

## Migration and nuptiality. 'Europeans' in a colonial context : Algeria (1830-1870)

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When the territory had been conquered by the French army in the 1830s, European settlers started migrating to Algeria. From 1840 onwards, the territory was sufficiently 'pacified' for a population stemming from immigration to develop. With a steady flow of migrants from France, but also from Spain, Italy, Malta and other countries, the population grew fast (+134% between 1846 and 1866), and then even doubled every twenty years (1866-1886 and 1886-1906).

It must be pointed out that 'other Europeans' were as numerous as French citizens in the early times of the colonization. Their subsequent decrease can be explained partly by the nearly systematic naturalization of the 'Europeans' present in Algeria from 1865 onwards. Each of the 35 000 Jews who were present on the territory in 1870 was also naturalized (Cremieux Decree, 1870).

Table 1 – 'European' population in Algeria

|      | French  | Other Europeans | All Europeans | % Other Europeans |
|------|---------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1846 | 46 339  | 49 780          | 96 119        | 51.80%            |
| 1866 | 122 219 | 94 871          | 217 090       | 43.70%            |
| 1886 | 261 666 | 203 154         | 464 820       | 43.70%            |
| 1906 | 514 065 | 166 198         | 680 263       | 24.40%            |
| 1926 | 657 641 | 175 716         | 833 357       | 21.10%            |

Source: Kateb, p.187

Thus, a new 'European' population came into existence in this colonial context. 'European' and 'indigenous' populations lived separately, living in different areas when they inhabited in the same town. In the main towns, 'Europeans' could be in the majority (Alger, Oran, Bône), whereas 'indigenous' could outnumber them in other cities (Blida, Constantine, Sétif). They did not all share the same status: 'Europeans' were citizens, whereas 'indigenous' were subjects. They came under different jurisdictions: the French legislation for 'Europeans', the Koranic law (Chari'a) for 'indigenous'.

Marriages between the two populations were extremely rare. Marriages between 'indigenous' were seldom recorded and few documents are available. On the other hand, marriages between 'Europeans' were recorded just as they would have been in the French metropolitan cities, and the 19th century registers were well-kept and are in good condition today.

The present study rests on the analysis of a survey, including five thousand marriage certificates registered in the main Algerian cities between 1833 and 1870. Marriage certificates provide us with a great deal of information, as they include the following data, which will be exploited systematically, according to the methods of Historical Demography.:

- place of birth and place of residence of the spouses;
- place of residence or place of death of the spouses' parents;
- date of birth and age of the spouses
- matrimonial status of the spouses,

- date of death of the previous spouse for widows and widowers;
- place and date of birth of possible illegitimate children born before this marriage
- the spouses' occupations and their parents'.

A preliminary analysis, based on a set of one thousand marriage certificates registered in 1867 in the main cities, allowed to see some patterns concerning nuptiality of this 'European' population. (Brunet, 2012; 2014b).

One of the aim is to study the geographical origins of the migrants and to see how the population of each of these towns was made up. Important differences in the origin of the husbands and wives can be found between Algerian cities (migrants from Italy and Malta are numerous in the east part of the country, but very scarce in the west part).

Table 2 – Place of birth of spouses in relation with the place of marriage, marriages registered in the main Algerian towns in 1867

| Territoire de naissance | Région de mariage |         |               |          |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------|---------------|----------|
|                         | Algérois          | Oranais | Constantinois | Ensemble |
| Algérie                 | 18,1%             | 6,6%    | 8,0%          | 12,1%    |
| Allemagne               | 1,8%              | 2,1%    | 3,8%          | 2,4%     |
| Espagne                 | 18,1%             | 24,5%   | 4,2%          | 16,3%    |
| France                  | 54,4%             | 62,4%   | 60,2%         | 58,2%    |
| Italie                  | 3,8%              | 2,8%    | 12,3%         | 5,7%     |
| Malte                   | 1,6%              |         | 11,1%         | 3,6%     |
| Divers                  | 2,2% *            | 1,7% ** | 0,4% ***      | 1,6%     |
|                         | 100,0%            | 100,0%  | 100,0%        | 100,0%   |
|                         | N=447             | N=290   | N=261         | N=998    |

Source: Brunet (2012)

Table 3 – Distribution of marriages in relation to the male and female spouse's native territory. Marriages in the main Algerian towns in 1867.

| Territoire de naissance de l'homme | Territoire de naissance de la femme |           |         |        |        |       |        | Ensemble |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|-------|--------|----------|
|                                    | Algérie                             | Allemagne | Espagne | France | Italie | Malte | Autres |          |
| Algérie                            | 78                                  | 1         | 19      | 12     | 4      | 6     | 1      | 121      |
| Allemagne                          | 7                                   | 9         | 1       | 7      |        |       |        | 24       |
| Espagne                            | 56                                  | 1         | 101     | 3      |        |       | 2      | 163      |
| France                             | 133                                 | 16        | 45      | 364    | 14     |       | 9      | 581      |
| Italie                             | 16                                  |           | 8       | 6      | 24     | 2     | 1      | 57       |
| Malte                              | 16                                  | 1         | 3       | 4      | 2      | 10    |        | 36       |
| Autres                             | 7                                   | 1         | 4       | 4      |        |       |        | 16       |
| Ensemble                           | 313                                 | 29        | 181     | 400    | 44     | 18    | 13     | 998      |

Source: Brunet (2013)

While French settlers come from all the French regions, the Spanish ones come from a small numbers of provinces (Alicante, Almeria, Balearic Islands). Endogamy is more important among Spanish spouses than among the French ones. Furthermore, the comparison between the place of birth of the spouses, the place of residence of their parents, and the place of birth of possible illegitimate children (10% of the marriages), reveals complex migration courses.

New data collected in 2013 will allow us to present new results, based on a larger database. With

this new survey, we intend to strengthen our knowledge about migration from Europe to Algeria, but also inside of the Algerian territory, and back migration from Algeria to Europe. We also examine how the “second” generation, born to ‘European’ migrants on the Algerian soil, get access to marriage: do they intermarry ? do they marry newcoming migrants ? do they marry migrants with the same origin as themselves ?

While previous works had already determined the main tendencies of colonial peopling in Algeria, thus providing a basis for the present study, the latter will be a pioneer through its practice analysis of the migratory process and the choice of the spouse among the 'European' population in Algeria.

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*They started working together two years ago, and they have built a database including 5000 marriage certificates. This paper is the very first presentation of the exploitation of the database.*

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