

## **CHAPTER 4: A POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IDEOLOGIES OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST GROUPS IN ALGERIA**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

As has been argued in detail in Chapter two of this dissertation, rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism are limited, specifically in terms of their neglect of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalists and/or the groups they adhere to. While socio-economic and political conditions, which rationalist interpretations of Islamic fundamentalism predominantly focus on, are useful when it comes to the analysis of Islamic fundamentalist groups, the dialogic model of interpretation posits that it is *also* necessary to look in detail at the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in order to come to a deeper, less condemnatory understanding of Islamic fundamentalism. The country case studies, Algeria, Sudan and South Africa, which constitute the following three chapters, are thus approached by means of an in-depth analysis of the ideologies of prominent Islamic fundamentalist groups, but will also consider structural (political, economic and social) factors.

Briefly again, as has already been discussed at length in Chapter two, the dialogic model of interpretation rejects the existence of a neutral, objective point of view from which the analyst can observe a particular situation and from which he or she is able to discover “the final and objective truth”. Instead, the analyst is open to new interpretations and insights that can possibly be gained through mutual participation in a dialogue with the ideas of Islamic fundamentalist groups. This ultimately involves a “fusion of meanings”, consisting of the conditions of the dialogue, the participants, the traditions to which they belong and the prejudices which they bring to the conversation (Euben 1996: 36).

A crucial aspect of the dialogic model of interpretation is that although it strives towards a standard of compatibility between the analyst and the understandings of the participants, there is also the possibility of being distanced sufficiently from the participants’ own meanings so that there will be room for critique of how they understand their own ideas and, more specifically, for the possibility that participants can misunderstand or misrepresent aspects of their own behaviour (Euben 1999: 39-41). It is this element of the dialogic model of interpretation that prevents it from being too uncritical and accepting about what the participants have to say about their own ideas. This would, in a way, present the opposite of a Western

rationalist-inspired condemnation of Islamic fundamentalism, as there would be a somewhat too unconditional acceptance of the ideas of Islamic fundamentalists.

The dialogic model of interpretation then forms the theoretical framework of the political analysis of the ideologies of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Algeria in this chapter, and is also used in the following chapters which deal with Sudan and South Africa. The focus is on the ideologies of the Islamic fundamentalist groups that are studied, but also incorporates some of the useful elements of rationalist analysis, for example taking into account structural factors: political, cultural and socio-economic conditions and evaluating their impact on the ideological frameworks of the respective groups.

## **4.2. AN OVERVIEW OF ALGERIAN HISTORY<sup>10</sup>**

Algerians engaged in a serious struggle for autonomy from their French colonists starting on 1 November 1954 when the armed revolutionary groups, the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN – National Liberation Front), was formed under the leadership of Ahmed Ben Bella. The FLN's activities led to a full scale war of independence, extremely bloody in nature, which culminated in the deaths of 300 000 people and lasted almost eight years (Political Overview, Algeria Country Review 2004).

Ben Bella was elected as president in 1963, heading the FLN as sole party. In June 1965 the Minister of Defence, Colonel Houari Boumedienne, toppled Ben Bella in a bloodless coup and in 1975 managed to consolidate the regime's power and enhance his personal status by means of adopting a National Charter which enshrined both the creation of a socialist system and the maintenance of Islam as the state religion. Boumedienne died in 1978 and Colonel Ben Djedid Chadli was appointed as his successor (Europa World Year Book 2003: 442).

The 1980s proved to be a decade of political and economic turmoil in Algeria. Chadli's hesitant steps towards economic liberalisation, which considerably worsened Algerians' living conditions, as discussed in

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<sup>10</sup> Only the most central events and developments are pointed out here to give a general background picture of the situation in Algeria. The rest of the chapter provides a more in-depth analysis of political, economic and social factors contributing to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria and characterising the current conflict. The ideology of the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS - Islamic Salvation Front) is discussed in detail, and the principal radical Islamic fundamentalist groups are also briefly looked at, within the overall political and economic context of the Algerian conflict.

more detail in the following section, prompted a series of protests, which became more frequent from 1985 onwards and culminated in the events of “Black October”. From 4 to 7 October 1988 as many as 5000 youths went on the rampage in Bab el-Oued, an overcrowded and impoverished suburb of Algiers. The riot spread to many other cities across the country and the army was eventually given permission to shoot on sight. It is estimated that between 200 and 500 people were killed. As a result of the magnitude of these events and ensuing demands by opposition groups – students, trade unionists, communists and Islamists – the Algerian regime set about reforming the state apparatus (Stone 1997: 63-64).

The predominant beneficiary of the new multiparty constitution which was adopted in early 1989 seemed to be the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS – Islamic Salvation Front) which managed to attract the support of adherents of several trends of thought and activism and use to its advantage the importance of Islamic expression which had played an important part in earlier periods of Algerian history (Spencer 1996: 93). Municipal elections were consequently held in 1990, which would usher in a decisive, if exceedingly unstable and violent, phase in Algerian politics. At municipal level the FIS managed to garner 4.3 million votes out of a possible 12.8 million. An even greater upset was caused in December 1991 when the FIS captured 188 out of 430 seats in the first round of the legislative elections (Takeyh 2003: 68).

The FIS’s electoral successes were never to be consolidated however. On the eve of the second round of legislative elections which had been planned for January 1992, the military stepped in to cancel the electoral process. Those members of the military who had prevailed in this decision believed that if the FIS were to hold an absolute majority in parliament this would result in a political disaster and would jeopardise the achievements that the country had attained over the past thirty years. Of course, an FIS-dominated parliament would also signify an end to the military’s privileges, which was another reason why they wanted to rid themselves of the FIS (Stone 1997: 79). Shortly afterwards Chadli was made to resign and a state council took power, thereby ending Algeria’s liberal period and signalling the start of a civil war which was to consume over 100 000 lives and institutionalise violence as a means of resolving disputes (Takeyh 2003: 69).

The new government consisted of a five member High Council of State (HCS) that would act as a collegiate presidency until at the latest, it claimed, December 1993 (Europa World Year Book 2003: 443). Having declared a state of emergency, the HCS demonstrated its hostility against the Islamic fundamentalists by

opening detention centres in the Sahara where up to 6000 opponents of the regime were being held under reportedly harsh and unsanitary conditions. On 29 June 1992 Muhammad Boudiaf, the chairperson of the HCS, who was strongly determined to eradicate corruption and had ordered the release of 2000 FIS adherents from detention, was assassinated, reportedly by the “special intervention unit”, linked to the military. Boudiaf had made himself very unpopular by taking an official stand against the exceedingly high level of government corruption. Boudiaf was thus almost obliged to publicly address the problem, in order to win back some measure of credibility for his administration. This attitude was evidently not appreciated by the military, with fatal consequences for Boudiaf (Stone 1997: 108).

Meanwhile, violence between radical Islamic fundamentalists and state security forces, which had begun when the 1992 elections were cancelled, persisted unabated. The Armée Islamique du Salut (AIS – Islamic Salvation Army), which constituted the military wing of the FIS, predominantly targeted members of the military backed regime and armed forces. On the other hand, the other major actor at this stage, the *Groupe Islamique Armé* (GIA – Armed Islamic Group), was held responsible for the more horrific killings, and specifically also those directed at intellectuals and prominent civilians (Spencer 1996: 94-95). On the political front, Liamine Zérroual, a retired general, was inaugurated as President on 31 January 1994 for a three year term. The HCS’s promise to disband at the end of 1993 had thus been reneged (Europa World Year Book 2003: 443). During August 1994 progress appeared to be under way when a series of negotiations appeared to be heading in the direction of including the FIS in a process of national dialogue. In September 1994, the two main FIS leaders, Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, who had been sentenced to twelve years of imprisonment in July 1992 for conspiracy against the state, were released from prison and placed under house arrest. The attempt at negotiations failed, however, as the regime was not willing to allow the FIS to convene a full meeting of its executive council to discuss an official negotiation position. The Algerian government at this stage evidently did not want to deal with any “terrorists” associated with the FIS, in other words, radical FIS members belonging to its armed wing, the AIS. As a result, the initiative was returned to the military hardliners who had always opposed any form of agreement with the FIS (Spencer 1996: 95).

In November 1994 representatives of several of Algeria’s major parties, including the FIS, the FLN and the Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS – Socialist Front), met in Rome under the auspices of the Sant’ Egidio Catholic community to discuss the crisis in Algeria (Europa World Year Book 2003: 444). The resulting

Rome Accords proved to be a remarkable compromise between secular and religious forces. Here the FIS, as well as the other parties involved in the negotiations, pledged its support for the renunciation of violence as a means to achieve or retain power, the rejection of dictatorship, the recognition of the right of the people to defend their elected institutions, respect for both the regulated transfer of power through the popular vote and political, cultural and ethnic pluralism and the guarantee of both individual and collective fundamental freedoms. There was also a call for the non-interference of the army in political affairs, as well as the release of imprisoned FIS leaders (Shahin 2003: 134). Unfortunately, however, the military's angry rejection of the accords meant a marginalisation of all moderate forces and an even more pronounced return to violence between the military eradicators and radical Islamic fundamentalist groups (Takeyh 2003: 70).

The military-backed regime made several attempts to consolidate its position by garnering popular support. Presidential elections were held in November 1995. Despite an appeal by the FLN, FFS and FIS for voters to boycott the election, official figures showed that Zéroual achieved an outright victory, attaining 61 percent of the votes cast. At parliamentary level, legislative elections took place in June 1997. Still, however, despite demands by other opposition parties, the FIS had been excluded from participating. Amid allegations of electoral fraud the Rassemblement National Démocratique (RND – Democratic National Rally), which had hastily been formed a few months beforehand to support Zéroual's military backed regime, attained an impressive 156 out of the National People's Assembly's 380 seats. Then, in April 1999, seven candidates were declared eligible by the Constitutional Council to contest the presidential elections. It was suspected that, despite the military's assurances of neutrality, Abdelaziz Bouteflika had the support of the military establishment. Shortly before the election Bouteflika's six rivals withdrew their candidacy following allegations of massive electoral fraud in Bouteflika's favour. Despite official results stating that Bouteflika had won 73,8 percent of votes cast, the credibility of the poll was greatly compromised (Europa World Year Book 2003: 445).

After clandestine negotiations between the government and FIS representatives, the AIS announced a cessation of hostilities against the government. Bouteflika's plans for national reconciliation were embodied in a Law of Civil Concord, implemented in July 1999, whereby an amnesty was announced for members of radical Islamic fundamentalist groups who surrendered within a six-month deadline and who were not implicated in mass killings, rape or bomb attacks on public places. When the deadline expired in January 2000 it was estimated that some 1500-3000 AIS members had been granted a full pardon under the Law of

Civil Concord, some of whom declared themselves willing to aid the security forces in apprehending members of the GIA and of one of its break away groups the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC – Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat). Despite the progress made, violence persisted and in July 2000 the daily *Jeune Indépendant* claimed, citing unofficial sources, that 1100 civilians and an estimated 2000 radical Islamic fundamentalists had died since the expiry of the general amnesty deadline (Europa World Year Book 2003: 445).

In November 2000 the regime asserted that 6000 radical Islamic fundamentalists had been granted amnesty, but violent actions by the GIA and GSPC continued. Instability in Algeria showed and still shows few signs of abatement as the potential for and actual occurrence of violence continues to remain high. While there had been a temporary cessation of violence in cities since September 2001, Algiers in particular was rocked by bomb attacks. Violence also increased in the run up to the May 2002 legislative elections, though this was not solely as a result of the clash between radical Islamic fundamentalist groups and the regime. There was also a great deal of instability in the Kabylia region, where massive protests (500 000 people in the Berber capital Tizi Ouzou and 300 000 people in Algiers) had taken place the year before and had been met by brutal police repression. The protests centred on the Berber population's dissatisfaction with police brutality and government neglect in the Kabylia region and included demands for a greater focus on human rights, economic opportunities and cultural recognition. The government made a limited concession in terms of granting the Berber language Tamazight the status of an official language, but this was not seen as sufficient, and culminated in a boycott by the Berber parties of the 2002 legislative elections and continuing widespread anti-government violence. (Political Overview, Algeria Country Review 2004).

Algerians went to the polls on 30 May 2002 for the legislative elections, although these were characterised by a very high abstention rate – 50 percent. The results can be described in terms of a resurgence of the FLN (199 out of 389 seats), a noticeable drop in support for the RND (from 156 seats in 1997 to 47 seats in 2002), the endurance of the Moderate Islamic current in the form of Djaballah's Mouvement pour le Réforme National (MRN – Movement for National Reform) with 43 seats and the emergence of the Workers' party at the head of the secular democratic opposition with 21 seats (International Crisis Group 2002).

In 2003 isolated incidents of attacks on civilians and security forces by the GIA and GSPC continued to be reported, although Algerian officials maintained that fewer than 1000 radical Islamic fundamentalists remained active (Europa World Year Book 2003: 447). On 8 April 2004 Bouteflika was re-elected as President of Algeria with 85 percent of the vote, followed by various charges of alleged fraud behind his victory. In his speech concerning the plans for his new five year term, Bouteflika said that the focus should be shifted to the economy now that radical Islamic fundamentalist activity had, according to him, been reduced to “a few pockets of resistance”. He also noted, however, that links had been established between the radical Islamic fundamentalist groups and international terrorist organisations, and that the fight would have to continue (Meftahi 2004).

#### **4.3 WHY PEOPLE TURNED TO ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM**

“Algeria’s modern history is one of excesses. The colonial period was unusually harsh, the war of independence was particularly costly, the nationalisation of the economy was especially far-reaching after independence, the insistence on one-party rule was initially unwavering, and the projects for industrialisation were overly ambitious” (Pierre & Quandt 1995: 132). This quote gives an idea of the economic, political and social turmoil Algerians have had to experience throughout their history. It now becomes necessary to delve into some of the factors alluded to above and also to examine the rise of Islamic fundamentalist activism so as to better grasp the appeal that the FIS, arguably Algeria’s historically and politically most significant Islamic fundamentalist group, and its ideology held for a substantial portion of the Algerian electorate. A discussion of these structural factors will be followed by a thorough and critical analysis of the FIS’s ideology along the lines of the dialogic model of interpretation. The ideology of the FIS, whose rise, development and significance has been followed and documented in detail by various authors on the subject of Algeria, forms the central focus of this chapter. The ideologies of the radical Islamic fundamentalist AIS, GIA and GSPC, on which only limited information is available due to the often uncoordinated and scattered activities of the groups’ various cells, will be discussed thereafter within the political and economic context (thus again underlining the importance of taking into account structural factors) of the Algerian conflict as a whole.

Algerians, under the French administration, were discriminated against specifically on the grounds of being Muslims. It is particularly ironic that the French, though they have equated citizenship with nationhood and

have advocated the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity since the time of the French Revolution, denied the majority of Algerians the right to citizenship, without which they effectively had no political representation. The main problem was that to acquire citizenship one had to make a declaration of intent to belong to the nation of France and this would mean having to abandon one's personal religious status as a Muslim (Adamson 1998: 53). This effectively meant that only 2500 Muslims acquired citizenship between 1865 and 1934 (Adamson 1998: 55).

Thus it is not surprising that the majority of Algerians, having been deprived of political representation for so long and having had their religious status threatened by the French secular colonialist regime, should embrace the FLN's calls for a war of independence. The FLN's wartime ideology was largely based on Islam as a call to unity and *jihad*. Algerian fighters saw themselves as "brothers in faith" even before they classed themselves as "comrades in arms". Faith propelled them and their reliance on their belief that "God is Great" and their Islamic courage, which meant that they were prepared to die for their cause, were greater than any philosophy based on a left-wing model of revolutionary warfare would have been (Derradji 2002: 76-77). Equally important was the support of the Algerian population who saw it as their common objective to promote national independence for Algeria and their individual freedom. Linked to this was a love of the motherland, an integral part of the Islamic faith. Thus, providing support to the liberation army meant fighting the French infidels and fulfilling one's Islamic duty. Islam, as a dynamic force during war, was perceived as a fundamental component in the formation of the personality of the Algerian people (Derradji 2002: 78). Islam as a mobilising factor was thus used to great effect by the FLN during the war of independence. Particularly, an appeal was made to Algerians to recapture the importance of Islam in Algerian society, something which the French colonial administration had deliberately ignored.

Subsequently, however, Algerian presidents went back to undermining the status of Islam in Algerian politics and society. Boumedienne attempted a fusion between socialism, nationalism and Islam, thereby trying to moderate the cultural conflict between Francophones and Arabophones. The idea was to build a new Algerian identity based on Arab and Islamic roots, but within a secular context (Dekmejian 1995: 205). The problem here was that "Islamic socialism" owed little to either Islam or socialism and failed at both. Ultimately, the population was alienated by the government's intense focus on the Western ideology of socialism as an engine for rapid development, while Islam, though being advocated as a common reference point for both the regime and the population, did not receive the same degree of attention (Stone 1997: 149).

The regime thus monopolised Islam and also limited the activities of non-political Islamic political groups such as al-Qiyam<sup>11</sup> and Ahl al Da'wah. In an attempt to Arabise society, Egyptian Islamist teachers and clerics who had sought refuge from Nasser's persecution of the Muslim Brethren were imported. As such teaching was pursued in an Islamic, rather than secular context, however, what began as Arabisation in the 1960's had transformed into grass-roots political Islamic political action by the 1980s (Dekmejian 1995: 205-206).

Chadli's open rejection of Boumedienne's policies and his simultaneous unravelling of Algeria's socialist institutions created a policy vacuum of which the Islamic fundamentalists could take full advantage: in the absence of any other political alternative, they became the fastest-growing and most dynamic political movement in Algeria in the 1980s. The younger generation especially had begun to resent the government and its imported ideologies, as these had failed to realise the ambitious promises that had been made since independence had been attained<sup>12</sup> (Stone 1997: 155). Also, those who had received their education in Arabic had little chance of finding employment in the French speaking production and administrative sectors, something which contributed to the young people's anger and resentment at the state (Sonkosi 1998: 202). One important way in which Islamic fundamentalists spread their influence was by means of making use of mosques to discuss the wider issues facing Algeria, an activity which began to supplant normal forms of preaching. It was not until 1980, however, that the various Islamic fundamentalist-orientated factions started merging into something resembling an organised movement (Stone 1997: 161).

The Chadli government began its first major crackdown against Islamic fundamentalists in reaction to increasing attacks on women wearing Western dress and confrontations on university campuses between pro Islamic fundamentalist and pro Marxist students (Dekmejian 1995: 206). In 1984, Chadli adopted elements

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<sup>11</sup> Al-Qiyam was an Islamic cultural organisation which had been created in 1964 by al-Hachemi Tijani, Mohammed Khider and Malek Bennabi and had the objective of proclaiming the supremacy of Islamic values over "national-populism". As the first real manifestation of political Islam, it also sought to respond to "colonialism and decadence" and called on the government to impose the *Sharia*. Al-Qiyam also called for the state to enforce Islamic customs, such as the closure of shops during hours of prayer and occasionally mounted campaigns against "immodestly dressed women" (Stone 1997: 150).

<sup>12</sup> An interesting study was undertaken by Merzouk (1997), who interviewed five young university-educated men from Oran in order to determine why they support the FIS. He concludes that in the absence of efficient state structures and increasingly unstable family relationships young people rally towards activist Islam as an alternative ideology. Young educated Algerians also see themselves and their beliefs as superior to those of their parents as they can read and understand the *Quran* directly and are not reliant on an oral transfer of knowledge and culture like previous generations of Algerians.

of the Islamic fundamentalists' agenda in a new family code in an attempt to outflank them. He also released Madani, Sahnoun and 21 other prominent Islamic fundamentalists who had been detained and later in the same year opened the ambitious Emir Abdelkabar University of Islamic Sciences in Constantine, an institution which has subsequently played a central role in the development of the Islamic fundamentalist movement in Algeria. Although there is no concrete evidence showing that the Islamic fundamentalists actually initiated the riots in October 1988, the unrest provided them with their first real opportunity of influencing the actions of the Chadli government, by means of projecting themselves as the unofficial leaders of the uprising in its last days (Stone 1997: 162).

One of the main reasons for the rise and popularity of Islamic fundamentalism was economic. As already mentioned, Boumedienne made use of a socialist ideology, closely coupled with a policy of industrial and agricultural nationalisation. Although considerable wealth was amassed in the 1970s thanks to the sales of natural gas and petroleum and the Algerian government was able to successfully establish a social welfare system for its population, these successes proved to be short-lived (Sonkosi 1998: 201). As Takeyh (2003: 63) puts it, "the poor planning that favoured underproducing heavy industry, a neglected agricultural sector, and a bloated and corrupt bureaucracy went unnoticed as the petrodollars continued to mask the economy's deep-seated structural flaws". In the 1980s, when the oil market suddenly experienced a serious decline, the regime was faced with an enormous foreign debt, diminished revenues, as well as a population who was seriously disillusioned by the failures of state socialism.

The economic crisis which would culminate in the "Black October" riots of 1988 can be traced back to the policy mistakes made in the 1960s and 1970s, but more specifically has its origins at a meeting of Organisation Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) countries in Geneva in 1985, where a decision was taken against the maintenance of low production quotas. As a result there was a fall first in the price of oil and then in the price of gas, which culminated in Algeria's hydrocarbon earnings falling by 40 percent and its foreign debt surpassing \$24 billion. In reaction the regime, which refused to default on its debt obligations, introduced a wide ranging austerity package. It was forced to reduce subsidies on foodstuffs, had to order inefficient co-operative farms to sell off land, drastically cut back on imports and impose a freeze on wages (Stone 1997: 66). The government also moved towards liberalisation and deregulation which entailed the cancellation of many social-welfare services. Both the urban working class and the poor suffered under these measures and resentment grew with the increasing gap between rich and poor (Takeyh

2003: 66). While ordinary Algerians suffered economically, party and state officials were allowed access to special state shops and continued to ostentatiously parade their wealth. It was the practice of corruption, though probably not higher in Algeria than in other Arab states, that particularly disgusted Algerians, who had developed a strong sense of egalitarianism during the war of independence. Demographic factors also played a part here. By 1988 the Algerian population had doubled to around 23 million and as approximately 65 percent of Algerians were younger than 25, this proved an immense strain for the country's education system and infrastructure. Immigration from rural to urban areas meant that up to eight family members lived in one room in unsanitary conditions. This went hand in hand with a rising unemployment rate and a scarcity of basic food items, due to a depletion of the rural population, ineffective management and repeated droughts (Stone 1997: 66-67).

In reaction to the economic and political crises, and particularly the "Black October" riots, Chadli embarked on the road of political liberalisation and democratisation. Algerians now had 60 parties to choose from (Sonkosi 1998: 205). Also, while the situation remained explosive, initially benefits such as a relatively free political atmosphere with a flourishing press, competitive political parties and intense debate over the direction in which the state was heading were visible. At the same time, however, the presence of the spectre of economic decline and a prominent military hierarchy uneasy with any changes to the status quo remained. "Algeria's liberal interregnum was bound to be short-lived, as the forces of radicalism would soon be plotting to reclaim the political landscape" (Takeyh 2003: 66).

As already mentioned earlier, the focus on ideology in this chapter, and the remaining ones, is supplemented by an analysis of some of the useful elements of rationalist analysis, namely structural factors in the form of political, cultural and socio-economic conditions which, in this case, led to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria and eventually also contributed to the eruption of the Algerian conflict. An economic crisis impacting severely on the living standards of Algerians, coupled with the Arabised, politicised youth's frustration at not being able to find employment in the predominantly French-speaking job sector and general unhappiness with the repressive and inefficient political elite had readied the Algerian electorate for a political alternative. It now becomes important, keeping in mind the importance of an Islamic identity for Algerians and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as discussed above, to examine the ideology of Algeria's most prominent Islamic fundamentalist group: the FIS.

## **4.4 THE IDEOLOGY OF THE FIS**

When Boudiaf was appointed as president by the HCS, he immediately denounced the FIS for claiming a monopoly on religious belief. His stance seems to have culminated in a belief that Islam did have its place in society, but that there should be a definite distinction between the public political and private religious spheres. “In Islam, tolerance, understanding and modesty can go together with democracy” he announced to the world’s press in February 1992. However, he also stated that “a closed Islam, which harks back to 13 or 14 centuries ago cannot work with democracy ... Islam should not accept extremism. Mosques should be a place of preaching, or rest and moderation. Religion has its place but democracy is a march towards modern society which includes political pluralism” (Adams 1992: 21).

### **4.4.1 The official FIS programme of 1989**

What then did the FIS’s ideology in terms of its political and economic tenets look like in 1992 and why did secularists<sup>13</sup> perceive it as such a threat? The two major themes in the Algerian Islamic fundamentalists’, and more specifically the FIS’s, propaganda were that Algeria had been infiltrated by a number of ideologies that had brought atheism in their wake and the general feeling that the Algerian revolution had been made to stray from its initial path. The solution to these two central problems as perceived by the FIS in particular was to call for the creation of an Islamic state which would also automatically entail being cleansed of the superstitions and impiety built up over the centuries “by colonialism and its instruments within the country”. Islam was perceived as “an inexhaustible fount for references for religion, myth, metaphysics and civilisation” which meant that Islamic fundamentalists had no desire to turn to any other ideologies to supplement their views. Although Western models were rejected, this did not mean that the benefits of science and technology were equally done away with. The uses thereof were willingly accepted. The *Quran* served as the source of the absolute truth that could not be doubted (Rouadja 1996: 71-72). The perceived threat of alternative ideologies and modernity, the view of an Islamic state as a solution to this threat, and the exalted position of Islam in a cultural as well as political context fit in with the general characteristics of

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<sup>13</sup> Apart from ideological reasons why Algeria’s secularists would perceive the FIS as a threat, it is also important to remember the vested interests of the military in the top echelons of government who would necessarily have seen the rise of an oppositional power, especially one strongly denouncing government corruption as the FIS did, as a major threat.

Islamic fundamentalism, as discussed in the previous chapter of the dissertation. These are: authoritarianism, a messianic spirit, the subordination of secular politics to their religious beliefs, a belief in the infallibility of holy scripture, rigid adherence to the fundamentals of the Islamic faith as literally interpreted from the *Quran* and the *Sunna*. They also include a campaign to impose the *Sharia* on society to purge those influences which are felt to detract from or demean the fundamentals of Islam; a belief in the supernatural; charismatic leadership and enforced moralism (Husain 1995: 45). Simplistically put then, Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria arose as a result of disillusionment with the secularist government's attempts at introducing modernity to Algeria, which had resulted in socio-economic chaos and high corruption characterising the political and military elite. This had gone hand in hand with or was even preceded by a perceived drop in the level of morality when it came to social and other conduct.

How exactly did the FIS then propose solving these problems on an economic and political basis? Three central principles form the backbone of the FIS's programme, which was announced in 1989. These include the aim to:

- 1 "Keep to the Islamic *Sharia* and its fair, moderate and exhaustive method, which alone allows the treatment of all questions" and conforms to the divine word.
- 2 "Use all scientific resources in a methodical way for a healthy approach to questions in abeyance and in order to better define problems, to analyse and then resolve them; take advantage of diverse techniques to put into practice the essentials of our activity as it is true that competence and experience are the necessary conditions for any healthy, beneficial and committed enterprise".
- 3 "Conform to the aspirations of the Muslim people of Algeria who wish to advance and break free from the shackles of colonialism for good and get rid of the multifaceted burden of underdevelopment, armed with their faith, strong in their Muslim convictions and confident in God the Almighty". The FIS's proposal is to be put into practice knowing "nothing other than the popular will of the people" (The Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria 2000: 276).

The principles are rather vague and though seemingly straightforward do not go into the finer details of how they are meant to be realised, something which one would expect the FIS's "political plan of action", the next part of the programme, to cover.

The ideological framework of the FIS rests on the fact that the "Algerian people are a Muslim people" whose "Islamic nature is as ancient as it is true". This, according to the FIS, justifies its use of Islam as "the framework and ideological reference point for political action that embraces all aspects of life". In a world in crisis, Islam is proving itself to be the most reliable ideology on which to found a political plan (The Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria 2000: 277). There is thus no doubt that Islam is the ideological reference point for the FIS, based on the Algerian people's adherence to it as a religion and on the failure of competing ideologies. This is distinctly reminiscent of the kind of ideology used to mobilise people during the Algerian war of independence, though in this case the idea is not merely to engage in a struggle against the status quo, but to present a feasible alternative to the secular system in place.

The following section, which overall deals with the FIS's domestic policy, focuses first of all on its political axis. Politics, according to the FIS, is legitimate, characterised by advisory freedom, the existence of co-ordination and a focus on dialogue, with the aim of arriving at "a reasoned, realistic, just commitment and at moderate views along a trustworthy path". Two other important notions are those of the FIS policy being adopted out of choice without coercion, and a focus on *shura* (mutual consultation) to prevent any tyranny, though this is not elaborated on any more. The FIS's political axis seems to be specifically based on the notion of ending any form of tyranny or corruption at regime level, along with opening up the possibility of "equality of opportunity", in other words, appointment on the basis of merit rather than connections on social, economic and political levels. This would also entail working closely together according to the general will of the *umma* and promoting its well being, as well as encouraging the spirit of collective work to exterminate individualistic tendencies and selfishness. Freedom of speech and self-criticism would also be encouraged by setting up systems of economic, political and administrative accountability at all levels along with a policy of informing people and making them feel responsible to the principles espoused by the FIS (Derradji 2002: 263-264).

The above appears to be a moderate view with an extensive focus on equal opportunity and merit so as to do away with tyranny and abuse of power. A strategy by means of which abuse of power is to be countered

seems to be the focus on a collective spirit which is meant to override individual ambitions and inspire a sense of mutual dedication to and responsibility for the FIS principles. This point of view can be understood when placed against the corrupt practices of the FLN regime's political and military elite.

A number of ways are consequently suggested in which the FIS proposes to "correct" the political system. One of these is making political legislation subject to Islamic *Sharia* law. What seems of crucial importance to the FIS is the reform of the military establishment in order to promote the protection of the country and people. Security policy is also to be reformed in order to free it from the taint of tyranny or coercion and to ensure that it conforms to the *Sharia*, while reform of the information sector is planned in order to protect Algeria from cultural dependency and cultural conquest (Derradji 2002: 264-265). While these reforms are to a large extent logical and reflect the need to reconstruct the workings of Algerian politics, certain criticisms can be levied. Reference to the *Sharia* is persistent, but vague. No effort is made to explain exactly what a subordination of political legislation to *Sharia* law would entail and how this would be of benefit to Algerian society. In terms of the reform of the information sector which sounds somewhat like introducing censorship of foreign influences one might argue that cutting off Algerians from other cultures would not necessarily only be beneficial in terms of preventing "cultural dependency and cultural conquest" but could lead to young people's misconstruing the way they see other cultures, specifically those of the West, and result in misunderstandings and prejudices.

Additional reforms include those of the judicial system "by implementing judicial immunity as determined in the *Sharia* law in order to prepare for an environment of divine justice, far removed from injustice and oppression". In addition a review of the voting system is mentioned, which aims at establishing a free and fair electoral system so as to allow people "real participation in managing the state of affairs and getting legitimate representatives in political, executive and legislative assemblies" (Derradji 2002: 266). Again an explanatory gap exists specifically in terms of the reform of the justice system. There is no additional explanation as to what "judicial immunity" and "divine justice" entail, which limits the noble sounding precept of the absence of injustice and oppression.

When it comes to the economic axis, the FIS focuses on the economic dimension as ultimately aiming to achieve the elevation of mankind "and his happiness here or in the after-life". It is with this objective in mind, which apparently combines the spiritual and divine with a mundane matter like the economy, that the

FIS approaches agriculture, industry, commerce and monetary policy. A number of points are listed which the FIS proposes in order to bring about a more efficient agricultural policy. These include using the most advanced technology to work the land, presupposing that the land has been distributed in accordance with the *Sharia*, without any form of nepotism and corruption. In addition, there is to be a focus on “breeding” so as to allow Algeria to move away from importing basic foodstuffs, mention is made of the need to encourage small and medium-sized production units, as well as of the necessity of planning for the country’s long-term needs. Furthermore, it is recommended that the level of the quality of agricultural teaching be raised and that Algeria’s agricultural sector become internationally competitive, though it remains a priority to satisfy local needs before embarking on international trade (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 281-283). Although again the role of the *Sharia* is only mentioned in passing here, the suggestions address the neglect and failure of past regimes when dealing with the agricultural sector and offer some valid ideas in addressing these. Of course, further judgement would have to be reserved for potential future programmes of action and actual policies of implementation and their practical functioning.

When it comes to industry the FIS argues that development of this sector is essential for a renaissance in Algeria, but equally stresses that “human values and dignity must not be sacrificed to the machine”. Similarly as with the section dealing with agriculture the FIS programme then moves on to a list of recommendations dealing with the industrial sector. These include encouraging the existence of small and medium-sized businesses in order to reduce unemployment, but at the same time ensuring that Algeria is not reliant on foreign help, which would amount to economic dependence. Furthermore, the importance of teaching is stressed, as well as the development of research plants in order to produce highly qualified experts and technicians in various scientific fields and increase Algeria’s international industrial competitiveness. Collective responsibility is also advocated along with a concern for the dignity and rights of the worker by ensuring good mental and physical health and social conditions. The existence of an Arab and Islamic common market, as well as greater inter-African trade is advocated as well in order to reduce economic dependency on industrialised states. There is also an emphasis on the need to limit state intervention in the industrial sector, so as to protect the workings of the private sector, while at the same time making sure, however, that the private sector does not develop into a monopoly and encroach on public interests (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 283-285). Again, there are a number of solid ideas here, which recognise the importance of industry for Algeria, but at the same time see the rights of human beings as equally important. An interesting observation is the FIS’s almost frantic reiteration of wanting to avoid

dependency, be it economic or technological, at all costs through independent research and a trade with developing rather than developed countries. Though this can be explained in terms of a fierce sense of Algerian independence and a desire to protect society from corrupt foreign influence, one needs to consider whether such a policy is actually feasible. The FIS's stance on this particular matter seems to have shifted to some extent in later years though, when in a letter to the US State Department in 1995, it stated its intention to, should it come to power, participate fully in the global economy, to make foreign trade a priority and to attract foreign capital in order to revitalise the economy (Shahin 2003: 135).

The FIS programme consequently shifts its focus to both commerce and finance. In terms of commerce, the focus is on reforming the commercial system by means of the abolition of monopolies and all criminal activities, such as fraud. Emphasis is also placed on the need to move towards the decentralisation of businesses. Standards are to be reviewed in line with the *Sharia*. When it comes to external trade, great care is taken to emphasise that this should never take precedence over internal trade and that any imbalance between imports and exports is to be prevented, even if this means resorting to autarky. Export serves the role of Algeria making its mark on the world market, as well as the ability to “fulfil our duty toward humanity through the propagation of peace in the Islamic sense, of justice, and by the support of oppressed peoples and nations that are victims of colonial policy” (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 285-287). The focus then seems to be on decentralisation and maintaining a careful balance between imports and exports. Again, as in previous cases, only passing mention is made of the *Sharia* with no additional explanations. Briefly, the financial sector focuses on the creation of a social solidarity and credit fund, conforming to the *Sharia* and aimed at helping citizens in the case of economic and social crisis. Prosperous Algerians and Muslims abroad are encouraged to invest in Algeria and the banking system is to be reformed to protect the assets of the citizens and facilitate their participation in the enrichment of the country through investment (Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 287-288). Again the emphasis seems to be on a fiercely protective stance when it comes to Algeria's financial dealings, with a preference being expressed for Algerians and Muslims to invest in the country, while nothing is said about Western investors.

Ciment (1997: 153) argues that the basic intention of the FIS's economic programme appears to be a rapid and thorough privatisation of the economy, which goes hand in hand with a hostility to socialism and socialist ideas. Ultimately, the FIS's policy is an attempt to balance the need for human laws and institutions with a reliance on God as the determiner of a just economic order, which leads critics to argue that this

cannot possibly result in a realistic economic programme. The FIS does not engage itself with economic theory, nor does it analyse specific economic problems such as the causes of inflation, surplus value and the like. Instead, economic programmes are based on the notion of individual virtue and a moral order derived from the revealed word of God. As Roy (in Ciment 1997: 155) puts it, “The idea of building a modern economy that would function only through the virtue of the economic actors is an illusion” and because of this, in the absence of virtue, the opposite of the fundamentalist ideal will emerge: abuse of power, speculation and corruption. On a cautionary note it could be argued that the FIS in its 1989 programme does present ideas that engage directly with Algeria’s socio-economic woes, though these, in terms of their focus on privatisation and the need to attract foreign policy, are not necessarily all that different from the policies proposed by the Algerian regime and might not prove more effective than the regime’s policies currently in place.

The FIS’s social policy hinges on the importance on two basic precepts. The first is the right to existence which views man as “the creator of civilisation” and therefore opposes the notion of birth control. Instead, the community must find a way to protect all newborn children and guarantee equal opportunities for everyone. The second is the right to protection and care. It is here where the right to education is of prime importance as it simultaneously instils both notions of right and duty in children (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 289). The FIS’s views about birth control can be understood from a religious perspective, nonetheless one needs to critically take into account the demographic situation in Algeria which has led to a population explosion and a vast increase in the country’s youth and the feasibility of being able to care for and provide employment to all newborn children.

Education is seen as very important by the FIS and is, not surprisingly, focused on the precepts of the *Sharia*, including the segregation of the sexes and good values. The ultimate aim is to lower the education “deficit” and put an end to graduate unemployment, while simultaneously finding ways of giving those who have failed academically a second chance to be reinserted into society. A theme already picked up earlier runs through the FIS’s education policy too – there is a strong focus on eliminating external influences contrary to Islamic values and on ensuring that no help from abroad is required to turn out top-quality graduates. Teacher training, as well as adequate financial compensation, is of crucial significance because of the teacher’s additional role of instructor of exemplary behaviour and moral values. Socialisation is also important within the educational system, which is meant to figure as a microcosm of the *umma* as a whole

(The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 289-291). Again, a number of good ideas are present here, specifically targeting problems faced by Algerian society due to the policies of the FLN regime. As with the other policies, however, there are no specifics as to how these would be implemented. A problem could be seen in the importance that is attached to the notion of morality when it comes to the FIS's educational policy. This opens up the possibility of enforcing one particular and definitive interpretation of what is considered moral, in other words, the FIS's reading of the Islam, which precludes the possibility of other options. Dekmejian (1995: 207) argues that judging from Madani's educationalist background a stress on Islamic education is understandable, though by far not sufficient for the establishment and rule of an Islamic state. This, he argues, also points to the fact that the FIS is far more adept at political mobilisation and philanthropic work than ideological development.

Two points that consequently receive particular attention in the FIS programme are the right to vote and a strong emphasis on the Algerian family structure. The right moral and behavioural credentials qualify "man" to vote and to stand for election, which will mean that he is responsible to God and the entire community. The Algerian family has long been the victim of adverse influences under colonialism and neo-colonialism. Various suggestions are made to help rebuild its importance. These include guaranteeing work for the father of the family, providing adequate housing, making an effort to ensure the return of emigrants, and taking care of the mother who is raising the children. Motherhood is perceived as a veritable profession and should be rewarded with "maternity allowance". Women, because of the important part they played in the golden age of Muslim civilisation in the spheres of thought, literature, *fiqh*, politics and medicine, and because of their crucial contribution to the war of independence, form an integral part of Algerian society, according to the FIS. In addition, women are seen as an irreplaceable force on a psychological, social and cultural scale which is why their potential needs to be channelled constructively to contribute to the development of Algerian civilisation. It is recommended that the faith and good morals of women are re-enforced, that women are guarded from all repression and that the slackening of morals and blind imitation is fought against and that society is enlightened about the crucial role and mission of women. "In fact, Islam was and remains the religion that makes no distinction between the woman and the man, her brother". Provision is also made in the FIS programme for families who do not earn enough to survive, provisions for the elderly and reassessment of the prison policy to ensure that prisoners can one day be successfully reinserted into society (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 292-295). The main point of contention here seems to be the FIS's attitude towards women. It is not, for example, made clear that women have the right to vote and stand

for elections, nor whether they are allowed to work, other than in their educational capacity at home. The fight against “the slackening of morals and blind imitation” which the FIS advocates when it comes to women is also prone to misinterpretation and the possibility of abuse, as a Muslim woman wearing Western clothing or asserting her right to work could be accused of being amoral or “blindly imitating” the West.

The little that is said in the FIS programme about its foreign policy can be summarised as a need to uphold Algeria’s international prestige, its moderate position and its willingness to support any just cause and help any destitute nation, within the framework of the *Sharia* (The Islamic Salvation Front 2000: 290). When the FIS 1989 programme was published, the FIS still perceived itself as having a fair chance of coming to power, as was proved in the 1990 local elections and the 1991 legislative elections when it won an impressive majority of votes. It was only after 1992, when the FIS had been banned from Algerian politics that it had to start reformulating its foreign policy and become clearer in terms of its objectives, as well as show increasing signs of reconciliation towards the West. This becomes evident in a 1996 outline written by the FIS which is somewhat more detailed than the 1989 programme and includes a commitment to treaties signed before the take-over of the military backed regime in 1992, non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states and withholding support for Islamic movements there, and finally a willingness to co-exist peacefully with the West (Shahin 2003: 129).

The FIS views the European-inspired state system as potentially unstable and destructive because it is based on interests and power rather than justice. One of the main negative aspects of the West is the legacy of colonialism which continues to persist. While Western culture is not viewed as singularly evil by the FIS, it is still perceived as going through a crisis. Therefore, the FIS is of the opinion that Islam, as a set of values and a civilisation, should be looked at in order to ensure justice, equality and freedom and also to uphold moral political principles at the domestic and international levels (Shahin 2003: 125).

The FIS, in addition, considers secular regimes in Arab and Muslim countries illegitimate and therefore temporary. Therefore, the establishment of an Islamic state and eventually the restoration of the caliphate is necessary for Muslims to reconcile their values with their societies. The basic precepts of this model include the restoration of human dignity through freedom (which is not absolute but restricted by justice), the recognition of God’s sovereignty, the protection of property, the freedom of opinion, belief, thought and opposition to tyranny, the right of people to elect their leaders and hold them accountable and the enjoyment

of equal opportunities, education and welfare. Furthermore, the Islamic political system is based on collective leadership and the collective responsibility of society to ensure pluralism and individual initiative (Shahin 2003: 126-128). The FIS's foreign policy then has evolved to become more pragmatic and seeking closer co-operation with other states, especially in its struggle to increase its international viability as an opposition movement capable of providing a peaceful and politically and economically solid alternative to the current Algerian regime. Its precepts fit in with its domestic policy, based on the necessity of accepting Islam and the *Sharia* as a basis for civilisation and also serve to expound why this is the case, namely as a result of the FIS's disillusionment with Western ideologies and their inability to run societies that are morally intact.

In accordance with Islamic fundamentalist thought, notably the ideas of Qutb, as discussed in the previous chapter, the FIS does not specify what an Islamic state would look like, nor how it would function. According to Qutb, an idea also adhered to by the FIS, the development of a system of rules and regulations only becomes possible once a society has submitted to God's law. Because divine law is the only law that is valid, the government has more of an administrative than a ruling function, enforcing pre-existing rules and regulations, which, when clear, are "beyond human question and interpretation". These include rules related to prayer and worship, prohibitions against usury, monopolies, gambling, drinking and prostitution, punishment of thieves by cutting off their hands, excommunication of rapists and public stoning to death of adulterers. As opposed to a democratic system, there is no political contract. The responsibility of the ruler to the rules and *vice-versa* is mediated by adherence to Islamic law - as long as its rules are scrupulously implemented, the ruler is doing the ruled a great service. (Euben 1999: 80-81). The FIS in its 1989 programme thus makes valid suggestions to address various aspects of Algeria's political, economic and social life that had been mismanaged or neglected by the FLN government. Nonetheless, the programme does not provide concrete measures for implementation of the at times only vaguely enunciated ideas, nor does it give an indication of the political and economic structures that an Islamic state would possess. The argument underlying this "oversight" is that an Islamic society first has to become sufficiently moral before an Islamic state, whose rules and regulations would be developed over time if and when the need arises, can be implemented. This "moralisation of society" was the approach followed by the FIS when it had won a majority in the local elections. Though the changes enforced are in accordance with what Islamic fundamentalists generally advocate, there are nonetheless some discrepancies between the apparently

moderate nature of the FIS programme, as elucidated above, and the regulations it introduced at local government level.

#### **4.4.2. Rhetoric vs practical implementation – some discrepancies**

It is when one considers the limited practical implementation that there has been of the FIS's 1989 programme at the local political level that one realises that the FIS's "moderate", yet vague rhetoric about a society based on the *Sharia* can lead to enforcements of morality that those who had to comply with had trouble labelling "moderate". Roy (1994: 76) explains that neo-fundamentalists, as he terms Islamic fundamentalist groups like the FIS, still very much adhere to the populist "return to Islam" theme but take this onto a new ultra-conservative level and replace a discourse on the state with a discourse on society. The aim furthermore is to create certain "Islamised spaces" or, differently put, Muslim micro-societies, which, once established, serve as "models" for what the whole of society is supposed to look like one day. The main aim then is to implement the *Sharia* and purify mores while the political, economic and social realms are only challenged in words.

This reflects the emphasis that Islamic fundamentalists place on a narrowly-conceived reading of the law as an essential component of Islam, as discussed in Chapter three of this study. A high degree of social conservatism is pursued, whereby the FIS, in accordance to what general fundamentalist practice professes, crusade against prostitution, pornography, the selling or use of alcohol and drugs, gambling, Western music, singing, dancing, wearing ornaments of gold and silver, palm reading, astrology, fortune-telling, fatalism and superstition. The idea is thus to return to the simplicity, austerity, purity and piety of Islam's classical period. This includes praying five times a day, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, and waging *jihad* against infidels, which for the Wahhabi school of thought, which has greatly influenced many Islamic fundamentalists, include not only non-Muslims, but also Muslims who do not rigorously adhere to their faith. Furthermore, a strict and scrupulous adherence to the *Sharia* is demanded and, by implication, severe punishments for those who transgress it (Husain 1995: 45-46).

There were a number of ways in which the FIS went about increasing society's morality and ridding it of its "sins" during the summer of 1990. The directives that were applied included banning men from wearing shorts on the beaches, outlawing *rai* music, prohibiting alcohol and the operation of brothels and setting up a moral police in places to ensure that these measures were adhered to. Algeria's citizens did not comply with

these new regulations without protest. The town of Bechar came up with a strong letter of protest which centred on the argument that the prohibition of alcohol would ruin the tourism sector and that if not allowed alcohol young people might be tempted to turn towards drugs and methylated spirits instead, which would be even more destructive to their health. The authors of the letter of protest ultimately made the observation that the FIS “is solely obsessed with its crusade against everything that offends its totalitarian conception of life: alcoholic drinks, the condition of women, the mixing of the sexes, singing music etc ... as if the existence of these things constitutes a certain impediment to the blossoming and prosperity of Algeria” (Rouadjia 1996: 87-90). Roy (1994: 80) terms this kind of practice “Puritanism”, which is characterised by the rejection of all distraction, music, theatre and the desire to eradicate places of pleasure and leisure. All that is permitted and deemed acceptable is a return to religious practice and fear of God, which Roy argues is actually rather far from traditional Islam where pleasure is legitimate as long as it does not transgress either the *Sharia* or the superior goals of man, an argument mirroring the quote from Bechar’s concerned citizens above. In addition, Roy (1994: 82) argues that neofundamentalists are obsessed with the corrupting influences of Western culture, another reason why “pleasurable” activities specifically of Western origin may be deemed immoral or corrupting influences. The protective attitude towards Algerian culture, as seen above, plays an important part in the FIS’s political programme.

As discussed earlier on, the FIS programme focuses on the importance of the role of women in Algerian society and also mentions that they are equal to men. There is a definite discrepancy, however, when one regards the treatment of women at the hand of FIS members during their brief reign at local government level, where women were increasingly pressured to wear the veil, mixed beaches were designated where women were forbidden to wear two-piece bathing suits, and incidents of physical aggression against women in bathing attire were reported, though the FIS denied having anything to do with the latter. Despite the FIS’s apparently considerate and appreciative attitude towards women in its 1989 programme, a strong focus on morality nonetheless led the FIS to staunchly refuse to accept a Western value system that on the juridical level grants women more or less the same rights and freedoms as are granted to men. Allowing women freedom is equated with allowing them the right to “take liberties”, which would result in lowering the dignity of men (Rouadjia 1996: 86-87).

Roy (1994: 83) substantiates this argument by pointing out the fact that the women’s organisations linked to the FIS are singularly silent, that the FIS opposes women’s right to work and to vote (something that is

neither alluded to nor clearly stated in the 1989 programme) and that when it comes to questions of personal status (wives, family, divorce) a literal reading and application of the letter of the *Sharia*<sup>14</sup> is favoured.

Brumberg (1997: 16-17) provides some useful insights into why the FIS adopted a deceptively moderate rhetoric in its 1989 programme, focusing on notions like “choice rather than coercion” and freedom from tyranny and undertaking to follow nothing but “the popular will of the people”, while the practical implementation of its version of what an Islamic state should morally constitute at local level did not necessarily correspond to this tone. He discusses reformist fundamentalism, which upon closer examination seems to suggest elements of the FIS political agenda. Reformist fundamentalism is fuelled by a utilitarianism that views politics and the state itself merely as a vehicle for realising the collective moral will (in the form of an Islamic state). This model does not bode well for democracy, as it only embraces liberal notions such as gradual political liberalisation and the strengthening of civil society in order to arrive at a unified ethical order which effectively precludes the basis of forging a “democratic bargain”. The closer this model gets to realising its ultimate goal, the more it threatens the vital interests of ruling elites, thereby hindering a transition to pluralist politics. Ciment (1997: 133-134) elaborates on Brumberg’s scepticism about the compatibility of democracy with the idea of an Islamic polity. The presence of a leader who qualifies to be God’s vice-regent on earth, according to Islamic law, undermines the notion of democracy, as a system of checks and balances would necessarily fall away if sovereignty emanates from God alone. An elected assembly would only have the power to counsel His vice-regent on earth, not to legislate. Finally, how is it possible for those who believe that they represent the will of God on earth tolerate opposition parties? Logically, they cannot.

Brumberg (1997: 18), in addition to his discussion of reformist fundamentalism, focuses on tactical modernism. This entails the selective use of modernist themes to advance a fundamentalist agenda.

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<sup>14</sup> While the *Quran* explicitly focuses on the equality of rights between men and women concerning marriage and divorce, Islamic scholars have in later centuries interpreted it in such a way as to place women in subjection. In addition, the father exercises absolute authority over his wife and children, rules apply which permit a man the right to uncontested divorce, but deny it to women, and the veil has been transformed from a means of protection to a sign of ownership by men. Furthermore, men largely control property and Islamic law largely favours men over women in matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance (Ciment 1997: 69).

When Islamic fundamentalists address political allies who might adhere to a more secularist agenda they will integrate ideas, symbols and themes drawn from the democratic repertoire<sup>15</sup>, whereas political allies with similar views to theirs will hear the undiluted version of what an Islamic state is to entail. This may to some extent explain the concessions made to pluralism and democracy by the FIS in its rhetoric, while the practical implementation thereof, though only of limited duration and extent, indicated a definite authoritarian tendency.

#### **4.4.3 FIS ideology after 1992**

The question that needs to be examined now is how the FIS's ideology has evolved and progressed in the years since its banishment from political affairs. Attention is briefly paid to the FIS's stance at the Rome accords, before moving on to selected statements in interviews with members of its leadership conducted in 1996 and to its recent political platform as announced in 2002. The Rome Accords, which were also signed by the FIS leadership, proved to be a remarkable agreement between Algeria's secular and religious forces (Takeyh 2003: 70). All signatories agreed to the renunciation of violence as a means to achieve or retain power, the rejection of dictatorship, the recognition of the right of the people to defend their elected institutions, respect for both the regulated transfer of power through the popular vote and political, cultural and ethnic pluralism and the guarantee of both individual and collective fundamental freedoms. They also called for the non-interference of the army in political affairs, as well as the release of imprisoned FIS leaders (Shahin 2003: 134). The fact that the FIS leadership agreed to the above principles and put its name to them suggests that it is moving in a democratic direction, a significant observation when one takes into account the doubts about the democratic nature of the FIS as discussed earlier on. It now becomes essential to examine more closely what the FIS leadership itself had to say in 1996 about its ideology.

In an interview conducted in 1996 with Ghemati Abdelkrim and Ould Adda Abdelkrim, two members of the FIS leadership, Denaud (1997: 67-69) posed questions about the FIS, its history, organisation and political thought. Ghemati Abdelkrim said that the FIS did view itself as democratic, as they accept the "ballot box

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<sup>15</sup> The FIS stance on pluralism and democracy is not easily pinned down. Support for democracy, pluralism and power rotation seemed to form a key part of Madani's principles when the FIS was still a legal political party. However, there was always a segment within the FIS that was determinedly opposed to such "heretical" thoughts. Belhadj vociferously opposed democracy or any governing framework that detracted from the religious mission of the state and had the potential of subverting the divine order. In this view it was blasphemous to suggest that God's will should submit to the popular will in the governance of the country (Takeyh 2003: 68).

verdict” (*le verdict des urnes*), the principle of power transfer, the existence of a parliamentary life and a political life, all of which are essential elements of a democracy. Furthermore, Ould Adda Abdelkrim insisted that it is important not to confuse the FIS’s wish to introduce an Islamic state (*un Etat islamique*) with the introduction of a theocratic state (*un Etat théocratique*). The model proposed by the FIS will not be theocratic, but instead its fundamental principles will be grounded in the teachings of Islam. This does not involve cutting human beings off from modernity. Ghemati Abdelkrim added here that their vision of an Islamic state means establishing a civil state based on Islamic principles and the notion of consultation with its people. This would also include an elected president, an elected parliament, an independent justice system and opposition parties. In addition, people should be able to choose their societal project within the confines of a democratic system.

Whereas the views espoused by the two FIS leaders interviewed definitely contain democratic elements and thus mirror what was discussed at the meeting in Rome, references to the exact role that “Islamic teachings” and the *Sharia* are to play in the envisaged Islamic state remain vague. When asked about how implementing the *Sharia* in all spheres of life, including imposing the veil on women could be deemed compatible with the FIS’s support for a multiparty system and democracy, Ould Adda Abdelkrim answered that the *Sharia* itself would not be able to resolve all the problems in a society as complex as the Algerian one. Nonetheless, its application would be naturally realised (*trouvera une realisation naturelle*) in a just and purified society. Furthermore, as the people have been given the chance to choose a particular project for society out of a range of different options, in other words as they have chosen the Islamic project through democratic means, this would also mean that the *Sharia* has been chosen and can therefore not be “imposed”. The minority who has not chosen this particular option will have to wait for the next elections. In addition, the Islamic project is economic and social above everything else and in terms of individual liberties above all wants to educate and to convince. This does not mean to insist on a particular kind of behaviour, but to create a climate to ultimately convince people to adhere to the FIS’s project of society (Denaud 1997: 74-75).

Though this is suavely put and the argument about majority rule making it obsolete to talk about the notion of imposition is cunning, the practices of “educating” and “convincing” people to adhere to an Islamic way of life envisaged by the FIS could quite easily turn into threats and coercion. It seems that in 1996 elements of the FIS leadership still or again advocated an adherence to democratic principles, though these, for several reasons as discussed above, are by no means incontestable. Having delved into some of the FIS’s earlier

proposals to ameliorate political, social and economic conditions in Algeria, this chapter now takes a look at elements of the FIS's Platform for the Salvation of Algeria (*Plate-forme du FIS pour le Salut de l'Algérie*) as drawn up at the internal "Congress of the Martyr Abdelkabar Hachani", a prominent FIS leader who was killed, in 2002.

In its Platform, the FIS points out that the Civil Concord policy has failed and that Algeria's political, economic and social crises have been aggravated instead of ended. Its aim is therefore to end the oligarchic military's hold on the state and society, to give back sovereignty to the Algerian people and to reconstruct Algeria, turning it into an Islamic country, where peace, justice, liberty and prosperity are accessible to everybody. The FIS's three major objectives to achieve said aim are to a) dismantle the system of military hierarchy, b) transfer power to the Algerian people and c) restore truth, justice, peace and memory (Front Islamique du Salut 2002: 2-3).

The FIS's first objective, to dismantle the system of military hierarchy, is to be achieved by replacing officers of the old school with those younger officers who have refused to become involved in the Algerian conflict and are therefore the only ones who can regain the respect and trust of the Algerian population. There is specific emphasis on the notion that the military should remain apolitical at all costs and occupy itself solely with functions such as defending the country against external threats. Military education should be reformed in line with this notion, and there is also a call for all counter-insurrectionist activities which the military has been engaging in to be abandoned (Front Islamique du Salut 2002: 9-11). This objective offers an important rectification to Algerian political life which for decades has been dominated by a military elite, which has benefited from corruption and economic malpractices both before and during the current Algerian conflict. A future political dispensation, if sincerely aimed at uplifting the living conditions of Algerians, would do well to restrict the military's power.

The FIS's second objective, the transfer of power to the people, includes demands for lifting the state of emergency and restrictions on the individual's right to expression, movement and association. The FIS and other political parties should also be allowed to compete politically, restrictions on the press should be lifted, political prisoners should be released and protection promised to Algerian exiles and refugees who want to return home. Those who had the courage to "fight against injustice and defend the choice of the people" should be recognised and rehabilitated, and elections should eventually be held (Front Islamique du Salut

2002:11). Again, the suggestions seem of great importance in bringing peace to Algeria and eventually bringing about a more liberal dispensation. The idea of recognition for those who had the courage to fight injustice and defend the people's choice is rather one-sided and could potentially be problematic, if one takes into consideration the possibility of human rights violations having been perpetrated even by the most moderate of armed Islamic fundamentalists.

The FIS's third objective is aimed at restoring truth, by means of the establishment of both human rights and economic commissions of enquiry to establish where abuses have been perpetrated. The restoration of justice is also envisaged, through the judicial pursuits, judgement and punishments of those responsible, on both the government and Islamic fundamentalist sides, for serious war and economic crimes. Peace is to be restored by means of demobilising all parties involved in the war and confiscating, destroying and prohibiting the circulation and traffic of arms. Here it is also important to mention the FIS's calls for the rehabilitation and compensation of victims. Reports are requested from both the military leadership and that of the extremist Islamic fundamentalists, recognising acts committed against civilians, assuming responsibility for these and apologising for them. Reparation programmes for the victims of human rights abuses and their families are also to be put in place. The next point is that of restoring Algeria's collective memory which would involve declaring a day of commemoration and building monuments symbolising the national struggle for Islam, justice, dignity and human rights and paying witness to the atrocities suffered during the Algerian conflict. Other measures include launching a search for Algeria's 17 000 (according to a source quoted by the FIS) missing people, and finding ways to excavate bodies which have been hastily dumped and reburying them in a dignified manner. There is also specific emphasis on calling in international experts who specialise in discovering the identity of dead bodies. In addition, children at schools are to be taught a balanced version of Algerian history, including the post-1992 period (Front Islamique du Salut 2002:12-16).

Again, some very important points are raised here by the FIS, specifically the idea of Algeria coming to terms with the conflict and dealing constructively with the frightening and contentious issues of war crimes and human rights violations, somewhat reminiscent of the South African post-apartheid experience. The idea of calling in international experts to try and identify thousands of dead bodies, some of who died in the conflict years ago, seems rather ambitious and somewhat unrealistic.

The FIS believes that negotiations are crucial to achieving peace provided that efforts are characterised by sincerity on all sides involved and that its conditions are met. These include a respect for the fundamental rights of human beings, which can be summarised as a demand for the cessation of all forms of human rights violations, the release of detainees and the establishment of expert commissions of enquiry to bring to account all perpetrators of violent acts. Politically, the FIS demands that it be allowed to reunite its leadership, that all militias financed by the government be disbanded and that the military withdraw from the political scene. Mediation is also an option, provided that the mediator(s) are politically neutral. Negotiations are meant to pave the way for a transitional period and a government of national unity. This would then evolve into a National Conference, whose members would be elected by the people and who would have the aim of writing a constitution in line with the principle of universal suffrage. This provisional government would consequently organise local and national elections (Front Islamique du Salut 2002: 22-25).

The idea of a transitional government sounds sensible as this could provide a slow and thorough preparation for elections to take place. The FIS's negotiation demands are fair and realistic; negotiations cannot go ahead without conditions of relative peace and co-operation having been established between the different groups.

#### **4.5 THE ALGERIAN CONFLICT – DYNAMICS AND ACTORS**

The discussion now moves on to some of the extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups involved in the Algerian conflict: the AIS, now reportedly largely disbanded, the GIA and the GSPC. Attention is paid to their respective ideologies and actions, and this is analysed within the political and economic dynamics of the Algerian conflict as a whole. As already stated earlier, an analysis of the ideologies of these particular groups is necessarily more limited than that of the FIS because the often uncoordinated and scattered activities of these groups' various cells make it much more difficult to obtain relevant and valid information on them. Nonetheless, they are dealt with, and this discussion takes place within the political and economic context (thus again underlining the importance of taking into account structural factors when evaluating ideology according to the dialogic model of interpretation) of the Algerian conflict as a whole.

The MIA (Mouvement Islamique Armé), which had suffered fierce clampdowns from security forces and had been forced to withdraw from various strongholds which were increasingly being challenged by the

GIA, was transformed into the AIS<sup>16</sup> in 1994. The FIS leadership enthusiastically welcomed the formation of the AIS, which was determined to present more of a challenge to the brutal and extremist ideology of the GIA (Stone 1997: 186-187). The AIS viewed the chaos caused by the GIA as extremely dangerous and furthermore accused the GIA of having been infiltrated by members of the military in order to commit atrocities which were consequently blamed on Islamic fundamentalists and turned popular support to the government (Martinez 2003: 169-170). The AIS turned its attention to giving an explicitly political content to its violence, of which the ultimate aim would be the re-legalisation of the FIS. A very important distinction between the AIS and the GIA is that the former vehemently distanced itself from the GIA's strategy of all-out violence: "The apostate regime today attributes to the *jihad* certain abominable operations ... These untruths led the AIS to reply that it is innocent of all those acts and has never given an order to attack a woman, to burn a school or a hospital, or for any other operation contrary to our religion." The AIS thus hoped to salvage the image of the *jihad* which had greatly been sullied by the actions of the GIA, and noticeably the behaviour of the latter's local leaders or *emirs* who represent self-enrichment and hatred and therefore tarnish the general image of the *Moudjahidin* (freedom fighter) (Stone 1997: 201-204). Instead of targeting civilians in order to benefit economically, its targets were limited members of the security forces and special forces (Solomon & Swart 2004: 34). The AIS has reportedly largely disbanded, following the Bouteflika regime's Law of Civil Concord which offered amnesty to armed Islamic fundamentalists who had not been involved in major acts of violence.

The GIA was formed in 1993 as a result of the regime's oppressive practices, which radicalised the extremist fringes of the Islamic fundamentalist movement and led to disillusionment with the idea of political discourse (Solomon & Swart 2004: 38). Membership consists mainly of the illiterate and unemployed whose hopelessness and desire for social revenge is greater than any concern about whether or not they are being manipulated (Tahi 1995: 216). Its philosophy is as simple as it is self-defeating. The failure of the FIS to claim power was put down to a lack of resolution in pursuit of the *jihad* and as a number of GIA leaders had fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan the argument arose that armed force was necessary to bring down an "illegitimate", infidel regime (Takeyh 2003: 69-70). The GIA is generally classified as a radical Islamic fundamentalist group which aims at violently overthrowing the Algerian secular regime and replacing it with

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<sup>16</sup> The AIS formed a complementary branch of the FIS structure and was in contact with the leadership, though it retained responsibility for its actions, according to Ould Adda Abdelkrim. While the FIS supported the AIS in its military initiatives against the state and its structures, it vehemently condemns the GIA which, according to the FIS, only knows violence and in this way wants to forcefully install a radical Islam by targeting all sectors of society, including civilians (Denaud 1997: 104-106).

an Islamic state. It is opposed to all gestures of reconciliation and its activities include frequent attacks against “symbols of the state”, in particular security personnel, government functionaries, civilians, journalists, intellectuals and foreigners. Ways of carrying through its operations include cutting victims’ throats, launching bomb attacks, setting up roadblocks and conducting kidnappings. The GIA hijacked an Air France flight *en route* to Algiers in 1995 and is also suspected of being responsible for a series of bomb attacks in France in 1995 and one in 1996 (Groupe Islamique Armé 2004).

As the conflict has evolved, the GIA has moved farther and farther away from its “acclaimed piety” and professions to create a virtuous order, by pressing small merchants, entrepreneurs and petty bourgeoisie for funds and operating well-developed racketeering schemes. Its various affiliates seem to have turned into violent street gangs (Takeyh 2003: 70). This violence is situated in the context of the parallel or *trabendo* economy, which has progressively moved in to replace the state, whose ability to control political and social life has declined after 1988 as privatisation measures have taken hold. The informal parallel economy, which is principally run by the country’s burgeoning youthful population and involves smuggling, initially provided a new mechanism to organise collective life in the absence of the state. It was at first under the relatively organised control of the FIS but after 1992 has been increasingly replaced by violent coercion and has become an intrinsic part of the violence that has swept through Algeria since 1992. The violent workings of the parallel economy, which have included large scale massacres, are especially evident in the peripheral regions of urban settlement and, although they are dignified by their appeal to an Islamic fundamentalist rhetoric, are really largely related to economic benefit<sup>17</sup> (Joffe 2002: 43-44).

It is these activities that Kalyvas (1999) builds on in his attempt to discover “the logic of massacres in Algeria”. In his study he asks why any political organisation would slaughter, decapitate and mutilate hundreds of men, women and children, including babies and, though he admits that the Algerian civil war is a war “concealed by layers of darkness” making it very difficult to find reliable sources, deems finding an answer to this both gruesome and fascinating question important. Kalyvas’s central thesis is that massacres can be understood as part of a rational strategy which aims to punish and deter civilian defection under specific constraints (Kalyvas 1999: 243-245).

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<sup>17</sup> The Algerian conflict has been of considerable benefit to a number of local leaders of the extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups. These *emirs* know that their future lies in the continuation of the *jihad* which alone can bring maximum returns on their initial investments (Martinez 2000: 232-233).

The massacres in Algeria, mostly attributed to the GIA, first appeared in 1996, became a recurrent pattern in 1997 and waned in 1998. The number of victims ranged from ten to 400 and most of the massacres took place in “the triangle of death”, an area of about 150 square kilometres south of Algiers. The massacres typically occurred at night, and were carried out by groups of armed men whose main objective was the systematic killing of civilians. The attackers broke into houses in small towns and villages and killed families in their entirety by means of the most brutal of methods, usually hacking them to death or slicing their throats, using knives, machetes and axes. In some cases corpses were mutilated, houses set on fire and women abducted to be raped and then killed (Kalyvas 1999: 247).

Though a possibility for explaining this behaviour would be by means of the GIA’s ideology, the problem is that “ideological discourse is a fluid and contested field of meaning, amenable to a multiplicity of interpretations: one can derive multiple courses of action from the same ideological tenet”. Also, solely looking at the GIA’s ideology to explain the massacres its members have been guilty of is problematic for another reason. The GIA did not change its ideology between 1994 and 1997, yet there were no massacres in 1994, but a great number took place in 1997. Civil wars rely on civilians as their key element of support. Competing political actors, both incumbents and insurgents, will therefore need to attract and maintain civilian support both by providing benefits (such as land distribution) and sanctions (such as attaching a high cost to defection to the opponent). During periods of intense military conflict, political actors are likely to resort to terror, in the form of well-planned, individually targeted and selective killings, to shape civilian behaviour and reduce the probability of defection. Because civilians value their own survival, they will usually respond by cooperating with the political actor who makes the most credible threats (Kalyvas 1999: 251).

From the premise that killings are not indiscriminate it follows that the victims of the GIA belonged to three groups: a) local opponents, especially members of the security forces, informers, or those joining government-backed militias; b) people supporting competing guerrilla organisations, such as the AIS and c) former sympathisers who either switched sides, refused to help the rebels or were about to do so.

Ultimately, “the goal is to punish and terrorise the civilian populations<sup>18</sup> accused of disloyalty to the holy cause”. Whereas a relative peace (in other words the absence of massacres) had prevailed when certain “liberated” areas were under rebel control, where a mix of consent and coercion was used to ensure the support of local populations, this radically changed when the military aggressively began to reclaim the rebel-held areas starting with Mitidja. Soon afterwards the massacres began, as the incumbents’ return dislodged the rebels but failed to eliminate them and a massive programme of militia formation generated mass defections<sup>19</sup>, which, as already mentioned above, is one of the major reasons for the massacres having taken place. Civilians faced an impossibly difficult choice in having to decide who to support in a situation where neither the GIA nor the military had full control over the specific areas. Openly advocating support for either party meant retribution by the other, and, in the case of the radical Islamic fundamentalists, this very often meant death to one’s entire family (Kalyvas 1999: 254-267).

Ultimately, the point of Kalyvas’s study (1999) is to propose that the GIA’s actions were not irrational or senseless, but in fact predicated upon self-interested behaviour which was perhaps directed more at benefiting from its hold on the local civilian populations than at achieving its objective of implementing by force an Islamic state in Algeria.

Whatever motives GIA members may have harboured in massacring civilians, ultimately the level of violence perpetrated by them reached such levels that break-away groups were formed, among which the GSPC, who did not want to be associated with the atrocities committed by the GIA any longer. This is understandable when one considers some of the official statements made by GIA leaders. *Agence France Presse* in a news report of 31 March 2002 quotes Tourab, one of the more recent *emirs* of the GIA, reportedly killed later on in the same year, as saying that their ideology involves “neither truce nor dialogue, nor reconciliation, nor security, but blood, blood, destruction, destruction”. Full out war is waged by the remaining GIA cadres: “We will continue to destroy their harvests, to take their goods, to rape their women,

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<sup>18</sup> The relationship between the extremist Islamic fundamentalists and the local populations generally moved from a situation of consent to coercion. Whereas at the beginning civilians believed these groups to be an underground version of the FIS and wanted to help them build a more just society, they soon became disillusioned. According to a Rais resident: “80 percent of the villagers were against [the guerrillas], but we had no choice. During the evening, when they came to your place you had to give them money, clothes or lend them your car ... We were living in a nightmare” (Kalyvas 1999: 262).

<sup>19</sup> Militias play a major part in the Algerian conflict and in addition to guarding their villages from attacks they are becoming increasingly involved in full-fledged military operations as auxiliary corps of the army (Kalyvas 1999: 265).

to decapitate them in the cities, the villages and the deserts.” Any Algerian not with the GIA is automatically labelled an infidel and an apostate and hence prone to punishment.

The GSPC is one of the few extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups still active in Algeria. It constitutes a break-away wing from the GIA, formed in 1998, whom it sees as having destroyed the foundations that had been laid by the FIS from 1989-1991. Its attentions officially are focused solely on attacks against the Algerian regime and it denounces violence against civilians. Reportedly, the GSPC has declared its allegiance to Osama Bin Laden, thereby taking the Algerian conflict to the international level (Martinez 2003: 171-173). Internal disagreements over whether or not to negotiate with the Algerian government led to the formation of splinter groups, who had apparently shared the desire of the GSPC’s former leader, Hattab, who was assassinated in 2000, to co-operate with the government. On 20 June 2004 government troops reportedly killed the most recent GSPC leader Nabil Sahraoui (The Associated Press Service 2004). It remains unclear whether negotiations between the GSPC and the Algerian government will take place in future, especially considering that the GSPC has made it on to the US State Department’s list of terrorist organisations.

The crisis in Algeria also needs to be examined in terms of the role that the Algerian regime has played in it. The arbitrary political power exhibited by the Algerian regime is paralleled by the considerable control that the unaccountable elites and army leadership exercise over the economy. A close relationship thus exists between the refusal of the regime to concede power through transparent economic reform, despite numerous efforts that have been made at reforming the economy, and the corruption that inhabits the government (Joffe 2002: 29).

The violence in Algeria – both that of the regime against Islamic fundamentalists and that of Islamic fundamentalists in urban areas – could only have prospered in the context of a state that was essentially dysfunctional. The Algerian regime’s claim to revolutionary legitimacy to mark the arbitrary power of the army has meant that in the post-1992 period the fundamental interests of the ruling elites, the *mafia*, have not been threatened. Economic reforms, instead of redistributing some of the country’s wealth, have resulted in the private sector becoming tributary to the state itself, depending on it for inputs and for a domestic market in which it could operate (Joffe 2002: 30).

In addition to benefiting from privatisation reforms, the Algerian government has also made very good use of a highly unfavourable internal situation to get several international actors to help it bear the costs of its security operations. The International Monetary Fund's seal of approval for Algeria's market economy from 1994 onwards has meant that the international community in 1994 alone gave the Algerian regime 40 billion francs (approximately 6 billion Euros) in the form of loans, credits, gifts and other financial agreements. Additional financial support has come from the French government and international oil and gas companies, such as British Petroleum, Exxon and Repsol, who have continued investing in Algeria. To allay fears of attacks by the GIA, companies were offered additional security by hiring "mercenaries". The international oil companies, along with the IMF and favoured economic partners such as France have through their investment in Algeria become partners in the restoration of state authority. Military leaders too have benefited from the Algerian conflict, which has in many respects restored their authority and ensured profits for them, thereby marginalising their erstwhile rivals, the FIS (Martinez 2000: 229-232). Therefore, it is clear that both extremist Islamic fundamentalists and members of the Algerian government have acquired military benefit from the ongoing Algerian conflict, and have their reasons to indefinitely postpone negotiations. The Algerian populace, on the other hand, has suffered gravely in numerous respects. The first is economic.

While most economic commentators view Algeria's economy as standing on the threshold of economic revival, as by now the elements of a liberal, free market economy have been put in place and because its access to oil and gas revenues, as well as opportunities in other sectors, should attract investors, the micro-economic reality looks much bleaker. Foreign investment has stubbornly remained at an annual \$ 500 million, 450 000 workers have lost their jobs because of privatisation in the past century, wage levels are low (overall consumer prices have risen by 66 percent since 1995, while wages have only risen by 44 percent over the same period), housing is poor and inadequate and standards are worsening (Algeria has one of the world's highest occupancy rates at 7,5 people per housing unit) (Joffe 2002: 35-38). For the average Algerian, therefore, living conditions are abysmal. This situation is exacerbated by the continuing violence civilians experience, not only at the hands of radical Islamic fundamentalists, but also in the form of state terrorism.

State terror can be defined as "internal, within a state, between rulers and their subjects, and is a technique of ruling". It is also "the purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear and/or compliant behaviour in a

victim and/or audience of the act or threat”. The Algerian regime has a considerable number of armed elements, including, as quoted in 2001, its armed police force of 50 000, its professional army of 125 000 and a civilian militia of around 60 000 patriots. One of the techniques used by the Algerian regime to instil fear in people is the policy of affecting disappearances. Sources which contain testimonies of former Algerian police officials place the number of “disappeared” Algerian men and women at approximately 12 000. Although most of the people who “disappear” are opponents of the state, a number of disappeared people are nonetheless reported to be politically indifferent. By making people “disappear” the Algerian regime is guilty of both breaking international agreements it has ratified, as well as certain of Algeria’s domestic legal codes. Generally the Algerian authorities have not been helpful in dealing with enquiries about “disappeared” people; Amnesty International alone has compiled 3000 dossiers on such cases. The “disappearance” strategy is a particularly effective but also frightening form of terror as it strikes at one of the most basic of human needs – the need for physical safety (Sandhu 2001: 4-5).

Another strategy used by the Algerian government is that of torture, usually applied to detainees. Despite a myriad of complaints by detainees who reported being tortured, not a single judicial investigation has been carried out. This behaviour by the Algerian government has contributed to protect the torturers from legal action and has left the victims of torture, as well as their families and lawyers feeling more and more sceptical and hostile towards the Algerian administration of justice (Sandhu 2001: 5-6). The Algerian regime has thus also played a considerable part in inflicting pain and suffering, not only its opponents, but on the Algerian population as a whole, simultaneously rather overtly benefiting from the spoils of war.

Algeria’s future remains highly uncertain. Today, Bouteflika’s dispensation is still to a large extent under the control of the military, which is divided between a wing that urges conciliation with the Islamic fundamentalists and another that presses for their eradication. After more than 100 000 people have died it has become clear that the radical Islamic fundamentalists are not capable of replacing the regime and that likewise the military cannot rid themselves of their opponents. The cycle of violence can only be ended when all parties recognise that Algeria has to become a democratic state which provides for individual sovereignty while at the same time accepting moderate political Islam as a part of the political landscape (Takeyh 2003: 71). Whether it will be the FIS who plays the part of the moderate actor representing Islam remains to be seen. As has been established, it is not always necessarily the case that rhetoric mirrors practical intent. The FIS will have to prove its ability to better the conditions of the Algerian population by

means of coming up with effective and feasible economic and political solutions to Algeria's crisis. The political platform, which recognises the need for Algerians to come to terms with their troubled past before being able to move on, is definitely a step in the right direction.

The dialogic model of interpretation is thus used in this chapter to attempt an open-minded, yet critical analysis of the ideology of the FIS and, to a lesser extent, that of extremist fundamentalist groups in Algeria. In addition, structural (economic, political and social) factors are taken into account to, among other things, help explain the importance of Islam and, more specifically, its role in the political mobilisation of the Algerian people during the war of independence and afterwards. This, as well as an understanding of the severe economic crisis of the 1980s and the political scene, which, at the time, was characterised by a short-lived liberal interregnum, but nonetheless was dominated behind the scenes by the overpowering might of the military, helps provide an explanation for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria. This information serves as an essential background for an analysis of the ideology of the FIS, (no ideology can be understood in isolation from the environment from which it has emanated), and, to a lesser extent, for the ideologies of radical Islamic fundamentalist groups which have played or still play a part in the Algerian conflict. The ideologies of those radical Islamic fundamentalist groups actively engaged in the conflict is again discussed within the context of structural factors, particularly those which are relevant to the war itself. This chapter then aims at providing a deeper understanding of the ideology of the FIS and, to a more limited extent, that of other radical Islamic fundamentalist groups engaged in the conflict. This discussion centres on ideology, but also takes into account an analysis of structural factors. The latter is imperative for a thorough understanding of the complexity and seriousness of the situation in Algeria, and particularly the role played by Islamic fundamentalism. The concluding chapter of this dissertation deals more specifically with the findings of this chapter and attempts at making recommendations for a way forward to resolve the conflict.

#### **4.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FOUR**

Modern Algerian history has been characterised by turmoil and violence, commencing with the extended and bloody war of independence against the French colonial power, continuing through a series of military coups, the 1988 "Black October" riots, in response to the dire economic situation, and culminating in an unpredictable and violent civil war from 1992 onwards. The popularity of Islamic fundamentalism, and notably the FIS, rose due to a lack of popular support for Algeria's military elite, as well as in reaction to less than favourable economic circumstances.

The FIS espouses a relatively moderate yet also conservative ideology, which entails a rejection of secularism and a focus on Islam as a potential state system filled with possibility and promise. Politically speaking, this entails a focus on advisory freedom, co-ordination and a focus on dialogue, choice without coercion and collective work towards the collective good. This moderate rhetoric, however, found a less than moderate practical application when after the victory the FIS had gained in the 1990 municipal elections, it started implementing its policies. In terms of what the FIS has to say about the current volatile situation, however, some of the points it makes are of substantial importance and relevance. These include the need to distance the military from politics, to lift state of emergency regulations and to aid Algerian people to come to terms with their violent past. Nonetheless, the situation in Algeria remains uncertain and volatile and it is imperative that long-term solutions be found to the political and economic problems facing the country.