

By Book and School: The Politics of Educational Reform in France and Algeria during the Early Third Republic

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BY BOOK AND SCHOOL: THE POLITICS OF
EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN FRANCE AND ALGERIA
DURING THE EARLY THIRD REPUBLIC

by

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ABSTRACT

During the era of New Imperialism, the newly-formed French Third Republic continued France's civilizing mission both in France and in Algeria. Founded on a series of reforms, republican leaders and educational experts judged primary level education taught in the French language to be the most effective means of uniting a linguistically and culturally diverse population in the metropole. These republican values, based on revolutionary tenet of universality, would help France to sustain a republican regime, would thwart attempts to reestablish monarchical rule, and would teach future French citizens what it meant to be politically active. At the same time, another group of metropolitan republicans set out to reform the educational system in Algeria, the crown jewel of the French empire. These men, using the civilizing mission as their justification, wanted to export the reformed metropolitan curriculum to Algeria in order to inculcate French values into the indigenous populations. The exclusive use of the French language and of metropolitan educational materials, based on assimilationist beliefs, resulted in the devaluation of Algerians' culture, language, and traditions. A third group of leaders and educational experts who had lived in Algeria recognized the peril involved in the direct export of metropolitan education. This third group championed Algerian exceptionalism, arguing that local circumstances must be considered when reforming education in Algeria so that indigenous culture is respected. Their associationalist perspectives predated the metropolitan shift in colonial ideology from assimilation to association.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1899, an article in the *Bulletin de l'Enseignement des Indigènes de l'Académie d'Alger* suggested that education was “the most certain way that a civilized nation has to win over primitive populations to its ideals and to raise them up gradually to it.”¹ This statement demonstrates Third Republicans’ belief that education was the most important way to bring the civilizing mission to fruition. This thesis investigates the discursive debates of metropolitan and colonial officials and educational experts in their efforts to reform France’s metropolitan and colonial educational systems concurrently during the early Third Republic (1870–1914). I argue that the texts analyzed here demonstrate that French metropolitan and colonial officials and educational experts, using the language of republicanism and of colonial ideology, promoted reforms in order to civilize France’s metropolitan population with the aspirations of turning French men into citizens, and to lift France’s colonial subjects in Algeria out of a perceived static and backward existence so that they would become more like the French.

While some educational reforms that leaders enacted in France found their way across the Mediterranean Sea, both systems needed locale-specific organizational and curricular reforms in order to inculcate republican values into their students. These debates reveal that republicans considered France’s educational system to be in as much flux as its Algerian counterpart. By examining these texts, I hope to answer the following questions: How did educational reforms fit into republicans’ vision of citizenship? How did these reformers perceive the place of education within the civilizing mission, both domestically and colonially? How did assimilation and

¹ *Bulletin de l'Enseignement des Indigènes de l'Académie d'Alger*, no. 75 (1899): 108, quoted in Antoine Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation* (Paris: Harmattan, 1991), 24. The title of Jennifer Sessions’ monograph, inspired by a comment by Governor General of Algeria Thomas-Robert Bugeaud, influenced the title of this thesis. See, Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

association influence reformers' perspectives? How did personal experiences of working in Algeria influence the reforms these republicans advocated?

Jennifer Sessions' monograph *By Sword and Plow* influenced the title of my thesis. Her title stems from a statement by Algeria's Governor General Thomas-Robert Bugeaud during the 1840s.² Republicans, however, believed that more was needed than just a military presence in Algeria; the French needed to win over the indigenous population. The *Alliance française* supplanted the symbols of the sword and the plow, which symbolized French military rule in Algeria, in favor of two new symbols: the book and the school, symbolizing a shift to civilian rule. A statement in the inaugural edition of the *L'Alliance française illustrée* best exemplified this feeling. "But if the sword and the plow subdue man and soil, it is the book and school which transform minds and win hearts."³ Thus, I chose the book and the school as symbols for my thesis to signify a continuation of Sessions' scholarship into education during the early Third Republic.

At the heart of France's colonial enterprise was the concept of a *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission). The history of this mission cannot be presented as separate from that of republican France, nor can the history of republican France be presented as separate from that of the French empire. Republican universalism intimately links the two histories, rendering the civilizing mission "one of the most important chapters of French political thought." Contrary to any pretentious claim to ethno-cultural neutrality stemming from the revolutionary affirmation of equality for all mankind, republican universalism, in reality, emerged as the primary justificatory

² Thomas-Robert Bugeaud, *Par l'épée et par la charrue: Ecrits et discours* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948). See also, Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*.

³ L. Leroy, "En Algérie: Écoles et écoliers indigènes," *L'Alliance française illustrée* (15 February 1894): 12.

means of France's racial policies that it implemented in the empire.⁴ French publicists and politicians considered France alone, amongst the Western nations, "had a special mission to civilize the indigenous peoples now coming under its control." Underpinned by the assumptions that French colonial subjects were too primitive to govern themselves, but capable of change, the civilizing mission suggested that France was exceptionally suited to perform this undertaking because of its revolutionary history and industrial development, and that France had a duty to "remake primitive cultures" in proportion to its own political, economic, and cultural progress.⁵ Embodying the secular and rational ideas of the Enlightenment and the spirit of the French Revolution, the civilizing mission theoretically pledged to enrich the livelihoods of France's colonized populations via legislative reforms and education.⁶

This study examines the discourses of three distinct groups of officials and experts. The first chapter investigates the debates of metropolitan officials and experts and the reforms they implemented within the metropolitan educational system. Metropolitan in this context possesses a double meaning. Geographically, it encompasses the Hexagon, the land located inside the political borders of France. Politically, it denotes the administrators in Paris since the Third Republic was a highly centralized regime. It was from Paris that officials and experts disseminated their reforms throughout France to create their idealized Frenchman. While these officials and experts reformed the metropolitan educational system in order to create politically-active citizens, another group of officials and experts debated how to reform the colonial

⁴ Dino Costantini, *Mission civilisatrice: Le rôle de l'histoire coloniale dans la construction de l'identité politique française*, trans. Juliette Ferdinand (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 2008), 14. See also, Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

⁵ Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in French West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 1–2.

⁶ J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicans, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880–1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5.

educational system in Algeria. The second chapter focuses on this second group of metropolitan officials and experts whose interest was the educational system in Algeria for indigenous children. The third chapter examines the educational debates surrounding indigenous education in Algeria of officials and experts who lived part or all of their lives in Algeria. In short, I posit that these texts reveal that republican leaders and experts in the metropole and in Algeria, through the inculcation of republican values via a reformed educational system, wanted to transform the French population into politically-active citizens and the Algerian population into informed subjects who had the potential to develop into citizens.

The best methods to fulfill this wish were just as varied as the debates analyzed here. These texts reveal a vigorous and dynamic debate that failed to unearth a common solution that could be ubiquitously applied. All of the texts I analyze, however, suggest that the best way to begin this educational reform was via the French language at home and abroad. While republicans' incessant promotion of the French language could contribute indirectly to the reinforcement of colonial power, the language assumed a direct role in the dissemination of republicanism in both locales. Based on historical political divisions, the population of metropolitan France has had a long record of being linguistically heterogeneous. An 1863 survey suggested that approximately twenty-five percent of the population spoke no French at all as it was spoken in Paris and that another quarter of the schoolchildren aged seven to thirteen could understand some French, but were unable to write it. An economic and geographical disparity existed amongst French speakers, most of whom were middle or upper class and urban dwellers. Thus, republicans found themselves in a situation in which French was a foreign tongue for almost half of France's future citizens. While linguistic differences did not threaten administrative unity, republicans sought to reform the metropolitan educational system once they

perceived regional languages as a threat to ideological unity. Consequently, the initial steps of the civilizing mission needed to occur domestically.⁷ In Algeria, language divided the population into two main groups: Berber speakers, whom nineteenth-century linguists argued were linguistically closer to French speakers, and Arabic speakers.⁸ Based on ethnographic reports, republicans believed Berbers to be more amenable to French values. As a result, the exportation of metropolitan curriculum to Algeria, taught in French and replete with France's notions of superiority, civilization, and grandeur, tried to disseminate republican values amongst the Berber population first.⁹

Early Third Republic Ideology

France's Third Republic (1871–1940) was a paradox of concurrent stability and instability. Some scholars suggest that the regime's relative political stability—a seventy-year reign—was due to the lack of revolutions, a shift in favor of anticlericalism, and the advent of mass political participation. Republicans maintained parliamentary majorities during the Third Republic by consolidating power in important institutions, most notably via the virtual extinguishment of the Left's leadership during the Paris Commune, and by making alliances to foil any resurrection of anti-republican forces.¹⁰ Philip Nord argues that while “new elites”

⁷ The French population, depending on where they lived, spoke a variety of languages, including Breton, Alsatian, Béarnais, Basque, Catalan, and Italian. The French language I reference is Parisian French. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), 67, 71, 73.

⁸ Alan S. Kaye, “Arabic,” in *The World's Major Languages*, ed. Bernard Comrie, 664–685 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). In Algeria, the major languages at the time were Berber, Arabic, and Hebrew. Berber refers to a group of languages spoken in North Africa west of Egypt, whose dialects include Tuareg, Tamazight, Kabyle, Tshalhit, Tirifie, Chawiya, and Zenaga. See, Comrie, *The World's Major Languages*, 648.

⁹ Patricia M. E. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Race in Colonial Algeria* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), 152. For more on ethnography's role in the Third Republic, see, George R. Trumbull, IV, *An Empire of Facts: Colonial Power, Cultural Knowledge, and Islam in Algeria, 1870–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Michael Sprinker, *History and Ideology in Proust: A la Recherche Du Temps Perdu and the Third French Republic* (1994; repr., New York: Verso, 1998), 31.

helped to reform democratic institutions, the republic's embrace of "old elites" within state institutions not only contributed to the regime's stability, but demonstrated continuities between the Third Republic and its predecessors.¹¹ Other scholars characterize this period as unstable due to the manifold political, social, and cultural hazards that occurred. These threats to the regime included economic recession, financial crises, bank failures, the materialization of a socialist political party, labor unrest, and a series of anarchist attacks.¹² In addition, the early Third Republic witnessed fifty-two different cabinets between 1875 and 1914, only eleven of which lasted longer than one year.¹³

Republicanism itself was an inconsistent ideology. James Lebling argues that republicanism was a compilation of differing perspectives that not only played a part in the republic's instability, but fomented internecine divisions amongst republicans.¹⁴ Despite these tensions republicans still had to find a solution to the shift from elite politics to mass political participation.¹⁵ Based on the revolutionary ideal that a republic could create its citizens, republicanism in the early Third Republic embodied a dual project. It meant not only the formation of institutions permitting mass political participation, but the creation of citizens who could actively take part in those institutions.¹⁶ The most palpable institution republicans could use to transform the French people and colonial subjects was education. Educational officials within the republican regime translated the political, economic, and cultural functions of

¹¹ Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 4, 248.

¹² William Fortescue, *The Third Republic in France 1870–1940: Conflicts and Continuities* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 55; James Lebling, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Third Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 1–13.

¹³ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875–1914* (1987; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 96.

¹⁴ Lebling, *To Be a Citizen*, 2.

¹⁵ Lebling, *To Be a Citizen*, 5.

¹⁶ Lebling, *To Be a Citizen*, 9.

schooling into educational objectives imbued with a civilizing mission.¹⁷ According to historian Antoine Léon, this mission, as it pertains to education, can only be “disinterested when its values are deemed universal.” This universality, a revolutionary tenet, imparts a superiority legitimizing civilizing enterprises both domestically and colonially.¹⁸

Important events such as the Franco-Prussian War, the Paris Commune, and the Dreyfus Affair perturbed French life and exacerbated nationalist feelings after 1870. The Franco-Prussian War dealt a blow to France’s international image, highlighting its weaknesses vis-à-vis its European neighbor. The republican government ousted the Paris Commune, which favored the discontented Parisian working class, all but silencing the political Left. Some nationalists felt France should turn its attention to the recovery of annexed land in the East; others believed France needed to seek compensation via the development of colonial expansion policies. This second group, whose focus sought to expand France’s empire, became the Colonial Party (*Parti colonial*).¹⁹ Composed of some sixty societies, including the *Alliance française*, the Colonial Party promoted “republican colonialism” as a mixture of Jacobin imperialism and revolutionary thinking.²⁰ This group invoked the civilizing mission as a “rallying cry” to inspire an ambivalent country to obtain and to invest in the empire.²¹

Prior to the late 1870s, many republicans were lukewarm supporters of the imperial enterprise, and radicals remained opposed to colonial expansion. Once republicans could be more certain of the republic’s future, the development of Algeria and the expansion into Tunisia,

¹⁷ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 17.

¹⁸ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 24.

¹⁹ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 69–70.

²⁰ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 71. For more on the composition of the Colonial Party, see, C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, “The French ‘Colonial Party’: Its Composition, Aims, and Influence, 1885–1914,” *The Historical Journal* 14, no. 1 (March 1971): 99–128.

²¹ Daughton, *An Empire Divided*, 5.

Madagascar, Indochina, and West Africa gained the support of republican leaders including Jules Ferry and Léon Gambetta. Within the republican political culture, this expansion forced republicans to contemplate the prospect that colonized subjects might eventually become French citizens. Imperialist expansion also occurred within the context of racial science and the hazards of hybridity, resulting in the widespread concern regarding degeneration and national decline. Thus, for some republicans, the republic's universalizing mission of transformation rendered colonialism a "natural extension of the development of the republic in France itself." For others, however, imperial expansion highlighted the dangers of the republican enterprise, allowing the colonial experience to emerge as a means to contest certain elements of republican political culture.²²

In Algeria, republicanism frequently functioned as a discursive strategy, an ideological construction that served as a counterpoint to Islamic Algeria. French imperialism depended on and manipulated the procedural fluidity of delineating the meanings of a republican empire.²³ Historian Yves Person argues that the tendency to reduce colonization to a simple extension of the nation-state which would suppress autochthonous cultures and would break local solidarities runs the risk of masking the specificity of colonial education.²⁴ The unique essence of colonial education resides within a double refusal. On the one hand, the colonizers' refusal to Gallicize colonial subjects completely via gradual assimilation tasks the educational system to make up for subjects' perceived deficiencies based on their "primitive" nature.²⁵ On the other hand, the colonial subjects' refusal to participate in a limited, partial, or conditional Gallicization testifies

²² Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 128–130.

²³ Trumbull, *An Empire of Facts*, 7.

²⁴ Yves Person, "L'État-Nation et l'Afrique," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* 68, no. 250 (1981): 276.

²⁵ For a discussion about French perceptions of Africans' backwardness, see William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530–1880* (1980; repr., Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 76–79.

to their desire of participating equally in a system in which the colonizers fear bestowing social and political rights to indigenous populations that had the potential to upset colonial rule.²⁶

Education

Over the course of the early Third Republic, the civilizing mission's substance shifted and evolved as conditions in the metropole and in the empire changed.²⁷ Thus, this period, during which France experienced its most concentrated period of colonial expansion, offers scholars a fruitful opportunity to examine educational debates both in France and in Algeria prior to the outbreak of World War I and before the potential specter of Pan-Islamism essentially revised interpretations of Islam.²⁸ While metropolitan republicans tried to cast and recast education to fit into the republican mold via a series of reforms, the texts examined in this study articulated various opinions about what republicanism should look like. The two main colonial theories of the early Third Republic—assimilation and association—informed these perspectives, even though the theories themselves lacked clearly articulated definitions. Republicans also utilized these theories to generate and to justify a broad range of oppressive and violent policies.²⁹

Educational officials justified the organizational schema in the colonies based on their perceived image of indigenous societies.³⁰ This socially-hierarchized image emerged from the social sciences of the period, which posited that differences in race explained human diversity. Social scientists believed that biological dissimilarities differentiated between races and that race effected the political, economic, and social accomplishments of a specific ethnic group.³¹

²⁶ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 10.

²⁷ Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 3.

²⁸ Trumbull, *An Empire of Fact*, 6; Daughton, *An Empire Divided*, 5.

²⁹ These policies will be discussed more in chapter two.

³⁰ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 17.

³¹ Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*, 215.

Collectively known as scientific racism, the works of these scientists, including Joseph Arthur de Gobineau and Paul Broca, gave rise to the perception of the French race as superior.³² The term “race,” as nineteenth-century anthropologists and scientists understood it, principally denoted skin color and became rigidly categorized based on craniometrics. These biological studies consequently gave rise to a hierarchy of races, with each race having its own mental abilities and shortcomings.³³ A well-known philologist and historian during the early Third Republic, Ernest Renan argued, “In the big picture, colonization is a political necessity.” For Renan, a nation that did not colonize other parts of the world would inevitably find itself in a class struggle between the rich and the poor. “The conquest of a racially inferior nation by a superior race, the latter establishing itself as the ruler, is not shocking.” According to Renan, colonization would eradicate the domestic class struggle since “nature made a race of laborers: the Chinese...; a race of workers of the earth, the blacks...; a race of masters and soldiers: the Europeans.”³⁴ Renan’s racial distinctions, which historian Gilles Manceron characterizes as “republican racism,”³⁵ did not follow the biological racism of essayist and diplomat Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, whose treatises Renan believed contradicted the republic’s democratic principles.³⁶

This hierarchical vision extended to the language used in metropolitan and colonial schools. Parallel to the linguistic policies the French Revolution inspired in France, those of the early Third Republic privileged the French language as the language of instruction in metropolitan and colonial schools. As mentioned above, French was a foreign language to nearly

³² Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*, 97, 216. For more on Paul Broca and anthropology’s role in the empire, see, Alice L. Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850–1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 19–29.

³³ Conklin, *In the Museum of Man*, 5–6.

³⁴ Ernest Renan, *La réforme intellectuelle et morale*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1872), 92–94.

³⁵ Gilles Manceron, *Marianne et les colonies: Une introduction à l’histoire coloniale de la France* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2003), 132.

³⁶ Manceron, *Marianne et les colonies*, 135.

half the French population during this period. Thus, the educational aspect of the civilizing mission was not solely targeting colonial subjects, but future French citizens. These policies also participated in the justification of the colonial enterprise and theoretically helped to sustain France's domination.³⁷ These goals, couched in the terminology of the civilizing mission, appeared in an article in the *Bulletin de l'Enseignement des Indigènes de l'Académie d'Alger*, which stated:

Teaching our language is the best way to consolidate our influence, to bring the people whose territory we occupy closer to us, and to introduce them to our civilizing ideas. Yes, it is via the popularization of our language that we truly exercise a useful domination and that we will finally obtain a productive collaboration with the human beings whom we have the mission to elevate to our ideas and to our customs.³⁸

Socially, republicans believed that the learning of the French language would not only aid France's civilizing mission, but would facilitate colonial subjects' gradual integration into Western society. This integration via language would act as a means of personal development. The republican zeal surrounding the propagation of the French language carries with it two caveats. First, one must acknowledge that, at least until the end of World War II, schooling only had a bearing on a small portion of the Algerian population. Second, the teaching of French was not always deemed to be a vital requirement since some republicans believed that if French colonial officials learned Arabic, colonial domination would be maintained.³⁹

In some parts of the French empire, missionaries acted as instructors of indigenous students. At a time when republicans' anticlericalism proliferated in France, the use of local vernaculars in the empire expressed a real worry that missionaries, generally proselytizing in

³⁷ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 17, 55.

³⁸ *Bulletin de l'Enseignement des Indigènes de l'Académie d'Alger*, no. 81 (1900): 14, quoted in Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 58.

³⁹ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 58–60.

local languages, would convert colonized populations and turn them against French rule.⁴⁰ Both French officials and missionaries worried that colonial subjects' knowledge of a Western language would influence them to shun their perceived station in life as workers of the earth.⁴¹ Critics of missionaries castigated missionaries' failure to teach indigenous students the French language. Believing that language was the main component of the civilizing mission, critics went so far as to question missionaries' patriotism. Without having learned the language, critics argued that colonial subjects would never benefit from French philosophy, literature, or science because they could not speak French fluently.⁴²

Historiography

While most of the scholarship on colonial education prior to the 1960s justified the actions of the colonizing nations, decolonization and changes in educational sociology influenced scholars to shift their focus. Based on a renewed interest in the destiny of ethnic minorities and disadvantaged classes, American scholars began to analyze educational systems as an instrument of domination and as a means of control in the service of society's upper classes.⁴³ This trend in American scholarship encountered the European sociological trend of analyzing education as a means to conserve or to reproduce social order rather than as a liberative or emancipatory process.⁴⁴ Third World ideology, suggesting that Western colonial education caused destructive effects in colonized regions, helped to reinforce these interpretations.⁴⁵ The combination of these interpretations shifted the historiography of colonial

⁴⁰ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 32.

⁴¹ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 65.

⁴² Daughton, *An Empire Divided*, 95–96.

⁴³ Charles Webster, "Changing Perspectives in the History of Education," *Oxford Review of Education* 2, no. 3 (1976): 201–213.

⁴⁴ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 7.

⁴⁵ Pascal Bruckner, *Le sanglot de l'homme blanc. Tiers-Monde, culpabilité, haine de soi* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1983).

education to one comparing it to its metropolitan counterpart, suggesting that colonial relations would reproduce metropolitan social or educational relations more contentiously or more violently.⁴⁶

The forays into the historical analysis of colonial education in the French empire began during the 1970s and 1980s and, in some respects, foreshadowed later debates. Fanny Colonna examined indigenous teachers in Algeria, and Gail Paradise Kelly published articles on colonial schools in Indochina and French West Africa.⁴⁷ The 1990s witnessed an increase in the amount of scholarship devoted to education in the French empire. This scholarship began to investigate the discursive and linguistic elements of educational policies. Antoine Léon, noted scholar of education in metropolitan France,⁴⁸ expanded his own work into the French empire in 1991 by analyzing metropolitan educational debates at Colonial Congresses corresponding to the International Expositions of 1889, 1900, 1931, and 1937.⁴⁹ Anne Judge examined how linguistic policies became part of political ideologies in post-Revolutionary France, suggesting that French officials implemented these policies through educational and governmental institutions both in France and in the empire.⁵⁰ Craig Sirles expanded the historiography by investigating linguistic identity in Francophone Africa, suggesting that “Europeanized” North Africans found

⁴⁶ Papa Ibrahima Seck, “L’école coloniale française en Afrique. Le cas du Sénégal,” *Jonction*, no. 3 (1980): 6–19.

⁴⁷ Fanny Colonna, *Instituteurs algériens: 1883–1939* (Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1975); Gail Paradise Kelly, “Colonial Schools in Vietnam: Policy and Practice,” in *Education and Colonialism*, Philip Altbach and Gail Paradise Kelly, eds. (New York: Longman, 1978); Gail Paradise Kelly, “Educational Reform and Re-reform: Politics and the State in Colonial Vietnam,” in *Cultural Identity and Educational Policy*, Colin Brock and Witold Tulasiewicz, eds. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985); Gail Paradise Kelly, “Learning to Be Marginal: Schooling in Interwar French West Africa,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 21, no. 3–4 (1986): 171–184.

⁴⁸ Antoine Léon, *Histoire de l’éducation technique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961); Antoine Léon, *Histoire de l’enseignement en France* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967); Antoine Léon, *Histoire de l’éducation populaire en France* (Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1983); Antoine Léon, *L’histoire de l’éducation aujourd’hui* (Paris: Unesco, Delachaux, & Niestle, 1984).

⁴⁹ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 13. He confined his study to the metropole and Algeria due to archival limitations he encountered, but does not go into detail as to the actual limitations he experienced.

⁵⁰ Anne Judge, “French: A Planned Language?” in *French Today*, ed. Carol Sanders (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

themselves displaced and alienated due to their education.⁵¹ In 1999, Michel Pichot published an article examining the educational policies implemented in Guïard, Algeria. He argues that the mandatory inclusion of Muslims in education, which coincided with new policies to break tribal order, offered one way for the French to destroy traditional indigenous societies.⁵²

After the turn of the twenty-first century, a small number of scholars have started to highlight the importance of language within examinations of education. Anne Judge's essay explores the generally accepted notion among the French people that France has only one language and the implications of that concept on citizenship in metropolitan France. She argues that traditional linguistic policies were protectionist in nature, imbuing the French language with the power of the state over metropolitan France and the empire.⁵³ Alain Messaoudi examines the teaching of Arabic in Algeria and in France, seeking to counter the general perception of French hostility toward Arabic. He debunks this monolithic assumption, suggesting that the situation was more complex since officials actually acknowledged Arabic's importance among the indigenous population, but sought to avoid its link with nationalism.⁵⁴ The most recent publication on colonial education focuses on the teaching of the French language in the French empire.⁵⁵ This collection of essays concentrates on educational policies, on colonial educators, and on educational manuals. The publication of these essays demonstrates that a concentration on the linguistic nature of education is coming into its own as a subfield of educational history.

⁵¹ Craig Sirles, "The Self, the Other, and Linguistic Identity in Francophone Africa," *The European Legacy* 1, no. 2 (1996): 439.

⁵² Michel Pichot, "Educational Policies of the French Third Republic (1870–1939) in the Village of Guïard, Algeria: Hostility of the French Settlers and Cultural Resistance of the Indigenous Muslims," *Michigan Academician* 31 (1999): 509–517.

⁵³ Anne Judge, "France: 'One State, One Nation, One Language?'" in *Language and Nationalism in Europe*, eds. Stephen Barbour and Cathie Carmichael (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵⁴ Alain Messaoudi, "The Teaching of Arabic in French Algeria and Contemporary France," *French History* 20, no. 3 (2006): 297–317.

⁵⁵ Dalila Morsly, ed., *L'enseignement du français en colonies: Expériences inaugurales dans l'enseignement primaire* (Paris: Harmattan, 2010).

Michel Foucault's observations about how disciplines operate within a state's institutions have influenced historians to analyze experts and their writings who embodied power, as well as the institutional structures that produced and disseminated knowledge.⁵⁶ His insights have led scholars to place texts these experts wrote into their political and social contexts.

This thesis joins a field of historical and sociological inquiry into the discursive debates metropolitan and colonial officials and experts had regarding educational reform, as well as into the relationship between education and politics in France and in Algeria. For example, Elisa Camiscioli analyzes the political, demographic, scientific, juridical, and feminist discourses surrounding immigration in the early twentieth century.⁵⁷ Also, George R. Trumbull, IV analyzes ethnographical texts experts wrote to demonstrate how these texts created a body of knowledge, subsequently taken as factual, that illuminated the paradoxical and fluid nature of republicanism.⁵⁸ From a methodological perspective, this study continues the historiographical trend of analyzing texts that experts in particular fields wrote, placing them within their historical context. Education is one of the most essential aspects of any culture; without it, political leaders cannot be assured of a nation's continuance once they leave power. This was an ever-present fear for leaders of the early Third Republic, and it is there that this study begins.

⁵⁶ See Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) and *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* (1975; repr., Paris: Gallimard, 2014).

⁵⁷ Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

⁵⁸ Trumbull, *An Empire of Facts*.

CHAPTER ONE: METROPOLITAN PRIMARY EDUCATION, EDUCATIONAL REFORM, AND THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

In the 1904 book entitled *Éducation et instruction*, Octave Gréard remarked, “The teaching of the [French] language, lessons in history and geography, and moral lessons are the only ones in primary-level classes that open several large horizons in a child’s mind and prepares him to become a man and a citizen.”⁵⁹ This statement testifies to what republicans of the early Third Republic (1870–1914)⁶⁰ perceived to be the most important pedagogical lessons primary-level education in France could give future French male citizens after the passage and implementation of the Ferry Laws. The French language became a tool to civilize and to unify a linguistically diverse nation. In the aftermath of France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, republicans viewed history and geography lessons as ways to teach children about France’s glorious past and to regain it. A moral and civic education imbued children with republican values so that future citizens would ultimately maintain a republican government rather than revert to either a monarchical or an imperial regime prevalent in the post-Revolution period which squashed individual liberties.

In this chapter, I argue that metropolitan officials and educational experts envisaged a reformed metropolitan educational system—one that taught the French language, glorified France’s past as a way to reclaim an erstwhile status, and attempted to create a citizenry imbued with republican values—as a tool to restructure and to unite French society around republican civic and moral values. I also argue that the key element in this reformed educational system was

⁵⁹ Octave Gréard, *Éducation et instruction* (Paris: Hachette, 1904), 329.

⁶⁰ Historians of France’s Third Republic generally subdivide the republic’s seventy-year existence into an early period (1870–1914) and a late period (1918–1940) and normally concentrate on one or the other time period. The historiography of World War I falls into its own category. See Philip Nord, “The Third Republic,” in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, eds. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert, and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 54–55.

the use of the French language at the primary level of schooling to fuse a multifarious population and to instill republican tenets into French children. This chapter begins with a brief history of metropolitan education from the French Revolution to the Early Third Republic. Next, I examine education's relationship with the principal themes around which educational reforms occurred, specifically secularism, civics, morality, and citizenship. Finally, this chapter explores the significance of the French language to republicans and educational experts within this reformed educational system as a means to unite a linguistically-diverse nation, one in which illiteracy and local vernaculars posed challenges to reformers.

Metropolitan Education from the French Revolution to the Early Third Republic

Prior to the French Revolution, leaders of the Catholic Church believed local religious schools had taught a segment of the French population how to read and to write. These leaders also believed that the Revolution ruined the work done in these schools.⁶¹ During the Revolution, revolutionaries deemed education to be the means by which they could wrest control away from religious leaders and could forge national unity around the tenets of liberty, political equality, and fraternity, regardless of any class or material barriers that may have existed.⁶² The revolutionaries' goal was a complete overhaul of the Church-dominated educational system of the Old Regime into a state-operated and public one. Revolutionaries placed all primary level schools, public and private, under the control of laic authorities and created a secular educational

⁶¹ François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Lire et écrire: L'alphabétisation des français de Calvin à Jules Ferry* (Paris: Les Edition de Minuit, 1977), 1.

⁶² Françoise Mayeur, *Histoire de l'enseignement et de l'éducation en France*, 4 vols. (1981; reprint, Paris: Tempus Perrin, 2004), III:23.

structure via the formation of state-led lay schools.⁶³ Thus, some historians argue that the Church's ability to educate came to an end thanks to the Revolution.⁶⁴

Under Napoleon I's leadership, France's educational system at the primary level deteriorated. The absence of sufficient funding both for the schools and for teachers' salaries, the disappearance of religious teachers, and the lack of training for lay teachers contributed to this decline. Napoleon I depended upon local municipal budgets, private donations, and the Brothers of the Christian Schools, whose return to France was just beginning, to revive primary education. With the creation of the Imperial University in 1806, Napoleon I entrusted the state with control over all teachers and school throughout France, leading to the hierarchization of the administration, the administrative personnel, and the teachers. He believed that the University's ability to appoint clerical advisors in schools would result in religion being taught by moderate men.⁶⁵ Once the Bourbons regained power, Louis XVIII opted to keep the University as a centralizing force in an otherwise politically divided nation. During the Restoration monarchists afforded a greater role to the Church by designating archbishops, bishops, and priests as educational inspectors.⁶⁶ While schools in French villages possessed an informal organizational schema, both boys and girls in rural areas attended school notwithstanding the Catholic Church's opposition to coeducation.⁶⁷ In rural France both priests and laymen served as teachers, but their level of competence in the subject matter was dubious.⁶⁸ Teachers often lacked any official type of state certification, despite the 1816 and 1819 regulatory statutes requiring teachers to pass

⁶³ Sandra Horvath-Peterson, *Victor Duruy and French Education: Liberal Reform in the Second Empire* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 25.

⁶⁴ Furet and Ozouf, *Lire et écrire*, 1.

⁶⁵ Horvath-Peterson, *Victor Duruy and French Education*, 27–30.

⁶⁶ Horvath-Peterson, *Victor Duruy and French Education*, 30–31.

⁶⁷ Rebecca Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story: Madame Luce in Nineteenth-Century Algeria* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 30–31.

⁶⁸ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 306.

exams.⁶⁹ It was during this period that rural teachers modified the educational curriculum around what they believed to be important: an uncritical recitation of the catechism.⁷⁰ Students learned material by rote memorization without gaining any capacity to comprehend what they were learning. Language became a series of “formulas and spells.”⁷¹

Under the more liberal July Monarchy led by Louis Phillipe, primary education developed quickly. The Guizot Law of 1833, named after François Guizot, a conservative liberal and Minister of Education from 1832 to 1837, began to change the condition of education in France since the government now had a vested interest in the education of its citizenry. This interest stemmed from a shift in attitudes among the dominant classes who traditionally believed that education would divert the popular classes from agriculture and manual labor. By 1833, the dominant classes, whilst still apprehensive of educating the popular classes, felt that popular-class men could not be reliable, efficient, or loyal without being afforded a nominal education.⁷² The law required each commune or group of nearby communes to found and to sustain fiscally a primary school. The law also required every department to establish a normal school in which future teachers would be trained. Each school had to obtain an official certificate affirming that a certain level of standards would be taught. In addition, the leaders expanded the curriculum to cover not just reading, writing, and arithmetic, but history and geography as well.⁷³

In light of the social unrest which resulted from the establishment of the more conservative Second Republic in 1848 under Napoleon III and the bloody days of June, the French bourgeoisie believed that the Catholic Church should play an even larger role in

⁶⁹ Mayeur, *Histoire de l'enseignement*, III:299–419; Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story*, 33.

⁷⁰ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 304.

⁷¹ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 306–307. Quote on 306.

⁷² Horvath-Peterson, *Victor Duruy and French Education*, 35.

⁷³ Colin Heywood, *Growing Up in France: From the Ancien Régime to the Third Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 217.

education.⁷⁴ The Falloux Law of 1850 ushered in an era in which the French state and the Catholic Church essayed to attain a common goal of educating French children and to uncover an accommodation between secularism and religion.⁷⁵ The primary significance of the Falloux Law, however, was the formation of a rivalry between the University and the Catholic Church, which led some anticlerical politicians to fear the creation of “two youths” in France.⁷⁶ The law’s eighty-five articles created the foundation for reorganizing public instruction in France and emerged as a compromise allowing both secular and religious schools to coexist.⁷⁷ This coexistence at the primary level resulted in efforts to “moralize” the masses by teaching patience in fiscal matters, social deference, and an inculcation of respect for family, religion, and bourgeois values.⁷⁸ From 1850 to 1880, primary level enrollment increased approximately sixty-two percent. Religious education expanded greatly in rural departments and among girls.⁷⁹ The decentralized nature of religious schools allowed them to tailor their curriculum to suit the local community’s needs.⁸⁰ The Church’s success can be attributed to the strong Catholic culture in certain parts of France, which sustained the perspective that girls required a separate curriculum than did boys based on an ideological viewpoint relegating girls to the private, domestic sphere. The Church’s ability to attract more students to private schools stemmed from lower fees at religious schools, decreasing both parents’ and municipal councils’ financial burden vis-à-vis education.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Horvath-Peterson, *Victor Duruy and French Education*, 36.

⁷⁵ Patrick J. Harrigan, “Church, State, and Education in France from the Falloux to the Ferry Laws: A Reassessment,” *Canadian Journal of History* 36 (April 2001): 53.

⁷⁶ Horvath-Peterson, *Victor Duruy and French Education*, 40.

⁷⁷ Harrigan, “Church, State, and Education in France,” 55.

⁷⁸ Horvath-Peterson, *Victor Duruy and French Education*, 39.

⁷⁹ Harrigan, “Church, State, and Education in France,” 56.

⁸⁰ Harrigan, “Church, State, and Education in France,” 60.

⁸¹ Harrigan, “Church, State, and Education in France,” 57–58.

The Second Empire witnessed a shift in educational debates away from the role of the Catholic Church. By late 1860, the process of transferring or granting primary schools to religious orders had ceased, and Gustave Rouland, a moderate magistrate who favored lay education and Minister of Education from 1856 to 1863, encouraged local municipalities to regain direction over *collèges* that bishops had controlled.⁸² Vocational education and schools offering more practical “professional” training emerged as the hot button topics. In addition to reading and writing, educational leaders believed students, including girls, needed the skills permitting them to work.⁸³ Napoleon III’s goals did not include alienating the Catholic Church, but a reorientation of education to coincide with the new political realities of a more liberal empire after the 1863 election.⁸⁴ While still elitist and centralized and always a victim of politics, the French educational system slowly began to answer the need for skilled labor in an era of swift industrial, technological, and commercial transformation.

After almost a century of political volatility and in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, the leaders and social experts of Third Republic promoted a series of metropolitan educational, industrial, and economic reforms aimed at tackling the consequences of a post-Revolutionary industrialized society and governmental instability. Some of the most sweeping legislative transformations of the early Third Republic focused on primary level education in France and in Algeria. Intended to restructure French educational practices based on the political climate of the Second Empire, the Ferry Laws, named after Prime Minister Jules Ferry, had the most impact on society.⁸⁵ The Law of 1879 eliminated university status for

⁸² Horvath-Peterson, *Victor Duruy and French Education*, 45.

⁸³ Rogers, *A Frenchwoman’s Imperial Story*, 122; Rebecca Rogers, “Retrograde or Modern? Unveiling the Teaching Nun in Nineteenth-Century France,” *Social History* 23, no. 2 (May 1998): 146–164.

⁸⁴ Horvath-Peterson, *Victor Duruy and French Education*, 46–47.

⁸⁵ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 36; Harrigan, “Church, State, and Education in France,” 72.

religious institutions and reinstated full control over the *baccalauréat* to public universities. The following year, a decree excluded Jesuits from secondary schools, marking a turning point in metropolitan secondary education. While Ferry acknowledged the impossibility of enforcing legislation against every religious school, citing the state's fiscal inability to replace religious teachers with lay ones, he suggested it was possible to remove the most serious opposition to a secular educational system.⁸⁶ In 1881, all public primary schools in France became free.⁸⁷

Ferdinand Buisson, a Radical-Socialist deputy for a working-class Parisian district for seventeen years, a founding member of *La Ligue de la Paix*, and the longest serving Directorate of Primary Education from 1879 to 1896, argued that the idea to make French schools free of charge was not anticlerical in nature, but an application of the standards of the American "free school."⁸⁸ The next year witnessed the enactment of compulsory public or private schooling. In 1883, the French government required each village with more than twenty school-age children to maintain a public primary school. In 1885, the French government allotted subsidies to build and to maintain schools and to pay instructors. The following year a standard primary teaching program came into effect, coupled with increased supervision and inspections.⁸⁹ Furet and Ozouf argue that the primary reason that nineteenth-century republicans "struggled so obdurately" for reformed primary education and for free schooling was the republicans' resolve to preserve what they believed to be one of the fundamental legacies of the French Revolution: the "emancipation

⁸⁶ Harrigan, "Church, State, and Education in France," 72.

⁸⁷ Eugène Brouard, *Essai d'histoire critique de l'éducation primaire en France de 1789 jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Hachette, 1901), 233.

⁸⁸ Ferdinand Buisson, "L'Ecole et la nation en France," *L'Année pédagogique* (1913): 6. Buisson used "free school" in English in the French text.

⁸⁹ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 308–309. For a complete listing of the Ferry Laws, see Brouard, *Essai d'histoire critique de l'éducation primaire*, 290.

of the people through education.”⁹⁰ This emancipation eschewed confessional education’s emphasis on traditional hierarchies in favor of rationality and state-guided morality.

During the early Third Republic, the meaning of school shifted for the French citizenry.⁹¹ The term *éducation* was not solely comprised of pedagogical meaning. Emile Littré, famous lexicographer, dedicated republican, and follower of Auguste Comte, revived the pre-Revolutionary idea of education into the lexicon of the early Third Republic. Littré argued that “education pertains simultaneously to the heart and the mind, and comprises knowledge given to us and the moral guidance of our sentiments.”⁹² In light of the growing body of expert analyses on the laboring classes, education also included structural components, such as skill set acquisition and labor habits of vocational training.⁹³ In the case of girls’ education, official republican curricula delineated the principal tenets of republican motherhood, such as a dutiful and supportive wife and a self-sacrificing and counseling mother.⁹⁴ In 1886, Pierre Chesnelong, a Legitimist senator from the Basses-Pyrénées and lifelong champion of religious education, defined primary education thusly: “Primary education is two-sided. It must first form the child’s soul, then it must let in a series of beliefs, principles, and traditions, . . . transmitted from generation to generation, which are the [nation’s] founding principles, rules, and honor

⁹⁰ Furet and Ozouf, *Lire et écrire*, 1.

⁹¹ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 303.

⁹² Emile Littré, quoted in Yves Roumajon, *Enfants perdus, enfants punis: Histoire de la jeunesse délinquante en France* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 1989), 121.

⁹³ Sylvia Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger and the Problem of Government in Third Republic France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 157.

⁹⁴ Linda L. Clark, “Bringing Feminine Qualities into the Public Sphere: The Third Republic’s Appointment of Women Inspectors,” in *Gender and the Politics of Social Reform in France, 1870–1914*, eds. Elinor A. Accampo, Rachel G. Fuchs, and Mary Lynn Stewart (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 133.

simultaneously.”⁹⁵ *Éducation*, therefore, evolved into the concomitant formation of one’s morality and of one’s sociability.⁹⁶

In order to instill these lessons into French children, leaders of the Third Republic faced the additional challenge of finding a standard means through which these lessons could be disseminated. Influenced by the mid-nineteenth-century work of French lexicographers and grammarians, a standardized (and Parisian) French language emerged as the unifying method of instruction for metropolitan students and as a means to unify the manifold segments of French society.⁹⁷ Elisée Reclus, a renowned geographer and anarchist, argued that “language is the most solid tie that links people of diverse provinces to one another” and the manner in which a nation begins to take shape.⁹⁸ Using the data in an 1863 national survey on language which the French Ministry of Public Education conducted, historian Eugen Weber demonstrates that approximately twenty-five percent of France’s population spoke a language other than French. He acknowledges the inherent bias in the survey since the ministry may have wanted “to exaggerate success and to conceal failure.”⁹⁹ Nonetheless, Weber suggests that the data should be accepted, even if it was an underestimation of the state of the French language in the decade prior to the Franco-Prussian War. According to Weber’s statistical corrections, the leaders of the newly-formed Third Republic took charge of a nation in which roughly half the population did not speak French.¹⁰⁰ Even though accent and dialect had the potential to marginalize some segments of a nation’s populace, a national language has the capacity to yoke the present to the

⁹⁵ Pierre Chesnelong, quoted in Alfred Moulet, *L’Ecole primaire et l’éducation morale démocratique* (Paris: Hachette, 1915), 5.

⁹⁶ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 156.

⁹⁷ Mireille Huchon, *Histoire de la langue française* (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2002), 219.

⁹⁸ Elisée Reclus, “Epreuves données aux examens du brevet élémentaire,” *Bulletin officiel de l’enseignement public* no. 34 (1890): 461.

⁹⁹ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 67.

¹⁰⁰ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 70.

past and the personal to the collective.¹⁰¹ A common national language can also be viewed as a natural attribute linking the language's speakers and the territory in which they live. This boundary of state ties a nation's populace geographically.¹⁰²

The Need for Secular Education

As they attempted to establish a French republic based on revolutionary principles, almost all republicans agreed that the influence of the Catholic Church hindered republican efforts to create an educated, participatory citizenry. For that reason, a key component in educational reform was the transition to a fully secular public system. While the Jesuits were a palpable target for anticlerical legislation, republicans also focused on removing various orders of religious brothers and sisters who composed a considerable proportion of the teaching corps from public primary schools throughout France.¹⁰³ During the Enlightenment, philosophers, concerned about the Church's monopoly on morality, argued for the "absolute liberation of human conscience."¹⁰⁴ Republicans believed the Revolution started everything. Anything that existed prior to the Revolution had been "in the hands of the Church" and deemed "obscurantist."¹⁰⁵ Republican administrators yearned to preserve the revolutionary separation and believed the republic's survival completely depended on a secular educational system.¹⁰⁶ Ernest Lavissee, director of the *Ecole normale supérieure*, argued in 1907 that a secular educational

¹⁰¹ Joseph J. Errington, *Linguistics in a Colonial World: A Story of Language, Meaning, and Power* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 108.

¹⁰² Etienne Balibar, "The Nation Form: History and Ideology," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, by Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (New York: Verso, 1991), 96–100.

¹⁰³ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 36.

¹⁰⁴ Ernest Lavissee, *Discours à des enfants* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1907), 14; Phyllis Stock-Morton, *Moral Education for a Secular Society: The Development of Morale Laïque in Nineteenth Century France* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 9.

¹⁰⁵ Furet and Ozouf, *Lire et écrire*, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Harrigan, "Church, State, and Education in France," 74.

system “guards the neutrality among religions.”¹⁰⁷ This neutrality, according to Lavisse, respected the freedom of fathers and of children and was in the public’s best interest.¹⁰⁸ Embedded in the language of impartiality, Lavisse’s statement attempts to reinforce the reallocation of confessional control of a child’s education to paternal management of it.

For other republicans, the legislative banning of confessional teachers in public education symbolized something deeper than simple neutrality. Alfred Moulet, an Academy inspector, argued that the “French primary school, the ‘lay school,’ was conceived and organized to protect the French population from ecclesiastical tutelage, to wrest childhood away...from an abusive pressure that only permitted an education that was hostile to modern ideas and defiant of knowledge.” Since many republicans, including Moulet, believed that confessional education reinforced traditional hierarchies that hindered individual liberties, the French state enacted many legislative decrees to delimit and, eventually, to eliminate religious teachings in public schools. Moulet went on to argue that it was “in the name of individual and national progress” that Jules Ferry and his associates reformed an educational system which “knew how to give a ‘liberal education’ to a nation that desired it so ardently.”¹⁰⁹ Since confessional education reinforced the position of the Church as the moral authority, for some republicans this separation needed to be absolute to facilitate the state’s ability of instilling republican values into future citizens.

For republicans, the Church emerged as an “agent of monarchism and social hierarchy” at a time when efforts to raise educational standards, to imbue French children with a sense of

¹⁰⁷ The *Ecole normale supérieure* was a creation of the French Revolution, founded to furnish the republic with professors trained in the secular values and critical spirit of the Enlightenment. See, Robert J. Smith, *The Ecole normale supérieure and the Third Republic* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1981).

¹⁰⁸ Lavisse, *Discours à des enfants*, 16.

¹⁰⁹ Moulet, *L’Ecole primaire et l’éducation morale démocratique*, 7.

patriotism, and to lessen the Church's role developed concomitantly.¹¹⁰ Historian Patrick Harrigan suggests that it was the combination of achieving universal primary education, the ensuing competition for future leaders between the religious and secular secondary schools, and the electoral successes of republicans during the mid-1870s that "set the stage" for the laicization of the French educational system.¹¹¹ Even as late as 1909, four years after the official separation of church and state, the Catholic Church attempted to derail state educational efforts by scheduling the catechism at the same time as French history lessons or as civic and moral lessons in secular schools.¹¹² In their efforts to establish a secular polity based on revolutionary tenets, republicans attempted to wrest control of the family away from conservative and religious institutions, venerating the family as the fundamental social and educational unit of a salubrious, republican polity.¹¹³ Civil law became the primary means to establish governmental authority and to restructure the nation's moral life independent of religious doctrine.¹¹⁴ Republicans perceived the legal regulation of morality as a vital contribution to the regime's stability.¹¹⁵ Law helped the state to challenge the Church's status as the source of normative and sanctioned morality. Legal rationality, which purported to express the relationship between the universal and the particular, countered religious superstition and liberated society from pre-Revolutionary

¹¹⁰ Harrigan, "Church, State, and Education in France," 75.

¹¹¹ Harrigan, "Church, State, and Education in France," 74.

¹¹² A.-H. Canu, "La Défense laïque et l'Enseignement," *Bulletin du Parti Républicain Radical et Radical-socialiste* no. 208 (6 November 1909): 1.

¹¹³ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 9.

¹¹⁴ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 10. The French state passed legislation to disencumber society from religious influences, including the secularization of cemeteries and hospitals, the reinstatement of divorce, and the legalization of work on Sunday. See, Jean-Marie Mayeur, *Les débuts de la IIIe République, 1871–1898* (Paris: Seuil, 1973), 111–119.

¹¹⁵ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 11. See also, Claudia Scheck Kselman, "The Modernization of Family Law: The Politics and Ideology of Family Reform in Third Republic France," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1980); Esther Sue Kanipe, "The Family, Private Property, and the State in France, 1870–1914," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1976).

hierarchies.¹¹⁶ In the place of religious education, the state implemented a pedagogy respecting religions and their ministries in public schools, but the educational curriculum remained republican at its core. In place of a moral and confessional education, republicans substituted a moral and secular education.¹¹⁷

To continue French society's progress toward the realization of the revolutionary tenet of equality, Ferdinand Buisson sought to abolish the inherent class distinctions between lay and confessional education systems by establishing true parity of opportunity in education.¹¹⁸ Philip Nord characterizes Buisson's pedagogical activities as "diluted Protestantism."¹¹⁹ Buisson convinced the Radical Party to accept his ideas for educational reforms as part of the party's official platform.¹²⁰ He aimed to remodel the metropolitan educational system without its class stratifications through a common primary level education for all, followed by compulsory secondary education through age fourteen. This was to be followed by a third phase, also compulsory, which included either future study or an apprenticeship. Contrary to their European counterparts, French children were not obligated to attend school past the primary level.¹²¹ Buisson's proposals, on which the Radical Party Congress voted without discussion, never materialized. While both the Radicals and the Socialists believed that the education system needed to be reformed, the most pressing difficulty was not how to execute reform, but was the ever-present debate between secular and religious education.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 11.

¹¹⁷ Moulet, *L'Ecole primaire et l'éducation morale démocratique*, 7.

¹¹⁸ Armand Charpentier, *Le parti radical et radical-socialiste à travers ses congrès (1901–1911)* (Paris: M. Giard et E. Brière, 1913), 49–50.

¹¹⁹ Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 92.

¹²⁰ Charpentier, *Le parti radical et radical-socialiste*, 45.

¹²¹ Charpentier, *Le parti radical et radical-socialiste*, 52.

¹²² D. R. Watson, "The Politics of Educational Reform in France during the Third Republic, 1900–1940," *Past and Present*, no. 34 (July 1966): 87–88.

A Civic and Moral Education

In the aftermath of France's defeat to the Prussians and the subsequent outbreak of the Paris Commune, the first two decades of the Third Republic witnessed a regime struggling to establish the groundwork for and legitimacy of moral order.¹²³ During the Third Republic, the primary focus of civic integration was education, sanctifying the republican ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity.¹²⁴ Republicans viewed civic and moral order to be the solution to the myriad of national adversities through which the nation had suffered. These misfortunes included a deficient military, alcoholism, political radicalism, and the demographic actualization of a terrifyingly low birthrate.¹²⁵ In an era of rapid industrialization and modernization, increased migration and immigration, educational reform, and religious animosity, republican officials used state institutions, especially education, to construct a unified, stable, and secular "imperial nation-state."¹²⁶ Republican leaders assumed that the new republic had yet to fulfill the revolutionary promises of national unity and equality. Authorities perceived the French citizenry,

¹²³ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 8. For more on the Franco-Prussian War, see Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870–1871* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870–1871* (New York: Routledge, 2001). For more on the Paris Commune, see John Merriman, *Massacre: The Life and Death of the Paris Commune* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Donny Gluckstein, *The Paris Commune: A Revolution in Democracy* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011); David Shafer, *The Paris Commune: French Politics, Culture, and Society at the Crossroads of the Revolutionary Tradition and Revolutionary Socialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Gay Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Roger V. Gould, *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Alistair Horne, *The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune 1870–71* (1965; reprint New York: Penguin Books, 2007).

¹²⁴ Cécile Laborde, "Citizenship," in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, eds. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert, and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 139.

¹²⁵ Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race*, 22; Joshua Cole, *The Power of Large Numbers: Population, Politics, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 201–202; Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 8; Elinor A. Accampo, Rachel G. Fuchs, and Mary Lynn Stewart, eds., *Gender and the Politics of Social Reform in France, 1870–1914*; Robert A. Nye, *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

¹²⁶ Gary Wilder's nomenclative restructuring shifts the emphasis from the paradox between "republican universalism and colonial or racist practices to the antinomy between universality and particularity." See Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 3.

especially rural dwellers, to be illiterate, uncivilized, passive, and potentially dangerous due to their geographical isolation and to their general ignorance of political life. This ignorance, according to French leaders, rendered the French population inadequately prepared to participate in political life efficaciously. Elite politics were the norm prior to the Third Republic, and French authorities perceived mass participation as having the potential to be disruptive or violent. Through the establishment of representative institutions and universal male suffrage, republican elites viewed mass political participation as a means to insure an orderly, secure, and stable republic. The Urban dwellers were not immune to republican leaders' disparaging opinions since memories of the Paris Commune conjured up images of restive workers.¹²⁷

Armed with this disparaging perspective of the national population, republican authorities set out to unify the French populace by enacting educational reform as a central tool of the metropolitan civilizing mission. As anticlerical freethinkers won elections and essayed to modify the cultural discourse, republican leaders established what historian Philip Nord characterizes as an "unbending faith in a civilizing pedagogy."¹²⁸ One primary school director, M. Gasquet, argued that "the state places moral teachings in the forefront of those taught in primary schools. Without abdicating its essential mission, [the state] could not abandon the formative ideas that ought to mold the future citizen in both public and private life."¹²⁹ French teachers would have the task of inculcating students with republican values whilst governmental officials continued their efforts to decouple society from various links they deemed to foster dependency, such as the clergy and wealthy landowners.¹³⁰ Based on the tradition of thinkers during the eighteenth

¹²⁷ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 5–6, 56–57.

¹²⁸ Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 246.

¹²⁹ M. Gasquet, "La morale à l'école laïque," *Annuaire de l'enseignement primaire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1904), 411.

¹³⁰ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 49, 55–56.

century and the “grand republicans” of the Second Republic, the reformers of primary education entrusted the public instructor with an “educational mission.”¹³¹ To reinforce the dual connotation of *éducation*, Senator Chesnelong argued in 1886 that the teacher had a twofold task. The educational task (*tâche d'éducation*) was to form a child into a moral person. The instructional task (*tâche d'instruction*) was to introduce a child to the first elements of human knowledge.¹³² This new educational system also helped governmental authorities to define and to disseminate the perceived appropriate republican attitudes regarding one of the most pressing issues of this time period: the social question.¹³³ The social question constituted not only the visible changes that industrialization caused within French society, but the invisible effects of those changes on the family, the local community, gender relations, and France’s long-established concentration on rural culture.¹³⁴

Another educational expert, Alfred Moulet, argued that a moral education gives man “the habits of thinking and of action” and “the principles to guide his morals.” The opponents of state-sponsored education who believed primary education should consist solely of reading, writing, and arithmetic felt that moral education should be left to the family, the Church, and the priest.¹³⁵ Moulet argued, however, that these three academic subjects “reorganize a culture...and consciously modifies a child’s mentality. This culture puts the child in a position to think better.”¹³⁶ Moulet’s argument demonstrates one aspect of the domestic civilizing mission via education: the transformation of a populace’s way of thinking from one that adhered closely to

¹³¹ Moulet, *L'Ecole primaire et l'éducation morale démocratique*, 4.

¹³² Senator Chesnelong, quoted in Moulet, *L'Ecole primaire et l'éducation morale démocratique*, 5.

¹³³ Janet R. Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France: The Musée social and the Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 49.

¹³⁴ Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France*, 22.

¹³⁵ Moulet, *L'Ecole primaire et l'éducation morale démocratique*, 1.

¹³⁶ Moulet, *L'Ecole primaire et l'éducation morale démocratique*, 2–3.

confessional dogma to one that showed signs of progress and modernity based on republican values. “A republican nation cannot be uninterested in the question of knowing how, in a public school, a child learns to read, to write, and to count.”¹³⁷ Moulet believed that the state had a vested interest in the education of the nation’s citizens since it would be these citizens who would cast future votes.

The educational reforms did not simply include mandatory, universal primary education. Using the republican notions of solidarity and fraternity, metropolitan educational leaders modified the curriculum, viewing it as a means to turn “peasants into Frenchmen” and to govern the citizenry civically and morally.¹³⁸ Republicans imbued questions about citizenship with a new focus on morality. With the moral pulse of the nation at stake, public and private educational situations attracted political interest.¹³⁹ According to Moulet, “The French primary school is an enterprise in moral and civil training.”¹⁴⁰ Educational officials deemed children to be “essentially imitative” in nature, which meant that teachers possessed a “very grave responsibility” to comport themselves accordingly lest the students mimic the teachers’ undesirable habits.¹⁴¹ Included in these moral lessons were activities to teach students order, cleanliness, accuracy, politeness, reflection, and work, all attributes republicans believed future French citizens should possess.¹⁴² These civic and moral lessons aimed to teach children how to be thrifty, autonomous individuals. Authorities believed that if French students learned how to exercise self-control and to govern themselves according to these civic and moral lessons, the

¹³⁷ Moulet, *L'Ecole primaire et l'éducation morale démocratique*, 3.

¹³⁸ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*; Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France*, 50.

¹³⁹ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 158.

¹⁴⁰ Moulet, *L'Ecole primaire et l'éducation morale démocratique*, 4.

¹⁴¹ Émile Poirson, *L'Ecole primaire* (Épinal, France: Imprimerie Homeyer et Ehret, 1903), 43–44.

¹⁴² Félix Pécaut, *L'Éducation publique et la vie nationale*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Hachette, 1904), 156–162.

temptation to revert back to authoritarian regimes later in life would disappear and the continuation of the republic would be assured.¹⁴³

Following the 1879 electoral defeat of the conservative monarchists, the advent of a more liberal administration devoted to France's revolutionary traditions siphoned its anxieties about moral degeneration toward the family.¹⁴⁴ By the early 1880s, metropolitan French officials and educational experts recognized the protection of children to be a state concern, especially those children between twelve and sixteen years of age who lacked republican mores and could be easily placed in apprenticeships. First established in 1811, the *Service des enfants assistés* assisted poor and abandoned children, and, in 1823, the organization limited its work to children under twelve years old. Republicans who sought to expand the Service's role to older children believed that a child's age denoted the degree to which insalubrious experiences had corrupted a child morally, as well as the level of possible reform via education. Age not only signified a child's affiliation with law and labor, but also the child's morality, character, and intellect.¹⁴⁵ Since nineteenth-century logic of reform promoted a linear trajectory of time and experience,¹⁴⁶ republicans thought that children needed to reform their detrimental habits before said habits could become permanent characteristics and before the children were too old to be educable.¹⁴⁷ This vision of reform in the early Third Republic was exceedingly gendered. Republicans deemed male children to be of the greatest interest to the nation, especially as workers, soldiers,

¹⁴³ Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France*, 50.

¹⁴⁴ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 9.

¹⁴⁵ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 143, 148–149.

¹⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 160–161.

¹⁴⁷ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 150.

and enfranchised citizens, since future male generations would assume economic, social, and political roles.¹⁴⁸

Not only did children garner the state's attention, but republicans focused on the parents of future citizens too.¹⁴⁹ Ferry and his supporters saw the family as the "building block of French society," as did their political opponents.¹⁵⁰ Since the mother helped to educate children before they entered school, childhood represented an opportunity to reproduce a moral population.¹⁵¹ Some republicans believed that the "ideal woman" served French society and the state via the moral authority she possessed in the family. As a source of inspiration for her husband and as an indoctrinator of her children, mothers created and passed on social values.¹⁵² Camille Sée, a member of the Chamber of Deputies and supporter of girls' education, suggested that "women determine mores, and it is mores even more than laws that make a people."¹⁵³ Historian Sanford Elwitt argues that the republican educational reforms supported a social policy intended to protect the bourgeois class and to sustain social order, which included the maintenance of women in the private sphere.¹⁵⁴ While republicans deemed women ill-suited for society's public sphere, both politically and laboringly, republicans argued that women's role within the family was fatefully vital for civilization.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁸ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 153; Colin Heywood, *Childhood in Nineteenth-Century France: Work, Health, and Education among the classes populaires* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 112–124, 147–156.

¹⁴⁹ Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 158.

¹⁵⁰ Jo Burr Margadant, *Madame le Professeur: Women Educators in the Third Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 28.

¹⁵¹ Heywood, *Growing Up in France*, 132–136.

¹⁵² Clark, "Bringing Feminine Qualities into the Public Sphere," 133; Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 158.

¹⁵³ Camille Sée, ed., *Lycées et collèges de jeunes filles. Documents, rapports et discours à la Chambre des députés et au Sénat* (Paris: Cerf, 1884), 60.

¹⁵⁴ Sanford Elwitt, *The Making of the Third Republic: Class and Politics in France, 1868–1884* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1975), 170–229.

¹⁵⁵ Margadant, *Madame le Professeur*, 31.

Republicans also paid attention to the father's role in French society.¹⁵⁶ Coupled with private property ownership, paternal authority captured the interest of many republican reformers. Leaders and social experts, including Frédéric Le Play, viewed urban migration as a destabilizing aspect of modernity and championed property ownership as the underpinnings of paternal authority.¹⁵⁷ Land dispossession, they believed, would undermine a father's authority, resulting in the collapse of the family and, eventually, to the breakdown of society in general.¹⁵⁸ Prior to the Ferry Laws requiring children to attend school, the education of children fell to the father. The Civil Code obligated the father to tend to his progeny's education, which was chiefly the education of his male offspring, but did not require him to send his children to school. He could carry out the education himself, entrust it to someone he deemed fit, or send the children to school; it was completely his choice. The Code's only requirement was that the father could not condemn his child to ignorance.¹⁵⁹ The Ferry Laws wrested control of children's primary level education away from the family and into the hands of the state. This change rendered the state a child's surrogate parent who would instill republican values into French children. The state, which characterized many citizens as passive, uncivilized, and dependent,¹⁶⁰ perceived this modification as a means to protect minors from potential ignorance if the father did not see to a child's education and from confessional doctrine that went against republican tenets, not as a decrease in a citizen's liberty or rights. This shift was one component of a metropolitan civilizing

¹⁵⁶ Rachel G. Fuchs, *Contested Paternity: Constructing Families in Modern France* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

¹⁵⁷ Frédéric Le Play, *On Family, Work, and Social Change*, ed. and trans. Catherine Bodard Silver (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger*, 37–38.

¹⁵⁸ Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France*, 21.

¹⁵⁹ Jules Simon, *L'Ecole* (Paris: Hachette, 1894), 251.

¹⁶⁰ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 49.

mission meant to ensure the continuation of the republic via mass electoral participation and to avoid a regression into monarchy.¹⁶¹

Education and Citizenship

Republicanism of the early Third Republic involved a dual mission. On the one hand, in order to allow for the transformation from elitist politics to mass participation, republicans set out to create a series of institutions which would furnish French citizens the means to participate politically. On the other hand, this mission also required the state to transform its populace into politically-active citizens so that they could participate in these newly-created institutions.¹⁶² Based on the concepts of individual autonomy and the preeminence of the nation-state, republicans viewed citizenship in conjunction with equality and universality. In becoming a citizen, the state acknowledges the individual as a rational, autonomous individual who is able to divorce himself from “social, religious, and cultural determinisms.”¹⁶³ The citizen’s connection to the state encompasses both allegiance in the form of duties and emancipation in the form of liberty.¹⁶⁴ As an active citizen, the individual benefits from social and civil rights belonging to a participatory democracy, principally the right to vote. Third Republicans established a legislative parity between citizenship and nationality, the latter functioning as both a geographical boundary and common culture.¹⁶⁵ Because French citizens would be responsible for the republic’s political future, republican leaders perceived the educational system as a means to erase illiteracy throughout France and as an institution that would convert ignorant and passive people into

¹⁶¹ Simon, *L’Ecole*, 267.

¹⁶² Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 9.

¹⁶³ Cécile Laborde, “Citizenship,” 137. For more on the history of citizenship, see Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le sacre du citoyen: Histoire du suffrage universel en France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992).

¹⁶⁴ Laborde, “Citizenship,” 136.

¹⁶⁵ Laborde, “Citizenship,” 138. For more on French nationality, see Patrick Weil, *How to Be French: Nationality in the Making since 1789*, trans. Catherine Potter (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

educated and active political participants through its curriculum.¹⁶⁶ Education gave French citizens access to these universal values and to modernity, as well as an orientation toward suppression of identities other than citizenship, including confessional affiliations.¹⁶⁷

A truly republican education, according to Alexandre Vessiot, an inspector for the Academy and member of the Superior Council on Public Instruction, must, before anything else, “inspire in children the respect due to humanity since the republican doctrine, after all, is only an affirmation and a demand for personal dignity.”¹⁶⁸ Since every French child would now have to pass through the republic’s reformed educational system, republican leaders viewed this method as having the most potential to reshape society by instilling republican values based on the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and by turning the French people into politically-active citizens. Officials considered the notion of citizenship to be one of the legacies of the French Revolution and of primary concern to a republican regime.¹⁶⁹ For Vessiot, since the republican regime was nothing but the rule of law, the formation of “good citizens” in schools needed to include training children to respect the law. Without this respect for law, one could not call oneself republican.¹⁷⁰

Inherent in this transformation, however, was a fundamental element of exclusion, particularly of women, whom leaders believed needed to be converted prior to participating in the republic’s future.¹⁷¹ Girls’ education in France during the first half of the nineteenth century was limited, to say the least. In urban areas, girls’ schools were either privately run by nuns or

¹⁶⁶ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 57.

¹⁶⁷ Laborde, “Citizenship,” 139.

¹⁶⁸ Alexandre Vessiot, *De l’éducation à l’école primaire, professionnelle, supérieure et normale* (Paris: A Ract, 1885), 310–311.

¹⁶⁹ Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France*, 49; Weil, *How to Be French*, 11–19.

¹⁷⁰ Vessiot, *De l’éducation à l’école primaire*, 311.

¹⁷¹ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 57. This exclusion also extended to Catholics, non-French Europeans, and immigrants.

were laic boarding schools, but both types concentrated on a religious and moral curriculum. The schools that did exist in rural areas regularly welcomed both sexes and were structurally informal.¹⁷² Most parents only sent their daughters to school for one to two years, enough education to prepare them for their first communion.¹⁷³ During the 1840s lay schoolmistresses established boarding schools in urban areas to educate middle class girls whose families could afford the tuition fees.¹⁷⁴ Between the passage of the 1850 Falloux Law and the Franco-Prussian War, opportunities for girls' education expanded, with many schools being religious in orientation. These schools inculcated girls with ideas of "feminine obedience and docility, not independent thinking and the virtues of autonomy." The 1860s witnessed the emergence of a debate about vocational training for girls, which would provide them with needed skills to work.¹⁷⁵ For republicans, however, the citizen was male, not female. Republican leaders perceived women as passive nationals who often supported religious, rather than state, authorities. The female tendency to support confessional institutions harkened back to traditional hierarchies and failed to demonstrate the desired conversion from religious influence to rational thought.¹⁷⁶

Girls' education during the Third Republic encountered a contradiction: girls needed to be educated like their male counterparts, but that education excluded girls' rights as individuals and concentrated on making them skilled mothers and wives. Ferry and his compatriots vowed to sustain French societal gender roles.¹⁷⁷ Octave Gréard, who was vice-rector for Paris and an inspector, highlighted this exclusion in a report to the Parisian Academic Council. "Let us

¹⁷² Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story*, 29–31.

¹⁷³ Heywood, *Growing Up in France*, 218.

¹⁷⁴ Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story*, 56.

¹⁷⁵ Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story*, 122.

¹⁷⁶ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 42–43.

¹⁷⁷ Margadant, *Madame le Professeur*, 28.

beware of seeming to want to change women into men. We have passed the time when people wondered if women had a soul or if it differed from the soul of men. What is undeniable, however, is that neither their destinations nor their natures are the same.”¹⁷⁸ Reformers insisted on the connection between social order and biology, desiring to underpin the barriers between the sexes rather than disintegrate them. Almost universally republicans believed the social destinies of men and women to be divergent; men were destined for the public sphere because they had the right to vote, whereas women were nurturers and dominated the private sphere. The gendered division of social tasks was, to these reformers, a “rational expression of natural differences in human talents.”¹⁷⁹ Henri Marion, a professor at the Faculté des Lettres de Paris at the Sorbonne, even went further in his discussion on gender roles. “The more advanced a society’s civilization, the more pronounced the division of labor between men and women becomes.”¹⁸⁰ He suggested that a widening of the gap between men and women was an indication of humanity’s progressive rationality. These officials and experts, however, did not entertain the option to make women politically-active citizens. This role was strictly reserved for men.

Revolutionaries understood that a system in which universal suffrage existed was a bold, difficult, and uncertain adventure even if the state provided the means to educate future citizens.¹⁸¹ According to Félix Pécaut, a former general inspector of public schools, officials and theoreticians during the liberal monarchy of 1830 thought those with the right to vote must work to guarantee the state’s interests, while the republican regimes of 1848 and 1870 deemed the risk

¹⁷⁸ Octave Gréard, *L’Enseignement secondaire des filles: mémoire présenté au Conseil académique de Paris dans la séance du 27 juin 1882* (Paris: Delagrave, 1882), 110.

¹⁷⁹ Margadant, *Madame le Professeur*, 29.

¹⁸⁰ Henri Marion, *La psychologie des femmes, cours professé pendant plusieurs années à la Sorbonne* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1900), 28.

¹⁸¹ Pécaut, *L’Education publique et la vie nationale*, 126.

worth taking to link the citizenry's intelligence to an education that touted democratic institutions. Under a free and popular government, he believed it was the teachers' responsibility to instill the correct political conduct into new generations. Education was meant to teach students "to think and to speak correctly" by "arming them with a basic knowledge in good taste." Schools must also teach children lessons in history, geography, and the "grand place [France] occupied" and "occupies again in the world."¹⁸² Via these lessons "one has reason to hope that the child...will be better prepared to seek advice from the general interest." An effective political education can only be achieved through lessons in literature, history, geography, philosophy, and science.¹⁸³ A citizenry in which these lessons have not been imbued is "fatally devoted to servitude." Political education depends "almost exclusively on the public mind, on tradition, and on morals; that's to say on the manner of thinking, of feeling, and of acting."¹⁸⁴

Language, Regeneration, and Education

While seeming to be a more "abstract" concept, Etienne Balibar argues that a community possessing a shared language is, in reality, more "concrete" since that language connects people with a shared origin. He argues that the existence of a national language presupposes both a "common code" and a "common norm," and the task of universal schooling is to inculcate a national populace with this norm by means of the national language.¹⁸⁵ For republicans of the Third Republic, the enacted reforms alone were not enough to assure the continuance of a republican regime. Education required a national and uniform method of instruction, and republicans insisted that the French language be the unifying factor. The French Revolution, the

¹⁸² Pécaut, *L'Education publique et la vie nationale*, 126–127.

¹⁸³ Pécaut, *L'Education publique et la vie nationale*, 128–129.

¹⁸⁴ Pécaut, *L'Education publique et la vie nationale*, 132–133.

¹⁸⁵ Balibar, "The Nation Form: History and Ideology," 97.

common origin for a secular France, transformed the French language into a symbol for a nation embracing equality and human rights.¹⁸⁶ Thus, republican reformers wished to use the French language as a means to construct a shared identity centered on republican values and to civilize a populace in which approximately half did not speak French.

During the eighteenth century, the French language was not solely the communicative standard for international diplomacy, but it was concurrently the language of the arts, of the republic of letters, and of civilization.¹⁸⁷ French uprooted Latin as the *lingua franca* and emerged as the language of science, education, and philosophy.¹⁸⁸ The nineteenth century witnessed the language's standardization with the publication of manifold linguistic manuals and dictionaries.¹⁸⁹ After its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, however, France's place on the world stage diminished.¹⁹⁰ Thus, the newly-reformed educational system focused on the recuperation of France's cultural superiority vis-à-vis the rest of the world by means history and geography lessons and emphasized the French language as a standardizing medium by which teachers accomplished this task.

Many republicans believed that the Franco-Prussian War stripped France of its perceived erstwhile status as a culturally superior nation. One way to regain that position, according to George Duruy, a professor of history and literature at the Polytechnic School in Paris, was to teach elementary students about "war stories." These historical tales would facilitate the task of imbuing students with a basic notion of the "grand and noble" role France previously played.

¹⁸⁶ Anne Judge, "French as a Tool for Colonialism: Aims and Consequences," University of California Berkeley: Institute of European Studies, March 18, 2005, accessed June 18, 2014, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6t22342r>, 3.

¹⁸⁷ Marc Fumaroli, *Quand l'Europe parlait français* (Paris: Le Fallois, 2001).

¹⁸⁸ M. L. Herbet, letter read by M. Adrien Artaud during the Procès-verbaux des Séances on 11 September 1906, *Congrès de l'Alliance française et des Sociétés de Géographie* (Marseille: Secrétariat de la Société de Géographie et du Comité de l'Alliance française, 1906), 57. See also, Huchon, *Histoire de la langue française*, 205.

¹⁸⁹ Huchon, *Histoire de la langue française*, 219.

¹⁹⁰ Jean-Benoît Nadeau and Julie Barlow, *The Story of French* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 119. See also Marc Fumaroli, *Quand l'Europe parlait français* (Paris: Éditions du Fallois, 2001).

Duruy argued that the 1870 war had left both an “incurable suffering” in French hearts and a “spirit of reparation as vivacious as our pain.”¹⁹¹ Ferdinand Buisson also argued that the Franco-Prussian War damaged France’s global prestige.¹⁹² In light of France’s defeat in 1870, Buisson believed that national reform had to occur by way of education.¹⁹³ He credited French democracy with inscribing education into the national budget, arguing that as far as public instruction is concerned, it is the national conscience that makes education a “national duty.”¹⁹⁴ Buisson also asserted that the teaching of the French language was the “principal work of the elementary school...a labor of patriotic character.”¹⁹⁵ Patriotic education, according to Buisson, “is one of the necessary steps in the progression of man and of humanity.” This progress, he believed, would eventually restore France to its former glory.¹⁹⁶

The importance of the French language, coupled with the concepts of civilizational superiority and modernity, arise frequently in Buisson’s writings. The French language, to Buisson, was a “treasure” in which the “products of [French] civilization” accumulate and are conserved.¹⁹⁷ While knowledge of spoken French allowed children to carry out daily tasks and interactions, knowledge of French literature afforded children “access to a superior world.”¹⁹⁸ This emphasis on literature harkened back to when French writers dominated the literary world, and people all over Europe read these writers’ works. Like most republicans who witnessed

¹⁹¹ George Duruy, *Ecole et patrie* (Paris: Hachette, 1908), 14.

¹⁹² Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 81, 107.

¹⁹³ Buisson, “L’Ecole et la nation en France,” 3.

¹⁹⁴ Buisson, “L’Ecole et la nation en France,” 4.

¹⁹⁵ Ferdinand Buisson, *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d’instruction primaire*, 2 vols. (Paris: Hachette, 1888), 2.1:1499. Hachette published the various volumes of this work from 1882 to 1893. Originally published in two parts and five volumes, the French National Library has digitized this work in two parts and two volumes. My citations come from the digitized version, noting the volume, then the part, then the page number. See, <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb30175079g>.

¹⁹⁶ Ferdinand Buisson, *L’Instruction et l’éducation internationale* (Paris: La Grande Revue, 1905), 13.

¹⁹⁷ Buisson, *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d’instruction primaire*, 2.1:1499.

¹⁹⁸ Buisson, *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d’instruction primaire*, 2.1:1499.

France's downfall at the hands of the Prussians, Buisson yearned to see France retake its erstwhile place as a superior nation. He believed the French language to be the tool with which France's future citizens—the children of the early Third Republic—would reclaim that standing. Buisson quoted his colleague M. Villemain, who argued that the French language was the “principal idiom of civilization that unites the modern world.”¹⁹⁹

Republican reformers encountered several obstacles in their quest to civilize metropolitan citizens via the French language. Many adults who grew up during the July Monarchy and Second Empire did not speak French at home, and their children did not learn French as their mother tongue. As a result, the French education system faced a dire dilemma in the early years after the Ferry reforms: how to teach French to children who had never heard it.²⁰⁰ Another of the largest hindrances administrators faced was illiteracy in French among those who did speak it. Some children left school before learning how to read or to write. One estimate put the number of illiterate children in France aged seven to thirteen at half a million.²⁰¹ One former instructor and inspector of primary education, Émile Poirson, complained about the lack of French language knowledge among rural students. “Our young students arrive to class not always knowing how to speak French. In the countryside, *patois* is the language of the family and is the dialect in which [students] speak, whether it be with their loved ones or with their compatriots.”²⁰² The fact that schools used local dialects helps to account for the low number of graduates who could read and write French, for priests' insistence on teaching and preaching in

¹⁹⁹ Quoted in Buisson, *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire*, 2.1:1499.

²⁰⁰ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 310.

²⁰¹ Simon, *L'Ecole*, 223. Simon explicitly admitted that this estimate was quite low since it did not account for students' attendance or for those students in apprenticeships, the latter being required by law to be inscribed in a school. Another publication, *L'Alliance française illustrée*, also published the same estimate in its January 1894 edition. See, L. Leroy, “Appel aux maîtres et aux écoliers français,” *L'Alliance française illustrée* (15 January 1894): 2.

²⁰² Poirson, *L'Ecole primaire*, 96.

the local vernacular, and for the sustained high level of illiteracy in France up to the turn of the twentieth century. Publicly, most French officials ignored the problem by rejecting its existence.²⁰³ Another obstacle to educational reform was the lack of perceived utility of the knowledge gained amongst the rural population. Not only were rural parents too poor to afford tuition, the need for child labor on farms outweighed any classroom knowledge gained from attending daily classes.²⁰⁴ Eugen Weber argues that school curriculum had little relation to the everyday needs and lives of rural French citizens. The metric system and monetary lessons did not correspond to the units of measure used, and teachers used dry grammatical rules to teach the French language which was useless since the town crier spoke the local dialect.²⁰⁵ The lack of practical applications led many French parents to question the government's initiatives, and absenteeism persistently disrupted educational efforts in isolated areas up until the 1930s.²⁰⁶

By the 1890s, the utility of French language education was beginning to become evident. Conscription forced French men to learn French in order to understand their leaders' commands. A burgeoning coterie of public employees, whose forms were only in French, offered various legal services locally.²⁰⁷ Migration of rural people into the cities forced these transplants to use French in order to gain employment.²⁰⁸ After the Dreyfus Affair, a new consciousness emerged about the metropolitan education system.²⁰⁹ The political Left, which feared that the masses were becoming "easy prey for demagogic nationalism," began to shift its belief in education. The need to educate the masses spawned even more proposals not only for education reforms, but for

²⁰³ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 311–312.

²⁰⁴ Heywood, *Growing Up in France*, 217.

²⁰⁵ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 326.

²⁰⁶ Heywood, *Growing Up in France*, 218; Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 336.

²⁰⁷ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 328–329.

²⁰⁸ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 338.

²⁰⁹ Watson, "The Politics of Educational Reform," 85.

Dreyfusard intellectuals to offer lectures in French to the working class so that future French citizens would not be subjected to nationalist and anti-Semitic propaganda.²¹⁰ For non-native speakers, the need to have a working knowledge of the national language continued to rise up until the outbreak of World War I.

Conclusion

At the turn of the twentieth century, the metropolitan education system found itself divided into two categories. Thanks to the efforts of Jules Ferry, the primary education track offered French children a free and secular education. This track did limit its students' future career choices to a teaching position in the primary school system or work in private industry. The secondary education track, on the other hand, charged tuition and offered students the opportunity to sit for the *baccalauréat*, which could lead to more advanced study at a university resulting in a high-level career in the government or in a liberal profession.²¹¹ The distinction between the two tracks was not limited to tuition costs; it also highlighted a class difference between the two sets of students. Metropolitan government officials assumed that children would naturally occupy the same station in society as their parents. If children of the lower classes attended secondary schools, officials feared that students would acquire habits and tastes unassociated with their place in society. Thus, government officials consciously offered no resistance to the extant social stratification of nineteenth-century France.²¹² Metropolitan

²¹⁰ Watson, "The Politics of Educational Reform," 86.

²¹¹ Watson, "The Politics of Educational Reform," 83–84. Secondary school fees existed until 1944. See Watson, "The Politics of Educational Reform," 92.

²¹² Watson, "The Politics of Educational Reform," 83–85.

political leaders' recognition of the need for educational reform did not gain widespread acceptance until after World War I.²¹³

As this chapter has demonstrated, metropolitan officials and educational experts championed a series of reforms making public primary education compulsory, free, and secular. These educational reforms attempted to affect a civilizing mission in France not only to diminish the Catholic Church's grasp on the population, but to remodel future French citizens into French-speaking, politically-active, and morally-sound republicans. These reforms, however, did not take place within a vacuum. The French empire attracted the attention of another group of metropolitan officials and experts who advocated for the exportation of French education and, more specifically, the French language, to French Algeria. These men, who formed the *Alliance française*, offer a fascinating case study of how an educational system in flux in the metropole could be theoretically exported to a colony without taking into account local conditions and circumstances.

²¹³ Watson, "The Politics of Educational Reform," 88.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CONQUEST OF MINDS: LANGUAGE, COLONIAL THEORY AND THE *ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE*

At an 1887 conference at the *École Professionnel* in Bordeaux, France, Maurice Wahl outlined his vision of the *Alliance française*'s role in Algeria. "It is necessary to deal with [the indigenous population], to work to steer it around to us, to ensure it becomes ours, so that it may be French one day."¹ Wahl's statement is one example of how members of the *Alliance française*, a group of *lycée* professors, academy inspectors, and primary school instructors united in their mission to spread the French language and civilization throughout the world, believed their work in Algeria was of national importance.² The conversion of Algerians' mindset to one that welcomed France and its civilization was of upmost significance if the civilizing mission were to succeed. While the previous chapter focused on the perspectives of metropolitan officials and educational experts desiring educational reforms in metropolitan France, this chapter concentrates on another group of metropolitan officials and experts whose interest was the French empire, specifically French Algeria.

This chapter argues that the members of the *Alliance française* desired the exportation of the French language as the first step to winning the hearts and minds of colonized Algerians to insure the continuation of French rule in Algeria and to make Algeria a new consumer of French goods. Alliance members wanted to assist the French government in its efforts to expand its initial conquest from one focusing on what Governor General of Algeria Thomas-Robert Bugeaud characterized as "the sword and the plow" to one emphasizing the book and the

¹ Maurice Wahl, *L'Algérie et l'Alliance française* (Bordeaux: Imprimerie G. Gounouilh, 1887), 8–9.

² Maurice Bruézière, *L'Alliance française: Histoire d'une institution* (Paris: Hachette, 1983), 17.

school.³ This chapter demonstrates that the alliance's members paralleled, and even foreshadowed at some points, their metropolitan-focused republicans vis-à-vis colonial theory. After a short overview of education in Algeria prior to the advent of the Third Republic, this chapter delineates the connection between assimilation—the dominant colonial theory for most of the nineteenth century—and education. This is followed by an introduction to the *Alliance française* and its primary goals. Next, I discuss the debates of the alliance members and how these discussions interacted with the national colonial theoretical debates. Finally, once association replaced assimilation as the dominant colonial theory, I demonstrate how the *Alliance française* adapted to this transformation.

Education in Algeria Prior to the Third Republic

France's foray into Algeria began in 1830 and highlighted a constitutional crisis which the internecine political tensions between royalists and liberals caused. The invasion's planners believed it would bring glory to Charles X, but he was overthrown just weeks after the conquest began.⁴ Under the Second Republic, metropolitan French leaders divided French Algeria in 1848 into three departments on par with their counterparts in the metropole. European citizens living in French Algeria profited from political representation in France and from colonial administrative structures that theoretically mirrored those in France.⁵ The military invasion and French attempts to render French Algeria economically beneficial prompted the emergence of two symbols characterizing the first fifty years of France's invasion of Algeria: the sword and

³ Thomas-Robert Bugeaud, *Par l'épée et par la charrue: Ecrits et discours* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948). See also, Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*.

⁴ Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 1, 25–26.

⁵ Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 2.

the plow.⁶ According to Arthur Girault, who taught classes in colonial legislation at the law school in Poitiers, French Algeria became a “simple prolongation of the nation’s soil.” For Girault, “there was no rational motive for distinguishing and for refusing the benefits of legislation deemed good for the metropole” from the French empire.⁷

The educational system in Algeria prior to France’s 1830 invasion consisted of three levels of instruction. Primary level education taught children up to age ten. For seven to eight hours per day, students learned reading, writing, and arithmetic while “squatting on the ground or sitting on mats.” In rural areas ambulatory primary schools existed which took place in a tent or in open air. Secondary level education was for children between the ages of ten and fifteen. In these schools, students memorized grammar rules, continued their arithmetic studies, and began to learn about Muslim law. For students that could continue their studies, madrasas, or small universities, existed in urban areas.⁸

It was during the 1840s that French administrators began to transform the Algerian educational system. The French administration authorized the establishment of *Bureaux Arabes* [Arab Offices] in 1844 to serve as a link between the Algerian population—both European and indigenous—and the French colonizers.⁹ These military administrative units redefined France’s civilizing mission’s scope and objectives and acted as “interpreter[s] of the conquering nation’s thought and institutions.”¹⁰ The bureaucrats who worked in these offices, predominantly accomplished and skilled graduates from metropolitan military academies, redefined the colonial

⁶ These symbols influenced the title of Jennifer Sessions’ monograph.

⁷ Arthur Girault, *Principes de colonisation et de législation coloniale* (Paris: L. Larose, 1895), 54.

⁸ L. Leroy, “En Algérie: Écoles et écoliers indigènes,” *L’Alliance française illustrée* no. 2 (1894): 12.

⁹ Rogers, *A Frenchwoman’s Imperial Story*, 69. The *Bureaux Arabes* were also known as the Department of Indigenous Affairs. See, Benjamin C. Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France’s Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844–1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 24.

¹⁰ Osama Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity: Saint-Simonians and the Civilizing Mission in Algeria* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 7; Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, 80.

government's local interests and priorities, created a new colonial administrative framework, and reversed the executive protocols vis-à-vis the cultural and political assimilation of Algerians.¹¹ In 1848, under the aegis of the Ministry of Public Instruction, French leaders established academies in Algeria and began to inspect Algerian schools, parallel to metropolitan schools, as a means to impose direct control.¹² During the Second Republic, French colonists used the metropolitan educational system in Algeria for non-Muslims, attempting to assimilate them into the French way of living.¹³ This included both European Algerians and the Kabyles, the latter, according to metropolitan social scientists and anthropologists, being distinct from the Arab population of Algeria. French officials believed both of these groups to be more amenable to assimilation due to their racial proximity to the French.¹⁴

The year 1850 was a landmark year in terms of educational legislation, both in France and in Algeria. In March, the Falloux Law, which a conservative government passed as a reply to the social unrest of the Revolution of 1848, required villages with a population of more than eight hundred inhabitants to open a public primary school for girls. Consequently, the Catholic Church gained influence within the school system since members of religious orders, including the clergy, acted as teachers and inspectors. While these schools did promote religious values, they also contributed to a rise in literacy amongst women.¹⁵ In Algeria, the educational laws of July 1850 established a two-tiered approach to Muslim education. Metropolitan French authorities divided the educational system in Algeria between two ministries. As stated above,

¹¹ Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 14, 18.

¹² Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story*, 79.

¹³ El-Djamhouria Slimani-Aït-Saada, "L'institution du français dans la plaine du Chélif: aspects historiques et didactiques," in *L'enseignement du français en colonies: Expériences inaugurales dans l'enseignement primaire*, ed. Dalila Morsly (Paris: Harmattan, 2010), 75.

¹⁴ This assumption was based on the Kabyle Myth. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, 153–162; Trumbull, *An Empire of Facts*, 5.

¹⁵ Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story*, 88–89.

the Ministry of Public Instruction controlled the education of non-Muslim Algerians. The Ministry of War gained control of and inspected extant Muslim schools, which afforded the colonial government a means of surveillance. At this stage in France's invasion of Algeria, French officials assigned the education of Muslim Algerians to the Ministry of War since it was responsible for administering most parts of the colony until 1858.¹⁶ The men who worked in the *Bureaux Arabes* resisted the Ministry of Public Instruction's practices in Algeria as an affront to their specialized knowledge of the region. As a result, the Ministry of War placed the *Bureaux Arabes* in charge of the curriculum, inspection, and evaluation of Muslim students. The ministry created an assortment of French-Arab schools the men of the *Bureaux Arabes* led, in which Muslim students came into contact with the French language. This method set out to generate a French-speaking Algerian elite with whom the French colonial administrators could establish closer economic, social, and cultural links.¹⁷

During the Second Empire, the number of traditional Muslim schools dwindled, principally due to the resumption of military rule and the colonial government's support of the Arab-French schools led by the *Bureaux Arabes*.¹⁸ There was also a "political shift toward the municipalization of colonial schools" near the end of Napoleon III's rule.¹⁹ The Arab-French schools, according to French administrators, offered the most efficacious means to propel Muslim students onto a path of civilization and progress and, in time, to create a cadre of Muslim elites who would assume administrative positions in the colonial government.²⁰ As such, the sovereignty of the *Bureaux Arabes* blossomed, and, between 1856 and 1867, forty-eight of these

¹⁶ Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*, 201.

¹⁷ Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story*, 79–81.

¹⁸ Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 194–197; Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 120.

¹⁹ Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 197.

²⁰ Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story*, 123.

schools opened.²¹ For the proponents of assimilation, the paucity of bilingual instructors hindered efforts to promote the Arab-French schools. The result was the foundation of an Algerian normal school, which was supposed to train French teachers to speak Arabic. The school's curriculum actually mimicked that of a metropolitan normal school, and students only spent three hours a week (out of a course load of thirty-four hours) learning Arabic.²² This particular school, in reality, concentrated on training teachers for the European schools in Algeria.²³

Yet, in spite of the development of infrastructure and economic growth in Algeria, the educational policy aimed at Muslims failed. One reason for this failure was the French policy of segregation. Having distinct schools for European Algerians and Muslim Algerians, the former based on the metropolitan school system and the latter on the curriculum devised by the *Bureaux Arabes* strengthened the gulf between the colonizers and the colonized and failed to assimilate Muslim Algerians into the French way of life. Muslim families also resisted French education as an act of deculturation.²⁴ Historians normally measure the efficacy of French efforts to educate Algerians via the available attendance statistics, which suggest that only a small percentage of Algerians actually passed through French schools.²⁵ Because education was not compulsory yet, the number of educated indigenous non-Muslims remained low.²⁶ By 1870, only 1,300 indigenous students attended the controversial schools led by the *Bureaux arabes*.²⁷ This low

²¹ Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 195–196.

²² Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story*, 125.

²³ Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity*, 192–194.

²⁴ Slimani-Aït-Saada, "L'institution du français dans la plaine du Chéelif," 74–75.

²⁵ Khaoula Taleb-Ibrahimi, "L'Algérie: coexistence et concurrence des langues," in *La France et l'Algérie: leçons d'histoire*, eds. Frédéric Abécassis, Gilles Boyer, Benoit Falaize, Gilbert Meynier, and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (Lyon: Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique, 2007), 48.

²⁶ Slimani-Aït-Saada, "L'institution du français dans la plaine du Chéelif," 75.

²⁷ This total was out of a population of over 2.1 million. See Charles Robert Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France, 1870–1891*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Paris: Editions Bouchène, 2005), 2:320.

number of indigenous participants can be attributed to two factors: strong opposition to French educational efforts in rural Algeria and the colonizers' strict selection process of eligible Algerians.²⁸ Rural Algerians felt a French education would substitute indigenous practices for those of a colonial power, and colonial authorities restricted upper level education to the sons of local collaborators out of a fear of awakening indigenous consciences.²⁹

Colonial Theory and Education

Education played a significant role in the civilizing mission of the early Third Republic, both in the metropole and in the empire. At its core, the civilizing mission represented universal republicanism par excellence and was the main vector to rationalize France's racialized policies that the nation implemented in the empire.³⁰ The civilizing mission and colonialism went hand in hand to disseminate French universal values throughout the world.³¹ Metropolitan educational debates and reforms occurred alongside those having the French empire as their focus. While metropolitan officials and educational experts reformed the metropolitan educational system, republican leaders and educators concomitantly questioned the educational system in place in the colonies, especially the system used in French Algeria. Before analyzing these debates, however, a brief account of the dominant colonial theory for most of the nineteenth century will help to elucidate the political and cultural context in which they took place.

The question of ideology unavoidably motivates imperialism. Central to nineteenth-century European imperialism, including French imperialism, was the ideology of assimilation,

²⁸ Taleb-Ibrahimi, "L'Algérie," 48.

²⁹ Aïssa Kadri, "Histoire du système d'enseignement colonial en Algérie," in *La France et l'Algérie: leçons d'histoire*, eds. Frédéric Abécassis, Gilles Boyer, Benoit Falaize, Gilbert Meynier, and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (Lyon: Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique, 2007), 31.

³⁰ Costantini, *Mission civilisatrice*, 14.

³¹ Costantini, *Mission civilisatrice*, 87.

which sought to legitimize colonization both politically and morally.³² The history of assimilation can be traced back to the *philosophes* during the Enlightenment.³³ Influenced by Thomas Hobbes' concept of a "system of universal knowledge" and John Locke's emphasis on empiricism, historians often credit Claude-Adrien Helvétius as the "intellectual father" of assimilation.³⁴ Helvétius argued that "intellectual inequalities are the result of a known cause, and that cause is the difference in education."³⁵ Consequently, he championed education as a possible way to eliminate class and social distinctions. His arguments gave rise to the two major tenets of assimilation: fundamental human parity and education as a counteraction to environmental dissimilarities. Other philosophers, including D'Alembert, Rousseau, and Condorcet, contributed to the notions that reason was a virtue, man is catholically equal, law is universally applicable, and everyone is subject to rational modifications.³⁶ The best legislative example of these principles can be found in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which explicitly state that "men are born and live free and equal in rights."³⁷ France openly practiced assimilation in Senegal during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries with the hopes of generating a local elite who would be faithful to France and who would fill low-level bureaucratic positions in French administration and commerce.³⁸ The French supported schools in Saint-Louis and Gorée, in which students learned the French language and

³² Saliha Belmessous, *Assimilation and Empire: Uniformity in French and British Colonies, 1541–1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

³³ Martin Deming Lewis, "One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The "Assimilation" Theory in French Colonial Policy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4, no. 2 (1962): 134.

³⁴ Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory*, 14–15.

³⁵ Claude-Adrien Helvétius, *Œuvres complètes d'Helvétius*, 14 vols. (Paris: P. Didot L'ainé, 1795), VII:155.

³⁶ Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory*, 15.

³⁷ Quoted in Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory*, 16.

³⁸ Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*, 122; Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 81.

culture. These efforts created a “population closely identifying with France and relatively free of racial cleavages.”³⁹

Once Napoleon I came to power, his skepticism about the ideology influenced officials and experts to abandon assimilationist practices, viewing them as central values of republican governments.⁴⁰ In contrast to France’s West African possessions, in which most of the people were free, Napoleon’s concern about exporting metropolitan legislation to France’s Caribbean colonies stemmed from a fear that colonists and indigenous peoples, after gaining control of local administrative entities, would upset the colonial economy which relied heavily on slave labor.⁴¹ After the Revolution of 1848, the Second Republic manumitted slaves and reinstated colonial representation in the French parliament. Louis Napoleon’s ascension to power halted assimilationist efforts in the colonies, but his own colonial policies followed no regular pattern.⁴² The constitution of 1852 reestablished separate administrations for the colonies, but the *sénatus-consultes* of 1854 and 1866 modified the constitution to place religion, the press, the police, and credit institutions under metropolitan leadership.⁴³ The juxtaposition of assimilation and imperialism, however, meant that France was caught between working with the local populations and colonial domination.⁴⁴ While the leaders of the Third Republic continued the colonial practices of the *sénatus-consultes*, the shift from military to civilian government in French

³⁹ Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*, 123.

⁴⁰ Lewis, “One Hundred Million Frenchmen,” 135; Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory*, 17.

⁴¹ Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory*, 17.

⁴² Lewis, “One Hundred Million Frenchmen,” 135.

⁴³ Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory*, 19.

⁴⁴ Judge, “French as a Tool for Colonialism,” 13.

Algeria and the rapid imperial expansion of the 1880s shifted the national focus before any new republican policies regarding the colonial question could be formulated.⁴⁵

Assimilationist policies assumed a variety of guises (such as civilization, *mise en valeur*, civility, and progress) and accentuated an array of European cultural elements (including civic status, religion, social organization, and economic development).⁴⁶ Despite these nomenclative differences, assimilation's core objective centered upon the integration of foreign societies into European cultures, what Frederick Cooper characterizes as an "inclusionary project."⁴⁷ Cooper suggests that this inclusion would witness "subjects becoming citizens, having access to more and more opportunities once reserved for metropolitans, or constituting a polity equivalent to all other polities."⁴⁸ These projects, however, highlight a concomitant opposition: the encouragement of uniformity and the maintenance of difference.⁴⁹ In the case of France, once the nation came face to face with the economic dearth of its colonies, French officials believed it was their responsibility, based on their perceived advanced status as a civilization, to improve the standard of living of their subjects. This transformation would occur through a process called *mise en valeur*, which historian Alice Conklin translates as "rational economic development," during which the colony's human and natural resources would be used more efficaciously.⁵⁰ While Conklin's study concentrates on French West Africa, the experimentation executed in this

⁴⁵ Lewis, "One Hundred Million Frenchmen," 136.

⁴⁶ Belmessous, *Assimilation and Empire*, 1.

⁴⁷ Frederick Cooper, "Empire Multiplied: A Review Essay," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 2 (2004): 271.

⁴⁸ Cooper, "Empire Multiplied," 271.

⁴⁹ Cooper, "Empire Multiplied," 269.

⁵⁰ Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 6.

region spurred metropolitan officials to carry out state-sponsored *mise en valeur* at home based on contemporary social policies.⁵¹

The word assimilation is inherently problematic and ill-defined. While a dictionary definition of the term implies adaption, absorption, or conformity,⁵² scholars examine the word from different perspectives. Raymond Betts traces the word's origin in France back to the days of Richelieu when it possessed a religious connotation, but its political meaning arose during the French Revolution. Napoleon I's skepticism about extending French laws to the empire led to the doctrine's rejection due to a fear that indigenous populations could access local government. The Second Republic embraced the concept, but it ended up on the back burner during the Second Empire due to Napoleon III's contradictory colonial policies. Assimilation's resurgence during the early Third Republic, Betts argues, was administrative and economic in nature.⁵³ Alice Conklin argues that French colonial doctrine prior to World War I was never purely assimilationist in nature, but focused on the improvement of colonial subjects' standard of living via rational development.⁵⁴ J. P. Daughton examines assimilation as it related to missionaries in the colonies, arguing that intolerance characterized missionaries as antithetical to assimilation.⁵⁵ Jennifer Sessions argues that assimilation "came closest to full realization" for the European population in French Algeria due to its desire for a "more intimate union" and since the indigenous populations were subject both to a separate body of legislation and to military rule.⁵⁶ Most recently, Saliha Belmessous associates assimilation with Frederick Cooper's concept of an

⁵¹ Robert Aldrich, "Imperial *Mise en valeur* and *Mise en scène*: Recent Works on French Colonialism," *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 4 (2002): 922.

⁵² "Assimilate." Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. Accessed January 22, 2016. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/assimilate>.

⁵³ Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory*, 12–20.

⁵⁴ Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 6.

⁵⁵ Daughton, *An Empire Divided*, 93.

⁵⁶ Session, *By Sword and Plow*, 2.

“inclusionary project,” encompassing not only the political and economic realms, but the cultural realm as well.⁵⁷ In short, the scholarly definition has evolved to be more inclusive, yet its exact definition remains elusive.

This terminological ambiguity does not rest solely on the shoulders of scholars who have studied it.⁵⁸ At the *Congrès colonial national* of 1889–90, one delegate, Mr. le Baron Michel, criticized the policy’s advocates by saying that “among the partisans of assimilation, there are no two who agree on the meaning of the expression.”⁵⁹ He went on to question the feasibility of absolute assimilation in the empire, suggesting instead that it would be “simpler to examine each colony’s situation individually and to determine which system would work the best in the colony’s interest, in the metropole’s interest, and in the general interest of civilization.”⁶⁰

Another delegate to the same congress, Henri Mager, seconded Michel’s suggestion, suggesting that “there is no colony that would accept [assimilation] without conditions and reservations.”⁶¹

Ten years later at the *Congrès international de sociologie coloniale de 1900*, metropolitan experts had yet to define assimilation clearly. One participant to this congress, M. de Lamothe, observed that “there are so many meanings given to assimilation that it has become one of the most dangerous words in our colonial vocabulary.”⁶² He went on to highlight that “even in Algeria, where assimilation is practiced in all its forms, one does not claim, except for a few dogmatists, to assimilate the indigenous.”⁶³

⁵⁷ Cooper, “Empire Multiplied,” 271; Belmessous, *Assimilation and Empire*, 2.

⁵⁸ Lewis, “One Hundred Million Frenchmen,” 132.

⁵⁹ *Recueil des délibérations du Congrès colonial national, Paris, 1889–90* (Paris: Librairie des Annales Economiques, 1890), I:24. Hereafter *CCN 1889–90*.

⁶⁰ *CCN 1889–90*, I:25. This perspective could be viewed as a foreshadowing of the shift in colonial theory during the early 1900s from assimilation to association.

⁶¹ *CCN 1889–90*, I:25.

⁶² *Congrès international de sociologie coloniale* (Paris: A. Rousseau, 1901), I:183. Hereafter *CISC 1900*.

⁶³ *CISC 1900*, I:183.

Despite the manifold interpretations of assimilation, one thing all of the delegates to the 1889 congress did agree on was the dissemination of the French language throughout the French empire.⁶⁴ The adopted resolution stated that “in all the overseas lands under French authority, the efforts of colonization should propagate among the natives the language, the methods of work, and, progressively, the spirit and civilization of France.”⁶⁵ This resolution’s assumption regarding the exportability of the French language and culture to a colonized land tried to rekindle notions of France’s cultural superiority during the previous century lost due to France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. The resolution also characterizes the French language as the best means of inculcating indigenous groups with republican values since some republicans believed language to be the most effective way of transforming a society’s mentality. Nineteenth-century thinkers and experts did not judge inferiority to be a permanent condition, but one that could be overcome through the adoption of French societal institutions and structures.⁶⁶ Jules Cambon, the head of education in Tunisia, wrote in 1882,

We do not have at present a better way of assimilating the Arabs in Tunisia...than by teaching them our language....We cannot count on religion to achieve assimilation; [the Arabs] will never convert to Christianity. But as they learn our language, this will introduce them to a multitude of European ideas.⁶⁷

As idealistic as Cambon’s statement may seem, he believed language to be a reliable method by which French education could change colonial subjects. This process would strive to reorganize colonial societies and institutions so that colonial subjects could benefit from education in ways similar to their French counterparts.⁶⁸ Advocates of assimilation argued that once colonial

⁶⁴ Lewis, “One Hundred Million Frenchmen,” 143.

⁶⁵ *CCN 1889–90*, III:329.

⁶⁶ Judge, “French as a Tool for Colonialism,” 11.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Judge, “French as a Tool for Colonialism,” 15.

⁶⁸ Judge, “French as a Tool for Colonialism,” 11.

subjects saw the benefits of the colonizers' culture, they would freely accept France's authority.⁶⁹

The French Language and the Alliance française

While a variety of metropolitan authorities and experts debated what reforms were needed in metropolitan schools, another group of metropolitan leaders and experts joined together to debate what reforms were needed in French Algeria. The vast majority of these discussions occurred under the auspices of the *Alliance française*. Founded in 1883 and officially recognized in 1884 through an Interior Ministry decree, the *Alliance française* touted itself as an apolitical and non-confessional organization that fostered both political and religious tolerance.⁷⁰ The political perspectives of the alliance's founding members spanned the spectrum, uniting men whose opinions often separated them in the National Assembly. Pierre Foncin, General Inspector of Public Instruction in France and the organization's General Secretary from 1884 to 1897, argued that these men could unite "on neutral ground" under the common banner of the French language.⁷¹ Despite their internecine political quarrels, Foncin argued that these men were united in the belief that "when it comes to the French language, it is part of the nation." He posited that this harmony, largely absent within the republic itself, helped to create "precious traditions" and assured the alliance's future sustainment.⁷² Many of the founding members of the *Alliance française* were also members of the *Cercle Saint-Simon*, which feted itself as a "center of

⁶⁹ Judge, "French as a Tool for Colonialism," 15.

⁷⁰ *Alliance française, Conférence faite à Bordeaux le lundi 1^{er} décembre 1884, à l'Ecole Professionnelle* (Bordeaux: Imprimerie G. Gounouilhou, 1885), 14. Léon Dufourmantelle proclaimed anew this apolitical and non-confessional nature of the organization more than twenty years after its establishment. See, Léon Dufourmantelle, "Séance solennelle d'ouverture, 10 septembre 1906," *Congrès de l'Alliance française et des Sociétés de Géographie* (Marseille: Secrétariat de la Société de Géographie et du Comité de l'Alliance française, 1908), 46.

⁷¹ Pierre Foncin, *L'Alliance française et l'enseignement de la langue nationale en Tunisie et en Algérie* (Paris: Siège de l'Alliance française, 1884), 3.

⁷² Pierre Foncin, "L'Alliance française et sa propagation hors de France," *Bulletin - Société historique et Cercle Saint-Simon* 2 (1884): 41.

intellectual life and of scientific information” and proposed to maintain and to extend France’s influence via the propagation of the French language.⁷³

While the spread of the French language, an indispensable and fundamental component of French culture, in metropolitan France aimed to unite and to equalize France’s citizens, its spread in the colonies initially had the opposite effect.⁷⁴ After the second French empire began in 1830, French colonial officials acquired only a basic knowledge of the colony’s indigenous language in which they served. This made it necessary to impose basic French for the purposes of communicating with the indigenous population.⁷⁵ Initially colonists only taught the French language to those with whom they had contact, mainly the elite and the elite’s male progeny.⁷⁶ During the first decades of France’s occupation of Algeria, this practice established a coterie of colonized elites with whom French colonial officials could partner in order to carry out French colonial policies. Chronicling the French government’s efforts to spread the French language into the empire prior to the creation of the *Alliance française*, Pierre Foncin used the example of France’s presence in Senegal to demonstrate the efficacy of this practice. An 1857 decree prescribed courses in French for every student of Muslim schools in Senegal. It also reinstated a school for the sons of tribal chiefs, originally founded by General Faidherbe, in which they received a French education. These efforts to export the French language, however, met with heavy opposition from merchants who had learned to speak the indigenous tongues of West Africa in order to sustain a commercial monopoly. The Committee of Saint Louis’ decision to uphold the decree’s requirements demonstrates that French economic interests in the empire

⁷³ Gabriel Monod, “Rapport,” *Bulletin – Société historique et Cercle Saint-Simon* 1 (1883): 12.

⁷⁴ Anne Judge, “French as a Tool for Colonialism,” 4.

⁷⁵ Judge, “French as a Tool for Colonialism,” 8.

⁷⁶ Judge, “French as a Tool for Colonialism,” 4.

trumped the merchants' interests.⁷⁷ Foncin argued that the colonial government's example in Senegal should serve as a model to "its sister colonies" under republican authority.⁷⁸

The alliance had many goals: create and financially support French schools, introduce French language classes in schools which had none, train teachers, distribute appropriate rewards to assure school attendance, award prizes or travel scholarships to top students, encourage the publication of pedagogical materials, publish a periodical bulletin, and organize conferences and other means of propaganda.⁷⁹ The foremost topic of debate amongst these men was the spread of the French language. For many centuries scholars have characterized Algeria as a multilingual nation. The various dialects of Berber compose the oldest linguistic substratum of this region. After the Islamicization of Algeria in the seventh century, the introduction of Arabic, both classical and spoken, replaced the Berber dialects as the most widely spoken language.⁸⁰ Even prior to France's invasion in 1830, Algerians had knowledge of various European languages principally as a means to facilitate trade, particularly Spanish and Italian. Once France invaded Algeria, however, French colonial officials' imposition of the French language constituted one of the fundamental elements of colonial power.⁸¹ The communicative importance of French between various peoples, regardless of geographical location, suggested language, like all elements of French culture and civilization, could become universal.

Not only did the *Alliance française* play a cultural role in spreading the French language throughout the world, but it also had an economic one. French officials believed that speakers of the French language, regardless of where they were in the world, would become consumers of

⁷⁷ Foncin, "L'Alliance française et sa propagation hors de France," 43–44.

⁷⁸ Foncin, "L'Alliance française et sa propagation hors de France," 45.

⁷⁹ Bruézière, *L'Alliance française*, 10–11.

⁸⁰ Taleb-Ibrahimi, "L'Algérie," 41, 43.

⁸¹ Taleb-Ibrahimi, "L'Algérie," 47.

French goods.⁸² Pierre Foncin suggested that, “words are the vehicle for ideas and feelings. They drag around with them bundles of merchandise and march quicker than soldiers.”⁸³ Not only did the alliance’s members assume that foreign desire for French products would help France regain its place on the international stage, but the exportation of the French language, as a key component of France’s civilizing mission, would transform the world faster than military conquest. Another alliance member, Maurice Wahl, a former municipal councilor and high school history instructor in Algiers and the General Inspector of Public Instruction in the colonies, viewed the organization’s work from an economic perspective as well. Wahl believed that shared interests would eventually result in the two groups sharing ideas and morals.⁸⁴ Wahl suggested that French colonists needed the indigenous populations and vice versa and that non-political means of achieving this unity could be carried out.⁸⁵ “Our indigenous policy must work to build a Muslim society in Algeria which is not absolutely similar to ours, but which stops being hostile.”⁸⁶ He felt that European farmers could help Algerian farmers produce more and better crops through “agricultural education.”⁸⁷ This “education,” however, created conflict amongst indigenous peoples. French efforts to instruct farmers on how to best exploit the land intensified tensions between farmers, whom local French administrators favored, and pastoralists, whose herds had to be kept away from the crops. Rivalries ensued over land use and threatened indigenous solidarity against colonial rule.⁸⁸ Wahl also believed that industrial improvements such as railroads, mining, and factories had the potential to offer benefits to all inhabitants of the

⁸² Bruézière, *L'Alliance française*, 20.

⁸³ Quoted in Bruézière, *L'Alliance française*, 40.

⁸⁴ Maurice Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” *Bulletin - Société historique et Cercle Saint-Simon* 3 (1885): 97.

⁸⁵ Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 100.

⁸⁶ Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 97.

⁸⁷ Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 100.

⁸⁸ Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*, 109.

colony. This series of activities had the capability to increase Algeria's *mise en valeur* because the colonists and the indigenous populations would have daily interactions, which would allow for the "reciprocal penetration of morals and ideas."⁸⁹

The spread of the French language played a patriotic role in the alliance's work. While he praised the government's efforts in Senegal, Foncin criticized French educational efforts in Algeria from the conquest to the founding of the Third Republic. First, he stated that France failed to work with the educational system already in place, which resulted in its destruction. It could be argued that Foncin's critique, the idea of partnering with indigenous institutions, foreshadowed the theoretical shift that occurred after the turn of the century from assimilation to association. Instead, French officials attempted to erase the former system from existence, which Foncin argued caused the "indigenous Algerian population to lose its taste for study."⁹⁰ Second, Foncin accused the French conquerors of not establishing an educational goal after conquest. The French conquerors, according to Foncin, should not have only educated a select number of "sons of grand chiefs and a certain number of *déclassés*," but should have "taught the French language to the entire indigenous population." This selective practice created a local elite who spoke French and went against the republican value of equality. Third, Foncin believed that the founding of Arab-French schools was a mistake. While these schools did teach the French language to a select number of indigenous students, Foncin criticized the methodological approach since it did not civilize students via French values.⁹¹ Finally, Foncin inveighed against the establishment of schools that were identical to those in metropolitan France. He felt that schools *à la française* were too expensive in terms of tuition and teachers' salaries. The teaching

⁸⁹ Wahl, "La question des indigènes en Algérie," 101.

⁹⁰ Foncin, *L'Alliance française et l'enseignement de la langue nationale*, 14.

⁹¹ Foncin, *L'Alliance française et l'enseignement de la langue nationale*, 15.

of French did not require “comfortable buildings,” “perfected teaching material,” or “teachers with diplomas.”⁹² Instead, simpler schools could be taught by French soldiers whom the French state no longer needed, by former students of the Arab-French schools, or by marabouts who spoke some French.⁹³ The goal, for Foncin, was not the acquisition of complicated grammatical rules, but the ability to converse daily with French officials. Thus, he believed the *Alliance française* should do all it can to accomplish the patriotic duty of propagating “the French language throughout the world.”⁹⁴

During a time in which France’s international grandeur was less than desired, Foncin argued that the founding of the *Alliance française* relied on its founders’ belief that the alliance could provide a patriotic purpose.⁹⁵ This patriotism, according to Foncin, was never more needed than during this era when France was still recovering from its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War.⁹⁶ In the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War and as a foil to the British Empire, Foncin felt that France was “stationary.” As a means to counter its imperial rivalry with Great Britain, Foncin believed the expansion of the French language to be one of the best means of national defense.⁹⁷ Foncin argued that a “love of country” and language connected the alliance’s politically diverse members. He suggested that French grandeur was most prevalent during the seventeenth century due to France’s demographic dominance over its European rivals. Because of the recent defeat, however, France needed to find additional ways to defend itself and to regain its former glory.⁹⁸

⁹² Foncin, *L’Alliance française et l’enseignement de la langue nationale*, 16.

⁹³ Foncin, *L’Alliance française et l’enseignement de la langue nationale*, 17.

⁹⁴ Foncin, *L’Alliance française et l’enseignement de la langue nationale*, 20.

⁹⁵ Foncin, *L’Alliance française et l’enseignement de la langue nationale*, 3.

⁹⁶ Alliance française, *Conférence faite à Bordeaux*, 15.

⁹⁷ Foncin, *L’Alliance française et l’enseignement de la langue nationale*, 3.

⁹⁸ Alliance française, *Conférence faite à Bordeaux*, 15.

Foncin posited that the exportation of the French language via education should be the first step in the nation's recovery efforts. He argued that the alliance inspired both political and religious tolerance because of its apolitical and non-confessional nature. By teaching non-French peoples the French language, he believed that a secular conversion could occur without violence.⁹⁹ Due to its independent status, which allowed the *Alliance française* to undertake various initiatives unavailable to the French government without incurring resentment from other European states, Foncin suggested that the *Alliance française* existed "to help" the French state as an ally and partner.¹⁰⁰ He said it was "an honor" for the organization "to safeguard our old and cherished language among civilized peoples."¹⁰¹

The *Alliance française* did not solely set its sights on Algerian students. The organization also established French language classes for adults. Begun in 1884, these classes were held at night, normally between seven and nine o'clock, and lasted between five and seven months. By 1892, 582 adults in Algiers, Bône, and Constantine, of which approximately 120 were soldiers, attended these classes. For the urban, indigenous adults who saw utility in learning French, these classes offered the skills required to function in colonial society. According to the organization's monthly bulletin, the *Alliance française* paid for almost all of the class expenses.¹⁰² This organization, desiring to demonstrate its humanitarianism and benevolence toward these adults, covered the costs of these classes. Yet, its efforts were couched in the underlying cultural violence of the civilizing mission. One textbook used in both primary level schools and in adult classes stated in its conclusion that the lessons aimed to provide students of all ages with an

⁹⁹ Alliance française, *Conférence faite à Bordeaux*, 14–15.

¹⁰⁰ Foncin, *L'Alliance française et l'enseignement de la langue nationale*, 4; Alliance française, *Conférence faite à Bordeaux*, 14.

¹⁰¹ Foncin, *L'Alliance française et l'enseignement de la langue nationale*, 4.

¹⁰² "Nouvelles et correspondance," *L'Alliance française illustrée* (15 February 1894): 23.

“idea of human life, of its conditions, and of its goals....Civilization was the result of and the compensation for” hard work, without which “no progress was possible.” The conclusion went on to assert that without this education, “man stays in a state of destitution, misery, and ignorance,” conditions the civilizing mission purported to eliminate.¹⁰³

A Conquest of Minds

By the 1890s, French Algeria was under civilian rule. The *Alliance française* supplanted the symbols of the sword and the plow, which symbolized French military rule in French Algeria, in favor of two new symbols: the book and the school. “But if the sword and the plow subdue man and soil, it is the book and school which transform minds and win hearts.”¹⁰⁴ This perspective shifted the Algerian conquest from one of military and economic focus to one in which the education of indigenous students according to republican values took center stage.¹⁰⁵

In the initial edition of its monthly journal *L’Alliance française illustrée*, L. Leroy stated that,

[Our] fathers, for the past sixty years, reconstructed a vast and magnificent colonial empire by the sword. They give [the empire] value every day by the pickaxe, the factory, the trading post, or the bank. It is up to [our] sons, who will be the administrators of tomorrow, to perfect the work by the book; that is to say to open the minds and to win the hearts.¹⁰⁶

Comprehending that a complete transformation of the Algerian population was not possible in one generation, Leroy feted the work of his predecessors through his description of the constructed empire. Positing that their work paved the way for the economic growth of Algeria, he went on to outline what should be done in the future to achieve the desired conquest of minds. In the same article, Leroy characterized instructors as the “pioneers of this new work,” whose

¹⁰³ Paul Rousselot, *Leçons de choses et lectures* (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1888), 290.

¹⁰⁴ L. Leroy, “En Algérie: Écoles et écoliers indigènes,” *L’Alliance française illustrée* (15 February 1894): 12.

¹⁰⁵ Léon, *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, 19.

¹⁰⁶ L. Leroy, “Appel aux maîtres et aux écoliers français,” *L’Alliance française illustrée* (15 January 1894): 2.

efforts at educating indigenous children will be the “working ankle” of the entire colonial project.¹⁰⁷ If the metaphorical foot could not march into Algeria, the colonial project would be unable to realize its goals.

Within French colonial discourse regarding education, the exportation of the French language to Algeria went hand in hand with the conquest of minds. For Jean Jaurès, the moderate republican who became a social democrat during the 1880s and the leader of the Socialist Party in 1902, the spread of the French language into the colonies was a “necessary instrument of colonization.”¹⁰⁸ Since French emigration to the colonies was lagging behind that of the British, Jaurès felt that those who did emigrate were numerically insufficient to propagate French influence and ideas.¹⁰⁹ To counteract this, he proposed an increase in the number of French schools that indigenous children attended. This increase, according to Jaurès, would aid the French colonists to perform their “difficult work of moral conquest and assimilation.” In these schools, the sophisticated and complex grammatical points are not needed, but, following the suggestions of General Faidherbe in Senegal, the indigenous should be taught the present, past, and future tenses along with the “essential words of the language,” without worrying about exact pronunciation or moderate corrections.¹¹⁰ Jaurès labeled the French language as one of the “soft forms” of civilization since he believed that once the indigenous populations had learned enough French to communicate at a basic level, they would feel closer to the French in terms of intelligence.¹¹¹ Somewhat utopian in his beliefs, Jaurès suggested that that spread of the French

¹⁰⁷ L. Leroy, “Appel aux maîtres et aux écoliers français,” 3.

¹⁰⁸ Alliance française, *Conférence de M. Jean Jaurès* (Albi, France: Imprimerie Pezous, 1886), 6. For more on the life of Jean Jaurès, see, Gilles Candar and Vincent Duclert, *Jean Jaurès* (Paris: Fayard, 2014); Jean-Pierre Rioux, *Jean Jaurès* (Paris: Perrin, 2008).

¹⁰⁹ Alliance française, *Conférence de M. Jean Jaurès*, 6.

¹¹⁰ Alliance française, *Conférence de M. Jean Jaurès*, 7.

¹¹¹ Alliance française, *Conférence de M. Jean Jaurès*, 8.

language and French literature would “surely make [the indigenous peoples] love France.”¹¹² He felt that the indigenous would eventually “fall in love” with the marvelous and true history of France, but if the French did not teach French history, another nation would come along and teach it, casting France in an unflattering light.¹¹³ Jaurès believed that France had a responsibility to bring along “the glory of France” when it conquered a locale. Because this glory was full of “justice and goodwill,” he ostentatiously thought that the indigenous populations would “certainly welcome it.”¹¹⁴

Republicans viewed the conquest of minds via education as one means of theoretically preventing indigenous populations from relapsing into slavery. Since slavery went against the republican value of liberty, it was an institution that represented monarchical tyranny and one that needed to be eliminated.¹¹⁵ French officials, however, recognized that a labor force was paramount to Algeria’s success as an economically viable colony. Algerians either fled upon France’s invasion or carried out acts of armed resistance, both of which made the recruitment of indigenous workers highly unlikely.¹¹⁶ Some military officers thought Kabylia, whose inhabitants the French believed to be reliable and hardworking, might offer a source for labor, but regional insurrections quickly squashed this idea.¹¹⁷ Therefore, the absence of a “servile labor force” in French Algeria led French colonial officials to champion European emigration, which Jennifer Sessions argues became “the defining feature of a new vision of empire to be

¹¹² Alliance française, *Conférence de M. Jean Jaurès*, 12.

¹¹³ Alliance française, *Conférence de M. Jean Jaurès*, 8.

¹¹⁴ Alliance française, *Conférence de M. Jean Jaurès*, 9.

¹¹⁵ Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 179.

¹¹⁶ Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 192.

¹¹⁷ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, 46–47.

inaugurated in Algeria, where social virtue could flourish to the benefit of both metropole and colony.”¹¹⁸

After slavery was finally abolished in 1848, the concept of conversion shifted from religion to civilization. The perception of Africans as barbarous and uncivilized had long been in the psyche of French leaders and administrators. As far back as the mid-seventeenth century, the French used Africans’ slavery practices as justification to convert them.¹¹⁹ The French also used the fight against slavery to legitimize their incursion into regions where the institution endured. Through the abolition of slavery, the colonial enterprise found “decisive proof” of French civilization’s superiority.¹²⁰ Members of the *Alliance française* argued that education, and a French education in particular, was one means to eradicate such a barbarous institution. Leroy wrote that many colonial children “await the arrival of the book to deliver them from this servitude of ignorance which, prior to [France’s] arrival, rendered slavery possible.” In order to bring this transformation into fruition, Leroy argued that “it is necessary to raise their minds after having liberated their bodies.”¹²¹ In another edition of the same bulletin, Pierre Foncin recounted the story of the last Dahomean king named Béhanzin who sold his youngest daughter into slavery. Foncin, chronicling the manifold misdeeds of the king, suggested that if he had been born in France and had received a “proper education,” these lessons would have enlightened his intelligence and touched his heart. Yet, since Béhanzin had not been inculcated with republican values, he continued to carry out “barbarous” acts.¹²² Through this tale, Foncin argued that a metropolitan French education had the potential to shift the mindset of someone who performed

¹¹⁸ Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 192–193.

¹¹⁹ Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*, 19.

¹²⁰ Costantini, *Mission civilisatrice*, 58.

¹²¹ L. Leroy, “Appel aux maîtres et aux écoliers français,” 2.

¹²² Pierre Foncin, “La fille du roi Béhanzin,” *L’Alliance française illustrée* (15 March 1894): 1–3.

barbarous deeds and to obliterate the institution of slavery in locales in which it still existed. Maurice Wahl argued that the *Alliance française*'s work in Algeria served France's national interest in the "most effective manner."¹²³ He interpreted France's national interest to be the spread of French civilization to the indigenous populations. He posited that French monetary and human expenses "liberated" Algeria from barbarity.¹²⁴ Wahl was part of a group of experts who believed France had the ability to transform its colonial subjects from an uncivilized and backward population to one imbued with French values, mores, and customs that might, at some time in the future, become French nationals. He suggested that Algerians belonged to "an age of civilization that we [the French] had since long ago gone beyond. Our society is the result of a long series of historical evolutions they have not known."¹²⁵

Members of the *Alliance française* also believed poverty, which some republicans viewed as a fault of local circumstances and not due to colonial violence or dislocation, to be a condition from which indigenous children must be delivered. Pierre Foncin, in an article encouraging readers of the organization's monthly bulletin to donate money, labeled these children as "the poor who lack bread are those in distant nations who are deprived of the benefits of French education."¹²⁶ Foncin's appeal for funds from readers can be interpreted as part of the republicans' humanitarian efforts to benefit the uneducated colonial subjects under France's tutelage. By subscribing to the organization's monthly bulletin, metropolitan and colonial adherents' contributions would be used to further the association's work. But, Foncin's plea can also be perceived as a means to increase the coffers of the organization, one that was private, apolitical, and non-confessional. Using revolutionary imagery, Foncin continued, "The small

¹²³ Wahl, *L'Algérie et l'Alliance française*, 1.

¹²⁴ Wahl, *L'Algérie et l'Alliance française*, 6.

¹²⁵ Wahl, *L'Algérie et l'Alliance française*, 11.

¹²⁶ Pierre Foncin, "Les paniers fleuris," *L'Alliance française illustrée* (15 January 1895): 2.

vendor is the *Alliance française*, and its tricolored, flowery baskets represent subscriptions. Give to our flower seller!”¹²⁷

While the efficacy of the conquest of the minds is difficult to ascertain, one example of a possible mindset shift appeared in an edition of the monthly *Alliance française* bulletin. A speech by M. Brahim-ben-Mardassi, an indigenous instructor, lauded the alliance’s efforts in French Algeria to teach the French language to adults. “The *Alliance française* has understood that putting the study of [the French] language in the hands of adults, like children... assures us [Algerians] of all liberties except ignorance.” The reprinting of this speech most likely served as a piece of propaganda for the bulletin’s readers. Without having learned French, M. Brahim-ben-Mardassi would have presumably been unaware of the French perspective of Algerians as ignorant. He went on to say that “it was by a prodigious hand that [France’s] generous ideas, which are the reserve of the nation that wanted to be our mother and our civilizer, were spread among us.”¹²⁸ The ideas about which he spoke would have been the lessons about French civilization and the state as the *mère-patrie* (motherland), which accompanied language lessons.

From Assimilation to Association

The policy of assimilation, as ill-defined and contested as it was, fell out of vogue in the late nineteenth century partly because its policies failed.¹²⁹ Republicans condemned the practice’s universalism and inflexibility and favored the need for decentralized variants in colonial policies.¹³⁰ In its place, association emerged as a way to allow indigenous cultures to

¹²⁷ Pierre Foncin, “Les paniers fleuris,” 2.

¹²⁸ “Nouvelles et correspondance,” *L’Alliance française illustrée* (15 February 1894): 23.

¹²⁹ Judge, “French as a Tool for Colonialism,” 11.

¹³⁰ Betts, *Association and Assimilation in French Colonial Theory*, 106.

progress “at their own pace.”¹³¹ Republicans believed that association, in theory, emphasized a spirit of cooperation between the colonizer and the colonized and favored the consideration of ethnic and geographical characteristics and the social development of a specific region.¹³² Following a development in the social sciences in which “social evolutionary thinking” came into favor, association aimed to respect local social structures. Based on the notion that cultures were inherently dissimilar, association encouraged French officials and experts to appreciate cultural and institutional diversity among colonized populations.¹³³ No longer did republicans perceive the empire as one united block, but as a succession of distinct possessions requiring separate administration. This shift, which signified a rejection of assimilation’s tenet of centralization in favor of decentralized control, resulted in local administrators assuming more responsibility for the daily management of the colony and the reduction of powers for the Minister of the Colonies, whose duties consisted of coordinating general colonial policies.¹³⁴ This concept, based on mutual interests and the republican value of fraternity, did not, at its core, include equality.¹³⁵ In practice, historian Anne Judge argues that respecting the colonial context amounted to nothing more than “flattering the elite and keeping the masses in their place.”¹³⁶

Efforts to disseminate the shift from assimilation to association began at various colonial gatherings the French government staged. At the 1904 *Congrès colonial français*, the delegates favored the shift from assimilation to association, promoting an agenda of collaboration between the colonizer and the colonized. Expressing their fears that educational efforts could create a local elite that possessed the potential to challenge France’s colonial authority, the attendees

¹³¹ Judge, “French as a Tool for Colonialism,” 11.

¹³² Betts, *Association and Assimilation in French Colonial Theory*, 106–107.

¹³³ Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 74–75.

¹³⁴ Betts, *Association and Assimilation in French Colonial Theory*, 107.

¹³⁵ Betts, *Association and Assimilation in French Colonial Theory*, 120.

¹³⁶ Judge, “French as a Tool for Colonialism,” 12.

deemed educational attempts to assimilate colonial subjects to be dangerous and championed the “fusion of interests through economic development” as the most effective means to proceed. Thus, the Congress determined that “colonial governments concentrate their efforts on the economic development most likely to assure [subjects’] wellbeing along with that of the colonists.”¹³⁷ From an educational perspective, this required a change in curriculum from a knowledge-based approach to the acquisition of a skill set enabling indigenous students to make a living. At the 1905 annual banquet of the *Syndicat de la Presse coloniale française*, Minister of the Colonies Étienne Clémentel, noting the necessity of a colonial policy placing the indigenous as an associate of the French colonizer, suggested “this policy of collaboration, of association is, moreover, an essential policy. It constitutes not only a policy of justice, but also a policy of foresight and of security.”¹³⁸ At the 1905 *Congrès colonial français*, Dr. Gieure, the General Advisor at Oran, firmly declared himself in favor of the switch from assimilation to association. Describing Algerian students as “inassimilable,” he stated that “it is necessary to have the indigenous participate in our actions and in our benefits.”¹³⁹

Once association officially replaced assimilation as the dominant colonial theory, members of the *Alliance française* followed suit. In 1906, a year after Minister Clémentel touted the new policy, Léon Dufourmantelle, General Secretary of the *Alliance française* in Paris, suggested that the organization desired to create a “rapprochement” between the French and the indigenous populations. The wish to establish a fraternity between the colonizers and the colonized demonstrates how the *Alliance française* would participate in the spread of republican

¹³⁷ “Rapport général des séances des sections,” *Congrès colonial français de 1904* (Paris: Imprimerie spéciale des congrès coloniaux français, 1904), 4–5.

¹³⁸ Clémentel’s speech at the annual banquet of the *Syndicat de la Presse coloniale française*, quoted in *La Dépêche coloniale*, 5 January 1906.

¹³⁹ Dr. Gieure, “Le peuplement français de l’Afrique du Nord,” *Congrès colonial français de 1905* (Paris: Secrétariat général des Congrès coloniaux français, 1905), 201.

values. To achieve this desired harmony, Dufourmantelle believed that France must take a profitable interest in its colonized subjects not only to benefit France, but to benefit the “protected populations.” This process included the creation of colonial committees in the colonies, the founding of libraries, the establishment of adult language courses, and the encouragement of local educational enterprises.¹⁴⁰

Dufourmantelle thought that one of the *Alliance française*'s duties was to spread amongst France's colonial subjects an “instruction conforming to their [the subjects'] needs and appropriate to their nature, making men useful to themselves, to their native country, and to their adoptive country.” This associationist perspective takes into account the need to respect local extant institutions and structures whilst retaining a distance between the two groups, a gap that would never result in true equality. Recalling that “instruction” referred to the impartation of human knowledge, Dufourmantelle considered the French language to be the most effective way to disseminate information, which he believed would result in a “pacific conquest of minds.”¹⁴¹ He judged the French language to be a “vehicle of progressive and humanitarian ideas” and capable of bring about an “evolution” among French subjects.¹⁴² Dufourmantelle characterized the French language as “sweet to speak, clear to understand, [and] through which many masterpieces have been written,” resulting in the language's ability to produce manifold high and noble thoughts.¹⁴³

On 11 September 1906, at a meeting of the *Alliance française* at the Exposition Coloniale de Marseille, Georges Garros also advocated the shift from assimilation to association with

¹⁴⁰ Léon Dufourmantelle, “Le rôle de l'Alliance française,” *Congrès de l'Alliance française et des Sociétés de Géographie* (Marseille: Secrétariat de la Société de Géographie et du Comité de l'Alliance française, 1908), 116.

¹⁴¹ Dufourmantelle, “Le rôle de l'Alliance française,” 116.

¹⁴² Dufourmantelle, “Le rôle de l'Alliance française,” 118.

¹⁴³ Dufourmantelle, “Le rôle de l'Alliance française,” 119.

regard to colonial education. Garros, a lawyer and delegate from Cochinchina to the Exposition, believed association to be the correct path to take going forward because he did not see the need to transform indigenous populations into French-like people.¹⁴⁴ Echoing his metropolitan counterparts' desire to impart a moral education to students under the tutelage of the Third Republic, Garros deemed the education and instruction of indigenous children to be a moral obligation France undertakes as a colonizer. He advocated for the creation of metropolitan scholarships for indigenous students showing great aptitude and outstanding morals, but, for the rest, he advocated an "instruction and education appropriate...to elevate their intellectual and moral level, without exposing ourselves [the French] to the creation of *déracinés* (uprooted people)" Garros believed the *déracinés* were those indigenous students who had lost the moral qualities of their own race, but had also not acquired the moral qualities associated with Frenchness.¹⁴⁵

Garros also suggested that it was France's duty to procure a colonial administrative job for the indigenous student once his studies are complete. However, Garros cautioned that this rise in indigenous bureaucrats had the potential to foment "management difficulties, which could provoke conflicts with indigenous races, via the creation of an indigenous intellectual proletariat." To avoid this conflict, he argued in favor of an "apprenticeship (*stage*)" that would not occur in an "indigenous colonial school."¹⁴⁶ The apprenticeship, according to Garros, would arouse less "inconveniences" for French officials and it would be easier to curb the "number of indigenous

¹⁴⁴ Georges Garros, "Procès-verbaux des Séances, 11 septembre 1906," *Congrès de l'Alliance française et des Sociétés de Géographie* (Marseille: Secrétariat de la Société de Géographie et du Comité de l'Alliance française, 1908), 59.

¹⁴⁵ Garros, "Procès-verbaux des Séances," 60.

¹⁴⁶ Garros, "Procès-verbaux des Séances," 59.

apprentices...based on administrative needs.”¹⁴⁷ For Garros, the process of limiting the number of indigenous bureaucrats would not threaten France’s colonial sovereignty since authority did not need to be shared.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

Alice Conklin argues that, at the turn of the century, the Third Republic’s civilizing mission vis-à-vis education was neither assimilationist nor associationist in nature, but republican. Stemming from the revolutionary idea of educating the masses, Third Republicans championing primary level education for all were merely following the tenets their compatriots established one century earlier.¹⁴⁹ While some republicans did advocate the inculcation of republican values in Algeria, another group of metropolitan republicans—the members of the *Alliance française*—championed the conquest of Algerians minds via the spread of the French language and French civilization. While the alliance members discussed here predominantly adhered to the two colonial theories of the early Third Republic, Pierre Foncin foreshadowed the theoretical shift from assimilation to association.

So far this thesis has examined the debates among metropolitan officials and educational experts regarding both metropolitan and colonial education using the French language as the main unit of analysis. Metropolitan officials used French as a tool to instill republican values into the nation’s children in order to unite a linguistically-diverse metropolitan population, while members of the *Alliance française* campaigned for the exportation of French as a means to continue France’s civilizing mission in Algeria. The final chapter will examine parallel educational debates of French officials and experts who lived in Algeria.

¹⁴⁷ Garros, “Procès-verbaux des Séances,” 59.

¹⁴⁸ Garros, “Procès-verbaux des Séances,” 60.

¹⁴⁹ Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 75.

CHAPTER THREE: COLONIAL PERSPECTIVES, ASSOCIATION, AND RESPECT FOR LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Louis Vignon, a professor at the *Ecole coloniale* and a former Chief of Staff for the Minister of Commerce who spent time in Algeria as the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Undersecretary of State in the Colonies, published a book in 1893 in which he described his experiences. Fully cognizant that local circumstances needed to be considered when implementing laws in Algeria, he protested the direct export of French legislation concerning property rights, justice, and, most importantly for this study, education into Algeria, arguing that these laws “were absolutely contrary to the indigenous society.” His experience in Algeria had taught him that the export of a metropolitan curriculum, which some republicans championed, would not work in the colony. “We have not gone to the trouble of creating a special curriculum for [Algerian children].”¹ The discourses of French officials and educational experts who lived in Algeria and called for Algerian exceptionalism during the early Third Republic, Vignon among them, form the foundation for this chapter.

I argue that the texts colonial officials and educators living in Algeria wrote challenged the dominant metropolitan colonial theory of assimilation long before association replaced it in metropolitan France. These texts, while not explicitly stating it, played a part in bringing about the shift to association since they suggest the need of taking local circumstances into consideration when designing an educational program for Algerian children. These officials and experts believed that using the exported metropolitan educational curriculum was inappropriate for a colonized society and that manifold modifications would be required if France wanted to conquer the minds and hearts of its colonial subjects. This chapter begins by outlining the

¹ Louis Vignon, *La France en Algérie* (Paris: Hachette, 1893), 432.

indigenous question and its relationship with colonial theory and education. This is followed by an analysis of the discourses of officials and experts who critiqued France's educational efforts. Next, this chapter tackles the challenges colonial officials and experts delineated in France's attempts to reform indigenous education, as well as the discourses surrounding girls' education. Finally, I examine the discourses surrounding the uniqueness of Algeria and how the experience of working in Algeria informed the perspectives of these officials and experts, as well as their suggestions for reform.

The Indigenous Question and Colonial Theory

In 1879, Jules Ferry ordered several missions to study the question of indigenous education in Algeria. As a result, the French opened several schools in Kabylia.² Founded on the information in these reports and the Kabyle Myth, the potential to assimilate the Kabyles quicker than Arabs into French society encouraged French educational officials to begin their work this region. Within the realm of primary education, republican officials and educational experts in Algeria suggested their first efforts to assimilate non-European Algerians should target Kabyles. Building on the publications of French ethnographers from the 1840s and 1850s whose work outlined the racial differences between Berbers and Arabs based on environment classification, the French perceived the Berbers who lived in Kabylia as more acquiescent to assimilation than their Arab compatriots. The Kabyles were a more sedentary race, whose habitat in a sheltered mountain range harbored them against outside influences.³ Ethnography studies likened Kabyles

² Wahl, *L'Algérie et l'Alliance française*, 16.

³ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, 152. Some ethnographers and anthropologists interchanged the terms Kabyle and Berber without distinguishing the Kabyles' geographical isolation in the Aurès Mountains.

to French farmers living in rural areas such as Auvergne or Limousin.⁴ French ethnographers perceived the Arabs, on the other hand, as a nomadic race, whose peripatetic and vagabond lifestyle was persistently subject to modification.⁵ While unrepresentative of reality, this binary opposition became entrenched in the French psyche and, rooted in social and religious differences, characterized Algerian Berbers positively and Algerian Arabs negatively.⁶

In addition, language differences separated Berbers and Arabs. French colonial administrators, seeking to segregate the two indigenous groups using a divide and conquer methodology, asserted that the various tribes which could collectively be labeled as Berber possessed a common language, imbuing them with the potential to form a nation. The notion of language as a “determinant of racial origin” led some experts and linguists during the nineteenth century to argue that Berbers, thought to be speakers of an Indo-European language, were of Aryan descent and closer to the French.⁷ This is in contrast to the Arabic-speaking Algerians whose language was part of the Semitic Afro-Asiatic language group.⁸ As a result, drawing on the concept of the Kabyle Myth and alleged linguistic parity between French and Berber dialects, colonial administrators deemed Kabyles to be the most assimilable via French educational methods. French administrators’ assumptions about Kabylia’s suitability ended up being another miscalculation they made. Once French schools opened, Kabyle students, contrary to French

⁴ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 433. See also, Onésime Reclus, *France, Algérie et colonies* (Paris: Hachette, 1886), 681.

⁵ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, 152.

⁶ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, 2. See also, Mohamed Benrabah, *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-Independence* (Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters, 2013); Paul A. Silverstein, “The Kabyle Myth: Colonization and the Production of Ethnicity,” in *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures*, ed. Brian Keith Axel, 122–155 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); Charles-Robert Ageron, “La France a-t-elle eu une politique kabyle?” *Revue Historique* (1960): 311–352.

⁷ Mohamed Benrabah, “Tensions between Arabophones and Berberophones in Algeria,” in *Multiculturalism and Democracy in North Africa: Aftermath of the Arab Spring*, ed. Moha Ennaji (New York: Routledge, 2014), 61.

⁸ Alan S. Kaye, “Arabic,” in *The World’s Major Languages*, ed. Bernard Comrie, 664–685 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). Linguists now classify the Berber language group, which includes Kabyle and Tamazight, to be in the Afro-Asiatic group as well. See Comrie, *The World’s Major Languages*, 648.

predictions, did not voluntarily attend. Instead, French colonial administrators had to travel around the region to “gather up” students.⁹ Fathers who refused to send their sons were subject to punishment under the Indigénat, the repressive code of justice French officials implemented in Algeria for Muslims which imposed harsh punishments for manifold infractions.¹⁰

In 1880, approximately one dozen schools specifically dedicated to the education of Muslim Algerians existed in Algeria. Originating in the Arab-French schools which the *Bureaux Arabes* led, attendance at these schools was notably poor.¹¹ Two years later, out of the 664 primary level schools in Algeria, twenty-two Arab-French schools existed—twenty for boys and two for girls.¹² In 1882, estimates of the number of Muslim students attending these schools ranged widely from 2,336 to 3,172.¹³ Jules Ferry, cognizant of the importance of developing French-style education for Muslim Algerians for the “great profit of [France’s] influence,” enacted a decree in 1883 whose first article stated, “All fully accredited Algerian communes are required to sustain one or several public primary schools free of charge to European and indigenous children.”¹⁴ While it was originally Governor General Alfred Chanzy’s preference whether or not school was compulsory, in 1887, the French metropolitan government passed

⁹ François Charvériat, *Huit jours en Kabylie* (Paris: Plon, 1889), 136.

¹⁰ Charvériat, *Huit jours en Kabylie*, 136; For more on the Indigénat, see Sylvie Thénault, “Le « code de l’indigénat »,” in *Histoire de l’Algérie à la période coloniale*, Abderrahmane Bouchène, Jean-Pierre Peyroulou, Ouanassa Siari Tengour, and Sylvie Thénault, eds. (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2012), 200–205; Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 33; Manceron, *Marianne et les colonies*, 170–171; Isabelle Merle, “Retour sur le régime de l’indigénat: Genèse et contradictions des principes répressifs dans l’Empire français,” *French Politics, Culture, and Society* 20, no. 2 (2002): 77–97.

¹¹ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 430.

¹² Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Guillaumin et Cie, 1882), 365.

¹³ Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonisation*, 365; Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 430.

¹⁴ First article of 13 February 1883 decree quoted in Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 430.

another decree requiring boys to attend.¹⁵ By 1890, legislative actions resulted in an increase in both the number of schools in Algeria (up to 122) and the number of attendees (up to 11,206).¹⁶

In 1892, The senatorial commission charged with investigating indigenous education in Algeria deemed the most propitious means of implementing change in Algeria would be the “propagation of our language and of our teaching among the indigenous population, which will result in the merging of [the indigenous population] with French nationality” as a means to “assimilate” Algerians. The commission characterized teachers as “agents of propaganda” who would travail to carry out “this highly desirable pacification [and] this needed conciliation” using the French language. French, to the commissioners, was the “principal instrument of the rapprochement of minds and as a natural process toward the eventual harmony of hearts.” These officials, using education as a means to assimilate rural French people into the body politic, perceived the export of French education in French to Algeria to be “an excellent thing, an unparalleled means of assimilation.”¹⁷ In reality, the imposition of the French language upon Algerians was one component of the cultural violence the civilian-led colonial government unleashed on the region.

Local Critiques of France’s Educational Efforts

French colonial officials and educational experts in Algeria offered various critiques of France’s efforts to educate Algerians. After having visited schools in Kabylia, the biggest shock to Louis Vignon was the use of metropolitan lessons in classes. He criticized French authorities for historical lessons that included information about “Clovis and the Crusades” and geographical lessons that encompassed the “five parts of the world.” The use of metropolitan

¹⁵ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 430. Alfred Chanzy served as Governor General from 1873 to 1879.

¹⁶ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 431.

¹⁷ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 432.

dictation books aimed at French-speaking children, according to Vignon, were useless. “After the first three lines,” he argued, “the majority [of the dictations] are incomprehensible for an intelligent Kabyle.” He also noticed a small library in the school whose books, in French, were full of information that even “the most intelligent indigenous student could not grasp.”¹⁸

The use of metropolitan lessons, to Vignon, resulted in Kabyle students learning via rote memorization. He wrote that “the lesson [students] learned by heart, they did not understand. The memory is developed, but the faculty to understand remains non-existent.” He found that after five or six years of studying the French language, Kabyle students no longer made orthographic errors, but even though students could write in French, they “did not understand it at all.”¹⁹ In addition, he blamed the curriculum itself for the students’ poor performance and lack of comprehension. He believed the lessons to be “too difficult and too busy;” they were unsuitable for Kabyle children.²⁰ Vignon included the students’ home life in his critique, arguing that Kabyle children are not raised in the same manner as French children. Kabyle children do not speak French at home, they are not exposed to French traditions or ways of thinking, and their mothers are “considered to be slaves” who know nothing about the French colonizers and their civilization.²¹ The dearth of reinforcement of knowledge learned at school contributed to the child’s mind becoming “rusty.”²² To Vignon, the combination of all of these factors contributed to the failure of French educational efforts in Algeria.

Vignon was not the only educational expert who lamented the use of metropolitan textbooks in Algerian schools. Gustave Benoist was an Academy inspector in Constantine in

¹⁸ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 436.

¹⁹ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 436.

²⁰ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 437.

²¹ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 438.

²² Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 437.

1884. Prior to working in Algeria, he held the same position in Besançon, an experience which afforded him the knowledge required to compare metropolitan and colonial practices. Two years after his appointment in Constantine, he returned to metropolitan France as an inspector in Nantes.²³ Benoist believed that the French language served as one means to initiate a dialogue between the French and the Algerians and to modernize and to civilize the indigenous populations.²⁴ It opened the way for “ideas about progress and civilization, via contact with Europeans,” to transfer from metropolitan France to the crown jewel of the French empire.²⁵ Regardless of background or gender, Benoist felt that the French language must be taught to all children. “Many teachers must teach the French language...to all of the French and foreign children...to all of the indigenous Jewish children,” and “to the largest possible number of indigenous Muslim boys and even girls.”²⁶ While Benoist did not specify an exact percentage of Muslim children, one could argue that his hope was that more than just the elite would learn the language.

The usage of metropolitan textbooks to teach students the French language, according to Benoist, introduced Algerians to concepts about which they had never heard. Writing about his experiences in Constantine, Benoist argued that the city was an “incommensurable distance” from metropolitan France, rendering the textbook lessons incomprehensible. Using paternalistic language characteristic of a representative of a mother-state, he wrote, “It is certain that special books are needed since one can only gradually and slowly give these infants an idea about things

²³ “Gustave Benoist (1842–1892),” Bibliothèque nationale de France, last modified March 18, 2015, accessed October 14, 2015, http://data.bnf.fr/10711067/gustave_benoist/.

²⁴ Gustave Benoist, *De l'instruction et de l'éducation des indigènes dans la province de Constantine* (Paris: Hachette, 1886), 6.

²⁵ Benoist, *De l'instruction et de l'éducation*, 60. For more on Algeria's status as the imperial crown jewel, see Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 1.

²⁶ Benoist, *De l'instruction et de l'éducation*, 3.

they have not seen and which they will perhaps never see.”²⁷ In the long run, he believed that France would succeed in its efforts to educate Algerians. “Success is not doubtful. It’s a matter of time, money, and will.”²⁸ Benoist’s optimism concerning Algerians’ eventual ability to assimilate suggests he, like many republicans, devotedly believed in education’s ability to transform people into French citizens.²⁹

One of the ideas Benoist conflated with acquisition of the French language was private property. Since private property was a significant component of citizenship for republicans, Algerians’ knowledge of French would help colonial officials “constitute a civil state and indigenous private property” as another step toward Algerians’ full political participation.³⁰ In reality, however, the possibility of Algerians possessing land drastically diminished after the passage of the Warnier Law of 1873. Passed under pressure from French colonists, this law justified European management of Algerian land based on the presupposition that only Europeans would fully exploit the land to its maximum potential.³¹

François Charvériat, a professor at the Algiers School of Law, also complained about the curriculum. On a visit to a primary school in Aït-Hichem, he met with some Kabyle students who could recite grammatical rules and fables by La Fontaine, but he wrote that the students, in reality, “know almost nothing.”³² Without an understanding of the knowledge given, the work of French instructors benefited no one. He attributed the students’ ability to recite without understanding to the predominance of memory in Islamic traditions. Since “Muslim science”

²⁷ Benoist, *De l’instruction et de l’éducation*, 87.

²⁸ Benoist, *De l’instruction et de l’éducation*, 110.

²⁹ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 151.

³⁰ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 25–26; Benoist, *De l’instruction et de l’éducation*, 109.

³¹ John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 80–113.

³² Charvériat, *Huit jours en Kabylie*, 140.

required the knowledge of the Qur'an word for word without questioning its meaning, Charvériat interpreted the students' ability to regurgitate knowledge as part and parcel of their religious training.³³ Students learned what the teacher required, but since it did not have any practical application in their daily lives, students failed to understand the lessons. Charvériat labeled this failure as a "hereditary anemia of intelligence," characterizing young Kabyle students up to the age of twelve or thirteen as able to "measure up" against their European counterparts thanks to the Kabyles' memory skills. But when it came to reasoning and reflecting on the material taught, Kabyle students could not participate in these discussions and could not comprehend abstractions due to their "facultative atrophy."³⁴ Charvériat went on to compare Kabyle children with a type of fish found in artisanal wells of the Sahara. Having lived underwater for many generations, this fish has evolved in such a way that it no longer has use of its eyes. He argued that "one can compare [the Kabyle child] to this type of fish...who finds itself blind today."³⁵ The vocabulary Charvériat used, while not necessarily eugenic in nature, suggests that he did believe in a biological difference between French and Kabyle children and each group's capacity to retain information.

Challenges to Educating Algerians

While numerous French officials and educational experts stressed the need to educate France's colonial subjects, another group of leaders and experts openly opposed France's efforts. Those opposed to educating Muslim Algerians reduced their arguments to three main concerns. First, some suggested that primary education of Muslim Algerians was useless due to Algerians' atavism and was "marked by sterility" from the beginning. Second, some argued that European

³³ Charvériat, *Huit jours en Kabylie*, 141.

³⁴ Charvériat, *Huit jours en Kabylie*, 142.

³⁵ Charvériat, *Huit jours en Kabylie*, 143.

education repulsed Algerians out of a fear of losing traditional customs and standards of living, resulting in mass absenteeism. Third, some feared the creation of an indigenous elite that would be politically dangerous at some point in the future. The members of this elite would develop into a group of *déclassés* (relegated people), “unusable” because of their inability to adapt to different Algerian situations.³⁶ Many of the experts and officials examined in this chapter set out to counter at least one of these arguments.

In a March 1885 speech printed in the annual bulletin of the *Société historique et Cercle Saint-Simon*, Maurice Wahl, a former municipal councilor and high school history instructor in Algiers and the General Inspector of Public Instruction in the colonies, outlined what he believed to be the reasons France had failed to assimilate the Algerian population. He argued that the material situation of indigenous Algerians had improved since France began its conquest in 1830, but still left much to be desired. Even though he cast a positive light on France’s presence in Algeria, because few Algerians had “attached themselves” to the French occupiers and most Algerians remained “hostile” to French efforts to civilize the indigenous population, he attributed the failure of assimilationist practices to religious differences.³⁷ It can be argued that some of the republicans who opposed educating Muslim Algerians sustained racist perspectives that originated during the first decades of France’s occupation of Algeria. These men viewed Islam as a major obstacle to France’s efforts to civilize its colonial subjects. Specifically, the French viewed the practice of polygamy and the status of women in the colony to be “dishonorable” and “unnatural” because French men believed women played a “formative role in the development of

³⁶ M. Marçais, “L’Enseignement primaire des indigènes algériens,” *Congrès de l’Afrique du Nord, 1908*, 2 vols. (Paris: Siège du Comité d’organisation du Congrès, 1909), 2:181–182.

³⁷ Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 94–95.

society and civilization.”³⁸ “After many years of trying,” Wahl continued, “the most ardent proselytizing was unable to sway Algerian Muslims.” Wahl also believed that religious dissimilarities hindered efforts to form mixed marriages, which were another means of trying to unite the French and the Algerians. “The opposition of morals and ideas render mixed marriages difficult and infrequent.”³⁹ Wahl suggested that religious propaganda served France well in other regions, but in Algeria, it was source of “embarrassment” and fomented “dangerous complications.”⁴⁰

Because of what he thought to be France’s past errors in Algeria, Wahl advocated a shift in strategy. He viewed a gradual rapprochement similar to association as the best method of endearing Algerians to their occupiers. “Our indigenous policy must work to build a Muslim society in Algeria which is not absolutely similar to ours, but which stops being hostile.” Wahl believed that shared interests would eventually result in the two groups sharing ideas and morals.⁴¹ He suggested that French colonists needed the indigenous populations and vice versa and that non-political means of achieving this unity could be carried out. Even though France had expropriated Algerian land, he felt that European farmers could help Algerian farmers produce better crops at a higher yield through “agricultural education.”⁴² Wahl believed that industrial improvements such as railroads, mining, and factories could also offer benefits to all inhabitants of the colony. All of these activities had the potential to increase Algeria’s *mise en valeur* because the colonists and the indigenous populations would have daily interactions, which

³⁸ Lorcin, *Imperial Identities*, 66.

³⁹ Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 96.

⁴⁰ Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 97.

⁴¹ Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 97.

⁴² Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 100.

would allow for the “reciprocal penetration of morals and ideas.”⁴³ Yet this penetration truly only benefited the colonizers, not the colonized. Wahl’s perspective, which one could posit was associationist in many ways during an era in which assimilation still dominated republican discourse in the metropole, predated the metropolitan ideological shift by some twenty years.

Even more significant to Wahl than the various political, economic, and industrial ways of linking Algerians with the French were his views on education. In the same 1885 speech, Wahl argued that “the most powerful means [to unite groups] are those which have a direct impact on the spirit of a people.” He thought that education was the most effective way of affecting the Algerian spirit. Wahl proposed the creation of two types of schools in Algeria. The first, which French teachers led, he labeled as “principal schools.” The second type consisted of “preparatory schools” which adjuncts or indigenous monitors led.⁴⁴ Both schools were to be conducted in the French language, and primary curriculum should be aimed at allowing students to continue their studies at the secondary and superior levels. The educational curriculum, according to Wahl, should not challenge Algerians’ attachment to Islam as assimilation proposed, but should work alongside it in an associationist manner to reduce the possibilities of resistance by Algerian parents.⁴⁵

Louis Vignon, in his discussion of Kabyles, suggested that another challenge to France’s educational efforts in Algeria was resistance on the part of Algerian parents. This resistance, according to Vignon, was rooted in the parents’ mindset. If a Kabyle father did not send his son to school, the son could “keep the herds, help out in the fields, [and] drive the donkeys through mountain paths.” Kabyle parents considered their children as part of the labor force and

⁴³ Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 101.

⁴⁴ Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 101.

⁴⁵ Wahl, “La question des indigènes en Algérie,” 102.

questioned the usefulness of speaking French in a region dominated by Berber dialects. If Kabyles did need to interact with French colonial officials, Vignon suggested that many years at school learning grammatical rules and vocabulary lists were unnecessary. Vignon believed the Kabyle would pick up the needed vocabulary and phrases by “hearing it spoken, by playing with the children of French colonists, or by following French travelers,” as opposed to learning French by rote memorization in school. As utopian as Vignon’s suggestions may seem, his point was that Kabyle fathers would not send their sons to French schools unless the fathers were “obligated” to do so, whether that obligation stemmed from a Governor General’s mandate of compulsory education or from a French administrator’s invitation, which were culturally difficult to decline, or unless the fathers “saw some kind of profit” in schooling, whether that profit be for the father himself or for the future employment of the son.⁴⁶

Parallel to the challenges metropolitan officials faced concerning the illiteracy of rural French students, such as those from Brittany and the Pyrenees region, whose primary language was not standard French, illiteracy among Algerians plagued French colonial authorities. The educational situation in the Algerian countryside dramatically differed from that in urban areas. Because parents needed their children to work on the farm and due to the long distances children would have had to travel to school, Ernest Mercier suggested that “Arabs in the countryside are almost all illiterate.” Mercier, a member of the General Council of Constantine and a delegate to the Superior Council, complained that unless the children’s parents lived close to a marabout, with whom the children could study, children in the Algerian countryside inherited illiteracy from their parents. While richer families could hire a tutor for their children, the distance required to attend school and the fees charges were too much for a poor, rural family to pay in

⁴⁶ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 441.

order for children to receive an education.⁴⁷ Thus, Mercier's complaint focused on the paucity of primary level schools in the countryside, which consequently excluded a large proportion of Algerians from receiving a French education.

An additional challenge in Algerian stemmed from officials, experts, and colonists who opposed France's educational endeavors. These opponents highlighted the perceived differences between the French and the Algerians, including the Algerians' fanatical religiosity, excessive pride, and extreme sensuality.⁴⁸ The members of these groups opposed assimilation and believed Algerians should not be educated since that education could potentially enable them to rise up against French colonial rule.⁴⁹ The argument against educating indigenous children concerned Achille Delassus, who was a teacher at the *École normale* in Algiers and an officer in the Ministry of Public Education. He was born in Algeria and lived there all of his life, which gave him a unique perspective on education since he did not pass through the metropolitan educational system.⁵⁰ Delassus highlighted the rival arguments for and against instructing indigenous children. Some theoreticians have argued that France should not educate its colonial subjects; some colonial publicists and philosophers bitterly protested the creation of French schools in Algeria. While these educational adversaries did see the need to "civilize" French colonial subjects, they did not think education was the way to do it since education created a "relegated" (*déclassé*) segment of society.⁵¹ These opponents argued that Algerians should not reside in

⁴⁷ Ernest Mercier, *La question indigène en Algérie au commencement du XXe siècle* (Paris: Challamel, 1901), 184. This is not the Ernest Mercier (1878–1955), born in Constantine, who became the director of the French Petroleum Company (CFP), the predecessor of the French petroleum conglomerate Total. See, Richard F. Kuisel, *Ernest Mercier: French Technocrat* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967).

⁴⁸ Judith Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870–1920* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 60.

⁴⁹ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 141; Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story*, 126–136.

⁵⁰ Achille Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies: La conquête morale des indigènes* (Algiers: Libraire Pour Tous, 1913), 5.

⁵¹ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 31–32.

cities because they would adopt immoral habits, such as drinking, banditry, and theft, and that they should be “manual laborers and farmers.”⁵² Instead, these officials and experts suggested that France “should govern to benefit the French...which is the best way to be useful to the indigenous.”⁵³

Another argument against the education of Algerians centered on the vast expenditures France incurred to establish an educational system in its crown jewel.⁵⁴ The expulsion of Algerians from their land, the loss of individual property rights, the laws concerning Algerians’ civil status, and the taxation France imposed all worsened the living standards of the indigenous populations.⁵⁵ In addition, republicans believed that affording some Algerians with a French education whilst concomitantly subjecting them to a different civil code after 1887 intensified the tensions between the colonized and the colonizers.⁵⁶ Thus, French officials viewed the development of indigenous education as one way to reverse France’s poor treatment of colonial subjects. In light of the three metropolitan educational decrees of 1881, 1883, and 1887, the number of schools in Algeria increased to 122. In 1892, metropolitan legislators, in an effort to ameliorate tensions between Algerians and their colonizers, approved a 215 percent increase in budgetary allocations to colonial education in Algeria and an addition 400,000 francs to construct schools for indigenous students.⁵⁷ Opponents of indigenous education, however, believed these sums to be misdirected. “Indigenous education...costs much and produces no

⁵² Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 32.

⁵³ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 16.

⁵⁴ “L’enseignement primaire des indigènes algériens,” *Congrès de l’Afrique du Nord, 1908*, 2 vols. (Paris: Siège du Comité d’organisation du Congrès, 1909), 2: 39.

⁵⁵ Brower, *A Desert Named Peace; Sessions, By Sword and Plow*; Julia A. Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994).

⁵⁶ Merle, “Retour sur le régime de l’indigénat,” 79-99.

⁵⁷ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 431.

durable result.”⁵⁸ Some believed that Algerians quickly forgot what they learned in school, rendering money spent on education wasted and better spent elsewhere. Delassus admitted that education had the potential to engender a “relegated” class of Algerians, but, contrary to these opponents, he argued that offering education “for all” also created a “large advantage,” both to France and to Algeria.⁵⁹

One solution Delassus proposed to counter the opponents’ arguments was an increase in the number of schools. “It is not a question of lessening the classes open to [Algerians] under the pretext that the benefits are ephemeral. Their number must be multiplied...to render a lasting work.” The expansion of the school system, according to Delassus, would lead to better retention of information and to a deeper dissemination of French civilization into the outermost regions of Algeria since more students would participate in the system.⁶⁰ “It is so they will understand us, see our strength and generosity better, and be convinced that they would lose by having other masters or from being independent.”⁶¹ Delassus’ argument that education would transform the mindset of Algerians does not follow the assimilationist discourse of the metropole. Delassus also took issue with the advocates of educating Algerians. He characterized the proponents as being too utopian and “idealistic,” which rendered them unable “to see reality” since their “eyes were full of illusions.” These supporters, according to Delassus, believed that French colonial subjects only had a “love of France” in their hearts, would be “our most active auxiliaries” in the civilizing project, and would become “free missionaries of French influence among their coreligionists who were still savage.”⁶²

⁵⁸ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 47.

⁵⁹ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 44–45.

⁶⁰ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 48.

⁶¹ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 49.

⁶² Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 33.

Girls' Education

During the Second Empire, colonial officials effectively blocked state support for indigenous girls' education, arguing that it was too costly and formed a coterie of women neither the colonial nor the indigenous society accepted.⁶³ Yet, this mindset began to shift with the advent of the Third Republic. Many metropolitan and colonial republicans and experts believed that the education of girls played a significant part in the civilizing mission, both domestically and colonially. To assure the French public's allegiance to the republican regime, French authorities championed a civic education for girls in metropolitan secular schools.⁶⁴ In the metropole republicans perceived women's domestic roles as linked to the "civic virtue" of their husbands and sons.⁶⁵ In Algeria, however, girls' education had the potential to place them in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, they would become future guardians of Algerian traditions, and, on the other hand, they would serve as symbols of domestic modernity.⁶⁶ In the end, republicans' belief in women's ability to help society progress and modernize and to bring about the fusion of the races in the empire influenced republicans to deem the education of indigenous girls to be just as important as that of boys.⁶⁷

Born in Lorraine in 1844, prior to the region's annexation by Prussia, Charles Jeanmaire taught philosophy at the Algiers high school while studying for his civil service examination. In 1882, he earned his doctorate in Lyon, and in 1884, he became rector of the Academy of Algiers and went on to establish upper-level schools in Algeria. A dedicated republican, Jeanmaire spent

⁶³ Julia Clancy-Smith, "Envisioning Knowledge: Educating the Muslim Woman in Colonial North Africa, c. 1850–1918," in *Iran and Beyond: Essays in Middle Eastern History in Honor of Nikki R. Keddie*, Ruldolph P. Matthee, Beth Baron, Nikki R. Keddie, eds. (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2000), 99–100.

⁶⁴ Margadant, *Madame le Professeur*, 24.

⁶⁵ Margadant, *Madame le Professeur*, 17.

⁶⁶ Clancy-Smith, "Envisioning Knowledge," 99.

⁶⁷ M Marçais, "De l'enseignement primaire des filles indigènes," *Congrès de l'Afrique du Nord, 1908*, 2 vols. (Paris: Siège du Comité d'organisation du Congrès, 1909), 2:204.

almost a quarter of a century in Algeria with the hopes of turning educated Muslims into the agents who would disseminate progress in the colony.⁶⁸ Jeanmaire's stance on educating Algerian girls characterized the nature of indigenous boarding schools in which many girls lived as inhumane since they were forced to live separately from their families. He believed that under the current circumstances, "most of [the girls] have no future."⁶⁹ He expressed the belief that France should not "abandon" these girls, but that "we must also have the courage to recognize that a parallel institution [to boys' schools] is bad, or at least premature."⁷⁰ While Jeanmaire believed that Kabyle girls would eventually be able to attend French schools, the education of Muslim girls, "as desirable as it might be, can only be pursued with great reserve." Muslim girls, according to Jeanmaire, should not be forced to attend school, but would eventually desire an education due to the "immediate advantages it will produce."⁷¹

Based on the current conditions in Algeria, Jeanmaire suggested three ways to introduce education to girls. First, a French woman would teach girls in their home. Implemented in Kabylia with mixed results, the wives, daughters, sisters, or mothers of French teachers would enter the home with the parents' permission to teach the French language, lessons on hygiene, and basic sewing skills. Second, begin girls' education at age four in a "children's school" (*école enfantine*). He proposed that girls learn how to handle a needle and to make small knitwear, all the while learning "a little bit of French." Jeanmaire stated that once a girl reached the age of eight, she became veiled, stayed at home, and was separated from boys. But if educational efforts started at age four, this would allow for four years of formative education in mixed-sex classes

⁶⁸ Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen*, 61.

⁶⁹ Charles Jeanmaire, "Sur l'instruction des indigènes en Algérie," *Revue pédagogique* 19, no. 7 (1891): 11.

⁷⁰ Jeanmaire, "Sur l'instruction des indigènes en Algérie," 11–12.

⁷¹ Jeanmaire, "Sur l'instruction des indigènes en Algérie," 12.

prior to being separated.⁷² Third, create vocational schools for girls in which they can learn a trade. This option, for six to fourteen-year-olds, would respect the separation of sexes in Algerian society and would offer girls the chance to have “an assured resource” in the future. While metropolitan girls learned domestic skills designed to keep them firmly in the private sphere, Algerian girls, to Jeanmaire, needed to learn a trade or vocation with which they could support themselves in the public sphere. Jeanmaire’s respect of the separation of the sexes in education can be interpreted as associationist in nature. The girls would have the opportunity of participating in an “industry whose products are sought after by Europeans and Arabs alike.” These workshop-schools had been tried in Algiers and Constantine, in which girls produced “Arab embroidery.” However, these institutions met with poor results due to the lack of buyers for the products, leaving the girls “without employment and without a future.”⁷³

Parallel to many of his metropolitan republican colleges, M. Marçais believed the “feminine element” in society represented a “conservative, traditional, and particularistic force,” whose belief in a new concept had the potential to “accelerate progress.” Marçais tackled the challenges associated with girls’ education in Algeria. The first challenge he perceived was the inferior status of women within Muslim society. Lacking a public role, women’s influence was constrained, especially in rural areas where they lost the ability to teach their sons at an early age.⁷⁴ Second, Algerian women lived a sheltered life (*vie recluse*) and rarely have contact with the outside world after the age of eleven or twelve. Finally, within Muslim society, according to Marçais, a hostile prejudice existed regarding the education of girls. Muslim men characterized women as having malevolent intentions and “fabliaux ideas,” and educating them would only

⁷² Jeanmaire, “Sur l’instruction des indigènes en Algérie,” 12.

⁷³ Jeanmaire, “Sur l’instruction des indigènes en Algérie,” 13. See also, Rogers, *A Frenchwoman’s Imperial Story*, 146–155.

⁷⁴ Marçais, “De l’enseignement primaire des filles indigènes,” 2:205.

“arm” their maliciousness.⁷⁵ The urban girls’ schools that did exist in Algeria had a professional character to them, in which girls learned a skill that could benefit them economically, such as rug making or embroidery. Marçais suggested that French colonial officials should maintain this course of instruction, but augment the number of girls’ schools in Algeria, which only numbered about a dozen in 1908.⁷⁶

Hubertine Auclert deemed the education of girls in Algeria of upmost importance for the colonial government. After having founded *La Société le droit des femmes* in 1883, an organization supporting women’s suffrage in metropolitan France, Auclert, a staunch anticlerical, and her husband moved to Algeria in 1888, where she lived for four years chronicling the daily lives of Algerian women.⁷⁷ For Auclert, who believed the most efficacious way to end colonial violence was to grant colonial subjects the right to vote, the process of assimilation meant citizens and subjects shared a common civil code.⁷⁸ She also believed education of boys and girls to be the best method of inculcating potential citizens with republican values, unlike some republicans who argued that educating girls would rob them of their social position. Auclert argued that the future of Arab society depended on the capacity of its women. She posited that “instruction kills fanaticism, and the French who genuinely wished to conquer the fanatical Arabs” should send girls to school.⁷⁹ She believed that if more schools for girls had been

⁷⁵ Marçais, “De l’enseignement primaire des filles indigènes,” 2:205.

⁷⁶ Marçais, “De l’enseignement primaire des filles indigènes,” 2:206. For a detailed examination of one girls’ school, see Rebecca Rogers, *A Frenchwoman’s Imperial Story*.

⁷⁷ For a critique of Auclert’s work, see Julia Clancy-Smith, “Islam, Gender, and Identities in the Making of French Algeria,” in *Domesticating the Empire: Languages of Gender, Race, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism, 1830–1962*, Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, eds. (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 1998), 169–172. See also, Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 90–124; Steven C. Hause, *Hubertine Auclert, The French Suffragette* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

⁷⁸ Lehning, *To Be a Citizen*, 150–151.

⁷⁹ Hubertine Auclert, *Les femmes arabes en Algérie* (Paris: Société d’Editions Littéraires, 1900), 135.

permitted in 1861, “assimilation would be near at hand, if it had not already been accomplished” since women would have been authoritative allies in the French civilizing mission.⁸⁰

Considering Local Circumstances

Many officials and experts familiar with local circumstances in Algeria openly admitted that the direct exportation of France’s metropolitan educational system to Algeria failed to achieve the desired goals of the civilizing mission. One of the educational experts who wrote about this failure was Louis Vignon. Based on his experience, Vignon argued that primary education in Algeria “must be very simple” and the courses must be “less busy” than those given in French metropolitan schools. Instead of a direct exportation of France’s metropolitan educational curriculum into Algerian schools, Vignon championed a more nuanced approach with minimal grammatical explanations of the French language and the addition of indigenous history. He suggested that young Kabyles and Arabs should be taught “the French language in such a way that they can read and write it, arithmetic, and a little history. That seems sufficient to us.”⁸¹ Vignon also strongly advised that teachers should be able to speak Arabic or Berber so that they can explain French words in a language the children understand. As an example of association in practice, this would solve the ever-present conundrum of students not understanding the French words they speak or write since currently Algerian students learned French solely by rote memorization.⁸²

Vignon’s advocacy of curricular simplicity influenced him to propose that educational experts should author new textbooks specifically targeting Algerian children. According to Vignon, these textbooks should include a “simple grammar,” a collection of vocabulary and

⁸⁰ Auclert, *Les femmes arabes en Algérie*, 144.

⁸¹ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 452.

⁸² Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 453.

dictations, and one volume of history. He believed that prolix and detailed narrations of France's history unnecessarily complicated the teachers' task, but an overall portrait of France's "force and power" on an international scale should be communicated. From an associationist perspective, Vignon stressed that Algerian history "cannot be forgotten" and that it was "desirable that the indigenous know a little about who they are."⁸³ In addition to curricular modifications, Vignon proposed that French teachers should "often, if not always" be accompanied by an indigenous assistant. He stated that while metropolitan France had "lay schools," in Algeria, France needed to have "religious schools." The expulsion of religious teaching from public schools in France complemented efforts to instill republican values into French children. In Algeria, however, Vignon argued that this expulsion would not advance France's efforts to educate Algerian children. "It would be an error to believe that the addition of an assistant in classes would compose a danger for us." Since many Algerian parents did not send their children to French schools, he thought the indigenous assistant, who would teach the students the Qur'an and would impart "moral and civic instruction," could influence more Algerian parents to allow their children to attend French schools.⁸⁴ The inclusion of indigenous structures also testifies to Vignon's associationist point of view.

Another educational expert, Charles Jeanmaire, published his thoughts about the need to consider local circumstances vis-à-vis education. Jeanmaire suggested that one region of Algeria be selected, in which officials would establish "all the schools needed to assure primary education to all indigenous boys." If this system produced acceptable results, it would then be expanded to other areas. He stated that it could take up to three years to see any significant

⁸³ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 452.

⁸⁴ Vignon, *La France en Algérie*, 453.

changes, but, following the dominant racial hierarchization in Algeria, French officials should start in Kabylia since Kabyle schools had produced the “most results and hopes.” Other Berber regions would follow, and Arab regions would be reformed after the Berber ones.⁸⁵ Yet, in order to assure that indigenous students do not revert to their traditions ways, Jeanmaire suggested that the area in which the students would live needed to be “completely modified.” While he gave no specific details about this change, he thought this modification should be based on educational principles, a common language (French), and French ideals.⁸⁶

Paul Bernard, director of the *École normale* in the Bouzaréah suburb of Algiers, paralleled other educational experts in his belief that education in Algeria must be “adapted to the milieu.” Parallel to other associationist perspectives examined here, Bernard thought the modifications to exported metropolitan curriculum and policies should take local circumstances into account. He stated that it should be an “original education” and “absolutely special.”⁸⁷ Part of education’s originality, according to Bernard, was its divorce from dogmatism, unlike metropolitan education which imbued students with a republican perspective. Schools in Algeria must remain “absolutely neutral” and should never criticize the Qur’an or any other religious text.⁸⁸ Bernard was uninterested in the various historical or philosophical debates circulating at the time about assimilation, arguing in associationist terms that France needed to “model school teaching based on [indigenous] ideas, their feelings, and their needs.” Bernard quoted Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau’s argument, saying France needed to “develop [Algerians] using a plan from

⁸⁵ Jeanmaire, “Sur l’instruction des indigènes en Algérie,” 18.

⁸⁶ Jeanmaire, “Sur l’instruction des indigènes en Algérie,” 25.

⁸⁷ Paul Bernard, “L’enseignement primaire des indigènes musulmans de l’Algérie,” *Revue du monde musulman* 1 (1906): 9.

⁸⁸ Bernard, “L’enseignement primaire des indigènes musulmans de l’Algérie,” 9.

their own civilization.”⁸⁹ These statements highlight the perspective of taking local circumstances and customs into consideration when forming educational policy, and not following metropolitan decrees verbatim. Bernard believed that education should not detach the indigenous populations from their geographical place, but should give them the taste and means to better their moral and material conditions based on their own traditions.

For Bernard, the French language should have a “place of honor” in education.⁹⁰ French was the “primordial” element of a French education and its centrality rendered all other lessons possible. Unlike metropolitan schools, which emphasized literary French and a myriad of intricate grammatical structures, Algerian schools should focus on “everyday French.” The teaching of colloquial French to Bernard allowed for easy expression of elementary knowledge and of some educational concepts forming the foundation of indigenous instruction. Instead of learning French via Arabic or Berber, teachers should use direct teaching methods so Algerian children can learn vocabulary. He encouraged instructors to act out verbs as much as possible and to bring items into the classroom so students would associate the spoken French word with the item displayed. Only if absolutely necessary should Arabic or Berber be used to facilitate comprehension during French lessons.⁹¹ Even though Bernard disagreed with Vignon about the use of Arabic or Kabyle in the classroom, his emphasis on visual learning steered away from a strictly textbook approach.

Bernard did advocate the teaching of Arabic as a “second language” using direct methods since Arabic was the language of commerce amongst the indigenous populations. Bernard argued that in France’s “desire to be useful to our scholarly clientele...we give [the Algerians]

⁸⁹ Bernard, “L’enseignement primaire des indigènes musulmans de l’Algérie,” 6.

⁹⁰ Bernard, “L’enseignement primaire des indigènes musulmans de l’Algérie,” 9.

⁹¹ Bernard, “L’enseignement primaire des indigènes musulmans de l’Algérie,” 10.

the possibility of speaking [Arabic] quite rapidly.”⁹² This utility in Bernard’s article echoed the metropolitan concern of giving back to the colonized populations. French colonization should no longer be a one-way process of exploitation, but should benefit both the colonizer and the colonized.⁹³ It also demonstrated Bernard’s belief in association, not assimilation. Proponents of assimilation would have argued that Arabic and Berber should have been banned in schools in favor of educating Algerians solely in French so that they could become like the French more quickly. Associationists, on the other hand, believed in respecting local cultures and institutions, including indigenous languages, to reduce the chances of any resistance that colonization might have fomented.⁹⁴ More accurately, this process of association would be what Eugen Weber has identified as “acculturation.” Weber argues that acculturation was the “civilization of the French by urban France, the disintegration of local cultures by modernity and their absorption into the dominant civilization of Paris and the schools.”⁹⁵ While Weber’s examples were of metropolitan France, this label and his definition of acculturation can also be applied to Algeria. French colonists attempted to bring civilization and modernity to Algeria via the French educational system with its emphasis on the French language, and essayed to absorb colonial subjects into the dominant French way of life.

Educators were not the only ones who recognized the need to tailor education in Algeria. Ernest Mercier highlighted the metropolitan perspective on educating the indigenous children. Members of parliament and bureaucrats of the academy were both “impassioned” by the topic,

⁹² Bernard, “L’enseignement primaire des indigènes musulmans de l’Algérie,” 10. M. Marçais, a member of the 1908 Congrès de l’Afrique du Nord and the Director of the Madrasa in Algiers, reiterated the need to sustain the teaching of Arabic in Algeria at the yearly congressional meeting in Paris. See, “L’enseignement primaire des indigènes algériens,” 2:40.

⁹³ Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 52.

⁹⁴ Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 84.

⁹⁵ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 486.

highlighting the “certain advantage,” the “civilizing action,” and “the conquering of spirits and hearts” by extending French education to the Algerians. These feelings induced these men to create schools in Algeria.⁹⁶ In theory, Mercier argued, these sentiments, applied to an “abstract location,” could have been justified. In reality, however, Algerians faced “diverse economic conditions,” “traditional influences,” and harbored particular prejudices and spiritual habits unknown to metropolitan officials. Mercier’s acknowledgement that French officials could not transform Algerian schools into French schools by will alone intimates his own awareness of local exigencies. Mercier offered school attendance as just one reason why a direct exportation of French educational methods would fail in Algeria. “If the Muslim...wants and can teach his children something, it is first and foremost elements of the Arabic language and the tenets of his religion.” In addition, once Algerian children reach puberty, Mercier stated that affluent parents did not wait to marry off their offspring and that poorer families withdrew their children to help out at home.⁹⁷

For Mercier, the successful future of French educational methods hinged on offering Algerian children “advantages” and imbuing them with “confidence.”⁹⁸ The exportation of French curriculum without taking into consideration local needs would most certainly fail to bring the civilizing mission to fruition. Thus, Mercier suggested vocational training would impart a skill indigenous students could use to support themselves fiscally. “The addition of manual works seriously constitutes a real attraction [to indigenous students] because these offer tangible results.” He believed the development of a “practical, industrial education” would offer indigenous students a chance for “real success.” In addition to finding teachers who spoke

⁹⁶ Mercier, *La question indigène en Algérie*, 189.

⁹⁷ Mercier, *La question indigène en Algérie*, 190.

⁹⁸ Mercier, *La question indigène en Algérie*, 197.

Arabic well enough to engage the children's parents in their education, Mercier also encouraged colonial officials to imbue school directors with more local autonomy, including curricular modifications based on local exigencies.⁹⁹

Achille Delassus' perspective as an Algerian-born Frenchman allowed him to assert suggestions that other officials and experts might not have considered. Having passed through French schools teaching French curriculum in Algeria, Delassus was well versed in the French colonial perspective of French imperialism bringing progress and modernity to the empire. For Delassus, the way to bring progress to the Algerians should not be based on their religion. "One should not rely on the Muslim faith or the Qur'an to achieve progress for the Muslims, just like one does not rely on the Christian faith to achieve progress for the Christians."¹⁰⁰ Instead, Delassus advocated basing indigenous progress "on reason and on the heart," which he said belonged to both races.¹⁰¹ Republican values, imbued via education, informed his rational approach to the conquest of minds. Delassus believed that the Algerians to be incapable of self-governing because of their religious adherence. He labeled pan-Islamism as "chimerical" because it was composed of too many different races from various geographical locations. Relating religion with nationalism, Delassus argued that this disunity rendered pan-Islamism incapable of producing a cohesive governing body. Thus, Algerians could not choose between independence and subjection, but had to choose under which "masters" they would live.¹⁰² Once chosen, "in several centuries, the distinction between conquerors and conquered will no longer exist in Algeria. There will only be one nation formed from members of different origins and

⁹⁹ Mercier, *La question indigène en Algérie*, 198.

¹⁰⁰ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 19–20.

¹⁰¹ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 21.

¹⁰² Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 36.

religions...having all the same rights and the same duties.”¹⁰³ Once political equality, one of the main tenets of republicanism, succeeded in Algeria, the differences in race would no longer matter. For Delassus, “natural order” helped to bring about a “higher and intelligent morality, without worrying about race.”¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

In a speech at the 1908 *Congrès de l’Afrique du Nord* in Paris, M. Marçais reiterated the prevailing sentiment of the French colonial officials and educational experts examined in this chapter when he stated that “the primary level education of indigenous Algerians must renounce being solely a straightforward copy of metropolitan education.” His reasoning was twofold. French educational experts fashioned metropolitan education into a metropolitan audience. From an ethnological and historical perspective, this curriculum was completely foreign to Algerians. In addition, metropolitan education sought to create French citizens and to instill republican values, an unachievable objective for colonized subjects consistent with the theory of association. In order for education to achieve its “noble task,” it must take into consideration an “exact appropriation of the political condition, the social state, and the economic needs of its clientele.”¹⁰⁵

None of the officials and experts examined in this chapter advocated the direct exportation of the metropolitan educational system to Algeria. In fact, every one of them either critiqued France’s efforts as being too utopian or misguided or suggested modifications, such as specialized textbooks and maintaining Arabic language classes, in order to fulfill France’s civilizing mission vis-à-vis education in Algeria. With the outbreak of World War I, France’s

¹⁰³ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 36–37.

¹⁰⁴ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 24.

¹⁰⁵ M. Marçais, “L’Enseignement primaire des indigènes algériens,” 2:182.

educational efforts stalled, seeing that its main concern shifted from maintaining its empire to battling Germany. What France did after the war in terms of modifying the educational system in Algeria would be one way to expand this study's scope.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the Third Republic, the change from military rule to civilian rule in French Algeria brought about a shift in education. No longer were the sword and the plow the main symbols of France's management of the colony. They were replaced by the book and the school. Republican leaders on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea recognized that in order to win over the indigenous populations of Algeria, France would have to start offering its subjects something in return. Republicans believed that education, as part of the civilizing mission and as a moral responsibility, was the best route to take to endear the Algerians to the French cause. When French metropolitan legislators passed the decree of 13 February 1883 extending metropolitan schooling to Algeria, less than 3,000 Arab and Kabyle children attended primary level schools. By 1912, that number had increased approximately ten times the original figure.¹⁰⁶ Republicans believed that educating Muslim children to be part of the overall civilizing mission, one that imparts a duty onto "superior races" to elevate "inferior races" to the former's level.¹⁰⁷

In his 1913 treatise on France and its empire, Achille Delassus, referring to metropolitan French authorities and educational experts, argued that "they do not sense the differences in location, in goals, and in methods."¹⁰⁸ Education was a political endeavor for Delassus. Contrary to those who wanted to export metropolitan educational practices to Algeria without any changes, Delassus was adamant that exceptions needed to be made in Algerian schools. This text, published on the eve of World War I, demonstrates that even four decades after the founding of the Third Republic, metropolitan and colonial officials has still not reached a consensus about the curricular content for Algerian schools.

¹⁰⁶ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 30. Delassus does not furnish an exact number of attendees.

¹⁰⁷ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 140.

¹⁰⁸ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 126.

The discourses examined here show that metropolitan French officials and educational experts believed the civilizing mission needed to begin in the metropole. These republicans believed a secular, moral, and civic education to be the means of inculcating future French citizens with republican values. To avoid a return to a monarchical regime and to assure the revolutionary tenet of individual liberties, republicans deemed a reformed, state-directed educational curriculum the best way to guarantee the republic's continuation. The centralized nature of this domestic civilizing mission favored using the French language as a tool to unite a linguistically diverse populace and to ameliorate France's widespread illiteracy.

In addition to the discursive debates occurring about metropolitan educational reform, another group of metropolitan officials and educational experts focused their efforts on reforming education in Algeria. The debates about educational reform in the French empire occurred alongside those concentrating on the metropolitan system. The debates this imperially-minded coterie of men produced, specifically those by member of the *Alliance française*, demonstrate a concern about the civilizing mission's success, arguing that Algerians needed to be won over to the French cause in order to assure the mission's victory. Also championing the French language as a conversion tool, these debates, informed by colonial theories, first encouraged the assimilation of Algerians. After the theory of association gained ground, these men changed their debates accordingly.

Republicans thought the endearment of Algerians to France would occur in two stages. First, the material conquest of Algerians' minds would happen via daily interactions between the colonizers and the colonized and through the exchange of products and services. This "practical and economic" phase would slowly bring about an equilibrium aimed at reducing the tensions

heretofore experienced.¹⁰⁹ Second, the educational conquest of Algerians, according to republicans, would “infuse [them] with all that merited to be saved from the past and present of [the French] into the souls of [the Algerians].”¹¹⁰ This moral conquest, which supplanted Algerian knowledge with French knowledge, “completed” the material conquest.¹¹¹

Metropolitan officials and educational experts were not the only ones debating which educational reforms France should employ in the empire. A group of colonial officials and experts offered their own reforms for consideration. This group of men and one woman overwhelmingly argued that geographical considerations needed to be taken into account when reforming the curriculum in Algeria. They decried a direct exportation of the metropolitan educational system into Algeria. These people, who either spent some time in Algeria or lived there all their lives, embraced the need to take local circumstances into consideration long before their metropolitan counterparts when reforming education. Thus, they argued in favor of Algerian exceptionalism when it came to reform.

While the discursive debates studied here begin to answer the questions posed in the introduction about the relationship between republicanism, education, and citizenship, more research and analysis needs to be done in order to understand the intricate connections between ideology and institutional reform fully. The role of World War I and its effect on education, especially on colonial troops, is a subfield of research that few scholars have tackled.¹¹² The interwar years, during which acceptance of the empire among the French population increased, is another time period in which education played an even greater role in the lives of France’s

¹⁰⁹ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 143.

¹¹⁰ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 144.

¹¹¹ Delassus, *Métropoles et colonies*, 142.

¹¹² See, Richard S. Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914–1918* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

colonial subjects. Yet, scholars have recently concentrated on other areas of study such as migration and immigration, the origins of the welfare state, and race relations during this era. Thus, much research and analysis remains to be done on education during the Third Republic, the results of which will most likely contribute a more nuanced, complicated, and non-monolithic interpretation of education's role in the republic. In light of the historiographical trend of comparative and global history within the past ten years, scholars could also produce comparative studies about educational discourse and reform throughout the French empire. Republicans' application of metropolitan educational policies and reforms in the empire, such as in Algeria, Indochina, Madagascar, and French West Africa, could shed light on the extent to which local circumstances influenced changes in these policies or reforms.

Another area of future research is the connection between language and identity throughout the French empire. The tension between a language that is widely used to facilitate communication and local languages serving as repositories of culture brings into question the extent to which a dominant language effects the identity of vernacular speakers. Sociologist John Joseph argues that people who adopt the dominant language do so whilst “constructing an identity for themselves that is bound up with a conception of modernity as communication extending beyond their village and their country to the world at large.”¹¹³ In the case of the French empire, the extent to which colonial subjects adopted the French language as their *lingua franca* could shed light on how they perceived their identity.

¹¹³ John E. Joseph, *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 23.

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