Theocracy and Nationhood: Political Islam's Influence on Post-Colonial Futures

Sabirah Mahmud, University of Pennsylvania

Abstract

Political Islam has profoundly influenced the trajectory of post-colonial Algeria, offering a framework for reconciling tradition with the imperatives of modern governance. The liberatory movement to apply Islamic theology to state-building became a cornerstone of the nation's identity following independence from French colonial rule. This study delves into the intellectual contributions of figures like Malek Bennabi, Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, and Amar Ouzegane, whose ideas shaped Algeria's sociopolitical fabric during its formative years. By exploring concepts such as Bennabi's "colonizability," Ibrahimi's emphasis on cultural authenticity, and Ouzegane's fusion of socialism with Islamic ethics, the discussion highlights the enduring relevance of political Islam in addressing the challenges of decolonization and governance. The Algerian experience underscores both the complexities and potential of integrating Islamic principles into modern statecraft, particularly amidst tensions due to pluralism, tradition, and globalization.

I. Introduction

Frantz Fanon, an influential political philosopher during the Algerian war, wrote in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* a famous invocation: "Come then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed with the desire to catch up with Europe" (312). During the period of the 1960s many nations were gaining new-found freedom and independence from colonial occupiers. Countries such as Algeria had to consider how to navigate their society–newly liberated from French colonialism–while preserving their traditional and native culture. In forming their newly independent government, Algerians grappled to reevaluate the relationship that their Muslim-majority North African nation could have with the former colonial and Western influences—most notably seen within the Pied Noir population, the community of European settlers, primarily French nationals, who had lived in Algeria during French colonial rule. To understand this political transition, it is imperative to consider the role of political Islamism on post-colonial

state-building. Understanding how Islamicism and post-colonial state-building interact can highlight how nations have adapted and responded to colonial influence on their traditionalist values. While colonial legacies never truly fade away, a closer examination of Algeria's intellectual and political landscape reveals critical insights into how Islamic theology shaped and guided political ideology during the nation's formative state-building years.

Most famously, former President and Algerian revolutionary, Abdelhamid Ben Bella stated "Islam is my religion, Arabic is my language, and Algeria is my country" (Sakthivel). As an Algerian national, Ben Bella's direct relation and blatant naming of Islam as his religion, highlights the significant role that Islam played within the formation of Algerian national identity. Intellectuals and revolutionaries such as Amar Ouzegane, Malek Bennabi, and Taleb Ibrahimi, had all contributed to this intellectual and national development during the time of independence and state-building. All three of these intellectuals born prior to independence and raised within religious families contributed to the manner Islam had changed the fabric of Algerian society. Bennabi and Ibrahimi assisted in creating the theological basis for implementing Islamicism within a political structure in its infancy. Ouzegane, a post-independence Algerian politician, provides insight into understanding how the new Algerian state could apply theological ideologies towards reforming the nation to be authentic to indigenous culture and morale. Their interpretation of Islam's revolutionary nature in conjunction with Ben Bella's proclamation, persists in shaping Algeria's political identity and influencing its sociopolitical understanding.

II. Malek Bennabi: Architect of Islamic Revivalism

Malek Bennabi's philosophical contributions form the bedrock of political Islam ideology in Algeria. Originally trained in Islamic jurisprudence in his home town of Constantine–a stronghold of the religious reformists–Bennabi earned a degree as an electrical engineer abroad. His time abroad had spearheaded his work on understanding the intersection between Islam and intellectualism and politics (Walsh 237). While in contact with Muslim student groups he noted: "In the Latin Quarter, I became more and more the 'preacher.' I was preaching Islam, Wahhabism, Maghrebian, depending on the circumstances. [...] Actually, I was preaching Islam as a way of evolution and civilization" (Bennabi, *Mémoires d'un témoin du siècle* 141). In these early stages of his intellectual reckoning, he began to criticize the initiatives of nationalists and Islamic reformists in his home country. He specifically emphasized the lack of true change they

had brought about in society. His relocation from Paris to Cairo had further radicalized his thoughts to reflect on the importance of revolution (Walsh 237). He recalled: "Th[e] necessary solution can be nothing short of a 'revolution' that allows the Muslim to make up his deficit with regard to the rest of the world... Making a 'revolution' in the Muslim sense means apply[ing] a revolutionary technique inspired by the Quran. Now, all radical changes presuppose, according to the Quran, a change in the state of mind" (Bennabi, *L'afro-asiatisme* 320-321). Bennabi's ideology directly relayed the relationship between Islam and the holy book Quran to inspire revolutionary fervor among Algerian youth. In return, Islamism had begun to stick to the motivation for an independent Algerian society.

As independence was won, Bennabi's work focused on diagnosing the ailments of post-colonial societies and offering a framework for their revival. He introduced the concept of "colonizability" to describe the internal weakness that left Muslim societies vulnerable to colonial domination (Bennabi, *Question of Ideas* 69). In *Vocation de l'Islam* (1954), Bennabi described "[the independent state] as a mixed product of residues inherited from the post-Almohad era and new cultural inputs from reformist and modernist movements" further reform had never considered intentional direction or engaged in scientific planning (*de l'Islam* 117). Furthermore, he described the Muslim world in *Vocation* as a "composite mixture of undigested archaisms and unfiltered novelties." Connecting Bennabi's concept of colonizability with his arguments in *Vocation de l'Islam* clarifies that the post-Almohad condition remained entrenched in Algerian society, rendering them vulnerable to colonisation.

Almohad refers to a period in Algerian history in which the Almohad Caliphate had ruled modern-day Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. This Caliphate was a North African Berber Muslim empire beginning around 1120 CE (Fromherz 45). What Bennabi accomplishes by mentioning this vital period in Algerian history is that there is a necessity of a saving renaissance to address the post-Almohad condition; however, this necessity depends on a balance of concepts of reform or *islah,* and return to Islam's original thought, or *Salafism* (Gronhovd 1218). The intention was not to simply teach post-Almohad Muslims the legacy of the Almohad caliphate, but restore this belief's effectiveness alongside the innovation of the modern age. In battling the return to renaissance, Bennabi believed true liberation required addressing these internal deficiencies through moral and intellectual renewal. If this is not completed, in his view, the society remains susceptible to further colonial domination and cannot truly be liberated to its indigenous state.

In his seminal work, *The Question of Ideas in the Muslim World*, Bennabi argued that Islamic civilization had stagnated because its values had ossified into empty rituals, losing their transformative power. He described the condition of Algeria in writing "when the archetypes are obliterated... society is atomized because of the lack of common motivation, as was the case in Algeria after the Revolution" (*Question of Ideas*). Moreover, he cautioned against "dead ideas" from other civilizations, as these ideas often exacerbated societal disintegration when transplanted without adaptation (Walsh 242). Bennabi's critique of social atomization offers a profound diagnosis of the challenges facing post-colonial Algeria. For Bennabi, the obliteration of "archetypes"–the foundational ideas and values rooted in Islamic moral and cultural traditions–leads to the erosion of shared identity and purpose. This loss results in societal fragmentation, where individuals and groups, disconnected from a unifying framework, pursue disparate and often conflicting agendas. In Algeria, this atomization became most particularly visible in the aftermath of the independence revolution, as the cohesive struggle against colonial rule gave way to internal divisions, ideological conflicts, and a lack of coherent national direction.

The symptoms of atomization in Algerian society included political disunity, cultural alienation, and the adoption of 'deadly ideas' imported by foreign civilizations, such as the allure of the Soviet Union's success as a socialist liberation movement. These borrowed ideologies lacked alignment with Algeria's indigenous cultural and religious context, further exacerbating the societal fragmentation. Bennabi warns that these ideas, already 'deadly' in their original environments, become more destructive when transplanted from one society to another without adaptation to the local socio-cultural fabric (*Question of Ideas* 69). In Algeria, the secular governance systems and policies created by Soviet socialism failed to resonate with the moral and spiritual identity of the populace, deepening the divide between the rulers and the ruled.

In order to counter atomization in society, Bennabi advocated for a cultural and intellectual revival rooted in the rediscovery in Islamic archetypes (*Question of Ideas*). For him, Islam was not merely a set of rituals but the "plasma" that could regenerate social cohesion and collective purpose. By reconnecting Algerians with their Islamic heritage, Bennabi believed it was possible to restore a sense of shared motivation and unity. This process required addressing internal deficiencies–what Bennabi referred to as "colonizability"–through moral renewal, intellectual awakening, and the alignment of governance with Islamic principles (*Question of Ideas* 99).

Movements such as the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) sought to operationalize Bennabi's vision by promoting Islam as a unifying framework for political and social life Krais 226). They emphasized the role of Islamic values in fostering a sense of collective identity and addressing the socio-economic grievances that had alienated much of the indigenous population. However, Bennabi's philosophy had highlighted the need for balance; he argued that restoring archetypes did not mean rejecting modernity but rather integrating Islamic moral frameworks with scientific and intellectual advancements (Walsh 244). This synthesis, he believed, was the key to undoing societal atomization and building a cohesive, dynamic, and authentic Islamic society. Ultimately, Bennabi's ideas suggest that the path to reversing atomization lies in cultural authenticity and intellectual resilience. By grounding policies and societal structures in the moral and spiritual roots of Islamic civilization, Algeria would overcome the fragmentation caused by colonialism and misguided modernization efforts. In this way, Bennabi's vision extended beyond mere critique, offering a transformative blueprint for rebuilding societies fractured by the loss of their foundational archetype.

Bennabi's vision for the revival of Islamic society and Algerian authenticity was rooted in the Quranic principle that "God will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (*The Qur'an* 13:11). He emphasized the importance of aligning moral and intellectual development with Islamic principles while incorporating modern scientific knowledge. Without praxis and this practice of changing the condition of the believer, there could not be change within the social and political society to liberate themselves from previous colonialism. This synthesis, he argued, would provide the foundation for a dynamic and authentic Islamic society capable of navigating the complexities of modern governance, essentially curing his phenomenon of colonizability (Walsh 242).

Bennabi's influence extended beyond academia. His ideas inspired the group *Ja'zara*, Islamic intellectuals who played a pivotal role in the rise of the political group FIS, or Islamic Salvation Front. These thinkers sought to operationalize Bennabi's vision by emphasizing the compatibility of Islam with democratic principles and the socialism that had taken the attention of residents in the region. Bennabi's belief that democracy could thrive within an Islamic framework provided the ideological underpinning for the FIS' efforts to achieve political legitimacy through elections (Walsh 246).

While Bennabi's ideas were often too intellectual for widespread populist appeal, their significance lies in their ability to offer a coherent framework for addressing the challenges of post-colonial state-building. By grounding his philosophy in Islamic values while remaining open to innovation, Bennabi provided a model for reconciling tradition with modernity, a theme that resonates in the work of Ibrahimi and Ouzegane.

III. Taleb Ibrahimi: Champion of Islamic Identity

Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi's contributions to political Islam focus on the cultural and spiritual dimensions of nation-building. Unlike Bennabi, whose work often emphasized theoretical constructs, Ibrahimi's writings were deeply rooted in practical concerns about preserving Algeria's Islamic identity in the face of modern challenges. In *Letters from Prison (1957-1961)*, Ibrahimi reflected on the dual challenges of decolonization: overcoming external colonial domination and addressing internal cultural alienation (15). Central to Ibrahimi's philosophy was the idea of "internal decolonization," which he defined as the process of reclaiming cultural and spiritual authenticity. He went further to explain: "To solve the problems of our historicity, we must return to our authenticity, anchored in the relationship between man and God" (V). Ibrahimi describes a similar phenomenon that Bennabi describes when he writes regarding colonizability. Both emphasize that the only solution to reversing the impact of colonialism and cultural reformism is to revert to the authentic version of Algeria, while prioritizing the role that religion or *deen* plays. Ibrahimi believed that Algeria's Islamic heritage provided a unifying framework for addressing the fractures within its society.

Ibrahimi's emphasis on education as a tool for cultural renewal aligns closely with Bennabi's personal philosophy. He argued that the education system needed to reflect Islamic values and promote a sense of national pride (59). This perspective was particularly relevant in post-independence Algeria, where tension between secular and religious visions of the state often played out in debates over education policy. Whereas, upon Bennabi's return to Algeria, he served as the Director of Higher Education for a number of years. While in his position, he remained critical towards the political elite and warned against a pseudo-revolutionary leadership which would fail to eradicate the root causes of colonizability and to bring about a true revolution (Bennabi, *Question of Ideas* 99). These two intellectuals in conversation with each other both emphasize the role that education played in refocusing Islam and the Algerian connection to the

religion to combatting the colonial residue within the social and political fabric of the nation.

Ibrahimi, additionally, critiqued the uncritical adoption of Western models, echoing Bennabi's concerns about "inveterate imitators" who failed to grasp the underlying values of the societies they sought to emulate (*Question of Ideas* 73). For Ibrahimi, Islam was not just a faith but a comprehensive worldview that could guide Algeria's development in a way that respected its unique cultural and historical context; this was different from the Soviet-adopted socialism that many other post-colonial nations adopted into their newly independent states (Ibrahimi, *Letters from Prison* 6). By focusing on the practical application of Islamic principles, Ibrahimi provided a bridge between Bennabi's theoretical insights and the pragmatic challenges of governance. His work underscores the importance of cultural authenticity in the broader project of political Islam, paving the way for figures like Amar Ouzegane to translate these ideas into actionable policies.

IV. Amar Ouzegane: Bridging Islam and Socialism

Amar Ouzegane, a former communist turned ardent Algerian nationalist, exemplifies how political Islamism began to converge and intersect with socialist principles to build a cohesive national identity. Ouzegane's work represents the pragmatic application of the philosophical and cultural insights of Bennabi and Ibrahimi. His approach underscores the adaptability of political Islam as a framework for nation-building.

During Algeria's liberation struggle, Ouzegane criticized Soviet-style communism for being too alien and materialistic. In his commitment to prioritizing Islam as a fabric of Algerian society, he advocated for a fusion of socialism with Algeria's Islamic traditions, noting that Soviet-style socialism went against the country's Islamic values. In his book *Le Meilleur Combat* (The Worthiest Struggle), he argued that the revolutionary leaders should root their movements in Islam to align with the aspirations of the people (Sfeir). His words emphasized that liberation struggles must be rooted within the doctrine and struggle of the indigenous and native people; rather, liberation should not adopt methods from supposed liberatory ideologies in other societies with different moral values.

Ouzegane's tenure as Minister of Agriculture exemplifies his commitment to integrating Islamic ethics into governance. While in his position, he implemented agrarian reforms designed to empower rural communities while preserving their

cultural heritage (Unna). These reforms reflect the influence of Ibrahimi's emphasis on cultural authenticity and Bennabi's call for a moral foundation in governance. In prioritising the agrarian indigenous culture of the Algerian native, Ouzegane brought cultural authenticity towards the Algerian condition in empowering the native individual to enjoy their land. Within the French occupation of Algeria, many native Algerians experienced expulsion and discrimination in the autonomy of their lands, cultural authenticity was expressed in bringing back the agency towards the indigenous agrarians. Without prioritizing support for farmers—whom Bennabi termed the 'peasants'—Algerian civil society would have been left without a critical foundation to sustain itself during the fragile post-independence period. Therefore, these reforms, as instituted by Ouzegane, demonstrate how Islamic values informed practical solutions to socio-economic issues. These provided a model for integrating tradition and progress especially within the intention to stay near and close to the Islamic tradition of Algeria.

Ouzegane also recognized the importance of the peasantry in Algeria's revolutionary and post-revolutionary efforts. As mentioned above, Bennabi observed in one of his university speeches: "It was the peasant, not the intellectual nor the worker, who made this [independence] struggle sacred" ("The Algerian Perspectives" 437). Those who were able to sacrifice for the sake of the state without repercussion as they already lacked material resources were at the forefront of the liberation struggle. The religious and existential character of the country's liberation struggle was—and still is—reflected in the fact that these peasants and freedom fighters are called *moudjahidine*, while those who died in the struggle are referred to as *chouhada*, or martyrs (Sakthivel). The importance of centering the peasants and those who had sacrificed for the liberation is integral to Islamic tradition. This is embedded in Algerian society. By centering his policies on the values and needs of Algeria's rural population—the backbone of the resistance against colonial France—Ouzegane ensured his socialist initiatives were culturally resonant, rooted in Islamic tradition, and socially transformative.

While Ouzegane's approach was less theoretical than Bennabi's and less focused on cultural revival than Ibrahimi, his role highlights the practical potential of political Islam as a tool for addressing real-world challenges. His ability to translate and apply philosophical and cultural insights into actionable policies underscores the versatility and relevance of political Islam in post-colonial governance.

V. The Role of Political Islam in the Post-Colonial State

Political Islam played a critical role in shaping Algerian identity. The interplay of Islamic values and nationalist aspirations provided a framework for resisting both colonial legacies and the perceived cultural imperialism of Western modernity. In post-independence Algeria, Islam was not just a religious doctrine but a source of political legitimacy and a unifying force for nation-building.

The National Liberation Front (FLN) appropriated religious symbols and rhetoric to consolidate its authority. By framing the liberation struggle as jihad and commemorating the martyrs of the war as *chouhada* – an Islamic term used to honor those killed in battle – the FLN linked the fight for independence to Islamic ideals (Walsh 240). This narrative reinforced the connection between Islam and Algerian indigeneity, countering French colonial efforts to undermine the cultural fabric of Algerian society. However, the FLN's reliance on Islamic symbolism did not translate into governance rooted in Islamic principles. Under President Hourari Boumediene, the government pursued more Soviet-adjacent socialist policies that many Islamic factions viewed as incompatible with Islamic values. Groups such as al-Qiyam emerged to challenge the moral and cultural direction of the state, advocating for a return to governance based on Sharia law and opposing what they saw as the secularization of Algerian society (Sakthivel).

These tensions laid the groundwork for the rise of the Islamic Salvation Front in the late 1980s. The FIS represented a coalition of Islamic factions united by their opposition to the FLN's secular nationalism. Drawing on the ideas of Bennabi, the FIS sought to reconcile Islamic governance with democratic principles, presenting itself as a legitimate alternative to the FLN's authoritarian rule. FIS activist Rashid Benaissa recalled:

> Our grandfather was Bennabi ... it was him who showed me that science should not confuse itself with religion. He had created a centre we called the Centre for Cultural Orientation. We held what we called 'seances of reflection' there. Bennabi said that he wanted to put on the front of his house: 'No one should enter here if he is not an engineer'. We did not want to create a doctrine that knowledge depends on faith. We wanted ... to construct not just religious thought, but the global thinking of the Muslim. (Burgat and Dowell 256-257)

Bennabi's belief that science should not be conflated with religion is echoed within the testament of this activist. This perspective aligns with Bennabi's vision of an Islamic renaissance that embraces modern knowledge and technology while maintaining Islamic moral and ethical frameworks. For political Islam, particularly through movements such as FIS, this approach provides a framework for integrating faith with modernity and rejecting the notion that Islamic societies must choose between religious values and scientific values. Bennabi's vision of an Islamic democracy that balances spiritual intellectual and political governance was reflected in the FIS' attempt to engage in democratic elections. The subsequent success of FIS in local and national elections highlighted the appeal of political Islam as a vehicle for addressing the socio-economic grievances of Algerian people.

VI. 1990s: Civil War Against Political Islam

The Algerian Civil War (1991-2002) marked a turning point in the relationship between political Islam and the state, defining one of the darkest chapters in the nation's post-colonial history. The military's decision to cancel the 1991 elections–in which the FIS had emerged as the dominant political force–triggered a bloody conflict that would claim thousands of innocent civilian lives. The government justified its actions by portraying the FIS as a threat to democracy and modernity, but the war exposed deep fractures within Algerian society.

By the late 1980s, the FIS began to emerge as a formidable political force capitalizing on the widespread dissatisfaction with the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN). Years of economic stagnation, corruption, and authoritarianism had alienated much of the Algerian population, creating fertile ground for the FIS' platform of Islamic governance rooted in social justice and moral renewal (Sakthivel). However, the military-backed government viewed the FIS' rise with suspicion, fearing that its democratic rhetoric masked an agenda to establish a theocratic state. This mistrust culminated in the military's decision to cancel the 1991 elections–after it was announced the FIS gained significant wins–triggering mass protests and a wave of political violence.

Due to the annulment of elections, the civil war began to be characterized by extreme violence from both state forces and Islamist factions. Armed Islamic groups, some which splintered from the FIS, carried out attacks on civilians, government officials, and rival factions. Meanwhile, state forces engaged in mass arrests, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances. This mutual brutality underscored the

difficulty of integrating political Islam into a pluralistic political framework while navigating deeply entrenched social and economic grievances (Sakthivel). Moreover, the Islamist movement lacked a cohesive political vision. Initially, the FIS had sought to achieve its goals through democratic means; however, the radicalization triggered by the cancellation of the election pushed FIS activists into marginal radical organizations. These groups, such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIS), violently targeted the state, and later, they also began targeting civilians (Sakthivel). GIS formed out of necessity in which they saw that attacks such as assassination of the Prime Minister seemed necessary to demand the reinstatement of their theological agendas (Council on Foreign Relations).

The war highlighted the enduring relevance of Bennabi's concept of colonizability–the internal weaknesses to render societies vulnerable to external and internal domination. Algeria's inability to build a cohesive national identity and its reliance on imported models of governance created fertile ground for conflict. Bennabi had warned about the dangers of atomization and cultural disintegration which remained present as Algeria's political landscape became increasingly fragmented (Bennabi, *Question of Ideas*). The war revealed deep fractures within Algerian society, from rural-urban divides to ideological splits between secularists and Islamists. These divisions were compounded by the government's reliance on imported models of governance, which Bennabi had critiqued as inauthentic and disconnected from the distinct Algerian Islamic and cultural identity (Krais 218). Bennabi's call for a moral and intellectual renaissance rooted in Islamic principles seemed more urgent than ever. However, the violence of this Black decade, which this period has been coined as, made it clear that the path to such intellectual renaissance would require not only ideological clarity but also a commitment to pluralism and dialogue–qualities which were lost during the civil war.

By the time the conflict officially ended in 2002, the war had devastated Algeria's social fabric. Its legacy has built mistrust and trauma that continues to shape the nation's politics. For many, the civil war became a reminder of the challenges inherent to integrating political Islam into the pluralistic governance frameworks, particularly in the contexts marked by economic inequality and political authoritarianism. The one-party dominance within the political arena of Algeria has remained privileged from this distrust and alienation away from political Islam in the contemporary history of Algeria.

Despite the devastation of the civil war, the conflict revealed the resilience of political Islam as an ideological force. While the FIS experienced massive setbacks during the Civil War leading to its dismantling, the ideas it represented—rooted in thinkers such as Bennabi, Ibrahimi, and Ouzegane—remain both a cautionary tale and testament to the persistence of political Islam as an enduring framework for envisioning postcolonial futures. Nevertheless, although political Islam continues to exist in Algeria through ideology, formal mobilisation under the Islamic Salvation Front is heavily suppressed with the group being banned within the current political landscape, which remains dominated by the FLN's political monopoly.

VII. Conclusion

The legacy of political Islam in post-colonial Algeria underscores a profound attempt to navigate the complexities of modern nation-building while preserving Islamic identity. Intellectuals and Algerian revolutionaries such as Malek Bennabi, Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, and Amara Ouzegane illustrated diverse Islamic yet interconnected approaches to addressing Algeria's socio-political challenges. Their intellectual contributions not only shaped Algeria's trajectory, but also offered broader conversations for other Muslim-majority nations grappling with the dual imperatives of modernity and tradition. Bennabi had increasingly touched upon this given his interaction with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and how his work was in conversation with the development of Abdel Nasser's Egypt (Gronhovd 1222).

Bennabi's emphasis on the concept of 'colonizability' remains particularly resonant in understanding the theoretical framework of this time period, highlighting his emphasis on uprooting the internal vulnerabilities that compromise self-determination of post-colonial states. His call for a synthesis of Islamic moral frameworks with scientific and intellectual advancements provided a blueprint for authentic modernization. His students and disciples who later formed the Islamic Salvation Front sought to operationalize his teachings, demonstrating the enduring relevance of Bennabi's philosophy in Algeria's political landscape.

Ibrahimi's focus on cultural authenticity and reclamation of Algeria's Islamic heritage highlights the significance of education and internal decolonization. By prioritizing the preservation of spiritual and cultural identity, Ibrahimi offered practical strategies for resisting the alienation wrought by colonial legacies. The approach parallels Ouzegane's integration of socialism and Islamic ethics, which bridged the ideological divide between Algeria's revolutionary and traditionalist factions.

Despite these intellectual advancements, the Algerian Civil War exemplifies the challenges of reconciling political Islam with pluralistic governance within the post-colonial history of the nation. The cancellation of democratic elections and subsequent violence underscored the fragility of attempts to institutionalize Islamic political movements, and the subsequent threat it posted to the dominant FLN party. Nevertheless, the persistence of political Islam as an ideological force attests to its deep roots in Algeria's national identity and resistance history. Additionally, it considers the potential of political theology to make meaningful contributions to governance, provided it has the opportunity to develop within democratic frameworks and aspirations—an approach originally intended with the creation of the FIS.

Looking forward, the lessons from Algeria's post-colonial experience with political Islam holds critical relevance for contemporary debates about the role of religion in governance, especially as nations try to become authentic without the hand of western cultural hegemony. While post-colonial nations continue to grapple with the legacies of colonialism and the pressures of globalization, these political Islamic theories of Bennabi, Ibrahimi, and Ouzegane serve as a reminder of the importance of grounding political and social reforms in cultural and moral authenticity. By balancing tradition with innovation, political Islam can offer a compelling vision for the future of post-colonial societies striving for self-determination and justice.

Works Cited

"Ben Bella Finds Unrest: Sabotage Reported." *The Christian Science Monitor.* 2 December 1962.

Bennabi, Malek. *Vocation de l'Islam.* Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1954.

Council on Foreign Relations. "Armed Islamic Group (Algeria, Islamists)." Last modified 1 June 2005. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/armed-islamic-group-algeria-islamists.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York, Grove Press, 1961.

Fleming, Louis B. "Being Friend to Both Blocs Benefits Algeria." *Los Angeles Times*, 2 Feb. 1963.

Fromherz, Allen. "North Africa and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Christian Europe and the Almohad Islamic Empire." *Islam & Christian-Muslim Relations,* vol. 20, no. 1, 2009, pp. 43–59.

Gronhovd, Anne-Marie. "Algeria, Ideology and Reason: Albert Camus, Malek Bennabi, Maissa Bey." *The French Review,* vol. 83, no. 6, 2010, pp. 1216–1230.

Krais, Jakob. "The French Connection: Political Islam from the Algerian War to the Iranian Revolution." *Middle Eastern Studies,* vol. 58, no. 1, 2021, pp. 214–228.

"L'Islam et l'Esprit Démocratique selon Malek Bennabi." *Le Temps* (Tunis, Tunisia), 2017.

Sakthivel, Vish. "Political Islam in Post-Conflict Algeria." *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology,* vol. 22, 2017.

Sfeir, George N. "What Fundamentalism Offers [the] Arab World." *New York Times*, 11 July 1990. *Proquest*, https://www.proquest.com/docview/108534301.

Taleb Ibrahimi, Ahmed. *Letters from Prison*, 1957–1961. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1988.

Unna, Warren. "Red Role Is Out, Algerian Says: That's His Opinion." *The Washington Post*, Times Herald (1959–1973), 10 February 1963. https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/red-role-is-out-algerian-says/docview/141912639.

Walsh, Sebastian J. "Killing Post-Almohad Man: Malek Bennabi, Algerian Islamism and the Search for a Liberal Governance." *The Journal of North African Studies,* vol. 12, no. 2, 2007, pp. 235–254.

Zoubir, Yahia H. "Democracy and Islam in Malek Bennabi's Thought." *American Journal of Islam & Society*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1998.