The Question Of Identity In The Thought Of The Liberation Movement In Algeria

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Abstract:

This study aimed to examine the interaction of political parties and the reformist movement with the identity crisis in Algeria, which was fabricated by French colonialism in an attempt to create conditions of stability in Algeria by striving to erase the country's identity and replace it with its own. The colonial project had some impact on a segment educated in its culture, while the general population was plunged into ignorance, rendering it devoid of agency. Although the people retained their religious identity, some confusion clouded their understanding. We concluded by highlighting the significant role of the reformist movement in reviving the true doctrine, which invigorated the spirit of resistance among the general population, forming the foundation upon which armed resistance was built.

Introduction:

One of the most prominent issues in contemporary intellectual discourse is the question of identity, deeply rooted in Islamic history since the clash between Islamic armies and the Byzantine Empire, a confrontation between two distinct identities. This issue intensified during the Crusades and became more evident when the Western world came into contact with the Ottoman Empire, which, as it weakened, led to Western colonization of most Islamic countries. Amid this conflict, driven by material interests and the seizure of abundant resources, a significant cultural struggle emerged, defined by religious identity. Colonial powers, particularly France in Algeria, sought to employ this struggle by attacking Islam and the Arabic language in favor of Christianity and the French language. In response, various Algerian resistance movements clung to their identity and roots from the very beginning of the French invasion. However, after more than a century, some became enamored with Western culture, forgetting their roots and nation, which led to a renewed focus on identity, especially among the enlightened class that formed the nucleus of political parties. This leads us to the following question: How did France target the Arab-Islamic identity in Algeria, and how did this affect the orientations of the national movement in Algeria?

Answering this question requires addressing the following points:

1. Defining the concept of identity

2. The features of identity targeting during the colonial era in Algeria

3. Identity orientations among Algerian movements and parties during the colonial period

First: The Concept of Identity

- **Linguistically:**

We do not find the term "identity" in classical linguistic sources in a way that aligns with our topic, as it is a relatively modern term. However, its linguistic origin traces back to the repeated pronoun "هو هو" (he is he), meaning that the thing is itself. Thus, "identity" is a coined term derived from "هو" (he). [1]

- **Terminologically:**

Islamic thought has been concerned with the issue of identity since the 3rd century AH, following Muslims' interaction with Greek philosophy through translation. As a result, there was a focus on defining a concept of identity that aligns with their doctrinal perspective. Al-Iji says, "The distinction of essence from anything other than it, whether universal or particular, is what makes it what it is. This is an explanation of the concept of the essence of a thing; the particular essence is called identity, and it may be used to mean external existence, while the universal essence is called essence." [2] Al-Iji differentiates between essence and identity, considering identity to be external existence or the particular truth, while essence is the universal truth, making the latter more comprehensive than identity.

As for Al-Farabi, he states, "The identity, individuality, particularity, and unique existence of a thing, all refer to one concept. When we say it is 'itself,' this points to its identity, particularity, and unique existence, which is not shared." [3] This means that the identity of a thing refers to its unique self with all its distinguishing characteristics.

A broader definition is provided by Al-Jurjani, who states, "Identity is the absolute truth encompassing all realities, as a seed encompasses the tree in the absolute unseen." [4]

Al-Tahānawi says, "Identity, with a damma on the 'ha' and a ya of attribution, refers to individuation, which is common among philosophers and theologians. It can also denote external existence or essence with individuation, which is the particular truth." [5]

Al-Kafawi provides a detailed comparison of identity with essence and truth, stating, "Some say that the aspect by which something is itself is called truth or essence in terms of its realization, identity in terms of its individuation, and, in broader terms, essence. If it is universal, like the essence of a human, it is called essence; if it is particular, like the reality of Zaid, it is called identity; and if neither universality nor particularity is considered, it is called truth." [6]

From all these definitions, we conclude that identity refers to the distinguishing characteristics of a thing, individualized in reality, representing the particular truth, while essence represents the universal truth.

Among modern definitions, identity is described as "a socio-psychological concept that indicates how a people perceive themselves and how they differentiate themselves from others. It is based on general cultural premises historically tied to social, political, and economic values." (7)[7]

Rana Shaker posits that identity takes two main forms:

1. Individual Identity: The distinguishing traits of an individual that reflect their principles and behavioral values.

2. Collective Identity: Within a single society, it consists of interactive relationships among individuals, reflecting shared values, customs, culture, and ideas that form the framework distinguishing them from other groups.[8].

She emphasizes the connection between the two forms of identity, stating, "Thus, both identities are an essential part of the human interaction process that contributes to the development and continuity of identity in thought and behavior. We can say that identity, in its simplest form, is a blend of individual and collective perception based on a dialogue between the individual self and social selves within a framework of thought and behavioral patterns, encompassing beliefs, moral values, customs, and traditions deeply rooted in the individual and group historically and culturally. Through interaction, a consensus on a set of these patterns is formed, creating a minimal common denominator among all individuals belonging to a specific community, defining their identity and distinguishing them from the identities of other communities."[9]

Therefore, identity is what unifies a particular community in terms of beliefs, values, and culture, making it distinct from others, which represent "the other." This unity fosters a sense of loyalty, expressed through rejection of any action from the "other" that threatens the community's identity. Preserving identity and its components is considered the most crucial weapon a nation holds against any form of intellectual or settler colonialism. This is underscored by Al-Massiri, who states, "The emergence of identity in the 20th century is significant as it protects humans against the advancing forces of standardization and globalization, which existed in embryonic form at the beginning of the century but have now become dominant and overwhelming. From this perspective, identity is important; it is a fundamental form of resistance, provided it does not turn into a ghetto where one becomes entrenched." [10]

The most challenging form of colonialism faced by Islamic countries was the French colonialism in Algeria, as it took on the guise of a civilizational war between East and West. One of the tools of this war was targeting the Algerian nation in its identity. What are the features of this targeting?

Second: Features of Identity Targeting During the Colonial Movement

Before colonialism, Algeria, like all Islamic countries, did not suffer from an identity crisis. The religious and doctrinal dimension served as the primary bond, dissolving ethnic and linguistic differences. However, like other Islamic nations, Algeria fell into the clutches of colonialism, which sought to alter the identities of colonized peoples, albeit to varying degrees. The French colonization of Algeria was the most severe, working earnestly to erase the people's identity to

establish stability and permanence. This effort was conducted along three primary axes: targeting Islamic identity, enforcing policies of racial division and discord, and enacting the naturalization law. These aspects are detailed as follows:

1. **Targeting Islamic Identity:**

The motives behind France's occupation of Algeria were numerous, including political and economic interests. However, we must not overlook the religious dimension of this fierce campaign, which can be seen as an extension of the Crusades. This was expressed by Dunlop, who urged the French army to raise the cross in the city of Hippo (Annaba) with the aim of returning Algeria and North Africa to the Christian fold and reviving the legacy of Saint Augustine. [11]It was France's duty to avenge the cross,[12] which was defeated by the crescent during the Islamic conquests that made North Africa Muslim land, from which further conquests into southern Europe were launched. When Algiers was occupied, the Archbishop of Paris addressed the King of France, blessing him for the revenge of the cross over the crescent .[13]

France was acutely aware of its civilizational war in North Africa, particularly in rebellious Algeria, where uprisings continued to erupt. Each time one was quelled, another would arise, as the French found a proud, educated people firmly attached to their religion and cultural identity. To subjugate this people, France devised a comprehensive plan to strengthen its control through a relentless crusade that went beyond killing and displacement, extending to well-planned efforts to replace one identity with another. This took several forms:

- **Eliminating Architectural Landmarks of Islamic Identity:**

This involved demolishing mosques and converting them into stables as an added insult or as an expression of inherited Crusader animosity. In 1838, Marshal Valée converted the Saleh Bey Mosque in Constantine into a Catholic church. [14] Clergy members also excavated ancient churches that predated the Islamic conquest, appointing bishops to signify reclaiming lands that had once belonged to them. In 1842, during Marshal Bugeaud's rule, they retrieved the remains of Saint Augustine. Furthermore, to emphasize Christian identity, the colonizers constructed numerous churches across Algeria. For example, between 1839 and 1846, Bishop Dupuch built 60 churches and chapels and 16 religious institutions. In 1850, the Church of Our Lady of Salvation was inaugurated in Oran, and in 1854, the foundation stone was laid for the Church of Our Lady of Africa in Algiers. [15] Similar efforts were seen across Algeria.

- **Altering the Religious Identity of the Algerian People:**

This was attempted through individual and collective missionary campaigns, requiring the arrival of a vast number of clergy and the most active Christian missionary groups. A historical example of these efforts is that within four years, Bishop Dupuch brought 91 priests and 140 religious personnel, including men and women. [16] In 1854, the French government brought Jesuits, who used charitable work to convert orphans by establishing shelters in Kabylia and other areas. [17] Another missionary group, the Trappists, followed a different approach by focusing on agricultural work. The French government granted them fertile lands, and they

settled in Staouéli. Father Lederman used the same approach in Guelma, where he gathered orphaned children to convert them and also utilized them for agricultural labor. [18]

Cardinal Lavigerie arrived in late 1866, becoming the most active and enthusiastic missionary in Algeria and North Africa. He saw his mission as restoring Christianity's lost glory following the Islamic conquest and promoting mass conversion of the people to facilitate French control over the land. Since converting adults was challenging, he believed in focusing on children to form a generation of Christian Arabs. He said: "We must save these people – the Algerians – and liberate them from their Qur'an. We must, at the very least, take care of the children and raise them on principles other than those of their ancestors. It is France's duty to teach them the Gospel or banish them to the far reaches of the desert, away from the civilized world." [19] Lavigerie also stated: "We must make Algerian soil the cradle of a Christian state, illuminated by the light of a civilization inspired by the Gospel. That is our mission." [20]

Lavigerie recognized the importance of combining manual labor with agricultural education and missionary work. To ease their mission and penetrate Algerian Muslim society, he instructed missionaries to learn Arabic and wear traditional Algerian clothing. He provided the White Fathers and White Sisters with farms to teach orphans handicrafts and farming skills, a first step in his mission plan. His next step was to establish Christian Arab villages populated by pairs of orphans who would marry to form Christian families, enabling mass conversion efforts after failing to convert adults. The aim was to create a Christian community that would reinforce the French presence in Algeria. [21]

Lavigerie established two settlements in the Chelif Valley: one for boys, named "Saint Cyprien," and one for girls, named "Saint Monique." He baptized the children with French names while preserving their Arabic ones and combined European attire with the burnous in an approach called "seamless integration," where connections with roots were retained to avoid alienation. To incentivize conversion, each newly converted couple was given a house. [22]

Lavigerie's activities extended across Algeria, even reaching the Sahara, as he recognized the importance of France's control over the desert. His support led to the establishment of the "Armed Brothers in the Sahara." [23]

This demonstrates the political and military nature of Lavigerie's missionary activities in Algeria during that period. Despite his carefully planned strategy, which included the following points, the missionaries succeeded in converting only a small number of Algerians: [24]

1. **Mass Conversion** – aiming to convert entire villages, which could only happen by eliminating fanaticism.

2. **Portraying Christians as Devout** – as Algerians considered Christians infidels, Lavigerie advised missionaries to appear devout to gain respect.

3. **Exercising Patience and Tolerance of Insults.**

4. **Attracting People through Charitable Acts** – such as providing medical care, visiting villages to offer treatment, and educating children.

5. **Integrating into Society** – by using the local language.

6. **Avoiding Direct Criticism of Islam** – as this would alienate the people and hinder missionary efforts.

2. Ignorance and the Suppression of the Arabic Language

Arabic is one of the most crucial pillars of national identity, being closely tied to the preservation of religion, as it is the language of the Qur'an. The colonial authorities understood this, as expressed by Louis Rinn, who said, "The Qur'an in Algeria was everything; it was teacher and teaching." [25] Consequently, on March 8, 1938, the French Minister of the Interior, Chautemps, issued a decree banning Arabic education and classifying Arabic as a foreign language in Algeria, taught only with special permission and considered foreign in the country. [26] French schools were introduced as an alternative to Islamic schools. However, most Algerians refused to enroll their children in these schools, as they instilled French culture in children, leading to widespread ignorance among the population.

Although education was mandatory for settlers, it was only so for indigenous Algerians upon the order of the General Governor, which never happened. As a result, the literacy rate among Algerians was a mere 1%, amounting to 60,000 individuals out of a population of six million, compared to 15% for Europeans. In these schools, children did not receive any instruction in Arabic, and the curriculum was identical to that in France, even including French history, where children were taught phrases like "Our dear ancestors, the Gauls." [27]

To stifle pride, resistance, and connection to the glories of the past, the French authorities persecuted the popular poet (Meddah), who used to sing in markets and gatherings about historical battles and heroes. [28] They encouraged the use of dialects to undermine Modern Standard Arabic. Even the religious schools were subjected to strict conditions: certain topics in Islamic jurisprudence, like Jihad, were removed from the curriculum, and in some cases, the teaching of monotheism was forbidden. Teachers were required to make children memorize the Qur'an without understanding it. [29]

An example of this ignorance policy and the barbarity of colonialism is that when the French defeated Emir Abdelkader, they tore apart the books he had spent years collecting. What civilization, then, did they intend to bring to Algeria? [30] Evidence of France's commitment to an ignorance policy lies in the fact that the literacy rate before colonization was very high, with an education rate of 60%. General Bedeau wrote that in Constantine alone, there were 90 primary schools with between 1,300 and 1,400 students in 1837, but by 1850, this number had dropped to 30 schools with only 350 students. As for higher education, there were 600 to 700 students in 1837, but only 60 by 1850. Schools, mosques, zawiyas, kuttabs, and both public and private libraries were closed. [31]

The goal of these actions was to sever Algerian society's connection to its language and intellectual heritage and bind it to French culture to achieve what could be termed "civilizational replacement." This would create a small elite representing the guiding class for the majority of the people, who were kept ignorant and whose beliefs were distorted by supporting certain deviant Sufi orders. On another front, they impoverished and terrorized the population through their criminal acts, pushing them to the margins of history.

3. Stirring Up Sub-Identities:

By "sub-identities," we mean the ethnic and linguistic differences that France sought to exploit to disrupt the cohesive national identity unified by Islam as the religion, Arabic as the language, and Algeria as the homeland—a unity later articulated by Abdelhamid Ben Badis. France aimed to create a divide among Algeria's people, including Arabs, Kabyles, Shawiya, and Ibadis, by promoting local dialects over Arabic and sowing discord among ethnic groups. This effort was most evident in the Kabyle region, where a sense of superiority over Arabs was instilled, utilizing various methods such as promoting French education and Christianity, presenting the Islamic conquest as Arab colonization that stripped them of their Christianity. One example of this strategy was the instigation of the Berber issue within the People's Party in France, which later spread to Algeria. However, party leaders quickly contained the situation. [32]

4. Enacting the Naturalization Law:

The Naturalization Law was part of a series of decrees aimed at erasing Algerian national identity and replacing it with a French one. Below is a list of these laws:

- The Royal Order dated July 22, 1834, whose first clause states that Algeria became French property.
  - The decree of March 4, 1948, which declares that Algeria is an inseparable part of French territory.
  - The Senate decree of July 13, 1865, whose first clause specifies that the Muslim native is French while retaining Islamic law, with the right to request French nationality, but if granted, they would be subject to French law.
  - The decree issued on August 28, 1884, known as the decree annexing Algeria to French territory.
  - The law issued on March 7, 1944, which declares that Algerians are French citizens and divides society into two classes: natives and settlers. This is also emphasized by the law of September 20, 1947.
  - The decree issued on December 13, 1866, which mandates that Muslims seek justice from French peace judges, with Muslim judges restricted to enforcing the rulings of French judges.

In the same vein, a decree issued on August 28, 1874, ordered the abolition of Islamic courts in the Kabyle region, replacing them with local councils known as judicial councils that governed based on customs and traditions without reference to Islamic law. [33]

  - The law of February 6, 1919, which stipulated that Algerians seeking French nationality had to renounce their personal status. [34]

France was not genuinely interested in achieving equality between the Algerians and the French; rather, the Naturalization Law was intended to placate the Algerian people. This was evident when France swiftly enacted the "Code de l'indigénat" (Native Code), subjecting Algerians to the settlers' authority, allowing them to impose punishments without trial and confiscate their property. [35]

The Algerian response was largely one of rejection, with only a small minority accepting naturalization, primarily French-educated graduates and a few bourgeoisie who sought

material advantages. However, their motivation was generally not out of love for France, and they became the advocates of assimilation [36], which we will discuss later.

The French colonial attempts to erase the identity of the Algerian people were not only driven by hostility toward Islam but were also intended to weaken the spirit of resistance within the Algerian people so that they would become submissive and accept French rule, even gaining their loyalty to its authority.

Third: Identity Orientations of Algerian Movements and Parties During the Colonial Era

The liberation movement in Algeria split into two main groups. The first was the reformist movement led by the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars, under the leadership of Abdelhamid Ben Badis, which adopted the Arab-Islamic Algerian identity as its banner. The second was a purely political movement that championed Algerian national identity as the core of its political struggle. This political group had varying stances on religious fundamentals, which shifted according to different ideological influences, with some emphasizing the importance of respecting all religions within the framework of the Algerian nation. The following sections detail these orientations.

1. **The Assimilationist Orientation:**

This was not a liberation movement but rather a movement advocating for Algerians' rights and equality with the French. Established in 1939 through the union of Algerian representatives in the three labor councils, its leaders included figures such as Dr. Mahmoud Ben Jelloul, Ferhat Abbas, and Al-Khodri, among other proponents of assimilation in France. Most of their demands focused on achieving equality in political and social rights between Algerians and the French, aiming for integration while preserving Islamic identity through the maintenance of Islamic personal status law. [37]

The Algerian people were aware of France's plans to erase their religious and national identity, and their refusal grew stronger due to the condition that required them to abandon their personal status. According to statistics, between 1865 and 1875, only 371 Algerians out of a population of 2,462,936 (based on the 1876 census) chose to naturalize. This law remained in effect until 1974, with modifications made in 1919. [38]

Yahia Bouaziz notes that after World War II, this faction formed the **"Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto,"** which called for the establishment of an Algerian republic associated with France a federation without independence. This party believed in political rather than military struggle. [39]

Regarding the nature of this party's struggle, Ferhat Abbas stated at the party's first national congress, "Colonized nations must certainly rise to the level of sovereignty within their homelands and participate in managing their national heritage. France's presence in these different countries should aim to educate these various peoples and prepare them to govern until the day arrives when they are capable of self-governance, managing their own affairs on the basis of freedom and democracy." [40]

Thus, this orientation did not emphasize religious identity but instead aimed to fight for democracy that would ensure rights for all races and religions. Abbas's words reveal his

intellectual alienation and lack of confidence in the Algerian people's ability to govern themselves and manage their own affairs.

2. The National Liberation Orientation

After World War I, the **"North African Star"** was formed by Algerian migrants in Europe, advocating for independence and facing opposition from the colonial authorities. When it moved to Algeria in the 1930s, it became known as the **"Algerian People's Party."** Following World War II, its members operated under the name **"Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties."** This movement believed in promoting Arab-Islamic culture. [41]

This revolutionary party's activities were both political and militant, aimed at achieving independence. It sought to foster national consciousness among Algerians to encourage them to fight against French colonialism. Its vision was rooted in Algerian nationalism with a strong Arab-Islamic cultural dimension. [42]

This liberationist stance did not deny Islamic identity but rather prioritized national identity. This focus led to a significant struggle against the colonizer, promoting political awareness of the cause of liberation as an essential part of the confrontation—though not the entirety. As we previously mentioned, this war was a civilizational conflict, targeting not only the land but also the hearts and minds of the people.

3. The Reformist Orientation:

The reformist movement was the only one to establish a comprehensive reform project aimed at all segments of society, taking on the mission of reviving what colonialism had sought to eradicate: the integrated religious, linguistic, and national identity of the Algerian people. This was viewed as a foundational step to prepare society for political struggle. Following the centennial celebration of the occupation of Algeria, Algerian scholars, led by Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis, founded the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars on May 5, 1931, with "Nadi Al-Taraqi" in Algiers as its headquarters. [43] Sheikh Ben Badis summarized the association's principles with the motto: "Islam is our religion, Arabic is our language, and Algeria is our homeland." This motto encapsulated the association's opposition to France's policies of Christianization, francization, and assimilation.

The association carried out reform efforts inspired by Sheikh Ben Badis by establishing schools and newspapers, promoting the teaching of Arabic and the Qur'an, and instilling Algerian national identity in response to France's claims. They also taught Islamic history and Algerian geography. The association's activities extended to France, where it sent delegations and founded clubs and schools to educate Algerians residing there in 1936. Recognizing the association's threat, the French authorities stated in "L'Écho d'Alger" that "the movement led by Muslim scholars in Algeria is more dangerous than all previous movements, as they aim at two major goals: political and religious." [44]

According to Abdul Rachid Zarouka, Ben Badis's long-standing struggle against French colonialism, which spanned 27 years (1913–1940) and began as an individual effort before evolving into a collective struggle under the association, went through three phases:

1. **Phase of Cautious Optimism Towards France (1913–1936):** Ben Badis sought to revive religious ideas and correct doctrinal concepts within a people exhausted by poverty and ignorance. This required a political facade of goodwill toward the colonizer to allow him and the association to achieve their goals of spreading knowledge and awareness. [45]

2. **Phase of Asserting the Nation's Cultural Identity (1936):** As the movement grew stronger and gained followers, calls for freedom began to emerge. In a 1936 article titled "The Holiday of Freedom" in Al-Shihab newspaper, Ben Badis wrote: "Freedom is every person's right, as is life itself; the extent of one's life is the extent of one's freedom." During this phase, the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars, led by Ben Badis, participated in the 1936 Islamic Conference chaired by Ben Jelloul. The conference advocated for preserving the Islamic character of the Algerian people, calling for the separation of religion and state, the restoration of religious institutions to the Muslim community, the return of waqf properties, lifting the classification of Arabic as a foreign language, and ensuring freedom of the press. [46]

3. **Phase of Disillusionment with France (Post-1936):** After the Islamic Conference in June 1936, in which Ben Badis participated, French authorities stalled on meeting the demands, leading Algerians to realize that they could not rely on French promises and that the time for struggle had arrived. Ben Badis stated[47], "The policy of stalling will not lead us to despair; rather, it will drive us to boldness and sacrifice." [48]In 1937, he published an article titled "Is It Time to Despair of France?" addressing Algerians in terms of their identity: "O Algerian people, O Muslim people, O proud Arab people, beware of those who deceive and mislead you, who attempt to lull you with promises from sources that do not reflect your soul, history, or conscience. Draw inspiration from Islam, then from your history, and rely on God and yourself." [49]

Ben Badis confronted advocates of assimilation, saying, "This Algerian Muslim nation is not France, cannot be France, and does not want to become France, nor could it even if it wanted to. It is a nation entirely separate from France in its language, ethics, race, and religion. It has a defined, distinct homeland the Algerian homeland within its current, known borders, overseen by the governor appointed by the French state." [50] In 1938, Ben Badis issued a fatwa declaring Algerians who accepted French nationality as apostates, given that France required renunciation of Islamic law, and similarly judged as apostates those who married outside the Islamic faith. [51]

Ben Badis believed that nationalism is an inherent instinct in human nature. He advocated for Islamic nationalism, based on principles that begin with family and extend to the local homeland, the broader Islamic nation, and ultimately humanity as a whole. He argued that "Islamic nationalism preserves families in all their aspects, maintains the nation with all its components, and respects humanity in all its races and religions." [52]

In this context, Abdel Wahab El-Messiri stated, "I believe that Arab-Islamic identity is a set of human traits that may also be found in other human groups, but it exists in a specific form and order that gives Arab identity its uniqueness." According to El-Messiri, Arab-Islamic identity is the most effective identity for liberation movements. He cited the Islamic Jihad movement in Palestine as a contemporary example of how identity enhances the success of liberation efforts,

suggesting that such movements achieve their goal of independence when anchored in a strong cultural identity.

This reference to current reality mirrors the hope for a similar outcome—independence—highlighting what El-Messiri observed, and what Ben Badis and the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars recognized: the importance of Islamic identity as a shield protecting the nation against the cultural poisons infiltrating society in a civilizational war.

Islamic identity, as understood by the association, encompasses linguistic, ethnic, and national identities, recognizing them as integral parts of Algerian identity. For Ben Badis, who himself was of Sanhaja Berber descent, there was no opposition between Arabic and Amazigh, both being components of Algerian identity. This reflects the essence of Islam, which prioritizes religious loyalty over linguistic or ethnic differences, considering as "other" only those who differ in faith, while still granting them full rights unless they transgress.

Conclusion

This study leads to the following conclusions:

- The bond that unites people and molds them into a cohesive entity is their sense of identity, whether it is based on ethnicity, language, or geography. However, religious identity is the strongest force uniting a society or a nation, as religion serves as the common ground where all differences within a society or among various sub-identities merge, forming a unified culture.

- Whether colonialism is physical, as in ancient and modern forms of colonization, or intellectual, as in cultural invasion, globalization, or the so-called new world order, it targets the identity of nations by casting doubt or erasing it. This makes it easier to dominate and replace the native identity with its own, thereby strengthening its influence, ideas, and ambitions.

- The strongest bond that connects members of a society is the religious link, which transcends geography, nationality, and politics. In colonial Algeria, the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars served as a stronghold that reconnected the nation to its religious, linguistic, and national identity after a century of France's efforts to erase Algeria's identity. Among all political movements, it was the association that revived this comprehensive identity, and many of its students eventually joined the National Liberation Front.

- The success of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars in its intellectual and doctrinal struggle can be attributed to its collective approach, inclusive of all segments of society, and its use of diverse, carefully planned methods. While many scholars and reformers before them had undertaken similar efforts, their work was often individual or limited in reach, unlike the comprehensive impact achieved by the association across the entire Algerian territory.

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