

## Citizenship, Culture, and Politics: The Discussion on the Naturalization of Muslim Soldiers in the French Army during the Great War (1914–1918)

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### Abstract

Numerous examples in history show how the politicization of citizenship and invocation of cultural standards were used as an argument for the marginalization of certain groups. With that in mind, this article analyses the 1915 discussion about French colonial policy and republicanism provoked by the Minister of War's proposal to grant French citizenship to Muslim soldiers as a reward for their sacrifice for France. Although the proposal was rejected, the discussion revealed a complex relationship between citizenship, culture, and politics. The article maintains that citizenship was treated as an element of cultural identity and that its concept was born in a specific historical context, which was imperial domination over colonial people. This is confirmed by the fact that the positions of supporters of soldiers' naturalization based on recognition of the soldiers' cultural identity and opponents who called for their cultural assimilation were very similar and differed in the sequence of events; both opted for acculturation of the newcomers as the final step of naturalization. The discussion proves that culture in the relationship with citizenship means more than pluralism and that citizenship in the relationship with culture grows beyond the institutional dimension.

### Key words

citizenship, culture, colonialism, France, Third Republic, Muslim soldiers, Great War, naturalization

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## Introduction

The concept of citizenship has been historically linked with the emergence of nation-states and was initially shaped in relation to civic, political, and social rights (Marshall, 1964, p. 92; Faist, 2010, pp. 200–202). However, since the 1980s, along with the progressive diversification of societies and multicultural policies, the links between citizenship and culture have become clear and have become essential to the relationship between the ‘native’ population and migrant groups (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 101). As a result, the concept of cultural citizenship was formed in the literature, expressing a close relationship between citizenship and culture, and two research approaches were developed: (1) a sociological method, which emphasized the relationship of the inclusion of new groups into the polity with the sphere of identity and belonging, which presupposes the primacy of cultural needs and leads to the modification of the polity; (2) a political science approach, which focuses on integrating new groups into an already existing political structure and emphasizes the importance of such aspects of this process as limits of tolerance, forms of political representation of new citizens, and the adaptation of new cultural elements to the existing polity (Delanty, 2007, p. 61).

The history of French colonialism shows a contradiction between the republican principle of equality and the restricted access of the colonial peoples to the civil rights enjoyed by the French citizens (Hincker, 2014, p. 359). This contradiction was based on the distinction between active and passive citizenship, introduced in 1789 by Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès in his work *Reconnaissance et exposition raisonnée Des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen*. All inhabitants of the country were guaranteed personal protection and the protection of their property, but only those who made up the public sphere were truly active citizens. The precondition of “making up the public sphere” was to accept republicanism and French law (*Reconnaissance et exposition*, 1789; Pauquet, 2014; Belissa et al., 2014, p. 20; Brubaker, 1992). The concept of citizenship and its application were from the very beginning an instrument of political struggle. As early as 1789, the aristocracy and Jews were deprived of the rights of active citizens (Sahlins, 2004, pp. 267–312).

Cultural assimilation was, therefore, a necessary condition to obtain full civil rights, and the French authorities pursued such a policy in the colonies and protectorates. However, during the Great War of 1914–1918, nearly 250,000 soldiers from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia fought in the French army, and perceptions of the place of indigenous people changed. In 1914, the Minister of War applied

to grant French citizenship to these soldiers as a reward for their sacrifice for France. This step was motivated by the desire to attract new soldiers to the French army. The prospect of obtaining French citizenship was to encourage them to join the French army. The decision of the Minister of War sparked a lively discussion about colonial policy and republicanism, which was at the very foundations of French political culture. It revealed imperial pride and racial prejudices. The fact that the indigenous people of Algeria received the French nationality on the basis of the *sénatus-consulte* of 1865 but were deprived of the quality of citizen was called the “republican compromise” or the “paradox of French republicanism.” It was expressed in the limitation of the universal meaning of citizenship and the introduction of the criterion of nationality as the only legally legitimate criterion for political discrimination (Noiriel, 1988, pp. 110–113).

### Materials and method

The presence of the Muslim soldiers in the French Army during the Great War resulted in significant studies. Pioneering works by G. Meynier (1979, 1981, 2000, 2017), M. Michel (1982, 2003), C.-R. Ageron (1959, 1964, 1966, 1972, 1973, 1991, 2005, 2010), J.-C. Vatin (1983, 2015) and J. Frémeaux (1991, 2002, 2006, 2016a, 2016b, 2019) have become classics and benchmarks for new research. Many publications refer to the broader context of the mobilization of colonial soldiers, particularly the political culture of the Third Republic and the French colonial doctrine combined with the republican concept of *citoyenneté* (Hincker, 2014; Reconnaissance et exposition, 1789; Pauquet, 2014; Belissa et al., 2014; Brubaker, 1992; Sahlins, 2004; Weil, 2008; Lehning, 2001), and the ‘science’ of races (Power, 1944; Burrows, 1986; Fogarty, 2008, 2016; Rogan, 2014). This framework has been determined by the discourse between colonial orientation and the anti-colonial tradition in France about the ways of integrating *indigènes* with metropolitan culture (Andrew & Kanya-Foster, 1974). There is a widespread opinion that the First World War accelerated the polarization of the mainstream views of colonial policy and marked a breakthrough in the relationship between the metropolis and colonies (Meynier, 1979, p. 219; Nouschi, 1979, pp. 77, 80).

Documentation on Muslim soldiers is extensive and is kept in the Archives Nationales d’Outre Mer in Aix-en-Provence, the Archives du Ministère des affaires étrangères (AMAE) in La Courneuve, and the archives of the Ministère des armées, the Service historique de la Défense (SHD) in Vincennes. For the purpose of this article, the most important were the archival materials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the archival group Correspondence Politique et

Commerciale, Nouvelle Serie, Guerre 1914–1918, Affaires Musulmanes, Soldats Musulmans dans l'armée français. They are listed in subgroups: 1664 (July 1914–February 1915), 1665 (March 1915–October 1915), 1666 (November 1915–June 1916), 1667 (July 1916–December 1916), 1668 (January 1917–September 1917), 1669 (October 1917–August 1918), 1670 (Panislamisme 1914–1915), and 1671 (Panislamism 1916). The minutes of a special Inter-ministerial Commission for Muslim Affairs (*Commission interministerielle des Affaires musulmans*) established in 1914 to manage the problem of Muslim soldiers in the army (Le Pautremat 1998, 2003) are in the same archival group and they were an important source for the discussion.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. It raises the impact of the war on colonial policy and examines literature and relevant archival documents. European colonialism signified the domination of Europeans over the peoples of Asia and Africa, and included economic, political, social, and cultural aspects. Colonial politics and the history of European colonial empires is the subject of a very large body of literature. The novelty of this article is in discussing the presence of the Muslim soldiers in the French Army in the context of two concepts of citizenship defined by French republicanism in 1789 and colonial policy. The following research questions have been formulated: (1) How was the concept of active republicanism incorporated into the colonial policy? (2) What were the arguments against granting Muslim soldiers French citizenship? (3) Did the political elite of the Third Republic really depart from the policy of assimilationism towards the colonial peoples after 1901?

### **Citizenship and culture**

Considerations about the relationship between culture and citizenship introduce a certain intellectual uncertainty. Many studies emphasize the politicization of citizenship, and numerous examples show that citizenship is used as an “instrument of administrative rationality” (Pfiffner, 1960, p. 125). It often serves either to marginalize certain social groups or to strengthen the position of the dominant group (Cohen & Ghosh, 2019). The result is semi-citizenship statuses “that offer some individuals partial bundles of rights and semi-citizen statuses” (Cohen, 2014, p. 1047). Often the basis for restricting access to full citizenship is linked to citizenship with the culture of the dominant group, which leads to the exclusion of groups representing other cultures (Volpp, 2007, p. 572). The emphasis that solutions to include new groups in the existing politics should be associated with the neutrality of the state raises, however, questions. The dominant group is most

convinced of the neutrality of its concept of citizenship, which may raise doubts. Volpp alludes to the headscarf debate in France in recent decades and believes that it has shown that “the republican citizen is not a purely neutral concept”, as “this figure emerges in opposition to a perceived, particularized threat, positioning an abstract, culture-free citizen against a culturally-laden other (Volpp, 2007, p. 574). On the other hand, one should not ignore the fact that the concept of citizenship is the result of a process specific to each historical process, and that people who identify with it are attached to it. In essence, it can be said that citizenship is “both a cultural and anti-cultural institution” as “citizenship positions itself as oppositional to specific cultures, even as it is constituted by quite specific cultural values” (Volpp, 2007, p. 574). Edwige L. Lefebvre stresses that “the French concept of citizenship has always intentionally neglected / ... / cultural pluralistic dimensions, because of a fear of social fragmentation” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 15). In the Third Republic, which in 1905 saw the separation of church and state and the consolidation of French *laïcité*, the colonial authorities in Algeria constantly controlled mosques, imams, muftis, and charities as a tool of strategic dominance over punishment. They ruled out on an ethno-religious basis qualification of indigenous peoples from the political sphere, depriving them of the rights reserved for the peoples of European culture. As a consequence, according to L. Blévis, the history of Algerian citizenship during the colonial period underwent few inflexions, which strengthened France’s presence and brought institutionalization of colonial domination (Blévis, 2001, p. 559)

### Citizenship and empire

Skin colour and culture became other reasons for the deprivation, which was ‘justified’ by the ‘science’ of races, the ‘pinnacle’ of which was the work of Arthur de Gobineau *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines* of 1850. Its author distinguished three races: “black”, “white”, and “yellow” and believed that race created culture. He posited that all races are inferior to the Europeans (de Gobineau, 1853, p. 22). Racial theories became very popular in the Third Republic in creating a colonial empire. In 1885, Jules Ferry presented the foundations of the colonial doctrine of the Third Republic and stressed that the metropole had one duty to the colonies – to civilize *indigènes* as inferior races (Hincker, 2014, pp. 236–237; Power, 1944; Burrows, 1986, pp. 109–135).

Racial theories were transferred to the military domain in the form of the *les races guerrières* theory. The most famous exponent of this theory was General Charles Mangin, who in 1907–1911 was the commander of the French armed

forces in West Africa. In 1910 his book *La Force Noire* was published. The author postulated West Africa as a reservoir of soldiers for the French Army due to the unique military abilities of some African peoples, especially Senegalese. Africans had the natural attributes of being excellent soldiers – they could withstand extreme climatic conditions, cover long distances without problems, and their nervous system made them more resistant to pain than “whites”. According to this author, “those primitive people for whom life has such a low price, and whose veins have young blood and if it is not shed, will manage to reach the level of French bravery and revive her if need be” (Mangin, 1910, pp. 228, 288–289).

Mangin’s views sparked a lively debate among the military, scholars, parliamentarians, and journalists about increasing the share of non-European races in the French Army. How widely this theory was discussed is demonstrated by the impressive number of 4,300 press articles published on this subject in 1909–1912 (Lunn, 1999, pp. 199, 523). Mangin’s theory was popular during the Great War. In 1916, the Société des Etudes Coloniales et Maritime, which published the popular magazine *Revue indigène*, called for the introduction of compulsory conscription in Algeria and Morocco, similar to the one in Tunisia, to create three armies among the North African *indigènes*. The authors argued that the *indigènes* from Africa showed great bravery and could form large military formations. They referred to the project of Adolphe Messimy, a member of the budget committee of the Chamber of Deputies and later the Minister of War (1911–1912), who in 1908 called for the introduction of conscription of recruits from *indigènes* in Algeria as it was a cheaper method for creating military forces than contract service. In 1916, the ‘high recognition’ of the *indigènes’* organizational skills and their military prowess was understandable for other reasons. At that time, the French Army was beginning to experience a shortage of soldiers from the metropole at the front. It was necessary to mobilize soldiers from colonies and protectorates (Lunn, 1999, p. 523; Bourdarie, 1916, pp. 13–15, 20–21; Recham, 1966, p. 17).

The politics of assimilationism was pursued by the French authorities in North Africa. Algeria was incorporated into France as an integral part, divided into departments and covered by French legislation (Augustin, 1926, pp. XIII–XIV; Vatin, 2015, pp. 27–28; Frémeaux, 2016). In 1881 and 1904, Tunisia and Morocco, respectively, became the protectorates of France (Augustin, 1926, p. XVIII). France’s policy in North Africa was to plant French people there and gain the trust of the *indigènes*. It meant double assimilation: the French from Algeria should look like the French from France, and the *indigènes* should look like the Europeans. The sénatus-consulte from 1865 was to serve this purpose. It made it

possible for *indigènes* to obtain the rights of a French citizen, but the condition was to give up the personal status of being Muslim (Hamel, 1880, p. 6). From 1901 onwards, a new native policy had been officially introduced, entitled the “policy of association” aimed at the “advancement of Muslims within their civilization.” It meant the French authorities’ admission to the assimilation policy’s failure and, consequently, the strict separation of the French from the Algerians (Ageron, 1991, pp. 63, 73–74 ; Betts, 2005, pp. 106–133). This new policy, however, did not change the precondition for naturalization with full political rights. It was cultural assimilation, as demonstrated by the discussion in 1915 about granting French citizenship to Muslim soldiers.

On 20 November 1914, Alexandre Millerand, the Minister of War, sent a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in which he expressed the view that the war and the participation of Algerian soldiers in it had created a new situation in the matter of naturalization. The Minister proposed to create formal and legal possibilities for Algerian soldiers to choose between their current personal status and the naturalization and acceptance of French citizenship (*la nationalité française*) as “compensation for their loyalty to us” (AMAE, 20 November 1914).

The Millerand initiative was met with immediate criticism from all sides. The Ministry of Colonies noted that the possibility of naturalization had not yet attracted Muslims’ attention because, for many, it was associated with apostasy and a departure from Muslim personal status (AMAE, *séance* 3, 31 December 1914). The proposal was also criticized by the Algerian *assimilationistes* who found it too restrictive, as it provided for the possibility of naturalization only for those soldiers who directly participated in the fighting on the front (AMAE, 15 January 1915).

The French administration in North Africa presented the strongest arguments against the project. On 19 January 1915, Gabriel Alapetite, the French Resident-General in Tunisia, expressed that the Interministerial Commission’s proposal on naturalization applied in Algeria, where there was a distinction between those who had French citizenship rights and those who did not have these rights. However, this was not the case in Tunisia. The purpose of France’s policy in this country was to improve the living conditions of its inhabitants, not to change their citizenship. He explained that a Muslim who was a naturalized French citizen was treated as an apostate in his country. The active exercise of French civil rights conflicted with Muslim family law and personal status, specifically concerning polygamy and the unequal position of women in the inheritance of property under Muslim law (AMAE, 19 January 1915).

The Resident also did not believe in the effect of cultural diffusion, i.e., the settling of Tunisia by French colonials and the assimilation of Muslims to the European concepts of civil and family law. Those *indigènes* who knew how French society worked and were aware of the rights and obligations arising from French citizenship would not apply for it; those who did apply for it were ignorant of the rights and obligations attached to French citizenship at the time of their applications, and most of them were soldiers urged to apply for citizenship by their French commanders. "Those who had received higher education in France and were well acquainted with French society believed that our civil rights were unacceptable to them because they threatened their traditions, intellectual heritage, their ethical and aesthetic views, as well as their understanding of what human dignity and family were." It meant a complete failure of the policy of assimilation of Muslims, as evidenced by, according to the Resident, only two cases known to him of Tunisians adopting a French lifestyle (AMAE, 16 May 1915).

The French Resident in Tunisia believed that facilitating naturalization by simplifying procedures would only improve statistics but would not indicate that *indigènes* had accepted republican values that form the core of French citizenship. "The problem of reconciling these values with the personal status of a Muslim will not automatically disappear with the act of naturalization but will be hidden under the guise of formal acceptance of obligations imposed on a naturalized person as a French citizen. One should not turn a blind eye that the conflict will not exist under the skin - tensions between the naturalized person and the French state and between the French state and the naturalized person's family will be constant," wrote the Resident (AMAE, 16 May 1915). According to the Resident, the source of these tensions was a gradual change of habits, customs, and values, and the consequences of these tensions would be felt primarily by the family. The new situation would also include the wife of a naturalized soldier who would acquire new rights and adapt to the new social role determined by these rights and obligations. Acceptance of French citizenship by a person who was brought up in a Muslim environment and functioned within Muslim personal status did not mean immediate assimilation, but acculturation following naturalization was inevitable (AMAE, 16 May 1915).

The discussion showed how vital procedural issues were and how different interpretations could be made of the text. The Commission's proposal was very general and expressed more political intentions related to the environment and the needs of the Ministry of War than legal solutions. The Governor-General was more detailed in his project and placed his project in the context of imperial policy



and saw it in line with other legal acts that were in force at the time, indicating possible legal and political complications if adopted.

### **Citizenship and *la mission civilisatrice***

On 27 January 1915, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies (*Commission des Affaires Extérieures de Chambre des Députés*) presented a resolution on the treatment of Muslim soldiers on an equal footing with “their comrades, the French and Israelites.” Its chairman, deputy Albin Rozet from the district of la Haute-Marne, stated that “for the sake of equality and justice, it should be that people who are equal before death are also equal before the law” (AMAE, 29 January 1915).

General Hubert Lyautey, the Resident-General in Morocco, was a strong opponent of the equality bill. In a telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 4 February 1915, he stated that the naturalization of Moroccan soldiers for their merits on the battlefield is not favourable from the point of view of France’s political interests, as it would weaken the authority of the Sultan in the eyes of his subjects (AMAE, 4 February 1915). Thus, the colonial administration took the view that state authorities should not give up control over the naturalization process, as this could harm the colonies’ functioning and France’s position in the colonies. On 5 March 1915, the Minister of Colonies relayed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs his position on the project of the Interministerial Commission. It expressed complete agreement with the position of Alapetite and Lyautey, who considered that the Commission’s proposal was underdeveloped and needed significant changes. (AMAE, 11 March 1915).

On 1 April 1915, the Chamber of Deputies heard a new draft law on the facilitation of naturalization of Muslim soldiers from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The draft was submitted by four deputies – Albin Rozet, Georges Leygues, Louis Doizy, and Lucien Millevoye – known for their liberal views on the rights of the colonial population. “Everyone, no doubt, will agree that this lasting loyalty deserves immediate compensation from the sovereign nation,” we read in a speech by deputies (AMAE, 1 April 1915). Consequently, the first Article of the new law would refer to Muslim soldiers from Algeria and give them the right to receive the rights of a French citizen (*la qualité de citoyen français*) by a simple declaration of the acquisition of those rights after reaching the age of 21 and at any time. The draft was more of a political declaration than a law taking into account the existing legal system. Its authors did not ask any naturalized French citizens to give up their native culture in favour of French culture. The authors of the draft law

were convinced that the new law would significantly impact the future of France's relations with the indigenous population, as it would be a step in overcoming mutual prejudices. They were more politically than culturally conditioned, for the Muslim faith alone determined these relations to a lesser extent than the activities of religious brotherhoods and political groups. The authors were concerned with the ideas of Pan-Islamism, which increasingly influenced Muslims and turned them hostile to European civilization. According to the authors, France was losing Muslims and steps had to be taken to regain them. The law on the naturalization of soldiers would be such an action (AMAE, 1 April 1915).

The design and thinking of liberal deputies remained within the framework of *la mission civilisatrice*, but was ground-breaking in terms of politicians' perception of Muslim culture. Until now, it was believed that Muslim culture was incompatible with republican values. The authors of the project, 'allowing' naturalized soldiers to stick to their Muslim personal status, 'suggested that the coexistence of two cultures within one European civilization is possible.' A severe obstacle was polygamy, which was prohibited by French law, but liberal deputies saw this phenomenon as temporary, and history confirmed their suppositions (AMAE, 1 April 1915, 9 Jun 1915).

### French citizenship and Islam

The draft of the four liberal deputies was sent on 3 April by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Resident-General in Morocco, who soon added his comments. Resident Lyautey gave it a brief assessment: it posed a threat to the French presence in North Africa, so it must be rejected in its entirety without even attempting to adapt it to any circumstances. It was necessary to find a different formula for expressing national recognition and appreciation of the Moroccan soldiers fighting on the front. The Resident's arguments for this stance were both political and legal. Political issues were about intending to grant citizenship to all soldiers who fought or would fight alongside France. According to the Resident, such generalization was too far-reaching, because in the case of Morocco, it marked the emergence of 'a military caste, enjoying a special statute, coming from classes that are neither the most respected layers in Moroccan society, nor would we like to support them for the security of our interests' (AMAE, 15 June 1915).

The legal argument against the project was polygamy. French law did not allow polygamous associations, while in Morocco, they were widespread. A naturalized soldier entering into a polygamous relationship would violate French law and face the consequences. Lyautey did not think polygamy was bad in Morocco. He

wrote: 'Only insufficient knowledge of Moroccan society can justify the belief that polygamy is proof of a fall and backwardness. For a long time, polygamy in Morocco formed the basis of family organization and proclaiming that monogamy is a state of superiority and that from a French point of view, it is the only regulator and the only acceptable norm will be a challenge for customs, social and religious traditions, and a real offence to the Sultan and the entire elite, as well as for the whole society. I claim that every Moroccan who decides to apply for naturalization will realize that he will have to agree to monogamy, which will be contrary to his habits and his tradition, and besides, isolate him from his environment and his race' (AMAE, 15 June 1915).

### Return to the old policy

On July 31, 1915, a turning point took place in the discussions about the naturalization of indigenous soldiers as a form of moral compensation in return for fighting in wars for France. On that day, the *Direction des Affaires administratives et techniques* at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared a note for the Political and Commercial Affairs Department – the second most important department at the Ministry – giving an opinion of the Lagrosillière project on naturalization law. The authors of the note fully supported the position of the Governor-General of Algeria. They concluded that the project seriously compromised the nature of naturalization, which was still a favour that the state authorities could grant or refuse after assessing the person applying for naturalization. According to the proposal, this favour would be replaced by citizenship being acquired as a legal good because the acquisition of citizenship by certain persons was socially and therefore legally acceptable. The regime of acquiring citizenship as a legal good was approved by the Civil Code and applied to descendants of the French and sons of foreigners born in France. The basis for citizenship was their attachment to France, resulting either from having roots or their upbringing in the French community. However, the exercise of this right was subject to certain restrictions, and administrative authorities might refuse to register a declaration of acquisition of citizenship if the applicant was not worthy of it. "Now, according to the discussed project, these restrictions will be lifted against *indigènes*", the authors of the note concluded (AMAE, 31 July 1915).

This conclusion was crucial for the future. It led to widespread reflection on the nature of naturalization, especially the place of possible adopted law in the French legal system. Moreover, it practically ended the possibility of a fast legislative path for the decree on the naturalization of indigenous soldiers. Later, until the end of

the war, state administration institution documents only confirmed the validity of the assessments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs formulated in July 1915.

## Conclusion

The initiative of Minister Millerand of November 1914 granting French civil rights to indigenous soldiers as a reward for their loyalty and bravery resulted in heated discussion among the political elite of France regarding the naturalization of *indigènes*. The discussion revealed a deep polarization of views on the desirability of adopting a new naturalization decree. A group of liberal deputies in the parliament and colony deputies proposed the naturalization of soldiers and all *indigènes*, which meant significant changes in the electoral law, tax system, and the way of administering the empire. Their projects were criticized by the French administration in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco as premature due how civilized the colonies were perceived to be and therefore dangerous to the interests of France. The Interministerial Commission then submitted a project in which it tried to reconcile the war-related need to increase the number of volunteers from North Africa to serve in the French Army with the need to stabilize the imperial system.

An crucial element in these political discussions was that of culture, and specifically the personal status of Muslims. According to opponents of the naturalization of soldiers, Muslim personal status was incompatible with the French concept of civil rights, in particular with regards to polygamy and the unequal position of a woman when inheriting property. Consequently, an *indigène* had to give up Muslim personal status if he wanted to practice French citizenship. In other words, if he wanted to become French, he had to stop being a Muslim. Liberal deputies did not set such a condition – a naturalized *indigène* could keep his native status. However, in this case, too, it was ultimately about assimilation. The difference was in the order of events: in the first, case assimilation was to precede naturalization; in the second, it was its consequence. In the political sphere, in both cases, it was about preserving the empire. Even Albin Rozet, the strongest supporter of the indigenous case, did not go so far as to demand the abolition of indigenous disciplinary authority. Discussions on the project included prospects of rapprochement with Muslims based on the French concept of citizenship. The Resident-General of France in Tunisia expressed such a position among others. He agreed with the authors of the projects on those parts that stated “if an indigenous soldier devotedly serves in the French Army and if he is attracted by living conditions in France, while at the same time knowing French

law, and valuing it more than that which now regulates life and is aware of French civic obligations, the person's declaration should be positively received without any obstacles or delays." However, the Resident doubted whether such persons were in the French Army (AMAE, 16 May 1915, 17 May 1915).

Concerning the relationship between citizenship, politics, and culture, the 1915 discussion on the naturalization of people belonging to a different culture allows for some important conclusions to be drawn. The concept of citizenship is closely related to culture, and cultural citizenship is an essential complement to civic, political, and social citizenship. To understand a given citizenship concept, the historical context of its formation is critical. In the case of the Muslim soldiers in the French army, the context was the empire and imperial ideas about the attitude of the metropole to the subordinate people. Some of these ideas were marked by resentment and a sense of superiority towards the *indigènes* as an inferior race. Citizenship was closely linked with the colonial idea of *la mission civilisatrice* and thus had an educational aspect. The act of granting citizenship was a final stage of the adoption by *indigènes* of the customs and legal norms of higher culture, in which the idea of citizenship emerged. One can agree with Delanty, who points out that in the relationship with citizenship, culture is more than pluralism and citizenship in the relationship with culture grows beyond the institutional dimension focused on rights and participation (Delanty, 2007, 65–66). Culture and citizenship relate to a learning process as they express the experiences of everyday life in specific historical circumstances and socio-political settings.

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