

**THE POLITICS OF APOLOGY: SEMANTIC COMPLETENESS,  
MEMORY, AND IDENTITY IN FRENCH RECONCILIATION  
POLICY TO ALGERIA**

By

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, the undersigned Elisabeth Clemmons, hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirement of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Political apologies are increasingly common between former colonizer and colonized nations, but remain contentious as a policy and ambiguous in effectiveness at easing disputes. Between France and Algeria, reconciliation and apologies are actively being pursued, yet bilateral tensions are still high. According to research, apologies must meet specific criteria to be accepted, including semantic completeness. Apologies may also have discourses of memory and identity that attempt to repaint the identity of the perpetrator more favorably. This thesis thus aims to enhance understanding regarding the effectiveness of these apologies by examining the semantic completeness of apology discourses, memory discourses, and identity discourses from François Hollande and Emmanuel Macron. The results indicate that the apology discourse is semantically incomplete, with acknowledgement of responsibility lacking in particular; that the presidents push for the idea of a single, utopian historical "truth" of the past, which potentially conflicts with the Algerian perspective; and that France presents itself as a "bearer of values" whose identity was victimized in the war. These results provide an in-depth examination of complex apology discourses, helping to inform theories on how reconciliation and apology policies are constructed and their effects on bilateral relationships.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

Political apologies are generally defined as an apology given by a state or state-representative entity to victims or descendants of victims of a state's historical actions.<sup>1</sup> In foreign policy, political apologies have grown increasingly common, especially between former colonizer countries and their former colonies for colonial actions. Recent examples include Japan's 1990s apologies to Korea, Italy's 2008 apology to Libya, and Germany's 2021 apology to Namibia.<sup>2</sup> Political apologies can help nations come to terms with their history, ease strained bilateral relations, and maximize soft power, but might not always successfully achieve these goals.<sup>3</sup> One salient case is France and Algeria, where reconciliation policy and apologizing remain contentious issues.

Algeria has made several demands that France apologize for damages incurred from colonialism and the French-Algerian War of 1954-1962. Presidents from 1995 to present - including Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, François Hollande, and Emmanuel Macron - have all to some degree recognized the "injustice" of the French colonization of Algeria, and numerous

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<sup>1</sup> Janna Thompson, "Apology, justice, and respect: A critical defense of political apology," in *The age of apology: Facing up to the past*, ed. Mark Gibney, Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann, Jean-Marc Coicaud, and Niklaus Steiner (Philadelphia, USA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 31.

<sup>2</sup> BBC, "Germany Officially Recognises Colonial-Era Namibia Genocide," May 28, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57279008>; France24, "Italy's Berlusconi hands Libya \$5bn apology," August 30, 2008, <https://www.france24.com/en/20080830-5bn-apology-libya-italys-berlusconi-italy-libya>; Risa Kitagawa and Jonathan A. Chu, "The Impact of Political Apologies on Public Opinion," *World Politics* 73, no. 3 (2021): 442.

<sup>3</sup> Kitagawa and Chu, "The Impact of Political Apologies," 441.

apologies for specific aspects of the war such as affected marginalized groups have been made.<sup>4</sup> These apologies ultimately fall short of addressing colonialism itself, however, and actions of the state - such as a 2005 law recognizing the "positive" aspects of colonialism - often directly contradict these statements.<sup>5</sup> In fact, nearly all French presidencies have openly rejected calls to apologize for colonialism as a whole.<sup>6</sup> Sarkozy even demeaned the idea of apologizing, calling for an end to a culture of "self-flagellation."<sup>7</sup> This has led to debates over the success of France's reconciliation policy.

Nevertheless, despite not directly apologizing for colonialism, France has still pursued reconciliation for nearly two decades and has apologized for specific issues including torture, treatment of the *harkis*, and assassinations. Reconciliation and apology thus clearly constitute important aspects of France's bilateral relationship with Algeria. The Algerian side remains discontent with France's "half-apologies," implying dissatisfaction with the presentation of the discourse.<sup>8</sup> However, there has been little scholarly examination of this "half-completeness" of

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<sup>4</sup> BBC, "President Hollande accepts French injustice in Algeria," December 20, 2012. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20795750>.

<sup>5</sup> "Loi n° 2005-158 du 23 février 2005 portant reconnaissance de la Nation et contribution nationale en faveur des Français rapatriés (1)" [Law number 2005-158 of February 23, 2005 concerning the recognition of the Nation and national contribution in favor of the French repatriates]. French National Assembly, 12th legislature. (2005). <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000000444898/>

<sup>6</sup> France24, "Macron Apologises for French Treatment of Algerian Harki Fighters," September 20, 2021. <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210920-macron-apologises-for-french-treatment-of-algerian-harki-fighters.>; France24, "No Repentance nor Apologies' for Colonial Abuses in Algeria, Says Macron," January 20, 2021. <https://www.france24.com/en/france/20210120-no-repentance-nor-apologies-for-colonial-abuses-in-algeria-says-macron>; Ilan Caro, "Chirac, Sarkozy, Hollande : Trois Discours Sur l'Algérie," franceinfo:Afrique, December 20, 2012, [https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/afrique/chirac-sarkozy-hollande-trois-discours-sur-l-algerie\\_190865.html](https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/afrique/chirac-sarkozy-hollande-trois-discours-sur-l-algerie_190865.html).

<sup>7</sup> Simon Tilford, "France: Why the Self-Flagellation?" Center for European Reform, February 10, 2012. <https://www.cer.eu/insights/france-why-self-flagellation>

<sup>8</sup> Al Jazeera, "Algeria Seeks Apology from France over Colonial Past: President," July 5, 2020. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/7/5/algeria-seeks-apology-from-france-over-colonial-past-president>.

apology discourse. There is also little insight into the actual content of the discourse of French presidents, which would help understand why and how politicians are choosing the current trajectory. These speeches heavily invoke memory and identity, thus analyzing these themes specifically could help understand politicians' agendas. This thesis therefore aims to fill this gap by analyzing the semantic completeness of apology discourse and the reconstruction of memory and identity in the discourse. It is generally agreed that apologies should contain key linguistic elements for semantic completeness, so this thesis defines these elements as *expression of regret, explanation, acknowledgement of responsibility, declaration of repentance, offer of repair, and request for forgiveness*.<sup>9</sup> Memory here is conceived as the experiences and perspectives of the Algerian War, and identity looks at how France defines both its own and Algeria's historical and current role.

Broadly, this thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of what constitutes an effective political apology and what discourses are used to enact reconciliation policy. This research uses the following questions to better understand how apology and reconciliation policies are pursued, and using which discourses:

1. To what extent is France's apology discourse to Algeria semantically complete?
2. How is the subject of memory treated in the discourse?
3. How are the identities of France and Algeria reconstructed in the discourse and what implications does this have about power relations between the two?

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<sup>9</sup> Christopher Daase, "Introduction: Guilt, apology, and reconciliation in International Relations," in *Apology and Reconciliation in International Relations*, ed. Christopher Daase, Stefan Engert, Michel-André Horelt, Judith Renner, and Renate Strassner (New York, USA: Routledge, 2016), 3.; Roy J. Lewicki, Beth Polin, and Robert B. Lount Jr., "An Exploration of the Structure of Effective Apologies," *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research* 9, no. 2 (2016): 177-183.

This research demands a holistic analysis of how practices (apologies and reconciliation efforts) and beliefs (the "correct" memory of the war and colonialism) of politicians are constitutive of each other.<sup>10</sup> An interpretivist, constructivist paradigm is therefore followed, seeking not to solve a problem or establish causality, but rather to "concentrate on meanings, beliefs, and discourses, as opposed to laws and rules, correlations between social categories, or deductive models."<sup>11</sup> This thesis is furthermore a single case study that uses discourse analysis of French presidential documents as its primary data sources.

This thesis finds that (1) apology-making is only semi-complete and subverts key elements of what is considered a semantically complete apology, especially acknowledgement of responsibility; (2) both Hollande and Macron claim there is a singular, truthful narrative of the historical events, arguably an unrealistic, utopian ideal to appease both sides; and (3) the war and colonialism are characterized as tragedies where France's identity as a bringer of values was victimized, but Algeria has little personality in the discourses, demonstrating shaky power relations that overall favor France. These findings enhance understanding of the French-Algerian bilateral relationship and inform theories on political apologies, demonstrating how discourse structures work in practice and how underlying beliefs that are woven throughout drive reconciliation policy.

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<sup>10</sup> Roderick A.W. Rhodes, "On Interpretation," in *Interpretive Political Science: Selected Essays, Volume II* (Oxford Scholarship Online), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

## 1.2 Research aims and rationale

This research aims to firstly fill the gaps in study of French presidential apology discourses under Macron. As aforementioned, the relationship between France and Algeria is the subject of extensive postcolonial, development, and international relations research, but there is little research on the discourse of political apologies. Horelt (2016) finds the presence of a "double discourse," in which the apologies issued were nullified and contradicted with other public declarations in light of contradicting domestic and international opinions on the matter.<sup>12</sup> This informs the basis of this research, but is limited from Chirac's presidency to the end of Sarkozy's presidency in 2012. The nature of bilateral relations between France and Algeria has significantly shifted since, with Hollande and Macron taking more proactive steps in reconciliation policy. Furthermore, this previous research does not explicitly evaluate the semantic completeness of these apologies. In other cases such as Japan/Korea, low semantic quality is speculated to lead to non-acceptance of apology attempts.<sup>13</sup> This low semantic quality is also largely related to memory and identity narratives that externalize the blame to entities that "do not truly represent" Japan or otherwise have victimized it, which is possibly applicable to France as well.<sup>14</sup> Understanding semantic quality and presentation of memory and identity in the French-Algerian case can enhance understanding of what constitutes a successful apology and why current policies fall short. Thus,

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<sup>12</sup> Michel-André Horelt, "The double discourse of apology," in *Apology and Reconciliation in International Relations*, eds. Christopher Daase, Stefan Engert, Michel-André Horelt, Judith Renner, and Renate Strassner (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 196.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Engert, "Japan - China and the two Koreas: the apologia syndrome," in *Apology and Reconciliation in International Relations*, ed. Christopher Daase, Stefan Engert, Michel-André Horelt, Judith Renner, and Renate Strassner (New York, USA: Routledge, 2016), 255.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 247.

to further understand *how* exactly the most recent policies are taking shape, more qualitative research based on discourse is required.

### 1.3 Structure

The research proceeds as follows. A literature review will be conducted, identifying key scholarly works on (1) reconciliation, reparations, and apology, (2) memory and historiography, and (3) post-colonialism. Following this, the conceptual framework section will be presented, introducing an abductive approach that firstly analyzes the semantic completeness of the apology discourse in a deductive manner and then extrapolates key themes across presidencies in an inductive way. In particular, for the deductive analysis, Lewicki's (2016) six components of apologies will be used alongside concepts of blame deflection and offensiveness minimization in Benoit's image repair theory.<sup>15</sup> For the inductive analysis, general concepts for consideration are the speaker's portrayals of memory, the reproduction of the roles that both sides played in the war, and the underlying currents of power relations that these indicate. The methodology will then be presented, highlighting the research design, the interpretivist approach, the data sources, and the exact methods of analysis. Then, a brief overview of the historical background will be provided to situate the reader. The findings section presents the results of analysis, discussing the key elements of apology that were coded and the themes on French/Algerian memory and identity. The discussion and conclusion section then interprets the findings of the research and discusses policy implications. The limitations of this research are also addressed along with recommendations for future research. Finally, a recap of this research is provided.

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<sup>15</sup> Lewicki, "An Exploration of the Structure of Effective Apologies," 183; William L. Benoit, "Image Repair Discourse and Crisis Communication," *Public Relations Review* 23, no. 2 (1997): pp. 177.

## 2. Literature Review

As the study of political apologies is an emerging field, it is necessary to consult a wide body of literature from many different disciplines to justify the research and construct an analytical framework. This thesis draws upon transitional justice, postcolonialist, and even formal psychology and linguistic works to understand how apologies are structured, what issues are at stake, and how to appropriately examine their meaning.

### 2.1 Reconciliation, reparations, and apologies

A review of literature on political apologies helped conceptualize reconciliation, reparations, and apologies as three highly interrelated, interdependent concepts, each meriting their own definition. Understanding the differences among these three informs this thesis's underlying theory and justifies the approach of analyzing apology policies as opposed to other types of reconciliation measures.

#### 2.1.1 Reconciliation

Traditional psychology and diplomacy literature give precise definitions and methods to reconciliation. According to Bar-Siman-Tov (2004), reconciliation is "at its simplest form....transforming relations of hostility and resentment to friendly and harmonious ones."<sup>16</sup> Reconciliation requires both parties to undergo a psychological change and methodically agree on a collective reconstruction of the past.<sup>17</sup> Galtung (2007) pioneered this process, conceiving the

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<sup>16</sup> Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004). 4.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

"Transcend Approach" as a framework to guide reconciliation after violence.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, reconciliation begins with acknowledgement of specific goals and entails identifying overarching, collectively accepted goals.<sup>19</sup> As Tavuchis (1991) asserts, reconciliation is not the same as reparations: reparations and apologies are *parts of* reconciliation, which is ultimately the overarching process from beginning to end of "forgiveness and redemption for what is unreasonable, unjustified, undeserving, and inequitable."<sup>20</sup>

### 2.1.2 Reparations

In human rights literature, reparations describe the proposed solutions to repair a relationship. De Greiff (2008), in his seminal work on justice and reparations, asserts that reparations can include *restitution* (restoring the victim's previous status quo before the violation occurred), *compensation* (a quantified offering to make up the consequence of economic, mental, or moral injury), *rehabilitation* (provision of measures such as medical and psychological care), and *satisfaction and guarantees of non-recurrence* (cessation of violations, confirmation of facts, official apologies, and judicial rulings in favor of the victim).<sup>21</sup> The aims of reparations are to do justice to the victims, to return the status of citizens by recognizing them, to form or restore trust among citizens, and to strengthen solidarity among social groups.<sup>22</sup> Apologies therefore fall under the category of reparations, but reparations is more than just apologies and includes other tools to

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<sup>18</sup> Johan Galtung, "Introduction: peace by peaceful conflict transformation - the TRANSCEND approach," in *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*, ed. Charles Webel and Johan Galtung (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Nicholas Tavuchis, *Mea culpa: a sociology of apology and reconciliation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 37.

<sup>21</sup> Pablo De Greiff, *The Handbook of Reparations* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008): 454-455.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 457.

achieve similar means. However, as Woolford and Ratner (2010) argue, for reparations strategies to be effective, sustainable opportunities must be created for participants to collectively address societal problems and social suffering that are not necessarily prefigured by institutional actors.<sup>23</sup> Apologies alone are therefore not always enough on their own, but constitute an important way of creating opportunities to address the issue at hand.

### 2.1.3 Apologies

Apologies are a specific type of reparation aimed at satisfying and reassuring the victim verbally.<sup>24</sup> However, structuring apologies and evaluating whether they have gone "far enough" is a complex process. Apologies require interdisciplinary lenses to thoroughly examine their meaning and significance.<sup>25</sup> Lakoff (2001) provides linguistic lenses to view apologies, including phonology, syntax, lexical semantics, speech act pragmatics, conversational analysis, narratology, and sociolinguistics.<sup>26</sup> These linguistic perspectives provide a way of understanding the form, content, and function of apologies as interlinked. Lewicki et al. (2016) also examines the linguistic composition of effective apologies and confirms that responsibility is an essential component to ensuring the success of an apology.<sup>27</sup> He thus provides a framework of characteristics for semantic completeness and demonstrates that linguistic analysis is key to understanding how effective

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<sup>23</sup> Andrew Woolford and R. S. Ratner, "Disrupting the informal–formal justice complex: on the transformative potential of civil mediation, restorative justice and reparations politics," *Contemporary Justice Review* 13, no. 1 (2010): 15.

<sup>24</sup> De Greiff, *The Handbook of Reparations*, 454.

<sup>25</sup> Robin Tolmach Lakoff, "Nine ways of looking at apologies: The necessity for interdisciplinary theory and method in discourse analysis," in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi E. Hamilton (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 197-198.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 201.

<sup>27</sup> Lewicki, "An Exploration of the Structure," 182.

apologies are. The linguistic literature thus provides insight on the structure and nature of apologies as a tool. However, this warrants further inquiry as to their application.

Harris et al. (2006) examine the application of apologies by looking at their interaction with context. They note that political apologies are usually in the public domain and highly mediated by the presence of an audience, and oftentimes not only are born from conflict, but further give rise to it.<sup>28</sup> Apology in international relations more specifically is addressed by Daase (2016), where he defines three categories of political apologies based on the aforementioned psychological models: denial, excuses, and apology.<sup>29</sup> The influence of the political system/democratic peace theory, domestic and international pressures to apologize, and the growth of apologies in international law provide the impetus to give public apologies.<sup>30</sup> Kitagawa and Chu (2021) take this a step further by examining the end results of political apologies on public opinion using the case study of Japan and the US. They find that apologies have a role in maximizing soft power, but can backfire and cost politicians support among social groups that are inclined towards strong hierarchical group dispositions, i.e., nationalist or politically conservative.<sup>31</sup> The composition of the targeted public audiences, which includes both domestic and international audiences, therefore is often of crucial consideration by politicians issuing the apology. This is the reason that Horelt (2016) characterizes the France/Algeria situation in the Chirac and Sarkozy years as a "double discourse," where the presentation of apologies was ultimately thwarted when contradicting

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<sup>28</sup> Sandra Harris, Karen Grainger, and Louise Mullany, "The pragmatics of political apologies," *Discourse & Society* 17, no. 6 (2006): 721.

<sup>29</sup> Daase, "Guilt, apology and reconciliation," 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Kitagawa and Chu, "The Impact of Political Apologies," 443.

domestic/conservative and international demands had to be mediated.<sup>32</sup> However, while the above literature presents possible underlying factors for poor reception of apologies and continued strenuous bilateral relationships, the literature does not examine the theoretical completeness of the apologies in and of themselves, nor do they look at specific streams of discourse within these apologies. Renner's (2016) study on the wording of the apologies issued by the West German government shows how semantic completeness had a significant impact on reconciling Germany and Poland without domestic backlash.<sup>33</sup> This is further confirmed by other studies such as Engert's examination of Japan.<sup>34</sup> An exploration of the semantic completeness of apologies is therefore necessary to understanding their potential effectiveness.

## 2.2 Memory

Memory is crucial when considering the politics of apology, especially in the case of France and Algeria where disputes over how the events of colonialism are remembered are fueling the debate. Firstly, a distinction between memory and history must be made. Nora (1989) states that memories are "in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting," and are subjective, powerful experiences whereas history attempts to be a means of "organization of the past" that is "objective" without transmitting values.<sup>35</sup> Nora then presents the notion of a *lieu de mémoire*, a site of memory: "places, sites, causes" that are "material, symbolic, and

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<sup>32</sup> Horelt, "The double discourse," 195.

<sup>33</sup> Judith Renner, "The ritualisation of apology," in *Apology and Reconciliation in International Relations: The Importance of Being Sorry*, ed. Christopher Daase, Stefan Engert, Michel-André Horelt, Judith Renner, and Renate Strassner (New York, USA: Routledge, 2016), 52.

<sup>34</sup> Engert, "Japan - China and the two Koreas."

<sup>35</sup> Nora, Pierre. "Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire." Translated by Marc Roudebush. *Representations* 26 (1989): 8, 10.

functional" in representing and reconstructing historical experiences.<sup>36</sup> Nora argues, however, that today there is only "one national memory," and *lieux de mémoire* and local memories are often homogenized into a single remembrance of the past.<sup>37</sup> Verovšek (2016) notes that politicians frequently "mobilize memory as an instrument of politics in the present," and state actors can manipulate both the substantive content of collective memory as well as interactive channels through which they convey this content.<sup>38</sup> This has led Kubik and Bernhard to therefore conclude that political science should focus on "strategies that political actors employ to make others remember in certain, specific ways."<sup>39</sup> They present a typology of mnemonic actors: *warriors*, who believe themselves to have the "true" vision of the past and posit that there is an attainable, objective, historical truth; *pluralists*, who believe that others are entitled to their own visions of history and memory; *abnegators*, who avoid memory politics altogether; and *perspectives*, who believe that they have "solved the riddle of history" and know how to achieve a better future.<sup>40</sup>

These concepts of memory underscore the power of the French state in constructing a specific narrative of the past. McCormack (2011) analyzes how the Algerian War is not present in the French education system, for example.<sup>41</sup> This, she claims, is one example of how the state is

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Verovšek, "Collective memory, politics, and the influence of the past: the politics of memory as a research paradigm," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 4, no. 3 (2016): 529.

<sup>39</sup> Kubik, Jan, and Michael Bernhard. "A Theory of the Politics of Memory." In *Twenty Years After Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration*, edited by Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 7-9.

<sup>41</sup> Jo McCormack, "Social Memories in (Post)colonial France: Remembering the Franco-Algerian War," *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 4 (2011): 1134.

trying to instill a specific image of the French nation in the public mind, and current memory work is therefore largely symbolic and unsatisfactory since it is driven by domestic agendas.<sup>42</sup> Derderian (2002) additionally examines how the Algerian War has the potential to be a *lieu de mémoire*, but it seems too divisive to be enshrined and perpetuated in the public, hence the long period of silence between 1962 to the present.<sup>43</sup> He states, however, that private memory of individuals often still exists in opposition to official public narratives, thus private citizens can still help confront the "true complexity of the past" even despite political agendas.<sup>44</sup> Memory thus plays a clear role in the case of France and Algeria, but there are few studies looking specifically at how memory is integrated into apology discourse.

## 2.3 Postcolonialism

Finally, as Algeria demands sweeping apologies for French colonialism, this thesis also draws on postcolonial and decolonization theory to understand the origins of the colonial reconciliation debate. These conflicts are in part driven by foundational texts of postcolonialism, including Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, wherein orientalism is defined as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient... a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."<sup>45</sup> The debate also draws upon Césaire's (1950) *Discourse on Colonialism*, where he argues that colonialism dehumanizes both the colonizer and the colonized, and ultimately leads

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 1135.

<sup>43</sup> Richard L. Derderian, "Algeria as a lieu de mémoire: Ethnic minority memory and national identity in contemporary France," *Radical History Review* 83, no. 1 (2002): 29.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>45</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Random House Inc., 1978), 3.

to "relations of domination and submission."<sup>46</sup> Fanon (1965), in his testament of the Algerian War, *A Dying Colonialism*, further links this to the French-Algerian context by arguing that colonialism constitutes "the dream of total domestication of Algerian society," whether that be through technology, patriarchy, or other means.<sup>47</sup>

These arguments against colonialism serve as the impetus for Algeria to demand apologies. O'Riley (2001) proposes that there is a hauntology of orientalism present in current Algerian society: while Algerians seek to claim postcolonial agency, they are still struggling to break free of a grip that France's orientalist perception has on their culture, history, and memory.<sup>48</sup> This hauntology has therefore led to tensions and demands for remedies. House (2010) argues that these desires for postcolonial remedies also stem from historical experience of the mid-1900s including the Occupation, which incited rhetoric of anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and growing solidarity among the dominated that persists today.<sup>49</sup> Postcolonial theory thus drives the Algerian side of the debate and justifies their demands for apologies.

On the French side, however, postcolonial theory complicates and ignites debates. As Shepard (2006) demonstrates, the Algerian War prompted an abrupt shift in the way the narrative was framed: it gave birth to the narrative that "decolonization" was an inevitable historical fact,

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<sup>46</sup> Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, translated by Joan Pinkham (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1950), 42.

<sup>47</sup> Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, translated by Haakon Chevalier (New York, NY: Grove Press Inc., 1965), 39.

<sup>48</sup> Michael O'Riley, "Specters of orientalism in France, Algeria, and postcolonial studies," *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* (2001): 63.

<sup>49</sup> Jim House, "Memory and the Creation of Solidarity During the Decolonization of Algeria," in *Yale French Studies* no. 118/119: *Nœuds de mémoire : Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture*, ed. Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal, and Max Silverman (Yale, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 37-38.

and that Algerian colonialism was "an unfortunate detour" going against the otherwise-progressive values of France.<sup>50</sup> Decolonization was not seen as an inevitable end point before 1962, however. Algeria had constituted 3 French départements, prompting Prime Minister François Mitterand in 1954 to proclaim: "L'Algérie, c'est la France" ("Algeria is France").<sup>51</sup> Conklin (1998) also details how this initial narrative of Algeria and France being one and the same was rooted in justifications of French colonialism - namely, the "civilizing mission" (*mission civilisatrice*) of the Third Republic in the 1800s.<sup>52</sup> Historically, the conquest of Algeria was a political move designed to distract the people, and the conquest was justified under the frame of universalist, liberal, republican ideology - including liberating Africans from oppressive slavery and feudalism, provision of education, and bestowing modern science and technology to help develop the country.<sup>53</sup> Seemingly obvious brutal institutions, such as the administration of justice and use of forced labor, were legally codified, which created "the illusion that basic human rights in the colonies were being respected," thereby legitimating an allegedly democratic colonial regime.<sup>54</sup> The notion of *mission civilisatrice* has shaped the colonial narrative on the French side even today.

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<sup>50</sup> Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: the Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 5; Ibid, 11.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid; Maxime Tandonnet, "19 mars : quand François Mitterrand déclarait, «l'Algérie c'est la France...»" [March 19: when François Mitterand declared, "Algeria is France"], *Le Figaro*, March 18, 2016. <https://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/histoire/2016/03/18/31005-20160318ARTFIG00198-19-mars-quand-francois-mitterrand-declarait-l-algerie-c-est-la-france.php>

<sup>52</sup> Conklin, "The Civilizing Mission," 173; Alice L. Conklin, "Colonialism and Human Rights, A Contradiction in Terms? The Case of France and West Africa, 1895-1914," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 2 (1998): 419.

<sup>53</sup> Conklin, "Colonialism and Human Rights," 420.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

## 2.4 Synthesis of literature

As demonstrated by the literature, while there is general research on apologies, there is surprisingly little focused on apologies specifically between France and Algeria. Horelt's discourse analysis, the only one of its kind to the author's best knowledge, only focuses on the Chirac and Sarkozy presidencies.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, it does not follow a structured semantic analysis, nor does it look at questions of memory and identity in depth. As established, effective apologies generally are semantically complete.<sup>56</sup> Understanding how memory and identity play a role in the discourse is also crucial to ensuring successful reconciliation, as demonstrated by Bar-Siman-Tov and Galtung, and more research is needed here.<sup>57</sup> Finally, the literature only partially examines what the discourse implies about national identities and the bilateral relationship. Based on the current gaps in the literature on semantic completeness, themes of memory, identity, and power relations, and more recent developments, this thesis therefore aims to provide a more in-depth look at the discourse of Hollande and Macron.

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<sup>55</sup> Horelt, "The double discourse of apology."

<sup>56</sup> Renner, "The ritualisation of apology," 52.

<sup>57</sup> Galtung, "Introduction: peace by peaceful conflict transformation."

### 3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework draws upon the literature to construct a path for understanding of the semantic completeness of apologies and their treatment of memory and identity. This framework centers around presidential speeches, declarations, and more as the principal locations of apology-making and a site where tensions in memory and identity explicitly manifest. This framework proposes an analysis of the discourse in an abductive way to achieve a full understanding of the politics of these apologies: first through a deductive examination of the semantic components of the apology, through an inductive extrapolation of themes of memory and identity.

#### 3.1 Deductive analysis of semantic completeness

The deductive analysis of apology-making draws heavily upon the linguistic literature in order to understand the semantic components and completeness of presidential speeches. A semantic analysis will demonstrate the extent to which French presidents are apologizing and the reasons why their apologies might be considered inadequate. This component of the framework is inspired by the linguistic studies of Lewicki et al. (2016) and Benoit (1997).

Lewicki defines an apology as consisting of six elements. *Expression of regret* is where the violator expresses how sorry they are for the offense.<sup>58</sup> An *explanation* enumerates the reasons for the offense.<sup>59</sup> *Acknowledgement of responsibility* is where the speaker recognizes their part in the offense.<sup>60</sup> *Declaration of repentance* is where the violator promises to refrain from repeating

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<sup>58</sup> Lewicki, "An Exploration of the Structure of Effective Apologies," 183.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

the offense.<sup>61</sup> An *offer of repair* offers to reach out and rebuild trust on the part of the violator, and a *request for forgiveness* is an explicit call for the victim to pardon the violator.<sup>62</sup> According to Lewicki, in no particular order, the three most important elements in an apology are explanation, an offer of repair, and acknowledgement of responsibility in order for the apology to be perceived as sufficient.<sup>63</sup> This is consistent with current research on political apologies. Acknowledgement of responsibility for wrongdoing is a focal point in political apologies, especially in the French/Algerian case, where Tebboune has felt France does not take enough responsibility for colonialism-induced damage.<sup>64</sup> Thus, for this research, acknowledgement of responsibility will be spotlighted to understand to what extent the French have apologized and satisfied Algerian demands. Acknowledgement of responsibility also informs how French discourse is promoting a certain identity for itself, as public officials "stand to lose face, and therefore possibly power" by taking too much responsibility in their apologies and changing the perceived role of the state too rapidly.<sup>65</sup>

In the France/Algeria case, however, there are instances where the apology might not exist, or exist but be refuted. Additional elements are therefore useful for the framework, namely elements from Benoit's image repair theory. As image is crucial in the field of public relations (which logically extends to diplomacy), public entities must restore their image when it has been

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 191.

<sup>64</sup> Al Jazeera, "Algeria Seeks Apology from France."

<sup>65</sup> Lakoff, "Nine ways of looking at apologies," 203.

tarnished, but there are multiple ways to attempt to restore image beyond apologies.<sup>66</sup> According to Benoit, alternative strategies to apology are *denial* (denying that the act was performed or blaming someone else) and *evasion of responsibility* (saying the act was provoked, that there was a lack of information or ability, or that it was a well-intentioned or accidental mishap).<sup>67</sup> Additionally, the perpetrator can *reduce the offensiveness* of the event by *bolstering* (stressing good traits), *minimizing* (saying the act was not serious), *differentiating* (using euphemisms to paint the act as less offensive), *transcending* (justifying for "the greater good"), *attacking the accuser* (reducing the credibility of the victim), and offering *compensation* ("hush money").<sup>68</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, these elements will be consolidated and coded as strategies of *deflection* (denial or evasion of responsibility) and *offensiveness minimization* (reducing the offensiveness).

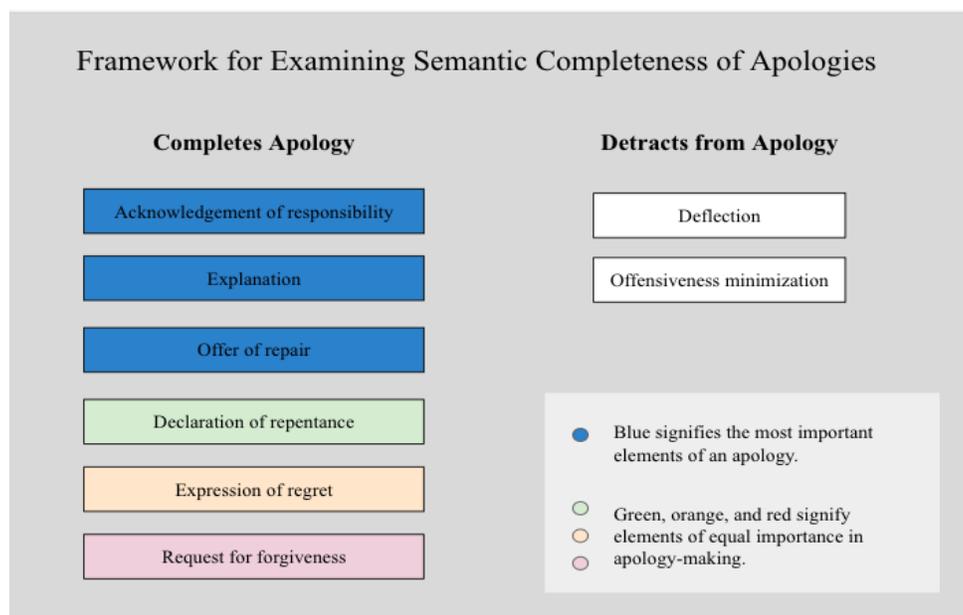


Fig. 1: Semantic completeness framework adapted from Lewicki et al. (2016) and Benoit (1997)

<sup>66</sup> Benoit, "Image Repair Discourse and Crisis Communication," 177.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 179.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

This framework is illustrated above in Figure 1. This framework ultimately informs the ways that France is attempting to manipulate the contents of apology discourse to push a certain narrative.

### 3.2 Inductive analysis of memory and identity

The second stage of analysis for this conceptual framework will be inductive, without predefined categories or codes. Inductive analysis will reveal important themes in the memory of the Algerian War, the way France is portraying itself and Algeria, and the power relations between the two nations. This particular part of the analysis will draw inspiration from works such as critical discourse analysis and Kubik and Bernhard's typology of mnemonic actors, but will overall see its own codes emerge organically.

As an inductive approach, the part of the analysis will not contain stringent categories. Rather, analysis of discourses here will "begin with basic description and move to conceptual ordering and then on to theorizing" in an inductive but systematic process similar to grounded theory.<sup>69</sup> These will eventually evolve into "inductive abstract analytic categories" that "emphasize theory construction" under the questions of memory and identity through political apologies.<sup>70</sup> The next steps will involve an examination of Hollande's and Macron's discourses over time to understand how they change and evolve.

Concepts from critical discourse analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis help further guide coding. Van Dijk (2001) describes critical discourse analysis as an approach that focuses on

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<sup>69</sup> Diane Walker and Florence Myrick, "Grounded Theory: An Exploration of Process and Procedure," *Qualitative Health Research* 16, no. 4 (2006): 549.

<sup>70</sup> Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2006), 15.

macro-level themes within utterances and texts.<sup>71</sup> These themes include identifications of groups, how certain groups dominate other groups, and how this induces inequalities.<sup>72</sup> Foucauldian discourse analysis proposes along similar lines that power relations manifest in discourse. As Foucauldian discourse scholar Miller (1990) describes, discourses from powerful institutions can categorize, control, and construct identities, therefore compelling beliefs and behavior and producing certain kinds of being.<sup>73</sup> The French president, as a position of power, can thus compel certain kinds of behavior and establish inequalities through discourse. The inductive analysis will consider this to understand how exactly the French/Algerian apology discourses are meant to situate and reproduce certain kinds of group beliefs, including collective French memory and identity, thereby reinforcing and/or coercing certain kinds of identities and power relations.

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<sup>71</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk, "Critical Discourse Analysis," in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, edited by Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi E. Hamilton (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 354.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Seumas Miller, "Foucault on Discourse and Power," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, no. 76 (199): 122.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Brief overview

This paper follows a single case study research design and employs discourse analysis as the method of examination. A single case study method is chosen with the aim of preserving "the complexity that is involved in real situations," and also due to the "analytical eclecticism" of case studies which provide the opportunity to tackle intricate issues from different angles.<sup>74</sup> Discourse analysis, executed in an abductive fashion, is chosen specifically in light of the aim to examine the completeness of apologies and what kind of political narratives are behind reconciliation attempts. Discourse analysis reveals how verbal and social processes are fundamentally linked, how discourse reconstructs social realities, and how policy practices are produced, hence it is particularly suitable for this thesis where verbal utterances of apologies are the central theme.<sup>75</sup>

### 4.2 Single case study design

The selection of a single case study is made with the logic that a case study allows for the investigation of "a contemporary phenomenon *in depth* and *within its real-life context*, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident."<sup>76</sup> This holds especially true in the case of France and Algeria, where understanding how exactly France is issuing the apologies and underlying motivations for doing such requires a deep understanding of

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<sup>74</sup> Gary Thomas, "A Typology for the Case Study in Social Science Following a Review of Definition, Discourse, and Structure," *Qualitative Inquiry* 17, no. 6 (2011): 512.

<sup>75</sup> Jennifer Milliken, "The study of discourse in international relations: A critique of research and methods," *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 2 (1999): 229; *Ibid*, 240.

<sup>76</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Inc., 2009), 18.

the context of the relationship between the two nations. Performing an experiment or large-N survey would "deliberately divorce" the phenomenon of apologizing from the context-specific factors of France and Algeria, thus providing generalizations that would only half-fulfill the goals of explaining the current policy trajectory and its underlying intentions.<sup>77</sup>

This case has unique elements that distinguish it from other political apologies, especially given the complex governance of Algeria under French colonialism, so it can be considered a *critical instance*, examining a very unique program.<sup>78</sup> It can also be considered an *instrumental case* that is used to provide insights into an issue for theory building.<sup>79</sup> This instrumental case's contribution to theory building is noticeably distinct from the positivist aim to generalize broadly: rather, this thesis aims to construct and refine theory through a smaller-scale generalization that "presents an explanation for how an evaluated initiative produces its results (or not)" rather than reaching for a broad numeric one.<sup>80</sup> This has been referred to by some scholars as an *analytic generalization* as opposed to a sweeping numeric generalization.<sup>81</sup> Thus, given the complexity of the phenomenon of political apologies, a case study is deemed most appropriate to capture the nuances of reconciliation and contribute to theory building.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Sasa Baškarada, "Qualitative case study guidelines," *The Qualitative Report* 19, no. 40 (2014): 5.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Robert K. Yin, "Validity and Generalization in Future Case Study Evaluations," *Evaluation* 19, no. 3 (2013): 327.

<sup>81</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research*, 43.

### 4.3 Data collection

The discourses analyzed in this thesis are promulgated particularly by French presidents François Hollande and Emmanuel Macron in their speeches, declarations, interviews, and communications from the Élysée office. This restriction is made due to the fact that presidents are viewed as perhaps the most legitimate representative of the state and thus the only figure that can truly "apologize" on behalf of a government.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, this work somewhat aims to be a continuation of Horelt's analysis of Chirac's and Sarkozy's approaches to apology-making, which analyzed presidential discourse but only up to 2012.<sup>83</sup> Macron's presidency has marked a turning point in the approach to diplomatic relations with Algeria, with significantly more activity surrounding reconciliation.<sup>84</sup> This makes it especially more crucial to examine how the discourse has progressed since 2012. From a theoretical perspective, the selection criteria also adheres to Wilson (2001) who describes, examining political discourse means that studies should look at speech acts "such that we only deal with politicians and core political events," therefore excluding everyday discourse.<sup>85</sup> Data must therefore be selected with the aim "to seek out the ways in which language choice is manipulated for specific political effect."<sup>86</sup> Public officials generally must also have a high enough standing in order for their apologies to be considered "felicitous" and thereby

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<sup>82</sup> Daase, "Guilt, apology, and reconciliation," 4.

<sup>83</sup> Horelt, "The double discourse."

<sup>84</sup> "Apaiser les mémoires de la colonisation et de la guerre d'Algérie" [Soothing memories of colonization and the Algerian War], Élysée, March 18, 2022. <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2022/03/18/apaiser-les-memoires-de-la-colonisation-et-de-la-guerre-algerie>

<sup>85</sup> John Wilson, "Political Discourse," in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi E. Hamilton (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 411.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 410.

have any effect on political action.<sup>87</sup> An apology is, however, a "face-threatening act," and for presidents and country leaders, it is "crucial not to be one-down, because that constitutes a loss of power and influence," which makes it especially interesting to study apologies from specifically presidents.<sup>88</sup> This thesis therefore chose to restrict political discourse analysis to presidencies specifically due to their significant influence over policies of apologies, as well as the particularly high stakes they have if the apology is done insufficiently.

The speeches and documents are restricted to those from the Élysée office in the public domain, totaling n=32. These were obtained through the archives available at the official government websites, Elysee.fr and Vie-publique.fr. The data are restricted to content coming directly from the presidents, including speeches, press releases, official communications on reports of a presidential action to do with reconciliation such as telephone calls, press conferences, interviews, and letters. Key documents that have influenced their decisions will also be considered for context, namely a 2021 report by historian Benjamin Stora, "Les Questions mémorielles portant sur la colonisation et la guerre d'Algérie," here referred to as "the Stora report." The Stora report is particularly influential to Macron's apology policy, having been expressly commissioned by the president himself to guide reconciliation.<sup>89</sup> While the Stora report itself is not an object of strict analysis, it will contextualize Macron's political discourse. There is no similar report for Hollande, so the Stora report will only apply to understanding Macron's speeches.

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<sup>87</sup> Lakoff, "Nine ways of looking at apologies," 203.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 206.

<sup>89</sup> Benjamin Stora, *Les Questions mémorielles portant sur la colonisation et la guerre d'Algérie* [Questions of memory regarding colonization and the Algerian War] (Vie Publique, 2021), 1.

As the sources in French usually without official English translations, all translations in this thesis are those of the author unless otherwise specified. The author received a Bachelor's in French Language and Literature with substantial coursework in Linguistics and Translation. The author has several qualifications in translation and language, including the DALF Certificate for Level C2 in French, a certification provided by France Education International for the French Ministry of Education.<sup>90</sup> This was therefore deemed sufficient for deep understanding of speeches and key texts.

#### 4.4 Discourse analysis method

As discussed in the conceptual framework, the method of analysis is discourse analysis, which allows this thesis to focus on how the act of speech-making is conducted and on how interpretations of such build knowledge around reconciliation and apologies. Discourse analysis examines how "social realities" are constructed by words, language, and interactions, wherein "knowledgeable" authorities construct power through these discourses, making it ideal for the purposes of this research.<sup>91</sup> Traditionally, discourse analysis has been criticized for its lack of replicability and methodological rigor, even being criticized by some for being "prolix and self-indulgent."<sup>92</sup> This debate is beyond the scope of this research. This analysis, however, follows Milliken (1998), who asserts that the strength of the approach remains in its ability to systematically analyze texts and extrapolate how certain repetitions of phrases, thoughts, and

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<sup>90</sup> "Welcome on DELF-DALF's website!" DELF-DALF, accessed June 10, 2022 at <http://www.delfdalf.fr/index-en.html>

<sup>91</sup> Martin Senn and Christoph Elhardt, "Bourdieu and the bomb: Power, language and the doxic battle over the value of nuclear weapons," *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 2 (2014): 317.

<sup>92</sup> Milliken, "The study of discourse in international relations," 227.

syntax structures help to push a particular way of framing the agenda.<sup>93</sup> Discourse is useful in studying how meaning is constructed, knowing how discourses are productive or reproductive of reality, and appreciating how the structuring of meaning is connected to legitimizing certain practices.<sup>94</sup> This is particularly relevant for this thesis, which aims to analyze how apologies, memory, and identity are meaningful for informing reconciliation practices between France and Algeria.

Discourses within presidential speeches and documents were coded entirely by hand without the assistance of qualitative software. In the deductive part, key words were sometimes flagged as potential sites for semantic elements, e.g., *request for forgiveness* was associated with the phrase "*pardon*" or "forgive/pardon" in English. It is not necessary, however, for a document to have an explicit apology to a group in order to be coded within these categories as this analysis deals with the broader discourse of apology rather than a single speech. For example, a speech may address the overarching bilateral relationship between French and Algeria but contain phrases on colonialism that would qualify it as acknowledgement of responsibility in the larger discourse. For the inductive part, related keywords to memory and identity were identified, analyzed, and compared with one another to establish how these issues were being framed. Codes and their categories were modified and refined throughout the analysis. The full coding structure of both the deductive and inductive parts is included in Appendix B. An example of the coding process can be found in Appendix C.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 229.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 229-230.

As a case study with an abductive approach, validity was ensured namely by consulting multiple sources of evidence and attaining as broad a sampling of data as possible. Plausible rival explanations were also considered per Yin (2013)'s recommendation.<sup>95</sup> For example, for the interpretation of memory and identity discourses, France could be attempting to be a mnemonic pluralist and consider all sides of the argument in the discourse. These types of counter-speculations were ultimately rejected as there was not enough historical support. Data was also rigorously coded multiple times to ensure that the results remained overall the same.

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<sup>95</sup> Yin, "Validity and generalization," 323.

## 5. Case Overview

This section briefly recounts the historical issue at hand. In 1830, King Charles X of France began the conquest primarily as a means to regain international prestige that it had lost in skirmishes with Russia and Britain.<sup>96</sup> Algeria, its target, became France's colony with 1 million *pièdes noirs* (European colonizers) settling there.<sup>97</sup> The territory became an official part of France with the French Constitution of 1848 that made three *départements* of it and gave it representation in the French parliament, a unique status bestowed only on Algeria and not on other Moroccan and Tunisian holdings.<sup>98</sup> In colonizing, France was motivated by the notion of *mission civilisatrice* - where France's ideas of the "superiority of French culture" and republican values led them to believe they needed to civilize "primitive" societies through science, technology, education and more.<sup>99</sup> However, France's citizenship laws for the colonies detracted much power from the colonized: the *code d'indigénat*, for example, classified Algerians as "natives" (*indigènes*) that were subjects rather than citizens, thus having civic duties but no civic rights.<sup>100</sup> The only means of obtaining French citizenship was through giving up Islamic religion and/or indigenous Berber customs.<sup>101</sup> These systems led to "more than an inferiority complex.... a feeling of non-existence"

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<sup>96</sup> James McDougall, *A History of Algeria* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 51.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 231.

<sup>98</sup> Guy Pervillé, *De l'Empire français à la décolonisation* [From the French Empire to Decolonization] (Paris, FR: Hachette Livre, 1993), 159.

<sup>99</sup> Tyler Stovall, "The Republican Empire," in *Transnational France: The Modern History of a Universal Nation* (New York, US: Routledge, 2018), 206; Alice L. Conklin, "The Civilizing Mission," in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, ed. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert, and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011): 174-175.

<sup>100</sup> McDougall, *A History of Algeria*, 123.

<sup>101</sup> Pervillé, *De l'Empire français*, 159.

as Algerian culture was effaced by its colonizers.<sup>102</sup> This therefore gave birth to Algerian nationalism as a counter reaction.<sup>103</sup>

The Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) was the brutal conflict resulting from this nationalistic sentiment, and France's biggest colonial defeat.<sup>104</sup> Both the French and Algerians committed atrocities, including massacres and torture.<sup>105</sup> The war also led the nearly 1 million *pieds noirs* who had been in Algeria since its formal annexation in 1830 to be suddenly, forcibly deported to France.<sup>106</sup> *Harkis*, Algerians who fought on the French side, were similarly mistreated - those who remained were tortured by Algerians and those who fled to France were shunned by French society.<sup>107</sup>

While the Evian Accords ceased physical fighting in Algeria, they marked the beginning of a war of memory. Algerians condemn the practices of 132 years of French colonialism, including the *code indigénat*, punitive labor measures in the colony, and generally violent practices against Algerians.<sup>108</sup> They also contest events of the war, including the Sétif massacre on May 8, 1945 during V-E Day celebrations, the Seine Massacre of thousands of pro-independence

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<sup>102</sup> Phillip C. Naylor, *France and Algeria: A History of Decolonization and Transformation* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), 29.

<sup>103</sup> McDougall, *A History of Algeria*, 128; Pervillé, *De l'Empire français*, 159.

<sup>104</sup> Pervillé, *De l'Empire français*, 159.

<sup>105</sup> Naylor, *France and Algeria*, 8.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 45.

<sup>108</sup> Pervillé, *De l'Empire français*, 45; Caro, "Chirac, Sarkozy, Hollande."

protestors in Paris, and nuclear tests in the Algerian desert that killed around 42,000 Algerians.<sup>109</sup> Domestically, there has also been much criticism of France. The government initially was completely silent on the subject of the Algerian War, save for amnestying all military members involved.<sup>110</sup> The war was not termed as a "war" until 1999.<sup>111</sup> Then, following a 2000 publication in *Le Monde* of the torture of Louise Ighilariz during the war, domestic debates began.<sup>112</sup> Debates expanded to the torture and execution of Maurice Audin and Ali Boumendjel, mistreatment of repatriates and *harkis*, and the massacre of civilians by the Organisation de l'Armée Secrète (OAS), a pro-French Algeria terrorist organization.<sup>113</sup> These issues prompted an official apology to be issued by Jacques Chirac in 2003 (but scholars note that Chirac presents a "sterilization of history" with blurred moral accountability).<sup>114</sup> While progress was initially made to reconcile with Algeria, the 2005 "loi portant reconnaissance de la Nation et contribution nationale en faveur des Français rapatriés" was then passed that required teaching the "positive role" of French colonialism in North Africa.<sup>115</sup> This prompted Algerian President Abdeziz

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<sup>109</sup> Al Jazeera, "Algeria Seeks Apology"; France24, "France's 1960s nuclear tests in Algeria still poison ties," July 29, 2021. <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210729-france-s-1960s-nuclear-tests-in-algeria-still-poison-ties>

<sup>110</sup> William B. Cohen, "The Algerian War, the French State and Official Memory," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* (2002): 223.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 219.

<sup>112</sup> Horelt, "The double discourse of apology," 199.

<sup>113</sup> Naylor, *France and Algeria*, 33

<sup>114</sup> Horelt, "The double discourse of apology," 203.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, 199.

Bouteflika to demand further, formal apology, and since, France's bilateral relationship with Algeria has continued to be marred by indignation and resentment.<sup>116</sup>

While French presidents have attempted reconciliation, they have mostly been focusing on domestically-related issues such as the *harkis* and repatriates and have even continued to justify colonialism in some cases.<sup>117</sup> Today, Macron has openly denied calls for apologies for colonialism and is instead engaging in "symbolic acts" to drive reconciliation, partially under the guidance of historian Benjamin Stora.<sup>118</sup> 2022 marks the 60th anniversary of the Evian Accords, yet in spite of two decades of efforts, reconciliation has still not been fully achieved.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 204.

<sup>117</sup> Jacques Chirac, "Discours de M. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République, sur l'intensité des relations franco-algériennes, le refus du 'choc des civilisations', la nécessité des réformes en Algérie et la coopération culturelle, notamment universitaire, entre la France et l'Algérie, Oran le 4 mars 2003," Élysée, March 4, 2003, 2

<sup>118</sup> France24, "No Repentance nor Apologies."

<sup>119</sup> France24, "Sixty Years on, Algerian and French Nationals Share Stories of the Algerian War," March 16, 2022. <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220316-sixty-years-on-algerian-and-french-nationals-share-stories-of-the-algerian-war>.

## 6. Findings

This section describes the findings of the analysis of presidential speeches and related presidential documents. The findings will be elaborated first as a general overview, then broken down into sections based on the deductive semantic completeness of apology-making, the inductive analysis of memory, and the inductive analysis of identity and power relations.

### 6.1 Overview of results

This analysis finds overall that Hollande's and Macron's efforts at reconciliation contain numerous apologies for issues that concern mostly groups still remaining within the French context. However, neither president takes full responsibility for colonialism, and both even attempt to paint France itself as a victim of colonialism, a subversion of acknowledgement of responsibility. Apology-making attempts are therefore muddled, and despite inclusion of most elements, apology for colonialism remains a semantically incomplete and imbalanced discourse. Furthermore, in both Hollande's and Macron's speeches, there is an aspiration to a "truth" that is accepted and objective, which contradicts Benjamin Stora's own analysis of the reconciliation process and can be considered a utopian idea in resolving memory conflicts between France and Algeria. The idea of a single truth and objective history can also be considered to be aligned with the beliefs of *mnemonic warriors*, who claim there is a definitively true version of the past that they know, although Hollande and Macron are not overtly combative. The structure of the "apologies" and treatment of truth overall feed into the power relations dynamics, as France begins to re-imagine itself as a victim of colonialism and Algeria mostly assumes the stance of a distant, passive figure with little agency.

## 6.2 Semantic completeness of apologies

This analysis found mixed results of semantic completeness according to the initial framework. This framework was fine-tuned to match the specific nuances of this case and can be viewed in Appendix B.1. While apologies to the repatriated French and *harkis* are made that are semantically complete, the apology to Algeria for the war and colonialism is generally incomplete. The overall apology discourse can therefore be described as only partially complete. Hollande and Macron generally maintain very similar patterns of only partially achieving each of the 6 steps to apology. This incompleteness seems to confirm Horelt's notion of "double discourse," as politicians try to account for audiences of both supporters and opponents of France's decision to apologize.<sup>120</sup> The incompleteness also implies that apologies are controversial political moves that not many politicians are willing to fully follow through with.

In Hollande's speeches, most elements of Lewicki's apology typology were included to at least some extent, but the discourse still remains dubious in its semantic completeness. Notably, expressions of regret, explanations, and acknowledgement of responsibility are subverted. In the first public communication to President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, a letter dated the 4th of July 2012, Hollande replies to a correspondence from Bouteflika that requests him to take an "objective reading of history."<sup>121</sup> In doing so, Hollande speaks on behalf of France and recognizes that there is "further place for a lucid and responsible look at its painful colonial past."<sup>122</sup> This

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<sup>120</sup> Horelt, "The double discourse."

<sup>121</sup> François Hollande to Abdelaziz Bouteflika, July 4, 2012, Élysée.fr. <https://www.elysee.fr/francois-hollande/2012/07/04/lettre-de-m-francois-hollande-president-de-la-republique-adressee-a-m-abdelaziz-bouteflika-president-de-la-republique-algerienne-democratique-et-populaire-sur-le-cinquantieme-anniversaire-de-la-naissance-de-la-republique-algerienne-democratique-et>

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

particular phrasing exemplifies the subversion of Lewicki's traditional conception of expressions of regret, explanations, and acknowledgement of responsibility. While the phrase "painful colonial past" implies an expression of regret for France's colonialism, it is not a direct admission of the past being regrettable *per se*. Simultaneously, it is also not an explanation in the traditional Lewickian sense that Hollande is explaining the reasons for France's actions, but rather is simply explaining that the past is painful to France as well. This is additionally a prime example of how Hollande treats narratives of responsibility as well, as even though Hollande claims to take a "lucid and responsible look" at the past, it is unclear *what* France is responsible for and if the pain from the colonial past was inflicted on France or another party.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, broad economic development projects that are not obviously related to the history between the two nations, and are mostly self-serving, are his offers for repair.<sup>124</sup> Offers for repair that *do* signify a meaningful step towards reconciliation are those that relate to youth and education.<sup>125</sup> However, arguably, these initiatives - which include the establishment of more Alliance Française institutions and a greater integration of French into education curricula - can potentially be perceived culturally imperialist in nature, echoing the old notion of *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>126</sup> Even if not explicitly intended this

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> François Hollande, "Conférence de presse de M. François Hollande, président de la république, notamment sur les relations franco-algériennes, à Alger le 19 décembre 2012" [Press Conference by François Hollande, President of the Republic, notably on French-Algerian relations], Alger, Algeria, December 19, 2012, accessed June 11, 2022 at <https://www.elysee.fr/francois-hollande/2012/12/19/conference-de-presse-de-m-francois-hollande-president-de-la-republique-notamment-sur-les-relations-franco-algeriennes-a-alger-le-19-decembre-2012>

<sup>125</sup> François Hollande, "Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur la coopération culturelle entre la France et l'Algérie, à Tlemcen (Algérie) le 20 décembre 2012" [Declaration of François Hollande, President of the Republic, on cultural cooperation between France and Algeria], transcript of speech delivered at Tlemcen, Algeria, December 20, 2012. <https://www.elysee.fr/francois-hollande/2012/12/20/declaration-de-m-francois-hollande-president-de-la-republique-sur-la-cooperation-culturelle-entre-la-france-et-lalgerie-a-tlemcen-algerie-le-20-decembre-2012>

<sup>126</sup> McCormack, "Social Memories," 1134; Conklin, "The Civilizing Mission," 173.

way, this demonstrates a very French-centric approach to the apology. Such ambiguous delivery of key elements of an apology overall demonstrate that Hollande is reluctant to propagate a discourse of true, complete apology.

Hollande's other speeches, such as the December 2012 speech on the Franco-Algerian relationship and the 2016 declaration on the Algerian War, further demonstrate incompleteness with subverted expressions of regret, explanations, and acknowledgement of responsibility. In his 2012 declaration on bilateral cooperation, Hollande recounts the history of colonialism as a form of explanation, but again does not go beyond recalling the basic facts of the events.<sup>127</sup> While he alludes to the massacres in Sétif, Guelma, and Kherrata, there is little examination of the motivations behind these events in his explanation, where French police murdered hundreds of pro-Algerian independence demonstrators.<sup>128</sup> Hollande also acknowledges the colonial system as "profoundly unjust and brutal," which constitutes somewhat of an expression of regret, but distances France from its perpetrating role in this system.<sup>129</sup> He "recognizes the suffering that colonization inflicted on the Algerian people," yet also emphasizes that France itself suffered from "breaching its universal values" (in French: *la France manquait à ses valeurs universelles*) in this situation, the phrasing of which implies it as temporary loss of values that France normally always upholds.<sup>130</sup> This could be seen as an acknowledgement of responsibility, but it is subverted as

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<sup>127</sup> François Hollande, "Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur les relations franco-algériennes, à Alger le 20 décembre 2012" [Declaration by François Hollande, President of the Republic, on French-Algerian relations], transcript of speech delivered in Alger, Algeria, December 20, 2012, 1. <https://www.elysee.fr/front/pdf/elysee-module-12601-fr.pdf>

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

France claims that it, too, was victimized in these series of events. His March 2016 declaration echoes this same sentiment and again subverts the notion of acknowledgement of responsibility by separating out the "unjust colonial system" from the French identity.<sup>131</sup> He characterizes the Algerian War as the "last page" of the story of the French colonial empire, stating that France "constructed" this system of colonialism that was founded on inequality, but that colonialism "contained in itself its own end."<sup>132</sup> This phrasing, a borderline deflection, implies that the responsibility lies primarily in the system of colonialism as opposed to the perpetrator of the system. Ultimately the speech contains other apologetic elements like strong offers for repair (namely through the early opening of archives) and declaration of repentance, where Hollande vows to reconcile the memory conflicts and ensure history recognizes where France has gone wrong.<sup>133</sup> However, overall, given these subversions, Hollande's apology discourse is semantically incomplete.

Macron attempts to break the mold with a comparatively bolder approach to admitting the responsibility of the French Republic for various issues, but his apology discourse is ultimately also incomplete, especially with explanation and acknowledgement of responsibility. Macron openly aims to not provide an apology but rather to pursue "reconciliation."<sup>134</sup> This is in line with

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<sup>131</sup> François Hollande, "Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur la guerre d'Algérie, à Paris le 19 mars 2016" [Declaration by François Hollande, President of the Republic, on the Algerian War], transcript of speech delivered in Paris, France, March 19, 2016. <https://www.elysee.fr/francois-hollande/2016/03/19/declaration-de-m-francois-hollande-president-de-la-republique-sur-la-guerre-dalgerie-a-paris-le-19-mars-2016>

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> France24, "No Repentance nor Apologies."

the Stora report, which serves as the foundation of Macron's reconciliation policy with Algeria. Benjamin Stora, renowned historian on France and Algeria, was commissioned by Macron to advise him on how to handle the Algerian question.<sup>135</sup>

The Stora report ultimately recommends that steps towards reconciliation should be made, but that France should not apologize for colonialism. The recommendation against apology is prescribed on the basis of the Japanese and Chinese/Korean experience. Stora claims that examining the relationships between Japan, China, and Korea reveals that many apologies have been made on Japan's behalf, but efforts to do so have had little effect in diffusing tensions between these nations.<sup>136</sup> He uses this to claim that new official apologies issued by the state will likely not suffice to heal the rifts between the two nations over questions of memory, but still encourages the acknowledgement of "reality" of the colonial system.<sup>137</sup> However, using the Japanese case to generalize the effectiveness of political apologies is not entirely valid, as the Japanese case has been conceived of as an "apologia syndrome," where there is an overabundance of semantically incomplete, highly-unspecific apologies that fail to actually acknowledge Japan's responsibility or explicitly use the word for "sorry."<sup>138</sup> The instances where apology statements have come closer to being more theoretically complete have notably been sabotaged by nationalist lobby groups.<sup>139</sup> Scholars overall conclude that it is actually *because of* the many half-hearted attempts to apologize

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<sup>135</sup> Stora, "Les Questions mémorielles," 1.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 83.

<sup>138</sup> Engert, "Japan - China and the two Koreas," 239.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 328.

that Japan is not viewed as credible.<sup>140</sup> This further points to the importance of semantic completeness of apologies, as a single, more semantically complete apology has the potential to be more effective in mitigating bilateral tensions.

Due to the Stora report's recommendation, Macron overall does not apologize directly to Algeria for colonialism, but instead enacts a series of "gestures" and apologizes only to specific victims of the France-Algerian War. This includes the gesture of returning twenty-four Algerian skulls and apologies for the torture and disappearance of Maurice Audin, the assassination of Ali Boumendjel, the mistreatment of the *harkis*, and repatriated *pieds noirs*. Notably, with the exception of the skulls and Boumendjel, these subjects are all more closely tied to France than Algeria. This is a preliminary indication of how the structure of the apologies may differ from Hollande's, as it may be relatively easier to apologize completely to domestic subjects.

Nevertheless, Macron's speeches and declarations also remain relatively semantically incomplete with notable subversions in explanation and acknowledgement of responsibility. Explanation is used not as a means for explaining the motivations of France in the past, but for the motivations of France in seeking this apology in the present day. For example, in the speech on repatriated French citizens from Algeria, after a lengthy retelling of the historical circumstances of *pieds noirs*, Macron acknowledges that they "were not listened to," notably in passive form that somewhat strips away the responsibility of France, and explains the reasons for pursuing this step in reconciliation - namely, to finally lift the veil of silence on the "injustices that you [the repatriates] have suffered" and ultimately to "restore the truth of our history."<sup>141</sup> This explanation

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Emmanuel, Macron, "Discours du Président Emmanuel Macron aux représentants de rapatriés d'Algérie" [Speech by President Emmanuel Macron to representatives of repatriates from Algeria], transcript of speech given in Paris, France, January 26, 2022, 4. <https://www.elysee.fr/front/pdf/elysee-module-19215-fr.pdf>

not only does not adhere to the Lewickian definition of explanation, but also seems to be a justification more so for nationalist audiences who question the need for apologies in the first place, another example of Horelt's theory of double discourse. The acknowledgement of responsibility is also often subverted in these speeches by declaring France was a victim of colonialism as well and/or making the designation unclear. For example, in the 2017 speech returning the skulls to Algeria, Macron acknowledges that "the government obviously has its part in the responsibility" to repair ties, but reminds the public that this is also their duty and that France has been equally traumatized by the war.<sup>142</sup> Additionally, in the statement on Boumendjel, Macron acknowledges that "no crime, no atrocity committed by anyone during the Algerian War can be excused or concealed."<sup>143</sup> This implies that France is not exonerated of its responsibility for the assassination of Boumendjel but also is ambiguous, as the word "anyone" moves the focus from the those of the French to those of other actors in the conflict. Finally, in the official apology to the *harkis*, after expressing regret at their "long and painful" history, Macron qualifies that France itself was also victim of the exclusion of the *harkis*, as it "turned its back" on its "history" and "values," ultimately taking responsibility but declaring that France had undergone equal suffering.<sup>144</sup> The focus on the harms France underwent while failing to properly explain their side

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<sup>142</sup> Emmanuel Macron, "Discours du Président de la République, Emmanuel Macron, devant la communauté française à Alger" [Speech by the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, before the French community in Alger], December 7, 2017, 5:20, <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2017/12/07/discours-du-president-de-la-republique-emmanuel-macron-devant-la-communaute-francaise-a-alger>

<sup>143</sup> "Reconnaissance par la France de l'assassinat d'Ali Boumendjel" [Acknowledgement by France of the assassination of Ali Boumendjel], Élysée Office, March 2, 2021. <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2021/03/02/reconnaissance-par-la-france-de-lassassinat-dali-boumendjel>

<sup>144</sup> Emmanuel Macron, "Discours du Président de la République à l'occasion de la réception consacrée à la mémoire des harkis" [Speech by the president of the Republic during the reception dedicated in memory of the harkis], transcript of speech given in Paris, September 20, 2021, 3 <https://www.elysee.fr/front/pdf/elysee-module-18405-fr.pdf>.

of the story overall weakens the apology. Offers of repair are, however, very concrete, as Macron invokes various days of remembrance, compensations, and visits that he will undertake throughout various speeches.<sup>145</sup> He also further vows to continue the efforts of reconciliation, recounting the progress that has been made in his March 2022 reflections on the Evian Accords and looking forward to the additional work that must be undertaken.<sup>146</sup>

Despite that many of Macron's speeches contain these subversions, some speeches contribute to rounding out the discourse, such as his apology to Boumendjel. In line with the evidence that a more semantically complete apology is more effective at repairing relations, the Algerian government had very positive reception to this apology.<sup>147</sup> The publicly-available version contains strong expressions of regret, declarations of repentance, explanations, and an acknowledgement of responsibility as it does admit that France played a part in torturing and assassinating Boumendjel.<sup>148</sup> In his 2022 commemoration of the Evian Accords, Macron also recounts all current accomplishments in the reconciliation and discusses France's responsibility. He openly condemns the previous silences and expresses that the nation must "efface nothing, accept nothing, forget nothing" of the injustices it has committed, from massacres to exclusion of repatriates.<sup>149</sup> While this is relatively nonspecific and does not appear to include colonialism,

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>147</sup> Roger Cohen, "In Reconciliation Act, Macron Acknowledges Truth of Algerian Lawyer's Death," *The New York Times*, March 4, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/04/world/europe/macron-algeria-Ali-Boumendjel.html>

<sup>148</sup> "Reconnaissance par la France de l'assassinat d'Ali Boumendjel."

<sup>149</sup> Emmanuel Macron, "Discours du Président de la République" [Speech by the President of the Republic], transcript of speech delivered in Palais de l'Élysée, France, March 19, 2022. <https://www.elysee.fr/front/pdf/elysee-module-19462-fr.pdf>

Macron is arguably more open to admitting the wrongdoings of the state. Thus, ultimately, Macron's apologies are somewhat more semantically complete than Hollande's, but still subvert essential elements. In instances where Macron gave a more semantically complete and straightforward apology, however, the reception was positive, illustrating the importance of language and discourse to reconciliation.

### 6.3 Memory, truth, and utopia

The second, inductive part of the analysis found that one of the most prominent memory discourses in both Hollande and Macron's speeches was the notion of objective, singular truth. Both Hollande and Macron appeal many times to a singular truth (*vérité*) to the historical narrative of the French-Algerian War that would help to heal rifts in the memory dispute between the two nations. The Stora report, however, cautions against the idea of a singular truth. Given the complexity of the France-Algerian War, Stora argues that memory must be treated as a dialogue where the two parties continuously converse on their perceptions of the past to achieve consensus.<sup>150</sup> The discourse of objective truth to memory follows the strategy of Kubik and Bernhard's *mnemonic warrior*, politicians who argue that they know the truth, and other perspectives on the past are "wrong."<sup>151</sup> Hollande and Macron can be classified as mnemonic warriors, but rather than using truth to directly manipulate and polarize the memory narrative, at this point, their insistence on the truth can be viewed more so as a utopian ideal that aims to appease both suffering victims and justify apology to adamant nationalists who are against reconciliation.

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<sup>150</sup> Stora, "Les Questions mémorielles," 23.

<sup>151</sup> Kubik and Bernhard, "A Theory of the Politics of Memory," 2.

In Hollande's speeches, the utopian ideal of truth is present from the very beginning, from the initial 2012 letter to Bouteflika to the 2016 declaration on the Algerian War. In the 2012 letter, he remarks that he agrees with Bouteflika regarding an "objective reading of history" and acknowledges that French and Algerians "share the same responsibility - that of telling the truth."<sup>152</sup> The October 17, 2012 declaration paying homage to Algerians killed in the 1961 protest for independence in Paris also aims to "recognize these facts [of the massacre] with lucidity."<sup>153</sup> These types of descriptions repeat themselves even in press conferences, such as the December 2012 press conference where Hollande again asserts that "there is a truth to say about the past" and that it is "equally a responsibility" for both France and Algeria.<sup>154</sup> In the June 2015 press conference on cooperation on terrorism and Mediterranean economic exchange, he similarly claims that France and Algeria have "turned towards the future" thanks to the "lucidity, truth" that are guiding diplomatic discussions on colonization.<sup>155</sup> However, this occurred in the context of ongoing debates on how to present France's "positive" involvement in Algeria in educational curriculum, the far-right's inflammatory remarks refuting the calls for apology, and even disputes

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<sup>152</sup> François Hollande to Abdelaziz Bouteflika, 2012.

<sup>153</sup> François, Hollande, "Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, en hommage aux Algériens tués lors de la manifestation pour le droit à l'indépendance du 17 octobre, 1961, à Paris le 17 octobre 2012" [Declaration by François Hollande, President of the Republic, paying tribute to the Algerians killed during the protest for the right to independence on October 17, 1961], Paris, France, October 17, 2012. <https://www.elysee.fr/francois-hollande/2012/10/17/declaration-de-m-francois-hollande-president-de-la-republique-en-hommage-aux-algeriens-tues-lors-de-la-manifestation-pour-le-droit-a-lindependance-du-17-octobre-1961-a-paris-le-17-octobre-2012>

<sup>154</sup> Hollande, "Conférence de presse, le 19 décembre 2012."

<sup>155</sup> François, Hollande, "Conférence de presse de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur les relations franco-algériennes, la lutte contre le terrorisme et sur la Grèce et la Zone euro, à Alger le 15 juin 2015" [Press Conference by François Hollande, President of the Republic, on French-Algerian relations, the fight against terrorism, and Greece and the eurozone], Alger, Algeria, June 15, 2015, accessed June 11, 2022 at <https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/195478-conference-de-presse-de-m-francois-hollande-president-de-la-republique>

by the French government about whether an Algerian nation truly existed before French colonial rule.<sup>156</sup> An objective "truth" thus seems harder to attain than the speeches indicate - almost a utopian ideal. This demonstrates that while Hollande has made strides since France's days of denial and refusal to apologize, the aspiration to a universal, objective "truth" is simply an ideal rather than a tangible goal.

While initially Macron is less vigilant about truth, eventually he perpetuates the narrative of truth and objective history as well. The 2017 speech returning the skulls of Algerians has less of a focus on attaining the truth and more so on defining their memories as "intertwined."<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, he stresses the idea that there must be a "transformation" of how the two sides perceive each other and their histories, which will ultimately lead to true reconciliation.<sup>158</sup> This indicates a stance more akin to a *mnemonic pluralist*, where Macron is advocating for reciprocal exchange and conversation over pushing an objective truth.<sup>159</sup> However, later, Macron pushes singular truth, such as in his declaration on the death of Maurice Audin where he declares France must pursue "the work of truth" on subjects related to the Algerian War and colonialism.<sup>160</sup> This is also echoed in the communication on the death of Ali Boumendjel, where he declares that "looking history in the face, recognizing the truth of facts, will not close still-open wounds, but

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<sup>156</sup> Akram Belkaïd, "France and Algeria, a long history of distrust," *Le Monde diplomatique*, November 2021, <https://mondediplo.com/2021/11/10algeria>

<sup>157</sup> Macron, "Discours devant la communauté française à Alger," 3:00.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 6:56.

<sup>159</sup> Kubik and Bernhard, "A Theory of the Politics of Memory," 2.

<sup>160</sup> Emmanuel Macron, "Déclaration du Président de la République sur la mort de Maurice Audin" [Declaration by the President of the Republic on the death of Maurice Audin], transcript of speech given in Paris, France, September 13, 2018. <https://www.elysee.fr/front/pdf/elysee-module-950-fr.pdf>

will help traverse the path towards the future" of reconciliation.<sup>161</sup> Thus, while there is a degree of understanding that it is no panacea, the discourse ultimately promotes the utopian idea that objectivity, history, and truth are attainable, fundamentally healing forces. However, sometimes, the notion of objectivity is met with skepticism. Macron, for example, classifies the reconciliation with the *harkis* as a "rendez-vous with the truth," but is interrupted by an individual in this speech who is critical of his words.<sup>162</sup> This interruption in of itself illustrates the contentiousness about what actually constitutes the truth in this particular situation, and whether or not the presented historical narrative can ever go "far enough" in recounting the facts after decades of silence and denial.

Truth is furthermore overall presented as a unilateral vision in Macron's speeches. In speeches more focused on bilateral topics with Algeria, there is little exchange or input from Algeria on what is agreed to be "true." For example, there is a noticeable lack of mention of the word "truth" in reports of phone calls between Macron and Tebboune.<sup>163</sup> This likely relates to disputes over many memories of colonialism, including the aforementioned argument about whether Algeria was a state prior to colonization.<sup>164</sup> Macron has even criticized Algeria for "rewriting history" and not "basing it upon the truth" in 2021, leading to diplomatic backlash in

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<sup>161</sup> "Reconnaissance par la France de l'assassinat d'Ali Boumendjel."

<sup>162</sup> Macron, "Discours à la mémoire des harkis," 1.

<sup>163</sup> "Entretien téléphonique avec le Président de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire, M. Abdelmadjid TEBBOUNE" [Telephone interview between the President of the Republic and the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, M. Abdelmadjid TEBBOUNE], Élysée, January 29, 2022, <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2022/01/29/entretien-telephonique-avec-le-president-de-la-republique-algerienne-democratique-et-populaire-m-abdelmadjid-tebboune>

<sup>164</sup> Belkaïd, "France and Algeria, a long history."

2021.<sup>165</sup> Despite retracting this statement later, Macron has therefore implied that there is an objective history that France is aware of, but that Algeria fails to acknowledge.

After this diplomatic blip, Macron nevertheless continued to pursue the utopian ideal of truth. In his March 2022 speech, he further asserts that all his efforts at reconciliation are:

"a work for the truth, for alongside memory and beyond memory, there is history. We are lucky to have living memories today - there will arrive a moment where the nation will no longer have any written traces. Thus, the task of history is essential, making the manipulation of our stories impossible."<sup>166</sup>

This therefore implies an idealization of history as a tool to attain an objective truth. This reflects the ideas of historiographer Pierre Nora, who claims that there is a heavy distinction between "memory" and "history," as memory is personal and history is impersonal, organized, and claims universal authority.<sup>167</sup> However, Nora also cautions that history is, on the contrary, not an infallible way of preventing manipulation, as it is merely "reconstruction, always problematic, and incomplete."<sup>168</sup> Stora, in his report to Macron, similarly cautions against unilateral searches for the truth. He asserts that "the aim is not... the writing of a common history, but to try to explain the

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<sup>165</sup> Matthieu Vendrely, "Quand Emmanuel Macron rencontre les "petits-enfants" de la guerre d'Algérie et provoque la colère d'Alger" [When Emmanuel Macron met with the "grand-children" of the Algerian War and provoked the wrath of Alger], TV5Monde, October 2, 2021. <https://information.tv5monde.com/info/quand-emmanuel-macron-rencontre-les-petits-enfants-de-la-guerre-d-algerie-et-provoque-la-colere>

<sup>166</sup> Emmanuel Macron, "Discours du Président de la République."

<sup>167</sup> Nora, "Between memory and history," 9.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

events of colonialism together" without believing that "everything can be settled with a definitive verdict."<sup>169</sup> The idea of a "truth" thus temporarily appeals to the "double discourse" and multiple audiences that French presidents must juggle for political traction, but as historians warn, finding the "truth" is more challenging and less clear-cut than it seems. Truth therefore becomes a utopian ideal across the French apology discourse, even veering sometimes into the mnemonic warrior territory, and always centered around the French experiences of memory and history.

## 6.4 Identity and power relations

The final element of analysis was the reconstruction of roles and implications on identity and by extension, power relations. In the deductive part of this analysis, it was found that apologies frequently failed to adequately acknowledge responsibility. Acknowledging responsibility is logically tied to identity and perception of roles as the wrongdoer versus victim. This particular element therefore required more examination, as the way responsibility is assigned can hint at a specific agenda in recounting the past and forming identities.

In Hollande's and Macron's speeches, the war is re-imagined as a "tragedy." France's responsibility for atrocities of colonialism is considerably down-played, and France is characterized as a nation with strong core values that was itself a victim of the colonial system. Furthermore, the leaders both advocate for "shared responsibility" for the past and claim that France and Algeria are "equal partners" in various economic, security, and social initiatives. However, given the lacking characterization of Algeria in these speeches and the simultaneous diplomatic disputes in practice, it is uncertain if this is just another idealistic aspiration. These

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<sup>169</sup> Stora, "Les Questions mémorielles," 93.

speeches thus are telling of France's identity as well as the shaky power relations between the two nations.

Hollande's speeches and interviews begin this trend of narrating the war as a tragedy and reconstructing roles. In terms of France's role, Hollande not only separates France from its colonial exploits, but also proposes that France be recognized as a victim. In his December 2012 interview in *El Watan*, he asserts that the quest for the truth and responsibility is something that "we owe to victims, *all* victims, and to the Algerian people."<sup>170</sup> His 2015 tribune in *Le Quotidien d'Oran* and *El Khabar* also echoes this sentiment, expressing that this "essential political act" of recognizing the ills of the colonial system is owed not only to the Algerian people, but "France herself."<sup>171</sup> Hollande also makes a point of saying that France benefits above all from the efforts to reconcile memory conflicts, urging his contemporaries and citizens that the nation should not "stay a prisoner of the past."<sup>172</sup> In these statements, Hollande thus asserts that France is a victim itself of the war. Hollande further characterizes France's victimhood as lying in an inadvertent betrayal of moral principles, most visible in the aforementioned 2012 statement on "breaching its universal values."<sup>173</sup> He emphasizes that France normally values "emancipation" and "living in an

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<sup>170</sup> François Hollande, "Interview de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, dans "El Watan" et "El Khabar" du 20 décembre 2012, notamment sur les relations franco-algériennes" [Interview of François Hollande, President of the Republic, in El Watan and El Khabar on December 20, 2012, notably on French-Algerian relations], unknown interviewer, 2012, 1. <https://www.elysee.fr/front/pdf/elysee-module-12602-fr.pdf>

<sup>171</sup> Hollande, François. "Tribune de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, dans "Le Quotidien d'Oran" et "El Khabar" du 15 juin 2015, sur les relations franco-algériennes, intitulée "La coopération franco-algérienne est en marche"." [Tribune by François Hollande, President of the Republic, in Le Quotidien d'Oran and El Khabar on June 15, 2015, on French-Algerian relations, titled 'French-Algerian cooperation is underway']. Reproduced on Élysée website, June 15, 2015, 3. <https://www.elysee.fr/front/pdf/elysee-module-13389-fr.pdf>

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Hollande, "Déclaration sur les relations franco-algériennes, le 20 décembre 2012," 1.

environment of peace and stability," thus unrest caused by colonization was an aberration.<sup>174</sup> This corresponds to France's historical identification with the role of value-bearer, rooting its identity in republican principles from the French Revolution era and the *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>175</sup> The tragedy of the unjust colonial system therefore victimized France as well by forcing it to betray its own beliefs.

With regards to Algeria, there is little specific characterization of its activities or roles in the process of reconciliation, and when mentioned, Hollande frames Algeria in a relatively passive manner. Algeria is simply characterized as a "valuable partner" who "plays a strategic role" in the Mediterranean region.<sup>176</sup> Hollande additionally pushes the idea that as equal partners, France and Algeria should both assume equal power within the framework of historiography and resolving memory conflicts. He declares that "the power of a country is measured in its capacity to look at its history," and that "we owe it to France, we owe it to Algeria," underscoring that he aims to build a partnership built on "equality" in cooperating on history.<sup>177</sup> Nevertheless, no concrete suggestions are made as to how Algeria is supposed to act aside from vague requests to foster partnership with France. The task of reconciliation and facing history, described as empowering, is thus portrayed here as a primarily unilateral act by France. This may align with the reality of the situation, but nevertheless demonstrates that France has greater control over the narrative at the moment.

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>175</sup> Conklin, "The Civilizing Mission," 173-174.

<sup>176</sup> Hollande, "Déclaration sur la guerre d'Algérie."

<sup>177</sup> Ibid; Hollande, "Interview dans 'El Watan' et 'El Khabar.'"

Macron also pushes these ideas of identity in his speeches and declarations. In terms of the French identity, Macron adheres to the narrative of France as an equal victim of the colonial "tragedy" and further revives the notion of *mission civilisatrice*. Macron, for example, claims in the speech on the *harkis* that for "France, the France of the Enlightenment and of human rights," the exclusion and shunning of the *harkis* was "worse... a breach of herself, of what she wanted to be, of what she should have been."<sup>178</sup> Macron also highlights the shame and "unpardonable" behavior of the French republic in his apology to the repatriates, recalling that these individuals were essential in "modernizing the France of the *Trente Glorieuses*."<sup>179</sup> On the surface, this is merely meant to underscore that the injustices lived by the repatriates goes against what normally are France's values. But by invoking history, Macron is also referencing the narrative of France as a country of equality, liberty, and acceptance, beliefs which drove the creation of its "republican empire" in the first place.<sup>180</sup> Thus, by asserting and reminding the public of France's moral endeavors, this aims to redefine the damage incurred from France's colonial atrocities as actions of a tragic hero actor who betrayed its own beliefs.

While initially, Macron attempts to offer Algeria with more of an active role in reconciliation, Algeria overall continues to appear as a passive figure with minimal presence in Macron's speeches. His first visit to Algeria to address the francophone community openly embraced a policy of "friendship - a balanced relationship."<sup>181</sup> During this speech, Macron also

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<sup>178</sup> Macron, "Discours à la mémoire des harkis," 1.

<sup>179</sup> Macron, "Discours aux rapatriés," 2.

<sup>180</sup> Stovall, "The Republican Empire," 206.

<sup>181</sup> Emmanuel Macron, "Discours devant la communauté française à Alger," 2:33.

openly declares that "it is not only a foreign political problem when speaking of Algeria," as Algerian affairs are "a French subject as well."<sup>182</sup> He therefore argues that France and Algeria are inextricably tied and must deal with the same challenge of facing up to the past, giving Algeria agency in this discussion as well. He even pleads for the Algerian government to allow the *harkis* to return to their families.<sup>183</sup> Following this, however, Algeria's presence in the speeches dissipates, largely due to the fact that Macron primarily focuses on domestic groups. Algeria is only mentioned to the effect that "the truth" is important to it in recognizing the assassination of Boumendjel.<sup>184</sup> In the speech to the repatriates, Algeria is also recognized to be a subject of a "carnal love story," but there is little characterization of Algeria's role in today's efforts for reconciliation.<sup>185</sup> In these speeches, France is thus given most of the focus and therefore power. While Algeria is described as an "equal partner" by Macron as well, this is not necessarily upheld in the immediate discourse as Algeria has very little true presence.<sup>186</sup> It is also noteworthy that the 2021 diplomatic crisis where Macron described Algeria as having a "political-military system" with an "official history" that was "totally rewritten" implies that inequality and disputes do, in fact, exist between the two countries.<sup>187</sup> The iciness of relations since then becomes visible in the

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 8:00.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 4:34.

<sup>184</sup> "Reconnaissance de l'assassinat d'Ali Boumendjel."

<sup>185</sup> Macron, "Discours aux rapatriés," 1.

<sup>186</sup> "Entretien téléphonique entre le Président de la République et le Président de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire" [Telephone interview between the President of the Republic and the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria], Élysée, June 2, 2020, <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/06/02/entretien-telephonique-entre-le-president-de-la-republique-et-le-president-de-la-republique-algerienne-democratique-et-populaire>

<sup>187</sup> Vendrely, "Quand Emmanuel Macron provoque."

speeches. In his March 2022 speech recounting the reconciliation policy outcomes thus far, Macron claims that "Algeria is not budging" and "there is no responder."<sup>188</sup> However, he still "embraces" reconciliation and thinks that Algeria will come round, but above all does it "for us, for our children" who require a nation that can truly "live in peace."<sup>189</sup> Macron thus implies that the apology speeches are ultimately a tool to continue to empower France more than Algeria by asserting its moral ground and achieving reconciliation with its own past above all. This demonstrates that power relations remain uncertain between the two nations, and while France has become vulnerable in its reconciliation attempts, it still aims to maintain a more dominant position in the discourse.

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<sup>188</sup> Macron, "Discours du Président de la République," 4.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

### 7.1 Policy implications

Overall, this thesis found that the apology discourse was semantically incomplete, that France believes there is a "true" version of memory to pursue, and that France uses the discourse to emphasize its identity as a "value-bearer," ultimately trying to take the dominant role in power relations. Such a discourse has significant implications on the bilateral relationship between the two nations. Given that the apology itself appears incomplete, it is uncertain if this will attenuate the tensions between France and Algeria. Yet although the current trajectory is likely not sufficient in smoothing the conflict, it is a step. The reconciliation discourse overall requires more development and reflection, specifically regarding the nuances of responsibility, memory, and identity.

As a policy issue, this will also only continue to increase in relevance as Macron continues reconciliation in his second term. More groups will be involved, including some that Stora recommended in his report, and as Algeria responds to developments in the bilateral relationship, there will be increased need for adaptability and insight as to where the reconciliation attempts are strong and where they may fall short. Apology as a reparations tool could eventually evolve into more material reparations, such as in the case of Germany and Namibia, thereby having implications for development aid and transitional justice.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> BBC, "Germany Officially Recognises Colonial-Era Namibia Genocide."

## 7.2 Relevance of contribution

This thesis has provided an in-depth examination of the current trajectory of France's apology policies, including how they are made and the components that possibly constitute a “successful” apology. The results overall align with the findings of scholars such as Engert, Renner, and Horelt that giving a semantically complete apology is a complex but important undertaking that implicates many discourses.<sup>191</sup> The decision to do so is clearly influenced by many external factors which this thesis only brushed upon, including historical circumstances and public opinion.

This thesis has also added to understanding of the case by demonstrating how discourses of memory and identity are intrinsically tied to the decision to apologize. Memory and identity are strategically employed to construct the narrative in a more favorable way to the apologizer, to justify undertaking apology, and to attempt to control power relations in the discourse. Thus, studying apologies by directly implicating questions of memory and identity are essential to gaining a better understanding of underlying motivations behind apology.

This thesis overall has further contributed to scholarly examination of reconciliation policy by extending the analysis beyond "double discourse" and further identifying the semantic incompleteness, discourses on a single utopian truth, and identity of France as a value-bearer as essential components of France's apology.<sup>192</sup> These elements could be driving the overall lukewarm reception of the apologies by Algeria. The findings of this case could potentially be

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<sup>191</sup> Engert, "Japan - China and the two Koreas," 247; Horelt, "The double discourse," 195; Renner, "The ritualisation of apology," 52.

<sup>192</sup> Horelt, "The double discourse of apology."

similar in other cases involving France, including Madagascar, Senegal, Vietnam, and a number of other former colonies.

### 7.3 Limitations and future research

While this thesis has given detailed insight as to underlying discourses that help to drive France's apology to Algeria, there are several limitations. The first limitation is that this thesis does not evaluate the broader discourse and only restricts the discourse to presidential Élysée communications including speeches, interviews, declarations, and press conferences. However, other bureaucrats, the media, and the public do also contribute to political discourse to some extent and ultimately, to apologies.<sup>193</sup> Furthermore, the presidential discourse extends beyond what is officially posted, as spontaneous remarks on news channels, private remarks reported by individuals and the media, and exchanges behind closed doors are also clearly significant to discourses. As aforementioned, restriction of the discourse to the very political elite is justified in that the head of the state is usually viewed as the most representative person of the State.<sup>194</sup> Furthermore, while spontaneous, private, and "behind closed doors" remarks are certainly important, these were difficult to obtain for the purposes of this thesis, and these discussions are generally not accessible to the public at this point in time. Nevertheless, expanding the analysis to other subjects and remarks would provide valuable sources of information about how the nation rallies or rejects apologies and thereby shapes discourses and policy.

The second limitation of this thesis is that the process of giving an apology is detailed, but there is no extensive evaluation of how these discourses are actually received. The Algerian side

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<sup>193</sup> Wilson, "Political Discourse," 398.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 399.

has little coverage in research, and it remains a large gap to be filled. The discourses generally indicated that Algeria has had little substantial reaction to reconciliation attempts thus far, but as these claims came from the French side, it is difficult to ascertain the accuracy of these claims. Regardless, current reparations policy literature indicates that any kind of measure will usually be subjectively "not enough" in the eyes of the victim.<sup>195</sup> More empirical research is needed in the French-Algerian case to fully grasp the extent to which France's reconciliation attempts are accepted.

A final limitation to consider is that, being a case study, the analysis of these apologies cannot necessarily be generalized to all apology cases. As mentioned, given how complex reconciliation is - often involving various groups under specific circumstances and motivated by various causes and emotions - studying this phenomenon from an interpretivist case study was deemed most appropriate. Nevertheless, future studies could undertake the task of comparing apologies across cases in an attempt to establish causal factors that induce nations to apologize.

## 7.4 Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated how policies of apology are designed and underlying discourses that they attempt to push. In the case of France and Algeria under Hollande and Macron, political apologies do not always clearly adhere to what is considered semantically "correct." Apologies to Algeria often subverted acknowledgement of responsibility in particular, which has been demonstrated to be one of the most important elements of an apology. Furthermore, Hollande and Macron are guided by a utopian ideal for an objective, universally-accepted truth despite scholarly acknowledgement of the difficulty of such an effort. According to memory literature,

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<sup>195</sup> De Greiff, *The Handbook of Reparations*, 456.

this qualifies them somewhat as "mnemonic warriors" trying to assert that they are capable of judging history as "correct," although this appears as more of an appeasement strategy for domestic audiences rather than an effort to be combative with Algeria. Finally, France's role is reconstructed as a *mission civilisatrice*-like "value-bearer" who was victimized by the war, and as Algeria has little agency in the discourse, power relations – though somewhat ambiguous – are fundamentally underpinned by narratives that favor France's dominance.

This thesis therefore has contributed to knowledge of the France-Algerian bilateral relationship and underlying discourse mechanisms that are contributing to the current tensions in the bilateral relationship. This thesis has also contributed to the field of political apologies, demonstrating the delicate semantic lines and underlying questions of memory and identity that politicians attempt to balance in political apologies.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A. List of presidential discourse documents

These presidential documents include speeches, letters, declarations, press releases, conferences, and interviews. They were obtained from Elysee.fr and Vie-publique.fr.

### 1. François Hollande

Document Title	Type	Delivery Date
Lettre de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, adressée à M. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Président de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire, sur le cinquantième anniversaire de la naissance de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire	Letter	July 4, 2012
Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, en hommage aux Algériens tués lors de la manifestation pour le droit à l'indépendance du 17 octobre 1961	Speech	October 7, 2012
Conférence de presse de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, notamment sur les relations franco-algériennes, à Alger le 19 décembre 2012	Press conference	December 19, 2012
Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur la coopération culturelle entre la France et l'Algérie, à Tlemcen (Algérie)	Speech	December 20, 2012
Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur les relations entre la France et l'Algérie, à Tlemcen (Algérie)	Press conference	December 20, 2012

Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur les relations franco-algériennes, à Alger le 20 décembre 2012.	Speech	December 20, 2012
Interview de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, dans "El Watan" et "El Khabar" du 20 décembre 2012, notamment sur les relations franco-algériennes	Interview	December 20, 2012
Message de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur la disparition en 1957 de Maurice Audin, jeune professeur et militant de l'Algérie indépendante	Press release	June 18, 2014
Tribune de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, dans "Le Quotidien d'Oran" et "El Khabar" du 15 juin 2015, sur les relations franco-algériennes, intitulée "La coopération franco-algérienne est en marche"	Newspaper editorial	June 15, 2015
Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur les relations franco-algériennes, à Alger le 15 juin 2015	Speech	June 15, 2015
Conférence de presse de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur les relations franco-algériennes, la lutte contre le terrorisme et sur la Grèce et la Zone euro, à Alger le 15 juin 2015	Press conference	June 15, 2015
Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur la guerre d'Algérie, à Paris	Speech	March 19, 2016
Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la République, sur les Harkis, à Paris le 25 septembre 2016	Speech	September 25, 2016

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Déclaration de M. François Hollande, Président de la  
République, sur la mémoire de l'esclavage, à Paris le 10  
mai 2017

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Speech

May 10, 2017

## 2. Emmanuel Macron

Document Title	Type	Delivery Date
Emmanuel Macron sur l'invité (before presidency)	Interview	February 15, 2017
Déclaration du Président de la République Emmanuel Macron au Palais de Zeralda	Speech	December 6, 2017
Discours du Président de la République, Emmanuel Macron, devant la communauté française à Alger	Speech	December 7, 2017
Conférence de presse du Président de la République, Emmanuel Macron, lors de sa visite de travail et d'amitié en Algérie	Press conference	December 7, 2017
Communiqué du Président de la République - Entretien par téléphone avec le Président algérien Abdelaziz Bouteflika	Office communication	February 27, 2018
Déclaration du Président de la République sur la mort de Maurice Audin	Press release	September 13, 2018
Entretien téléphonique entre le Président de la République et le Président de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire	Office communication	June 2, 2020
Entretien téléphonique du Président de la République avec le Président de la République algérienne, Abdelmadjid Tebboune	Office communication	July 9, 2020
Journée nationale d'hommage aux Harkis	Press release	September 25, 2020

Entretien téléphonique avec M. Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Président de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire	Office communication	February 21, 2021
Le Président de la République a reconnu l'assassinat d'Ali Boumendjel, avocat et dirigeant politique du nationalisme algérien	Press release	March 2, 2021
Le Président a entendu les demandes de la communauté universitaire pour que soit facilité l'accès aux archives classifiées de plus de cinquante ans	Press release	March 9, 2021
Discours du Président de la République à l'occasion de la réception consacrée à la mémoire des Harkis	Speech	September 20, 2021
Journée nationale d'hommage aux Morts pour la France pendant la guerre d'Algérie et les combats du Maroc et de la Tunisie	Speech	December 5, 2021
Discours du Président Emmanuel Macron aux représentants de rapatriés d'Algérie	Speech	January 26, 2022
Entretien téléphonique avec le Président de la République algérienne démocratique et populaire, M. Abdelmadjid Tebboune	Office communication	January 29, 2022
Déclaration de M. Emmanuel Macron, Président de la République, en hommage aux citoyens tués lors de la manifestation pour la paix et l'indépendance de l'Algérie du 8 février 1962	Speech	February 8, 2022
Discours du Président, 60ème anniversaire des accords d'Évian	Speech	March 19, 2022

## Appendix B. Coding system

### 1. Deductive Coding

Code Category	Sub-Codes
<i>Expression of regret [REG]</i>	Event described negatively, especially for victim [REG.1]
	Event generally described negatively (subversion) [REG.S1]
	Pay respects, no details (subversion) [REG.S2]
<i>Explanation [EXP]</i>	Reasons given for past action [EXP.1]
	Historical retelling of events (subversion) [EXP.S1]
	Reasons given for current action (subversion) [EXP.S2]
<i>Acknowledgement of responsibility [ACK]</i>	France is responsible for incident [ACK.1]
	Colonialism is responsible for incident (subversion) [ACK.S1]
	France is both responsible and a victim of incident (subversion) [ACK.S2]
	Passive voice, unclear responsibility (subversion) [ACK.S3]
<i>Declaration of repentance [REP]</i>	France declares it will not repeat offense [REP.1]
	France declares history/truth must be pursued for prevention of repetition [REP.2]
<i>Offer of repair [OFF]</i>	France provides programs, events, etc. [OFF.1]
	France encourages cooperation in restitution (subversion) [OFF.S1]
<i>Request for forgiveness [FOR]</i>	France asks for victim's forgiveness [FOR.1]
	France states that the action intends to advance relationship [FOR.2]

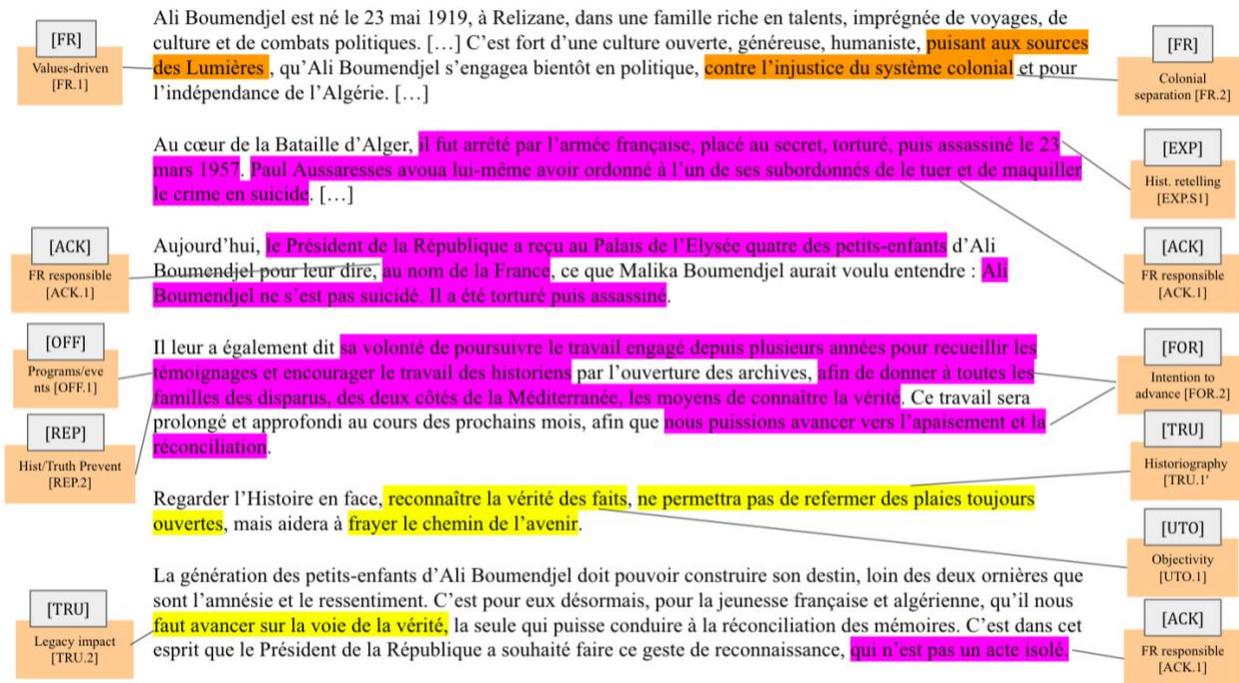
<i>Blame deflection [DEF]</i>	Denial of occurrence [DEF.1]
	Evasion of responsibility [DEF.2]
<i>Offensiveness minimization [MIN]</i>	Bolstering [MIN.1]
	Minimizing [MIN.2]
	Act was for the greater good [MIN.3]

## 2. Inductive Coding

Code Category	Sub-Codes I	Sub-Codes II
<i>Memory and Historiography</i>	Truth debate [TRU]	Historiography [TRU.1]
		Legacy impact [TRU.2]
	Utopian ideals [UTO]	Objectivity [UTO.1]
		Singular narrative [UTO.2]
		Equal partnership [UTO.3]
	Description [DES]	Pain [DES.1]
Hope [DES.2]		
<i>Roles and Identity</i>	France [FR]	Values-driven [FR.1]
		Colonial separation [FR.2]
		Victim [FR.3]
	Algeria [ALG]	Passive [ALG.1]
		Equal partner [ALG.2]
		Same as France [ALG.3]
	Power Relations [PWR]	Upperhand in apologizing [PWR.1]
		Prisoners of history [PWR.2]
		Equal friendship [PWR.3]

# Appendix C. Example coding

## 1. Example coding of Macron's communication on the assassination of Ali Boumendjel



## Appendix D. Example translations

Example translation is provided as evidence of author's proficiency and provides insight into how certain words and phrases were potentially interpreted.

### 1. Author's translation of an excerpt of "Discours du Président de la République à l'occasion de la réception consacrée à la mémoire des harkis" (Emmanuel Macron)

<u>Original</u>	<u>Translation</u>
<p>« [...] Et je vous le dis pour la France, la France des Lumières et des droits de l'Homme, ce fut pire. Un manquement à elle-même, à ce qu'elle veut être, à ce qu'elle doit être. Oui, en privant les Anciens combattants, leurs femmes, leurs enfants de leurs libertés fondamentales, en n'offrant pas à leurs enfants la même éducation qu'à tous les jeunes Français, en ne voulant pas reconnaître, malgré vos combats, malgré le travail d'Histoire et tant de lettres dictées. La France leur a lâché la main et leur a tourné le dos. Face à ceux qui l'avaient loyalement servi, notre pays n'a été fidèle ni à son Histoire ni à ses valeurs.</p>	<p>[...] And I tell you that for France, the France of the Enlightenment and the rights of man, it was worse. A breaching of herself, of what she wanted to be, of what she should be. Yes - in depriving the long-time soldiers, their wives, their children of their fundamental freedoms, in failing to offer their children the same education that all French youth have, in not wanting to acknowledge despite your struggles, despite the work on history and so many demands. France let go of their hand and turned her back on them. When it came to those who had loyally served her, our country was faithful neither to its history nor to its values.</p>
<p>C'est pourquoi aujourd'hui, au nom de la France, je dis aux Harkis et à leurs enfants, à voix haute et solennelle, que la République a alors contracté à leur égard une dette. Aux combattants, je veux dire notre reconnaissance. Nous n'oublierons pas. Aux combattants abandonnés, à leurs familles qui ont subi les camps, la prison, le déni, je demande pardon, nous n'oublierons pas...»</p>	<p>That is why today, in the name of France, I am saying to the <i>harkis</i> and to their children - solemnly, aloud - that the Republic has incurred a debt in their respect. To the soldiers, I want to express our gratitude. We will not forget. To the abandoned soldiers, to their families who were subjected to camps, prison, denial - I ask for forgiveness. We will not forget. [...]</p>