"A Conflicted Sense of Nationality:

Napoleon III's Arab Kingdom and the Paradoxes of French Multiculturalism"

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Who gets to be French? How does one become French? What does it mean to be French? These

are question that have been posed over the past decade as France exhibits an ever more defensive

posture regarding the subject of its national identity.[1] Fears over immigration—and especially

the growing number of Muslims in the country—have come to play a central role in a variety of

issues ranging from the sustainability of French social welfare programs to the preservation of an

authentically French culture and way of life.[2] State policies bolstering an aggressive secularism

and mounting protests spurred by the social exclusion faced by immigrant and Muslim youths

have become symbolic of the alleged incompatibility between French values and Muslim culture

in the twenty-first century. The pairing of "French" with "multiculturalism" appears almost a

contradiction in terms as scholars increasingly remark upon French republicanism's patent

hostility to cultural diversity, the explicitly Gallic brand of racism it promotes and the threat

globalization currently presents to French universalism.[3] More broadly, the growing interest in

French immigration policies and the state's aversion to American-style multiculturalism reflect

general concerns over the changing cultural geography of Europe's postcolonial nation-states

and the consolidation of peripheral ethno-religious identities that have raised serious questions as

to the future of the national and secular polities long considered central to Western modernity.[4]

    The controversies generated by the issue of "Islam in France" have routinely translated

into critiques of France's nationalist heritage and, in more specific terms, the French *idée*

republicaine rooted in the promise of a secular and egalitarian society. The centrality of

republicanism to these assessments has, however, tended to obscure a far more nuanced history

chronicling France's engagement with diversity in the modern period. The fact that republican

ideas of nationhood and nationality competed with alternate possibilities for most of the

nineteenth century has often been muted. The republican narrative—commonly read as France's

path to modernity—persists to cast a long shadow across a tumultuous and fractious post-

revolutionary history in which the republican model was hardly a *fait accompli*. Throughout the

century, French statesmen, administrators and intellectuals of varying ideological persuasions

actively sought out and proposed alternatives to republican nationhood as they attempted to

balance concerns over political rights, legal statuses and questions of national belonging.[5] The

current focus on whether a republican France can accommodate the cultural pluralism of the

present has eclipsed decades of non-republican efforts to contend with the realities of difference

in an age of growing national identification.

    The years prior to the founding of the Third Republic marked a period of intense debate

on a broad range of issues relevant to French national identity, political inclusion and national

boundaries that have yet to be fully appreciated by historians. While the ruling Bonapartist

government's strongly-nationalist political platform during the 1850s and 1860s provided a

backdrop for these debates, French Algeria and the Second Empire's colonial policies played a

substantial role in animating the "politics of Frenchness" that emerged in national political life at

mid-century.[6] On 6 February 1863, Emperor Napoleon III galvanized the public with an official

memorandum printed in French and Arabic declaring that Algeria was not "a colony properly

said, but rather an Arab Kingdom."[7] Outlining an ambitious plan for Muslim social integration

and the maintenance of religious tolerance in the territory, Napoleon III professed his intentions

of "regenerating" a fallen Arab nationality and transforming Algeria into a Franco-Muslim

homeland open to Europeans and natives alike. Fashioning himself "Emperor of the Arabs just as

much as Emperor of the French," he implored European settlers to look upon Algerian Muslims

as "compatriots," eschewing the demoralizing notion that they were "savages" or Islamic

"fanatics."[8]

Within days of the official announcement, protests broke out in the colony as irate *colons*

denounced the Emperor and his entourage as traitors to their nationality and civilization.

Algerian newspapers ran editorials and printed letters execrating the government's capitulation

to "Arab barbarism" and warning of the "Franco-Muslim conspiracy" being hatched in Paris.[9]

According to one particularly acerbic petition, the imperial government was not only sacrificing

"the interests of the *patrie* and civilization" out of "contempt for European society," but was

demanding that France "abdicate its civilizing role."[10] While state officials and pro-imperial

journalists chalked up the colonists' reaction to the racism and prejudices harbored by the settler

population, the issue was hardly that simple. At stake was not only the *colon* hope of a Gallicized

Algeria connected politically and culturally to the metropole. As would become evident, the

Arab Kingdom controversy provoked fundamental questions over one of the core concepts underpinning perceptions of French identity and selfhood in the nineteenth century: *nationalité*, the essential quality defining one as French.

Nationalité has constituted a central tenet of French politics and identity for over two centuries; and yet, despite (or perhaps because of) its saliency, the term has habitually possessed a remarkably protean character. Since the Revolution, ideas of Frenchness have encompassed a variety of legal and political considerations, reflections on "natural" and historical development, and assumptions regarding the vital role of culture in national life. From the 1790s onward, conflicting interpretations of nation and people vacillated between political and ethno-cultural definitions.[11] Those looking to France's republican heritage traditionally emphasized unity over pluralism and ethnic identification, seeing the nation as a political construct in which the individual's participation in the collective life of the community provided the means of transcending particularism and difference.[12] A second strand of French nationalism, however, encouraged considerations of "national character" and deeply-rooted cultural traits in categorizing nation and people. These dual paradigms proposing distinctly different concepts of nationality and community consistently lay at the heart of the French national imaginary and, more often than not, were blended or conflated to suit specific ideological positions as needed.[13] During the 1850s and 1860s, Bonapartist ideologues saw little conflict in espousing liberal-republican sentiments in their promotion of French *nationalité* while simultaneously relying upon a discourse of national and cultural exceptionalism. Represented as both a liberal nation-state and a communitarian ethnic nation, the Second Empire testified to *nationalité*'s exceedingly fluid and paradoxical nature throughout the nineteenth century. Studies examining the new style of nationalist politics inaugurated by the Bonapartists at mid-century have tended to minimize

this dualism and the problems it presented for the regime, especially when it came to the Emperor's hope of establishing a French Arab Kingdom on the shores of the Mediterranean.[14]

Although the Arab Kingdom has typically been treated by historians—and rightfully so—as a failed colonial policy,[15] the implications of an Arabized French territory and the regime's efforts to cultivate an Arab identity tied to France furnish an opportunity to rethink the significance of *nationalité* in French identity politics and the troubling relationship between "French" and "Muslim" that has remained a hallmark of France's republican nationhood. Throughout the post-revolutionary period, elites of various ideological backgrounds were actively engaged in efforts to reimagine French society after the traumatic upheavals of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Revisiting these alternatives not only subjects the narrative of republican modernity to scrutiny; it equally invites reflection on what Ian Coller has referred to as the "parallel diversity" of the past that existed alongside paths to European nationhood.[16] Critiques of republican ideology and society tend to marginalize this parallel diversity, commonly working within the binary logic of "secular" [*laïque*] and "religious," "Occident" and "Orient" or "particular" and "universal" that have informed republican assimilationist objectives and shaped categorical distinctions between French and Muslim identity.[17] Although these oppositions were present in competing ideological discourses of the time, they often proved adaptable to alternative readings of identity and community counter to the republican model. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, assimilation was hardly the predominant ideology underpinning France's North African policies. Colonial and metropolitan officials did articulate national imaginaries that deviated from the assimilatory rhetoric of the republican "civilizing mission" and highlighted France's ability to embrace cosmopolitanism and "associate" with foreign cultures, a term commonly denoting state mediation in "foreign"

communities residing in French territory and the granting of special dispensations to specific ethnic and religious groups.[18]

A closer examination of French nation and empire building in the years prior to the Third Republic holds the prospect of expanding our understanding of key concepts like nationality, citizenship and multiculturalism, highlighting the often understated role that the Second Empire played in defining French views of cultural diversity. It also underscores the importance of colonialism in shaping reflexive understandings of national selfhood and belonging as Napoleon III's Arab Kingdom became a focal point for the articulation of conflicting ideas of *nationalité* during the 1860s. The increasing attention given to imperial borderlands and the mutually-constitutive relationship binding nations and empires in contemporary scholarship has dramatically altered our understandings of modern nation-states and their internal dynamics.[19] The coterminous dimensions characterizing nation and empire building during the years of the Second Empire suggests that efforts to integrate and assimilate Muslim populations have been a consistent feature of France's modern political history antedating its current republican polity. Consequently, a new understanding of how these encounters influenced conceptions of nationality, citizenship and the identity politics they inevitably generated needs to be considered.

Janus Faced Nationalism

In an exposé published in the summer of 1852, the political commentator Edward Warmington began his examination of French society with a familiar and by most standards commonplace narrative. Since 1789, the country had been torn apart by revolutionary antagonisms, public prosperity had dwindled and faith in French government was increasingly diminishing with each fallen regime. "Our political divisions have degenerated into personal hatreds and hostilities," he

apprised his readers, "and our differences of opinion have nearly made us forget our *nationalité*, our interests and our common duties."[20] Neither erudite nor exceptionally shrewd in its analysis, Warmington's book nonetheless epitomized the new tenor of politics growing up across Europe following the nationalist revolutions that had roiled the continent in 1848. Despite the political failures of the revolutionary movements at mid-century, the idiom of *nationalité* that had called a generation to arms was sustained and would increasingly come to suffuse the political discourse of both the left and right within the coming years.[21] "Nationality is the real religion of France . . .," remarked one critic observing the political situation in 1861. "It is more than a principle or sentiment. At present, it is an unyielding instinct."[22]

The appeal of *nationalité* in France was, in large part, the product of the revived Napoleonic Empire headed by Napoleon III and his Bonapartist supporters in the wake of 1848. Brought to power through a coup d'état, the newly-founded Second Empire had, from the beginning, reflected the nationalist *Gestalt* prevalent to European politics of the period. While the legality of the government remained questionable, national referendums, the maintenance of universal manhood suffrage and ardent appeals to patriotism aimed to provide the regime with a semblance of popular legitimacy. Inheriting a France destabilized by chronic partisan divisions and social antagonisms, the Bonapartists presented the new empire as a government of national reconciliation and unity committed to nurturing a common sense of community and compatriotism among Frenchmen. "A people possess force," the Emperor reminded his followers, "only by virtue of their *nationalité*."[23] Such pronouncements became ubiquitous as the Bonapartist consolidated their power, making *nationalité* a virtual mantra of the new imperial regime.

Taking their cue from the Emperor, propagandists and proponents of the new government played upon fears of national dissolution and pervasive anarchy, lauding Napoleon III as the savior of the French nation. "French nationality no longer existed," the political writer Charles Piel de Troisments remarked when recounting France's turbulent history since 1789. "Napoleon III has given it a new life."[24] For Bonapartists, the Napoleonic parvenu embodied the "sentiments and providential instincts" of the French people.[25] With typical patriotic flair, the Duc de Persigny, Napoleon III's most loyal *devotée*, flaunted the popular and demotic character of the government with his assertion that "before [the Empire] rallied all the forces of the nation, it was born in the cottages of the people."[26] This nationalist rhetoric equally extended to Napoleon III's foreign policy and his public support for oppressed nationalities throughout Europe. According to one pamphleteer, the Emperor perceptively understood the integral nature of nationality to modern society which resisted all forms of "conquest, fanaticism, aristocracy and privilege." "The world moves along this path," the author insisted, "proceeding more surely and quickly because it has found in Napoleon III, who understands its aspirations, its pilot."[27]

While Second Empire politics exhibited a brazenly nationalist tenor and attitude focused on the cult of the Emperor, nationalism itself was nothing new to French politics. The concept of *la nation* already possessed a long history rooted in the intellectual and political culture of the Ancien Régime.[28] During the late-eighteenth century, revolutionaries had placed *la nation* at the center of their political program, imagining a new type of community and politics that would effectively redefine established notions of identity and territory over the course of the following century.[29] National association, as the revolutionary Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès declared in September 1789, implied that "France is, and must be, a single whole" constituted through the collective actions and will of a sovereign people.[30] In the view of Rousseau and his republican

acolytes, a nation was understood to be a political community formed of individuals invested with equal rights and, theoretically, partaking in the general will through an active civic participation.[31] It assumed the existence of a "community of citizens" that transcended ethnic and religious differences and attached the individual to the collective life of society.[32] The Code napoléon issued in 1804 reinforced such revolutionary desires for national unity by equating nationality with the principle of equality—or, more specifically, equality before the law—enunciated in 1789, making nationality synonymous with the rights enjoyed by all French citizens.[33]

Yet if the civil code validating the republican notion of a "community of citizens," this alone hardly indicated who in fact belonged to this community or the criteria for membership within it. The Revolution had never adequately resolved this question. Some, like the deputy J. M. Coupé in 1790, had insisted that the French people constituted a "profuse family" bound by a shared commitment to liberty that was theoretically accessible to all like-minded individuals regardless of origin.[34] Jacobin nationalists, however, denounced this unbridled cosmopolitanism on the grounds of national security, favoring a vision of the French people defined in historic and "natural" terms that excluded individuals born outside the country or to foreign parents. The civil code of 1804 subsequently upheld this conviction. Under article 9, French nationals were determined through the principle of *ius sanguinis* while residency requirements were established for foreigners and national minorities living in the country.[35] Nationality continued to remain a primarily political category, but one defined and conditioned by the public authority of the state.[36] Over the coming years, successive post-revolutionary regimes would slowly amend the provisions laid out in the civil code, shrouding *nationalité* in an ambiguity for most of the nineteenth century.[37]

The term *nationalité* itself was a neologism of the nineteenth century, first appearing in the *Dictionaire de l'Académie française* only in 1835. Initially tied to a language of universal rights and citizenship, it was not a concept merely reducible to political and legal categorizations and, over time, became divorced from its democratic-revolutionary context in more common usage. During the Restoration and July Monarchy, distinctions between "civil" and "political" rights muted the democratic connotations associated with Frenchness, entailing that to be French did not imply participating in the Rousseauvian community of citizens but rather adhering to the French legal code.[38] Perennially suspicious of popular sovereignty, nineteenth-century liberals endorsed a vision of the nation rooted in its historical and organic unity, judiciously marginalizing the importance of the Revolution in favor of continuity with the past.[39] The Algerian polemicist Jules Duval remained reticent on the subjects of citizenship and rights when reflecting on the "essential idea" of all nationalities in 1866, defining it as "a certain conception of history, aspirations, public sentiments and collective cooperation that transforms a mass of people possessing disparate origins, languages and faiths into a single soul."[40] As the basis of collective life and experience, nationality forged an intimate and indissoluble bond between diverse peoples, resisting the anomie and social fragmentation generated by political, confessional or ethnic divisions. Without the common unity sustained by national association, society remained only a confusing mass of "disaggregated parts," as the critic Jean-Gabriel Cappot opined in 1855, "grains of sand without cement, [and] atoms without links."[41]

Almost paradoxically, however, the revolutionary discourse which gave substance to the idea of a French nation and national community also associated France with a broader set of ideas and sentiments that transcended national boundaries. In the most radical phase of the French Revolution, republicans endeavored to carry the revolutionary élan across Europe,

declaring that the ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity were not only French, but those of humanity and civilization in general. French national identity was, from its origins, tied to a universal and inclusive rhetoric which identified France as the repository of common values and aspirations.[42] "In England, Germany, Italy, and Spain there is expressed only the destinies of England, Germany, Italy and Spain . . . ," the republican Hippolyte Marlet claimed in 1854. "In France the destiny of mankind is expressed."[43] Jean-Gabriel Cappot expressed as much in his study on nationality, insisting that while other nations were comprised of distinct groups that "retained the name of their race and the mark of their nature as a form of protest . . . France alone truly represented a unity, a nationality."[44] Despite Cappot's belief in the encompassing and universal ideals represented by France, he, like Marlet, could not resist the temptation to attribute something definitively French to this universalism.

This recognition of a French exception hinted at a second thread of nationalism owing more to the liberal and romantic outlooks prevalent during the nineteenth century than the Enlightenment. In contrast to the abstract and often cosmopolitan outlook of the *philosophes*, the post-revolutionary generation cultivated an appreciation for the particular historical experiences and cultural influences that shaped the character and mentality of a people. "Every people has its distinct genius," the savant Hippolyte Taine affirmed; "that is why each people has its distinct history."[45] Nations, like individuals, possessed a unique "personality," Jean Alexander Vaillant, a French publicist sympathetic to the cause of Romanian national liberation, explained in 1855. Nationality constituted the expression of this particular personality, exhibiting the distinctive mark of a people derived, according to Vaillant, from "the soil, language, mores, traditions and belief in the *patrie*."[46]

Revered by the revolutionary nationalists of the 1790s, the *patrie*, or "fatherland," was closely bound to conceptions of nationality and persisted to remain a leitmotif of French national discourse throughout the nineteenth century. In a public exchange with his cohort Émile de Girardin in 1859, the liberal journalist Adolphe Guéroult spoke at length on the meaning of the *patrie* in national life, describing it as the primary locus of experience and identity, whether for an individual or a collective group of people. "For me, the *patrie* is not only the locality in which we were born. It is family, friends, relations, memories and historical tradition. It is the collective genius of a race developed through history, written on monuments and in books. It is the moral, intellectual and material cradle and the best half of life for each of us."[47] In Guéroult's estimation, racial traits and cultural environment were virtually interchangeable, an outlook which many conservatives and liberals came to share.[48] Whereas the revolutionaries of the eighteenth-century had interpreted the nation as a violent rupture with the past, post-revolutionary generations were inspired by desires to endow nations with a history and genealogy, eliciting a search for origins and "aboriginal essence."[49] If thinkers of the eighteenth-century prized the universal equality and unity associated with revolutionary nationhood, their successors emphasized the unique and particular qualities of the indigenous *Kulturstadt*. With its focus on language, "national character" and organic social development, romanticism inscribed French national identity with an ethnological and racial content that did not always rest easily alongside its revolutionary counterpart.

In their veneration of nation and *nationalité*, the Bonapartists frequently made little distinction between the varieties of nationalism they promoted, seeing fit to employ one or the other model as the occasion warranted. Bolstering the government's revolutionary character and credentials, statesmen and dignitaries esteemed the popular orientation of imperial politics,

insisting, as Persigny did, that the Second Empire was built upon "the principles and ideas of the Revolution of 1789."[50] Yet this emphasis on national sovereignty remained tempered by the more authoritarianism and illiberal tendencies of the regime, discouraging a purely political understanding of French society. Parliamentarianism was discouraged on the grounds that it was particularly English and, therefore, alien to the natural temperament and character of the French people.[51] "The formation of English nationality has proceeded from totally different means than those followed for the formation of French nationality" Louis Napoleon pronounced in 1851 when presenting his constitution to the nation.[52] It was unfeasible just as much as unnatural to expect France to follow the English model of representative government. For the Emperor as well as his most faithful followers, "national character" was the lifeblood of any successful polity, necessitating a government derived from the natural conditions of the French people and the country's traditions of absolutism and centralized authority. "The theory that seeks to impose the same forms to liberty everywhere," Persigny contended, "is as contrary to history as it is to reason." Founding a government "deriving at once from the traditions of leadership belonging to his race and his own informed reflections," Napoleon III had, Persigny boasted, "elevated a monument" to France built upon "the natural foundations found on its soil."[53]

In cultivating a native identity for the new government, imperial officials relied heavily upon a discourse of national particularism that associated the state with a certain history, set of traditions and even racial identity. This was not the universal language of the French Revolution speaking nor the democratic volunteerism of Rousseau, but rather the primordialism familiar to conservative and liberal ideologues. While studies on Bonapartism and the Second Empire have frequently stressed the national tenor of imperial politics, the evident contradictions and paradoxes replete in this nationalist agenda have yet to be fully examined. In fusing together

divergent political and ideological traditions, the Second Empire further encouraged the ambiguity surrounding *nationalité*, infusing it with a mix of territorial, cultural, political and racial connotations. The Bonapartists may have made the idiom of *nationalité* a staple of French political discourse, but they equally inscribed it with a troubling dissonance that drew upon universal and particularist ideologies. By mid-century, it was evident that there existed little consensus on the specific meaning of the term despite its prominence in Second Empire political culture. This confusion would, moreover, become pronounced during the 1860s as the Bonapartist government focused attention on France's colonial territories and, in particular, North Africa, making Algeria a veritable terrain upon which various interpretations of *nationalité* were reified and contested as politicians, statesmen and intellectuals attempted to imagine and define the contours of post-revolutionary French society.

Diversity, Unity and the *Patrie*

That European nation and empire building proceeded together and mutually influenced one another has become a commonplace of historians concerned with the nineteenth century. Yet the specific ways in which the cultural and ethnic diversity encountered in the colonies contributed to and influenced perceptions of national selfhood during the period begs further scrutiny. Algeria, a territory intimately connected to France by virtue of its proximity to the European continent and sizeable settler population presents an interesting case study for the intersecting trajectories of post-revolutionary nationality and colonialism in an age of national identification. The Bonapartists legitimated the political institutions and practices of the Second Empire by virtue of their supposedly Gallic character and profound connection to the French people and soil. This justification naturally provoked questions regarding the relationship between France

and its North African territory inhabited by a sizeable Muslim population and array of European immigrants. As French politicians came to speak the language of *nationalité* during the 1850s and 1860s, the vexing "Algerian question" became not only a debate on the nature of French colonialism but, ultimately, one on the French nation and national identity *tout court*.

Following the invasion of the Ottoman Maghrib in 1830, King Louis Philippe had impulsively annexed swaths of North African territory to the national domain, declaring the newly-created Algeria "a land forever French." Over the next four decades, French settlers and metropolitan nationalists inspired by this pronouncement rallied behind the call of *l'Algérie Française*, insisting that rather than a mere colonial appendage, Algeria constituted a "new France" and "trans-Mediterranean province" connected to the national body.[54] Substantiating these assertions was, however, problematic in light of evident demographic realities. By the late 1850s, French colonists accounted for little more than half of a total European population amounting to some 188,000, and this was compared to a native population of over two million Turks, Arabs, Jews, Moors and Berbers.[55] These statistics not only aroused anxieties regarding the loyalty of the colonial population, but also raised serious questions as to whether or not Algeria, with its patchwork of insular ethnic and religious communities, could even be considered French in any meaningful way at all.

French politicians and nationalists have customarily asserted that the idea of France is dependent upon the recognition of organic diversity—that France symbolizes "*variété dans l'unité*" as republicans like to say. A nation of varied regional cultures and traditions, France is, according to this argument, nonetheless united in its sentiments and values, sharing in a quintessential idea of Frenchness that transcends local and ethnic affiliations. This concept was quite familiar to many nineteenth-century thinkers and nurtured an appreciation for the cultural

individuality of the varying regional localities constellating the country—the *pays*. This localism

frequently stood opposed to the demands for national unity promulgated during the Revolution.

Jacobin centralists had promoted their nationalist program against the regional diversity found in

la France profonde, attempting to dissolve local identities through the administrative re-

organization of the country and the suppression of regional *patois*. These early efforts to create a

homogenous national community established a tradition of nation building in France that

remained perennially suspicious of local differences, equating the advent of *la nation* with the

eclipse of *paysan* and regional particularism. In his monumental history of France published in

1846, Jules Michelet applauded what he described as "the natural progress of life," noting the

disappearance of provincial identities in the countryside with the onset of the great unity which

was the French nation. "It was at the moment that France suppressed within her bosom all

divergent Frances that she revealed herself in her loftiness and originality. She made the

discovery of herself . . . ."[56]

While histories of modern France have tended to see the French nation as the creation of

top-down policies opposed to French provincialism, this image has been subject to revision in

recent years. As Stéphane Gerson has demonstrated, liberals and conservative notables in the

post-revolutionary period proposed models contrary to republican national centrism as they

attempted to restructure French society after the Revolution. Encouraging the writing of local

histories and the staging of regional exhibitions under the July Monarchy, provincial elites

worked with state officials in a concerted effort designed to bolster a "cult of local memory"

aimed at constructing a national history and identity rooted in the particularity of provincial life

and the individual's emotional attachment to both *pays* and *nation*.[57] Desires to translate the local

into the national and the national into the local were deemed necessary to realizing the type of

democratic society created by the Revolution, a society in which, according to the liberal

statesman and historian François Guizot, the citizen was expected "to take part in the affairs of

his *pays*."[58]

For French settlers in Algeria, however, this sense of local attachment remained an

abstraction in light of the territory's prominent "oriental" features and the relatively low number

of French colonists. As late as 1848, a *colon* petition identified "imparting a *nationalité*" to the

diverse colonial population and establishing "a *patrie* in place of a foreign land" as the principal

task facing the government in Algeria.[59] Beginning in the late 1840s, a policy of *colonisation*

départemental was implemented to encourage emigration from the metropole and give a more

pronounced French identity to the colony. The project endeavored to make colonial resettlement

in the Algerian Tell more attractive through the construction of communities modeled on specific

provincial villages in France. Families and groups coming from the same department or region

were settled together with the hope of recreating the camaraderie, local patriotism and

conviviality of the *pays* on African soil.[60] This effort to replicate distinct French localities

overseas corresponded with *colon* demands for Algeria's cultural and political assimilation to the

metropole. Algeria's unique mix of Oriental and French features and the patriotism of French

settlers were touted as examples of both the diversity and unity embodied within the French idea.

As the critic Arsène Vacherot, a strong proponent of a Gallicized Algeria, acclaimed in 1869, in

Algeria one found "the passions of France at the same time as the beauties of the Orient."[61]

The connection between colonization and nation building was frequently highlighted by

colon writers and publicists such as Jules Duval, who proclaimed that colonies were nothing less

than "the progenitors of nations."[62] In Duval's opinion, the disorderly conglomeration of warring

tribes and ethnic groups inhabiting North Africa could not provide the cohesion or unity essential

to founding an Algerian society. "There are no intimate relations and solidarities that constitute a *nationalité* [among the native tribes]," he observed. "The idea of a *patrie* is unknown to them."[63] It was the responsibility of the French, Duval professed, to surmount the tribalism dividing North Africans and demonstrate that "the people of diverse origins, habits, customs, languages, races and religion [inhabiting the region] form only a single people: the Algerian people . . . . Tolerance and the admirable sociability of the French spirit [will] nullify old hatreds generally believed to be ineradicable."[64] This ambitious plan of assimilating North African natives to French social and cultural norms and creating an *Algérie Française* was given official encouragement in 1858 when the colonial ministry under Prince Jérôme Bonaparte announced its intention of pursuing an aggressive Gallicizing initiative in the colony's explicitly Arab and Muslim territories. Advancing an exceedingly more racialized understanding of *nationalité* than Duval, Prince Jérôme's policy nevertheless dovetailed with the general propositions of *colon* critics, unambiguously proclaiming: "we are in the presence of an armed and tenacious nationality that it is necessary to subdue through assimilation."[65]

This Gallicizing program inspired by *colons'* "admirable understanding" of the strength derived from national "concord and unity," as one colonial publicist put it, was short lived. By 1860, the government had begun scaling back or jettisoning altogether many of the tentative provision laid out by the colonial administration in 1858.[66] This reversal was consistent with the Emperor's evolving attitudes on foreign policy, domestic politics and the Algerian question. Overt assimilation hardly fit with Napoleon III's stated support for the "sacred cause" of national self-determination currently being supported in Italy and Romania. Nor did it gel with the allusions to national and, hence, "natural" government coloring the political speeches of Bonapartists spokesmen at home. As part of a general re-thinking of the Algerian question

beginning in 1860, Napoleon III endeavored to make the colony a centerpiece of his *politique de nationalité*, proposing to "regenerate" rather than "assimilate" a moribund Arab people.[67] "When France placed its foot on African soil thirty-five years ago," the Emperor explained during a speech given in 1865, "it did not come to destroy the nationality of a people but, on the contrary, to elevate this people from an old oppression."[68]

Having constructed a "monument" to French nationality with the establishment of the Second Empire, Napoleon III now pledged to do the same for his Muslim subjects across the Mediterranean with the creation of an Arab Kingdom. The new course called for communal institutions open to Europeans and natives, policy initiatives fostering social and economic modernization, and the promotion of a mixed Franco-Muslim education curriculum intent on drawing the disparate Maghribi communities to a new Algerian *patrie* under French aegis.[69] To give colonial institutions an indigenous character, Napoleon III continued the military's policy of native administration, allowing Muslims law courts authority over civil affairs while implementing French rule in cooperation with *shayks* and Muslim notables responsible to their local communities. These measures were strategically designed to sustain the *presence française* in Algeria, prescribing a policy of indirect rule in which local officials and community leaders functioned as valuable interlocutors between the French administration and the native populations.[70] Perhaps most galling to proponents of *Algérie Française* was the proposal of integrating Muslims into Algerian society without demanding their explicit assimilation and the request that they be thought of as "compatriots."

Seemingly in line with the nationalist ideology of the Bonapartists, the Emperor's new Algerian policy was, in actuality, motivated by the suggestions of a small, close-knit group of colonial administrators and journalists inspired by a mix of liberal values and Saint-Simonian

philosophy.[71] Chief among these reformers was the military translator and *Conseil de Gouvernement* in the colony, Ishmael Urbain, a key policymaker and the Emperor's *éminence grise* in Algeria throughout much of the 1860s. In many respects, Urbain was the ideal spokesman for the Emperor's envisaged Arab Kingdom. A Muslim convert born in colonial Guinea and educated in France, Urbain was a creole proud of his status as an *homme de couleur* and sympathetic to the plight of France's colonial subjects. At once black and white, Christian and Muslim, he fashioned himself a man of both East and West, openly declaring his hope of "bringing forth the union of Orient and Occident, Muslims and Christians, [and] Muslim society with French civilization."[72] Accenting his multicultural origins, Urbain reconciled his inherent diversity through his association as a Frenchman, claiming, "I am at once Christian and Muslim because I am French and this title is for me, at this moment, the most elevated religious and civilized qualification."[73]

In cultivating this liminal identity, Urbain was consciously promoting a particular vision of France in his very person, one inspired in equal measure by the cosmopolitan universalism of the Revolution and the abstract humanitarianism of the Saint-Simonian philosophy in vogue during the post-revolutionary period. An acolyte of Propser Enfantin, Urbain had come to share his mentor's conviction in man's universal progress and its potential to bring forth "a rejuvenated civilization no longer oriental or occidental but human."[74] The colonization of Algeria signaled the first step in the advent of this new world order conditioned by global commerce and cultural exchange, portending "a France a little Bedouin, a little rustic . . . or perhaps a little pasha," according to Enfantin.[75] Like Enfantin, Urbain was convinced France alone was best suited to serve as the custodian of this dynamic world civilization on the cusp of realization, for beneath the unanimity nurtured by French nationality persisted a rich and diverse mosaic of customs,

languages and populations that discouraged exceedingly reductive understandings of identity and culture, what Urbain denounced as a "general uniformity."[76] "Can we still not distinguish the diversity of its origins in the different provinces," he asked rhetorically in 1837, "despite the fact that France is one of the most homogenous nations in Europe today?" [77] While this conception of Frenchness reflected the belief that French nationality embodied "*variété dans l'unité*," what set Urbain's views apart from the mainstream of French nationalism was his willingness to extend this celebration of diversity to non-European cultures and imagine a cosmopolitan nation that cut across civilizational and racial boundaries.

Formulating his *politique indigène*, or "Nativism"[78] which would provide the basis for Napoleon III's Arab Kingdom experiment, Urbain expressed his conviction that national unity need not preclude pluralism. Progress implied, in his opinion, "multiplicity while at the same time unity in the human destiny." Algerian society was not to be conditioned by the "monotone uniformity" of cultural assimilation, but rather unified through the "harmonic multiplicity" of its diverse cultural traits and makeup.[79] Attempting to "suddenly change the habits, mores and laws of a population which hardly knows us, which perhaps fears us, but which certainly does not love us," he urged, was as dangerous as it was impractical.[80] Infinitely more fruitful was a program that rejected compulsory assimilation and charted a course for Algerian Muslims "in line with their normal development, linking their past, present and future."[81] "For each individual as for each group there is a point of departure and a particular aim," Urbain contended, arguing that it was vital "to consult the traditions and memories of each and all" in formulating social and political policies.[82] Much as Bonapartist ideologues in France avowed, government, if it was to be considered legitimate, must be indigenous and accord with the historical development and customs of the people it represented. To proceed otherwise would jeopardize the core values of

national liberty central to France's revolutionary heritage. In his strident defense of the Maghribi natives penned in 1863, Urbain's cohort, Frédéric Lacroix, summarized the matter bluntly: "Algeria will never become a French Poland!"[83]

Taking aim at the colonial lobby, Nativists drew attention to and, at times, exaggerated the racism and national chauvinism of colonists, painting a dismal portrait of an Algeria traumatized by fierce racial and confessional hatreds. "I believe that the Arabs need to be protected," Baron Jérôme David, a key spokesman for the Emperor's Algerian policies in the senate, stated when discussing the role of the military in the colony, "that they cannot be delivered to the designs of the colonists."[84] Assessing the situation following the declaration of the Arab Kingdom in 1863, Lacroix expressed similar misgivings. Reproaching settlers for the abuse and exploitation they meted out on Algerian Muslims, the fiery polemicist did not hesitate to compare the situation to the demoralizing slave regimes of the West Indies. "The prejudices that once separated whites from the black race in the Antilles are today projected onto the Arabs in Africa in all its violence and blindness."[85] In his opinion, the settlers were all too willing to "sell Arab nationality short" in order to maintain their privileged status in the colony.

While colonists demanding *Algérie Française* categorically denied that North Africans, with their "tribal" mores and insular clans, possessed a national consciousness, Nativists like Lacroix countered these assertions, insisting that the Arabs had in fact conserved the distinctive traits of their nationality despite centuries of foreign rule and oppression. "It is true that [the colonists] take the position of purely and simply denying Arab nationality," he seethed. "It's easier, but the Austrians also deny the existence of an Italian nationality."[86] Comparing the current situation in North Africa to the repressive empires of the Habsburgs and Russian Tsars, Nativists pledged to reform the nation's "civilizing mission" in accordance with France's values

of tolerance, equality and national right. "The blood that flows in the veins of our Arabs is the same as the Arabs during the first age of Islam," the general Charles Nicolas Lacretelle wrote in 1868, ". . . [and] what their forefathers were, the Arabs of our day can and must become again."[87] "Among the Arab race there are all the necessary elements to constitute a nation," Urbain hypothesized, "not by the models of European nations, but an Oriental and Muslim nation that will take from our civilization only what its faith, customs and character permit it to assimilate."[88]

Allusions to Arab nationality and "regenerating" a fallen people pervaded Nativist rhetoric, accenting the emancipatory and nationalist objectives of creating a new *patrie* for France's Arab subjects. Yet the prescribed formula of civilizing through nationalizing central to Urbain's plan often undercut the supposed cultural relativism upon which it rested. The notion of a North African Arab Kingdom was always more ideological fiction than reality. "Arab" constituted a generic term applied by French administrators to a diverse and heterogeneous North African population and, consequently, carried little currency amongst native groups which neither spoke Arabic nor identified with an Arab nationality.[89] In deeming Algeria an "Arab" Kingdom, French officials were, in actuality, working to create the very nationality that their cultural and political policies claimed to represent and protect, Arabizing various non-Arab groups like the Turks, Moors and Berbers in the process. Defending the Emperor's policy in 1861, Baron David openly applauded the military's intention of "creating what had not previously existed, that Arab nationality which has begun to appear."[90] Although Urbain candidly admitted that concepts of nationhood and nationality were European imports, stating that "nationality, as it is known to Europe, still remains only a latent idea among these populations divided into tribes attached to diverse and hostile origins," he nevertheless continued

to believe that national identification, when pursued with consideration for the "normal development" of a people, signified a universal stage in humanity's social evolution.[91]

"The idea of progress," Urbain wrote in 1861, "implies multiplicity while at the same time unity in the human destiny."[92] This sentiment both constituted the crux of Urbain's native policy and, ironically, undermined its very foundation. Endeavoring to inculcate an Arab national consciousness among the Algerian *indigènes* and revive a decadent Oriental civilization, Nativists relied upon a conception of Arab modernity defined in exceedingly Eurocentric terms, imposing revolutionary constructs like *nationalité* and *la nation* on a society estranged from Europe's revolutionary experience. As the anthropologist Jean-Loup Amselle has aptly noted, French objectives to regenerate Arab nationality amounted to a policy of "assimilative regeneration" which at once recognized the Arabs as a culturally distinct group while intending to "civilize" them in accordance with European norms.[93] Urbain, like many of his contemporaries, equated Frenchness with civilization itself. He never doubted the universality which French values purportedly embodied or their potential of transcending the varieties of human diversity and experience. He also never doubted his cultural relativism either, perennially affirming that distinctive "harmonic multiplicity" which French nationality was best suited to realize.

Colon responses to the Arab Kingdom policy were nothing short of hostile. Waves of protests erupted in the major cities of the colony and colonial journals spared no ink in denouncing what they saw as a blatant betrayal to French nationality and civilization. Drawing upon familiar colonial stereotypes, critics attacked the very basis of the Arab Kingdom, insisting that the lack of a national consciousness among the Arab people could not serve to unify a society. "In order to exist," as one *colon* publicist explained, "a nation demands a degree of

civilization that is impossible to find among these savage and moronic people."[94] More important, however, was the challenge that an Arabized Algeria posed to the cultural integrity of *Algérie Française*. An Arab Kingdom threatened to undermine the very foundation of French *nationalité*—unity—leaving colons bereft of a common *patrie*, community and national culture which affirmed one as French "The interest of the colony, the honor of France and the triumph of civilization," the journalist Alexandre Lambert charged, "demand that we search by all possible means to unify all the diverse populations into a single people."[95] Without this quintessential mark of Frenchness, the settler community would find themselves effectively *dépaysé*.

The Arab Kingdom controversy brought into sharp relief the tension inherent within cultural definitions of nationality and the French ideal of "diversity in unity." Tying *nationalité* to the idea of the *patrie*, post-revolutionary thinkers of varying ideological positions insisted on the vital role that culture, custom and shared mores played in defining a community. The diversity of colonial Algeria, however, elicited fundamental questions on the nature of French identity and the unity it ostensibly promoted. Proponents of *Algérie Française* looked askance at the heterogeneous colonial population and prospect of a hybridic Franco-Muslim society, seeing them as impediments to the unity which a common French culture, sociability and identity promised. For Nativists like Urbain and Lacroix, however, the essence of French *nationalité* was precisely its ability to sustain unity across cultural and racial boundaries. Blending cultural nationalism with universalized notions of civilization and progress, Nativism attempted to balance pluralism with social cohesion, seeing little conflict in cultivating indigenous and particular forms of identification while integrating them into an exceedingly multicultural vision of society. Confident in his assertions that France symbolized unity in the midst of diversity, Urbain always perceived Algeria as the terrain upon which the universal and cosmopolitan

attributes of French nationality would receive their true baptism, presaging a society neither wholly European nor Muslim but French.[96] The cultural relativism sanctioned by his brand of Nativism was, however, highly problematic, at once recognizing diversity while dissolving it within a holistic and universalized idea of French cultural values.

Entrenched in the language of *patrie*, *pays* and cultural primordialism, conceptions of post-revolutionary *nationalité* often proved difficult to reconcile with the republican rhetoric of French universalism. Yet it should be recalled that efforts to imagine a trans-Mediterranean French community during the nineteenth century did not derive from strict republican principles either and often mapped divergent ideas of nationality that deviated from the centrism and national unity prized by republicans. Drawing upon a rich stock of ideological opinion, colonial administrators and critics blended an appreciation for culturally-determined identities, local particularism and Enlightenment cosmopolitanism as they attempted to contend with the diversity of North African society. In so doing, they outlined potential alternatives to republican nationhood that illuminated the latent possibilities of imagining a multi-ethnic and multicultural France distinct from the communitarianism and assimilation of republican national discourse.

Frenchmen, French Citizens and the Prominence of *Nationalité*

The formulation of alternatives to republican *nationalité* did not, however, entail the disappearance of competing discourses rooted in a language of rights and citizenship. On the contrary, the late 1840s witnessed a revival of republican egalitarian universalism, culminating in the collapse of the July Monarchy and the declaration of universal manhood suffrage in 1848. That spring, the Second Republic recognized the three northern provinces of Algeria as *de facto* French departments and permitted *colons* to participate in national elections. In the words of one

deputy, Algeria was to symbolize the values of the new republic, standing as "a great monument" on which France would "imprint the seal of its principles and *nationalité*."[97] *Colon* publicists like Amédée-Hippolyte Brossard concurred, emphasizing the strong correlation between citizenship and national belonging. "The *patrie* is the soil, the family, [but also] the title of citizen, rights, duties and the affections which derive from them." Algeria could only be considered French, Brossard argued, if "the rights of [colonial] citizens were respected and maintained" in accordance with French law.[98]

The relationship between race and colonial citizenship institutionalized under the Third Republic has been well documented.[99] Until 1871, however, this hallmark feature of French colonial society had yet to be formalized. Under the Second Empire, colonists did not possess the same political rights enjoyed by their metropolitan counterparts and suffered many of the same limitations that subjecthood imposed on natives. Although the civil code continued to assure equal rights to all French nationals, colonies proved exceptions to metropolitan standards. As French settlers migrated across the empire and took up residence beyond the continent, they found themselves subject to colonial regimes reluctant to concede the basic liberties granted to metropolitan citizens. *Colons* protesting against their disenfranchisement upheld that "the title of French" and "the title of citizen" were closely linked if not synonymous. "Between the citizens of France and the citizens of the colonies," Jules Duval pointedly asked in 1869, "are we to presume that there exists such a difference in nature that one has the right of universal suffrage while the other only a privileged suffrage?"[100]

Colonial publicists may have given credence to the idea of a French cultural community, but they never relinquished the belief that Frenchness was a quality obtained by virtue of belonging to and participating in a national political community either. In their defense of

Algérie Française, *colons* often conflated civic and cultural ideas of nationality, promoting Algerian cultural assimilation while espousing the language of French republicanism and its veneration of the community of citizens. It was, therefore, not surprising that key metropolitan republicans were among the most vocal defenders of the Algerian settler community during the 1860s. Attacking the government's Algerian policies before the Corps législatif in 1868, Jules Favre deemed them an egregious violation of French "law and *nationalité*." "Algeria, like France, has contributed to constituting this society," he declared. "Like France, it is French because it is its blood, its substance, its moral character . . . [and] like France, it has the right to be represented and you cannot strip it of this expectation without usurping authority."[101] Blood, "moral character" and political representation all came together in Favre's criticism, demonstrating the extent to which understanding of *nationalité* drew upon and conflated racial, cultural and civic models. Yet for *colons* eager to access the levers of political power at the local and national level, the issue of rights and political inclusion was paramount. Clément Duvernois, a journalist and unrelenting critic of the colonial regime, summed up the position of the settlers succinctly in 1858: "If we want Algeria to be and remain French, then we must give to its inhabitants the same political rights as those of the French."[102]

Defining French nationals in terms of civil liberties and collective rights appealed to the Rousseauvian ideal of the civil and political community just as much as the revolutionary principle of *égalité devant la loi*. Yet allusions to republican political tradition often concealed underlying anxieties stemming from the negligible French presence in North Africa and its implications for French control in the colony. The settler population comprised a mix of continental nationalities legally categorized as "European" since 1831.[103] The diversity of the settler community, Andrea Smith has argued, persistently undermined the fiction of a

homogenous ruling class and threatened to destabilize the dichotomies of colonizer and colonized which buttressed French power in Algeria.[104] Encouraging civic participation, especially at the local levels of colonial society, offered a viable means of unifying the variegated European communities scattered across North Africa. "In a colony composed of such diverse element," explained one council member in the province of Constantine, "the *commune* becomes ever more necessary. Because it exercises a strong force on individuals, it becomes the first link attaching them to a new *patrie*."[105] Only by giving "national institutions" to Algeria, as the *colon* journalist Arnold Thomson explained, would the multi-national settler community come to see itself as French.[106]

This emphasis on local attachment, while consistent with earlier liberal and conservative efforts to root national belonging in the natural affection for the *pays*, nonetheless differed markedly in its focus on civic ideals and political volunteerism. Much like the program advanced by liberal-republican reformers in metropolitan France during the 1860s,[107] *colon* spokesmen argued that local government comprised the lifeblood of a society, nourishing the patriotism and communal solidarities upon which nations were built. Establishing "legal and administrative unity" throughout Algeria, Thomson argued in 1868, would provide the first step in fusing the mélange of ethnicities and nationalities into a single French people, tying them to a new *patrie*.[108] Frenchness, in other words, was equated with belonging to a community of citizens brought together through the recognition of equal rights, shared interests and common institutions.

Inscribing national belonging within the legal and political discourse of modern citizenship theoretically divested French *nationalité* of any racial or ethnic connotations. The "quality of French" was dependent upon the endowment of rights and adherence to the laws

common to all. Yet this rationale conveniently justified the exclusion of Algerian natives.[109] The

government's maintenance of customary and traditional legal codes in Algeria allowed for the

practice of Sharī'a and Hebraic law in civil affairs, recognizing separate and distinct legal

systems for the Europeans and Algerian natives respectively.[110] The special legal status granted

to natives proved an exception to the principle of *égalité devant la loi*, a fact which *colons* and

republicans insisted set them apart from the nation. "In principle . . . the Arabs will have the right

of a citizen only if they accept the French code," Duvernois explained.[111] Unless Muslims

abandoned their adherence to Quranic law and submitted fully to the civil code they could not be

considered equals, making citizenship tantamount to apostasy. A French Algeria, according to

Thomson, was "dependent upon applying a single legislation to all those carrying the name

French."[112]

Despite the ostensibly de-racialized logic of republican isonomy, scholars have correctly

noted the ethno-racial biases built in to modern French citizenship. Longstanding and overly-

generalized assumptions on the part of French critics regarding the centrality of Islamic ritual

and practice to the culture and daily life of Muslims have patently denied the possibility of

separate religious and secular spheres. This act of saturating Muslims with "Muslimness," as

Naomi Davidson has put it, effectively collapsed racial and ethnic differences into a discourse of

religious distinction, inscribing Muslim confessional identity with implicit racial qualities.[113] The

correlation between rights, French law and national belonging during the 1860s obfuscated the

ethnic and racial attributes associated with Frenchness, denoting religion and not biology as a

central marker of difference. Within this "hidden logic of exclusion" lay the rationalization of the

ethno-political order essential for a French-dominated Algeria.[114]

In a rare moment of consensus between the Nativist camp and settlers, Urbain concurred with this judgment. "Because the natives will not allow a radical separation between the spiritual and temporal, because their culture and religious dogmas are in contradiction with our codes," he argued, "they should not be invested with the title of French citizens."[115] France could hardly compel Muslims to repudiate their faith and religious conventions; yet it could not invalidate the basic principles upon which its society was founded either. Under the circumstances, citizenship would have to be a personal choice for Algerians rather than a universal condition. Only once the "civilizing" influences disseminated by France had taken root and the Qur'an became a purely religious book and not a text for civil legislation could Muslims be considered for citizenship.[116] For Urbain, the question of citizenship was, ultimately, secondary. The primary question was how to make the natives French, and this had more to do with nurturing shared interests among the two populations of the colony and attaching them to a *patrie* than with political rights. Inthis respect, Urbain believed it preferable to facilitate the process of native integration by opening positions in the civil bureaucracy to Muslims and assuring eligibility to state benefits. With these measures in place, equal relations between the native and European populations would be assured, providing an institutional framework for the development of the Franco-Arab society he imagined.[117]

In the spring of 1865, a senatorial committee was convened to address the status of Algerian natives. Following a series of debates, the senate ruled in favor of naturalizing the Algerians, conferring French nationality by virtue of *ius soli*. This blanket naturalization marked a clear victory for Urbain and his hope of attaining "the fusion of the two races in civil equality, freedom of religion . . . [and] tolerance for mores while brining [the natives] more into line with our civilization."[118] In more specific terms, the resolution officially endorsed his policy of native

integration by determining formal procedures through which Algerians might acquire French citizenship once they had obtained a sufficient level of civilization. Writing to the governor general of Algeria that June, Napoleon III summed up the verdict concisely: "The Arabs are French since Algeria is a French territory."[119] Yet if the Arabs were French, the ruling of 1865 confirmed them so only as nationals, not citizens. Algerian *naturalisés* were not obliged to submit to the French civil code and, therefore, continued to retain their special status under traditional law, upholding the conviction that citizenship must be a personal and individual choice.[120] While Muslims were recognized as French nationals sharing in the nation's "great political unity," as Urbain claimed, their legal status continued to affirm their attachment to an external community, rendering them nominal Frenchmen bereft of the civil and political liberties accorded to citizens.[121]

The compromise reached between the principle of unity under French law and respect for religious pluralism in 1865 marked a watershed in the debates over Frenchness generated by the Algerian question. The revolutionary conception of *nationalité* enshrined in the civil code was abandoned, recognizing a distinction between Frenchmen and French citizens that possessed ominous implications for the future. While post-revolutionary liberalism had never equated national belonging with political participation, the senatorial decision broke with liberal tradition in key ways. The ruling of 1865 defined citizenship as submission to the French code but allowed for the possibility of French nationals subject to different and distinct legal systems, undermining the principle of legal equality central to classical liberalism.[122] Unmoored from a political-legal context, *nationalité* became a distinct concept in its own right, indicating the extent to which the intellectual and political milieu of the mid-nineteenth century encouraged a re-thinking of France's revolutionary heritage. The discourse of rights and citizenship

championed by republicans and colonists continued to define one idea of Frenchness, that "true" France, as Ian Coller has called it, making up the community of citizens, but henceforth it could never make authoritative claims to encompass the total of what it meant to be French.[123] In spite of all their affirmations and insistence that Frenchness was synonymous with the rights of the citizen, republicans and colonists never challenged the verdict that Frenchmen need not be French citizens. The senatorial mandate offered the necessary legitimation for the *Algérie Française* they desired, furnishing the rationale for the power relations and exclusionary policies of the future colonial republic.

Conclusion

The years of Bonapartist rule marked a pivotal moment in the debates on Frenchness first inaugurated by the revolutionary upheavals of the late-eighteenth century. Throughout the period, the saliency of *nationalité* in political and cultural discourse came to define competing ideas of what it meant to be French, ideas that ranged from the political and cosmopolitan to the ethnic and cultural. The government's Algerian policies would bring these rival conceptions of Frenchness into sharp relief as the question of what defined a society and people as French became distilled within more fundamental questions of assimilating nominal foreigners or tolerating diversity. In addressing the Algerian question, French politicians, opinion leaders and administrators faced complex issues pertaining to social integration and the nation's willingness to tolerate cultural difference as they attempted to outline policies for France's Muslim populations across the Mediterranean. In the minds of both *colon* activists and colonial officials, these issues were rarely divorced from a larger debate on the French nation. As a point of convergence for both national and colonial discourses, North Africa provided a canvas upon

which to imagine and reify prevailing ideas of Frenchness just as much as a laboratory for testing

their possibilities. At once fashioned in the image of France *and* serving as an object against

which French identity was constructed and projected, Algeria reflected the mythologies and

tensions inherent within the idea of France itself.[124]

Efforts to reimagine society in radically new terms in the post-revolutionary period raised

a series of questions which were not easily resolvable: What role was local identification to play

in promoting national affiliation? Could colonialism be made compatible with France's

revolutionary values and heritage? To what extent could French *nationalité* accommodate

difference without sacrificing unity? The conquest of Algeria both amplified and modified these

questions as administrators and colonial publicists attempted to define the contours of a trans-

Mediterranean French community spanning two continents. Much like the contradictory variants

of *nationalité* endorsed by the Bonapartist regime at home, colonial policymakers found it

difficult to escape the contradictions posed by cultural essentialism and cosmopolitanism that

had plagued French national discourse since the Revolution. Tolerance always rested uneasily

with French desires for unity, and questions pertaining to French national identity frequently

witnessed the anthropological man of the Romantics grapple with the abstract individual of

Rousseau and the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, the experiment in French multiculturalism

carried out during the years of the Second Empire did compel a sharp reassessment of the

meanings implicit within core concepts like citizenship, nationality and community that held

profound implications for France's revolutionary heritage and the principles of 1789.

Today controversial anti-immigrant legislation, perpetuated stereotypes and an aggressive

secularism have aggravated efforts to promote cultural diversity and acknowledge a public

identity for French Muslims. Yet these mark only the latest instances in a much longer historical

trend that has cut across the narrative of French modernity. While critics point to the notorious "headscarf affair" or the Pasqua Laws of 1993 as symbols of France's hostility to diversity, one could equally recall the comment made by the *colon* Wilfrid de Fonvielle in 1860 who bemoaned the fact that the Arabs had "still not found their place in Algerian society."[125] While decolonization—or the war of Algerian liberation, depending on how one looks at it—has made the question of whether or not Muslims might find their place in Algerian society a moot point, the question asked by many French intellectuals and polemicists today continues to be whether Muslims will find their place in French society rather than whether French society will find a place for them. If Napoleon III's Arab Kingdom is instructive in highlighting the pathological nature of French multiculturalism, its legacy continues to be felt today in state initiatives to fashion a moderate and Gallicized brand of Islam (*Islam française*) and the retention of "local" statutes among populations in overseas territories, policies which persist to see the state as an arbiter between culturally distinct groups and communities situated at the margins of the nation.[126] Nativism, removed from its colonial context, has assumed the more neutral handle of "integration," effectively "brining the empire back home," as Herman Lebovics has claimed.

Identity politics and the shifting cultural geographies encouraged by globalization and transnational migrations have brought claims of French universality into question and drawn reactions from right-wing ideologues who profess desires to "Keep France French!" (*la France aux françaises!*). These two positions rooted in universal and particular conceptions of French nationality have remained central to the politics of Frenchness and continue to inscribe French identity with both ethnic and cosmopolitan qualities that prove difficult to reconcile. French republicanism's emphasis on unity and its refusal to recognize distinct communities within the civil and political spheres has posed the challenge of cultural diversity in exceedingly binary

terms: pluralism or republicanism; equal rights or special consideration.[127] Retracing the history

of the Arab Kingdom suggests, however, that the dissonance between French and Muslim need

not be contained merely within the familiar binary constructions of self and other, Christianity

and Islam, secular and religious. The idea of a French Arab Kingdom did offer the prospect of

transcending such oppositions even as its conflicting principles served to reinforce and

crystallize many of them. If today politicians insist that the French do not want "a puzzle of

cultures, faiths and traditions slowly disfiguring our national identity,"[128] it is worthwhile to

recall that for a man like Urbain the possibility of embracing this cultural jigsaw was, ultimately,

one of the most endearing aspect of French society. As critics speculate on whether or not French

republicanism can successfully come to terms with the diversity accommodating a pluralist and

globalized world, it is perhaps instructive to revisit the alternative approach to diversity

embedded within France's past.

NOTES

[1] Karl E. Meyer, "Who Gets to Be French?" *The New York Times*, 12 April 2012, A27; Patrick Weil, *How to Be French: Nationality in the Making Since 1789* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Didier Fassin and Sarah Mazouz, "Qu'est-ce que devenir français? La naturalisation comme rite d'institution républicain," *Revue Française de Sociologie*, 48:4 (October-December, 2007): 723-50.

[2] Soraya Tlatli, "French Nationalism and The Issue of North African Immigration," *Franco-Arab Encounters*, eds., L. Carl Brown and Matthew S. Gordon (Lebanon: American University of Beirut Press, 1996), 392-414; Frank Gaffney and Alex Alexiev, "Farewell to Europe?" *Washington Times*, 10 November 2005, A19; Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse, *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006).

[3] See: Jeremy Jennings, "Citizenship, Republicanism and Multiculturalism in Contemporary France," *British Journal of Political Science*, 30:4 (October 2000): 575-97; Herman Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home: France in the Global Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall, "Race, France, Histories," *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 4; Naomi Schor, "The Crisis of French Universalism," *Yale French Studies*, 100 (2001): 43-64.

[4] Crawford Young, "The Dialectics of Cultural Pluralism: Concept and Reality," *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-State at Bay?*, ed., Crawford Young (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 4-13; Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 4-24; Tarek Mitri, "Christians and Muslims: Memory, Amity and Enmities," *Islam in Europe: Diversity, Identity and Influence*, eds., Aziz al-Azmeh and Effie Fokas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 29-30.

[5] Andrew Jainchill, *Politics After the Terror: The Republican Origins of French Liberalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Ian Coller, *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe, 1798-1831* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le Moment Guizot* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985); Immanuel Wallerstein, "Citizens All? Citizens Some! The Make of the Citizens," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45:4 (October 2003): 650-679.

[6] I borrow this term from Jonathan Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria, 1930-1954* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002).

[7] Archives nationales [AN] 234 AP 4, "Lettre de Sa Majesté l'Empereur," 6 February 1863.

[8] AN 234 AP 4, "Lettre de Sa Majesté l'Empereur," 6 February 1863.

[9] G. Andrieux, "La question algérienne devant la France," *Courrier de l'Algérie*, 21 January 1863.

[10] "Pétition au Sénat," *L'Echo d'Oran*, 10 February 1863.

[11] Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism Between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 134; Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race and Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 5; Sophie Wahnich, *L'impossibile citoyen: L'étranger dans le discours de la Révolution Française* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997).

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[75] *Œuvres de Saint-Simon* (Aalen: O. Zeller, 1964), 32:7.

[76] Georges Voisin [Ishmael Urbain], *L'Algérie pour les algériens* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1861), 10-11.

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[78] I employ the term "Nativism" throughout this paper to refer to the specific policy applied to Algeria during the 1860s. Opponents of the regime's policies employed the derogatory term "Arabophiles" when referring to this group. The capital "N" is to distinguish it from the more common movement of "nativism" which typically connotes xenophobic nationalism during the nineteenth century.

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[80] Ibid., 125-26.

[81] Ibid., 15.

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[83] Frédéric Lacroix, *L'Algérie et la lettre de l'Empereur* (Paris: Challamel, 1863), 73.

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[85] Lacroix, *L'Algérie et la lettre de l'Empereur*, 7.

[86] Ibid., 15.

[87] Charles Nicolas Lacretelle, *De l'Algérie au point de vue de la crise actuelle* (Paris: Challammel Ainé, 1868), 50-51.

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[101] Jules Favre, *Discours parlemntaires* (Paris: E. Plon, 1881), 3:565-67.

[102] Clément Duvernois, *L'Algérie: Ce qu'elle est, ce qu'elle doit être* (Algiers: Dubos Frères, 1858), 244.

[103] Jean-Robert Henry, "Introduction," *French and Algerian Identities from Colonial Times to the Present*, 8.

[104] Smith, "Citizenship in the Colony": 32-43.

[105] "Délibérations du conseil général," *Raports sur le budget et procès-verbaux des deliberations du conseil général* (Constantine: Veuve Guends, 1865), 175.

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[107] See: Sudhir Hazareesingh, *From Subject to Citizen: The Second Empire and the Emergence of Modern French Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

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[109] Laure Blévis, "Les avatars de la citoyenneté en Algérie coloniale ou les paradoxes d'une categorisation," *Droit et Société*, 48 (2001): 575-79.

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[111] Duvernois, *L'Algérie*, 254.

[112] Arnold Thomson, "Ouverture du conseil général d'Alger," *Akhbar*, 13 October 1867.

[113] Davidson, *Only Muslim*, 3.

[114] Ibid., 12;Blévis, "Les avatars de la citoyenneté en Algérie colonial": 575-79.

[115] Urbain, *L'Algérie française*, 6.

[116] Ibid., 46.

[117] Levallois, *Ismaÿl Urbain*, 621-23

[118] Voisin [Urbain], *L'Algérie pour les algériens*, 153.

[119] Quoted in Spillmann*, Napoléon III et le Royaume Arabe*, 58.

[120] Michael Brett, "Legislating for Inequality: The Senatus-Consulte of 14 July 1865," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 51:3 (1988): 454-56; Levallois, "Essai de typologie des orientalistes Saint-Simoniens," 108.

[121] Urbain, *L'Algérie française*, 3.

[122] Blévis, "Les avatars de la citoyenneté,": 561.

[123] Coller, *Arab France*, 217.

[124] Henry, "Introduction," *French and Algerian Identities*, 4.

[125] Fonvielle, *L'Empereur en Algérie*, 18-19.

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