

A Divided Republic

**Nation, State and Citizenship
in Contemporary France**

Emile Chabal

A Divided Republic: Nation, State and Citizenship in Contemporary France

This book is an original and sophisticated historical interpretation of contemporary French political culture. Until now, there have been few attempts to understand the political consequences of the profound geopolitical, intellectual and economic changes that France has undergone since the 1970s. However, Emile Chabal's detailed study shows how passionate debates over citizenship, immigration, colonial memory, the reform of the state and the historiography of modern France have galvanised the French elite and created new spaces for discussion and disagreement. Many of these debates have coalesced around two political languages – republicanism and liberalism – both of which structure the historical imagination and the symbolic vocabulary of French political actors. The tension between these two political languages has become the central battleground of contemporary French politics. It is around these two poles that politicians, intellectuals and members of France's vast civil society have tried to negotiate the formidable challenges of ideological uncertainty and a renewed sense of global insecurity.

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4 Post-colonies I: integration, disintegration and citizenship

Regardez les portugais, ils ne font pas tant d'histoires!

A humorous definition of *intégration* from a 1989 study of second-generation immigrants in France¹

From a purely academic point of view, post-colonialism came late to France. French historians, political scientists and sociologists resisted attempts to understand modern French history through a post-colonial lens until the early 2000s. Imperialism and its consequences were put to one side as France 'silenced' memories of its colonial encounters in North and West Africa, Indochina and beyond.² Yet, if post-colonialism seemed invisible inside the academy, outside it was omnipresent. France received an enormous influx of migrants from its former colonies and elsewhere from the 1960s onwards. Soon, second- and third-generation immigrant children were reclaiming what they perceived as 'their' colonial memories. Whether in the form of 'reparations' for slavery, or a recognition of police violence against Algerians in Paris in 1961, there was a growing number of demands from a wide variety of pressure groups, organisations, individuals and political movements.³ Alongside the resurgence of colonial memory, other major problems began to surface. Institutionalised racism blocked access to housing and the labour market, while spatial segregation turned many French *banlieues* (suburbs) into areas where unemployment, violence and social exclusion were the norm. It seemed that the problem was not simply one of silenced memories; the post-colonial predicament had become an integral part of French society.

¹ Jean-Marie Têrrasse and Virginie Linhart, *Génération Beur* (Paris: Plon, 1989), p. 10.

² On this, see for instance, Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel and Sandrine Lemaire, *La fracture coloniale: La société française au prisme des héritages coloniaux* (Paris: La Découverte, 2005). I discuss this in more detail in [chapter 8](#).

³ On the memory of slavery in France, see Françoise Vergès, *La mémoire enchaînée* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2006). On Paris 1961, see Jim House and Neil Macmaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror and Memory* (Oxford University Press, 2006). On France's memory wars more generally, see Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (eds.), *Les Guerres de Mémoires: La France et son histoire* (Paris: La Découverte 2008).

One of the main consequences of this change was that France's post-colonial immigrant communities became increasingly visible. This, in turn, has led to impassioned debates over immigration and colonial memory – two of the most pressing political issues in contemporary France. Not a week goes by without, for example, a public debate over the right of non-EU citizens to vote (a long-standing Socialist electoral pledge that has still not been fulfilled), a disagreement over whether there should be public funding for mosques (an area of considerable legal ambiguity), or a polemical exchange over the Algerian War. It is only natural, therefore, that neo-republicanism – which developed in the 1980s at the same time as many of these questions and focused heavily on definitions of citizenship and the nation – should have become intimately tied up with this emerging post-colonial challenge to French national identity. As neo-republicanism has become a vital part of the symbolic vocabulary of French politics, it has been repeatedly deployed in the face of the bleeding of the colonial past into the present.

This has been most clearly visible in a variety of words and ideas that have gained wide currency in France. The most potent of these is *intégration* (integration) – a word whose myriad meanings will form the basis of this chapter. The struggle to define *intégration* and its opposites (*désintégration*, *fracture sociale*, *communautarisme* . . .) has structured debates surrounding post-colonial minorities. It has provided a means through which political actors of every persuasion have been able to understand social problems and the rise of identity politics in France. Not all of this has been related to immigration, ethnicity or the legacy of colonialism. But, for various reasons, *intégration* has become indelibly associated with a cluster of debates that focus on these issues, such as racism, nationality law and Islamic fundamentalism. Significantly for our purposes, the idea of *intégration* also provides an excellent case study of how neo-republicanism has penetrated political discourse and policy practice in France. In this chapter, we shall see how discussions about the meaning of *intégration* reveal the umbilical relationship between neo-republicanism and France's post-colonial predicament – a relationship that was already implicit in previous chapters. And we shall see how the most common definition of *intégration* has come to rely on a specifically neo-republican historical narrative, sociological theory and conception of citizenship.

Dividing the nation: immigration, the Front National and *la fracture sociale*

No threat has traditionally been perceived as more dangerous to a republican vision of national unity than that of 'désintégration', which

in French carries the double meaning of the 'disintegration' of the state and the failure of citizens to 'integrate'. Since the 1980s, one of the most prominent perceived causes of disintegration in France has been immigration.⁴ Of course, France is not unique in this. The emergence of immigration as an issue has been well documented across Europe. It has been intensified by the rise of anti-immigrant populist politics in the past three decades. The Europe-wide collapse of the far left has led disgruntled voters to vote in large numbers for the extreme right in a geopolitical climate that has created a new, more confrontational attitude towards Europe's Islamic minorities. For all its similarities, however, the French experience is distinct in two important respects. First, despite its long history as a country of immigration, the issue of immigration has – until recently – played little or no part in the writing of a national narrative in which the question of 'origin' has always been subservient to a project of 'social' and 'national' integration. Second, France has been unusual in the strength and persistence there of an organised extreme right-wing party since the 1980s.⁵ As we shall see, these are the two crucial contexts that have underpinned the French political class's feeling of 'disintegration'.

France has long been a country of immigration. Yet, surprisingly, scholarly interest in the subject is a relatively new phenomenon. Part of the explanation for this silence was a singular lack of academic work on the subject until the late 1970s. As the historian Gérard Noiriel pointed out in his seminal volume *Le creuset français* (1988), academic studies presented immigration as 'external' to France – a transitory or fleeting economic phenomenon. It was absent from textbooks, and academic historians left the subject largely to students of law. For Noiriel, the explanation for this lies in the fact that the modern idea of the nation in France came into being during the French Revolution, before the widespread use of the term 'immigration'. This meant that foreigners were not considered an integral part of the nation.⁶ By the time immigration became a significant phenomenon in France in the later part of the nineteenth century, the nation had been ideologically 'fixed'. There was no space for the experience of immigrants or foreigners within the French national narrative, despite the fact that France had a higher rate

⁴ Alec Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'Race' and Ethnicity in Contemporary France* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 151.

⁵ Emmanuel Godin, 'Does it make sense to treat the Front National as a French exception?', in Emmanuel Godin and Tony Chafer (eds.), *The French Exception* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2004).

⁶ Michael Rapport, *Nationality and Citizenship in Revolutionary France: The Treatment of Foreigners 1789–99* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), pp. 327–43.

of immigration in relation to the overall population than the United States for long periods in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁷ It was only in the 1970s that French historians began to look at this major social phenomenon, in response to the obvious contemporary importance of immigration as a political and social issue. But even then there was nothing like the public memorialisation of sites of immigration like Ellis Island in the United States or the complex empirical research on immigrant communities of the kind that has long existed in Britain or the United States.

Today, there is relatively little disagreement about Noiriel's arguments as they relate to his analysis of immigration studies in France. Nor can there be much doubt that *Le creuset français* marked a watershed in French studies of immigration, after which an entire school of students inside and outside France began to look at the question in much greater detail.⁸ Nevertheless, Noiriel's book simultaneously (and inadvertently) revealed some important assumptions about French attitudes towards immigration and the integration of migrant communities. Even though this was the first detailed and empirical investigation into a phenomenon long pushed aside in a French republican narrative of national unity, it still held to two important tenets of this narrative: first, it underplayed the importance of France's colonial encounter and, second, it maintained that the challenges of 'ethnic' integration are little different from those of social integration. The following passage highlights the first of these two assumptions:

The fact that the [latest wave] of mass immigration ... is from the colonial world ... is indeed unprecedented. For the first time, individuals whose family life has been marked by wars that were started by French people ... are confronted with the question of naturalisation and this can provoke particularly acute problems of conscience.⁹

Such a statement would have appeared profoundly uncontroversial to most British academics writing about this subject in the late 1980s, especially given that well-known scholars such as Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall were writing about the interrelationship of race, post-colonialism and immigration at the same time.¹⁰ In France, by contrast, the same intellectual traditions were almost entirely absent and Noiriel could

⁷ Gérard Noiriel, *Le Creuset Français* (Paris: Edition du Seuil, 1988), pp. 16–30.

⁸ For outside perspectives on the question of immigration and integration in twentieth-century French history, see e.g. Mary Dewhurst Lewis, *Boundaries of the Republic: Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism, 1918–1940* (Stanford University Press, 2007).

⁹ Noiriel, *Creuset Français*, p. 211.

¹⁰ Most famously, perhaps, Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: the Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

quickly pass over the issue of France's colonial past without arousing suspicion. Indeed, it is astonishing that this brief mention of the colonial encounter was the only time in his 500-page book that he acknowledged the role of France's colonial heritage and its relation to immigration. The implication was clear: that colonialism and the discourse of superiority that accompanied it were relatively insignificant to an understanding of French immigration – be it in the 1920s or the 1990s.¹¹ In this sense, *Le creuset français* clearly rehearsed a traditional republican narrative of 'colour-blind' integration. By downplaying the relevance of the colonial encounter to contemporary immigration, Noiriél was suggesting that migrant identity and memory were of negligible importance, even though there was ample evidence at the time that racism and colonialism were vital factors in understanding immigrant responses to French society.

This brings us directly to Noiriél's second claim in *Le creuset français*, that immigration should be viewed as a 'social' rather than an 'ethnic' problem. As he put it,

Is not the clearest proof of the effectiveness of the French melting pot illustrated precisely by the fact that the diversity of its origins today passes unnoticed by specialists of immigration themselves ...?¹²

With this statement, Noiriél was evidently trying to counter political rhetoric from the extreme right about the 'explosion' of migrants in France. He wanted to stress that immigration is an old problem that need not provoke hysterical panic. In so doing, however, he summarily dismissed current problems of integration as simply another manifestation of France's social problems, and reduced feelings of alienation among young ethnic minorities to a generalised 'crisis of hope' affecting the current generation.¹³ Paradoxically, in trying to defuse the apocalyptic talk of a 'crisis of integration' and a 'flood' of migrants, he pushed the question of 'ethnic' integration into the same category as 'social' integration – a strategy that would subsequently be enthusiastically taken up by neo-republicans seeking to counteract the corrosive effect of identity politics in France.

Some of Noiriél's blind spots can be explained with reference to his political allegiances and intellectual trajectory. Noiriél's training was as a Marxist historian who worked on the northern French working class, and, even though he has drawn on a very wide range of influences since then, his work on immigration has always been driven by what he calls

¹¹ For a more critical perspective see Neil Macmaster, *Colonial Migrants and Racism* (London: Macmillan, 1997).

¹² Noiriél, *Creuset Français*, p. 341. ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

'socio-history'.¹⁴ This has resulted in an overwhelming interest in the empirical facts of immigration and relations of power inside French society. He has left to one side questions of 'identity', 'discourse' and 'belonging'. Inevitably, this strict social approach, and some of his later essays denying, for instance, the double identity of second-generation immigrants, made his work popular with neo-republicans.¹⁵ He recently acknowledged this and, in an effort to correct his image, wrote a book specifically on racial discourse in nineteenth- and twentieth-century France.¹⁶ But he still remains resolutely hostile to analyses of contemporary France that emphasise its 'post-colonial' character, writing in 2009:

[T]he ritual invocation of the 'colonial imaginary' as a way of analysing the social problems that affect today's young people from deprived backgrounds [*jeunes des quartiers*] has the effect of inhibiting our understanding of *existing* power relations, and the role that professional opinion-formers play in the construction of stereotypes.¹⁷

Thus, while Noiriel can hardly be considered an unreconstructed neo-republican, the argumentative thrust of much of his work on immigration has helped to rehabilitate one of the central assumptions of neo-republicanism, namely that problems of ethnic integration are the same as those of social integration. Moreover, by dismissing France's 'post-colonial turn', Noiriel has reinforced the sense that the legacy of colonialism is largely irrelevant, and possibly even dangerous, to an understanding of contemporary French politics. In the context of a renewed political interest in the integration of migrant and ethnic minority communities, it is telling that the scholar who did most to rehabilitate immigration as an object of serious study in 1980s France simultaneously found himself reproducing a number of neo-republican assumptions.

Alongside the rediscovery of immigration in the academy, and the (often well-meaning) tendency to conflate 'ethnic' and 'social' integration, there was also a very real political concern, which forced immigration and integration to the top of the political agenda: the rise of the FN. This was vital

¹⁴ His early work was published as Gérard Noiriel, *Longwy: immigrés et prolétaires* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984). On Noiriel's influences see Gérard Noiriel, *Penser avec, penser contre: itinéraire d'un historien* (Paris: Belin, 2003). On socio-history, see Noiriel, *Etat, nation, immigration*, and Gérard Noiriel, *Sur la crise de l'histoire* (Paris: Belin, 1996).

¹⁵ 'Les jeunes 'd'origine immigrée' n'existent pas', in Gérard Noiriel, *Etat, nation, immigration: vers une histoire du pouvoir* (Paris: Bélin/Folio 2001).

¹⁶ Gérard Noiriel, *Immigration, antisémitisme et racisme en France: discours publics, humiliations privées* (Paris: Seuil, 2007).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 681 (emphasis in original).

both in placing immigration at the heart of political discussion but also in helping to create a renewed consensus around republican values.¹⁸ Since the FN's first publicised success – in the municipal elections in Dreux in 1983 – the party has posed a constant threat to the consensual character of France's post-Gaullist political landscape. Gathering strength in legislative and presidential elections, the FN's most spectacular success was on 21 April 2002, when its presidential candidate, Jean-Marie Le Pen, squeezed past the Socialist Lionel Jospin in the first round of the presidential elections. But Le Pen's success was only the most striking manifestation of the FN as a political protest movement. With the collapse of the PCF, the FN became at once an inheritor of the erstwhile *poujadisme* of provincial France's lower middle class and of a wide-ranging critique of the supposedly complacent consensus of the Parisian elites.¹⁹ The party's most popular slogan – 'la France au Français' – not only ran counter to the abstract, non-ethnic conception of the French Republic but was also an attack on the country's elites. The FN posed, therefore, a double threat: first, to the ideal of the Republic and, second, to the institutions and personalities who make up the Republic. Hence, perhaps, the vehemence with which political figures associated with the revival of a republican discourse denounced the FN.

At the same time, Le Pen's sometimes frenzied attacks on Muslims, Arabs, *sans-papiers* and *clandestins* (illegal immigrants) took the logic of French immigration policy to its most extreme conclusion.²⁰ In common with other European countries, the official discourse in France surrounding immigration throughout the 1980s increasingly emphasised immigration as 'transgression' by using a discourse of illegality to marginalise both economic migrants and asylum seekers.²¹ The unfortunate expression 'the threshold of tolerance [*seuil de tolerance*]' – picked up by Mitterrand in December 1989 to describe the limits of France's immigration policy – indicated the degree to which this view had become widespread, even on the left, where the idea would previously have been condemned as racist.²² Of course, it is debatable whether France's

¹⁸ On this see especially Favell, *Philosophies of Integration*.

¹⁹ For an analysis of the Front National's role in the context of the French right, see Jim Shields, *The Extreme Right in France, from Pétain to Le Pen* (London: Routledge, 2007).

²⁰ A famous example of this hysteria is Le Pen's statement that 'Demain, les immigrés s'installeront chez vous, mangeront votre soupe et coucheront avec votre femme, votre fille ou votre fils.' From a speech by Jean-Marie Le Pen on 14 February 1984 in 'Dossier Société – Le Front National: c'est ça', *Le Monde* (21 March 1998).

²¹ On this, see the analysis in Max Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism and Citizenship in Modern France* (London: Routledge, 1992).

²² Excerpts of Mitterrand's original speech on illegal immigration can be found in 'L'immigration clandestine ne doit pas être tolérée', *Le Monde* (12 December 1989).

increasingly repressive immigration policy can be attributed to the influence of the FN alone; European, geopolitical and economic imperatives have also played a crucial part in the worsening climate for migrants. Still, the FN concentrated the fears of France's political elites and gave neo-republicans a clear enemy. From a purely philosophical perspective, to stress the integrative power of the Republic against the FN's 'ethnic' conception of the nation was to suggest that immigrants can and should have a place in French society. More pragmatically, the electoral successes of the FN created the conditions for a new defensive *pacte républicain* in the 1990s that was designed to protect French politics from the influence of the extreme right.

By the mid 1990s, the political and social problems surrounding immigration, identity politics and the extreme right seemed to have come to a head. It was at this point that the term *fracture sociale* came to prominence, both as a way of understanding the fragmentation of French society and as a basis on which to build policy. There is no satisfactory translation for *fracture sociale* in English. The English terms 'social fracture' and 'social cohesion' are vague, while 'inequality' suggests a primarily economic phenomenon.²³ In French, however, *fracture sociale* implies a breakdown, dissolution or disintegration of the body politic. Such a notion provided the ideal counterpoint to a neo-republican project of nation-building. As we shall see, for neo-republicans of all stripes, *intégration* was the logical solution to *la fracture sociale*. But the enthusiasm with which French political figures in the 1990s adopted the word 'fracture' to describe the ills of the nation was in itself an indication of the penetration of a neo-republican language of national unity into the French political space.

The first use of the term *fracture sociale* was attributed (incorrectly) to the geographer, Emmanuel Todd, in the early 1990s, but it came to prominence in the 1995 presidential election campaign, when Jacques Chirac called on 'republican discipline' to counter the threat of the Front National.²⁴ This gave Chirac the political legitimacy to invoke the traditional rallying cry of the Republic: that the Republic was in danger. Alongside the threat from Le Pen, there was a growing sense of

On the penetration of far-right discourse into French politics, see Pierre Tévanian and Sylvie Tissot, *Mots à Maux: le dictionnaire de la lépénisation de l'esprit* (Paris: Dagorno, 1998).

²³ There are echoes of the French idea of 'social fracture' in the writings of Anglo-American conservatives such as Charles Murray and Theodore Dalrymple, but they focus much more on a negative view of 'culture' than politics and citizenship.

²⁴ Emmanuel Todd, 'Rien ne sépare les enfants d'immigrés du reste de la société', *Le Monde* (12 November 2005).

insecurity. In particular, rising unemployment and unrest in France's *banlieues* had once again brought to the fore issues of social exclusion, racism and spatial segregation. Employing an analytical term that was in vogue at the time, Chirac grouped these numerous problems under the term *fracture sociale*. The success of the phrase was immediate. After Chirac won the election, variants of the term began to appear regularly across a variety of media.²⁵ For example, the sociologist Michel Wieviorka, in his work on the strikes of 1995, used it to describe the kind of social divisions that had led to the confrontational politics of the strikers.²⁶ The writer Azouz Bégag, whose fictional writing had played a major role in bringing the problems of second-generation immigrant children to public attention in the 1980s, talked of a *fracture ethnique*.²⁷ Others, particularly those on the losing left, denounced the growing *fracture politique*, the most important aspect of which was the right's neglect of 'popular sovereignty'.²⁸

As the millennium approached, the term appeared to have lost none of its urgency. When asked in a 1997 opinion poll, the overwhelming majority of respondents claimed that the *fracture sociale* had either remained as bad as it ever was or had worsened.²⁹ By 1999, the French had, according to another opinion poll, become the 'most morose' of west European nations, which the then head of the French polling organisation IPSOS, Pierre Giacometti, attributed to the continuing fracture.³⁰ On the right, figures such as Henri Guiano used the concept to suggest that France was going through a 'moral and intellectual crisis'.³¹ On the left, the term was employed both to undermine Chirac's policies and to understand Jospin's failure in the 2002 presidential elections. The riots of 2005 in the *banlieues* and the rejection of the European Constitution in the same year saw the idea return to prominence: an

²⁵ For a multifarious interpretation of the 'fracture sociale', see Claude Julien, 'Brève radiographie d'une fracture sociale', *Le Monde Diplomatique* (6 June 1995).

²⁶ Michel Wieviorka, 'Le sens d'une lutte', in Alain Touraine (ed.), *Le Grand Refus* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), pp. 250–5.

²⁷ Bruno Causse, 'Intégration: M. Chirac face aux fractures sociale et ethnique des banlieues', *Le Monde* (14 October 1995).

²⁸ Jérôme Lèbre, 'Vers une fracture politique', *Le Monde* (20 September 1995).

²⁹ The poll revealed that 48 per cent of respondents thought that the *fracture sociale* had not improved, while 42 per cent thought that it had worsened. Only 5 per cent felt that there had been any improvement. 'Scepticisme des français sur la "fracture sociale"', *Le Monde* (17 April 1997).

³⁰ 'La France: Pays de la fracture sociale', *Le Figaro* (23 June 1999).

³¹ Henri Guiano, 'L'opinion et les responsables politiques: Comment en est-on arrivé à cette crise générale de la confiance? La fracture morale', *Le Figaro* (4 November 2000); Henri Guiano, 'La crise actuelle n'est ni technique, ni économique, ni sociale. Elle est intellectuelle et morale. Plaidoyer pour le principe d'autorité', *Le Figaro* (18 June 2001).

editorial in *Le Monde* in late 2005 suggested that the *fracture sociale* had not been addressed and that both the right and the left were responsible for the ‘destruction [*déchirure*] of the republican pact’ in the *banlieues*.³² In the meantime, scholars of French colonial history coined the term *fracture coloniale* to describe the initial suppression and subsequent resurgence of France’s colonial memories at the turn of the twentieth century, while the political scientist Pierre Rosanvallon used *fracture sociale* to describe France’s social problems.³³ Claims in 2001 that the term *fracture sociale* had been replaced by ‘insécurité’ (insecurity) in the electoral vocabulary were premature, and there have been few signs that the earlier concept has passed its political sell-by date. For example, editorials in *Le Monde* in 2007 and 2008 again invoked various fractures – ‘social, educational, ethnic, urban’ – to explain the worsening state of the Parisian *banlieues*.³⁴ Within a decade, the idea of fracture had become deeply ingrained in academic and political debates.

The continuing relevance and use of the term *fracture sociale*, and the zeal with which it was adopted by France’s political and intellectual elite in the mid 1990s, was a testimony to both the fear of fragmentation and the continuing pre-eminence of a neo-republican language of national unity. In some cases, the link was made explicit – as was the case when philosopher Blandine Kriegel came up with the term ‘fracture républicaine’ in 2002 – but, in the majority of cases, it was simply assumed that any ‘fracture’ would, by definition, compromise national unity.³⁵ Above all, the notion of a *fracture sociale* was a means by which new and disruptive post-colonial narratives of second-generation identity politics or post-colonial racism, could be understood and fitted into an existing neo-republican framework. Just as Noiriel’s arguments had minimised the role of colonialism by underplaying the importance of ‘ethnic’ identities, so the idea of the *fracture sociale* reduced disruptive post-colonial narratives to one part of a much wider narrative of generalised socio-economic crisis. Even if there was widespread popular recognition that a number of France’s social ills were in some way related to the country’s colonial legacy, the idea of *fracture sociale* made it possible

³² ‘Fracture urbaine’, *Le Monde* (8 November 2005).

³³ Blanchard, Bancel and Lemaire, *La fracture coloniale*; Pierre Rosanvallon and Thierry Pech, ‘Introduction’, in Pierre Rosanvallon and Thierry Pech (eds.), *La nouvelle critique sociale* (Paris: Seuil, 2006), p. 16.

³⁴ ‘Banlieues, la fracture’, *Le Monde* (26 October 2007); ‘Banlieues, la rage’, *Le Monde* (17 June 08). In an interview in March 2002, the sociologist Robert Rochefort claimed that the term ‘insécurité’ had replaced that of a *fracture sociale*; Robert Rochefort and Emmanuel Todd, ‘Interview avec Robert Rochefort, Emmanuel Todd: Le thème d’insécurité a pris le relais de la fracture sociale’, *Le Monde* (10 March 02).

³⁵ Blandine Kriegel, ‘Non à la fracture républicaine!’, *Le Figaro* (23 April 2002).

to understand this within a familiar narrative of the breakdown of the Republic and the threat of disintegration. What, then, was the solution? How could the French state repair a broken society? It was in response to France's multiple fractures that neo-republicans in the 1990s began to elaborate a new, more strident project of national integration.

Repairing the nation: the Haut Conseil à l'intégration

It has become commonplace to speak of a 'French model of integration'. Under the banner of a unifying Republic, and stressing the need to integrate immigrant communities, this French model has generally been placed in contrast to an Anglo-American 'multicultural' model that celebrates community identities and ethnic difference. The debate – often revolving around the emotive issue of Islam – usually takes on a partisan tone. To its critics, 'multiculturalism' is a dangerous celebration of fragmented multi-ethnic communities, while the 'French model' is little more than an updated version of an old assimilationist colonial ideology. Unfortunately, this easy dichotomy has too often been accepted by the French and non-French alike. The result has been to confuse a debate surrounding citizenship that has been marked by an inadequate understanding of the way concepts such as 'multiculturalism' and 'integration' have been deployed in different political contexts. Moreover, the tendency of French intellectuals to raise discussions of specific issues (such as the headscarf) to a high level of abstraction has often been misread beyond the confines of France as an invitation to further abstraction rather than as part of a political debate within the French elites. The problem with a decontextualised treatment of France's model of integration is that it ignores the importance of successive nation-building projects in modern French history. Seen in a short-term perspective, it was the complex relationship between the rise of the FN, the growing 'problem' of immigration and the legacy of France's colonial encounters that made the elaboration of a new model of integration particularly urgent. But, in a long view, current debates over national integration are simply part of an ongoing political debate which has drawn on previous attempts to unify France across religious and class lines. When the French elite talk about 'intégration', therefore, they are not merely referring to the absorption of disparate 'ethnic' communities into France; they are endorsing a nation-building project that, on paper at least, involves all French citizens.

In order to gain a clearer view of what 'intégration' means, the obvious starting point is the work of the Haut Conseil à l'intégration, some of whose reports we examined in the opening chapter. In order to gain a

clearer view of what *intégration* means, the obvious starting point is the work of the Haut Conseil à l'intégration, some of whose reports we examined in the opening chapter. The HCI provided an institutional framework for the implementation of state integration policies from 1989 until its effective dissolution in 2013 (to be replaced by the Observatoire de la Laïcité). At the time of its creation by the Socialist Prime Minister Michel Rocard in December 1989, it was seen to be a positive, state-driven response to the perceived crisis of integration. Its stated aim was to

give advice and make any useful proposition at the request of the Prime Minister or the inter-ministerial committee on integration on any question related to the integration of foreign residents or French residents of foreign origin.³⁶

To this end, it gathered together a number of important public personalities, of whom many have been associated with neo-republicanism, including the commission's presidents Marceau Long (1990–7) and Blandine Kriegel (2002–8). Nevertheless, unlike the Commission Stasi, where the presence of neo-republicans was overwhelming, the HCI is interesting precisely because its eclectic (and changing) composition gives us an insight into a more consensual, official definition of 'intégration'. Fortunately, it is not necessary to infer the HCI's interpretation of the term, since it gave a quite explicit definition:

The term 'intégration' (generally used to describe the situation of immigrants who have settled permanently in their host country) refers both to a [social] process and policies that are put in place in order to facilitate it ... The process requires the effective participation of all those called to live in France in the construction of a society that brings [its citizens] together around shared principles (liberty of thought and conscience, equality between men and women for example) as they are expressed in equal rights and common responsibilities ... To lead a policy of integration is to define and develop actions that tend towards the maintenance of social cohesion.³⁷

This excerpt has the benefit of capturing succinctly some of the very important aspects of the term 'intégration' and is entirely consistent with the definition found in the HCI's reports. What emerges strongly is its explicitly political dimension; there is a contractual element to the idea of 'shared principles'. If *intégration* is something which depends on a certain 'social cohesion', this is primarily political in nature. The unity of the body

³⁶ Article 1 du Décret no 89–912 du 19 décembre 1989 portant création d'un Haut Conseil à l'intégration, *Journal Officiel* (23 December 1989).

³⁷ This definition is taken from the glossary of terms on the HCI website, www.hci.gouv.fr/-Mots-de-l-integration-.html#1 (last accessed 10 March 2014). Significantly, this definition has found its way into a wide variety of other documents, including those produced by the erstwhile Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Cohésion Sociale et du Logement, the INSEE statistics agency, and a slew of local government documents

politic is the implicit assumption behind any 'policy of integration', for no integration can take place where there is no unity in which to integrate.

The consequence of such a conceptual framework is, to quote an HCI report from 2003, that

intégration is not only destined for French citizens of immigrant origin, but concerns any individual who participates in the public space [*espace civique*] ... National identity is experienced through shared values: it is not enough to be born on French soil to feel French. In order to come together, we must forget our particularities and discover what we have in common with others.³⁸

This is a strong form of citizenship, which passes through the state – hence the HCI's continuous emphasis on the role of a 'public debate' instigated by the state.³⁹ It is also what one might describe as a 'total' form of citizenship, insofar as it brings together the social (*insertion sociale*), the economic (*exclusion*) and the 'ethnic' (*origine*) under the specifically political notion of *intégration*, which takes as its basis a 'republican pact'. Unlike the English 'inequality', which carries economic connotations, *intégration* suggests a wider civic project.

Any policy that promotes *intégration* also necessitates the reconstruction of what has become known as the *lien social* (social bond), a subject to which the HCI devoted an entire report in 1997. It becomes obvious from the report's introduction that the weakening of the *lien social* is one of the most significant components of the *fracture sociale*, and that it is intimately tied to the fate of the nation:

The weakening of the *lien social* ... is a consequence of the search, by those belonging to the most fragmented social classes, for a collective identity that they no longer find in the nation.⁴⁰

In this analysis, the *lien social* depends on the nation. It is through the nation that the 'fragmented social classes' find their collective identity. The weakening of the *lien social* poses a fundamental threat to the body politic, since it leads to identities that 'affirm themselves against others, either through the development of a group identity and verbal aggression, or through discrimination'.⁴¹ Any weakening must therefore simultaneously entail a fragmentation of the nation itself. Of course, this logic

³⁸ Haut Conseil à l'intégration, *Le contrat et l'intégration* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2003), p. 104.

³⁹ For example, the HCI chose not to recommend the collection of statistical data along ethnic grounds, instead arguing for a greater civic debate around the issue of discrimination. See Haut Conseil à l'intégration, *Les parcours de l'intégration* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2001).

⁴⁰ Haut Conseil à l'intégration, *L'affaiblissement du lien social* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1997), p. 26.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

rests on an eminently neo-republican elision between nation, state and identity – and it is the same logic that we find in the notion of *intégration*. The ‘total’ citizenship required by the HCI’s definition of *intégration* thus becomes the obvious response to the ‘total’ disintegration of the *lien social* and the resulting *fracture sociale*.

It was noticeable that the HCI’s reports articulated an increasingly sophisticated conceptual framework from 1995 onwards, in an attempt both to respond to the critics of a monolithic republican universalism and to present a coherent ideological justification of the notion of *intégration*.⁴² The result of this increasing conceptual clarity did not, however, give rise to a questioning of the fundamental assumptions behind *intégration*. If anything, the HCI’s conclusions became more militant in tone. In 2002, the commission argued that

We must maintain the French republican tradition in its secular and contractualist version, but we must reject assimilationism, which represented its hidden organicist dimension ... Disintegration [*désintégration*] remains a threat to the Republic. [The battle for integration] is a constant struggle and public authorities must be vigilant.⁴³

Quite apart from the difficulty of distinguishing between *assimilation* and *intégration* – a problem the HCI tries to deal with in the report – this particular passage lays out quite explicitly the relationship between disintegration and republicanism. It claims that the Republic is under threat, a rallying cry that has long been part of republican language. At the same time, the HCI’s calls for vigilance on the part of ‘public authorities’ places a heavy burden on the state, whose responsibility it is to tackle the threat of disintegration.

This question of responsibility was made more explicit still in an HCI report in 2009 entitled *Études et intégration – faire connaître les valeurs de la République*. The report’s aim was to offer guidelines on measures designed to stimulate ‘the understanding of republican values and symbols among immigrants’.⁴⁴ The report’s recommendations included the mass distribution of small French flags at sporting events, and the more ‘systematic’ display of Marianne in public buildings.⁴⁵ Aside from these symbolic proposals – strikingly reminiscent of late-nineteenth-century republican attempts to bring the Republic to the provinces – the report also provided a reassertion of the necessity of ‘total’ citizenship. While

⁴² See in particular the philosophical discussion in ch. 3 of Haut Conseil à l’intégration, *Le contrat et l’intégration*, pp. 104–22.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 111–12.

⁴⁴ Haut Conseil à l’intégration, *Études et intégration: faire connaître les valeurs de la République* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2009), p. 19.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 27.

recognising that ‘the return of . . . the republican model in the 1980s was marked by a form of nostalgia for a supposedly unified doctrine of republicanism’, the report nevertheless set about rehearsing its own neo-republican vision. In keeping with a transformative narrative of the Republic, it insisted that republicanism is built on its ‘emancipatory force’, but reminds us that

Through his engagement with the collectivity and his fellow citizens, . . . the citizen embodies a type of universality which everyone can recognise. The participation of citizens in the *res publica* leads to the formation of a republican identity that brings together and unites [*solidarise*] citizens in a common political project.⁴⁶

The implication is clear: integration and disintegration are political processes, which require a political response.⁴⁷

The reason for emphasising this strongly political dimension to the concept of integration in the HCI’s reports is that it is often underplayed by foreign commentators who focus on France’s ‘model of integration’ in relation to ethnic minorities. While there can be little doubt that a fear of disintegration and a renewed interest in national integration are direct consequences of France’s post-colonial challenges, *intégration* cannot be compared unproblematically to the Anglo-American world’s response to the same problems. So-called ‘multiculturalism’, even in its most clearly articulated form, separates the process of individual and community identity formation from the nation state. A neo-republican concept of *intégration* does precisely the opposite: it makes ‘ethnic’ (and other) group claims subservient to a narrative of social integration, and makes the state responsible for carrying out such integration. In so doing, the state also restores the *lien social*, which ultimately serves to re-energise the nation. This being the case, any discussion of the French ‘model of integration’ cannot limit itself, as it might in the Anglo-American world, solely to ‘ethnic minorities’ – a concept that anyway is taboo in France. As the work of the HCI makes abundantly clear, *intégration* is seen as a much wider process, involving a form of ‘total’ citizenship in which all French citizens are summoned to participate.

To recognise this is not to ignore the crucial importance of the post-colonial or the ‘ethnic’; it is simply to recognise that ‘ethnic’ exclusion is seen to be only one part of a crisis of integration that has much wider implications for French society. Moreover, discussions surrounding

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁷ Despite this general hardening of attitudes on the subject of *l’intégration*, it is notable that in 2000 the HCI was unwilling to recommend a ban on the headscarf in schools, despite heated debate. Haut Conseil à l’intégration, *L’islam et la République* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2000), pp. 6–8.

intégration in France remind us that, despite numerous emerging post-colonial narratives, the nation has remained the over-arching reference point in contemporary French politics. Through such terms as *la fracture sociale* and *intégration*, French politics has continued to absorb – some might say, deflect – post-colonial questions with remarkable success. In the same way as Noiriel in *Le creuset français*, the HCI's reports tried to absorb the 'problem' of immigration into a wider narrative of social integration. This made it possible to underplay its specifically post-colonial dimensions and emphasise the renewed importance of the nation in the process of integration.

From *intégration* to *communautarisme*: the language of integration and the French elite

While there are good reasons for focusing on the HCI's reports as the most thoroughgoing attempts to define *intégration* there is ample evidence to suggest that the HCI was not so much imposing its vision from above as piecing together fragments of existing languages circulating in the political space. Indeed, in another of its reports, the HCI itself uncovered the powerful hold of a 'republican rhetoric' in the public and private sectors, which made managers and civil servants extremely reluctant to talk about the problems of racial or ethnic discrimination. They almost all used a republican discourse of colour-blind integration to minimise the role of job discrimination and explain away the need for various forms of positive discrimination.⁴⁸ This same 'colour-blind' logic has been used to justify the refusal to collect statistics on ethnic grounds, an issue which has regularly provoked sustained confrontation between those who see ethnic statistics as necessary, and those who see them as a potentially dangerous acknowledgement of community identities.⁴⁹ Not surprisingly, opponents of ethnic statistics have usually been those associated with other aspects of the neo-republican turn. So, for instance, demographer Hervé Le Bras – whose book *Le démon des origines* (1998) pushed the issue into the limelight in the late 1990s – recently published another book with Elisabeth Badinter denouncing the 'return of race' in statistical collection.⁵⁰ The HCI, too, was extremely reluctant to

⁴⁸ On this, see Haut Conseil à l'intégration, *Les parcours de l'intégration*.

⁴⁹ See for instance Centre d'analyse stratégique, *Colloque sur les statistiques ethniques* (Paris: Centre d'analyse stratégique, 2006), and Henri Héduin, 'Faut-il inventer des catégories "ethniques"?' in *Différences* (June/July 2002), pp. 36–7.

⁵⁰ Hervé Le Bras, *Le démon des origines: la démographie et l'extrême droite* (Paris: Editions de l'Aube, 1998). On the initial controversy in 1998, see 'Une virulente polémique sur les données ethniques divise les démographes', *Le Monde* (6 November 1998). For more

endorse the use of ethnic statistics, in 2007 describing such a task as ‘anachronistic and of little use in learning about integration’.⁵¹ Even the Conseil constitutionnel cast serious doubt on their use when, in the same year, it ruled that any data collection based on ethnic or racial criteria would run counter to Article 1 of the Constitution.⁵² This opposition has hampered attempts on the part of French researchers to construct a picture of French ethnic diversity.⁵³ On this issue, as with others, the language of neo-republicanism has proved too great a barrier to overcome.

Even among France’s (rather limited) ‘ethnic’ elite, the language of republican integration has often taken pride of place. Two good examples are Jacky Dahomay, a Guadeloupean philosophy teacher and member of the HCI in 2006–8, and Malika Sorel, a writer of Algerian descent who was nominated to the HCI in 2009. Although Dahomay resigned from the HCI in protest at the creation of a Ministry of National Identity, both have vigorously defended *intégration* and ‘republican identity’ in the press, on the internet and in the media in recent years.⁵⁴ They are not alone: other prominent non-white public figures have stressed republican integration as the primary means for immigrants to surmount their social and political disenfranchisement. For instance, Socialist politician Bariza Khairi, since 2004 a member of the Sénat, one of only two Muslim members, has attacked the idea of ethnic statistics on neo-republican grounds.⁵⁵ In the same vein, Kofi Yamgnane, who was elected in 1989 as the first black mayor of a predominantly white French

recent interventions see Hervé Le Bras, ‘Inutiles statistiques ethniques’, *Le Monde* (14 July 2009), and Hervé Le Bras and Elisabeth Badinter, *Retour de la race* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008).

⁵¹ Haut Conseil à l’intégration, *Les Indicateurs de l’intégration: statistiques ethniques, enquêtes sur les patronymes, mesure de la diversité, baromètre de l’intégration* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2007), p. 18.

⁵² Décision n° 2007–557 DC du 15 novembre 2007, available at www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/les-decisions/acces-par-date/decisions-depuis-1959/2007/2007-557-dc/decision-n-2007-557-dc-du-15-novembre-2007.1183.html (last accessed March 2010).

⁵³ For critical voices, see for instance Michèle Tribalat, ‘La connaissance des faits: est-elle dangereuse?’, *Le Monde* (5 November 1998).

⁵⁴ For Dahomay, see Jacky Dahomay, ‘Pour une nouvelle identité républicaine: point de vue’, *Le Monde* (15 April 2005), and J. Dahomay, ‘Le cynisme des chiens’, *Libération* (17 December 2008). For Sorel – whose tone is altogether more shrill, see her blog www.malikasorel.fr and her presentation before the Veil Commission on the subject of diversity and integration. Comité de réflexion sur le préambule de la Constitution, *Redécouvrir le préambule à la Constitution: rapport de la commission présidé par Simone Veil* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2008), pp. 164–73.

⁵⁵ See, for instance, her position in Bariza Khiary and Patrick Lozès, ‘Pour ou contre les statistiques ethniques’, *Nouvel Observateur* (19 October 2006).

town (Saint Coultitz) and a Socialist secretary of state in 1991–3, founded a *Fondation pour l'intégration républicaine* in 1993. He used the *Fondation* to promote his strongly neo-republican reading of *intégration*.⁵⁶ As he put it in 1995, 'integration can only take place through the values of the Republic ... The integration that we are proposing is positive and mobilising since it is the binding element of social cohesion'.⁵⁷ At the other end of the political spectrum, too, there has been a strong neo-republican current among non-white political figures such as the deputy Rachid Kaci, who is of Kabyle origin. In 2002, he founded *La Droite Libre*, which described itself as 'liberal and republican' and developed a strong discourse of republican integration mixed with Gaullist nationalism and a hostility to economic interventionism.⁵⁸

Another excellent example of a trajectory strongly marked by the neo-republican turn is that of Malek Boutih. His career in the anti-racism organisation *SOS Racisme* – as vice-president (1985–92) and then president (2001–3) will be examined in more detail later. What is relevant here is that, after his involvement with *SOS Racisme*, he has been a prominent member of the PS and has been instrumental in the formulation of the party's immigration policy.⁵⁹ Rather like the party with which he has been so closely involved, his attitude to the question of immigration and integration has taken on increasingly neo-republican overtones, to the point that in his essay *La France aux français? Chiche!* (2001), he denounced the inexorable logic of *communautarisme* and defended a strong version of republican *intégration*.⁶⁰ This is all the more striking given that *SOS Racisme*, as we shall see, emerged at a time in the early 1980s when the centralising Jacobinism so dear to neo-republicans was under attack from the emerging anti-racism and *beur* movements.

⁵⁶ The *Fondation* was set up, in his words, to 'soutenir les projets de jeunes issus de l'immigration ... Les premiers projets de la fondation consistent à parrainer des jeunes dans des entreprises, à ouvrir des appartements partagés et des 'cafés-rencontre' ... à organiser plusieurs manifestations artistiques ... destinées à valoriser l'apport culturel des jeunes issus de l'immigration'. 'Kofi Yamgnane crée une Fondation pour l'intégration républicaine', *Le Monde* (28 May 1993).

⁵⁷ Kofi Yamgnane, 'Intégration. Adapter le modèle républicain', *Le Monde* (23 September 1992), and Kofi Yamgnane, 'Exclure l'exclusion', *Le Monde* (14 August 1995).

⁵⁸ Kaci was a member of a minority rights NGO, *France-Plus*, and a fervent defender of the anti-*fouillard* position during the *affaire*. He has been involved in the Gaullist right since the early 1990s. See, in particular, his blog (<http://rachidkaci.over-blog.com/>) and R. Kaci, *La République des lâches* (Paris: Editions des Syrtes, 2003).

⁵⁹ For a useful profile of Malek Boutih, see Claude Patrice, 'Malek Boutih, Le Désillusionniste', *Le Monde* (13 June 2002).

⁶⁰ Malek Boutih and Elisabeth Lévy, *La France au français? Chiche!* (Paris: Fondation 2 Mars/Mille et une nuits, 2001). Nicolas Weill, 'Entre Malek Boutih et la philosophe Chantal Delsol, un accord presque parfait sur l'intégration', *Le Monde* (15 November 2002).

Boutih's subsequent conversion demonstrates the irresistible attraction of neo-republicanism, even to its erstwhile detractors.

Of course, we should not be especially surprised to find that political figures who have emerged from France's immigrant communities have been attached to a notion of republican *intégration*, since it is this very model that, in their view, made it possible for them to participate in French political life. Moreover, evidence suggests that France's minority communities have traditionally been extremely favourable to the political contract implied by *intégration*. In a recent survey, the Pew Global Research Centre found that French Muslims were much more likely than their counterparts in other European countries to value their 'French' identity and demonstrate a willingness to 'adopt French customs'.⁶¹ The merits of such a broad longitudinal study notwithstanding, it served to emphasise the fact that both France's ethnic minorities, and its 'ethnic' elite, have often taken their own *intégration* seriously. The historians Jim House and Neil Macmaster are surely right when they argue that 'some racialised colonial and post-colonial groups within the French polity [have] questioned elements of Republicanism . . . based upon their lived experiences of [a] political model, which has treated them with profound ambivalence'.⁶² By the same token, successful members of these same groups have regularly aspired to precisely the model of integration that historically treated them with indifference and even hostility.

But the spread of a neo-republican conception of *intégration* in the past three decades has not been confined to France's ethnic elite alone. Nor has it been the sole preserve of those involved in party politics in some way. The resurgence of interest in *intégration* also had intellectual roots. This has been most clearly visible in the work of Dominique Schnapper. The daughter of the most important non-Marxist intellectual in post-war France, Raymond Aron, Schnapper made her name through a series of books on citizenship, the Other and the sociology of the nation.⁶³ Having pursued a highly successful academic career, with a doctorate in sociology and a position at the EHESS since 1980, she embodies the intellectual involved at the highest levels of decision-making. She has sat on a number of government commissions (including the 1987 Commission de la Nationalité), and was a member of the Conseil constitutionnel

⁶¹ Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Muslims in Europe* (7 June 2006), available at <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=254> (last accessed March 2010).

⁶² House and Macmaster, *Paris 1961*, p. 332.

⁶³ On this, see especially Dominique Schnapper, *La communauté des citoyens: sur l'idée moderne de nation* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), and Dominique Schnapper, *La relation à l'autre: au coeur de la pensée sociologique* (Paris: Seuil, 1998).

in 2001–10. This commitment to public service extends to her work. A number of her books have essentially been textbooks designed for a wide market and, in much of her more recent work, there has been a consistent interest in political (or, what we might call in English, ‘civic’) integration.⁶⁴

From the 1980s onwards – and especially after 1987 – she became increasingly outspoken in her defence of a neo-republican conception of citizenship (which she calls a ‘tolerant republicanism’) as the best response to the crisis of integration.⁶⁵ As Schnapper put it herself in 2005,

[C]itizenship is the foundation of political legitimacy; it is also the source of the *lien social*. To live together is not to participate in the same church or to be subjects of the same monarch, it is to be citizens together.⁶⁶

In this definition, republican citizenship forms the basis of the political community – a community in danger of fragmenting under pressure from the unravelling of social bonds. Citizenship is the theoretical foundation of a (French) model of *intégration*, which in turn means that the political process of nation-building is the most effective response to the (dis)integration of the national community. As she puts it, the integration of a society is as important as integration to that society – in other words, the integration into society of any external element (such as foreigners) can only take place when each constituent part of that society is integrated into a whole. In short, the integration of different classes, sexes, ages or regions is as significant as the integration of ‘ethnic’ and ‘foreign’ communities. Like others, Schnapper believes that the integration of society relies on political foundations: citizenship rests on a political consciousness of the citizen, and the understanding of political rights and responsibilities.

It is true that Schnapper has remained more sensitive than many other defenders of *intégration* to the changing meaning of concepts. Her empirical approach has offered a critical view of the development of neo-republicanism and she has even softened her position on the

⁶⁴ This is true of her most recent summary of the sociology of the nation. Dominique Schnapper, *Qu’est-ce que l’intégration?* (Paris: Folio, 2005).

⁶⁵ Schnapper herself claims that her participation in the Commission de la Nationalité was a turning point (personal interview with the author, June 2011). This is confirmed by her earliest statements on this subject that date from this period, such as Dominique Schnapper, ‘Unité nationale et particularismes culturels’, *Commentaire* (Vol. 10, No. 38, 1987), pp. 361–7. See also Schnapper, *La communauté des citoyens*, and Dominique Schnapper, ‘La République face aux communautarismes’, *Études* (Vol. 2, 2004), pp. 177–88.

⁶⁶ Schnapper, *Qu’est-ce que l’intégration?*, p. 132.

question of ethnic statistics.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, these critical reflections have not significantly modified her view, which has conformed to some of the central assumptions of neo-republicanism and found a wide audience among other intellectuals. For instance, although radically different in approach and focus, the philosopher and sociologist Pierre-André Taguieff has looked to Schnapper to support his staunch defences of the Republic. A product of the ‘new’ university in Nanterre, and a child of the *gauchiste* atmosphere of 1968, Taguieff has also followed the path of a career academic.⁶⁸ He now teaches at Sciences Po Paris, and is a member of the influential Centre de recherches politiques de Sciences Po (CEVIPOF). He has also, since 2002, been a member of the Cercle de l’Oratoire – a think tank created to support the war in Iraq and combat French anti-Americanism.⁶⁹ Taguieff’s earlier works dealt with French anti-Semitism, and the development of the anti-racism movement, but it was in the mid 1990s that he began to write on the future of the Republic.⁷⁰ His work has become increasingly outspoken and polemical, not least in his recent 600-page attack on Lindenberg’s essay on the *nouveaux réactionnaires* entitled *Les contre-réactionnaires* (2008), but he has remained a staunch neo-republican.⁷¹

However, where Schnapper has focused on the necessity of civic integration, Taguieff has brought to the fore the fear of fragmentation. For Taguieff, the most important reason to defend France’s unitary and unified concept of the Republic is that it is increasingly under threat from the atomising tendency of multiculturalism.⁷² This, as well as the ideologies of cultural relativism and cosmopolitanism, has led to a dangerous disintegration of the nation. He claims that France must protect a republican conception of the nation in order to restore the ‘civic bond’

⁶⁷ While still remaining very resistant to their use, she now reluctantly accepts their value as an expression of a certain ‘democratic aspiration’. See Dominique Schnapper, ‘Les enjeux démocratiques de la statistique ethnique’, *Revue française de sociologie* (Vol. 49, No. 1, 2008), pp. 133–9.

⁶⁸ Christopher Flood, ‘National Republican Politics, Intellectuals and the Case of Pierre-André Taguieff’, *Modern and Contemporary France* (Vol. 12, No. 2, 2004), pp. 353–70.

⁶⁹ A list of members of the Cercle de l’Oratoire can be found at www.lemeilleurdesmondes.org. The Cercle also produces a journal, *Le meilleur des mondes*.

⁷⁰ See especially Pierre-André Taguieff, *La force du préjugé: essai sur le racisme et ses doubles* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987); Pierre-André Taguieff, *Les fins de l’antiracisme* (Paris: Editions Michalon, 1995); and Pierre-André Taguieff, *Sur la Nouvelle Droite: jalons d’une analyse critique* (Paris: Descartes, 1994).

⁷¹ Pierre-André Taguieff, *Les contre-réactionnaires: le progressisme entre illusion et imposture* (Paris: Denoel, 2007). And see, for instance, Pierre-André Taguieff, *La République enlisée: pluralisme, communautarisme et citoyenneté* (Paris: Syrtes 2005), and Pierre-André Taguieff, *La République menacée: entretien avec Philippe Petit* (Paris: Textuel, 1996).

⁷² Taguieff, *La République enlisée*, pp. 23–4.

and defend against 'tribalisation'.⁷³ One example of this 'tribalisation' is the threat of Islam: the issue of 'the Islamo-terrorist threat' looms in the background, and there is a clear sense that a breakdown in social relations will make space for militant Islam.⁷⁴ Hence the Republic is invoked as both a protection against outside threats and a way of combating internal fragmentation.

Alongside Taguieff's rather apocalyptic vision of fragmentation, his work on the Republic also highlights neo-republicanism's eclectic intellectual roots. We saw earlier how Debray and Finkielkraut travelled from the 'radical' left to neo-republicanism. In a similar way, Taguieff's work shows a strong – if not always clearly argued – link between consumer society, the atomisation of social relations under capitalism, and the unravelling of the nation. Here, Taguieff betrays his intellectual roots in a post-1968 situationist critique of consumerism.⁷⁵ This critique pushes him to defend the centrality of the nation as a counterweight to consumer society.⁷⁶ It is logical, therefore, that Taguieff's work has been placed among those of other *nouveaux réactionnaires*, whose journey from left to right has been well documented. But this is to simplify the issue. Not only does Taguieff deny that he has taken a partisan political position – he has been described, rather confusingly, as a 'libéral social conservateur' – but he also represents something more complex.⁷⁷ He is an intellectual who has used a defence of the Republic to bring together a traditional anti-capitalist language of the left with many of the traditional concerns of the right (a critique of 'progressivism', the fear of immigration, the 'Islamic threat', etc.)

Taguieff's work also draws attention to another argument that has further strengthened the neo-republican consensus around the notion of integration: the threat of *communautarisme*. We shall see in the following chapter the extent to which this unusually loaded term has involved a repackaging of long-standing stereotypes of the Anglo-American world, but it is worth clarifying here that the French *communautarisme* carries much stronger connotations than its English translation 'communitarianism'. It is seen to be the culmination of the logic of multiculturalism: a fearful descent into isolated and discrete communities that would run

⁷³ 'La première des ces conditions est le sentiment de coappartenance à une communauté métacommunautaire, dotée d'une identité méta-identitaire: la nation, où s'inscrit et s'épanouit, dans la modernité, ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler le principe civique'. Taguieff, *La République enlisée*, p. 115. References to 'tribalisation' can be found on pp. 64 and 169.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 342. ⁷⁵ See especially *ibid.*, p. 282.

⁷⁶ On this, see the excellent analysis in Audier, *La pensée anti-68*, pp. 331–49.

⁷⁷ George Weyer, 'Taguieff', *Le Figaro* (11 December 2004)

counter to even the most flexible definition of *intégration*. This is the definition of *communautarisme* we find in the work of Taguieff, and it is one that has been widely popularised in the political space more generally. So, for example, in 1989, Finkielkraut deplored the fact that ‘the nation is disappearing in favour of tribes . . . [and] the cultural unity will make way for a juxtaposition of ghettos’.⁷⁸ In a similar vein, in 1999 Danièle Sallenave borrowed the expression ‘community of citizens’ from Schnapper’s work to argue that it was important to oppose the Charter for Regional Languages because this also meant

[o]pposing the division of the national community, which is a ‘community of citizens’ and not a conglomeration of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups . . . [the Charter] would bring French law in line with *communautarisme* and differentialism [*différentialisme*].⁷⁹

This kind of critique also found an echo in the media. Journalists and commentators such as Christian Jelen (who died in 1998) and Joseph Macé-Scaron – the former an editor at *Le Point*, the latter a regular contributor to *Le Figaro* – denounced what they describe as *la tentation communautaire*.⁸⁰ Jelen, in particular, took up Finkielkraut’s reasoning by indiscriminately indicting polygamy, homosexuality, ‘the Islamic chador’ and the danger of multiculturalism at the hands of ‘dangerous’ academics such as Farhad Khosrokhavar or Michel Wieviorka.⁸¹ They were all, according to him, responsible for a growing communitarian logic in contemporary France.⁸²

In politics, too, a fear of *communautarisme* has become a common rhetorical tool, from Jean-Pierre Chevènement’s left-wing republicanism to Philippe de Villiers’s defence of a rural France against the inexorable onward march of Islamic fundamentalism. From 2003 until 2011, there was even a semi-political pressure group entitled Observatoire du communautarisme, dedicated to protecting France from its pernicious effects. Its founder, Julien Landfried, has published a number of articles on the subject, including an essay entitled *Contre le communautarisme*

⁷⁸ Alain Finkielkraut, ‘La nation disparaît au profit des tribus’, *Le Monde* (13 July 1989).

⁷⁹ The expression ‘communauté de citoyens’ is borrowed from the title of Schnapper’s early work on the sociology of the nation. Danièle Sallenave, ‘Partez, briseurs d’unité’, *Le Monde* (3 July 1999).

⁸⁰ Joseph Macé-Scaron, *La tentation communautaire* (Paris: Plon, 2001). See also a 2003 television debate on the subject involving Macé-Scaron, alongside Yves Calvi, Manuel Valls, Michel Wieviorka and Catherine Wihtol de Wenden. *C dans l’air*, France 5/La Cinquième, (28 March 2003).

⁸¹ France Culture, *Répliques: La République est-elle une idée de neuve?* (2 November 1996).

⁸² Christian Jelen, *Les casseurs de la République* (Paris: Plon, 1997), one of several books on this topic.

(2007), and the Observatoire's website brought together articles by almost every neo-republican public figure.⁸³ At its height, the website claimed to receive up to 40,000 visitors each month, which, even allowing for exaggeration, suggests that there was a sustained interest in the topic for at least a decade.⁸⁴ The proliferation of essays, articles, pamphlets and editorials dealing with the subject suggests that, like *fracture sociale* and *intégration*, the term has been a powerful response to a number of existing concerns. Today, the fear of communitarian fragmentation has become a widely recognised political argument throughout the French political space and, while it might be easy to dismiss its more radical manifestations as hyperbole, it has proven a powerful means by which the key tenets of neo-republicanism have been vulgarised.

Intégration à la française: a political paradigm

It might seem strange that an entire chapter devoted to France's post-colonial predicament has dealt relatively little with the lives of France's migrant and minority communities. It is customary, at the very least, to highlight migrant or minority counter-narratives, and show how these have undermined or delegitimised existing narratives such as neo-republicanism. Very often, it is expected that a post-colonial approach will cast a strongly critical eye on precisely the kind of 'hegemonic' ideology embodied in the neo-republican notion of *intégration*. But a critical approach – however valuable it may be – only tells part of the story. We also need a much finer appreciation of the ways in which national narratives have absorbed and adapted to the reality of a post-colonial nation. In later chapters, I shall try and show how various counter-narratives have in fact been written in contemporary France, but here I have chosen to emphasise the longevity, and indeed resurgence, of *intégration* as a rehabilitation of the French national narrative. Against the backdrop of growing numbers of settled immigrants and the significant presence of an extreme-right party, the late twentieth century saw a reinterpretation of *intégration* as a neo-republican nation-building project. The importance of political participation was re-emphasised, accompanied by a renewed notion of 'strong' citizenship based on the values of the Republic. From a neo-republican perspective, there was no need to modify France's model of integration: the processes of

⁸³ Julien Landfried, *Contre le communautarisme* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2007).

⁸⁴ The Observatoire du communautarisme's website – www.communautarisme.net – has since been taken down. It is not clear whether this is because the organisation has folded or because it is going to be redesigned.

integration that had united rural populations, the working classes and early immigrants in the nineteenth century could once again be used to absorb incoming immigrants at the end of the twentieth.

Contemporary definitions of *intégration* have thus provided both an account of France's past and a blueprint for its future. The problem is that the reality of identity politics, socio-economic exclusion and the battle over the memory of the French empire have all posed a formidable challenge to neo-republican definitions of *intégration*. Despite Noiriel's assurances that first-, second- and third-generation immigrants are underprivileged groups like any other, the economic integration of agrarian populations within the nation state in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe is not the same as the social integration of ethnic minorities today. Some of the processes may be similar but there are important differences, notably in perception on the part of the receiving nation. In seeking to minimise the challenges of 'ethnic' integration in favour of a language of 'social' and 'civic' integration – by refusing even to give ethnic minorities a name – those who have defended a strongly neo-republican model of *intégration* have caught themselves in the discourse they are trying to take apart. A relative silence about the colonial encounter until the late 1990s, the systematic and historical marginalisation of foreigners, the fear of Islam and a repressive Europe-wide migration policy have hampered France's ability to find a solution to its own ideological impasse. For the foreseeable future, foreigners will continue to arrive in France. The majority will continue to integrate with some success. Most will continue to carry around with them their multiple identities.⁸⁵ The question, then, is the extent to which these identities will be recognised by the Republic and exactly how they will be incorporated into a neo-republican national narrative that continues to emphasise unity over difference.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Riva Kastoryano, *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants in France and Germany* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002).

⁸⁶ Sophie Guérard de Latour, 'Cultural Insecurity and Political Solidarity: French Republicanism Reconsidered', in Chabal, *France since the 1970s*.