“YESTERDAY’S COLONIZATION AND TODAY’S IMMIGRATION”: AN INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY OF ABDELMALEK SAYAD, 1957-1998

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the Department of History
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

June 2017

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Miles James Reding

Title: “Yesterday’s Colonization and Today’s Immigration”: an Intellectual Biography of Abdelmalek Sayad, 1957-1998

This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of History by:

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Degree awarded June 2017

THESIS ABSTRACT

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This thesis traces the development of Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad's ideas pertaining to Algerian immigration in France in the postcolonial period. I show that Sayad must be understood as more than simply an accomplished scholar; he must also be seen as a scientific intellectual operating within a particular historical moment. Sayad's writings on the migrant condition are, I argue, a sociological analysis of Algerian immigrants' existential dilemma that is rooted in a loss of sense of belonging and a feeling of being oppressed by state power and dominant members of French society. In addition, Sayad's radical critique of the nation-state operated both as an explanation of Algerians' sense of liminality as well as his attempt to recast the narrative of Algerian immigration in France as a form of neocolonialism. Sayad's sociological work was not purely academic; it was impassioned and, at times, imbued with the language of a moral voice.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> *...I'm going to do what was done in this country after Independence: I'm going to take the stones from the old houses the colonists left behind, remove them one by one, and build my own house, my own language.* – Kamel Daoud, *Meursault, contre-enquête*[1]

Algerian writer Kamel Daoud, in his recently published spiritual successor to Albert Camus' *L'Etranger*, expressed colonialism's deep legacy in his country – particularly French rule's effect on the mind and soul of the colonized. Decolonization marked the beginning of a long process of reshaping identity, with the expectation that Algerians could one day leave behind the colonizers and carve out their own image as an autonomous community. The pursuit of a new conception of themselves was far from easy, and the fact that Daoud continues to write in French, and not in Arabic, makes this apparent. Daoud and his compatriots have faced, and still face, a variety of dilemmas as they strive to reinvent themselves. A question that lies at the heart of this thesis is how Algerians pursued true self-autonomy after decolonization.

I explore this question by examining the writings of Algerian sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad. His life embodied the transition from colonialism, to decolonization, and then into the murky territories of the postcolonial period. Born in Kabylia in 1933, Sayad spent his childhood as a colonial subject. He witnessed members of his village work as fieldworkers for French landowners. He passed through the education system

[1] Kamel Daoud, *Meursault, contre-enquête: Roman*, (Arles: Actes sud, 2014). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

with a curriculum designed to teach young Algerians to love the idea of France. The Algerian War, which Sayad experienced during his schooling in Algiers, laid bare to him the extent of the impact of French domination over the body and soul of himself and his compatriots. During the war he, a young *universitaire*, learned how to use a field of knowledge bestowed upon him by the colonizers – social science – to understand the nature of the condition of being colonized. He took the knowledge that the colonists left behind, dismantled it, and built his own way of seeing the social world – his own sociology, in short.

This thesis, broadly defined, is an intellectual biography of Abdelmalek Sayad. I emphasize his writings rather than his life activities. His activities are introduced insofar as they facilitate understanding the purpose of his sociology. Through a close analysis of his texts, along with relevant historical context and issues pertaining to his personal biography, I show that Sayad's sociology of migration and sociology of the nation-state served two interrelated functions. The former unveiled what Sayad believed to be fundamental truths about the migrant condition, while the latter revealed the extent and manner of the continuing domination of the global South by the global North into the postcolonial period. Through the lens of his sociology, Sayad showed the effects of neocolonialism on Algerians, in order to critique relations of domination in a more general sense.

While guiding readers through a reading of the corpus of Sayad's work, I also make a case about how he should be defined as an intellectual. My knowledge of his writings and awareness of his life activities lead me to believe firmly that any one definition of his intellectual type is bound to be too limiting. In the French context, the

dominant understanding of the intellectual is the publicly engaged moral voice typified first by Emile Zola and, later, Jean-Paul Sartre. Social scientists, often referred to as social thinkers and more recently as "specific intellectuals," stand as an alternative to the engaged intellectual. Sayad would almost certainly need to be understood as the latter type of intellectual rather than the former. Yet as helpful as it may be to try to box him in as either a critical sociologist, a social thinker, or a specific intellectual, doing so cannot account for the fluidity of his intellectual style. His writings were often far more impassioned than one would anticipate from a social scientist whose aim is the objective observation and analysis of society. His texts often drifted between scientific rhetoric and the rhetoric of a moral voice. His project, to which he was deeply committed, was dual: on the one hand, guiding Algerian migrants on their journey of self-discovery (in an existential sense) and, on the other, critiquing the concept of the nation-state for its harsh effects on dominated groups – including Algerian migrants. A friend of Sayad called him a *homme-frontière* (roughly, "man of the frontier").[2] This is a fitting term for his style as an intellectual, as Sayad frequently transgressed boundaries over the acceptable limits of discourse about migration and the nation.

This thesis takes an approach to the study of Sayad as an intellectual akin to the methods employed in intellectual biographies and histories of ideas. Following this approach, I use one figure's writings to establish claims regarding ideas about immigration and about the legacies of colonialism. Intellectual historians in more recent years have challenged the merits of historical analysis taking such an approach, as relying too heavily on one individual and his or her texts. Fritz Ringer, for instance, has insisted

[2] Emile Temime, "Un homme-frontière," *Migrance* 14 (May 2004), 28-36.

that intellectual historians take seriously Pierre Bourdieu's contention that intellectuals needed to be understood not in isolation, but as a whole social group. The historian's job, then, should be to map a sociology of knowledge – the composite sets of ideas within a particular moment that can be linked to a multiplicity of thinkers.[3] While intellectuals must be considered in their social context, those like Sayad, who wrote against the grain of other social thinkers who dealt with the same questions of immigration and the nation, need to be considered primarily in their relationship to the world of ideas which they contested. As such, it is worth exploring in detail what set his ideas apart from those of his contemporaries. Furthermore, I echo Christophe Prochasson's claim that historians need not choose between conducting *either* a sociology of knowledge *or* a history of ideas. Intellectual historians can and should do both. In addition to analyzing their ideas and determining their place in society, historians must also understand intellectuals' behavior in their day-to-day life insofar as it might impact their cultural production. An intellectual's identification with a certain elite, their need to conform somewhat to contemporary mores, their relationship with power, can all have effects on how they behave as intellectuals.[4] In analyzing Sayad's ideas, I aim to take into consideration not only Sayad's socio-political context, his activities, and matters in his personal life that might have impacted the work that he produced, but also his positioning of his ideas in relation to those of other sociologists and contemporary thinkers who reflected on immigration.

[3] Fritz Ringer, "The Intellectual Field, Intellectual History, and the Sociology of Knowledge," *Theory and Society* 19, no. 3 (June 1990): 269–94.

[4] Christophe Prochasson, "Intellectuals as Actors: Image and Reality," in Jeremy Jennings, ed., *Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century France: Mandarins and Samurais*, St Antony's/Macmillan Series (New York, N.Y: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 59-79.

This thesis sits at the crossroads of two historiographies not often thought of in concert: immigration in postcolonial France and late-twentieth century intellectual history. With respect to immigration, I argue that an analysis of Sayad's writings clarifies our understanding of his role in shaping discussion of immigration in France. His writings also complicate our notions of how immigrants have positioned themselves in French debates on immigration and multiculturalism. Sayad's writings are virtually unanimously accepted as a major statement of the current understanding of immigration in France. Nearly all of the scholarship written on the subject cites his sociological work. Interestingly, though, his writings have been relegated mainly to footnotes; little has been done to examine his intellectual engagement in historical context. The only biography written about him begins to accomplish this task, but by choosing to place the emphasis on Sayad's formative years during the Algerian War, the authors of this work miss the opportunity to analyze how Sayad positioned himself in debates on immigration and postcolonialism taking place in France long after decolonization.[5]

Emile Chabal, a historian of contemporary France, missed this opportunity as well. While he seemed to understand the significant connection between academia and intellectual discourse, he failed to mention Sayad in his discussion of academic intellectuals. He also placed considerable importance on the powerful opposition to republicanism voiced by individuals critical of postcolonial French society – including especially prominent immigrants.[6] Yet nowhere does Sayad factor in to this section of Chabal's monograph, despite his regular interventions in this discourse. My sense is that

[5] Tassadit Yacine-Titouh, Yves Jammet, and Christian de Montlibert, *Abdelmalek Sayad: la découverte de la sociologie en temps de guerre* (Nantes: Éditions nouvelles Cécile Defaut, 2013).

[6] Chabal, *A Divided Republic*, 186-189, 193-197.

Chabal overlooked Sayad's critiques of French neo-republicanism because Sayad avoided public engagement and was not always overtly political. However, Sayad's style as an intellectual is unique and worth analyzing precisely because, not only was his opposition to neo-republicanism so total, but the ways in which he took his ideological stand represented a staunch commitment to scientific rhetoric rather than polemics.

Undertaking an intellectual biography of Sayad has the further advantage of complicating our understanding of when postcolonial debates began in France and how immigrants have positioned themselves in national debates over immigration and national identity. Sayad's writing on immigration anticipated that of several of the most prominent authors on the subject. His writing preceded by several years the beginning of the Beur activism that Alec Hargreaves, Richard Derderian, and others made the focal point of their work.[7] He wrote about the Algerian conflict and how it reverberated into the present decades before Benjamin Stora called upon the French to confront their colonial past.[8] Sayad's analyses of neocolonial relations of domination also represent a voice coming from the social sciences in the critical reflection on postcolonialism. His work challenges the notion put forward by French scholars of postcolonialism that the social sciences had all but ignored postcolonial studies until the late 1990s.[9] An analysis of Sayad's sociology offers us the opportunity to place the immigrants themselves within the history of social thought in postcolonial France. Academic analyses of the "problem"

[7] Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, "Race" and Ethnicity in Contemporary France* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1995); Richard L. Derderian, *North Africans in Contemporary France: Becoming Visible* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[8] Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie*, Cahiers Libres (Paris: La Découverte, 1991).

[9] Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, eds., *Culture post-coloniale, 1961-2006 : traces et mémoires coloniales en France* (Paris: Autrement, 2011).

of immigration were not, as Herman Lebovics seemed to suggest, exclusively the vocation of French social scientists.[10] Immigrants like Sayad involved themselves in this enterprise as well, and in so doing contested the dominant society's claim to total hegemony over academic discourse on the subject. By giving recognition to Sayad's specific academic style, moreover, we broaden our knowledge of the range of options chosen by those members of minority groups in France who became intellectually engaged. Sayad's writing thus expands the spectrum of such engagement beyond the narratives offered by Hargreaves, Derderian, and more recently by Chabal, who portray engaged immigrants as artists, writers, public intellectuals (at times, polemicists), political activists, or sometimes as politicians, but never as academics.

My framing of Sayad within his particular historical moment builds upon what scholars have written on the changing nature of intellectual history in France. Since the 1990s historians have understood intellectual history in post-1970s France as a turn away from the universal intellectual towards the specific intellectual. To see this shift, Pascal Ory and Jacques Sirinelli have argued that we need to rework our constrained definition of the intellectual. The Dreyfus Affair seemed to have established a mold for the intellectual as publicly engaged and uniquely authoritative in national politics, but this traditional conception of the intellectual overlooks the various occupations held by intellectuals and the diverse, hierarchical social milieus in which they navigated. Once we appreciate the sociology of intellectuals, we can better understand the conditions of

[10] Herman Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home: France in the Global Age*, Radical Perspectives (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 184-114.

the society that they regarded as their vocation to transform.[11] Scholars argue that a combination of events and intellectual developments in the 1970s triggered that transformation. According to Michel Christofferson, this decade was an "anti-totalitarian moment" in which intellectuals criticized the French Communist Party for its commitment to Stalinism despite growing awareness of the totalitarian turn that communism had taken in the Soviet Union. As a result, intellectuals grew increasingly receptive to ideas at variance with those associated with Marxism. By the 1980s, republicanism had replaced Marxism as the new dominant ideology of intellectual discourse.[12]

New critiques of intellectual society also altered the understanding of the role and mission of the intellectual. Michel Foucault, for instance, called into serious doubt the intellectual's ability to bear universal knowledge. Instead, intellectuals needed to focus on mastering a particular branch of knowledge or institutional sphere of power. At the same time, society became more skeptical of the intellectual's right to perform the duties of a "secular cleric." Pierre Bourdieu's analyses of intellectual society, seen especially in *Homo Academicus*, revealed that intellectuals played a complicit role in networks of power. As a consequence of Bourdieu's critique, intellectual historians argue, it no longer seemed appropriate for intellectuals to claim moral authority and access to universal truth.[13] Yet by no means did the intellectual disappear from view. As Jennings

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[11] Pascal Ory and Jean-Francois Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France: de l'Affaire Dreyfus à nos jours*, 3. éd, Collection U histoire (Paris: Colin, 2002), 10-13.

[12] Michael Scott Christofferson, *French Intellectuals against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970's*, Berghahn Monographs in French Studies (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004).

[13] Michel Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), 582-610; Ory and Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France: de l'affaire Dreyfus à nos jours*, Third Edition (Paris: Armand Colin, 2002), 227-232; Allan Stoekl, *Agonies of the Intellectual: Commitment, Subjectivity, and the Performative in the Twentieth-Century French Tradition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 190-198.

puts it, now "the intellectual was to intervene in local, specific struggles, challenging power in precisely defined institutional settings, drawing upon his [or her] own conditions of life and work."[14] Sayad was among those intervening in this way. He navigated the academy as an institutional sphere of power and wrote against what Emile Chabal has termed the "neo-republican consensus" in contemporary France.[15]

To demonstrate how Sayad fits into these historical topics, I begin with a chapter that offers the necessary background on the development of the republican idea of the nation with the concomitant development of the engaged intellectual as well as a sociological tradition in France. Doing so will set the backdrop for how the role of the intellectual became transformed by the time that Sayad was active, and how the republicanism that prevailed in the late nineteenth century resurged in the latter half of the twentieth century. Within this chapter, I also set my sights on how colonialism shaped the trajectories of social thought and intellectual history in the French Republic and the broader francophone world. Thinkers like Frantz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre examined what colonialism did to societies and people. After decolonization, intellectuals, Sayad included, asked how colonial power structures endured in the postcolonial world.

Chapter two hones in on Sayad's development of a sociology of migration. I show that he was particularly concerned with exploring the migrant condition by weighing individual agency against social structures. In doing so, he posited a theory of "double absence," an existential dilemma in which individual migrants lack a strong

[14] Jennings, *Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century France*, 4.

[15] Chabal, *A Divided Republic*.

sense of belonging either to the society of emigration or the society of immigration. Later in his career, his theory of "double absence" evolved to stress that the migrant condition not only involves a crisis of identity, but also human suffering. He believed that the suffering of the immigrant is made worse by the fact that immigrants experience a neocolonial form of domination from the society of immigration – the dominant society.

The third chapter looks at Sayad's interest in relations of domination, and how this question naturally led to him interrogating the nature of the nation-state. During a period of resurgence in republicanism in France, Sayad presented a radical critique of the nation-state which was centered on the notion that the logic of the nation-state is essentially exclusionary and neocolonial. By presenting his sociology of the nation in this way, Sayad recast the narrative of immigration and multicultural politics as one of resistance to neocolonial power. As such, he brought the rhetoric of anti-colonialism into his contemporary moment. Before analyzing his ideas in full, though, we must first turn our attention to the Third Republic, when the concept of the nation that Sayad critiqued began to take shape.

CHAPTER II

THE THIRD REPUBLIC, THE "REPUBLICAN EMPIRE," AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITION

A Brief Introduction to the Republican Idea of the Nation

Established in September of 1870, the Third Republic, following a brief period in which monarchists (commonly referred to as the Legitimists) attempted to re-institute a monarchy, gave lasting shape to a republican idea of the nation. The republicans consciously posited themselves as inheritors of the 1789 Revolution's first attempt at building a Republic. They took the revolutionary tradition and expanded upon it to construct a fully conceptualized form of the republican nation. Their republican ideal essentially held that the nation ought to comprise a community of citizens – all of whom would benefit from the same political and civil liberties. Furthermore, republicans held that the nation was to be founded upon the principles of reason: humans, not God, had the right to govern their own affairs because they were capable of accessing universal knowledge; justice, not arbitrary abuse of power, would hold citizens responsible to the general welfare; science, not superstition, would dictate how people pursued knowledge. The republican idea of the nation also stipulated that the key tenets of republicanism had universal applicability. Although France was the birthplace of the Rights of Man (or so said the republicans), humans everywhere could and should enjoy the same benefits as

citizens of the Republic did.[16] Having decidedly come into power by the early 1880s following a period of conservative dominance, the republicans institutionalized their republican idea of the nation.[17]

A decisive factor in republicans' institutionalizing their idea of what a nation should be consisted of their attempts to transform France's political culture. Doing so meant consciously molding Frenchmen (with the emphasis on "men") into citizens.[18] As James Lehning has shown, for certain members of the political elite, the republican project of creating a nation of citizens meant far more than simply extending suffrage to all adult men. Some republicans believed that citizens needed to be politically engaged on a deeper level. Competing visions of citizenship, or debates over who was allowed to participate in politics and under what circumstances, occurred precisely because of the opening up of the public sphere that the Republic fostered.[19] The state may have begun modernizing during the Second Empire, and the development of a politically significant middle class, the organization of workers, and the emergence of the peasants as an important political base may have occurred under the Bonapartist regime, but it took the Third Republicans to harness these developments and deploy them in their mission of

[16] Charles Sowerwine, *France since 1870: Culture, Society and the Making of the Republic*, 2. ed (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 39-41; Tyler Edward Stovall, *Transnational France: The Modern History of a Universal Nation* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2015), 168-169.

[17] Robert David Anderson, *France. 1870-1914. Politics and Society* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1984), 5-14.

[18] Philip G. Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995), 190-217.

[19] James R. Lehning, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Third Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

creating a democratic society.[20]

The Birth of the Intellectual during the Third Republic

The republican project of creating a nation of citizens occurred alongside the birth of the intellectual as an important figure in French politics and society. Here, by "intellectual" I do not simply mean a writer-philosopher proposing ideas related to human affairs. During the Third Republic, what began to take shape was a whole society of politically and socially engaged intellectuals. A set of structural factors contributed to the formation of this intellectual society. First, the republican leadership expanded the universities as part of their efforts to promote a greater number of professionals who, chosen at least ostensibly on the basis of merit, could help build and improve the Republic's institutions. By encouraging growth in the universities, the republicans helped create a community of thinkers who, because of the state patronage they received, were expected to be committed to the republican project. Indeed, during the 1880s, *universitaires* came to the aid of the republicans in power at a time when they still faced considerable resistance from monarchist forces – as was seen, for instance, in the Boulangist movement. The Republic's fostering of the advent of mass politics, with the concomitant growth in print media, also created the necessary preconditions for the emergence of an intellectual class. In the early 1880s, Jules Ferry's government passed a series of laws allowing for a free press, freedom of association, unionization, and

[20] On the modernization of the state and social transformations during the Second Empire, see Christophe Charle, *Social History of France in the Nineteenth Century* (Providence: Berg, 1994), 53-105.

educational reform. Taken together, these laws facilitated the rise of mass politics: citizens could keep informed about important issues by reading newspapers and journals, and they could read because on the whole people were becoming more literate; they could assemble in public without having to ask for permission from the local prefect; and workers could be better organized, thereby opening the possibility of them becoming a significant political force.[21]

A nascent intellectual class took advantage of these developments to begin to assert their own power and influence in politics and society. Beginning in the 1890s, *universitaires* started demanding autonomy from the state. They wanted to break free from their limited role as defenders of the Republic and assert themselves as an independent force capable of checking the political powers that be. Young students spearheaded this initiative for greater university autonomy, as they came to feel disappointed in some respects by the pragmatic centrists who dominated politics. The source of their malaise with the status-quo republicans was their sense that the current leadership had done nothing to address the "social question" – an issue which was a key point of political contention after the 1890s. Outside of the university sphere, intellectuals also benefited from access to organs of the press and publishing houses. This society of intellectuals – be they strictly academics or more general writer-philosophers – grew out of, as well as helped feed, the new mass politics. Average people, who were increasingly literate and engaged in politics, were ready to listen to

[21] Christophe Charle, *Naissance des "intellectuels": 1880-1900,* Le sens commun (Paris: Editions de Minuit); Pascal Ory and Jean-Francois Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France: de l'affaire Dreyfus a nos jours*, 3. éd, Collection U histoire (Paris: Colin, 2002), 44-47; Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 32. On the Ferry laws, see Sowerine, *France since 1870*, 33-34.

what the intellectuals – now a distinctive professional group – had to say.[22]

Intellectuals first asserted themselves as an autonomous and influential group during the course of the Dreyfus Affair. With good reason, the reference point for the particularly French understanding of the modern intellectual continues to be the Dreyfus Affair, because it was amidst this widely-publicized scandal that the French public witnessed the mobilization of a true society of engaged intellectuals.[23] Emile Zola's 1898 open letter to the President, which was published in *L'Aurore* under the title, "J'accuse!," is regarded as the spark lighting the fire of intellectual engagement pitting the Dreyfusards against the anti-Dreyfusards.[24] Zola's essay expressed the position that would be taken by the Dreyfusards during the affair: the army's false accusation of Alfred Dreyfus represented a severe "miscarriage of justice," and any true republican should care about Dreyfus' exoneration because the Republic was good for nothing if it did not protect the rights of individuals.[25] "J'accuse!" effectively mobilized the nation's notable republican intellectuals in the defense of justice and individual rights. As such, these intellectuals asserted their power over government by rallying public opinion without depending on any state entities. Eventually, the republicans won their case. As a result, not only was Dreyfus exonerated, but the Catholics and the nationalist right (the anti-Dreyfusards) were pushed back, and anti-Semitism virtually discredited amongst the republican left.

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[22] Charle, *Naissance des "intellectuels*." On the "social question," see Anderson, *France. 1870-1914*, 18-21.

[23] Ory and Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France*, 33-40.

[24] Anderson, *France. 1870-1914*, 18-21.

[25] Emile Zola, "J'accuse!," in Michael Burns, *France and the Dreyfus Affair: A Documentary History*, The Bedford Series in History and Culture (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1999), 93-102.

The Development of French Sociology during the Third Republic

The Dreyfus Affair also indicated an intellectual fixation on the question of republicanism and the national community. In this debate, writers and philosophers were not the only thinkers who had a stake; sociologists also came to play an important role in intellectual discourses on the meaning of the nation. After the 1890s, these sociologists became increasingly preoccupied not only with the national community, but also with the "social question" – an issue which had generated greater angst amongst the French and Europeans more broadly. Across Europe, a new generation of social thinkers – termed collectively as the "generation of the 1890s" – responded to the general social malaise by combining their scientific analyses of social structures and human action with a touch of philosophical writing. As such, they were intellectuals with a devotion to the specificity of science as a way of explaining the social world rather than, say, imaginative literature. They began a tradition which their disciples carried on and used to create more specific branches of study. Unlike their successors, these sociologists could be described as "general social thinkers" in the sense that they were committed to understanding the nature of society in broad terms rather than honing in on one specific aspect of society.[26]

Without question, Emile Durkheim was the most important social thinker in the Third Republic. Durkheim – the sort of "father" of sociology in France – left a lasting and durable imprint on the field. His primary intellectual concerns converged on the nation and modernity. Through the lens of the nation and the modern condition, he

[26] H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930*, Second Edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 12-32.

analyzed how societies functioned and were held together even in the face of modernity's supposedly socially alienating effects.[27] Seeking out clues to the glue that held society together, Durkheim eventually accepted sociology as the ideal angle through which to approach his intellectual inquiries. It was not, however, inevitable that Durkheim, who was originally a student of philosophy, would choose sociology as his field of study. At the time, sociology was neither an established nor a highly-regarded field. Few Europeans in the 1880s practiced sociology, and the discipline had almost no institutional support. Nevertheless, Durkheim was hugely inspired by how Saint-Simon and August Comte attempted to explain social cohesion from an objective, scientific standpoint.[28] Saint-Simon and Comte were, in effect, proto-sociologists, and Durkheim picked up their mantle. His work used sociological methods to build off of earlier philosophical explanations of how societies functioned. Through the course of his work on *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim confirmed his appreciation for sociology's explanatory power.[29]

In *Division of Labor*, Durkheim examined social solidarity from the viewpoint of functionalism – the school of thought that argues that society is governed by a set of functions that dictate how society operates. He argued that whereas a common set of ideas and sentiments (the "common consciousness" or *sens commun*) once performed the function of social cohesion, in industrial societies the division of labor performed that function. Industrialization and the individuation of people it engendered did not, as some

[27] Steven Lukes, *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work, A Historical and Critical Study* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 6.

[28] Ibid., 77.

[29] Ibid., 66-67.

of his contemporaries feared, tear people apart from one another.[30] What he termed "organic solidarity" had effectively replaced "mechanical solidarity" as the primary vehicle of social solidarity.[31] In pre-industrial society, people were bound together because they shared a "common consciousness," which he defined as "the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society."[32] However, in industrial society, people were bound together because they depended upon one another for goods and services. Industrialization had brought about this form of social cohesion organically, Durkheim referred to it accordingly as "organic solidarity."[33] As a consequence of industrialization's division of labor, individuals had become more specialized into a specific role in society, and as such they were more inward-looking.[34] While he recognized individuation as potentially harming the common consciousness, Durkheim argued that in fact the cult of the individual had become a new form of a collective belief-system. He wrote that "as all the other beliefs and practices assume less and less religious a character, the individual becomes the object of a sort of religion. We carry on the worship of the dignity of the human person, which, like all strong acts of worship, has already acquired its superstitions."[35] In sum, Durkheim's analysis was meant to prove that industrialization and individuation would not, as many of his contemporaries feared, result in social fragmentation. Social solidarity, he argued, was in

[30] Ibid., 147.

[31] Ibid., 150-153.

[32] Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, 1st paperback ed (New York: Free Press [u.a.], 1997), 38-39.

[33] Ibid., 77.

[34] Ibid., 84-85.

[35] Ibid., 122.

fact stronger than ever thanks to the changes brought about by the republican project.

By elucidating the ways in which modern societies function, the *Division of Labor* was a prime example of Durkheim demonstrating the purpose that sociology can serve. Indeed, he prefaced the *Division of Labor* by stating that "what we propose to study is above all reality…it does not follow that we should give up the idea of improving it. We would esteem our research not worth the labor of a single hour if its interest were merely speculative."[36] It was sociology's power to scientifically explain the social world that, in turn, made it possible for society to be improved. Durkheim believed that sociological analysis could tap into the set of laws that govern how societies operate.[37] Practiced objectively and with detail and precision, sociology could clarify social realities better than general philosophical conclusions could.[38] Within a specifically French context, Durkheim saw sociology as helping to establish a "moral and civic foundation" for the Third Republic.[39] Despite the overtly political nature of his conception of sociology, he remained adamant that the sociologist's proper role was only to provide the objective analysis; those with power and influence would then use that information to improve society. As he famously wrote, "the sociologist's task is not that of the statesman."[40] Despite seeing himself as a critical sociologist rather than an engaged intellectual, Durkheim nevertheless intervened in public affairs, as he did in the Dreyfus

[36] Ibid., xxvi.

[37] Lukes, *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work, A Historical and Critical Study*, 79-83.

[38] Ibid., 85.

[39] Johan Heilbron, "Repenser la question des traditions nationales en sciences sociales," in Gisèle Sapiro, ed., *L'espace intellectuel en Europe: de la formation des états-nations à la mondialisation, XIXe-XXIe siècle* (Paris: Découverte, 2009), 309.

[40] In Lukes, *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work, A Historical and Critical Study*, 538-539.

Affair.[41] The fluidity and ambiguity of his intellectual activities was, as we will see, mirrored by future sociologists – including Abdelmalek Sayad.

In addition to helping legitimize sociology as a subject of study and defining the sociologist's role, Durkheim was also deeply engaged with the task of institutionalizing the field. In the late 1890s, he established the *Année sociologique*, a social science journal designed to encourage the spread and specialization of sociology.[42] Sociology did indeed begin to spread across Europe at the turn of the century.[43] In 1900, Durkheim wrote that "our science came into being only yesterday. It must not be forgotten, especially in view of the favorable reception that sociology is given now, that, properly speaking, Europe did not have as many as ten sociologists fifteen years ago."[44]

Durkheim's life's work had important consequences for the intellectual trends discussed in this thesis. He offered a blueprint for the sociological method which involved the examination of data, institutions, and laws to draw conclusions about how societies function at the macro level. In that way, he helped move sociology beyond a largely speculative practice towards one which was both philosophical while also grounded in scientific rigor. At the same time, he sought to prove in what manner sociology could be used in the service of making improvements to humanity. Durkheim's successors, some of whom appear in this thesis and include especially Abdelmalek Sayad, were also convinced of sociology's greater purpose. In addition, we shall see that, late in the twentieth century, sociologists will do as Durkheim did and

[41] Ory and Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France*, 44-47.

[42] Ibid., 289.

[43] G. Duncan Mitchell, *A Hundred Years of Sociology* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1968), 7-9.

[44] In Lukes, *Emile Durkheim*, 392.

make sociological contributions to the republican project.[45] The sociologists who did so were motivated by a common concern that the traditional mechanisms of social solidarity were evaporating. Although Sayad agreed with Durkheim on sociology's purpose, he, unlike many of his contemporaries, wrote against the republican grain. He was also the product of new sociological findings that challenged the Durkheimian conception of social facts. Indeed, for however significant Durkheim certainly was to beginning a sociological tradition in France and establishing some of the basic parameters around which sociologists would become intellectually engaged, later sociologists would come to find certain elements of his theory wanting. In particular, later sociologists, Pierre Bourdieu and Sayad included, would find Durkheim's functionalism to be an inadequate approach to accounting for human action in society and for change over time. Their opposition to the Durkheimian model would be hard to envisage were it not for the influence of anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose structuralist theories sent shockwaves throughout the French academy in the 1950s. Before turning to Lévi-Strauss and his ideas, though, we need to take a glance at who inspired him, as well as other developments affecting France's intellectual history – many of which extend beyond the Republic's borders.

The "Republican Empire": Experimenting with Ideas and Social Thought in the Colonies

While the republicans were busy building a national community at home, they were also expanding an empire abroad. Tyler Stovall calls the "republican empire" "that

[45] See Chapter IV.

strangest of political formation." The empire that the republicans built represented a commitment to making the idea of the French nation universal. First, though, colonial subjects (read: non-Europeans), had to be made ready for citizenship. In the process of "civilizing" the colonized, the subjects of the "republican empire" would need to be denied the rights of citizenship – as citizenship came with tremendous responsibility. Of course, the republicans had practical reasons for expanding an empire (namely, the search for new markets), but the imperial enterprise was also about national grandeur: building an empire upon republican values would prove correct the republicans' claims to universalism.[46]

Algeria is often placed at the center of French colonial history. With good reason, this thesis is no exception. Not only is Algeria the central focus because the main thinker discussed here (Abdelmalek Sayad) was born there, but also because Algeria was one of the primary terrains on which a broader intellectual history of France unfolded. Algeria, as well as other African colonies, also had important ramifications for the place of academia in spheres of power. Academic research became one enduring way in which France could exert power over its colonies.[47] Certain academics were in tune to the special relationship between scholars and colonial authorities and sought to contest this particular manifestation of knowledge-power. One early example of this is Marcel Mauss, an influential ethnologist who was active around the time that Sayad was born.[48]

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[46] Stovall, *Transnational France*, 207-223; see also Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

[47] See, for instance, Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st ed (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), and Osama Abi-Mershed, *Apostles of Modernity: Saint-Simonians and the Civilizing Mission in Algeria* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2010).

[48] The following narrative of Marcel Mauss's biography rests upon the excellent research of Mauss and the Museum of Man done by Alice Conklin. See Alice L. Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850-1950* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2013).

Mauss, a nephew of Durkheim, was one of the most prominent social scientists working in France after Durkheim passed away and before Claude Lévi-Strauss emerged onto the scene. He created a bridge between sociology and anthropology, using the former field as a blueprint for understanding humans' social interactions and the latter field as a theoretical and methodological foundation for understanding human behavior and conducting ethnographic fieldwork. He had an interest in studying non-European societies, believing that doing so would give him a greater sense of the human condition. Mauss achieved academic prominence at an ideal moment – after the First World War – for this was a period in which the "republican empire" was at its apogee. With the French controlling massive swaths of territory worldwide, he could easily send his students across the globe to conduct fieldwork on societies that Europeans deemed "primitive." While he certainly may have made problematic assumptions about the non-Europeans (often colonial subjects) that he studied, Mauss saw his role as using science to combat the scientific racism preponderant in French academia. The sloppy academic research couched in scientific objectivity which his peers conducted helped to boost the legitimacy of imperialism by positing French racial superiority over colonized peoples.[49] Mauss, aware of the link between academia and colonial power, sought to use scientific knowledge to reverse the tide of scientific racism. He did so in the 1930s – an age of imperialism and extreme ideologies. The Musée de l'Homme (Museum of Man), which Mauss presided over, was the main institution through which he conducted his anti-racist campaign. Housing artifacts and artwork from around the world, the museum sought to instruct public audiences in the beauty of human diversity rather than promoting a racial

[49] Stovall, *Transnational France*, 207.

hierarchy.

While it is difficult to know for certain the extent to which Mauss's anti-racist message resonated among the French public, it is certainly true that his methods had a significant impact on how future social scientists conducted their research. First, he laid the foundation for the primacy of fieldwork in ethnography. Second, by sending students to the colonies to do fieldwork, he helped establish a direct link between academia and the empire. In doing so, he encouraged his disciples to explore colonialism's impact on colonial subjects. As we will see, this had important consequences for the "republican empire" later on.

In the meantime, though, empire still had a couple of decades of life left in it, and in the 1930s it was far from clear that a global war would prompt the beginning of empire's end. Abdelmalek Sayad, born in Algeria in 1933, grew up at a time when colonialism was vigorously celebrated both in the metropole and among the European settler population in Algeria. The global depression, however, made the political and economic inequalities between the European *colons* and the *indigènes* especially glaring, exacerbating rifts between the two groups. This historical context was, as his biographers noted, "inscribed in the memory of young Sayad."[50] When he reached adulthood, though, he would come to the same realization that Marcel Mauss made: that science could be used to combat colonial power.

[50] Tassadit Yacine-Titouh, Yves Jammet, and Christian de Montlibert, *Abdelmalek Sayad: la découverte de la sociologie en temps de guerre* (Nantes: Éditions nouvelles Cécile Defaut, 2013), 30.

Decolonization and the *Tiers-Mondistes*

After the Second World War, among French intellectuals, philosophical debates about society and individuals were renewed, and these debates were ultimately channeled into the global anti-colonial movement. Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir in particular proposed existentialism as an alternative model to existing theories in the social sciences which attributed little importance to human agency. Individual thought and action, they argued, ultimately mattered more than social structures. Simultaneously, Claude Lévi-Strauss used his anthropological fieldwork to popularize, develop, and expand upon Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralist way of conceiving of human behavior. By employing structuralism as his guiding principle, Lévi-Strauss represented a significant challenge to the primacy of existentialist philosophy in postwar France. The two competing intellectual camps did, however, have something in common: they used their ideas to promote the cause of decolonization in the so-called "Third World."

The existentialists, who dominated postwar intellectual life, essentially believed that society was the sum of its parts. To put it another way, abstract social facts do not govern how humans behave; rather, individual agents are responsible for shaping humanity. In a lecture delivered in Paris in 1945, Sartre argued that human beings spend their lives in pursuit of subjectivity or selfhood. In establishing themselves as autonomous subjects, individuals rely upon interactions with others to obtain truths about themselves. Sartre insisted that subjectivity and inter-subjectivity could not be isolated as

two autonomous concepts. Both were essential facets of human existence.[51] Beauvoir's analysis of women's condition made plain the careful balance between subjectivity and inter-subjectivity that governed human life. In the *Second Sex*, she showed how men asserted dominance over women by positing their own subjectivity through the objectification, or "Othering," of women. That is, women existed only to satisfy men's existence, they did not possess authentic selfhood. In order to realize their full human potential, women needed to not only subvert patriarchal power and posit their subjectivity, but they also needed to cultivate healthy and empowering relationships with men predicated upon inter-subjectivity.[52] This is what Sartre and Beauvoir strove to do in their own relationship.

Beyond having a romantic connection, the two also spearheaded an intellectual project together. Sartre and Beauvoir's existentialist movement was centered on Paris' Left Bank and enjoyed institutional support from the universities located there. Existentialism also found a medium through *Les Temps modernes*, the famous journal which the two presided over. Important events and issues of the day were discussed, analyzed, and debated in this journal, and these ideas were disseminated widely. In contrast to scientific intellectuals, Sartre, Beauvoir, and their coterie articulated a moral intellectual voice, playing the role of engaged "secular cleric" in society.[53]

Though some of the main figures of French existentialism were cloistered around Paris, the existentialist project was not hermetically sealed within French borders.

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[51] Jean-Paul Sartre and Bernard Frechtman (trans.), *Existentialism* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947).

[52] Simone de Beauvoir, Constance Borde, and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (trans.), *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage, 2011).

[53] Ory and Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France*, 146-150.

Intellectuals, Sartre included, paid attention to events taking place across the globe – including in the colonies. The development of their ideas was influenced by the growing anticolonial movement. Sartre considered human existence not only through the experience of Nazi occupation, but also through the lens of French imperialism's effects on its subjects. He was, after all, in contact with intellectuals from the colonized world who sought to use philosophies developed in Paris in their own liberation struggles.[54]

In the 1940s and 1950s, Antillean psychologist Frantz Fanon was one such anticolonial intellectual to have contact with Sartre. During his time in Paris, Fanon explored with Sartre the colonial system's existential impact on colonized peoples. Their conclusion, that the colonizers effectively "Othered" the colonized in order to fulfill a sense of superiority over the colonized and that, by extension, colonial racism had created in colonized subjects an inferiority complex, was developed and expanded upon in Fanon's 1952 book, *Peau noir, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*).

A psychoanalytical study with anticolonial implications, Fanon intended for *Peau noir, masques blancs* to reveal how French rule in the Caribbean was demonstrative of the existential effects on colonized subjects of living in a world shaped by white European civilization. Black Antilleans, the focus of his book's analysis, struggled to posit their own subjectivity in the face of domination by white Europeans. Because black subjects of the French metropole were fed the notion that European civilization was the essence of human existence, they often felt obliged to comport themselves in the manner of white people. As a result, argued Fanon, colonialism served to deny Antilleans (and

[54] Robert J.C. Young, Preface to Jean-Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 2001), vvii-xii.

colonial subjects more broadly) the right to become fully authentic and autonomous beings. If colonized peoples were to begin discovering their own subjectivity, the end of colonial rule would be an essential prerequisite.[55]

Published in the early 1950s, a few years prior to Moroccan and Tunisian independence and the beginning of the Algerian War, Fanon's text represented the early stirrings of a worldwide anticolonial intellectual movement – often referred to as *tiers-mondisme* in the francophone world and "Third World-ism" in the anglophone world. After the Second World War, nationalist political figures and intellectuals under European rule agitated for absolute independence. In the context of decolonization, adherents of the Third World model advocated for the colonies' autonomy from both the capitalist West and the Soviet bloc. *Tiers-mondistes* desired the freedom to carve their own path separate from either of the two superpowers.[56]

Fanon's writings, many of which were produced in the context of the Algerian War, articulated a particular vision for *tiers-mondisme* which helped popularize and add greater heft to the burgeoning ideology. Among the anti-colonial treatises that he wrote, *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne* (*A Dying Colonialism*) and *Les damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*) were without a doubt the most consequential. Published two years apart from one another and differing somewhat in style, these two books nevertheless presented a common vision for the future of peoples who had ousted – or were in the process of repelling – their colonial rulers. The formerly colonized, Fanon argued, had a destiny to reshape humanity and the world in their image. Writing in 1959

[55] Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire masques blancs*, Points Essais 26 (Paris: Éd. du Seuil, 1952).

[56] James D. Le Sueur, *Uncivil War: Intellectuals and Identity Politics during the Decolonization of Algeria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 28-54.

during the fifth year of the Algerian War, he proclaimed the birth of a new Algerian nation and a new Algerian people a fait accompli despite the French government's continued efforts to maintain French Algeria.[57] At the time, Fanon was deeply optimistic of the political and socioeconomic changes that the Algerian War was bringing about, describing the revolutionary struggle as the "oxygen which creates and shapes a new humanity."[58] *Les damnés de la terre*, written far more as a political essay than an analytical piece, described the violence of the Algerians' struggle (as well as that of other colonized peoples) as necessary in order to galvanize the people and in order to ensure legitimate change after decolonization. It was bourgeois colonialists, he argued, who were the greatest proponents of peaceful transitions of power, for they understood that a passive resistance would allow them to maintain economic power over the "Third World."[59] Only violent overthrow, he insisted, would ensure a true break from the colonial past, thus allowing the formerly colonized to discover and create new ways of being, to fashion "new skin, to develop new thoughts…a new man."[60]

The particular brand of *tiers-mondisme* outlined by Fanon was echoed by other intellectuals situated in both the colonies and in Europe – including, for instance, Aimé Césaire and Jean-Paul Sartre, close ally of Fanon. In his *Discours sur le colonialisme* (*Discourse on Colonialism*), Césaire, a writer from French-controlled Martinique, argued that colonialism had morally corrupted Europeans and had degraded the colonized. The colonial system, then, was actually antithetical to the progress of human civilization

[57] Frantz Fanon and Haakon Chevalier, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 22-23.

[58] Ibid., 181.

[59] Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 65-128.

[60] Ibid., 376.

anywhere, be it European or not. The colonized, he insisted, could not begin to progress and reclaim their civilizations until the European colonizers were removed from power.[61] Sartre, for his part, promoted Fanon's ideas quite openly. He wrote the preface to *Les damnés de la terre*, in which he defended violence as a means of revolutionary change.[62]

The Algerian War stood as a significant center of gravity for the *tiers-mondistes*, as evidenced by the emphasis on that conflict in Fanon's writings. Through much of the war's duration, Sartre published high-profile articles condemning French military action in Algeria. By 1957, a pivotal year in the Algerian War, Sartre and most other prominent French intellectuals (including even the liberal Raymond Aron, but shockingly excluding Sartre and Beauvoir's close friend, Albert Camus), were decidedly in favor of Algerian independence. Realizing that they could not have a strong impact on the Third World intelligentsia, Sartre and other French *tiers-mondistes* turned their attention towards influencing public opinion in the metropole, revealing atrocities committed by the French army.[63] That same year, Frantz Fanon, in Algeria working with the French state to provide medical relief to locals, abandoned his post and joined the Front de libération nationale (FLN) following a massacre perpetrated by the revolutionary group. Seeing that the war was becoming increasingly violent, he felt obligated to take a stronger position in the independence struggle. Embedding himself in the FLN's intelligentsia based in Tunis, Fanon spent much of the rest of the war writing critiques against the French left's tepid support of the Algerians' war for independence, explaining the

[61] Aimé Césaire and Joan Pinkham (trans.), *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 21-25.

[62] Fanon, *Damnés de la terre*, 37-62.

[63] Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, 87-127, 131-213.

necessity of violence, as well as of course articulating the vision of *tiers-mondisme*.[64]

While existentialism had massive support among the francophone intellectual community, it was not the only theoretical framework around which colonialism was critiqued in the period of decolonization. That existentialism remained disputed in anti-colonial discourse owes much to the importance of the social sciences in postwar debates on colonialism. Within the social sciences, structuralism predominated, due in large part to the enormous influence of Claude Lévi-Strauss. As we will see, the work of Lévi-Strauss was more influential to Abdelmalek Sayad and his mentor, Pierre Bourdieu, than the general philosophy produced by Fanon and Sartre.

Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology emerged both from his readings of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic works and his fieldwork studies of Brazil's indigenous peoples which he conducted in the 1930s and 1940s.[65] As contemporaries of the existentialists, he wrote against the notion that human agency was potentially unlimited. Instead, he proposed that a pre-ordained system of structures governed the body social and human thought and behavior, much like the laws of physics dictated the planets' and stars' movements through the cosmos. Although his conception of humanity differed drastically from that of the existentialists, he shared a common desire to use his ideas to subvert the Western imperial powers' attempts both at dominating non-European peoples and making them subhuman.

In combating European racism and proving that "Third World" peoples were equals, Lévi-Strauss, like other social scientists, aimed to use academic research to make

[64] Ibid., 165-190.

[65] Edmund Leach, *Claude Lévi-Strauss*, Second Edition (New York: Viking Press, 1974)

his case. His strategies for intellectual engagement were therefore similar to those adopted by such predecessors as Emile Durkheim and especially Marcel Mauss. Early on in his career, Lévi-Strauss gravitated away from pure sociology and towards the ethnographic tradition emerging in France around the interwar era. He found the idea of fieldwork especially appealing. In *Tristes tropiques*, his autobiography about his time in Brazil, he recounted that, as a young student venturing out to a foreign land, he imagined himself on the cutting edge of a new trend in academia wherein the scholar actually exited the laboratory and made for the field. Often times it was drudgery and exhausting work, but it was how he believed new truths about the human condition were to be obtained.[66] He gave primacy to his interactions with people at the ground level as he developed his own structuralist theories.[67]

Unlike Durkheim, who was curious about discovering "social facts" particular to one society, Lévi-Strauss was, like Mauss, concerned with establishing facts about the human mind which were universal.[68] As he wrote,

> In suggesting Man as the object of my studies, anthropology dispelled all my doubts: for the differences and changes which we ethnographers deal in are those which matter to all mankind, as opposed to those which are exclusive to one particular civilization and would not exist if we chose to live outside it.[69]

Taking cues from structuralist principles as laid out by such linguists as Ferdinand de Saussure, Lévi-Strauss's anthropological observations sought to demonstrate how people ordered, classified, gave meaning to their world, and how these structures shaped human

[66] Claude Lévi-Strauss and John Russell (trans.), *Tristes Tropiques* (New York: Atheneum, 1964), 17-22.

[67] Leach, *Claude Lévi-Strauss*, 12.

[68] Ibid., 2.

[69] Lévi-Strauss and Russell, *Tristes Tropiques*, 62.

behavior and thought. In doing so, he believed that he could prove that all human beings, regardless of race, possessed the same intellectual faculties. In *La pensée sauvage* (*Savage Mind*), for instance, he elaborated on systems of classifications used by "primitive" groups. Through what he termed "totemic classification," "primitive" groups conferred meaning upon their physical world. They observed their surrounding ecosystem methodically and applied names to plants and animals based upon those natural objects' perceived relation to emotional or epistemological concepts already present in their system of viewing the world.[70] His analysis of "savage thought," by showing how "primitive" groups possess abstract concepts in their linguistic systems, sought to counter ethnocentric assumptions that non-Western peoples lacked the capacity for complex thought because their language supposedly lacked abstract vocabulary. Rather, he insisted that "primitive" groups gave meaning to their world in ways that were as complex and as legitimate as the philosophies and sciences developed by Europeans.[71]

Lévi-Strauss was convinced of structural anthropology's ability to accurately explain the workings of the human mind, and that in turn the findings of this type of research could serve to equalize relations between Europeans and non-Europeans by scientifically disproving European racism. While his theories sprung from the same desire that *tiers-mondistes* had to end European domination over non-Europeans, his conception of humanity placed significant restraints upon the individual's ability to make autonomous choices in a society whose structures were pre-ordained. Wrote Lévi-

[70] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 39-45.

[71] See especially his analyses of "myth," which, he argued, is born from the same desire to logically order the world as science is in "civilized" societies. Lévi-Strauss, *Savage Mind*, 16-21 and *Tristes tropiques*, 164-176.

Strauss,

> The ensemble of a people's customs has always its particular style; they form into systems. I am convinced that the number of these systems is not unlimited and that human societies, like individual human beings (at play, in their dreams, or in moments of delirium), never create *absolutely*: all they can do is to choose certain combinations from a repertory of ideas...[72]

He therefore believed that, without even being cognizant of it, humans interacted with social structures largely imposed upon them. As such, his structural model, although placed in the service of anti-colonialism, lacked the same sort of revolutionary optimism about human agency offered by the existentialists. Lévi-Strauss was as critical of colonial rule and colonial racism, but his intellectual style was one of scientific pragmatism rather than philosophical speculation.

Other social scientists, who occupied the same intellectual terrain as Lévi-Strauss, also sought to deploy academic rigor in the service of the anti-colonial movement, and they did so through a similarly pragmatic lens. Owing to Lévi-Strauss' dominance in the academy, most French social scientists would approach the anti-colonial struggle through structuralism rather than existentialism. They also possessed a certain distaste for the strategies adopted by other *tiers-mondistes* discussed here, largely because they felt that the *tiers-mondistes*' philosophical meditations on colonialism did little to address the concrete realities of empire's effects on colonized individuals and societies. Two sociologists working in Algeria, Pierre Bourdieu and his student, Abdelmalek Sayad, typified the positions taken by academics with an interest in the anti-colonial struggle. It was during the Algerian War that Bourdieu and Sayad would gain a strong sense of sociology's greater purpose. Through the sociological analysis of Algerian society, the

[72] *Tristes tropiques*, 160, emphasis in original.

two found that by viewing the country and its people through a microscope, they could diagnose Algeria's deeper problems, for the purposes of discovering more durable solutions.

"Uprooting": Pierre Bourdieu and Abdelmalek Sayad in Algeria, 1957-1962

Originally, Bourdieu had been trained in philosophy, but his experiences in Algeria drove him to sociology as a field that, he believed, could identify the nature of colonialism's harsh effects on people in a precise, scientific manner. After the Second World War, he completed his studies at the Ecole Normale Supérieure with phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty serving as his principal instructor. Upon graduating, the army called Bourdieu into service in Algeria, where he arrived in 1955. There, he fell in love with the country and its people. Bitter towards his own country for the damage it had dealt Algeria, he felt that he had an obligation to assist Algerians. He wanted to understand the root causes of Algeria's socioeconomic troubles, and to explore the effects that wartime population displacement had on the Algerian people. During his one year of military service, he came to believe that the scientific rigor of sociology was better equipped than philosophy to address the deeply troubling issues unfolding in front of him. Once he fulfilled his military obligations, he decided to stay in Algeria in support of the revolutionaries' cause.[73] In 1958, he entered the University of Algiers to research social conditions in Algeria and to teach philosophy (as well as of course sociology).

[73] Michael Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts* (Dublin: Acumen Publishing, 2012), http://alltitles.ebrary.com/Doc?id=10817858, 17.

While a faculty member, he came to appreciate the work of one student in particular – Abdelmalek Sayad – who would eventually accompany Bourdieu on fieldwork studies in the countryside.

A native Algerian, Sayad was fortunate to be attending a university rather than performing manual labor like many of his compatriots. His life experiences, far from typical, contributed to his becoming an academic. For one, Kabylia, where he grew up, had more educational opportunities than elsewhere in Algeria.[74] Sayad therefore became literate at a young age. Unlike his average peers, he spent endless hours indoors, owing to a childhood plagued with frequent illnesses. With books often being the only form of entertainment available to him, he latched on to the world of knowledge. It was this childhood experience that set him on track to become a teacher in Algiers during the Algerian War.[75] In 1957, with the Battle of Algiers raging, Sayad distinguished himself as a teacher, providing the credibility that he needed in order to gain entry into the University of Algiers.

Initially, Sayad tried to avoid becoming involved in the independence struggle, fearing that he would jeopardize his academic standing. However, 1957 was a particularly polarizing year in the war. Both sides – the FLN and the French army – upped the ante, making it nearly impossible for people not to take a position on the war. The Battle of Algiers crystallized the war's intensification. Bearing witness to this

[74] Colonial authorities provided Kabyles preferential treatment over the Arab population in Algeria, believing that Kabyles were racially superior to Arabs. See Patricia M. E. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria*, Society and Culture in the Modern Middle East (New York: I.B. Tauris ; Distributed by St. Martin's, 1995).

[75] Yacine-Titouh, Jammet, and Montlibert, *Abdelmalek Sayad*, 34-44.

turning point in the war, Sayad finally accepted an invitation to join a group of student syndicalists comprised of both European and "Muslim" Algerians. The group, known as the Comité des étudiants algériens laïques (the Committee of Laic Algerian Students), articulated a liberal "third way" for Algeria. In his first published article, Sayad wrote that independence was vital because of colonialism's de-humanizing effects on the colonized. However, he insisted that reconciliation between Europeans and Algerians was not only possible, but also ideal. He rejected positions taken by the extreme left and the ultras on the right, both of which conceived of the war as a binary struggle between two monolithic groups – French versus Algerians, Muslims versus Christians, or Europeans versus Arabs.[76]

Bourdieu's own ideas about the war ran along the same lines of pragmatism and nuance. He rejected strongly what he perceived to be a celebration of revolutionary violence espoused by Fanon and Sartre. He agreed that the long-term socioeconomic impact of colonialism on Algeria had made "French Algeria" a dead letter. He also believed that the structural problems afflicting "Muslim" Algerians made their resorting to violence understandable, but not necessarily preferential to more moderate forms of resistance. Revolutionary violence, he insisted, would result in a chaotic socio-political situation after decolonization. The major upheaval would make it difficult for future Algerian leaders to bring forth a functioning, beneficial socialist system. The position that he took on the war sprung from his belief that his role was to analyze social structures in order to locate the origins of Algeria's maladies, and that these discoveries would contribute to more intelligent decision-making. From his point of view, he was the

[76] Ibid., 49-73.

practical observer, and intellectuals like Sartre and Fanon played the role of fiery rhetoricians.[77]

Sayad's political engagement makes it clear that, even before meeting Bourdieu, he was making moves in the direction of scientific pragmatism rather than the kind of intellectual work employed by the prominent *tiers-mondistes* of the day. Like Bourdieu, he wanted to understand the world around him and how it had been morphed by the negative effects of colonial domination. With deeper knowledge of colonialism's structural effects, Bourdieu and Sayad believed, political leaders could then be better equipped to solve problems.

When the two young thinkers met in 1958, it was on the surface level a student-pupil relationship, but they developed a closer bond born out of shared intellectual interests. Looking back on the period in which he began taking classes with Bourdieu, Sayad described the significance of their rapport as such:

> It was the first time that I realized that society could be an object of study and that everything that I learned from my readings of Kant, Mauss, or…Aristotle could contribute to an understanding of social realities.[78]

Sayad saw in Bourdieu a bridge to the world of ideas that appealed to him the most – especially the social sciences. And Bourdieu saw in Sayad someone with a deep desire to learn more as well as an ally who could collaborate with him on projects related to the situation in Algeria.[79]

Their close partnership began in late 1958 when Bourdieu invited Sayad to

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[77] Le Sueur, *Uncivil War*, 214-255.

[78] Yacine-Titouh, Jammet, and Montlibert, *Abdelmalek Sayad*, 79.

[79] Ibid., 74-87.

become a part of his research team. The organization, l'Association demographique, économique, et sociale (the Association for Demographic, Economic, and Social Studies – ARDES), was funded by France's Finance Ministry and was charged with exploring socio-economic issues affecting "Muslim" Algerians.[80] Although Bourdieu was at the head of ARDES, he was far from interested in helping to maintain French domination over Algerians. Rather, just as Mauss did in the 1920s and 1930s, he saw an opportunity to embed himself in an institution and use his academic influence to check colonial power. Bourdieu, Sayad, and other members of ARDES worked around Kabylia taking samples representative of various members of society – the well to do *colons*, the middle classes, the peasantry, and villagers forced into resettlement camps. By bearing witness to the socioeconomic conditions in Kabylia and disseminating their findings to a larger audience, Bourdieu's research team used scientific research in the service of the independence struggle.[81]

In their analyses of social conditions in Kabylia, Bourdieu and Sayad placed primacy on fieldwork. Given the state of the social sciences in the postwar era, that the two sociologists valued on-the-ground observations and conversing with their subjects of study is hardly surprising. Decades prior, Mauss had set in motion a trend of going directly to the subjects of study for analysis. What is more, Lévi-Strauss' use of his own fieldwork studies in Brazil to inspire a breakthrough in structuralism gave his

[80] ARDES was part of a larger attempt by De Gaulle's government to administer a program in Algeria akin to affirmative action in the United States, with the hope being that Algeria would remain French. See Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 49-51.

[81] Yacine-Titouh, Jammet, and Montlibert, *Abdelmalek Sayad*, 99-103.

contemporaries (Bourdieu and Sayad included) added encouragement to go directly to the people in order to make new discoveries.[82]

Bourdieu and Sayad also desired to integrate anthropological fieldwork into their sociology because they placed considerable currency on the personal and intimate nature of this type of work.[83] Bourdieu later recounted that, when it came to interviewing Algerians, Sayad stood out as one who could easily establish comfort and familiarity with the interview subjects:

> In fact, and this is why I loved working with him…he brought an eye that was neither of indifference nor of condescendence to the fellow men and women of his country. And to their little tricks, their little lies, their frailties produced from suffering and misery, he gave a look that I would say was tender or moved.[84]

Sayad's future research on Algerian migrants in France (see Chapter 2) indicates that he cultivated that skill that he possessed intuitively through the course of his studies with Bourdieu, the ability to approach the interview subject not just as an academic, but also as a sympathetic comrade. By establishing camaraderie with the interview subjects, more honest and frank oral testimonies could be obtained.

The two sociologists set their sights especially on the peasantry, believing this class of Algerian society to be the most detrimentally impacted by French rule. Indeed, while the Republic at the end of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century occupied itself with transforming "peasants into Frenchmen," the same could not be said for how the "republican empire" regarded Algerian peasants – who were subjects,

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[82] Ibid., 104-105.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Quoted in Ibid., 105.

not citizens, of France.[85] Rather, colonial officials saw the peasants not as a significant political base, but as potential impediments to the building of a settler colony. In Algeria, the key principle of colonial policy vis-à-vis the indigenous peasantry was to erase it as a political entity and transform it into a purely economic entity. By the end of the nineteenth century, the majority of arable land in Algeria was owned by Europeans, and the indigenous peasants had been essentially transformed into workers for landowners and owners of industry.[86] Sayad and Bourdieu, through the course of their sociological studies in the countryside, sought to shed light this negative socioeconomic impact that French colonialism clearly had on the Algerian people.

After six months observing peasant society in Kabylia, where Sayad was born, the two sociologists co-authored a book titled *Le déracinement: la crise de l'agriculture traditionnelle en Algérie* (Uprooting: the Breakdown of Traditional Agriculture in Algeria). Published in 1964, this sociological study functioned as a critique of the colonial system. The key purpose of the study was to track French colonialism's impact on Algerians' "peasant spirit." Bourdieu and Sayad found that the colonial system essentially "proletarianized" Algerians and erased traditional patterns of living.[87] They argued that the "resettlement" camps that cropped up during the war as a means of monitoring peasant populations served as an exemplar of the colonizers' long-term

[85] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1976).

[86] John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 80-113; Benjamin Claude Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902*, Paperback ed, History and Society of the Modern Middle East (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 21-24.

[87] Pierre Bourdieu and Abdelmalek Sayad, *Le Déracinement: la crise de l'agriculture traditionnelle en Algérie* (Paris: Les Éd. de Minuit, 1989).

efforts to detach peasants from their land. Going back to the late nineteenth century, *colons* uprooted peasants in order to make them available for farm or industrial labor. In uprooting peasants, the *colons* also wished to ween Algerians off of the pre-capitalist modes of production that were traditionally practiced in rural villages (what Sayad and Bourdieu referred to as the "peasant spirit").[88] Bourdieu and Sayad argued that this rapid and forceful introduction of a foreign economic system had torn asunder traditional patterns of living in the countryside. The colonial system first made peasants landless, which then necessitated migration to Algerian cities or France, which then resulted in the breakdown of the social fabric of village communities. Left only with the memory of their traditional way of life, peasants felt they had to either try to cling on to their heritage or try to adapt to the new economic realities. In either case, peasants could not reverse the fact that they had been "proletarianized" and pauperized due to the structures embedded in the colonial system.[89]

Using a combination of historical research, analysis of data, and fieldwork, Bourdieu and Sayad effectively crafted a sociological critique of colonialism. Their joint project, *Le déracinement*, showcased their preference for what they saw as the precision and greater clarity of sociology over philosophy. The two young men, not far apart in age (even though Sayad was Bourdieu's pupil), fashioned themselves as critical sociologists, or specific intellectuals in the same vein as their predecessors in the social sciences. Sayad and Bourdieu cut their sociological teeth during the Algerian War. Their experiences at this stage in their lives left a deep imprint on their future development as

[88] Ibid., 15-27.

[89] Ibid., 161-167.

social thinkers. Bourdieu would use his studies of Kabyle peasants as a basis for articulating a new sociological conception of structures and agents. His new model, what he called a "theory of practice," attempted to transcend the philosophical divide between existentialists and structuralists. In the process of developing this new theory, Bourdieu became a leading sociologist in France. Sayad, for his part, would carry what he observed in Algeria into his later work on migration and the nation. Fundamentally, his sociological inquiries remained geared towards shedding light on human suffering and critiquing power and domination in society. He launched his career as a sociologist after leaving his place of birth and settling in the French mainland. After the achievement of Algerian independence in 1962, he became an emigrant.

Sayad's Path to a Sociology of Migration

The unstable political situation in Algeria during this period led Sayad to realize that he could no longer conduct sociological studies in his homeland. At the same time, he became increasingly aware of the part he would have to play in in his compatriots' continued struggle against French domination. He did not arrive at an epiphany overnight; first, he had to determine how he would deploy his intellectual skills in helping to envision the makeup of the postcolonial world. Eventually, he determined that the sociological analysis of migration and migrants could offer an ideal launch pad from which to inquire into relations of domination. It would take nearly a decade to discover how to use sociology in the service of his countrymen. For the immediate future following independence, he was left in a situation where he felt that he could no longer

pursue his career in his home country. As he put it, Algeria had become "hell" for him.[90]

His political disagreements with the FLN were the source of his deciding to leave Algeria in 1963. In particular, he found the FLN's tactics for achieving independence disagreeable. He believed that violence did not solve the structural problems that colonialism had inflicted on Algeria. In an interview with Sayad conducted in 1996, he said that

> …a young *pied-noir* girl who has gone dancing, dancing even with a war raging…who was mutilated following an attack by nationalists, an attack by the colonized, she being somewhat on the side of the colonizers, on what grounds is this young girl personally responsible for my unhappiness as a colonized person? Colonialism being, as we have said, a system, the logic of this system has made it so that she is on one side and I, the colonized, am on the other side.[91]

He rejected the bipolar division of people that the colonial system had engendered. What is more, he believed that because the problem of colonial domination was structural, arbitrarily attacking beneficiaries of the system was not only morally abhorrent, but also ineffective.

During the war, Sayad's alignment with the liberal camp had already painted a target on his back, as the FLN tended to view moderates as a threat to the Algerian cause. His fear of FLN reprisals was well founded. Several of his friends who held similar beliefs fell victim to FLN terror. Once the FLN officially came into power in 1962, Sayad could not help but feel that if he remained in the country he would face political persecution. It seemed that even after independence, France still appealed to Algerians

[90] Abdelmalek Sayad and Hassan Arfaoui, *Histoire et recherche identitaire ; suivi d'entretien avec Hassan Arfaoui* (Saint-Denis: Bouchène, 2002), 84.

[91] Ibid., 52.

like Sayad for its openness compared to Algeria.[92]

Leaving what he believed to be a deteriorating situation in Algeria, Sayad went to France in 1963 with little direction or sense of his long-term aspirations. The listlessness that he experienced in his first decade there owed to a combination of career troubles and personal health problems. While he managed to secure a position at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), the work was precarious due to the nature of his short-term contract. Nevertheless, the position provided him the resources necessary to continue sociological studies, but he lacked an object of study which would provide him the same passionate commitment that working with peasants in Algeria did. Meanwhile, he consistently experienced medical issues which required frequent hospital visits, compounding what was already a troubling first few years in France. Taken together, his problems at this stage in his life culminated in a severe existential crisis.[93]

While Sayad struggled to find his footing, multitudes of migrants continued to enter France from Algeria. By the time that Sayad was in France, though, the nature of Algerian immigration had begun to shift from a temporary to a permanent form of immigration. Decades prior, colonial officials, working in concert with employers, had already established an efficient and vibrant chain of migration between Algeria and France. Between the First World War and the beginning of the Algerian War, a steady stream of migrant workers, most from the countryside, came to France on a seasonal

[92] After all, the development of an Algerian nationalist movement occurred in emigrant enclaves in France. See Neil MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants and Racism: Algerians in France, 1900-62* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 83-117.

[93] Yacine-Titouh, Jammet, and Montlibert, *Abdelmalek Sayad*, 123-125.

basis for work in industry.[94] After Algeria gained independence, FLN leadership agreed to negotiate accords with France that would allow the migrant chain to continue. As Algeria's economy continued to struggle, FLN leaders understood that emigration could function as a convenient safety valve ensuring stability in the young Republic. With the French economy continuing to experience tremendous growth, De Gaulle's government had every reason to encourage more Algerian immigration. As a result, by the end of the 1960s upwards of 800,000 Algerians were living in France. Unlike in periods prior, these new Algerian immigrants consisted of entire families, and with this new trend in family immigration came the increased likelihood that Algerians might opt to permanently settle there.[95]

As Algerians in France became more settled, numerous, and noticeable, Sayad turned his attention to them as a potential focus of his studies. His reasons for wanting to pursue Algerian immigration as an area of sociological inquiry are obvious. Algerian immigrants were his solid connection to the compatriots that he had left behind when he felt obliged to leave his home country. By interacting with these immigrant communities, he could once again seek answers to questions concerning forms of domination that affected fellow Algerians. He found that he could use his analytical abilities to uncover the truth behind his condition and the condition of fellow Algerians with whom he felt a deep attachment. After all, for Sayad, sociological research was, in addition to being a way of understanding society writ large, fundamentally an act of self-discovery. He described identitarian research as such:

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[94] MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants and Racism*, 67-83.

[95] Patrick Weil, *La France et ses étrangers: l'aventure d'une politique de l'immigration, 1938-1991*, Liberté de l'esprit (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1991).

> The act of sociology, a discourse on others, is also an act of auto-sociology, a discourse on oneself: talking about others or talking about things related to others is great, but what is said of these things only takes on its full significance when I know what has made me say those things about others. This is not only a methodological reflex, but it is also a subtle proxy for talking about oneself.[96]

Sayad was also becoming aware of the fact that Algerians in France issued from that world – peasant society – that offered him his first foray into sociological study:

> For me, working on the Algerian population which had immigrated to France, which was residing in France, was a way of rediscovering the peasants whom I knew through the course of my sociological work in rural Algeria; they had been transformed into workers for French industry. So I was not that far from both my origins and my first objects of study.[97]

At the same time that the realities of immigration in postcolonial France were taking shape, immigrants themselves were attempting to make sense of the fact that they might never return to Algeria, and therefore had to renegotiate their identities as new permanent members of French society. Becoming increasingly vocal and active at the national level, writers and other intellectuals within the Algerian immigrant community had to make a choice as to how they would publicly articulate the immigrants' struggles, their rights, and their sense of belonging. Some wrote novels, others put on plays, some made music, some pursued journalism, and a small number entered academia. Sayad was among the latter. His medium was sociology. Through this field of scholarship he explored his own inner dilemma and that of his compatriots.

By the early 1970s, Sayad was more assured of his purpose as a sociologist, but although he now had a field of study in mind, the question remained of how he would approach a sociological analysis of migration. He needed a theoretical framework that

[96] Sayad and Arfaoui, *Histoire et recherche identitaire*, 46.

[97] Ibid., 88.

would conjoin his passion for on-the-ground fieldwork with the desire to understand the social world at a macro level. The state of sociology in this period made it difficult to envision how one could balance larger social structures against choices made by individual actors. Although the discipline was widely represented across France's academic institutions, the parameters around which sociologists could conduct their work felt limiting. It seemed that one had to choose between phenomenology or structuralism. Sayad, however, wanted to consider human agency in tandem with social structures. He found inspiration in an innovative sociological approach that was coming to the fore at nearly the same time as Sayad's becoming aware of his own calling in sociology. That inspiration came from his former mentor and fellow fieldworker in Algeria, Pierre Bourdieu.

Bourdieu's arriving upon his "theory of practice" arose out of his lack of satisfaction with the three main schools of thought that he had been exposed to: phenomenology, existentialism, and structuralism. He appreciated phenomenology and existentialism as ways of seeing the world that emphasized human action, but he was, like Lévi-Strauss, convinced that human agency was not unrestrained. At the same time, though, he found structuralism ahistorical because, he believed, it could not account for how people and societies evolve over time. From his view, structuralism also ignored a truth about the human condition that existentialists and phenomenologists made quite obvious: humans have a role in shaping the social world.[98]

The new model that Bourdieu developed aimed to prove that structures are not static and merely imposed upon people. Rather, individuals, while not exercising

[98] Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu*, 43-45.

complete freedom of will, make choices and negotiate with the existing social world and are also active agents in the morphing of social structures. His "theory of practice" asserted that structures are both structured and evolving.[99] In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, published in 1972, he developed a theoretical approach that demonstrates how individuals both shaped and were shaped by existing social structures. His basis for understanding human action centered upon his concept of *habitus*. An individual's *habitus*, as defined by Bourdieu, constitutes an individual's way of seeing and interacting with the social world. It is a set of behaviors adopted by the individual on the basis of background and life experiences. *Habitus* is therefore in itself a micro-structure that belongs to the individual. Yet it is not a static structure; it evolves.[100] *Habitus* evolves because the individual agent is unwittingly capable of apprehending and reproducing (and therefore molding) objective reality.[101]

Habitus accounted for human agency while also placing what Bourdieu believed to be realistic limits on humans' ability to make truly autonomous choices. Unlike existentialists, he argued that humans interact not just with one another, but also with a set of social structures that govern their lives. He referred to the social world with which people interact as a "field" or *doxa*: the agglomeration of all "social and mental structures" which are internalized by each member of the community through their *habitus*. The *doxa* regulates individuals at the same time that it is shaped and

[99] Ibid.

[100] Pierre Bourdieu and Richard Nice (trans.), *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology ; 16 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu*, 50-53.

[101] Bourdieu and Nice, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 79.

manipulated by individual agents.[102] In contrast to Lévi-Strauss's structuralism, Bourdieu insisted that his concept of *doxa* does not find the source of its strength solely in the stability of objective structures. The extent to which individuals reproduce structures in their behavior also determines *doxa*'s strength. Thus, the "agents' aspirations have the same limits as the objective conditions of which they are the product."[103]

In sum, Bourdieu's "theory of practice" encouraged an evolution beyond prior ways of thinking about how people interact with society. He provided a model that claimed to be capable of explaining social agency at the ground level rather than applying intense analytical theory to reality. Bourdieu aimed for his model to be used in the pursuit of inquiries into relations of domination in society – an issue of considerable relevance during a period in which Foucault's theories about power began to carry considerable weight in the French social sciences and the broader intellectual sphere.[104] Going forward, much of his life work would be centered on how humans were engaged in a struggle – be it physical or symbolic – for power.[105]

Following the release of *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, the findings of which were received with considerable enthusiasm across the academic community, Bourdieu became the de facto leader of French sociology. He spearheaded a cohort of sociologists who were similarly intrigued by the question of domination in society. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (ARSS), a social science journal founded by Bourdieu,

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[102] Ibid., 164.

[103] Ibid., 166.

[104] On Foucault's reception, see Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montreal ; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

[105] Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu*, 55.

became the principal journal around which Bourdieu's coterie disseminated research on power, domination, and the body social. Sayad, who was keen on the same issues that Bourdieu cared about, and who was also enthusiastic about applying Bourdieu's ideas to his own work, was among one of the earliest contributors to Bourdieu's new journal.

Armed with a distinct object of study, a more satisfying theoretical framework, and the opportunity to publish in a journal presided over by likeminded individuals, Sayad now felt far better positioned to begin making serious contributions to sociology. He began directing his energies towards developing a sociology of migration at a time when few social scientists took an interest in the subject.[106] He understood his role as one who endeavored to understand the social mechanisms of migration on a deeper level, how the settlement of Algerians in France might embody relations of domination between French and Algerians, and how Algerians themselves internalize and come to terms with the migrant experience. His same opposition to intellectual engagement with a broader audience that he had during the Algerian War carried through into the beginning of his studies on migration in the 1970s. He mainly targeted academic institutions and interacted with the immigrant community, but not with the public writ large.

Sayad began molding his intellectual type at a moment when the role of intellectuals in society was transforming. Throughout the 1970s, a perceptible shift occurred in which the intellectual gave up the mantel of bearer of universal knowledge and instead focused on a particular branch of knowledge. Michel Foucault insisted on this shift in the intellectual's role, arguing that thinkers would be more effective in

[106] As Herman Lebovics argues, such an interest in immigration would not develop until the political situation in the 1980s made it a necessity for academics to study the immigration "problematic." See Herman Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home: France in the Global Age*, Radical Perspectives (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 84-114.

bettering society if they mastered a specific set of intellectual problems and focused their energies on institutional spheres of power. The kind of intellectual that Foucault advocated for was "specific," rather than a writer-philosopher who engaged the public on a number of disparate ideas, as Sartre had done in the postwar era. Foucault, for his part, concentrated his efforts on the historical analysis of institutions and power, and devoted most of his activism to prison reform.[107]

Pierre Bourdieu's critique of intellectual society also contributed to changes in the position of intellectuals in society. In his analysis of the intelligentsia, he argued that intellectuals and academics employed cultural capital, defined as the "partial or total monopolizing of the society's symbolic resources in religion, philosophy, art, and science," as a means of exercising power in society.[108] As such, he concluded, it would be irresponsible for intellectuals to comport themselves as "secular clerics," because doing so would only be an attempt at using knowledge-power to exercise domination over those with less cultural capital. Bourdieu's critique had its effect; by the end of the 1970s, it seemed increasingly inappropriate for intellectuals to claim access to moral authority or universal truth.[109]

Given the changes in intellectuals' roles for the reasons described above, we can perhaps understand why Sayad, already predisposed to want to avoid public engagement, would commit himself to the role of "specific intellectual." By doing so, he could gain

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[107] Jeremy Jennings, "Introduction," in Jennings, ed., *Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century France: Mandarins and Samurais*, St Antony's/Macmillan Series (New York, N.Y: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 13-28; Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics*, 47-48.

[108] Bourdieu and Nice, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 187.

[109] Michel Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels* (Paris: Seuil, 1997), 582-610; Ory and Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France*, 227-232; Allan Stoekl, *Agonies of the Intellectual: Commitment, Subjectivity, and the Performative in the Twentieth-Century French Tradition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 190-198.

considerable expertise over migration and the dynamics of power involved therein and, simultaneously, work to check the power of academic institutions. Indeed, the 1970s was, for Sayad, both a period in which he found his passion for the sociology of migration, and when he realized that the academy itself had a powerful role to play in French discourses on immigration.

In the next chapter, we will explore in detail how Sayad executed his sociology of migration and the intellectual activities that he pursued in relation to his migration studies. I will show how he employed Bourdieu's model by making his interviews with individual Algerian immigrants the focal point of his writings. In doing so, he made the case that Algerian immigrants, as individual agents, in the process of negotiating and helping shape existing social structures, undergo a profound crisis of identity that begins with a sense of absence from both the society of immigration and the society of emigration and that ends with physical and mental suffering. His writings on migration articulated a theory of "double absence" by taking the voices of ordinary immigrants and converting their testimonies into a scientific – and therefore true – elaboration of the suffering of the immigrant.

CHAPTER III

A SOCIOLOGY OF MIGRATION

Introduction

When Sayad began his sociological inquiries into migration, he found that the issue of migration was conspicuously absent from sociological work despite sociology's overall strong representation in France's academic institutions. Being an Algerian immigrant himself, Sayad was tuned in to migration as an object of study long before his French peers. As Sayad put it in an interview, he "had to be familiar with emigration. I had to have an interest in emigration and the study of it in order to recognize that all immigrants here are emigrants from somewhere else, to want to put back together the two parts or faces of the same phenomenon, to try to restore the object's totality."[110] His own experience with migration, combined with his commitment to fellow Algerians, made him latch on to migration as an object of sociological inquiry. He soon discovered the relations of domination intertwined in the migration process and sought to explore how migration, as a neocolonial form of domination, is socially constructed along the lines of domination, and how that domination affects the lived condition of migrants.

This chapter addresses Sayad's mission to understand, through his scholarship, the analytically complex and profound elements of the situation of the immigrant as actually lived out on the ground. To do so, I begin by exploring the early sociological

[110] Abdelmalek Sayad and Hassan Arfaoui, *Histoire et recherche identitaire ; suivi d'entretien avec Hassan Arfaoui* (Saint-Denis: Bouchène, 2002), 88.

work which led him to arriving at an understanding of how immigration and its corollary, emigration – which, in this thesis, are identified together as migration – are socially constructed and, furthermore, of the migrant condition that springs from that construction. Among the questions Sayad addressed in his early work were those pertaining to how emigration and immigration are sustained and made socially acceptable, how migrants are socially defined both by Algeria and France, and how migrants constitute themselves within this system. Subsequently the chapter will trace the evolution of Sayad's thinking with regard to these questions through his studies in the 1980s. I offer a textual analysis of his writings from the mid-1970s to the 1990s in order to illuminate how his theory of "double absence" first began as a sociological explanation of the impermanence and paradoxical nature of the migrant condition and then evolved to also take into consideration how the "double absence" produces bodily and mental suffering. I argue that Sayad, in framing the "double absence" as an existential dilemma, sought to show how postcolonial forms of domination bred the same sort of existential conflict among the dominated (many of whom were formerly colonized peoples) that Fanon identified among colonial subjects in the era of decolonization.

Sayad had three main goals in mind with regard to building his sociology of migration. The first was the articulation of the methods and theories underpinning such sociological work. The second was the execution of this sociology by taking into account both emigration and immigration as well as the social construction of immigration and the social definition of migrants. Most important of all was the attention that Sayad devoted to the migrant condition. To arrive at an understanding of the migrant condition, Sayad placed significant emphasis on individual agents as the primary subjects of his

studies. The inclusion of interviewees' testimonies in his writings was not simply for effect; like Pierre Bourdieu, he firmly believed that individuals played an active role in shaping surrounding social structures. By making his subjects' voices central to his writings, Sayad believed that he could humanize his sociology of migration in a way that few other academics were doing at the time. His third goal, then, was also to effect a change in academic discourse on immigration in order to be less partial and more holistic. With regard to his sociology of migration, Sayad's engagement with the academy dominated his activities as an intellectual. The final section of this chapter will complicate our understanding of Sayad's nature as an intellectual by considering other aspects of his biography which suggest a certain degree of public engagement on his part. By doing so, I show that we need not apply one ready-made definition of Sayad's intellectual type, but that instead we must accept the fluidity of the strategies and methods that he adopted in his intellectual engagement. Sayad's willingness to make adjustments in his approach stemmed from his fundamental mission of aiding fellow Algerians in their struggle. He believed that often times his role was above all else to seek out the truth of his compatriots' condition (and the truth of the migrant condition overall) through science. At the same time, he believed that he could use his discoveries to guide immigrants and advocate for them – particularly in academia. In this chapter, the focus is on how he helped Algerian immigrants along their journey of regaining their sense of humanity, or, to put it in an existential manner, positing their subjectivity.

Sayad Develops a Sociology of Migration

Sayad's earlier writings on migration focused on the sociological ramifications of the act of leaving one's home country and settling in a new country. This, I argue, was necessary because Sayad always understood his research as an exercise in the pursuit of not just the identity and lived conditions of fellow migrants, but also of himself. In the early years of his development of a sociology of migration, he, being a relatively recent transplant to France, was most familiar with the short-term effects of the migration process on the individual as well as the social mechanisms that made migration possible. Texts that he wrote in the latter half of the 1970s reveal his partiality to these kinds of questions about migration. He initially conceived the "double absence" on the basis of that perspective.

Around 1975, Sayad began having conversations with Algerian immigrants. His interviews were akin to the field work he conducted with Pierre Bourdieu in Algeria. Direct dialogue with his subjects of study greatly facilitated Sayad's mission to make migration come alive as a field of sociological inquiry. The extensive nature of the Algerians' testimonies spoke to the fraternal bond which Sayad established with his subjects of study. His familiarity with them facilitated a comfortable atmosphere in which the interviewee could feel free to divulge some of his or her most hidden sentiments and reflections. His close reliance on individual testimonies, and the effectiveness with which he put those testimonies to work, meant that he was able to humanize the immigrant experience in a way that he believed French social scientists, with their emphasis on hard data and issues that affect only the dominant society, could

not do. By humanizing his work and providing a more holistic view of migrants and migration, Sayad sought to reveal the contradictions and the suffering that migration – which, for him, was synonymous with neocolonialism – created.

One of the first interviewees that Sayad sat down with was a Kabyle emigrant referred to in Sayad's work as "Mohand A." Mohand's testimony began with his reflections on why he decided to emigrate in the first place. His account of conditions in the countryside brought Sayad back to his days studying Algerian peasants during the war. In particular, Sayad was reminded of the ways in which the "proletarianization" of peasants drove them to emigration. Mohand recounted that

> our country is fine for anyone who asks only to live, as long as they are willing to live 'according to the state of the land': you work all the days without counting, all the days that God sends, you bring in what you need to live on and what you bring in is all you have to live on…If you are satisfied with that, so much the better; if not, you have to start running.[111]

France appeared to offer peasants like Mohand a way out of the cycle of working simply to survive: "All those who have money," said Mohand, "those who have done anything, bought anything, or built anything, it's because they had money from France."[112]

During the interview, Mohand not only explained the immediate economic reasons which informed his decision to emigrate, but he also attempted to make sense of how people and communities sustain emigration in the long term. He knew firsthand that the lived experience of being an Algerian in France could very well have discouraged migrants from ever returning to France. Yet the cycle of migration persisted despite the

[111] Abdelmalek Sayad, "El Ghorba: le mécanisme de reproduction de l'émigration," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 2, March: 50-66, in Abdelmalek Sayad and David Macey (trans.), *The Suffering of the Immigrant* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2004), 10.

[112] Ibid., 11.

harsh realities that immigrants faced once they arrived in the country of immigration.

Part of the answer to this paradox was simply misinformation. Mohand's fellow villagers constructed false narratives about what he should expect in France. Men came back from France well-dressed, loaded with cash, seemingly happy and healthy, which led members of Mohand's community to believe that it was the "land of happiness." The realities of living there were hidden beneath the dream of France that everyone possessed. When Mohand himself arrived in France

> it wasn't at all what I expected to find…to think I'd believed that France wasn't exile [*el ghorba*]. You really have to come to France to know the truth. Here, you hear things being said that they never say to us back home...I will always remember this image of my arrival in France, it is the first thing I saw, the first thing I heard: you knock at a door, it opens on to a little room that smells of a mixture of things, the damp, the closed atmosphere, the sweat of sleeping men.[113]

Yet despite what Mohand discovered, he hid the truth from everyone in his village. Just like emigrants who came before him, he opted to go along with the collective misrepresentation of France.

On the basis of conversations with immigrants like Mohand A., Sayad directed his attention to questions relating to migration's social meanings. In the spring of 1975, Sayad released his first major independent contribution to the field of sociology. His article, "El Ghorba: le mécanisme de reproduction de l'émigration" (El Ghorba: The Mechanism that Reproduces Emigration), included part of the testimony offered by Kabyle emigrant Mohand A., as well as Sayad's analysis of his findings from this interview. "El Ghorba" represented Sayad's earliest efforts at articulating a sociology of migration. Here, Sayad was particularly focused on the first element which constitutes

[113] Ibid., 16-17.

migration – emigration. The title of the article itself keys us into this, as *el ghorba* roughly translates to "exile" from the homeland. In the main, he offered an explanation for how emigration – "exile" – is made socially acceptable.

This article also represented the first instance of Sayad employing new sociological techniques developed by Bourdieu. Bourdieu's method called for the use of an interview subject who would be prodded into performing an auto-analysis of his or her social condition. Bourdieu believed that, by using this process, the sociologist could more accurately construct theories about the social world. With Bourdieu's help, this type of socio-analysis was emerging as an effective alternative to older approaches which, Bourdieu believed, made the mistake of arbitrarily applying abstract concepts to realities on the ground.[114] Sayad, like Bourdieu, viewed his subjects' personal reflections not just as a retelling of one's life story, but also as a socio-analysis in raw form. The sociologist's task was to transform the raw material provided by the interview subject into a refined analysis.

According to Sayad, Mohand's statement about the economic conditions that compelled him to emigrate spoke to broader social transformations occurring in rural Algeria as a result of colonialism's socio-economic effects. Sayad wrote that Mohand experienced

> in a surprisingly short space of time and very directly all the upheavals that have overtaken the old peasant social order…The entire peasant spirit has been seriously damaged and all the old values are being undermined. To go on believing (or pretending to believe), if only for a while, in the peasant condition, and to go on clinging (or pretending to cling) to the land…can in the

[114] Michael Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts* (Dublin: Acumen Publishing, 2012), http://alltitles.ebrary.com/Doc?id=10817858, 55-57.

circumstances only be a defiant attitude.[115]

In short, the traditional peasant world had been irrevocably changed. Eventually, Sayad argued, peasants like Mohand realize the "futility" in trying to maintain the old ways within the new economic system introduced by the French. Stubbornly clinging on to the "peasant spirit" leads only to the "accumulation of debts and, in the same way that one challenge leads to another, to emigration being seen as the only resort, as the final solution that can break the infernal circle of rural proletarianization, and as the 'emancipatory' act *par excellence*."[116] Sayad therefore found that the ways in which the French dramatically restructured Algerian society and its economy continued to have effects on Algerians' lived conditions into the postcolonial period. After decolonization, the French still benefited from Algerian labor because Algerians still wished to believe in the promise of emigration. In reality, though, there was nothing at all "emancipatory" about being an emigrant. As such, France – the dominant society – continued to exercise considerable influence on the thoughts and actions of the dominated group (Algerians).

Beyond socioeconomic factors rooted in the colonial system, socially constructed illusions about the promises of emigration were, Sayad argued, powerful ways in which individual migrants and their community members helped sustain the migrant system. Sayad found that this illusion versus reality dichotomy was so internalized in emigrants and their community members that the contradiction was even imbedded in the peasants' language. Especially striking to Sayad was the fact that Mohand and his fellow villagers never employed the term "emigration." Words like "France" and *el ghorba* operated as

[115] Sayad, "El Ghorba," in op. cit., 20-21.

[116] Ibid., 22. Italics in original.

stand-ins so that "emigration" never had to be directly stated. Peasants employed the "vocabulary of the mythico-ritual system" to describe the process of leaving the village for work.[117] By using traditional motifs like the notion of *el ghorba*, emigrants and entire sending communities effectively masked the truths surrounding emigration. The term *el ghorba* was itself part of what Sayad called the "great traditional oppositions" that make up Kabylia's mythico-ritual language: "inside-outside, full-empty, light-dark, etc."[118] *El ghorba*, he argued, is a loaded word which carries all of these contradictory connotations at once. When Kabyles employ the term *el ghorba* to describe emigration, they jettison the negative connotations of the word and "exile" suddenly only refers to light, joy, happiness, and confidence.[119] He summed up his analysis of this linguistic phenomenon in Lévi-Straussian fashion:

> It is by using the resources of the mythical tradition that the informant produces an actual model of the mechanism by which emigration is reproduced, and in which the alienated and mystified experience of emigration fulfills an essential function. The collective misrecognition of the objective truth of emigration is the necessary mediation that allows economic necessity to exercise its power. And the misrecognition is sustained by the entire group, by emigrants who select the information they bring back when they spend time in their country, by former emigrants who 'enchant' the memories they retain of France, and by candidates for emigration who project their most unrealistic aspirations onto "France."[120]

Poor living and working conditions as well as social stigmatization constituted the "objective truth of emigration" which all Algerian emigrants collectively chose to ignore.

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[117] Ibid., 25.

[118] Ibid. Here, Sayad borrowed from ethnographic work done by Bourdieu in Algeria which focused, among other things, on the oppositional language which made up Kabylia's mythico-ritual language. See Pierre Bourdieu and Richard Nice (trans.), *Algeria 1960: The Disenchantment of the World: The Sense of Honour: The Kabyle House or the World Reversed: Essays*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[119] Sayad, "El Ghorba," in op. cit., 26.

[120] Ibid., 26-27.

Emigrants covered up the realities with illusions that the entire sending community then chose to embrace. A young man like Mohand wishing to overcome "proletarianization" accepted the falsehoods about what "France" (emigration) was and wholeheartedly engaged in what is believed to be the "emancipatory act *par excellence*." Rather than acknowledge the fact that they have not been emancipated at all, Sayad claimed that emigrants tell tall tales about "France" for the sake of preserving their own self-worth.[121] Sayad's argument here about how emigration is socially constructed rested on two pillars: individual thought and action on the one hand, and social structures – which were, to use Bourdieu's words, both "structured and evolving" – on the other.

In addition to focusing on the "mechanisms which reproduce emigration," in "El Ghorba" Sayad touched tangentially on the migrant condition. He observed that "the entire local community 'hangs on' its emigration…The village is constantly on the alert and listening to that part of itself from which it has been separated."[122] Emigration had become a central fixture in the village community. The whole village was affected by the absence of many of its members, and in turn the absent member him/herself was affected by the village's total preoccupation with emigration. Sayad noted that the fact that Mohand was cognizant of the disruptive effect his move to France was having on the village community weighed heavily on his mind. Exactly how this relationship between village and emigrant shaped the emigrant's mentality was a concept that Sayad wished to unpack.

To do so, Sayad broadened his scope to acquire a sense of emigration and

[121] Ibid., 27.

[122] Ibid., 23.

immigration over the long duration and on a macro level. The publications of "Les 'trois ages' de l'émigration algérienne en France" (The Three Ages of Algerian Emigration in France) and a monograph he co-authored with Alain Gillette titled *L'immigration algérienne en France* (Algerian Immigration in France) signaled Sayad's move in this direction. Given the production of this extensive work, we can surmise that Sayad, through the course of further research, had become more versed on the mechanics of Algerian migration over the long term. In these writings, Sayad was interested in assessing emigration's change over time while taking into account social phenomena at the macro level. By analyzing Algerian migration in its totality, Sayad could more confidently offer a theory of "double absence" – a move that he did not seem ready to make in the course of his work on "El Ghorba."

One of Sayad's first breakthroughs with regard to how whole societies deal with migration concerned his notion of the "myth of the provisional." In particular, he found that paradoxically, despite Algerian emigration's evolution in the postwar period, the "stereotypical image of the '*noria*' continues to be applied to all immigrants."[123] Late into the 1970s, it seemed advantageous for members of both French and Algerian society to believe that migration was still largely characterized by the rotational movement of single male workers coming to France on a temporary basis (*noria*). He argued that the construction of this illusion of migration as entirely provisional fulfilled at the macro-level the same function that the notion of *el ghorba* served at the local level in Kabylian villages. It was an illusion which was necessary for French and Algerians to deceive

[123] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Les 'trois ages' de l'émigration algérienne en France", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 15, June: 59-79, in Sayad and Macey (trans.), *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, 30.

themselves into believing that migration would remain fully beneficial to both parties while also not fundamentally altering their respective societies.[124]

Sayad's sociological narrative of postwar migration in France, which consisted of three ages, served to counter the "myth of the provisional" and elucidate the realities of Algerian migration. In the first age of migration, that of *noria*, emigrants had what Sayad termed a specific "mandate" which was dictated by their ancestral village.[125] In the second age, individual emigrants became more autonomous to the point that the balance of authority had actually been reversed; the emigrants began to influence the sending community rather than the other way around.[126] More families also started emigrating together, and the new generation of emigrants began leaving the country on a more permanent basis. Emigration became "professionalized" as it came to define one's entire life's work rather than immediate economic necessity.[127] Finally, in the third age (the period which was contemporaneous to Sayad at time of writing), the separation between emigrant and sending community was so complete that Algerian emigrants had established their own micro-communities in France.[128] This final age in the migration process also saw the intensification of familial immigration which had already been developing during the second age.

Sayad found that, in blatant defiance of the above realities, neither French nor Algerians wished to acknowledge that anything past the first age of emigration had ever

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[124] Ibid., 30-31.

[125] Ibid., 35.

[126] Ibid., 38-42.

[127] Alain Gillette and Abdelmalek Sayad, *L'immigration algérienne en France* (Paris: Editions Entente, 1984), 59-63.

[128] Sayad, "Les 'trois ages,'" in op. cit., 57-62.

occurred. The second age, and especially the third age, did not fit neatly into the mold of migration as it had been carefully constructed by the societies and governments on both sides of the Mediterranean. Particularly disturbing to both the dominant country and the dominated country was that the post-*noria* phase appeared to be bringing about the supplanting of labor migration in favor of peopling – a pattern of migration which neither one of the parties had explicitly agreed upon.[129]

By articulating these ideas about the three ages of Algerian emigration, Sayad was elaborating upon his original analysis of how migration was socially engineered. At the same time, he was also beginning to grasp at a concrete idea of the migrant condition. Prompted by the parallel discourses occurring in France and Algeria concerning migration, Sayad sought to understand how these discourses affected the migrant's experience. He wanted to know what it meant for migrants that two nations constantly battled with one another over who had ultimate custody over these people on the move. In the nation to which Algerian workers had come as immigrants, their stay, ostensibly temporary, became permanent in their eyes the more time they spent in France. For their part, the French were deeply concerned that, once their specific labor function was fulfilled, Algerians would remain in France, even long enough to apply for citizenship. They demanded Algerians for their labor but were not prepared to accept them as potential citizens. The government of the immigrants' country of origin, for its part,

[129] For other studies of the evolving nature of Algerian immigration in France, see Patrick Weil, *La France et ses étrangers: l'aventure d'une politique de l'immigration, 1938-1991*, Liberté de l'esprit (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1991), 78-79. Gérard Noiriel and Geoffroy de Laforcade (trans.), *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity*, Contradictions of Modernity, v. 5 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 143-150.

became increasingly preoccupied with bringing its citizens back home at the exact moment that Algerians elected to settle in France. Seeing that Algerian immigrants were at once living in France indefinitely but without citizenship and meanwhile constantly being beckoned back by their homeland, Sayad sought an explanation for the social ramifications of these tensions. Ultimately, he would articulate, for analytical purposes, migration's inherently contradictory qualities by postulating the notion of "double absence": the emigrant was physically absent from the society of emigration, but as an immigrant remained present in the abstract sense. Algerian immigrants to France were physically present in that country, but in the abstract remained absent. The "double absence" both defined the migrant condition and informed the actions and behaviors of these doubly absent individuals.

Sayad's earliest articulation of the "double absence" principle emerged in "Les 'trois ages.'" He spoke to how the "double absence" is experienced by migrants in both Algeria and in France. When, for instance, an emigrant returns to his home village, Sayad wrote that he "goes home as a 'holiday-maker.' He is virtually a 'foreigner' in a world that seems increasingly foreign to him. Everything about the way he behaves – his use of time, the hours he keeps, his activities, his movements, his leisure activities, his spending habits…his clothes – is designed to remind everyone of his emigrant status…of his position as a 'guest in his own house.'"[130] Having lost their ability to regulate individual emigrants, sending communities could no longer prevent emigrants from adopting certain traits picked up in France.

Crucially, Sayad stressed that this adopting of alien qualities should not be

[130] Ibid., 49.

confused with emigrants' perfect assimilation into French society. Instead, he argued that the micro-societies which Algerians constructed in France in order to minimize contact with the French (and therefore sustain a strong connection with the sending society) became increasingly complex so that by the third age of emigration they had become veritable "colonies" which were largely separate from the dominant society. These colonies, Sayad wrote, have the effect of intensifying the "double absence" because they become fully autonomous and therefore separate from both the society of emigration and the society of immigration. Thus, while the Algerian micro-society in France

> ensures that they [the immigrants] are permanently present in France, it also sustains *the feeling that their presence is temporary*. Amongst other things, it helps them to overcome the contradictions inscribed in the emigrant condition, but it does so by reduplicating them. It helps to confirm emigrants in the condition that has been imposed upon them and which is the result of two complementary facts: on the one hand, the exclusion from the host society which, in varying degrees, affects all immigrants and, on the other, a break with the land of their birth which is not merely spatial.[131]

Sayad savored introducing such paradoxes and contradictions in his work. This type of thinking is of course preponderant in French intellectual discourse. One could almost be deceived into believing that, for followers of French schools of thought, the discovery of a paradox was in itself the height of intellectual achievement. Typically, however, paradoxes are introduced in intellectual discourse in order that they might be resolved. Sayad was no exception to this general rule. That migrants' lives are filled with contradictions was not his full answer to the migrant condition. According to Sayad, the migrant condition, as defined by a "double absence," also involves migrants' attempts to *resolve* the paradoxes which make up their existence.

[131] Sayad, "Les 'trois ages,'" in op. cit., 58. Italics in original.

Algerian immigrants, Sayad contended, attempt to make sense of their contradictory existence in two ways. First, they create autonomous communities in France. Second, they invest wholeheartedly in the socially constructed illusion of their activities as purely temporary. Sayad argued that by choosing to buy into this illusion, these doubly absent individuals believe they have found balance in an otherwise bewildering condition wherein they come to view France as a second home but also maintain ties to Algeria and, while they are back in Algeria on holiday, idealize France.[132] However, attempting to resolve the system's paradoxes only begets additional problems.

In a subsequent article, "Qu'est-ce qu'un immigré?" (What is an Immigrant?), Sayad turned his gaze more explicitly to how French society, Algerian society, and the migrants themselves constitute their understanding of the migrant. Here, he summed up immigration's inherent contradictions by stating that "one no longer knows if [immigration] is essentially a provisional state but which we are happy to prolong indefinitely or, on the contrary, if it is essentially a more durable state but one in which we are happy to live with a feeling of it being provisional."[133] Speaking in doubles, he drove home the point that, when immigration is referred to in France's and Algeria's public discourses, one is essentially dealing with a "double contradiction."[134] For Sayad, it was that "double contradiction" that allowed the system to continue. "All of the parties concerned with immigration," he wrote, buy into the illusion because it allows

[132] Ibid., 58.

[133] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Qu'est-ce qu'un immigré?," *Peuples Méditerranéens/Mediterranean Peoples* 7 (1979): 3–23; 3.

[134] Ibid.

them to "act according to the contradictions which occupy them…without having the feeling of transgressing" the way they think about and constitute immigrants or the way they think about and constitute themselves as immigrants.[135] Immigrants accept the illusion so that they can tolerate being in a foreign and, at times, hostile country for an extended period. Both societies, that of emigration and that of immigration, adopt the "immigration-as-temporary" logic so that everyone can either come to terms with the absence of fellow nationals or resolve the apparent problem of the presence of many non-nationals. The logic behind France's *aide à retour* program,[136] then, had "deeper roots":

> When one speaks of *emigrants* (to France) or *immigrants* (in France), this vocabulary theoretically contains in itself the idea of the return. The logic of the national order, that of "rationality" (especially for the country of emigration and for Algeria more than other countries), demands that the return be the "natural" ending for emigration and for immigration.[137]

Sayad also argued that, in addition to being referred to as an entirely temporary presence, immigrants are defined solely by their status as workers, particularly in the eyes of French society. "The ideal," Sayad wrote, "would have been…for the immigrant to be a pure machine, an integral system of levers."[138] According to Sayad, this social definition emerged because the French tolerated immigrants only if the economic benefits far outweighed any potential social or cultural costs. He supposed that it was this rationale which propelled the French government into engaging in complex bilateral

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[135] Ibid., 4.

[136] Both d'Estaing's and Mitterrand's administrations adopted policies aimed at encouraging immigrants to return to their home countries through subsidies. The results of these efforts were paltry. See Weil, *La France et ses étrangers*, 110-131.

[137] Gillette and Sayad, *L'immigration algérienne en France*, 155. Italics in original.

[138] Sayad, "Qu'est-ce qu'un immigré?", 7.

deals with sending countries. These accords enabled France to extract exactly as many immigrants as the country needed to contribute to economic growth without causing an overwhelming burden on social welfare programs that risked jeopardizing the country's social stability, or threatening French identity.[139]

Originally, defining immigration as purely temporary and labor-oriented allowed the French to resolve the contradictions inherent in immigration. Sayad also found that, as immigration aroused greater controversy once the economic cycle turned in a direction unfavorable to the immigrants, the construction of this social illusion permitted the French to place the responsibility for the immigrant "problem" squarely on the shoulders of immigrants. From this perspective it was not the host society's prejudices which were to be blamed, but rather the actions of the immigrants. When they decided to bring their families with them, thereby making their stay more permanent, they broke the deal that the sending and host societies had made with one another. Algerians were regarded as the first group to betray the hidden social rules underlying the system in the postwar period. The fact that Algerians also constituted the largest group of non-European immigrants and carried with them the scars of the Algerian War only magnified the friction between them, the "Other," and the French. By Sayad's estimate, Algerian immigration therefore served as a prime example of the sociological transformation from "good" (temporary labor) immigration to "bad" (permanent peopling) immigration.[140]

Through the course of his research, Sayad also became aware of the social realities of migration's effect on the children of immigrants. Another interview subject

[139] Ibid., 5-6.

[140] Ibid., 11.

from Sayad's early years of sociological work offered a rather different account of life as an immigrant than that provided by Mohand A. Zahoua, a young student born in France to Algerian parents, was in fact a French national. Her status as an "immigrant" was therefore "second generation." Zahoua discussed with Sayad at length her family's experiences in France since 1954. Following the outbreak of war in Algeria, her family relocated to the metropole, where they eventually relocated to a HLM (low-income housing project) in eastern France. Zahoua's parents occupied industrial jobs for most of their lives. At the time of the interview, Zahoua was a university student with three years of education under her belt. She, along with the two younger siblings of the family, were "products of France," not Algeria.[141] Zahoua's differing background drove a wedge between her and her Algerian-born parents.

Zahoua felt firsthand the distance from her parents' roots when the family vacationed in Algiers after the war. She did not readily adapt to the city. Algiers felt chaotic and confusing to her; but what was worse was the feeling of being singled out as a tourist. She recounted that when Algerians saw her and her family, they said "there's the emigrants."[142] Despite the cold reception she received in Algeria, Zahoua felt driven to spend time there doing volunteer work. She studied Arabic and Islam at university and established a cultural bond with Algeria – which could not be said of her feelings towards France.

Though she came to feel an attachment towards her parents' birthplace, Algerians

[141] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Les enfants illégitimes: 1ère partie," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 25, no. 1 (1979): 61–81, doi:10.3406/arss.1979.2623, 63.

[142] Ibid., 64.

were reticent to accept Zahoua as a member of their cultural community. Zahoua said that her status as an emigrant made Algerians resentful, as they associated emigrants with privilege. But, she said, "what they do not know is that, here in France, it's worse: we are brought up just like over there [in Algeria] or it's even worse still, to the point that my parents, here [in France], feel completely isolated from the social context."[143] Zahoua went on to explain that not only did Algerians' living conditions in France create a situation identical to that in Algeria, but they also faced marginalization from the dominant society.[144]

Frustratingly for Zahoua, the truth about her condition seemed irrelevant. Algerians remained convinced that the children of emigrants experienced a luxuriant, decadent lifestyle which made them morally depraved. As she put it, emigrants' daughters were considered "easy…you're always regarded with suspicion; you're put on trial. One could say the devil personified. That's what the children of emigrants are…The girls, of course, more than the boys…Corrupted children."[145]

Algerian society's fabrications about emigrant children's qualities served to legitimate the social stigmatization of emigrant groups. Even in her own family, Zahoua could feel the pain of rejection and lack of a sense of belonging. The Algerian side of her family condemned her for not rushing off to begin a family as her cousins did. They supposed that she had acquired too much schooling "to be a good wife."[146] Zahoua's

[143] Ibid., 65.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid., 66-67.

[146] Ibid,. 69.

own parents, for their part, were unsure of what to make of her education. They too believed that she ought to have prioritized finding a husband over pursuing university work.[147] Yet at the same time, her father was proud of her for learning about her heritage.[148] The mixed signals that she received, coupled with the feeling of being rejected both by French society and Algerian society, generated intense inner turmoil. On the basis of his interview with Zahoua, Sayad first became aware of the fact that the "second generation" also experienced the "double absence."

While the emphasis here has been on Sayad's development of the sociology of migration and his "double absence" theory, it bears repeating that, on a deeper level, Sayad understood migration as a powerful mechanism through which dominant countries exercise power over the dominated countries. From Sayad's perspective, what would have once been referred to as relations of power between the colonizers and the colonized had essentially become a relationship between dominant and dominated. Sayad's frequent use of a "dominant-dominated" framework in his writings on the migrant condition and especially his critiques of the nation-state (see Chapter IV) signaled his intentions to cast migration as a strong manifestation of neocolonialism. Therefore, his extensive analyses of the migrant condition fundamentally concerned the existential effects of France's neocolonial domination over Algerian people – who had allegedly gained independence from the French. It is because of Sayad's belief in the relations of domination enmeshed in migration that he found it so pressing to effect change in academic discourse.

[147] Ibid., 71-72.

[148] Ibid,. 78.

Sayad's Engagement with the Academy

The issue of "knowledge-power," or how individuals and institutions could use their monopoly over a subject to control discourse, came under closer scrutiny in the period that Sayad was becoming more active in academia. Foucault's analyses of medical and penal institutions pushed to the forefront of academic studies the idea that institutional actors could use their knowledge to exercise discreet power over people.[149] His concept of knowledge-power inspired other works, including Edward Saïd's *Orientalism*, which showed how European writers claimed a monopoly over information about the Arab world, and then used that knowledge to "Other" Arab people, thereby legitimizing European rule over them. Saïd included in his analysis the role that academics played in exercising knowledge-power over colonized peoples.[150] Critiques of knowledge-power and academia like those offered by Foucault and Saïd, as well as Bourdieu, were circulating widely in France when Sayad was developing his sociological studies and finding his footing in academia. It is likely that Sayad believed that if he obtained a prominent position in the social sciences, he could not only secure the financial stability that would allow him to do his research, but he could also be well-positioned to critique academia and to effect positive changes in discourses on immigration.

In 1977, following the publications of "El Ghorba" and *L'immigration algérienne en France*, Sayad acquired a position as research director of sociology at the Centre

[149] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (London: Routledge, 1973); Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1975).

[150] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st ed (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), a research institution controlled by the EHESS. Going forward, he would benefit from having a prominent position in academia as he concentrated his efforts on influencing academic discourse on migration at a time when French society more broadly was becoming increasingly concerned with immigration. In the remainder of the decade, and in the decade that followed, he sought to effect a clearer understanding of the immigrant experience and to critique academia's shortcomings in its analysis of immigration.

Sayad occupied part of his first few years at the CNRS with critiquing academic discourse on migration. Specifically, he contended that the ethnocentric ways in which academics in France conducted their analyses of immigration made it impossible for social scientists to arrive at the objective truth of migration. In a 1984 paper, Sayad targeted the ethnocentrism which he believed to be preponderant in the academy. Assessing a laundry list of publications on immigration that had been produced in France since 1960, he argued that while social scientific research on immigration had indeed grown and become more complex, the overwhelming tendency was still to focus on aspects of immigration that mattered to French society. As such, he concluded, a true sociology of migration, taking into consideration all the social conditions that construct migration, had still failed to truly crystallize.[151] As he put it in an earlier work, "any study of migratory phenomena that overlooks the emigrants' conditions of origin is bound only to give a view that is at once *partial* and *ethnocentric*."[152] Both public discourse and academic discourse, he suggested, fell into a similar trap of failing to

[151] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Tendances et courants de publications en sciences sociales sur l'immigration en France depuis 1960," *Current Sociology* 32, no. 3 (Winter 1984): 219–304.

[152] Sayad, "Les 'trois ages,'" in op. cit., 29. Italics in original.

recognize the full personhood of immigrants. Instead, members of the dominant country – the country of immigration – were predisposed to look only at the characteristics of outsiders (the immigrants) which affected them.

To begin to resolve the problems that he pointed to in his critiques, he insisted that scholars focus on how factors present in the society of emigration make immigration in France a possibility in the first place. He also called for academics to consider the perspectives of individual migrants. Furthermore, he encouraged academics to focus on more than the question of how immigration affects French society. Rather, he argued, social scientists ought to take into consideration the full spectrum of the migration experience, such as the effects that migration has on individual immigrants. He developed this argument in a paper published in 1979, which reflected on his studies of Algerian migration to date. Here, he emphasized the ways in which his sociological exploration of migration took into account both sides of the coin: emigration *and* immigration. He wrote that his understanding of the migration process became clearer because he considered both Algerians' social conditions present in the society of immigration as well as their "social trajectories" which began in their community of origin:

> Here, to be comprehensive, the interrogation of immigration must bring to bear not only the immigrant's conditions in France, but also the social conditions which, being related to the context of the sending communities, determined the immigrant's departure; being constructed before emigration, these conditions as a matter of course determine the particular forms which immigration will take, the diverse modalities of residing, working, and building a life in France.[153]

[153] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Etude de l'immigration algérienne en France, étude comparative de cas spécialement choisis en raison de leur pertinence structurale" (Paris: Centre de sociologie de l'éducation et de la culture, December 1979), 2.

Sayad also gave weight to his interviews with the migrants themselves, arguing that constructing "a certain number of biographies, 'life histories' of emigrants," allowed him to see how the conditions present in the sending community elucidated the social conditions of Algerian immigration in France.[154] Here he drew upon Pierre Bourdieu's arguments about the benefits of dialogue with the subjects of study. Bourdieu believed that the sociologist's task was to apprehend the interviewee's existing knowledge about the social world and turn that information into a clear scientific model with sets of rules.[155] This articulation of the sociological method had consequences for how Sayad conceived of his interviews with immigrants. For him, these interviews represented a coming-together of the analyzer and the analyzed, "the 'learned' discourse of the professional (the observer) and the spontaneous, original discourse (the observed)."[156] He argued that while many interview subjects would not be capable of objectifying their sociological condition in an exclusively academic sense, they were nevertheless able to objectify "their own reality" because of the "actor and spectator" position which immigrants occupied in society. That is, because of the contradictions embedded in their lived experience, due to their physical absence from their homeland as well as their liminal presence in France, they were in the "most favorable situation for the construction and the expression of a 'spontaneous sociology' of their own condition…this [is done] by necessity, to be able to live or survive, it becomes indispensable to produce their sociology, that is to say 'practical' sociology, about social conditions which have

[154] Ibid.

[155] Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu*, 50-53.

[156] Sayad, "Etude de l'immigration algérienne en France," 17.

engendered the current situation and the contradictions which characterize it."[157] By giving primacy to individual agents, Sayad's sociology of migration had the double benefit of both changing academic perspectives on the migration situation and, on a deeper level, wresting the doubly absent individuals from the abstractions of data-centric research.

Placing the immigrants' perspectives at the center of his analyses became more crucial to Sayad once he arrived at a greater awareness of the human suffering that the migration process involved. His continued interactions with immigrant communities throughout his career solidified his belief in immigrants' suffering. This suffering was brought on precisely because of the contradictory experience and the sense of feeling dominated that being a migrant entailed. In emphasizing the "double absence" which defined the migrant condition, Sayad's sociology of migration was in fact profoundly existential. For him, the migrant condition involved one's internal struggle over coming to terms with being doubly rejected by the host society and the sending society, being doubly dominated by the nation of immigration and the nation of emigration, and with only being regarded as a provisional, or temporary presence – which essentially meant being defined as a non-person, an object rather than an authentic subject. Sayad's mission, beginning in the late 1970s and continuing up to his death, was to continue to analyze the migrant's dilemma and, in the process, help his interview subjects along their way of becoming cognizant of their existential predicament so that they could begin to rediscover, or discover for the first time, their selfhood.

[157] Ibid., 21.

The Suffering of "Double Absence"

For the rest of his career, Sayad continued to pursue the question of the migrant condition. He never deviated from his original analysis that, due to a set of social circumstances shaped by members of both the dominant society as well as the dominated society, the lives of immigrants are essentially defined by a "double absence." Once he had the "double absence" clearly articulated, Sayad was then able to show how because of his or her condition, the immigrant becomes embroiled in intense suffering. In the 1980s, as the controversy surrounding immigration in France approached new heights, Sayad became invested in elucidating in yet more profound ways the migrant condition. As anti-North African racism was intensifying, it made sense for Sayad to want to direct his studies towards making plain the suffering that immigrants endured. In doing so, he believed that he could perhaps recapture their humanity and collapse the ever-widening gap between the French and Maghrébins.

Sayad's first conception of the "double absence" as human suffering emerged out of his studies of immigrants' interactions with medical institutions in the early 1980s. He likely gravitated towards the question of immigrants' relationship with doctors due to his own health problems. He had intimate experiences with medical institutions himself, and therefore could feel confident in analyzing the ways in which immigrants experience illness. His observations of immigrants' interactions with medical institutions provided him his first glimpse of migration's impact on the body.

Sayad argued that for the immigrant's part, his associations with the medical institution reveal the glaring "contradictions that constitute the immigrant condition

itself." That is, because the immigrant "has no existence except through his work, illness, perhaps even more so than the idleness it brings, is inevitably experienced as the negation of the immigrant."[158] Illness, by rendering the immigrant unable to work, disrupts the immigrant's equilibrium because he loses the "alibi" that he had for being temporarily present in France (labor). Sayad argued that immigrants will stubbornly cling onto their illness and their attachment to the medical institution both as a means to secure an alibi for not working and, more profoundly, in order to once again make sense of their status and condition. A problematic relationship between the immigrant and the medical institution emerges because the immigrant expects his doctor to not only cure his ailment but to also somehow, "by magic," "act as though his accident or illness had interrupted nothing and disturbed nothing."[159] When this cannot be done, the immigrant has to simply pretend that the illness has not been cured, thereby creating friction between the patient and the doctor who insists that the medical problem has been solved.

From an outsider's perspective, the immigrant's behavior in these circumstances is seen as neurotic, hysterical, pathological, and paranoid because there seems to be no rationality behind his continued claims to illness. However, Sayad insisted that

> If we fail to take into consideration the immigrant condition as a whole and, more specifically, the immigrant's relationship with the most critical phases in his condition (such as illness, for example), we condemn ourselves to seeing only *phenomena*, or in other words appearances, and we can neither get back to the principles that constitute and explain those appearances nor reconstruct the complete system of their determinations.[160]

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[158] "Santé et équilibre social chez les immigrés," XXIIe Colloque de la Société de psychologie médicale de langue française: Psychologie médicale et migrants (Marseille, 30-31 May 19880), *Psychologie médicale*, 13, 11: 1745-75, in Sayad and Macey, *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, 179-180. Italics in original.

[159] Ibid., 182.

[160] Ibid., 185. Italics in original.

Objective understanding was key to getting at the reality of immigration and the immigrant condition. Sayad was not satisfied with the polemical discourse occurring in France that willingly ignored complexity and instead reduced immigrants and immigration to abstractions of the society of immigration's own making. Furthermore, he argued that deeming immigrants' behavior towards doctors as pathological allowed members of French society to problematize immigrants, thereby lending further credence to the necessity of reducing their status to that of provisional workers.

Sayad performed his own analysis of immigrants' relationship with medical institutions as part of a larger mission of reversing the negative effects of what he viewed as problematic and ethnocentric discourse on the subject. In addition, his socio-analysis served to offer a firm sociological basis for understanding the suffering of the immigrant. Immigrants' feeling of "double absence," he argued, which is generated by how they are socially constructed, is physically embodied in utter agony:

> Always torn between his permanent present, which he dare not admit to himself, and the "return" which, whilst it is never resolutely ruled out, is never seriously contemplated, the immigrant is doomed to oscillate constantly between, on the one hand, the preoccupations of the here and now and, on the other, yesterday's retrospective hopes and the eschatological expectation that there will be an end to his immigration. Because this seems to be the condition of the immigrant, and especially the Maghrebin immigrant, the slightest crisis in his itinerary – unemployment, illness, an accident, an infraction of the regulations that concern him specifically, and the more general regulations – necessarily has repercussions that affect him very deeply. It affects his very identity as an immigrant. If the effects of each of these crises on his behavioral system and his system of representations border on the pathological, this is presumably because it is not merely a crisis affecting his external environment, but an internal crisis. It is a crisis that affects the status that defines him, and it is completely imposed upon him from outside.[161]

Here we have, then, a clear manifestation of Sayad's purpose in conducting a sociology

[161] Ibid., 215.

of migration. Achieving a holistic understanding of the immigrant condition permitted Sayad to unlock the full meaning of immigrants' suffering. Marginalization, alterity, liminality, all of which comprised the "double absence," was not simply an external force that touched the immigrant's life superficially. The immigrant, according to Sayad, deeply internalizes these externalities to the point that it corrupts his or her body and soul.

Nowhere, in Sayad's opinion, was this bodily suffering more pronounced than in the older generations of doubly absent Algerians. In addition to making institutions the focus of his field work, he also maintained close connections with members of the Algerian immigrant community. As Sayad grew older, more and more he began reaching out to the elderly who had experienced the migrant condition for a long time. The testimonies of elderly immigrants that he collected revealed the harsh long-term effects that the experience of being dominated and being doubly absent has on immigrants.

Ali T., a 64-year-old Algerian emigrant, spoke to Sayad at a time when he was withdrawing from the work force and determining whether or not he wanted to live out his retirement in France or Algeria. Ali's problem was that he struggled to fit in anywhere. His children that he had in France regarded him as a foreigner – in his words, "like an Arab" – even though he had done everything to adopt the lifestyle and mannerisms of the French. His first son, who stayed behind in Algiers, looked upon him as a foreigner as well. [162] Ali was a member of two societies, but did not fully belong to either.

[162] Abdelmalek Sayad et al., "La vacance comme pathologie de la condition d'immigré. Le cas de la retraite et de la pré-retraite," *Revue européenne de migrations internationales* 17, no. 1 (2001): 11–36, doi:10.3406/remi.2001.1760, 17. Article originally appeared in *Gérontologie*, no. 60, p. 37-55, in 1986.

Another emigrant, Hadj Y., left Algeria in 1922 and rarely went back. It suited his needs to throw himself wholeheartedly into life as an emigrant. Unlike Ali, he reconciled his "double absence" by choosing to negotiate his belonging solely with France rather than attempting to oscillate between two societies. His natal village once reached out to him and tried to encourage him to return. He felt that he had to decline, saying that "I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to understand this group that I was no longer familiar with…I refused."[163] Once he could no longer perform manual labor, Hadj began playing the part of "sage" in his emigrant community in France rather than considering a return to Algeria.

Ali and Hadj were adapting to a situation which was intolerable for its contradictions. Sayad emphasized that this journey towards resolving their double absence was not a happy one; in fact, he argued, it made their suffering clear. Another of Sayad's interview subjects expressed the frustrations of being an immigrant in a manner which was shocking in its frankness:

> Let me tell you: France is a loose woman, like a whore. Without you realizing it, she hangs around you, tries to seduce you until you fall into her clutches, and then she sucks you, drains you of your blood, gets you to do everything she wants and when she's had enough of you, she casts you aside like a worn-out old slipper, like something that has no importance…She's an enchantress. How many men has she carried off? She has thousands of ways of keeping you prisoner. Yes, it is a prison, a prison you can't get out of, prison for life; it's a curse.[164]

At eighteen years old, he ran off to France. As an old man, he continued to live with that decision which weighed down on him, crushing his body and spirit. What is more, this interview subject expressed cognizance of France's domination over him. He analogized

[163] Ibid., 22.

[164] Sayad, "La 'Faute' de l'absence ou les effets de l'immigration," *Anthropologica medica* (Trieste), 4, July: 50-69, in Sayad and Macey (trans.), *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, 147.

"France" with "whore" and "enchantress" to essentially make the point that France had taken away his self-autonomy. The effects of French domination on his existential well-being stayed with him long after formal colonialism had ended. Sayad's analysis of these testimonies focused on drawing a spotlight on the agony that migration – which he understood to be synonymous with domination of one group over another (neocolonialism) – produced in the bodies and souls of the immigrant.

Sayad's analysis of older generations of immigrants revealed that being doubly absent causes a breakdown in one's natural temporal order. Experiencing this rupture means that immigrants quickly bypass the traditional age of eligibility for marriage. They may have missed the opportunity to meet someone before they left for France, and when they do come to France they find it difficult to meet a single woman. And because of their position largely as unskilled workers in the order of labor, they surpass their usefulness in the labor market quicker than others; they age prematurely.[165]

> …all of these transformations mean that the elderly immigrants…are no longer, truthfully speaking, real peasants (supposing that they even were before emigrating and that it is even possible to be one collectively) and can no longer be, for several reasons, real salaried workers (because there is no work, because they are old, because they have already worked for too long in France); or…they are no longer really "young" (in age and in position) enough to throw themselves into whatever work presents itself, nor really old enough to fully play the role of the elder…The older emigrants of this type must give themselves a status which frees them from this ambiguity: men "*in between two ages*" (they are generally between forty and fifty years old) and "*between two positions*" (they are neither truly active since they do not possess a well-defined activity, nor "men of the outside," since their status is not recognized as such), all that remains is to act their age and to play with their age, to play with the whole language system which enables corporeal expressions.[166]

[165] Ibid., 25-30.

[166] Ibid., 32. Italics in original.

The seeming abnormalities which people register in immigrants' behavior occurs precisely because it was no longer possible for anyone to make sense of migration. As Sayad put it, there "came a whole series of disenchantments – namely, the shattering of all the illusions that had helped to give a meaning to a situation which, when reduced to its naked truth, was neither intelligible nor tolerable."[167] The illusions surrounding immigration and emigration can only be sustained if everyone involved colludes in this system. Once immigrants experience a rupture in their complicity with this system, their whole meaning in life is shattered.[168] They begin to experience a "coming and going between what was possible yesterday and is no longer possible today, between what was once no more than possible and what has now become irrevocable."[169]

Sayad's interactions with older immigrants allowed him to elucidate the subtle ways in which the whole system of emigration and immigration is perpetuated, how individuals make sense of this system, and the long-term effect that all of this has on the immigrant himself.[170] It was essential for him to be able to draw upon subjects who had lived through all of the ages of emigration – who had come to France during the *noria* and who eventually settled there permanently – in order to assess migration's impact on the self. Through his research, Sayad made a compelling case for the suffering of the immigrant, an existential problem that was rooted in past and present forms of domination over people from the global South.

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[167] Sayad, "La 'Faute' de l'absence," in op. cit., 138.

[168] Ibid., 142.

[169] Ibid., 143.

[170] Sayad et al., "La vacance comme pathologie de la condition d'immigré. Le cas de la retraite et de la pré-retraite," 33-36.

An Engaged Intellectual?

Because Sayad was convinced of the tragic nature of the migrant condition, he was willing to test the boundaries of the behavior that was expected from an academic intellectual. While he maintained his interest in critiquing the elitism and the ethnocentrism of the academy, Sayad also became more directly involved in extra-academic immigrant affairs after the 1980s. Around the same period that "second-generation" Maghrébins became more active in the public sphere, Sayad reached out to leaders of the "Beur" movement. His involvement in immigrant activism mirrored his interactions with the independence movement during the Algerian War. As we saw in the previous chapter, during the war he mostly saw his role as an objective observer of his compatriots' struggle rather than an active member. Initially, he chose to play the part of bystander in national debates over immigration. That being said, his choice to stand on the sidelines rather than to take an active part in immigrant activism does not signal a lack of commitment on his part. Rather, he believed that his energies were best devoted to mastering his sociology. His shift towards greater public engagement in the 1990s provides further proof that his observations of the social world of which he was a part was far from passionless, and that he was not necessarily fundamentally opposed to public engagement should the circumstances warrant such behavior on his part.

Consciously molding himself as a specific intellectual, Sayad made connections with Maghrébin militants and syndical groups for the purposes of providing consultation.[171] One of the most high-profile militants with whom Sayad had close

[171] Monique de Saint-Martin, "Un sociologue critique," *Migrance* 14 (May 2004), 36-40.

contact was Saïd Bouziri, a Franco-Tunisian who moved to France in the 1960s to study economics. Bouziri became involved in militant activism early on, particularly in advocating for immigrants' rights. He latched onto a nascent network of immigrant activists which developed alongside the student-worker revolt of 1968. In addition, he joined the Ligue des droits de l'Homme (Human Rights League), an activist association whose main goal, as the name suggests, was defending human rights. Sayad's association with Bouziri was largely one of intellectual collaboration. They possessed a shared interest in studying immigrants' lives and disseminating their knowledge to a wider audience, with the intention of garnering sympathy for the immigrant plight.[172]

Because Sayad was committed to spreading awareness about immigrants and their specific struggles, he also established connections with publishers and helped found a cultural association. In 1980, he became a member of the editorial board for *Sans Frontière*, a newspaper that published on issues related to the immigrant community. By enmeshing himself in print media, he could have a voice in how immigrants represented themselves and organized with one another on a national scale.[173] Later in the decade, Sayad, in concert with other Maghrébin scholars, instituted a research association called l'Association berbère de recherche, d'information, de documentation et d'animation (Research Association of Berber Information, Documentation, and Activities). Sayad was President of this association in the years that it was active (roughly 1985 to about the time of Sayad's death in 1998). The association strove to promote Berber culture by organizing conferences on research related to the Maghreb and Maghrébins living in

[172] Saïd Bouziri and Driss el Yazami, "Prendre la peine," *Migrance* 14 (May 2004), 2-6.

[173] Ibid.

France and by publicizing the work of notable Berber artists. Sayad's combined efforts here indicate the commitment that he had to ensuring that Maghrébin immigrants had autonomy over their voices and their culture. Immigrants, he believed, should be empowered to speak for themselves rather than relying upon French spokespeople.[174]

Thus far, the nature of Sayad's intellectual engagement has been characterized by an approach taken by specific intellectuals and critical sociologists. Rather than attempting to reach the public directly, and rather than claiming access to universal knowledge, Sayad instead spent the late 1970s as well as the 1980s pursuing mastery over the sociology of migration, and then using what he learned from migration to scientifically elucidate the nature of immigrants' lived condition. He used his sociological findings as a basis for assisting fellow Maghrébin immigrants in their cultural, activist, and intellectual efforts. In the process of articulating his sociology, he also focused on effecting change in academic discourse about migration. He believed that without a more nuanced and holistic academic discourse on the subject, there could be no hope for a more responsible public discourse on the immigration "problematic." By focusing on targeting France's academic institutions, Sayad positioned himself to eventually become an authority on the subject of immigration. And indeed, many academics on immigration in France did begin, and continue to, defer to Sayad as one of the chief experts on the subject.[175] Up until the 1990s, then, it is quite clear that the terms

[174] For information about Sayad's life activities, I have benefitted from Odysseo's digital archive: http://odysseo.generiques.org/search?query=abdelmalek+sayad&search-query=&search-query=1, as well as a special issue on Sayad produced by the journal, *Migrance*: http://www.generiques.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/12/Migrance_14.pdf.

[175] See especially the works of Neil MacMaster, Maxim Silverman, and Paul Silverstein, whose scholarship were quite overtly influenced by Sayad's theories. Neil MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants and Racism: Algerians in France, 1900-62* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Maxim Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France*, Critical Studies in Racism and Migration

specific intellectual and critical sociologist more accurately define Sayad's nature as a social thinker.

However, there is evidence that beginning in the 1990s Sayad became more comfortable with the idea of engaging with the public. Without access to his archives, it is impossible to state definitively why this shift occurred at this point in his career, but some understanding of the context of the period can provide us insight into plausible explanations as to why Sayad made that change in behavior. For starters, a set of broader historical factors related to France in the 1990s might have contributed to his change in approach as an intellectual. The political drama surrounding immigration that began in the 1980s only continued to intensify in the 1990s.[176] That immigration politics only became more divisive, rather than less, might have pushed Sayad to take a more public stand.

This change in position would mirror the new approach taken by Sayad's close friend, Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu, who for a long time committed himself to staying away from the public spotlight, had a change of heart in the 1990s due to his indignation over the neoliberal turn that the Socialist government took. In Bourdieu's mind, the stakes had simply become too high not to become more committed to public engagement. His sociological studies had convinced him that globalization and neoliberalism exacerbated existing patterns of domination which favored the privileged members of society while disadvantaging vulnerable groups – such as the working classes, students,

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(London ; New York: Routledge, 1992); Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation*, New Anthropologies of Europe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

[176] Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, "Race" and Ethnicity in Contemporary France* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1995).

and immigrants.[177] It is quite possible that Sayad felt a similar concern that the tactics that he adopted as a specific intellectual did not seem to produce tangible change in relations of domination in society. It is also possible that Bourdieu encouraged this shift in Sayad's thinking. Sayad did indeed contribute chapters to Bourdieu's widely-read critique of neoliberalism and globalization – *La misère du monde* (*The Weight of the World*). His contributions to this work, published in 1993, brought to bear on public audiences the suffering of immigrants that Sayad had made the highlight of his later writings on migration.[178]

The next chapter will explore further Sayad's intellectual engagements in the 1990s as it relates to his sociology of the nation and his vision of a bipolar world, but suffice it to say that his type of intellectual style was one of fluidity and adaptability rather than rigidity. He had a commitment to adopting a scientific rather than a moral voice as an intellectual, but this did not necessarily doom him to a life hermetically sealed within the academy. He was closely connected to both prominent and ordinary members of the immigrant community and their political struggle. In addition, although many of his publications only reached specialized audiences, he was willing to engage a wider readership.

Conclusion

In developing a sociology of migration, Sayad devised a way of explaining how

[177] Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu*, 18-20.

[178] Pierre Bourdieu et al., *La misère du monde* (Paris: Editions de Seuil), 1993.

French and Algerian society schemed to make migration work for them with minimal negative consequences. The social construction of migration as only temporary and only about labor neglected the fact that not just societies, but also people, were fundamentally transformed in the process. For the immigrant, being fed this illusion, and then accepting the illusion, made the process of dealing with the permanent nature of emigration especially tumultuous. The immigrant's contradictory condition resulted in a profound sense of "double absence." The immigrant suffered because, as much as he or she attempted to make sense of this condition, the weight of the "double absence" eventually crushed the immigrant's body and psyche.

Sayad's sociology of migration went beyond an abstract representation of structuralist principles. He maintained that structures were important, but he also wanted to balance those structures against the weight of choices made by individual agents. By making his argument about the migrant condition at least in part on existentialist grounds, he could prove that individuals could liberate themselves from their suffering.

His extended discussions of the migrant condition also key us into Sayad's distinctive voice as an intellectual. For Sayad, conducting a sociology of migration allowed him to accurately identify the specific kind of suffering involved in the immigrant condition. By using the rigors of scientific inquiry as well as the heft and clarity of scientific language, Sayad carved out his unique strategy for calling attention to the hardships endured by Algerian immigrants.

He hoped that his findings were reaching learned audiences who had an interest in helping to ameliorate immigrants' conditions. After all, activists and sympathetic politicians did read Bourdieu's social science journal (ARSS). But Sayad's activities as

an intellectual extended beyond the production of texts. He was active during a period in which the academy as an institutional sphere of power came under close scrutiny. As a consequence, Sayad committed himself to becoming an authoritative figure in the social sciences. Upon becoming a research director at CNRS, he was able to position himself as a specific intellectual with a mission to reconfigure academia's power over discourse on immigration towards positive ends. He sought to effect a change in how social scientists discussed immigration so that, eventually, society as a whole could begin to understand the truth about the migrant condition. As he put it, "all science is truth, so all truth is science."[179] Sayad was convinced that he had a moral obligation to ensure that the social sciences were held up to the ideal of being the pinnacle of human knowledge. There could be no genuine sociology of migration if it was reduced to a "partial and ethnocentric" discourse. Beyond critiquing the academy, Sayad also made moves in the direction of a publicly engaged intellectual. This shift in behavior likely occurred because of his growing frustrations with the politics of immigration. As the immigrant increasingly became a central object of national debate, Sayad found it more and more urgent to help immigrants discover their authentic selves, to become subjects, rather than objects, once more.

Along these lines, his dialogues with immigrants often times turned out to be an emancipatory experience for the interview subject. Interviews not only provided Sayad invaluable insight which allowed him to produce sociological analysis of the immigrant condition, but they also offered the interviewee an opportunity for liberation by

[179] Sayad and Arfaoui, *Histoire et recherche identitaire*, 65.

unburdening his mind:

> It was, as the interviewee and one of his witnesses admitted, "like a veil being removed." The confession – and it is a confession rather than a confidence – seems to provide greater freedom, to bring about a liberation, like a fragment snatched out of "non-existence," and therefore a new piece of freedom: a small space, a brief encounter, an intermittent relationship, a few moments of chat during which and thanks to which one can exist.[180]

Here, it is clear that the discovery of sociological principles governing migration was not Sayad's ultimate objective. His deeper mission was to help guide migrants towards freedom from their suffering.

[180] Sayad, "La 'Faute' de l'absence," in op. cit., 160.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIOLOGIES OF THE NATION-STATE

Introduction

As we saw in the previous chapter, Sayad maintained a lifelong interest in assessing the migrant condition and the social construction of migration. Beginning after the 1980s, he also became increasingly interested in discussing immigration's relationship to the nation-state. Contemporaries of Sayad have called this his "sociology of the State," but a "sociology of the nation-state" might be a more useful term, as it describes not only how Sayad interpreted immigrants' interactions with the state, but also how he interrogated immigrants' relationship to the social group, or the national community, and how nationality law and the politics of integration inform this relationship.[181]

Sayad's writings on the nation-state were a direct response to the politics of the time. Though he had been working on immigration since the 1970s, he began writing explicitly about the nation in the early 1980s, when issues of immigration and cultural pluralism truly came online in France's public discourse. Sayad positioned himself within this debate as a specific intellectual. He brought to bear expertise on issues of immigration and nationality as they pertained to immigrants of Algerian origin and their descendants (the so-called "second generation"). Useful as it is to try to pinpoint his

[181] Association des Amis d'Abdelmalek Sayad and Colloque International sur L'Actualité de la pensée d'Abdelmalek Sayad, *Actualité de la pensée d'Abdelmalek Sayad: actes du colloque international, 15 et 16 juin 2006 - Paris* (Casablanca: Editions Le Fennec, 2010).

intellectual style, though, boxing him in as a "specific intellectual" creates an unrealistic image of Sayad as an objective bystander. He was by no means a public intellectual in the style of Zola or Sartre, but his intervention in debates on immigration was not passionless.

Sayad brought to this debate an understanding of immigrants' existential condition that he learned through his interviews with Algerians living in France. Therefore, his analysis of national belonging built upon and complemented his ideas about the sociology of migration and the migrant condition. French society, he reasoned, faced a dilemma in fully integrating immigrants and their families into the Republic precisely because the immigration system was socially constructed along lines of social and political exclusion. Integrating immigrants into the national community was contingent, or something that needed to be intensely negotiated. The system's exclusionary logic contributed to immigrants' "double absence," an existential conflict that made it difficult for immigrants themselves (and even their children) to ever envision belonging to the nation.

In this chapter, I will show how Sayad's ideas concerning national belonging represent a radical critique of the French nation-state. Over the span of several years, his argument about the nation-state's exclusionary logic also came to be premised increasingly on the notion of relations of domination between the host society and immigrants. More specifically, Sayad came to view the immigrants' relationship to the nation-state as a continuation of colonialist practices. At times, he even referred to France's immigration system as "neocolonial" in his writings. His neocolonial critique of the nation-state stood in stark contrast to other sociologists' understanding of issues of

immigration and national belonging. It will be shown that Sayad stood in opposition to a larger consensus among sociologists in France that the immigration problematic could and should be resolved within a republican framework. Through the analysis of Sayad's sociology of the nation as well as a comparative analysis of sociologists who addressed issues of immigration, I also add substance and nuance to the still-thin history of intellectual life in France after the 1970s. But before detailing these currents of thought, we need some background on the context in which Sayad and other sociologists were writing.

The Immigration Problematic in Context

As was noted above, immigration became a national concern in the 1980s. The economy continued to perform poorly, and immigrants' children – particularly those of North African origin – became increasingly visible. During a period of crisis, French anxieties – be they economic, cultural, or identitarian – were projected onto non-European immigrants in the form of xenophobia, racism, discrimination, and, increasingly, Islamophobia.[182] By the 1980s, against the backdrop of widespread socioeconomic insecurity, a problematic centered on the cultural pluralism that immigration engendered became one of the defining political, social, and intellectual dilemmas facing postcolonial France.

The immigration problematic was met with a variety of responses. Through

[182] Ralph Schor, *Français et immigrés en temps de crise (1930 - 1980)*, Populations (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004).

protest and cultural expression, "second generation" North Africans (commonly known as "Beurs") publicly asserted their rights as citizens and their "right to difference." They demanded equal participation in politics and the economy, equal rights, and the right to be French while also embracing a specific cultural heritage. This agenda found its clearest articulation through the anti-racist movement known as SOS-Racisme, which held its first and most famous march in 1983.[183]

Immigrant activism certainly shook up the nation's political culture as well. The same year that SOS-Racisme held its march, Jean-Marie Le Pen's far-right party, the Front National, ran for local offices under an unabashedly racist and xenophobic program and achieved considerable electoral success for doing so. Fearing for its political survival, the mainstream Right co-opted key tenets espoused by the FN: cultural plurality was anathema to the Republic; those immigrant groups (read: non-European) who seemingly refused to assimilate had the right to be different, but they must exercise that right in their home country. If politicians on the Right largely insisted that non-European immigrants could not and did not wish to assimilate (and that they should therefore be repatriated), the Left's stance was that there was a place for these immigrants in the Republic. However, the Left was divided on whether or not to pursue an assimilationist program or to articulate an agenda that would provide space for a plurality of cultures. These political divisions, which took shape around what has been termed the "effect Le Pen," remain in France to this day.[184] A clear crystallization of the debate over

[183] Alec G. Hargreaves, *Immigration, "Race" and Ethnicity in Contemporary France* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 141-147.

[184] Herman Lebovics, *Bringing the Empire Back Home: France in the Global Age*, Radical Perspectives (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 115-142.

multiculturalism was manifested in the proposed reforms to the Nationality Code introduced in 1986. After years of discussion among a panel of experts, in 1993 the National Assembly passed a new law requiring children of immigrants to apply for French nationality upon reaching the age of maturity. Although this law would later be revoked, its passing nevertheless signaled something quite profound about France's evolving conceptions of national belonging. By not granting nationality automatically to anyone born in France, the reform broke with a little over a century of nationality law.[185]

This is a general outline of the accepted narrative of immigration in postcolonial France, but how have scholars interpreted these issues? While scholars of immigration have looked in depth at the politics of multiculturalism and at how immigrant activism has functioned, they have been slow to recognize the intellectual dimensions of the immigration controversy. Alec Hargreaves examined how the visibility of non-Europeans in France reshaped political culture, redrew party lines, and created massive anxiety on the part of the French in how to reconcile multiculturalism with traditional republican values of universalism. He, along with Gérard Noiriel, also mapped out anti-immigrant discriminatory practices as they related to employment, housing, and policing. Furthermore, Hargreaves drew attention to the "second generation's" cultural and political engagement as part of their strategies for recognition.[186] Richard Derderian, in a related work, emphasized the ways in which the "second generation" took full advantage

[185] Patrick Weil, *Qu'est-ce qu'un français?: Histoire de la nationalité française depuis la Révolution* (Paris: Grasset, 2002), 177.

[186] Hargreaves, *Immigration, "Race" and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*; Gérard Noiriel and Geoffroy de Laforcade (trans.), *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity*, Contradictions of Modernity, v. 5 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

of new forms of mass media to gain visibility.[187] Paul Silverstein's urban anthropology of Algerian immigrant communities in Paris is rich in details about not only the broader political and cultural expressions analyzed by Hargreaves and Derderian, but also how marginalization and liminality created a space for the construction of hybrid identities.[188] Within this scholarship, few links have been made between immigration/multiculturalism and intellectual life. My analysis of Sayad's sociology of the nation reveals that immigrants also found expression through intellectual engagement.

The above-mentioned scholarship also does not place issues of migration and multiculturalism within a broader historical moment. Emil Chabal's history of France after the 1970s is, however, an important exception to the general lack of historical research on this period. Chabal argues that a resurgence of a republican conception of citizenship is the overarching theme through which we should understand postcolonial France as an epoch. Immigration, multiculturalism, and postcolonialism have been the driving forces propelling a "neo-republican" consensus. That is to say, after decades of a subdued republicanism, the Republic suddenly mattered a great deal again. When thinking about France's life after empire, and where former colonial subjects and their families fit in the so-called "Hexagon," politicians and intellectuals positioned themselves within a consensual framework that the French nation was a democratic republic in which all citizens were free and equal because they all embodied similar core values (individual liberty, freedom of expression, the rule of law, and *laïcité*, for

[187] Richard L. Derderian, *North Africans in Contemporary France: Becoming Visible* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[188] Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation*, New Anthropologies of Europe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

instance). A re-discovery of passionate republicanism – articulated in a variety of forms – supplanted the era of grand ideologies that defined the postwar era. In that sense, Chabal argues that the place of the intellectual has not, as has often been argued, lost its importance in France. Instead, where intellectuals once defined themselves in relation to communism, liberalism, or *tiers-mondisme*, the parameters of intellectual discourse has shifted to a "neo-republicanism."[189] Here, I emphasize that some of the most significant sociological work on immigration and issues of multiculturalism was conducted within that neo-republican framework.

While I accept Chabal's neo-republican thesis, I take issue with his examination of the critiques of the neo-republican model. By limiting his analysis to republican ideas as they relate to political culture, he ignored Sayad's contributions to the ideological opposition to the neo-republican consensus. Instead, Chabal makes sociologist Michel Wieviorka the key figure in his discussion of intellectual challenges to prevailing neo-republican discourses. My analysis will make clear that, in fact, Sayad's critique of the republican model was even more far-reaching than Wieviorka's.[190]

In the pages that follow, I assess the specific elements of Sayad's sociology of the nation. First, I address what I take to be Sayad's "call to action" when it comes to understanding immigration's relationship to the nation-state. Then, I look in detail at how Sayad analyzed the nation-state and the national community, particularly the mechanisms of social exclusion and neo-colonial domination of immigrant groups embedded in legal, political, and social discourses. The position he took stood in

[189] Emile Chabal, *A Divided Republic: Nation, State and Citizenship in Contemporary France* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[190] Ibid., 193-197.

opposition to the Durkheimian optimism shared by many French intellectuals of the Republic's ability to integrate outside groups into the national community. In order to demonstrate how Sayad's analysis of immigration and the nation-state differed from other socio-analyses of the same topic, I compare Sayad's writings to the works of three French sociologists: François Dubet, Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux, and Michel Wieviorka.

Sayad's "Call to Action"

Around the early 1980s, in the midst of increased immigrant activism and the rise of the Front National, Sayad became interested in questions of nationality. He came to see his inquiries on immigration as a way of also achieving a greater understanding of the sociology of the nation. That is, in analyzing Maghrébins' interactions with the French state and their coexistence with French nationals, he believed that he could arrive at profound truths about the logic of the nation-state. In pursuit of that intellectual agenda, Sayad outlined a particular "call to action" which, while being primarily academic in nature, contained broader socio-political implications. Sayad implored fellow scholars to understand the situation of immigrants in objective terms, but to do so in a way that would not neglect immigrants' humanity. He also called for a sociological framework that would place the issue of immigration in its historical context.

Sayad argued that members of the dominant society were in danger of losing a sense of immigrants' basic humanity. The dominant society was predisposed to dehumanize immigrants out of an impulse to maintain national order. That is, to insure social cohesion, the French had essentially placed immigrants outside of the national

community. Immigrants only existed as outsiders, non-nationals, or the "Other." In order to wrest immigrants from this existential predicament, Sayad wrote, "We must battle, fight, combat abstractions of the foreigner, of the immigrant; and we must combat the abstraction of the foreign national outside of the nation, additionally, we must come to terms with the national who is nevertheless outside of the nation."[191] Sayad's writings on the migrant condition clearly reveal his efforts to humanize immigrants (see Chapter 2), be they "first" or "second" generation, but a similar impulse also manifests itself in the corpus of writings that he produced concerning the sociology of the nation.

In a 1984 article, "Etat, nation et immigration" (The State, the Nation, and Immigration), Sayad developed the above point on immigrants' existential dilemma and his proposed antidote to this problem. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of placing the societal dilemma in historical context. After elaborating on the ways in which immigrants are placed in a liminal space by the host society and how the host society then experiences tension with regards to how to understand who belongs to the nation and who does not, Sayad offered a way to interrogate national belonging in such a way that pays attention to depth, nuance, and history. A society and its individuals must, he wrote, "interrogate nationality law and its history, not only the link between the internal evolution of the idea and the reality of the nation (and of the nationality in which it is expressed), but also – something which has not been done systematically – the link

[191] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Y-a-t-il une sociologie du droit de l'immigration?" in Association de juristes pour la reconnaissance des droits fondamentaux des immigrés (France), ed., *Le droit et les immigrés: actes du colloque droit et immigration, 29-30 Janvier 1982* (La Calade, Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1983), 105.

between, first, colonization...and then immigration."[192] Here he made clear that the brutal experience of French colonization – especially of Algeria – deeply influenced contemporary problems of immigration and nationality.[193]

The publication of the second edition of *L'immigration algérienne en France* (Algerian Immigration in France) in 1984 is a tangible product of his research agenda. In the midst of contentious debate over immigration, he reawakened the ghosts of the colonial past and showed how colonial power was inextricably tied to the history of Algerian immigration in France. It was a forceful move at a time when French society rarely discussed the colonial past.[194] By historicizing Algerian immigration in France and assessing from a sociological angle the conditions of the contemporary Algerian immigrant community, Sayad revealed the underlying complexities of the immigration "problem" in France, the consequences that the discourse on immigration and national belonging has on the immigrant community, and the idiosyncrasies of the idea of "re-inserting" French Algerians into Algerian society.

The monograph traced the history of Algerian migration back to its early colonial roots and then up to the contemporary era. The first chapter, which dealt with how colonial policies engineered a system of migration, is a reflection of what Sayad discovered while studying the Algerian peasantry with Pierre Bourdieu. Indeed, the manner in which Sayad described colonial interests clashing with the pre-capitalist

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[192] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Etat, nation et immigration," in *L'immigration, ou, les paradoxes de l'altérité*, L'Homme, l'étranger (Bruxelles: De Boeck université, 1991), 310.

[193] Ibid., 311.

[194] Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie*, Cahiers Libres (Paris: La Découverte, 1991).

"peasant spirit" echoed what Bourdieu and Sayad wrote about in *Le déracinement* (Uprooting), published in 1964.[195] He defined Algerian emigration as the product of "two forces" – the "attractive" force of metropolitan France and the "repulsive" force generated by deleterious colonial conditions.[196] As he put it in a separate work: "Algerian immigration was, from the very beginning, engineered. But before it could be engineered, Algerians had to have already been made available for emigration."[197] In support of European settlers, colonial authorities requisitioned land from peasants and allotted the land to Europeans. At the same time, the *pieds noirs*, as they came to be known, introduced a modern capitalist system to Algeria, a system that was entirely foreign to Algerians' pre-capitalist system of production. Unable to rapidly adapt to these changing economic dynamics, landless and impoverished peasants turned to migration as a primary means of earning an income.[198] Sayad went on to argue that, in creating the structures that would allow migration to develop and thereby making Algerians dependent upon opportunities in French industry for their livelihood, the colonial system strengthened the unequal relations of power between colonizers and colonized. More recent waves of Algerian immigration laid bare France's enduring

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[195] Alain Gillette and Abdelmalek Sayad, *L'immigration algérienne en France*, 2e éd. (Paris: Editions Entente, 1984), 17; Pierre Bourdieu and Abdelmalek Sayad, *Le déracinement: la crise de l'agriculture traditionnelle en Algérie* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1989), 15-27.

[196] Gillette and Sayad, *L'immigration algérienne en France*, 18-19.

[197] Abdelmalek Sayad, "L'Immigration algérienne, une immigration exemplaire," in J. Costa-Lascoux and E. Temime, eds, *Les algériens en France, genèse et devenir d'une migration*. Actes du Colloque du GRECO. Grenoble, 26-27 January 1983. (Paris: Publisud, 1985): 19-49. In Abdelmalek Sayad and David Macey (trans.), *The Suffering of the Immigrant* (Malden: Polity, 2004), 66.

[198] Evidence for this structural sea change in the Algerian economy is substantiated by historians Neil MacMaster and Benjamin Claude Brower. See Neil MacMaster, *Colonial Migrants and Racism: Algerians in France, 1900-62* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Benjamin Claude Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902*, Paperback ed, History and Society of the Modern Middle East (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

domination over Algeria even in the postcolonial era: "The period between 1962-1981 illustrates the relation of domination which is at the heart of all current migratory phenomena: between, on the one hand, the country of immigration, the dominating country, and on the other hand, the country of emigration, the dominated country."[199]

Sayad concluded his work by emphasizing what, above all, his historical and sociological analysis of Algerian immigration was meant to convey: that French society was continuing to discuss immigration with relative ignorance of the circumstances that brought about immigration. As a result, the French continued to talk about immigration and national belonging in fallacious terms. He insisted that the French needed to come to terms with the fact that their society and their political system constructed a displacement of Algerians to the metropole. Furthermore, given the deleterious effects that colonialism had on Algerian development, it was unrealistic to envisage a massive return of Algerians to their homeland. No matter what the French chose to believe, the Algerian community was rapidly becoming permanently French, and political leadership needed to effect a dialogue about this reality instead of perpetuating the "myth of the return."[200]

Sayad's Neocolonial Critique of the Nation-State

We turn now to a closer look at how Sayad dissected the immigration problematic. His primary question was how and why immigrants are marginalized and how such marginalization springs from relations of domination. He also asked what nationality and naturalization means for French society, or what it takes to belong to the

[199] Gillette and Sayad, *L'immigration algérienne en France*, 102.

[200] Ibid., 256.

national community. As suggested above, part of his answer to why immigrants are marginalized by the host society related back to the idea of "double absence." More crucially, though, Sayad believed that the nation-state manufactures an "Other" in pursuit of national order and solidarity. Marginalization and alterity, he argued, are products of, and not unfortunate side-effects of, nationalist frameworks. As his reflections on the nation-state developed, he also began to see a direct link between neocolonialism and state power. If neocolonial ideas could be seen in political and social discourse, there was also evidence of those ideas being embedded in the legal system. In fact, members of the national community, or the dominant society, reproduced the state's neocolonial logic, and not the other way around. An analysis of immigration, he argued, elucidated these fundamental truths about the nation-state. In his interview with Maghrébin scholar Hassan Arfaoui conducted in 1996, he said that the "sociology of immigration definitively presages the sociology of the State; it is, without a doubt, a manner of introduction, and perhaps the best introduction to the best way to conduct a sociology of the State."[201]

An analysis of legal, political, and social discourse revealed to Sayad that the nation-state *needs* its diametric opposite, and it discovers its ultimate "Other" in the immigrant. Edward Said contended that imperial subjects (particularly Arabs) existed as an "Other" in the European imperial imagination.[202] For Sayad, immigrants rendered visible this binary opposition between Europeans and non-Europeans. He argued that the

[201] Abdelmalek Sayad and Hassan Arfaoui, *Histoire et recherche identitaire ; suivi d'entretien avec Hassan Arfaoui* (Saint-Denis: Bouchène, 2002), 94.

[202] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st ed (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

nation-state "others" immigrants in order to enshrine its legitimacy. It confers rights upon its nationals; and by necessity, non-nationals cannot have those rights, otherwise the nation-state loses its *raison d'être.* There cannot be a "national order" without a clear hierarchy between citizens and immigrants. In his 1984 article, "Etat, nation et immigration," Sayad established a connection between his arguments concerning the immigrant's position in the nation-state to Hannah Arendt's analyses of stateless refugees.[203] The ramifications of his comparing the position of immigrants to the experience of a German Jew fleeing the Holocaust is damning. In doing so, Sayad questioned the French nation-state's democratic credentials, and quite openly. To be an immigrant, he wrote,

> …is, during one's entire life, to be denied the most fundamental of rights, the right of nationals, the right to have rights, the right to belong to a body politic, to have a place in it, a residence, a true legitimacy. That is to say, the right, in the final analysis, to be able to give a meaning and a reason to one's actions, thoughts, and existence; the immigrant is not in a position to be able to appropriate his past and future, to have power over his own history.[204]

Paradoxically, though, even as the nation is able to define its existence in opposition to the immigrant – who has no rights – the very existence of these people without rights forces open uncomfortable questions about the meaning of the nation. The presence of immigrants frustrates the national order when immigrants become assertive and resist exclusion. Sayad pointed to immigrants' public protest against government expulsion of immigrants in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a prime example of what the

[203] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951).

[204] Sayad, "Etat, nation et immigration," in op. cit., 296.

national community would deem "heretical behavior."[205] When immigrants begin to engage in "heretical" behavior by asserting their right to have rights, by refusing to be provisional, by positing "other possible modes of relation," the national order is put in a crisis situation, as immigrants' "heretical" behavior "contradicts and harms the common consciousness (*le sens commun*)."[206] Sayad's deployment of the Durkheimian notion of a "common consciousness" is significant. He has taken what Durkheim believed to be a positive function of social integration and has implied that the nation's common consciousness operates as a powerful vehicle in excluding those who do not automatically belong to the nation. His analysis therefore places severe limits on the Republic's power to foster social solidarity, as he suggested that the national order fails to function smoothly when its exclusionary logic is laid bare.

In later writings produced in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Sayad analyzed in greater detail discourses on nationality and naturalization in order to throw into sharp relief the nation-state's impulses towards marginalization. By making immigrants candidates for citizenship, the naturalization process necessarily highlights the very unnatural attempted conversion of a permanent outsider into a bona fide member of the nation. From a purely legal standpoint, he wrote, naturalization is a "veritable operation of sociopolitical magic…transforming into naturals" those who are "unnatural" due to their national origins.[207] The politics of multiculturalism should therefore be understood as a contentious debate over what to do with those who, having been placed outside of

[205] Ibid., 307-308.

[206] Ibid., 306-307.

[207] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Naturels et naturalisés," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 99, no. 1 (1993): 26–35, doi:10.3406/arss.1993.3059, 26.

the nation-state for some time, are now demanding rights as citizens. Proposed reforms to the Nationality Code, as well as debates over integration policies, represent an attempt to regulate the process of bringing non-nationals into the national fold. "Indeed," wrote Sayad,

> the demands of the political order ensure that there are only two modes of political existence within the nation. One is the "natural" mode that is self-evident and specific to the nation's "naturals" or nationals and, in very extreme cases, the mode of the "naturalized" citizen. The other is an extraordinary mode that escapes national "orthodoxy" and which, in itself, is basically illegitimate and therefore requires an intense and continuous process of legitimization.[208]

Yet Sayad insisted that merely opening the discussion over how to integrate immigrants does not immediately solve the problem. In fact, in attempting to make into "naturals" those who, by design, have always been deemed "unnatural," the national order contradicts its own logic, thereby introducing a whole new set of problems. As he wrote, "far from solving the paradox of immigration, as one might expect it to do, and far from guaranteeing or completing the full integration of immigrants into French society and the French nation, naturalization…tends, contrary to all expectation, to perpetuate the problems of immigration." Naturalization "exacerbates" the "problems of immigration" because it "converts" them into not just "immigrants' problems" (which can be ignored) but into "problems of identity with the nation, or national problems concerning groups of nationals."[209] Within a national framework, what is technically a simple juridical process quickly spirals into a national controversy.

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[208] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Les Immigrés algériens et la nationalité française," in S. Laacher, ed., *Questions de nationalité. Histoire et enjeux d'un code* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987), 127-197, in Sayad and Macey (trans.), *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, 225.

[209] Ibid., 263.

The conflict over integrating new immigrants becomes a national dilemma not only because of the perceived difficulties of making non-Europeans into Frenchmen, but also because issues of multiculturalism force the whole of society to interrogate the extent to which its national community is well-integrated. Indeed, as Durkheim defined integration, the term has a two-fold meaning: it involves not only the act of inducting new members into the national community, but also the strength of the existing social bond. A society needs to be well-integrated in order to be able to integrate new members effectively.[210] "Because it is the integration of the whole that is at stake," Sayad wrote, "and not simply the integration into the whole of a few individuals who are foreigners or outsiders, the discourse on integration is of necessity an impassioned one."[211] The nation-state's logic of integration therefore creates a space in which, when faced with a large population of incoming outsiders, a national angst can easily be generated.

Sayad's sociological analysis of immigration and the nation-state therefore sought to explain the tension involved in naturalizing immigrants. His analysis served another purpose as well: identifying the root cause of French hostility towards immigrants. Indeed, throughout the naturalization process, immigrants are reminded that they still have not done enough to integrate. The national order "cannot but…accuse their being for its incompleteness. This being [has] to learn how to be French" through mechanisms of the state – particularly education.[212] Often held up as the Republic's greatest integrating force, here Sayad called into question the education system's total

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[210] Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, (New York: Free Press, 1997), 104.

[211] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Qu'est-ce que l'intégration? Pour une éthique de l'intégration," *Hommes et migrations*, 1182, December 1994: 8-14. In Sayad and Macey (trans.), *The Suffering of the Immigrant*, 222.

[212] Gillette and Sayad, *L'immigration algérienne en France*, 219.

benevolence, suggesting that for however many people it molds into citizens, it also has the effect of marking others as outsiders because of the perceived difficulties involved in integrating them.

Sayad also noted that immigrants who are becoming naturalized are not only constantly reminded of their "incompleteness," but they are also viewed with deep suspicion and become easy targets of stereotyping and derision. From the point of view of anti-immigrant members of the dominant society, naturalized citizens, having transgressed the sacred boundary between national and non-national, must have adopted "Frenchness" for duplicitous reasons. Since foreign-born citizens do not naturally belong to the national order, they must have chosen to be French for an ulterior motive. They are suspected of cheating the system and not doing their duties (paying taxes, fulfilling their military service) while reaping the full benefits of naturalization. All the while it is believed that their true allegiance is with their home country.[213] Anti-immigrant racism is therefore able to persist even when immigrants become full members of the national community. In fact, the "conversion" of immigrants into citizens "confines in itself the greater probability of a racism that the difference of national identity can no longer justify even in the eyes of its victims."[214] That is to say, before, when both parties (national and non-national) bought into the idea of immigration as provisional, the French chose not to prioritize addressing anti-immigrant racism; and immigrants, for their part, tacitly tolerated intolerance, understanding that their stay in France was purely temporary.[215]

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[213] Sayad, "Les Immigrés algérienes et la nationalité française," in op. cit., 247.

[214] Sayad, "Naturels et naturalisés," 31.

[215] See previous chapter.

But, in the period contemporaneous to Sayad, one party was continuing to leave growing issues of racism unresolved at the precise moment that the other party was no longer willing to tolerate that behavior.

For Sayad, the conflict between "natural" members of society and the new, "unnatural," members of society runs even deeper than the xenophobia and racism described above. His later writings on the nation-state discussed here reflects this shift in his thinking. The fundamental element of Sayad's critique of the nation-state became relations of domination, or, more to the point, colonial power. Sayad sought to prove that "yesterday's colonization and today's immigration" fundamentally shaped the marginalizing and exclusionary power of the nation-state.[216] Through immigration, France continued to exercise domination over individuals from the former colonies and from the global South more broadly. He showed that the process of naturalization did not reverse the act of colonizing migrants, but rather it was the final outcome of the process of dominating the dominated. The relationship between French and Algerians was, for Sayad, a prime exemplar of the nation-state's internal colonization of "its" immigrants.

In addition to transforming the "unnatural" into a "natural," Sayad argued that naturalization operated as a show of force, a form of soft coercion, on the part of the nation-state. "Naturalization is," he wrote, "an act of annexation or of annexing on the one hand, and allowing oneself to be annexed on the other – and few such acts are so far reaching or so total."[217] The language used here suggests that the immigrant has, in a way, been colonized by the state. Once the immigrant is colonized or "annexed," it

[216] Sayad, "Les Immigrés algérienes et la nationalité française," in op. cit., 230.

[217] Ibid., 228.

follows that the nation-state then must legitimize its dominance over the former immigrant turned citizen. The nation-state executes this strategy in part through discourse. During the naturalization process, the nation-state lays bare its chauvinism, as the legal system confers upon the former immigrant and his or her children the "quality" of being French and the "dignity" of being French, a high "honor" that both parties must acknowledge. "The whole vocabulary of honor," he wrote, "(*dignity*, *privilege*, *merit*, *obligation*, etc.) constantly reappears in everything that is said about nationality and naturalization, and this is an ethical rather than a political vocabulary."[218] In a system of domination he referred to as a "gentle violence" (borrowing Bourdieu's term), France's dealings with non-nationals represents "all the imbrications that bind together yesterday's colonization and today's immigration, the one being a continuation of the other."[219] Sayad was certainly aware that the relationship between colonialism and the contemporary dilemma over immigration was not readily obvious, nor would it be an argument that most people in French academia at the time would readily be willing to accept.[220] He committed himself to a careful socio-analysis of the nation-state's hidden logic in order to make his case convincing. His interpretations of the naturalization process reflect that method.

In addition to focusing on the language mobilized in discourses about naturalization, Sayad also pointed out that the widespread use of the term "integration" rather than "assimilation" represents a discursive strategy aimed at creating distance

[218] Ibid. Italics in original.

[219] Ibid., 230.

[220] Postcolonial studies, after all, was not introduced in France until the late 1990s. See Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, eds., *Culture post-coloniale, 1961-2006 : traces et mémoires coloniales en France* (Paris: Autrement, 2011).

between the colonial past and the postcolonial now. Yet for however much "assimilation" is mocked for its colonialist pretensions, the act of cultural assimilation is also "celebrated today in the present state and because of its contemporary effects (the assimilation of immigrants), and continues to be praised as a primarily, or even specifically, French virtue."[221] It is not challenged in any serious way that the idea that anyone can become French – that France's conception of democracy and human rights is universal and that therefore everyone should want to participate in it – might bear striking resemblance to the kind of Republican chauvinism that provided the Empire a convenient *cause d'être*.[222] In his analysis of the politics of integration, he also stressed that, just as it would be erroneous to think that the state is the only actor involved in naturalizing and integrating new citizens, it is equally fallacious to think that colonial power, however manifested, is merely a matter of the state. Rather, the entirety of the dominant society – the national community – plays an active role in asserting power of a colonial nature over immigrants. Just as the state performs its part through a form of "gentle violence," so too do members of the dominant society.

For some time, Sayad had ruminated on the idea that culture was a primary weapon of the dominant society's show of force over immigrants, many of whom were formerly colonial subjects. As early as 1979, he had produced a paper explaining the discreet forms of power hidden beneath the surface of cultural exchanges between immigrants and the dominant society. He argued that, as a form of "symbolic violence," culture justifies the dominant society's claim to superiority over the dominated. The

[221] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Qu'est-ce que l'intégration?" in op. cit., 219.

[222] See Chapter II, 22-25.

dominant society, civilized and advanced, calls upon the "Other" to become civilized under the terms defined by the dominant group. Once they are civilized (in the postcolonial context, this occurs when the immigrant is naturalized), the dominant society can then discuss ways in which they might benefit from learning about the cultural heritages of the immigrants they have successfully integrated into their society.[223]

In the early 1980s, when the "second generation" was becoming more active in the cultural sphere, Sayad must have seen fit to revisit earlier arguments he had made about culture's relationship to colonialism. Speaking at a conference in 1984, in which a panel of experts from across France had gathered to discuss the issue of cultural pluralism, he forcefully critiqued French society for what he perceived to be a thinly veiled ethnocentrism:

> "Enrich yourselves from your mutual differences," claims a poet, but only under the condition of ignoring that, on one hand, all is rich and all becomes rich when we [Europeans] lay our hands on it and, on the other hand, that we can only fuel the richness of others! This is ethnocentrism when you really look at it!...Having been sufficiently assured of themselves and of their culture (which is the only "legitimate" culture, even when they agree to pay lip service to cultural relativism), only then is it the appropriate occasion to be tolerant, welcoming, benevolent, liberal, in other words condescending – "go to the people," go to the "popular" culture, go to the culture of immigrants or…to the cultures which have come from immigration, etc.; that which is only a disguised form, euphemized and moralized and, especially, intellectualized, therefore cultivated, of racism – and, in a word, "relativist" (i.e. in appearance, the total opposite of ethnocentrism).[224]

The reference he made at the beginning here, "enrich yourselves" ("*enrichissez-vous de*

[223] Abdelmalek Sayad, "Les usages sociaux de la 'culture des immigrés,'" *Langage et société* 9, no. 1 (1979): 31–36, doi:10.3406/lsoc.1979.1199.

[224] Abdelmalek Sayad, "La culture en question," in Carmel Camilleri et al., eds., *L'immigration en France: le choc des cultures : actes du Colloque "Problèmes de culture posés en France par le phénomène des migrations récentes", mai 1984* (L'Arbresle: Centre Thomas More, 1987), 18.

vos différences mutuelles!"), comes from a famous statement made by French poet Paul Valéry in reference to the colonial situation in Algeria. Writing at the height of French Empire, Valéry admonished fellow Frenchmen to "enrich themselves" from contact with the Algerian *indigènes*, a contact which could only be sustained so long as the French were the dominant force and the Algerians the dominated. By making this reference, Sayad drew a parallel between the power relations involved in culture and empire and the contemporary period, arguing that the same form of cultural domination was seen in France directed at immigrants from the former colonies – especially Algerians.

The key conclusions of Sayad's critique of the nation-state were that the national order's very mechanisms propel impulses towards differentiating groups of people, and this constant pursuit of an "Other" is reinforced by neocolonial forms of power which, originating first from the state, are diffused throughout society. The combined forces of a national framework and neocolonial mechanisms of power mean that immigrant communities remain almost perpetually in marginality. The same logic is even applied to the "second generation" even though they were born in France and are therefore, per French nationality laws, automatically French. An arbitrary distinction is created between the rightful members of the national community and the "Other" in order for the dominant society and political structures to maintain an internal coherence.[225]

Sayad's critique of the nation-state, his careful whittling away at the unspoken logic of the national order, opens up the possibility, he believed, of once again constituting the immigrant ("first" or "second" generation) as a human being. He wanted

[225] Sayad, "Etat, nation et immigration," in op. cit., 303.

readers to acquire a sense of immigrant behavior not in terms of inherently malicious behavior. Rather, he sought to show how it was possible to see immigrants and their children as actors placed in a condition of perpetual liminality responding to overwhelming configurations of power, which he referred to succinctly as "double alienation" and "double domination."[226] That is, French society at once makes immigrants into "Frenchmen in reality and also in law," but they are made into Frenchmen "not like the others" because they still carry the monikers of "Algerian," "Arab," "Beur," or "second generation." Algerian society, meanwhile, sees emigrants as remaining Algerian while also not being "like the others: as they are also partially French, that is, they have been 'altered.'"[227]

As they come to terms with living with the nation-state, Sayad argued, immigrants must negotiate this "double absence," or "alienation," the push from France and the pull from Algeria. Immigrants' relationship with both France and Algeria is also made tense because of the relations of power at work, as the French government and even ordinary members of the dominant society attempt to exert influence over immigrants through national chauvinism, and as the Algerian government continues to assert dominance on "its" emigrants under the auspices that it is coming to the aid of "victims" of new forms of colonial domination.[228] Furthermore, the necessity of constituting oneself within a national community built upon the logic of exclusion creates among immigrants a profound identity crisis. If they cannot fully belong to the dominant community, then

[226] Gillette and Sayad, *L'immigration algérienne en France*, 217.

[227] Ibid., 218-219.

[228] Ibid., 219.

they must build from scratch an equally powerful framework of belonging, with its own social bond, its own *sens commun*.[229]

Sayad identified two major identity constructs which sprung from this pursuit of an alternative sense of belonging. One alternative that created severe anxiety in France in the 1980s was, of course, Islam.[230] By rallying around a religion, he argued, individuals from the Muslim immigrant community, whose culture had been colonized by the French, believe that they can begin to reverse the effects of past and present forms of domination.[231] Seen in this light, Islam operated as a "force of resistance for preserving a threatened identity…a substituted or compensated 'nationality.'"[232] Another prominent identity construct was the "Beur," which was in essence what Anglo-American scholars would call a hyphenated identity. The "second generation" not only embraces this identity, thereby turning the experience of alterity into something worth celebrating, but they also assert their identity, for the purposes of gaining legitimacy in society. In effect, their construction of identity operates as a rebellion against the dominant society.[233] Given his close involvement with the Algerian immigrant community's cultural and intellectual activities (see Chapter 2), we can surmise that he saw the "second generation's" pursuit of unique identities as positive strategies in resisting the dominant society's hegemony.

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[229] Ibid., 198-199.

[230] Alain Boyer, *L'islam en France*, 1. éd, Politique d'aujourd'hui (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998).

[231] Sayad, "Le choc des cultures," in op. cit., 118-122.

[232] Gillette and Sayad, *L'immigration algérienne en France*, 199.

[233] Sayad, "Le mode de génération des générations « immigrées »," 169; "Les Immigrées algériens et la nationalité française," in op. cit., 237.

No matter the identity they chose to adopt,[234] Sayad argued that Algerian immigrants – particularly their children – shared a common resistance struggle against the dominant society. The language deployed in his analyses of immigrants' responses to anti-immigrant hostility and discrimination reveals that Sayad's primary concern with regards to the question of national belonging was showing how immigrant identity politics was fundamentally about resisting domination, a resistance which was anti-colonial in nature. Here, Sayad outlined multiple fields of resistance: cultural or identitarian (discussed above), legal (in their resistance against naturalization), political (in their activism), and sometimes violent (in rioting against police brutality).

First, Sayad argued that Algerians resist accepting French nationality not because they have an inherent disposition to be deviant, but because they view naturalization within a longer-term struggle against French colonialism. The reality of French domination over Algeria guarantees that naturalization would be an agonizing process for Algerian immigrants.[235] "Because they [Algerians] invested nationality with a significance and a symbolism (which can be social, cultural, religious, mythical and therefore political, or even racial) that extend far beyond the merely juridical dimension, they cannot bring themselves to regard naturalization – i.e. a change of nationality – as a mere administrative process."[236] Viewing it as a "mere administrative process" would "come later, in another context and with another generation of immigrants and children of

[234] Of course, it must be kept in mind that these identity constructs were often fluid. One could be both Beur and Muslim.

[235] "Les Immigrées algériens et la nationalité française," in op. cit., 232-235.

[236] Ibid., 232.

immigrants."[237]

Sayad noted that it was also within this context of conflicts over nationality that both non-violent and violent political resistance ought to be understood. The so-called "Marche des Beurs" was indeed a demonstration against French racism, but he argued that more fundamentally, this political activism needed to be understood as resistance against neo-colonial domination.[238] Beurs made their stand on the political sphere understanding that they were the "products and victims" of a "double history," a mutilated past in which their ancestors had French nationality imposed upon them as well as, simultaneously, a "denied and forbidden" nationality – Algerian nationality.[239] He argued that, just as in the colonial era, one must anticipate that the "second generation's" resistance against French domination will also sometimes turn violent. More concretely, Beurs relegated to city suburbs perceive police aggression as an attempt to assert control over territory to which the marginalized residents have staked claim. The "second generation" demand a certain degree of autonomy over the spaces that they control, and if necessary they will resort to violence to ensure their autonomy:

> Thanks to a sort of ironic revenge on the part of history, it is those who were and still are both the first and the last victims of "blood and soil" nationalist ideologies who are now being forced, in order to realize their identity, to create from scratch their "soil," their "blood," their "language," their "ethnicity"...their "culture," or all the "objective" criteria that can serve as "proofs" of their identity and as reasons for laying claim to that identity. The paradox finally becomes complete when we end up with a sort of "nationalism without a nation" or "patriotism without a *patrie*," or a "territoriality without a territory." This can lead to the demand for a territory, and for relocation within what is still an impossible

[237] Sayad, "Naturels et naturalisés," 29.

[238] Gillette and Sayad, *L'immigration algérienne en France*, 245.

[239] Ibid., 246.

territory…[240]

By describing first the stigmatization immigrants (both first and "second generation") experience and then accounting for immigrants' responses to that stigmatization, Sayad was ultimately aiming to cast the immigration problematic and conflicts over multiculturalism within a colonial narrative. For Sayad, critiquing the national order for its reproduction of the colonial system also served as a way of achieving greater understanding of problems facing the Algerian immigrant community. They are up against forces of domination as well as an excruciatingly paradoxical lived experience. The "second generation" is especially cognizant of this contradiction because they are French by law yet face discrimination and exclusion because of their parent's origins. He averred that in light of these circumstances, antagonizing immigrant communities appears inherently unjustified. Writing during the debate over reforming the Nationality Code, he asked how anyone could "criticize this entire class of 'naturalized at birth' and 'approximately French' citizens for their lack of enthusiasm, for not showing any great eagerness to possess French nationality? And, above all, how can we criticize them for using naturalization for purely utilitarian ends, for the sake of advantages (they imagine) it might give them, and without any patriotic or even passionate commitment?"[241] The denial of national belonging should not be seen as proof of "some 'bad instinct' on their part." Rather, these behaviors can be explained "if we see them as the effects of systematic stigmatization."[242]

[240] Sayad, "Les immigrés algériens et la nationalité française," in op. cit., 258.

[241] Ibid., 253.

[242] Ibid., 255.

Taking all of his ideas on nationality and immigration into consideration, it becomes quite clear that what Sayad proposed was in fact a radical critique of the nation-state. More than perhaps any other observer of immigration in France, Sayad pushed the idea that stigmatization was sewn into the fabric of the nation-state. The marginalization of an Other was necessary in order for the nation-state to have a sense of logic and in order for a well-integrated national community to take shape. The legacy of colonialism compounded forces of both marginalization and domination of non-national groups, making the integration of Algerians into the national community an undertaking fraught with difficulties. In that sense, Sayad's sociology of the nation-state was unique in its reproduction of anti-colonial arguments well into the postcolonial period.

Unique, certainly, but how were his ideas received? Sayad's ideas reached a wide learned audience. Some of his most important writings on immigration, including one of his earlier analyses of the nation-state, was collected into a single book titled *L'immigration, ou les paradoxes de l'altérité* (Immigration, or the Paradoxes of Alterity) and published through a university press in 1991. He also contributed to Pierre Bourdieu's journal (ARSS), which was widely read among academic, intellectual, and activist circles. One of his later analyses of the nation-state was also included in an anthology published through L'Harmmatan, one of France's most important publishing companies. Given that he was and is widely regarded as among France's top authorities on immigration, Sayad's success as an author is no great shock. Yet, influential though he was, Sayad was not the only sociologist writing on the question of immigration and the nation-state. In other words, he still faced competition in the marketplace of ideas. Other sociologists, influential and authoritative in their own right, proposed different

visions of France's immigration problematic that did not resemble the same kind of radical, anticolonial critique of the nation-state that was seen in Sayad's writings. It is to those other sociologists and their ideas that we now turn.

The Revival of Republican Thought

We can see the distinctiveness of Sayad's radical intellectual critique more clearly if we compare his ideas about national belonging and immigration to those of other academics and/or intellectuals who have written on the same issues. Other sociologists – Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux, François Dubet, and Michel Wieviorka, in particular – were indeed critical of society and of the nation-state's failure to integrate new members, but they stopped short of calling into question the very idea of the nation-state, or more specifically, the Republic. Rather, what they saw was not that the Republic was marginalizing by design, but that newer immigrant groups were being marginalized and stigmatized by individual members of society due to socioeconomic and systemic issues affecting all of French society. They located problems related to stigmatization, marginalization, and racism within society, but not necessarily within the nation-state. Therefore, the systemic issues could be addressed in the confines of a republican framework. A reinvigorated Republic, with reformed and revitalized institutions, they believed, would act as a significant bulwark against certain French people's anti-immigrant racism and xenophobia. On the question of colonialism, and whether or not the dynamics of power seen in colonialism were being reproduced in the postcolonial period, these sociologists were largely silent.

In establishing this dichotomy between what an Algerian sociologist has had to say about immigration and the nation-state and what French sociologists have had to say, we need to caution against an overly simplistic comparative analysis. That is to say, while it is clear that Sayad's critique of the nation-state was the most far-reaching, undoubtedly because of his particular Algerian perspective, it is not the case that the French sociologists presented jingoistic counterpoints. Among the French sociologists examined here, there is a gradient of republican arguments about immigration and the nation-state, with varying degrees of trust in the national framework and in existing institutions.

Like Sayad, the sociologists examined here offered explanations for the dilemmas facing postcolonial France. In contrast to Sayad though, they attributed anti-immigrant hostility not to something inherent within the framework of nation-states, but to a breakdown of the republican system as it had been established after 1870. In the face of widespread unemployment (beginning in the 1970s and worsening under Mitterrand's presidency) and deindustrialization, society had become increasingly fragmented. Without industry, without strong republican institutions, there were no bulwarks against social atomization. France's Fifth Republic was becoming the antithesis of the Third Republic that Durkheim upheld in his famous *Division of Labor in Society*.[243]

François Dubet, a student of Alain Touraine and close colleague of Michel Wieviorka (both Wieviorka and Dubet studied the working classes with Touraine), argued that wider socioeconomic and institutional problems meant that the integration process for immigrants was slow and paradoxical. Slow because, without a well-

[243] See Chapter II, 16-22.

functioning school system or stable employment opportunities, immigrants were often left to their own devices in adopting strategies for assimilation. Paradoxical because immigrants were permanently settling in France at the precise moment when industry, traditionally a mechanism for integrating immigrants, was in terminal decline. In addition, immigrants' children began attending French schools at a time when schools were not integrating the popular classes as well as they used to. In the following passage, we see the sociologist, the scientist of society, reporting on the results of his studies:

> If we also consider that there is a positive correlation between scholastic performance and occupation and that scholastic exclusion almost always equates to unemployment, that the non-scholastic channels to employment opportunity have been reduced, we can understand why immigrants have arrived in the education system at an "inopportune moment," when faith in the integrating function of the school has disappeared…Immigrants achieve "less and less" in a system which largely appears to be "failing" the children of the popular classes.[244]

This structural breakdown, he continued, is "regrettable because the republican school was an effective agent in national cultural insertion."[245] If, as I did with Sayad above, we wished to pinpoint Dubet's "call to action," it would certainly be that sociologists need to analyze what is wrong with the republican system currently, and what can be done about the problem.

These thoughts are echoed by Dubet's colleague, Wieviorka. As we will see shortly, though, Wieviorka was more interested in focusing on racism and less so on immigrants' marginalization in a broader sense. His widely-read work, *La France raciste* (Racist France), opened provocatively with a statement that racist discourse – particularly

[244] François Dubet, *Immigrations: qu'en savons-nous?* (Paris: La Documentation française, 1989), 45.

[245] Ibid., 50.

against Maghrébins – is ubiquitous in society.[246] Though Wieviorka's aim was to acquire a deeper understanding of anti-immigrant racism, his narrative of his contemporary world followed similar patterns to other sociologists examined in this section. In what he termed "The Great Mutation," France after the 1970s suffered from a decline in worker solidarity as a result of de-industrialization, a social division between "haves" and "have-nots," and a rise in identity politics (made possible by social atomization and decline in worker solidarity) – all of which has made possible a space for racism to resurge.[247] Wieviorka also pointed out that issues of cultural pluralism had led to a loss of faith in the state. So-called *français "de souche"* (roughly, "French by blood"), especially those in a precarious financial position, believed that welfare programs were aiding immigrants disproportionately. They also began viewing the public school system with suspicion, believing that the mixing of Muslim and French students was somehow leading to a qualitative decline in their children's education. Those with the means therefore turned increasingly towards private schools.[248]

Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux, who worked at CNRS and had regular contact with Sayad, acknowledged the socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional factors stated above as important, but more importantly her critique centered on problems in France's legal and political system which shaped immigrants' marginalized position in society. In this sense, her views came closer to Sayad's, as she was more prone to call into question the functioning of the nation-state. Ultimately, though, she stressed that sweeping reforms

[246] Michel Wieviorka and Philippe Bataille, *La France raciste*, L'Epreuve des faits (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 9-10.

[247] Ibid., 25-34.

[248] Ibid., 34-37.

were possible within a republican framework. In addition, Costa-Lascoux set her analysis of the nation-state against the backdrop of European integration. Indeed, her regular contributions to the *Revue européen des migrations internationals* – a journal focused on migration in the European Economic Community – showcases her deep investment in the European project and searching for pan-European frameworks for integrating new members of society.

As other sociologists have clearly stressed, Costa-Lascoux contended that the immigrant experience in the host society (in this case, France in particular) is layered with contradictions. More specifically, she argued that certain immigrants' integration has been stalled due to the legal system's simultaneously extending and restricting of rights to non-nationals. While there had been some attempts to guarantee rights to immigrants (of particular concern were those coming from outside of the EEC), Costa-Lascoux also saw ways in which the French government had been restrictive because of its preoccupation with controlling migratory fluxes. She paid special attention to the numerous regulations imposed upon family reunification, attempts to crack down on clandestine migration, and the debates over reforming the Nationality Code and extending municipal voting rights to EEC migrants but not to non-EEC migrants. The extent of her criticism of republican practices aligned much closer with Sayad's, as she drew more attention to deeper flaws within the politico-legal system. "The very notion of Rights of Man," she wrote, "is not understood on an equal basis between European states and certain tertiary states, between citizens of the host society and certain immigrant groups."[249] That is to say, France's current laws have targeted non-Europeans

[249] Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux, *De l'immigré au citoyen* (Paris: La Documentation française, 1989), 70.

disproportionately. One almost senses a similarity to Sayad's argument that an "Other" is essential to the nation-state's existence, although, as we will see, Costa-Lascoux's critique was more tempered.

The particular issue of anti-immigrant racism is one which Sayad gave little primacy in his critique, as he was more preoccupied with understanding racism as a product of the nation-state's exclusionary logic and neocolonial power. These sociologists, however, both devoted more attention to racism specifically and offered different understandings of the origins and forms of racism. Racism, they argued, needed to be analyzed on its own terms, separate from the mechanics of the nation-state, because it was an issue that came from the bottom-up, diffused throughout society. While Sayad may have agreed that racism had become diffuse, he located the origins of racism within the nation-state. His conception of racism in France was therefore top-down.

Of all these sociologists, Michel Wieviorka zeroed in on racism the most. He viewed the socioeconomic and institutional issues described above as gateway through which racist ideas could develop in society.[250] His study, published through Gallimard (and thus geared towards a general audience), presented the efforts of him and his team in conducting on-the-ground observations and interviews in three locales touched by social atomization and deindustrialization (Roubaix, Mulhouse, and Marseille) in order to establish a link between popular racist discourse and racism in political discourse. Wieviorka found that a compelling case could be made that politicians at both the local and national level felt pressure to adapt to the anti-immigrant sentiment expressed by a large number of voters:

[250] Wieviorka and Bataille, *La France raciste*, 39.

> Have we not heard very prominent figures in the political class talk, on the left, of a threshold of tolerance and of charters, and, on the right, of invasion, of odors, or foreign occupation? On one hand, racism is deployed in an infra-political manner; on the other hand, it animates official political life more and more, perverting in particular the debate on national identity. The advance of popular racism is worrying; even more so due to the fact that it can be relayed and orchestrated by the Front National; but even more serious is that the general mutation of the political system is occurring in the general absence of a political project and in the beginning of political leaders' alignment with positions taken by the Front National, at least in a general sense.[251]

To address the source of racist political discourse, Wieviorka directed his analysis at popular racism.

His approach was to see racism in France as a "shadow discourse" (*discours sombre*): it exists outside of the State, diffused throughout society, manifested in hateful language, racial violence, discrimination and segregation. To witness this everyday racism, he wrote that "one need only get in a Marseille taxi…and engage in conversation with the driver in order for there to be a good possibility of hearing extreme proposals, sometimes even dealing with violence."[252] This everyday racism, he argued, becomes especially amplified (or "stable") in areas where low-income *français "de souche"* lose faith that they will overcome a period of socioeconomic crisis. Living among equally (or often times more severely) disadvantaged immigrant communities, popular classes also begin to believe that their very identity, or culture, is in jeopardy. That is, because their "Frenchness" no longer appears to afford them the same privileges over immigrants that it used to, the French popular classes begin to wonder if their national and cultural identity has value.

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[251] Ibid., 343.

[252] Ibid., 17-18.

What is more, Wieviorka argued, in sites of stable racism, the most vulnerable members of France's white popular classes tend to represent a minority. For reasons of safety concerns or intolerance, and informed by a desire to pursue greater economic opportunities elsewhere, those with the means leave underprivileged, heavily immigrant-populated neighborhoods.[253] This exodus by those with the means reinforces feelings among the remaining French residents that they have been left behind, and they direct their anger and resentment towards the immigrants among whom they are "forced" to live. What is formed, then, is a particularly acute arena of racism.[254] In these areas, he wrote,

> For the *francais "de souche"* who have remained, or who have arrived later, all of these combine to signify exclusion: poverty, unemployment, families broken apart, failure, for many of them, a deprived mobility, and the concrete presence of an immigration which brings its own share of "nuisances" – always overestimated, but also quite real.[255]

Exactly what he meant by "nuisances" is unclear. In all likelihood, he was referring to noise or differences in modes of living that made the French ill at ease. Regardless, the last line of this passage reflects Wieviorka's tendency to sympathize with the plight of French working classes, even going so far as to sympathize with their hostile feelings towards immigrants.

Dubet understood the origins and nature of racism in similar terms. In addition to the authors both agreeing that racism came from the bottom up, Dubet and Wieviorka

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[253] Ibid., 155-169.

[254] This is not to say that in neighborhoods without an immigrant presence racist ideas are not present. Wieviorka detailed racism in the middle and upper classes on 155-169.

[255] Ibid., 174.

also concurred that it manifested itself in a variety of ways that were often times contradictory.[256] For instance, the fact that many among the French popular classes were in an equally precarious situation vis-à-vis Maghrébins, Dubet argued, had the potential to either aggravate racial tension or to foster solidarity between Maghrébins and *français* "*de souche*," as the French will either view these immigrants as direct competition in the labor pool, or they will view them as allies against common forces of exclusion.[257]

Returning now to Costa-Lascoux's analysis, we find a repeat of the common refrain seen above:

> The accumulation of situations of frustration and conflict, feelings of insecurity and the fear of an uncertain future promotes the development of racism. Unemployment, insufficiency of social welfare programs, the degradation of housing in neighborhoods that tend to become ghettos, failures in education or professional training are generators of resentment…Discriminatory logic is something that serves to offer a universal explanation for all the misery, with the simplicity of a symbolic visibility: a few exterior signs, some particularisms suffice to justify hostility, whether it qualifies as "heterophobia," "Otherism" or more often racism. Acts of discrimination are disguised as the attributes of an ideology of negative differentiation.[258]

Contra Sayad, Costa-Lascoux did not see the state as complicit in anti-immigrant racism. She may have agreed with Sayad's point that laws and regulations concerning migration solidified a dichotomy between nationals and non-nationals, but she seems to have disagreed that everyday racism and discrimination is the logical conclusion of the state's machinations. In fact, she lauded the legal system's implementation of a "diverse juridical arsenal" for its efforts to combat everyday racism. What she took issue with was

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[256] Dubet, *Immigrations*, 65-80. Wieviorka made clear his agreement on this point in *La France raciste*, 41.

[257] François Dubet, "SOS-RACISME: et la revalorisation des valeurs," *Esprit* 132, no. 11 (November 1987): 42–48.

[258] Costa-Lascoux, *De l'immigré au citoyen*, 99.

the state's tendency to formulate ad-hoc responses to instances of racism or discrimination while failing to articulate a broader political agenda for instituting non-discriminatory practices, particularly in housing.[259] The law, she argued, needed to be stronger and more effective in dissuading racist discrimination and "tempering conflicts," as the "pedagogical role of the law is fundamental and, in this sense, civic education is a primary means of combating discrimination."[260]

The "pedagogical role" of republican institutions formed the bedrock of the solution to the problems that Costa-Lascoux highlighted throughout her work. Despite her strong critiques of the Republic's hitherto treatment of non-European immigrant groups, especially Maghrébins, she saw an opportunity to transform notions of citizenship both within a republican framework and within the context of European integration. As noted above, she acknowledged that the development of the EEC had the adverse side-effect of cementing a divide between Europeans and non-Europeans. She even went as far to claim, picking up on Gérard Noiriel's arguments about the history of immigration, that France's national culture has historically left little space for diversity. Crucially, though, in the past, immigrants have nevertheless been successfully integrated. The subtext here is that socially-constructed cultural conceptions of the nation were never quite internalized in state institutions.[261] If, in practice, there has been wiggle room regardless of the Republic's national ethos, Costa-Lascoux did not find it hard to imagine that there could be no space for adjustment in the contemporary context. She believed

[259] Ibid., 106-109.

[260] Ibid., 114.

[261] Ibid., 115.

that her socio-analysis of immigration law had successfully identified new models for the integration of new members of society. Because new emphasis was being placed on the notion of a European citizenship, and that as a consequence national citizenship had less currency, she thought that members of the host society were coming around to the idea of extending local citizenship to non-nationals. In the era of the EEC, it seemed that imagining immigrants participating in local politics was becoming increasingly less controversial. With the position of immigrants in society clarified, the politico-legal system would begin functioning the way it should with respect to non-nationals: with broader institutional coherence, free of contradictions.[262]

The idea of a Republic transformed is echoed forcefully in Wieviorka's writings. He envisioned a new set of republican values that reconciled the universalist ideal with the necessity of respecting unique cultural heritages. On-the-ground officials representing state institutions were to be the enforcers of this new republican vision, acting as ambassadors of a national culture much as the police had done in the early years of France's nation-building efforts.[263] Indeed, he noted throughout his work instances in which the presence of social workers and other state intermediaries served to ease tensions between immigrant groups and the *français* "*de souche*." But he unhappily noted that across many urban locales, his team observed that social workers appeared impeded by the combined pressure of social atomization (*dualisation*), deindustrialization, severe institutional malfunctions, and a general social malaise. Given

[262] Ibid., 150-152.

[263] John M. Merriman, *Police Stories: Building the French State, 1815-1851* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

these conditions, state intermediaries "are, at the moment, without grand projects, without a utopic vision, they are field nurses or stretcher-bearers, witnessing, but powerless in the face of a society in the process of dualization, and there is nothing to indicate that this situation will improve rapidly."[264] In an ideal situation, where social workers are able to embed themselves in local militant groups, the social worker "is capable of exerting a decisive influence, prudently managing the tensions between the universal and the particular…reducing the hard excesses of ethnicization of social interactions by relying on minority cultures, not to valorize as an end in itself, but as a means, a lever towards integration."[265]

To begin implementing the necessary reforms to achieve greater integration, Wieviorka thought that a new vision for the Republic was an essential prerequisite. What would the Republic's new ideal be precisely? He landed somewhere in between traditional universalism and ideas presented by the anti-racist movement: there needed to be some degree of uniform social solidarity, but it was also simply untenable to think that diverse ethnic identities would disappear entirely in the body social. In fact, the respect for ethnic minorities could become a vehicle for greater integration in the present context. If, in Durkheim's era, the "cult of the individual" performed a function of social solidarity, then a certain appraisal of ethnic identities could "constitute a resource in an integration strategy" in the contemporary context.[266] The presence of a plurality of cultures and different ethnic groups was an undeniable reality, just as in Durkheim's

[264] Wieviorka and Bataille, *La France raciste*, 213.

[265] Ibid., 215.

[266] Ibid., 345.

industrial society people were becoming more individuated. Rather than trying to forestall the inevitable, society needed to honor, respect, and find value in others' right to difference. Wieviorka believed that state intermediaries could help inculcate this cultural shift, without appearing as though they were giving special privileges to minority groups. The consequences of resisting this apparently inevitable path were, for him, dire:

> Our country is at a crossroads. Either we will know how to construct the debates and conflicts that restructure social life, to avoid widening the fractures born of a dualization that is currently somewhat limited, to restore the nation's charge to a universalism from which it has retracted and been disturbed; or we should expect a growing racism, an expression among others that will be just as dramatic, of our incapacity in pursuing the project of modernity for which France has, for more than two centuries, been strongly identified.[267]

Dubet, for his part, believed that the republican system was largely still functioning despite recent challenges. On the point of cultural assimilation (as distinct from socioeconomic integration), in particular, he saw less cause for concern than commentators of immigration expressed. He lamented the fact that the school system now seemed to be performing its assimilative function less and less. At the same time, though, he believed that mass media was now performing that same function. Because individuals consume mass media largely within the private sphere, it is difficult to see the process of assimilation being played out here. The proof of mass media's assimilative function is apparent, though, when one considers the norms and forms being adopted by immigrants – especially their children. The "second generation" wear and express cultural products that are projected through media without losing a sense of their parents' heritage.

[267] Ibid., 350.

> Assimilation does not simply suppose that the immigrant disappear into a gray and homogeneous mass…one need only travel a little in France to see that we do not all talk the same way, that we eat differently, that some go to mass while others do not…[Assimilation] does not demand that the immigrant lose all of his identity, but it does imply that he transform and manage himself differently, that his identity include some very elementary cultural models [of the host society]…[268]

Though Wieviorka and Costa-Lascoux appealed to the strengths of the republican system as well, Dubet's faith in the Republic appears especially profound when presented against the other sociologists examined here.

Sayad's utter skepticism of the republican system is quite clear in his general critique of the nation-state shown above. Unlike the other sociologists, there is no discernable "solution" laid out in Sayad's writings. This absence of a viable solution, married with a host of biting analyses, implies considerable doubt on his part that the immigration problematic could be resolved within the existing national framework. Examine the history of the modern French Republic in its totality, Sayad has told his readers, and one will see that the relations of domination produced by colonialism have always been there. Algeria was the laboratory for the perfecting of the use of migration in transforming dominated peoples into human capital. The migrant chain that developed not only served to strengthen colonial power, it also insured that the unequal power relations would endure into the postcolonial era. Ideas about national belonging evolved within this history, not separate from it. As a consequence, the Republic's integrity is deeply compromised, to the point that reforms within existing institutions appear nearly untenable.

Neither Dubet, Wieviorka, nor Costa-Lascoux seemed willing to go that far.

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[268] Dubet, *Immigrations*, 59.

Their reticence to critique the republican system to that extent is seen by the selective use they make of Sayad's work in their own writings. Dubet, for instance, within his discussion of the degree to which "second generation" immigrants are assimilating, pointed to naturalization as one quantitatively reliable litmus test. According to his analysis, Algerian immigrants' children in particular opted for French nationality not only because it is far easier for them to do so than it is for their parents, but also because the naturalization process presents less of an identity crisis. He cited Sayad's argument about the betrayal to their heritage Algerians feel when they obtain French nationality. Interestingly, though, he left out the fact that Sayad attributed this struggle over naturalization to colonialism's legacy. Downplayed throughout Dubet's work, this would have been one area in his text where he would have made mention of colonial power had he agreed with Sayad's neocolonial thesis.[269]

Wieviorka positioned himself within a transformative republican framework. While he is known for having taken a critical stance towards the Republic, he still rejected the notion that the current context bore any resemblance to past injustices. "We are far," he wrote, "from a colonialism that is at once condescending and enlarged by its principle of the inferiorization of colonized peoples."[270] His widely-read work, *La France raciste*, did not engage Sayad's scholarship – a truly rare occurrence in scholarship related to immigration after the 1980s.

Fellow CNRS researcher Costa-Lascoux was without a doubt more receptive to Sayad's work. Nevertheless, she too adopted the strategy of downplaying the colonial

[269] Ibid., 85-86.

[270] Wieviorka and Bataille, *La France raciste*, 19.

legacy and avoided mentioning areas in Sayad's analysis where he made connections between colonialist and contemporary policies. With regards to housing, for instance, she highlighted disparities in living conditions between immigrants (especially Algerian immigrants) and the rest of the population. She cited Sayad's observations of Algerian migrant workers' housing as a reliable source of information, but did not integrate his analyses of colonialist housing practices into her own work.[271] In fact, by emphasizing that the "State, remaining the guarantor of national solidarity," needed to lead the charge in instituting equitable housing policies, she herself projected what Sayad would constitute being a colonialist logic.[272]

While the comparison between Sayad and other sociologists presented here has highlighted distinct differences, we must caution against creating a neat political and ideological divide between the Algerian sociologist and the French sociologists. There were other ways in which these sociologists' ideas intersect. They all condemned racist and discriminatory practices against immigrants, and agreed that Maghrébins were the primary targets of anti-immigrant sentiment. Certainly, no one here attempted to argue that French society's anxiety over recent waves of immigration (particularly Maghrébin immigration) was defensible. Costa-Lascoux and Wieviorka insisted that sweeping changes be made in order for new immigrant groups to become well-integrated, and Dubet believed that Maghrébins were already assimilating and that, with improvements to institutions and the economy, socioeconomic integration would naturally follow. Sayad, for his part, certainly wanted to see a change in immigrants' place in modern

[271] Costa-Lascoux, *De l'immigré au citoyen*, 73-74.

[272] Ibid., 78, 76. For Sayad's analysis of immigrant housing, see Sayad, "Le foyer des sans-famille," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 32, no. 1 (1980): 89–103, doi:10.3406/arss.1980.2082..

France, but given how deep the logic of exclusion seemed to run in a national framework, he wondered if incremental reform could address an issue which he saw as more than contingent upon current socioeconomic issues. We can conclude, then, that the most obvious difference between the Algerian sociologist and the French sociologists is the radical critique of republicanism on the one hand, and the steadfast commitment to the Republican ideal on the other, in spite of current dilemmas.

Sayad's Intellectual Engagements in the Final Years

Given the dichotomy between Sayad's sociology of the nation and the analyses offered by French sociologists seen here, Sayad, in his later years, must have felt that the essence of his ideas were falling into oblivion. Indeed, an outside observer, a British scholar who was an admirer of Sayad's work, attested to the lack of public or academic discourse on colonialism in France in the early 1990s.[273] As mentioned in the previous chapter, the final years of Sayad's life were characterized by a greater sense of frustration on his part towards the state of the immigrants' position in society, and the state of the world in general. The feeling of a failure on his part to adequately convince French social scientists of the importance in considering the colonial past and its legacy likely also fed his frustrations.

To his frustrations with the academy can be added a set of tragic developments that he bore witness to in his final years. He committed himself to the defense of

[273] Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation*, 1-16.

migrants' rights and to the betterment of his Algerian compatriots, yet in the final decade of his life he saw few palpable improvements. In particular, he witnessed continued French animosity towards Maghrébin immigrants as well as new political conflicts centered on the influx of refugees fleeing violence in Southern Europe in the early 1990s.[274] At the same time, an Islamic fundamentalist-led insurrection broke out in Algeria, the decade-long violence of which was the worst the country had seen since the War of Independence.[275] The escalation of conflicts in the final years of his life fueled his inner turmoil and gave him impetus to take on a more public role as an intellectual.

As noted in the previous chapter, the first evidence of Sayad becoming more publicly engaged came with his involvement in Bourdieu's book project, published in 1993. But his movement into public view in that instance proved to be more than ephemeral, since in that same year he also decided to join the Groupe de Genève (the Geneva Group) – a pan-European assortment of academics, professionals, and experts advocating for the rights of refugees at a time when many European states attempted to close their borders to refugees (particularly Roma and Yugoslavs). After his death, a close colleague of Sayad's recalled that the stance he took at the Geneva Group's meetings was quite passionate.[276] On the issue of whether or not European nations had a duty to provide asylum to refugees, Sayad was unequivocal in his position that to deny refugees asylum was to violate their human rights. Concerning this point, he found

[274] Klaus J. Bade, *Migration in European History*, The Making of Europe (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2003), 315-333.

[275] John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 244-287.

[276] Marie-Claire Caloz-Tschopp, "Sayad, un Socrate d'Algérie en mouvement: le fait de la domination et le postulat de la liberté," *Migrance* 14 (May 2004), 10-16.

inspiration for his critique from Hannah Arendt's analyses, particularly her thesis that refugees lose the "right to have rights" because they can no longer claim belonging to a nation-state.[277]

With the Islamist insurrection occurring at the same time as the refugee crisis in Europe, Sayad also turned his gaze towards Algeria. He joined his associates connected to the Ligue des droits de l'Homme in condemning the violence perpetrated both by the Algerian state and by the insurgents. In 1997, a year before his death, he also became a founding member of the Comité international pour la paix, la démocratie et les droits de l'homme en Algérie (International Committee for Peace, Democracy, and the Rights of Man in Algeria). A mix of French and Arab intellectuals – including for instance Pierre Bourdieu and Algerian writer Kamel Daoud – comprised the Committee, whose aim was to draw a spotlight on the events occurring in Algeria.[278] Sayad's activities with the Committee, as well as with the Geneva Group, points to a new trend in his later years of a growing acceptance of taking a more public stance. In other words, his greater direct involvement in public concerns – including on matters that were not immediately related to his area of expertise (the Algerian insurrection) – indicates that, before his untimely death, Sayad was perhaps beginning to become more of a public intellectual.

While we cannot know if Sayad would continue to adopt the habits of a public intellectual were it not for his passing away in 1998, we can clearly see that categorizing his intellectual brand as specifically geared towards critical sociology runs the risk of overlooking certain aspects of his intellectual biography. Like Bourdieu, Sayad lived

[277] Sayad, "Migration, refuge, asile," *Europe: Montrez Patte Blanche*, 1994, 276–96.

[278] Driss El Yazami, "Face à la deuxième guerre d'Algérie: suivre le menteur…" *Migrance* 14 (May 2004), 44-50.

most of his life believing it to be inappropriate for a sociologist to involve him or herself directly in public affairs. He wished to spend less time playing an active role in social dramas and more time analyzing society's ailments for the purposes of locating possible cures. Nevertheless, there remained the possibility that circumstances could initiate a change in Sayad's view of how he should comport himself in the social world. In the 1990s, those circumstances were the refugee crisis and the insurrection in Algeria, a return to the kinds of horrors that the world endured in the mid-twentieth century when Sayad was first developing an intellectual consciousness.

Conclusion

By placing the focus on Sayad's socio-analysis of the nation and setting it against other socio-analyses of the nation, this chapter has illuminated French sociology's relationship to postcolonial debates over immigration and multiculturalism. We have seen a radical critique of the nation-state being posited by one of the top scholarly authorities on immigration in France, Abdelmalek Sayad. His sociology of the nation, with its neocolonial dimensions, was in fact unique in comparison to analyses produced by other prominent sociologists who wrote on the subject of immigration and the nation-state. One key difference between Sayad and other sociologists working in France at the time is that Sayad was thinking in terms of "neo"-colonialism, and the others were thinking in terms of "post"-colonialism. Costa-Lascoux, Dubet, and Wieviorka were instead proponents of a revival in republican thought which was preponderant across society and politics.

Social scientists and therefore professionally committed to objective thought, these figures may have been, but devoid of passion they were not. Durkheim, after all, analyzed the nation not just out of a desire to locate society's mechanisms of integration, but also because he was intellectually committed to the republican project.[279] The same holds true for the French sociologists examined in this chapter. Sayad also clearly took his stand in the debate over immigration and the nation with a passionate commitment to intellectual engagement. Working with Bourdieu during the Algerian War, Sayad discovered that sociology could be deployed in order to come to a heightened understanding of colonialism's harsh impact on the Algerian way of life. Sayad continued that project in France until his death.

While most of the sociologists examined here provided some sort of solution to current dilemmas, the same cannot be said for Sayad. It seems that Sayad's lack of a clear solution can be owed mainly to his own skepticism and deep uncertainty. Indeed, if a faith in historical progress can be discerned among republican sociologists, the same cannot be said for Sayad. His interview with Hassan Arfaoui offers clarification of his personal state of mind. When asked when French society will be able to accept "second-generation" Maghrébins as full members of the nation, Sayad had no answers, only a set of rhetorical questions:

> Is it just an epochal conflict? Lasting until all of the dead are buried in Père Lachaise? Until everyone's child is named Françoise or François? Or does our current period need its Dreyfus and its Zola, a Dreyfus Affair and a new *J'accuse*?[280]

Young Maghrébins lived in France, worked in France, spoke French, but they still carried

[279] See Chapter II.

[280] Sayad and Arfaoui, *Histoire et recherche identitaire*, 102.

markers of difference, thus limiting the true extent of their citizenship. It is not simply that their parents were born elsewhere, Sayad said. Their alterity is accentuated by the fact that their nation of origin is impoverished and dominated by France. There will always be the immigrant as long as there is a bipolar division of the world between dominant and dominated. For Sayad, it was impossible to say when this division will end.[281]

> When will this situation disappear? We can only ask the question without having the answer. And I say this not out of an excessive pessimism. Being born in France, going to a French school and experiencing the ways in which it produces [French] nationality in the body…in spirit, in sensibilities, ways of being, etc., none of that is enough if the name (another way of saying religion) brings to mind the Maghreb.[282]

By his account, the effects of colonialism were even more powerful than simply a harsh legacy weighing on the present. In reality, there was no rupture with the colonial past to speak of, only continuity. The neocolonial power present in France lay at the heart of enduring tensions between the dominant society and the immigrant community.

Some of Sayad's contemporaries saw his views as overly pessimistic, but his attitudes towards the immigration problematic need to be considered in their proper context. His biography sketches the portrait of a man who was deeply skeptical, troubled, and often frustrated. Skeptical because, in the period after independence, he could not help but feel that not enough had been done to erase the bipolar division between global North and global South. He was troubled and frustrated not simply because of his own recurring health problems (which certainly may have informed his overall mentality to some extent), but more importantly because he saw both the French

[281] Ibid., 103-105.

[282] Ibid., 105.

and Algerian nation-states continuing to negatively affect the livelihoods of individuals who moved between both societies. Migrants, just like the colonial subjects of days past, were still treated as individuals without their own subjectivity, without a history, and whose rights had to be negotiated. The plight of immigrants and their tenuous position in the national community fed Sayad's inner turmoil which was already present because of his awareness of what migration did to people's existential condition. In the final years of his life, Sayad directed this inner turmoil towards more overt political engagement.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL CONCLUSION

By analyzing the writings of Abdelmalek Sayad, I have endeavored to tell a story about how one Algerian deployed sociology in the service of carving out a better existence for his compatriots. Sayad's intellectual project began through the course of the Algerian War and continued until his death in France in 1998. He took the science and philosophy that the "republican empire" had introduced to him, and refashioned those ideas for the purposes of helping his country gain independence. After 1962, his mission became ensuring that he and fellow Algerians enjoyed true autonomy. Over time he learned that France still possessed powerful means of exerting domination over Algeria and its people even after independence had been achieved. He was convinced that with sociology, he could understand the nature of French domination's effects over the people who were the direct victims of neocolonialism – Maghrébin immigrants. His theory of "double absence" showed how the migrant condition produced a crisis of identity which ultimately resulted in human suffering. In this way, Sayad's sociology of migration mirrored the *tiers-mondistes*'s arguments about colonialism's existential impact on colonized peoples.

Sayad presented migration as a neocolonial narrative most powerfully through his critique of the nation-state. Writing against the neo-republican grain that predominated French social thought in his historical moment, he argued that the nation-state was exclusionary by design. From his point of view, the dilemma over integrating Maghrébin immigrants made the nation-state's exclusionary logic clear. What is more, he believed

that the relationship between Maghrébins and the dominant members of French society illustrated the continued power struggle between the two groups. He insisted that immigrant activism – seen most forcefully in the "Beur" movement – be viewed as a resistance against neocolonial forms of domination.

By beginning to openly discuss the legacies of colonialism as early as the late 1970s, Sayad anticipated postcolonial debates in France by decades. With that in mind, it no longer seems justified to argue that it took the intervention of French scholars, including, for instance, Benjamin Stora and especially Nicolas Bancel, to begin a conversation about France's colonial past.[283] It may have taken Bancel's efforts to institutionalize postcolonial studies, but Sayad had already been putting pressure on the academy to explore neocolonial forms of domination over subaltern groups. The lack of reception to his ideas during his lifetime, as has been said, left him with a bleak view of the world.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can wonder how justified Sayad was in his frustrated vision for the future. Certainly, French politics in the twenty-first century has seen a strong revival of positive narratives of colonial history. But this whitewashing of France's past has been met with strong resistance from newer generations of immigrants. In their very name, Les Indigènes de la République (the "Natives" of the Republic) assert themselves as a political body of opposition to neocolonialism in France.[284] Now, it can no longer be doubted that debates over colonialism have forcefully entered the public

[283] Emile Chabal, *A Divided Republic: Nation, State and Citizenship in Contemporary France* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 197-207.

[284] Nicolas Bancel, "France, 2005: A Postcolonial Turning Point," *French Cultural Studies* 24, no. 2 (May 1, 2013): 208–18, doi:10.1177/0957155813477794.

consciousness. What began as a dispute among academics is now a full-fledged national debate that has redrawn political lines. We cannot know what Sayad might have contributed to these debates if he was still with us, but by remembering his work, we can honor him for having helped to begin this conversation.

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