



Citizenship of Algerians During the French Colonial Period Between 1865 to 1919

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Abstract: This study seeks to shed light on the issue of Algerian citizenship during the French colonial period between 1865 and 1919. It covers the practices of the French administration in the context of its colonial policy that granted Algerians the status of French citizens and naturalizing them with French nationality under a series of controversial laws from 1870 and 1871 to 1919 and the related reforms. We aim to explain what these laws brought to the Algerians (the indigenous population) as the owners of the land and the Algerians' reaction to these laws in their struggle for independence. This study aims to elaborate on the promises of the French colonial administration to Algerians and their conditions for granting them civil and political rights, including speaking good French and leaving the religion of Islam. I will also discuss the extent to which these politics succeeded or failed vis-à-vis the survival of the Algerian culture under a comprehensive policy of assimilation and colonization. It will also discuss the relation between the citizenship debate and independence movement mixed with Muslim and Arab identity.

Keywords: Algeria, Colonization, Citizenship, French Colonies, Naturalization

1. Introduction

The concept of citizenship is related to the society where citizens live together freely and independently to achieve their livelihood. It denotes integration through plurality despite the diversity of their religious and ethnic national affiliations. Citizenship represents the social and legal bond within a country. The issue of the French citizenship has been controversial throughout its modern history and even today. This study sheds light on the issue of Algerian citizenship during the French colonial period between 1865 and 1919.

The Colonial French administration worked on granting Algerians the status of French citizens and naturalizing them with French nationality because they want to annex the Algerian land as the French Algeria. When France occupied Algeria, it promised to protect Algerian citizens and preserve their property in discourse to contain the grievances of the native Algerian people, but it broke its promises with oppressive responses. For this purpose, they introduced a series of unjust laws starting with the Senatus Consult law of 1865 and the Crémieux decree of 1870, through the law on the indigenous population of 1871, right up to the law of 4 February 1919 and the so-called reforms that accompanied it. Because of the French nationalism and secularism, the French considered themselves superior to the Algerians as the introducers of their civilization and modernity and saw colonization as a natural price of modernization and development. Their dislike toward Islam emanates from nationalism and secularism and even some of old Catholic tradition. Therefore, they tried to erase their Arab-Islamic identity by eliminating anything relation to the Islamic religion and Arab-Algerian culture because they saw it as backward and a barrier before progress under the influence of the French Enlightenment. In this way, the colonial rule tried to eliminate everything that represented the Algerian identity and to transform the Algerians into complete French citizens.

Even though the French administration did not care about the wellbeing of the Algerians, but they had to implement some measures to contain their anger and reactions due to the confiscation of their lands

and their mistreatment. For this purpose, France introduced laws to incorporate at least some of Algerians living in Algeria and France as they considered Algeria a French province while attempting to erase its Algerian identity and history as they even destroyed the Algerian archive.

Very few studies elaborated on this subject of, including that by Wael Patrick (2005) entitled *Le statut des musulmans en Algérie coloniale, une nationalité française dénaturée* (The status of Muslims in colonial Algeria, a distorted French nationality) which addressed the status of Algerians as subjects and not citizens of France by the Senatus law, and the gradual integration of Algerian and European Jews through granting them full citizenship by the Crémieux decree. In his study, Patrick describes this conditional French citizenship France granted the Algerian people but not a full nationality with several flaws. Patrick also refers to the reforms of February 1919, which introduced new procedures for French citizenship to the Algerians with disappointing conditions for Algerians colonialists. In another study named "La citoyenneté sous l'Empire français (Citizenship under the French Empire)", Yerii Urban (2017) distinguishes between the French citizens and the French subjects in the French colonies, and between several concepts of citizenship, including colonial citizenship, indigenous citizenship, and French citizenship. Urban also argued that it was impossible to be a full citizen outside the center as the state of France. He also mentioned that the French colonies and their inhabitants were forced to have a second-class citizenship and were considered French subjects without rights.

Sarah Safwan (2022) analyzed the legal citizenship of the Algerian population during French colonialism. She discussed the fact that French nationality was not granted to residents of Algeria during the French colonial period between 1865 and 1944, due to the complex and difficult conditions set by the French colonialists in order for the Algerians to obtain the French nationality. These conditions involved renouncing their Islamic civil status. She also mentioned several laws enacted by France concerning Algerians, including the Crémieux decree, which provided for the granting of French citizenship to all Algerian Jews in 1870. She also referred to the declaration of 1 November 1954 as the first Algerian legal text published during the period of armed struggle against the French colonialists. It stipulated the need to recognize Algerian nationality through an official declaration that abolished the colonial legislative system that had annexed Algeria to France.

2. An Overview of The French Occupation of Algeria

The French occupation of Algeria is one of the longest and oppressive colonial experiences in modern history as the Algerians lost millions of martyrs during their resistance to the oppressive French colonization of 132 years. The suffering of the Algerians began with the defeat of the Algerian and Ottoman fleets against the European (British and French) fleets in the Battle of Navarino in 1827. The abolition of the Janissary corps (1828) also caused a weakness in the Ottoman army that was exploited by France to invade Algeria. Moreover, the Fly Whisk Incident was an indirect cause of the French occupation of Algeria. France received its wheat shipments from Algeria while debts began to accumulate on the side of France, so Algerian merchants complained that France was not paying money for wheat. When Dey Hussein (Governor General of Algeria before the French occupation) asked the French Consul Duval of the time to pay France's debts, he replied with a humiliating answer which angered Dey Hussein against him and expelled him by waving at him with flywhisk (then called fan). By demanded an official apology which Dey Hussein rejected, the French government exploited the opportunity to occupy Algeria, particularly given the weakness of the Algerian fleet of the Ottoman state.

France prepared the French public opinion for the colonization of Algeria on the basis that it wanted to restore France's honor after being humiliated by Dey Hussein. As a result, France launched the siege of major Algerian cities in 1827, which lasted three years, and on 05 July 1830, France officially occupied Algeria. The Punishment of Dey Hussein was transformed into a campaign of conquest of people, land, culture, and religion (Saadallah,1992: 16). Beyond the Fly Whisk incident and the French consul's

revenge, the real reason was that France had planned to occupy Algeria much earlier but did not find the opportunity to implement its plan.

As soon as France set foot in Algeria, the policies of relocation, repopulation, repression and persecution began. France also confiscated lands from tribes and villages and redistributed them to of European immigrants coming from France, Spain, and Italy to Algeria. The French administration also closed Islamic schools to destroy Algeria's Islamic identity because Islam was the major source of resistance against colonization. (Kanoun: 2012, 15)) As an attempt to confront France's repressive policy, the resistance of religious leader Emir Abdelkader emerged in western Algeria and El Hajj Ahmed Bey led resistance in the east of the country.

Following a long military confrontation with the resistance, France managed to defeat the forces of Emir Abdelkader and Ahmed Bey. In 1848, Algeria was officially made a French province and Algerian Jews were granted French citizenship while France enacted a series of unjust laws against Algerian Muslims.

In May 1945, France committed a terrible massacre by killing 45,000 Algerians who were demonstrating with the national flag for Algerian independence, known as the massacres of 8 May 1945. On 1 November 1954, the Algerian Revolution (the war of liberation) broke out under the leadership of the National Liberation Front, and in August 1956, the Soummam Conference was held, considered an important event because of the identification of the leaders and structures of the internal and external resistance (military and civilian).

In September 1958, the National Liberation Front formed an interim government led by Farhat Abbas as an Algerian politician. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, he volunteered for the French army. Farhat Abbas also called for Algeria to merge with France and for equal rights for Algerians and French. After the war, Farhat Abbas' ideas changed as he began to fight for Algerian independence, and he founded the Democratic Union Party for the Algerian Declaration.

The National Liberation Front (FLN) was formed in 1954 from a split within the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms by members of the paramilitary Special Organization: Its armed wing, the National Liberation Army, fought in the Algerian War from 1954 to 1962. After the Evian Accords of 1962, the party suppressed internal dissent and ran Algeria as a one-party state. The French occupation, which lasted 132 years of oppression, came to an end with the signing of the Evian Accords on 18 March 1962, which is celebrated as Victory Day, and 5 July 1962 is the date of Algeria's official declaration of independence, the same day that France seized Algeria.

With the outbreak of the Algerian revolution for independence, Farhat Abbas joined the National Liberation Front party and became its representative in Paris. When the formation of the first Algerian interim government was announced in Tunisia, he became its first president between May 1958 and August 1961. The National Liberation Front is a nationalist political party in Algeria. It was the main nationalist movement during the Algerian revolution to later rule the independent country unilaterally until other parties were legalized in 1989.

2.1. The situation of Algerians before 1865

On the political front, following France's direct occupation of Algeria, France set up a government department to oversee local affairs in the so-called Arab offices, to create an information base on cultural traditions, the impact of tribes and local norms and laws. This policy aimed to penetrate Algerian society and consolidate French influence (Brown, 2018: 17).

In this context, Ben Tami Reda and Marah Muhammad Al-Hanafi (2019) point out that colonial capitalism dismantled Algerian rural structures and their traditional tribal framework, as each clan had elites and their representatives within an independent body. However, French policy sought to

eliminate all forms of clan and tribal organization and tried to uproot the original culture of Algerian society through laws in which France considered Algerians as 'subjects' rather than 'citizens' (Ben Tami and Marah, 2019: 31). (France provide Algerians with the same rights as other French people. The word "subject" is an official term France used for Algerians to strip them of their Algerian identity and all their rights).

The local French administration quickly turned into an authoritarian and arbitrary rule in Algeria as France concentrated on inhabiting Algeria with the non-native population and developing an expansionist agricultural plan that would benefit the colonists that came to Algeria. In this respect, Haley Brown argues that settler colonialism sought to replace indigenous peoples on their lands, not to extract surplus value from them by mixing their labor with the colony's natural resources, so settler colonialism's main objective can be distinguished as exclusion and liquidation (Brown,2018:13). As a result, the Europeans that France brought to Algeria enjoyed the bulk of political and economic influence thanks to their membership of the French nationality, and they controlled the votes in Algerian municipalities.

France also created the post of a military governor to manage the French possessions in Algeria. On April 15, 1848, it was decided to divide Algeria into three provinces (Algiers, Oran, and Constantine), all attached to the French Ministry of the Interior. Colonial France decided to set up the French political and administrative system there, considering Algeria a French territory. Algerians were completely deprived of all political rights. In the period between 1848 and 1852, the French government gave settlers in Algeria the right to be represented in legislative councils and the right to elect two-thirds of municipal councils, this was at the expense of the representatives of most Algerians, on the pretext of their incapacity. The implementation of the French law was between the French citizens and Algerian subjects. The latter was punished for the additional crimes such as assembling without authorization, traveling to Algeria without permission, and criticizing the government. Algerian Muslims were subject to collective punishments imposed on tribes and douars (rural areas) (Weil, 2005: 95), constituting a racial discrimination against Algerians in the colonial France.

The French administration also encouraged settlers to plant vines to produce their wine after confiscating the land used for producing cereals before the French occupation. Algerians were expelled to less fertile lands without any financial aid to impoverish, starve, and eliminate the Algerian people, which led to the outbreak of famine later in Algeria between 1920 and 1924, and France eliminated traditional artisanal production such as silver, copper, and weaving industries for which Algerians (Boujemaa, 2016: 164-165). On the cultural front, France has pursued a policy of deliberate erosion of the local culture since its occupation of Algeria. For this purpose, it sought to eliminate Arab and Islamic culture as a prelude to the integration (or assimilation) of Algerians into the French entity.

France punished teachers and students, and desperately sought not to educate Algerians into French culture because it saw their traditional education as a threat since traditional education continues to inspire resistance to the occupation. In this regard, French Governor General Louis Turman (1882-1891) declared: *"Experience has shown that the Algerian people, to whom we have given a complete education, will demand their rights, which the French authorities have long concealed from them"* (Boujemaa, 2016: 165). The French administration paid no attention to the education of Algerians, and as a result, illiteracy was widespread among Algerians, especially children.

3. The Non-Citizenship of Native Algerians and the Laws Enacted by French Colonialism (1865 and 1919)

France tried in various ways to obscure historical facts to justify its colonization of Algeria, claiming that Algeria was a land without a master and that it was made up of groupings and tribes without constituting a nation (Safwan, 2022:177). The Algerians rejected this on the grounds that Algeria was a sovereign

state, and that they were Algerian citizens and were united it by spiritual, social, and historical ties. For them, Algerian citizenship is an inalienable right.

To speak of Algerian citizenship during the era of French colonialism is considered impossible, as the term Algerian (with a capital letter) never appeared in official texts, and the project of an 'Algerian nationality' never saw a day light of day (Urban, 2017: 27). Particularly during the early period 1865-1944 France considered Algerians (indigenous people) and Muslims as foreigners and conquered people (Bousquet, 1953: 596), their citizenship could only be conditional.

Accepting Algeria as part of France under the 1848 Constitution recognized Algeria but it did not automatically grant French citizenship to its original inhabitants. A Muslim Algerian could not be considered a "French citizen" but rather a "French subject" because he was subject to his own law based on the provisions of Islam and could not enjoy the rights of a French citizen unless he was subject to French civil and political laws (Daifallah, 1995: 21). This was approved by the *Senatus Consult* law of 1865, defining the legal status of Algerians (indigenous people) by the French Senate as 'subjects' and that Algerian Muslims are *de facto* lower-class citizens (Ghabrial, 2007:10). The *Senatus Consult* law stipulates that Algerian Muslims are French but continue to be subject to the provisions of Islamic law and may be employed in civil and military jobs (Daifallah, 1995: 315). So, according to the logic of French design, Algerian Muslims were "French subjects". They exercise all the duties and more and enjoyed few of the French rights because the French administration feared about most Algerians over the minority of European colonist in Algeria. If an Algerian Muslim wished to be naturalized with French nationality and to enjoy his rights as a Frenchman, he would have to step outside the provisions of his Islamic religion, which the Algerian Muslim people completely refused. As a result, France intensified its tyranny over the indigenous Muslim population with unjust laws (*Crémieux* decree of October 1870, law on Indigenous peoples 1871, and law of February 4, 1919).

Yerri Urban (2017) argues the French citizens could fully exercise all their rights in Algeria while French subjects had no rights. He also distinguishes between three concepts of citizenship in French colonial times: French citizens, colonial citizens, and indigenous citizens. Citizenship of indigenous people was a concept launched by colonial France to formalize the existing political hierarchy between colonizers and the subordinate original inhabitants of Algeria by a nationality law specific to Algeria, making them French in the sense of general international law and not in the sense intended by domestic law (Urban, 2017:12). As for colonial citizenship, it's a form of citizenship open to individuals who come from other European countries without a French nationality within the framework of colonial settlement policy.

Patrick Weil argues that there is a link between citizenship and the civic rights according to the French civil law. For example, any French citizen automatically enjoys all rights, including civil rights. But this link was completely severed when France occupied Algeria and officially annexed it. France considered Muslims of French origin as non-citizens while depriving them of political and civil rights as a deformed and subjugated nationality, meaning that it is not based on the attribution of rights, but rather on the weakening of the Algerian people and their subjugation to the direct rule of France (Weil, 2005:93). In the same line, Samir Graid states that the French occupation of Algeria led to a major deformation of citizenship of Algerians' notion of belonging and loyalty to the tribes but not the way France attempted to remove it and to impose itself according to colonial conditions (Graid, 2015:6).

There has been a change in the French conception of the meaning of citizenship in the colonies and especially in Algeria since all French nationals by birth or naturalization are entitled to French nationality with the exception of the Muslims of the French Algeria where France defined the French, and their access to French nationality on the basis of leaving their Islamic legal status (Abul-Hassan, 2021:9-10). Thus, French citizenship was conditional on Algerian Muslims abandoning their Islamic religion.

3.1. Laws of French citizenship applicable to Algerians between 1865 and 1919

The laws of French nationality that are applied to Algerians are a set of legal procedures by which a person acquires a nationality other than his or her original nationality. There are then conditions for naturalized citizens that must be met to obtain French nationality.

3.1.1. Senatus Consult law of July 5, 1865

The Emperor Napoleon's¹ interest in Algeria took shape during his second visit in May 1865 (Medawar, 2018: 46). Napoleon addressed the Algerians, saying that France had not come to eliminate their nationality, but that it wished to improve their standard of living and participation in political life. Napoleon sought to pursue a policy of integration by creating an Arab kingdom in Algeria. On his return to France, he sent a letter to MacMahon on June 20, 1865, explaining France's policy in Algeria, which included stopping the confiscation of land and attempting to equalize Algerians and French, and his approval of the Senatus Consult law, which provided for the cessation of land colonization and recognition of Algerian ownership of the land they held previously (Saadallah, 1992: 24).

This policy angered the colonists/settlers in Algeria, especially as the phrase "Algeria is not an exclusive colony, but an Arab kingdom" (Qarmat, 2020: 21).

The Senatus-consult of 14 July 1865 allowed Muslims and Jews to apply for full French citizenship rights. In this case, the individual was governed by all the civil and political laws of France and lost all links with the special status to which he or she had previously been subject to. The granting a French citizenship that, by decree of the Council of State, was the result of an individual application, required the production of a certain number of documents, and was not automatic (Mouloud, 2012: 1).

The Senatus-consult law targeted lands over which the people had the right of usufruct, and did not deal with property rights with one exception that allowed people in the military region to dispose of their land, which allows centenarians to buy them freely, and an imperial decree was issued on May 23, 1863, it includes the general administration regulations related to the implementation of the Senatus-consult law. One of the aims of the law was to dismantle Algeria's cohesive society.

Reactions to the law varied as some favored the colonial administration and others opposed it. The ambitions of the centenarians in Algeria were boundless as they grabbed as much land as possible. As for the Algerians' position on the law, they strongly opposed to it, especially as it concerned their land. The Senatus-Consult law was intended to strip Algerians of their identity, to erase their historical and civilizational presence, and to convince Algerians that France had come to Algeria to civilize them.

Sebai Sidi Abdelkader and Bershan Mohammed argued that the first part of the article 1 stipulated in the Senatus Consult law states that the Algerian Muslim is French but will continue to be subject to the Islamic law. Researchers claim that the recognition of the French character of Algerian Muslims was explicit, that France did not recognize the status of full citizens, and that the survival of the Muslim subjects to Islamic law and personal status (marriage, inheritance, divorce, etc.) is not subject to French civil law and is therefore considered a non-citizen (Sebai and Bershan, 2018: 145).

In this context, researchers consider that France created a new legal status for the indigenous population by separating nationality from citizenship and that the legal status of Algerian Muslims was that they remained subject to their private status under civil law and their non-participation in voting for representatives of the French people under political rights, Sebai Sidi Abdelkader and Bershan Mohammed assert that what distinguished the colonizer from the indigenous population after 1865 was

¹ Napoleon III, the first French leader since the early years of the French occupation of Algeria and throughout the period of military rule from 1830 to 1870, was elected President of the Second French Republic.

not French nationality, but rather the right to vote, given that the concept of citizenship in the strict sense is the ability to participate in the exercise of national democracy by being able to vote, and the absence of this right means the non-participation of the Algerian Muslim population in public political life (Sebai and Bershan, 2018: 145-146).

3.1.2. Crémieux Decree of October 1870

The majority of Algerian Jews were loyal to the colonial France. Consequently, most of them worked in espionage and information-gathering on the Muslim population for the French regime. Thus, France rewarded them with religious, political, and economic privileges through the Edict of Crémieux (Adolphe Crémieux), the decree that transformed the Jews of Algeria from colonial subjects into French citizens (Robert, 2011:1), legally granting them French nationality and citizenship rights in exchange for their relinquishment of personal status lawfully granted them the right to French nationality and the enjoyment of French citizenship rights in exchange for their relinquishment of personal status (Rabinovitch, 2018: 813). Among the privileges granted to the Jews of Algeria, a central Jewish council was formed in the provinces of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine, with the recognition that all Jews in the Algeria become French citizens. The decision influenced 35,000 Jews in Algeria (Sheikh, 2017: 521) as France used Jews to spread the so-called French civilization in Algeria (Ayoun, 1988: 62).

The Jews in return welcomed colonialism and displayed their dependence on France while some voices were heard within France against the decree's abolition, fearing that the Jews would dominate France because Algerian Jews' right to French citizenship meant that they had political privileges, and their votes played a major role in many electoral districts. Algerian Muslims naturally rejected the decree, fearing that France would empower the Jews there (Sheikh, 2017: 525). The decree was not rescinded despite all the reactions and criticisms until 1940.

3.1.3. Indigenous People Law 1871

At the beginning of 1871, the second phase of the French administrative system began in Algeria, based on the civil regime stipulated by the Third French Republic and under the authority of a civilian Governor General. During this period, colonial France promulgated the "loi indigène (local law)". France used the term "loi indigène" to distinguish between the French and foreigners (who are the native inhabitants of Algeria) and to exclude them from their full legal rights (Urban, 2011: 2). The true meaning of the word 'indigène' means landowner, but in the French understanding it meant contempt and subjugation. The term was applied to the indigenous Algerian population, not to other colonists (Daifallah, 1995: 21). The term "Indigène" has only been used about Algerians because France did not consider them undeserving French citizenship, fearing their empowerment and their probable demand for liberation.

As for the European settlers, it was France who brought them to Algeria to serve her interests by granting them numerous privileges such as giving them the land of the Algerian people. These policies were not implemented in the rest of the French colonies where the local people remained in their place. Indigenous law was considered an arbitrary law against the indigenous population (Muslims in particular), depriving them of any right to equality. Indigenous law is seen as exceptional and unjust laws that aimed at repressing Algerians and depriving them of the right to own land and from enjoying civil and political freedoms. The French authorities limited the validity of this law to 7 years, but it was extended each time until 1944. This law was also seen as an obstacle to the movement of the Algerian population, exploiting their country's wealth and enslaving them to colonists and Europeans (Ouldennebia, 2011: 71).

In addition, this law included several exceptional and inhumane violations of the most basic human rights applicable only to Algerians. This unjust law overturned all rights granted by any authority to the

individual, it gave the legally granted government the right to French citizenship and the enjoyment of French citizenship rights in exchange for their relinquishment of personal or general status of the power to inflict punishment without trial and the enshrinement of the principle of collective responsibility in the crime against the French authorities (Ouldennebia, 2011: 5).

The aim of promulgating this indigenous law was to demolish social structures, dismantle family and spiritual ties, and to erase the material and moral existence of Algerian society. It also aimed to incorporate them into French civilization by forcing Algerians to attain French citizenship and naturalization, by abandoning their religion and culture. Through this law, France also exhausted Algerian society by imposing excessive taxes, confiscating their arable land, closing schools, and preventing the teaching of Arabic. Thus, the Algerian Muslims were forced to choose between abandoning his religion and identity while accepting French civil and political laws and thus French nationality or starve to death. Despite all this, the Algerian people became increasingly determined to resist the occupation and its assimilation policies.

The indigenous law remains an indelible symbol on France's colonial history in Algeria and a symbol of their supposed civilized decadence. Merle Isabelle, a historian of colonialism and specialist in the history of the Pacific, put it: "In Algeria, which is an integral part of France, we witnessed the birth of this ugliness and the legal atrocity of nationality without citizenship" (Sebai and Bershan, 2018: 206).

3.1.4. The Law of February 4, 1919

Following the appeasement of the Algerians and in recognition of the participation of thousands of Algerians in the First World War, the France made reforms, including the promulgation of the law of February 4, 1919, a charter that defines the legal status of the Algerian Muslims, since it specifies in its first chapter the conditions for obtaining French citizenship (Sahouli, 2022:842).

A new procedure for attaining citizenship by judicial decision was created by a law of 4 February 1919, but it remained restricted and was concurrent with the procedure provided for by the Senatus-consult of 1865. Anyone applying for French citizenship under either of these two texts had to give up their status of local law in favor of ordinary civil law status (Mouloud, 2012: 2), meaning the abandonment of Islamic law in their transactions.

There was a division over these reform about Algerians between the French elites. i. e. the French liberal that supported them and the Conservatives that rejected them, like the Alshubaan aljazairiyoun (Algerian youth) movement led by Prince Khaled. In this, researcher Sahouli Bashir explains Tawfiq al-Madani's speech in his memoirs on the polemic between liberals and conservatives:

"Two roads have opened up today facing young Algeria, - Algerian youth - and at the head of both roads is a group of people who wish to follow this road... The first road is the road of naturalization and entry into a new nationality, which is the nationality of the predominant element, integration into it, and acceptance of what follows this naturalization and assimilation. Proponents of this route spread their appeal with diligence and activity, writing, declaiming, and publishing newspapers and magazines in the French language, aiming to influence the classes educated in French schools and saturated with French culture. The second road, it's the road to preserving Algerian identity. This group has its supporters and defenders, even among the educated classes of French schools" (Sahouli, 2022:842).

The February 1919 reform appealed to the Algerian intelligentsia while granting political rights to Algerians (representation in the French Parliament and French citizenship) as they are still asked to abandon their private status with Islamic teachings, but internally it aimed to consolidate colonial domination. One of the most important provisions of the law of February 4, 1919, was how Algerians can enjoy French nationality and use the right to vote. Articles included in the law allowed the Algerians

to naturalize with French nationality, provided they renounce their personal status. Granting the right to vote and standing for election was based on the fact that Algerians meet a set of conditions, including completion of military service, and ownership of the land. To qualify for naturalization, they must reach the age of 25, be single, unmarried, or monogamous, with no previous crime and residence of for two years in a certain place. In reality, these conditions are considered almost impossible to meet, unfair and for the Algerians. Very few Algerians were naturalized according to this law (around 2,131 between 1919 and 1938) (Larbi,2020: 134).

The reforms introduced by the law of February 1919 were seen as disappointing by many Algerians as they maintained the logic of the Senatus Consult of forcing the original Algerian population to renounce their individual status in the name of French citizenship. Naturalization under this law was subjugation, not integration, according to the articles accompanying it, and even those who accepted naturalization were treated differently from French officials and citizens as they were still, in the eyes of the French administration, 'subjects' or second-class citizens. With the law of February 4, 1919, the French colonizer also aimed to increase the number of Algerian conscripts in the French army and to exploit the French elite who accepted naturalization in the service of the French administration to realize the colonial project.

4. Conclusion

The question of French citizenship for Algerian people was one of the most important issues for Algerian parties during the period between (1865-1919). When Algeria was legally annexed to France, the legal status of the indigenous peoples remained ambiguous to consolidate colonial rule in Algeria. The Senatus Consult law of 1865 was considered the first French attempt to solve the problem of citizenship for the Algerian population but it prevented them from automatically and collectively obtaining French citizenship and opened the way for them to obtain it individually and under difficult conditions. The most important of these conditions was to abandon the personal status law based on the Islamic law.

Depriving the Muslim population of French citizenship was nothing more than a devotion to the political will of the French colonizer, intended and planned in an attempt by the French colonialists to eliminate the Algerian identity and culture in order to legitimize its colonization. Additionally, these laws revealed the contradictions between the colonial authorities' plans in their relations with the Algerians since they asserted that all people of colonies were French citizens regardless of their affiliations. In reality, we find a policy of destroying Algerian society through genocide, ethnic and cultural discrimination, and depriving them the most basic civil and political rights.

The Algerian reactions were divided as the French Algerian elite (especially the graduates of French schools) accepted French nationality and supremacy, but their percentage was very small. The conservative Algerian movement rejected naturalization with the French nationality and favored *jihad* in the name of liberating Algeria and obtaining Algerian nationality as the overwhelming majority of the Algerian people rejected French citizenship and French occupation. The Algerian people relied on an armed resistance for independence and liberation from the laws of oppression and second-class citizenship imposed by the French colonialism. This led to the outbreak of the Algerian Liberation Revolution that was officially declared on November 1, 1954. The Revolution explicitly stipulated the need to recognize Algerian citizenship and to restore national sovereignty.

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