

Abderrezak Dourari

Algiers 2 University, Director of CNPLET/Ministry of Education (Algeria)

## **Managing Cultural Diversity: Multiculturalism and Citizenship in America and Algeria**

“Every Human being bears in himself the entire form of the Human condition.”

—Montaigne, *Essais* (my translation)

### *1. Introduction: First, the Name*

The above quotation from Montaigne epitomizes the whole debate on the acceptation/rejection of multiculturalism in America and in the world since the superpower USA is not restricted to weaponry, but encompasses the intellectual leadership they inspire to other nations. Let's first examine the name. Naming is the first activity of humans in the process of thinking. Each epoch has its specific dominant terms describing and setting the configuration of society's knowledge system. These terms make up what Michel Foucault calls an *episteme*. Communication in our epoch is dominated by the recurrent use of terms like *post-modernity*, *gender*, *ethnicity*, *identity*, *minority*, *post-ethnicity*, *intercultural*, *multicultural*, etc., which constitute together, as lexical cousins, a reading/comprehension grid of social realities and discourse, so-called semantic isotopies. As a taxonomy this conceptual grid tends to insinuate particularism and a specific historic experience as universal (Bourdieu and Wacquant 74-77). These terms embody, in fact, commonplace ideas through which other objects are thought, but they go unthought-of themselves.

Let us first put some relativity in our way of thinking and in the process of human thinking in general before we proceed further. Nick Herbert argues:

At its core, the process of thinking depends on our ability to tell a good lie and stick with it. Metaphors R Us. To think is to force one thing to ‘stand for’ something that it is not, to substitute simple, tame, knowable, artificial concepts for some piece of the complex, wild, ultimately unknowable natural world. [...]. *Language* is surely one of our most useful tools of thought, giving *conceptual prominence* to certain things and processes, while relegating the *unnamed* and unnamable to *conceptual oblivion*. (74, my emphasis)

Human beings think with/through language. Be it of a neurological or an economic nature, language is the best tool both to prevarication, to procrastination, and to tell the truth. As such, “Each word is a cultural enterprise, a public attempt to dissect the wordless world in one particular way” (Herbert 74).

Similarly, A.-J. Greimas argues in his *Sémantique structurale* that scientific thinking is a mere translation of the observations of the natural world into a specific artificial language called *metalanguage*, itself made of *predefined* terms. Consequently, from a positivist point of view, the scientist is a mere translator of reality into the specific metalanguage of his own discipline. Subsequently, to avoid any misunderstanding, it seems to be fine to begin our paper with some succinct definitions.

## 2. Some Conceptual Definitions

The following terms are presented according to the concise definitions given in ([www.boundless.com/sociology/textbooks](http://www.boundless.com/sociology/textbooks)) because in their intensive use in discussions, whether between specialists or between the former and laymen, an agreement on their meaning is necessary for the clarity of any presentation. The frequent use of these terms in current speech, by specialists and non-specialists, confers to them a false appearance of transparency:

*Culture*: “The *beliefs, values, behavior* and *material objects* that constitute a people’s way of life; the *arts, customs, and habits* that characterize a *particular society* or nation [...]. Any *knowledge* passed from one generation to the next [...]. The *language* and *peculiarities* of a geographical location [...]. The *distinct ways* in which people living in different parts of the world classified and represented their experiences.”

*Society*: “A long-standing *group of people sharing cultural aspects such as language, dress, norms of behavior* and artistic forms.”

*Pluralism*: “A social system based on *mutual respect* for *each other’s* cultures among *various groups* that make up a society, wherein subordinate groups do not have to forsake their lifestyle and traditions, and can express their culture and participate in the larger society free of prejudice.”

*Religion*: “An organized collection of *belief systems*, *cultural systems*, and *worldviews* that relate humanity to *spirituality* and, sometimes, to *moral values*.”

*State*: “A state is a *political organization* with a *centralized government* that maintains a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence [on a specific territory].”

### *3. Multiculturalism: the Historical Context of Its Rise and Its Worldwide Generalization*

One of the main consequences of the intensification of communication in the world through the popularization of the Internet (among other ways) is the rapid circulation and sharing of ideas, values and cultural products. Another consequence, more pernicious, is the occultation of the historic and socially specific contexts of the circulated ideas and the eagerness of people to convergence by sharing symbolic products. Overall, the globalization of economies correlates with the globalization of culture and values of humanism even if it is, at a first glance, in the form of a resistance process to a devastating neoliberalism and neo-conservatism. The progressive merging of ancient sovereign States in greater ensembles, like the European Union, alongside the globalization of neoliberal economies and the massive planetary exchanges, is very rapid and enhances, paradoxically, the relative growth of specific cultural and ethnic identity claims as *collateral damage*.

As a consequence, the term *multiculturalism*, meant in the USA to compensate for and to mask the historically continued harsh segregation of the black and indigenous American Indian peoples, alongside the need to respect their culture and identity, on the one hand, and the crisis of the national American myth and the “American dream,” on the other, has been propagated in Europe and elsewhere to mean *cultural pluralism* in the civic sphere and the necessity to take diversity into account at schools attended by immigrants from diverse cultural backgrounds so as to give them *equal opportunities* in the acquisition of cultural capital competition.

Suffice it to say that only France in Western Europe—which calls itself the country of Human Rights—refuses the idea of multiculturalism in the civic sphere, to which it opposes the concept of *integration*. Nevertheless, France, as a Jacobean State, paradoxically supports the independence of Quebec whilst refusing to give the same advantage to Corsica. This paradox is good news for future developments in as much as it makes the posture of France less defensible...

#### *4. All-American vs. Hyphenated Identities in the USA*

It goes without saying that if any social, cultural or political idea has got supporters in a society, then it has necessarily opponents too. That’s what is observed in the American society, where another strand in US politics is ferociously opposing *multiculturalism* and considers it a *divider* of the nation, in

the same way we have it in Algeria. Frosty Woolridge states straightforwardly: “By its very name it *destroys* one culture by *breaking it* into *many...*” (my italics). Additionally, with *numerous* cultures come *multiple languages*. According to Woolridge, Linguistic *chaos* equals *unending tension*.<sup>1</sup>

These words are harsh: “destroying,” “breaking into many,” “linguistic chaos,” “unending tensions”... The denigration of multiculturalism includes sarcastic expressions about “hyphenated identities,” like Afro-American (the American president Barak Obama is one of them). One point of view puts it ironically: “The American president is black, yet the White House is still white.” This point of view is criticized by liberals as *Nativist*:

Many liberals hear talk of national culture and shout ‘Nativist’! [...]. They believe it is a sign of their patriotism that they hold fast to the idea that we are ‘*a nation of immigrants*’—forgetting that we are also a nation of immigrants *who willingly assimilated* and became Americans... We *lose our national identity* with every added citizen who calls him/herself a *hyphenated American*. (Jonah Goldberg, my italics)<sup>2</sup>

This is a matter of allegiance, they would seriously declare. The only recognized identity is, for them, the *All-American* one. *Multiculturalism* is represented as a

---

<sup>1</sup>Frosty Woolridge is an author and journalist. One of his 13 books is entitled: *Immigration’s unarmed invasion*. He declares elsewhere “*immigration, multiculturalism is a deadly brew*” (<http://www.newswithviews.com/Woolridge/frosty344.htm>).

<sup>2</sup>Jonah Goldberg is an American conservative journalist who contributes on politics and culture in the *National Review On line* (NRO), of which he is the editor-at-large.

mischievous sprite destroying a supposedly welded identity and culture that holds the moniker *All-American*.

There is a looming disaster:

Today, America's 232 years run *fractures* [since Independence in 1776], *falters* and *degrades* under the march of '*multiculturalism*'. The word sounds unifying, inclusive and respectful. Yet how unifying can a nation remain when a *foreign* language *forces its way* into *our* national character? Los Angeles provides a peek into *our* future where Mexican culture '*overtook*' its way into dominance. (Goldberg, my italics)

##### 5. *Multiculturalism: Pluralistic vs. Cosmopolitan*

In *Post-ethnic America* David Hollinger refers to two main trends of multiculturalism: A '*pluralist*' model and a '*cosmopolitan*' one. The pluralist model treats groups as *unchanging* beings/essences with clear borders that keep these borders as *self-contained* entities with the freedom to develop their own culture and specificity. The *cosmopolitan* model accepts *variable* cultural borders and sharing *hybrid identities* as well as the promotion of *dynamic new* cultural *combinations*.

This idea seems to be very brilliant and pragmatic. But what about being black? Is it a/one culture? Is it many cultures, many ethnicities and identities? Is being black a matter of nature or one of culture? Since it is generally an *ascribed* "*identity*" associated with segregation and social exclusion within white

majorities, being of African descent (centuries ago!) can neither be an identity nor a culture. Moreover, the African peoples today do not pretend belonging to one unique culture. Such a matter is no doubt to be considered within the framework of citizenship and not as a matter of multiculturalism, since the issue is the person's *color* of skin and not his *subjective* group affiliation or any subjectively constructed identity. During the recent deadly raids of American white police against Black Americans, people held protest marches under the banner: "Black lives matter," presenting themselves as human beings and citizens of different color and not culture.

If being black can be considered an identity/a culture, why shouldn't one equally consider being white a culture/identity as well? Stubborn racialism must be combated politically and educationally (see Wulf Christoph) so that no stigmatization can hold over the color of skin or origin. That's why a modern multicultural cosmopolitan state must have to do with nothing else than citizenship: *all people enjoy equal rights and duties*, and it is up to *individuals* to decide how tight or loose they will *affiliate* with *one* or *more communities* (see Kymlicka) or just affiliate with the *wholesale nation* or even with *humanity* (international citizenship). Within wider nations there can be some minority nationalism that is not resolved within multiculturalism, as would be the case with *nations within*, as in Canada: Quebec; or in Belgium, the Dutch and the Walloons.



## 6. *Cultural, Inter-Cultural, Trans-Cultural, and Multicultural as Concepts: Bridges or Gaps?*

Paradoxically, the semantic structure of the most-often used key terms in this discussion (“cultural,” “inter-cultural,” “transcultural,” and “multicultural,” see Dourari, “Culturel, interculturel” and “Algeria”) gives way to interpretations that encourage *cocooning* rather than *openness*. The term “culture” is a construct based on the assessment of *differences*, and the meaning suggested by the prefixes “inter-,” “trans-,” and “multi-” bear the idea of persisting opposite *shores* (cultures) linkable by a *bridge*.

These ancient terms have been imagined rather to rearrange the semantic content of the term *culture* which emerged in other cognitive contexts, and can no more account for the present rampant globalization of human values like Human Rights, international law, democracy and individual liberties, nor for the perceptibly increasing converging intimate life styles that come into view via the internet influence.

The Arab Spring upheavals sloganeering epitomized this fact to a great extent. There is a noticeable international wave of cultural *standardization* manifested in the international solidarity between geographically and culturally “distant” peoples for the sake of “just causes” and contestations of, for example, the international economic order and the governments that support it (e.g., the Occupy Wall Street Movement, the *Mouvement des Indignés*,” etc.).

## 7. *Multiculturalism in Algeria: Languages and Religions*

However, while multiculturalism can definitely be a seductive perspective to account for the situation in Algeria from a political philosophy point of view, it will give the outsider a fuzzy perception of the Algerian society as made up of contiguous distinct communities. Moreover, a schematic comparison shows that the Algerian society goes through the same discourse controversies as those undergone by the United States when it comes to the recognition and management of the multiplicity of its cultures and languages (see Dourari, “Dialectique”).

### 7.1 *Is Algeria Multicultural?*

In some related recent papers,<sup>3</sup> we tackled the multicultural and multilingual structure of the Algerian society still built on the basis of the ancient Amazigh backbone, whose roots go deep in prehistory and which is actually *integrated* and manifested within and through the shared Algerian Arabic. The first cultural and political disarray in the Algerian Nationalist Movement that took place within the PPA/MTLD (=Algerian People’s Party/Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties) and led to the well-known and ideologically founding crisis of 1949 (see Ali Yahia), made public the different nationalist tendencies’ representations of the Algerian cultural identity. The split concerned two quite opposite perspectives over the future independent State: “an Arab Algeria” vs.

---

<sup>3</sup> See particularly Dourari, “L’enseignement.”

an “Algerian Algeria.” The latter trend has been accused of “Berberism” (Berber separatism) and of nurturing discreetly the will to create a *Kabyle* party. Ferhat Ali, at that time treasurer of the PPA-MTLD and member of that trend of thought, responded in *Alger Républicain*:

A Party for the *Kabyle People* has never existed. For the mere reason that there exists only *one Algerian people*, whose *components are nevertheless different* in origin and language, which *live brotherly united* and animated by the *same will of national liberation* [...]. As for me, I have always thought that *Algeria* is neither Arab, nor Berber, and *could not be anything else than Algerian* and that in our homeland, *all the cultures* as well as all the components of our *common heritage deserve respect* and free development. (190, my translation and italics)

In the same period of time, the authors of an historical manuscript, *Idir Al-Wataniy*, figuring out the representation of the future independent Algeria confirm:

The *linguistic factor* has also contributed to the formation of our *national conscience*, the *spoken language* as well as the *classical one* [...] the *Algerian person*, whether Arabic or Berber speaker, uses nowadays his own *mother tongue* proudly and feels less the desire to speak otherwise, in French for example. He seeks, on the contrary, *to study classical Arabic* to know Islam and the *Islamic culture* to which *our people* have contributed. (Belhocine 17, my translation).

One can easily observe the clear ideological stance of the political actors within the nationalist movement in the late forties, a part of whom promoted a *multicultural* but nevertheless *united makeup* of the *Algerian society* (“*common heritage*”). Yet one must acknowledge the fact that this was neither the mainstream thinking, nor the trendiest one. The opposite trend prevailed in fact till 1995 when, symbolically, following the *bag strike* of Kabylia,<sup>4</sup> the authorities decreed the introduction of the teaching of Tamazight in the educative system, and an amendment of the Constitution was to follow in 2002 to declare it “equally national” with scholarly Arabic.

## 7.2 *What are the Most Salient Features of Multiculturalism in the Algerian Society?*

Writing a history of North Africa, Philip C. Naylor states:

North Africa is like an island located between the Mediterranean and the Sahara. Waves of human encounters and interactions have swept ashore and shaped the ‘island’s’ rich cultural and historical morphology. Accordingly, extraordinary peoples and histories have fashioned an impressive *trans-cultural legacy*. (2, my italics)

Algeria occupies the most important part of this territory, with more than 1200 kilometers of southern Mediterranean coasts from west to east, and more than

---

<sup>4</sup> The Amazigh Cultural Movement (MCB= Mouvement Culturel Berbère) decided in 1994 to boycott the Algerian schools as long as the Tamazight dimension of the identity was not recognized by the authorities and the Tamazight language not taught at school.

2450 kilometers from north to south at its most distant points. The approach of the linguistic and cultural issue in the Maghreb, and particularly in Algeria, through the concepts of unity and uniformity—a perception through which a people is said to be as uniform as one man—lacks any sense of reality.

The attentive observer can make out real differences in the cultural, linguistic, political and religious practices of the Algerians.<sup>5</sup> Differences lie in the very geographical contrasted relief and climate (the woody north, the Higher plains with smaller scattered vegetation, and the Sahara desert with small cities near dispersed palm trees oases) acting as a distinctive natural and cultural setting for inhabitants. The sheer size of the territory (around 2.5 million sq. kilometers for Algeria) cannot reasonably be inhabited by only one uniform and well-integrated kind of culture, language and people. The anthropological holistic approaches of culture and identity produce the societies' representations as larger-than-life, so much so that some unmindful scholars would speak about “the Arab society” in the singular or of “Islam” with a capital “I” as if there existed one unique society for all the so-called Arabs, as well as one form of religiosity in any large human society. Such statements are generally accompanied by equational predications like “the Arab world is, or isn't...,” “in Islam women are...,” “Berbers are...,” “so, you are...,” etc.

---

<sup>5</sup> We rely here on our own observations developed in another, more extended article to be published in a 2<sup>nd</sup> collective book on *Multiculturalism and Democracy in the Maghreb*, edited by Moha Ennaji, Routledge, 2015

### 7.3 Religious Variety

#### 7.3.1 Sunni and Ibâdhî Islam

In addition to a majority of Moslems with different trends of Islam, one can also easily observe the existence of Christians, Jews and unbelievers. Next to Sunni Islam, that's to say the declining *Mâlîki* and the more conquering *Wahhâbi* backed by the intrusive Saudi Arabian and Arab Gulf States TV preachers, lives the peaceful *Ibâdhî* community within the Algerian Amazigh *Mzabis* in Ghardaïa (600 kilometers south of Algiers).

Ibâdism is dominant in the Omani Sultanate where it is still the official religion, and from where the Algerian one originates. It exists also in Zanzibar (in Tanzania, which was an Omani colony till 1964), in Libya (*Djebel Nafusa*), in Tunisia (*Djerba* Island) and in Algeria (*Ghardaïa*). It is named after one of its leaders, 'Abdullah Ibn Ibâdh at-Tamîmî al-Murri (of Arabian descent), but the disciples of Ibâdhism proclaim *Jâbir Ibn Zayd al-Azdî* (of Omani descent) as their first founder.<sup>6</sup> Similar to the Sunni rites (see Messem *passim*), one may notice in the Ibâdhî Islam one important difference that is, nevertheless, political rather than religious: They deem the Imamate (caliphate) an open position for any Muslim regardless of his ethnic origin, given he is endowed with the required qualities for the purpose.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Al-Azdî is said to have been the best disciple of Aïcha, the youngest and most preferred wife of the Prophet, and of Abdullah Ibn Abbâs, the cousin of the latter.

<sup>7</sup> The history of Ibadhism has been confused with that of Khâridjism in the discourses of the Sunni elite, because they also happen to have left the caliph Ali whom they criticized as too unbending with the non-Muslims. But they left him peacefully, in fact before the battle of

The geographical space in which the Algerian Ibâdhî *Mzabs* live is also inhabited by other tribes of Arab descent. The tribe of *Ouled Nail* lives in the north of Ghardaïa town. *Ouled Yahia* is another tribe established in *Berriane*, a mixed city, the *Cha'amba* tribe in *Metlili* town, and the *Medhabih* tribe in Ghardaïa (invited by the Amazigh *Ouled 'Ami Aissa* tribe). The Ibadites are the ancient founders of the Rostomid civilization whose capital city was *Tihert*, Algeria. The Rostomi Imamate, which is often presented as the symbol of an Ibâdhî golden age, is also frequently considered by the Maghribi postcolonial historiography as the foreshadowing of an Algerian nation (see Aillet 47-78). The Mzabis constitute today an Amazigh minority and, being Ibâdhîs, they are also a religious one; nonetheless, they are plainly Algerians. Some of them participate in the Algerian political parties and government and others occupy high-ranking functions in the Algerian bureaucracy. They naturally ask for the recognition of their specificity by the constitutionally monolithic State they have contributed to establish after the Independence. This demand was predictable, since the Algerian Education System (which involves more than one quarter of the population!) explicitly plays up ideological identity issues against historical ones—history is somewhat disregarded to the benefit of official ideology (see Dourari, “Politiques linguistiques” 73-90).

### 7.3.2 *Judaism*

---

*Nahrawân* and that of *Siffin*, and retreated to Oman. See Nâsir b. Sulaymân b. Sa'îd al-Sâbi' (1999) about forged Hadiths against the Ibadites. In fact the Ibadites movement was born after the death of Prophet Mohammad in 632 AD.

Jews have always lived in this part of the Central Maghreb. Around the 11<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the Phoenicians, coming from Syria, constituted a group with the Hebrews and had the same language and the same religious practices. They took part in the colonization of overseas countries and founded commercial settlements in the present-day Algerian territories like that of Hipo Regius (Annaba), Igilgili (Jijel), Tipaza, Iol (Cherchell), Icosium (Algiers), Cunugu (Gouraya), etc. (Chenouf 21). Concerning the Algerian Jews, Chenouf observes:

One can find among them those who collaborated with French colonialism and those who nourished sympathies for the Revolution [just like the other Muslim or Christian Algerians]. For the latter ones, the GPRA [<sup>8</sup>] gave guaranties of property and personal protection [...] but a lot of Jews did not stay in Algeria.” (my translation)

The Jewish community of Algeria has been historically formed through numerous waves of immigration, and it is now as an indigenous community trying to emerge in the Algerian modern society ruined by years of the FLN party’s exclusive Arab Islamic ideology aggravated by the Islamist terrorism.

The widely read and trustworthy Algerian newspaper *El-Watan* gave the information regretting the “anonymous death” of Roger Said on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012. He was the “representative of both the Algerian Jewish community and of

---

<sup>8</sup> GPRA = Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, 19<sup>th</sup> September 1958 to 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1962. There have been three provisional governments. The first GPRA was presided by President Ferhat Abbas from 19<sup>th</sup> September 1958 to 18<sup>th</sup> January 1960.



the 25 Synagogues of Algeria.”<sup>9</sup> Said was also the former dean of the Algerian barristers. In fact, in 2009 the Algerian authorities gave permission to have a specific representative body of the Algerian Jews presided by Roger Said, whose barrister’s cabinet is still in *Blida* (50 kilometers to the west of Algiers). During the same summer, *El-Watan* published an interview with 24 years-old Naïm, proclaimed “*the future Algeria’s Rabin.*”<sup>10</sup> In the heading quotation, it states: “Algeria, to the liberation of which they contributed, is their homeland. With the Algerians they share everything except [...] religion. They are the Jews of Algeria. Today, they still hide to live better: Portrait of a youngster who chose to speak out.” In February 2015, Roger Hanin, a French actor of Algerian origin who lived the greatest part of his life in France, asked to be buried in Algiers’ Christian and Jewish cemetery of *Bologhine*. The ceremony was attended by Algerian officials and a crowd wearing kippas.

But generally, the Algerian Jews live on their native soil as an underground community because of the intolerant Islamist hegemonic stance imposed on society. Multiculturalism and citizenship would certainly give them the liberty to practice their cult freely.

### 7.3.3 Christian Algerians

The Christian Algerians—with the different modern trends of Christianity—enjoy a more visible condition than the Jews and can attend churches even

---

<sup>9</sup> *El-Watan*. Monday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2012: 06 (my translation).

<sup>10</sup> See *El-Watan*, July 13<sup>th</sup> August 2012: 08 (my translation). His family name was not revealed for security reasons.

though the bureaucracy does not take them and their religious needs into account. Their religious holydays are recognized and the Algerian public radio station broadcasts mass celebrations on some important religious occasions. Many Christians are of European descent but feel and are considered as entirely Algerian, like the famous Claudine and Pierre Chaulet. Pierre Chaulet (born in 1930) was a member of the FLN revolutionary party and stayed in Algeria all the time through independence until his death on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2012. His death triggered massive condolences and the presence of a great number of intellectuals and officials at his funeral. He is buried in the Christian graveyard at Algiers El-Madania.

Some Bible texts have been translated into Kabyle<sup>11</sup> (e.g., *Ahbib n Rebbi; Indjil n-Sidna Aisa El-Masih*). There are also some DVDs introducing to the precepts of the Christian religion (see *Eisa Lmasih s unagi n meryem tamagdalit*). But there is still no official teaching of Christianity in Algerian schools. All proselytism of non-Islamic religion is forbidden.

This fact is fundamental, beyond the stereotyped old-style truth discourse on the universe shared by all religions in the proselytism discourses put forward by the proponents of conversion to Evangelist Christianity (see, for example, the

---

<sup>11</sup> We cite here but a few of the Christian texts in Kabyle: *Ahbib n Rebbi, Tiktabin n luqa s Tamazight (=The Friend of God, the Evangels of Luke in Tamazight)*. Ed. ACEB: Lyon, France. ISBN 2-907191-00-4; *Indjil n-Sidna Aisa El-Masih Akken ith-iktheb Matta, (= Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mathew)*. There are also some DVDs in that language, dealing with the precepts of the Christian religion (see *Eisa Lmasih s unagi n meryem tamagdalit*, [www.jaimelalgerie.net](http://www.jaimelalgerie.net) = *Jesus, the Christ: The Testimony of Mary of Magdalena*, my translations).

blog *Lalla n Gerger* [www.notredamedekabylie.net](http://www.notredamedekabylie.net)), notwithstanding the fact that there may be personal and practical needs behind the conversion fascination. Islam and scholarly Arabic, which were in revolutionary times the instruments of Algerian identity against colonialism (represented as Christian and French by the official trend), have now become, at least for some other trends of thought, the instruments of dictatorship and identity denial, and are both widely rejected—to the profit of Tamazight with its friendly attitude toward Christianity and French.

#### *7.4 The Language Issue*

The religions of Algerians are different although they share many common components. That is why they bear the moniker *Abrahamic religions*, and are born of the same geo-cultural space. But as there is no comparative historical teaching of religions at schools, these facts go unseen by the majority. The languages of Algerians differ too, but belong altogether to the *Hamito-Semitic family* and typology. The indigenous Berbers helped extend the use of Banû Hilâl's Arabic—a language that progressively mixed up with Berber and Punic—as well as their folktales in the Maghrebi society (Roughi 67-101). The spreading of Islamic religion later contributed to building a prestigious image of Arabic in general.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> See Goodman 6-11, 12, 33-37, 35, 55-57 for a detailed discussion of the subject in relation to the Kabyle contestation.

The monolingual language policy of the modern postcolonial state contrasts with the multilingual reality and thus provokes socio-linguistic and cultural unease. Historically one can in fact hardly imagine a country as big as the Maghreb (from the Egyptian-Libyan frontiers to the Canary Islands, then to Mauritania, Mali, and Niger in the south), with human groups evolving in such distant places, to miraculously speak the same language when media and communication means were rudimentary!

Two main language spheres are attested: (1) the *formal domain* dedicated to the scholarly Arabic and French; (2) the *personal domain* in which one can find Algerian Arabic and varieties of *Tamazight* (takbaylit, tachaouit, tumzabt, tamachaqt, taznatit, tachelhit, tachenouit...). The wholesale Amazighness (Berberness) of the Central Maghreb is no more contested and the diversity of the Tamazight varieties is beginning to be accepted as a normal fact. However, we must not forget the controversial semantic content of Berber and Berberness as essences.

### 8. Conclusion

Nowadays, Tamazight- and Arabic-speaking Algerians, along with the different religious groups (Jews, Christians, and Muslim minorities such as the Ibadites...) claim their recognition by the monolithic State. The official hegemonic Arab and Islamic identity equation imposed long before Independence and expected to produce unity inside Algeria and even at a broader level (the Arab nation), is

indeed generating disarray. Whilst the Tamazight claim—Kabylia, and the Chaouia mainly—is not settled yet, the Ibadites—a specific trend of Islam and at the same time an Amazigh Zenata group, claim publicly the recognition of their specificity within the Algerian nation, causing cracks in the official monolithic paradigm and bring forth the need to radically change the representation as well as governance of the society as a whole.

Cosmopolitan Multiculturalism (as experienced in Canada for example), together with citizenship, might possibly constitute a solution for diversity in Algeria. The latter can no longer be ignored. As is the case in the United States, where discussions about this issue have taken place and ended in the conclusion that some form or other of multiculturalism is necessary for a peaceful co-existence of different citizens with different cultural backgrounds, there is a need that the society moves towards centripetal action around citizenship. Will Kymlicka states:

The appropriate form of multiculturalism must be fluid in its conception of group and groups' boundaries [...]; voluntary in its conception of groups' affiliation [...]; and non-exclusive in its conception of group identity [...]. Only such an open-ended, fluid, and voluntary conception of multiculturalism fits with the openness of American society and its deep respect for individual choice; and the greatest challenge to creating such a

fluid conception of multiculturalism remains the disadvantaged and stigmatized status of African Americans. (*Dissent* 73-79)<sup>13</sup>

Such a multicultural citizenship perspective should be considered and respected in Algeria too, while designing pedagogical programs for the schooling system, for media, for Mosques as well as for polity, in such a way as to restore confidence in the different components of the society themselves, whilst permitting the Algerian citizens, regardless of their group origin, to adhere to wider ensembles. If Ibâdism were taught at schools instead of imposing Mâlikism at Ghardaïa (which is the trend of Islam followed by the other co-existing community said to be from Arab origin, the Chaanbas, the Mdhabîhs, the Ouled Yahia...), and if Tamazight were assessed correctly by the Algerian authorities, the recent Ghardaïa conflict<sup>14</sup> and the recurring Kabyle conflicts would not have taken place at all.

Since all groups adhere to the “Algerianness” and its unification symbols, societal peace can only be achieved through cosmopolitan multiculturalism and citizenship, which we have called elsewhere the “Multiplicity and Unity Dialectics.” The Algerian Arabic is the most shared symbol among Algerians, and can still be considered, as such, the cornerstone of such Algerianness.

---

<sup>13</sup> This article is a condensed presentation by Kimlicka based on his *Multicultural Citizenship*.

<sup>14</sup> A very violent clash had taken place between the Maliki and the Ibâdhî communities living side by side in Ghardaïa for more than a millenary where more than 23 persons died.

## *Works Cited*

- Aillet, Cyrille. "Tahart et les Origines de l'Imamat Rustumide." *Annales islamologiques* 45 (2011): 47-78.
- Ali Yahia, Abdennour. *La Crise Berbère de 1949, Portrait de deux Militants: Bennai Ouali et Amar Ould-Hamouda. Quelle Identité pour l'Algérie ?* Alger: Editions Barzakh, 2014.
- Belhocine, Mebrouk. *Idir al-Watany, ou l'Algérie Libre Vivra*. Alger: Edition Le « Combat Algérien », 2001.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loic Wacquant. « L'import-Export de la Soumission ». *Manière de voir* 137 (Octobre-Novembre 2014): 74-77.
- Chenouf, Aissa. *Les Juifs d'Algérie, 2000 ans d'existence*. Alger: Edition El-Maarifa, 1999.
- Dourari, Aberrezak. "Algeria: Cultural Multiplicity and Unity Dialectics." London: Routledge, 2014: 35-53.
- . "Dialectique de l'Un et du Multiple dans la Culture Algérienne" [The Dialectics of the One and the Multiple in the Algerian Culture]. *Cultures Populaires, Culture Nationale*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002.
- . "Culturel, Interculturel, et Multiculturel: Concepts et Implications Intellectuelles et Didactiques." Mostaganem University Conference, *Mediating Languages and Cultures*. (27-28/01/2015). Paper.
- . "Normalization of Tamazight in Algeria: Fighting an Uphill Battle." *Science Art and Gender in The Global Rise of Indigenous Languages Symposium*.

- Ed. Kamel Igoudjil and Sihem Arfoui-Abidi. Tunis: Sahar Editions, 2014.  
91-105.
- . "Politique linguistique en Algérie: entre le Monolinguisme de l'Etat et le Pluralisme de la Société." *Synergies Pays Germanophones* (N spécial): *Les politiques linguistiques implicites et explicites en domaine francophone. Revue du Gerflint* (2012): 73-90.
- . "L'enseignement de tamazight en Algérie: contexte sociopolitique et problématique d'aménagement." *Langues et Linguistique, Revue Internationale de Linguistique et Société* (2011): 1-21.
- Goodman, Jane E. *Berber Culture on the World Stage, From Village to Video*.  
Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2005.
- Ferhat, Ali. *Alger Républicain*. Alger: 21-22 August 1949. National archives.
- Greimas, A.-Julien. *Sémantique structurale*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1986.
- Hollinger, David. *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*. New York: Basic Books, 1995.
- Herbert, Nick. *Elemental Mind: Human Consciousness and the New Physics*.  
Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993.
- Kymlicka, Will. "American Multiculturalism in the International Arena."  
*Dissent* (Fall 1998): 73-79.
- . *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.



---. *Politics in the Vernacular*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.

Messem, Mohamed. *L'islam Tolérant et Pacifiste, Bref Aperçu sur l'Histoire et les Principes Fondamentaux de l'Ibâdisme*. Algiers: Edition El-Ibriz, 2014.

Nâsir b. Sulaymân b. Sa'îd al-Sâbi'. *Al-Khawaridj wa l-haqîqa al-ghâ'iba* [The khawâridj and the obliterated truth]. Doctorate thesis: Sultan Qabus Oman University, 1999.

Naylor, Philip C. *North Africa, a History from Antiquity to the Present*. Austin: U Texas Press, 2009.

Rouighi, Ramzi. "The Berbers of the Arabs, Moors and Berbers." *Studia Islamica* New series 1 (2011): 47-78.

Wooldridge, Frosty. "Multiculturalism—destroying American culture." 20 Feb. 2015. Web.

Wulf, christoph. *Introduction aux sciences de l'éducation*. Translated by Kamila Benayad and Rémi Hess. Paris: Armand Collin, 1995.