After the Algerian war: reconstructing identity among the *Pieds-noirs*

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Between 1961 and 1962 one million French citizens left Algeria when it gained its independence after over 130 years of French rule. They were immediately subjected to a repatriation policy[1] unprecedented in the French Republic (Scioldo-Zürcher 2006a). When they resettled in metropolitan France these French Algerians, who had willingly identified themselves as Algerians in the colonial context, were gradually re-identified as *Pieds-noirs*. This was at a time when the French non-citizens, namely, the French Muslims involved in the war of independence, proclaimed themselves Algerians. Thus it can be seen that, in colonial Algeria as elsewhere, issues of naming are issues of power, since, in the absence of a legal definition of Algerian nationality, the term "Algerian" designated a legitimate occupant of the territory. Unlike the French Algerians, whose genesis occurred in the colonial context,[2] the *Pieds-noirs* therefore constitute recent groups of individuals (Buono 2004; Savarese 2002a), whose existence can be dealt with through the experiences, accounts, and practices observable in metropolitan France.

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In order to define a *Pied-noir*, at least two criteria must be invoked. The first is that of repatriation, when the category of repatriated person became a management tool for the colonial issue from 1958 onwards.[3] Being a *Pied-noir* means being part of the repatriated French group, since some – though very few – individuals chose to remain in Algeria after independence, and were called Pieds-verts in contrast. But this criterion alone does not suffice to define the contours of this population as some Harkis were repatriated but cannot be considered *Pieds-noirs*. A second criterion is therefore required: that of the individual's status in the former colony, in which the *Pieds-noirs* were French citizens and the Harkis were among the French non-citizens. This follows the division produced by colonial classifications that recognised only French people – but, as an exception to the principle of republican equality – French people with distinct statuses (Blévis 2001; Saada 2005).

All French citizens born in Algeria who were officially repatriated, mainly between 1961 and 1962, can thereby be identified as *Pieds-noirs*. This definition makes it possible to count, measure, and examine the economic reinsertion of these so-called repatriated individuals, to look for ideal-typical paths, and, more generally, to hone the statistical tools to describe the main characteristics of this population. However, to avoid brandishing a social science pseudo-object that has not been adequately constructed, we must also take into consideration the great diversity of this group of individuals. For example, among the one million individuals covered by the

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definition we find former militants of the Organisation Armée Secrète (OAS), an underground organisation made up of militants involved in defending French Algeria, but also anti-colonialist writers; a Marxist philosopher (Louis Althusser), as well as a strictly orthodox Nobel economics laureate (Maurice Allais), and citizens whose voting choices were very varied and who encompassed the whole political party spectrum (Comtat 2006). Furthermore, we can find *Pieds-noirs* who consider themselves as such (albeit with a wide range of identity choices) and others who have always refused to define themselves in this way. Just one example of the latter is the historian Benjamin Stora, who is among the best specialists on colonial Algeria and the Algerian war.

Thus, just as it is not possible to claim that the *Pieds-noirs* do not exist, thereby denying several thousand individuals one of the strong aspects of their identity affiliation, it is important not to attempt to transform a statistically constructed population into a homogenous group defined by common social, political or cultural features – the only aspect common to all the *Pieds-noirs* being their suffering in exile. This implies dispensing with empirically disproved notions such as the *Pied-noir* vote, *Pied-noir* culture or, still from the stock of supposedly obvious categories,[4] a *Pied-noir* memory. As we will see, the use of such terms reflects activism rather than a sociological attitude.

To deal with the reconstructions of identity among the *Pieds-noirs* after the Algerian war is to strive to explain the diverse crises and identity choices (Martin 1992, 1994) that can be found in any population made up of dissimilar individuals. As a good number of historians show (Nouschi 1996; Stora 1991a, 1991b), colonial Algeria was a land of contrasts and divisions, first among two categories of French people (citizens and non-citizens), then among different categories of French citizens (Spanish, Italians, Maltese, as well as the Jews of Algeria, who were naturalised by the Crémieux decree of 1872 and found themselves the target of controversy during upsurges of anti-Semitism [Jordi and Planche 1999]), and finally between a few wealthy colonists and most people who eked out a meagre existence from their work. That being the case, one would not expect repatriation to homogenise a million individuals. It is thus necessary to examine multiple identity strategies (Bayart 1996) and the ways in which the *Pieds-noirs* coped after the conflict.

Strategic identities: the invention of the *Pieds-noirs*

The arrival of the *Pieds-noirs* in metropolitan France is broadly associated with trauma, as shown as much in exile literature as in the accounts collected through interviews[5] and in various historical studies (Jordi 1993, 1997). The pain experienced at the time of departure was succeeded by their inadequate welcome by metropolitan France, as well as a series of doubts that gave rise to a more or less new questions about their identity. In particular, the destinations initially chosen by the repatriated citizens were sometimes linked to their questioning of their geographical origins, with *Pieds-noirs* of Spanish ancestry going more readily to Perpignan than to Nice, unlike those of Italian origin.[6] In these conditions it is easy to admit, in reconstructing activist trajectories, that the first years spent in former metropolitan France were devoted to resettlement and the social insertion of the repatriated group, which is what the policies implemented were supposed to enable, even if the results were varied (Scioldo-Zürcher 2006a).

Several years later the first experiences of organisations made up of activists from the *Pied-noir* and the repatriated group led to a series of concrete demands. These were, on the one hand, to obtain amnesty for former French Algerians who had participated in the actions carried out under the aegis of the OAS and, on the other hand to ask for material indemnities. In due course, several laws partially satisfied these demands,[7] but, like all contingent groups (Vilain and Lemieux 1998), that is, groups of individuals that shared not social features but simply memories of suffering, neither material reparations nor legislative measures exhausted their being mobilised as *Pieds-noirs*. This is because the stakes were first and foremost those of memory and identity, as seen, after 1973 by the creation of the Cercle Algérianiste, one of the main organisations involved in the defence of the *Pieds-noirs* with the mission of saving an endangered culture.

The time taken to mobilise these activists, who have since been fully reintegrated and have retired, bears witness to the difficulty of bringing together a million scattered individuals into a politically influential force of change. While the issue of material demands has increasingly been sidelined and former militants have been granted amnesty, a good many activist organisations have supported the *Pied-noir* cause through dual political action. The first of these was by lobbying local and national elected representatives for action in the context of the Algerian war of memories (Savarese 2007) to convert memory into official history.

As this activity was neither new nor secret, as emphasised by Romain Bertrand (2006), there is no justification in resorting to conspiracy theory to explain how elected representatives yielded to the demands of the activists, for example, by adopting the law of 23 February 2005 that, above and beyond the very controversial Article 4 mandating the inclusion of the positive role of colonisation in school curricula,[8] includes indemnity measures for former members of the OAS. The adoption of this text instead reflects a choice by some MPs that can be explained by specific political constraints.

These MPs, who were often new to the National Assembly, were outsiders in their party and thus found it in their own best interest to redefine divisions. Furthermore, a good number of them adopted the false but widespread view among politicians in the south of France, where the Algerian repatriates had mainly settled, that there was a *Pied-noir* vote. However, in a context marked by an increase in memorial laws and a rise in disputes regarding the way in which historical issues should be interpreted,[9] the pressure put on elected representatives explains the splits associated with political function, as politicians regularly found themselves summoned to arbitrate between competing memories. Various projects to place the history of colonial Algeria in museums or on controversial monuments, especially in cities in southern France, are currently a source of localised conflicts of memory[10] which have become national issues, in particular with the media overexposure of the colonial issue in the eventful year of 2005 (Savarese 2006). Fighting for the inclusion of memories in official histories implies a rallying of the *Pieds-noirs* to their cause and, in return, their support of activities likely to serve this cause.

This is the reason why the development of a *Pied-noir* memory by the activists in numerous repatriate organisations can be understood as the key identity strategy seeking to transform a million dissimilar people into an active and politically influential structured group of individuals. As no group of individuals can exist without a relationship to the past, especially in the context created by exile, the activists proceeded to invent a tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) through which the *Pieds-noirs* could be associated with an ancestry of pioneer builders. Based entirely on two components – the desert and the pioneer – at the core of this collective representation,[11] the frontier tradition belongs to heroic accounts intent on producing an idealised version of the history of colonial Algeria. In the context of such an account the *Pieds-noirs* belong to a group of individuals that emerged in Algeria and fit into an ancestry of brave and defiant pioneers who, at great risk to their own lives, transformed an arid desert into a prosperous country. In this way the pioneer tradition transforms the *Pieds-noirs* into empire builders, the inventers of an Algeria created entirely by pioneers who domesticated virgin land and the founders of an Algeria that was not a colony. An excerpt from a past interview illustrates perfectly how the production of a tradition is driven by a "liberating amnesia" (Jaffrelot 1992), by producing a narrative within which everything that is apparently foreign to the impulses of *Pied-noir* activists can be brushed aside:

> I've been told I was born in a colony. It is not true. I was born in a French département. Algeria was never a colony. In the beginning, it was a military territory, to which colonists came – that's one of our proudest achievements – not a colony. What is a colony? It is when the legal government of one country is replaced by another, run by a foreigner. There, it was different; there wasn't anything: a Dey, some cities, a Spanish trading post. Algeria didn't exist. Algeria – and the word was created by France – was a pure creation, out of nothing, by France, along with the pacification and creation of a new country. The only ones who could resent us for it are the Turks, and since they don't say anything. . . . In the 1958 Constitution, as far as I know, it is written that territorial integrity must be guaranteed. Being legal, that's to say, obeying the Constitution, was to keep French Algeria, not abandon

it. That's what's asked today for all the territories – except for Algeria. (Journalist born in 1952 in the suburbs of Algiers, who left Algeria on 26 July 1962. Interview conducted in Narbonne in 2000).

The fact remains that many *Pieds-noirs* have developed a competing vision of this heroic history that has never been converted into a common memory among repatriated former French Algerians. This is first because some *Pied-noir* authors have broken off from a backward-looking attitude that thrives both in the many figures of "nostalgeria" and in attitudes of victimisation. This is an obstacle to the real work of mourning: "The journals of repatriated groups and their organisations still put themselves in a situation of dependency and still overassert their status as victims" (Vircondelet 1982, p. 228).

It is also because the dynamics of reconstructing an identity are partly worked out on a critical vision of measures taken at the time of the basic socialisation of French Algerians into colonial society. An author such as Marie Cardinal gives an account of the effects of colonisation as an experience of subjectivisation and inculcation of lifestyles (Bayart 1996) through the ambivalent ties woven between the different categories of the French: "In a few seconds, the young girl disappeared, and I became a dignified young French woman again, frightened of a coarse and savage Arab. I was afraid of being raped. I thought the Arab would take advantage of my confusion and rape me. Instead, he went to get help" (Cardinal 1980, p. 90). This illustrates an overwhelming rejection of one's upbringing and, through it, the principles inculcated in a colony where several institutions contributed to promoting racist principles, especially through an essentialisation of the Arab or the Muslim.

In particular, the three most famous *Pied-noir* authors actively participated in denouncing the colonial system: the writings of Albert Camus (1958) related to the extreme poverty in Kabylia, remarks by Emmanuel Robblès (1974) on the separation between the French citizens and non-citizens in colonial Algeria, or the denial of republican principles pointed out by Jules Roy (1993, pp. 139–140): "The principles of the Republic were never applied in Algeria: 'liberty, equality, fraternity' concerned Europeans exclusively". More generally, many texts written by *Pied-noir* authors are show that there are multiple identity choices in the post-colonial situation. This is the reason why the Algerian memory wars also run through the webs of *Pied-noir* groups. While activists of the Association for the Defence of the Moral and Material Interests of the Former Prisoners and Politically Exiled Individuals of French Algeria, several members of which are also members of the far-right National Front, fight to set up monuments in favour of former OAS members, those of the National Association for the Protection of the Memory of OAS victims support the former victims of clandestine underground organisations and assert that their competitors represent only themselves and cannot proclaim themselves to be the repositories of a *Pied-noir* memory or identity.

Pied-noir memory therefore exists only in the space of a specific militant discourse and in the framework of strategies seeking to build a social group capable of negotiating a status in the former colonising state. On the other hand, some post-conflict identity traumas can be described independently of activist logic and memorial issues.

From colonial to post-colonial: transferring a war memory

The analysis of war traumas implies marshalling documents, which make it possible to ask how the *Pieds-noirs* lived through the main sequences of the conflict. Some 400 political posters that are available at the overseas archive centre in Aix-en-Provence reveal a great deal about the relations with the enemy that are characteristic of this conflict. While the posters cover the entire history of colonial Algeria, some are specifically devoted to the Algerian war; to propaganda in favour of French Algeria or to the staging of the conflict: election posters, documents enhancing the value of the work done by France in Algeria and orders intended for the French as well as for the Algerians at a time when the distinction created by the conflict was taken up in the institutions of the Republic. The documents, which were published not just in Paris but also in

Packing cases containing the personal belongings of European repatriates from Algeria in port of Marseille, September 1962. AFP

Algiers, by the French government, or by local actors (such as the Constantine Public Safety Committee), bear witness to the involvement of several political forces. As some among the French population of Algeria considered themselves betrayed, the political posters give an account of the competition between Paris and Algeria regarding the legitimate definition of Algeria and the fate of Algerians faced with the actions of the National Liberation Front (FLN).

As the war could only be won politically, obtaining the support of French Muslims was an issue for both sides. This is probably the reason why official documents published in metropolitan France gloss over the role of the FLN and seek to minimise its importance, trying to reassure the people and reiterate that both Muslim and non-Muslim populations would be afforded protection – in short, to participate in legitimising the French presence. On the other hand, documents published mainly by local militants in Algiers, Oran or Constantine are above all devoted to denouncing terrorism, revolutionary war or the acts of violence committed by the rebels – in short, an attempt to delegitimise the role of the rebels (*fellagas*). Slogans thus serve to contrast economic prosperity, modernity, and French peace with death, mutilated bodies, and scorched earth. Therefore, on the one hand, the supposedly reassuring story line is offered of conquest vocabulary – pacification, development, ports, roads, medical institutions, agriculture – and the handling of symbols of French power such as the colonial helmet. On the other, the image of archaism is spelt out, the brutality and congenital evil-mindedness of the rebels, the form of barbarism that would

blossom only if they were able to carry out their macabre designs, shown in black and white photos used to stage death, the destruction of harvests, and the ruin of a country.

Such processes of demonising the *fellaga* are not specific to the Algerian situation: they are part of any dynamics that construct an internal enemy through political propaganda. As the French Algerians and French Muslims found themselves in competition to produce a legitimate vision of the Algerian, the official documents contrasted, through text and image, the Algerians and the *fellagas*. It is thus useful to look into how the *fellaga* appears in propaganda posters. These documents are characterised by a strange omission: the other, the rebel, the enemy, the *fellaga* is physically absent from them. In other words, designated as the cowardly assassins lurking in the shadows who kill innocent people, the *fellagas* are also the bodiless enemies in a nameless war that, in this respect, unfolds without images.

Such a lack of physically staging the enemy contrasts sharply with the old iconographic tradition in which there are many examples of demonisation. One example is the stigmatisation of the Jew with the features of a bird of prey during the Dreyfus affair or the image of the Communist stabbing France; not forgetting the Italian immigrants depicted as a horde of tramps responsible for the invasion of France and threatening national identity (Temime 1999): examples of demonisation through images of the enemy within remain plentiful. In nearly all cases, measures to identify the enemy show a desire to give it a bestial nature: the absence of the representation of the *fellaga* is undoubtedly an exception. The enemy is identified but remains invisible.

This absence bears witness to the inability of French Algerians to dissociate the *fellaga* from the French Muslim who had integrated into everyday colonial life. This can be seen in several interviews with *Pieds-noirs*: "In the cities, you live with them; they're your pal, you play football on the same team. And then they were a very small minority; the vast majority of them were very good" (former physical education teacher who returned to metropolitan France in June 1962. Interview conducted in Narbonne in 2000). This absence of differentiation between the *fellaga* and the Arab, which reflects an inability to distinguish the Arab friend from the Arab enemy, cannot be attributed to the justifications for the colonial conquest or to identity strategies worked out within activist structures. In fact, the exile literature attests to the traumatic effects of this inability to distinguish Arabs who are close and integrated into the network of inter-personal relations from the *fellaga* or rebel, which holds true despite partisan preferences or the identity choices of the authors.

This type of problem is well illustrated by Louis Gardel, in a novel in which the wife of a colonist, whose son participates in the activities of the OAS, indefatigably protects one of her employees, Omar, even though he is suspected of belonging to the FLN. He is an employee who at night sets fire to the garage of his employers' family home, all the while taking care to spray them with water so that they escape from the flames; an employee who, finally, threatened with death by the FLN, warned his employers: "You must keep the garage with the petrol locked and never give me the key. Even if I ask for the key to the garage where the petrol is, never give it to me. You understand?" (Gardel 1973, p. 125). Better than any other historical material, these tragic situations depict the complexity of colonial relationships during the Algerian war. They point out the extraordinary ambiguity created by a conflict situation in which the individuals are subject to contradictory demands and feelings: "'If the *fellagas* order me to cut your throat, Madame Marcelle, you don't need to worry.' 'I know, Tounsi, I trust you.' 'You can trust me, Madame Marcelle, I'll cut your throat during a nap, and you won't feel a thing'" (Cardinal 1980, p. 111).

On the other hand, Pierre Nora (1961) emphasises that, at the very height of the Battle of Algiers, General Massu mentioned that the arrest of each suspect was followed by mediation on the latter's behalf by French Algerians, even though they called for the greatest firmness towards the rebels. In other words, everyone could be suspect, except for those integrated in the social relations that were superimposed by colonial domination.

We can assume that such situations can affect social practices and representations in the long term, just as the lack of differentiation between *fellaga* and Arab companion during the

Algerian war can be transferred to metropolitan France. Indeed, even though it started in France at the beginning of the century – that is, in the colonial context – Algerian immigration is sometimes associated with the coming to France of the former *fellagas*: "You see, we made a mistake with the Arabs. We sent back those who cried 'Vive la France', the Harkis, the auxiliaries, and they had their throats cut. And those whom we allowed to come are those who shot at us" (retired teacher, age 65, who left Algeria on 18 June 1962. Interview conducted in Cagnes-sur-Mer in 2000). Hence the Algerian memory has been transferred to France, as Benjamin Stora (1999) pointed out in connection with the OAS, anti-Arab racism and the ideology of the National Front on the one hand, and the perceptions of Algerian immigration that reflect the traumas of the invisible enemy on the other:

> Our worst enemies, those who made us lose our land, they are here and they want revenge. All those people are here. . . . The former members of the FLN, the fellouzes, they're here in France. What's more, you can see former heads of the FLN in Paris walking around calmly, and, moreover, medals are given to people who deserve to die for high treason. How can you expect the *Pieds-noirs* to feel good, in France, with all that? The Harkis, those who were with us, they were massacred or penned up in camps, and our worst enemies are here, taunting us, after everything they did to us (journalist born in 1952 in the suburbs of Algiers, who left Algeria on 26 July 1962. Interview conducted in Narbonne in 2000).

Among some *Pieds-noirs*, the transfer of a war memory therefore contributes to a tragic association between the *fellaga* and the immigrant, in so far as the ambivalence of feelings towards the "Arabs" during the conflict spills over into thoughts about North African immigration:

> All that has created resentment; psychologically that has created resentment. As a policeman, I was on the streets. I could no longer stand having someone walk behind me. Even now, I still have anxiety attacks. . . . Immigration is keeping up this fear. I don't know; if you knew the Bourg-lès-Valence market, you'd understand. My wife and I can't go there; it is a constant fear. There're only Arabs there; you don't feel safe. If I go there, I may not get out alive; I'm always looking to the right, to the left. (Former garage mechanic, born in Tlemcen and later lived near Algiers, retired. Left Algeria on 13 June 1962. Interview conducted in Valence in 2000).

Repeating the same testimony (Savarèse 2002a) eventually gets in the way of argument. A second example, which is just as symptomatic of this transfer of memory process, must therefore suffice:

> They did horrible things. I can tell you, I saw them. I was in a cinema that blew up; half the people were floored, full of blood . . . After the war, to give you an example, when I saw an Arab behind me, I stopped to let him pass. If I queued up at the supermarket where there was an Arab behind me, I felt uneasy. It lasted years. "Is it over now?" "It is better, but it lasted a long time. Now, it is over, it is all right". (Retired teacher, born in Mostaganem. Interview conducted in Cagnes-sur-Mer in 2000).

Not all *Pieds-noirs* experience such identity traumas, but, given their presence in many texts, published by authors with widely varying interpretations of the history of the Algerian war, such as Jean Brune, Geneviève Baïllac, Marie Cardinal and Louis Gardel, it is not possible to see them only as the expression of a militant strategy to impose a memory. This is why the reconstruction of identity experienced by *Pieds-noirs* must be considered in its diversity. Whereas the working out, within certain "repatriation" organisations, of a memory competes with official history and reflects an identity strategy worked out by identifiable individuals, and while these strategies are disputed by *Pieds-noirs* who do not recognise themselves as part of a pioneer tradition, this repeated transfer of war memories belongs to mental injuries that continue to justify the difficult but indispensable work of mourning today.[12] It is thus not surprising that the Franco-Algerian Society of Psychiatry devoted its first conference in Paris on 3 and 4 October 2003 to the study of post-traumatic stress disorders suffered over many years by all participants in the Algerian war.

It is worth adding that, within the framework of issues more specific to the social sciences, transfers of memories provide possibilities for original research. One such project on the links between the transfer of memories and political behaviour will be mentioned here: while it is not possible to regard the National Front as the party of the *Pieds-noirs*, as confirmed by the quantitative data and findings available (Comtat 2006; Stora 1999), and while it is unthinkable to explain *Pied-noir* affiliation to the National

Front by recycling the old stereotype of the *Pied-noir* as invariably racist, colonialist and nostalgic for imperial France, it can be productive, on a heuristic level, to ask ourselves about the trajectories of *Pieds-noirs* who have voted for the National Front.[13] And likewise it is worth observing whether, among other variables – such as primary or secondary socialisation, political preferences and social characteristics – the transfer of war memories influences an individual decision to support and to vote for the National Front.[14] Although the visibility of the Algerian memory wars is at the forefront of current events, the suffering associated with the memories of wars deserves something better than pity or commemoration: it deserves explanation.

Translated from French

Notes

1. This policy aimed to transform the French Algerians into metropolitan French through material (access to housing and jobs) and moral assistance. Results varied. Economic reinsertion, in the post-war context of what the French call the *''Trente glorieuses''* (the 1945–1974 boom), was crowned with success, whereas the feelings of the *Pieds-noirs* with regard to the French state and the French metropolitan varied.

2. The laws of 1889, which granted French citizenship to the Mediterranean groups that peopled the colony, can be considered the genesis of French Algerians. This law firmly implanted a divide between French citizens on the one hand and French non-citizens (or French Muslims) on the other. From this we can see the fundamental role of religion in building the identity of French Algerians (Baussant 2002).

3. As emphasised by Yann Scioldo-Zürcher (2006b), up until the First World War repatriation referred to the return of French people to their country of origin and the expulsion of unwanted foreigners, whereas from 1958 the status of the repatriated person concerns only French individuals leaving a territory where France previously exercised sovereignty.

4. What such approaches have in common is that they hypothesise a homogeneity that does not exist, but they present appreciable differences. For example, behind such standardising expressions as *Pied-noir* memory (Hureau 1987) or *Pied-noir* identity (Martini 1997), the authors find different ways in which memory and identity are being expressed. But other viewpoints, such as that of Jeannine Verdès-Leroux (2001), consist of mixing up figures of ''nostalgeria'' with the shared memory of colonial Algeria – if not with the history of French Algeria. For a critique of this last viewpoint, see my arguments (Savarese 2004).

5. The research discussed here is based on an interview survey conducted among 25 *Pied-noir* activist organisations in the South of France between May 2000 and January 2001 at various locations: at the *Mémorial national des Français d'Algérie et rapatriés d'Outre-Mer* in Aix-en-Provence; at the 27th Convention of the Cercle Algérianiste, in Narbonne, on 20 May 2000; on the occasion of *Pieds-noirs* 2000 in Cagnes-sur-Mer, on 10 June 2000 and, finally, in December 2000 and January 2001 among organisation activists in Valence (10 rue Digonnet, Valence). We have also previously shown (Savarese 2002b) the methodology of the survey used to gather this information upon which this article is partially based.

6. Regarding this point, see the report ''*Pieds-noirs*, harkis, rapatriés'', which was coordinated and presented in the journal *Pôle sud*, (Savarese 2006) and particularly the interview conducted with a former MP on these questions.

7. Indemnification for abandoned property was relatively meagre, but reinsertion policies were, despite mixed results, costly and on an unprecedented scale (Scioldo-Zürcher 2006a). As for the amnesty laws, there were four of these: Law no 64–1269 of 23 December 1964; Law no 66–396 of 17 June 1966; Law no 68–697 of 31 July 1968 and Law no 82–1021 of 3 December 1982, adopted without voting via Article 49–3 of the Constitution. This Article made it possible, according to the wishes of the head of state and against the opinion of young socialist MPs who entered politics via anti-colonialism policies, to reintegrate the generals responsible for the 1961 putsch in

Algeria in the French army with their rank and retirement benefits.

8. This article stipulates: ''University research programmes shall confer upon the history of the French presence overseas, in particular in Northern Africa, the position that it deserves. Educational curricula shall recognise in particular the positive role of the French presence overseas, notably in northern Africa, and confer upon the history and the sacrifices of the combatants of the French army coming from these territories the prominent position they deserve.''

9. Specifically, the so-called Gayssot law making it an offence to deny the Jewish genocide (1990); the law of 1999 replacing the expression, ''operations carried out in North Africa'' with ''Algerian war'' and ''combats in Tunisia and Morocco'', the law stating that France recognises the Armenian genocide (2001), the so-called Taubira law ''aiming to recognise the slave trade and slavery as a crime against humanity'', and, finally, the law of 23 February 2005 already mentioned above while it was still a bill, making it an offence to deny the Armenian genocide, that was adopted by the National Assembly in 2006.

10. For example, in Perpignan a collective of organisations has been denouncing a monument erected in July 2003 in the cemetery of Haut-Vernet to commemorates former OAS members. It is fighting against the plan to create in Perpignan a ''centre of the French presence in Algeria'' on the premises of the Sainte Claire convent; a plan entrusted to the Cercle Algérianiste of the Pyrénées-Orientales.

11. Collective, according to the meaning of Durkheim (1912), who regards a representation to be collective when it is shared by a more or less significant part of the social body.

12. Meaning work of mourning in the Freudian sense of the term (Freud 1968). In so far as all psychic elements simultaneously justify a topical, dynamic, and economic analysis, the work of mourning consists of identifying and gathering memories in order to strive, by acting on the economic aspect of the analysis, to reduce the amount of effect attributed to them.

13. ''Who have voted'' rather than ''who vote'', in so far as, as shown by Patrick Lehingue (2003), there is no National Front electorate. On the one hand, almost half of its votes come from individuals who support it on an occasional basis. On the other hand, the laws of electoral statistics quake in the face of a party whose voters include Catholics, atheists, shopkeepers and labourers or, in other words voters with greatly variable social characteristics.

14. This is a research idea I am currently investigating, but the partial results obtained cannot, at present, lead to empirically based conclusions. This aspect of the problem will therefore probably be the subject of a forthcoming article.

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