to prevent escape), had to identify all the dead. The dead I saw them. They were killed by 75 mm shells that had exploded against the stones. (...) There was no napalm, or very little. Shards of rocks and shells killed them. It was not the shells, it was the shards of the rocks that killed them.

What was the scope of the use of napalm during the battle of El-Hamra? It remains difficult to assess, because the only survivor of the battle I have met could not talk about it. Every time he tried to tell the story of the war, he started crying. Until today, he is haunted by nightmares. Was he captured alive with Amirouche's private secretary and asked to identify the corpses of his comrades? Did he witness the horror of the mutilated Algerian corpses? Joseph confessed for the first time in his life, with discomfort and embarrassment, that the dead bodies of the FLN soldiers were left on the battlefield with mutilated genitalia:

I'll tell you something I've never said before. I think that all the corpses found in El-Hamra had their penises removed I think that they had cut off their genital parts... They were dead. I do not know who did that. Perhaps the harkis, the Algerian tirailleurs? The para? Perhaps the Algerian tirailleurs did that to grill them? Is it an act of war? I do not know (...) This is an extreme form of humiliation. I did not want to see everything. I think the Algerian tirailleurs did it,

124 Paulin, Interview by author, December 28, 2011.
I saw them fighting, we had completely disoriented them. They fought against their brothers. Their brains were a little... There were 72 of them!\textsuperscript{126}

Still under shock at what he saw on the battlefield decades ago, Joseph finds it hard to give rational explanations for the violence. Uncertain of who committed the crime, he insists on the possibility that Algerian \textit{Tirailleurs}\textsuperscript{127} was responsible, thereby largely dismissing the participation of the French military at large. He hints at the paratroopers, remembered for their use of extreme forms of violence against civilians and rebels alike during the battle of Algiers (1957), to only further insist on the possibility that "Algerian \textit{tirailleurs}" committed such an act.\textsuperscript{128} He imagines that Algerian \textit{tirailleurs} may have mutilated dead bodies in order to "grill" them, thereby resurrecting the old image of cannibalistic tendencies among Algerians. The attribution of cannibalism to Algerians, a practice associated with "savagery" and "barbarism" has a twofold function: it is a way of "othering" Algerians which may at the same time exculpate the French troops, inversely portrayed as "civilized" and therefore incapable of such an act. Yet, he admits the disorienting effects of war on soldiers recruited in Algeria to fight "against their brothers," in other words, against each other. Additionally, after falling into the trope of the "barbarian" native, Joseph considers the purpose of such an act to be humiliation. The post-mortem mutilation of genitals could be understood as a form of humiliation after death presumably not aimed directly at the dead but at the living. The act is one of terror meant to instill fear in the population. Then comes the question of the audience. The act was mostly

\textsuperscript{126} Joseph. Interview by author. Angoulême, January 5, 2012.
\textsuperscript{128} Martha Crenshaw, \textit{Terrorism in Context} (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 482.
directed at those capable of fully identifying themselves with the mutilated bodies, i.e. the rebels arrested on the battlefield and possibly civilians from the villages surrounding the battlefield. The act also carries a strong symbolic signification. The rebels collectively emasculated through a graphic display of dominance.

The practice of mutilating dead bodies and leaving them on display was not rare during the war. It mirrored in some ways a practice used by the FLN against the French. For instance, "it was not uncommon to find soldiers, especially harkis, with their throats slit and their testicles stuffed in their mouths." The overwhelming spectacle of mutilated bodies contributed greatly to radicalize both sides. Photos of bodies mutilated at the hands of the FLN were used as propaganda against the FLN within the French military. Marcel, a French soldier who served in the region, recalled photos circulating during the classes, soldiers' basic training after recruitment:

Before leaving (for Algeria), we passed around pictures of mutilated bodies. (...) It showed the horrors committed by the FLN. I remember one whose throat had been slit with genitals in his mouth. We were told: "See what they can do? You better walk straight!"

The photos were meant to instill fear of "anything that was Arab or Berber."

These examples show the complexity of violence and its multiple use by both sides engaged in psychological warfare. In the words of Martha Crenshaw, "violence in Algeria was often calculated for effect, but these calculations could be motivated by the desire for revenge as

130 Stora, 1830-2000: a Short History, 44. A point of rupture was the FLN led-massacre of Pieds noirs in Philippeville on August 20, 1955. Jacques Soustelle, then Governor general of Algeria, arrived on the scene of the massacre and "overwhelmed by the spectacle of mutilated European cadavers, now gave the French army carte blanche."
131 Marcel, Interview by author, June 17, 2011.
132 Ibid.
much as the desire to produce a change in the behavior of the adversary. One should add that it produced a change in the behavior of the French military itself.

Pacifying the area: a case for systematic resettlement

Reports by Colonel Buis, commander in chief of the military sector of Hodna-West, which includes the villages of Mansourah and El-Hamra, are tangible evidence of the application of counter-revolutionary doctrine by the French military in the region of Mansourah specifically and in Algeria at large. Colonel Buis seeks to demonstrate the importance of pacifying the area, a crossroad for the rebels. He argues that pacifying the area implies the systematic *regroupement* of the population. At the time of his writing in October 1958, 12 resettlement operations had already been carried out in his sector. An estimated 20,000 Algerians had already been resettled. Yet, the region needed "a few (other) resettlements" to be entirely pacified.

Buis considered *regroupement* fundamental to the pacification of the region. He was not the only military commander to think that way. Most French officers regarded it as a panacea for all problems. Yet, at the time of his reports (1958-1959), the practice of *regroupement*, largely improvised and widely applied in Algeria as a means of fighting against the rebellion, was beginning to be reconsidered. Several official reports pointing to the extremely poor living conditions of the resettled population were produced. Two months after De Gaulle's return to power on May 29, 1958, General Raoul Salan, then delegate general of the government, commissioned reports on the situation in the eight departments of Algeria. One of them stressed

133 Crenshaw, *Terrorism in Context*, 484.
134 I/1990/D1
135 Cornaton, *Les regroupements de la décolonisation en Algérie*. 44
the necessity to be concerned with the living conditions of the resettled population. At about the same time, in Kabylia, General Olié had expressed his moral reservations about the deplorable living conditions of the resettled population. On October 11, 1958, he enjoined the military commanders under his command to not carry out any other resettlement operations in the East of Algeria. On March 31, 1959, Paul Delouvrier, then general delegate in Algeria, moved to stop the practice of resettlement and organize the existing *regroupements* camps. Yet, military commanders were convinced of the usefulness of *regroupement* as a counter-insurgency strategy and often resettled the population "in contradiction to directives from the civilian government."

In Colonel Buis’s view, the "humanitarian" argument did not hold. The lack of proper housing accommodation was no excuse for not undertaking *regroupement* operations. In a report dated October 1958, to the Army General, commander of forces in Algeria, Colonel Buis expresses this view in a bold and blunt manner: "leaving unattended ("laisser dans la nature") a group of hamlets that receives the visit every two nights of rebels under the pretext that we lack tents (*guitounes*) while there is a few kilometers away a center of *regroupement* is a serious mistake." Nonetheless, the increase in humanitarian concerns within the military made it necessary for him to prove the utility of conducting “a few resettlements” ("quelques *regroupements*”) to his military superiors in Kabylia. It is possible that Buis added an economic argument to make a stronger case for resettlement. In a report to the General commanding the

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137 Ibid., 37.
138 Ibid., 50-51.
140 Ibid., 255.
141 1H1990/D1
19th Infantry Division and the Western area of Constantine dated from March 3, 1959, Colonel Buis alludes to the "national" and even "international" dimension of the oil pipeline crossing the area and the "disproportionate propaganda value" any attack against it would have. In his fantasy of "total" pacification of the area, he insists on the urgency and significance of protecting the pipeline, stressing that "apart even from any psychological consideration, if the pipe has for the economy of the nation the importance that the governmental statements give it, it does not seem acceptable that the maximum is not done to ensure its security."

Oil in Algeria was discovered in June 1956 and its exploitation began in December 1957. According to Hocine Malti, its discovery and the promises of the wealth to be gained delayed the end of the war by at least two years. De Gaulle believed that oil would allow the industrial development of Algeria. Rejecting the FLN claims for independence and believing instead that an improved economic situation would be sufficient, he said on December 7, 1958: "Algeria's industrial development will be its revolution." The 659 kilometer pipeline crossed the Sahara and the Hodna to arrive in the port of Bougie, situated 180 km East of Algiers. It ran through the region from North to South and crossed the village of M'zita, which according to the map legend (see map below) was a "center" of regroupement, the largest in the area.

Buis appears obviously annoyed with the French military's habituation to routinized FLN attacks. In contrast to the psychological impact attacks against the pipeline would have, he adds,
"A road cut, a train blown up, are unfortunate incidents but they are accepted, they have become part of everyday life. They are considered to be normal corollaries of this war." The French military had indeed grown accustomed to these types of attacks. Actions were taken and followed regularly to prevent them. Marcel, a French soldier who served in the region at the time, recalled the daily routine of checking for any sign of attack: "Our mission was to monitor the railroad track from Mansourah until the tunnel every morning. We walked along the tracks to make sure there was no bomb or that they (FLN) had not dismantled the tracks of the railroad."

But Buis considers preventive measures (monitoring the area) or post-incident actions (repairing the material damage) as insufficient.

By invoking the importance the government gave to the pipeline, Buis tried to convince his superiors of regroupement’s benefits, though in reality the protection of the pipeline was not of central concern. Fabrice, who served in the region at that time, says, "I don't remember much about the pipeline. It came from the Sahara and passed by Mzita. We would monitor it, protect it, we would make sure the fellagha (FLN) had not destroyed it, but that's it. I would say it was a secondary mission. I have a few pictures of it if you want." The protection of the pipeline, a seemingly "photographic curiosity", was part of a routine inspection of the area. Buis’s insistence on ensuring its security should probably be understood as a way to justify resettlements. There is a sort of logic in place whereby it becomes unclear what is the goal and what is the reason for the goal, i.e. we cease to be able to discern whether regroupement is the end or the means. It is a kind of a circular rationale that inevitably leads to the bottom line that asserting state power by any means is the sole purpose. All other activities appear incidental.
Resettling the population of El-Hamra, from the map to reality

The village of El-Hamra is circled in orange, meaning the population had to be resettled. Red arrows representing the "paths of the rebels" criss-cross the village of El-Hamra. A blue arrow shows the direction of the resettlement towards Mansourah. (photo by author)

The French military archives contain a map sketched with color pencils in an almost childlike manner. The map shows a topography of Mansourah region and necessary measures to carry out its "pacification". The operations of *regroupement* appear key. The map is authorless but was clearly drawn after reports made by Colonel Buis. The logic behind the operations of resettlement is evident in this report. The focus is on the Beni-Ouagag, the Biban and the Hodna, "the hub of the rebellion." The population who lived near the haunts of the rebels had to be systematically resettled. That way, the rebels would be reduced to living in "arid areas with no

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149 H1990/D1
150 Ibid.
water and no proper houses (démunies d'eau et d'habitat).”

At that time, the population of the village of Beni Ouagag had already been resettled. In the words of Joseph, "the village had been emptied and crushed. There was not a single house left standing." Yet, in March 1959, at the time of Buis’s second report, some villages situated along the path of the rebels remained intact and continued to serve as refuge and support for the FLN. The village of El-Hamra was one of them. On the map drawn after Colonel Buis’s reports, El-Hamra was circled in orange, meaning the population had to be resettled. Red arrows representing the "paths of the rebels" criss-crossed the village of El-Hamra. A blue arrow shows the direction of the resettlement towards Mansourah.

The timeline of regroupement in Mansourah is not really clear. The oral testimonies point to conflicting dates. Their experiences of temporal distance vary. Some situated the operation in March 1958 while other in January 1960. This point highlights the fragility and "fundamental vulnerability of memory" which, in the words of Paul Ricoeur, results from the absence of the thing remembered and its presence in the mode of representation.” Interestingly, a recurring image to situate the event chronologically was the bombing of the area with napalm. Achraf, who identified himself as from Ouled Abbas, "mechtas (hamlets) Djedida et Merdja” situated 5 km South West of El-Hamra: "We were evicted a few weeks after the battle. It is because of this battle that they drove us out.”

151 1H1990/D1
152 Interview with Joseph, December 2011.
153 Ricoeur, Memory, History, Forgetting, 58.
154 SAS 120 - ANOM
155 Achraf, Interview by author, July 14, 2011.
The military archives can help us situate the event with more precision. Colonel Buis wrote in a report, dated March 3, 1959, that the regroupment of the population of El-Hamra in Mansourah was to be completed at the latest by August 15, 1959. The battle of El-Hamra, which occurred on March 20, 1959, might have hastened the decision to resettle the population from El-Hamra in Mansourah. In a larger context, we can situate the event either before or in the very beginning of the *Jumelles* (binoculars) military operations, which occurred between July 1959 and March 1960 in the 3rd *Wilaya* and were characterized by large-scale, combined operations against the ALN forces. General Challe who was placed in command of all forces in Algeria and his commandos' achieved decisive results and broke up the 110 strong-katibas or compagnies in the *Wilaya* of Kabylia, which was already weakened by internal purges. The *Jumelles* military operations, as their name suggests, relied on intense aerial visual and photographic reconnaissance to document the enemy. Aerial intelligence provided by air forces allowed an almost instantaneous response by the army on the ground.\(^{156}\) This is another instance of the deployment of colonial power through surveillance and documentation.

**How did it happen? Beyond the silence of archives**

The reports by Colonel Buis give us some insights into why and when the population of El-Hamra was regrouped in Mansourah. They show that the operations of regroupment were planned and supervised at a high level of military command. Indeed the reports were addressed to the Commanding General of the 19th Infantry Division and the Constantine west zone. Despite these useful insights, however, the archives are silent about how it actually happened. It

is as if resettlement was comprised of a mere order and an apparent implementation of that order. The testimonies of those involved, however, reveal that it was disorder that prevailed during the settlement process. This shows the relevance of oral history in overcoming lapses and silences imposed on history. In the words of oral historian Alessandro Portelli, oral history can "reveal unknown events or unknown aspects of known events."\textsuperscript{157}

All the testimonies of the interviewees from El-Hamra stress the suddenness of the operation. Inhabitants of El-Hamra saw the French army coming up the only asphalted road in the area and entering the village. The villagers were forced to leave hastily. The return of memory takes place "in the mode of becoming an image."\textsuperscript{158} Most of them had in mind the image of the French army’s American GMC trucks, and one of them added that of tanks. Abdessalem, originally from El-Hamra, recalled the event as follows: "They attacked in the morning. They arrived with trucks and tanks. They gathered the population and threw them out in Mansourah." Through the use of the third person in the narrative of the event, Abdessalem casts himself as a distance observer. Yet, he was a direct eyewitness and participant in the \textit{regroupement} operation, which he remembers as an "attack" set upon with violent force as a semantic analysis suggests ("attacked," "tanks"). Abdessalem’s account is elliptic. What happened between the moment in which the French military attacked and drove the population to Mansourah? According to most interviewees, some walked under military escort with their herds of livestock the eleven kilometers that separate the village of El-Hamra from the village of Mansourah. Others were carried by truck to the closest military outpost in Mansourah. In the words of Paul Ricoeur, "to remember (se souvenir de) something is at the same time to remember oneself (se souvenir de

\textsuperscript{158} Ricœur, \textit{Memory, History, Forgetting}, 7.
Bakir, who at the time was only a child, remembered himself "alone in a truck." He said: "the soldier did not want me to get in the same truck as my mother." He added: "My mother cried out in fear: 'he is my child!' but they started the truck up!"

These testimonies highlight the level of coercion and violence in the rehousement operation and complicate the discourse on "voluntary" rehousement put forth by the French military. The official typology made a distinction between "spontaneous" rehousement and "forced" rehousement. Yet, sociologist Michel Cornaton highlights the deceptive use of the word "spontaneous" in the official nomenclature. There was no voluntary rehousement but only a few concerted cases, where the population sought the protection of the French army. Buis in his reports consistently presupposes the population's will and natural inclination to be resettled. He writes in October 1958: "everywhere in the countryside, the population is ready to be cut off from the rebels (...) It must (then) be systematically carried out." Interestingly, he carefully disguises the unilateral nature of rehousement, saying "if not requested (by the population)," it should be "at least consented to."

But what kind of alternatives would be given to those who refused, who were not "willingly" disposed, "naturally" inclined to agree, or ready to obey? The population from Ouled Abbas, a clan part of the tribe of El-Hamra who lived in a group of hamlets a few hundred meters away from the village of El-Hamra, remembered being given the "choice" between being resettled or being constituted as a harki "self-defense" village considered loyal to the French military and "traitors" to the FLN. Achraf recalled the decisive scene as follows: "We were

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159 Ricœur, Memory, History, Forgetting, 3.
160 Cornaton, Les regroupements de la décolonisation en Algérie, 56.
161 Ibid. 56.
resettled a few days after those from El-Hamra (the main clan). We did not want to leave Ouled Abbas. A French officer was there. He told us: "you won't be resettled providing that you are on our side." We did not want that. They put us into a truck and took us to Mansourah.162

In El-Hamra as in Ouled Abbas, the forceful eviction of the population took place in the context of destruction. "The being of the past can be said in many ways," but the common images are of properties set on fire.163 Bakir described a scene in which the French military set stockpiled crops and houses on fire. The French army would generally destroy the abandoned houses to prevent them from falling into the hands of insurgents. Bruno, a French soldier who served in Mansourah from May 1957 to March 1958 recalled taking part in the practice of systematically destroying villages: "We emptied the village [of its population] and burned it. We took the tiles off the roofs and set the houses on fire. The officers insisted that we search the

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162 Achraf, Interview by author, July 14, 2011.
163 Ricœur, Memory, History, Forgetting, 22.
village to not leave anything [in place]. We wiped out the village altogether. The FLN would pass by these villages. We had to destroy them.” According to his description, *regroupement* amounted to a "scorched earth policy." Yet, beyond the military objective (not leaving food and shelter to the FLN) lies another intention: inflicting pain and asserting colonial power. Many share the painful memory of seeing their houses destroyed and set on fire. They felt crushed by the spectacle of flames devouring their houses organized by the French military before their eyes.

*Regroupement, "Staying at friends' house"?*

Once in Mansourah, the population had to fend for itself. "Where would they go after being evacuated? I don't know. They stayed at friends' houses," says Bruno, a French soldier who took part in resettlement operations in the region. Referring to the process of resettlement as one implying "staying with friends" is denying the inherent violence of forced displacement and diminishing the difficulties arising from a forced cohabitation with families of strangers. Jawed, who at that time who was 13 years old, recalled that "they did not speak Kabyle like us." The population from El-Hamra was Arabophone, whereas the inhabitants of Mansourah spoke mainly Berber. There were kinship alliances through marriage between members of families from the two villages, yet forced cohabitations inevitably generated conflicts. Beneath the official discourse of "brotherhood" and "unity" that many articulated lay the reality of tensions between the communities. During a focus group discussion, Brahim, originally from Mansourah, started

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164 Bruno, telephone interview with author, December 27, 2011.
165 Ibid.
166 Jawed, Interview by author, December 19, 2010.
talking about "vendettas" between the families and was immediately interrupted by the other participants.

In Mansourah, the French army did not organize the housing of the population. FLN members in Mansourah facilitated the process of resettlement. They divided up the families. Arrangements were made to house the coming families, in accordance with the space available in each house, and with respect to the local norms and culture. Jawed, for instance, whose mother was a widow, shared his house with three other families of only women and children.\textsuperscript{167} The population was ostensibly resettled to escape the grip of the FLN, yet the final phase of their resettlement was organized by the FLN itself. This appears quite ironic in light of Colonel Buis’s words: one of the "obstacles to the harmonious development of \textit{regroupement} or simply to its success" is "the presence of a cell that has not been dismantled." This proves the intent of resettlement: separating the FLN from the population, putting them in a "box" as if they were pawns on a chess board.

\textbf{Recasement or \textit{regroupement}? A unified objective: increasing the French’s army control over the colonized body and soul}

At the outset of the war, the French army would destroy the abandoned houses to remove them from the hands of the insurgents, and yet no provision was made to rehouse the population.\textsuperscript{168} People resettled near French military outposts would live in handmade camps made of tents or grass huts that did not correspond at all to the needs of people and especially children, both in summer and in winter.\textsuperscript{169} During 1957, when the practice of \textit{regroupement} became generalized

\begin{flushleft}\footnotesize\textsuperscript{167}Jawed, Interview by author, December 19, 2010.\textsuperscript{168}Sutton, "Population Regrouping in Algeria: Traumatic Change and the Rural Settlement Pattern," 332.\textsuperscript{169}Ibid., 332.\end{flushleft}
and systematic, the army created *regroupement* camps, which were not properly equipped.\textsuperscript{170} When the policy of *regroupement* was institutionalized with the creation in 1959 of Inspection Génération des *regroupements* de population (IGRP), a "technocratic pseudo-civilian administration"\textsuperscript{171} in charge of creating and monitoring *regroupement* camps\textsuperscript{172}, the living conditions in these "villages," as they were euphemistically called, improved.

In Mansourah, the population was not resettled in a newly built camp but in an already-existing village. They were rehoused in people's houses. This is a case largely, if not entirely, ignored by the literature on *regroupement*, which is largely focused on *regroupement* in camps. If one refers to the somewhat inappropriate terminology developed by sociologist Michel Cornaton, the *regroupement* in the village of Mansourah could be considered a case of *recasement* (from the root "re-caser" - literally translated as "to put again in a case/box." \textsuperscript{173} Cornaton defines recasement as "the most basic type of displacement. People hunted or seized with fear, will live in nearby towns, either by living within an existing home or building a new house."\textsuperscript{174} He defines *regroupement* as a massive displacement of people and its resettlement,

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 244.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 244. Keith Sutton writes that "while purely military considerations involved in defeating the guerrilla forces dominated the army's thinking, the IGRP and the SAS contained many individuals who wished to turn a military operation into a rural renovation and socio-economic development programme."
\textsuperscript{173} In Les *regroupements* de la décolonisation en Algérie, Cornaton draws a somewhat artificial distinction between of what he believed to be conflated categories in the French official typology: *recasement* and *regroupement*. This distinction between *recasement* and *regroupement* is useful for it highlights substantial variations in the practice of *regroupement* and differentiation in experience of the realities of *regroupement*. There is indeed an actual difference in experience between the individual or collective *recasement* of people in already existing villages and the *regroupement* en masse of people in camps with insufficient resources. The living conditions in camps were much harder. The realities of *regroupement* varied across regions and camps, but when one takes seriously into account intention, cause, practice and effect, the distinction between *regroupement* and *recasement* seems artificial. A broader conceptual approach will encompass the reality of these categories, which affected millions of individuals, and will show the continuation of a practice that varies only in appearance.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 54.
mostly near the area evacuated, in newly created camps. This distinction between recasement and *regroupement* may be useful for it highlights substantial variations in the practice of *regroupement*. Yet, the process of categorization implies a somewhat arbitrary classification of knowledge, which is a reflection of our representation and not of reality itself. The reality of *regroupement* in Mansourah does not fall under the categories Cornaton has developed. Mansourah was not a newly created camp, yet the population did not leave El-Hamra out of "fear" seeking a shelter. It was a planned operation. Therefore, speaking of recasement in Mansourah would be misleading. It was a *regroupement* in an already existing village. Interestingly, the official definition of *regroupement* does not make distinctions between recasement and *regroupement*. *Regroupement* referred to the process of displacement of the population, and the various locations (camps, centers and villages) in which the population was resettled. Hence, a broader conceptual approach will encompass the reality of these categories, which affected millions of individuals and show the continuation of a practice that varies only in appearance. Beyond the clearly stated strategic objective of *regroupement* to wrest the population from the "grip" of the FLN lies the true logic of the practice: transforming the individual into a subject to power by bringing him under the direct surveillance and ubiquitous control of the colonial military apparatus.

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175 Ageron, "Une dimension de la guerre d'Algérie: les 'regroupements' de population." Ageron cites instructions from the 5th Bureau, according to which the *regroupement* centers should not be given the appearance of detention camps. However as stated in instructions signed on September 17, 1957 by the Army Corps General Loth and the Inspector General of Administration, prefect of Constantine, Maurice Papon, these centers were "temporary refugee *camps* (emphasis by me) or relatively permanent." In the same instruction is added that once established definitely, "the term camp must disappear."

176 Ibid., 327.
In this chapter, I have uncovered the significance of El-Hamra as a crossroad for the FLN soldiers on their way back and forth to Tunis and shed light on the incompleteness of French military control over the population despite the (frequent yet not systematic) use of surveillance and documentation techniques in combination with spectacular and intense violence. I have also reconstructed the history of *regroupement* in Mansourah in the sequence of its events.
Chapter two: *Regroupement* as a means of tightening the web of colonial power over the colonized subject.

In the second chapter, I will show how by resettling the population, the French army spun tighter the web of control over the population. In order to do so, I will document the assertion of power in Mansourah through disciplinary means and corporal punishments. I will show how these techniques of exercising power were resisted within the village and how this resistance was met with spectacular violence, including torture, executions and massacre.

"Which feeling of comfort?"

Viewed solely as a military tool at the beginning of the war, *regroupement* came to be seen as a means of economic and social improvement under the Constantine Plan unveiled by General de Gaulle on October 3, 1958.\(^{177}\) The intended social and economic improvements were part of a larger political strategy that the Left in France considered a form of "neocolonialism, an attempt 'at seducing the Algerians."

\(^{178}\) By promising housing for one million people, the reallocation of 250,000 hectares of land to Algerians, the creation of 400,000 jobs, the schooling of all children, and the equaling of incomes to those in the metropole, the government hoped to destroy the ground on which the FLN campaign had spread. The language of the reports by Colonel Buis reflects this evolution: "the population must think of *regroupement* as social advancement." Provide water and electricity to convince the population that the measures taken


are in its best interest. The idea was to woo the population with the comforts of civilization. Electricity and running water, potent symbols of modernity, of modern magic, became symbolic statements that France’s presence in Algeria was beneficial and would bring progress. Here we must explore the distance between intent and reality and between theory and practice.

Some in El-Hamra were indeed struck by the presence of street lamps at the entrance of Mansourah. But beyond this pleasant surprise, they soon realized that electricity did not reach the homes, which diminished any apparent feeling of comfort. Jawed recalls that "there was neither water nor electricity at home. We brought water from the fountain and used an oil lamp as a light source at night." The construction of a fountain in Mansourah was listed as the only effort carried out by the local authorities "in the last five years" in a report by the office of planning at the Prefecture of Setif dated from March 3, 1959. In fact, inside the houses, the feeling was not of modern comfort but of claustrophobia, as families had to share homes and even rooms. In their view, electricity was there for security purposes. The French army could monitor the village more easily at night and identify the enemy attempting to sneak in to get food from the population if there were streetlights.

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179 IH 1890/D1
180 Maurice Faivre. Interview by author. Paris, July 3, 2011. General Faivre considers regroupement as progress. Echoing the official rhetoric, he said: "Well, I agree, at first the resettlement centers were not very comfortable, people lived under tents, then they were asked to build their own houses (...) but once they were settled down permanently and comfortably, there was no problem. For the population resettled, it was viewed as a progress because the children were sent to school, their village was situated on a road, a doctor came to visit them, there was a grocery store where they could get supplies, so for them there was a social and economic progress." In his opinion, certainly influenced by his participation in the resettlement of people living in slums at the outskirt of Constantine in "newly built villages", regroupement was aimed at improving the living conditions of the population.
182 SAS 120
183 To my knowledge, there was no census held after the episode of regroupement. Yet, we can reach an approximation of the total number of inhabitants after the regroupement, by adding to the individuals counted in Mansourah El-Kabira in October 1954 (1047) and the number of people in El-Hamra to be resettled in Mansourah (1000 people). That way, we can approximate 2000 people.
Village of Mansourah El-Kabira at night, July 2011 (photo by author).
One can imagine the FLN soldiers attempting to sneak in at night to get food from the population.

As residents of Mansourah would come to find, streetlights were only the beginning of the fear-inducing methods of surveillance, control, and intimidation deployed by the colonial authorities to subjugate the population. The people of Mansourah swam in a sea of prying eyes with a constant feeling of being observed by the watchtower, native informants, and colonial administration that monitored their movements and activities through methods of documentation designed to make the population legible. Additionally, barbed-wire enclosures created not only a physical but also psychological barrier from the outside world, and while these barriers were constructed ostensibly to protect the population, they did not protect them from random searches by the military and frequent acts of violence and intimidation in the form of torture and rape. This psychological warfare was by no means a one-way street, and the local population as well as the FLN found ways of slipping through the web of colonial power. Yet, even in these acts of
subversion, all caught within this web were affected by the trauma of an order built on fear, suspicious and mistrust in the shadow of war.

**Life in the Crosshairs: Surveillance and Subversion of the Colonial Gaze**

The idea of pervasive colonial surveillance is a recurring theme in the testimonies of the population.184 We should examine the psychological mechanics of power and the ways by which people found themselves entangled in its web in order to better grasp its significance. The interviewees remember the presence of a sentry posted in a watchtower on top of the mountain, "just above the village" that constantly watched the area.185 Mourad, an inhabitant from Mansourah, looked in the direction of the mountain and pointed his finger at it: "There was a sentry posted up there. They had binoculars and watched everything. They were there day and night (...) They could see everything from there."186 In the same vein, Achir, also an inhabitant from Mansourah, remembers, "There was a watchtower posted on the crests (of the mountain), at the top. From there, they dominated the whole valley and monitored the area with binoculars. They could see everything that happened."

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184 Bruno, telephone interview with author, December 27, 2011. An idea also put forward by Bruno, a French conscript who served in Mansourah at the time of the *regroupement*: "We did not resettle the population for humanitarian reasons, this I can ensure you. It was to control the region and its population."


186 Mourad, Interview by author, July 13, 2011.
All interviewees recall the watchful gaze of the French military posted in a watchtower "at the top" of the mountain. The watchtower is of central importance here. Based on the panoptic principle, it procures "for a small number, or even for a single individual, the instantaneous view of a great multitude." Additionally, it is the primary mechanism by which power is made visible and transcendentally felt by the viewer. "We saw the sentry in the morning when we left Mansourah," remembers Mourad. Therefore, the watchtower functioned, to use the words of Foucault, as "a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned." "They watched us with binoculars. We could not venture anywhere," insists Djamel. This memory indicates that each gaze formed "a part of the overall functioning of power." Through the technique of hierarchical observation, it made possible the control and subjugation of individuals. The people of Mansourah were controlled and disciplined simply by

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188 Ibid. 173.
189 Djamel, Interview by author, January 5, 2011.
190 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 171.
the fact or sensation of being under constant observation. The watchtower functioned as a mechanism of disciplinary power in the space of the village. According to Foucault, discipline is a type of power; a subtle one, and at times even invisible. Discipline produces "subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile bodies.'" Disciplinary power operates repeatedly and exhaustively at the level of the body and covertly attempts to mold individual behaviors. In the context of the military-guarded town of Mansourah, a panoply of disciplinary techniques was deployed to shape and train the colonial subject. The art of surveillance was of one them and took many forms.

Of crucial importance in the exercise of disciplinary power is that it should be "visible and unverifiable." Visible in that one must always be confronted by the sight of an observing power and unverifiable because one must never be sure whether or not he or she is being observed yet always assume that it is the case. The sentry posted in the watchtower at the top of the mountain was too far for naked eye for villagers to understand whether surveillance of the area was continuous. Like a black window on a dark night, the mere sight of the watchtower created a certain gaze effect irrespective of whether or not surveillance was actually taking place. In fact, it was probably intermittent. But the population remembers being constantly under the gaze of a pair of binoculars. As Foucault says, "surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action."

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192 Ibid., 182.
193 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201.
194 Ibid., 201.
195 Ibid., 201.
The invisible yet suspicious presence of Algerian informers (or spies) among the population was another form of surveillance that supplemented the eyes of the French military in continuation of the "see/being seen dyad." 196 The population was well aware of the presence of "invisible eyes" that watched over the population and reported any "disobedient" action to the French military. Strangers were like mobile watchtowers, and a matrix of almost infinite gazes crisscrossed the village. Mourad recalls, "Once people were resettled, we were living with people we did not know. Sometimes, they were leaks (fuites). The fellagha (FLN soldiers) would come and eat at night, and the day after, the French military would know about it. We did not know who had given the information. They would come and arrest those who hosted the fellagha. We had to be very cautious." 197

The testimonies reveal that the population had felt powerfully the effect of the gaze. Yet they also shed light on many forms of resistance, "that elude[d] discipline without being outside the field in which it is exercised." 198 Djamel, who was a child at that time, remembers that people in Mansourah El-Kabira had organized themselves to watch the coming of the French military.

The French forbade us to study Arabic. (...) I remember when we went to the mosque to learn Arabic, people were watching. When the army arrived, we had to hide the board on which we learned the Quran. I remember being taught Arabic in Kabyle. 199

Djamel interprets the surveillance of the mosque as evidence of the colonial intent to suppress the colonized's identity. His narrative is embedded in a discourse, which equates the Algerian identity to Arabic and Islam, a discourse developed early by the founder of the Association of

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196 Ibid., 202.
197 Mourad, Interview by author, July 13, 2011.
198 De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, 96.
199 Djamel, Interview by author, January 5, 2011.
Muslim Algerian Ulema Abdelhamid Ben Badis and made explicit in the first FLN declaration of November 1954 and later foundational to the modern state of Algeria. But more than the attempt to suppress the colonized subject’s identity, this instance is evidence of the army monitoring speeches, writings and activities in the Mansourah El-Kabira mosque out of suspicion that they supported the FLN's struggle against the French. In fact, during the war, "mosques, sometimes safe from police informers, became centers to spread news and propaganda for the cause."\textsuperscript{200} Also, this instance or "moment of practice" in Michel de Certeau's terms, appears to be exemplary of the concept of disciplinary power. Djamel expresses the feeling of being under an unequal gaze characterized by the constant possibility of observation. Yet, he also alludes to the fact that the population had developed "tactics" to elude the gaze of the French military and gaze back.

The counter surveillance deployed inside the mosque replicated in some ways that of the French military. Yet, it was not limited to the interior of the mosque. Like in most regroupement "centers," people were organized in secret cells organically linked to the parallel structures of the FLN / ALN.\textsuperscript{201} Some were charged with the surveillance of the village. Talib, an FLN soldier originally from Ouled Abbas, recalled the organization of the secret cell in Mansourah:

\begin{quote}
We had contacts with people in Mansourah. They informed us for instance of the movement of French troops with the aid of electric lamps. They also monitored informers who informed the French army of the presence of ALN soldiers in the village by waving red lights in the dark. The French had informers, but we also
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{201} Bennoune, "La doctrine contre-révolutionnaire de la France et la paysannerie algérienne : les camps de regroupements 1954-1962."
had our informers who would give us information about these traitors. Then, we
would take them and kill them.202

Inhabitants of Mansourah were thus caught in the crossfire of rival gazes as it were.
Informants considered and remembered as traitors to the cause were hunted down and killed
during the war.203 Contrary to the French military who rather routinely had recourse to extra
juridical executions of suspected FLN members, the practice of killing informants was preceded
by judicial decision.204 Yet, revolutionary justice too was expeditive.205 The result was that in
Mansourah, everyone was a potential informant for one or both sides: "The identification of
informers was based on information from the population, which always left room for false
accusation."206 Abdelkrim's testimony sheds light on the fragility of evidence gathered from
observation: "Hanafi, a guy from Mansourah, was suspected by the FLN of working with the
French army and providing information on the villagers. They saw him going up and down. He
was abducted on the road and he was slain. God rest his soul."207 The effect of this exchange of

202 Talib. Interview by author, July 17, 2011.
203 Marnia Lazreg, *Torture and the twilight of empire: from Algiers to Baghdad*, 82.
204 On that note, Jawed remembered that "one day a prisoner escaped from the prison in Mansourah (Centre). And
the guy was a former resistance fighter, and one day we were in the wadi swimming when the army came and asked
"Have you seen someone go through it?" They were with dogs. They told us: "Clear off!" And returning home, we
heard gunfire, and in fact, they found him in a tree. They shot him. It is the first time I felt death close by." Joseph
confessed to me that : "What happened routinely was la corvée de bois... People who had been tortured (...) we got
rid off of them. I think it happened on a large scale. I haven't seen it, I haven't seen it. The only thing I heard about
is related to my captain, he is not dead yet, but... The day two or three of his soldiers, including a non-commissioned
officer, precisely at El-Hamra, in the rocks. They had prisoners. He took a prisoner. He asked the gun to a soldier, he
took the prisoner outside and he told him: "you can go!" and he shot him dead. One of his secretary told him at
night: "captain, what you did this morning is not good! "He never did it again. You know, we like each other when
we are fighting together. When you are a soldier and when one has experienced that (losing a man), when you lose
... (sobbing) I'm sorry, this is the first time it happens. Well, it was a dirty war, it was a bitch."
Press, 2008), 82.
206 Ibid., 82.
207 Abdelkrim. Interview by author, July 11, 2011.
unspecified gazes was ultimately that the boundary between innocence and guilt was a matter of perception.

**Tangled in the Web: Barbed Wire and Enclosure in Mansourah**

All subjects interviewed for this study stressed that the French army had surrounded the village with barbed-wire fences. Some said it happened before the *regroupement*, and others say after. Some stressed that the barbed wires were "the height of a man," another emphasized its length of "2 or 3 kilomoters." Some remembered the barbed wires were electrified, while others totally dismissed this idea: "There were barbed-wire fences but they were not electrified, like that of the Morice line." In the last instance, one could talk of a superposition of memories. Some remembered the barbed wires surrounding Mansourah El-Kabira as "electrified," yet they certainly were not. But as Paul Ricoeur states, we should not treat "the deficiencies stemming from forgetting as pathological forms, as dysfunctions, but as the shadowy underside of the bright region of memory." One should instead examine the representation of the past like that of an image. And the images are those of enclosure(s), by means of barbed wires. In fact, one could use the plural, because the memory of “electrified” barbed wire conveys the sense of several layers of enclosure. In some regard, the image of electrified barbed wire conveys the additional psychological barrier of the kilometers of sharp steel surrounding the village. The impression was of that of immediate and distant enclosure, in Mansourah El-Kabira and along the Tunisian border.

210 Mourad, Interview by author, July 13, 2011.
The barbed wire realized the idea put forth by Colonel Buis: "cutting off"\textsuperscript{212} the rebels from "the population in general and the population living along the hideout area (zone repaire) in particular."\textsuperscript{213} In an inevitable reciprocity, it implied "cutting off" the population from the rebels. In a more abstract sense, the barbed wire divided people in terms of harmless/dangerous and normal/abnormal. The logic in the \textit{regroupement} was reversed. In theory, only the civilians in need of "protection" were enclosed in the village, and the rebels were kept out. The "dangerous" individual posing a threat to society was to be kept outside the delineated space of disciplinary power, and the "harmless" was to be inside. The "normal" individual was to be isolated from the "abnormal". In other words, the population of Mansourah El-Kabira was to be isolated from the FLN, and not the contrary. However, FLN members arrested by the French army were also confined within prison walls in Mansourah Centre, thereby creating an infinite chain of dividing practices.\textsuperscript{214} We might speak metaphorically of a \textit{mise en abyme} of the panoptic logic of surveillance and of disciplinary power at large.\textsuperscript{215}

\textsuperscript{212} 1H 1890/D1 - Constantinois, secteur de Bordj Bou Arreridj, 10ème région militaire - corps d'armée de Constantine - Secteur du Hodna Ouest, 8/10/1958 - "La bande rebelle ne sera réduite aux zônes repaires généralement arides, démunies d'eau et d'habitat, elle n'y souffrira, elle ne s'y démoralisera, elle ne courra le risque de sortir sur ses franges et surtout elle n'y sera avec certitude lorsqu'on décidera de l'y aller chercher, que si elle est coupée de la population en général et de la population qui borde la zone repaire en particulier."

\textsuperscript{213} 1H 1890/D1

\textsuperscript{214} Sylvie Thénault, "Personnel et Internés dans les Camps Français de la Guerre d'Algérie. Entre Stéréotypes Coloniaux et Combat pour l'Indépendance", \textit{Politix}, 69 (2005), 66. During the war, Algerians suspected of belonging to the FLN were placed in internment camps. Within the category of internment camps euphemistically labeled by the French administration as "centers" lie three types of camps: "centres d'hébergement" (CH) created in 1955 and administered by the prefectures, "centres de triages et de transit" (CTT) created in 1957 and administered by the military, and "centres militaires d'internés" (CMI) created in 1958 and administered by the military. While the CTT aimed at collecting information through interrogation and the possible use of torture, and the CMI at re-educating the detainees, the CH legally only aimed at isolating dangerous individuals from the rest of the society. In absence of corroborative evidence, we cannot determine what kind of "center" was present in Mansourah Centre. However, based on the testimony, we can understand the logic of it. The intention was of re-educating the detainees. It encouraged obedience and work.

\textsuperscript{215} Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish}, 191.
Ironically enough, the FLN defeated the primary purpose of *regroupement*—the almost clinical separation of the population from the insurgents—by their very entrance into and presence in the village "under the noses of the guards." The testimonies collected reveal the porousness of the fenced village, to which FLN fighters had continued access. Hence, against Colonel Buis’s wishes or beliefs, resettling the population had not made it "immune to poison"\(^{216}\) (*mithridatisé*), a negative metaphor to refer to the FLN. The population had not "rejected the foreign body, i.e. destroyed it," to further employ Colonel Buis’s medical metaphor; a metaphor that suggests his perception of the FLN as a foreign born movement locally transplanted.\(^{217}\) In fact, the population continued to provide, by or against its will, support to the FLN.\(^{218}\) Interviewees remembered that the FLN had cut the barbed wires at several places to allow a path in and out of the village and entered the village at night to defy the all-encompassing surveillance of the army. To avoid alerting the attention of the French guards, all precautions were taken. Jawed shared an anecdote that struck him as a child: "all dogs were killed. The FLN had given orders to kill all dogs because when they came at night, dogs were barking, so all dogs were killed."\(^{219}\) The FLN often came at night, but also resorted to creativity to enter the village during the day. Achir, one of the interviewees, described the ruse used by the rebels to enter the village

\(^{216}\) [IH 1890/D1](#)


\(^{218}\) Horn, *A Savage War of Peace*, 134. The testimonies are full of references to and accounts of how the FLN imposed itself upon the population by means of violence. It appears that violence used by the French army and the FLN was instrumental and interactive. The population was the bone of contention. The true extent of the violence deployed by both sides was meant to force views upon the population. I do not intend to draw an implicit parallel between the nationalist resistance and the French colonial powers - the FLN had more legitimacy and greater acceptance amongst the population because of its ultimate goal of national liberation. Instead I want to consider the means by which the FLN imposed itself as the sole legitimate representative of the Algerian people. For instance, the FLN would impose the collection of taxes and food supplies on Algerians, and had developed a kind of 'alternative government' to the French system of *caïds.* Djamel recalls that: "The FLN was among us and everyone had to support it. Everyone had to prepare food. There was a dictatorship of the FLN."

under broad daylight: "They (the French military) had left two gates to enter and exit the village. The moudjahidin (FLN fighters) sometimes took advantage of the fact that the flocks entered the village, bellowing and pushing each other, to worm their way inside. They would hide amid the flocks." This is an instance of tactic in De Certeau's term. Tactics take advantage of opportunities, operating "in isolated actions, blow by blow." "It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is guileful ruse." 

However, in the words of Lila Abu Lughod, one should not "read all forms of resistance as signs of the ineffectiveness of systems of power and of the resilience and creativity of the human spirit in its refusal to be dominated." Rather, one should examine the mechanics of power, and the ways in which people are entangled in its web. Some interviewees stressed the repression they suffered from the French military when they discovered that the barbed wires had been cut, evidence of a disobedient affront to its authority. Amra, who provided food and provisions for the FLN during the war said, "The FLN had cut the wires in several places to enter the village. The French military discovered that the barbed wire had been cut and took it out on us." In the same vein, Bakir recalled, stressing the systematic repressive practices of the French military: "Every time the FLN fighters entered the village, the French army came. Informants waved a flashlight through the darkness of the night to let them know the FLN

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220 Achir. Interview by author, July 16, 2011.
221 De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, 37.
223 Amra. Interview by author, July 18, 2011.
The Knock on the Door: Random Searches and Sexual Violence

The interviewees often mentioned the practice of house searches by French troops during the day or at night. It was often remembered as sudden and forced penetration that instilled fear and anger within these communities. The word "penetration," used by female interviewees to describe these sudden visits by the French army in the intimacy of their homes, is meaningful. Indeed, women were often alone at home because "(their) men were not there with (them). They were rather in prison or in the maquis fighting."²²⁵ Using the present tense to reenact the scenes in her own mind, Amra said with a tone of anger: "They (the French military) come at night, they climb the houses, they penetrate our homes."²²⁶ Amra, whose husband, working as a guard for the FLN, had been arrested and held in detention during the war, added: "I was very scared, especially when they came at night and that our men were not there."²²⁷

The French army successfully inculcated fear into the minds of many. In the same vein, Kahina recalled one frightening episode: "They (the French military) came into the house." She stood up, riveted her eyes on the wall behind her and pointed her finger at it, saying: "There were plenty of soldiers standing on the wall and in the courtyard. They were about twenty, French and harki. I was standing alone in front of them. I climbed the stairs to escape them, but one of them ordered me to go down. I went down and tried to escape through the door. But another soldier

²²⁴ Bakir. Interview by author, July 18, 2011.
²²⁵ Amra. Interview by author, July 18, 2011.
²²⁶ Ibid.
²²⁷ Ibid.
blocked me the exit door. I pushed him and ran under his arm. He had time to grab my scarf I had over my shoulders. I ran to the house of my father and there I found as many soldiers."228

Probably out of inhibition, Kahina did not dare disclose her more profound fear: the fear of rape. The village was engulfed in rumors of rape. Jawed, referring to Kahina, said: "My sister-in-law was young and beautiful. She always put black mud on her hair and face to not be desirable, to not be raped. She was afraid of the French army."229 In the same vein, Talib said, referring to "rape" in an euphemistic way: "They (the French military) did the unimaginable!"230 I heard no direct testimony from rape victims, although the issue of sexual violence by the French army was often mentioned by the interviewees, who, when asked to give further details, would remain evasive. The topic remains taboo yet it appears that the practice of rape was widespread during the war.

Historian Raphaëlle Branche studied the silenced yet pervasive practice of rape—an understudied aspect of the Algerian war relying mostly on written and oral testimonies due to the lack of accessible military judicial sources. She found evidence of the practice of rape in regroupement camps in a recent judicial case, pointing out that regroupement camps were an ideal space for committing such violence.231 Her analysis understands rape as a form of physical as well as symbolic violence. She relates it to a desire to subjugate, possess, and humiliate women. This, in turn, affects the whole society.232

228 Kahina, Interview by author, July 7, 2011.
230 Talib. Interview by author, July 17, 2011.
232 Ibid.
Historian Marnia Lazreg notes that "Witnesses to rape, or those who heard about it, seem to express unease, a sign of the complex emotions that the excesses of the war triggered in soldiers." Marcel, who served in the region at that time, expressed embarrassment when asked about forms of violence against the population, including sexual violence. His answer only touches on the violence he witnessed and experienced and entirely eludes the question of rape. Yet he suggests the abuses arising from the position of power and "extreme dominance," to borrow his words, the French army was placed. He gave an example: "The French army made unannounced visits to homes. At midnight, one o'clock, they entered the houses with flashlights, looking if there was nothing suspicious. It was a situation that in retrospect was still pretty hard. It was a very tense situation." Note his use of the pronoun of the third person plural to distance himself from the practice of psychological violence by the French military.

By contrast, Joseph, who served in the region at that time, talked more openly about the practice of rape. "Within the French military, it could only be ordered or tolerated. The regiments of Moroccan tirailleurs, the goumiers (colonial infrantrymen), those ones, you just had to give them permission and the entire village would go through it. I know people who bragged about doing it themselves. What I can say is that it was always allowed or ordered by the captain. I was lucky enough to be under the orders of good officers, I mean, not exactly, I did not tell you everything." Joseph tends to attribute rape to primitive, animalistic tendencies in colonial infantrymen (Moroccan tirailleurs and goumiers), a theme already evoked in his testimony about dead bodies of ALN soldiers subjected to genital mutilation in El-Hamra. His assumption may be based more on perceptions and prejudices than on experience. In fact, at the time of his military

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233 Lazreg, Torture and the Twilight of Empire: from Algiers to Baghdad, 158.
234 Marcel, Interview by author, June 17, 2011.
service (1958-1959), these two Moroccan infantry units he refers to had already ceased to exist since Morocco's independence from French colonial powers in 1956.\textsuperscript{235} Yet, his testimony is important, for it sheds light on the use of rape as a weapon of warfare. He insists several times on the fact that rape was committed, not only with the knowledge of but also by order of the commanding officer of the French troop. Citing an enlisted officer in the Grande Kabylie, historian Marnia Lazreg highlights the "frequency of rape not only during reprisals but also as part of routine search operations."\textsuperscript{236}

Joseph offers a more twisted testimony. If he admits the existence of rape, especially during reprisals, he sees it as a ruse of the rebels:

> When a village did not want to support the rebellion, they (the ALN) tended an ambush (embuscade) to the French military near the village, once, twice and in retaliation the French army went to the village and broke everything. If they broke everything, they raped, etc ... I've never experienced and I've never... I have seen only one person ... a soldier who told me. I think that's true, I think that's true. I remember he told me: 'now you have half an hour (to act), you figure it out!' So they had an order, so they went (to the village) and when they saw a girl, three or four of them held her. You know what it is a rape, I don't know... You have not suffered from it, I hope. So I don't even know how I could have bore it, then no matter, I did not see it. I did not see it and the guy who told me about it, he was a soldier. I know where he lives. I met him once, 30 or 40 years later. He was leaving the café, but he did not want to recognize me. I feel like it has left scars.\textsuperscript{237}

His testimony could suggest a form of denial, i.e. "a disavowal of some distressing truth."\textsuperscript{238} Note the constant interruption of his sentences to correct and adjust his ideas. "I've never experienced and I've never... I have seen only one person ... a soldier who told me." This

\textsuperscript{235} Clayton, \textit{Histoire de l'Armée française en Afrique 1830-1962}, 212. They had ceased to exist since Morocco's independence from France in 1956.

\textsuperscript{236} Lazreg, \textit{Torture and the Twilight of Empire: from Algiers to Baghdad}, 155.

\textsuperscript{237} Joseph. Interview by author. Angoulême, January 5, 2012.

makes us wonder: did he actually witness the rape as his first words suggest? According to Hal Arkowitz, a cognitive therapist, "Denial results in disconnection because knowledge that is available is warded off and not utilized in awareness. Such knowledge is, in some sense, still active in the mind." The interview triggered memories of rape, and Joseph who seems to remain emotionally affected by these memories engages "in continual vigilance to ward off the denied truth." He repeats several times: "No matter, I did not see it." As if repeating it would create another cognitive reality. Beyond this question, it is interesting to note that he perceives rape as a form of torture, unbearable, leaving dark scars. He paints the soldier as a victim of the act of sexual violence he perpetrated, thereby suggesting that the subject and author of rape/torture are both affected by such practice, a theme evoked in a the Alain Resnais' film entitled *Muriel ou le Temps d'un retour* (1963). The memory of rape/torture becomes inescapable for the subject and author of rape. It is even remembered as "torture" by the subjects of rape themselves. Historian Marnia Lazreg notes that "women who survived the war use the code word 'torture' among themselves to mean rape." And even though a French paratrooper interviewed by Marnia Lazreg distinguished between "rape as a tool of torture for securing intelligence" and "rape as comfort", rape constitutes and is instrumental for domination.

**Identity Cards and Permits**

The "art of surveillance" was coupled with "a system of intense registration and of

239 Arkowitz, *Comprehensive Handbook of Cognitive Therapy*, 111.
240 Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: from Algiers to Baghdad*, 158.
241 Ibid., 159.
documentary accumulation. In that sense, it constituted, in Foucault's words "an essential part in the mechanisms of discipline." In Mansourah, the population was required to carry identity cards. This way, they became more "visible" and "legible" to the colonial authorities. The role of the Sections Administratives Spécialisées (SAS) was crucial in this pursuit. They conducted a census of the population, registered their civil status, photographed them, and produced identifying documents. Abdelmounem, an inhabitant from Tizi Khelâa who was resettled in Mansourah Centre in 1956, recalled that "Everyone was put on file. They photographed us in the courtroom. They had gathered everybody there, women, children. They compiled files and took photos." In the same vein, Kahina remembered: "they took us to the village (Mansourah Centre) to take photos of us. They gave us identity cards, so that we could get around. That way, they could identify us." This shows the relevance of Foucault's analysis on the use of small techniques such as notation, registration, and of constituting files to transform individuals into "describable and analyzable objects" and facilitate the "daily exercise of surveillance." In essence, their missions did not differ from that of the officers of the Bureaux Arabes in nineteenth-century Algeria and the Service des Affaires Indigènes in early colonial

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242 Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 189.
243 Ibid., 148.
244 Ibid., 189.
248 Kahina, Interview by author, July 7, 2011.
249 Foucault, Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison, 217.
Requesting Permission to Survive: Permits, Production, and Starvation

On January 19, 1962, Lieutenant Claude Hullo informed the person named Hamlat Ali, resident of Algiers, his authorization request for plowing his "piece of land" for a period of "6 or 7 days" was rejected. The chief of the SAS advances two reasons to reject his request: 1. the land was situated in the forbidden zone at Tizi Khelâa, a village adjacent to Mansourah Centre, and 2. the authorizations for plowing the lands had expired on January 1, i.e. 19 days before. Affirming the possibility of recourse, herewith conferring it a semblance of democratic legality, he added, "In the event of dispute, I ask you to send a new request directly to the military authorities, that of the Deuxième Bureau."251

The requirement of permits to access lands situated in the forbidden zone for the purposes of cultivation was another means of controlling and observing the movement of Algerians during the war. As the case above shows, permits were difficult to obtain, and in fact the military archives are replete with instances of refusal found in the military archives. The right to dispute denial of a permit, which on the surface gave the system an appearance of legitimacy or transparency, often functioned as a bureaucratic buffer zone to postpone the inevitable denial of right. Some would in fact request permits and obtain them, as suggested by the following

250 Jennifer Oneydum, "Humanizing Warfare: the Politics of Medicine, Health Care, and International Humanitarian Intervention in Algeria (1954-1962)" (PhD thesis, Princeton University, 2010), 40. The Bureaux Arabes for the first few decades of the conquest of Algeria were effectively in charge of colonial policy. During that time these officers produced vast amounts of literature on those residing in Algeria.

251 SAS 120 - ANOM - Département de Sétif, Arrondissement de BBA, SAS de Mansourah, Attestation. It is worth noting that the chief of the SAS, a military officer with the rank of lieutenant, saw the role the SAS as "civilian" and that of the Deuxième Bureau as "military." This is not only evidence of the subordination of civilian authorities to the military authorities in Algeria, but to the reorganization of powers and duties within the military regime in place during the war. In this new legal framework, the SAS played the role of "pseudo civilian" authorities.
example: an authorization delivered by the SAS of Mansourah to "Djellouli Douadi Ben Tayeb (registered with Identity card number) YF 20010 and Djelloulo Zouaui Ben Laid (registered with Identity card number RF 29846" to "plow the fields of Mariche Ammar ben Tahar ben Messaoud situated in Ouled Abbas (...) for 15 days as of December 23, 1961."\textsuperscript{252} However, even these examples of successful permit requests illustrated the degree of regulation and bureaucratic hurdles imposed on a population already suffering the broader hardships of the war while trying to eke out a respectable existence on the lands surrounding regrouped villages in the Algerian countryside.

Permits, which limit movement and access, functioned as another "instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible,"\textsuperscript{253} to borrow the words of Foucault. The population in regroupement "centers" needed permits to enter and leave and had to respect curfew rules, and these control measures severely disrupted production and work in the communities.\textsuperscript{254} Djamel, an inhabitant from Mansourah El-Kabira, recalls:

> We had no right to leave whenever we wanted. I do not remember exactly now, but I think at 9 am, you could go out and at 2 or 3 p.m., everyone had to go home. People could not go to cultivate their fields. It was very difficult for them to do so.\textsuperscript{255}

Time has passed, and he does not recall the exact time of entrance and exit, but he remembers the close monitoring and restrictions of movement. Jawed has a similar recollection of the permit system. He recalls that, “We needed permits to harvest our lands. So we had special permits allowing us to go”

\textsuperscript{252} SAS 120 - ANOM - Département de Sétif, Arrondissement de BBA, SAS de Mansourah, Attestation.
\textsuperscript{253} Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish}, 214.
\textsuperscript{254} Cornaton, \textit{Les regroupements de la décolonisation en Algérie}, 101.
\textsuperscript{255} Djamel, Interview by author, January 5, 2011.
Bakir recalls the progressive abandonment of agricultural activities by the population following this bureaucratic tightening, saying

We needed permits to cultivate the lands. They gave us a day per month, sometimes two days when it was time to harvest the cereal crops, but it was not every day. It was not easy to obtain them. Eventually people abandoned the crops. The year following the regroupement, people requested permits to reap the crops they had sown and tended. But after that, they stopped. They requested permits to go for what nature had given them.²⁵⁶

The system in place in regroupement "centers" where the population had to request permits to cultivate their lands created hunger problems. During the war, Michel Rocard, a young inspector of finance in Algeria, wrote an investigative report on regroupement camps stressing the extremely precarious living conditions in which resettled civilians were placed by the French. The report that leaked to the press in April 1959 stressed the state of malnutrition of many children, saying that "an empirical law was found: when a regroupement reaches 1,000 people, a child dies every two days."²⁵⁷

Marcel, a soldier who was posted in Aïn Defla, a regroupement center 15 km away from Mansourah, remembered: "We had resettled people who had been expelled from the forbidden zones. I saw them plowing with wooden plows to grow a little wheat to make bread (galette). Aside from raising a few sheep and some chickens, the flour and bread, they had nothing to eat. They lived in a state of destitution of which we cannot be proud!"²⁵⁸ Likewise, Paulin recalled with empathy scenes of misery in Mansourah Centre: "There were people, poor chaps, we (French conscripts) threw our food away because it was disgusting. The kids and women would

²⁵⁷ Rocard et al. Rapport sur les camps de regroupement et autres textes sur la guerre d’Algérie.
²⁵⁸ Marcel, Interview by author, June 17, 2011.
then come and eat it." Bakir recalled eating bread with barley flour that tasted like "gasoline."

He said: "When we moved to Mansourah, the French had set fire to the stocks of barley we had with gasoline. Part of it burnt. We were allowed to return two weeks after to bring back a few things. My grandfather brought back the barley left unburned. We had to eat all that was. I remember when I was eating bread, it felt like eating gasoline."  

These restrictions of movements affected the population, yet they were in theory designed to target the rebels. By isolating the population from the FLN, the "rebel band" to use Colonel Buis’s words, would be condemned to "suffer" and "get demoralized." Thus, the rebels would be forced to take risks to come out from hiding to get food. The FLN would still risk detection by approaching the villages placed under the French army’s control, but it became rarer during the course of the war. Ali, an FLN combatant during the war, recalled: "We would go close to the barracks to get food from the population. For instance, we were hiding in the forest, two kilometers away. We would approach the population that was encircled. We had no choice. We had nowhere else to go." In Bakir's words, "the FLN was left with nowhere to eat and rest (... ) The regroupement affected the moudjahidin a lot. Most of them died during this period. They were more moudjahidin killed in 1960 and 1961 than the years before." If one looks at the list of FLN soldiers from Mansourah reported killed in 1960 and 1961, one draws the same conclusion.

259 Paulin, Interview by author, December 28, 2011.
260 Bakir. Interview by author, July 18, 2011.
261 IH 1890/D1 - Constantinois, secteur de Bordj Bou Arreridj, 10ème région militaire - corps d'armée de Constantine - Secteur du Hodna Ouest, 8/10/1958.
262 Ibid..
264 Interview with Bakir, July 2011
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Due to the long and hazardous process described above, some would not even bother trying to get permits from the SAS and would enter the forbidden zones without authorization to bring food to ALN soldiers. Abdelkrim, a young shepherd at that time, recalled entering the forbidden zone to bring food to the ALN, taking the risk of being shot or arrested by the French military:

When they were hiding in the mountains, we would meet them. Often they spotted me. I was a shepherd, so they would spot me and come to find me. I was arrested and tortured several times. I was a shepherd like today (he looks at his sheep around him). I was a shepherd and I had a flock. They (the French military) were suspicious of me. Every time they met me, they said: "you there, come here!" I was arrested several times. Once they gave me a pain to remember. They tied a rope around my neck and lifted me above the ground. They left me like that for a while.266

If Abdelkrim had been seen in a forbidden zone, which by definition is a free-fire zone for both ground and air forces, he would have been shot. In the words of Paulin, "if we saw someone (in the forbidden zone), we would fire upon him."267 Abdelkrim must have been arrested in a "black zone," which was a regulated free fire zone. A report dated from July 1959 says that forbidden zones, except in the Sahara and in the border regions, should all be considered regulated free-fire zones. One could not open fire without the prior consent of the commander of the area. In addition, it forbade the use of the term "forbidden zone," because it had negative connotations for the population. Yet, the testimonies I have collected, on the Algerian and French sides, all mentioned the existence of "forbidden zones."

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266 Abdelkrim. Interview by author, July 11, 2011.
267 Paulin, Interview by author, December 28, 2011.
Arrests and torture were meant to deter people from entering the forbidden zones without authorization. Some who had obtained these permits would risk capture to bring food to the ALN. Yet, this was particularly difficult, because the population would remain under tight surveillance. Bakir recalled: "You could find the French military on the way. They check, they control. Sometimes they arrest people. You are monitored all the time. Sometimes you go there and you find them there, to your surprise." While cultivating the lands situated in the forbidden zone, many recalled the buzzing of helicopters above their heads and the presence of military forces on the ground. "Yes, the army was there to watch. They (the population) mustn't provide the FLN with wheat." Surveillance was again used to police and produce docile bodies.

‘Where is Our Father?’: Collective Memory of a massacre

Memory of the past is externally driven and can be triggered by senses of perception, resurfacing involuntarily and even forcefully. Interview questions also help people recover memories of the past, and the question of permits triggered the memories of killing and massacre of resettled inhabitants of El-Hamra in Mansourah who were given permits to go cultivate their lands in the forbidden zone. Bakir said: "You must have heard of people who killed that day, they were 45." "On the djebel Ref-raf, that's where people were burned, 40 civilians," said Achir, an inhabitant of Mansourah. Abdelkrim also mentioned the killing of the resettled peasants: "In Setif, there were 45,000 killed. Here, 45 peasants of El Hamra and Ouled Abbas..."
were burned in a house." Interestingly, Hamid associates the massacre of the resettled peasants to that of the Algerian Muslims in uprising against colonial rule in the town of Setif, East of Algeria, on May 8, 1945, V-E day, celebrations of the end of World War II. In accordance with the official nationalist narrative in Algeria, Abdelkrim remembers that 45,000 Algerians were killed. According to historians, the popular revolt, the harbinger of the Algerian war itself, was bloodily suppressed, and at least 20,000 civilians lost their lives in the following crackdowns. To Abdelkrim, the massacre of resettled peasants was a replication on a smaller scale of the massacre of Setif.

In Mansourah, people constantly mentioned to me the massacre of the peasants resettled in Mansourah. This traumatic episode is retained in local collective memory. People even remember a folk poem about the events composed in the local Arabic dialect. The first words of the poem lament the dead and remember the last moment they were seen alive. "O men of our country, you have been gone for so long. You went out at dawn without greeting us, and we thought you'd be back soon in the afternoon." The poem suggests the confusion and anxiety left by their death or disappearance. Were they killed? Some answers were forthcoming from FLN officials. "The envoy of the FLN came to announce to us your death. France killed you, horribly killed you." "The children ask: 'where is our father? He has been gone for so long.' Their mother hides her tears and says: 'your father shows no signs of life since he left." Unofficial information,
in the form of rumor, also circulated, revealing the level of uncertainty surrounding these deaths: "Sometimes good news reaches us. They would be in prison. Sometimes bad news reaches us and upsets us. They would be dead since the first day." The poem ends with the belief of their remaining presence in spirit: "All that remains of them is their spirits, who come and visit us by surprise. Their spirits have breathed us this poem."

Poem: "On the way to the liberation of our country, we saw our own death"
Mansourah, July 2001 (photo by author)

The causes of and circumstances surrounding these deaths and disappearances remain uncertain to this day. Most interviewees in Mansourah insist on an act of reprisal by the French army under the supervision of Captain Groussot, nicknamed "Bou'oukaz" by the population. The word "Bou'akaz", literally meaning "the man with a stick" evokes both a material and personal attribute to the character who in the fearful memory of the population often took the shape of a

275 Personal files of Abdelhamid Benhacen, Mansourah, Algeria
monster. Jawed recalled: "he used to walk with a stick." Hamid added: "Bou'akaz used to always play with his stick. If you didn't greet him: 'hello my captain', he would beat us up with his stick." "When I was arrested and tortured, Bou'oukaz was there," recalled Abdelnour. In the story of the massacre, Captain Groussot was also there. Abdelkrim recalled:

They were farmers with permits (laissez passer). They went for the harvest and got caught up in a clash between the ALN and the French army. Among them, some had brought food to the ALN soldiers. We used to say before that a French soldier got caught by the farmers, cut into pieces and put in a bag. Another French soldier hidden had witnessed the scene and when reinforcements came, he told them: "don't look for the fellagha, the fellagha are here. Two teenagers and an adult escaped from death. The other were burnt, alive, all of them together. Bou'oukaz was supervizing the operation."

Insisting on the same details, Achir said: "Bou'oukaz's brother had been killed by the peasants. They had cut him into small pieces. The French army put them in a house. They sprayed the house with gasoline and set it on fire."

Abdessalem, whose brother was killed that day, avoided giving brutal details: "The 45 peasants were allowed to spend the night there, in Ouled Abbas. In the morning, the French armed forces arrived on the scene. Fighting took place between the ALN soldiers and the French army in El-Hamra in the afternoon. The French army gathered the population in a house near El-

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277 Abdelkrim. Interview by author, July 11, 2011. In the apparently innocent waving (many recalled the army greeting them) the individual is made subject to power. In this very last example, we can identify the larger concept of "hailing" used by the French philosopher Louis Althusser to illustrate how the individual becomes conscious of being a subject to an authority. In Althusser's words: "by this mere one-hundred-and-eighty degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject. Why? Because he has recognized that the "hail" was really addressed to him, and that it was really him who was hailed." In this meaningless waving, ideology manifests itself and insinuates unnoticed into the individual. Ideology constitutes the subject in its subjectivity. Louis Althusser;"Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus", 174-75.
279 Abdelkrim. Interview by author, July 11, 2011.
280 Achir. Interview by author, July 16, 2011.

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Hamra and closed it. Three young people were brought to Mansourah.  

281 After sharing this timid testimony on the circumstances of his brother's death, he left suddenly, leaving me to wonder if it was a strategy to avoid other emotionally unsettling questions. He came back with hot goat milk and bread, making me think it was a symbolic gesture to the memory of the dead evoked earlier or a perhaps a form of comfort. He disappeared again and came back with a baby goat that he put on my knee, laughing loudly and expressing himself with clown-like gestures. The excesses of his reaction suggested a desire to seek comfort from the heavy memory of the past.

Many mentioned that three of the farmers survived the massacre. Benhacen, a local historian, had recorded the memories of one of them:

It (the massacre) happened after a battle in El-Hamra the day before at 5 pm. We were peasants with permits. We had spent the night in Ouled Abbas. In the morning, we were putting the straw on the backs of our mules and were leaving the village. We met French soldiers on our way. They set the straw on fire and fired upon Mohamed Nasser Maarich who died instantly. We were carried by truck to a house. When we were gathered in the house. On the way (back to Mansourah), we saw with our own eyes the smoke rising from the house where the peasants had been killed.  

282 In the absence of archival documents, one must rely on testimonies of those willing to share their memories and the efforts of local historians to document the massacre. French conscripts who served in the region at that time had heard about the massacre, hence suggesting that the rumor of the event also circulated within the French military personnel in Mansourah. Yet most of them appeared quite reluctant to talk about it. I asked one of them: "Do you know Captain Groussot?" He answered. "Yes I know him." "People in Mansourah also remember him", I said. "Do they

282 Personal files of Abdelhamid Benhacen, Mansourah, Algeria.
have good memories of him?”, he asked. "Someone rather authoritarian”, I replied. He said: "Yes, he was not... The last military operation, I was with him... He was not a model in the French army. I won't tell you more. Oh, yes, the population must have bad memories of him..." I insisted: "You don't have stories to share about him?" "No, not at all."

"My friend Fabrice was there too at that time. He knows about it,"²⁸³ Paulin confessed to me. Yet, he refused to talk about it. We can suggest several reasons for his silence. First, the setting of the interview must be considered. The interview was conducted over the phone in the presence of his wife, who intervened several times to remind him to ask me questions about my background and the motives of my research. Hence, the presence of his wife may have made it more difficult for him to talk about the violence against Algerian civilians. In fact, the only episodes of violence, he mentioned were perpetrated by the FLN in complicity with the population.²⁸⁴ Another possible reason for keeping silent is the fear of reprisal and the ability of an active minority of Pieds-noirs, French veterans of the Algerian war and harkis--those nostalgic of French Algeria and still resentful of de Gaulle's political compromises despite France's military victory over the FLN²⁸⁵—to silence the truth.²⁸⁶

In contrast, Paulin, another French conscript who served in Mansourah at that time, talked about the massacre without being solicited. I asked him: "Does El-Hamra sound familiar to

²⁸³ Paulin, Interview by author, December 28, 2011.
²⁸⁴ Ibid., Episode of the ambush in Erbéa.
²⁸⁵ "Les nostalgiques de l'Algérie française ont la dent dure." Le Matin, October 10, 2007: http://www.lematindz.net/index.php?news=126&ric=405 During the war, army officers formed the Secret Army Organization (OAS), headed by General Salan, to preserve at all costs French Algeria. The OAS staged a failed military putsch in April 1961 and resorted to violence against supporters of de Gaulle and Muslims. The OAS still has followers among the far-right movement in France.
²⁸⁶ What put me on that track is his reaction to a question on French referendum for Algeria's self-determination organized in the metropole and in Algeria on January 8, 1961. I asked him: "How did they vote if many of them were illiterate?" He replied, nervously laughing: "We helped them to vote. But I don't dare talking about this because the last time I did (...) I almost got into trouble..."
you?" He replied spontaneously, to my surprise, even adding details to his account: "yes, this sounds familiar. There were people killed there. The village was situated in the forbidden zone. People from our side went there. They were on a patrol. There were civilians that had been allowed to farm. They had to return at night, but they could cultivate though. When the patrol arrived, the civilians went to the mechtas (hamlets), where the fell (abbreviation for fellagha, FLN soldiers) were hiding. They (the FLN soldiers) fired on the patrol. A few of us died. Some of us went there the day after and there were reprisals. I think that there were many farmers killed."\textsuperscript{287} I further asked him: "do you know how many of them were killed?" He replied: "No, I can't tell you. And there (in Mansourah), what were you told?" I said: "About 40 died." He replied, apparently shocked at the number: "Oh, that many?"\textsuperscript{288} "I don't have more information. Call my friend. He was there with Capitain Groussot."\textsuperscript{289}

Fabrice, Paulin's friend, directly witnessed the situation. He agreed to answer my questions, though reluctantly, when it came to the massacre. I asked him: "Do you remember El-Hamra?" He replied: "Yes, we fell in an ambush in El-Hamra. Captain Groussot had not done things quite right that day (n'avait pas fait les choses très bien ce jour-là)."\textsuperscript{290} "Which ambush?", I asked him: "A section of the 3rd battalion of the 57th Infantry Regiment had left to ambush the FLN, we called that Chouf (surveillance operations - an Arabic word entered into the French military slang). They had seen the fell, but their radio had broken down. They could not notify

\textsuperscript{287} Paulin, Interview by author, December 28, 2011.
\textsuperscript{288} According to the testimonies collected in Mansourah, the number of civilians killed varies between 42 and 49. Abdessalem, the brother of one of a farmer killed, said: "They were 45 peasants, 43 were from Ouled Abbas and two from El-Hamra. There were my brother and another guy called Maqui from El-Hamra" A survivor of the massacre, whom a local historian from Mansourah interviewed, remembered that they were 49 of them. But beyond the question of number, difficult to estimate in the absence of archival documents, one should ask: what and how is it remembered?
\textsuperscript{289} Paulin, Interview by author, December 28, 2011.
\textsuperscript{290} Fabrice. telephone interview with author, December 27, 2011.
us. As the captain gave no sign of life, we were sent up there. That's when we fell into an ambush."291 He added: "we had one dead... We had one soldier killed that day,"292 thereby contradicting the memory of Paulin according to which: "a few of us had died that day."293 Fabrice further added to his account: "we got reinforcements. The fell were surrounded. But night came, and we sent fireflies to prevent them from leaving, fireflies in the air. But the fell had left and we did not see them leaving. They were gone."294 I said: "I heard that they were reprisals. Captain Groussot had a stroke because he had lost a man." Fabrice replied, obviously surprised and embarrassed: "Someone told you that. Yes, yes, he had..." He interrupted his sentence and started nervously laughing. "Yes, there were reprisals. The capitain did it. And apparently they were not fellaghas. They were ordinary people they had found up there."295 Fabrice started answering my questions in a laconic way, a series of short affirmative statements, thereby suggesting discomfort and reluctance to talk. They present evidence of a corroborating character that appear very crucial to my endeavour to document a silenced massacre.296 I asked him, in hope of getting more information from a direct witness:

Q: "Were they civilians?
A: Yes.
Q: Were they cultivating their lands?
A: Yes
Q: Did Captain Groussot execute them?
A: Yes, yes, yes...
Q: I heard that he gathered them in a house.
A: Yes, yes, but I was not there. I didn't go. I refused to go.

291 Fabrice. telephone interview with author, December 27, 2011.
292 Ibid.
293 Paulin, Interview by author, December 28, 2011.
294 Fabrice. telephone interview with author, December 27, 2011.
295 Ibid.
296 To my knowledge, this massacre has not been documented by historians so far.
Q: Did he go there alone?
A: No, he wasn't alone. There were volunteers.
Q: Did he ask who was eager to execute them?
A: Yes, here goes.
Q: Someone volunteered? He did not do it himself directly?
A: Oh, no, no, no, that was not him. I mean, not him... He was there. But I wasn't there so I can't
tell you how it happened.
Q: Were there several volunteers?
A: Oh yes several!

His testimony sheds light on the routinization of violence. Out of vengeance and hatred,
out of boredom and wartime stress, in a desire to please the hierarchy. The motives remain
obscure in the absence of testimonies from the actors themselves, but many volunteered to
execute the civilians. This is further tangible evidence of the application of counter-revolutionary
theory, which in effect tends to blur the boundaries between civilians and soldiers.297 Some may
argue that this event was simply the result of an isolated act ordered by a deranged individual in
the military. Paulin for instance said: "Groussot, he was a loser ("pauvre mec") from the
battalion. I say that because we in Boukton (where he served later on), we never committed such
atrocities. We never killed civilians. We killed soldiers and we got killed.298 Instead of accepting
the idea that this act was isolated, somehow escaped the control of the hierarchy, one should
consider the legal framework that allowed for the execution of civilians, allowing Captain
Groussot to massacre individuals that he considered complicit with the FLN whether through
bringing food or actually killing a French soldier.299 Historian Graeme Harper argues that "the
French authorities, led by the military and the police, possessed all the structural characteristics

297 Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, ICRC, accessed March 19,
http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/WebSign?ReadForm&id=375&ps=P - This absence of distinction between civilians and
combattants is in contradiction with the 1949 Geneva Coventions to which France was party at that time.
298 Paulin, Interview by author, December 28, 2011.
299 and that the execution of civilians had escaped the control of the power hierarchy.
of a totalitarian (and, many argued, fascist) regime." The existing legal apparatuses reinforced the authority of the French military in Algeria. The declaration of a state of emergency in April 1955 and the vote of Special Powers in 1956 greatly extended the power of the French army. In fact, members of the French Parliament and government were complicit. They actively took part in the formulation of laws that met the military demands of legal protection in conducting "pacification" within Algeria. "Pacification" was at the core of the colonial experience, and it was employed oxymorically, using violent yet legal methods to effect peace. Therefore, we cannot overlook the symbiotic relationship of the civil and military authorities in conducting such acts. The rather loose legal framework of such actions can be analyzed following David Scott's words: "law is deployed as an instrumentality, a direct means toward the primary political end of commanding obedience."

A spectacular massacre

The exact circumstances of the crime remain unclear - were they burned alive as most interviewees in Mansourah believed? Were they executed first and then burned down to a cinder as the testimony from a survivor of the massacre suggests? "Along the way we saw with our own eyes the smoke rising from the house where the peasants were executed." Beyond this question, we should consider how this crime, and the rumors it encouraged, impacted people's imagination and psychology.

Rumors and stories of people burned alive circulated widely in Mansourah to the point that Djamel, who at the time of the massacre (most probably December 1959) was only 8 years old.

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302 Personal files of Abdelhamid Benhacen, Mansourah, Algeria.
old, reenacted in his mind with force and clear vision images of the massacre. Djamel, who now lives in Paris, remembers the horrifying spectacle of the French army burning FLN members alive before the eyes of the population. He described to me the "theatrical representation of pain" in a public spectacle as follows:

We were all together in one place. Men, women, children were present. (...) And I remember one day, people were burned alive in front of us. It was summer, and the French burned them alive. They were, I don't know exactly, maybe a dozen. Everyone was outside watching. We had been forced to come. They asked us to watch. We could smell human flesh burning. And I remember when they burned the men, the women began to ululate. Instead of crying... And the men said "Allahu Akbar." They died as martyrs. I remember that, I was sick for a long time. I could not speak. When I remember it, I still get goosebumps.

His memory is one of a trauma. The frightful visual and olfactory memories of bodies torched by the French army disturbed him greatly. The memory of public torture haunted him in his sleep for years. The horrifying spectacle that he says he was forcibly exposed to continued to resurface in his nightmares. After this traumatic experience, he withdrew in silence. During the interview, he broke the silence that enveloped him in his recurring nightmares.

Did public torture and execution occur in Mansourah, as described by Djamel? The practice of public execution and exhibition of corpses by the French army was not rare during the war. In 1957, a French colonel named Agoud, who then became the chief of staff of General Massu, publicly executed FLN combattants. Colonel Agoud evaded the prohibition of his immediate superiors by bringing the population to the place where he executed the "criminals." This practice is reminiscent of forms of punishments historically prevalent in the would-be "classical" age. In Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison (1995), Foucault suggests a

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303 Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 14.
304 Djamel, Interview by author, January 5, 2011.
historical shift in the French juridical and penal system. "At the beginning of the nineteenth century", he writes, "the great spectacle of physical punishment disappeared."\textsuperscript{306} "From being an art of unbearable sensations, punishment has become an economy of suspended rights."\textsuperscript{307} This was arguably not the case in the context of France's colonial war in Algeria. It reveals instead the coexistence of "classical" and "modern" forms of punishments in Algeria.

After putting Djamel's testimony and other testimonies side by side and in dialogue, I came to the conclusion that Djamel's memory mixed the episode of massacre with another episode of the war in Mansourah. One day, Captain Groussot gathered the population in the main square of Mansourah El-Kabira after one of his soldiers had been killed. That day, the interviewees recalled, he threatened the population with death. Yet, Djamel's testimony should not be dismissed. We should instead try to understand the meaning of his frightening memories.

Foucault writes insightfully that "the guilty person is only one of the targets of punishment. For punishment is directed above all at others, at all the potentially guilty."\textsuperscript{308} Abdelkrim, a FLN sympathizer in Mansourah, expressed this sentiment saying "the peasants were killed to make an example of them"\textsuperscript{309} to the rest of the population. The massacre of peasants said to be guilty of a crime—as the rumor of them chopping a French soldier into pieces suggests—was an instance of exemplary punishment. The entailed punishment for direct disobedience and affront to the colonial authorities, or more precisely to the military authorities as the subordination of the civil authorities to the military's implies, had to be "ever present in the

\textsuperscript{306} Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish}, 11.
\textsuperscript{307} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{308} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{309} Abdelkrim. Interview by author, July 11, 2011.
heart of the weak man and dominate the feeling that drives him to crime.310 It also aimed to restore the total power of the "sovereign." Through this act, the military powers made the body of the condemned men "the place where the vengeance of the sovereign was applied, the anchoring point for the manifestation of power, an opportunity of affirming the dissymmetry of forces."311 The public burning of the bodies of the criminalized insurgents or its representation as such was "an exercise of 'terror' (...) to make everyone aware (...) of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign."312 Therefore, public punishment or its representation as such, can be read as an assertion of power by the colonial state.

In his testimony, Djamel vividly described the reaction of the audience to the ceremony of punishment. He transported us to the scene of the event: "the women began to ululate. Instead of crying ... And the men said "Allahu Al-Akbar." In Foucault's words "the great spectacle of punishment ran the risk of being rejected by the very people to whom it was addressed."313 In fact, it had a counter effect. The public death of the ALN fighters touched the deepest chord of sympathy and admiration among the Algerian audience. The insurgents were praised as martyrs. Therefore, even in Djamel's memory, it was not an effective spectacle, reinforcing the power of the state.

311 Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim., On violence: a reader, 55.
312 Ibid., 49.
313 Ibid., 63
Surveillance of goods

The system of surveillance and control of persons was extended to the circulation of goods crucial to the rebels' struggle. In the words of Colonel Buis, the war was also an "economic war."314

The French military controlled the circulation of foodstuffs, including cereals, coffee, and sardines.315 Canned sardines were perfectly suited to the needs of the FLN combatants fighting in the mountains. Sardines, as "food placed in an airtight container, then sterilized by boiling"316 have the chief advantage of not spoiling and being easily transportable. They served as a food reserve in case of a disruption of food supply. Ali, an FLN combattant, recalled: "When moussabilin (members of the FLN) could not come bring us food, we ate what we had, sardines, stale bread..."317 The resistance in Mansourah was organized to meet these objectives and evade the surveillance of the military. Mourad, an FLN member in Mansourah, explained the clever tricks developed he used to avoid detection:

I often bought cans of sardines. There was a sentry in front of the shop. So me, what did I do? I had to bring the sardines to the mujahidin, it was a cold meal. I bought a loaf. It was a big piece of bread, one kilo. It was not a French stick (baguette). I cut it in half and stuck three or four cans of sardines in it. The

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314 1H 1890/D1
315 Ibid.
sentry when he looked in the bag, he thought it was bread, but inside there were
sardines.$^{318}$

In addition to food items, some goods such as pataugas shoes, radio transistors and radio
batteries required a special authorization delivered by the SAS to be purchased.$^{319}$ In the national
archives in Aix en Provence, I found evidence of the politics of control in place. For instance, the
head of the SAS, Mr. Retore gave authorization to M. Dditli, inhabitant of Mansourah, registered
under the identity card number 15565, to purchase a transistor radio (*poste à piles*) at Mr.
Abdelnour Talib - storekeeper in Mansourah.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. Salah Ben Ammar Dditli</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born June 10, 1913 in Mansourah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residing in Mansourah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardholder No. 15565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

is authorized to purchase a transistor radio, at Mr. Abdelnour Talib - storekeeper in Mansourah.

Seller shall comply with the requirements of the texts on regulations.

Mansourah, March 8, 1961
The head of the SAS
Mr. G. Retore, Civil deputy

In the absence of electricity in large parts of the country, "battery-operated receivers,
from 1956 on, were in great demand within Algerian territory. In a few weeks thousands of sets
were sold to Algerians, who bought them as individuals, families, groups of houses, douars,

$^{318}$ Mourad, Interview by author, July 13, 2011.
$^{319}$ 1H1890 - The text says: "Certain goods may be sold only upon presentation of a purchase authorization form
issued by the authority (pataugas, corrugated iron, radio batteries, medicine...) Their transport must be controlled."
Frantz Fanon observed a change in attitude adopted by Algerians "in the course of the fight for liberation, with respect to a precise technical instrument: the radio." The radio was no longer seen solely as an instrument of domination, "a part of the occupier's arsenal of cultural oppression." With the appearance of *Voice of Fighting Algeria*, a radio station broadcasting programs in Arabic and French, followed by *Voice of Tunis, Cairo* and *Damascus*, Algerians "had at last the possibility of hearing an official voice, the voice of the combatants, explain the combat to him, tell him the story of the Liberation on the march, and incorporate it into the nation's new life." In Mansourah like elsewhere in Algeria, Algerians listened to radio broadcasts extolling the courage and force of the FLN combatants fighting "up there among the rocks and on the djebels." Radio programs organized by Algerians and transmitted from Tunis, Cairo and Damascus, played a crucial role in shaping people's imagination of the Algerian nation. Algerian nationalism was being formed through the very means employed in furthering the anti-colonial struggle.

Many interviewees in Mansourah mentioned listening regularly and attentively to radio broadcasts transmitted from neighborhood countries. Yet, listening to these radio broadcasts disseminating nationalist ideas was prohibited. The French services had jammed *The Voice of Fighting Algeria* transmitted from Algeria, but no longer tried to jam broadcasts transmitted from Cairo, Tunis, Rabat, and Damascus. Yet, the apparatus of control and repression continued its

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321 Ibid., 69.
322 Ibid., 84.
323 Ibid., 71 - Until then, Radio-Alger, the voice of France in Algeria, constituted "the sole center of reference at the level of news."
324 Ibid., 86.
work. In addition to prohibiting the sale of radios, except with authorization issued by the military, the French troops confiscated all the radios during the course of a raid. The population was aware of this prohibition and astutely found ways around it. Aissa, a FLN member in Mansourah, shared a valuable anecdote about "tactics" in de Certeau's terms - maneuvers "within the enemy's field of vision" - used by the population: "I had a small transistor radio and used to listen to it. We hid it underground so that the French can't find it. I remember one day an old woman was listening to the radio with FLN fighters. They were warned of the arrival of (French) soldiers so they left without the radio. They had not switched it off. The old woman was left alone with the radio. She didn't know how it worked. She told the radio: 'Hush, my son! Hush, my son! They're coming!' After having asked the radio to be quiet, she took a pick and broke it. Then she put it in a cloth and threw it. The FLN fighters then returned to get it back. They asked: "where did you put the radio?" She replied: "I broke it into pieces to shut him up!"

Beyond its humorous anecdotal character, this story tells us that all Algerians listening to these broadcasts, civilians and combatants alike, formed an imagined community of nation. Radio broadcasts extended the boundaries of belonging, unifying if but for the duration of the broadcasts the fragmented resistance movement—the "interior" and the "exterior" forces —through the power of nationalist rhetoric. Radio transistors provided all Algerians with a crucial

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325 Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, 96.
327 Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: the Origins and Development of a Nation*, 170. Since the Soummam Congress in 1956, the FLN was divided between an "interior" and an "exterior." Yet, the Conseil National de la Résistance Algérienne (CNRA), a body created at the Soummam Congress, "which was in effect Algeria's first sovereign parliament", "reversed Soummman Valley decisions establishing the primacy of the interior and the superiority of the political over the military" during its first formal session in Cairo in July 1957.

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means for "entering into communication with the Revolution, or living with it." Ali, before fleeing and joining the *djebel*, recalled stealing a radio transistor for the FLN:

They had placed an order. They needed a radio transistor. When I entered the shop, the French soldier, a football coach, pretended to leave. I was sure he was gone. He knocked me senseless. When I woke up, I was in prison (in Mansourah Centre). They had not closed the door. I looked so young. I was only 13. Captain Bou'oukaz said, 'we'll see, we'll see.' He was busy. When he left, I jumped over the wall and fled. I walked along the rail tracks for 3, 4 kilometers, then I walked along the river and then I went to the *dechra* (Mansourah El-Kabira). A woman hid me under the ground. The army arrived the next day, they surrounded the *dechra*. I could see them through the wall. I stayed there 4 or 5 days. She gave me food. Then FLN soldiers came and I joined the *djebel*. 

Ali managed to flee, but Abdelnour, a shopkeeper in Mansourah Centre who provided the FLN with "radio, clothes, Pataugaz shoes, sardines, etc... anything they needed..." was arrested, tortured and put in prison. Fabrice, a French soldier, who served in the region, recalled:

"There was a shopkeeper, an Algerian. His name was Abdelnour. We would go sometimes help ourselves... we would go shop at his place. He acted in a two-faced manner. He was nice to us. One day, he disappeared, we didn't see him anymore. We heard he got arrested by the intelligence services. We didn't see him in Mansourah anymore. He played a two-faced game. He was forced to." Abdelnour, an Algerian who in the eyes of the French military could be trusted, as suggest by vouchers issued by the SAS in Mansourah allowing people to buy forbidden goods at his shop (see above), was in fact working for the FLN. Yet, he was not "forced to" as Fabrice believes. "The French, I had nothing to do with them. They were

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328 Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, 83.
331 Fabrice. Telephone interview with author, December 27, 2011.
customers in my shop, that's all. The FLN that was something else. I was on their side." 332

Abdelnour recalled the day the French military discovered that he worked on the side of the FLN. "One day, they found documents. They had caught a guy and they had found on him documents that mentioned my name." He described the torture he suffered after being arrested, remembering and reenacting trauma: "When they arrested me, they put a stick like this, my hands were tied, I was tied." He interrupted his description and started laughing nervously, signs of him re-experiencing a traumatic scene. After a short silence, he added, reenacting the interrogation scene: "They asked me: 'Do you know this one?' 'Yes, he is a barber, he lives there', "Do you know this one? Yes, he is a rural policeman (garde champêtre). I answered point by point. They told me that they had arrested a fellagha and they had found documents on him. "Talib Abdelnour?" I said, "Yes, it is me." They had found 20 packets of medicine with him. I replied: I'm not a pharmacist!' They put electricity here on my ears and here on my toes. Two or three times. I yelled. 'I'll sign whatever you want', I told them. They replied: 'you will sign what YOU will tell us!' It lasted from 10pm to 2am. They had arrested over 50 people that night. That was in 1959 but I don't remember the exact day or month." 333

Abdelnour’s memory of suffering is not chronologically anchored. The physical and moral suffering resulting from this long moment ("from 10 pm to 2 am") of methodically inflicted pain was in fact ever-lasting. "I can still feel the pain in my arm." 334 Abdelnour was not an isolated case. As seen above, Abdelkrim had been arrested and tortured for crossing the boundary of the forbidden zone. In fact, "from the end of 1956 onward, torture was rationalized,

332 Abdelnour. Interview by author, July 13, 2011.
333 Ibid.
334 Ibid.
professionalized, and systematized." Torture had become "a standard method for screening individuals picked up during roundups, identity checks, or operations. It was not only inflicted to get confessions, but also to obtain information of any kind. Any suspected nationalist activity, no matter how inconsequential, was grounds for subjecting a suspect to torture." Many told me about the torture they suffered or heard about during the time of the war. The torture was carried out within the walls of the interrogation room but the village of Mansourah was small enough for the screams of the tortured to be heard. Mounira recalled: "My husband told me that Abdelrahman Balouli had been hung, naked, upside down, to pillar in the prison. He howled like a jackal. (...) Everyone could hear him shouting. Torture has killed him." The act of torture was hidden, concealed behind walls, yet it took on an almost public form through the vivid representation it formed in the people's imagination. Torture left the domain of visual perception and entered that of aural perception ("Everyone could hear him shouting"). It entered the domain of consciousness through whisperings ("My husband told me"). In that sense, torture served the purpose of instilling fear and obedience in other individuals aware of the routinized use of torture against suspected nationalists.

"Benevolent" France - transforming the population into France's supporters

Colonel Buis wrote in October 8, 1958: "A population that has allowed itself to be resettled is a population which in its heart of hearts has taken sides. We must lead it to become urgently aware of its position and its implications." However, in most cases, the populations

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335 Lazreg, Torture and the Twilight of Empire: from Algiers to Baghdad, 111.
336 Ibid., 111
337 Mourad, Interview by author, July 13, 2011.
338 1H 1890/D1
were forced to be resettled. It is interesting to note that Colonel Buis entirely dismisses the idea of coerced resettlement. As Bruno, a French conscript who participated in resettlement operations, recalled: "We did not ask them their opinion. They were loaded into the GMC trucks and we drove them down." Following Buis’s reasoning, the population "willingly" resettled should then be "urgently" made aware of its deep-seated convictions/beliefs. How then could they be made aware of this unconscious commitment to the French side? In British philosopher John Stuart Mill’s words, "the manifestation of the belief necessarily involves knowledge; for we cannot believe without some consciousness or knowledge of the belief, and consequently without some consciousness or knowledge of the object of the belief." Thus, it was necessary for French authorities to construct the knowledge upon which would be based the belief. In Mansourah, as in other regroupement centers directly administered by the SAS, attempts to instill the belief that France was beneficial to Algeria took different forms, among them propaganda and education.

**Propaganda sessions - The belief that the colonial subject is made "out of a formless clay."**

All interviewees mentioned forms of propaganda activities conducted by the French military in Mansourah. Amra, an inhabitant of Mansourah, evokes the memory of coerced listening: "They made us go out into the street, next to the mosque. We had to listen to them.

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341 Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 135.
They explained to us France's objectives.\textsuperscript{342} Mourad, also an inhabitant from Mansourah, recalled long hours of waiting, listening to French propaganda: "They left us there until exhaustion and then we were allowed to go back home. They made propaganda: 'France will win!'"\textsuperscript{343} Likewise, Achir, an inhabitant of Mansourah, recalled the French army's denigrating discourse about the resistance: "They told us that we mustn't support the fellaghas, they were bandits...”\textsuperscript{344} Bakir, an inhabitant originally from El-Hamra, recalled a discourse stressing the positive role of France: "France builds schools and clinics."\textsuperscript{345} Moncef, an inhabitant from Mansourah recalled: "They made us go out and told us: 'It's forbidden to give money to the FLN. It is France that feeds you.'"

The testimonies describe psychological weapons used by the French troops and officers posted in Mansourah, particularly the use of loudspeakers to impose their message of "truth" on the population. The Cinquième Bureau "with its potent function of propaganda and psychology warfare"\textsuperscript{346} played a central role in psychological manipulation.\textsuperscript{347} Most French officers were trained in the methods of psychological warfare at the Centre d'Instruction à la Pacification et à la Contre-Guerilla (CIPCG) in Arzew.\textsuperscript{348} According to General Hogard, a follower of revolutionary war principles theorized by colonel Charles Lacheroy, the objective of revolutionary war was "the total control, physical and psychological, of the mass of the

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\textsuperscript{342} Amra. Interview by author, July 18, 2011.
\textsuperscript{343} Mourad. Interview by author, July 13, 2011.
\textsuperscript{344} Achir. Interview by author, July 16, 2011.
\textsuperscript{345} Bakir. Interview by author. Mansourah, July 18, 2011.
\textsuperscript{346} Horne, \textit{A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962}, 354.
\end{flushright}
people."349 Thus, *regroupement* efforts played a role in a much larger campaign to totally dominate the Algerian population on both the physical and mental levels.

Were the propaganda methods efficient in retaining the population under France's influence? Moncef said with great honesty: "I believed what they told us. The French army had tanks and planes!"350 This statement reveals that the words did not suffice. It is the fear of France's violence that lends legitimacy to its words. In Jawed's memory, the use of propaganda techniques by the French army in Mansourah were rather ineffective. He said:

> We could spend hours on our knees, without moving, having to listen to the propaganda of France: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." There was a gap between rhetoric and reality. They made us leave our homes and sit in a vacant lot. We had to leave our houses open. They did what they wanted inside, they take, they throw, they break. You did not know in which shape you would find your house. In the meantime, we sat on the ground of this vacant lot. There was a translator who spoke about the benefits of colonization, told us to not be in contact with the FLN, to denounce them. This was propaganda. We knew that it was propaganda.

In this very instance, Jawed depicts the propaganda methods used as absurd and ludicrous *objects of ridicule*. They were not perceived as words grounded in reality. He highlights the paradox of a universalist republican discourse of the French state buttressed by violent and exclusionary forms of colonial rule. But is it a faithful account of his past conscious experience? *Was he fully aware of the tricks of the colonial rule at this very moment? Or did he become aware only after the fact?* To this question, oral historian Allesandro Portelli responds: "There may have been changes in personal subjective consciousness as well as in social standing and economic condition, which may induce modifications, affecting at least the judgment of events

350 Moncef, Interview by author, July 7, 2011.
and the 'coloring' of the story. However, informants are usually quite capable of reconstructing their past attitudes even when they no longer coincide with present ones."\textsuperscript{351} Therefore, in this very instance, Jawed was fully conscious of the means by which the army tried to subjugate the population. But in other instances - that we will discuss below (school, clinics) - he did not perceive the arbitrariness of the established colonial order. This shows the complexity of the relationship to colonial power structures.

**Schooling and medicine - domination by consent?**

"The factors of success are not only a military victory but also and *above all a victory in the minds of the population* resulting in the support of the population for the French cause." How to obtain this support? The report by General Challe, commander in chief of French forces in Algeria, of which the SAS in Mansourah received a copy, further indicates: "To obtain the support of the population, we must gain its trust *by human contact*, we must make it impervious to the subversive ideology of the enemy and get it to participate fully in the fight for the common cause."\textsuperscript{352}

The SAS officers, in charge of organizing and administrating the centres de regroupement, embodied "human contact" with the population.\textsuperscript{353} The SAS were, among other tasks, in charge of running schools and dispensaries.\textsuperscript{354} Teams of French soldiers, physicians, nurses, and teachers were part and parcel of a colonial apparatus of social control and

\textsuperscript{351} Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History", 102.
\textsuperscript{352} 9 SAS 121 - ANOM
\textsuperscript{353} A newsletter of the French Ministry of Defense in March 1957 said: "Preoccupied with the problems of man (the SAS) has multiplied human contacts." Cited in Orville D. Menard, *The Army and the Fifth Republic* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 42
They were sent to conquer the souls and minds of the population in rural areas. In this sense, the strategy was not different from that used during the early colonial period to conquer the natives. Historically, education and medicine have been critical tools of colonial administration. As early as 1836, the minister of war General Clauzel, governor of Algeria, argued: "In my opinion, the establishment of a field hospital especially for the Arabs would be one of the most productive means by which the French authorities could gain influence over the local population; it would create closer relations between them and us, while it would also spread among them the spirit and the benefits of civilization and slowly dissipate their objections and antipathy." One could talk of a strategy of "domination by consent."

Before the launch of the Constantine Plan (1959), only a few children had the "privilege" to attend the French school in Mansourah El-Kabira and worked for the colonial administration as civil servants "in town halls, in justice, and the railways." They were culturally and economically privileged in comparison with the rest of the villagers. Achir, recalls: "I didn't go to French school. I only went to the Koranic school. The French school was exclusively reserved for great families from Mansourah."

In Albert Memmi's words, "the idea of privilege is at the heart of the colonial relationship." Jawed, who was born into a relatively wealthy family, was endowed with the

355 Ibid., 387.
359 Achir. Interview by author, July 16, 2011.
360 Albert Memmi and Robert Bononno, *Decolonization and the Decolonized* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xii.
"privilege" of attending French school and understood the small advantages conferred by this status outside of school:

What saved me from being harassed by the soldiers at the checkpoint was my school identity card. They felt that I spoke French and that I was not part of the masses.361

Jawed perceived himself "one small notch above" the others.362 But he remained a colonized subject. He cherished within himself the illusion of a distinctive and superior status. However, he was reminded once of his "proper" place in the colonial hierarchy.

One day we were inside the school. And there were young guys who wanted to play with the stilts that our teacher brought back from France. And I said: 'They are outsiders, why do they come play with us?' And then he slapped me, saying they were my brothers and I was fortunate enough to go to school! They did not have such luck, so he asked me to keep quiet. Then I realized.363

In contrast, Djamel did not have the "privilege" to attend a French school, and he bitterly resents it to this day:

The FLN made a mistake by burning down the school (in Mansourah El-Kabira). People stopped going to school. Why so? Supposedly for not studying French. If today I'm not a doctor, it is because of this. I went to school at the age of fifteen. What do you want me to learn at fifteen years old?364

In his account, Djamail blames the FLN for preventing him from acquiring an education. The destruction of schools was indeed part of the FLN strategy against the colonial powers, but

362 Memmi, Decolonization and the decolonized, xiv. Memmi refers to the Jews in this very sentence, but the idea can be well applied to this case. Hence the colonial society was not only divided on ethnic or religious basis, but also in economic and cultural terms. In this sense, the colonial authorities profoundly modified and fragmented the Algerian society.
364 Ibid.
Djamel forgets to point out that French schools were restricted to a small percentage of the Algerian population, despite the government's late efforts put into schooling the natives. In 1954, only 15.4% of Algerian children attended schools. Rates of schooling were much higher in Kabylia, where according to the "Kabyle myth" the population was "more assimilable." Djamaïl remained excluded from the French school system, even before its destruction by the FLN. Education was not a right but a privilege for the native population until the launch of the Plan of Constantine (1959). Yet, even then, despite mass schooling efforts, many children were not endowed with the "privilege" of attending French school. A report by the SAS in Mansourah indicates that 200 children (only male) are currently enrolled in French school in Mansourah Centre. 200 children (female and male) are left outside of school. Djamaïl was one of them.

In Mansourah, two years after the school had been burnt down by the FLN, a new "military school" had reopened on the premises of the battalion headquarters. Two classes were in operation. "There is no reticence regarding school attendance," observes a report by the SAS in Mansourah. Yet, some testimonies collected in France and Mansourah bring nuance to this statement. Marcel, a French conscript who served as a teacher in Aïn Defla, a regroupement "center" supervised by the SAS of Mansourah, recalls: "The school was opened to everyone. Everyone had to come to school. That's why I had so many children! 83! All children from the village, without exception." I asked him rather innocently: "Except those who refused?" He replied, barely containing a nervous laugh: "There were not many who refused, because they had

368 9 SAS 121 - ANOM.
369 9 SAS 121 - ANOM.
no right to refuse. They would be reprimanded."\textsuperscript{370} The word reprimand is rather euphemistic. In the words of Ali, who was resettled in Mansourah Centre\textsuperscript{371}, his family faced no choice but to send him to school. "My father did not want me to go to the French school. The army came to send us to school. But my father did not want, so my mother said: 'if you do not let your son go to school, the army will come get you and put you in prison.' Then I went to French school in Mansourah Centre for a year and a half. I think I was 10 or 11 years old. The school was in a barracks."\textsuperscript{372}

Classes were of different levels. Marcel, who was a teacher in Aïn Defla, recalls: "most of them did not know one word of French. I had to teach them how to write and speak French. I used a book made for Algerians who were in a situation of educational backwardness."\textsuperscript{373} The students were of different levels. Some were in "educational backwardness", others were "évolués" - to borrow Marcel's words. The use of the word "évolué" deserves our attention. It refers to those "educated in the French manner."\textsuperscript{374} They were culturally assimilated, yet not fully French. It is interesting to compare the testimonies of Jawed, who would have been considered an "évolué" and Ali who would have been considered "educationally backward." Ali recalls: "I did not stay for long (at school). I was not good at studying. I had no basic instruction in French. Instead of starting in the first grade, I started in the third grade. It is like building a house from the roof. So I dropped school and joined the armed struggle."\textsuperscript{375} In contrast, Jawed, who had

\textsuperscript{370} Marcel, Interview by author, June 17, 2011.
\textsuperscript{371} Ali. Interview by author, July 20, 2011 - "I was 6 or 7 years when they (the French army) found mudjahidin at our place, they burned our house and we went to Mansourah Centre. I think it was in year 56."
\textsuperscript{372} Ali. Interview by author, July 20, 2011.
\textsuperscript{373} Marcel, Interview by author, June 17, 2011.
\textsuperscript{374} Ruedy, Modern Algeria: the Origins and Development of a Nation, 105.
\textsuperscript{375} Ali. Interview by author, July 20, 2011.
attended school in Mansourah El-Kabira before its burning by the FLN in 1956 and then pursued his studies in Mansourah Centre, illuminates how school had contributed to and shaped his identity.

The school was in Mansourah village. Then when it was burnt by the FLN, I went to school in Mansourah center. I walked about 4 or 5 kilometers. (...) Once we were regrouped in Mansourah center, a teacher came. He was a soldier. His name was George Barra. In 1959, he never came back, because sparks flew. We had bought a radio and I heard of a school by correspondence, and I attended school by correspondence for one year at Boulevard Exelmans in Paris.376

For most children, those sent to French school after 1959, the objective was less to make them literate and imbued with French values than to put them in direct contact with France, embodied by French soldiers and their perceived "benevolent" actions.377 In the words of Bruno, a French soldier who served in Mansourah, "school was a good way to rally them (the young) to us."378

Rallying the youth to France was crucial. "The youth, which comprises about 5 million people in Algeria, provides the greatest opportunity in the present as in the future. It is necessary to ensure simultaneously their civic and national training and physical education"379, remarked General Challe in a report sent to the SAS in Mansourah. In April 25, 1960, Geminel, the Commander of the 3rd Bataillon of the 57 Infantry Regiment based in Mansourah, echoes a similar sentiment: "considering that the action on youth in villages and regroupement centers is a key factor in the success of pacification, I intend to continue the efforts undertaken." He adds, "in particular, I plan to assume control of (prendre en main) seriously the youth in Mansourah,

377 Ali. Interview by author, July 20, 2011 - "the teacher-soldier was a lovely man."
378 Bruno, telephone interview with author, December 27, 2011.
379 9 SAS 121 - ANOM.
center the most important and difficult of my district."\textsuperscript{380} In addition to school, the SAS was charged with organizing "youth" activities, including sport, film and TV screenings. Male and female youth between the age of 8 and 20 could "benefit" from these activities, which were deemed integral to a French modern lifestyle being transplanted into Algeria's rural areas in a last-ditch attempt to salvage the crumbling colonial order. These activities followed the logic of modernization carried by the French authorities in Algeria: "wiping the slate clean to impose a new framework of existence."\textsuperscript{381}

The youth was not the only group targeted. Women, an old obsession of the colonial authorities in Algeria, were also at stake. Historically, Muslim women have been discursively constructed as not only representing an inferior culture, but also as the victims of this culture. The colonial powers justified their presence in Algeria with the "civilizing mission"\textsuperscript{382}, which purported to liberate these women from Islamic traditions perceived as backward.\textsuperscript{383} In a report dated October 8, 1958, in a subsection entitled "action on women", Colonel Buis reiterates the discourse and assumptions. He writes, explaining the strategy put in place as follows: "It was sought to set them (women) in motion, physically in motion, to create a new climate by making them leave their homes and particularly at night, which had never happened before. They had never gone to the movies either. So we try to lead them to the cinema

\textsuperscript{380} 9 SAS 121 - ANOM - challenge de cross du quartier des portes de fer, 9/05/1960.
\textsuperscript{381} Bourdieu et al., Le Déracinement. \textit{La Crise de l'agriculture traditionnelle en Algérie}, 27.
\textsuperscript{382} On that point, Osama Abi Mershed has questioned "the appropriateness of ascribing an immutable ideological spirit and content to the French civilizing mission in Algeria." He points out: "Clearly, the political rationalities of France did not operate consistently across the length and breadth of its colonial rule." Osama Abi-Mershed, \textit{Apostles of Modernity: Saint-Simonians and the Civilizing Mission in Algeria} (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press. 2010), 117.
in the evening." Buis draws on colonial representations of women as secluded at home. "In Algeria, the Muslim customs of polygamy, female veiling, and seclusion were unambiguous cultural markers with which to differentiate the modern civilization of France from the baser society of the natives." By introducing them to modern culture, epitomized here by cinema, Buis intended to emancipate Algerian women from Algerian men. He adds: "I sincerely believe that the movement of hundreds of thousands of women, going at night, prattling, to the movie, despite the disapproval of men and orders of the rebellion, was a sign that something had changed in Bordj Bou Arreridj." The scene he describes of "women, going at night, prattling, to the movie, could have taken place in Paris, thereby suggesting the colonial fantasy of assimilation of the natives through adoption of French manners and customs. Interestingly, he measures the success of this event to the participation of a large number of women "despite the disapproval of men and orders of the rebellion." Participation in an event was indeed an important yet superficial way to measure the progress of pacification. In a report dated from May 9, 1960, Geminel, the Commander of the 3rd Bataillon of the 57 Infantry Regiment, expressed his satisfaction with the "participation of all (emphasis in the text) villages or centers of regroupement of the district" at the cross country tournament. In his opinion, "this sporting event shows the effectiveness of action taken on youth (l'efficacité de l'action entreprise sur la jeunesse)."
Yet, using participation to measure the success of the measures appears quite superficial. The testimonies reveal that the attendance of these events did not necessarily equate support for the French cause. Ali, a school attendee and participant in youth activities in Mansourah, described throwing a grenade at the French army, causing the death of several French soldiers, right after attending a movie screening organized in Mansourah Centre: "The army organized film screenings once a month. We went to the movies like everyone else. When we left, I had a grenade with me, I was only 13 years old, there was an armored truck in front of us. When it arrived next to me, I threw the grenade into the truck. It exploded, many died unfortunately. Everyone was screaming. It was total panic." Ali confessed to me straightforwardly the attack he had perpetrated, but later euphemized the impact of his act: "I targeted a French army truck and it fell inside. There were casualties, unfortunately." His sudden awareness of being recorded may have led him to change his narrative.

In Ali's memory, the movie screenings were widely attended events. "We went to the movies like everyone else." By the same token, many recalled that the clinics run by the SAS officers were widely attended. "People came to get treated. They came every morning. Every day, we had people who came to get treated." recalls Marcel who served in the regroupement "center" of Aïn Defla. Yet, again, this reading may appear superficial. Achraf recalled attending the clinic and giving his medicine to the FLN: "I suffered from rheumatism, so I went to the

389 Ali. Interview by author, July 20, 2011.- Ali explained his trajectory to armed struggle as follows: "I had a friend called Abdessalem. He was my contact with the FLN. I started by doing things that were not very legal. I stole in shops, pataugas shoes, clothes. I'd steal the clothes of the soldiers drying out near the barracks. I gave him what I stole and then Abdessalem gave them to the mudjahidin. He lived in the dechra (Mansourah El-Kabira). Then it became much more intense. He escaped, he did not want to deal with weapons, grenades. I started with little things like that and after I stole a pistol, grenades, I made an attack here in the movie theater."
390 Ibid.
391 Marcel, Interview by author, June 17, 2011.
clinic. I had immigrated to France and met a guy who worked with me at the factory there. He was a male nurse in the SAS in Mansourah. He sent me to Bordj Bou Arreridj to cure my rheumatism. I kept two of the medicine and gave the rest to the FLN. I also remember giving coal to treat stomach ache to the FLN.\(^{392}\)

**Doctors and Teachers, Benevolent figures?**

The testimonies reveal fully the role of doctors, teachers and school in creating hegemony and shaping the experiences of the colonized subject.\(^{393}\) Following Michel Foucault, we shall delve into the systems of thought that lie beneath the consciousness of the colonized subject and mold his identity. Amra, inhabitant of Mansourah, recalls "I went there, they were clinics dedicated to us. They were good doctors."\(^{394}\) In the same vein, Abdelmounem, inhabitant of Mansourah, recalls: "The SAS officers: they were good-hearted."\(^{395}\) Jawed recalls in a beautifully narrated story the services provided by the SAS doctors.

One day I remember, I almost lost my foot. I had stolen fruit. There were plenty in our garden and I went next door, there was a guy with a Tuskish mustache, he ran behind us and rusty barbed wire seriously hurt my feet, and I did not know that it was tetanus. I could have lost my foot... So I went to the clinic. They cleaned the wound, and I returned two weeks later to be offered vaccination.\(^{396}\) He recalls his teacher in the same vein:

Our teacher in Mansourah was a soldier. (...) He was a soldier but he did not like

\(^{392}\) Achraf, Interview by author, July 14, 2011.

\(^{393}\) As a bracketed reflection: the colonized subject is not the only one who undergoes change. The process is not one-directional but rather reciprocal. The school experience shaped the identities of both the colonized and the colonizer. But we will restrict our analysis to the colonized.

\(^{394}\) Amra. Interview by author, July 18, 2011.

\(^{395}\) Abdelmounem. Interview by author, July 10, 2011.

\(^{396}\) Jawed, Interview by author, December 19, 2010.
the army. (...) I think he was a little bit gay, he was not like the usual army, which he despised (...) For example, at school, he used to take off his military cap and wear a school smock. (...) And he brought us toys, books, songs, and even a device for viewing movies. We watched a movie every Wednesday... Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton etc... It was nice! (...) To us, he represented a bit the France that we had been dreaming of. He was human, close to people, he visited people in their family, ate couscous, shared our sorrows, interceded when he could, gave news from the prisoners... 397

The material examined here suggests the complexity of the relationship between colonized and colonizer. The discourse is marked by denial of the truth of his mission ("he was a soldier but he did not like the army", "he was a little bit gay", "he was not like the usual army") and by warm feeling. Jawed expresses deep gratitude to these "humanitarian" figures. ("he brought us toys from France", "I could have lost my feet."). He keeps in mind positive images of the educational and medical services provided in the center - images which show to some extent the success of the civilizing and humanitarian mission of the SAS.

Some testimonies reveal the hegemony created through school and clinic, yet the hegemony was not total. The consent was in most cases only superficial. The testimonies reveal the level of distrust within the population towards the SAS officers. Many said they were aware of the contradictory mission of the SAS, which on one hand was "civilizing and humanitarian," and on the other hand clearly repressive. Abdessalem, resettled in Mansourah, recalls: "When we were sick, we would go. But they always tried to extract information from us." 398 Bakir, resettled in Mansourah, recalls: "it is through the SAS that they controlled everyone." 399

Returning to the text of the decree for the creation of the SAS, one finds that the SAS consisted of "officers of Algerian affairs intended to provide supervisory duties and

strengthening the personnel of administrative units and local authorities."\textsuperscript{400} The euphemistic phrasing of the decree hides the reality of their mission. As clearly enunciated by General Cherrière, the Army commander in chief, the idea was to put in place "a network of administrators and officers to conduct political activity and intelligence gathering."\textsuperscript{401} Historian Noara Omouri highlights the totality of their mission, which was both military and civilian.\textsuperscript{402} She writes that their mission was "mainly economic and social", but also "administrative, juridical and police."\textsuperscript{403} This favored the concentration of powers in the hands of officers whose core mission was to administer and reconquer the population in the most remote areas.\textsuperscript{404}

We have seen in many instances how, in the particular setting of Mansourah, colonial power "reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives."\textsuperscript{405} This is a form of imperceptible and invisible violence, which one may find more subtle. Yet it must be recognized and taken into account in the colonial context. We have also seen in many instances how the French hegemonic aspirations were challenged from below. These challenges to the sovereign, embodied by Captain Groussot in the village of Mansourah, were met with intense, spectacular violence - at least at the level of representation. This intense and systematic repression of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnoteref{400} Cornaton, \textit{Les regroupements de la décolonisation en Algérie}, 64.
\footnoteref{401} Omouri, "Les Sections administratives spécialisées et les sciences sociales: Études et actions sociales de terrain des officiers SAS et des personnels des Affaires algériennes", 384.
\footnoteref{402} Ibid., 384.
\footnoteref{403} Ibid., 385.
\footnoteref{404} Ibid., 385.
\end{footnotes}
deviance to the norm imposed, is intensely remembered to this day. We have seen the role of trauma in forming memory and consciousness of this spectacular violence.
Conclusion

"We could compare the threads of this research (on regroupement of the population of El-Hamra in Mansourah) to the threads in a carpet. We are at a point where we see them arranged in a tight, homogeneous weave."406 I have made use of many different sources to reconstruct events from written and oral evidence of different actors, "carefully sifting out contradictions or establishing concordances."407 The threads of the carpet form a clear motif, that of the structural colonial violence against the Algerian population through the process and reality of regroupement.

I have shown that by resettling the population, the French authorities sought to gain greater control over it. Through the testimonies collected and supplemented by archival documents and secondary sources, I have pointed out the "positive and useful effects" of punitive measures used by the French military to assert its power. For in the words of Foucault "punitive measures are not simply ‘negative’ mechanisms that make it possible to repress, to prevent, to exclude, to eliminate, but that they are linked to a whole series of positive and useful effects which it is their task to support."408

Additionally this thesis has proven the relevance of the study of regroupement at the microhistorical level. By focusing on one village and region in particular, we have changed the scale of observation and made visible what remained unperceived at the macrohistorical scale: how Algerians found themselves caught up in the "web of power" spun by the colonial

408 Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 24.
authorities who sought to keep Algeria under French control. The methodology of oral history has offered unique insights into the values, perceptions and traumatic lived experience of Algerians confined in the military-guarded village of Mansourah during the war.

I have tried to demonstrate how the practices of the French military were constituted, imposed, and subsequently challenged by the FLN in the particular setting of Mansourah. *Regroupement* in Mansourah became a motif for analyzing how material structures and systems of representation were used to create a new disciplinary order. The focus was on the means used to control and, therefore, to affect the subjectivity of the colonized. Furthermore, my theoretical approach has drawn heavily on Foucault's study of power to understand the dynamics of power at play in the microcosm of Mansourah. The Foucauldian conception of the subject and power helps show that the French colonial authorities made use of disciplinary methods and brutal means of repression, hidden and visible, to create docile bodies and to perpetuate their domination over Algeria, hence suggesting the symbiotic coexistence instead of substitution of "classical" and "modern" forms of punishments. The FLN challenged the ubiquitous and pervasive power of the French army, which sought to distort the sense of self of the colonial subject and to invade the most intimate sectors of Algerian life. Nevertheless, following Foucault's understanding, resistance actually appears within the power structure rather than as an externality. Consequently, the enclosed space of the village of Mansourah can be viewed as a field of power within which the French army and the FLN were competing to assert their hegemony. For that, the FLN employed in a process almost mirroring the French colonizers, brutal means of repression and disciplinary methods.
Although regroupement helped the French succeed on the military level by emptying remote and less accessible mountain areas of their populations and transforming them into 'free fire zones' for both ground and air forces, regroupement did not allow them to win on a political level, despite placing the population under the French military's intense and continuous supervision and routinizing France's staggering authority in Algeria through daily and seemingly mundane contacts with the SAS officers, teachers and doctors.

Interestingly and contradictorily to commonly accepted interpretations of de Gaulle's policy in Algeria, the study of the French control over the Algerian population through resettlement has revealed not "a skilled disengagement" as most French historians argued but a "deepening and prolonged military violence." The brutal repression, through torture, arbitrary executions, rape and massacre were "among many acts of state violence as the colonial regime disintegrated." Today, in France as in Algeria, the scale and nature of colonial repression and violence is an ongoing debate. In the words of British historians Jim House and Neil Macmaster, "the numbers of deaths and their category (FLN or French combatants, Algerian or French civilian populations) continues to be a political bone of contention." Yet, it obscures the reality of the colonial structural violence and its long-term effects on those directly involved in the process. Interestingly, this study has shown that the repression constituted memorable events for both Algerian and French interviewees entangled in this war.

Most studies on regroupement have overlooked Algerians' wartime experiences. They focus on the policy of regroupement, its application and consequences for the population. Yet,

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410 Ibid.
411 Ibid., 5.
412 Ibid., 11.
they do not analyze the violence that constantly accompanied the process of *regroupement*. This study has delved deeper into people's traumatic memories of *regroupement* to understand how its violence has affected individuals. It provides a close-up photograph, revealing on one hand details subsumed in the grand narrative of the war and on the other hand the basic structure of colonial violence. This methodology adds details that hold the key to deeper aspects of the war and the use of repression against the population. In this sense, this microhistorical work adds human and emotional details as well as complexity to the overarching narrative on the Algerian war at large and *regroupement* in particular.

**What remains of the past fifty years after Algeria's independence?**

We are now fifty years after the signing of the Evian accords between the FLN and the French authorities on March 19, 1962 which ended 132 years of French rule in Algeria and led to Algerian independence on July 3, 1962, thereby putting an end to a dark era of the country’s history.⁴¹³ Beyond the invisible traces of memory made visible through the process of archiving them, what visual artifacts remain in the places studied of the war and the French presence? Are there traces elsewhere than in people's memories?

"Power must be expressed through symbolic guises. Symbolism is necessary to prop up the governing political order."⁴¹⁴ The French tricolor is no longer flying over the town house in Mansourah Centre. The Algerian flag with a red crescent and star motif layed over the green and

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white backdrop has replaced it. The newly declared authority has reoccupied the premises of the town house. The facilities of the Deuxième Bureau, the torture chamber and the detention center (which formed one unit) have been left abandoned. The concrete walls are cracked in many places like shattered glass and grass has crept into cracks. Graffiti in the form of an Amazigh flag, a symbol of the call for Amazigh sovereignty\textsuperscript{415}, has been painted on the wall of the former detention center. Inside the detention center, nature has reclaimed its rights and covers the ground with vegetation. The premises of the SAS are now inhabited by local residents. The train station has remained the same since its construction by the colonial authorities. The conductor punches tickets with the same single-hole punch. The train station feels almost like a museum, filled with artifacts still in use. "They are building another train station", an employee of the Société Nationale des Transports Férroviaires in Mansourah told me. "What will they do with this one?", I asked intrigued by its future reconversion. "I don't know, they'll leave it empty."

If one passes up the main road (RN5) and turns right to go to Mansourah El-Kabira, one notices the poor state of the road and sidewalk. A former FLN combatant bitterly deplores the state of things in Mansourah in particular and in Algeria at large. "Look at the open sewers where the shit of Mohamad and Aïcha flows!" In his discourse, Mohamed and Aïcha, Arabic/Islamic names, become stereotypical figures of Algerian citizens. He admires countries where "the streets are clean, everything is organized", and strongly rejects the Algerian society and state: "a corrupt state, a fanatic society!" He added: "my best comrade in the maquis begged God to die from a bullet between the eyes before the independence. Believe it or not, he died exactly that way!" Whether God had fulfilled his wish is not the matter. This showed his fear of

\textsuperscript{415} James McDougall, \textit{History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria} (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 2006), 189.
seeing the post-independence era. He stated, tainting his discourse with the nostalgia of the French presence and their governance abilities: "When I go up there (in Mansourah El-Kabira), I think, shit, if France was still ruling this country, I would have built my shack up there. The road would be superb. There would be flowers, water. I saw it here. I know this is possible."

When one goes "up there", in Mansourah El-Kabira, one finds trash lying on the ground because "there is no garbage collection. They (the garbage trucks) don't come up there." But beyond the neglect of social services, one notices untended old stone houses in ruin, ready to collapse. Dirt-roads are almost empty, giving the impression of a ghost town. Many have left the village. Most of the resettled population has stayed, some have left to Algiers, a few of them have gone back to El-Hamra. Most of the population from Mansourah has left. In the words of Amra, originally from Mansourah, "France has killed us!"

Among the acclaimed martyrs the war has produced, one of them has bequeathed his name to the school in Mansourah El-Kabira burnt down by the FLN during the war and rebuilt after Algeria's independence. Kahina, whose brother's name was given to the school, points to the fact that the name of the school is the only remaining visible trace of his brother's existence and his participation in the struggle: "The inauguration day, they (Algerian local authorities) asked us for a picture of him. But we did not have any. We had burned all the photos we had so that the French military wouldn’t find them. We had burned all traces of him. He is dead but others are benefiting from it!"

In El-Hamra, just like in Mansourah El-Kabira, many houses are in ruin. Other houses have been rebuilt. The village is populated again. Life has resumed its course following the war. There is no visible memorial sign. A few kilometers away, in the theater of the battle of El-
Hamra, no scenery has been planted to commemorate the loss of 73 FLN soldiers, one of the greatest battles in the history of the Algerian war. No war memorial has been erected. Only words can help imagine the historical reality of the war. The whispering landscape opened on every side on the whole region is of absolute beauty. The silence and apparent virginity of this place make it difficult to imagine that it was the scene of a ferocious battle. Below in the valley, the house where the resettled Algerians were executed bears no sign of visible memorialization. How to account for this apparent public amnesia?

**Amnesty laws, "legal forgetting", official amnesia.**

A clause of the Evian agreements signed in March 1962 provided that "nobody may exercise police measures, or justice, or disciplinary sanctions or any discrimination whatsoever against whomsoever because of opinions expressed or actions committed during the events of the war."\(^{416}\) That way, the French military protected itself from legal and judicial pursuits by the newly independent Algerian state. Conversely, the ALN-FLN could not be pursued juridically. Yet, "in the absence of trials for assassinations of Algerians, the reality of repression and the responsibilities (and identities) of the perpetrators remained hidden."\(^{417}\) In other words, "such amnesties helped to cover up the realities of and responsibilities for the system"\(^{418}\) of which the massacre of the farmers in El-Hamra is just an example. The policy of oblivion won *on both shores of the Mediterranean*, thereby denying to the victims of atrocities themselves the choice between forgetting and remembering. Victims were forced to forget or remember through the


\(^{417}\) McDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria*, 264.

\(^{418}\) McDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria*, 264.
lens of those in power in Algiers, imposing an official history celebrating the sacrifices of one people united in struggle, a narrative thereby losing the complexity of multiple layers of traumatic experiences in people's life histories. The stake, then, is to reveal the complexity of individuals' stories, which have been swallowed yet not digested by the grand official narrative.

A selective public memory

Historians Jim House and Neil Macmaster write: "We may learn more about a society by thinking about what it doesn't commemorate rather than what it does." The absence of sponsored memories of the great battle of El-Hamra reveals the power dynamics at play in Algeria. During the war, rivals within the FLN assassinated prominent Kabyle leaders. The "interior" chief Kabyle leader Abbane Ramdane had organized FLN's first congress in August 1956 in the Soummam valley of Kabylia to endow the FLN with a functional political structure.  

The political platform adopted under Ramdane's leadership sought the primacy of the political over the military and the primacy of the forces of the "interior" over the "exterior", so-called exiled members of the FLN, among them Ahmed Ben Bella, one of the FLN's "historic chiefs." Additionally, the political platform rejected the Islamic and Arab character of the Revolution enshrined in the FLN's Proclamation of November 1, 1954. His rivals within the movement assassinated him in Morocco in 1957. Colonel Amrouche, military commander of

421 Ibid., 21
Willaya 3, who had managed to escape from the hideout in El-Hamra assaulted by the French military, was killed a few days later on March 28, 1959. In his recently published book, **Amirouche, une vie, deux morts, un testament** (2010), Algerian author Said Saadi argues that Amirouche was killed by the French military following a plot hatched against him by Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne (GPRA) Ministry of Armament and General Supplies, headed by Colonel Boumedienne. After the war, the Ben Bella-Boumedienne bloc took power and declared Algeria an "Arab Muslim" country. In reaction, Hocine Aït Ahmed, Kabyle FLN war leader, founded the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) and led an uprising throughout Algeria against a regime that decried regionalist identities as "feudal survivals." Kabylia's opposition to the exclusionary and marginalization polices of the government remains strong until today. To this day, Kabylia has remained politically, economically and discursively marginalized.

"Public memory exists to promote values rather than "facts". The power in place since 1962, has sought to write the Algerian revolution "in a triumphalistic, simplistic way, passing over the historical origins, internal disputes, and plurality of actors during the war." In Algeria, the reality of the war experience was transformed into a myth of spontaneous, united and popular

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424 Ibid., 89.
425 Ibid., 89.
427 Jim House and Neil MacMaster. *Paris 1961 Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2006), 276 - The Algerian parliament adopted on November 12, 2008 a revision of the constitution whose main purpose was to allow the Algerian president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run for another term. A few other points were changed. On writing history, the Algerian constitution now declares "History is the memory and the common heritage of all Algerians, no one has the right to appropriate and exploit for political purposes. It is therefore for the state to ensure the promotion of his writing, his teaching and dissemination. " Qui écrira l'histoire de l'Algérie, accessed April 6, 2012: http://www.ldh-toulon.net/spip.php?article2963
struggle against colonial powers.\textsuperscript{428} The central figure of this narrative is the martyr who represents national sacrifice. This selective and simplified narrative of the past presented in the official media and school programs serves to hide the acts of violence by the FLN (assassinations, betrayals, etc...) and to give legitimacy to the incumbent leaders, who present themselves as the natural heirs of the Algerian revolution.

\textbf{Silence on the question of regroupement in post-independence Algeria}

Lastly, how can we explain the conspicuous absence of collective memory on \textit{regroupement} camps in official history, while during the war the FLN insisted on their close resemblance to Nazi concentration camps? Field studies conducted after the war revealed "a high survival rates for the centers."\textsuperscript{429} The change of values entailed by resettlement largely explains that most people resettled continued to live in these centers after the war. In fact, the better-equipped centers (school, clinics, employment opportunities) received an increased population.\textsuperscript{430} The continuation of this reality may have covered up its violent genesis. Additionally, the Algerian rural society experienced "another reordering of its settlement system"\textsuperscript{431}, with the launch of the agrarian reform program by President Houari Boumedienne in 1971. The Algerian government imposed its values on a traditional society, already disrupted by earlier resettlements. The "1000 villages socialistes" program recalled the Constantine Plan of 1959, "but that time devoid of associated land reform."\textsuperscript{432} This program amounted, to some extent, to another \textit{regroupement} of much of the Algerian rural society, yet "more voluntary and more

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{428} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{429} Keith Sutton et al. "Population Regrouping in Algeria: Traumatic Change and the Rural Settlement Pattern", 339.
\item \textsuperscript{430} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{431} Ibid., 346.
\item \textsuperscript{432} Ibid., 343.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
positive." Interestingly and quite revealingly, some of these so-called "villages socialistes" built to provide a "technical base for production", and to be "the center of the community's collective activities" and "the social life of individual and family"\textsuperscript{434}, were former \textit{regroupement} camps. Shedding light on the continuation of colonial legacies and structures, an Algerian, when asked if the newly state of Algeria had built the village he lived in, replied: "Non, c'est de Gaulle qui l'a construit."\textsuperscript{435} ("No, de Gaulle built it).
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