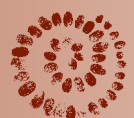
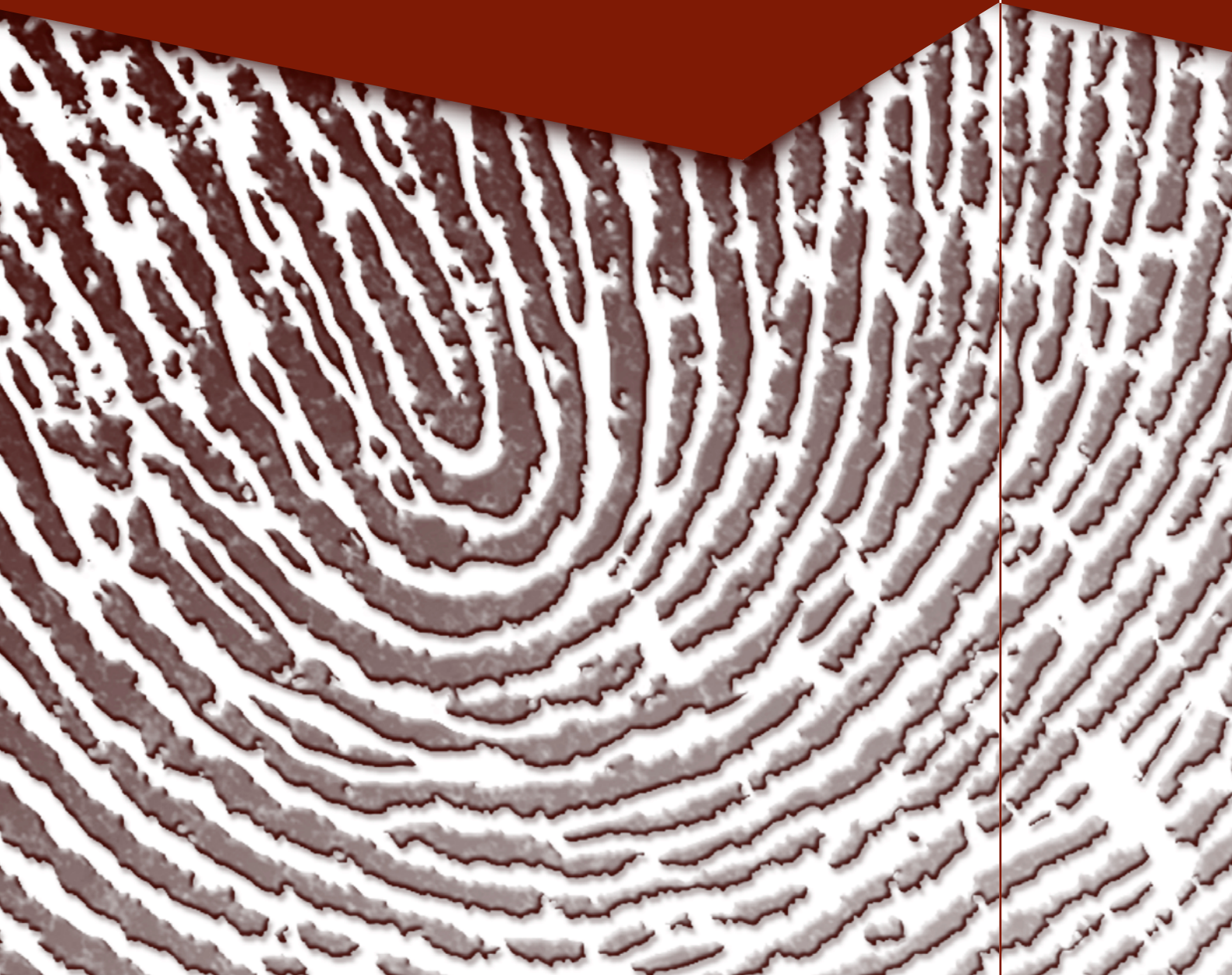


Distant Neighbours –

Understanding How
the French Deal with
Ethnic and Religious
Diversity



About Runnymede

The Runnymede Trust is an independent policy research organization focusing on equality and justice through the promotion of a successful multi-ethnic society. Founded as a Charitable Educational Trust, Runnymede has a long track record in policy research, working in close collaboration with eminent thinkers and policymakers in the public, private and voluntary sectors. We believe that the way ahead lies in building effective partnerships, and we are continually developing these with the voluntary sector, the government, local authorities and companies in the UK and Europe. We stimulate debate and suggest forward-looking strategies in areas of public policy such as education, the criminal justice system, employment and citizenship.

Since 1968, the date of Runnymede's foundation, we have worked to establish and maintain a positive image of what it means to live affirmatively within a society that is both multi-ethnic and culturally diverse. Runnymede continues to speak with a thoughtful and independent public voice on these issues today.

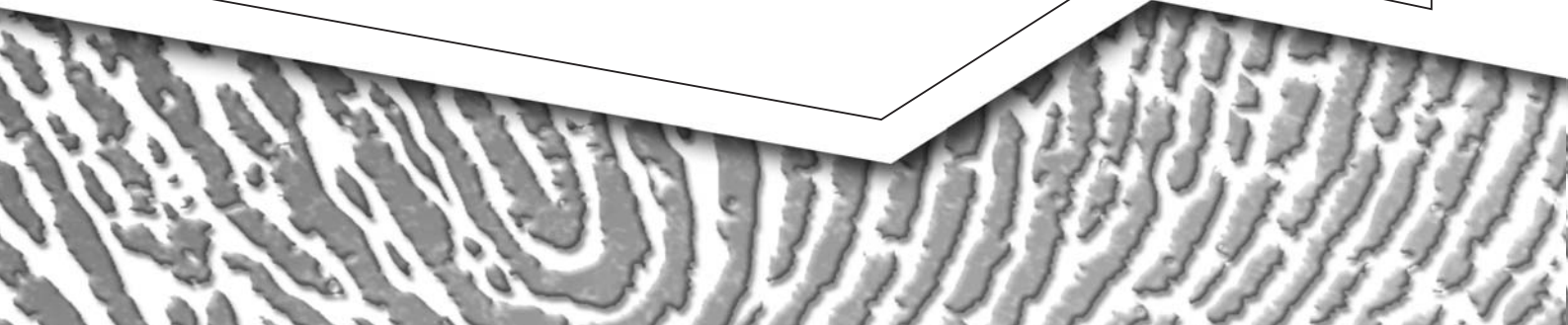
ISBN-10: 0-9548389-12
ISBN-13: 978-0-9548389-11
EAN: 9780954838911

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Foreword

Separated by only 23 miles, the UK and France often seem a gulf apart culturally and politically. While there are many similarities, both nations appear to revel in their uniqueness, while casting a glance over the fence to see how the other is doing, either to approve or more jingoistically to disapprove. This is unsurprising given our intertwined histories; from shared monarchy, through centuries of conflict, to alliance against Hitler's fascist aggression, to leading partners in an economic and political union of nations, France and the UK have worked closely together in the past and will again in the future. They often use each other for comparison – responding differently to the pressures of globalization and other external phenomena. There is a tendency to indulge in *Schadenfreude* when things go badly, and envy when they go well.¹ Policy in terms of racial equality, ethnic diversity and interfaith relations is no exception to this rule.

The events of 2005 brought the issues of race equality, community cohesion and interfaith relations to the fore in both countries. True to form, the gulf between the two countries became apparent and the subject of much comment. The British model of multiculturalism had been in flux since 2001, when analysis of the riots in the northern mill towns encouraged a welcome re-definition of policy to include community cohesion.² A year earlier Runnymede had published the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain,³ which had articulated our understanding of the British model of multiculturalism as a balance between cohesion, equality and diversity.

Our worst fears were realized. The bombings in London on July 7th 2005 reverberate still. It is clear that the actions of the four bombers and the five who attempted to replicate their terrorist actions two weeks later shocked the nation into recognizing that there were some people who, though born and raised in Britain, reject the British way of life. These people claimed to be declaring war on Britain from within and on behalf of an entire minority community.

For them multiculturalism had failed and was not what they wanted to promote. For them multiculturalism was a constraint because it allowed values which they did not share. Some commentators saw the bombings as evidence that multiculturalism had failed – in this way siding with the bombers, though admittedly for very different reasons.

We had been used to multiculturalism being under attack from the political (far) right, who had argued over a long period of time that assimilation was the only policy that would work, that allowing space for ethnic identities (other than the allegedly 'neutral' white British ethnicity) is unnecessary and indeed divisive. The race riots of the early and late 1980s were in part a response to this approach. Now, however, multiculturalism came under attack from the progressive left. The argument was that multiculturalism challenges social solidarity and therefore reduces mutuality; that multiculturalism makes us too diverse to sustain a welfare state by discouraging people from wanting to support people seen as too different.⁴

To me this is a profound mis-reading of what multiculturalist policies set out to do and made little

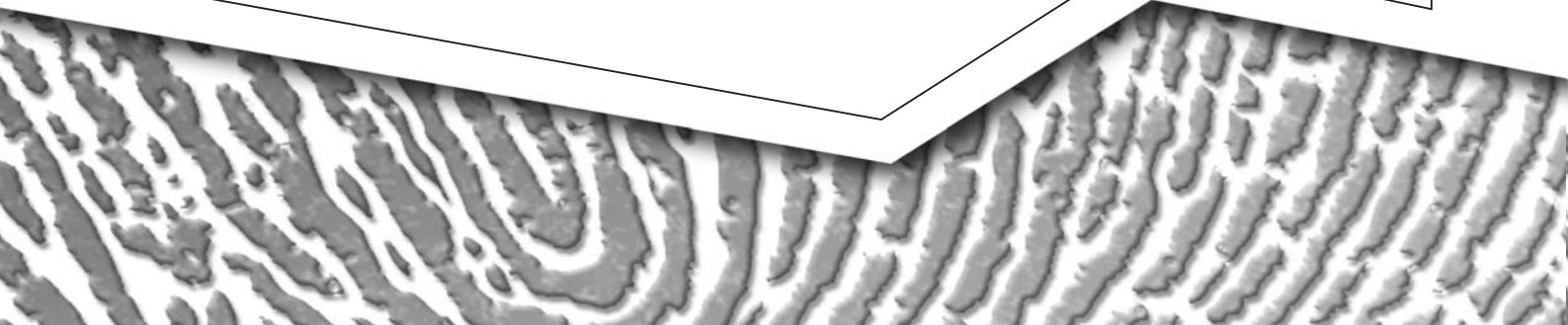
reference to multiculturalism as we had come to understand it. Common values and a shared sense of belonging, ensuring fair treatment and equal opportunities, and a recognition of different and fluid cultural identities, are all part

¹ July 6th 2005 put this into stark relief when London won the 2012 Olympic Bid from Paris, which had been seen by many as the favourite.

² Burnley Task Force (2001), Independent Review Team (2001), Denham (2001), Ritchie (2001)

³ CFMEB (2000)

⁴ Goodhart (2004)



of multiculturalism. Have the bombings and attempted bombings of July 2005 changed our society so much that these things are no longer true?

The debate that we had started in 2000, about the nature of Britishness and shared values, collided with the public debate after 11 September 2001 about a 'clash of civilizations', the limits of multiculturalism and the development of shared values, and led to the development of a community cohesion agenda. While we had been arguing that multiculturalism was about establishing a balance between cohesion, equality and diversity, a cohesion agenda was hurriedly developed in the context of fears of Muslim exceptionalism which attempted to focus on only the cohesion part of the model. The danger with this agenda has always been that the equality and diversity parts of the model are ignored. Yet if we lose a focus on equality, the social exclusion, disenfranchisement and marginalization of communities and groups remains unchecked. If we lose the diversity part of the equation then we return to a model of assimilationism and reject the benefits of challenge, new ways of thinking, and hybridity.

The critique of 'multiculturalism' made by the then Chair of the CRE Trevor Phillips,⁵ Secretary of State for Communities Ruth Kelly,⁶ and Cabinet Minister Baroness Amos,⁷ was born out of a frustration with the way in which it was misread more than an attempt to discard its principles. The political danger of such an approach however is that where policy becomes practice, the nuances of this argument will not be understood and the baby will be discarded along with the bath water. In this context it is instructive to note that when Trevor Phillips began his critique of multiculturalism, he posited an alternative agenda, 'Integration with diversity', yet within a year the '. . .with diversity' tag had been dropped.

In a speech to guests of the Runnymede Trust at the end of 2006,⁸ Tony Blair challenged those who had given up on multiculturalism, arguing:

It is not that we need to dispense with multicultural Britain. On the contrary we should continue celebrating it. But we need – in the face of the challenge to our values – to re-assert also the duty to integrate, to stress what we hold in common and to say: these are the shared boundaries within which we all are obliged to live, precisely in order to preserve our right to our own different faiths, races and creeds. We must respect both our right to differ and the duty to express any difference in a way fully consistent with the values that bind us together.

It would appear that the multicultural model lives on.

Engagement around cohesion alone is difficult and it is understandable why. The benefits for any group of there being cohesion without equality and diversity are pretty thin. It is being asked to 'integrate' without a clear picture of what it is being asked to integrate into. It is being asked to integrate on the basis that it leaves behind what it already has. It is being asked to integrate without any acknowledgement that it will be able to influence the shape of the whole. Above all, it is being asked to integrate into power structures that may leave it in a disadvantaged position.

The coming months in Britain will see renewed debate about the nature of our multicultural settlement with the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, the completion of the

⁵ The Times (2004)

⁶ 'I believe this is why we have moved from a period of uniform consensus on the value of multiculturalism, to one where we can encourage that debate by questioning whether it is encouraging separateness.' Speech by Ruth Kelly 24/08/06 available under www.communities.gov.uk

⁷ 'We didn't recognise the limits of multiculturalism early enough' Speech by Baroness Valerie Amos 28/09/06

⁸ 'The Duty to Integrate: Shared British Values - Our Nation's Future' Speech by Tony Blair Dec 8th 2006 available under www.number10.gov.uk

Equalities Review and the promised publication of new legislation in the form of a Single Equalities Bill. It is for this reason that it is useful to have a 'glance over the fence' to understand alternative models of dealing with ethnic and religious diversity. Our French neighbours have taken a different route and the outcomes are at least as problematic as our own.

While still reeling from the July bombings and the fighting in the streets of Lozells, Birmingham which saw two people die as a result of running street battles between Black and Asian youths, reports came through of unrest in French suburbs. This unrest led to the government imposing a curfew. It also led to fresh examples of the *Schadenfreude* that typifies relations between our countries. In the wake of the French riots Jonathan Freedland wrote in the Guardian (9/11/05):

France's refusal to see the ethnicity of some of its people as relevant translates into de facto racism. If human beings were free of prejudice, the French republican ideal would work beautifully. Because we are not, it allows racism a free hand.

Others accused France of being backwards by comparison to Britain.⁹ It seems we quickly forget the beam in our own eye when looking at France.

Christophe Bertossi's paper reminds us that the multiculturalist model that we have adopted (confused as it sometimes is) is the result of a series of political choices; we live with the consequences. France has made its own choices. We believe that many of the choices that we have made have been the correct ones for Britain. Our model is not perfect and there may be things to learn from others. Whether it is discussion about the relationship between religion and the state, religious dress in public, the legacy of Empire, the rise in far-right political activity, our role in Europe or economic disadvantage, all are of relevance in contemporary debate in the UK. It seems as if in looking at France we sometimes lose our critical faculties in our haste to further our neighbourly oneupmanship.

Bertossi's paper also sheds light on the role that European level policymaking can have in this area – embedding change where national governments find it difficult, encouraging greater similarities in treatment of minority communities, often for the better. The work that Runnymede undertakes engaging with policy at a European level and supporting the UK Race and Europe Network (UKREN)¹⁰ is crucial because the changes that it can deliver domestically and across Europe serve to benefit minority ethnic and faith-based communities. When we engage with the policy-making processes of the EU, we can open up new possibilities for influence and change. By having a voice in these debates we can ensure that a model of race relations that works in line with our understanding of ethnic and religious diversity is embedded in policy right across the Union.

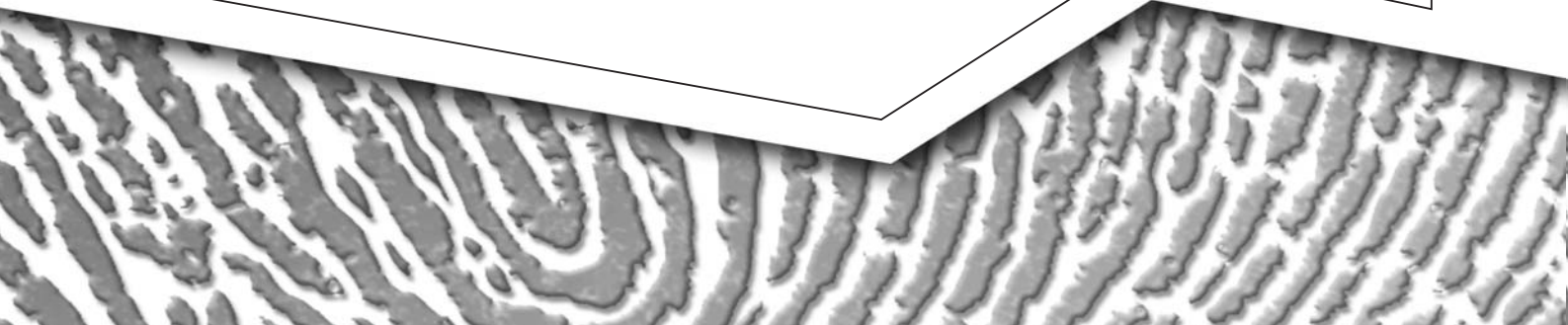
Here we take a look at our 'distant' neighbours in order to understand the political choices made and to learn from them about our own choices. Facing very similar issues, the UK and France have often taken different routes – neither of us has a road map; both have a need to build successful

multi-ethnic communities at ease with themselves.

Dr Rob Berkeley
Deputy Director of the Runnymede Trust
February 2007

9 For example, Graham Murray wrote 'Members of Britain's ethnic minority communities arriving in France should put back their watches by about thirty years. For those too young to have experienced the blatant racism of the 1970s, be prepared for a shock; for the rest, brace yourselves for some sinister reminders of the past. This is a country where a foreign name on a CV will seriously undermine your chances of getting a job; where landlords still instruct estate agents to find white tenants; where *pâtisseries* sell chocolate-covered cakes called *tête de nègre* (negro's head) and whose inhabitants apologetically describe their poor English as *petit-nègre*.'

10 Visit www.runnymedetrust.org/ukren



Distant Neighbours

– Understanding How the French Deal with Ethnic and Religious Diversity

Christophe Bertossi

Introduction

On 27 October 2005, in Clichy-sous-Bois, a Paris suburb, two teenagers of North-African and Sub-Saharan origin, 15 and 17 years old respectively, died when they were electrocuted after seeking refuge from the police in a power station. Two days later in the same city, police fired tear-gas at the entrance of a mosque. That was the start of three weeks of riots affecting almost all the regions of France. On 7 November, a curfew was imposed by the government, reactivating a 1955 law originally aimed at stemming insurrection during the Algerian war of independence. The police arrested three thousand youngsters, one third of whom were under the age of 18. Pictures of 9,000 burning cars were broadcast around the world for a month. These images symbolized the limits of French republican integration and citizenship.

The immediate policy response to these events was to implicate the so-called ‘anti-integration’ attitudes of migrants, whose identities were highlighted as the core problem affecting their social, cultural and political integration into French society. As a matter of fact, these ‘migrants’ were French citizens. What’s more, as far as their identities were concerned, they did not mobilize on the basis of any cultural or religious claims. A police

report to the Interior Minister concluded that the main factor behind the crisis in the suburbs was discrimination.¹¹ The issue was actually about equality of opportunity and of access to social mobility, as well as spatial segregation connected to ethnic and religious identity.¹² The youngsters involved in the three-week riots fought against the symbols of their relegation to territories where republican equality did not reach, notably the institutional symbols of French society (police forces, firemen, schools, and so on). They did not contest the principles of French citizenship. They claimed their legitimate place within it.

This gap between the policy understanding of the crisis and the social and economic roots of the riots arises from a particular context. In recent years, French identity politics have been marked by:

- the institutionalization of Islam under the auspices of the Interior Minister, with the creation of the French Council of the Muslim Religions (CFCM);
- a debate on French secularism (*laïcité*) leading to the banning of Muslim headscarves in public schools;¹³
- the negative referendum on the European constitutional treaty in May 2005, partly connected with antipathy towards the accession of Turkey to the European Union and the fear of being ‘swamped’ by Eastern Europeans;
- the vote in favour of and then withdrawal of a law celebrating the positive contributions made by French colonialism overseas;¹⁴
- and the presence of the leader of the extreme right-wing party in the second round of the 2002 presidential election.

¹¹ Le Monde (2005)

¹² Fitoussi, Laurent, Maurice (2004)

¹³ The law ‘in application of the principle of *laïcité*, forbidding ‘all signs or clothes obviously demonstrating a religious affiliation’ in public schools was voted in on 15 March 2004. It was implemented in metropolitan France and in the departments and territories overseas, but with some exceptions in Neo-Caledonia. At the start of the following school year, school officers negotiated with 600 Muslim schoolgirls, 47 of whom were finally excluded.

¹⁴ The Constitutional Council declared that the content of Article 4 of the law of 23 February 2005 came within the competence of administrative rules and not of the law. This article stipulated that ‘History syllabi should recognize, in particular, the French presence overseas, notably in Northern Africa, and afford the eminent attention they deserve to the history and sacrifices of French military combatants originating from these territories’ (my translation).

A new politics of citizenship in France?

Such identity politics in France are not recent. In the 1980s, they emerged as a public agenda connected to the restriction of access to French citizenship for post-colonial migrants. These migrants were already identified through their supposed religious identity, namely as 'Muslims'. But the context in which these identity politics took place has critically transformed itself since then.

This paper aims to increase understanding of this transformation. To do so, I first argue that public readings of the 'issue of integration' as a specific stigmatization of the 'reluctant identity' of minority-group members, perceived as opposing integration into the French republic, is not something new. Rather, it originates in the way the republican model of integration was initially conceived at the end of the 19th century, and then re-invented in the 1980s. If the labeling of the members of these minority groups has changed, from categories based on their nationality in a post-colonial manner to categories emphasizing their membership of Islam, the dilemma of French citizenship versus ethnicity has not.

My second point is that within this citizenship versus ethnicity dilemma, French politics and policies of ethnicity and integration have been affected by various policy developments at the EU level. The emergence of a French anti-discrimination agenda originates, for example, with the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, rather than deriving from a bottom-up mobilization among French citizens of migrant origin. In much the same way, the transformation of French identity politics from citizenship/nationality in the 1980s–90s to Islam/*laïcité* at the beginning of the new millennium has something to do with the EU global context.

Understanding French politics and the policies of citizenship

I begin by investigating the inner contradictions of the French model of citizenship, as explanations of the limits of French citizenship today have to be sought, to some extent, in the French republican model of integration itself. That is, our under-

standing of the transformations and limits of the French model of integration is incomplete if we focus only on the way each situation is embedded in a coherent set of principles, what Adrian Favell calls 'philosophies of integration'.¹⁵ Emphasizing either the correspondence with or the distance between these public philosophies and the recent developments of identity politics in France is far from satisfying.

A full analysis of the construction of citizenship in contemporary France must also address these contradictions. What is more, limiting analysis to the national level fails to inform us about the current context in which these transformations of and limits to citizenship-building take place.

There is another dimension that must be added: Europe itself, for two main reasons:

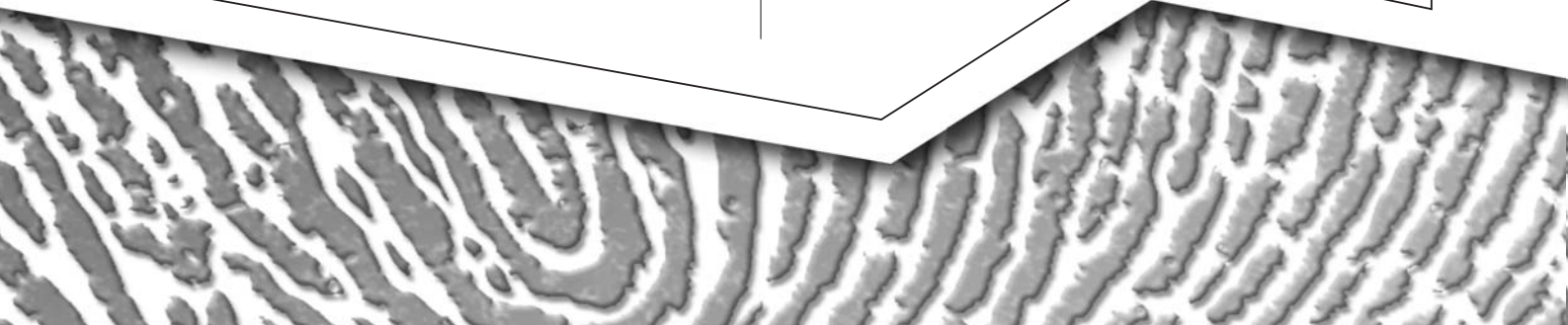
First, the French crisis of integration resembles similar developments in other European Community (EU) countries, most notably the Netherlands in the aftermath of the murders of Pim Fortuyn in May 2002 and Theo Van Gogh in November 2004. The traditional 'philosophy' of liberal tolerance yielded ground to perceptions of Islam as a threat to Dutch liberal norms and values. Something similar happened in Britain in the aftermath of the 2001 riots in Northern England, with new policies based on so-called Community Cohesion, and the promotion of a civic understanding of citizenship, connected in turn with notions such as allegiance and loyalty.¹⁶ This perception is now shared by public opinion in most EU countries, especially after the bombings in Madrid on 11 March 2004 and in London on 7 July 2005.

Second, European integration has transformed deeply both the notion of citizenship and the relationship between identity, rights and sovereignty out of which modern democracy emerged in the aftermath of the American and French revolutions in the late 18th century.

With EU integration, elements of sovereignty have been transferred to European supranational institutions. Whereas citizenship had become an old-fashioned notion, from the mid-1980s onwards it started to attract important attention from academics and policymakers, under the two

¹⁵ Favell (2001)

¹⁶ Independent Review Team (2001)



processes of the durable settlement of migrants in Europe and progress towards the further political integration of European communities. This contributed to a reformulation of the relationship between identity and rights, that is, between nationality and active citizenship. Despite the existing formal limits of EU citizenship, the post-2005 crisis of French citizenship finds in the EU integration process a new context that impacts on the French politics of citizenship and identity, and has reshaped French policies of integration, though in contradictory ways that range from anti-discrimination to anti-Islam perspectives.

Structure of this paper

This paper is organized in four sections. Section 1 addresses the inner contradiction of the French model of citizenship in its development through the 19th century and, more importantly, how it crystallized in the 1980s, when migration shifted to the settlement of post-colonial migrants, whose children then became French citizens. Section 2 emphasizes how the French 'model' of citizenship is contradicted much more deeply by the EU integration process than it is by the shift from migration to durable settlement. Section 3 describes the early evolution that occurred in French citizenship policies towards the middle of the 1990s, when the traditional republican 'philosophy of integration' was complemented by anti-discrimination policies, directly imported from the EU agenda in the aftermath of the Amsterdam Treaty. The fourth and last section addresses the recent emergence of new identity politics focusing on the compatibility between being a Muslim and being a French citizen, in the context of debates on French secularism, leading to the ban on Muslim headscarves in public schools. This section also highlights the European dimension of such debates.

¹⁷ Schnapper (1998 (1991))

¹⁸ Miller (2000)

¹⁹ Leca (1990), Bertossi (2001)

1. Ambiguities of French Citizenship

French politics of citizenship have been based exclusively on the uniqueness principle – the uniqueness of the individual. Ethnic, regional or religious categorizations have been ignored. *Only* individuals are citizens, citizens are equal, therefore all individuals are equal citizens. This syllogism has grounded French citizenship for the last two centuries.

There are ambiguities inherent in the issue of ethno-cultural and religious identities versus national and civic identities. Logically, these ambiguities have paved the way for contradictory policies of citizenship in post-war France, with a critical gap between the universalist principles the French Constitution is based on, of equality of rights of membership, and the actual treatment afforded to formal citizens who also belonged, in increasing numbers, to minority groups.

This distortion between principles and reality is not something specific to the French situation. However, my argument is not that this distortion is contradicting French republicanism, but that it is an element of its structure. This finds its roots in part of a general debate on the national stage and among the nation-states in the age of globalization. What Dominique Schnapper¹⁷ and David Miller¹⁸ claim about the necessary limitation of universalism by national identity has been equally claimed by the proponents of French republican citizenship, particularly in the 1980s, when post-colonial labour migrants settled in France and their children became French citizens.

1.1. The sources of French Republicanism

How can the needs of ethno-cultural and religious diversity be accommodated within an underlying notion of equality? Formally, the ideological scaffolding of French citizenship provides a clear solution: the transformation of individuals into citizens parallels the melding of cultural and religious 'identities' into one common national identity. As Clermont-Tonnerre famously stated: 'nothing to the Jew as a Nation, everything to the Jew as an individual'. Republican legitimacy is therefore based on the primacy of civic individualism and national modernity.¹⁹

The Republican understanding of citizenship is rooted in the 1789 French Revolution and its aftermath. It was enhanced by the 19th century's politics and policies on nationality and immigration, by which French citizenship, at the end of the century, had become based on three principles: *jus sanguinis* in 1804 (blood right to citizenship), dual *jus soli* in 1851 (a conditional birthright²⁰ based on place of birth), and automatic *jus soli* in 1889 (simple birthright). The underlying philosophy that shapes these principles is that socialization in France, through school, trades unions, voluntary organizations and/or military service, leads to one's fully fledged integration into the national/civic *habitus* that embodies French citizenship. This ideology concerns foreigners, but not exclusively so: as Eugen Weber shows, it also dealt with the transformation of peasants into Frenchmen.²¹

However, there has never been a stable and permanent republican structure in France's modern history. The rights of citizenship and nationality have not always been equated. During the colonial period, for example, nationality was not synonymous with citizenship. Specific colonial statuses were created, such as 'French colonial nationals' and the implementation of a second electoral body in Algeria (reserved for Muslims).

That said, formal nationality was not a precondition for full citizenship during the process of suffrage extension. Until 1848, suffrage was based on capacity and tax quotas. Women were not entitled to vote until 1945, nor could youths under 21 until 1974 (when the voting age was lowered to 18). What is also striking with regard to the formal Republican ideology is that, from the very end of the 19th century on, new French nationals were not able to become new citizens at once. They had to wait five years before getting the right to vote and ten years for eligibility to become a citizen. This 'dual naturalization' was phased out in 1973 (right to vote) and 1983 (eligibility).

It is also important to note that the political

²⁰ The principle of dual birthright supposes that children born in France of 'foreign' parents who were themselves born in France, become French automatically.

²¹ Weber (1976)

²² Weil and Hansen (eds) (2000)

²³ Feldblum (1999)

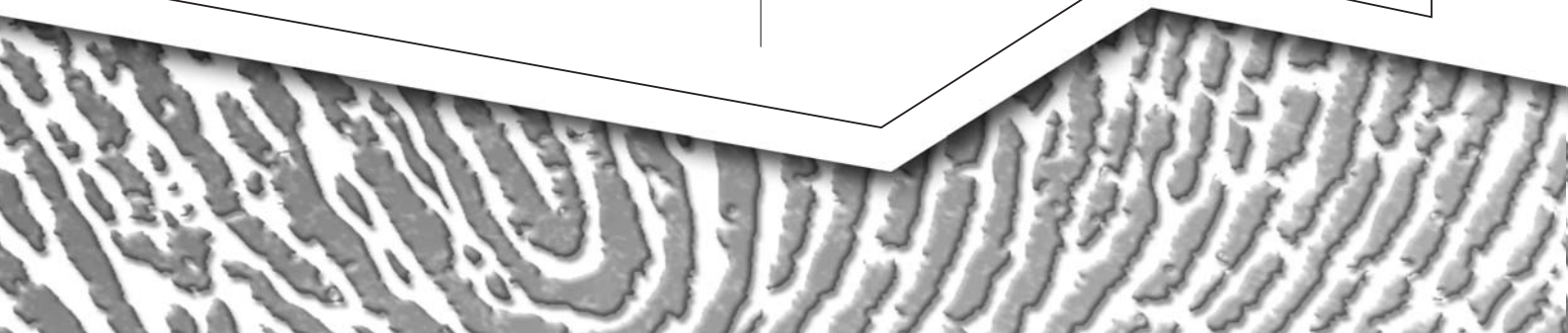
heritage of 1789 was suspended between 1940 and 1944 by Pétain's *Révolution Nationale* and the Vichy regime. Nationality was restrictively manipulated. More than 15,000 French citizens had their French nationality annulled during the period. This affected mostly French Jews (about 6,000).²² French nationals who fled from France between 20 May and 30 June 1940 without authorization had their nationality revoked (Act of 23 July 1940). At the end of World War II, the Vichy regime was abolished and new legislation reinstated the main principles of the 19th-century Republican doctrine.

From the 1950s onwards, immigration was used to help cope with a labour shortage until borders were closed in 1974. Since then, the supposition that migrants would return to their country of origin has reinforced the difficulty of coming to terms with ethnic minorities' settlement. The issue of citizenship re-emerged in this context with the mid-1970s economic crisis, when immigration itself became a public issue. In turn, the very notion of French 'nationhood' was questioned.

1.2. The 'problem' of nationality in the 1980s

As a result, integration was reconceived in the mid-1980s²³ as a modernization of the old-fashioned concept of French assimilationism. The debate focused on tolerance towards newcomers' non-European and non-Christian cultural backgrounds. This was embedded in the post-colonial context and the establishment of permanent communities of the non-French.

In the early 1980s, France's post-colonial heritage was reassessed, largely the result of the relationship with Algeria. Algerian independence in 1962 sounded the death knell for the myth of a universalistic French nation. Despite the colonial dichotomy between French citizens and Muslim subjects, Algeria had been integrated into metropolitan France as one of three *départements* considered to be integral to France. But this so-called civic definition of the French nation, one that was to be reproduced in other French territories overseas, failed with the Algerian war of independence (1954–62).



Meanwhile, former colonial subjects became migrant workers. By virtue of the right to family reunification, whole families started to settle. By the 1980s, they had become part of the political agenda (immigration as a public issue) and the polity (their children having become French nationals by birth). This led to a reassessment of national identity as a condition for citizenship. At the same time, Muslims began to become 'visible' in the public realm (car industry strikes in 1983, demands for the construction of places of worship, etc.).²⁴ Islam became France's second religion. Subsequently, the boundary between the 'national Self' and the 'Other' got blurred: post-colonial migrants and their descendants have settled in metropolitan France, are entitled to the rights of citizenship and have become French nationals. But these newcomers, particularly the Algerians, are still perceived, politically and socially, as *foreign migrants* despite their nationality status.

A new polemic arose under the same premise – one by which newcomers did not have what it takes to become 'genuine' citizens. They were seen as being unable or unwilling to accept the burdens of citizenship (obligations in general, but more precisely 'cultural' integration). They were suspected of claiming French citizenship only in order to reap its benefits. From that perspective, new French nationals were referred to as 'the paper French' or 'French only for the papers'. Strongly influenced by the extreme rightwing National Front party, this debate generated a broad consensus that became the core issue of France's mid-1980s political agenda.

This situation paved the way for reformation of the French nationality code (CNF), as carried out by the new right-wing government elected in 1986. The project aimed to replace automatic access to French nationality (article 44 of the Code) by a Declaration of Will (*manifestation de volonté*). This alluded directly to the claim that new citizens were bogus nationals. The consequences of de-colonization on nationality rules were also addressed: dual *jus soli* (article 23 of the Code) was challenged, essentially regarding children of Algerian origin (defined by the Code as children born in France from foreign parents who were born in France too,

Algeria having been part of France before 1962).

However, this first attempt to reform the CNF faced considerable opposition from groups supporting 'the right to (cultural) difference'.²⁵ A new generation of voluntary organizations and groups emerged as a result of foreigners' freedom of association, guaranteed by law in October 1981. Organizations such as SOS Racisme and France Plus were created in 1983–4. They launched nationwide rallies (*Marche des Beurs* in 1983–4–5 – see footnote no.18), inspired by the Black American civil rights movements of the 1960s.

The Council of State challenged aspects of the government project that clashed with the Constitution and its incorporated Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. In response, the Prime Minister launched a Commission of Nationality to stem opposition to the project. Between 1987 and 1988, the Commission undertook public hearings and investigated the little-known social aspects of migrant settlement, family reunification, schooling, housing, and the policies of nationality and immigration.

Results were published in a two-volume report, entitled *Being French Today and Tomorrow* (Long, 1988). The report defined and crystallized the notion of national integration. This notion met with huge consensus across the political spectrum (except within the National Front) and society. It also represented the starting-point for an extensive new academic literature on the issues of immigration, citizenship and national identity.²⁶

Republican ideology was re-focused on a comprehensive basis: national integration, absorption of minorities into the would-be socio-cultural 'mainstream', relegation of any cultural or religious difference to the private sphere, loyalty and allegiance perceived as the *sine qua non* for citizenship. Consequently, French citizenship was re-invented while strict republican features were strengthened and legitimized (the opposition between the political and the social, the public and the private, cohesion and diversity, national identity vs. 'the other').

The first headscarf affair occurred in this context in 1989 when three Muslim schoolgirls refused to take off their *hijab* in class. As the bicentennial of the French revolution was celebrated, Islam was being denounced as a threat to

24 Kepel (1991)

25 Feldblum (1998), Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau (2001)

26 Costa-Lascoux (1989), Etienne (1989) Schnapper (1998 (1991)), Weil (1991)

national identity. The issue of a religious ‘threat’ to the republican contract was intensified by groups of Christian fundamentalists setting fire to cinemas where Scorsese’s *Last Temptation of Christ* was being screened.

Amidst this drama erupting around issues of French national identity, reform of the CNF was finally implemented in 1993 by a newly elected right-wing government. Unlike the 1986 attempt, the 1993 reform did not face strong resistance. It replaced Article 44 (automatic *jus soli*) with the Declaration of Will (Article 21–7 of the New Civil Code). From then on, children who were born in France of foreign parents had to *declare* their wish to become French between the age of 16 and 21. Moreover, young people were deprived of that right if they had been sentenced to over six months in prison.

Aside from this restrictive reform of French legal citizenship, the redefinition of integration has had a social cost: the final form into which national/civic integration crystallized in the 1980s–90s was one largely determined by a conservative Republican philosophy. Namely, it assumed that being a French national was a sufficient basis for fully fledged citizenship. In these terms, the very notions of discrimination, inequality of opportunity or belonging within mainstream society were declared not to be legitimate issues for the ‘Republican Pact’.

On the one hand, the pact posited that there were no such things as ‘ethnic minorities’ in France.

On the other, legal equality was equated with full and actual equality. Thus, it was claimed that discrimination did not exist in France. The civic integration creed was clearly aimed at non-Europeans and non-Christians and the way they could be accommodated. It is striking that the

27 According to the 1999 Census, 553,663 Portuguese nationals live in France (17% of the foreign population), compared with 504,096 Moroccans (15.5%), 477,482 Algerians (14.6%) and 154,356 Tunisians nationals (4.7%). The foreign population is 3,263,186 or 5.57% of the entire population of France (INSEE 2001).

28 Assemblée Nationale (1993: 347–8)

29 United Nations Commission on Human Rights (1996)

30 Despite this, the dominant ideology on citizenship still framed social policies and most of the academic literature until the end of the 1990s. Even when a new discrimination-aware policy emerged in the early 1990s, it faced severe resistance. A survey published in 1991 identified discrimination in two main domains: employment and housing (Tribalat, 1991; 1995). However, there was no statistical tool for researchers and policymakers to measure the precise nature or extent of discrimination (the census only referred to nationality without any mention of ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds). The issue of ethnic minorities’ access to employment was mostly explained, *inter alia*, within the mainstream unemployment patterns (Hessel, 1988; HCI, 1993).

whole debate focused on the Muslim population in general and Algerians in particular, whereas in fact the most common foreign nationality was Portuguese.²⁷ Cultural and religious differences were therefore at the centre of the debate. The issue of controlling immigration flows paralleled this cultural row (the 1993 Immigration Law was passed one month after the Law on Nationality). This sensitive combination was clearly affirmed in the justification of the new nationality law by one of its instigators:

I will add – and I know everyone here does think about it – that Islam is not only a religion, but a real rule for social, judicial, philosophical and economic life, which is opposed to our own conceptions, as well as to our own legal principles. Islam – and I think especially about the threat of fundamentalism – refuses, we have to say, adhesion to our own society ... Yesterday from European origin, the foreign population is largely from non-European origin today ... [W]e will face new situations, and integration, again, is more difficult today, because – we have to say this – more and more aliens living in France come from countries which are different from the countries which they used to come from in the past.²⁸

Hence 9/11 can be seen as the origin of neither national identity politics in France, nor the suggestion that Islam is irreconcilable with French republican citizenship. The post-colonial context shaped this debate much earlier, in the 1980s and 1990s. What is also striking is how clearly that perspective shows the ostensible push *for* integration becoming a counter-integrative programme. It challenged the equality of membership of French *citizens* who were perceived as ‘difficult’ to accommodate, because of the development of a culturalist approach to integration. A report on xenophobia in France in 1995 emphasized the extent of discrimination and the way the latter was legitimized by the new legislation on nationality and immigration,²⁹ but this found no policy response.³⁰

2. The Pluralist Challenge to Integration: Immigration and Europe

Such radical developments in the political debate surrounding French citizenship put the very notion of membership of an equality-based society at issue. Migrants' organizations gave highly critical responses. Issues of equality, identity, democracy, human rights and, moreover, of a citizenship by residency without regard to ethnicity, became tools used by a new generation of migrants' organizations for challenging 'integration'. But French citizenship was in fact challenged less by migrants and their descendants – most of their initiatives actually failed – than by the development of the EU integration programme, out of which an EU citizenship emerged and became legitimate in 1992.

2.1. Mobilization among the new French citizens

By the end of the 1990s the new French citizens had transformed their anti-nationalist protest movement into a more localized, less ambitious campaign.³¹ New attitudes towards citizenship emerged from this shift in methodology and programme.

A particular group of voluntary organizations emphasized the notion of 'new'.³² 'New citizenship' values active commitment by individuals to their local environment, rejecting the 'soft' civic attitude of the mainstream population. Broadly speaking, citizenship is considered within the framework of *local* everyday life. As a voluntary sector leader of Algerian origin puts it: 'some people do not have French nationality, and yet they may be much more "citizen-like" than a lot of French natives who are nationals by descent... They are citizens because they participate in the local social life; because they are militant; because they make associations working for the interest of all; because they are aware of the general interest; because they defend their city with more conviction than the natives'.³³

31 Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau (2001)

32 Bouamama (1992)

33 quoted in Bertossi (2001: 202)

34 Bertossi (2001: 210–17), Césari (1998)

35 La Médina (2000)

Other organizations of the non-ethnically French developed the idea by which 'we are from this country, regardless of our nationality. Same duties, same rights'. These different critics focused on a key claim: a citizenship logic must replace a perspective based on nationality and civic/national integration.

One main criticism of national citizenship focused on national identity as a destroyer of cultural differences (and thus as a challenge to democracy), with particular attention to the post-colonial context. In tandem with these statements, Muslims set up further initiatives in the middle of the 1990s with a new agenda: reconciliation between Islam and the Republic, establishing Muslims as a fully fledged component of the 'Republican Pact'.³⁴ The slogan 'Muslim citizens' sums up this new attitude, for 'citizenship is broader than nationality'.³⁵ Particularly for some Muslim youth, campaigning at the European level was seen as an important way of legitimately bypassing the nation-state. European involvement is thus seen as a good prospect for Islam within France.

2.2. European citizenship and French Jacobinism

Another challenge to French national Republicanism can be seen in the emergence of a European framework for citizenship. The European framework stands in opposition to two pillars of French republicanism: the latter's refusal politically to acknowledge cultural diversity in the country, and the centralized nature of the French state and its denial of possible pluralistic forms (e.g. regionalism).

The close relationship between citizenship and nationality in the French model has been profoundly challenged by the emergence of EU citizenship. Thus far, even local (municipal) citizenship for foreign nationals could not possibly conform with the Republican doctrine, yet the right to vote locally was one of the 110 proposals made by François Mitterrand in the 1981 presidential election campaign. This proposal did not reappear on the political agenda until twenty years later, when the *Assemblée Nationale* discussed it in 2000 (without implementing it).

In the 1980s, various attempts to bring foreign nationals into local affairs had taken place in some

cities. As early as the mid-1970s, local consultative councils for foreigners were created in Marly and Valenciennes, inspired by similar experiments in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. In Mons-en-Baroeul, 'immigrants' were invited to take part in a referendum on the city council's financial undertakings. In 1985, the city council held an election of 'foreign associate councillors'. In 1987, a similar vote took place in Amiens. Between 1989 and 1992, five other municipalities followed a similar line of 'associative democracy' (Cerizay, Longjumeau, Les Ullis, Vandoeuvre-Lès-Nancy and Portes-Lès-Valences).

However, these experiments remained on the fringes of legality. What is even more striking is that the migrants' organizations themselves did not reach a clear consensus on the issue. For organizations such as France Plus, any dissociation between nationality and citizenship was understood as too sensitive an issue. During the 1988 presidential election, its president argued that it was 'dangerous' to give foreigners the local right to vote because it would exacerbate French natives' xenophobic attitudes towards 'migrants'.³⁶

Municipal suffrage for foreign nationals, however, did not arise from national political debate. It had clearly been granted from outside the domestic French political arena, that is, from the European-wide development of an EU citizenship.

Article 8 of the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) institutes a residency-based European citizenship at local and supranational level. Whereas Article 8 B-2 (EU citizenship at the European level) remains oddly above the issue of distributing specific political rights to foreign nationals in France, Article 8 B-1 (EU citizenship at the local level) is at odds with the Republican constitutional definition of French citizenship (Articles 3 and 4 of the 1958 Constitution).

³⁶ Arezki Dahmani quoted in Césari (1995: 202)

³⁷ Soysal (1994), Habermas (1998)

³⁸ Linklater (1998)

³⁹ Kastoryano (ed.) (1998)

⁴⁰ Bauböck (1994)

⁴¹ Bertossi (2001)

⁴² This issue concerned the integration of populations from migrant origins but the successive EU enlargements also contributed to the reinforcement of this problematic, notably within normative frameworks developed by the Council of Europe in the mid-1990s with regard to regional minorities in Eastern Europe (see Pierré-Caps, Poumarède and Rouland, 1996).

Consequently, on 3 April 1992, the Constitutional Council ruled that Article 8 B-1 contradicted the French constitution. Two issues were outlined: first, that city councillors participate in national governance and sovereignty insofar as they elect Senators (members of the upper chamber of the French parliament); second, that mayors and deputy mayors act 'in the name of the French people', and are consequently to be considered as local agents of national sovereignty. Hence, Article 8 B-1 of the Treaty must be interpreted under a dual restriction: European foreign nationals living in France can have the right to vote and to run in municipal elections, but they cannot be elected as mayors or deputy mayors. In addition, when they are city councillors, they cannot vote in senatorial elections (Constitutional Act, 25 June 1995).

2.3. Understanding the EU challenge to French Republicanism

In the early 1990s, the renewal of citizenship studies emerged from proposals focused on the revision of national modern citizenship. Authors suggested new post-national,³⁷ cosmopolitan,³⁸ multicultural,³⁹ and transnational⁴⁰ theoretical frameworks, aimed at a reform of the idea of citizenship. All these developments found in European integration the resource and impetus for such a renewal. European integration was perceived as an opportunity for by-passing the internal contradictions of national democracy, while these national contradictions were underscored by the presence of migrants and claims made by ethnic minorities for equal access to citizenship rights. In this context, the fate of migrants in their new countries of settlement became a question of political and social justice that challenged the legitimacy of national principles.⁴¹ Meanwhile, Europe presented itself as a new arena for redefining post-national citizenship coupled with a strengthened multicultural democracy.⁴²

The reading of this process considered citizenship as the result of a progressive dialectic in which Europe constituted a new step beyond the nation-state. Citizenship resulted from the progressive inclusion of excluded segments of national populations (such as women, youth, non-property owning working classes, people with a disability

or illness, and so on) through an increasingly developed set of civil, political and social rights.⁴³ This process seemed to come to a standstill as far as the place of migrants within the homogeneous conception of national democracy was concerned. The issue then turned into a debate about the problem of integrating populations originating from postcolonial immigration. This debate defined national identity as either a necessary resource for such integration or, on the contrary, an inadequate constraint preventing incorporation of new citizens into their receiving polity.

These academic developments thus paralleled a new policy focus on the notion of nationality as a condition for incorporating new citizens. Between 1980 and 2000, all Western European countries reformed their nationality legislation.⁴⁴ There was pan-European convergence toward the principle of birth-rights-based citizenship and the progressive suppression of blood-rights-based citizenship legislation, such as in Germany in 1999. This liberalization of nationality regimes in Europe did not prevent the rise of anti-immigration politics, illustrated by the electoral successes of far-right parties in European countries in the 2000s.

Using the principles of nationality to integrate migrants resulted in a kind of consensus, according to which an equality-based society had the right to limit rights (compare Arendt's 'rights to have rights') as far as this was articulated by the political principle grounding the modern state's legitimacy and moral order: the nation. Another trend in these reforms concerned the progressive abandonment of colonial heritages that entitled some migrants to rights that non-postcolonial migrants did not have. Following these reforms, the former were increasingly treated as the latter

and lost most of their privileges.

Such nationality policies, however, failed to address fully the European and migratory challenge to national citizenship. National entitlement to citizenship could not answer the issue of what Tomas Hammar defined as denizenship: individuals who had not accessed formal citizenship but who, as foreigners, participated substantially in their country of installation, notably through organizations in the voluntary sector, and who were subject to citizenship obligations (paying taxes, for example) without being entitled to citizenship rights.⁴⁵ This called for a new mode of incorporating non-citizens into a polity of which they were already 'acting citizens', and echoed a theme that had mobilized migrants and populations of migrant origin since the 1980s, focusing on the necessary dissociation between nationality and citizenship, particularly in France and the 1983–5 *Beur* civic movements, albeit without success.⁴⁶

What such mobilizations had failed to start was finally initiated by European integration. Article 8 of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty defined a citizenship of the EU which was disconnected from nationality. But this separation was constrained in two ways: only nationals of an EU Member State were entitled to it, and the national vote was excluded from its scope. Some authors highlighted how far this twofold limitation further reinforced the problem of nationality as an ambiguous principle for distributing citizenship rights, as Europeans were provided with more rights from which third-country nationals were excluded.⁴⁷ The 1999 European Summit in Tampere called for a removal of the nationality condition from the definition of EU citizenship, but nothing changed. At the end of the day, there remained, as before, just those few EU countries that had given third-country nationals local political rights from the end of the 1960s onwards, long before the issue arrived on the EU agenda.⁴⁸

This is the heart of the sharp contradiction between European integration and national limits: it generalizes the distinction between being a member of a polity and of being a national, but fails to address the real issues in including third-country nationals, or to reconcile citizenship, as an institutional and sociological fabric of equality-based societies, with globalization, including the globalization of human mobility.

43 Leca (1990), Marshall (1950)

44 Reforms of nationality legislation were voted in Sweden (1980), the UK and Portugal (1981), the Netherlands, Finland and Greece (1984), Austria (1984), Luxembourg (1985), Germany (1990, 1999), Spain and Denmark (1991), Belgium (1991 and 2000), Italy (1992), France (1993, 1998).

45 Hammar (1990)

46 'Beurs' refers to Arab populations in French slang. It was used by French new citizens from North-African origins when they mobilized in the 1980s and claimed equality of membership during the debates on the reform of French nationality legislation (see Catherine Wihtol de Wenden and Rémy Leveau, 2001).

47 Weil and Hansen (eds) (2000), Bertossi (2001), Martiniello (1994)

48 The countries who implemented a local right to vote to non-European migrants are Ireland (1963), Sweden (1968), Denmark (1977), Norway (1978), Finland (1981), and the Netherlands (1983). Similar reforms had been discussed at the end of the 1990s in other countries: some failed (e.g. in France), others succeeded (e.g. the 2004 reform in Belgium).

3. The French Liberal Hour?

A European perspective on citizenship also emerged at a less institutionalized level, challenging the formalism of national citizenship as an actual source of empowerment. In other words, being a national was not enough to guarantee access to real equality of opportunity and membership. Some formal citizens were still treated as if they were not 'genuine citizens' because they were identified as members of minority groups. This paved the way for discrimination to take hold at the centre of the politics of citizenship.

However, publicizing the issue of discrimination is not a neutral social policy as far as citizenship is concerned. The normative value of legal equality yields ground to the issue of substantive equality. What is more, it also implies addressing the actual basis of discrimination against individuals, including ethnicity or religious beliefs, alleged or actual. If this has succeeded to some extent in a country like Britain, which developed its integration policies around the so-called 'race relations' agenda, it appeared in France as a challenge to the two main pillars of French citizenship, where the values of legal and abstract equality trumped concrete equal opportunities: the 'veil of ignorance' on ethnicity and the refusal to recognize collective identities of minority-group members.

Consequently, this EU anti-discrimination agenda has impacted on French citizenship policy. To some extent, during the period of importation of this agenda, namely between 1999 and 2002, new stands on integration were promoted in public debate, calling for a re-invention of French Republicanism in a context of ethno-cultural and religious diversity. This appeared at one stage to be the 'liberal hour' of French policies and politics of integration.⁴⁹

49 Adlai Stevenson first formulated the notion of the 'liberal hour', that is, 'the moment when public men of all shades of opinion, from radical to conservative, accept the necessity of a movement in policy on a social problem issue' (Deakin, 1970: 19). This notion was used by Jim Rose and Nicholas Deakin for explaining the move of British policies from assimilation to the fight against discrimination (Rose, 1969).

50 Schierup, Hansen and Castles (2004)

51 Rose (1969)

52 Brown (1984), Daniel (1968), Smith (1977)

53 Bauböck (1994: 202)

3.1. Anti-discrimination as a citizenship issue

Some authors used Myrdal's argument about the 'American dilemma', and applied it to the European situation.⁵⁰ As early as the 1960s, Jim Rose used the notion for post-war Britain, revealing a critical gap between the common creed of equality on which British citizenship policies were based, and the reality of ethnic minorities being systematically discriminated against.⁵¹ It was a landmark in the public recognition of discrimination as a policy problem,⁵² leading to the progressive implementation of the current Race Relations framework.

This line on discrimination reversed existing nationality politics in some EU member states, inspired more by a republican conception of citizenship than by a liberal one. As Rainer Bauböck puts it, 'for a liberal conception, in contrast with the republican tradition of Aristotle, Rousseau or Hannah Arendt, the inclusion of the inactive or even the incompetent as equal members in the polity is a basic achievement of contemporary democracy'.⁵³

If nationality reforms had swung the pendulum from a liberal to a republican understanding of inclusion in European countries, the anti-discrimination perspective swung it back and complemented it with multicultural and multi-faith issues as constitutive elements of citizenship. It led to a recognition that being a national could not prevent members of ethnic or religious minorities from being discriminated against, from experiencing a lack of civil, social or economic resources, or from inequality of opportunity in education, employment or even leisure. These became the main challenges to the relevance of citizenship as an institution of common belonging in an equality-based society.

Of course, this attempt to de-republicanize citizenship found variable political opportunities in the EU countries. One country less favourable to that perspective was France, as French normative citizenship could not recognize ethnic factors as an explanation of why some citizens were less equal than others. In contrast, British integration policies were based on the fight against racial discrimination, springing from the development of Race

Relations legislation in 1965, 1968 and 1976. The latter position found a receptive ear at European level, where European institutions had formerly based their approach to integration (albeit outside of EU competence) on an emphasis on equality of opportunity rather than abstract individual equality (often used as a means toward assimilation).

European integration moved forward in 1997 with the Amsterdam Treaty. Article 13 of the Treaty addressed discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origins, religion and belief, gender, disability, age and sexual orientation. Two EU Council Directives were adopted pursuant to this article: one addressing racial discrimination at large, the other targeting all forms of discrimination in the workplace. EU Member States had to adopt these Directives before July 2003 and December 2005 respectively.

The effect was to contribute to the Europeanization of anti-discrimination as an element of citizenship policies, making an impact on the legislation of individual EU countries. The way EU policy tended to merge anti-discrimination as a mainstream strategy challenged the British public apparatus, which was based on the separation of racial and ethnic (1976 Race Relations Act and its 2000 Amendment), gender (1976) and disability (1995) discrimination, while failing to take account of religious discrimination (with the exception of Northern Ireland).

Similarly, this EU agenda also impacted on French integration policies. In 1996, the Council of State judged that:

being the basis of the juridical order of our society, the principle of equality is threatened when new and serious inequalities emerge in society ... Equality of rights seems to be a mere formal petition. Thus, the credibility of the equality principle is definitely at stake in the field of equality of opportunities.⁵⁴

This constituted an apparently striking reversal of the policy approach to integration.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Conseil d'Etat (1997: 45)

⁵⁵ For a detailed description of this shift to anti-discrimination in France see Bertossi (2004)

⁵⁶ GELD (2000b)

3.2. French anti-discrimination policies

A new argument in the citizenship debate has been heard in France since 1997, combining the new European agenda with the strong criticism of French Republicanism initiated by ethnic minorities in France. The hypothesis that legal citizenship does not guarantee substantial equality and that discrimination must be addressed by corrective policies gained a stronger legitimacy in the late 1990s. However, addressing discrimination was not an easy line for French legal doctrine, as Marie-Thérèse Lanquetin shows:

The principle of equality is the basis of the French juridical system; the principle of discrimination is not. And yet equality and discrimination are not two sides of the same coin. Actually, every difference of treatment, every inequality, does not constitute discrimination. They become so only if they are illegitimate.

Discrimination is an arbitrary, illegitimate and unlawful difference.⁵⁶

The aim of the 1996 Council of State's annual report was to agree on a definition of equality in connection with the issue of discrimination. The authors suggested it was necessary to favour equality in a differentialist perspective, called 'reverse discrimination' (*'discrimination justifiée'*). This new legitimacy regarding differentiated treatment in order to achieve equity broke the logic of Article 1 of the 1958 Constitution, which professes 'equality in law for all citizens without any distinction based on origin, race, or religion.'

The new thinking logically paved the way for re-conceiving the notion of integration. Citizenship was, therefore, profoundly redefined. The first step was to *de-legitimize* the radical republican notion of national integration. National belonging can no longer be a condition for equality. There was a trend to consider citizenship as something distinct from nationality, as well as from loyalty or allegiance to the French polity. The second step was to *re-legitimize* the notion of citizenship in providing a new niche for ethnic minorities in France. Ethnic minorities must have a place in the Republic.

However, controversy still hampered this new conception of citizenship. For example, in 1998, a dispute erupted among scholars on the subject of statistical tools for developing an understanding of the reality of ethnic minorities in France.

Proponents of such a perspective claimed that there was an urgent need for public knowledge on this issue. Opponents claimed that it was a counter-revolutionary approach and contradicted the very principles of the Republic.

After the populist wave of the 1980s, a lot of the heat was taken out of the debate on French citizenship at the end of the 1990s. In terms of nationality law, a 1998 reform re-enacted the automatic birth right to citizenship (former Article 44) and revoked the Declaration of Will [or *Manifestation*]. Dual *jus soli* was also restored even if not to its full extent.

But more importantly, the focus of French citizenship policy shifted sharply. Integration yielded ground to another central issue: the struggle against discrimination.

As a result of these French dilemmas, a new policy of integration was launched by the Socialist government in 1998. The Ministry of Employment and Solidarity enjoyed considerable influence in the new cabinet. Its minister, Martine Aubry, took the initiative in transferring the new doctrine on equality into public policy. On 21 October 1998, she made a statement on 'the policy of integration' in cabinet. This was the first time a statement on integration had been given at this level of state since 1991. The minister set up a threefold programme: improving the reception of newcomers and the atmosphere of tolerance towards them;

57 Belorgey (2001)

58 (1) A hotline (called 114): created by the Ministry for Employment (Direction of Population and Migration) in May 2000, its task is to receive calls from victims of discrimination. This service refers people case by case for further action. Calls are registered on a document that is transmitted to the CODAC (description follows). The 114 hotline is also a means for identifying the places where discrimination occurs. The GELD analyses the resulting data (see below). (2) GELD (*Groupe d'Etude et de Lutte contre les Discriminations*): created by the Ministry for Employment in October 1999, its mission is to analyse the extent of discrimination and the groups it concerns (foreigners, French nationals of foreign origin, French over-seas citizens, etc.). The GELD advises the government on public policies. It has published three reports since 1999, on: discrimination on the basis of nationality in the labour market; the onus of proof in a case of discrimination; discrimination in housing (GELD, 2000a; 2000b; 2001). (3) CODACs (*Commissions Départementales d'Accès à la Citoyenneté*) were created by the Ministry of the Interior in February 1999. They exist in every French département (however, some may have more than one) and are chaired by the *Préfet* (local representative of the central administration) on a quarterly basis. They may encourage people who dialled the 114 hotline to pursue further court action against the perpetrators of discrimination.

59 HALDE (2006)

fighting against discrimination on the basis of a renewed conception of equality; and facilitating the acquisition of French nationality.

The setting-up of a new anti-discrimination policy framework followed an inquiry into whether a specific administrative authority should be introduced or if the existing framework should be used and extended to fight racial discrimination. In his report of 6 April 1999, Jean-Michel Belorgey (a member of the Council of State) recommended the creation of a new authority similar to the British Commission for Racial Equality.⁵⁷ However, this recommendation was not immediately implemented. Instead a new apparatus, combining three different institutions and services, came into operation between 2000 and 2002.⁵⁸

Eventually, the French Parliament incorporated the European Council directive on anti-discrimination in employment (EU Directive 2000/43/CE). In November 2001, the Parliament passed a new law expanding the scope of anti-discriminatory provisions. First, the onus of proof in discrimination cases is to be shared between employer and employee. Second, the scope of anti-discrimination provisions in the labour legislation (Article 122-45, *Code du Travail*) is extended. So far, discrimination has been actionable only in cases of employment and redundancy. The new text extends it to wages, promotion, transfer and mobility, training, etc. Third, new types of discrimination are incorporated: discrimination based on phenotype, name and sexual orientation (Law of 16/11/2001). This was complemented by a law against discrimination in housing (Law of 17/01/2002).

Finally, the 30 December 2004 law created a new independent public body comprehensively in charge of the anti-discrimination agenda in France, HALDE (*Haute Autorité de Lutte contre les Discriminations et pour l'Égalité*, or Anti-discrimination and pro-Equality Authority). As an independent administrative authority, it aims at identifying discriminatory behaviour, seeking proof of discrimination and supporting individuals discriminated against, including within the juridical process. It also advises government on improving French anti-discrimination laws.⁵⁹ The scope of its action was strengthened in March 2006.

4. The New Challenge to Diversity

Less than a decade after the Amsterdam Treaty, the situation seems to be back to square one. The European constitutional crisis in the wake of the negative referendums in France and the Netherlands has rung the death-knell for a qualitative transformation of European integration from the economic to the political. This in turn has prevented further development towards an EU citizenship. Also, the post-Cold War international context has been marked by fears concerning Islam, particularly after 9/11. These fears have grown in Europe and have nurtured the politics of integration's rediscovering of the value of national identity as a reservoir of common belonging. Subsequent developments in popular discourse have variously equated and conflated the terms Islam, Muslims, ethnic minorities, migrants, Islamists and international terrorism. This has influenced social attitudes, which have, in turn, underpinned a resurgence of racial and religious discrimination.

As a result, the principle of multiculturalism has been attacked on several sides: the European project that supported ethno-cultural and religious diversity has been dramatically weakened; the crisis of national integration frameworks stigmatized so-called 'anti-integration attitudes' among ethnic and religious groups; no resolutions of how it is possible to reconcile the fabric of equality in globalized societies have been provided. At the policy level, a critical approach to integration is no longer made, and the issue of integration is assessed only against the so-called ethnic and religious 'identities' of members of minority groups, without really taking into account the wider context of a crisis in national welfare and high levels of unemployment. At an academic level, attacks on the idea of multiculturalism have found a new legitimacy, as illustrated by Brian Barry's book *Culture and Equality*.⁶⁰

In this broad context, new debates on the so-called 'French model of integration' have focused on Muslims. Two decades ago, integration politics identified postcolonial migrants in terms of their nationality of origin (North African countries); after 2003, the problematic shifted to Muslims

versus *laïcité*. In the same way that nationality was re-invented in the 1980s as the tradition of French citizenship, *laïcité* has been re-invented in the 2000s as the very identity of French republicanism. In this process, however, *laïcité* was given a new understanding. Again, this must be analysed from a wider perspective than just that of a French national politics of identity, as the EU dimension plays an important role in these evolutions.

4.1. The re-invention of French *laïcité*

Until recently, *laïcité* referred to debates on the French school system. National demonstrations in 1984 and 1994 showed how *laïcité* was an issue in the relationship between public and private schools.⁶¹ When the first Muslim headscarf affair occurred in 1989, it became a debate about religious neutrality in schools. In its declaration of 27 November 1989, the Council of State found a way to resolve this issue: a distinction had to be made between freedom of conscience (including freedom of religious beliefs) and proselytism, only the latter leading to the interdiction of religious signs in public schools. Each individual case had to be assessed by the head of the school concerned.

After 2003, *laïcité* became something different and more global, far beyond the educational sphere. It expanded so as to cover what had hitherto been described through the notion of nationality. New *laïcité* politics progressively involved public authorities, media, voluntary organizations, academics and religious communities' representatives. The vote on the 15 March 2004 law forbidding 'ostentatious' religious signs in public schools could not prevent the emergence of a new kind of politics expanding the notion of *laïcité* so widely that it started to be considered as the main repository of French republican values, equating with French identity itself.

It had all started with a proposal by the Protestant Federation to reform the 1905 *laïcité* law, framing the separation between the political and the religious in France. The idea was that this principle prevented more recently settled religions in France from reaching equality of treatment as far as the building of places of worship was concerned. This debate about how *laïcité* should be redefined one century after its first definition rapidly turned into a debate about the difficult recon-

60 Barry (2001)

61 Baubérot (2005)

ciliation between French Muslims and their identity as French citizens. This happened at the same time as the Interior Minister achieved the institutionalization of the Muslim religion, with the Agreement in December 2002 signed with representatives of Muslim organizations, and the succeeding launch of a French Council of the Muslim Religion (CFCM).

The new *laïcité* politics developed around two main issues. On the one hand, it focused on the so-called fight against collective ethnic and religious identities – what is referred to as *communautarisme* (communalism). On the other, counter-arguments emphasized the anti-discrimination agenda, and used notions such as ‘islamophobia’ to describe the new context. The issue of gender equality appeared at the intersection of both lines of this debate.

A series of reports were published in 2003, after two young veiled women were expelled from a secondary high school in the Northern Paris Region (Aubervilliers). In May, François Baroin published a paper in which he identified what he thought were ‘communitarian threats’ to the Republic (Baroin, 2003). If the school system is described as the ‘sanctuary’ of the French model, where *laïcité* must be preserved, the author went on to consider that *laïcité* was at stake in all French public institutions, including hospitals, swimming pools, public administration, etc. There then started what Emmanuel Terray described as a ‘political hysteria’: *laïcité* was so much politicized that a new consensus was emerging out of this diagnosis.

Another dimension of this debate concerned political competition within the French government, of which the Interior Minister was one principal protagonist. At the very moment of the nomination of a ‘Muslim *Préfet*’ by the Ministry of the Interior, and its promotion of ‘affirmative action’, the two main parliamentary parties (the Socialist Party and the right-wing UMP presidential party) agreed on the need to redefine *laïcité* in a way that would protect it from the challenge constituted by French Muslims.

62 Bertossi (2007), Bertossi and Wihltol de Wenden (2007)

63 Balibar (2001)

Two groups were set up in that context. One commission was launched by members of the National Assembly and chaired by its President. In its report on 4 December 2003, this commission called for the banning of all ‘visible’ religious signs in public schools. This recommendation was not followed, as it seemed too much in contravention of article 9 of the ECHR concerning freedom of religion. A second commission was launched by the President of the Republic, similar to the 1987 Commission on Nationality.

Named after its chairman, the Stasi Commission published its report on 11 December 2003. Recommendations included the banning of religious signs in public schools as well as the fight against urban and social discrimination, against racism and antisemitism, the appointment of Muslim chaplains in public institutions such as hospitals, prisons and the military,⁶² and the creation of new public holidays (following Jewish and Muslim religious calendars). Only the first recommendation was finally implemented with the 15 March 2004 law.

This new legislation reversed the 1905 approach to *laïcité*: instead of being an abstract principle of State neutrality, it was converted into an identity principle; instead of being exceptional, to cover cases of proselytism, according to the 1989 State Council’s decision, the ban became an everyday rule.

4.2. The crisis of the national: a shift from ethnicity to religious identities?

As we discussed in the previous section, the issue at stake with the notion of *laïcité* since 2003 is the idea that Islam is potentially a challenge to French citizenship. However, the Muslim religion is less the cause than the object of this crisis of republicanism. Comments on the ‘Muslim challenge’ in contemporary France go beyond the issue of accommodating religious pluralism within the principles of the modern State. They rather concern a crisis of national identity, in a context where national sovereignty is increasingly devolved to the European supranational project.⁶³

In other words, Europe has profoundly challenged the notion of the

'nation' as the boundary of modern democracy. And it just so happens that the nation has been the historical sphere for negotiating political compromises about the place of religion. In France, *laïcité* has been the outcome of the conflict between 'the two Frances' since the French Revolution: one was catholic and pre-modern; the other was revolutionary and 'Enlightened'.⁶⁴ Elsewhere in Europe, other types of compromise in the relationship between the political and the religious developed within the national sphere, including situations with State-recognized religions: with an official State religion in the UK and Greece, with a concordat in Portugal or Luxembourg, with a religious tax system in Germany, and so on.

Hence, Europe appears as one element in what is a general dilution of the framework of the 'nation'. Even more striking is how Europe is the arena for a struggle for supremacy between very different conceptions of the relationship between the State and religion. After the Maastricht Treaty, European integration evolved into a political process that went beyond the scope of economic function. Becoming a politically based process in the way it also tried to implement a notion of EU citizenship, EU integration became a matter of common identity, and paved the way for debates about State neutrality vis-à-vis religions.

This happened at several levels.

First, at the European level, there is no Europeanized concept around which national thinking can debate the role of religions vis-à-vis the State. Members of the European Convention who were in charge of drawing up the EU Constitutional Treaty confronted this issue when writing the preamble. Seven countries advocated a mention of the so-called 'Christian heritage of Europe' (Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic and Slovakia, during the Irish Presidency of the EU). France, Belgium, Denmark and Finland opposed it. The final version of the preamble mentioned only the 'cultural, religious and humanist heritage of Europe'. However, one article of the Treaty afforded a specific status to churches (article 51), and pro-

moted an 'open, transparent and regular dialogue' between these churches and the Union. That illustrated the way churches in Europe – and particularly in Germany – refused to be equated with civil society and voluntary sector organizations, already defined in article 46.

This also shows how non-axiomatic is State neutrality among the EU member states, particularly the new ones. As a consequence, if the vote had gone in its favour and it had been ratified, the proposed EU Constitutional Treaty would have challenged the French 1905 law on *laïcité*.

At a second level too Europe is in a state of flux – that is, in the juridical arbitration around possible conflicts between the religious and public spheres. It is striking to consider how hard the French legislator struggled to find a balanced formulation when drafting the 15 March 2004 law. One issue concerned the notion that ECHR censorship of the new law could be a breach of article 9 of the ECHR on religious freedom. This generated a complicated exegesis in the French debates: would all 'visible' signs be forbidden (Commission of the National Assembly)? Or only the 'ostentatious' signs (Stasi Commission)? The minister of Education worried about the possibility of such a law being challenged by the ECHR. As a matter of fact, this also illustrated the low level of knowledge about ECHR jurisprudence, which normally bases its judgments on national legal traditions. Hence, the French law on *laïcité* would not be assessed against a would-be European appreciation of the freedom of religion, but against its own French legal tradition. However, there is a more substantial issue behind this apparent dilemma: the 'Supreme Arbiter' of *laïcité* is not the nation-state any more, but the European Court.

As a result, the emergence in France of a new politics of integration based on *laïcité* seems contradictory. Why has such a politics emerged? Answering this question highlights a dual rupture that affects national identity today in the EU context, both from below (ethnicity and religious identity) and from the top (EU integration). Whenever national politicians lose control over important elements of traditional national policies, they make dogmatic stands 'on sacred national values, virtues and ideals'.⁶⁵ Here is one

64 Baubérot (2005)

65 Favell (1998: 248)

source of the crystallization of the French politics of citizenship and integration – around the so-called ‘communitarian’ threats that would erode from within the grand principles of the Republic and would challenge the normal functioning of its institutions.

In this context, the crisis of the national in Europe affects the relationship between national identity, cultural and religious diversity, notions of equal opportunity, the Welfare State and the socio-economic inclusion of disadvantaged populations, among whom are members of minority ethno-cultural and religious groups.

That is, behind the issue of Islam in France, *laïcité* questions something more fundamental. This question does not concern conciliation between Muslims and French secularism, as the former are already accommodated as French citizens, although the 2004 *laïcité* is a breach of the equal treatment the Republic is meant to afford them. The more difficult issue – which has been hidden during the debates about secularism versus Islam in France since 2003 – is rather the following: since *laïcité* has been historically defined within the limits of the nation-state, can *laïcité* be a viable principle without the normative support of the national? Can globalized societies be grounded in versions of secularism that were defined at the beginning of the 20th century? In other words, can a post-national *laïcité* be possible within a further politically integrated Europe?

This question is an obvious one within the French context. However, all EU states are equally affected. It seems clear that there is no prospect of a europeanization of the relationship between the political and the religious. However, another kind of europeanization seems already at work, reinforced after 9/11 but rooted more profoundly in colonial and post-colonial contexts: the crisis of national models of integration (Dutch pillar system, British race relations, French republican integration) which converge to a common European diagnosis, where Islam is perceived both as the source and the explanation of the problem.

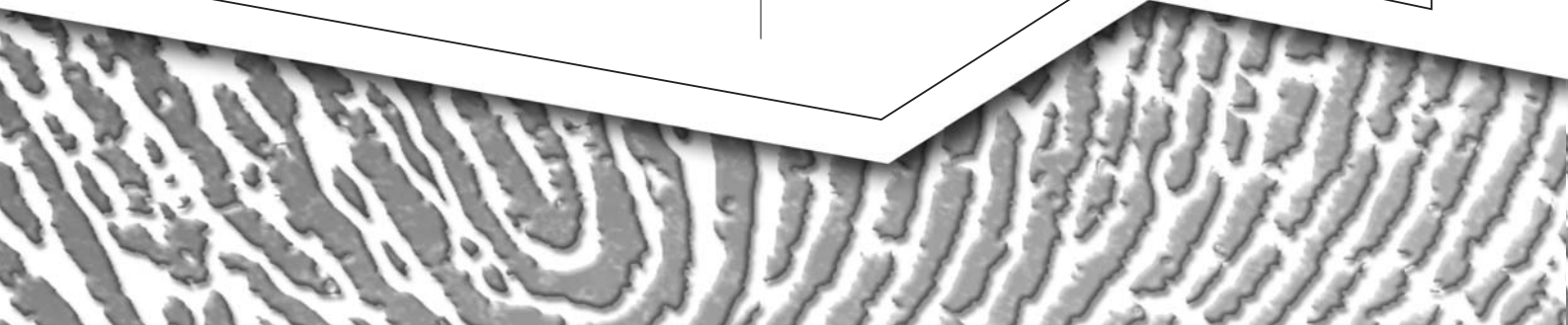
Conclusion

On 11 October 2006, one year after the 2005 ‘riots’ in the French suburbs, a new confidential police report contradicted what the same police services had said a year before. In this document, the critical conjunction between the anniversary of the ‘riots’ and the end of the month of Ramadan is seen as a favourable context for new ‘riots’ to occur. While the conclusions drawn by the police in December 2005 were that Islam and ethnicity were not direct causes of the events, it was now claimed that there must have been a causal link.

Obviously, what was true in 2005 is still true in 2006. Youngsters involved in the November 2005 events made no claims about being Muslims. When Muslim organizations such as the UOIF (Union of French Islamic Organizations) tried to mediate with youths in the French suburbs to stem the street violence, they were ignored by pupils who identified more with their suburban territories than with the religious identity of their parents. The strong emphasis placed on identity politics in the France of the past five years, on Islam vs. the Republic, makes it difficult, however, to differentiate subtly in media and political debates. At the same time, the feeling of being discriminated against because of their supposedly Muslim identity has transformed Islam into an identity of refuge for those who feel excluded and denigrated. Muslim identity becomes instrumental for those who are accused of being Muslims.

The result has been that French integration politics has identified a group which does not objectively exist, and has equated this ‘identity’ with a failure of the French policies of citizenship. In this perspective, Muslims are perceived as not accepting ‘republican values’, supposedly having problematic transnational allegiances, and refusing to integrate into French society. To some extent, this diagnosis is one aspect of the limits of French policies of integration, as it justifies anti-Muslim attitudes – and policies – and does not address the socio-economic roots of the crisis.

In this context, the French ‘liberal hour’ has passed and anti-discrimination policies are not supported by any strong political will, despite



what happened in November 2005. The situation is critical as it calls for a renewal of citizenship in France and, in more general terms, in Europe. This renewal must address at least three issues: what normative and political 'status' can national identity have in today's Europe? How is it possible to tackle material inequality when it is superimposed on membership of ethno-cultural and religious minority groups? What labels is it possible to use when describing situations of ethno-cultural and religious diversity in the context of nation-states participating in a supranational project?

This could promote new understandings of what it means to share common belonging and common values. This might also address what a young Muslim woman of North African origin recently argued: 'they [French society] will understand everything the day they understand we are French too'.⁶⁶ This is where the French republican model reaches its limits.

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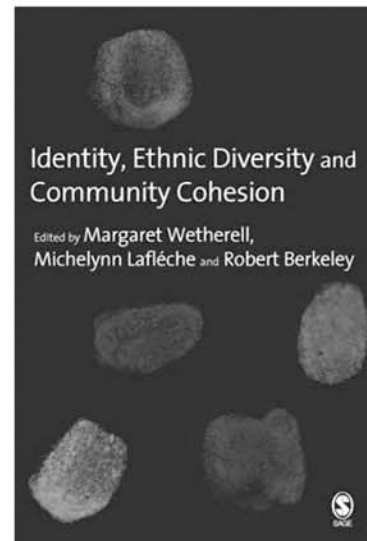
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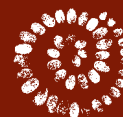
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Dr. Christophe Bertossi is a Senior Research Fellow and head of the 'Migrations, Identities, Citizenship Programme' at the French Institute of International Relations (Ifri), Paris. Before joining Ifri in 2003, he obtained his PhD in Political Sciences at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Aix-en-Provence (2000). Now an associate fellow, he was previously a Marie Curie Research Fellow at the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick (UK). He is also associated with the Centre for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California in San-Diego (US) and the American University in Paris. He lectures in political science at Sciences Po (Paris). His publications include: *Les frontières de la citoyenneté en Europe: nationalité, résidence, appartenance*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2001; *European Anti-Discrimination and the Politics of Citizenship: France and Britain*, Basingstoke/New York, Palgrave, 2007; (with Catherine Wihtol de Wenden), *Les couleurs du drapeau: les militaires français issus de l'immigration*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 2007. Dr. Bertossi can be contacted at bertossi@ifri.org

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Funded by the Connecting
Communities Plus strategic grants
programme from the Department
of Communities and Local
Government. The views in this
report do not necessarily repre-
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