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The Events of May 8, 1945, in the French Press: Colonial Coverage and Transformations of Historical Memory

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Abstract: This study examines the role of the French media in covering the events of May 8, 1945, in Algeria and analyzes how this coverage was used to serve the objectives of the French government's public policy. The study relied on a content analysis approach by selecting temporal samples from *Le Monde* articles to cover three main periods: the immediate post-event period (1945), the post-independence period (late 1960s), and the contemporary digital era. The results showed that the French media framed the events in a way that reflected government positions and mitigated the impact of internal and external criticisms, consistent with the propaganda methods historically employed by France to shape public opinion and support its colonial interests. The study also revealed that the reframing of media narratives across different periods was influenced by historical and political contexts, while modern digital platforms contributed to the emergence of alternative voices seeking to expose colonial violations and challenge dominant discourses, indicating a shift in propaganda mechanisms and the diversification of influential media sources.

Keywords: French Media, Content Analysis, Historical Memory, Propaganda, May 8, 1945 Events.

Introduction:

The events of May 8, 1945, stand as one of the most significant milestones in the historical trajectory of the Algerian revolution, as they embody the violent response of French colonialism to the

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Algerian people's peaceful demands for independence. In this context, the media played a critical role in shaping the public perception of these events whether through the coverage offered by the French press under colonial censorship or through later efforts to document and acknowledge the massacres.

The massacres of May 8, 1945, unfolded in a sensitive historical moment marked by the end of World War II and the Allies' victory over Nazism. Thousands of Algerians had fought alongside France, hoping that their sacrifices would be met with recognition of their political and human rights chief among them the right to independence. In several cities most notably Sétif, Guelma, and Kherrata .Algerians staged peaceful demonstrations carrying banners that called for freedom and selfdetermination. The French colonial authorities, however, responded with brutal violence: within a few days, the protests were transformed into mass killings that claimed tens of thousands of Algerian civilian lives.

From a media perspective, the colonial administration exerted complete control. Newspapers and radio stations were subject to strict censorship, and no genuinely independent Algerian press existed. Frenchlanguage outlets operating in Algeria portrayed the demonstrations as a "rebellion" that had to be suppressed, deliberately obscured the scale of casualties, and framed the massacres as a "restoration of order" and "fight against chaos." Gazette de France (1848–1915).

On the international stage, global news organizations were focused on covering the war's conclusion in Europe, leaving only superficial and marginal reporting on the Algerian massacres. Although some British and American newspapers offered brief mentions, their coverage never reflected the magnitude of the tragedy.

This media collusion helped conceal the truth for many years, creating an imperative for postindependence Algerian media to reclaim and meticulously document the historical narrative by every available means.

This study aims to analyze how the French media addressed the massacres of May 8, 1945, with a particular focus on the divergent narratives surrounding these events. The analysis is based on a selection of French press articles examined across three key phases: the first, during the events of May 8, 1945; the second, following

Algeria's independence in 1962; and the third, covering the contemporary period, marked by global transformations and the emergence of new media platforms.

I. The History of French Press Propaganda

The French press is one of the oldest media institutions in Europe and has played a dual role since its inception transmitting information while shaping public opinion. It officially began in 1631 with the establishment of *La Gazette* by Théophraste Renaudot, under the patronage of Cardinal Richelieu. At the time, the newspaper functioned as a tool of the state, disseminating official news, subject to strict censorship, and used to legitimize the ruling authority. In the 18th century, with the rise of the Enlightenment, intellectual publications emerged that debated philosophical and social issues. However, press freedom remained heavily constrained by royal censorship (Gazette de France (1848–1915), n.d.).

The French Revolution marked a temporary liberation of the press, leading to the emergence of hundreds of newspapers expressing a wide range of political perspectives. One of the most prominent was *L'Ami du peuple* by JeanPaul Marat, which played a crucial role in mobilizing the masses. Nevertheless, this freedom was shortlived, as Napoléon Bonaparte reimposed censorship upon taking power and shut down most opposition newspapers. During the 19th century, journalism advanced technologically and expanded widely due to improvements in printing and distribution methods. Yet, political censorship persisted, especially under Napoléon III during the Second Empire. With the advent of the Third Republic, freedom of expression expanded relatively, and the press became a politically influential force. This was especially evident in the Dreyfus Affair, when Émile Zola published his famous article *J'accuse* in *L'Aurore*, defending justice against antisemitism (Censorship and Literature under Napoleon I, n.d.).

During World War I, the written press played a key mobilizing role, adhering to a unified national discourse that justified the war effort. In World War II, however, the press was divided between publications loyal to the Nazicontrolled Vichy regime and those aligned with the Resistance, such as *Combat* and *Libération*. After

the liberation, the media landscape was reconstructed, and independent newspapers emerged, most notably *Le Monde* (founded in 1944), which became a reference point for indepth reporting and investigative journalism.

Since the late 1950s, French journalism entered a new institutional phase with the creation of public media such as ORTF, followed by France Télévisions. Although the state maintained influence over the media during crises such as the May 1968 protests or the Algerian War, journalism began to adopt a more independent and professional stance. In recent decades, French journalism has entered the digital era, with major outlets like *Le Figaro*, *Libération*, and *Le Monde* transitioning to online platforms. Meanwhile, investigative outlets such as *Mediapart* have gained prominence for their bold reporting on corruption and politics ("Propaganda at Home (France) / 1.0 / Handbook," n.d.).

Regarding the propaganda techniques employed by the French written press, various methods have evolved over time. Chief among these was the manipulation of language and terminology, with newspapers using vocabulary that reflected the state's point of view. For instance, during the Algerian War, terms like "resistance" and "liberation" were replaced with "rebellion" and "terrorism," thereby distorting the image of the Algerian struggle in the eyes of the French reader. The state also employed censorship and suppression, preventing coverage of sensitive events such as the Sétif Massacre (1945) and the October 17, 1961 massacre in Paris, or allowing only the official narrative to be published without independent investigation (*Les massacres de Sétif*, 1995).

Additionally, national symbols such as the French flag, the anthem (*La Marseillaise*), and images of returning soldiers were used to evoke nationalist sentiment and associate patriotic loyalty with government policies especially during wartime. Finally, the press employed a strategy of framing, shaping readers' understanding of events through selective headlines, sources, and content structure. This method often presented social groups such as immigrants or Muslims as threats or dangers, reinforcing statedriven narratives while maintaining a superficial appearance of journalistic neutrality.

The history of the French press, in both form and content, reveals that it has never been merely a tool for communication. Rather, it has functioned as a powerful instrument of political

systems, playing a strategic role in shaping collective consciousness and influencing public behavior particularly through the systematic use of propaganda during periods of conflict and transformation (Daum, 2017).

II. The Historical Context of the May 8, 1945 Massacres :

The massacres of May 8, 1945 occurred within a highly sensitive historical context, coinciding with the end of World War II and the Allies' victory over Nazism. Thousands of Algerians had participated in the war alongside France, hoping their sacrifices would be rewarded with the recognition of their political and human rights, foremost among them the right to independence.

In cities such as Sétif, Guelma, and Kherrata, Algerians took to the streets in peaceful demonstrations, raising banners demanding freedom and selfdetermination. However, the French colonial authorities responded with extreme brutality, turning the protests into mass killings that claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Algerian civilians within just a few days.

It is worth noting that the Algerian Revolution began on November 1, 1954, as an organized and armed reaction against the French occupation that had lasted for more than 130 years, marked by systematic exploitation, repression, and the political and cultural marginalization of the Algerian people. The revolution was led by the National Liberation Army under the banner of the National Liberation Front, reflecting the collective will of the people to reclaim their national sovereignty and cultural identity. The revolution was characterized by its broad popular participation men and women, young and old, from all segments of society and across both urban and rural areas. It relied on armed struggle as a strategic choice, supported by an active diplomatic effort to garner international sympathy and support. Despite the fierce colonial response, which included mass torture, destruction, and physical liquidation, the Algerian people continued their struggle with resilience until independence was achieved on July 5, 1962, marking the revolution as one of the most prominent liberation movements of the 20th century.**(**Ibn Jabbūr Muḥammad & Ḥmdādw ibn 'Umar, 2024**)**

World War II broke out in September 1939, and Algeria, as a French colony, found itself directly involved in the conflict alongside France. Tens of thousands of Algerians joined the ranks of the French army and made enormous sacrifices on various fronts, hoping that their contribution would be recognized through the granting of political and human rights after the war. However, the end of the war with the Allied victory in May 1945 brought only disappointment for the Algerians, as the colonial authorities ignored their repeated demands for freedom and equality and continued to impose policies of repression and exclusion. In this tense atmosphere, Algerians organized peaceful demonstrations on May 8, 1945, in several cities most notably Sétif, Guelma, and Kherrata to express their aspirations for independence. The French colonial response was brutally violent, leading to massacres that remain etched in the Algerian national memory as some of the most heinous colonial crimes of the 20th century.**(**Ibn Jabbūr Muḥammad & Ḥmdādw ibn ʻUmar, 2024**)**

The media landscape in Algeria during the War of Liberation can be described as a true battleground between two opposing narratives. The French media held dominant control over the communication sphere, launching an aggressive propaganda campaign aimed at downplaying the revolution and portraying it as nothing more than temporary acts of unrest. In response, the revolutionary leadership recognized the strategic importance of media as a parallel weapon to armed struggle. They mobilized media content to counter French propaganda and to rally the Algerian people around the national cause. Initially, revolutionary communication relied heavily on oral methods as an effective means to mobilize the masses. Over time, this evolved into the use of written media, which helped consolidate the revolutionary message and broaden its reach across various segments of society.

III - The French Media Strategy During the Algerian War of Independence

During the Algerian War of Independence, French media played a central role in shaping public opinion, both within France and on the international stage, in a way that served colonial interests and distorted the reality of the Algerian struggle. It focused on portraying the revolution as isolated acts of violence led by so-called "rebel gangs," deliberately ignoring its popular and political nature.

The media employed a propaganda driven language filled with prejudice and inflammatory terms such as “terrorism” and “rebellion” to justify the brutal repression carried out by French authorities in Algeria. (Bensoula , 2024)

In France, the official media contributed to mobilizing public support for the continuation of colonial rule by promoting a positive image of colonization as a “civilizing mission” and reinforcing the idea of protecting French interests and European settlers in Algeria. French media deliberately overlooked the violent and exploitative practices endured by Algerians and instead focused on selective events, presented out of context, to depict the revolution as chaotic and bloodthirsty.

In Algeria, the press was subject to heavy censorship by colonial authorities, who banned any content expressing sympathy with the National Liberation Front or referencing the legitimate demands of the Algerian people. Journalists who attempted to break this media blockade were subjected to arrest, threats, or even assassination, which effectively silenced independent voices and enforced a singular narrative that served the colonial agenda (Bensoula , 2024).

Moreover, French media adopted a carefully crafted strategy aimed at controlling the official narrative of events, particularly concerning the coverage of the May 8, 1945 massacres. This strategy was reflected in various media practices that demonstrated a systematic manipulation of information and contributed to obscuring and distorting the truth in the eyes of both the French and international public. One of the key techniques used was suppression and minimization, where the French media deliberately ignored or downplayed the scale and brutality of the massacres committed against Algerians (Bensoula , 2024). These events were described using sanitized terms such as “disturbances” or “clashes,” rather than acknowledged as systematic massacres targeting unarmed civilians. This linguistic manipulation helped conceal the truth and absolve the colonial authorities of responsibility. The media also shifted blame onto the victims, portraying the Algerian demonstrators as the instigators through accusations of “provocation” or “violent

behavior." This narrative was employed to justify the ruthless military response that followed the otherwise peaceful protests. In doing so, the roles were reversed: the victims were depicted as aggressors, while the colonial forces were framed as protectors of public order. French media coverage relied heavily on official and institutional sources such as military communiqués and government statements, which were treated as the sole authority on the events (Bensoula , 2024). Meanwhile, testimonies from victims and local residents were marginalized or completely ignored, thereby reinforcing a onesided interpretation that aligned with the colonial discourse. Strict censorship was also imposed on the media operating within Algeria, with the authorities preventing the release of any images or news that might expose the reality of what had occurred. International journalists were barred from accessing massacre sites, effectively isolating global public opinion from the truth. As a result, independent reports and photographic evidence of the atrocities were largely absent, allowing the official version of events to dominate unchallenged. Additionally, French authorities employed distraction tactics, focusing media coverage on domestic or international issues to divert attention from the events unfolding in Algeria and to create alternative news priorities. It becomes clear that French media was not a neutral channel of information, but rather a component of a broader colonial apparatus aimed at controlling collective perception and legitimizing oppressive policies. For this reason, studying the French press coverage of the May 8, 1945 massacres is essential to understanding the mechanisms of systematic media distortion in colonial contexts.. (Bensoula , 2024)

IV. Research Design

The research design of this study adopts a strategic discourse analysis of French media coverage of the events of May 8, 1945. It aims to trace the evolution of media narratives and assess their influence on shaping public opinion both within Algeria and on the international stage. The temporal sample is structured into three analytical phases: the first corresponds to the immediate postevent coverage in 1945, capturing the contemporaneous media response to the massacres; the second focuses on the postindependence period (late 1960s), examining how the events were reframed in light of the decline of colonial power; and the third addresses the contemporary era marked by the proliferation of "new media" and digital platforms,

which have enabled the emergence of alternative voices seeking to expose colonial atrocities and challenge dominant historical discourses through counternarratives and documentary content. In each phase, two articles were selected from the French newspaper *Le Monde* through its official website(https://www.lemonde.fr).

IV.1- Question Research

The events of May 8, 1945, represent a pivotal moment in the history of both Algeria and France, as the French media played a central role in conveying these events to the French and international public. The central question is: ***How does the French media utilize the events of May 8, 1945, in the public policy of the French government?***

This research problem is based on several sub-themes:

-Analyzing French media discourse to determine how the events were presented and politically leveraged in favor of the French government.

-Studying the relationship between media and public policy, and how journalistic coverage contributed to supporting government policies or mitigating the impact of domestic and international criticism.

-Exploring the impact of historical and political changes on the reframing of media narratives during the post-event period, post-independence era, and even the contemporary digital age.

IV.2- Methods :

Based on the preceding discussion, this study adopts the method of content analysis, which is recognized as both a qualitative and quantitative research tool used to examine the presence, frequency, and meanings of specific words, themes, or concepts within a given text. This methodology enables the researcher to systematically analyze textual data in order to uncover patterns, relationships, and implicit messages embedded within the content.

Content analysis allows for the measurement and contextual interpretation of textual elements. For instance, analyzing the language used in journalistic articles may reveal forms of bias, ideological positioning, or particular media framing strategies. Such analysis thus goes beyond the surface level of the text, extending to deeper insights into the author's perspective, the intended audience,

and the broader cultural and historical context in which the text was produced.

Content analysis is widely employed in the fields of media studies, communication sciences, and the social sciences more broadly. It serves as an effective tool for interpreting meaning, decoding symbols, and identifying discursive trends across various forms of expression and communication (*Content Analysis Method and Examples | Columbia Public Health*, 2016).

IV.3- Sample :

Table 1: Research Sample

Phases	N°	Original Article Title	Translated Article title	Newspaper	Date of article
The 01 st phase	**01**	*"L'émeute sanglante de Sétif"*	The Bloody Riot Of Sétif	Le Monde	15th May, 1945
	02	*Une note du ministère de l'Intérieur*	A Memorandum Issued By The Ministry Of The Interior"		16th May, 1945
The 02nd phase	**03**	" Les leçons du 8 mai 1945 **"**	The Lessons Of May 8, 1945		10th May,1985
	04	*Les massacres de Sétif*	"The Sétif Massacres"		14th May, 1995
The 03rd phase	**05**	*Il y a soixante ans, les massacres de Sétif : l'autre 8 mai 1945*	"Sixty Years Ago, The Sétif Massacres: The Other May 8, 1945"		07th May, 2005
	06	*Sébastien Ledoux, historien : « Le 8 mai 1945 en Algérie est un massacre colonial »*	Sébastien Ledoux, Historian: 'May 8, 1945 In Algeria Was A Colonial Massacre'"		08th May, 2025

Source: Authors, 2025

V.Results :

As previously mentioned, the study focused on a textual and quantitative analysis of a sample of articles from the French newspaper *Le Monde* across three chronological stages: the first stage covering the direct reporting of events, coinciding with the outbreak of the May 8, 1945 massacres; the second stage following Algeria's independence; and the third stage coinciding with the emergence of alternative media. The study concentrated on textual and quantitative units of analysis, including the historical context of each article's publication, the article's length in terms of word count which is particularly significant in print journalism as it reflects the level of

focus and importance given to the topic—the linguistic and narrative style employed, and the sources of information used in shaping the media discourse.

V.1 The 01 st phase « Immediate coverage in 1945 »

it is evident that the French discourse regarding the events of May 8 during the first phase served to deepen the colonial strategy, as it silenced Algerian voices and presented an exclusively French perspective that reflects colonial dominance over the media narrative.

In the article «L'Émeute Sanglante à Sétif(1945)» (*The Bloody Riot in Sétif*), there is a clear reliance on bureaucratic language aligned with official statements, as seen in expressions such as «ordre a été rapidement rétabli» (*order was quickly restored*) and «bandes armées» (*armed gangs*), which justify military intervention and portray Algerians as rebellious armed groups, while conferring legitimacy on French violence as a means to restore order.

As for the article «Une note du ministère de l'Intérieur(1945)» (*A Note from the Ministry of the Interior*), the discourse adopted a more emotional tone, closer to propaganda, using terms loaded with contempt and criminalization such as «émeutiers» (*rioters*), «complices» (*accomplices*), and «Tribus berbères incultes et misérables» (*uncultured and miserable Berber tribes*). It also repeatedly employed fear-inducing phrases such as «ensanglanter» (*to stain with blood*) and «massacrés» (*massacred*).

Most importantly, the economic dimension was used as a propaganda weapon, as the issue of wheat (blé) (mentioned three times in the text) was inserted in a context emphasizing the Algerian threat to France's vital supplies, suggesting that the uprising endangered not only security but also the stability of French food supplies. This reference was used to justify repression as a means of protecting national interests, evident in the combination of security threat language (agressions – repeated three times) and economic threat within the ministerial statement.

Quantitative analysis reveals a difference in the discursive structure between the two texts: the article «L'Émeute Sanglante à Sétif» (359 words) employs a lexicon blending criminalization and racism, through phrases such as «tribus berbères…», «massacrés», and «émeutiers», with an emphasis on the act of "restoring order" in its active form «rétablir… l'ordre» (*restore… order*). In contrast, the article «Une note du ministère de l'Intérieur» is longer (389 words)

and more varied, combining security vocabulary («bandes armées», «agressions») with economic propaganda through the repeated mention of blé, while highlighting the authorities' speed in regaining control through the phrase «L'ordre a été rapidement rétabli» (*Order was quickly restored*).

Thus, both discourses converge in silencing the Algerian narrative and amplifying the alleged threat, yet they differ in style: the first article is marked by apparent neutrality and official language, while the second carries a racist and inflammatory tone aiming to demonize Algerians and exaggerate their threat to French security and economy, making repression appear as an inevitable necessity to preserve stability.

V.2 The 02 nd phase « After Algeria's independence»

French media discourse in the post-independence period was characterized by an attempt to reshape colonial memory within a framework that balanced partial acknowledgment of historical facts with the justification of French actions. At the same time, it sought to shift responsibility to non-French parties, such as German agents, Algerian rebels, and to attribute the state of tension to economic conditions and shortages of food and agricultural products.

Both articles share similarities in adopting a historical narrative of the events, incorporating figures on the number of victims that differ from Algerian sources a strategy aimed at minimizing the scale of the events. For instance, the article *Les massacres de Sétif* estimated the number of victims to be between 2,000 and 15,000 at most, whereas Algerian sources affirm that the death toll exceeded 80,000. This suggests an effort within French narratives to downplay the magnitude of the tragedy.

This tendency is reflected in the language and discourse used. Both articles employed a style that projects an appearance of neutrality, with heavy use of terms that soften the sense of responsibility, such as *«les émeutes»* (riots), *«la répression»* (repression), *«les événements»* (the events), and *«les troubles»* (unrest), instead of *«les massacres»* (massacres). This lexical choice reveals the French press's intention to frame a narrative that does not

directly indict France but instead situates the events within a broader context of global unrest and war.

Furthermore, the article *Les massacres de Sétif* indicates significant shifts, as it references the work of French historians such as Benjamin Stora and Charles-Robert Ageron, who have produced critical studies on the colonial era and the events of May 8, 1945. The inclusion of these academic perspectives underscores the French press's attempt to adopt a more documented and less denialist discourse compared to what was prevalent in previous decades.

This can also be interpreted in light of the French media's focus on French-Algerian relations through the article *Une note du ministère de l'Intérieur 1945*, which emphasizes that the events did not affect the core relationship between France and the Muslims of Algeria but were merely limited disturbances that could be contained. This is evident in the use of expressions such as *«affirmations de loyalisme à l'égard de la France»* ("affirmations of loyalty toward France") and *«de nombreux groupes culturels, sportifs et corporatifs musulmans»* ("numerous Muslim cultural, sporting, and corporate groups").

V.3 The 03 rd phase « New media»

Both the article *« Il y a soixante ans, les massacres de Sétif : l'autre 8 mai 1945(2005) »* and the article *« Sébastien Ledoux, historien : Le 8 mai 1945 en Algérie est un massacre colonial(2025) »* focus on the French debate surrounding colonial memory and the recognition of the massacres committed in Algeria on May 8, 1945, highlighting the political and economic dimensions that influence relations between Algeria and France. Both articles share the use of a contrastive style between France's celebrations of the Allied victory and the Algerian tragedy to emphasize the duality of historical memory, and they narrate the bloody events in Sétif, Guelma, and Kherrata, underlining French violence and the omission of these massacres in the official narrative.

They also emphasize the role of activists and associations of Algerian origin in France, such as the association *Au nom de la mémoire*, in documenting history and advocating for recognition of the massacres. This shift in media discourse can be traced to the emergence of alternative media, such as *médias nouveaux*, which enabled the dissemination of their positions and the stimulation of public debate on historical justice. This similarity is evident in both

articles' focus on using media and literature as tools to commemorate May 8, 1945, and to confront official denial, while also addressing the controversy over victim numbers between French and Algerian sources.

In terms of style and tone, while *« Il y a soixante ans, les massacres de Sétif : l'autre 8 mai 1945(2005) »* employs a critical and academic language with strong metaphors, the article *« Sébastien Ledoux, historien : Le 8 mai 1945 en Algérie est un massacre colonial(2025) »* features a contemporary narrative and analytical style. Nonetheless, the discourse in both articles reflects the same media and academic attention to the topic, highlighting a shared engagement in addressing the issue of colonial memory and advocating for the rights of the Algerian community in France.

VI .Discussion

After reviewing the French media discourse across the three stages, it becomes clear that this discourse focused on several key aspects. First, the issue of official recognition of the massacres, where acknowledgment occurred according to specific political and economic conditions and France's desire to maintain its relations with Algeria. Second, the interpretation of the causes of the events, aimed at justifying French actions and mitigating direct responsibility. Third, the human losses, with casualty figures consistently reduced compared to official Algerian sources. The discussion also highlights the role of Algerian activists and associations in reintroducing the issue into public debate, combining academic and analytical approaches within the media discourse.

During the post-independence stage, French media discourse was characterized by the imposition of a colonial narrative reflecting French dominance, portraying the massacres as legitimate measures to protect French interests. The discourse employed a provocative and racist tone, depicting Algerians as rebels threatening security and economic stability. Quantitative analysis of articles, most under 400 words, reveals a lack of attention to representing the victims, with no reference to their numbers during this period.

In contrast, after Algeria's independence, the discourse attempted to justify the French side by mixing partial

acknowledgment of facts with shifting responsibility onto non-French actors, such as German collaborators and Algerian insurgents, while linking the events to economic crises and resource shortages. The human toll was downplayed, presenting figures far lower than Algerian sources, and academic studies by French historians were incorporated to lend a documentary character to the coverage, portraying the events as limited disturbances that did not undermine the core of French-Algerian relations. Quantitative analysis of articles exceeding 2,000 words during this period also indicates an increased media attention to the events.In the new media stage, French discourse continued to employ evasive strategies by presenting conflicting narratives and varying casualty figures, attempting to minimize direct responsibility for the massacres. However, the emergence of new media platforms exerted pressure on official discourse, resulting in implicit acknowledgment of the events. The coverage also adopted a narrative literary style, integrating indirect events, such as France's Allied victory celebrations, to highlight the duality of the historical events. Attention was given to the role of Algerian activists and associations in documenting history and advocating for recognition of the massacres, utilizing alternative and new media to stimulate public debate. Stylistically, the discourse combined critical academic language with narrative approaches. Quantitative analysis, with articles averaging around 900 words, reflects a moderate level of attention balancing the goal of downplaying the events while responding to activists' demands for France to acknowledge its responsibility for the massacres.

VII. Conclusion

Through this study, it has been shown that the French media worked to utilize the events of May 8, 1945, to serve the public policy objectives of the French government, in line with the propaganda methods historically employed by France to shape public opinion and support its colonial interests. The analysis revealed that media coverage was framed in a way that reflected government positions and mitigated both domestic and international criticism.

The study also found that the reframing of media narratives across different Periods « the immediate post event phase, the post independence era, and the digital media stage »was influenced by historical and political contexts, reflecting the continued use of media

as a tool for managing collective memory. However, new digital platforms have contributed to the emergence of alternative voices seeking to expose colonial abuses and challenge dominant narratives, indicating a shift in propaganda mechanisms and a diversification of influential media sources. The study opens the way for further research on the impact of digital media on reshaping political and historical discourse.

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