

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Leeds		
Unit of Assessment: D26		
Title of case study: Retrieving hidden colonial pasts to influence the present: Algiers, Casablanca and Paris (1919-2020)		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000-2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Jim House	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Senior Lecturer in French and Francophone History	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 1995–date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013–July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>This project's main impacts have focussed on civil society and public discourse relating to the obscured socio-political histories of Algerians in Paris and migrants in colonial-era shantytowns in Algiers and Casablanca. Impact involved a broad range of beneficiaries, from the French presidency to former shantytown residents in Casablanca (Carrières Centrales) and Algiers (Mahieddine). By retrieving and telling previously hidden histories and memories, House's research enabled wider society to see these poor urban communities and their experiences in a new light, helping contribute to a more conducive environment for speaking about the past. His work has also helped these often-marginalised communities and individuals better understand and take pride in their pasts.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>House's research is concerned with the retrieval and articulation of hidden histories and memories relating to France's colonial past amongst the migrant urban poor. This work began in 2000 with a comprehensive analysis of the causes, events and public memory of the violent repression of a peaceful, pro-independence demonstration of 40,000 Algerians in Paris on 17 October 1961. Using an unparalleled range of sources, House examined the spatial dynamics of this urban protest, how and why the French state hid its repression, and how a new generation of memory activists successfully retrieved its memory. This work culminated in a 140,000-word monograph co-written (50%/50%) with Neil MacMaster (UEA, retired) entitled <i>Paris 1961. Algerians, State Terror, and Memory</i> [1], subsequently reissued as an OUP paperback (2009) and French translation (Tallandier, 2008 and Casbah (Algeria), 2012), with approximately 2,500 copies sold. <i>Paris 1961</i> underlined the agency of the migrant urban poor and helped to bring issues of colonial violence onto the public agenda, thereby contributing to a re-appraisal of decolonisation in France. House also published another fifteen single and joint-authored outputs on this topic, including [2].</p> <p>After the publication of <i>Paris 1961</i>, House's research focus moved to the hidden histories of urban districts in the former French colonies of North Africa. This work has involved analysing the radical transformations that rural-to-urban migration brought to the social and political geographies of colonial Algiers and Casablanca, notably through the creation of shantytowns, of which no histories exist in English or French. This interdisciplinary project (history, sociology, memory studies) features micro-historical studies of two large former shantytown districts – Carrières Centrales, Casablanca and Mahieddine, Algiers.</p>		

The shantytowns project has resulted in ten publications, of which five are listed in Section 3 [2-6]. It has pursued six main strands, with House's impact arising primarily from the final three:

- internal migrations [5]
- European constructions of shantytowns as a health, social, political and security problem [2-3, 5-6]
- welfare colonialism – notably rehousing [6]
- everyday lived experiences in the shantytowns [4]
- anti-colonial mobilisations and their violent repression, particularly:
 - the nationalist protests of December 1952 in Casablanca ([2-3], with [3] being the most detailed study ever of this repression)
 - the mass pro-independence demonstrations in Algiers in December 1960, during which shantytown inhabitants emerged as important political actors [2]
- fluctuating social memories of these areas after independence [4].

Placing shantytowns at the analytical centre shifts geographical, academic and social focus. This work will shortly culminate in an OUP-contracted comparative monograph *Shantytowns and the City: Colonial Power Relations in Algiers and Casablanca, 1910-1962*, which provides a more balanced and inclusive understanding of recent history vital to policy-makers, politicians and local communities alike. It underlines the key but neglected socio-political agency of the urban poor by showing how pro-independence mobilisations created a multi-centred nationalist city, one in which former shantytown residents can take pride, and consequently feel more socially valued. The oral history material retrieves the previously 'underground' everyday lived experiences of shantytown inhabitants (solidarity, resilience) alongside evocations of complex pasts linked to their little-known participation in the struggle for independence.

3. References to the research

Publications:

All contributions were peer-reviewed and published by academic publishers.

1. Co-authored book with Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory*, Oxford University Press, 2006, 375pp. See: <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/paris-1961-9780199247257?cc=gb&lang=en>

Paris 1961 has received overwhelmingly positive academic feedback, and has been extensively reviewed in UK, French, Algerian and US-based academic journals. In his review article, Joshua Cole judged *Paris 1961* 'substantial and convincing' (*French Politics, Culture & Society*, Vol.28, No.1, Spring 2010, p.115), and Daniel A. Gordon praised this 'outstandingly well-researched book' (*European History Review*, cxxiv 509, August 2009, p.1014). Described by reviewers as 'a landmark work' (Philippe Bernard in *Le Monde des livres*, 13.10.2006), and as 'exhaustive' and 'unsurpassable' by one of the organizers of the 17 October 1961 demonstrations - a former government minister in Algeria (letter to authors, 09.10.2011), a paperback French version of *Paris 1961* will appear with Gallimard's prestigious 'Folio Histoire' series in 2021.

2. Jim House, 'Colonial Containment? Repression of Pro-Independence Street Demonstrations in Algiers, Casablanca and Paris, 1945-1962', article in *War in History*, Vol.25, No.2, 2018, pp.172-201:

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0968344516659897>

3. Jim House, 'L'Impossible contrôle d'une ville coloniale? Casablanca, décembre 1952', article in *Genèses. Sciences sociales et histoire*, No.86, March 2012, pp.78-103:

<https://www.cairn.info/revue-geneses-2012-1-page-78.htm> (cut and paste into browser)

4. Jim House, 'Shantytowns in the City: Algiers and Casablanca as a (Post)Colonial Archive', article in *Francosphères*, Vol.3, No.1, Spring 2014, pp.43-62:

<https://online.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/doi/abs/10.3828/franc.2014.4>

5. Jim House, 'Double présence. Migrations, liens ville-campagne et lutte pour l'indépendance à Alger, Casablanca, Hanoi et Saigon', article in *Monde(s). Histoire, espaces, relations*, No.12, November 2017, pp.95-119: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-mondes-2017-2-p-95.htm> (cut and paste into browser)

6. Jim House, 'Shantytowns and rehousing in late colonial Algiers and Casablanca', in Ed Naylor (ed.), *France's Modernising Mission. Citizenship, Welfare and the Ends of Empire*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp.133-163.

Funding:

- European University Institute, Florence, 'Colonial shantytowns in Algiers and Casablanca, 1910-1962', Fernand Braudel Senior Fellowship, Sept.-Dec 2019, £8k.
- Co-investigator on international project *La ville informelle au XXe siècle. Politiques urbaines et administration des populations*, funded by Ville de Paris (Paris City Council), 2016-2020, £180k. <https://informalcity.hypotheses.org/>
- Institut d'Études avancées (Paris Institute for Advanced Studies), 'Shantytowns and the City: colonial power relations in Algiers and Casablanca, 1920-1962', 9-month research fellowship, Oct. 2015 to June 2016, approx. £36k.
- Leverhulme Research Fellowship, 'Shantytowns in the city: late-colonial Algiers and Casablanca', 2012-2013, £41k.
- British Academy Small Research Grant, 'Colonial rule and resistance: the shantytowns of Algiers and Casablanca (1930-1962)', 2007, £3.79k.
- AHRB Study Leave Award, September 2002-January 2003: 'The social memories of the 1961 massacre of Algerians', £9.4k.
- British Academy Small Research Grant, 11 September 2001- 3 March 2002: 'The social memories of the 1961 massacre of Algerians', £678.

4. Details of the impact

House's research has had an impact on public discourse, local communities and individuals, through his role as an advisor for politicians, community associations, individual memory activists, local historians, journalists and filmmakers and in the co-production of knowledge. Nationally, House's retelling of little-heard stories of resilience, repression and solidarity has supported a more complex assessment of the plural experiences of colonialism, decolonisation and their legacies. Locally, it has provided a better understanding of decolonisation and reinforced community and individual pride.

(a) National level: French presidency and government. House's research on Algiers, Casablanca and Paris has underlined the contribution of poor urban areas, groups and events during decolonisation and the importance of recognising the roles and experiences of local actors. House's reputation as an expert on these issues led to his being consulted by the French Secretary of State for War Veterans and Memory about President Hollande's role in the 19 March 2016 commemoration of those who died during decolonisation in North Africa. The Secretary of State met with House to seek his advice on whether the President should appear at this event at all, how to ensure inclusivity through the content and presentation of this high-visibility speech, and on official French memory policy more generally. At this meeting, House gave the Secretary of State a copy of [1] (*Paris 1961*), and he confirms House's 'key' role as advisor, while his policy advisor attests that House's input

'strongly influenced' Hollande's speech [B]. The Hollande speech as delivered [A] explicitly calls 17 October 1961 'the most brutal repression', and includes the main points House made to the Minister regarding the need to recognise the complex legacies of colonial history and to incorporate the perspectives of ordinary Algerians and Moroccans [B]. House also underlined the necessity of more inclusive histories when invited by the Algerian Ministry of Culture to speak at the 2014 Algiers Book Fair, the largest annual cultural gathering in Algeria, and when talking at the Museum for Mediterranean Civilizations (MUCEM) in Marseille at a high-profile 2018 event in honour of public historian Benjamin Stora attended by France's Minister of Higher Education. House's many other public talks, as well as his extensive interventions across the international media (Algeria, France, Morocco, Qatar, Turkey, UK, USA) have had 'strong impact' [C]. They have consistently foregrounded the agency of poor urban communities often written out of dominant histories and memories, and have highlighted the legacies of colonial repression and its spatial dynamics [D].

(b) Community level: civil society associations. A wide range of community-based history / memory retrieval projects have used House's research. His work has evidenced the role played by their areas during the struggle for independence, thus helping them to work for symbolic reparations and recognition, alongside promoting urban heritage projects. For example, he has worked with *Initiative urbaine* (<https://www.facebook.com/Association-Initiative-Urbaine-102754409816012/>), a largely youth-based organisation located in Carrières Centrales, also known as Hay Mohammadi, a post-industrial suburb of Casablanca (population approximately 50,000). House sent this group publications [3] and [5] and met with them to advise on their district's social and political history. As a result, *Initiative urbaine's* founder and president attests that they have undergone 'an historical and cultural awakening' allowing him to see the 'bright side' to his home area otherwise often known for alleged criminality. This change has led to plans, with which House is closely associated, for an urban heritage project that will serve locally as a 'lever for (urban) development', including the association's creation of a neighbourhood museum. This activity has also reinforced inter-generational community solidarity, as the members of *Initiative urbaine* interact with older generations in pursuit of their hidden – and positive – local history [E].

(c) Individuals (Algeria, France, Morocco). Between 2013 and 2020, House worked to share his research findings and materials, publications [1-5] and advice with local residents, community historians, memory activists and other actors, thereby providing significant resources and evidence for their work. Beneficiaries included residents from Mahieddine, a social housing estate built on a former shantytown in central Algiers (population approximately 10,000). For one, a local memory activist, House's arrival was 'a true gift' [F]. He is committed to improving perceptions of Mahieddine, and has used House's expertise to campaign with others to have a public building dedicated to local wartime nationalist hero, Badeche: guillotined in 1957, but largely forgotten since. House has also worked closely with a former political prisoner and author of newspaper articles on Carrières Centrales shantytown, his birthplace. Through the provision of archival material, House allowed this person to 'sharpen' his existing understanding of the history of Carrières Centrales – about which he regularly speaks locally and in documentaries. He feels that House 'instigated' his participation in cultural exchanges between young people in Casablanca and the Paris region regarding Hay Mohammadi's history, and that House is someone whose input was 'needed' and whose work 'passes on our memory' [G].

Indeed, House's impact on individuals was achieved not merely through the dissemination of existing research findings, but also through a research process involving the co-production of knowledge with people whose areas have suffered social stigmatisation, memorial marginalisation and (often) repression. Including such residents as interviewees and co-producers of their own local history empowers them, makes them feel 'honoured' [H] and enhances their awareness of and pride in their own past. According to one locally-based historian who has published on Carrières Centrales, organises community history events

there with *Initiative urbaine*, and with whom House has conducted interview-based fieldwork, House's interviewees were left with 'a profound sense' of *Carrières Centrales*' role in 'national struggle and armed resistance' going beyond official and limiting versions of this past (1944-1956) in Morocco. This produced 'feelings of comfort and pride [*amongst interviewees*] and of the need for more interest in their local history' and 'a change of image for the female residents' [I]. The local memory activist from Mahieddine also refers to the 'pride' that local residents feel when House evokes Mahieddine urban area in his public talks that highlight 'the distinctive qualities of these humble people from an area of Algiers that many from Algiers itself don't even know exists' [F]. A professional historian of Algeria and France who has undertaken fieldwork with House in Mahieddine has confirmed that House's research process constitutes 'a rare occasion for actors to speak (out) and express their experiences, allowing for the writing of a different history – that of their participation in the independence struggle'. Consequently, House's work has had a 'key impact in freeing up expression for these subaltern actors' [J].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. President Hollande's 19 March 2016 speech, from <https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/198332-declaration-de-m-francois-hollande-president-de-la-republique-sur-la>
- B. Material to confirm impact of meeting with French Minister, February 2016: letters from the French Secretary of State for War Veterans and Memory and his advisor.
- C. Email from the Head of the Memories, History and Archives section of the French Human Rights League, September 2020.
- D. Media impact portfolio recording House's direct and indirect contributions to publications, documentaries and television, 2015-2019.
- E. Letter confirming nature of Impact work with *Initiative Urbaine* association from its president, January 2020.
- F. Letter from a local memory activist confirming House's role in his work on Mahieddine, October 2020.
- G. Email from a former political prisoner and journalist confirming House's role in his work on *Carrières Centrales*, October 2020.
- H. Letter from a family in Algiers confirming the impact for them of taking part in House's research, October 2020.
- I. Email from a locally-based historian confirming the nature of House's Impact work on *Carrières Centrales*, January 2020.
- J. Letter confirming extent of House's continued Impact activities in Algeria and France from a Research Professor at CNRS / Paris 1, January 2020.