French Colonial Education and Elite Moroccan Muslim Resistance, from the Treaty of Fes to the Berber Dahir

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ABSTRACT  This article explores colonial education as a site of interaction between French colonisers and elite Moroccan Muslims, from the beginning of the protectorate to the early 1930s. The French administration wished to implement an anti-assimilationist educational policy that would keep Moroccans rooted in traditional culture. However, this policy was challenged by Moroccan elites who hoped to minimalise French influence over the traditional institutions of Moroccan society while maximising Moroccan access to French higher education, professions and administration. The resulting compromise was a French-based educational system that was nevertheless steeped in the anti-assimilationist philosophy of the French leadership. This article argues that while the French-based curriculum prompted nationalist accusations of assimilationism, the
ethnological, anti-assimilationist ‘meta-curriculum’ complemented the ideas of Moroccan nationalists who denounced assimilationism and challenged the French Berber policy.

**Introduction**

Georges Balandier has observed that in a colonial situation, ‘colonial society, the seat of domination, is not separable from the colonised society, the object of domination’ (2002, p. 7). This insight has led historians of colonialism and of anti-colonialism to explore the processes by which ‘colonial subjects and their modes of resistance are formed within the organisational terrain of the colonial state, rather than some wholly exterior social space’ (Mitchell, 1988, p. xi). Education has long been recognised as a part of the colonial terrain central to the formation of anti-colonial movements. Educational systems were sites of close interactions between colonising and colonised populations, loci of cultural contact which reflected ‘the dynamics and inner conflicts of colonial societies; the social spaces that served as zones of both contact and separation between colonial and colonised societies; the borders between groups and the question of how those borders are constructed’ (Saada, 2002, p. 2). Consequently, colonial school systems were places where the relationship between coloniser and colonised was explicitly articulated and contested. The importance of colonial education is signalled by the prominent and disproportionate role that colonial-school graduates played in nationalist movements, and by the centrality of education in the grievances and agendas of colonised elites.

The first half of this article describes the process of negotiation and contestation between the French leadership and the Muslim elite in Morocco during the nineteen-teens
and 1920s. French colonial education in the early protectorate period was transformed by the agency of Moroccan Muslims. Initially, Muslim elites resisted French efforts to make French-run schools the guardians of traditional Moroccan identity, seeking instead to use the colonial schools to gain access to power within French society and the colonial state. Moroccan pressure succeeded in overturning French plans to offer a primarily Arabic and Islamic education in French-run schools, but the resulting French-based programs did not give Moroccan elites the hoped-for power and opportunities within the French-dominated colonial society. The concessions and compromises made by the French during this period led to an altered educational landscape that prompted new grievances and new tactics of Moroccan resistance. As French schooling grew in quantity and importance, the foreign character of the schools was seen as a growing threat to the cultural identity of the Moroccan elite.

The second half of this article explores the relationship between French education and nationalist discourses about Moroccan identity. In French Morocco, colonial education served as a vector for the ideas of republicanism, liberalism and socialism, but it also deliberately promoted an essentialist and anti-liberal discourse of cultural separation. Over three decades of anti-assimilationist French colonial discourse and education facilitated the nationalist critique of colonialism. While the French-based curricula of the schools exposed students to Western culture, teachers and administrators urged students to preserve a ‘traditional’ orientation. Moreover, French education made young Moroccans aware of a body of French ideas promoting a vision of a single Moroccan nation that needed to be sheltered from foreign influences. While the French
Berber Policy aimed to thwart the development of a unitary Moroccan identity. French pedagogical discourses encouraged an attachment to just such an identity, and contradicted the dichotomous ethnology that underlay the Berber Policy. Consequently, the discourse of Moroccan nationalism was complemented by that of the French colonial educational system. Eric Jennings has termed this phenomenon ‘reculturation’: the attempt, by both coloniser and colonised, to accomplish the ‘disentanglement’ of cultures, creating a ‘nativist synergy’ (2004, p. 602). In French Morocco, reculturation was the central theme of educational policy during the interwar years, and shared discourses rejecting assimilation and hybridisation became an important feature of the colonial situation, shaping the politics of both colonialists and anti-colonialists.

**The Lyautist Strategy and the Moroccan Response to the Collèges Musulmans**

The policies of pre-war and interwar French Morocco were shaped by the leadership and legacy of Louis-Hubert-Gonzales Lyautey, Resident General from 1912 to 1925 and a staunch opponent of the older colonial approach known as assimilationism. Lyautey’s colonial philosophy reflected the broad ascendancy of an anti-universalist approach to colonial administration in the early twentieth century. The growing influence of anti-assimilationist discourse throughout the French empire was precipitated by several factors, including the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the threat to colonial domination posed by assimilationist movements among colonised elites. Challenged by French-speaking colonial subjects demanding the rights of Frenchmen, colonial policymakers were now charged with the task of preserving and controlling the cultures
and identities of indigenous peoples in order to prevent or stifle assimilationist demands (Lebovics, 1992; Kelly, 1984; Conklin, 1997; Suret-Canale, 1971; Genova, 2004).

However, the anti-universalist convictions of the French leadership in Morocco were by no means hegemonic in the French Third Republic, still divided by the legacy of the French revolution. In order to defend against assimilationist pressures from the metropole, the colonial state emphasised the status of Morocco as a protectorate. It was hoped that the existence of the Sultan and his *makhzen* government as a partner in the Treaty of Fes would keep French universalists at bay, while insuring against the emergence of assimilationist demands among Moroccan Muslims. It was critical, therefore, that the colonial state develop a true partnership with the *makhzen*. The problem was, of course, that the *makhzen*’s desires were not always compatible with French interests and agendas. This was the perennial problem of indirect rule. Lyautey recognised that persistent conflicts with the *makhzen* were likely, and would result in the erosion of Protectorate ‘collaboration’ into a mere ‘façade’ (*Les bases politiques*, 1915). But how could this be avoided?

Resident-General Lyautey hoped that education could provide a solution. Because the French leadership believed that French rule was in the best interest of Moroccans, the problem was seen as a matter of convincing the Moroccan elite of this truth. It was hoped that if the French could gain control over the education of the future generation of *makhzen* administrators, then harmonious collaboration could be assured. In 1914 the French therefore attempted to administer a reform of the Qarawiyin mosque-university in Fes, the traditional educational institution for future *makhzen* administrators and magistrates. This strategy met resistance, however.
The first step in the planned French reforms was to standardise the appointment and salaries of Qarawiyyin faculty, and to establish an administrative council (mejles) of Muslim professors (ulema) elected by their peers. While a ‘modernist’ faction among the ulema hoped to use the mejles to create a reformed curriculum, modeled on that of al-Azhar in Cairo or the Zitounia in Tunis, traditionalists opposed this. The reforms had the support of Mohammed al-Hajoui, the makhzen delegate for education, but they were opposed by the Justice Minister Bouchaib Doukkali and by Abd el Hadj al-Kittani, director of the Qarawiyyin and head of one of Morocco’s most powerful zwaya, or Sufi brotherhoods. Because the prestige of the traditional Moroccan political and religious elite was central to Lyautey’s vision of the Protectorate, the French were fearful of offending the traditionalist ulema or the makhzen. Further Qarawiyyin reform was abandoned until the early 1930s (Nehlil, 191?; Merrouni, 1981). The French then switched tactics. Lyautey called a series of meetings in October 1915. As the French administration saw it, the problem with the makhzen was that its ministers and functionaries lacked an education compatible with modern ideas and were thus incapable of recognising the needs of Morocco in the modern world. If the Qarawiyyin could not be reformed, then French schools would have to educate the ‘new generation’ of makhzen leaders. French schools for the Moroccan elite were to provide this new generation with ‘the instruction and education which, without rendering them strangers to their traditions and to the characteristics of their race, will prepare their intellects to open to all the modern conceptions compatible with the necessities of the evolution that their country is called to accomplish under the tutelage of France’. A plan was therefore drawn up for the creation of elite ‘collèges arabes’. These schools, soon renamed collèges musulmans,
were to become the new preparatory schools for future ‘pashas, khalifas, indigenous financial agents...judges, etc.’ (Les bases politiques, 1915).

In addition, the French hoped that collège students who went on to study at the Qarawiyin to become ulema would eventually reform the ancient university from within, bringing it into collaboration with the French. A school in Fes which had been operating since 1914 was converted into the Collège Moulay Idriss, and the Rabat Collège Moulay Youssef opened in February 1916.

The dangers that education posed to colonial rule were well known. Lyautey and his top educational administrators sought to use education as a tool for maintaining Moroccan traditions and social hierarchies, and as a means to avert the political discontents associated with uncontrolled modernisation. French education for Moroccan Muslims was intended to maintain social stability, and to protect the traditional elites upon whose collaboration the French depended. However, there was a tension between Lyautey’s goals of modernising the Moroccan state and of preserving Moroccan society. Creating a new elite of diploma-bearing functionaries could threaten French goals, either directly, were this educated elite to adopt European notions of republicanism or socialism, or indirectly, were Moroccan notables to feel menaced by lower-class Moroccans pursuing social mobility through French education.

The French leadership sought to avoid these hazards by increasing the segregation of social classes throughout the educational system and by rooting the curriculum of the schools, especially the schools for elites, in arabophone Muslim culture. Class segregation was to be ensured by charging tuition fees at these elite schools. Schools for the Sons of Notables (écoles des fils de notables), from which the collèges would recruit,
were to be distinguished from non-elite primary schools (Lyautey, 1913; Knibiehler, 1994). Both the écoles des fils de notables and the collèges musulmans were to provide Morocco’s future makhzen leaders with an education that was ‘Moroccan and Muslim, and not a European culture that neither their instincts nor their traditions prepared them to really understand or assimilate to’. The primary language of instruction was to be Arabic, although collège students were also to acquire ‘a complete knowledge of the French language’ (Les bases politiques, 1915). Arabic language specialists were chosen to head the collèges: the Rabat school was under the direction of J. Neigel and the Fes school was given to Louis Brunot, who would later become head of Muslim Instruction (Loth, 1917). Students were to learn French as a second language, for use as an ‘instrument’, and to acquire an ‘exact and complete’ understanding of French civilisation, but they were not to be immersed in French, since they were not to become part of French civilisation themselves (Les bases politiques, 1915). Six hours per day were to be spent in Arabic-medium instruction, including both ‘Sciences’ and ‘Letters’. The Letters classes were to consist of Koranic studies, Islamic theology, Arabic grammar and syntax, logic, Arabic literature, rhetoric, and Islamic law. ‘Sciences’ were to include mathematics, natural history, physics, chemistry and geography. Only one hour per day was to be devoted to French (Neigel, 19??). Moroccan Muslims who desired a fully French education could apply for admission to the French lycées, but the future makhzen leaders trained in the collèges were to remain ‘entirely Muslim’ (Les bases politiques, 1915).

This vision for the collèges was soon subverted by the agency of Moroccan elites. While the French hoped to use the collèges to increase French influence over the
traditional institutions of power in Morocco, Moroccans hoped to use the schools as a means to gain power within the new fields of French administration and the colonial economy. Neither the makhzen nor the collège students wanted the French schools to provide a pseudo-traditional Arabic and Islamic education. Al-Hajouji had publicly encouraged Moroccan Muslims to learn French, declaring, ‘The foreigners will soon come to compete in the activities of our country. But it is knowledge of the French language that will allow you to preserve your prosperity and wealth, in contrast to what happened to your brothers in Algeria. It is also by this knowledge that you will defend your rights’ (1913). Grand Vizier al-Mokri also wanted the French schools to provide a Western education sufficient to allow Moroccan elites access to power within French social and economic hierarchies, without allowing French-educated Moroccans to gain influence over Morocco’s traditional institutions (1918). The makhzen thus followed the pattern established in the 19th century by the Ottoman Tanzimat and the Egypt of Muhammed Ali: the state encouraged the acquisition of Western knowledge through the new educational tracks, in hopes of strengthening its position vis-à-vis the European powers, without reforming traditional institutions dominated by entrenched interests. This strategy was successful, at first, because Lyautey’s hope for genuine collaboration and his fear of upsetting social hierarchies made the French dependent on the makhzen.

Makhzen pressure for Western-style, French-based schools was reinforced by the students at the collèges, who wanted more French instruction, and less Arabic. The new schools represented a non-traditional route to success through a close relationship with the French and access to Western knowledge, and for this the French language was critical. Families who did not place a high priority on the French language tended to
avoid the French-run schools. The parents of collège students did want their sons to get a solid Arabic and Islamic education, but they wanted an equal amount of time to be spent on French studies. The students, however, were reportedly interested primarily in French, neglected their Arabic, and pressured their frustrated school directors for more French courses. Anxiety over low enrolment led the administration to be flexible, and a second hour of French was added to the secondary program for the 1916-1917 school year (Neigel, 19??).

Hoping to preserve the original mission of the collèges in the face of opposition from students and the makhzen, Lyautey appointed a commission to study the problem in 1917. The commission consisted of educational director Gaston Loth, the two collège directors and two of the Protectorate’s top officials: Raoul Marc, civilian conseiller du gouvernement chérifien, and Colonel Henri Berriau, head of the cabinet politique at the Service des Renseignements (Burke III, 1972; Zniber, 1987). Of these five men, only the collège directors, Brunot and Neigel, seem to have been truly committed to Lyautey’s philosophy. Lyautey insisted that the collèges were to remain small and devoted exclusively to the education of ‘the part of the elite destined to remain and evolve within the Muslim norm, and to recruit especially for offices and employment of a Muslim character: the makhzen, the ulema, functionaries of the administrative and judicial type, and, finally, individuals who, without seeking paid employment, desire a higher education without losing any of their Muslim character’. Lyautey stated that he did not want to close off all Moroccan access to careers of a European sort (‘quite to the contrary, since the whole conception of the Protectorate rests upon the close association of the two races’), but he feared the creation of ‘malcontents’, and insisted that if some
Moroccan Muslims had to be given a more European-style education, this was to occur in institutions other than the collèges (Lyautey, 1917). Lyautey, however, was preoccupied with the ongoing military pacification of the Moroccan hinterlands, and had limited time to devote to educational administration (Brunot, 1918). Over the course of the next two years, the commission on the collèges gradually gave in to Moroccan demands.

On 17 September 1917, the commission met to discuss the need to accommodate the collège programs to student desires. At this meeting, Loth argued that only a few students wanted a wholly French education in order to go into French careers such as law and medicine. But he also acknowledged that an equally small number of students fit Lyautey’s vision for the collèges, aspiring to careers in the makhzen or the religious elite and desiring a rigorous Arabic and Islamic education, with merely ‘sufficient’ French. The ‘great majority’ of students, according to Loth, desired ‘a sufficient Muslim education but, at the same time, to acquire a French education developed enough to permit them access to lucrative employment in the [French] Administration, and in industry’(1917). The committee decided that, while the first group of students could best pursue their goals in the French lyçées, the other two groups could be accommodated by the creation of separate secondary sections within the collèges, one French-oriented and one Arabic-oriented. This was a major step away from Lyautey’s principle that Arabic was to be the primary language for all students in the collèges. The commission asked Neigel and Brunot to discuss the matter with the parents, who agreed. Some of the Rabat families suggested that a commercial section be added as well. In 1918 a proposal was presented to the Sultan for a six-year program, divided into two cycles of four and two years. For the last two years, students would have a choice of three sections: French
language, Muslim law, or commerce (Commission des collèges musulmans, 1917; Programmes des Collèges Musulmans, 1918).

The new French and commercial sections were accepted by the makhzen; but the Muslim law section encountered opposition. In 1918, Grand Vizier al-Mokri demanded that Islamic education be given exclusively in mosques, by ulema. Arabic-language instruction in the collèges was to be limited to belles-lettres and grammar. This would shield the training of Islamic judges and scholars from the French, thwarting French hopes of using the collèges to infiltrate the traditional institutions of Morocco. Al-Mokri also asked that the French-medium instruction in the collèges conform to metropolitan programs and that the collège diploma be made equivalent to the French baccalaureate, in order to allow access into French higher education and the liberal professions (Mokri, 1918).

The commission immediately made concessions to the makhzen position. Although the new collège programs did declare that students were to be instructed ‘according to the same principle of maintaining students in their social habits’, law and theology were now excluded from the Arabic-language curriculum, and the idea of separate Arabic and French sections was dropped. A ‘general’ secondary section would prepare students to work in the French administration or in liberal professions. The mission of the collèges was reoriented, ‘to create an educated middle class exercising, all differences of milieu maintained, professions of commerce, agriculture, industry, as well as most liberal professions’(1919). In the general section, a third of the instruction would be in Arabic, with the remainder spent in French language and literature and in other subjects taught in French, including history, geography, and mathematics. The planned commercial section
would offer only three hours of Arabic per week for the last two years. Most radically, the commission agreed that the collège diploma would be developed into an equivalent to the French baccalaureate, possibly with the aid of the Faculty of Bordeaux (Commission des collèges musulmans, 1918). This was a stunning surrender of Lyautey’s vision, much to the frustration of Louis Brunot, the director of the Fes collège. He had embraced Lyautey’s original vision of the collèges as preparatory schools for future magistrates, and had hoped that the Fes collège, as a feeder school for the Qarawiyyin, would provide the French with a means to influence and control the mosque-university. Brunot lamented the lack of cooperation between the collèges and the Qarawiyyin, brought on by the decision to eliminate the teaching of Muslim law from the collèges in response to makhzen pressure. He predicted that the new French orientation of the collèges would create a division within the Moroccan elite, so that ‘a blunder, a political crisis, could create conflicts, then struggle, between the old turbans and the young Moroccans…’ (Brunot, 1920). Thus far, however, the old turbans and the young collège students were united in their desire to see the French schools focus on the French language.

The Lyautist Counter

Resident-General Lyautey was displeased with this development, however, and in mid-1919 he abruptly dismissed his educational director, Gaston Loth, and replaced him with Georges Hardy. In April 1919 Hardy had been dismissed from his post in his West Africa after losing a political battle with Senegal’s pro-assimilation African elite. Hardy’s tremendous energy, Catholic background, and interest in ethnology and the maintenance of the ethnic difference made him a kindred spirit to Lyautey. Hardy’s anti-universalist beliefs would eventually lead him to become one of North Africa’s leading
spokesmen for Marshal Pétain’s Vichy regime in 1940, but first it brought him to
Lyautey’s Rabat at the end of 1919, where he became the new director of education. In
Morocco, Hardy’s mandate would be to roll back the concessions which had been made
in the collèges, and to provide the strong leadership necessary to make Lyautey’s vision
of Muslim education a reality throughout Morocco.

Lyautey had sent a clear message by firing Loth, and Hardy had little difficulty in
persuading the commission on the collèges to reverse the 1918 decision to allow collège
graduates access to French universities and administrative positions (Commission des
collèges musulmans, 1920). Hardy did not revive the idea of predominantly Arabic-
medium curricula in the collèges, however. The French-based programs were a fait
accompli, and staff and materials for Arabic-based programs were lacking. The methods
of traditional Moroccan teachers, or fqih, were considered too primitive and rote, and
neither the fqih nor the French or Algerian arabisants were accustomed to teaching math,
science, and history in Arabic. Although Neigel suggested bringing in Arabic teachers
from Egypt or Tunis, Hardy feared that such teachers would infect Morocco with foreign
political notions (Neigel, 1915; Hardy, 1920a; Hardy, 1920b). Hardy maintained his
belief, developed in polyglot West Africa, that French could be taught as a practical
‘instrument’ without alienating students from their native culture. In both the elite and
the non-elite school systems, French instruction was to take up a large portion of the
school day, for this was to be the basis of economic modernisation and collaboration with
the French. In the Schools for Sons of Notables, the new programs included three to five
hours of French for every hour of Arabic (Hardy, 1920c, pp. 398-399, 406-311). Hardy
worked to create schools that would communicate his anti-assimilationist philosophy
through a curriculum that was primarily in French. He placed great emphasis on the need to restrict the content of instruction.

French was not to become a vehicle for critical thought or political integration. Elite Muslim boys were to learn to speak and write French correctly and well, but Hardy’s 1920 programs mandated that, at the Schools for the Sons of Notables, ‘the study of the French language aims solely at the acquisition of an instrument, a means of accessing other knowledge for entering into relations with the French and doing commerce with them’ (Hardy, 1920c, p. 397). Hardy declared that for Muslims, pre-1789 French history was ‘useless’ and post-1789 history was ‘totally incomprehensible’ (Hardy, 1920c, p. 404). The French curriculum of the Schools for the Sons of Notables generally resembled that used in West Africa’s regional schools, beginning with local, mundane topics: school, the body, clothing, and housing (Ponty and Hardy, 1914; Conklin, 1997, p. 134; Hardy, 1920c).

There was more ambiguity surrounding the implementation of this restrictive and anti-rationalist pedagogy in the collèges. Hardy instructed the collège directors to restrict the French curricula to only ‘usuel’ French, to eliminate dissertations littéraires, and to reduce instruction in natural science, history and geography. Geography and history were now to focus on French North Africa, stressing the benefits of colonialism (Commission Interministérielle des Affaires Musulmanes, 1921). Hardy warned against giving students too much knowledge, or too much of a taste for analysis:

French literature, mathematics, physical and natural sciences; all these, which already so unbalance European heads, should be measured out parsimoniously to Muslim heads, and above all should be distanced from all rationalism: it is not the
school that teaches reason... it is life—and I would like our French instruction in
the collèges musulmans to be limited to wholly practical elementary knowledge, in
constant relations with the concrete. (Hardy, 1921c, p. 8)

Yet the collèges were still considered institutions of secondary education, where a
select group of elite adolescents were to be trained to take on prominent roles within
Moroccan Muslim society. Lyautey wanted the collèges to create true elite collaborators,
not subaltern clerks. Hardy’s writings on the collèges oscillated among a variety of
formulas, ranging from the more restrictive ‘humanités musulmanes et instruction
française pratique’(Hardy, 1920d) or ‘une culture islamique et une instruction française,’
to the more expansive idea of providing ‘une double enseignement—traditionnel et
moderne’(Hardy, 1921c) or ‘une double culture musulmane et français’(Hardy, 1921a).
This inconsistency was not trivial: a double culture implied that Arabic and Islamic
instruction would accompany a rigorous French-style secondary education, while ‘French
practical instruction’ suggested the more restrictive model of West Africa’s primary
schools or the metropolitan écoles primaires supérieures for working-class youth.

The nature of French-medium instruction in the collèges depended greatly upon the
individual collège directors and teachers. However, there was considerable institutional
and political pressure on school personnel to conform to the anti-assimilationist Lyautist
philosophy. In 1922 the director of the Fes collège (Brunot’s successor) was fired for his
alleged lack of respect for Muslim institutions and elites (Lyautey et al., 1919), and the
post was given to Paul Marty, formerly head of Muslim Affairs in French West Africa
and an influential ethnographer of West African Muslims. Although Marty had
previously advocated baccalaureate equivalency at the collèges, he now recanted, citing
the need to keep students rooted in their own culture and to discourage students from seeking entrance to French higher education, which would lead to ‘the creation of a class of lawyers without causes, of jurists and men of law, unutilised and unusable, of unemployed journalists, recruits for the army of jealousy and disorder’ (Marty, 1923, p. 30).

Although Marty declared that assimilation was to be rigorously avoided, he nevertheless allowed the French teachers at the Fes collège to continue to teach French literature and philosophy. Marty stressed that this French instruction was to be accompanied by an emphasis on Arabic literature, and by a renaissance of Islamic culture in Fes, an ‘intellectual renovation’ centered around Arabic-language academic conferences held at the collèges (Marty, 1923, pp. 13-16). Nevertheless, French instruction in the collèges brought criticism from the anti-assimilationist writer Louis Vignon, who denounced the collèges publicly, and privately urged Lyautey to fire the literature instructor, Charles Sallefranque. Sallefranque defended himself by pointing out that his students were often as old as twenty, could speak French, and had access to French bookstores and periodicals. His job, therefore, was not to avoid Enlightenment writers, especially the most ‘dangerous’ ones like Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, but rather to guide students in reading them. Sallefranque added that none other than Philippe Pétain had observed him teaching Beaumarchais, and had approved (Sallefranque and Vignon, 1923-1924). Marty also defended the literature curriculum, expressing confidence in the ability of the teacher to exert moral and intellectual influence over the students, leading them to reject radicalism: ‘The task of the professor has been to restrain a bit their [the students’] enthusiasm dissolvants, and, without veiling
what remains of the great critical effort of the 18th century, to insist on its fairly narrow limits’ (Marty, 1923, p. 4). Faced with mature and intellectually curious students, these educators argued that the danger of French ideas could not be avoided by restricting the reading list; French ideas had to be confronted head on by the instructor, so that their impact could be minimised and controlled. This stretched the limits of Hardy’s instructions to measure out French literature parsimoniously, but was framed within the anti-assimilationist goals of the collèges. Although the French-based pedagogy in the collèges engaged the ideas of the European enlightenment, instructors were pressured to foster scepticism toward these ideas. The ambiguous character of education at the ‘Muslim’ collèges reflected France’s culture wars as well as the contested nature of the colonial relationship.

**The Responses of Students and Anciens Élèves**

Meanwhile, elite Moroccans continued to resist French agendas, although the nature of this resistance began to change. During the First World War, the fragility of French rule and French education in Morocco had required the colonial leadership to respond to political pressures from the makhzen government. As the French position became more secure, however, the treaty relationship between the French and Moroccan states became more and more of a façade, as Lyautey had feared. Consequently, the influence of the makhzen on French education diminished in the 1920s. However, Muslim students and former students continued to engage the colonial state in the ‘constant negotiation of power relationships and identities’ (Thompson, 2000, p. 1) within the field of colonial schooling.
While some elite Muslims voted with their feet and avoided the French schools for Muslims, others began to organise in order to lobby the French for more reforms. In 1920, a group of forty Muslim notables and former collège students in Fes became alarmed at the anti-assimilationist trend in French colonial discourse when a French speaker at the annual meeting of the Casablanca Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture suggested that Muslim students should be restricted to purely primary education. The Moroccan group addressed their concerns to the French leadership and to Grand Vizier al-Mokri and demanded that the French follow ‘principles of equity’ and provide programs for Muslims that matched the programs in schools for Europeans, granting access to French schools of medicine, law, and engineering. These demands sought the integration of educated Moroccans into the educated French elite and into the French administration. The group’s agenda was not culturally assimilationist, however. Unlike the collège students of 1915-1917, this group also demanded that Arabic instruction be given treatment equal to French. This group formed the ‘Association Indigène relative à l’enseignement des langues arabes et française’, which was renamed the Association des Anciens Élèves du Collège Moulay Idriss in Fes (an organisation, which, despite its name, initially included members who had not attended the collège). This organisation was soon imitated in Rabat. Soon, former students from the Schools for the Sons of Notables also sought to form associations (Petition to al-Mokri, 1920; Statuts de l’Association, 1920; Conseiller p.i. du Gouvernement Chérifien, 1920).

The French educational leadership did not object to these organisations; they represented an important point of contact and collaboration with the Muslim elite, and a potential ally in efforts to spread French influence and recruit students. To Georges
Hardy, the *Anciens Élèves* organisations presented a means to extend French influence beyond scholastic life: ‘well-counseled and discreetly directed, the Association of former students and of friends of the *collège musulman* can be an interesting organ of liaison between the government and the indigenous population’ (Conseiller p.i. du Gouvernement Chérifien, 1920).

Under French supervision, the *Anciens Élèves* organisations worked quietly for reform of the educational system. Some French teachers and metropolitan academics were sympathetic, recognizing that Moroccan students were as intellectually capable as French ones. Even among top Protectorate administrators, there was considerable debate over whether the *collège* diploma ought to be made equivalent to the baccalaureate after all, in order to improve recruitment as well as to appease the *Anciens Élèves*. However, three main objections to *bac* equivalency were articulated by Hardy and his colleagues. First, it was argued that the *collège* diploma could not be made equivalent, because the *collège* education was simply not of comparable quality to that of the *lycée*. Second, the French leadership noted the varied nature of Moroccan demands: it would be difficult to reconcile *bac* equivalency, which would presumably mean increasing the orientation of the *collège* programs toward French, with the new demand for improved and expanded Arabic and religious instruction in the *collèges*. Finally, the leadership feared that political dissidence would result from Muslims pursuing careers in law (Hardy, 1921a; Marty, 1922; Montaigne, 1922; Cellier, 1922; Hardy, 1924a; Paye, 1957).

In 1926, the Fes organisation became more vocal, and presented another set of demands. They again asked that the diploma be made equivalent to the baccalaureate, or at least to the *brevet supérieur*, to allow students to transfer into the French system more
easily and gain access to higher education in metropolitan France. Seeking better employment opportunities, they also demanded access to better positions and better salaries within the Protectorate administration, and criticised the administration’s hiring of Algerians, Tunisians and Syrians rather than the local collège graduates (Gaudefroy-Demombynes, 1928). Despite a few sympathisers among French educators, these requests were again refused in 1926.

The matter was far from settled, however. The discontent produced by the refusal of the baccalaureate was exacerbated in 1927, when a baccalaureate program was instituted at the Collège Sadiki in Tunis. This had a significant impact on the attitude of Moroccan Anciens Élèves, in part because, that same year, the handful of Moroccan Muslims who had squeezed through the cracks in scholastic segregation and were studying in France participated in the creation of the Association des Étudiants Musulmans Nord-Africains en France (AEMNAF). This group included future nationalist leaders Ahmed Balafrej, Mohammed al-Fassi, Mohamed al-Kholti, and Hassan al-Ouezzani. The Moroccan members of the AEMNAF remained in contact with the Anciens Élèves groups. This formed a link between Morocco’s student movement and Tunisian and Algerian reformers and nationalists in the AEMNAF. For the next three years, the Anciens Élèves lobbied the Protectorate leadership with letters and petitions; meanwhile, the AEMNAF launched a campaign in the French press (Ageron, 1983; Halstead, 1969; Paye, 1957; Merrouni, 1981).

The Nationalist Turn and the Berber Question

The campaign of the Anciens Élèves in the 1920s for more educational parity and more access to the French professions eventually bore fruit. Beginning in 1930, the
French would finally address these concerns by giving Moroccan Muslims access to the baccalaureate, and after 1945 the Fourth Republic would fully break from the anti-assimilationist policies of the Lyautey period, opening the lycées to the Moroccan elite. In the end, however, the strategy pursued by the Anciens Élèves was judged a failure by many members of the young Moroccan elite, and the new French strategy failed to assuage Moroccan discontent. The grudging reforms of the 1930s were too modest, and the post-war reforms came too late. By the time the bac was finally allowed at the collèges in 1930, a transformation was already underway in the discourse of Muslim responses to French education, as the emerging nationalist movement brought a new emphasis on the defense of Moroccan cultural identity.

It has been recognised that the nationalist writings of the early 1930s, culminating in the 1934 manifesto, the Plan de Réformes, bore the stamp of Muslim dissidents who had been educated in French-run schools. Discussions of the origins of Moroccan nationalism often focus on the influence of Salafiyya, pan-Arab nationalism and the political traditions of the makhzen, in addition to European ideas of republican liberalism and socialism. However, such an analysis of influences should also take into account the culture of colonialism in Morocco, and particularly the culture of the colonial educational system (Anderson, 1991, p. 163). Although most colonial education systems produced nationalist dissidents, French colonial education in Morocco was distinctive in that it did not produce a competing group influenced by republican universalist ideals. In Morocco, French education offered upper-class Muslim dissidents few ideological alternatives to nationalism. There was no political element among French-educated Moroccan Muslims
who advocated French citizenship for Muslims, as Blaise Diagne had done in Senegal, or who opposed separatist nationalism, as Ferhat Abbas had initially done in Algeria.

Moroccan nationalism had much in common with the anti-universalist colonial philosophy of the French school system. The nationalists challenged Georges Hardy’s notion that language could be separated from culture, i.e. that a curriculum dominated by French could produce students still rooted in Moroccan traditions. But the nationalists agreed that education ought not to turn ‘natives into Frenchmen’. The French had never attempted to convince them otherwise; on the contrary, French educational discourse was full of exhortations to Moroccan Muslims to maintain their traditional identity. Yet the nationalists accused the French of offering an education that was assimilatory. This was true in a linguistic sense, due to the French concessions of 1917-1919, but not in terms of organisational structure or the social and political integration of graduates. Moreover, the meta-curriculum was anti-assimilatory. The nationalist attack on assimilationism was fully in keeping with the original philosophy of the French Protectorate in Morocco, a fact that the nationalists recognised and made use of by quoting Lyautey as a moral authority in the *Plan de Réformes* (CAM, 1934, p. 12).

Colonial educational discourse preached the evils of assimilation, and encouraged Muslim students in French-run schools to maintain a specifically Muslim and Moroccan identity. Even the few Muslims who attended the French schools for Europeans were encouraged to socialise with their Muslim peers and to join in the extracurricular life of the schools for Muslims rather than integrate into French student life (Brunot, 1934). Colonial education in Morocco had made collège students literate in classical Arabic and had infused them with notions of a Moroccan Muslim identity. This facilitated the
alliance of French-educated Muslims with Muslims from traditionalist and Salafi backgrounds.

The nationalist platform accorded with the longstanding French desire to use the schools to maintain the cultural separation between Moroccan Muslims and the French. Although the French baccalaureate had been made available in the collèges in 1930, the nationalists called for a distinct Moroccan baccalaureate that would allow access not only to French higher education but also to Arabic-language universities in the Middle East. A segregated Muslim system was to be maintained at both the primary and secondary levels, in order to prevent the deracination of the Muslim population. Schools for Muslims were to remain separate from those for Moroccan Jews and for Europeans. The nationalists stated that, for Muslims, ‘the programs of the modern primary schools should include the teaching of the Koran, Islam, the Arabic language, and the history and geography of Morocco; these should have the same importance in the examinations as the other subjects in the program’ (CAM, 1934, p. 84). This had been Lyautey’s intention when the collèges had been founded in 1915, although the policy had been abandoned in the face of student demands for more French. Hardy had been brought in to increase the school system’s commitment to the maintenance of traditional culture, and had mandated the teaching of Moroccan history and geography.

When it came to education, Morocco’s nationalists were, like Lyautey, Hardy and Brunot, staunch opponents of cultural assimilationism. In order to restore Arabic and Islam to their rightful place in the curriculum, the Plan de Réformes challenged French authority over Muslim schooling, calling for the legalisation of the Salafi-inspired ‘free schools’ and the creation of a vizirat of Public Instruction under makhzen control, which
would oversee the education of Muslims. In order to promote the further separation of cultures, the Plan called for more schooling for girls, but stated that such schooling ‘should be based on Arabic and Islamic culture’ and that it should be provided with assistance from Middle Eastern institutrices (CAM, 1934, pp. 88-89). Unlike boys, girls did not merit a statement about the equal weighting of French and Arabic instruction; maintaining a purely Arabic and Muslim culture was apparently more important, reflecting the belief that girls, as future mothers, were the key to cultural preservation and therefore merited stricter controls (a belief common to both Western and Islamic societies).

Morocco’s early nationalists agreed with the Protectorate administration that Moroccan Muslims ought to maintain their distinct culture and identity. A major source of contention, however, was the question of what that culture and identity consisted of, and whom it included and excluded. The dominant issue in the 1934 nationalist manifesto, the Plan de Réformes, and in the nationalist discourse and politics of the 1930s in general, was the ‘Berber Question’. This issue underlay all of the Plan’s legal, political, administrative and educational proposals. It was a question to which the young Moroccan political activists, whether French-educated or not, had a virtually unanimous reply. The nationalists asserted the existence of a single Moroccan national identity, in contradiction of the French policy promoting the legal, cultural and political separation of Berbers from Arabs.

Implementation of the French Berber policy had begun with an edict, or dahir, on 11 September 1914, stating that ‘the tribes said to be of Berber custom are and will remain regulated and administered according to their laws and their own customs under
the control of the authorities’ (qtd in Ageron, 1971, p. 62). Although some French commentators hoped to assimilate Berbers to French culture, the official Berber policy was phrased in terms of Gallieni’s *politique des races* and Lyautey’s principle of respecting local traditions and institutions. The policy aimed to prevent the ‘arabisation’ of Berber culture. Issued while the conquest of the Moroccan interior was still ongoing, the 1914 *dahir* provoked little comment among Arabic-speaking Moroccans.

Then the Berber policy was carried a step farther, in the infamous ‘Berber Dahir’ of 16 May, 1930, provoking a wave of protest in French Morocco’s arabophone cities. The new edict solidified the status of ‘Berber customary law’ by creating ‘customary tribunals’ whose juridical authority replaced that previously given to the local Berber assemblies (*jemaa*). Appeals tribunals were also established. More radically, the new *dahir* mandated that all serious criminal cases would fall under the jurisdiction, not of the Berber tribunals, but of French courts. The earlier Berber policy had claimed to preserve the status quo, threatened by the growing power of the centralised state, by allowing Berbers to live according to their own customs, while the makhzen and the Sultan had retained nominal sovereignty over the areas classified as Berber. The 1930 *dahir* officially severed these areas from the makhzen and the sharia, or Islamic law, and placed them under French authority (Halstead, 1969; Ageron, 1971). Protest against the Berber Dahir became the defining issue in Moroccan nationalism. Like the Dinshaway incident in Egypt, the Berber Dahir allowed educated dissidents to rally the masses and begin to create a popular nationalist movement.

The Moroccan Protectorate’s Berber Policy had its origins in French racialist discourse about Algeria, a discourse that emphasised a dichotomous antagonism between
Arabs and Berbers. In Algeria, the French had developed an idealised view of the Algerian Berbers, and particularly the Kabyles. The ‘Kabyle Myth’ held that the Kabyles had European ancestry (Roman, Gaul, or Vandal) and were ‘only superficially Islamicised and the hereditary enemies of the Arabs’. As a result, they were considered more easily assimilated to European laws and even to Christianity (Ageron, 1990, pp. 72-73). As Patricia Lorcin has argued, this favourable view of Algeria’s Berbers had its roots in the experiences of the French Army during the conquest of Algeria in the 1830s, and developed as a counterpoint to negative French views of Islam and of Algeria’s nomadic arabophone groups. This discourse of bad Arabs and good Berbers soon spread to medical and ethnographic circles, although the ‘Kabyle Myth’ of the ‘good Berber’ never became a basis for policy in Algeria (Lorcin, 1995, pp. 27-34, 165).

In the early 20th century, these ideas about Algeria’s Kabyles were transcribed onto Morocco’s Berber populations. Edmund Burke III has argued that French ethnographers and military officers initially recognised the complex and heterogeneous character of the various groups who spoke Berber dialects (1972). However, as Timothy Mitchell has noted in his discussion of British Egypt, the complexities of scholarly discourse were often ill-suited to the needs of day-to-day colonial administration; ‘what was needed was a way of moving quickly from these empirical particulars to the abstraction of an Oriental mentality’ (1988, p. 140). A basis for French policy had to be found sooner rather than later, and a stereotyped image of the Moroccan Berber soon emerged. In contrast to Algeria’s settled Kabyles, most Middle Atlas tamazight were semi-nomadic transhumants, but French descriptions of the Middle Atlas Berbers nevertheless soon came to resemble the (imagined) Kabyle: a kind of noble savage, only superficially
Islamic, hostile to the Arab *makhzen* and preferring their own customary law to the *sharia*. In Morocco, the Arab-Berber dichotomy was mapped onto the dichotomy between the *bled al-makhzen* or ‘Land of Government’ controlled by the Sultan and the *bled al-siba* (literally, ‘Land of Anarchy’) controlled by tribes not in submission to the Sultan’s *makhzen*. Increasingly, the *siba* became associated with Berbers, although the categories were not in fact coterminous. The dichotomy was often expressed in racial terms: in contrast to Arabs, the Berbers were whites, virtually uncorrupted by outside influences (Burke III, 1972, pp. 175-199; Ageron, 1971, pp. 50-55). Racial differences correlated with moral distinctions: the Berbers were honest and brave, ‘*de moeurs très democratiques*’, without the Arabs’ devotion to Islamic doctrine (Secrétariat Gl. du Gt. chérifien, 1913). Morocco’s Berbers were one of the ‘Latin races;’ they had been Christian and Roman before they had become Muslim; they were the people of Augustine and Tertullian (Conseil de Politique Indigène, 1922). Thus the Kabyle Myth was transposed to Morocco. However, as Lorcin has argued, ‘French attitudes toward Berbers in Morocco were more than an echo of the Kabyle myth’, because in Morocco the Arab-Berber distinction became a guiding principle of official policy (1995, p. 231).

The Berber policy was based on the idea that there was a fundamental difference between the traditions of the Berber areas and those of the arabophone cities, that Berber culture was more compatible with French culture, and that therefore the arabisation of the Berbers had to be prevented. Although the nationalists explicitly invoked Lyautey and his assertion that Moroccan culture ought to be preserved, they denied that this culture was legitimately pluralistic, and asserted a unitary Moroccan identity that had to be defended against French assimilationism.
The nationalist vision of Moroccan identity was in direct opposition to the Berber policy and the ethnology that supported it. However, it was not entirely in opposition to the ethnology of the colonial school system that had educated so many of the nationalist leaders. Like the nationalist ideology, the pedagogical ethnography of the French educational administration had, since 1920, asserted the existence of a unitary, common Moroccan identity that encompassed both ‘Berbers’ and ‘Arabs’. This was at odds with the dichotomous ethnography that supported the Berber Policy, an ethnography that was subscribed to not only by the Residency and the military authorities, but also by many of the experts in the *Institut des Hautes Études Marocaines* (IHEM). This ethnographic inconsistency was the result of the agency of director of Public Instruction Georges Hardy and head of Muslim Instruction Louis Brunot. In the early 1920s, Hardy and Brunot had produced a pedagogical ethnology, rooted in an intuitive approach to psychology, that was distributed throughout the educational system by means of the *Bulletin d’Enseignement* and related publications, and through Hardy and Brunot’s involvement in the training and supervision of teachers.

When Georges Hardy first arrived in Morocco in 1919, the Berber-Arab distinction had not yet resulted in educational differentiation, although the creation of distinct *écoles franco-berbères* had been planned since the beginning of the Protectorate. Prior to Hardy’s arrival, a 1912 report had proposed that

Two groups of indigenous schools will therefore co-exist in the country: one where French-language instruction will be given in parallel with an education in the Arabic language, another where they will study a Berber dialect. The first will be
situated in the cities; the others will be instituted for the Berbers devoted to agriculture or animal husbandry (Situation de l'enseignement, 1912).

This planned distinction between Arab and Berber schools was intended to maintain the cultural and political divisions between the bled el-makhzen, here portrayed as arabophone and urban, and the siba, seen as rural and Berber. Proscribing Arabic-language instruction from the schools for Berbers would, it was hoped, reduce the danger of the arabisation of the siba. However, the unrest in the Middle Atlas and the First World War had prevented the development of a distinct educational structure for Berbers. A few schools had been set up in Berber-speaking Middle Atlas towns such as al-Hajeb, Azrou, and Agourai, but these were still little more than ad hoc écoles de fortune run by the military, and were still in the improvisational stage (at al-Hajeb, class was conducted in the caïd’s house) (Loth, 1917; Bidwell, 1973). Because the few schools in berberophone regions were under the control of the army and Indigenous Affairs, the educational service had focused on schools in Arabic-speaking areas, and had stressed social rather than ethnic distinctions among Muslims: ‘notable’ and commoner, urban and rural.

Arriving in December 1919, Hardy also emphasised social distinctions, downplaying the Berber-Arab dichotomy. Although he accepted the idea of creating écoles franco-berbères, he consistently avoided portraying Berber-Arab differences as a matter of ethnicity, culture or even language, instead using the terms ‘écoles berbères’ and ‘écoles rurales’ interchangeably. Hardy’s 1920 programs established that urban students were to become literate in both Arabic and French. In rural schools, however, there was to be no Arabic literacy instruction, regardless of the local language, because
Hardy considered classical Arabic to be alien, not only to Berbers, but also to illiterate rural Moroccans who spoke dialectical Arabic. This made the Berber-Arab distinction less important. The only specific policy on Berbers in the 1920 curriculum was the tentative statement that ‘Koranic instruction may be given in regions completely Islamicised and arabised. In purely Berber regions, it is not useful, at least for the moment, to create a msid where none exists in the region’ (Hardy, 1920c, p. 413). This statement did embody the notion that rural Morocco could be divided into ‘purely Berber’ regions and ‘arabised’ regions, and it reflected the Residency’s policy of trying to maintain those differences. But within the context of a vocational curriculum rooted in agronomy and rudimentary French, the ethnic distinction made little practical difference.

Throughout the early 1920s, Hardy resisted the idea that there were Arabs in Morocco with an ethnic character distinct from that of Berbers. He avoided using the term ‘Arab’, preferring to refer to ‘berbères arabisées’ and ‘berbères démeurés berbères’ (Hardy, 1921c, p. 13; Hardy, 1924b). In the Revue de Paris, Hardy described Moroccans as ‘arabo-berbères’, each possessed of a ‘double origin’ and a ‘double character’. Hardy argued that Islam acted as a powerful unifying factor in Moroccan society: ‘they are all Muslims, to different degrees it is true, but only the title of Muslim matters, because religious pride compensates for what might be lacking in faith’ (Hardy, 1921b, p. 774).

Hardy reiterated this view in 1921 when he published Les Grandes Étapes de l’Histoire du Maroc, co-written with Paul Aures. This history, written for pedagogical use, placed great emphasis on Morocco’s natural unity. Hardy and Aurès wrote that the Moroccan people had been geographically defined by the natural boundaries of the
Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Sahara; isolation behind these boundaries had led to the development of a Moroccan race, the Berbers. According to Hardy and Aurès’ account of Moroccan history, the Berbers were –initially-- too fiercely independent to organise themselves into a state, but they were natural soldiers, ‘a very resistant, courageous, hard-working and ambitious race’ that had never truly submitted to foreign invaders (Hardy and Aurès, 1921, p. 11). One such group of invaders was the Arabs, whose corrupting influence had failed to dilute the Berbers’ good qualities. This reflected the Moroccan version of the Berber Myth. However, in *Grandes Étapes* the Arab-Berber distinction did not clearly correspond to the makhzen-siba distinction, and the term ‘Arab’ disappeared after the rise of the Almoravides, replaced by the term ‘Moroccan’. Rather than define the Berbers as dissident rural tribesmen, resistant to a decadent theocratic Arab tyranny, *Grandes Étapes* legitimatized the makhzen as a semi-Berber institution. It also related Moroccan unity to Islam and to the religious status of the Sultan, and declared the Sultan’s sovereignty over all Muslim Moroccans: ‘It is thus, as in the past, the Sultan alone who, for the indigenes, is the sovereign judge, and the rules that apply are those of traditional law originating in the Koran’ (Hardy and Aurès, 1921, pp. 101-103). The nationalists would make the very same claim in their protest against the Berber Dahir and in the 1934 *Plan de Réformes*. Hardy and Aurès, in their history written for schoolteachers, made no suggestion that teachers ought to promote a Moroccan identity or a concept of makhzen authority that did not include the Berbers.

Hardy’s emphasis on the unique and unitary character of the Moroccan people reflected a desire to suppress pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism among arabophones. Not only did he prohibit Arabic instruction in arabophone rural areas, he also sought to
separate urban Moroccan arabophones from Arab culture outside of Morocco by ending
the recruitment of teachers from Algeria and Tunisia and—initially, at least—by
attempting to purge student readings of Arabic literature from the Middle East (Hardy,
1920b; Affaires Indigènes, 192?). Similarly, Grandes Étapes, by emphasising the
distinct, unitary, and Berber character of Morocco, attempted to discourage young
Moroccan Muslims from identifying with Arabs abroad.

However, Hardy’s belief in a unitary Moroccan identity was also rooted in an
attempt to fuse colonial ethnography with psychology to create a ‘psychogeography’ that
would facilitate colonial rule by going beyond empirical description and the study of
beliefs to identify the differences in human souls or minds: l’âme des hommes (Hardy,
1925, p. 52). Within the educational system, this psychological ethnography led to the
construction of a simple credo about ‘The Moroccan Child’. The Berber-Arab dichotomy
became internalised within this ethno-psychological portrait of the Moroccan. Berber
individualism and Arab collectivism; industrious Berber pragmatism and Arab indolence,
Berber honesty and Arab deceitfulness: these became oppositions within ‘the Moroccan
Soul’ and ‘the Moroccan Child’ (Hardy, 1926, pp. 14, 41; Hardy and Brunot, 1925, pp. 7-
16). In contradiction of the dominant French ethnography of Arabs and Berbers, Hardy
asserted that Moroccans shared a common ‘arabo-berber’ mentality that was more Berber
than Arab, and stressed the importance of a common religion. The comparison to Algeria
was invalid, according to Hardy, because in Morocco everyone was much more Berber.

Hardy’s challenge to accepted doctrine soon prompted a response. Six months
after the publication of Grandes Étapes as an edition of the Bulletin de l’Enseignement
Public in March 1921, the Bulletin published another special edition: an article by
Maurice Le Glay entitled ‘L’École Française et la Question Berbère’. Le Glay gently rebutted Hardy’s portrayal of Moroccan unity and argued for the necessity of making policy distinctions between Arabs and Berbers in order to distance the Middle Atlas Berbers from makhzen authority. Le Glay conceded that all Moroccans were ‘vaguely Muslim’ and of predominately Berber racial origin. But he argued that these facts were largely irrelevant to policy. Geographical differences had created social and cultural differences. The fact was, argued Le Glay, that Morocco’s towns and plains contained groups that were ‘arabised in language and religion’, possessed a highly developed Islamic civilisation, and were loyal to the Sultan, while the Middle Atlas tribes remained Berber in language, custom, and law. Le Glay reiterated the Berber Policy, warning against repeating the error of allowing the Kabyles to be arabised. Le Glay also called for the creation of schools to promote the evolution of Middle Atlas Berbers separately from the Arabs. The most important aspect of these schools would be the exclusive use of the French language (Le Glay, 1921).

In 1923, Le Glay’s ideas were incarnated in five Berber schools in the Middle Atlas. The following year, a teacher-training section was created at the IHEM to train French teachers for these schools. By the end of the decade, there were between eighteen and twenty schools for Berbers. In addition, a regional post-primary school, later known as the Collège Berbère, was opened in Azrou in 1927 (Feugeas, 1948; Gaudefroy-Demombynes, 1928; Ageron, 1971; Direction Générale de l'Instruction Publique, 1930). As the Berber school system expanded, the Azrou school became necessary for the training of Berber teachers. Berbers could not be sent to Fes or Rabat, nor could
graduates of the Fes and Rabat collèges be used to teach in the Berber primary schools, lest the Berber students become arabised.\(^{10}\)

Hardy supported the creation of such schools, for he conceded the political expediency of a policy of ‘divide and conquer’: ‘we must treat them separately and maintain the divide that separates them from the city dwellers, in order to allow us, when the opportunity arises, to find, here or there, the counterweight necessary to maintain order and authority’ (qtd in Rivet, 1988, pp. 277-278). This pragmatic attitude echoed his 1920 statement that ‘in purely Berber regions, it \emph{is not useful, at least for the moment}, to create a \textit{msid} where none exists in the region’ [emphasis added] (Hardy, 1920c, p. 413). Lorcin has argued that a ‘divide and conquer’ approach to colonial rule was not the origin of French policy toward Berbers, but was derivative of the ethnological discourses regarding Arabs and Berbers (1995). Hardy, it seems, had accepted the derivative strategy, without accepting the underlying ethnological beliefs. Consequently, the creation of the Berber schools did not bring about a fundamental change in French educational psychology and pedagogy, or in teaching practice in the arabophone areas. Since Hardy had advised against the teaching of Arabic in all rural schools, and instruction was officially in French, no major change in curriculum or principle was required for the new schools, except that the occasional oral use of Arabic was to be avoided in the Berber areas (Paye, 1957; Hardy, 1923).

Both Hardy and Brunot rejected the notion that pedagogical ethnography should distinguish among Muslim Moroccan social and ethnic groups. In ‘\textit{Les Caractères Essentiels de la Mentalité Marocaine}’, Brunot wrote, ‘we know different types of Moroccans: the Chleuh, the Arab, the rural, the urbanite, the black, the islamified Jew,
the merchant, the artisan, the fqih, the marabout, etc. must one describe the mentality of each? This would expose one to fastidious repetitions which would only serve to expose the nuances, omitting the fundamental characteristics’ (1923, p. 37). Hardy and Brunot asserted their ability to induce (or intuit) a psychological commonality that they assumed to be more fundamental than the obvious surface diversity. This approach allowed Hardy and Brunot to reconcile their own ideas about ‘The Moroccan’ with existing French ethnography about Arabs and Berbers. Hardy modified his theoretical position only slightly during his tenure in Morocco. In *L’Âme Marocaine* (1926), Hardy paid more attention to rural-urban differences, and made more use of IHEM ethnography. There were no more statements about the Sultan’s sovereignty over all Moroccans. Hardy also took pains in *L’Âme Marocaine* to point out that Moroccans’ common characteristics did not imply national unity in the French sense of a ‘patrie’.

Nevertheless, Hardy declared that ‘in this country there has lived and still lives a ‘people’’ (p. 14).

As director of Public Instruction, Hardy made no attempt to use the schools to convince the Arabic-speaking students of the cities that there were fundamental differences between Arabs and Berbers. Quite to the contrary: from 1920 until his departure in 1926, Hardy promoted belief in a unitary Moroccan character, and *Grandes Étapes* remained recommended reading for teachers long after Hardy was gone (Paye, 1939). The affluent urban arabophone nationalists rejected Hardy’s characterisation of all Moroccans as Berbers. Hardy had failed to insulate Morocco from pan-Arab influences, and Morocco’s nationalists asserted that all Moroccans were Arabs—or should be made Arabs through universal Arabic-language schooling. However,
nationalist discourse accorded with the anti-assimilationist rhetoric of the French
schoolmasters. The Plan de Réformes asserted that the French administration had been
engaged in a campaign against ‘our Arab culture and our traditions’ (CAM, 1934, p. x).
The French policy was denounced as a ‘policy of division among Moroccans themselves’
that aimed ‘to directly assimilate the great majority of the Moroccan people’. This
assimilationist endeavour involved ‘a systematic and cunning campaign against Islam and
Arab culture: it gravely compromises the authority of His Majesty the Sultan, the
integrity of Moroccan justice, and the social union and territorial unity of Morocco’
(CAM, 1934, p. 30). The nationalist authors of the Plan de Réformes shared Georges
Hardy’s belief that all Moroccan Muslims were united by the authority of the Sultan and
by a common identity rooted in religion, history, territorial integrity, and also by
something more abstract that made them a ‘people’.

Conclusion

The original mission of the elite schools, to reinforce a traditional Moroccan
identity through an Arabic-based curriculum, was thwarted when the Sultan’s makhzen
government and the ulema of the Qarawiyin university blocked the access of French-
educated Muslims to positions of traditional power, and Muslim students at the collèges
musulmans demanded, and obtained, a more French-based curriculum. Nevertheless, the
French administration, fearing social dislocation and wishing to maintain cultural
separation, resisted student and alumni demands for increased economic opportunity and
social integration within French society. Instead, the French educational leadership
preached the unitary nature of ‘The Moroccan’, the evils of assimilation, and the
importance of keeping ‘The Moroccan’ rooted in a Muslim cultural identity.
Moroccan Muslim pressure for increased integration and opportunity led the French to moderate the anti-assimilationist character of the colonial educational system. However, the reluctant French concessions increasing French language instruction and belatedly allowing access to the baccalaureate produced only meagre benefits for the Moroccan elite. Frustration continued over the limited opportunities for Moroccans. Meanwhile, the concessions that the French did make left French educational policy open to nationalists’ accusations of assimilationism. In making such accusations, Moroccan nationalists were able to co-opt the rhetoric of the anti-assimilationist French leadership. Of course, French-educated Moroccans did not need French schoolmasters to teach them an identity which embraced all Muslims, or which was defined by geographical frontiers or the authority of a monarch, or which demanded the imposition of cultural unity through schooling. There were plenty of precedents for these ideas in indigenous Moroccan political discourse, in Salafiyya, and in European conceptions of the nation-state that Moroccan nationalists accessed through European sources and through the examples of nationalist movements elsewhere in North Africa and in the Middle East. To assume that the nationalists could only have gotten these ideas from colonial pedagogy would be to subscribe to the coloniser’s false belief that culture and ideology could be controlled through the schools.

Nevertheless, the complementarity between the French pedagogical defense of Moroccan identity and the nationalist critique of French colonialism constituted an important part of the cultural landscape of French Morocco. The emphasis within the French schools on the maintenance of cultural separation (a principle constantly expressed and continually violated) shaped a generation of future nationalists. In
Morocco—unlike in Algeria or Senegal—nationalism did not face opposition from organised groups of French-educated elites promoting cultural assimilation, political integration or French citizenship. Anti-assimilationism, it seems, was highly assimilable. French-educated Moroccans joined with traditionally-educated Moroccans and members of the Salafiyya Islamic reform movement, and French attempts to maintain the colonial separation between ruler and ruled were subverted into the nationalist counter-hegemony that demanded political separation. Whereas the traditional explanation of the interwar flowering of nationalist movements emphasises the impact of metropolitan education, European ideas of liberty and equality, and the experience of the First World War, as well as indigenous factors, the Moroccan case suggests that discussions of nationalist origins ought to include the early twentieth century shift in colonial thinking and especially colonial education away from assimilationist universalism and toward a philosophy of ethnic difference and separation.

Notes

1. See also Porter (2002).

2. See also Lyautey (1917).

3. Similar sentiments were expressed by Mohammed ben Abd el-Ouahad, the Sultan’s delegate for education (1920).

4. According to William Hoisington, Marc ‘never had the full trust of the sultan nor the complete confidence of Lyautey, an anomalous situation for an important banner carrier of indirect rule’ (1995, p. 49).

5. See also Paye (1957, p. 308) and Merrouni (1981, pp. 146-153).
6. On Hardy’s role under Vichy, see his personnel file (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, 1940-1956) and his radio address from Algiers (1941).

7. For example, see Henrys (1914).

8. See also Bel (1915) and Bertschi (1914).

9. See also Hardy (1920b).

10. In Benedict Anderson’s terms, the scholastic ‘itineraries’ of Berbers might have led French-educated Berbers to conceive of the Middle Atlas administrative region and its inhabitants as a nation (1991, p. 121). However, because the French-run schools did not use the Berber language, no vernacular ‘print culture’ of Berberism developed. The impact of the schools for Berbers was also limited in scope and in duration, because the development such schools was delayed until after the First World War. Meanwhile, and most importantly, Arabic print culture spread quickly, despite French policy to the contrary. The itineraries of Berber soldiers (e.g. Mohammed Oufkir) were not restricted to the Berber territories, and probably had a major impact.

Abbreviations

ANF = Archives Nationales de France

CADNM = Centre d’Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes, collection Maroc

CAM = Comité d’Action Marocain

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