The Conundrum of Cohesion: France's North African Question

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ABSTRACT The level of social polarization between native French and North Africans in France in an enduring dilemma. The prospect for effective social cohesion is challenged by factors including staunch French secularism, laïcité, and the deep wounds of the Algerian Revolution. In order to understand the situation, this paper employs two interpretive frameworks: the politics of difference and the politics of home. In the former, a long-held notion of colonial superiority manifests itself in structural and interpersonal modes of social subordination aimed towards North Africans. In the latter, many native French lash out against North Africans for the threat that they pose to established French values. In response to both, a heightened sense of communalism permeates North Africans communities, often resulting in pronounced instances of fundamental backlash. The goal of this thesis is to view the reasons behind polarization in equitable housing, economic inclusiveness, and religious expression, and posit whether the myriad of outlooks, from the French Left and Right to North Africans themselves, can resolve France's social woes.

I. Context

In contemporary France, digesting and assimilating immigrants from North Africa has proven to be a major challenge. The country, like numerous Western states with high levels of immigration, is facing conundrums in equitable housing, inclusive workforces, and plural governance for ethnic communities. What distinguishes the French case from others in Western Europe, though, is the unusually high level of polarization between native French and North African Muslim citizens and residents in societal, economic, political, and cultural opportunity. The exceptional nature of the French colonial experience and the direct result it had on mass immigration into the country in the 1960s and 1970s, coupled with staunch values of laicism and French exceptionalism, seem to have resulted in a remarkable degree of antagonism directed towards migrant communities. This has resulted in turn in increased animosity between the two groups as they try to reconcile their respective identities. My objective for this paper is to view the fundamental reasons why integration has been stunted to such a degree in the French case and why the ensuing polarization along the lines of co-habitation, economic inclusiveness, and religious identity has become so prevalent.

It is important to note at this preliminary stage of the paper that I will be focusing particularly on the North African Arab communities, which make up the most sizable and apparent group of Muslims in the country. These citizens and residents, originating in the contemporary states of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, present the most pointed group through which to view the myriad of factors contributing to the pervasive societal strain present in France as it shapes its post-colonial identity. While other predominantly Islamic groups experienced French colonialism or took part in the mass emigration from the Global South at the conclusion of the World Wars, particularly black Africans of the Sahel, Arabs of the Levant, and to a lesser extent, Turks, commentary and analysis of the North African Arab Muslim communities from the former French colonies there will be the focus here since that is where the assimilation problem is most severe. This is due in part to the divisive relation between a largely Islamic identity and French secular values, the sheer number of people from this region that have settled in France, and the deeply-engrained, even aggravated, nature of the French relation to the area and its people.

II. North Africans in France

In a mapping of where North Africans fit into the French social mosaic, there are several preliminaries that need to be set out. In the first place there are issues of nomenclature. In this regard, I will first differentiate between the terms citizen, resident, and immigrant, as all too often "the term 'immigrant' [has been] used to describe widely different populations, even groups that have been in France for generations" (Lloyd & Waters 51). When employing the term citizen I will be describing any French North African Arab who holds French citizenship, whether they are recent recipients of it or if they and their families have been citizens since North Africans first started coming to France en masse. Resident can be used to denote those that live and work in

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France, but still hold citizenship in the Maghreb nations of Morocco, Algeria, or Tunisia. Finally, immigrant will be utilized when delving into the historical sections of this paper, as they refer to a point when the majority of North African Arabs were neither citizens nor residents.

Additionally, I will attempt to avoid the use of the term "Muslim" outside of specific cultural and religious commentary, as it "can denote a myriad of socio-cultural, religious, and political connotations" (House) that if read in a manner different from what I intend, could affect the point that I am attempting to make. For specific social, economic, and political contexts, I will strive for a much more direct "North African Arab" or "North African community" and avoid as much religious connotation as possible.

Nomenclature aside, the second general point to make is that documenting the North African presence in France, their geographic and social distribution among other things, is not always straightforward. This is owing to a refusal on the part of the responsible government authorities to differentiate the population according to ethnic background. French authorities proclaim that race is not a factor in French society, thus historically marginalized racial groups are all-too-often neglected in the mechanisms of social welfare because their individual needs are not met. Occasionally there is reference to where immigrants came from, but if they are no longer immigrants but rather residents or citizens, it can be difficult to acquire statistics that comment on their social conditions. This void in provision of government services is often filled through the efforts of private organizations.

Figure 1 – Map of France and North West Africa, or the Maghreb; Source: Yale University Library

A History of Immigration

The fact that a very large number of people living in France trace their genealogy back to the former French colonies of North Africa: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, is significant. Taken collectively we can trace a history of immigration into France. For adequate spatial perspective, Figure 1 presents France's geographic relationship to the three colonies, represented here as contemporary nation-states.

With dominion firmly established over the majority of the Maghreb by the early 1900s, France began importing substantial numbers of North African laborers, which may be thought of as the "first wave" of immigration into the country. Part of the context for this was the limited work prospects at home spurred by the hegemony of settler communities and, particularly in the case of Algeria, French appropriation of land. However, the blatant animosity that the French held towards their Arab subjects was already developing. Despite Algeria being an integral part of France and Tunisia and Morocco as entities of Greater France, Frenchmen did little to understand the cultures of these "zones of departure", meaning that the prospect of healthy assimilation was stunted from the outset (MacMaster, 1997, p. 9). The French simply looked scornfully and resentfully upon these subjects as commodities, as units of labor power, and not as participants in a common society. This feeling of superiority that the French cultivated in viewing North Africa left an indelible mark that would continue to plague their society as additional episodes of immigration commenced.

The outbreak of the First World War necessitated a more conscious large-scale migration strategy on the part of the French government so as to assist in the war effort, and this assistance came primarily in the shape of the colonial guest worker. These were laborers that arrived on temporary status who helped with war-damage reconstruction and the manning of industrial facilities. During the War, some 120,000 workers were shuttled in from the Maghreb, including 78,566 Algerians, 25,506 Moroccans, and 18,249 Tunisians who "were essentially brought in as forced labour" (Stovall 3). An important feature of this period in Maghrebi-Franco immigration was the institutional subordination of the North African. The government introduced a program of encadrement, or regimentation, in which "All aspects of the lives of non-white workers in France were set by SOTC [the Colonial Labour Organisation Service], with an eye on keeping them as isolated from the French population as possible" (Stovall 7).

In addition to guest workers, and quite crucially, hundreds of thousands of North African and French West African subjects laid down their lives for the French cause in battle. These troops were viewed as largely expendable, used in wave attacks in-between trench encampments that saw thousands of them gunned down by machine gun fire. Additionally, they served in some of the harshest trench conditions of the war, succumbing to all manner of disease that the environment presented. It is approximated that Algeria alone fronted 173,000 soldiers, with tens of thousands of additional troops arriving from Morocco and Tunisia. The blatant disregard for the well-being of these troops serve as yet another example of the prevailing sense of North African inferiority, "viewed through [the] prism of backwardness… considered indolent and incompetent" in the eyes of the French (Laurence 50).

The onset of the Second World War also necessitated a mass transfer of workers and soldiers from North Africa. During the early years of the war, the French government ordered the governors of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine to each contribute 10,000 laborers for work in France in the production of war matériel (Hunter & Leveau 5). In total, about 80,000 North Africans troops also fought on the side of the French. While this was considerably less than their contribution to the First World War effort, Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians still played a key role in staving off the German incursion and occupation. By 1947, Algerians working in France were granted the status of 'French Muslim', "making it clear [that] they were not entitled to the same rights as Frenchmen" (Schneider 11). This sustained subordination would only see itself exacerbated as North Africans, particularly Algerians, contributed to the post-war rebuilding initiatives.

The violence and carnage of the Second World War left France a "devastated country with respect to both human resources and material circumstances" (Witte 80): a situation which necessitated a comprehensive rebuilding effort. This came partly through Algerians serving as ostensibly temporary labor, with their numbers in France increasing from approximately 100,000 in 1945 to 250,000 in 1950. This growth rate was the most sizable of any colonial people group tasked in the rebuilding effort; indeed by 1954 their annual rate of increase of 32.5 percent dwarfed the overall immigration rate of 1.3 percent (Shen 21). This influx of workers, however, was poorly facilitated and managed. As more and more North Africans were shoveled into France, housing accommodations became scarcer, giving rise to shanty towns referred to as the bidonvilles. The conditions of these areas were very poor, with ramshackle construction and poor plumbing. Social and hygienic necessities were placed by the wayside to keep down social welfare costs. Figure 2 shows the dilapidated state of these bidonvilles.

Figure 2 – Example of French bidonville settlement; Source: Slide Share

By 1970 there were some 900,000 North Africans in France, with Algerians constituting about 650,000. Seasonal immigration took place, with additional long-term settling primarily by Algerians. By 1973 the Algerian population rose to about 800,000 (Witte 85). The nature of immigration dramatically changed, however, in the wake of the global 1973 oil embargo ushered in by OPEC nations. France experienced a swift economic downturn, meaning that their economy, at least for the time being, could not absorb North African employment. As a result, by July 1974 in response to this global oil crisis, immigration of non-European workers was prohibited. This ceasing of migration arose in part from the notion of seuil de tolerance or "threshold of tolerance", and the assertion "that racism and racist conflicts (i.e. racist violence) could be prevented only by (1) stopping immigration and (2) dispersal policies with respect to the immigrant population" (Witte 90). The primary dispersal technique was placement of immigrants on the periphery of the French cities. Along with the discontinuation of immigration, the French also worked towards repatriation of North Africans currently in France; however, these efforts were largely

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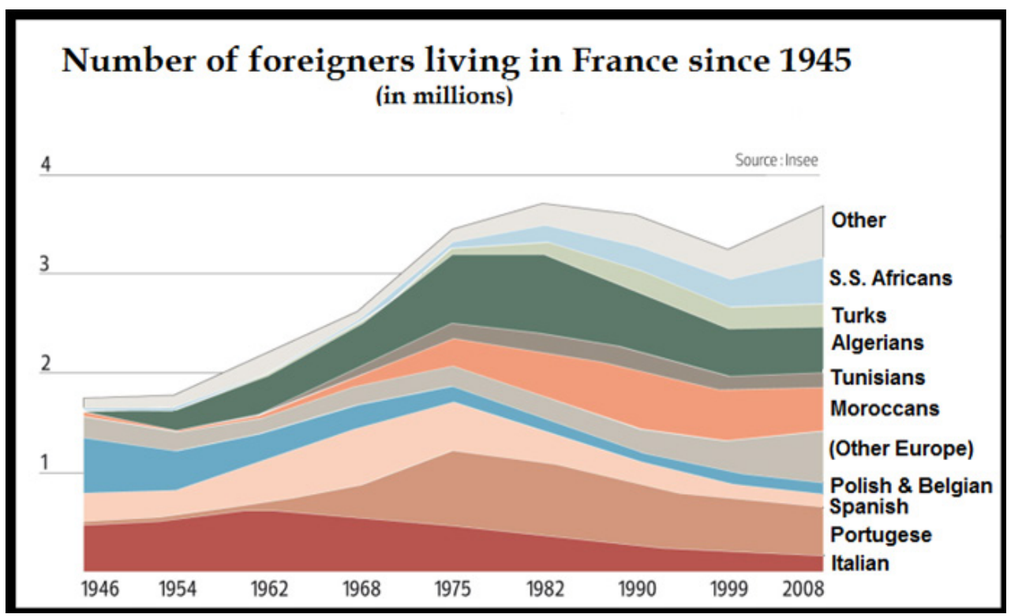
unsuccessful.

The 1974 decree for halting immigration backfired on the French. This manifested itself in two primary ways. First, the seasonal workers in France at the time of the policy decision remained in France subversively in the fear that they might never be able to return to France if sent back to North Africa. It also resulted in increased instances of illegal entrance into France during 1974 and subsequent years. The second way in which the immigration policy decision had an adverse effects was the massive arrival of the families of these formerly 'turnover' migrants, "which raised new issues of multiculturalism" as the non-French population increased (Pauly 36-37). The French state strove "to discourage reunification of these immigrants' families, [thus] immigrants' access to housing projects was severely restricted" (Verdugo 8). This resulted in placing these families in housing projects on the periphery of French cities, a geo-societal phenomenon that would have long-lasting implications.

Immigration flow once again increased due to the political turmoil in Algeria during a civil war in the 1990s. In addition to the fleeing from conflict, this "third wave" of immigration also included migrants seeking family reunification and searching for the flexible, low-skilled labor positions that were blossoming in France. The population boom from across North Africa during that time was something France was ill-equipped to handle, resulting in further relegation of new arrivals into the isolated housing projects that lined the outskirts of French cities. As the Algerian Civil War continued to rage on, immigration numbers swelled. As presented in 1996 by the Archdiocese of Paris, there were approximately 4 million Muslims in France, with 1.5 million from Algeria, 1 million from Morocco, and 350,000 from Tunisia (Hunter & Leveau 6). The rates of immigration to France since 1945 are represented in Figure 3. Note the leveling off of Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan immigration in 1999, a direct result of conflict in North Africa.

Figure 3- The number of foreigners living in France in France since 1945; Source: Those Who Can See



North African Geography

Documenting exactly where North African immigrants and their descendants live in France today is difficult in considering the French government's aversion on collecting statistics on the basis of race. However, there is data on the distribution of the Muslim population at large. While this information is far from ideal, it does present a strong survey of the North African settlement pattern in general due to the fact that a vast majority of French Muslims are indeed North African. In Figure 4, we see that there are certain departments where Muslims make up more than 30 percent of the population, coinciding with historic migration patterns. When coupled with Figure 5, it is clear that urban centers stand out as destinations for North African settlement. Paris, indicated in number 75 of Figure 4, Lille, number 59, Lyon, 69, Marseilles, 13, and Nice, 6, all house persons at a rate of 5,000 persons or more per square kilometer. Important to note is the dense settlement in the North east of France, once a prosperous industrial area that has fallen in economic importance.

Figure 4 – The Distribution of the Muslim Population in France; Source: Le blog de Abdellali Hajjat

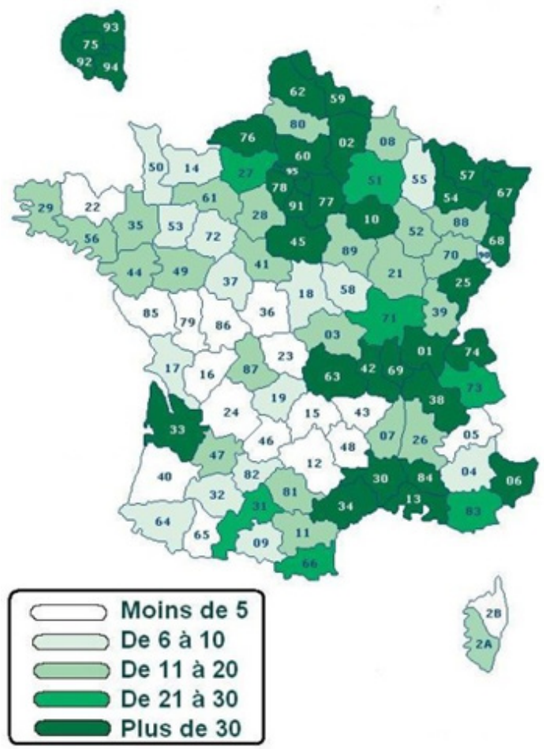
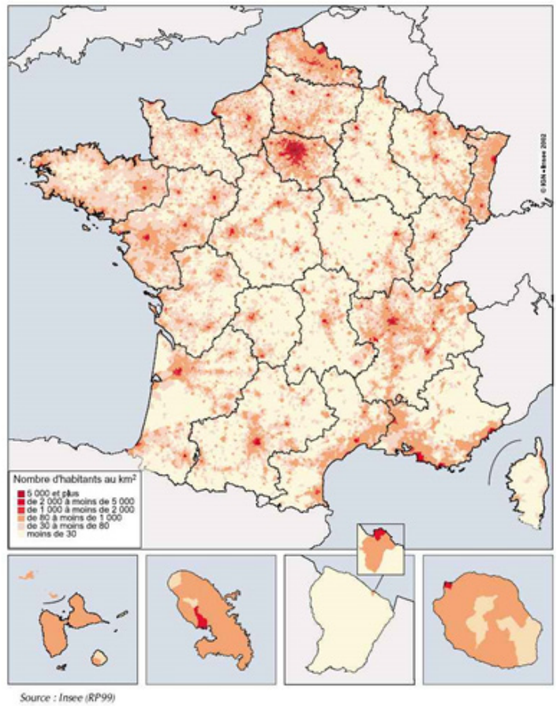


Figure 5 – The Distribution of the Urban Population; Source: Le blog de Abdellali Hajjat



Economic and Social Conditions

The seeds of animosity that were sown in various waves of historical immigration have culminated in various forms of societal strain. North Africans face disadvantage in labor markets, which tends to translate into disadvantage in housing. Difference in labor market outcomes have been apparent early on, with immigrants relegated to unskilled, low-paid labor with high turnover and minimal prospects of advancement. This practice of labor subordination exemplifies the economists' idea of a "dual labor market" in which jobs are segmented into the primary "established position[s] in society" (Piore & Doeringer 246) and secondary "low-status jobs… filled by ethnic workers" (Peck 51). The dual labor market is characterized by a dichotomy between the prospects of job security and upward social mobility. The primary sector represents attractive, white-collar jobs, while the secondary represents blue-collar, menial labor. According to the Observatoire des Inégalités, 46 percent of foreigners in France are of the working class, as compared to 25 percent of Frenchmen (Dechaufour 7).

This duality is evidenced in the sectors in which Native French and North Africans are working. Simon and Steichen present sectional variation in employment (2014). As evidenced by Figure 6, the bulk of native French from 2009-2011 worked in Public Administration, Education, and Social Work at 31.1 percent, as compared to 12.6 percent of North African residents. Additionally, the field of Construction was comprised primarily of North African labor at 10.8 percent as

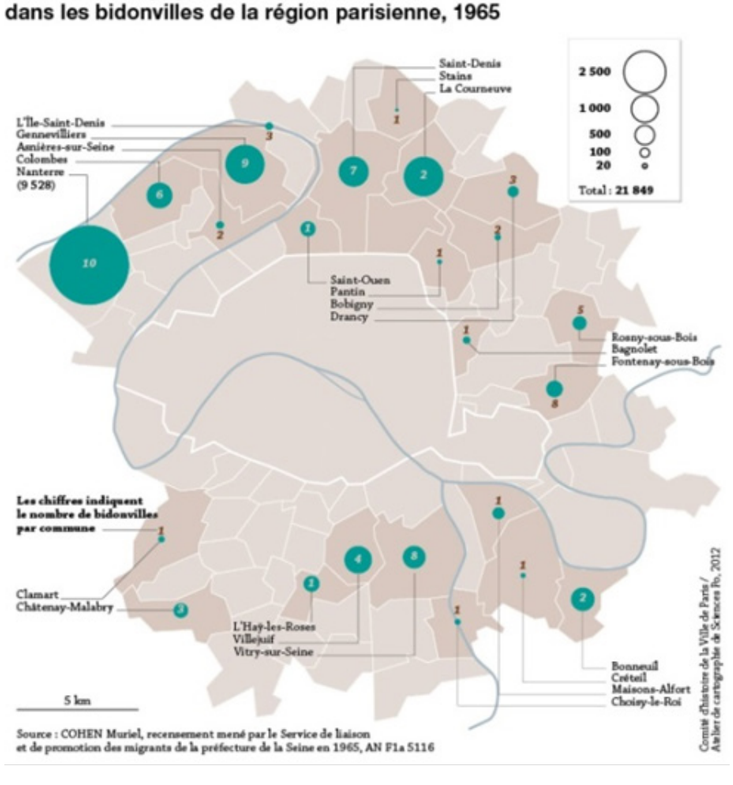
compared to the native 6.4 percent. Native French represented larger shares in Financial and Insurance Activities and Manufacturing, while immigrants saw an employment advantage in Service Support. These figures help to shed light on the tendency towards a dichotomy in the French labor market. These figures are by no means ideal, as the data fails to indicate at what level in the hierarchy North Africans find themselves in a particular sector. Regardless, they are important as a reinforcement of trends in the labor market which lead to stagnated financial advancement.

Figure 6 – French Employment Sectors 2009-2011; Source Simon & Steichen

	Public Administration, Education, Social Work	Construction	Financial and Insurance Activities	Manufacturing, Mining, and Energy	Service Support Activities
Native French	31.1%	6.4%	3.5%	14.4%	9.9%
North Africans	12.6%	10.8%	1.1%	12.0%	22.7%

Along with job market disadvantage, and perhaps increasing it, is the disproportionate relegation of North Africans to public housing, which leaves them spatially disconnected from viable jobs and adequate schooling. Referred to by numerous names, including the cités, banlieues, grandes ensembles, and Habitation à Loyer Modéré (HLM), public housing projects relegate North Africans to social segregation and inhibit their opportunity. Nearly 50 percent of all North African immigrants reside in so-called residential towers, which are located primarily on the outskirts of Paris, Marseille, Lille, and Lyon. This percentage is staggering considering that only 17.6 percent of native French reside in HLM, yet comprise some 90 percent of the population. The banlieues are areas "marked by poverty, welfare dependence, black markets, broken families, and single mothers" (Laurence &Vaïsse 36). They have become known as zones de non-droit, "lawless zones", where gangs propagate their seedy agendas and grip families in cycles of fear (Caldwell 125). Couple this with negligence of French social services, and it is clear how detrimental for their residents these housing experiments truly are.

Figure 7 – North African Population size in the shantytowns of the Paris region, 1965; Source: SciencePo



In order to understand France's housing projects, it is useful to look at how they fit into the housing history of North Africans in France. By the late 1960s, the temporary shantytowns used to house arriving North African migrants, the bidonvilles, with their lack of running water and sewer systems, were presenting themselves as horrendous options for long-term housing in France. Additionally, they were grossly overcrowded as presented in figure 7, housing some 20,000 people.

An opportunity arose to place these migrants in the aforementioned HLM as French families moved into more traditional, one- or two-story homes. As presented by Dubet and Lapeyronnie, HLM became "repositories for all France's social ills and unwanted populations" (Shen 58), areas where France could cast migrants with little accountability and no cognition of assimilation procedures. What has resulted in France is a runaway growth of North Africans settling in these structures. The rates of North African residence in HLM-style housing in the outskirts of French cities in 1982, 1990, and 1999 rose to 34.2 percent, 42.6 percent, and 47.9 percent respectively, ultimately culminating to the 50 percent figure that we see today (Verdugo 9).

The most detrimental feature of public housing is the way it spatially segregates its residents from mainstream France, and the ensuing social and economic deprivation that this segregation fosters. Of these areas, usually ten kilometers from the centers of their adjacent cities, most "lacked amenities such as shopping, metro lines, schools, or recreational spaces, increasing residents' sense of social isolation" (Mitchell 12). This inability to break into the greater French economic and social sphere results from a "residential sorting process" wherein social stratification is exacerbated by the lack of social worth that residing in the banlieues entails (Cox 148). This culminates in the sense that the banlieues constitute "spaces of banishment" (Mitchell 16) where North Africans must remain, void of the opportunities that mainstream French enjoy. The prevailing notion is that the youth, really all age segments, of these banlieues are ill-equipped to acclimate into proper French society, leaving them to languish away in their isolation.

III. France's North African Question

Native French are at odds with their North African community. France prides itself on its social and institutional aversion to religion, and it plays a key role in policy decisions. This position is referred to as laïcité. The current model of this state-directed secularism arose from the Law of 1905 that presented a clear division between Church and State, asserting that the Republic grants no special recognition or subsidies to any religious group. In the development of the law, secularism was deemed a critical social element due to the notion that "traditional religion [was] inferior to the new rational ways of understanding" (Mishra). Beginning with the large-scale migration of North Africans into France during the First World War, many in France viewed Islam as a threat encroaching on the institution of laïcité. This view has had adverse effects on the North African populace, leading to a stigmatization that facilitates subjugation. Here, I will outline the particular nuances of French secularism in order to show how its norms actively factor into separatist dispositions among North Africans.

First, it is important to distinguish between the two types of secularism present in France. The first is that of soft, or "open" and "pluralist" secularism. This is a rather benign form that seeks "inter-religious understanding and public dialogue among different religious groups" in an effort to bolster social cohesion (Soper & Fetzer 937). While this type is still adamant in the importance of a church-state divide in the building of religious houses of worship or providing social services, it strives to foster the free exercise of religion, even in the public sphere. This is seen as the premier way through which to foster integration. It typically follows the ideology of secular cosmopolitans who understand the values of a pluralist society. Unfortunately, many in France do not adhere to this style of secular thinking due to the pervasive fear that religious accommodation will lead to a disregard of the secular values of equality and reason.

The more ever-present interpretation of laïcité is that of hard, or "strict" and "closed" secularism. In this interpretation private practice of religion is accepted as a reality in immigrant communities. This secular view, however, decries the outward expression of religious adherence due to the notion that is represents a threat to Republican values. This is the philosophy championed by conservative locals found in the ranks of the FN and throughout rural France. The primary "exterior manifestations" that this view rejects include: "[p]raying in public, refusing to eat [non-halal] food…, and wearing religiously distinctive clothing" (Soper & Fetzer 937). All of these practices are viewed as proselytization efforts on the part of Muslims. A particular concern for French society and policy makers is the hijab, the veil that many Muslim women wear. There has been a long rhetorical and legal battle over the hijab in France. Thus, it serves as a strong example of the French fervor of suppressing the Islamic identity of the nation.

The French have long viewed the veil "as a symbol of Islam's primitive backwardness" (Mishra), a tangible representation of Islamic and Arab society as inherently inferior to that of the French. A watershed moment occurred in September of 1989 in Creil, France

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when three Muslim girls were expelled from school for refusing to remove their head covering. This affaire du foulard ushered in a decade and a half of debate on the role of the veil in violating France's policy on separation of church and state. In 2004, the Statsi Commission declared a ban on the hijab in "state primary and secondary schools" for its "witness to a pupil's religious affiliation" (Raymond 9). Conservative politicians such as Jacque Chirac and Jean-Pierre Raffarin were adamant that the veil conveyed a political agenda in the ranks of France's North African Muslim population. Even socialists and moderates feared that the headscarf served to subjugate woman and spur radical tendencies. Thus, the banning of Muslim headscarves may be though as a means to "prevent potential development of dual loyalties" (Laurence &Vaïsse 167) among North Africans.

The French government created the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman in 2003 as a mechanism through which to engage with Muslim communities in France through a formal structure. The CFCM was created as "a Muslim counterpart for practical discussions of policy" (Bowen 48). However, it has actively worked towards influencing Muslims to mitigate their Arab-Muslim cultural and political disposition, doing little to facilitate any reconciliation in fostering social and cultural diversity and inclusion. The organization is insufficiently scoped, interacting with affluent Muslims while disregarding the needs of those in the banlieues. It fails to serve as a voice for North African Muslims to improve their social position in France.

Alongside religious aversion to North Africans is the notion of their inherent violence. Due to the pervasive notion of the banlieues as areas that harbor violence and disunity, many in France believe that all North African youth exhibit these qualities. For some, this violence is simply sociological in nature,an out lash against French values and privilege. Others, however, see a clear religious nature in the violence. Former Interior Minister Chevènement said it best when he asserted that "a humiliated identity is a radicalized identity" (Laurence & Vaïsse 144). The vacuum created in the lives of North African youth is filled by organizations that claim to present a nucleus through which they may find group identity, meaning, and purpose. It is not uncommon for foreign imams to serve as mouthpieces for groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, the Muslim Brotherhood, or even al-Qaeda, who actively use mosques as a recruitment zone for their newest fighters. As of January 2015, some 1200 French citizens have been reported as traveling to Syria and Iraq to fight (Radio Free Europe). This figure is only surpassed by the numbers reported from Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Tunisia. The gunmen who carried out the Charlie Hebdo attacks had known connections to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula that were cultivated while in a French prison.

French aversion to North Africans has manifested itself as both a social and political phenomenon. The far-right political group Front National, as an outgrowth of an ostensibly more radical North African populace, has gained ground in France's political arena. This party, founded in 1972 by rightist Jean-Marie Le Pen, holds nationalism and anti-immigration policies with particular importance. They pander to rural or less-educated native French who believe that North Africans are a violent threat to French peace and hegemony. They gained ground throughout the 1990s as a key supporter of a strict adherence to traditional law and order decrees in France, serving as a critical voice in the aforementioned headscarf ban. In the 2012 presidential election, Le Pen's daughter Marine Le Pen finished third in the countries first-round of elections, garnering 6,421,426 votes, or 17.90 percent. The group is characterized by a wide geographic spread in its constituency, meaning that their meager two seats in the French National Assembly has more to do with proportional representation than waning support.

IV. The North African's France Question

North Africans perpetually feel the brunt of French neglect for their social and religious betterment. For one, there is lack of respect for, and facilitation of, the Islamic culture, the faith to which most North Africans adhere. Due to adherence of the 1905 secularization law, training for religious leaders is virtually non-existent. As a result, of the about 1000 imams in France, only about 10 to 20 percent are French citizens. These imams, many of whom arise from the Islamic madrasas of Morocco, function to influence the susceptible young minds of their mosques towards more pronounced degrees of separation from French social and culture values. As presented by sociologist Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, these foreign Imams are "using the loss of identity values and the feeling of exclusion to develop a 'catch all' strategy'" in incorporating them into fundamental networks (Pauly 42). Indeed, foreign imams function to exacerbate tensions in French society with their fire-brand rhetoric, which in many cases leads to radicalization and extremist tendencies. This then serves to perpetuate negative stereotypes against all North Africans and further marginalizes those who truly wish to be functioning members of French society.

Some of the North Africans most hard hit by social marginalization are second and third generation French citizens of North African descent. These youth and their families have a difficult time reconciling between their French, Arab, and Muslim social and cultural identities. All too often they are confronted with exclusion--from mainstream France with the stunted prospect of stable white-collar employment and living conditions and by their North African relatives with dispositions of them being too western or disconnected with their mother language and religion. The racial discrimination and scorn, primarily from native French, that they confront on a daily basis drives their push towards dis-assimilation at best and fundamentalism at worst.

V. An Interpretive Framework for Explanation

What are we to make of this fissure in French society in terms of its interactions between native French and North African residents and citizens? On the one hand, it may be that the French view their social condition in the context of an inherent superiority decreed from their strong Republican laicism. The North African "Other" is merely a residual holdover from the glorious colonial experiment, possessing little more than burden for contemporary France with its odd cultural practices and charged religious disposition. It could also be that native French are simply alarmed by a growing foreign presence in France, a force that challenges the very meaning of home. It is likely, though, that the situation falls somewhere between the two, where French notions of racial and cultural superiority impact policy decisions which disenfranchise North Africans, leading to increased episodes of backlash.

Some Historical Background

First of all, in trying to understand this relationship between the native French and those tracing their origins back to North Africa, one cannot ignore the importance of the old colonial relationship and the attitudes it spawned. In that regard it is important to review some of that history. Algeria was the first of the three colonies. By 1848 it had been subjugated and divided into what would be three départements of the French state, Algiers, Constantine and Oran, even while the political rights of the indigenous peoples were severely limited. This was something that would become more and more apparent as European settlers moved in and monopolized those rights. The French authorities quickly discovered the agricultural and commercial value of their new territory, and subsidized land sales for European purchase. This resulted in tens of thousands of settlers, referred to as colons or pieds noirs, arriving from working-class communities not just in France, but also Spain and Italy. The new arrivals quickly found themselves in a privileged position, including exemption from many colonial taxes, living conditions that were exponentially more attractive and sanitary than those of native North Africans, and hefty education allocations.

These benefits represented the pronounced dichotomy in "the dualistic society of the colony" that would continue to impede social cohesion (MacMaster 6). Coupled with the preferential treatment of Europeans was the stifling of Algerian opportunity, including crippling limitations on social mobility, employment prospects, and adequate schooling. Resultant differences in occupations, education, and material circumstance would then reinforce the notion of a mental superiority among the French and a view of the colonized peoples as "backward and lower down the scale of human progress" (Lloyd & Waters): a phenomenon that would continue to shape the French attitude to North Africans.

By 1881 Tunisia was added to the list of French colonies in North Africa. The French colonial authorities implemented reforms in the courts and educational practices, ushering in more western practices. The absence of a substantial settler population, however, meant that Tunisians retained possession of the land, continued to dominate commerce, and experienced less stigmatization. The colony nevertheless served as a critical source for colonial labor, particularly the ubiquitous seasonal migration to the French mainland. The protectorate survived the two World Wars, and Tunisia was able to claim independence on March 20, 1956.

After acquiring Tunisia, France focused on Morocco, a region embroiled in various claims by France, Spain, and Germany dating back to at least 1905. By 1911 the Protectorate of Morocco was created. The Moroccan case possessed nuances that differentiated it from the Algerian or Tunisian one. Most significantly Morocco was internationally viewed more in the context of a state than a territorial possession. This afford-

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ed traditional Moroccan religious and political leaders more power in conducting their affairs. This would later play a role in the current dilemmas confronting French society in relation to Islam as it has become a favored source of imams who are relatively fundamental in their views. Ultimately, Mohammed V negotiated an end to the French protectorate and Morocco formally gained its independence on April 7, 1956.

In some respects the experience of decolonization deepened French superiority; now the indigenous peoples were not only inferior, they were ungrateful too for all what French colonialism had supposedly brought them. This was particularly the case with Algeria. Both Morocco and Tunisia had acquired independence by 1956 relatively peacefully. But as a result of the presence of a highly privileged settler minority amounting to about ten percent of the population and anxious about retaining those privileges, Algeria would be different and there would be a protracted war of independence lasting from 1954 to 1962.

The war of independence left a searing wound in the psyche of both the French and Algerians, as the war ultimately claimed 150,000 Front de Libération Nationale(FLN) fighters and about 25,000 Frenchmen, along with upwards of 50,000 Algerian sympathizers. When the referendum for Algerian autonomy was completed in 1962 a mass exodus commenced, leading to 900,000 settlers or so-called pied-noirs fleeing their home of one-hundred-plus years for France. While 100,000 initially decided to stay, FLN violence, summed up in the propaganda campaign La valise ou le cercueil ("Suitcase or coffin",) made it clear that they were no longer welcome and nearly all left by the late 1960s.

A group more adversely affected by the need to flee Algeria were the Français musulmans, popularly referred to as the Harkis. These native Algerians who had served as soldiers and collaborators for France in the war effort were largely neglected upon their arrival into France. They were classified as "Muslims" and "refugees": labels void of the recognition they deserved for their service to the French cause (Fellag 7). By and large the some-91,000 Harkis who fled Algeria in 1962 faced the same social woes as those of the long-established North African migrant labor and congruent pied-noirs relocated communities. While it is true that they escaped likely death by fleeing their homeland, they were welcomed with little more than social ostracizing and roadblocks to effective inclusion into mainstream France.

It was not just the settlers who were put out by challenge of the Algerian independence movement. They also had their allies in mainland France. The French populace and government exhibited increased animosity towards North Africans, due in large part to feelings of denial over the loss of colonial territories. Algerians in particular were the targets of violent attacks carried out in France, referred to as ratonnades, or "rat hunts." One of the most pointed episodes of French violence against Algerians occurred on October 17, 1961, in the midst of independence negotiations. During a demonstration against French rule in Algeria, about 200 North Africans were shot and killed by Paris police, their bodies dumped in the Seine River. As presented by Rosenberg: "French governments took a unique interest in these Muslim migrants and subjected them to much greater disciplinary controls than any foreigners. The connection between the abuse endured by North African migrants between the wars and the violent repression of peaceful demonstrators on the notorious night of 17 October 1961 was both logical and direct" (Schneider 11). As North Africans continued to represent the largest sections of foreigners in France, these episodes of institutional subjugation would persist.

The Politics of Difference

In trying to understand this, I rely upon the concept of the politics of difference. This is aimed at explaining the dichotomy found in societies where a superordinate group works towards constraining the rights and privileges of an "Other," as a way of reinforcing an identity as superior, but also as a means of realizing certain material interests in the way of employment and housing. I also work towards addressing the pervasiveness of racism in France and strive for a more thorough comprehension of the various social outlooks in the country.

Many French people are adamant that North Africans are inherently inferior. This notion arises primarily from the colonial period when the French sought to understand their supposed social advancement and rationality vis-à-vis the barbarism and Islamic "superstition" of the colonized. In viewing themselves as intellectually and socially more advanced, the French could justify colonialism through their so-called "civilizing mission." Privileged segments of society work towards validation of preexisting advantage, by "[d]efining others as different, as lacking, and [through] disparaging them" (Cox 145). This creation of a dichotomy in society is important for French hegemony: due to the deep-seated, fundamental inferiority that North Africans supposedly exhibit, as well as contemporary notions of North Africans representing an uneducated, violent under class, they will, it is argued, never assimilate fruitfully. Some French even goes so far as to perpetuate racially offensive and demeaning stereotypes of North Africans as backwards and radicalized, further rooting their second-class status in society.

Many French subordinate North Africans through relegating them to the status of an "Other." This designation has arisen due to a supposed "threat to the cultural values of the 'host country'" (Ferjani 4) that North Africans represent in their language, religion, and presence in the job market. The very concept of 'home' for many French is being attacked. In interacting with North African physical landscapes (halal butcheries and mosques), as well as social ones (religious garb and the Arabic language), some native French feel as though the French they grew up in no longer exists. In order to safeguard Republican values, mainstream French society strives to create a national community of "we" that can be safeguarded from the "you" that North Africans present by "stigmatizing [them and] underlining their otherness" (Raymond 3). This theme of fundamental difference creates a binary lens through which French are viewed as enlightened and civilized and North Africans are viewed as backward and threatening to social order. This has detrimental results on the psyche of North African citizens in terms of reconciling their identity and position to the larger frame of society and leads to anti-assimilationist tendencies.

A crucial area in which this politics of difference may be playing out is in job markets. One reason for the dual labor markets seems to be discrimination in the job application process spurred by professional aversion towards North Africans. Indeed, North African-ness is a code of sorts that signals poor education or criminal tendencies. It is common for North African youth, usually with Muslim "sounding" names, to be judged based on these notions. Their résumés are frequently cast aside in favor of a résumé with a more "French" name, regardless of the merits of the application. In one case study, an identical application packet was submitted for the fictitious "Marie Diouf" and "Khadija Diouf", with Marie receiving "a positive response on 21% of her applications", as opposed to Khadija's 8 percent. Furthermore, "[f]or every 100 interviews that Marie was called for, Khadija was summoned for just 38" (Yong). This is by no means an isolated case. In many job sectors, a Muslim applicant will be about 2.5 times less likely to obtain a position as compared to a comparable Christian counterpart. This has disastrous effects on the economic security of North Africans and their ability to sustain employment, as well as to move into improved housing in parts of the city where the schools are of the sort that will give their children a better chance at life.

The inability of North Africans to break into the job market is apparent in their high rates of unemployment. In January 1999, the unemployment rate for North African Muslims reached 33 percent, despite government efforts at "positive discrimination" implemented in 1998 (Hunter & Leveau 9). More contemporary numbers are harder to come by, due to Republican aversion in France to record on the basis of race or ethnicity, but it is likely that this rate has remained stable or worsened. The problem of unemployment affects all groups of North African heritage, even those with university degrees. In 2002, unemployment for North Africans with a college degree hovered at 16 percent, which was double that of the native French (Laurence & Vaïsse 33). The prevalence of inequality of opportunity in the workplace for North Africans has widened, as 26.5 percent of university graduates of North African descent do not hold jobs. This figure would seem to indicate an unwillingness of French companies to hire these prospective employees, suggesting racial or cultural bigotry.

On the other hand, one should grant that there may be other reasons for the weak labor market position of North Africans. In virtue of factors including level of education, gender, and home-country economic conditions, North Africans are especially susceptible to unemployment. Because so much migration is a result of family-reunification of mothers, wives, and children with little to no formal education, many new arrivals lack "host-country human capital, such as language proficiency, professional networks, and knowledge of local labor market norms" (Simon & Steichen 2). Language abilities are of particular importance. INSEE data from 1999 shows that North African youth born in France to at least one parent born in Algeria exhibit an unemployment rate of 46 percent among 25-29 year olds when their mother tongue is Arabic, as compared

to 18.4 percent for those youth who speak French exclusively. This slows down entry into the job market and particularly into those jobs requiring specialized skill. The native French unemployment rate in 1990 was 10.4 percent overall, with 7.5 percent of men and 14.1 percent of women out of work. Compare this with North African rates in figure 8, and the importance of higher education in France presents itself as one factor in mitigating high unemployment rates among North Africans.

Figure 8 – Unemployment rates by nationality and sex, 1990; Source: INSEE 1992. Cited from Haque 2006

	Percent All	Percent Male	Percent Female
Algerian	27.5%	23.1%	42.3%
Moroccan	25.4%	20.7%	42.5%
Tunisian	25.7%	22.0%	42.5%

North African access to the labor market is further inhibited by French labor unions, largely native French in their membership, and their exclusionary practices. Many French unions deem an influx of foreign workers to be a threat to their job security and as such subordinate North Africans in work projects. This trend is seen clearly on construction industry, where the majority of hard labor is carried out by immigrants. Unions receive their justification for subordination of North Africans from the larger frame of French law, where "their exclusion from the political and labor-union world is confirmed" (Dechaufour 6) on the basis of their status as foreigners. In this manner, the French can continue to ensure that North Africans are placed at the fringes of the job market, ensuring that they pose little threat to French privilege there.

French policy response to the plight of North Africans in the labor market has been particularly pernicious, laying the majority of the blame upon the North Africans and a supposed unwillingness to adjust to the demands of the economy. Sociologist Oliver Roy stated that "a self-fulfilling sense of exclusion prevents many of these [migrant] youngsters from entering the new economy" (Schneider 6). Here, there is the assertion that North African defeatism and unwillingness to mold to French expectation are the primary cause for rampant unemployment. Former Minister of Interior and President Sarkozy is more venomous in his interpretation of the situation, claiming that the root causes behind unemployment are "the drug traffic, the law of bands, the dictatorship of fear and resignation of the Republic" (Schneider 6). This rhetoric of viewing the North Africans as responsible for their own social situation is common, while ignoring the institutional mechanisms that spur social polarization.

A second area in which the politics of difference has been evident is in policing. The grands ensembles in which many North Africans reside are indeed marked by the prevalence of drugs, violence, and poverty, which in turn induces a larger police presence. The issue that has arisen is the notion that North African immigrants in their entirety represent criminals with whom French security services must engage. This stereotype has resulted in a shift from "social development to 'security,' and has exacerbated the everyday harassment of non-white youth" (Mitchell 14). With arrest quotas in place, interactions between police and North African youth have become more charged. Indeed, Arab youth are disproportionally singled out in police operations, prone to unreasonable instances of police verbal harassment, random identity checks, and even physical brutality.

Police brutality is an unfortunate reality in polarized communities, and the cités of France are no different. In societies where ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities are present, police often perform their duties "cruelly and with violence" (Schneider 7). It is not readily apparent why many police departments prefer punitive strategies of high arrest counts and physical confrontation with those suspected of criminal acts. Community policing characterized by an interpersonal relationship with the residents of a certain housing area has proven much more effective. In response to the domineering presence of French police in the banlieues, North African youth have lashed out. This antagonism, spurred on by a lack of mutual understanding, results in increased rates of violent crimes and further mitigates any possibility of societal cohesion.

Institutional mechanisms condition racist policies and actions. At the level of policy decisions, racism is denied as a social problem because all citizens of the Republic are viewed as equal. This has negatively affected the prospect of social improvement in cases where genuine racism is found, for bills against discrimination rarely pass the National Assembly and racist acts are seldom prosecuted. What has resulted from this negligence of viewing racism in its proper socio-economic context has been a strong shift from "prevention and

rehabilitation toward individual accountability, restitution and retribution" (Terrio). Sarkozy cut funding for social programs servicing the banlieues and was unenthusiastic about the idea of community policing. He also instituted a "zero-tolerance" policy on "quality of life crimes", namely, loitering, begging, and jumping of metro turnstiles (Schneider 16-17). This had led to non-violent, misdemeanor crimes now carrying felony sentences of upwards of six months, showcasing in effect that a different type of justice governs North African youth.

This push to criminalize non-violent behavior has led to abnormally high rates of incarceration for North African males. Throughout metropolitan France, Muslims, most of whom are North Africans, make up about seven percent of the population yet constitute upwards of 70 percent of the French prison system (Mahamdallie). The banlieues are particularly affected by high incarceration rates. As sociologist Farhad Khosrokhavar states, "prisoners with a North African father outnumber prisoners with a French father by 9 to 1" for youth eighteen to twenty-nine (Laurence &Vaïsse 41). The primary point that must be emphasized is that North Africans are six times more likely than native French to be incarcerated for non-violent crimes. This has been justified as a means of "cleaning up the streets" in the grands ensembles, but has only resulted in enhanced feelings of angst among North Africans as they reconcile their position in society.

Facing general societal racism, police aggression, and high incarceration rates, North Africans have reacted, often violently. The primary case is that of the French riots of October 2005 that arose from the death of two youth of North African descent as they hid from police in a power transformer. The deaths led to a two-week period across major French cities that presented "the worst and most widespread civilian violence Western Europe had seen in decades", with some "eight thousand cars burned and 2,900 people arrested" (Caldwell 137). Youth, largely of North African descent, targeted French businesses and citizens, justifying these actions on the basis of the systemic inequality they face. The angst of North African communities only serves to enhance the mainstream French notion that beurs, as North African youth are called, present a "violent opposition to society" through "criminality and provocative behaviour" (Roy 65), at odds with the civil rationality of France. The 2005 riots, as well as smaller episodes of 2007, have only led to an expansion of xenophobic notions in mainstream France.

Plagued by exclusion in French social networks and general lack of respect, North Africans have exhibited a move towards communalism that distances them from broader French society. Rather than continue exposure to French racism, and animosity, they frame their social interactions among themselves exclusively. As presented by Smolar, "[s]ometimes cultural isolationism is combined with the rejection of western values to construct a negative identity that mixes homeland culture [and] neighborhood values" (Laurence & Vaïsse 94). This poses difficulty for the prospect of sociabilité, the concept of "deeper contracts, even intimacy, between people of different cultures" (Caldwell 130), due to the fact that ideological walls are constructed as North African citizens and residents revert into their own parallel societies within France. This problem is only worsened by the technology of today and how it enhances the ability of French North Africans to connect to a broader Arab culture.

Figure 9 – Satellite dishes on residence in Clichy-sous-bois; Source: Wikimedia Commons

In an effort to find a place of their own in French society, many North Africans find solace in connecting with the media of their mother tongue: Arabic. Hundreds of thousands of North African apartments and households beam in sitcoms from Algeria, news

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from Qatar, and religious programs from Saudi Arabia. By 1994, one million satellite dishes were installed in France, with a sizable one-quarter of these owned by Arabic speaking families. As presented by the author Bouachera, there is concern in France that the continual streaming of Arabic will in the least "compromise the years of effort to increase the level of French literacy and the assimilation of these communities," and at the most severe "exacerbate the tendency to[wards] fundamentalism" (Ferjani 5). Indeed, it seems that Arabic-language television works to "both extend and to catalyze tensions at work in French society" (Ferjani 16) and makes the prospect of assimilation ever-more elusive. Figure 9 depicts an example of satellite dishes on an HLM residence.

The xenophobia developed in native French citizens has resulted in stereotypes that regard North Africans as unable to assimilate into the country as a whole. The animosity cultivated among the French results in pronounced examples of race-motivated hate crimes. According to the Ministry of the Interior in statistics compiled from 1990-1991,"[t]he racist targeting of North African migrants or their descendants, the 'second generation' Beurs, in incidences of abuse, assault, and murder is higher than for any other minority group" (MacMaster 1). In addition to instances of physical assaults, the free use of racial slurs is common on the French street. In the climate of racism cultivated in French media and psyche, this practice serves to subordinate and humiliate North Africans. As stated by Hargreaves, between 1980 and 1993 Maghrebi residents and citizens were the object of 78 percent of recorded hate crimes, despite constituting no more than 40 percent of the foreign population at the time (Shen 40).

A particular brand of racism that has arisen in the post-9/11 world is that of Islamophobia. This is anti-Muslim prejudice that portrays Islam as a despotic, stagnant religion "uniquely vulnerable to irrational, extreme interpretations" (Mahamdallie). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced against North Africans due to their largely Arab ethnicity and practice of Islam. The animosity towards North Africans has expanded beyond fear of incorporation into the workforce or access to housing, and now extends to fears of an Islamic proselytism portending societal degradation. In the words of Yonnet, Muslims pose a threat to the present "bio-ethno-religious homogeneity" of France (House 223) and as such must be contained. The notion that North Africans are hostile to the values of the republic is only exacerbated by their Islamic character.

In this instance, the politics of difference has a deep-seated lineage in European imperial identity creation. The French mission civilisatrice shares key tenets with the British imperialist notion of the "white man's burden", namely the critical role that European nations hold in bettering the social and economic conditions of societies deemed stunted in their lineal development. The feeling of superiority that accompanies any instance of social dichotomy is heightened in the French case due to the bloody battle for independence that played out in Algeria. The war left an indelible mark on the psyche of many French and North Africans serve as an adequate release point for much resentment of the French. This manifests itself in many forms, from economic discrimination to outright racism.

As articulated throughout this paper, North Africans have reacted to French exceptionalism by reverting to their own forms of counter-culture. This allows them to search for an identity that dredges some self-worth out of a social milieu that is particularly disadvantageous for social and ethnic diversity. On means in which Arab youth seek to counteract the hardships of an imposed otherness is reject mainstream French culture, as showcased in their utilization of verlan. This is a range of French that incorporates morphological and lexical elements from Algerian Arabic that serves "as a verbal rebellion against French as the language of colonization" (The Economist). In this way, as in others, North Africans are able to proclaim their rightful place in French society, unable to be stifled under the tenets of Republican secularism.

The Politics of Home

The concept of 'home' for a people group is of paramount importance. This term does not refer to the domestic hearth of family and friends, but rather the broader frame of societal shared experiences and symbols. These factors, such as national holidays and popular culture norms, shape the psyche of people on an individual level. The concept serves as a defining perimeter for the national community. 'Home' is a demarcating mechanism to determine who is included, thus, who may benefit from the privilege of being a part of the exclusive French community. Immigrants, North Africans in particular, are deemed to be outside of this frame of belonging due to the sense that their language, social practices, and physical manifestations of religion are incurring on the French 'home.' Many in France feel as though North Africans represent an alien presence of sorts that threatens the entire existence of the France they once knew.

This is not to say that all in France even believe in a monolithic sense of a French 'home,' let alone the notion that it is being destroyed. Moderate middle class French citizens, who could be thought of as thinking in a particularly cosmopolitan fashion, typically possess nuanced insight on cultures other than their own. Indeed this cosmopolitan "surrender[s] to the alien culture, [which] implies personal autonomy vis-à-vis the culture where he originated" (Hannerz 240). Through the ability to disengage with irrational fear towards a people group, these largely bourgeois French are able to be more pragmatic in their dealings with North Africans. However, it is certainly a reality that they will assert and defend French values like after watershed moments such as Charlie Hebdo. In the end, though, they will not use laicism as a tool for discriminatory fervor.

The same cannot be said for those who are usually less educated, what may be thought of as locals. This social group is characterized by predominantly working class native French from smaller industrial towns and rural areas who feel that North Africans, and immigrants in general, represent a grave threat to the French 'home.' Many devote their support for the Front National, which heeds their rallying cry of expelling anti-Republican sentiment from France. As evidenced by Figure 10, "White collar" jobs, Employés in French, refers to clerical workers or retail staff. They supported the Front National in 2015 departmental elections at a rate of 38 percent.

Figure 10 – The Vote at the Turn of 2015 Departmental Elections; Source: Les-Crises.fr

	Parti socialiste	UMP-UDI	Front national
Liberal Professions; Senior Management	28%	33%	13%
Intermediary Professions	25%	27%	25%
White Collar Positions	18%	24%	38%
Workers	15%	13%	49%
Unemployed	19%	23%	25%
Retired	23%	37%	20%

"Workers" supported the Front National at a rate of 49 percent. These Ouvriers, as they are known in French, serve primarily as work hands in industrial, agricultural, and distribution sectors. As evidenced by the right column of Figure 10, FN support increases heavily as social prominence decreases, pointing to the strong influence that the group holds over impressionable minds. Appendix A explains the nuances of each job category as understood in France. While xenophobic notions of a North African incursion on the French 'home' are almost certainly a factor in these rates, it seems likely that they are also a by-product of concern over North Africans claiming these same types of jobs for less wages. In this way, locals lash out against North Africans for both sentimental and pragmatic reasons.

In addition to the professions of locals, their stunted level of educational exposure also manifests itself into increased support for the Front national. A university degree, with its common focus on a cross-cultural perspective, will generally present to a pupil the importance of respect for other social groups. This is largely void in the ranks of locals, as they comprise primarily blue-collar economic and social conditions which rarely facilitate a college degree. As such, lower levels of education typically lend to much stronger support for the Front National. As evidenced by Figure 11, those with no diploma support the FN 50 percent of the time. Those that have obtained a CEP or BEPC (see Appendix B) support the FN at a rate of 35 percent. This is important because it showcases the strong impact that a liberal, diverse education can have on cultural astuteness.

Figure 11 – Level of Education and Voting Choice; Source: Les-Crises.fr

	Parti socialite	UMP-UDI	Front national
University Degree	24%	36%	16%
Baccalaureat and Two Years of Further Education	21%	32%	24%
Baccalaureat	17%	26%	29%
CEP/BEPC/CAP/BEP	23%	23%	35%
No Diploma	8%	17%	50%

Variation in Belief

French society is an amalgamation of outlooks. In order to understand the country's conundrum, it is important to see how each segment of society thinks about and interacts with the position of North Africans. The French Left has worked towards improving social conditions for North Africans, particularly in the context

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of limiting deportations and expanding family reunification. Where they must improve, though, in their connection with North Africans is their inability "to acknowledge the racial dimension of social inequalities" (Murray 38). In working towards counteracting geo-social discrimination, whether in housing, labor, or healthcare, they have been largely ineffective in addressing the racial components of social disparity. They have a difficult time understanding that a great deal of inequality stems from racialized notions of North African inferiority. This oversight, in part, allows institutional racism to persist.

Juxtaposed to the liberal French outlook is that of conservative French ideology. The Right uses ideology and rhetoric to ensure that native-born French continue to hold preference over immigrants in housing and jobs. The primary weapon in persuading the electorate of this position is to assert the threat of "encroachment of Islamic fundamentalist ideas harboured within Muslims" (Mahamdallie) The primary target of this claim is North Africans, who make up the majority of Muslims in France. The bastion of rightist France, the Front national, long found success in their fire-brand approach towards decrying Islam and North Africans. In the wake of leadership transition from founder Jean-Marie Le Pen to his daughter Marine, however, the FN has worked towards a "de-demonizing" effort to ensure that their racist rhetoric is scaled back. They boast some 80,000 members and represent 23 of France's 74 European Parliament seats. They also fare well in municipal elections, for they represent a "protest" vote of sorts that condemns the central government and its efforts in immigrant rights.

The Front National is not the only right-wing voice in France. The Republicans, headed by former French President Sarkozy, occupy the center-right political position in France. Recently, a dispute ensued between Sarkozy and European Parliament member Nadine Morano over her comment that France is a "white nation". In the past Morano had been adamant on accepting North African migrants, so long as they assimilate into French culture and society. This comment of the Republicans shows that the Right is having a difficult time of finding a position on the North African issue. It seems as though Sarkozy is cognizant of the weight that North Africans possess in France, and thus decried a comment that years past would be of little consequence. It shows that just as French society as a whole is not monolithic, neither are the ranks of the right-wing.

As discussed above, the emotional distance that native French exhibit in the notion of France as a 'home', incurred upon by North Africans, varies drastically. More leftist, bourgeois segments of France, the aforementioned cosmopolitans, characterized by "an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences" (Hannerz 239). They typically present a more thorough sense of awareness of the effects of French colonialism, and while holding firm to French social values of secularism, do seek a more plural voice in France. On the other hand, those who are from socially conservative and rural departments of France largely comprise the aforementioned locals. Their view asserts that French values face a genuine threat from North Africans that must be quelled through more pronounced interpretations of secularism.

Figure 12 – Percentage of FN support in the 2014 European Parliament elections; Source: Le blog de Abdellali Hajjat

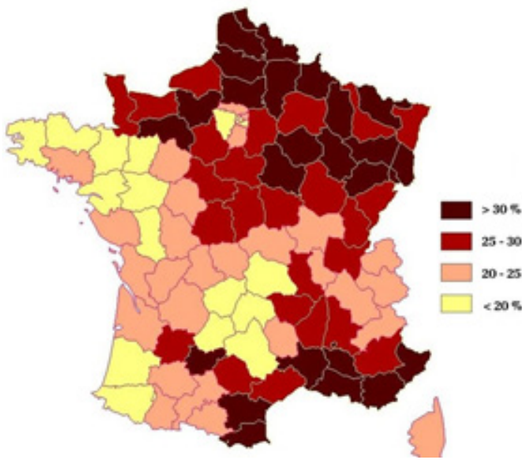

Figure 13 – The Distribution of the Muslim Population in France; Source: Le bnlog de Abdellali Hajjat

We have already seen that certain educational and occupational norms lend to a particular constituency representing the Front national, namely industrial laborers with minimal advanced schooling. In Figure 12, we see that the majority of FN support is focused in the Northeast and Southeast of the country, areas that are marked by a downturn in industrial production over the years. In a comparison with Figure 13 we see a clear correlation between FN support and Muslim population percentages, particularly in the North East of the country and the French Riviera.

In this regard, Figure 14 provides a cross-tabulation of departments according to the level of support for the Front national compared to the proportion of the population that is Muslim. If FN support increases with the Muslim presence, then the larger percentages should gravitate to an axis moving from bottom left to top right and there is some clear tendency in that direction. But interestingly, there are some obvious deviations from this, particularly in the bottom right of the cross-tabulation, where the asterisked entries correspond to areas with lower rates of FN support, but a high Muslim presence.

Figure 14 – Correlation between FN support and Muslim Population; Source: Le blog de Abdellali Hajjat

% Muslim of French Population						
% French Population that voted in favor of FN		Less than 5%	6-10%	11-20%	21-30%	Greater than 30%
	Greater than 30%	1%	2%	9%	3%	12%
	25-30%	2%	5%	4%	1%	10%
	20-25%	10%	7%	3%	3%	7%*
	Less than 20%	7%	3%	4%	0%	7%*

Significantly these are departments that for the most part are in the Paris region, Lyon and Grenoble. All of these areas are characterized by an overrepresentation of native French workers in professional, technical, and white collar occupations. These are the members of the social strata which tend to register low rates of support for the FN.

Variation in views of the North African question is not just a prerogative of the native French. North African positions are also diverse on numerous levels, and level of adherence to Islam is a primary distinguishing factor. Many North Africans are what might be called 'cultural' Muslims who are relatively secular and aim towards "[creating] a synthesis between Islam and modernity." These moderates constitute the largest group of North African Muslims and exhibit the highest degree of upward social mobility as compared to other Muslims. A more zealous disposition is that of the fundamentalists whose "primary goal is to encourage a revival of Islam and Islamic principles." The most ardent of groups are the Islamists, and it is they who incite the most animosity among the native French. This segment aims to form an ideal Islamic society in France. In many cases, this ideology "appeals to a segment of Muslim youth who feel frustrated and excluded" (Hunter & Leveau 10), which furthers the notion that, due to their cultural faith, North Africans are inherently radical and violent.

There are groups attempting to counteract this notion. These groups have emerged from the moderates who, with their higher level of social integration, are able to promote civil discourse to improve conditions for North Africans. Their strategy is to try to show that French antagonism against Arab communities runs counter to the values of the Republic. The group SOS Racisme was created in 1984 as one of the first means through which beur youth could organize themselves and cultivate "greater acceptance of youth of Arab origin" (Laurence &Vaïsse 70) in mainstream France. Another group founded in the 1980s, France Plus, was also formed around winning acceptance of North Africans. These groups, along with others, strive to ensure that the North African grievances are addressed. Indeed, these organizations "have joined together in what have become known as new social movements in order to achieve some moral equality, some equality in terms of a sense of social worth" (Cox 163). The social position which North Africans occupy is precarious, accentuating the importance of these organizations.

The theme of social worth that these groups promote may help save those within the North African community on the fringes of French society from separatist outlooks, particularly "second- and third-generation" youth. Due to a crisis of identity, they have a difficult time assimilating into French society. They are stuck in a space of limbo, not entirely in touch with French culture and lacking key social and linguistic ties with their families' country. They are pulled in opposite directions by the cultural allure of North Africa on the one hand, and the gilded promise of the Republic on

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the other. They feel as though something in their lives is missing: that they do not have a place where they can be free to self-explore. Often, these youth take up Islam as the means of finding a niche in society and reconciling between their polar identities.

VI. Internationalizing the North African Question

Viewing France's North African dilemma in the broader frame of European politics is useful in understanding its dimensions. There is deep-seated, anti-Muslim sentiment throughout the European Parliament, a situation that is only exacerbated by contemporary en masse migration from the Middle East and North Africa. In June a coalition referred to as "Europe of Nations and Freedoms" was formed by Front national leader Marine Le Pen and includes members from the Dutch Party for Freedom, Austria's Freedom Party, and Italy's Northern League. A mere 39 members represent the coalition, the smallest bloc in the European Parliament. With such low membership, the group is unlikely to galvanize heavy support. However, their more unified voice decrying immigration into European will play a factor in deliberations regarding the ease of settlement and assimilation for new arrivals from the Arab world in the coming years.

Another important factor in the broader frame of the North African question is linkage between immigration into Europe and the international war on terror. There is genuine panic among the governments of Europe, for they feel that their citizens can become susceptible to the fundamental rhetoric of groups such as the Islamic State and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. As aforementioned, France is currently faced with a surge of their nationals fighting in Syria and Iraq – some 1,200 in total. Other countries are plagued by a rash of their young men (and women) going to fight in extremist groups, particularly Great Britain which, according to intelligence reports, faces as many as 2,000 of their own citizens currently fighting in Syria and Iraq. The response of British governance has been severe, invoking a criminal charge on those that leave the country to fight in jihadist endeavors. France, too, must learn how to best deal with their challenges in youth heading east to fight.

VII. Conclusion

In this paper I have worked towards framing the historical, social and cultural reasons for the remarkable level of social polarization between native French and North Africans, whether recent arrivals or those of the third generation. The prospect for effective social cohesion is challenged by numerous French factors including laïcité and the deep wounds of the Algerian Revolution. These facets, viewed in the frame of a politics of difference and a politics of home, plagues the possibility of assimilation. Through the former, many French relegate North Africans to a subordinated role substantiated through a long lineage of colonial subjugation. In the latter, many native French lash out at North Africans due to the fear that they represent an alien force that is determined to undermine French Republican values. In response to social, economic, and cultural marginalization, North Africans galvanize themselves, either along the positive lines of social mobilization or the dangerous phenomenon of fundamentalist violence. The situation is convoluted by the myriad of social factors at play in the fight for North African social assimilation, whether the right-winged Front National, the liberal Partie Socialiste, or groups sympathetic to the North African cause, notably SOS Racisme. In the end, the quest for genuine social cohesion must arise through a nuanced negotiation among all groups with a vested interest in the question. For the time being, particularly in light of fundamentalism spurred in all levels of France and increased quotas on migration, it seems that the "North African Question" will be as perplexing as ever.

Appendix A

1. Liberal Professions – Professions libérales
   a. Refers to physiotherapists, doctors/surgeons, notaries, lawyers, etc, and other similar professionals, whose income comes from 'fees' in payment of their services
2. Senior Management – Cadres supérieurs
   a. Refers to senior managers in both the public and private sectors
3. Intermediary Professions - Professions intermédiaires
   a. Encompasses nurses, teachers, accountants, social workers, middle manage ment, etc. There is an understanding that they are not 'managers' or decision-makers, but they have a skill or a position that is beyond simple execution of tasks.
4. White Collar Positions – Employés
   a. This category refers to clerical workers, retail staff, and other 'lower-level' white-collar positions
5. Workers – Ouvriers
   a. These are industrial or factory workers that perform primarily manual labor. Positions include: dock workers, seamstresses, farm workers, warehouse attendants, municipal gardeners, and trash collectors
6. Unemployed – Chômeurs
7. Retired – Retraités

Appendix B

1. University Degree - Diplôme supérieur
   a. Comprises all other degrees, ranging from Bachelor of Arts/Sciences to Doctoral degrees
2. Baccalauréat and Two Years of Further Education
   a. This can indicate that one has a post-baccalauréat professional degree (obtained through an IUT, Institut Universitaire Téchnologique, similar to Institutes of Technology in the American system)
3. Baccalaureat - Baccalauréat
   a. This is received at the end of high school
4. CEP - Certificat d'études Primaires
   a. Received at the end of primary school (A defunct degree; only older generations would hold this type of degree)
5. BEPC - Brevet d'études du Premier Cycle du Second Degré
   a. Received at the end of junior high/middle school, just before entering high school
6. CAP - Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle
7. BEP - Brevet d'études Professionnelles
   a. These two are professional degrees after 1 or 2 years of studies in a parallel system to high school (these would be the degrees that most employés or ouvriers would possess)
8. No Diploma – Pas de diplôme
   a. Denotes that no diploma for schooling has been received

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