

# Algeria

(AlgeriaRN2.4.doc)

James Fearon  
David Laitin

Stanford University

This is one of a set of “random narratives” to complement our statistical findings in regard to civil war onsets. This is a draft of April 10, 2006; comments welcome. We acknowledge comments from I. William Zartman.

Our model tracks with near perfection Algeria’s two civil war onsets since independence in 1962. Over the course of the thirty-eight years since independence, its mean probability of civil war onset is .033, which translates into a predicted probability of 1.25 onsets since independence. Algeria’s average probability is quite high, about two and a half times the regional average for states in the North Africa / Middle East region. Like many states in the region, Algeria’s oil exports -- 96 percent of total exports of US\$12.7 billion in 1990 (Metz 1993, Society) -- make it more susceptible to civil war than if it had been without oil. Its rather large population estimated at 32.5 million in 2003 -- some 1.7 times greater than the regional average -- makes civil war even more probable. And its GDP per capita is less than half the regional average. Since country poverty is the strongest predictor of civil war, Algeria’s weak economy makes insurgency more likely. (Algeria’s mountain coverage is somewhat below the regional average, and if anything, lowers the expected probability of civil war). Oil, poverty, and large population work in concert to make Algeria a likely victim of civil war onset in general.

But the model does even better. Algeria’s onsets in 1962 and again in 1992 both occurred precisely when the model indicated heightened probability. In 1962, as a new state, our model gives Algeria a .15 probability of onset, among the highest in our entire sample. In 1990, with regime instability and anocracy, the model predicts a two and a half times increase in the likelihood of a second civil war, from .025 to .065. Within two years a second civil war broke out, one that still rages.

Not having ethnic fractionalization as an explanatory variable lost us next-to-nothing in our civil war estimates for Algeria. Its population is a

mixture of Arab and indigenous Berber that are largely integrated, bridged with a common exposure to French, with little social stratification along racial or ethnic lines. While there are several other ethnic groups present in small numbers, Arabs constitute about 80 percent of total (Metz 1993, *Society* 1.1). In our index of ethnic fractionalization, Algeria scores .43. This is higher than the mean for all countries in the region (average = .22), but low as compared to the other countries in West Africa (average = .65). In fact, Algeria in terms of ethnic fractionalization is close to the world average (.37), so little is gained by pointing to levels of heterogeneity. In terms of religious fractionalization, Sunni Muslims are dominant. Non-Muslim minorities are inconsequential. There are some 45,000 Roman Catholics, fewer Protestants, and a miniscule Jewish community (Metz). There is clear religious homogeneity. Insurgency in Algeria cannot be accounted for on grounds of civilizational difference or any other theory of ethnic or religious fractionalization.

The fact that our model does well in this case, however, does not assure us that we have the mechanisms correct. In fact, there is reason to look carefully at this case to reassess our principal storyline in regard to mechanisms. The principal mechanism we have theorized linking low GDP per capita to insurgency is to portray poverty as a proxy for state weakness in confronting insurgents. This story doesn't quite fit the Algerian case. Although Algeria is relatively poor for its region (the Middle East and North Africa combined, but not poor relative to its north African neighbors) in terms of GDP per capita, it has a formidable army, honed by years of anti-French guerrilla struggle. Its infrastructure is moderately well developed. There are more than 90,000 kilometers of roads in Algeria's network, 58,868 of them paved (Metz 1993, *Transportation*). Its army is formidable. In late 1993, it consisted of 121,700 total active forces. Algeria's internal security forces included a Gendarmerie Nationale of 24,000, Sûreté Nationale force of 16,000, and 1,200-member Republican Guard Brigade (Metz 1993, *Armed Forces*). So we shouldn't assume that because our model did well, a close examination of the case would provide strong support for our theory.

Here we focus on three periods.<sup>1</sup> First we examine the transition from colonial rule to independence so that we can isolate the mechanisms that

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<sup>1</sup> . The structure of this narrative relies heavily on Metz (1993). Since we used the electronic version (where no page numbers are provided), citations give the section of the book from which the material was quoted. We did not use quotation marks where material from Metz was combined with material from other sources.

translated high likelihood of civil war to its actual occurrence. Second, we survey the nearly three-decade period when civil war probability stayed within a range of .02 and .03. Algeria in this period hovered slightly above the world average in its susceptibility for civil war, which of course is a quite low likelihood. And in this period of lowered probability, while there were near-outbreaks, there was no new civil war. Third, we analyze the period of anocracy and political instability, when the likelihood of civil war heightens, again to isolate the mechanisms that translated this different source of susceptibility into an actual onset.

## The Immediate Post-Independence Period

Algerians fought a civil war in the wake of their own independence on June 5, 1962. It was the direct result of several anticolonial leaders jockeying for control over the state, each of them representing different factions. In Evian, near the Swiss border, after an unimaginably brutal war for independence, the French government capitulated and signed an accord with the GPRA (Gouvernement Provisoire de la Révolution Algérienne), based in Tunis, with Benyoussef Ben Khedda as its leader, paving the way to Algerian independence. With this document signed, the French government released the so-called “historic chiefs” who had long been incarcerated. Once released, the most powerful of these chiefs, Ahmed Ben Bella, denounced the Evian accords as a sell-out, and accused Ben Khedda of making a secret deal with the *colon* settler terrorists (in the Organisation de l’Armée Secrète – the OAS). Ben Bella at a meeting of his faithful in Libya then created a Political Bureau that would replace the GPRA.

Both Ben Bella and Ben Khedda saw it as essential to control the liberation army, the ALN. Ben Khedda, fearing that Houari Boumedienne of the General Staff was disloyal, released him from his duties. Boumedienne refused to obey this order, and allied with Ben Bella, bringing with him both divisions of the ALN (from Tunisia and Morocco), amounting to 45,000 troops. Losing support from the national army, Ben Khedda sought alliances among the so-called *wilayat*, the regional armies that were quasi-autonomous throughout the independence war. His strongest alliance was in *wilaya* III, the Kabylie, and the Tizi Ouzou (the major city of the Kabyle) group made up of Berbers. Berber leaders (who were more closely tied to

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Among our sources, there was no consistent spelling of Algerian names. Even in quotation, we retain a consistent spelling of all names, mostly using Metz (1993) as the standard.

the French), despite being well represented in FLN structure, expressed dissatisfaction with their assigned role in Ben Bella's Political Bureau, as they received only one marginal seat. Ben Khedda was also able to get the support of *wilaya* IV (Algiers) under the control of Colonel Youssef Khatib and *wilaya* II (Constantine) under Col. Saout al-Arab. In response, Ben Bella quickly brought the remaining three *wilaya* warlords to his side.

In July, personal as well as sub-regional rivalries split *wilaya* II into warring factions, and Ben Bella was able to stem the violence by putting control of the *wilaya* under one of his allies. But Mohammed Khider, one of the historic chiefs and a member of Ben Bella's Political Bureau, organized a rump leadership group in the area of the capital, forcing Ben Khedda's ministers to flee the capital. However, the forces led by Col. Khatib confronted the ALN in an anarchic chaos, in which 2,000 people were killed. Many Algerians used the resulting chaos to settle old scores, as members of the FLN were able to secure revenge against the pro-French Muslims (known as the *harkis*) who had fought against them.<sup>2</sup>

There is hardly consensus in Algerian historiography on how to represent these events. A government brochure of 1965 called Algeria on the Move, prepared for the Afro-Asian Conference avoided giving any categorization of the events. It read "July 1962 was a black month in Algeria. Not enough doctors for the mutilated victims of the last bombs... The departing French officials had left nothing but emptiness... There would be no bread, perhaps no water... Alarming rumors spread through the back streets" (Ottaways 1970, 9). Monneret (2000, 286) in his impressive documentary of the period entitled the section minutely describing the events as "the summer crisis" of 1962. The Ottaways (1970, 92, 177) in their comprehensive account describe it alternatively as the "summer civil war," the "summer struggle," and at one time as the "civil war in 1962." Quandt (1969, 171) does not refer to the events as a civil war, but his authoritative account makes clear that by our definition, post-independence Algeria experienced a civil war. He writes, "Open fighting between the troops of *wilayas* 3 and 4 and the forces of the *Etat Major* broke out during late August and early September, causing several thousand casualties."

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<sup>2</sup> . This skeletal account is based on Humbaraci (1966, chap. 4); Stone (1997, pp. 37-47); Jackson (1977, 66-72); Quandt (1969, 168-71); the Ottaways (1970, 20-23); and Zartman (1970, 232-35).

Given that it was a civil war (at least by our criteria), we now ask what were the mechanisms linking the propitious conditions for civil war in 1962 to its actual outbreak? One might have expected that Algeria would be the exception, for historical reasons. Algeria's War of Independence (1954-62) was both prolonged and deadly. Although often fratricidal, analysts point out, as is the case more generally for wars of independence, "it ultimately united Algerians and seared the value of independence and the philosophy of anticolonialism into the national consciousness" (Metz 1993, chap. 1). If this is the case, it needs to be asked why civil war broke out in independence's wake.

Going back further, Algerian historiography records a genuine nationalist figure around whose image all Algerians could unite. This is Abd al Qadir, who fought battles across Algeria against French forces seeking to pacify the country. His forces were defeated in 1836, but when the French broke the treaty that had ended hostilities, he rebooted his holy war. He failed, but took refuge in Morocco and used his friendship with the sultan to conduct raids into Algeria. He was again defeated and promised safe conduct in Palestine, and he agreed to those terms. But he was tricked and incarcerated in a French prison. Napoleon III took compassion and freed him, and Abd al Qadir resettled in Damascus, where he intervened during an Ottoman massacre of civilians to save the lives of some 12,000 Christians, including the French consul. For that he received the Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honor. He turned not to politics but became an ascetic, gripped by his religious studies, and died quietly in Damascus in 1883. Few countries have such grist for the mythmaking mill, to feed the name of national unity. Yet any hope for unity in Algeria collapsed on the eve of independence.

One explanation for post-independence insurgency is that in Algeria, insurgency is part of what social movement theory calls its "repertoire of contention" (Tarrow 1998). In our model, as in many models of contentious politics, having a past episode of some form of contentious politics is a good predictor that it will recur. Our dataset begins in 1945 and misses pre World War II episodes. Moreover, until 1962, violence in Algeria is coded as civil war in France. But a perusal of Algerian history would clearly support the view that past violent episodes predict future ones. In the course of French colonization of Algeria, uprisings were endemic. In 1832, two years after French conquest, Muhyi ad Din, a leader in a religious brotherhood who had been jailed in Ottoman jails for his political opposition, launched attacks against the French and their allies at Oran in 1832. In the same year, tribal

elders chose Muhyi ad Din's son, twenty-five-year-old Abd al Qadir who immediately began his storied rebellion ending in 1847. Twenty-four years later in 1871, a revolt originated in the Kabyle region, when the French ceded local authority to the European settlers, called *colons*. These colons, amid a food shortage, repudiated guarantees to local chiefs that seeds would be re-supplied, and this incited a rebellion. Other Berber uprisings occurred in 1876, 1882 and 1879. And Algerian expatriates began organizing revolutionary cells in France in the early 1930s.<sup>3</sup>

In the period covered by our dataset, the first Algerian uprising was set off on V-E (Victory in Europe) Day, 1945, when French police shot at nationalist demonstrators. The marchers retaliated and killed over 100 colons and the violence quickly spread into the countryside. In what the French called *ratissage* (raking-over), French authorities killed more than 1,500 Algerians and arrested more than 5,400. Nine years later, with crucial external support from Egypt, the war for independence began, at the cost of as many as 300,000 Algerian dead (Metz 1993 “Introduction”). A string of civil wars in the past 90 years (as part of France) made insurgency in newly independent Algeria a well-understood and cognitively available part of Algerians’ repertoire of contention. Despite this plausible interpretation, the data do not support the view that colonial wars presage post-independence wars, as part of repertoires of contention.

A second plausible account for Algeria’s descent into immediate post-independence civil war is that its independence, although it took place in 1962, had all the appearance of the unruly dispensation of colonies that took place after World War II. France was defeated in World War II. Yet all too soon its army was called upon to retain Vietnam and then Algeria. The unsuccessful management of the war in Algeria was a principal cause of the fall of the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic; and a putsch by Algerian army officers in 1960 nearly destroyed the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic. France had neither the means nor the will to provide assurance to the regime to which it transferred power. De Gaulle played a dangerous game. He signed the Treaty of Evian with Ben Khedda. Yet he secretly supported Ben Khedda’s rival, Ben Bella, who had been a sergeant in the French army, and it was rumored at the time that he was once decorated personally by De Gaulle. The French presence in Algeria disappeared quickly, along with the fleeing and angry colons. As described

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<sup>3</sup> . On the NafStar of Messali Hajj, initiated when things were quiet in Algeria itself, see Zartman (1975). See also Netcyclo [<http://www.netcyclo.com/places/polit/nations/algeria/ag-his04.htm>] downloaded April 6, 2006.

by the Ottaways (1970, 10), “the last months of “Algérie Française” had the Organisation de l’Armée Secrète (OAS) race through the streets of the major cities gunning down innocent Moslems. Two days after independence a Moslem demonstration in Oran touched off a gun battle that killed ninety-five. The OAS targeted hospitals, schools, power plants and burned the University of Algiers library. But they failed in their primary goal -- to induce a massacre of French civilians that would have called in the French army.” France in regard to Algeria in June 1962 was like UK in regard to India and the Palestinian Mandate in the post-World War II decolonization era -- get out quickly before the blood of the transition stains your own hands.

French authorities were escaping a nasty war, and were not in a position to authoritatively pass power to one faction over another. A weak metropole relative to the large forces mobilized by the National Liberation Front on Algeria was clearly unable to commit to the leadership to which it transferred power. In fact, relative weakness of the metropole emboldens challengers to seek power. (See the discussion of Burkina Faso. There, a much stronger France relative to any opposition force in the colony could assure a more orderly transfer of power). Indeed, in Monneret’s judgment (2000, chap. 14) the violence in summer 1962 can be attributed to French President Charles de Gaulle, who ordered after self-determination was granted “if the people massacre themselves it will be the business of the new authorities.”

Sure the French abandoned responsibility. But how and why did the FLN lose control over the transition? Fractionalization within a highly divided independence movement, which played out in an ugly moment when each sought to grab power, is a dominant theme in Algerian historiography. The Ottaways and Quandt use factionalization as their leitmotif, explaining the summer struggles of 1962 -- as well as the rebellion in 1963-64 and the coup in 1965 -- to factional splits in a multi-dimensionalized divided FLN. The FLN, they point out, was never dominated by a single figure. In the 1930s, Messali Hadj created the Parti du Peuple Algérien (PPA); shortly thereafter Ferhad Abbas organized the Union Populaire Algérienne (UPA), which called for the integration of Algeria into France with equal rights. These parties were banned and were resurrected under different names, but both of these leaders contended for leadership in the FLN. A breakaway faction of Messali Hadj’s Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques (MTLD), called itself the FLN. Abbas joined, but Messali

Hadj refused and his Mouvement National Algérien waged as much war against the FLN as it did against the French. The FLN, reacting to Messali Hadj's dictatorial rule, organized a form of collective leadership while paying due respect to Algeria's "historic nine" leaders, who maintained their revolutionary purity due to their long-term imprisonment. In 1956 the top FLN leaders in the Soummam Valley in Algeria created a Conseil National de la Révolution (CNRA), first with 34 members but later went up to 72, and was referred to in documents as "the supreme body of the FLN". It was headed by a five man Committee of Coordination and Execution (CCE). The solution of collective leadership consecrated the principle of collegiality, but led to personal rivalries and factional disputes as a constant in FLN affairs.

The decentralization of the FLN required provisional pacts of solidarity that rarely held. In September 1958, in response to De Gaulle's offer of equality of political rights to Moslem Algerians, the FLN replaced the CCE and created a Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne (GPRA) in Tunis as a solidarity pact against any agreement less than independence. Abbas was first president, but in August 1961 he and his moderate allies were ousted from the GPRA and Ben Khedda became president. However, the seed of the national army (ALN) in Tunisia was independent of the GPRA. Both the General Staff of the ALN and the GPRA were cut off from the war theatre by the barbed wire and mines the French built in 1957 along Algeria's borders with Morocco and Tunisia. Thus the *wilayas* were isolated from the General Staff. Their warlords had autonomy, and took the brunt of the killings. They were disdainful of the "outside army". By 1962, there were perhaps only 6,000 *wilaya* forces remaining. Factional fighting was rampant in the last years of the war. ALN officers attempted a coup against the GPRA; and *wilaya* commanders were said to have been killed by other *wilaya* leaders and not by the French.

All factional leaders met in May 1962 in Tripoli as the CNRA. The GPRA was castigated as impure, for not attacking the feudalism remaining in the Maghreb. Its "Tripoli Program" was unanimously accepted, but the leaders could reach no agreement on the composition of the Political Bureau. CNRA president Ben Khedda, not included in Ben Bella's list of the Political Bureau, stormed out of the meeting with a minority group. At the Tripoli meeting, commanders of *wilaya* 5 (Oran), *wilaya* 1 (Aurès Mountains), and *wilaya* 6 (Sahara) supported Ben Bella's "Tlemcen" faction, with close links to the ALN stationed in Morocco. Meanwhile *wilayas* 2 (North Constantine), 3 (Kabylia), and 4 (Algiers) lined up with the

opposition “Tizi Ouzou” -- the largest city in the Kabyle -- faction. The closer to the frontiers, the Ottaways observed, the better the contacts with the external army (ALN) of Col Houari Boumedienne (Ottaways 1970, 13-21).

Quandt’s work (1969, 11-22, 69, 167) equally focuses on elite fractionalization as the source of Algeria’s instability. He saw his study as a disconfirmation of a widely held thesis that revolution works to unite a revolutionary elite. In fact, he shows, in Algeria “intraelite conflict has dominated internal politics during the entire period from 1954... There has been a constant turnover in top political leadership, and political careers are made and unmade with great rapidity.” There were no stable alliances within the political elite, and no one in the elite represented in any substantive way the powerful groups in society – thus incumbency was based primarily on deals within the political elite that were usually short-lived.

In 1962, Quandt reports, the FLN contained at least ten relatively independent centers of authority: six *wilayas*, the forces of the Etat Major of the ALN in Morocco and Tunisia, the GPRA (recognized internationally as the legal representative of the FLN), the FFFLN (The French federation of the FLN which was the financial source of the revolution), and the “historic leaders”. Reconciling these forces was too difficult a task in a couple of months.

But the FLN was divided not only into factions, but into generations as well. To demonstrate this, Quandt compiled biographies of the top 87 leaders and 273 secondary leaders of the FLN, with attention to their political socialization (family, school, occupation, and political faction). From these data, he identified four separate strands: (a) Liberal Politicians – the first generation of nationalists who were moderates and sought to act within the legitimate confines of the French parliamentary system; (b) Radical Politicians – they got their first experience in the colonial period, but were active politically in the GPRA; (c) Revolutionaries – these broke with the political process in 1954 and assumed military roles within the revolution; (d) Military – these rose to influence within the ALN. Within the military there were two separate strands: those mostly organized in Tunisia and Morocco as part of well-organized armies; and those who fought a guerilla war within Algeria, the *maquisards*; and (e) Intellectuals – skilled and educated elites brought into the political class in the final years of the revolution, and were brought into high bureaucratic positions. It was these

five groups – not connected to any social base – that fought it out among themselves in post-independence Algeria.

With the FLN's acquisition of power, there were incompatible demands for a large number of contenders for top positions in government. Given the rivalries, winners in this struggle promoted men from the secondary elite from a younger generation, which in the Algerian case were people of greater cosmopolitanism, who pushed for an even more rapid change in leadership.

Why were these interfactional and intergenerational rivalries so irreconcilable? Quandt provides a new answer: viz., that it was the revolutionary process, one that socialized new cadres at different moments, and each generation reacted to the failures of the previous generation, and this reinforced deep differences. A discontinuous development of the opposition to French rule meant that there was no on-going political process that established rules of the political game. As long as the war was going on, these problems were latent, and no means were developed to resolve them.

But the question remains open as to why the many fractionalizations of the FLN could not have been negotiated in a power sharing agreement? Our theoretical answer to this question is to focus on the *commitment problem* faced by the occupants of the presidential office in newly independent states to respect the rights and deliver a fair share of the goods to out of power factions. There are two possible groups whose leaders may have been impelled to challenge the new leadership in fear that if they failed to do so immediately, the opportunity would dissipate once the Ben Bella junta controlled the reigns of state power. The first is the Berber population; and the second are the *wilaya* commanders. We will now look at both of these groups in order. But because the region of the Kabyle is implicated in both of these stories, they are not completely independent of one another.

Let us begin with the Berbers. Berber converts to Islam from the time of the initial invasion of the Arabs in the 7<sup>th</sup> century were treated as inferior and many were enslaved. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, many Berbers flocked to a religious sect built on egalitarian principles (the Kharijites) and was at the time at war with the Umayyad caliphs. The Berbers never quite assimilated to Arab cultural hegemony. Centuries later, the Berbers were more-or-less protected from the Arabs under French rule, and did relatively well in the colonial period. It was clear that the Arabs would control the independence

government. Ben Bella's inclusion of a Berber lightweight (who had little standing in Berber society) into his five-member Political Bureau was perceived as mere tokenism by the Berbers of Kabyle.

Monneret (2000, 281-2), who in general does not support an Arab/Berber divide as an explanation for the bloody summer provides some material to give this view credence. Ben Bella, once he was freed from prison, by his pro Arab statements (promising in April that he would send 100,000 troops in aid of the PLO), and thereby alienated the Berbers. Ben Bella, he points out, was worried about the Kabyle, and of Krim Belkacem in particular, and feared an alliance between Krim and Boudiaf. He wanted to build a centralized state and worried that the Berbers would want to preserve regional peculiarities. Boudiaf while not a Berber himself, developed hostility toward Ben Bella during the detention in France, and was willing to become a champion of Berber aspirations. As Monneret (2000, 289) summarizes, "The Berbers and their leader Krim Belkacem had no illusions of what would be reserved for them if Ben Bella and the Arabists took power." It was only after the victory over the French that this underlying tension could be revealed.

Berber aspirations were not ephemeral. Berbers at the time of independence had an advantage in French (through their migration patterns and through their colonial collaboration with the French), and thus they were threatened by any suggestion of Arabization. Nearly eighteen years later, Chadli Benjadid's first challenge in his presidency was the "Berber Spring" of 1980, set off when a Kabyle writer was prevented by the police from delivering a lecture on Berber culture. Students of Tizi Ouzou went on strike, leading to a government crackdown. Back to 1962, Berber fear of Arabization and latent aspirations to an imagined Tamazight-speaking autonomous region might help explain not only the activation of *wilaya* III in Kabyle against Ben Bella's forces, but also why Colonel Youssef Khatib, who commanded *wilaya* IV (Algiers), was able to take advantage of Berber discontent and to recruit so successfully among the Berbers of Algiers.

Quandt (1969, 12), however, puts little faith in highlighting the Arab/Kabyle split. He acknowledges that to some extent this cleavage resonates in society. However, he points out that within the elites there was no clear divide on this dimension, and much conflict between members of the same ethnic group. In a later work (1998, 95) he reiterates this view. The Berbers he writes, the only recognizable minority in Algeria, "have had

relatively little problem identifying with the nation, and generally they have been well represented in all the political movements and institutions of the country...there is no separatist movement among Berbers....” Monneret (2000, chap. 15) concurs. As the two opposing camps emerged in spring 1962, he points out, Col. Youssef Khatib, who refused to join either camp, held the balance. He railed against the “cult of personality” with Ben Bella in mind. He had little respect for the historic leaders. But it was a *wilaya* that had both Berbers and Arabs in its ranks. If Berbers feared marginalization in a state ruled by Arabs, why would they have aligned with Khatib in Algiers? It is not as if they were seeking a separate bargain from Ben Khedda, leader of the opposition to Ben Bella. In fact, there is no record of his offering a better deal to Berbers, *qua* Berbers. While there was (and remains) an Arab/Berber cleavage in Algeria, there is little evidence that Berber leaders were seeking in the violence of 1962 a special deal for Berbers to protect them from a future Arabizing state.

The second commitment story, and a more compelling one, pits the forces of the new state army that was moving into Algeria from Tunisia and Morocco against the local guerrilla forces, organized territorially as *wilayas*.

The *wilaya* leaders faced a greater fear, for it was they or the ALN that would have control over the peace. Monneret (2000, 316) reports that in order to crush *wilaya*-ism, Ben Bella on 8 August decreed an end to the territorial principles of the along which the *wilayas* were organized. The Ottaways (1969, 22) note that the *wilaya* leaders opposed to the Political Bureau were especially wary of the plan to convert the ALN into an Armée Nationale Populaire. Such a move they suggest would have incorporated the *wilaya* forces into this army, and taken them out of politics. On September 28<sup>th</sup>, after the GPRA approved the Ben Bella Cabinet, Si Larbi (a *wilaya* leader who supported Ben Bella) had still not given up his control over Constantine, and guerilla bands were roaming the country. As the Ottaways describe it, the problem was in integrating the *wilayas* into the system without letting them get the political power they thought they deserved. Ben Bella never succeeded at that, they argue, and he thus remained somewhat distanced from local political power.

What links the Berber and the *wilaya* support for an anti-Ben Bella insurgency is the topography of the Kabyle that favored an insurgency. Kabyle villages (as described in Metz), “built on the crests of hills, are close-knit, independent, social and political units composed of a number of

extended patrilineal kin groups. Traditionally, local government consisted of a village council [the *jamaa*], which included all adult males and legislated according to local custom and law. Efforts to modify this democratic system were only partially successful, and the *jamaa* has continued to function alongside the civil administration. Set apart by their habitat, language, and well-organized village and social life, [Kabyle villages] have a highly developed sense of independence and group solidarity.” Moreover, living at the edge of mountains, they had the strategic advantage of rough terrain, making their insurgents hard to find. That the Kabyle was the home of both the Berbers and the *wilaya* leaders most strongly valuing local autonomy against a centralizing national army suggests that an interaction of a history of local autonomy along with geographical favorable conditions can turn commitment problems into insurgencies. While insurgents in the Kabyle played somewhat to the Berber aspirations, these insurgents were too mixed culturally to identify their opposition in cultural terms. However, the real threat they faced was of state incorporation of those guerrilla fighters most strongly identified with on-the-ground revolution. A commitment logic clearly motivated *wilaya* leaders furthest from Algeria’s frontiers -- and therefore furthest from the influence of the Etat Major -- to challenge militarily Ben Bella’s claim to centralized rule before he could actualize that authority.<sup>4</sup>

Although this civil war occurred when our model predicts a war driven by the commitment logic, and it is “on the regression line”, the theoretical mechanisms of our model were not fully decisive. To be sure, the Ben Bella leadership faced a commitment problem in regard to the Berbers, and a stronger one in regard to the *wilaya* commanders. This supports our view that for new states, commitment problems enhance the probability of civil war before the new state can get its organizational bearings. But the summer struggle in Algeria of 1962 looks not unlike cases of *coups d’état*, where urban violence follows from a period of contested rule. This case was one of palace politics that spilled over into urban Algiers as the troops of one contestant refused to lay down arms when their own leader sued for peace. The failure to control his own forces by the coup aspirant (Ben Khedda), and the inability of France to make an orderly retreat (having already lost a war

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<sup>4</sup> . The *wilaya* leaders were probably correct that 1962 was their last good chance. Five years later President Boumediene, who had come to power in a coup in 1965, faced a coup attempt led by Col. Tahar Zbiri, who organized remnants of the *wilaya* guerrilla leaders. It failed against what was by then a powerful state army (Quandt 1998, 24).

to the NLF, it could not play a neocolonial role) -- in conjunction with the commitment problem -- helped to send some 2,000 Algerians to their deaths.

### The Thirty-Year Peace

The thirty-year peace was hardly peaceful -- it is just that no political violence attained 1,000 deaths to be counted as a civil war by our criteria. Most of the period could be seen as attempts by the political leadership to enhance its power and to subdue opposition. Our model predicts, given that there were no constitutional changes and unambiguous autocracy, that there was only an above average probability of civil war. In fact, the country teetered on civil war, but avoided it.

Ben Bella, once the 1962 insurgency was squashed, controlled a majority in the National Assembly.<sup>5</sup> But an opposition bloc, led by another of the historic chiefs, Ait Ahmed, soon emerged. Ait Ahmed quit the National Assembly in protest against Ben Bella's dictatorial tendencies such that the legislature could only rubber-stamp presidential directives. He formed a clandestine revolutionary movement in the Kabyle -- the Front of Socialist Forces (Front des Forces Socialistes--FFS). Ben Bella sent regular army troops into the Kabyle in 1963 to squash these rebels.

Ait Ahmed was not the only active regime opponent. There were many others, all working outside the legal political institutions. These included the communists, who were excluded from the FLN and therefore from any direct political role, had allies in the post-independence press. Also active was Mohamed Boudiaf's left-wing Socialist Revolution Party (Parti de la Révolution Socialiste--PRS). Ben Bella banned the activities of all these opposition groups and arrested Boudiaf. When opposition from the General Union of Algerian Workers (Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens--UGTA) strengthened, the trade union organization was forcibly subsumed under FLN control.

Serious fighting broke out in 1963 in the Kabyle as well as in southern Sahara. The National Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (Comité National pour la Défense de la Révolution-- CNDR), joining the remnants of Ait Ahmed's FFS and Boudiaf's PRS with several surviving *wilaya* military

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<sup>5</sup> . The following paragraphs are a summary from Netcyclo  
[<http://www.netcyclo.com/places/polit/nations/algeria/ag-his04.htm>] downloaded April 6, 2006.

leaders, organized the insurgency. Two of Ben Bella's allies who helped bring him to power in 1962 now turned against him, largely because Ben Bella began negotiating with insurgents against the wishes of the national army, whose officers believed they had crushed the rebellion. Without being defeated, many of the insurgents hid in the Sahara. But there were insufficient deaths to meet our criterion for a civil war. As minister of defense, Boumediene ordered Algeria's well-equipped army to crush regional uprisings. However, when Ben Bella attempted to co-opt allies from among some of the same *wilayat* commanders whom the army had been called out to suppress, tensions increased between Boumediene and Ben Bella.

In June 1965, on the eve of the Afro-Asian conference, shortly after Ben Bella had tried a second attempt to oust Boumediene from control over the ALN, Boumediene's army arrested Ben Bella in his bed. There was no resistance because Ben Bella's inner circle created to protect him from a coup had joined the plot. In fact Tahar Zbiri, whom Ben Bella had tried to use to supplant Boumediene, was the one who arrested Ben Bella. Only one of Ben Bella's key allies put up a struggle. The next day people went to work without knowing of the coup, but when it was announced, it caused little stir. The communists organized demonstrations against the coup, but they were rapidly dispersed by army troops. In Annaba and Oran demonstrations drew large crowds, and perhaps fifty were killed at the hands of the army (Ottaway 1969, 185-9). This was a coup but not a civil war.

Boumediene quickly established a no-nonsense autocracy. He dissolved the National Assembly, suspended the 1963 constitution, disbanded the militia, and abolished the Political Bureau, which he considered an instrument of Ben Bella's personal rule. Political power would now reside in the Revolutionary Council that sought to broker a new deal between the army and the party. The Council's original twenty-six members included former Political Bureau members and senior officers of the Armée Nationale Populaire (ANP--People's National Army). Boumediene's largely civilian Council of Ministers (or cabinet) ran the government. The cabinet was inclusive, representing a broad range of Algerian political and institutional life, including religious leaders. Boumediene beefed up the Sécurité Militaire, a secret police force that assiduously enforced the banning of any political organization operating independently of the FLN. This security force has gotten credit for the assassinations of two leading

independence figures (Mohammed Khider and Belkacem Krim) while they were living in Europe.

Boumediene died in 1978, but his system of rule persisted under Chadli Bendjedid for nearly a decade. In 1965, when Boumediene came to power, Algeria's autocracy score went from 8 to 9 (its democracy score remained at nil), and that score held steady through 1987.

However authoritarian, Algeria through the 1980s was apparently on the brink of civil war. Boumediene had to counter several coup attempts and a failed assassination attempt in 1967-68. Each time he exiled or imprisoned his opponents and further consolidated his autocratic rule. In 1980, after Arabization policies were decreed, Berber students (who saw their own social mobility to be based largely on French education) launched a general strike. Protests were organized and there were several deaths as a result. The government agreed to support teaching in Berber languages, and this helped quiet those protests.

But protests over religion became far more incendiary. By the late 1970s the Islamists mobilized.<sup>6</sup> They engaged in fundamentalist policing of society in their initial years of activity, but in 1982 they called for the abrogation of the National Charter and the formation of an Islamic government. Violent incidents were rife campuses. After Islamicists had killed a student, police arrested 400 of their supporters. In protest, some 100,000 demonstrators congregated for Friday prayers at the university mosque. Eventually, the arrests of hundreds more activists, including prominent leaders of the movement, Shaykh Abdelatif Sultani and Shaykh Ahmed Sahnoun, deflated the mobilization for a few years.

However, the regime now viewed these Islamicists as a genuine threat to stability. Cooptation followed the coercion. In 1984, the government opened one of the largest Islamic universities in the world in Constantine. In the same year, again coopting Islamists, the government changed family status law in accord with fundamentalist doctrines.

Our model performs well for this era of authoritarian rule. Algeria had an above average likelihood of a successful insurgency, and it seemed

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<sup>6</sup> . This and the next paragraph draw from Netcyclo  
[<http://www.netcyclo.com/places/polit/nations/algeria/ag-his04.htm>] downloaded April 6, 2006.

always to be on the brink of one. What saved the regime from successful challenge was political unity at the center (maintaining authoritarian structures) and resisting calls to democracy (which would have brought “instability”). Its military -- given its long war against the French -- was much stronger than would be predicted by its GDP, and therefore, as long as it was united, it posed a powerful counterforce to any potential insurgency. No special explanation is therefore needed for the outcome in this period.

### **Instability, Anocracy and Civil War**

As would be predicted by our model, insurgency followed a period of economic decline, anocracy, and political instability. The economic situation was from a long-term point of view perilous (Quandt 1998, 23-6, 120). Boumediene’s policies -- the political allocation of free housing, and as a consequence no investment in new housing; free services in the cities leading to mass urbanization; collectivization of French agricultural properties with below market state prices, making for regular food shortages -- kept the population quiescent but with a false sense of security. Oil subsidized these gross inefficiencies, and there was no apparent need for taxation. However, Algeria was getting only about \$350/capita each year in oil revenues (Saudi Arabia, with its greater reserves and lower population, was getting about \$5000/capita). Boumediene’s economic policies therefore left little margin for safety.

The drop in world oil prices in 1986 (when GDP reached its height) aggravated Algeria’s already depressed economic situation.<sup>7</sup> Oil and natural gas, despite attempts to generate wider investments, remained the major sources of Algeria’s national income. High unemployment, particularly among younger males in the cities -- about 70 percent of Algerians were under thirty years old, and 44 percent of the total population was under the age of fifteen -- was a worrisome problem for the regime.

Because of France’s changing immigration policies, unemployed youth did not have an easy exit option.<sup>8</sup> The resulting social unrest stemmed

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<sup>7</sup> . This and the subsequent paragraph relies on Metz (1993).

<sup>8</sup> . In 1968 the Algerian and French governments set a quota on migrants of 35,000 per year, which was reduced to 25,000 in 1971. In the aftermath of the oil embargo of 1973, France enforced migration control more vigorously. (Metz 1993, “Migration”). Martin (2000) points to the changed policies during the *cohabitation* régime (1986-88). Not only was there a “drastic reduction in the delivery of entry visas in France,” but also there were “multiplication of administrative obstacles and extreme bureaucratization of the visa issuance process [as well as] forced expulsion on charter planes of ‘illegal’ immigrants...” As

from the discontent of those youths who were either un- or underemployed and unable to enter the French labor pool.

The unrest culminated in a new wave of protests, cresting in October 1988, when students and workers in Algiers jointly participated in riots that destroyed government and FLN property. The government, watching the spread of these mobilizations, declared a state of emergency and called in security forces to restore order. Estimates reckon that in what came to be called “Black October”, more than 500 people were killed and more than 3,500 arrested, engendering popular outrage. A panoply of unsanctioned independent organizations of lawyers, students, journalists, and physicians sprang up to demand justice and change. Meanwhile, Islamicists grabbed power in several localities.

In response, Benjedid fired many senior officials and promised political reform. He ushered in a new constitution in 1989 that allowed for the creation and participation of competitive political associations, and diminished the political role of military. Once the new constitution was ratified, the Law Relative to Political Associations legalized political parties. More than thirty parties contested the first multiparty local and regional elections that were held in June 1990. Benjedid also instituted the Arabization of education, the building of mosques, and state training of imams, in a “kind of state-controlled Islam” (Quandt 1998, 28). Thus was opened the era of instability and anocracy.

“Try as they might to impose official Islam in the mosques,” Quandt (1998, 49-50) reports, “the regime could not keep control.” Earlier, in 1982, a form of militant Islam, rejecting an earlier version of the government’s “official Islam”, emerged on university campuses. Mustafa Bouyali (whose brother had been killed by the police) created the Algerian Islamic Movement in 1982 in the countryside, forming maquis, inflicting small damage. Bouyali was killed in 1987. Now, with the mass protests of October 1988, pictures show that the dress *du jour* was of the muhajidiin fighting the Russians in Afghanistan (Quandt 1998, 37-41).

Ali Ben Hadj (a young militant and charismatic speaker in the mosques) and Abbassi Madani (an elder, and more respectable type) were

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European countries follow suit (in the 2000’s) in forestalling the free movement of labor, they may well be creating the conditions for refugee flows that their policies were designed to stop!

co-leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) when it was approved in 1989. They were able to grow a movement through preaching in mosques. The FIS associated with small armed militias that from 1990 were in skirmishes with the regime. If Ben Hadj and Madani were denied access to state mosques, they would simply go to one of the popular mosques that were cropping up.” Later in 1991, while the government supported Kuwait after Iraq’s invasion, the FIS picked up the anti-Islam theme popular in the streets against American support for a corrupt sheikhdom.

The FIS won the battle of the street on this issue and was feeling strong. It demanded parliamentary elections. Chadli agreed to their demands and also expanded freedom of expression, association, and congregation. In response to this liberalization, parties proliferated, but the FIS became the focal point for regime opposition. The FIS demonstrated its central oppositional role by defeating the FLN in the June 1990 local and provincial elections, winning in Algiers, Constantine, and Oran, three of Algeria’s leading cities. The Berber party, the Front of Socialist Forces (Front des Forces Socialistes--FFS), and Ben Bella's Movement for Democracy in Algeria (Mouvement pour la Démocratie en Algérie--MDA) and several other small opposition parties, refused to participate.<sup>9</sup> In the subsequent national elections of December 1991, the FIS won even more impressively despite the fact that Abbassi Madani and Ahmed Belhadj, two of its leaders, were in jail. To forestall the second-stage, run-off elections scheduled for mid-January 1992, which the FIS presumably would have won decisively, Minister of Defense General Khaled Nezzar staged a coup d’etat. Martial law was re-imposed, and Benjedid resigned. The new junta named Sid Ahmed Ghazali as acting president and head of the high military council. Ultimately army leaders recalled Mohamed Boudiaf, then in a self-imposed exile in Morocco, to serve as head of state.

Re-imposition of authoritarian rule followed. The authorities banned the FIS (using the high court to claim that the constitution prohibited political parties based on religion, race, or regional identity) in early March and dissolved the communal and municipal assemblies in an attempt to weaken the street demonstrations. Boudiaf’s government then systematically repressed known Islamicists, upholding laws demanding that beards be

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<sup>9</sup> . On Ben Bella’s political activities in his 80s, see Al-Ahram Weekly On-line, “Ahmed Ben Bella: Plus ça change”, 10 - 16 May 2001, Issue No. 533 [<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/533/profile.htm>]

shaved off, and humiliating and even torturing urban activists suspected of Islamicist sympathies.

Surely the army must have known they were courting an insurgency. Perhaps the military could have allowed the FIS to rule thereby ruling out by definition the possibility of an FIS-led civil war. But, according to Quandt (1998, 61) they feared an alliance of Chadli and FIS against the military. Indeed, the FIS leadership “threatened to eliminate the top generals when it came to power.” The military saw its role as the protector of the FLN goals of secularism and modernity. An alliance between the FIS and Chadli would not only have marginalized the army from the political process for the first time in Algeria’s history, but it would also have compromised, from the senior military staff’s point of view, the revolution’s core goals.

The army was at first moderately successful. The radicals’ promised revolution (if the elections were cancelled) did not come. There was no spontaneous uprising. People who were willing to vote for the FIS were not willing to risk their lives for it. The generation that had experienced the war against France, especially those that became well-to-do, was opposed to their children taking up Islamicist ideas and joining in with FIS activists. These parents said that the proposed war against the military was a cover for settling old scores from previous violent episodes, and would be uglier than their own war against the French.<sup>10</sup> Thus there was a tacit acceptance by the population of the cancellation of the election. Moreover, the military moved with brutal clarity. Many Islamists were arrested and tried by military courts, receiving severe sentences. In 1992 about 10,000 Algerians were sent to prison camps in the Sahara. A senior military officer even reported to Le Monde, “At the beginning, we thought we could win” (Martinez 2000, 58-63).

But after this initial period of calm, a low-level insurgency began. The military government's repression of the FIS brought sharp responses from other political parties. The FLN and the FFS expressed support for the FIS in solidarity to restore democracy. Furthermore, the repression radicalized some elements in the FIS and in the military. In this violent environment, Boudiaf was assassinated in June 1992. Terrorist attacks on civilians as well

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<sup>10</sup> . Indeed, Quandt (1998, 99) gives an example. In one terrible episode during FLN rule, the inhabitants of Melouza were all massacred by FLN forces; years later this village voted largely for the FIS. The GIA successfully recruits from this and similar villages. The 1992 war in many ways is a continuation of a series of blood feuds going back to the war for independence.

as military personnel ensued. Ali Kafi of the military high command succeeded Boudiaf as head of state.

Insurgency was fostered by FIS fractionating. The main body of the FIS was moderate. They were willing to consider reconciliation with the authorities if FIS members who had been imprisoned were set free and the party legalized. The radical faction (the Armed Islamic Group [Groupe Islamique Armé – GIA]), split from the FIS, which it considered too conciliatory. Turning into an urban terrorist group, the GIA began its own insurgency in November 1991. It killed scores of foreigners, especially oil installation personnel. As a show of its ability to defy the government, it kidnapped (and subsequently released) the Omani and Yemeni ambassadors in July 1994.

Meanwhile, the FIS-sponsored Armed Islamic Movement (Mouvement Islamique Armé--MIA) – made up of about 10,000 guerrillas -- later renamed the Islamic Salvation Army (Armée Islamique du Salut--AIS), mobilized a traditional guerrilla insurgency. The AIS concentrated its violence on military bases, abjuring opportunities to attack civilians or foreigners.

The government ordered repression. Curfews designed to counter terrorism, instituted in December 1992, were not lifted until 1994, and martial law continued to apply. The government's counteroffensive against radical Islamist groups succeeded in killing several leaders of the GIA, including the group's head, Mourad Sid Ahmed (known as Djafar al Afghani), in February 1994 and Cherif Gousmi, Djafar al Afghani's successor, in September 1994.

Despite the sharp government response, violence escalated. More than 10,000 (some estimates range as high as 30,000) Algerians were killed between January 1992 and October 1994, and up to 80,000 by the end of the decade. The war, even though largely urban, took on aspects of a classic insurgency.<sup>11</sup> Prospective insurgents were urban youth. Algeria had unemployment at the time of its 1988 riots over 30%, mostly among the young. These youths lived at home, sleeping in shifts, with working members sleeping at night, and they hung out in mosques, having no other

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<sup>11</sup> . While it is true that this urban war had elements of a rural insurgency, it lacked a focal rural base, a major city that insurgents controlled and formed the base of their operations. Without such a rural base, insurgents have no place to hide, and no place to return for rest.

places to go. With the austerity program of 1986, the small payoffs to them by the government ceased, and two years later they were in rebellion on the streets of the leading cities, set off by water shortages in the hot season. These youths are popularly called “Brooms”, who in their capacity for revolt have been called an urbanized peasantry (Pelletiere 1992).

Most fighting was done at night, and fighting units became anonymous urban residents (or occupiers of their siblings’ beds) during the day. Security forces fought at night, and rounded up suspects during the day. One strategy was for security forces to grow beards, disguising as Islamists, in order to extract local information. The café became dangerous as people couldn’t read who informers were. Young men who spent evenings on the beach or in cafés (and who did not have beds at home for them to sleep in at night) were open for recruitment into the armed bands, joining urban guerrilla forces as a form of recreation. But there were other motivations to join in. Guerillas urged conscripted young men to join the bands, threatening death to those who served in the army. Meanwhile the army threatened that young men whose identity papers did not show correct military service were subject to arrest. This led to a wave of murders against young men by both sides. Families hedged their bets to provide brothers with information from both sides. In 1994, with the creation of “liberated areas” in the suburbs of Algiers by the armed bands, the guerilla armies (MIA, GIA, MEI) felt that victory was near. This was an illusion as the districts were “swarming with plain-clothes government agents...military reinforcements were stationed around the Islamist communes...” But still the army was confused as to how the guerrillas continued their operations given the arrests of ex-FIS personnel and the neutralization of most of the armed Islamist groups (Martinez 2000, 76-82).

The GIA decreed “total war” in October 1994, and sought, in maintaining command, to kill the leadership of the FIS, and sought to wipe out the competing guerrilla army, the AIS. People then began to join war machines for protection, not wanting to be “a floating target.” The war became embedded into the local economy, with protection rackets, and the “Emirs” of the militias taking advantage of trade liberalization to jump-start import-export companies (Martinez 2000, 94-112). The war has now dragged on for a decade.

But has this been a civil war? Algerian historiography is not unanimous. Martinez (2000) assumes that it is. But Roberts (2003, 257) -- a

sophisticated on-the-ground analyst of Algerian affairs -- says no. Only Paris called the events of 1992 a civil war. The authorities in Algiers don't (who say a "legitimate state is confronting the illegitimate violence of a terrorist movement"); nor does the opposition (which calls itself a jihad, or as a "legitimate rebellion to persuade the 'sincere' and 'patriotic' elements of the regime to recognise the error of their ways and readmit the banned FIS to the legal political process.")

What then is it? Roberts (2003, 258-9) summarizes his answer. What occurred in Algeria in 1992 and its aftermath was: (a) a thoroughly fragmented set of actors all combined into a "notionally Islamist rebellion" (b) lacking in support of its own ex-FIS electorate, or any other popular base (c) the complete non-involvement of the Algerian population into the conflict, except when dragooned into it; (d) the lack of a clear frontier of battle; and (e) the lack of any political or ideological division despite the so-called Islamic/nationalist interpretations others put on it. What this adds up to is (f) that this is another aspect of the incessant factional struggle within the Algerian power structure itself. Despite the subtlety of Roberts' characterization, since there has been a set of quasi-coordinated insurgents who are all at war with armies of the state, and casualties have gone way beyond the 1,000 threshold, by our definition this violent set of episodes in Algeria since 1992 constitute a civil war. We must now ask, what accounts for its onset?

Since the FIS was a religious mobilization, can the civil war of 1992 be explained by some religious factor? There can be little doubt that Islamic symbols had a powerful emotional impact on the population. In the late 1970s, Muslim activists engaged in isolated and relatively small-scale assertions of fundamentalist principles: harassing women whom they felt were inappropriately dressed, smashing establishments that served alcohol, and evicting official imams from their mosques. As already alluded to, the Islamists escalated their actions in 1982, provoking violence. Islamists were also able to mobilize large numbers of supporters successfully to demand of the government the abrogation of rights given to women in the colonial period. And of course, the Islamist political party shocked and awed the military authorities in their impressive first round electoral victory in

December 1991 (Metz 1993, Chadli Bendjedid and Afterward).  
Fundamentalism was popular!<sup>12</sup>

However, the FIS hardly represented a deep ideological cleavage to the FLN. Going back to the colonial era, the French denied citizenship to Muslims in the 1870 Cremieux Decree. Algerian nationalism was consequently always “Islamic” in sentiment. The FLN was never considered, as many in the army command considered themselves, secular and perhaps even anti-Islam. Some FLN leaders such as Ben Badis were Islamists. The FIS did not represent a deep cultural cleavage in Algeria. In fact, there is a popular pun among Algerians, “le FIS est le fils du FLN” (Quandt 1998, 96-7). The trump in the FIS hand was not its religious devotion or its sole identification with Islam.

Furthermore, our cross-sectional data show no significant relationships linking a particular religious faith to insurgency. And a careful examination of the FIS reveals little about Islam as the source for the Algerian rebellion. For one, the clerics followed the urban proletariat into war rather than led them. There is evidence that in fact the clerics sought in the late 1980s to calm the riots in the streets instigated by the unemployed youth (Pelletiere 1992, 6). The case is similar after the onset of war, when the armies of principle lost out to the armies divorced from Islamic principles. The AIS and MIA focused on the injustices of the canceled election and focused on the practical meaning of *jihad*. But the GIA, incorporating armed urban bands and ignoring Islamic ideology altogether, was able to take strategic control of the insurgency. To be sure, the GIA relies on fundamentalist ideology in order to finance the war through the “Islamic rent” paid by Middle East states (Martinez 2000, 198-206, 240). But in Algeria, it is the tactics of insurgency rather than the principles of Islamic revival that have turned religious protest into large-scale civil war.

Perhaps it was not Islamic fundamentalism, but rather state strategies in regard to religion that played a vital role in driving the insurgency? “After independence,” as summarized in [Wikipedia](#), “the Algerian government asserted state control over religious activities for purposes of national consolidation and political control. Islam became the religion of the state in the new constitution and the religion of its leaders. No laws could be enacted

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<sup>12</sup> . In a personal communication, I. William Zartman emphasizes that FIS was a protest movement against governmental failures, but hardly an organization with a mass following. And when the terrorist tactics began, it lost much of its popularity among the urban middle classes.

that would be contrary to Islamic tenets or that would in any way undermine Islamic beliefs and principles. The state monopolized the building of mosques, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs controlled an estimated 5,000 public mosques by the mid-1980s. Imams were trained, appointed, and paid by the state, and the Friday *khutba*, or sermon, was issued to them by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. That ministry also administered religious property, provided for religious education and training in schools, and created special institutes for Islamic learning.”<sup>13</sup>

What is the implication of state control over religion? Our data show that religious discrimination or grievance cannot distinguish countries that have experienced civil wars from those that haven't. But the data also show that governments that monitor and control the administration of religious practice in their country, as did the FLN government, are somewhat more likely to experience civil war. In 1969, for example, 59 governments monitored religious organization in their countries; and 35 of these countries (59%) have had civil wars in the past half century; meanwhile only 43% of the entire sample of cases (70/161) have had a civil war. Under conditions of state monitoring, religious protest necessarily becomes protest against the state, with far greater ramifications.

How did this happen? In Algeria, as early as 1964 a militant Islamic movement, called Al Qiyam (values), emerged. Al Qiyam's leaders decried Western values and called for a more dominant role for Islam in Algeria's legal and political systems. They were suppressed by the FLN government. Militant Islamism reappeared, however, in the 1970s, but with a new organization. The movement began spreading to university campuses, and it became useful to the FLN as a counterbalance to left-wing student movements. By the 1980s, the Islamicists gained strength, as the official state mosques that had sermons delivered to them from the Ministry of Religious Affairs were rapidly being overwhelmed by private mosques that were not under state control. Algerian law allowed mosques to be free from state control while under construction; so many stayed nearly finished for years and operated freely. The Ministry reported that 60% of prayer leaders at mosques were not professionally fit, yet they continued to practice outside of state control. The FIS in the late 1980s had 9,000 mosques in its network, almost double the number of official state mosques. The state tried to

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<sup>13</sup> . “Islam in Algeria” [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Algeria) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\_in\_Algeria], downloaded April 10, 2006.

regulate these mosques, leading to arrests and violence (Mecham 2006). Violence due to Islamicist mobilization was reported at the Ben Aknoun campus of the University of Algiers in November 1982, leading the state to crack down on the movement. Confrontations of this sort intensified in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The point here is that in the act of authorizing religious organizations and leaders, the state is subjecting itself to a war of position on the religious front, one that it may not be able to control.

Moreover, religious parties in many places of the world have the capacity to offer state services, and become state-like in organizational behavior. When the state controls religion, it perhaps inadvertently aids in this capacity, by authorizing an organizational structure that it can control. This dynamic appears to have operated in Algeria. The FIS in the 1980s mobilized the Algerian urban populations through performing many normal state welfare functions. It capitalized on its organizational strengths after the 1989 earthquake by taking on state-like welfare and education functions. Their social service programs helped promote their religious program in the popular imaginings. Surely as well, these programs constituted a threat in the eyes state authorities.

In sum, rather than some deep religious message of FIS that articulated with the religious sentiments of the people, it was the situation in which the state, by seeking to co-opt religious opposition, that gave that opposition a visible stage to articulate a clear anti-regime message. State sponsorship of religion backfired grievously.

State monitoring of religious elites cannot be the whole answer to the question of how the FIS was able to effectuate a successful insurgency. As Martinez points out, Tunisia did not fall after its government's refusal to recognize the Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique. Nor, he points out, did Syria's after the repression against the Muslim Brotherhood in 1982. Martinez then articulates a theory consistent with the "repertoires of contention" discussed in conjunction with the post-independence period. The answer, he writes, is in the "war-oriented *imaginaire* common to the warring parties in Algeria, making violence a method of accumulation of wealth and prestige." Thus, he continues, "The 'Emirs' – the leaders of the armed Islamic groups – prefer to define themselves...in relation to certain historical models that have achieved distinction...by social advancement through war." The models to which Martinez refers were the corsair in Ottoman times, the Caïd (native official) in the French period, and the Colonel during

the period of the FLN against the French. “This process of advancement,” he concludes, “placed violence in a ‘cultural code of social improvement’ where the dominant figure is that of the political bandit” (Martinez 2000, 7-10). As we noted in our discussion of the 1962 insurgency, these available repertoires of contention may well play a role in the strategic calculus of opposition groups.

Mountains also mattered. Although Algeria falls a bit below the regional and world mean for mountainous territory, the geographical reality of the Atlas Mountains standing just south of the major cities had a profound effect on the logic of insurgency. In this case, Abdelkader Chébouti, the leader of the MIA, was known to his followers as “the lion of the mountains”. His people came down to the plains to recruit young people, especially those that had been ill-treated by the Algerian army, and brought them up to the mountain camps for military training (Martinez 2000, 60). The mountains, however, were not unambiguously in favor of the insurgents. Many of the veterans of the war against France were not only veterans of the mountain hide-outs but strongly secularist as well. These veterans became the principal informers for the regime (Martinez 2000, 84-91).

What about our most powerful predictor of insurgency -- low GDP proxying for a weak state with a low-information army? While the Algerian economy was half that of the regional average and was in decline, its army did not reflect its economic weakness. To be sure, there were signs at the early stages of the war of gaps in military preparedness. The army at the start of the insurgency did not protect Berbers from Islamist attacks. And under army watch, 1,000 prisoners escaped from the Tazoult high-security prison near Batna in March 1994 (Metz 1993, Introduction).

Indeed (and despite some brutal slayings of the militant opposition in the opening salvos) the military was not in great fighting shape in 1992. The military budget of Algeria was typically less than 3% of GDP compared to Syria and Iraq where it was 10-20% of GDP. So the military did not make strong demands on the country’s resources. Its short border war with Morocco in 1963 was the only military engagement of Algeria’s independent history, with no foreign threat. In consequence, the army was hardly battle ready. Furthermore, “the military had clearly been caught off guard. They were not prepared to fight a guerrilla war against their own people. They were not trained for it, they did not have the equipment, and they did not have special units available” (Quandt 1998, 67, 84).

But the bigger picture is of army learning. Anti-guerrilla activity was carried out originally by the regular army, the gendarmerie (about 25,000 men in 1992, modeled after the French gendarmerie which until 1990 was training Algerian officers and NCOs), and the National Security forces (about 20,000 men) – none of which had training in counter-insurgency warfare.

In 1993, however, General Mohamed Lamari borrowed a page from General Challe's play-book of 1957 by organizing *harkis* to fight against the ALN. Lamari organized a counter-insurgency force that reached 60,000 men by 1995. This force encircled GIA-held communes, allowing these areas to "rot" economically. Local merchants in these GIA strongholds felt the pain, and began to urge their local militias to change sides, and to join forces with the army. Thus local militias began to re-form under the protection of the army (but some under private funding) to combat the GIA. These militias remained in the towns and villages where they were formed, and freed the army from responsibility for control of these places.

Using another counter-insurgency tactic, the Minister of Interior in 1994 set up a "Commune Guard" to give protection to local councils that were activated in towns from which the *Moudjahidin* fled. This unit recruited from the same pool that the local armed bands were recruiting. The regime was able to offer nice career opportunities to recruits. These Guards were backed up by the "Intelligence and Surveillance Group" (called Ninjas) to counter commando operations. The Ninjas were themselves backed by plainclothesmen, driving expensive sports cars and sporting American sunglasses. They served as bounty hunters searching for militants.

Meanwhile the army modernized its information gathering systems, relying extensively on computer datasets. To run these systems, the army recruited from college graduates. By 1996 the war college graduated its first class specializing as Special Forces.

The government encouraged "repentant" guerrillas to speak out publicly and to ask for greater support for the government. These broadcasts were not initially seen as credible by the FIS, and were written off by the guerrillas as of limited value. The ones who believed them were petty traders, who already saw the economic advantage of switching to the side of the government. However, to the surprise of the Islamists (who saw in the

Army conscripts a Trojan Horse to fight against the regime), the Algerian army recruited successfully and avoided mass desertions. Young men especially from the interior were attracted to the army, as the army was increasingly well respected in the interior. Also the army was the first step in a future official career. Once in, it should be added, it was unsafe to leave. With both inducements and threats, army personnel often re-enlisted (Martinez 2000, chap. 7). This story of Algerian military flexibility in the face of a new threat hardly confirms a theory that points to economic weakness as a proxy for a bad army. While the army may not have been prepared for counter insurgency activities in 1962, surely its history and its professionalism should have made it a daunting barrier for Islamist insurgents to even instigate a rebellion against its hegemony. It was only the fact that the army and government in 1992 were divided that may have given Islamist insurgents a false sense of their potential armed power in confronting the Algerian military.

## Conclusion

In the case of Algeria's two civil wars, practitioners in the field of comparative politics examining our statistical model showing such a nice fit between model and the real world would let sleeping dogs lie. Algeria, with its poverty, its oil, its large population, and its mountains was a likely candidate for civil war. This was especially the case for two periods, 1962-63 and 1991-1992, when political factors (being a new state in 1962; political instability and the movement toward anocracy beginning in 1990) pushed the expected probability of civil war way over the world average. And in fact, the onsets of civil war took place precisely when our models showed that Algeria was especially prone to such violence.

Why examine with a fine-toothed comb cases for which no explanation is needed? In our method, however, Algeria was chosen through random selection, and so we could not let this sleeping dog lie. Waking him up proved rewarding.

The civil war onset when Algeria was a new state did not have a commitment logic in precisely the way we theorized it would. To be sure, the Berbers in *wilaya* III gave support to the insurgency because at least some of them feared a loss of status in the move from French to Algerian rule. And the *wilaya* commanders had every reason to fear that if they did not fight for power in the summer of 1962, they would be marginalized

forever. But the rebellion had as much to do with the ineffectiveness of France's transfer of power than it had to do with commitment. France left the scene when the independence movement was divided in several ways, with no constitutional mechanism to decide. With urban warfare a core part of the repertoire of contention, local warlords employed this repertoire to seek advantage in controlling the state. Independence to a new state without a credible commitment by the former metropole to support the leadership to which it transfers power yields a vacuum that draws in insurgents. It was France's inability to commit to Ben Bella rather than Ben Bella's inability to commit to the future security of minorities that accounts for insurgency violence in 1962.

The onset of civil war in 1992 is, as the model highlights, well explained by the political opening granted by the authoritarian regime, and its own movement from autocracy to anocracy. Given the apparent loss of will to rule by the government (or else, why would they have opened up the political process), clerics were emboldened to exploit the economic crisis to challenge the regime in the name of fundamentalist ideals. This is consistent with our theoretical account linking anocracy and instability to civil war.

However, a careful look at the civil war that ensued brought into question our interpretation of country wealth. We have portrayed country poverty as a proxy for a weak army, unable to collect information on its own population or to use information strategically to root out insurgents. In the Algerian case, we find an army that had learned much from the French experience in fighting Algerian insurgents during the long war of independence. Moreover, it had the resources and will to develop sophisticated counter-insurgency units. Thus the war that we so successfully post-dicted opens up for us new questions for explanation.

Based on the Algerian narrative, we can provide conjectures to address two new questions that are raised. First, what work is GDP doing in our statistical models? We conjecture that low GDP matters for civil war onsets not only because it is a proxy for a weak military, but also because it is a proxy for available rebels who cannot be absorbed by the local economy. To the extent that unemployed youth have an exit option (moving to the labor markets of France), the recruitment pool will be depleted for potential rebel leaders. In this case, the rebellion came shortly after France cut off the immigration spigot. Instead of inciting even further the anti-immigration program of M. Le Pen and his Front National in France, these

young Algerians were being recruited into the FIS. And so, the low GDP in Algeria worked through the second mechanism (available recruits) rather than the first (weak military) to translate high likelihood to actual onset.

Second, why, if the Algerian military was strong, did it not deter potential insurgent armies? Here we conjecture that the political instability within the Algerian army make it unclear to potential insurgents whether the military was in fact sufficiently united to counter an insurgency. It was only after the insurgency had some initial success that the military was able to regain sufficient unity to successfully battle the rebels. Splits between the military and the government also induced guerrilla entrepreneurs to organize an insurgency in the name of an Islamist agenda against the Algerian state.

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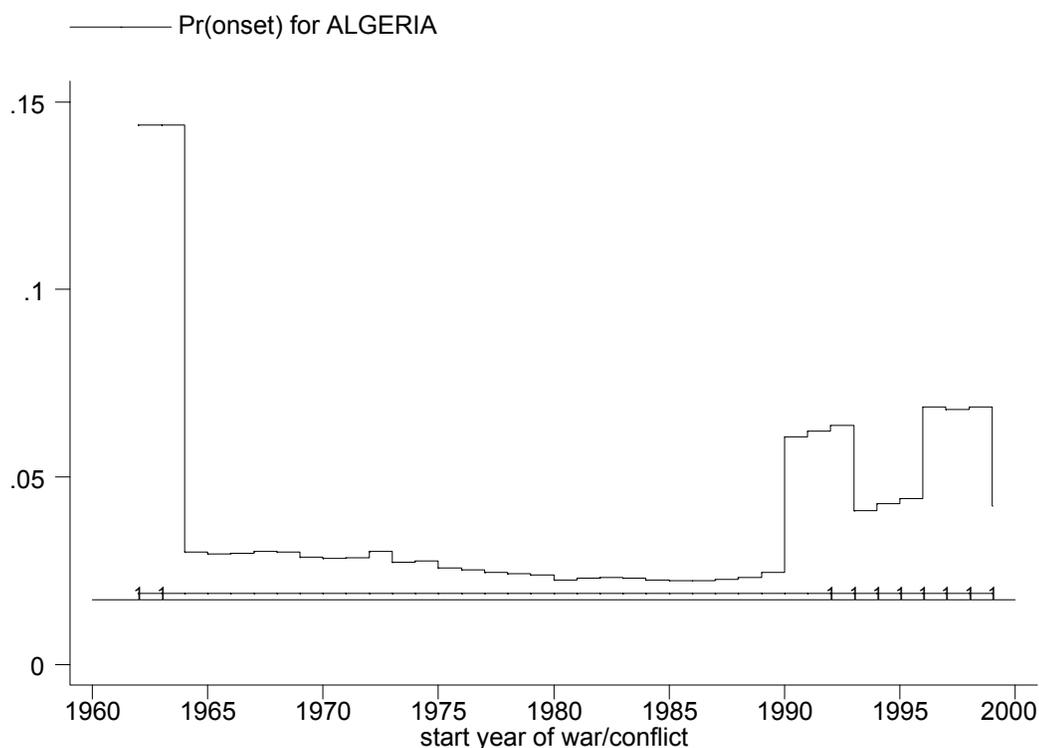
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cname	year	pr	gdp~1	pop	mtn~t	Oil	ins~b	anocl
ALGERIA	1962	.1519206	1.275	11236	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1963	.0689942	1.275	11460	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1964	.0130639	1.517	11690	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1965	.0304632	1.589	11923	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1966	.0306743	1.584	12267	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1967	.0312668	1.548	12622	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1968	.0309897	1.6	12986	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1969	.0296928	1.758	13360	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1970	.0291942	1.835	13746	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1971	.0295038	1.826	14169	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1972	.0312035	1.676	14609	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1973	.0282709	2.011	15064	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1974	.0284966	2.012	15534	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1975	.0265762	2.256	16018	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1976	.0260611	2.343	16516	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1977	.025343	2.456	17030	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1978	.025051	2.518	17559	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1979	.0246747	2.591	18105	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1980	.023213	2.807	18669	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1981	.0237783	2.758	19254	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1982	.0239549	2.761	19862	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1983	.0236813	2.823	20495	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1984	.0232776	2.903	21173	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1985	.0230429	2.962	21848	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1986	.0230465	2.988	22497	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1987	.0233649	2.97	23124	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1988	.0239746	2.913	23758	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1989	.0252931	2.769	24374	15.7	1	0	0
ALGERIA	1990	.0648196	2.843	25003	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1991	.0665866	2.777	25680	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1992	.0682318	2.72	26254	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1993	.0189582	2.719	26852.84	15.7	1	1	0
ALGERIA	1994	.0198343	2.598	27454.32	15.7	1	1	0
ALGERIA	1995	.0205217	2.511	28058	15.7	1	1	0
ALGERIA	1996	.0317399	2.555	28678.96	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1997	.0314227	2.605	29317.75	15.7	1	1	1

ALGERIA	1998	.0317506	2.591	29974.95	15.7	1	1	1
ALGERIA	1999	.0182644	2.68	.	15.7	1	0	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	38	.0334262	.023947	.0130639	.1519206
gdpenl	38	2.340079	.541402	1.275	2.988
pop	37	19411.4	5901.332	11236	29974.95
mtnest	38	15.7	0	15.7	15.7
Oil	38	1	0	1	1
instab	38	.2368421	.4308515	0	1
anocl	38	.1842105	.3928595	0	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	845	.015935	.0215325	2.45e-10	.2603802
gdpenl	857	5.430375	7.802111	.048	66.735
pop	889	11482.33	14302.43	222	63451
mtnest	910	18.61816	21.26137	0	71.3
Oil	910	.4901099	.5001771	0	1
instab	906	.1335541	.3403605	0	1
anocl	890	.2348315	.4241318	0	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	6327	.0167543	.0228494	2.45e-10	.488229
gdpenl	6373	3.651117	4.536645	.048	66.735
pop	6433	31786.92	102560.8	222	1238599
mtnest	6610	18.08833	20.96648	0	94.3
Oil	6610	.1295008	.3357787	0	1
instab	6596	.1464524	.353586	0	1
anocl	6541	.2256536	.418044	0	1