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University Abdelhamid Ibn Badis

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English



**A Comparison Between English and
French Policies as Colonial Power
Case Study; Ireland and Algeria.**

**Dissertation submitted for the fulfillment of an LMD Master degree in
Literature and Civilization.**

Submitted By: Tires Mokhtaria

Supervisor: Mr. CHERIF Tegua

Board of Examiners:

Ms. Bellal Hanane

Examiner

University of Mostaganem

Mrs. Bendoukha Amina

chairperson

University of Mostaganem

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this humble work to my late father, who unfortunately did not stay in this world long enough to see this moment. To my dear mother, sisters and brothers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This work is a study of two countries, one European (Ireland) and the other North African (Algeria). These two nations underwent very long foreign domination and rule and resorted to armed struggle to win their independence. The two countries offer an interesting ground for comparison, both historically and sociologically. In what ways are the countries similar? Do they face the same challenges in the present century? The study therefore examines their historical backgrounds, as well as their socio-cultural characteristics. The dissertation concludes that it is at the level of culture/language and national identity quest/crisis that they are similar most. Also, it highlights the types of relationship with colonizers and colonized had before being invaded. This also leads one to shed light on the process both England and France had to go through in order to impose their power over Ireland and Algeria. In addition, this work puts stress on the ways these oppressors used spread their culture in the colonized countries.

Keywords:

- Ireland
- Algeria
- Similarities
- Identity
- Language crisis / Quest

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

To study historically, politically and culturally different countries is quite rewarding. In this dissertation, two countries, Ireland and Algeria are examined and compared.

The first one lies on the Atlantic side of Europe, within what is known as the British Isles. It was occupied by English forces since 1169. History has rarely witnessed such a case in the world, let alone in Europe. The country and its people underwent foreign political and cultural segregation for many centuries. It is only after nearly 800 years of English presence that Ireland became free (1921). However, the consequences of foreign occupation and dominance are still observable: use of English language everywhere in the country including government and public institutions (ministries, universities, mass media). The Irish people are still searching for their identity.

Similarly, Algeria has never been totally independent as a nation. After being part of the Muslim Empire, the country knew some form of “autonomy” during the Ottoman period but still under Turkish dominance. Indeed, the country was ruled by Turkish leaders and Turkish civil servants right until the arrival of French troops in 1830. One can safely claim that Algeria was born in July 1962, the year of independence, much like Ireland in 1921.

However, while Ireland identifies “geographically” as European and culturally as European (sharing the same Judeo-Christian roots), Algeria the North-African and Mediterranean country (geographically) seems to turn its back on its “geo-identity” and claim an “ethnic” one: Arab and/or Berber.

This work then addresses the following questions:

- In what way Ireland and Algeria are similar?
- DO they face the same challenge in the present century? Or
- Did England and France leave any socio-cultural impact on Ireland and Algeria after their independence?

As possible answers one might suggest that the two countries Algeria and Ireland are similar as far as language and identity are concerned also they may find it difficult to solve these challenges in the future. Therefore, the work has been organized as follows: three chapters, the first of which reviews Ireland as a nation (historically, politically and culturally) from the

beginning to the present day. First, it gives a brief account of Irish history from the Celts to the invasion of Ireland by Cromwell in the 17th century; then, it moves to modern Ireland as a sovereign state and independent nation. Moreover, it also examines other aspects of Irish society such as the recovery of Irish language and Irish identity.

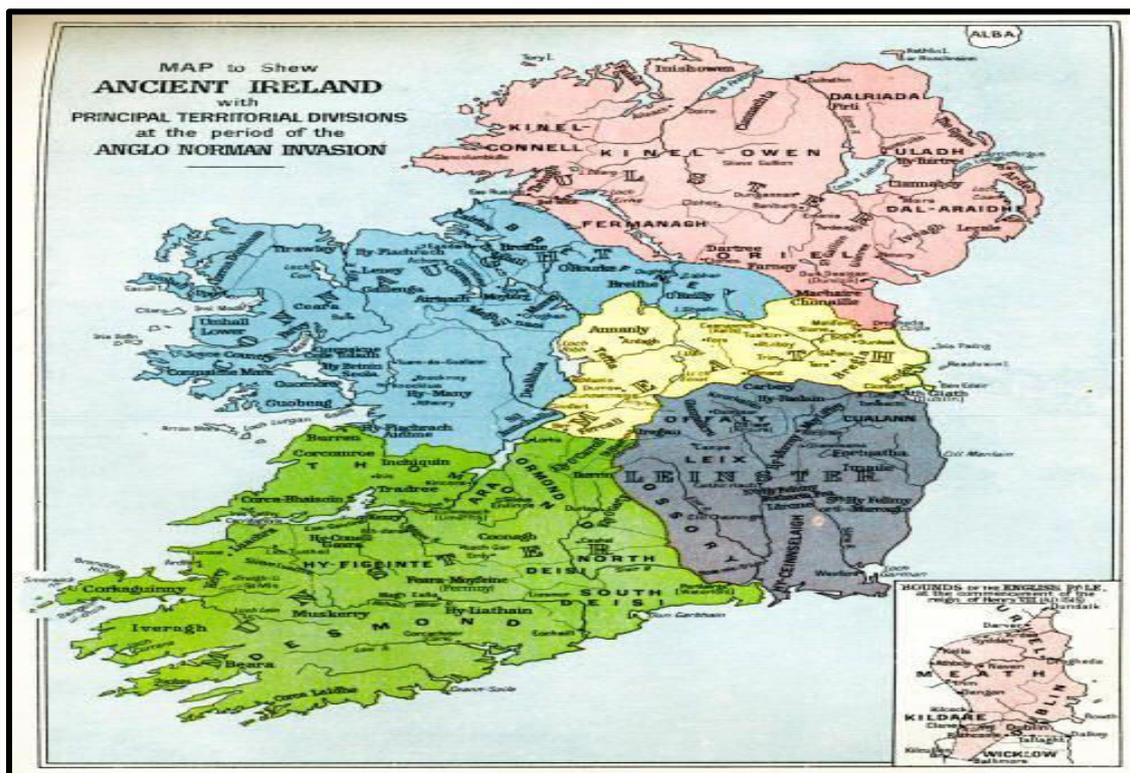
Chapter Two is devoted to Algeria, covering the history of the country from the beginning to the arrival of the French in 1830. The second part of the chapter reviews Algeria under the French colonization (1830 - 1962), while the rest of the chapter tackles independent Algeria with its main challenges: language and identity. Finally, chapter three discusses similarities and differences between the two countries as a result of their past as colonized nations.

In this chapter we review Irish history from the beginning to Independence in 1921. Irish society and culture as well as Gaelic, the Irish national language, and the status of English as a postcolonial legacy will also be reviewed.

I.1. Irish History (from the beginning to 1169)

Ireland exists since around 8000 BC when unknown hunters came from what is now known as Great Britain and Europe and settled there. These people lived by hunting and fishing for about four thousand years, historians say¹ around 4000 BC, they began to farm, and the old hunting way of life decreased gradually and finally died out. This society was organized in the form of many small kingdoms, composed of a learned upper class and artisans who created bronze, iron and gold metalwork. Irish society was pagan for thousands of years. See map 01:

Ancient Map of Ireland



Old Map of Ireland ².

¹A brief history of Ireland, pdf accessed on February 24 2019.

²[https://: www.old map.com/Ireland htm](https://www.oldmap.com/Ireland.htm), accessed on April 25, 2019

In fact, nobody knows exactly when people first came to Ireland³ as historians say, the Irish people themselves say various and different races came in waves, one after the other. They brought with their way of life, and most probably a new language, perhaps even a more organised religion, just as “we do not know for sure what language the first farmers in Ireland spoke, since they never wrote it down”⁴. Archaeologists reckon that these people were the first people in Ireland to speak an Indo-European language, which leads us to think that:

“it is possible that the Neolithic farmers of Ireland, Britain, France and other parts of Central Europe were, in fact, a very early form of Celtic people: “Proto-Celts”, direct ancestors of the Celtic peoples whose languages and culture came to dominate large parts of Western and Central Europe”⁵.

Therefore, Ireland may have been Celtic for much longer than most history books claim that the Celts came to Ireland only 300 or so years BC.

Today we know about the Celtic religion because of the early Irish Christians. Ireland was never part of the Roman Empire, unlike most of Britain, but was in regular contact with the Empire. The Irish attacked and robbed British settlements so much that the normal British names for Irishmen were: *Gael* (wild men) in Welsh and *Scotti* (pirates) in Latin⁶.

After the Romans became Christian, Christian missionaries began to come to Ireland to try to convert these

“wild men and over a period of about 200 years they converted the Irish to this new religion. One of these missionaries later became famous as Saint Patrick, today the patron saint of Ireland, himself taken as a slave to Ireland, who returned to save the people who tortured him.”⁷

Christianity replaced the old pagan religions by the end of the 6th century. The early religious men introduced the Roman alphabet to a people with a largely oral culture. And so, this helped them write down part of the rich collection of traditional stories and legends,

³Seaghdha, Micheal ua, *The Story of Ireland: A Bridge Between Celtic and Modern, America and Europe*, Prague, 2007, pdf.

⁴ibid

⁵ibid

⁶ibid

⁷ibid

and consequently safeguard their cultural heritage⁸ (ibid).

Two centuries later, from the early 9th century, Vikings invaded Ireland. These attacks went on for over 100 years. At first the Vikings raided monasteries and villages. These invaders also built settlements in the country which later became important towns. Among them, one can name Dublin, Limerick, and Cork. The descendants of the Vikings were eventually assimilated into Irish society. The island then witnessed the rise of a fair number of small kingdoms which began to attack each other and were constantly at war with each other. During the 12th century (1169-1170) another invasion brought more dramatic consequences on the country, and that was the Anglo-Norman Conquest.

1.2. The Anglo- Normans in Ireland and its consequences (12th century)

Before invading Ireland, the Normans who came from Normandy had first invaded England in 1066. Then, they undertook a long process of spreading their power over the neighbouring lands including Ireland.

1.2. The first English Presence

The 800 years or more of English rule in Ireland began in 1169, when an army of English barons landed in Wexford and quickly captured the two ports of Wexford and Waterford. The Norman invasion of Ireland was originally a tactical alliance between the barons and Dermot MacMurrough, king of Leinster who had been ousted from his throne by an alliance of Irish chieftains spurred on by the High King himself, Turlough O'Connor (1088–1156). In return for help in defeating his enemies MacMurrough promised Strongbow the hand in marriage of his daughter Aoife as well as the kingdom of Leinster⁹.

English desire to seize or colonize Ireland is quite old. In fact, most historians agree that Henry II (1154 - 1189) had been plotting to get his hands-on Ireland since 1155. Armed with the blessing of the pope and uneasy about Strongbow's growing power and independence of mind, Henry II sent a huge naval force in 1171, landed at Waterford and declared it a royal city¹⁰. Within seven years, the king had confiscated the lands of the most rebellious lords, eliminated the power of the Irish Church and was declared King of Ireland.

⁸ibid

⁹ibid

¹⁰ibid

Other kings also further consolidated English power in Ireland. Yet, Ulster remained the last outpost of the Irish chiefs. Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, led the last serious assault on English power in Ireland for centuries¹¹. With the native chiefs gone, Queen Elizabeth I and her successor, James I, could later in the 16th and 17th centuries pursue their policy of Plantation with impunity, and while confiscations took place all over the country, Ulster was most affected because of its wealthy farmlands and as a punishment for being home to the primary fomenters of rebellion. It is here that Ulster's often tragic fate first started. This also marked the final collapse of the Gaelic social and political system and the total conquest of Ireland by the English.

I.3. English Ireland since Cromwell (1649- 1921)

Oliver Cromwell arrived in Ireland in 1649 and left it in 1650 to lead English troops against the Scots. During his presence there, he took several towns. His sons-in-law Henry Ireton and Charles Fleetwood were to complete the task after him. and the view of Cromwell as a war criminal has not been softened or abandoned in most Irish accounts ever since¹²

The most significant national movement came after the rebellion of 1641. A small group, of Gaelic (Irish) and Anglo-Norman Catholic lords set up a de facto independent state to be called "the Confederation the of Kilkenny" having nominal control over most of the island (about two-thirds). They demanded autonomy for the Irish parliament and full rights for Catholics, including an end to the Plantations, all the while reasserting their loyalty to the English crown. Cromwell would later crush it during his Irish campaign of 1649–53. He finally destroyed this so-called confederation and seized all the lands previously owned by the Irish gentry.

But nationalist feelings would not stop. Another attempt to resist English rule was the Rebellion of the late 17th century, where Irish Catholic monarchists rallied behind James II after his deposition in the Glorious Revolution in 1689.

Again, another rebellion would take place later on, around the late 18th century, whose leader was a young Protestant called Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763–98), who was the most prominent leader of an organisation in Belfast called the United Irishmen. Their aim or dream

¹¹,MorillJohn .*Religious Context of the Cromwellian Conquest of Ireland*, pdf, accessed on March 5, 2019.

¹²Murphy,Dennis.*Cromwell in Ireland*, 1883 cited in John Morill, *The Religious Context of the Cromwellian Conquest of Ireland*, pdf, accessed on March 5, 2019.

was to bring together men of all creeds to reform and reduce Britain's power in Ireland, but their attempts to gain power through straightforward politics proved fruitless. But because they were committed to bring change by any means, they went underground.

The Act of Union, passed in 1801, was the British government's vain attempt to put an end to any aspirations toward Irish independence. What was it? The Act of Union was born when the British wanted to do without the Irish Parliament following the 1798 Rebellion. It was passed in 1800 by using bribery and corruption. It came into effect in January of 1801, when the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was created. The King, George III, refused to grant Catholic Emancipation following the Act of Union, declaring, 'I shall reckon any man my personal enemy who proposes any such measure.' Prime Minister William Pitt and other leading politicians resigned in protest, because they thought the future success of the union depended on the granting of Catholic Emancipation. Throughout the nineteenth century, both Catholic Emancipation and repeal of the Act of Union were burning issues in Ireland. Due to the efforts of Daniel O'Connell and his supporters, a limited version of Catholic Emancipation was achieved in 1829, though many Catholics were still prevented from voting, with the qualifications for voting even more restrictive than before the Act of Union. The union itself, however, proved to be more long lasting. It was not until Irish independence was achieved in 1922 that the Act of Union ceased to apply in the Republic of Ireland ¹³.

However, the nationalist movement was now out of the bottle and two distinct forms of nationalist lines began to emerge. The first was a breed of radical republicanism, which called for the use of force to found a secular, egalitarian Irish republic (quite similar to the Algerian FLN); the second was a more moderate movement, which advocated nonviolent and legal action to force the government into granting concessions. The most important moderate was a Catholic called Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847) who founded the Catholic Association in 1823 with the aim of achieving political equality for Catholics (much like the Algerian Oulema of Ben badis). This group or association soon became a vehicle for peaceful mass protest and action: in the 1826 general election it supported Protestant candidates who favoured Catholic emancipation¹⁴

¹³ www.askaboutireland.ie/narrative-notes/the-act-of-union/index.xml accessed on march 6 2018.

¹⁴ www.askaboutireland.ie/narrative-notes/the-act-of-union/index.xml accessed on march 13 2018

I.4. The Aftermath of the 1801 Act of Union

In fact, during the 18th century, many laws were passed that discriminated against Catholics. The native Gaelic language was banned in schools. By 1778, only five percent of the land was owned by Catholics¹⁵. In 1801, the Irish parliament was abolished for Ireland had finally become part of “the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland”. Catholics could not hold parliamentary office until 1829. Since then, Ireland had to face many problems that would weaken the country in many ways. Poverty was widespread. For many disasters subjected to a disaster: the potato blight. Such disease destroyed much of the potato crop for the next few years, and this was to affect them tremendously. To make matters worse, the cause of the blight was not immediately understood, and the English rulers did little to help the situation. Sadly, about a million people died of starvation or disease, while another million emigrated to escape poverty and starvation. As a result of the potato blight, the population of Ireland fell from more than eight million in 1841 to about six million in 1852 and the population continued to decline more slowly until the second half of the 20th century¹⁶.

In fact, it was land ownership that fuelled the nationalist cause and was an important feature of the Irish struggle against English rule. Under the leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891), what was to be known as the Land League started widespread agitation throughout the country. As the conflict developed, violence sparked off on both sides. The Land War, as it became known, lasted from 1879 to 1882. For the first time, tenants¹⁷ defied their landlords. The Land Act of 1881 improved rural life greatly, creating fair rents and the possibility for tenants to own their land¹⁸.

Efforts to gain home rule and improve the condition of the people went on during the 19th century. There were movements for land reform and movements to make Gaelic the official language of Ireland once again. There was strong Protestant opposition to these demands. By 1900, civil war loomed and could have been avoided by the Rule Act of 191, which would have given Ireland some autonomy. Nevertheless, the Act was suspended when the first world war started, leading to an uprising on Easter Day, April 24, in 1916. The Easter Uprising failed to spread beyond Dublin, and the leaders were arrested and

¹⁵ A Brief History of Ireland, PDF, 2008

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ Tenants are farmers who rent land for the Landlords who own these lands.

¹⁸ www.askaboutireland.ie/narrative-notes/the-act-of-union/index.xml accessed on march 19 2019

executed. Their brutal treatment tipped public opinion in favour of independence. Hence, the Irish War of Independence began in 1919 and continued until 1921. In 1922, the southern 26 counties of Ireland seceded from the United Kingdom and the new country called itself the Irish Free State. Gaelic was restored as the official national language, together with English. Ties with Great Britain were cut in 1948. So, the new country became known as the Republic of Ireland. The other six counties in the north of the Ireland, called Northern Ireland, remained part of the UK until today. However, this did not end the conflict. There was sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland, between Nationalists, largely Catholics, who wanted Northern Ireland to unite with the Irish Republic, and the Unionists, mostly Protestants, who were loyal to Great Britain. This unrest exploded violently in the late 1960s, a time called the Troubles. It did not end until 1998, when a peace agreement was signed.

A lot more blood would soon run on Irish soil, but the Civil War would lead finally to independence and freedom despite the heavy cost in human lives. The country was now partitioned and six Ulster provinces were allowed to remain part of the UK, sowing the seeds of division and bloodshed that tormented the provinces half a century later.

I.5.Emigration (17th -19th)

The earliest waves of Irish emigration date to the second half of the 17th century and the aftermath of the Cromwellian era. Most were Catholics. To the Irish Catholics of the 17th and 18th century, the very notion of emigration went against the old Celtic traditions of extended family and clan relationships. Leaving one's family and homeland was considered an unbearable exile. For this reason, finding a better life abroad was not a big problem for the majority of Ireland's population. Catholic emigration to North America was forbidden by law until after the War of Independence. Those who found the financial means to emigrate and chose to break ties with their country usually travelled from Cork or Kinsale. Until 1720, New England was their favourite destination with a steady flow¹⁹.

In 1771-1773, more than 100 ships left the Ulster ports of Newry, Derry, Belfast, Portrush and Larne, carrying some 32,000 Irish immigrants to America. Meanwhile, a similar number set sail from Dublin, Cork and Waterford alone. Some of these would certainly have been Catholics. By 1790, the USA's Irish immigrant population numbered 447,000 and two-

¹⁹ www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/emigration-Ireland-19th-century.html

thirds originated from Ulster. In Ireland the population had grown from only 2.3 million at mid-century to as much as 5 million by 1800. The vast majority lived in poverty. No other European country, not even Italy or Poland equalled this massive Irish emigration. Some statistics reveal the enormous migration abroad. 19th-century emigration from Ireland is usually broken down into three distinct phases: 1: 1815-1845, when 1 million left; 2: 1846-1855, when 2.5 million left; and 3: 1856-1914 when 4 million emigrated. These figures are considered underestimates because it is difficult to ascertain the numbers who settled permanently in mainland Britain. Ireland was still a part of Britain, so travel to or from Wales, Scotland and England was not subject to any scrutiny²⁰.

I.6. Ireland (Eire) After Independence (1921-present day)

Gaining independence were a great challenge to Ireland as a nation after being colonized since 1169 and during this period the colonizer succeeded to affect the Irish people.

6.1 A Free State

Southern Ireland or Eire as it is officially known became a free state after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921. This treaty marked the end of the War of Independence and the beginning of a new era. The new Irish state was born just after WWI and after an extreme long 800-year struggle by the Irish to free themselves from the yoke of foreign rule. Nowadays modern Ireland is a modern country, and a member of the European Union. Economically thriving, the country faces great challenges however. These challenges are essentially cultural, namely the question of re-establishing Gaelic as the national language in replacement of English. This reminds one of Algeria.

6.2. Irish Language and Identity

Language and culture are inseparable²¹ While Irish is the official language of Ireland, it is estimated only 1.8 percent of the population speaks it daily. With the number of Irish speakers dwindling in recent generations, there have been numerous attempts to keep traditional culture alive through a revival of the language.

The Irish government has created plans to address dozens of aspects of the language and culture, including radio and television, schooling, legal and business, but often there are too

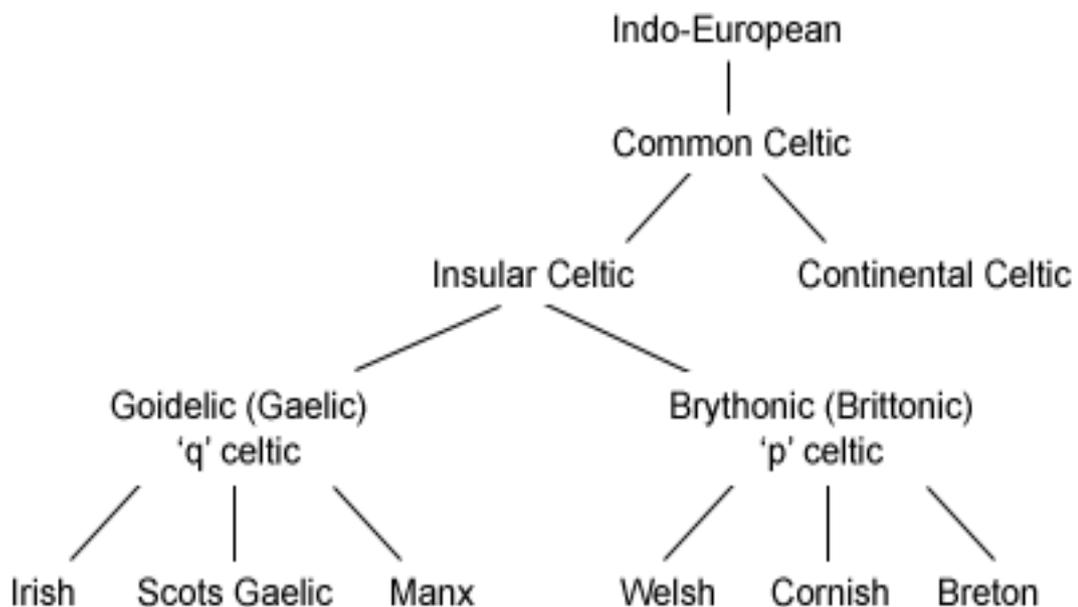
²⁰ibid

²¹Claire Kramsh, *LanguageandCulture*, 1998.

few resources to properly take on the issue. It is more often left up to the Irish speakers to promote their own language and pass their culture on to new generations of Irish citizens. A small community of people are now responsible for an entire nation's cultural revival.

Irish, or *Gaeilge*, is an indigenous language spoken in Ireland (including Northern Ireland). It is a Celtic language closely related to Scottish Gaelic but not to Welsh. 'Celtic' is the term linguists apply to the language group from which Irish evolved. Historians say Celtic languages emerged some 500 B.C. The Irish language is the national and first official language of Ireland (article 8 of the Constitution), the second official language is English. Irish is taught as a compulsory subject from the primary level to middle school. As a language, Irish is unique to Ireland and is, therefore, of crucial importance to the identity of the Irish people and their culture. However Irish went through a harsh or traumatic history. It experienced a complicated relationship with its speakers in Ireland. Since the birth of Ireland as a free state, the education system has been targeted as an agency and model for Irish language planning and language revitalisation with the aim of recovering Irish identity²². See figure 01

Insular Celtic Languages:



Since independence in 1922, Irish society has gone through several reforms and an immense national reconstruction. This helped reshaping or negotiating Irish identity and culture. The restoration of the Irish language has been a key policy objective of successive

²²History of Ireland: The Irish Question, 1536 -2005.

governments since the foundation of the State in 1922. The present (1937) Constitution designates Irish as the first official language by virtue of its being the national language. The English language is recognized as a “second official language” in the same Article.

In the case of the Irish language (also called Irish Gaelic), the language death was almost achieved by the English policy of supplanting the Irish language with English. Moreover, during the Victorian era, the Irish were viewed as backward and inferior. There were many stereotypes used depicting Irish people as wild, reckless and indolent. Furthermore, the Irish Gaelic, one of the two official languages of the Republic of Ireland, is considered by many as the supreme embodiment of independent Irish-Celtic culture. The Irish language and culture have gone through and enjoyed a period of growth in the media and education, with a rising interest in literature, theatre and music, while being part of the European Union opened up new prospects for Irish translators and interpreters.

The powerful status of the English language attracted the Irish people when the language was presented to them as the language of business, trade and commerce. The English language was associated with power, advancement, wealth, employment and a better future and life (much like French in Algeria).

I.7. The Case of Northern Ireland

The Republic of Ireland is historically a Catholic country and a large majority of the Irish are Catholics. Many people in Northern Ireland are descendants of the original population of this region and are also Catholics. However, the majority of the Northern Irish have forefathers who emigrated from England and Scotland and these two countries have been Protestant for almost 500 years. Therefore, one ends up with a rather confusing situation with a split population from two different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Ireland is England’s first colony already in the 1100s, England started to gain control over this region). Since then the Irish have continued to rebel against their oppressors but the English had a particularly difficult task in ruling the Irish in the northern corner of the country called Ulster. To increase their control, they sent Protestant Englishmen and Scots to settle in this area and simply take over land from the Irish. This immigration was indeed very effective and by 1703, only less than five per cent of the land of Northern Ireland (Ulster) was still in the

hands of the Catholic Irish²³. In 1801, the Act of Union made the whole of Ireland a part of the United Kingdom. There was, then, much oppression and discrimination against Catholics through discriminatory laws. Soon, this led to several uprisings which were quickly crushed by the police and the British Army.

The wish for independence grew stronger and stronger and England had more and more difficulty controlling the rebellious Irishmen. After a period of guerrilla war, an agreement was reached with England about Irish independence in 1922. The only condition was that the six counties in the north (Ulster) were to remain in the union with Great Britain. This was so because the majority in the north was Protestant and wanted to keep the bond with Britain. In Southern Ireland (Eire) this decision stirred strong feelings and disagreement and threw the country into a civil war. Many Irish felt that giving up the North would mean to betray that region. The civil war did not change the decision. Ireland was liberated, but divided in two. Now, more than 85 years later, the situation is still unresolved.

The Catholics want to be reunited with the rest of Ireland and to leave the union with England, Scotland and Wales. The Protestants, on the other hand, wish to remain within the UK because they feel culturally and historically a part of this union since their ancestors emigrated from England and Scotland hundreds of years ago.

In fact, the conflict is primarily a social and cultural one. Religious teachings are not an issue between the Catholics and Protestants. They do not believe in different Gods. Historically, the Catholics have been poor, oppressed and often unemployed. On the other hand, the Protestants have represented the oppressive British side consisting of the privileged classes in society with better jobs and opportunities, and also better wages. So the conflict is cultural, social and historical rather than religious²⁴.

Conclusion

Ireland has been “English” for too long, nearly 8 centuries (1169-1921) although real colonization only began with Cromwell in the 17th century. The Irish people now have a state of their own and have recovered their own language but are still using the language of the colonizer. Their language is unspoken outside Ireland if we exclude Scottish Gaelic, as a different variety.

²³A *Brief History of Ireland*, pdf.

²⁴Morrill, John, *The Religious Context of The Cromwellian Conquest of Ireland*, PDF.

The next chapter examines another country, Algeria, which has been continually colonized by various powers and foreign forces: Romans, Arabs, Turks, French. Like Ireland, the country faces problems of identity and language.

CHAPTER TWO THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN ALGERIA (1830-1962)

The present chapter examines Algeria as a comparable case with Ireland. The country has been continually under foreign rule ever since the Roman times. Various people came to the country including Arabs (7TH century, Turks in the 16th and the French in 1830). Moreover, it faces great challenges at the level of national identity and language conflicts

II.1. Algeria before 1830

History books tell us that Algeria was first inhabited by the Berbers prior to the Arabs' arrival in the 7th century. During the classical period (800 B.C-500 AD), Berber civilization was practiced agriculture and trade and trade relations the Berbers and Carthage was developed. The Carthaginian state declined because of several defeats by the Romans in the Punic Wars (264-146 B.C), and in 146 B.C. Carthage was destroyed. Some years later, several Berber kingdoms were born. Soon, Berber territory was annexed to the Roman Empire (around 24 AD). Roman rule brought more and more urbanization and this added with agricultural organisation caused big changes in Berber society. The prosperity of most towns depended on agriculture, and the region was known as the "granary of the empire." ("grenier de l'empire"). Also, a new faith arose there as Christianity arrived in the second century, so that by the end of the fourth century, most urbanized areas had become Christianized, and some Berber tribes had converted en masse²⁴.

These people spoke their own language and practised paganism first, then adhered to the Christian faith thanks to Roman presence in Numidia. Saint Augustine²⁵, one of the founding fathers of the church and the most famous Berber thinker in the early Christian era (4th century) was born in Taghaste (now Soukh-Ahras) and later moved to Hippo (Annaba). He wrote in Latin just as the Berber people also spoke Latin then

²⁴ Library of Congress – Federal Research Division Country Profile: Algeria, May 2008.

²⁵ Saint Augustine was one of the great African thinkers of the early Church. He was born into a Roman colony in what is now Souk Aras in Algeria in 354. His father was possibly a *freedman* given Roman citizenship; his mother Monica was Berber. Augustine would die 76 or so years later in Annaba on the shores of the Mediterranean. His homeland had been occupied by Rome for 500 years before he was born, so he moved in a Latinised and pagan world. He would study at Carthage, travel to Milan accompanied by his Christian mother, Monica. Her influence and that of Ambrose, bishop of Milan led in part to the famous conversion recorded in the *Confessions*. His mother dead, Augustine returned to Africa at the age of 35. He would become bishop of Hippo. As Augustine lay dying in Hippo in 430, Vandals were besieging the city of Hippo and would go on to capture Carthage. The Roman world Augustine had known was gone. The *Confessions* of Augustine was the first confessional autobiography written and has influenced writers on spirituality and memoir ever since. <https://anothersimplepilgrim.wordpress.com> ,accessed on April 14 2019.

CHAPTER TWO THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN ALGERIA (1830-1962)

1.1. The Advent of Islam

The Arabs first invaded North Africa in 642 and so Islam spread throughout the region, and by 710, they conquered all the Maghreb. The majority of the Berbers converted to Islam during the 8th century. Although they quickly adopted Islam, they put up a 35-year resistance against the Arab conquest. The Berber priestess Kahena was a hero who sacrificed her life in this struggle but the Berbers finally failed and became part of the Arab-Muslim Empire.

In 739 -740 the Kharijites which was an egalitarian sect rebelled against the new rulers. It succeeded in driving them out of the country for a short time. This led to the end of the Omeyyad dynasty throughout the entire “Arab-Muslim” region. This region was since then ruled by many Berber dynasties: the Rustumids (776-909), the Fatimids (909 - 972), the Almoravids (1063-1102), the Almohad (1152 - 1247) and the Zayanid (1235 - 1546). Following a large incursion of Arab bedouins from Egypt beginning in the first half of the eleventh century, the use of Arabic spread to the countryside, and sedentary Berbers were gradually Arabized²⁶.

During all these periods (from the 8th to the 15th centuries), there were large migrations of Arab tribes from Arabia and Egypt into the Maghreb²⁷

1.2. The Ottomans (1525- 1830)

Ottoman Algeria emerged in 1525. The Regency of Algiers was established by Ottoman Turkish naval leader Barbarossa that same year (1525) when he captured the city of Algiers. The city soon turned into the base from which the Ottomans launched attacks against European ships in the Mediterranean. By coming to Algiers, the Turks put an end to the Zianid dynasty. The Ottoman sultan gave Barbarossa the title of *beylerbey* (provincial governor) and some 2,000 well-armed soldiers (janissaries). With this force, he managed to subdue the entire coastal region between Constantine and Oran (although Oran remained under Spanish rule until 1791). Under Barbarossa’s rule, Algiers became the center of Ottoman authority in the Maghreb. See map 02

²⁶ Library of Congress – Federal Research Division Country Profile: Algeria, May 2008.

²⁷ *ibid*

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Ottoman Empire



The coming of Islam to Algeria²⁸

Barbarossa's son Hassan later took over from his father and became ruler of Algiers in 1544. Gradually, the country (Northern Algeria mainly) saw the setting up of an Ottoman administration with governors called *pasha*, with no Berbers or Arabs in the local administration. Soon after, Turkish was adopted as the official language of Algeria.

However, one must admit that the main source of revenue for the Regency of Algiers was based on piracy or "course" (French term for piracy). Christian ships were the main target and the Christians captured were sold as slaves. The continued piracy on European and (much later) American ships led countries like Spain, Denmark, France and England to launch attacks against Algiers. Eventually, it was France that put an end to the "pirates" of Algiers in July 1830.

²⁸The Coming of Islam to Algeria [http:// fanack.com/wp content](http://fanack.com/wp-content) accessed on March 12 2019

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II.2. FRENCH ALGERIA (1830 - 1962)

French troops landed in Sidi Fredj in July 1830 and began expanding from Algiers after defeating local troops led by Algerian (Ottoman) officers. Several French generals became notoriously known during the period ranging from 1830 to 1882 when the country was finally declared “French territory”. To understand the French-Algerian war, one needs to understand the history of the mutual relationship of these countries.

France has for a long time wished to settle in Algeria for several reasons. First, it wanted to put an end to “piracy” or “course” (naval rivalry in the Mediterranean). Second, it also dreamed of kicking out Islam there as we shall see. Third, there were economic motives too (namely wine and wheat). Taking control of the country lasted many years and was rather bloody. The French occupation had and still has profound implications on the society. Ownership has been dismantled, social security broken down and the system of schools nearly annihilated. Apart from the changes in the economic structure, there were big changes in the societal and cultural sphere as well.

Despite Emperor Napoleon III’s wishes that the Muslims should be treated as equal co-citizens, the reality was very much different. The discrimination also extended to the use of local languages (Arabic and Berber). The only official language during that period (1830-1962) was French and a law passed in 1938 even declared Arabic as a foreign language.

Among France’s numerous colonies and protectorates Algeria was a special one. It was considered part of France, just like any department in France. Being officially part of France in 1882, the colonizers launched a considerable infrastructure of roads and railways, even building schools and hospitals and a modern public administration²⁹. But Algerians were very far from being recognized as French citizens. It was however few educated Muslim Algerians who started the opposition movement.

²⁹ Sitarovà, Lucie, *The Algerian War of Independence: Major Causes of Political Violence*, June 2016, pdf.

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3. INDEPENDENT ALGERIA (1962-present day)

After more than 130 years of French rule (1830 - 1962) Algerians finally launched their war of independence in November 1954 and waged what was later called “a savage war of peace”³⁰. In this book, the author compares the savagery of the war to that of the Irish war for independence). The war of national liberation and its aftermath had severely disrupted the country’s society.

Moreover, when the *pieds-noirs* left the country, the state almost collapsed because of a huge shortage in managers, civil servants, engineers, teachers, doctors and skilled workers. There were dozens of thousands of homeless and displaced persons, and around 70 percent of adults were jobless. Given the chaotic situation socially and economically, President Ben Bella declared in March 1963 that all agricultural, industrial, and commercial properties owned by the *pieds-noirs* (French settlers) were vacant, and were soon confiscated³¹. However, Ben Bella's ambitions and authoritarian tendencies were to lead to increasing discontent among Algerians³²

Kabylarian opposition leader Hocine Ait-Ahmed left the National Assembly in 1963 to protest against the growing dictatorial tendencies of the new state and created formed the Front of Socialist Forces (Front des Forces Socialistes—FFS) whose aim was to overthrow the Ben Bella regime. As minister of defence, Boumediene sent the army to crush the movement. However, tensions soon increased between the dictatorial and regionalist Ben Bella and Colonel Boumediene and on June 19, 1965, the latter overthrew the president in a swift and bloodless coup d'état.

Boumediene immediately dissolved the National Assembly and suspended the 1963 constitution. Despite attempts to overthrow him in 1967-1968, he succeeded in remaining in power. After 11 years of rule, he finally allowed a long-promised new constitution to be promulgated (1976), and was also elected president with a 95 percent majority. His death in December 1978, marked the reinforcement of the army-based regime as Colonel Chadli Bendjedid, became president in February 1979 and remained in office until his resignation in January 1992. Soon after his arrival, he summoned an extraordinary FLN Party Congress in June

³⁰ Horne, Alistar., *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*, 1977 pdf.

³¹ Library of Congress – Federal Research Division Country Profile: Algeria, May 2008.

³² Sitarova, Lucie. *The Algerian War of Independence: Major Causes of Political Violence*, June 2016? pdf.

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1980 to launch a five-year plan to liberalize the economy and break up unproductive state enterprises and corporations. However, his reforms and policies failed to end high unemployment and bad living conditions among the lower classes, and only fueled Islamist activism.

The waves of discontent crested in October 1988, when a series of strikes and walkouts by students and workers in Algiers degenerated into rioting. In response, the government declared a state of emergency and used force to quell the unrest. The stringent measures used to put down the riots of “Black October” engendered a groundswell of outrage. In response, Benjedid conducted a house cleaning of senior officials and drew up a program of political reform. A new constitution, approved overwhelmingly in February 1989, dropped the word *socialist* from the official description of the country; guaranteed freedoms of expression, association, and meeting; but withdrew the guarantees of women’s rights that had appeared in the 1976 constitution.

The new laws reinvigorated politics. Newspapers became the liveliest and freest in the Arab world, while political parties of nearly every stripe vied for members and a voice. In February 1989, the Islamic Salvation Front (Front Islamique du Salut—FIS) was founded. Algeria’s leaders were stunned in December 1991 when FIS candidates won absolute majorities in 188 of 430 electoral districts, far ahead of the FLN’s 15 seats, in the first round of legislative elections. Faced with the possibility of a complete FIS takeover and under pressure from the military leadership, Benjadid dissolved parliament and then resigned in January 1992.

He was succeeded by the five-member High Council of State, which cancelled the second round of elections. The FIS, as well as the FLN, clamoured for a return of the electoral process, but police and troops countered with massive arrests. In February 1992, violent demonstrations erupted in many cities. The government declared a one-year state of emergency and banned the FIS. The voiding of the 1991 election results led to a period of civil conflict that cost the lives of as many as 150,000 people. Periodic negotiations between the military government and Islamist rebels failed to produce a settlement. In 1996 a referendum passed that introduced changes to the constitution enhancing presidential powers and banning Islamist parties. Presidential elections were held in April 1999. Although seven candidates qualified for election, all but Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who appeared to have the support of the military as well

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as the FLN, withdrew on the eve of the election amid charges of electoral fraud. Bouteflika went on to win 70 percent of the votes.

Following his election to a five-year term, Bouteflika concentrated on restoring security and stability to the strife-ridden country. As part of his endeavor, he successfully campaigned to grant amnesty to thousands of members of the banned FIS. The so-called Civil Concord was approved in a nationwide referendum in September 2000. The reconciliation by no means ended all violence, but it reduced violence to manageable levels. An estimated 80 percent of those fighting the regime accepted the amnesty offer. The president also formed national commissions to study reforms of the education system, judiciary, and state bureaucracy. President Bouteflika was rewarded for his efforts at stabilizing the country when he was elected to another five-year term in April 2004.

In September 2005, another referendum—this one to consider a proposed Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation—passed by an overwhelming margin. The charter coupled another amnesty offer to all but the most violent participants in the Islamist uprising with an implicit pardon for security forces accused of abuses in fighting the rebels. After ruling the country for almost 20 years, Bouteflika suffering from a severe mental and physical handicap finally resigned when millions of Algerians took to the streets in most cities (Algiers, Oran, Constantine, Bejaïa, Tizi-Ouzou, Sidi Bel Abbas, etc) demanding his removal from office.

3.1. CULTURAL CLASHES IN ALGERIA

In *Language Conflict in Algeria*, Mohamed Benrabah examines language politics and linguistic culture in Algeria, from the eve of the French colonial conquest of 1830 until 2012. He examines three periods. These are, first, the era of France's colonial rule (1830-c. 1954), when French rulers propagated French; second, the years of Algeria's war for independence (1954-62), when nationalists agonized and argued about the country's future; and third, the postcolonial period (1962-present), when Algerian regimes tried to fashion Algeria into an 'Arab' nation-state by promoting literary Arabic. France is to blame, Benrabah argues, for starting the Algerian identity crisis. Before France invaded in 1830, the Ottoman Empire had claimed Algeria as its westernmost territory while ceding considerable autonomy to local Muslim elites. Against the context of this loose imperialism, pre-1830 Algeria was the site of many languages: Ottoman Turkish, literary or classical Arabic, local Arabic colloquials, Berber variants, and, on the coast, *sabir*, a 'medieval Mediterranean pidgin', that blended elements of Arabic, Spanish, Provençal,

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and other Mediterranean languages. But then the French showed up and used “language like a cudgel”³³ In 1897, the French Minister of Education acknowledged the ongoing effort to conquer Algeria ‘by the School’, in order to assert French language over all other ‘local idioms’, to ‘replace ignorance and fanatical prejudices’, and in the process to convince Muslims that France was superior. The hierarchical system of French education in Algeria generated a Francophone Algerian Muslim elite while leaving ninety percent of the population illiterate by the time of decolonization³⁴.

When France lost Algeria in 1962, the anticolonial backlash hit French immediately. Algerian nationalists began a large Arabization plan, promoting literary Arabic (Modern Standard Arabic), instead of French, in schools and government offices, while ignoring local forms of Algerian Arabic and Berber. Benrabah calls what resulted a linguistic ‘war with diversity’. But the postcolonial Arabizers were too zealous and awkward. For example, in the mid-1960s, when they asked Egypt to supply the Arabic teachers that they needed for their programs, and when Egypt’s President Nasser informed them, in response, that Egypt could not meet their full demand, the Algerian envoy reportedly told Egypt to send teachers ‘even if they were greengrocers’

3.2. The Quest for Identity

Early post-independent Algeria (1962-1975) was moulded by nationalism and the blind faith in Algerian identity. The latter was built upon anti-colonialist ideology and nationalist enthusiasm. These were the days of Algerian nationalism with an avant-gardist youth who dreamt of building the nation. Fed on revolutionary ideals and expectations, these predominantly left-wing young francophone Algerians were rather secular and considered themselves first Algerians, then Arabs (for the non-Berbers) and finally Muslims.

However, this nationalism was perhaps confused with « Boumedinism » or simply with the state incarnated by his leadership: "In the Algerian experience, nation has always been related to statehood. Nation and state were one"³⁵. In fact, the problem with Boumedinism and his Algerianness was that they were often (if not always) linked to Arabism.

³³ Benrabah, Mohamed. *Language Conflict in Algeria: From colonialism to post independence*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2013, xiv+19pp. 978 1 84769 964 0 p (51-56)

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ Merdaci. *Malaise identitaire en Algérie: de l'Algérianité problématique à la dérive post coloniale* " in

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After the death of Boumediene, the reign of Chadli Bendjedid (1979-1991) coincided with the Iranian Revolution and the re-Islamization of the Algerian society. Two major reasons may explain this. First, as the new regime decided to change to a more liberal economic system, Algerian nationalism was thus undermined for ideological reasons and political calculations. Therefore, and in order to liberalize the system, the Algerian regime thought of encouraging the re-Islamization of the country in order to combat the deeply rooted national feature of social equality and hence of socialism. Because Algerian nationalism was built on the war against France as well as on social equality and justice, it then started to decline. This led to the emergence of the Islamists as a new political force in coordination with some ruling circles. Second, the Islamists who came mostly from the lower social classes and Arabophone elites now took their revenge on the secular francophone middle classes. The latter were considered too “French” or simply the new pieds-noirs (French Algerians under French rule). As to Arabism, it simply died along with Boumediene’s full legacy.

The discussion so far has concerned Algerian identity in its Arab and Islamic dimensions, neglecting one major dimension of utmost importance: Berber culture, language and heritage. As later events have shown (Berber Spring in 1980 and the Berber revolt in 2001), this indigenous dimension of Algerian national identity has started to develop and rise. However, given the “conflict” or “clash” between the Arab-Islamic “identity-defenders” and the secular or non-Islamic Berbers, this matter will not find a solution before long. What is needed is to cling to Algerianness and drop our racial or ethnic identities.

The Berber dimension is vital in this search for identity. Who are the Algerians, Arabs, Berbers, Africans? The Amazigh peoples

“were referred to with different names including the Moors (Mauri). The Greeks called them the Mazyes, while the Greek historian Herodotus used the Amazigh word Maxis. The ancient Egyptians called their Amazigh neighbours “the muddled”. The Romans called them Numidians, or Libo. The Arabs often called them the Berbers. Berber in Arabic comes from the Graeco-Latin word Barbar, a Latin word used to describe all people who did not speak Latin or Greek believing Greek and Roman civilization superior to all others. The

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Berber or barbarian denomination was used by the Romans not only against the Amazighs but also against Germanic and English rebellious tribes”³⁶.

He goes on to say that the Amazighs have faced historical conquests as well as several attempts to change or obliterate their identity over time. They live in a region that covers almost a quarter of the African continent, from the Nile River to the Atlantic Ocean going deep into Sahel area. But today, Arabic and not Amazigh is the region’s official language and the language used in society. Nevertheless, many areas in the Sahara region have maintained their Amazigh language.

Arabic shares with French and especially English some features of an imperial language: it was used to support an empire which expanded over the territory now divided into several states³⁷. The dominance of Arabic is legitimized by two pillars: Islam, which has used Arabic as the sacred language of the Qur'an for centuries and national unity. In fact, successive Algerian governments undertook the task of reviving Classical Arabic and establishing it as the national language of Algeria. The aim was to recover an “imagined” pre-colonial past and eventually to restore the national identity and Arab personality of the newly independent nation. The policy of Arabization was supported by the vast majority of Algerian, mostly non-Berbers since this project excluded them. Therefore, the Berbers, especially the Kabylis, have intensified their efforts to claim a status for their own language.

The absolute domination of Arabic, as the “language of the nation” did not make the Algerians feel at home with their “national” language. Hundreds of thousands French-educated Algerians felt excluded from the Arabization project. Hence, the rise of rivalry between the new “Arabophone” elites seeking a better share of power and the Francophone ones already settled in most areas of the state machine (ministries, mass media, universities, etc.). This rivalry led to ideological clashes between the two sides. For example, the Francophone side attacked the Arabophone on its conservatism and alliance with the Islamists, while they attacked the Francophone elites and the secular Berbers as *Hizb Fransa*. The Islamists, for their part, have not hesitated to compare the Berber movement with their supposed worst enemy, the Jews (Tilmatine, “Arabization and linguistic domination: Berber and Arabic in North of Africa)

³⁶ ,Ahfir ,Abdallah. *The historical Roots of Amazigh and its Arabization Factors in Algeria*. In *Revisita Argelina* 6(Primavira 2018):67-64

³⁷ Likewise, Arab nationalism with Nasser in Egypt and Baathism in Iraq and Syria dominated the Arab populations through the late 1950s (following the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956) right to the rise, of Islamist ideology after the Iranian Revolution.

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Conclusion

Contemporary Algeria is still facing unknown horizons. Neither national identity nor national languages are settled. Clashes of identity can be observed daily between those who claim they are arabs, the Kabylians, the Muzabites of Ghardaïa and the Tuaregs. Islamic identity is another big issue as many Algerians refuse Islam as an identity but prefer to leave it in the private sphere.

In this chapter, similarities and differences between the two countries will be examined: politically and culturally (the economic aspects will not be addressed.)

1. At the Political Level

First the two countries belong to two different continents: Europe and Africa. while Algeria has a mixture of Ethnic groups: Arab, Kabyle, Chawi, Muzabite, Tuareg, and Blacks. It also belongs to another faith: Islam. In this respect, the Irish nation is more homogeneous and shows a strong sense of belonging.

Ireland gained its independence in 1921 after centuries of English dominance. Very few European nations, if not none, have experienced what the Irish have gone through. Their chance if one may call it is to lay in Europe as a bridge between the Old Continent and America. Moreover, Ireland belongs to the Western Civilization with its Judeo-Christian background. Ireland soon showed it was a democratic state by following democratic rules right from its birth despite its “revolutionary” colour.

Ireland then joined the European Union in 1973. This has had an impact on the development of the Irish nation since Ireland was regarded by most nations as an almost insignificant island, still struggling to find its place in the world more than five decades after gaining independence from the UK.

Algeria, for its part, became independent after 7 years of ruthless war. Aggrandized since 1830 thanks to France. Ottoman rule in Algeria or the so-called Algerian state during the Ottoman period did not reach towns like Ghardaia, Ouargla and Bechar in the South. In fact the Turks left no real state, no universities, no high schools and no towns.

Algeria’s political system is dominated by a strong presidency and security apparatus. Elections are regularly held, but political dynamics appear to be dominated by opaque politico-military elite networks that Algerians refer to as *Le Pouvoir*³⁶. The political system has remained stable amid regional upheaval since 2011. Yet Algerians face future uncertainty as President Abdelaziz Bouteflika’s resignation has left a political deadlock or standstill. The 2011 Arab Uprisings, also known as the Arab Spring, will most probably continue to have effects on these countries. Algeria in particular is a unique case, and the question of how the Algerian state dealt

³⁶ Arieff, Alexis. Algeria: Current Issues, African Affairs November 18, 2013.

with the impact of the regional upheaval has been asked by political scientists, sociologists, and experts within a variety of other disciplines. Though it is disingenuous to claim that Algeria did not participate in the Arab Uprisings, the country did not experience the level of political unrest that its neighbours of Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt did. There were minor protests and calls for democratic reform that echoed those in the nearby countries, though the Algerian regime only responded with limited liberalization of existing policies and limited economic cushion³⁷.

Algeria is a fascinating politico-linguistic case study, in part due to its unique pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence history compared to the parallel history of the neighbouring states. The state withstood a longer, harsher colonial period than Morocco and Tunisia, as well as fighting a decidedly more violent war for independence and a significant internal civil war in the 1990s. Since winning independence, the longstanding nationalist regime of Algeria has steered the state away from much of the cultural acclimation to the legacy and infrastructure left by France. One of the clearest signals of this intent is seen in how discussion of the language issue is dealt with by state policies. As the young state has matured, language has been both a dividing and central factor within political and cultural movements. On the other hand, Algeria readily adopted the French tradition of Jacobinism that guides today's state with a strong centralized and socialist government³⁸ The form of government that harkens back to the revolutionary movements of France is now the same form of government that resisted a thread of upheaval at a time when revolution was occurring all across North Africa. The indigenous communities that populated the region during the Ottoman Empire still have strong voices in the modern state, some demographics more so than others. While the Ottoman Empire didn't fully collapse until the early 1900s, the region it covered began shrinking decades earlier. North Africa, originally a fairly self-governed sphere within the empire, saw a wave of European colonization much earlier than the Gulf and Levant states. Algeria was the earliest of the colonized regions in North Africa³⁹.

Following the Berber Spring and the nationwide protests against the nationalist regime and its policies, the Algerian government made major adjustments to the party laws and electoral process⁴⁰. Party restrictions were lifted and a variety of new political parties were formed.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Benrabah, Mohamed . *language conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-independence*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters , 2013.

³⁹ Arieff, Alexis, *Current Issues, African Affaires* November 18, 2013.

⁴⁰ Ibid

Elections were held in the early 1990s and, in a surprising turn of events, in 1992 an Islamist party (Islamic Salvation Front; FIS) won municipal elections. Today's Algeria is an example of a multilingual state, despite the state sponsored idea of monolingualism entrenched in their Algerian identity stake. Though Algeria's Arabization policies have rationalized Arabic in many spheres, it remains true that French is still a dominant feature of the Algerian economy. Both private and public sector jobs call for French language competency⁴¹. In fact, Algeria has never succeeded to totally "Arabize" itself since many of the economic, judicial, and higher academic institutions still use or function in the French language⁴²

2. At the Sociological Level

The two countries differ historically and sociologically. The two nations belong to two different continents or better, to two different civilizational worlds. Ireland belongs to the Western-European-Judeo-Christian one and Algeria to the African-Arab-Muslim one.

2.1. Ireland

Ireland has been ethnically more or less homogeneous: the Irish people are essentially Celtic and Anglo-Norman⁴³. The national language is Gaelic and poses no problem as to its acceptance by the citizens and (re)diffusion after being prohibited and excluded from the national scene for centuries and replaced by English, the language of the colonizer.

The English masters left cities, roads, universities, and so many other buildings as Ireland was part of the UK from 1801 to Independence. By the end of the 19th century, there were several important towns and monuments which the British built in Ireland. They also built trains, trams and roads:

Echoing the Monty Python sketch, "What did the Romans ever do for us?" Charlie drove off paying a warm tribute to our former British oppressors for building all those galleries and museums... It's a good job that the Brits were here for a few years and left us a few old buildings

⁴¹ Benrabah Mohamed. *Language conflict in Algeria from colonialism to post- independence*. Bristol: multilingual matters, 2013, xiv+199 pp.978 1 84769964 0

⁴² Austin, Averett, *Algeria in Perspective: Changing the Understanding of the Modern Algerian State*, 2015.

⁴³ *A Brief History of Ireland*, pdf, accessed on February 24,2019

Linguistically, the fact of being Britain's first colony in the world left indelible traces in Irish society as a whole. As M.Cambria argues, the case of Ireland is unique among the English-speaking colonies⁴⁴ :

“Within the constellation of British colonies, Ireland represents a case in point. Ireland was the first British colony and in the historical spread of English during the colonial period, Irish English played a central role alongside forms of Scottish English and British English (Hickey 2004; McCafferty 2011). It is probably the place where the colonial legacy is the strongest as English has been present in the island for over 800 years, but its position and position-ing within the Empire is often controversial”⁴⁵.

Indeed, no European nation had been colonized in such a way. Almost 8 centuries of English presence, then trying to rebuild the nation from 1921 onwards, with the language issue as the main one. This is quite similar to the Algerian case as we will see now.

2.2. Algeria

Algeria as a nation faces several challenges, political, economic, demographic and cultural ones, too. First, the country has since independence in 1962 claimed its Arab identity on the basis that the majority of the population speak Arabic. The Berber question has always been postponed ever since the creation of the FLN/ALN organizations to liberate the country from French colonization⁴⁶. Now, this big identity issue, that of questioning who the Algerians are (Arab? Berber? Both? Africans, too?) is quite vivid

The Kabylis have been fighting against the regime for their exclusion as a “people”; hence their demands for both autonomy and justice. First, they claim they are the first indigenous inhabitants of the land well before the arrival of the Arabs under the banner of Islam in the 7th century. They also claim, alongside historians that the Arabs, including the later waves of Banu-hilal or Hillalians in the 11th century could not possibly make the whole Maghreb ethnically Arab⁴⁷. Hence, most Kabylis thinkers and leaders, as well as former presidents Chadli and Bouteflika claimed that there are no Arabs in Algeria as such but that the Algerians are

⁴⁴ www.quora.com/Did-Ireland-benefit-from-being-part-of-the-UK-from-1801-to-1922, accessed on 17 May 201

⁴⁵ Cambria, Mariavita, “Is it English what we speak?” *Irish English and postcolonial Identity*, *Studi irlandesi. A Journal of Irish Studies*, n.4(2014), pp.19-33.

⁴⁶ Boubekeur, 2011; Benrabah, 2013

⁴⁷ Ramzi, Rouighi, “The Berber of the Arabs: Moors and Berbers”, in *Studia Islamica*, 2011, pp.62- 101.

Amazighs (Berbers) most of whom have been arabized by Islam. Therefore, the fight for Berber identity continued rising since 1980 (the Berber spring) and later (2001) until the making of Tamazight (the Berber language) both national and later official (2016)⁴⁸.

The Arab Algerians, for their part, claim they are Arabs since they speak Arabic. Critics of such a position say the Sudanese are black Africans and claim they are Africans first and foremost⁴⁹. However, deep in themselves the Arabic –speaking Algerians do not pay attention to this official version of history. They think and strongly believe they are Arabs regardless of any historical claim. They seem to say: “I speak Arabic, therefore I am Arab”. This attitude is reinforced in school and elsewhere where Classical Arabic, the language of the Koran, is used.

The policy of Arabization in the country starting from 1962 onwards led to the decrease of the influence of French and the increase of the influence of Arabic. This led observers to speak of a power struggle between French speakers or francophones and Arabic speakers or arabophones⁵⁰. The use of Classical Arabic in the political sphere as well as among the new elites led to a fierce battle of power. The Kabylis and the French-speaking Arabs of Algeria joined forces against the Islamo-conservative defenders of Classical Arabic. But, in fact, neither the former nor the latter is winning the fight.

Now, the other issue in the country is the French language. It first came with French troops and settlers as a foreign language. However, it gradually moved from that status to almost that of “national” language in practice. Most Algerians speak it or understand it; it is in our schools and universities, it is on tv, on the newspapers, it is kept alive by francophone writers (Yasmina Khadra, Kamel Daoud, etc), our political leaders and ministers use it on tv, too; in short it is everywhere in our daily life⁵¹.

French is also the language of our diaspora in France, Quebec, Belgium and Switzerland. It is the medium by which they communicate with their relatives in the motherland. One more point is that the Kabylis see Arabic as the language of the Arab “colonizers”, while

⁴⁸ www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/509632/politique/algerie-bouteflika-et-les-amazighs/, accessed on 18 May 2019

⁴⁹ Heather J. Sharkey, “Arab Identity and Ideology in Sudan: The Politics of Language, Ethnicity and Race” , 2007,pdf

⁵⁰ Benrabah, Mohamed. Language in Education Planning in Algeria: Historical Development in Language Policy (2007) 6225-252. Springer. 2007.

⁵¹ Aid, Samia. *Le statut du français en Algérie*, PDF, 2017.

the Arab Algerians do not speak Berber. Hence French seems to be a “neutral” language which made President Bouteflika claimed for it a national status in 2002 in Lebanon:

« Aujourd’hui, nous devons savoir nous départir de la nostalgie chatouilleuse qui s’exprime en repli sur soi et nous ouvrir sans complexe à la culture de l’autre afin de mieux affronter défi de la modernité et du développement par nous-mêmes. La langue française qui pendant longtemps et pour une grande partie de l’Afrique, a été la langue de la colonisation doit devenir aujourd’hui la langue de l’émancipation et du progrès (...) l’usage de la langue française est un lien qui assure notre unité »⁵² .

Hence, the claim that French is the language of national unity much the same as in Mali for instance where many ethnic groups speak their own language.

The question of identity and national language(s) is a bomb for national unity. Sooner or later, the nation will have to address it seriously.

Conclusion

Both Ireland and Algeria face challenges, namely those related to language and national identity. While the Irish clearly identify as Irish, their daily life is nurtured and fed by mighty English, the real and true “national” language of the country. Likewise, and although the Algerians have one major national language that they use every day (Algerian Arabic), the clash with both Berber as a minority language and Classical Arabic as a non-spoken language is there. For it is obvious that no nation can survive long with a non-spoken national language. The Berber language is both spoken and written; that is not the case of Classical Arabic.

⁵²ibid

General Conclusion

This work tried to examine two cases of long colonization, Ireland in Europe and Algeria in Africa. The study revealed similarities in language and identity and differences in socio-political aspects.

On the one hand, Ireland had been colonized by the English for too long (nearly 800 years) from 1169 to 1921. During this long period, the colonizers established their rules (political, social) and own language while ignoring Gaelic (Irish language) which had been prohibited for use.

Likewise, Algeria had been colonized by various foreign powers starting with the Ottomans in 1525 (till 1830) and later the French in 1830 (till 1962). Here again, language and identity seem to be a big national issue as we have seen.

problem as well as that of identity is of utmost importance. For the Algerians seem to be lost between ethnic identity (“Arabness”, “Berberness”) and religious identity (Islamness). In general, nations identify with culture and geography; for instance, the French. Clearly, the Irish case is problematic as regards two aspects: language/identity and political unity with Northern Ireland. These two issues will keep the Irish nation preoccupied with its stability and future prospects for quite a long time.

In the case of Algeria, the language is French because of French culture and European because of geography, too. In the case of Algeria, with its multicultural and multilingual dimensions, the answer is not clear.

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