

Institution: University of Leeds

Unit of Assessment: 28 Modern Languages and Linguistics

Title of case study: The history and memory of the October 1961 anti-Algerian repression in Paris: enriching public understanding of the Franco-Algerian colonial past.

1. Summary of the impact

The research examined the causes, events and public memory of the violent repression of a peaceful, pro-independence demonstration of 40,000 Algerians in Paris (17 October 1961). Initially covered up, these events resurfaced to become one of the most controversial episodes in Franco-Algerian history, formally recognized by the French state in 2012. This project's key impacts have been on civil society and public discourse in France and Algeria, changing and increasing both public understanding and visibility of the massacre. Further important impacts were enhancing inter-ethnic and inter-generational understanding and citizenship, by providing social knowledge to campaigning groups, as well as enabling former demonstrators to speak publicly.

2. Underpinning research

The case study centres on a 140,000-word monograph co-written (50%/50%) by Jim House (started Leeds 1995, Lecturer A to 2000, Lecturer B 2000-2007, then Senior Lecturer) and Neil MacMaster (UEA, retired). The research was undertaken between 2000 and 2005 and the book was published in 2006 by OUP (1). This has been complemented by a number of single and joint-authored publications (2-6). *Paris 1961* is the most comprehensive and original study in its field both because of the wide range of sources used (archival, oral, print) and the methodological approach adopted. Whereas previous analyses had concentrated on the specific date of 17 October 1961, *Paris 1961* argued that the events of this day can be best understood within the longer history of a repressive system in Paris inspired by methods of colonial policing and counter-insurgency (state terror). Furthermore, *Paris 1961* concentrated on a system, rather than on any one individual (e.g. Paris Police chief Maurice Papon) and stressed that speaking of 'October 1961' better accounted for the weeks-long culmination of police anti-Algerian violence and complex dynamics within the Algerian nationalist movement (6). Simultaneously, *Paris 1961* showed that mass killings of Algerians had indeed taken place on and around 17 October 1961 itself.

No previous study had examined in as much detail why and how this violence then 'disappeared' in the years following the massacre, due to an official cover up, tensions within the French Left, and the political marginalisation of the French-based Algerian nationalists upon Algerian independence. Nor had any study examined how and why the memory of October 1961 resurfaced in the 1980s, after several decades of virtual silence (2-4). The key factor in this reappearance was the emergence in the 1980s of a new generation of antiracist activists – often of Algerian heritage – who promoted the public memory of this event within demands for symbolic justice from the French state and sought to understand their parents' historical trajectories (see also 3-4). October 1961 thus came to occupy considerable public visibility, notably with Papon's trial (for crimes against humanity during Vichy) in 1997-1998. *Paris 1961* provided a uniquely detailed case study for the history of colonial / postcolonial memory in both France and Algeria, showing the event's shifting and multi-layered meanings over a 45-year period. Its timely publication in 2006 followed nearly a decade of considerable academic, media and political interest in Franco-Algerian history.

The massacre's greatest visibility came at the 50th anniversary (October 2011) in part due to the book's research findings, as evidenced by the high number of references to *Paris 1961* by journalists, activists and public practitioners. The book went straight into OUP paperback

(2009), French translation (Tallandier, 2008), and then a French edition in Algeria (Casbah, 2012).

3. References to the research

- (1) Co-authored with Neil MacMaster: *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory*, Oxford University Press, 2006, 375pp. Translated (2008) as *Paris 1961. Les Algériens, la mémoire et la terreur d'État*, Paris: Tallandier (trans. Christophe Jaquet). OUP paperback edition 2009 (and e-book) based on positive critical reception and sales figures (OUP e-mail evidence). The French edition has sold over 2,000 copies. Available on request.
- (2) 'Memory and the Creation of Solidarity During the Decolonization of Algeria', article in *Yale French Studies*, Nos.118-119, November 2010, pp.15-38. Listed in REF2.
- (3) 'Silences on state violence during the Algerian War of Independence: France and Algeria, 1962-2007', chapter (co-authored with Raphaëlle Branche) in Efrat Ben Ze'ev, Ruth Ginio and Jay Winter (eds.), *Shadows of War. A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp.115-137. Available on request.
- (4) 'Leaving silence behind? Algerians and the memories of colonial violence', chapter in Nanci D. Adler, Selma Leydesdorff, Mary Chamberlain and Leyla Neyzi (eds.), *Memory and Mass Repression: Narrating Life Stories in the Aftermath of Atrocity*, Baltimore: Transaction Publishers, 2008. pp.137-156. Available on request.
- (5) 'Time to Move On. A Reply to Jean-Paul Brunet', *The Historical Journal*, Vol.51, No.1, March, 2008, pp.205-214. By Jim House and Neil MacMaster. Available on request.
- (6) 'La Fédération de France du FLN et l'organisation de la manifestation du 17 octobre 1961', *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'Histoire*, No. 83, July-September, 2004, pp.145-160. By Neil MacMaster and Jim House. Revised version chosen to be published in Raphaëlle Branche (ed.), *La guerre d'indépendance des Algériens 1954-1962*, Paris: Perrin, pp.127-149 (2009). Available on request.

External supporting grants

- AHRB Study Leave Award, September 2002-January 2003: 'The social memories of the 1961 massacre of Algerians', £9,400.
- British Academy Small Research Grant, 11 September 2001- 3 March 2002: 'The social memories of the 1961 massacre of Algerians', £678.

Indicators of research excellence

Paris 1961 has received overwhelmingly positive academic feedback, and has been extensively and positively reviewed in UK, French, Algerian and US-based academic journals. In his review article, Joshua Cole judged *Paris 1961* 'substantial and convincing' (*French Politics, Culture & Society*, Vol.28, No.1, Spring 2010, p.115), and Daniel A. Gordon praised this 'outstandingly well-researched book' (*European History Review*, cxiv 509, August 2009, p.1014), while Holder Nehring in H-Net, Clio-online, called it a 'real triumph of historical scholarship' (2007-3-052). It was also nominated by the Society for French Colonial History for best monograph in 2007, and has been described by reviewers as 'a landmark work' (Philippe Bernard in *Le Monde des livres*, 13.10.2006), and as 'exhaustive' and 'unsurpassable' by one of the organizers of the 17 October 1961 demonstrations and a former government minister in Algeria (letter to authors, 09.10.2011). The other items have appeared in leading scholarly peer-reviewed journals and in edited collections that are major publications in the field.

4. Details of the impact

The impact for this project started in 2002, eliciting initial reach with speaking engagements due to early publications. This created momentum around the publication of *Paris 1961* in 2006, and, crucially its French translation in 2008. This culminated in 2011 with the 50th anniversary of the massacre and in October 2012, when French President Hollande formally recognized the existence of the massacre in the context of the 50th anniversary of Algerian independence. Bolstered by House's role as a central contact point for media correspondents,

filmmakers, civil society associations, as well as key individuals, the research has had a significant impact on cultural life, education, policy, public discourse and public services. It has been effective in four main ways:

Firstly, its authoritative academic argument has increased public understanding in the face of previous official French denials by providing significant corroboration that a massacre took place. In legislation seeking to formally recognize the massacre currently under consideration by the French National Assembly, *Paris 1961* is cited as proving large-scale repression (A). This project has, according to the co-president of the campaigning association *Au nom de la mémoire*, 'strongly contributed' to achieving official (presidential) recognition of the massacre in France (B). One public historian, campaigner and former vice-president of the French Human Rights League (FHRL) commented that in addition to changing perceptions within French society, the project has helped associations linked to Algerian migration and human rights groups to 'formulate their demands for official recognition' (C). See also b, c, d and e, below.

Secondly, and linked to the above, this project is recognized as having generated 'greater social visibility' of the massacre (F), thereby helping move October 1961 from the margins to the centre of political debates not only in France, but also in Algeria. In September 2012, House was invited to the Algiers International Book Fair, where he discussed *Paris 1961* with both Algerian President M. Bouteflika and Algerian Culture Minister, Mme. Toumi (E). See also a and b, below.

Thirdly, this project has played a role in portraying the War of Independence as a key moment transcending generation, nationality and ethnicity. The former VP of the FHRL describes how the project has helped public acceptance of the idea that the October 1961 violence constitutes 'a shared event' in Franco-Algerian history: this has strengthened inter-ethnic solidarity and reinforced 'harmonious co-existence (*vivre-ensemble*)' (C). According to one key collaborator – a former humanitarian worker (and subsequently author and campaigner) - this project has also improved inter-generational solidarity by 'providing an overarching narrative that is accessible to younger generations', allowing them a 'better understanding of what their parents experienced' (F). See a and c, below.

Finally, *Paris 1961* has helped bring about what the former VP of the FHRL has identified as 'a new social and political climate' (C), one which the former humanitarian worker believes is 'more conducive' for former demonstrators and their descendants, better enabling them to publicly speak out about this difficult event (F). See also d and e, below.

(a) Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration (CNHI)

The State-run National Museum for Immigration History (Paris) has regularly used House's expertise since 2008 because of his 'authoritative' work (D). Over the past decade, successive French governments have given greater policy priority to the public recognition of the experience of immigrants, which is seen to promote social cohesion. On 13/10/11, House delivered a public lecture on the subject of October 1961 at the CNHI, which was recorded as a podcast and has been downloaded 521 times since November 2011. It has also been added to the France Inter radio station webpage (G).

(b) Radio and print journalists (France, Algeria, United Arab Emirates [UAE])

House has intervened in the public debates on the Franco-Algerian colonial past by providing expert analysis and generating approximately twenty interviews for national radio, newspapers, TV, documentaries and websites. He was interviewed on national French state television (France 2) news on 17/10/11 (average audience 3 million), participated in an hour-long live debate on *La Fabrique de l'Histoire* on France-Culture, France's equivalent of Radio 4, (broadcast 15/12/10), and was included in an hour-long documentary programme *La Marche du monde* on Radio France Internationale, France's equivalent of the BBC World Service (broadcast 27/10 /12). House also appeared on live Algerian national radio (Radio Algérie internationale, 17/10/12), was interviewed by *Le Monde* newspaper (*Culture et idées*

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supplement, 15/10/11 - average circulation approx. 340,000) and the Algerian Arabic-language daily *El-Khabar* (25/12/12). He was also cited in an article in the UAE newspaper *The National*, published 19/3/12.

(c) Civil society associations (France, Algeria)

The project prioritized and directly supported initiatives with groups containing a strong Algerian presence, helping older and younger generations to understand October 1961. House gave presentations, produced written content and acted as a research consultant for events organised by civil society groups such as the *Cercle des Algériens et Franco-Algériens en Rhône Alpes* (Lyon), *Au nom de la mémoire*, *Ancrages* and *Harkis et droits de l'homme*, in addition to a number of town councils and local associations, and the Amirat Foundation in Algiers. His specialist support has 'very usefully reinforced' these initiatives (F).

(d) Documentary film-makers and writers

House has provided specialist advice to four documentary films, including *Ici on noie les Algériens* (2011), which was shown across France (House spoke to an audience of 450 at the film's gala preview in Paris), and in 2012 was nominated for a César and released on DVD. He also supplied a contact for one of the film's main interviewees with whom he had previously conducted interviews: this man's appearance in such a film shows how some former participants now feel empowered to publicly speak out (H). The research has also had an impact in the literary world: inspired by *Paris 1961*, writer Albert Drandov wrote the text for a graphic novel relating to the 17 October massacre (I).

(e) Individuals

A former humanitarian worker in the Algerian shanty-towns of suburban Paris (Nanterre) many of whose inhabitants demonstrated on 17 October 1961. Since interviewing her in 2002, House has helped arrange for her personal archives to be made available to the general public in a major Paris research centre, IHTP (J). He has facilitated discussions between this person (today an author and campaigner) and head archivists and encouraged media attention to ensure the wider dissemination of her experience and that of other former shanty-town residents (F).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

A) Bill (Proposition de Loi) presented to the French National Assembly (24/10/12):

www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/propositions/pion0327.asp (accessed 08/09/2013).

B) Documentary film-maker and co-president of the campaigning association *Au nom de la mémoire* (In Memory's Name), Paris. E-mail (8/12/12), *available on request (in French)*.

C) Public historian and campaigner, former vice-president of the French Human Rights League, Paris. Written testimony provided (24/01/13), *available on request (in French)*.

D) Director of Research Department, Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris. Written testimony provided (20/08/12), *available on request (in French)*.

E) Algerian newspaper *El Watan* (20/09/2012) confirms the President's presence at the bookfair and interest in *Paris 1961*. *Available on request*.

F) Author, campaigner, former humanitarian worker in Paris shanty-towns, Paris. Written testimony provided (25/08/12), *available on request (in French)*.

G) <http://www.franceinter.fr/lien-a-ecouter-en-ligne-la-conference-a-la-cite-nationale-de-l-histoire-de-l-immigration-sur-les-eve> (accessed 08/09/2013)..

H) DVD *Ici on noie les Algériens*, see credit to House at 1h29 and, at 1h27, to interviewee in film whose name also appears on p.341 of *Paris 1961*, available on request

I) Article describing the influence of the publication on Drandov's work in *Les Influences* (18/10/11): <http://www.lesinfluences.fr/17-octobre-1961-memoire-en-cases.html> (accessed 08/09/2013).

J) <http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/spip.php%3Farticle1152&lang=fr.html> (accessed 08/09/2013).