The Movement for a Society of Peace:

Islamism and Political Sense-Making in Post-Conflict Algeria

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of DPhil in Oriental Studies

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to broadly understand the role of social meaning-making in the formation, practices, and discourses of political challengers. Focusing on the case of Islamism in Algeria, I highlight how collective efforts to make sense of the 1989 political opening and the 1990s civil conflict have re-introduced into public contestation: the meaning of Islamist moderation, the role of religion in politics, Algerianness/nationalism, and the viability of political parties. Using ethnographic research focused on Algeria's Muslim Brotherhood affiliate, the Movement for a Society of Peace (MSP) party, I show that such contested concepts factor prominently in how movement identity is negotiated and political platforms are articulated, both by the leadership in order to position itself as a viable political actor, and by the movement base so they may reconcile their multiple subjectivities. I argue that Algerian Islamists do not reject the wider political culture that disavows their brand of politics or the attendant hegemonic frames used to cast them out of the body politic; instead, they work to make their positions and their activism legible, palatable, and even meaningful through these very frames. This argument interrogates the assumption common in academic literature that Islamism is at odds with local and nationalist articulations of subjecthood.

This responds to two literatures. First is the literature on Islamist parties in authoritarian contexts, which tends to view parties as unidimensional: either as vote-maximizing parties seeking to alternate 'power' with the regime, as 'contentious' social

movements, or as piety-driven religious revivalists. An ethnography of the MSP reveals a case where what animates members are not fixed or neatly classifiable. Rather, their goals and identities as a movement are formed more through interaction with those of the wider body politic, than with some grander, disembodied imperatives. Second is the literature on Algerian post-conflict politics, which has tended to take popular characterizations of a moribund partisan sphere and generally meaningless Algerian politics at face value, rather than analyzing them as the values, priorities, narratives and social labels through which sense-making processes manifest, and decoding their function in Algerian political culture. Instead, this thesis deconstructs the prevailing discursive patterns as means through which power, social order, and legitimacy are (re)negotiated.

Acknowledgments

I dedicate this to my husband—my best friend—Gareth, who read versions of this text more times than he wished, I'm sure. I thank my parents for ensuring I ate properly and avoided hardship at this time. I am forever indebted to the people of Blida and Algiers, who opened their hearts, homes, and lives to me, ultimately making this thesis possible. I lastly cannot but express my deepest admiration and hope for the people of Algeria: May you realize your dream for a better tomorrow for all.

Wa taḥīyā al-Jazāʾir.

April 2019

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Note on Transliteration, Translation, and Style

Transliteration of Arabic terms in this study follows the system used by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES) both for Standard Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) and words in the Algerian dialect (when possible). However, proper nouns retain the French transliteration, such as Hocine Ait Ahmed, Chadli Bendjedid, or Chlef in order to retain/approximate the Algerian spelling. As a result, a single given word may be spelled in different ways. For example, the word *mujāhidīn* is spelled using IJMES conventions throughout the thesis, save for in the expansion of the acronym ONM, where the organization spells it *moudjahidine*. The plurals of Arabic words use anglicized markers (-s) as opposed to Arabic plural patterns (e.g. *usra*s as opposed to *usar*).

Translation: English translations are provided for text in Arabic or French; Original text is sometimes provided in italics when cross-referencing may be of interest to readers.

Formatting style: APA is overall guide for style and citations; for improved readability, primary source data is cited in footnotes rather than in-text, using APA conventions. There is a separate source list for interlocutors, primary documents, and interviews.

List of Abbreviations

AAV	Green Algeria Alliance (*Alliance de l'Algérie verte*)
AIS	Islamic Salvation Army (*Armée islamique du salut*)
AKP	Turkey's Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*)
ANP	Popular National Army (*Armée Nationale Populaire*)
ANSEJ	National Youth Employment Support Agency (*L'Agence nationale de soutien à l'emploi des jeunes*)
APC	Popular Communal Assembly (*Assemblée Populaire Communale*)
APN	Popular National Assembly (*Assemblée Populaire Nationale*)
APW	Popular Wilaya Assembly (*Assemblée Populaire Wilayales*)
AUMA	Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama
BW	National Edification Movement (Bināʾ al-Watani)
CHEMS	Youth for a Society of Peace (Shabab Mujtamaʿ al-Silm)
CNDDC	National Committee for the Defense of Unemployed Rights (*Comité National pour la Défense des Droits de Chômeurs*)
CNLTD	National Coordination for Freedom and Democratic Transition (*Coordination Nationale pour les libertés et la transition démocratique*)
CNSE	National Commision for Election Supervision (*Commission nationale de supervision des elections*)
CNT	National Transition Council (*Conseil national de transition*)
DRS	Department of Intelligence and Security (*Département de Renseignement et de la Sécurité*
ECC	Essentially Contested Concept
ENA	Étoile Nord-Africaine
FARD	Algerian women reclaiming their rights (*Femmes Algériennes Revendiquant leurs Droits*)
FC	Front for Change (*Front du Changement*)
FFS	Socialist Forces Front (*Front des Forces Socialistes*)
FIS	Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*)
FLN	National Liberation Front (*Front de Libération Nationale*)
GIA	Armed Islamic Group (*Groupe islamique armé*)
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (*Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat*)
HCE	High Committee of the State (*Haut Comité d'État*)
HCI	High Islamic Council (*Haut Conseil Islamique*)
ISCO	National Body for Monitoring and Consultation of the Opposition (*Instance nationale de suivi et de concertation de l'opposition*)
LADDH	Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights (*Ligue algérienne pour la défense des droits de l'homme*)
MPC	Movement for Preaching and Change (*Mouvement pour la Prédication et le Changement*)
MSP	Movement for a Society of Peace (*Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix*)
MTLD	Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties (*Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques*)
OJAL	Organization of Free Algerian Youth (*Organisation des jeunes Algériens libres*)
ONM	National Organization of Mujāhidīn (*Organisation nationale des moudjahidine*)

ONVT	National Organization for Victims of Terrorism (*Organisation nationale des victimes du terrorisme*)
OPNI	Unidentified Political Objects (*Objets Politiques Non-Identifiés*)
POS	Political opportunity structures
PCA	Algerian Communist Party (*Parti communiste algérien*)
PJD	Justice and Development Party (*Parti de la justice et du développement*)
PPA	Algerian People's Party (*Parti du Peuple Algérien*)
PRA	Party of Algerian Renewal (*Parti du Renouveau Algérien*)
PRE	Politically Relevant Elite
PT	Workers' Party (*Parti Travailleurs*)
RAJ	Youth Action Rally (*Rassemblement Action Jeunesse*)
RCD	Rally for Culture and Democracy (*Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie*)
RMT	Resource Mobilization Theory
RND	National Democratic Rally (*Rassemblement National Démocratique*)
SMA	Algerian Muslims Scouts (*Scouts Musulmans Algériens*)
SMT	Social Movement Theory
TAJ	Rally for Algerian Hope (Tajamuʿ Amal al-Jazaʾir)
UDMA	Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto (*Union démocratique du manifeste algérien*)
UGEL	General Union of Free Students (*Union générale des étudiants libres*)
UGTA	General Union of Algerian Workers (*Union générale des travailleurs algériens*)
UNEA	National Union of Algerian Students (*Union nationale des étudiants algériens*)

Chapter One: Introduction

> "Th[e] failure to apprehend plurality is at the core of the [...] main characteristic of contemporary history writing about Algeria."
>
> –Malika Rahal, *Fused Together and Torn Apart* (2012, p. 125)

In 1997, Algeria's held its first parliamentary elections since the advent of the country's brutal armed conflict between the state and Islamist insurgents. The regime saw these elections as a barometer of its legitimacy and of the new and controlled pluralism it had forged after the military canceled the results of Algeria's first-ever free, multi-party elections in 1991 due to a sweeping victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) party; this cancellation was the tipping point that in fact launched the insurgency.

Another Islamist party, the Movement for a Society of Peace (MSP), ran in the 1997 elections coming in second place with 14 percent of the vote, winning 69 seats and entering the coalition government. A self-proclaimed branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, the MSP was legalized in 1990. Its founder Mahfoud Nahnah had long been campaigning around the country, even traveling abroad, on behalf of the Algerian regime during the conflict period. This round of elections occurred against the backdrop of indiscriminate violence that was shaking the country to its foundations. State narratives galvanized collective trauma to cast Islamist insurgents as its chief (if not sole) aggressors. In turn, they positioned the state, especially the army, as the savior of the Algerian people. These narratives gradually made the FIS brand—and the Islamist label more broadly—synonymous with the trauma of the war.

Before the war began, the religious, political, and economic grievances that had mounted over the decades made the FIS' overtly antisystem displays—revolutionary rhetoric, calls for subversion, openly contesting the state's claims to religious legitimacy, mass protest—a welcome discourse and a long-awaited alternative to a sclerotic single-party system, especially among Algeria's urban/northern population.

But the changes in popular attitudes began to render subversive and antisystem modes of contention politically and culturally unavailable, especially to Islamists. The MSP repositioned accordingly, increasingly taking up discourses of patriotism, nationalism, cooperation, unity and moderation. Against the optics of Islamist violence, the MSP's was a winning formula. The MSP's many followers hailed it as a 'moderate alternative.'

However, the Algerian public did not fully buy into the regime's legitimating narrative on the elections. Both domestic and international commentators widely disparaged them as window dressing: a cover for the actual political closure underway over the course of the conflict, and a bid to normalize de facto military rule and the state of emergency. Additionally, they held that the MSP's influence in the coalition government, in what was anyway a Potemkin parliament, could only be marginal against the hegemony of the other two members, which were both state-aligned parties. While the more antisystem FIS had been eviscerated, the MSP's cooperationism and cooptation permitted it to survive and exist. This led some of the Algerian press to even speculate that the MSP was a full-on creation of the regime.

In this way, the MSP's rise came to coincide with the apparent loss of political freedom in Algeria. In the years that followed, various machinations on the part of the core political elite encouraged the MSP's declining electoral outcomes, stoked intra-party divisions, and incentivized several high-profile MSP individuals' entanglements in state-led corruption. Thus with time, in a telling conundrum, the more cooperationist shape of Islamist contention became a liability with some parts of the Algerian polity, who came to dismiss contenders like the MSP as a meaningless and impotent phenomenon. (Indeed paradoxically, *other* opponents maintained it was dissembling moderation, and driven by the same radical, millenarian impetuses they believed had animated the previous Islamist victors.)

These ways through which the polity "made sense" of these optics made the MSP's cooptation an open-and-shut case in Algerian popular discourse. These popular, cultural conceptualizations were reproduced in the academic corpus, where the MSP's willingness to participate in the Algerian political system became largely dismissed as misguided, manipulated, or otherwise un-meaningful (Boubekeur, 2010; Driessen, 2014; Dris, 2013; Ghanem, 2015; Hamladji, 2002). The path it might forge was no longer subject to academic debate, with many studies coming to the same conclusion: that Algerian politics were dead (Roberts, 2017), and with it, so too was the MSP.

However, nearly twenty years after the end of the civil conflict, the MSP remains among the largest parties in Algeria (second only to the state-aligned FLN and RND parties), as well as the largest Islamist group, since the conflict. It may be tempting for some observers to attribute this to state-backing (in terms of electoral numbers) or corruption (considering its budget). However, it also has a large and pervasive popular base which in turn, complicates accounts of a 'meaningless' MSP.

This thesis seeks to account for how MSP members/supporters and others 'make meaning' around political affiliation and action. Using an ethnographic approach, I highlight how ideologies, values and political cultures shape the political environment, as well as the practices and discourses of those who seek to activate within that milieu. What are the ways Islamists carve out a legitimate way-of-being, a political existence against the hegemonic discursive regimes that work to strip them of it? The answers make the broader theoretical contribution of elucidating the role of social meaning-making in political contention.

1.1 Algerian Politics in the Literature

The MSP and its place within the Algerian political system has been typically understood through a body of work within political science that seeks to understand how and why some authoritarian regimes endure. This corpus largely asserts that authoritarian regimes have been able to survive in part by adapting governance strategies to changing international, regional, and local/popular conditions (Blaydes, 2010; Heydemann, 2007; Lust-Okar, 2005). In cases where coercion and repression have become either passé or politically costly, regimes instead manage demands for social/political change and sustain legitimacy, through what Heydemann (2007) coined as *authoritarian upgrading*: the cultural-sharpening of autocratic tools, and 'softer' management of political opposition such as, through token political inclusion, political concessions, the use of nominally democratic institutions, and the cooptation of political opposition through these institutions (Heydemann, 2007; Lust-Okar, 2005; Malesky & Shuler, 2010; Stuglett, 2007). Pratt (2007) points to cooptation of civil society in Arab countries as a way to "normalize" authoritarianism. Some of the literature on political cooptation asserts that in its most typified cases it results in, inability of the smaller group to implement their political program, legislative inertia, loss of popular credibility, serial defections, and ruptures in party unity (Gandhi & Przeworski, 2006; Malesky & Shuler, 2010; Lawler, 1983).

Given the Algerian regime's machinations to reassume power and manage opposition, subsequent attempts to understand Islamism and politics after 1991 chiefly adhere to these frameworks. In analyzing the MSP's role in the 1997 elections described in the chapter's opening, scholars pointed to the MSP having been the sole opposition party to capitulate to the state-initiated Platform for National Entente, which enshrined Islam as under state purview and forbade parties from using overt religious reference, among other things—to make the case that it would be coopted and/or that the MSP

leadership had made a sort of devil's bargain (Berkouk, 1998; Layachi, 2006). Others highlighted its receipt of only minor ministerial portfolios and nominal government posts (Ottaway, 2015), and mused that the party would be thrown out once it had served its purpose: to build a respectable voter turnout, and to legitimate an otherwise façade pluralism (Werenfels, 2007).

In analyzing the MSP's subsequent tenure in government, Hamladji (2002) concludes the party and its leaders ultimately "failed in their attempts to gain more influence in the decision-making process. Their participation strategy has allowed them to go only half the way *towards power* [emphasis added]" (p. 3). In a similar study, Boubekeur (2010) concludes that the party has "lost out" where its "influence on government decision-making remains marginal," and led "in the country's political life [to] the trivialization of Islamist parties' political participation" (p. 5). She adds that "the 'parliamentarization' of Islamist contestation […] consists in routinizing Islamist demands by giving these groups access to the Parliament as MPs, while knowing that the Parliament has a negligible impact on decision-making" (p. 4).

Analyses of the broader ways the regime sought to sustain power post-1991 note that the regime has relied on embedded patronage networks and a redistributive rentier (chiefly oil) economy, nominal democratization, and a constant low-lying threat of terrorism to skew popular preferences in favor of stability (Entelis, 1997; Volpi, 2006). Regime factions pre-organize the official political field including through electoral processes and other democratic institutions to, according to Volpi (2006), "favor candidates that are deemed acceptable to the ruling elite" (p. 446) who do not pose a real contest against the regime due either to (1) limited electoral support or no opposing policy proposals, and/or (2) results-engineering via poll-rigging and direct *and* indirect

vote-buying. Contenders like the MSP are understood to be utterly powerless against such a reality.

According to Andrea Liverani (2008) various regime factions sought to manage the political crisis, not by ensuring genuine contestation, but by leading a "hyper-plurality" (p. 101) of parties to outstrip the number of actual political/social cleavages; by congesting the partisan marketplace with too many parties, the latter are left to manage, defeat, and diffuse one another, absolving the regime of having to overtly ensure no tendency gains disproportionate ascendance over others.

This account echoes the common observation of the intelligence apparatus' occasional infiltration of parties (e.g. Burgat, 1997; Willis, 1996), which functions either to collect information and/or to sow division—the paranoia around which perhaps outweighs the *actual* ubiquity of the phenomenon, leading the specter of the state to nevertheless loom over partisan life and engender strife in itself. All the above, taken together, has led the country to be characterized, particularly in the prevailing political science literature, most often as *hybrid*-authoritarian or *semi*-authoritarian (Volpi, 2013).

Isabelle Werenfels (2007) refers to the late-1990s/early-2000s period as a "re-liberalization phase" (p. 16), which differed from that of 1989 as it was, much more expressly, not intended to lead to democratization:

> Political decisions were taken in opaque and informal ways; the judiciary was firmly under the grip of the executive; there were few signs of a truly independent organization of civil society actors; and democratic tendencies remained confined to a small number of dispersed activists in academia, politics and the print media, and to a few NGOs that had been active even during the years of strong repression. (p. 16)

This literature overwhelmingly imagines Algerian politics as fixed, that Algeria at large is devoid of any real political or civic vitality. Per this reading, Algerian Islamism began and ended with the FIS' rise and fall (1988-1992), the Algerian state's use of

propaganda during and after the conflict decade, helped by the period's confusion and violence, eroded the revolutionary, millenarian, and/or subversive aspects of Islamist appeal. This allowed those in power to constrict the political and civic space with little significant pushback (Hafez, 2003), including: by controlling election outcomes while using them as cover for political closure, by pitting the Islamist camps against one another, by delegitimizing parties through cooptation, and using legal means to curb the parties' political prerogatives, thus strangling any avenues by which Islamist politics might proceed thereafter. This meant that participating Islamists like the MSP were coopted (Driessen, 2014; Hamladji, 2002), thereby impotent in the face of the machinations of an immutable incumbent regime (Driessen, 2013; Roberts, 2015; Volpi, 2013), and that, indeed, there was little more to be said of these Islamists.

This results from this literature's reliance on a democratic *telos*: that political systems are necessarily on a path toward democracy, and that any phenomena to the contrary are unwanted obstacles to its realization. The result is that democracies, by virtue of their formal political setups, are considered home to diverse spaces of pluralist maneuver, while autocracies are characterized by unyielding closures where the state's primary function and singular interest is to clamp down, in lockstep, on any contesting activity. Indeed, while Algeria has been designated in much of this literature as *hybrid*- or *semi*-authoritarian, there is still little consensus in this corpus on where the 'line' is drawn between an autocracy that is *liberalizing* (Diamond, Plattner, & Brumberg, 2003) and a democracy that is simply *defective* (Merkel, 2004). And that regimes like Algeria have been categorized among all the above differentially and subjectively, illustrates that democracy/autocracy are less conducive to rigid classification than to definitional contestation. This demonstrates that traditional authoritarianism and democratization/transitology modeling, under a guise of—and a professed commitment

to—objectivity, are actually governed by academic subjectivities whose normative biases render their approaches incapable of fully apprehending, what occurs outside of the more conventional domains of politics, and the nature of relations between, various actors and resilient regimes.

Ultimately, the foregone conclusions of a failed political Islam in Algeria (Boubekeur, 2007; Burgat, 2007; Roy, 1994) have normalized what are in fact conspicuous gaps on politics and Islam in Algeria, where what is left unexplored has only raised glaring questions: What *were* the new contours of Islamists' activism and the substance of their contention in the new, changed environment? What do such popular characterizations of the MSP and Islamists reveal about how Algerians *make sense* of their political world? About Algerian political culture? Perhaps most glaring, what ultimately impels the Islamist movement and compels its members if, as the prevailing scholarship argues, it is actually 'meaningless'?

1.2 Conceptual Framework

This thesis proceeds on a post-structuralist set of assumptions. Namely, that social and political groups, cultures, and categories, rather than functioning systems of fixed structures, are the result of the intersubjective processes through which social order, legitimacy, and belonging are negotiated and manifested; that language, vocabularies, and discourses necessarily both form and are formed by these processes; that people are both subjects of, and agents in, the social world they construct through these processes; and that, therefore, power is shape-shifting and unlocalizable.

Sense-Making and Power

The prism of *sense-making* (McKee, 2003; Weick, 1995) usefully encompasses and theorizes these individual and collective psycho-social and discursive processes.

Sense-making practices refer, in their broadest definition, to the ways people make sense of the world around them. According to Karl Weick (1995), sense-making necessarily involves: *identity* and self-positioning, where who we think we are within our context around us shapes our narratives, actions and interpretation of events; *retrospection*; *enactment*, wherein people speak in narratives that shape, organize, and confirm experiences, and that manage future events; *extracting cues* to guide decisions on relevant information and plausible explanations; *plausibility*, where accuracy is impossible and elusive against the multiple and ever-changing identities of others and the self; sense-making is also *social*, wherein the most 'plausible' narratives are preserved and shared, even with oneself; and *ongoing*, in that individuals both react to and shape their environment, in a process of feedback. Sense-making systems may form along different lines and around various epistemic groups ranging from an individual, to a family or social group, to a larger community, to a nation, or larger global group. Individuals can belong to several sense-making systems, whether overlapping or otherwise.

One key affordance of a focus on sense-making is that it demystifies how language/discourse is both a medium and object of political debate. My thesis engages with this via the notion of *essentially contested concepts* (ECC). Pioneered by Walter Bryce Gallie in 1955, ECCs involve widespread agreement on the importance of a concept, but contestation over its best realization, "the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users" (Gallie, 1955, p. 169). Users all argue the notion is used incorrectly by other camps (Starrett, 2010). Consider *liberty* or *freedom* in the United States: it is central to popular social and political discourse, but resistant to any precise definition. It is a defining national tenet, of genuine importance to most citizens, which is thus invoked across the breadth

of political spectra. However many disagree on what it means, and the various political camps define it in diametric-opposition. It is a linchpin of political legitimacy, weaponized against political rivals, and claimed in exclusivist terms by opposing camps. To clarify, ECC are not an example of a sense-making practice, but rather *objects* of sense-making. And *where* individuals position within the contestations over these terms' best definitions and manifestations, results from, and further leads to, sense-making practices. This conceptualization helps to organize our understanding of Algerian politics and political culture, effectively as a sum or series of contestations and meanings.

While the essentially contested concept is useful over the course of the thesis in broadly considering the ways in which different Algerian actors position in the debates over various national concepts, ECC provides an especially robust framework for my discussion in Chapters Four and Five of religious 'moderation' as it relates to notions of 'Algerianness.' I will refrain therefore, from theorizing ECC too heavily here. Rather, for the sake of a more focused discussion, I will review ECC in relation to moderation and Algerianness in Chapter Four itself before its detailed discussion of the MSP's negotiation of—and through—these concepts.

A second affordance of the sense-making lens is in reconceptualizing modernist understandings of states and power. To this end, I follow other ethnographers of political life under Middle Eastern/autocratic regimes (Iqtidar, 2011; Ismail, 2006; Wedeen, 1999) in adapting Foucault's conceptualization of power. Wedeen, for example, understands power as an inherently diffuse network of relations, that circulates and is socially-reified both through and between practices of domination as well as the projections of individual and collective imaginaries—as opposed to residing in, and thus existing solely by the virtue of, the visible or palpable structures through which it

manifests. According to Wedeen's (1999) study of authoritarian power in Syria, "actual experiences of domination" do not necessarily localize its source; rather than demonstrating an actual or "functional coherence of power," people's experiences of power rather reveal its "ambiguities" (p. 26).

Ismail's (2006) approach to Cairo's informal housing dwellers, while elaborating aspects of state-society relations that are markedly different from my thesis, has been instructive in my own investigations of the ways that MSP members/sympathizers experience the state, and how these experiences project on how they carry out their movement and perform their identities. In her work on the 'practices of government' in Cairo's popular, informal neighborhoods, she asserts that "in examining everyday-life practices in terms of the forms of resistance they represent, we also consider the nature of the edifice of domination, the structures of control and their hegemonic effects" (p. xxiv). She argues that this hegemony, this edifice, is traditionally understood as, and instantiated through, the Egyptian 'state,' which she argues—drawing upon Foucault's concept of government as 'the conduct of conduct'—is "better viewed in terms of practices and rationalities of government" (p. xxiv) than an identifiable locus of power. Indeed, sociologist Philip Abrams (1988) calls on scholars to reject "the legitimating account of [political power] that political theorists and political actors so invitingly and ubiquitously hold out to us—that is, the idea that it is '*the state*'" (p. 64).

If the state is no longer a cohesive object to study (Iqtidar, 2011), what then should we make of ubiquitous discourses of state power Algerians regularly deploy? Abrams asserts to this end that state power is more than just the "state system" (p. 58) which in most cases—including Algeria—is a fragmented cluster of competing interests. State power is reified, according to Abrams, through the "state idea" (p.58)—

i.e. the idea that it is a coherent and sovereign moral entity. Where institutionalized power is primarily the "ability to withhold information, deny observation and dictate the terms of knowledge" (p. 62), remaining conspicuously hidden allows the state to reinforce the idea of its existence as it leads everyday citizens to reify it. For example, *Le Pouvoir* ('power') is a popular term for the Algerian regime which reflects how the Algerian polity has come to make sense of the nature of state power. *Le Pouvoir* refers to the de facto power-sharing arrangement between the FLN, the People's National Army (ANP), and its intelligence apparatus, the *Département de Renseignement et de la Sécurité* (DRS, 'Department of Intelligence and Security').[1] The opacity of Algerian high politics has made this arrangement difficult to corroborate or measure, but has also bolstered the idea of a secretive, all-deciding, immutable ruling triumvirate.

Even *political challengers* take part in this reification in a seeming conundrum that is important for this study. The conundrum is if power (state power) is 'everywhere,' producing even the subjects that resist it, then how can it be apprehended? What, then is resistance to power, and how does it emerge? Can resistance even exist under such an understanding of power? Abrams (1988) would suggest that contenders (like the MSP and its members/supporters) must hold up "the autonomous reality of political power […] as real" (p. 70) for the sake of "agitational appeal" (p. 70)—if not as an oppressor or hegemon, at least as the entity against which they formulate grievances and articulate a competing or complementing mission. This makes any sort of political participation or struggle—perhaps even writing about it—"a matter of participating in the ideological construction of the state as a real entity" (p.70). That is, even if we intellectually deny a "concrete existence of the state" (p. 70) the

[1] Often referred to informally as "Pouvoirology" (a twist on Kremlinology), the attempt to understand the shifts between these three poles in decision-making processes, veto, leverage, and power within the regime is racked by speculation and conjecture both within and outside the country.

ways people experience, conceive of, talk about—indeed sense-make around—the state and state power are *real*: they are inherent to how people understand their political world, and how in turn, contenders position within it.

In adopting this theoretical stance, my work also builds on the tradition within English-language Algeria studies (such as the works of James McDougall, Malika Rahal, Jane Goodman, Natalya Vince, and Judith Scheele) which departs from, and problematizes, the ways tropes and discourses heard in the field are often *replicated* in academic discourse, rather than *decoded* (viz. Jourde, 2009 p. 201; Rahal, 2012, p. 124). This body of work rejects narratives about Algerian exceptionalism and post-conflict political stagnation, in favor of post-structural epistemologies that unpack the circulation of public sense-making practices, and the resulting values, priorities, narratives and social labels such as an omnipotent/hidden state apparatus, and attendant notions of partisan/civic powerlessness, and Islamist treachery. By contrast, many past works on Algerian politics have largely reproduced these narratives, effectively confirming/codifying them, even reproducing them as analytical frameworks themselves.[2]

It is worth stating here that my experience during fieldwork in Algeria has motivated my embrace of this framework. For example, a phenomenon I came to call *DRS-determinism*, the practice of casting political events, phenomena, groups, or actors as creations or agents of Algeria's opaque and secretive intelligence apparatus, the DRS, was initially a profound challenge to my data collection. A near-constant discourse (theorized and deconstructed in Chapter Three), was the claim that the MSP was 'a

[2] Malika Rahal (2012) for example, expressly observes, and laments, this in the scholarship on the colonial and pre-independence period: "Historians both inside and outside Algeria have been influenced by the sense of illegitimacy that tainted the defeated political parties and their members, as is indicated by the widespread view of the 1946–56 period as one of "loss of time" and useless division […] This view is frequently expressed by the *actors themselves, but it also finds its way into historical* [academic] *discourse*" (p. 124).

creation of the intelligence services,' such that I wondered at times if/how the MSP party/movement merited any investigation at all. I sometimes found it difficult not to internalize this outlook, whose ubiquity made it difficult to discern the 'real' versus 'fake.'

However, as I began treating DRS-determinism and other similar concepts as practices of sense-making, their purpose and instrumentality within the Algerian political space, and their relation to the positionality of the user, became clearer and more patterned.[3] Observations of 'open secrets' of contenders' collusion with the state, of who engaged these narratives, and of who rejected them, themselves offered fascinating clues about how the Algerian political space was negotiated and constructed, and about how (and why) collective imaginaries actively reified the *idea* of an omnipotent Algerian state (Abrams, 1988).

And as I increasingly moved with members and branch-level leaders, I saw varied and competing articulations of Algerian identity, and sought to deconstruct them as the means through which power, social order, and legitimacy were (re)negotiated. I thus realized that *even if* the theory that MSP had been a 'fake/front' party—founded to absorb the FIS electorate, and counter-mobilize these members into a party loyal to the regime—were true, that it did not the negate the very real ways in which such members' dispositions and worldviews projected back onto the movement and the course it was charting today. That state power is a social construction complicates the overwhelmingly dichotomized conceptualizations of Algerian power and politics, where

[3] This is perhaps a quintessential example of sense-making as defined on page 5. Citizens made sense of their social universe by *enacting* the idea that political outcomes were fixed—that political occurrences were orchestrated by the DRS, or at least carried out with its support. Where the state's incontestability could be affirmed through *retrospection*, it could be used to dismiss out of hand any meaningfulness in politics, thereby allowing its users to retreat from their stakes in political outcomes and manage expectations regarding future events. This concept and the purpose in serves in national meaning-making is explored in fuller detail in Chapter Three.

an actor can only either be a state-coopted agent devoid of principle, or a purer, independent one impervious to perverse incentives.

Political Islam in Social Movement Theory

In using sense-making to understand the MSP, this thesis hopes to make a broader contribution to the study of Islamist activism, and in particular to an increasingly-prominent set of assumptions/frameworks used to study Islamists groups: Social Movement Theory (SMT). SMT in a sense complements the democracy/autocracy literature I reviewed above: it seeks to understand how movements occur under the very systems of power that the democracy/autocracy literature considers wholly determinative. I therefore propose re-theorizing SMT to foreground sense-making processes in understanding Islamist behavior. This adaptation of SMT moves us toward an analysis of the MSP as participants in, and site of, political/social meaning-making and cultural production in Algeria. More globally, it allows us to understand the behavior of Islamists' activating within authoritarian arrangements—thinking beyond structuralist/rationalist understandings of Islamist impetus and their fortunes in formal political spheres.

To be sure, the social movement approaches to Islamism were initially motivated by a dissatisfaction with the Orientalist frames that pathologized Islamists as motivated solely by religious revivalism, and ideology (Tuğal, 2009; Wiktorowicz, 2003). Seeking to move studies of Islamism away from such essentialisms they argued, instead, that Islamists are just like their irreligious counterparts: in response to the structures of political opportunity around them—which they apprehend in lockstep as a cohesive unit, through rational calculation—these movements mobilize resources (like recruits and funds) and undertake (necessarily disruptive) contentious action. However,

these assumptions have been treated as so totalizing and determining, that they too have become reductive in the following ways.

Political Opportunity. The methods of authoritarian upgrading discussed in literature on Algerian politics are examples of what the foundational SMT literature (Tarrow, 1994) would call *political opportunity structures* (POS)—the factors *external* to a movement or collective that either strengthen or limit its scope for action. Political opportunity is an SMT sub-theory especially salient in modern works on Islamist contention, where they are understood as the "configurations of enablements and constraints [which] structure [Islamist] movement dynamics" (Wiktorowicz, 2003, p.13). According to this literature, these 'structures' might come in the form of formal institutions (e.g. an election) or less-formal social systems and discourses (e.g. the diminished appeal by 1988 of state nationalist discourses). Despite the fact that the literature on political opportunity has increasingly tried to account for *political culture* and *collective political imagination* (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004; Tuğal, 2009), it continues to cast these phenomena occurring *outside* of, and *upon*, movements like the MSP and does not account for how "systems of signification are subject to contestation and renegotiation by people who are both constructed by and also agents in their world" (Wedeen, 1999, p. 26).

A post-structuralist account by contrast affirms that discursive and ideational changes in the political space do not simply *descend* upon movements and their members, nor are Islamist groups like the MSP subject solely to exogenous forces, namely, structures that are too closed to allow contenders any maneuver. Rather, Islamist actors are an indivisible part of the social universe that generates the very spaces, dispositions, and rationales through which actors and movements activate at all. That is, rather than opening and closing like a spigot, "opportunity [is] mediated by

belief[s]" (Kurzman, 2004, p. 114) of all involved—the state, the movement, and polity—between whom boundaries are far more blurred than the authoritarian/POS scholarship assume; it is intersubjectively formed, indeed not without contenders' own participation. Members of movements/collectives are usually also members of other epistemic communities, resulting in overlapping subjecthoods and social group memberships (a theme I will elaborate further below). In dialogue with their social universe(s), MSP members are thereby themselves in possession of the "world-views that allowed these structures to operate" to begin with (p. 8). Therefore, I engage the emerging debates within political opportunity literature (Kurzman, 2004, 2008; Touraine, 1985) that call for greater investigation of the individual and collective imaginative processes inherent to how people and movements themselves form and construct the cultures of opportunity in which they activate.

Framing Contention. SMT literature tends to view movements as responding to political opportunity structures through some sort of contentious action. It characterizes such action as organized into *repertoires of contention*, which are mimicked, borrowed, or reused, therefore often recurring among movements with vastly different claims or contexts of mobilization. According to its chief theorist Charles Tilly (1986), repertoires are the "whole set of means a group has for making claims of different types on different individuals" (p. 2).

Such a theorization indeed leaves *open* the idea of how contention can manifest. Empirically speaking however, the literature has focused asymmetrically on public, confrontational, and disruptive acts, effectively delimiting what qualifies as a repertoire: civil disobedience, active resistance, boycott, mass protest, rejection of the terms of engagement, revolution, or even terror and violence. This implicitly renders necessarily disruptive notions of contentious politics as more meaningful and worthy of observation

than the everyday, more "non-confrontational patterns of interactions between Islam and the state," to use the words of Berna Turam (2006, p. 19). Indeed, as Turam laments, Islamist opposition is often mistakenly seen as an outgrowth of political crisis—necessarily as a vehicle for popular discontent against the state's failures to deliver (p. 19). This may partly explain why the FIS' fiery rhetoric and public displays of dissent during their (very brief) heyday continue to receive far greater attention than the more restrained claim-making methods of the MSP in the literature on Algerian Islamist contention—indeed, despite having been a political phenomenon in Algeria for nearly thirty years.

A post-structuralist reframing of contention allows for us to productively interrogate this assumed link between genres of action and their intended meaning. To this end, Ismail (2006) asks, "can we draw clear distinctions between coping mechanisms that are not necessarily political and resistance strategies that are?" (2006, p. xxiv). She contends that the answer is to refrain from deciding "once and for all that a given act fits or does not fit into a box called resistance" (Ismail, 2006, p. xxiv) because (1) the meanings of actions are necessarily contextually defined and (2) "intentions evolve through practice…[such that]… the meanings ascribed to an act, rather than being fixed, are of a dynamic nature" (p. xxiv). As we saw, works on the MSP implicitly rely on these normative biases that favor deliberate or confrontational political action. But how 'contentious' does contention ultimately need to be, to be considered as such? Rather than adjudicating on an observed act's contentiousness/disruptiveness, scholars may trace the meanings and processes that precede, produce, and follow from, these acts.

This allows us to move away from the normative focus within the authoritarianism and democratization/transitology literature on electoral outcomes,

policy influence, and other formal, political arenas—a focus linked to a self-affirming, and ultimately obfuscating, assumption that the 'real' or 'intended' purpose of opposition parties/movements in the Middle East/North Africa is to alternate power with incumbent regimes, or contest their exercise of power. Through ethnographic observations, Turam (2006) finds that Turkey's Gülen movement, for instance, deviates from this assumption: "motivated by its affinities to the state, the movement was mobilizing to make more space for the faithful individual *within the boundaries* of the secular Republic [emphasis added]" (p. 19). Similarly, in the case of Algeria and its MSP, how much of the membership is actually animated by the prospect of winning votes, capturing the *state*, going "towards power" (Hamladji, 2002, p. 3), or "access to parliament" (Boubekeur, 2010, p. 4)? Are electoral outcomes the only 'prize' for the broader movement? How is the 'game' at hand and its 'prize' defined, and do all members view them *the same way*?

Beyond Rationality. These questions bring us to the problems of rational actor theories of agency that continue to underlie SMT assumptions about movements' value-cultivation, purpose-construction, and decision-making. It assumes a singular rationality animates the movement and makes it constantly cohere. Robinson (2003) for example, argues in his study *Hamas as Social Movement* (Palestine) that because "individual decision-making cannot be understood outside of a group[...] context" that "the group is the proper unit of analysis" in understanding collective 'rationality' (p. 115). Taken together, these assumptions treat movements as unitary agents—i.e. as necessarily internally-consistent blocs that approach the world around them in lock-step.

Firstly, however, social agents do not go through life in a constant state of calculation based on rational/economic criteria. Rather, they behave according to their

feeling of being-in-the-world as arising from individual history (what Bourdieu (1977) called *habitus*), as well as according to intersubjective meaning-making.

Secondly, instead, the framework of sense-making assumes that: (a) our ability to process information is finite and limited; (b) the information surrounding us is large and incongruous; (c) the world is characterized by complexity and "ambiguity" (Wedeen, 1999, p. 26); and (d) our behaviors, worldviews, and other cognitions are necessarily socially-formed—even negotiated—through language and discourse. Therefore, even *if* agents wish or believe themselves to be rational, it is unlikely that they can fully recognize and apprehend the opportunities around them—nor is the information in front of them is necessarily correct, let alone quantifiable or calculable.

It therefore is much more productive/revelatory for sense-making to approach movements as an *assemblage* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980) composed of differentiated constituent parts,[4] wherein integration of and connections between these parts and their arrangements provides sense or meaning, if not, *context* for assigned meanings. This helps us to productively rethink Islamist impetus by giving greater consideration to internal movement difference: what gets the movement to that decision or behavior relies on the dispositions, worldviews, ideas, negotiations that are taken up by the individual parts that comprise the movement.

When individuals and their diverse subjecthoods come together in Islamist movement membership, they interact and influence the ways members—individually and dialogically—make sense of their participation in the movement/collective: e.g. the values animating their participation, their sense of purpose as persons versus as

[4] *Assemblage theory*, as presented in A Thousand Plateaus (1980) by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, forwards the idea that within a group, congregation, or body, the relationships between the constituent parts (people, objects, ideas) are not fixed or stable but are fluid, exchangeable, and multi-functional and thus subject to displacement/replacement. According to an interpretation of this text, the connection between, and arrangement of, these component parts what provides sense or meaning (see Phillips, 2006)

members, and whether/how these converge/diverge. For example, Aitemad Muhanna (2015) finds in an ethnography of women Hamas members in Gaza, that such an "intersubjective contingency" (p. 8) led to varied and emotionally-rooted responses to aspects of Hamas' religiosity as it interacts with other aspects of their personhood. In this way, we can appreciate that different parts of the movement do not operate as a 'whole,' and all want the same thing.

Moreover, the extent to which we see uniformity in members' ethos is at least partly attributable to the efforts forged to maintain an outward image of uniformity, and to contend with in-group difference among parts of the MSP.[5] This goes back to the themes of the 'state idea' wherein a movement may similarly present itself as a uniform, coherent group to movement outsiders—or, as an act of sense-making, to themselves. My thesis therefore seeks to further consider the ways movements *cultivate* or *perform* unity, and often act as units vis-à-vis outsiders, rather than assuming *a priori* how/whether such a unity exists or not. Asef Bayat (2005) argues that "Islamist movements are internally fluid, fragmented and differentiated," even if something "binds these fragments together" (p. 901) through the processes or set of values by which individuals together cultivate the 'collective identity' that leads them to constitute the party/movement to begin with (Kurzman, 2008).

This departure from rational actor theory also has implications for how we consider *individual* motivations vis-à-vis movements. Assumptions of movement *oneness* render a constituent Islamist as only one type of *subject*, as if their membership in other social groups do not equally weigh on their approach to and behavior in the

[5] Particularly wherein membership itself and internal promotions are predicated on the embodiment of these shared ideals. MSP movement members are organized into an *usra* ('family'), reflective of bond and similarity. Likewise, the teachings within the *usra*, ensure a uniformity of militants' education and curriculum, producing members with common political and social ideas. But these practices are sites of contestation and difference-management. (This is an issue elaborated in greater detail in Chapters 4-7.)

movement. But members of defined in-groups (like Islamist movements) usually have other long-cultivated identities (even if these are less conducive to decisive labelling) with which their involvement in the movement is reconciled. An MSP member/supporter's multiple subjectivities may include: a citizen within the Algerian polity, member of other social/in-groups (e.g. striking university students, members of parliament, profession-based labor union, even residents of a certain neighborhood), have other identitarian labels (regional, ethnic, tribal, linguistic), or even more basically as parents or children, or as members of a gender, age group or generation, all of which in differing ways shape members' worldviews, interests, and approaches to the movement.

Attention to how an individual's subjectivities interact / are reconciled, should conversely not over-assume a *tension* between Islamist movement membership/support and other defining identities. For instance, many MSP members describe their own allegiance to symbols of nationalism/patriotism not as strategic performances but as genuine, personal acts representing their nationalist subjectivity. In this sense, the ethnographic task is to trace how members (re)constitute, shape and define the movement through their individuated framings/interpretations of them—to trace sense-making.

Islamist Resources and Mobilization. A final way in which SMT may better account for sense-making is by reconceptualizing resource mobilization. Per the prevailing reading, SMT understands resource mobilization as the evaluation and achievement of 'efficient' outcomes (Tilly, 2003), or of calculable gains (Wiktorowicz, 2003) such as political leverage (Wickham, 2004), recruitment of bodies, and funds (Clark, 2003). Al-Anani even refers to Islamist recruitment as a predatory, infiltratory (hunter-prey) process (2016, p. 70). What little literature exists on the MSP's *daʿwa,*

implicitly relies on these frames: focusing on the presumed priority of recruitment and monies (Dris, 2013; Hamladji, 2002; Ouaissa, 2015; Yacine, 1998). (*Daʿwa* refers in Islam to proselytizing or preaching, but also includes societal outreach, charity, and often social service provision. It widely understood in Islamist movements as necessary/complementary to political/partisan activism.)

However, this focus on material gain overlooks the varying individual and collective subjectivities regarding these resources: what is to be mobilized and why, and what it allows the movement to be/do, and what it means for the movement's collective identity / self-understanding. That is, what is identified as a 'resource' or 'gain' does not only concern the accumulation of human, monetary, and material capacities, but is contingent upon the interpretive frameworks that arise before/during members' mobilizational processes. Thus the identification/pursuit of a resource is shaped not only through the prism of external factors, but (re)formed through the *experience* of mobilization (Touraine, 1985). These processes and experiences are "fundamentally 'nonrational' in character without yet being irrational," and are "meaningful and provide the actors with the capacity of making sense of their being together" (Melucci 1996, p. 66). Engaging with this reconfiguration of resource mobilization theory (RMT), my study investigates: What are the ways in which certain types of people, material objects, and mobilizational spaces serve as articulations of movement values and ideations? How do processes of mobilization, which are by their nature interactive and interpretive, give way to meaning-making around collective action? Indeed, might these processes themselves be acts of contention?

1.3 Methodology

Acts of political sense-making, like the example of DRS-determinism, are typically not apprehended by traditional instrumental rationality approaches, and therefore often overlooked in political science. Denis-Constant Martin (2010) refers to such acts as *unidentified political objects* (*objets politiques non-identifiés*, OPNI). Martin asserts an OPNI is any social phenomenon that is underlain by political/social representations (2009). It may be "located in the fields of *religion*, artistic production, festivals, sports, forms of sociability and commensality, etc. […] which expresses, transmits and contributes to remodeling social representations of polities and politics" (2009, p. 259). Similarly, ethnographer Cedric Jourde (2009, citing Wedeen, 2002) alerts us to "the critical role of" OPNIs, as the "informal institutions and 'meaning-making' practices in the survival of authoritarian regimes" (p. 201), as they "also invest other sociopolitical realms […] that are generally 'unidentified' by many political scientists, but are critical for the production of compliance, repression, or contestation" (p. 204). Indeed, as OPNIs also involve the "political *struggles over the labeling* of groups and the meanings of those labels [emphasis added]" (Jourde, 2009, p. 201), essentially contested concepts (ECC) are also example of OPNI central to this study.

Jourde's (2009) fieldwork among Mauritanian Islamists revealed certain "rituals and celebrations," (p. 205) as *OPNIs*, as they worked to effectively either legitimize or resist the regime's strategies for survival including "repression and electoral fraud" (p. 205). In Syria, Lisa Wedeen (1999) similarly finds that what many political scientists had written off as a fabricated cult of personality around Hafez al-Assad, in fact were ethnographic objects, themselves constructions and performances of discipline, symbolic acts in spite of widespread consensus regarding the cult's apparent illegitimacy. And in Algeria, Jane Goodman (2013a) uncovers previously unidentified

modes of informal resistance in the face of similar symbolic acts of discipline, chiefly the folklore and mythology around the revolutionary FLN at a local theater.

These cases suggest that OPNIs, including sense-making practices are best apprehended using ethnography: as it involves investigating behaviors of certain participants in a certain social context or situation, as well as these participants' own interpretation of these behaviors. It therefore elucidates both what is implied and connoted in how individuals choose references, characterize, make value judgements and pick vocabulary, as well as the function and position of these within the larger ideational milieu. Similarly, this thesis will identify certain acts, languages, exchanges, and rituals that are revealing of social positions and political contestations.

Instead of reproducing what is seen/heard, ethnography opens our eyes to whether and how what we see and hear may be sites of political meaning-making and social debate, thus objects of inquiry. My example in this chapter of DRS-determinism, is indeed a common trope in Algerian *political culture*, a notion I understand as the sum and interaction of individuated sensemaking processes, where individual worldviews and beliefs and their interaction with wider discourses and ideas, "are inscribed in concrete actions and [...] operate to produce observable political effects" (Wedeen, 2002, p. 714). That is, political culture has a dialectic relationship with the explicit, emic descriptions of Algerian politics, what is known as *collective political imagination*. This involves the various imaginative and meaning-making processes through which members of a(n) (also imagined) society experience political life. While experiences are individual, they are reified through interactions in social circles, reinforced through media and education, and often marshalled for purposes of consensus and political identity. It is members of the polity themselves who therefore shape, in turn, what is imagined and believed, leading peers to share, to a degree, the

values, worldviews, attitudes and beliefs that constantly produce and reproduce their political world.

Ethnography helps reveal: what *are* members' attitudes and beliefs and how do they—either collectively or individually—interpret those of the broader polity? What are the meanings members assign to the wider narrative cults (e.g. DRS-determinism)—to what extent do they reject or partake in them, and to what ends? Ethnographic methods thus also reveal the ways long-accepted political scientific tropes and concepts take shape, unfold, and function in political life. In addition to other political actors, the types of which are described below, ethnography of the MSP reveals how Islamists and other social movements pursue meaning-making in controlled/neo-authoritarian regimes (Ismail, 2006; Jourde, 2010; Turam, 2006; Wedeen, 2002), namely the various rhetorical, discursive and cultural tools that allowed the MSP to (re)situate itself within the national fabric, despite post-conflict political attitudes appearing to have extinguished any space for political Islam.

Immersive and repeated interaction with MSP members, supporters—with varying degrees of identification and affilation—as well as defectors and external observers allowed me to, (a) construct a picture of the broader political culture, and (b) understand the ways in which MSP actors recast the movement's purpose, re-define what it means to be part of their movement; they reimagine its goals, straddle the boundaries of 'political' behavior, (sometimes even denying any organizational link to other sections of the larger movement—political, charitable, educational/developmental). They negotiate what is considered *political* behavior, and locate their *resistance* or *contestation* through more unobtrusive channels.

1.4 Data Collection and Sources

Martin (2002) proposes three types of discourses that require investigation for OPNI to be more comprehensively examined: that of *everyday citizens*, that of *politicians/leaders*, and that of '*indigenous' observers*. I spoke in a previous subsection about the need to include and apprehend the multiple subjectivities within Islamist movements. My study of the MSP will be the first, to my knowledge, to analyze the membership base as a primary source. In the case of the MSP especially, the focus on the party elite has obfuscated the ways members make sense of and undertake movement priorities, discourses, and mobilizations, and how/whether these relate to leaders and founders' perspectives. Because of this study's stated wish to depart from these frames, my ethnography privileges the investigation of the 'everyday MSP activist'. While I do believe that interlocutors and their narratives may not be so neatly classifiable into Martin's (2002) three proposed types, this has been a logistically useful rubric to ease and organize the already complex and cerebral process of ethnography.

First, at the level of everyday citizens, I engaged in informal conversations, and regular participant observations chiefly with low-level members in my primary field-site Blida, almost always in Arabic (Algerian dialect, standard Arabic, or some register(s) in-between). Informal conversations allowed members to be more thoughtful, responding not only with their perspectives, but also reflections on why they felt a given way, and comparing this with other movement members, or out-group peers. I occasionally conducted pre-arranged semi-structured interviews, which at this level, often resulted in responses that were less introspective and candid, and more withheld and cautious. Still others were more guarded about my intentions and thus more parsimonious in relaying any intuitions that might be too revelatory about them as individuals, their movements, and their involvement. These differences in disposition

were in themselves revelatory and are analyzed and contended with in the core data chapters.

Whenever possible, I also sat in on formal MSP meetings, observed group study sessions (*ḥalqa*s), spent time with activists and their families, observed public events, attended lectures, watched university activities, and just generally did my best to spend time with them to get a sense of their lives, their thoughts, and their relationships. These revealed the competing narratives I sought without respondents framing their answers for an outsider and allowed me to observe interpersonal and in-group dynamics. Access, especially to the study sessions, was difficult; it was only after getting to know a few of the members very well, that I was able to observe a few. Even then, on occasion, a few members opted out of sessions they knew I would be observing, which also likely altered group dynamics. Once, a few members 'put on' a *ḥalqa* for me, when they were unable to get permission. While imperfect, the interactive environment—where members conversed and debated with each other, as opposed to directly with me—still offered interesting clues as to these members dispositions in ways that had remained hitherto unconveyed in our one-on-one interactions. I analyzed these members' word choices, individual and in-group dispositions, and patterns of communicating with myself and others, and made efforts to understand their worldviews while analyzing their comments on the party, and politics beyond.

All of was facilitated by my living situation in Blida. I had a rented a flat in Algiers in which I stayed when I needed to conduct interviews with national leadership, (and consolidate my personal life and space) however I spent much of the week in Blida, with a friend Houria and her family. Houria's father is a well-known local doctor and her mother is known for her charitable work around town. The family's stature helped me navigate local bureaucracy; in general being attached to a family lent a

legitimacy to my presence in town, made me less of a stranger to townspeople, and kept me safe. Houria and her mother also ran a language and activities center for youth, where several of the volunteer teachers were also invaluable local resources and interlocutors.

I used chain referral[6] to meet further MSP interlocutors. The tenuous nature of trust and access meant a vote of confidence from a friend within the movement was necessary in getting new people to talk and spend time with me. Often I met new persons in groups with previous contacts present to ease any tensions. Of course, this method raises issues of bias and self-selection, and in particular, of the extent to which the MSP-interlocutors interviewed and observed are representative of the larger movement—not only demographically (region, gender, age, ethnic background, and the categories of social/economic class which are the prototypical focus of literature on political Islam), but also, in terms of worldview (which can relate to one's demographic attributes). However, my aim in this thesis is not to provide a comprehensive study of 'Islamist contention' or 'Islamism after the 1990s conflict', but more narrowly, to track Islamist interlocutors' trajectories within their movements (or associated organizations) and who they believe themselves to be in the new Algerian context. To this end, I prioritize detailed analysis of sense-making practices over sweeping, compendious accounts of all possible social positions within the MSP or other Islamist movements.

It therefore becomes important to situate my interlocutors within the broader demographic makeup of the party. Focused in Blida, my interlocutors were predominately though not exclusively young (22-40 years) and male.[7] They represented

[6] Sometimes known as *network selection* or *snowball sampling*, this is a process by which initial subjects recruit and connect the researcher to additional subjects.

[7] This resulted in part because male interlocutors were much more likely to be available to meet in repeated and around the clock manners, whereas female interlocutors often had many additional responsibilities at home, in their jobs, and in their higher studies. It was thus younger male interlocutors who had the time and flexibility to accompany me about town, introduce me to different members and

a cross-section of social class backgrounds—differences which I observed were either downplayed by members owing to the MSP's ideology and image-making of party unity, or emphasized as a marker of the open and accepting nature of the movement. A discussion of class dynamics within the movement's political history is undertaken in Chapter Two, and the discussion of how demographics and other personal factors lend themselves to recruitment and self-enlistment are explored in Chapter Six. (A list which breaks down interviewees, their basic biographies, and background is in the primary source bibliography.)

In ethnography, it is inevitable that my presence as a researcher influences or alters the outcome of interview or observation data, especially given my position: one of relative power as a researcher, moreover from a nation with a history of hegemony in the region. In interviews, individuals sometimes gave responses they thought would please me, or that painted them in a desired light vis-à-vis what they assumed or perceived to be my worldview; and during observations, some level of performativity and self-censorship was to be expected. (A more detailed exposition on my positionality is in the forthcoming subsection, and it is unpacked where relevant throughout the thesis.)

To address this, I conversed with different members about the same ideas, events, and concepts in order to 'plot' the competing or overlapping narratives. I almost always had repeated interactions with members, both to observe any changes in outlook or disposition over time, but also to develop trust, friendship, and rapport and ease some of the performativity issues. With individuals and groups with whom I cultivated close relationships, issues of positionality and power gradually became less stark, and evolved

leaders. The concept of shyness/modesty (*ḥashma*) also made younger women reticent to be the ones to help fix and liaise meetings with the—normally male—leadership of the local commune or wilaya. The spaces in which I moved tended to be starkly gendered, and as an outsider, it was not always clear where in the binary I would be situated.

into (relatively) more equitable relationships. Moreover, rather than always seeking to 'correct' for performativity, I analyze it (where appropriate) in the core chapters as an aspect of sense-making where I explore the functions and meanings of the performances, in particular as it relates to my presence. I also contextualized these discourses through written documents (more below). I often recorded these sessions and later transcribed them into English; if unrecorded I took notes during and after. In both transcriptions and notes, if the English translation of certain terms, phrases, expressions, or other cultural concepts failed to capture their nuance or full connotations, I either retained or included parenthetically their Arabic form. These transcriptions and notes served as the chief primary source for the thesis. Low-level members often wished to remain anonymous. I use one pseudonym for each anonymous interlocutor.

Second, as regards those in 'power,' I analyzed speeches which I attended and recorded in person, published press interviews, and social media posts by contemporary senior figures in the MSP such as Abderrazak Makri, Abdelmadjid Menasra, and Aboujerra Soltani. I also interviewed some of these figures. I also transcribed and analyzed speeches uploaded to YouTube given by movement founder Mahfoud Nahnah, co-founder Mohammed Bouslimani, and other *ancien* figures from the 1980s and 1990s. Discourses here allowed me to make some inferences about how the MSP, now and in the past, positions itself in the political theater, their behavior on the political 'stage,' and how they perform their politics, in addition to how the theater in turn understands the MSP. I also interviewed a handful of members of the national bureau and national figures, and leaders of the MSP's various associations and wings. Occasionally, my institutional affiliation, as well as my previous work as a political analyst in Washington D.C. (which they could find through a cursory Google search) rendered me a consequential audience for whom responses needed to be rehearsed, with whom a

political message could be sent. Some elite MSP interviewees were visibly tense with some of my questions, while more seasoned others were much more 'on message,' with perfectly-packaged rejoinders and semantic whataboutisms. Still others were perplexed by my rather open-ended research questions and interactive methods.

As I progressed with the elite interviews, I focused more heavily on what Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983) (discussing Foucault) called "serious speech acts," that is, "what experts say when they are speaking as experts," (p. xxiv) rather than seeking, as I did with the lower-level members, a more candid self-presentation or any "speech acts of everyday life" on their part (p. xxiv). I thus paid attention to the words chosen, the dispositions taken up, and the position staked-out as these interlocutors assumed their roles as representatives and spokespersons for the MSP.

Interviews and observations of mid-level MSP leaders, such as mayors, and local and state-level party heads, were also important. Some local leaders had been local figures or post-holders for decades. Others were younger and clearly more freshly-groomed. Since many in this way seemed to occupy a sort of liminal space between *leadership* (the 'producers' of the MSP's ideas, platforms, and dispositions), and the *membership* (the 'consumers' who either adopt, distill, re-articulate, perform, or reject them), they spoke "as experts" (p. xxiv) in some instances, while in others they took part in negotiating and making sense of movement directives alongside low-level members. While both types of discourse and disposition were important, the latter required more time and finesse to glean firsthand. I initially sought contact with them through national bureau contacts, and these interviews were occasionally stiff, rehearsed, and highly adherent to the party 'line'. While it was instructive to hear the discourses and register the dispositions they took up when speaking in these contexts "as experts" (p. xxiv), I wished also to apprehend how they negotiated and made-sense

of movement directives, not unlike lower-level members. I therefore opted to be introduced through the latter: my rank-and-file acquaintances. The drawback of this new approach was that interviewees were more inclined to break appointments and did not assign as much gravitas to our meeting. However the discussions were far richer, longer, and more candid, if more winding, disorganized, and spontaneous, when they did not view me as some elite researcher put in touch via their superiors. In addition to removing airs of formality, it also allowed me to often sit afterwards with the member(s) who had connected us, and register their feedback and commentary regarding the discourses of the interviewed figure(s).

As a third interlocutor type, I interviewed informed and perceptive observers (what Martin (2002) calls 'indigenous' observers) such as local journalists, both national and local newspaper correspondents; Algerian professors of political science, sociology, religious studies, and/or anthropology. Local news correspondents especially helped put the MSP's activism and development in the context of the history and social-political dynamics of that locality.

I also noted the comments of ordinary observers in order to better understand and depict the nuances of the Algerian social universe. Observing off-hand comments on buses, in taxis, at cafes, allowed me to glean a backstage view to various social worlds and epistemic groups, beyond interviews that offered rehearsed, deliberate and retrospective accounts. (Of course even this 'backstage' should be consistently interrogated, for people 'perform' even for themselves.) Sociologists Berger and Luckmann (1966) coined the notion of the *symbolic universe* where a set of beliefs upon which everyone outwardly agrees makes the institutional structure palatable and acceptable, if not at least *plausible*, for the individuals in it, even (and especially) for those who may not fully comprehend or approve of the fundamental logic of this

institution (p. 116).[8] To this end, these more candid encounters provided clues about the more unobservable ways in which this political system functions, and terms on which consensus is assumed, or at least performed, even when people did not believe what was at its heart. The composite of my interactions in public (but gatekept) spaces like Qurʾanic schools, parliament, local and state councils; in public and open spaces like alleys, markets, and shops; and in more private spaces like homes, get-togethers, and cars, led me to glean some of the ways Algerians from different walks of life made sense of their social world. These accounts and cultures allowed me to contextualize the MSP oral narratives in the social/political space.

Another source-type that allowed me to historically, chronologically, and culturally contextualize oral/retrospective accounts, were written documents. Newspapers and other media sources were a useful window into the evolving debate, and the respective discourses of various political/social/ideational tendencies beyond just those of the party.[9] These papers differed from one another in ownership (government versus private), in language medium (French and Arabic, these two languages often produce different types of meaning and narratives), and in general political leaning and loyalty. I also analyzed MSP documents: old speeches, party-generated reports, manifestos, educational/*daʿwa* curriculum, and booklets used for distribution or internal use, government papers, press releases, posters, electioneering material, etc. (For a full list, refer to the primary sources in the bibliography.)

Positionality

[8] Of course I follow my overall conceptual framework in considering the *symbolic universe* to be intersubjectively negotiated, rather than fixed and external/above everyday interaction.
[9] I examined credible and known Algerian newspapers, *El Watan, Echourouk, El Khabar* and *Liberté*, and many others. Much like in the ethnographic process, this diversity in papers allowed me to reconcile competing tendencies. Some of these materials were available at the *Bibliothèque Nationale d'Algérie*, known for newspaper archives. Most newspapers, especially for the recent period I have examined, had online archives.

Unpacking my position as an Indian-American female researcher in the Maghreb has been complex and ambiguous. It seemed I was typically seen as Indian in more superficial exchanges (taxis, shops, banks, restaurants), and as American in interactions with subjects—although this was not always the case.[10] I sometimes found myself wishing the reverse were the case. My skin color, darker than most northern Algerians, alongside my preference for / ease with *al-dāridja* / Arabic over French often invited a sort of *ḥugra*[11] ('condescension') in more superficial exchanges. Often, people did not know that I was of Indian origin, and assumed I was from another region of Algeria. In these spaces, any relative 'power' on my end could only be brought to bear if I revealed other aspects of my identity, which I never did unless asked.

Though my physical appearance felt like a 'disadvantage' in some spaces, during some interviews and conversations, it was occasionally a point of subaltern co-identification and affinity (which referenced a shared Algerian-Indian colonial struggle, involvement in the non-aligned movement, etc.). On these occasions, being coded as a fellow citizen of the global south led elite interlocutors to let down their guard and code me as unthreatening. Some potentially-provocative questions were not met with the same level of reticence (it seemed) as when I was coded as more traditionally western/American.

But the latter case was far more common in formal interviews: more often elite interviewees saw me as a representative/agent of the United States (even as they questioned the authenticity of my Americanness) which was especially challenging in a

[10] Even when it was clear I was an American researcher, some interviewees tended to continue to ask questions or reference India when regarding my background—the fact that I was born and raised in the United States, is typically an afterthought, if not forgotten (or dismissed) altogether.
[11] Often transliterated as *hogra*, this traditionally refers to elite condescension, or humiliation. It is ubiquitous in Algerian parlance in discussing more contemptuous manifestations of authority. However, it is often also often used to refer to how fellow citizens treat, and may seek to wield power over, one another. The ways in which the term is articulated and deployed reflects a perception that widespread personal sense of inferiority makes individuals eager to establish superiority over others, and that social hierarchy that is constantly visible, palpable, and aggressively reinforced through social sanction.

time and culture where suspicion of the United States is high.[12] As I will elaborate further in the core chapters, one characteristic of the Algerian zeitgeist was an broad wariness of the insidious 'foreign hands' (*al-ayād al-khārijiyya*). The same 'unknowability' that drove widespread paranoia regarding the reach and presence of the DRS, drove concerns about my being a CIA agent. (At a conference, one MSP leader once joked, "don't let her fool you, it's the new CIA (*c'est la nouvelle CIA*), they send people who look and talk like us," referencing my skin color and preference for *al-dāridja* over French.) Providing business cards and contacts that disclosed my institutional affiliation sometimes helped, but being perceived as an elite researcher produced the other subset of previously-outlined challenges.

Among non-elite and/or young participants my presence was often initially met with confusion: how a woman "as young" as myself could be conducting research alone, why someone would speak *al-dāridja* and study Algeria, giving way to a great deal of curiosity, and sometimes suspicion, which was often dealt with and handled at length at the beginning of each first-time interview with a given individual or group.[13]

The implications for power relations were blurred, dynamic, and difficult to define. On this point Lisa Wedeen notes that power relations inherent in interpretivist research are not only about tangible leverage, but are "intersubjective relationships that are diffuse, omnipresent, and often acephalous" (2009, p. 80). Indeed, I became aware that the ways I opted to self-present to subjects morphed and adapted to different situations—to the extent that my note-taking sometimes veered into autoethnography!

[12] Indeed, according to accounts from various British colleagues, Americans are seen as far more suspicious than Britons, other Europeans, and far less than those from the global south.

[13] When speaking with Islamist leaders, I usually avoided answering questions about my faith as it was not usually met favorably. I was once even told that I was the "worst kind of *kāfira* ('infidel')" I was not of 'the book,' I worshiped nothing, etc. Undertaking to explain Hinduism (which I was in any case not practicing) was a daunting task which I evaded and dodged with ever-evolving sleights of hand in order to focus interlocutors' attention on topics more immediately relevant to my research. I only revealed and discussed my religious background with a handful of rank and file members with whom I moved most frequently and whose sensibilities had become clearer to me.

Site Selection & Challenges

I had initially aimed to make inferences about the broader MSP and planned to examine multiple ethnographic sites (Marcus, 1995), choosing the city of Blida as the first, as it was the birthplace of the Hamas/MSP movement-cum-party, and was one of many bastions of politico-religious influence in the Algerian "center" region: Algiers and its periphery. Blida, the capital of Blida province and 30 miles south-west of Algiers, is also the hometown of founder Mahfoud Nahnah, where founding members first activated and mobilized, making the Blida the regional backbone of support to the MSP in its earliest years, and where the party, despite periods of its besiegement, enjoys a positive image, if not least a nostalgia for Nahnah.

Blida's population boomed in the 1990s due to the reverse-urban flight during the 1990s conflict wherein residents of surrounding *duwār*s (peri-urban communities) and mountain villages fled to the larger municipalities which enjoyed better police and military surveillance and protection.[14] During the violence of the 1990s conflict, most violence was focused around Algiers and the area southwest: Medea, Blida, Ain Defla, and more, all of which constituted the regional support base for Islamism during this period. This region was especially racked by the violence of the conflict, and came to be called the 'Triangle of Death.' Indeed, where Algeria at large rarely makes western headlines, the little-known garrison city of Blida made it into the New York Times in 1997 under the headline: "100 Algerians Are Killed In 48 Hours of Violence."[15] Chapter Three discusses Blida's violent period in more detail, and briefly discusses the

[14] Industrialization also contributed to Blida's rapid urbanization and increased population density. Located on the southern flank of the highly fertile Mitidja plain, and at the foot of the Tell Atlas Mountains, Blida was once famous for its orange groves, cork trees and cedar groves which were a key source of revenue during and just after the colonial period. This mantle has since been usurped by neighboring Boufarik (the birthplace of the soft drink Orangina), particularly as Blida has undergone tremendous industrial development.

[15] Associated Press, 1997.

relationship between traumatic historical events and the formation of political dispositions.

In the 1990s and 2000s, Blida was a battleground of extra-institutional Islamist contestation, an example of where "Islamists have rendered the defense of morality a continual test of the state's legitimacy," and for years "rivaled the state in providing social services, mobilizing local communities' resources and responding to vital needs." (Ismail, 2001, p. 221)

Where the FIS' stronghold had been Algiers, it might be argued that the MSP's was Blida. Of course, the FIS dominated the social space across the breadth of the north at this time, but the formidability of the MSP's rivalry in Blida made the latter a good place to examine the post-conflict Islamists. The MSP's social/charitable activity and organizations, which receive attention in the latter half of the thesis, began in Blida. Most significantly, where the MSP for years after the death of founder Mahfoud Nahnah, placed great importance on his life, discourses and visions, there remains a great deal of local pride and honor—even among avowed anti-Islamists, or those who do not like the party in its current form—that Nahnah had hailed from their town.

I originally planned to compare the present-day national party discourses and practices, with those of the evangelical base in Blida, and compare these in turn with the party/movement discourses, activities, and political realities in a few additional localities for the sake of variation in MSP popularity, to contend with differing local realities, and to 'control for' Blida's historical relationship to the MSP. However, after an unusual (and yet unexplained) spell of visa difficulties cut short my expected time, I abandoned plans for the multi-sited ethnography. As I described, building trust and cultivating networks in Blida proved more arduous and time-intensive than I was

accustomed to.[16] I expanded my Blida findings with the suddenly-little remaining time, rather than starting over in additional sites. (Indeed, I had an opportunity to meet members and journalists in Chlef and Constantine, (and a bit in Oran, Tlemçen and Relizane) to speak with members and other observers to compare and confirm broader patterns (MSP prerogatives in local councils, discourses of moderation, use of satellite organizations), although these were short trips and could not constitute a robust ethnographic comparison to the Blida case.)

More generally, challenges arising from visa and residency issues made the type of prolonged (years at a time) immersion called for in a stricter anthropological ethnography, impossible. Contemporary scholars of ethnography are today more tuned in to such limitations, and give more importance to an "ethnographic sensibility" as cultivated and deployed using "approaches that rely centrally on person-to-person contact as a way to elicit insider perspectives and meanings," rather than assessing findings' quality and depth solely through time spent or other, often arbitrary quantifiable measures (Jourde, 2009, 202; Schatz, 2009). My rationale for the choice of Blida changed in this way, over the course of fieldwork.

Reflection on Researcher Biases

Other challenges in the ethnographic process arose from my own personal outlooks and biases. Over the course of my research, self-identifying Algerian secularists, many of them my friends, repeatedly told me that '*todays Islamists were wolves in sheep's clothing*,' or even more broadly that '*religion should have no role in politics*,' mantras that became difficult not to reproduce or internalize. Indeed, these

[16] My only ethnographic experience before this had been in Morocco; I had lived for two and half years in a semi-rural area and have maintained relationships there for nearly a decade after; thus the trust- and network-building period has always been significantly shorter and easier; and since my beginnings there were as a teacher, friends, families and interlocutors often continued to see me as an daughter of the town returned home, even as I returned for research purposes.

were a self-selecting group who, presumably, became my friends precisely because we shared, to an extent, in social values and worldviews. And as my fieldwork revealed, these views were not at all widespread or held by the majority of Algerians. Indeed, as a colleague once said to me, "you must suspect anything that confirms your allegiances, labels, and worldview. Be wary of anything that nourishes your outrage—it might not be wrong, but you have to unpack it."

It was sometimes challenging to interview Islamist leaders, often men, to understand their worldview, to provide it a platform, and even to empathize with their struggles against entrenched autocracy. I spent a good amount of time interrogating my own beliefs about religion, polemics, and politics. I grew up as a religious minority in the conservative American interior, and have long been critical of the United States' shortcomings in separating religion and politics. I thus had to consistently interrogate my biases in speaking with individuals in Algeria who had explicitly religious visions for their country's political future, and used their influence where possible to prevent policies I personally deemed important (e.g. those involving outcomes on women's issues (such as the family code), religious/ethnic minorities and irreligious persons).

While I did not openly counter Islamist figures' views, I often played 'devil's advocate' during discussions in order to understand the full breadth what they opposed, believed, and why. Conversely, I also found myself defending Islamists' views to those determined to paint them with broad brush. I thus identify, to a degree, with scholar Jillian Schwedler's (2006) conundrum on this subject where, "debates are so polarized that I sometimes find myself defending Islamists alongside apologists whose willingness to overlook the regressive dimensions of many Islamist agendas makes me extremely uncomfortable" (p. xii). Despite my religiously-pluralist commitments in my own country, I remained wary of imposing my view on a context which was not my

own. (Indeed as I have set out in this chapter, the struggles in Algeria over 'whose' in fact it is, is among the very discursive phenomena I seek to unpack.)

As this thesis deals largely in perceptions and subjective accounts, it would be disingenuous to ignore my own prejudices in interpreting them and using them to weave narratives. It is my responsibility to lay out my biases and motivations before discussing the very thorny subject of Islamist politics in a country which is not my own. I also imagine (rather I hope) that this self-interrogation allows me to then interrogate more credibly.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into two broad sections, the first section, Chapters 2-3 deal with the basic political history of the MSP and provide background on Algerian political culture, while the second section, Chapters 4-7 deals with the various ways the party/movement contends with them. Chapter 8 concludes. The remainder of the thesis is thus organized as follows.

Chapter 2: The MSP from Movement to Party introduces the MSP as movement, party, and political entrant, as well as the context of the Algerian political system in which it activated. It begins by briefly providing the party's internal structure and hierarchy. It then chronologically traces the party's path from a spiritual movement to a mainstream political party, paying particular attention to: in its early years, how it related to others religious/Islamist camps; and in the years after its legalization, to its positions in parliament, its electoral performance, and intra-party politics. It examines the role party founder Mahfoud Nahnah has played over both the party's operations and its ideational formations, and the effects his death had on the organization. It also explores the effects of subsequent regime-deployed rules and laws designed to hamper

the national political system and the party sphere. These structural factors—without being an all-determining set of exogenous structures—have had a significant role in shaping the party/movement's scope for engagement and maneuver. This chapter thus introduces these material challenges.

Chapter 3: Political Culture and Opportunity after the Civil War, sets the stage for the remainder of the thesis. It outlines the relationship between religion and politics in Algeria and how views, norms, and discourses on the matter ebbed and changed along historical events. It especially focuses on some of the narrative shifts within Algerian political culture after the 1989 political opening, and the civil conflict that followed soon after, that were rather central in shaping the social/political environment of which the MSP was a part. Among these narrative shifts, a few were of particular challenge to the MSP. The first was a cultural aversion to Islamism, a second was the party-weary state of the polity, and the third: the specter of state power. Often, in cases of violent conflicts or war, the discursive processes inherent to how these events are framed often result in new (and seemingly unanimous) truths about the heroes and villains. In the case of Algeria's civil war, individual, subjective experiences of violence were appropriated toward a similar binary. Indeed, this framing so pervaded public discourse that even citizens who do not fully believe the narrative were enlisted in its reproduction. Accordingly, this chapter lays bare the ways which the MSP—an *Islamist* actor, but also one that took *partisan* form, and moreover contesting in a predetermined, all-*powerful* system—ultimately faced a rather thorny political-cultural environment.

Chapter 4: Contesting Moderation, and **Chapter 5, "I'm not an Islamist, I'm Algerian": Algerianness Weaponized** together explore the history and public cultivation of two hotly-contested political labels, *moderation* and *Algerianness*, and

how the MSP, and its members, made sense of them, deployed them and defined themselves through these terms to both construct identity and self-present as a more congenial and appealing variety of Islamist. Chapter Three elaborated one of the shifts in political attitudes as unfavorable to Islamists, namely 'Islamism' became a shorthand, a scapegoat for Algerian instability. Thus *moderation* became a much more central part of the MSP's political vocabulary and internal culture, than it had been prior to the conflict.

Similarly, Algerianness discourses were reinvigorated post-conflict, building on another promulgated narrative that the civil war was the result of meddlesome foreign interests, and later, of the importation of extreme versions of Islam that had no basis in Algerian history, culture, or society, or of the armed Islamist groups' composition chiefly of foreign fighters. MSP thus also endeavored to assert its Algerianness (often in competition with other claimants), because it had become a precondition not only for national belonging, but also for moderation. In this way, moderation and Algerianness, are essentially contested concepts (ECC): notable, and therefore explored, for how, why, when, and whether they are deployed, and not for what they 'actually' mean or are intended to explain. That is, moderation and Algerianness are not analytical frameworks in themselves, but social labels whose *contestations* serve as ethnographic objects.

Chapter 6: "*Ḥizb* or *ḥaraka*: Negotiating Politicality through Associations,"** continues the discussion of how the MSP and its members position themselves within the broader political culture. Chapter Three explained how the terms *ḥizb* and *ḥizbī* carried connotations of opportunism, ineffectuality, dysfunction, and a lack of integrity. This chapter examines how members and sympathizers, operating under their own conflicted views on partisan/political engagement, negotiate and contest whether they are acting politically or apolitically, sometimes through 'non-partisan' modes of

involvement in the MSP, namely through the movement's associated organizations—referred to in the movement as 'divisions' (*taqsīmāt*, sing. *taqsīm*) or 'specializations' (*takhaṣuṣāt,* sing. *takhaṣuṣ*)—and in how they talk about this involvement. I refer to this associational sphere as the 'MSP orbit,' in consideration of these organizations' contested, as opposed to consistent and officially-stated, links to the MSP. Some of the MSP's older satellite organizations have attempted to distance themselves from politics and parties in recent years, leading them to sever their ties to the MSP, while newer ones refrain from explicitly aligning with the MSP. Likewise, activists within this orbit, navigate their affiliations, and redraw the boundaries—and acceptable limits—between politics and spiritual activism, between *al-ḥizb* ('the party') and *al-ḥaraka* ('the movement') by re-cast their associations' origins, re-interpreting their missions, thereby also re-negotiating their own identities vis-à-vis the movement, their other identitarian affiliations, their other personal subjectivities, and their place and role within these spaces.

Chapter 7: MSP Resource Mobilization and the Algerian Scouts is the final data chapter on the MSP and its members' endeavors for recognition, visibility, and legitimacy in the cultural/ideational context of post-conflict Algeria. From the early 1990s onward, mobilizing the Algerian Muslim Scouts (SMA) allowed the MSP to assert an identity that aligned with widely agreed-upon national values and social labels. The process of mobilizing scouts cemented MSP-scout affinity. Just as *notions* of Algerianness had long been state-brokered and -monopolized, so too were the *bodies, institutions,* and *spaces* through which they were historically exercised and performed: namely the individual scouts themselves, the national scouting organization, and scouting activities and education. Trespassing on this domain of the state allows the MSP to contest some modalities of 'state power' without actively confronting it. The

SMA's religious-ideological, military, and educational-formational role in the War of Independence and in national myth-making in the years following, has led it to continue to occupy a special place in the Algerian imagination, as an heir of the revolution, an icon of authentic Algerianness, and importantly: a symbol of the hopefulness of youth and the Algerian future. In mobilizing and establishing affinity, in most cases rather successfully, with the historic scouts—through troops, their activities, their ideational basis and spiritual purpose—the MSP lays claim to codes of national belonging; especially against the political cultural and discursive trends that have otherwise sought to place it outside the body politic. The MSP can assert that it too adheres to and upholds revolutionary, Algerian values.

Chapter 8: Conclusion concludes, summarizing the thesis' core findings and their contribution to knowledge on Islamist activism and modern Algerian politics, exploring their implications for understanding Islamist behavior around the region, and outlining limitations, areas for further investigation, and future research.

Chapter Two: The MSP from Movement to Party

SMT theorist Charles Kurzman (2008) has argued, that when seeking to complicate the structuralist assumptions around political opportunity and other social movement considerations, we must remain wary of "fetishizing meaning-making to the neglect of material and structural factors" (p. 12). To this end, the investigation of political sense-making around the MSP requires first identifying and contextualizing the phenomena around which sense is made. To do so, this chapter introduces the MSP's chronology within Algeria's political and cultural context: first as a grassroots movement, then a political entrant, and ultimately a formalized party. I show how this trajectory contributed to the political opportunity frameworks—in both its "formal structural" and "perceptual" elements (Meyer & Minkoff 2004, p. 1458)—with which the movement contended.

2.1 Organizational Structure and Membership Demography

Before proceeding with a chronological account of the MSP, and of the political/historical environment in which it has worked over the last decades since its founding, a bit of background information and context on some of the party's basic internal functions are in order.[17]

Organization and Structure. The rigid, top-down organizational structure of the MSP is based on the model of the flagship Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The *usra* is the lowest administrative unit of the MSP. Literally meaning 'family', the *usra* is comprised of about seven persons who often live in proximity to one another. Members of the *usra* usually meet a few times a week to discuss culture, politics and social issues,

[17] This discussion relies on a reading of the movement's bylaws verified against interviews and fieldnotes. See al-qānūn al-asāsī (n.d.).

and their personal lives, and also take part in *ḥalqa*s, or organized group prayers and religious study. While low in the pecking order, the *usra* unit is critical to the MSP, reinforcing the communal bonds, transmission of values between peers, which also operate as the social sanctioning devices that inhibit defection. (Forthcoming data chapters deal in greater detail with the nature of the MSP's linkages to the transregional Muslim Brotherhood.)

The *usra* undertakes these activities under the authority of an *murabbī* ('educator'). While the formal role of the *murabbī* is to guide these meetings, the informal role they play is also important: to monitor members of their *usra* in way that determines their party mobility, and also to guide and ensure their wellbeing. A *murabbī* is typically a member of the executive municipal bureau (more below), whose performance is usually gleaned through the dynamism of their assigned *usra*, which often determines their advancement in the party. By way of the *murabbī*, the *usra* also comes as a mechanism for the party to understand its membership and support base: its adherence to party doctrine, and its worldviews and preferences—which in turn, allows better understanding of the nature of their political opportunity.

Above the *usra*, is the *majmuʿa* ('group') consisting of between five and eight *usra*s, which has its own administrative office responsible for coordinating educational and mobilizational activities within a particular geographical administrative unit (like a neighborhood or set of peripheral villages). Government municipalities are usually divided into two to four such units, to which the groups correspond.

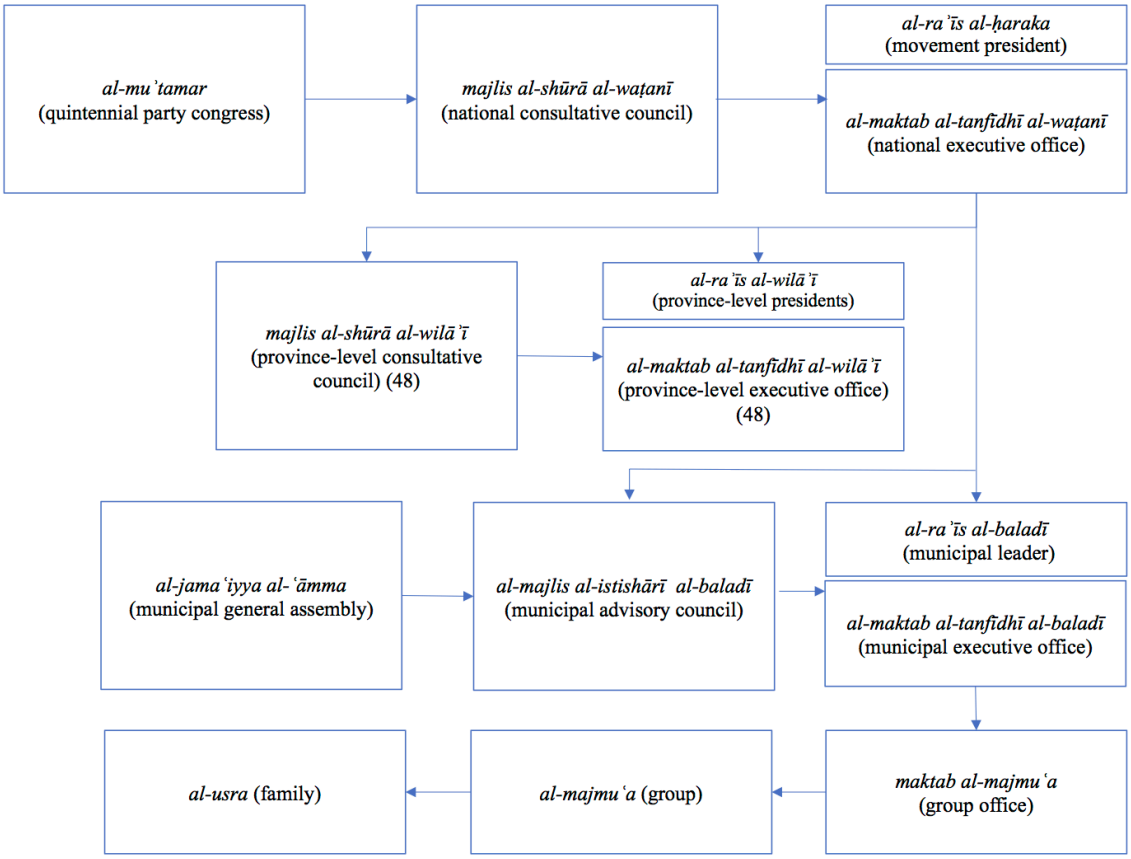

Figure 2.1 MSP Organizational Structure [own rendering]

All local chapters have a general assembly (*al-jamaʿiyya al-ʿāmma*) which meets twice annually to form and approve the program and budget of the municipal bureau, to elect the president of the municipal chapter, and to assess the work of their constituent groups. However, if the number of MSP members living within a given municipality exceeds 100, they may, in addition to a general assembly, form a municipal advisory council (*al-majlis al-istishārī al-baladī*). The advisory council concentrates the legislative prerogatives of the general assembly into a smaller, more selective, leadership body. The formation of the municipal advisory council must be approved by the national executive bureau (*al-maktab al-tanfīdhī al-waṭanī)*. The general assembly and/or council are responsible for forming the executive municipal bureau (*al-maktab al-tanfīdhī al-baladī*) and overseeing its constituent groups under the guidance of the province-level party officials.

MSP activities within each Algerian province (*wilāya*) are coordinated by a province-level consultative council (*majlis al-shūrā*) and executive bureau (*al-maktab al-tanfīdhī)*. The provincial executive bureau oversees its constituent municipalities and members. The province-level body has similar prerogatives to the municipal bureau and similar internal election processes. In addition, it monitors municipal-level election processes, acts as a liaising body between the national and municipal level bureaus, and has seats in the MSP's national-level consultative council (*majlis al-shūrā al-waṭanī).*

The national executive bureau (*al-maktab al-tanfīdhī al-waṭanī*) supervises the formation of the state- and municipal-level and their respective consultative councils. The national consultative council (*majlis al-shūrā al-waṭanī)* is the movement's legislative body, and is composed of representatives from each state-level office as well as at-large representatives from affiliated organizations, the parliamentary delegation, past leaders, etc. The national *majlis al-shūrā* elects the movement president (*al-raʾīs al-ḥaraka*) through a two-round secret ballot on a 5-year term and approves appointments to the national executive bureau. The *majlis al-shūrā* is selected during the quinquennial party congress (*al-muʾtamar*), which is the highest body of the party, where select members party also ratify and amend bylaws, and debate and set the party's long-term agenda.

Party Membership, Advancement, and Demography. For purposes of recruitment, the MSP has occasionally deployed 'scouters' who acquaint themselves with prospective youths' families, going to lengths to learn about these families' religiosity, the role of the father, mother, and extended family, which additionally facilitates the possibility of recruiting parents as well. Indeed, the recruitment of mothers into the MSP religious wing, al-Irshad wa-l-Islah ('guidance and reform'), is seen as a particularly expedient way of expanding the movement's support base. In the

literature, this sort of individual recruitment into the MSP, like Muslim Brotherhood affiliate groups in general, is often portrayed as a deliberate, calculated, even predatorial process of targeting and ensnaring initiates (Aït Mouhoub, 2011; Al-Anani, 2016). However, my ethnography of the party's base revealed the process of joining to be often far more fluid, organic, and intermittent—and less methodical or mechanistic—than these accounts suggest (examples of which I discuss in detail in Chapters Six and Seven). Indeed, the boundaries between involvement and non-involvement in the movement were often (sometimes deliberately) blurred, and the status of MSP *munkhariṭ*, or a registered member, was consistently articulated as unimportant by various members throughout the party strata (except when one is or seeks to be a formal movement or government post-holder). This is perhaps in contrast to the flagship Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood which "utilizes an exclusive membership system that requires a high degree of indoctrination and ideological socialization" and where "members must meet clearly defined conditions and prerequisites in order to receive full membership" (Al-Anani 2016, p. 103) after which one's activism with the group can begin in earnest. Instead, the process by which one becomes involved in the MSP reflects the observations of Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson (1980), wherein individuals rarely join movements with full intent initially, instead taking part in the organization's activities and progressively becoming members thereafter (p. 795).

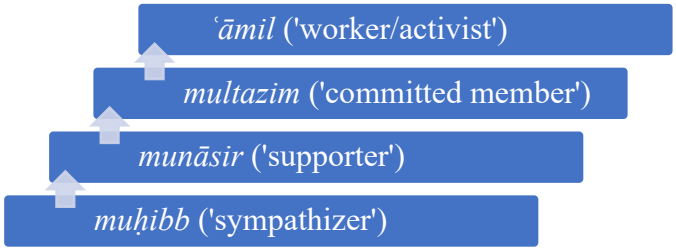

Figure 2.2 MSP Promotion Steps

Despite this fluidity around basic membership status, holding any sort of formal post or leadership position requires advancement through the movement's stages of

membership. They are first a basic member (to which members refer as a *muḥibb*, or a 'lover' of the organization), at which time their piety and loyalty are noted—how they get on with members, the regularity of their prayers, etc. This progression is shown in Figure 2.2. The *muḥibb* joins an *usra* and begins a period of training and education lasting up to a year. At this early stage, *tarbiya* is focused on basics and seeks to elicit a positive response from the members and initiate them into the movement. In the next stage, the member becomes *munāsir*, or 'supporter.' This is the stage wherein they must begin paying member dues. The *munāsir* becomes more involved in educational activities, preaching, and recruitment. The *munāsir* must memorize the Quran more rigorously, and become better versed in party doctrine. This period lasts for at least two years. S/he thereafter ascends to *multazim*, or 'committed member,' begins helping the MSP's official satellite organizations; this period lasts for five years, where his/her loyalty and piety are also closely observed before s/he reaches the highest position, *ʿāmil*. An *ʿāmil* is a full member who can participate in elections and vote.

The demographic makeup of the movement does not necessarily correspond to that of the country, and is shaped by the party's history and trajectory. The party today, consists chiefly of middle class and professional men and women, as it focuses recruitment among the pious and educated, particularly through university activism,[18] affiliated professional development organizations, youth groups and the national scouts. MSP support and membership also tends to be concentrated in Algeria's coastal, and urban/semi-urban North.[19] (For a full breakdown of ethnographic interlocutors, their

[18] The MSP's student union (UGEL, General Union of Free Students) has in the northern universities facilitated recruitment of students from regions without strong MSP presences. Attending university from far away, these students often live in the dorms where associative life and group activity are virtually inescapable. Moreover, the structure of the dorm is conducive to systematic congregation and then, recruitment. More in Chapter Six.

[19] Rural and remote areas tend to be less acquainted or familiar with non-FLN parties, while the regions of the far south have historic loyalties to the state party through chiefs and notables; the Berberist parties generally enjoy support in the Kabylie region.

background, and the demography of the interlocutor group, please refer to the Primary Source Reference List at the end of this thesis.) Of course, the ways in which demographic attributes (class, region, gender, etc.) organize individuals' activism in the movement is far more complex than can be outlined in this summary, and is instead discussed in the data chapters.

This brief summary of the party's makeup, organizational structure, and initiation processes has provided the background necessary to interpret the accounts of the interlocutors we will meet in forthcoming data chapters. We now turn to the history of MSP to provide further context on the events and dramatis personae that are the frequent referents in these interlocutors' discourses.

2.2 Early Party Stirrings: 1962-1988

The party that emerged during the 1988-89 political crisis had its roots in the earlier educational activism and religious agitation of Mahfoud Nahnah and his various companions, notably Mohammed Bouslimani. Nahnah was born in Blida in 1942, to a religiously conservative family of modest means. One of five children, his father was a mason, and Nahnah shared a close relationship with his mother according to observers, particularly after the death of two of his siblings.[20] Nahnah attended one of the many *free schools*[21] run by the nascent nationalist movements where he met Bouslimani, his childhood friend, and later MSP-cofounder. Nahnah's education was focused chiefly on Islam and Arabic language, in which he is said to have become highly proficient by the time he was a teenager.[22]

[20] S. Bouzakri, interview, December 6, 2015.
[21] Meaning that it was not administered by the colonial state. In the Algerian context, many such free schools were set up by the nationalist Islamic reform project led by Abdelhamid Ben Badis under the auspices of the AUMA (Damis, 1974).
[22] S. Bouzakri, interview, December 6, 2015.

After Algeria's independence from France in 1962, Nahnah taught high-school Arabic in Blida. Soon after, Nahnah joined the nascent al-Qiyam ('values') Association, which had the stated aim of defending Islamic values in the new country.[23] Al-Qiyam emerged as a more dissident breakaway from Algeria's dominant and far-reaching Islamic organization, the Algerian Association of Muslim Ulamaʾ (AUMA) (Willis, 1996, p. 64). (I discuss the AUMA and its significance for the independence war and post-war state-building in Chapter Three). As a portion of the AUMA was increasingly incorporated into the state after independence, al-Qiyam maintained its distance from, and quickly took a combative position vis-à-vis the social, religious, and economic policies of Algeria's iconic first two presidents, Ahmed Ben Bella (1963-1965) and especially Houari Boumediene (1965-1978). Specifically, al-Qiyam criticized the state's adoption of socialism as a western import with no basis in Islam,[24] and as contradictory to the "true historical vocation of the revolution," of expunging foreign influence through the promotion of an Islamic society (McDougall, 2017: p. 262). The group also bristled, in 1965, at new president Boumediene's efforts to institutionalize and centralize Islam under the state's purview.[25] Al-Qiyam in 1966 published a condemnation of the execution of prominent Muslim Brotherhood thinker Sayyid Qutb by the Egyptian state. For this, it was banned from operating in the Algiers *wilāya* ('province'), then in 1970, dissolved by the authorities (McDougall, 2017, p. 262).

Nahnah went on for studies and a professorship in Arabic at the University of Algiers Faculty of Letters, where his and others' Arabic instructors and colleagues were

[23] Created in 1963 by University of Algiers Secretary General Hachemi Tidjani.
[24] The state's attempt at compromise with a proposed 'Islamic socialism' was also rejected, which introduced a more profound friction between these important Islamic/Islamist voices and the regime (Berkouk, 1998; Sidaoui, 2009; Willis, 1996).
[25] The Religious Affairs Ministry thereafter adjudicated on religious matters, overseeing the *ḥubūs* (religious endowments) and approving sermon content. This brought mosques under centralized state control, and "transformed Islamic scholars and preachers into civil servants of the state and deterred any Islamic activity outside this 'official framework'" (Berkouk, 1998, p. 46).

chiefly from Egypt.[26] He was increasingly exposed to members of the Muslim Brotherhood and their precepts, and would later make several long visits to Egypt and would return to infuse his lectures and sermons with their teachings.[27] Over the course of the 1970s during his tenure at university he continued criticizing Boumediene's socialist revolutions[28] (Willis, 1996; Berkouk, 1998, p. 48). On the state's part, socialist reforms were pitched as part of 'Algerianization'[29] in the long period of state-building after independence, however many Islamists saw this as in direct contradiction of those Islamic scriptures which uphold private property ownership (Burgat & Dowell, 1993; Willis 1996). In 1976, Nahnah and Bouslimani found themselves newly galvanized in opposition to Boumediene's National Charter, which enshrined socialism as a framework for development but also as the country's guiding ideology (McDougall, 2017, p, 260). The two created the secret association *al-muwaḥḥidūn* ('the monotheists')[30] and in opposition to the Charter, in 1977, penned an open letter to Boumediene titled, "Boumediene, where are you going?" This letter explicitly criticized the 1976 Charter as a communist infiltration thus inherently anti-Islamic, called out the regime as illegitimate, and demanded that Islam be better-enshrined as a way of life, and as the jurisprudential basis of the country's legislative, economic, and political systems.

In a further show of opposition, Nahnah and Bouslimani took down electrical and telephone lines later that year around Blida, for which the two were jailed. During

[26] As a part of Arabization, teachers from countries like Egypt were invited to teach Arabic in Algerian universities.
[27] S. Bouzakri, interview, December 6, 2015; Mustapha, interview, February 13, 2016.
[28] The most significant and controversial element for Nahnah was the agrarian reforms in which public lands were redistributed and private lands were expropriated for redistribution under a slogan of democratic socialization and an improvement of the plight of the rural populace. Nahnah openly criticized these reforms (Bird, 2012).
[29] Boumediene held that the nationalization of Algerian industries (oil, chief among them) was the logical conclusion of the anti-colonial struggle, such that social/economic innovation was an extension of Arabo-Islamization. (Vince, personal communication, December 15, 2018) (More in Chapter Three.)
[30] Though this is an imperfect translation, as it refers to those ascribing to Tawhid, the more abstract Islamic notion of Godly oneness. Not to be confused with the extremist subgroup of the same name that formed later with the GIA (Armed Islamic Group).

the final years of Nahnah's imprisonment, various deputies took over supervision of the organization's activity's in Blida and coordinated with Nahnah from prison. While much of their activity proceeded underground at this time, the Islamist tendency at-large was growing and thriving in Algeria. Nahnah was pardoned in 1981 under new president Chadli Bendjedid's (1979-1992) more conciliatory approach to Islamist groups. Nahnah's early release, and subsequently modulated rhetoric, fueled suspicions that the organizations he later built were based on a deal with the regime and received its encouragement.

Indeed, Nahnah is widely believed to have been tortured during his imprisonment, which onlookers see as marked by a turning point in his strategy and outlook, where his torture served as an early lesson to him in the ways of the regime. Going forward, he became more cautious, even pliant. He largely abstained thereafter from the political debates and the more intense agitation that characterized Islamist activism in the early 1980s, including from the 1982 Islamist demonstrations, and from the increasingly vocal and outspoken voices in the Islamist camp who influenced the new, conservative, and austere 1984 Family Code (Charrad, 2001; Willis, 1996), and other policies. Instead, Nahnah focused on building a movement based on *daʿwa*, or religious outreach, in a manner that was less confrontational vis-à-vis the state.[31] Following the model of the flagship Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, his group's *daʿwa* and mobilizational activities consisted of—in addition to preaching—social work, help with employment, assistance to orphans, widows and the needy, and access to medical care.

[31] This period of activity, between 1982 when Nahnah and Bouslimani's were released from prison, and 1990 when the party was formalized, is revisited in Chapter Four, namely, on the movement's shift towards more self-conscious discourses and performances of centrism, loyalism, and moderation.

2.3 Nahnah, Other Islamists, and the Onset of War: 1988-1994

The end of the 1980s were a watershed moment for politics in Algeria and for the broader Islamist movement in particular. Years of dissatisfaction with social and political economic policy over the course of Chadli's presidency culminated in a bout of severe protests in October 1988 in Algiers and other large cities[32] (Brand, 2014; Evans & Phillips, 2007; Layachi, 2006; Willis, 1996). The regime/army fired at protestors, declared martial law, killed and tortured hundreds of—many rather young—people, renewing public anger and shock at the military's behavior. The army's unusual violence and repression seemed poised to shatter the state's tenuous legitimacy. Chadli's conciliatory agenda thus sought to lift the state's tight controls on political participation and civil society. Soon, the country began bursting with new associations and parties (Liverani 2008).

In the months prior to the demonstrations, Nahnah and Bouslimani founded al-Irshad wa-l-Islah as a religious/charitable organization in Blida that formalized the Muslim Brotherhood-inspired *daʿwa* program they had built up since their release from jail. The informal umbrella for Nahnah's long-undertaken *daʿwa* grew over a few years into a large network of institutions, with offices in every province and most municipalities, many of which had large women and youth wings as well.[33] Alongside al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, Nahnah and his colleagues founded Kafil al-Yatim, the orphan-care organization, and the General Union of Free Students (UGEL), a student union representing the interests of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah on university campuses. These

[32] Where Boumediene's redistributive policies had in the previous period been possible due to large hydrocarbon revenues, the decline in oil prices now rendered them untenable. Ensuing austerity meant Algerians increasingly experienced housing shortages, soaring prices in customer goods, mounting inflation, and rising unemployment. This compounded disillusionment around bureaucratic ineptitude and diminishing agriculture and industry, and the precarious demographic change: the population had nearly tripled since independence, and a majority of Algerians were under age 18.

[33] N. Hazzam, interview, October 15, 2018.

activities, while manifesting the Muslim Brotherhood *dīn wa dawla* ('religion and state') ethos (a notion I complicate in Chapter Six), they also laid the groundwork for a social/political existence ahead of the impending political opening. (Chapter Six will discuss these associational dynamics within the MSP in greater detail and using ethnographic and other data.)

Nahnah's activities under al-Irshad wa-l-Islah were contemporaneous—and in many ways in tension—with several other Islamist currents that also sought to expand their influence in the climate of political opening. One was formed around Abdallah Djaballah, an influential figure in the academic Islamic circles around Constantine. A second formed under Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj who would soon co-found the FIS (Islamic Salvation Front).[34]

The Rabitat al-Daʿwa was formed in an attempt to bring these tendencies together and manage intra-Islamist differences, as a religious, nominally apolitical consultative body[35] (Berkouk, 1998; Driessen, 2014; Entelis, 1997). However, this union would be short-lived. In response to the political crisis, President Chadli in 1989 ushered in constitutional reforms to abolish the one party rule of the National Liberation Front (FLN) that had been place since independence, allowing other, non-FLN parties to contest elections for the first time in independent Algeria's history. The perceived opening in political opportunity made the heterogeneities within the Rabita untenable (Dris, 2013).

Ali Belhadj increasingly pushed for subversion, mass protest, and official party formation. In February 1989, Madani and Belhadj together announced the creation of

[34] Madani was a *mujāhid* in the Algerian Independence War and veteran FLN figure and considered a more seasoned and pragmatic politician. Whereas the younger Belhadj, a fiery preacher at the *al-sunna* mosque in the Bab el-Oued neighborhood of Algiers, was seen as a more staunch ideologue.
[35] Ahmed Sahnoun (a FIS elder), led this effort, reportedly out of concern that Madani and Belhadj would isolate others Islamist figures (Willis, 1996).

the FIS. Madani's seasoned political pragmatism served to complement Belhadj's uncompromising religious rhetoric, whose camp openly professed that Algeria's republicanism (and de facto military hegemony) contravened Islam (Berkouk, 1998; Hafez, 2003). Indeed, this more populist brand of Islamism harnessed the political cultural atmosphere of change and climate of reform.

Nahnah and Djaballah declined invitations to join the FIS, in part because aforementioned disagreements had demonstrated to them that their own strains of Islamism were distinct from that of the FIS (Willis, 1996, p. 166), and in part due to skepticism regarding the genuineness of the political opening. They believed the FIS' triumphs would be violently crushed, and that the FIS had taken for granted the genuineness and aims of the state-led political opening.[36] In turn, the FIS believed that Nahnah and Djaballah's approach to spark change 'from within' was equally naïve, that such an approach was no match for the entrenched interests of the sitting regime. (Interestingly, a common thread for both the Brotherhood and future-FIS camps was the power/potency they accorded to the regime.) The local elections held in June 1990 were the country's first multi-party elections. The FIS won landslide majorities in Algeria's biggest cities: Algiers, Oran, Constantine, Tlemçen, Annaba, Setif, Blida.[37] The FIS won majorities in 32 state councils (APWs) (out of 48), and in 853 municipal councils (APCs) (out of 1541), (Tlemçani, Laggoune, & Djabi, 2008).

Nahnah and Djaballah opted to form their own parties, both formalized in December 1990, partly because the FIS' victories enlightened them to the preferences of the Algerian public, and partly out of concern of being marginalized within the broader Islamist camp. Even Nahnah and Djaballah went separate ways: Djaballah founded al-

[36] M. Dhina, interview, January, 11, 2017; A. Haddam, interview, November 16, 2017.
[37] Excepting Tizi Ouzou (the biggest Kabylie city) where the RCD was victorious. Algeria's south remained steadfast in its traditional support for the FLN.

Nahda, and Nahnah and Bouslimani harnessed al-Irshad wa-l-Islah's material resources and mobilizational momentum to found the *Mouvement de la Société Islamique* (MSI in French) or as it was more often referred to in its Arabic acronym, Hamas, short for Harakat al-Mujtamaʿ al-Islami.

Key differences stymied potential cooperation between these two. One difference was in how they aligned with, and drew upon, the Muslim Brotherhood. Nahnah sought to establish a domestic, Algerian branch of the transnational Muslim Brotherhood that would remain oriented to the flagship Egyptian Brotherhood, while Djaballah sought more to create a specifically *Algerianist* Muslim Brotherhood, combining the latter's precepts with the Algerianist (al-Jazaʾara) tradition[38] that also animated parts of the FIS. This Algerianist ideology—which foregrounded Algerian nationalism and religious-linguistic particularity, and rejected foreign religious influence—was a stark contrast to the transregional orientations of the Nahnah camp toward the Arab East. This difference further isolated Nahnah, both within the Rabita and vis-à-vis Djaballah. (The ways in which Nahnah then—and the MSP today—relate to the al-Jazaʾara tendency is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five toward a fruitful discussion of the polemics around the binarized domestic/transnational label.)

A second difference was in the extent to which they favored cooperation with the incumbent regime. The now more risk-averse Nahnah avoided populist and subversive engagements. In contrast to al-Nahda—and in *stark* contrast to the FIS—Hamas took a highly cautious approach to the tentative opening, asserting a

[38] The al-Jazaʾara Islamic camp, influenced by Algerian Islamic thinker Malek Bennabi, proceeded on the notion that Algerians remained preoccupied with the adoption of foreign models—in religious doctrine and otherwise—and could flourish with greater attention to the spiritual foundations present in their own society (Walsh, 2007).

commitment to the tenet of *al-tadarruj*[39] ('gradualism' or 'incrementalism') wherein Islamic values must be 'incorporated' into the status quo, proposing *shuraqraṭiyya* ('shuracracy'),[40] rather than ushered in through rebellion (Driessen 2014, p. 148; Naylor, 2015, p. 403; Sakthivel, 2017, p. 87). However, Djaballah found Nahnah's approach to be too acquiescent. Nahnah took this accommodationism further, publicly criticizing the FIS, and calling out its approach to Islam as aberrant (Davis, 1999). Again here, Nahnah's decisive departure from his pre-prison rhetoric—wherein he once indicted the state's own religious inauthenticity—led some within the FIS to suspect that the state had solicited Nahnah to dissent from fellow Islamists (Entelis, 1997; Layachi, 2006). Some even cast him as a state agent tasked with actively eroding support for their revolutionary project (viz. Burgat, 2007, p. 17).

Ultimately however, Nahnah's and Djaballah's respective political projects were no match for the popularity and mobilizational prowess of the FIS.[41] The more fiery FIS positioned itself as the fitting alternative to the FLN's impiety and its single-party tyranny. Some FIS figures even re-deployed independence-era rhetoric of *jihād*, or religious struggle, arguing that the regime had miscarried the Algerian revolution and the Islamic ideals behind it, and asserting itself as its truer progeny. The FIS in some ways thus became the first contemporary organization to rival the state's grip on religious discourse and symbols, supported by a populace ready to break with this entrenched system. By many accounts, so strong was the public desire for a political alternative, that people would not necessarily vote *for* the FIS, but simply *against* the

[39] These are terms used by Nahnah himself in interviews on his group's goals. Nahnah always preached, 'when the time is right,' or 'when Algeria is ready,' slow change from within toward an Islamic state was the preferred path (Davis, 1999).
[40] A rhetorical tool which sought to reconcile western-style democracy with Islamic Shura, or consultation. While remaining, perhaps intentionally, vague as to how exactly this reconciliation would take form. (An example in Davis, 1999).
[41] Indeed, the FIS' *daʿwa*, charity, service provision, and resource mobilization efforts were extremely far-reaching, and one of the foremost reasons for the FIS' near-overnight establishment and electoral success (see Ait-Aoudia, 2013).

FLN (Aït-Aoudia, 2013). In the pivotal December 1991 parliamentary elections, the FIS won overwhelmingly yet again, particularly along the populous north winning 48 percent of the vote (Roberts, 2003, p. 129; Willis, 1996, p. 135).

The FIS victory gave way to a series of events that would shape Algerian politics for years to come. A faction within the army who came to be known as the *Janvieristes*[42] were unsettled by the FIS' sweeping and undeniable triumph due to the threat it posed to the status quo. They annulled the 1991 parliamentary election results that would have almost certainly given the FIS another overwhelming victory (Berkouk, 1998, p. 55; Burgat & Geze, 2007, p. 14). President Chadli resigned on January 11, 1992 at the behest of the *Janvieristes*. The latter went on to form a provisional governing body to take control of the state, the High Committee of State (HCE).[43]

The FIS was then dissolved and banned. Some disillusioned former-FIS members and followers formed or joined various armed factions that would later be involved in the ensuing conflict (sometimes known as the Dark Decade) that spanned from 1992 to roughly 2002. The army justified its actions as 'restoring democracy'. However by several accounts, it had long-predicted and accepted the possibility that the coup would provoke violence (Samraoui, 2003, 162).[44] Still other accounts held that the military had taken deliberate steps toward a war aimed at obliterating any trace of FIS sympathy (Mundy, 2015). (More on how this violence shaped—or indeed was used to shape—the Algerian political culture and context in the forthcoming Chapter Three.)

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[42] So named for the January 1992 interruption of the electoral process, led by Generals Khaled Nezzar and Larbi Belkheir.

[43] French: *Haut Comité d'État*. Though these events unfolded quickly, they were incremental. At first, the government simply attempted to curb some of the FIS' powers (e.g. measures in 1991 to broadly reduce prerogatives of local-level and elected governments) until the military eventually voided the electoral process altogether.

[44] Indeed, according to testimony by Mohamed Samraoui, a former leader of the *Sécurité militaire* (the army's secret service): "In May 1992, at a meeting in Chateauneuf in the presence of numerous officers, he [Colonel Smail Lamari] told us: 'I am ready and determined to eliminate three million Algerians if necessary to maintain the order that Islamists threaten'" (Samraoui, 2003, p. 162).

These events marked a new era for Algeria, and for the Hamas that would exist within it. The movement was not among the belligerents of the violent conflict, though members did experience violence firsthand. In 1993, Nahnah's number two, Mohammed Bouslimani, by now the head of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, was found slaughtered in the Blida mountainside. The accepted theory is that the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), one of the main insurgent groups during the conflict, was responsible for his killing.[45] At Bouslimani's 1994 funeral, mourners wailed and fainted as Nahnah gave an imperious speech calling for an end to the carnage and chastising the armed Islamists, weeping as he recounted memories with his comrade. While members suffered a personal tragedy, it boosted the party/movement's brand. Bouslimani became Hamas' Islamist-nationalist icon in the state's 'fight against Islamist extremism' (more on this and the significance of 'martyrdom' within Algerian political culture in Chapter Five).

More broadly, such optics presented an opportunity for Hamas. Prior to the crisis, the FIS camp had eclipsed it on the national stage and within the Islamist sphere. But as the decade wore on, official narratives effectively attributed the seemingly intractable violence and insecurity to the FIS. Hamas thus was able to exploit the disrepute of the FIS brand to construct its own as the inverse. For example, Nahnah recast the movement's tenet of *al-tadarruj* ('gradualism') as having been a response to the FIS' revolutionarism, and positioned Hamas as the 'moderate' alternative to the 'extremist' FIS (a binary to which the breadth of Chapters Four and Five are devoted). Additionally, Nahnah balked at FIS' recruitment in poorer areas, which he framed as

[45] Reportedly, the GIA slit Bouslimani's throat after failing to secure from him a fatwa legitimizing their violent methods, and in order to persuade the MSP to boycott the national conference on resolving the crisis. However, OJAL (Organization of Free Algerian Youth), a violent, vigilante anti-Islamist militia—believed by some to be a front for the DRS to slaughter Islamists (and suspected Islamists) with impunity—also claimed responsibility for his murder.

exploitation, as coercing disenfranchised demographics with false promises, and as moving the Islamist movement away from intellectualism. He tapped into a different demographic, recruiting among the more educated and middle classes. Through new and far-reaching publicity—including through the party newspaper and frequent speeches and press conferences—the MSP's positions on issues of popular importance, like that of the role of women in Algerian society, were set discursively, if superficially,[46] apart from those of the FIS. Indeed, the MSP sought not only to present itself as a foil to other Islamists, but also to set itself apart from its past *self*, purging its discourse of the sort of revolutionary language it leaders had used in the early 1980s and 1970s. Indeed, as Abdelkarim Dahmen, a current member of the (MSP) national council and scholar on the MSP, claimed, "it was a relief for people to see a party that was Islamist and moderate, a voice like Nahnah's was important for people."[47]

Indeed, Nahnah's message has often been recounted (perhaps not without a healthy dose of romance and nostalgia) as having been particularly effective in its delivery. Many informants who had personally known or met Nahnah, including those who did not affiliate with the party, persistently emphasized his charisma—such as Yahia, a former member:

> Nahnah and Bouslimani, they related to the common people [...] Their speeches were not high-level speeches, if you listen to their Friday sermon or lessons (*durus*) in mosques, simple words, simple thoughts. He even used Daridja and jokes in his lessons, so people really loved it. It was new, and in their own language. He did not have an air of 'I am a sheikh, and I must speak only *fus'ha*,' Nahnah and Bouslimani wanted people to understand them, and people got attached to them, especially in such a hopeless period [1990s].

[46] For example, many prominent FIS leaders, especially Ali Belhadj, visibly and publicly argued for women to remain in the home, to emerge only to execute any duties related to her family or spouse; whereas Nahnah, actively, and as a matter of political discourse, advocated for women to have central roles within the movement and in the public sphere. (Although in practice, women ended up having a large role in FIS' *daʿwa*, and women's participation in the MSP's political affairs were often tokenistic. Indeed, as Al-Ahnaf, Botiveau, and Frégosi (1991) note, in comparing the texts within the MSP and FIS journals, the differences in their treatment of women, their existential purpose, and their role in political life, were trivial—if distinguishable at all (p. 243).

[47] A. Dahmen, interview, March 13, 2016.

Nahnah also thereafter took it upon himself to serve as an ambassador for Algerian Islamism abroad, spending the next several years speaking in France, Sweden, Germany, and the United States. Nahnah undertook this diplomacy for several key reasons and audiences. First, it allowed him to manage the Algerian state's narrative on the conflict—for which the military regime was already seeking international support and which threatened to sully Algerian Islamists at large. Namely, he cast his party as the 'good Islamists,' with the moderate disposition, the more enlightened view on the role of women, better suited to merge Islam and democracy vis-à-vis its newly-banned counterpart, and other such issues they believed to be of interest to westerners. Second, as Islamists were seen as threatening to regime interests, Nahnah sought to signal Hamas' loyalty, as one who would hold up the state narrative on the conflict to international interlocutors.

The regime of course gained too. Its propaganda campaign discredited the FIS and normalized a strong security apparatus. Its ruthless military campaign could be juxtaposed with an apparently magnanimous inclusion of another Islamist actor, Hamas, thereby engaging an Islamist partner while in fact conditioning and controlling its participation. This was facilitated by a dominant narrative that pluralism / opposition needed to be restricted while the country navigated the violent period. In effect, the regime's FLN-army axis was restored despite the new multi-party milieu.

2.4 A Gradually Upgrading Autocracy: 1995-2003

At the height of the violence, the regime brought about various democratic processes to reestablish its legitimacy—both popularly/affectively and more legally/constitutionally. At the same time however, it also sought to maintain its tight control of formal politics, both by creating new laws limiting political parties, and, less officially, by engineering the political and electoral fields. Hamas thus took advantage

of rising anti-FIS sentiment to gain a foothold not only in national consciousness, but more practically, in the—increasingly illegitimate—partisan sphere.

In 1995, interim president Liamine Zeroual (acting, 1994-1995; president, 1995-1999) stood for election for the first time after his appointment to the role by the HCE the year before. Most onlookers believed Zeroual's victory had been preordained (Evans & Phillips 2007, p. 213). Nonetheless, several loyal opposition leaders were solicited to run against him, including Nahnah, Said Saadi of the secular-Berberist party Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD),[48] and Noureddine Boukrouh of the Algerian Renewal Party (PRA).[49] Zeroual was elected as expected, with 61 percent of the vote. By official accounts Nahnah came in second place with 25 percent of the vote, although Hamas alleged the results were fixed.[50] Soon however, Nahnah accepted the unfavorable results, expressing to the press that elections were still necessary to end the violence, and that national reconciliation and dialogue was required for stability and peace. His capitulation further cemented the pervasive view that Nahnah and others' candidacies were forwarded only to give a pretense of competition.

After his election, Zeroual began a process of constitutional reform that set the stage for parliamentary elections to be held in 1997. However, several amendments to the 1996 constitution—intended to address the violent strife—included changes which especially strained the new parties, including Hamas, as they prepared to run in these elections.[51] First, a new revision (Article 42) now stipulated that "political parties may not be founded on a *religious, linguistic, racial, gender, corporatist or regionalist*

[48] In French : *Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie*
[49] In French: *Parti du Renouveau Algérien*
[50] Specifically, they argued that none of the candidates had in fact won the required 50 percent, that Nahnah's victories in the south were going discounted, and that a runoff needed to be held the following December (Bird, 2012).
[51] Hamas was already, in order to signal support for the regime-led transition, participating in the National Transition Council (CNT), established in 1994 to serve as an interim parliament until the 1997 parliamentary elections.

basis."[52] The law, having also enshrined Islam, Amazighité, Arab identity, as components of the *national* Algerian identity, thereafter banned "the[ir] use for partisan or propaganda purposes,"[53] precluding competing claims on the exclusivist identitarian rhetoric over which the state/FLN's claimed ownership for the sake of its own symbolic legitimation. Quite deftly, the amendment acknowledged parties' formal legitimacy and right to exist, while providing a legal basis for their ideational restriction. The two legal Islamist parties, Nahnah's Hamas and Djaballah's al-Nahda, removed overt references to Islam, while the two 'Berberist' parties, the RCD and the historic Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) restrained ethnolinguistic rhetoric, and were generally obligated to reframe their party/movement's activities, campaigns, slogans, programs and platforms.[54] And thus in 1996, Hamas, the Movement for an Islamic Society (Harakat al-Mujtamaʿ al-Islami, Hamas in Arabic), became the MSP, Movement for a Society of Peace (Harakt mujtamaʿ al-Silm, or HMS in Arabic).

A second constitutional revision saw the addition of the upper house (Majlis al-Umma).[55] Until that point, parliament consisted solely of the lower house (al-Majlis al-Shʿabi al-Watani, hereafter APN).[56] This new body effectively retained the regime's veto in case of a majority of any non-regime parties,[57] while the introduction of term-

[52] Algerian Const., t, 1 ch. IV, art. 42.
[53] Algerian Const., t, 1 ch. IV, art. 42.
[54] In the case of the 'Berberist' parties, this hampered their ability to harness populist, subaltern discourses and run on platforms of Berber empowerment, discourses that were particularly important to their enclaves of support particularly in Kabylia.
[55] In the upper house two-thirds of members (96 in total) are elected indirectly, by simple majority vote by an electoral college composed of local councils: wilaya and beladiya assemblies, with two representatives from each of the 48 wilayas, and one-third (48) appointed by the president, with 144 seats in total. In addition to making parliament bicameral, the amendment also stipulated parliamentary representation for Algerian citizens residing abroad.
[56] French: Assemblée Populaire Nationale. The APN is directly elected by popular vote where members serve 5-year terms (*khomasi*). The APN is composed of 462 seats distributed in 48 constituencies corresponding to the *wilayas*. (In May 2012, the number of APN deputy seats were increased from 389 to 462, adding 73 seats.) Each constituency is allocated a number of seats according to its population: 1 seat per 80,000 inhabitants, plus one seat for each remaining fraction of 40,000 inhabitants, with a minimum of 4 seats per constituency.
[57] Those other than the FLN or RND. Because the president appoints one third of the seats, the change effectively ensured that non-regime parties have not been able to secure control of both houses.

limits also checked new parties' powers. Moreover, it enshrined the president's prerogative to appoint magistrates and *wālī*s (appointed heads of the province or *wilāya*), adding to his already de facto grip on the judiciary. It is worth briefly mentioning that the structure of the Algerian political system more broadly, was/is designed to constrain new participants. Despite the existence of elected councils at the province and commune level,[58] the regime-appointed *wālī*s' prerogatives were progressively enhanced—first in 1996, and later furthered through the 2011 communal code—such that the veto of President of the Republic could be exercised even at these levels.

State efforts to maintain control over the 1997 elections and their results were not only undertaken through institutional structures and legal mechanisms, but also though manipulation of the electoral field. To give an example, just months before the elections took place, the National Democratic Rally (RND) was formed by friends of President Zeroual. This was done in order to counterbalance the Islamists' potential electoral strength by funneling non-FLN votes toward a different regime-aligned party—while also generating the impression of electoral options and political opposition. The RND won the elections with 32 percent (156 seats out of the 389 in the lower house), the MSP came in second place with 69 seats, and the FLN came in third with 62 seats. As these were the first parliamentary elections since the army had cancelled the 1991 results, and since the subsequent onset of violence, these elections were intended to restore legitimacy to parliament, and to the political system at large (Dahmen, 2015, p. 167). But its optics were damning. Without any electoral or social history, discernible platform, or reputation to speak of, the RND's sweeping victory

[58] Algeria's subnational elected bodies consist of the al-Majlis al-Shʿabi al-Wilaʾi (popular wilaya assembly, APW), which is the state-level deliberative body composed of members elected by universal suffrage for five years, and the al-Majlis al-Shʿabi al-Baladi (Popular Communal Assembly, APC), which is the elected body at the level of the commune.

seemed implausible to onlookers,[59] discrediting the election. This was compounded by obvious cases of election-rigging, and a seemingly cynical deployment of troops to ensure election-day order where at the height of violence, citizens felt these same resources could have be allocated to their day-to-day protection (Volpi, 2003, pp. 76-77). The MSP—alongside several other opposition parties—participated in the large street protests that ensued, and filed formal complains of election fraud, alleging hundreds of cases.[60]

However, the MSP again relinquished its claims upon joining the governing coalition with the FLN and RND in 1997, and upon acquiring various ministerial portfolios. Indeed, it was "a sacrifice, so that the state would not collapse (*taḍḥiyya, bāsh al-dawla mātanhār*)" as MSP supporters would repeatedly justify later (a discourse we will explore in forthcoming chapters). In the 1997 APW province-level elections, the MSP fared slightly better, joining the RND and FLN on regional and municipal councils. A few months later, it won 2 seats (out of 144) on the upper house—which while small was still more electorally significant than any other Islamist party in this post-FIS period—which ushered the MSP into the state apparatus (Tlemcani et al., 2008).

In 1999, President Zeroual called for early elections.[61] While these initially featured multiple candidates, the constitutional council rejected Nahnah's application, citing a new 1996 Constitutional stipulation that presidential candidates of age furnish proof of participation in the Independence War.[62] Abdelaziz Bouteflika thus won with

[59] In fact, because it became a fully-developed party so quickly after its sudden appearance on the political scene, a clear outgrowth of the FLN, the RND soon became referred to widely as the "baby born with a mustache". Today, while not as notionally powerful as the FLN, it has served an important procedural function in the ruling triumvirate and maintains relationships in major business circles.
[60] Nahnah specified the issue of "itinerant polling stations," ballot boxes transported around smaller communes difficult to monitor in the large Algerian territory (Cohen, 1997).
[61] After losing a power-struggle with the army, regarding control of the RND and defense ministry (Roberts, 2007).
[62] Algerian Const., t. 2, ch. I, art. 73

74 percent of the vote amidst serious polling irregularities, and the withdrawal of other candidates who cited fraud concerns. Nonetheless, the MSP supported Abdelaziz Bouteflika's presidency thereafter, and importantly, his Civil Concord referendum, which sought to absolve and reintegrate repentant combatants, a measure, albeit imperfect and controversial, which effectively ended the war.[63] The MSP and RCD were generally more cooperative with Bouteflika and the military *decideurs* ('decision makers') over the course of the reconciliation project, and would go on to more vocally support the reconciliation project's legal culmination: the 2005 National Charter. In contrast, Djaballah's party, Louisa Hannoune's Trotskyist Parti des Travailleurs (PT), and the historic FFS were more critical of certain aspects (Roberts, 2007).

2.5 The MSP after Nahnah 2003-2018

After years battling leukemia, Mahfoud Nahnah passed away in June 2003, after which the party transformed in several prominent respects. Nahnah's cult of personality had unified and transcended any ostensible fissures inside the party. His death thus generated a vulnerability within the movement, wherein party leaders wrestled over succession, Nahnah's legacy, and adjudication (using this legacy) on participation, collaborationism, and their financial entailments. Indeed, the party's financial arrangements and business practices underwent a visible shift too: as individual incentives within the party changed, its clientelist practices evolved into outright corruption. Islamist disunity as well as post-Nahnah era corruption, were reportedly

[63] This program granted amnesty to repentant insurgents on the condition that they had not been accused of murder or rape, which angered many victims of violence. Because often victims did not know whether aggressors were Islamists, the state (intelligence apparatus, the DRS), or the state disguised as Islamists, many felt the parameters of the concord institutionalized impunity and obstructed any legal recourse against the DRS, while penalizing anyone who accused an amnestied person (Islamist or otherwise). Many argued that the official designation of the period as a 'civil war' (rather than an 'Islamist insurgency') had been a concession by Bouteflika, as part of the Civil Concord, to residual supporters of the conflict's Islamist camp. The referendum saw an 85 percent voter turnout with 98 percent voting in its favor (Roberts, 2007).

encouraged and incentivized by the regime, which saw Nahnah's death as an opportunity to fragment, more fully coopt, and publicly undermine the credit of the Islamist contender, and also bind it closer to the authorities. Ultimately, this left the party significantly weakened: as a moral figure, formal political force, and electoral body vis-à-vis formal institutions like parliament, ministries, and provincial and local government.

Internal Fragmentation

Nahnah's popular discourses and the cult/symbolism of his very person had been the backbone of the movement's early formation; even as it formalized into a rule-based party structure, he retained de facto veto and immutable influence as the spiritual guide. This was in part attributable to the characteristic Muslim Brotherhood model of deference to authority that serves to maintain order, respect, and curb internal dissent—a culture reinforced through the movement's structure, promotion system, and education (see above). During this period, it was also highly reminiscent of other orderly, rigid Brotherhood structures in the region in that any internal discord was not apparent to the outside.[64]

A related and convincing explanation is its embrace of a broadly observable pattern of *zaʿīm*ism, wherein a party or movement is highly reliant on a single, totemic figure (Liverani, 2008, p. 106), a *zaʿīm*. Generally speaking, organizational identity, self-image, and brand is inextricable from the *zaʿīm*, meaning leader, the 'great one,' often a founder. Despite established decision-making mechanisms, the *zaʿīm* often holds informal veto. Often, the ambitions, ideas, and cult of personality of the founding *zaʿīm*

[64] Traditionally, MSP has maintained order and hierarchy within senior ranks allowing the party to guard secrets. This was particularly true during Nahnah's time, where little could be determined regarding the debates of the executive council. However, this level of order and cohesiveness has been eroded particularly since the Soltani-Menasra rivalry, where many of the debates and schisms have been made public; and although today's party is more eager for publicity and has become more accessible, they still guard the ranks, and it remains difficult to dig further behind the party line.

continue after his/her death to shape how authenticity and purity of doctrine and practice are understood, and to serve as the movement's moral and political basis. Subsequent leaders and personalities, rather than introducing their own ideas and philosophies, adjudicate on—challenged in even amending or adapting—those left behind by the *zaʿīm*. Because *zaʿīm*ist organizations often fail to codify (or adhere to) mechanisms of succession, the death of a *zaʿīm* can catalyze rupture—in fact, succession is frequently not even undertaken until a zaʿīm passes away. Often embedded into an organizational culture, *zaʿīm*ism makes successive leaders unwilling to share authority with others, and preferring to head up their own fiefdoms rather than share the mantle, which threatens movement unity.

Indeed, the MSP was often known as "Nahnah's party."[65] While on paper, party decision-making relied on *al-shūrā* (through the structures discussed at the chapter's outset), the primacy of Nahnah's vision undercut established consultative decision-making mechanisms both before and after his passing, whether Nahnah intended this or not. Nahnah's sporadic presence as he traveled abroad as a self-styled ambassador-at-large during the party's formative years further left unmediated internal party debates such as: the transfer of power, parameters for political engagement[66] (their boundaries of collaboration as a 'loyalist opposition,' the extent and limits of cooperation with state institutions), how to adapt religious outreach, and other policies.[67] Moreover, other

[65] "*hādik al-ḥaraka ta' naḥnaḥ*" (that movement of Nahnah's) as many Blida natives called it.
[66] According to Yahia, who left the MSP shortly before joining university, "Nahnah's message on how to engage the regime was not at all clear. Those who came after him were not prepared to manage the party or manage disagreements on this; disagreements that resulted from an vision that was not defined, that these men were left interpreting."
[67] For *daʿwa*, charitable work, and development, for instance, the group could use the Muslim Brotherhood as a reference. However, in their political engagement, brotherhood political activity abroad does not 'travel' to the Algerian context. Driessen (2014) notes that most of Algeria's early Islamist iterations—which preceded parties—did not clearly articulate the institutional arrangements they envisioned for the country, and while calling for an 'Islamic state,' did not explicitly define how their vision would remedy the shortcomings of the existing form of state Islam (p. 144).

party personalities did not have sufficient opportunity to cultivate gravitas or legitimacy as leaders.

The consequences of *zaʿīm*ism for the MSP became much more palpable as Nahnah's death coincided with the slowing of the civil conflict. Members and former members recounted finding their party thrown into the reconciliation period[68] having not yet determined the movement's post-conflict appeal, identity, goals, and plan for relevancy. To be sure, as the country returned to relative normalcy, the MSP's value to the regime was wearing off.[69] (Indeed, the war-torn period into which the MSP was born molded its mission and platform as moderate 'alternatives' to FIS and combatant Islamists. The resulting conundrum: to whom, and on what grounds, it would appeal once the violence had ended, is fully explored in Chapters Four and Five.) Subsequent attempts to adapt Nahnah's ideas to this new context and to its specific challenges were cast as betrayals. While *zaʿīm*ism—or founder-worship more generally—is certainly not unique to Islamist movements,[70] the patterns it describes help explain/classify the various aspects of the party's trajectory after his death.

After Nahnah's death, MSP Vice President Aboujerra Soltani[71] ascended to party president, and it was not long before his leadership was fiercely contested. As the procedure for succession was not clearly delineated, some questioned the legitimacy of

[68] As Abdelkrim Dahmen, member of the MSP national council and scholar on the MSP, put it, "in the 1990s our nation was facing terrorism and other challenges to the state's existence, so we [MSP] hadn't the time to make our programmatic switch, to the 'new situation'" (Interview, March 13, 2016).
[69]That is, as helping the state provide a veneer of competitive politics at home and abroad, and to appear as otherwise tolerant of Islamism; and by potentially dissuading enlistment into armed networks as an Islamist alternative.
[70] Consider Messali Hadj of the ENA (Étoile nord-africaine), PPA (Parti du peuple algérien), and MTLD (Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques), probably the most prominent *zaʿīm* of modern Algerian memory, seen as the forefather of the Algerian nationalist movement, or Hocine Aït Ahmed of the FFS. Moreover, several Islamist groups do not have an overwhelming *zaʿīm*ist dynamic with which to contend: consider the Moroccan Justice and Development Party (PJD) which has a diffuse, decentralized and democratic internal governance structure, or even the FIS, which ran more as a massive, well-functioning machine composed of different (even disparate) parts, with a plurality of leadership and ideological influences.
[71] He had also served as Small Business Minister, 1997-1999; and Labor and Social Affairs Minister, 1999-2001.

his transfer of power. Despite Soltani's Islamic scholarship—a professor of *al-shariʿa* at the University of Constantine—many saw him merely as Nahnah's contemporary, as not quite deserving of the *zaʿīm* position. Soltani's reportedly authoritarian (and power-hungry) style of leadership isolated parts of the movement. He was also implicated in various corruption scandals which sullied the party (a dynamic more fully explored in the next subsection), and gave the impression that he was closely bound to the regime. This compounded the party base's apprehension that their participation in the governing coalition—the weaker partner vis-à-vis FLN and RND—was eroding their political independence and claims to moral rectitude. This soul-searching was even further impelled by the party's electoral setbacks, when it was displaced in 2002 by Djaballah's new al-Islah party as Algeria's leading Islamist group in parliament, winning 43 seats out 389, versus the MSP's 38. Some believed the Islamist electorate was rewarding what they saw as Djaballah's[72] more principled non-participation vis-à-vis the MSP (Ottaway, 2015). Thus during his campaign for re-election to movement president ahead of the 2008 second party congress, Soltani pledged the MSP would take tougher stances on corruption and revise its approach to political participation. Though Soltani was re-elected, soon many attributed his consolidation of power to regional (indeed, expressly tribalist) mobilization within the party, rather than a continued popularity among the base (Hachemaoui, 2012). Some observers further believed this was encouraged by the

[72] Nonetheless, Djaballah's parties imploded soon after their victory, in the pressure of what many saw as the hand of authoritarian manipulation. Djaballah founded al-Islah in 1999, after being ejected from al-Nahda at its 1998 party congress, and replaced by then-secretary general Lahbib Adami. Djaballah was a more vociferous opponent of the regime than Nahnah, and less of a loyalist. As al-Nahda drew stricter boundaries regarding the acceptance of ministries and other posts, in hopes of retaining credibility and nuisance power, the MSP's impressive 1997 electoral performance led various al-Nahda cadres to deem Djaballah's approach too rigid. Adami's entourage then sought cabinet positions and general proximity to the regime by allying with the RND. Al-Islah was Djaballah's effort to recreate a party with oppositional "virginity" (Parks, 2013, p. 123) and resume his moderate non-participation. However he was jettisoned yet again in 2007 by secretary general, Djahid Younsi, whose camp was similarly motivated by the potential of greater access to formal office. Islah struggled to attract support in the absence of Djaballah's charisma and in 2007, MSP again dislodged rival al-Islah, winning 52 seats. Most believe that Adami and Younsi, if not simply lured by office, were more actively elicited to sideline Djaballah (Ghanem, 2014; Ottaway, 2015; Sakthivel, 2017).

national intelligence apparatus (the DRS), as he would be easier to control[73] (Burgat & Geze, 2007, pp. 20-21). Moreover, Soltani soon broke his campaign promise, and led the party to support President Bouteflika's highly-controversial third mandate.

Internal party discontent had long simmered, and had consolidated behind Soltani's deputy, Abdelmadjid Menasra, a long-time critic of Soltani's closeness to the regime.[74] After failing to challenge Soltani's 2008 victory,[75] Menasra led a mass defection of rank and file members as well as several MSP government post-holders. Several of the figures who defected to Menasra's new movement[76] were famously close to Nahnah and present at the MSP's founding. This aggravated an already-momentous setback for the MSP, degrading the MSP's claims to having descended from Sheikh Nahnah—still a badge of spiritual authenticity and political legitimacy.[77] The new movement was legalized as a political party, the Front for Change (Jabhat al-Taghyir, FC) in 2012.

In 2012, Soltani's new deputy, Abderrazak Makri, began a campaign for party president that would seek to remedy these setbacks. In a book he authored that year, *al-Bayt al-Hamsi*, (roughly, 'The Hamas Family'[78]) Makri lamented the party's missteps,

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[73] Of course, these notions of string-pulling as I will show can be overstated and are often not entirely verifiable, often gleaned from conversations with the Francophone press which itself often takes positions within the polemics on Islamism in Algeria.

[74] Menasra was also critical of Soltani's retention of his cabinet position even after his assumption of the presidency, where Nahnah's policy had been to occupy only one of the two posts.

[75] Immediately after Soltani's victory, and before creating his splinter party however, Menasra harnessed the anger of party's rank and file to run again, against Soltani. However, under the party bylaws, a congress must convene and choose the new president using the *al-shūrā* process, thus he was not necessarily the presumptive successor. However, when the *majlis* met, he did not make it into the final running. Menasra withdrew his leadership bid at the eleventh hour in return for Soltani's resignation from his post as Minister of State without portfolio—a position which exemplified his proximity to regime interests, and stoked various party cadres' resultant misgivings. Soltani complied, which meant Menasra had to withdraw his complaint.

[76] Called Harakat al-Daʿwa wa-l-Taghyir, or the Movement for Preaching and Change (MPC).

[77] Indeed, with Menasra went MSP figures Mustapha Belmehdi and Abdelkader Bengrina. Belmehdi was considered in some circles to be the third original founding member after Nahnah and Bouslimani. Bengrina, former Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts, moved with Nahnah and was considered a skilled historian of the party. Once heavyweights within the MSP owing to their reputations of closeness with Nahnah, these two were initially considered the 'true' *de facto* leaders of FC.

[78] The word *ḥamsī* is an adjectival derivative of the party acronym HMS/Hamas, and cannot be directly translated into English. See Makri (2013).

and argued that *za'īm*ism and personalism had destroyed party unity. He even critiqued Nahnah's early orientations as having impeded unification of the greater Muslim Brotherhood tendency—namely that Nahnah, and perhaps Djaballah too, with their own personalistic political motivations, simply did not want to share with each other the mantle of leadership (Makri, 2013). Makri also leveled that while Nahnah's early strategy of loyalism was out of necessary caution during the conflict, that Islamist agitation vis-à-vis the regime needed revision to the current context. In an argument that became central to his platform, he held that 'sacrosanct' movement tenets (of *al-tadarruj*, *al-musharaka* ('participation'), and loyalism) had led the party into blind collaboration and crisis. To rectify this, he proposed breaking the inertia of its participationism,[79] by renewing its oppositional credibility, and proposed taking time to rebuild the base and expand outreach and recruitment. Further empowered, in part, by the revolutionary mood around the Arab Spring and subsequent Islamist electoral victories in the region at the time, the MSP withdrew from the governing coalition. To compensate for the defections and generate a voter base ahead of the May 2012 legislative elections, Makri organized an opposition electoral bloc called the Green Alliance (AAV, *Alliance de l'Algérie Verte*), with Djaballah's smaller Islamist opposition parties, al-Islah and al-Nahda.

Meanwhile however, the regime continued its own efforts to rig the electoral landscape. The Interior Ministry created the National Commision for Election Supervision (CNSE, *commission nationale de supervision des elections*) which gave the FLN a monopoly over results-tabulation (The Carter Center, 2012, p. 5). The FLN won an astounding 208 out of the 462 seats (45 percent), and the RND followed with 68

[79] His chief proposals at the time were to only support government political and economic initiatives after full transparent discussion with credible state partners (whereas Soltani gave more unquestioning support), and to re-unite the Nahnahist (and other Islamist) currents and hedge against further splinter groups.

seats. The AAV won only about 6 percent of the vote (49 seats) despite its potential for greater numbers as a multi-party bloc.[80] Though Makri protested that the electoral defeat was the result of substantial fraud, which evidence supports (The Carter Center, 2012), the internal crises that had afflicted the MSP had also taken a toll. Most other parties grappled for even 1 or 2 percent of seats, and ultimately, no one party rose as a formidable opposition (The Carter Center, 2012).

As Makri's leadership was seen as marking a new era for the MSP core party, indiscernible, rivaling Islamist micro-parties would proliferate still. In 2012, MSP Minister of Public Works and Transport, Amar Ghoul, left the MSP in a bid to remain in government, founding a second splinter, the *Tajamuʿ Amal al-Jazaʾir* (TAJ). Ghoul expressed his will to join the governing coalition (from which the MSP had just withdrawn) vowing the new TAJ would support the program of Bouteflika. The interior ministry authorized the new party with a swiftness that raised suspicions.[81] Ghoul's new party had almost no legitimacy among the Islamist/Nahnahist support base, and onlookers within and outside the movement were unconvinced of the doctrinal authenticity of the new group.[82] MSP militants I spoke with saw TAJ as Ghoul's desperate attempt to remain close to the regime. Even militants who sympathized with Menasra's FC and acknowledged that MSP could have better negotiated its participation, saw Ghoul's departure one of opportunism, as devoid of any ideological or even political difference or basis. Some external observers were certain Ghoul received government incentives to form a more pro-regime Islamist group to siphon

[80] This was a precipitous decline from MSP's 52/389 in 2007, and al-Islah's whopping 43/389 in 2002, when both were standalone parties.
[81] Almost immediately after TAJ's September 2012 founding congress.
[82] It is considered unpreoccupied with existential questions of party's spiritual purpose, moral campaigns, ownership of Nahnah's original vision, and negotiating a place of religious opposition. It is rarely seen as 'Islamist' in the popular imagination of the same ilk as Nahnah's other micro- and splinter-parties. Indeed, by Ghoul's own pronouncements, TAJ's intended orientation is that of a "nationalist," as opposed to Islamist, party (Mammeri, 2012).

more mainstream support from an MSP moving toward non-participationism. (Dris, 2013) (Where RND had been the 'baby born with the mustache,' it was often joked TAJ was the 'baby born with the beard.')

In 2013, around the same time that Makri won the party presidency, a third breakaway, al-Binaʾ al-Watani (BW) or the 'National Edification' party, was formed by former MSP heavyweights who had defected to Menasra's FC in 2009—among them Mustapha Belmehdi, a powerful older member, who some consider Nahnah's number three.[83] While these men originally took issue with Soltani in their original defection to the FC, they in turn left the FC due to Menasra's wish to rejoin the party[84] with Makri's MSP, of whom they disapproved.[85] As in their first defection, these men positioned themselves as the truer adjudicators of the Muslim Brotherhood school in Algeria and of Nahnah's founding vision. And, perhaps ironically, some BW leaders saw Makri's critique of Nahnah's ideas and attempt at adaptation[86] as outlined in his book as a betrayal of founding doctrine, bordering on heresy. Indeed, Abdelkader Bengrina, among the aforementioned BW co-founders referred to those in Makri's camp as *kufār* ('infidels'), and lambasted Makri as a traitor to Nahnah's original vision.[87] In fact, Bengrina soon followed this with a quip that Makri did not sufficient embody a *zaʿīm*:

"Who then, is a *zaʿīm*?" I asked.

[83] The other two were Ahmed Dane, former Communication and External Relations head for FC and MSP, and Abdelkader Bengrina, former Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts.
[84] The FC had not seen electoral success and wished to meet the 5 percent threshold required to hold parliamentary seats, as did the MSP, whose AAV bloc (the *Alliance de l'Algérie Verte* with smaller Islamist opposition parties al-Islah and al-Nahda) was failing.
[85] Indeed, Menasra told me that "Belmehdi and Bengrina represented the most 'radical' elements of al-Taghyir [FC], [that] they were opposed to any sort of engagement with the MSP or reconciliation;" Menasra had wished, optimistically, to reunify all Nahnahist splinters. Conversely, Bengrina avowed that Menasra had been a weak leader, owing to this conciliatory inclination. A. Menasra, interview, November 1, 2016; A. Bengrina, interview, November 12, 2015.
[86] Many leaders of BW argue that they do not follow the ideas of 'Nahnah,' but rather, as comrades of Nahnah during his time, they formed their ideology in consultation with one another, that "it's not we that followed his ideas, he followed ours, jointly, we followed each other" (A. Bengrina, interview, November 12, 2015).
[87] A. Bengrina, interview, November 12, 2015.

> "Nahnah, of course. Bouslimani was a *zaʿīm*, but he died so early, God bless him. He could have succeeded Nahnah." He responded.
>
> "But the leader is elected by *al-shūrā*? Not just next in line."
>
> "Yes, but he would have won. And anyway, this is what happened with Soltani! Anyway, Boumediene was also *a zaʿīm*. [Abdelhamid] Mehri[88] was a *zaʿīm*. In Morocco, Benkirane[89] could be a *zaʿīm*."[90]

By time the terms of the MSP-FC merge had been settled, the other bloc of which the MSP was a part, the AAV (MSP, al-Islah, and al-Nahda), had become weakened by widespread cynicism,[91] hamstrung by partisan contradictions, and riddled with conflicts of interest—including over which party's members should top the ballot lists. By January 2017 the AAV was dissolved, and just before the May 2017 parliamentary elections Menasra's FC returned to the MSP umbrella, in yet another round of hasty and cynical reconfigurations that confused and disillusioned voters.

The various defecting figures, once respected names in the Islamist sphere with added gravitas for having moved with Nahnah, failed to attract significant numbers, seen largely as shrill, intransigent, and confused. Followers themselves had begun to lose track of new groups, and the schisms (amidst mutually-exclusive claims to being the sole remaining adjudicators of Nahnahist thought) had trivialized not only the MSP but the full spectrum of Nahnahist parties. Even Rachid Hamdis, the head of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah's Blida-wilaya branch in 2016 referred to the MSP, its followers, and the resulting splinter parties as "Nahnah's orphans," likening the breakaways to cynical quarrels among brothers, the "founder's sons" over legacy and inheritance.[92] These optics ultimately worked in the regime's favor, and by many assessments, with its

[88] A *mujāhid* (former freedom fighter) and rather revered figure within the FLN.
[89] Then-leader of the Morocco's Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD), and prime minister of Morocco.
[90] A. Bengrina, interview, November 12, 2015.
[91] This was because many of its dominant figures were known for their cooperation with the regime (including having called for 'stability' during the 2011 protests in Algeria) and because the switch over to the opposition was made hastily ahead of the 2012 legislative elections.
[92] R. Hamdis, interview, February 21, 2016.

intervention—as part of its broader tactic of inundating the electoral sphere with indistinguishable parties. Indeed, it is widely believed that the regime's similar wishes to fragment the Berberist tendency—whose formal, national organization was for years chiefly under the historic and unyielding FFS—is behind the 1989 formation of the RCD.

Corruption Scandals

Let us now return to the early 2000s, when the regime began to be racked by famous corruption scandals, the prosecutions of which were undertaken vindictively in a manner revealing of the fractiousness within the regime (viz. McDougall, 2017, p. 330). At this time, splinters and divisions were more actively incentivized across the breadth of the political class in order to more easily bind it to "the system's long-established blend of authoritarianism, patrimonialism, rentierism and corruption" (McDougall, 2017, p. 322).

Nahnah's passing coincided with this timeline. Prior to his death, the MSP primarily engaged in a sort of *pious clientelism*, characterized by technically-legal exchanges of benefits, which advanced the movement's charitable works, outreach, and fundraising for elections. However during Soltani's presidency these practices, relationships, and networks morphed into visible corruption, where leaders leveraged them for personal, individual enrichment, and extracted bribes in public office. Though these practices were widely observable and endemic to this period, the MSP, having based its identity and platform on moral rectitude, was especially vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy—cast as unprincipled, opportunistic, and 'un-Islamic' by the party ranks and beyond.

As Nahnah built the early movement in Blida, he also relied on his relationships with wealthy contributors and influential contacts to sustain charitable activity. In the

early 2000s, Youcef Zidoune's DigiMex company, for instance, gave meals, clothing, and other goods to al-Irshad wa-l-Islah for distribution during Ramadan. In exchange, local MSP government post-holders helped Zidoune to navigate the local government bureaucracy and to acquire operating permits. Around the same period, a local paper company (Bouhamid) whose owner grew up with Nahnah, funded charitable projects such as al-Irshad wa-l-Islah's collective weddings for the poor, in exchange for MSP functionaries' help in acquiring permits and access to import required machinery. Such non-monetary and in-kind donations were made through al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, a registered charity, rather than to the MSP due to new funding stipulations in the 1996 party law.[93]

In other cases, patronage was intended as a gesture to broadly cement shared interests and values, rather than based in the tangible quid-pro-quos characterizing the more plainly-clientelistic exchanges above. For instance, in the late 1990s the wealthy Naïmi family in Blida endowed a swathe of their private land to Nahnah in order for the movement to construct its own mosque[94] (the al-Arqam Mosque). Rather than a material exchange, the Naïmis—according to various accounts—hoped that a more influential MSP/Hamas would counterbalance the ideology of, and recruitment into, the armed

[93] This law also introduced a ceiling of 450-dinar per individual contributor, and forbade foreign funding, hampering its ability to obtain monies from private donors in the Gulf, wherefrom the MSP was widely reported to have received funds. It also increasingly relied on membership dues. As we will see in later chapters, the party is also able to harness its control over civic associations to access state funds and in-kind goods.

[94] Most mosques today are overseen by the Religious Affairs Ministry, which regained its purview in the late 1990s over those mosques briefly captured by the FIS and violent splinter groups, after which it attempted to re-promulgate a restrained and 'apolitical' Islam by governing and managing imam-training and intervening in the sermons (Rahal, 2012; Werenfels, 2007). The state ensured a sanitized, regime-friendly Islam through the High Islamic Council (HCI), whose members were state-appointed, charged with identifying 'moderate' interpretations of the Qu'ran, and made to issue fatwas favorable to state policies (Werenfels, 2007, p. 185). Even some remaining independently-administered mosques—believed to be an unspoken concession to Islamists/Salafists by the Bouteflika government—are subject to some government monitoring. Rouadjia (1990) notes that since privately-built mosques became state property only upon completion, some private preachers and groups prolonged the construction of a commissioned mosque in order to maintain control over the space and delay government jurisdiction.

Islamist groups.[95] Moreover, land-owning families like Naïmi accumulated wealth during the colonial period in part through agriculture, and thus shared his views on private property and appreciated his opposition to Boumediene's land reform.[96] Additionally, notable Blida families like Naïmi were as esteemed as local benefactors, thus were often outwardly pious and conspicuous in their charitable giving. As influential local actors, they sought to augment Nahnah's position also to expand their own links to the other notable families, local government actors, and imams in his orbit. The *al-arqām* mosque is still in operation today and is known as an MSP bastion.[97]

The patron-client dynamic sometimes worked in the other direction, as exemplified in Bird's (2012) investigation of the MSP majority in the Oran province-level government council. MSP-linked council members oversaw the province's urban development commission, and were held responsible for the related projects, their budgets, and awarding contracts to developers. Criteria for these awards were based not only on merit and past performance, but on contractors' character, reputation and status as observant Muslims, standing with local MSP members, and charitable donation to / participation in the branch's *daʿwa* activity.

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[95] Mustapha, conversation, February 13, 2016. Such donors saw Nahnah's ideas as both possibly siphoning youth away from 'jihadism' and producing pro-regime discourses—some of these families are in fact tribal elite and/or '*ancien mujāhidīn*' who have close relationships to, and receive special privileges from, the state. "One notable told me that they saw with their own eyes the FIS saying 'no' to music, 'no' to television, 'no' to teaching foreign languages, that girls shouldn't go to school. We needed an alternative [*badil*]. So, they gave Hamas a building to meet in, and Naïmi gave them land to build a mosque" (Mustapha, conversation, February 14, 2016).

[96] These wealthy, land-holding families were also opposed to Boumediene's policy; therefore, angry about property seizure during nationalization, they gave funds to both the FIS and MSP. However, as Blida had been adversely affected by civil war violence, many notable families began to move away from the FIS toward Nahnah's new 'moderate' movement.

[97] The MSP's jurisdiction over mosques and other religious spaces allows it, to a degree, to retain its own teachings, manage its own Friday *khutba*, and infuse study sessions with the party's religious interpretation. (Other mosques in Blida have also been run by the MSP periodically, such as the Salam mosque in Chrea, and Blida's Hanafi mosque.) These arrangements also effectively bypassed party-funding stipulations. Today, the imams at *al-arqām* have salaries/stipends paid by the MSP. One imam is responsible solely for the Friday *khutba*, while the others head the day to day prayers: As former member Younes told me, "most of those attending *al-arqām* are with MSP, but not all. The imams are not card-carrying members, but they are active with [MSP]."

The imperatives were thus both economic *and* religious. Indeed, the MSP's economic philosophy had long been one of growth through a (regulated) capitalist and market economy; it had thus always been pro-business, encouraging economic neoliberalism and alliances with middle-class merchants and the educated elite (Yacine, 1998, p. 10). In turn, the MSP sought to build a moral incentive structure for the merchant/business community, where one may materially benefit from the contracts awarded by the branch, if one in turn shares in its ideology and values. In short, the contracts award process served the party's politico-religious interests, even while they denied material kickbacks.[98] Ultimately, all of these sorts of exchanges were meant to serve the Islamist collective, never a single individual.

However, this dynamic would more visibly change in the final years of Nahnah's life (~1999-2003), which were also the MSP's first years in the coalition government. As Nahnah's role gradually receded owing to his health, Soltani's grew. The wider perception was that Soltani turned to more manifest corruption where kickbacks and spoils accrued to individual leaders, rather than the party/movement. Indeed, per admissions made by businesspersons themselves, Nahnah had often disappointed those seeking pure quid pro quos, whereas Soltani was more of a boon to the business class.[99]

Soltani is credited with transforming the MSP from a grassroots movement to well-oiled national machine, having taken steps to formalize and modernize the party bureaucracy, adapting it so that it could navigate the legal environment and function in Algeria's political institutions. Businesspersons took note of MSP's pursuit of, and later

[98] It is important to note in this *pious clientelism*, I only observed this sort of 'discrimination' in the party/movement's engagement with wealthy donors and in contracts. In administering social services to the poor or middle class, the movement did not first assess ideologies, affiliations, voter behavior, or expect other quid pro quos, etc.
[99] Aït Mouhoub, 2011.

proximity to, ministries of interest. Rather than seeking the highly-coveted 'ministries of sovereignty,' (justice, defense, foreign affairs, interior, and finance) Soltani's MSP sought those with better patron-client prospects (Small and Medium Enterprises (PME), Fisheries/Agriculture, Industry and Infrastructure, Tourism and Handicrafts, Transportation, Commerce/Trade and Environment).[100] Indeed, despite the importance of *al-tarbiya* ('formation') and *al-taʿlīm* ('education') to the movement, it did not pursue education portfolios.

Soltani's corrupt activity was on display as early as 1998. As Secretary of State for Fisheries (*secrétaire d'État à la pêche*), he is alleged to have extracted large bribes while granting large contracts to Chinese companies to fish for tuna in Algerian waters.[101] Soltani was then behind one of MSP's most sordid scandals in 2003, when as Minster of Labor and Social Security he embezzled approximately millions of dollars worth of public funds (social security funds)[102] through a private investment bank owned by banker Rafik Khalifa (who is currently serving an 18-year sentence in Algerian prison).[103]

Though now the leader of TAJ, Amar Ghoul was a behind a third high-profile corruption scandal while still an MSP-member. As Minister of Public Works (*Travaux publics*, another ministry considered "bread and butter for bribes"[104]), Ghoul's portfolio included the USD11 billion mega-project to build the East-West highway. As construction costs ballooned—reaching USD17 billion by completion in 2016—the project became the center of a highly-publicized investigation into a kickback scheme

[100] An important exception is Sassi Lamouri who was Minister of Religious Affairs in 1992, a portfolio of real political and symbolic significance, overlooking Islamic education, mosques, and religious messaging. (Though he left the MSP and always touted belonging to no party, he was active in al-Irshad wa-l-Islah and remained close to Nahnah.)
[101] Alitat, 2018.
[102] Namely from the CNAS (*Caisse nationale d'assurance sociale*).
[103] Alitat, 2013; "Le point du Samedi," 2005.
[104] A. Kharief, interview, April 18, 2016.

involving high-level officials, foreign companies, and Ghoul himself. Despite this massive government expenditure, various sections of the highway are still under construction, and a tunnel in Constantine collapsed in 2014, with the eastern portion of the highway generally poorly constructed.[105] Ghoul has thus become synonymous with elite corruption and bureaucratic ineptitude. Furthermore, his new TAJ party, which he defected the MSP to form, became a became an icon of venality, and a haven for rent-seeking Islamist bourgeoisie and business icons, according to political scientist Cherif Dris (2015), where notable business personalities started joining the party simply in order to streamline political-business collusion.[106] It is widely believed that the regime passively condoned, if not actively coordinated his high-profile illegal activity and his creation of TAJ in order to tarnish the wider Islamist movement and its claims to purity of mission.[107] In fact, that Ghoul had been kept on as minister after the highway scandal acted to confirm speculations that he was a regime mole in the MSP (Dris, 2013).

Meanwhile on the political stage, the MSP focused on religious agendas (Ouaissa, 2015), fashioning itself as a watchdog that might check against any parliamentary legislation on alcohol, conversion laws, and education (especially in the teaching of Arabic language and Islam). The express preference for English as a second language had seemingly paradoxical motivations: *dogmatic* opposition to the hegemony of French language in Algerian culture, as well as more *pragmatic* business interests (Werenfels, 2007, pp. 52-53).

Such incongruities—between its moralizing on one hand and instances of corruption of staggering scale on the other—once exposed, led the MSP ranks to take

[105] Kefane, 2014.
[106] For example, Habib Yousfi, then-president of the *Confédération générale des entreprises algériennes* (CGEA; General Confederation of Algerian Companies) joined in 2014. These businessmen often used it as a platform both to support the pro-business Bouteflika's mandates, and to legitimize some of the policy proposals of the influential Forum of Entrepreneurs' (*Forum des chefs d'entreprises* FCE).
[107] L. Dris-Ait Hamadouche, interview, September 14, 2015.

umbrage with party leadership, not only on the problems of unity outlined in the preceding subsection, but on perceptions of hypocrisy and moral decay as well. MSP ranks, voters, and constituents—in a pattern that has been documented in the other parts of the region (Kalin & Siddiqui, 2016)—punished corruption in actors who had presented themselves as part of the pious in-group, more severely than figures in the irreligious out-group. That is, despite being incentivized across party-type and throughout the breadth of the political class, *it was Islamist support that was disproportionately eroded by the corruption endemic during Algeria's early 2000s*.

2.6 Chapter Conclusion

All in all, the MSP has undergone a tremendous transformation from its formal 'birth' in 1990 to today. In the earliest years, before the broader Algerian Islamist movement settled into the camps known today, Nahnah and these various Islamist colleagues organized against the state's socialist policies. After imprisonment, and again after the start of the violent civil conflict, the movement became more pragmatic in their opposition: biding time as a moderate, cooperative, state-sanctioned Islamist entity which embraced the establishment, and promoted anti-revolutionarism and incremental reform—indeed, as the inverse of the FIS.

The latter years however were spent grappling with the risks this cooperationism posed. The *zaʿīm*ism phenomenon within the MSP left the party, after founder Nahnah's death, unclear on the transfer of power and unable to remain unified amidst rising ideological differences and personal disputes arising from competition, jealousy, and other personalistic aspirations. In its efforts to coopt, and also discredit, the post-conflict Islamist movement—and the partisan sphere at large—the regime encouraged these dynamics: incentivizing defections and breakaways, ensuring its legislative inertia,

enlisting its participation in corruption, and by some accounts, possibly even employing moles to infiltrate and fragment the group from within.

This treatment of the MSP was part of a broader pattern of authoritarian upgrading. In this process, the regime used nominally democratic institutions, like parliament, coalition governments, and the multi-party system, to give a veneer of formal pluralism and democratization—while in fact simultaneously pre-organizing the official political field by controlling (sometimes rigging) electoral processes, and deploying rules and laws designed specifically to curtail parties' platforms, prerogatives, legislative influence, and ultimately, their social and political legitimacy.

As the forthcoming chapters elaborate, challenges like these have projected upon how Algerian society understood its political world. The structural 'closures' elaborated in this chapter, have imprinted on how citizens make meaning around notions like *Islamism*, *partisanship*, *politics*, and the *state*. They also in turn, constitute the 'clues' to Islamist contenders themselves regarding the nature of their boundaries, the penalty of overstepping them, and thereby what the magnitude, scope, and nature of their contentious action can be. And the resulting discursive phenomena project onto how the party, and its members, make sense of position it occupies in the Algerian space. That is, despite being considered tightly bound to the regime, and by some accounts, completely controlled by the army and the intelligence (Roberts, 2007), the movement is still able to take on a life and purpose of its own through the practices, discourses, and imaginaries of the base—even of certain leadership figures.

To this end, the forthcoming chapter will explore the interactions of sense-making, political culture and political opportunity, as manifest through three popular discourses: disdain for Islamism, distrust of party politics, and the idea of state omnipotence—all of which shape and are shaped by the MSP.

Chapter Three: Political Culture and Opportunity after the Civil War

> "The ideology of history is a yoke that chokes everyday life, melds it with what remains, and yet, so to speak, determines the being-in-the-world of Algerians."
>
> -Ratiba Hadj-Moussa, *Algerian Cinema* (2014, p. 153)

In the wake of the political tumult and violence in the 1990s, several shifts emerged in popular preferences that became some of the defining features of Algeria's contemporary political culture. First, Islamism and Islamists came to be negatively viewed in the dominant narrative. Second, the dynamics of cooptation described in the last chapter crystalized a general banalization/delegitimization of the partisan sphere. Third, the state's measures to combat insurgents fostered a view of the regime as omnipotent and incontestable.

This is not to suggest a deterministic relationship between Algeria's contemporary situation and its decade of bloodshed. Some scholars thus lament that Algeria is often, and uniquely, reduced to a product of its violent past, with all political phenomena attributed to the 1990s, essentializing Algeria as somehow exceptional (McAllister, 2014; McDougall, 2017). However it is more broadly the case that a political community's sensemaking and outlooks (and as a result, their social and political preferences) are often shaped by historical events, with the framing of this history (especially for those who did not experience it) as, if not more, significant. As children, for instance, we learn in school about formational wars, treaties, enemies, and battles, which contributes to our personal and collective constructions of belonging and nationhood. Thus, the violent decade did not *create* modes of national myth-making, meaning-making around Islamism, and the social construction of the state. Rather, these pre-existing discourses were reconfigured in a way that had real and specific effects on the Algerian political imagination. That is, it was not the conflict itself that affected political openness but the imaginative and retrospective processes that followed. This is

observable, if differentially, in other contexts too, such as Turkey after the repression of Islamists in the 1990s, Egypt before and after the 2011 uprisings and the 2013 coup, and in Morocco after the 2011 protests. That Algeria too has a *political culture*—a product of both the *history* of a polity and its members' historical experiences—is precisely what makes it unexceptional.

Subjective experiences of notable or traumatic historical events have in many contexts been gathered and marshalled toward unifying morals and national truths. In the U.S. context for instance, Dobratz, Waldner, and Buzzell (2015), find that 'trauma' surrounding the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks became a currency to be instrumentalized in the national(ist) narrative(s) that followed. These in turn formed the point of reference for political preferences in the decades afterward, including demands for tightened immigration policies, acceptance of exhausting airline security measures (despite financial or opportunity costs), and acquiescence to invasive monitoring despite possible perils to their own civil liberties.[108] Regardless of a citizen's position in the prevailing socio-political field, or the extent to which they assent to or dissent from the American myth-making and identity-construction that grew out of the attacks, they nevertheless may find themselves articulating social/political positions that implicitly reference, or hinge upon it. In Algeria, as in Egypt, Turkey, and the U.S., histories, memories and ideas were marshalled toward political ends, projected onto political projects.

[108] An example of this in Algerian history is, as John Ruedy (2005) argues, in the wake of winning independence from France, when Algeria's citizenry was easily won over to the state's nationalist political and economic policies—such as centralized, technocratic control of state capitalism, the shift from agriculture to petroleum export and the nationalization of oil, and *autogestion* (national self-management), among others. Eventually, nationalist fervor waned in favor of more pragmatic concerns about economic prosperity and individual opportunity; this was exacerbated as the state's inability to deliver economic opportunity after the first generation of jobs were filled, therefore making this brand of nationalism far less appealing.

This chapter thus marks the beginning of the remainder of the thesis: it launches our discussion of the broad ways political sensemaking occurs. I focus on the role of history (and language) in producing and reinforcing notions of Islamism as dangerous, the party system as ineffectual, and the state as omnipotent. As I will argue later in the thesis, these cultures and discourses—what Martin (2002) would call *unidentified political objects* (OPNI)—do not just *act upon* the MSP and other actors, but are intersubjectively-formed. The MSP participates in their creation in an environment of which its members are inextricably a part.

3.1 "*Gaʿ al-islāmawiyyin kif kif* ('all Islamists are the same')": New distaste for Islamism

The previous chapter discussed how Algeria's newer partisan-Islamist wave came to connote hypocrisy or loss of piety. In the early 2000s, corruption scandals and other issues endemic to parties under Bouteflika have disproportionately damaged political Islam: invoking piety came to have the perverse effect of prompting onlookers to hold them to higher standards of morality and conduct. The inability of today's Islamist parties to satisfy this standard has harmed the new Islamist wave, as evidenced by the defections and splinters described in the previous chapter.

However, when the MSP first entered the political fray in the 1990s, the distrust for Islamism had a markedly different basis. At this earlier time, the distrust evolved from narratives of Islamist violence, and chiefly around the FIS, AIS, and other groups charged as responsible for the violence of the conflict period—and it was *this* milieu into which the MSP sought to first position itself. How did public sentiments on the role of Islam in political life shift over time?

Islamic Beginnings

The Islamic reform project developed in Algeria over the first half of the 20th century, and sought, against a backdrop of colonial dispossession, to define for Algerians an authentically Muslim-Algerian way of life. Despite contestations over this authenticity (McDougall, 2017, p.161-163), these reform efforts crystallized in the Algerian Association of Muslim Ulamaʾ (AUMA), formed in 1931 under scholar Abdelhamid Ben Badis and colleagues,[109] which cultivated a deep societal and institutional reach over the decades[110] (Courreye, 2014; Damis, 1974). Ben Badis openly rejected French assimilation, and the AUMA held that an authentic and distinct Algerian identity could be articulated only through the fundamentally *Muslim* character of the full 'indigenous' population vis-à-vis the colonizers (Merad, 1967).

As briefly alluded to in Chapter Two, French repression emboldened the more subversive tendencies within the AUMA whose activism empowered the rising Algerian nationalism;[111] and as the independence struggle began, its precepts appealed to the organizing nationalists (Merad, 1967). Dominant revolutionary voices held that French authorities had cemented their power by attacking Algerian social fabric and sowing ethnic, regional, and religious divisions. They thus adopted AUMA thought, casting Islamic identity as the rampart against these efforts, as overriding other social cleavages, and uniting all Algerians. John Ruedy's (1996) observation on this is, if

[109] Including Bachir Ibrahimi and colleagues Abdelatif Soltani and Ahmed Sahnoun.
[110] Ben Badis avoided contesting French rule in the beginning—indeed his chief issue was not colonial rule, but French jurisdiction over Muslim patrimony and institutions. The AUMA focused in the earlier period on developing scholarly circles, schools, youth and sports clubs, theater, with the goal of both cultivating the young, native Algerian generation, and culturally foregrounding Arabic language and Islam (Courreye, 2014; Damis, 1974). The AUMA enjoyed financial contributions from families content its 'cultural return,' and its Arabo-Islamic alternative to French education (Merad, 1967, p. 208). That this was against the backdrop of colonial dispossession lent a political dimension to the association's ethos (Courreye, 2014; Watanabe, 2012), though it maintained it was a chiefly cultural organization and avoided overt political rhetoric (which was prohibited).
[111] The AUMA's 1938 repression by French authorities led it to depart from its accommodationism, and to make overtly political demands (Courreye, 2014; Merad, 1967), such as equality of status between Muslims and the French, officialization of the Arabic language.

contested, nevertheless interesting: "the Islam affirmed was a cultural Islam, an essential element of national identity. For most it was not a way of life, not a way of restructuring society, and certainly not a political system" (p. 78). That is Islam, rather than for what it *involved*, was deployed for what it *connoted*. Thus as the FLN formed in 1954 and coopted smaller revolutionary movements of various religious/political stripes, it also absorbed the AUMA in 1956 appropriating Ben Badis' refrain: "Islam is my religion, Arabic is my language, and Algeria is my fatherland," and the breadth of its attendant symbolism. It cast Islam as transcending other identity-based cleavages among Algerians—cleavages which could have threatened the unity (and *unanimity*) (Colonna, 1996, 2003) required to legitimate the revolution itself—and as defining *algérianité* ('Algerianness') above all else. Bolstering the religious-existential framing of the liberation struggle, freedom fighters were called *mujāhidīn* (those who undertake jihad), and those who lost their lives called *shuhadāʾ* ('martyrs').

After independence, this discourse remained central to the nation-building process and to the state's legitimacy thereafter.[112] The constitution of 1963 enshrined Islam as the religion of the state; the Religious Affairs Ministry was created to regulate and standardize religious activity (after Colonel Houari Boumediene assumed the presidency in 1965) chiefly by bringing mosques and religious leaders into a state-supervised bureaucracy (Berkouk, 1998), (effectively asserting the state as the guardian of the 'besieged' national religion; see Platteau, 2017, p. 225); and the Algerian education system was Arabized (which had the ancillary effect—perhaps goal—of sidelining the rising leftist and Berberist opposition) (Roberts, 2003).[113]

[112] After the war was won and the nation-building period began, the FLN's army wing, the ALN became the *Armée Nationale Populaire* (People's National Army, ANP), and FLN/army-dominated regime cemented its monopoly on Islamic discourse and symbolism.

[113] Even today, this continued need to 'unanimize' the Algerian identity—and to present threats to state power as threats to this identity—explains the now-puzzling persistence of AUMA religious thought in

As discussed in Chapter Two, the rise of the Islamist opposition in the 1970s was chiefly against the state's ownership of religious symbolism and legitimacy and against Boumediene's socialist direction. Islamist counter-discourses peaked in the 1980s. Over the course of Chadli Bendjedid's presidency (1979-1992), state promotion of Islamic piety came to ring increasingly hollow for the broader public as well, especially as the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was asserting itself as the truer heirs of what they held were the miscarried Islamo-nationalist values of 1954. Independence-era redistributive policies continued to favor those linked to the FLN and the *shuhadā'* (Vince, 2015), leading to glaring inequities between those who had access to privileges and those who did not (Brand, 2014; Layachi, 2006). In addition to such economic considerations (among many others), state-appointed imams came to be distrusted, and channels for independent religious thought increasingly limited, thus the state's hold on religious legitimacy appeared to be approaching a limit. The generalized Islamist movement settled into various parties, one of which was the MSP, the strongest of which would be the FIS. The FIS' disruption of the religious status quo would soon be widely unwelcome.

Descent into Darkness

As discussed in Chapter Two, after the military canceled the FIS' electoral victories of 1990 and 1991, the state eventually moved to eliminate the FIS from Algeria's socio-political scene altogether. Hitherto closed French colonial-era prisons around the country, especially in the isolated south, were re-opened to house and torture thousands of FIS members and supporters, including elected officials. Many more were sentenced to death in the secret courts, re-opened despite having been banned under the 1989 constitution. All FIS charitable wings, associations and mosques were shut down.

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the state's nationalist discourses (Colonna, 2003). Fanny Colonna referred to this preoccupation with unanimity as an "obsession" (p. 162).

Indiscriminate manhunts, forced disappearances, and extrajudicial executions ensued almost daily. These events had the effect of unbridling some of the previously marginal radical tendencies within the FIS, as well as a relocation of other FIS activists into existing, though previously-negligible, radical organizations.[114] These groups were seen by many in Algeria as responsible for many of the civilian deaths over the course of the civil war.[115]

The city of Blida, my field-site, about 30 miles away of Algiers, seemed to exemplify the trauma of this period, constituting one of the corners in the 'Triangle of Death,' referring to the region south of Algiers which saw some of the worst of the period's massacres.[116] The FIS once enjoyed considerable popular support in Blida. To be sure, while a majority of northern towns voted for the FIS in the 1990 municipal elections, in Blida province (*wilāya*) the FIS won majorities in *all* 25 of the municipal councils (known as APCs*)*, leaving zero to the FLN. In the Blida province-level assembly (APW), the FIS won 36 out of 43 seats in these elections, leaving 7 to the FLN. In the province's capital city, Blida, in the municipality or '*baladīyya*' (APC) the FIS won 18 out of 23 seats, leaving 5 to the FLN.

The long aftermath of the election cancellations changed sentiments. This region experienced unspeakable horrors in a war that shook the country to its foundations. The trauma of Blida is perhaps partly what has led it to house the founding branch of the famed ONVT (the Organization for Victims of Terrorism), once known as *Djazairouna* ('our Algeria').[117] Stories in old newspapers describe Blidians finding the headless

[114] While some went on to violently target the government, military, later others, notably the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) targeted civilians, and these groups eventually combatted one another. The GIA eventually spawned the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), a neo-Salafist (Jihadi) group.
[115] However, there is also abundant evidence that the Algerian military regime at this time also carried out civilian attacks under the guise of the GIA and GSPC to garner support for the state's *eradicateur* ('eradicator') counter-terror approach.
[116] The other two corners are debated, between Algiers and Larbaa, or Medea and Chlef, sometimes Ain Defla.
[117] The organization's name is a transliteration of Algerian Arabic using French graphemes.

bodies of their neighbors strewn about, spending days in search of the head; victims often never knowing *qui tue qui* ('who killed who'), that is, whether perpetrators were Islamists or the state (Bennoune, 2013, p. 90). Of course, such accounts are often anecdotal and not without intentionality or litigiousness.[118] In this way, these discourses are a way for individual experiences to be collectivized, and for blame to be neatly located (indeed, standardized) during conflicts or trauma, a process I discuss in detail below.

Friends and interlocutors of my age had their own harrowing stories of childhood in the 1990s: hiding under furniture inside their homes; missing school; hiding radios, TVs, and satellite dishes; unveiled girls hiding in their cars trunks as their fathers drove through *faux barrages* ('false checkpoints').[119] My friend in Blida, Houria, remembered seeing her mother threatened at knife-point at their doorstep for not covering her hair. Her mother once told me, "if I didn't veil, the Islamists kill me, if I do, the others[120] could kill me."

In a poignant and oft-told Algerian joke particularly reflective of the *qui tue qui* riddle that confounded citizens and exacerbated widespread paranoia: a man drives through a *faux barrage* and is asked, "who do you support, the noble Islamists, or the state?" Misled by the wording, the man replies, "the Islamists." State operatives, the armed men cut one side of his mouth. He drives and comes to another checkpoint, the

[118] Especially in the case of Bennoune family: where Karima Bennoune, and her father anthropologist Mahfoud Bennoune are known for polemical anti-Islamist rhetoric.
[119] As Natalya Vince pointed out in an exchange, these stories are perhaps also a way to appropriate agency (like the joke in the text) and taking back control when in fact there is none, where attacks are entirely indiscriminate, veiled *and* unveiled women are murdered, listening to either religious audio or music are killed). These often describe strategies to protect oneself: while driving keep a Quʾranic cassette to switch if approaching a faux barrage; if a woman, carry a veil to put on (or take it off) in emergencies; if a student, camouflage school books in shopping bags; etc (Vince, personal communication, December 15, 2018). This notion of 'endurance' and 'perseverance' is referenced in several of McDougall's work (e.g. 2017) to refer to the capacity of people (Algerians, for our studies and purposes) to adapt, make sense of, survive, and also "retain a sense of humanity," within the systems in which they must exist and function (Vince, personal communication, December 15, 2018).
[120] She was perhaps referring to the unknown vigilantes, who were either private actors or state actors. She did not know.

armed men asked "who do you support, the Islamists or the state?" "The state," he responds. The Islamists at this checkpoint cut open the other side of this mouth. When he finally makes it to the hospital, the doctor asks, "which cut shall I stitch first?" to which the man responds, pointing to his lips, "the one in the middle."

Memory, Meta-history, and Pretending

Political sociologist John D. Brewer (2003) writes that events in the conflicts of Northern Ireland and South Africa that were internalized biographically were appropriated to represent the suffering of one particular group of people by another, contributing back to the larger institutional framing of this trauma. Victims too were made into mascots of suffering. Brewer finds that at the same time however that "history reflects agency" (p. 169); in a phenomenon analogous to the Algerian post-conflict environment, "people made history into a shibboleth" (p. 169) such that individual subjectivities in turn were imprinted upon the reconciliation process. In discussing the effects of political violence and memory on political preference, he writes:

> People both act in history and are acted *upon* by historical forces. History impacts on the personal biographical experiences of people through the way it helps to shape the social structure and polity, but it is also made *by* them as personal biographical experiences, social structural interests and political preferences come to define what history means to them. By becoming reproduced in a set of institutional arrangements and structures, historical forces clearly take on an objective quality to imprint themselves on individuals, although, as we have seen, this happens only through the mediating effect of the social structure. (p. 169)

As is common, the appropriation of personal and collective experiences of trauma in Algeria is evident even in vocabulary used to discuss the 1990s period. Much of the academic literature in English, French and Arabic, reference it as the 'civil war,' an implicit recognition of the multi-sidedness of the conflict.[121] While enshrined in the

[121] Usually *la guerre civile* in French, or *al- ḥarb al- ahliyya* in Arabic.

Civil Concord as a matter of compromise and peacekeeping (Chapter Two), Algerian officials—especially military—have always rejected this nomenclature (Mundy, 2015). While some accounts held that the regime itself initiated the 'war' to eradicate Islamism and its sympathizers and reconsolidate its power after this threat to the status quo,[122] leaders at the time insisted that the coup was what was *preventing* the possibility of civil war. And as the violence mounted, the regime adopted language like, 'terror' and 'tragedy' (Mundy, 2015).

The 2005 charter settled on a rather neutral *la tragédie nationale* ('national tragedy') which worked to effectively outsource the blame, and turn those party to it, and the events that constituted the 'darkness' themselves into abstractions. Used less commonly, and in usually more professional or formal settings, *al-ʿashariyya al-sawdāʾ* ('black decade') had a similar effect. While individuals used the latter term in more structured interviews, I noticed *waqt al-irhāb* or the 'time of terrorism' used in informal, off-the-cuff conversations and in groups. In fact, this was the term I observed circulating most widely, in nearly all of my most informal exchanges, as well as in my observations of others' conversations in taxis, small shops, or informal gatherings. Malika Rahal (2012) observes use of "*snin al-irhab* [sic]" ('years of terrorism') (p. 126). When I repeatedly heard people of diverging political leanings, age groups, socio-economic statuses, and levels of education, refer to this bewildering period unflinchingly as the *waqt al-irhāb*, I thought, they must surely be aware of the credible counter-narratives to the idea that Islamists/terrorists were the sole aggressors. My curiosity was met with repeated well-intentioned warnings to keep such questions to a

[122] See Chapter Two. According to testimony by Mohamed Samraoui, a former leader of the *Sécurité militaire* (SM, the army's secret service) "In May 1992, at a meeting in Chateauneuf in the presence of numerous officers [Colonel Smail Lamari] told us: 'I am ready and determined to eliminate three million Algerians if necessary to maintain the order that Islamists threaten'." (Samraoui, 2003, p. 162)

minimum, “don’t ask these questions”; “don’t look into this in your research” and “it’s over, [we] just forget about it.”

The persistence and ubiquity of this usage seemed to function to retrospectively structure this period “into a set of myths, symbols and iconography that reifie[d] the suffering and resistance of one group or the other” (Brewer, 2003, pp. 169-170). Indeed, in Algeria as in many other cases (e.g. the U.S. after 9/11, Sri Lanka after its civil war), *trauma* has effectively been made into prized currency, *victimhood* into a special moral position (Fassin & Rechtman, 2009) which, when aggregated, becomes a formidable instrument of power—even hegemonic power.

While an amnesty was granted to armed militants in order to initiate a reconciliation, the regime had actively fostered the view that Islamists were chiefly to blame, thus ultimately responsible for Algeria’s anguish. Indeed, politicians tended toward a more intentional use of *waqt al-irhāb*, including (and perhaps especially) those in MSP as a way to situate themselves; as McDougall (2017) notes, “recounting the war became indistinguishable from taking a position within it” (p. 292).

This is despite the fact that originally, the FIS had been formed in order to unify various Islamist trends and represent the broader Islamist position under one coherent bloc.[123] The FIS therefore, rather than being a single cohesive movement, was a formalized umbrella of diverging religious movements, platforms, and intellectual strains. The various violent insurgent groups that formed in the wake of the election cancellations, themselves had ethical and ideational differences—some hoped to limit casualties in what they considered self-defense against regime aggression, while others

[123] Instead of a group of fragmented Islamist parties that would prevent any one of them from winning a majority This aim was of course undermined by Mahfoud Nahnah (MSP), and Abdallah Djaballah’s (Nahda) refusal to fuse their movements with the FIS.

held that all Algerian citizens were infidels, and that the entirety of society needed to be upended (Hafez, 2000).

During peak carnage in the mid-1990s, high estimates put the total number of active insurgent fighters at about 25,000 which "seemed to indicate a massive failure to rally popular support to the cause of rebellion—most of all the support of the hundreds of thousands who voted for the FIS" (Mundy, 2015, p. 38). Nevertheless, that even *some* of the armed militants were themselves former FIS militants perplexed on-looking citizens, a confusion exacerbated by the army's infiltration tactics and false-flag operations (Mundy, 2015), evidenced for instance by the "apparently 'false beards' of the attackers" (McDougall, 2017, p. 312). The army targeted FIS militants and armed militias alike. These optics discursively erased differences among the Islamist opposition; the myriad FIS tendencies as well as the different violent splinter factions, were seen as one—all while the state denounced, in blanket terms, 'Islamist' extremism. "*Gaʿ al-islāmawiyyin kif kif, lī gāl lik lā maḥbūl* ('all Islamists are the same, whoever tells you otherwise is a fool')", a young Muslim Scout troop leader once told me. (The suffix *-āwī,* if added where it does not *normally* belong can sometimes connote derogation. Some words require it of course, like *ṣaḥrawi*, someone from *al-ṣaḥrā*, or *qubbawī*, a person from the Algiers' suburb Kouba (*qubba*). However, while calling someone *siyāsī*, is a relatively neutral way to refer to someone as a political or partisan, to call some *siyāsawī* is to trivialize or cast suspicion on the position, or to poke fun, among other things. Therefore, though Islamists are typically referred to in the Arabic as *islāmiyyin*, which itself has come to have a pejorative aura, *islāmawiyyin* is more expressly derogatory.)

Connotations and impressions surrounding Islamism thus effectively shifted from a potentially novel political alternative to, as the war wound down, a reactionary,

regressive and dangerous ideology that threatened religious totalitarianism. Accordingly, in the Algerian case, as in the country cases Brewer (2003) cites, "while historical factors are objective realities imposing themselves on people in the peace process, history is also used, manipulated, molded to the social structural interests, political concerns and biographical experiences of people" (p. 170).

The period's violence was cast chiefly as an insurgency driven by religious perversions (indeed as 'un-Algerian' religious 'importations,' more on which in Chapters Four and Five), rather than as a conflict between competing political interests. The FIS' once-welcome disruption of the state's monopoly on religion had been rendered less desirable. Due to these politics of naming, what citizens critiqued prior to the 1990s trauma, in its aftermath they condoned: a centrally controlled Ministry of Religious Affairs that monitored religious activity, religious discourse, the government-appointed Islamic scholars and preachers as civil servants, precluding Islamic activity outside this state-sanctioned framework, and the state ownership of its associated symbolism, all in the interests of national security. Indeed, it is rare (though not impossible) to meet someone these days who disagrees with the government control and provision of mosques, into which even some Salafis and Sufi networks—the latter once seen as threatening to state consolidation, state Islam, the societal fabric, and the regime's modernizing policies—have been coopted and absorbed. Far from coincidental, the apparent shift in public attitude has dovetailed with the state's own economic (oil)- and security-centered preference which allows it to prioritize, in perpetuity, shorter-term domestic stability over long-term democratization (Volpi, 2013).

Contemporary Algeria's "meta-history of history," (Brewer, 2003, p. 169) or the catalog of conflict and violence over time as perceived and interpreted by individuals

based on their "biographical experiences and their group position in the social structure" (p. 169) is a mythology itself mediated by the external social structure: the Algerian regime, state media, and importantly, peers who—whether they believe them or not—consume and circulate the same reinforcing notions. *This*, it is important to note here, has rendered past (or ongoing) support for the FIS, or worse, any admission of continued support for them, a social taboo. This has in turn thrown disproportionate (and misled) weight to the narrative that 'everyone hates the FIS' and accepts pervasive monitoring and tight state control of religious messaging.

On this topic, Martha Crenshaw's (1994) study on violence highlights the distinction between private and public preference: where the former is known only to the individual, the latter is revealed to others. She notes that "rational choice theory assumes the two coincide, but in reality the two often diverge. Individuals may conceal or falsify their private preferences because the expression of a public preference determines how the person will be treated by society" (p. 262). Individuals fear, if not physical punishment, then social sanction or isolation, even by others who are similarly "acting as if" (Wedeen, 1999, pp. 67-86).[124] Many—though not all—who accept the narrative of Islamist-only aggression make it known, while those who do not, may conceal/pretend.

However on this point, while *acting* in their theater, citizens should not be stripped of their voluntarism and meaning. Indeed, they relocate their defiance of the state narrative through political cartoons, jokes challenging state accounts of the conflict period, and other forms of humor (Perego, 2018). Stories like the man driving through

[124] In Lisa Wedeen's (1999) *Ambiguities of Domination*, she asserts that the cult of Syria's Assad regime was a disciplinary device, which led the public to dissemble, *act as if* they venerated their leader. By overwhelming public and private life with "instructive symbolism," (Wedeen, 2013, p. 849) the regime recruited the citizenry to participate in subtle reproductions of its power. The cult, to which she refers, enforces obedience, produces complicity, and isolates citizens from each another. The public follows the established parameters of speech and behavior, even if they do not believe it.

faux barrages allowed them to question the absurdities of their political world, as did expressions such as '*qui tue qui.*' (The latter perhaps first instantiated through the high-profile assassination of interim president Mohamed Boudiaf in 1992: where the regime claimed it was a Islamist bodyguard, most Algerians have continued to suspect it was the regime itself.)

Research, including my own, can sometimes reproduce this fabricated unanimity. For foreign observers, perceptions of Algerian political culture are often shaped by their social groups in country, which often (indeed not always) consist of the urban Francophone elite who frequently have an *eradicateur*-orientation[125]—or at least present themselves as such. The perception that disdain for the FIS is widespread and unanimous is thus circulated and confirmed among observers who find and report the same thing. Additionally, respondents are reticent to reveal support for the FIS or other forms of state-proscribed Islamism to peers, and particularly to researchers, fearing they will be exposed or reported. This fear is furthered by the perceived ubiquity of the feared Algerian intelligence agency, *Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité* (Department of Intelligence and Security, DRS—more on this in section 3.2). Collecting accounts of FIS support is thus something few researchers have been able to do with ease or exhaustiveness. This limitation is at play in the uncertainty around whether most Algerians consider the war *waqt al-irhāb*, or whether disdain for Islamism—even if widely expressed—is actually agreed-upon.

In other words, there is not a discoverable consensus around a collective post-conflict contempt for the FIS and more 'radical' Islamism, and positive support for the

[125] *Eradicateurs* ('eradicators') were the hardliners among the security, military and political apparatus who refused compromise with armed Islamist factions, refused negotiation with their leaders, and argued they should be dealt with only by forceful elimination. This is in contrast to the *conciliateurs* ('conciliators' sometimes called *dialoguistes*, 'dialogue-ers') who promoted national dialogue and reconciliation.

post-reconciliation state narrative. Instead supporters may pretend: they may falsify their revealed preferences in order to conform to the norms and expectations of the peer group and beyond—especially regarding a topic where nonconformity carries unusually great risk. If the supporter thinks no one else supports, the risks in revealing private preferences seem high. If *all* supporters think this, they remained locked in waiting for someone else to reveal their preference first, keeping levels of support unknown and unrevealed. As followers are effectively silenced by the uncertainty of their environment, contemporary studies have been unable to determine the extent of lingering support for the FIS tendency.[126] As Crenshaw (1993) notably finds, one of the few, if only, times in Algeria that "incentives for falsification of preferences dropped," was around the riots of 1988, when "it became increasingly clear that a *majority* of Algerians rejected the FLN" (p. 266).

Ultimately however, even if everyone does not actually fear Islamism, the belief that everyone else does, guides individuals' political preferences, discourses, political priorities, patterns and behaviors—which produces challenges for Islamist contenders.

The memory of the 1990s has perhaps deterred mass anti-state mobilization, and dissuaded movements (especially formalized political parties) from deploying antisystem frames.[127] However, this should not lead to a dismissiveness of Algerian resistance which overlooks how it has morphed in its causes, goals, and means. After all, people distrusted the state too during and after the conflict. The *dawla* continues to evoke dread and paranoia. But it is more socially palatable—and less individually

[126] Conversely, they reveal their private preferences only to a select group of people on whose position they have certain information, if at all.
[127] In fact, as historian Michael Willis noted in a conversation, the parts of Algeria which have seen this sort of mobilization since the end of the conflict, were those relatively untouched by the worst violence of the period, such as the Kabylia region, and the far south (Willis, personal communication, September 2017)

burdensome—for most to continue centering fear and blame on Islamist insurgents rather than the presumed all-powerful and pervasive state.

This subsection has demonstrated how the very notion of Islamism has become rife with connotations most political actors in Algeria today are loathe to be associated with—despite not being at all well-defined: with disagreements abounding over who can be labeled an Islamist, what set of doctrines constitute Islamism, and how to understand Islamist 'moderation' and behavior. Of course, the 'Islamist' label, is intentional in official discourse to discredit political opponents—for as Hugh Roberts (2003) contends, strands of the FLN itself are in fact Islamist, now and in the past (p. 133).[128]

This collective fear of 'Islamism' engendered after the conflict decade comprises the first—arguably the chief—ideational shift to influence the MSP's political opportunity. Discussion of the second major shift in public perception proceeds below.

3.2 "*Ḥana ḥaraka*" ('we are a movement'): The taboo of *taḥazzub*

As the post-conflict period settled into a relative permanency, political parties became seen as increasingly ineffectual and without prerogatives. As suggested in Chapter Two, at the national and local government levels, this perception dis-incentivized voting and other participation in the electoral process. They also engendered widespread disillusionment in the political system which projected upon the parties themselves for choosing to compete in such a system.

Of course, there is a universality to this phenomenon. Most people regardless of national background are likely familiar with late-modern narratives of politicians as

[128] Hugh Roberts (2003) encourages distinguishing the within the FLN's Islamic tendency, which dates to the 1950s, between the longer-standing "*ulamists*" subgrouping (such as Ahmed Talib Ibrahimi and other AUMA-loyalists) and the burgeoning, radical, neo-Salafist, and more pan-Arabist "*Barbe-FLN*" (bearded FLN) as nicknamed by domestic press and pop culture (p. 133).

self-interested, ineffective and corrupt. And in Algeria, there is a longer history of the *ḥizb* ('party') having negative connotations. The FLN is very explicitly a *jabha* ('front'), and critiques of the FLN lament the break between the pre-1962 *front* and post-1962 *party*.[129] Moreover the parties to emerge in the 1989 multiparty space almost never included the word *ḥizb* in their name, opting instead for rally (*tajammuʿ*), movement (*ḥaraka*), front (*jabha*), and so on. However, it was in the after the start of the multiparty period that it became increasingly evident to Algerians that multi-partyism, elections, and other nominally democratic institutions were largely legitimating devices for the regime. Popular skepticism about whether parties could effect progress in such a controlled atmosphere transformed into an active mistrust in the mid-2000s. Indeed, various party leaders' behavior seemed to indicate that party membership and elections were primarily a vehicle to win seats, and to benefit from the trappings of office. Of course, such perceptions were aggravated by the fact that the parties like the MSP had apparently internalized the broader dysfunctions of Algerian politics, such as regionalism, tribal and clan-based rivalries, personalistic intraparty fissures, and corruption scandals (examined in Chapter Two). *Taḥazzub* ('partisanship,' but often used as shorthand for the *process* by which a movement became a party, or the *state* of being a party) and *ḥizb* both gradually became shorthand for political opportunism, or relinquishment of organizational integrity.

Indeed these sentiments occur both within and outside the party's orbit. Ishaq, an activist with al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, felt that politicians were constrained by institutional/legal limitations:

> In European countries, there is democracy. An elected party is put in a position to provide for constituents. But here, the party wins the mayorship (*al-raʾīs al-baladī*) but it's not really him [mayor] controlling his APC. In Algeria, parties don't rule, a system (*niḍām*) that we don't understand does.

[129] Vince, personal communication, December 15, 2018.

Other times, he felt elected officials—MSP officials included—were too easily affected by power, networks, clientelist opportunities, and other perks of office, and the incentive structures that result. "Once a politician is in the position of power, and is able to help people and provide for them, he can't or won't," he added. While he supports the party, he maintains a distance from its political activity under the belief that politics cannot reform the country and the society, that it is not a means to reach the people, who are similarly disheartened.

Ishaq does not however believe modern democracy is something *ḥaram* ('forbidden'), instead he believes that Algeria's system needs reforming. For Ishaq, it is a structural problem, rather than a matter of ideology: "Its deception of democracy, its failure to provide for the people, its refusal to be accountable to us, is *haram*." In this rigged and imperfect system however, the best possible option for Ishaq is an Islamist in office; he votes for the MSP in elections because he believes the party is the only one that can represent the values of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah in the government and in policy. "A few made mistakes, but the system in place means that anyone in their place would do this."

Adnan, a local FLN retiree and boy scouts' leader, agreed that well-intentioned individuals are deeply constrained by the system—constraints which in turn lead the public to blame the parties themselves:

> The people [during the 1980s] wanted religion to save the country, save the people, save them from poverty, from misfortune. After, these figures personally profited from [office], the people think they no longer have real convictions or principles, that they are opportunists. FLN *and* MSP, all the parties I would say. There is still no culture of democracy.[130]

[130] Conversation, February 2016.

When asked why he joined the FLN if he felt this way, he responded, "I was young, and there were no other parties. But in my old age, I know that to benefit the citizens, I have to stay engaged in social work/activism (*aʿmāl ijtimāʿiyya*)." Like Ishaq, he holds that this problem is not only a function of shifting incentives, but also of limits on elected officials' prerogatives.

Elite management of the electoral process has led to the population's conscious and deliberate disengagement from the political process, and redirects mistrust toward parties as accomplices to this system. According to Algerian political scientist Rachid Tlemçani:

> The Algerian people fully know what is going on, all elections are fraudulent: the *Pouvoir* allocates quotas; there are feuds *within* parties to be on tops of lists with people even buying them from each other, They use "shkara" [bags of money]. So, the people hate politics, and they know parties don't work, MSP is a party, so, *voila*.[131]

In an example of this, Rachid (not the above interviewee) son of an older MSP member, and self-proclaimed 'secularist' was an active member of the movement of former prime minister and FLN defector Ali Benflis, until the latter's party Talaʾiʿa al-Huriyat (roughly, 'vanguard of freedoms') received authorization. He said, "the minute it became a party, I knew things would change, I knew they were heading toward taming their discourse, otherwise they would not get authorization." He felt this way knowing that the legal obstacles, in addition to the other more informal obstacles to acquiring authorization for a political party, are profuse. Often, authorizations are a quid pro quo, given in exchange for a form of understanding that the new party will play the game on the regime's terms. A party's willingness to abide is expressed to the public through rhetorical commitments to democracy and the rule of law. It is expressed to the arbitrating regime through agreements that it will not significantly challenge—in action,

[131] Conversation, March 2, 2016

in mobilizational support, or in rhetoric—foundational components of the state's legitimacy: the War of Independence and the 1990s civil war, non-culpability of the Algerian security services in the carnage of the conflict, the Islamic credentials of the Algerian state, etc.

The public's general awareness of such an exchange between party and regime works to further erode the parties' credibility. Indeed, *being* a party did not carry nearly as much stigma as the *process* of *taḥazzub* ('partification'). Once, while discussing a movement seeking to get authorization as a party, my friend Slimane asked me, "aaah, *taḥazzbū*?" as if to say, "ah, so they gave in / sold out?"

Taḥazzub and the Case of the Unemployed Movement

The precarious shift from an organization/movement to party was thus a prospect which some fledgling organizations and their militants viewed with an existential anguish. This was perhaps exemplified in a March 2016 meeting of province-level representatives of the *Coordination Nationale de Défense des Droits des Chômeurs* (National Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Unemployed; CNDDC), held at the RAJ[132] headquarters in Algiers. It was founded in the southern city of Ouargla by unemployed activists opposing regional economic inequality.[133]

The CNDDC's pointed, specific criticisms, its mobilizational capacity, high profile, and popularity—in especially in a traditionally pro-FLN region that the government considers increasingly volatile, restive, and difficult to control and monitor—makes the group an assured target for the state's proven subversion efforts.[134]

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[132] The *Rassemblement Action Jeunesse*, a youth group widely understood to be close to the historic Berberist FFS party.

[133] Namely the asymmetric employment of northerners in the southern extraction sites; however, its cause expanded to encompass the rights of all *chômeurs* ('unemployed') (if focusing mainly on the southern disenfranchised populations), to resisting fracking in Ain Salah which morphed into a countrywide environmentalist cause, and to call attention to adverse effects of climate change on the southern livelihoods.

[134] Moreover, as it is perennially important for the regime's legitimation to be seen as exclusively equipped to address issues most important to the population, it hopes to maintain a monopoly on youth

Hugh Roberts (2015) notes that the CNDDC has been "by far the most significant critic of the government's policy of dealing with youth employment and the regime has displayed a relentlessly repressive attitude toward it" (p. 178). Indeed, the CNDDC enjoys a great deal of credibility and popular support in their regions of operation, despite regime efforts to infiltrate and fragment it.[135]

The CNDDC meeting I observed was planned for representatives to discuss the strategic vision for upcoming years; however, it quickly evolved into an impassioned debate about whether the organization ought to submit a request for legal authorization.[136] Some of the representatives wished to submit the organization's papers for authorization having tired of its repression, the limits on its assembly and harassment of its members in various southern localities in which it operates. Facing difficulties in getting authorization to use certain meeting spaces[137] to hang announcements, and having difficulties liaising with the more formal political actors of the South, these representatives made the case that if they could at least become a legal group, they could proceed with their work in safety, free of some of these constraints.

Several representatives vehemently opposed seeking legality, and refused to submit their file to the authorities, arguing it was a slippery slope to *taḥazzub*:

> "*L-yūm ndafaʾū al-dossier, ghadwa ntaḥazzbū!"* ('today we submit our papers, tomorrow we 'partify' [become a party]!'), they railed. "And to get their approval, they will want something in return, we lose everything."

empowerment and employment initiatves—such as entrepreneurship programs, and by granting quick and easy loans through the *Agence nationale de soutien à l'emploi des jeunes* (National Youth Employment Support Agency or ANSEJ; a flawed Algerian state loan scheme, designed to help youth set up businesses). The CNDDC has criticized these as ineffectual, "the regime is throwing money around but this serves no good purpose […] we don't want to become bosses, we want work!" (CNDDC leader in Roberts, 2015, p. 157).

[135] Although while in Algeria I heard many accounts, which I could not fully corroborate, that some individuals have reportedly been bought off, and entreated to form competing groups.

[136] Observation, March 21, 2016.

[137] Such as the local, publicly administered *duyūr muwaṭinīn* ('citizen halls') and *duyūr shabāb* ('youth centers').

> "Our whole existence is to resist the corruption of the bureaucracy, if we submit our papers to become an official legal group, we legitimize the bureaucracy, we become part of the corruption!" another yelled.
>
> "It would just be a formality," a representative from the pro-legality camp chimed, "we need not lose our mission or principles. I have a family whose safety I must consider. The police came to my house, scared my daughter."
>
> "We all have our personal concerns, which we always weigh and sacrifice," an anti-legality representative responded. "We make a choice to be in the movement. We cannot sell our mission in exchange for personal comforts. Maybe my son is scared today, but if we stand strong against authorization and '*taḥazzub*,' perhaps tomorrow he will have a future."[138]

The group here was faced with two options. Remaining unauthorized would expose it to further repression, difficulties in mobilizing resources, and exposure to personal insecurity; but it would allow it to retain credibility, popular momentum, nuisance power, and intra-group cohesion.[139] Becoming authorized would give it some latitude in its activities and mitigate risks to members' safety; however, it would bring greater risk of appropriation, or creation of a regime-led clone movement, either of which could diffuse and banalize the movement. Much like the party sphere, the movement is confronted with the 'coopt or perish' binary and the dilemma inherent in the threat of *taḥazzub*.

Taboo of Religion and Politics

An added complication for the above two tropes (anti-Islamism and *taḥazzub*) is that Islamists are perhaps both, as *religious* actors disproportionately punished for the trappings of *taḥazzub*, and simultaneously as *political* actors disproportionately punished for invoking religion.

[138] Observation, March 21, 2016.
[139] An external observer who had helped give the group access to the hall, and observed the meeting alongside me, later shared that there were suspicions among the anti-legality camp that someone among the pro-legality members was implanted to collect intelligence for the regime and to encourage a more pliant position. Again, the imperceptible specter of the state had served to ostensibly fragment members without lifting a finger, paranoia and doubt sown since the war, working on its behalf.

This is to say, pious actors have come to find the partisan (*ḥizbī/siyāsī*) nature of Islamist parties to be untoward, as evidence of an underlying lack of piety. In turn, more secular and/or *eradicateur* actors routinely accuse Islamists of wishing to 'bring the mosque to the parliament,' as the saying goes, to Islamize not only Algeria's society, but also its institutions.

The disdain for Islamism is thus based more in this disdain of *overlap* between religion and politics than for actual religiosity, even if a given brand of religiosity contravenes secularist frames. A manifestation of this latter phenomenon is the rising popularity of *daʿwa* Salafism[140] (often referred to broadly as *salafiyya ʿilmiyya,* and in English sometimes as *quietist* Salafism), whose contemporary proponents preach that piety and partisanship (which they articulate as a 'modern,' 'western' political institution) are necessarily at odds. In what is a transregional phenomenon, it is an often loosely-organized religious tendency that benefits from an implicit arrangement with the regime premised on their disavowal of partisan aspiration. (Indeed, this is despite the regime's preference for the 'moderation' of the parties versus the Salafists in their religious interpretation and worldviews, which they worry may pose risks in religious / ideological radicalization, and the state's ability in the longer term to retain control over the engineering of the religious field.)[141] This rejection of *siyāsa* is not as strategic/negotiated as it is for the MSP and its members (more in Chapter Six), but

[140] Of course, Salafism is not a neat category, and modern *daʿwa* Salafists in Algeria (among whose popular figures include Abdelmalek Ramdani, Ali Ferkous, Azz-Eddine Ramdani and Al Eid Cherifi all of whom either live or received training in Saudi Arabia) are not necessarily the direct progeny of those among the *salafiyya* of the first half of the twentieth century who promoted al-Islah (religious reform) (e.g. Ben Badis et al.), though there are similarities in some points of reference and intellectual influence (e.g. Wahhabism). See Merad (1967); McDougall (2006, p. 112).

[141] A concern which the government is indeed seeking to counter, in turn, through promotion of 'Algerian Islam' and religious indigeneity through reinvigoration of the Sufi *zāwiya*s and Sufism at large as a moderating balance (among other reasons), versus the 'imported' schools of Salafism and Ikhwanism. (More on this notion of 'importation in Chapter Five.)

grounded more in an actual religious imperative that deems modern political systems and processes to be *bidaʿ* (heretical innovation).

Interestingly, this broader phenomenon of a dual-taboo as instantiated in the rise of *daʿwa* Salafism has given the MSP information about the social preferences of Algerian society: that Islamic movements with partisan aspirations or which seek to effect religious policy, are considered more threatening than those who may harbor zealotry and promote literalism, but 'keep to themselves.' This demonstrates that it is not Islamic activism writ large to which the population has become averse, but the impression that religious actors who seek expressly *political* ascendance and/or run on religious platforms, seek to institute Islamic law per their own decided interpretation. And precisely because the Salafist movement has expressly rejected politics and partisanship, it is mostly unaffected by the constraints facing the MSP in its framing, self-presentation, and discourses. (Chapter Six will explore how MSP members make sense of the Salafist phenomenon.)

***

The MSP's own *taḥazzub* —the trappings of its '*partification*'—is a foregone conclusion. As we saw in Chapter Two, the parameters of its political participation remained unrevised by Nahnah's death in 2003. This led its hazily-delineated boundaries of moderation and opposition to blur into aggressive absorption into the state apparatus. An explosion of *Nahnahist* micro-parties resulted. Despite concomitant claims to their own exclusive authenticity, they remained mostly indistinguishable in ideology and political platform; this muddied the Islamist arena and confused followers, fragmented the Islamist electorate, and crowded out the Islamist party 'marketplace'. Moreover, its high-profile corruption scandals cemented MSP's place in the generalized view of parties as opportunistic. The MSP's own trajectory contributed to the wider

discrediting of the partisan sphere, the taboo of *taḥazzub*.

However, as I will discuss in subsequent chapters, the MSP does not always resist these narratives and discourses outright. Instead, members share the public 'consensus' on them, and join in their negotiation. They also replicate the language used to discuss and construct them in order to favorably situate themselves, even reinforcing and strengthening them.

For instance, since the party's founding, Nahnah presented its 'partification' as necessary for the country, enshrined in his adage oft-sung within the movement today, "*maṣlaḥat al-waṭan qabl maṣlaḥat al-ḥizb* ('the interests of the nation above the interests of the party')". MSP party leaders and members alike continue today to trumpet the rationale that the party chose political participation in order to prevent state collapse—indeed "at great risk to the movement."[142] They read Nahnah's partisan maneuvering in an altruistic light: the MSP's involvement in establishment politics was meant to drown out violent Islamism, win over the latter's base to peace, and prioritize, above all else, national stability. This concept of stability is wrapped up in its self-presentations and deployment of concepts such as moderation and nationalism/Algerianness (Chapters Four and Five). Hedging against attempts to cast parties and partisanship as inherently self-interested, the party's discourses cast its partification as itself an act of selflessness, as toward a larger—national and altruistic—interest.

Discussion of a third shift in public perception, toward the belief that state power is invincible and predetermines all political outcomes, continues below.

3.3 "You're just a man": State Omnipotence

[142] This sentiment was stated repeatedly in interviews and conversations.

The DRS, I was told, hears everything you say, even everything you don't say; it knows when you sleep, it knows your family, if you smoke, if you go the mosque, how often you pray, and the last time you brushed your teeth.[143] The woman sitting across from me, smoking in the corner of 'Le Lapin' bar, was an agent, my friends said, as they began to whisper. One suggested that "I pretend to be Algerian," after all, I spoke *al-dāridja* and my appearance 'passed'. "No, no don't pretend," another chimed, "they know." A new shopkeeper had emerged opposite my flat, selling peanuts, pre-packaged spices and men's deodorant—he was an agent, a friend told me. Every morning, it was not the call to prayer that woke me (there was a mosque immediately behind my building), but a homeless man who shouted profanities from the doorstep of my apartment building in Alger Centre. "I wonder why he only started yelling here after *you* arrived?" My journalist friend intimated. In a more personal and unsettling instance, as we sat on the balcony of a close friend's house, my friend Amel pointed to another friend of ours, (mixing English and French) "he's been acting strange lately. A couple of us think he's become an agent." I was skeptical, "what makes you say that?" Blowing her smoke into the sky she responded, "you can tell. It's a feeling."

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If the uniformization of Algerian identity during the liberation struggle was to support its religious-existential character, this ideology was only reinforced in its aftermath. In what author/playwright Slimane Benaïssa calls a "confiscated ancestry," (1997, p. 220) the FLN by some narratives, took a public good, Algerian identity, and kept it for itself. The administration that followed was cast as one with divine purpose, a performance in which citizens (mostly willingly) partook for the 'sake of country,' in the name of unity against their shared external enemy. Anthropologist Fanny Colonna

[143] Everything on this list has been alleged by a different friend or contact within Algeria over the course of my fieldwork.

(1996) labeled this the "*chantage à l'unanimité*" ('blackmail of unanimity') (p.7). Indeed, the FLN "even as it *lost its revolutionary aura* [emphasis added]", as a front-cum-single party it "remained synonymous with 'rule of the single party; arbitrary, authoritarian' (Stora, 1994, p. 153 as cited in Goodman, 2013a, p. 782).

'Consensus' around the state as the deliverer of liberty, composed under strong and sovereign Algerian *al-radjla* ('manliness'),[144] indeed "avengers of the past, victors of the present, and builders of the future" (Benaïssa, 1997, as cited in Khalil, 2014, p. 85), was reinvigorated after independence to erase differences along lines of language, religion, ethnicity—as brothers under the regime. This notion was according to Colonna (1996) "readily internalized by subjects themselves" (p. 7, as cited in Goodman 2013b). (Indeed, it was the very concept leveraged for the 1996 party law against identitarian language.) With time, according to Benaïssa (1997), "it was no longer possible to contest the leaders since history had chosen and legitimated them: to put into doubt the political class was to dispute Algerian-ness itself" (Benaïssa 1997, as cited in Khalil, 2014, p. 85).

Le Pouvoir is usually understood as the DRS, military and the FLN together—of course, in popular usage, who within the trifecta, 'really' controlled things, often goes unspecified. Additionally, *state* and *regime* were seldom 'technically' distinguished. The amorphous mass that dominated life was instead, referenced singularly, as *al-dawla*, or the state. *Al-dawla*'s combined 'omnipresence' and invisibility/indiscernibility, led a to distrust, suspicion, and paranoia among citizens, as well as a resignation—that any and all political occurrences were, if not actively orchestrated by it, then at least carried out with its support.

[144] In Algerian Arabic; *al-rujūla* in standard Arabic. Connotes conviction, assuredness, courage, integrity, principle, resoluteness.

"You think it's bad now? In the 90s, people were afraid of their own brothers, spying for the DRS," Abdou, 44, an ex-MSP member told me, "it was so traumatizing, you never said your views aloud, not even to your own brother." Abdou's comments (if perhaps hyperbolic and certainly not without a strong dose of hindsight) recall the period's breakdown of social ties and trust. Giordano and Kostova (2002) refer to this as the *social production of mistrust*, which is "a system of representations and rational strategies that actors follow" when the state fails to "guarantee a 'pacified space', in which they can trust each other through the 'rule of law'" and is "based on specific practices that necessarily stem from past negative experiences, which are reactivated in the present through the group's collective memory" (p. 75).

Colonna has rightly argued that the *unanimisme*—the illusion of consensus—had slowly broken down by the 1988 mass protests, shattering thereafter. The regime no longer held a monopoly on the symbols and ideas on which Algerianness was premised, and they became open to new claimants (as is further explored in Chapter Five). In Khalil's (2014) study of Algerian fiction writing, she finds:

> Literary texts about the October 1988 protests reveal a clear objection to the way in which political power had constructed historiography through its relationship to ancestors and martyrs. This contestation of FLN historiography and the making of the hegemonic 'present' can be read in the lines of Algerian literature. (p. 85)

But other aspects of the *chantage* ('blackmail') were retained, indeed rebuilt and restored, under new aegis. The conflict ended up reinforcing a *unanimisme* of another sort: Algerian citizens as self-identifying subjects of an omnipotent, if highly imperfect and obviously divided, *al-dawla*. In this narrative, this regime is the arbiter of stability, safety, and reconciliation—and backed by an undefeatable, almighty army, and as well as an omnipresent and omniscient intelligence apparatus. "*They* know," as my friend

(above) told me.[145] That is, even while its legitimacy was irretrievably lost, the "magic of the state" (Taussig, 1997)—its authoritarianism, murkiness, and spookiness (Strauss & Taussig, 2005)—was sustained.

"Feelings," like those of Amel and the others in the opening vignette, provide a "glimpse into both the production and nature of the magic of the state as paranoiac mystique; the invisibility of security forces and strategic confusion," as Michael Taussig (1997, p. 122) notes in his ethnographic surrealist fiction, *Magic of the State*. Here it becomes "impossible to draw a line and say when these properties are magical and when they are not" (p. 122). Moreover, as briefly introduced in Chapter One, the *ways* in which the *state system* operates and unfolds, can work to confirm the *state idea* (Abrams, 1988). For instance, very little has been known about former chief of the DRS, Mohamed 'Toufiq' Mediène, and only two photos of him were known to exist; indeed, he came to be called *rabb al-jazaʾir*, the Lord of Algeria. The cog and machine of the DRS was also occluded. What constituted an 'agent' was not uniform or clear; whether a full employee, a one-time or sporadically-compensated informant, or simply someone who was personally close to various members or employees of the DRS. And the number of people in DRS employ has been kept intentionally obscured. This is perhaps the crux of what Abrams (1998) called the *state idea*: the regime is rendered imperceptible and of course never personified, allowing it to remain a unifying, transcendent, and abstract presence. It is this very enigma and unknowability that leads subjects to experience it *as real* (Abrams, 1988).

Additionally, the sophistication with which the DRS controlled and manipulated information, as well as its refined and intricate infiltration and false flag operations,

[145] Jane Goodman (2013a) notes use of *ils* ('they') is an abstraction implicitly referencing *Le Pouvoir*, as "an occult force…which ordinary citizens view as inaccessible to them, is thought to swoop in from on high" (p. 780).

cemented its political clout and displayed its capabilities during and after the civil war, even beyond its significant influence and presence under presidents Boumediene and Bendjedid (Mundy, 2015). A leader in the *eradicateur* camp during the conflict period, Toufiq became famous, and feared, because of his wily methods. Soon, the DRS was believed to be the ultimate linchpin and manifestation of state power. This is to say, that beyond "'*mere'* folklore" alone (Taussig, 1997, p. 122), myth-making processes were furthered by events and optics.

In more recent years, the perception of state omnipotence has been reified by the regime's intercessions into the associative sphere. In multiple cases, organizations (or at least factions within them) have suddenly experienced an ease in repression after entering into an agreement with the regime, as was expressed by interlocutors in the previous subsection. In other cases, the state regularly produces 'clones' of independent civil society organizations (often with very similar names) to confuse consumers of information and seekers of services. These actions allow the state to retake control of narratives on human rights, women's rights, Berber issues, victims of violence, and to crowd out, confuse, and delegitimize the associational sphere. If not, the DRS will often plant 'moles' in movements either to keep tabs or subvert them altogether.

Local politics, too, are often read through a narrative of state omnipotence. That local authorities were seen as executing the program of *al-dawla*—something often vocally relayed to constituents[146]—contributed not only to a lack of faith in parties and

[146] The extent to which the politics of a particular province or municipality are read as evidence of, or an exception to, the narrative of state omnipotence is of course a question for ethnographic observation. Bouarfa's mayor, Abdennour Khelifi, an MSP member, for example, insisted that he had significant leverage because of his good relationship with regional authorities (the *wālī*) (A. Khelifi, conversation, April 20, 2016). His statements were met with incredulity by many others in the town. By contrast, in Relizane, a locality in west Algeria, MSP and other non-establishmentarian parties were far likelier to face bureaucratic blocks to its APC-conceived initiatives than FLN mayors or FLN-majority APCs. (In fact, Lahmer (March 28, 2016) reported that where the FLN was more likely to see their projects to fruition in these beladiyas, many of Relizane's MSP APC members and former mayors left the party in favor of the FLN, where they could better push policy and other agenda.) Such blockages and MSP's electoral decline cyclically reinforced one another in this locality. Where the mayor and APC were held

government institutions, but also in turn, to the notion of the omnipotent state. That these representatives located authority outside themselves, and in the more distant and un-seeable spaces of the central government, generally fed people's sense that an unspecified set of interests decided their fate (Goodman, 2013a, p. 786).

Before resolving to investigate state omnipotence as a discursive object in itself, this dynamic was a thorn in my side during fieldwork. Party divisions, splinter parties, defections, and other political phenomena at large were blamed wholesale on *al-dawla*-interference, omitting the possibility of ideological, strategic, opportunistic, or personal cleavages that may have formed for other reasons. MSP members and interlocutors I spoke with were suspected to be 'state agents,' on a few occasions even by other members or bystanders.[147] This made it difficult to discern when someone was telling me something 'real,' speaking as someone with interests in the party, or other interests. This pervasive lack of certainty around their suspicions made it impossible to know whether *Le Pouvoir* was in fact stage-managing some phenomenon, or whether public lore was hyperbolizing its seemingly infinite capabilities.

This is perhaps the point. *Al-dawla* exists only insofar as people believe it. Philip Abrams, in discussing how polities construct their state, asserts to this effect, that the while the state *system* is a "palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure," the state *idea* is an "implicit construct [...] reified" however "divorced from practice as an illusory account of practice" (1988, p. 58). This disconnect is instantiated in the continued discursive conflation of the *Le Pouvoir* trifecta into the more singular *al-*

accountable by the public, in building and distributing housing, creating employment, recruiting investment, resolving issues of hygiene, water and sanitation, restoring roads and walkways, the MSP's difficulties damaged their electoral support. "The ra'is beladiya as well as the HMS-majority APC suffered when the public attributed the delays to the *cachet Islami*," said Djelloul Lahmer, the Relizane correspondent for Arabic daily *el-Khabar* (D. Lahmer, interview, March 28, 2016).

[147] Indeed, as discussed in the introductory chapter, so common were claims that the MSP was a "DRS-creation," that even I wondered whether the party warranted any exploration at all.

dawla, despite the now-widespread (and confirmed) impressions that they are in fact fragmented and dis-unified, with competing interests. It is well-known that President Bouteflika, in office for nearly two decades, has sought to curtail the power of the military over the executive and other civilian institutions.[148] Indeed, the president's clan in the mid-2010s even wriggled the army from the DRS with some success. These camps in the *Le Pouvoir* have multiplied further as Bouteflika has aged and ailed, with several interests within the DRS/military jostling for power. Indeed, this "actual disunity of political power," Abrams (1988) argues is what "above all, the *idea of the state* conceals. The state is the unified symbol of an actual disunity. This is not just a disunity between the political and the economic but equally a profound disunity *within* the political" (p. 79). Indeed, the regime upholds the façade of unity out of a concern that impressions to the contrary could threaten its continuity and stability. In a leaked 2009 cable, Said Sadi (RCD) said 'Toufiq' himself expressed that any political transitions or alternatives should "be viable" and not *too* radically upset the status quo.[149] These disparate factions have a shared interest in appearing united.

Citizens, too, for years upheld this false unity—even after the ideational challenges posed since the 1980s and the 1990s conflict—for 'who knows' what would happen should the state ever be revealed for what it really is. For as Goodman (2013a) puts it, to sustain this illusion is perhaps better "than to face the possibility that perhaps there is barely a state there at all" (p. 790). The near-comfort many took in 'no one

[148] Although the stated interest is in cultivating a 'civil state,' by Bouteflika's replacement of "generals and regional commanders with loyalists" (Embassy Algiers, 2009) from his native region of Tlemçen/Nadroma in the west—effectively weakening the army's traditionally-eastern power base, with a once-particularly outsized presence of members of the eastern Chaoui Berber tribe—as well as the priority he gives to "loyalty over competence in his tug of war with the DRS" (Embassy Algiers, 2009), appear more to weaken the likelihood of a coup, or any other threats to his power, as these moves have enfeebled even the military's intended/stated functions.

[149] Sadi shared that senior officers were amenable to gradually withdrawing the military from political affairs with sufficient assurances that there would not be any popular retribution for military abuses during the conflict decade. (Embassy Algiers, 2009)

really knows' is perhaps what made the generalized buy-in to the conflict narrative of Islamist aggression all the more complex. Though most people knew that there was something "behind" (Abrams, 1988, p. 58) what was being presented to them, the narratives cults that developed with the state's backing seemed to indicate society was making a choice: to agree in locating blame on Islamists, or more abstractly, 'terrorists,' in order to move on from the conflict. Giving up the search for *qui tue qui* perhaps offered a respite, a surrender to the godlike will of *al-dawla*.[150] This determinism-as-surrender may be a way for citizens to retreat from their stakes in political outcomes. The ability to dismiss, out of hand, any 'realness' or meaning in their political world, is a way to re-assert a political agency. Indeed, to identify as 'apolitical,' which many Algerians angrily, cynically, resignedly, or indifferently did, was itself a political self-identification.

This determinism is also a political weapon. That *al-dawla*, to quote Goodman (2013a), is "behind everything of consequence that transpires in the country" whether "renewal or destruction" (p. 780) is often used to discredit movements or ideologies. Much like the *ayād khārijiyya* ('foreign hands')[151] accusations of collusion or infiltration are freely flung by either rival movements, competing factions within a movement/tendency (to gain ascendancy as the truer faction), or by camps within the press who oppose a group's orientation or ideology. Naturally, this engendered a paranoia: either of being at the receiving end of a potentially discrediting accusation, or,

[150] This is not to deny that the question remains painful to many, and is still on the tongues of the families of the disappeared, who still activate, either independently or under the banner of NGOs (like SOS Disparus, Djazairouna (ONVT), or the Algerian League of Human Rights (LADDH)), continuing to demand answers. These issue-specific organizations and movements have not however bled into the national culture. Despite a widespread sense that the 'truth' may yet be is out there, most have abandoned any hope of finding, especially as the period drifts further away into the past.

[151] This often, though not always, refers to western meddling. For instance, Berber movements are often accused of collusion with Israel, and Islamist movements including the MSP are often cast as 'imports' from the Arab East; more, countless movements are accused of working with the American CIA, or accused of being *ḥizb fransā* ('party of France')

of moles/agents entering one's movement. As Abdou the ex-MSP member complained, "But the state benefited from this [paranoia] in a way. Now, no political movement stays unified because everyone is looking at the others [in the organization] with suspicion," he added.[152]

Like Abdou, most politically-involved people resented state-meddling; however this was sometimes belied in instances when they in turn relied on its very arbitration, where the state had "configured itself as a kind of 'providential state'" (Goodman, 2013a, p. 783). Abdou continued, "But they [parties] want the same *dawla* to help them when a [political] threat arises to them. They themselves… they… feed the cycle (*ḥalqa mufragha*)." By some accounts, convinced that political and social outcomes are ultimately *dawla*-determined, the public in turn has come to lean on the apparatus to intervene. For instance in 2013, feminist activist Fatma Boufenik, a member of the women's rights group FARD,[153] called on the state to intervene in a veiling-promotion campaign headed by friends of the MSP, ongoing in the Blida province—she argued the state was the guarantor of respects for freedom, and that organizations like hers could not do so alone. Effectively, FARD wanted the authorities to intervene and adjudicate on discourses with which they disagreed and ideologies they deemed harmful.

Operating as a sort of patron, "the 'providential' state engendered in its citizens a staunch belief that 'the administration must and can find the solution to all problems'" (Goodman, 2013a, p. 783, citing Leca & Vatin 1975, p. 316).[154] This 'state as guarantor' thinking contradicted their distrust of the state: these same independent organizations—feminist and Islamist alike—often complain that their discourses are too

[152] Conversation, September 2015.
[153] *Femmes Algériennes Revendiquant leurs Droits* ('Algerian women reclaiming their rights')
[154] This, as Natalya Vince noted in a conversation is an interesting point, as this notion, key to many socialist post-colonial states, where independence is the culminative peak, the "solution to all problems" (Vince, personal communication, December 15, 2018).

refereed, if not appropriated and replicated outright by the Algerian authorities. Despite both groups wishing to retain their organizational and ideological independence from state interests, they simultaneously opt to *wield* the state against opponents. As Goodman argues, the state was a guarantor, but its arbiters stood in the way of citizens' entitlements (p. 783).

Actors whose political *raison d'être* was ostensibly to 'change the system' thus reproduced the logic of an all-arbitrating 'unchangeable system.' Mourad Dhina is a former FIS spokesperson and member of FIS' executive bureau. Exiled in Geneva, he is also a ranking member of the *Rachad* movement, whose stated aim is to more fundamentally break with the Algerian political system in place since independence, and calls on the Algerian citizenry to peacefully overthrow the government, which it holds is a military junta and the primary culprit of the 1990s' violence.[155] Dhina recalled that in his early years engaging with Nahnah,[156] he was skeptical of the latter's optimism, "you really think you can work from within the system and pose a challenge? Especially after the conflict? You're *just a man*".[157]

Dhina, per my interpretation, upholds this symbolic universe even though he disagrees with its logic.[158] Despite his calls to radically and systemically challenge the Algerian political machine, he activates in his own narrative milieu where the regime is incontestable, and himself reproduces the "man behind the curtain, that invisible but

[155] Based in Geneva, and founded in 2007, the Rachad movement is suspect among some Algerians since some its founding members are former FIS leaders, members, or supporters in exile.
[156] In spite of the DRS-determinists' theory, including many former FIS members themselves that Nahnah's movement had been formed in fact by the hand of the DRS, Dhina emphasized that Nahnah's hopes appeared truly genuine.
[157] M. Dhina, interview, January 11, 2017.
[158] The pioneers of the sociological notion of the *symbolic universe* Berger and Luckmann (1996) would explain this as *universe maintenance*, where the symbolic universe upholds the prevailing order and provides justifications for individuals' behavior and self-identification as members of this universe: "Specific procedures of universe-maintenance become necessary when the symbolic universe has become a *problem*. As long as this is not the case, the symbolic universe is self-maintaining, that is self-legitimating by the sheer facticity of its objective existence in the society in question" (p. 123).

palpable force that issues the orders and pulls the strings from on high" (Goodman, 2013a, p. 791). He too described the regime in godlike terms: "they are everywhere, and they are in everything, and you can't know how they are working, or what they are doing, until its done."[159] The Algerian state, in its discursive methods of eliminating any residual support for the FIS, and notionally eradicating the possibility of real contests to state power, "liquidate[s] conceptually everything outside the same universe," denying the legitimacy of reality constructions originating from outside it (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 132).

Therefore, the *chantage* to which Colonna referred did not entirely end with the discontent of the late 1980s. A new *unanimisme* instead has taken shape under the public's perceived ubiquity of *al-dawla*, and the latter's monopoly on the conflict narrative. The *Badissian* aphorisms, religious rhetoric, pledges of national allegiance, cult of leadership, mythology, and other tools to engender notions of state *radjla*, have not become irrelevant, but revised with updated historical memory and modern symbols. Despite defying the state's pluralist pretenses, this *unanimisme* is a procedure of Algerian universe-maintenance, as the above mythology helps inhibit challenges to the codes underlying the system.

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This subsection has discussed the widespread notion—regardless of whether people truly believe it—that the state is ever-present, preordaining any and all political outcomes, which is a third significant sense-making practice that shapes the political world as it is understood by the MSP and its members themselves. This notion has (among other factors) led the electorate to believe they are no match for the government, and to have little faith that political avenues effect meaningful change.

[159] M. Dhina, interview, January 11, 2017.

This renders the public skeptical of those who suggest otherwise, namely political parties, as the previous subsection discussed.

In this way, suspicion around what was real or fake, is also expedient for the regime. It sows confusion and distrust while itself remains above the fray. Indeed, we therefore should not altogether dismiss the role of the DRS in stage-managing some aspects of political life. And interlocutors may be right that Mr. X head of Party Y is an 'agent.' However, as determining the veracity of such claims is often futile, since one can never *really* know—at least not without incurring some personal risk—it is more revealing (and within the realm of scholarly feasibility) to examine the practice of DRS-determinism and interrogate when and how it is used.

Indeed, for these very reasons, rather than impinging on the state entity, or attempting to dislodge its grip over and presence in formal institutions, movements such as the MSP instead seek to appropriate the symbols the former uses for legitimation—both important national myths and concepts as well as actual tangible spaces of political mobilization, as are explored in forthcoming chapters.

3.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how, after the turn of the conflict, the MSP emerged having to contend with several changes to the political culture in which it operated. First, the myriad tendencies within Islamist opposition—from unarmed partisan figures to the armed insurgents—were placed indiscriminately under the 'Islamist' umbrella. These *Islamists* were cast as the conflict's sole aggressors. As a result, the perceptions and connotations surrounding 'Islamism' changed such that it went from it being a potentially novel political alternative in the 1980s, to evoking notions of extremism, anti-national betrayal, and instability. Second, parties were no

longer seen as credible or as vehicles for articulating popular preferences. The very notion of *taḥazzub* ('partisanship') took on new social meaning—even as an epithet connoting opportunism or loss of integrity (to which, as discussed in Chapter Two, the MSP's own trajectory contributed). Third and relatedly, political processes were considered fixed by an un-seeable power. The 'state' loomed over the public as preordaining all political outcomes. The feeling of the intelligence apparatus' ubiquity in daily civilian life and its cunning in infiltrating insurgencies and other groups, further contributed to this image of an all-powerful regime. This evoked not only paranoia and confusion, but paradoxically, a sense of security and stability. Resigning to a least-bad scenario and retreating from stakes in the political process, provided a perhaps ironic sense of certainty and control.

As authoritarian regimes themselves *learn* and are understood to borrow from each other, these are all widespread patterns. Thus these phenomena are not unique to Algeria, although the exact shape they take, perhaps are. In Morocco for example, only few parties are seen as legitimate, viable, or empowered while the monarchy is seen as immutable and incontestable, even as its citizens increasingly question its logic. In Turkey and Egypt, as in Algeria, smaller Islamist parties—Gülenists, the Salafist Nour Party, and the MSP—operated in the shadow of much larger Islamist movements—the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP), the flagship Muslim Brotherhood, and FIS, respectively—which were, in the latter two cases, repressed and obliterated presumably due precisely to the threat of their size and influence. All three contexts have seen abundant efforts, although at different points in history, to excommunicate Islamists from the body politic: in Turkey long-enshrined secular, Republican values (and more recently hegemonic Islamist narratives of Gülenists' betrayal of 'true' Islam), in Egypt the post-coup anti-Brotherhood crackdown and propaganda, and in Algeria, the

collective retrospections of the civil war. Egypt's Nour Party, has remained "strongly sectarian and intransigent in its religious stances" (Lacroix, 2016, para. 1) but also opted to back the Egyptian regime's 2013 coup against the much larger Muslim Brotherhood (not unlike the MSP's backing of the Algerian regime's coup against the larger FIS) among other concessions defended using the argument that it "aims to defend the interest of the Da'wa [*sic*] […] in other words, protect and possibly reinforce the religious movement that it represents" (Lacroix, 2016, para 8).

Ultimately, MSP supporters and members, themselves members of the Algerian polity, reify and reproduce such broader discursive cultures including the three described in this chapter. Rather than denying or rejecting them, they contend with and negotiate them in different ways—in the process accordingly positioning themselves and the movement of which they are a part. The following chapter describes a related regionwide phenomenon, where Islamists were cast as uniquely given to dissimulation or *false* moderation, and as religious/cultural 'imports' that were 'un-Algerian' and thus inherently immoderate. It then describes how the MSP uses and adapts these concepts, terms, and rhetorics.

Chapter Four: Contesting Moderation

"Moderation is bound to be a contested concept reflecting the ambiguity of our moral and political vocabulary."

-Historian Aurelian Craiutu, *A Virtue for Courageous Minds* (2012, p. 13)

The shifts in political attitudes and political culture elaborated in the previous chapter, particularly regarding Islamism and Islamists, brought notions such as moderation into public (and perhaps global) contestation. This chapter examines the social constructions of the concept of *moderation* (*al-iʿtidāl*) and the label of *moderate* (*muʿtadil*) are taken up by the MSP and negotiated/enacted by its members. It constitutes a weaponized political discourse, a contested social value/label, as well as an important religious/movement doctrine (*al-wasaṭiyya wa-l-iʿtidāl*).

These attributes make moderation/moderateness an *essentially contested concept* (ECC) (Gallie, 1955). This means it cannot be singularly and objectively defined and detected, but rather is subjective, imagined, and linked to the ontologies, social positions, and self-identifications of the term's user. Typically prominent in popular usage, *essentially contested concepts* (ECC) generate polarizing disputes over their best definitions and manifestations, despite what are often near-unanimous agreements on their significance. Because of this significance, frequently people of varying self-identification or group identity, are equally compelled to invoke them. Frequently of historical importance, they can moreover be coveted labels that confer legitimacy, and therefore are often politically wielded, sometimes in exclusivist terms (e.g. we are *Algerian*, thus they are *not*. We are *moderate*, thus they are *not*). Citizens sometimes use them to frame rival ideational or political phenomena. They are central, oft-sung values despite often being defined in diametric-opposition. The terms' users imply, and

intended audiences infer, what they want.[160] These uses sometimes occur at the encouragement of regimes or other hegemonic structures. These contestations, these "struggles over the labeling of groups and the meanings of those labels" (Jourde, 2009, p. 201) are themselves objects of political inquiry, the "social-revealers" which Martin (2010) calls unidentified political objects (OPNIs). Therefore, in what follows, I do not attempt to define (or neatly distinguish between) *al-wasaṭiyya* (centrism) and *al-iʿtidāl* (moderation), but rather explore how and why the notions are imprecise, conflated and used interchangeably on the ground.

This chapter explores the use of moderation in the official discourses of the party, as articulated in its published texts and speeches; in the less-official "speech acts" of the leadership corps while "speaking as experts" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. xxiv) in interviews with me, the press, and on social media forums, as well as in the unofficial comments, conversations, and articulations of members of the base. I analyze how MSP discourses interact with, borrow from and negotiate the notions of moderation that circulate in the broader polity. My conceptualization of moderation/*al-wasaṭiyya*/*al-iʿtidāl* as an ECC, is reflected in these discourses, where it fails to have any 'real' meaning outside of how it is used, by whom, for what purpose, and in what contexts.

4.1 Moderation in Algeria

The case of the MSP and that of Algeria more broadly shows that the cultural/political value assigned to moderation can change over time: whether moderation is considered righteous, virtuous, or appropriate, and in which contexts and

[160] In the contemporary American example, the far-right has, in some cases successfully, cast social justice movements (most recently and notably, the momentous Black Lives Matter phenomenon) as violent, extreme, and unpatriotic—the contested notions here being pacifism, moderation, and patriotism.

moments.[161] Indeed, as historian Aurelian Craiutu (2012) notes in his study of the philosophy and history of moderation, "what is moderate today might not be so tomorrow [...] there are times when moderation is a virtue and other periods when it might be a political liability" (p. 18).[162]

Indeed, the positive associations *moderation* now has in Algerian political culture is in sharp contrast to the War of Independence period, when it was largely undesirable. The 'moderates' at this time were the so-called *attentistes*—those who took a tentative, wait-and-see approach to taking up arms against the French—who were cast as anti-FLN (National Liberation Front). Malika Rahal (2012) has noted how colonial-era parties, such as the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto (UDMA), and the Algerian Communist Party (PCA) were markedly less 'radical' than the FLN, which sidelined them as overly conciliatory. At a certain point, to be a moderate vis-à-vis the 'radical' FLN could even leave one vulnerable to the label of *ḥarki*.[163] Indeed, the FLN moved to monopolize anti-colonial activism by expunging UDMA and PCA from this field,[164] and later effectively marginalizing them in collective memory (Rahal, 2012).

This is all the more notable as these sidelined organizations in fact embodied the 'moderation' that circulates in Algeria today: upholding and abiding by the rule of law (however unjust or arbitrary), rejecting revolution in favor of incrementalism, and favoring compromise over stalwartness.[165] The FLN's 'radicalism' in this, as well as in

[161] Interestingly, Aurelian Craiutu (2012) notes that the virtue of moderation has in fact been disputed along these lines in western history and political thought: of whether it was apposite and in which circumstances it might be deemed so or not.
[162] Somewhat surprising for a scholar of modern Islamism to read, Craiutu laments that moderate thought—cast as one of compromise, and sustaining the status quo—receives less praise and/or even consideration than revolutionary discourses have throughout the modern western canon.
[163] *Ḥarki* literally refers to an Algerian combatant who, usually for material or survival purposes, aided the French counterinsurgency; but it has come to connote duplicity, treason, and cowardice
[164] Now understood to have been as much in service of hegemony and power consolidation, as of revolution.
[165] Founded in 1946 by Ferhat Abbas, the UDMA was "long considered a bourgeois party, francophone, intellectual, secular and *law abiding*, at a time when the preferred national narrative was Arabophone, Muslim and *revolutionary* [emphasis added]" while the latter PCA, "perceived as an atheist organization,

how it sought to deal with the occupiers (read: violence, revolution, inflexibility) is usually not indicted in prevailing discourses (Crenshaw-Hutchinson, 1972). Instead it is (by-and-large, with some exceptions) credited as having delivered Algeria from a ruthless occupation, its 'immoderate' methods, the violence of the revolution, widely seen as justified, self-sacrificing, even glorious.

In stark contrast to the glory of the independence struggle where Algerians, 'together as one people' as the narrative goes, resisted their French oppressors using justified violence, the conflict decade was characterized by a country divided, Algerians slaughtered *involuntarily*, and not knowing why, or by whom. The politics of naming pathologized the violence as ideological and religious, while the narratives of blame—squarely placed on the Islamist 'side'—retrospectively cast the violence as one-sided and insurgent. Thus when near-identical anti-system discourses—millenarianism, revolution, jihad, etc., with uncompromising positions on these aspects—were employed alongside near-identical tactics (Crenshaw-Hutchinson, 1972) by the FIS and other strains in the late 1980s, they were cast as profoundly threatening to Algeria and the region. Remarkably, former FIS leaders for their part hold that only in retrospect were they cast as 'radical,' whereas during their heyday, they were instead cast, more optimistically, as 'revolutionary'.[166]

Moderation-immoderation is thus a specially tortured dichotomy. The now-clichéd expression, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" arose precisely from the acknowledgment that the merits of immoderation (whether this refers to revolution, extremism, violence, ideological inflexibility, stalwartness or a combination of these often-concurrent phenomena)—and conversely moderation—were

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was discredited for promoting, as did the UDMA, an independent republic that would unite both former colonized and former colonizers under one common Algerian citizenship" (Rahal, 2012, p. 122).

[166] M. Dhina, interview, January 11, 2017; A. Haddam, interview, November 16, 2017.

entirely too subjective to be discussed in stark moral terms. Instead, moderation is "a positional or circumstantial virtue […] the exact location of which ultimately depends on the position (and strength) of the extremes that it seeks to temper" (Crauitu, 2012, p.18). Not only is moderation necessarily relational in this way, it is also highly-contested, its "meanings fluid, variant, and elusive," as opposed to detected or tested against an immutable, agreed-upon set of properties.

In recent years it has become even polemical. For instance, Slimane who identifies as queer/gay, told me, the "I knew very religious leaders and persons who were much more moderate than [MSP], a few who have even talked about protections for us [LGBTQ]".[167] Slimane went on to articulate moderation as adoption and consideration of leftist ideas, if not leaning more leftward altogether. An alternative formulation was offered by Najib, an engineering student at the University of Oran who described himself as "apolitical." He conceptualized moderation as fundamentally incompatible with Islamism: "there is no moderate Islamism, they all have the same goals, just different means."[168] Najib is one of many who hold that 'political Islam' (*al-islām al-siyāsī* or *al-islāmiyyin*) itself could never 'be moderated'; that if clergy aspired to politics (read: power), it could only be in order to impose some millenarian vision.[169] The extent of its contestation renders moderation/immoderation an *object* of inquiry in itself. Anthropologist Gregory Starrett (2010) suggests interrogating, if not abandoning, such concepts for their usefulness in analyzing political-social behavior (p. 628), which as ECC, are instead noteworthy for the controversy they create, and on which fronts.

[167] Conversation, November 2015
[168] Conversation, February 2016
[169] Indeed, the 'Islamist' caveat remains an important one, for most other movements are not subject to the moderation test. The CNDDC for example, introduced in the previous chapter, refuses to support or back regime efforts on employment and job issues, has (so far) refused to form a party or participate in formal political processes, and routinely leads and engages in protests that employ anti-system rhetoric—these are defining traits of "immoderation" per most of the aforementioned scholars. Yet it is rarely cast as such either on the Algerian ground, or in the academic investigations of the movement, while nevertheless enjoying popular legitimacy and varying degrees of support.

4.2 Moderation and the MSP

As discussed in the previous chapter, The Islamists (*Les Islamistes/al-islāmiyyin*) had by the end of the conflict become in Algerian political discourse an all-encompassing classification, from the varied, disparate FIS strains, to the ever-splintering armed factions born of the opportunism of war, the differences among which had been effaced by the period's (intentionally) confounding optics. Affirmed and reified through interacting western-led, academic (more on which in the conclusion chapter), transregional, and state narratives, moderation has become a prerequisite for Islamists hoping to sustain any sort of political existence in Algeria's post-conflict era.

Over the years, moderation has been thus increasingly taken up in the MSP's platform, language, and movement identity. This began with founders Nahnah and Bouslimani during the 1990s, however were notably absent in the period preceding the conflict period. The brand of 'moderate Islam' that Nahnah preached until his passing in 2003 was not evident in his previous political action, nor was his ideology necessarily distinguishable from his erstwhile Islamist comrades (see Chapter Two), who are today considered 'radical,' even by the MSP's own assertions.

Indeed, in a sharp contrast to the ways the MSP articulates and performs *moderation* today, as discussed in Chapter Two, Nahnah agitated vocally and contentiously against Boumediene's religious and socialist policies, calling for abolishing socialism and doctrines of nationalization in all Islamic countries, and suggesting expansion of the application of *al-shariʿa* law so as to be under a Caliphate.[170] According to a former-member who had been with them at the time, Nahnah and Bouslimani began inciting followers in Blida to revolution:

> They wanted to emerge from secrecy, to confront the state. I refused these activities. We're going to go confront state policies with what, just with '*allāhu*

[170] This is when he joined the group *daʿwa wal-tablīgh*, a successor organization to al-Qiyam (Willis, 1996, p. 65)

> *akbar"*? How? I refused. And the men of the security services (*mukhabarāt*) were conducting searches and ambushes. Nahnah and Bouslimani started to post tracts on the walls for all the people to see: '*yā nās* ('hey people'), do a revolution,' '*yā nās* this is an infidel state (*dawla kāfira*),' '*yā nās*, you are Muslims and this is an infidel state.'[171]

Later that year, the two took down electrical and telephone lines around Blida for which they were sentenced to 15 years in prison by military tribunal, and imprisoned at the infamous Barrouaghia Prison in Medea. Today, party members describe the electric lines incident as an isolated and lighthearted prank in keeping with Nahnah's jovial character.[172] But at the time, it was seen as an act of terror and sabotage by Blida residents I spoke with. They recounted other experiences of armed assailants cutting their neighborhood electric power before launching massive attacks, which led many to speculate about Nahnah's penchant for radicalism.

What is notable then is the ways in which Nahnah and Bouslimani's early orientations, actions, and rhetoric (acts of sabotage; camaraderie with individuals who he himself later cast as terrorists; subversive rhetoric—even engaging in *takfir*—vis-à-vis the state's perceived un-Islamic policies) all contravene the qualities that now-underpin how moderation in constructed in Algeria today, and which are embraced even forwarded by the MSP (anti-rebellion, *tadarruj* ('incrementalism'), and support for the state's claims to the national religion).

As noted in Chapter Three, the FIS rose to popularity in part because of its anti-system frames. However, due to the inherent ambiguity of the concept of the moderation, and the eagerness of the authorities to politically weaponize it, any anti-system position (particularly for Islamists) came to be conflated with religious or ideological radicalism after the violence began. Immoderation went from virtue to peril over the pivotal conflict period.

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[171] Mustapha, interview, February 14, 2016.
[172] S.A. Boulil, interview, October 22, 2015.

The MSP's discourses referencing *moderation* thus began to appear more abundantly, deliberately, and methodically. Nahnah et al. newly promoted the tenet of *al-wasaṭiyya wa-l-iʿtidāl* as a platform in his speeches and engagements with great zeal, through which the movement conflated their religious definitions of spiritual and jurisprudential balance, with popular conceptions of anti-extremism, and with the state's requirement of political moderation (more below). They began advocating *al-shūraqratiyya* ('shuracracy,' see Chapter Two) and vigorously endorsed pluralism, with Nahnah claiming in 1997 that "he would collaborate with anyone, including atheist parties, if that could *save the country* [emphasis added]" (Zoubir, 2009, p. 148).

This image-making continued into the early 2000s as the conflict wound down. The group signaled adaptability and abandoned Islamic vocabulary in favor of those that more closely resembled the state's ambiguous discourses of 'democratization,' among others. At the risk of replicating the Islamic exclusivism that tainted the FIS, they relaxed their labeling as an 'Islamist' party and instead claimed Islam merely as their history (*al-tārīkh*) or a reference (*al-marjiʿ*).[173] Party discourse also expressed further Islamization as unnecessary since the country, its citizens, and its government were already Muslims—a reversal of its pre-conflict stance and an acquiescence to the state's monopoly on religious character.[174] After Nahnah passed away in 2003, even references to *al-shūraqratiyya*, were gradually replaced with more generic language of political development. Note that in the party's charter below, *moderation*—alongside centrism, peace, and incrementalism—are used to define the party, while its goals are articulated through concepts of societal development:

> The Movement for a Society of Peace, is a comprehensive movement that is political, popular, reformist, based on a change-based, peaceful, *centrist and*

[173] This was also for legal reasons. In 1996, it became illegal for parties to have a religious basis. See Chapter Two.
[174] S.A. Boulil, interview, October 22, 2015; N. Hazzam, interview, October 28, 2015. (Also see Amghar & Boubekeur, 2006, p. 11)

> *moderate* approach, with the goal of building up the individual, family, and society. It participates in the political project, in order to realize the complete development of the democratic, Algerian state that has sovereignty under the auspices of Islamic principles, through the peaceful transfer of power, by democratic means [emphasis added].[175]

Meanwhile, the imperative of Islamic principles is mentioned briefly toward the end, and chiefly to qualify the democratic development MSP articulates as its chief ambition.[176] Although subsequent waves of MSP figures have departed from various aspects of Nahnah's ideas and discourses, moderation has remained a central feature of party discourse, chiefly because it has become a staple of Islamist legitimacy.

4.3 MSP Figures on Moderation

For Nesroudine Hazzam, national president of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, the MSP's moderation lies in its tenet of Islamization of the individual *before* that of the society or the system. Here, religious buy-in and support is secured before its application to policy or politics, whereas immoderation would involve Islamization against the will of the people. This tenet, which is central to most Islamist movements—including those considered 'immoderate'—is re-fashioned in our conversation as a defining aspect of *al-wasaṭiyya*:

> The moderate (*wasaṭi*) path means personal formation (*takwīn shakhṣī*) with methods which focus on the individual person (*bi-uslūb murakkiz ʿalā shakhṣ al-insān*), then the family, then the neighborhood, then the society, the state. This is the idea, the work is from the bottom-up, not top-bottom. So, it's the formation (*takwīn*) of the society. You could have a person who rules, an Islamic person, but the people do not follow him, in this case, there will be problems. This

[175] al-Barnāmaj al-siyāsī li al-ḥaraka, n.d.: "*ḥarakatu mujtamaʿu al-silmi, harakatun siyāsiyyatun, shaʿbiyyatun, iṣlāḥiyyatun, shāmilatun, taʿtamidu ʿalā minhajin taghyīrī, silmī, wasaṭī, muʿatadilin, yastahdifu binaʾa al-fardi wa-l- usrati wa-l- mujtamaʿi, wa tushāriku fī al- ʿamaliyati al-siyāsiyya, min ajli istikamāli binaʾi al-dawlati al-jazaʾiriyyati al-dimuqrātiyyati al-ijtimaʿiyyati dhata al-siyādati fī ʿiṭār al-mabādiʾi al-islāmiyyati, min khilāla al-tadāwuli al-silmī ʿalā al-sulṭa, bal-wasaʾil al-dimuqrāṭiyyati*."

[176] While allusions to Islam are left vague and generic in the political section of the text, it receives ample attention in the preamble, which sets up Islam's role in Algerian identity, very much in line with revolutionary discourses on Islam: that the Algerians are Muslim, that successive historical struggles enabled to reassert this identity, that the war of independence gave Algeria back its independence and sovereignty, however, that the those that ruled in the aftermath did not produce the social, democratic state promised in the Declaration of November 1.

> leader is not moderate. Like Iran, they implemented Islamic rule from the top and the people were not in accord with this. You must start at the bottom.[177]

Hazzam did not provide evidence for this notion that Iranians disagreed with the nature of Islamic rule, which remains contested itself. However, that he takes up this discourse demonstrates the ways in which narratives of history, not only of one's own society, but that of others, becomes a way to position oneself within an Islamist schema—in Hazzam's case, to establish a relational moderation.

For former MSP spokesperson, Sid Ahmed Boulil, "Nahnah was moderate because he was more focused on the wellbeing of the country, than the party."[178] Here, Boulil takes part in a popular discursive phenomenon wherein an Islamist's *nationalism* is indicative of its moderation (explored fully in the forthcoming chapter). He also argued that Nahnah's syncretism—specifying his interpretation and fusion of various Islamic thinkers (Abul Aʿla Maududi, Muhammad Abdou, Jamal Din al-Afghani, Hassan al-Banna) in a 'flexible' manner—rendered him a 'centrist' thus moderate.[179]

Similar themes pervaded the discourses at a regional conference I attended, hosted by the MSP. The Maghrebi Forum for Moderate/Centrist Parties (*al-multaqā al-maghribiyya lil-aḥzāb al-wasaṭiyya*) on April 21, 2016, invited Islamist counterparts from Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, and Libya, as well as local Algerian parties of varying orientation. The forum was a part of an MSP-led initiative to revitalize the effectively-defunct Arab Maghreb Union, under the stated logic that a more unified Maghreb would allow greater crossborder Islamist collaboration, and that trans-Islamist solidarity may strengthen the current region-wide.[180]

In his speech, president of the movement, Abderrazak Makri emphasized that

[177] N. Hazzam, interview, October 28, 2015.
[178] S.A. Boulil, interview, October 22, 2015.
[179] S.A. Boulil, interview, October 22, 2015.
[180] Spokespersons emphasized their project would be opened to anyone who wished to 'move unity forward.'

the uniting factor among all the parties present, whether secular, Islamic or socialist, was their commitment to moderate values and Islamic principles. Makri cast the influences arising from instability in the greater Maghreb neighborhood, especially Libya and the Sahel, as threats to moderation. He expressed that Algeria had seen its own period of violence and bloodshed that had renewed to them the importance of moderation, as called for by founder Nahnah.

Saad Jawhari, from Tunisia's Nahda party, called the meeting an opportunity for Maghreb's moderate, centrist parties to interact and benefit while retaining their "national specificities," in a way that does not *dislocate the state*. This framing served to qualify that the stated trans-Islamist impetuses behind the meeting, should not threaten their respective governments. The representative from the Libyan Islamist party, al-ʿAdala wa-l-Bināʾ (Justice and Edification) asserted that as the Maghreb was the most stable in the Middle East region, that it was an especially important time for moderation—that moderate parties needed to better coordinate and communicate, in the absence of more vigorous official regional integration. The Mauritanian representative from the Islamist party, *tawaṣṣul*, said coordination between moderate/centrist parties in the Maghreb region, was necessary to lead their respective countries to safety, particularly with respect to 'invaders and extremists' and to stave off extremism as transmitted by foreign meddling. And in emphasizing the merits of incrementalism and cooperation with authority, MSP official Zineddine Tebbal reiterated Jawhari, that any coordination efforts and ideological projects must be undertaken, "but without displacing the state (*lākin dūna an taḥill maḥal al-dawla*)".[181]

At this conference, moderation was not discussed through any ideological, theological or philosophical exegeses—but rather as a political and relational position

[181] Observation, April 21, 2016.

taken up vis-à-vis radical Islamist *others*, and as instantiated in their shared preference for incrementalism and national stability. Speakers instead highlighted as their common and binding feature, their moderation, in addition to their 'ideological closeness,' 'common roots' and 'shared orientations,' without explicitly acknowledging that all of them drew, to varying degrees, on the Muslim Brotherhood—perhaps aware of the audience.[182] As I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter Five, this is partly because the flagship Muslim Brotherhood's 'moderation' was called into question during and after the 2013 Egyptian coup per several dominant narratives, and because (im)moderation was becoming increasingly defined through transnationalism, even by Islamists at this very conference.[183] (Interestingly, Egypt, by virtue of being technically outside the 'Maghreb' is implicitly cast by attendees of this conference as the part of the perilous 'Arab East,' and thus beyond the acceptable border of transregional sharing.) This also reveals the widespread nature of Islamists' moderate, pro-stability, and nationalist discourses. The MSP and Algeria are not unique in this and can be said to be part of a broader regional phenomenon wherein moderation has become a political prerequisite for Islamists (a point I elaborate in the conclusion).

In a separate press interview, Abdelmadjid Menasra (provisional 2017 MSP president, and former leader of MSP's now-recuperated breakaway party, Front for Change) warned:

> The retreat of Islamist parties will not be in favor of the nationalist current, nor to the benefit of the laïque or other currents, but will give strength to extremist current, thus to violence. The void that will be created by the withdrawal of moderate Islamist parties will necessarily be filled by radical Islamism. Those who hope for the retreat of Islamist parties should know they will thus prepare

[182] Also in attendance were representatives from the FLN, RND, and Jil Jadid parties, as well as from the Foreign Affairs Ministry, as well as journalists, and a few researchers including myself.
[183] Makri also said at the conference: "The political movements with Islamic reference bear great responsibility in bringing the countries of the Maghreb closer together because of their original legitimate unity" (Blidi, 2016). Although it is wielded against them domestically, they know that some degree of transnational solidarity is required to sustain the strength and influence of their Brotherhood tendency regionally—especially by aligning with the movements of Tunisia and Morocco which have been electorally successful and to whom MSP members often, if selectively, claim affinity.

> the bed for violence.[184]

Moderate Islamism is presented as an indispensable brand, a lack of which imperils the nation and region. This legitimizes these parties not only as nationalist (thus moderate) forces, but necessitates them as regional forces of counter-radicalization. They also highlight the merits of upholding the political-systemic status quo, emphasizing that any coordination should take care not to undermine sitting regimes. All of this situates their parties squarely within mounting international discourses of Islamist moderation—which increasingly interact with local constructions of moderation—and tacitly yields to the trending foreign policy priorities (e.g., stability and continuity) of which they are often critical.

These more public presentations of moderation as an incontrovertible virtue are even more fascinating as ethnographic objects when compared to members' other (perhaps more critical) discourses that question it. In a tract entitled "*al-wasaṭiyya fil-siyāsa* ('centrism in politics')," Makri himself repurposes the term 'extremist' as instead defining the regime and its intolerance:

> For the [regime], anyone who opposes it, is thus against the Algerian state and National People's Army, and therefore a traitor, an anti-nationalist and perhaps a foreign agent. This [strategy] has long been used by autocrats to dominate government and monopolize power.[185]

He goes on to question the prevailing narrative of the 1990s conflict, arguing that 'terrorism' is a ruse used by certain elements of the regime—especially those rich in petrol—and subsequently hints at the role of regime elements in contemporary Algerian terror. Makri's performances of moderation-as-nationalism, Algerianness-as-

[184] Boufatah, 2017 : "*Le recul des partis islamistes ne sera en faveur ni du courant nationaliste ni au bénéfice du courant laïque ou autres, mais donnera de la force au courant extrémiste, donc à la violence. Le vide qui sera créé par le repli des partis islamistes modérés sera forcément comblé par l'islamisme radical. Ceux qui souhaitent le recul des partis islamistes doivent savoir qu'ils prépareront ainsi le lit pour la violence."*

[185] Makri, 2014.

moderation, and assertions that moderate parties are key to counter-terror are thus all the more telling. Makri contests 'moderation' but recognizes the overall importance of the agreed-upon narratives. While he disagrees with aspects of this logic, he still moves to present his party within such frames.

In other respects, it is perhaps less surprising coming from Makri. After all, he ran for party president on a platform of more meaningful opposition. He is now more popular among the party's young base than the pro-regime elements such as Aboujerra Soltani and Abderrahmane Saidi, who enjoy more support in the higher pro-business ranks. Thus, that Makri deploys such discourse and remains popular is indicative of the extent to which the base itself seeks more critical engagement with state narratives on moderation, extremism, Islamism, and terror (more below). Indeed, he has also been accused, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, of betraying Nahnah's 'conciliatory' ideals by defectors such as Abdelkader Bengrina and Mustapha Belmehdi, because of this wish to distance the party from state interests.

Al-Wasaṭiyya wal-Iʿtidāl as Doctrine

Fatima Saïdi, MSP's National Secretary for Women and Family Affairs, extends the movement's definition of *al-wasaṭiyya wal-iʿtidāl* from a governance/extremism usage to a personal/spiritual/*daʿwi* one—one which also has a marked gendered component, wherein the woman, as the glue of the family and society, is the keeper and spreader of moderation.

In her tract, "The role of the woman and family in spreading centrist and moderate values," Saïdi spends pages outlining the central role women have, as wives and mothers, in ensuring moderation in society by beginning in the household: compassion and affection in child-rearing, the cultivation of a healthy household for children and preventing their involvement in crime, avoidance of verbal and physical

abuse, dialogue between family members, deferment to the husband in matters of authority, avoiding social and familial neglect that lead to *ḥarrāga*[186] and suicide (which Saïdi casts as 'manifestations of extremism'), 'moderation' of the wealth gap that produces extremist thought, moderation in consumption of food, drink, and clothing, and in how one's time is divided between study/work and leisure, and so on.[187]

In her articulation, moderation additionally encompasses an Islamic lifestyle of temperance, restraint, balance, and equability, defined as contrary to excess and indulgence—beyond just a political/ideological orientation and methodology defined as contrary to violence, extremism, compulsion and radicalism—without overtly laying out this logic, or explicitly suggesting that its definition be broadened.[188] The tract takes for granted that readership do not have fixed or rigid ideas of what constitutes moderation, and harnesses its ambiguity to make this discursive leap, one that generates greater connection between MSP's political slogans to articulations of its social project.

Moreover, where opponents cite MSP positions on women's issues and policies as evidence of extremism and regressiveness, this discourse allows the MSP to reassert a more broadly-defined moderation through this very topic. Additionally, moderation itself is asserted as a vessel by which the woman is empowered to effect the world she—and the movement—seek to create. (Indeed, the MSP still uses religious and biological arguments—such as the idea of gender complementarity—to defend differential rights, and further justifies it as in service of spreading moderation.)

Thus, the contestations and negotiations of *al-wasaṭiyya* we have discussed until

[186] *ḥarrāga* (pl.) are migrants (usually North Africans) who attempt to sail to Europe in makeshift boats. The word is from Moroccan/Algerian Arabic, meaning "one who burns," in reference to the burning of their ID-papers in order to seek asylum upon arrival. Some understand it as a metaphor, that their perilous migration arises from the same humiliation as those who '*ḥaraq*' (burn/self-immolate) in desperation.
[187] Saïdi, 2010.
[188] This is very much in line with the articulations of *wasaṭiyya* outlined by theologian Yusuf al-Qaradawi, as encompassing many such aspects of personal virtue (Warren, 2014).

this point should not belie the doctrinal and spiritual value the notion of *al-wasaṭiyya* may have to members (and of course non-members too) as it has a rather important place in Islamic jurisprudence (Kamali, 2015, p. 13). Indeed, it was mentioned to me several times that "moderation/centrism is important in Islam (*al-wasaṭiyya muhimma fil-islām*)" and "moderation/centrism is already an Islamic value (*al-wasaṭiyya qīma islāmiyya aṣlan*)." What is of interest however is *which* values, virtues, and doctrines, of the hundreds that could be jurisprudentially referenced, become more regularly-invoked and central to movement discourse than others, and why.

In attempting to answer this, the efforts to understand the MSP's use of moderation (which varies across the party/movement) as purely (or even chiefly) strategic are misguided. Moderation was valued due to varying intersections of social culture, political discourse, and spiritual basis. Distilling both national as well larger-movement directives gives members the tools to engage and conceptualize contested terms like *al-wasaṭiyya/al-iʿtidāl* in ways that reflect and accommodate their worldviews, make personal sense, and make legible the positions they occupy in both Algerian and broader-regional political imaginaries.

4.4 Everyday Negotiations of Moderation

Mustapha considers himself a silent co-founder of the Hamas (now-MSP) movement. About 10-12 years their junior, Mustapha began to move with Nahnah and Bouslimani in the 1960s. He, his peers, and Mustapha Belmehdi, who also considers himself a young co-founder, attended Nahnah's study groups. He was often also charged with administrative tasks, "*ruḥ tjīb, ruh tjīb* ('go bring this, go bring that')" he recalls, "I was the young one, I was the one sent to store, the bank, everything."[189]

[189] Mustapha, interview, February 13, 2016.

This went on until he left for studies in Islamic Law at Zitouna University in Tunis in the early 1970s, after which, he explained, his orientations and beliefs took more definitive shape. He had come to disagree with the ideas of Nahnah, Bouslimani, and Belmehdi particularly regarding political activism, having slowly come to believe that religious precepts ought not to be institutionalized into legal and governmental systems. He nevertheless continued attending their study groups and helping them to spread Nahnah's and Bouslimani written tracts around Blida.[190] Although he left Nahnah's circle in 1987, opposed to the group's plans of officialization, he said he maintained positive relationships with them. He still believes that amidst the violence of the conflict period, the MSP's messaging and image of moderation was important:

> Everyone cannot be moderate always, if everyone is always moderate, change can never happen, revolutions would never happen. But sometimes we need it. We didn't need a revolution that time, we needed people to return to peace. The difference between MSP and FIS, is that the MSP is moderate. Their teachings do not forbid women from leaving the house without a guardian, they condemn but do not ban alcohol, some groups even issue fatwas against Coca-Cola because it looks like wine. And all these other movements, if you accidentally eat during Ramadan, they say 'no, you must repeat the day'. With Nahnah, '*ah nsītī, khalās maqbūl*, *jā'iz* (oh you forgot, it's ok, accepted, it could pass); this is what is moderate.[191]

Mustapha, like N. Hazzam in the previous section, articulated the MSP's desire to implement its vision gradually and using societal buy-in, versus the FIS' alleged desire to implement its (nevertheless-similar, according to Mustapha) vision overnight, as moderation. He confers upon the MSP the label of moderate because of this forgiving treatment of religious requirements, their nonviolent method of engagement with followers, and their gradualism. Interestingly, he articulates Nahnah's moderation as not

[190] He also felt, since he was now more respected, seen as an adult and a credible scholar among the group, that he could now contribute to these debates. According to him, he asserted that "our value was in applying Islamic pressure on the government, but we should not *be* the government." He wanted to remain an organization for advocacy, but not a political party in a government he characterized as "if not to the level of 'Marxism,' definitely *al-ishtirākiyya al- ṣārima* (severe communism)" (Mustapha, interview, February 13, 2016).

[191] Mustapha, interview, February 13, 2016.

through his political doctrines or behavior, but through his treatment of general social rules (fasting, drinking, etc.) Thus, in a notable paradox, he asserts the MSP as moderate in its approach to society, but does not think it would be 'moderate' in government. Holding fast to his ideas that led him to leave the early movement (that religious movements ought not to be in government itself, that imposition of religion through the channels of government is itself immoderation) he replicates the 'wolf in sheep's clothing' hypothesis:

> But! I'm sure the day they become in the government, they will forbid wine, woman going out without a guardian, they will enforce laws that have a basis in Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence). The MSP in Algeria, the Salafists, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Hamas in Palestine, FIS here before, all have the same *goals* (*ahdāf*), they differ in their *styles* (*asālīb*). If MSP comes to [real] power, they will issue laws against wine, and make laws about women's movement and their clothing.[192]

Mustapha initially seemed to me to have an unfocussed view of moderation, or an indecisiveness about how he saw the MSP. Indeed, it generally appeared to me that members had not reconciled their personal definitions of moderation, leading to both internal contradictions, and contradictions *among* members. In these repeated interactions with various leaders and ex-figures, I also observed what I thought was a conflation of centrism and moderation (*al-wasaṭiyya wal-iʿtidāl*). When I once asked Nasser, a local Blida branch member, about this he replied, "*wasaṭī* means we take a middle way, but *muʿtadil* is different, it means… [long pause] it means, we are kind, peaceful, we approach the society gently, not with force or compulsion." This response, if not terribly specific was a step, for me, toward a more satisfactory answer.

But as I collected more such accounts, it became ultimately more apparent that various aspects of Mustapha's positionality led him to wrestle with the concept. Because the MSP has a clear conservative agenda vis-à-vis other parties, Mustapha took

[192] Mustapha, interview, February 13, 2016.

umbrage with their religious program and interpretation, although he appreciated the MSP's renunciation of violence and willingness to work with parties whose ideologies contravened their own. He harbored the very dissonance—the goals/means tension—that he himself argued undermined the party's claims to 'real' moderation. This imprecision is also evidence of moderation's essential contestedness; indeed, I too could not define moderation consistently when asked. While an oft-deployed concept, central to partisan discourse and notionally powerful, its manifestations were difficult to determine. Similarly, the reasons MSP members and interlocutors did not prioritize how or whether the party defined moderation and centrism in any agreed-upon, formal or codified way became increasingly clear. The significance of the term for them, lay not in a scientific definition, but in its evocations—it allowed intended audiences to reference all the shared narratives of FIS aggression and the political virtue of Islamist moderation. That is, as is characteristic of the *essentially contested concept*, moderation's relational and fundamentally comparative nature, and its surfeit of definitions allows the MSP and other wielders to imply and leave open to interpretation.

Other figures were acutely aware of the relational nature of the term, and called out its polemical dimension in Algeria. Abdellah Yousfi, MSP's Blida wilaya branch president, began our conversation by explaining "we are moderate, peaceful, incrementalist (*ḥanā wasaṭī, silmī, tadrījī*)" listed as though they were naturally concurrent and thus effectively synonymous.[193] Several hours into our discussion however, his misgivings that perhaps moderation-extremism could be rhetorical weapons, became more apparent, "The socialist and communist tendencies have also had violent movements, why don't we talk about them?" he exclaimed. "It's on purpose

[193] A. Yousfi, interview, December 15, 2015.

(*bil-ʿānī*)" he then added, meaning that it was it was 'on purpose' that moderation was now only used to discuss Islamists.[194]

Similarly objections were on display one Saturday afternoon in March 2016, when a few MSP members kindly offered to simulate for me a *ḥalqa*, a study session among movement members typically by one *usra* (MSP 'family').[195] When they inquired as to my research topics I responded that the idea of moderation was one of many, but also told them to discuss any topic, and to pretend I was not in the room.[196] My responses of course shaped the conversation, and they were quite eager to showcase their movement's moderation. After some initial awkwardness owing to my presence, members slowly began to discuss, first quoting Nahnah, and repeating lessons on moderation from their '*usra* leader, which evolved into a debate. Slowly, they brought up the legacy of the FIS, about *what it was* that made them not moderate (*ghayr muʿtadil*); different members drew upon the varying definitions that have come to interact in wider popular discourses on moderation. For one member, it was because they were not 'nationalists,' and disloyal to Algeria's *nationalism*. For another, it was a result of their *violence*:

Member 1: "But not all of them were violent, it wasn't the whole party."

Member 2: "The non-violent ones should have tried to stop the violent ideas."

These discussions led members to shape and discuss, how then, the MSP was moderate

[194] A. Yousfi, interview, December 15, 2015.
[195] See Chapter One for a full outline of methods, methodology, and sources. The group of youth members were unable to get permission for me to observe a real *ḥalqa*, but a few of them kindly offered to simulate one for me, as long as I didn't inform anyone. I asked if I could use their statements verbatim, to which they agreed on the condition of anonymity. The group that turned up was rather small, as some members understandably did not want to participate in front of me. I thus do not cite and date this event to protect interlocutors. Commune branch and location are further omitted to protect the members and the party branch.
[196] Of course, I did not expect they would truly pretend I was not there. I was well-aware that my presence (as a woman and a foreigner, especially an American) would add a layer of performativity beyond their regular in-group performance, including more self-conscious presentation and framings, checking other members' discourses, etc.

in comparison.

> Member 3: “Because we reject violence, that’s it. Because we are nationalists.”
>
> Member 1: “Benefit of the nation, comes before that of the party (*maṣlaḥat al-waṭan* qabl *maṣlaḥat al-ḥizb*) Nahnah said this. FIS put everything else before the nation, their party, their ideas, they wanted to have all the power, they just wanted to collect people, gather as many people as possible, to say ‘look we have people.’ Even if that threatened stability. So they did not care about the nation.
>
> Member 2: “The party [MSP] was made to stop the country from collapse. It was just a movement of few people, but they made it into party, and participated in elections, to stabilize the country. It was not the time for opposition.”

The conversation evolved into a discussion of personal responsibility, civic duty, and behavior, and how they could exercise moderation in their daily lives.

> Member 2: To talk calmly about our ideals, don’t fight with people about it. If someone thinks differently, we bring him in slowly, don’t insult his ideas.
>
> Member 1: “For example, if I meet an a socialist, even a communist, I don’t hit him, fight or yell. I talk calmly.”
>
> Member 2: “Obey our parents even if they don’t agree with our ideas, even if they hate the movement.”
>
> Member 3: “Yes this is important. For example, in FIS, they would kill their own families if they didn’t agree.”
>
> Member 1: “No, I don’t think so.”
>
> Member 3: “I swear (*wallāh*), they did. This is well-known. Families killed families.”
>
> Member 1: Yes, but not how you’re saying it. They did not just kill someone if they didn’t agree, there were many things happening that we cannot understand. Also, excuse me, I want to add that maybe they were moderate at first, then the circumstances changed them. They killed maybe because they became paranoid.”
>
> Member 2: “No, then that is not moderation. Nahnah and Bouslimani, god bless them, they were in prison, we cannot imagine how they suffered. But they never gave up that principle.”
>
> Member 1: “You wouldn’t get angry and rebel if someone hurt your family, or tortured your brother?”

Members looked at one another silently, member 3 widened his eyes at the speaker.

Member 1 looked at me.

> Member 3: “Maybe I would [be angry] but now I am a member of the movement, I have my principles, they would stop me from reacting with violence.”
>
> Member 1: “Even if violence is being used against you? Or against your mother?”
>
> Member 2: “We can defend ourselves in that moment, maybe, in that moment. But not to go around hurting people. We have to improve the image of Islam. Nahnah said ‘fight people with love (*nuqātil nās bil-ḥubb)*.’”
>
> Member 1: “So you defend yourself now, what about tomorrow? It is right to arrest and hit his [a FIS member’s] mother, the poor woman? Maybe we would have acted differently if it had been us, we did not live through it.”
>
> Member 2: “I don’t know. Maybe. Maybe we could have been violent. Anyone in their place maybe could have been violent, but this is exactly why we must take Nahnah and Bouslimani as examples, and of course the Prophet. Peace is the only way. It could have stopped them.”
>
> Member 1: “Peace is the only way for *us*, not for the state (*dawla*). Vish, don’t misunderstand me, I am moderate, but I am saying this to get us to think deeper. In certain cases, people are pushed too much. Even the FLN used violence, fed up with how the French humiliated us (*ḥuggarna*)”
>
> Member 3: “Ok, ok, [laughing] let us choose another subject before Vish goes and tells Obama that we are terrorists [all laugh].”

In this debate, several interrelated phenomena and themes arise as they relate to how moderation is conceptualized. Moderation recurs as a special ‘moral duty’ for Islamists. Hearkening to the revolutionary-era duty of defending the nation against foreign occupiers, they understand their duty as movement members to be to, in part, temper and pacify the broader Islamist constituency—that other party aspirations, including more meaningful opposition would have to be postponed. Because moderates within FIS failed to do this, it was especially incumbent on MSP to assert itself in the political sphere. There was also a duty to Islam—to improve its image, another ‘failure’ of the FIS. It was therefore *the duty of moderates to regulate non-moderates*.

A related theme is the way in which the MSP presents itself as uniquely positioned to carry out this Islamist duty, because its priorities are simultaneously, religion *and* country. The idea that it came into political existence to 'prevent state collapse,' and that it was specially placed to do so because of the dual nature of its moral duty, was in fact widely observable among the movement. Recall Nahnah said he would work with any political tendency if it would "save the country" (Zoubir, 2009). As we saw in Chapter Two, the Mayor of Bouarfa (Khelifi) asserted that MSP was founded, "*bāsh al-dawla mā tanhār* ('so that the state would not collapse')," where its electoral participation, and its *partification*—the process by which a movement is institutionalized as a political party—was a necessity of nationalism. Its choice was either to be a stabilizing glue, or a destabilizing challenger—rhetorics that justify its cooperation, market its mobilizational capabilities, and link nationalism to moderation.

Rejection of violence is articulated as though it is synonymous with nationalism. Defense of the nation is in turn used interchangeably with moderation. (A sharp contrast with the independence-era connotations of moderation, as laid out in the chapter's outset.) The seemingly circular logic would appear to reflect an imprecise understanding of these concepts, a hazy view of history, or both. However, these are concepts that have recently been accorded greater political primacy in the post-conflict period and, as explored in greater detail in the next chapter, moderation came to be wound up with various concepts relating to constructions of 'nationalism' and of 'Algerianness,' further formed in relation to how the state and the Islamist combatants were retrospectively portrayed. These members' logic thus reflects a pattern more widely observable in their milieu, in which these terms are used interchangeably and used reflexively to define each other.

Myth-making regarding their founders and founders' purposes and impetuses, leads them to some anachronisms. For instance, Member 2 accounts that during Nahnah's and Bouslimani's time in prison, they did not 'abandon' the tenet of moderation. However recall that this occurred in the late 1970s, when their discourses, as yet un-tempered by the ideational closures of the conflict and post-conflict periods, were far more rebellious. Indeed, these were activities and discourses they would have vocally admonished from the 1990s onward. Their imprisonment thus occurred before 'moderation' entered the movement's discourse in a systematic, deliberate manner as is noticeably the case today. It would be too simplistic to cast these anachronisms as a result of these young members' ignorance, because most people in world do not have a perfect account of history, but rather a *feeling* of it: of how history has been framed to them, how Nahnah and Bouslimani are remembered, and how they have imagined it having pieced together, and unfolded.

We also see them, one of them in particular, wrestling with perceived inconsistencies. First, there is some discomfort that the onus of 'moderation and peace'—articulated in this part of the conversation as passivity and pacifism—are placed disproportionately on the MSP, rather than on those actors closer to the state. Second, they question established narratives about the FIS and their country's political history generally. They wonder perhaps, to paraphrase Member 1, whether FIS' immoderation was a response to the state's immoderation, that their violent repression perhaps nourished their 'radicalism'. Finally, following from this, they interrogate the merits of moderation, asking whether what the MSP now characterizes and exalts as moderation, would have always been the fitting approach. Member 2 concedes they may have acted differently had they been of age in the early 1990s, while Member 1 maintains, effectively, that though the FIS were indeed problematic in their anti-

nationalism, that it did not follow that radical action was always an immoral option, citing the FLN. Still, Member 1, despite his indictments, never critiques MSP's moderation, describing it as necessary and virtuous, and still chooses to self-identify as moderate. It is still important to him that he is seen as a moderate Islamist, even while he questions the logic of the concept.

He is furthermore worried that I will construe him as immoderate. While their joke that I could inform on them was lighthearted, I detected acute concern and reservation on the part of Members 2 and 3 to more meaningfully engage Member 1's frank and rather eloquent contentions—they did however exchange many looks. There was perhaps concern that their more dissenting remarks would be somehow reported in the U.S., picked up by the Algerian government, or perhaps most worrisome, back to party leadership. How young members represent the MSP through their behavior is a significant consideration for promotion within the movement (as described in Chapter Two). It was therefore important to perform loyalty and conviction in front of fellow members. Their candor and honesty on moderation was thus refreshing; in some respects anchored to party directives, they nevertheless pushed the boundaries on its official discourses.

They never arrived at a compromise on how the word was to be defined. For one, moderation meant turning the other cheek, for another it was more deliberately about how they engaged fellow citizens, non-members, and how to handle differences in opinion and ideology. Some questioned whether it was always the answer. They welcomed the plurality of definitions and did not attempt to identify the 'best' one.

More notable—if perhaps most central to their performance of MSP membership—was that whatever the responses, in all their diversity, all could be used to describe the MSP (notably, against what other and past Islamists, were not). This

perhaps provides some clues as to why the movement has not more acutely pursued defining and distinguishing moderation and centrism in a precise or fixed sense, despite it being one of the most central components of the MSP's mission, political platform, and overall *raison d'être*. Airtight definitions and consensus did not matter as much as the meanings, history, connotations, and feelings the word evoked, and embodying them approximately and contextually for themselves and to external audiences. One ex-member confirmed as much, "there is no difference between these words, it doesn't matter, they are just words people use. Oh, we are *wasaṭī* and *muʿtadil*, it's like saying, I am big and strong, they go together. No will be able to tell you the real difference."[197]

4.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the languages, narratives, platforms, and behaviors—both organizational and more personal—taken up at various levels of the party/movement to contend with the notion of moderation, and with the presumption of Islamist immoderation.

Moderation once had a negative connotation in the Algerian political culture, in particular during the liberation struggle where national narratives "glorified armed struggle over political reformism" (Rahal, 2012, p. 120). In fact, Craiutu (2012) notes that in most places, contexts and times, it is *immoderation* that has been worthy of admiration, seen as resolute, principled, and stalwart, while moderates were far less glorious—seen as dithering and opportunistic, their penchant for compromise seen as weakness or a lack of conviction or clarity (p. 17).

However in Algeria, the Islamist 'specter' has led moderation to be seen as positive and desired. As discussed in the previous chapter, the optics of violence

[197] Yahia.

generated a dominant discourse wherein 'Islamism' was a notion to be suspected and feared unless proven otherwise (despite disagreements over who was to blame for the violence and fear of 1990s, and more fundamentally over who/what constituted an Islamist). Moderation, for Islamists, has thus become a linchpin of their social/political legitimacy and therefore a contested social label from which they are loath to be excluded, in turn leading rival camps to define it in diametric opposition and make exclusivist claims to it. These patterns abound in the broader Middle East as well; reinforced in international policy and even intellectual discourses, they now abound more globally.

This is indicative of the changing connotations radicalism, non-compromise and immoderation held over time, and how the virtues of moderation/immoderation depend who was invoking it. Moderation was *more* of a signifier of political and moral character for *some* actors than for others, and immoderation could be wielded against the movement. Where/whether one fit into such labels has proven subjective, relational, and even polemical, inextricable from arrangements of power, and the position of the term's wielder.

However, the contestedness of moderation was also an *opening*. The party's early founders during the conflict period forged a new image and platform for the broader movement based heavily in moderation, enshrining it in the party's doctrine. Of course, members define the notion subjectively: for some it was a political imperative, for some it was needed for stability, and for still others it was a matter of spirituality. Others revealed themselves to be internally and interpersonally wrestling with the meaning of moderation, and how it organizes their activism in the movement. Indeed, some of these members appeared even to understand that such parsing and precision on the definition of moderation, is *not* why it is so powerful a notion in discourses on

Islamism and on regulation of religion at large. However interlocutors were mostly unanimous in their valuation of moderation as central and defining, and cast everything the early founders did as an extension, or acts in service, of this moderation.

Instead of resisting anti-Islamist narratives, the MSP engaged in the popular negotiations of the ECC used to construct them, in order to align with the broader polity, and to help place the 'other' Islamist factions outside of the body politic. This is not just a deliberate political strategy, but for many members a result of their individual and intersubjective processes of meaning-making regarding the movement and their existence in the wider milieu. The tainted image of the 'other' Islamists rather, than a force *acting on* the MSP, has been a dialectic space of which the MSP and its members contributed to wider more public patterns of sense-making. In other words, contenders, even in a controlled political milieu, themselves participate in the construction of the discursive environments that generate political opportunity. In this way, reclaiming popular discourses like moderation and re-appropriating it for the movement's own discourse is a form of movement contention, if one free of confrontation or dispute (see Chapter One on SMT). The forthcoming chapter analyzes the history and development of another similar essentially contested concept, Algerianness, as well as its dialectic relationship with moderation.

Chapter Five: "I'm not an Islamist, I'm Algerian": Algerianness Weaponized

"Algerianness was defined, notably through exclusion."

–Malika Rahal, *Fused Together and Torn Apart* (2012, p. 131)

This chapter examines the social constructions of Algerianness and how it has been taken up and negotiated within the wider MSP. State-led discourses of 'moderate Algerian Islam' as intersecting with the national(ist) myth, have in recent years led to tropes of martyrdom and of religious indigeneity to be subsumed in Algerianness, all which have come to underpin political/religious moderation. (For the history of such constructions see McDougall, 2006.) Of course, there was little agreement on how in fact they ought to be defined, and what were the requirements of each. Who or what were believed to embody them were furthermore decidedly subjective and linked to the social positions and self-identifications of their user. In this way, notions of Algerianness are also *essentially contested concepts* (ECC) (Gallie, 1955): they are subjective, disputed, and indeed, weaponized and claimed in exclusivist terms. ('Moderate Algerian Islam' is a domestic religious/political policy position, but also a matter of foreign policy, which will receive brief mention but is outside the scope of this study.)

Regulating Algerianness comes as "[an]other sociopolitical realm" in which "authoritarian elites also invest [...] that are generally 'unidentified' by many political scientists, but critical for the production of compliance, repression, or contestation" (Jourde, 2009, p. 204). Its investigation thus allows "the study of the authoritarian repertoire [to] be enlarged" (Jourde, 2010, p. 204). For these reasons, as in the previous chapter on moderation/moderateness, Algerianness is investigated in this chapter as an ethnographic object (OPNI) itself. To unpack Algerianness, in keeping with the logic of the *essentially contested concept*, I pay closer attention to what is implied and connoted

in how individuals choose references, characterize, make value judgements and pick vocabulary as well as, to the function and position of these within the larger ideational milieu.

This chapter will examine allusions to and performances of Algerianness both in the wider polity and within the MSP through texts, speeches, social media, and in comments, conversations with me and others. This chapter will also engage with literature that interrogates Algerian nationalisms and the normative and often necessarily-essentialist discourses on which they rely, including (but not limited to) the various works of Fanny Colonna, James McDougall, Malika Rahal, Judith Scheele, and Natalya Vince. These serious English-language works deeply consider the role of contestation and dispute in the understandings of history and how these continue to shape the Algerian political space today.

Constructing Algerianness Today

Three main exclusivist constructions of Algerianness—what historian Malika Rahal calls '*entre-sois*'—emerged at various points after independence: "the FLN's Arab and socialist definition; the democrats' nationalist and pluralistic definition; and the Islamic fundamentalists' theocratic and millenarian definition" (2012, p. 128). Though these are cast as mutually exclusive by their proponents, who position themselves as the sole arbiters of Algerianness at the expense of others, there is actually considerable intersection and common cause. The FLN's Arabism, and the Islamism that dominated later, converged on the notion of recovering *Islamic* Algeria from foreign (read: western) intercession. The pluralists (especially the Francophone left) and Islamist agitators both cast the FLN as usurpers of the revolution, traitors of the values of the 1st of November, and *faux*-mujāhidīn who achieved only a trivial decolonization (through flawed Arabization policies) and a false plurality.

While these three articulations of Algerianness still pervade, they arguably do not enjoy equal legitimacy, and some are not as credible as in the past. The FLN's version of Algerianness thus saw the most resilience, appropriating the discourses of the other two, and marginalizing their formal presence, even if the breadth of the citizenry did not necessarily fully *buy into it* (see Chapter Three). The FIS' millenarian version, has in many ways been cast out.

In what follows, I describe two key ways in which Algerianness has been articulated, performed, enshrined, and withheld: *firstly* through martyrdom/veteran-ness and the national myth, and *secondly* through the notion of 'moderate Algerian Islam' and the imperative of religious indigeneity. These two themes correspond to the forthcoming subsections, within which I will first give some history and context on the notions before proceeding to discuss the ways in which the MSP attempts to claim them to position as indivisible from Algerianness and other linchpins of national belonging.

5.1 Martyrdom and the National Myth

Martyrdom has long been an axis through which battles over ownership and authentic embodiment of Algerian identity have been waged (McDougall 2006). After 1962, it was asserted as the ultimate symbol of the revolution, a coveted label over which the FLN sought a monopoly as it consolidated its position as guardian of the revolution, along with the largest association for ex-combatants, the National Organization of Mujahidin (ONM; *Organisation Nationale des Moudjahidine*) and through the formation of the Ministry of Mujahidin (*Ministère des Moudjahidine*). This cohort sought to ossify narratives of the past that would imprint on their posterity, reminding them of the sacrifice made by the 'million and a half martyrs' so they could live in a free Algeria.

Malika Rahal (2012) notes that in the state-building period, competing narratives on the revolution were left without an outlet as the state monopolized publishing on the topic[198] to ensure "certain themes, figures or organizations were simply written out of the curriculum" (p. 121).[199] The effects of this myth-making process would imprint on popular discourse, which would later go on to, today, lionize the post-colonial leadership, especially that of Boumediene and his program of decolonization—thanks in part to the nostalgia for the 1970s period—and legitimize (even celebrate) forthcoming social, economic and cultural/linguistic domestic policies, as well as insular foreign policy under a banner of Third World solidarity.

Martyrdom has remained a key instrument in these discursive processes; the status of *shahīd* (martyr) and *mujāhid* (a surviving combatant) of the Independence War still carries great symbolic clout. *Mujāhid/shahīd* status even accords material benefits. Financial payments, healthcare entitlements, subsidies, modest pensions to the immediate family, and other rewards to the families of martyrs and combatants have constituted a considerable slice of the national budget. Better-known *mujāhidīn* enjoyed high government posts and status in addition to the financial benefits given to their offspring.[200] In fact, concurrent to attempts during and after the conflict period to erode FLN's monopoly on the narrative of national struggle (by FIS discourses), the government has also redoubled efforts toward research devoted to tracking lesser-

[198] It did so by assuming control over history textbook production.
[199] Such as the rival MNA led by Messali Hadj. Rahal adds that the FLN could thus present "itself as rooted in an old and single-strand political struggle by concealing and denying the multiplicity of legacies and political traditions developed in Algeria prior to 1954" (2012, p. 121). This coordinated account was institutionalized even in academia.
[200] As Natalya Vince (2015) importantly notes however, lesser-known *mujāhidin*, whose stories nevertheless help build and preserve the national myth, received their public benefits only incrementally, meaning it was often insufficient to live from. Some individuals sold their benefits and subsidized goods for cash. The process by which one had to prove veteran status was particularly onerous for poorer, lesser-known, and rural combatants, especially as stories about false mujāhidīn came to dominate the press. It was further complicated by corruption and by requirements of political connectedness (*maʿrifa*). Such shortcomings in the face of persisting legends and heroism around martyrdom, show that martyrs often provide greater value as political symbols in the post-colonial era, than as valued participants in contemporary Algerian life.

known mujāhidīn, and their more obscure stories, through increased resources toward academic centers, and museums (Vince 2015).

Celebrated widely and often, major streets are named after the martyrs, with the prominence of the eponymous road usually corresponding to the fame of the *shahīd(a*) or *mujāhid(a*), while the Maqam al-Shahid ('martyrs' memorial') in Algiers, at 302 feet, stands out prominently along the city skyline. The government body designated for affairs regarding the *mujāhidīn* (the Ministry of Mujāhidīn) along with the FLN, hold forums, cultural events, celebrations, and induct road- and building-naming ceremonies. Monuments and other imagery have been used to commemorate and enshrine the *mujāhidīn* and *shuhadāʾ* (pl. *shahīd*) under state patrimony. Emmanuel Alcaraz (2010) notes in his study of Algeria's Independence War memorials that, a system of imagery, symbols, signs and rituals serves to constantly remind, indeed, of things some people may not have ever seen or experienced, thus crafting a unified, collective memory.[201] Furthermore, private citizens do not, legally and technically, retain the right to request, commission, or independently commence any construction of a martyrs' monument (p. 127),[202] effectively instutionalizing the state monopoly over this symbology. State-constructed monuments and commemorations—through the emotions, memories, and feelings they are designed to evoke, and the history they represent—were themselves important tools of legitimation. As Alcaraz notes:

> There is much nationalization of the cult of *shuhadāʾ* to the benefit of the Algerian state. The martyr allows the state to obtain […] 'the passport of the sacred.' The foundations of its legitimacy remains the blood of the martyrs of

[201] He writes, "The location of the monuments is not neutral. They can be located in the central square of a village or a small town, near the mosque or the communal people's assembly (APC). They can be found near a market (*La localisation des monuments n'est pas neutre. Ils peuvent se situer sur la place centrale d'un village ou d'une petite ville, à proximité de la mosquée ou de l'assemblée populaire communale [APC]. Ils peuvent se trouver près d'un marché*)" (2010, p.132).

[202] However, as DeGeorges (2009) notes, nevertheless, small towns throughout the country enshrine (and boast) their *shuhadāʾ* in special cemeteries, and families, communities, and movements hold frequent commemoration events. Regional narratives also have, throughout, maintained their own subjective accounts and histories, and in some cases dissented from the national-level projects of narrative centralization (p. 283).

> the war of independence. The power-holders consider themselves the heirs of the *shuhadāʾ*.[203] (p. 128)

During the late 1980s martyrdom and the national myth began to be increasingly subject to re-negotiation and contention.[204] Indeed, the idea that "the independent Algerian state exists because hundreds of thousands of Algerians sacrificed themselves in order to build it during the war of liberation [...] nourished the discourse of the nationalists *as much as the Islamist utopia of the FIS* [emphasis added]" (Martinez, 2006, p. 25). The FIS went on to enlist an untold number of followers, in part, around its argument that the so-called *ḥizb fransā* (party of France) elements within the regime (and/or the wider power structures) had usurped the revolution, by sending the rest of the (presumed Arabophone) country on a path of downward mobility while Francophile elite monopolized the spoils, thus betraying its—at its core, Islamic—ideals. This, by the FIS' logic rendered them *ḥarkī*s (Algerian auxiliaries who served on the side of France during the Independence War—today, often an epithet for an anti-Algerian traitor), making the FIS the destined culmination of the nationalist *jihād* and the true progeny of the revolutionary martyrs.

Malika Rahal thus notes that around the 1989 political opening, state control over national codes such as martyrdom was re-asserted: "The new constitution of 1989 also invoked the War for Independence, asserting that 'The State guaranties the respect of the symbols of the revolution, the memory of the *shuhadāʾ* [martyrs] and the dignity of their beneficiaries, and the *mujāhidīn* [war veterans].'" (2012, p. 121) Furthering this

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[203] '*Il y a bien nationalisation du culte des chouhada au profit de l'État algérien. Le martyr permet à l'État d'obtenir ce que Pierre Legendre appelle « le passeport du sacré ». Le fondement de sa légitimité demeure le sang des martyrs de la guerre d'indépendance. Les détenteurs du pouvoir se considèrent comme les héritiers des chouhada*.'

[204] Indeed, this set of notions was arguably already far from fixed, or attached to a specific set of people, as Hardman (2009) notes: "The war was, nonetheless, primarily one of liberation and the FLN welcomed non-Muslims in the struggle. Still, the war was referred to as a 'jihad' and combatants, regardless of their actual status as believers were referred to as '*mujāhidīn.*' [...] In this sense, a *mujâhid* was anybody willing to sacrifice his life in the struggle, not for Islam, but for the destruction of colonial injustice." (p. 171)

assertion of ownership amidst the ensuing violence of 1990s, Alcaraz (2010) finds that, the state reinvigorated its construction of monuments commemorating the *shuhadāʾ*, vigorously building more and more steles with the aim of asserting its historic legitimacy against 'enemies' who refused to recognize it (p. 126).[205] The monuments were thus also a way to reassert state actors' revolutionary legitimacy necessarily at the expense of Islamist interlopers.

To be sure, the civil war and the abundance of death it produced, led martyrdom discourses to resurge in a different way, partly as a way to bestow a coveted honor upon the dead, even if its application to the violent decade was markedly different from that of the revolutionary 'war dead'.[206] This was not because they were seen as any less honorable or self-sacrificing, but because the *cause* would not be as glorious. Instead, to have been martyred in the 1990s conflict seemed to connote confusion, dread, and hopelessness. Indeed, mothers were not "proudly" sending sons and daughters to the front lines as they might have done during the revolution.[207] In what was seen as a senseless fratricide, versus what was a glorious battle for the nation against illegitimate occupiers, the prospect of a martyred child evoked only fear, unknowability, and pointlessness. Andrea Khalil (2014) tracks martyrdom's representation in Algerian art, film, and literature over the decades. She finds in earlier works (1960s and early 1970s), such as that of Assia Djebar, martyrdom is still represented as a proud symbol of

[205] Indeed, many combatants took to defacing and destroying some of the monuments, questioning the authenticity of the enshrined martyrs (Alcaraz, 2010, p. 126).
[206] This time around, martyrdom did not come with the pensions, job guarantees, extensive subsidies (and liquor licenses), or assurances that their families would be set for life. Even the symbolic weight did not match the glory or celebrity accorded to revolutionary martyrdom.
[207] This sentiment (that mothers back then proudly sent sons) of course is a function of how the War of Independence is collectively 'remembered,' that is, understood even by those who were not yet born. By some accounts, parents were indeed nervous about sending their children to fight the French or participating in any way in the revolution, the benefits of which was an unknown quantity up until later stages of the war (Khalil, 2014; Vince, 2015).

Algerian struggle, evoking themes of integrity and honor.[208] Whereas, by the late 1970s and 1980s, the uses of revolutionary martyrdom began to lose credence:[209] where now, "literature and cultural expressions concerning martyrs [...] were often objections to official historiography and mythologizing languages of identity" (p. 82).[210]

However, the term, for many still carrying some connotation of sacrifice for the nation, was repurposed and reapplied to deaths in the 1990s conflict. When four young scouts were killed in a 1994 bombing in Mostaghanem, they were cast as 'martyrs of freedom;' slain writer Tahar Djaout is routinely cast a 'martyr of truth,' 'of literature' (rather ironically given his literary skepticism of martyrdom discourses), as is slain journalist Said Mekbel as 'martyr of the free press;' the Trappist monks killed at the Tibhirine monastery in 1996 were martyrized (and beatified in 2018 in Algeria); representatives of ONVT (National Organization of Victims of Terrorism) have called for martyrs of this period to be recognized as such in the constitution; and families, communities and movements went to great efforts to have their members recognized as martyrs, as a way to (re)assert themselves, their families, their localities, or their affiliations into the narrative of national pain and struggle (Scheele, 2006).

MSP as Nationalist Martyrs

These ways in which the term broke from previous patterns of collective usage opened the category to new claimants. The MSP too followed in the practice of re-

[208] Particularly in Djebar's (1962) work *Les Enfants du Nouveau Monde*, the most respectable female character, the protagonist, dreams of sacrificing her life for the nascent Algeria, dreaming of her judgment day; meanwhile a female *ḥarkī* who also, just happens, to be a prostitute appeared effectively, as a foil, who dies 'justly' at the hands of her brother in public view.

[209] Especially, Khalil notes, because the socialist promise on which the post-colonial state had hinged began to fail against the ascendancy of neoliberal reforms (2014, p. 82).

[210] In Djaout's 1984 novel *Les chercheurs d'os*, further suffering is begotten through the fool's errand of looking for war dead—an irony that Algeria had become so preoccupied with the Independence War, that it was no longer livable. Martyrdom is a cynical stand-in for political capital, to be accumulated even at further cost to life.

adapting discourses (both state and popular) on martyrdom[211] and other nationalist symbols to the new context of instability. And as laid out in Chapter Three, the conflict had begun to more prominently shape how people saw Islamism, the role of religion in public life, the concept of nation, who was and was not an Algerian. Indeed, 'the anti-Algerian' was no longer just the *ḥarkī*, but now also encompassed the 'religious infiltrator' (more in the next subsection). It thus became vital for the Islamist MSP to situate itself in the languages, groups, and categories of the conflict.

MSP members—in keeping with their all-compassing, uncontroversial version of Algerianness—avoided "Islamist-millenarian" discourses in talking about martyrdom (Rahal, 2012). After all, the FIS' contention that the FLN-led system was no longer the legitimate heir of the revolution, had retroactively invited the 'immoderate' label. Instead, MSP members asserted a view wherein it *too* held claims—alongside, but not at the expense the of, FLN et al., or any other members of the polity—to national remembrance, often repeating the well-known adage, "one hero, the people." *We too are the people*, they would instead contend, holding that many MSP founding members had in fact been *mujāhidīn* and/or had *shuhadāʾ* in their families. The MSP also forwarded its own martyrs from the conflict decade, to situate themselves favorably within the dichotomies that had come to typify the period. Identifying as on the side of the people, as among the "victimized," came as a way to perform a moderation vis-à-vis the FIS et al.

In a speech dated October 1993 in front of an adoring crowd, the Algerian flag positioned neatly behind him, Nahnah tells the story of a conversation with a young Algerian man, and his own response to his apparently treacherous comments about the ongoing bloody conflict:

[211] It is not incredibly noteworthy that the MSP did not also adopt state discourses of *jihād*, against the insurgents, as the concept had been appropriated during that conflict by the latter itself.

> What did he say to me? He said 'Let Algeria be divided into a million Somalias, who cares?' I stood up, I told him, 'Hey you, I am not a *ḥarkī,* my father is not a *ḥarkī*, I am not a *goumi* [word for *ḥarkī* used in Algeria's eastern region], and my father is not a goumi! This Algeria was created united and will stay united until Judgment Day!"[212]

Within just this short excerpt from his larger speech, Nahnah communicates a great deal about who he is (and implicitly who is the movement he represents), and where he is to be positioned within the scheme of the conflict period. Nahnah commits himself to national unity, presents himself as opposed to any internal regionalism that would threaten the territorial integrity of the country, and perhaps implicitly to this, as opposed to the sort of borderlessness certain strands within the FIS supposedly sought. He further invokes the ultimate anti-national caricature, the *ḥarkī /goumi*, to situate himself squarely as its opposite, accepting and adapting this dichotomy of the nationalist myth.[213] He then asked what had happened to "Algerian brotherhood," to "dialogue," and finished by asking, "where are the men?" alluding to the dearth of *al-radjla* that had allegedly befallen Algeria during this violent decade. As I will show below, these notions are all connected to how moderation would come to be cultivated both within and outside the movement.

As the conflict decade produced a second wave of martyrs, claimants in the MSP used systems of symbols, signs and rituals such as monuments, photograph placement, and commemoration ceremonies and marches that were in many ways in continuity with those used to enshrine the Independence War. The party produced and published its own 'The Book of Martyrs,' which elaborated the biographies of those

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[212] YouTube, binaa nahnah, 2013: "*Wash igul lī. gāl li 'khallī al-jazaʾir taqsam ʿalā miliyun sūmāl, wash raḥna fīha?' nuḍt. gult luh: 'ya hada! ana mānish ḥarkī, bābā māwush ḥarkī, ana mānish gūmī, u bābā māwush gūmī! al-jazaʾir hadiya tanḍim muwaḥḥada tabqā muwaḥḥada ilā yawm al-dīn!'*"

[213] Discursive developments in the post-colonial period have led to a caricaturization of the *ḥarkī* (Scheele, 2006) into the martyr's hideous foil, the worst type of traitor—where the war was *jihād*, their betrayal was a near-existential one of the *umma*. This archetype is thereby often weaponized, used as an insult or epithet, usually to cast a politician or other figure as more loyal to France—by espousing French, or any western "ideals," "values," etc.—than to Algeria.

close to the movement killed during the civil conflict. The MSP national headquarters has a wall which features the photos of those members who lost their lives in the 1990s conflict. Photos and drawn portraits of tens of young men killed in the 1990s, line the stairwell, describing that they had defended Algeria against treachery, Islamic perversion, extremism, anti-nationalism, and other such ideas.

The most prominent of such displays were dedicated to Mohammed Bouslimani, Mahfoud Nahnah's companion and co-founder of the MSP/Hamas. In 1993 Bouslimani was kidnapped from his home, and months later his body found in the Blida mountainside. As previously discussed, the widely accepted narrative on his murder was that the GIA, one of the main insurgent groups during the conflict, slit his throat after failing to secure from him a fatwa legitimizing their violent methods, and in order to persuade the MSP to boycott the national conference on resolving the crisis.[214]

In a 1994 speech addressing thousands of attendees, Mahfoud Nahnah cried and gesticulated to a massive crowd in the central Blida square, "Place Toute," as he cited Bouslimani as an example of the martyrdom of *moderate* Islamists at the hands of *immoderate* ones. "Bouslimani was murdered for saying no [to the fatwa]!" asking, "who would do this but the people hateful and ignorant of Islam?"[215]

Bouslimani became a symbol of MSP's "over 300 martyrs," and the 'moderate MSP martyr' was a character that would be actively cultivated very soon after his death.[216] Discourses underscored his 'patriotic sacrifice' and exalted him as the icon of MSP's commitment to moderation, to restoration of peace, and its loyalty to the Algerian nation at any cost. This persona was cultivated, and his memory was curated

[214] Although alternative theories attributing his death to the regime, also abound in private conversation. Some remain convinced that elements of the security had something to do with his death—especially where fatwas legitimizing their 'jihad' were usually only extracted from imams seeking to join the GIA.
[215] YouTube, hms tlemcen, 2018.
[216] The 300 number, sometimes 400, was a discourse repeated to me in several conversations with MSP across the ranks.

posthumously, and became central to the party's own nationalist myth-making processes. Indeed, around the country, all MSP and al-Irshad wa-l-Islah (MSP's religious/*daʿwa* wing) offices prominently feature Bouslimani's photo above the main entrances, and new buildings and initiatives are consistently inaugurated in his name—a reminder to visitors that the MSP deserves to stake out a place among the glorious on Algeria's historical record.[217]

A few years after Bouslimani's death, the Bouslimani Foundation was a set up as a charitable organization to commemorate his life, and re-create his work serving the poor and needy. The foundation soon began annual commemorations, and to curate his life story based on companions' accounts to share with younger, burgeoning members who did not know him. In 2003, the Foundation held his commemoration in Algiers, wherein books, CDs, and videos about his life traced his career in Islamic scholarship, as well as his activism in the late 1970s.[218] In January 2013, the Tlemçen wilaya branch of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah built a large religious complex in his name at the El Habbak subdivision of the Mansourah commune.

At the 2014 commemoration in Algiers, speakers praised his defense of moderate values, even as those values led to his death. According to reports, speakers unanimously hailed him as a 'nationalist' who 'sacrificed' his life for Algeria's unity and stability. Other speakers spoke of his valiance. MSP figure Abderrahmane Saïdi reportedly called him the "symbol of Algerian unity" and a nationalist who refused to give permission to terrorism, preserving his country's stability by emphasizing national values of "unity" and rejecting "violence and *fitna* ('discord').[219]

I attended the January 2016 commemoration for Bouslimani held at the MSP

[217] As Malika Rahal (2012) interestingly notes, "in a country where, the official slogan claimed, there had been 'but one hero, the people,' only martyrs could be glorified as individuals" (p. 122).
[218] Harichane, 2003.
[219] "Cheikh Bouslimani, un nationaliste", 2014.

provincial headquarters in Blida. Members and attendees referred to Bouslimani almost chiefly as *al-shīkh al-shahīd Bouslimani*, or more often just *al-shīkh.* Speakers hailed from around the country, including the national bureau. One speech expressed that his martyrdom was an act of love—for Algeria, for the nation, for all citizens, for the Algerian *umma*. Another speaker, a member of the local Blida branch said passionately:

> "Algeria was a country full of martyrs, martyrs for what? Many of the martyrs of the 1990s were without purpose or outcome. But Bouslimani died for the sake of Islam, for Algeria and her sons, for the sake of *real* Islam, not the *imported* ideas that created the problems of the 'time of terror' [emphasis added]."[220]

Another highlighted that "he did not run, but bravely went along with his captors, embracing his duty to face them." We see in these speeches vocabulary highly-reminiscent of revolutionary discourses of sacrifice, patriotism, heroism, courage, purpose, duty, resistance to 'foreign' assaults on Algerianness, which become intertwined with the MSP's discourses on moderation. At the event itself, "moderate, Algerian," (*wasaṭī, jazaʾirī*) "moderate, national(ist)" (*wasaṭī, waṭanī*) "moderate, not imported," (*wasaṭī, mūsh mustawrid*), were almost always deployed back to back, listed consecutively, as if their equivalence were intuitive.

Still more speakers discussed some of the movement's 'forgotten martyrs,' 'sacrificed' during the 1990s conflict: the hundreds of other MSP members killed in various attacks. That the perpetrators in many cases of MSP deaths are still in fact unknown, was not raised. The only language dissenting from the state narrative was that of the label of *islāmī* ('Islamist') given to the armed groups. "Why do we call them *islāmiyyin*, or *islāmawiyyin*?" one speaker railed, "They have no relationship to Islam. And today, Daʿish ('the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham'), and al-Qaʿida, and these other criminals have no relationship to Islam!"[221]

[220] Observation, January 29, 2016.
[221] Observation, January 29, 2016.

Behind the more official and rehearsed public events and commemorations however, martyrdom was understood differentially among members as evidenced in more personal conversations about movement discourses on jihad, martyrdom and national identity. On the question of 'who was a martyr' by definition, conventional Algerian usage had until now chiefly referred to martyrdom as a sacrifice (actively, knowingly) *made* for the nation (or *al-umma*). One member describing the murder of another member's uncle, also an MSP member, said, "look, but he was still sacrificed, we call it a sacrifice, because he was killed, why? Because he refused to join them, this refusal is a choice, accepting the possibility of death."[222] On this, Vince (2013) interestingly points out martyrdom/sacrifice can take on different meanings as: the acceptance that death could very likely result from one's participation in an armed conflict, versus the active choice of martyrdom as a mode of warfare (e.g. suicide missions) (p. 40). This member chooses to identify martyrdom as the former in his negotiation of the idea and its applicability to his friend's uncle and fellow MSP member. In this way, personal proximity to a martyred movement member, the calls for greater recognition of their nationalism, and other discourses of sacrifice and valor in the face of 'foreign' violence, were recurring themes which drew upon the language of the national myth (even if members acknowledged they could not know whether these individuals had willingly or unwillingly been slaughtered, for what purpose, or by whom). But again, such technical aspects of the term were less important that the emotions it evoked and the meaning it ascribed, namely the parallels it drew to the national(ist) narrative. These parallels arose in a conversation with a few of the January commemoration attendees near me:

> Girl 1: "Because all of this, all of these wars, is for the search for Algeria. Who are we, as Muslims? As Arabs? Well, of course we are not just Arab, but we are

[222] Conversation, January 29, 2016.

> still struggling for our identity. And we always have fought against foreign entities. In the past there was Larbi Ben M'hidi [one of the leaders of the FLN killed in the liberation struggle], today we have Bouslimani."
>
> Girl 2: "What we mean is that is they [FLN] did not stick to the real Islamic ideas, so terrorists came to try to speak in their place."
>
> Girl 1: "But they [FIS/terrorists] did it the wrong way. They instead gave a bad idea about Islam, and brought foreign concepts that we don't have in Algeria."
>
> Girl 2: "But Sheikh Bouslimani, God bless him, died in order to correct the image of Islam, he refused to give the *fatwa*. He was being a real *mujāhid*, *this* is *jihād*."[223]

On one hand, they (re)produced myths about their founders, and about movement purpose: that Nahnah and Bouslimani led the MSP in moderating the Islamist sphere, thereby stabilizing the country; that the party is an integral part of the national(ist) fabric and boasts its own sacrifices and martyrs; of a binary between good and bad Islamists; that it is an authentically Algerian party, and they mimic the greater party's use of the state's nationalist myth-making language to do so. On the other hand, they identify their own versions and explanations of history: Both girls were members of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, and their statements 'veered' slightly from what had seemed to me to be the now-agreed-upon position among MSP leadership (that terror and violence had resulted from a lack of moderate interpretation, as opposed to the spiritual/cultural shortcomings of the incumbent system), and almost converged with that of the FIS (that religious, cultural, and linguistic decolonization been abandoned following independence, and the violence was a culmination of this previously miscarried revolution). They also negotiate their own understanding of '*al-jihād'* outside of the FLN-revolutionary-nationalist or FIS-millenarian-Islamist dichotomy. Finally, their reading of history, casts Algeria as specially locked in a state of existential struggle against foreign incursion, a 'search for Algeria' as she puts it, that sees modern Algerian conflict as inevitable, as if

[223] Conversation, January 29, 2016.

the latter were in continuity with the first. (A discourse which is very common—perhaps due to replication of local narratives—in some academic accounts on Algeria as well.)

We see here that MSP members' individually-formed understandings of their shared past do not dissipate under pressures from the greater movement to unify political-historical discourses; instead members receive, adapt, and distill party directives through their own lenses formed of their independent experiences of their world. And rather than asserting their ideas as dissensions from the party line, their varied lenses further engender their loyalty to the MSP. They use these personal understandings to justify the MSP's rightful place in modern constructions of nationalism, sacrifice, belonging.

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Martyrdom's new articulations show the term's discursive power and stamina—it has endured as an incontrovertible virtue, as invaluable political capital. The martyrdom complex is a testament to the ways political legitimacy is still contested along lines of subjective representations of national history. And as Vince (2013) rightly notes, the state's official monopoly over claims to the Independence War is now less unanimously legitimate, with more space for maneuver. The MSP constructed its own martyrs' memorials and hosted its own commemorations; Bouslimani and other slain MSP members became the movement's '*martyrs for moderation*'. These legitimating myths and narrative cults, which often evoked the language of the Independence War, were enshrined in the preamble of the party's political charter:

> The Movement for a Society of Peace, which was born out of the womb of the Algerian people and their suffering, has contributed since the early years to building the Algerian state and in defending the choices of the people and the orientations of the nation. It has done so out of its deep awareness of the unique nature of the post-independence era, and within a strategic *framework of wasaṭiyya wal iʿtidāl and relying on the Islamic reference common among all*

> *Algerians*. The movement has contributed to the long, noble struggle, via its men, and institutions and strategic choices, to refute the plans threatening to divide the nation, and it has courageously confronted advocates of sedition and partition, be they speaking in the name of religion, territory, or language, or simply wanting to exploit and remain in power. In this way, the movement has offered ***convoys of martyrs*** from among their finest men and women. [emphasis added][224]

We see the MSP sought less to undermine the fundamental logic of the national myth or subvert the accepted—moral, revolutionary, or religious—nodes of legitimacy than to assert itself as among its brokers.

To be sure, MSP members are not its only new claimants. Judith Scheele (2006) for instance provides compelling examples of Berber(ist) movements, seeking recognition of and attention to the martyrs among them, demanding the state acknowledge local victims of the 2001 police violence as *shuhadāʾ*. Unfairly cast as *ḥarkī*s, or members of *ḥizb fransā* because of their varying links to France, presumed Francophone tendencies and assumed rejection of Arabic, Scheele finds locals were more interested in the symbolic significance of martyrdom, as a matter of inclusion and belonging, than its material benefits (p. 189).

In another example, exclusion from these nationalist symbols risked deepening political isolation among members of the Touareg community in the southern Tamanrasset region, as conveyed in a 2018 *El Watan* newspaper interview with the Amenokal[225] of the Hoggar region:

> The notables were very upset by the fact that they were excluded from the Martyr's Day commemoration ceremonies. How can we forget the notables of the Hoggar tribes who gave many martyrs to the Revolution?[226]

[224] *al-barnāmaj al-siyāsī lil-ḥaraka*, n.d.
[225] The title given to the highest-ranking chief of the Touareg tribes, found in southern Algeria, as well as Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, among others.
[226] "La patience de notables", 2018 ("*Les notables étaient très contrariés par le fait qu'ils aient été exclus des cérémonies de commémoration de la Journée du martyr. Comment peut-on oublier les notables des tribus du Hoggar qui ont donné de nombreux martyrs à la Révolution … ?*"

The leader saw their exclusion as an erasure of the Touareg people from the Algerian myth, an ultimate affront to the longer-standing breakdown in trust between the government (symbolically the northern metropoles) and the southern population.[227]

Disputing and negotiating martyrdom thus comes as a shared repertoire (see Chapter One; Tilly, 1995) among groups that have traditionally been sidelined (or altogether excluded) from the national myth, its attendant symbolism, and its tangible benefits. It is my contention however, here and throughout this thesis, that the conflict decade, in addition to the regional optics of terror that has followed, has made this claim-making of particular consequence to a group like the MSP. Where Islamists are more distinctly and methodically cast as external and dangerous to the national fabric, it endeavors to place itself on the side of state in the (nationalist-)state versus (imported-)Islamist dichotomy through which the conflict is still often imagined. For Islamists, in addition to being an articulation of belonging, it is also an expression of *moderation*, which is a specific type of *political* belonging that shapes Islamists' political opportunity.

5.2 Religious Localism, Algerianness, Moderation

We now examine a second discourse, of *religious localism* and *'moderate Algerian Islam*,' through which Algerianness has been expressed in official, legal, and popular discourses alike to draw boundaries on belonging, and to withhold it from certain actors. I will begin with a bit of context on the notion before elaborating how the

[227] So unanimous is martyrdom in national belonging, that he worries the slight could more fully turn already-disaffected youth away from the social group organized around the Amenokal—which has traditionally been in an arrangement with the FLN-state that ensures tribe members' loyalty to this state. Given Touareg's issues of economy and social marginalization vis-à-vis their northern counterparts, that demands to recognize their claims to martyrdom finds a place among their more pressing material demands, demonstrates the binding nature of the notion's imperative, as transcending even the most profound intra-national identity differences.

MSP takes it up in articulating its identity. In addition to the nationalist myth and martyrdom discourses, Algerianness and nationalism were now increasingly articulated through an indigenization[228] of Islam, as through the prism of more contemporary 'threats' to Algerian religious practice.[229]

A 2005 article published in Algerian daily L'Expression[230] covers a speech by then-Religious Affairs Minister Bouabdellah Ghlamallah,[231] in which he calls for a 'unification' and Algerianization of religious discourse through media to counterbalance foreign religious sources entering the country through the internet. He is quoted as having said "Algeria has its own personality [character] in religious discourse, to which *we must return* [emphasis added]"[232] expressing nostalgia for an imagined past where Algeria's religious practice was free of foreign influence.

Paraphrasing the Minister, the journalist asserts that "the message implied by the Religious Affairs [official] is, without contest, one of returning to this Islam *bequeathed by our ancestors* and un-polluted by political violence [emphasis added]"[233] and that Ghlamallah, "wants to put back together the pieces of *authentic Algerian Islam*, mistreated by 'foreign' currents that nearly led an entire nation adrift [emphasis added]."[234] Both the minister's speech, and the journalist's re-telling, effectively wed religious indigeneity to moderation, and link foreign Islam to extremism and danger.

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[228] As distinct from earlier 20th century discourses on Algerian religious particularity. The transnational *salafiyya* influenced Abdelhamid Ben Badis, whose philosophy was central to Algerian revolution and nation-building, and was explicitly wedded to Algerian nationalist Islam. The way in which Islam is 'indigenized' or 'Algerianized' today is distinct from how it was done in this previous era—relying on a branding that combines the Maliki school, with Sufi brotherhoods, policies codified under the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

[229] Examples include Wahhabism from Saudi Arabia, Ahmadism from South Asia, and Shiism from Iran which are subsumed under a blanket threat of 'foreign' religious influence.

[230] Benalia, 2005.

[231] He is today, the Chairman of Algeria's High Islamic Council (Haut Conseil islamique (HCI).

[232] Benalia, 2005. '*L'Algérie a sa propre personnalité dans le discours religieux, ce à quoi il faut revenir.*'

[233] "*Le message sous-entendu par le premier responsable des Affaires religieuses est, sans conteste, celui de revenir à cet islam légué par nos ancêtres et non pollué par la violence politique*."

[234] "*A semblé vouloir recoller les morceaux de cet islam algérien authentique, malmené par des courants «étrangers» qui ont failli mener toute une nation à la dérive."*

This notion, marketed to international onlookers and domestics audiences alike, built itself on the narrative that the civil war was the result of meddlesome foreign interests, and later, of the FIS' importation of extreme versions of Islam that had no basis in Algerian history, culture, or society, or of the armed Islamist groups' composition chiefly of foreign fighters (or domestic combatants who had seen battle in Afghanistan).

Providing his own analysis of the speech, the journalist concludes that "Islamist discourse, for it will [now] be distilled by the national press, will no longer be imprinted with the *excessive Orientalism* [eastern orientation] *that has led the country to the excesses* [problems] we now know."[235] In addition to locating blame for the violent decade squarely in the Islamist camp, this articulates the state's exclusive ownership of 'indigenous religious practice.' Indeed, as a partly a matter of religious policy, Bouteflika's coterie has taken to revitalizing Sufi orders and practices as authentically 'Algerian' religious institutions, thus conduits of moderation. In what is in fact a region-wide pattern, these Bouteflika-led efforts[236] to promote 'moderate local [Algerian] Islam,'[237] have received diplomatic and moral support from numerous western allies, and is a new pillar in its paternalist ties to the Sahel.

Despite relying implicitly on an essentialization of Algerian culture, history, and religious practice, as well as of the role of Sufism in the Algerian past and assumptions of 'inherent' Sufi pacifism, this neo-indigenization of Islamic practice has been generally somewhat persuasive in Algeria, even if many do not trust its hyper-promotion by the state (Muedini, 2015; Sakthivel, 2016). Beyond just the specter of its own civil conflict, the more recent optics of terrorist violence and war in neighboring

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[235] *"Le discours islamiste, tel qu'il sera distillé par les organes de presse nationaux ne sera plus empreint de cet orientalisme excessif qui aura conduit le pays aux dérives que l'on connaît."*

[236] We must be cautious to refer to them as necessarily 'state-led'.

[237] Indeed, there are several other domestic religious, geopolitical reasons for this pattern of institutionalized Sufism-promotion, which is also observable in Morocco and to a degree, Tunisia. See Muedini (2015) and Sakthivel (2016).

countries has aided in this. Dominant narratives have positioned sectarianism—or the idea that belligerents are executing the will, and are under the patronage, of foreign religious hegemons—as one of the chief drivers of the region's various 'proxy' wars, stoking fears about the potential for Algerian insecurity.

It is notable that at previous points in Algeria's history, 'local practice' has been cast as a threat.[238] To give one example, the interwar period's religious-reformist wave that crystallized under Ben Badis and the AUMA—the symbol(s) of Algerian religious nationalism and indigeneity *par excellence*—had itself come from the Arab East (Djerbal, 2007), influenced by the transregional Salafi movement in Tunisia and Egypt, among other traditions[239] (Merad, 1967; Achi, 2007). And it was Ben Badis' dictums that played a central role in Boumediene's religious engineering, which also sidelined Sufi orders and the veneration of holy persons as un-Islamic, *bidaʿ* ('heretical innovation'), obscurantist and antiquated, thus threatening to his modernization efforts. Thus the new nature of the invocation of Sufism and the boundaries of indigeneity almost-certainly results from politically-motivated revisions and renegotiations of an imagined, constructed, or 'remembered' past.

The celebration in recent years, even among avowed secularists and laicists, of the Algerian *haïk* can perhaps be seen as an expression of this development. The haïk is a garment that consists of a loose-fitting (usually white) cloth wrapped around the body, with a triangular white cloth covering the lower face, usually worn by older women. During the annual haïk celebrations, young women don the haïk, march in the streets, pose for photos with friends, and pay homage to a dress largely seen as one of yesteryear.

[238] This shift is not unique to Algeria. The political instrumentalization of Sufi brotherhoods under Morocco's King Mohammed VI, for instance, departs markedly from the period under his father, Hassan II, whose reasons for sidelining 'local practice' were rather similarly to those motivating Boumediene.
[239] Not to be confused with the neo-Salafist movements of the late 20th century onward.

The annual celebration did not coincide with my stay in-country, but journalistic reports and accounts from girlfriends who participated offered some insights (notwithstanding some potentially self-selecting discourses within the articles). "I just wear it for fun on this holiday," my friend Kenza admitted, "to take selfies," she added. "The only person in my family who wears it is my grandma."[240] Nevertheless she says, "I think it's good, this haïk day, it's important to bring back the *real* Algeria, instead of the hijab that girls wear here. We have to make our *own thing*." In a 2013 article about the celebration a participating respondent and her grandmother opined, "it is unfortunate that we've had the hijab imposed on us since the 1990s, it is not a part of our tradition."[241] Implicitly referencing the armed Islamists of the 1990s conflict, she casts the hijab as un-Algerian, and the result of foreign incursion.[242] The grandmother adds, "sure, the haïk has *Turkish origins*, but it was with us for centuries [emphasis added]"[243]. Her qualification belies an acknowledgment that most practices and rituals are at some point *borrowed*. Her issue is perhaps not with the longevity of the borrowed practice, but the origin. Namely, Turkish influence is perhaps to her more palatable than a Saudi one. Indeed, several of the women and girls with whom I moved lamented that the haïk either was no longer worn or had been supplanted by foreign-style veils. My friend Houria said, "look at me, even I am wearing *foulard* ('headscarf'), not haïk, my hijab we took from Iran," describing, rather remorsefully, how she and others of her generation had abandoned "real Algerian tradition."

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[240] I would, if compelled, probably loosely classify her as a member of the Francophone elite—even though such identities are fluid, fungible, and if asked, wouldn't think to identify herself that way. She enjoys upward mobility due to her various networks and education. Her knowledge of Arabic is by her own admission, limited, she knows only rudimentary passages from the Quran, and she moves in social circles wherein veiling would be seen as a curiosity. She travels frequently to France and London where two of her sisters live.

[241] Khadige, 2013.

[242] What is left vague is whether she believes the imposers were themselves foreign, or conduits by which foreign practices and ideas entered Algeria. See Khadige (2013).

[243] Interestingly, this is also contested, with some contending that the haïk was not brought by the Turks, but was indigenous to Algerians even prior.

To this end, another participant is quoted as saying, "we want to sweep away these clothes which come from Saudi Arabia,"[244] which she further characterizes as "black, sad, and stifling under the sun," in contrast to the "traditional haïk which is the pride of Algerian women," with its "lightness and elegance".[245] (However, in some regions in the east, including Setif and Constantine, the haïk is itself black in color—in some places called a *malayya*—and sometimes made of wool. This suggests that her grievances were less about just the color and heaviness of the dress than with its Saudi provenance.) A passerby reportedly added, "this is a part of our culture. The black thing, that is totally alien". These celebrations are a space to negotiate the boundaries of 'locality' between Algerianness and foreignness, which have also become wrapped up in narratives of religious localism (haïk as expressing *national identity*, versus a hijab or niqab as an extra-national trend).

Moreover, the *haïk* has an additional layer of nationalist symbolism (and martyrdom), as it was also worn by *fidāʾiyāt* (women freedom fighters) during the independence struggle (to transport hidden weapons, bombs, messages, and other relevant items, as the conservatism the dress connoted shielded its wearer from searching and touching by French police). It was thus over time romanticized as a distinctly Algerian-Muslim (and feminine) symbol of anti-colonial defiance. Because the haïk is wound up with the national myth, it often evokes nostalgia for the 'virtuous' Algeria of yesteryear, yet untouched by the contemporary cultural, social, and political decay in which newer veiling trends have happened to find a home. The haïk-reverence thus also links the nationalist myth and martyrdom, to more contemporary notions of religious localism as moderation. The haïk, is something to be asserted over the immoderation and nefariousness of 'foreign' practice.

[244] Khadige, 2013.
[245] She is presumably referring to the *ʿabāya* or *niqāb*.

It follows that these official and popular discourses together render the label of 'religious import,' acutely threatening to an Islamic movement's popular legitimacy: casting doubt on the Algerianness of its orientations, influences, and exegeses, and even marginalizing in some respects from the national myth. Alongside this, the *al-ayād al-khārijiyya* (the notion of a meddling 'foreign hand') was discussed in the introductory chapter as having re-arisen after the 1990s due to a confluence of issues, not least as a hyperextension of the foundational myths which cast "Algerian history as a long series of rebellions against unjust and foreign occupation that reached its climax in the Algerian war of independence" (Scheele, 2006, p. 182), an angst 'confirmed' by the 1990s conflict. Due to their discursive strength, the MSP re-appropriates these notions rather than seeking to make a case against them.

Religious Localism, and the MSP as Muslim Brotherhood

The MSP has traditionally been considered a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the extent to which the MSP today either intensifies or modulates claims to a relationship with, or influence by, the transnational Muslim Brotherhood (MB)—whether this is the flagship organization in Egypt, or other branches—is a prominent example of the ways in which the MSP seeks to ensure its place in the Algerian fabric, to meet larger ideational imperatives of religious indigeneity, Algerianness and moderation.

Since the party's founding, members have vacillated between strengthening, relaxing, or altogether abandoning language that link it to the organization, either momentarily depending on the audience, as well as more enduringly, per shifts in the political environment. As briefly discussed in Chapter Two, the MSP's early founders throughout the 1970s and 1980s originally intended toward the establishment of the international MB in Algeria. Nahnah's early formation and influences drew heavily

upon the MB, and aligned itself with its international network (*al-tanẓīm al-dawalī*). The MSP has adopted basic aspects of the MB's ideology (e.g., the Sunna as the only reference for organizing the individual, the family structure, society/community, and then, the state), and a nominal adherence to its terms for engaging with 'secular entities.'[246] The most significant adoption is that of the MB's organizational model (Chapter Two). This contrasts with Abdallah Djaballah, representing the other Algerian MB 'camp' of the eastern group, who preferred to represent an Algerian version of the MB free of formal ties with the larger international organization, merging it with tenets of the local al-Jazaʾara (Algerianist) Islamist tendency. The latter focused on Algerian nationalism and rejected non-Algerian interpretations and influence. Omar Ashour (2009) notes that of the major trends to influence Algerian Islamism in the 20th and 21st centuries[247], the al-Jazaʾara was unique in its advocacy of 'Algerianization' of political Islam, and refusal of transnational aims—which Nahnah, ironically, vehemently opposed (p. 7).[248] According to then-spokesperson Sid Ahmed Boulil:

> Nahnah could not subscribe to al-Jazaʾara ideology, we cannot Algerianize or regionalize the faith. This is consistent with the thought of the Muslim

[246] That *al-shariʿa* is an 'insurance' against the ruling regime's potential tyranny; as the Quʾran is open to reinterpretation, it is sufficient that secularism and a secular regime's policy do not obviously contravene Islamic imperatives. It is therefore technically permissible to work with and under such a regime. (Accounts on this have varied from one MB leader to another, however. Qutb for instance called for armed struggle.)

[247] Including Ikhwanism, Salafism, Jihadism, Takfirism and the Jazaʾara (Ashour, 2009, p. 7) Many FIS figures subscribed to the Jazaʾara ideology, and the latter was one of two dominant strains within the Front.

[248] Al-Jazaʾara were formed of individuals from a camp of Islamic thinkers influenced by Algerian Islamic thinker Malek Bennabi, who held that Algerian society, Islamist or otherwise, was too fixated on adopting foreign models, and misguided as they ignored the spiritual foundations present in their own society. While they rejected violence, and accepted electoral democracy, they considered armed rebellion to be legitimate and justified if confronted by a dictatorship. It is worth noting that although Bennabi had been a key inspiration to members of al-Qiyam (McDougall 2017: 263), Nahnah diverged from the subsequent developments of al-Jazaʾara thought in the 1970s and 1980s. (See Chapter Two for more on al-Qiyam.) Nahnah, for his part, admonished Algerian religious particularity and their rejection of Eastern, pan-Islamic notions. In fact, he was responsible for coining the Al-Jazaʾara nickname, which was thereafter used pejoratively thus rejected by the camp for years. The MSP's position on al-Jazaʾara is thus quite telling considering the esteem it now accords to religious indigeneity. (More contemporarily however, some adherents have embraced the term, presenting themselves as having been indeed committed to the Algerian nation and its religious history as a reference. In turn, rhetoric on the part of the MSP on this subject has dwindled, as religious transnationalism became linked to nefarious foreign influence, and in turn to immoderation, starting as early as the early-1990s.)

> Brotherhood. Islam is not Algerian, Moroccan, Tunisian or Egyptian. Islam is a universal religion and Algeria cannot be a *marjiʿ* ('point of reference') for Islam. Islam is global and regionalism cannot be a reference.[249]

In later years, MSP's discourses on a global *umma*, and influence under Egypt's flagship MB were deployed more sparingly, and Nahnah's disdain for the al-Jazaʾara's Algerian religious particularity (he was in fact responsible for coining the nickname) were all but forgotten. In front of non-Islamist audiences, or acutely nationalist members of the party itself, the party restrained appeals to transnational activism in order to satisfy institutional and popular fixation on sovereignty and on authentic/moderate 'Algerian Islam.' However in private, or often among likeminded members, transnationalism was alluded to with an air of 'if only' or, 'in an ideal world,'—at once idealized under a nostalgia of global Islamic greatness, but undesired for its remoteness. Indeed, many dismissed the notion as too hypothetical and abstract, that debates about lofty issues like the illegitimacy of borders were irrelevant to their context and distracted from more pressing domestic issues for the movement. The discursive energy MSP members devote to Algerian specificity is driven by a combination of personal, in-group, and national/contextual motivations. For example, for Ishaq, a volunteer with al-Irshad wa-l-Islah:

> Yes, the *umma* is important, and the borders we have now, if you remember, they are forged, created by the French, from the time of occupation. The Europeans came together and divided the Muslim nation for their interests. But what happened, now, we *are* Algerians, we struggled, and this [anti-colonial] struggle has made us into one people. Moroccans are my brothers, Tunisians are my brothers, but their struggles were different, he cannot be my Algerian brother. So how to return to the *umma* after of all this; many people, including me would not agree to sacrifice Algeria. So it is important, the *umma* is a noble goal, but not now. All the countries must agree. This will take a lot of time. Plus, now you have Daʿish pretending to be *umma*, so we are in a dangerous time. Dangerous ideas are being brought into our country. Saudi is trying to influence Algerian Islam, and this is so dangerous. So we have to protect ourselves first, before we can work for the real *umma*.

[249] S.A. Boulil, interview, October 22, 2015.

Many political scientists have cast such discourses—of abandoning the *umma* [250] 'in favor of' the modern nation-state—as evidence of 'evolution,' 'pragmatism' or indeed, 'moderation' (Driessen 2014; Schwedler 2006; Wickham 2004, 2013). (Even though this is quite common to contemporary Islamist movements, especially MB movements that have always promoted the nation-state, unlike, other religious movements.) Rather than classifiable into Islamist behavioral archetypes, these discourses instead demonstrate a rather painless reckoning between not-so-conflicting loyalties. Members I knew did not feel compelled to 'choose' between love of nation and love of movement—Algerianness and its related imperatives act upon and are espoused by the very individuals that make up the movement. Rather than there being some profound tension, Ishaq seems to find the reconciliation quite intuitive and straightforward. The priority of the nation—underscored to him by apparently treacherous religious forces present outside national borders—is sufficiently important for him, such that the *umma* becomes irrelevant. Moreover, even while many observers seek to technically classify the MSP as a MB party or not, the lines of identification and identity-construction are less defined by the MB, than by Algeria's own historical trajectory, as well as how this history transpires in citizens' memory. As we saw in the *ḥalqa* in the previous chapter, the FIS as an anti-model, the Islamist 'other', the abject[251] and the country's own past was more central in the youth's discussion of the party's moral direction, political path, and the imperative of national loyalty in moderation, than was the MB. Of course, strategic political developments factor into these imaginaries as well. The 2013 Egyptian coup significantly weakened the flagship MB's political capabilities, which

[250] Interestingly enough, Olivier Roy in *The Failure of Political Islam* (1994) (which has since been challenged, revised, and brought to bear against newer developments) cites Islamist abandonment of the transnational vision of unifying the *umma*, in favor of attempting to do so within the borders of the nation-state, as one of the causes of political Islam's "failure."

[251] The FIS was consistently maintained as the implicit point of comparison when discussing MSP's moderation and as the Islamist "alternative."

led several country branches to look elsewhere for leadership. (Namely, the Turkish outcome has been taken up as a regional model among the leadership; more on which is forthcoming.)

One telling exception the MSP makes to its optics of distance from transnationalist Islamists and the MB branches of the 'Arab east,' is in its highly publicized relationship with Palestine's Hamas. According to Burgat and Dowell (1993), the MSP's early name *Hamas* was chosen in order to link itself to the Palestinian cause—indeed MSP/Hamas was reportedly created on the anniversary of that of Palestine's Hamas (p. 288). Indeed, I observed MSP members' persistent informal use today of 'Hamas' to refer to their movement was not just a holdover from a bygone time, or a method to navigate legal limitations.[252] 'Hamas' carries connotations among its followers, of the time of Nahnah, commitment to Islamic government and a more existential purpose, as well as a cognitive linkage between itself and the party of Gaza. Associating their name to that of a Palestinian and Islamic movement of resistance, has allowed them to adopt parallel language of siege and marginalization and to emphasize the oneness of the transnational cause to which they position themselves as uniquely and inextricably linked, and as uniquely capable of addressing.[253]

This exception to the 'transnational taboo' is the result of widespread subaltern co-identification, namely the parallels of the Palestinian cause to Algeria's liberation struggle, among Algerians broadly speaking. This affinity between Algerians' own

[252] This refers to the 1996 law against the party's use of religious symbols and appellations. See Chapter Two.

[253] Of course, at other times, 'Hamas' is uttered by mere force of habit. It is common practice in Algeria to either retain the previous name in everyday parlance or to use the name, which has more legitimacy among its referents. If I live on Rue Ahmed Khalfi, its prior French name, Rue Charras will the name by which it is known. On the other hand, the famous Didouche Mourad no longer goes by Rue Michelet. A similar story applies to Rue Larbi Ben M'hidi in Algiers near the statue of Emir Abdelqader (a similar Rue is in Oran). Popular preference for a new versus old appellation proves to be far more meaningful than mere habit, they are indeed socially reinforced.

national(ist) myth and the ongoing Palestinian crisis has led to Algeria's (official) support for the PLO to remain strong, and to the salience of the humanitarian situation for many Algerians, which in turn animates many MSP members' emotional and moral impetuses.

The MSP built the Mahfoud Nahnah High School in Gaza (and rebuilt it when it was destroyed by shelling), and the "Manager of the Palestinian Issue and Issues of Justice" is a titled position in the MSP national bureau as well as in all province- and commune-level MSP branches. Abdallah Yousfi, who previously held this post in Blida told me, "*They* are Hamas Palestine, *we* are Hamas Algeria, we are the same, cut from the same cloth (*kīf kīf khaṭ waḥid*). And Palestine is our [Muslims'] land (*arḍna*)."[254] The Palestinian relationship is thus an *important exception to the MSP's understatement of extra-national cause, as it is largely-acceptable within the Algerian epistemic space*.

Though the Gaza issue remains one over which the party has no real policy control or political leverage (foreign policy is centralized and already decidedly pro-Palestine), the MSP's vocal and high-profile activism and charity work in Gaza in partnership with Hamas has garnered widespread positive attention throughout the years,[255] has enhanced views on the MSP's social legitimacy and piety, and has been an impressive recruitment tool. For instance, Djamel for years self-described as irreligious and nonpartisan, however became a post-holder in the party after years of pro-Palestine activism and charity through avenues he felt only the MSP provided. He always told me how, "not many groups were doing as much as MSP. The FLN did a little, but the MSP, and Blida, were at the front."

[254] A. Yousfi, interview, December 15, 2015.
[255] Enough that TAJ attempted to undercut it, launching its own charitable initiatives in 2014 while asserting that it would not deal with Palestine's Hamas, but only with the legitimate interlocutors, the Palestinian Authority, and through the formal channels such as Algeria's Foreign Affairs Ministry—a jab at the MSP-Hamas relationship which also signaled support for official Algerian efforts at the expense of the MSP's. See Aggar (2002) and Boufatah (2014).

In 2009, MSP's Blida wilaya office invited then-spokesman of Palestine's Hamas, Sami Abu Zihri, accompanied by Soltani, to participate in a public outdoor forum (in the pouring rain no less) rallying Blidians to support the Palestinian cause.[256] The 'Freedom Flotilla' in 2010, was one of the MSP's biggest social and political victories in the party's short history. After Israeli forces fired at the ship on which MSP president Abderrazak Makri was traveling, stories abounded in the media about the MSP's 'suffering' at the hands of Israeli security, hearkening to notions of martyrdom and sacrifice. A representative of MSP's youth wing, was quoted as saying, "There was torture. We lived through what our Palestinian brothers have lived through for 60 years."[257] Makri and other MSP members were given a hero's welcome upon their return, eclipsing the state parties present.[258] MSP's relationship with Palestine and Hamas thus presents a marked exception to the 'peril' of transnational Islamism.

Indeed, as discussed at the outset, certain elements of the 'east' are cast as more threatening to 'moderate Algerian Islam' than others, namely the hegemonic influence of Saudi Arabia, Iran and other such regional *centers* of religious soft power. Under Makri's leadership, the MSP has increasingly looked to Turkey's AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) for guidance, which demonstrates that loyalty to the flagship MB are not etched in stone, that the choice of Islamist model (and anti-model) are additionally based on performance, popularity, image and other practical concerns. As is to be expected however, the MSP's relationship with AKP and other transregional Islamist groups has been cast as treacherous and threatening to the preservation of 'moderate Algerian Islam.' In February 2018, secular writer Kamel Daoud critiqued the MSP's reception of the Turkish Prime Minister and the AKP delegation on human rights

[256] See M. B., 2009.
[257] Bensouiah, 2010.
[258] An MSP-led effort, it also had a few members of the FLN and RND in their caravan. See Bensouiah (2010).

grounds.[259] In response, Makri called Daoud and other opponents of the meeting "traitors and collaborators of France."[260] Daoud's rebuttal cast the MSP's claims to martyrdom and the nationalist myth as dubious: "I wrote about Erdogan [Turkish PM] what Algeria's *martyrs* would have written, you wrote what the *agents of the Muslim Brotherhood* [added emphasis] would have written."[261] Though Turkey has arguably not typically been cast as a foreign religious threat in the way Saudi Arabia, Iran and the other Gulf states have, Daoud's statement shows that any sort of religious foreignness may be seized upon as marks of disloyalty or religious extremism, as contravening 'Algerian Islam.' This broader exchange between them—and the positions they stake out—displays the sorts of mutually-exclusive claims made on Algerianness, and lines along which two actors may attempt to cast the *other* out of it.

Ultimately, the extent to which the MSP can still be considered (and considers itself) a MB branch, is far from obvious. I have thus refrained here from examining the more 'technical' ways in which the party does or does not adhere to various tenets and practices as called for by the MB, because they are outside the scope of this study, and are moreover challenging to verify due to the contestations I describe.[262] Instead, these contestations over the MB label are themselves far more telling as objects of movement meaning-making; the notion of connectedness to the MB, or not, is an axis around which members negotiate their Algerianness.

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[259] Ironically, Daoud is himself often accused of extra-national loyalty of another sort—often lambasted as a *ḥarkī* for his secularism and sometimes western audience.
[260] Namous, 2018 ('*Traitres et de collaborateurs de la France.')*
[261] Namous, 2018. ('*Moi, j'ai écrit sur Erdogan ce qu'auraient écrit les martyrs de l'Algérie, vous, vous avez écrit ce qu'auraient écrit les agents des frères musulmans.')*
[262] For example, some members of the larger MSP movement, including members of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, as well as some from the ex-FIS have said that in 1976, Nahnah pledged *bayʿa* ('allegiance')to the MB, while others, especially those active on the formal partisan side typically deny this, arguing that the definition of *bayʿa* is subject to interpretation.

The MSP as Authentically Algerian Islam

I now turn to an example of the sorts of discourses taken up within the MSP when guarding its Algerianness, the references and vocabularies chosen (and what they imply and connote), the characterizations and value judgements made, and the implications for positioning the movement.

In March 2017, Makri was engaged in different sort of public row, with an Emirati preacher. The Emirati religious figure, Waseem Yousef,[263] of Jordanian origin, was invited by an Algerian television channel to discuss the notion of *al-wasaṭiyya wal-iʿtidāl* (centrism and moderation)—also an oft-deployed slogan and banner for the MSP, as well as other Brotherhood-inspired parties around the region. During the interview, broadcast mainly to Algerian audiences, he stated, "the Muslim Brotherhood leaders that incited to jihad during the Arab Spring events now live with their children in Europe and the U.S., and launch others' children living in the Arab world into unfounded wars."[264] He argued that since terrorism and extremism arise as a result of rivaling political angles and interests, that one cannot simultaneously be political and *wasaṭī*—that political Islam was thus in and of itself immoderate. He then called on the clergy to 'moderate' by distancing themselves from politics, concluding that Brotherhood types could not in essence, embody moderation.

Islamist circles in Algeria bristled at the statement.[265] They further argued that his words only served to deepen the fragmentation among Muslims. Where the MSP itself has been accused of extra-nationalist loyalties (to the Muslim Brotherhood and others), it was important for Makri, as we see, to swiftly seize upon the UAE preacher's foreignness, to place the movement on the more favorable side of the collective *al-ayād*

[263] He is a preacher famous for his Friday sermons at UAE's well-known Sheikh Zaid mosque.
[264] Ennahar TV, 2017.
[265] Even the AUMA responded that the interview consisted of little more than accusations against those with whom Yousef simply had an axe to grind.

al-khārijiyya anxiety—one perhaps especially exacerbated for the MSP by the Algerian and Emirati regimes' shared desire to curb the Brotherhood current. Makri responded as follows in a Facebook post:


Abderrazak Makri عبد الرزاق مقري updated his status.
March 15, 2017 ·

من الذي يصدقه الجزائريون: "الداعية" "الإماراتي" المتسيس، أم الشيخ محفوظ الإخواني الجزائري الوطني الصادق ؟

جاء هذا الرجل الأردني الأصل، المتجنس إماراتيا، المتحامل على الإخوان المسلمين ليزرع فتنة في الجزائر ليست موجودة في بلادنا وفي المغرب العربي كله، لا يعلم هذا "الداعية المتحزب" أن الشيخ محفوظ نحناح الذي عاش إخوانيا ومات إخوانيا هو من انتصب شامخا ضد الإرهاب والتطرف بكل أنواعه وهو الذي قتل من رجاله بيد الجماعات المسلحة 400 شهيد على رأسهم الإخواني الكبير الشيخ محمد بوسليماني رحمهم الله جميعا. لا يعلم هذا "الداعية المشرقي" والذي لا يهمه معرفة الحق واتباعه أن زرع الكراهية عمل مشين وغير مشرف و أن من يسمون "إخوان مسلمين" عندنا هم جزء أصيل في النسيج الاجتماعي والسياسي والثقافي في المغرب العربي، بل منهم الوزراء والرؤساء. فليتق الله هذا الرجل، وليتق الله من جاؤوا به وليصححوا المسار، فهو يشتغل لحساب أصحابه في الإمارات والمشرق العربي، فليدع لنا جزائرنا بعيدة عن مشاكلهم . لا نريد إستيراد فتن المشرق، نريد أن نحفظ بلادنا من الفتن، وعندئذ ربما نستطيع أن نساعدكم لتخرجوا من الفتن التي أوقعتم فيها شعوبكم والتي يتلظى بها آلاف الأشخاص والعائلات ظلما وعدوانا في مصر وغيرها ممن تتهمونهم باطلا بالإرهاب.

هذا المنشور كتبته وفاء للشيخين محفوظ نحناح ومحمد بوسليماني رحمهما الله، وإحقاقا للحق.

عبد الرزاق مقري

Figure 5.1 Screenshot of the Facebook response post by MSP president Abderrazak Makri on March 15, 2017.

> Who will Algerians believe? The partisan/politicized "*Emirati* preacher", or the *loyal Algerian nationalist Brother* Sheikh Mahfoud? This *Jordanian* man (Emirati by citizenship) is biased against the Muslim Brotherhood, and *came to incite discord in Algeria* that doesn't exist in our country or in the Arab Maghreb region. This "partisan preacher" doesn't know the Sheikh Mahfoud Nahnah, who lived and died a Brother, stood tall against terrorism and extremism of every type and *lost 400 martyrs* to armed groups, among them the prominent Brother Sheikh Mohammed Bouslimani, God bless them all. This "Eastern preacher," who doesn't care about the truth or his followers, doesn't know that fostering hate is disgraceful and dishonest and those who are known as the Muslim Brothers among us are a foundational part of the social, political, and cultural fabric in the Arab Maghreb, and indeed there are ministers and leaders. God have mercy on this man, and have mercy on those who follow him and let them correct their path, for he works on behalf of his *masters in the Emirates and the Arab East*. Let *our Algeria* be far from their problems. We don't want to *import Eastern fitna*. We want to protect our nation from *fitna* ('discord') and after that maybe we can help you come back from the fitna into which you've plunged your people, and which has brought injustice and hostility to thousands of individuals and families in Egypt and elsewhere, who have been falsely accused of terrorism. I wrote this post out of loyalty to the Sheikhs Mahfoud Nahnah and Mohammed Bouslimani, God bless them; and for the truth. [emphases added]

Yousef is speaking about political Islam in a more global sense, about what, across contexts and histories, makes an Islamist 'immoderate'. Rather than directly addressing

his contentions about immoderation arising through political interests more broadly, or his assertions about Muslim Brotherhood trajectories in the wider region, Makri's rejoinder focuses solely on the Algerian context. Using the moment to assert the MSP as within the national(ist) narrative and attendant to this, within moderation narratives, he dispels Yousef's claims to the latter (moderate Algerian Islam) on the basis of his non-membership in the former (i.e. his foreignness). Evoking specifically Algerian histories and recollections, he unleashes a series of well-worn discourses: radicalism and *fitna* ('discord') as entering Algeria solely through 'foreign' channels or 'importation,' the importance of Algerian indigeneity (and political-religious insularity), standing up to the Islamist "terrorism and extremism" of the 1990s conflict (and accompanying references to MSP founders Mohammed Bouslimani and Mahfoud Nahnah) as a necessary condition for moderation, and claims to martyrdom. He questions Yousef's qualifications in discussing *al-wasaṭiyya wal-iʿtidāl* based on the very trope that the party looks to dispel, that the former hails from a region that cannot appropriately model it for Algeria. Makri, in turn, casts Algerianness as being in exclusive opposition to 'Arab Easternness,' villainized as exporting 'Eastern fitna' that will imperil "*their* Algeria," which has only recently won back its peace from the very thing. He casts Yousef as an outsider to the Algerian audience, and places him in direct dichotomy to himself (and the movement he represented). Yousef's otherwise unremarkable characteristics, "Emirati," "eastern," "Jordanian," are spun to engender a jaundiced view of his positionality, with "masters in the […] Arab East," in sharp contrast to the positive and noble ones assigned to Algerian Muslims and the MSP more specifically, as "loyal Algerian nationalists," who "stand tall against […] extremism," who "lost martyrs," and protect the nation from "imported eastern discord."

Makri presumably chose to frame his post in these terms precisely because the notions they conjure are of value and significance to much of the wider polity. That is, his contentions and competitive claims confirm and reproduce a broader discursive phenomenon where *martyrdom, indigeneity, nationalism* affirm one's Algerianness and thereby one's *moderation.* He positions the MSP as embodying the entirety of the resulting package of these concepts through which Algerianness is conceptualized, crediting the ideology and actions of current Algerian Islamists with "defeating extremism," during the 1990s conflict, thus exemplifying moderation. That Yousef is from the Arab East is enough, for Makri, to disqualify him from this set of virtues.

In this debate, competing claims to moderation (specifically to *al-wasaṭiyya wal-iʿtidāl*) are articulated more through disputants' positionalities than definitional differences underlying the disagreement. Indeed, while Yousef says the Islamic parties by virtue of their political aspirations are not moderate, and that religion and politics be kept separate, Makri responds by attacking the '*al-dāʿiya al-mutasayyis*' [politicized, partisan preacher], attempting to discredit Yousef's theology by in turn ascribing *back* to him a *political* motivation—which shows that the two perhaps define moderation and see limits on the credibility of formal politics in analogous ways. However, the two proceed to, probably intentionally, talk past each other.

Still considered a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Algeria, the MSP is quite regularly on the receiving end of the charged adjectives Makri hurls at Yousef—as we saw in his row with Kamel Daoud. Indeed, the allegations of being *mutasayyis*—connoting here a sullying of religion through its politicization—and of being *importations*, or carriers of foreign fitna have, as we have explored at great length, been historic criticisms of Islamist parties in Algeria and beyond. To this end, "*anā mānīsh*

islāmī, rānī jazaʾirī (I'm not Islamist, I'm Algerian)"[266] has become a common refrain among MSP leaders, which also comes as an apparent acquiescence to attempts to make the two ideas (*islāmī* versus *jazaʾirī*) mutually exclusive.

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Where the conflict decade was cast as the result of "foreign currents that nearly led [the] nation adrift"[267] the specter of a latent Islamist extremism has been reified by more recent regional instability.[268] This has reinforced 'foreign Islam' as a more imminent peril, leading moderation to be increasingly wound up with the neo-indigenization of Islam. *Authentic Algerian Islam*, "bequeathed by [Algeria's] ancestors" "to which [Algerians] must return"[269] was enshrined in foreign and religious policy, and normalized through cultural spectacles like haïk-day marches.

Where one got located within such essentialisms was of particular consequence to pro-system, cooperationist Islamists like the MSP. Thus where the FIS had an 'imported' ideology, the MSP's was 'indigenously-conceived,' with 'Algerian reference'. Where the FIS had extra-national loyalties, the MSP placed 'the benefit of the nation over that of the party'. Where the FIS had *created* martyrs, the MSP *were* martyred. And where the FIS had been un-Algerian, the MSP were 'Algerian first.' Movement members do not oppose the nationalist myth and its underlying logics—moral, revolutionary, or religious—or the corresponding brands of legitimacy it confers. They instead want to join in being its arbiters. They contest the state's monopolistic usage and definition, seeking to broaden them such that they too are implied within it.

[266] A. Bengrina, interview, November 12, 2015.
[267] Benalia, 2005.
[268] Such as Al-Qaeda, the so-called Islamic State and their many affiliated groups and branches, whose implantation in Algeria simmers as a constant if low-lying threat.
[269] Benalia, 2005.

Makri's response to Yousef is emblematic of this, as he makes use of these constructions to disqualify a foreigner from being its gatekeeper.

Meeting the requirements of religious indigeneity, is also partly the reason movement members often downplay Eastern influences, and restrain Muslim Brotherhood discourses. Yet, whether the MB is referenced is also a function of diverse intra-movement priorities and understandings on the significance and relevance of international MB ideology for their lives and their quotidian experience of Algerian politics. Ishaq felt for instance that extra-national influence was a genuine peril. Members do not just cynically replicate nativist rhetorics for an audience, but organically negotiate between transnationalism to indigeneity.

Others felt more cynical of the religious localism discourse. "But everything in our country is imported! Name one thing that was born here, that grew here in Algeria. Our vegetables? Our socialism? It's all imported (*gaʿ mustawrid*)! It [localism] is a way to limit us," railed Abdellah, former head of the Blida branch.[270] He was not alone in his objections to the requirement of indigeneity, or in his complaints that as 'Islamists' they shouldered the burden of the 'importation taboo' much more than other movements. For most members, however, it was a minor pill to swallow, and a rather straightforward negotiation.

5.3 Chapter Conclusion

During and after the conflict decade, Algerianness, into which tropes of nationalism, religious indigeneity, martyrdom have been subsumed, were revitalized as pillars of political legitimacy, and interacted with the swelling importance accorded to religious moderation. This chapter examined how these contours of Algerianness have

[270] A. Yousfi, interview, December 15, 2015.

changed in recent years, the lines along which Algerianness is contested, and how the notion has been taken up and negotiated within the wider MSP.

The conflict decade opened the notion of national martyrdom to new claimants which allowed Islamist contenders like the MSP—by forwarding members martyred by Islamist combatants—to both articulate movement identity through the prism of the national myth, and also place itself on the side of the state versus the combatants.

This commitment to nationalism became conflated with moderation, especially where the FIS was cast as a 'foreign' religious incursion disrupting the peaceful Algerian Islam that existed before it. Where domestic practice had once been cast as inauthentic, *bidaʿ*, and obscurantist, they were now held up as conduits of moderation—both by the public, and through more pronounced state-led efforts,[271] all of which relied on essentializations of Algerian culture, history, and religious practice.

The MSP, in a sort of symbolic interactionism, participated in this meaning-making. The leadership, rather than countering, or dissenting from the new meanings around these concepts, adopted the discourses of the wider polity. In articulating moderation, the MSP joins the public in using and redefining aforesaid themes to admonish certain characteristics of Islamism/Islamists from which it distanced itself thereafter; and re-aligning the language and labels used to present its ideology and goals toward those more palatable for the post-conflict polity. And where it was after all the youth of the post-conflict polity that would constitute the party's ranks, members themselves generated the new conceptual and ideational landscape.

Like moderation, Algerianness has, along new and different lines, come to be a cornerstone of political/cultural legitimacy and thereby a disputed social category from

[271] Such as the Bouteflika-led effort to promote moderate Algerian Islam, notably by revitalizing Sufi institutions and saint-veneration practices. Indeed, there are several other reasons for this, for more see Muedini (2014) and Sakthivel (2016).

which actors are wary of being cast out, which in turn leads competing camps to articulate and claim it in mutually-exclusive terms. To an extent, this is true for both Islamists and non-Islamist identity-based parties alike. The RCD for example implicitly positions as defending the rights of Algeria's 'most indigenous' (Berbers), but plays up nationalist leanings to preempt accusations of separatist sympathies. And in its more official discourses, it emphasizes interests of 'all Algerians,' denying links to Berber nationalism, and maintaining that its identity-based foundations have been a coincidence of geography.

Indeed, the fluid and subjective nature of Algerianness made irrelevant any requirement of a single, binding definition. Indeed, as Starrett notes, the *contested concept's* importance is "a function of the arguments it generates and the conflicts it organizes, rather than of some phenomenon it purports to describe" (2010, p. 628). Their usage shifted furthermore over time, reflecting the changes in their significations arising through new historic/al events.[272]

This chapter has also shown that in examining how the MSP positions itself within its symbolic universe, the political opportunity present within it cannot be understood only as 'structures' which open and close upon contenders. Structural POS and the hegemonic tools available to—and used by—durable authoritarian regimes do not sufficiently describe the nature of how *politics* are undertaken and pursued in these polities. As described in this chapter, and the preceding chapter, a fuller picture partly required expanding our understanding of how political opportunity manifests. The amalgam of attitudes, discourses, cultural significations, subjective and collective histories—generated with the involvement of contenders themselves—also generate the

[272] Indeed, the *ways* in which these concepts are contested, disputed, and reclaimed, are themselves *unidentified* as political objects; they "express, transmit and contribute to remodeling social representations of polities and politics [and] manifest the queries and vacillations a society, and its members, undergo" (Martin, 2010, p. 271).

spaces, dispositions, and rationales of political opportunity and social latitude through which actors locate meaning, generate impetus, and pursue action. That is, political opportunities occur in an environment of which it is inextricably a part, they are formed dialectically, with the MSP's contribution. And, rather than actively confronting the state/the keepers of these legitimating labels, questioning and re-appropriating the most powerful and enduring aspects of these rationales comes as a mode of contention—a way to challenge hegemonies in roundabout ways (Tuğal, 2009, p, 425).

This chapter and the one preceding described the various ways in which the MSP negotiates the disdain for Islamism (see Chapter Three). The next chapter turns to another space, MSP satellite organizations, in which the ranks reconcile their activism with the broader political culture, namely the popular distrust surrounding politics (*siyāsa*) and partisanship (*taḥazzub*).

Chapter Six: *Ḥizb* or *ḥaraka*: Negotiating Politicality through Associations

> People in our society don't like politics. They don't see any benefit (*fāʾida*) , we don't see results in a party's victory, results that affect our lives and livelihoods, so people who want to be active, take interest in charitable work. I vote for my interests, so I vote for al-ḥaraka [the MSP]. But no one votes in this society. Ask anyone.
>
> -Ishaq, a member of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah

This chapter examines how members negotiate and contest what it means to act politically or apolitically, through 'non-partisan' modes of involvement in the MSP, specifically the movement's satellite organizations—what it calls its divisions (*taqsīmāt*) and specializations (*takhaṣuṣāt*)—and in their discourses about them. I show how activists navigate their affiliations, and redraw the boundaries—and acceptable limits—between politics and spiritual activism, between the *ḥizb* and *ḥaraka*.

Through the *daʿwa* and preaching work of Mahfoud Nahnah and a small group of likeminded activists beginning in the 1970s, the movement's mobilization and charity work laid the groundwork for a social and political existence that would formalize just before the 1989 political opening. As the party began its bid for legalization, Nahnah and his colleagues founded a trio of organizations, as introduced in Chapter Two: al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, the charitable 'wing'; Kafil al-Yatim, the orphan-care organization, and the General Union of Free Students (UGEL), a student union representing the interests of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah on campuses.[273] During this period, the Algerian associational sphere at-large began to explode with organizations just as the parties began to multiply in tandem.[274]

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[273] While the erstwhile Hamas had not yet been given official authorization to form as a party, al-Irshad wa-l-Islah moved to create this student union—in 1989 one month after the constitutional referendum which newly allowed the multiparty system—charged with representing student interests to university administration. Its formal stated mission was to act as an intermediary between the two.

[274] Indeed, innumerable informal and small, local-level de facto MSP-run organizations sprouted up throughout the decades. These groups addressed specific local needs and causes, and usually did not self-identify as 'Islamist' or MSP-related; nevertheless all of the staff and leadership happened to be MSP

Al-Irshad wa-l-Islah has served as the movement's spiritual and *daʿwa* nucleus over the years.[275] The organization has been central to the partisan side's large local network of sponsors, as training grounds, for recruitment, as well for funneling financial resources into the party.[276] Though party requirements mandating that MSP political leaders spend years in al-Irshad wa-l-Islah have been relaxed, there continues to be significant, often explicit, overlap in personalities and political positions. The other two organizations, UGEL, and Kafil al-Yatim, have differed in the extent to which they have remained in the movement's orbit, becoming subject to heated contestation over the years.

A second wave of MSP-linked associations emerged nearly two decades later. Concurrent to a general climate of declining partisan credibility in Algeria, Nahnah's death in 2003 left the party without a charismatic leader, resulting in various intra-party power contests.[277] As discussed in Chapter Two, in 2008 the MSP was sent reeling after the mass defection of the party's Menasra clan, who held MSP president Aboujerra Soltani's leadership and corruption responsible for the party's blemished reputation. For all these reasons, first wave organizations became seen as insufficient as vehicles for recruitment and mobilization, and various new poles of power arising within the party undertook to fashion new ways to galvanize youth. Geographically, these sub-movements, unlike those of the first wave, did not originate from the Blida network linked to Nahnah and company. Instead they began in the Algiers metropole, now

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members, rendering them 'MSP organizations' in the eyes of locals. Moreover, they usually worked in tandem, or as satellites of, these national associations' own local branches. However, they are too numerous and disparate to receive coherent focus within the specific scope of this chapter and thesis.

[275] Becoming a legal association in 1989, al-Irshad wa-l-Islah now claims a membership of over 100,000 (N. Hazzam, interview, October 28, 2015), and actively attempted to counter the FIS' much more popular, widespread, and far-reaching *daʿwa* at this time, through its own employment programs and medical care.

[276] Particularly to circumvent new laws that constrained parties' funding as distinct from those regarding charitable organizations and NGOs; see Chapter Two.

[277] See Chapters Two and Three.

governed by a new class of MSP cadres from different regions and newly-impelled by various, often conflicting, political interests.[278]

Founded in July 2009, Shabab Mujtamaʿ al-Silm (Youth for a Society of Peace, known by the French transliterated acronym CHEMS) was conceived by Soltani's bureau. A few months later, Jil al-Tarjih[279] was founded by Abderrazak Makri, Soltani's then-vice president and rising party contender who had risen to lead the camp within the MSP that held it had become too participationist, bureaucratized, and enmeshed into the system.[280] CHEMS and Jil al-Tarjih were founded and approved by the national bureau almost concurrently; and where Soltani's group and the Makri faction were obviously competing for ascendancy, their associated youth projects were believed to have been conceived in competition as well.[281] One interlocutor, Yahia, who trained in both during his years at *lycée* ('secondary school') remembers he initially observed that the two groups had complementary methods,[282] Jil was minted as a leadership and skills training, as opposed to an explicit wing of the party with the sort of overt emphasis on youth recruitment that characterized CHEMS. Indeed, while it is actively administered by a ranking MSP member (Farouk Taifour at the time of fieldwork), and believed by closer observers to have the same end-goal as CHEMS—to funnel competent and committed youth into the party/movement—spokespeople deny

[278] Initially supervised by well-known ranking member Noureddine Ait-Messaoudene (once Nahnah's translator), it was later placed under the responsibility of Abdelhalim Abdelwahab, then MSP's secretary for youth and associative section and a member close to Soltani.
[279] Also referred to as Akadamiyy Jil al-Tarjih, it has four programs: science and knowledge (*al-ʿulūm mʿārif*), behavior and morality (*al-sulūk wal-ākhlāq*), skills (*al-mahārāt*), and actions/acts (*al-fʿiliyya*).
[280] He was vocal about reclaiming legitimacy in opposition, versus Soltani's '*entrisme'* that Makri and his supporters held had sullied the larger movement.
[281] As mentioned in Chapter Two, the regional nature of the intraparty factions meant there was also a regional element to the strength of either youth program. For instance, those who managed Jil al-Tarjih, decided the programmatic aspects, and controlled the funds were those members from Makri's native Msila region.
[282] He noted that while CHEMS was marketed as something akin to the national scouts, meant as a program/club to bring together youth from the wider Algerian population and external to the party, with the eventual aim of bringing them into the movement, Jil al-Tarjih, was originally aimed at providing academic and professional training to *existing* youth MSP members, to build competencies among the party's future cadres.

partisan aims. Taifour emphasized that it is "foremost meant to prepare the new generation to develop youth's potential and build professionalism, with the hope of rebuilding Algeria and the renaissance of the Muslim society."[283] However Yahia said he soon noticed a creeping overlap:

> After a while, Jil al-Tarjih started doing the same thing as CHEMS, opening it to outsiders, going out into the community and doing volunteer work, hosting *iftār*s ('breakfast') during Ramadan, with some trainees even helping with campaigns, all of which was the job of CHEMS. Then CHEMS started doing trainings, and skills development! And it was clear they were not coordinating, they were almost competing if I can say that: instead of sending kids to Jil to get trained, they said, 'oh we'll do it,' and instead of just leaving the charity to CHEMS, Jil wanted its *ḥasanāt* ('blessings for good deeds').

The relationship between the MSP and its various satellite organizations have been highly politically contested not only within the organization but in Algeria more broadly. Specifically, as discussed in previous chapters, the notions of *ḥizb* and *taḥazzub* have been imbued with new connotations in Algeria in recent years which now evoke skepticism, pessimism, connote opportunism, ineffectuality, dysfunction, and a lack of integrity, and even inspire feelings of absurdity. This, compounded by perceptions of state power as incontestable, has generated discomfort around formal politics, a discomfort experienced even by members themselves. Considering the role the MSP, at the national party level, played in this production of state-society and party-society mistrust, how do young members make sense of their activism in the *ḥizb/ḥaraka*?[284] Do they reject or partake in the narratives surrounding *taḥazzub*, and to what ends?

Several scholars have explored the division of labor that characterizes most Muslim Brotherhood branches and Brotherhood-inspired organizations: distinguishing

[283] F. Taifour, interview, October 1, 2015.
[284] Chapter Two examined the institutional arrangements that form the milieu in which the MSP has operated, and the costs of its participationism: legislative inertia, new perverse incentives for party cadres, loss of popular credibility, serial defections, and ruptures in party unity—optics have contributed to citizens' retreat from their stakes in formal political outcomes.

between the *ḥaraka* (movement) and the *ḥizb* (party) allows them to concentrate separately, but in tandem, on the two requisite spheres of Islamic reform: the society and the state. For some, this is an exercise of the Muslim Brotherhood *dīn wa dawla* maxim (Clark, 2003; Roy, 1994)—which calls for a dual societal-political, top-down-bottom-up approach to Islamic political change.

However in reality Islamist movements navigate the *ḥizb*/*ḥaraka*, political/socio-religious division of labor not only through a disembodied 'dual-project' ideology, but to contend with more worldly aspects, such as domestic politics, and other important local dynamics. As political scientist Charles Tripp noted in 2009, the *dīn wa dawla* refrain is often little more than a rallying cry on the part of adherents, and increasingly rare as a defining feature of Islamist movement organization and impetus.[285] Tripp concludes that the refrain more often has a "meaning contingent on the setting in which it is used" (p. 124). Indeed, as we saw in preceding chapters, many of the movement's members, including party leadership are not so invested in their Brotherhood identity or origins that they hold fast to requirements and affiliations—especially if they are no longer expedient or are potentially damaging. In a more striking example, Tunisia's Ennahda party in 2016 separated entirely from its *daʿwa* and preaching efforts, establishing a clear distance from Brotherhood-inspired models around the region. The party even dropped the label "Islamist" in favor of "Muslim Democrats," all in an effort to professionalize the party and move it away from the stereotypes and connotation that had come to surround the 'Islamist' label in Tunisia.[286]

[285] Tripp further asserts that analyses which peddle it as otherwise, essentialize both Islam as necessarily having a political end goal, as well as Islamist motivations as "an exotic peculiarity that defies normal analysis and can only be explained as an extension of their faith" (2009, p. 124)

[286] It also undertook to and ease broaden membership and recruitment requirements in order to expand beyond its existing networks, newly forbade its party members and leaders from concurrently holding positions in civil society or religious associations, and newly prohibited their preaching in mosques. In the press, Ennahda members underscored the need to divide labor and specialize, so as to strengthen each concentration.

A perhaps more extensively documented effect of the *ḥizb/ḥaraka* overlap as it occurs within broader socio-political dynamics and culture is that the *ḥaraka*—namely associations—constantly navigates the stigma of involvement in politics. As Steven Brooke (2017) argues, "any organization engaging in both [*ḥizb* and *ḥaraka*] will […] be forced to cope with the possibility that the inevitable failures of politics will color citizens' views of the non-political as well" (p. 32).

In the Egyptian context, Marie Vannetzel (2016) argues that Muslim Brotherhood's claims to *daʿwa* and religious efforts were transformed by the changing legal context of the 2011 revolution. Under Mubarak, the organization faced severe legal restrictions and therefore it could not "stamp its trademark on the social welfare sector" (p. 49). But the Brotherhood used this forced separation to its advantage, and:

> Turned [it] around as an *ethical disposition*: the impossibility of exhibiting Brotherhood trademark was transformed into an ostentatious refusal to derive self-interested benefits from virtuous actions. And the Brotherhood distinction was precisely to deny its own distinction. This specific method of politicization, which engaged deeply interindividual ethical and affective sensitivities, could be summed up as 'distinguishing oneself without appearing to'. (p. 50)

Yet, the MB's legalization post-revolution meant that it could more explicitly draw upon its *daʿwa* in developing its political-electoral project. Vannetzel (2016) notes that this however upended its strategy of disavowal, reversing "the benefits of 'ethical conduct' by disqualifying it as a sign of hypocrisy and attempt at manipulation" (p. 50).

Brooke (2017) notes that while downplaying the role of elections and politics in favor of socio-religious activism may help Islamist groups' appeal, it also contravenes the very identity of Islamists as politically-engaged actors. Comparable dynamics in Algeria produced similar inconsistencies in the MSP's "image-making" processes (Goffman, 1959; Turam, 2006): While the party has tried to sometimes claim the activities of its socio-religious side, the latter has tried to de-emphasize the relationship. Consider in Algeria the rise of the Salafist and piety movements whose attractiveness

and credibility lies in their denunciation of the follies of politics. The *ḥizb/ḥaraka* divide becomes, in effect, the *ḥizb*/*ḥaraka dilemma*.

Brooke (2017) further notes that *daʿwa* may be done without too much moral controversy and in firm continuity with movement principles, whereas politics require "an ability to cut deals with ideological opponents (and the flexibility to rationalize them), and a willingness to accept defeats, all performed in the public eye," (p. 32) even if the two have the same presumed end goal. The taboo of *taḥazzub* has complicated this *ḥizb/ḥaraka* paradox for the larger MSP.

This literature shows that attempting to clearly divide *ḥizb/ḥaraka* is highly fraught. However, as this chapter shows, the attempts to manage this are not only undertaken in collective, official terms, or chiefly by leadership. Followers and members also have stakes in these negotiations, as well as in how they self-present in light of their affiliation and participation in the MSP or its orbit. In this chapter I show how members and sympathizers, under their own conflicted views on political engagement, re-cast their associations, re-interpret missions, thus also re-negotiate their own identities vis-à-vis the movement**,** their other identitarian affiliations, and their place and role within these spaces. In essence, not all members agree on the end goal for the movement, on the nature and purpose of the activism in which they are engaged, or even, whether they are participating in it at all.

The remainder of this chapter uses ethnographic and interview data to explore these phenomena, presenting *three broad, recurring discourses* within the MSP's and its associations' broad base of members, volunteers, and sympathizers: First, that no level of partisanship is any longer acceptable; the second involves participants downplaying or denying any partisan character, or relationship to partisan nucleus; and third, are the rationalizations and justifications for retaining an overtly political

character and partisan goals, in light of the prevalence of the previous two discourses. The relationships between the MSP and its various associations are sometimes bragged about, other times they are an open secret, and still other times, they are denied outright, with organizations making strident efforts to fully and officially break from the party.

Where appropriate, I refer throughout this chapter to an "MSP orbit," in consideration of those organizations with contested, as opposed to consistently and officially-stated, links to the MSP; whether they are knowingly denied or truly believed not to exist, is ambiguous. However, I do not seek to corroborate any claims, rather what is of interest here are the "struggles over the labeling of groups and the meanings of those labels" (Jourde, 2013, p. 201).

6.1 "I Don't Want Any Politics!" Rejection of the Political in the MSP-Orbit

Hind

Hind was an Islamic Studies student at the Kharouba (Caroubier) Faculty in Blida, and used to take part in the activities of both al-Irshad wa-l-Islah and CHEMS. As an active member of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, she taught Quʾran memorization to preschool-age children. Expressing her feelings of fulfillment, she said, "I loved the children, and I felt it was my duty."

Soon, her CHEMS group, among others, was chosen to take part in CHEMS' flagship activities in Algiers and implement them in Blida. She recounted, "during the MSP's early years [1990s] al-Irshad wa-l-Islah was effective at bringing in new members through its educational activities;" she recalls that this became challenged as al-Irshad wa-l-Islah schools became increasingly subject to government scrutiny.[287] She

[287] Specifically, she said movement needed to change its methods of recruitment and mobilization: "Before, these kids all went to the same Quranic schools, same *ḥalqā*s ('reading groups'), so these social groups keep them close to the party. Before, you would rarely find a person whose father or mother wasn't part of MSP, or that social circle. This is how they were attracting people, if people bring their kids to the school, it means [MSP] can access the families. You can then bring them to *ḥalqā*s or any related meetings, so it was successful years ago, for bringing in *new* people. Not even just young people,

saw CHEMS as a way to attract youth from different familial and ideological backgrounds, beyond those in the larger movement's existing core network on which al-Irshad wa-l-Islah traditionally relied.[288] However, she soon felt she needed to distance herself from the groups when:

> Soon I found myself going door to door [*min dār l dār*] encouraging people to vote for Hamas [MSP] in the election. This was not my purpose. These activities also even contradict some teachings in Islam, in my opinion […] it is difficult to keep your Islamic virtues when you have these other motivations.

She left both CHEMS and al-Irshad wa-l-Islah shortly after beginning her postgraduate studies, and told me, "I feel now my soul is clean (*ruḥḥī naqiyya*). So now no politics (*lā siyāsa)*! I don't want any politics!"

Like much the wider population (Chapters Two and Three) Hind had come to believe that political motivations generated incentives and desires fundamentally incompatible with what she defined as being virtuous. It is perhaps worth noting that Hind began her studies the previous year in 2014 at the Kharouba (Caroubier) Faculty, which has for some time been a known bastion of neo-Salafist thought, employing popular clerics such as Sheikh Ali Ferkous. The disdain for partisanship (*taḥazzub*) was thus perhaps particularly acute for Islamist parties, as elaborated in Chapter Three, as result of the rising popularity of *daʿwa* Salafism (often referred to broadly as *salafiyya ʿilmiyya*), whose contemporary proponents preach that piety and partisanship are necessarily at odds. Indeed, some of the female teachers who remained at the (Irshad - run) Qu'ranic school in which Hind taught, say her time at the faculty "changed her."

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but also parents and relatives. If you open a school in a poor neighborhood, these people can go to the school for free, so now you enter even into households—who are grateful because you're educating their kids, so if you call them later for a meeting or something, they will come, they trust you. Now, it's different. The government began to close Quranic schools that were not approved by the Ministry and didn't follow the national guidelines and curriculum. But before that al-Irshad wa-l-Islah was opening a lot of schools. In my neighborhood, we have at least 2 or 3; they're very small, in a house or basement maybe or something like this. Because they had always depending on these old networks and old ways of bringing people, after this time the MSP was struggling to attract new audiences, or new bases."

[288] By the first annual CHEMS national conference held in August 2010, at the organization's one year mark, it had been installed in several wilayas around the country with the aim to expand to all 48 wilayas.

Younes

Younes, as a young boy, was a devoted young member of the MSP. He first came to know about the MSP through his attendance at the al-Arqam Mosque in Blida, a mosque effectively founded and run by the MSP (see Chapter Two). He also for years attended a Quʾranic school de facto administered by local leaders of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, until middle school. He was active in nearly all of the MSP satellites once he became of age: CHEMS, Jil al-Tarjih, and later in university, of MSP's university wing, UGEL. Younes eventually ended his involvement in CHEMS due to time-commitments as he began university. During his second year, he left the MSP over professional and management differences:

> After the university environment, I realized that in MSP, we were not allowed to dissent. They care so much about loyalty and hierarchy. And there is nepotism. It was supposed to be an alternative for the system, but it had the same *ḥugra* as the system.[289]

His departure from the MSP led him to leave its student wing, UGEL in turn. However, as for Jil al-Tarjih, Younes left during his second year of university as well, angry that the movement/party and its wings had failed to expressly divide "the political" from religious outreach and formational activities. He held that he still agreed with the underlying precepts, stating: "I still agree with party's ideas, their ideology, Hassan al-Banna's ideas, and Hamas' interpretation of Hassan al-Banna's visions." However, he disagreed with the party's political tactics: "but I hated that requirement, that we kids help the party make political gain—not making a real difference, just winning votes, getting them *kursi* ('seats')."

[289] Conversation, November 2015. (About a year later, he told me it was only then, after leaving the party of which he had been a part since his childhood, that he fully understood how much his perspective had changed as he grew, and how many of the party's tenets he had long questioned.)

We see that Younes believed that partisan activity is more palatable when it is *explicitly* stated rather than implicit. He disagreed with what he sees as the packaging of partisan activity as youth development:

> I left the MSP actually around the same time that I stopped going to Jil al-Tarjih. Makri wanted to do like the [Turkish] AKP, give the kids skills, not so that they can have a good adult life, but to use those skills as member of the party. If they would just say this outwardly, I would have more respect. They act as if membership is more about spiritual purpose and duty to God, and they did not emphasize the political aspect when we joined. We believed we are doing a religious duty type of thing, but later, we realize it is not.

This 'realization' led to Younes' disappointment with the movement overall, "it's like I teach you to cook, so that I can make you cook for me," he once said.

Hind drew a firm line between what constituted political work versus social/religious work, the latter was acceptable, the former was not. Hind's change of heart may be attributable in part to the shifting social preferences of Algeria's pious: toward constructions of a more 'pure' piety unsullied by material interests such as political office. This in turn is perhaps a result of the growing influence of the *daʿwa* Salafists' religious imperative that consider modern political systems—such as the Algerian state—to be *bidaʿ* (heretical innovation) and a product of both the 'modernity' and 'Western' values they (purport to) reject.

Younes, by contrast, defined what counts as unacceptably political in a different way. The mobilizational arrangements on the part of the MSP that Younes calls out as lacking integrity or piety, are not unique to the MSP, and can be observed in the flagship Muslim Brotherhood movement and other 'models' that he upheld in our conversations as either more authentic or more successful (Morocco's PJD, Turkey's AKP). Indeed, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood today employs parallel methods of youth recruitment and inculcation, and in the past, al-Banna had his own Rover Scouts and other arms that funneled youth into the movement. Jil al-Tarjih itself was reportedly

inspired by a similar program by the Turkish AKP, which provides similarly comprehensive and holistic training and development for youth interested in potential party membership.

In this way, Younes' articulations about the flagship Muslim Brotherhood's history contained a certain element of myth-making (Brewer, 2003; Goodman, 2013a, 2013b; Taussig, 1997). He conceptualized al-Banna as though his programs did not themselves have goals geared at politics, government, partisanship and the state. Indeed, al-Banna had an explicitly political vision and aim even if his strategy was ostensibly more bottom-up (departing from the more top-down Qutb/Maududi tradition).[290] Nor did Younes similarly demonize the same duality in the AKP.

When I pressed Younes on this seeming paradox, he was well-aware of this history and this presented no contradiction for him. In his explanation, the political nature of an action (electioneering vs. Qurʾanic instruction) is not inherent to the act itself like it was for Hind; he did not reject politicality a priori, or believe that spirituality and politicking should never overlap, but rejected the shape he believed partisanship took in the *Algerian context*: with accompanying connotations of self-interest, opportunism, and corruption. Seemingly benign youth development activities were rendered underhandedly *political* because, as he alleged, the party conducted them for its own benefit rather that of participants.

In sum, this subsection has shown the assignment of "politicality" as it is socially constructed in Algeria, make it a less credible agent of the sort of change or activism some Islamist members envision. The assertion, perhaps in response, of *apoliticality* by leaders of organizations in the MSP orbit can backfire as seen in the above cases.

[290] As an aside, I noticed that al-Banna is often romanticized by anti-*taḥazzub* ex-members as having been entirely 'apolitical.'

6.2 "It Is For Everyone!" Denying the Political of the MSP-Orbit

The previous subsection showed the extent of aversion to *taḥazzub* even to individuals at one time involved in and sympathetic to the MSP and its ideas. Focusing chiefly on the debates over the political character of Kafil al-Yatim orphan charity (and to a lesser degree the Jil al-Tarjih training), this subsection explores the result of such instincts. It is not at all clear that such debates are taking place publicly, rather it seems that many members decide for themselves and among closer peers, what they believe the character of the organization is.

Politics in Kafil al-Yatim? Tayeb and Yahia

Tayeb, 23, became a full volunteer with Kafil al-Yatim in late 2014. His father passed away when he was nine years old, and saw his mother working and providing for the family, a role he described as unbefitting but necessary. His participation was initially driven not by the religiousness of Kafil al-Yatim, nor by its history (as an MSP arm) but by a personal passion regarding orphans and widows. He heard about Kafil al-Yatim on Facebook, after which he met a volunteer distributing flyers in a local store in early 2014. During Ramadan, he opted to get in touch with the volunteer to learn how to help. As he said, "*al-ḥamdu llāh* I grew up without fear; my mom worked, and everyone was ok. So growing up I always wanted to help other orphans."[291] He did not identify

[291] Kafil al-Yatim was indeed not the only organization through which he satisfied these ambitions for Tayeb, he also worked with two other, small, local-level organizations, *Roses d'Espoir*, and Jamaʿiyyat al-Baḍr: "The religiousness of Kafil, you can see and feel that when you're there volunteering. There is huge difference from *Roses*. In Kafil, the volunteers girls and boys don't talk, almost not at all, the *ikhtilaṭ* ('gender mixing') is very limited, it is really *ʿiyb* ('shameful') and technically *mamnūʿ* ('forbidden'). You can work with her, but only for the association, you can't talk too much. But in *Roses* we work together, we have meetings together […] Kafil maybe forbids too much. […] I *know* that I respect my religion, to create some boundaries. But I don't like it when in meetings, preparing for collective *iftār* ('breakfast') in Ramadan, sometimes there are *no* girls! There are projects that could be even better if women were more involved We should have mixed meetings, girls can often give better ideas than boys. It's not good how they [Kafil al-Yatim] set the general meetings to only be after maghrib prayer, so then we hear only from boys. They don't feel comfortable with mixed meetings, and you see religious aspects reflected all the time; it feels limiting. We [*Roses*] took a trip to Chrea and we were mixed, and it was nice, we worked together respectfully."

with any religious movement or ideology, but identified as a religious person. For him, the very purpose of care for orphans was rooted in a religious imperative:

> The basis of Kafil al-Yatim is the idea that a person gets *ḥasanāt* ('blessings') for doing good things. And the prophet was an orphan, so there are a lot of recommendations [*tawsiat*] to help orphans. So, the motto of Kafil [the organization] is 'With your support, we create their happiness.'

He presented himself as rather disengaged from politics, admitting over our talks that he didn't vote. He said he had heard of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah and its charities, but had only come to learn about its relationship to MSP from me, and didn't know much about the organization's foundations. He said the story of Kafil al-Yatim's founding was not relevant to his volunteership.

When I described Kafil al-Yatim's work as a form of *daʿwa*, he objected, saying that he associated the word "*daʿwa*" with Islamists, organized movements, and proselytism, that he places Kafil al-Yatim's work as certainly outside of these. Moreover, he described 'Islamists' (*islāmiyyin*, or *islāmawiyyin* as he called them) through the stereotypes of extremism discussed in Chapters Three, Four and Five; *daʿwa* and Islamic "groups [*mujmuʿat*]" evoked in him imagery of "bearded men trading services for conversion."[292] He added: "I'm afraid of extremism maybe."

Tayeb considered Kafil al-Yatim's work and the larger MSP's *daʿwa* as distinct, the former was a more focused charity with the singular goal of improving orphans' lives, while the broader charity of the latter had ulterior aims. His distinction thus appeared informed both by disdain for Islamism, as well as the taboo of *taḥazzub* (see

[292] However, Tayeb said he felt a duty to participate in Kafil al-Yatim because of its work, even while he seems to disapprove of the extent of its religiosity, one he feels is at times limiting to the more central function of serving orphans: "In Kafil you feel religion more than in any other association. It's obvious when you talk to [volunteers], there is always religion and *ḥasanāt* ('blessings'), but in *al-baḍr*, they are more 'cool.' But I'm actually comfortable in both. My friend is both in *al-baḍr* and she asked 'how to join Kafil?' My other friend said, 'just put a headscarf [foulard], and you can come.' That is a joke, but I told you that to show you how religious reflection is felt by all people in Kafil. This is not to do '*daʿwa*' they are not Islamists, but it's to bring Islam to the families, but they don't force people to change their thinking, they just *Islamize* people."

Chapters Three and Four). Indeed, his concerns about parties emerged in later conversations:

> Personally I was raised religious; my mom was religious. I give more importance to Islam, but at the same time, we don't trust parties at all. We feel like, just be a good Muslim, that is enough. I show my religiousness through my actions. Actually, I always felt I don't have the time to hear [parties'] nonsense. Maybe there are honest people among them, but you can't tell who. There are too many contradictions, you can't trust anyone. They always make promises, they get the *kursi* ('seats' [in elected bodies]), they forget about it. We have a great rising generation, we have energy, it's going to waste.

Nevertheless, he welcomed that the organization made him a bit more religious than he had been previously, and felt quite strongly that despite having a religious bent, that the organization was not ideological: "*makāsh tayyār islāmī bark taʾatīr islāmī*," [not an Islamist tendency, just Islamic influence]. Tayeb's sentiments were closely reflective of Kafil al-Yatim's now-official discourse.

During our interview, Kafil al-Yatim's Blida director, Ali Chouati denied, and bristled with indignation at any suggestions, that Kafil al-Yatim is, or ever was in the past, linked to the MSP or any of its splinter parties:

> The parties' main goals is *kursi*, so they can never be interested in the benefit of people. There cannot be progress if a party is charged with helping a social problem. And see all the divisions (*inqisāmāt*) inside MSP, that would have happened to us![293]

His emotive response evinced a genuine revulsion and disappointment with the partisan inclinations of the MSP, and his direct allusions to the MSP's internal divisions showed an earnest distress that Kafil al-Yatim could suffer a similar fate. However his suggestion that 'it would have happened' to them, seemed to belie his denial of any proximity to the larger MSP movement. Development scientist Andrea Liverani (2006) refers to this attempt by the civil / associative sphere to distance itself from politics and parties as "party bypass" (p. 97). Focusing on Algeria's 1980s "associative spring" (p.

[293] A. Chouati, interview, February 13, 2016. (This is in reference to various splinters and breakaways from the MSP described in Chapter Two.)

109), he explains that as the state began coopting parties and asserting alternative agendas and narratives identical to theirs, that associations sought to maintain—or at least maintain the impression of—independence in order to insulate themselves from these dynamics and protect their credibility.

Yahia, whom we have met before, volunteered with Kafil al-Yatim in the late 1990s into the mid-2000s. He was less driven specifically to the issue of orphans like Tayeb, but more by a general moral duty to help less fortunate people. He further characterized his participation, especially in Kafil al-Yatim, as "automatic." Already active in MSP's other organizations, it was easy and natural to add another:

> I grew up hearing about it, everyone around me knew about it because it was Nahnah's idea, it was a big organization in town [Blida]. Back then I was involved in all the activities of the MSP: CHEMS, I trained in Jil al-Tarjih, I went to Quranic schools of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah. So being in Kafil was sort a continuation of those duties. Not only as a good Muslim, but, maybe as being a part of *al-ḥaraka* (MSP). And our ideas, maybe we didn't teach them to the orphans directly, but they would learn them from us because we all move together.

His personal experience within Kafil al-Yatim also led him to be flummoxed by the assertions by current volunteers that Kafil al-Yatim was not at all related to MSP:

> How? It's totally connected to MSP; it even used to have a seat in the MSP national *majlis shura*. I don't know if they still do, but they had delegates within the *majlis shura*, who also had managerial positions in Kafil. And the same people in Kafil were working in al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, in the local election campaign lists. I saw them with my eyes! They are trying to sell this image, that they are not affiliated with any party. Especially in the political atmosphere now, they would rather be away, but it's hard to see any difference between MSP and Kafil al-Yatim when you see all Kafil volunteers at all the MSP gatherings, or even in the legislative election lists, even now! So you can't fool everyone with that.

Tayeb's story exemplified the sort of highly-personal motivations that animated many individuals' participation in charitable organizations. He was driven more by his personal history and his priorities were shaped chiefly by specific life events than any ideology. He stated a clear relationship between his childhood experience and his

service—which rather than serving as an underlying cause, constituted his stated, articulated motivations. Although Tayeb's engagement with Kafil al-Yatim—for the sake of *ḥasanāt* ('blessings'), as dovetailing with his increasing religiousness, to confer this spirituality to the children he serves—by some definitions constitutes *daʿwa*, he rejected this label because it to him implied connection to an external or ulterior aim.

Yahia's reasons, and the context in which he joined, were in stark contrast to Tayeb's. His service in Kafil al-Yatim was, as he put it, an *extension* of his life as an MSP member. He saw Kafil al-Yatim's attempts to distance itself from the partisan sphere, as a trick, an attempt to "fool everyone." Interestingly, this is a narrative common in *eradicateur* discourses—often reproduced in the literature on Islamists—that such negotiations and essential contestations over labeling are actually a contradictory, sabotaging double-speak: opportunistically both *claiming* as well as *disavowing*.

Unlike Younes and Hind in subsection one, Yahia and Tayeb had seemingly diametrically-opposed views on the extent to which they saw Kafil as having a 'political' underbelly, as well as on how they defined *daʿwa*, and what they saw the founding purpose of Kafil as having been. They fundamentally disagreed about whether Kafil al-Yatim, an avowedly "apolitical" organization was at all linked to the less-questionably partisan MSP.

For Yahia, the link was irrefutable, based on his first-hand experiences of programmatic and administrative overlap. Tayeb however experienced the organization in seemingly complete disconnect from the MSP and its social project, and seemed unaware of its common origins and programmatic connections. Finally, the organization's official discourse went to the extent of lambasting partisanship as damaging to Kafil al-Yatim's goals.

Abdelfatah and Hamza

A newly-inducted trainee in Jil al-Tarjih, Abdelfatah always made a point to remind me that he had no interest in politics or movements, stating the latter "are no longer credible." When I once asked about the often-direct path from Jil al-Tarjih into MSP, he responded:

> Maybe there are kids in Jil who later will join MSP, if they want to they are free. We trainees are free, we go on to many different things. Me, for example, I will not join MSP; I think you see it as part of MSP, this is incorrect, it is for everyone.

For Abdelfatah Jil al-Tarjih's four programs were inextricably linked to Islam, "I cannot be guided in doing these correctly without the guidance of Islam," he told me. Listening in, Hamza added that he had never participated in the MSP, but had become drawn to Jil al-Tarjih due to the overlap in values in had gained with the Boy Scouts, and due to the seemingly parallel components of the trainings. (Interestingly, in the 2000s a large portion of scouting troops around the country, particularly around Blida, were run by MSP members. More in Chapter Seven.) He said:

> There is no politics, no talking this way, that way [hypocritically or contradictorily], in many ways it is a lot like scout life. Just focus on the kids, on the skills. Jil al-Tarjih is better for adults, scouts teaches us life skills, but in Jil we learn professional skills, how to speak publicly, how to lead, and there is also a religious component. They even have similar structure and progression. For example, I am in a group, and when I graduate, I have the option of creating another and leading it, becoming the *qā'id*.

I pointed out that this was also similar to the structure in CHEMS, where young leaders could form their own groups, as well as to MSP's system of an '*usra* run by a *murabbī*, with similar graduation processes. He quickly interjected, "no, no, it's different, we are not required to memorize the teachings of Nahnah. There is no mention of him, and we are not obligated to learn those teachings."

I was continually, admittedly skeptical of how Abdelfatah and Hamza's framed Jil al-Tarjih and their participation in it. Moving with other Jil al-Tarjih members, I

observed a rather seamless web of activity, especially among this age group, between MSP/ al-Irshad wa-l-Islah and Jil al-Tarjih. Indeed, it was founded by Makri to invigorate the MSP youth sections. Younes, another trainee, was thus equally perplexed by the disavowal:

> Usually Jil al-Tarjih does not talk about MSP in a direct way (*bi-l-shakl mubāshir*), because that is not the focus of the trainings. But we all know it was from MSP. You can see the ideas are the same. Either these people are exaggerating, which means they are very loyal, and this is exactly the people MSP wants! Or, they are ignorant about the origins of Jil al-Tarjih. But it is so new, I don't know how this is possible. I think they don't want to be associated with the MSP.

Younes commented that this wholesale denial of MSP- Jil al-Tarjih relations was implausible, resulting either from ignorance, or a dissimulation arising from loyalty.

However, I did not read a lack of awareness into Abdelfatah and Hamza's positions, nor was it clear that they were deliberately misrepresenting Jil al-Tarjih's origins and orientation. Instead, they appeared engaged in what sociologist Berna Turam (2006), invoking Goffman (1959), identifies as "impression management" (p. 55). In such a process, which Goffman argues can be conscious or *subconscious*, Abdelfatah and Hamza may seek to influence or shape my perceptions regarding a person or object (in this case themselves and Jil al-Tarjih), by managing and modulating information during social interaction. Abdelfatah and Hamza clearly had strong positive feelings towards the training, evidenced by the consistent effusiveness with which they described the curriculum and its religiously-based advocacy work. They did not wish to tarnish the legitimacy or virtue of their skills-training or their participation in it by allowing it to be characterized as *ḥizbī* (partisan)—effectively a new epithet in Algerian political culture. This came across strongly during our conversations through comments like "we don't trust parties (*mantiqūsh bi-l-aḥzāb*)" in reference to the MSP. In the context of this conversation, I was perhaps the more immediate audience, as a foreign

researcher (or movement outsider more generally) who may reprint (or otherwise reproduce) their ideas. However my sense was that this behavior—highly reminiscent of the sort of *image-making* practices that Turam (2006) observed among Gülenist movement members in Turkey—was an extension of the broader daily negotiations Abdelfatah and Hamza undertook within their societal and national milieu. Indeed, Turam similarly found that Gülenists often downplayed and denied aspects of their religious orientation as a "conscious act of adaptation" (p. 55) to a perceived risk of being cast out of the body politic in secular Turkey.

In both the cases of Kafil al-Yatim and Jil al-Tarjih discussed in this subsection, members of MSP satellite organizations experienced and represented their participation as wholly disconnected from the broader movement. Scholars have elaborated the ways in which members of a movement imagine, construct, and agree upon a set of interests or characteristics that bind them together, despite other differences (Bayat, 2005; Kurzman, 2008).

Here however, we instead see a phenomenon of *imagined differences*: individuals in these organizations constructed their membership dialectically, within and against an opposing other, engaging in the sort of "boundary-making" Fredrik Barth (1969a) described. Of course, this term has traditionally been used to describe constructions of ethnic difference and motivations for ethnic conflict (Schlee, 2002), however there is relevance and resonance in the discourses of the MSP satellites—and their members—that have more consciously sought to dissociate from their partisan nucleus. These members, who imagined their organization as distinct, not as under the umbrella of a larger organization, drew social and symbolic boundaries that distinguish their organization's purpose, character and goals, actively *othering* other groups in the orbit. As Barth described (1969b) boundary-making normally occurs between different

groups who otherwise share a territory—indeed there is often much similarity between people on differing sides of the boundary.

6.3 "If My Arm is Weakened, Do I Cut It Off?" Defenses of the Political

In contrast to those within the orbit discussed above—who structured their loyalty, sense of purpose along organizational divisions and in exclusivist terms—other members, especially those who saw the utility in the political side, saw and cast themselves as members of the same movement, even while the aspirations and impetuses animating them, diverged considerably.

Abdelhamid

Abdelhamid, 32, joined the MSP in high school, and continued his participation throughout university and beyond. When we first met in December 2015, he operated the cybercafé attached to the MSP Blida wilaya headquarters, was the financial officer to the commune-level branch,[294] and was a right hand to much of the local leadership. After that, he undertook to go out of his way to manage the party's image, to me, as well as in Blida broadly. He almost always popped up when I had an interview scheduled with a higher-ranking member, but was more difficult to pin down for a conversation or to spend time than any of his fellow members. I gleaned that he was reticent to meet in the absence of a higher-up for fear of saying something external to, or contradicting, the party line. Indeed, one day when I eventually asked him why he was always busy, he admitted, "I don't want to tell you something wrong, I'm not yet an expert, someday inshallah."[295]

[294] In Blida, as in many provincial capitals, the province-level and commune-level branches operated out of the same physical headquarters.
[295] Conversation, April 2016.

In several of these de facto group interviews, he defended the party against questions that he perceived as adversarial. His comportment during these interviews—nodding, agreeing with, and paraphrasing leadership—seemed like ostensible displays of loyalty, bids to prove his mettle with MSP leaders and higher-ranking interviewees as the intended audience. I asked him what he got out of involvement in the organization, he first answered, *rāḥa* ('bliss', 'satisfaction'), "I feel *martāḥ* ('blissful', 'relieved') that I am helping god-fearing men make society more pious." He qualified, raising a finger, "pious not extreme (*tāqī māshī mutashaddid*)."

As the months went on, Abdelhamid began to speak increasingly candidly with me. (One afternoon, he remarked, "I have never seen you eat, only running around. Your parents will say Algerians didn't take care of you. Let us go to the restaurant next door, it has families[296], and they have *your* food, hamburgers.") During our meal I asked again what inspired his membership in the MSP, especially when so many other individuals with similar spiritual convictions and motivating notions of the importance of *daʿwa*, either focused on the associational activity or left the MSP-orbit altogether. "Yes, we are in a difficult time, but this is when we need to be strong, not quitting, we have a role to play in bettering the country." Rather than allowing partisan stigma or the idea of an all-determining deep state (see Chapter Three) to color his faith in the political path, Abdelhamid argues it is what motivates his activism in the MSP's political section in the first place. He asserts his position is an optimistic and hopeful one.

Abdelhamid acknowledged the corruption scandals, and argued these were not reasons to abandon the partisan component altogether, that if the greater movement remained simply a charitable movement, it would never be ready when matters

[296] 'It has families,' means that it is a respectable, acceptable mixed-gender venue.

improved, when opportunities presented themselves. Abdelhamid continued, "The party is an important part of the movement. If my arm is weakened by an injury, do I cut it off? The different wings must lean on each other for balance." He explained, for instance, that training he received through programs like Jil al-Tarjih and other associations is instrumental for improving one's life, and to make MSP members complete (*shāmil*)." He went on to discuss how both participation and opposition have 'costs':

> While we [MSP] were in the [coalition] government we were bullied by the FLN and RND. But that at the same time, this participation gave us the ability to get projects done in local councils, in a way that was not previously available to us. And it is again not available to us because we are now in national opposition.

He explained that without a defined political section, a movement could be exposed to accusations of political inaction:

> When a movement has an underdeveloped political program, too focused on only *daʿwa*, the government can use it to weaken you, they say, 'see'? Then there is no pressure on the system (*niḍām*) to change. It is the same thing now with the *salafiyya*. The regime is losing religion, and becoming less religious because of the Salafists (*wujūd al-salafiyyin*).

Asked to elaborate, he expressed worry that religious groups that vocally denounce politics created a religious void (*yikhalliū faragh*) in the political sphere, allowing the political class (*al-siyāsiyyin*) to become more and more secular, while pious circles (*al-mutadayyinīn*) remain disengaged from the wider sphere, effectively as if in a bubble [own paraphrasing]. He asked:

> How long can this last? It is dangerous. It is causing a fitna between religious people and the government. Why? Because the religious people with time, they demand more and more Islamic changes to laws and policies, even more than the concessions [tanāzulāt] the regime does for them today. Then the government will become the only neutral part in an country full of Salafists.

I responded, "But isn't this what Nahnah himself said? If we can change the minds of the people, the government will have to follow. So how is this different?" He replied: "It's different, because we are not dividing, we are still active in both sides and making

gradual change, not staying isolated (*maʿzūlīn*) and telling our followers that politics is *ḥaram*. With time, this can cause *fitna*." In other words, Abdelhamid worried that modern Salafists in Algeria may be causing dramatic cleavages that could cause instability.

Interestingly, his concerns echoed those mentioned in some academics works, such as Henri Lauzière (2006) who noted that Islamists who seek agitation away from formal institutions may be "*creating a de facto secular space* by re-routing religious activism [too far] away from the state and, sometimes, from political issues altogether [emphasis added]" (p. 241). Indeed, *daʿwa* Salafism has been tacitly encouraged over the last few decades to stifle potential enlistment into the Islamist parties' (albeit changing) Muslim Brotherhood ideology.[297] Thus for some MSP members, it is *precisely its politicality* that sets them apart within this 'hyperplural' religious sphere. Another MSP member (below) exemplifies this sentiment concisely: "The [Salafists] always say there is corruption, and that the *dawla* (state) is *kāfira* (infidel), but at least *we* do something."

Abdelhamid also opined that the MSP's political side provided tangible opportunities for political and professional development: "And for me, there would have been no chance for a career had I been of age at the time of the [FIS]." Abdelhamid argued that personal advancement is better achieved as the member of a legalist, recognized party, than of a banned movement or a purely religious one, such as

[297] Despite the regime's preference for the 'moderation' of the parties versus the Salafists in their religious interpretation and worldviews, which they worry may pose risks in religious / ideological radicalization, Salafist movements' dogmatic rejection of modern electoral politics (and therefore, elections) siphons away potential voters for the Islamist parties. And given the perceived risks of Salafist extremism, the government also promotes 'Algerian Islam' and religious indigeneity through the Sufi *zāwiya*s and Sufism at large as a moderating balance (among other reasons), versus the 'imported' schools of Salafism and Ikhwanism.

the *salafiyya ʿilmiyya* (see Chapter Three). Eventually more frank about his motivations, he later told me: "I want to be in the party's leadership one day, inshallah."

Nasser

Nasser entered the MSP's political orbit through non-MSP activities, namely scouting (more in Chapter Seven). He repeatedly emphasized to me the idea of politics-as-means, and came to fully embrace politics and its role within the broader MSP movement. He shared Abdelhamid's concerns about the local Salafist trend. I suggested that *daʿwa* Salafists appeared to be more successfully changing the social landscape, precisely because of their avoidance of politics,[298] he objected:

> No, no. They say they don't believe in *taḥazzub,* that *taḥazzub* is not found in our religion, but *they* have a party. *Ḥizb blā wrāq* ('a party without papers')! Because their *jāmʿa* is like a *ḥizb*. How can they have such a presence if the state did not allow it?[299]

He went on to explain that the Salafist tendency in Algeria was being aided by the state, because it did not threaten the FLN's electoral monopoly—and that this itself made them political. He elaborated that Salafism's intolerance is what 'imperiled the country' in 1990s, that the MSP, a more tolerant tendency, is thus necessary to balance the religious landscape. His sentiments illustrated why some of the more piety-focused, politics-averse members still held fast to the MSP:

> They [salafists] are very *mutʿaṣṣabiyyin* ('intolerant,' 'sectarian,' 'fanatical'). I'm in the MSP, so they insult me, calling me *siyāsāwī*[300] or they say *bidaʿ* ('heretical innovator'). When they meet men without beards, they refuse to greet them, even though it is in our religion to greet (*sallam*) people! I tried to learn more about them, because they are numerous, and I wanted to work together, but they refused to talk to me because I wore hair gel. MSP and al-Irshad etc., is about *waṣaṭiyya* and *iʿtidāl* ('moderation'). Not *mutashaddidin* ('extremist'). During the time of terror (*waqt al-irhāb*) intolerance and extremism (*tʿaṣṣubiyya*) caused all of our problems in Algeria.

[298] Neither the MSP nor the Salafist movements publish official numbers for their safety, but the online traffic, polls, and widespread observation and anecdote appear to indicate this trend.
[299] Conversation, March 2016.
[300] Recall from Chapter Three, that adding the suffix *-awi,* where it does not normally belong, often connotes derogation.

Like Abdelhamid, Nasser argued that politics were an indispensable, even stabilizing, component of MSP activism. He used the nominally apolitical *daʿwa* Salafist movements as an example of how and why religious activism and political activism could never be delinked; that the Salafists' disavowal of *partisanship* could never translate into complete abandonment of the *political*, due to the simple reality that it had to exist and activate in the Algerian socio-political space. To him, this justified the MSP's politicality in tandem: that an MSP political presence is an important balance. (Note also the discussion of fashion, personal hygiene and comportment as an articulation of moderation.)

Reem

Still others had much more sober, less romantic, understandings of the role that all the associations, together, played. When I met Reem, she was a religious education teacher and activity leader among the young children of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah. She spent her younger years in the *nādī al-fatāt*, the young girls club within al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, and joined al-Irshad wa-l-Islah's regular activities during university, at the age of 20. Reem was initially adamant that as an al-Irshad wa-l-Islah member she is not linked to the MSP, "*māshī kif kif, māshī maʿahum*, ('we're not the same, we're not *with* them')", she emphasized.

As our friendship evolved, and she came to better understand my research, she elaborated the associations' common history:

> In the past, all of them, al-Irshad wa-l-Islah Kafil al-Yatim, they were all together, they were all parts of *al-ḥaraka*, then each began to specialize. Kafil al-Yatim is from Blida, and was founded at the same time as al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, and they did almost the similar work, later just lately Kafil al-Yatim started specializing just in orphans. But al-Irshad wa-l-Islah maintains a broader field (*majāl wāsiʿ*) and it works in several issues, and with all ages.

She explained the similarities between these various branches: "the student unions, *nādī al-fatāt*, Kafil al-Yatim, the means are not important. They are just different ways to

help in the missions of Sheikhs Nahnah and Bouslimani, god bless them." She elaborated on another occasion on, what she herself called, her *informal* (*ghayr rasmī*) involvement with the party.

> Remember I'm a teacher […] I'm not political, but I have training in *informatique* ('information technology') so [the MSP] asks me to help them write up journalistic essays. Or if they do something related to the law or rights they ask my help because I studied law in my masters. They empower young people like me to be useful, and I also feel that I am giving to *al-ḥaraka*. After the *nādī* [*al-fatāt*], after [one is] well trained, she can start working in al-Irshad wa-l-Islah.

Reem's reflections showed one of the ways that the *ḥaraka/ḥizb* tension is resolved within individuals, and provided a personal perspective on the relationship between the two. While she did not always like politics—in part because believed herself to not be equipped for it—she worked with al-Irshad wa-l-Islah in service of the greater *ḥaraka*. Reem's overlapping social networks and friendships with MSP members meant that she was led to help the partisan side in material ways. She did not seem to mind this, despite her disapproval of contemporary Algerian politicking, and the distance she thus kept from it.

In this way, the divisions of labor not only allow the movement to contend with the taboo, it also allows the MSP to cater and satisfy the diverging senses of purposes among the rank and file, by having 'something for everyone,' and a vocation or group matched to an individual's goals or skills. We further see here that the *ḥaraka* and *ḥizb* even if kept theoretically separate, bleed into one another. Sometimes devoid of actual procedural distinction, the technical border established to distinguish between its social-mobilizational activities and its formal political participation is not always upheld in practice, where the *ḥaraka* and *ḥizb* often share in responsibilities and efforts.

Hafsa

Hafsa also does not favor political activity, but for different reasons. Like Abdelhamid, she agrees the arm should not be 'cut off,' but more significantly, like Nasser holds fast to the notion of politics-as-means. Hafsa currently oversees *al-tarbiya* ('education/formation') in the MSP's Blida commune branch. She became involved in the MSP though student life in her dormitory when she attended the University of Blida:

> My dorm especially was very much following the *ḥaraka*, the most active organized associations were those of Hamas [MSP]. […] My roommate and her close friend were taking part in a daily *ḥalqa*, they did a lot of Quran interpretation (*tafsīr ta' al-qu'ran*), and I felt at peace. Especially because it was difficult to be away from my family, they became my family.

She was initially involved with the MSP student union, UGEL. Soon however UGEL became, according to her, less about influencing campus life and ensuring pious conduct in the student social activities and dorms, and more about competing for power vis-à-vis other partisan unions and control of student administrations. She explained that she left UGEL because any political activity needed to be service of Islam and relate to the formational/educational reference (*al-marjiʿ al-tarbawi*) of the movement:

> Abdelhamid, you know him, he has skills in accounting and finance, but is that to make us rich? Reem focuses on her writing skills, and I devote myself to the formation of the youth. All of this is for the sake of the movement and our ideas. We each do this in different ways, and the politicians act in their own way.

She explained that deviating from this indicated politics for politics' sake, as opposed to politics toward an end of Islamizing society, and eventually laws and the state. UGEL, she argued, was right to use political means to advance the movement's spiritual goals on campus—advocating the veil, regulating the campus prayer spaces, discouraging dance music and *al-ikhṭilāt* ('gender-mixing') at social events, etc.—but lost its way when its partisan character and political incentives became too predominant and exposed. (Indeed, UGEL became a political booty in the internal-MSP splinters

described in Chapter Two, which caused political crises on campuses throughout the country.)

The picture that emerges from the cases of Abdelhamid, Nasser, Reem, and Hafsa is one in which some members saw no inconsistency between politics and spiritual activism, between the *ḥizb* and *ḥaraka*, even if some like Hafsa *condition* this relationship. Their discourses most strongly mirrored what is typically understood to be the underlying ethos of the 'dīn wa dawla' maxim: that the various movements served the same cause in diverse ways. For these members, these associational fields keep the umbrella of the organization grounded in society and funnel members, and social / religious capital to the party, despite ebbs in electoral patterns. They claim the satellites are indeed a part of the movement, believing that they are creating the milieu conducive to Islamic social life, satisfying Nahnah's vision of gradual (*marḥali, tadrījī*)[301] pursuit of "culture, politics, and religion based on the idea of *al-shūrā*" (Davis, 1999, 73). From this perspective, one's organizational identification is a considered a mere background attribute—rather than a basis of differentiation—chiefly reflective of how one has chosen to pursue the larger spiritual goals of the MSP umbrella.

6.4 Chapter Conclusion

It is rather straightforward that people, in their lives, 'wear many hats,' as the expression goes. Members of defined in-groups, such as Islamist movements, typically have other long-cultivated, if sometimes less-clearly defined, identities with which their involvement in the movement is reconciled. In other words, MSP members and supporters have multiple subjectivities: they are also Algerian, may hail from a certain

[301] These are terms used by Nahnah himself in interviews on his group's goals. For example, Nahnah always preached, "when the time is right," or "when Algeria is ready," slow change from within toward an Islamic state was the preferred path (Davis, 1999).

region or ethnicity, they are mothers, fathers, local functionaries, etc. In some cases, one subjecthood may complicate another.

Chapter Three explored historical memory, how events in history are experienced individually and collectively, and how these recollections are coopted to support the larger institutional framing of history (Brewer, 2003). In turn, this framing impacts what is collectively remembered, and how (Cubitt, 2007). Chapter Three then analyzed how people see Islamism and partisanship is a result, in part, of official framing of historical events and ongoing political phenomena. The current and preceding chapters showed not only that many of Algeria's pious believe religion should be free of politics, but that members of the wider polity believe politics should be free of religion. As such, MSP subjecthood occasionally produces anxiety and discomfort for other subjecthoods. Despite seeking an in-group purpose, most individuals in the MSP-orbit also seek belonging and connection to the wider society and nation, reticent to experience life as if separate from the rest of the body politic.

Berna Turam's (2006) fieldwork in Turkey revealed a similar phenomenon: as Gülenist movement members were aware of the weight of 'Islamism' conceptually and connotationally in historically-secular Turkey, they opted to present a "progressive, tolerant and thereby pluralist image by highlighting its focus on science, knowledge, education (mostly in English) and international commerce" (p. 55). This often came at the expense of their Islamic self-presentation, wherein religion and *daʿwa* activities were downplayed to the public. As Turam argues, the "image-making" that often results: "reflects followers' aspiration for recognition and for visibility as legitimate social actors" in light of the surrounding cultural and political context (p. 55). Like 'Islamism' for the Gülenists, the taboo of *taḥazzub*, that is the stigma around partisan

politics, posed formidable challenges to how members of the MSP-orbit negotiate the identity and labeling of their activism.

This chapter has shown how individuals in the MSP associational orbit understand and articulate their individual member- and in-group-identities to make it compatible with widespread and seemingly agreed-upon sense-making practices around Algerian politics, in albeit different ways. In other words, they reconcile (or not) their association with their own, often unfavorable, views on religious-partisan overlap. In this, differential positionalities, individual aspirations, associational affiliation interactively shaped how members of varying commitment and affiliation, situated themselves, their sub-associations, and the larger movement within the national and societal fabric.

Some (Hind and Younes) abandoned the orbit entirely, seeing no room for the negotiation or acceptable presence of politics in spiritual activism. They had different opinions of precisely how politics has come to stain the MSP's spiritual project, with Hind ultimately rejecting the political side of the Brotherhood's *dīn wa dawla* project, and Younes finding its implementation in Algeria necessarily sullied by opportunism, personalism, and corruption.

Others responded to the taboo of *taḥazzub* by denying or downplaying the political links of quasi-independent MSP satellites. Tayeb, of Kafil al-Yatim, seems genuinely able to participate in the organization without having to encounter its links to the MSP, allowing him to opt out of these negotiations entirely. In a slightly different way, Abdelfatah and Hamza in Jil al-Tarjih rather implausibly deny the MSP's links to the organization in a way that seems to serve their self-presentation as anti-partisan. In both cases, official organizational discourse—demonstrated by the denials of the Kafil al-Yatim Blida director—created the space for this type of impression management

(Goffman, 1959). This attempt to differentiate the image and brand from the party nucleus is itself an outcome of the taboo of *taḥazzub*.

A final epistemic group defends the political project of the broader movement in spite of the taboo of *taḥazzub*. They differ in their personal interest in and engagement with politics, with Abdelhamid and Nasser participating actively in the party's political activities, Reem providing ad hoc material support while chiefly abstaining, and Hafsa devoting herself to *tarbiya*. Nevertheless, they agree that the movement's partisan side, despite the deal-making, rationalization, even opportunism inherent to this sort of politicking, is a necessary and integral component of the overall mission.

What emerges from these three discourse groups is a picture of substantial identitarian and ideational diversity—even disconnect. The fundamental question of what it means to be 'political' in Algeria, to what extent this labeling is desirable or expedient, is being negotiated within the groups themselves, with consequences for: whether or not members associate with the movement and its associated acts at all (Hind and Younes), consider their participation as a part of the movement at all (Tayeb, Abdelfatah, Hamza) or articulate that MSP wings are necessary parts of a unified whole (Abdelhamid, Reem, Nasser, Hafsa). And associations' own ambiguity as either religious, political, charitable, or an amalgam of these, itself allows members to assign whichever they value, and align their senses of self and individual purpose to their conception of the association(s) in which they partake.

These competing claims call into question the notion in social movement literature (as theorized in Chapter One) that wider movements/causes necessarily revolve around a collectivized identity, or, that the attempts at collectivizing identity is necessarily successful and impels all members of the larger movement/cause. Instead, through these meaning-making processes, we observe in this chapter rather

contradictory instances of both *imagined solidarity* (Bayat, 2004), as well as *imagined differences* and *boundary-making* (Barth, 1969b), all in efforts to defend and define oneself and others against the prisms of acceptable politicking that reject and exclude partisanship. Bayat (2005) notes in his study of Islamist movements, that although "participants in a social movement often espouse not totally shared, but 'partially shared' interests due to an *imagined solidarity*" (p. 902) such that they cultivate the 'collective identity' that leads them constitute the party/movement to begin with (Kurzman, 2008).

But while most participants in the MSP orbit do "imagine solidarity" in some way (Abdelhamid, Reem, Nasser, Hafsa), others (Tayeb, Abdelfatah, Hamza) have a far more complicated relationship to it, if not reject it outright (Hind and Younes). The latter's positions in relation to the movement are in fact quite ambiguous: they imagine themselves as outsiders, while participating in activities that many observers inside and outside the movement consider as tacit, if not explicit, involvement. They engage in a process of strategic classification similar to Turam's Gülenists—necessarily at the expense of the othered out-group—attempting to draw clear boundaries and establish differences from the 'core' MSP lest they too become associated with the social constructions of Algerian *taḥazzub*.

These individuals (and those in this broader chapter and thesis) represented their relations to and within these groups (and the associated labels) through situated communicative events or speech acts (e.g. "we don't trust parties," etc.) with the intention of achieving a meaning or idea within their social interactions—with me as the intended audience in most of these moments and conversations. Though this is partly characteristic of impression management, it is also a performance (such as of identity, self, gender) where the 'intended' audience includes one's own self as well.

The forthcoming chapter is the final data chapter, which examines a different part of the 'MSP orbit': namely, the MSP's mobilization of the national scouting organization. Rather than simply 'accruing' to the MSP as a material resource, the intersubjective process of the scouts' mobilization by the MSP gives way to sense-making around (both MSP- and scout-) group identity, collective action and what constitutes a 'movement resource.'

Chapter Seven: MSP Resource Mobilization and the Algerian Scouts

The second half of this thesis has focused on how the MSP positions itself as a legitimate, integral part of the national fabric by using the rhetorics, spaces, and discourses that have come to predominate in Algerian political culture. Laying out this political culture, Chapter Three identified three major political cultural shifts in the post-conflict period against which the MSP has sought to exist meaningfully. Chapters Four and Five explored how the first shift, the trope of *Islamist extremism* made national concepts (such as moderation, Algerianness, martyrdom, and religious indigeneity) especially imperative for the MSP's identity and discourse, and how members made sense of them. Chapter Six focused on how the second shift, the taboo of *taḥazzub* shaped how members of the broader movement negotiate its political character, and sense-make regarding their personal involvement. Following from this, this chapter will examine the MSP's *recruitment of scouting youth and mobilization of the national scouting organization as a means to assert an identity that aligns with widely agreed-upon national values and social labels*—and in the process, contending with the third shift, a belief in an omnipotent, incontestable regime.

The MSP's (and other various political actors') mobilization of the Scouts has typically been understood as having the singular goal of accessing funds and recruiting youth, a view that draws heavily on the structural social movement school of *resource mobilization theory* (RMT). However sociologists such as Alain Touraine (1985) and Charles Kurzman (2004, 2008) have sought to elaborate a post-structural understanding of resource mobilization, one that privileges the dialectic production of political and social meaning. In their reading, which I draw upon for this chapter, *mobilizing resources* is as much about accumulating adherents, money, or networks as it is a part of a process of contesting and making meaning. In other words:

> If people come to view their community's institutions as resources for social movement activism, for example, and they attempt to act on this understanding, then the understanding *constitutes the resources as resources* [emphasis added]. The institutions themselves, as viewed by academic observers, are less important than the understandings of the activists and their rivals. (Kurzman, 2008, p. 10)

Following from this, while Chapters Four and Five focused on the terms and *concepts* that formed these discourses of belonging (Algerianness through moderation, martyrdom, religious indigeneity, and the revolution), this chapter will examine a physical *space* through which they have historically been exercised and performed. That is, just as such concepts were brokered and monopolized by the state—once buttressing its legitimacy—so too were *bodies, institutions, and spaces*, namely the individual scouts themselves, the national scouting organization, and scouting activities and education.

The Scouts are a historic institution in Algeria, its important legacy owed in part to its religious-ideological, military, and educational-formational role in the War of Independence, and later, to its function as a training grounds for future FLN/state cadres. This legacy has led the Scouts as an institution to occupy a special place in the Algerian imagination, as an heir of the revolution, an icon of authentic Algerianness, and importantly: a symbol of the hopefulness of youth and the Algerian future. It is for this reason that the scouting body has continued to be seen as somewhat pure—despite various controversies within/over the Scouts in recent decades—and 'above' the perceived decay in the other 'revolutionary' institutions.

Thus by attempting to mobilize and establish affinity with the historic Scouts—their troops, their activities, their ideational basis and spiritual purpose—the MSP lays claim to codes of national belonging, especially against the political-cultural and discursive trends that have otherwise sought to place it outside the body politic. The MSP can assert that it too adheres to and upholds revolutionary, Algerian values.

In doing so, MSP contends with a third ideational trope, *state omnipotence*. (Of course, in many respects, its discourses and activities are in constant contention with all *three* tropes.) As described in Chapter Three, it is a widespread societal belief that the strings of most political phenomena are pulled behind a mysterious curtain (Goodman, 2013a, 2013b)—not only elections and other formal political institutions, but even social phenomena such as the rise of socialism in the 1970s, the rise of neo-Salafism in the last few decades, and even the founding of the MSP, challenging many of these tendencies' ability to exist meaningfully. The MSP has often been cast as socially/politically meaninglessness due to this state omnipotence narrative, which has harmed and hampered the MSP's moral project and electoral efforts.

Trespassing on scouting territory is a way for MSP to ask the polity (and itself), *is the state omnipotent, really*? without putting this question to the test in the radical terms that would contravene its claims to moderation and cooperationism, and threaten its pragmatic relationship with the state. That is, instead of attempting to contest or dismantle the underlying cultural, religious, and political codes, symbols, language, and imagery through which the state has traditionally sustained revolutionary legitimacy, the MSP instead seeks to trespass on them. Rather than confronting the state's 'actual' power, the movement attempts to chip away at its moral monopolies (Ismail, 2006; Turam, 2006).

I begin by discussing the history of the Scouts organization, in order to demonstrate the breadth of its historical presence and legitimacy, as well as its mobilizational potential, before discussing its significance to the MSP.

7.1 Scouts: From "Soldiers of the Future" to Politically-Coveted Youth



"Be Prepared (*kun musta'idan*)" the slogan of the Algerian Muslim Scouts, in line with the worldwide scout motto. Incidentally, the same motto is found on the Muslim Brotherhood emblem. The five points on the flower within the crescent represent the five pillars of Islam. The red color is said to represent the blood shed by the revolutionary *mujāhidīn*.

Figure 7.1 Emblem of the Algerian Muslim Scouts

Worldwide, scouting organizations have sought to instill in the young generations civic responsibility, ethical and moral character, leadership, life skills and physical aptitude. Scouting has taken on a religious dimension in many national countries, albeit stronger and more explicit in some contexts that others (Block & Proctor 2009). A few examples, among a great many, is the Israeli Scouts which emphasizes Jewish identity in relationship to nationalism and civic responsibility, thus membership often fed into the army (Bar-Yosef 2009). Another example of the central role of scouts in consolidating nationalism is the Italian Catholic Scouts which were a section of the religious-political establishment.[302] Scouting in Algeria has similarly long had an important religious/nationalist dimension.

The Algerian Muslims Scouts (SMA) were formed in 1935 by Mohammed Bouras,[303] a prominent sympathizer with the Islamic reform organization, the Algerian

[302] Though it was at one point usurped by extremist nationalists under Mussolini.
[303] Bouras, after completing his studies would move to Algiers and take part in the activities of the AUMA, the various influential sporting organizations of this period, as well as in Messali Hadj's *Étoile Nord-Africaine* (ENA) (Kaddache 2003a; Watanabe 2012). Founded first in 1926, the ENA marked the birth of Algerian radical nationalism, a political-ideological tendency which called for peaceful revolt against French occupation and full independence and sovereignty.

Association of Muslim Ulamaʾ (AUMA).[304] The SMA effectively merged the developmental and formational component of the model of the International Boy Scouts, with the Islamic education imperative the AUMA emphasized[305] (Kaddache, 2003b; Watanabe, 2012). The colonial administration viewed the SMA's rapid growth with trepidation and debated whether Algerian scoutisme ought to be banned, but ultimately focused its efforts on coopting it.[306] Despite this, scouting activity surged in the early 1940s and soon began propagating nationalistic concepts.[307] In the years leading into the liberation war, Algerian Scouts held events in regions throughout the country, disseminating nationalists anthems (*anāshīd*), and rallying support for the nationalist cause (Kaddache, 2003b).[308] According to Shoko Watanabe (2012), the Scout movement had two key roles as a conduit for nationalism among youth: The first was a quasi-military role which would contribute to the radical nationalist movements (the austerity and survival skills taught to scouts would prove advantageous for the future *maquis*).[309] The second was a religious role which aided in making the focus on

[304] See Chapter Three on the role of the AUMA's religious discourse in the underpinning the nationalist movement.

[305] Indeed, the *pied-noirs* had their own boy scouts in which some native/Muslim Algerians could take part. However, urban Muslim youth were becoming increasingly politically aware, engaged in civic activities, and increasingly seeking and accessing Islamic education as the AUMA opened free schools and built mosques; and as Mahfoud Kaddache, a historian of the Algerian independence struggle and once-leader in the SMA, finds, "some Algerians, having practiced scoutism in the French associations, dreamed of seeing groups of young Algerian scouts led by Algerians" (2003b, p. 69).

[306] Bouras was at this time vying for the SMA's recognition by the French (and international) scouting bodies. The latter proposed absorption into one of the existing *pied-noirs* scout groups, the Catholic *Scouts of France* (SDF) or the secular *Éclaireurs de France* (EDF). The administration also organized, according to Kaddache, leadership trainings for SMA leaders, led by SDF and EDF leaders, chiefly to emphasize the Scouts' educational aspects and de-emphasize the growing paramilitary nature of the SMA and bring the Muslim troops close to the administration (2003b, p. 70). The SMA declined the proposal, but was legalized in 1939 under the 1901 association law.

[307] The scouts, before becoming an extension of the FLN were first linked to Messali Hadj's *Étoile Nord-Africaine* (ENA) founded first in 1926 marked the birth of Algerian radical nationalism, a political-ideological tendency which called for peaceful revolt against French occupation and full independence and sovereignty (Vince 2015). When the French authorities dissolved the ENA in 1937, Hadj and other ENA leaders founded the *Parti du Peuple Algérien* (PPA).

[308] When the French authorities dissolved the ENA in 1937, Hadj and other ENA leaders founded the *Parti du Peuple Algérien* (PPA), of which many scouts leaders were members or sympathizers (Kaddache, 2003b, p. 71), while others became generally close to these nationalists as well as the AUMA.

[309] Indeed, Kaddache (2003a) observes that the Scouts became a 'satellite' of the erstwhile PPA-cum-MTLD (p. 760). (The *Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques* (MTLD) was founded immediately after the PPA was again dissolved in 1946.) The Scouts matured as a political movement in

Arabic and Islamic education an important galvanizing ideological point for anti-occupation agitation. Watanabe cites a 1946 pamphlet in which the SMA General Guide speaks of a mission to "fight irreligion by the scout movement," and that based on this, "Algerian Muslim Scouts, is incompatible with any non-religious thought." (2012, p. 54).[310]

After the FLN's first armed actions in 1954, the SMA became instrumental in the hand-in-hand militarization-Islamization of the resistance struggle.[311] The SMA founded 'refugee' troops in Tunisia and Morocco dedicated to national education and military training in preparation to join the National Liberation Army (ALN), the armed wing of the FLN.[312] Others were held in parts of France, the Netherlands, and Spain, caravans in Syria and Egypt (Kaddache, 2003b). The international agitation of the Scouts, alongside FLN supporters abroad, enhanced the international attention paid to the Algerian struggle.

After independence, the FLN's monopolistic grip[313] on the scouts allowed it, for years, to have a sole ownership of the body, of the Badissian-nationalist impetuses of its religious training, and of the patriotic ideology fostered within it—all of which have remained crucial symbolic tools of nation-building and Algerianness. In the 1970s this

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its own right and developed stronger, more formalized, and administrative presences in the organized nationalist activities (2003b, p. 73). The PPA-MTLD prepared scouts ideologically, pedagogically, and militarily as "soldiers of the future" (2003b, p. 73).

[310] The SMA had opted to centralize from 1943, in line with a similar direction taken on the part of the British Scouts. The appointment of Mahmoud Bouzouzou to the position of SMA General Guide (*murshid al-ʿam*) at this juncture cemented the religious aspect of the Scouts training and socialization. Bouzouzou established the Irshad (guidance) program which was comprised of Arabic language, Islam, and morality instruction; and through its implementation oversaw the division between technical and religious training. This division, in a manner similar to the division of labor present in the Muslim Brotherhood, was a departure from the British Scouts structure. (Kaddache 2003b, Watanabe 2012)

[311] The MTLD's most militant strains would join the founding of the FLN after its announcement of the War of Liberation on November 1st. Many of the deciding FLN members were themselves scouts.

[312] These scout cadres included Malamane from Maghnia (western Algeria), Ouadahi from *Grande Kabylie* (east-central), and Ali Pacha from *Petite Kabylie*). They were the representatives for Algerian scouting in international occasions and events especially in fellow Arab countries (See Kaddache, 2003b, p. 75).

[313] More generally, the FLN undertook to coopt various smaller religious/political revolutionary movements, by which time the AUMA's repression by the French encouraged its more subversive strains.

role became more explicit as President Houari Boumediene's regime attempted to isolate potential challengers. Under Boumediene, scout mobilizations were re-directed in 1975 toward the founding of the FLN's youth union, the National Union of Algerian Youth (*Union nationale de la jeunesse algérienne*; UNJA), and substantial swathes of the Scouts effectively became an official FLN arm.[314] Importantly, this move effectively prevented the SMA from potentially becoming an independent source of political power, by capping the age of Scout leaders at 32. A mass exodus of partisan personalities followed.[315]

By some accounts this redirection of the youth force was Boumediene's explicit directive, a response to accusations of religious laxity as the FLN's counterpart university union, the UNEA, had then-recently been judged "too far to the left" (Hachemaoui, 2013, p. 128). Thus according to historian Mohammed Hachemaoui, the UNJA effectively became a "satellite of the authoritarian regime responsible for structuring and controlling youth. Its discourse fit as such, and is in the line of the ideology of the regime" (2013, p. 128), including in the discourses of state-led Islam.[316]

Concurrent to the use of the Scouts to foster a religious brand of patriotism,[317] Boumediene throughout the 1970s made several concessions to Islamists—both the strains within his party apparatus and the movements outside it.[318] Interestingly,

[314] N. Mazari, interview, October 1, 2018.
[315] N. Mazari, interview, October 1, 2018.
[316] "Un satellite du régime autoritaire chargée de structurer et contrôler la jeunesse. Son discours s'inscrit en tant que tel dans la ligne de l'idéologie du régime."
[317] It is claimed that the use of religious rhetoric in the anticolonial struggle—prominently, *jihād* and *istishahād* (martyrdom)—was in order to emphasize it as a moral struggle, and complete personal sacrifice: *against* colonial injustice, as opposed to necessarily *for* Islam. Indeed, even non-Muslim combatants were designated as "*mujāhidīn*" (Hardman 2009; Ruedy 1996). The same is true for the state-building period: despite declaring Islam the religion of the state, the majority of the FLN leadership remained quite secular and did not clarify the role of Islam in Algerian politics (Parmentier, 1999).
[318] This included efforts as Arabization and Islamization in order to unify Algerian identity and rid it of French vestige, with the addition motivation of countervailing his biggest perceived threat, the leftists and organizing Kabyles.

Islamists within the FLN—sometimes known as the *Barbe-FLN*[319]—were the socially / morally conservative grouping working within the *parti unique* ('single party') for Algerian society's Arabization (or at least, its de-Francization) and for infusing the prevailing socialist system as much as possible with *al-shariʿa* (Roberts, 2003). The FLN's Islamist contingent became gradually more defined, better-organized, and increasingly outspoken—making more vocal calls for sharia law and a re-introduction of Arab/Islamic values (Willis, 1996, p 127).[320]

This growth in Islamist voices coincided with a perceived secularization within the FLN, if not in its official rhetoric, at least in its internal culture and approach to the Islamist discourses growing within the party (more on this in the forthcoming section 7.3). And by the time of the 1989 political opening, Islamist discourses both within and outside the FLN had risen sharply in popularity, exploiting popular disapproval of the state's economic policies, to push its own disapproval of the social liberalizing and secularizing path of the FLN government. Although this disapproval of the state's religious character was not 'central' to the popular discontent, it was notionally mobilized to compound prominent material grievances. And indeed, by the 1980s, the Scout movement had drawn increasingly closer to the Barbe-FLN, as its counterpart UNJA remained in the grip of the FLN's secularizing current.[321]

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[319] While the Islamic tendency within the FLN dates to the 1950s, Hugh Roberts (2003) encourages distinguishing between the longer-standing subgrouping within this faction, the "'*ulamists*" (such as Ahmed Talib Ibrahimi and other AUMA-loyalists) and the burgeoning, radical, neo-Salafist, and more pan-Arabist "*Barbe-FLN*" (bearded FLN) as nicknamed by domestic press and pop culture (p.133). The latter was led most prominently by Abdelaziz Belkhadem, a conservative Islamist who was APN president from 1990 to 1992.

[320] This is including but not limited to the issue of gender-segregated schools (Willis, 1996, p. 127); additionally, Belkhadem had brought the ritual of opening parliamentary sessions with readings from the Quran, and was influential in getting the contentious 1984 family code passed (an enormous defeat for the feminist groups at the time, as it is largely still in effect) (Entelis, 2007).

[321] As several 'Barbe-FLN' had defected to the FIS, several formerly FLN-linked scout leaders and *muḥāfiẓ*s, by extension, had joined FIS ranks. There is limited secondary literature on the hold the FIS had on the Scouts during its brief heyday. The FIS, by many accounts, very briefly had a grip on various *wilāya* (province) level and *baladiyya* (commune) level scout troops around the north—with many of the *muḥāfiẓ*s (scouts state-level leaders), and *qāʾid*s (commune-level leaders) belonging to the FIS. (A deeper

In this opening political environment, various scout troops around the country reportedly requested to be distanced from the FLN and the UNJA, with the hopes of rejuvenating the revolutionary ethic of the organization outside the increasingly illegitimate architecture of the state party.[322] Additionally, the various political forces that would later crystallize into parties, initially moved to form their own scouting organizations wholly separate from UNJA. However in 1989, leaders with history in the pre-1975 SMA preempted these developments by organizing a "renaissance conference" (*muʾatamar inbiʿāth*) to restart the SMA under new "independent NGO" status and to prevent the fracturing of scouting along political lines.[323]

Scout Schisms

Ultimately, while the SMA's reconstitution in 1989 preserved a unified scouting body, it did not entirely succeed in isolating it from politics, as most of the newly-formed parties attempted to establish relationships with the Scouts. Some did so rather effectively, which as we will see has caused various inter-party tensions within the organization that continue to boil to the surface from time to time.

There is little to no literature on the Scouts' activity over the course of the 1990s, but according to several accounts, this is when Scouts took a highly-localized character and were often mobilized according to local causes.[324] The MSP, through its own troop leaders, expanded its presence in the scout troops throughout the 1990s, and an increasing number of MSP members ascended to scout posts such as *muḥāfiẓ* (regional commissioners and *qāʾid* (local guide). This trend was accelerated by the party's incorporation into the formal political space and its attendant efforts to have a

inquiry on how this influenced scout activity and ideology, would be an important, fascinating, and much-needed contribution to the limited literature on the pre-coup FIS as well as the Scouts' history.)

[322] N. Mazari, interview, October 1, 2018.

[323] N. Mazari, interview, October 1, 2018.

[324] N. Mazari, interview, October 1, 2018; A. Mechaï, interview, October 4, 2018.

normalized presence in Algerian life and society—a development which, while not entirely welcome by the scouting establishment, was preferred to the perceived prospect of FIS expansion into the Scouts.[325] (Indeed, according to personal accounts of several older scouts, many scouting troops in FIS-strongholds transitioned to MSP control once the conflict began.) [326] This transition meant an increasing overlap in troop- and MSP youth activity and its spiritual wing, al-Irshad wa-l-Islah's spiritual and charitable activism. Until as recently as the late 2000s, it was a common claim that the MSP was present throughout the breadth of the Scout troops in the North.

In 1998, Noureddine Benbrahem, a member of parliament from the regime-aligned National Democratic Rally (RND) party, succeeded Noureddine Belaïd, the scout president seen as more permitting of MSP overlap (thus often rumored to have been in the MSP himself, which he vehemently, and rather credibly in my view, denies). Benbrahem began a quiet campaign of recuperating posts in the national scout apparatus, as well as attempts to recuperate the scouting troops to the RND (and FLN).[327] Under Benbrahem's stewardship, and under the guise of rooting out partisanship at large, the national body had a stated wish to wrest itself from localized party dynamics in the townships around the country (i.e. imbrication with the MSP), and give the organization a renewed veneer of autonomy. One prominent former-scout leader in Blida and FLN member, Djamal Ferfera, told me in no uncertain terms, "we

[325] Abdelmoumen, conversation.
[326] FIS-aligned *muḥāfiẓs* and *qā'id*s were removed from their posts by the national scout leadership—still de facto FLN-dominant—during the broader post-coup crackdown on the FIS. Several older informants alleged that many new Scout activists were still quiet sympathizers of the disbanded FIS, and that the national scout leadership continued to go to great lengths to identify these ex-FIS remnants and root them out.
[327] Reports abounded in the press that Benbrahem had in fact once been a zealous activist of the MSP, who had been promised second place in the RND's list for the 1997 legislative elections and to be voted into the post of the Scouts' commander in chief, if he agreed to the leave the MSP. These rumors led to further speculation that he retained—and facilitated the Scouts' retention of—many Islamist ideals even as scouts were administratively won over to the RND party, and as Benbrahem continued to attempt to climb the government hierarchy.

must *return* [emphasis added] the Scouts to our cause, in defending the country's values, and the values of the liberation struggle," in an implicit reference to recovering the Scouts back to the state parties.[328]

This maneuvering polarized the Scouts between the national leadership and the local leadership and troops—with the former aligned with the state parties, while the latter, the base, maintained organizational affinity with the MSP.[329] At the 2008 congress, many scouts expressed concern about the future of the SMA, their dismay at their dominance at the hands of the parties, and at Benbrahem's multiplying mandates. This was of course exacerbated by the concurrent splintering within the MSP, where defecting troop leaders often took their entire troops with them.[330] As Hamza (Jil al-Tarjih trainee we met in Chapter Six) recounted, "we young members decided that the Scouts should not follow any one party, that it should be an autonomous body (*mustaqil bidhat*), to protect its credibility, and to be loyal to our definition of the Scouts as a non-political, educational, volunteering organization (*munaẓẓama tarbawiyya taṭawwuʿiyya ghaīr sīyāsiyya*)."

Calling on leadership to relinquish party ties, and for Benbrahem to abandon his campaign for an additional presidential term, these members in 2008 created a 'non-aligned,' nonpartisan coalition (*kutla*) against the state of affairs. Benbrahem accused the MSP of orchestrating this opposition. He accused MSP's then-president, Aboujerra Soltani of having instructed high-ranking MSP leaders, militants, and party-aligned troop leaders to execute a rebellion to unseat him, and even referred to Soltani as "a well-known opponent to our nationalist current," attacking the Islamists' patriotic bona

[328] Conversation, March 8, 2016.
[329] N. Mazari, interview, October 1, 2018; A. Mechaï, interview, October 4, 2018.
[330] Nasser, December 2016; N. Mazari, interview, October 1, 2018; A. Mechaï, interview, October 4, 2018.

fides.[331] Underscoring the partly financial nature of parties' interest in the Scouts, Benbrahem accused the MSP of using the Scouts to fill the party coffers, raising the point of Soltani's known corruptions scandals.[332]

The result of the conference was Benbrahem's retention of the presidency, while the separation between parties and scouting was more strictly enforced. As Nasser, an active MSP member and scout leader who we met in the last chapter recounted:

> Our troop had to stop its activities during this period. Then we resumed, our troop was still MSP, as were all the troops [in Blida], but we could not show it, we had to try to not be obvious about it (*mānbiyyinūsh*). Some of the people who became MSP members, were told not to talk about their scouts origins, because this can be understood the wrong way. This will be manipulated. People will say we are doing this on purpose (*bi-l-ʿānī*), they already said that, that we were trying to seize the Scouts.

Indeed, according to MSP and scout leader Abdelkarim Mechaï, "it became such that people will not show their political belonging within scouts. When you are in scouts you take off your party member cap. And when you are in the party, you take off your scouts cap." He added, laughing heartily, "You can't wear both…unless of course you were in the FLN or RND!"[333]

As the years went on, the turf war between the MSP and the RND had matured into a larger, more publicized, and regionally-pervasive battle. The leadership came to see the status quo as no longer tenable and made the theme of the Scouts' 11th congress on January 31, 2015 "reconciliation and reform." Conceding to base of the organization

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[331] Djouadi, 2008.

[332]This series of events was reported on by Djouadi (2008): Mounir Aït Yala, a then-ranking MSP member and *muḥāfiẓ* of the Scouts for the Oran *wilāya*, counter-accused Benbrahem of selling clothing, scout uniforms, and other materials typically distributed free of charge, for profit to the troops in the city of Djanet in the poor southeastern Illizi province. Indeed, according to Aït Yala, "this conflict is not political, it is about financial and administrative foul play" (*'c'est une affaire d'ordre purement administratif et financier')* (Djouadi, 2008). *Muḥāfiẓ*s of the Oran, Relizane, and Algiers provinces, many of which were de facto MSP-run, demanded an extraordinary congress, lest they withdraw confidence from the president. They additionally penned a letter addressed to the president of the republic and involved *wālī*s, stating that the Scouts threatened to become Benbrahem's private fiefdom and calling for changes to be made to oversight of administration and financial management, emphasizing they were not acting out of partisan impetus. In response Benbrahem froze the activities of the three *muḥāfiẓ*s.

[333] A. Mechaï, interview, October 4, 2018.

which had grown weary from Benbrahem's seventeen-year tenure,[334] the national leadership voted in a new president, Mohammed Bouallag, after which Benbrahem finally stepped down.[335]

These territorial quarrels demonstrate how important the Scouts continues to be for national self-understanding, and show the sustained breadth of scouts' symbolic capital as well as its mobilizational potential. So important are the Scouts that these competing camps shared a large stake in maintaining its 'integrity' and 'purity' as an institution, fearing parties (or perhaps just *other* parties) would sully it, even while trying to claim it for themselves at the expense of others. Interestingly, the terms along which the battles are waged were ultimately rejected by the scout ranks themselves, and thus eventually the leadership, as the internalized institutional discourse within the Scouts about their scouting identity, is that they ultimately must remain 'above politics.'

7.2 Scouts as Movement Resources?

Relative to their size, and in consideration of the many obstacles facing the non-state parties (see Chapter Two) the MSP's efforts to unify their activities with that of the Scouts, and to harness its mobilizational capacity were perhaps more fruitful than other parties. These efforts started in earnest after the scouting body was announced as formally independent in 1989.

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[334] See "Benbrahem quitte enfin" (2015). Though Benbrahem remained tenacious and confident he would secure a fifth term, sufficient pressure within the Scouts to wriggle from the grip of parties and their conflicts, as well as to see a more pluralist change of hands, had sufficiently mounted. 44 of the 48 *wilayas* did not vote for him. He then attempted to advise a transition period, wherein he would gradually cede his post to a successor, a proposition the delegates firmly rejected.

[335] See "Benbrahem quitte enfin," 2015; "Scouts musulmans algériens," 2016. Despite the proscription of partisanship having long been enshrined in the charter, Bouallag vowed to guard the Scouts from the partisan forces. Where gerontocracy afflicts most political institutions, parties, and organizations, Bouallag also vowed to open posts of leadership, management, and responsibility to the younger scout ranks ("Scouts musulmans algériens." 2016). Interestingly, contestation and speculation over his "real" partisan affiliation ensued among the scout ranks, according to interlocuters. MSP members, interestingly, claimed he was in the FLN, while FLN and non-partisan members asserted he was from al-Bina' al-Watani a later 2013 splinter from the MSP.

Data collection on this topic proved difficult. Any partisan links became technically illegal in 1989 (at the Renaissance Conference) and could invite sanction from the national organization (particularly for non-state parties, as several dual MSP-scout members lamented). Official claims of party influence on scouting activity, or of any partisan links on the part of a scouting official were thus downplayed if not denied in official discourse. Meanwhile data regarding partisan influence and presence, including through dual (party and scout) post-holders in scout councils, local organization ladders, and troops, and their likely variations by region in this regard, are undisclosed thus not collected.[336]

This chapter is chiefly about the Scouts as a prism for MSP identity-articulation within the Algerian fabric, and this dearth of quantitative and geographic data on partisan influence has admittedly come as another, more practical, reason to privilege examination of MSP discourses and ideational claims as they relate to their relations to the scouting body. And anecdotally, by most accounts several local troops and had become "MSP's reserves." According to Abdelmoumen, a non-partisan leader within the Scouts since its 1989 reconstitution:

> UNJA became *al-khazn* ('storage/reserve') for the FLN, so Scouts became *khazn* for the Islamists. When FIS was gone, it went to MSP. In both, young people are educated with the same principles and in a certain mentality so that when they grow up they start thinking exactly like them.[337]

By other accounts, although the majority of national leadership posts were held by the state-aligned parties with little exception, the large majority of state-level offices,

[336] There is no secondary literature that deals with the development of the SMA in the 1980s onward. Members who personally experienced MSP-scout overlap understand it perhaps intentional but as organic and natural, as in keeping with the character of either organization, while those external to the MSP characterize it as an infiltration. If I am granted a visa to return to Algeria, I should seek to find archival sources and individuals that may elucidate, aside from these contestations, the MSP's efforts to have a normalized presence in the Scouts, beginning in the late 1990s. While nearly all interviewees who spoke on the subject were certain it was an intentional campaign, there is little in the way of evidence, other than anecdotes. I am interested to elucidate how the intentionality of these efforts manifested in the relationship with the Scouts.

[337] Conversation, February 2016.

commune-level leadership posts, and troop leadership were almost entirely held by the MSP (and later, its splinters).[338] As Noureddine Belaid, the Scouts former general secretary said to me, "RND was at the top, but the MSP held the base."

In my primary fieldwork site, Blida, the MSP for a time was closely integrated with scouting networks in the region, as revealed through conversations and observations of scouting activity. By some accounts this was helped by the lack of a unified national curriculum and minimal troop-level oversight, leaving troops to effectively design their own activities as long as they adhered to fundamental scout tenets. Nassim Mazari is a nationally-known (non-MSP) scout activist since the early 1980s, whose scouting and activism in adult life has been subject of media profiles.[339] According to him, in the national scouting organization, "the curriculum is not unified! (*al-manhaj ghayr muwaḥḥad*) Not since the new form it took in 1989. Because it is not centralized, troops and local councils can do as they like."[340] Commenting on this, Noureddine Belaid told me, "this facilitates the overlap we see between tendencies [parties] and scouts. When this is the situation, it becomes even more normal/natural [*ʿadi*] for groups like MSP to make scouting in line with their practice."[341]

For example, Karim, a former scout, now a journalist in his late 30s, joined the Scouts in Blida at the behest of his father, also a scout. Until he left for university he spent eight years with the Scouts, and recounted much of the activity as including religious *ḥalqā*s (usually-religious group-study sessions) and prayer alongside troop members several times a day. Notably, according to Karim, many of the *ḥalqā*s sessions focused primarily on the teachings of Hassan al-Banna and in turn their reading for the Algerian context by Mahfoud Nahnah. He recalled that during his final years he began

[338] See Chapter Two regarding these splinter parties.
[339] " Le boy-scout infatigable," 2016.
[340] N. Mazari, interview, October 1, 2018
[341] N. Belaid, interview, October 1, 2018.

to notice *other* motivations of the scout organization in his locality—namely toward recruitment: "I was not a registered member (*munkhariṭ*) in MSP, but I came close then I decided I didn't completely agree with it [MSP]. After I left the troop, nearly everyone became active militants, including those who went to university." In Karim's experience, the Scouts functioned as a place to socialize youth into the discourses and practices of the MSP, and to ease their trajectories toward activism and even membership in the party. While Karim stated that it was not required, he made clear he had felt a social pressure to follow this path as well.

Nasser told me that while it is not one-to-one recruitment, a majority of scouts in Blida and the surrounding towns end up in the MSP or its charitable wing, al-Irshad wa-l-Islah. And vice versa, many MSP members got their start in the Scouts. According to him it is primarily to due to the training, support, and general time and resources that MSP mentors offer to scouts.

One sub-theory within social movement theory (SMT) that has been—often productively—deployed to frame the above behavior is resource mobilization theory (RMT). RMT describes the process(es) of acquiring resources from a provider, through various means, to reach a movement's established goals. Traditional RMT emphasizes these resources must be the right 'type,' to be 'efficiently' timed, and to come at an optimal 'cost'. It has also documented the role of *social networks* in directing needed resources to movements: money, adherents/supporters, alliances with power, media attention, and other symbolic and material resources (Clark, 2003; Singerman, 2003).

In my own observations, the MSP's involvement in scouting in Blida and elsewhere came as an important avenue for resource mobilization—with the Scouts as a clear boon to the MSP movement—in several ways. While this prism of 'resources' does not tell the full story of the MSP-scout relationship, I remain wary of "fetishizing

meaning-making to the neglect of material and structural factors" as Kurzman warns (2008, p. 12). I will therefore briefly outline how scout troops and the activities conducted within them were significant for material aspects of MSP mobilization on a few specific fronts, before proceeding to analyze the lines of meaning-making that impel and accompany these efforts.

First, as described by Karim above, the Scouts are an important source of youth recruitment in certain regions, especially where, as he pointed out, the Scouts are a "national service available to all Algerians without profit," rendering it a neutral space where the party and the public may come together. In Blida and beyond, scouting brought MSP-leaning youth together with non-members. *The troop*, here, was thus akin to a preexisting social network, with its own manpower and resources, with the friendship and loyalty ties cultivated within the troop facilitating a sense of cohesiveness, and like-mindedness.[342] Additionally, field trips and overnight away-camps offered further chances to deepen these bonds and familial ties, and to experience spiritual retreat together. According to several young scouts that Nasser once introduced me to, the camps consisted of *riḥla*s ('trips'), and *tadrīb* ('exercise'), and a healthy dose of *tarbiya* ('educational formation') and religious *ḥalqa*s. (A few scouts described these lessons as frequently referencing the practices and ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as those specific to Nahnah.)

These exchanges and shared experiences encouraged the affinity and sense of "imagined solidarity" to which Bayat (2005) refers as necessary to bind members and engender feelings of shared cause within movements. Some MSP troop leaders expressed to me that many boys joining scouts were already religious, sometimes came

[342] I emphasized the word 'sense' here, to underscore that this like-mindedness should not be taken to mean that there is an 'actual', discernable like-mindedness and assured homogeneity among members that would obscure the ideational differences that surely abound among them.

from religious families, and thus often sought spiritual and civic solidarity with peers, and characterized them as therefore more inclined toward Islamism. Therefore, these efforts to establish a degree of curricular overlap between MSP religious education and scouting activity not only felt 'natural,' but also made the process of invitation to the MSP much more organic and less concerted—for as Nasser often put it, they are "already there." As political scientist Janine Clark puts it, "social bonds aid potential joiners in overcoming the various perceived costs of joining a social movement" (Clark, 2003, p. 166, citing Klandermans & Oegema, 1987, p. 530).

According to several accounts of individuals involved in both scouting and the MSP movement since the early 1990s, more and more scout troops began to promulgate the MSP religious and societal vision, incorporating many of the MSP's *tarbiya* and *takwīn* (formation, training and education) into their existing scout training. If we indeed use the prism of RMT to understand the MSP-scouts relationship in some regions, it looks much like its relationship to MSP youth associations (like CHEMS, see Chapter Six), where the Scouts are a single, consolidated venue to provide to the MSP access to a network of both member and non-member youth.

Second, the MSP benefits in material and budgetary terms from its relationship with the Scouts. Hamza, scout leader in the Blida area put it this way:

> "Because of how MSP shares their resources, the Scouts also share theirs, scouts have a lot of money to put on the programming that MSP wants to do, like city clean-ups, and religious retreats where we learn about the party, and about Mahfoud Nahnah."

Notably, many of scout funds are actually government funds, earmarked for associations. So for the MSP, the Scouts' state-allocated resources came as an opportunity to funnel *state funds into party activities*.[343]

[343] In an interview given to *Le Matin* by a member of the army cadres on the subject of MSP's money dealings, he muses "one wonders how it's possible for the MSP to monopolize those departments where money flows. It seems the Bouteflika clan has long led a strategy of support to the MSP in return for

Ultimately, while the traditional RMT lens is useful in some respects, it is also incomplete in several others. For example, traditional RMT theorists are inclined to frame such mobilizational efforts, such as the use of MSP education in scouting camps, trips, and other activity as "a *conscious* effort by movement activists to *selectively target* prospective participants in sympathetic social networks and communities [emphasis added]" (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987, p. 530 as cited in Clark, 2003, p. 166). However, this over-assumes a rationality and intentionality that necessarily weighs costs and benefits, and necessarily has information on what these are. Rather than expecting calculable mobilizational successes, a better characterization of MSP's overtures to the Scouts might be one of trial and error. After all, as we saw in the previous subsection, these efforts did not go uncontested for long.

Additionally, the multitude of subjectivities within a movement will necessarily generate divergent understandings of what constitutes a 'resource,' or a 'gain' as they relate to how individuals understand their movement and their own purpose within it. These articulations and discursive choices themselves generate the very spaces, dispositions, and rationales through which their producers activate at all. That is, openings and closures in mobilizational opportunity do not simply descend upon the MSP and its members. Rather, what constitutes 'resources' (what is to be mobilized and why, what it means, and what it allows the movement to do) are constructed and created through sense-making processes and their interaction with political culture. That is, efforts such as the conjoining of the Scout and MSP *ḥalqa*s, and other conflations (cases in which a scout troop is effectively turned into an MSP *usra*, or communes where a

political support within the presidential alliance, a sort of win-win partnership… (*On se demande comment il est possible que le MSP ait pu accaparer de tels départements où l'argent coule à flots ? Je pense que le clan Bouteflika mène depuis longtemps une réelle stratégie de soutien au MSP. En contrepartie d'un appui politique au sein de l'Alliance présidentielle. Une sorte de partenariat gagnant-gagnant…)*" (Aït Mouhoub, 2011).

troop leader has the same functions or is in effect the very same position as an MSP *murabbī*) are also ways for the MSP understand, rearticulate, and cement its religious ideology, organizational orientation, and movement purpose.

Several post-structural social movement theorists depart from the traditional RMT conceptualization along these very lines (Kurzman, 2004, 2008; Touraine, 1985). They assert that what instead merits emphasis in RMT is how both the resources and their goals are at their core shaped by sense-making, and are therefore not static but reshaped and transformed through their very contact with the movement as they pursue said resources and goals. Indeed, the mobilizations discussed here could not have been undertaken without accompanying meaning-making practices. The more structural and curricular overlap could not have been pursued without establishing ideational affinity, especially where the Scouts' history had traditionally coupled it with the FLN/state. As Touraine (1985) argues:

> The notion of resource mobilization has been used to transform the study of social movements into a study of strategies as if actors were defined by their goals and not by the social relationships—and especially power relationships—in which they are involved. (p. 769)

And in turn, the way in which resource-mobilization *occurs* itself generates meaning. As the next subsection elaborates in greater detail, the trials and travails of mobilization, shaped how meaning was made about this affinity, along what lines it does and should exist, the boundaries of acceptable overlap, and about scouting identity.

7.3 Negotiating Algerianness Through the Scouts

Sociologist Charles Kurzman thus elaborates that the practices considered *relevant* (in traditional SMT) may have significance to movement members beyond their instrumental or strategic use toward some predetermined goal(s). He gives the example that "democratic or consensus decision-making may serve a movement's ideals

and self-understandings, as well as its strategic goals, notwithstanding outsiders' skepticism" (2008, p. 9). That is, a movement practice may not necessarily be solely for functional administrative purposes, political/goal-oriented/mobilizational progress or effective internal governance, but also represent practices and articulations of movement identity.

In this way, the Scouts serve not only a (more structural/material) resource-mobilizational purpose for the MSP, but also provide a specific grounds for MSP members to make claims about the movement's identity; namely, as one that is simultaneously Islamist and no less an heir to revolutionary legitimacy and thereby to national belonging than the more traditional state-aligned claimants (i.e. the FLN). This next subsection presents examples of how scouting participants from various social positions make sense of this widely-recognized affinity between the two movements.

Claims of MSP Affinity

Nasser, who we have met over the course of several chapters now, was from Bouarfa, a poorer hamlet of Blida—my primary field site. Once he reached high school, his neighbor invited him to participate in al-Irshad wa-l-Islah. Around the same time, per Nasser's recollection, a school official with MSP ties invited him to join a scout troop in Bouarfa in 2006, which, according to Nasser, led him to be more active in al-Irshad wa-l-Islah. He joined the MSP in 2007, and described remaining active in all of its sections: al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, Scouts, CHEMS. He described the *ḥalaqāt kashfiyya* ('scout study circles,' a telling combination of Islamic/MSP and scouting terminology):

> Eventually, I became a troop leader, we organized many activities, trips to the beaches, mountains, community-cleaning activities. We are scouts, so of course we also participated in nationalist activities, celebrations of 1st November, of independence, etc. most of these were administered also through al-Irshad, so we often pooled the funding for these activities.

Nasser described the charitable activities and responsibilities in al-Irshad wa-l-Islah as much more time-consuming, daily, and constant, such that they would simply bleed into scouting activity. “All the troop leaders were MSP, so they did not mind this,” he emphasized. “And not all of the Scouts in our troop were MSP, but many of them slowly joined with us. Our families become close, we trust each other.” Further for Nasser, “when I was a scout troop leader, it was like a being a *murabbī*, in a way. I see how my *murabbī* guided us, in religion, in how to behave, and I tried to also repeat this with my scouts.”

And, even though Nasser raised clear themes of recruitment, he did not see the relationship between the MSP and scouts as occurring chiefly along these lines. Instead, he understood and established a common cause between the two, along lines of values and organizational purpose. He described the overlap in activities as something organic, natural, and reflective of consensus, (“they did not mind this,”) rather than something strategic. His experience is noteworthy when compared with Bouallag’s rhetoric of the need to “guard the Scouts from partisan forces” as Nasser did not seem to see (or at least did not present) the MSP-scout overlap as ‘political’ in nature. That is, although he clearly depicts his party as having a heavy role in his scouting activity, he maintained and asserted his belief that scouting must remain above partisan politics, perhaps because he did not see this overlap as ‘partisan.’

Nasser’s experience appeared rather typical, as several other dual-members I met in Blida also articulated scouting as part of a single, unified experience of involvement in the broader MSP movement. Their accounts echoed a broader narrative—especially among small, non-national, level scout leaders—of a special spiritual, moral, and organizational affinity between the MSP and the Scouts. Interestingly, this sense was pervasive in Blida even among non-MSP scouts. Hamza,

who we know, was an active scout leader in Blida, and deliberately distanced himself from political activity and the MSP:

> My father was in the party [MSP], and thought the Scouts were good for formation of young boys. He didn't want to expose me to politics at so young an age, so I was in scouts instead, since in our town, most organizations were run by MSP anyway, not always officially, but by leading members.

Hamza further explained that violence and insecurity during the 1990s conflict were another reason that scouts became a better place for youth to congregate and receive civic and religious training:

> The Scouts were safer because the mosques, especially in Blida, all had extremist preachers. My dad felt the mosques at the time were having a negative effect on young kids in their ideas and orientations. So, the scouts, whose leadership and organization, were known, were a good alternative. And the MSP were thought to be moderate.

Hamza has also elaborated that the relationship between Scouts and the MSP during his childhood, was inevitable for most: he explained if youth wanted (or their parents wanted them) to be engaged in civil society work, "they go either to HMS [MSP], or to the Scouts. Both have charitable work (*ʿamal khayrī*), both have religious study (*ḥalaqāt diniyya*), and both care about the trust and love and brotherhood (*ukhuwa*) in the *usra*[344] ('movement family)." This closeness in activities and goals meant for Hamza that the Scouts provided "material and ideological support (*al-dʿam mʿanawiyyan wa madiyyan*)" for the MSP.

Several scouts around Blida spoke of the way in which their troops were like pre-existing and pre-organized *usra*s (MSP families). According to Nasser and Hamza's accounts, in Blida and Bouarfa, the promotion process (*fard* to *murabī*, etc. see Chapter Two) mimics that of the Scouts, facilitating kids' ability to graduate in tandem through

[344] As discussed in Chapter Two, the 'usra is the smallest unit of organization in the Scouts. Because Muslim Brotherhood organizations are modeled in part off the Scouts, they share similar organizational structure.

both. In these localities, boys in the same troop were often in the same *usra*, using their scout meeting time to study and prepare their MSP activities.

It is perhaps worth briefly noting here that this structural affinity is not without historical precedent in the region. When founding the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1920s, Hassan al-Banna reportedly "wished to found an organization that was similarly [to the international scouts] devoted to fostering the personal development of the rising generation," (Brown, 2011, p. 2) and was influenced by its promotion process and internal structures when devising those of the Brotherhood. Indeed, al-Banna also adopted the motto "be prepared." The MSP bases its structure roughly on that of the flagship Brotherhood, while the Algerian scouts base their own roughly on the International scouting model, which partly explains the structural commonalities between the MSP and the Algerian scouts today (even while this structural affinity may not have been a strategic pursuit for the MSP). There is a notable difference however, in the way the Islamist organization in Egypt and Algeria have related to their domestic national scouting body. Al-Banna, rather than seeking to establish a presence in Egypt's state-aligned scout movement, created the Brotherhood's own Rover Scouts (*al-jawwala*) in the 1930s (Al-Anani, 2016, p. 88; Al-Arian, 2014, p. 39), over which the Brotherhood had clearer jurisdiction and which operated more officially as its youth wing (Lia, 1999).[345] Similar to those Algerian scouts run by the MSP, the Egyptian *jawwala* sought to recruit members through sports, establish discipline over youth, imbue young "Brothers-in-training" with anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist ideas, and establishing "a reservoir of trained youth" who would execute the social projects central to the Brotherhood's *da'wa* imperatives (Lia, 1999, p. 172). Indeed, as Hamza further

[345] The Muslim Brotherhood eventually established bylaws specifically concerning the Rovers; by the late 1930s, Rover Scout membership was mandated for aspiring members. Al-Banna managed to get the Rovers registered officially in Egypt's National Scout Movement in the late 1930s, which allowed the Brotherhood youth more room for maneuver.

noted, "with this MSP support and training, the scout then has the capacity to work with society. Most of the children in scouts became HMS [MSP]. My father was in HMS, he put me in boy scouts for this reason."

As discussed in Chapter Five, a popular issue that was taken up and cast as an axis of moral affinity and common cause, was the issue of Palestine.[346] Salim was an avowedly nonpartisan elder scout and Blida troop leader and a self-described scouting history enthusiast; he said he admired Nahnah but did not support the MSP. According to him, engagement in charitable work in Gaza was, "a cause for us [scouts]. It is in our beliefs (*Un combat pour nous. C'est dans notre croyance*)." And as discussed in the previous chapters, the issue of Palestine is one around which the MSP has been able to mobilize varied, often unlikely, followers around Blida. Moreover, its Islamization of the Palestinian cause has allowed the MSP to claim a primary role in its championing, at the expense of the FLN and the old guard of pan-Arab nationalism within Algeria. The Scouts, also long dedicated to the Palestinian cause, again found a logical partner in the MSP from the view of many Blida scouts—again allowing Scouts *tarbiya* and activism to be construed as contiguous with MSP ethos, while in conflict with that of the FLN.

Karim, the former scout we met in the previous subsection who was reticent about scouts' links to MSP, recalled visiting Algiers with his scout troop in 1997 for a Palestinian solidarity meeting held by the Scouting organization. Toward the end of the meeting, he recalled troop leaders began chanting "Hamas! Hamas!" in order to, in Karim's reading, honor the Palestinian armed front. His own troop leader, among others changed it to "*ḥams*! *ḥams*!" (i.e. the Arabic acronym for the MSP, close in pronunciation to the Palestinian organization) to which he followed along. Soon, he recalled, all the young boys around the room were chanting "*ḥams!"* instead—reflective

[346] For a full discussion of MSP's activism regarding Palestine, see Chapter Five.

of how the MSP often seeks to align itself with the cause of Hamas, often using similar language of besiegement.[347]

Hamza, though similarly disapproving of MSP-scout overlap conceded, "sometimes I didn't agree with the [scouts'] relationship with al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, because everyone knows they are Hamas (MSP), but it gave many troops important opportunities to have communications with people in Gaza, and share in charitable projects. Hamas [MSP] has good communication with the people on the ground [*fi al-arḍ*]." The most public example of efforts to make the Palestinian cause an axis of shared moral purpose, was when Scout troops were enlisted to participate in 2010 in the MSP-led Algerian (and Moroccan) delegation to the 2010 Freedom Flotilla, a high-profile international activist effort to break the blockade on Gaza. As elaborated in Chapter Five, it was one of the party's largest social and political victories in its short history.[348] On this, Hamza recalled:

> "MSP invited scouts to be a part of it [the flotilla], the leaders thought it would be good experience for the youth and also is like a *daʿwa* for the Kashafa ('scouts'). Still in Blida, all the charity the Scouts does for Gaza is through HMS [MSP], not all, but most. Because they have relationships with Hamas in Palestine."

These discourses, including those surrounding an innate shared interest in the Palestinian cause, show that the relationship between meaning-making discourses and mobilization techniques are not causal, but mutually-reifying and thus bi-directional: the belief in the affinity justifies the mobilization, while the nature of this mobilization feeds into how the affinity is cultivated.

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[347] Indeed, this was after the MSP party in 1996, had just changed its name from Hamas to HMS in Arabic, or MSP in French.

[348] Bensouiah, 2010. As described in Chapter Five, after Israeli forces fired at the ship on which MSP president Abderrazak Makri was traveling, stories abounded in the media about the MSP's 'suffering' at the hands of Israeli security, hearkening to notions of martyrdom and sacrifice. An MSP-led effort, it also had a few members of the FLN and RND in their caravan.

Other non-MSP scouts disapproved of this logic of affinity, and instead saw it as having nefarious intentions (a pattern in many anti-*taḥazzub* views). According to Abdelmoumen, a Blida scout leader but also a former FLN militant, and now member of national scouts:

> Look, the Scouts are called al-Kashafa al-Islamiyya ('Islamic scouts') so Hamas [MSP] used this same religious language to show it is the *same* as scouts. The same history, values, everything. So children who go into scouts, especially in Blida, but not only in Blida, they do the same activities as their association (al-Irshad wa-l-Islah), they pray together, they study Qu'ran together the same way as in the party. I saw this with my eyes! So when they grow up, they go to Hamas [MSP]. They say other parties are not compatible with Islam.[349]

For some non-MSP scouts, the curricular overlap was less problematic than the involvement in what they considered to be more explicitly *political* activity. As young scouts, Smain and Zaki, from Algiers, were taken to MSP political programs, and even hung up posters for the party during election season. "The praying and *ḥalqā*s were normal" Zaki conceded, "after all Mohamed Bouras was close to *ulamaʾ* [i.e. the AUMA] so it should have a *tayyār islāmī* ('Islamic tendency'). And today, the only one remaining in Algeria is MSP. But hanging posters, that felt too partisan (*kān bzzāf ḥizbī*)." Smain and Zaki's discomfort are illustrative of a common ambivalence among some scouts regarding their relationship in some regions and precincts, to the MSP: they were happy to incorporate MSP educational and spiritual activities, but for them, explicit party politics constituted a red line for scouting life—*taḥazzub* was taboo.

Of course, as some MSP-scout dual-members noted in the previous section, this red line applied more strictly—not only officially but also ideationally—to non-state parties. As noted at the chapter outset, the FLN (and to a degree RND) are often not seen as part of the multi-party landscape, but rather as an arm of the state. "You don't think they used to hang FLN posters?" Hamza retorted, suggestively.

[349] Conversation, February 2016.

Claims of FLN Betrayal

Recall Abdelmoumen's observation that the claims of a special MSP-scout affinity often sought to preclude that of competing claimants. Namely, it came as a way to kick the FLN/state out of its own, exclusivist version of Algerianness (the FLN revolutionary *entre-soi*; Rahal, 2012), by chipping away at the latter's claim to exclusive ownership of the 'indigenous/nationalist religious practice' of which the Scouts had been rendered an enduring symbol. In doing so, it was able to erode the labels, claims and myths that nourish the widespread feeling that the state is *omnipotent,* a narrative that dominates the Algerian *state idea,* and has often called into question the legitimacy—in some cases even the basic purpose or meaningfulness—of social movements and political challengers in Algeria. And where MSP members themselves often subscribed to and reproduced this idea of an all-powerful state, it could trespass on state authority without dissenting radically from it, and thus preserving its pragmatism and cooperationism.

Indeed, in various regions, including Blida, a common discourse among scouts was that while the Scouts had remained steadfast and loyal to the FLN's Islamic/revolutionary/nationalistic *raison d'être*, the FLN itself had departed from it. Salim said to me:

> The Scouts are Islamic and were part of the FLN. But the people that [fought] in the [independence] war are gone, so the FLN is not the same. The FLN of yesterday who defended the interests of the country, is the same FLN who destroys the country today. If you see the principle of *1er novembre*,[350] its completely different from what it [the FLN] now does. They are traitors to the principles the war was fought for.[351]

[350] The date on the which the famous "declaration of the 1st of November." On November 1, 1954, the FLN issued a proclamation calling for the restoration of Algerian sovereignty and called on Algerians to support its uptake of arms against the French.
[351] Conversation, February 2016.

Nasser, as we know has been a member since his childhood and first came to the MSP through his scouting activities. For him, the FLN 'lost the Scouts' because of a more fundamental lack of dynamism needed to inspire and attract young people:

> FLN is known to be all old people, and they are not pious or religious. The Scouts are young people and they are pious and want to protect the religion in scouts. But FLN has mostly old people. The movement has many more young people who are active in mosques, in all the student organizations, and active in *daʿwa*. And this is what scouts is based on also, *daʿwa* with training. And, there are also those in MSP that were young in scouts at the time of the single-party, then when they grew up they became MSP leaders.

The narrative among subnational councils and ranks of the Scout movement, that their ideology and societal vision was less compatible with a supposedly socially-liberalizing and no-longer revolutionary FLN than with the rising Islamist tide, even circulated among those who disliked the MSP.

According to Salim, the MSP was able to take over upon scouts' 1989 independence, "because the FLN had abandoned the Scouts (*parce que FLN avait abandonné les scouts*)." He went on to argue that "after all, in our scout education, Islam is central." Similarly for Karim (the former scout, ex-MSP), "with time, we saw the ideology of FLN change. We [scouts] were more conservative, religious, and we stayed this way, while the FLN was becoming less and less conservative, and much less religious in their language." Hamza's sentiments echoed this closely: "FLN has no religious people, it abandoned religion but the Scouts did not. Those inside FLN who are religious, they are marginalized (*muhammashīn*), how can someone who went through the Scouts believe in the idea or project of FLN?"

All of these scouts articulate a shared stake in the Scouts' character; regardless of secondary/partisan affiliation; they appear to share an interest in sustaining the sanctity of the organization, where both MSP- and non-MSP interlocutors truly lament the perceived loss of piety on the part of the FLN, one they worried would bleed into

the character of the scouting body. Indeed, these deep-rooted stakes in sustaining the organization's historical integrity are in part what led to the sort of intentional measures, discussed in the previous section, to keep politics out of the Scouts. However as the Scouts' organizational purity remains sacrosanct, the conundrum is that any insinuation of *taḥazzub* could imperil the very thing—the historical legitimacy and symbolism of Algerian national/moral righteousness—that makes the Scouts so valuable to these actors in the first place.

Official MSP Discourse on Overlap and Affinity

How is this conundrum reconciled in official MSP discourses? Abdelkarim Mechaï is a prominent MSP leader from Oran who was also SMA's National Director of Training, then its Director of International Scouting Relations, between 1998 and 2008. National MSP figures often referred me to him claiming he was among the most experienced MSP personalities to hear from regarding the relationship between the MSP and scouts, especially to understand the MSP's official stances as they related to official SMA stances. As was to be perhaps expected, he straddled a middle ground between claiming a special affinity between the Scouts and the MSP like many other dual-members I had known, and also emphasizing his opposition to any formalized overlap as is consistent with scout bylaws. (Even the national MSP leaders who insisted I talk with him, did so after making a point to tell me about the special relationship between the MSP and scouts, due to their moral and ideational commonalities.)

He began by articulating the MSP-Scout relationship was necessarily more sympathetic and profound than the oft-sung historic one between the FLN and the Scouts:

> The Scouts assume the slogan: *Islam is our religion, Algeria is our nation, and Arabic is our language*. It's the same slogan as the Islamists. We all have the same point of reference, patriotism, Islam, and the Scouts assumes religious value, duty to God, duty to the nation, duty to others. […] The scout doesn't go

> in the way of deviance/perversions (*inhirāfāt*), bad morals, of turning his back on values. This is congruent with only the ideas of Islamism (*al-tayār al-islāmī*), with our ideas, that seeks to return society to its origins, its history, and its civilization […] so the goals that MSP youth have is also found in the Scouts.[352]

This scouting slogan of course is none other than Abdelhamid Ben Badis' famed refrain, which, along with the other discourses of Ben Badis' AUMA Islamic reform movement, were leveraged in the FLN's battle cries in the days before the Independence War, and cemented its national myth-making in the years following. When I raised this point, as well as the idea that the 'Islamists' as they are known today did not exist in the same way at that time, he responded, "yes, but who is carrying the vision of AUMA and Ben Badis? The FLN? This vision, which is still in the Scouts is only in the FLN superficially, in name only (*faqaṭ bi-l-kalām*)."

He proceeded to paint a rather binary portrait of Algerian society, as one divided into two mutually-exclusive categories—one that presumably belongs to the MSP/Islamist tendency, and that of the FLN/state: "There are two orientations (*tawajjuhayn*) in society, people that want to imitate novelty and modernity, to be without values, who have no point of reference (*bilā marjaʿiyya*)," versus those who "care about protecting the nation, raising children and the nation, guiding youth, preserving values, national history, etc. and against deviance, violence, tending toward decay, corruption." He explained further, "this is the opposite of someone who might like music and dance, streets, and smoking and cigarettes."

He perhaps bifurcates Algerian society in these stark (and perhaps rather simple) terms, for the purposes of demonstration for an interlocutor whom he knows is located squarely outside the Algerian body politic: to clearly locate MSP/Scouts/State/patriotism on one side and FLN/youth aimlessness/moral

[352] A. Mechaï, interview, October 4, 2018.

treason/societal decay on the other. “In the 90s, I was a youth MSP member who cared about these [former] issues, so I found in the Scouts a place to put my ideas into action.” For him, the MSP and the like are thus uniquely morally capable of continuing the nationalist project as it was ‘intended.’ Meanwhile, because the FLN is chiefly preoccupied with sustaining power and has no actual ideological core, per his reading, it is morally ill-equipped to provide the type of values-based socialization that he asserts Algerian youth require: “the FLN is only a vehicle for political power; before 1988 anyone who wanted any position at any level needed to be a *munkharit* in FLN. So there is no ideology, whereas the Islamist parties bring people together around ideas.”

Over the course of our nearly four-hour conversation over video-chat, he appeared acutely aware of the prevailing narratives of MSP’s ‘intentional infiltration’ of the Scouts—language which abounds in large portions of the Francophone Algerian press, and casts the MSP overtures to the Scouts as somehow different, more nefarious, while normalizing those of the state-parties. His careful qualifications regarding the MSP-Scouts relationship thus arose eventually in the discussion. He proceeded to describe the 1990s as being a difficult period in which to activate as a movement, the “fields [*majalāt*] in which to work were limited,” he explained, and therefore, “scouts were the best field to work in, because they were already existent and active, and they already have the moral and religious foundation.” He recalled that often the scout troops met in al-Irshad wa-l-Islah’s buildings, “not to bring al-Irshad to the Scouts, no,” he emphasized, but because they were unable to go outside and find alternative congregating places during violent periods. He noted that in poorer scouting districts, this was still the case.

Along these lines, I mentioned that in some of the localities I observed scouts troops were effectively run as MSP *usra*s similarly headed by a *murabbī*, with parallel curricula. He seemed troubled by this assessment:

> The idea of a troop being run as an *usra* is… incorrect. The Scouts uses games, songs, and camping, and *tarbiya* is part of this, but Hamas [MSP] has *ḥalaqāt islāmiyya* ('Islamic study circles'), this is something serious and more rigorous. So the *means are different* [emphasis added], the Scouts is a *madrasa* ('way of learning') and MSP is another *madrasa*. Where they meet is that they both develop the thinking of the child using similar ideational reference (*marjaʿiyya fikriyya*).[353]

He concluded, "there could be some people who have mixed goals, they are mistaken in their practice [conflating Scouts and MSP]. In general we make a division between scouting activities and political activities. In Oran for example, we have people from three to four parties in our troops."

Ultimately, Mechai's views are an interesting window into how the MSP-scout affinity—and instances of the MSP seeking to mobilize along lines of affinity—is presented by leadership and talked about in official circles. As an MSP leader, he asserted the relationship arose from shared values, was completely organic, and an expected outcome of FLN's moral abandon. He positioned the MSP tendency as the truer heirs to the revolutionary-era religiosity expressed through AUMA doctrine—a historic linchpin of Algerianness as discussed in Chapters Three and Five—and thus possessing a unique kinship to the scouting institution. ("Who is carrying the vision of AUMA?" he hinted.) In fact, he even talked about the Scouts as one of the MSP's specializations (*takhaṣuṣāt*); using language very much in line with movement discourse: scouting activities as different *means* to cultivate the same *ideational reference*. This is not unlike the MSP's (and other regionwide Muslim Brotherhood

[353] A. Mechaï, interview, October 4, 2018.

offshoots' and inspired movements') treatment of its charitable, associational, and training wings.

However, as a scout leader with stakes in preserving scouting credibility (and that of its relationship to the MSP movement), he simultaneously explicitly opposes any formalized or overt curricular overlap and politicking—especially the practice of conflating the functions of the MSP *murabbī*s and leaders with the scout *murabbī*s and *qāʾid*s (noteworthy that there are shared names). "Kashafa is for *children*," he stressed. The emphasis on 'children' as constituting the Scouts (though the ranks of MSP and al-Irshad wa-l-Islah are also comprised of children) evinces a sense of youthful hope and innocence to the scouting experience, of a need for pedagogical lightheartedness not to be disrupted by the curricular seriousness of the MSP.

Additionally, the 'performative' aspects of his discourse should not be discounted of course, it is probably equally important that given I am quite likely to publish, that his remarks dissent from and debunk the common, *eradicateur*-leaning narratives of deliberate MSP efforts to 'infiltrate' the Scouts. In this way, the taboo of *taḥazzub* is also at play here, denying the pursuit of curricular and political overlap is also a way to assert the Scouts' (a)politicality. By claiming the overlap is solely spiritual allows him to also articulate to an audience the (un)acceptable boundaries of politicking for a body he himself considers an MSP satellite.

Finally, several scout respondents, including Mechaï, pointed out intently to me, that the MSP's increasing presence in the Scouts was of course, not uniform throughout the country; that because Blida was the birthplace of the MSP, their influence on the Scouts would be more pronounced there than elsewhere.[354] (As discussed in the

[354] They pointed out that while far reaching, especially in the northern cities, overlap and collaboration with scout troops in the southern regions, for example, were less easy, where other local dynamics, including tribal, familial, and kinship networks influenced the scouting arrangements. In places where the MSP's reach over various scout troops expanded, such as Blida (also in Algiers, Medea, Ain Defla,

introductory chapter, my ability to check for such dynamics in regions outside Blida (and central Algeria) was challenged for several practical and logistical reasons.)

Mechaï hails from western Algeria with national-level posts in both MSP and Scouts. While I was unable to ascertain how pervasive these discourses were among rank-and-file dual-members in other regions, Mechaï's (and other national MSP-scout leaders) views and articulations, if taken at face value, seem to indicate that while the actual overlap in activity may have been more pronounced in historic MSP strongholds, notions of a special affinity nevertheless exist nationally as well. Additionally, the way in which the MSP were especially singled out during the various national-level battles and controversies also indicates that these notions of MSP-scout affinity transcend Blida's borders only.

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This subsection has shown that scouts do not just come as a venue to mobilize material resources, but a vehicle by which the MSP articulates a movement 'self,' as not only 'Islamist' but also as embodying the nationalist concepts and revolutionary version of religiosity that the Scouts represent.

These framings abound so strongly in some cases and regions that even non-MSP scouts may subscribe to them. Hamza and Salim for instance, despite disliking parties, politics, and the MSP subscribe to and reproduce the narrative of a natural MSP-scout overlap. They do not express disdain for the overlap either, characterizing it as something to be expected. The establishment of such ideational linkages, and of discourses around them, has allowed the MSP to lay claims to the Scouts at the FLN's expense, thus allowing it to contest state authority by questioning this aspect underlying its claims to Algerianness, rather than confronting it through more traditional

Larbaa, according to interview data), long-standing personal and kinship networks facilitated organizational affinity.

'contentious' means. Ultimately, such claim-making serves as both the *resource* for, as well as the *outcome* of activism.

7.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the MSP's mobilization of the Algerian Muslim Scouts, at the state- and commune-level of the national-level organization, as well as at the level of day-to-day troop activity in various regions. In some cases, collaboration with scouts offered opportunities for funding movement activities, while also serving as an importance source of recruitment, particularly among a coveted group: enthusiastic, religiously-minded, often educated, and animated youth. Equally significantly however, cultivating programmatic intersection and asserting an orientation-based/ideational commonality with the Scouts allows the MSP to construct movement-identity and to perform it according to its self-understandings.

By the time the War of Independence was announced in 1954, scouting had become pervasive and influential among youth throughout Algeria, taking up a large role in societal religious formation and making it accessible to the masses. It thus became a key vessel through which the FLN galvanized people around unifying nationalist ideas. The scouting youth were, as former scout leader and scholar Mahfoud Kaddache notes, considered as "*soldats de l'avenir*" (soldiers of the future), forming part of the backbone of the revolution itself (2003b, p. 73).

After independence, it became a "prime channel of upward mobility" (Werenfels, 2007, p. 90) for FLN ranks, remained central in the transmission of ideas about civics and citizenship, nationalist pride, Islam and religious comportment, behavior and morality, and therefore retained an image of "historic legitimacy and,

hence, moral superiority" (Werenfels, 2007, p. 65), as well as revolutionary righteousness, and Algerian religious particularity.[355]

Hence it endures as an institutional embodiment of Algerianness (through nationalism, indigeneity, martyrdom, Algerian Islam / religious indigeneity). These notions were reinforced as cornerstones of political legitimacy after 1989 and the ensuing conflict as elaborated in Chapters Four and Five. Contemporary movements and parties are thus eager to be included in these constructions—despite their possible outdatedness and the impossibility of classifying contemporary political actors and citizens in a neat and precise manner. Indeed, to accuse one of lacking these attributes can be tantamount to accusations of Algerian inauthenticity or extra-/anti-nationalism.

As Chapter Five explored in detail, the assignment of 'Islamist' in contemporary Algeria is often similarly used as an accusation, to deny Islamist actors any claims to nationalism and to cast them outside these agreed-upon constructions of Algerianness. Thus the MSP, by claiming its unique likeness to the Scouts, can lay its own claim to the national myth—revolutionary sacrifice, the million and a half martyrs, the glorious safeguarding of the Algerian *umma*.

Thus the prism of 'resource mobilization' is insufficient to make sense of the MSP's efforts at affinity with the Scouts. It falls short not only in its inherent assumptions—of movement actors' strategy and rationality[356], of a fixed set of political opportunity structures, and the over-assumption of intra-movement homogeneity—but

[355] In the run up to independence in 1962, the role of the AUMA and other revolutionary movements in the Scouts dwindled, while that of the FLN rose. In the latter years of the independence struggle, scout offices were used for FLN cells and training, with many of the future *mujāhidīn* having been scouts. (An arrange that would later resemble that of the MSP within the Scouts.)

[356] Rather than rationally identifying the Scouts' religiosity, nationalist symbolism, revolutionary symbol, as a political opportunity opening, and pursuing control with intentionality or success, it is more likely that the MSP sought symbolic proximity first. As Gamson and Meyer (1996) aptly noted, contenders often happen on mobilizational success as they navigate, with optimism, their social/political fields, as opposed to charging optimal courses with deliberate or rational calculus.

also loses sight of the more discursive functions that processes of mobilization can serve to a movement, and the more intangible and symbolic forms 'resources' can thus take.

Ultimately, these meaning-making processes that accompany mobilization efforts interact with—and in some cases are formed from—the larger Algerian political culture. The MSP discourse on and activism with the Scouts, interacts in particular with two of the three major public preferential shifts (outlined in Chapter Three): widespread suspicion of partisan politics (*taḥazzub*) and the sense that the 'state' is all-knowing and ever-present, pre-ordaining political outcomes.

In addition to the opportunity to define themselves as equal and legitimate representatives of Algerianness, affinity with the Scouts is also a way for the MSP to *cultivate non-partisan aspects of its activism and organizational character.* While Mechaï pointed out that the MSP and scouts have the same "ideational reference (*marjaʿiyya fikriyya*)," he was emphatic regarding the imperative to keep them distinct as *means*, which is identical to the MSP's language regarding its various non-partisan wings. Indeed, the Scouts' history of greater cause has led political and social actors of all stripes to have enormous personal stake in ensuring its 'apolitical' character, which means that efforts to maintain pretenses that the organization is not 'political,' come from all sides.

Of course, the MSP's efforts in this respect was not without challenges, nor always 'successful'. Recall for instance, that Smain and Zaki concluded some of the scout activities expressly aided the more partisan/election-related tasks projects were "too political," leading them to opt out. Similarly, Karim didn't notice until long after he left the Scouts, the political nature of the canvassing in which he eventually engaged once he had become an older scout. "I had no idea they were actually in the party," he told me, recalling that many of MSP's local elections posters featured candidates he

recognized within the various MSP charitable organizations[357] and chiefly, scout troop elders. Looking back, he noted with a tone of regret, "We were in [MSP] fundraising activities, hanging posters, and collecting signatures." Then, on the national scale, partisan battles over the Scouts entrenched the disdain for *taḥazzub*, drawing negative press to the cherished scouts. Ultimately, as Gamson and Meyer (1996) note, mobilizational success is usually happened-upon, rather than calculated and assured.

Even scouts with a dual-membership in the MSP, had trepidations about creeping partisanship, negotiating what was "too political" for this space. Thus, seeking to emphasize the chiefly spiritual and ideational nature of the affinity is a way for the MSP, not only to contend with the pervasive cultural distrust of parties, but to perform its constructed movement identity of being in unique possession of nonpartisan (charitable, spiritual, developmental, or scholarly) avenues for activism.

In addition to the taboo of *taḥazzub*, the widespread sense of *state omnipotence*[358] is another trope in Algerian political-cultural thinking that has loomed over most parties or movements—in particular, over their ability to claim to any sort of social or political potential. Claiming affinity to the Scouts also allows the MSP to contend with this narrative in two ways.

First, the MSP can chip away at the values and myths that sustain *omnipotence* as the underlying *state idea*.[359] Of course, some elements of the narrative of state power, namely those backed by the state's actual military and surveillance power, remain intact. However, the moral folklore(s) used to justify this 'actual' power are eroded as the MSP lays claim, in many cases successfully, to the institutional and mobilizational spaces through which the national myths and concepts that undergird the state's

[357] Namely leaders in the Kafil al-Yatim (the local orphan charity), Irshad wa-l-Islah.
[358] For a full discussion, refer to Chapter Three.
[359] This term describes the ways in which polities construct the 'state' in a manner divorced from the realities of how state *practice* actually unfolds (see Abrams, 1988, p. 58).

discursive power are manifested and performed. We saw this in the various instances of non-MSP scouts decrying the state's moral decay and its retreat from the religious morality that scouting represented.

Second, the MSP can encroach on state authority, without sacrificing its pragmatic character by radically dissenting from this authority. As discussed in previous chapters, MSP ranks themselves in most cases construct the very political/ideational milieu in which they activate, and generate the very "world-views that allowed [power] structures to operate" to begin with (Kurzman, 2008, p. 8). That is, though their stated *raison d'être* is ostensibly to change the system, they can often reproduce the logic of an unchangeable system or an incontestable regime. Therefore, the MSP does not challenge the state's 'stateness' (Abrams 1988) or attempt to dislodge its grip over and presence in formal political institutions. Nor does it challenge the national myth or the underlying logic of the state's moral folklore; instead it trespasses on them, and asserts itself as equal claimants. This is quite reflective of their pragmatism, for after all, the narrative of state omnipotence also means that nobody knows how much power the state *actually* has.

To this end, the MSP also constructs itself as loyalist, moderate, gradualist, and cooperationist. And performances of these identities, in part due to such political cultures, are also of great importance to the movement's self-understandings and to how it presents itself to the polity. Thus in mobilizing the Scouts, materially and discursively, the MSP is still able to maintain its political pragmatism and participationism, and lend discursive support to the state in other issues and realms, ultimately able to refrain from contesting the state in the radical or subversive terms that would contravene these chosen labels.

This point also illustrates how MSP's cooptation, which has invited dismissiveness regarding its political meaningfulness, is not totalizing and does not occur at every point of engagement with the incumbent/state. I will further engage these questions and others in the forthcoming conclusion chapter.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The periodization of this thesis effectively ends in 2018, for practical and data collection purposes. However, we would be remiss not to briefly consider the ways in which ongoing political developments in the post-periodization timeline, if as yet tentative, relate to the themes of sense-making, plurality, and culturally-available contention discussed throughout this thesis.

In early February 2019, Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced he would run for a fifth term; and on February 22, 2019 Algerians embarked on what would become the largest protests in the country's recent memory. The desires of the Algerian people, to have their "plurality apprehended" (Rahal 2012, 125) and reflected in their government, have perhaps in part driven these anti-regime protests. Where Bouteflika has since stepped down, and the prospects of transition initiated, "imagined futures" and "imagined Algerias" are now reopened for public debate (Rahal, 2012, p. 128), complexifying the existing prisms of Algerianness.

Protestors have in their slogans, placards, songs, and manifestos reclaimed the language of the anticolonial mujāhidīn and the sacrifice of the *shuhadāʾ* (martyrs), casting themselves as extensions of that struggle: "The Algerian people, we take what is ours, just like the martyrs did when they freed the country in '62 [...] Like them we will free Algeria from these corrupt gangs," one protestor said.[360] Innumerous placards compared 2019 to 1962. Protestors' claims to Algerianness were further legitimated when they were joined in their marches by famous mujāhidīn,[361] their demands later backed by the National Organization of Mujāhidīn (ONM). That nationalist narratives are taken up in the *rejection* of the current regime not only attests to their power and

[360] Berbère Télévision, 2019.
[361] Such as Djamila Bouhired and Zohra Drif.

longevity, but confirms that what is contested (or perhaps *up for contest*) are not the system's underlying moral codes and spiritual vocabulary, but rather who are their real arbiters and rightful claimants.

The aura of unanimity in the protest movement—the notion that every Algerian man, woman, child, whether Islamist, secularist, and even the politically-disengaged, wants the entire system replaced with one that gives dignity to the 'people'—has allowed the protesting mass to function as an arbitrating force, able to powerfully reclaim codes of patriotism, civic duty, and nationalism. These notions, at least at this liminal stage, are widely expressed through the 'duty of protest.' Taking to the streets was to show love for country; to abstain was anomalous, suspect, and even un-Algerian. As protest is itself cast as a tool of the dispossessed, to be a protestor is to be of 'the people,' and to be among the people is to embody Algerianness. Whereas to be among 'the power' is to be the dispossessor, the anti-patriot, the 'fake' mujāhid, who has pillaged Algeria, squandered her wealth, and miscarried the revolution. Thus, as protestors arbitrate who are 'the people,' and who the '*juzʾu min al-niḍām*' ('part of the system')[362] where one gets situated in this dichotomy is important for political actors at the time of writing.

The MSP and its base have self-located among the former: initially fielded by the MSP for the (now-postponed) presidential elections, Abderrazak Makri's candidacy was withdrawn by MSP's *majlis al-shūrā* on March 2, 2019 at the behest of the movement membership—many of whom by this time had begun taking part in the protests alongside their non-MSP counterparts. This highlights the contradictions and liminalities discussed throughout this thesis that members navigate. They participate in

[362] Protestors are rejecting all figures with any association with the Bouteflika clan, and several parties have been chased away from the protests as *juzʾu min al-niḍām* ('part of the system' Such as Louisa Hannoune's PT). Also see Berbère Télévision, 2019.

these protests as an opposition and self-identify as such, even as the movement's party has taken part in—and by some accounts in doing so has sustained—the system.

And they join their non-MSP counterparts in disavowing not only the system, but also the '*bū laḥiya*s' (bearded men, assumed to be Salafists, FIS heirs, or both, indeed another competing Algerianness) who were staging breakaway protests in Kouba and other suburbs calling for a '*dawla islāmiyya*,' and shunned them as attempting to 'seize' on the protests and bring back the conflict decade. As camps, sides, and labels have been reshaped in the protest sphere, MSP members seek to situate squarely away from the *power* (the anti-*shʿab*) as well as the *bearded Islamists* (the anti-Algerian/anti-moderate). That is, in their "desire to live amongst those with whom they feel identical, the need to be 'entre-soi', [which is] connected with a collective project of what togetherness is or should be," (Rahal, 2012, p. 127) MSP members maintain an identity that is both everywhere and nowhere (Chapter Five) in the competing versions of Algerianness. And as we have seen, the conundrum of where to locate has come as another paradox MSP members must navigate: the moderate branding required to distance themselves from the Islamists of the nineties, has also required the cooperationism that has sullied the movement as 'coopted.'

The 'old guard' of Algeria's Islamist studies has continued to assess the notion of Islamism in the Algerian space through the prism of FIS activism in 1980s, and to draw from them parallels to the Islamists in today's protests (see Burgat, 2019). However, this falls regrettably short, effectively eliding the contours of religious/Islamist activism since (and in response to) the 1990s, as instantiated in the nature of MSP as described here. Such analytical shortcomings attest to the need for better study of Algeria post-1990s. Indeed, the Islamist sphere too must have its plurality apprehended.

And ultimately, as I laid out in the introductory chapter my motivation in writing this thesis was to respond to the large repertoire of literature on Algeria that overwhelmingly imagines Algerian politics as fixed, and casts Algeria at large as devoid of any real political or civic vitality. Therefore, I believe (or rather I hope, writing tentatively in March 2019) that these lapses are, through the events of the day, being brought to bear.

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Through the stories of MSP members, this thesis sought to illustrate the important role of ideologies, values and political cultures in the creation of a political milieu, and in the practices and discourses of those who seek to activate within it. Ethnography of the MSP sheds light on how a political challenger makes sense of its existence, and how its members see themselves and cultivate aspiration, in light of the Algerian *idea*, a set of stories and 'truths' that circulate about Algerian gallantry and triumph over unending traumas, and (per the more hegemonic narratives) their 'rightful' proprietorship by the/a providential state (Abrams, 1988; Hadj-Moussa, 2014).

8.1 Summary of the Thesis

Toward this end, Chapter Two explained the events and optics that produced the dominating narratives on the MSP and the political system, providing context on the MSP's rise (and 'fall') outlining its trajectory within formal politics, and the structural limitations facing the party/movement. It also gave some background on the party and its history.

Chapter Three then began the process of deconstructing these dominant narratives. It elucidated the complex optics of the traumatic 1990s civil conflict and subsequent political developments, and the individual and collective efforts to make

sense from them. Three of them were particularly consequential for an Islamist partisan contender like the MSP. After the Algerian civil conflict, individuals' experiences of violence were distilled through state narratives to both 'Islamize' the rebels *and* cast them as the chief aggressors against the civilian population, thereby coloring 'Islamism' as a social signifier. Similarly, the state-imposed limitations on the prerogatives of contending parties led the public to ascribe to parties notions of impotence, dysfunction and illegitimacy. Meanwhile the idea of the Algerian state as an all-powerful, all-knowing figure—if briefly undermined by the 1988 riots—was reified in its crushing military defeat of the insurgents, and continually ritualized thereafter.

The second half of the thesis explored the MSP's behaviors, discourses, presentations, and understandings as a *constituent part* of this political milieu. That is, though many of the new Algerian discursive traditions were unfavorable to contenders like the MSP on many fronts, its members were not mere victims of these broader ideations. Instead, they constituted, shaped and defined the movement through their individuated framings and interpretations of them.

For example, in Chapters Four and Five, members' performances and articulations of *moderation*, were not only to appease a post-conflict electorate wary of Islamist extremism, or to buffer the party/movement against public accusations of latent radicalism by state interests—even though these are important. Rather, the movement had come to see moderation as a value and virtue, an end in itself, in some cases because they saw themselves as the 'anti-FIS' (or as a foil to the generalized 'Islamists' of the conflict), and other times due to the centrality of *al-wasaṭiyya* in Muslim Brotherhood doctrine, and in Islamic jurisprudence more broadly. Members distilled interpersonal, local, national, and larger ideological (even transnational) directives in their negotiation of this term—because connotations and referents of 'moderation' vary

at these different scales, it can address multiple intended audiences at once. In the same chapter, the performance of Algerianness through religious indigeneity, martyrdom, etc. was not just a response to an external ideational environment, but a result of how the movement and its members wanted to understand itself. They themselves prized Algerianness and the national myth.

The prevailing assumption that the MSP's moderation and allegiance to symbols of Algerianness are simply strategic performances, rather than authentic aspects of their national subjectivity, assumes that the public's ideations can be delinked from those of MSP members. It assumes that members' sympathies to the MSP prevail over—or are distinct from—their allegiance to the nation, or their identification with their other subjectivities. That is, MSP individuals are also members of other social in-groups (like striking university students, members of parliament, or other careers and vocations) or identitarian labels (regional, tribal, linguistic), and these accordingly shape members' worldviews, values and priorities. This ultimately dispels idea that Islamists dissemble moderation or take it on as a platform solely for the sake of political expedience, or, that they pay lip-service to nationalist impulses while 'actually' retaining extra- or non-national loyalties.

Indeed, as Chapter Six showed, members of the MSP or its associational orbit adapted their participation and activism according to their various subjectivities. Through the MSP's various satellites, young members made differential sense of their activism and redrew different boundaries—and acceptable limits—between politics and spiritual activism, between *ḥizb* and *ḥaraka*. Thus MSP subjecthood produced discomfort for other subjecthoods among some members. They thus negotiated and chose where and how to self-locate. For others, membership and support for the MSP did not displace other defining identities, which they saw as wholly compatible with

MSP subjecthood. This challenges conventional understandings of Islamist motivation as animated solely by their membership in their movement. It also complicates the common assumption that members of a broader movement/cause—Islamist or otherwise—identify with it for the same reasons, and have the same motivations.

Chapter Seven showed that the MSP's mobilization of the scouts was not only about recruiting bodies and monies into the party machine. For many, the scouts were prized as a terrain of socialization and youth formation, fulfilling the movement's ideological imperatives of *al-daʿwa* and *al-tarbiya*. For others it allowed articulation of the MSP's identity as one with the same religio-nationalist legitimacy as the scouting organization. Additionally, claiming ideological affinity to the scouting organization to articulate its Algerian/nationalist bona fides was not simply an outward performance, but an expression of internal identities and values. Where Chapter Four, noted above, explored agreed-upon national *values* and legitimizing social *labels* like moderation and Algerianness/nationalism; Chapter Seven explored a *space*, an institution through which these had been historically executed and performed.

8.2 Contribution to Knowledge

The varied findings in these chapters have equally varied implications and contributions. However, at the broadest level, this thesis aims to respond to two literatures.

Rethinking Islamist Activism

The first is the broader literature on Islamist activism in authoritarian contexts. Its prevailing treatments either analyze them as traditional *parties*, electorally 'pragmatic' or 'rational' actors with the chief goal of maximizing votes (Schwedler, 2006; Tezcür, 2010); as contentious *social movements* or protest movements

preoccupied with predefined and agreed-upon goals and the structural mobilizational avenues to achieve them (Clark, 2003; Singerman, 2003; Wickham, 2013; Wiktorowicz, 2003); or as *religious revivalists* mainly concerned with Islamizing society and/or political institutions (Kepel, 2003). This is the case in studies of Islamist movements both within Algeria (Al-Ahnaf, Botiveau, & Frégosi 1991; Driessen 2014; Hamladji 2002) and the broader region. This thesis has challenged these frames in the following ways.

MSP as a party. Capturing the 'state' or electoral ascendance was rarely articulated as a priority among movement members.[363] Indeed, the discourses elucidated in Chapters Five and Six demonstrate that the 'prize' is differentially defined within the broader movement. To be sure, suppressing, downplaying, or suspending electoral priorities and desires could be a way for members to contend with their social universe and with how meaning is made about their movement. Because of rising structural limitations to better electoral outcomes—aggravated by the party's own strategic misfires—members have over the years increasingly sought and articulated meaningfulness and purpose using other frames, and using alternative spaces. This doesn't mean that votes are never important to them, or that electoral representation is never valued.[364] Rather their experience, as movement members, of Algerian existence shapes how they form priorities and goals—not only based on values, but on the needs of their national/local context, and on what they understand to be possible, feasible and safe. The ways in which members experience state power as instantiated in part through

[363] Of course, wave for the well-known activities of various high-profile MSP leaders (Chapter Two). Indeed, it is likely due in part to the actions of these individuals that members see Algerian office more for its perverse incentives than for reform opportunities.
[364] After all the party/movement is well-aware that votership is used as the metric of their influence and reach, even if they acknowledge it is an imperfect one due to various in-transparencies.

the controlled formal political system, leads many members to direct their hopes elsewhere, and cultivate movement aspirations outside of electoral ambition.

MSP as a movement. Similarly, in the literature on Islamists as social movements or within SMT more broadly, movements necessarily undertake action through "repertoires of contention" (Lawson, 2003; Tilly, 1977, 1993) that are necessarily disruptive—civil disobedience, active resistance, boycott, mass protest, rejection of the terms of engagement, revolution, or even terror and violence—and do so in response to political opportunity structures (POS), using cost-benefit calculus in mobilizing the needed resources—like recruits and funds—to pursue it.

However ethnography of the MSP complicates these three aspects of SMT theory, of repertoires as disruptive, of POS, and of resource mobilization theory (RMT). First, the MSP's mobilization of the scouts in some regions, is an instance where it effectively trespassed on the state's moral monopoly rather than undertaking more disruptive or confrontational means of contention. As the scouts had long been a space through which the cultural, religious, and political codes, symbolism, and language of the *state idea* (Abrams, 1988) were promulgated and sustained, the MSP's claim to the scouts (while dislodging the state's) allowed them to relocate their challenge of the state idea outside of formal and 'political' spaces.

However, the prevailing literature on Algerian Islamism casts the MSP's cooperationism in the latter spaces as a 'price paid' for entry into the mainstream system (Burgat & Geze, 2007; Driessen, 2014; Entelis, 1997; Ottaway, 2015; Volpi, 2013), as a signal of loyalty to the current military-bureaucratic state, rather than as an aspect of this more uncontentious approach to opposition formed of members' understanding and experience of the 'state power.' The MSP has also understood its cooperationism, not as its cooptation, but as an extension of its moderation, an important tenet of the

movement formed through interaction with the wider discursive culture. Its allegiance to nationalism was similarly seen as an entry fee rather than an exercise of movement identity (Driessen, 2014). (I will elaborate further on the trope of 'Islamist moderation' below.)

Second, the accounts in this thesis challenged the conceptualization of Islamist movements' political environment through the theorization of political opportunity structures (POS) as *external* to a movement and either strengthening or limiting its scope for action—as phenomena occurring *outside* of, and *upon*, movements. As Chapter Three demonstrated, *discursive* processes and ideational formations are just as significant in shaping the milieu for political entrants, as the more structural aspects. Chapters Four to Seven showed the MSP and its members themselves are part of the cultivation of collective political imagination, and thus themselves construct the very political/ideational milieu in which they activate, and the "world-views that allowed these structures to operate" to begin with (Kurzman, 2008).

Third, Islamists' mobilizational processes within the Islamist/SMT literature are analyzed through the more *instrumental* benefits of resources, supporters, media, attention, funds, etc. as identified with rationality and intentional calculus by the party's string-pullers (Clark, 2003; Singerman, 2003)—thus overlooking the identitarian and sense-making impetuses behind the pursuit of a resource. For instance, MSP efforts toward affinity with the national scouts (Chapter Seven) revealed that what a movement considers a *resource*—what is to be mobilized and why, what it means, and what it allows the movement to do—and the ways in which it seeks to galvanize this resource, is often more rooted in collective identity and self-understanding—in our case, as embodying the highly-prized nationalist/revolutionary version of Islam and religiosity that the scouts represent—than in neatly calculable resource gains.

What a movement identifies as a 'resource,' or 'gain' is formed from individuals' divergent understandings of their movement and their purpose within it. In turn, the *efforts* to mobilize the resource is likewise the outcome of a movement's multitude of subjectivities. Resources and goals are not thus static but reshaped and transformed through their very contact with the movement members' mobilizational processes. Thus, they cannot be attributed to a single movement calculus (Hafez, 2003), nor to top-down party policy or decree.

Moreover, just as *state* power is constructed and imagined, so too is power *within* movements. (Though there are formal arbitrating structures within the movement, including the national consultative council (*majlis al-shūrā al-waṭanī*) and the many local level councils (as laid out in Chapter Two), activities as well as ideological mandates are not always undertaken in lockstep or based in consensus, but revised and distilled according to individual and group frames in contention with regional/local contexts, and in interaction with other inter- and intra-personal subjectivities (as laid out in Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven). Moreover, despite the national-level arbitrating structures and processes through which decisions are 'formally' made, 'real' power remained diffuse and dynamic due to the changing nature of kingmaking, clientelism, and elite access among the higher echelons of the party/movement and its associated organizations. There are therefore multiples loci of power within the movement about which much speculation is made, however are difficult to corroborate.)

All of these findings, together, support calls for these theorizations within SMT to be broadened (Tuğal, 2009), and makes the MSP an empirical case (among a potential many as section 8.3 will show) that demonstrates the value of new post-

structural approaches to understanding social movements (Kurzman, 2004, 2008; Touraine, 1985).

MSP as Muslim Brotherhood / Religious Revivalist. Finally, the works on Islamist actors that call for focus on ideology and doctrine as chief animating impetus, tend to obscure the other considerations (articulated above), as well as the more context-driven or instrumental purposes that ideology may serve. Indeed, while for some MSP supporters politics are a means to spread piety, for others, their ideological roots and discourses of piety served purposes beyond piety itself as an end.

We saw in Chapter Five for instance that the MSP's discourses on a global *umma*, and influence under Egypt's flagship MB were deployed more sparingly in the post-conflict years in order to stem accusations of 'transnationalism' and to satisfy institutional and popular fixation on Algerian sovereignty. Indeed, some talked about the transnational *umma* as an 'if only;' idealizing the oft-stated grand wish for a return to global Islamic greatness, while dismissing serious discussion of it on the grounds of its remoteness and unlikelihood. Still others dismissed these as abstractions too hypothetical to be at all relevant to—if even distracting from—more concrete domestic issues for the movement. Moreover many members' own allegiance to Algerianness and its related imperatives made the prospect of a borderless *umma* unsavory. One member argued, "actually, Muslim Brotherhood's tenets require that we work within the system, within the nation-state, even if we don't accept borders. We are not Daʿish ('the Islamic State')!" (Chapter Five)

Chapter Six similarly revealed how grander Brotherhood/ideological directives, rather than followed on face-value, were instead distilled and (re)appropriated for more localized sense-making purposes. The Muslim Brotherhood *dīn wa dawla* maxim calls for a dual societal-institutional approach to Islamic political change, rooted in the period

of the seamlessness between religious values and political practice during the time of the Prophet Mohammed and first successors. Per most readings, this maxim is what motivates the division of labor that characterizes most Muslim Brotherhood branches and Brotherhood-inspired organizations between the duties and domain of *al-ḥaraka* (the movement) and those of *al-ḥizb* (the party), allowing it to pursue separately, but in tandem, *dīn* (religion) and *dawla* (state) (Clark, 2003; Roy, 1994). Ethnography however revealed that attempts to divide *ḥizb/ḥaraka* are highly fraught, due to the ways the former hampers progress in the latter—the label of 'politics' threatens the legitimacy of *daʿwa* and other 'nonpolitical' forms of movement activism. Such ideational developments produced remarkable contradictions in the 'image-making' processes (Goffman, 1959; Turam, 2006) of the MSP as well as its members. For instance, while the party has tried to sometimes claim the activities of its socio-religious side, the latter has tried to de-emphasize the relationship. Followers and members, with their own stakes in these negotiations and conflicted feelings on partisanship (*taḥazzub*), similarly stake out how/where they identify in the MSP and its associational orbit. As political scientist Charles Tripp (2009) has noted the *dīn wa dawla* refrain more often has a "meaning contingent on the setting in which it is used" (p. 124).

Ultimately, ideological imperatives are not the sole ends or the motivations. Inspired also by a concurrent sense of belonging within the Algerian national fabric, members relaxed or negotiated MB directives against shifting local political and cultural frames. What then constituted 'piety' became equally fraught as members negotiated the boundaries and definitions of 'pious' or 'Islamist' activity.

Ultimately the contribution of this thesis to the literature on Islamism is that Islamists are not only power-driven, rationally/goal-driven, or piety driven. When put so dryly, it seems rather obvious and straightforward. And of course, this thesis would not

be the first-ever works to challenges these frames. However, the prevailing literatures seek to define Islamist movements as *one* of these at the expense of others. When electoral explanations do not suffice, they call for focus on ideology (Kepel, 2003). When ideology fails to explain certain choices and behavior, they call for rethinking them through rational calculus (Clark, 2003; Hafez, 2003; Lawson, 2003; Schwedler, 2006; Singerman, 2003). However, because ideational processes vary so vastly at the individual level, from member to member, no one prism can explain a movement at the expense of others. Instead, movement persons are animated by myriad personal and collective factors, which are in constant dialogue with their social universe—both structural consideration as well as symbolic—and thus in continual flux. Indeed, that no one framework is sufficient to understand the MSP, its impetuses, and behaviors, or to understand what makes the Algerian social-political system 'tick,' is the reason for the diverse—but interrelated—sub-theoretical treatments across the thesis' chapters.

Rethinking (Islamist) Moderation. This thesis also hopes to rethink moderation. Indeed, the manifestations and drivers of moderation has seen a growing repertoire in contemporary Middle East studies, and has become a preoccupation in the sub-school of Islamist studies in recent years. This literature chiefly argues that political inclusion leads oppositional actors to 'moderate' due to institutional constraints and exposure to alternative viewpoints (Schwedler, 2006). As I have shown in Chapters Four and Five, the heavy theorization in this literature of *moderation* as a necessarily identifiable position or traceable process may be misguided. Even without the empirics of this thesis, a review alone of the moderation literature shows the term's normative charge: it is chiefly about an Islamist moving from margins to center. Various works hedge using metric proposals: whether an entity is anti-system (versus pro-system), revolutionary (versus gradual), ideologically extreme (versus centrist), literalist (versus flexible),

violent (versus non-violent), accommodating (versus stalwart) (Berkouk, 1999; Cavatorta, 2013; Clark, 2006; Driessen, 2014; Entelis, 1997; Khalil, 2014; Schwedler, 2005; Wickham, 2004).

However, as we have seen even these notions are valued differently at different times, and are themselves disputed and struggled-over labels (e.g. despite various rhetorical and tactical parallels, the FLN as revolutionary, its use of violence and intransigence cast as *al-radjla* ('manliness'), versus the FIS et al. as terrorist, its own obstinacy and violence cast as dangerous).

Moreover, when we apply these prevailing measures of moderation—of where it places in the above binaries and continuums—to the MSP, we see that it did not simply change from pre- to post- 'inclusion.' What additionally changed was: how the term circulated and was deployed in Algerian political culture, the Islamists' efforts to lay claim to it as a social label, and their attempts to negotiate individual and group identity through its subjective, contested and dynamic popular framings. Findings also revealed that vote-maximizing or electoral positioning is far from the only reason moderation is taken up in Islamist discourses. In fact in some cases, it was defined through the Muslim Brotherhood ideology of *al-wasaṭiyya*, therefore as predating the current Algerian context of competitive party inclusion.

Finally, and importantly, the contestations on the ground over moderation's best definitions mirrored the term's definitional and moral ambiguity within the academic literature, because, *political imagination* as Humeira Iqtidar (2011) notes is "capacious enough to accommodate both intellectual history and popular political discourse," (p. 537). And as anthropologist Gregory Starrett (2010) notes of contested concepts, "one of their central features is that they are used to make value judgments, and value judgments emanate from social, cultural, moral, and political frameworks, not

necessarily scholarly ones" (p. 648). That is, the subjective and relational nature of moderation is instantiated in the normative bias of scholars themselves. The literature assumes, *a priori*, an immoderation on the part of Islamists. Even when describing moderation in irreligious terms—"accommodat[ing] itself to the give-and-take of 'normal competitive politics'," (Wickham, 2004, p. 206), "commit[ing] to playing by the *basic rules of the game* [emphasis added]" (Driessen, 2014, p. 6), or the abandonment of contentious action, especially if it circumvents electoral institutions (Tezcür, 2010, p. 10)—it asymmetrically levies this expectation on Islamist actors, which re-centers status quo regimes as the direction and standard toward which one moderates.[365]

What explains the academic unanimity on the goodness and desirability of Islamist moderation? It is highly plausible to me that scholarship on Islamism overwhelmingly views moderation as desirable because it affirms, rather than challenges, the liberal political order in which its production is situated. That is, in adjudicating moderation, scholars "implicitly make a choice of sides [and the] implicit choice arises from our own positions within local, national, regional, and global systems of social organization and discourse" (Starrett 2010, p. 648).[366]

Stated more explicitly, the pro-moderation bias in Islamism studies has become self-perpetuating against the ongoing backdrop of modern terrorism, the latter still chiefly understood through religious exegesis and ideology. As a result, as Islamic scholar Mohammed Kamali (2015) observes, moderation is usually "a calling and

[365] In what seems a rather arbitrary choice, Driessen (2013) does not apply this analysis to the Trotskyist, Berberist and other contenders to emerge at the same time as MSP in the 1980s.
[366] Indeed, in my home country of the United States I am more likely to bristle at perceived 'immoderation' coming from a political party, movement, or ideological camp whom I find threatening, or simply with whom I disagree, than with those I favor or perceive as favorable to my interests. Indeed the camp from which the behavior emanates may determine whether or not I cast it in terms of moderation at all, which is the crux of the *essentially contested concept*.

demand addressed particularly to Muslims" (p. 11). As historian Jacob Mundy (2015) notes, the disproportionate Islamization of the violence of Algeria's civil war is partly attributable to the "continuing and pervasive power of Orientalism in the politics and science of contemporary conflict management's approach to the Arab and Islamic worlds." (p. 68) Attempts to cast it chiefly as an *insurgency*, "amplif[y] a fundamental contempt for rebellion that operates in prevailing understandings of civil war" (p. 68). This is perhaps an additional factor in what has led this literature to be more than willing to *adopt the politics of naming on the ground and replicate the contestations and polemics that have manifested* in Algeria on the Islamist nature of the violence. It has led the "use and ascription of social labels [for] 'Islamists' [...] at the core of tense and complex political struggles, [to be] battles in which some political scientists take part" (Jourde, 2010, p. 201). Thus in Algeria, and well-beyond, the dyad of anti-rebel and Orientalist bias has produced this shift in the study of moderation, where whether it is "a virtue for all seasons and all people" is no longer up for philosophical debate (Craiutu, 2012, p. 17), but instead subject to moral absolutism.

Taken together, all of this shows that moderation cannot (and should not?) be singularly and objectively defined and detected, at least not without treating it foremost as an actual *object* of an inquiry than as its analytical framework. Such a treatment of moderation may be instructive for future studies of Islamist behavior and discourse, as it privileges investigations of subjectivities, imaginaries, ontologies, social positions and self-identifications of the term's users, and seeks to rid academic narratives on Islamist moderation of normative bias (which proceeds on the assumption that Islamist moderation is a necessarily positive end). Rather than reproducing local politics of naming, it decodes them.

Searching for Meaning in Contemporary Algerian Politics

The second body of literature to which this thesis hoped to respond is that on Algerian politics from 1989 to today. The oft-told story about Algerian politics after 1989, is that they are now 'dead,' (Roberts, 2017) and political contenders thereby serve no real purpose other than as window-dressing for this state of affairs (Volpi, 2013). Accordingly, the MSP's story is one of total impotence against the machinations of an all-powerful regime and the disillusionment of a listless polity (Burgat, 2007; Roberts, 2015). The epistemological hegemony on the matter is a result of such 'on the ground' stories being reproduced and reinforced by knowledge-producers.

Much of the literature on post-conflict Algeria relies chiefly on the democratization/ transitology literature on the Arab region, where closed regimes survive by modernizing and adapting their modes of repression (authoritarian upgrading), and which understands party/movement behaviors under closed regimes as 'responses' that are 'available' within a game wherein costs and benefits are necessarily known and calculable (Boubekeur, 2010; Driessen, 2014; Hamladji, 2002; Heydemann, 2007; Volpi, 2013). This literature, because it understands the nature of power and contestation in Algeria through such structural frames, has in some instances produced an asymmetric focus on high politics, or *Pouvoirology*, attempting to unmask and analyze the inner workings of the regime (Roberts, 2015). As the dynamics described in Chapter Two showed, this is not incorrect. Instead, as the subsequent chapters showed, it is simply incomplete: the common privileging of structural and material considerations at the expense of psycho-social and discursive factors in the construction of political milieu, has precluded a more holistic picture of modern Algerian politics.

Political milieu are formed not only from 'structures' but also through popular ideation. This thesis elucidated how in the Algerian case, popular conceptualizations of

state ‘power’ nourished popular constructions of societal (and partisan) powerlessness, as well as Islamist treachery. These ideations circulated (and even formed) through individual and collective choices of terminology, references, characterizations, and value judgements. In turn, Algerian political challengers like the MSP developed self-understanding, purpose, goals, and priorities through symbolic interactionism with these broader ideations.

Instead, in many cases the literature takes these public sense-making practices, and the resulting values, priorities, narratives and social labels at face value—reproducing them as analytical frameworks in themselves instead of deconstructing them as the means through which power, social order, and legitimacy are (re)negotiated. That is, much of the literature uncritically repeats public discourses of an omnipotent opaque state apparatus, partisan powerlessness, Islamist treachery, as well as the negotiations of Algerian identity, rather than problematizing and decoding them. Circulating ideations and value judgments have ultimately predominated in academic studies of Algeria, exactly like they do in the very spaces these studies seek to understand.

The presumption of Algerian political meaninglessness has thus become an accepted wisdom that is often difficult to avoid and has justified needless empirical oversights, doing a great disservice to the study of the modern Algeria—which may in fact be being brought to bear as I write. To this end, this thesis hopes to have made contributions of the empirical nature as well. It is among a handful of studies in English examining the period after the 2002 ‘end’ to the civil conflict, a period understudied relative to the preceding decades. It also examined the trajectory of MSP, not only on the formal political stage but through its inner workings and discourses. Despite being the largest Islamist party to emerge after the recomposed party system for the last thirty

years, the MSP is relatively understudied in the trending Islamist studies field, as well as in modern Algeria studies owing to this periodizational neglect. Finally and relatedly, this thesis documented the more recent history of the Algerian Muslim Scouts. After 1974, when parts of it were used to reconstitute the FLN youth organization, UNJA, even the prized national scouts became overlooked in the literatures under aforementioned assumptions of an 'exhausted' Algerian politics with nothing more to see. (Of course, as I will further elaborate, there is still much more to be done to understand the metamorphosis of the Algerian scouts after the 21st century.)

8.3 An Algerian Exception? Regional Implications

There may therefore be strong instincts within the tradition of Algeria studies to attribute this story of the MSP and its political environment to the 'Algerian exception:' where the Algerian case is unique due to its violent and conflict-ridden past(s), such that contenders activating within it face unique circumstances. This tendency within Algeria studies reduces the country to a product of its moments of past violence, with all political phenomena attributed to an especially-Algerian trauma.

However, it was not simply the conflict itself that affected Algerian political milieu, but the imaginative and retrospective processes that followed. In other words, a political community's social and political preferences are often shaped by historical events, and more importantly, by the framing of this history. That Algeria too has a *political culture*—a product of both the specific *history* of the polity and its members' historical experiences—is precisely what makes it unexceptional. That similar political cultural features and Islamist behaviors are observable in places that have not experienced the same histories, complicates the deterministic oft-assumed relationship

between Algeria's contemporary situation and its decade of bloodshed and its colonial struggle before that.

What the story of the MSP and of movements like it instead suggests is that authoritarian regimes and movements alike learn from and borrow strategies and discourses from other contexts (Amar, 2013). To give an example, in Morocco, a year after the Islamist Party of Justice and Development's (PJD) encouraging performance in the 2002 legislative elections (it won 42 seats up, putting it in 3rd place), the 2003 terrorist bombing in Casablanca led many to hold the Islamist party morally accountable—with encouragement from the authorities—for supposedly emboldening the attackers by creating a safer religious-political environment for Islamist discourse. Anger at the PJD mounted, and there were even calls for its dissolution, at which time parliament passed a law mandating parties remove references to religion, ethnicity, or ethno-linguistic groups, which put legal limits on the PJD's engagement, further strained its relations with its own spiritual wing al-Tawhid wa-l-Islah, and hampered avenues by which it could engage followers. (Recall the ideational environment in addition to the 1996 amendment to the Algerian constitution produced parallel challenges for the MSP.) This is not to say that Morocco consulted the Algerian playbook in this instance, rather that repertoires are often common and shared, either through mimicry or dialogue.

Popular ideations, such as the perceived omnipotence of the regime, excommunication of Islamists from the body politic, and cynicism toward political parties, and the place of such ideations in the worldviews and priorities of political contenders themselves, especially Islamist contenders, are a familiar regionwide phenomenon: in Turkey after the repression of Islamists in the 1990s, Egypt before and after the 2011 uprisings and the 2013 coup, and in Morocco after 2011, and more. What

I have described in this thesis is therefore applicable as a framework for the broader region, due to these two interrelated regionally-observable phenomena: the cultivation of political 'contexts' (including through ideation and social construction), and the ways in Islamist discourse, behavior, and practice relate to these contexts.

Common Ideational Contexts

At the more structural level, many (indeed not all) modern Arab states have in common the recent shifts from more classic authoritarian regimes which relied heavily on coercion, repression, and intimidation, to more 'hybrid' authoritarian systems that combine personalism, clientelism, and economic predation with nominally democratic institutions, like parliament and a diverse party sphere permitted to contest elections. This is true for the large republics like Egypt and Algeria that have relied on revolutionary legitimacy, pan-Arabism and other ideologies for legitimacy, as well as for the smaller, non-oil monarchies like Morocco and Jordan which have relied on the mythology of the divine monarch, among other things. In these cases, the employment of nominally democratic institutions have bolstered regimes' continuity, whose attendant methods of cooptation/appeasement have helped them to manage the demands of, and make selective concessions to, the various opposition parties and protest movements, including in some cases those of the 2011 uprisings. The theatrics of instability that have 'resulted' in other parts of the region have been similarly marshalled to shape popular opinion and preferences that favor gradualism (or rather continuity) over sudden regime change. (However, as this thesis has shown, this does not mean 'change' is not sought in other ways.)

Mythologization of the State. Chapter Three reviews the works of Taussig, Abrams, Goodman, and others, to demonstrate that the construction of the 'state idea' or the 'Godlike state' is not unique to Algeria, or even to authoritarian states.

It may be, of course, that the state, and the lines along which it is deemed omnipotent, are constructed differently across contexts. For instance, if we consider neighboring Morocco, we see that the Algerian regime is not seen as legitimate to the extent of the Moroccan palace. For many Moroccans, including many members of the educated elite, the king is a galvanizing symbol of Moroccan nationhood, which works to cognitively equate citizenship to royal subjecthood (a phenomenon which is perhaps the case regarding monarchs region wide). Similarly-galvanizing symbols exist in Algeria as well, however these and individuals' identities are not necessarily wound up with a person, or any one component of the three offices which comprise the *Le Pouvoir*, which has been the case certainly since 1989, arguably well before. Indeed, when an Algerian invokes *al-dawla*, she is referring to the components of the *Le Pouvoir*, including the cooperating parties and elites; when a Moroccan references the *al-dawla*, she is referring to her country's institutions, parties, perhaps even the king's circle, but never the king himself. In either case, '*al-dawla'* is amorphous and imprecise, but in Morocco's case, it does not include the monarch whose position is often promoted as divine, even nonpolitical. Not only is the king a national unifying political symbol, he is also the *amīr al-muʾminīn* ('commander of the faithful') giving him an ultimate and timeless divine mandate. Moreover, Morocco's intelligence services, while quite heavy-handed, are not powerbrokers themselves and do not have the same notoriety as that of Algeria.

However, it is almost uniformly the case, that this *state idea* masks the actual disunity of the *state system* (Abrams, 1988). Algerians saw the state as the arbiter of stability (and reconciliation) under an almighty army, despite broader impressions that the regime itself is a fragmented, disunified cluster of individuals with competing interests. Consider the similar ways in which members of the Egyptian polity

constructed the 'state' after 2013; according to political ethnographer Salwa Ismail, it was the "product of practices of government deployed by administrators, governors, army, and police" (Ismail, 2006, p. xxxii) And in Morocco the regime's omnipotence, as exercised (and morally justified) through the sanctity of the monarch(y) has produced similar feelings of preordained politics, even though Moroccan political parties enjoy some degree of political prerogative (certainly in comparison to the Algerian case). More elementarily, the omnipotence of the state (engendering the powerlessness of the polity) has often been expressed as a 'barrier of fear' in Morocco, Egypt, and other parts of the Middle East. And history is often marshaled toward the state 'idea' and state power. As Ratiba Hadj-Moussa (2014) puts it, "the ideology of history is a yoke that chokes everyday life, melds it with what remains, and yet, so to speak, determines the being-in-the-world of Algerians" (p. 153). Lisa Wedeen's (1999) work uses the Syrian case (during Hafez al-Assad's period) to show that the perception of an omnipotent state circulates not only through public myth-making, but is instantiated through its security apparatus and its pervasiveness, both real and perceived. In all of these cases, the 'state,' rather than being a structure, is the *result* of structures (Mitchell, 1991): a myth produced by the varied, disparate structures—included those within the society itself—that feel compelled to sustain it.

Taḥazzub & Disdain for Islamism. These constructions are however, not impositions upon the populace, in any of these cases. In Egypt, Morocco, Jordan and beyond, 'state omnipotence' as a discourse can also be a political tool used to situate a political rival vis-à-vis oneself and are often weaponized to suggest a rival's political meaninglessness. For citizens, it may be a way to resign from political stakes and manage expectations of outcome. By assigning a meaningless to their political world, they can make sense of it and proceed accordingly. This actual and perceived 'state

idea,' has in turn produced broad lack of faith in non-state entities to have any agency or to impel change. A general cynicism toward political parties is therefore also observable regionwide. Regional examples abound—not least in the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist parties in Egypt, the PJD and al-ʿAdl wa-l-Ihsan (AWI) in Morocco, and the Islamist Action Front in Jordan—of cases where waves of highly-legitimate religious revivalists became sullied by the illegitimacy and perceived pointlessness of partisan politics. In Turkey, Berna Turam (2006) observes that "the resentment of other Islamic groups and parties was peaking because of the state's repression in the late 1990s," which, in a telling parallel to the MSP's strategies, led to "followers of the Gülen movement […] articulating wide-ranging loyalties to their country, the nation and its Republic, and even the military" (p. 19). In Egypt Islamists were, as in Algeria, conflated into an anti-national figure—both discursively and otherwise—not only following the revolutionary politics after 2011, but even before. This has occurred alongside a regionally-observable conflation and connotation of 'Islamists' and Islamism as anti-national, and thus implicitly radical and threatening, figures.

Common Islamist Discourse, Behavior, and Practice

This thesis also provides a more broadly applicable framework for thinking about how Islamists relate to their social milieu. As an example, Chapter Six showed that some young MSP members believed that their activism ought to be more than just *daʿwa*. Asserting that trauma from the conflict decade was fading and that they had to play a part in rebuilding partisan credibility, these members—fearful that the party would simply bide its time in the associational / *daʿwa* sphere indefinitely—wished to forge a more bellicose political path that more directly confronted the state and the challenged the limits they faced in the formal realm; conversely other members, often in the more fastidious *daʿwa* wing, believed Algerians to be as yet unready for such

aggressive confrontation, that the limitations were too great, that society was still in a state of anxiety and siege, and that parties were not trusted (they often evinced a mistrust of partisanship on their own part), therefore that any programs should have a religious and ideological basis—bases which are first disseminated through *daʿwa*, boy scouts, and other societal milieu. These *daʿwa*-focused members often complained that the national level wing's actions and priorities belied their lip service paid to the importance of outreach and training.

Such a debate will sound familiar to anyone who has been a member, or has spent time with members, of an Islamist party/movement in most places in the region. It is thus not a specially-Algerian phenomenon that a movement's constituting members have both individualized and collective identities and goals that are formed through their life-long interaction with the larger body politic—an attribute that complicates attempts to neatly classify Islamist movements and their members through the prism of vote-maximizing parties seeking to alternate 'power' with the regime, as 'contentious' social movements, or as piety-driven religious revivalists.

Morocco is an especially fascinating case for comparison as it showcases two major Islamist players, the governing PJD party and the banned AWI movement, who carve out in diametrically-opposed ways, a legitimate social existence in line with their movements' self-understanding, as these relate to Moroccan social codes. The data on which the below points proceed, were collected through ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Morocco over the last several years with the PJD and AWI's national leadership(s) in Rabat and Casablanca, and most recently within the southern locality of Taroudant (from September to October 2017).

Morocco's PJD has taken a similar approach to Algeria's MSP, pledging support to the arbitrating regime (the Moroccan palace) while maintaining a grassroots presence.

PJD's spiritual wing al-Tawhid wa-l-Islah even makes the religious primacy of the monarch and his divine position as *amīr al-muʾminīn* (commander of the faithful,) a requirement in its religious exegesis, and reconciles tenets of its foundational thinkers with the official religious message of the state.

Al-ʿAdl wa-l-Ihsan (AWI) however is technically banned in Morocco due to its principle of non-recognition of the monarchy, and of non-participation—as it would legitimize the political system which it rejects wholesale. Its renegade politics have been its key selling point, and enjoys a massive following throughout the country.[367] AWI's refusal to comply due to their self-understanding as 'principled rejectionists,' despite members' concerns over personal costs[368] incurred by involvement, is highly illustrative of how wrapped up its identity is with Morocco's own *taboo of taḥazzub.*

The PJD must also contend with the disdain for partisanship in a manner highly reminiscent of the MSP. It too justifies its *dīn wa dawla* and *ḥizb/ḥaraka* separation as technically under directive of the movement's "greater project" (*al-mashrūʿ al-ʿām*). However, in practice, individualized and collective negotiations of nonpartisan identity leads its associational wings— al-Tawhid wa-l-Islah, its student union (al-Tajdid al-Tullabi) and its local charity organizations—to distance themselves from the PJD's label. Like the MSP, the PJD's *division of labor* within the movement is not only (if not at all) due to a higher ideological imperative (or in the case of non-Egyptian Islamists, doctrinal loyalty to the 'core' or flagship movement) or to activate via '*dīn wa dawla*,' but rather is a product of the wider outlooks that regulate Islamists' being-in-the-world. Such an observation suggests that these issues of 'partisan disdain' as a social outlook

[367] Its membership is estimated to outstrip that of the PJD, however as a banned movement it does not publish its numbers, making such claims difficult to corroborate.
[368] AWI members on the other hand suffer frequent shakedowns, and their families and livelihoods are often threatened. They often meet in secret in members' homes, and some high-profile individuals' home have been shuttered by the state.

that impress upon how movement members understand themselves, are present well beyond these Maghreb cases.

In Egypt, Steven Brooke (2017) highlights the conundrum the Muslim Brotherhood political candidates faced in the inability to "tap into social networks built around social service provision or religious activism" (p. 32) for campaign purposes as it would have negative consequences for the credibility of their *daʿwa* activity. Marie Vannetzel (2016) finds that after years of refusing to harness spiritual networks for electoral purposes, that the MB's transition to legal status led this ethical position to be cast as a partisan manipulation. Conversely, for Egypt's Salafist Nour Party, the partisan side is considered simply the political/lobbying apparatus for the main spiritual tendency. The movement behind Nour asserts it remains otherwise averse to party politics, but uses the latter to stake out a mainstream place for the Salafist cause.[369] This thinking was also observable among some of MSP's more pious members, who as we saw in previous chapters, believed politics to be a means (*al-siyāsa waṣīla*).

Arguments of *waṣīla* have been used by Morocco's AWI in the recent founding of its political circle. In its discourses of refusal, it implicitly casts its character as opposite the PJD's partisan accommodationism.[370] Staunch AWI supporters frequently praise their movement's latitude in platform, rhetoric, and self-presentation, citing the PJD's inability to take stances too far from that of the monarchy. For their part, PJD youth assert they have greater latitude in practice—able to meet freely in authorized

[369] Indeed, according to Stephane Lacroix (2016), the Nour Party's tremendous pragmatism even instances of alignment with the military state on the partisan side, has not translated into compromise on the rigidity, intransigence, and even sectarianism on the religious/doctrinal side.

[370] There have been defections in either direction: those who leave the PJD for AWI say the party has abandoned its Islamist program, that it has backpedaled on its principles, while those who leave AWI for PJD, lament their position in the political margins and their missed opportunities: unable to access many of the same professional, political, and governmental privileges as the PJD and its members. AWI members complain they must rely on much loftier rhetoric and solutions that hinge on a future, hypothetical, state of affairs, while PJD members are able to propose ideas, imagine viable religious policies, and activate within the present political and social reality.

buildings, use its funding to purchase its own headquarters at the national, province, and communal levels. Its members enjoy freedom from repression and insecurity.

Similar to 'partisanship,' the label of 'Islamism' has led activists to deal with similar efforts to cast them outside the confines of national and nationalist virtue. Algeria was therefore not the only context where 'immoderation' was cast as the result of non or anti-national forces. Several Arab authoritarians' wish in recent decades to galvanize their polities around a common threat, dovetailed conveniently with the US-led War on Terror, and countries including Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, and beyond, were increasingly and willingly enlisted in the efforts. As Morocco engaged these efforts, it too positioned its religious identity through 'moderate Moroccan Islam,' as necessarily more palatable than the versions emanating from the 'east.' Many Moroccans internalized this concept of *Moroccan-ness as moderation*, privileging indigeneity over importation in religious practice—at least discursively—even as they disagreed with the underlying logics of the War on Terror that most believed demonized Islam writ large.

Islamists in Morocco and beyond were thus compelled to articulate identities through narratives of *moderation* the definitions over which were as contested as in the Algerian case (Chapter Four). While the PJD fought for legality against the Moroccan regime's effort to cast them as an foreign incursion into Moroccan culture—as tentacles of the foreign Muslim Brotherhood—the PJD asserted its moderation through its cooperationism and political participationism. The party asserted that its platform was not *about* Islam, but is simply *inspired* by it—much like the MSP, this rhetoric was differentially flexed based on audience. In the rather different Turkish context, Gülenist interlocutors similarly downplayed their Islamic motivations in order to remain connected to national imaginaries, as Islamism ran counter to the long-standing

secular(ist) constructions of Turkishness. This positioning is a result of what Berna Turam (2006) described in her ethnography of Turkish Islamists, as the "long-term individuation of the movement through its interaction within the larger institutional milieu" (p. 55).

Conversely, Morocco's AWI always asserted its moderation through its claims to being a 'homegrown' movement, influenced in part by practices of domestic Sufi *zāwiya*s and focused on legal and societal reform of the Morocco only, even if it rejects formal partisanship—fixating on the 'non-Moroccan-ness' and 'non-indigeneity' of the rival PJD, implicitly and explicitly. Ultimately, the two Islamist tendencies define what underlies moderation and national identity in diametrically-opposed terms, while laying equal claim to them.

Thus ultimately, the focus in this thesis on the "context of post-conflict Algeria" does not assert the conflict as an all-determining focal point, but rather as a period that has simply gone chronically understudied in the Algerian studies corpus. The impact of the 1990s conflict on Algeria's political and ideational configuration lies not in 'actual' history or events, but rather to its 'idea' (Hadj-Moussa, 2014). Other country contexts have other 'ideas:' events and histories which are marshalled toward similar national narratives and discursive cultures. The Algerian case in this thesis thus leads us in considering "similar groups with similar experiences participating in similar processes under similar constraints" (Schwedler, 2005, p. 193). And it thus dismantles the idea that Algeria is exceptional. Rather it makes that case that Algeria too can serve as a sample or potential model for understanding the region, beyond the more oft-studied cases (such as Egypt) which are frequently are extrapolated to the Maghreb.

8.4 Limitations and Future Research

My original intention was to conduct a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995), as opposed to taking the single sited approach, in order to capture the diversity in narratives of MSP militants and branch-level leadership. I had aimed to understand the variations in how MSP members and affiliates understand their social world and make sense of their movement and purpose as these interact with their local social and political dynamics. Initially, I worked with MSP's national office to identify cities which have varied in MSP popularity over the last decades, where chosen towns represented a combination of MSP-strong (Blida and Chlef) and MSP-weak (Constantine). I had originally intended for this study to be an in-depth examination of how local social and political circumstances interacted with the imaginaries of MSP supporters and members, and actors in differing cities, as well as how different branch-level cohorts as a smaller-scale collectives contended with differing local realities and collective subjectivities.

For example, a young MSP sympathizer or a scout from Kabylie, or the eastern Chaoui region may experience the party, its challenges, and thus frame the movement and their purpose within it, vastly differently from a young member from the far south Saharan regions, due to the variation in how their movement membership interacts with their other 'subjecthoods' including kinship ties and tribal membership, varying social realities, and the local constituents' social and political needs. Moreover, the differing 'strengths' of MSP influence—historically and ideologically, as well as in networks and patronage—would likely spell differences in the ways members experienced state reach, in the levels of anti-Islamist discourse, and in the ways members negotiated (a)political identity through involvement in the MSP associational orbit.

However, as explained in the introductory chapter an unexplained spell of visa difficulties cut short my expected time, and I abandoned plans to move on to other

localities. I was aware that the suddenly little time I had left in country would be insufficient for gathering meaningful findings in a new field-site—as building trusting relationships and networks in Blida had been energy- and time-intensive. I sought to deepen my findings within this locality, including increasing time spent with the local scouts.

This opened up new findings about the breadth of the MSP-scouting affinity in Blida, and according to most accounts, in regions where the MSP had large social networks and following. The same logistical setbacks that challenged the multi-sited approach to the MSP however, challenged that of the scouts. I would have wished to acquire data on the MSP's drive and efforts—to the extent that these were in fact formalized and/or policy—to have a normalized presence in the scouts, beyond MSP claim-making, and the discourses of local Blida citizens on this. The cross-generational examination in Chapter Seven showed it was typically younger scouts (under age 40) drawn to MSP in Blida. Indeed, a cross-*regional* look could shed light on the regional, class and educational factors that favor the scout-piety and the scout-MSP affinity in some places and at particular times, but not in others. This would be an illuminating exploration for future research, and I hope to return to Algeria to undertake it.

Additionally, a deeper exploration of the extent to which MSP activities within the Scouts were transformative at the level of scouts' ideological discourse and practice at the local organizational level, could greatly enrich the more discourse-focused discussions in Chapter Seven on MSP-scout affinity. While it was partially gleaned through various scouts' accounts of curricular overlap, the extent to which it was effective in socializing scouts to the MSP (and/or broader Muslim Brotherhood) doctrine could have been even better gleaned had I had access to educational material used in the *ḥalqa*s, and pursued more intimate registers of access to some of the scout

activities to witness their practices of socialization, training, and discipline. However, my inability to take a return-trip to Algeria precluded my ability to gather these materials.

Finally, more empirical research on the history of the scouting organization after 1974 would be illuminating and fill the abrupt break in academic knowledge on the scouts timeline. Mahfoud Kaddache (2003a, 2003b) and Mohamed Hachemaoui (2012, 2013) provide some coverage of the state of national scouting up until 1974. However there is no recorded history to my knowledge of the period after the 1974 UNJA formation, and again after the scouts' 1989 reconstitution as an independent (non-governmental) organization. This study thus relied heavily on oral accounts and newspapers in discussing that period. A more comprehensive written / academic history would be an important area for future research.

8.5 Closing Considerations

Ultimately, the MSP and the people who constitute it, activate in their universe by contesting the various social constructions they themselves—(un)knowingly, (un)admittingly or otherwise—reify. These contestations are the oft-overlooked 'unidentified political objects' to which Denis-Constant Martin (2002) refers as overlooked in studies of contention—but are nevertheless at the MSP and its members' disposal as potential wedges against 'state' power, even if not every wielder recognizes them as such.

Many argue that this supine position on the part of MSP practice has abetted authoritarian durability—that its inclusion in the Algerian space was contractual, premised on its cooptation. While there is certainly evidence of this, such assessments rely on a somewhat static and normative modeling of politics under authoritarianism

where the 'actual' purpose of opposition parties/movements is to contest or alternate power with regime incumbents (per the Western democracy ideal-type), while the state, as a unified and monolithic force, is interested only in repressing this activity. This in turn assumes that the same goals animate all MSP members.

Indeed, ethnography of the MSP did not reveal desires to dismantle the authoritarian configuration. Notwithstanding members' allusions to more 'democratic' processes (such as increased transparency, election monitoring, etc.), the movement's priorities remain 'moderation through incrementalism,' instantiated through their insistence on compliance and loyalty (to the system), and performances of discipline and unanimity. Indeed, as Ismail (2006) observes, the "range of performances by the ruled may attest to complicity or to *contempt* [emphasis added]" (p. xxxv).

So what *do* MSP members/supporters gain, or seek to gain, through the discourses, efforts and strategies discussed throughout this thesis? There is, as I have shown over this thesis, no single, neat answer. It is partly rooted in the more fundamental reasons people join movements: friendship and camaraderie, spiritual fulfillment (*ḥalqa*s, group prayer), community (dorm activities, campus outreach), a sense of greater moral cause (orphans, charity, Palestine). Some felt the movement's moderation allowed them to be the Islamists that 'served' Algeria after the conflict by providing an alternative voice, effectively wedding their religious cause to a nationalist one. Others, as noted in Chapter Six, felt the MSP offered 'something for everyone': those discouraged by partisan constraint and disheartened by Algerian politics are able to locate movement ambition elsewhere and find other vocations within the movement. Those who have political aspirations also find a place, and can access doctrinal justification in doing so. Still others more expressly believed that dividing politics and religion was perilous, as evidenced by the growing Salafist trend, which they believed

created political versus religious silos, effectively outsourcing faith and piety to what they held was an extremist source. For some interlocutors it was a source of personal and professional development. These are among some of the things members 'achieve' in reclaiming moderation, in contesting Algerianness, negotiating their politicality, and claim-making on religious localism, and underlies why they willingly undertake so much negotiation to normalize and make-legible their activism.

It also allowed them to challenge state power in their own ways. The MSP trespassed on state power by claiming it was more entitled to legitimating components of the 'state idea' than the state itself. The claims to Algerianness, martyrdom and the scouting institution are such ways to trespass on the state's moral modalities, without expressly challenging the state as a metaphysical entity, for this aspect has been upheld by a coercive apparatus the MSP cannot similarly claim or replicate.

Collective movement *intentions* evolve through individuated movement *practice*, and vice-versa. Because goals and means are dialectically-formed, these contentions have had the attendant effect of generating MSP's own internally-hegemonic discourses and cultivating its own spheres of influence and inculcation.

While such processes are additionally emotional, personal, and affective, rather than only rational or strategic, they imprint on the collective through constituent individuals' protracted, years-long contention with prevailing public discourses. They reify hegemonic narratives and perform accordingly, even if they profess to be unaware of them, and even if these narrative regimes jeopardize the legitimacy and existence of their movement. This demonstrates the power and longevity of these narrative cults: even, as those in power lose ownership over the narratives that sustain them, and even, as the 'state system' no longer retains these logics! For contenders like the MSP, the 'everyday' contention with narrative cults becomes a mode of subversion, upending the

purposes of the practice, process, or institution forwarded by the state, even as it reinforces them. As such, I do not believe Algerian politics are 'dead,' or will be stuck in the 'limbo' that various scholars and pundits argue characterizes the current state of affairs. Rather, I suspect that the discourse and modalities through which the state sustains the idea of its power, will continue to change indefinitely, as will contending movements' self-understandings, objectives, and undertakings vis-à-vis this power. And it will continue to merit curious exploration.

Primary Sources

Informal interviewees & Repeated Interactions

Abdelfatah, 31, was an enigma. Always very eager to meet and talk, he would sometimes become standoffish in discussing MSP. He and Hamza were always together. An aspiring writer of children's books, he appreciated Jil al-Tarjih's religiously-based approach to skills training, leadership and communication, one that emphasized respectful and pious comportment. He described himself as 'apolitical,' and frequently self-presented as averse to politics.

Abdelhamid, 32, was the most unabashed political aspirant among these informants I regularly moved with. He runs the MSP office cybercafé which is open to the public (and free for members). He joined in high school and continued into university and thereafter. He studied accounting and business at Blida University 2 in El Affroun, Blida.

Abdelmoumen, in his 60s, is a native of Blida, former *militant* of the FLN, and former ranking member of the local Blida chapter of the Scouts. He left the FLN in the 1990s; while wishing to be politically involved as a younger man, he disliked the turn of political parties (FLN included) after the opening. He is an administrator at Blida's School for the Blind, and continues to volunteer with the local scouts chapter. He was introduced to me by Salim (below).

Abdou, 44, is a native of Blida, married with three children. He admitted having favored the FIS as a teenager because his classmates also did. After the violence began, he attended Hamas (MSP) rallies in Blida against the violence, and joined the MSP. He left the MSP in 2007 owing to the scandals and infighting. He owns a small shoe shop on the main Mohamed Boudiaf Street (often referred to as L-Boulevard) in Blida.

Adnan, in his 60s, is Abdelmoumen's colleague at the Blida School for the Blind, and like him a former FLN member and scout leader. He was introduced to me by Salim (below).

Amel, 47. A human rights lawyer. Is anonymized for this thesis, as she spoke and interacted me as a friend repeated and numerous over the course of my time in Algiers. Her comments as used in this thesis were made in passing, off-the-record manner, as opposed to as a formal interviewee, speaking as a lawyer, in the name of her firm.

Constantine MSP member group interview. Three interlocutors, Lamia, 25; Rachid, 41; and Noureddine, 23 took part. I met them once on September 20, 2015 at the MSP-Constantine Wilaya headquarters during a visit to Constantine.

Djamel, 31, struck many as a fair-weather MSP member. Several members, such as Nasser and Younes, often expressed he seemed more just to be looking for something to do: that he was not sufficiently religious, that he prayed regularly, but beyond that did not embody someone of *the haraka*. Indeed, he told me that he had not always been religious, but found that MSP was the main organization in

Blida and Algiers doing on-the-ground charity work in Gaza and had a relationship with Hamas in Palestine, in which he sought to get involved. He became more religious through his relationships in the MSP.

Girl 1, 16; **Girl 2**, 17, are high school students and volunteer teachers with al-Irshad wa-l-Islah. I met them only once at Bouslimani's commemoration on January 29, 2016. Asking if I could write the ideas they communicated, they agreed on the condition of anonymity, and were very eager to meet again to "help me however they could" and practice (their very limited) English. However, it was difficult to meet them again after that; though they often cited being busy with their studies, I wondered if whether there had been an organizational intervention owing to their age or rank.

Hafsa, 29. Came to MSP through the dorms at the University of Blida. The two girls with whom she shared a dormitory space regularly took party in the *ḥalqa* of the MSP (the haraka). She expressed that MSP was especially present in her particular dorm, that where it was difficult to be away from her family, they became her family. She is now in charge of tarbiya (education/formation) for the Blida commune branch. Several of her friends and male acquaintances in *the haraka* were UGEL members, which she slowly stopped supporting.

Hamza, 27, is a lifelong scout, current leader/trainee in Jil al-Tarjih, and is Abdelfatah's close friend. Expresses discomfort with the MSP-scouts relationship, but often acknowledged the benefits of the relationship to the scouts.

Hind, 28, grew up in Blida. In her teenage years volunteered with al-Irshad wa-l-Islah and in her early twenties taught Quʾran memorization to preschool-age children at the Jamaʿiyyat al-Furqān (a memorization school run by Irshad). She joined CHEMS, but broke with the entire organization when she was asked to canvas for an election. She joined the faculty of Islamic Studies at Kharouba in 2014.

Houria, 30, operates a language school for school-age children. She was my closest friend in Blida. She loves languages and speaks French, Arabic, English, and is studying Spanish. Her father is squarely Francophone and has told Houria he wished she didn't wear hijab. She has no connections to the MSP, but knew people who were. Hosting me for long periods in their home, she and her family were an important source of information, connection, as well as comfort.

Houria's mother, in her 60s, was an important and well-known figure about town. A known benefactor to local development and education projects, she was an important person to be attached to when navigating Blida. Being attached to a family lent a legitimacy to my presence in Blida.

Ishaq, 28, grew up in Blida. The nadi taqafi (cultural club) at his high school was run by members of the MSP and al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, which acquainted him with the movement. Averse to politics, he volunteers exclusively with the latter, and is not a formal member of the MSP haraka. He expressed interest in Muslim Brotherhood doctrine over the course of our acquaintance.

Karim, in his late 30s, is now a free-lance journalist in Blida. He joined the scouts due to a family legacy, but began to have misgivings as an adult, due to the MSP influence.

Kenza 34, was my closest friend in Algiers. She is chiefly Francophone and speaks French at home. She often works on diplomatic and developmental projects linked to the American and French embassies and international NGOs operating in Algiers. She has a discernable eradicateur orientation, which occasionally became difficult not to internalize as I interacted with my Islamist interlocutors. Kenza notably praised the haïk festival.

Members 1, 2, 3 (Chapter 4, ḥalqa) are completely anonymized without pseudonyms because they engaged in a research activity with me that did not have the approval of their higher-ups in the movement—they simulated a *ḥalqa* as we did not get permission for me to observe a real one. Within the text itself I did not cite or date the event, and participants explicitly asked me to omit the movement branch and location.

Najib, 33, University of Oran engineering student. Comes from a well-off family, many of whom live several months out of the years in Marseilles. Hosted myself and my husband at his family's home whenever we visited Oran.

Nasser 31, is from a Bouarfa, a poorer hamlet adjacent to Blida, where al-Irshad wa-l-Islah was active. He was among my main contacts. He helps his friend run a cybercafé, which he says he enjoys because it allows him to have a sufficiently flexible schedule to commit himself to the movement's activity. Taking note of his good performance in his Islamic studies class in school, a school official who was a member of the MSP invited him to join a scout troop run by an MSP member which quickly led him to be more active in al-Irshad wa-l-Islah. He is an extremely active and committed member (multazim) in the MSP and its orbit. He was in the Scouts chapter of Bouarfa, went on to become a certified troop leader. He was simultaneously involved in CHEMS, Kafil al-Yatim, and Jil al-Tarjih. He is friends with Abdelhamid, Younes, Yahia, and Djamel, all of whom express frequent awe at the rigor of his activism. He met me eagerly and often.

Rachid, 27. Is a volunteer teacher at Houria's school. He took interest in my project and offered constant commentary and opinion, whenever I came to visit Houria at the school. Extremely cynical about politics, he hated the MSP (though his father was a former member), and was interested in the Talʾiʿa al-Huriyat movement and the ideas of Ali Benflis until this formalized as a party.

Reem, 29, was in the the *nādī al-fatāt*, the young girls club within al-Irshad wa-l-Islah as a young girl and fully joined the latter at age 20 during university. She says that she came to al-Irshad through a Qur'anic school, and that this is the way she wishes to therefore give back to al-Irshad. She now teaches at the Jamaʿiyyat al-Furqan (above) and occasionally works with the MSP's party wing.

Salim, 31, was a scout troop leader who was close with Adnan and Abdelmoumen and frequently took me visit them. His mother is Kabyle and he feels close to that identity. He teaches French at Houria's language center and often puts on shows

and plays for small children. Sees himself as devoted to young children. Consistently expressed admiration for Mahfoud Nahnah and Mohammed Bouslimani who were according to him, stabilizing Blidien 'men' (*rijāl*), who used the Blidian *al-dāridja*; however strongly disapproved of the MSP. however he is close to many MSP members through the scouts and considers them his friends.

Slimane, 37. Radio journalist. Studied literature and journalism at University of Algiers. Is of Kabyle origin on his mother's side and speaks French at home. He identifies as a member of the LGBTQ community in Algiers and travels to Europe frequently for social and work purposes. He is the most successful member of his relatively poor family, and as such is frequently called to support his five siblings. His father is not in the picture for reasons he did not convey. Though he was a brief supporter of the MSP in his adolescence (according to him, for six months and chiefly due to peer relationships in the Algerian scouts), he was my friend and spoke to me in that capacity, rather than as a set interlocutor. He now disavows the group.

Smain, 23 and **Zaki**, 22, are close friends and always together. Smain is a native of Algiers, while Zaki moved to Algiers from Mostaghanem at the age of 13. Smain was much more critical of the MSP presence, than Zaki, who often shrugged. The two frequently came to Blida to take part in scouting activities and meetings with Salim. When I would be in Algiers, he and Smain frequently met me in Algiers to show me various scouts activities and to discuss their views and provide more information on scouting life, especially since I had been unable to observe a great deal of scouting firsthand.

Tayeb, 22. He is a Blida native. He is involved with MSP's orphan charity, Kafil al-Yatim. He learned about Kafil al-Yatim through Facebook, and is generally very disengaged from politics. Despite having studied architecture at University of Blida, he had not heard of UGEL (the MSP's student union), and did not (or appeared not to) know much about Kafil al-Yatim's founding or its links to Nahnah/the MSP. His father passed away when he was nine years old, which drew him to the cause of orphans.

Yahia, 31, is a Blida native who studied journalism in London and typically spoke with me in English. We met often, although he was a busy business executive in Algiers. He joined the MSP at 14, after some older boys in MSP who also attended sermons at al-Arqam mosque, brought him into the movement activities. He mentioned he observed many children at his middle school and high school were involved in MSP, and he observed they were the more well-behaved, studious among his peers, which attracted him to the movement. He was involved in CHEMS, Kafil al-Yatim, and Jil al-Tarjih. He slowly became disenchanted with, what he felt, was an indoctrination process. He said that during his studies in the U.K., his views changed due to exposure to diverse faiths, which confirmed his discomfort as an adult.

Younes, 30, is a native of Blida, but his father is from Ghardaïa, a member of the al-Shʿanba tribe. He was one of my main contacts in Blida and Algiers, having facilitated many introductions, relationships and meetings. He is a junior architect

in Algiers and commutes from Blida daily. He attended, as a young boy in the early 1990s, the Quʾranic school de facto administered by local leaders of al-Irshad wa-l-Islah, until middle school. He was thereafter active in most of the MSP's divisions: CHEMS, Jil al-Tarjih, and later of MSP's university wing, UGEL. Though he left the MSP umbrella in 2013, he has maintained close friendships with all members.

Formal Interviewees

Belabbes, Tahar, mid-40s (Leader, founding member of CNDDC). Conversation with Vish Sakthivel. Personal Interview. RAJ (Rassemblement Action Jeunesse) offices. Algiers, Algeria, March 21, 2016

Belaid, Noureddine, 60s (Scouts; former general secretary of SMA) Interview with Vish Sakthivel. Personal Interview. Facebook Video, October 1, 2018

Bengrina, Abdelkader, 57 (Founding member of BW; former Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts; close associate of Chenine; a native of Ouargla). Interview with Vish Sakthivel. Personal Interview. Kheima Maghrabiya Restaurant, Staouali, Algeria, November 12, 2015

Benmansour, Abdelilah (notable member, Sidi Boumediene Sufi order). Interview with Vish Sakthivel. Personal Interview. Tlemcen, Algeria, April 2, 2016

Benzerga, Mohamed (El-Watan, Blida Correspondent) Interview with Vish Sakthivel. Personal Interview. Maison de la Presse. Blida, March 7, 2016

Boulil, Sid-Ahmed, 60s (MSP; former Minister of Transport; current MSP spokesperson). Interview with Vish Sakthivel. Personal Interview. MSP National Headquarters, Algiers, Algeria, October 22, 2015

Bouzakri, Soufiane, 50s (MSP-Blida; former Manager of the Palestinian Issue; current member of national MSP majlis al-shūrā; often referenced as 'movement historian' by Blida MSP members). Interview with Vish Sakthivel. Personal Interview. Irshad wal Islah Blida Wilaya Headquarters, December 6, 2015

Chouati, Ali (Director, Kafil Yatim-Blida) Interview with the author, Kafil al-Yatim office, Blida. February 13, 2016

Chekkat, Kamel (AUMA member; founding member of the League of Ulemas of the Sahel). Interview with Vish Sakthivel. Personal Interview. Radio Algerienne, Algiers, Algeria, September 22, 2015

Chenine, Slimane, 53 (Current ranking member of BW; defected from MSP in 2008; a close associate of Bengrina; as of July 2019, the president of the APN; a native of Ouargla). Interview with Vish Sakthivel. Personal Interview. El Raed Newspaper, Borj el Kiffan, Algeria, September 29, 2015

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