CHAPTER 6

"Culture" and "Religion": Immigration, Islams, and Race in 1970s Paris

Changes in immigration policy during the 1970s meant that for the first time in French history Algerian and other North and West African immigrants began to take seriously the possibility that they would live their lives in France and not return to their home countries.[1] This represented an important shift from preceding decades, in which it was tacitly assumed that temporary labor immigrants would eventually find their way back across the Mediterranean. Increasingly, immigrants were no longer single men gathered with fellow countrymen, but families, with women and children, negotiating life in a new country. Questions of "Muslim" identity were weighed differently than they had been in previous generations, and the complicated overlaps of race, culture, and religion were increasingly visible.

In order to respond to changed demographic realities in a climate of economic insecurity and violent anti-Arab racism, the French state developed a new apparatus of national and local administrative agencies designed to address the needs of potentially permanent immigrants. Officials worked to create a new cultural politics designed to reflect the possibility of sedentarization. One such authority was the Secrétariat d'état aux travailleurs immigrés, whose director, Paul Dijoud, explained that the recent "events" in Algeria had created a sense of heightened tension around the "profoundly uprooted" rural immigrants from North Africa. People arriving from West Africa, he

went on, had "analogous problems [to the North Africans]" in attempting to succeed in France, but on a much larger scale.[2]

For the French administration as well as many local associations working with immigrant groups, the most significant factor leading to this sentiment of "uprootedness" was their removal from a Muslim milieu. While the vast majority of new immigrants from former French colonies were at least nominally Muslim, and while it would in fact be West African Muslims who would be at the forefront of certain demands for Muslim religious sites, the French state conflated North African-ness with Islam while defining West Africans more frequently simply as "black." Maghrébins suffered from the transition to French society, immigration specialists argued, in large part because of "the rupture of spiritual ties, which, in Islamic countries, play an essential role in collective and individual equilibrium."[3] At the heart of the state's cultural politics of immigration was the identification of Islam as the central aspect of these immigrants' lives and as an important area for intervention. Indeed, some voices from within the increasingly diverse Muslim communities in Paris did demand that the state provide them with religious sites or that employers provide prayer rooms in their factories. Still others organized and funded their own sites or made arrangements with local church and neighborhood association leaders to use existing spaces for Muslim worship.

In this new mix of immigrants, the universalist character of Islam (rather like French republicanism's claims of universalism) was challenged by the ways in which race and Islam worked in both Muslim and non-Muslim French opinion. Although it was widely agreed that West Africans were more "religious" than North Africans, for reasons having to do with not only their more recent arrival in France but also their perceived "primitiveness," neither Maghrébins nor French considered them to be "real" Muslims in the way that North Africans were assumed to be. The case of West Africans not being considered Muslim represents a refracted mirror image of the ways in which Maghrébin immigrants could be *only* Muslim and shows the extent to which Islam was so profoundly characterized as North African (and more particularly, Algerian).

The paradox this chapter will explore is why, in a climate where "traditional" Muslim practices such as daily prayer were said to be on the wane by both Muslims and non-Muslim French observers, did the state continue to use the funding and creation of Muslim religious sites as the centerpiece of its cultural politics for managing North and West African immigrant populations? And if Muslim religious practices were truly on the decline, how do we explain the real demands for Muslim places of worship? To put

it another way, when working-class Muslim associations or unions demanded that the state and employers provide spaces to be used for prayer, what were they asking for, exactly? French policy makers, the Mosquée leadership, and North African associations all recognized that the Mosquée's authority was more eroded than ever: for the first time, the state began to invest financial resources in other religious sites beyond the purview of the Mosquée de Paris. Thus while the model of the Mosquée de Paris seemed to fall out of favor, or at least to be viewed more realistically, the choice of the mosque itself as the ideal vehicle for interaction with the "Muslim community" continued to drive policy. The conflation of Muslim religious sites with racial, national, and cultural identities during a period where observance was said to be on the wane, I argue, demonstrates the deep-seatedness of the French belief in the fundamental inability of certain Muslim immigrants to be anything other than Muslim subjects. It also represents a deployment of that same argument by some Muslim individuals and associations as a strategy to achieve particular goals. Islam was the terrain for negotiating issues that had as much to do with virulent racism, inadequate housing, unemployment, and legal status as they did with religion.

Changing Immigration Politics and Changed Cultural Politics

In the years after France's former African colonies gained independence, a series of different legal regimes regulated North and West Africans' position with regard to their access to the French labor market and to French citizenship. A multilateral accord signed in June 1960 guaranteed that citizens of Madagascar, Senegal, and Mali had complete freedom of movement to and within France with their national identity cards. Once on French territory, they had the same rights as French citizens when it came to employment. This initial agreement was eventually extended to all of France's former West African colonies.[4] Immigrants from Algeria were subject to a different series of regulations, which nevertheless resembled the policy on West African immigration. The Evian Accords of 1962 enshrined the freedom of movement between France and Algeria. Algerians living in the metropole were considered foreigners and were treated as such, though they could opt for French nationality at any moment until the end of an initial five-year transition period.[5]

The government of newly independent Algeria halted emigration to France in 1973, officially to protest one in a series of racist incidents targeting North African immigrants in the metropole.[6] This wave of anti-Maghrébin

violence began in the spring of 1969, with attacks on Moroccan- and Algerian-owned cafes in the Paris region by racist groups claiming to defend "the pure race."[7] One particularly savage "*ratonnade*" in Marseille in 1973 left eight North Africans dead.[8] The December attack served as a catalyst for the Algerian decision to halt emigration was a direct assault on the Algerian Consulate in Marseille, killing four people and injuring twelve.[9] The abrupt change in policy was also linked to diplomatic tensions between France and Algeria over the nationalization of Algeria's oil production as well as Algerian internal economic and industrial issues. This decision was followed by France's 1974 suspension of new working-class immigration.[10] In the panic that ensued over whether or not families would be able to reunite given the potentially long-term moratorium on movement across the Mediterranean, many North and West African families chose to join relatives already established in France.[11]

Given that these "temporary" workers and their families would now likely be permanent residents of France, the government began to consider a new direction in its cultural politics of immigration.[12] In May 1974, before the suspension of immigration on 3 July, the government created a new position within the Ministry of Labor: the Secretary of State for Foreign Workers (Secrétaire d'état aux travailleurs immigrés). This post, designed to accompany "the birth of a new all-encompassing policy in favor of immigrants," came into being "in the context of the economic crisis of 1974–1975" and the belief that immigration needed to be controlled so as not to add to the large numbers of unemployed.[13] This new policy's twenty-five elements were adopted by the Conseil des ministres on 9 October 1974. Most of them were dedicated to providing immigrants with the same liberties their French counterparts enjoyed. The Conseil's conception of immigrants' "liberty" was twofold: it referred to the freedom to remain in France or to return to their country of origin, but more importantly, it meant the freedom to preserve one's linguistic, religious, and cultural identity. The right to "cultural identity," it was argued, allowed the immigrant to remain close to his country in spite of his geographical distance.[14]

The new government agencies concerned with immigrant workers believed that the immigrant was first and foremost a "*déraciné,*"[15] someone whose fundamental self had been altered in potentially crippling ways upon arrival in France. The concept of *déracinement,* or uprootedness, in the social sciences was not novel in the 1970s. As early as 1937, French sociologist Georges Mauco investigated the psychological effects of immigration on isolated Polish workers who had been responsible for acts of violence. The classic work on the subject of "urban pathology" by the Chicago School

was done in the 1950s, when sociologists argued that the effects of a pas-
sage from one kind of society to another can be devastating and that the
rootlessness born of immigration is one of the causes of urban problems.
Most importantly, Pierre Bourdieu and Abdelmalek Sayad's famous 1964
study, *Le déracinement,* examined the impact of forced relocations on Algerian
peasants during the Algerian War. Their conclusions informed the thinking
of metropolitan French officials debating how to manage Algerian immi-
grants, many of whom had been uprooted in their own country and would
be uprooted once again upon arrival in France.[16] French fears about the
potential traumas that could result from ruptures produced by immigration
coincided with a profound ambivalence about new immigrants, of Euro-
pean and North African origin, arriving from postwar Algeria. The link
sociologists had drawn between violence and uprootedness was particularly
ominous for French officials as they considered how to manage immigrants
from a country whose war of independence had recently heralded the end
of the French empire.[17]

The portrait of the generic immigrant, "shared, torn between two uni-
verses, two civilizations," generated by the Secrétariat d'état aux travailleurs
immigrés and inspired by the work of social scientists is one marked by
sympathy. It is, nevertheless, one with no nuances and no room for more
complicated experiences. In this vision, the immigrant's "country of origin
represents his deepest attachments, his memories," and the absence of "sun,
religious customs, and the habits of everyday life," which "in those countries
constitute a knot of very close ties," provokes "a painful lack."[18] In order
to "evoke their lost light," the officials argued, immigrants "build decors
which tend to resemble their countries: oriental pastries, cluttered dens, sunlit
music" in their neighborhoods. This "glittering façade" is a form of "pride
and dignity and seeks to dissimulate the misery of the housing."[19] To charac-
terize French and non-French universes and civilizations as polar opposites,
magnets dragging helpless immigrants between them, is problematic not least
because French and other cultures and civilizations had been in contact with
one another for more than a century in some colonies. That North Afri-
cans in particular had resided in France in smaller and then larger numbers
since the 1920s also meant that there were already established neighborhoods
with shops and services catering to those populations; "exotic" and upscale
restaurants and shops in "North African" styles also catered to a French
audience. Not only were French and non-French "civilizations" presented
as polar opposites, but immigration was also identified as a purely negative
experience of loss. In attending only to the element of loss and lack, the state
effectively made it difficult for immigrants to decide to build new identities

that might draw on some aspects of both their old "universes" and their new ones. Finally, the ingredients that constituted an immigrant neighborhood in this definition—oriental pastries, excess, and cheerful music—signal an exoticized North African neighborhood but not necessarily any other immigrant space. This image of what constitutes "immigrant" culture is significant because it shows the extent to which the state's discourse was elaborated using a North African model, and, as we will see, how the equation of Islam with immigrant culture meant that Islam, North Africans, and immigrants were forever linked in French official discourse.

In order to facilitate the cultural exchanges which were supposed to help immigrants retain their identities, the National Office for the Cultural Promotion of Immigrants (Office national pour la promotion culturelle des immigrés), created in May 1975, began its work in November 1975. The ONPCI was at once a "privileged instrument" for the administration and a "tool for popular culture," which would be responsive to the "preoccupations of the entire immigrant population."[20] The ONPCI's work was decentralized across France's *départements,* and local officials were charged with coordinating between the *département*'s immigrant associations, city halls, *foyer* associations, business groups, and anyone else who could potentially help orchestrate demonstrations of immigrant cultures or expose immigrants to "French" culture. In concrete terms, these initiatives included programs like sports activities and vacation camps for immigrant children; libraries with works in both French and various immigrant languages; the diffusion of foreign radio, TV, and movies; performances and tours of cultural groups from immigrants' home countries; and exhibits on art, folk art, and artisanship from those same home countries.[21]

The ONPCI's active members included government employees "directly concerned with cultural action," while its associate members included representatives from the major working-class immigrant associations. Additionally, the ambassadors of the countries that supplied France with the highest numbers of immigrant workers (Algeria, Spain, Italy, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Portugal, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yugoslavia) also served as honorary members.[22] Seven of the eleven countries were majority-Muslim lands, and Yugoslavia also had a Muslim population. Yet the "Muslimness" of these partners in this government agency did not shape the agency's belief that culture and Islam were virtual synonyms, for the ONPCI's program had been oriented in that way from its inception.

While it would be an overstatement to suggest that the ONCPI was designed with the exclusive intention of managing a Muslim immigrant population, the agency often emphasized Islam as the most important element

of "culture" or identity of working-class immigrants. In 1978, the Centre d'Information et d'Études sur les Migrations Méditerannénnes (CIEMM) published a short document surveying the French Muslim landscape, inspired by the ONCPI's emphasis on the importance of Islam. The study both echoed and explained Dijoud's team's own conclusions:

> What importance does Islam have in the lives of Muslims to push a secular state like France to take the Islamic religion into account and to decide to help in the construction of religious sites?
> Man, according to Islam, is a Man who has submitted to God, who is present throughout his life. He is also a communitarian man. . . . The personal and community status of a Muslim . . . is eminently religious and informs every aspect of public and private life for the faithful.[23]

The CIEMM's justification of the secular state's political and financial participation in the construction of Muslim religious sites rests on several important assumptions: first, that North African's identities were first and foremost, if not exclusively, religious. Second, that North African immigrants' allegiance was to their fellow Muslims—the possibility that they might have other communities made up of their colleagues, neighbors, political or leisure association members, or otherwise, seemed remote. Finally, and most classically, that Muslims were incapable of separating their public and private spheres, rendering their participation in secular French public life difficult, if not impossible, and necessitating the creation of separate structures for their use. These separate structures would continue to blur the constantly shifting boundaries between "cultural" and "religious" identities.

Given the continued belief that the "cultural" lives of Muslims were entirely driven by their religious identities and that the state was supposed to preserve the "cultural" lives of immigrants, the construction of communal religious sites was a significant element of a *circulaire* from 2 September 1976 on "cultural action in favor of immigrants."[24] The "Religious Sites" program of the 1976 policy defined two levels of action:

> Aid for the creation of religious sites:
> *Objective*: Since cultural life has traditionally been inseparable from the respect of religious prescriptions for Muslims, it is necessary to put spaces reserved for religion at the disposal of the faithful in neighborhoods with high Muslim populations, particularly in Immigrant Worker Hostels.
> Aid for existing Mosques and prayer rooms:

Objective: To respond to the material religious cultural needs of the Muslim population which makes use of existing mosques and prayer rooms.[25]

The language of providing services necessary to and desired by the Muslim population is similar to that of earlier arguments made in favor of the construction of mosques.

While restating the idea that Muslims do not separate the religious elements of their lives from the rest of their existence (a claim which is made even more explicit elsewhere in the new policy), the bureaucrats who produced the "Religious Sites" program were not as invested in the creation of a particular kind of space for these Muslims to use as the Mosquée's founders were. Although they were less concerned about the space of Islam, the place of Islam was vitally important to 1970s administrators. The major difference in this program was that these new religious sites should be constructed where Muslims lived, not in parts of the city visible to tourists, as in Paris, or slated for urban renewal, as in Marseille. I suggest that the new program's emphasis on the geographic location of Muslim religious sites reflects one of the important shifts *Islam français* underwent during this decade. These sites were private spaces designed for religious subjects, not public places designed for public display. The notion that Muslim embodied practices could be performed in different kinds of spaces broke with decades of *Islam français* rhetoric. French observers did not believe that these practices were any less physical or any less central to the lives of Muslims, but they no longer argued that they had to be performed in a particular aesthetic setting.

What is also remarkable about the new religious-cultural politics of the 1970s was the acknowledgement that a mosque is not a church is not a synagogue. This was a major shift in itself, but French officials also acknowledged that the mosque's meanings are in fact multiple and may signify different things for different members of the Muslim community. An attempt was made to distinguish among different types of Muslim sites, which had overlapping functions. Dijoud's collaborators defined the mosque, or the "official religious site," as a space where "the community of believers meets for regular prayer (the Friday prayer and the entire duration of Ramadan) or for occasional ceremonies (marriage, burial, circumcision, departure for Mecca)."[26] The mosque is not the same as the *salle de prière,* which is not the same as the "family habitat," in which a simple prayer rug suffices to delineate the space for family religious observance. Administrators reported that there were three kinds of public religious spaces in the Paris region: mosques, *salles de prière,* and socio-cultural centers. The mosque, which was described

above as a physical space that allowed believers to gather collectively for prayer and to celebrate special religious occasions, is, however "not exclusively a place for prayer." It is "essentially a community meeting place for all the questions which concern [the community]," be those questions cultural, social, or political.[27] The reference to the mosque as a politicized public space is new, for the question of the potential politicization of the Mosquée de Paris or any other Muslim religious sites was always a source of profound fear for the metropolitan and colonial officials, who did all in their power to de-politicize Muslim religious sites. If mosques were to have any political valence, it was to be as the embodiment of a particular kind of relationship connecting metropole, colony, and Muslim subjects, and that orientation was to be controlled by the administrations rather than members of the "community." Other than the mosque, the other kinds of Muslim sites described were the *salle de prière,* which is a site reserved exclusively for prayer; and the socio-cultural center, which, "in certain neighborhoods with a high North African or Turkish population, has put rooms at the disposition of the Muslim community for prayer and meetings."[28]

However, the construction of Muslim religious sites in the 1970s brought the problems of Islam's "late" arrival to the metropole to the foreground. One policy report remarked that "the Mosquée de Paris, created immediately after World War I in memory of the Muslims who died for France, was the only meeting place for Muslims (and Muslims do not all recognize it)." They emphasized the Mosquée's lack of overarching authority repeatedly, even going so far as to refer to it as "the structure which is *supposed* to represent Islam" but does not speak in the name of the "majority" of French Muslims.[29] The "representativeness" that French officials would have hoped for from a Muslim interlocuteur was made difficult by the fact that Islam was not organized along the same channels as France's other religions. French immigration theoreticians were troubled by Islam's lack of "a hierarchical organization compatible with French public life" and a "sizeable cultural apparatus" with respected notable figures and a firm understanding of the way French society works. These lacunae deprived Muslims of "the means to ensure the continuity of their religious and national identity in the country of immigration."[30] For the French state, Islam's different structure was "lacking" rather than simply organized along alternative lines than Catholicism and France's older minority religions, Protestantism and Judaism. Furthermore, French immigration policy makers continued to conflate "religious" and "national" identities in ways reminiscent of the Mosquée's founders.

While there were certainly some important shifts from earlier policies and discourses, the French state had viewed Islam as the best medium for interact-

ing with subaltern Muslim populations since the creation of the Mosquée and the Hôpital Franco-Musulman, if not earlier. The Ministries of War and Labor in particular had been at the forefront of efforts to provide Muslim soldiers and workers with their version of the means to perform Muslim religious practices since World War I. Individual companies and factories had also made accommodations for Muslim workers, with concessions such as work schedules that allowed laborers to return to North Africa for the entire month of Ramadan. There is a distinction to be made between providing religious Muslims with prayer sites that would have otherwise been unavailable to them and using Islam as a medium to interact with Muslims in France. Yet the French state's policy of providing religious sites according to the logic of *Islam français,* in which Muslims could only ever be Muslim, did both at once. The French state's long history of maintaining its relationship with the Muslim working class resident in France through the medium of Islam belies French political scientist Gilles Kepel's assessment of the SONACOTRA strikes, which I discuss below, and the creation of the *salle de prière* at the Renault factory in Billancourt as a major shift in French policy.[31]

Foyers and Factories: Religion, Labor, and the Cultural Space of Home

From 1975 to 1980, a series of strikes emerged in state-funded SONACOTRA[32] workers' hostels in cities and suburbs all over France. It began in January, with the residents of the Romain-Rolland hostel in Saint-Denis refusing to pay the rent increase SONACOTRA had instituted for February 1975.[33] The system of workers' hostels, founded in 1957 to house single male workers responding to the needs of the French labor market, housed Algerians almost exclusively until 1962 but then opened its doors to immigrants from the rest of North and West Africa as well as Europe. In 1975, in the Paris region, the most represented immigrant group in SONACOTRA *foyers* was actually the Portuguese (27.6% of all foreigners), while Algerians made up 21 percent, Moroccans 7.1 percent, Tunisians 4.9 percent and Africans 3.4 percent (the remaining 11% were Spaniards).[34] Thus in Ile-de-France, the *foyers* were not overwhelmingly populated by residents from majority Muslim countries: this population made up about a third of a whole whose other two thirds were nominally Catholic or Christian.

Almost all of the *foyers* were run by former colonial officials chosen for their experience with managing colonial populations, even though North and West Africans did not always represent a majority of the resident population.[35] A study commissioned by SONACOTRA itself found that its

directors treated residents differently depending on their nationality, salary, and professional situation, reserving the worst discrimination for North Africans.[36] Of 155 directors in the Paris region, 144 were also former military men having fought in at least one if not more of France's colonial wars.[37] Because of their supposed knowledge of the "native mind," many *foyer* directors devoted space for a *salle de prière,* believing it was important to maintaining a well-run institution.[38] The exact layout and features of each *foyer* differed, but all of them featured a combination of the following: individual or occasionally collective bedrooms (ranging from 72 to 512 rooms, with an average of 280 rooms) and shared spaces such as bathrooms and showers and kitchens with individual lockers on each floor. Shared spaces for the entire *foyer* included the bar, the TV room, and sometimes a room or rooms that could be used for classes, cultural associations, or *salles de prière.*[39]

Many residents were unhappy not only with what they saw as the high cost of a fairly wretched existence but also with the administration of the *foyers* and their own lack of representation in the decision-making process about regulating daily life in the residencies. The strikers' demands ranged from the economic (a 50% reduction in rents) to the hygienic (more frequent laundering of linens) to the social (the freedom to have visitors of both sexes twenty-four hours a day, forbidding staff from entering residents' rooms without permission; no expulsions without agreement from the residents' committee; transparency in rental procedures; and the replacement of directors with concierges) to the political (the freedom of assembly and speech).[40] In some individual *foyers*, residents also demanded *salles de prière* and sometimes also a halt to the selling of alcohol at the bar.[41] But the strike was about more than just changes in the management of the workers' *foyers*. As the bilingual newspaper *La Voix des Travailleurs Algériens* explained, the fight was against the exploitation of the immigrant working class, not just about SONACOTRA. For them, the strike was "against the organized theft of immigrant workers by the French state," and their demands included full family support payments even if a worker's family remained in Algeria, full pension payments, an end to all programs for immigrants' cultural integration, and *foyer* and neighborhood cultural activities run by residents themselves, not the state's cultural agencies.[42] The strikes also drew French student activists and members of the far left into the fray, who saw the immigrants' struggle as an ideal site for intervention. The Arab Workers' Movement (Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes, MTA) was one of the groups at the organizational center of the strike, and their demands did not focus on recognition as Muslims or demands for Muslim religious sites.[43] Organized French labor as well as the Algerian-state-run Amicale proved powerless to negotiate in the name of the striking workers.[44]

It was certainly easier to provide residents with a room to use for religious purposes than it was to address their other demands, and in one system of *foyers*, the management did so quickly, even before the SONACOTRA strikes began. The ADEF (Association pour le Développement des Foyers du Bâtiment et des Métaux) *foyers*, which were privately owned by construction companies employing largely immigrant workers, had a "religious policy" that already provided for Christian religious observances as soon as they opened in 1955. When waves of Muslim workers began arriving in the 1970s, the management realized that not only were they refusing to eat the *foyer*'s restaurant's food, they were also creating their own makeshift spaces for prayer in halls and bedrooms. The directors of the ADEF *foyers* quickly gave Muslim workers access to rooms that had been used as games or television spaces, sometimes going so far as to provide two different rooms to allow North Africans and Turks to pray separately.[45] In the case of the SONACOTRA *foyers*, on the other hand, things happened more slowly: by 1973, there were *salles de prière* in only a handful of *foyers*, including Bobigny and Nanterre. However, some SONACOTRA directors claimed that they tried to make sure Muslim residents were able to perform their religious obligations. As one director said, "I respect their holidays very much. Ramadan, though, that's something else. I have to explain to the Portuguese . . . that for a whole month, the Arabs are going to be up all night. The classroom is turned into a lotto room, and they play until 4 or 5 a.m. The others accept it very well. At the end of Ramadan, we bring in an orchestra, and it's another celebration."[46]

French ethnographer Jacques Barou, who conducted interviews with *foyer* residents active in the strike as it was happening, argued that "the leftist and Marxist language used by the coordinating committee contributed to occult the Islamic aspect of this conflict."[47] Barou wrote that demands for Muslim religious sites were so ubiquitous that SONACOTRA management began to move one step ahead of the strikers by budgeting for the construction of *salles de prière* in *foyers* that did not yet have one, thus removing one of the rationales for the strike. In his analysis, the Marxist tinge of the strikes did not represent the real orientation of *foyer* residents, to the extent that even some of the French far-left associations and the Marxist immigrant groups also adopted the language of Muslim practice in order to participate in the struggle. The Marxist MTA, for example, whose demands focused on social and economic justice for all immigrant workers, nevertheless invited workers to celebrate all the major Muslim holidays. I would not suggest that the "Marxist" or "Muslim" elements of the SONACOTRA struggles need to be put into competition or that one needs to be seen to be "genuine" while

the other was merely "strategic." Different people were moved to strike for different reasons, and what concerns us here is not the overlaps between religious and labor demands but that Islam was invoked at all.

Similar demands were made in factories at the same time as the demands for Muslim spaces in *foyers* were being voiced. In examining the case of the *salle de prière* at the Renault factory in Billancourt in conjunction with the experiences of the SONACOTRA strikers, I will explore the question of the demands for Muslim religious spaces during a period when French observers perceived a decline in religious practice in tandem with the issue of racial difference and the tensions between North and West Africans. As in the *foyers*, Islam had been present in Renault's Billancourt factory before the 1970s: the cafeteria had long offered menus without alcohol or pork; in the 1960s, the Comité d'entreprise began to sponsor celebrations of Muslim holidays while work schedules were also finessed to allow workers to observe Ramadan.[48] From these existing arrangements in favor of practicing Muslim employees, the move to create a *salle de prière* was hardly a revolutionary proposition. It was officially opened in October 1976, during Ramadan, as a response to a petition launched by a group of Senegalese Renault employees that gathered more than eight hundred signatures the afternoon it was circulated. The petition came at a time when no major conflicts between labor and management had arisen in the previous two years, and the general atmosphere at the factory was calm.[49] Jacques Barou (who had also interviewed the SONACOTRA strikers), Moustapha Diop, and Subhi Toma argue that unlike the case of the rent strike, the creation of the *salle de prière* took place very peacefully. The only groups to express ambivalence about supporting the effort were the unions, but Renault management was well aware that many Muslim workers were already in the habit of praying in the factory and thus pragmatically decided to create prayer sites as an attempt to regulate what was already everyday practice.[50] For Barou, Diop, and Toma, the way in which the demands emanated also showed that the desire for Muslim religious space in the factory was totally autonomous, not the result of outside interference or pressure.

A year later, another *salle de prière* would open in a different workshop in the same factory, in a larger space that could accommodate up to 150 people. Its imam was apparently more popular among Renault employees and also had a tendency to encourage Muslim workers to keep their own company and not participate in any other aspects of factory life.[51] The imam of the second *salle de prière* launched a series of attempts to create a truly distinct sacred space in the workshop. The practices he encouraged were those associated with North Africa, such as the distribution of mint tea after Friday

services and the creation of a community fund to purchase North African–style white djellabahs (which were also laundered on a regular basis) so that workers could put them on over their clothes and enter the *salle de prière* even if they did not have time to wash themselves fully or change their clothes.[52]

"Second-Class Muslims"

The white djellabahs that distinguished between the pure space of the *salle de prières* and the impure space of the factory also marked the religious site as North African.[53] Yet many scholars have argued that it is not coincidental that the workers who pushed for the creation of a Muslim religious site at the Renault factory were Senegalese. West African Muslims, who had arrived more recently than their North African colleagues, also had to affirm their Muslim identity in ways that North Africans did not because neither French nor North Africans took them seriously as Muslims. This hierarchization within France's Muslim community was visible to non-Muslims, and those who were concerned by the status of West African immigrants had to overcome their own prejudices in order to accept them as equals. As one Catholic involved in inter-religious dialogue explained:

The Subsaharan African Muslim is not a second-class Muslim, even if he does not resemble the North African Muslim. Of course, his Arabic is very limited, and he is not always a scrupulous observer of the religion's pillars. But even there we cannot generalize: some peoples have been Muslim for a very long time, for example, those along the Senegal River since the 11th century, while others are very recent neophytes.

Islam in Africa, like everywhere else, is not static. There are *marabouts* who are excellent masters of doctrine and spirituality, who introduce others to knowledge of the Quran. Believers travel, such as going on the pilgrimage to Mecca, or going to study in Morocco, Tunisia or Egypt. For many years, they have created educational and cultural associations for a more enlightened faith. Reformist or modernist currents exist in cities. If there have been delays in this evolution, the responsibility lies with the colonial policy repressing the development of a religious culture deemed too Arab, out of fear of pan-Islamism which would be hostile to it.

In brief, if we are first taken aback by African-style Islam, upon a closer look, we can recognize the Black Muslim as the Arab Muslim's brother.[54]

This outreach worker, while declaring that African Muslims were just as Muslim as Maghrébin Muslims, undermines himself by effectively arguing not that Muslims on both sides of the Sahara are equal but that West African Muslims can be taken seriously *if* their *marabouts* have formal training, *if* they have traveled and opened themselves to Arab Islam, and *if* they belong to a modernizing or reformist urban Muslim movement. The Muslimness of West Africans was thus evolutionary and conditional, not taken for granted as was that of Arab immigrants (whether they were observant or themselves identified as Muslim or not). In other words, "Arab" Islam was the standard to which West Africans Muslims should aspire.

Journals from Muslim associations whose vision of Islam emphasized its universalism reveals that even groups that sought to overcome national, ethnic, and racial divisions still reflected those same cleavages in their own discourse. The association Musulmans en Europe, for example, explained to its members in an article entitled "Why Pray Only in Arabic?" that one of the reasons for Arabic prayer is that "if Islam were only a regional, racial, or national religion, one would certainly have used the language spoken in that region, by that race, or by that nation. But the demands of a universal religion are entirely different, one whose faithful speak hundreds of regional languages."[55] Praying in Arabic was not, according to them, an exclusive practice designed to maintain Arab superiority but rather a lingua franca to unify an increasingly "cosmopolitan"[56] Muslim *umma*. However, in spite of this language of universalism, the advertisements and the articles in *France-Islam* concerned North African immigrants and, more particularly, Algerian immigrants, rather than a diverse and inclusive Muslim community. Ads for Air Algérie and cargo services took up all available ad space, and while any articles on topics other than Muslim religious texts, thinkers, or history concerned only the experiences of North African immigrants in France. By the late 1970s, most of the journal was printed in Arabic, effectively rendering it an Arab publication: even if non-arabophone Muslims were familiar with the Arabic liturgy or had studied the Quran, many of them would not have been capable of reading a journal in Arabic. Likewise, the MTA's materials reflected a tension between their desire to identify as members of the North African working class fighting for the rights of all immigrant workers regardless of their origin and their cultural and religious specificities. While they proposed teach-in style programs or education plays about racial discrimination and exploitation, which were advertised in French to make them accessible to the largest number of people, they also organized celebrations of Muslim holidays or concerts featuring different styles of North African music, dance, and theater.

Testimony from West African Muslim workers and *foyer* residents confirms the existence of tensions between "Arab" and "African" Muslims, which in fact seemed to stem less from "Arab" disdain for "African" Islam than from social conflicts around everyday life practices in the *foyers*, ranging from table manners to attempts to subvert the legal procedures for room attribution in favor of compatriots. Manara Kamitenga, a Zairean resident of a SONACOTRA *foyer* in the Paris suburb of Saint-Ouen, addresses this issue in his short memoir describing life in his *foyer* in the late 1970s. In addition to his vivid depictions of the serious material problems facing residents (filthy kitchens, unsanitary bathrooms, and so on), he also wrote about the relations between the different racial groups. One of the major sites of conflict, he explained, was the dining hall: "It's rare to see Arabs and Blacks at the same table. Theoretically, the tables are all shared, but in reality they're separated. . . . The Arabs think of themselves as more 'clean' than the Blacks and tend to segregate themselves by monopolizing certain tables." Issues of cleanliness surface again and again in explanations of the tensions between North and Sub-Saharan African residents. Kamitenga writes that "our *foyer* is a melting pot where the races represented should melt together. But we can't talk about 'race' without thinking of the cultures they represent and without which the darkness or lightness of one's skin can't distinguish between men. Isn't what distinguishes the Arab from the White and the two of them from the Black their respective customs and traditions? The way of seeing the world, of feeling, of reacting, are different depending on whether one is Arab, White, or Black." Kamitenga distinguishes between the "biological" aspects of race and the cultural characteristics associated with different races. Ultimately, however, he falls back on the French model and conflates the two, arguing that each "race" has particular customs and traditions that define it.[57]

Although the historiography tends to suggest that an important distinction among the diverse members of Paris's Muslim community is that West Africans were more observant than North Africans, this was not necessarily the case. In interviews conducted in the late 1970s in both Paris and Dakar, most West Africans, while identifying "everyone" as Muslim when asked "how many people are Muslim," also said that only 50 to 60 percent of them were practicing Muslims.[58] Almost all those interviewed affirmed that "all the old people are observant" while few of the younger generation prayed or fasted; however, everyone practiced to a lesser extent in France than they did in Senegal. The reasons these workers gave to explain this situation centered on the effects of their migration to France. Their new industrial-time work schedules made it difficult to maintain the prayer schedule, which was more easily accommodated by the rhythms of work in their home countries. In

addition, their new living spaces did not always give them access to spaces for collective prayer. As one person said, "There is no collective prayer: we don't have the space for it," or, as another remarked, "Even those who are the most observant don't necessarily go to the mosque (or the common *salle de prière*). In the *foyer*, there are problems with collective prayer because the *salle de prière* is the same as the TV room."[59]

West Africans may not have been *more* observant than North Africans, but they were *differently* observant. Their religious activities were often centered around *marabouts* from their home communities. The Quranic-trained *marabout*'s responsibilities included serving as the teacher and religious leader of the group as well as making *gris-gris,* or talismans, for community members.[60] *Marabouts* sometimes lived in individual apartments, but more often they lived in the *foyers* among people from their regions. Those who did live in the *foyers* were said to be "the hard core of the observant [Muslims], often the rigorous censurers of young people's non-Muslim behavior."[61] Their making of *gris-gris,* however, and the importance that many West African workers accorded these objects presented their Muslim practice in a light at odds with "orthodox," or North African, Islam. Workers said that they sought out *gris-gris* for many reasons: for help with getting a job, to maintain a good relationship with one's employer, to move up the social ladder, for help with naturalization paperwork, and to protect against ill wishes. In fact, the richest of the *marabouts* (through their sales of *gris-gris*) were those with connections to factory hiring managers and police and other administrators: they used their personal connections to ensure positive results for their talismans.[62] Practices like these were used by members of the North African Muslim community to denigrate the "Muslimness" of West Africans. The way people who were all nominally Muslims conjugated racial difference and Muslimness was reflected and refracted in both similar and different ways among non-Muslim French.

Nationality, Race, and Islam: "Racing" Islam from Without and Within

An 1971 article entitled "Hatred of the Emigrant," published in the FLN's newspaper, *El Moudjahid,* explained the Algerian perspective on the wave of violence committed against North African, especially Algerian, immigrants in the metropole:

> More than ever, the Algerian in France is prey to this evil form of human relations. More and more, he constitutes the expression of an

ethnicity whose "biological properties" leave much to be desired, and it is true that one attributes extremely vulgar qualifications to Algerians, whose "linguistic simplicity" has a psychological effect which could not possibly be more effective [in shaping] public opinion. . . .

Prejudices, stereotypes, insults and many other manifestations make the Algerian worker into an artificial being invented piecemeal by the racist.[63]

In this article, the author explains the racism that Algerians experienced in the metropole as a function of their nationality and perhaps implicitly of their socioeconomic status as members of the working class. Their identity as Muslims was not part of the rationale for the hostility they faced, according to this analysis. In fact, the state newspaper's official stance on the attacks on Algerian immigrants held that they were the victims of France's anger at the independent state's decision to naturalize their oil industry. As another article explained:

Even before the decisions of February 24, taken by the Revolutionary Power in the hydrocarbants domain, a vast press campaign had been prepared and unleashed in France against Algeria in general and our emigration in particular. But since these historic measures, the campaign has reached a veritable frenzy and become an exacerbated racism whose outrages our emigrant brothers suffer every day.[64]

In this editorial introduction to a special issue devoted to the "daily drama" and "hell" of Algerians' lives in France, it is clear that the Algerian government and state press saw the racism that was literally attacking their emigrants to be based in political concerns.

On the other hand, groups like the Mouvement des travailleurs arabes tended to speak less of "Algerians," choosing instead to use explicitly racial language ("Arabes," "Noirs").[65] Furthermore, the MTA did not confine its struggle to the rights of "Arabs"; it was concerned with the problems faced by all immigrants, including those from Sub-Saharan Africa. In a poster advertising a two-day conference against racism, the MTA scorned the creation of the new Secrétaire d'état aux travailleurs immigrés as proof of the government's intention to end discrimination. "Because one is Arab or Black, is it fair that one has almost no chance of finding decent housing? Is it fair that one be the victim of intolerance and mistrust? . . . Is it fair not to have all the rights of French workers?"[66] In this formulation, race and class are the central elements that define the second-class existence of the North or West African worker, rather than their national, "ethnic," or religious identities.

Yet another perspective was offered by the Amicale des Musulmans en Europe, a pan-European association with aspirations to speak in the name of all Muslims, regardless of national origin.[67] French racism was absent from its analysis of the problems facing Muslims in France, as were questions of discrimination, unequal access to resources, economic injustice, and other issues. For the Amicale des Musulmans, the real danger France presented to Muslims was that increased exposure to the de-Christianized, materialistic society in which they found themselves would cause them to lose their identities. Too much exposure to life in France could potentially allow Muslims "to envisage a secularized Muslim society, more or less in the image of contemporary Western societies."[68] The real enemy in this vision is not the racist or the capitalist exploiter but the "Muslim countries" that have done little to help their emigrants in France, since they are preoccupied by their own internal politics. This third conception of the identity of "Muslim" immigrants is thus entirely religious, one in which race and nationality play no role whatsoever.

Si Hamza, speaking in the name of the Mosquée, made statements about immigrants that tended to conflate these three visions in ways that many elements of France's Muslim communities found profoundly disturbing. The Mosquée's *recteur* took a very public stance on the issue of anti–North African racism in an article in *Le Monde* dated 22 September 1973. The catalyst for Si Hamza's article, "On the Anti-Racist Demonstration," was the MTA's organization of a demonstration against racism held on 14 September, which gathered about a thousand immigrant workers outside the Mosquée. In his article, Si Hamza wrote that the demonstration's organizers did not contact him before moving ahead with their plans and then offered his own analysis on the question of racism, which differed significantly from that of the MTA and many other organizations. He argued that North Africans arriving in France felt as though they were in a "hostile milieu" and that the effect of this sentiment was a deterioration of their "psychic state" to the point of feeling like persecuted pariahs. The Maghrébin immigrant learns to dread learning of a crime committed by one of his fellows, because he knows that in the French imagination "individual responsibility" is transformed into "collective responsibility." In this vision, then, Si Hamza seemed to be suggesting that North Africans are not, in fact, pariahs, they only feel themselves to be so, and that they bear much of the responsibility for their predicament because of their own thoughts and sentiments. He went on, however, to put forth even more questionable propositions. While condemning "hurtful speech," Si Hamza nevertheless argued that he did not believe that words could be transformed into "aggressive action."[69] The problem, as the *recteur*

saw it, was not that the French were racist toward "North Africans or any other ethnic group" but that they "rose up against the abuses, the excesses, and everything that 'disturbed' their habits," especially when it was a question of North Africans doing things in France "that they would not do at home." Si Hamza's solution to the problems of North African immigrants was a simple one: he urged his fellow Maghrébins, "who benefit from [French] hospitality," to strive toward "friendliness, forgetting knives, respecting women, polite manners, [and] proper language" as paths to improve the situation.[70]

In Si Hamza's account of the problems facing North African immigrants, there is no mention of their religious identities; "North African" is a sign for a particular ethno-cultural identity with social practices (violence, misogyny, vulgarity) that are unacceptable in French society. Coming from the caretaker of the temple to *Islam français,* this is an especially interesting analysis because it departs in a key way from the French state's vision of North African immigrants in which their Muslimness is the most important element of their identities and ethnic/cultural/racial particularities are all signaled under the category of Islam. Furthermore, although Si Hamza was instrumental in trying to unlink Islam from national, political, and ethno-cultural identities in the late 1960s by reaching out to West African Muslims and to the *harkis,* his stance on the issue of racism seems to suggest that only North Africans are concerned (and not West Africans, for example).

By speaking almost exclusively about the particular experience of immigrants of North African origin while claiming to be the representative of all Muslims in France, Si Hamza threw into question the extent to which his universalist vision of Islam in which race and nationality were immaterial was a true reflection of his own thought or of the reality of Muslim existence in France. I argue that Si Hamza's definition of North Africans as an ethno-cultural community rather than a national or religious one reflects an internalization of the ways in which the French state's discourse on North African immigrants emphasized embodied religious practices to talk about the innate nature of Muslim identity along ethno-racial lines. The Mosquée's *recteur* brought this discourse to previously unseen heights by dispensing with the Muslim label and speaking directly about ethnicity and culture. Si Hamza's evacuation of the religious content of North African immigrants' identities in his commentaries on their place in French society signaled a new stage in the development of *Islam français* in the 1970s: while the French state and factory owners created new mechanisms to manage immigrant populations through "cultural" programs that quite often were projects designed to facilitate Muslim religious practices, the leader of France's premier "Muslim" site had paradoxically made the opposite move and dispensed with Islam as a

code for speaking about North African immigrants in France. As we will see, Si Hamza's responses to the violent (verbal and physical) opposition he faced from different elements within France's Muslim communities on religious and political grounds were almost always free of religious grounding. While I do not contest the authenticity of certain Muslims' attacks on the *recteur* and the Mosquée on religious grounds, I do argue that Si Hamza understood that far more was at stake in the fights over Islam in the 1970s than interpretations of religious practice. His direct recourse to political arguments in his rebuttals of these critiques demonstrates the ways in which the decades-old model of using Islam to negotiate cultural and political realities was being strained beyond recognition.

"Unbearable Tyranny": Claiming and Owning Muslim Religious Space in Paris

Representatives from almost all of France's diverse Muslim communities responded vehemently to Si Hamza's arguments, agreeing that he was blaming the victims for their own suffering. But the attacks were made in different discursive registers: opposition to Si Hamza's statements was couched in the language of Islam, of nationality, and of class solidarity, with some groups drawing on more than one of these themes in their counterarguments. The strong opposition to Si Hamza's presence in the Mosquée's leadership, especially after 1974, was often voiced in and around the site itself: Muslims seemed, for the first time, to be laying claim to the space of the Parisian site while rejecting its leadership. In other words, by voicing strong criticisms of Si Hamza during prayers or at holiday services, many Muslims in Paris were trying to separate the institution, which they wanted to salvage for their own "proper" Muslim use, from its leadership, which was described as corrupt both religiously and morally. In a truly interesting turn, some Muslim groups called on the French state to "save" the Mosquée from its leader and restore it to its rightful owners, France's Muslims. Thus secular France, for some Muslims, became the best guarantor of Muslim religious freedom.

Trying to parse the critiques of Si Hamza made on religious grounds from those made on the basis of his politics is difficult, as few attacks were formulated exclusively in one way or the other. However, opposition to the Mosquée's *recteur* can be divided into those who primarily doubted his religious and moral capacities to lead a Muslim institution and those who found fault with his positions on the place of immigrants in French society or with his relationship with the French and Algerian states. The Amicale des musulmans en Europe was one of the groups that led the charge in

attacking Si Hamza's leadership on religious and moral grounds; it was also this group that made explicit demands of the French state, as the guarantor of religious freedom, to remove Si Hamza from power. The group's critiques ranged from comments on specific events to more wide-ranging attacks on the *recteur*'s management of the institution. One frequent complaint was that Si Hamza used the Mosquée not as a shrine to Muslim religious values and practices but as a personal money-making venture in ways that were counter to the basic principles of Islam. An example of this kind of situation is cited in an article by an opponent of the Mosquée, describing a "savage attack" by Si Hamza and Mosquée staff on a "perfectly behaved Muslim student" who had been distributing free pamphlets listing the hours for Ramadan prayers after Friday's service. "Do we really need to explain that all employees of the Mosquée de Paris, without exception, must be the zealous servants of Islam, and of the community, not its nobility? Naturally, they are free to cede this honor, to those who are better qualified, conscious of their duty and not interested in disputing the ownership of this place of prayer."[71] The subtext of this particular incident was that the student was distributing free pamphlets, whereas the Mosquée's schedules were sold rather than distributed. "Soon the Mosquée's administration will charge the faithful for the air they breathe," wrote the author who described this particular incident, deploring the un-Islamic way in which the Mosquée "never tires" of making money from Muslims and "our non-Muslim brother visitors." Si Hamza was also criticized for allowing the Mosquée's *salle de prières* to be used in an advertisement for oriental rugs and for trying to set up his own *halal* butcher shop in the Mosquée's complex (with non-*halal* meat imported from Ireland still bearing the export stamps).[72]

The thornier issue in these critiques of Si Hamza on religious grounds, however, was who was distributing what kind of Muslim information within or around the Mosquée, not simply whether the Mosquée's financial practices were in keeping with Muslim ethics. What was at stake for the Amicale and other groups was the question of who had the right to use the site's space to spread what message.[73] In addition to the "attack" described above, a series of incidents in which Si Hamza or members of his staff either forcibly ejected men trying to distribute tracts, lead study sessions, or give classes or otherwise made it impossible for them to use the Mosquée's space for their religious practices, suggested to certain members in the Muslim community that Si Hamza's Islam was quite exclusive. One such event took place on 16 April 1970 when three "foreign" sheikhs came to Paris "to remind their brothers of God's teachings" were "chased out of the Capital's mosque, probably to allow tourists who paid an entry fee to admire the architecture of

an empty room where the rugs moan under the weight of sand and dust."[74] The point about the Mosquée as a tourist destination echoes the critiques made by groups like the ENA in the 1920s. These critiques, however, were more urgent in the 1970s, when the emptiness of the mosque-museum was contrasted with the desire of a large Muslim community to use the space for Muslim religious practices. In this case, the men and those who had remained in the *salle de prière* after the Friday prayers to study with them were "rudely chased" out of the room when Mosquée staff overwhelmed their conversation "with a deafening loudspeaker playing a Quranic recording."[75]

From other critiques made by the Amicale on religious grounds, such as their disdain for Si Hamza's French translation of the Quran,[76] as well as their turn to a more "rigorous" form of Islam during the course of the 1970s, it seems that the Mosquée's attempts to silence their members or to keep them from having access to the site's space grew out of a desire to maintain the institution as a temple to *Islam français*. One particularly evocative illustration of the conflict between the French Islam that the Mosquée was supposed to embody and the Islam of increasingly vocal Muslim associations in France is the conflict around Si Hamza's response to the French orientalist Maxime Rodinson's book on the Prophet Mohammed. A diffuse group of Muslims calling themselves "Les Associations religieuses Islamiques de France" were scandalized by Si Hamza's refusal to condemn the "*laïc*" Rodinson's work, as well as that of another French scholar whose book contained "defamatory propositions" about the Prophet.[77] Worse than this, the group argued, the *recteur* had "allowed Rodinson to speak in the heart of the Mosquée" after the publication of his work on Mohammed.[78] The work was a historical materialist account of the origins of Islam as well as a consideration of the Prophet's life in its socioeconomic context. Si Hamza's invitation to Rodinson to speak at the Mosquée was very much in keeping with the site's founders' vision of the institution as a place for encounters between French scientific thought and Muslim "civilization," and it was this vision that was rejected in the "Les Associations religieuses Islamiques de France's" condemnation of Si Hamza's perceived relationship with Rodinson.

Muslims who made these kinds of critiques also turned to the French state as a potential arbiter and protector of religious freedoms. The long-established collaboration between the Mosquée, the embodiment of the government's vision of secular Islam, and local and national politicians no longer seemed to matter to those who criticized Si Hamza primarily on religious grounds. In other words, Muslims whose vision of Islam had little to do with "traditional" *Islam français* sought the assistance of the secular state to guarantee their right *not* to be secular and to promote their own vision of Islam

within the Mosquée's walls. The Amicale made one of the most explicit calls on the French state to help their cause:

> The Muslims of Paris call on the French Authorities to deliver them from the unbearable tyranny of the direction of the Mosquée de Paris which has been imposed on them for many years.
>
> They would be infinitely grateful for their willingness to put an end to the undignified behavior of these scandal makers at the Mosquée de Paris, thus ridding Islamic community of an administration far too interested in the shameless exploitation of the faithful, all the while humiliating them.
>
> The faithful want to choose themselves an Islamic Direction in the service of God and the community.
>
> They have adopted France as their second homeland to live there freely, far from any dictatorship.
>
> They are determined to be worthy of their adopted homeland.
>
> This is why the Mosquée de Paris needs to be a real Islamic Institute where human fraternity is cultivated, and not the de facto property of an individual or a family.[79]

This appeal to the French authorities willfully ignores the fact that it was the French government that replaced Si Ahmed with Si Hamza because his politics were less threatening to French authority in the midst of the Algerian War. More important, however, is the discourse of loyalty to the "adopted homeland" of France: the trope of loyalty and sacrifice was the rallying cry of the Mosquée's French Islam, but now it was being used to contest it. The Muslims making this plea did not claim to be secular, and were not interested in being *laïc* subjects: they wanted to serve God and their community, not the French republic, even though they did promise their loyalty to France. But the contemporary political climate and the new cultural politics of immigration suggested to this group that the French state was their best hope for creating the space for their Muslim religious practice within the walls of the Mosquée de Paris.

The critiques of Si Hamza on political grounds reflected a similar rupture in the old and established equation between the French state's *politique musulmane* and the capital's Muslim institution: the Mosquée's *recteur* was being attacked not for his close relationship with the French state, as Si Kaddour had been, but for his difficult relations with Algiers and with the Muslim community itself. The accusations of complacency if not complicity in the racist attacks on North Africans were one element that explained Si Hamza's poor relations with many members of the Muslim immigrant community.

The *recteur* was also attacked for his perceived openness to Jews, Judaism and Zionism.[80] These criticisms certainly did not ignore Islam, but in this context it was less a question of particular interpretations of Muslim practice and belief than of Islam as a symbol of immigrant integrity and autonomy to be defended and championed. Islam was also conflated with race and national identity in many of the more politically oriented critiques. These charges indicated an important shift in the relationship between the state and the Mosquée, between Muslims in France and the French state, and between the Mosquée and the increasingly large and diverse Muslim communities in France.

One of the most widely publicized attacks on Si Hamza's leadership was a tract distributed at the Mosquée after a protest staged by "several hundred Muslim faithful" during the service for Aïd es-Séghir on 3 January 1974.[81] The demonstration itself targeted Si Hamza's "mercantile spirit" as well as behavior that showed him to be "much more of an ally of the exploiters of Muslim workers than the spiritual protector of the Muslim community." A pamphlet distributed by various Paris-area Muslim associations[82] would later be reprinted in both the immigrant and French press. "Of all the religious communities living in France," the authors of the tract argued, "the people of the Muslim community have paid the heaviest tribute to racial intolerance." This text's identification of Muslims as a *religious* community that had been *racially* targeted is illustrative of the complex intersections between race and religion in France. While representatives of French Jewish groups might have contested the claim that Muslims were the French religious group to have suffered the most from racialized violence, the question of competing victimhood is less important here than the implicit self-identification of "Muslims" as a racial group. The document's authors accused Si Hamza of confusing the executioner and the victim and asked rhetorically, "Whom does he represent? Whom does he defend?" They responded to this question by "denying the right of the *recteur* to intervene in the name of Muslims and to preach an Islam which he perverts." The authors give Islam a strong social justice and class inflection; Si Hamza is said to have perverted Islam's principles of charity, tolerance, and justice. "There is a chasm of difference between the exploited Muslim worker and the aristocratic life of this emulator of pashas," they claimed.[83] This critique of Si Hamza echoes the class-based arguments of the Étoile nord-africaine from the 1920s and 1930s, yet the Mosquée leadership is here criticized as a representative of Islam, not as the mouthpiece of the colonial (or neocolonial) state.

The Algerian ruling party's newspaper's own position was slightly different from that voiced by the Parisian Muslim associations. For *El Moudjahid*'s

editors, Si Hamza's actions were traitorous to the Algerian nation itself, and his betrayal of both "true" Islam and the immigrant working class were merely symptoms of his "mad desire" to harm Algerian interests.[84] The newspaper of course also accused Si Hamza on class grounds (also labeling him an "emulator of pachas" and "ally of the exploiters of Muslim workers") and on the grounds that his leadership had transformed the Mosquée into a ridiculous tourist trap. As they saw it, "under the reign of this '*recteur,*' [the Mosquée de Paris] has become a shopping center with a cafe, hammam, etc. . . . a miniature casbah for tourists in need of sun!"[85] But Si Hamza's worst betrayal, in the eyes of the FLN, was of the independent Algerian state: describing him as a man who ran away "the day after independence to make a place in the sun for himself elsewhere," *El Moudjahid* accused him of "having harmed the Maghreb, in the most vile manner possible" and then "usurping the role of spiritual head of the Maghrébin community and of all the Muslims in France."[86]

Unlike the Amicale des musulmans en Europe, *El Moudjahid* did not call on the French state to save the Mosquée from Si Hamza—rather, it accused the *recteur* of perpetuating the colonial relationship between metropole and colonies through the medium of the Mosquée. Si Hamza, "emphasizing himself his exclusive allegiance to the French administration," as the journalist put it, "was merely persevering in his behavior of constantly positioning himself against Algerians, against North Africans, against Muslims, in the camp of colonialists of all stripes, of renegades and traitors."[87] His crimes against Islam were the least of the Algerian's state's concerns: for Algiers, Si Hamza's real faults were political ones targeting the country during its struggle for independence and in the years following its victory. Algiers accused Si Hamza not merely having served as a *député* during the colonial era, but also of being an agent for the French secret services and being paid for services rendered with the gift of the Mosquée. The subtext to this entire discussion, of course, was Si Hamza's determination to maintain the Parisian site as a French, rather than North African, possession, "even though it was built with the money of Maghrébins!"[88]

Another variation of the politically oriented attack on Si Hamza was one in which he was accused of Zionist sympathies and of being in league with French Jews and Israelis. This particular critique was often part of a larger one in which he was accused of being a traitor to the Algerian people and the Algerian state, but added an element that made his treason even worse in the context of the recent 1973 war. A tract distributed at the Mosquée begins a recounting of the Mosquée's leader's many betrayals with the earliest sign of his perfidy: "It appears that he was breastfed by a Jew."[89] As though

he had imbibed his affinity for the Jewish community with his wet nurse's milk, critics accused Si Hamza of more serious actions, all the worse for being conscious acts: one example was his membership in the Association of Abrahamic Brotherhood (Association de Fraternité Abrahamique); another was the fact that he hosted one of the group's meetings (in cooperation with the Chief Rabbi of France and Church representatives) at the Mosquée on the eve of the 1973 war. Si Hamza's participation in fundraising events for LICRA, such as a gala performance with Johnny Hallyday, Enrico Macias, and the Kol Aviv Jewish folk ensemble,[90] was also used as proof of his objectionable alliances by his Muslim and North African critics. Those who accused Si Hamza for his willingness to engage in inter-religious dialogues and to participate in the fight against anti-Semitism (particularly while seeming less concerned about anti–Arab racism) did so on political grounds, not religious ones. Tensions between the Jewish and Muslim communities in France began to rise towards the end of the 1960s and spiked at moments of conflict in the Middle East, and the criticisms of Si Hamza reflect that situation.[91]

Si Hamza's decision to mount his explicit public defense on political grounds, that is to say, against the charges of treason to the Algerian nation and people, rather than on the basis of his religious authority or his ability to speak in the name of Muslim immigrant workers is revealing of the way he saw the issues involved in the attacks on his role as *recteur*. He perceived the real threat to the Mosquée (and to his own power) as coming from Algiers and the FLN, who sought to gain control over the Parisian site. The question of alternative expressions of Muslim religious belief and practices was not unimportant to Si Hamza, as is evident from his censoring or outright removal of Muslims using the Mosquée to give voice to their own perceptions of Islam. But his responses to the threat posed by a multiplicity of visions of Islam were contained within the confines of the Mosquée and its surroundings, within the confines of the Muslim community. The rendering public of Si Hamza's response to other Muslim practices was done by the groups or individuals who felt targeted by his actions, not by the *recteur* himself. On the other hand, Si Hamza responded to the charges of treason, made in *El Moudjahid*'s pages and in tracts distributed to Muslim worshippers with letters to the Algerian president; the ministers of justice, the interior, and national defense; the general procurer, and to the French press. Si Hamza stated that he had never "betrayed his country, for which [he had] known torture and prisons." He declared himself ready to appear before any Algerian judicial authority, civil or military, at a moment's notice to refute the charges made against him.[92] The Amicale des Imams de France (led by the

grand mufti, Cheikh Ameur, of the Mosquée de Paris) issued a press release to voice their support for Si Hamza, whose subtext revealed a similar perception that the attacks on his authority were political more than anything else. The document congratulated the *recteur* for "maintaining this international institution safe from base intrigues and all from any political control incompatible with its mission and with the dogma of Islam."[93]

In interviews with the French press, Si Hamza's tongue was considerably looser than in his letter to Algiers. In one interview in particular, he gives an account in (relatively) *longue durée* terms of why the mid-1970s attacks on him were really political attacks that stemmed from the immediate aftermath of the Algerian Revolution. The Mosquée's *recteur* saw the attacks on his person as part of a larger strategy of the Algerian government to organize Islam in Algeria and France in the service of the FLN. As Si Hamza explained:

Everything began in December 1962. . . . Ben Bella, in power, sent his friend Chami as an ambassador, with a letter offering me the post of ambassador of the new Algerian Republic to Austria.

It was obviously a trap. In virtue of the principle that all which is Muslim in France legally belonged to them, the Algerian leaders wanted to get their hands on the Hôpital Franco–Musulman de Bobigny, among others, and, most especially, on the Mosquée de Paris.

In their vision, the splendid and vast construction that is the Mosquée would become a super-embassy for Algeria in the heart of Paris. They would also install party[94] officials there. They would control the faithful. Religion would serve political ends.

This is what would happen all over Algeria. Mosques there have become political cells. Qualified and independent imams have been replaced with completely servile FLN bureaucrats. They don't even preach, they content themselves with reading printed Marxist texts sent by the Ministry. Religion is annexed to partisan ends, so as to better indoctrinate the masses.

I could predict all of this by 1962. Thus my response to Ben Bella was negative.

Sorry, I told him, but the Mosquée de Paris of which I was elected *recteur* for life does not belong to me. It is not an Algerian mosque, it is a French creation.

And it's true. The Arab countries did not contribute to it. It is in hommage to the Muslims who fell for France that the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate voted unanimously, on August 19, 1920, on Edouard Herriot's report, the decision to construct the Mosquée

de Paris. The stunning architectural ensemble cost . . . more than 150 million francs. The principal funder was the city of Paris itself, which donated the land and offered an enormous subvention.

And hardly born, the Algerian state wanted to put its hands on the Mosquée? I refused as *recteur,* but also as the Frenchman I have never stopped being, a veteran and a former deputy of the Oasis. Finally and above all, the Muslim I am could never accept this takeover. The Mosquée de Paris is open to all sects . . . all the universes of Islam, without any discrimination. . . . I would not accept obedience, intolerance, exclusivities. [95]

The account of the Mosquée's origins Si Hamza gives his interviewer is a highly selective one that elides the financial and political contributions of all three North African territories, not to mention the West African colonies, to the construction of the Mosquée de Paris. The donations given by Muslims from beyond the boundaries of the French empire are also erased from this story. The absence of France's former colonies in Si Hamza's version of the founding of the Mosquée is an essential tool in the elaboration of his argument that he was being attacked on political grounds for his defense of (legitimate) French interests against (spurious) Algerian ones. His accusation that the FLN was using Islam for political ends with political appointees serving as imams was not untrue[96] but is also somewhat disingenuous coming from someone who was himself a politically appointed *recteur,* parachuted in to replace someone whose politics were problematic.

"The Crypt of the Ménilmontant Church Hosts Belleville's Neighborhood Mosque": Finding Other Muslim Space in the Capital

Si Hamza's belief that the biggest challenge to his authority came from Algiers rather than from different movements in the Muslim communities of Ile-de-France was an indication both of his lack of regard for other Muslim leaders in France and his underestimation of the authority enjoyed by new Muslim sites among many Muslims in the capital. In addition to the prayer spaces in factories and *foyers*, *salles de prière* and mosques began to inhabit church basements and abandoned warehouses in neighborhoods with large Muslim immigrant populations. The visions of Islam enshrined in these spaces were distinct from those of the Mosquée's leadership.

Local church leaders were among the strongest proponents of attributing spaces for Muslims to use as religious sites. Breaking with decades of French

discourse on the particularities of mosque architecture and aesthetics, they argued that finding and providing such spaces would be relatively easy given that "religious practice is not tied to an edifice" in Islam.[97] Considering that the Church's social welfare and outreach programs brought clergy and lay people into contact with immigrants, it was not unusual for Muslims to seek their assistance in locating appropriate spaces for prayer after being rejected by municipal authorities. A Parisian priest wrote that a particular Muslim man asked him each time they met to find the neighborhood's Muslims a room they could use for prayers and for Arabic and Quran lessons for children. "Why did he ask me? Because we often talked about our faith, and he must have thought that I would better understand his need for a *salle de prière*."[98] In the case of "Monsieur R," the priest's attempts to secure a space through City Hall and the Préfecture met with failure. Ultimately, their church's chaplain found an available room for them in a neighboring parish. Muslims were right to suspect that the church, both Catholic and Protestant, would help where the state was unwilling to step in: across the country, many clergy sympathetic to the plight of Muslim immigrants allowed them to use spaces within their churches or sold them church lands or buildings at very low prices. For Christians concerned with social issues, the lack of access to religious spaces was a symptom of all the problems facing Muslim immigrants:

> For the average migrant, the home, which is normally the place for prayer, is too cluttered, too crowded to allow for reflection. The incredible overpopulation impedes normal life. The HLM apartments are the biggest, but are not made for families with more than eight children. Or for family groups of 12 or 15, which are not rare. Where, then, can they gather?
>
> The city is witnessing the opening, almost everywhere, of prayer sites: cramped spaces where Muslims can gather together after their working day. But these asylums born of private initiatives are few and far between. It seems only fair, in this country of welcome, where depending on one's political leanings, one prides oneself on fraternity or charity, that facilities be made which would make possible the legitimate expression of a secular and non-subversive faith.[99]

The paucity of Muslim religious sites was merely one of many things lacking in the everyday lives of immigrant workers, Christian social workers realized. In addition to the problems in access to housing, of course, was the fact that the housing which was available was inadequate for large immigrant families. Although as this author emphasized, Muslim religious practice does

not require a particular kind of space for its proper observance, the locales available to immigrants, whether sacred or profane, were simply not spacious enough to allow for their inhabitants' everyday activities. Yet on the other hand, Christians who independently provided Muslims with spaces for prayer and community gatherings also believed that the secular French state should do the same to help a "secular and non-subversive" faith. In other words, Christians called on the *laïc* state to provide religious sites for a *laïc* religion like their own.

The "secular and non-subversive" Islam so staunchly defended by those members of the church concerned with immigrant welfare and inter-religious dialogue in fact resembled the *Islam français* of the 1920s Mosquée. In their perception, it was still attached to its traditions (in a way they feared Christians no longer were), yet those traditions were in fact in perfect harmony with French republican principles.[100] As the Catholic organizer of an association called All Sons of Abraham (Tous fils d'Abraham) designed to promote encounters between Christians and Muslims explained, the "Muslim knows, better than the Christian of our century, that God is also part of the everyday. He shows it in a way which mixes sovereign God and the most ordinary occupations, with a natural air that can easily disconcert those of us in a secularized society."[101] Misogynist or patriarchal behaviors, they argued, were mere perversions of "real" Islam. Thus the Church was in fact hoping to aid the practice of the kind of Islam the Mosquée was supposed to embody, though the Mosquée was of course highly opposed to the creation of these independent sites that escaped its authority.

One such site was what would become known as the Mosquée de Belleville, under the guardianship of the Association culturelle islamique (more commonly known as the Association islamique de Belleville). The association, founded in 1969 by a French citizen of Algerian origin, was made up primarily of Algerians and Pakistani members of the Jama'at al Tabligh (known in French as Foi et pratique, or Faith and Practice, founded in France in 1972).[102] The group established its mosque in an old and fairly decrepit two-story building owned by a Muslim immigrant in the midst of Belleville, with its large population of Muslim (as well as Jewish) North African immigrants. A Catholic visitor to the original home of the mosque was surprised by the building's small size, observing that it

 does not correspond to our image of such a place. There is no minaret or arabesques, rather a kind of spruced up hangar. . . . On the ground floor of this almost dilapidated two-story house, an orange wall-to-wall carpet extended by two worn oriental rugs takes away a bit of the

sadness. At the back, a big sink (where several running faucets leak) allow the faithful to perform their ablutions before prayers. A wooden stairwell leads to the first floor, to the *salle de prière.* Here too a big carpet covers the floor . . . a stepladder covered with a rug acts as the pulpit. Seated on top of it, the muezzin launches the call to prayer on his microphone . . . the faithful will soon be more than 400 in this cramped space.[103]

The aesthetic contrast between the opulence of the state-sponsored Mosquée de Paris and the independently financed and organized Mosquée de Belleville is glaring, as is the fact of their respective locations in the center of Paris and in the middle of a lower-class immigrant neighborhood. Church sympathizers noted that the Mosquée did not welcome this independent upstart, an "independent reality" with no connection to Boubakeur's institution.[104] The difference was only accentuated by an accident in which the weight of the faithful in the *salle de prière* brought the floor crashing down into the ground level.

The founders of the Belleville Mosque, seeking a new home, met with rejections from tenant associations when they tried to buy spaces in existing buildings. Seeking help from the Catholic Church, they were pleased to learn that the *curé* of Notre-Dame de la Croix de Ménilmontant Church, Père Loubier, was sympathetic to their cause and often lent available space to community groups. At the same time as they pleaded their case to Loubier, they alerted the ONCPI of their problems finding an appropriate home. As a priest involved in negotiating their temporary placement in the Ménilmonant church explained, the agency "attached great importance to the Muslim community of Belleville" and followed the issue with interest given Paul Dijoud's policy of support for Muslim religious space.[105] Loubier sought his parishioners' approval for his idea to offer the church's crypt to Muslims, and while there were some negative reactions, almost everyone supported allowing Muslims to use the crypt (which was already a space to be rented out for meetings, parties, theater productions, and other activities).[106] The Muslims of the Belleville Mosque covered the crypt's decorations, which featured human or animal forms, and began to attend in large numbers.[107] A few years later, in 1981, the Association islamique de Belleville was able to purchase an old fabric warehouse on rue Tanger, in the 19th *arrondissement,* which was large enough to accommodate up to four thousand people. This new site was formally known as the Mosquée Ad'dawa, and it is still an important player in Parisian Muslim life.

Finally, it is important once again to emphasize that while the 1970s saw the growth of many new prayer sites and the most serious challenges to the

Mosquée's authority, much of Muslim religious and cultural life continued to take place outside of the framework of any of these religious sites. Many of the markers of Muslim everyday life, such as Ramadan celebrations, occurred in the home or in the neighborhood. In North African neighborhoods such as Barbès, the rhythms of daily life adjusted to the holiday:

> Sunday afternoon, all the food stores are open. The butchers who sell the meat of the sheep which have been sacrificed according to Muslim tradition are literally invaded by dozens of Algerian clients sometimes coming from neighboring suburbs. It is the same in the grocery stores, where one is sure to find all the ingredients necessary for a good "shorba," [soup] while the outdoor display cases of pastry shops are piled with mountains of "zlabia" [fried honey pastries] and all the Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan specialties. The restaurants busy themselves, knowing that around 5:30, there will be huge crowds.[108]

In one Paris suburb, a small group of young Muslims tired of celebrating the communal holiday of Ramadan exclusively with families in the home. They decided to produce a brochure in French and Arabic explaining the meaning of the holiday and distributed it to all their neighbors. Initial confusion and reluctance from non–Muslim neighbors turned to interest and curiosity, and that year Ramadan was celebrated communally, with children ferrying meals back and forth between neighbors.[109] Another communal event was the welcoming of pilgrims returning from the *hajj,* which began at Orly airport: in 1976, for example, about four thousand friends and relatives gathered to wait for four hundred people flying home from Mecca. The pilgrims themselves invited all their friends and relatives to their homes upon their return. During these gatherings, which often featured musicians chanting verses of the Quran, the *hajj* would anoint his guests with perfume and then serve them dates and water from the desert well from which the Prophet had drunk.[110] There were additional venues for the expression of Muslim religious or cultural practices, such as gatherings organized by politically oriented groups like the MTA or the Amicale des Algériens. Thus the growth of new prayer and community sites in the city and suburbs, in factories and *foyers*; the support (in some cases) accorded to these spaces by the French state and the Catholic Church; and the further erosion of the Mosquée's authority in the wake of these newly established institutions should not, however, create the impression that all Muslim life revolved around these centers. In particular, the new mosques and *salles de prière* were very specifically gendered and did not offer much room to immigrant women for their own expressions of belief. These spaces were very welcoming of children and often offered

Arabic and Quran classes. Yet that female members of the Muslim community did not use these religious sites as the primary loci for their own practice reminds us that these sites did not exclusively define Muslim religious life in Paris during this period.

Si Hamza's response to the growth of autonomous religious sites and, more importantly, to the French state's groundbreaking recognition of alternative Muslim authorities in Paris was more often than not to issue ultimatums and threats in the hopes of consolidating his power. When he realized that it would be difficult to restore the Mosquée to its former prominence in Muslim France, Si Hamza took the paradoxical step of transferring authority over the site to Algiers. The *recteur,* reviled and accused of treason in the Algerian and North African press in France, ultimately decided to cast his lot and that of the Mosquée with the FLN government rather than the new and, to his mind, uncooperative Socialist government in France. Si Hamza's decision did not emerge from a sudden sense of nationalist pride or a desire to "return" what began as a colonial institution to the masters of the independent former colony. On the contrary, the *recteur* had no desire whatsoever to see Algiers take over leadership of what he saw as his institution. Rather, I suggest that it was a response to the French state's abandonment of its commitment to the original vision of *Islam français* through its support for alternative sites of Muslim religious authority over the course of the 1970s. In raising the specter of Algerian ownership, Si Hamza hoped to recall the French state to its duties as the defender of *Islam français*.

Both the national administration and the city of Paris refused to increase their subsidies of the Mosquée in spite of Si Hamza's repeated requests, so as early as 1977 he began threatening to make whatever decisions he felt necessary and warning that "the Mosquée would no longer be French."[111] In fact, Si Hamza's campaign to ensure his authority over the Mosquée began much earlier, in 1958, when he pushed through an amendment to the Société de Habous' statutes giving the president greater powers and an unlimited tenure. Having assured his power, he then formally transferred the Société de Habous' headquarters from Algiers to Paris almost immediately after Algerian independence in 1962. This action greatly angered the Algerian authorities, who, along with the Moroccan and Tunisian authorities, declared that they no longer recognized Si Hamza as *recteur* and named an Algerian, Abdelkader Boutaleb, in his place. However, Si Hamza's authority was preserved by a legal decision that confirmed his position as the Mosquée's recteur and rejected the North African attempt to take over the institution.[112] Throughout the 1970s, Si Hamza proceeded to make gestures to both Algerian and Moroccan

authorities, naming each of them in turn the primary beneficiary of all of the Mosquée's patrimony should the Société de Habous be dissolved, in the hopes of forcing the French authorities to increase their own contributions to the Mosquée's budget. He finally made good on his threats when the Société des Habous decided the legal transfer of all the patrimony of the Institut Musulman and Mosquée de Paris to Algeria during its 4 August 1982 meeting.[113] Shortly thereafter,[114] Si Hamza also presented his demission as *recteur* to the Société de Habous. The Algerian government designated Cheikh Abbas Ben Cheikh el Hocine, a member of the Ouléma who had served as an FLN representative in Cairo during the War, as Si Hamza's successor and also expressed the hope that French authorities would cooperate with the Société des Habous decision. However, it was not until January 1983 that Si Hamza told the minister of the interior of the decisions taken internally at the Société de Habous' General Assembly, well after Algiers had begun to plan its administration of the Parisian site. The French state refused to recognize the agreement between Si Hamza and Algiers, and the Moroccan government, along with other Muslim states, formally protested the decision. Legal wrangling among Algeria, France, Morocco and Tunisia over the possession of the Mosquée continued until 1987, when Algiers formally declared the site's new organization with the Préfecture de Police.

In 1989, the Algerian minister of religion declared, "We are at home here: this mosque is an Algerian mosque, and if the *Français musulmans* want their own, the French state can build them one."[115] His use of the colonial-era term "*Français musulman*" rather than "*Musulman français*," or French Muslim, is a reference to those Algerian Muslims who took French citizenship in exchange for their Muslim personal status. The political implications of his comment are clear. Yet in spite of the radical rupture a remark like this seems to signal that little had actually changed in the day-to-day administration of the Mosquée de Paris with the transition to Algerian stewardship and a new *recteur*. Cheikh Abbas held the position from 1982 through 1989 and was followed by Dr. Tedjini Haddam from 1989 to 1992; Haddam was an Algerian surgeon who, like Cheikh Abbas, had served the FLN in Cairo during the war. Both of these Algerian *recteurs,* however, would spend their years as *recteur* defending *Islam français* during a decade in which the Salman Rushdie affair electrified the world, the infamous headscarf debates erupted on a national scale in France, and the "Muslim" landscape in France continued to change and evolve. The demographic shifts of the 1960s and 1970s continued during the 1980s and 1990s, and although the majority of Muslims in France continued to be immigrants or their descendants from North Africa, the Muslim populations of France were not homogenous. Immigrants from

France's former colonies, including those from the Indian Ocean territories of Reunion and Mayotte, were joined during the 1970s by immigrants from Turkey as well as later waves of immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia who sometimes came to France as refugees, bringing greater diversity to France's Muslim communities.[116] Yet throughout the 1980s and 1990s, in spite of France's Muslim diversity and the global concerns about Islamic fundamentalism, "Muslim" continued to be a synonym for "Arab" in France.[117]